

Clause 9 in Report No. 7 of Committee of the Whole was adopted by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on April 23, 2015 with the following amendment to Recommendation 2:

2. Regional staff be authorized to appear before the Ontario Municipal Board in support of the Region's position, as required, for all development proposals that seek to reduce approved densities within intensification areas, *and that staff inform Regional Council of any and all Ontario Municipal Board proceedings related to this direction.*

9

Supporting High Density Development within
Identified Intensification Areas

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated March 26, 2015 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner:

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Council reiterate its support for high density development in intensification areas, as identified in the Regional Official Plan and local Official Plans.
2. Regional staff be authorized to appear before the Ontario Municipal Board in support of the Region's position, as required, for all development proposals that seek to reduce approved densities within intensification areas.
3. This report be circulated by the Regional Clerk to all local municipalities.

2. Purpose

This report provides Council with an analysis of potential implications associated with changes to approved development densities within identified intensification areas. This report highlights Council's city building objectives and policy direction for intensification, including the approved intensification matrix framework which identifies where to best locate higher density development in York Region.

3. Background

The Region's urban structure vision for a system of compact, mixed-use and transit-oriented Centres and Corridors is detailed in the Regional Official Plan

York Region's vision for city building includes a system of high density, mixed-use centres and corridors where people can live, work and play. This approach combines significant investment in rapid transit with a policy and land use planning regime that together will help create compact, sustainable and people-oriented communities. The *York Regional Official Plan, 2010 (YROP-2010)* contains policy direction and guidance to support Regional Centres and Corridors, and key development areas along Regional Corridors, as the primary locations for intensification and the greatest densities and mix of uses in the Region.

In support of the Region's vision for city-building, specific policies in the *YROP-2010* expressly prohibit the approval of local official plan amendments and zoning by-law amendments that would have the effect of reducing development densities in areas previously approved for medium or high density development.

To prohibit the approval of local municipal official plan and zoning by-law amendments that would have the effect of reducing the density of a site in areas that have been approved for medium- or high-density development, unless the need is determined through a municipal comprehensive review. –YROP-2010, Policy 3.5.23

This policy approach represents good planning by ensuring that any proposed reductions in density are considered collectively at the time of a municipal comprehensive review. This approach places emphasis on the need to conduct a thorough consideration of the municipal-wide implications that reductions in density may have on meeting mandatory required intensification targets and maximizing on infrastructure investments. While this policy applies to all areas of the Region, most designated medium and high density areas are captured within the Region's Intensification Matrix Framework (see Figure 1). This framework establishes a hierarchy of preferred locations for intensification and high-density development in York Region. Under this framework the greatest densities and mix of uses, including residential and employment uses, are to be directed to the Region's Centres and Corridors, followed by Go Transit Train stations, subway stations and local centres and local corridors. All areas in the hierarchy are needed to achieve the intensification targets of the *YROP-2010*.

Figure 1
Intensification Matrix Framework
(YROP-2010, Section 5.3)



The *YROP-2010* and the Provincial *Growth Plan* mandate intensification

The *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)* sets out goals and objectives to support growth and intensification by identifying a series of Urban Growth Centres. In addition, the Provincial *Growth Plan* requires municipalities to plan to meet or exceed minimum intensification and density targets, and provides a policy context for infrastructure to support growth, sustainable development, and complete communities. York Region's vision for city-building is aligned with the *Growth Plan* and ensures appropriate development densities are incorporated into our land use planning system to achieve the minimum intensification and density targets set by the Province.

Recent proposals do not align with the Region's vision

Recently, Regional staff received a number of development proposals and pre-applications that would have the effect of permitting development density reductions below levels that are envisioned in local official plans and secondary plans. Attachment 1 highlights the number and location of proposed applications seeking to reduce densities.

Staff is of the opinion that these applications are an immediate reaction to what is likely a short-term market condition that does not address the long term vision for these areas. Once a development is built a lower density, the future residential

intensification opportunity is lost. The longer-term implications of the loss of density and the planning and public policy rationale for continuing to support high and medium density development in identified intensification areas are the focus of the following sections of this report.

