

October 13, 2021

Delivered by email
minister.mah@ontario.ca

Municipal Affairs and Housing, Ministers Office
College Park 17th Floor,
777 Bay St, Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

RE: Report No. DS-043-21 Reiteration of Proposed Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Requests for Inclusion in the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review

Please be advised the above-noted matter was placed before Council at its meeting held on October 5, 2021 and the following resolution was passed:

- 1) That Council request, pursuant to the request made by the property owner of 12041 Woodbine Avenue, that the proposed expansion for the South Gormley Boundary include the eastern portion of this property.
- 1) That Council reiterate its request that the Bethesda Road lands identified in Report DS-043-21 be considered and prioritized by the Region of York in its Municipal Comprehensive Review for a community urban settlement area expansion to the Community of Stouffville; and
- 2) That Council reiterate its request that the South Gormley Employment Expansion Area as identified in Report DS-043-21 be considered and prioritized by the Region of York in its Municipal Comprehensive Review for an employment urban settlement area expansion, as amended; and
- 3) That Council reiterate its request that the existing Gormley Industrial Area and the Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area be identified as an "Urban Area" and designated "Employment Area" in the Region's Official Plan, to accommodate planned employment growth to 2051 on the basis of full municipal services; and
- 4) That Council request that York Region identify through its Municipal Comprehensive Review the Potential Future North Gormley Employment Expansion Area as Strategic Employment Lands through an overlay to accommodate future employment growth; and
- 5) That Council direct staff to forward Report DS-043-21 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Region of York as input to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review.

Please find attached a copy of Staff Report No. DS-043-21 Reiteration of Proposed Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Requests for Inclusion in the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review.

If you have any questions, please contact Dwayne Tapp, Director, Development Services at dwayne.tapp@townofws.ca or 905-640-1910 x2431.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K Soolepp', written in a cursive style.

Kristina Soolepp, Council Coordinator
(905) 642-4130

Attachments.

cc. York Region

Subject: Reiteration of Proposed Settlement Area Boundary Expansion Requests for Inclusion in the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (D08)

Staff Report No. DS-043-21

Department: Development Services

Date: October 5, 2021

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council reiterate its request that the Bethesda Road lands identified in Report DS-043-21 be considered and prioritized by the Region of York in its Municipal Comprehensive Review for a community urban settlement area expansion to the Community of Stouffville; and
- 2) That Council reiterate its request that the South Gormley Employment Expansion Area as identified in Report DS-043-21 be considered and prioritized by the Region of York in its Municipal Comprehensive Review for an employment urban settlement area expansion; and
- 3) That Council reiterate its request that the existing Gormley Industrial Area and the Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area be identified as an "Urban Area" and designated "Employment Area" in the Region's Official Plan, to accommodate planned employment growth to 2051 on the basis of full municipal services; and
- 4) That York Region identify through its Municipal Comprehensive Review the Potential Future North Gormley Employment Expansion Area as Strategic Employment Lands through an overlay to accommodate future employment growth; and
- 5) That Council direct staff to forward Report DS-043-21 to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Region of York as input to the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review.

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this Report is to reiterate Council's request to the Region of York through its ongoing Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) to consider and prioritize the proposed settlement area boundary expansions for the Bethesda Road lands and the South Gormley Employment Expansion Area.

2. Executive Summary:

On March 18, 2021 Regional Council received a Staff Report regarding the Proposed 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment (Region's Report). Regional Council directed staff to consult on the proposed forecast and land needs assessment, including the preliminary urban expansion areas as part of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), and report back to Council on phasing policies necessary to manage growth over the 2051 planning horizon.

On April 20, 2021, Town staff presented Council with the Region's draft 2051 Growth Forecast and Land Needs Assessment for information, as outlined in Staff Report DS-012-21. Town Council directed staff to use the Town's Draft 2051 Growth Forecasts in the interim for the Town's Master Plan updates, if necessary, pending the final approval of the 2051 Growth Forecasts by York Region Council; and to report back to Council with comments on the Region's Proposed 2051 Growth Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment.

The Region's Proposed 2051 Growth Forecasts anticipates that the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is forecasted to grow to 92,900 persons and 31,900 jobs by 2051, and all of the Town's remaining Whitebelt lands (375 hectares) will be required to accommodate this growth through urban settlement boundary expansions. The Whitebelt lands comprise agricultural lands that are located outside of the Province's Greenbelt Area (which comprises lands within both the Greenbelt Plan and the ORMCP).

