



Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting

Date of Meeting: November 15, 2023

Report Number: SRPBS.23.030

Department: Planning and Building Services

Division: Policy Planning

Subject: SRPBS.23.030 - Request for Approval - OPA
18.8 Oak Ridges Local Centre (City File MOPA-
23-0003)

Purpose:

A request for approval concerning a municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to the City's Official Plan for the Oak Ridges Local Centre (refer to Appendix A). The OPA seeks to update the Oak Ridges Local Centre designation policies in the Official Plan to guide future development in the Local Centre.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Staff Report SRPBS.23.030 be received.
- b) That Council adopt Official Plan Amendment 18.8 (attached to SRPBS.23.030 as Appendix A), and that the City's Official Plan be amended in accordance with the modifications set out in OPA 18.8; and
- c) That following adoption of the Official Plan Amendment 18.8 by City Council, a copy of the amendment be forwarded to York Region as the approval authority for consideration and approval.

Contact Person:

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Report Approval:

Submitted by: Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Building Services

Approved by: Darlene Joslin, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

Page 2

Executive Summary:

Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 18.8 is one of four area-specific amendments that form part of the Batch 2 amendments of the City's Official Plan Update (OP Update) project. This amendment primarily updates the Oak Ridges Local Centre policies of the Official Plan. In addition, OPA 18.8 recommends modifications to existing policies of the Official Plan to ensure future planning for this area conforms with recent changes to Provincial and Regional policies and represents a comprehensive secondary plan for the Oak Ridges Local Centre area. OPA 18.8 implements many of the Key Directions from the [Key Directions Report](#), and addresses feedback received on the draft OPA. An overview of the policy changes proposed in OPA 18.8 is available in [Staff Report SRPI.23.069](#).

Extensive public consultation has occurred for this OPA and has taken place in tandem with the development of the recommended policy frameworks for the other three Centres that are being recommended to Council for adoption. Following the release of the draft OPA 18.8 on May 11, 2023, a statutory open house under the *Planning Act* took place on June 7, 2023, which was followed by a statutory public meeting on June 20, 2023; beyond these, City staff have also met with a residents association, land owners, and prescribed bodies on the proposed amendment. The City received numerous written submissions in response to OPA 18.8 from the general public, government agencies, and landowners during the public comment period.

The feedback received on OPA 18.8 has generally been positive, with support for a mix of uses and modest levels of intensification in the Oak Ridges Local Centre given its unique and sensitive context and environmental attributes. However, some concerns were raised regarding the heights and densities proposed in the OPA and the impacts on the environment, traffic, transition to adjacent low density neighbourhood lands and the need for public parks and open space to service new growth.

As a result of the feedback received, changes are proposed to the draft of OPA 18.8 released for consultation in May 2023 and presented to Council at the statutory Council Public Meeting (CPM) on June 20, 2023. A summary of these changes are shown in Appendix E to this report.

Overall, City staff note that the majority of the recommended changes to OPA 18.8 are minor and technical in nature, and do not propose substantial modifications to what was presented to Council at the June 20th CPM. Accordingly, these changes are intended to provide additional clarity and certainty to the policy framework for the Oak Ridges Local Centre area to guide development within the Local Centre to 2051 and beyond.

In summary, the changes for OPA 18.8 consist of:

- Modification of the side bar regarding the developable portion of the site area to clarify that hazard lands would not be included;

Page 3

- Modification to the height policy in the OPA (Policy 4.3.2.1(7)) to replace the words “street wall” with “base building” for clarification;
- Modification to remove the term “mid-rise” from the proposed building height policy;
- Removing a policy related to the maximum building height to remove redundancy and repetition;
- Revising the policy related to the gateway to emphasize design excellence and sustainability as key elements to be valued;
- Modification to clarify that the location of parks are conceptually shown on the Schedule and adding a policy to clarify that minor adjustments would not require an amendment to the Official Plan; and
- Modification to Schedule A1 to recognize the proposed boundary expansion of the Local Centre north to Bloomington Road.

