

Rationalizing Official Plan Policies

To provide for the “right” types of employment
in the “right” places

Presentation to Employment Land Strategy Stakeholders
November 12, 2008



Overview of Presentation

1. Description of project goals.
2. Overview of the current employment lands policy framework.
3. Is the policy framework working?
4. Some employment land planning challenges....
5. The definition of "area of employment" is key....

Section 1(1) of the Planning Act indicates that an area of employment is "*an area of land designated in an Official Plan for clusters of business and economic uses including, without limitation, the uses listed in Sub-Section (5), whereas otherwise prescribed by regulation.*" Sub-Section (5) indicates that "*the uses referred to in the definition of area of employment in Sub-Section (1) are:*

- a) manufacturing uses;*
- b) warehousing uses;*
- c) office uses;*
- d) retail uses that are associated with uses mentioned in clauses a-c; and*
- e) facilities that are ancillary to uses mentioned in clauses a-d."*

Project Goals

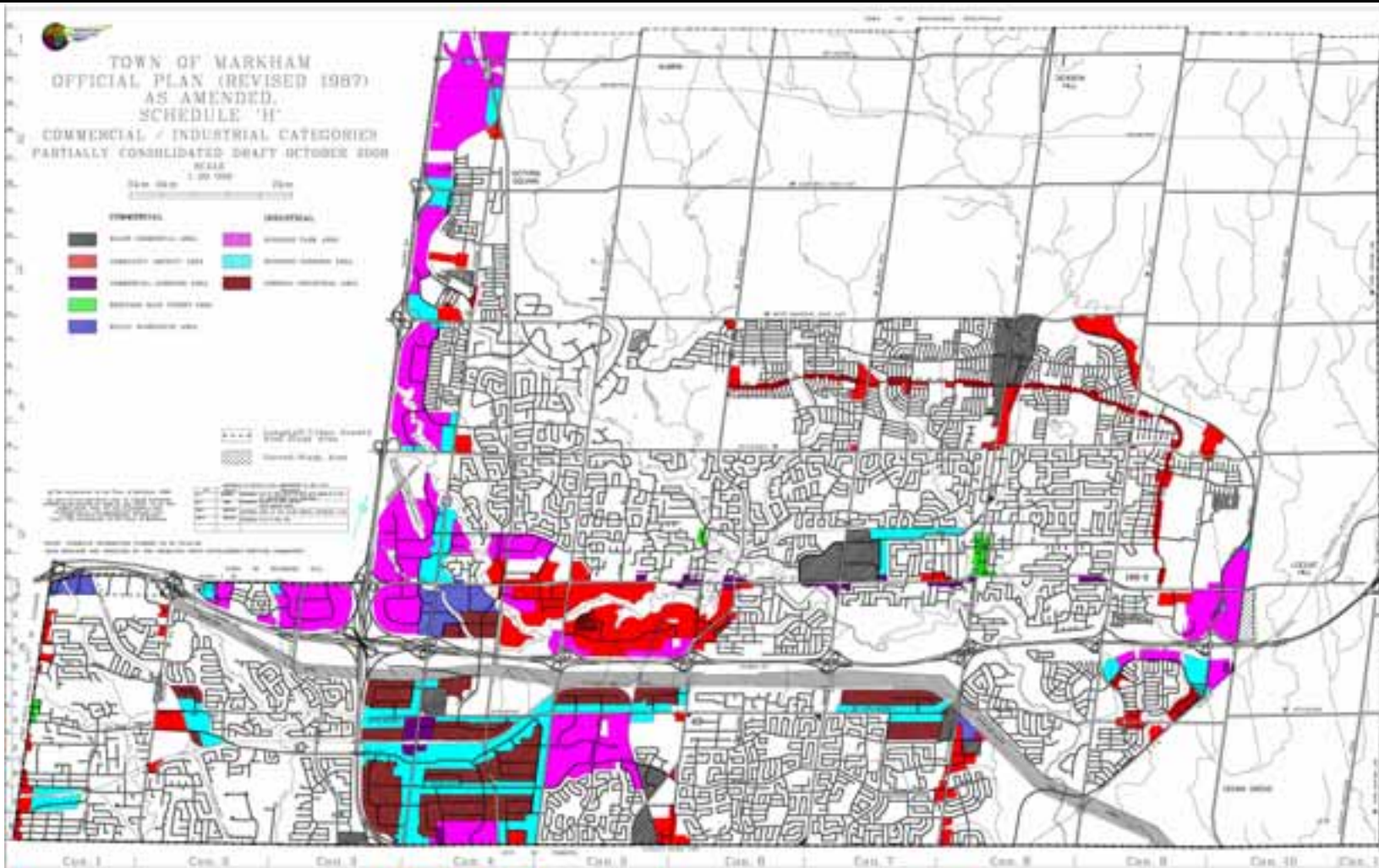
An opportunity exists as part of the Employment Lands Strategy process to identify opportunities to enhance the employment lands policy framework to:

