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**From:** Switzer, Barbara <[Barbara.Switzer@york.ca](mailto:Barbara.Switzer@york.ca)> **On Behalf Of** Regional Clerk  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 19, 2022 9:52 AM  
**Subject:** Regional Council Decision - Yonge North Subway Extension Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals Markham and Richmond Hill

On January 13, 2022 Regional Council adopted the following recommendations, *as amended*, in the report dated January 7, 2022 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and the Chief Planner:

1. Council direct staff to work with the Province, *Infrastructure Ontario*, Metrolinx, local municipalities and landowners to advance the Yonge North Subway Extension and Transit-Oriented Communities work to address Regional *and local* interests to more closely align with Regional and local planning visions *and phasing of development for complete and sustainable communities as a destination and key multi-modal transit hub in the GTA.*
2. *Regional Council endorse the inclusion of a station at Royal Orchard.*
3. *Staff be directed to seek further clarification on financial arrangements, including, but not limited to, the ability for municipalities to levy all development charges, community benefit charges, parkland and any other potential cost implications to the Region or the local YNSE municipalities.*
4. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Ministers of Transportation, Infrastructure and Municipal Affairs and Housing and *all local municipalities.*

The original staff report is attached for your information.

Please contact Karen Whitney, Director, Community Planning and Development Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71505 if you have any questions with respect to this matter.

Regards,

**Christopher Raynor** | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk's Office, Corporate Services

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# **The Regional Municipality of York**

Regional Council  
Planning and Economic Development  
January 13, 2022

Report of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner

## **Yonge North Subway Extension Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals Markham and Richmond Hill**

### **1. Recommendations**

1. Council direct staff to work with the Province, Metrolinx, local municipalities and landowners to advance the Yonge North Subway Extension and Transit-Oriented Communities work to address the Region's interests to more closely align with Regional and local municipal planning visions for these communities.
2. The Regional Chair communicate to Metrolinx, Council's desire for the Yonge North Subway Extension to proceed to tunnel procurement and construction without delay.
3. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Ministers of Transportation, Infrastructure and Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Cities of Markham, Richmond Hill and Vaughan.

### **2. Summary**

This report provides an overview of the Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) proposals by the Province and highlights Regional planning issues, implications, and comments heard at their recent public engagement sessions.

Key Points:

- Under the Provincially-led TOC program, the Province is partnering with developers to plan and deliver integrated development with transit expansion.
- Province announced two TOC sites in York Region, at Bridge and High-Tech stations located in the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre.
- York Region is committed to Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) implementation and working with the Province and landowners to align Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals with the planned vision of the Regional Centre and local municipal secondary plans.

- Key areas of Regional interest include appropriate mix of uses, magnitude of population increase beyond planned growth, multi-modal connectivity, provisions of affordable housing and adequate spaces for parks and community services.
- Growth proposed by the TOC proposals is well beyond what is planned for and will impact the planning and delivery of Regional infrastructure and services.
- At the December Provincial TOC public open houses, attendees raised comments concerning density, mobility, housing, mix of use, wind and shadow impacts, community amenities, and others.
- Province's target is to attain zoning certainty for TOC proposals by March 2022, through municipal planning approvals or Minister Zoning Orders.
- The YNSE project is being delivered by Metrolinx – the provincial agency also responsible for GO Transit – and planned to move into procurement and construction next.
- Through 2021, Metrolinx responded to concerns expressed by some Thornhill residents about the alignment under their homes.
- TOC proposals are anticipated for proposed Steeles and Clark stations.
- The status of the Royal Orchard station is yet to be decided but Metrolinx should be encouraged to proceed with preliminary construction while this is being resolved.

### 3. Background

#### **Provincial Transit-Oriented Communities Program aims to build mixed-use, compact communities around subway stations**

The Province passed the *Transit-Oriented Communities Act* in 2020 to facilitate planning and delivery of mixed-use TOC around transit stations along the YNSE and other priority subway projects. Through this process, the Province collaborates with landowners to submit development proposals for sites around transit stations. The landowners will invest in infrastructure to offset capital costs of the transit program.

To implement the TOC program, the Province and York Region executed a [Preliminary Agreement and Transit-Oriented Communities Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) with shared objectives for TOC developments, including:

1. Exchange of Value: Creating new investment and revenue opportunities between the public and private sectors, where possible
2. Increased Transit Ridership: Develop transit-oriented communities, in which residents choose transit as their first mode of transportation
3. Improved Customer Experience: Enhancing station areas to make the interaction with customers seamless (e.g., by creating desirable commerce and retail concourses, etc.)

4. City/Region Building: Develop communities that provide residents and workers with new places to live, work and play

### **Province announced two Transit-Oriented Communities at Bridge and High-Tech stations, in the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre**

In September 2021, the Province announced TOC locations (Attachment 1) at the proposed Bridge and High-Tech subway stations, within the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre. Along with Provincial announcement of the TOC sites, Infrastructure Ontario shared submissions for these TOC proposals confidentially with York Region, City of Markham and City of Richmond Hill staff. Both submissions included background reports prepared by landowner consultants on planning and technical matters. These were circulated to internal Regional and local municipal departments for review and comments on a confidential basis, as requested by the Province.

### **Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities proposals are located within the approved Langstaff Gateway and Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plans areas**

The Bridge and High-Tech TOC development areas represent large land holdings in the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan and Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan areas beyond the immediate station areas.

The Bridge TOC development area comprises the western portion of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan area, extending from Yonge Street to Cedar Avenue (Figure 1). The High-Tech TOC proposal is within the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan area (Figure 2).

**Figure 1**

### **Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan Development Concept and Bridge Transit-Oriented Communities Lands**



**Figure 2**  
**Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update Development Concept and**  
**High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Lands**



**Approved and evolving transit-oriented secondary plans already exist for proposed Transit-Oriented Community lands in the Richmond Hill/ Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre**

The Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan, approved in 2011, facilitates a high-density, mixed use, transit-oriented community with a range of mobility choices, community services and parks and open spaces for 32,000 residents and 15,000 jobs. This Plan was developed through a two-year comprehensive public engagement process.

Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan is being updated with new land use and density targets. City of Richmond Hill Council, municipal and agency stakeholders, and the public have provided input into the update since 2019. This work is nearing completion with City Council adoption targeted for early 2022 and Regional approval thereafter. The Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan update envisions a future downtown in Richmond Hill Centre, with high-density, dynamic and vibrant destinations for 28,000 residents and 16,500 jobs. The updated policy framework identifies a wide and balanced mix of employment, housing, retail, community and cultural uses with vibrant urban spaces and fine-grained streets for walkable neighbourhoods in this growing community.

Together, these approved and emerging updated Secondary Plans achieve the Region’s vision of compact, mixed use, vibrant TOC supported by housing, employment, cultural and community facilities, integrated with rapid transit connections.

## **Province is working towards a time-bound approval process to achieve zoning certainty for Transit-Oriented Communities proposals by March 2022**

The Province submitted Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals to the Region and local municipalities outside of the traditional development application and approval process. These TOC proposals follow a unique Provincially led process with expedited review and approval timeline to achieve zoning certainty by March 2022 to meet critical transit project and procurement timelines. These developments are not following the review and decision process timelines legislated through the *Planning Act*.

“Zoning certainty” guarantees heights, densities and land uses at TOC sites. The Province has advised achieving “zoning certainty” may involve Minister’s Zoning Orders or municipal planning approvals (e.g. amendment to official plans and zoning bylaws). TOC developments approved through Minister’s Zoning Orders are not appealable.

### **4. Analysis**

#### **Municipal comments on the Transit-Oriented Communities proposals identified four critical areas of concern shared by York Region, Markham and Richmond Hill staff**

Municipal comments on the Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals were provided to the Province in September 2021 and outlined four critical areas of concern and detailed technical comments:

1. Alignment with approved municipal Secondary Plan visions for lands within TOC sites
2. Densities and population proposed for the TOC sites
3. Process – confidentiality and engagement with Councils and the public
4. Financial framework to support the TOC sites

The Region reinforced the need for the TOC proposals to be revised to address these concerns in a memo to the YNSE Executive Strategy Committee in September 2021 and letter to Deputy Ministers of Transportation and Infrastructure in November 2021 (Attachment 2).

Regional and local municipal staff have actively engaged Provincial staff in an effort to align the TOC proposals with the planned vision of the secondary plans in the Richmond Hill/ Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre. Regional and local municipal staff shared feedback and input at multiple working group sessions and strategic committee meetings for improvements to TOC proposals that more closely align with the areas’ planned vision.

## Revised Transit-Oriented Communities proposals need to address key issues and more closely align with the planning framework of local municipal secondary plans

In December 2021, the Province released revised Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals on the public open house engagement platforms. Updates included boundary adjustments to the TOC development lands, addition of east-west multi-modal connections, provision of a high-level phasing plan, revised shadow and pedestrian level wind studies.

Table 1 compares the revised Bridge TOC proposal with the Langstaff Gateway Master Plan (West Side) targets. A comparison of development concept between the Secondary Plan and TOC proposal is shown in Figure 3.

**Table 1**  
**Bridge Transit-Oriented Communities Proposal and**  
**the Langstaff Gateway Master Plan (West Side) Comparison**

Statistics	December 2021 Bridge TOC Proposal	Langstaff Gateway Master Plan (West Side)
Site Area	25.4 hectares	25.4 hectares <sup>1</sup>
Population	43,700 <sup>2</sup>	22,300 <sup>2</sup>
Jobs	9,400 – 12,300	10,600 – 19,200
Population to Job Ratio	3.6 to 4.6 :1	1.2 to 2 :1
People and Jobs per Hectare	2,089 – 2,203	1,294 – 1,631
Building Height	5 – 80 storeys	3 – 50 storeys
Floor Space Index	3.4 – 25.7	5.4 – 15.9

<sup>1</sup> Area in the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan intersecting with the Bridge TOC proposal

<sup>2</sup> Population calculated based on 2.13 persons per unit factor, as per the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan

**Figure 3**  
**Development Concept - Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan and**  
**Bridge Transit-Oriented Communities Proposal**

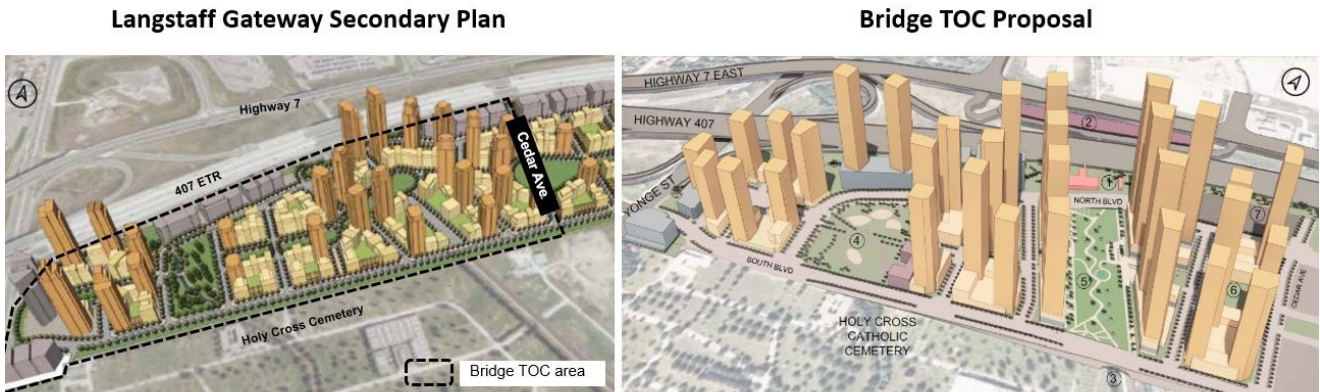


Table 2 compares the revised High-Tech TOC proposal with statistics derived from the draft Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan policy framework. Figure 4 shows renderings of development concepts for the draft Secondary Plan and High-Tech TOC proposal.

