



# Key Directions Report

For the Richmond Hill Official Plan Update

November 2021



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# Executive Summary

### Executive Summary

This Key Directions Report is a foundational document for the preparation of amendments to the Official Plan 2010. These forthcoming amendments are required to complete the Official Plan update process that was initiated in late 2019. This report provides a framework for the updating of the Official Plan that ensures that the proposed Vision and Urban Structure for City Plan 2041 can be achieved. The framework is informed by Provincial policy, emerging Regional policy resulting from the Municipal Comprehensive Review process that the Region is presently undertaking, and by other City initiated in-process and completed studies. (A full list of resources used to inform this report is provided in Section 4.0 References.) Detailed planning policy and mapping, including matters such as density of development and permitted land use to address social, economic and environmental considerations outlined in this report, will be forthcoming through the initiation of amendments (where warranted) to the Official Plan. These updates will be responsive to the key directions provided herein and through further consultation with the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities.

The essence of the key directions are three-fold, we need to update our Official Plan to:

- 1) Articulate a 2041 vision for city planning.
- 2) Establish an urban structure that:
  - directs growth to centres and corridors,
  - supports economic development by enabling more jobs within the City, and
  - ensures development is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.
- 3) Address key issues such as:
  - housing affordability,
  - out-migration of residents for jobs,
  - climate change mitigation and adaptation, and
  - accommodation of diversity of lifestyles among city residents and workers.

### **Key Directions**

The following is a summary of the proposed key directions for the Official Plan update provided by category in accordance with questions arising from in the 2019 Official Plan Update Initiation staff report (refer to SRPRS.19.053):



## Urban Structure

- Maintain 2010 urban structure framework, with minor changes in accordance with the following “Big Moves”:
  1. Align with Regional Major Transit Station Area direction.
  2. Align with Regional Employment Area direction.
  3. Change land use permissions at specific nodes on Highway 7 to support bus rapid transit.
- Facilitate development and provide commensurate infrastructure to accommodate the Regional growth forecast for Richmond Hill.
- Update Official Plan monitoring targets per Regional and City directions, as a means to confirm the efficacy of Official Plan policies overall

## Built Form

- Continue to advance the Official Plan as a guide to “placemaking”.
- Ensure that urban design policy direction supports design excellence in new development and in public realm, to reinforce the objective of building complete communities.
- Appropriately respond to emerging trends and innovation related to matters such as parkland, urban agriculture, sustainable design, micromobility (i.e. electric bicycles and scooters), and electronic and autonomous vehicles.
- Identify and plan to support a hierarchy of mobility that prioritizes sustainable transportation, and ensure that built form and transportation infrastructure are aligned.

## Intensification

- Clarify the purpose and intent of the intensification hierarchy.
- Clarify the roles of Centres and Corridors within the hierarchy.
- Appropriately designate intensification areas and implement Regional MTSA minimum density direction.
- Intensify Centres and Corridors with consideration of overall community benefit in mind.
- Consider the potential impact of climate change and apply mitigation and adaptation measures accordingly.
- Support the provision of future high-order transit.
- Continue to consult on and provide more detailed guidance for Centres, starting with clear vision statements for each area.

Note: More detailed key directions are also provided with respect to specific areas within the City that were the focus of engagement events undertaken in the spring of 2021.

## Employment

- Continue to foster and promote business attraction and retention within intensification, employment, and neighbourhood commercial areas, in ways that are responsive to the needs of businesses who choose to invest in Richmond Hill.
- Within intensification areas, promote development of spaces that are flexible in their use and can evolve over time as areas become more established.
- Within employment designations, provide greater flexibility of land use and promote urban design that makes these areas attractive for employees and investment.

## Climate Change

- Apply climate lens considerations in decision making where there are opportunities for mitigation or adaptation.
- Provide necessary policy direction to achieve the Community Energy and Emissions Plan greenhouse gas reduction target.

## Implementation

- Enable the use of Planning Tools by adding or updating policies related to:
  - Inclusionary Zoning (add new),
  - Demolition and conversion control of rental housing (update),
  - Community Planning Permit System (update),
- Establish or update policies to:
  - Encourage the use surplus public lands for affordable housing (establish),
  - Improve public engagement and engagement with Indigenous communities, in particular (update); and
  - Inform evaluation of future amendments to the Official Plan (establish).

## Technical

- Update policies, mapping and definitions to conform with applicable Provincial Plans and the Regional Official Plan.
- Clarify policies where there have been implementation and/or interpretation challenges.

As the foregoing is a summary of key directions, a full list of key directions identified in Section 2.0 is provided in the Appendix of this report.

## Next Steps

Council endorsement of these Key Directions forms the foundation for future amendments to the Official Plan, which collectively will culminate in a full update of


the City's Official Plan. Consultation on these amendments will occur in Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process, which will commence in 2022. Amendments are proposed to be brought to Council in three or more stages: starting in July 2022, when the Regional Official Plan is anticipated to be adopted by Regional Council, with subsequent amendments being brought to Council in early 2023 (following Provincial approval of the Regional Official Plan), and late 2023 when consultation on the balance of amendments has concluded.



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# Introduction



## 1 Introduction


In 2019, the City of Richmond Hill initiated the review of its Official Plan. Per the staff report presented to Council (SRPRS.19.053), staff noted that the Official Plan as adopted in 2010 required updates relating to a variety of matters including changes to Provincial and Regional planning policy and legislation, as well as changes within our local context. Within the report, staff provided a three-phased approach for how the update of the Official Plan would occur and identified several considerations that were to be addressed through the Official Plan update process. Phase 1 of the Official Plan update process included background work, as well as consultation with the public and stakeholders regarding a 2041 Vision for the Official Plan. The public were also consulted on possible changes to the City's Urban Structure to better respond to Provincial and Regional direction and to better respond to emerging trends, with a view to ensuring that the Official Plan is future-ready.

We are presently in Phase 2 of the Official Plan update process. This phase consists of workshops and online surveys that occurred in April and May 2021, stakeholder consultations and a meeting with the Official Plan Update Committee, and a Public Open House and online survey in the fall of 2021. This phase will culminate with Council endorsement of this Key Directions Report. Information pertaining to these two phases of the Official Plan update is provided in detail on the City's Official Plan Update webpage at [richmondhill.ca/OPUpdate](https://richmondhill.ca/OPUpdate).

This Key Directions Report is a foundational document for the preparation of amendments to the Official Plan, to complete the update process. At a very high-level the essence of the key directions are three-fold, update our Official Plan to:

- 1) Articulate a 2041 vision for city planning
- 2) Establish an urban structure that:
  - directs growth to centres and corridors,
  - supports economic development by enabling more jobs within the City, and
  - ensures development is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable.
- 3) Address key issues such as:
  - housing affordability,
  - out-migration of residents for jobs,
  - climate change mitigation and adaptation, and
  - accommodation of diversity of lifestyles among City residents and workers.

When we update our Official Plan, we need to take into consideration today's planning context, which is much different from the context we were working with back in 2010, when Council adopted the *building a new kind of urban* Official Plan.



At the Provincial, Region and local level the context has changed in so many ways. We have new and updated Provincial Plans, which we have noted in our staff reports and previous presentations. These plans have become more directive and, in some ways, more protective of the environment, natural and rural areas. The *Planning Act* has changed to give Council's more decision-making authority, and also to reduce red-tape, and expedite planning approvals. At the Regional level, the Region is updating its Official Plan and will be taking on a more active role when it comes to matters such as employment area protection and settlement area boundary expansions. At the local level, in 2019 we officially became a City and that raises expectations in terms of how this city functions and competes within the broader Regional context and even at the Greater Toronto Area scale.

Furthermore, as noted in Planning for Change<sup>1</sup>, there are powerful trends that pose new opportunities and challenges that can shape how we update our Official Plan, these include:

- Rapid knowledge industry growth and the rise of new work models,
- Dramatic demographic changes—aging population and smaller households,
- Enhanced transit (subway) and rapidly evolving mobility technologies,
- Growing housing affordability challenges, and
- Growing awareness of, and responsibility, for addressing climate change.

### 1.1 Purpose of Key Directions Report:

This Key Directions Report provides a framework for the updating of the Official Plan that ensures that the proposed Vision and Urban Structure for City Plan 2041 can be achieved. The framework is informed by Provincial policy, emerging Regional policy resulting from the Municipal Comprehensive Review process that the Region is presently undertaking, and by City initiated in-process and completed studies. A full list of resources used to inform this report is provided in Section 4.0 References. These references address a wide range of topics that are relevant to the Official Plan update, including: climate change, economic development, transportation planning, emerging trends in various topics (such as stratification of land and sustainable design practices), and important social issues (such as affordable housing and community services).

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<sup>1</sup> Planning For Change is a document prepared by visionary urbanist David Dixon and Stantec's Urban Places. This document serves as a guide for the Official Plan Update and its implementation. The document intention is to inform the Official Plan Update, provide guidance to Council and city planning staff to successfully implement the Official Plan, and add additional perspective in terms of a path to take for planning complete communities. This document was made available on the City's website in August 2021.



## 1.2 Vision

Based on direction from the Official Plan Update Committee and consultation undertaken by staff, the following statement encapsulates the **2041 City Plan Vision**:

**By 2041, the City of Richmond Hill will be the centerpiece of York Region and one of the most prominent, complete communities in the Greater Toronto Area.**

This statement:

- Recognizes our central location within the Region's urban communities and that the City hosts two BRT lines, GO Stations, a future subway system and 407 transit-way.
- Leads us to establish an urban structure that supports transit-oriented, vibrant community development; starting with Richmond Hill Centre, which will be supported by 5 modes of transit;
- Provides the Official Plan direction that supports Richmond Hill as a robust regional mixed use hub community;
- Directs us to invest in public infrastructure that not only supports residents and businesses of Richmond Hill; but, also those of York Region, and
- Brings about a call to action to partner with York Region and other levels of government, agencies, stakeholders, developers and the public to achieve common city-building goals.


As noted in the Phase 1 What We Heard Report, there is general support for this vision.

## 1.3 Pillars

The key directions provided herein are also intended to respond to the four pillars of the Official Plan Update for evaluating policy and mapping changes. During the Open House in February, staff explained that when we update the Official Plan, we will need to evaluate proposed changes based on how well they respond to the four pillars noted below.

**Grow our Economy** by enabling conditions to attract and retain talent. Provide a policy environment to facilitate business opportunities. Provide the necessary infrastructure to support and expand our local business base.

**Design Excellence** to achieve more than just great architecture. Provide well designed public and private spaces. Provide memorable destinations in our communities via parks, trails, and open spaces. Improve access to community services through different modes of travel. Allow for spaces to adapt to changing needs of society and environment.



**Green and Sustainable** city building supports innovation in “green” building standards. Supports achievement of the City’s greenhouse gas reduction target. Supports use of “green infrastructure.” Aspires to improve on existing natural heritage features and functions.

**Protect and enhance** “our cherished places,” to ensure that while we change, we don’t lose what is important to us. Enhance and promote a Richmond Hill identity. Respond to the diversity of cultures and lifestyles within our community. Support greater mix of housing types, tenures and levels of affordability. Diversify and enhance our civic spaces. Protect our natural heritage for generations to come.

At the crux of it, the pillars respond to four core issues: economic prosperity for the City and its residents and businesses, provision of housing that is affordable to all income groups of residents of Richmond Hill, the realities of climate change, and the diversity of RH residents, workers and environment overall. These pillars were derived from [Council’s Strategic Priorities](#) and are supported by design principles that are explained in David Dixon’s “Planning For Change”, which advocate that city planning must always account for design elements related to highly supporting walkability of places, creating opportunity for connectivity among people and places, provision of diverse public realm, provision of choice as it relates to places to live, work, and play, and promotion of authenticity within our communities.

As noted in the Phase 1 What We Heard report, these pillars were also well received by the public and stakeholders, and as such, when developing the key directions herein, careful attention has been given to ensure that they too uphold them.



# Key Directions



## 2 Key Directions

The following subsections provide key directions to inform the Official Plan Update. These key directions are informed by public consultation to date as well as the research and analysis that has taken place for this Official Plan Update and for related initiatives.

These key directions respond to the following themes and related questions arising from the 2019 Official Plan Update initiation staff report:

### **Urban Structure**

Should the urban structure of the Official Plan change? If so, how and where?

### **Built Form**

What direction should the Official Plan provide regarding built form in our Centres, Corridors, Neighbourhoods, etc.? What urban design elements do we need to create a city in which we can take pride?

### **Intensification**

How should our Major Transit Stations Areas, other Centres and Corridors be planned to ensure that: they are transit supportive hubs where residents and businesses within the Centre and beyond are able to enjoy a mix of land uses and services that maximize development, and efficiently use land and investment in infrastructure?

### **Employment**

Where and how should the City provide the necessary land use directions to ensure that jobs are available for its residents, existing business are able to grow, and new businesses are able to establish themselves and prosper?

### **Climate Change**

What direction should the Official Plan provide to address matters related to Climate Change mitigation and adaptation?

### **Implementation Tools**

How should the Official Plan be updated to address new planning tools or improve implementation?

### **Technical**

What changes are required to improve clarity and ensure conformity with Provincial and Regional planning policy and legislation?

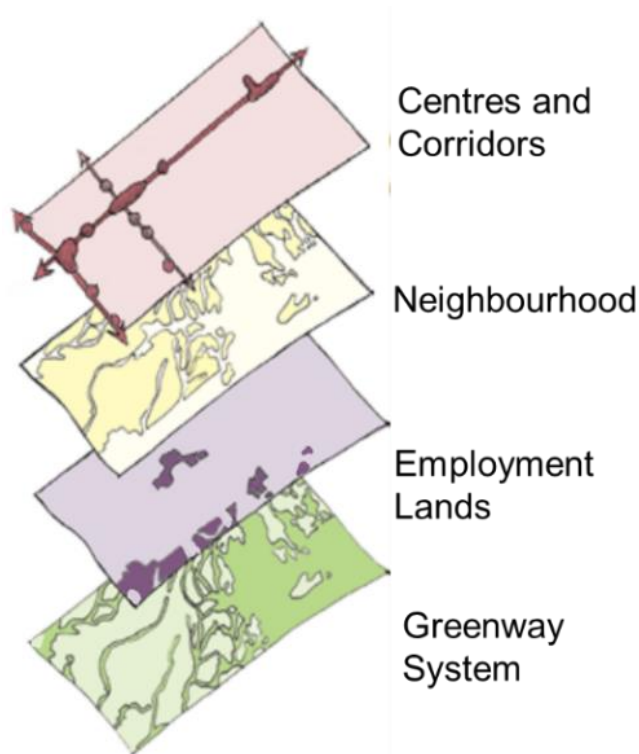
## 2.1 Urban Structure

As noted above, Urban Structure key directions are provided in response to the following question arising from the 2019 Official Plan Update initiation staff report:

*Should the urban structure of the Official Plan change? If so, how and where?*

Establishing and updating the City's urban structure to more closely align with the Official Plan vision is an important first step. The Urban Structure, which is defined in policy and mapping, provides a high-level planning framework.

There are four components of the City's urban structure as shown in Figure 2.1-1. These are: Centres and Corridors, Employment Areas, Neighbourhood Areas, and the Greenway System. We recognize that within these components there are various land use designations and that, on the ground, the areas within these designations vary in scale and form of development, and that over the course of time, these variations will continue. We also recognize that this variety is what distinguishes Richmond Hill from other places and collectively provides a unique City character. It is important to note that not all cities are blessed with such a variety of land use and areas that have such distinguishing characteristics. For example, there are several cities in the GTA that have no rural lands, and many that cannot boast that 40% of its land area forms a Greenway System. For these reasons, it is important to consider how the Official Plan can continue to provide urban structure direction that supports the city vision to be a prominent complete community.



**FIGURE 2.1-1 URBAN STRUCTURE ELEMENTS**

At the February 2021 Open House, staff presented four Big Moves in terms of how the current urban structure could be modified to address the emerging vision. Three of the four Big Moves were generally supported. These were:

1. Align with Regional Major Transit Station Area direction.
2. Align with Regional Employment Area direction.
3. Change land use permissions at specific nodes on Highway 7 to support bus rapid transit.

The final Big Move, which related to an urban boundary expansion, was not supported by the majority of respondents during our Phase 1 engagement. This Big Move is also not warranted at this time based on the direction the Region is taking through its Municipal Comprehensive Review. It is also not permitted, based on the current Provincial policies in relation to where and when a settlement boundary could be expanded, which are provided in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), Greenbelt Plan, and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan).

### 2.1.1 Urban Structure Key Directions

The following are the main Urban Structure key directions proposed:

- Maintain 2010 urban structure framework, with minor changes in accordance with the Big Moves 1, 2, and 3 noted above.
- Facilitate development and provide commensurate infrastructure to accommodate the Regional growth forecast for Richmond Hill.
- Update Official Plan monitoring targets per Regional and City directions, as a means to confirm the efficacy of Official Plan policies overall.

### 2.1.2 Key Directions Rationale

#### 2.1.2.1 Urban Structure Elements

- **Maintain 2010 urban structure framework, with minor changes in accordance with the Big Moves 1, 2, and 3 noted above.**

This proposed urban structure maintains the 2010 Official Plan framework of identifying Centres and Corridors and Employment Lands, where the majority of population and employment growth will be directed; while identifying Neighbourhoods and the Greenway System, where limited growth would occur. However, modest changes to the Urban Structure from the current Official Plan are as follows and illustrated in Figure 2.1-2:

**Big Move 1 - Align with Regional direction**, and recognize Major Transit Station Areas<sup>2</sup> within our intensification hierarchy and build “live-work-play” hubs, by directing context appropriate growth:

- Along the Yonge Street corridor, from Hwy 7 to Bloomington Road.
- Along the Hwy 7 corridor - at Bathurst, and from Yonge Street to Hwy 404.
- At the Richmond Hill and Gormley GO stations.

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<sup>2</sup> Major Transit Station Areas are areas identified by the Region where growth and development is directed to make effective and efficient use of existing and planned transit. More information about these areas is provided in Sections 2.2 and 2.3.



**Big Move 2 - Align with Regional employment areas**, and broaden select employment areas to support a greater mix of land use and economic opportunities within the following areas:

- Yonge Street and Enford Road extension, to permit mixed use development along this stretch of the Yonge Street corridor.
- Newkirk Road and Major Mackenzie Drive, to permit mixed use development in all four quadrants of this area.
- Hwy 7 and East Beaver Creek, to permit mixed-use development in this area (see also Big Move 3).

**Big Move 3 - Support Bus Rapid Transit**, and identify three new mixed-use growth areas within the intensification hierarchy to implement the Regional Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) transit supportive development direction, specifically at:

- Bathurst and Hwy 7 area (presently designated as Parkway Belt West Plan)
- Bayview and Hwy 7 area (presently designated as Neighbourhood)
- East Beaver Creek and Hwy 7 area (presently designated as Employment Area and Employment Corridor)



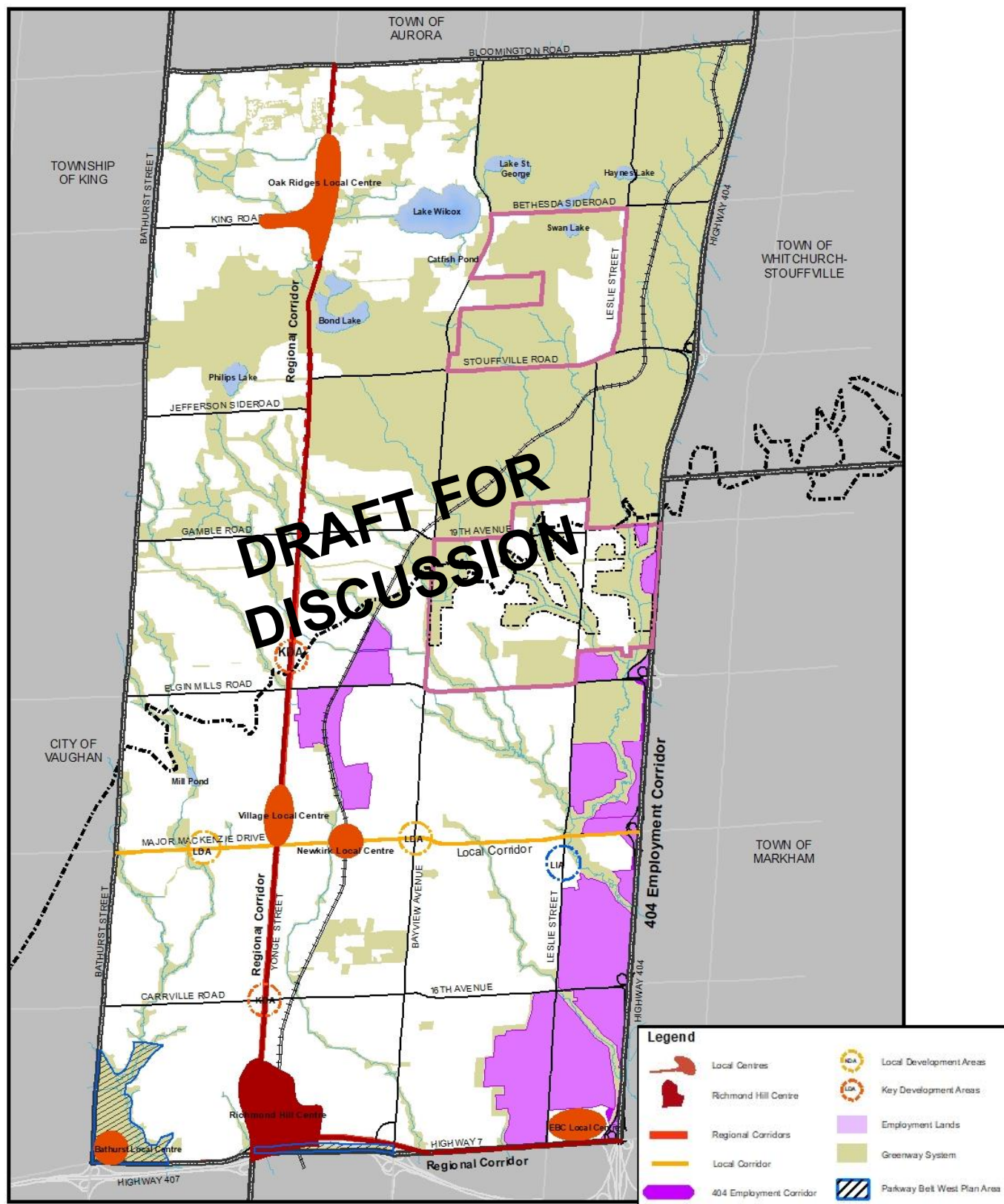


FIGURE 2.1-2 PROPOSED URBAN STRUCTURE

The following key directions are supplementary to the foregoing, and are specific to each of the four elements of the City's Urban Structure.

### 2.1.2.1.1 Within Centres and Corridors:

- Uphold hierarchy of urban places (Urban Growth Centre, Key Development Areas, Local Centres, Regional and Local Corridors) – to provide variety of and choice of destinations and communities.
- Promote development that prioritizes sustainable transportation modes over private automobile use.

These key directions will be discussed in greater detail within Section 2.3 Intensification of this report. By planning for more dense development to occur in our Centres and Corridors, we ensure that this growth can be accommodated in environmentally, socially and economically sustainable manner. In this regard, we maximize use of existing and planned infrastructure and we reduce pressure on rural, agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands. By focusing on promoting development that prioritizes sustainable transportation modes, we ensure that required services are in place and that they are being used efficiently, this mobility key direction is further discussed in Section 2.2.

### 2.1.2.1.2 Within Employment Areas:

- Protect employment areas for uses that require separation from sensitive uses, to ensure their long-term prosperity.
- Support intensification and vibrancy of employment areas.

In terms of our employment areas, we want to continue to preserve the majority of these areas for long-term employment uses, especially those that cannot be accommodated in mixed-use or neighbourhood environments. We see these areas as vital for our ongoing economic competitiveness. It is for this reason that the vast majority of lands that are currently designated Employment Area, Employment Corridor or Office are proposed to continue to be designated for employment purposes. However, we also understand that the market place is changing as a result of more automation, greater emphasis on the knowledge and renewable energy economy, and so much more. And in that regard, we want to work with the business community to ensure our policies provide sufficient flexibility to ensure that they can set up and/or expand expeditiously. More discussion regarding employment areas is provided in Section 2.4 Employment.

### 2.1.2.1.3 Within Neighbourhood Areas:

- Respect character and distinguishing features of neighbourhoods across the City.
- Permit “gentle density” by allowing a greater mix of housing types and access to day-to-day (including commercial) activities.

In terms of Neighbourhoods, it is really important that we recognize that neighbourhoods across the City have differing character and distinguishing features, and that as we continue to plan for these areas, we should not lose sight of those distinguishing features. However, statistics show that our population is aging and that there is and will continue to be an increase in one and two-person households.<sup>3</sup> We need to be mindful of these demographic realities and plan our city accordingly. Consequently, we need to look at opportunities to improve our neighbourhoods, to make them more complete and age-friendly.

Figure 2.1-4 below identifies housing forms, such as duplexes, triplexes, walk up apartments, and live-work units, which are coined as the “missing middle.” These are house forms that we see in older parts of our city and other places across the Greater Toronto Area that are in some cases being demolished and are not being reintroduced into our communities. These house forms however often provide, or have the potential to provide, ground-oriented housing that is affordable to households that are not able to afford single- or semi-detached housing in Richmond Hill. These households are made up of residents who are one- or two-income households lead by: middle-managers, teachers, fire fighters, single parents, newly graduated university students, persons on fixed pensions, and so many more. It is important to provide these households with housing options that they can afford, within Centres, Corridors, and Neighbourhood areas.



**FIGURE 2.1-3 A DEPICTION OF A RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES THAT ARE MISSING FROM MANY COMMUNITIES.**

<sup>3</sup> The City's 2019 Socio Economic Study identifies these trends, so too does the Affordable Housing Strategy Background Report.

Presently, the Official Plan provides for some infill development where some of these “missing middle” house forms are permitted. The Official Plan also identifies areas where neighbourhood commercial uses are permitted. Figure 2.1-5 provides a map of where these areas are. Outside of these areas, the permission to create new “missing middle” housing and/or introduce commercial uses within areas designated “neighbourhood” presently requires the preparation of a Tertiary Plan<sup>4</sup> or an amendment to the Official Plan. Moving forward with this Official Plan update, the question is whether or not these permissions are sufficient to accommodate the needs of current and future populations and businesses. By doing so, we may create more opportunities to create new or enhance existing complete communities. (More information regarding complete communities is provided in Section 2.2 Built Form.)

Presently, in support of the City’s comprehensive zoning by-law, the City is undertaking analysis related to residential infill development and low-rise development typologies, this analysis can inform public consultation and policy development during Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process.

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<sup>4</sup> The Official Plan provides policy direction with respect to the preparation of a Tertiary Plan. These plans are generally required to be prepared by the City through a public consultation planning process. These plans are approved by Council, but are not considered statutory plans under the *Planning Act*, and as such they are a guiding document for development within the area that is subject to the plan.





**FIGURE 2.1-4 CURRENT AREAS WHERE MEDIUM DENSITY AND/OR NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMERCIAL USES ARE PERMITTED WITHIN AREAS DESIGNATED NEIGHBOURHOOD.**

Source: DTAH and Gladki Planning Associates, 2021 (Draft Summary Brief, Low-Rise Medium Density Typology Study for Neighbourhood Areas)



### 2.1.2.1.4

#### Within the Greenway System:

The Greenway System is an important component of our urban structure. It includes natural areas, major open space, rural areas, and agricultural areas. The Greenway System occurs within the City's urban and rural areas. It includes lands where there are natural heritage features such as woodlands, wetlands, valley lands and natural habitat for wildlife. Provincial and Regional policy requires protection of these natural features and their functions, including requirements to create sufficient buffers to them to ensure that there are no negative impacts from surrounding development. These policies also encourage or require enhancement areas and linkages to these areas. Collectively, these natural heritage features, their buffers, enhancement and linkage areas contribute to a natural heritage system. While Section 2.5 of this report provides key directions related to natural heritage protection and enhancement as means for climate change adaptation and mitigation, the following key directions relate to rural (outside of the natural heritage system) and agricultural areas of the Greenway System.

- Capitalize on opportunity that is provided in rural areas - clarify and expand permitted uses.

Rural areas that are presently designated Countryside in the Official Plan provide opportunities for expanding our economy, fostering tourism, contributing to our food system, supporting green energy, and providing opportunities to increase climate change resiliency through natural environment protection and restoration. As a key direction, we want to ensure that the Official Plan highlights what these areas have to offer to our communities and future land-users within these areas.

Accordingly, Official Plan policies should be updated to clarify the opportunities that the lands within the Countryside designation of the Official Plan have to offer. Relying on direction from the Region regarding “edge planning”<sup>5</sup> for agricultural lands (in relation to their interface with urban areas) and the Provincial guidance we have with respect to rural lands, there is opportunity to highlight and promote the use of this area.

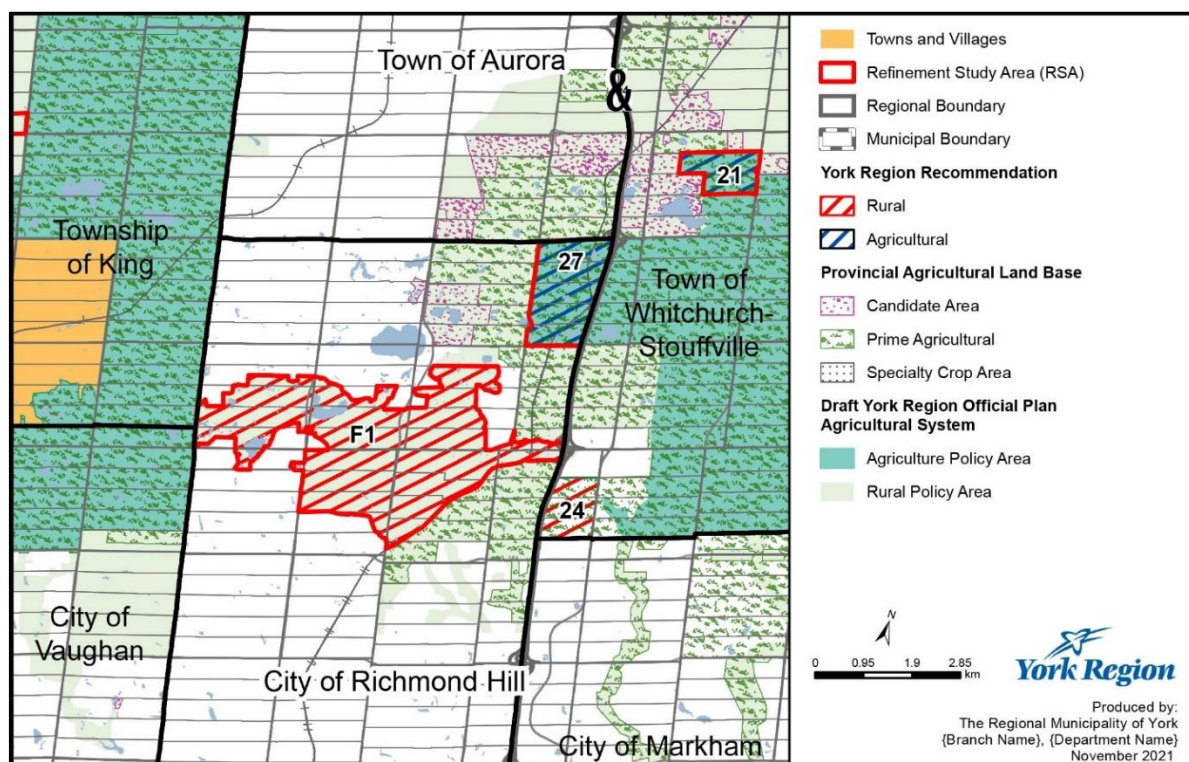
- Designate and provide policy direction for Prime Agricultural areas.

This Key Direction is derived from direction from the Region, as was reported to City Council in February 2020. As the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) continues to progress, we know that we will need to update the Official Plan to recognize lands north of Bethesda Road and east of Leslie Street as prime agricultural

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<sup>5</sup> The [York Region Edge Planning Background Report - November 2018](#) provides information and guidance on the importance and need to protect agricultural lands from urban development. The report identifies the use of buffers as a very successful method to reduce urban impacts on agricultural uses. Through the use of case studies, this report illustrates that there are various planning tools and implementation mechanisms that should be considered to reduce adverse impacts of urban development on adjacent agricultural uses along the agricultural-urban boundary.

and provide the necessary policies to ensure that these lands and those surrounding them continue to support agricultural uses, systems and economy. It should be noted however, that the Provincial mapping of Prime Agricultural lands is much larger than what is identified by the Region, and as such we will need to await Provincial approval of the Regional Official Plan to confirm the final delineation of the Prime Agricultural Areas. (See Figure 2.1-6 below prepared by York Region, which identifies the York Region proposed Prime Agriculture area in the recently released draft Regional Official Plan and the Provincial Proposed Prime Agricultural area.)



**FIGURE 2.1-5 COMPARISON OF PROPOSED PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL PRIME AGRICULTURAL AREAS WITHIN RICHMOND HILL AND ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES**

## 2.1.2.2 Infrastructure Alignment

- Facilitate development and provide commensurate infrastructure to accommodate Regional growth forecast for Richmond Hill.

These proposed urban structure changes respond to anticipated growth that will occur in the City to 2041 and beyond. Forecasting growth is an important step in the land use planning process to ensure communities are prepared to accommodate anticipated growth. It is important to note that, as of March 2021, the Region is proposing to assign a forecast of up to 317,000 residents and 122,600 jobs by 2051.

This forecast is based upon projections for the Region that were done by the Province per the Growth Plan, and then that forecast is allocated by the Region to its nine local municipalities. Over the next 20 to 30 years, the actual amount of growth will largely depend upon numerous factors - most important of which is the desirability of Richmond Hill as a place to live and work.

Desirability can be influenced by the quality of infrastructure that is provided to support growth and development within the City. This infrastructure largely relies on public investment in things like streets, parks, emergency services, schools, and utilities. For that reason, before we entrench anything in the Official Plan, we want to work with providers of this infrastructure to ensure that planning for long-term growth in the City can be supported through existing and planned infrastructure.

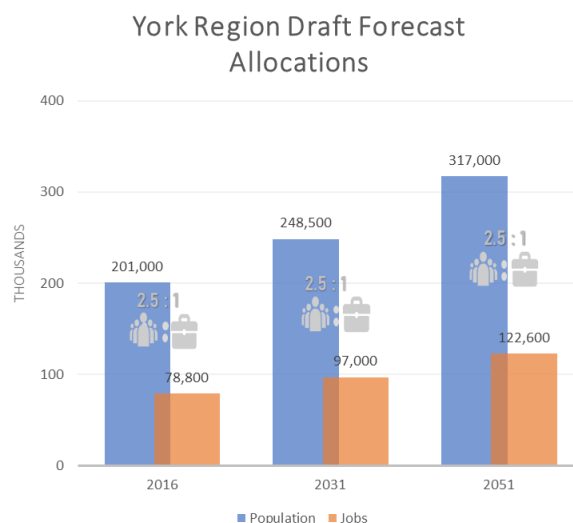
To that end, we have shared a draft forecast with our transportation, water and wastewater, parks and recreation consultants, as well as school boards, to understand how and confirm that the proposed growth can be accommodated over the long-term. This confirmation is important because knowing that the City and these agencies can provide needed high-quality infrastructure services is essential for attracting and retaining growth in our communities. For that reason, it is vital that the master planning work the City is presently undertaking aligns with the Official Plan as amended through this Official Plan update process, and that future development approvals are aligned with the direction in the Official Plan and are scaled in accordance with the completed master plans.

## 2.1.2.3 Official Plan Targets

- Update Official Plan monitoring targets per Regional and City directions.

In order to achieve the long-term vision of the Official Plan, it is important to monitor how the policies are being implemented. One way of doing this is to identify performance targets. Some targets can be measured annually, whereas others may be measured over a period of time.

Presently, there are targets in the Official Plan that are derived from Regional policy. As these targets are updated by the Region, they also must be updated in the City's Official Plan. In addition to Regional targets, however, there are plans approved by



**FIGURE 2.1-6 DRAFT POPULATION AND JOBS FORECAST**

Source: [Proposed 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment, York Region](#), March 2021.

Note: Jobs forecast includes 'work from home' jobs.

Council that also provide targets that have a land use planning relationship. Accordingly, updates to Official Plan targets should be undertaken in accordance with:

- The (new) Regional Official Plan, related to matters such as minimum density of development, rate of intensification, mobility, and affordable housing;
- The Urban Forest Management Plan, which provides a tree canopy cover target of 30% and a woodland cover target of 15% to be achieved by 2040; and
- The Community Energy and Emissions Plan, which provides a target of “net zero greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 2050.”<sup>6</sup>

In order to achieve these targets, complementary policies need to be in place in order to sufficiently direct individual development proposals to collectively achieve the targets.

### 2.1.3 Connection to Pillars of the Official Plan Update

The proposed changes to the Urban Structure respond to the City Plan 2041 Vision and Pillars of the Official Plan update by establishing at a high-level how growth will be accommodated in Richmond Hill. Collectively, the urban structure supports the city vision by providing this high-level guidance that will be implemented through more detailed mapping and policy direction.

