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Marketing the Corridors: Planning Initiatives Information Report

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In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any member of Council may make a request to the Town Clerk that this Report be placed on an upcoming Committee of the Whole agenda for discussion.

Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to provide an update to Council regarding the completion of Planning and Building Services' components of the 'Marketing the Corridors' campaign.

Background

Approximately 3 years ago, a series of cross-departmental initiatives were identified in order to facilitate the redevelopment of the Yonge Street and Davis Drive corridors. This project became known as the 'Marketing the Corridors' campaign, and various departments were tasked with determining and implementing ways to encourage the redevelopment of the Yonge Street and Davis Drive corridors. Planning and Building Services was responsible for many of these initiatives, which have now been completed.

Discussion

The 'Marketing the Corridors' campaign generally consists of three components:

1. Community Investment Brand/Marketing and Communications Strategy - Headed by Economic Development and Corporate Communications, this initiative involves the creation of a print and digital marketing strategy intended to attract further development and sustainable interest in Newmarket's corridors.

2. Engagement with landowners of key properties - Various members of the Town's senior staff and elected officials meet regularly with developers and owners of strategic landholdings along the corridors to advise on the Marketing the Corridors campaign and obtain information on any redevelopment plans.
3. Planning policy initiatives - As discussed in the balance of this Report (in chronological order).

1. Enactment of the Urban Centres Secondary Plan

The Urban Centres Secondary Plan provides a clear long term vision for the area, setting out future land uses, heights, densities, parks/open space areas, street networks and urban design policies. As is typically the case with major planning policy documents, it was appealed by various landowners shortly after it was approved by the Region. More specifically, the Plan was subject to five appeals and staff spent much of **2016 and early 2017** working with these appellants through mediation to resolve their issues and avoid a full OMB hearing. Currently, four of the five appeals have been settled and the remaining appeal (the Estate of Thomas Mulock) is anticipated to be withdrawn upon the closing of the sale of the property to the Town at the end of October 2018.

Having an Urban Centres Secondary Plan in force and effect is essential in providing a clear vision, and removing uncertainty, for developers regarding re-development potential in these areas.

2. Parking Reductions within the Urban Centres

Parking comprises one of the most significant hard costs of development. The below table (taken from the Parking Standards Background Study for the Urban Centre Zoning By-law) summarizes the cost per parking space:

Structure Type	Minimum	Maximum	Average
Above Ground	\$22,390	\$38,190	\$31,600
Below Ground	\$34,240	\$63,210	\$44,770

This hard cost of development remains consistent regardless of where the development is taking place. In an effort to be as competitive as possible and encourage redevelopment, an initiative was undertaken to reduce the amount of required parking within the Urban Centres. This measure is further supported by its positive social effects, including encouraging transit usage and active transportation, as well as mitigating the negative urban design impacts to the public realm that result from an over-abundance of parking.

Reduced parking requirements were prepared by staff, which were approved in **February, 2017** through an amendment to the Town's Zoning By-law 2010-40 specific to the Urban Centres, and have since been incorporated into the Urban Centres Zoning

By-law (as discussed in number 9 below). These new parking standards include ranges consisting of minimums that are meaningful yet achievable, and maximums that are near the previously existing standards. Having a maximum parking requirement is relatively uncommon but is recognized as being one of the most effective and progressive means to achieve a walkable, transit supportive, mixed use community.

3. Process Change: Concurrent Planning Applications

Processing multiple planning applications concurrently is known to accelerate the planning review process, when multiple applications are submitted. Typically, multiple planning applications are submitted to the Planning Department, which are then processed in a sequential manner. For example, an Official Plan Amendment is processed and approval obtained, followed by the processing and approval of the Zoning by-law Amendment, followed by the processing and approval of the Site Plan application. This is a standard practice, however it results in a lengthy overall planning process.

In 2016, staff trialed processing concurrent applications for a specific development consisting of two planning applications (Zoning By-law Amendment and Site Plan); the results of which showed a quicker and more efficient process, and received significant support from applicants. Therefore, in **2017** staff began implementing this practice on a regular basis.

4. Adoption of the Parkland Dedication By-law

The Town's authority to request parkland as part of a development application was historically provided through an Official Plan policy. In order to provide a more detailed understanding of the Town's parkland requirements, staff prepared a Parkland Dedication By-law which was approved in **October, 2017**.

The Parkland Dedication By-law sets out which forms of parkland are acceptable, in which locations. For example, the by-law allows more urban forms of parkland such as urban squares, plazas, pocket parks, sliver spaces, strata parks, pedestrian mews and Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) within the Urban Centres. In addition, the by-law sets a competitive parkland requirement rate that is comparable with other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area. Parkland Dedication By-laws are very common tools found in many municipalities to provide predictability and clarity on a municipality's parkland requirements.

