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Subject: Toronto Gore Density Policy Review Study

Secondary Title: Information Report
City- Initiated Official Plan Amendment
Toronto Gore Density Policy Review (Undeveloped Lands)
Ward: 10
City File Number: OPR TGED

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Report Number: Planning, Bld & Ec Dev-2021-322

Recommendations:

1. That the report titled: **Information Report - City Initiated Official Plan Amendment – Toronto Gore Density Policy Review (Undeveloped Lands), Ward 10**, to the Planning and Development Committee Meeting of April 12, 2021, be received;
2. **THAT** Planning, Building and Economic Development Department staff be directed to report back to Planning & Development Committee with the results of the Public Meeting and final recommendations; and,
3. **THAT** a copy of this report and Council resolution be forwarded to the Region of Peel for information.

Overview:

- **The purpose of the Toronto Gore Density Policy Review Study is to assess the existing established estate residential area with a focus on protecting community character and to assess the undeveloped lands in the southern quadrant of Toronto Gore to determine if there is potential to introduce urban densities on full services.**

- In January 2019, staff presented the Phase 1 & 2 Report – Supply and Demand & Recommendations Report prepared by SGL Planning (City’s Consultant) to Planning & Development Committee that provided a policy overview, a summary of the analysis that had been completed to date and preliminary policy options for Toronto Gore. The staff report also recommended that staff proceed with public consultation.
- An open house meeting on the Study was held on March 20, 2019. In addition, an on-line presentation was available for the public to view and provide comments on between July and August 2020.
- Although the Study has included an assessment of the established estate residential area, policy recommendations related to this area of Toronto Gore will be presented at a future statutory public meeting so that additional analysis and further public consultation can be undertaken.
- The purpose of this public meeting is to present a proposed Official Plan amendment that implements the Study recommendations to permit urban densities on full services on the undeveloped lands in the southern quadrant of Toronto Gore.
- This Information Report and the associated public meeting facilitate compliance with the Term of Council “A Well-run City (Good Government)” priority with respect to encouraging public participation by actively engaging the community.

Background:

The Toronto Gore Density Policy Review (the “Study”) was initiated in 2016 to assess both the existing established estate residential community with a focus on protecting community character and also to assess the undeveloped lands in the southern quadrant to determine if there is potential to introduce more urban densities on full urban services. SGL Planning & Design Inc. was hired by the City to complete the Toronto Gore Density Policy Review Study.

The Study includes the lands that are generally bounded by Countryside Drive to the north, Castlemore Road to the south, The Gore Road to the east, and Goreway Drive to the west, along with two areas north of Countryside Drive (see Appendix 1 – Toronto Gore Density Policy Review Study Boundaries).

Area Characteristics

The Toronto Gore is a community of approximately 600 homes located on large, estate properties. The average lot size in the Toronto Gore is approximately 0.8 hectares (2.0

acres). There are approximately 53 vacant lots scattered throughout the Toronto Gore community and larger vacant parcels of land in the southern quadrant, located between McVean Drive and The Gore Road and north of Castlemore Road that have an approximate area of 80 hectares (198 acres).

The Toronto Gore community is characterized as an estate area based on its rural characteristics, such as roads lined with mature vegetation, limited access points to major arterial roads, large single detached dwellings situated away from the road, considerable building setbacks to adjacent dwellings and the expansive views across the community into the adjacent valleys.

Recommendation Report

A Recommendation Report on the Study was approved by Planning and Development Committee in January 2019. The purpose of that Report was to present the Phase 1 & 2 Report – Supply and Demand & Recommendations Report prepared by SGL Planning and Design Inc. The January 2019 Report provided a policy overview, a summary of the analysis that had been completed to date and it also included preliminary policy options. Below is a summary of the information provided in the January 2019 Report:

- The supply of estate residential lots (approximately 138 lots) available in Toronto Gore could potentially be greater than the anticipated demand over the next 25 years.
- The demand for estate residential housing can be accommodated within the existing estate residential communities of Brampton, and that more urban densities could be considered on the currently undeveloped contiguous lands located in the southern quadrant of Toronto Gore.
- Two potential growth scenarios were recommended for the undeveloped lands that included redesignating all of the lands “Upscale Executive Housing”. A second option was presented that included redesignating a portion of the undeveloped estate residential lands from “Estate Residential” to “Upscale Executive Housing” and redesignating of a pocket of land adjacent to The Gore Road from “Estate Residential” to “Low and Medium Density Residential”.
- Policy options for the established estate residential area proposed adding new Official Plan policies that would require new estate housing and lot severances to respect and reinforce the existing character of the established estate residential area. No changes were recommended to amend the minimum lot area of 2.0 acres as prescribed by the Estate Residential policies in the Official Plan.

The January 2019 Recommendation Report also recommended that staff undertake public consultation to present the preliminary findings and options of the Study.

Public Open House Meetings

A public open house meeting was held on March 20, 2019 at Professor's Lake Recreation Centre to introduce the Study, discuss findings from the background research and analysis and receive feedback from residents on what elements and qualities they felt were important and contribute to the character of their neighbourhood.

The policy options that were presented at the first open house meeting focused primarily on redesignating the undeveloped lands in the Official Plan from "Estate Residential" to "Upscale Executive Housing", which would permit predominantly single detached dwellings with a minimum frontage of 15.2 metres (50 feet) and a maximum net density of 14.5 units per hectare. One of the policy options presented included redesignating a small pocket of land adjacent to The Gore Road from "Estate Residential" to "Residential" to permit a maximum density of 25 units per net hectare. In addition, there were policy recommendations presented to strengthen the Official Plan policy intent to protect the character of the established estate residential area.

After the first open house meeting, the Province released the new Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in May 2019 and released a new Provincial Policy Statement in May 2020. Given the provincial policy direction to build more compact greenfield communities in order to reduce the rate at which land is consumed, SGL amended the proposed policy recommendations for the undeveloped lands after the first public open house meeting. The policy recommendations were amended to propose that the undeveloped lands be redesignated from "Estate Residential" to "Residential" to permit a range and mix of housing types (not solely upscale executive housing). They were also amended to recommend that an appropriate and gradual transition of residential lot sizes be provided between the new residential development and the established estate residential area. These proposed policy recommendations are explained in greater detail within this report.

An on-line presentation was available for the public to view on the City's study webpage on July 16, 2020. The on-line presentation provided an overview of the study, a summary of the comments that were provided at the first open house meeting and a summary of the proposed policy recommendations for the Toronto Gore established estate residential area and the undeveloped lands. Residents were able to provide feedback on the proposed policy recommendations until August 21, 2020.

Current Situation:

A draft Toronto Gore Density Policy Review Report (Phase 1, 2 & 3 Supply and Demand & Recommendations Report) has been prepared by SGL Planning & Design Inc., which discusses the characteristics of the Toronto Gore Neighbourhood, a policy overview, the supply and demand of estate residential housing, considerations for future growth (i.e. servicing, open space, transportation) and preliminary policy recommendations. The Phase 1, 2 & 3 Supply and Demand & Recommendations Report prepared by SGL can be found in Appendix 2.

As noted above, the scope of work of the Study was to assess both the established estate residential area and the undeveloped lands in Toronto Gore. Given the public comments received to date on the draft Study recommendations related to the established estate residential area, it is premature at this time to advance any amendments to the Official Plan to protect the character of this area without undergoing additional analysis and consultation with the public. Therefore, this statutory public meeting is only presenting the proposed policy recommendations for the undeveloped lands in the southern quadrant of Toronto Gore. The policy recommendations for the established estate residential area will be presented at a future statutory public meeting.

