

Report to: Development Services Committee

Date of Meeting: March 24, 2009

SUBJECT: Toward a Markham Growth Management Strategy:
Outlining an Intensification Strategy

PREPARED BY: Policy and Research Division Staff,
Planning and Urban Design Department

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report entitled “Toward a Markham Growth Management Strategy: Outlining an Intensification Strategy”, dated March 24, 2009, be received;

And that the “Intensification Principles” and the “Intensification Hierarchy”, as described in the report, be endorsed as a basis and framework for finalizing a Markham Intensification Strategy addressing both residential and employment intensification within the Town’s current settlement area;

And that Staff report back to Development Services Committee with a recommended Intensification Strategy following endorsement of the preferred alternative for housing and employment growth as identified in the Markham Growth Management Strategy;

And that Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Markham is recognized for its success in planning and developing more compact, complete urban communities based on principles of New Urbanism, incorporating higher densities and supporting public transit. Over the past decade, Markham has been working with all stakeholders to create more compact urban development in Markham Centre and along the Avenue Seven and Yonge Street Regional Transit Corridors, and in relation to other Local Corridors such as Milliken Main Street and Markham Road. This form of intense development and redevelopment within the Town’s current settlement area is consistent with the Provincial Growth Plan and Region of York Intensification Strategy targets and policies.

Intensification within the Town’s current settlement area is a key component of the Town’s emerging Growth Management Strategy which focuses on containing growth within the current settlement area. An Intensification Strategy is necessary to guide Markham’s vision for its intensification areas. The vision should provide for predominantly mixed use, pedestrian friendly, livable communities that will generally be served by higher order transit and will be transit supportive.

The strategy must provide overall direction on where both residential and employment intensification should occur, appropriate land uses and amount of development, and the anticipated phasing of new development. It must have regard for the Provincial and Regional emphasis on intensification as the means of encouraging the development of urban centres and corridors at transit supportive densities. The strategy details will be subsequently refined in Secondary Plan, or more locally focused area studies.

Intensification must be planned for and guided by Town policies and requirements, and be directed to preferred locations at transit nodes and along transit corridors.

At this time, Staff is seeking endorsement of “Intensification Principles” and an “Intensification Hierarchy” to be used as a basis and framework for finalizing a Markham Intensification Strategy addressing both residential and employment intensification within the Town’s current settlement area.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

None at this time.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Development Services Committee with an update on the Residential and Employment Intensification Analysis currently underway as a component of the Town’s Growth Management Strategy Study and to secure endorsement of an approach to finalizing a Town of Markham Intensification Strategy.

BACKGROUND:Provincial Requirement for a Town of Markham Intensification Strategy

Under the Provincial Growth Plan, all municipalities must “develop and implement through their official plans and other supporting documents, a strategy and policies to phase in and achieve intensification within their current settlement area.” For residential intensification, the Growth Plan has established a target requiring that “by the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 40% of all residential development occurring annually within each upper and single tier municipality will be within the built up area.” This target must be met across York Region as a whole with intensification in the local municipalities contributing to the overall target.

The Province has defined the built up area, in terms of the “Built Boundary” in each local municipality in York Region, including Markham. The built up area forms part of Markham’s Current Settlement Area. The Growth Plan also establishes a minimum density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare by 2031 or earlier, for the provincially designated Urban Growth Centres which include Markham Centre and the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway.

The Growth Plan intensification policies direct municipalities to identify the appropriate type and scale of development in intensification areas. To be effective in shifting new development toward a more intense compact development form, the Provincial intensification targets must be accompanied by a comprehensive package of supporting policies.

York Region Intensification Strategy Adopted

York Region has adopted the minimum 40% residential intensification target (Region wide) and the Urban Growth Centre density target as part of the Region’s 2031 Intensification Strategy which will be used as the basis to update the Regional Official Plan’s intensification policies.

The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy, adopted by Regional Council in February 2009 (See Appendix 'A'), includes a set of "Principles of Intensification" and Local Municipal Intensification Targets required to achieve the 40% intensification target of the Provincial Growth Plan. Most of the intensification units identified in the Region's Strategy are assigned to the municipalities in southern York Region. The Strategy proposes targets for Markham of locating 31,590 intensification units and approximately 65000 jobs, within the Town's current settlement area, over the period from 2006 to 2031. Based on the Growth Plan requirements for applying intensification targets, the overall 40% target for York Region translates into approximately a 52% target for Markham's share.

The Strategy also includes a Regional Intensification Matrix Framework which has been formulated to help local municipalities in identifying potential intensification areas. The Matrix Framework allocates anticipated intensification in a hierarchical manner, with Regional Centres having the highest intensity of development compared with other identified locations or forms of intensification.

Regional Intensification Matrix Framework

Regional Centres
Regional Corridors
GO Stations
Local Centres & Corridors
Other Major Corridors
Local Infill
Secondary Suites

Markham Approach to an Intensification Strategy

A strategy is necessary to guide Markham's vision for its intensification areas. The vision should provide for predominantly mixed use, pedestrian friendly, livable communities that are transit supportive with transit oriented development within the Town's current settlement area.

The strategy must provide overall direction on where intensification should occur, the amount of development that is appropriate, and the anticipated phasing of new development, having regard for the emphasis the Province and Region have placed on intensification as the means of encouraging the development of urban centres and corridors at densities which can support transit. The strategy details will be subsequently refined in Secondary Plans or more locally focused area studies. Intensification must be planned for and guided by Town policies and requirements, and be directed to preferred locations at transit nodes and along transit corridors.

The scope of Markham's intensification strategy must extend beyond a mathematical response to the Growth Plan intensification targets and address other Growth Plan policies that relate to urban design:

- built form and the appropriate type and scale of development,

- sustainable development practices,
- connectivity which supports transit,
- walking and cycling activities,
- a diverse and compatible mix of land uses including employment and residential uses at appropriate locations, and
- a range and mix of housing types.

Other Town studies and initiatives must reflect and build on the strategy, particularly in regard to community infrastructure to foster complete communities.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Work is underway on a Town of Markham Intensification Analysis

Since the Spring of 2007, Staff has been analyzing potential intensification opportunities within the Town's Current Settlement Area guided by senior government growth management and transportation policy directions, the Town's Official Plan and Council's comment and direction. In November of 2007, Council included the analysis as part of the Growth Management Strategy to be prepared for Markham.

The intensification analysis is proceeding in the following 5 phases:

Phase 1 – Background Research and Orientation to Height and Density Options

Phase 2 – Techniques and Classification of Intensification Opportunities

Phase 3 - Identification and Modeling of Intensification Potential

Phase 4 – Input to Growth Options

Phase 5 – Finalizing the Intensification Strategy and Implementation Framework

Phase 1 – Background Research and Orientation to Height and Density Options

This phase set out the Provincial and Regional context for intensification as well as the structural elements that currently guide development within Markham. In particular, the initial work addressed the Avenue Seven, Yonge Street and Warden Avenue Regional Transit Corridors and the Regional Centres of Markham Centre and Langstaff Gateway which are to be the focus of higher density, mixed use, urban development in Markham.

In September 2007, Staff provided the Development Services Committee with an overview of background research completed on applying height and density in potential intensification areas within the Town's Current Settlement Area. At the same time, Staff provided an outline of height and density options to assist the Committee in understanding the potential impact of increased height and density while focusing on the quality of design, function and livability of a more compact urban form. Particular attention was given to increasing lot coverage, especially in support of mid-rise buildings, while still achieving significant density, and on limiting floor plate size for taller buildings to support "point tower" forms.

To be successful and meet community expectations, increases in building height and density must be paired with good urban design. With this in mind, the following considerations for increases in development height and density were identified:

- Height and density are related but distinct, based on factors affecting:
 - site organization and building placement, site and building design

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- lot coverage (footprint)
 - gross floor area (footprint x the number of storeys)
 - on-site open space
 - parking requirements and location (surface vs. structured vs. underground)
 - Increasing lot coverage can reduce building height and still achieve density
 - Built Form Principles:
 - massing of “slab” building compared with “point tower” form
 - limiting heights of slab buildings to mid-rise and reducing floor plate size of tall buildings to achieve point tower forms
 - separation distance between buildings
 - height of tower components (base/middle/top)
 - relationship between building height and street (human scale, views, solar access, good relationship of building to street at 1:1 ratio and canyon effect of slabs at street level above 1:1 ratio) – pedestrian friendly
 - transit supportive
 - podium forms compared to sheer wall forms or with the use of terracing
 - transition of height (gradation of density, replicating built form)

In June, 2007, Staff also provided the Committee with a Density Study, highlighting examples of height and density of residential, office, mixed-use, live-work within Markham and across the GTA. This was followed by a November 2007 tour of GTA intensification areas in North York Centre, North Toronto, East Downtown Toronto/the Distillery, Mississauga City Centre, Port Credit, Etobicoke Centre and Scarborough Centre. These current baseline studies of intensification projects over the last ten years, in Markham and GTA wide, assisted in comparing our preliminary intensification assumptions to existing trends. Council found this type of analysis especially helpful for understanding how different densities could be achieved using different height and coverage scenarios and a variety of built form solutions in Markham.