**Table 2**  
**High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposal and Draft Richmond Hill**  
**Centre Secondary Plan Comparison**

Statistics	December 2021 High-Tech TOC	Draft Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan
Site Area	20.1 hectares	21.8 hectares <sup>1</sup>
Population <sup>2</sup>	35,300 – 36,700	17,700
Jobs <sup>3</sup>	9,600 – 12,600	14,500
Population to Job Ratio	2.8:1 – 3.8:1	1.2:1
People and Jobs per Hectare	2,303 – 2,383	1,475
Building Height	40 – 80	8 – 70
Floor Space Index	10.3	4 – 9.5

<sup>1</sup> Area in the Secondary Plan that most closely aligns with the High-Tech TOC proposal

<sup>2</sup> TOC population based on average unit size 76.5 m<sup>2</sup> and 1.74 persons per unit factor. Secondary Plan based on average unit size 95.02 m<sup>2</sup> and 2.15 persons per unit factor

<sup>3</sup> TOC jobs based on 20 m<sup>2</sup> per employee for office and 40 m<sup>2</sup> per employee for retail. Secondary Plan jobs based on 20.90 m<sup>2</sup> per employee for office and 37.16 m<sup>2</sup> per employee for retail



## Figure 4 Development Concept - Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposal

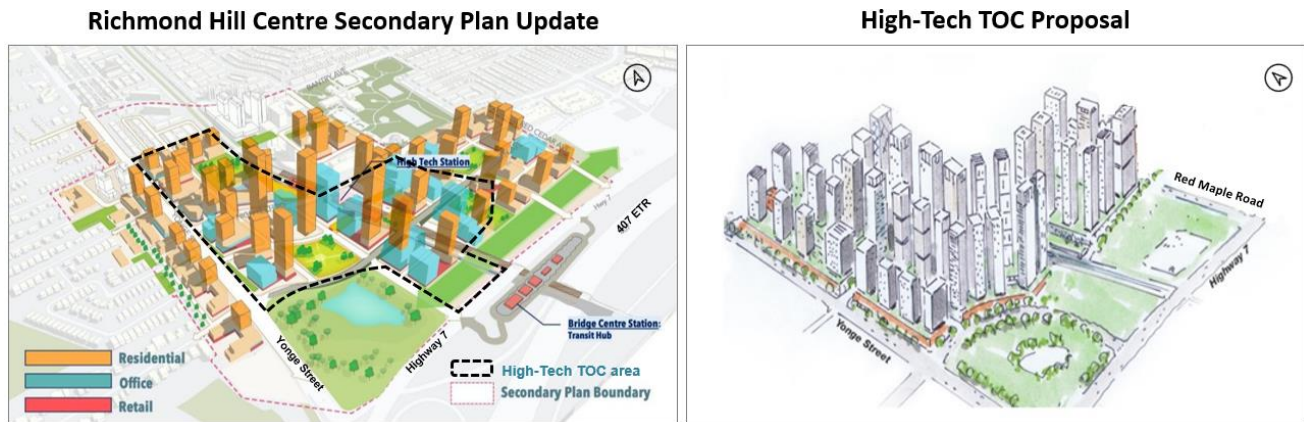


Table 3 highlights key issues raised by York Region and local staff with the Province that remain outstanding to date:

**Table 3  
Outstanding Regional Issues on the Bridge and  
High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals**

Theme	Issue	Details
Growth and Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed population growth and Gross Floor Area (GFA) beyond what is planned for in the Regional forecast and local municipal secondary plans</li> </ul>	<p>High-Tech TOC proposes about 2,300 persons and jobs per hectare (PJ/Ha) while the Bridge TOC proposes about 2,200 PJ/Ha. In 2020, Regional Council endorsed planned MTSA density target for this area at 400 PJ/Ha. By comparison, density at Toronto's Yonge and Eglinton area is 600 PJ/Ha (see Attachment 3)</p>
Mix of Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is need for a more appropriate mix of uses, including residential and non-residential GFA that provides a healthy balance for a complete community</li> </ul>	<p>Resident to job ratio at Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals is about 4:1 and 3:1 respectively. Regional Official Plan directs a long-term resident-to-employee target ratio of 1:1</p>

Theme	Issue	Details
Fine-grained Street Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TOC development should deliver fine-grained streets, multi-modal travel network including automobile, cycling and pedestrian connectivity at the proposed Garden Avenue extension east of Yonge St in Richmond Hill Centre</li> </ul>	High-Tech TOC proposal includes pedestrian and cycling paths in lieu of the originally planned Garden Avenue east-west street
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While the Province indicated affordable housing would be addressed at the TOC program level, it remains unclear how the proposals will achieve Regional affordable housing targets</li> </ul>	Regional Official Plan requires 35% new housing units in Regional Centres to be affordable. Affordable housing remains a critical priority in complete communities
Development Phasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TOC proposals lack detailed phasing plans to ensure sequencing of development is coordinated with infrastructure availability</li> </ul>	Proposed growth well beyond what is planned by the Region and local municipalities needs to be assessed in the context of the Region's infrastructure master plans and fiscal sustainability
Parks and Community Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional spaces for community facilities, school sites and open spaces are required to serve proposed residential growth and be phased appropriately as development advances</li> </ul>	More in-depth financial and implementation frameworks are needed to ensure successful delivery of adequate municipal parks and community amenities in the TOC proposals

### **Growth proposed through Transit-Oriented Communities proposals impacts planning and delivery of Regional infrastructure and services**

Intensification and the magnitude of growth proposed by the TOC proposals is significant and will impact the planning and delivery of physical and social infrastructure, including roads, sewer and water, waste management, emergency and social services and other community facilities to support future residents and workers in the area. Proposed TOC densities and growth assumptions were not contemplated in the Regional Transportation and Water and Wastewater Master Plans. Further analysis is required to fully assess necessary upgrades, impacts and implications to Regional infrastructure systems, and planning and delivery of Regional transit, community and social services and programs.