- Simplify the policy approach by creating specific designations only if the planned function of each designation is clearly unique;
- Ensure that the uses which support the planned function of each designation are identified and permitted;
- Improve policies relating to mixed-use development;
- Rationalize the location land use designations to reflect their current and future use;
- Encourage the further intensification of employment areas as long as the scale and type of intensification is consistent with the planned function of the area;
- Ensure that the policy framework is sufficiently flexible to address the Town's economic development strategy and for new and expanding knowledge-based industries and the emerging 'creative class'; and,
- Provide for the protection of additional urban employment lands outside of the urban boundary from incompatible or alternative development.

Current Policy Approach

- Current approach established in 1994 by OPA 26.
- Basis of OPA 26 was to focus less on planned function and built form.
- Resulting policies generally encouraged the mixing of land uses provided development met the Town's built form objectives.
- OPA 26 established the following "Industrial" designations:
 1. Business Park;
 2. Business Corridor; and,
 3. General Industrial.
 - OPA 26 also established the following "Commercial" designations:
 1. Major Commercial Area;
 2. Retail Warehouse Area;
 3. Community Amenity Area;
 4. Corridor Commercial Corridor Area; and,
 5. Heritage Main Street Area.

Schedule H



November 12, 2008

Planned Function

BUSINESS PARK

- 783 hectares (47.5% of total land in Industrial category)
- Almost 50% of the jobs in this designation are scientific, technical and management
- Planned function - intended for 'prestige' uses such as corporate head offices and research
- Applies to prime highly visible locations
- Retail and service commercial uses only permitted within office buildings or hotels



Planned Function (Cont'd)

BUSINESS PARK (cont'd)

- Other service uses conditionally permitted (fitness centres, banquet halls)
- Currently characterized by single use buildings, multi use office buildings and hotels
- There has been demand recently to permit free-standing or un-integrated restaurants and other retail/service uses
- Also increasing interest in developing private schools
- The planned function is currently being maintained, but its function is being threatened by the demand for non 'business park' uses.

Planned Function

BUSINESS CORRIDOR

- 450 hectares (27.3% of total land in Industrial category)
- Major job categories in Business Corridor - Manufacturing (17%), professional, scientific and technical (16%) and admin and support (13%).
- Planned function - intended for high quality business activities on corridors adjacent to industrial and business park areas.
- Uses are primarily intended to serve business and service needs of companies and employees
- However, uses serving the general public may be permitted
- Applies to a number of major arteries
- Freestanding retail and service commercial uses permitted (greater than 300 m² but less than 1,000 m²) -some uses may be larger
- Restaurants must be in multi-use buildings

Planned Function

BUSINESS CORRIDOR (cont'd)

- Currently characterized by primarily multi-use buildings containing a range of retail and service commercial uses and some industrial uses
- Many home furnishing and similar uses
- Some Business Corridor areas do contain uses that primarily serve adjacent businesses
- However, some Business Corridor areas contain uses that have a regional draw and/or serve surrounding residential neighbourhoods
- These latter areas could be characterized as commercial areas that serve the wider community
- There will continue to be a demand for floor space in these areas since multiple floor space options available
- Given location of designation in high traffic areas, there is considerable interest in developing more retail and less interest in development industrial uses.
- Demand for self-storage facilities is also high
- Planned function is being slowly eroded since many uses are not there to serve adjacent businesses in industrial areas

Planned Function

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL

- 413 hectares (25.2% of total land in Industrial category)
- Planned function - intended for manufacturing, processing and warehousing
- Applies to lands that are in the interior of industrial areas
- Currently characterized by a range of primarily single use buildings
- There is pressure to develop retail and service uses in existing multi use buildings



Planned Function (Cont'd)

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL (Cont'd)

- No freestanding office buildings permitted in some areas
- Planned function is currently being maintained - however, some uses such as self-storage do not support planned function.