Recognizing the importance of good urban design for new intensification areas in Markham, particularly where they are adjacent to established low density residential neighbourhoods, Council subsequently authorized funding for a complementary Built Form, Height and Massing Study component of the Intensification Analysis. Among other things, this study (which is underway) will address the development of principles, guidelines and performance standards for the mid rise and high rise buildings that will accommodate the intensification in terms of their location, placement and separation, orientation, lot coverage and building floor plate area, and measures to address the impact on the public realm and adjacent residential neighbourhoods. Most of the Town's existing residential neighbourhoods have been established at lower densities and residents want reassurance that new development directed to adjacent intensification areas will be appropriate in scale and context.

As part of the intensification analysis, the consultant retained to complete a Built Form, Massing and Height study will also “test” select locations identified for potential intensification. Among other things, this study will focus on pedestrian-friendly, transit oriented development and demonstrate how policies relating to transition and urban

design can be introduced in the Town's secondary plan or more localized studies to ensure that new development adjacent to existing neighbourhoods respects the character and scale of the neighbourhood. Intensification projects also often demand a flexible, site-specific response to implement principles of good building and site design and planning of streets. Therefore, the study will highlight any potential conflict with Region and Town standards, practices and by-laws that may need to be addressed.

The Built Form, Massing and Height Study complements work already underway on Secondary Plans, urban design guidelines, and open space/public realm master plans across the Town at various locations such as Markham Centre, Langstaff Gateway, Cornell Centre, the Yonge/Steeles Corridor and the Highway 7 Precinct Plan between Warden Avenue and the CNR(Uxbridge Subdivision) rail corridor.

Increasing population density in intensification areas must be coupled with public infrastructure that can accommodate the increased activities of additional residents and ensure sufficient amenity space is provided. A further study has been initiated to determine appropriate applications of the provisions of Section 37 of the Planning Act (bonusing for height and density) to secure a range of public benefits in return for increased height and/or density.

Phase 2 – Techniques and Classification of Intensification Opportunities

In April 2008, Staff provided Development Services Committee with a presentation of assumptions and methods applied when considering intensification opportunities. These included several provisos relating to the consideration of intensification:

- Consideration of locations for intensification does not mean that intensification will be approved, or that an entire location may be suitable for intensification;
- The potential to accommodate intensification at a given location does not mean that its realization is a priority for the Town, or that it will be acted on in the market place;
- If the overall potential to intensify exceeds the need or the demand, priorities will need to be established to direct intensification to preferred locations;
- Intensification at locations that have reduced impacts on infrastructure or which justify infrastructure investment are likely to be preferred;
- Intensification needs to be appropriate to the context in which it occurs; the built form of development – its height and density, the change and mix of uses involved, the relationship to surrounding community design and function, etc.; and,
- Intensification must positively impact the Town's economy and not result in losses in essential economic activity and a reduced range of jobs.

The intensification analysis is focused on the Current Settlement Area and takes into account areas where intensification is unlikely to occur, or to be proposed by the Town, as well as locations where intensification may be proposed by policy or preference to meet Town planning objectives.

A key aspect of identifying intensification potential is the relationship to higher order rapid transit facilities. In this regard, the analysis takes account of the Region of York Intensification Matrix Framework which organizes intensification potential relative to

specific policies in the Provincial Growth Plan and the Regional Official Plan. Elements of the Regional Hierarchy are included in the organization of intensification areas in the analysis. In addition to this hierarchy, the Town's analysis considers:

- locations currently approved for intensification,
- locations that are being studied for intensification,
- greenfield lands that might accommodate intensification,
- development proposals incorporating intensification, and,
- business parks (employment intensification only) and strategic retail sites.

Concurrently, the analysis is confirming locations considered to have "No Potential" for intensification, including established residential areas and components of the Greenway System where intensification is not needed or required.

Using District specific area mapping, Staff completed a preliminary analysis of intensification areas highlighting Urban Growth Centres/Regional Centres, potential Key Development Areas along Avenue Seven, Yonge Street and the Warden Avenue Regional Transit Corridors, and other potential intensification areas in Local Centres and Corridors along Bayview Ave, Steeles Ave, Kennedy Rd, Markham Rd and other Major Corridors and at GO, Viva and subway stations.

This provided a preliminary Town-wide screening assessment of parcel size, coverage and Floor Space Index for existing urban residential, commercial and industrial lands within the urban area with potential intensification areas mapping superimposed on it.

Input was also obtained from Town planning Staff and Councillors on:

- appropriateness of identified intensification area;
- type of development best suited for the area;
- level of intensification, ie. tolerance of increased height and density;
- investigation of both residential and employment intensification opportunities;
- current development proposals; and
- possible timeframes for phasing in of intensification over time.

Phase 3 - Identification and Modeling of Intensification Potential

Potential Benefits of Intensification

Intensification, or increasing the density of development within the Town's current settlement area can occur in a number of ways:

- through redevelopment of under-utilized lands;
- infill of vacant lands or spaces between existing buildings;
- expansion or conversion of existing buildings; and
- development or redevelopment of large land areas within the Town's current settlement area (eg. the Markham Centre and Langstaff Gateway lands).

Intensification has a number of potential benefits. More compact and intense development within the Town's Current Settlement Area may:

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- provide for higher density, mixed use and transit supportive development which improves land use efficiency and creates more sustainable communities;
 - reduce reliance on the automobile by providing transit supportive densities which make it more feasible to provide efficient public transit;
 - result in more efficient use of existing infrastructure and reduce expenditures on servicing of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas of the Town;
 - provide for a variety of housing forms to help meet the needs of a growing and diversifying population and offer more affordable housing choices; and
 - slow the rate at which land outside of the current settlement area is developed for residential use.

Analysis of Intensification Potential

Part of the work toward developing an intensification strategy for Markham includes an analysis to estimate and identify intensification potential for future residential and employment development. Council has authorized work on an intensification analysis that takes into account:

- community priorities outlined for the Town's Growth Management Strategy;
- senior government initiatives for growth management and transit infrastructure;
- demographic trends such as an aging population and an increased diversity of households;
- economic trends and land prices that impact market choices; and
- typical constraints to intensification including community acceptance, urban design issues and infrastructure service issues.

Markham's Intensification Principles

Staff recommend that the following principles be endorsed by the Development Services Committee and be used to finalize a Town of Markham Intensification Strategy:

1. Redefine the Town's urban structure to manage intensification within the current settlement area without significantly impacting the Town's existing structure of residential neighbourhoods and business parks.
2. Intensify and improve the mix of development and direct it to designated centres and corridors which are well served and connected by rapid transit to improve land use efficiency and create more sustainable communities.
3. Intensification should coincide with the delivery of high order public transit as a reliable, sustainable travel alternative and result in the creation of mixed use, pedestrian friendly, liveable communities that are transit supportive and incorporate sustainable development practices.
4. Established residential areas and designated employment areas should be protected from residential intensification; preserve identified natural features from all intensification.
5. Focus intensification in areas that have a reduced impact on Town infrastructure, or which justify investment in new and sustainable infrastructure.
6. Intensify development within the Town's Current Settlement Area and limit land for intensified uses outside of the Town's Current Settlement Area.

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7. Retain employment serving Town residents and businesses in new development and create live-work opportunities through mixed use development.
 8. Intensification will need to be prioritized, directed and phased to preferred Intensification Areas.
 9. Improve connectivity by providing a street network/public realm that is more conducive to transit, cycling and pedestrian use, to reduce reliance on the automobile as a preferred mode of transportation.
 10. Intensification needs to be appropriate to the area context in which it occurs, the built form of development, its height and density, the appropriate mix of uses involved, and the relationship to the surrounding community form and function.

Markham's Intensification Hierarchy

An Intensification Hierarchy will provide a framework to guide development of a Town of Markham Intensification Strategy. Staff recommends that the Intensification Hierarchy outlined below be endorsed by Development Services Committee.

The intensification analysis takes into account the intensification hierarchy and strategy guide developed by the Region of York, in consultation with local municipalities. This is a policy regime that encourages allotting density in a hierarchical manner with Regional Centres having the highest intensity of development, followed by Regional Corridors, GO stations, Local Centres and Corridors and Local Infill.

In addition to this approach the Town's analysis considers current Town policy areas and the potential for residential intensification in study locations and current development proposals. The intensification analysis does not consider intensification in established residential areas, identified natural features or residential intensification in designated office and industrial lands.

Where Residential Intensification can be Accommodated in Current Settlement Area

Figure 1, Markham's Intensification Hierarchy – Intensification Area and Rapid Transit Improvements, depicts the overall context for both residential and employment intensification opportunities within the Town's current settlement area. It identifies the Current Urban Settlement boundary in purple and a hierarchy of intensification opportunities categorized as Regional Centres which are also provincially designated Urban Growth Centres in pink, Key Development Areas along Regional Transit Corridors in blue, locations on Major Corridors in green, and Local Centres and Corridors in orange and Local Infill in beige. All of these intensification areas are set within the context of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Infrastructure Plan.

