

Committee of the Whole (2) Report

DATE: Tuesday, December 10, 2024

WARD(S): 2

TITLE: MARTIN GROVE ROAD AND HIGHWAY 7 – SPECIAL AREA UPDATE

FROM:

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ACTION: FOR INFORMATION

Purpose

To provide an overview and receive comments from the Committee of the Whole on the revised Martin Grove Road and Highway 7 - Special Area and to ensure the comprehensive re-development of the subject area in the absence of the lands being a primary centre, local centre or subject to a Secondary Plan.

Report Highlights

- To provide background information on the Martin Grove Road and Highway 7 Special Area including previous reports and meetings.
- To identify a revised Special Area boundary to be supported by area wide studies in order to align and coordinate orderly development.

Recommendation

1. THAT the Information Report (Martin Grove Road and Highway 7 – Special Area Update) BE RECEIVED; and
2. THAT any site-specific issues identified be addressed by staff in the processing of individual planning applications to be reported to Committee of the Whole in future.

Background

There is a significant amount of development pressure within the special area. The area is not designated as a primary or local centre or subject to a Secondary Plan. Staff

believe a comprehensive planning approach is required to ensure coordination between developments and commitment to build a complete community.

On Tuesday June 18th, 2024, the Committee of the Whole received a report on the Martin Grove Road and Highway 7 – Special Area. The report provided background information on the study area including active employment conversions and development applications. The report recommended the identification of a Special Area that would require a joint Development Concept Report and Phasing Plan (DCRPP), with supporting studies, in order to align and coordinate orderly development within the subject area to develop a complete community.

On Tuesday, June 25th, 2024, Council received a Staff Communication with a boundary revision to the Special Area. The Committee of the Whole recommended the Special Area boundary be extended to include 5694 Highway 7, 5732 Highway 7, and all adjacent properties to Highway 7 and Highway 27, on the north side. Attached to the Staff Communication is an updated map to reflect Council's direction (Attachment 1).

This report proposes a new Special Area Boundary.

Through a series of consultations with landowners and knowing the challenges facing each part of the area differ significantly, staff recommends that the special area be reduced and limited only to the lands bounded by Highway 7 to the north, Martin Grove Road to the west, Natural Areas and Low-Rise Residential to the east and Natural Areas including the Vaughan Grove Sports Park to the south. The subject lands are comprised of commercial, industrial, office and retail uses in addition to automotive and associated uses. The revised Special Area boundary can be found on Attachment 2. While applications for other parts of the original special area can be considered separately, the same principles will apply that the landowners prove to the city their desired land use changes can be accommodated by existing infrastructure or planned infrastructural improvements in the future.

There are a number of active development applications within and adjacent to the revised Special Area boundary.

The active development applications can be found on Attachment 3.

Employment Conversion – 7625 & 7635 Martin Grove Road & 211 Woodstream Boulevard

An Employment Land Conversion request was made by 716051 Ontario Limited and 1214420 Ontario Limited for a 1.84 hectare site for the lands municipally known as 7625 & 7635 Martin Grove Road & 211 Woodstream Boulevard. The request was to re-designate lands from Employment to Mid-rise Mixed-use. Council approved the request for conversion in May 2020.

Active Development Application – 77 Woodstream Boulevard

An Official Plan Amendment application (OP.11.003), Zoning By-law Amendment application (Z.11.009) and Site Development application (DA.15.072) was submitted to permit a mixed-use residential/commercial development consisting of a 16-storey residential building (containing 166 dwelling units) connected by a 3-storey mixed-use podium and three townhouse blocks with 28 townhouse units that are 3.5 storeys in height. Council approved the applications in September 2018.

Active Development Application – 132, 144, 154 and 166 Woodstream Boulevard

An Official Plan Amendment application (OP.24.007) and Zoning By-law Amendment application (Z.24.019) was submitted to permit a two-phased development of two (2) high-rise mixed-use buildings, consisting of four (4) residential towers at 35-storeys in height, with a total unit count of 1,221 residential units. A public meeting occurred on November 6, 2024, and the application is currently under review.

Active Development Application – 5655, 5657, 5731, 5767 and 5781 Highway 7 and 7700 and 7714 Martin Grove Road

An Official Plan Amendment application (OP.22.007) was submitted for the lands municipally known as 5655, 5657, 5731, 5767 and 5781 Highway 7 and 7700 and 7714 Martin Grove Road. The applicant submitted a proposal to permit a phased high-rise mixed-use master plan community consisting of 10 residential apartment blocks totaling 13 buildings with at-grade commercial uses, a maximum height of 28-storeys, a maximum Floor Space Index ('FSI') of 5.62 times the area of the lot and a total of 3,390 units spanning 3 phases, various public and private roads, public parks and privately owned public spaces. A public meeting occurred on February 6, 2023, and the application is currently under review.

