

## Committee of the Whole Report (2)

---

**DATE:** Monday, March 09, 2020

**WARD(S):** ALL

**TITLE: MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREAS**

**FROM:**

Bill Kiru, Acting Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

**ACTION:** DECISION

---

### **Purpose**

To seek endorsement of the City of Vaughan planning staff's comments on York Region's proposed Major Transit Station Areas boundaries and minimum densities in the City of Vaughan.

### **Report Highlights**

- The Provincial Growth Plan was amended to include criteria for the location, boundary and minimum density of Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)
- MTSAs are areas identified for existing and future intensification
- There are 23 MTSAs within the City of Vaughan along subway stations, bus rapid transit stops and GO stations
- York Region is responsible for delineating MTSA boundaries and establishing minimum densities through the York Region Municipal Comprehensive Review
- The City of Vaughan will be responsible for incorporating the MTSA boundaries and minimum densities into the Vaughan Official Plan update and adding maximum densities, heights and land use policies to achieve these densities
- Vaughan planning staff agree with most of York Region's recommendations for MTSA boundaries and minimum densities, however there are 10 MTSAs where staff recommend adjustments to the boundaries and/or minimum densities

## **Recommendations**

1. That the City of Vaughan's Planning staff comments on the Region of York's proposed Major Transit Station Area boundaries and minimum densities in the City of Vaughan be endorsed; and
2. That a copy of this report be forwarded to York Region.

## **Background**

### ***The Provincial Growth Plan identifies Strategic Growth Areas as areas for intensification***

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 (Growth Plan) identifies Strategic Growth Areas (SGAs) as areas planned to accommodate intensification and higher density mixed uses in a more compact built form. SGAs include Urban Growth Centres (UGCs), Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) and other intensification areas. UGCs in York Region include the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway, Markham Centre, and Newmarket Centre.

### ***MTSAs are areas within an approximate 500 to 800 metre (10-minute walk) radius of higher order transit stations and stops***

The Growth Plan defines MTSAs as:

*the area including and around any existing or planned higher order transit station or stop within a settlement area; or the area including and around a major bus depot in an urban core. Major transit station areas generally are defined as the area within an approximate 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk.*

The MTSA boundary delineation, as defined above, is not a land use designation. Rather, the boundary of a MTSA is intended to be used to measure the achievement of the Growth Plan minimum density requirements that are discussed in the next section of this report. The 23 MTSAs identified in the City of Vaughan (the City) are shown in Attachment 1. These MTSAs are within priority transit corridors including existing and/or future subway, bus rapid transit and GO stations.

***The Growth Plan sets minimum density requirements for MTSA's which vary based on the ultimate buildout***

Minimum density requirements apply to MTSA's and are mandated by the Growth Plan. MTSA densities in priority transit corridors must meet or exceed the Growth Plan minimum density requirements at ultimate buildout, as identified in the table below:

**Minimum Density Growth Plan Requirements  
- People and Jobs per Hectare (PJH)**

Subways	200 PJH
Light Rail Transit/Bus Rapid Transit	160 PJH
GO Transit Rail	150 PJH

The calculation for determining the requisite Minimum Population/Jobs for MTSA is as follows:

$$\text{MTSA Area} \times \text{Minimum Density Requirement} = \text{Minimum Population/Jobs for the MTSA}$$

For a MTSA, the Minister may approve a minimum density that is lower than the applicable minimum density requirement where it is demonstrated that this minimum density requirement cannot be achieved.

***York Region is responsible for delineating MTSA boundaries and setting the minimum density requirements in consultation with local municipalities***

Consistent with the Growth Plan, York Region, in consultation with local municipalities, must delineate MTSA boundaries located on priority transit corridors. It must also set minimum densities in the Regional Official Plan for MTSA's to achieve or exceed the Growth Plan minimum density requirements. The MTSA boundaries and minimum densities will be included in the York Region Official Plan (ROP) review. These MTSA boundaries and minimum densities will be revisited in the following ROP review in the next 5 to 10 years.

