



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: June 23, 2021

Report Number: SRPI.21.055

Department: Planning and Infrastructure

Division: Policy Planning

Subject: **SRPI.21.055 Request for Comments – York
Region Official Plan Update Policy Directions**

Purpose:

To provide a summary of the proposed policy directions emerging through the York Region Official Plan Update, and to seek Council's endorsement of Staff's comments on same which are to be forwarded to the Region of York for consideration through its Municipal Comprehensive Review process.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Council receive staff report SRPI.21.055 regarding Request for Comments – York Region Official Plan Update Policy Directions;
- b) That City Council endorse the comments on the Region's proposed policy directions set out in SRPI.21.055, and in doing so, that Council also advise the Region of the following:
 - 1. That Council requests that the Region expand the Bathurst and Highway 7 Major Transit Station Area boundary to include additional lands to the north, as set out in Map 1 to this report (SRPI.21.055), and for the principle reasons set out in the report;
 - 2. That Council request that the Region require local municipalities to identify resident-to-job target ratios for MTSA's in local Official Plans and that these target ratios are guided by the Region's MTSA analysis endorsed by Regional Council in September 2020, to ensure that an appropriate mix of residential and non-residential development is achieved based on the local context of each MTSA area;
 - 3. That Council reiterates its request for the Region to approve the conversion of employment lands within the southeastern part of the Beaver Creek Business Park, as shown on Map 3 to this report (SRPI.21.055), for mixed-use development and exclude the lands from the

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Region's proposed Regional employment area designation mapping for the reasons previously set out by the City in staff report SRPRS.20.003;

4. That the Region consider providing direction in the ROP regarding cross-jurisdictional issues that may arise in relation to excess soil management; and
 5. That the Region be advised that the policy direction to identify future community or employment areas beyond the 2051 planning horizon is not supported, and that the decision to designate new urban areas should be determined through a future land needs assessment based on the policy and context that are in place at that time.
- c) That the Region be advised of City Council's support for the recommendations set out in report SRPI.20.055, and that the City Clerk forward a copy of the report and its attachments to the Region of York as input to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review Process.

Contact Person:

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Report Approval:

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Infrastructure Department
Approved by: Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Summary:

This staff report is the third report in a series of staff reports brought forward to Council respecting the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process. The first two reports were considered by City Council on February 26, 2020 (refer to SRPRS.20.003 and SRPRS.20.004) and highlighted recommendations related to the conversion of Employment Lands (refer to SRPRS.20.003) and Major Transit Station Areas and Prime Agricultural Areas (refer to SRPRS.20.004). Those reports were subsequently endorsed by City Council, and forwarded to the Region to be considered as local municipal input into the Region's MCR.

This report is a continuation of the aforementioned City staff reports. It provides a summary of the preliminary policy directions emerging through the Region's Official Plan (ROP) Update on several policy areas that are being considered to inform the development of an updated Regional Official Plan. This report also identifies Staff's comments on same and their anticipated impacts, if any, on the update of the City's Official Plan ("City Plan 2041"). The policy themes summarized herein cover several topic areas that were presented to Regional Council in December 2020 and March 2021, these cover topic areas of the ROP not previously reported to Council, and highlight Staff's assessment of the proposed Regional direction. Accordingly, this staff report is being brought forward to Council now as the Region is seeking input on the draft policy directions within an expedited timeframe to help inform policy formulation for the ROP, and with ultimate goal of releasing a draft Regional Official Plan by November 2021.

Six recommendations are provided herein, where staff recommend that the Region reconsider a policy direction prior to releasing a draft of the Regional Official Plan.

These recommendations relate to:

- 1) an adjustment to the Bathurst and Highway 7 MTSA boundary;
- 2) the requirement for local Official Plans to provide targets related to the ratio of jobs to residents for each MTSA and that these targets are guided by the Region's analysis of September 2020;
- 3) confirmation of an employment area conversion for lands located at East Beaver Creek and Highway 7;
- 4) provision of policy to address cross jurisdictional issues related excess soil; and
- 5) not proceeding with including policies that would permit the identification of community or employment areas beyond those that are required to accommodate growth to 2051.

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Background:

Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review Process

York Region is currently in the process of reviewing and updating its Official Plan in order to plan for and accommodate growth in York Region. The Regional Official Plan (ROP) is being reviewed to identify required policy updates and mapping changes to the ROP in order to respond to and implement changes in Provincial Policies, and to plan for an increase in the Region's forecasted population and employment to the year 2051.

On December 17, 2020, Regional Council endorsed preliminary policy directions ("Policy Directions I") in several themed areas which was summarized in a report to Regional Committee of the Whole by York Region Staff in support of the development of draft policies to inform an update of the Region's Official Plan¹. The Region's report focused on the following themed areas as follows, and builds on a series of previously released reports to Regional Council outlining background analyses respecting, among other matters, [Major Transit Station Areas](#), [Planning for Employment](#), [Agriculture](#) and [Natural Systems Planning](#).

The Region's December 3rd, 2020 Staff Report outlined preliminary policy directions on the following policy themes:

- Regional Structure;
- Employment;
- Environment; and
- Healthy Communities and Servicing;

Subsequent to the aforementioned report, on March 18, 2021, Regional Council considered additional staff reports summarizing: (1) the Region's proposed 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment², (2) additional policy directions in several topic areas affecting the ROP that were not previously brought forward to Regional Council ("Policy Directions II")³.

The two aforementioned regional reports provide important updates and additional details respecting changes to Provincial planning policies, forecasted population and employment growth for each of the nine local municipalities in York Region to 2051, and proposed policy directions for the ROP Update in the following themed areas:

- Aligning Growth and Infrastructure;
- Agriculture and Rural Areas;

¹ Refer to Agenda Item H.2.1, Regional Committee of the Whole Meeting, December 3, 2020, <https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=17317>

² Refer to Agenda Item F.1, Regional Council Special Meeting, March 18, 2021, <https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=20344>

³ Refer to Agenda Item F.2, Regional Council Special Meeting, March 18, 2021, <https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=20350>

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- Diversity and Inclusion; and
- Regional Official Plan Mapping

In light of the preceding, this staff report provides a summary of the emerging policy directions in the aforementioned eight (8) themed areas that are being considered as part of the 2051 ROP Update, and outlines City Staff's comments on same for Council's consideration and endorsement as input to the Region's municipal comprehensive review process.

Staff note that Council's endorsement of the Region's preliminary policy directions set out in this staff report will serve as a framework to inform and establish key directions for the City's Official Plan Update. Undertaking an update to City's Official Plan concurrently with the Region's review will ensure that the City is appropriately engaged in both review processes, and ensures a timely adoption of an up-to-date Official Plan for the City that conforms to Regional planning policies. As articulated in each of the geographic workshops for the OP Update carried out throughout May 2021, a report on the emerging Key Directions that will inform the update to the City's Official Plan is anticipated to be brought forward to City Council in Q4 2021. This aligns with the Region's Official Plan update process, which anticipates a draft ROP containing updated policies to be shared with Regional Council and the public for comment in November 2021.