#### *Grow Our Economy*

The proposed Urban Structure identifies where different types of employment uses will be accommodated, which supports our local economy. A large variety of commercial, population related jobs will be accommodated in Centres and Corridors. A smaller proportion will be accommodated in Neighbourhood commercial areas, and institutional uses such as schools and public recreational facilities will continue to locate within Neighbourhood areas. Employment areas will continue to be used for variety of businesses that benefit from being separated from sensitive uses and also benefit from being in close proximity to each other. These areas will also accommodate uses that benefit from proximity to major goods movement corridors, such as Highways 404 and 407. Finally, rural areas are available to support some major recreational and tourism uses, agriculture and agricultural related uses, as well as renewable energy uses. All of which provide jobs and support the local economy.

#### *Design Excellence*

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<sup>6</sup> The Community Energy and Emissions Plan explains that this target means that by 2050, Richmond Hill will have reduced its GHG emissions as much as possible, and will not be emitting more than it is offsetting.

These key directions support design excellence by directing the majority of growth to areas that are serviced by transit, and by directing that our infrastructure planning is aligned with the Official Plan and that it occurs in lock-step with new development. By doing so, there is opportunity to work in partnership with the development proponents to ensure that new development results in a “net-benefit” to the broader community - meaning new development contributes to the overall betterment of a community whereby occupants of the new building as well as those in the city experience an improvement to quality of life. These benefits can range from increased transit service due to improved ridership levels, access to affordable and/or 'right-sized' housing<sup>7</sup>, access to new, expanded and/or improved park spaces and recreational facilities, and so much more.

### *Green and Sustainable*

The proposed Urban Structure continues to support the identification of 40% of the City's land area as Greenway System. By directing the majority of growth to Centres and Corridors and Employment areas, this high-level structure reinforces direction to protect and enhance natural heritage features and functions, support a healthy natural environment, as well as support rural land uses that create a buffer between urban uses and agricultural uses within and outside of the City.

### *Protect and Enhance*

These key directions respond to the desire to protect and enhance the elements of the City that we cherish by recognizing that the City has various land uses, neighbourhoods, communities with their own distinguishing character, and that as we move towards updating the Official Plan we should identify and build on those distinguishing elements. Similarly, within the City there is a diversity of residents and workers who enjoy a broad range of lifestyles and may have varying values, as such, these key directions recognize that changes in the Official Plan need to be made through consultation with this diverse community.

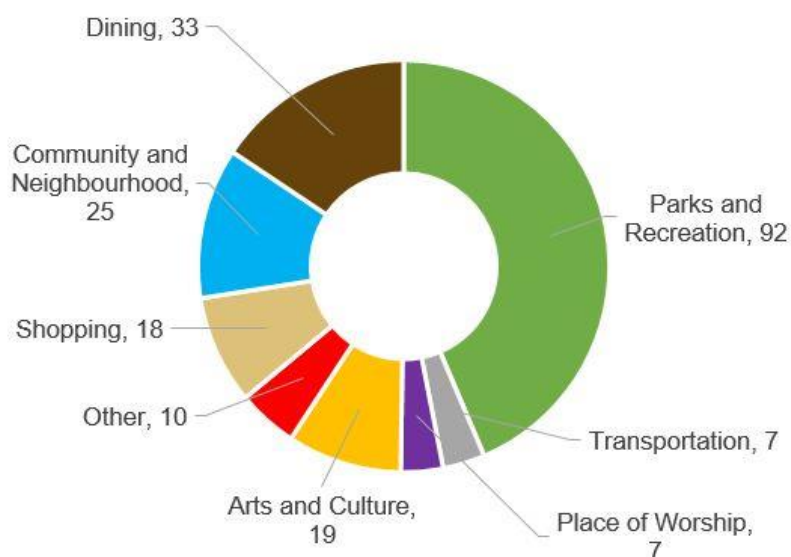
As we see through our Favourite Places application, new pins continue to be added to the map, identifying places that are cherished by residents and workers of Richmond Hill. While a large portion of input to date is related to many of the City's parks, we also see niche places like specific restaurants, landmark sites (such as the David Dunlap Observatory), golf courses, heritage buildings, art galleries, and various shopping facilities

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<sup>7</sup> 'Right sized' housing is housing that is sized appropriately to accommodate the household that is occupying it.



across the City being identified. These places are shown in Figures 2.1-7 and 2.1-8, and help us to understand what elements of our City are favoured and why.



**FIGURE 2.1-7 FAVOURITE PLACES BY CATEGORY**  
**(211 UNIQUE PLACES ADDED AS OF OCTOBER 29, 2021)**

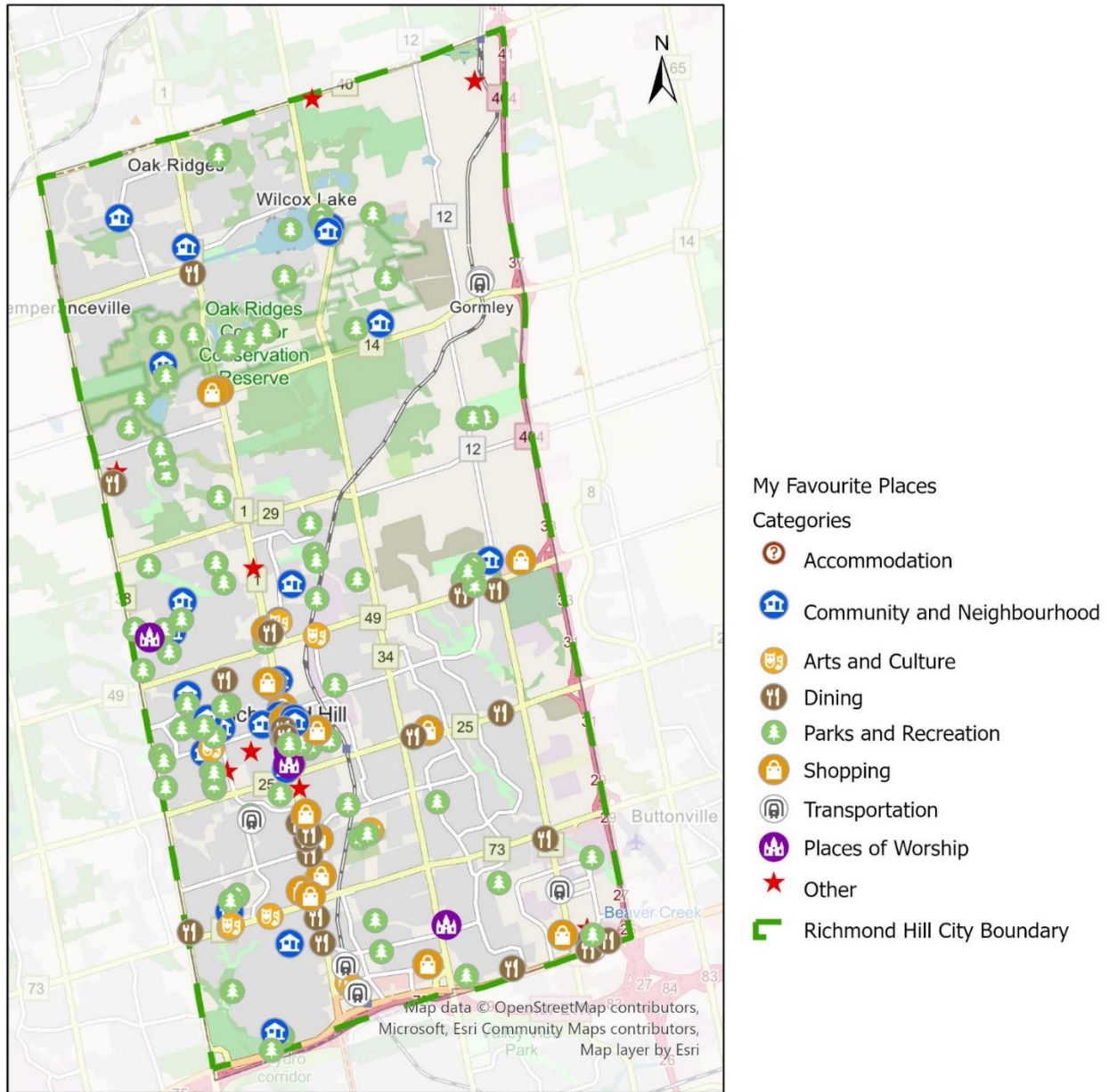


FIGURE 2.1-8 FAVOURITE PLACES MAPPED (OCTOBER 29, 2021)



### 2.2 Built Form

Built Form Key Directions are provided in response to the following two questions arising from the 2019 Official Plan Update initiation staff report:

- *What direction should the Official Plan provide regarding **built form** in our different land use designations?*
- *What **urban design elements** do we need in order to create a City in which we can take pride?*

While Urban Structure generally considers city planning on a two-dimensional level, Built Form is about considering the third-dimension (the vertical plane) and the fourth (sensory) dimension - what a community ultimately “feels” like. From an Official Plan policy development perspective, Built Form is about fostering: placemaking, design excellence, innovation and mobility. To address these matters we need to think about both private development and public infrastructure and how they intersect, interrelate and, ultimately, complement each other.

The current Official Plan and supporting documents provide a range of standards for city building that address matters such as building height and density, street right-of-way widths, parkland standards (including where they are located and the level of service they should provide), lighting standards, noise standards, and so much more. These standards inform the provision of public realm and are determined based on the type and scale of development that may occur around it. As land becomes more scarce and place becomes more desirable, there will be competing interests and a solution to that may be to alter built form standards from the current norms and, in some cases allow for a blurring of ownership where both private and public realm matters are co-mingled.

Built Form varies across the City, and needs to be planned considering the local context in terms of physical form and land use, as well as the environmental, social, and economic context. With continued emphasis on design excellence, we can ensure that development whether private or public collectively results in highly functional Built Form that we can be proud of in Richmond Hill.

As we plan our city with a vision for it to be a prominent complete community by 2041, key directions regarding Built Form inform how we ensure that the City builds out over time. These key directions can also inform related studies and master plans that are being undertaken by the City, such as the Parks Plan, Recreational Plan, and Transportation Master Plan.

## 2.2.1 Built Form Key Directions

The main Built Form key directions are as follows:

- Continue to advance the Official Plan as a guide to “placemaking.”
- Ensure that urban design policy direction supports design excellence in new development and in public realm, to reinforce the objective of building complete communities.
- Appropriately respond to emerging trends and innovation related to matters such as parkland, urban agriculture, sustainable design, micromobility (i.e. electric bicycles and scooters), and electronic and autonomous vehicles.
- Identify and plan to support a hierarchy of mobility that prioritizes sustainable transportation and ensure that built form and transportation infrastructure are aligned.

## 2.2.2 Key Directions Rationale

### 2.2.2.1 Placemaking

➤ Continue to advance the Official Plan as a guide to “placemaking”

Chapter 3 of the current Official Plan provides policy direction related to “placemaking”. Placemaking means: creating quality places where people want to live, work, and play. “Quality places” are those where people want to be, and are created through effective combination of both public and private places. Quality places have good form, which includes considerations such as mass, density, and scale that are appropriate to their locations, whether they be within an urban, suburban or rural setting. Placemaking applies the design principles (walkability, connectivity, public realm, choices, and authenticity) noted in Planning For Change, and also takes into consideration the 2041 Vision (Section 1.2) and applies the four pillars of the Official Plan Update (Section 1.3). It considers form and function of spaces that respond to the needs of the people who live, work, and/or play within them – all in an effort to provide complete communities.

In the Spring of 2021, ‘complete community’ was described during public workshops as communities that offer access to day-to-day living needs within 15-minutes of where a person lives. The City of Winnipeg has identified the following elements as being essential for creating a complete community<sup>8</sup>:

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<sup>8</sup> Source: City of Winnipeg, Complete Communities  
<https://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom/CityHall/OurWinnipeg/pdf/CompleteCommunities.pdf>

### ✓ High quality local spaces

### ✓ Mixed developments

- Local employment options
- Housing options / affordability
- Retail, services, public space, etc.

### ✓ Transportation options

- High frequency transit
- Complete street account for cars, bikes, pedestrians
- Connected transit, pedestrian, bike routes
- Parking

### Space for Culture

- Preservation of heritage buildings & sites
- Promotion of art & culture
- Schools

### ✓ Open Space

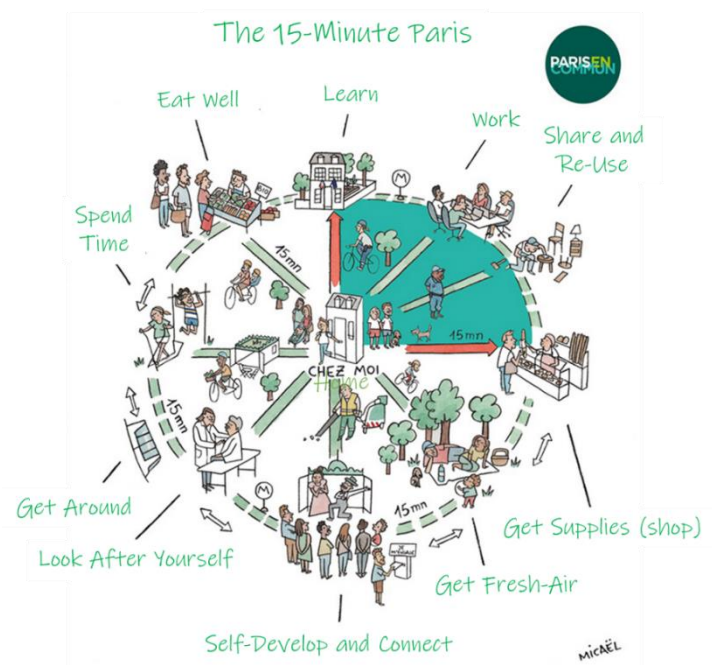
- Parks
- Urban forest
- Urban agriculture
- Roof top garden

### ✓ Clean energy

### ✓ Safe & accessible

Figure 2.2-1 provides a diagram taken from an initiative in Paris to plan for complete communities and it uses the concept of a “15-minute Paris.” The idea here is that we create communities that would allow for a resident to have access to many of the elements noted above, including access to infrastructure such as cycling and transit facilities, all within a 15-minute walking distance of their home. By doing so, we create compact and connected communities, which are much less auto-reliant than the communities some of us live in today. By being less auto-reliant, we create communities that are more socially engaged and connected, we have better health outcomes for residents and workers, and we are much more environmentally and economically sustainable.

The current Official Plan identifies ‘complete community’ as one of the guiding principles of the Plan. The Official Plan states: “A complete community provides opportunities for people to live, work, shop and play. It offers access to infrastructure and amenities in well-designed, pedestrian-



Source: Paris En Commun via [Trend Watch March 2020](#) | [Street Furniture Australia](#)

**FIGURE 2.2-1 A DEPICTION OF ELEMENTS OF A 15-MINUTE COMMUNITY.**

oriented places developed at a human scale where public transit, walking, and cycling are viable alternatives to the automobile.”

Accordingly, the key direction to continue to advance the Official Plan as a guide to “Placemaking” is complemented by the following directions.

### 2.2.2.2 Design Excellence

- Ensure that urban design policy direction supports design excellence in new development and in public realm, to reinforce the objective of building complete communities.

As noted in the City’s Official Plan, urban design is concerned with shaping the physical form of urban and rural areas and plays an important role in maintaining and enhancing civic image, economic potential, and quality of life. Excellence in design is critical to reinforcing the human-scale of the urban structure. Although excellence in design can be subjective, through consultation we can work to establish some shared views on what constitutes design excellence from a city planning perspective. How we design our city to achieve the City Plan 2041 vision is a key question to be answered through the Official Plan update process. These key directions are a starting point for that response.

As we direct growth to our Centres and Corridors, the City will be hosting more dense and taller buildings (i.e. mid-rise and tall buildings), and will require commensurate public realm and infrastructure. These types of compact built form have many economic, social and environmental benefits:

- Economic - They create mixed-use environments which make new businesses more economically viable when people live and work in close proximity.
- Social - This built form is intrinsically more affordable than our traditional sprawling suburban development, allows for greater social interaction, and access to goods and services, and
- Environmental - This built form provides lower per capita GHG emissions than low-rise development dominated areas.



**FIGURE 2.2-2 HULLMARK CENTRE IN TORONTO IS AN EXAMPLE OF A HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AND OFFICE BUILDINGS THAT PROVIDE A MIX OF COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL USES AT GROUND LEVEL, WITH AN OPEN COURTYARD THAT ALL SEAMLESSLY CONNECT TO THE STREET, TRANSIT FACILITIES, AND NEIGHBOURING AMENITIES AND DEVELOPMENT.**

In this context, “public realm” is defined as:

*Places and/or spaces that are shared by the public. This includes all publicly accessible places, open spaces and streetscapes, as well as places that provide infrastructure to support communities and where social interaction is possible.*

Consequently, well thought-out provision of public realm within compact development and neighbouring areas has the potential to create a network of public spaces that are well-connected, walkable, safe and comfortable routes between origins and destinations throughout the City. The public realm, as broadly defined, also plays an important role to create vibrancy and social interaction within communities. To that end, it is important that our Official Plan policies and our related master plans (as noted in Section 2.1) are aligned so that we can work with the development community to ensure that this new era of development in our city does indeed achieve our complete community vision.

- Update urban design policies to respond to changing built form, by implementing urban design principles described in Planning For Change. These principles are: (1) walkability, (2) connectivity, (3) diverse and lively public realm, (4) choice of places to live, work, shop, play, innovate, etc., and (5) authenticity; with a clear acknowledgement that achieving the Official Plan vision requires working in partnership.

While the current Official Plan does indeed provide urban design policies and there are complementary urban design guidelines in place, this key direction suggests that these policies be reviewed and updated to ensure that the urban design principles are addressed. As explained in Planning For Change, the updated policies ought to provide sufficient flexibility to allow for new development to be innovative and responsive to the design principles.

To implement this key direction, our Official Plan should provide sufficient criteria to guide the development of private proposals and their evaluation, to ensure that new development does indeed result in benefits to quality of life, not only for the occupants of a new building, but also to those people and workers that surround it. As such, the following key direction is proposed in relation to criteria to apply in the evaluation of development proposals:

- Update policies to guide the evaluation of development proposals and building design based on criteria related to matters such as context, history, city pattern, compatibility, enhancement of public realm, promoting walkability, creating identity within communities, applying sustainable design measures, and sound architecture. With an understanding that the objective of this criteria is: to ensure new development benefits quality of life in the City, and to reinforce the objective of building complete communities.



An important consideration in the evaluation of development, for example, may be the interface of a building with the adjacent public realm to ensure that safe, accessible, attractive and comfortable pedestrian environments are provided.

During future public consultation, whether on a city-wide or area specific basis, consideration must be given to how “public benefit” is addressed in the Official Plan and achieved over the long term.

### 2.2.2.2.1 Public Realm and Facilities

- Clearly express required public realm and facilities (parks, streets, community centers, library, fire halls, tree canopy, schools, etc.) that is commensurate with build-out of the broader area – to create amenity-rich communities.

Through public consultation to date, concerns have been raised regarding the ability for the City’s infrastructure to support forecasted growth. As noted in the Urban Structure (Section 2.1) modelling is underway to confirm existing and planned capacity, and master planning with respect to water, wastewater, stormwater, transportation, trails, parks and recreation facilities are also underway to ensure proper alignment with the Official Plan Update. Through the development of more detailed planning for intensification areas (discussed in Section 2.3 Intensification), necessary mapping and policy updates recommended by the master planning work can be added to the Official Plan to clearly indicate where future infrastructure, such as parks and streets, is required to support long term growth within the City.

### 2.2.2.3 Emerging Trends and Innovation

Key Directions that are responsive to trends and innovations relating to parkland, urban agriculture, sustainable design, and mobility are discussed below. However, it should be noted that throughout this Official Plan update process, we continue to acknowledge and learn about new trends and innovations, and recognize that there is a need to allow for sufficient flexibility within the Official Plan to appropriately respond to evolving trends and new innovations, even after this Official Plan Update has concluded.

### 2.2.2.3.1 Parkland and Open Space

- Recognize opportunity for privately owned publicly accessible spaces (“urban plazas”) within the City’s park typologies and open space system.

Parkland is an important element of the public realm and provides a lot of social, economic and environmental public benefit. Both the Official Plan and Parks Plan provide a list of park typologies and direction as to where different types of parks should be provided. Providing a variety of park typologies across the city is important in order to serve a variety of interests that residents, workers and visitors to the City have. Through the Parks Plan update, consideration is being given to developing a system of urban open spaces whereby parkland is connected through linear parks, and more urban squares are established within Centres and Corridors.

Over the last few years, in the preparation of secondary plans for key development areas and the Richmond Hill Centre area, a new typology of parkland has been identified: “urban plazas”. The “urban plaza” is defined as a privately owned publicly accessible open space. These are common among highly urban areas, especially within mixed-use development sites. These urban plazas contribute to the broader public realm, creating more connections and opportunities for social interaction on private lands that seamlessly connect to the public realm. These urban plazas need not be limited to specific centres within the city, and as such through the Official Plan Update, it appears to make sense to include this form of parkland among the parkland typologies listed, and to provide appropriate guidance for them in relation to all Centres and Corridors. To assist with policy development, the City can look to the findings of the Stratification and Public Easement Study and the policies provided in the Yonge and Bernard Key Development Area and the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plans.

### 2.2.2.3.2 Urban Agriculture

- Support urban agriculture, community gardens, and roof-top greenhouses.

The City’s Environment Strategy advocates for access to local food and continued support for pollinators and their habitat, through the provision of rooftop gardens, urban agriculture, and community gardening. With increased intensification, the desire for having community gardens is likely to increase, especially among households who



**FIGURE 2.2-3 THE TORONTO DOMINION CENTRE IN TORONTO PROVIDES A PARK AREA THAT IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC.**

Source: [Toronto-Dominion Centre | The Cultural Landscape Foundation \(tclf.org\)](https://www.toronto-dominion-centre.org/)

may not have access to a private garden. Policies 3.2.3.9 and 3.2.3.10 of the current Official Plan support these initiatives, however strengthening of these policies may better support their implementation through new development. Furthermore, advances in agricultural processes and precedents have shown that commercial agriculture, whether through roof-top greenhouses and/or vertical agriculture, can be supported within urban areas. As such, enabling policies in the Official Plan should be provided to ensure that such uses are neither precluded nor delayed. The provision of these facilities adds to the variety of building and open space forms we may see in our communities, creating a more diverse Built Form across the City.



**FIGURE 2.2-4, GOTHAM GREENS FARM AND WHOLE FOODS MARKET, CHICAGO, IL IS AN EXAMPLE OF URBAN AGRICULTURE IN THE FORM OF A ROOFTOP GREENHOUSE.**

### 2.2.2.3.3 Sustainable Design

- Continue to advance sustainable design practices (i.e. low impact development measures, green roofs, etc.)

This key direction stems from Provincial and Regional policy direction. The Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) indicates that 30% of the greenhouse gas reduction can take place through the construction of efficient buildings and building retro-fits, resulting in climate change mitigation. The Corporate Climate Change Framework, Environment Strategy and related guiding documents promote the incorporation of green infrastructure, such as low impact development measures (e.g. bio-swales with native plants, rain gardens, and permeable pavers) on site, as a means to adapt to climate change. These documents also note that the provision of shade structures and increasing tree canopy improve community resiliency to climate impacts such as heat stress.



**FIGURE 2.2-5, EXAMPLE OF LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUE IN MILLBURY, MA**

.Sustainable design practices also include energy and water efficient building design, provision of electric vehicle charging stations, and renewable energy generation (i.e. rooftop solar panels). Providing green roofs on new developments and managing stormwater on a property results in both climate mitigation and adaptation benefits.

When designing these facilities, we need to ensure that they are functional over the long term. Accordingly, consideration needs to be given, both within the Official Plan and in related documents, to provide standards that ensure these sustainable design elements are supported and facilitated through relevant approval processes.

We need to recognize that these sustainable design elements will introduce new elements to our current Built Form. As development in our communities more frequently utilize these

elements – we will create a more “green” look and feel across the City. (Additional key directions regarding sustainable design elements are provided in Section 2.5 Climate Change.)

### 2.2.2.3.4 Mobility

Section 2.2.2.4 below discusses emerging trends and innovation related to mobility.

### 2.2.2.4 Mobility Hierarchy

- Identify and plan to support a hierarchy of mobility that prioritizes sustainable transportation, and ensure that built form and transportation infrastructure are aligned.

When updating the Official Plan and approving development applications, consideration needs to be given to how people and goods move around the city. The Community Energy and Emissions plan indicates that 40% of GHG emissions can be reduced when more trips are taken using sustainable modes of travel that include walking, cycling, micromobility (e.g. electric bikes and scooters), transit and the use of electronic vehicles. This list of modes of travel represents a large range of mobility options. However, it is through planning and the provision of the necessary infrastructure to support these modes of travel that we can persuade people to choose to utilize them in the way that is envisioned in the Community Energy and Emissions Plan and the City’s forthcoming update to of the Transportation Master Plan.



Over the last 10 years, there have been advancements in technology related to mobility, and these too need to be factored into the planning framework. Innovation in mobility, such as ride share services that use applications that are accessible on hand held devices (i.e. Uber, Lyft), electric bikes and scooters, and electric and autonomous vehicles, has increased options for movement from one place to another, however, in some cases more infrastructure or changes in our city-standards are required to facilitate their use. Moreover, to ensure that these options are supported, Built Form should provide the appropriate density and design elements to connect to and facilitate the efficient use of infrastructure that supports this range of mobility.

This key direction more overtly introduces the concept of a mobility hierarchy within our Official Plan. For its implementation, we would need to evaluate our policies to ensure that they truly recognize and facilitate the hierarchy proposed in Figure 2.2-6. This hierarchy considers a number of factors including: traffic safety, traffic congestion, sustainability, equity, health, and trip value.

Walking is at the top of the proposed hierarchy because, as noted in Planning For Change, walkability is a key ingredient to complete communities.

What is new to the hierarchy is micromobility and shared vehicles. In this context, micromobility speaks to electrified bikes and scooters and other such devices that make travelling more effortless than their non-electrified versions. With the use of these modes of travel, people may be more willing and able to travel over longer distances, and at faster speeds, than when they are using the non-electrified versions, and as such may prefer them to using their private automobile. Shared vehicles go beyond traditional car-pooling and include ride-hailing services, however, this category also brings into consideration autonomous vehicles that are run through public fleets, as an example.

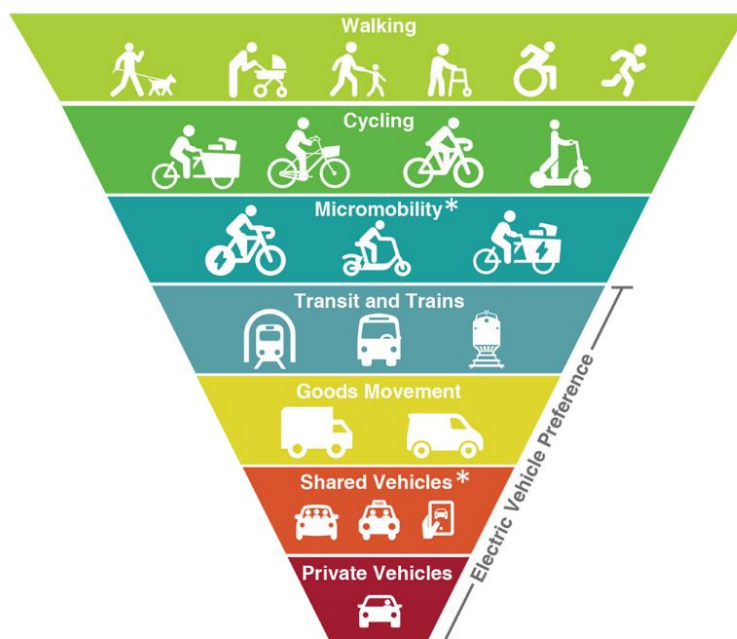



FIGURE 2.2-6 PROPOSED MOBILITY HIERARCHY

By recognizing the mobility hierarchy, we need to make room for all of these modes of travel and think of ways to accommodate them and the impact they will have on the overall Built Form of the City. While this will be addressed in the City's Transportation Master Plan, it also needs to be addressed in our Official Plan in order for it to work.





Provision of infrastructure that supports this range of mobility requires planning and capital funding. With limited financial resources, it is important that priority is given to development that is commensurate with existing and planned infrastructure. This prioritization can occur through appropriate designation and pre-zoning of land within the City, (key directions in Section 2.3 will address this planning element further). Similarly, the provision and maintenance of infrastructure that supports active modes of transportation (e.g. walking and cycling), micromobility, and transit, should also be prioritized in capital planning and maintenance programs.

The implementation of this key direction has multiple benefits, including:

- Environmental - It prioritizes low-carbon, sustainable modes of transportation and reduces dependency on single occupancy vehicles.
- Social - It has public health benefits, and can result in less incidences of illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease in communities where people are using active transportation modes of travel, and can benefit communities by reducing noise, odour, and air pollution produced by gas-powered vehicles; and
- Economic - It has economic benefits, as frequent and high-volume use of transit ensures that the system runs more efficiently. Furthermore, this mobility hierarchy supports the local economy, because people engaged in active transportation are able to frequent local businesses during their travel time more easily than people who are in private automobiles.

The City's forthcoming Parking and Transportation Demand Strategy, which will provide a set of measures, strategies and policies that encourage people to choose sustainable travel modes, will also be a resource for consulting on and developing Official Plan policies during Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process to implement this key direction.

#### 2.2.2.4.1 Autonomous Vehicles

- Plan to capitalize on advantages that come from autonomous mobility.

In addition to the key direction advocating for a mobility hierarchy, consideration should be given to “autonomous mobility,” specifically. “Autonomous Mobility” is rapidly evolving. Autonomous Vehicles (AV) use computers and sensors to understand the driving environment and operate with little to no human input. These vehicles include cars, vans, trucks, buses and subways. We are seeing examples of their use across the world some in a piloting phase (such as Loblaws delivery trucks in British Columbia, which commenced in January 2021, or the recently announced Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) autonomous shuttle bus in Toronto, which commenced in October 2021), and others in their established form (such as the Vancouver SkyTrain). This new mobility paradigm is creating more options for citizens to move around the city.



**FIGURE 2.2-7 CITY OF TORONTO AUTOMATED SHUTTLE PILOT**

SOURCE: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/8f3d-TSAV-ShuttlePublic-MeetingSept14.pdf>

Connected mobility applies integrated technology that is in constant communication between vehicles and the environment. This technology allows vehicles to operate with more precision than they do when subject to only human influence. As noted in Planning For Change, the prevalence of connected vehicles/autonomous vehicles increases the capacity of existing roadways and parking fields to provide opportunity to accommodate other modes of travel and/or support new infrastructure such as street trees and benches. Furthermore, with the prevalence of public Autonomous Vehicles, there is more opportunity to support “last mile” travel (i.e. getting transit users from transit stops to their final destination), and also resulting in long-term cost savings for transit providers who will no longer need to staff all transit vehicles.

The federal and provincial governments have put forward investments, regulations, and policy documents to shape how Autonomous Vehicles will arrive to consumers on a national and regional scale. In Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process, and through the on-going work that is being undertaken for the City’s Transportation Master Plan, further consultation and analysis will need to be undertaken to ensure

that the implementation of connected mobility and Autonomous Vehicle technology will be equitable and sustainable for its users. We will also want to ensure that well-being and safety of our citizens and communities continues to be protected when these vehicles become prevalent in our city.

From a Built Form perspective, consideration needs to be given in relation to standards related to parking, street-widths, provision of access points to facilitate drop-off/pick-up opportunities, and other forms of infrastructure to support the use of AV.

### 2.2.3 Connection to Pillars of the Official Plan Update

The Built Form key directions respond to the Pillars of the Official Plan Update by providing guidance in relation to the design of development within the City that is evaluated based on qualitative policies that ensure new development is responsive to the achievement of the City vision and complete community objectives. This guidance also speaks to the relationship between private development and public infrastructure (public realm), and will be further informed by findings from related initiatives that the City is undertaking (i.e. the Transportation Master Plan, Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan, the Parks Plan, the Recreational Plan, and Culture Plan updates, and the Comprehensive Zoning By-law).

#### *Grow Our Economy*

Economic prosperity within the City is dependant on attracting and retaining residents and businesses in Richmond Hill. Built Form – creating places that people want to live, work and play – is essential to ensuring that attraction exists. These key directions provide foundational considerations for updating the Official Plan with an emphasis on ensuring appropriate public realm is efficiently provided where needed, and that private development complements the public realm in terms of its function, design and scale, to ensure that there is a comparable return on investment in public infrastructure.

#### *Design Excellence*

These key directions specifically speak to the pillar of design excellence by recommending a move away from prescriptive policies to criteria based and context specific policies. The key directions seek to achieve design excellence by emphasizing the importance of new development having to relate to and/or contribute to public realm elements that support it and the broader community.

#### *Green and Sustainable*

These key directions speak to sustainable development by recommending policy improvements that more closely align with actions identified in the City's Community Energy and Emissions Plan and Environment Strategy, by providing direction in

relation to sustainable building and site design, and the use and provision of green energy and green infrastructure within public and private development.

### *Protect and Enhance*

These key directions also recognize that achieving the City Plan 2041 Vision is about recognizing the assets of the City not only in terms of physical qualities, but also in terms of the people and businesses that exist and that have yet to come to the City. These key directions recognize that the diversity, opportunities and innovation provided by residents and businesses need to be accommodated as we continue to implement the Official Plan. Accordingly, these key directions recognize the importance accommodating and embracing innovation, and creating space for social interaction in a seamless manner from private development to public facilities.



### 2.3 Intensification

The Intensification key directions are provided in response to the following question arising from the 2019 Official Plan Update initiation staff report:

*How should our Major Transit Station Areas and other existing and emerging Centres and Corridors be planned... to ensure that:*

- *Such areas are transit supportive hubs; and*
- *Such areas are where residents and businesses within the Centre and beyond are able to enjoy a mix of land uses and services?*

As noted in Section 2.1, the vast majority of residential and job growth is proposed to be directed to the Centres and Corridors within the City. As such, careful attention needs to be given in terms of policy changes that will guide this new growth in a manner that responds well to the City Plan 2041 Vision. In response to the above questions, we need to consider Provincial and Regional policy frameworks that provide direction on Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) and intensification within settlement areas in general. We also need to consider input received from public and stakeholder engagement and other corporate initiatives that inform the City's Official Plan Update (these are listed in Section 4.0).

The Provincial policy framework directs for the identification of MTSA's along priority transit corridors, and that these MTSA's be planned in a transit-supportive manner. The objective of planning MTSA's is to capitalize on the number of potential transit users that are within walking distance to a transit station (approximately 500-800 metre walking distance) in accordance with the level of service the transit station is able to support. A key policy objective of MTSA's therefore involves the achievement of a minimum density target, which is prescribed by Provincial policy, and reflective of the type of transit that is planned to serve the MTSA.

The Region's emerging policy direction on MTSA's supports this Provincial direction, and has identified 18 MTSA's within the City that will need to be reflected in the City's land use planning framework through the Official Plan Update. This also includes a requirement that the City plan for and achieve minimum density targets within each MTSA. As the upper tier level of government and transit provider, the Region has the discretion to propose minimum density targets that exceed the minimum targets prescribed by the Growth Plan.

With respect to intensification in general, municipalities are directed by Provincial policies to accommodate the majority of growth within its settlement area. Settlement areas include nodes and corridors that may or may not be MTSA's. These areas are to be serviced by existing or planned municipal water and wastewater systems and higher-order transit. To that end, the current Official Plan provides a hierarchy of intensification, meaning that it prioritizes where growth should be directed based on infrastructure capacity (especially transit, water and wastewater) and local context.



As articulated in the Planning For Change document, the current context of these areas are a result of their development responding to the earlier economic trends and development interests of the past 30 years. Today, these Centres and Corridors represent significant opportunity to accommodate change to ensure the City is creating places that embody human scale, choices, wellness, sustainability, and a sense of community, as discussed in Section 2.2 Built Form. The input received from the public engagement process thus far has underscored and drawn attention to this needed change.

In light of the preceding, the subsequent sections of this report recommend key directions regarding intensification to inform the update of the City's Official Plan. Among them is the need to clarify the purpose and intent of the City's intensification hierarchy, while also highlighting how intensification and MTSA's should be addressed to "future proof" the City, as recommended in Planning For Change.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.3.1 Intensification Key Directions

Intensification results in more compact, mixed-use development that allows for more people to live, connect, work and play. It is a key policy direction in both provincial and regional growth management, and is often promoted as a way to achieve other intended benefits such as: the provision of reliable frequent public transit, the creation of complete communities, the fostering of better health outcomes and climate resiliency, and more efficient use of public infrastructure and services. Planning for intensification often requires a substantial shift in development patterns and requires establishing a long-term vision for an area.

To achieve these benefits, a number of key directions have emerged as follows:

- Clarify the purpose and intent of the intensification hierarchy;
- Clarify the roles of Centres and Corridors within the hierarchy;
- Appropriately designate intensification areas and implement Regional MTSA minimum density direction;
- Intensify Centres and Corridors with consideration of overall community benefit in mind.
- Consider the potential impact of climate change and apply mitigation and adaptation measures accordingly;
- Support the provision of future high-order transit; and

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<sup>9</sup> In Planning For Change, David Dixon notes that due to circumstances related to demographic, economic, mobility and environmental change, we will experience transformational change within our city. He indicates that "future-proofing" the City requires an understanding of what those changes may be and to manage them in way that adheres to familiar human values. From a land use planning perspective, this means creating places that celebrate the five senses, are of human scale, provide for individual choice, wellness, sustainability, and equity, and where people are able to share a sense of community.

- Continue to consult on and provide more detailed guidance for Centres and Corridors, starting with clear vision statements for each area.

