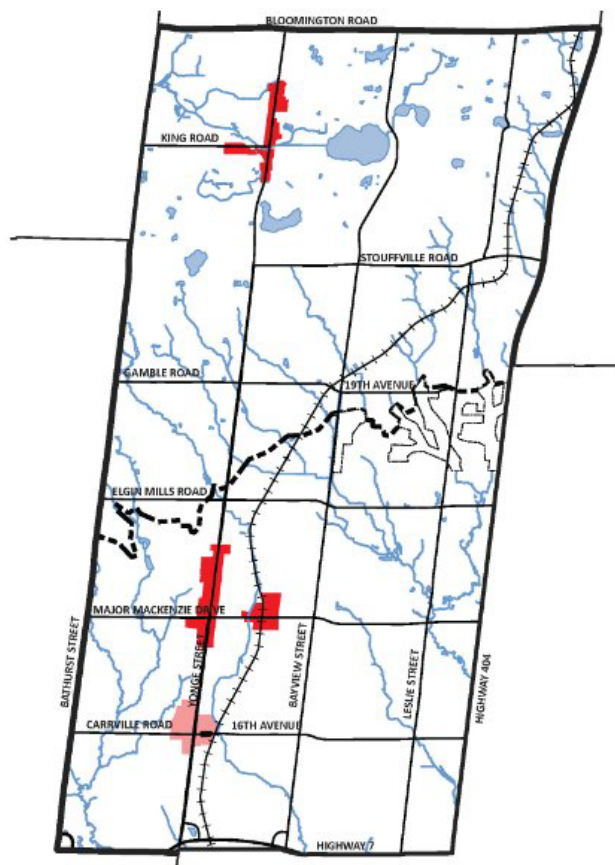


# Richmond Hill Comprehensive Zoning By-law Virtual Open House Consultation Summary Report:

Zoning for the Yonge and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Key Development Area,  
Village Local Centre, Oak Ridges Local Centre, and Newkirk  
Local Centre



ZoneRH Virtual Open House and Consultation – October 17, 2024

Prepared by LURA Consulting and R.E Millward + Associates

# 1. Project Background

The City of Richmond Hill is undertaking a comprehensive review of its existing Zoning By-laws to create one City-wide Comprehensive Zoning By-law (CZBL). The City of Richmond Hill (the City) currently has approximately forty (40) in-force 'parent' Zoning By-laws. A Zoning By-law is a legal document that implements the policies and vision of the Official Plan (OP) by regulating buildings, structures, and land use with specific standards of how development can occur on each property within the City. Section 26(9) of the *Planning Act* requires that municipalities update their zoning by-laws to implement and conform with their respective Official Plans. The *Planning Act* requires that City Council amend all Zoning By-laws no later than three years after the OP comes into effect. The CZBL must also consider the Provincial Planning Statement, Provincial Plans (including the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan), the *Conservation Authorities Act*, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act*, and the *Greenbelt Act* when developing regulations. So far, City Council has approved some OP Amendments as part of the City's OP Update, and more are planned to be brought forward to Council for their consideration in the future.

The objective of the City's review is to develop one Comprehensive Zoning By-law that is:

- **Updated:** Reflecting current and emerging planning and development practices and trends.
- **Modern:** Fully accessible online in an interactive web-based format.
- **Consolidated and Simplified:** User-friendly and easy to understand, administer and enforce.

Reviewing the City's in-force Zoning By-laws and preparing a CZBL provides an opportunity to engage the public and key interest holders.

The CZBL Project is being completed in the following four phases:

- Phase 1: Background Research.
- Phase 2: Strategic Directions.
- Phase 3: Drafting of the New Comprehensive Zoning By-law.
- Phase 4: Approval and Appeals of the New Comprehensive Zoning By-law.

To date, Phase 1: Background Research and a portion of Phase 2: Strategic Directions are complete. The Strategic Directions in Phase 2 provide key recommendations about the overall approach to the CZBL (SDR 1: Framework, Design, Phasing, and Implementation) and zoning for neighbourhood areas (SDR 2: Zoning for the City's Neighbourhoods), specific intensification areas (SDR 3: Zoning for the Yonge and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Key Avenue Development Area (KDA), Village Local Centre (LC), Oak Ridges LC, and Newkirk LC) and city-wide parking and loading (SDR 4: Zoning for Parking and Loading).

The CZBL will be drafted in two phases (1 and 2) to align with the work undertaken on the City's OP Update. The City has prepared a draft of the CZBL for Phase 1.

Phase 1A of the CZBL includes zoning for the Yonge and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Avenue KDA, Village LC, Newkirk LC, Oak Ridges LC, and the Zoning By-law structure and associated parking and loading related to these areas. The OP Amendment (OPA 18.7) for the Newkirk LC is in force, while the OP Amendments for the three other Phase 1A areas are under appeal at the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT). Phase 1B will focus on

the City's Neighbourhoods, the Leslie Street Institutional Area, and the associated parking and loading for those areas.

