

Community Information Meeting Summary Report

Updated Flood Plain Mapping and Unionville Special Policy Area Boundary Update

September 17, 2020, 7:00 p.m.



Project Website: www.yourvoicemarkham.ca/unionvillespecialpolicyarea

Introduction

The City of Markham hosted a community information meeting on September 17, 2020 regarding updated flood plain mapping and the Unionville Special Policy Area Boundary Update. The meeting was held virtually on the Zoom video platform. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce residents and stakeholders to the new flood plain mapping and to provide an overview of the Special Policy Area update process. The meeting was advertised by mailing approximately 450 mail notices to affected landowners, through a newspaper advertisement in the Markham Economist and Sun and through Markham's 'Your Voice Markham' online engagement platform. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the meeting.

Staff Presentation

The meeting began with a presentation from City of Markham and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) staff. The presentation provided information on: what is a Special Policy Area (SPA), the flood plain modelling, development and regulations within the flood plain, flood risk management, criteria for determining the Special Policy Area boundary, and next steps. The presentation can be downloaded from the 'Your Voice Markham' website.

Question and Answer

Members of the public were invited to ask questions or to provide their comments to the project team. The questions can be summarized into the following themes.

What are the development implications or changes to the flood plain?

Several residents asked for clarification on a specific property and how the flood plain and SPA had changed. Maps illustrating the old and new flood plain were reviewed at the meeting and are also available online at the project website. It was noted that the new SPA boundary had not yet been determined and that it would be presented at a subsequent public meeting.

One resident asked about the buffer required adjacent to the flood plain. The TRCA confirmed that their regulation limit includes a buffer along flood plain lands. Buffers are generally not applied in Special Policy Areas as the Special Policy Area is contained entirely within the floodplain.

Another resident asked about illegal fill activities and whether the new mapping would reflect any filling operations. Staff explained that TRCA has an enforcement team that deals with illegal fill within the flood plain. Filling within the flood plain is not permitted without a permit from the TRCA.

Why had the flood plain increased in size?

TRCA staff explained the flood plain modelling exercise including the updated information that was obtained on ground elevation (LiDAR), new bridge/culverts and new modelling techniques. The new flood plain model has been reviewed and approved by the Provincial Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry who are responsible for province-wide flood plain modelling standards.

There was discussion regarding the reduction of the flood plain for Fonthill Creek and residents' observations of stream flow during storm events. Staff identified that the update of the Fonthill Creek flood plain included consideration of the entire drainage area and stormwater infrastructure that feeds into Fonthill Creek. Staff also identified that other types of urban flooding may contribute to observations of flooding.

There was also discussion regarding the history of the creek running through the middle of Markham Centre. Staff indicated that the flood plain mapping reflects existing conditions on the ground at the time of the study.

Has the City or TRCA considered options to reduce flooding?

Several residents asked about this topic. Specifically, one resident asked why flood remediation was not explored first to eliminate the need to do another flood plain mapping exercise. Staff responded that the flood plain mapping is required to identify the current extent of flooding to inform land use planning decisions.

One resident asked about the flooding situation around the Pan Am Centre and asked about the flood remediation. Staff clarified that any flood remediation would require demonstration of no adverse flooding impacts on other properties.

Other residents voiced opinions on potential remediation options including soft landscaping requirements in the community while another resident asked whether publically owned lands could help to store flood waters.

Why would certain properties in the flood plain be excluded from the Special Policy Area?

Several people asked why properties in the flood plain would be excluded from the SPA. Staff explained that the Province has established guidelines for the SPA and given the risk that must be assumed by public agencies the SPA overlay needs to be justified for each property. The criteria being used to update the SPA boundary was included on slide 16 of the presentation.

One person asked why the Don Mills employment area (Woodbine & 14th) was not a Special Policy Area. Staff identified that the area is identified as a flood vulnerable area and that the SPA is intended for historic communities.

How is flooding of roadways managed?

There was discussion regarding flooding that overtops certain roads, particularly Highway 7. Staff identified that roadways are typically designed to accommodate the 100-year storm event. Staff will be following up with the resident on the level of flooding that would be expected in this area.

The meeting ended at 8:50 p.m.