Based on Town staff's Draft 2051 Growth Forecasts, the Region's Growth Forecast is fairly conservative. The Town's 2051 Growth Forecasts anticipate growth in the order of approximately 101,400 persons and 39,300 jobs to 2051. Town staff have been in continued discussions with the Region with respect to the Region's 2051 Growth Forecasts and Land Needs Assessment.

On July 20, 2021, Council endorsed staff's comments on York Region's Proposed 2051 Growth Forecast and Land Needs Assessment as outlined in Staff Report DS-031-21, and requested that the Bethesda Road Lands and the Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area continue to be considered and prioritized by the Region of York through its MCR for urban settlement boundary expansions.

On September 16, 2021, Regional Council considered a Report on Alternative 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios in Response to Consultation. This

Report, including a number of motions was deferred to the October 21, 2021 meeting of Regional Council, pending further analysis by the Region. In staff's view, Council's requested settlement area expansions as outlined in Staff Report DS-031-21, where not fully contemplated nor addressed in the Region's Report and subsequent Memorandum to Regional Council from Paul Freeman, dated September 15, 2021.

The purpose of this Report is to reiterate Council's request to the Region of York to consider and prioritize the proposed settlement area boundary expansions for the Bethesda Road lands and the Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area, and direct staff to forward these comments to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Region of York as input to the Region's on-going Municipal Comprehensive Review.

It is anticipated that the Region will be bringing forward an update to Regional Council on October 21, 2021 with respect to the 2051 Alternative Growth Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios. Furthermore, a final draft of the revised growth forecast and land needs is anticipated to be presented as part of the Region's new draft Official Plan in November 2021.

3. Background:

On March 18, 2021 Regional Council received a Staff Report regarding the Proposed 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment (Region's Report). Regional Council directed staff to consult on the proposed forecast and land needs assessment, including the preliminary urban expansion areas as part of the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), and report back to Council on phasing policies necessary to manage growth over the 2051 planning horizon. The Region's Report presents the population and employment forecasts for each local municipality and the results of the mandated provincial land needs assessment and identifies proposed settlement area boundary expansions that are required to accommodate the forecasted growth to 2051, as part of the Region's MCR.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) sets out minimum population and employment forecasts and requires municipalities to plan to achieve these forecasts by 2051 through the Region's MCR. The Growth Plan requires the Region of York to plan to accommodate a forecasted population of 2.02 million people and 990,000 jobs to 2051, which represents an increase of approximately 800,000 people and 345,000 jobs between 2021 and 2051. The Region's Proposed 2051 Growth Forecast anticipates that the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is forecasted to grow to 92,900 persons and 31,900 jobs by 2051.