Phase 2 of the CZBL will focus on the remaining Centres and Corridors, such as the Local Development Areas, Regional Mixed-Use Corridors, Local Mixed-Use Corridors, Employment Areas, Employment Corridors, the Greenway System, Utility Corridor, and associated parking and loading.

## ZoneRH Virtual Open House Format and Promotion

The Virtual Open House was held via Zoom on October 17, 2024, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. The open house aimed to gather input to inform the first draft of Phase 1A of the CZBL and answer participant questions. City staff were present and supported by the consulting team, including R.E. Millward + Associates, Hertel Planning, FUSL, and LURA Consulting.

The ZoneRH Virtual Open House was promoted through:

- Social media posts on the City's Twitter and Facebook accounts.
- The City's homepage via static and rotating banners for two weeks before the event.
- Email notifications to those registered for Zone Richmond Hill notifications on October 3 and 15, 2024.
- An e-news story on [www.richmondhill.ca](http://www.richmondhill.ca) and a media release on October 11, 2024.

Approximately thirty-two (32) individuals attended. Participants shared their comments and questions during the open house and shared additional feedback via email afterwards. The [Zone Richmond Hill webpage](#) includes an overview of the process, technical papers, background materials, the SDRs, and the Virtual Open House presentation.

## 2. Overview of ZoneRH Virtual Open House Presentation

City staff provided an overview of the objectives and purpose of the project and highlighted that the new CZBL is being drafted in two phases, as noted above. Staff emphasized that the Virtual Open House would focus on Phase 1A, and further engagement opportunities will be available for Phase 1B and Phase 2.

R.E. Millward and Associates noted that the consulting team has reviewed the areas to be addressed within Phase 1A. They presented how the draft CZBL will be directed by the SDRs, which were amended based on comments received by the public at the in-person Open House on June 24, 2024.

The presentation provided a general overview of the proposed CZBL structure. The draft CZBL will create regulations addressing three main aspects of developments: permitted uses, lot standards, and building standards. The consulting team noted that charts are proposed to be included outlining which uses will be permitted in each zone (the list of permitted uses is proposed to differ across zone categories), which must align with the City's OP policies for these areas.

The consulting team noted that lot standards might address elements such as maximum lot coverage, minimum soft landscaping, and minimum front, side and rear yard setbacks. It was noted that building standards may address elements such as height limits, angular planes, density, tower separation, ground floor height, ground floor transparency, amenity space and tower floorplates. It was also noted that

Phase 1A of the CZBL is proposed to include site-specific exceptions, definitions, and provisions related to accessory buildings, structures, and uses. The presentation included an overview of the vision for the Yonge and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Avenue KDA, Village LC, Newkirk LC, and Oak Ridges LC. The presentation noted that automotive uses, "big box commercial"/stand-alone commercial plazas, car dealerships and car washes, drive-throughs, and low-density residential uses (single- or semi-detached dwellings) are generally being considered as uses not to be permitted in these areas. Finally, the presentation included a brief overview of the types of terms to be included as definitions.

Following the presentation, participants were invited to ask questions or respond to the following discussion questions:

- Which lot and/or building standards do you believe would best address transition, design, built form, compatibility, and sustainability?
- Is there any other matter or regulation you feel the City should consider when drafting the CZBL?

### 3. Key Discussion Themes

The following summarizes key themes emerging from the comments received. Where the project team (City staff and consulting team) responded, the response is noted. The project team will consider these points when developing Phase 1A of CZBL.

#### Legislative Changes

- There was interest in understanding how recent changes in legislation (e.g., York Region OP, 2024 Provincial Planning Statement) will affect the CZBL, given that the SDRs were prepared beforehand.
  - **Response:** The consulting team confirmed they undertook a preliminary review of recent legislative changes and do not anticipate significant changes will be required to the recommendations in the SDRs. However, staff will continue to review and advise Council of any revisions as appropriate.

#### Permitted Uses

- There was discussion about whether it is possible to prohibit drive-throughs in the KDA to support a pedestrian-friendly vision. It was noted that drive-throughs and the cars that use them are hotspots for emissions, pose risks to pedestrians, and require a lot of space, resulting in vehicle idling and emissions.
- Participants were interested in transition and compatibility of uses near residential areas. It was suggested that there should not be the same permitted uses across all areas but that zones be created within an LC or KDA considering compatibility and adjacency to neighbourhoods.

#### Building Standards and Urban Design

- There was a discussion on how and where the CZBL will include specific urban design standards. Participants were particularly interested in the relationships between heights, existing character, use and built form.

