

Unionville Community Meeting

Thursday, April 2, 2009

Council Chamber
Civic Centre
101 Town Centre Blvd.
Markham, Ontario

Summary Notes

Attendance:

There were 22 participants at the meeting.

Open House (6:00 pm to 7:00 pm)

- Participants were invited to walk around, view informative panels and ask questions to available staff.

Opening Remarks (7:00 to 7:15 pm)

- Welcome by Amanda Kennedy, DPRA
 - Introduction to the Town of Markham's Growth Management Strategy and the Transportation Strategic Plan.
- Councillor Joseph Virgilio (Ward 3) and Councillor Dan Horchik (Ward 6) welcomed the audience and provided opening remarks.

Presentation – Growth Management Alternatives (7:15 pm to 7:45 pm)

- Presentation by Valerie Shuttleworth – Director of Planning and Urban Design, Town of Markham
 - The provincial, regional and local context for growth
 - The approach that Markham has taken to plan for residential and employment growth
 - Some of the options that the Town has been examining, including potential strategies for intensification

The presentation is available on-line at:

http://www.markham.ca/NR/rdonlyres/40639712-ADB1-4304-AB6C-F78A9D4747D7/0/GMS_communitypres_090311.pdf.

Audience Polling Activity (7:45 pm to 8:00 pm)

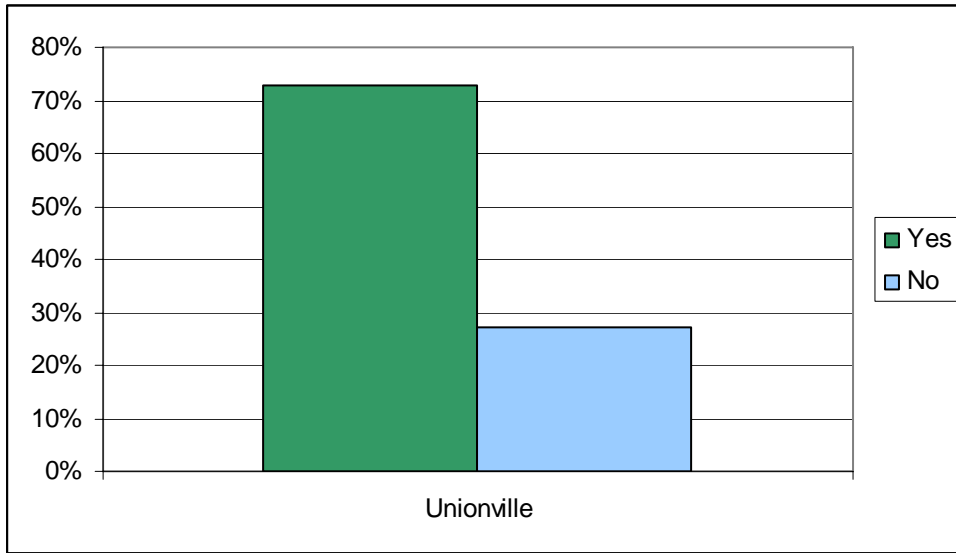
- Participants were provided with a hand-held polling device to respond to the list of questions posed.

Note: An interactive and innovative polling technology was used at the community meetings to elicit feedback from the participants. The polling tool allowed participants to answer multiple-choice question immediately followed by a presentation of the results. This polling exercise was one method used to gather feedback from participants attending the public events. The sample sizes were small and therefore, the results of the polling exercise are *not statistically significant*.

Polling Questions (Facilitated by Valerie Shuttleworth)