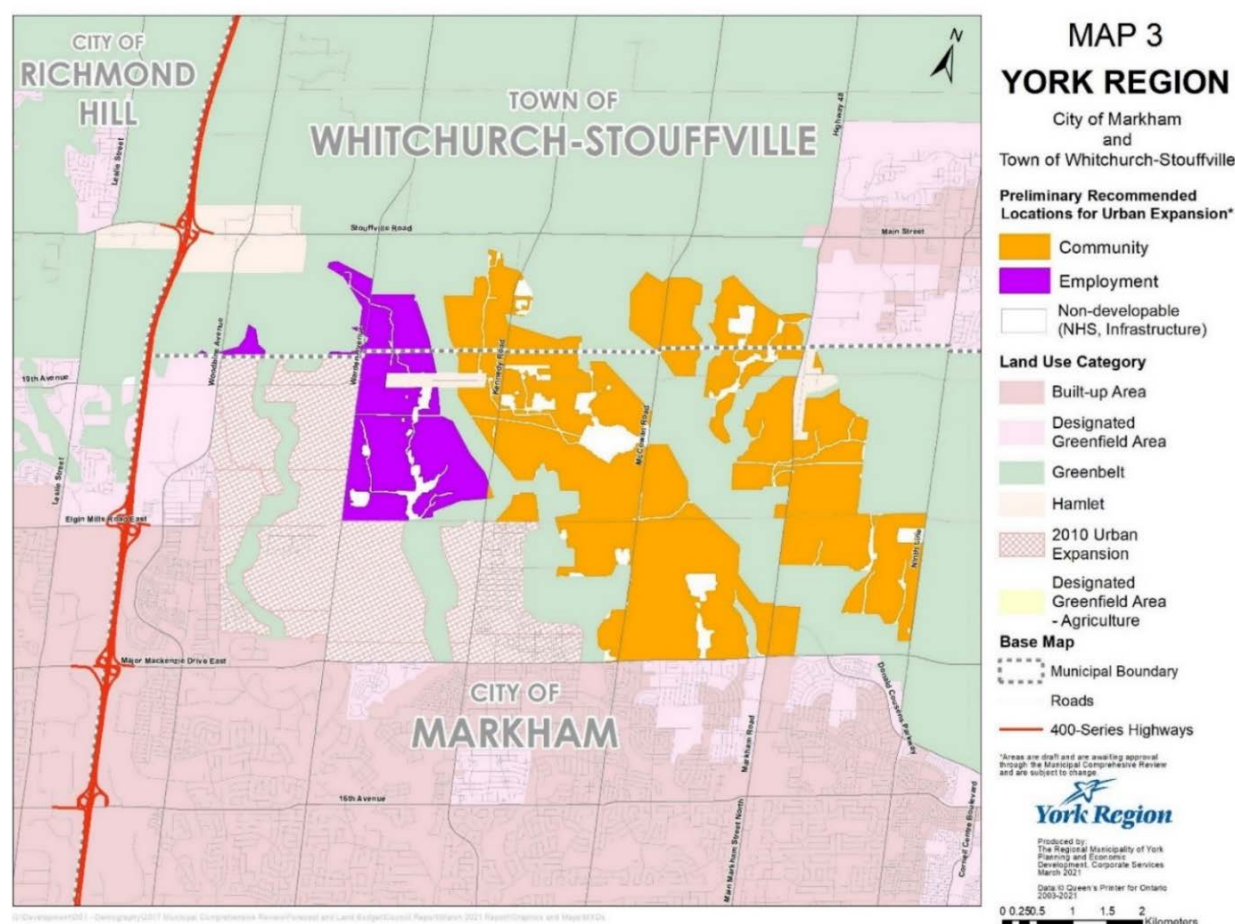
The Region's Report indicates that by applying the Provincial land needs assessment methodology to the Region's Growth Plan forecasts, approximately 80% of Whitebelt lands are needed to accommodate forecasted growth to 2051, assuming a Region-wide intensification target of 50%. The Whitebelt lands comprise agricultural lands that are

located outside of the Province's Greenbelt Area (which comprises lands within the Greenbelt Plan and ORMCP). In consultation with local municipal staff, these lands were classified into potential community and employment areas based on their connectivity to existing community/employment areas and prioritizing lands adjacent to or near existing or provincially planned 400 series highways for employment purposes.

The Region's Report proposes that all of the remaining Whitebelt lands in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville are required for urban settlement expansion. This includes a total of 375 hectares, of which 280 hectares are proposed for Community land and 95 hectares are proposed for Employment land, which are located in closest proximity to Highway 404.

Figure 1 illustrates the extent of the proposed urban expansion lands within the southeastern municipalities (Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and City of Markham). The geographical extent of the Greenbelt Area results in non-contiguous and isolated pockets of Whitebelt lands that border the municipal boundary with Markham, which are proposed for urban expansion.

Figure 1 – Preliminary Recommended Locations for Urban Expansion



Source: York Region Planning and Economic Development Branch, March 2021

On September 16, 2021, Regional Council considered a Report on Alternative 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios in Response to Consultation. This Report, including a number of motions was deferred to the October 21, 2021 meeting of Regional Council, pending further analysis by the Region. Some of the proposed scenarios and motions contemplated changes to the intensification targets which may result in the reconfiguration of the extent and location of the proposed settlement area expansions, in addition to further requests for urban settlement area expansions.

It is anticipated that on October 21, 2021 Regional Council will address the Town's request that the Bethesda Road Lands and the South Gormley Employment Expansion Area be considered and prioritized by the Region of York through its Municipal Comprehensive Review for urban settlement area expansions, as outlined in Staff Report DS-031-21. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the revised growth forecast and land needs will be presented as part of the Region's new draft Official Plan in November 2021. This has a direct impact to the Town's Official Plan Review as the updated growth forecasts and urban expansion areas will need to be implemented and conform to the Region's new Official Plan.