Figure 2, Markham's Intensification Hierarchy – Residential Intensification Areas, identifies a potential distribution for residential intensification. This distribution will be finalized once the overall proportion of appropriate residential growth to 2031, to be achieved via intensification, has been endorsed by Council. The overall proportion has been the subject of several presentations and reports to Development Services Committee.

Staff has recommended that the proportion should be in the order of 55% of the Town's residential unit potential built during the period between 2015 and 2031 (in accordance with the Provincial Growth Plan intensification requirement). This proportion would exceed the proportion of 52% proposed for Markham by the Region of York, in order to meet the Region's minimum 40% intensification requirement, set by the Provincial Growth Plan, and is consistent with the Council's focus on containing growth within the current settlement area.

Current estimates suggest that a proportion of 55%, applied to a forecast of Town unit development in the period between 2015 and 2031 could represent approximately 23000 to 25000 units. If the potential prior to 2015 is included, the overall intensification potential could be in the order of 30000 units over the entire forecast period from 2006 to 2031. However, these estimates are subject to future economic circumstances, market preferences and development phasing that will affect actual unit production over the entire period to 2031. It is also important to recognize that some intensification areas currently under consideration, in particular the large capacity Urban Growth Centres, could, depending on their phasing, have the potential to continue to develop and contribute additional units, well beyond 2031.

Figure 2 compares the intensification potential of several components of the intensification hierarchy. Comparing the total intensification potential, it shows that the largest proportion of residential intensification units (44%) could be achieved in the two Regional Centres of Markham Centre and the Langstaff Gateway. These Urban Growth Centres are planned for the highest concentration and greatest mix of uses in the Region, a range of housing and employment opportunities, and to be a focus for strategic investment in transit. Both of these centres also contain interfaces for multiple rail and bus transit services, and have been identified as Mobility Hubs in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Infrastructure Plan. In addition to accommodating a significant share of the Provincial residential intensification target requirements, current planning for these provincially designated Urban Growth Centres will exceed the minimum Provincial density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare by 2031.

The next largest proportion of potential residential intensification units (33%) could be accommodated in the Key Development Areas (KDA's) along the Avenue Seven and Yonge Street Regional Transit Corridors. These KDA's include Cornell Centre, the Yonge/Steeles Corridor, Commerce Valley/Galleria, Markville, Woodbine/404 and the Yonge North Corridor. These Regional Corridors are the main arteries of the Regional structure and the preferred routes for higher order rapid transit lines through Markham and connect to the Regional Centres. The Regional Centres and Key Development Areas, both strongly relate to higher order rapid transit service, and together could accommodate as much as 77% of the identified intensification potential.

The balance of the potential residential intensification units (23%) could occur along the Major Corridors of Markham Road, Steeles Avenue and Kennedy Road, where the adjoining pattern of development can accommodate change, and in the Local Centres and Corridors of Fairtree East-Parkview Centre, Milliken Centre (Main Street), Thornhill

Centre, Cathedraltown Centre and Cornell North Centre, Kennedy Corridor – Berczy, which contain a mix of activities like Regional Centres but on a smaller scale and serving the adjacent community. Both the Major Corridors and Local Centres and Corridors are served by local transit offering connections to higher order transit and in some cases contain GO stations.

Finally, there is the potential for appropriate local infill and for second suites. Local infill in Markham typically involves small scale ground-related housing development and the creation of new lots by consent. This form of intensification occurs regularly, although its contribution to intensification is relatively small, estimated to be less than 1% of the total.

Local infill might also include redevelopment of some older retail sites and isolated parcels of sufficient size. The most likely candidate sites will adjoin arterial and collector roads which have transit service. Intensification of such sites is likely to be more challenging in terms of finding development forms appropriate to their context, but their intensification may have less impact on infrastructure because of their small scale. It should also be an objective to retain retail and service uses where they currently exist, as a component of any redevelopment, to ensure these continue to serve the surrounding community, supporting complete communities. Again, the potential contribution from local infill is relatively small, but offers more localized opportunities at a more modest scale, to contribute to the evolution of the Town's housing stock.

Infill, via second suites is encouraged in both Provincial and Regional policy, and is recognized in the Town's Official Plan. Many existing second suites in Markham have been established without zoning permission or the benefit of comprehensive regulatory procedures. Council is currently considering recommendations from a Subcommittee of the Development Services Committee to establish zoning permission for second suites, subject to conditions and strict regulatory controls.

Most greenfield lands in Markham's Current Settlement Area have been included in the Province's Built Boundary and have approved plans and policies in place; some lands are now developed. Some greenfield lands are already subject to policies promoting increased densities, while some may present opportunities to increase densities. Greenfield lands are included in the Intensification Analysis to assess opportunities to meet the Growth Plan density target of 50 jobs and persons per hectare and to assess intensification at appropriate locations. Examples of locations with potential include Cornell Centre, Cornell North Centre, and Fairtree East/Parkview.

Where Employment Intensification can be Accommodated in Current Settlement Area

The focus of employment intensification in the analysis is on established business park areas and strategic retail sites, especially where these relate to Regional Corridors and form part of Key Development Areas or Regional Centres. The analysis assesses the potential for both dispersed employment infill and intensification in Key Development Areas. The analysis does not consider residential intensification in established business parks.

Like residential intensification, employment intensification is market sensitive and driven by the economics of both land development and business operational priorities.

Government policies and directions have less direct impact on employment intensification, than in the case of residential intensification. Employment intensification will only occur if it is consistent with the accommodation requirements of businesses, and depends on a decision by a property owner or business to alter current development and business arrangements.

Current estimates by the Region of York suggest that about 65000 additional jobs might be accommodated within Markham's current settlement area and could contribute to future employment intensification. Employment intensification is being considered as part of the Employment Lands Strategy Study in order to take account of Town growth objectives, employment forecasts, land supply and market trends.

Phase 4 – Input to Growth Options (Staff are currently working on Phase 4)

The results of the analysis of potential residential intensification opportunities indicate that it would be appropriate to direct a share of the total additional residential units identified in the Regional forecast for Markham to intensification locations. As recommended in the February 3, 2009 report "Toward a Markham Growth Management Strategy: Opportunities to Accommodate Growth, this share would be equivalent to at least 55% of the total units added between 2015 and 2031. This proportion would exceed the proportion of 52% proposed for Markham by the Region of York, in order to meet the Region's minimum 40% intensification requirement, set by the Provincial Growth Plan.

Considering the entire planning period from 2006 to 2031, the analysis suggests that the Town could also meet or exceed 55% intensification throughout the whole 25 year period, if the market for higher density housing is sufficiently strong. However, the analysis also suggests that more of the potential residential intensification opportunities occur later in the forecast period to 2031, and beyond 2031, as the market interest in higher density housing forms is expected to strengthen, over the long term.

Staff is reviewing the February 3, 2009 growth alternatives with the public and will be reporting to the Development Services Committee on the review and analysis of housing and employment growth alternatives and responses received to the alternatives through public engagement.

Phase 5 – Finalizing the Intensification Strategy and Implementation Framework

Once Council has endorsed a Town of Markham Growth Management Strategy (targeted for June 2009), and confirmed a preferred growth alternative for housing and employment growth, Staff will prepare a Town of Markham Intensification Strategy to include:

- Intensification Principles including Building Form, Height and Massing
- Intensification Hierarchy

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- Intensification Targets for each identified Intensification Area
 - Implementation Strategies or key actions that address planning policy and tools, financial policy and tools, infrastructure policy and investment programs.

The planning policy actions might include area studies and secondary plan reviews that would address, in detail, area specific land use intensification policies and built form, massing and height guidelines; revisions to parkland and parking standards; and the use of various Planning Act tools such as pre-zoning of Intensification Areas, Height and Density Bonusing, Community Improvement Plans, Development Permit Systems, etc.

The financial policy and tools might include the application of Tax Incentives and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and possible revisions to the Development Charges Act to better account for the cost of establishing a new urban structure and services. A review of current financial policy and tools could form part of the Finance Department's financial impact analysis linked to the Town's preferred Growth Management Strategy.

The infrastructure policy and investment programs might explore under which circumstances the Town would be prepared to support the cost of infrastructure front-ending, in which intensification areas it may be appropriate, and what it will take to make it happen. Review of current infrastructure policy and programs relative to intensification can form part of the Markham Strategic Transportation Plan, the Master Servicing Study, the Integrated Leisure Master Plan, Community Safety Plan and the Community Sustainability Plan (Green Print).

FINANCIAL TEMPLATE:

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Intensification Strategy is a component of the Growth Management Strategy which implements the Growth Management Priority, and addresses both the Transportation/Transit and Environment Priorities established in Building Markham's Future Together.