***Vaughan planning staff worked jointly with York Region staff to develop the proposed delineated boundaries and to test proposed minimum densities***

Vaughan planning staff initially prepared and provided York Region with proposed boundaries and proposed minimum densities for the 23 MTSA's located within Vaughan.

The boundaries were determined using a 500m to 800m “10-minute walking distance” from higher order transit stations and stops. Generally, the proposed boundaries were drawn to include lands with development/redevelopment potential. Consistent with the Growth Plan requirements, the proposed MTSA boundaries are continuous and do not contain any gaps or missing areas (“holes”). The proposed minimum densities were determined by considering the Growth Plan minimum density requirements and potential build-out density.

York Region staff made minor revisions to Vaughan planning staff’s proposed MTSA work and added the proposed Royal Orchard Subway Station (MTSA 71) on the future Yonge subway extension. This report outlines the proposed MTSA boundaries and minimum densities recommended by York Region and also includes Vaughan planning staff comments on the boundaries and their respective minimum densities.

***Public engagement is a key piece to future planning and York Region is responsible for engaging residents on MTSAs***

It is York Region’s responsibility to engage residents within the Region, including Vaughan residents, on the proposed MTSA boundaries and minimum densities, and to provide information on the MTSAs. To date, York Region’s public engagement has included a Web Page that provides information on the MTSAs and includes an Interactive Map that residents can use to provide feedback (see Previous Reports/Authority Section below for the web page link). York Region has also engaged residents at various community events within the Region.

In June and July of 2019, Vaughan Planning staff met with the Mayor and Members of Council to discuss the Major Transit Station Areas. The Mayor and Members of Council provided valuable feedback, including requests for a public information session on the MTSAs in Vaughan. In response, the Region and the City of Vaughan held a drop-in public open house on the topic of the MTSAs in Vaughan on March 4, 2020.

***The City of Vaughan is responsible for land use designations, and minimum and maximum heights and densities***

Based on the *Planning Act* requirements, Vaughan must adopt its updated Vaughan Official Plan (VOP) within one year of the ROP adoption. The updated VOP must include the ROP MTSA boundaries and minimum densities. The VOP shall include policies that identify appropriate land uses to meet the minimum density, the minimum

and maximum building heights, and the maximum densities for each MTSA. Vaughan planning staff anticipate the target density of people and jobs for each MTSA will likely be between the minimum and maximum density. Accordingly, the MTSA policies will be revisited in the following VOP review in the next 5 to 10 years.

***The delineation of MTSA boundaries, as well as the recommended densities, building heights, and land uses cannot be appealed to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal***

The *Planning Act* restricts official plan and zoning appeals to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) for areas identified as MTSA's in both the regional and local official plans. The following matters cannot be appealed to the LPAT:

- MTSA boundaries
- minimum number of residents and jobs per hectare
- minimum or maximum densities and building heights
- approved land uses

***The population and jobs per hectare in Vaughan's proposed delineated MTSA's are generally based on the existing land use policies of VOP 2010***

The potential build-out for each MTSA was generally based on current VOP 2010 policies. The following chart outlines the approximate potential growth and net population and jobs for all MTSA's within Vaughan:

Major Transit Station Area Only	*Additional People and Jobs Within the MTSA's	*Total People and Jobs (Existing and Additional)
People	169,000	202,000
Jobs	13,000	57,000
Total	182,000	259,000

\*Values are approximate

**Previous Reports/Authority**

The York Region MTSA Engagement Web Page entitled 'Do you live or work near a major transit stop?' can be found as the following link:

<https://www.york.ca/wps/portal/yorkhome/newsroom/CampaignsProjects/citybuildingintegration>

## **Analysis and Options**

### ***Vaughan planning staff has provided comments on York Region's proposed MTSA boundaries and minimum densities***

Vaughan planning staff has worked with York Region on the delineation of the proposed MTSA boundaries and minimum densities. There is general agreement with York Region on the proposed MTSA boundaries and minimum densities that have been prepared, however there are a few areas where Vaughan planning staff is recommending an alternative position.