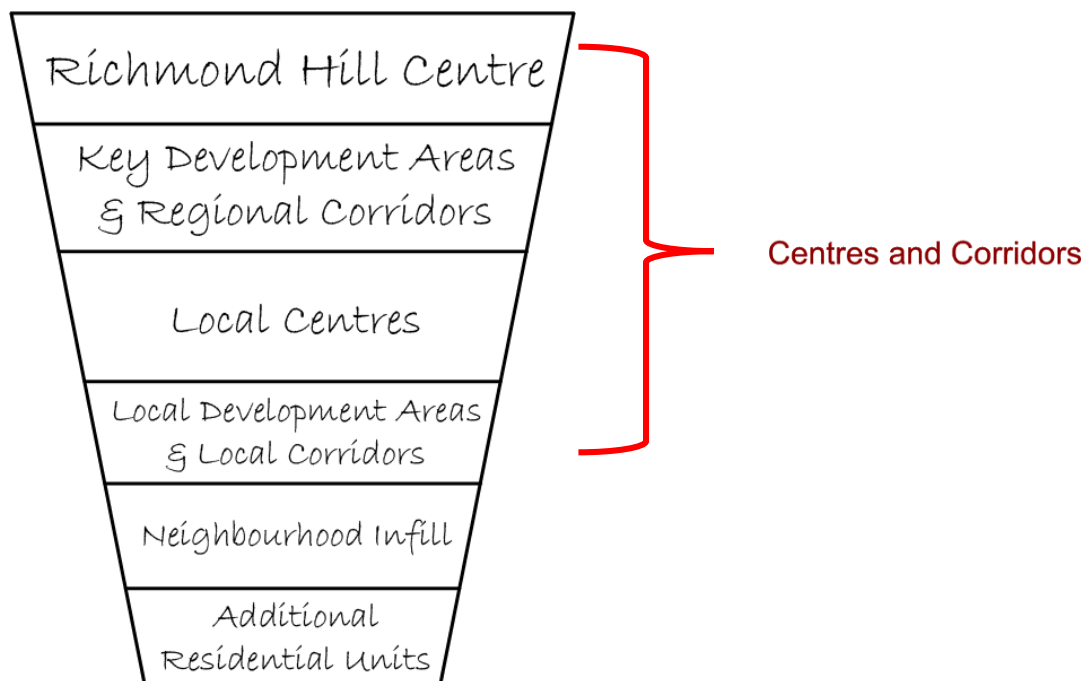
### 2.3.2 Key Directions Rationale

The summary and rationale for each of the aforementioned key directions is described in more detail in the following sections.

#### 2.3.2.1 Intensification Hierarchy

- Clarify the purpose and intent of the intensification hierarchy.

The role of the City's intensification hierarchy is to complement the urban structure and clarify in more detail where we intend to direct growth within the City. The network of Centres and Corridors as shown Figure 2.3-1, form a significant part of the City's intensification hierarchy, and are areas of the urban structure that are planned to accommodate the majority of growth within the City.



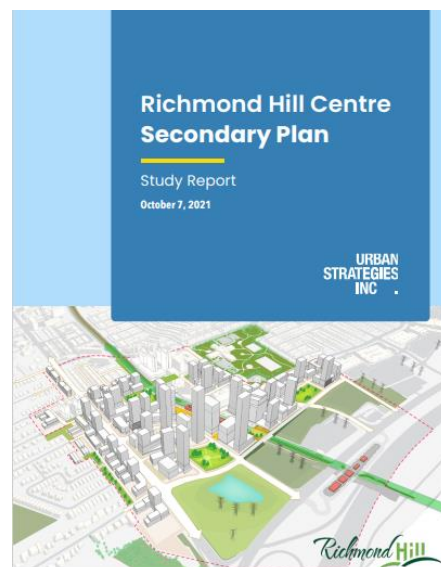
**FIGURE 2.3-1 CITY OF RICHMOND HILL'S INTENSIFICATION HIERARCHY**

As we proceed with Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process, it is important that we establish a common understanding with respect to this established hierarchy. To that end, below is a description of each level of the hierarchy:

**Richmond Hill Centre** continues to be recognized at the top of the hierarchy, which reflects its status as a key origin and destination point in the City and the broader GTA Region. This area will support two subway stations, provide opportunities for major office as well as a corporate centre, and will be considered as one of the Region's downtowns. As such, it will become a hub for office, entertainment, residential, commercial and community uses. The Richmond Hill Centre will encourage innovative forms of city-building to enable it to become a key regional destination and transit-oriented urban community. Given the significant transit investment that will be directed to this area, this area is planned to undergo a major transformation as proposed in the [draft Secondary Plan](#) and therefore accommodate a large proportion of forecasted growth over the next 20 years.

Next in the hierarchy are **Key Development Areas** and **Regional Corridors**. Regional Corridors will continue to include certain segments of Yonge Street between Highway 7 and Bloomington Road, and segments of Highway 7 between Yonge Street and Highway 404. At specific nodes along the Regional Corridors are areas that cater to a larger regional draw as a destination, which are identified as Key Development Areas (KDA). There are two KDAs identified in the Urban Structure, located at Yonge Street and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Carrville Road (which presently provides a major retail function, including a regional scale shopping centre) and Yonge Street and Bernard Avenue (which also provides a major retail function and a bus station which connects north and southbound passengers to locations from northern York Region to Toronto). These areas represent large swaths of land that presently occupy low intensity commercial uses and expansive surface parking lots and are serviced by bus rapid transit along Yonge Street. In Planning For Change, David Dixon notes that areas such as these are well suited for unlocking a new era of opportunities to achieve the City's planning vision. Accordingly, these two KDAs will be recognized and carried forward in the OP Update.

Below Regional Corridors and KDA's within the hierarchy are **Local Centres**. Local Centres also cater to a regional draw, however a defining feature of these areas are their unique characteristics and established contexts. Accordingly, local centres are identifiable as transit supportive, complete community areas, each with a unique character due to the existing built context, cultural heritage and/or natural heritage that



**FIGURE 2.3-2 THE RICHMOND HILL CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN WAS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL AND THE PUBLIC IN OCTOBER, THE [STUDY REPORT](#) PROVIDES THE RATIONALE FOR THE LONG TERM VISION AND BUILD OUT PROPOSED FOR THIS AREA.**

exists within them. This means that Local Centres may require more contextually sensitive policy direction to ensure their unique character and local conditions are addressed over the long-term.

**Local Development Areas (LDA)** and **Local Corridors** follow next in the hierarchy, and they are characterized as compact, complete community areas that are in proximity to existing or planned higher order transit. Through the 2010 Official Plan, they were identified giving consideration to the existing development in the area, which already provided for some medium to high density development and/or underdeveloped commercial or institutional uses. A defining feature of these areas is their intended function, which is to serve the immediate and local areas that surround them. One exception to this local function is the LDA located west of Yonge Street wherein several institutional uses are provided that serve the regional community; most notably is the Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital, which is the largest employer in Richmond Hill. These areas will be planned through the Official Plan Update to provide a mix of uses to serve the surrounding community, through modest levels of intensification and development that is contextually sensitive.

Finally, within the hierarchy are the City's **Neighbourhoods**. As noted in Section 2.1, there is recognition that there are opportunities for Neighbourhoods to continue to accommodate some small-scale intensification through infill development. This means new development within Neighbourhoods will generally be accommodated through new lot creation and/or through the introduction of different forms of housing (e.g. gentle density) that is contextually appropriate and desirable.

➤ **Clarify the roles of Centres and Corridors within the hierarchy.**

Given that the intensification hierarchy combines KDAs and Regional Corridors together, and similarly LDAs and Local Corridors together, it is important to also clarify their distinct roles within the hierarchy. While these areas of the hierarchy are depicted to be on the same level in terms of where to prioritize new development, they vary slightly in terms of function – and this is determined by the physical context of each area. For example, lots within Corridors may be smaller and more constrained given their context, when compared to lots within Centres. Larger lot configurations provide more near term opportunities for redevelopment of sites that can support new public streets, parks and urban open space connections.

With respect to the roles of Centres and Corridors, **Centres** should be recognized as focal points and destination areas, where a mix of uses should be required. They should also be well-supported by public realm elements to ensure they are attractive, provide opportunity for social interaction, and that they develop over time into walkable, urban settings.

**Corridors** play a supporting role to Centres. They provide connections, continuity, and transition between Centres, forming a cohesive network of mixed-use lands that serve the broader community and Region as a whole. When planning for Centres and

Corridors, we need to consider transition of Built Form to surrounding areas that can include lands within neighbourhoods, employment areas, or the City's Greenway System. Given the extent of designated corridors, this transition can have a major impact on how much development (in terms of density and height), as well as the range of permitted uses (to ensure land use compatibility) can occur within a specific lot within the Corridor. As such, a key distinction between Centres and Corridors is that while Centres may provide key destinations with likely taller buildings, higher densities and greater variety of permitted uses than their adjacent Corridors, it is the Corridors that are often the connection to them, which necessitates the need for the City to ensure that they too be animated, diverse and provide for a vibrant streetscape.

- Appropriately designate intensification areas and implement Regional MTSA minimum density direction.



**FIGURE 2.3-3 EXAMPLE OF A MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREA STOP ALONG HIGHWAY 7**

Within the Official Plan, there are several land use designations for which there are more detailed policy direction to inform how specific areas of the City are intended to develop. The identification of these land use designations is informed by local context and vision. However, a new input to this determination is the Regional direction for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) and the minimum density targets that are assigned to them. Generally speaking, the Region has identified different minimum density targets for each MTSA, based on the local context and on the level of transit infrastructure that is planned and/or provided. However, as noted in Staff Report SRPRS.20.004, not all of the proposed MTSAs and minimum density targets are in alignment with the current Official Plan, which is what necessitated Big Move 3 as discussed in Section 2.1 Urban Structure of this report.

These MTSA boundaries are not intended to be land use boundaries, rather, they are catchment areas for transit stations, within which more detailed planning is required to ensure that there is built form transition to adjacent neighbourhoods as well as achievement of the overall minimum density targets over the long-term.

Planning for MTSAs is about ensuring an appropriate mix and density of development is permitted to support transit. In Staff Report SRPRS.20.004, staff noted that the

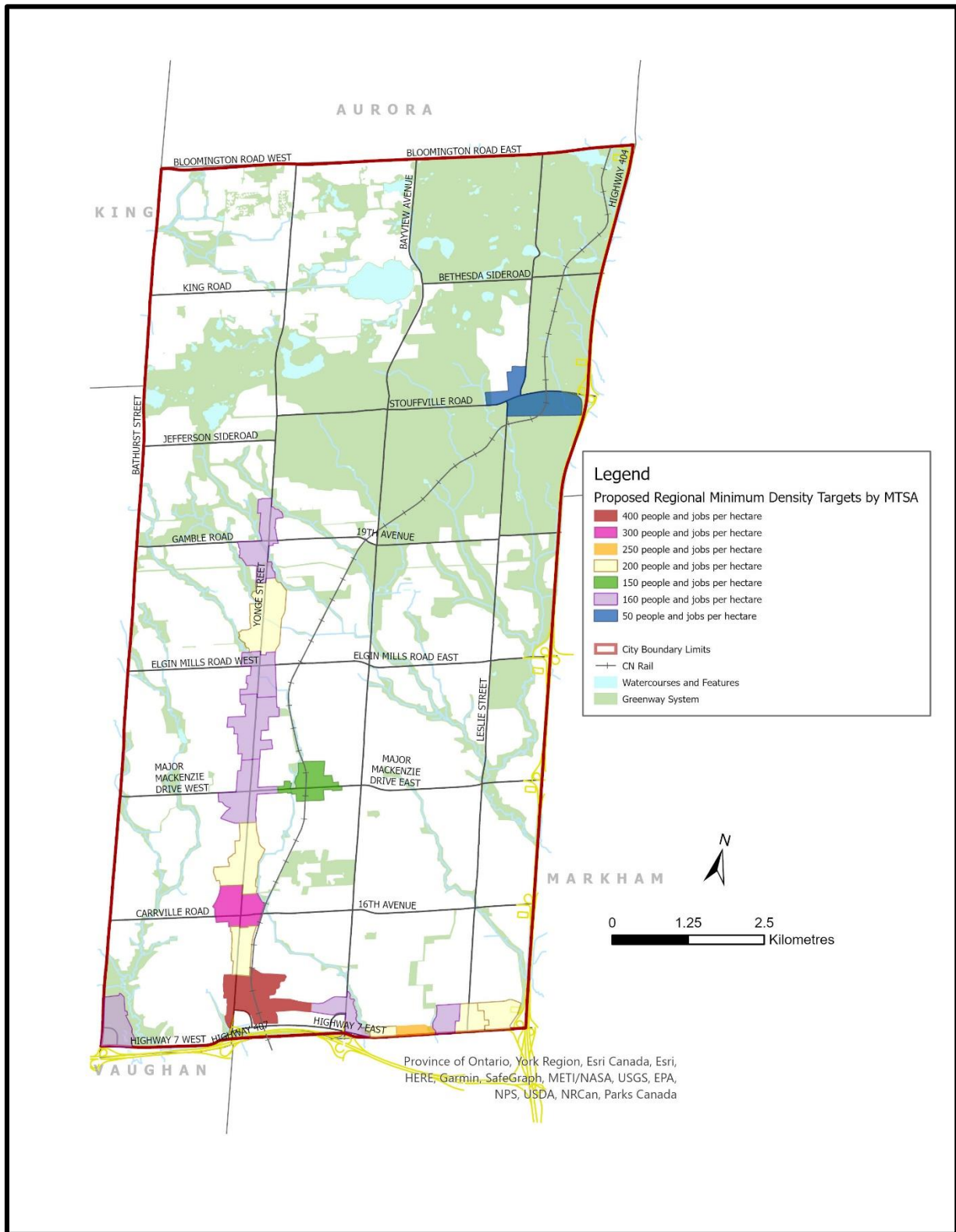


Region's proposed minimum density targets could be achieved based on the City's current Official Plan policies and land use designations, with a few exceptions that led to "Big Move" Urban Structure Key Directions as noted in Section 2.1.

As we advance into Phase 3 of the Official Plan Update, it is important to establish a common understanding of how the Region's MTSA's fall within the City's Urban Structure and current land use designations. To that end, **Table 2.3-2** below proposes this alignment based on a number of factors, including:

- The intensification hierarchy explained in Section 2.3.2.1;
- The proposed 2041 city planning vision;
- The local context within and surrounding each area; and
- Public and stakeholder engagement undertaken to date.

The refinement of the Centres and Corridors in terms of delineated boundaries, proposed height, densities and mix of use, as well as public realm and infrastructure needs will be further explored in Phase 3 of the Official Plan Update.



**FIGURE 2.3-4 LOCATION OF MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREAS AND PROPOSED REGIONAL MINIMUM DENSITY TARGETS (RESIDENTS & JOBS PER HECTARE)**

**TABLE 2.3-1 SUMMARY OF INTENSIFICATION HIERARCHY, LAND USE DESIGNATIONS, AND ALIGNMENT WITH REGIONAL MTSA MINIMUM DENSITY TARGETS**

Intensification Hierarchy	Land Use Designation	York Region Proposed Minimum Density Target per MTSA (residents + jobs / ha)
<b>Richmond Hill Centre</b>		
	Richmond Hill Centre	400
<b>Key Development Area (KDA) and Regional Corridor</b>		
	KDA - Yonge/16 <sup>th</sup> -Carrville	300
	KDA - Yonge/Bernard	200
	Regional Mixed Use Corridor (RMUC) Yonge Street, generally between Highway 7 and Townwood Drive	200, and 160
	RMUC - Yonge Street, generally between Townwood Drive and Bloomington Road	n/a
	RMUC and Employment Corridor - Highway 7, generally between Yonge and Highway 404	400, 250, 200, and 160
<b>Local Centres</b>		
	Local Centre - Oak Ridges	n/a
	Local Centre - The Village	160
	Local Centre - Bathurst and Highway 7 (proposed)	160
	Local Centre - Bayview and Highway 7 (proposed, to be confirmed)	160
	Local Centre - East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 (proposed)	200
	Local Centre - Newkirk (previously a LDA)	150
<b>Local Development Areas (LDA) and Local Corridor</b>		
	LDA - Bayview	n/a
	LDA - Trench	n/a
	Local Mixed Use Corridor - Major Mackenzie Drive, generally from Arnold Crescent to Bayview Avenue	n/a
<b>Other Areas for Intensification (located outside of the Centres and Corridors)</b>		
	Neighbourhood Infill	n/a
	Residential Mixed Use, Residential Medium Density, and Institutional within West Gormley Secondary Plan	50

Through the Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review process, the Region has the option to designate MTSAs as “Protected MTSAs” in accordance with the *Planning Act*. This additional designation protects these areas from private appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal on matters respecting boundary delineations, minimum and maximum densities, building heights, and approved land uses. Effectively, this protection from appeals provides much greater certainty in the development process for the development proponent as well as the general public. In addition, a protected designation will allow the City to implement inclusionary zoning<sup>10</sup> to require the provision of affordable housing in areas that are within proximity to public rapid transit. Should the Region choose to apply the “protected” designation to all or some of these MTSAs, we will need to update Official Plan policies and associated zoning to include minimum and maximum density and height of buildings. As we move into Phase 3 of the Official Plan Update, we will need to further consult on establishing these standards to ensure that built form considerations discussed in Section 2.2 are fully addressed.

### 2.3.2.2 Community Benefit

- **Intensify Centres and Corridors with consideration of overall community benefit in mind.**

In *Planning For Change*, it states that: “Density without amenity is crowding. Density with amenity is community.” This key direction is about ensuring that the implementation of intensification policies results in creating “community.” Through Phase 3 consultation and other engagement on related projects such as the Parks Plan, Recreational Plan, Cultural Plan, Transportation Master Plan, we will work to identify and plan for community building that addresses the community needs of existing and future residents and workers in Richmond Hill. And, as development occurs within the City, we will work to provide the amenities and services that do benefit the community at large.

To that end, a number of key directions are recommended to guide the City on this path, as follows:

- **Ensure that development provides social, physical and visual connections to adjacent areas to create a cohesive sense of place.**

This direction is informed by public consultation to date, where there is a desire for better connections to and from destinations within the City. The identification of new connections may occur through the Official Plan Update as well as updates to the City’s Transportation Master Plan, which would be specific to physical connections such as streets and trails.

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<sup>10</sup> Inclusionary Zoning is addressed in Section 2.6 Implementation.

- Require 5% of new dwelling units in multi-unit residential developments with 20 or more proposed units to include units with 3 or more bedrooms.

This key direction is informed by the Affordable Housing Strategy, which indicates that this type of housing provides suitable and affordable rental or ownership units for low and moderate income households with three or more persons; however, presently, there is insufficient supply to meet demand for them.

- Within Centres, require (not simply encourage) a mix of use within sites, including office, commercial, community services, and entertainment.
- Support density with public realm elements that are commensurate with the proposed level of build-out density, and ensure that density is in keeping with directions set out in other City master plans (e.g. TMP, UMESP, Parks & Recreation, Fire, etc.).

These key directions are derived from the feedback that was obtained through the public consultation and engagement process to date, and reflect many of the points that were addressed in the Planning For Change document. For instance, through the business community consultations, we heard that there is a need to ensure that a mix of appropriate uses are provided in the centres and corridors and within employment areas to support employees and to make these areas vibrant. Moreover, Planning For Change highlights the need to develop “walkable density”, which is the critical mass of residents and workers within a five minute walking distance of a main street, that attracts retailers and services who together bring the street to life. In that regard, policies that direct higher density along mainstreet that transitions down further away from them provides for the recommended “walkable density.”

### 2.3.2.3 Climate Change Resilience

- Consider potential impact changes in climate may have on new development and surrounding area, and apply mitigation and adaptation measures accordingly.

Planning For Change notes that focusing growth towards the Centres and Corridors, and in a manner that is denser, walkable, and supported by transit, represents the single most effective strategy that Richmond Hill can employ to substantially reduce per capita carbon footprints. Unfortunately, that alone is not enough to address climate change threats. The City’s Community Energy and Emissions Plan states that climate change poses considerable risks to the well-being, economic potential and evolution of the City as a maturing urban community. Climate change can lead to loss of biodiversity, food and water scarcity, and the destruction of infrastructure and buildings as a result of severe and extreme weather events. While Section 2.5 Climate Change provides key directions regarding Climate Change, it is important that we address climate change here as well, given that the intensification areas are where



that majority of growth will be accommodated. To that end, the following key directions are recommended:

- **Direct development away from natural heritage features and buffers, ensure development does not negatively impact those features and their functions.**

While the current Official Plan presently provides this policy direction, it is important to recognize that as urban development encroaches on the natural environment, upholding this policy direction can be challenging. But, with the increasing threat of climate change, the need to protect the natural heritage resources is even more heightened, and for that reason consideration should be given to defining and confirming development limits early in the planning process, and ensuring that development proponents apply measures in their project that protect and enhance these features and functions.

- **Support provision of alternative energy (e.g., District Energy, Geothermal, and Solar).**

The current Official Plan supports the use of alternative energy, however, the provision of certain types of energy such as district energy requires partnership, a high concentration of development, and considerable upfront planning. To that end, through our Phase 3 consultation, we should endeavor to identify areas where district energy can be accommodated, similar to what is proposed for Richmond Hill Centre.

- **Apply “complete streets” principles which prioritize active transportation, accounting for micro-mobility modes (e.g. e-Bikes, e-Scooters, etc.), and provide supportive infrastructure such as trails/dedicated lanes, bike parking/shelter, benches, street trees (with appropriate soil volume) and other measures to provide hospitable pedestrian environments.**

The Community Energy and Emissions Plan indicates that 40% of GHG reductions by 2050 will come through “transportation transformation” meaning changes in the way people and goods are transported. These changes include: a much higher proportion of trips are taken through active transportation (e.g. walking, cycling), micromobility, transit and using electric vehicles. This key direction provides more detail in terms of planning to accommodate active transportation and micromobility within Centres and Corridors, where high concentration of residents and workers will be. To that end, it is necessary that consultation during Phase 3 of the Official Plan Update is coordinated with the Transportation Master Plan update in order to determine how we can align policies and planning to achieve the transportation transformation envisioned in the CEEP.

### 2.3.2.4 High-Order Transit Advocacy

- **Support the provision of future high-order transit.**

The City of Richmond Hill has a robust transit system with two major priority transit corridors where it hosts two Bus Rapid Transit lines, several GO Stations, a future subway system and a future 407 transit-way. We recognize that public infrastructure such as transit is critical in supporting growth in residents and jobs. This key direction recognizes that the Official Plan is a visionary document and that, while not responsible for providing transit, the City does have a role in planning to accommodate transit.

Having policies and mapping in the Official Plan that identify the potential for the provision of future subway and GO stations is an effective means of advocacy. For intensification to be realized in the City it is important to advocate for longer-term, high-order transit. In particular, the Official Plan Update could consider options to add new subway stations (such as extensions to 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Major Mackenzie) and/or GO Stations (near 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue) to our future transportation system. And, when considering maximum densities for areas in the Centres and Corridors where these stations could be provided, we could consider policies that would allow for higher densities, using a phasing system that is subject to a commitment from the transit authority that such as service would be provided.

### 2.3.2.5 Long Term Vision for Intensification Nodes

- **Continue to consult on and provide more detailed guidance for Centres, starting with clear vision statements for each area.**

This key direction recognizes that planning for all of our Centres and Corridors at once can be difficult. As such, it proposes an approach whereby we continue to focus on planning for our Centres first (in accordance with the discussion above in relation to the role of Centres and Corridors) and rely on the conclusions of those consultations to inform how we can propose to update policies of the Official Plan in relation to Corridors. Secondly, this key direction indicates that we establish or update vision statements for each of the Centres as a starting point to providing any other Centre-specific policy/mapping updates.

Presently, the Official Plan provides vision statements for most Centres. The Yonge and Bernard KDA has a vision statement in its associated Secondary Plan (awaiting final decision from the Ontario Land Tribunal). Similarly, the draft Yonge and 16<sup>th</sup>/Carrville Secondary Plan and the draft Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan also have proposed vision statements. The provision of such statements is foundational to planning for a community, as they help ground planning frameworks and decision making.

During our spring and summer consultation on the Official Plan Update, preliminary vision statements have emerged for Centres within the selected study areas that were part of that consultation; however, further consultation is required before they are finalized. More key directions for these specific areas are provided in Section 2.3.3 Area Specific Directions.

### 2.3.3 Area-Specific Key Directions

The following key directions stem from workshops and stakeholder engagement that occurred in the spring and summer of 2021 with respect to select study areas as shown in Figure 2.3-8. These areas are also identified in the Big Moves for the Official Plan Update, which are described in Section 2.1 Urban Structure.

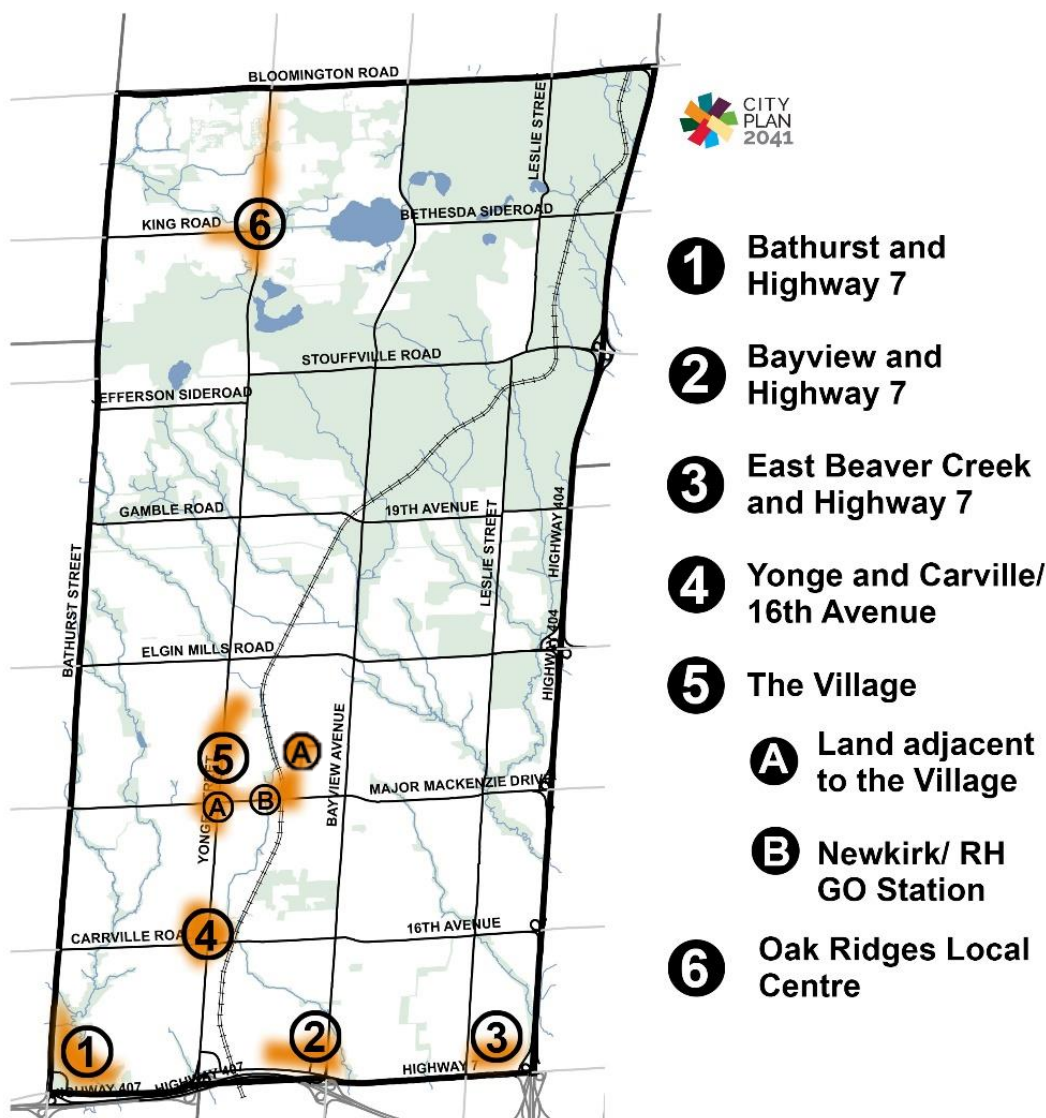


FIGURE 2.3-5 OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE PHASE 2 WORKSHOP AREAS

### 2.3.3.1 Bathurst and Highway 7

The Bathurst and Highway 7 area has been identified as an emerging Local Centre that will support a mix of uses. The City initiated consultation in relation to the Big Move to consider establishing the northeast portion of the intersection of Bathurst and Highway 7 as a Centre, in recognition of its identification as a Major Transit Station Area.



**FIGURE 2.3-6 BATHURST AND HIGHWAY 7 STUDY AREA**

Currently, the City's 2010 OP envisions this area to remain a place for recreational uses and natural heritage protection in accordance with Province's Parkway Belt West Plan (PBWP). These permissions limit much of what can be done on the lands, but does allow for low intensity recreational uses.

Reasons to consider a change for this area from the current Official Plan direction include: the identification of the lands as an MTSA, which is served by a VIVA bus rapid transit station, and the proposal of a future 407 Transitway station at the

northeast corner of Highway 7 and Bathurst. To that end, to permit transit supportive development in this area, the lands must first be removed from the Provincial PBWP. When the PBWP no longer applies to this area, both Regional and City Councils will be able to make land use planning decisions for these lands to achieve their common goal of creating a proper MTSA for this area.

At the time of writing, we are aware of several site-specific requests to remove lands located in the Bathurst and Highway 7 area from the Parkway Belt West Plan. To date, one of these applications has been approved, (the lands of the Richmond Hill Country Club at 8905 Bathurst Street). The remaining applications are being considered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

If established as a Centre, this area would contribute to the vitality of the surrounding neighbourhoods by providing transit-oriented development. The Region's proposed minimum density target for this study area is 160 people and jobs per hectare, which

reflects the minimum density targets prescribed under the Growth Plan for transit corridors that are served by bus rapid transit.

### 2.3.3.1.1 Bathurst and Highway 7 Key Directions

The key directions for this area reflect the feedback received to date from the public and stakeholder engagements, and they are as follows:

- Continue consultation and planning process, once the PBWP has been amended;
- Plan to provide a gateway feature and support a mix of land use;
- Maintain the majority of the study area in a natural state and continue to provide recreational uses; and
- Provide trail connections to integrate with surrounding neighbourhood, transit systems, and York Region's South Greenway Trail (south of Highway 7).

### 2.3.3.1.2 Bathurst and Highway 7 Key Directions Rationale

The rationale for these key directions is detailed below.

- **Continue consultation and planning process, once the Parkway Belt West Plan has been amended.**

As noted earlier in this section, the Parkway Belt West Plan, 1978 (PBWP) forms one of three Provincial Plans that provide policy direction for this area. An application to remove lands from the PBWP was approved by the Province for the lands located at 8905 Bathurst Street; and presently there are two more site-specific requests we are aware of that seek to remove lands from the PBWP as well. These requests are still in process at the time of writing. This key direction essentially recommends that we do not presuppose a decision from the Province with respect to the removal of lands from the PBWP and unnecessarily utilize resources to continue the local planning process until there is certainty that the Province will release all or part of the study area from the PBWP.

- **Provide a gateway feature and support a mix of land use.**

The desire to consider this Centre as a gateway area was identified through the City's public and stakeholder consultation. It was suggested that through Phase 3 consultation, we consider this area as a gateway and that it be supported by a mix of uses to enable people to live, work and play (should the lands be removed from the PBWP). Given the area's prominent location at the Bathurst and Highway 7 intersection, there is an opportunity to provide a gateway feature in this area to create a sense of identity for the area, the surrounding community, and the City as a whole (irrespective of whether or not the lands are part of the PBWP). This could be in the form of a landmark or something that highlights a special aspect of the area, which helps to develop an overall sense of place.



- **Maintain the majority of the area in a natural state and continue to provide recreational value.**

Vast amount of lands in this area form a part of the East Don River watershed and they are also designated as Urban River Valley in the Greenbelt Plan. Lands along the East Don River include key natural heritage and key hydrological features and functions and therefore, the City must ensure there is an appropriate policy framework in place to protect, restore or enhance these lands, while also planning for future growth in the area.



**FIGURE 2.3-7 PRESENTLY THE BATHURST AND HIGHWAY 7 AREA PROVIDES A BRT STATION AT ENTRANCE TO RICHMOND HILL**

Overall, the feedback received through the public and stakeholder consultation engagements has demonstrated that there is a strong desire to maintain the majority of the lands within this area in a natural state, by protecting existing green spaces and by introducing new opportunities to provide new trails and linkages to natural heritage areas, wherever possible. The initial feedback we received through Phase 1 of the Official Plan Update cited concerns with disrupting the existing green space network through MTSA level development, however, there was an interest in facilitating/improving access to natural green spaces for both local residents and those who commute via transit to visit the area. In addition, it was recognized that the existing golf course lands can provide significant opportunities for passive recreation, should redevelopment present options for these lands to be restored to a natural state. Through Phase 2, we heard again that there is a need to consider providing for more recreational activities in this area and to create access to natural green spaces.

Accordingly, a key direction for this area is to maintain the majority of the lands in a natural state, while identifying opportunities to provide recreational activities and connections to green spaces. This key direction will guide the future policy framework for this Centre to focus on protecting and enhancing the natural heritage areas that exist, while also establishing requirements for passive and active recreation to serve existing and future residents.

- Provide trail connections to integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood, transit systems, and York Region's South Greenway Trail (south of Highway 7).

Through the public and stakeholder engagement, the City received feedback indicating a desire to explore opportunities for more trails, which link to the existing natural areas and features within the area to the surrounding neighbourhoods to the east (e.g. South Richvale). We recognize that the East Don River adjoining valley lands create a barrier between the existing bus rapid transit station and the residential areas that exist to the east. In response, we are proposing to explore opportunities in Phase 3 to establish connections through the open space and ravine system in order to integrate lands in the area with the surrounding neighbourhood. In addition, we will also explore opportunities to incorporate bike lanes, multi-use trails and improvements to the existing sidewalks to improve active transportation, and accommodate micromobility in the area.

In late November 2020, the Region indicated its desire to undertake a Feasibility Study regarding an alignment for the proposed South York Greenway Cycling, Pedestrian and Micro-Mobility Corridor. This corridor represents 52 kilometres of lands in southern York Region, encompassing lands along the 407 Hydro Corridor, between Highway 50 to the west and York-Durham Line to the east. Once complete, this route will connect with trails, including the Lake to Lake Walking and Cycling trail, mobility hubs, and other region-wide trails. It is noted that this route traverses the southern portion of the Bathurst and Highway 7 Centre. And so, through the Official Plan Update, we can explore opportunities to provide trail connections to the Region's South Greenway corridor, along with creating potential connections into the City of Vaughan, south of Highway 407.

### Vision Statement (Bathurst and Highway 7)

The public and stakeholder response received to date for the Bathurst and Highway 7 Centre suggests the following 2041 vision for the Centre:

*"Bathurst and Highway 7 should be a vibrant place to live, work and play, which is walkable, welcoming and green."*

Through further consultation, a final vision statement can be determined for this area.

## 2.3.3.2 Bayview and Highway 7



Bayview Avenue and Highway 7 Study Area

**FIGURE 2.3-8 BAYVIEW AND HIGHWAY 7 STUDY AREA**

The Region of York generally identifies the Bayview and Highway 7 study area as Major Transit Station Area #21, with a minimum density target of 160 residents and jobs per hectare. This minimum target is in accordance with the Growth Plan for transit corridors that are served by bus rapid transit. A portion of this study area is also located in the same MTSA as lands located in the Richmond Hill Centre area, and as such the minimum MTSA density target for that portion of the study area is 400 people and jobs per hectare. Currently, the predominant land use

designations within this area supports low density residential, neighbourhood commercial, and major retail, which collectively would not accommodate the minimum density targets identified for this area. As such, in accordance with Big Move 3 described in Section 2.1, we are considering adding this area to the City's network of Centres and Corridors so that it may redevelop as an area with compact, mixed-use, well-designed, pedestrian-friendly and transit oriented built form.

### 2.3.3.2.1 Bayview and Highway 7 Key Directions

The key directions for this area are as follows:

- Provide transition of built form from intensified development proposed within Richmond Hill Centre (RHC) to existing low-rise / low-density neighbourhood, through either Local Centre or Regional Mixed Use Corridor designation;
- Allow for a range of interim/ temporary uses to facilitate development within RHC (e.g. permit a construction staging area for RHC related development, or allow for buildings to be re-purposed for various temporary uses such as sound stages, indoor recreational space, storage facilities, etc.);
- Consult on various options for final build-out scenarios;

- Build on the area's current retail identity by preserving some "big box" form while creating a variety of smaller scale retail destinations;
- Provide a range of new office and commercial space to attract innovative companies;
- Provide safe pedestrian and cycling connections to future subway stations and natural/open space areas; and
- Consider secondary uses (e.g. community garden, multi-use trail) within the hydro-corridor to complement the build-out of this area.

### 2.3.3.2.2 Bayview and Highway 7 Centre Key Directions Rationale

The rationale for these key directions is detailed below.

- Provide transition of built form from intensified development proposed within Richmond Hill Centre to existing low-rise / low-density neighbourhood, through either Local Centre or Regional Mixed Use Corridor designation.