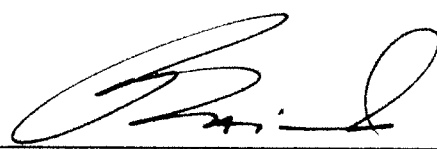
DEPARTMENTS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDED BY:



Valerie Shuttleworth, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Director of Planning & Urban Design



Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A – York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy

Figure 1 – Markham's Intensification Hierarchy – Intensification Areas and Rapid Transit Improvements

Figure 2 - Markham's Intensification Hierarchy – Residential Intensification Analysis

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APPENDIX A

York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy

York Region Planning and Development Services

February 2009

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Executive Summary

The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy Report demonstrates the Region's ability to achieve the Provincial *Growth Plan*'s intensification targets and requirements. This report is also a component of the comprehensive review required for the *Regional Official Plan* conformity exercise. The report includes the following highlights:

- The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy meets the requirements of the Provincial Growth Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement and other provincial initiatives.
- The York Region Principles of Intensification will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. They provide a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres and corridors served by rapid-transit.
- The Local Municipal Intensification Targets, as outlined in Table 1, will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. The Region plans to meet and/or exceed the estimated 90,700 new units required to achieve the 40% intensification target in the Provincial *Growth Plan*.
- The provincially-defined urban growth centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan are planned to meet and/or exceed the *Growth Plan* target of 200 people and jobs per gross hectare. The number of forecasted jobs should be enough to employ, at a minimum, the total labour force residing in each Centre.
- Local municipalities are currently completing their intensification strategies that will identify and map key strategic areas where intensification can be best accommodated with respect to efficient and cost-effective infrastructure, transit and human services provisions. Local municipalities are expected to address intensification in all key strategic areas of the Region's Intensification Matrix Framework that include: Regional Centres and Corridors, GO Stations, Local Centres and Corridors, Other Major Corridors, Local Infill and Secondary Suites.
- As part of the local intensification strategies, local municipalities will include targets for each identified intensification area to meet their municipal intensification target based on the 40% target region-wide. Local Municipalities will plan to meet and/or exceed these local area targets.
- The Region has developed a number of key attributes of intensification areas that will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. The attributes focus on such areas as: transit-supportive and mixed-use development, housing options, built form and design, transit connections, natural heritage and public space, traffic and parking, energy planning and active lifestyles.
- The *York Region 2031 Land Budget Report, January 2009*, indicates that approximately 42% of the Region's total employment growth will occur within the built-up area by 2031, translating into an anticipated 138,000 new jobs.

- Local Municipalities will plan for employment within the built-up area and identify intensification areas that can accommodate employment in keeping with the Region's Employment Forecast.
- A number of local municipalities, such as Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, are currently identifying key areas along the regional rapid transit corridors of Highway 7 and Yonge Street in which to focus mixed-use and transit-supportive development.
- Of the 90,700 required units, over 50,000 already have some level of approval within the built-up area. For example, a total of 34,500 units are already planned for in the Regional Centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.
- As specified in the *Growth Plan*, the Region is developing a monitoring system to track progress on intensification in collaboration with the local municipalities. Sources of information that are being considered for the system include: building permits, development applications and the Region's annual employment survey.

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1.0 Purpose of the York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy

In 2006, The Province of Ontario released a **Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) Places to Grow**. The *Growth Plan* guides decisions on issues relating to transportation, infrastructure, planning, land-use planning, urban form, housing, natural heritage and resource protection with the intent to help secure the future prosperity of the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.

The *Growth Plan* states that all municipalities will develop and implement, through their official plans and other supporting documents, a strategy and policies to phase in and achieve intensification and the intensification target. The **York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy** represents a component of the larger municipal comprehensive review required for the *Regional Official Plan Review*. In accordance with provincial requirements, the objectives of the Regional Intensification Strategy are to:

- Use the Region's Growth Forecasts for population and employment
- Quantify and accommodate a significant portion of both future employment and residential development through intensification throughout the built-up area in accordance with the policies in 2.2.3 of the *Growth Plan*
- Identify a minimum intensification target for residential development that maximizes and ensures the implementation of the intensification strategy.
- Identify the appropriate type and scale of development and set targets for employment and residential growth in intensification areas, urban growth centres, major transit station areas and intensification corridors.

In addition to provincial regulation, intensifying the Region's built-up area will result in a number of environmental, economic and community benefits:

- Communities can be designed so that cost-effective and efficient transit, infrastructure and human services systems can be operated and easily accessed. Well-designed streets and building locations give people the choice of walking and bicycling as opposed to reliance on automobiles.
- Higher density, mixed-use and transit-supportive development reduces greenhouse gas emissions and increases long-term resiliency to the impacts of climate change by utilizing land and infrastructure resources efficiently and reducing automobile dependency.
- Higher densities result in a greater proportion of row and apartment style housing. These types of housing structures provide a broader range of housing choices and affordability.

The Regional Intensification Strategy, accompanied by the Local Municipal Intensification Strategies, will reinforce the linkage between high density, mixed-use development and centres and corridors served by rapid transit. These strategies,

therefore, will further enhance the planned urban structure and advance the Region's "city-building" initiative.

2.0 Background and Context

2.1 Provincial Policy Context

The Provincial Policy Statement

Intensification is supported and encouraged in Section 1.0 of the Provincial Policy Statement, "Building Strong Communities". Specifically, Section 1.1.2 states that *"sufficient land shall be made available through intensification and redevelopment and, if necessary, designated growth areas, to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of employment opportunities, housing and other land uses to meet projected needs for a time horizon of up to 20 years"*.

Definition of Intensification

The Provincial *Growth Plan* defines intensification as the development of a property, site or area at a higher density than currently exists through:

- Redevelopment, including the reuse of brownfield sites;
- The development of vacant and/or underutilized lots within previously developed areas;
- Infill development; or,
- The expansion or conversion of buildings.

Provincial Policy on Intensification

With respect to Intensification policy, the Provincial *Growth Plan* stipulates that:

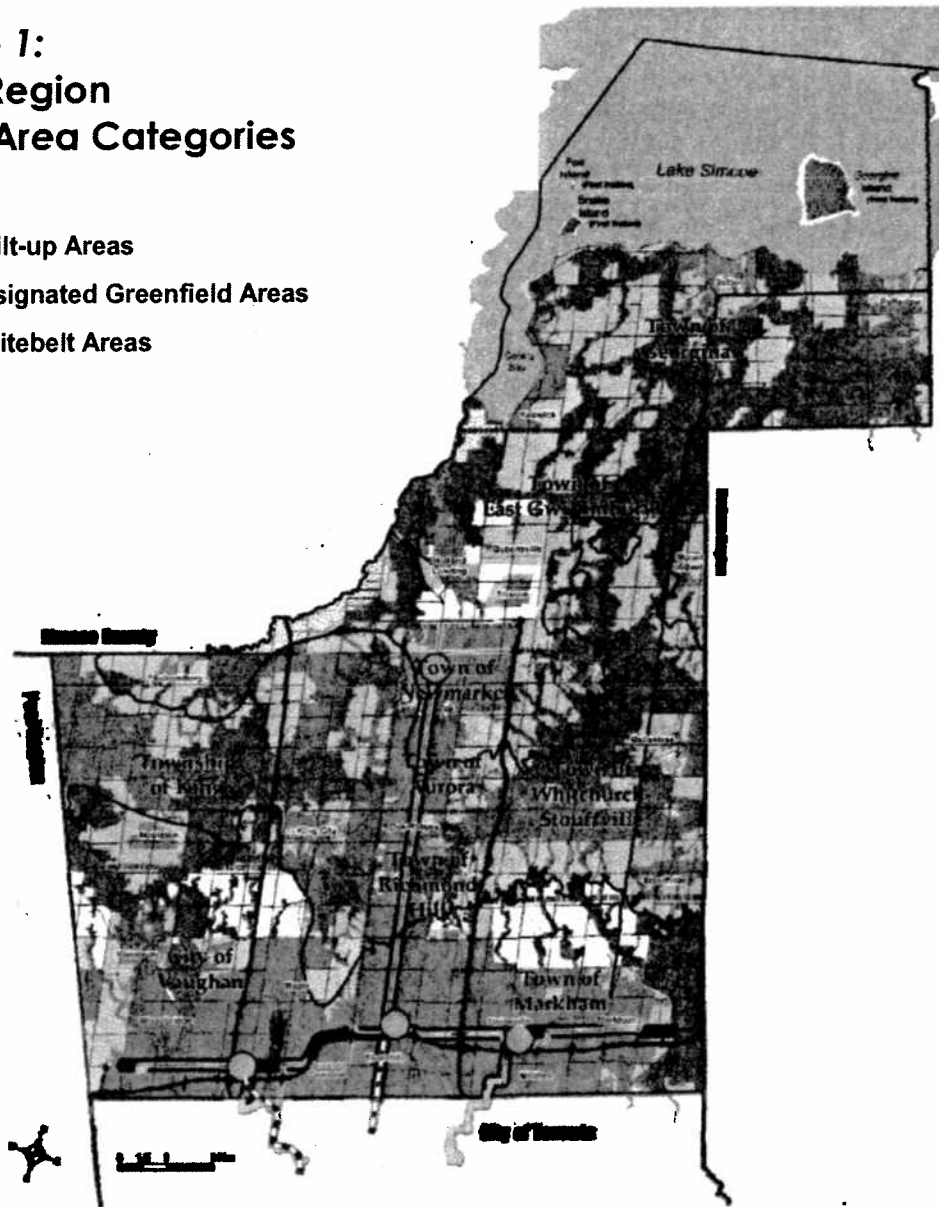
- By the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum 40 per cent of all residential development occurring annual within each upper- and single-tier municipality will be within the built-up area.
- If at the time this Plan comes into effect, an upper- or single-tier municipality is achieving a percentage higher than the minimum intensification target identified in policy 2.2.3.1., this higher percentage will be considered the minimum intensification target for that municipality.
- All municipalities will develop and implement through their official plans and other supporting documents, a strategy and policies to phase in and achieve intensification and the intensification target.

