



Memorandum

November 22, 2023

MEMO TO: Mayor 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 18.7 (Newkirk Local Centre)**

Background:

At its meeting on November 15, 2023, the Committee of the Whole considered Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 18.7 for the Newkirk Local Centre. At the meeting, Members of Committee raised questions following submissions and deputations that were made in relation to OPA 18.7. The purpose of this memo is to provide additional information and clarification to Council regarding these matters as outlined below.

Discussion:

Some of the submissions and deputations made to Committee related to OPA 18.7 commented on a perceived “discrepancy” between the Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) boundary as approved by York Region and the limits of the Local Centre designation in OPA 18.7. To clarify this point, when York Region delineated the PMTSA boundaries through the update of the York Region Official Plan, they were instructed as per direction set out in the Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe to consider a broad 500-800 metre radius surrounding the transit station. The 500-800 metre radius generally represents a 10-minute walk. Staff note that Provincial direction does not preclude the ability for the planning authority to refine the boundaries of a PMTSA based on other constraints within the area. This is why the PMTSA boundaries delineated in the York Region Official Plan are not perfect circles.

In this regard, the boundary of each PMTSA was delineated, refined and adjusted to account for various contextual elements that exist within them, including natural features, physical barriers, existing and proposed development, and the walking distance based on the existing transportation network. Additionally, the PMTSA boundary as identified by the Region is there to generally identify lands that are expected to support transit use, but the boundary does not identify a specific land use. Rather, the local municipality can choose to distribute the density and types of uses within the PMTSA boundary in a way that can contribute to meeting the prescribed minimum density targets.

Through the development of OPA 18.7, staff have undertaken a similar exercise to determine the size and location of the Local Centre designation. Additional factors such as adjacency to low-rise neighbourhoods, institutional uses, and environmental lands were taken into account when identifying the proposed Local Centre boundary. As a result, not all lands within the PMTSA boundary were deemed contextually appropriate to be designated as part of the Local Centre, despite them being located within the broader PMTSA.

It is important to recognize that multiple land uses can contribute to meeting the overall minimum density target in a PMTSA, and that not every parcel is required to be designated with the highest intensification level possible to meet the prescribed density target of the PMTSA. Within PMTSA #50 which applies to OPA 18.7, there are multiple land use designations including Local Centre, Local Mixed-Use Corridor, Neighbourhood, and Natural Core. Existing Official Plan permissions in these other land use designations continue to allow for a more modest scale of development and intensification, appropriate to the local context, which will help contribute to providing densities and riders to support transit use in the area.

As discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting, the Official Plan is reviewed every 5-10 years as required by the *Planning Act*. Development in the Newkirk Local Centre will occur over the long-term, and is expected to progress incrementally in support of the GO Rail service. As development progresses, Council can direct staff to review the policies of the Local Centre at the time of the next Official Plan update to ensure they are meeting the applicable Provincial and Regional objectives for the MTSA. In addition to the required reviews, individual landowners may submit private development applications, which may be considered by Council.

Response to Submissions:

In addition to the Local Centre designation, properties fronting onto Major Mackenzie Drive that are outside the Local Centre designation within PMTSA #50 are designated under the Local Mixed-Use Corridor designation. In that regard, the City received correspondence at the November 15, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting from several landowners who own properties along Major Mackenzie Drive and Maple Avenue, east of Norfolk Avenue. The correspondence submitted requested that Council consider adding these lands within the Newkirk Local Centre designation. Staff do not support this request for several reasons:

- the lands identified in the correspondence include 539-563 Major Mackenzie Drive, 148-158 Maple Avenue, and 150 Colborne Avenue, which are generally located on the south side of Major Mackenzie Drive and are designated Local Mixed Use Corridor; and 9960 Bayview Avenue, which is designated Local Development Area. The Local Mixed Use Corridor and Local Development Area designations allow for a mix of uses, similar to the Local Centre designation, although at a lower height and density than the Newkirk Local Centre would permit. This is to recognize the specific local context, as these properties are adjacent to existing low-rise residential neighbourhoods; and,
- the Local Mixed Use Corridor and Local Development Area designations already include permissions for intensification. They continue to promote a built form that, in the opinion of Staff, continue to be contextually appropriate for lands along Major Mackenzie Drive and for the intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive and Bayview Avenue given the level of public transit service that serve those areas.

The area of Centre Street East located west of the C.N. Rail corridor is designated Neighbourhood in the Official Plan. This area is also identified as part of a Priority Infill Area on Appendix 9 of the Official Plan. While these lands are technically within an 800 metre radius (“as the crow flies”) of the GO Station, due to the constraints of the existing transportation network, they are beyond the 10-minute walking distance from both the GO Station platform and the intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive and Newkirk Road. Some of the public realm improvements proposed in OPA 18.7, such as the proposed crossing of the C.N. Rail corridor, would improve access to these properties and reduce the walking distance to transit. However, at the time of writing of this memorandum, there is currently no design or funding available for this crossing. Following approval of OPA 18.7, the City will continue to explore possible opportunities to implement this crossing in the Local Centre over the long-term.

Conclusion:

As noted by City Staff at the November 15, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting, adoption of OPA 18.7 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 City’s 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 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 Committee regarding OPA 18.7, and to reiterate Staff’s recommendation set out in Staff Report SRPBS.23.029 to adopt OPA 18.7.

Recommendations:

- a) That Staff Report SRPBS.23.029 be received;
- b) That Council adopt Official Plan Amendment 18.7 (attached to SRPBS.23.029 as Appendix A), and that the City’s Official Plan be amended in accordance with the policy changes and modifications set out in OPA 18.7; and
- c) That following adoption of Official Plan Amendment 18.7 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