The Bayview and Highway 7 area borders the Richmond Hill Centre (RHC) to the west, the residential neighbourhoods north of High Tech Road, and a mix of high- and low-rise, predominantly residential development to the east of Bayview Avenue. Practically, the Bayview and Highway 7 area sits in the middle of the polar opposites of the intensification hierarchy. This is because according to the City's urban structure, the RHC is proposed to have the tallest and densest development in the City, while Neighbourhoods are predominantly residential areas with the lowest densities. Therefore, the Bayview and Highway 7 area has an important role in providing transition and buffer between these two extremities. Through the Official Plan Update, we can consider designating the area to be a Local Centre or Regional Mixed Use Corridor to help transition from the high-rises of the RHC to a lower density residential development to the north-east. These designations can support a broad range and mix of land uses and activities in a compact, pedestrian and cyclist-friendly and transit-oriented built form.

- Allow for a range of interim/ temporary uses to facilitate development within RHC.

The intent of this key direction is to help prioritize development of the Richmond Hill Centre. Permitting interim / temporary uses will allow for greater flexibility to accommodate a range of uses that benefit the existing community and support the development of RHC. For instance, an interim / temporary use of lands in the Bayview and Highway 7 area may be to use some of the lands for construction staging to facilitate the construction of the Yonge North Subway and related new development in the RHC. Interim uses for existing facilities or big box retail spaces also allows for adaptive reuse and innovation to take place in this area, as it evolves from its current form into a more complete, mixed-use community. The existing buildings can be repurposed for multiple interesting uses, allowing for this area to become an

innovation hub for new businesses in need of large open spaces, and for other uses such as sound stages or indoor recreation facilities.

➤ **Consult on various options for final build-out scenarios.**

As noted in Section 2.1, Big Move 3 indicates that the Bayview and Highway 7 area should develop as a complete community alongside Richmond Hill Centre to the west. The current use of the lands are mostly big box retail and empty parking lots, the larger underutilized parcels west of Bayview Avenue provide lots of potential for redevelopment into different built-forms. As such, through this Official Plan update process, we should consult on various final build-out and mix of use scenarios for this area.

➤ **Build on the areas' current retail identity by preserving some "big box" form while creating a variety of smaller scale retail destinations.**

The current built form in the Centre is mainly big box retail with some strip plazas. These shops and services provide convenient retail and commercial opportunities to local residents and customers from a regional catchment area. This key direction suggests that planning for this area's redevelopment should not lose sight of the commercial function of this area. However, as the Bayview and Highway 7 area evolves into a finer grain of city blocks, the big box retail format may need to be reconfigured into a more compact form, as has occurred in other more urban areas in the GTA.

➤ **Provide a range of new office as well as commercial space to attract innovative companies.**

The Richmond Hill Centre (RHC) will be a magnet for businesses, arts and culture. Naturally, the development of the RHC will eventually spill over to the Bayview and Highway 7 area. As such, it will be important for the Bayview and Highway 7 area to support the vision of the RHC and to provide for a diversity of workspace in order to attract investment in businesses and jobs. Hence, a key direction for this area is to provide for a new office, commercial, and research and innovation space that complements the RHC.

➤ **Provide safe pedestrian and cycling connections to future subway stations and natural/ open space areas.**

The build-out of the Bayview and Highway 7 area should have several transportation choices for pedestrians, cyclists, and commuters, as per the mobility hierarchy described in Section 2.2. There is also a strong desire for safe, accessible, and equitable connections to natural green spaces across the Doncrest Valley and German Mills Creek, as well as connections to Yonge North Subway Station. Through consultation with the public, a detailed mobility plan can be established and realized over the long-term.



- Consider secondary uses (e.g. community garden, multi-use trail) within the hydro-corridor to complement the build-out of this area.

The area designated as utility corridor, where hydro-electric infrastructure is provided, covers approximately 45% of the overall study area. As this is a significant proportion, it is important to advocate for secondary uses (e.g. community gardens, multi-use trails, etc.) within the hydro-corridor. These secondary uses would enhance the public realm and provide for recreational uses and local food opportunities, which contribute to a complete community.



**FIGURE 2.3-9 THIS IMAGE PROVIDES A RENDERING OF A COMMUNITY GARDEN PROPOSED IN THE MEADOWAY IN THE CITY OF TORONTO, AS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW SECONDARY USES CAN BE ACCOMMODATED IN THE HYDRO CORRIDOR.**

Source: <https://themeadoway.ca/>

### Vision Statement

The public and stakeholder response received to date for the Bayview and Highway 7 Centre suggests the following 2041 vision:

*“Bayview and Highway 7 should be a transit supportive shopping focused community, which is accessible and sustainable”.*

Through further consultation, a final vision statement can be determined for this area.

### 2.3.3.3 East Beaver Creek Road and Highway 7

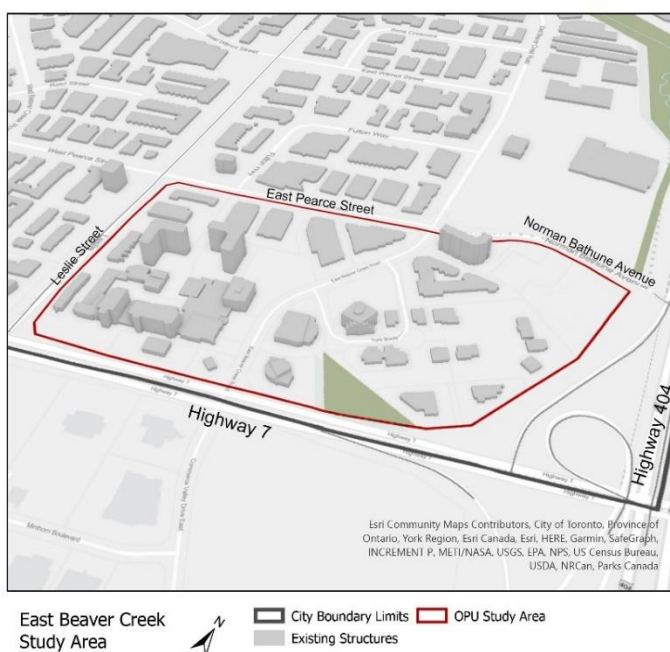
The East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 area has been identified as an emerging Local Centre that supports a mix of uses. Currently, the City's 2010 Official Plan designates lands in this area as Employment Area and Employment Corridor. These land use designations primarily allow for employment and business-related activities alongside ancillary commercial and retail uses that support the business function of the employment area. While these permissions encourage intensification of employment uses, they do not recognize the existing community of high-density residential apartments that exist in the area and which are within walking distance to the bus rapid transit stops along Highway 7 at East Beaver Creek Road and at Leslie Street.

In terms of local context, the East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 area presently functions as a highly mixed-use area consisting of a range of office, residential, retail and commercial uses. The area houses over 630 existing residential units, and there are approvals in place for an additional 616 residential units to occur in the area at East Beaver Creek and Norman Bethune Avenue. The area is also home to three major office buildings (including the City's municipal offices) three hotels, numerous restaurants and other retail uses. With this eclectic mix of existing land uses, this area can be

considered one of the City's most complete communities, notwithstanding the lack of community services that are necessary to support the residential community. Furthermore, this area is located in two MTSA's, both of which are proposed to have a minimum density target of 200 residents and jobs per hectare.

The following are reasons to consider a change for this area from the current OP direction:

- To acknowledge the existing context of the study area as a mixed-use area;
- To provide a broad range of amenities that serve both workers within the broader employment area and the residents in the area; and
- To respond to trends regarding the attraction of new office development articulated in Planning For Change.



**FIGURE 2.3-10 EAST BEAVER CREEK AND HIGHWAY 7 STUDY AREA**

### 2.3.3.3.1 East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 Key Directions

The key directions for the East Beaver Creek area are as follows:

- Convert from Employment designations to support a mix of uses, with the area predominantly continuing to support employment uses;
- Provide a civic presence relative to the City's municipal administrative building with an open space facility;
- Provide amenities that support existing and future residents and continue to provide services that support the broader employment area;
- Provide a gateway function at the southeast corner of the City;
- Ensure that new development is compatible with the functioning Buttonville Airport and existing employment uses within and in the adjacent area.

### 2.3.3.3.2 East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 Key Directions Rationale

The rationale for these key directions is detailed below.

- **Convert from Employment designations to support a mix of uses, with the area predominantly continuing to support employment uses.**

As noted in Section 2.1, the emerging urban structure proposes that the lands within the East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 area be converted from Employment to allow for a broader mix of land uses, including residential land uses that are contextually appropriate for the area. In February 2020, City Council requested that the Region consider this area for conversion through its MCR process, in light of the area's context. As such, a key direction for this area through the Official Plan Update is to re-designate the lands in the Official Plan to support a mixed-use designation in order to recognize the existing use and function of this area. This key direction also recommends that we consider the scale and intensity of mixed use that would be appropriate in this area so that this emerging centre continues to predominantly function for employment. In doing so, we will ensure that new uses are a good fit for the area, and do not significantly destabilize the existing employment uses in the surrounding area.

At the Regional level, a large portion of the lands within this area contribute to strategic employment lands that exist along the Highway 404 corridor. This larger employment area forms part of one of the three employment megazones within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), located outside of Toronto, and occupy a high employment density. Lands within this Centre therefore contribute to a significant concentration of finance, business, manufacturing, information and technology, not only to the City, but also to this GTHA employment megazone. To that end, this key direction seeks to preserve this economic context, while also highlighting the importance of providing a more broad range and mix of uses in order to support this area as an MTSA. Accordingly, this key direction ensures that while we engage in

planning for the future of this area, we do not lose sight of the need to maintain this area as an attractive place for future businesses and economic activity.

A mixed-use designation would recognize the existing employment and high-density residential uses in the area, and allow for a range and mix of land uses in a compact, pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented built-form to be supported by the existing bus rapid transit along Highway 7. Detailed planning for mixed use in this Centre will also allow for the inclusion of parks and other community services to be provided to serve the existing and future residential population of the area.

- Provide a civic presence relative to the City's municipal administrative building with an open space facility.



**FIGURE 2.3-11 RICHMOND HILL MUNICIPAL OFFICES ARE LOCATED WITHIN THIS CENTRE AMIDST OTHER OFFICE, RETAIL, HOSPITALITY AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Another key direction for the area is to provide a civic presence in the area which would capitalize on the City's existing municipal administrative building that is located on East Beaver Creek Road, just north of Highway 7. In support of this key direction, we considered the feedback obtained from the area-specific workshop consultations held in May 2021. We heard from the public that there is a desire to establish the existing municipal administrative building as a place for civic interaction. Participants noted that the administrative building currently solely functions as a traditional office building.

The public suggested improvements to green spaces around the building to provide more of a "City Hall" appearance, and to enhance placemaking at the site.

The importance of improving the placemaking function of the municipal office should not be understated. Nodes with thriving civic spaces bring with it a strong sense of community. Conversely, when such spaces are lacking, people may feel less connected. Therefore, we note that this administrative civic space is an important cultural element of the City and represents a space where residents can interact with each other and with government. Through ongoing consultation in Phase 3, we will explore opportunities to identify a more prominent role for the City's administrative building in the local centre.



- Provide amenities that support existing and future residents, and continue to provide services that support the broader employment area.

The Official Plan Update can consider a number of approaches and policies to enable the Centre to continue its role as a major node for employment, while supporting its evolution into a mixed use area. These measures and policies would support jobs in the Centre and provide access to amenities and services for existing and future residents that are presently unavailable.

Through detailed planning, we can identify needed amenities such as parks, retail, commercial and community uses that are contextually appropriate to serve residents who live in the Centre, and workers and businesses who continue to provide a vital employment function to the area. Additionally, as surface parking lots redevelop over time, there is opportunity to expand the tree canopy at grade as well as on rooftops to address the current deficiency of tree canopy in this area, as noted in the City's Urban Forest Management Plan, and minimize heat island concerns noted in the City's Climate Change Framework.

- Provide a gateway function at the southeast corner of the City.

The introduction of gateway elements (e.g. markers, signs, etc.) at key neighbourhood or node entrances or exists can reinforce the identity of that neighbourhood or node. Gateways can play an important character-defining feature of the East Beaver Creek area and the City in general. Incorporation of gateway elements should be considered to announce entry into the area and demarcate key historic, natural, cultural, civic, or other important destinations in East Beaver Creek.

Through the Official Plan Update, we can consider the inclusion of policies in the Official Plan for the Centre that require built form to be located and designed to reinforce a gateway function and enhance streetscape and placemaking attributes within the area.

- Ensure that new development is compatible with the functioning Buttonville Airport and existing employment uses within and in the adjacent area.

The Toronto Buttonville Airport is located northeast of the East Beaver Creek Centre in the City of Markham. The airport is considered one of Canada's top ten busiest airports, and its existence dates back to the early 1960s. As an operating airport / aerodrome, it is federally regulated by Transport Canada who is responsible for setting and enforcing airport safety and security standards.

With respect to the function of the Buttonville Airport and land use compatibility, Transport Canada implements regulations related to aircraft noise and emission standards. In addition, it also implements airport zoning regulations, which restrict the heights of buildings, structures and objects on regulated lands so as to protect aircraft from hazards, protect existing airport operations, and to ensure future development



near operating airports stays compatible with operational aircraft. To that end, airport zoning regulations typically extend beyond airport boundaries.

Section 3.1.9.8 of the City's OP sets out policies directing for the height of buildings and structures to be restricted in accordance with the Federal Airport Zoning Regulations for the Buttonville Airport to ensure safety for as long as the airport continues in operation. In addition, the Official Plan also requires that Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF)<sup>11</sup> and Noise Exposure Projection (NEP)<sup>12</sup> systems be used as a basis for land use planning and development control. Where available, these projections provide a measurement of the actual and forecasted aircraft noise in the vicinity of airports. The system factors in the subjective reactions of the human ear to specific aircraft noise stimulus, including loudness, frequency, duration, time of occurrence, tone and allows regulators and policy makers to predict a community's response to aircraft noise. Where NEF levels exceed beyond 35, nuisance regarding aircraft noise exposure becomes more prevalent and complaints are likely to be high. However, even NEF levels at 25 can produce some level of interference and annoyance caused by aircraft noise. To that end, new residential development is not compatible with NEF levels at 30 and above and Transport Canada recommends that at these levels, residential development should not proceed. Accordingly, since 1997, the Provincial Policy Statement prohibits residential development in areas where the NEF/NEP is above 30.

To ensure future development is compatible in the East Beaver Creek Centre and within the vicinity of the Buttonville Airport, it is important that we consult with the Airport operators and ensure that more detailed planning in this area appropriately designates lands and that any height standards provided comply with the applicable legislation and regulation.

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<sup>11</sup> The NEF is produced to encourage compatible land use planning in the vicinity of airports and approved by Transport Canada. The forecast is developed using a variety of input data to determine at a ground position an estimate of the integrated noise exposure produced by all types of aircraft at an airport, based on the actual or projected number and type of aircraft as well as the yearly runway utilization. The NEF system takes into consideration the number of flights, the duration of noise, the time of day, the frequency components of the noise and the noise potential from different types of aircraft operating under specific conditions. NEF values increase or decrease in logarithmic manner, and the resultant scale is aimed at approximately the human response to a complex noise situation.

<sup>12</sup> The NEP is based on a projection of aircraft movements for up to 20 years into the future, and includes aircraft types and runway configurations that may materialize within this period. An NEP is an approved (official) contour by Transport Canada. The information required to produce an NEP must, at least, be contained in an Aviation System or Airport Master Plan.

### Vision Statement

The public and stakeholder response received to date for the East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 Centre suggests the following 2041 vision for the Centre:

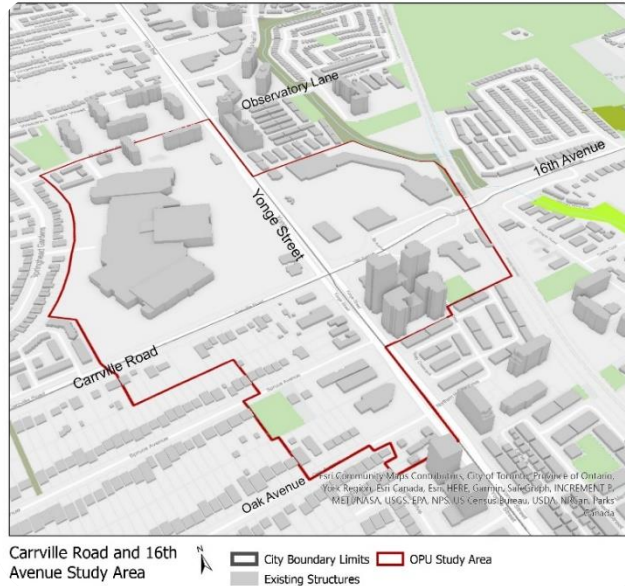
*“East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 should be a gateway hub to service the broader employment area and area residents, which provides access to a variety of businesses and cultural elements, and is well supported by transit.”*

Through further consultation, a final vision statement can be determined for this area.



### 2.3.3.4 Yonge and 16th Avenue/Carrville Road

The Yonge and 16th Avenue/Carrville Road Key Development Area (KDA) is in the second tier of the City's intensification hierarchy. Current land use policies also note



**FIGURE 2.3-12 YONGE AND 16TH AVENUE/CARRVILLE ROAD STUDY AREA**

that after Richmond Hill Centre, this area would have the tallest buildings in Richmond Hill. In the current Official Plan, the vision of this area is to be a mixed-use hub that capitalizes on the higher order transit service in the centre, in order to serve the surrounding area with a variety of amenities.

A study for the secondary plan for this KDA began in 2015, and a draft of the plan was presented to the public in 2017, followed by a second draft in 2018. On the basis of an impending city-wide Official Plan Update, work on the Secondary Plan was paused to allow for broader directional input.

Therefore, in this Official Plan Update, the planning for the 16th Avenue/Carrville Road KDA will need to consider a number of changes that have occurred since 2010. Firstly, there are development approvals given by the Ontario Municipal Board (now called the Ontario Land Tribunal), and their approvals exceed the height and density permissions in the current Official Plan. Secondly, there are new applications with proposals that seek to create even taller and more dense development than what is permitted in the current policies. Thirdly, this KDA will need to conform to Regional plans for this area as a Major Transit Station Area. And lastly, this KDA may accommodate a future extension of the Yonge Subway line beyond Richmond Hill Centre, which could mean planning for facilities and densities that support the subway extension.

#### 2.3.3.4.1 Yonge and 16th Avenue/Carrville Road Key Directions

The Key Directions for the Yonge and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Carrville Road are as follows:

- Build on and refine the 2018 draft secondary plan;
- Re-delineate the Key Development Area (KDA) boundary to include appropriate lands to realize the KDA vision;
- Create connections to the David Dunlap Observatory lands and German Mills Creek;

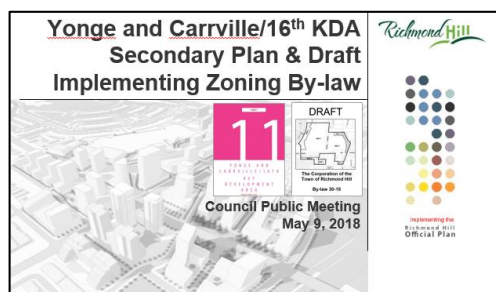
- Protect lands that can support future Yonge Subway and/or GO Transit stations; and
- Ensure that the long term build out of this area is neither precluded nor unnecessarily delayed by a potential temporary subway train storage and maintenance facility, should it be necessary to locate one within this area.

## 2.3.3.4.2 Yonge and 16th Avenue/Carrville Avenue Rationale

The rationale for these key directions is detailed below.

### ➤ Build on the 2018 draft Secondary Plan.

The 2018 draft secondary plan is based on comprehensive background research and Transportation Demand Management Study conducted from 2015 to 2017. Extensive consultation with the public and local landowners helped inform the draft policies. Through our spring workshop and stakeholder meetings we confirmed that while the draft secondary plan has not yet been brought to council for adoption, there are good planning principles in the draft document that warrant being carried forward in this Official Plan Update. However, we also recognize that the updated secondary plan should consider existing approvals and concept plans provided by major landowners. In that regard, through the Official Plan update process, we should build on the 2018 draft secondary plan and improve the draft plan based on more recent data and feedback from the public as well as stakeholders.



**FIGURE 2.3-13 A DRAFT SECONDARY PLAN AND IMPLEMENTING ZONING BY-LAW WAS SHARED WITH COUNCIL AND THE PUBLIC IN 2018.**

### ➤ Re-delineate the boundary of the Key Development Area (KDA).

Although the 2018 draft secondary plan for Yonge and 16th Avenue/Carrville Avenue KDA has delineated a boundary for the KDA designation, there could be justification to consider altering the boundary to better address built form and intensification key directions. The discussion above regarding clarity of the role of Centres and Corridors, and achieving minimum density targets, can further inform the boundary delineation of this KDA. It would also be important to consider how the KDA interacts with the immediate neighbourhoods to the east and west, as well as how it relates to the Regional Mixed Use Corridor areas that flank the KDA to the north and south along Yonge Street.

### ➤ Connect to the David Dunlap Observatory, the German Mills Creek and the Bridgeview Park.

The KDA is near two important landmarks, one being the David Dunlap Observatory, and the other is the German Mills Creek, both of which are located to the east of the KDA. The David Dunlap Observatory (DDO) is a national heritage site with an active and operating telescope. The observatory is located within the David Dunlap Observatory Park. Bridgeview Park is located just north of the KDA study area. Both of these parks contain vast woodlands within the City's urban setting, and both link to



**FIGURE 2.3-14 THE DAVID DUNLAP OBSERVATORY IS A NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE LOCATED BETWEEN YONGE STREET AND BAYVIEW AVENUE NORTH OF 16TH AVENUE, BUT WITH LIMITED VISIBILITY FROM THESE ARTERIAL STREETS.**

the river valley of the German Mills Creek. Presently, the German Mills Creek and CN rail line create a physical barrier to the parks from the study area. However, given the concentration of growth that is expected for this area, there is merit in considering how these unique features can be made accessible both physically and visually to the KDA. Through further consultation, we can determine how the KDA can have a role in connecting, promoting, and enhancing these natural and cultural resources.

➤ **Protect lands for future Yonge Subway/GO station(s).**

In accordance with key directions in Section 2.2, which recommend advocating for the expansion of the Yonge Subway line north of Richmond Hill Centre, and as already noted in the draft secondary plan for this area, a future TTC subway and/or GO Station should continue to be planned for this area over the long-term by Metrolinx. Accordingly, planning for the KDA should protect for this future transit infrastructure, while permitting heights and densities that are supportive of this level of transit infrastructure.

➤ **Ensure that the long term build out of this area is neither precluded nor unnecessarily delayed by a potential temporary subway train storage and maintenance facility, should it be necessary to locate one within this area.**

Metrolinx has indicated that a subway train storage and maintenance facility may need to locate somewhere between High Tech Road and 16th Avenue in order to support the TTC subway stations that will be extended to the Richmond Hill Centre. While this



storage and maintenance facility may be necessary to serve the subway extension<sup>13</sup>, the Yonge and 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue KDA is second in our intensification hierarchy for accommodating growth, and thus, it is important that the facility neither preclude nor delay the build-out of this KDA. As such, when finalizing the secondary planning for this area, we should ensure that the policies and mapping represent the long-term vision for this area and that the train storage facility, should it need to be located in this area in the interim, has minimal impact on achieving that vision. Some strategies could include advocating for the construction of a facility that can be integrated with development and possibly converted into a future subway station/GO terminal, and/or providing phasing policies.

### Vision Statement

Public response to date suggests the following 2041 vision for the Yonge and 16th Avenue/Carrville Road Key Development Area:

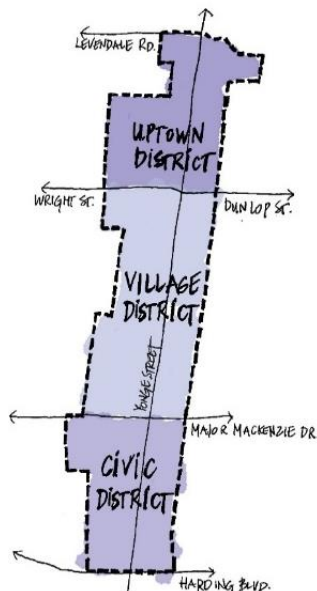
*“A community that is walkable, sustainable, green and vibrant, with a people friendly and shopping focus.”*

Through further consultation, a final vision statement can be determined for this area.

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<sup>13</sup> For more information regarding plans for the extension of the Yonge Subway line, please see: [Yonge North Subway Extension - Projects | Metrolinx](#)

## 2.3.3.5 The Village Local Centre



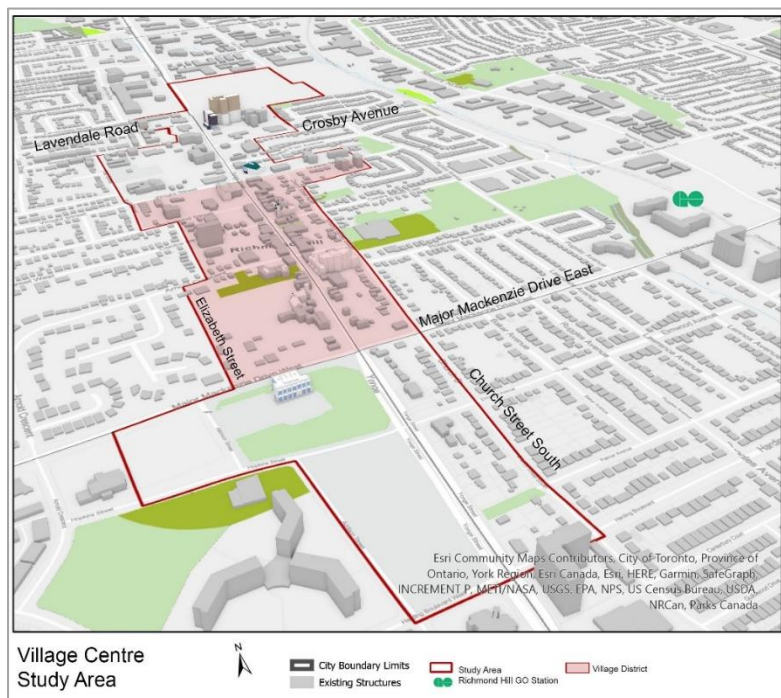
**FIGURE 2.3-15  
DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS**

As shown in Figure 2.3-20, the current Official Plan divides the Downtown Local Centre into three parts along the Yonge Street corridor: the Uptown District in the north (Leventdale Road to Wright/Dunlop Street), the Village District in the center (Wright/Dunlop Street to Major Mackenzie Drive), and the Civic District in the south (Major Mackenzie Drive to Harding Boulevard).

During our public workshops in Phase 2, we consulted with the public and stakeholders on the Downtown Local Centre. A subset of the study area is what we called the “Village Centre”, as depicted in Figure 2.3-21. Presently, the “Village Centre” has a mix of land uses, mainly in low density development with some medium and high density mixed-use residential developments. The area is surrounded by low density neighbourhoods and the Newkirk Business Park is located to the northeast of it.

Within the “Village Centre”, there are two Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) proposed by York Region that are located along the Yonge Street corridor. Each of these MTSAs have a minimum density target of 160 residents and jobs per hectare.

The “Village Centre” has many community services and amenities within and nearby in the form of retail, schools, public parks, and some landmark buildings such as the Richmond Hill Performing Art Centre, the McConaghy Centre, and the Richmond Hill Central Library. To the west of the area is the Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital, which is one of the City’s largest employers. In addition, there are emergency services, other community services like daycare centres and long-term care facilities,



**FIGURE 2.3-16 VILLAGE STUDY AREA**

as well as social service providers in and surrounding the area. The “Village Centre” is also near the Richmond Hill GO Station, located just east of the area on Major Mackenzie Drive.

The “Village Centre” is unique in that it has a high concentration of cultural/built heritage resources. There are 97 Municipal Registered Heritage properties within the broader area, and among those 25 are Designated Heritage Properties<sup>14</sup>. In addition to these designated or registered properties, there are other heritage places of worship that also add to our city’s rich culture and history.

Notwithstanding the above noted assets of this area, the “Village Centre” is in need of revitalization and to that end, the City adopted a Community Improvement Plan Program to incentivize area beautification, building renovation, and the establishment of new office development<sup>15</sup>. In support of this initiative for revitalization, there is a need for the Official Plan to be updated to better respond to trends and innovations discussed in this report and in those referenced in Section 4.0.

### 2.3.3.5.1 The Village Local Centre Key Directions

The key directions for the “Village Centre” are as follows:

- Reduce the Downtown Local Centre to lands only in what is presently called the Village District in the current Official Plan, and redesignate this area as “the Village Local Centre;”
- Plan for this area to be vibrant and locally and regionally attractive as a dining, shopping, cultural, and entertainment hub;
- Plan for the area as “The Village in the City” – continue to celebrate the historic character, and support the arts and culture of the area through ongoing façade improvement and building renovation, along with redevelopment of sites that are complementary and contextually sensitive to the area overall;
- Apply urban design principles in the determination of appropriate height and density that support revitalization and the vision for this area by considering “human scaled” podiums/building heights; and
- Explore opportunities for widening sidewalks, creating new cycling facilities and pedestrian paths.

### 2.3.3.5.2 The Village Local Centre Key Directions Rationale

The rationale for the Village Centre key directions are detailed below:

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<sup>14</sup> For more information regarding buildings of architectural and historical importance see: [Inventory of Buildings of Architectural Historical Importance - City of Richmond Hill](#)

<sup>15</sup> For more information regarding the community improvement plan, see: [Community Improvement Plan \(CIP\) - Grants - City of Richmond Hill](#)

- Reduce the Downtown Local Centre designated lands to lands only in what is presently called the Village District in the current Official Plan, and redesignate this area as “the Village Local Centre.”

This key direction stems from three factors: (1) consideration of planning applications that have been made in this area over the last 10 years; (2) the vision for Richmond Hill Centre as the downtown of Richmond Hill Centre, and (3) feedback through public and stakeholder engagement we have received to date.

As mentioned prior, the Downtown Local Centre is comprised of three distinct districts. These districts were delineated based on a vision for the area that proposed three different character areas and separate policy directions. While these three districts remain relevant, the differences in their development or redevelopment potential as well as their unique context warrants a second look at how we designate this Local Centre. In particular, the Uptown District and the Civic District have underutilized and larger lots that can support greater density. The Village District, on the other hand, is characterized by more established developments and a significant clustering of heritage properties. Over the last 10 years, there have been a few planning applications in this area which have proposed development that is typical of what proponents would consider appropriate for a city’s “downtown” but have not been in conformity with the City’s Official Plan. To some degree a change in nomenclature could better emphasize the rich heritage of this area, and temper expectations for how this area is expected to build out over the long term. To that end, we propose redesignating this Local Centre to the “Village Local Centre” and limiting this designation to the lands presently identified as Village District in the Official Plan. Consequently, the remaining Uptown District and the Civic District is proposed to be re-designated as Regional Mixed Use Corridor (see Section 2.3.3.6 below for key directions with respect to those lands).



**FIGURE 2.3-17 THE OLD POST OFFICE IS AN EXAMPLE OF A DESIGNATED HERITAGE BUILDING LOCATED IN THE VILLAGE AREA.**

A change in the designation also reinforces the vision for Richmond Hill Centre, which as noted in the recently released draft Secondary Plan, is proposed to be the downtown of Richmond Hill and function as a magnet for business, arts and culture, a leader in innovation and a key regional destination.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For more information on Richmond Hill Centre and the draft secondary plan, please see: [Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan - City of Richmond Hill](#)



This key direction was informed through consultation with stakeholders, the public and landowners, who indicated a desire to simplify the planning for this area and to recognize the unique context of the Village Local Centre. This proposed change also corresponds well with the proposed key directions related to clarifying the Intensification Hierarchy and the role of Centres and Corridors.

- **Plan for this area to be vibrant and locally and regionally attractive as a dining, shopping, cultural, and entertainment hub.**

Currently, the Village Local Centre has a strong residents to job ratio and includes many cultural and entertainment amenities, indicating that there is a good variety of mixed use. As development continues, the new development and redevelopment should focus on mix of uses that maintain the existing residents and job ratio, and simultaneously bring more mixed-use activities and attractions (events and programs) that will make this area vibrant, and continue as an entertainment district that complements, not competes with, Richmond Hill Centre.



**FIGURE 2.3-18 MIX OF LAND USES IN THE VILLAGE AREA.**

- **Plan for the area as “The Village in the City” – continue to celebrate the historic character, and support the arts and culture of the area through ongoing façade improvement and building renovation, along with redevelopment of sites that are complementary and contextually sensitive to the area overall.**

The study area includes lands that were the original settlement in the City and has the many site with cultural built heritage. Current residents of Richmond Hill generally value the history and cultural heritage resources existing in this area. Since 2018, the City has brought into effect a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) that provides financial incentives for businesses to invest in the existing structures in this area and/or build new office development. The initiatives of the CIP encourages adaptive



reuse of buildings including those with heritage features. Furthermore, the City has invested in several buildings in the area, including the restoration of the Old Post Office building, Richmond Hill High School/Old Town Hall, several office and retail facilities, and the construction of the Richmond Hill Performing Arts Centre. Accordingly, in order to foster investment and increase the vitality of the area, we will need to consult and discuss how new development can be supported in this area while identifying and respecting the scale, massing, and architectural features of the built heritage that is integral to this area's character and history. By integrating heritage and cultural buildings within new development and other means, new development can enhance and complement the character of the Village Local Centre.



**FIGURE 2.3-19 EXAMPLES OF NEW AND HISTORICAL CULTURAL FACILITIES AND HERITAGE: RICHMOND HILL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS AND THE RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL/OLD TOWN HALL (NOW COVERNOTES COFFEE HOUSE)**

- Apply urban design principles in the determination of appropriate height and density that supports revitalization and the vision for this area – consider “human scaled” podiums/building heights.

Currently, the Official Plan provides height and density policies for the Village District, where the maximum height is five storeys and the maximum density in a development block is 2.0 floor space index (FSI). These standards are blunt tools in a very complicated context. As discussed in Section 2.2 Built Form, the design and evaluation of development needs to consider many factors and their cumulative effect, to be able to determine whether a development proposal is appropriate. Similarly, when consulting on and developing a policy framework for this area, we need to ensure that a criteria-based or qualitative approach to urban design can be applied in this area.

- Explore opportunities for widening sidewalks, creating new cycling facilities and pedestrian paths.

In the Village Local Centre, the Yonge Street road width and sidewalks are narrow. Also, there is no dedicated cycling path or off-street pedestrian path. To achieve the

vision of making this area vibrant, walkable and safe, we will consult with the Region, landowners, developers and other stakeholders to explore opportunities for providing more hospitable cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. These include an overall complete street design that considers: wider sidewalks, dedicated cycling and pedestrian paths, on street parking facilities, street trees, and street furniture.

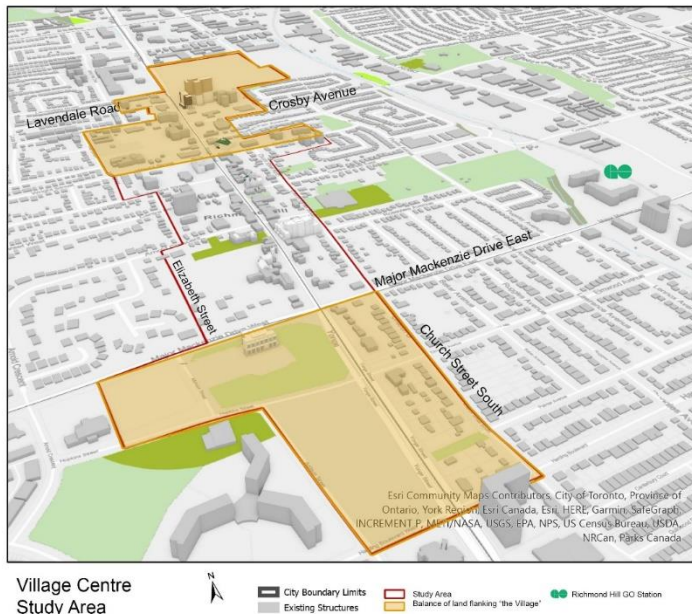
### Vision Statement

*Public response to date suggests the following 2041 Vision:*

*“A Village within the City” that is vibrant, walkable and green; and that provides opportunities for entertainment and access to the City’s history.*

Through further consultation, a final vision statement can be determined for this area.

## 2.3.3.6 Yonge Corridor Adjacent to the Village Local Centre



**FIGURE 2.3-20 LANDS ADJACENT TO THE VILLAGE LOCAL CENTRE**

The Uptown District and Civic District are character areas within Downtown Local Centre designation in the current Official Plan. However, in accordance with the key directions noted in Section 2.3.3.5, these lands are now proposed to be redesignated as Regional Mixed Use Corridor. The benefit of this approach is twofold: (1) As Regional Mixed Use Corridor, greater height and density than what is likely to be permitted in the Village Local Centre may be permitted to meet the overall density targets for the two MTSAs in the study area. (2) This designation also responds to the very different context these

areas have in comparison to the Village Local Centre in terms of lot depth / size, street width, etc.

### 2.3.3.6.1 Yonge Corridor Adjacent to the Village Key Directions

The following are key directions for this area:

- Allow for built-form transition from the Village Local Centre to flanking areas, while permitting heights and densities that are context appropriate; and
- Capitalize on City-owned property at the intersection of Major Mackenzie and Yonge Street.

### 2.3.3.6.2 Yonge Corridor Adjacent to the Village Key Directions Rationale

- **Allow for built-form transition from the Village Local Centre to flanking areas, while permitting heights and densities that are context appropriate.**

This key direction builds on directions provided in Section 2.2 Built Form, recognizing that when planning for the Village Local Centre and areas adjacent to it, there are complex design considerations such as the Toronto skyline view-shed and views of church steeples that need to be identified and addressed through policy, zoning, and/or design guidelines. The ongoing studies and consultation on the Comprehensive Zoning By-law may inform this Official Plan update process.