Planned Function

MAJOR COMMERCIAL

- 187 hectares
- Planned function - intended for large-scale and multi-use developments or areas that have a Regional draw
- Some older industrial and service commercial uses located in this designation
- The transition of older industrial areas into 'Major Commercial' area has occurred in some areas, but not in others
- Residential uses permitted
- This designation is clearly a 'retail' designation - however, the motor vehicle cluster is not 'major retail' and the scale of the residential development on Highway 48 will have an impact on the 'major retail' planned function
- There is a considerable amount of potential for redevelopment and intensification in this designation

Planned Function

RETAIL WAREHOUSE

- 65 hectares
- Residential uses not permitted
- Light industrial uses are permitted
- This designation is clearly a big-box 'retail' designation
- Potential exists for this designation to be combined with the Major Commercial designation - similar planned function

Planned Function

COMMUNITY AMENITY AREA

- 301 hectares and 156 hectares (residential)
- Planned function - intended for multi-use, multi-function retail, service, community, institutional and recreational uses serving residential and business areas
- Designation also permits freestanding office buildings and medium and high density housing
- Applies to a number of existing community scale shopping centres.



Community Amenity Area on Yonge Street

COMMUNITY AMENITY AREA (Cont'd)

- Many office uses (such as IBM) and future office uses to be located in this designation (primarily in Markham Centre)
- Other community amenity areas are developed exclusively with clearly residential uses and no mixed use
- Other areas serve primarily a retail and service function
- Mixed use potential is not being achieved as envisioned
- Permitting mixed use does not mean that mixed use development will occur

Planned Function

COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR AREA

- 39 hectares
- Applies to existing linear commercial areas along major arterials and at intersections where motor vehicle related uses are located
- Designation does permit offices
- Much of this area has been developed, and was developed primarily as a typical 'highway commercial' area
- This designation generally applies to high traffic areas in established areas and have high redevelopment potential
- There may be merit in considering the collapsing of this designation with the Community Amenity Area designation to stimulate redevelopment - may not be appropriate in all areas.

SOME CHALLENGES

IN DEVELOPING A POLICY FRAMEWORK, SOME CHALLENGES EMERGE:

1. What lands should be considered 'employment lands' for the purposes of moving forward (given the new 'area of employment' definition)?

Section 1(1) of the Planning Act indicates that an area of employment is "*an area of land designated in an Official Plan for clusters of business and economic uses including, without limitation, the uses listed in Sub-Section (5), whereas otherwise prescribed by regulation.*" Sub-Section (5) indicates that "*the uses referred to in the definition of area of employment in Sub-Section (1) are:*

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Some Challenges (Cont'd)

- Business Park and General Industrial designations clearly fit within the Provincial 'area of employment' definition
- However, the function of some areas within the Business Corridor designation is under pressure to change
- Some of the new office development in Markham Centre has and will occur in a 'commercial' designation - Community Amenity
- Some older employment uses also exist in the Major Commercial designation
- And lastly, live-work is being actively encouraged in the residential component of the Community Amenity Area as well



Major Commercial Area at Highway 7 and McCowan

SOME CHALLENGES (cont'd)

IN DEVELOPING A POLICY FRAMEWORK, SOME CHALLENGES EMERGE:

2. What do we count and not count, for the purposes of determining land needs for 'area of employment' uses?
 - The answer may have implications on how much additional 'Business Park' land is required...
 - Changing the planned function of some of the Business Corridor lands to a service commercial function may be appropriate
 - The creation of an 'office' component of the Community Amenity Area designation may also be appropriate
 - Options to enhance potential to achieve more employment uses within the Community Amenity Area should be explored

SOME CHALLENGES (cont'd)

IN DEVELOPING A POLICY FRAMEWORK, SOME CHALLENGES EMERGE:

3. What can we do to protect the function of existing Business Park and General Industrial areas?

- Uses not consistent with the function and corporate image desired in these areas should not be permitted - uses that are supportive of the planned function can go to the Business Corridors - these uses can include free-standing restaurants and self-storage facilities



Modern business park area on east side of 404

SOME CHALLENGES (Cont'd)

