



# Town of East Gwillimbury

## **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT ADMIN2012-08**

To: Committee of the Whole Council

Date: September 4, 2012

Subject: East Gwillimbury's Post Secondary Attraction Project

Origin: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer and  
Economic Development & Sustainability Branch

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **THAT** Chief Administrative Officer Report ADMIN2012-08, dated September 4, 2012, regarding the university project, be received.
2. **THAT** representatives from Queensville Properties be requested to make a presentation to the September 17<sup>th</sup> CWC meeting to provide and confirm information regarding the Queensville Community Plan (ownership, phasing, Town Centre, intensification, employment lands and the site currently designated for a post-secondary institution);
3. **THAT** following the September 24<sup>th</sup> Visioning Charette, the project team provide an Outcome Report to Council for review and discussion regarding next steps in the Post-Secondary Attraction Program and addressing a public outreach process.
4. **THAT** the proposed attendee list for the Phase 1 Post Secondary Visioning Charette be modified as outlined herein.

### **PURPOSE**

This report is submitted as a follow-up to CAO Report CAO2012-06 and in response to discussions at the August 13<sup>th</sup> and May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012 Committee of the Whole meetings. The purpose of this report is to provide specific information concerning the format of the proposed East Gwillimbury University Visioning Charette scheduled for September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012. In addition, and in accordance to Council direction, staff have also had discussions with Queensville Properties representatives to clarify property ownership and discuss matters such as the Town Centre and possible intensification within the Queensville Community.

### **BACKGROUND**

At the August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Committee meeting, Council gave approval to proceed with a two-phased university visioning and planning design Charette but asked staff to provide details as to the structure of these sessions. The additional funding for these sessions (\$21,500 for the project from the CAO's contingency budget) was also approved.

During the August 13<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting, there was discussion regarding the process and how the Post-Secondary Attraction project has been developed. This report will provide information regarding the project's process and chronology of events and activities to date.

## **ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION**

### **A Phased Charette Process**

Ideally, a charette process targets participation to facilitate effective discussion and very often includes reporting out to a broader groups, including Council, at key stages. The attendance of a quorum of Council would require the holding of a special council meeting in accordance with the Municipal Act. The format of a special council meeting would not be conducive to this type of charette process. It is recommended that the Mayor attend to represent the municipality at the Visioning session. Alternatively, Council may choose to appoint another Council attendee for the session. The details of the discussion and input obtained at the Visioning session will be reported to Council at the October 1st Committee of the Whole meeting, for discussion and deliberation.

As outlined in the May 22nd memo, staff proposed a two-phased project. Subsequent to the detailed discussions at the August 13<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting, staff provide the following as a more detailed description of the phasing structure:

- Phase 1 - A broad visioning session to develop a “shared vision” of what the campus could be and to develop a platform to build broad support and buy-in to the university concept in East Gwillimbury and the Region of York. The session will provide direction in terms of how the Town can market itself and advance a business case. This visioning session will examine ideas relating to the campus form, function and related land uses. This would include discussion on and determination of top priorities as to key elements of a university in East Gwillimbury. General location criteria may be discussed, however, the focus of this session is to establish some clear directives relating to the key elements of the university. Based on the discussion, there will, hopefully, be criteria agreed upon so as to help project staff and Council identify a suitable location(s) considering all options and alternatives including the Queensville lands designated in the Official Plan.

The proposed format and Agenda for the September 24<sup>th</sup> Visioning session is attached as Appendix 1.

In terms of the invitation list that Council reviewed on August 13<sup>th</sup>, it is proposed that this invitee list be amended by:

- Mayor of East Gwillimbury (to represent East Gwillimbury Council)
- Adding a representative from Southlake CFDC;

- Adding representative of the East Gwillimbury Business Development Committee;
- Adding the United Way York Region CEO, Daniele Zanotti
- Expanding Queensville Properties representation to include all major ownership interests.

The Project team will provide an Outcome Report to Council on October 1<sup>st</sup> with a summary and findings from the Phase 1 Visioning session. Part of this report will outline next steps and more specifics regarding Phase 2 for Council consideration together with a proposed public outreach process.