➤ **Capitalize on city-owned property at the intersection of Major Mackenzie and Yonge Street.**

This key direction acknowledges the significant land holding the City has located at the southwest corner of Major Mackenzie Drive and Yonge Street. Over the past decade, City Council has contemplated establishing a City Hall at this location, which is adjacent to the library and near the wave pool. However, more recently, Council determined that a new City Hall may not be prudent and directed staff to consider alternative means to address a civic presence for the subject lands. As such, through the Official Plan update process, consideration is being given to how these strategically located lands could be used. The following are suggestions that are not mutually exclusive and require further consultation:

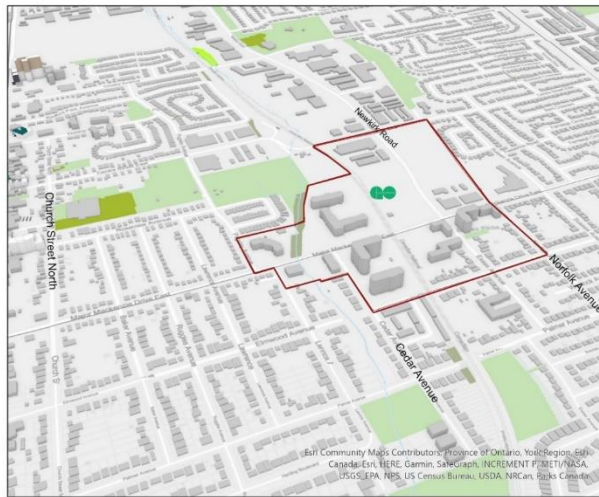


**FIGURE 2.3-21 THE RICHMOND HILL CENTRAL LIBRARY IS A LANDMARK FACILITY ADJACENT TO CITY OWNED LANDS ON THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF THE YONGE AND MAJOR MACKENZIE INTERSECTION.**

- As an anchor/business investment catalyst, consider providing municipal services at the site to serve constituents and improve access to Council and staff.
- Integrate civic services into a building that also offers one or more of the following: office, commercial, recreational services, and/or multi-unit affordable housing, through private-public partnership.
- Provide a large public open space to host city events, and connect with wave pool and library.



## 2.3.3.7 Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO Station



Newkirk Richmond Hill GO Station Study Area

**FIGURE 2.3-22 NEWKIRK/RICHMOND HILL GO STATION STUDY AREA**

Presently, the Newkirk Local Development Area (LDA) is an intensification area within the City's urban structure. It is centered on the Richmond Hill GO Station, located near the intersection of Major Mackenzie Drive East and Newkirk Road. This GO station is an important commuter stop with trains departing to and returning from downtown Toronto. There are future plans to have both all-day service along the GO line, as well as a future bus rapid transit (BRT) line along Major Mackenzie, making this a future multimodal terminal.

Today, much of the north east quadrant of the Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO Station area consists of commuter parking lots for the GO station, as well as industrial and employment uses. Mid-rise apartment buildings (4-10 storeys) are located south of Major Mackenzie and west of the rail corridor. Low-rise residential neighbourhoods surround the area to the south and east, while the Newkirk Business Park is to the north. A map of the Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO Station study area is presented in Figure 2.3-27.

### 2.3.3.7.1 Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO Station Key Directions

The key directions relating to the Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO Station study area are as follows:

- Convert employment lands south of Centre Street East to Local Centre designation;
- Elevate the area within the intensification hierarchy by redesignating the lands from Newkirk Local Development Area to Local Centre;
- Support development of a new community with a mix of uses and encourage structured commuter parking to allow for intensification opportunities;
- Update land use compatibility policies to ensure that existing and adjacent uses may continue;
- Provide new, and maintain existing affordable housing; and
- Enhance and provide connections to open space.



### 2.3.3.7.2 Newkirk Local Centre Key Directions Rationale

- **Convert employment lands south of Centre Street East to Local Centre designation.**

City Council adopted a motion on November 19, 2019, requesting that staff investigate the possibility of an employment conversion covering the portion of the Newkirk Business Park south of Centre Street East from employment to mixed-use. This was confirmed upon the adoption of the recommendations from Staff Report SRPRS.20.003 in February 2020, and the Region subsequently has not included this area in their Employment Land mapping. The reasons in support of the conversion are laid out in Staff Report SRPRS.20.003. The last step to complete the conversion process is to update the City's Official Plan to reflect the conversion, by assigning a new land use designation to the conversion area.

- **Elevate the area within the intensification hierarchy by redesignating the lands from Newkirk Local Development Area to Local Centre;**

In February 2020, through consideration of Staff Report SRPRS.20.004, Council requested that the Richmond Hill GO Station area be identified as a Major Transit Station Area. In subsequent York Region Council meetings, there was support for this request.

Given that this area is served by the GO train system and includes a large parking lot that has potential for redevelopment in accordance with Metrolinx's mandate to provide transit supportive development near GO stations, there is potential for this area - combined with lands in the existing Local Development Area designation in the remaining three quadrants - to constitute a Local Centre designation. This proposed land use designation change is in accordance with the clarification of the intensification hierarchy provided in Section 2.3.2.1 of this report.

The designation of this area as a Local Centre will enable the City to do more detailed secondary planning in order to create area-specific policies and plans to guide future development, including the need for future roads, parks, and infrastructure to serve the future population. These specific policies will also serve to implement the Region's MTSA criteria, including the required targets for population/worker density and mix.

- **Support development of a new community with a mix of uses and encourage structured commuter parking to allow for intensification opportunities;**

Richmond Hill GO Station, located within the proposed Newkirk Local Centre, is a busy GO station on the Richmond Hill line. In 2019 (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) over 2,600 commuters passed through the station each day, and its parking lots contain over 2,000 spaces. It will be critical to meeting the City's transportation priorities that the station continue to maintain its commuter function of serving the residents of the City that are located outside of the walking, cycling, or transit distance of the station.

In that regard, commuter parking can be accommodated in ways other than large surface lots, such as above-ground parking structures (common at other GO stations) or underground parking incorporated into surrounding buildings. By stacking parking into smaller areas, we can reduce the footprint of these parking areas, freeing up land to accommodate more residential, retail, and commercial uses, in order to create the mixed-use transit-oriented community vision of the Official Plan. Through further consultation with Metrolinx, we can consider an appropriate policy direction for this area which both fosters new development, while still seeking to maintain the commuter function of the GO Station.

- Update land use compatibility policies to ensure that existing and adjacent uses may continue.



**FIGURE 2.3-23 THE NEWKIRK BUSINESS PARK IS FULLY BUILT-OUT AND PROVIDES A VARIETY OF EMPLOYMENT USES INCLUDING MANUFACTURING WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR ALMOST 42% OF EMPLOYEES IN THIS AREA.**

The employment conversion would also allow for the creation of a suitable transition zone between the employment lands north of Centre Street East and the mixed-use Local Centre lands to the south. Using Centre Street as the dividing line (as opposed to a parcel line) provides for a clear separation between the two uses, and policies in the Official Plan can be adopted to design and create an appropriate transition zone, which can keep sensitive land uses away from the Centre Street frontage, and prevent redevelopment of the Local Centre from restricting the ability for certain businesses to locate in the Newkirk Business Park.

- Provide new, and maintain existing, affordable housing.

Newkirk Local Centre should be one of the priority areas in the City for providing affordable housing. The area surrounding the Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO Station study area already contains a number of rental apartment buildings, some of which include subsidized housing. The Newkirk Local Centre is also located away from the Yonge Street corridor, where demand is higher and land values are likely more expensive. Meanwhile, the area still has direct connection to higher-order transit, and is close to services and amenities in the Village Local Centre. These existing and future potential services and amenities makes this area a desirable place to live, one which could provide options that do not require car ownership. Significant portions of the study area are already owned by governments (primarily Metrolinx, used as commuter parking lots); as such, partnerships with other levels of government and agencies should be investigated to increase the provision of affordable housing in this area. (See also key directions in Section 2.6 regarding surplus public lands.)

➤ Enhance and provide connections to open space.

Currently, the small Essex Parkette (located on Essex Avenue, south of Major Mackenzie) is the only park or publicly accessible open space within the Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO study area. There are some parks and green spaces adjacent to or near the study area, most notably Unity Park to the west, and German Mills Creek along the western border of the study area. However, Unity Park is isolated by the rail corridor, and the German Mills Creek does not contain any trails or amenities. Through the secondary planning for this area, new parks, urban squares, and/or urban plazas can be identified to serve new residents and workers; and improved connections to surrounding parks may also be considered.

### Vision Statement

Based on public and stakeholder response received to date, the following vision statement to 2041 for the Newkirk Local Centre is suggested as:

*“An affordable, mixed-use community anchoring a transit station that connects commuters from across the City.”*

Through further consultation, a final vision statement can be determined for this area.

### 2.3.3.8 Major Mackenzie Corridor

The Major Mackenzie Corridor consists of the properties on either side of Major Mackenzie Drive East between Yonge Street and Newkirk Road. This portion was included within the larger Village/Richmond Hill GO study area as a means to link the two nearby growth areas, to study possible expansion of the Centres, and to determine if any changes to the existing designation and policy framework would be required as a result of changes to these areas.

The Major Mackenzie Corridor is part of the Region's Major Transit Station Area network, as extensions of nearby MTSA's resulting from the BRT station located on Yonge Street and the GO Station located on Newkirk Road, and not as a separate or stand-alone area.

Major Mackenzie continues to be identified in the York Region Official Plan as a future bus rapid transit corridor; however, the timing of implementation of rapid transit service along this corridor is uncertain. The current 2010 Official Plan only designates one row of properties on either side of Major Mackenzie Drive as part of the Local Mixed-Use Corridor. Given the shallow lot depths, the current development applications along this corridor provide for low-rise "missing middle" forms of development, which include townhouses, stacked townhouses, and apartment buildings of four to six storeys. ("Missing middles" was discussed in Section 2.1.) This form of development provides modest intensification in this area, and at the same time, supports transition to the surrounding lower density neighbourhoods.



Major Mackenzie Drive  
Corridor Study Area

**FIGURE 2.3-24 MAJOR MACKENZIE DRIVE  
CORRIDOR STUDY AREA**

#### 2.3.3.8.1 Major Mackenzie Corridor Key Directions

Based on the analysis and consultation to date, the following are the key directions relating to the Major Mackenzie Corridor:

- Maintain current vision and policy framework during this OP update process, supporting low-rise development including live-work units and "missing middle" development; and
- Support provision of cycling facilities (e.g. multi-use trail) along Major Mackenzie to improve access to and from the GO Station, Yonge Street, and surrounding areas.

#### 2.3.3.8.2 Major Mackenzie Corridor Key Directions Rationale

- Maintain current vision and policy framework during this OP update process, supporting low rise development, including live-work units and “missing middle” development.

The local context surrounding the Major Mackenzie Corridor is complex from a planning perspective. There are long-standing neighbourhoods with established character on either side of the corridor, and being adjacent to the Village (the original community of Richmond Hill) there are a number of designated and potential heritage properties in proximity to the corridor. The lands north of Major Mackenzie are subject to the Village Core Neighbourhood Design Guidelines, which promote certain design requirements for properties within the area to preserve the existing neighbourhood character. Expansion or further intensification of the corridor into these neighbourhoods risks destabilizing those interior areas.

The lands along this corridor have been identified as part of both the Major Mackenzie MTSA and the Richmond Hill GO MTSA, which both contain other intensification lands in adjacent Local Centres (Village and Newkirk Local Centres respectively). Planning analysis has determined that the current land use permissions of the Local Mixed-Use Corridor designation, combined with densities in the adjoining Local Centres, is currently sufficient to meet the long-term population and job density targets of these MTSA designations, as such there is no need to increase density within this corridor.

Current proposed development forms appear to be providing contextually sensitive development that supports a needed “missing middle” form of intensification. Furthermore, given the general context of the area and the lack of higher order transit in the near future, there is no need at this point to substantially modify the existing policy framework for the Major Mackenzie Local Mixed-Use Corridor.

- Support provision of cycling facilities (e.g. multi-use trail) along Major Mackenzie to improve access to and from the GO Station, Yonge Street, and surrounding areas.

One aspect of the current policy framework that can be improved is to support the creation of dedicated and/or improved cycling facilities along Major Mackenzie. The stretch of Major Mackenzie between Yonge Street and Newkirk Road is currently a narrow four-lane road without any dedicated cycling facilities. The distance between these two points is exactly 1 kilometer; this is an excellent trip length to attract active transportation users.

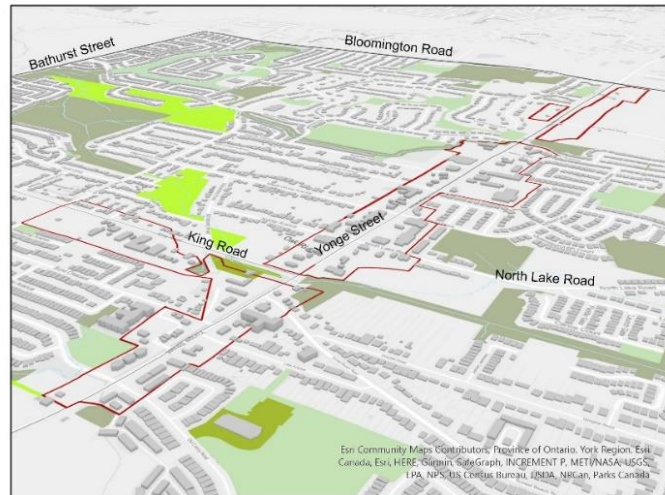
Improved cycling facilities can help connect Village residents to the GO station, people living in Newkirk Local Centre to the BRT along Yonge Street and the shops and amenities in the Village Local Centre, and it would also benefit local residents of the areas between these two points by improving their connectivity to these Centres.



### 2.3.3.9 Oak Ridges Local Centre (ORLC)

The current Official Plan has a number of policies that guide the planning for Oak Ridges Local Centre, including a requirement that a secondary plan be created for this local centre. Through this Official P Update, the City intends to complete the secondary planning for this area.

During this Official Plan Update, the City will need to consider a number of changes since 2010. Chief among them is that York Region will designate this northern stretch of Yonge Street to be a Regional Corridor. This means that in order to support the future bus rapid transit investment, development should be compact, mixed-use, and pedestrian friendly and transit-oriented.



**FIGURE 2.3-25 OAK RIDGES LOCAL CENTRE STUDY AREA**

#### 2.3.3.9.1 Oak Ridges Local Centre (ORLC) Key Directions

The key directions for the Oak Ridges Local Centre are as follows:

- Build on and refine the existing Official Plan policies for the Oak Ridges Local Centre;
- Expand the existing ORLC boundary to support objectives for the Regional Corridor and for building complete communities;
- Support the mobility hierarchy through modern main street design and compact built-form;
- Create a gateway at Yonge and Bloomington;
- Continue to apply an “environment first approach” to planning for the Local Centre;
- Support the broader neighbourhoods by providing local goods and services, as well as community amenities;
- Support tourists/visitors who visit the area to appreciate lakes and forests, through the provision of goods and services related to outdoor recreation; and
- Enhance connections to lakes and forests.

### 2.3.3.9.2 Oak Ridges Local Centre Rationale

The rationale for these key directions is detailed below.

- **Build on the 2010 Official Plan policies for the Oak Ridges Local Centre (ORLC).**

The current 2010 Official Plan provides directions for the development of the Oak Ridges Local Centre (ORLC). These policies are comprehensive and reflect good planning principles. As a part of the Official Plan Update, the ORLC secondary planning will build on and enhance the 2010 policies based on more recent data as well as public and stakeholders feedback.

- **Expand the existing ORLC boundary to support objectives for the Regional Corridor and for building complete communities**

Presently, the ORLC is predominantly delineated along parts of Yonge Street and King Road. To help achieve the objectives of complete communities, the boundary of this Local Centre should be expanded to include vacant or underutilized lands for potential development or redevelopment of mix uses. These uses include: residential, commercial, institutional, parks and open space, and community uses. In addition, to support the Regional designation of the northern stretch of Yonge Street as a Regional Corridor, the ORLC should be expanded to incorporate lands near Yonge and Bloomington. The expanded boundary of the ORLC will allow for more opportunities to increase the mix of uses and to support “aging in place” and family oriented community development.

- **Support the mobility hierarchy through modern main street design and compact built-form.**



**FIGURE 2.3-26 THE OAK RIDGES LIBRARY IS AN EXAMPLE OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN LOCATED WITHIN THIS STUDY AREA.**

Main streets typically consist of compact built form with a mix of uses that is well designed and pedestrian friendly. The public has indicated a desire to intensify Yonge Street at a scale that resembles traditional “main streets,” but in a modern form. Creating compact built-form that is contextually appropriate to the local character of the surrounding neighbourhoods will help generate more residents and businesses, which in turn will help support the transit service level of the Yonge BRT line.

### ➤ Create a gateway at Yonge and Bloomington.

The 2010 Official Plan directed that the Yonge and Bloomington area should be a gateway to the City. This is appropriate because Bloomington Road is the northern edge of the City and Yonge Street is designated as a Regional Corridor. The intersection of these two important arterial roads should provide for notable design elements of a gateway. Through consultation we can determine how a future gateway can contribute to the authenticity and sense of place for the ORLC.

### ➤ Continue to plan with an 'environment first' approach to planning for the Local Centre.

The ORLC is located within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area. Accordingly, planning for this area must conform with the Provincial Plan so as to protect and enhance environmental sensitive lands, including ORMCP landform conservation areas and highly vulnerable aquifers located underground.

### ➤ Support broader neighbourhoods by providing local goods and services, as well as community amenities.

The current neighbourhoods surrounding the ORLC are predominately low-density housing with very limited non-residential uses. To create complete communities that enable people to live, work, play, and age in their local communities, the ORLC will need to introduce more mix of uses in the area.

Access to goods and services, entertainment, and community amenities is the distinct feature of a 15-minute neighbourhood. This is vital as it enables residents and workers to enjoy all aspects of living and working without having to commute far and long.

### ➤ Support tourists/visitors who visit the area to appreciate lakes and forests, through the provision of goods and services related to outdoor recreation.

The presence of the Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) is one of the City's unique and distinguishing features. This expansive and important area which includes natural areas and lakes is a source for recreation, outdoor education, and appreciation for local residents and visitors alike. The ORM draws many people to the area every year. As such, there is opportunity to support tourists and visitors to this area through the provision of goods and services related to outdoor recreational activities. These types of businesses can complement the local culture of environmental stewardship. As such, during Phase 3 we will want to consult with local naturalists, outdoor recreational groups and businesses to gain insight on how this key direction can be addressed in the Official Plan.

### ➤ Enhance connections to nearby lakes and forest.

The ORLC is situated close to a number of trails that lead to parks and kettle lakes, including Lake Wilcox, Lake St. George, and Bond Lake. Even more impressive, the local centre is also located just minutes away from the Oak Ridges Corridor

Conservation Reserve – a nature reserve with more than 175 hectares of ecological linkages that includes forests, wetlands, meadows, lakes and extensive recreational trails. Connecting the ORLC to these natural heritage features through low impact trails and local streets will add more opportunity for local residents and businesses to enjoy nature. And as we take an ‘environment first’ approach to planning for this area, we will exercise great care in minimizing impacts to the features, while increasing buffering or other enhancement measures.

### Vision Statement

Public response to date suggests the following 2041 vision for the ORLC:

*“A community with a ‘modern town’ feel located on the Oak Ridges Moraine that is green, natural, clean and safe”.*

Through further consultation, a final vision statement can be determined for this area.

### 2.3.4 Connection to Pillars of the Official Plan Update

The key directions respecting intensification respond to Pillars of the Official Plan Update, as summarized below.

#### *Grow Our Economy*

The intensification key directions which seek to clarify the purpose and intent of the intensification hierarchy and the roles of the Centres and Corridors, provide certainty for planning our discrete communities. The key direction that proposes to require mix of uses will enable the City to establish a policy framework that will promote and encourage conditions for the creation of complete communities with diverse neighbourhoods; which not only attracts talent but also assists with pre-zoning areas for new development – making it easier to invest and establish oneself in Richmond Hill.

#### *Design Excellence*

The Intensification key directions recommend that the City appropriately designate intensification areas and continue to consult on and provide more detailed guidance for the Centres and Corridors. This includes the establishment of clear vision statements for Centres. These key directions align with the principles of the Design Excellence pillar by recognizing that through further consultation we will need to establish design parameters that may apply on a city-wide basis and those that may need to be specific to a certain area. Moreover, we need to devise an understanding of what is meant by “public benefits” and “quality of life” and work to embed this understanding into policies of the Official Plan in order to truly achieve design excellence.

#### *Green and Sustainable*

The intensification key directions include direction to consider intensification within the Centres and Corridors in the context of climate change, and to apply a climate considerations in the planning for intensification areas where there are likely to be several competing interests. These key directions align with the principles of the Green and Sustainable pillar by recognizing the significant impacts climate change poses to the City’s complete community and city building objectives. The directions support innovation in green building standards, reducing greenhouse gas emissions through improvements to building and neighbourhood design, reducing dependence on the private automobile, and supporting the use of green infrastructure. Lastly, these key directions seek to improve the supply of existing natural heritage features and functions in the City through protection, preservation, and enhancement.



### *Protect and Enhance*

The intensification key directions include direction to consider intensification within the Centres and Corridors with broader community benefits in mind. These key directions align with the principles of protecting and enhancing the City's cherished places to ensure that while the City continues to evolve and change, it does not lose sight of what is important to the City, and what contributes to a high quality of life in Richmond Hill. These key directions also promote Richmond Hill's identity, respond to the diverse cultures and lifestyles within the City, and promote diversifying and enhancing the City's civic spaces. Furthermore, these key directions speak to the creation of "gateways" within certain Centres and providing connections to places of cultural and/or natural interests. Consideration of these kinds of details is how we can work together to create a Richmond Hill identity and generate civic pride.



## 2.4 Employment

The Employment key directions are provided in response to the following question arising from the 2019 Official Plan Update initiation staff report:

*Where and how should the City provide the necessary land use direction to:*

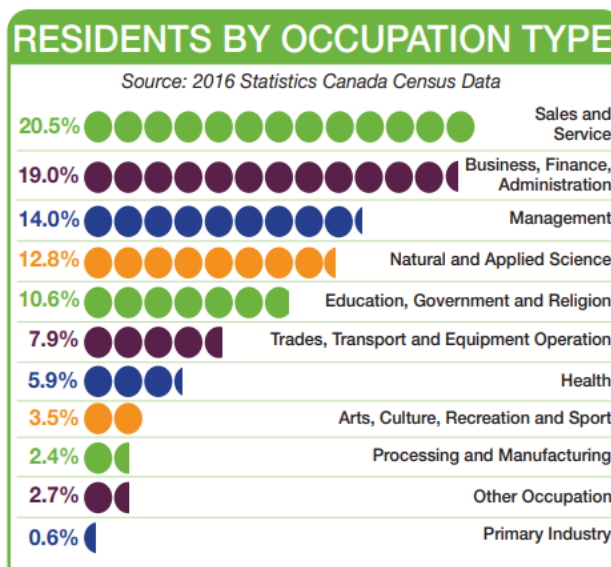
- ensure that jobs are available for its residents,
- existing businesses are able to grow, and
- new businesses are able to establish themselves and prosper?

One of the main objectives of the Official Plan Update is to consider how the Official Plan can be updated to better facilitate the provision of jobs in Richmond Hill, and help boost the City's overall economy.

As noted in the 2019 Employment Survey conducted by York Region, there were 5,014 businesses employing 76,328 people in 2019. 2,392 businesses (47.7%) were located in the City's four business parks, while the remaining 52.3% were located elsewhere in the City. The majority of businesses (85.4%) are small businesses, with less than 20 employees.

The number of surveyed businesses has grown by 27% since 2009, or almost 1,100 new businesses; and the 3.0% average annual employment growth outpaces the population growth rate, which is approximately 1.3% annually. In the same time period, full-time employment has grown by approximately 6,500 jobs, and accounts for 62% of the City's employment as of 2019.

According to the 2016 Census, 76.9% of employed Richmond Hill residents are working in the following sectors: sales and service; business, finance and administration; management; natural and applied science; and education, government, and religion (see Figure 2.4-1). Richmond Hill boasts the highest number of graduates in engineering, science, and math per capita. However, 76% of employed residents commute beyond the city to work, and 64% of people working in Richmond Hill live outside the city; this indicates a mismatch between the types of jobs available in the City, and the types of jobs in which our residents are employed.



**FIGURE 2.4-1 RESIDENTS BY OCCUPATION TYPE**

Despite positive growth in employment statistics, it is important to continually review and improve policies, so that Richmond Hill can remain a top destination for both employers and workers, and be even more competitive in attracting new investment.

### 2.4.1 Employment Key Directions

The main Employment key directions are as follows:

- Continue to foster and promote business attraction and retention within intensification, employment, and neighbourhood commercial areas, in ways that are responsive to the needs of businesses who choose to invest in Richmond Hill.
- Within intensification areas, promote development of spaces that are flexible in their use and can evolve over time as areas become more established
- Within employment designations, provide greater flexibility of land use and promote urban design that makes these areas attractive for employees and investment.

### 2.4.2 Key Directions Rationale

The following sections provide more detail and rationale for the key directions relating to the theme of Employment.

#### 2.4.2.1 Employment City-wide

- Respond to business attraction and retention needs – especially those related to the knowledge industry and “green” technology.

As identified in the Planning for Change report, with the increase in automation and innovation, and a shift towards greener technologies, there will be a shift in the types of businesses and the jobs associated with them. The draft Investment Attraction Strategy identifies four target sectors to focus on attracting to Richmond Hill: professional, scientific, and technical service (PSTS); finance and insurance; information and cultural industries; and life sciences. These four sectors rely less on the industrial/warehouse buildings that typically populate business parks, and more on office environments, ideally in mixed-use locations where employees have access to amenities and opportunities to live near their work. Additionally, the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) recommends investing in and attracting businesses in the green and low-carbon industries.

The high-talent workforce that accompanies these businesses also typically seek to work in mixed-use environments with a high level of nearby amenities. The idea that creating the conditions which attract high-talent employees to an area provides a competitive advantage for businesses, and incentivizes them to locate in these types of areas. These competitive conditions include the provision of frequent and reliable transit, and micromobility-supportive infrastructure, as noted in Section 2.2 Built Form.

Other conditions noted in Section 2.1 and 2.2 are those relating to lively communities that arise from having a broad mix of land use and built form that is context-appropriate, inviting, and welcoming.

- **Foster, promote, and embrace innovation – be prepared to take necessary risks where rewards are likely to benefit the community.**

From an economic view, unique shops and businesses are valued by residents. Employers, especially many small businesses, also prefer to locate in more unique settings. For example, older industrial and manufacturing buildings are being repurposed as offices for tech companies in many cities across North America.

New business types are emerging, many of which provide a combination of services that may not have been contemplated in the Official Plan. It is important that policies with respect to permitted uses do not unduly delay or prohibit these new innovative businesses from establishing themselves, or prevent existing businesses from expanding into new but related areas. This can be done by providing criteria or objective based policies rather than simple lists of permitted uses.

Given that the Official Plan is a 20 year forward-facing document, it needs to accommodate for industries and businesses that do not exist currently; being more flexible in terms of use permissions will allow new industries to form in Richmond Hill that do not exist today, without requiring policy changes.

- **Support vertical agriculture within Employment areas and the Greenway system.**

Vertical agriculture is an example of an innovative business that responds to the loss of traditional farmland and is a means of sustainable food production close to market. As is the case of AeroFarms in Newark, NJ (shown in Figure 2.4-2), these facilities can be located within existing or new buildings located in business parks, they may also be located within rural areas as a farming operation. While these uses may not presently be precluded by the Official Plan, to better facilitate their implementation, these uses should be identified as permitted uses within the applicable land use designations and their associated zoning. Facilitating such uses within these areas supports the local economy and also responds to rising concerns regarding food security.



**FIGURE 2.4-2 AN EXAMPLE OF VERTICAL FARMING AT AEROFARMS IN NEWARK, NJ**

Source: [Hail.to: What is sustainable agriculture?](http://Hail.to: What is sustainable agriculture?)

- Provide a vibrant, noteworthy “main street” character on Yonge Street, which is vital for business attraction.

This key direction complements those provided in Section 2.3 Intensification. Irrespective of a business’ location within a municipality, we have learned that new businesses want to be located in municipalities that have distinguishable and noteworthy “main streets” and/or downtowns, in order to attract both talent and clients.

- Complement at-grade commercial spaces with hospitable, pedestrian and cycle-friendly streets and streetscapes.

As noted in Section 2.2. Built Form, providing at-grade commercial spaces is an effective means of creating walkable communities. Complementary to this, however, is ensuring that the streets on which these facilities are located are hospitable, and pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly in order for these commercial places to be accessible. Accordingly, policies that encourage the provision of items such as wide sidewalks, street furniture, secure bicycle parking, and room for patios and sidewalk vendors can create this type of symbiotic and welcoming environment.

- Promote development that fosters “Work from Neighbourhood” community building.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many workers had to make a dramatic shift to working primarily from their homes. While the recovery is just starting, and what a return-to-new-normal will look like is not yet clear; one thing that has been frequently reported on is the strong interest from both businesses and workers to establish some form of “hybrid” work model. This would involve continuing to work remotely on, at least, a part-time basis for many people.

A shift towards a larger work-from-home contingent (whether fulltime or hybrid) would have policy implications. A shift in the distribution of the City’s daytime population towards more residential areas would also impact the location of supporting businesses. Supporting businesses that congregate around business parks (coffee shops, office supply/print stores, child care services, etc.) would now be in demand in more locations across the City.

Another potential new use is the rise in shared or “co-working” spaces, where people may rent or use an office-type space in their own neighbourhoods. These spaces can be used on a short-term basis for client meetings and interactions instead of commuting into the office. In response to this trend, some apartment developments already include or are proposing to include shared work spaces, be they board rooms or business support centre facilities.

More mixed-use development may need to be encouraged in surrounding residential areas to meet the new or increased demand. This direction aligns with the concept of 15-minute communities discussed in Section 2.2 Built Form. The need for a more widespread adoption of mixed-use communities that support a “work from



neighbourhood” lifestyle is something that will need to be further explored and consulted upon during Phase 3.

### 2.4.2.2 Employment in Intensification Areas

- Promote development of spaces that are flexible in their use and can evolve over time as areas become more established.

Through public engagement sessions and the “What We Heard” reports, both the public and the business community demonstrated a perception that the newer mixed-use buildings built along the Centres and Corridors are providing small commercial units that do not meet market demand. This is resulting in higher commercial vacancy rates (especially after their initial construction), and a lack of variety in tenants.

New development in the intensification areas needs to be flexible in terms of design, size, floor plans, and use permissions of commercial/retail units. Ensuring that a wider variety of business can be accommodated will assist in the creation of complete communities, and the achievement of 15-minute cities as described in sections 2.2 Built Form and 2.3 Intensification.

### 2.4.2.3 Employment in Employment designations

- Provide greater flexibility of land use and promote urban design that makes these areas attractive for employees and investment.

One of the key areas of feedback that has been received about the current Official Plan is that the current policies are too strict in terms of regulating uses within the employment lands. Given the City’s limited amount of employment lands and the inability to expand them, preference was given in the 2010 Official Plan to high performance industrial and office uses to be accommodated in these areas. However, the nature of jobs and the use of employment lands is changing.

As identified in Planning for Change, modern companies, especially those in the technology and innovation sectors, are looking to locate and invest in areas with a higher level of amenities for their workers. Accordingly, consideration should be given to the potential to add flexibility in terms of permitted uses in order to create more vibrant employment areas that can successfully attract new employers and retain existing ones. Such additional permissions, subject to further study and discussion, could include the loosening of restrictions on the size and location of commercial uses and services that support employment land businesses and their employees.

- Implement policies that facilitate the development of desired businesses to enable as-of-right zoning.

Through our consultation to date, an important comment we heard from the business sector is the need for certainty of timing. The fewer approvals that are required to facilitate the establishment or expansion of a business, the greater level of certainty there is in relation to when the business can be operational. As such, it is important that policies of the Official Plan are permissive and that the implementing Zoning By-law can easily provide for as-of-right development.

- Consider and consult on area-specific employment area permissions based on context and character of the area.

Richmond Hill's employment lands are divided into four business parks; each of these business parks has a different character based on the current established uses and businesses within them. The current Official Plan largely applies the same land use and design policies to all employment lands, with a few exceptions for specific uses that require separation from other uses (e.g. automotive repair and service).

By tailoring policies to each business park, the City can direct or focus specific uses to areas that are already suited for those types of businesses (i.e. Beaver Creek currently contains a higher proportion of offices, while Newkirk contains more automotive-oriented uses). In areas where there is still a lot of vacant land, there is greater potential to create hubs for green and low carbon related businesses or food production facilities, as noted above. This can create a cluster of similar or complementary businesses in the same area. This cluster effect can create synergies between these businesses, leading to increased productivity and efficiency, provide access to an established and skilled workforce, spur additional investment and boost attraction for new businesses to locate in the cluster.

In the summer of 2020, the City initiated consultation in relation to the permission of automotive uses, including the sale and service of cars within areas designated Employment Area, Employment Corridor and Office (lands located in the North Leslie Secondary Plan Area). This initiative continues to be underway through this Official Plan update process and in response to this key direction. Consideration can be given to where, if at all, these uses could be permitted, giving consideration to matters



**FIGURE 2.4-3 AUDI MIDTOWN TORONTO IS AN EXAMPLE OF A MODERN AUTO DEALERSHIP LOCATED IN AN EMPLOYMENT AREA.**

Source:

<https://www.careyglass.com/projects/audi-midtown/>

related to changes in the automotive industry as a whole and updates to Provincial policies related to land use compatibility.

- Consider and consult on permission of self-storage facilities to support small businesses and home-based businesses.
- Consider and consult on expanded permissions for warehousing to respond to a growing need for distribution centres.

Presently, the Official Plan does not permit new self-storage facilities in Employment Areas. While not a large job generator by themselves, we understand that they can help support small and home-based businesses by providing a secondary location to store materials and equipment related to the business. Furthermore, the urban structure is shifting to promote the construction of more apartment-type dwellings. These tend to be smaller than typical ground-related housing units; as such, there is expected to be an increased demand for residential storage. Additionally, we are seeing examples of businesses that offer storage and retrieval services, thereby increasing the jobs per hectare ratio of these types of facilities.



**FIGURE 2.4-4 EXAMPLE OF A HOME OCCUPATION**

The rise in e-commerce over the last decade means more products are being delivered directly to consumers. In the e-commerce business, products ordered over the internet are shipped from distribution centres and warehouses and delivered directly to customers at their homes. Besides a general increase in the number and size of warehouses to store goods waiting to be shipped to customers, to lower delivery times it also requires a wider network of warehouses located closer to the population to which it is delivering the goods. While warehousing and storage of goods have typically had lower densities of workers, more modern warehouses dedicated towards e-commerce and delivery services have resulted in increased worker density, and longer operating periods. The arrival of Amazon in the Headford Business Park is an example of such a distribution centre, which is anticipated to have over 200 full time and another 200 part time jobs.

Additional consultation will be required with the business community and development industry to see what specific policy changes may be required with regards to potentially accommodating self-storage facilities and changes to permissions related to warehousing.

- Implement noticeable sustainable design measures, i.e. solar panels and low impact development within parking fields, to outwardly demonstrate commitment to climate change.

Environmental sustainability is now a key focus for businesses, and many companies, especially those in the growing green technology industry, are looking towards investing in environmentally sustainable buildings. Investments in sustainable design are seen not just as good corporate citizenship, but also create long-run cost savings for those that make these investments. Traditional business park development, particularly those with large paved surfaces, have not typically been noted as environmentally sustainable. To attract new business investment, there needs to be a shift in that perception, which can be facilitated by encouraging or requiring new development to implement sustainable features such as solar panels and low impact development features that are visible to users and visitors to these areas.



**FIGURE 2.4-5 EDWARD GARDENS IN TORONTO PROVIDES BIOSWALES AND TREE PLANTINGS AS EXAMPLES OF LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT IN A PARKING LOT.**

Source: [Schollen & Company Inc.](#)

Furthermore, it should be noted that the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) indicates that commercial and industrial areas currently have the lowest tree canopy coverage in the City, at just 8%, which is significantly below the citywide average of 29% canopy coverage. Accordingly, policies in the Official Plan may need to be updated to provide more clear direction for new development to apply sustainable design measures, including tree planting within these areas. These policies can be complimented by the City's Sustainability Assessment Tool<sup>17</sup> and will help to implement recommendations from the CEEP and UFMP.

- Ensure employment areas are served by transit in a way that accommodates shift work and supports last-mile means of commuting.

Local transit service into the employment areas is critical to transporting workers to their place of employment. This transit service must also be in place outside of just

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<sup>17</sup> The Sustainability Assessment Tool is a means for City staff and the development industry to work together to identify, with an intention to ultimately implement, appropriate environmental sustainability features within new buildings and sites across the City, more about this program is provided in Section 2.5.



**FIGURE 2.4-6 CYCLING CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE "LAST MILE" MODE OF TRANSPORTATION**

the traditional “rush hour”, as many of the businesses in the employment areas provide shift work for which employees need transit available both before and after their shifts.

While some of the City’s employment lands are adjacent to current and future rapid transit corridors, much of these lands are beyond a 5-10 minute walk from rapid transit stations. To fill the first-mile/last-mile gap, consideration must be given to facilitate active transportation and micromobility.