4. Analysis and Options:

4.1 Interpretation of Settlement Area Expansion Policies

As illustrated on Attachment 1 to this Report, the Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area and the Proposed Bethesda Road lands are located within the Countryside Area of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP). The Bethesda Road lands abut the existing settlement area of the Community of Stouffville, whereas, the South Gormley Employment Expansion Area abuts the existing settlement area of Gormley and the City of Markham's existing Employment Area and existing Future Employment Area to the south. In staff's view, these proposed urban settlement area boundary expansions represent the most logical and appropriate locations for considering settlement area boundary expansions as they are contiguous to the existing settlement areas and would make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and community services and facilities.

Conversely, the Town's Whitebelt lands are non-contiguous, isolated parcels that run east-west along the Town's southern border with the City of Markham, and may not represent the most logical settlement expansion areas, in terms of the efficient and fiscally responsible use of land and resources, existing infrastructure and community services and facilities. The Whitebelt lands are far removed from the Town's existing settlement areas of Stouffville and Gormley. Future development of the Whitebelt lands would be largely contingent upon the phasing and timing of development within the City of Markham, and it is staff's understanding that these Whitebelt Lands would not be contemplated for development until post 2041, thereby not addressing the Town's short to mid-term development needs. Staff have identified significant concerns in supporting

the development of complete communities within these isolated pockets of Whitebelt lands, which would be disconnected from the Town's existing settlement areas.

The Implementation section of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan states that an upper-tier municipality may consider the need to change or refine the boundaries of a Settlement Area as part of a municipal comprehensive review undertaken in accordance with policy 2.2.8 of the Growth Plan. Furthermore, settlement area boundaries are not permitted to expand into Natural Core Areas or Natural Linkage Areas. As such, it continues to be the Town's request that the Region of York consider and prioritize the proposed settlement area boundary expansions for the Bethesda Road lands and the South Gormley Employment Expansion Area, on lands designated as Countryside Area, as part of the Region's on-going Municipal Comprehensive Review.

4.2 Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area

The Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area is identified in Attachment 2, which includes lands within the Countryside Area, but does not extend into the Natural Core Areas or Natural Linkage Areas of the ORMCP.

The amount and location of designated and serviceable employment land is a significant economic development issue for the Town. An insufficient supply of serviced employment land in the Town will have long term serious consequences to the economic viability of the local community. As per Council's recommendations of October 22, 2019 (Staff Report DS-052-19), Council supports additional employment growth along the Highway 404 corridor and the addition of lands to the urban settlement area, including the Proposed South Gormley Expansion Area and a Potential Future Expansion Area for Gormley. Furthermore, as per Council's recommendations of July 21, 2020 (Staff Report DS-027-20: South Gormley Employment Area Expansion and Greenbelt Enhancement Options), Council directed staff to pursue the designation of additional employment lands in the Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area and settlement area boundary expansion through the Region's MCR. Staff Report DS-027-20 outlines further planning rationale for considering the settlement area boundary expansion through the Region's MCR.

This request is further supported by numerous Town Council resolutions and the Regional Council resolution of March 21, 2019, to identify certain areas along the Highway 404 corridor as Provincially Significant Employment Zones. On April 6, 2021, Council endorsed Staff Report DS-010-21: Gormley Industrial Area and Potential Gormley Urban Expansion Area, which outlines the potential economic benefits and development charges that may be generated through the development of the existing Gormley Industrial Area and both the Potential North and South Gormley Employment Expansion Areas on the basis of full municipal services.

The Region's Proposed 2051 Growth Forecast and Land Needs Assessment currently identifies **95 ha of Whitebelt lands** to be designated as Employment. In staff's view the

designation of additional employment lands is required to accommodate the Town's forecasted employment growth to 2051. As part of the Town's on-going Official Plan Review, Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. is undertaking a Growth Management Assessment to identify population and employment forecasts and updated land needs for the Town to the 2051 planning horizon. The updated preliminary employment land needs for the Town were forecasted to be approximately **167 gross hectares** of serviced employment land that is required to the **2041 planning horizon**. Further updates to the Town's land needs are being undertaken to the **2051 planning horizon**, which is anticipated to result in an even greater employment land deficiency. The Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area would amount to approximately 149ha (excluding the 14ha of Whitebelt lands) of additional employment lands which are readily accessible to Highway 404 and serviceable through the extension of municipal infrastructure from the abutting employment area in the City of Markham.

The Town continues to prioritize the Highway 404 corridor for employment land opportunities. It is recommended that the Gormley Industrial Secondary Plan Area and the Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area be identified as an "Urban Area" and designated "Employment Area" in the Region's Official Plan, to accommodate growth to 2051 on full municipal services.