Employment Conversion – 20 Roysun Road and 55 Sovereign Court

An Employment Land Conversion request was made for a 0.8 hectare site for the lands municipally known as 20 Roysun Road. The request was submitted to redesignate the lands for a broader range and mix of uses including office, commercial and residential. The Committee of the Whole approved the request for conversion on May 20, 2020. The Committee of the Whole approved an additional request for the Employment Land Conversion immediately north of 20 Roysun Road municipally known as 55 Sovereign Court.

It is noted that other planning applications shown in the revised Special Area are minor site plan applications.

Previous Reports/Authority

A Previous report related to this study can be found at this link:

[Martin Grove Road and Highway 7 – Special Study Area, June 18, 2024](#)

Analysis and Options

The necessary legislation and policy documents will be considered for this Special Area Study.

All applications and the studies will be reviewed for consistency and conformity with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 and the policies of York Region Official Plan, 2022 and VOP 2010.

The Provincial Planning Statement 2024 ('PPS')

The PPS is a policy statement issued under the authority of section 3 of the *Planning Act* and came into effect on October 20, 2024. The PPS applies to all decisions in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter made. In accordance with Section 3 of the *Planning Act*, decisions affecting planning matters "shall be consistent" with the PPS. The PPS provides direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development and sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land province wide. Land use patterns within settlement areas should be based on densities and a mix of land uses which efficiently use land and resources; optimize existing and planned *infrastructure* and *public service facilities*; support *active transportation*; are *transit-supportive*, as appropriate; and are *freight-supportive* (Policy 2.3.1.2).

York Region Official Plan 2022 ('YROP 2022') and Vaughan Official Plan 2010 ('VOP 2010')

York Region Council adopted the YROP 2022 in June 2022. YROP 2022 was approved, as modified, by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in November 2022, bringing it into full force and effect. Bill 150 (*Planning Statue Law Amendment Act, 2023*) and Bill 162 (*Get It Done Act, 2024*) later rescinded some of those modifications.

On June 6, 2024, Bill 185 (*Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024*) ("Bill 185") received Royal Assent which includes amendments to the *Planning Act*. In accordance with the amendments to the *Planning Act* implemented through Bill 185, York region became a Region without planning responsibilities effective July 1, 2024.

Pursuant to subsection 70.13(2) of the *Planning Act*, YROP 2022 is deemed to constitute an official plan of the City in respect of any area in the City to which it applies and will remain in effect until the City revokes or amends it.

The YROP 2022 includes policies which provide for residential and employment growth throughout York Region, directed to strategic growth areas, small-scale intensification in the form of infill and secondary suites, as well as new greenfield development with a mix of low, medium, and high density-built forms. It is planned that the highest densities and the greatest mix of land uses are directed toward the four Regional Centres, as well as existing and new subway stations and other major transit station areas, while more limited density is directed to Regional Corridors between MTSAAs as well as Local Centres and Corridors.

YROP 2022 advises that the primary location for growth and development within York Region will take place within the Urban System which includes Urban Areas, Towns and Villages, and Centers and Corridors. Map 1 Regional Structure of the YROP 2022 designates the Subject Lands as 'Urban Area', which permits a wide range of residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. Map 1A Land Use Designations of the YROP 2022 designates the subject lands as either 'Community Area' or 'Employment Area'. The Community Area identifies where the majority of residents, personal services, retail, arts, culture, recreational facilities and human services will be located. The Employment Area identifies where clusters of business and economic activities including, manufacturing, industrial, offices and associated retail and ancillary uses will be present.

The subject lands are subject to the VOP 2010 and are located within the City's Urban Boundary. The subject lands are not subject to a Secondary Plan. Schedule 1 Urban Structure of the VOP 2010 identifies the lands as being predominantly designated as 'Employment Area'. Employment Areas are considered stable areas and planned for economic activity related to industrial, manufacturing, warehousing and office uses. Schedule 13 Land Use designates the lands as "High-Rise Mixed-Use", "Mid-Rise Mixed-Use", "General Employment", and "Natural Areas" (Attachment 4). The High-Rise Mixed-Use designation provides for a mix of residential, retail, community and institutional uses. The Mid-rise Mixed-Use designation supports a variety of residential and non-residential uses. General Employment areas are predominantly industrial areas with a wide range of industrial and employment uses. The Natural Areas designation is part of the natural heritage network and have land uses relating to ecological and environmental preservation.

There was a collaboration meeting between City staff and landowners in the Special Area.

Following the June 25th Council meeting, staff held a meeting on September 6th, 2024 with many of the landowners or representatives. Invitations to attend the meeting were sent to all contacts in the Special Area with active development applications and/or Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) applications, with the purpose to discuss next steps and a agreed to process and timeline to complete the studies.

Much of the discussion with the landowners or representatives included the size of the Special Area, transportation matters, servicing matters and the process and requirements to develop a terms of reference for a potential DCRPP.