5. Approval of Height & Density Bonus Implementation Guidelines

The Planning Act allows municipalities to permit increases in the height and/or density above what is in the existing zoning, in return for the provision of community benefits (e.g. cultural facilities, public art, streetscape improvements). However, the Planning Act requires that in order for municipalities to be able to pursue these community

benefits with developers, such policies must be included in the Official Plan and/or Secondary Plan. Such policies were included in the Urban Centres Secondary Plan, however because they are high level planning policies, they do not contain a lot of implementation detail.

In an effort to provide this detail, staff prepared “Implementation Guidelines for Section 37 of the Planning Act (Height & Density Bonusing) which was approved in **November, 2017**. These guidelines set out the actual process that must be followed for a developer to pursue additional height and/or density, including the roles of the applicant, staff and Council. Furthermore, the document contains the mathematical formula for calculating the dollar value of the increased height and/or density, on which the community benefits must be calculated. This document provides clarity and predictability regarding height and density bonusing that is valued by developers.

6. Refreshed the Site Plan Process

Site plan approval is a technical design refinement tool authorized by Section 41 of the Planning Act and is used to regulate certain external building, site, and boulevard design matters. The Town approved its first Site Plan Process Manual in 2008 and since that time it has been used to process all new industrial, commercial, institutional, and many multi-unit residential developments. However, since 2009 the planning policy context of the Town has changed, and staff have identified improvements that can be made to the process.

Staff prepared a new manual which was approved in **November, 2017**. This new manual includes extensive changes to the site plan review process to increase efficiency, improve design standards, address lessons learned, and enhance guidance for applicants. The new manual provides greater usability, efficiency and predictability in the Town’s site planning process.

7. Updated Servicing Allocation Policy

The amount of water and wastewater servicing that is available is distributed to local municipalities from York Region, based on the physical capacity of the overall regional network. Local municipalities, including the Town of Newmarket, then allocate this servicing to proposed developments based on their local strategies. The Town’s Servicing Allocation Policy provides this strategy.

The original version of the Policy was adopted by Council in 2009 and has undergone a series of updates since that time. These updates reflect the fact that servicing allocation is a highly constrained resource for the Town. The policy prioritizes allocation to the Urban Centres and has most recently been updated by staff to include the Inflow and Infiltration Reduction Program, a Strategic Condominium Reserve, and additional emphasis and clarity regarding affordable housing. The current version of the policy was approved in **May, 2018**.

8. Re-activated & Refreshed the Development Charges Deferral Policy

Deferring Development Charges is a practice that encourages re/development by allowing the developer to delay the payment of development charges to the municipality until revenue is generated by the sale/rental of units. In 2012 the Town approved its first Development Charge Deferral Policy, however this policy contained a sunset clause, causing the policy to expire on December 1, 2014.

Staff subsequently made significant revisions to the policy to align it with other newly created policies including the Urban Centres Secondary Plan and the updated Servicing Allocation Policy. The new Development Charges Deferral Policy was then approved in **May, 2018**. This policy sets out two options for deferring the Town's development charges: a Standard Approach (36 months), and an Enhanced Approach (48 months). The policy describes criteria and process for each of these approaches.

9. Approval of the Urban Centres Zoning By-law

Most recently, the Urban Centres Zoning By-law was approved. Work on this project began in 2016 with the goal of creating a separate zoning by-law specifically for the Urban Centres, which implements the Urban Centres Secondary Plan's land uses, heights, densities and urban design policies at the zoning level. Of specific importance, this document 'zones in' greater heights and densities as a means to add value to these properties within the Urban Centres and encourage their redevelopment.

This was the final, although perhaps the most significant, planning initiative as part of the Marketing the Corridors campaign. The Urban Centres Zoning By-law was approved on **September 24, 2018** and is currently undergoing its statutory appeal period which ends on October 24, 2018.

Conclusion

The aforementioned nine initiatives set the foundation for the intensification of the Urban Centres from a Planning perspective. These new and refreshed policies now reflect the new planning policy framework that has been largely set by the Urban Centres Secondary Plan. In addition, the policies now cross-reference each other as well as policies and programs provided by other governments and agencies (i.e. York Region).

These initiatives will work in conjunction with other 'Marketing the Corridors' initiatives, as described earlier in this Report (particularly the Community Investment Brand/Marketing and Communications Strategy and the discussions with key landowners), in order to create the optimum context for redevelopment.

Business Plan and Strategic Plan Linkages

Well-Equipped & Managed:

Marketing the Corridors: Planning Initiatives

- Balancing an ideal mix of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional land uses.
- Ensuring an appropriate mix of jobs to population and people to industry.
- Providing varied housing types, affordability and densities.

Well-Planned & Connected:

- Planning and managing growth through long-term plans and strategies, supported by short-term action plans.

Consultation

None.

Human Resource Considerations

None.

Budget Impact

None.

Attachments

None.

Approval

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