Many of the current buildings in the employment lands were designed for commuting by car, and as such are surrounded by large parking lots for its employees to park their vehicles. Providing transit service or facilitating other active (i.e. bike-share) or micromobility (i.e. electronic bikes) transportation options will reduce the number of employees commuting by car, and allow for a reduction in parking standards. In turn, this would increase the amount of land available to accommodate additional

employment uses, making more efficient use of the employment lands.

### 2.4.3 Connection to Pillars of the Official Plan Update

#### *Grow Our Economy*

These key directions work towards improving economic outcomes for the City by recognizing emerging trends and the need to improve partnership and understanding with the business community, in order to realise City goals related to the provision of jobs and improvement of the local economy.

#### *Design Excellence*

Employers are increasingly looking to locate their businesses in vibrant, well-designed areas that can attract high-talent employees. These key directions recognize that implementing good urban design principles will help create a welcoming place for customers, which will encourage businesses to open up and invest in an area.

#### *Green and Sustainable*

These key directions recognize that an improved focus and commitment towards green initiatives and environmental sustainability will attract new economic investment. Outside of an environmental perspective, these key directions also promote economic sustainability, and will ensure that good, stable, well-paying jobs continue to be available within the City for residents over the long term.



### *Protect and Enhance*

These key directions look to increase business investment in the City, attract more high quality jobs, and create the conditions for new businesses to grow and prosper. They also seek to preserve the majority of the City's existing Employment lands for employment uses, while making adjustments to the policies to improve the function and utilization of employment land.



### 2.5 Climate Change

Climate Change key directions are provided in response to the following question arising from the 2019 Official Plan Update initiation staff report:

*What direction should the OP provide to address matters related to Climate Change mitigation and adaptation?*

In Canada, all levels of government have established legislation and programs to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and increase resiliency among communities; which aim to address climate change mitigation (i.e. take actions to slow the pace of climate change) and climate change adaptation (i.e. take actions to be prepared to respond to the current and expected future impact of climate change). In Ontario, the *Planning Act* identifies climate change as a matter of Provincial Interest, and directs Official Plans to include policies that are directed at mitigating and adapting to climate change. As such, many of the key directions across all sections of this report are intended to implement those provisions, and are informed by the Council approved Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP).

The CEEP is “Richmond Hill’s path to a Low Carbon Future” which identifies actions that need to be taken by the City, its residents, and businesses collectively in order to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. As noted in Section 2.1 Urban Structure, the City’s community GHG reduction target calls for “Net-Zero GHG Emissions by 2050”, which means the City will have reduced its GHG emissions as much as possible and will not be emitting more than it is offsetting.

To help achieve this target, we need to review and update Official Plan policies to ensure that there is appropriate policy direction to enable and/or direct actions identified in the CEEP, as well as to conform with Provincial and Regional policy, that relate to the way we:

- protect our natural heritage, (also discussed in Section 2.1 Urban Structure);
- build new and renovate existing buildings, (also discussed in Section 2.2 Built Form and 2.3 Intensification);
- design our communities; (discussed in Section 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 Employment); and
- move ourselves and goods within our communities (discussed in Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4).

#### 2.5.1 Climate Change Key Directions

The main key directions, in addition to those identified in other sections of this report, are:

- Apply climate lens considerations in decision making where there are opportunities for mitigation or adaptation.

- Provide necessary policy direction to achieve the Community Energy and Emissions Plan GHG reduction target.

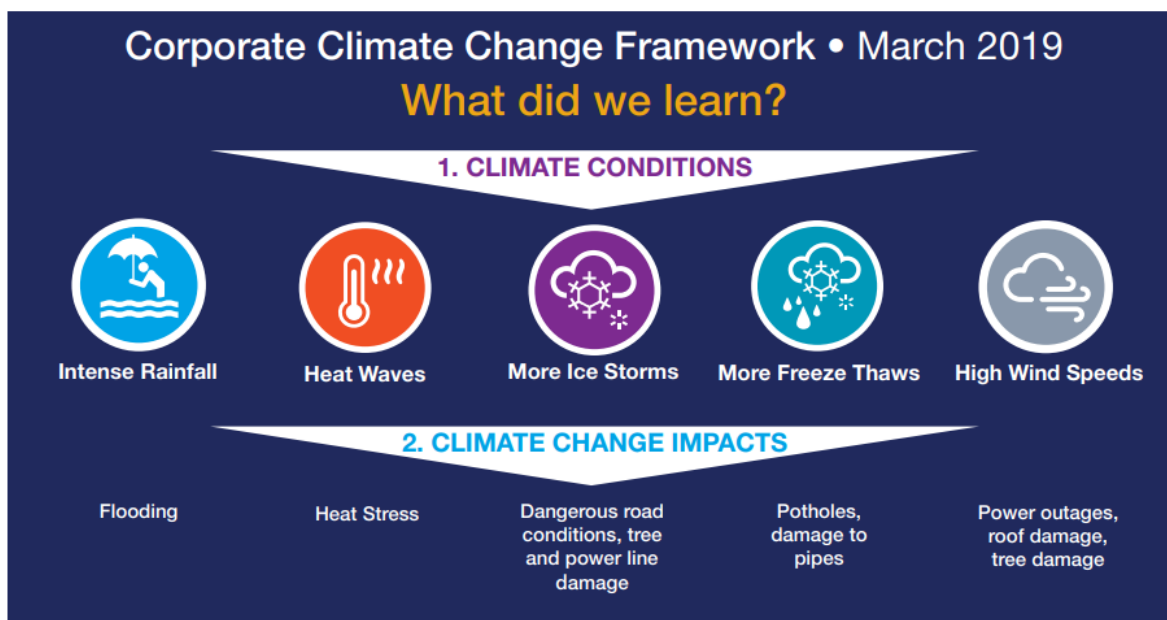
## 2.5.2 Key Directions Rationale

### 2.5.2.1 Climate Lens

- Apply climate lens considerations in decision making where there are opportunities for mitigation or adaptation.

As noted in the City's Climate Change Framework, the City must lead by example, both corporately and in the community, to mitigate and adapt to climate change. To reach Richmond Hill's climate change mandate and ensure a coordinated approach to taking climate action, the City has committed to apply climate lens considerations to corporate governance, land-use planning, and asset management matters.

This key direction reminds us to recognise that climate is changing, and the decisions that we make in land use planning can help to mitigate that change and, if not, can be adaptive to that change. Climate change mitigation refers to measures that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mainly through improvements in buildings, transportation, waste reduction, sustainable materials and natural vegetation. While, climate change adaptation refers to measures that improve our ability to manage or reduce the local impacts of extreme weather such as flooding, ice storms, and heat stress. Figure 2.5-1 identifies the following climate conditions that are possible in Richmond Hill: intense rainfall, heat waves, more ice storms, more freeze thaws and high wind speeds, and the impacts of those conditions.



**FIGURE 2 CLIMATE CONDITIONS AND IMPACTS IF RICHMOND HILL REMAINS STATUS QUO**

Source: Climate Change Framework, 2020, Richmond Hill

Climate modelling completed by York Region and Richmond Hill predict that the following can be experienced by the City in 2050, if current trends continue:

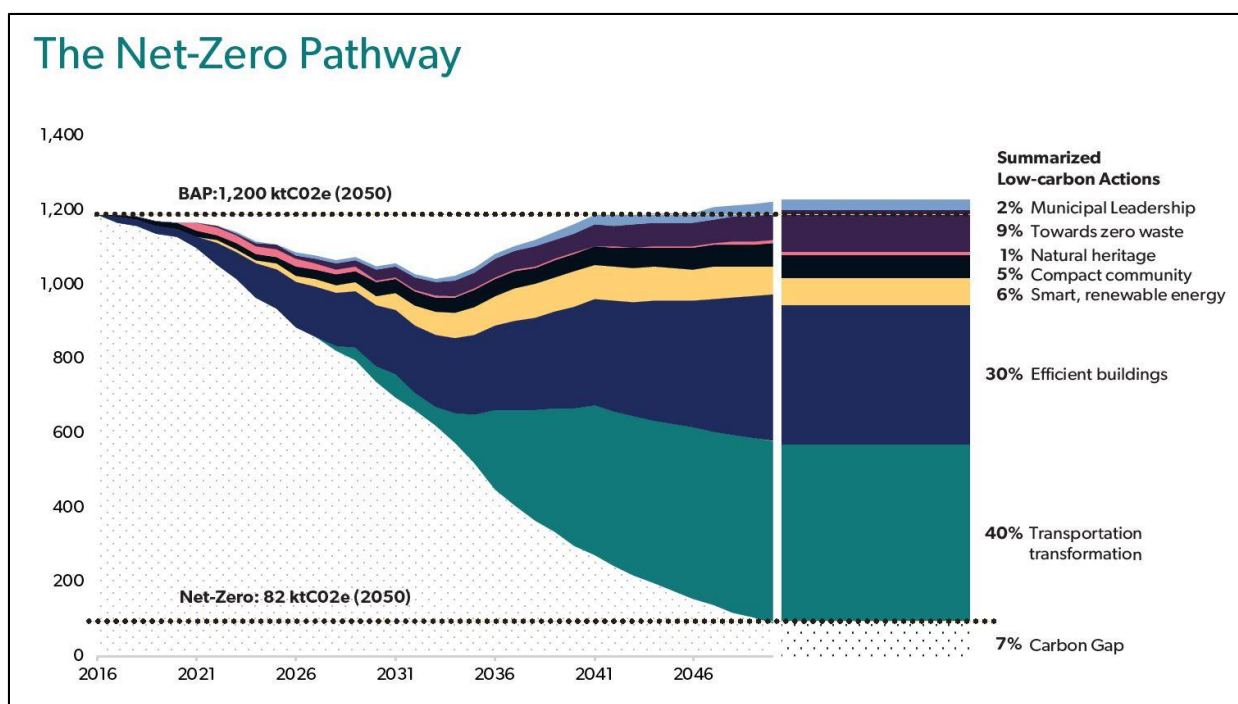
- An annual mean temperature that is 2.7 to 3.6°C higher than current levels, bringing warmer summers and winters.
- A longer growing season by as much as 30 days for both the spring and fall.
- A 59+ mm increase in annual average rainfall, with more precipitation occurring in the winter months.
- More than twice as many days above 30°C (26 days a year, versus the current average of 12) and several days that exceed 40°C annually.
- More frequent heavy rainfall, hail, freezing rain, and snow storms.
- A 33% increase in the intensity of extreme storms.

Accordingly, and in the context of the Official Plan, we need to develop the necessary policies to guide future decision making on land use planning matters in a direction that supports climate change mitigation and adaptation. As such, in the updating of Official Plan policies we will want to provide direction to leverage current and emerging climate data and modeling, to ensure climate considerations are addressed within development projects.

### 2.5.2.2 Achieve GHG Reduction Target

- Provide necessary policy direction to achieve the Community Energy Emissions Plan GHG reduction target.

As noted above, a key direction of the Official Plan update is to introduce the City's GHG reduction target of "Net-Zero Emissions by 2050" into the Official Plan. In order to achieve this target, the City's Community Energy and Emissions Plan identifies seven program areas, which are identified in Figure 2.5-2 below. As noted above, other opportunities to reduce GHG emissions such as planning for compact communities and sustainable transportation are discussed in Section 2.1 Urban Structure, Section 2.2 Built Form, 2.3 Intensification, and 2.4 Employment. As such, the following key directions are ones that have not been discussed in those sections of this report:



**FIGURE 2.5-2 ILLUSTRATION OF RICHMOND HILL'S NET-ZERO EMISSIONS PATHWAY**

Source: Community Energy and Emissions Plan, Richmond Hill

- Encourage more energy efficient, energy conserving and resilient building construction.

As noted in Figure 2.5-2, interventions in building design that result in more energy efficient buildings can account for 30% of the City's reduction of GHG emissions by 2050, and waste diversion could account for 9%. Retrofitting existing residential and non-residential development plays a major role in achieving a low carbon community, and constructing new efficient and resilient buildings plays a significant role as well. The City's Sustainability Performance Metrics [program, which was established in 2014](#), is a program that is being used to encourage new development to apply building energy efficiencies, reduce GHG emissions and design more resiliently. The suite of performance metrics also includes measures such as waste diversion and use of greywater systems,<sup>18</sup> which respond to the efficient building and waste diversion program areas of the CEEP. The Metrics Program also promotes the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations or EV ready facilities, which supports the transportation transformation program area of the CEEP. Furthermore, as noted in sections 2.2 and 2.4, the Metrics also encourages installation of sustainable design measures that contribute to climate change adaptation (e.g. LIDs, stormwater improvements, shade structures, etc.).

The Metrics Program applies a scoring system whereby applicants seeking site plan or plan of subdivision approvals must meet a minimum score to receive servicing

<sup>18</sup> Grey water systems capture rainwater and reuse it for low grade functions such as irrigation within a site.



allocation. As such, through the Official Plan update, we can encourage more energy efficient, energy conserving and resilient building and site construction by providing Official Plan policies that direct development to meet or exceed the minimum threshold scores of the Sustainability Performance Metrics program.

➤ **Support development and use of renewable energy.**

As noted in Figure 2.5-2, the use of smart, renewable energy (thereby relying less on fossil fuels) can account for 6% of the City's reduction of GHG emissions by 2050. Solar, wind, hydroelectric, and geothermal are renewable energy sources. Community generation, district energy, and renewable heating are forms of smart and resilient energy systems. These systems can take advantage of energy that would otherwise be wasted, improve resiliency in the event of grid outages, and reduce peak demand for heating and/or cooling. To that end, further consultation and consideration is required to determine if the current policies in the Official Plan appropriately enable the installation and use of renewable energy technologies, such as solar photovoltaic, district energy, wind turbines, anaerobic digesters, renewable natural gas, and geothermal facilities.



**FIGURE 2.5-3 RENEWABLE ENERGY INSTALLATIONS AT RICHMOND GREEN SPORTS CENTRE AND PARK**



**FIGURE 2.5-4 INSTALLING SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC CELLS ON THE ROOF OF RICHMOND HILL'S MUNICIPAL OFFICES**

- Require provision of green and/or white roof and/or solar panels for certain built form based on size and function.

The type of roof structures identified in this key direction can help with lowering GHG emissions and also provide climate change adaptation features. A green roof system is the extension of the existing roof that is retrofitted with a growing medium and irrigation to allow vegetation and foliage to grow on a top of a man-made structure. A white roof is a flat roof typically white in colour, or metal roof that reflects sunlight to reduce heat-island effect. Solar panels or solar photovoltaic technology are cells that capture sunlight and converts it to renewable energy. Presently, the Official Plan encourages the use of these roof treatments, and development proponents who propose them are awarded points towards achieving Sustainability Metrics threshold scores. However, to achieve the goals of the CEEP, it may be appropriate that through further consultation, we can determine which building forms are the best candidate for these types of roof structures and identify appropriate criteria to use in order to require their implementation within new development.

- Strengthen natural heritage protection in accordance with provincial and regional policies, and, where deemed necessary, beyond their minimum standards for climate change adaptation and mitigation purposes.

As noted in Figure 2.5-2, ongoing protection of existing and enhancement of natural heritage accounts for 1% of the overall GHG reduction target by 2050. The City's natural heritage system<sup>19</sup> (NHS) is a major asset that improves livability in Richmond Hill and captures GHG emissions. At a minimum, the City is required to protect and enhance the NHS by implementing Provincial and Regional policy and legislation. To achieve higher GHG reductions, however, we need to enhance our system. Opportunities to enhance the NHS can occur by fostering healthy soil, protecting habitats, growing the tree canopy, controlling invasive species, and preserving woodlots. The City's Urban Forest Management Plan recommends that the NHS be enhanced by identifying, managing, and enhancing linkages to the broader Greenway System through the development of a Natural Heritage Strategy. In the absence of this strategy, however, through the Official Plan Update we can consider policy and mapping changes that would aid in the provision of more connections and enhancements to the natural heritage system.

<sup>19</sup> The City's natural heritage system is comprised of land that hosts natural heritage features and functions, and buffer areas to them. This system is dynamic. Large portions of it are located in the Greenway System described in Section 2.1 Urban Structure, and most of these areas are designated in the Official Plan as: ORM Natural Core, Natural Core, ORM Natural Linkage, and Natural Linkage.



**FIGURE 2.5-5 PHYLLIS RAWLINSON PARK, RICHMOND HILL INCLUDES NATURAL HERITAGE FEATURES, FUNCTIONS AND BUFFER AREAS.**

- Revisit buffer policies for natural hazards to ensure minimum standards are appropriate and consistent with Provincial, Regional and Conservation Authority policies and address matters such as maintenance and long term climate change impacts.

Presently, the Official Plan provides policy direction to establish buffers around specific natural features to protect the feature and its function, and around hazard lands (such as flood plains and erosion areas) to ensure safety and stability. These buffers are generally identified by the Province, Region and in some cases the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Where policies and standards have changed since the adoption of the Official Plan, then so too should our policies. However, there are practical matters, such as impacts associated with maintenance or the long term stressors brought on by climate change, that need to be considered and factored into the policy development to ensure that the minimum standards account for all such matters. Further analysis and consultation is required to determine whether technical changes to minimum buffer standards are warranted.

### 2.5.3 Connection to the Pillars of the Official Plan Update

These key directions connect to the four Pillars of the Official Plan Update as follows:

#### *Grow Our Economy*

As noted in the Community Energy and Emissions Plan, its implementation is about reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), conserving energy and exploring related economic opportunities. These key directions which seek to implement the CEEP, similarly, foster new economic opportunities.

#### *Design Excellence*

These key directions respond to design excellence by supporting sustainable building design and the use of renewable energy. They aim to foster development that, over the course of time, achieves net-zero emissions. In so doing, building design will evolve in terms of materials used, site situation, amount of glazing, etc., and our

communities will become more “green” with an expanded tree canopy, the use of roof top gardens, and provision of low impact development measures.

### *Green and Sustainable*

These key directions respond to the pillar of Green and Sustainable by aligning the Official Plan with recommended implementing actions of the Community Energy and Emissions Plan and by continuing to recognise the importance of protecting and enhancing the City’s natural environment.

### *Protect and Enhance*

These key directions protect and enhance the Greenway System and open spaces, which are valuable key assets to the residents, workers, and businesses of Richmond Hill.



### 2.6 Implementation Tools

The key directions respecting new land use planning tools and implementation improvements are provided in response to the following question arising from the 2019 Official Plan Update initiation staff report:

*How should the Plan be updated to address new land use planning tools or improve implementation?*

In response to this question, it is important to understand that the *Planning Act* sets out the processes and tools that plan for and control the development or redevelopment of land. These tools include official plans, zoning by-laws, plan of subdivision, minor variances and site plan control. The following key directions not only address emerging trends and issues but, to also seek to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the planning process.

#### 2.6.1 Implementation Tools Key Directions

The key directions for new planning tools and implementation improvements are:

- Add new policies to enable Inclusionary Zoning to increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Enhance existing policies on demolition and conversion control of rental housing.
- Prioritize surplus public lands for public benefit, including affordable housing
- Update policies to enable the use of a Community Planning Permit System.
- Update alternative notice and engagement policies to ensure that public engagement is responsive to what is now considered common means of communication
- Update policies on engagement with Indigenous communities.
- Establish criteria for evaluating official plan amendments post the OP Update process.

#### 2.6.2 Key Directions Rationale

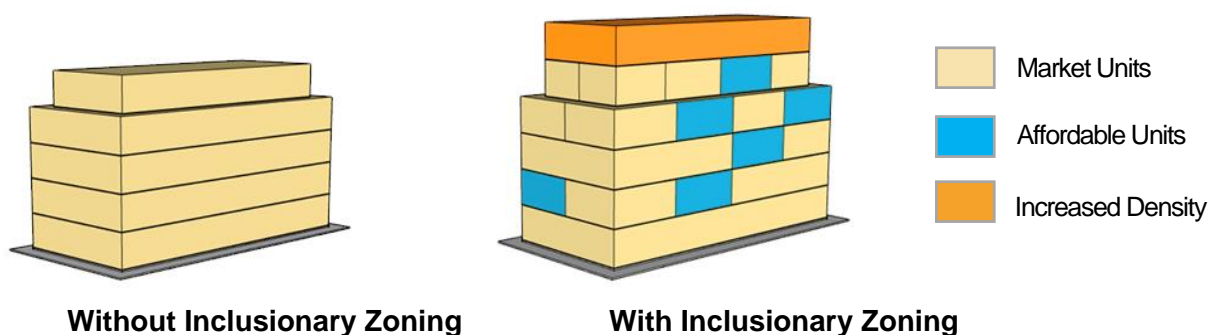
The summary and rationale for each of the aforementioned Key Directions is described below.



### 2.6.2.1 Inclusionary Zoning<sup>20</sup>

- Add new policies to enable Inclusionary Zoning to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Between 2019 and 2021, the City conducted background research and consultation on affordable housing. This work has culminated in the preparation of an Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS), which has been shared with Council and the public. The strategy provides goals and targets related to the provision of affordable housing. It also outlines seven categories of tools and measures, with a total of 44 actions to address the City's housing need. Among the category of planning tools, inclusionary zoning was recommended as an important tool that can help generate new affordable housing. Figure 2.6-1 illustrates an example of development with and without Inclusionary Zoning applied.



**FIGURE 2.6-1 EXAMPLE OF DEVELOPMENT WITH OR WITHOUT INCLUSIONARY ZONING. WITH IZ BOTH AFFORDABLE AND MARKET UNITS ARE PROVIDED IN A BUILDING. AS DEPICTED HERE, TYPICALLY IZ IS IMPLEMENTED WITH AN INCREASE IN PERMITTED DENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT TO ENSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS ARE VIABLE.**

Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) is a land use planning tool authorized under the *Planning Act*. It was first introduced through *Bill 7, Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016*, and later refined by *Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019* and the *Ontario Regulation 232/18*. The provincial legislation allows municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning in Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA) as a means of ensuring that affordable housing units are brought to the market through new market housing development. (PMTSAs are discussed in Section 2.3 of this Key Directions Report.)

<sup>20</sup> For more information regarding Inclusionary Zoning and affordable housing, see the Fact Sheet provided on this matter on the City's Affordable Housing website: [Affordable Housing Strategy – Inclusionary Zoning](#).

The use of IZ is new in Ontario, however, it has been implemented in many jurisdictions around the world, including many states in the United States of America, as noted in Figure 2.6-2.

Where a municipality has adopted an Inclusionary Zoning By-law, the municipality can then require a certain number of housing units or gross floor area to be affordable in residential developments.

The effectiveness of this by-law is in relation to how broadly it can be used across a municipality, or better yet, a Region. Based on its implementation elsewhere, it is understood that such a by-law provides a level playing field for all development that is taking place within the area of the by-law, because all development are subject to the same requirement to provide a mix of affordably-priced and market-priced housing units.

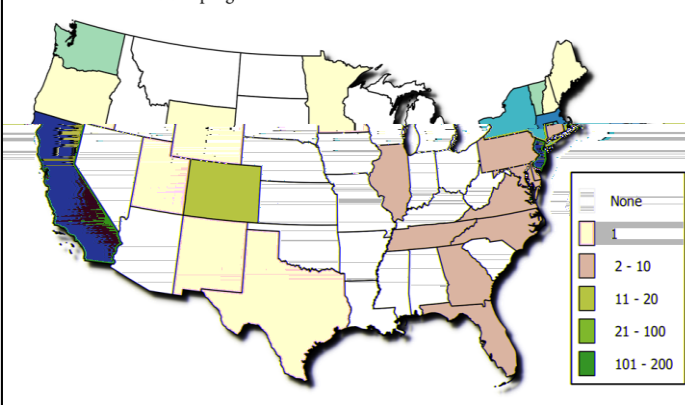
In Ontario, to implement inclusionary zoning and ensure that the implementation of the by-law will be viable, the City must undertake a market analysis, also known as an Assessment Report. This report is required to assess how inclusionary zoning could potentially impact the financial viability of development or redevelopment. (As part of the AHS, the City has completed this step.) The assessment report must then be reviewed by a third party. Following that, the City would need to adopt enabling policies in its Official Plan to permit inclusionary zoning. Finally, the City would then pass an inclusionary zoning by-law to implement the Official Plan policies. All of these steps require public consultation and engagement with stakeholders.

Therefore, a key direction for the Official Plan Update is to consult on and create new policies in the Official Plan to enable inclusionary zoning in the City. As such, in addition to PMTSA related considerations, such as location, permitted use, density and height, to enable the use of the IZ, the City will also need to develop policies in accordance with *Ontario Regulation 232/18*, to address matters such as:

- The minimum size and location of developments that would be subjected to IZ;
- The targeted household incomes that would benefit from IZ;
- The unit types and sizes of affordable housing;
- The period of affordability; and
- How the affordable prices or rents would be determined.

### Total number of IZ programs by state

Figure 1: While many states have IZ programs, the distribution is heavily concentrated. Most states have between 1 and 10 programs, while New Jersey and California both have over 100. Hawaii has one program and Alaska has none.



**FIGURE 2.6-2 USE OF INCLUSIONARY ZONING BY STATE IN THE USA, AS OF 2016**

Source: [Study: Why Do Communities Adopt Inclusionary Zoning?](#)

### 2.6.2.2 Demolition and Conversion of Rental Housing<sup>21</sup>

- Enhance existing policies on demolition and conversion control of rental housing.

As mentioned above, the City completed background research on housing as a part of the Affordable Housing Strategy. This research shows that the City has a low supply of rental housing, with only 17.5% of the total households renting in Richmond Hill in 2016. This is a critical housing gap because rental housing is generally more affordable than ownership housing. As such, the Affordable Housing Strategy recommends that the City enhance its policies and by-law(s) to restrict the demolition and conversion of existing rental housing stock, unless one or more of the following conditions apply:

- The existing building consists of six units or less;
- The vacancy rate of purpose-build rental housing is above 3% for the preceding 3-year reporting period; or
- The demolished rental units will be replaced by the same number of rental units; and,
- Where the demolished units are considered affordable at the time of application, the replacement units must also be affordable.

### 2.6.2.3 Surplus Public Lands<sup>22</sup>

- Prioritize surplus public lands for public benefit, including affordable housing

According to the Affordable Housing Strategy, land cost is one of the major contributors to the cost of housing development. To reduce the burden of high land costs on developers of affordable housing, the Strategy recommends that the City, along with other public agencies, make surplus or underutilized public lands or buildings available for affordable housing. The Strategy also recognizes that all surplus public lands may not be suitable for affordable housing (i.e. lands that are located in an employment area or floodplain), and/or may be necessary for other matters of public interest (i.e. expansion of a public park). As such, the Strategy recognizes that the policy's first objective is to make surplus public lands available to public authorities, and where the land is indeed suitable for affordable housing and not needed for another essential public use, that the public agency engage with a housing provider to enable the development of new affordable housing.

Hence, a key direction for the Official Plan Update is to add policies in the Official Plan to encourage the City and other public agencies to prioritize surplus public lands for public use, including partnerships with private or non-profit organizations to provide affordable housing.

<sup>21</sup> For more information regarding Demolition and Conversion policies and affordable housing, see the Fact Sheet provided on this matter on the City's Affordable Housing website: [Affordable Housing Strategy – Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion](#)

<sup>22</sup> For more information regarding Surplus Public Lands and affordable housing, see the Fact Sheet provided on this matter on the City's Affordable Housing website: [Affordable Housing Strategy – Housing First Policies](#)

### 2.6.2.4 Community Planning Permit System

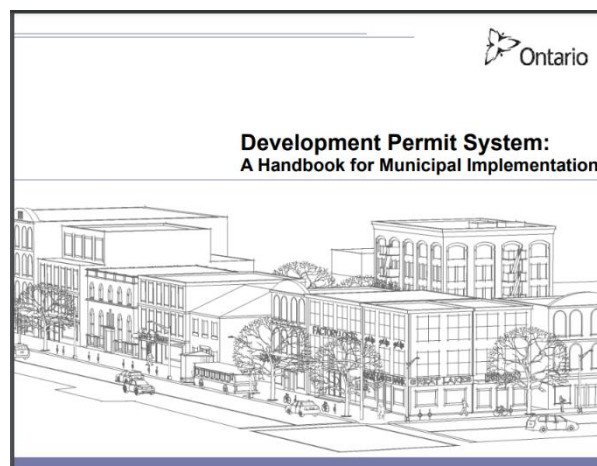
#### ➤ Update policies to enable the use of a Community Planning Permit System.

Presently, the Official Plan provides policy with respect to the Development Permit System (DPS), however, in 2016 the term DPS in the *Planning Act* was renamed the Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) and additional updates were made to its implementing regulation.<sup>23</sup> The use of a CPPS allows the City to streamline development approvals, impose conditions on development, and provide variation to development standards upfront.

In some jurisdictions, where this tool has been used, municipalities have been able to issue planning approvals with conditions that result in more sustainable development. As such, the use of this tool can assist with achieving the CEEP targets and the implementation of the Sustainability Metrics program.

Moreover, the Affordable Housing Strategy identifies the use of a CPPS as another effective planning tool to facilitate the development of affordable housing, and recommends it be considered while the City is undertaking its Comprehensive Zoning By-law update. Should it be determined through that process that the use of a CPPS is a viable option for the City, then updates to the Official Plan policies are needed to address the requirements listed in the implementing Regulation. These updates include providing the following in the Official Plan:

- The area of the CPPS;
- The scope of any delegation of authority;
- The goals and objectives of the CPPS;



**FIGURE 2.6-3, GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPMENT PERMIT SYSTEM, WHICH IS NOW CALLED COMMUNITY PLANNING PERMIT SYSTEM**

Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

<sup>23</sup> The CPPS combines the zoning, site plan and minor variance processes into one application and approval process.

Besides streamlining approval processes, municipalities may delegate decisions on CPPS applications to a committee or to a municipal employee. The delegation of approvals could expedite decision timing as these decisions are not tied to Council's meeting schedule. Consequently, the CPPS is considered a land use planning tool with faster and more efficient process.

An important feature of the CPPS is that it permits a municipality to set development standards and require conditions for approval. The conditions of approval may vary depending on the prescribed criteria set by the municipality. Thus, the CPPS can be tailored to achieve city planning goals of the community. For instance, the CPPS may subject development approval to conditions such as the provision of: environmental protection, affordable housing, public space, or other public amenities.

Another advantage of a CPPS is the ability to identify "permitted uses" as well as "discretionary uses" that may be permitted without a by-law amendment, subject to meeting prescribed criteria set by the municipality. Moreover, the CPPS can establish a range of variations from the minimum and maximum development standards, without a by-law amendment. More information about this is provided at: [Affordable Housing Strategy - CPPS](#)

- The types of conditions that might be included in the CPPS by-law; and,
- The types of criteria that might be included in the CPPS for evaluating discretionary uses and variations.

### 2.6.2.5 Notice and Engagement

- [Update alternative notice and engagement policies.](#)

The *Planning Act* and its associated regulation prescribe how and when a municipality must issue notice and obtain public input on planning matters. However changes in the *Planning Act* resulting from *Bill 73, Smart Growth for Our Communities Act* authorize municipalities to set out a broader range of alternative measures for informing and obtaining views from the public on planning matters. As a result, municipalities have greater flexibility in how they proceed with public notification and engagement, as long as these alternative means are identified in the Official Plan.

As such, a key direction for the Official Plan Update is to update alternative notice and engagement procedure policies. These policies could recognize online or virtual events, and include the use of email and other forms of social media as means for communicating notification. Public engagement is an important part of the land use planning system and as such it is important to hear from the public as to what they consider are appropriate alternative measures to those that are presently prescribed.

### 2.6.2.6 Indigenous Community Engagement

- [Update policies on engagement with Indigenous communities.](#)

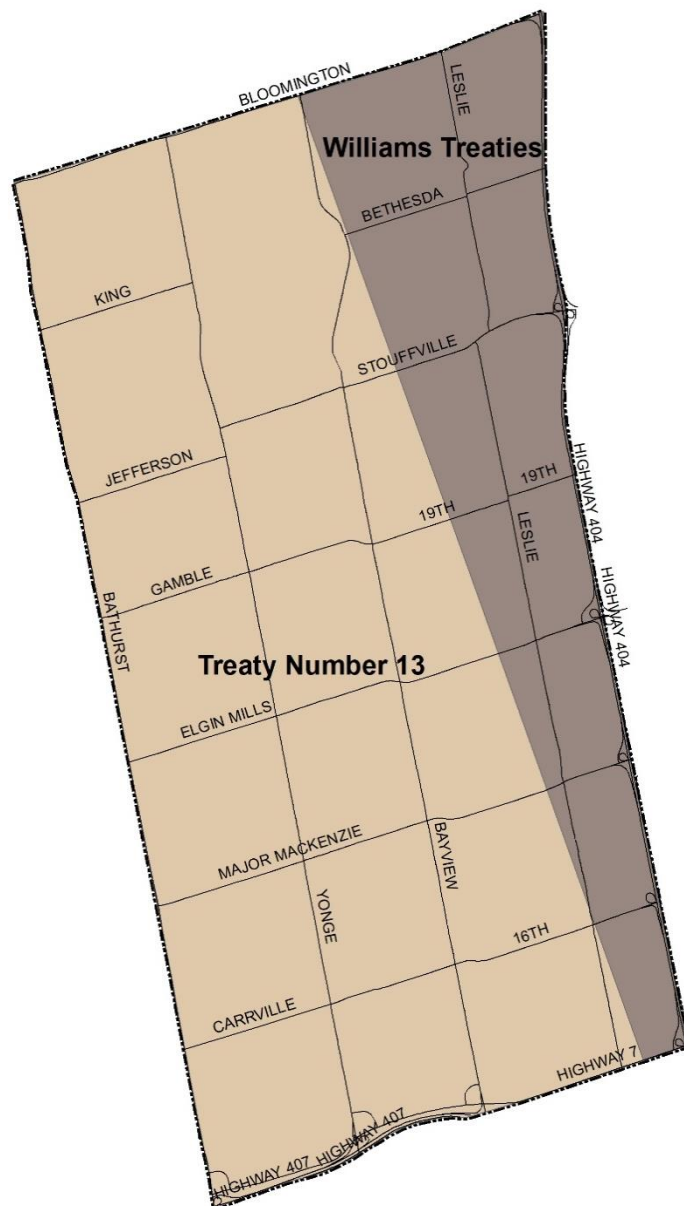
The PPS 2020 requires planning authorities to engage with Indigenous communities and to consider their interests, not only when identifying, protecting and managing cultural heritage and archaeological resources, but also with respect to land use planning matters in general, including the preparation of performance indicators for measuring the effectiveness of Official Plan policies. To that end, key actions respecting engagement with Indigenous communities have been identified, which reflect and build upon consultation and meetings between City staff and representatives from various Indigenous communities that took place in 2021:

- Clarify when and for what purpose the City will initiate or require consultation (i.e., archaeological matters and matters related to Treaty Rights, including matters related to natural heritage protection for harvesting and hunting purposes).
- Clarify matters related to consultation protocol, including but not limited to who initiates consultation and dialogue (i.e. City, development proponent, Indigenous community), to whom requests to engage should be directed, and the means/method of engagement.

To assist with the consultation process, we can also consider updates to the introduction section of the Official Plan to reflect on Indigenous history in Richmond Hill, and include mapping in the Plan to illustrate Treaty Areas (refer to Figure 2.6-4).



These matters need to be further discussed and developed through consultation with Indigenous communities during Phase 3 of the Official Plan update.



**FIGURE 2.6-4 LAND TREATIES THAT COVER THE CITY OF RICHMOND HILL**

Source: City of Richmond Hill, based on Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, First Nations and Treaties Map, published May 20, 2014

### 2.6.2.7 Development Approval

#### ➤ Establish criteria for evaluating official plan amendments.

Planning for Change was prepared for the Official Plan Update to set the context and outline the framework for how the City can grow over the next 20 years. One important recommendation in the document is to develop clear, public criteria for considering and approving official plan amendments. This recommendation is made with the understanding that while the review of all other development applications (i.e. zoning by-law amendments, subdivisions, site plans, consents, and minor variance) must always ensure conformity with the Official Plan, when it comes to an Official Plan Amendment, the test of appropriateness presently relies on higher level Regional and Provincial Plans and Policies. To that end, Planning for Change recommends to:

- Develop clear, public criteria for considering and approving development applications, including OPAs so that project proponents and the larger community can better understand how development can better achieve Richmond Hill's goals, and
- When considering a project approval that requires an OPA, consider it on its own merits.

Therefore, establishing criteria will help the proponent and the larger community understand how the City would evaluate the appropriateness of an amendment to the Official Plan and under what circumstances the City could grant approval. In doing so, the City, the proponent, and the general public can have a more meaningful dialogue on what are the most appropriate outcomes of a proposed development.