Undeveloped Lands in the Southern Quadrant

The findings of SGL's analysis are that estate residential housing will continue to have a limited role in fulfilling future housing demand in Brampton, and that it is appropriate to redesignate the lands in the Official Plan from "Estate Residential" to "Residential" to permit urban densities on the undeveloped lands, which will include providing a full range of housing types. Prior to any development proceeding on the undeveloped lands, it is recommended that a Secondary Plan be prepared to establish the goals and objectives for this new community, including the formulation of land use policies pertaining to density, built form, appropriate transition between the established estate residential community and the undeveloped lands, road and pedestrian connections, open space, natural heritage and servicing.

Although the Phase 1, 2 and 3 Recommendation Report prepared by SGL includes a high-level review of what the development of urban densities on the undeveloped lands will have on the transportation network and servicing infrastructure, and the adequacy of parks and open space areas, it is through the preparation of the Secondary Plan where more detailed background component studies will be prepared, such as subwatershed management, public health, transportation, open space and recreation, urban design and streetscape, heritage, servicing, financial and phasing, community services, and residential and housing allocation.

Proposed Amendments to the Official Plan

To implement the SGL Study recommendations noted above, which is to permit urban densities on the undeveloped lands, the following amendments to the Official Plan are proposed:

1. Redesignate Lands from "Estate Residential" to "Residential"

It is proposed that the portion of the undeveloped lands that are designated "Estate Residential" be redesignated to "Residential" and that a policy be added to the Official Plan to specify that these lands shall be comprehensively planned as part of a future secondary plan in accordance with the policies contained in Section 5.4 – Secondary Plans of the Official Plan.

2. *Policy Specific to the Southwest Quadrant and Future Secondary Plan Process*

It is proposed that a policy be included in the Official Plan to direct that a future Secondary Plan study be initiated and undertaken by the City to comprehensively plan for the undeveloped lands in the southwest quadrant. The new policy that is proposed to be added to the Residential section of the Official Plan will generally include the following:

The Secondary Plan for the Toronto Gore undeveloped lands shall include the following policies:

- a) To provide a gradual and sensitive transition in density between the adjacent established estate residential area and the Gore Meadows Secondary Plan area;
- b) To provide a diverse range and mix of housing options, including affordable housing;
- c) That no vehicular connections between the adjacent established Estate Residential Area and the Gore Meadows Secondary Plan area shall be provided;
- d) That the extension of Ryckman Lane shall be prohibited;
- e) That vehicular access to and from the Gore Meadows Secondary Plan area will be from McVean Drive and The Gore Road;
- f) That development within the Gore Meadows Secondary Plan area shall be on full urban municipal services;
- g) That the existing Natural Heritage System shall be protected and enhanced; and
- h) That pedestrian and cyclist linkages between the Natural Heritage System and Gore Meadows Community Centre shall be provided where it has been demonstrated that the functions of the Natural Heritage System will not be adversely impacted.

3. *Remove the “Unique Communities” Designation on Schedule 1 - City Concept*

The Toronto Gore Estate Residential Area is designated as a “Unique Community” on Schedule 1 - City Concept of the Official Plan because it is characterized by large, individual lots which do not require full urban services. The estate residential area of Brampton offers a rural lifestyle within an urban setting and adds to the City’s diverse housing choice as well as sense of identity. With the proposed amendment to redesignate the undeveloped lands from “Estate Residential” to “Residential”, the “Unique Communities” designation is no longer applicable, as these lands are intended to be developed at similar densities that can be found in other areas of the City and therefore would no longer meet the intent of the “Unique Communities” designation. It is proposed that Schedule 1 - City Concept be amended to delete the “Unique Communities” designation. The underlying designations of “Communities” and “Open Space” on Schedule 1 would remain.

4. Addition of a Secondary Plan to Schedule G

It is recommended that Schedule G – Secondary Plan Areas be amended by removing the undeveloped lands in the Southeast Quadrant from the Toronto Gore Rural Estate Secondary Plan Area (SP #26) and that these lands be identified as a new Secondary Plan Area known as “Gore Meadows”.

The proposed policy amendments for the undeveloped lands can be found in the draft Official Plan amendment attached as Appendix 3.

