



Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner

November 23, 2021

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Deputy Ministers:

**RE: Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals**

York Region and our local municipalities are committed to the Yonge North Subway Extension project, supporting seamless travel, additional housing options, jobs and economic vitality in our communities. As we plan for the arrival of extended subway services and stations along the proposed alignment, it is imperative to ensure livable, complete communities are planned and built around future stations including those built through the Province's Transit-Oriented Communities Program.

In September 2021, the Province announced locations of Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) proposals around future High-Tech and Bridge subway stations.

Regional and local municipal staff continue to support TOC proposals that align with and advance local planning visions, goals and objectives, established through current municipal planning frameworks, including existing and emerging secondary plans.

In August 2021, Infrastructure Ontario shared detailed submissions for the Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals with York Region, City of Markham and City of Richmond Hill staff on a confidential basis. We were unable to advance discussions on the proposals with our Councils. Municipal staff reviewed these proposals, and highlighted areas of alignment needed between these proposals and existing and emerging secondary plans. At numerous meetings with Provincial staff since August, we have reiterated concerns about the proposals. We acknowledge that some progress has been made towards better alignment with Richmond Hill for the High-Tech TOC proposal, but key areas of concern remain.

Municipal comments on the TOC proposals were sent to Infrastructure Ontario in September 2021 (attached) that focused on four critical areas of concern shared by York Region, Markham, and Richmond Hill staff:

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Re: Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals

1. Alignment with municipal Secondary Plan visions for the TOC sites identified
2. Densities and population proposed for the TOC sites
3. Process – confidentiality and engagement with Councils and the public, and
4. Financial framework to support the TOC sites

As we know, the Province is on a tight timeline towards zoning certainty so timely dialogue towards better alignment is important. While the Province and municipalities have a shared vision to realize complete communities in these locations, key issues and concerns raised in our September comments and at meetings with Provincial staff regarding the TOC proposals remain, including:

- Magnitude of population growth and increased overall Gross Floor Area (GFA) proposed
- Importance of a more appropriate mix of uses, including residential and non-residential GFA that provides a healthy balance for a complete community
- Provision of parks and open spaces generally consistent with municipal policy and practices
- Provision of adequate spaces for community services such as schools, community centres, libraries, and emergency services
- Adequate pedestrian and cycling connectivity, fine-grained street network and commitment to last kilometer solutions
- Clarity on the expected phasing and funding of related transportation infrastructure and services to support the projected demands (i.e. goods and service delivery, emergency services access, intersection capacities, etc.)
- Clarity on the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Regional and local planning directions
- Better understanding of financial implications and framework
- Provision of studies typically completed for Urban Growth Centres to demonstrate feasibility of intensified proposals (e.g. height, shadow, phasing, servicing, roads and other transportation facility design)

To support the Provincial timeline of zoning certainty for Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals by March 2022, municipal staff look forward to timely discussions about the issues and implications identified in this letter and our letter dated September 7<sup>th</sup> attached. We hope this will lead to positive improvements to the TOC proposals that better align with the vision contained within the existing and emerging secondary plans for these areas.

We remain committed to implementing the Yonge North Subway Extension and encourage the Province to engage with us in a dialogue to address these comments as we plan for TOC developments together with our local municipalities, community stakeholders and the public.

Sincerely,



Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner  
The Regional Municipality of York

November 23, 2021

Re: Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals

Attachment: Memorandum to the YNSE Executive Steering Committee - York Region and YNSE Local Municipalities  
Response/Comments to the Province's Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC)  
Proposals, September 7, 2021

cc Michael Lindsay, President & CEO, Infrastructure Ontario  
Vinay Sharda, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transportation  
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Hanna Evans, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Sean Fraser, Regional Director (Acting), Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Bruce Macgregor, Chief Administrative Officer, York Region  
Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Markham  
Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager, City of Richmond Hill  
Arvin Prasad, Commissioner, Development Services, City of Markham  
Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner, Planning and Infrastructure Department, City of Richmond Hill  
Lisa Lavery, Infrastructure Ontario  
Rob Krauss, Infrastructure Ontario  
Bronwyn Cuthbertson, Ministry of Transportation  
Darryl Lyons, City of Markham  
Anthony Ierullo, City of Richmond Hill  
Daniel Olding, City of Richmond Hill  
Mary-Frances Turner, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation  
Rose Suppa, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation  
Karen Whitney, York Region

Edocs #13457946



Office of the Chief Planner  
Planning & Economic Development

## Memorandum

To: YNSE Executive Committee

From: Paul Freeman, Chief Planner

Date: September 7, 2021

Re: **York Region and YNSE Local Municipalities Response/Comments to the Province's Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Proposals**

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On July 28th and August 5th, the Province shared with York Region and its local municipalities, City of Markham, City of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan (each a "Party" and collectively the "Parties"), TOC proposals for Bridge and High-Tech stations. Under a non-disclosure agreement, the TOC proposals were delivered via a data room for the parties to access in order to commence technical reviews and provide comments back to the Province for each of the sites as per the Province's TOC Zoning Certainty Approval Process and identified Process Map (Attachment 1).