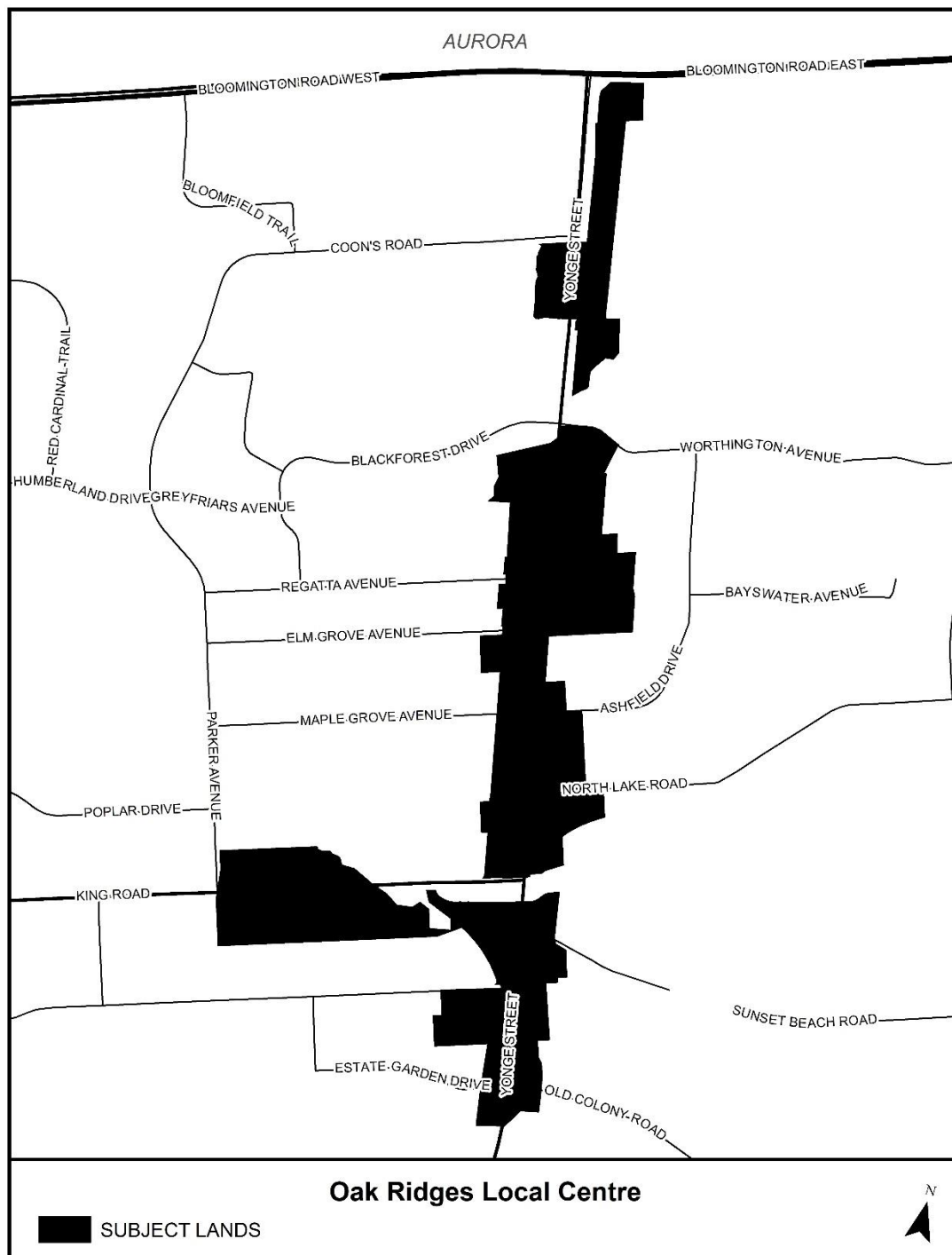
The aforementioned modifications amend the land use and design policies of the Official Plan for the Local Centre which are being recommended to Council for adoption. Overall, OPA 18.8 is consistent with the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement 2020, and conforms to the relevant provincial plans. The amendment also conforms to the updated York Region Official Plan which was approved by the Province in November 2022.

The subsequent sections of this report elaborate on the aforementioned updates and changes to OPA 18.8 which are recommended to Council for adoption in response to the input and feedback received from the public and prescribed bodies. In addition, the staff report also responds to the comments that were raised respecting certain policies and themes in OPA 18.8 but which did not result in the need for further changes to the policies. In this regard, City staff have provided a summary of the issues raised, followed by a response with supporting rationale.

Location Map:

Below is a map displaying the lands subject to Official Plan Amendment 18.8 (“OPA 18.8”). The Official Plan Amendment generally applies to lands as shown below. Should you require an alternative format, please call the contact person listed in this document.

Page 4



Background:

OPA 18.8 for the Oak Ridges Local Centre is one of four centre-specific official plan amendments that have been developed as part of the City's Official Plan Update (OP Update). The three other centre-specific OPAs include: OPA 18.5 Yonge and

Page 5

Carrville/16th Ave Key Development Area (see SRPI.23.066), OPA 18.6 Village Local Centre (see SRPI.23.067), and OPA 18.7 Newkirk Local Centre (see SRPI.23.068). Together, these four centre-specific OPAs form the series of Batch 2 amendments to the City's OP Update¹ and focus on providing area-specific policies to guide future development in the City's emerging growth centres. The four centre-specific OPAs have been developed in accordance with the directions set out in the Official Plan Update [Key Directions Report](#) (the "Key Directions Report").

On June 20, 2023 a statutory Council Public Meeting took place wherein Council considered draft OPA 18.8 in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*. At that meeting, Council received [Staff Report SRPI.23.069](#) for information purposes and directed that all comments on the proposed amendment be referred back to staff for consideration. The extract of this meeting is attached to this report as Appendix F.

Impetus for the OPA:

OPA 18.8 aims to address matters that are important to the long-term planning of the Oak Ridges Local Centre, including the vision for the area, permitted land uses, design elements, public realm, mix of land use, density of development, and recommended adjustments to the boundaries of the Local Centre in order to conform with the York Region Official Plan (2022) (ROP) and Provincial policies. The OPA implements the City Plan Key Directions endorsed by Council in February 2022, and supports the City's [Investment Attraction Strategy](#), [Affordable Housing Strategy](#), and [Parks Plan](#) which all have been approved by Council, as well as the Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan and [Transportation Master Plan](#) which are currently in process. This proposed amendment intends to support economic development and job creation in the City. Furthermore, it also incorporates direction from the ROP regarding the identification of Yonge Street as a Regional Corridor and proposes key changes to the Official Plan by re-designating certain lands from "Neighbourhood" to "Oak Ridges Local Centre".