- All intensification areas will be planned and designed to:
 - Cumulatively attract a significant portion of population and employment growth
 - Provide a diverse and compatible mix of land uses, including residential and employment uses, to support vibrant neighbourhood
 - Provide high quality public open spaces with site design and urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places
 - Support transit, walking and cycling for everyday activities
 - Generally achieve higher densities than the surrounding areas
 - Achieve an appropriate transition of built form to adjacent areas.

The provincially-delineated built boundary is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1:
York Region
Land Area Categories

-  Built-up Areas
-  Designated Greenfield Areas
-  Whitebelt Areas



Provincial Policy on Urban Growth Centres

With respect to urban growth centre policy, the Provincial *Growth Plan* stipulates that:

- The Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal (now Energy and Infrastructure), in consultation with municipalities that have urban growth centres, will determine the approximate size and location of urban growth centres.
- Municipalities will delineate the boundaries of urban growth centres in their official plans.
- Urban Growth Centres will be planned:
 - As focal areas for investment in institutional and region-wide public services, as well as commercial, recreational, cultural and entertainment uses
 - To accommodate and support major transit infrastructure
 - To serve as high density major employment centres that will attract provincially, nationally or internationally significant employment uses
 - To accommodate a significant share of population and employment growth.
- Urban Growth Centres will be planned to achieved, by 2031 or earlier, a minimum gross density-target of:
 - 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare for each of Markham Centre, Newmarket Centre, Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway and Vaughan Corporate Centre.

In November 2008, the Province released the final size and location of the Urban Growth Centres within the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

2.2 Regional Context

The existing *Regional Official Plan (ROP)* outlines a regional structure that includes a system of regional centres and corridors that act as a focus for residential, office and commercial development. The Region has a number of initiatives that promote intensification, as well as, a series of preliminary measures of progress. These include:

- In June 2004, Council adopted the Region's *Centres and Corridors Strategy* that aims to strengthen the relationship between a compact urban structure in the centres and corridors and transportation and transit.
- *Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 43)*, July 2005, that increases the plan's intensification target from 20% to 30% in existing built-up areas, and towns and villages and strengthens policies in the ROP regarding development in the Centres and Corridors.
- In 2006, Regional Council adopted the *Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines* that emphasize the need for an urban form that supports transit-users and the transit service itself along the Regional network of centres and corridors. The guidelines can help assess how well a policy or project incorporates some of

the essential TOD elements such as: pedestrians, built form, parking, land-use and connections.

- Between January 2001 and December 2005, the Region achieved a rate of 18.4% intensification compared to a 16.7% rate between 1990 and 2003. Both analyses used the estimated 1990 built boundary.
- In April 2007, a preliminary analysis indicated that approximately 85,000 new units would be required to achieve the 40% intensification target specified in the Provincial Growth Plan presented in the *Planning for Tomorrow – York Region Residential Intensification Strategy, Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) Report No. 4, 2007*.
- *Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA 60)*, approved February 2008, enables the Region to adopt Regional Community Improvement Plans and to participate in local community improvement plans as part of the Provincial Bill 51 amendment to the Planning Act. These plans can be applied to regional infrastructure, affordable housing, and planned transit corridors that have the potential to provide a focus for higher density mixed-use development and redevelopment.

Enhancing York Region's Urban Structure: A Guide to Developing Local Municipal Intensification Strategies

In April 2008, the Region released *Enhancing York Region's Urban Structure: A Guide to Developing Local Municipal Intensification Strategies* ("Intensification Guide"). The preliminary draft was endorsed by Regional Council in the *Planning and Economic Development Committee, Report No. 5, 2008*. The Intensification Guide provides a high level framework for collaboration with Local Municipalities to guide the completion of their local intensification strategies. In this way, the Region and the Local Municipalities can approach long-term intensification within the planned urban structure in a consistent manner and meet the Provincial Growth Plan targets.

The crux of the intensification strategies is not only to demonstrate conformity with the Growth Plan, but also to construct a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres and corridors. This framework is based on the following Regional principles of intensification that will be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review.

York Region Principles of Intensification

1. **Connect the Regional Centres and Regional Corridors with rapid transit systems to stimulate compact and efficient growth.**
2. **Connect transit, land-uses and pedestrians by following the Region's Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines.**
3. **Ensure that buildings and streets are well-proportioned to one another to ensure walkability and efficient investment in infrastructure and land.**
4. **Provide access to the community through open space, trails, parks and other public spaces that are carefully placed, inter-connected and proportioned.**
5. **Improve the live/work relationship through a mix of intensified land uses.**
6. **Ensure a range of housing options and affordability.**
7. **Create a sense of place through cultural amenities, and architectural and design standards.**

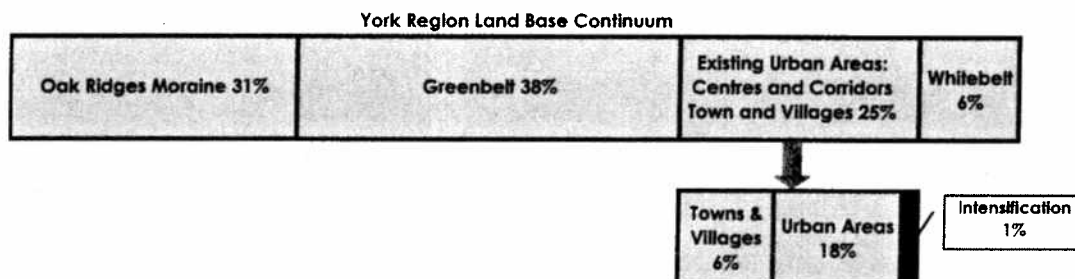
8. **Connect quality and accessible human services to rapid transit and alternative modes of transportation.**
9. **Protect and restore natural heritage and trails within the built-up area.**
10. **Integrate sustainable design and construction of buildings such as community energy systems and sustainable waste management.**

3.0 York Region Intensification Forecast (2006-31)

The York Region Intensification Forecast is divided into three analyses for residential, employment and the provincially defined urban growth centres. The Intensification Forecast is based on the *York Region 2031 Land Budget Report* that was presented to Regional Council in January 2009.

Intensification Expected to occur on One Percent of Region's Land Base

Considering the proportion of lands designated as Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine and the existing urban areas, approximately 7% of the Region's land base remains for future intensification and 'whitebelt' development. Of this remaining 7%, only an estimated 1% will likely be available for both residential and employment intensification. It is this proportion of the Region's land base that provides the opportunity to showcase high quality, sustainable and transit-supportive intensification in key strategic areas within the planned urban structure.



3.1 Residential Intensification

40% Intensification by 2031 requires 90,700 new units

Out of the total 234,100 new units forecasted region-wide, approximately 90,700 of these new units must locate within the provincially-defined built boundary to meet the 40% intensification target for all new residential development as specified in the *Growth Plan*. Table 1 illustrates the breakdown of the 40% target by local municipality.

The 90,700 figure is an update to the preliminary intensification target of 87,400 previously presented in the *Planning for Tomorrow – Refined York Region 2031 Forecast and Land Budget, Planning and Economic Development Committee (PEDC) Report, Report No. 8, 2008*. The revised intensification target of approximately 90,700 units was derived based

on detailed spatial analysis by regional staff using the final built boundary as defined by the Province.

The final built boundary released by the Province included areas of low-density greenfield development in the vicinity of major transportation corridors and along the edges or fringe areas of the built boundary line. These greenfield areas translate into an estimated 16,700 single- and semi-detached planned units in such communities as Cathedral and Box Grove in Markham, Newmarket Southeast in Newmarket, Kleinburg in Vaughan and various secondary plans on the fringe of the built boundary. From a technical perspective, these greenfield areas are within the built-up area, but have not been included as part of the intensification target analysis since large-scale low density greenfield development does not meet the intent of intensification policies in the *Growth Plan*.

Table 1: Required Intensification Units (2006-31) to meet 40% Residential Intensification

	Intensification Units (1)
Aurora	3,100
East Gwillimbury	1,030
Georgina	2,690
King	920
Markham	31,590
Newmarket	5,250
Richmond Hill	14,700
Vaughan	29,300
Whitchurch-Stouffville	2,100
York Region	90,700

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008.