The financial cost of providing hard and soft infrastructure supporting and benefiting TOC needs to be fully assessed. There is also an obligation of ongoing operations and maintenance and lifecycle costs for Regional infrastructure delivered. Clarity around the Region's total commitment needs to be achieved as part of a detailed financial analysis and framework requested from the Province to help understand financial impacts to the Region and local municipalities.

### **Province and proponent-led public consultations for the Bridge and High-Tech proposals were held in December 2021**

The Province and landowners in the High-Tech and Bridge TOC areas hosted virtual open houses to receive public input on the TOC proposals in December 2021. Residents living within a one-kilometre radius of TOC sites were notified of the open houses through mail-out postcards. The proponents also launched online engagement websites to share detailed concepts and studies for the TOC proposals and elicit feedback by early January 2022.

Approximately 200 people attended the TOC public open houses. Landowners (Metrus and Condor) and representatives from the Ministries of Transportation and Infrastructure presented the TOC development proposals followed by public input. Common themes and issues raised during the comment period include:

- **Density:** Need for appropriate population and employment intensification around transit hubs, particularly at High-Tech and the Bridge station with future access to five rapid transit modes including: subway, GO rail, GO bus, VIVA bus rapid transit, and 407 transitway (YRT conventional bus service will also operate out of Bridge Station)
- **Travel, Mobility and Parking:** Ensure there are safe pedestrian crossings, parking for residents and commuters, and active, pedestrian-only streets in the proposals. Integration of local and rapid transit with subway is key
- **Housing:** TOC developments should deliver a minimum 35% of affordable housing units required through municipal policies. Delivering affordable housing and including family-sized units in future developments should be a priority
- **Mix of Use:** Ensure there is a balance of residential and job growth at a 2:1 ratio. Proponent noted the TOC plans contain a minimum and maximum employment target, which yield resident to job ratios at 4:1 and 3:1
- **Community Services and Amenities:** Need for adequate community amenities such as schools, community centres, and libraries to meet the needs of future residents
- **Greenspace:** Preserve woodlot at Yonge Street and High-Tech Road from development as it is a community landmark; the Bridge rail deck park is key asset for the Langstaff community
- **Wind and shadow impacts:** Building and street design should mitigate wind effects and shadow impacts on surrounding uses

- Development timeline: The proponent anticipated TOC developments to begin after YNSE construction commences, with a 25- to 30-year build-out timeframe

While municipal review of the revised TOC proposals is constrained by Provincial zoning certainty deadline, it is important the proposals align with planned municipal visions developed with public and technical input. Regional Centres are intended to be vibrant destinations for jobs as well as population growth. Staff will continue to work with local municipal partners, community members, the Province and landowners to plan for livable, complete communities.

### **Status of the Royal Orchard Station is pending confirmation**

The project currently includes four stations within York Region – Steeles, Clark, Bridge and High-Tech. TOC proposals are anticipated by the Province for proposed Steeles and Clark station areas. Royal Orchard has been proposed as a Major Transit Station Area with strong TOC opportunities. If the station is not built or protected for in some fashion, the distance between stations (Clark to Bridge) will be the longest in the entire subway system at approximately four kilometres.

### **York Region remains committed to implementing the Yonge North Subway Extension and working with the Province to align Transit-Oriented Communities proposals with approved and emerging secondary plans for these areas**

York Region is committed to the YNSE project, supporting seamless travel, additional housing options, jobs and economic vitality in our communities. In planning for the arrival of extended subway services and stations along the proposed alignment, it is imperative to ensure livable, complete communities are planned and built around future stations including those built through the Province's TOC Program.

Whatever the outcome of the TOC deliberations, there is no question that the Yonge subway extension is long overdue with its current terminus at Finch Avenue remaining unchanged since 1974. In a [March 2021](#) update from Metrolinx, Regional Council was advised of the status of the project. Council also received an update in a [June 2021](#) report. The project is now fully funded and Metrolinx is charged with delivering the Yonge subway as one of five priority projects identified by the provincial government.

### **Metrolinx has responded to community concerns and further refined the alignment**

Through 2021, progress has been slowed due to alignment concerns through parts of the Thornhill community. Metrolinx worked through most of 2021 to address community concerns and has finalized a route that minimizes impacts – through construction and beyond. This project is now poised to catch up with the procurement and construction stages that other priority projects have already achieved. Council should be encouraging Metrolinx to advance preliminary construction for the YNSE without delay.

## **5. Financial**

Proposed TOC growth, well beyond what is planned for in the municipal secondary plans, requires assessment and possible funding of additional infrastructure and services to support projected demands and ensure municipal financial sustainability. The proposed additional growth has not been contemplated by any of the current Regional Master Plan, Development Charge Bylaw update, and Municipal Comprehensive Review work.

A shared objective of the TOC program is to create and exchange value. It is unclear how potential financial benefits created by the TOC will be shared. In addition, the Region also needs to determine and confirm with the Province that the TOC program will not diminish the Region's ability to raise revenue, including through development charges.

The financial framework to support TOC is currently being examined by the Province. Additional financial impacts to the Region and local municipalities will be made available when this analysis concludes.

## **6. Local Impact**

The proposed population and density for Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals, will impact local municipal provision of local streets, water and wastewater infrastructure, and community services including community centres, libraries, emergency services, parks and open spaces. While planned subway infrastructure will facilitate population and employment growth in the Richmond Hill/ Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre and local Secondary Plan areas, the TOC proposals need to support and align with the planned vision and established policy framework for building vibrant, mixed-use and livable complete communities.