4. Analysis and Options

Appropriate development densities are required to support city building objectives of Regional centres and corridors and the urban structure articulated in the *YROP-2010*

Regional centres and corridors have been an integral component of York Region's urban structure since the first Regional Official Plan was adopted in 1994. Regional centres and corridors form the two highest rungs within the intensification matrix framework and are planned for the highest and greatest intensity of residential and employment uses in York Region. The Region's centres and corridors are complete urban communities where people can choose to live, work and play. This vision for the Regional centres and corridors requires appropriate corresponding levels of development densities and a mix of uses that contribute to creating socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and economically vibrant communities. Density lost on a specific site cannot be regained on that site.

Higher density development is required to realize the benefits of investment in rapid transit and other infrastructure

Close to \$1.8 billion has been invested by the Province in 35 km of Viva Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in York Region. York Region Rapid Transit Corporation (YRRTC) is responsible for the planning, design and construction of the full vivaNext rapid transit network. An additional \$1.4 billion, of which York Region is contributing over \$400 million, has been secured for other rapid transit infrastructure projects, including transit terminals and the Toronto York Spadina Subway Extension project.

This significant investment in rapid transit infrastructure is supported by a policy and land use planning system, including an intensification matrix framework, which ensures that the greatest densities of people and jobs in York Region are within walking distance of reliable and efficient rapid transit services. The coordination of rapid transit infrastructure and the planning of high density, mixed use communities within the Region's intensification matrix framework are integral

to creating vibrant and successful communities where people can live, work and play. The implications of reducing densities in identified intensification areas include reduced ridership and increased per-capita capital and operating

spending to deliver and maintain the Region's rapid transit network. Reduced densities in identified intensification areas, underutilises the built water, wastewater and transportation infrastructure that were intended to service higher density. It also undermines the Regional urban structure and the importance the Region has placed on transit and travel demand management programs required in most new development proposals.

The planning and delivery of high and medium-density development within identified intensification areas ensures that investment in infrastructure and services, including rapid transit, are supported by appropriate corresponding levels of development density. Significant capital investments have and continue to be made in the Region's Centres and Corridors. It is therefore fiscally prudent to support high density development where it has been planned for in coordination with these investments.

Higher density development built form is consistent with transit oriented development guidelines

In addition to the *YROP-2010*, York Region's *Transit Oriented Development Guidelines* were adopted by Council in September 2006 in support of the ongoing implementation of the Region's Centres and Corridors program. These guidelines provide direction on, amongst other matters, appropriate land-uses, connectivity and the built form of developments. The *Transit Oriented Development Guidelines* describe a desired built form for development that makes efficient use of the site, is oriented to the street and is of a scale, design and height that are appropriate and compliments the urban vision within identified intensification areas. Generally, this desired built form cannot be achieved at lower densities. Higher density development can be achieved through a number of different built forms. Some sample densities and building forms are highlighted in Attachment 2. These samples show that higher density development can be achieved through thoughtful, well designed building forms that respect the character and values of the nearby community.

Reduced development densities challenge the Region's ability to meet required intensification targets

The *YROP-2010* prescribes intensification targets for local municipalities and anticipates approximately 90,720 units to be absorbed through intensification Region-wide by 2031. This is consistent with the *Growth Plan* requirement to accommodate a minimum of 40% of all new development within the built boundary, and the intensification and growth targets that the Province expects municipalities to reach by 2031.

Long Range Planning staff has prepared draft population and employment growth scenarios to 2041 as part of York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). These draft scenarios continue to place importance on apartment

units to contribute to intensification under both the 40% and 50% intensification scenarios and especially under the no urban expansion scenario.

The minimum development density requirements established in the *YROP-2010* ensure that intensification is appropriately accommodated. Reductions in planned development densities correspond to a lower level of apartment development that will adversely impact York Region's ability to meet our required intensification targets.

The cumulative effect of reduced development densities undermines the Region's urban structure

Accepting lower than planned development densities in identified intensification areas, as shown in Figure 1, puts pressure on other areas within or outside of the intensification matrix framework to make up for the loss of people and jobs. This potential off-loading of density to other areas within or outside of the matrix is not appropriate as it undermines the ongoing efforts of the Region and Local municipalities to appropriately manage growth, and effectively plan for intensification and infrastructure investment.

