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Written Submission regarding Markville Secondary Plan (MSP) Study
Draft Final Study Report

Sent via Email to Markham Development Services Committee Agenda Item 9.1 - June 10th, 2025

This is an official communication of the Unionville Residents Association (URA). We wish to comment on the Draft Final Study Report of the Markville Secondary Plan (the “Report”) for the DSC and Markham City planning staff to incorporate into the final MSP.

We reviewed the Report against the Key Policy Requests from Impacted Communities in the Open Letter (the “Letter”) that was sent to Markham City Council and Planning Staff by the seven community associations, including URA, on Oct. 3, 2024. We acknowledge and appreciate that some of our suggestions and concerns raised in the Letter were addressed and incorporated in the Report. These include increasing the proportion of larger residential units (2+ bedrooms) and increasing the ratio of jobs/residents from 8/28 in the 2023 Emerging Concept to 15/26.5 now.

However, we would like to comment on the following aspects that have not been properly dealt with or need improvement in the Report.

1. Density is too high and should not exceed 200 people + jobs per hectare.

In the Report, the planned population density is close to 400 people + jobs / hectare, with the majority (260 /hectare) being people (residents). For comparison, downtown Toronto is at about 416 people / hectare. However, downtown Toronto is supported by subway lines, multiple GO Train lines, other ground transportation networks and a very large number of jobs accessible by walking and cycling. No report / study we have seen so far can support this level of density in MSP area, even with the assumed future infrastructure improvements mentioned in the report. As discussed in items below, we expect gridlock and a massive parkland deficiency. We urge the DSC to request staff to provide a rationale/reason why they are trying to squeeze such a large population and jobs into this location.

2. Where is the Multi-Mode Transportation Study? Gridlock is the one of the key concerns of the community. We have yet to see this study, however, as per our deputation regarding the CF Markville OPA (April 22, 2025), we have a good idea what it will say because CF Markville submitted a study as part of their application. The CF study assumed a similar rapid transit network as contained in the MSP Report, and also assumed a very optimistic transit mode share (e.g. 44% outbound morning peak - even the recent Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan, with 3

subway stops and BRT on Steeles, only assumes 39% transit share!) The CF modeling then showed that, for 9,000 people, the intersections would operate under “busy but acceptable conditions”. Now, let’s triple the population to 26,000. **It’s not hard to predict gridlock with three times more population.** The transportation study is key to determine what density can be realistically planned in the MSP. We have been waiting for the study report a year now. Where is the report? **Without it, the City must not finalize the MSP.**

3. Mismatch of MSP and the approved CF Markville Official Plan Amendment (OPA). Density in other MSP areas must be reduced to offset the higher density in CF Markville OPA.

The Report has much lower density and building heights for the CF Markville area than what have been approved in the CF Markville OPA (page 52 and 53). **Staff must reduce the density and building heights in other areas, otherwise the overall MSP density would be even higher than 400 people + jobs per hectare!**

4. Phase 1 stage-gate thresholds are not enough to ensure the infrastructure can support the population growth. We ask the staff to include the readiness of Bus Rapid Transit on McCowan road to Phase 1 thresholds. As mentioned in previous deputations, the intersection of McCowan and Highway 7 Road is already near capacity. Having BRT on Highway 7 alone will not provide sufficient public transportation to accommodate the new population in Phase 1. The City should consider splitting Phase 1 into 2 Phases and set more appropriate stage gates for each, including McCowan BRT. It will also help reduce the impact of constructions to existing communities and chaotic traffic conditions in the area.

5. Use Jobs/Residents ratio as part of the stage-gate thresholds. As stated above, we are supportive of the increased jobs in the current MSP. We recognize that other developments in Markham have often found it difficult to attract jobs, meaning that constructing the required office facilities is often deferred well into the future. We do not want Markville to become a bedroom community. We recommend that a jobs/residents ratio be included in the Phase 1 and 2 stage-gate thresholds.

6. Building heights south of Bullock Drive at the McCowan intersection should be no more 20 stories. The Report plans 40 story buildings in these two corners. We ask the staff to lower them to no more than 20 to mitigate the negative impact on existing homes and Centennial Park. Building heights along McCowan should be reduced to 8 from 15, consistent with 2023 draft.

7. Parkland deficiency of 50% even under the reduced standard is concerning. The staff report stated that in the current Report, the area has a 50% deficiency in parkland. We request this be addressed and parkland space be sufficiently included in the plan area.

8. Parking details are not provided. We need to understand more on how the MSP will achieve 0.4 parking spots/unit.

9. We recommend the City consider building another pedestrian crossing over the tracks to the west of McCowan, in addition to the crossing east of McCowan. This will help encourage more residents to walk or bike to the Centennial Go Station by shortening distance.

Thank you very much for your attention to these matters. We look forward to any feedback.

Unionville Residents Association