- Phase 2 – This will be more of a technical exercise building on the Phase 1 discussions and which a preferred location would be determined and urban design concepts developed. Based on the criteria established in the Phase 1 session, this second phase would move towards answering the question of the best location to put forward as part of the current Provincial initiative. As discussed in this report and outlined in Appendix 2, the details for the Phase 2 Charette will be subject to Council's consideration and direction as part of the outcome reporting process.

The Provincial process of choosing a location for a satellite campus will be a very competitive one. The process will have a very short timeframe as the Province may be making its location decisions within a 12 month timeframe. Recently, the province has confirmed that the detailed final set of criteria and policy statement of the Government to define the selection process has yet to be finalized. Of key importance will be to collectively work towards positioning East Gwillimbury to put forward a focussed bid in the Provincial process and thereby secure an incredible asset for East Gwillimbury and the Region at large.

#### Queensville Properties Discussions

Mayor and Staff met with Queensville Properties representatives on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Queensville Properties was represented by Peter Czapka, Dave Woods, Al Duffy and Fraser Nelson. Queensville Properties advised that they own approximately 92% of the approved development lands in Queensville west of the highway 404 extension, including a large portion of the University site. Queensville Properties does not hold any land within the employment area designation. Council had requested information regarding the ownerships behind Queensville Properties. We have been advised that Queensville Properties is comprised of a 50/50 partnership between Czapka companies and DeGasperis companies.

Discussions with Queensville Properties also addressed the university project. The lands designated for university purposes in Queensville are owned partially by Queensville Properties ( $\pm$  64 acres) and partially by a private interest known as 1709491 Ontario Ltd. ( $\pm$  27 acres). Queensville Properties representatives have been invited to participate in the phase one University Visioning session.

It is important to note that Queensville Properties is one of the appellants to the Town's Official Plan. As part of their appeal and discussions through the appeals process, Queensville properties have requested an underlying residential designation for the lands designated "Post-Secondary Institution" in the Official Plan. Should the university not occur on this property, Queensville Properties would like the opportunity of developing for alternative uses without having to go through an Official Plan Amendment process.

There were a number of other items regarding the Queensville Community Plan discussed at the meeting. Given the complexity of this matter, it is proposed that representative(s) of Queensville Properties be invited to appear before Committee of the Whole Council on September 17 to discuss and update information regarding the Community Plan (university site, Town Centre, phasing, ownership, intensification, employment lands, etc.).

### **POST-SECONDARY BACKGROUND AND RECENT ACTIVITIES**

The following chronology provides a full context for the importance of this project and to respond to process-related concerns identified by Council on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

1.     March 1995                     Queensville Community Plan (OPA #89) adopted by Town Council with a university as a key component of the plan. The "University" designation on these lands remains in effect. It is noted that the original concept for the Queensville Community Plan proposed a private university.
  
2.     May 2006                     Council adoption of the Future Employment Lands Economic Review report by CN Watson which highlights the importance of the post-secondary institution as an economic driver and reviews employment land corridors, thereby enabling the Town to meet its employment growth and non-residential tax assessment targets.
  
3.     June 2010                     Consolidated Official Plan adopted by Council, identifies the need for an economic development strategy and recruitment of a post-secondary educational institution as a critical element of the strategy.  
*Section 2.2.1 – "Develop an Economic Development Strategy to promote employment growth and provide local job opportunities"*  
  
*Section 2.2.iii - "Establish a post-secondary institution for the Town and regional population;"*  
  
One of the fundamental objectives of the Consolidated Official Plan is to create a sustainable complete community by balancing economic activity (with approximately 30,000 new jobs by

2031) to balance and support residential growth. New Official Plan affirms the university land use designation in the Queensville Community Plan.

4. December 2011 EG 2012 Business Plan and Budget are approved with funds assigned to a "Post-Secondary Attraction Program". The project includes working with the Region of York.
5. January 16, 2012 The Town endorses the first ever Economic Development Strategy commissioned by Council and undertaken by Millier Dickinson Blais.