Regional Official Plan policy 3.5.23 has the effect of protecting the Region's intensification strategy from one-off development proposals seeking reduced development permissions, by requiring that reductions in density be considered collectively at the time of a municipal comprehensive review. The impact of approving any one such proposal may seem minor; however, the potential cumulative effect of these proposals could adversely impact our ability to meet our vision, strategic goals and objectives. In continuing to support higher density development in identified intensification areas, we encourage a development form that maintains the integrity of the Region's policy and land use planning system, urban structure and city building initiatives.

Regional staff will continue to be actively involved in all proposals that are contrary to the Region's policy direction on intensification

The implications associated with reduced development density affect both local and Regional interests. Accordingly, Regional staff will actively convey to applicants the importance of maintaining planned medium and high densities within identified intensification areas. Staff will also oppose development proposals that seek to reduce development densities in respect of Regional Council policy and will not permit the exemption of these applications from Regional approval. This may include, as necessary:

- Attending pre-consultation meetings with development proponents and local planning staff

- Providing preliminary comments on applications
- Attending and speaking at public meetings and sub-committee meetings
- Actively participating in hearings before the Ontario Municipal Board in support of the Region's policies respecting intensification, as outlined in this report

Link to key Council-approved plans

The recommendations of this report and the continued support for the Region's intensification matrix framework are consistent with the *2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan*. Ensuring that planned densities established through Regional and Local growth management initiatives are maintained supports, amongst others, the strategic objective of "encouraging growth along Regional Centres and Corridors".

Vision 2051 is a blueprint and vision for the future of York Region's communities. The recommendations of this report support the goal of creating liveable cities and complete communities. Creating a vibrant City-Region requires maintaining high and medium density development permissions within identified intensification areas to achieve better connections between where people live, work and play.

5. Financial Implications

Development charges are collected to pay for infrastructure to support growth, including intensification within the Region's Centres and Corridors

Development charges are one-time payments made by developers to the Region to fund the cost of essential growth-related infrastructure. The Region is making significant investments in the Regional Centers and Corridors.

Proposals to reduce unit counts and people per hectare could result in less development charges collections from specific development sites. For example, a residential building of 400 apartment units (assuming a 40 per cent to 60 per cent split between units of 650 square feet or less versus units of more than 650 square feet) would generate \$8.87 million in Regional development charges collections at today's rates. If that development application were amended, as an example, to a plan consisting of 60 townhouse units, approximately \$2.16 million in development charges would be collected. The net effect upon the Region would be a one-time loss of \$6.71 million in development charge collections.

Table 1 summarizes the one-time development charges collections and the approximate annual property tax revenue for a hypothetical one hectare site.

Table 1
Comparison of Development Scenarios and Financial Implications

	Apartments	Townhouses	Difference
Units ¹	400	60	340
Regional Development Charges (millions) ^{2,3}	\$8.87	\$2.16	\$6.71
Estimated Annual Property Tax Revenue (Regional Portion) ^{4,5,6}	\$512,000	\$88,000	\$424,000

Notes to table 1: (1) units represent the current centres and corridors average unit yield by unit type for a hypothetical 1 hectare site. (2) Assumes that 60 percent of apartment units are greater than 650 sq.ft. (3) Development charges represent a one-time cost. (4) Assumed 2 storey condominium townhouse. (5) Based on 2015 assessment value. (6) Tax revenue rounded to the nearest thousand

6. Local Municipal Impact

The recommendations of this report will further support our local municipalities in delivering on the policy directions, land-uses, growth management and intensification frameworks established in the Regional Official Plan, local municipal official plans and secondary plans. Regional staff will continue to work together with our local municipal partners to ensure that we work towards delivering on our established and collective vision for the future.

7. Conclusion

High and medium density development within identified intensification areas has been consistently supported through policy direction of Council. The *YROP-2010, 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan* and *Vision 2051* each support compact, mixed-use livable communities where people can live, work and play. The continued support of Regional Council and staff on this issue is required to ensure the success of Regional initiatives including the implementation of Centres and Corridors and Viva Bus Rapid Transit.

Regional staff will work with local municipal colleagues to actively enforce Council's approved policy direction and in respect of the Region's intensification matrix framework.