“City Plan 2041” Process

The City's Official Plan update is being undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Section 26 of the *Planning Act*. Accordingly, this update will include policy changes to the Official Plan that address changes to the *Planning Act* since 2010, including recent changes in provincial legislation affecting land use planning. In addition, the City Plan 2041 update process will also consider new policy direction resulting from an update to the York Region Official Plan and other important land use planning documents. Details of the areas of focus for the City's Official Plan update are set out in staff report SRPRS.19.053, which was approved by Council in November 2019.

Previous Council Direction Respecting Major Transit Station Areas and Conversion of Employment Lands

As part of the ongoing process to monitor and respond to the emerging regional policy changes from the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review, on February 26, 2020 City Staff brought forward a two-part staff report to City Council respecting employment land conversions, and planning for major transit station areas (refer to SRPRS.20.003 and SRPRS.20.004 respectively). These reports served as initial input and culminated in Council direction respecting planning for employment lands and major transit station areas in the City. The reports were then forwarded to the Region as input into the Region's MCR process in accordance with Council's direction. Accordingly, Staff note that the proposed policy directions summarized in this staff report build upon, and do not reiterate, the directions previously set out in the preceding staff reports.

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Proposed Regional Policy Directions:

Set out below is a summary of the proposed regional policy directions organized by policy theme. As noted earlier, these policy directions reflect two regional reports previously considered by Regional Council on December 3, 2020 and March 18, 2021 respectively.

In preparing this summary, City Staff have identified the anticipated policy directions that will be forthcoming in an update to the Regional Official Plan. In addition, Staff have also attempted to identify anticipated impacts of the Region's emerging policy directions on the policies of the City's Official Plan where applicable.

Regional Structure

The Region's urban structure sets out a framework for how and where population and employment growth is to be accommodated throughout York Region while also identifying, protecting, and enhancing agricultural and natural heritage systems. The policies of the ROP direct that growth be accommodated in accordance with the policies of the Regional urban structure and support intensification within a network of key centres and corridors.

Recent updates to the Provincial Plans including A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019 ("Growth Plan") have resulted in additional requirements being placed on single and upper-tier municipalities that are to be addressed at the time of a municipal comprehensive review. This includes, among other policy requirements, requirements for the Region to designate employment areas, delineate major transit station areas, and implement recently updated mapping respecting agricultural areas and the natural heritage system. The Region understands that these requirements will result in a more detailed Regional Urban Structure than what is currently set out in the Region's 2009 Official Plan, and will require comprehensive updates to both the policies and mapping of the Plan.

In support of these aforementioned updates, the Region is assessing the following matters related to the Regional Structure that are relevant to Richmond Hill, and which result from the recent changes in Provincial policy direction:

- Connecting the Yonge Street Regional Corridor through Richmond Hill and Aurora having regard for the context being located within the Oak Ridges Moraine;
- Considering the level of policy direction and detail in the Regional OP versus the local municipal OP's; and
- A more simplified intensification hierarchy consisting of the following urban structure areas:
 - Regional Centres / Subway Stations
 - Major Transit Station Areas

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- Regional Corridors
- Local Centres and Corridors
- Applying complete community principles more broadly across the Region beyond new community areas.

Regional staff have worked closely with local municipal staff to determine how best to incorporate these proposed policy directions in an implementable manner through local municipal official plans. The proposed changes to the Regional Structure policies are intended to build upon the current policy direction provided in the Region's Official Plan, with changes aimed at responding to new Provincial requirements and providing additional clarity. The proposed direction is in conformity with Provincial Plans, and provides for a planning framework that makes efficient use of land and infrastructure while providing for environmentally, socially and economically sustainable development.

Furthermore, it should be noted that in light of the proposed direction to expand the Yonge Street Regional corridor north of Gamble/19th Avenue, City staff have already initiated consultation regarding planning for this corridor through its recent City Plan 2041 workshop related to the Oak Ridges Centre area on May 18, 2021.



Figure: Proposed ROP
Intensification Hierarchy

Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

Major Transit Station Areas are an important emerging component of the Region's urban structure. To that end, on February 26, 2020 City Council considered and endorsed the recommendations set out in SRPRS.20.004, which provided, among other matters, input on the identification, boundary delineation, and resident to job ratios respecting 18 emerging MTSAs within Richmond Hill⁴. Through that report, City Council also endorsed specific recommendations respecting several proposed MTSAs within the City as follows, as well as recommendations to consider two additional MTSAs along the GO Rail line, which were recommended to the Region to be incorporated through the Region's MCR:

- A Recommendation requesting that the Region consider linking the Richmond Hill Centre and Bayview MTSAs together;
- A Recommendation requesting that the Region consider the lands on the east side of Bathurst Street and include them in the boundary of the Bathurst and Highway 7 MTSA;

⁴ Refer to Item 13.10, City Council Meeting February 26, 2020 <https://pub-richmondhill.escrimemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=cdea7eb3-d159-47a3-a8cd-026bdd70314c&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English>

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- A Recommendation requesting that the Region increase the ratio of residents to jobs in the Bayview MTSA and Weldrick MTSA to reflect a ratio of 80% (residential) to 20% (jobs); and
- A Recommendation requesting that the Region consider the areas surrounding the Richmond Hill GO Station at Newkirk Road and Gormley GO Station in the Hamlet of Gormley as additional MTSA's, with supporting minimum density targets.

In light of the foregoing, Staff note that the aforementioned recommendations were considered by Regional Council at its meeting on September 10, 2020. Regional Council's deliberation and disposition of these matters are summarized below.

Linking the Richmond Hill Centre and Bayview MTSA's

Staff note that in considering the recommendations for MTSA's, Regional Council has since endorsed expansions to both the Bayview and Richmond Hill Centre MTSA's. Accordingly, the Region has created two contiguous MTSA boundaries with different minimum MTSA targets. Expanding both MTSA's allows for a smoother and more gradual transition of density moving eastward from Richmond Hill Centre to Bayview Avenue.