Strategy includes recruitment of a post-secondary educational institution as a critical initiative and the following:

*"1. Prepare a business case and partnership strategy to pursue The development of a post-secondary institution in East Gwillimbury that is of sufficient size and scope to benefit and service the larger regional economy.*

- *Give consideration to designating an alternate location in the Town that provides more immediate access to a greater variety of transportation modes particularly provincial and regional transit.*
- *Conduct a review of the policies and procedures associated with post-secondary education expansion introduced by the provincial government to ensure opportunities are maximized.*
- *Directly involve representatives of various institutions in the development of a business case.*

*" - Explore the other potential lands that may be more attractive to a potential post-secondary partner*

- *Though the Town has a strategic advantage in the existing designation of post-secondary lands, the Queensville site is currently underserved by public transit and is somewhat north of high-volume traffic corridors. As seen in other jurisdictions, the Town may have a better opportunity to attract a post-secondary partner if it can arrange a land exchange for other vacant, privately-held employment lands."*

Council asks for an action plan as part of the adoption of the EDS

At this CWC meeting, the CAO identified that Stephen Quinlan, a local resident and former president of Seneca College, is volunteering and providing input toward the recruitment of a post-secondary educational institution

6. February 21, 2012 The Economic Development short-term action plan, outlining the post-secondary project, is approved by Council. The action items regarding this project include developing a general business case for recruiting a university campus and undertaking outreach meetings.
7. May 16, 2012 Application for funding filed with South Lake CFDC under the Community Innovation Fund to support the Post Secondary Attractions Program.
8. May 22, 2012 Staff memo to Council suggests a two stage Charette process regarding a proposed university with the potential of a Green Lane location, Council indicated invitations should be inclusive and include Queensville. CAO provides verbal update that the Town has been awarded \$18,500 in funding from South Lake CFDC for the Charettes.
9. June 15, 2012 An internal communication was sent to all Council members indicating that Stephen Quinlan, a volunteer on the university project, and the Economic Development Officer would like to meet members of Council to:
  - Provide an update on the proposed University project;
  - Solicit Council members viewpoints related to the project; and
  - Discuss the location options.
10. August 13, 2012 Report on proposed Charette process at CWC acknowledges Council direction from May 22<sup>nd</sup>, indicates Queensville site continues to be designated for university purpose in the Official Plan. Based on Provincial timelines and information received from outreach meetings to date, staff indicate that the Town should focus on the Green Lane location with the potential for the campus to also include Queensville. Staff directed to arrange for a University Visioning Charette on September 24 that is not specific as to location and inclusive of options for a York Region university to be located in East Gwillimbury, including Queensville designated lands.

During the time period March to May 2012, the Mayor and Mr. Quinlan, supported by Town staff undertook outreach meetings with Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP; Julia Munro, MPP, Peter Van Loan, MP; Hon. Glen Murray, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities; Glenn Craney, Sr. VP, York University; Sheldon Levy, President of Ryerson University; Alistair Summerlee, President of Guelph University; Bill Fisch, Chair of Region of York and Dave Williams, President of Southlake Regional Health Centre.

The outreach meetings were positive in that it was felt that the Town could easily work towards obtaining an institutional partner and go forward in making a bid submission to the Province. In the Spring 2012, it was felt that the project needed to move from the “idea stage” to a project that was working towards a tangible design concept. In order to do this, the two-phased University Visioning session and Planning Design Charette was tabled in a CWC memo on May 22. The charette was originally scheduled for June 2012 and a CFDC funding application was filed in a timely manner to partially fund this initiative.

In terms the project next steps and in order to keep Council apprised of the project's progress, an internal shareable computer folder will be created so that Council can access project work plans, meeting agendas and minutes.

