

## PART A: PREAMBLE

### 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Secondary Plan is to provide a development framework for intensification of the Yonge/Steeles corridor including the north side of Steeles Avenue West between Palm Gate Boulevard and Yonge Street and two segments along the west side of Yonge Street: 1) between Steeles Avenue West and Arnold Avenue; and 2) between Thornhill Golf Course lands and Highway 407, as shown on Schedule 1. The intent of this Plan is to implement planning policies to bring the area into conformity with the Province of Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the York Region Official Plan and the new City of Vaughan Official Plan. The policies contained in this Secondary Plan have been designed to address either the introduction of Bus Rapid Transit along Yonge Street or the extension of the Yonge subway to Highway 407.

### 2.0 SCOPE AND FOCUS

The Yonge/Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan Area is located in the southeastern corner of the City of Vaughan, bordered by the Town of Markham to the east and the City of Toronto to the south. The Study Area is divided into a North and South Area as shown on Schedule 1, separated by the Thornhill Conservation District which is the subject of a recently completed Secondary Plan (OPA 669).

The North Area extends along Yonge Street from the northern edge of the Thornhill Golf and Country Club to Highway 407. It includes properties with direct frontage onto Yonge Street and the adjacent residential neighbourhood to the west, part of which is in the Heritage Conservation District.

The South Area is bisected by the CN Rail line and comprises the properties fronting the Yonge Steeles intersection:

- Along Yonge Street, from Steeles Avenue West to the Thornhill Public School; and
- Along Steeles Avenue West, from Yonge Street to Palm Gate Boulevard.

The physical character, lot configurations and land uses vary greatly throughout the South Area, but generally reflect an emphasis on auto-orientated development. Built form is characterized for the most part by one to three storey buildings as well as large surface parking lots throughout most of the area, with higher buildings

located north of the CN rail line to Clark Avenue.

The Yonge/Steeles intersection is mostly characterized by low-rise, large format retail or auto-oriented uses. Commercial buildings are typically situated on large lots surrounded by surface parking along both the Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue West frontages.

North of the CN Rail line, the built form consists of predominantly high rise residential buildings and some office uses. Adjacent to the rail line is a high-rise node with three apartment buildings. Further north is a five-storey commercial building and a mixed-use development with ground floor commercial and residential units above. A townhouse development is situated adjacent to the mixed-use site. The Thornhill Public School and Gallanough Park are located at Arnold Avenue, both with frontage on Yonge Street.

Properties in the North Area are anchored by the Thornhill Golf and Country Club at the south boundary. Street frontages along Yonge Street consist mainly of low rise commercial buildings south of Bunker Road. There is a shift to residential uses north of Bunker Road in the form of a low density residential subdivision development with reverse lot frontage adjacent to Yonge Street. A school site exists on the northwest corner of Uplands Avenue and Yonge Street, with road access via Uplands Avenue.

In both the North and South Areas, low density residential uses are located to the west of the properties fronting on Yonge Street and to the north of the properties fronting onto Steeles Avenue West. In the south, the lots fronting on Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue West are quite deep providing opportunities to create a transition zone from higher density development along these arterial roads to the lower density neighbourhoods to the west and north of the lot frontages along the arterials.

The south side of Steeles Avenue in the City of Toronto, includes a range of land uses including the Centrepont Mall which is situated on the southwest corner of Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue West. Further west, Hilda Avenue acts as a dividing line with high rise apartment buildings on the east side, and low rise dwellings on the west side to Bathurst Street.

Much of the east side of Yonge Street in the Town of Markham, is characterized by older street-related commercial, auto-oriented strip mall development and large-scale retail uses with surface parking at the front. A new development has recently been approved by the Town of Markham on the east side of Yonge Street,

between the CNR tracks and Meadowview Avenue. The approved development will consist of four residential towers, two of which will be 31 storeys in height, comprising a total of 1200 units, as well as a 20 storey office building and a three storey retail podium. A public park will be incorporated as part of the development adjacent to Meadowview Avenue.

North of Clark Avenue, the building fabric transitions to residential uses in mid-rise buildings. In the North Area, the east side of Yonge Street comprises mainly a mix of high-rise apartment buildings and strip commercial uses, with the Holy Cross Cemetery located just south of Highway 407.