The [Key Directions Report](#) identified several key policy considerations applicable to the Oak Ridges Local Centre and the Yonge Street Regional Corridor adjacent to the Oak Ridges Local Centre that were to be considered through the development of OPA 18.8. These directions relate to boundary changes, creating a gateway and modern main street, built-form, the environment, non-residential uses, and public realm updates. The Key Directions Report also directed that policy and mapping updates to the City's Official Plan address the four pillars of the OP Update process. The four pillars include: Growing our Economy, Design Excellence, Green and Sustainable, Protect and Enhance. A full description of the proposed OPA and how the four pillars are addressed are described in the corresponding staff report that was presented to Council for information at the June 20th, 2023 Council Public Meeting (See [Staff Report SRPI.23.069](#)).

¹ For more details regarding the City's Official Plan Update, including copies of past staff reports, please see the city's webpage: www.RichmondHill.ca/OPUpdate

Page 6

Summary of Comments Received:

Leading up to this Council meeting, OPAs 18.5, 18.6, 18.7 and 18.8 have been available for review and public comment for over 120 days. Since that time, the City has received written and verbal comments regarding the proposed modifications of the four area-specific OPAs. At the time of writing this staff report, numerous written submissions have been received from the public, stakeholders, and public agencies. The correspondence was submitted to the City's OP Update e-mail address in advance of the Council Public Meeting and also through the Clerk that formed part of the public record at the June 20th Council Public Meeting.

City staff have reviewed, synthesized and assessed the written and verbal comments received on the OPA and have summarized this feedback below. A more fulsome overview of the feedback on OPA 18.8 is set out in Appendix C to this staff report. Through this review, staff are recommending additional modifications to the draft OPA in response to some of the feedback received.

Key Feedback Received from the Public and Stakeholders

The City received the following key comments and feedback on OPA 18.8 respecting the Oak Ridges Local Centre:

- Comments that the proposed building heights are too high and suggestions that the City consider reducing heights from 8 storeys down to 4 storeys;
- Comments that the heights and densities are too low and requests that they be increased;
- Comments related to environmental impacts on the Oak Ridges Moraine, low impact development and bird friendly design;
- Comments regarding transition of development to the surrounding neighbourhood;
- Concerns related to the lack of affordable housing; and
- Concerns related to traffic and traffic safety.

Key Feedback from External Agencies and Prescribed Bodies

OPA 18.8 was circulated to external agencies and prescribed bodies as required by the *Planning Act* on May 11, 2023. Key messages from these agencies received on the Oak Ridges Local Centre are as follows:

- The City did not receive objections to OPA 18.8 from the prescribed bodies. These organizations are: York Region, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), Metrolinx, York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board, Canadian National Railway Company, Bell Canada, and TransCanada PipeLines Limited;

Page 7

- It should be noted that the City did not receive comments from the Indigenous communities, nor did it receive comments from neighbouring municipalities regarding OPA 18.8;
- The two York Region schoolboards provided comments and feedback on the proposed OPA. In meeting with their respective representatives, the York Catholic District School Board did not raise any specific concerns with the amendment and noted that there is generally sufficient capacity in nearby schools to accommodate the proposed increase in population in the Local Centre. The York Region District School Board indicated that due to the significant development in the area, students may need to be accommodated outside of the local community and should the ultimate residential development exceed envisioned targets for the area, the Board may require a new school. With respect to the Conseil Scolaire Viamonde, the City did not receive feedback from the French School board;
- The Region of York provided technical comments on OPA 18.8 regarding density targets, water and wastewater servicing, public health, and water resources. It should be noted that staff met and worked closely with Regional planning staff through subsequent meetings to address their comments;
- The TRCA provided comments on the draft OPA regarding the OPA lands within the floodplain and Special Policy Area and noted that future development in these areas would be subject to flood management policies.

In addition to the foregoing, the following sections of this staff report highlight thematic comments received on OPA 18.8, as well as proposed changes to the amendment with supporting rationale, and areas where no policy changes are warranted/recommended.

Detailed Response to Comments Received and Proposed Changes to OPA

The following feedback and key themes were raised during public consultation on OPA 18.8. These themes represent important aspects of the proposed policy framework that are expected to have the most notable and lasting impacts on the future vision and planning for the Oak Ridges Local Centre over the long-term planning horizon. In that regard and based on a fulsome review of the feedback received, City staff are recommending that additional modifications to the policies and associated schedules of OPA 18.8 be approved by Council in response to the themes as follows. A full list of recommended modifications to OPA 18.8 is attached to this report as Appendix E.

Height

With respect to building heights, staff recommend that a minor revision be made to policy 4.3.2.1 (7) of the OPA to replace the words “street wall” with “base building”. This modification will provide clarity on the maximum height permissions for base building heights and stipulate when the building would need to step back for remaining floors. In

Page 8

addition, staff recommend that policy 4.3.2.1 (8) of the OPA be deleted as it was determined to be redundant and duplicative of the intent of other policies.

Built Form Terminology

Policy 4.3.2.1(7) of the OPA sets out height permissions for various portions of the Local Centre. Staff received feedback with regards to sub-policy (c), which lists maximum mid-rise building heights. The term “mid-rise” as referenced in the policy is not defined. While intended to describe the general built form for the area, the use of the term “mid-rise” in its plain meaning has the potential to cause confusion with the existing definition of *mid-rise* in the City’s Official Plan. The term “mid-rise” as originally proposed in the May 11th 2023 draft of the OPA was not an italicized term, and therefore it was not intended to have the OP definition apply in this policy. Thus, the normal meaning of the word would apply, but this resulted in confusion. As a result, staff are recommending that this term be removed altogether to eliminate any potential confusion with the definition prescribed in the OP. In addition, staff note that the use of the term “mid-rise” in its plain meaning does not materially add any benefit or clarity to the policy wording and therefore can be removed.