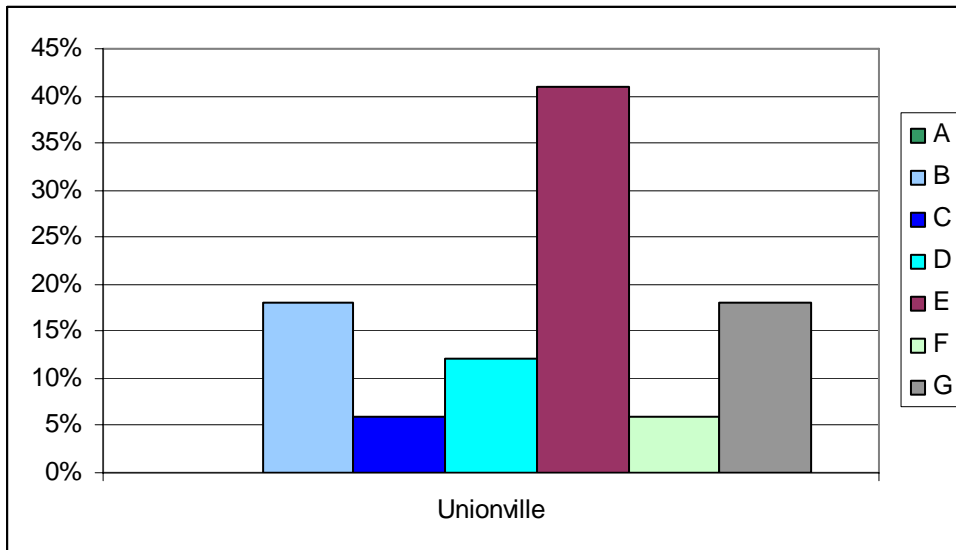
Question 1: Do you agree with the "environment first" approach to planning for new development

Figure 1: Unionville, n =22



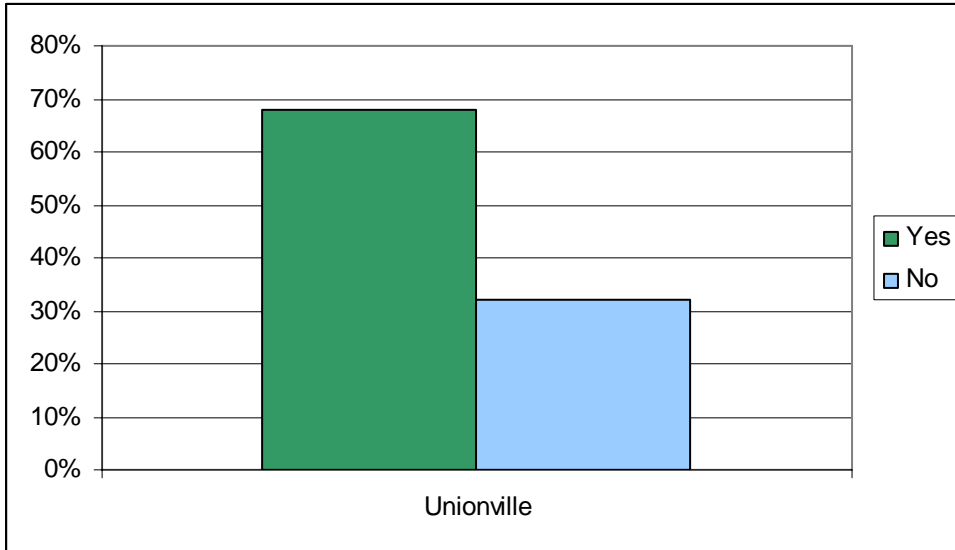
Question 2: What is the most important guiding principle:

Figure 2: Unionville, n =17



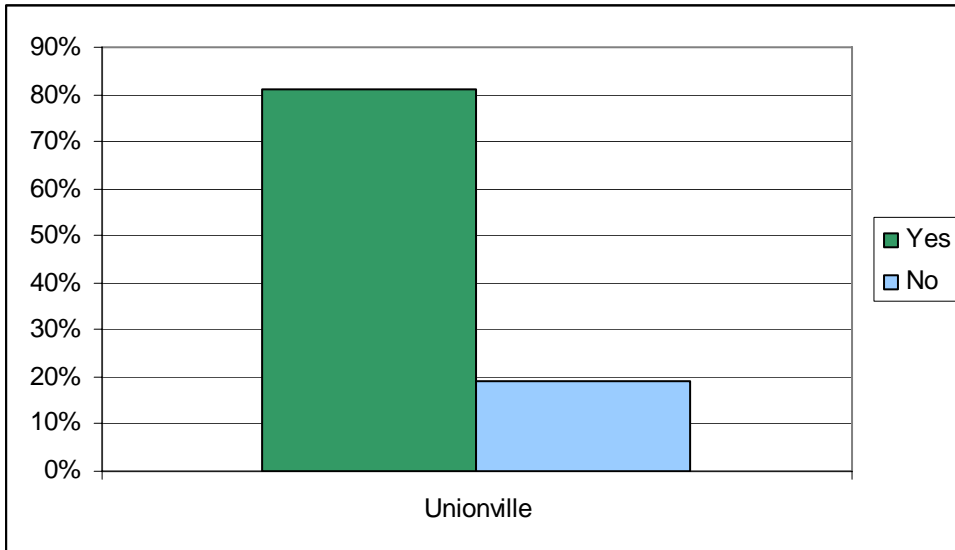
Question 3: Do you agree with accommodating the majority of new residential growth in the current urban area (Settlement Area)?

