

Memorandum

November 22, 2023

MEMO TO: Mayor West and Members of Council

COPY TO: Darlene Joslin, City Manager
Stephen Huycke, Director, Legislative Services/City Clerk

FROM: Gus Galanis, Acting Commissioner, Planning and Building Services

SUBJECT: **Response to Committee Members Comments and Questions Regarding Official Plan Amendment 18.8 (Oak Ridges Local Centre)**

At its meeting on November 15th, 2023, the Committee of the Whole considered Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 18.8 for the Oak Ridges Local Centre. At the meeting, Members of Committee and the public posed specific comments and questions to City Staff respecting the amendment. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide additional information and clarification on those matters as outlined below.

1. Consideration to include lands on the north side of King Road into the boundary of the Oak Ridges Local Centre.

- A delegation was provided by Ms. Gisella Imbrogno who requested that Council consider including lands north of King Road, generally between Parker Avenue to the west and Schomberg Road to the east, into the boundary of the Oak Ridges Local Centre designation. In addition, the delegation specifically referenced that the lands be identified as a “priority infill area”.
- For clarity, lands with frontage onto King Road are generally within the existing Oak Ridges Local Centre boundary as presently identified in the City’s 2010 Official Plan (refer to Schedule A1). The existing Local Centre designation in this area supports higher density development and/or redevelopment to fulfill the vision of a complete community as per the Official Plan’s intensification hierarchy. Priority Infill Areas on the other hand encompass areas exclusively within the Neighbourhood designation of the Official Plan which have potential for future low-density residential infill development.
- Priority infill areas reflect well-established patterns of infill development and/or locations that have undergone comprehensive review and study. In other instances, they are areas within Neighbourhoods where infill continues to occur and progress in a piecemeal fashion through individual lot severances (consents), with no comprehensive study to guide it. Given this unique context, the City adopted OPA 18.4 which provided policy direction for the Neighbourhood designation. In that amendment, the City updated the OP policies related to

Priority Infill Areas that are suited to accommodate infill. OPA 18.4 was approved by the Region in August 2022 and is now in effect city-wide. Staff note that these policies are not applicable to lands within the centres and corridors, which include lands within the Oak Ridges Local Centre as set out in OPA 18.8.

- OPA 18.8 proposes modifications and minor refinements to the boundary of the Oak Ridges Local Centre to expand the boundary to include lands located north of King Road so that they are included in the Local Centre. This includes a minor expansion of the Local Centre designation to re-designate lands from Neighborhood to Local Centre. If approved, the expansion would bring additional properties along Parker Avenue, Shaver Street and Hughes Street into the Local Oak Ridges Centre designation which proposes to allow for a broader range and mix of land uses when compared to the Neighborhood designation, and permission for building heights of up to 6 storeys. The area affected generally includes lands between Parker Avenue and the Greenway System which runs parallel to Schomberg Road, but would exclude properties fronting directly onto George Street. Therefore the subject property referred to by Ms. Imbrogno, while not in the priority infill area, falls within the proposed Local Centre designation which provides for a moderate increase in height and density.
- Accordingly, the proposed expansion of the Local Centre designation will provide additional land to support low-rise to mid-rise mixed-use redevelopment that is pedestrian-oriented, human-scaled, and supportive of the Oak Ridges community, while taking into consideration the environmental constraints and policies related to the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenway System present in this specific area.

2. Consideration to permit existing businesses within the Local Centre that would not otherwise conform to the new policies under OPA 18.8 to expand their operations and building footprint

- Staff note that Policy 3.4.1.(37) (c) of the City's Official Plan permits expansions of existing buildings or structures up to a maximum 15% of their gross floor area. This policy would apply to buildings or structures within the centres and corridors that do not conform to the minimum height and density requirements prescribed in the various Centres and Corridors designations throughout the City, including the Oak Ridges Local Centre.
- Policy 3.4.1(37)(c) is a longstanding policy in the Official Plan and provides flexibility to existing land uses and buildings in the centres and corridors and acknowledges that buildings and structures may have been built and/or pre-existed prior to the adoption of the Official Plan in 2010. This policy provides permission to allow those uses to expand up to 15% of their existing gross floor area, despite them not conforming to the updated height and density requirements set out in the Official Plan.
- Notwithstanding the flexibility provided under Policy 3.4.1(37)(c) of the Official Plan, OPA 18.8 envisions the long term redevelopment of the single-storey strip development that exists along Yonge Street within the Oak Ridges Local Centre into a more modern walkable and sustainable main street, which supports the objectives of a Regional Corridor as identified in the York Region Official Plan. This amendment includes policies that focus higher levels of intensification along Yonge Street with opportunities for the development over the long term of

a mixed-use complete community to support the Bus Rapid Transit along the Yonge Street corridor.

Conclusion:

As noted by City Staff at the November 15th Committee of the Whole Meeting, adoption of OPA 18.8 is an important milestone that would allow the City to meet its conformity requirements under the *Planning Act* and York Region Official Plan. In addition, adopting the amendment would allow the City to move forward with planning for capacity in infrastructure through the Transportation Master Plan and Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan and, altogether, inform the update of the City's Development Charges By-law which is required to be completed by early 2024. The updating of the DC By-law would allow the City to begin collecting back what is needed to provide for growth in these key areas.

Accordingly, the purpose of this memorandum is to respond to the questions and comments raised by Members of the Committee regarding OPA 18.8, and to reiterate Staff's recommendation set out in staff report SRPBS.23.030 to adopt OPA 18.8 as follows:

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Staff Report SRPBS.23.030 be received.
- b) That Council adopt Official Plan Amendment 18.8 (attached to SRPBS.23.030 as Appendix A), and that the City's Official Plan be amended in accordance with the modifications set out in OPA 18.8; and
- c) That following adoption of the Official Plan Amendment 18.8 by City Council, a copy of the amendment be forwarded to York Region as the approval authority for consideration and approval.

Submitted by:



Gus Galanis,
Acting Commissioner, Planning and Building Services