Gateway

OPA 18.8 proposes a policy that requires development to provide opportunities for the establishment of a gateway focal point through a combination of architectural design, signage, landscaping, and/or public art at the intersection of Yonge Street and Bloomington Road. A minor modification is proposed to include the words “design excellence” and “sustainability” to emphasize those themes as additional key elements of the gateway feature to be celebrated and valued in the Local Centre.

Other Technical Matters

In addition to the preceding, staff are also recommending that OPA 18.8 be modified to reflect a number of minor technical changes in order to improve readability and to provide greater clarity. The recommended modifications are listed below as follows:

- Adding a new sub-policy (e) to Policy 4.3.2.3 (6) of the OPA to clarify that minor adjustments to the location of parks shown on Schedule F2 would not require an amendment to the OP, provided that the intent of the Plan is maintained.
- Modification to Schedule A1 of the OP to add the proposed boundary expansion of the Oak Ridges Local Centre from Blackforest Drive/Worthington Avenue north to Bloomington Road.
- Modification to include a new sidebar alongside Section 4.3.2.3, in order to provide an explanation regarding the calculation of density. Staff are also recommending proposed modifications to the wording in this sidebar, in order to provide additional clarity and reduce duplication by referring to terms already defined in the OP (such as developable area and hazard lands).

Page 9

- Modification to the preamble to remove a reference to the Regional Corridor regarding the minimum density target since the Growth Plan applies this target to major transit station areas on priority transit corridors, and not to the corridor itself.

Response to Comments Resulting in No Additional Policy Changes to the OPA

The following sections provide responses to comments received, but for which no further policy change is proposed.

Angular Plane

Several comments were received regarding the application of angular plane. In response, staff undertook a detailed review of the City's angular plane policies set out in the Official Plan to determine how these policies align with other municipal land use planning approaches related to transition. Overall, staff found that the City's policies are generally comparable to other municipal approaches and best practices regarding the application of angular plane. As the City continues to urbanize, staff will monitor how other urban jurisdictions apply transition policies in comparable neighbourhoods. In light of the foregoing, Staff are not proposing changes to the City's angular plane policies for the following reasons:

The City's Official Plan includes policies in addition to angular plane requirements to help regulate built form and transition to adjacent low density residential areas. When applied collectively, these policies help to achieve transition without the need to apply aggressive angular plane requirements. These include policies in the City's OP and other development standards regarding built form, massing, at-grade treatments, height, exterior design, streetscape design, sun/shadow studies and wind control, human scale urban design, tower separation, compatibility, setbacks, and base building heights, and requiring urban design reports. The combination of these policies and development standards alongside the application of a 45 degree angular plane requirement helps to achieve a desirable transition in built form. The City's Urban Design Guidelines also reflect many of the urban design elements intended to reinforce human-scale design. Staff will continue to explore opportunities to update this document which may further help address concerns respecting transition to surrounding neighbourhoods.

Height and Density

Comments were received on the proposed heights and densities in the Oak Ridges Local Centre with some stakeholders requesting a decrease in the heights and densities proposed in the OPA, while others requested an increase to the permissions. The height and density policies are intended to consider the existing built context in Oak Ridges which is predominantly low-rise in character while still providing opportunities for intensification and redevelopment to occur in this strategic growth area of the City. In light of the feedback received, staff are not recommending additional changes to the

Page 10

heights and densities in the Oak Ridges Local Centre set out in OPA 18.8 for the following reasons:

Lowering the heights and densities from what is proposed could have potential negative impacts and unintended consequences. Similar to the rationale regarding the request for a stricter angular plane, lowering density permissions can have an impact on the potential number of new units created in the Local Centre, making redevelopment less attractive, and causing redevelopment to occur at a much slower pace. This could further impact the potential for reinvestment to occur. Fewer units can also result in fewer people and jobs which can impact the City's ability to achieve its housing and employment targets and may result in insufficient transit ridership to support the realization of the planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along this portion of Yonge Street. As noted above, there are many OP policies and development standards that address built-form transition to the surrounding Neighbourhood such as maximum street wall heights, human-scale urban design, the stepping back of buildings, and angular plane requirements. The policies are intended to be read together and work in conjunction with the policies of the OPA to support the vision and character of the area.

In addition, while the Oak Ridges Local Centre is located on a future Bus Rapid Transit route, it is not located within a PMTSA where higher levels of intensification are directed. The planned intensification is anticipated to be achieved over the long-term and is intended to support the mobility hierarchy and future Bus Rapid Transit service level along Yonge Street. The City Structure is intended to direct higher levels of intensification to other areas, such as the Richmond Hill Centre and the Key Development Areas to support bus rapid transit and the areas surrounding major transit stations. Within the City Structure, maximum density policies ensure the distribution of growth along the Centres and Corridors is planned appropriately based on context to ensure sufficient infrastructure and services are available. In addition, the maximum height policies are proposed to ensure a certain built form character is strictly maintained in light of the existing physical context. Based on 3D modeling exercises, the densities for the Oak Ridges Local Centre shown on Schedule F1 to OPA 18.8 are intended to support predominantly mid-rise buildings up to 6 and 8 storeys depending on the location. The proposed heights were based on a number of factors such as where growth could be accommodated, transitions to the neighbourhood, "human-scale" urban design, recent development activity, and potential constraints with underground parking in the Local Centre. For most of the Centre, up to 6 storeys is proposed as a modest increase from the current 4 storey maximum in the OP. This increase aligns with the building heights of the existing tallest buildings in the Local Centre (north of King Road at 13042 Yonge Street which is currently under construction and south of King Road at 12925 Yonge Street). Lands with permission for up to 8 storeys are recommended along a portion of the Yonge Street frontage, and not along King Road, to align with the future BRT corridor and to account for opportunities for intensification of existing commercial uses that generally have larger lot depths that could be able to accommodate a compatible built-form transition to the surrounding Neighbourhood.