## **7. Conclusion**

The Province-led TOC program aims to build compact, high density mixed-use communities around future transit stations through partnerships with private landowners and in collaboration with municipal and community partners. The two TOC proposals in York Region, Bridge and High-Tech TOCs, are within the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre. These proposals do not currently align with the planning framework established through secondary plans for these planned and growing communities.

To support the Provincial timeline of achieving zoning certainty, pending Council direction, staff will work with the Province, Metrolinx, local municipalities and landowners to ensure proposals align with and advance Regional and local municipal interests and secure commitments through necessary agreements and implementation tools. In the meantime, work necessary to advance construction of the subway project should proceed without delay.

For more information on this report, please contact Karen Whitney, Director, Community Planning and Development Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71505. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

**Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP**

Chief Planner



**Dino Basso**

Commissioner of Corporate Services



Approved for Submission:

**Bruce Macgregor**

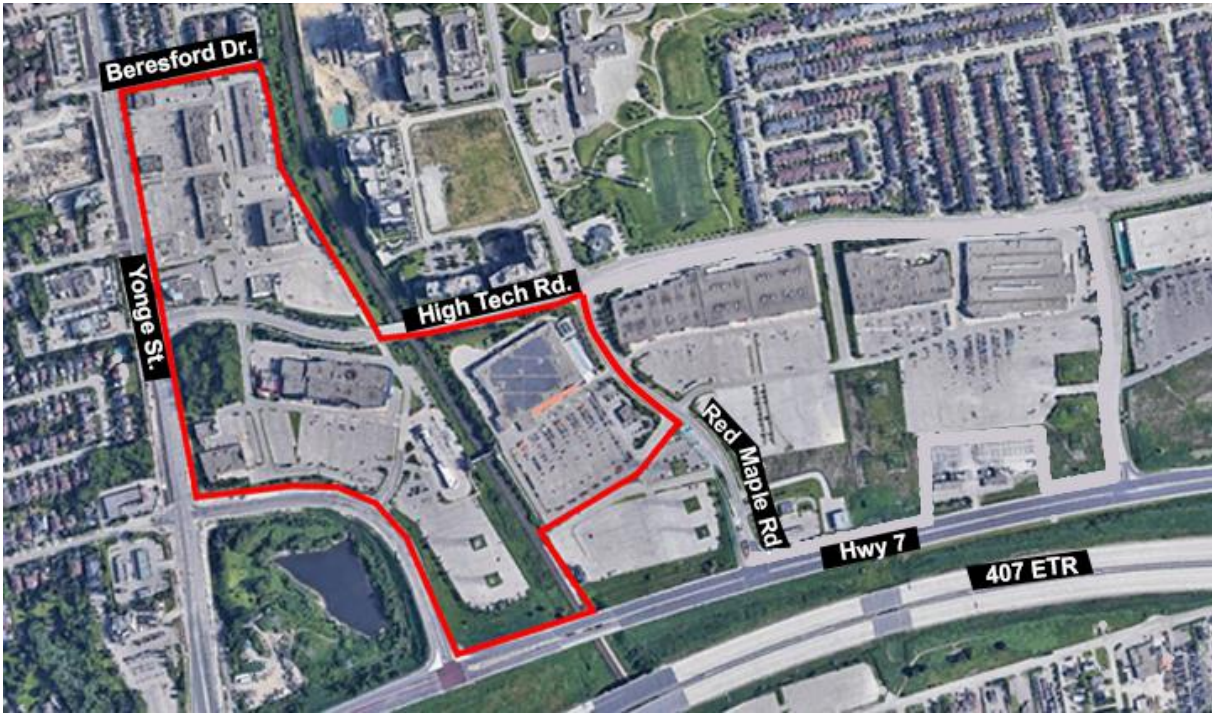
Chief Administrative Officer

January 7, 2022

Attachments (3)

13568950

**High-Tech Transit-Oriented Community Proposal Boundary**



**Bridge Transit-Oriented Community Proposal Boundary**





Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner

November 23, 2021

Ms. Laurie LeBlanc  
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Ministry of Transportation  
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Mr. Chris Giannikos  
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Deputy Ministers:

**RE: Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals**

York Region and our local municipalities are committed to the Yonge North Subway Extension project, supporting seamless travel, additional housing options, jobs and economic vitality in our communities. As we plan for the arrival of extended subway services and stations along the proposed alignment, it is imperative to ensure livable, complete communities are planned and built around future stations including those built through the Province's Transit-Oriented Communities Program.

In September 2021, the Province announced locations of Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) proposals around future High-Tech and Bridge subway stations.

Regional and local municipal staff continue to support TOC proposals that align with and advance local planning visions, goals and objectives, established through current municipal planning frameworks, including existing and emerging secondary plans.

In August 2021, Infrastructure Ontario shared detailed submissions for the Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals with York Region, City of Markham and City of Richmond Hill staff on a confidential basis. We were unable to advance discussions on the proposals with our Councils. Municipal staff reviewed these proposals, and highlighted areas of alignment needed between these proposals and existing and emerging secondary plans. At numerous meetings with Provincial staff since August, we have reiterated concerns about the proposals. We acknowledge that some progress has been made towards better alignment with Richmond Hill for the High-Tech TOC proposal, but key areas of concern remain.