The Richmond Hill Center MTSA (MTSA #4) has a proposed density target of 500 people and jobs per hectare supported by the proposed extension of the Yonge Subway north to Richmond Hill Centre, which recently received partial funding from the Federal Government⁵. The Bayview and Highway 7 MTSA has a proposed density target of 160 people and jobs per hectare, which will be supported by the VIVA bus rapid transit that operates along Highway 7. City Staff expect the achievement of the density target for the Richmond Hill Centre MTSA to be unproblematic given the vision and principles emerging through the Secondary Plan process. With respect to the Bayview and Highway 7 MTSA however, City Staff note that the City's Official Plan currently designates the land within this MTSA as "Neighbourhood" and "Utility Corridor", which if built out to the maximum permissions would not meet the minimum density targets required by the Growth Plan. On that basis, there is potential to utilize these lands in a more efficient manner and at higher densities, which could enable them to meet the minimum density targets in the Growth Plan, and to achieve a balance of people and jobs. To achieve this objective, the City has identified the Bayview and Highway 7 MTSA as a geographic area of interest to be addressed through the City's OP Update, and is actively planning for this area as one of several emerging centres throughout the City. A City Plan 2041 workshop was held on May 13th to discuss planning for this area.

Expanding the Bathurst and Highway 7 MTSA

The boundary of the Bathurst and Highway 7 MTSA (MTSA #20) was expanded by Regional Council to include additional lands to the north and east, and to encompass a

⁵ <https://www.canada.ca/en/office-infrastructure/news/2021/05/largest-public-transit-investment-in-gta-history-will-create-jobs-and-kickstart-the-economy.html>

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portion of the lands occupied by the existing Richmond Hill Golf Course⁶. Staff note however, that the Region's proposed MTSA boundary does not consider the full extent of the golf course lands, and lands north of the golf course that are presently under application for high density residential development which fall within the 500-800 metre walking distance prescribed by the Growth Plan. Upon further review of this area, City Staff recommend that Council request that the Region extend the Bathurst and Highway 7 MTSA boundary further north, as shown on Map 1 to this staff report, to include lands that are contiguous to the MTSA. There is a natural boundary formed by the valley to the north and east, which would limit the boundary of this MTSA to end at the lands municipally known as 8905 Bathurst Street. Additionally, extending the boundary as proposed will allow the City to comprehensively plan for lands that have been or are proposed to be removed by the Province from the Parkway Belt West Plan, and which are within proximity to the Bathurst and Highway 7 bus rapid transit station. Similar to the Bayview and Highway 7 MTSA, City staff have commenced consultation on the Bathurst and Highway 7 area to determine the vision, character and function of this emerging centre, during the May 4th City Plan 2041 workshop.

Recommendation #1: Based on the foregoing, staff recommend:

That Council requests that the Region expand the Bathurst and Highway 7 Major Transit Station Area boundary to include additional lands to the north, as set out in Map 1 to this report (SRPI.21.055), and for the principle reasons set out in the report.

Altering Resident-to-Job Ratios for Specific MTSA's

While City Council requested alterations to proposed ratios related to residents and jobs within MTSA's, Regional Staff are not proposing to specify through policy a targeted ratio of residents to jobs within the Regional Official Plan. Rather, providing such ratios within Official Plans will be at the discretion of lower tier municipalities. This will therefore be a matter that will warrant consideration as part of the City's OP Update and will need to be addressed in the forthcoming Key Directions report.

Provision of residents to jobs ratios in Official Plan policy clarify to development proponents the City's expectations in relation to how much of a mix of use a particular MTSA is expected to provide. Staff note that target ratios for MTSA's were identified by the Region in the analysis brought forward to Regional Committee of the Whole in September 2020 and later endorsed by Regional Council. Understanding that local planning may change as noted in the preceding sections, Regional staff opted not to prescribe ratios but rather to encourage local municipalities to do so through their Official Plan conformity exercises. City staff believe that the Region has a roll in the determination of these targets and the Region's work to date provides an important guide to determining what those targets could be. By requiring targets in all lower tier plans, there is consistency in developing Official Plan policies and there is assurance that the principles of developing complete transit oriented communities are achieved over the long term. Providing these ratios ensures that future development provides an

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appropriate mix of uses that results in transit oriented development and complete communities. This mix will also assist with achieving goals related to modal split, greenhouse gas reduction, and providing more choice for places to live and work.

Recommendation #2: Based on the foregoing, staff recommend:

That Council request that the Region require local municipalities to identify resident-to-job target ratios for MTSA's in local Official Plans, and that these targets are guided by the Region's MTSA analysis endorsed by Regional Council in September 2020 to ensure that an appropriate mix of residential and non-residential development is achieved based on the local context of each MTSA area.

Considering Areas Surrounding the Richmond Hill GO Station and Gormley GO Station as additional MTSA's

Consistent with the City's request to Regional Council, the Richmond Hill GO Station at Newkirk Road and the Gormley GO Station adjacent to the Hamlet of Gormley were approved as MTSA's by Regional Council and were included in the Region's MTSA and intensification framework⁶.

With respect to the Gormley GO Station, Staff note that the area surrounding this GO Station is unique. This GO Station is located within a rural area of the Oak Ridges Moraine and is subject to the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), Greenbelt Plan, and is adjacent to the Gormley Heritage Conservation District. In considering the request to account for the Gormley GO Station as an MTSA, Regional Staff noted that there is limited development potential for the area surrounding this GO Station due to Provincial policy restrictions. Notwithstanding this context, on September 24, 2020 York Region Council supported an MTSA boundary that includes lands located in the West Gormley Secondary Plan area, north of Stouffville Road and west of Leslie Street, and within the ORMCP Rural Settlement Area located south of Stouffville Road. Regional Council also proposed a density target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare for the Gormley GO MTSA, which was an increase from the 10-15 residents and jobs target initially proposed by Regional Staff⁷. Accordingly, the identification of the area surrounding the Gormley GO Station as an MTSA will have implications on the City's current policy framework. Staff will continue to work with the Region on the implementation of this MTSA through the OP Update work and report back to Council as necessary through its Key Directions Report anticipated to be brought forward to City Council in Q4 2021.