### **PUBLIC & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS**

As noted in the previous section of this report, staff have conducted a significant amount of stakeholder consultation which will continue into the Phase I Charette scheduled for September 24<sup>th</sup>. A broader public outreach program will be discussed and recommendations for this program presented as part of the Phase 1 reporting out process.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

As noted earlier, the existing 2012 Budget includes \$15,000 for this post-secondary attraction program. In addition, the Town received grant approval from South Lake CFDC funding of \$18,500 for the University Visioning/Planning Charette for the Green Lane corridor and additional resources have been approved on August 13 from the CAO's contingency account to support the program.

The two-phased University Visioning/Planning Design Charette had an estimated cost of \$40,000 in consulting fees. Pending the outcome of Phase 1 and Council direction as to the specifics for the second phase, the budget may require a review and adjustment.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Economic Development Strategy supports the pillar “Manage Growth for a community that is environmentally responsible, profitable and provides healthy places to live, work and play” as it provides guidelines that ensure business development and job creation form an integral part of the Town's ongoing growth.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Phase 1 (University Visioning Charette), as outlined in this report, is the next critical step required for this project and will be the focus of the project team in the immediate time-frame. The Town must work diligently and in a timely manner to be in a position to participate in the Provincial process for securing a post-secondary institution for East Gwillimbury.

Following phase 1, staff propose to report back to Council with an Outcome Report of the Visioning session.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix 1 – Draft Program and Agenda for University Visioning Session, Sept. 24  
Appendix 2 – Correspondence South Lake CFDC dated August 23, 2012

Prepared and Recommended by:

Original signed by

Marnie Wraith  
Economic Development Officer

Prepared and Recommended by:

Original signed by

Dan Stone MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Economic Development &  
Sustainability

Prepared and Recommended by:

Original signed by

Carolyn Kellington MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Planning.

Approved for Submission:

Original signed by

Thomas R. Webster  
Chief Administrative Officer

26 August 2012

Marnie Wraith, Economic Development Officer  
Town of East Gwillimbury  
19000 Leslie Street  
Sharon, ON L0G 1V0

**Re: Landowner Design Charrette for East Gwillimbury University Campus**

Dear Marnie:

This memo outlines our approach to the initial East Gwillimbury Design Charrette for a proposed university campus in the Town, in accordance with our May 9, 2012 approved Statement of Work.

The intent of the first design charrette will be to initiate a dialogue with community leaders regarding the Town's urban design vision for a campus. For example, we will explore such topics as how a campus could be integrated with the surrounding neighbourhood; how campus-related uses such as student residences, recreational facilities, open space and retail and entertainment uses could be addressed; transportation linkages; ancillary uses such as research and development facilities; green design; and so on.

The first charrette will not be place-specific. It is intended to generate the urban design objectives for the campus that will then inform the more detailed design work that will happen in a subsequent stage. It will also help establish the basis for how the Town would market itself, and distinguish itself, as a campus location.

The critical outcomes of this first charrette will be:

- an understanding of the type of campus (from a physical form and design perspective) that the Town would like to pursue; and
- an understanding of the most important locational requirements for a university campus in the Town.

The draft program for the charrette is attached.

The charrette will be led by planningAlliance, working closely with Town staff. planningAlliance will prepare all of the charrette materials, facilitate the charrette, provide the introductory presentation, and compile and analyze the results following the charrette.

Yours truly,

Jason Thorne  
Principal, planningAlliance

# DRAFT PROGRAM

## *Opening Exercise (as people arrive)*

1. What do you think is the nicest university campus in Canada, or elsewhere in the world?
  - As participants arrive, they will indicate on a map which university campus they like the best in the world. This exercise will be referred to again in a later exercise.

## *Presentation (45 minutes)*

2. Welcoming Remarks from the Town (5 minutes)
3. History of a University in East Gwillimbury (10 minutes)
  - Presentation by the Town regarding the history of East Gwillimbury's planning for a university, and the linkages to the Town's economic development objectives.
4. Different Ways of Integrating a University Campus with a Community (20 minutes)
  - Presentation by planningAlliance regarding various university campus precedents, and how they have addressed various design and urban form issues.
5. Questions (10 minutes)

## *Discussion Part One (55 minutes)*

6. What do you think is the nicest university campus in Canada, or elsewhere in the world? (10 minutes)
  - Referring to the exercise that participants undertook as they arrived, pA will facilitate a brief discussion about what people like about other university campuses, and the lessons these precedents may offer for a campus in East Gwillimbury.
7. Vision for the University (45 minutes)
  - Working in small groups, participants will identify the top 5-10 benefits that they hope a university would bring to the Town as a whole, and to the immediate neighbourhood around the campus. Each group's ideas will then be shared with the full group.