Municipal comments on the TOC proposals were sent to Infrastructure Ontario in September 2021 (attached) that focused on four critical areas of concern shared by York Region, Markham, and Richmond Hill staff:



November 23, 2021

Re: Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals

1. Alignment with municipal Secondary Plan visions for the TOC sites identified
2. Densities and population proposed for the TOC sites
3. Process – confidentiality and engagement with Councils and the public, and
4. Financial framework to support the TOC sites

As we know, the Province is on a tight timeline towards zoning certainty so timely dialogue towards better alignment is important. While the Province and municipalities have a shared vision to realize complete communities in these locations, key issues and concerns raised in our September comments and at meetings with Provincial staff regarding the TOC proposals remain, including:

- Magnitude of population growth and increased overall Gross Floor Area (GFA) proposed
- Importance of a more appropriate mix of uses, including residential and non-residential GFA that provides a healthy balance for a complete community
- Provision of parks and open spaces generally consistent with municipal policy and practices
- Provision of adequate spaces for community services such as schools, community centres, libraries, and emergency services
- Adequate pedestrian and cycling connectivity, fine-grained street network and commitment to last kilometer solutions
- Clarity on the expected phasing and funding of related transportation infrastructure and services to support the projected demands (i.e. goods and service delivery, emergency services access, intersection capacities, etc.)
- Clarity on the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Regional and local planning directions
- Better understanding of financial implications and framework
- Provision of studies typically completed for Urban Growth Centres to demonstrate feasibility of intensified proposals (e.g. height, shadow, phasing, servicing, roads and other transportation facility design)

To support the Provincial timeline of zoning certainty for Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals by March 2022, municipal staff look forward to timely discussions about the issues and implications identified in this letter and our letter dated September 7<sup>th</sup> attached. We hope this will lead to positive improvements to the TOC proposals that better align with the vision contained within the existing and emerging secondary plans for these areas.

We remain committed to implementing the Yonge North Subway Extension and encourage the Province to engage with us in a dialogue to address these comments as we plan for TOC developments together with our local municipalities, community stakeholders and the public.

Sincerely,



Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP  
Chief Planner  
The Regional Municipality of York

November 23, 2021

Re: Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals

Attachment: Memorandum to the YNSE Executive Steering Committee - York Region and YNSE Local Municipalities  
Response/Comments to the Province's Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC)  
Proposals, September 7, 2021

cc Michael Lindsay, President & CEO, Infrastructure Ontario  
Vinay Sharda, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transportation  
Kate Manson-Smith, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Hanna Evans, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Sean Fraser, Regional Director (Acting), Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing  
Bruce Macgregor, Chief Administrative Officer, York Region  
Andy Taylor, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Markham  
Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager, City of Richmond Hill  
Arvin Prasad, Commissioner, Development Services, City of Markham  
Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner, Planning and Infrastructure Department, City of Richmond Hill  
Lisa Lavery, Infrastructure Ontario  
Rob Krauss, Infrastructure Ontario  
Bronwyn Cuthbertson, Ministry of Transportation  
Darryl Lyons, City of Markham  
Anthony Ierullo, City of Richmond Hill  
Daniel Olding, City of Richmond Hill  
Mary-Frances Turner, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation  
Rose Suppa, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation  
Karen Whitney, York Region

Edocs #13457946



## Memorandum

To: YNSE Executive Committee

From: Paul Freeman, Chief Planner

Date: September 7, 2021

Re: **York Region and YNSE Local Municipalities Response/Comments to the Province's Bridge and High-Tech Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Proposals**

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On July 28th and August 5th, the Province shared with York Region and its local municipalities, City of Markham, City of Richmond Hill and City of Vaughan (each a "Party" and collectively the "Parties"), TOC proposals for Bridge and High-Tech stations. Under a non-disclosure agreement, the TOC proposals were delivered via a data room for the parties to access in order to commence technical reviews and provide comments back to the Province for each of the sites as per the Province's TOC Zoning Certainty Approval Process and identified Process Map (Attachment 1).

This communication provides a collective set of comments and concerns from the Region and local planning officials in Markham and Richmond Hill most impacted by TOC proposals for Bridge and High-Tech.

### **Four critical areas of concern have been identified by the parties:**

1. Alignment with municipal Secondary Plan visions for the TOC sites identified;
2. Densities and population proposed for the TOC sites;
3. Process – confidentiality and engagement with Councils and the public; and
4. Financial framework to support the TOC sites.

### **Background**

- Through the TOC program, the Province has been collaborating with third-party partners (i.e. private sector developers and their consultants) to submit TOC proposals.
- The Province, in consultation with Regional and local staff, has established a time-bound approval process (Attachment 1) for TOC proposals, to advance these

applications to “zoning certainty” by March 2022 to maintain pace with project timelines and procurements.

- “Zoning certainty” guarantees heights, densities and land uses at TOC sites. The Province has advised achieving “zoning certainty” may involve Minister’s Zoning Orders (MZOs) or municipal planning processes (e.g. amendment to official plans and zoning bylaws). TOC developments approved through MZOs are not appealable.
- Public consultation for the TOC proposals will be led by Infrastructure Ontario. Outreach was to start in late August/early September, first to elected officials (i.e. mayors and councillors), then to the community, notwithstanding municipal staff being bound by confidentiality.
- Additional TOC proposals may be forthcoming including lands around Clark station in Markham, and Steeles station in the City of Toronto.

### **TOC Proposals and Secondary Plans**

- The Region and local municipalities have key concerns about the deviation of the TOC proposals from the existing or emerging local Secondary Plans and the process to engage members of Council and the public while the TOC proposals remain confidential and as they are released.
- Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan is being updated with new land use and density targets. City Council, municipal and agency stakeholder, and the public provided input into the update since 2019. This work is expected to be completed by year end 2021. Part of the High-Tech TOC development is within the secondary plan area, with some lands extending beyond.
- Langstaff Gateway Secondary plan (LGSP) was approved in 2011 and continues to be in effect. The Bridge TOC development area comprises the western portion of the secondary plan area, extending from Yonge to past the CN railway tracks.

### **Areas of Concern Identified**

The following are collective planning issues identified by Regional and local municipal staff of the confidential Bridge and High-Tech TOC proposals:

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Concerns</b>
Vision	Richmond Hill Centre and Langstaff Gateway secondary plans articulate the planned vision for areas intersecting with TOC proposals. Density, parkland, mix of use proposed by the TOC developments deviate from vision, principles, and objectives in current secondary plans.