⁶ Refer to Agenda Item H.2.1, Regional Council Meeting, September 24, 2020
<https://yorkpublishing.escibemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=3beab14e-3d48-42e3-8d7a-f98c8ebc94d3&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English&Item=37&Tab=attachments>

⁷ Refer to Item F.3, Regional Council Meeting September 24, 2020,
<https://yorkpublishing.escibemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=3beab14e-3d48-42e3-8d7a-f98c8ebc94d3&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English&Item=33&Tab=attachments>

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Proposed Regional Policy Direction Respecting MTSA's

With respect to policy direction for MTSA's, the Region has set out the following emerging policy directions through the ROP Update, which are summarized briefly below:

- Policies to clarify the role of local municipalities, which include providing detailed land use planning for MTSA's, Official Plan designations, zoning standards, height, and inclusionary zoning;
- Policies for MTSA's in employment areas to protect employment area lands, and to ensure that employment area designations continue to apply while still encouraging higher density employment uses to meet the applicable MTSA minimum density targets;
- Classifying MTSA's as Protected MTSAs;
- Minimum density targets and detailed mapping of the boundary delineation for each individual MTSA to be determined by Region; however, local municipalities are to undertake detailed context specific planning for each MTSA for which the City may choose to include, but not require, target resident to job ratios for each MTSA;
- Policies regarding additional approvals required prior to development occurring for specific MTSAs (e.g. Provincial confirmation on a planned potential GO/subway stations and approval for lands to be removed from the Parkway Belt West Plan);
- Policies addressing future refinements to MTSA delineations and/or minimum density targets;
- Policies to monitor and report on planning and development activity within MTSA's;
- Policy direction to prioritize and optimize infrastructure investment for MTSAs; and
- Policies directing the Region to work with local municipalities to provide transit facilities and amenities that support existing and planned transit infrastructure

The proposed direction respecting MTSAs are in conformity with Provincial policies, which direct that these areas be prioritized for transit with a mix and range of uses and activities. Overall, Staff support the proposed direction, including the direction to identify MTSA's as "Protected MTSA's". This will afford MTSA's protection from appeals on policies respecting, among other matters, boundary delineations, minimum and maximum densities, building heights, and approved land uses. In addition, the establishment of Protected MTSA's will allow the City to implement inclusionary zoning to require the provision of affordable housing in areas that are within proximity to public rapid transit. In regards to setting minimum density targets and municipal planning for MTSA's based on local context, Staff support the Region's proposed direction to provide flexibility for local municipalities to determine how best to meet the minimum density

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targets for each MTSA. However, to bolster this direction, as noted above Staff also recommend that the Region require (not simply encourage) local municipalities to identify resident-to-job target ratios for MTSA's in local Official Plans to ensure that an appropriate mix of residential and non-residential development is achieved based on the local context of each area, and that that these targets be guided by the Region's MTSA analysis endorsed by Regional Council in September 2020.

Employment

Employment areas play a strategic role in planning for employment growth. This is true at both the Regional and local planning levels. The protection of employment lands for employment uses is vital to ensure a balanced Regional Structure, but also to ensure that lands are protected over the long term to allow for the changing nature of employment trends, and to align with the Region's economic development objectives.

Recent updates to Provincial policies require that the Region designate employment lands in the ROP, while also protecting and planning for employment areas and setting minimum density targets. Provincial policies also encourage the Region to identify, but not designate, future strategic employment lands beyond the 2051 planning horizon. These Provincial requirements will require that the Region update its policies and mapping to reflect the inclusion of a new Regional employment land use designation in the ROP, while providing policy direction to local municipalities to consider context, protect employment lands for traditional employment uses, and consider permissions for a broader mix of employment uses. The Region's proposed employment lands to be designated in the ROP are illustrated on Map 2 appended to this staff report.

Alongside the requirement to designate employment lands region-wide, the Region has also developed draft policy directions relating to employment lands that are being considered through the ROP update. These policy directions are briefly summarized as follows:

- Incorporate an employment area land use designation in the ROP;
- Policies to strengthen land use permissions and policies in employment areas to protect core employment areas for traditional employment area uses, while permitting mixed employment uses in suitable locations;
- Policies to set minimum density targets for each employment area and policies for their implementation;
- Policies to identify and protect future strategic employment areas outside of existing settlement areas for long term employment uses beyond 2051;
- Updating policies around conversion of Employment Areas through the Regional MCR subject to the Region's employment conversion criteria; and
- Policies directing for high quality, transit supportive urban environments that support growth of knowledge-based industries and attract and develop a skilled workforce

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Overall, the Region's proposed policy directions add clarity and bolster the Region's policies respecting planning for employment lands, and Staff are generally in support of the emerging directions set out by the Region, however there are a number of considerations Staff recommend the Region consider when preparing the Draft ROP which are set out below.

Council's Request for Employment Conversion in the Beaver Creek Business Park

As noted in the earlier sections of this report, in February 2020 City Council endorsed recommendations respecting the conversion of employment lands within the City. In doing so, Council approved 5 out of 8 site-specific conversion requests that were submitted by private landowners, and 3 area-specific conversion requests recommended to be initiated by the City (refer to SRPRS.20.003). These sites have since been supported for conversion by Regional Council with the exception of the City's request to convert the lands in the southern part of the Beaver Creek Business Park at Highway 7 and East Beaver Creek Road.⁸ In this instance, Staff note that while Regional Council did approve the two site-specific conversion requests submitted by Sheraton Parkway Hotels and Convention Centre Inc. and Crestpoint Real Estate (YYC) Inc. that are located within the broader conversion area recommended by the City, it did not formally approve the City's request to consider the broader area for conversion. The area recommended for conversion put forward by City Council in February 2020 is illustrated on Map 3 to this report.

In light of the foregoing, City Staff note that there is still an opportunity for the Region to re-consider City Council's desire to convert the lands shown on Map 3. The southern part of the Beaver Creek Business Park has a unique context. This area is located close to Highway 7 and the bus rapid transit that operates along the corridor, and consists of a mix and range of uses that are not typically found within traditional suburban business parks. To consider the future long term potential of the lands at this location as an MTSA, City Council directed that the lands be considered as a candidate for conversion from employment to mixed-use through the Region's MCR process. The Region is still in the process of drafting its Official Plan, and in doing so, there is still opportunity for the Region to formally consider these lands again as a candidate for conversion when a draft of the ROP is brought forward to Regional Council.

Recommendation #3: Based on the foregoing, staff recommend:

That Council reiterates its request for the Region to approve the conversion of employment lands within the southeastern part of the Beaver Creek Business Park, as shown on Map 3 to this report, for mixed-use development and exclude the lands from the Region's proposed Regional employment area designation

⁸ Refer to Agenda Item F.1, Regional Council Meeting Minutes October 15, 2020, <https://yorkpublishing.escrimeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=16196>

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mapping for the reasons previously set out by the City in staff report SRPRS.20.003.

Following the establishment of a Regional employment area designation in the ROP, the City's OP will be updated to conform to the employment area policies and mapping designations set out by the Region. The City's policy framework will be updated to reflect the site-specific conversions that have been approved and to conform to the Region's corresponding policy directions respecting employment lands. To that end, City Staff have initiated consultation with the public regarding the planning for three of the proposed employment conversion areas. These are the areas located on Yonge Street and within and around the Richmond Hill GO Station, and also the area located at East Beaver Creek and Highway 7, which were the topic of discussion during the May 11th and 20th City Plan 2041 centres workshops, respectively.

Environment

The Growth Plan directs that watershed planning support the protection of water resources, land and aquatic life, and the management of human activities within a watershed. The policies of the current ROP recognize the importance of watershed planning and includes requirements for watershed and subwatershed scale studies.