## 3.0 POLICY CONTEXT

### Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) came into effect on March 1, 2005 and establishes the policy foundation for regulating development and use of land in Ontario. Key directions include wisely managing change to promote efficient development and land use patterns.

The PPS was issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act and is intended to provide policy direction for land use matters, which are of Provincial interest. Planning Authorities are to be consistent with the Policy Statement when exercising any authority.

### Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Places to Grow, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe came into effect on June 16, 2006. Established under the Places to Grow Act (Bill 136), the Growth Plan guides land development, resource management and public investment decisions for all municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) and promotes the development of healthy, safe and balanced communities.

The Plan requires municipalities within the GGH to amend their policies to accommodate, by 2015, a minimum of 40 percent of all residential development on an annual basis within built up boundaries. Yonge Street is identified in the Growth Plan as an improved higher order transit corridor in the southern portion of the Study Area. In the northern portion of the Study Area, Yonge Street is identified as a corridor that is proposed for higher order transit to 2031. Major transit station areas along the Corridor are to be planned to accommodate a range of transportation modes including walking, cycling, and commuting. These are defined as areas within an approximate 500 metre radius of any existing

or planned higher order transit station.

### Region of York Official Plan

The new Region of York Official Plan was adopted by Regional Council on December 16, 2009. The main policy initiative of the Plan is to promote City building, focusing on Regional Centres and Corridors and including innovation in urban design and green building. The overall intensification objective in the Plan is aligned with the Provincial Places to Grow Plan: a minimum of 40% residential intensification within the built-up area.

Yonge Street between Steeles Avenue West and Highway 407, is identified as a Regional Corridor in the Plan. Local municipalities are required to identify the role of Regional Corridors in a comprehensive manner including the role and function of each Corridor segment. Boundaries of the Regional Corridors are to be designated by the local municipality based on: reasonable and direct walking distances between the Regional Corridor street frontage and adjacent lands; contiguous parcels that are desirable and appropriate locations for intensification and mixed-use development; and compatibility with and transition to adjacent and/or adjoining lands.

Comprehensive Secondary Plans are to be prepared by local municipalities for key development areas along Regional Corridors and implemented in co-operation with the Region and related agencies.

Minimum densities for key development areas are to be established within Secondary Plans, consistent with a 3.5 Floor Space Index (FSI) per development block at, and adjacent to, the Steeles Station on the Yonge Subway Extension and a 2.5 FSI per development block, at, and adjacent to, the Clark and Royal Orchard Stations on the Yonge Subway Extension.

Key development areas, once established, will support an overall long term density target of 2.5 FSI for developable areas.

The Yonge Street Subway extension between Steeles Avenue West and Highway 407 is identified on Map 11, Transit Network of the Region of York Official Plan. Yonge Street is also identified on Map 10 as the location of a "Cycling Facility on Regional Roads and Right of Ways".

### Thornhill Vaughan Community Plan (OPA #210)

The Thornhill Vaughan Community Plan (Amendment #210 in the previous Official Plan, replaced in the current Plan), provides detailed land use permissions for the

area bounded by Keele Street to Yonge Street and from Steeles Avenue to Highway 407. It was originally approved in 1987 and was modified and consolidated in 1997.

In the South Area, the majority of lands adjacent to Steeles Avenue West and Yonge Street, north to the CN Rail line are designated as General Commercial. Lands located north of the rail line on Yonge Street, are designated Medium Density Residential and Mixed Residential and Commercial.

In the North Area, the majority of lands fronting on Yonge Street are designated as General Commercial to Bunker Road and then transition to Low Density Residential up to Longbridge Road. There are also two school sites, one located at Uplands Avenue and another at Spring Gate Boulevard. Residential categories have been defined so that there is no overlap in the uses permitted or the density.

In Low Density Residential areas uses are intended for single family detached units with a net density not to exceed 22 units per hectare.

Medium Density Residential uses with a net density of 25 to 44 units per hectare. are identified along Yonge Street at Spring Gate Boulevard and just north of the rail line. Additional nodes are also located north of Clark Avenue and along Steeles Avenue, west of Hilda Avenue.

High Density Residential uses are located along Yonge Street, adjacent the rail line and permit apartment buildings with a net density of 124 units per hectare. Local Convenience Commercial uses are permitted without amendment. General Commercial uses are primarily located along the Steeles Avenue frontage and along Yonge Street to the CN Rail line.