Figure 3: Unionville, n =22



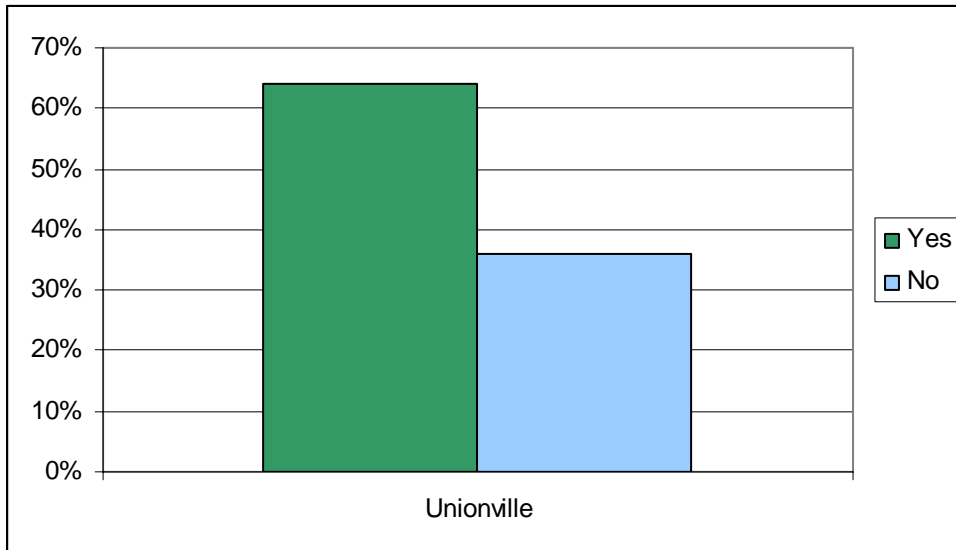
Question 4: Do you agree that the Town should balance residential intensification with the development of additional lower density housing to ensure a diverse housing mix?

Figure 4: Unionville, n =21



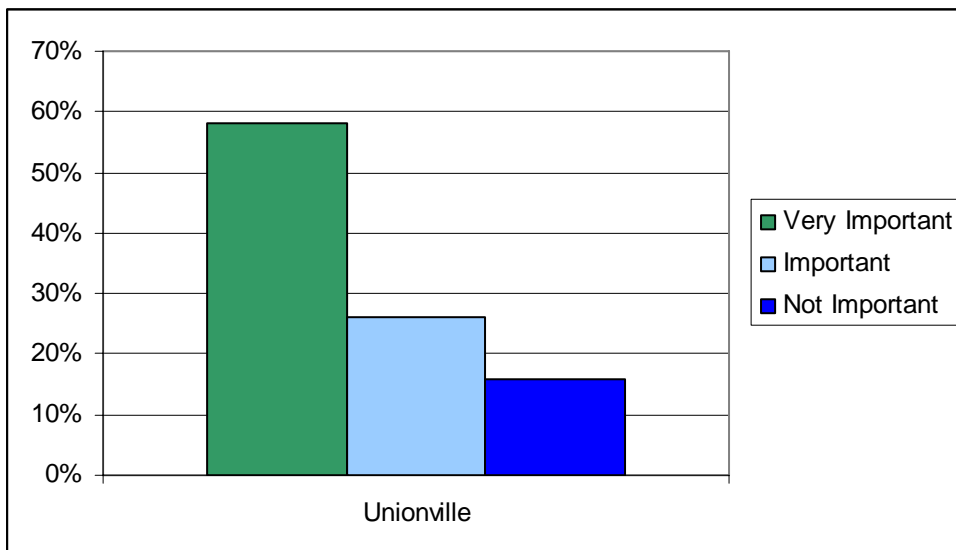
Question 5: Do you agree with expanding the Town's urban area into the Whitebelt to accommodate lower density residential growth?