Planning for Change recommends that the criteria should be based on the four pillars of the Official Plan Update, and that through public consultation consideration can be given to matters that are commonly accepted as benefits to quality of life within our communities, such as the following:

- Enhanced—more inclusive and inviting—public realm
- Job creation and/or spinoff economic benefits
- Expanded or deeper housing affordability
- Enhanced environmental performance—including climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Improved compliance with Provincial/Regional policy
- Greater alignment with infrastructure investment.
- More responsive to updated transit and/or Provincial/Regional Plans

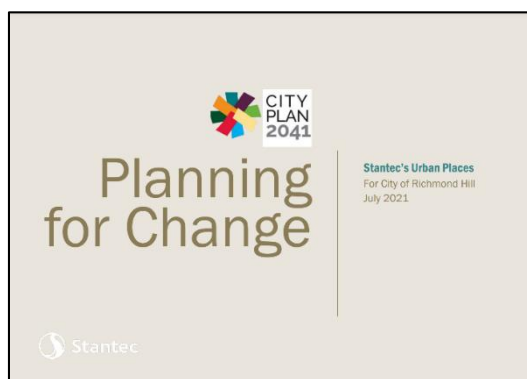


FIGURE 2.6-5 PLANNING FOR CHANGE

### 2.6.3 Connection to Pillars of the Official Plan Update

Key directions respecting new planning tools and implementation improvements to the Official Plan respond to the Pillars of the Official Plan Update as follows:

#### *Grow Our Economy*

The aforementioned key directions seek to streamline approval processes and provide flexibility in setting appropriate development standards. In turn, this will make the planning process more efficient, transparent, and predictable. Improving the implementation of the Official Plan will ultimately help developers and investors to better forecast risks and increase financial viability. Furthermore, the creation of incentive programs will help existing and future business owners to invest in improvements and/or expansion of their facilities. The new planning tools and implementation improvements are intended to improve the approvals process so that more affordable homes and diverse workplaces could be built in a reasonable amount of time.

#### *Design Excellence*

By consulting on the use of a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) through the on-going Comprehensive Zoning By-law development process, the City can have a fulsome discussion with the public, development community and other stakeholders to develop policies and standards that together aim to achieve design excellence. This design excellence may come through the use of conditions that may relate to matters such a sustainable design, affordable housing and natural heritage protection, the use of discretionary provisions which provide sufficient flexibility for a development proponent to advance innovative design ideas that fit well with the local context, and through the use of an approvals process that is much more time and resource efficient than traditional planning processes that require the use of multiple applications to be approved by various approval authorities.

#### *Green and Sustainable*

The key directions address this pillar of the Official Plan Update by proposing planning tools that can require as a condition of development, provision of environmental protection and green / sustainable buildings. Many of these key directions focus on tools that facilitate the provision of affordable housing, and from that perspective, these key directions respond to this pillar in terms of social sustainability as well. Shelter is a fundamental need for all people, and providing affordable shelter has many social and economic benefits for our community at large.

#### *Protect and Enhance*

These key directions largely speak to processes, many of which have a focus on the provision of affordable housing, which is a fundamental need for Richmond Hill residents. Accordingly, the protection of existing rental stock and enhancement of

opportunities to access new housing most certainly speak to this pillar. Additionally, these key directions speak to public engagement and consultation. While it is important to engage the public on planning matters, this can be challenging for the public if they feel compelled to participate in every development process that is underway in their community. To that end, discussing notice provisions and engagement options with the public in general and Indigenous communities in specific, helps to clarify how, when and how often, engagement is needed to ensure that when making planning decisions, we do not lose site of public interest and can continue to protect what we cherish and work to enhance what needs improvement within our community.



### 2.7 Technical Key Directions

Technical Key Directions are provided in response to the following question arising from the 2019 Official Plan Update initiation staff report:

*What changes are required to improve clarity and ensure conformity with Provincial and Regional planning policy and legislation?*

The Official Plan Update will involve a number of technical changes - some of which are mandatory when it comes to conformity with the Regional Official Plan and Provincial Plans and Policies. Staff reports shared with Council in February 2020 (SRPRS.20.003 and SRPRS.20.004) and June 2021 (SRPI.21.055) identify many of the technical conformity matters that we will need to address through this Official Plan Update process. In addition to those, we know that through this process, we can make improvements to the Plan's policies and mapping to better assist with implementation, readability and interpretation.

#### 2.7.1 Technical Key Directions

The following are the main key directions related to technical changes to the Official Plan:

- Update policies, mapping and definitions to conform with applicable Provincial Plans and the York Region Official Plan; and
- Clarify policies where there have been implementation and/or interpretation challenges.

#### 2.7.2 Key Directions Rationale

The rationale and more details for each of the aforementioned key directions is provided below.

##### 2.7.2.1 Provincial and Regional Plan Conformity

- **Update policies, mapping and definitions to conform with applicable Provincial Plans and the York Region Official Plan**

A number of Provincial policies and plans have been either updated or released for the first time since the adoption of the City's Official Plan in 2010. The Source Protection Plan came into effect in December 2015. The Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) were revised and brought into effect in 2017. Whereas the A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and Provincial Policy Statement were revised and took effect in 2020. Finally, the Parkway Belt West Plan, 1978, has been amended from time to time since the adoption of the City's Official Plan, including an amendment that removed lands



located in Richmond Hill from the Plan area in 2020. (Staff report SRPRS.19.053 provides more information on Provincial Plans.) Accordingly, City's Official Plan policies and mapping will need to be updated to conform to these updated Provincial policies and plans to ensure the Official Plan conforms with the latest Provincial policy direction.



**FIGURE 2.7-1 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT AND PLANS**



**FIGURE 2.7-2 CURRENT YORK REGION OFFICIAL PLAN**

In addition, the Region is currently in the process of undertaking a municipal comprehensive review of its Official Plan that was adopted in December 2009. The new Regional Official Plan (ROP) was released in draft in November 2021, and it is anticipated to be considered for adoption by Regional Council in June 2022. Accordingly, new Regional policy direction will be introduced through the ROP update and the City's Official Plan policies will need to conform to the Regional Plan. Staff reports SRPRS.20.003, SRPRS.20.004, and SRPI.21.055 provide more detailed information with respect the ROP update process and emerging policy direction.

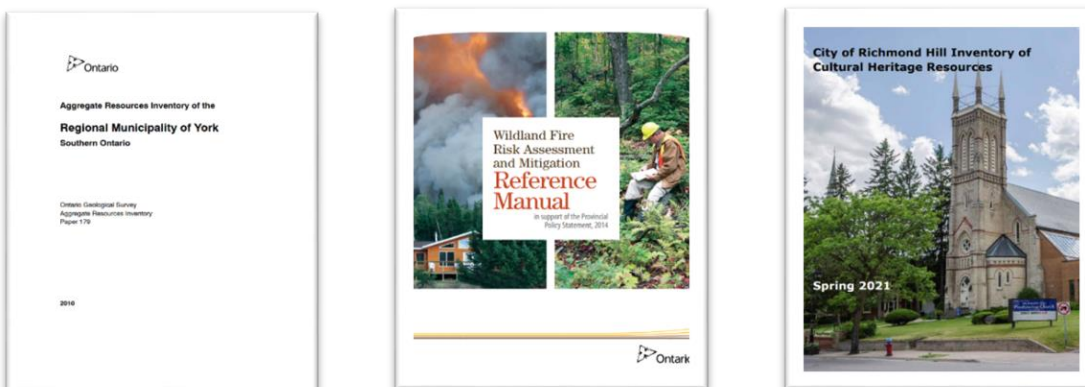
The following is a summary of the technical updates we will need to consider and consult on during Phase 3 of the update process. This list highlights technical matters that have not yet been mentioned in previous sections of the Key Directions Report.

- Consider means of implementing new Excess Soil, Wildland Fire, and various water resource related policies that align with Provincial Plans and which incorporate best practices;
- Update watershed planning and stormwater management policies to assist in implementation of new watershed planning requirements provided in Provincial Plans;

- Update policies to reflect new Provincial direction related to Species At Risk, and update requirements for natural heritage evaluations where the only features include habitat of endangered or threatened species;
- Update policies on the protection and management of mineral aggregate resources, especially in light of updated mineral aggregate mapping prepared by the Province; and
- Update policies respecting cultural heritage to recognize the importance of these features in establishing a “sense of place”, and update policy direction for conservation of built heritage and cultural heritage resources.

### 2.7.2.1.1 Mapping

Complementary changes to mapping in the Schedules of the Official Plan will also need to be undertaken to address matters such as: source water protection vulnerable areas, areas with mineral aggregate resource potential, potential areas of risk of wildland fire, and updates to natural heritage features and water resources system.



**FIGURE 2.7-3 RESOURCES WE CAN USE TO INFORM POLICY AND MAPPING CHANGES: AGGREGATE RESOURCES INVENTORY PAPER, WILDLAND FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION REFERENCE MANUAL, AND RICHMOND HILL'S INVENTORY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCES**

New mapping will also need to be considered and incorporated into the Plan, where available, including mapping related to the Buttonville Airport height limitations and noise exposure forecasting in the vicinity of the airport, in accordance with Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) policies that prohibit certain sensitive uses, such as residential development, from occurring where noise levels from the use of the airport would be too loud for such uses.

Additionally, we may also create mapping on views and view corridors that warrant protection (e.g., Church steeples, views of downtown Toronto) to support the PPS policy related to cultural heritage and sense of place, and to help implement the existing view shed policies of the Official Plan. This mapping could also inform from where such views ought to be protected.

### 2.7.2.1.2 Definitions

Similarly, updates to definitions are required to ensure conformity with Regional and Provincial Plans and policies. The following is a condensed and by no means, an exhaustive list of definitions that reflect Provincial policy changes, and reflect emerging Regional Official Plan policies and definitions:

- Updates definitions for habitat of endangered and threatened species, referencing Provincial and Federal species at risk procedures;
- Update the definition of the term “affordable” to reflect Regional direction and the City’s Affordable Housing Strategy; and
- Update the definition of “Long Term Care Facility” to reflect changes in Provincial policies, and facilitate their development within the City.

### 2.7.2.1.3 Transition and Exception Policies


Section 7.33 of the City’s Official Plan speaks to transition and applicability of the Plan’s policies respecting applications that were in process and/or approved prior to the 2010 Official Plan coming into effect. These policies should be reviewed to determine whether they are still relevant, and to what extent they are necessary to be carried forward through the Official Plan Update. In addition, Chapter 6 of the Official Plan regarding exceptions will need to be reviewed to remove policies that are no longer deemed an “exception” to the Official Plan as a result of changes made through the Official Plan Update.

### 2.7.2.2 Improvements for Clarity

- Clarify policies and/or definitions where there have been implementation or interpretation challenges

In addition to updates to ensure conformity, the City should also consider policy updates to address matters related to interpretation and/or implementation of policy direction. Based on consultation to date and recommendations that have been provided in many of the documents listed in Section 4.0 of this report, a number of revisions to the Official Plan policies and definitions may be considered through this Official Plan Update process, including:

- Improving policies regarding the sharing/coordination of shared access points and interconnections among adjacent and abutting sites and properties;
- Updating policies regarding “Home Occupations” and “Home Businesses” to add flexibility, in light of emerging trends and best practices respecting home occupations as noted in emerging recommendations emanating from the City’s Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review;
- Consider updating urban design policies to address implementation challenges and/or emerging trends related to:

- 
- “Tower Separation” to address instances where there are no window openings on adjacent walls and/or instances for buildings much taller than what is currently permitted in the Official Plan;
  - “Mid-rise building and podium separation” to address instances with and without windows on adjacent walls;
  - “Angular Plane” to address interpretation challenges related to when and how to measure angular plane from streets or from property lines;
  - “Floor Space Index” to address interpretation challenges related to how it is calculated.
  - Consider updating definitions respecting the terms “Low Rise”, “Mid Rise” and “High Rise” to better align with emerging trends and respond to forthcoming policy direction resulting from consultation on matters such as Built Form and Intensification.
  - Consider removing policies in the Plan that require Master Environmental Servicing Plans (MESP) in areas that are already covered by the City’s comprehensive Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan (UMESP), to prevent undertaking redundant processes, while also updating policies to direct that applications that fall within the area covered by the City’s comprehensive UMESP, demonstrate conformity with and respond to direction provided in the approved UMESP; and
  - Consider removing policies that speak to reliance on MESPs that are outdated, as it relates to matters respecting natural heritage features and functions. Natural heritage is dynamic, and as such from time to time evaluations need to be undertaken to confirm existence of, or identify new, natural features, functions and their appropriate buffer areas to ensure their long term protection.

The aforementioned suggested updates to the Plan are not exhaustive. Through Phase 3 of the Official Plan update process these and other matters that are identified by the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities can be considered and discussed.

### 2.7.3 Connection to Pillars of the Official Plan Update

The Technical key directions respond to the Pillars of the Official Plan Update as follows:

### *Grow Our Economy*

Working through the Official Plan Update process, the overall goal of adding clarity is to provide the public, development applicants and investors in Richmond Hill with a clear and common understanding of the direction provided in the Official Plan. This should therefore reduce development approval timelines and foster common understanding of Official Plan direction. In turn, having common understanding and acceptance of the Official Plan direction (i.e. less instances where planning matters are appealed to Ontario Land Tribunal) will aid in attracting prospective employers to Richmond Hill, promote economic investment, and retain business activity in the City.

These key directions also recognize changes in our economy and the proliferation of home businesses. Through the Official Plan update process, there is opportunity to better foster these businesses, which can flourish into major employers over the fullness of time and certainly grow our economy.

### *Design Excellence*

Several of the key directions presented herein seek to address technical matters related to urban design and built form. These key directions seek to update Official Plan guidance so that it is responsive to emerging urban design trends, that are demonstrating that there is a wide spectrum of building types and that our policies and definitions need to account for this variety, while we continue to implement design principles that support: well-designed public and private spaces, walkability, connectivity, a diverse public realm, and provide memorable destinations throughout Richmond Hill.

### *Green and Sustainable*

These key directions address the Pillar of Green and Sustainable by recommending that we consider updates to the Official Plan that address matters related to protecting, enhancing, and where feasible, expanding natural heritage features and functions, adding policies which clarify and provide flexibility for the dedication of environmental lands, and addressing emerging climate change matters such as the potential for wildland fire, and the need to better manage and protect our watersheds.

### *Protect and Enhance*

These key directions include recommendations to strengthen the policies of the Official Plan that seek to protect and enhance places that are cherished within the City, including natural and cultural heritage resources, as well as views of significant built form features and skylines.





# Next Steps



### 3 Next Steps

Following Council endorsement of this Key Directions Report, staff will use this report as a key guiding document to developing and consulting on Official Plan policy and mapping changes. Applying these key directions ensures us that the Official Plan will be updated in accordance with Regional and Provincial direction; and also in a manner that will assist the City in achieving its 2041 City Planning Vision. Making this document available to stakeholders and the public provides everyone with a clear understanding of the scope of work that is required to complete the update, and provides a road-map in terms of how the update will be completed.

With Council endorsement of the key directions, we can then move in earnest into Phase 3 of the Official Plan Update process, which will occur in 2022 and 2023.

#### 3.1 Related Matters


While the Official Plan Update is in process, we also need to be mindful of work that is underway through related initiatives. As indicated during the initiation of the Official Plan Update, the update to the City's Official Plan is being undertaken concurrently with many other City initiatives. By working concurrently, we establish common goals, and we can achieve efficiencies in terms of time and resources. While some of the initiatives listed in Figure 3.1-1 are completed or near completion, others are still in process, and some will continue after the Official Plan Update has been concluded. Timing of these processes is noted below in Section 3.2.



**FIGURE 3.1-1 OFFICIAL PLAN RELATED CITY INITIATIVES**

##### 3.1.1 Community Energy and Emissions Plan, Sustainability Metrics Update, and Lake Wilcox Management Plan

In 2021, Council approved the Community Energy and Emissions Plan (Richmond Hill's Path to a Low Carbon Future) and approved in principle the update to the Sustainability Metrics Assessment Tool. These approvals have informed key directions for the Official Plan Update, and will continue to help guide policy development on matters related to sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation.



The Lake Wilcox Management Plan was updated to provide the state of the lake and to determine if any changes or interventions were necessary for the full remediation of Lake Wilcox. Using water sampling data from the monitoring program run by the City and a computer model to analyze the information gathered in this area, the management plan study determined whether any changes to the management of the lake was necessary. The study is complete and staff is implementing many of the recommendations, such as adjustments to the monitoring program, new public educational activities and better integration of some planning processes along the lake. The Management Plan's policy recommendations will be considered during the update of the Official Plan.

### 3.1.2 Affordable Housing Strategy

Housing affordability is a key determinant of where a person chooses to live. The provision of housing that is affordable to residents of Richmond Hill is imperative to maintaining our existing population within the City and attracting new residents to Richmond Hill. Providing affordable housing, demonstrates to the business industry that the City is committed to attracting and retaining talent and customers, this gives them confidence to invest in Richmond Hill, and by doing so, we will be able to achieve our 2041 prominent complete community vision. Endorsement of the Affordable Housing Strategy is the first step of demonstrating commitment to the goal of facilitating development of the variety of needed housing articulated in the Strategy. Implementing the actions identified in the Strategy in relation to updates to the Official Plan is one of the next steps for the City to undertake in order to better facilitate the provision of affordable housing.

### 3.1.3 Comprehensive Zoning By-law (Zone Richmond Hill)

Continued work to inform the Comprehensive Zoning By-law also informs changes to the Official Plan. As such, staff will continue to hold joint public consultations to minimize consultation fatigue, and to get the public feedback we need to advance objectives of both the Official Plan update and the Comprehensive Zoning By-law.

### 3.1.4 Master Plan Updates

There are various master plan updates underway:

- Transportation Master Plan (including Cycling, Pedestrian and Trails Master Plans)
- Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan
- Parks Plan
- Recreational Plan
- Cultural Plan

As noted in Section 2.1 Urban Structure, a key action that needs to be undertaken (and is underway) is to do some technical modelling to determine infrastructure

requirements to support the forecasted growth for the City. This analysis is very important in determining infrastructure (e.g. water and wastewater servicing, roads, etc.) as well as other public realm requirements, and providing sufficient policy direction in the Official Plan to guide both public and private development that collectively will achieve the vision and principles of the Official Plan.

### 3.1.5 Other Studies and Strategies

The City is also undertaking the following studies that are near completion:

- Investment Attraction Strategy
- Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy
- Stratification and Public Easement Study
- Environment Strategy Update

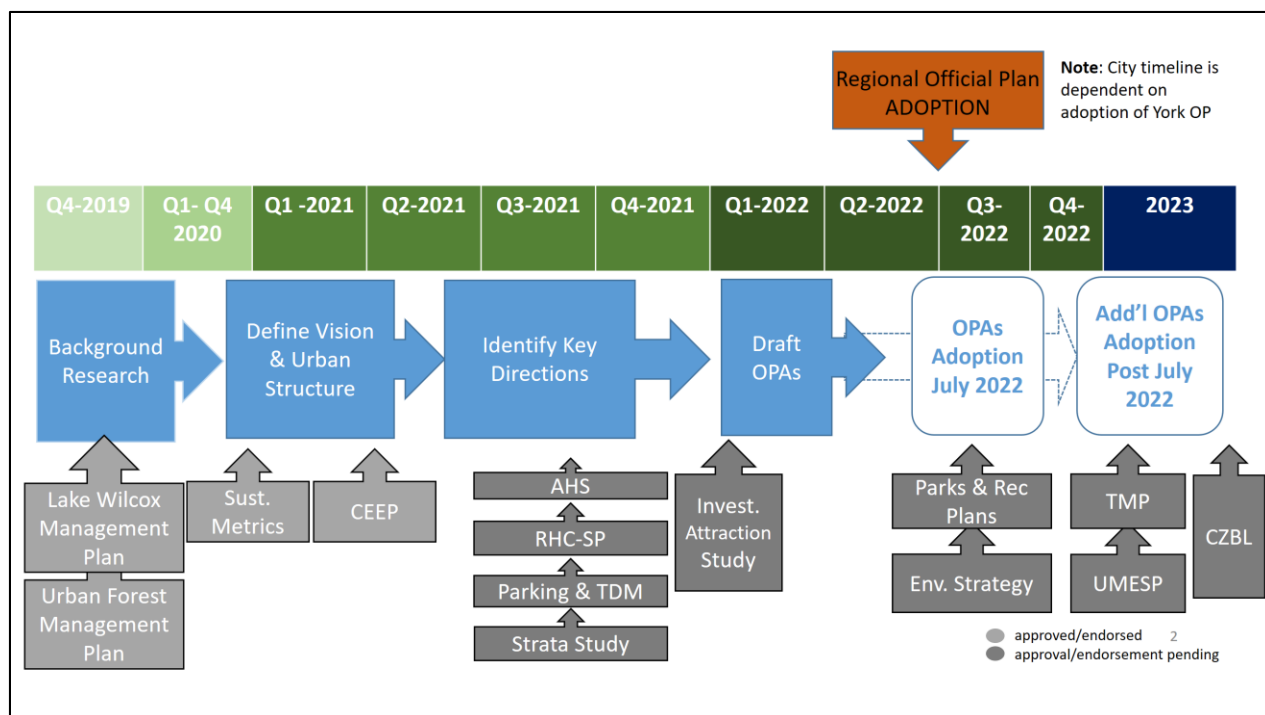
These studies and strategies are informed by inputs that have been used in this Key Directions Report and when completed, these strategies/studies will help to inform policy and mapping changes for the Official Plan as well.

## 3.2 Project Coordination Overview

Figure 3.2-1 below provides an overview of the Official Plan Update process in relation to the Regional Official Plan and related projects that are completed or in process. The Official Plan Update timing and the timing of related initiatives are inter-related. The York Region Municipal Comprehensive Review, however, is a key determinant of the project timeline for the Official Plan Update. The timing of the adoption of the forthcoming new Regional Official Plan (ROP) and its approval by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (which is not subject to appeal), will be a major factor for the City in determining when to advance local Official Plan Amendments for Council adoption, in order to ensure that amendments conform with the updated and approved Regional Official Plan.

The draft Regional Official Plan was released to the public for consultation in November, 2021. Accordingly, Regional staff indicate that following consultation on the draft ROP, they will bring forward a final ROP for Regional Council adoption in June of 2022. On that basis, Provincial approval of the ROP is expected to take place in the fall of 2022.

This is important to note, because without the ROP approval, the Region will not be in a position to approve Official Plan Update related Official Plan Amendments that are required to conform with the approved ROP. Based on this timeline, the update to the City's Official Plan is proposed to take place in three batches of Official Plan Amendments (OPAs), which are described in the following sections.



**FIGURE 3.2-1 PROJECT TIMELINE OVERVIEW**

## 3.3 Proposed Amendments to the Official Plan by July 2022

Staff are proposing to advance two amendments to the Official Plan before Council summer recess in July. The first amendment would be to update the Official Plan to better reflect the 2041 Vision and the Urban Structure. The second amendment would be in relation to the City’s neighbourhoods to advance “gentle density” provisions and the desire to better respond to complete “15-minute” community principles. These provisions are well supported by the Regional Official Plan today and are likely to continue to be supported in the forthcoming new ROP. Accordingly, these two Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) can advance without risk of being forestalled by the Region’s own ROP update exercise. This approach is similar to what was applied when the City advanced OPA 18.2 (the Leslie Street Institutional Area) in 2020. The OPA 18.2 was proposed as part of the City’s Official Plan Update and was fast tracked to support the development of a long-term care facility that has committed Provincial funding. This Official Plan Amendment received Regional approval, and is in effect today.

While two Official Plan Amendments are proposed, it is anticipated that both would be brought to a single Special Council Public Meeting for Council consideration and public comment.



### 3.3.1 OPA 18.# – Vision and Urban Structure

This Official Plan Amendment would be informed by the proposed City Plan 2041 Vision provided in Section 1.2, and key directions listed in the following sections of this report: **Urban Structure** (Section 2.1), **Built Form** (Section 2.2), **Intensification** (Section 2.3), **Employment** (Section 2.4) and **Climate Change** (Section 2.5).

Subject to forthcoming consultation, the amendment would include the following actions:

- Update Chapter 2 to incorporate the 2041 City Planning Vision, and recognize the importance of City planning to address economic prosperity, housing affordability, and climate change.
- Update Chapter 3 and Schedule A1 Urban Structure to initiate “Big Moves” (including employment conversion and expansion of intensification areas), clarify intensification hierarchy, and introduce new greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction target provided in the Community Energy and Emissions Plan, and updated tree canopy and woodland cover targets in accordance with the Urban Forest Management Plan.
- Update other sections of Official Plan as needed to address proposed changes and provide direction regarding implementation of these changes, i.e. need for subsequent Official Plan Amendments for full implementation.

### 3.3.2 OPA 18.# – Neighbourhoods

This Official Plan Amendment would be informed by the proposed key directions listed in the following sections: **Urban Structure** (Section 2.1), **Built Form** (Section 2.2), **Employment** (Section 2.4) and **Climate Change** (Section 2.5).

Subject to forthcoming consultation, the amendment would largely focus on updating section 4.9 Neighbourhoods of the Official Plan, to address matters related to “15 minute” complete communities and “gentle density” within the Neighbourhood land use designation.

## 3.4 Proposed Amendments to the Official Plan post Regional Official Plan approval in early/mid 2023

The following list of Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) are linked to the Regional Official Plan, and do require its adoption and provincial approval. These amendments would address: housekeeping matters and conformity with Provincial and Regional Plans, areas designated for employment uses, and most areas designated for “Centre” or “Corridor.” These proposed OPAs would be brought to a single Special Council Public Meeting and presented in a single draft consolidation of the Official Plan.

### 3.4.1 OPA 18.1 – Employment Policy Update

The proposed employment amendments would aim to address policy updates for lands designated Employment Area, Employment Corridor, and Office. The preparation of and consultation on the Official Plan Amendment would build on the consultation that was undertaken in 2020, as well as the findings of the Investment Attraction Strategy. This amendment would take into consideration key directions related to **Intensification** (Section 2.3) and **Employment** (Section 2.4). Subject to further consultation, this amendment would revise the draft OPA 18.1 to be more responsive to the broader consultation and update policies regarding permitted uses and urban design within the Employment Area, Employment Corridor, and Office (within the North Leslie Secondary Plan area) designations, and focus on changes within Section 4.8 and Chapter 9 of the Official Plan.

### 3.4.2 OPA 18.# – Housekeeping

The Housekeeping Official Plan Amendment will address general Provincial and Regional conformity matters as well as technical changes and implementation tools related key directions (as noted in Section 2.6 **Implementation** and Section 2.7 **Technical** of this report). It will also be informed by clarification related key directions identified in **Built Form** (Section 2.2), **Intensification** (Section 2.3), **Employment** (2.4) and **Climate Change** (Section 2.5). This amendment could also update mapping to, among other matters, recognize new streets, update natural heritage features, minor boundary adjustments, etc. This will likely be a fairly substantive Official Plan Amendment, given its broad technical focus. Consultation on this amendment, in particular, will include Indigenous communities as this amendment would address topics that have been identified by these communities to be of interest to them such as consultation, archaeological/cultural heritage, and natural heritage policy updates.

### 3.4.3 Centres and Corridors Official Plan Amendments (OPAs)

The other OPAs listed below are related to centres and corridors. These are proposed as separate OPAs given that they may garner more area specific interests; and by doing so, adoption and approval of policies and mapping that are specific to each of these areas can occur independently of one another. These discrete amendments allow staff, Council, and stakeholders to take the time they need to finalize these amendments, notwithstanding the desire to bring them all forward concurrently.

These OPAs will largely be informed by key directions provided in **Intensification** (Section 2.3), and also in **Built Form** (Section 2.2), **Employment** (2.4) and **Climate Change** (Section 2.5).

### 3.4.3.1 OPA 18.# - Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Corridors

A general MTSA Corridor amendment is proposed. Subject to consultation, this amendment would propose to amend Schedule A3 to identify all of the approved Regional Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), and any or all that will be designated by the Region as “Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs)<sup>24</sup>” in accordance with the Planning Act. Monitoring policies of the Official Plan could also be updated to reflect the minimum density targets for these areas and how these targets will be monitored. This amendment could also address areas that are not subject to a specific Official Plan Amendment (as noted below) by updating policies related to height and density, in accordance with requirements of the Regional Official Plan and the *Planning Act*.

It is noted that, in accordance with the *Planning Act*, certain elements of this Official Plan Amendment (as it relates to PMTSAs) will not be subject to appeal following Regional approval.

### 3.4.3.2 OPA 18.# - Yonge and 16<sup>th</sup> Key Development Area

Subject to further consultation, this Official Plan Amendment (OPA) could update Section 4.4 Key Development Areas of the Official Plan, building on the draft Secondary Plan for this area, and provide more detailed implementing policies and schedules. Here too, should this area be designated as a Protected Major Transit Station Area by the Region, elements of this OPA as it relates to permitted use, minimum and maximum height and density, will not be subject to appeal following Regional approval.

### 3.4.3.3 OPA 18.# – Village, OPA 18.# - Newkirk, and OPA 18.# - Oak Ridges Local Centres

Subject to further consultation, these Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) could update Section 4.3 Local Centres of the Official Plan. The updates could provide more detailed implementing policies and schedules for these areas. Here too, should these areas be designated as Protected Major Transit Station Areas by the Region, elements of these OPAs as it relates to permitted use, minimum and maximum height and density, will not be subject to appeal following Regional approval.

## 3.5 Proposed Amendments to Official Plan in late 2023

The final four amendments listed below are those where much more investigation, analysis, and consultation may be required, than the preceding amendments noted above. For that reason, the following amendments relate to areas that are being redesignated from **Parkway Belt West Plan, Neighbourhood, and Employment**

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<sup>24</sup> Protected MTSAs are discussed in Section 2.3.2.1 Intensification Hierarchy and Section 2.6 in relation to Inclusionary Zoning.

designations to a mixed-use designation. Two other amendments that may be considered relate to enabling the adoption of an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) By-law, and implementing a Community Planning Permit System. These are more likely to be brought to Council in late 2023 given that more time will be required to develop and consult on these matters. These proposed Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) would be brought to Special Council Public Meeting(s) as they are perfected.

These proposed area specific Official Plan Amendments are largely informed by the **Intensification** (Section 2.3) as well as the **Built Form** (Section 2.2), **Employment** (Section 2.4) and **Climate Change** (Section 2.5) key directions. Similar to the Centre amendments noted above, should these areas be designated as a Protected Major Transit Station Area by the Region, elements of these OPAs related to permitted use, minimum and maximum height and density, will not be subject to appeal following Regional approval.

The Inclusionary Zoning enabling OPA would be informed by the **Intensification** (Section 2.3) and **Implementation** (Section 2.6) key directions. This OPA would provide details on the development of an Inclusionary Zoning By-law that includes matters as required by the *Planning Act* and the associated Ontario Regulation. In accordance with the *Planning Act*, Regional approval of the Inclusionary Zoning enabling policies is not subject to appeal.

Finally, updating the current Development Permit System (now called Community Planning Permit System) policies of the Official Plan may also take place in late 2023, in order to better align with the work that is being undertaken for the development of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law. As noted in Section 2.6 **Implementation**, the *Planning Act* requires that the Official Plan provide specific direction in order to enable the adoption of a Community Planning Permit System By-law, as such this matter will require more consultation, analysis, and coordination with the Zone Richmond Hill process.

### 3.5.1 OPA 18.# – Bathurst and Highway 7

This Official Plan Amendment (OPA) can only advance should the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing amend the Parkway Belt West Plan to remove lands from the Plan area. Presently, the Minister is considering private applications to undertake this amendment on a site-specific basis.

Given that the forthcoming Official Plan Amendment would be proposing a significant shift in land use, redesignating the areas from Parkway Belt West Plan to **Local Centre**, it warrants more consultation with the public and stakeholders, including the City of Vaughan. Additional technical studies and analysis may also be required beyond infrastructure master plans that are already underway.

### 3.5.2 OPA 18.# – Bayview and Highway 7

The proposed Official Plan Amendment (OPA) for the Bayview and Highway 7 area could also result in a significant shift in land use, whereby the OPA would be redesignating the area from Neighbourhood to Regional Mixed Use Corridor/Local Centre. As such, it too warrants more consultation with the public and stakeholders, including the City of Markham. Furthermore, given that this area is adjacent to Richmond Hill Centre, planning for this area will also be influenced by the finalized Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan, as well as the Provincial Transit Oriented Community initiative that are presently underway.

### 3.5.3 OPA 18.# – East Beaver Creek and Highway 7

The proposed Official Plan Amendment (OPA) for the East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 area could result in redesignating lands from Employment Corridor and Employment Area to Local Centre. This amendment would largely acknowledge the existing mixed-use condition of this area. However, the development of the OPA requires more technical analysis and public and stakeholder consultation to develop policy and mapping for this area that will appropriately guide future development to address both current and future conditions. Another technical matter that will need to be addressed is the on-going protection of the nearby Buttonville Airport operation, for as long as the airport continues to be functional. As such, it too warrants more consultation with the public and stakeholders, including the City of Markham.


### 3.5.4 OPA 18.# – Enabling Inclusionary Zoning (IZ)

As discussed in the Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) and its related background report, the use of Inclusionary Zoning is a tool that the City can use to require the provision of affordable housing. The Planning Act requires that (a) the Region to designate Protected Major Transit Station Areas, and (b) the Official Plan to provide policy to enable the use of this IZ tool, and that prior to the adoption of such policies, an assessment be undertaken and peer reviewed. Through the AHS work, the assessment has been completed; but, further analysis and consultation is required prior to developing the prescribed policies for the Official Plan.

### 3.5.5 OPA 18.# – Updating Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) Enabling Policies

As also discussed in the Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) and its related background report, the use of a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) By-law is a tool that the City can use to facilitate and to require the provision of affordable housing. And, as noted in Section 2.6, this tool can also be effective for the provision of sustainable building design and on-going natural heritage protection. Prior to adopting such a By-law, however, specific enabling policies are required to be provided in the Official Plan. While the Official Plan does recognize the use of this tool,





it does not yet provide the full suite of prescribed policies, and as such it would be prudent to consult on the use of a CPPS while the City continues to do its work in relation to the Comprehensive Zoning by-law update. Specific research on the use of this tool, includes understanding how the permit system will work, developing the appropriate policy and by-law provisions, and determining the appropriate administration for processing and approving development permits, should be CPPS By-law be enacted.

### 3.6 Post Approval of Official Plan Update OPAs

Following the approval of all or most of the update related OPAs, additional modifications to the Official Plan that do not require formal adoption (in accordance with Section 1.5 and Policy 7.1 (14) of the Official Plan) will take place. These modifications include matters such as: updates to appendices, figures, and preambles. These modifications would likely occur through the preparation of a formal consolidation of the Official Plan.

### 3.7 Continue Consultative Process with All Partners

This Official Plan update process and its future implementation cannot occur without the ongoing participation of City staff, residents, businesses, and Council, as well as many stakeholders, interest groups, Indigenous communities, different levels of government and agencies listed in Figure 3.7-1 below. For that reason, staff continue to endeavour to update and include representatives from these sectors in each phase of the Official Plan update process. More details regarding upcoming engagement events, such as: open houses, workshops, stakeholder sessions, online survey, Council Public Meeting, Official Plan Update Committee meetings, etc., will be posted on the Official Plan Update webpage. They will also be promoted through similar means used to date, including email messages, notices in local papers, social media, etc.



**FIGURE 3.7-1 PARTNERS IN THE OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION**



# References

## References

The Key Directions provided herein are informed by the following resources<sup>25</sup>:

### [Affordable Housing Strategy](#)

<b>Prepared by:</b>	SHS Consulting
<b>Status:</b>	Complete
<b>Purpose of Study:</b>	The purpose of the Affordable Housing Strategy is to provide a consolidated set of actions to be undertaken by the City in order to facilitate the development of affordable housing that will meet the needs of current and future Richmond Hill residents.

### [Aging in Place Technical Paper](#)

<b>Prepared by:</b>	Gladki Planning Associates
<b>Status:</b>	In process
<b>Purpose of Study:</b>	The paper addresses the concept and implementation of aging in place from land use and zoning perspectives. The main goal of this paper is to inform the City of one or more zoning approaches appropriate to implementing the aging in place concept in a manner relevant to the City of Richmond Hill.

### [Automotive Commercial Uses Technical Paper](#)

<b>Prepared by:</b>	Gladki Planning Associates
<b>Status:</b>	In process
<b>Purpose of Study:</b>	<p>This technical paper focuses on the different forms and types of automotive uses, including automotive service commercial uses, as presently defined in the City's Official Plan.</p> <p>Amongst others, this technical paper is to consider and address the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of and differentiation amongst automotive related land uses and automotive service commercial uses;</li><li>• Appropriate definitions for these land uses;</li></ul>

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<sup>25</sup> Titles that are underlined and in blue text include a hyperlink to the referenced document(s) and/or supplementary information.



- The range, scale, built-form and site design considerations for these land uses that would be appropriate to locate within the Centres and Corridors, Neighbourhood and Employment lands;
- Emerging trends for these land uses including, but not limited to, locational criteria, consideration of co-location, campusing and/or integration of different uses.

### Cannabis Cultivation and Processing

**Prepared by:** Meridian Planning

**Status:** Draft

**Purpose of Study:** Amongst others, this technical paper is to consider and address the following matters as it relates to cannabis cultivation and processing land uses:

- Federal and Provincial regulatory framework and impacts on the establishment of land use controls;
- Regulatory considerations such as enforcement, odour and social considerations;
- Forms of use, location, and scale of commercial cultivation and processing;
- Examples of municipal policy on cannabis production.

The focus of the paper will principally address historical zoning issues, emerging zoning trends and complimentary zoning tools. The main goal and objectives of the paper is to:

- Inform a zoning approach to address the matter in a manner relevant to the City of Richmond Hill;
- Establish a framework to develop appropriate performance standards in conformity to the City's Official Plan including possible amendments to the Official Plan which could expand permissions for Cannabis cultivation and processing, if needed;
- Inform an implementation framework.



## Centres and Corridors and Employment Corridor Typology Study

**Prepared by:** DTAH, Poulos Chung, Gladki Planning, and Robert Freedman

**Status:** In progress

**Purpose of Study:** The Official Plan designates certain areas along Yonge Street, Highway 7 and Major Mackenzie Drive as Centres and Corridors and lands within the business parks as Employment Corridor. A mix of low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise buildings are permitted in these designations subject to detailed policies, such as location and compatibility.

