



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: May 3, 2023

Report Number: SRPI.23.048

Department: Planning and Infrastructure

Division: Development Planning

Subject: **SRPI.23.048 – Request for Comments -
Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project - City File D24-
18001**

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work program, key deliverables, associated timelines and next steps with respect to the City of Richmond Hill's Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project ("Zone Richmond Hill").

Recommendation:

- a) **That Staff Report SRPI.23.048 be received, and that Council refer all comments back to staff.**

Contact Person:

Anna Henriques, Manager - Development Zoning, phone number 905-747-6557

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Infrastructure

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, 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.

Background:

City of Richmond Hill Official Plan Update

The City's Official Plan (the "Plan") is a key document approved by Council that contains policies to implement the vision for the City being "the centerpiece of York Region and one of the most prominent, complete communities in the Greater Toronto Area." This vision contemplates a vibrant and complete community that serves the needs of all residents, businesses and visitors. The Plan is intended to guide land use planning and development decisions so that they occur in a manner that is consistent with the City's vision.

Page 2

In late 2019, the City initiated its municipal comprehensive review to ensure that the Plan is consistent with the *Provincial Policy Statement*, conforms with applicable Provincial plans as well as the Region of York Official Plan, all of which have been updated since the Plan was first adopted in 2010. In February 2022, Council endorsed the City Plan Key Directions Report which provides a foundation for preparing amendments to the Official Plan. To date, the update has resulted in the approval of three (3) Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) by Council, as follows:

- OPA 18.2 - Leslie Street Institutional Area (approved December 25, 2020)
- OPA 18.3 - Vision and City Structure (approved September 9, 2022)
- OPA 18.4 - Neighbourhoods (approved September 9, 2022)

Future updates to the Plan are anticipated to be brought forward to Council for consideration in the Fall of 2023 and in 2024.

City of Richmond Hill Zoning By-laws

A Zoning By-law is a legal document that implements the policies and vision of the Plan by regulating the use of land, buildings and structures and by providing specific standards for how development can occur on a property.

The City of Richmond Hill has approximately 41 “parent” Zoning By-laws currently in effect that apply to different geographic areas of the City. These parent by-laws have been in effect for several decades with the oldest by-law having been enacted in 1953, the newest by-law in 2017, and the vast majority of the by-laws prior to the 1990s. Numerous amendments to the City’s parent zoning by-laws have been approved over the past several decades including City initiated amendments to address various planning matters (i.e. Additional Residential Units) or for general housekeeping purposes. Additionally, numerous amendments and Minor Variances have been approved on a site specific basis, initiated by property owners and the development industry, in order to facilitate development across the City.

Municipal Zoning By-laws Required to Conform with the Official Plan

Section 26(9) of the *Planning Act* (the “*Act*”) requires Zoning By-laws to conform with a municipality’s Official Plan and requires that the Council of a municipality amend all Zoning By-laws in effect to conform with the Official Plan no later than three (3) years after the Plan comes into effect. As noted previously, many of the City’s Zoning By-laws were enacted decades ago (some as early as the 1950’s) and, as such, need to be reviewed and updated in accordance with the requirements of the *Act* to ensure conformity with the Plan including its recent and ongoing updates.

In addition to fulfilling the *Act*’s requirements as discussed above, the City’s Zoning By-laws are in much need of a comprehensive review and update for the following reasons:

- many of the parent Zoning By-laws are outdated and generally do not reflect current development practices and the evolving character of the City;

Page 3

- the sheer number of parent Zoning By-laws in effect and the many amendments and Minor Variances approved over the years make the by-laws difficult to navigate, understand and administer; and,
- the City's Zoning By-laws are not easily accessible as they are not presently available online.

In consideration of the preceding, staff was directed by Council in 2017 to undertake a review of the City's existing Zoning By-laws with the goal of preparing a comprehensive Zoning By-law for the municipality and in 2018 the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project (the "Project") was initiated by City staff.

Accordingly, the purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work program, key deliverables, associated timelines and next steps with respect to the Project.

Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project:

The purpose of the Project is to review, consolidate and update the City's Zoning By-laws into a single comprehensive Zoning By-law that implements the policies and vision of the Plan. Key objectives of the Project include creating a comprehensive Zoning By-law that is:

- user-friendly and easy to understand, administer and enforce;
- reflective of current and emerging planning and development practices and trends; and,
- fully accessible online in an interactive web-based format.

Once completed, the Comprehensive Zoning By-law will be an effective and efficient tool for managing development in the City and will:

- improve service delivery for external customers such as residents, businesses and the development industry by providing a user-friendly and easy to understand by-law that is accessible online; and,
- generate tangible staffing efficiencies as a result of staff spending less time responding to general zoning inquiries and administering the by-law which will in turn contribute to a more streamlined development review and approval process.