This communication provides a collective set of comments and concerns from the Region and local planning officials in Markham and Richmond Hill most impacted by TOC proposals for Bridge and High-Tech.

### **Four critical areas of concern have been identified by the parties:**

1. Alignment with municipal Secondary Plan visions for the TOC sites identified;
2. Densities and population proposed for the TOC sites;
3. Process – confidentiality and engagement with Councils and the public; and
4. Financial framework to support the TOC sites.

### **Background**

- Through the TOC program, the Province has been collaborating with third-party partners (i.e. private sector developers and their consultants) to submit TOC proposals.
- The Province, in consultation with Regional and local staff, has established a time-bound approval process (Attachment 1) for TOC proposals, to advance these

applications to “zoning certainty” by March 2022 to maintain pace with project timelines and procurements.

- “Zoning certainty” guarantees heights, densities and land uses at TOC sites. The Province has advised achieving “zoning certainty” may involve Minister’s Zoning Orders (MZOs) or municipal planning processes (e.g. amendment to official plans and zoning bylaws). TOC developments approved through MZOs are not appealable.
- Public consultation for the TOC proposals will be led by Infrastructure Ontario. Outreach was to start in late August/early September, first to elected officials (i.e. mayors and councillors), then to the community, notwithstanding municipal staff being bound by confidentiality.
- Additional TOC proposals may be forthcoming including lands around Clark station in Markham, and Steeles station in the City of Toronto.

### **TOC Proposals and Secondary Plans**

- The Region and local municipalities have key concerns about the deviation of the TOC proposals from the existing or emerging local Secondary Plans and the process to engage members of Council and the public while the TOC proposals remain confidential and as they are released.
- Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan is being updated with new land use and density targets. City Council, municipal and agency stakeholder, and the public provided input into the update since 2019. This work is expected to be completed by year end 2021. Part of the High-Tech TOC development is within the secondary plan area, with some lands extending beyond.
- Langstaff Gateway Secondary plan (LGSP) was approved in 2011 and continues to be in effect. The Bridge TOC development area comprises the western portion of the secondary plan area, extending from Yonge to past the CN railway tracks.

### **Areas of Concern Identified**

The following are collective planning issues identified by Regional and local municipal staff of the confidential Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Concerns</b>
Vision	Richmond Hill Centre and Langstaff Gateway secondary plans articulate the planned vision for areas intersecting with TOC proposals. Density, parkland, mix of use proposed by the TOC developments deviate from vision, principles, and objectives in current secondary plans.

Intensity	<p>Building heights and densities proposed on TOC lands exceed permissions in approved and proposed secondary plans:</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update</td><td>High-Tech TOC Proposal <sup>a</sup></td><td>Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan</td><td>Bridge TOC Proposal <sup>b</sup></td></tr><tr><td>Population</td><td>28,100</td><td>55,900</td><td>32,000</td><td>31,400</td></tr><tr><td>Jobs</td><td>16,300</td><td>6,400</td><td>15,000</td><td>8,200</td></tr><tr><td>Maximum Height (storeys)</td><td>8 to 70</td><td>15 to 80</td><td>3 to 50</td><td>10 to 80</td></tr><tr><td>Floor Space Index (FSI)</td><td>4 to 9.5</td><td>9.8 to 23.5</td><td>5.4 to 15.9</td><td>3 to 25.7</td></tr></table> <p><sup>a</sup> High-Tech TOC area does not align completely with the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan area</p> <p><sup>b</sup> Bridge TOC area is roughly half the size of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan area</p> <p>TOC proposals are generally 1.1 to 3.3 times in height, and 1.6 to 2.5 times in FSI beyond secondary plan requirements. Refer to Attachment 2 for more details.</p> <p>The Bridge TOC proposal uses lower apartment person per unit assumptions than the City (1.5 vs. 2.1), generating lower population and job estimates than what the City expects from the proposal.</p>		Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update	High-Tech TOC Proposal <sup>a</sup>	Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan	Bridge TOC Proposal <sup>b</sup>	Population	28,100	55,900	32,000	31,400	Jobs	16,300	6,400	15,000	8,200	Maximum Height (storeys)	8 to 70	15 to 80	3 to 50	10 to 80	Floor Space Index (FSI)	4 to 9.5	9.8 to 23.5	5.4 to 15.9	3 to 25.7
	Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update	High-Tech TOC Proposal <sup>a</sup>	Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan	Bridge TOC Proposal <sup>b</sup>																						
Population	28,100	55,900	32,000	31,400																						
Jobs	16,300	6,400	15,000	8,200																						
Maximum Height (storeys)	8 to 70	15 to 80	3 to 50	10 to 80																						
Floor Space Index (FSI)	4 to 9.5	9.8 to 23.5	5.4 to 15.9	3 to 25.7																						
Mix	<p>The proposals planned to deliver high proportions of housing with few jobs. This imbalance of residential to non-residential uses does not support the vision and delivery of complete, mixed-use communities. TOC sites provide great locations for office developments and facilitate the creation of knowledge-based jobs in Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre.</p>																									
Affordable Housing	<p>It remains unclear how the TOC proposals will deliver affordable housing to meet secondary plan targets. More implementation details will assist staff's review of the proposals.</p> <p>A stronger commitment to affordable housing is necessary.</p>																									
Parkland	<p>The parkland vision articulated in TOC proposals deviates from current secondary plans.</p> <p>Details regarding accessibility and operations of the proposed above-grade rail deck park need to be clarified.</p> <p>The Bridge TOC proposes a linear park system along an active high-voltage hydro-electric corridor. Health impacts, particularly related to exposure to electromagnetic fields, should be examined.</p>																									
Urban Design	<p>Performance based urban design measures are required to permit flexibility in building typologies over time.</p>																									

