

Evaluation of phase II preliminary planning concepts

The twelve preliminary planning concepts have been examined by a wide range of participants in the public planning process such as: on-site residents, including the North Pickering Council of Community Associations; various affected agencies and municipalities; representatives of Ministries of the Provincial Government; members of the general public at large; the project planning staff, and Plantown Consultants Limited. That review or evaluation process was focused primarily on the questions posed in the introduction and response form provided with the Planning Information Kit. Its completion has made it possible to establish guidelines for the preparation of more detailed planning proposals for a new community at North Pickering.

This document summarizes the planning guidelines that emerged from the evaluation of the preliminary planning concepts.

PLANNING GUIDELINES

SIZE OF COMMUNITY

The most important guideline that has received general acceptance is the principle of planning for the development of the site to a degree that is something less than its maximum potential capacity for a target year around the end of the next decade.

More precise planning for the years beyond the end of the 1980's can be undertaken when it can more accurately reflect conditions and priorities existing of some future date, and can be undertaken with the involvement of persons then resident in North Pickering.

Current planning activities, however, will continue to include the evaluation of end-state plans with respect to their ability to accommodate potential growth to maturity and full development at some point in time during the 21st century.

The maximum population potential of the North Pickering site, assuming housing densities comparable to other recently developed Canadian communities, has been calculated at about 200,000 persons. The population range for planning purposes could be from 70,000 to 90,000 people, depending on the rate at which development occurs.

The figure of 70,000 to 90,000 is significant because various studies have revealed that this population range can be regarded as a minimum community that would be necessary to sustain a multi-purpose town centre, reasonable social and cultural facilities, and services, a diverse employment base, and viable public transit. However, there is no consensus on the development rate to achieve this capacity. The pace of development will obviously relate to Government policy on housing and other external factors.

It should be pointed out that a lower rate of population build-up and lower population target might jeopardise the financial viability of the community and would likely result in no more than a dormitory or suburban area which, on the basis of all evaluations, is desired by no one.

URBAN FORM

a. Degree of Concentration

There has been a consistent desire to avoid urban sprawl in the development of North Pickering. Actions available to achieve that goal are numerous. A few of the primary ones are outlined below. It has been generally agreed by participants in Phase II of the planning, that there are advantages to a concentrated pattern of the urban fabric at all stages in the development of the new community in order to:

- i) maximize the amount of good agricultural land preserved for productive use;
- ii) minimize travel distance or time for internal trips;
- iii) facilitate servicing and thereby reduce costs;
- iv) achieve a cohesive physical and visual urban area.

b. Average Overall Residential Densities

There is general preference for an overall average density which allows a wide mix of housing types rather than a predominant concentration at any point in the range.

A housing mix comparable to that existing with Metropolitan Toronto or recently developed new Canadian communities has been adopted as a guideline.

This would permit:

- single family and semi-detached units at an average of 8 dwelling units per acre net*
- medium density at 15-30 dwelling units per acre net*
- high density at 40+ dwelling units per acre net*

The density would appear to balance the need to address the present housing crisis in Toronto, the public demand for detached housing and the need to ensure the financial viability of the Project while still allowing the private market to implement the housing construction program.

* Net residential acreage includes only residential property plus private internal service roads. It does not include public streets, parks, schools, commercial development, etc. acreages.

c. Relationship between Employment and Resident Labor Force

There is also support for dispersing employment throughout the site with primary concentrations of industrial development in the northeast and the southwest sectors.

Inherent in this approach is the principle of balance of employment opportunities with the population as well as enhancing the opportunities for a closer relationship between places of residence and employment as a potential means of minimizing the incidence of commuting within and without the community.