Figure 5: Unionville, n =22



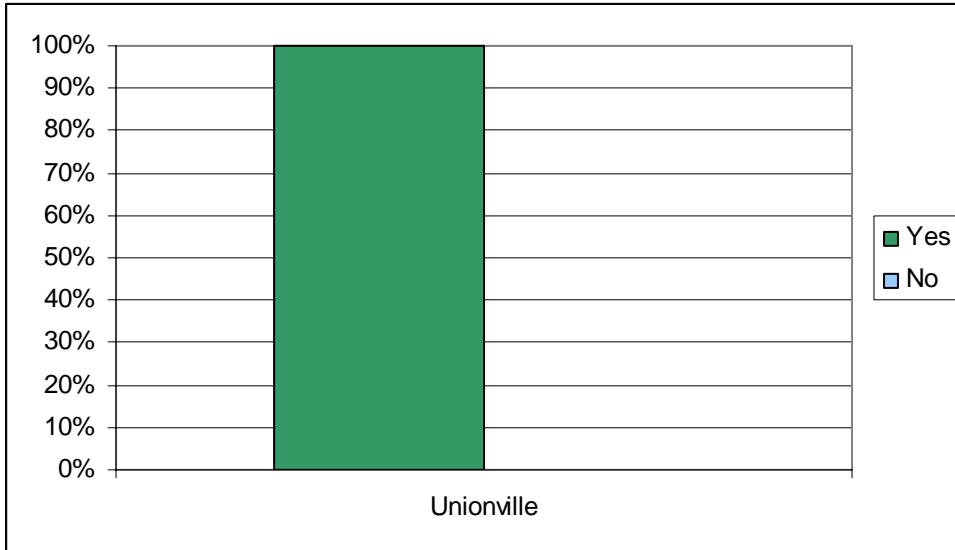
Question 6: How important is it to have a mix of housing types (e.g., single-detached, semi-detached, townhouses, apartments) in new development?

Figure 6: Unionville, n =19



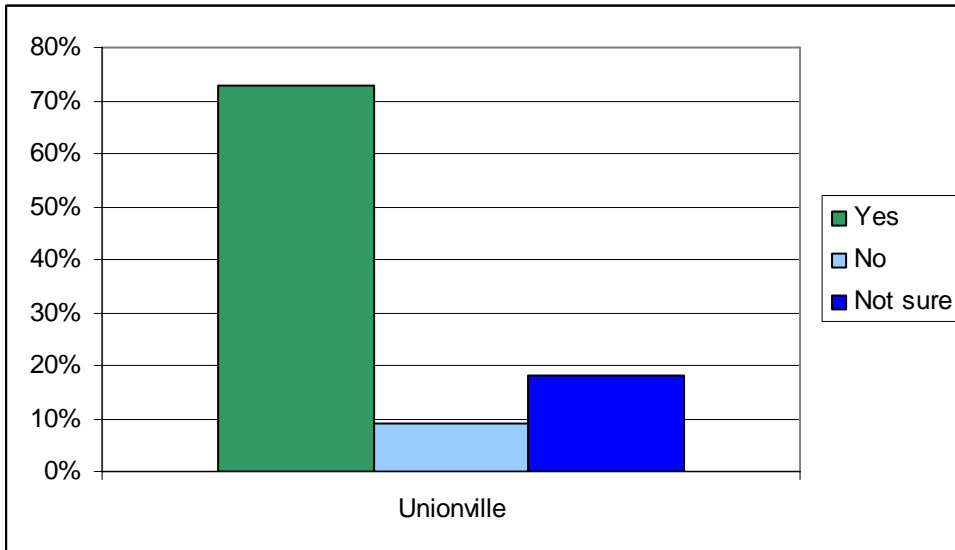
Question 7: Do you agree generally with the approach of distributing residential intensification to key locations with proposed rapid transit services?