Direction in the Provincial Growth Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan require that watershed planning inform the identification of water resource systems, decisions on implementation of growth, and inform planning for water and stormwater services. In light of this direction, the Region is proposing additional policies to be included in the ROP respecting the environment. These policies aim to strengthen watershed planning approaches and protect water resource systems and are briefly summarized below:

- Updates to watershed planning policies to assist in implementation of new watershed requirements in provincial plans;
- Updating water resource systems mapping and policies;
- Updating stormwater management policies to recognize watershed planning requirements; and
- Policy considerations to include identification of a region-wide tree canopy target, as established in the York Region Forest Management Plan in addition to the existing woodland cover target; and
- Updating policies to reflect new Provincial direction related to Species At Risk, including updating definitions for the habitat of endangered and threatened species, referencing provincial and federal species at risk procedures, and updating requirements for natural heritage evaluation where the only feature is the habitat of endangered or threatened species, in accordance with Provincial plans.

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In general, the proposed policy directions are supported by City Staff and in some cases reflect initiatives that are already being implemented by the City. With respect to the Region's direction to include a region-wide tree canopy target, City Staff will closely monitor the proposed policy target when it is made available to ensure that the Region's target is reflective of the municipal context, and to ensure alignment with the City's recommendations emanating from the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Healthy Communities and Servicing

Recent updates to the Provincial Plans direct municipalities to prepare for the impacts of climate change through land use and development patterns, and require that they develop Official Plan policies that aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address climate change adaptation, and promote energy and water conservation.

The Region's existing policies related to climate change, energy, and sustainability already provide strong support in these areas and acknowledge the impacts of climate change on land use planning and development. On that basis, the Region has indicated that it intends to carry forward the existing policy direction provided in the ROP to ensure support for implementation continues in these areas, while assessing the need for further updates once the Region's Climate Change Action Plan and Community Energy Plan is completed. City Staff will monitor these changes and incorporate any requirements into the City's OP as necessary to ensure conformity with the Region's climate change objectives.

With respect to servicing, updates to the Provincial Plans direct for the integration of growth and infrastructure. The Region is currently updating its Transportation Master Plan (TMP) and Water and Wastewater Master Plan concurrently with the update of the ROP to ensure that actions and objectives from these master plans are aligned with updated ROP policies. The Region's TMP is exploring consideration for more flexibility to respond to current and emerging issues, policy changes that respond to mobility trends, and direction to recognize options in transportation for businesses and residents.

In light of the foregoing, the following policy directions relating to the healthy communities and servicing are proposed through the ROP update.

- Determining the appropriate level of detail on energy efficiency and water conservation policies and targets;
- Assessing options to promote human health and well-being and human services
- Enhancing message for complete communities;
- Updating policy regarding importance of cultural heritage to establish a sense of place through conservation of built heritage and cultural heritage resources
- Updating policy regarding indigenous engagement in relation to identifying, protecting and managing archaeological resources.

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- Update the ROP policies to conform with approved Source Protection Plans to protect municipal drinking water sources from water quality and water quantity impacts
- Continue to limit private communal systems for residential developments, given the risk to the Region and its residents; and
- Consider private communal systems for employment developments on an interim basis until full municipal servicing is available

Overall, staff are in support of the aforementioned policy directions and will monitor the release of more detailed policies through the Draft ROP. With respect to the proposed direction respecting Source Water Protection Plans, Staff note that the CTC Source Protection Plan policies apply to land within Richmond Hill. While there is no municipal drinking water system in Richmond Hill, there are systems in adjacent municipalities for which lands in Richmond Hill are within their area of influence. As such, some policies and mapping from the CTC and the Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plans are applicable. To that end, Staff support the direction to conform to the requirements of the Source Protection Plans and will continue to monitor the Region's proposed policies and any corresponding requirements that are applicable to the City.

2051 Population and Employment Forecasts

Schedule 3 of the Growth Plan, 2019 identifies the distribution of population and employment forecasts for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to 2051, and sets out policies requiring municipalities to plan and achieve these forecasts by the intended planning horizon. To accomplish this, the policies require that the upper-tier municipalities like the Region determine if an expansion to the boundary of the settlement area is required to accommodate forecasted growth, and if so, whether the Region's supply of "Whitebelt" lands are sufficient to meet the demand. "Whitebelt" lands are lands that are not located within the Provincially delineated Greenbelt Area and that are not presently designated settlement area. Expansions to the settlement area are a matter of consequence; they require careful consideration of land use planning, balancing need for urbanization and the need to preserve and protect the rural, agricultural and natural heritage systems of the Region along with consideration of infrastructure requirements to service new communities and their long term fiscal and environmental impact.

Forecasts

From a forecast perspective, the Growth Plan projects York Region to house 2.02 million residents and 990,000 jobs in the Region by 2051. This equates to an estimated growth of 800,000 people and 345,000 jobs over the next 30 years, marking York Region as one of the highest attractors of growth in the GTHA, and accounting for approximately 22% of the population growth forecasted for the entire GTHA region. The Region's forecast analysis indicates that each of its nine local municipal forecasts to 2051 reflect recent growth trends, urban expansion needs, vacant greenfield areas, and market demand for intensification. To support assumptions on market demand, the Region retained Watson Consulting to understand macro-economic conditions and real

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estate trends influencing housing across the Region, indicating a robust approach to the development of a forecast to 2051.

As a share of this growth, Richmond Hill is forecasted to grow to 317,000 people and 122,600 jobs by 2051, representing an overall share of 15.6% of the Region's population growth, and approximately 12.3% of the Region's forecasted employment growth. Overall, Richmond Hill's share of growth in the Region has increased since the adoption of the City's 2010 Official Plan.

A number of local municipalities in York Region are forecasted to have lower 2031 employment forecasts than what is set out in the current 2010 ROP. For Richmond Hill, the City's employment forecast to 2031 is projected to decrease from the current estimate of 99,400 jobs to 97,000 jobs. Overall, this represents a decrease of 2,400 jobs by 2031. The largest share of employment is forecasted to be "population-related employment" (47%) with traditional "employment land employment" representing approximately 17% of total projected employment in the City. The balance of jobs is largely anticipated to be in relation to major office employment.

The proposed forecast for Richmond Hill averages a population growth of 1.3% annually. This rate is slightly higher than the actual average annual growth rate measured over the last 10 years. Local municipalities will be required to update their OP's to be in conformity with the updated forecasts within one year of the ROP being approved by the Province. Consequently, when updating the Official Plan, these projections will need to be updated to address the 2041 planning horizon of the City's Official Plan. Updating the Regional forecast to conform to the Growth Plan and distributing that growth to the local municipalities is a key component of the Region's MCR. Local municipal Council positions on the draft forecast is being requested to be provided no later than July 15, 2021.