Page 11

Water and Wastewater Servicing

Comments were received regarding how water and wastewater servicing will support the estimated build out population in the Local Centre. As part of the City's Urban MESP project, an analysis was undertaken through the master planning process to identify whether water and wastewater improvement projects are required to accommodate the future growth. The work undertaken through the Urban MESP project has taken into consideration the proposed level of development in this area as part of the analysis and has indicated that the projected growth for this area can be accommodated.

Traffic

Comments and concerns were received regarding traffic and traffic safety in the area and across the City resulting from the growth proposed through the centre-specific OPAs. Both the Region and City are committed to closely monitoring traffic conditions to identify and implement mitigation measures as needed. As growth occurs, an increasing shift towards alternative modes of transportation, such as transit and active transportation, will be encouraged to help accommodate higher volumes of traffic. This approach not only alleviates congestion but also promotes sustainable and environmentally friendly commuting options. In terms of specific traffic safety concerns, residents can contact the City's Traffic Safety and Operations section to identify issues and address concerns.

Moreover, the City is actively working towards creating 15-minute communities through the OPAs for the four Centres, which are designed to provide a diverse range of amenities and services within shorter distances (i.e. within 15 minutes of travel time) from residents' and workers' homes. By offering a mix of uses, these communities enhance accessibility, enabling individuals to conveniently access necessary facilities without the need for extensive travel. This holistic approach to community planning fosters a higher quality of life, promotes Richmond Hill's evolution into a more urban municipality, reduces dependency on cars, and encourages vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.

The City is also in the process of updating its Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to support planned growth as identified in the OP Update by planning for future transportation infrastructure improvements. These infrastructure improvements have been phased by 2031, 2041, and 2051 horizon years to occur within the City's growth areas, through intensification along transportation corridors and in new greenfield development. The TMP proposes numerous City road network improvement projects (in addition to road projects led by the Region and the Province), and a considerable expansion to the City's active transportation network. These investments need to be supported by additional infrastructure in the transit network, such as the extension of the Yonge subway line to Richmond Hill, and continued expansion in transit service by York Region Transit and GO Transit.

While the TMP supports mobility to help accommodate the growth forecast, it is important to note that congestion is forecast to increase above existing levels, even with

Page 12

the planned transportation investments. During peak travel hours, it is anticipated that the city will continue to experience higher volumes of traffic. The City is optimizing the network to provide operating conditions that remain functional but cannot “build our way out of congestion” with road expansion. A major focus of the TMP is on sustainable travel and making alternatives to the private automobile attractive for trips to accommodate future growth. These principles have helped to inform the recommended policy framework set out in OPA 18.8 for the Oak Ridges Local Centre.

Local Centre Boundary

Staff received comments requesting additional lands be added to the Local Centre boundary near Yonge Street and Bloomington Road. As noted in Staff Report SRPI.23.069, the Local Centre boundary is proposed to be modified to expand the boundary of the Local Centre northwards to Bloomington Road along Yonge Street. This expansion reflects the directions from the Key Directions report and generally applies a similar approach to the depth of the Local Centre designation that currently exists along Yonge Street for consistency. It also provides support for the objectives for the Regional Corridor as identified by York Region with the focus of higher levels of intensification being on Yonge Street, not along Bloomington Road, to see a mixed-use complete community develop over the long term to support the future Bus Rapid Transit route.

Parks

Comments were received regarding the perception of limited parks and urban open spaces in OPA 18.8. As noted in the Basis section of OPA 18.8, the proposed OPA is informed by and implements the planned parks outlined in City’s 2022 Parks Plan. Furthermore, as noted in Staff Report SRPI.23.018, which was received by Council at the January 30, 2023 Special Council Meeting, Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022 changed the *Planning Act* requirements for parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu to provide more certainty in parkland costs in order to facilitate housing development. The Bill 23 changes to the *Planning Act* reduced the amount of parkland/cash-in-lieu of parkland that municipalities are allowed to acquire as a community grows. The reductions specifically relate to areas with growing, intensified and largely vertical communities, for which new maximum parkland caps have been established.

The Oak Ridges Local Centre is already well-served by existing parkland, as there are a number of public parks within a short walking distance of the Centre. In line with the 2022 Parks Plan, OPA 18.8 also includes policies which identify a number of proposed parks including three neighbourhood parks, a linear park, and a community park. Beyond this, the policies of proposed OPA 18.8 encourage new development to contribute urban plazas which are privately-owned, publicly-accessible spaces that help contribute to the public realm and provide many of the benefits of public parks, such as gathering places and connections, acting as local landmarks and establishing an identity for the Local Centre.

