

## **URA COMMENTS ON UPDATING MARKHAM CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN**

August 20, 2020

On the behalf of the Unionville Residents Association please see our comments regarding the Engagement meeting number 2. I am acting as the point person for the URA on the secondary plan liaison. Please address any response or commentary to me and I will distribute the matter. Please acknowledge receipt of these comments.

Thank you;

Rick Tranquada

Unionville Residents Association comments to the August 11 Engagement meeting.

General comments on the process:

1. We recognize that these engagement sessions are meant to be high level to garner input and identify principles. We have minimal objection to anything floated at these meetings. Ultimately though, the details matter.
2. We sent you a note August 4 indicating 25 area of detail that are of great importance to us. We will continue to track these. (*appended to the end of this note*)
3. We want to be intimately involved in the Sept. workshop where presumably these details will be tackled
4. Councilor McAlpine has suggested that the Markham Centre Advisory Cttee be revived. URA was a founding member of the previous committee and we would support this revival.
5. Failing this we feel a meeting between URA and the consultants to discuss their latest thinking on our list is needed.

Our comments on the higher-level material from the August 11 Engagement meeting are summarized as follows:

1. The extent of the secondary plan has proven to be quite large and distracts from the focus of planning for the core urban area. The planner, Gladki Planning Consultants, has identified a remedy – the use of precincts. As the massive scope of the secondary plan exercise is set, then the work around appears to be a solution. However, several of the precincts seem to be only marginally related. Care will be needed to retain focus on the core area and somehow provide a linked plan to precincts – all within the timeline and funding for the secondary plan work.
2. URA remains concerned that the core urban area – controlled by a handful of developers – will ultimately be tailored to their wishes. For instance, designated key public uses –

such as a public square and parkland – in the core area will be challenged and disputed, and ultimately compromised. The urban area cannot descend into a collection of high rise residential buildings.

3. Although not part of the study area, Unionville Mainstreet should be considered for compatibility. The Markham Centre Plan needs to respect the historic nature of Main Street.
4. The discussion related to the relocation of the City Hall to the new urban area is not essential in the Association's point of view. The City Hall could remain where it is with a retrofit to the building to address deficiencies and an intensification of the land parcel. More important would be a public square in the new urban area.
5. The Rouge Valley green space is a key natural element. Incorporating adjacent land use would be very welcome. Restaurants, amenities and public use linked to the creek would be ideal.
6. The goal to not only provide trails through the natural valley but to provide road sections tailored to pedestrian and bicycle use is essential. It is quite important to interlink the two approaches.
7. The consultant obtained a good cross section of comments on the characteristics of a "great downtown". We have nothing to add in that regard, other than the comments and concerns set out above. However, we would like to see the compiled list.
8. To bring reality to the process, at some point, a constraints review will be required.

### **EMAIL SENT TO CITY STAFF, AUGUST 4, 2020**

The Unionville Residents Association (URA) has formed a subcommittee to track and respond to the Markham Centre Secondary Plan Update. Most of Markham Centre falls within our geography and we have been involved with developments and planning in Markham Centre for decades. We realize that the July and August virtual engagement meetings will likely be high level, to educate and solicit feedback from the general public. We presume the detail work will be at and following the September virtual workshop.

We subscribe to the vision and guiding principles for Markham Centre. However, the details matter. We have developed a series of key questions/issues that we anticipate the Secondary Plan will address. They are not a complete list of everything the Secondary Plan will contain, but they reflect our current priorities. They are listed below as a FYI to you and for us to track and evaluate as the Plan develops.

### **Land Use**

- Residential – what is the new population, unit count, location of buildings, heights? How was this population number determined?
- Employment – what is the new number of jobs, location of buildings? Per the Mayor's question, should office buildings be dispersed across Markham Centre, or concentrated somewhere? How was the jobs number determined?

- Retail/Commercial – where to locate and how much?
- Parkland – where to locate and how much? Will the City accept strata parks?
- Recreational Playing Fields – where to locate and how much?
- Community Centres/Libraries – where to locate, what sizes?
- Schools – where to locate?
- Road Network – what is the plan? Has traffic modeling been done to show the network can handle the demand?
- Mobility Hub design - location of the rapid transit lines, other uses
- Off-road Parking – above ground, below ground, shared/communal?
- On-road Parking – yes/no? Parking bays? Meters?
- Trail Network – what is the plan?
- Can there be a boardwalk along the rail corridor to Unionville Main St?

### **Built Form**

- How can we maximize benefit of Rouge River while still protecting habitat, e.g. riverside park? riverside café?
- Can we specify high quality streetscape and public realm (light fixtures, trees, wide sidewalks, benches, bike racks, art)?
- Can we specify the road width to support cycling?
  - Collector roads – wide enough for 2 buffered bike lanes
  - Local roads –?
- Can we specify environmentally friendly buildings (LEED standard, green roof, EV charging, pneumatic waste disposal, etc.)?
- Public square – where, how big, co-locate with civic centre and library?
- Civic Centre – what are the plans, relocate to centre of MC?
- Can we limit the height and floor plate size of podiums, to avoid massive slabs?
- Affordable housing – impact of inclusionary zoning in MTSAs, senior housing?
- Student housing – where, how big?
- Can something be done to help small retail in mixed use buildings?
- Can something be done to keep Markham Centre multicultural?
- Should smart city concepts be included?
- Is a dog park needed?

We look forward to continued dialogue on this badly-needed project.

Peter Miasek  
URA Past President