Land Needs

As part of the MCR process, the Region must consider how to accommodate the forecasted growth. To do this, the Region must undertake a land needs assessment using the Provincial methodology. This assessment considers current land supply within settlement areas and proposed intensification and density targets, among many other factors. Through this assessment, the Region can determine whether or not an expansion to its settlement area supply is warranted. Based on Provincial and Regional policy, the priority area for settlement area expansion are lands that are located in the "Whitebelt."

From a land needs perspective in Richmond Hill, it is important to note that there are no "Whitebelt" lands in the City, and there are only a few remaining Designated Greenfield Area lands left in the City that are expected to be built out by 2051. These include lands in the North Leslie and West Gormley Secondary Plan areas, which are planned and/or built out through comprehensive plans of subdivision. Accordingly, the majority of growth that the City will experience over the next 30 years is expected to come in the

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form of intensification, and through small-scale infill within existing established neighborhoods.

The Region's land needs assessment has determined a need for additional urban expansion lands totaling approximately 3,400 hectares, with the majority of this land (67.6%) accounting for 'community land needs' (e.g. lands for residential and population related employment uses) and the remaining (32.3%) accounting for 'Employment Land needs' (e.g. lands for employment and job growth). Of the 3,400 hectares proposed for urban expansion, there are no expansion lands identified to be accommodated within the City of Richmond Hill.

Site-specific requests for urban expansion of employment uses into the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt have been received by the Councils of Richmond Hill, Township of King and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. In the case of Richmond Hill, these lands include a request on behalf of the Leslie Stouffville Landowners Association to consider lands in the northeast portion of the City, south of Bethesda Sideroad for redesignation from "Countryside" to "Settlement Area". City Council have made several resolutions in relation to all or parts of these areas, supporting consideration of an urban boundary expansion. To that end, staff began consultation with the public with respect to consideration of a boundary expansion in February 2021 during the City Plan 2041 open house and follow-up public survey. The overwhelming response from the public was that these Countryside lands should not be considered for urbanization.⁹

In a memo to Regional Council dated January 26, 2021, Regional Staff reiterated that Provincial Policy in the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan explicitly sets out limited circumstances under which the Region can expand settlement area boundaries into the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt¹⁰. Based on the Region's land needs assessment, there is no justified need for expansion onto lands that are located within the Greenbelt Area to accommodate growth to 2051. It is City staff's understanding that without such justification, the Province will not consider amendments to the Provincial Plans which would authorize such an expansion, and without such amendments neither the City nor the Region are permitted to amend their Official Plans to redesignate Countryside lands to allow for urban settlement land uses.

Based on the foregoing, City staff will consider how to update the Official Plan to promote the many potential rural land uses that are permitted within the Countryside designation. These uses would complement both the urban areas to the south and east of these lands, and the agricultural areas that are located to the north and west of the lands within Richmond Hill and beyond.

⁹ Refer to City Plan 2041 What We Heard Phase 1 Summary Report, <https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/shared-content/resources/documents/City-Plan-2041---Phase-1---What-We-Heard-Report.pdf>

¹⁰ Refer to Agenda Item F.4, Regional Council Meeting dated January 28, 2021 <https://yorkpublishing.escrimetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=18555>

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Intensification Targets

In addition to the growth forecasts, a key policy direction prescribed under the Growth Plan is the requirement that the Region accommodate and achieve a minimum region-wide target of 50% intensification. This means that half of the Region's residential growth will be accommodated in the existing built-up areas through intensification and more compact development. This is a key input into the Region's forecast and land needs assessment, which has influenced the distribution of the local municipal area forecasts.

For Richmond Hill, the Region's proposed intensification target translates into a requirement for the City to accommodate approximately a minimum of 33,100 new residential units within its "built-up" area by 2051, representing a minimum intensification rate of 77% of all new residential units. This means that the balance of new units (up to 23%) would be located within Designated Greenfield Areas such as North Leslie and West Gormley.

It should be noted that the Region's data shows that on average it is exceeding this 50% rate of intensification across the Region. Accordingly, the local municipal targets that have been proposed by the Region are considered reasonable as they reflect, on average, the achievement of a 50% rate of intensification across York Region. Among other matters, the proposed intensification targets support the Region's investment in bus rapid transit and the continued championing for additional rapid transit investments into York Region, including the extension of the Yonge Subway from Toronto to Richmond Hill, and the future provision of a Bus Rapid Transit system along Major Mackenzie Drive.

When considering the City's emerging urban structure, current work related to Major Transit Station areas in the City, and the development industry's aspirations for accommodating growth within the City, we can see that the City is well poised to be able to meet and potentially exceed the Region's proposed intensification target rate.

In support of the foregoing, the Region has set out the following policy directions related to its growth forecast and intensification targets through the ROP Update, which are briefly summarized as follows:

- Local municipalities will be required to update population and job forecasts and intensification and density targets in their OP's to be consistent with the Region's new forecasts and targets, and undertake any additional official plan and/or secondary plan updates that may be required to meet or exceed the minimum targets;
- Assignment of a designated greenfield area density target of 70 residents and jobs per hectare for Richmond Hill to be required to be incorporated into the OP and implemented through secondary plans, as required, to ensure the minimum region-wide target of 60 residents and jobs per hectare is achieved in DGA's across the Region; and

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- The intensification target for Richmond Hill will be that 77% of all new residential growth will be directed to the City's built up area. This is estimated to be an additional 33,100 units to be located in the built up area, by 2051.

In addition to the foregoing, the Region will be considering direction on the phasing of growth in a forthcoming report to Regional Council in late Q2 2021. This report will form part of a third policy direction report on the ROP update. At this time, preliminary considerations for phasing have already been highlighted by the Region and may include: staging urban expansion areas, achievement of population thresholds, prioritizing areas with a higher level of certainty, and requirements to provide a progression of development. Staff will continue to monitor these emerging directions and report back to Council as necessary through the City's forthcoming Key Directions Report in relation to the OP Update.

With respect to Designated Greenfield Areas, it is noted that while the Region-wide target is 60 residents and jobs per hectare the minimum density target for DGA's within Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan is proposed to be 70 residents and jobs per hectare. Staff note that based on current plans for the largest DGA sub-areas in the City which include North Leslie and West Gormley, these communities provide for a diverse range of housing types and include permissions for a mix of land uses within specific areas. On that basis, Staff anticipate the proposed DGA targets to be generally achievable over the long term.

Based on the foregoing, City Staff are in support of the emerging policy directions respecting the Region's growth forecast, intensification, and land needs assessment work as it relates to Richmond Hill.