The amount of planned parkland identified in OPA 18.8 implements the City’s 2022 Parks Plan service level standard with respect to walking distance to parkland while

Page 13

providing the maximum amount of parkland possible in the Local Centre as a result of the Bill 23 legislative changes to the *Planning Act*.

Bird Friendly Design

Comments were received suggesting that the City consider including policies related to bird friendly design in the Local Centre. OPA 18.8 does not propose any new bird friendly design policies, however development within the Local Centre would continue to be subject to the existing in-force City-wide OP policy (refer to OP Policy 3.2.3 (21)) that encourages development to incorporate bird-friendly design strategies such as reduced reflectivity and transparency of windows. Through a forthcoming OPA in Batch 3 of the OP Update process, staff will continue to review and explore opportunities to update the existing City-wide bird friendly design policies to help reflect best practices to protect, enhance and create bird habitat, as well as reduce threats to birds in an urban environment. In addition to the Official Plan, there are a number of other actions the City is undertaking to help reduce threats to the bird populations and create a more resilient ecosystem for birds and other wildlife to thrive. These include Council's endorsement in March 2023 to become a Bird Friendly City through Nature Canada, pollinator habitat and restoration projects, community tree plantings and updates of the animal control and tree by-laws.

Sustainable Design

Comments were received regarding incorporating sustainable design in development in the Local Centre. OPA 18.8 does not propose new sustainability requirements, however development within the Local Centre would continue to be subject to the existing in-force City-wide OP policies (refer to section 3.2.3) that includes an extensive list of requirements and best practices related to sustainable design. Through a forthcoming OPA in Batch 3 of the OP update process, staff will continue to explore opportunities to update the existing sustainable design policies either at a City-wide and/or Centre-specific basis. In addition, the City's updated Sustainability Metrics Program (SMP) also continues to apply to development at the Site Plan and Plan of Subdivision scale. The Metrics are the City's green development standards that are used to quantify and evaluate sustainability performance of new developments by promoting sustainable design targets that go beyond provincial and municipal requirements. There are 3 performance levels that can be achieved through the SMP – Gold, Silver and Bronze – based on the final sustainability score received. Development applications must achieve a minimum "bronze" performance level to be considered for approval². Staff will continue to monitor the uptake and implementation of the recently updated SMP to understand if further updates may be needed.

² More information on the City's Sustainability Metrics can be found by navigating to the City's website at: <https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/find-or-learn-about/sustainability-metrics.aspx>

Page 14

Low Impact Development

Comments were received related to incorporating low impact development (LID) in the Local Centre. LID refers to techniques that seek to mitigate the impacts of increased runoff and stormwater pollution by managing runoff as close to its source as possible through a set of site design strategies. Given that the Oak Ridges Local Centre is located on the Oak Ridges Moraine, the provision of LID techniques in this area is important to mitigate pollution and runoff, and to advance the policies set out in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan which direct municipalities to incorporate low impact development techniques and green infrastructure elements as part of the management of stormwater. In that regard, the Local Centre would continue to be subject to the in-force City-wide OP policies (refer to Section 3.1.9.3) regarding stormwater management including the requirement to incorporate LID techniques in new development where appropriate. OPA 18.8 would also continue to carry forward existing policies in the Official Plan that require surface parking lots to be designed to include LID techniques. The policies of the Official Plan provides details on the requirements for stormwater management including the requirement to incorporate LID techniques in new development where appropriate. Some examples of LID measures for stormwater volume control could include green roofs, rainwater harvesting, trenches, perforated pipes, bioretention/bioswales, and enhanced grass swales.

Floodplain Requirements

Comments were received regarding the Local Centre boundary located within the floodplain and Special Policy Area. OPA 18.8 does not propose changes to the City's existing floodplain and Special Policy Area policies. Future development and site alteration in the Local Centre would continue to be subject to the applicable policies in the OP (refer to Section 3.2 Environment, Section 3.2.2.4 (Special Policy Areas) and Schedule A7 (Floodplain Regional Areas, Special Policy Area and Flood Vulnerable Areas). These policies set out requirements for development and flood management measures. Also, as noted above, OPA 18.8 proposes a new side bar to clarify that hazard lands would be excluded from the developable area of a site.

Affordable Housing

Comments were received regarding affordable housing. Presently, the Official Plan provides a minimum affordable housing target of 25% of new housing in the City overall. Through a subsequent OPA, the City will update its affordable housing targets and definitions to further implement the direction set out in the 2022 ROP respecting affordable housing.

Planning Analysis:

Under the Ontario land use planning framework, the City of Richmond Hill is subject to the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, and a number of provincial plans, including A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth

Page 15

Plan), the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), and the Parkway Belt West Plan.

Richmond Hill is also a lower-tier municipality, and as such, the City is subject to the Regional Official Plan of its upper-tier municipality – in this case, the Region of York's 2022 Official Plan. City staff reviewed the Regional Official Plan and conclude that OPA 18.8 conforms to the Regional Official Plan. It is important to recognize that OPA 18.8 is one of multiple proposed amendments that together will form the City's Official Plan Update. As noted in the OPA Basis section, the policies of this OPA will conform to provincial and regional plans. Conformity with the York Region Official Plan shall be achieved through a combination of: (1) existing City-wide Official Plan policies; (2) area-specific policies contained in this Official Plan Amendment; and (3) future amendments to the Official Plan to satisfy requirements of the 2022 York Region Official Plan.