Supporting High Density Development within Identified Intensification Areas

For more information on this report, please contact Josh Reis, Senior Planner, Centres, Corridors and Subways, Community Planning and Development Services, at ext.71515.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

March 26, 2015

Attachments (2)

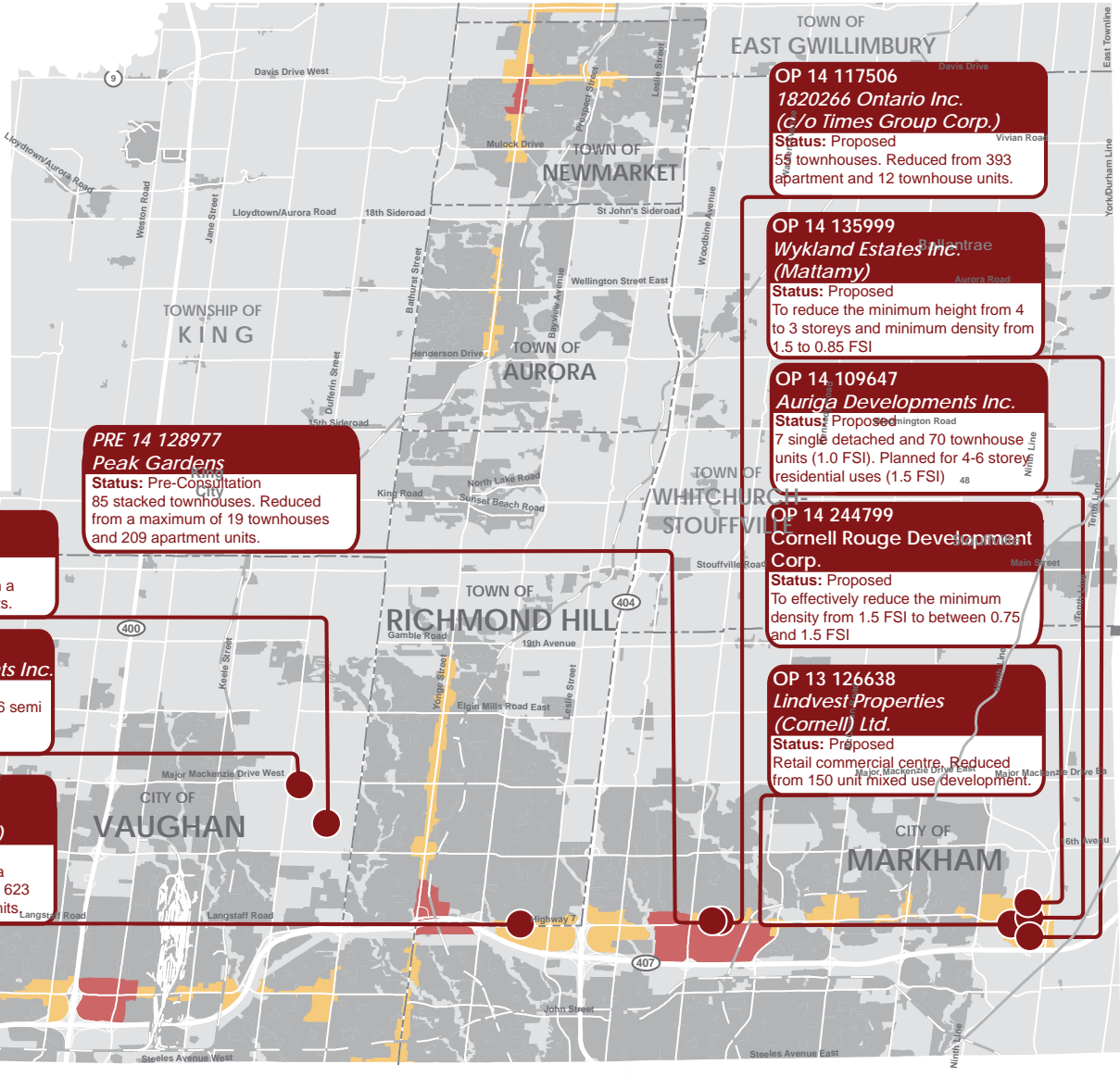
#6056390

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request

REGION OF YORK

Applications for Reduced Densities in Identified Intensification Areas

- Application
- Regional Centre
- Regional Corridor
- Built Boundary



OP.13.006
Quadrant Holdings Inc.
Status: Proposed
 206 townhouses. Reduced from a maximum of 855 apartment units.

