

Consultants present phase one paper for King's Official Plan review

By Angela Gismondi

Growth management is the focus of phase one of the King Township Official Plan Review.

'One King,' the phase one background and information paper for Official Plan Review, was presented to council at the March 23 meeting by Nick McDonald of Meridian Planning Consultants. In addition to background information, the document provides some key findings with respect to the Township's growth and conformity requirements. Recommendations for policy direction were not included in the paper and will be part of phase two of the study.

According to York Region's Official Plan, the Township is required to plan for a population growth from 20,300 in 2006 to 34,900 in 2031, explained McDonald. The plan indicates a minimum of 920 new dwelling units (about 2,390 people) should be planned for in the built-up area in King by 2031. In terms of possible intensification areas, McDonald said there may be potential for approximately 620 additional intensification units allocated in the built up area of King City (about 1,278 people), 415 additional intensification units (1,365) in the built up area of Nobleton and 45 additional units (237 people) in the built up area of Schomberg. Land use considerations, compatibility, natural hazards and site specific considerations may affect that potential.

The analysis confirmed that the Township can accommodate the Region's minimum intensification target by 2031 and that it may even be possible for the Township to exceed the Region's minimum intensification target since a total of 1,510 dwelling units (about 4,258 people) can potentially be accommodated in the built up areas of the Township.

Because the Region requires a minimum of 2,400 people to be accommodated through intensification, about 12,200 people need to be planned for in the Township's designated Greenfield area to meet the Region's overall population target of 34,900 by 2031.

However, the Township will not be able to meet that target if the densities that currently apply in the designated Greenfield areas remain unchanged and if no more than 920 units in total are developed by 2031 through intensification.

The Township also needs to consider how future development can be accommodated in King, explained McDonald. The Township can either support an increase in the number of intensification units to be accommodated within the built up area or an increase in the densities permitted in the designed Greenfield area to make up the shortfall. The Township could also support a marginal increase in intensification within the built up area and a marginal increase in densities permitted in the Greenfield area. Both options would allow the Township to meet the Region's overall population target and therefore an expansion to King's urban area boundaries would not be required.

In terms of employment forecast, the York Region Official Plan indicates that King Township is required to plan for employment growth from 7,100 jobs in 2006 to 11,900 jobs in 2031, which translates to an increase of 4,800 jobs.

Two types of jobs need to be planned for, said McDonald - employment land employment which includes traditional industrial jobs such as warehouses, manufacturing and processing and population related employment which includes jobs associated with new community development such as schools, personal service and retail.

King currently has about 80 hectares of vacant employment land. If it's developed at 25 jobs per hectare, 2,000 employment land jobs could be accommodated.

'This has the potential to increase significantly in the event that a major office project were developed,' said McDonald.

As for population related employment, based on existing densities, there is a potential for up to 1,315 new jobs in the Township's designated Greenfield area as a result of all new growth. There is also a potential for 285 new jobs to be accommodated in the Township's built up area. The number of population related jobs would be greater if the intensification in the built up area is increased or if density permissions are increased in order to meet the region's population growth target. There would be a potential for a total of up to 1,744 new population related jobs as a result of a total increase of 14,000 people in the built up area and the designated Greenfield area.

The Township will also experience new job growth in other ways, McDonald said. The new growth will come from major institutional uses such as Seneca College, the Koffler Scientific Reserve, St. Thomas of Villanova College and Country Day Schools. New job growth will also come for the agricultural sector, which currently employs about six per cent of the labour force. The report concluded that the Township will be able to accommodate employment growth forecasted by the Region by 2031 and that no additional land is needed for employment at this time.

The phase one paper will be available for public comment until April 30.