<p>Intensity</p>	<p>Building heights and densities proposed on TOC lands exceed permissions in approved and proposed secondary plans:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update</th> <th>High-Tech TOC Proposal <sup>a</sup></th> <th>Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan</th> <th>Bridge TOC Proposal <sup>b</sup></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Population</td> <td>28,100</td> <td>55,900</td> <td>32,000</td> <td>31,400</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jobs</td> <td>16,300</td> <td>6,400</td> <td>15,000</td> <td>8,200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maximum Height (storeys)</td> <td>8 to 70</td> <td>15 to 80</td> <td>3 to 50</td> <td>10 to 80</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Floor Space Index (FSI)</td> <td>4 to 9.5</td> <td>9.8 to 23.5</td> <td>5.4 to 15.9</td> <td>3 to 25.7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><sup>a</sup> High-Tech TOC area does not align completely with the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan area  <sup>b</sup> Bridge TOC area is roughly half the size of the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan area</p> <p>TOC proposals are generally 1.1 to 3.3 times in height, and 1.6 to 2.5 times in FSI beyond secondary plan requirements. Refer to Attachment 2 for more details.</p> <p>The Bridge TOC proposal uses lower apartment person per unit assumptions than the City (1.5 vs. 2.1), generating lower population and job estimates than what the City expects from the proposal.</p>		Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update	High-Tech TOC Proposal <sup>a</sup>	Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan	Bridge TOC Proposal <sup>b</sup>	Population	28,100	55,900	32,000	31,400	Jobs	16,300	6,400	15,000	8,200	Maximum Height (storeys)	8 to 70	15 to 80	3 to 50	10 to 80	Floor Space Index (FSI)	4 to 9.5	9.8 to 23.5	5.4 to 15.9	3 to 25.7
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<p>Mix</p>	<p>The proposals planned to deliver high proportions of housing with few jobs. This imbalance of residential to non-residential uses does not support the vision and delivery of complete, mixed-use communities. TOC sites provide great locations for office developments and facilitate the creation of knowledge-based jobs in Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Regional Centre.</p>																									
<p>Affordable Housing</p>	<p>It remains unclear how the TOC proposals will deliver affordable housing to meet secondary plan targets. More implementation details will assist staff's review of the proposals.</p> <p>A stronger commitment to affordable housing is necessary.</p>																									
<p>Parkland</p>	<p>The parkland vision articulated in TOC proposals deviates from current secondary plans.</p> <p>Details regarding accessibility and operations of the proposed above-grade rail deck park need to be clarified.</p> <p>The Bridge TOC proposes a linear park system along an active high-voltage hydro-electric corridor. Health impacts, particularly related to exposure to electromagnetic fields, should be examined.</p>																									
<p>Urban Design</p>	<p>Performance based urban design measures are required to permit flexibility in building typologies over time.</p>																									

<p>Transportation</p>	<p>TOC proposals should implement a fine-grained public street network to balance travel needs and modes.</p> <p>Garden Avenue extension as a major collector urban street in the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan is not included in the High-Tech TOC proposal.</p> <p>The “Transit Green” area shown in the Bridge proposal was conceived based on the subway station locating along Yonge Street. With the new subway alignment, planning for this area needs to be revisited. Additional connectivity is required to support the movement of people and goods and achieve a high modal split.</p>
<p>Parking</p>	<p>Appropriate parking standards are required to ensure the planned TOC proposals and Regional Center functions over the long term.</p>
<p>Water/wastewater capacity</p>	<p>Water and wastewater system impact analysis is required to assess if these areas can accommodate proposed growth and determine if Regional infrastructure would need to be built or upgraded.</p>
<p>Site Servicing</p>	<p>Better understanding of the planned approach to site servicing is required.</p>
<p>Phasing</p>	<p>No phasing information has been provided in the submissions.</p> <p>Successful city building requires careful coordination and sequencing of infrastructure and human services delivery to support planned developments.</p>
<p>Community Services/ Schools</p>	<p>School site locations deviate from secondary plans. Vertical school integration and school/community facilities co-location arrangements require more extensive multi-agency coordination.</p> <p>Both TOC proposals need to consider sites for emergency medical services (e.g. fire and paramedic stations).</p>
<p>Consultation process</p>	<p>There are concerns around confidentiality of the submissions, limiting staff’s ability to notify and brief municipal Councils on planned developments.</p> <p>There are concerns with TOC proposals deviating from ongoing public engagement by the municipalities to develop the vision for these Secondary Plan areas.</p>
<p>Financing</p>	<p>The proposals need to include financial analysis identifying cost impacts, implications, funding sources, and responsibilities related to the delivery and operation of planned infrastructure and features (i.e. rail deck park, shared community facilities between school board and local municipalities).</p> <p>Clarity is needed regarding the overall financial framework for the TOC program as well as the development charges for TOC developments, to support the Region’s efforts to secure funding for the YNSE.</p>

## Regional impacts

- Intensification and the magnitude of growth proposed through the TOC applications impact the planning and delivery of physical and social infrastructure, including roads, sewer and water, schools and other community facilities to support future residents and workers in the area.
- The significance of Regional Centres and these emerging TOD nodes in York Region require comprehensive planning to create the vision for complete communities the municipalities have worked extensively to achieve.
- The significant population increase in both TOC developments needs to be studied and planned comprehensively, especially in the context of the Region's master plans:
  - Proposed TOC densities were not contemplated in Master Plans.
  - Additional analysis is required to assess if these areas can accommodate proposed growth and determine if Regional/Municipal infrastructure would need to be built or upgraded.

## Next Steps

- The YNSE Executive Committee, with local CAO's and Planning officials will need to discuss a shared and united city-building vision for the planned TOC areas and the process to engage local Councils, the public and stakeholders.
- Regional and local staff will continue to share preliminary comments on the TOC proposals with Provincial partners at working group meetings and other collaboration forums.
- The Province (Infrastructure Ontario) will begin political outreach to update the Chairman, mayors and councillors on TOC proposals for Bridge and High Tech in early September.
- Regional and local municipal staff will continue to work with Provincial and private sector partners, to ensure TOC developments can be consistent with the Regional and local municipal secondary plan framework and policy intent for each site.