Vaughan planning staff has provided comments on the York Region's proposed MTSA work in the report sections below. In January 2020 Vaughan planning staff received preliminary comments from York Region staff in response to Vaughan's comments, as identified in this report. More detailed comments and information on each MTSA are provided in Attachment 2 to this report.

### ***Vaughan planning staff recommend MTSA boundary adjustments to exclude stable low-density land uses***

A consistent question by municipalities at Provincial consultation sessions on MTSA policies was "How are stable low-density areas being protected if they are being included within a MTSA?". The Province provided minimal direction on the protection of stable areas if these areas were included within a MTSA. The Growth Plan policies outline that lands within the MTSA are to be planned to be transit supportive. Land uses considered not transit supportive such as single and semi-detached homes, one-storey commercial, general industrial, large school sites, and parks may be considered as lands requiring intensification, if included within a MTSA.

VOP 2010 includes policies to direct growth to appropriate locations while protecting stable lands. In the preparation of the initial proposed MTSA boundaries by Vaughan planning staff, lower-density lands considered stable (i.e. not anticipated to be redeveloped by 2041) were excluded from the MTSAs, where possible. Exclusion of stable residential and non-residential lands reduces the area of the MTSA thereby affecting the minimum number of population and jobs that would be required. If these stable lands were included in the MTSA, it would put greater pressure on the remaining lands to meet the minimum density requirements for the MTSA.

### Land Use Assumptions Used for Proposed MTSA Boundary Delineation

The proposed MTSA boundaries are required to be continuous and cannot contain any gaps or missing areas. The table below outlines the planning assumptions made by Vaughan planning staff when considering the inclusion or exclusion of existing developed lands near a MTSA. The table also outlines the potential outcome if developed lands are included within the interior of a MTSA.

<b>Developed Lands</b>	<b>Assumptions made when including or excluding existing developed lands near proposed MTSA boundaries</b>	<b>Potential outcome if developed lands are included within the interior of a MTSA</b>
<b>Single and Semi - Detached Homes</b>	Typically excluded from MTSA if considered little redevelopment potential until 2041	May be considered areas for future intensification
<b>Townhouses</b>	Included in MTSA	Considered an intensified use and not likely to be redeveloped
<b>Apartments</b>	Included in MTSA	Considered an intensified use and not likely to be redeveloped
<b>General Industrial</b>	Typically excluded from MTSA if considered little redevelopment potential until 2041	Consideration for future intensification
<b>Prestige Industrial</b>	Included in MTSA	Considered an intensified use and may have further intensification potential
<b>Commercial</b>	Included in MTSA	Considered areas for future intensification
<b>Office</b>	Included in MTSA	Considered an intensified use and not likely to be redeveloped
<b>School</b>	Excluded from MTSA if not planned for closure by respective school board	May be considered for redevelopment and land area used within MTSA calculation
<b>Park</b>	Excluded from MTSA	May be considered for redevelopment and land area used within MTSA calculation
<b>Natural Areas</b>	Generally, excluded from MTSA, but may be included to maintain a logical MTSA boundary	Not considered for redevelopment however land area used within MTSA calculation

Not all of York Region's proposed MTSA boundaries adhere to this approach. The areas where there is a difference in approach are identified below. Alternative boundaries recommended by Vaughan planning staff are included in Attachment 2.

**Existing single detached homes should be excluded from the MTSA boundaries of the following:**

- MTSA 8 - Wigwoss-Helen Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station
- MTSA 9 - Pine Valley BRT Station
- MTSA 14 - Keele BRT Station
- MTSA 17 - Taiga BRT Station
- MTSA 19 - Atkinson BRT Station
- MTSA 20 - Bathurst-Highway 7 BRT Station

**Parkland should be excluded from the boundaries of the following MTSA:**

- MTSA 19 - Atkinson BRT Station
- MTSA 71 - Royal Orchard Subway Station

**The stormwater management pond should be excluded from the MTSA boundary of the following MTSA:**

- MTSA 57 - Rutherford GO Station

**Core Features, as per Schedule 2 – Natural Heritage Network to the Vaughan Official Plan, 2010, should be excluded from the boundary of the following MTSA:**

- MTSA 15 - Concord BRT Station

**York Region District Schoolboard lands should be excluded from the boundaries of the following MTSA:**

- MTSA 8 - Wigwoss-Helen BRT Station (Woodbridge College)
- MTSA 19 - Atkinson BRT Station (Rosedale Heights Public School and Westmount Collegiate Institute)

**NOTE: Preliminary comments from York Region staff support the exclusion of Woodbridge College from MTSA 8, and Rosedale Heights Public School from MTSA 19**

The York Region District Schoolboard has confirmed the noted school sites have not been identified for a potential accommodation review, which would be required prior to



any school closures. They are not anticipating these schools will close within the next five years.