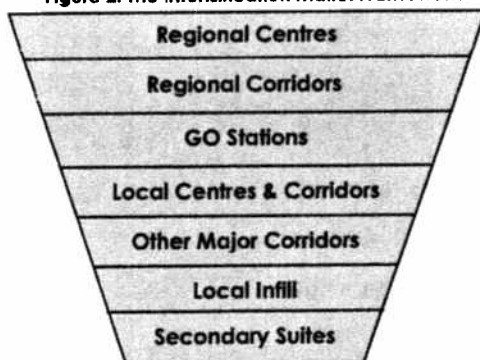
1. Includes rows, mid- and high-rise units, duplexes and secondary suites.

*NOTE: Figures may not add due to rounding.

The Local Municipalities, in completing their intensification strategies, will be reviewing their assignments to identify the appropriate level and location of intensification, as well as where it will not be permitted. Further detail on the role of local municipalities in meeting regional intensification targets is described in Section 6.0.

Intensification Matrix Framework Assists in Identifying Intensification Areas

Figure 2: The Intensification Matrix Framework



NOTE: Local infill includes severances, expansions or conversions of buildings, vacant or derelict land previously developed, parking lots and/or redevelopment of a portion of a land parcel.

The Regional Intensification Matrix Framework has been formulated to help identify potential intensification areas as shown in Figure 2. The Matrix Framework identifies key strategic areas where intensification can be best accommodated with respect to efficient and cost-effective infrastructure, transit and human services provisions. In this way, the Region can avoid unplanned and dispersed intensification by organizing the estimated 90,700 required new intensification units into the matrix levels.

The triangular shape of the Matrix Framework signifies that densities and built form types will vary. For example, higher densities and building heights will occur in the Regional Centres and Corridors relative to the other key strategic areas.

The existing *Regional Official Plan* specifies the following long-term density targets for the Regional Centres and Corridors:

- 2.5 Floor Space Index (FSI) in each of the Regional Centres
- An average 2.5 FSI of all Key Development Areas along the Regional Corridors. The intensification areas identified in Regional and Local Intensification Strategies that fall along the Regional Corridors are considered equivalent to Key Development Areas in which the 2.5 FSI target would apply.

The update to the *Regional Official Plan* will include an enhancement to the existing Regional Centres and Corridors policies given the *Growth Plan* requirements, planned TTC subway extensions into York Region and the advancement of the Region's city-building initiative.

Local Municipalities to Identify Intensification Areas to Accommodate 40% Intensification

Of the required 90,700 units, over 50,000 already have some level of approval. These applications are for communities within the built-up area. Local Municipalities are currently completing their local intensification strategies that will identify the areas that can best accommodate intensification and where it will not be permitted.

Regional Centres

The objective of the Regional Centres, as outlined in the existing *Regional Official Plan*, is to be the focus for residential, institutional and business activities, served by our rapid transit system, Viva. As well, Richmond Hill Centre and Vaughan Corporate Centre are the termini for the two planned TTC subways extensions into York Region.

Approximately 34,500 units, or 38% of the required new intensification units, are planned for within the Regional Centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan which also include the provincially-defined urban growth centres. The local municipalities are currently updating their respective Centre Studies recognizing the capacity to accommodate intensification beyond the 2031 planning horizon of the *Growth Plan*.

Regional Corridors

The Regional Corridors, as outlined in the existing *Regional Official Plan*, form the key connections between Regional Centres and are considered the main arteries of the Regional urban structure. Major road and public transit networks also intersect along these corridors to create opportunities for "sub-centres" or "inter-modal nodes" between the local and regional centres. The *Regional Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines* also reinforce the corridor element of intensification by focusing on the connection between pedestrians, built-form, land-use, transit and parking.

A number of local municipalities have commenced detailed planning to identify intensification areas along the Regional Corridors of Avenue 7 (Highway 7) and Yonge Street. These include:

- The Town of Markham's *Avenue Seven Corridor Study* identifies potential key development areas for intensification such as Langstaff, Commerce Valley, Woodbine/404, Markham Centre, Markville and Cornell.

- The Town of Markham has commenced the *Yonge and Steeles Corridor Study* that will introduce new policies to encourage vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian and transit-oriented development in this area.
- The City of Vaughan's *Avenue Seven Land Use Futures Study* and subsequent Highway 7 Official Plan Amendments outline a planned urban structure based on a hierarchy of centres for higher density development served by higher order transit. The hierarchy of centres consists of a number of Transit Stop Centres, GO Transit Centres, the 7/427 Centre, along with the Vaughan Corporate Centre.
- The Town of Richmond Hill, through their Official Plan work, have identified strategic areas along Yonge Street that are best suited to accommodate intensification. These include, Yonge/16th-Carrville Avenue, and downtown Richmond Hill (Yonge Street between Major Mackenzie Drive and Elgin Mills). The Town is also commencing an update study of the Richmond Hill Centre.

The Region is embarking on a process to further enhance planning for the Centres and Corridors with respect to updating ROPA 43 policy. This framework was presented to Council in *Taking York Region Centres and Corridors Planning to the Next Level of Innovation and Implementation – A Framework*, PEDC Report No. 11, 2008.

3.2 Employment Intensification

Employment Forecast Separated by Type

The Employment Forecast is divided into three distinct types: Employment Land, Major Office and Population Related Employment.

Employment Land Employment: Located on Employment Lands (industrial or business parks) and typically required large areas of vacant Designated Greenfield land, preferably in strategic locations along major transportation routes (i.e. 400 series highways) and near existing markets.

Major Office Employment: Occurs in office buildings of 1,860 square metres (20,000 sqft) or larger. Policies in the *Growth Plan* attempt to direct the location of Major Office within the Built-up Areas along transit routes and in centres and corridors. Major Office employment does not typically require large vacant lands for development and can locate on both employment lands and within a community.

Population-Related Employment: Located within communities and includes services that serve the local population such as retail services, educational services, municipal government services, social, community and health services, and local office uses. Major Retail, which is also classified as population-related employment, is calculated separately and requires significant land in addition to land requirements for a typical new community.

Details of the methodology used to calculate potential employment intensification is contained in the *York Region 2031 Land Budget Report, January 2009*.

Employment Lands within the Built-Up Area Anticipates 44,700 jobs.

The *Vacant Employment Land Inventory 2006*, presented in *PEDC Report No. 10, 2007*, was updated and used as the basis for determining the current supply of vacant designated lands available in the built-up area for employment land employment. The job potential from this inventory is derived by applying modified densities to the available supply taken from the *York Region Employment Land Areas Analysis, PEDC Report No. 5, 2008*. Further information on the Employment Land Employment methodology is included in the *York Region Land Budget Report, January 2009*.

Table 3: York Region Employment Land Potential in the Built-Up Area by Area Municipality

	Job Potential
Aurora	1,400
East Gwillimbury	500
Georgina	40
King	60
Markham	12,610
Newmarket	2,980
Richmond Hill	12,010
Vaughan	14,800
Whitchurch-Stouffville	320
York Region	44,720

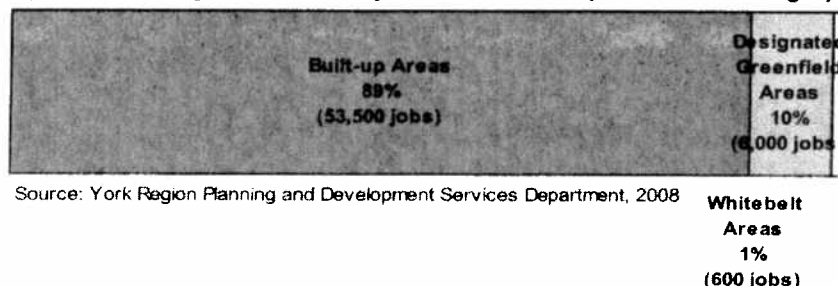
SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008.

As Table 3 illustrates, an analysis of employment land employment growth potential in the built-up areas indicates that over 44,700 jobs can be counted as intensification. This number of jobs is expected to occupy approximately 26% of the employment land potential within the Region.

Major Office Employment within the Built-up Area Anticipates 53,500 jobs.

The *York Region Land Budget Report, January 2009*, assumes that a portion of major office growth will expand upon existing major office locations on employment lands and also assumes a significant increase in major office employment along the Regional Centres and Corridors. It is anticipated that large numbers of major office employment will locate within the Region's four urban growth centres over the next 25 year period of the forecast.

Figure 3: York Region 2006-31 Major Office Growth by Land Area Category



Source: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008

Figure 3 illustrates that approximately 89% or 53,500 jobs of the Region's growth of major office employment is within the built-up area. According to the *York Region Land Budget Report, January 2009*, the Region is forecasted to add an additional 60,080 major office jobs within 1,514,000 square metres of total major office space by 2031.