Transportation	<p>TOC proposals should implement a fine-grained public street network to balance travel needs and modes.</p> <p>Garden Avenue extension as a major collector urban street in the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan is not included in the High-Tech TOC proposal.</p> <p>The “Transit Green” area shown in the Bridge proposal was conceived based on the subway station locating along Yonge Street. With the new subway alignment, planning for this area needs to be revisited. Additional connectivity is required to support the movement of people and goods and achieve a high modal split.</p>
Parking	<p>Appropriate parking standards are required to ensure the planned TOC proposals and Regional Center functions over the long term.</p>
Water/wastewater capacity	<p>Water and wastewater system impact analysis is required to assess if these areas can accommodate proposed growth and determine if Regional infrastructure would need to be built or upgraded.</p>
Site Servicing	<p>Better understanding of the planned approach to site servicing is required.</p>
Phasing	<p>No phasing information has been provided in the submissions.</p> <p>Successful city building requires careful coordination and sequencing of infrastructure and human services delivery to support planned developments.</p>
Community Services/ Schools	<p>School site locations deviate from secondary plans. Vertical school integration and school/community facilities co-location arrangements require more extensive multi-agency coordination.</p> <p>Both TOC proposals need to consider sites for emergency medical services (e.g. fire and paramedic stations).</p>
Consultation process	<p>There are concerns around confidentiality of the submissions, limiting staff’s ability to notify and brief municipal Councils on planned developments.</p> <p>There are concerns with TOC proposals deviating from ongoing public engagement by the municipalities to develop the vision for these Secondary Plan areas.</p>
Financing	<p>The proposals need to include financial analysis identifying cost impacts, implications, funding sources, and responsibilities related to the delivery and operation of planned infrastructure and features (i.e. rail deck park, shared community facilities between school board and local municipalities).</p> <p>Clarity is needed regarding the overall financial framework for the TOC program as well as the development charges for TOC developments, to support the Region’s efforts to secure funding for the YNSE.</p>

## **Regional impacts**

- Intensification and the magnitude of growth proposed through the TOC applications impact the planning and delivery of physical and social infrastructure, including roads, sewer and water, schools and other community facilities to support future residents and workers in the area.
- The significance of Regional Centres and these emerging TOD nodes in York Region require comprehensive planning to create the vision for complete communities the municipalities have worked extensively to achieve.
- The significant population increase in both TOC developments needs to be studied and planned comprehensively, especially in the context of the Region's master plans:
  - Proposed TOC densities were not contemplated in Master Plans.
  - Additional analysis is required to assess if these areas can accommodate proposed growth and determine if Regional/Municipal infrastructure would need to be built or upgraded.

## **Next Steps**

- The YNSE Executive Committee, with local CAO's and Planning officials will need to discuss a shared and united city-building vision for the planned TOC areas and the process to engage local Councils, the public and stakeholders.
- Regional and local staff will continue to share preliminary comments on the TOC proposals with Provincial partners at working group meetings and other collaboration forums.
- The Province (Infrastructure Ontario) will begin political outreach to update the Chairman, mayors and councillors on TOC proposals for Bridge and High Tech in early September.
- Regional and local municipal staff will continue to work with Provincial and private sector partners, to ensure TOC developments can be consistent with the Regional and local municipal secondary plan framework and policy intent for each site.