Figure 7: Unionville, n =22



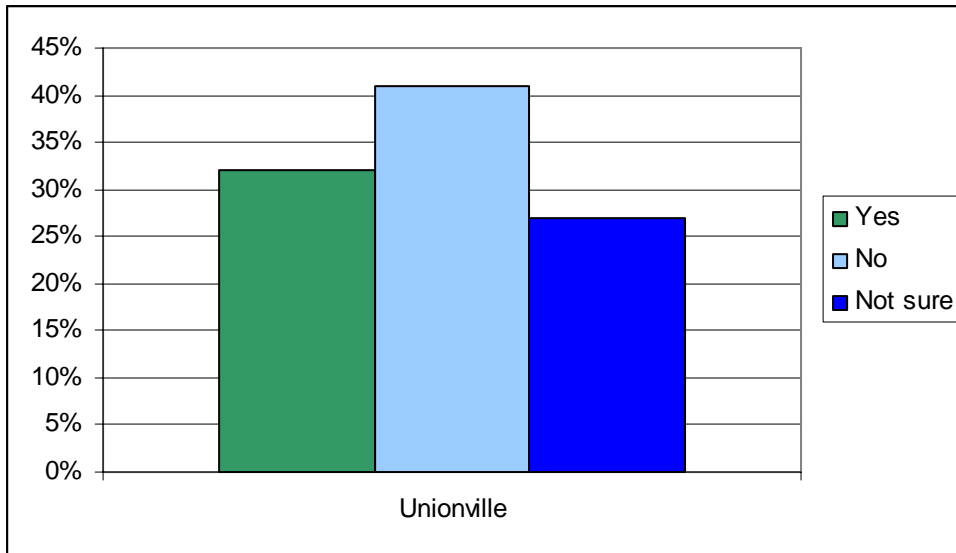
Question 8: Do you agree with the intensification areas identified?

Figure 8: Unionville, n =22



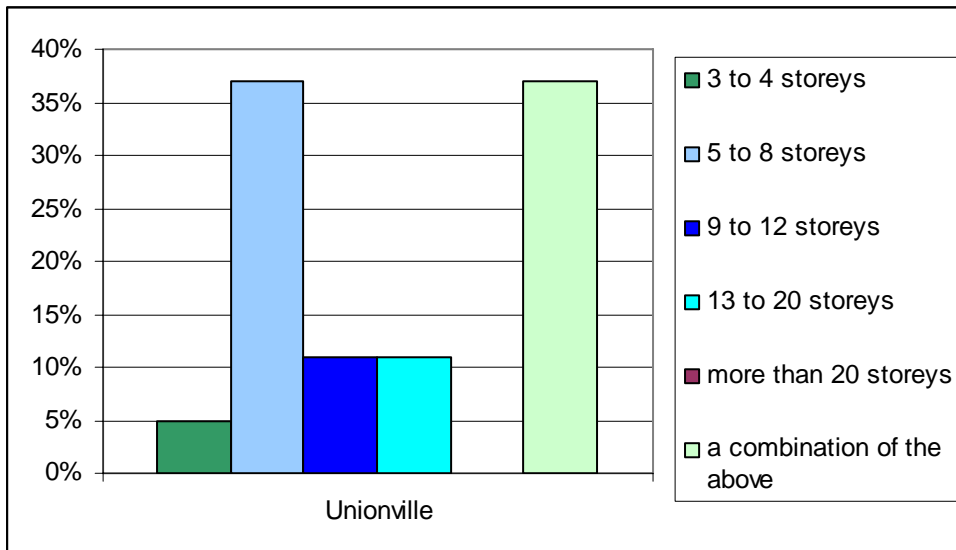
Question 9: Are there any additional intensification areas that should be considered?