#### MTSA minimum density adjustments recommended to achieve Provincial objectives

The Growth Plan outlines minimum density requirements for subway, BRT and GO station MTSA's. The Region can increase the minimum density or recommend a lower minimum density for these MTSA's. Provincial approval is required for a lower minimum density requirement, and justification must be provided on why the Provincial minimum standard cannot be met.

Through the VOP update, the City can set a maximum density and a target density between the minimum and the maximum densities for each MTSA. The preference is for each MTSA to have a range between the minimum and maximum density to provide flexibility in built form. The following outlines two MTSA's where Vaughan planning staff recommends an alternative minimum MTSA density versus the density proposed by the Region.

- MTSA 1 - Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC):
  - Provincial minimum density requirement is 200 PJH
  - York Region proposed minimum density is 500 PJH
  - Ultimate PJH based on existing VOP 2010 is below this minimum at 484 PJH
  - Recommend 400 PJH as a lower minimum

**NOTE: Preliminary comments from York Region staff support a lower density of 400 PJH for MTSA 1**

- MTSA 2 - Highway 407 Subway Station:
  - Provincial minimum density requirement is 200 PJH
  - York Region proposed minimum density is 200 PJH
  - Ultimate PJH based on VOP 2010 policies is zero (0) PJH
  - Lands are within the Parkway Belt West Plan Area; therefore, no density is expected for the lands (subway station site)
  - City and York Region do not have authority to designate intensification to these lands unless the Parkway Belt West Plan is amended
  - Recommended minimum is zero (0) PJH
  - Including a minimum density on these lands that cannot be achieved may put further density pressures on the VMC and Pioneer Village MTSA's

**NOTE: Preliminary comments from York Region staff support seeking an alternative PJH of zero (0) until such a time that MTSA 2 lands are removed from the Parkway Best West Plan Area**

## **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact resulting from this report. The MTSA policies applicable to Vaughan will be implemented and funded through the existing Official Plan Review budget.

## **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

Vaughan will continue to work with York Region to refine the proposed MTSA boundaries in order to implement the MTSA policies through the Municipal Comprehensive Review and VOP review.

Five (5) of Vaughan's MTSAs are also within the City of Richmond Hill and/or the City of Markham. These MTSA boundaries and densities, and distribution of densities will be dependent on the respective municipalities' comments to York Region on the MTSA boundary and the development that occurs within the boundary of the neighbouring municipality.

Vaughan planning staff is typically circulated and provided with the opportunity to comment on development applications proposed on adjacent lands in neighbouring municipalities. In addition, two of Vaughan's MTSAs border the City of Toronto. The character of the development occurring in adjacent municipalities may impact the character of the development within the MTSA in Vaughan.

## **Conclusion**

Vaughan planning staff has identified minor amendments to York Region's proposed MTSA boundaries and minimum densities, as outlined in this report, that should be forwarded for York Region's consideration.

**For more information**, please contact: Fausto Filipetto, Manager of Long-Range Planning at [Fausto.Filipetto@vaughan.ca](mailto:Fausto.Filipetto@vaughan.ca) or at 905-832-8585, extension 8699.

## **Attachments**

1. Proposed Major Transit Station Areas in the City of Vaughan
2. Comments on York Region's Proposed Boundaries and Proposed Minimum Density Requirements for Vaughan Major Transit Station Areas, Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, October 2019

**Prepared by**

Ash Faulkner, Planner, Extension 8733

Fausto Filipetto, Manager of Long-Range Planning, Extension 8699