Aligning Growth and Infrastructure:

As noted in the earlier sections of this staff report, the Region's 2051 Population and Employment Forecast and Lands Needs Assessment sets out the distribution of growth for the Region to the year 2051 as prescribed by Provincial Policy. The Provincial Plans also direct that growth align with investment in infrastructure. In order to support sustainable investments in infrastructure that are fiscally responsible, the Region is proposing to include phasing policies in the ROP to address the orderly distribution of growth and to ensure that decisions around growth are made with due consideration to infrastructure requirements. Phasing policies are aimed at optimizing the timing of development to maximize the efficient uses of existing and new Regional infrastructure.

In light of the foregoing, the Region has set out the following policy directions, which are briefly summarized below.

- Articulating the need for a more agile and adaptive approach to growth management in response to the changing nature and pace of growth, market demand, and/or other factors;

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- Enhancing the objective of optimizing growth in areas serviced with existing infrastructure capacity before making new investments;
- Strengthening phasing policies at the Regional scale such that the delivery and operation of infrastructure is phased in a fiscally sustainable manner;
- Strengthening connections between the timing and scale of growth in intensification areas and the existing and/or planned infrastructure and water and wastewater capacity in infrastructure Master Plans; and
- Identifying remaining Agriculture or Rural Whitebelt lands not required by the Provincial land needs assessment by 2051 as future urban

In light of the foregoing, City Staff are generally in support of the proposed emerging directions respecting growth and infrastructure with the exception of future urban areas (see section below “Future Growth Areas” for additional comment on this matter).

Agriculture and Rural Areas

Recent updates to the policies of the Growth Plan 2019 direct the Province and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in particular to identify an Agriculture System across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). A Provincial agricultural system was introduced as part of the updates to the Provincial Plans, and in 2019 the Province produced draft mapping for municipalities to use as the basis for identifying the agricultural system in Official Plans. The Provincial Plans require upper-tier municipalities to implement the agricultural system through updated policy and mapping. This is occurring through the Region’s MCR process. The purpose of identifying the Agricultural System is to ensure a consistent approach to agriculture production across the GGH, and to support a diversified economy by promoting the agri-food sector.

To undertake a review of the Region’s agricultural land base, the Region retained a consultant to undertake analyses to consider the long term viability of its agricultural areas given their existing and future context with urban areas. For Richmond Hill, the Region is considering to designate Prime Agricultural Areas in the northeastern part of the City (refer to Map 3 attached), which include the lands located between Leslie Street, Bloomington Road, Bethesda Side Road and Highway 404. This area is being considered for inclusion into the Region’s agricultural designation as illustrated on Map 8 of the current ROP¹¹. City Council supported this designation through its endorsement of the February 2020 staff report regarding the Regional MCR. Regional staff indicate that consultation with the public and area landowners have taken place in terms of the proposed mapping change. City Staff understand that there were no objections from

¹¹ Map 8, Agricultural and Rural Area, York Region Official Plan
<https://www.york.ca/wps/wcm/connect/yorkpublic/dfbb3257-35a1-455e-a225-7f7e04a21cb7/yropOfficeConsolidation2019Map8Accessible.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CVID=mLW2ro>

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Richmond Hill landowners. Once approved, the City will be required to amend its Official Plan to reflect the new Prime Agricultural designation.

Provincial Plans and the Provincial Policy Statement direct municipalities to provide policies related to the management of excess soil. While the preference is for excess soil resulting from development, including infrastructure, to remain in situ, this is not always a viable option. To that end, there may be instances where the management of excess soil may result in cross-jurisdictional issues. For that reason, Regional policy should not only direct local municipalities to develop strategies and apply best practices; but, also to identify how cross jurisdictional matters related to excess soil may be addressed and resolved.

Recommendation #4. Based on the foregoing, staff recommend:

That the Region consider providing direction in the ROP regarding cross-jurisdictional issues that may arise in relation excess soil management.

In light of the foregoing, the Region has set out the following draft policy direction for both agricultural and rural lands that is applicable to Richmond Hill:

- Continue to require permitted uses within areas identified as prime agriculture that are located within Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan area conforms to the applicable ORMCP policies; and
- Integrate new excess soil policies in the ROP that align with Provincial plans that direct local municipalities to develop excess soil strategies and incorporate best practices for the management of excess soils

Overall, Staff are generally in support of the proposed policy directions respecting agriculture and rural areas that are applicable to the City, but are seeking more Regional direction related to addressing cross jurisdictional issues related to excess soil.

Diversity and Inclusion;

There is a growing body of academic research and evidence which shows that diversity and inclusivity is foundational to the creation of complete communities. Provincial policies direct that urban centres be vibrant and characterized by compact development patterns to provide a diversity of opportunities for living, working and enjoying culture. Accordingly, a core principle prescribed under the Growth Plan to support the achievement of complete communities is to provide for different approaches to manage growth that recognize the diversity of communities. Planning for complete communities includes support for people of all ages and at all stages of life and abilities which allow them to live, work and play in their community.

To build on this direction, the Region is proposing to include stronger policy direction respecting inclusion and to highlight it as a core principle when planning for

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communities. In doing so, the Region is considering to include the following policy direction consistent with Provincial direction:

- Integrating inclusionary language throughout the Plan and identifying inclusions as a core principle of Planning in York Region; and
- Enhancing partnership and engagement policies to support inclusive engagement throughout the planning process

Overall, Staff are in support of the above-noted policy direction respecting diversity and inclusion.

ROP Mapping

There are a number of corresponding mapping updates that need to be implemented together with the proposed updates to the policies of the ROP. The ROP's mapping is an important operative component of the Region's OP, and like the policies articulated through the text of the Plan, they provide context to support and visualize the Region's urban structure, Greenlands System, Agricultural Areas and the regional transportation network.

In addition to the updates respecting the Region's agricultural mapping, recent updates to Provincial policies have necessitated the need for changes to the mapping in the Regional OP. Changes to the Provincial Plans require new mapping to delineate major transit station areas, as well as built up areas, greenfield areas, settlement areas and employment areas across the Region. Updates to natural heritage and water resource mapping will also be required to ensure that the Region conforms to Provincial Policy direction respecting natural heritage.

In light of the foregoing, the following updates to the ROP mapping are being considered through the update of the ROP:

- Simplifying Map 1 and displaying land use designations and land use categories on separate sub-schedules;
- Grouping water resource components on one or a series of maps;
- Incorporating Provincial layers on ROP maps (Natural Heritage System and Agriculture Areas); and
- Updating mapping containing Regional infrastructure to align with Transportation, Water and Wastewater Master Plans

Overall, Staff are generally in support of the aforementioned proposed changes to the ROP mapping, and will use this information to determine the appropriate changes needed to the City's OP to ensure conformity and to implement the Region's objectives. To augment the Region's proposed directions, when developing the new maps/schedules, the Region should also consider the scale in which maps and schedules of the ROP are displayed at to improve readability and interpretation of

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linework. In addition, appropriate policies respecting interpretation should accompany the Region's mapping changes so as to address, among other matters, instances where a discrepancy between the policies and a related map/schedule exist, and/or where the same lands are subject to two or more land use designations. These policies should help clarify how ROP policies are intended to be interpreted and applied.