The land budget exercises assumes that approximately 57% or 192 net hectares of land required for forecasted major office growth will locate predominately in regional centres and corridors between 2006 and 2031. In addition:

- The majority of major office growth is anticipated to locate in the Town of Markham, the Town of Richmond Hill and the City of Vaughan. A large proportion of the major office growth will be directed to the Regional Centres of each of these municipalities.
- 80% of Markham major office growth on employment lands is assumed to locate in the built-up areas.
- 100% of Vaughan major office growth on employment lands is assumed to locate in the built-up areas.
- The Town of Newmarket's major office growth will be focused in the Regional Centres and the area surrounding the Southlake Regional Health Centre.
- The Town of East Gwillimbury detailed official plan review identifies the area adjacent to the existing GO Train Stations as a potential location for major office.

Population Related Employment within the Built-up Area Anticipates 40,000 Jobs

According to the *York Region Land Budget Report, February 2009*, Population Related Employment occurs in step with the population growth in communities. Table 4 indicates that approximately 40,050 population-related employment will occur within the Region's built-up area by 2031.

Table 4: Population Related Employment Growth within the Built-up Area by Area Municipality (2006-31)

	Job Potential
Aurora	1,870
East Gwillimbury	290
Georgina	1,090
King	280
Markham	11,180
Newmarket	2,770
Richmond Hill	9,940
Vaughan	11,220
Whitchurch-Stouffville	1,410
York Region	40,050

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008.

The population related employment forecasted for the built-up areas is based on the portion of residential growth anticipated to occur in the built-up area.

Total Employment Intensification Anticipated to be 42%

Table 6 summarizes total employment within the regional built-up area.

Table 5: Total Employment Intensification by Type (2006-31)

	Job Potential	Built-up Area (%)
Employment Land Employment	44,710	26%
Major Office	53,500	89%
Population Related Employment	40,050	41%
Total Jobs in Built-up Area	138,260	42%
Total Jobs in Greenfield Areas	124,800	38%
Total Jobs in Whitebelt Areas	67,360	20%

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008.

Local Municipalities will plan for employment within the built-up area and identify intensification areas that can accommodate employment in keeping with the Region's Employment Forecast.

3.3 Urban Growth Centres

The Region's Urban Growth Centres Planned for more than 200 people and jobs per hectare

The Provincial *Growth Plan* stipulates a target of 200 people and jobs per hectare applies to the provincially-defined urban growth centres of Newmarket, Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan. This target applies to the entire gross area of the urban growth centres which includes all developable and non-developable lands. In November 2008, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure released the final size and location of the urban growth centres. This document states that the precise boundaries of the urban growth centres will be delineated in Regional and Local Official Plans. The document also states that these boundary adjustments should be minor and necessary in nature to the size and location of the provincially-defined size and location. The Region, in collaboration with the Local Municipalities, is clarifying the scope of these adjustments with the Province.

Table 6 illustrates preliminary population and employment growth needed to achieve 200 people and jobs per gross hectare by 2031 in each of the Regional urban growth centres. The local municipalities will refine these estimates in their respective intensification strategies and official plan updates. It should be noted that the urban growth centre boundaries are a subset of the Regional Centre boundaries.

One of the primary goals of these intensification strategies is to emphasize mixed-use development and a strong live-work relationship in intensification areas. At a minimum,

the number of forecasted jobs should be enough to employ the total labour force residing in that particular Regional Centre.

Table 6: York Region Population and Employment Growth in the Urban Growth Centres (2006-2031)

	Area (ha)	Population	Employment	Density (people & jobs/ha)
Markham	235	30,930	20,940	221
Newmarket	45	4,500	4,530	201
Richmond Hill	117	12,630	11,700	208
Vaughan	60	6,240	6,270	209

SOURCE: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, February 2009.

1. Population and employment figures represent growth required to meet Provincial Growth Plan target of 200 people and jobs per hectare

2. These figures are subject to change pending the completion of Local Municipal updates.

*NOTE: Figures may not add due to rounding

Given that the urban growth centres are contained within the boundaries of the Regional Centres, appropriate density targets will be established in lands adjacent to the Urban Growth Centres.

4.0 Key Attributes of Intensification Areas

Meeting the intensification and density targets specified in the Provincial Growth Plan and Regional policy are only one component in developing the built-up area and specific intensification areas. In creating complete communities, the Region has developed a number of key attributes of intensification areas:

York Region Key Attributes of Intensification Areas

Attribute	Description
Mixed Use Development	Support a broad array of land uses including employment, shopping, entertainment, arts and culture, parks, schools and other community services.
Live/Work Balance	Support close live-work opportunities through the arrangement of land uses and accessibility to transit and transportation.
Physical Activity	Promote an active lifestyle with connected pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, parklands and a well-designed street network.
Built Form	Buildings and streets that are well-proportioned to one another. Established urban design and architectural standards to foster a sense of place that would appeal to existing and prospective residents.
Natural Heritage/Open Space	Protected natural heritage features. Public spaces that are varied, interconnected and accessible to all neighbourhoods. Public spaces that are interesting, carefully spaced and proportioned.
Housing Options	Broad mix and range of unit sizes, housing forms, types and tenure that satisfy the needs of the Region's residents and workers.
Human Services	People of all ages, background and capabilities meet their needs throughout various stages in their lives including opportunities for employment, learning, inclusivity, culture, recreation and spiritual, emotional physical and social well-being.
Culture	The Region's cultural heritage resources and values are recognized, conserved and promoted as a benefit to the community.

Transit and Connections	Provisions for efficient and effective higher order transit. Buildings and spaces in between transit stations are connected by sidewalks and other walkways.
Traffic/Parking	Innovation in parking provisions such as structured and underground parking, and municipal lots to maintain a pedestrian-friendly area.
Energy Planning	Accommodate any land requirements for community energy systems, alternative energy and energy efficient technologies.

Source: York Region Planning and Development Services Department, 2008

These key attributes will be used in the implementation of the intensification strategies, as the Region and Local Municipalities continue to construct a long-term framework for a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres and corridors. These attributes will be adopted as part of the Regional Official Plan Review.

5.0 Monitoring Progress

Section 5.4.3.3 of the *Growth Plan* states that "Municipalities will monitor and report on the implementation of this (Growth) Plan, in accordance with the guidelines developed by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal (now Energy and Infrastructure)." A regional intensification monitoring system will evaluate whether the key attributes and targets are being attained in a consistent fashion across all Local municipalities. Working with the Local Municipalities, the Region will develop a system to track progress on intensification using the local municipal strategies and the Regional intensification guide and strategy as a basis. The monitoring system will also contain a separate assessment for Regional Centres (i.e. Provincial Urban Growth Centres).

The regional monitoring system will track progress towards the local municipal assignments in terms of:

- Building permits for new units within the built boundary on an annual basis
- Development applications for potential units within the built boundary on an annual basis
- The Region's Annual Survey of Employers

The Region will consult further with the Local Municipalities in developing the monitoring system. Once completed, the monitoring system will be incorporated into each of the local municipal intensification strategies.

6.0 Role of the Local Municipalities

Each Local municipality in the Region has a role to play in meeting the Regional target of 40% intensification.

The nature of this role will be captured in each of the local intensification strategies which the Local municipalities are in the process of completing. Using the Intensification Guide and in collaboration with the Region, the objectives of the local intensification strategies involve five objectives:

- Demonstrate how the Region's local municipal intensification assignment will be met in term of unit potential, density and design. Identify and map the locations and amount of intensification that will be planned for within the local municipality's built boundary by 2031.
- Identify the Key Attributes in creating high quality, sustainable compact communities.
- Promote communication to engage and raise awareness of intensification among stakeholders and the public.
- Identify the next steps to implement local municipal intensification strategies including reviewing current regional and municipal policy and conducting further detailed analysis on the identified intensification areas.
- Develop a monitoring system that tracks progress towards the intensification vision, key attributes and unit, population and employment targets.

The specific components of the local intensification strategy are contained in the Intensification Guide Report. The crux of the intensification strategies is not only to demonstrate conformity with the *Places to Grow Plan*, but also to construct a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres and corridors.

7.0 Conclusions and Observations

The *York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy Report* provides an analysis to achieve the *Provincial Growth Plan*'s intensification target and requirements. This report represents a component of the comprehensive review required for the *Regional Official Plan* conformity exercise.

The following conclusions made from this analysis will be used as a basis for the *Regional Official Plan* policy:

- The *York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy* meets the requirements of the *Provincial Growth Plan*, the *Provincial Policy Statement* and other provincial initiatives.
- The *York Region Principles of Intensification* will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. They provide a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact development focused on the centres

and corridors. These principles speak to such themes as strengthening land-use, transit and pedestrian connections, integrating sustainable design and construction, providing public spaces and ensuring that buildings and streets are well-proportioned to each other.