Phases of the Project:

The Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project is a phased, multi-year project, as shown in Attachment 1 hereto and as outlined in the following sections:

Phase 1: Background Research (2018-2023)

This first phase of the Project was initiated in 2018 and will be completed in Q3 of 2023. A significant amount of background research has been completed as part of this phase which will serve as a solid foundation to inform work on future phases of the Project, particularly in Phase 2 (Strategic Directions). Work completed and underway as part of Phase 1 includes:

Page 4

Technical Papers and Building Typology Studies

The City retained Gladki Planning Associates, Meridian Planning and DTAH to undertake smaller studies on specific zoning issues and topics to help inform the drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and the Official Plan Update. The findings of the studies were summarized in a total of eleven (11) technical papers and two (2) building typology studies. The technical papers have been finalized following public and stakeholder engagement which consisted of public information sessions and on-line surveys. The following technical papers are now complete and are available on the City's Zone Richmond Hill website:

- a) Community Uses
- b) Implementation Tools
- c) Aging in Place
- d) Additional Residential Units
- e) Residential Parking and Landscape Requirements
- f) Automotive Commercial Uses
- g) Cannabis Cultivation and Processing
- h) Short Term and Shared Accommodations
- i) Residential Infill Development
- j) Residential Accessory Structures; and,
- k) Home Based Businesses.

The following building typology studies are nearing completion and next steps include public and stakeholder engagement which will take place together with Phase 2 (Strategic Directions) engagement, as discussed in the later sections of this report:

- a) Low Rise Medium Density Typology Study; and,
- b) Centres and Corridors Typology Study

Phase 2: Strategic Directions (2023-2024)

Phase 2 (Strategic Directions) of the Project was recently initiated and is anticipated to be completed by Q4 2024. Work on this phase will be undertaken concurrently with Phase 3 (Drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law), as discussed further in this report.

The purpose of the Strategic Directions ("SDR") phase is to identify key recommendations to guide the drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law. Key objectives include providing recommendations with respect to:

- implementation of the Official Plan Update and alignment with other municipal initiatives;
- addressing specific zoning issues and topics as identified in Phase 1 (technical papers and studies);
- consolidating/streamlining and updating of zones (i.e. permitted uses and standards);
- improving clarity and consistency;
- establishing appropriate structure, format, method and approach to zoning (i.e. traditional Euclidean zoning, Community Planning Permit system, etc.); and,

Page 5

- creating an interactive, web-based Zoning By-law with appropriate functionality for internal and external users.

The SDR phase will result in the preparation of three (3) Strategic Directions Reports that will guide the drafting of various sections of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law, as follows:

Strategic Directions 1.0: Neighbourhoods (target Council endorsement Q3 of 2023)

This Strategic Directions report will provide key recommendations to guide the drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law specific to the City's Neighbourhood areas and will be informed by two (2) discussion papers:

- **Discussion Paper 1** - Technical/General and Existing Parent Zoning By-laws; and,
- **Discussion Paper 2** - Neighbourhoods.

Public and stakeholder engagement on this SDR, including the Low-Rise Medium Density Typology Study, is planned to take place in June 2023 following which staff will present the SDR, including the proposed engagement plan for Phase 3 (Drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law) to Council for endorsement in Q3 of 2023. Following Council endorsement of the SDR, staff will initiate Phase 3 (Drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law) for the City's neighbourhood areas.

Strategic Directions 2.0: Centres and Corridors and Parking/Loading (target Council endorsement Q4 of 2023)

This SDR will provide key recommendations to guide the drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law specific to the City's Centres and Corridors, (i.e. the City's key intensification areas) and parking/loading space requirements for various land uses. This report will be informed by three (3) discussion papers:

- **Discussion Paper 1** - Technical/General and Existing Parent Zoning By-laws;
- **Discussion Paper 4** - Centres and Corridors; and,
- **Discussion Paper 5** - Parking and Loading.

Public and stakeholder engagement on this SDR specific to Centres and Corridors, including the Centres and Corridors Building Typology Study, is planned to take place in June 2023, concurrent with engagement on the OP Update relating to proposed Batch 2 Official Plan amendments for the Newkirk Centre, Oak Ridges Local Centre, Village Local Centre and Yonge and Carrville/16th Avenue. Public and stakeholder engagement specific to parking and loading requirements is planned to take place in Q4 of 2023. Following the engagement, staff will present the SDR, including the proposed engagement plan for Phase 3 (Drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law) to Council for endorsement in Q4 of 2023.