- **Response:** Zoning by-laws are not great at regulating architecture but can regulate the building envelope. The project team will review and consider options through the preparation of the CZBL regarding specific urban design standards, as appropriate, to try and ensure that new buildings will fit the context.
- Participants were interested in learning if the CZBL will add more gathering spaces at the corners of main intersections.
  - **Response:** Zoning by-law regulations are limited to property boundaries. Zoning cannot regulate activities outside of a property, but it regulates the use and structures on a property.
- There was interest in confirming if the CZBL will address building height and if it will align with the OP's use of stories or specific maximum and minimum height metrics.
  - **Response:** The SDRs mention the CZBL consider height restrictions in stories or meters.

## Angular Planes and Setbacks

- Participants were interested in more details regarding the SDR recommendation related to angular planes and how they would be imposed.
  - **Response:** Angular planes and associated regulations will be referenced in the CZBL and applied as per OP policies. The project team will look at angular plane requirements relating to corridors and centres and the transition to adjacent neighbourhoods. There will also be other angular plane requirements, particularly along major roads such as Yonge Street in certain parts of the centres in accordance with the OP.
- Participants were interested in understanding if zoning by-laws or other tools can regulate building setbacks, specifically near intersections, to allow for more amenities (e.g., large accessible bus pads, gathering places, art installations, etc.).
  - **Response:** Setbacks from intersections are not addressed by zoning. Typically, major right-of-ways flare out at intersections, where public amenities (bus pads, etc.) are usually located. Zoning can regulate setbacks to a property line and the location of amenity space on private property. In addition, detailed site design normally occurs through the Site Plan Approval process.

## Village Local Centre

- There was an interest in preserving the heritage character of the Village LC. Participants suggested that this could be achieved through urban design guidelines and/or zoning by-laws,
  - **Response:** Many municipalities address heritage character through guidelines. It's possible to ensure compatible heights, especially at the base of the buildings, through zoning. Zoning can also set regulations such as 45-degree angular planes along streets like Yonge Street in the Village LC, which would limit height and have a step back behind the main street. These can help newer buildings fit in with the heritage character.
- Similarly, there was discussion about whether the CBZL can influence the materiality of finishes (i.e., dissuading the use of concrete and glass) in the Village LC.
  - **Response:** These factors would typically be addressed through urban design guidelines.
- There was interest in whether the CZBL could require overhangs and canopies along the large developments being built on Yonge Street to provide weather protection for pedestrians.
  - **Response:** The project team will review if this is possible in the CZBL.

## Parking, Loading, and Transportation

- Participants were interested in understanding how transit will affect the Yonge St and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Avenue KDA. They were particularly interested in understanding how the CZBL will deal with the possible extension of Subway Line 1 into the Yonge and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Avenue KDA as the proposed alignment is along the Canadian National Railway.
  - **Response:** The CZBL will implement the policies of the OP and may need to be adapted over time as part of the city plans for the subway extension and other transit improvements.
- Participants were interested in learning how the location of parking will be determined. There was an interest in a zoning standard to locate parking in appropriate locations away from Yonge Street.
  - **Response:** The OP policies provide direction concerning the form and location of parking areas, which generally encourage below-grade or structured parking, subject to additional criteria. The development review process also helps control parking locations to support active street frontages.
- There was interest in parking, particularly in the KDA. There was a desire to understand how the CZBL would treat above-grade parking versus below-grade parking.
  - **Response:** Generally, underground parking is encouraged as much as possible, but the project team recognizes that in Richmond Hill, there are areas where underground parking is not physically possible.
- There was a letter submitted to request a zone change of subject lands to not transfer site-specific zoning into the CZBL.
  - **Response:** The project team have received the letter and will consider the comments in the CZBL review.

## Housing Accelerator Fund

- There was interest in understanding the Richmond Hill Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) initiative and whether the four units as-of-right on any property will be addressed in the CZBL, specifically regarding waste management and parking requirements.
  - **Response:** The HAF (Housing Accelerator Fund) initiative intends to remove barriers and speed up the process for owners and builders to create more homes. The HAF initiative will look to implement zoning by-law changes permitting up to four units in residential areas to support transit-oriented development and allow increased density around transit stations. The HAF initiative is an unrelated project being reviewed separately, and the City has held separate public engagement sessions to discuss it.

## 4. Next Steps

The project team will review the feedback provided by the public and consider its input when drafting the new CZBL. The public can become more involved with the project by signing up for notifications and visiting the website. Further questions or comments may be directed to [zoning@richmondhill.ca](mailto:zoning@richmondhill.ca) or sent to Salvatore Aiello, Manager of Development Zoning and Committee of Adjustment, at [Salvatore.aiello@richmondhill.ca](mailto:Salvatore.aiello@richmondhill.ca).

The draft CZBL was appended to Staff Report SRPBS.24.124, and considered at the statutory public meeting held on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. The final by-law and staff recommendation report will be brought forward to the Committee of the Whole and for Council consideration in Q1 of 2025. Phase 1B of the CZBL, addressing Neighbourhoods and the Leslie Street Institutional, will start in early 2025 and is expected to be completed in late 2025.