Mixed Commercial Residential Areas are located on the north side of Clark Avenue. Permitted uses include residential uses, business and professional offices, retail facilities, and hotel and associated facilities with a net density not to exceed 60 units per hectare.

A number of site specific amendments that recognize existing uses such as car dealerships, commercial plazas, seniors housing and parking areas apply to the north and South Area.

### OPA #669 Thornhill/Yonge Street Corridor Plan, 2006

In the fall of 2002, the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan jointly initiated the Thornhill Yonge Street Study. The aim of the study was to establish a coherent urban design framework to guide the physical renewal and evolution of the Yonge Street Corridor from a post-war highway-oriented commercial corridor to a more

mixed-use, pedestrian-supportive main street within the historic community of Thornhill.

The Plan was approved by Council in 2006. Land use recommendations to guide the renewal of the lands provide for a vibrant mixed-use area, with at-grade commercial along Yonge Street and residential above. Development is to be street-related to create a pedestrian-oriented main street character and heritage assets are to be protected. Residential intensification is to encourage and support a rapid transit corridor.

### Town of Markham Official Plan

The Official Plan for the Town of Markham was consolidated in July of 2005 and, along with 28 Secondary Plans provides direction for land use planning. Official Plan designations that apply to the lands on the east side of Yonge Street between the Ladies Golf Club of Toronto to the south and the Holy Cross Cemetery to the north are described below.

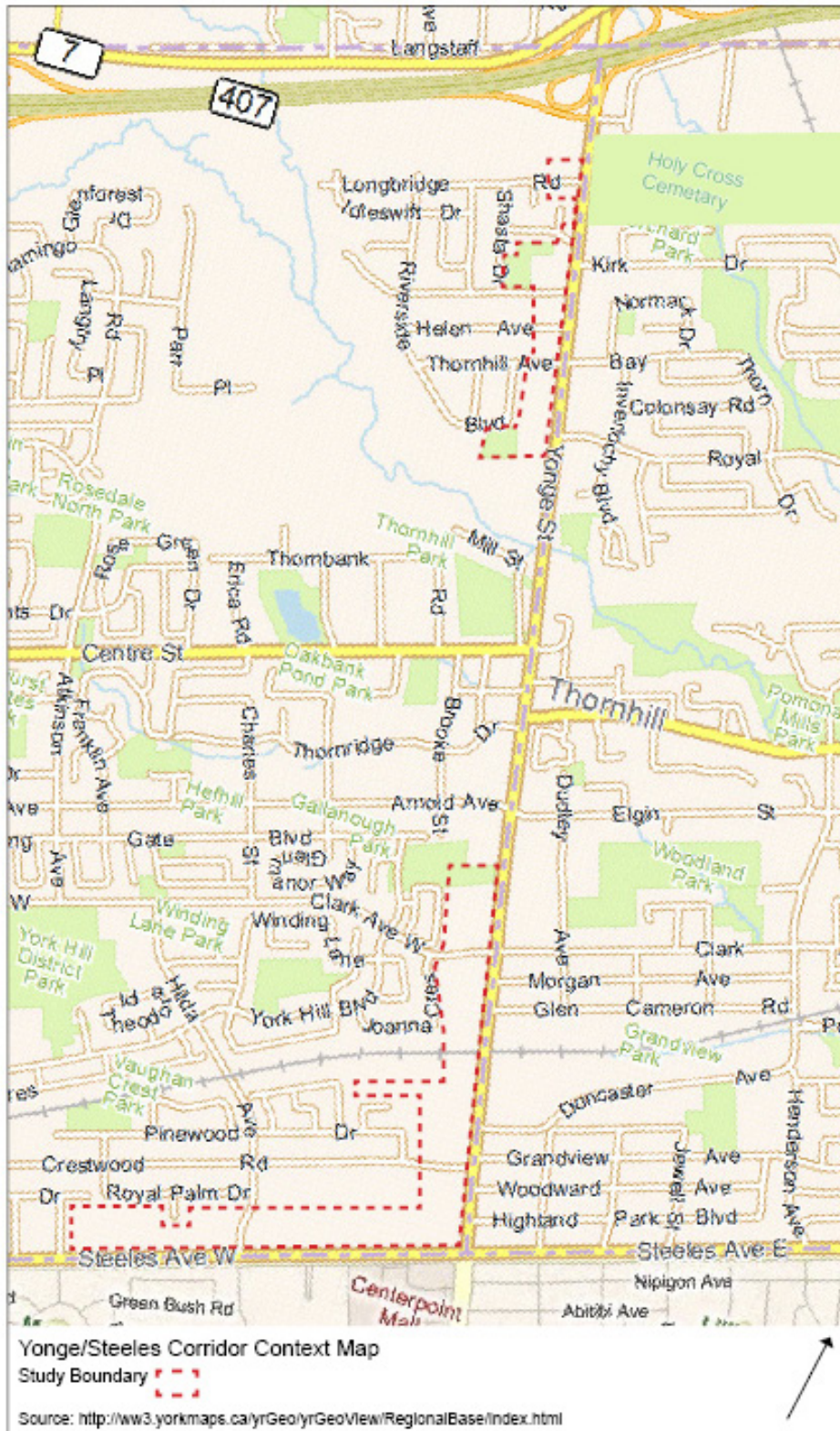
**Commercial** – These areas are to serve as multi-use and multi-purpose focal points offering a diverse range of retail, service, community, institutional, and recreational uses serving the neighbourhoods nearby and are intended to accommodate office and medium to high density residential uses. Commercial lands are located from the Holy Cross Cemetery south to Bay Thorn Drive and around Royal Orchard Drive.