- The Local Municipal Intensification Targets, as outlined in Table 1 will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. The Region will plan to meet and/or exceed the estimated 90,700 new units required to achieve the 40% intensification target in the *Provincial Growth Plan*.
- The provincially-defined urban growth centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan are planned to meet and/or exceed the *Growth Plan* target of 200 people and jobs per gross hectare. To emphasize a strong live-work relationship, the number of forecasted jobs should be enough to employ, at a minimum, the total labour force residing in the particular Regional Centre.
- Each Local Municipality will complete and adopt an intensification strategy. These strategies will use the Regional Intensification Matrix as a basis to identify key strategic areas where intensification can be best accommodated with respect to efficient and cost-effective infrastructure, transit and human services provisions. It is expected that local municipalities will address intensification in every key strategic area of the Matrix Framework that includes:
 - Regional Centres and Corridors
 - GO Stations
 - Local Centres and Corridors
 - Other Major Corridors
 - Local Infill
 - Secondary Suites
- The Local Intensification Strategies will include targets for each locally-identified intensification area to meet their municipal intensification target based on the 90,700 unit target region-wide. It is expected that local municipalities will plan to meet and/or exceed these targets.
- To achieve the *Growth Plan*'s concept of "complete communities" the Region has developed a number of key attributes of intensification areas that will be adopted as part of the *Regional Official Plan Review*. The attributes focus on such areas as: transit-supportive and mixed-use development, housing options, live-work balance, built form and design, transit connections, natural heritage and public space, traffic and parking, energy planning and active lifestyles.
- Local municipalities, such as Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan, are currently identifying key areas along Highway 7 and Yonge Street in which to focus mixed-use and transit-supportive development.
- Of the 90,700 required units, over 50,000 already have some level of approval. These applications are for communities within the built-up area, including the Regional Centres and Corridors. For example, a total of 34,500 units are already planned for in the Regional Centres of Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.

- The York Region 2031 Land Budget Report indicates that approximately, 42% of the Region's total employment growth will occur within the built-up area by 2031, translating into an anticipated 138,000 potential new jobs.
- The 138,000 potential new jobs forecasted for the built-up area consist of an estimated:
 - 44,700 employment land employment
 - 53,500 major office employment
 - 40,050 population-related employment
- Local Municipalities will plan for employment within the built-up area and identify intensification areas to accommodate employment in keeping with the Region's Employment Forecast.
- As specified in the *Growth Plan*, the Region is developing a monitoring system to track progress on intensification in collaboration with the Local Municipalities. Sources of information that are being considered for the system include: building permits, development applications and the Region's annual employment survey.

The York Region 2031 Intensification Strategy represents another component in enhancing the planned urban structure and advancing the Region's "city-building" initiative. The purpose of the intensification strategy extends beyond demonstrating conformity with the *Growth Plan* to outlining a long-term framework to create a new generation of sustainable and quality compact communities focusing on a system of Centres and Corridors.

Intensification Hierarchy

- Settlement Area Boundary
- Region at Centre
- Markham Centre
- Langstaff Gateway
- Key Development Area
- Cornell Centre
- Yonge/Steeles Corridor
- Commerce Valley/Galleria
- Markville
- Woodbine/404
- Yonge North Corridor
- Major Corridor
- Markham Rd Corridor - Mount Joy
- Markham Rd Corridor - Armadale
- Steeles East Corridor
- Kennedy Corridor - South Unionville
- Avenue Seven Corridor - Village Pkwy
- Local Centres and Corridors
- Faintree East - Parkview Centre
- Milliken Centre
- Thornhill Centre
- Cathedraltown Centre
- Cornell North Centre
- Kennedy Corridor - Berczy

In 18 / Redevelopment

500m Rapid Transit Corridor Catchment Area

Proposed Rapid Transit Facilities

- Viva Rapid Transit Terminal
- Potential Avenue Seven Viva Rapid Transit Stations
- Potential Highway 407 Transitway Stations
- Potential Yonge Street Subway Stations
- GO Stations

Potential Mobility Hubs

- Anchor Hubs (Markham Centre, Langstaff Gateway)
- Gateway Hubs (Yonge/Steeles, Hwy 404/Hwy 407)
- Potential Secondary Hubs (Thornhill Centre, Milliken Centre, Markville, Mount Joy, Box Grove, Faintree East/Parkview Centre)

Figure 1

Markham's Intensification Hierarchy

Intensification Areas and Rapid Transit Improvements

MetroLinx draft RTP - Rapid Transit Projects

- Richmond Hill Line: Richmond Hill GO to Union Station (2-way all day by 2023/Express Rail 2033)
- Southville Line: Mt. Joy GO to Union Station (2-way all day by 2023)
- Havelock Line: Locust Hill to Union Station (peak service by 2023)
- Yonge Subway: Finch to Langstaff / Richmond Hill Gateway (by 2016)
- Viva Hwy 7: Peel Boundary to Locust Hill (BRT by 2023)
- Don Mills: Bloor-Danforth Subway to Hwy 7 (LRT by 2023)
- Highway 407 Transitway: Vaughan Corp Centre to Markham Centre (BRT by 2033)
- Steeles: York University to Milliken GO (BRT by 2033)
- Steeles: Milliken GO to Downtown Oshawa (BRT by 2033)
- Markham-Pickering: Markham Centre to Downtown Pickering via 401 (BRT by 2033)
- Extension of Highway 407 Transitway (BRT 2033+)
- Major Mackenzie Drive (BRT 2033+)

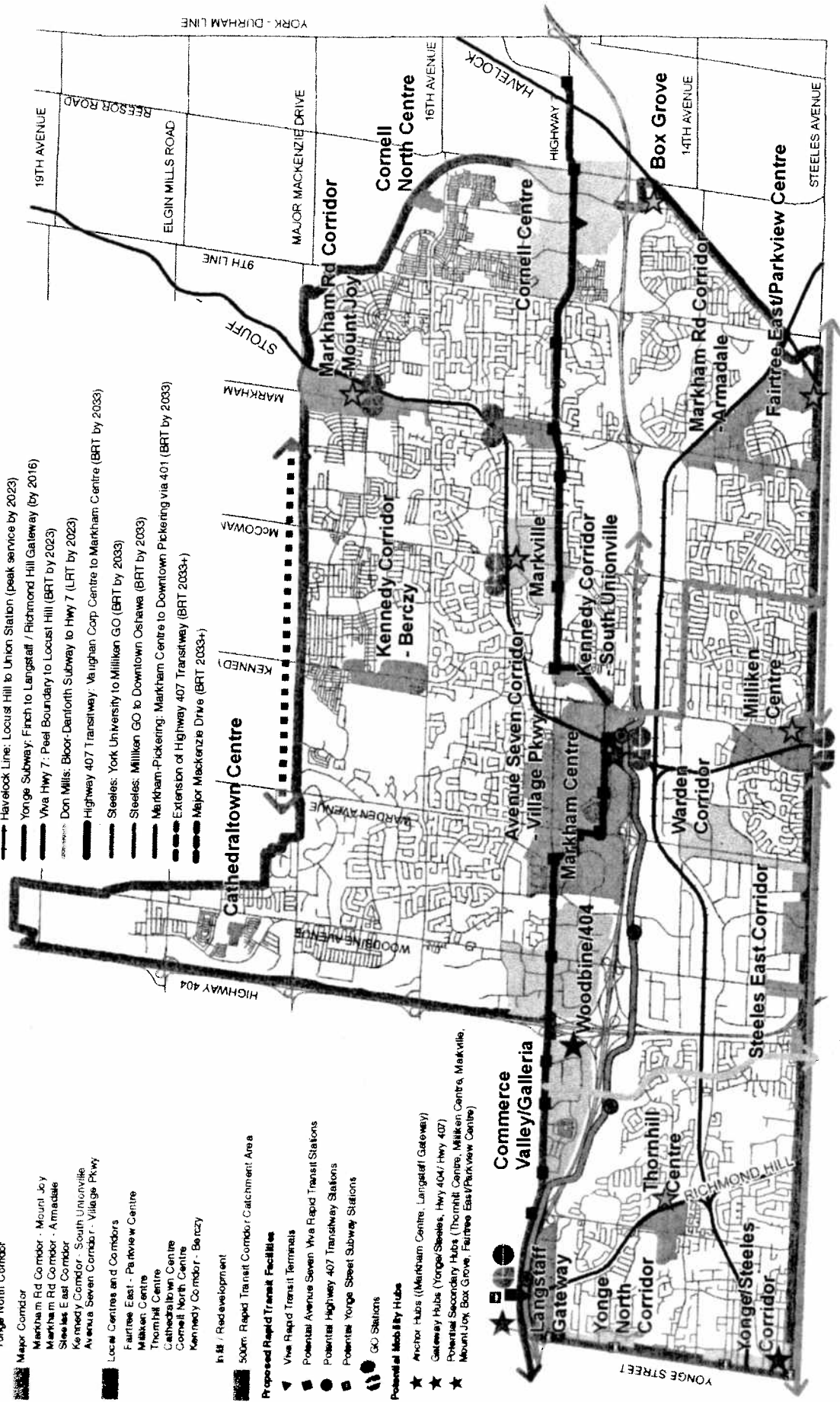


Figure 2

Markham's Intensification Hierarchy

Residential Intensification Areas