Feedback was received regarding lands at the Southeast Corner of Highway 7 and Highway 27.

Innovative Planning Solutions (IPS), on behalf of the owners of Bostar Inc. and 1639326 Ontario Ltd. (lands at the southeast corner of Highway 7 and Highway 27) submitted a letter, dated November 4th, 2024 to the City (Attachment 5). The letter acknowledged the heightened development pressure in the area but requested that their lands be excluded from the Special Area. This request is being made on the basis that their

client's lands are distinct in terms of engineering servicing solutions and transportation capacity and can proceed independently towards being developed.

The letter from IPS included a supporting letter from Schaeffers Consulting Engineers identifying a separate servicing option available to the subject lands that is independent from the study area (Attachment 6). This servicing strategy provides for a connection to the Regional Trunk System via Regalcrest Court and also provides a connection to future development west of the hydro corridor.

The letter from IPS also included a supporting letter from LEA Consulting Ltd. who conducted a transportation review (Attachment 7). The letter concluded that the subject lands are separated from the remainder of the Special Area by the hydro corridor west of Martin Grove Road and that the subject lands are more closely aligned with the Highway 7, Highway 27 and Highway 427 transportation network.

Feedback was received regarding lands at the Southeast Quadrant Martin Grove Road and Highway 7.

A letter dated November 14th, 2024, from the owners of 1315955 Ontario Inc., Cortel Group (132-166 Woodstream Boulevard) and 716051 Ontario Limited and 1214420 Ontario Limited (5555-5601 Highway 7, 7731-7625 Martin Grove Road and 211 Woodstream Boulevard) was submitted to the City (Attachment 8). The letter is in regard to the redevelopment of the southeast quadrant of Martin Grove Road and Highway 7. The letter requests that these lands be considered separately from the original Special Area. The letter identifies that the lands within the southeast quadrant has the ability to proceed independently from the larger surrounding area and that there is existing servicing and transportation capacity to service the southeast quadrant. It also acknowledges that there are servicing constraints that may affect the redevelopment of other lands in the larger surrounding context.

The letter confirms that as part of the formal development application process, a Comprehensive Transportation Review and a Comprehensive Master Servicing Review will be completed, in accordance with a Terms of Reference that shall be reviewed by City engineering staff, for the lands within the southeast quadrant, and will analyze the development context of the surrounding lands.

A preliminary review of the revised study area was completed by Valdor Engineering Inc. and CGE Transportation Consulting. The letter states that the findings have confirmed that the master plan for the southeast quadrant, which has protected for a future public road connection, has sufficient servicing and transportation capacity/appropriate circulation to accommodate future growth.

Consideration for the Revised Special Area Boundary

Policy Planning and Special Programs staff and City Engineering staff met to discuss the two letters received and the rationale provided. The following points were concluded through the discussions:

- There are servicing and transportation constraints in the area, including extremely limited capacity with regards to sewage.
- A Comprehensive Transportation Study is needed, which also reviews, analyses and incorporates the development in the southwest quadrant of Martin Grove Road and Highway 7. The investigation of this Study should be the cumulative transportation impacts of these developments and other sites in the area, identifying an internal transportation network that serves and protects for all potential development, and provides a clear path to implementation of this network, including preliminary designs to ensure feasibility.
- A Comprehensive Master Servicing (Water, Wastewater, and Stormwater) Study is needed, which also reviews, analyses and incorporates the development on the southwest quadrant of Martin Grove Road and Highway 7.
- The terms of reference for these two Studies must be reviewed in detail with the City's engineering staff to ensure that all appropriate matters are included.
- The technical engineering justification and conclusions contained in the letters have not been approved by staff. These details will need to be discussed and reviewed when a terms of reference is prepared for both Studies.

Financial Impact

There are no requirements for new funding associated with this report.

Operational Impact

The Comprehensive Transportation Review and Comprehensive Master Servicing Review will be circulated to all applicable City Departments for review and comment as part of the normal development application review process. Comments, issues, requirements, and/or modifications resulting from the review would be addressed as part of the processing of each individual application.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

The Comprehensive Transportation Review and a Comprehensive Master Servicing Review will be circulated to all applicable City Departments and external agencies for review and comments as part of the normal development application review process. Comments, issues, requirements, and/or modifications resulting from the review would be addressed as part of the processing of each individual application.

Conclusion

The Policy Planning and Special Programs Department staff are supportive of the revised Special Area boundary shown on Attachment 2 in order to align and coordinate orderly development within the subject area and to develop a complete community.

Attachments

1. Special Area - Previous Study Area
2. Special Area - Location Map
3. Active Development Applications
4. Official Plan Designations
5. Letter from Innovative Planning Solutions
6. Letter from Schaeffers Consulting Engineers
7. Letter from LEA Consulting Ltd.
8. Letter from 1315955 Ontario Inc., Cortel Group, 716051 Ontario Limited, and 1214420 Ontario Limited

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