Future Growth Areas

As noted above, there are two instances in the proposed policy directions that suggest the Region predetermine future growth areas beyond 2051. This is noted in the proposed policy directions related to employment and in the proposed policy directions related to aligning growth and infrastructure. The Region is required to review and update its Official Plan within 10 years of its approval and within 5-years thereafter. During that review period, the Region will also need to undertake another land needs assessment, and if warranted, consider appropriate areas for an urban expansion. Should the Region predetermine where those future urban areas should be, whether for employment or community uses, during the current review period, the Region will be identifying these areas based on the current context; rather than the context that may be quite different from today during which time the decision to expand is made. In order to provide future decision makers with the opportunity to consider the most current policy direction and local context, it would be best to not pre-identify future urban areas. This approach also provides certainty to rural and agricultural land owners that they may continue to operate their property based on the current planning permissions for those areas over the long term. For these reasons, Staff recommend that the Region be advised that policy direction for future uses beyond the 2051 planning horizon is not supported.

Recommendation #5. Based on the foregoing, staff recommend:

That the Region be advised that the policy direction to identify future community or employment areas beyond the 2051 planning horizon is not supported, and that the decision to designate new urban areas should be determined through a future land needs assessment based on the policy and context that are in place at that time.

Local Municipal Impact

The proposed policy directions described herein emanate from the Region's MCR process. Overall, these directions will impact the City's land use planning framework in many ways, and will serve to shape how growth occurs within Richmond Hill over the long-term. The City's current OP builds on the Region's Plan in many ways, and has drawn from the Plan as being a source of progressive and forward thinking approaches to planning for complete communities. The City is currently in the process of updating its Official Plan in response to new policy direction resulting from updated Provincial land use planning documents, and in response to the emerging Regional policy direction. The update is being undertaken concurrently with the Region's MCR, which

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will ensure that the City is appropriately engaged in both review processes. This streamlined process will also ensure a timely adoption of an up-to-date Official Plan for the City that ultimately conforms to the anticipated new Regional Official Plan.

This staff report identifies a number of emerging Regional policy directions that will impact the City's Official Plan policy framework, resulting in the need for updates to the City's OP policies and associated mapping. These emerging policy directions will be addressed comprehensively through the City's OP Update process and a forthcoming Key Directions Report.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

This report has no financial or staffing implications.

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

The recommendations of this report are in relation to proposed policy directions for the development of a new Regional Official Plan. When updating the City's Official Plan, we will need to ensure that policies and mapping conform with those of the Regional Official Plan. Accordingly, it is important for the City to provide comment to the Region for its consideration when developing the new Regional Official Plan to ensure that City interests are addressed. Providing timely responses to this important Regional initiative supports Council's strategic priorities by ensuring that the future ROP provides appropriate land use planning direction to ensure that Council priorities can be met when updating the City's Official Plan, without a risk of conflict between the two planning documents.

The proposed policy directions and the City's response to these directions align Council's Strategic Priorities as follows:

Balancing Growth and Green

The proposed policy directions provide a framework to accommodate growth and development, while protecting what is valuable including consideration of natural heritage areas, species at risk, consideration of watershed planning, preserving cultural heritage resources and by applying complete community principles more broadly, which serve to improve the quality of life within the City.

Strong Sense of Belonging

The proposed policy directions include direction to improve human-health, human services and well-being through complete communities and by including inclusionary language through the proposed policies that focus on inclusion, diversity, and engagement opportunities to support inclusive engagement throughout the planning process.

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Getting Around the City

The proposed policy directions emphasize the need to align growth with infrastructure, including the Region's Transportation Master Plan. Furthermore, the policy direction recognizes areas associated with subway stations, such as the Richmond Hill Centre as the top of the Region's intensification hierarchy. Reemphasizing the importance of the future expansion of the Yonge subway line to Richmond Hill.

Fiscal Responsibility

The proposed policy directions include consideration of investment attraction at both a Regional level and a local level through protection of employment areas and the consideration of flexible policies within parts of those areas to attract a diverse range of businesses and employers to the Region. Furthermore, many of the proposed policy directions take into consideration fiscal impact of accommodating growth and development and provide for opportunity to optimize and prioritize development to areas where there is existing infrastructure to support growth.

Climate Change Considerations:

The proposed policy directions being introduced through the Region's MCR touches on many aspects of land use planning, including climate change. The Region's proposed policies include the incorporation of climate change considerations to prepare for impacts of climate change through land use and development patterns. These policy directions focus on actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, address climate change adaptation goals, and promote energy and water conservation. Accordingly, this report recommends that Council support the proposed policy directions tabled by Regional staff.

Conclusion:

The Region's Official Plan Update is occurring concurrently with the City's OP Update process. In doing so, the Region has released policy directions on several topic areas that will shape the update of the Region's OP. This staff report provides a summary of the Region's proposed policy directions and provides Staff's comments on same as input to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review process. A draft new Regional Official Plan is expected to be shared with Regional Council and the public in November 2021 for consultation. Providing input on the proposed policy directions raised with Regional Council to date will help inform the drafting of new Regional Official Plan policies.

In the meantime, the proposed policy directions presented herein will be used by City Staff to inform the City's OP Update and the preparation of the City's Key Directions Report. Accordingly, this staff report recommends that Council receive the report, endorse the Staff recommendations presented herein, and forward a copy of the report to the Region for consideration as input into the MCR.

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Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendices, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

Map 1: Recommended Bathurst and Highway 7 MTSA Boundary Refinement

Map 2: York Region Employment Lands Designation Mapping

Map 3: Beaver Creek Business Park Recommended Area for Employment Conversion

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPI.21.055 - Request for Comments – York Region Official Plan Update Policy Directions.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- SRPI.21.055_Map 1_Recommended Bathurst and Highway 7 MTSA Boundary Refinement.docx- SRPI.21.055_Map 2_YR Employment Lands Designation Mapping.docx- SRPI.21.055_Map 3_Beaver Creek Employment Area.docx
Final Approval Date:	Jun 6, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Patrick Lee - Jun 3, 2021 - 5:35 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Jun 3, 2021 - 5:46 PM

Task assigned to MaryAnne Dempster was completed by delegate Darlene Joslin

Darlene Joslin on behalf of MaryAnne Dempster - Jun 6, 2021 - 10:05 AM