Figure 9: Unionville, n =22



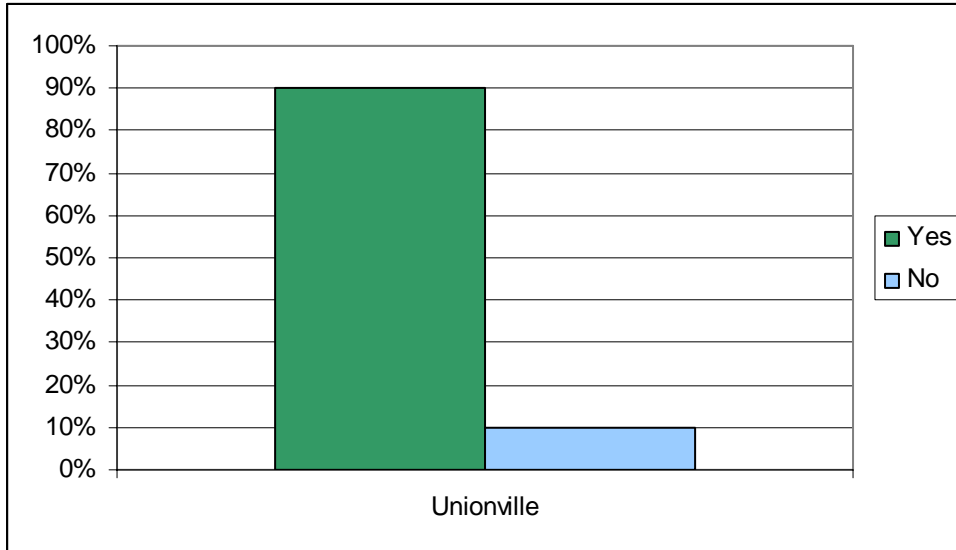
Question 10: If a significant amount of intensification were to be in the form of apartment buildings, what building height would you prefer?

Figure 10: Unionville, n =19



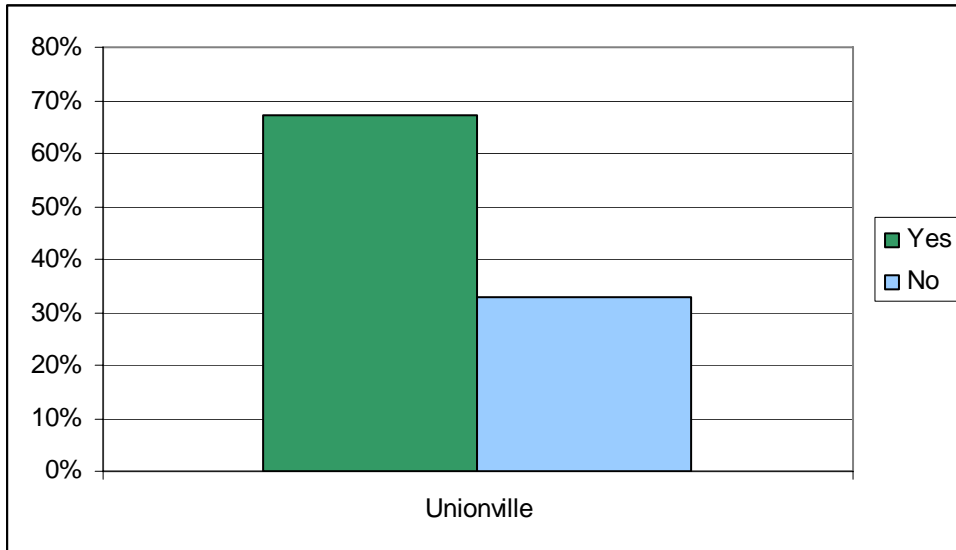
Question 11: Do you agree with reserving land to accommodate employment growth over the long term?