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Paul Freeman, Chief Planner

Attachments (2)

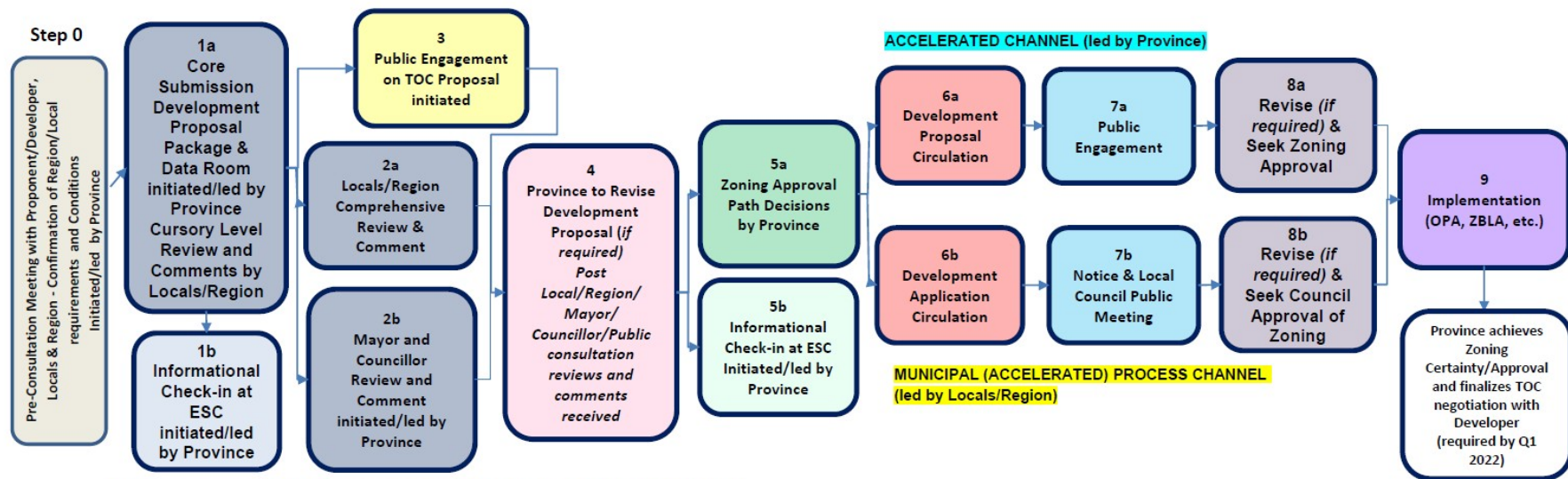
eDOCS 13276015

**Attachment 1**

Provincial TOC Zoning Certainty Approval Process

HIGH SENSITIVITY

# Bridge and High Tech TOC Timeline



**\*NDA covers all commercially sensitive information shared under this process**

STEP 1	STEPS 2 & 3	STEP 4	STEP 5	STEP 6	STEP 7	STEP 8*	APPROVED
DP to Staff & ESC: Late July/Early Aug (TBC)	Start: Late Mid-Aug (TBC) End: 10-Sep-21 (30 days)	Start: 30-Aug-21 End: 12-Oct-21 (30 days)	Start: 12-Oct-21 End: 18-Oct-21 (5 days)	Start: 18-Oct-21 End: 20-Oct-21 (3 days)	Start: 20-Oct-21 End: 30-Nov-21 (30 days)	Start: 30-Nov-21 End: 1-Mar-22 (60 days)	1-Mar-22



**Attachment 2**

Comparison of Secondary Plan and TOC Proposals Growth and Density Targets

Statistics	Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update	High Tech TOC Proposal <sup>1</sup>	TOC Proposal Increases from Secondary Plan	Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan	Bridge TOC Proposal	TOC Proposal Increases from Secondary Plan
Population at buildout	28,100	55,900	Not comparable, boundaries do not align	32,000 <sup>2</sup>	31,400	Not comparable, boundaries do not align
Jobs at buildout	16,300	6,400		15,000 <sup>2</sup>	8,200	
Maximum Height (storeys)	8 to 70 <sup>1</sup>	15 to 80	14 to 88% 1.1 to 1.8 times	3 to 50 <sup>3</sup>	10 to 80	60 to 230% 1.6 to 3.3 times
Floor Space Index (FSI)	4 to 9.5 <sup>1</sup>	9.8 to 23.5	145 to 147% 2.5 times	5.4 to 15.9 <sup>3</sup>	3 to 25.7	- 44% to 62% 1.6 times

<sup>1</sup> High-Tech TOC Proposal area does not align completely with the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan area. Comparison is made for areas that intersect both plans.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics shown are for the entire Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan area. The Bridge TOC comprises about 50% of lands in the secondary plan area.

<sup>3</sup> This represents secondary plan height and floor space index for areas covered by the Bridge TOC. Maximum building heights range from 3 to 50, and FSI from 3.8 to 15.9 across the entire secondary plan area.

## ATTACHMENT 3

### Transit-Oriented Communities Proposals, Secondary Plans and Toronto Urban Growth Centres Density Comparison

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Persons and Jobs per Hectare			
Richmond Hill/ Langstaff Gateway	December 2021 TOC Proposal	Secondary Plan	TOC increase in density
Bridge	2,089 – 2,203	1,294 – 1,631	+ 31% to 61%
High-Tech	2,303 – 2,383	1,475	+ 56% to 62%

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Toronto Urban Growth Centres	2019 Density (Persons and Jobs per Hectare)
Yonge-Eglinton Centre	595
North York Centre	460
Toronto Downtown and Central Waterfront	388

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Source: Toronto City Planning, Land Use Information System II. Toronto Employment Surveys 2006, 2011, 2016, 2019.  
Statistics Canada 2006, 2011, 2016 Censuses, custom tabulations.