Furthermore, staff also recommends that Strategic Employment Lands be identified for employment growth beyond 2051, as provided for through the Provincial Policy Statement. Strategic Employment Lands should be identified along the Highway 404 Corridor in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, consistent with York Region Council and Town Councils directions and the Region's Report on Potential For Employment Lands Along 400 Series Highways, October 8, 2020. In staff's view, the Potential Future North Gormley Employment Expansion Area as identified on Attachment 1, should be identified as Strategic Employment Lands through an overlay in the Region's Official Plan, which are contemplated for future employment growth. This is consistent with the Region and Town Council's request to identify these lands as Provincially Significant Employment Zones, under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and highlighted as a "Potential Future North Expansion Area" for Gormley in Report DS-052-19.

4.3 Proposed Bethesda Road Lands (Community of Stouffville Settlement Area Expansion)

As noted above, all of the Town's Whitebelt lands are proposed by the Region to be used to accommodate growth to 2051. Further to this point, staff are of the opinion that the development timing anticipated by the Region does not correlate with the rate of development that the Town has experienced in recent years and will continue to experience in the short to mid- term.

In order to accommodate the growth expected to 2041, it is recommended that other lands be considered for Community development ahead of some of the Town's Whitebelt lands. Attachment 3 to this report identifies lands along the Bethesda Road frontage from Tenth Line to Ninth Line that could accommodate growth in this shorter term and would provide

for a more efficient use of existing infrastructure and resources. The Proposed Bethesda Road Lands Settlement Expansion Area provides for contiguous parcels that are currently in line with the Community of Stouffville settlement area boundary. They total approximately 68ha and represent a logical extension of the Town's settlement area. The lands can be easily accessed by services that are already in place for the Community of Stouffville. Further to that, these lands are in very close proximity to the new Lincolnville GO Station, which has been identified as a Major Transit Station Area, and will represent an efficiency of both servicing and transportation infrastructure, while also providing better opportunities for creating a complete community.

Staff are of the opinion that the Bethesda Road lands represent a logical area for an urban settlement area expansion. Based on the Region's land needs assessment, these lands are more appropriate from a priority perspective for development as there is servicing and transportation infrastructure already in place. Staff recommend that the Region be requested to consider an urban settlement area expansion for the Bethesda Road lands as part of its current MCR, and further to that point, that the phasing of these lands be prioritized.

5. Financial Implications:

None

6. Alignment with Strategic Plan:

2. Expanding the tax base through a growing, diversified economy
Building and maintaining a tax base that supports the highest quality program and service delivery.
 - Focus on servicing and development of Provincially Significant Employment Zones
 - Identify expansion areas for Industrial / Commercial growth
4. Asset Planning, Maintenance and Development
Successful stewardship of the infrastructure and facilities required to support a growing community and vibrant economy.
 - Address / plan for maintenance of existing assets & infrastructure; Create new infrastructure

7. Attachments:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Attachment 1: | Proposed Settlement Boundary Expansion Areas |
| Attachment 2: | Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area |
| Attachment 3: | Proposed Bethesda Road Lands Community Expansion Area |

8. Related Reports:

DS-031-21: Comments on Region's Proposed 2051 Growth Forecast and Land Needs Assessment, July 20, 2021

DS-012-21: Draft 2051 Growth Forecast and Land Needs Assessment, April 20, 2021

DS-010-21: Gormley Industrial Area and Potential Gormley Urban Expansion Area, April 6, 2021