Policy Overview

Notwithstanding the policy summary provided below, staff advise that, prior to finalizing recommendations to Council, the City-initiated Official Plan Amendment will be evaluated for consistency with the Provincial Policy Statement (2020), conformity with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020), the Regional of Peel Official Plan and the City of Brampton Official Plan.

Provincial and Regional Policy Framework

The *Planning Act* and Provincial policy framework are consistent in their direction to municipalities regarding building more compact greenfield communities in order to reduce the rate at which land is consumed. The Provincial Policy Statement 2020 (PPS 2020) specifically highlights accommodating an appropriate affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types (including single-detached, additional residential units, multi-unit housing, affordable housing and housing for older persons), recreation, park and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs. New development taking place in designated growth areas should occur adjacent to the existing built-up area and should have a compact form, mix of uses and densities that allow for the efficient use of land, infrastructure and public service facilities.

A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Office Consolidation 2020) emphasis is on optimizing the use of the existing urban land supply to making better use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities, and less on continuously expanding the urban area.

Regional Official Plan

The Region of Peel's Official Plan objectives is to achieve sustainable development within the Urban System. This includes providing intensified and compact form and a mix of land uses in appropriate areas that efficiently use land, services, infrastructure and public finances while taking into account the characteristics of existing communities and services.

Brampton Official Plan

The undeveloped lands in the southern quadrant of Toronto Gore are designated “Estate Residential, Unique Communities, and Open Space” in the Official Plan. The undeveloped lands are also located within the City’s Designated Greenfield Area. The Estate Residential designation permits low density, low intensity form of residential development characterized by large, individual lots that do not require full urban services. For the undeveloped lands, the Official Plan currently requires a minimum lot area of 0.8 hectares (2 acres). The “Unique Community” designation is a result of the Toronto Gore’s cultural, historic, natural, and landscape qualities that are valued by the community.

The City Structure policies of the Official Plan state that new communities within the Designated Greenfield Area will contribute to the creation of complete communities by providing a diverse mix of land uses and creating an urban form that supports walking, cycling and transit. Complete Communities meet people’s needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing, and community infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, recreation and open space for residents. Convenient access to public transportation and option for safe, non-motorized travel is also to be provided.

Technical Considerations

A complete review of the planning and development implications of the proposed City-initiated Official Plan Amendment will be discussed within the Recommendation Report.

Public Meeting Notification Area

Notice of the Public Meeting was circulated to property owners within 240 metres of the undeveloped area boundaries of the Toronto Gore Density Policy Review study as per *Planning Act* requirements, and by public notification in the Brampton Guardian. The Public Notice was also emailed to the list of interested parties on file. This report has been posted to the City’s website.

Corporate Implications:

No corporate implications have been identified at this time.

Financial Implications:

No financial implications have been identified at this time.

Economic Development Implications:

There are no economic development implications identified at this time.

Term of Council Priorities (2019-2022)

This report directly aligns with the Strategic Direction – Brampton is a City of Opportunities by proposing an Official Plan amendment that will introduce urban densities on the undeveloped lands that will allow these lands to be developed as a complete community.

Living the Mosaic – Brampton 2040 Vision

This Report has been prepared in full consideration of the overall vision that the people of Brampton will ‘Live the Mosaic.’

Next Steps:

Staff will report back to Planning & Development Committee with final recommendations that address consistency with Provincial, Regional and City policies and an Official Plan Amendment that will include policies to permit and guide the development of the undeveloped lands for urban densities.

The final Recommendation Report will include a summary and a response to all of the public comments received at the open houses and at the statutory public meeting.

Conclusion:

In compliance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*, the City is holding a statutory public meeting to present a draft Official Plan amendment for the undeveloped lands in Toronto Gore for public review and comment.

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Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Toronto Gore Density Policy Review Boundaries (Air Photo)
- Appendix 2: Toronto Gore Density Policy Review – Phase 1, 2 & 3, Supply and Demand and Recommendations Report prepared by SGL Planning dated March 2021
- Appendix 3: Draft Official Plan Amendment