## *Break (15 minutes)*

### ***Discussion Part Two (60 minutes)***

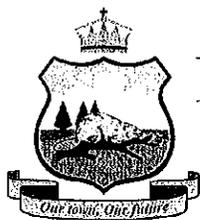
8. What should be the key characteristics for a university campus in East Gwillimbury? (50 minutes)
  - Working in small groups, and using maps and flip charts, participants will identify the key characteristics that they think are important for a university campus in East Gwillimbury, from the standpoint of urban design, operation and siting.
9. Final thoughts (10 minutes)
  - An open session for any participants to share any final thoughts or ideas with the full group. Particular emphasis on “what would be special and unique about a university campus in East Gwillimbury?”

### ***Closing Presentation (5 minutes)***

10. Thanks and Next Steps
  - Presented by Town

### ***Closing Exercises (as people leave)***

11. Dotmocracy
  - As they leave, each participant will be asked to “rank” the various campus design considerations that were generated during the charrette, using a simple “dotmocracy” voting exercise.
12. Defining Success
  - As they leave, each person will be asked to complete the following sentence on an index card: “For a university campus to be successful in East Gwillimbury, the most important consideration is ...”



August 23, 2012

Peter Budreo,  
General Manager  
South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation  
183 Queensway South  
Keswick, Ontario  
L4P 2A3

Dear Mr. Budreo:

**Re: East Gwillimbury Post Secondary Attraction Program**

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The purpose of this correspondence is to follow-up on our recent discussions and to provide clarification to the project scope as it relates to the Town's funding application.

The post secondary institution is a critical element of the Town's recently approved Economic Development Strategy and is also a primary goal of the Region of York's Draft Economic Development Action Plan. We continue to enjoy the support of the CFDC in terms of partnering with us in order to achieve our economic development objectives for the Town and the greater regional area.

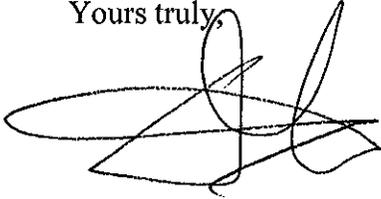
As you are aware, we filed an application to South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation for funding support under the Community Innovation Fund for a two stage "visioning-to-design process" to assist with the Town's initiative to attract a post secondary institution. As detailed in our application, the approach is structured in two phases. The initial phase will focus on building a vision for a university campus and aim to define its fundamental elements and characteristics. The second phase would be a more detailed urban design effort which would assist with garnering support and partners for a formal bid process to the Province. Subsequent to the South Lake Community Futures Development Corporation's approval of our application, we have reported to Council in May and more recently in August to move the process forward. The clear direction received from Council is that the post secondary visioning process needs to be inclusive to all options pertaining to location including the Queensville site which has been approved for university proposes in the Town's Official Plan.

Be advised that the process will be consistent with the Phase 1 as proposed in our application, this being a broader visioning session. Based on the outcome of the Phase 1 charrette and Councils consideration, there may be scope changes to the project for the second phase. Although the second phase of work is still expected to take place, we will keep the South Lake

Community Futures Development Corporation apprised of any changes which may impact the original application.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned if you have any question or if the funding contracts require amendment. We look forward to seeing you at the Visioning workshop scheduled for the 24<sup>th</sup> of September.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Dan Stone, MCIP, RPP  
Manager of Economic Development & Sustainability  
Development Services Department

cc: Mayor & Members of Council  
Thomas Webster, Chief Administrative Officer  
Marnie Wraith, Special Project Manager, Economic Development and Sustainability  
Branch  
Department Heads