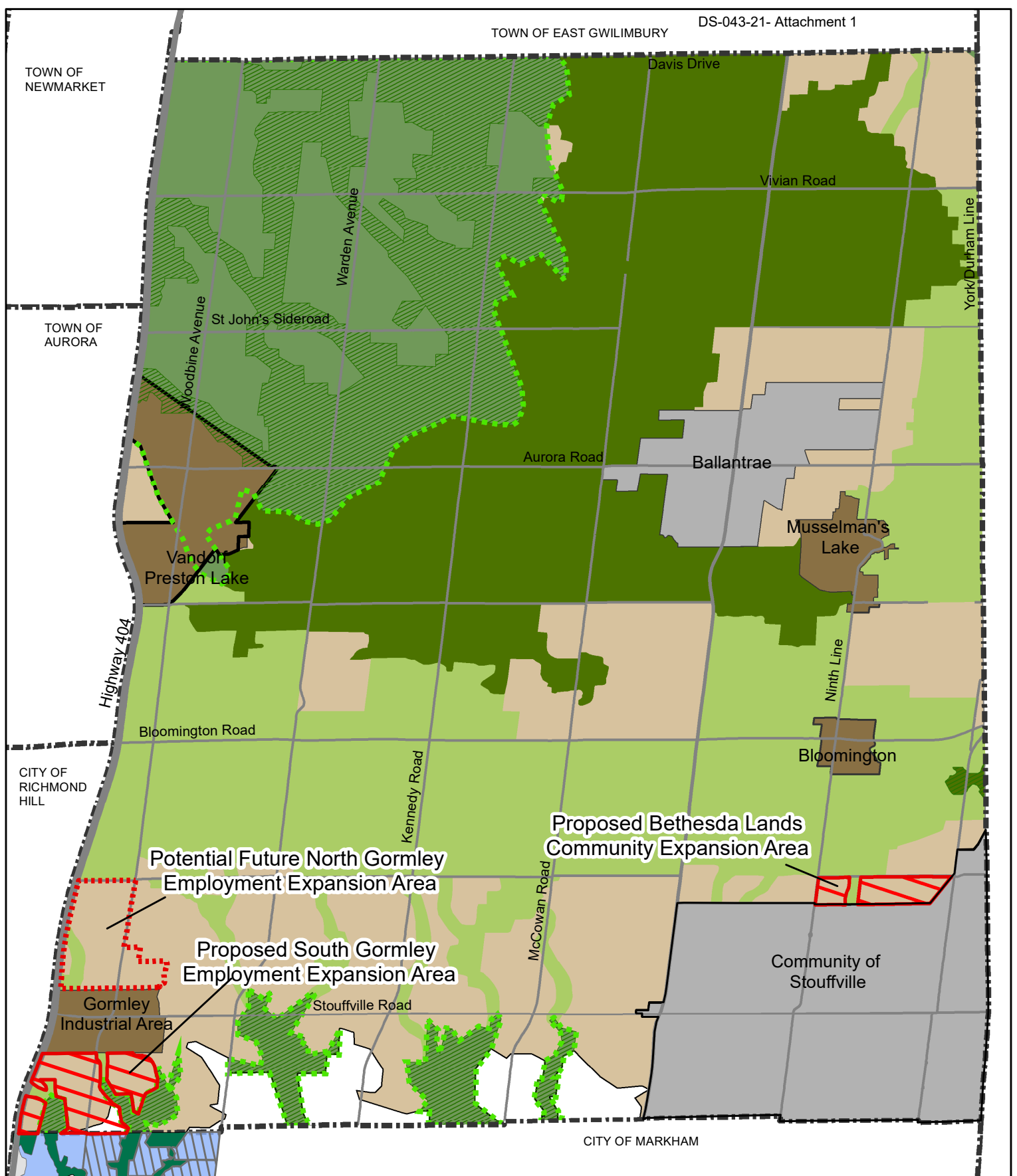
DS-045-20: Request for Emergency Extension of Full Municipal Services to Gormley, October 20, 2020

DS-027-20: South Gormley Employment Area Expansion and Greenbelt Enhancement Options, July 21, 2020









DS-052-19: Gormley Urban Settlement Area Boundary Expansion for Employment Growth and Greenbelt Enhancement, October 22, 2019






Authors: Randall Roth, Senior Policy Planner
Meaghan Craven, Manager Policy Planning

For further information on this report, please contact the Director of Development Services: Dwayne Tapp, at 905-640-1900 or 1-855-642-8697 ext. 2431 or via email at dwayne.tapp@townofws.ca