Page 6

Strategic Directions 3.0: Employment, Greenway and Other Zones (target Council endorsement Q4 of 2024)

This SDR will provide key recommendations to guide the drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law specific to the City's Employment Areas and Corridors, Greenway System and other zones, as required. This report will be informed by three (3) discussion papers:

- **Discussion Paper 1** - Technical/General and Existing Parent Zoning By-laws;
- **Discussion Paper 2** – Employment; and,
- **Discussion Paper 6** - Greenway and Other Zones.

Public and stakeholder engagement on this SDR is planned to take place sometime in 2024. Following the engagement staff will present the SDR, including the proposed engagement plan for Phase 3 (Drafting of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law) to Council for endorsement in Q4 of 2024.

Staff notes that endorsement of the above SDRs (SDR 1.0 – SDR 3.0) is dependent on Council approval of associated Official Plan Amendments which are targeted for Council consideration in 2023 and 2024.

Phase 3: Drafting of Comprehensive Zoning By-law (2023-2025)

Phase 3 includes taking the key recommendations found within the Strategic Directions Reports as guidance to begin drafting the Comprehensive Zoning By-law. The drafting of the by-law is anticipated to commence in Q4 of 2023 and will be released in three (3) batches, similar to the approach taken with Official Plan Updates and generally consistent with the sequencing of the Phase 2 Strategic Direction Reports. Further details on target key milestones and deliverables for Phase 3 is provided in Attachment 1 to this report.

Comprehensive Zoning By-law 1.0 (target Council approval Q3 of 2024)

The first batch of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law will include zoning for the City's Neighbourhood areas (consistent with Council approved OPA 18.4) which will include the establishment of area specific zones, permitted uses and development standards. In addition, the first batch will include key general components of a Zoning By-law (base Zoning By-law provisions) that are specific to Neighbourhood zoning including but not limited to:

- administration and interpretation provisions;
- definitions; and,
- general provisions

Comprehensive Zoning By-law 2.0 (target Council approval Q4 of 2024)

Batch 2 of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law will introduce additional zones to the by-law that are specific to the City's four (4) Centres:

Page 7

- Newkirk Centre;
- Oak Ridges Local Centre;
- Village Local Centre and Yonge; and,
- Carrville/16th Avenue.

In addition, Batch 2 will introduce parking and loading standards for a variety of land uses and refinements and additions to the base Zoning By-law provisions will be considered, as appropriate.

Comprehensive Zoning By-law 3.0 (target Council approval Q4 of 2025)

Batch 3 of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law will introduce additional zones to the by-law that are specific to the City's:

- remaining Centres and Corridors;
- Employment Areas and Corridors;
- Greenway System; and,
- other zones, if any (i.e. Utility Zones, etc.).

This Zoning By-law Amendment will also address any housekeeping amendments, as required, and refinements and additions to the base Zoning By-law provisions will be considered, as appropriate.

Public and stakeholder engagement will be critical when drafting all batches of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and therefore, as mentioned earlier in this report, an engagement plan will be presented to Council with each Strategic Directions Report for input prior to commencing work on drafting each batch of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law.

Staff notes that the timelines associated with the Phase 2 and 3 deliverables for the Project, are largely dependent on the timely advancement of the OP Update and as a result the timelines may be subject to change. In this regard, recent and potential future changes to Provincial Planning policies may necessitate updates to the OP Update work plan which will in turn impact the work plan and timelines for the Project.

Staff also notes that should Council decide to pursue a Community Planning Permit System (recommendations in this regard will be provided in the Strategic Directions Reports for Council consideration), enabling policies in the Official Plan will be required. Similarly, should Council decide to pursue Inclusionary Zoning, enabling Official Plan policies will also be required and recommendations in this regard will be provided to Council for their consideration through the Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation Committee, pending an update to the City's Housing Needs Assessment. It is anticipated that the timing for a Community Planning Permit System and/or Inclusionary Zoning (should Council decide to implement these tools) will align with the respective OP update that will introduce enabling policies.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

This report has no financial or staffing implications.

Page 8

Relationship to Council’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

The recommendations of this report do not have any direct implications with respect to Council’s Strategic Priorities. An overview of how the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project is aligned with the Strategic Plan will be included in a future recommendation report in relation to the Strategic Directions for the comprehensive Zoning By-law review.

Conclusion:

The Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project is a multi-year, multi-phased project. This report provides an update to what has been completed as part of Phase 1 and outlines the next steps in terms of completion of Phase 2 and the general approach for Phase 3 of the project. This report has been structured for information purposes, with a recommendation that all comments be referred back to staff for consideration.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, 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.

Attachment 1: Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project Overview: Phases and Timelines

Page 9

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPI.23.048 - Comprehensive Zoning By-law Update.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Apr 19, 2023

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

Gus Galanis - Apr 18, 2023 - 5:11 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Apr 18, 2023 - 6:00 PM

Darlene Joslin - Apr 19, 2023 - 11:02 AM