**Urban Residential** – Lands designated Urban Residential are to be used primarily for housing with limited allocations for complementary uses. Urban Residential uses apply just south of Bay Thorn Drive and south of Royal Orchard Boulevard.

**Institutional (Cemetery)** – The Holy Cross Cemetery lands are designated as Institutional (cemetery) permitting cemeteries, mausolea, columbaria, and crematoria in conjunction with a cemetery, along with chapels.

Lands north of the cemetery form part of the Langstaff Gateway Master Plan area.





### Markham Yonge Steeles Study

The Town of Markham completed a study of the Yonge and Steeles area in 2008, bounded by Yonge Street on the west, Dudley Avenue on the east, Steeles Avenue to the south and the Thornhill Heritage District to the north.

Overall principles identified during the study process include creating mixed-use infill development and varied building form; transition to stable residential neighbourhoods to the east and compatibility with the adjacent heritage district to the north; transit-supportive built form with highest densities adjacent to rapid transit stations along Yonge Street; balance between pedestrian and vehicular priorities and maintaining building continuity by removing site access from Yonge Street, Steeles Avenue and Dudley Avenue; creating a better parks and open space network; improving pedestrian amenity; designing complete streets; providing grade related uses; enhancing community services through redevelopment; strengthening the traditional streets and blocks pattern; and improving the environmental quality of the Town.

A proposed integrated open space system consists of a linear park and pedestrian connections on the eastern edge of the blocks adjacent to Dudley Avenue to serve as a buffer between redevelopment areas and existing low rise residential areas to the east.

Also included are two publicly-owned neighbourhood parks and a variety of privately owned but publicly accessible parkettes and squares.

The study also emphasized that both servicing and transportation capacity would require significant upgrades to accommodate redevelopment.

As of May 2010, the study recommendations had not yet been adopted as a Secondary Plan for the area.

### City of Toronto Official Plan

Land use designations on the south side of Steeles Avenue in the City of Toronto include Apartment Neighbourhoods and Mixed-use areas adjacent the Yonge/Steeles intersection. Further west surrounding Palm Gate Boulevard, lands are designated as Neighbourhoods reflecting the low density residential character of the area.

Mixed-use areas comprise a broad range of uses along avenues such as Steeles Avenue. These areas will absorb most of the growth in retail, office and services along with much of the new housing.

Yonge Street is also designated as an Avenue on Map

2 of the Toronto Official Plan. Avenues are identified as areas that will absorb growth through incremental development.

The City intends to carry out Avenue Studies to develop a framework for change that is tailored to the particular circumstances of each Avenue.

## 4.0 STUDY PROCESS

The formulation of the Yonge/Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan policies consisted of a number of phases. At least one public meeting or open house was held during each phase of the process. In total, six public meetings and open houses were held during the study period between June 2008 and April 2010.