Proposed Settlement Boundary Expansion Areas

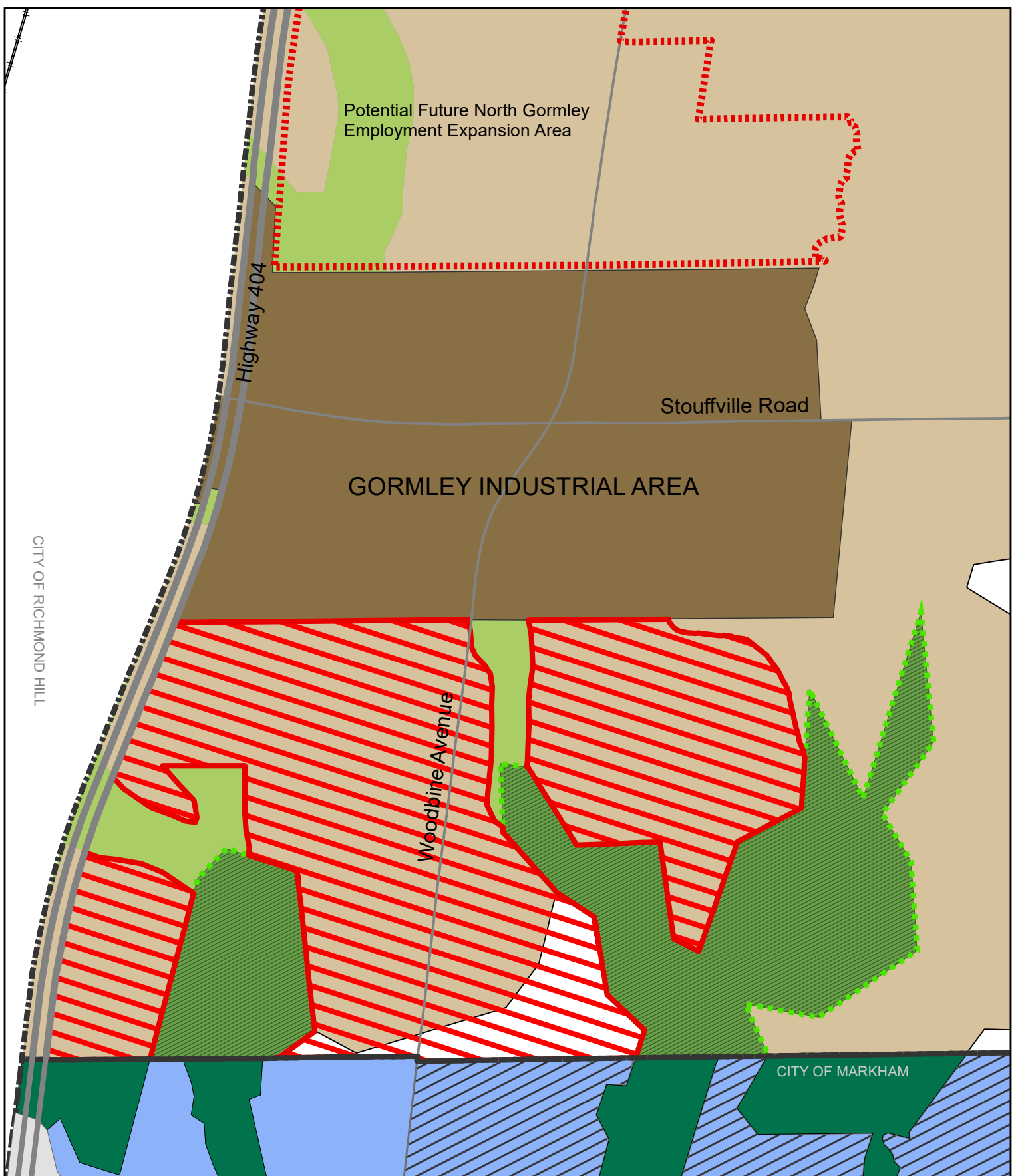
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|---|---|
|  Proposed Settlement Expansion Area |  Rural Settlement |
|  ORM Countryside Area |  Settlement Area |
|  ORM Natural Core Area |  Greenbelt Protected Countryside |
|  ORM Natural Linkage Area |  Natural Heritage System |

- | |
|---|
|  Greenbelt Boundary |
|  Markham Future Urban Area |
|  Markham Employment Area |
|  Markham Greenway System |
|  Whitebelt |