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Paul Freeman, Chief Planner

Attachments (2)



Memorandum re: Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals, September 7, 2021

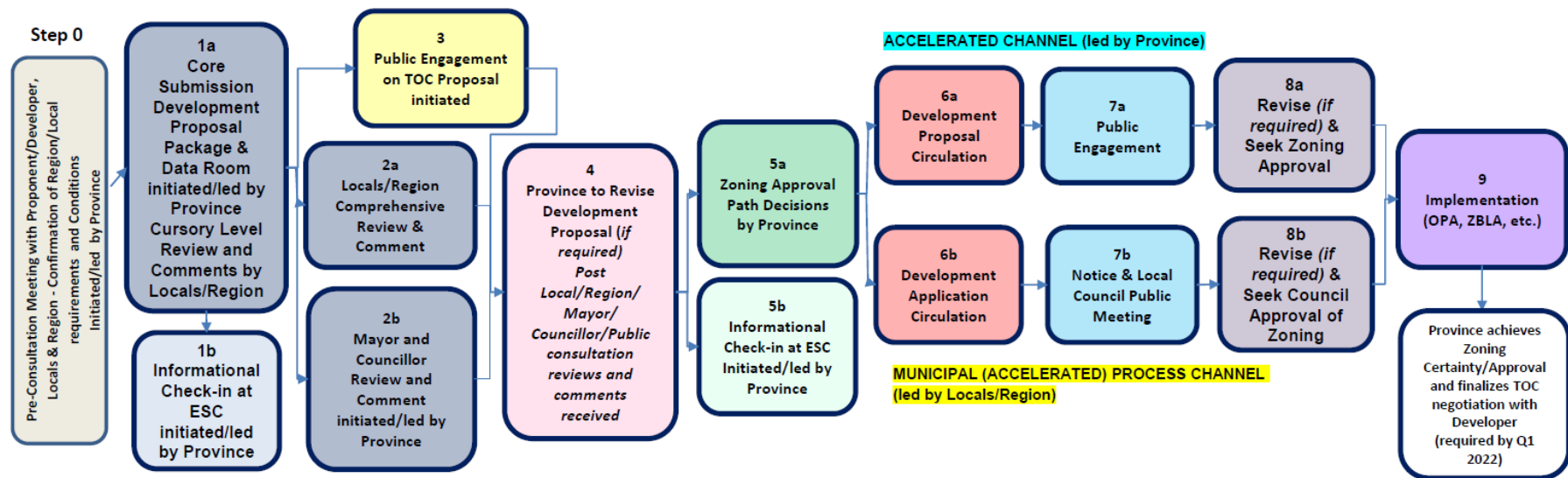
eDOCS 13276015

## Attachment 1

### Provincial TOC Zoning Certainty Approval Process

HIGH SENSITIVITY

## Bridge and High Tech TOC Timeline



\*NDA covers all commercially sensitive information shared under this process

STEP 1	STEPS 2 & 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8*	APPROVED
DP to Staff & ESC: Late July/Early Aug (TBC)	Start: Late Mid-Aug (TBC) End: 10-Sep-21 (30 days)	Start: 30-Aug-21 End: 12-Oct-21 (30 days)	Start: 12-Oct-21 End: 18-Oct-21 (5 days)	Start: 18-Oct-21 End: 20-Oct-21 (3 days)	Start: 20-Oct-21 End: 30-Nov-21 (30 days)	Start: 30-Nov-21 End: 1-Mar-22 (60 days)	1-Mar-22

## Attachment 2

### Comparison of Secondary Plan and TOC Proposals Growth and Density Targets

Statistics	Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update	High Tech TOC Proposal <sup>1</sup>	TOC Proposal Increases from Secondary Plan	Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan	Bridge TOC Proposal	TOC Proposal Increases from Secondary Plan
Population at buildout	28,100	55,900	Not comparable, boundaries do not align	32,000 <sup>2</sup>	31,400	Not comparable, boundaries do not align
Jobs at buildout	16,300	6,400		15,000 <sup>2</sup>	8,200	
Maximum Height (storeys)	8 to 70 <sup>1</sup>	15 to 80	14 to 88% 1.1 to 1.8 times	3 to 50 <sup>3</sup>	10 to 80	60 to 230% 1.6 to 3.3 times
Floor Space Index (FSI)	4 to 9.5 <sup>1</sup>	9.8 to 23.5	145 to 147% 2.5 times	5.4 to 15.9 <sup>3</sup>	3 to 25.7	- 44% to 62% 1.6 times

<sup>1</sup> High-Tech TOC Proposal area does not align completely with the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan area. Comparison is made for areas that intersect both plans.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics shown are for the entire Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan area. The Bridge TOC comprises about 50% of lands in the secondary plan area.

<sup>3</sup> This represents secondary plan height and floor space index for areas covered by the Bridge TOC. Maximum building heights range from 3 to 50, and FSI from 3.8 to 15.9 across the entire secondary plan area.