The following planning analysis summarizes how OPA 18.8 complies with provincial legislation and policies. More details are provided in Appendix D which provides a fulsome conformity analysis of the relevant provincial and regional policies applicable to OPA 18.8 and how the amendment conforms to those policies.

Provincial Policy Statement, (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) includes policies which encourage compact, mixed-use development to support liveable and resilient communities while considering housing needs. Accordingly, OPA 18.8 is consistent with the policies of the PPS 2020 as it directs higher density development within the Local Centre in a range of forms of residential and non-residential development to support a mix of land uses.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, (2020)

The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)* includes policies which support the achievement of complete communities. It prescribes a minimum density target of 160 residents and jobs per hectare in areas that are served by bus rapid transit (BRT). Accordingly, OPA 18.8 plans for a complete community by integrating a mix of uses in a compact form that provides for amenities and services within a 15-minute walk or 5-minute bike ride. Although the Local Centre is not within a Protected Major Transit Station Area, it is located along a future BRT route on the Yonge Street corridor, and as such, the OPA proposes a more compact urban form of development within the Centre when compared to the surrounding lower density neighbourhood.

Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017)

The *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017)* includes policies which focus and contain urban growth within settlement areas through a mix of uses, transit-supportive densities, and minimizing impacts to ecological functions and hydrological features. Accordingly, OPA 18.8 directs higher density development to occur within the Local Centre, which is located within the Settlement Area, and requires a mix of uses with

Page 16

higher densities aligning with future BRT stations to support transit. Density allocations take into consideration environmental constraints in this area including the presence of the Moraine, key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features and functions, and hazard lands.

Regional Policy Considerations:

The York Region Official Plan (2022) was approved by the Province in November 2022 and identifies the Oak Ridges Local Centre and portions of lands presently designated Neighbourhood along Yonge Street north of Blackforest Drive/Worthington Avenue as being located along the Yonge Street Regional Corridor. The ROP directs that regional corridors function as urban main streets and be planned with a compact, mixed use, well designed, pedestrian friendly and transit supportive built form and allow for active transportation. The policies of the ROP also direct that the scale and form of development address the local context, features and functions of the Oak Ridges Moraine. Accordingly, OPA 18.8 permits low- and mid-rise development to meet the minimum density target, while including policies related to enhancing the natural features and ecological character of the Moraine through urban design. Also, OPA 18.8 permits non-residential uses throughout the Local Centre and requires development to provide non-residential space for properties that front Yonge Street and that the existing amount of non-residential gross leasable floor area be retained.

Local Policy Context and Considerations:

Section 3.1.3 of the Official Plan outlines the City Structure, as well as the intensification hierarchy, which provides clarity and certainty on priority areas where new growth and intensification are directed. OPA 18.8 encompasses an area identified in the OP City Structure as a Local Centre. In accordance with the City Structure, the Oak Ridges Local Centre will accommodate intensification at a scale and intensity that is less than the Key Development Areas and generally less than the abutting Regional Corridor. Local Centres will be important community focal points and will develop as revitalized, mixed-use centres with pedestrian-oriented, human-scaled main streets.

OPA 18.8 also builds upon the existing policy direction from the Official Plan wherein the Plan directs for all relevant policies of the Official Plan to be considered when reviewing and evaluating changes to land use, including any amendments to the Official Plan. The focus of this OPA is to supplement and in some cases amend existing policies of the Official Plan as it relates to the Oak Ridges Local Centre by employing modern approaches to city building and good planning principles. The amendment also satisfies the secondary plan requirements of the Official Plan for this Local Centre, as set out in Section 5 of the City's Official Plan.

Future decisions regarding development in the Oak Ridges Local Centre will rely on policies provided in this OPA in combination with other relevant policies of the Official Plan. It is important to recognize that the balance of Official Plan policies regarding City

Page 17

Vision, City Building, Implementation and Interpretation, must also be taken into consideration and applied as necessary.

Public Consultation:

In addition to the consultation detailed in Staff Report SRPI.23.069, further engagement occurred and has been summarized in a report prepared by LURA Consulting entitled “Phase 3 Batch 2: What We Heard – Official Plan Amendments 18.5, 18.6, 18.7, and 18.8 Summary Report” (refer to Appendix C). The What We Heard report represents a fulsome summary of the feedback received on the proposed amendments on the four growth centres – Yonge Street and Carrville Road/16th Avenue Key Development Area, Village Local Centre, Newkirk Local Centre, and Oak Ridges Local Centre. It provides a high level overview of the feedback and concerns described in earlier sections of this staff report. Comments respecting the other three OPAs are summarized under separate cover in staff reports (SRPBS.23.027, SRPBS.23.028, and SRPBS.23.029). Below is a summary of the consultation engagements and notification associated with the development and formulation of OPA 18.8

Engagement

Staff conducted extensive consultation on OPA 18.8 using a variety of methods, as follows:

In-Person Open House

On June 7, 2023, the City hosted a combined public open house for the four OPAs. The event was held at the McConaghy Seniors' Centre, 10100 Yonge Street from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open House attendees had the opportunity to review material presented on a series of display boards, ask questions to City staff, and provide comments on each of the four proposed OPAs.

The Open House was well attended. The City received 224 registrations for the Open House, and 166 participants attended the Open House event.