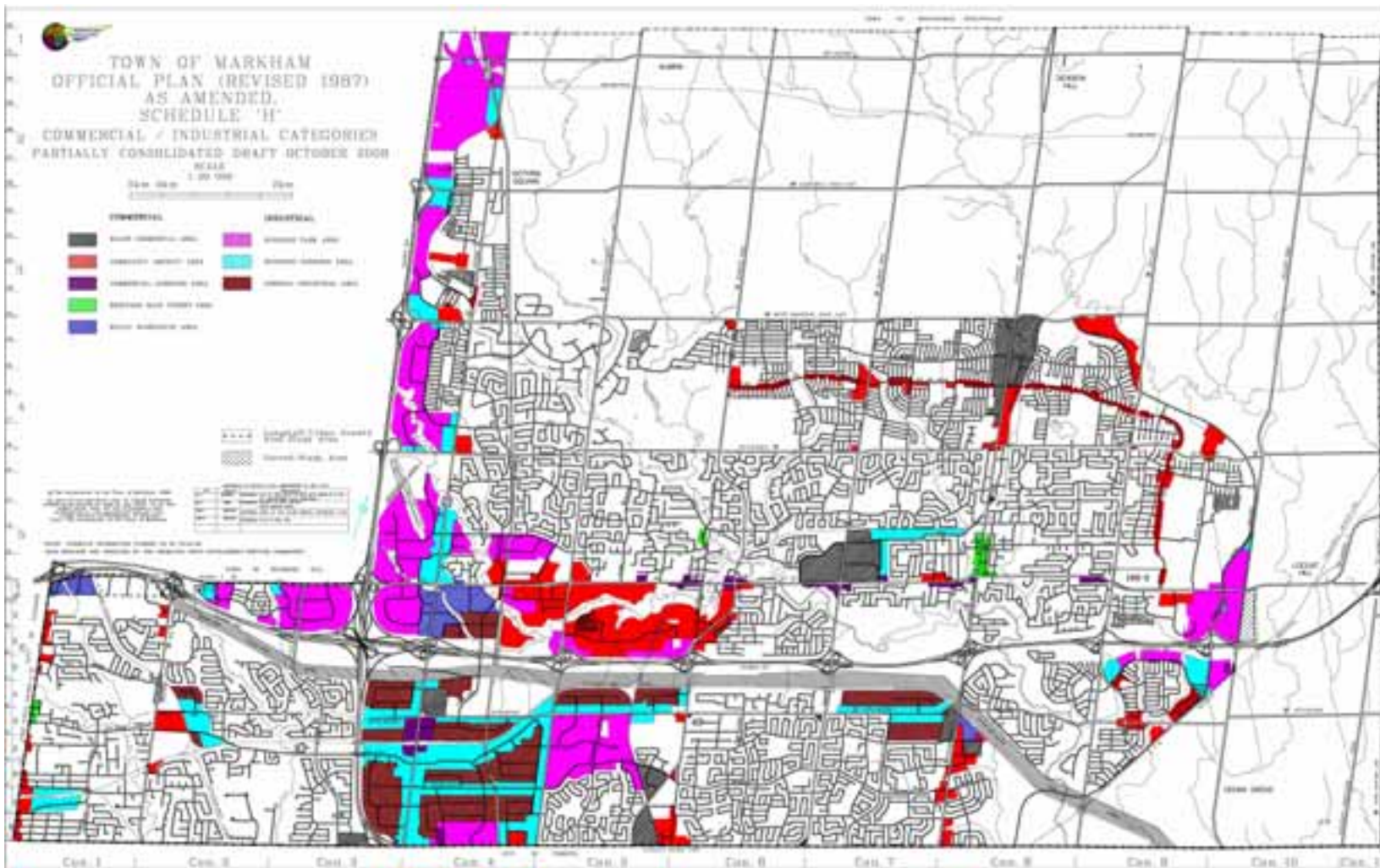
3. What can we do to protect the function of existing Business Park and General Industrial areas? (Cont'd)
 - As many parcel size and unit size options should be encouraged in these two designations
 - Freestanding office buildings could be considered as-of-right in the General Industrial designation - subject to compatibility issues being addressed
 - Permission for self-storage uses serving the general public should be re-considered

SOME CHALLENGES (cont'd)

IN DEVELOPING A POLICY FRAMEWORK, SOME CHALLENGES EMERGE:

4. What can be done to provide for as many options for new employment uses in the future?
 - The challenge is that we can only plan to 2031
 - The land within the 'whitebelt' is finite
 - Key areas adjacent to and with 400 series highway frontage need to be reserved for employment, much like land which is reserved for agriculture, natural heritage and open space/parkland - employment areas are a resource too
 - Outdated zoning by-laws should be replaced and updated to ensure that the intensification of existing areas can occur - has to occur in 3 years
 - Minimum densities as set out in Growth Plan are great minimum targets - however, municipalities have no control over number of employees per business
 - Any policy framework has to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate changing circumstances
 - Process improvements can also be considered to streamline approvals

QUESTIONS



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