The Study focuses on the following matters:

- The placement of building forms such as low-rise, mid-rise and high-rise uses that are appropriate within the Urban Structure along major corridors in the City;
- The site design considerations to implement the building forms within the focus area; and
- The establishment of appropriate zoning standards related to the building forms.

## Climate Change Framework

**Prepared by:** Sustainability Section, Planning and Infrastructure Department

**Status:** Council Endorsed

**Purpose of Study:** Richmond Hill's corporate Climate Change Framework is a corporate guiding document that outlines how the City can improve climate resiliency through various municipal systems or business functions. Priorities for climate action and applying a climate change lens are outlined for a number of municipal systems, such as corporate governance, land use planning, and asset management.

## Community Energy and Emissions Plan ("Richmond Hill's Path to a Low-Carbon Future")

**Prepared by:** Sustainability Solutions Group and Sustainability Section, Planning and Infrastructure Department

**Status:** Approved by Council

**Purpose of Study:** The Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) is a community plan to reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and promote related economic benefits.

### Community Uses Technical Paper

**Prepared by:** Gladki Planning Associates

**Status:** In process

**Purpose of Study:** The paper addresses community uses, with a focus on uses within the Neighbourhoods and Employment areas. The City's Official Plan prescribes a range of community uses and locational criteria within the Urban Structure in accordance with Section 4.1 policies of the Official Plan. For the purposes of this paper, community uses include schools, places of worship, child care centres, social services, cultural services, and other privately-operated public-serving facilities operated from private property or leasing space in city facilities. The main goal of this paper is to assess whether changes to the Official Plan policies are warranted, to inform a zoning approach relevant to the city, and to establish a framework to develop appropriate development standards.

### Environment Strategy Update

**Prepared by:** Sustainability Section, Planning and Infrastructure Department

**Status:** Under development

**Purpose of Study:** Mid-point update to the City's Environment Strategy, Greening the Hill: Our Community, Our Future.

### Home Occupations Technical Paper

**Prepared by:** Meridian Planning Consultants

**Status:** In progress

**Purpose of Study:** The City's Official Plan prescribes a range of home based business uses within the Settlement Area (urban areas) and within the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area outside of the Settlement Area (rural areas). For the purposes of this technical paper, home based businesses including home occupations, home businesses, home industries, and live-work units, are considered. Presently, the Official Plan policies prescribe locational, scale, and design criteria for such uses. This technical paper is to provide an analysis on the basis of these policy prescriptions to inform the Comprehensive Zoning By-law review.

### Implementation Tools Technical Paper

**Prepared by:** Meridian Planning Consultants

**Status:** In progress

**Purpose of Study:** The City is presently undertaking a technical paper on implementation tools prescribed by the Planning Act. This paper addresses:

- The form of a Zoning By-law;
- Community Planning Permit System; and
- Minor Variance Criteria.

The purpose of this technical paper is to inform one or more zoning approaches that are appropriate to implement the land use and built form controls in the Comprehensive Zoning By-law Project.

### Investment Attraction Strategy

**Prepared by:** MDB Insight

**Status:** In progress

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this project is to create an innovative, dynamic, and overarching Investment Attraction Strategy (the project) that assesses conditions, sets priorities and recommends actions to attract complementarily, non-residential employment-generating investment opportunities to Richmond Hill.

The resulting strategy will be action-based and focused on priorities, implementation and effective measurement. The Strategy considers current economic development programming and the policy framework that has been adopted or is under development, including local and regional Economic Development Strategies, Official Plans and related Secondary Plans.

### Lake Wilcox Management Plan

**Prepared by:** AECOM and Water Resources Section, Planning and Infrastructure Department

**Status:** Final

**Purpose of Study:** Conduct a state-of-the lake review of Lake Wilcox and determine whether any policy or monitoring changes are needed.

### Low-Rise Medium Density Typology Study for Residential Areas

**Prepared by:** DTAH, Gladki Planning, and Poulos Chung

**Status:** In progress

**Purpose of Study:** The Official Plan designates residential areas in the City as Neighbourhoods. Low rise medium density residential uses such as townhouses, apartments, and mixed-use residential and commercial buildings are permitted in the Neighbourhoods subject to detailed policies such as location and compatibility. This study considers low rise medium density residential uses in residential-only and mixed-use building forms.

The study focuses on:

- The placement of building forms appropriate in the Neighbourhoods; and
- The site design considerations to implement the building forms.

The study findings will inform the Comprehensive Zoning By-law with:

- The opportunity to pre-zone lands for low rise medium density uses; and
- To establish appropriate zoning standards related to the building forms.

### Official Plan Update Staff Reports

**Prepared by:** Policy Team, Planning and Infrastructure Department

**Status:** Received by Council

**Purpose of Reports:** Several Staff Reports have been prepared to seek direction from Council regarding the updating of the Official Plan. These reports have also been prepared to inform Council and the public regarding the Official Plan Update process, and also to address related matters such as the Region of York's Municipal Comprehensive Review.

### Parks Plan, Recreational Plan, and Cultural Plan Update

**Parks Plan Prepared by:** Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd., Planning and Infrastructure Department, Parks and Natural Heritage Planning

**Cultural Plan Prepared By:** Recreation and Culture Division

**Recreational Plan Prepared By:** Recreation and Culture Division

<b>Status:</b>	In process
<b>Purpose of Study:</b>	<p>The City is initiating a coordinated review of these three Plans to guide parks, recreation, and culture needs to 2041.</p> <p>Richmond Hill's Parks Plan and Parkland Dedication By-law guides the development of new and revitalized parks and outdoor recreation facilities for the next 20 years.</p> <p>The Recreation and Culture Division depends on the Recreational Plan to guide future direction for recreational facilities, programs and services.</p> <p>The Richmond Hill Cultural Plan guides cultural development, ensuring that culture is a part of all facets of the City's planning and decision making; where diversity, gender and age are reflected in all aspects of cultural expression and where an authentic and distinctive identity inspires a creative spirit.</p>

### Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy

<b>Prepared by:</b>	HDR and Development Engineering and Infrastructure Planning, Planning and Infrastructure Department
<b>Status:</b>	In progress
<b>Purpose of Study:</b>	<p>The Parking and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategy will serve as guidance document, which establishes clearly-defined rates, parameters, applicability, and a framework for off-street parking supply and TDM standards and requirements throughout the City for new development. It will also serve as an update to the Richmond Hill 2010 Parking Strategy – Draft Final Report. The purpose of this document is to align development policy with the City's vision of building a new form of urban, affordable and transit-oriented community. The Parking and TDM Strategy will also serve to provide input to the update of the Richmond Hill Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review.</p>



### Planning For Change

**Prepared by:** David Dixon, Stantec Urban Places

**Status:** Final

**Purpose of Study:** This study provides a “playbook” for the Official Plan update. It provides three critical roles for this Official Plan Update process:

- Inform the Official Plan Update by providing information and guidance as it relates to emerging trends and opportunities that result from them.
- Guide Council and planning staff to successfully implement the updated Official Plan over time.
- Share perspective gained from working with communities facing similar opportunities and challenges, to support Richmond Hill in managing change to create a more complete community.

### Residential Infill Development Technical Paper

**Prepared by:** Gladki Planning Associates

**Status:** In progress

**Purpose of Study:** The City’s Official Plan provides policies for infill of low rise low density residential development, such as single detached and semi-detached dwelling types, within the Neighbourhood designation, and specifically, Priority Infill Areas. Over the years, the City has approved many Infill Studies corresponding with these policies and has approved several Tertiary plans to facilitate infill development of built-up neighbourhoods. However, there are other built-up neighbourhoods of the city that are presently experiencing redevelopment pressure where there is a lack of specific guiding documents. This study focuses on infill development within these areas relative to the built context of the Neighbourhood designation and the policies within the Plan.

The following forms of infill development are being reviewed:

- Residential lot creation on existing streets through consent to sever approvals;
- Residential back lot plans of subdivision; and
- Demolition of existing buildings and rebuilding on existing residential lots.

The study includes a review of current planning approvals for new development in the established neighbourhoods and current development trends experienced by the City. This will provide guidance for the new Comprehensive Zoning By-law to regulate redevelopment in established neighbourhoods, and ensure new development remains compatible with the existing surrounding community.

### Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Study Reports

**Prepared by:** Urban Strategies Inc.

**Status:** Final

**Purpose of Study:** Background study reports that inform the development of the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan.

### Short Term and Shared Accommodations Technical Paper

**Prepared by:** Gladki Planning Associates

**Status:** In progress

**Purpose of Study:** The City is seeking to determine if there is a need to regulate short term and shared accommodations; and if so, find a balance between encouraging these forms and placing limits on their scope in order to preserve the residential character of the local community.

## Stratification and Public Easement Study

**Prepared by:** IBI Group

**Status:** Completed


**Purpose of Study:** The City has undertaken a study to better understand potential alternative ownership arrangements within Right-Of-Ways (ROWs) and linear/urban parkland, when and where they are appropriate. The study evaluates industry best practices and serves as a high-level resource document for City staff when there is a request for an alternative ownership arrangement to support Official Plan policies.

### Sustainability Metrics Update Project

**Prepared by:** Morrison Hershfield

**Status:** Approved in Principle by Council

**Purpose of Study:** Part 1 of the project was to update the suite of Sustainability Metrics since it was created in 2014. These metrics are used to



account for how well proposed development may perform in terms of its application of sustainable development measures. Part 2 of the project was to investigate eligible incentives that will support the uptake of the metrics by the development industry.

### Transportation Master Plan Update

**Prepared by:** WSP and Development Engineering and Infrastructure Planning, Planning and Infrastructure Department

**Status:** In progress

**Purpose of Study:** This study is an update to the City's Transportation Master Plan, Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan, and Trails Master Plan, which will culminate into one comprehensive document.

This Transportation Master Plan Update is a critical document for determining the city's transportation needs and identifying the policies, objectives and recommended infrastructure requirements needed to enhance and promote multi-modal mobility for commuter, recreational, and freight purposes, within and outside of the city. The project will endeavour to satisfy existing and projected future road operational needs, ensure road safety, and support a vibrant downtown, and other Major Transit Station Areas through a multi-modal network.

Through the preparation of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Update, road classifications will be confirmed, typical mid-block cross sections will be developed that incorporate various cross-sectional elements in the City's Public Realm Master Plan, and active transportation facilities may also be identified. The TMP Update will consider state-of-art best practices in design, and emerging technologies, and a complete streets policy will be developed in order to make streets safer and more livable.

### Urban Forest Management Plan.

**Prepared by:** Sustainability Section, Planning and Infrastructure Department (Formerly Natural Environment Section)

**Status:** Endorsed by Council

**Purpose of Study:** The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) recognizes the strong foundation of urban forest management in Richmond Hill, and provides a comprehensive approach for managing the urban forest. It prioritizes efforts and identifies opportunities for

improvement by streamlining workflows, leveraging technology and innovation, and optimizing resources.

Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan Update

**Prepared by:** Civica Infrastructure Inc., Development Engineering and Infrastructure Planning, Planning and Infrastructure Department

**Status:** In process

**Purpose of Study:** The 2014 Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan (UMESP) was undertaken to provide direction to new Secondary Plans within the City’s growth centers and corridors, and set out environmental servicing requirements for future development applications. The 2014 UMESP identified necessary municipal infrastructure improvements within the study area, including costing to support the City development charge bylaws. The study area limits are consistent with the growth centers and intensification corridors identified in the Official Plan.

The 2014 UMESP established municipal servicing requirements for the study area, including sanitary drainage, storm drainage, water supply and distribution systems, stormwater management, and transportation, along with assessments of energy conservation strategies, district heating and cooling systems, and community energy plans in accordance with the Official Plan. The UMESP also included an assessment of development impacts to the existing natural groundwater and surface water systems and natural heritage features, and where appropriate recommended mitigation measures and enhancement or restoration opportunities.

The purpose of the UMESP Update is to update the Water and Wastewater Servicing components of the 2014 UMESP to reflect updated land use and growth forecasts within the study area, and to reflect updates to existing conditions and related assumptions based on growth that has occurred within the study area. Other completed or ongoing studies (Transportation Master Plan, Community Energy and Emissions Plan, and Parks Master Plan) will update various components of the UMESP Update. The UMESP Update will also include costing of identified water and wastewater system improvements of sufficient detail to support inclusion within the City Wide Development Charge scheduled for 2023.



### What We Heard, Phase 1 Summary Report

**Prepared by:** LURA Consulting

**Status:** Final

**Purpose of Study:** This document provides a summary of comments from the public obtained through a public open house held on February 19, 2021, and a follow-up online survey conducted for two weeks following the open house. Public comments were provided in relation to proposed vision, pillars, and emerging Urban Structure for the Official Plan update.

### What We Heard, Phase 2 Business Community Summary Report

**Prepared by:** LURA Consulting

**Status:** Final

**Purpose of Study:** This document provides a summary of comments from the public obtained through a workshop geared to the business industry held on April 27, 2021, and a follow-up online survey conducted for two weeks following the workshop. Business representatives and the public provided comments regarding employment trends and policy direction for Centres and Corridors, Employment Areas (business parks), and Office designated areas to inform the development of Key Directions for the Official Plan update.

### What We Heard, Phase 2 Centre-Specific Workshops Engagement Summary Report

**Prepared by:** LURA Consulting

**Status:** Final

**Purpose of Study:** This document provides a summary of comments from the public obtained through six public workshops that were held during the month of May 2021, and follow-up online surveys that were conducted for two weeks following each of the workshops. Public comments were provided in relation to specific areas of the city where growth and development is likely to be directed as part of this Official Plan update process. Feedback received through these engagement sessions inform Key Directions for the Official Plan update.





# Appendix

## Appendix 1: Table of Key Directions

### Urban Structure

Item	Urban Structure Key Direction	Section
1 a.	<p>Maintain 2010 urban structure framework, with minor changes to:</p> <p><b>Align with Regional direction (Big Move 1)</b>, and recognize Major Transit Station Areas within our intensification hierarchy and build “live-work-play” hubs, by directing context appropriate growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Along the Yonge Street corridor, from Hwy 7 to Bloomington Road.</li> <li>• Along the Hwy 7 corridor - at Bathurst, and from Yonge Street to Hwy 404.</li> <li>• At the Richmond Hill and Gormley GO stations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Align with Regional employment areas (Big Move 2)</b>, and broaden select employment areas to support a greater mix of land use and economic opportunities within the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yonge Street and Enford Road extension, to permit mixed use development along Yonge Street corridor.</li> <li>• Newkirk Road and Major Mackenzie Drive, to permit mixed use development in all four quadrants of this area.</li> <li>• Hwy 7 and East Beaver Creek, to permit mixed use development in this area (see also Big Move 3).</li> </ul> <p><b>Support Bus Rapid Transit (Big Move 3)</b>, and identify three new mixed-use growth areas within the intensification hierarchy to implement the Regional Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) transit supportive development direction, specifically at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathurst and Hwy 7 area (presently designated as Parkway Belt West Plan)</li> <li>• Bayview and Hwy 7 area (presently designated as Neighbourhood) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ East Beaver Creek and Hwy 7 area (presently designated as Employment Area and Employment Corridor).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2.1.2.1
1 b	<p><b>Within Centres and Corridors</b></p> <p>Uphold hierarchy of urban places (Urban Growth Centre, Key Development Areas, Local Centres, Regional and Local Corridors) – to provide variety of and choice of destinations and communities.</p>	2.1.2.1.1



Item	Urban Structure Key Direction	Section
1 c	Promote development that prioritizes sustainable transportation modes over private automobile use.	
1 d	<b>Within Employment Areas:</b> Protect employment areas for uses that require separation from sensitive uses to ensure their long-term prosperity.	2.1.2.1.2
1 e	Support intensification and vibrancy of employment areas.	
1 f	<b>Within Neighbourhood Areas:</b> Respect character and distinguishing features of neighbourhoods across the City.	2.1.2.1.3
1 g	Permit “gentle density” by allowing a greater mix of housing types and access to day-to-day (including commercial) activities.	
1 h	<b>Within the Greenway System:</b> Capitalize on opportunity that is provided in rural areas (outside of the natural heritage system) - clarify and expand permitted uses.	2.1.2.1.4
1 i	Designate and provide policy direction for Prime Agricultural areas.	
1 j	Facilitate development and provide commensurate infrastructure to accommodate Regional growth forecast for Richmond Hill.	2.1.2.2
1 k	Update Official Plan monitoring targets per Regional and City directions.	2.1.2.3

### Built Form

Item	Built Form Key Direction	Section
2 a	Continue to advance the Official Plan as a guide to “placemaking.”	2.2.2.1
	Ensure that urban design policy direction supports design excellence in new development and in public realm, to reinforce the objective of building complete communities, via the directions listed in 2 (b) to 2(d).	
2 b	Update urban design policies to respond to changing built form, by implementing urban design principles described in Planning For Change. These principles are: (1) walkability, (2) connectivity, (3) diverse and lively public realm, (4) choice of places to live, work, shop, play, innovate, etc., and (5) authenticity; with a clear acknowledgement that achieving the Official Plan vision requires working in partnership.	2.2.2.2
2 c	Update policies to guide the evaluation of development proposals and building design based on criteria related to matters such as context, history, city pattern, compatibility, enhancement of public realm, promoting walkability, creating identity within communities, applying sustainable design	

Item	Built Form Key Direction	Section
	measures, and sound architecture. With an understanding that the objective of this criteria is: to ensure new development benefits quality of life in the City, and to reinforce the objective of building complete communities.	
2 d	Clearly express required public realm and facilities (parks, streets, community centers, library, fire halls, tree canopy, schools, etc.) that is commensurate with build-out of the broader area – to create amenity-rich communities.	2.2.2.2.1
	Appropriately respond to emerging trends and innovation related to matters such as parkland, urban agriculture, sustainable design, micromobility (i.e. electric bicycles and scooters), and electronic and autonomous vehicles, via directions listed in 2(e) to 2(g) and 2 (i).	
2 e	Recognize opportunity for privately owned publicly accessible spaces (“urban plazas”) within the City’s park typologies and open space system.	2.2.2.3.1
2 f	Support urban agriculture, community gardens, and roof-top greenhouses.	2.2.2.3.2
2 g	Continue to advance sustainable design practices (i.e. low impact development measures, green roofs, etc.)	2.2.2.3.3
2 h	Identify and plan to support a hierarchy of mobility that prioritizes sustainable transportation, and ensure that built form and transportation infrastructure are aligned.	2.2.2.4
2 i	Plan to capitalize on advantages that come from autonomous mobility.	2.2.2.4.1

## Intensification

Item	Intensification Key Direction	Section
3 a	Clarify the purpose and intent of the intensification hierarchy.	2.3.2.1
3 b	Clarify the roles of Centres and Corridors within the hierarchy.	
3 c	Appropriately designate intensification areas and implement Regional MTSA minimum density direction.	
	Intensify Centres and Corridors with consideration of overall community benefit in mind, via the directions listed in 3(d) to 3(g) below.	2.3.2.2
3 d	Ensure that development provides social, physical and visual connections to adjacent areas to create a cohesive sense of place.	
3 e	Require 5% of new dwelling units in multi-unit residential developments with 20 or more proposed units to include units with 3 or more bedrooms.	

Item	Intensification Key Direction	Section
3 f	Within Centres, require (not simply encourage) a mix of use within sites, including office, commercial, community services, and entertainment.	
3 g	Support density with public realm elements that are commensurate with the proposed level of build-out density, and ensure that density is in keeping with directions set out in other City master plans (e.g., TMP, UMESP, Parks & Recreation, Fire, etc.).	
3 h	Consider potential impact changes in climate may have on new development and surrounding area, and apply mitigation and adaptation measures accordingly and via the directions listed in 3(i) to 3(k)	2.3.2.3
3 i	Direct development away from natural heritage features and buffers, ensure development does not negatively impact those features and their functions.	
3 j	Support provision of alternative energy (e.g., District Energy, Geothermal, and Solar).	
3 k	Apply “complete streets” principles which prioritize active transportation, accounting for micro-mobility modes (e.g. e-Bikes, e-Scooters, etc.), and provide supportive infrastructure such as trails/dedicated lanes, bike parking/shelter, benches, street trees (with appropriate soil volume) and other measures to provide hospitable pedestrian environments	
3 l	Support the provision of future high-order transit.	
3 m	Continue to consult on and provide more detailed guidance for Centres, starting with clear vision statements for each area.	2.3.2.5
<b>3.1</b>	<b>In the Bathurst and Highway 7 Area</b>	
3.1 a	Continue consultation and planning process, once the Parkway Belt West Plan has been amended.	2.3.3.1.2
3.1 b	Provide a gateway feature and support a mix of land use.	
3.1 c	Maintain the majority of the area in a natural state and continue to provide recreational value.	
3.1 d	Provide trail connections to integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood, transit systems, and York Region’s South Greenway Trail (south of Highway 7).	
<b>3.2</b>	<b>In the Bayview and Highway 7 Area</b>	
3.2 a	Provide transition of built form from intensified development proposed within Richmond Hill Centre (RHC) to existing low-rise / low-density neighbourhood, through either Local Centre or Regional Mixed Use Corridor designation.	2.3.3.2.2



Item	Intensification Key Direction	Section
3.2 b	Allow for a range of interim/ temporary uses to facilitate development within RHC (e.g. permit a construction staging area for RHC related development, or allow for buildings to be re-purposed for various temporary uses such as sound stages, indoor recreational space, storage facilities, etc.).	
3.2 c	Consult on various options for final build-out scenarios.	
3.2 d	Build on the areas' current retail identity by preserving some "big box" form while creating a variety of smaller scale retail destinations.	
3.2 e	Provide a range of new office as well as commercial space to attract innovative companies.	
3.2 f	Provide safe pedestrian and cycling connections to future subway stations and natural/ open space areas.	
3.2 g	Consider secondary uses (e.g. community garden, multi-use trail) within the hydro-corridor to complement the build-out of this area.	
3.3	<b>In the East Beaver Creek and Highway 7 Area</b>	2.3.3.3.2
3.3 a	Convert from Employment designations to support a mix of uses, with the area predominantly continuing to support employment uses.	
3.3 b	Provide a civic presence relative to the City's municipal administrative building with an open space facility	
3.3 c	Provide amenities that support existing and future residents (e.g., community centre, parks, tree canopy, etc.), and continue to provide services (i.e. restaurants, retailers, banks) that support the broader employment area.	
3.3 d	Provide a gateway function at the southeast corner of the City.	
3.3 e	Ensure that new development is compatible with the functioning Buttonville Airport and existing employment uses within and in the adjacent area.	
3.4	<b>In the Yonge and 16<sup>th</sup>/Carrville Road Area</b>	2.3.3.4.2
3.4 a	Build on the 2018 draft Secondary Plan	
3.4 b	Re-delineate the boundary of the Key Development Area (KDA).	
3.4 c	Connect to the David Dunlap Observatory, the German Mills Creek and the Bridgeview Park	
3.4 d	Protect lands that can support future Yonge Subway and/or GO Transit stations	
3.4 e	Ensure that the long term build out of this area is neither precluded nor unnecessarily delayed by a potential temporary subway train storage and maintenance facility, should it be necessary to locate one within this area.	

Item	Intensification Key Direction	Section
3.5	<b>In the proposed Village Local Centre Area</b>	
3.5 a	Reduce the Downtown Local Centre designated lands to lands only in what is presently called the Village District in the current Official Plan and redesignate this area as “the Village Local Centre.”	2.3.3.5.2
3.5 b	Plan for this area to be vibrant and locally and regionally attractive as a dining, shopping, cultural, and entertainment hub.	
3.5 c	Plan for the area as “The Village in the City” – continue to celebrate the historic character, and support the arts and culture of the area through ongoing façade improvement and building renovation, along with redevelopment of sites that are complementary and contextually sensitive to the area overall.	
3.5 d	Apply urban design principles in the determination of appropriate height and density that supports revitalization and the vision for this area – consider “human scaled” podiums/building heights.	
3.5 e	Explore opportunities for widening sidewalks, creating new cycling facilities and pedestrian paths.	
3.6	<b>In the Yonge corridor adjacent to the proposed Village Local Centre</b>	
3.6 a	Allow for built-form transition from the Village Local Centre to flanking areas, while permitting heights and densities that are context appropriate.	2.3.3.6.2
3.6 b	Capitalize on city-owned property at the intersection of Major Mackenzie and Yonge Street.	
3.7	<b>In the Newkirk/Richmond Hill GO Station Area</b>	
3.7 a	Convert employment lands south of Centre Street East to Local Centre designation.	2.3.3.7.2
3.7 b	Elevate the area within the intensification hierarchy by redesignating the lands from Newkirk Local Development Area to Local Centre;	
3.7 c	Support development of a new community with a mix of uses and encourage structured commuter parking to allow for intensification opportunities;	
3.7 d	Update land use compatibility policies to ensure that existing and adjacent uses may continue.	
3.7 e	Provide new, and maintain existing, affordable housing.	
3.7 f	Enhance and provide connections to open space.	
3.8	<b>In the Major Mackenzie Corridor</b>	
3.8 a	Maintain current vision and policy framework during this Official Plan Update process, supporting low rise	2.3.3.8.2

Item	Intensification Key Direction	Section
	development, including live-work units and “missing middle” development.	
3.8 b	Support provision of cycling facilities (e.g. multi-use trail) along Major Mackenzie to improve access to and from the GO Station, Yonge Street, and surrounding areas.	
3.9	<b>In the Oak Ridges Local Centre Area</b>	
3.9 a	Build on the 2010 Official Plan policies for the Oak Ridges Local Centre (ORLC).	2.3.3.9.2
3.9 b	Expand the existing ORLC boundary to support objectives for the Regional Corridor and for building complete communities	
3.9 c	Support the mobility hierarchy through modern main street design and compact built-form.	
3.9 d	Create a gateway at Yonge and Bloomington.	
3.9 e	Continue to plan with an ‘environment first’ approach to planning for the Local Centre.	
3.9 f	Support broader neighbourhoods by providing local goods and services, as well as community amenities.	
3.9 g	Support tourists/visitors who visit the area to appreciate lakes and forests, through the provision of goods and services related to outdoor recreation.	
3.9 h	Enhance connections to nearby lakes and forest.	


## Employment

Item	Employment Key Direction	Section
	Continue to foster and promote business attraction and retention within intensification, employment, and neighbourhood commercial areas, in ways that are responsive to the needs of businesses who choose to invest in Richmond Hill, via the directions listed in 4 a – 4 f below.	2.4.2.1
4 a	Respond to business attraction and retention needs – especially those related to the knowledge industry and “green” technology.	
4 b	Foster, promote, and embrace innovation – be prepared to take necessary risks where rewards are likely to benefit the community.	
4 c	Support vertical agriculture within Employment areas and the Greenway system.	
4 d	Provide a vibrant, noteworthy “main street” character on Yonge Street, which is vital for business attraction.	
4 e	Complement at-grade commercial spaces with hospitable, pedestrian and cycle-friendly streets and streetscapes.	
4 f	Promote development that fosters “Work from Neighbourhood” community building.	

Item	Employment Key Direction	Section
4 g	<b>Within intensification areas</b> promote development of spaces that are flexible in their use and can evolve over time as areas become more established.	2.4.2.2
4 h	<b>Within Employment designations:</b> Provide greater flexibility of land use and promote urban design that makes these areas attractive for employees and investment	2.4.2.3
4 i	Implement policies that facilitate the development of desired businesses to enable as-of-right zoning	
4 j	Consider and consult on area-specific employment area permissions based on context and character of the area.	
4 k	Consider and consult on permission of self-storage facilities to support small businesses and home-based businesses	
4 l	Consider and consult on expanded permissions for warehousing to respond to a growing need for distribution centres	
4 m	Implement noticeable sustainable design measures, i.e. solar panels and low impact development within parking fields, to outwardly demonstrate commitment to climate change	
4 n	Ensure employment areas are served by transit in a way that accommodates shift work and supports last-mile means of commuting.	

### Climate Change

Item	Climate Change Key Direction	Section
5 a	Apply climate lens considerations in decision making where there are opportunities for mitigation or adaptation.	2.5.2.1
	Provide necessary policy direction to achieve the Community Energy Emissions Plan GHG reduction target, via the directions listed in 5 b – 5 f below.	2.5.2.2
5 b	Encourage more energy efficient, energy conserving and resilient building construction.	
5 c	Support development and use of renewable energy.	
5 d	Require provision of green and/or white roof and/or solar panels for certain built form based on size and function.	
5 e	Strengthen natural heritage protection in accordance with provincial and regional policies, and, where deemed necessary, beyond their minimum standards for climate change adaptation and mitigation purposes.	
5 f	Revisit buffer policies for natural hazards to ensure minimum standards are appropriate and consistent with Provincial, Regional and Conservation Authority policies and address	



Item	Climate Change Key Direction	Section
	matters such as maintenance and long term climate change impacts.	

### Implementation

Item	Implementation Key Direction	Section
6 a	Add new policies to enable Inclusionary Zoning to increase the supply of affordable housing	2.6.2.1
6 b	Enhance existing policies on demolition and conversion control of rental housing.	2.6.2.2
6 c	Prioritize surplus public lands for public benefit, including affordable housing.	2.6.2.3
6 d	Update policies to enable the use of a Community Planning Permit System.	2.6.2.4
6 e	Update alternative notice and engagement policies.	2.6.2.5
6 f	Update policies on engagement with Indigenous communities.	2.6.2.6
6 g	Establish criteria for evaluating official plan amendments.	2.6.2.7

### Technical

Item	Technical Key Direction	Section
7 a	Update policies, mapping and definitions to conform with applicable Provincial Plans and the York Region Official Plan.	2.7.2.1
7 b	Clarify policies and/or definitions where there have been implementation or interpretation challenges.	2.7.2.2



## Appendix 2: Glossary

### Abbreviations

The following are common abbreviations used in this report.


AHS	Affordable Housing Strategy
AV	Autonomous Vehicle
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CEEP	Community Energy and Emissions Plan
CIP	Community Improvement Plan
CPPS	Community Planning Permit System
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
IZ	Inclusionary Zoning
KDA	Key Development Area
LDA	Local Development Area
LID	Low Impact Development
MCR	Municipal Comprehensive Review
MESP	Master Environmental Servicing Plan
MTSA	Major Transit Station Area
NHS	Natural Heritage System
OP	Official Plan
OP Update	Official Plan Update
OPA	Official Plan Amendment
ORM	Oak Ridges Moraine
ORMCP	Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan
PBWP	Parkway Belt West Plan
PMTSA	Protected Major Transit Station Area
PPS	Provincial Policy Statement
RHC	Richmond Hill Centre
ROP	Regional Official Plan
TTC	Toronto Transit Commission
UMESP	Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan

## Terms

The following are common terms and their meaning, in the context of this report.

Term	Meaning
<b>15-minute Communities</b>	refers to compact communities that provide access to a variety of amenities and services- where people can live, work, play, shop, innovate, socialize, access transit, bike, etc., - within a 15-minute walking distance of a person's residence.
<b>Active Transportation</b>	refers to non-motorized travel, including walking, cycling, roller-blading and mobility assistive devices (i.e. wheelchairs and walkers). The active transportation network includes sidewalks, crosswalks, designated road lanes and off-road trails to accommodate active transportation.
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	refers to housing that can be owned or rented by a household with shelter costs (rent or mortgage, utilities, etc.) that are less than 30 per cent of its gross income (CMHC). In addition to being affordable, this housing should also be in a good state of repair and suitable in size for the household occupying it.
<b>Built Form</b>	refers to consideration of what a community ultimately "feels" like. This means considering space in four-dimensions, i.e. what is happening on the ground, and up from the ground, as well as how an area impacts the five senses. Built Form considers how private development and public infrastructure intersect, interrelate and, ultimately, complement each other.
<b>Centres and Corridors</b>	refers to areas in the City where the majority of growth in population and a large proportion of jobs are planned to be accommodated over the long term. These areas are expected to provide a mix of uses that serve the immediate and surrounding area.
<b>Climate change adaptation</b>	refers to measures that improve our ability to manage or reduce the local impacts of extreme weather such as flooding, ice storms, and heat stress.
<b>Climate change mitigation</b>	refers to measures that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mainly through improvements in buildings, transportation, waste reduction, sustainable materials and natural vegetation.
<b>Complete community</b>	refers to a space and place that provides opportunities for people to live, work, shop, and play. It offers amenities in well-designed, pedestrian-oriented places developed at a human-scale where public transit, walking, and cycling are viable alternatives to the automobile.
<b>Density</b>	refers to a scale of development within a specific area, usually expressed as a numeric value in terms of the number of residents and jobs located within one hectare of land. Density can also be described in terms of units per hectare, as well as total gross floor area per hectare. The higher the numeric value, the greater level of compactness and opportunity to achieve efficiencies in terms of using infrastructure that is needed to support development.
<b>District Energy</b>	refers to a renewable system that locally produces and distributes thermal (heating and cooling) and/or electrical energy to multiple buildings within a confined geographic area.
<b>Employment Areas</b>	refers to areas in the City that are predominantly used for employment purposes such as office, manufacturing, warehousing, wholesaling, etc.

Term	Meaning
<b>Gateway</b>	refers to design elements that demarcate a main entrance to communities. These entry features can express the image and character of a community. They can create transition between different spaces and provide a gathering place for the people who inhabit and frequent these places.
<b>Gentle density</b>	refers to new forms of development that can be accommodated through new lot creation within an existing community and/or when “missing middle” housing is introduced to an area where single and/or semi-detached housing is prevalent, in a manner that is contextually appropriate and desirable. Gentle density also introduce non-residential development into a predominantly residential area through the provision of modest neighbourhood-serving commercial, cultural, institutional, and recreational uses.
<b>Green Economy</b>	refers to an economy that is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment into such economic activities, infrastructure and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. (Source: <a href="#">United Nations</a> .)
<b>Green Industry</b>	refers to economic activity that seeks to minimize impact to the environment. This includes businesses that seek to, among other things: reduce their waste output, use or create clean energy sources, use chemicals that are not harmful or are less harmful to the environment, use or create modes of transportation that do not produce/produce less GHG emissions, and/or design and construct buildings and infrastructure that minimize impact on the environment when considering the entire life-cycle of the building/infrastructure. (Source: John, Spacey. <a href="#">"13 Examples of a Green Industry."</a> Simplicable, June 09 2019. Web).
<b>Greenhouse Gas</b>	In accordance with the Community Energy and Emissions Plan, Greenhouse gases are those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and anthropogenic, that absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of terrestrial radiation emitted by the Earth's surface, the atmosphere itself and by clouds. This property causes the greenhouse effect. Water vapour (H <sub>2</sub> O), carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ), nitrous oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O), methane (CH <sub>4</sub> ), and ozone (O <sub>3</sub> ) are the primary GHGs in the Earth's atmosphere. Moreover, there are a number of entirely manmade GHGs in the atmosphere, such as the halocarbons and other chlorine- and bromine-containing substances, dealt with under the Montreal Protocol. Beside CO <sub>2</sub> , N <sub>2</sub> O, and CH <sub>4</sub> , the Kyoto Protocol deals with the GHGs sulphur hexafluoride (SF <sub>6</sub> ), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and perfluorocarbons (PFCs).
<b>Greenway System</b>	refers to areas of the City that support the agricultural and rural economy and land uses, and areas where natural features (such as wetlands, woodlands, valleylands, lakes and rivers, and habitat) and their functions predominate.
<b>Inclusionary Zoning</b>	refers to a form of zoning that a municipality may use to require the provision of affordable housing within eligible residential developments that are located in a Protected Major Transit Station Areas.
<b>Major Transit Station Area</b>	In accordance with the Growth Plan, <i>refers to areas</i> within an approximate 500 to 800 metres radius of a transit station. (e.g. a BRT or GO Station) along a priority transit corridor, representing about a 10-minute walk. York Region is responsible for identifying and delineating MTSAs.
<b>Micromobility</b>	refers to electrified modes of personal travel that make travelling more effortless than non-electrified versions (e.g. electric bikes, scooters, electric skateboards, monowheels/self-balancing boards, etc.)



Term	Meaning
<b>Missing middle</b>	refers to modest multi-unit housing in forms such as duplex, triplex, walk-up apartments and live-work units.
<b>Neighbourhood</b>	refers to areas in the City that generally accommodate low-rise residential and community-serving development.
<b>Net zero emissions</b>	In accordance with the Community Energy and Emissions Plan, net-zero emissions are achieved when anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere are balanced by anthropogenic removals over a specified period. Where multiple greenhouse gases are involved, the quantification of net-zero emissions depends on the climate metric chosen to compare emissions of different gases (such as global warming potential or global temperature change potential, as well as the chosen time horizon).
<b>Placemaking</b>	refers to creating quality places where people want to live, work, play and learn. “Quality places” are those where people want to be, and are created through effective combination of both public and private places. Quality places have good form, which includes considerations such as mass, density, and scale that are appropriate to their location, whether they be within an urban, suburban or rural setting. Placemaking applies design principles such as (walkability, connectivity, public realm, choices, and authenticity).
<b>Public Benefit / Community Benefit</b>	refers to not only an overall benefit in quality of life for occupants of a new building; but, also to people and workers within the broader community. It has been noted in these Key Directions that further consultation is needed to further define what public benefit could mean at a citywide and local scale.
<b>Public Realm</b>	refers to places and/or spaces that are shared by the public. This includes all publically accessible places, open spaces and streetscapes, as well as places that provide infrastructure to support communities and where social interaction is possible.
<b>Sense of Place</b>	refers to a person’s relationship and perception with spaces and places through expression of emotions, biographies, imagination and stories. (Source: Adams, J., Greenwood, D., Thomasshow, M., Russ, A. <a href="#">The Nature of Cities</a> ; 2016. Web.)