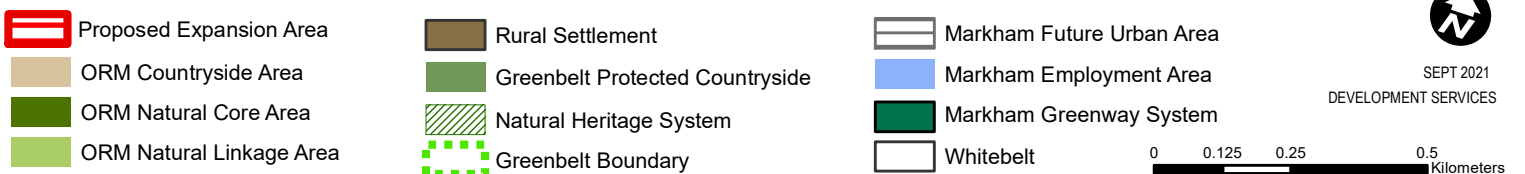


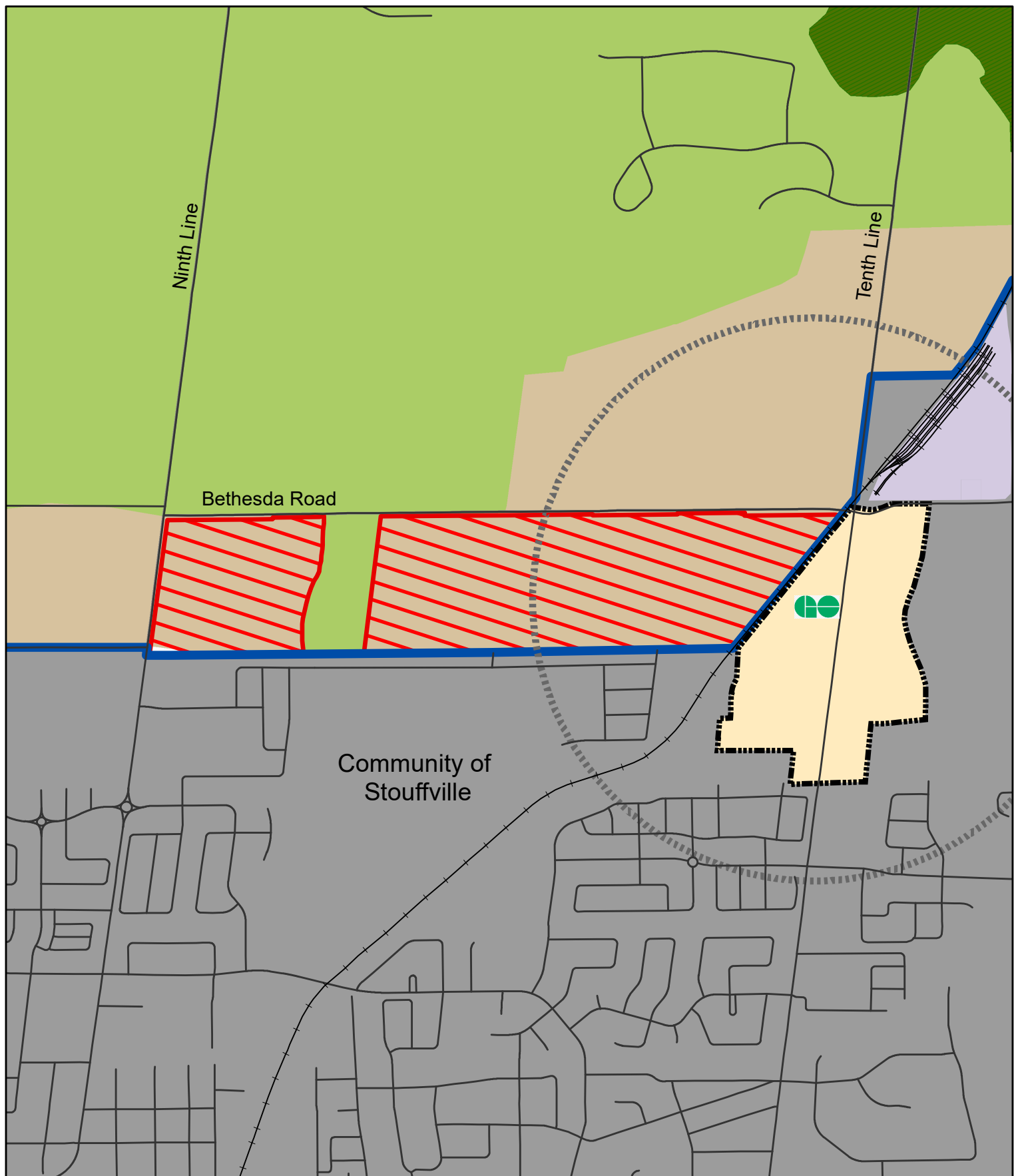
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








Proposed South Gormley Employment Expansion Area





Proposed Bethesda Road Lands Community Expansion Area

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
|  | Proposed Settlement Expansion Area |  | Settlement Area |
|  | ORM Countryside Area |  | Future Layover Facility |
|  | ORM Natural Core Area |  | Draft MTSA Boundary |
|  | ORM Natural Linkage Area |  | 800m Boundary |



SEPT 2021
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

0 0.15 0.3 0.6
Kilometers