OPA 739
King Jane Developments Inc.
Status: Approved
 June 2013 136 townhouse and 6 semi detached units. Reduced from a maximum 325 apartment units.

D01-12012
1857481 Ontario Inc.
(c/o Times Group Corp)
Status: Proposed
 88 townhouses. Reduced from a revised application consisting of 623 apartment and 22 townhouse units.

PRE 14 128977
Peak Gardens
Status: Pre-Consultation
 85 stacked townhouses. Reduced from a maximum of 19 townhouses and 209 apartment units.

OP 14 117506
1820266 Ontario Inc.
(c/o Times Group Corp.)
Status: Proposed
 55 townhouses. Reduced from 393 apartment and 12 townhouse units.

OP 14 135999
Wykland Estates Inc.
(Maitamy)
Status: Proposed
 To reduce the minimum height from 4 to 3 storeys and minimum density from 1.5 to 0.85 FSI

OP 14 109647
Auriga Developments Inc.
Status: Proposed
 7 single detached and 70 townhouse units (1.0 FSI). Planned for 4-6 storey residential uses (1.5 FSI)

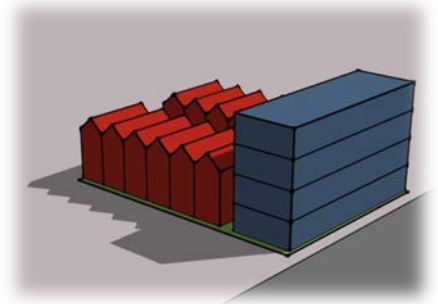
OP 14 244799
Cornell Rouge Development Corp.
Status: Proposed
 To effectively reduce the minimum density from 1.5 FSI to between 0.75 and 1.5 FSI

OP 13 126638
Lindvest Properties (Cornell) Ltd.
Status: Proposed
 Retail commercial centre. Reduced from 150 unit mixed use development.

Mixed



62 and 48 Suncrest Boulevard
FSI:4.4

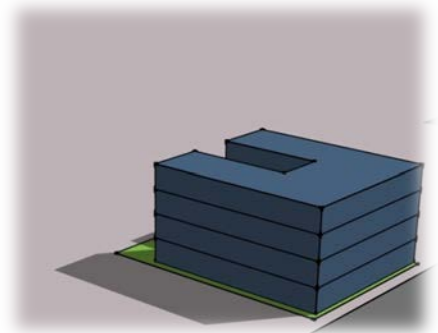


FSI: 2.5

Mid-Rise



Thornhill - Minto Watergarden
Floor Space Index:2.0

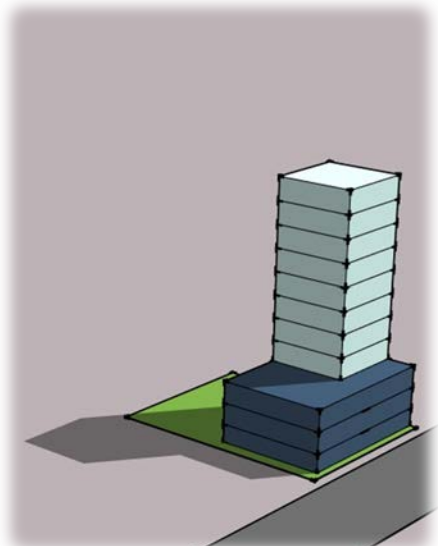


FSI: 2.5

Podium and Tower



World on Yonge
Floor Space Index: 3.5

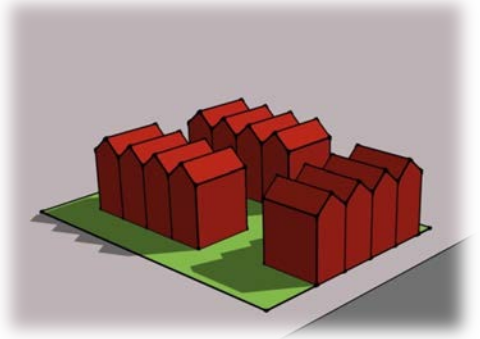


FSI: 2.5

Townhouses



Village Park Towns, Markham
FSI: 1.0



FSI: 1.0