Council Public Meeting

A Council Public Meeting, pursuant to Section 26 (3) of the *Planning Act* was held on June 20, 2023, to notify the public and receive comments on the proposed Official Plan Amendments. Members of the public were invited to submit written comments before the meeting and provide oral delegations to Council during the meeting. Overall, 36 written comments were submitted, and 18 requests for oral delegations were received at the Council Public Meeting respecting the four centre-specific OPAs. These submissions included other orders of government, regulatory agencies, property owners and/or their delegated representatives, community associations, individual residents/business owners, and other community members.

Page 18

Stakeholder and Landowner Meetings

Stakeholder meetings with prescribed agencies (Metrolinx, York Region, Alectra, School Boards, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority) occurred in March 2023 to discuss the proposed OPA prior to the public release. Additional follow-up meetings with York Region planning staff occurred in June and September 2023 respectively to discuss additional feedback received. Landowner meetings were held in August and September 2023 to discuss feedback received at the June 20th Council Public Meeting.

Notification

OPA 18.8 has been initiated under Section 17 and 26 of the *Planning Act*. The *Planning Act* requires public consultation on the proposed amendment to be conducted through at least one public meeting with a minimum of 37-days notice issued beforehand. The statutory open house and council public meeting pursuant to the *Planning Act* took place on June 7 and June 20, 2023 respectively. Notice for these events was issued on May 11, 2023 through the City's website, social media, and the Liberal newspaper, and re-issued on May 18, 2023.

Notice for today's meeting regarding the adoption of OPA 18.8 has been provided to all persons who formally requested to the City Clerk to be notified of a decision made by Council with respect to the proposed amendment, as well as to people on the OP Update notification list, and to people who have subscribed to the OP Update webpage.

Next Steps:

Following Council adoption of OPA 18.8, the City Clerk will provide Notice of Adoption to all prescribed bodies and those who have requested to be notified of Council's adoption.

Additionally, the OPA and its associated record will be provided to the Region who is responsible for issuing approval of the Council adopted amendment. As the approval authority, the Region has the authority to approve, modify and approve, or refuse Council's decision to adopt an official plan amendment. Notification of the Region's decision will be issued to all prescribed bodies and to those who have requested notification. Following the 20-day appeal period, if there are no appeals, the amendment will come into force. In the meanwhile, staff will continue to work on the City's Official Plan Update, with public consultation on Batch 3 OPAs to be held in 2024.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

The recommendations of this report do not have any financial, staffing or other implications. The approval of the updated OP policies will require changes to the City's Zoning By-Laws, which are presently under review and for which a separate workplan and budget is established.

Page 19

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

Updating the Official Plan is identified as a Council Priority. OPA 18.8 supports all four of Council's Strategic Priorities by directing the majority of growth to strategic growth areas, such as this Local Centre. The draft OPA also helps to create a strong sense of belonging by diversifying housing choice and enhancing the public realm in this Local Centre. With regards to getting around the City, the draft OPA provides for a fine-grained street network, along with facilities for active transportation and transit expansion. Lastly, the draft OPA promotes fiscal responsibility by coordinating the secondary planning process with infrastructure planning through the Parks Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, and other important City initiatives.

Climate Change Considerations:

OPA 18.8 proposes policies that consider climate change mitigation measures by supporting the creation of a mixed-use complete community to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions through improvements to transportation such as new public streets and cycling connections. These new connections will help provide opportunities for low-carbon transportation options like biking and walking within the Local Centre. OPA 18.8 also helps to reduce emissions by providing policies that support transit-oriented development with higher levels of intensification proposed along the rapid transit routes.

Conclusion:

The purpose of this report is to request that Council adopt OPA 18.8 for Oak Ridges Local Centre. This is a municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment to the City's Official Plan (refer to Appendix A) which seeks to update the Oak Ridges Local Centre designation policies in the Plan. The recommended policies in the OPA address several key directions contained in the City Plan 2041 Key Directions Report endorsed by Council in February 2022 and implement provincial and regional policy directions regarding complete communities. Adoption of this OPA will complete the secondary planning process for the Oak Ridges Local Centre set out in Section 5 of the OP, and will help guide development in this important area of the City.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix A: Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 18.8 – Oak Ridges Local Centre
- Appendix B: Implementing By-law 108-23
- Appendix C: Engagement Summary Report prepared by LURA ("What We Heard Report") Phase 3 Batch 2: What We Heard – Official Plan Amendments 18.5, 18.6, 18.7, and 18.8 Summary Report.
- Appendix D: Provincial and Regional Conformity Table
- Appendix E: Table of Proposed Changes to OPA

Page 20

- Appendix F: Extract from the Council Public Meeting on June 20, 2023

Page 21

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPBS.23.030 - Request for Approval - OPA 18.8 Oak Ridges Local Centre.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- SRPBS.23.030 - Appendix A - OPA 18.8 Oak Ridges Local Centre.pdf- SRPBS.23.030 - Appendix B - Implementing By-law.pdf- SRPBS.23.030 - Appendix C - Phase 3 Batch 2 18.5-8 Engagement Feedback Summary-AODA.pdf- SRPBS.23.030 - Appendix D - Provincial and Regional Conformity.pdf- SRPBS.23.030 - Appendix E - Table of Proposed Changes.pdf- SRPBS.23.030 - Appendix F - Council Extract.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Oct 26, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Maria Flores - Oct 24, 2023 - 4:00 PM

Kelvin Kwan - Oct 26, 2023 - 8:58 AM

Darlene Joslin - Oct 26, 2023 - 10:58 AM