Figure 11: Unionville, n =21



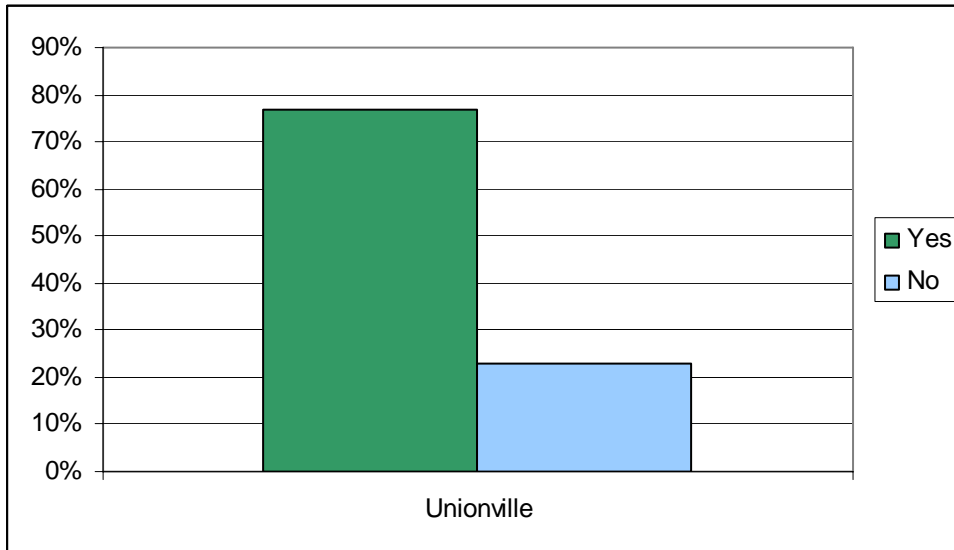
Question 12: Do you agree, that in addition to intensification, employment should be accommodated in the Whitebelt to ensure an adequate supply of land?

Figure 12: Unionville, n =21



Question 13: Do you support adding more jobs within the current urban area (Settlement Area) through intensification in existing business parks?

Figure 13: Unionville, n =22



Question 14: Do you support adding more jobs within the current Settlement Area by having some types of employment in new residential development (e.g., ground floor commercial uses in apartment buildings)? **Not Asked**

Presentation – Master Servicing Study (8:05 pm to 8:20 pm)

- Presentation by Allen Wu (Senior Development Engineer, Town of Markham)
 - Update on the Master Servicing Study

The presentation is available on-line at:

http://www.markham.ca/NR/rdonlyres/E210A2C6-5D6A-4C48-AAF1-B3624DB133E8/0/GMS_servicingstudy_090311.pdf.

Presentation – Markham Transportation Strategic Plan (8:20 pm to 8:35 p.m.)

- Presentation by Brian Hollingworth, IBI Group
 - Update on the status of the Transportation Strategic Plan

The presentation is available on-line at:

http://www.markham.ca/NR/rdonlyres/EF429246-6356-4E64-8195-6FB88E22BF7C/0/GMS_transportationplan_090311.pdf.

Polling Questions (8:35 pm to 8:45 pm)(Facilitated by Brian Hollingworth)

Questions and Answers (8:30 pm to 9:00 pm)

Note: Questions and answers were not recorded verbatim

Question: Traffic lights seem to be a thing of the past in Europe. I live close to 16th and Kennedy, we have had two new lights installed, they slow traffic down. Roundabouts, are much cheaper and more effective. Any plans to get rid of stop signs and traffic lights?

Answer: Good point, many communities are moving in that direction. Waterloo has a policy now. Markham will probably start moving into that direction, and it is a plan that Markham will look at in the future.

Question: A clarification on increase in use of transit, does that take into account any increase in population or service availability?

Answer: Yes it takes population growth into account.

Question: How do you encourage people to get out of cars and into transit?

Answer: The key is providing viable options. York Region is trying to provide a service that is competitive to automobiles by providing transit in dedicated lanes. This may result in travelling faster by public transportation than by car. Provide increased local transit service, increasing the times during a day of bus trips. Provide bike locks near local transit. Have to provide cost effective and time effective service.

Question: One of the objectives at other meetings have been to avoid negative impact in existing neighbourhoods, but I didn't see that in your presentation, will it be addressed?

Answer: Absolutely. It falls under providing liveable communities. This growth is coming and we will have to deal with the traffic issues; the solutions are traffic calming and providing pedestrian connections with neighbourhoods.

Question: I have a question with the 40% and 52% figure, as well as the bonusing

Answer: The 40% is the intensification target set by the province, 52% is the intensification target for Markham, as set by York Region. The discussion I had on bonusing, relates to consideration and individual development application down the road. The *Planning Act*, provides for density or height bonuses to developers in return for community developments (day care centres, libraries, city community centres, etc.). Can be used later on, starting to investigate if we should use it. No decision has been made yet, simply a consideration. Toronto uses bonusing.

Question: What document is that in?

Answer: Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006)

Question: You said you want to make land uses more pedestrian, and transit and bike friendly. How do you propose to redesign existing communities with short blocks and interesting mix uses, so that this ideal will be met?

Answer: I think there is a lot that Markham can do and have done already. Markham developed the Cornell community with their grid network and residential streets, which was a big step forward 20 years ago. Markham has been very proactive in not allowing places like Markham Centre to be converted into big box lands. The large commercial developments are very un-pedestrian friendly, re-engineering those areas offers some opportunities to create liveable communities.

Question: I don't see anything happening on grey water recycling, what is happening?

Answer: Nothing happening currently. We will be looking at grey water recycling in our sustainability strategy.

Question: Storm water and foundation drainage - I believe I heard you say that you taking the drainage and running it into the storm water sewage. Don't we have a policy of disconnecting downspouts? Shouldn't we be re-infiltrating as much runoff as possible rather than sending it to storm sewers? Why do you want more storm water into the storm sewers?

Answer: Disconnecting downspouts is policy that we have right now. We make sure that rainwater does not get connected into storm sewer system. More and more infiltration onto the lawn. Foundation drain are pipes that run around the house around the foundation. Purpose is to make sure that there is no water build-up on the outside of the house, because this would push it into the basement. The foundation pipe collects this water and dumps it into the storm sewer. This is water already infiltrated into the ground. I agree with you that rain water should be infiltrated in the ground instead of being connected to the sewers.

Question: What is grey water?

Answer: Water that comes out after you have a shower, etc. Can be re-used. Again, no policy on this at the moment. Will have to evaluate this as part of the process to see how can be used in the future.

Question: I still don't understand this.

Answer: Clarification – on the drawing it isn't the downspout that is connected into the storm sewer. I am talking about the foundation drain, if it were not connected to the storm sewer you would have water building up in the ground, which would be pushed back to your house and flood. Water gets filtered down through the ground and into foundation drain.

Question: One of the objectives you indicated was no negative impact to the existence of service infrastructure. I agree with that, but given the watering restrictions, whether or not if the infrastructure increase will result in increase or positive impact on service delivery system. Given that investment is going to be made to accommodate growth, should one of the objectives be not just to ensure no negative impact of growth, but in fact create a positive impact?

Answer: Building up more capacity? That would have to be a conversation with the City of Toronto to determine whether or not we can increase capacity. We want to spend money wisely, whether we want to build the system now to save money down the road. That is part of the cost benefit analysis that we will have to do.

Closing remarks by Amanda Kennedy, DPRA (9:00 p.m.)

Amanda Kennedy (DPRA) provided some closing remarks. Participants were welcome to leave, and those that were interested in continuing the conversation were invited to stay longer and ask additional questions of the presenters.

Closing remarks included comments about the

- Workbooks
- Comment forms
- Timeframes for engagement
- Next steps

Additional Questions & Answers (9:00 to 9:30 p.m.)**Note: Questions and answers were not recorded verbatim**

Question: I still don't understand the growth targets

Answer: 40% is the intensification target across the Region of York. 40% of new growth in the Region has to be within the current built-up area. That translates into 52% for Markham.

Question: Not necessarily in downtown Markham?

Answer: Part of it, parts will go all over depending on when it will be developed. It is very complicated, take a look at Region. We are even looking at higher than what the Region is saying.

Question: Can the Town accommodate it?

Answer: Yes, we can easily accommodate this growth. The intent is to slow outward growth, while continuing to provide housing variety.

Comments:

This section includes hand-written comments that were received after the Community Meeting.

There were 2 comment sheets received.

Comment Sheet #1

Area of intensification:

- Major Mac and Woodbine to Victoria Square to Warden and Elgin Mills
- Build solid town-homes and industrial land will be provided when Buttonville airport closes
- Services, soft, infra and retail can be built later because these new residents will lean on Richmond Hill

Comment Sheet #2

- Consider Pacific Mall area for an alternative urban intensification area
- Consider improving water delivery system (i.e. not just avoiding negative impact) given consistent watering restrictions over the last few years
- Ensure transportation strategic plan includes objective of avoiding traffic infiltration into existing neighbourhoods as a result of Markham Centre development