



SUBJECT: Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan Study - Interim Report

PREPARED BY: Deanna Schlosser, RPP MCIP, Senior Planner, Policy, Ext. 2157

REVIEWED BY: Duran Wedderburn, RPP MCIP, Policy Manager, Ext. 2109

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the report and presentation dated January 27, 2025, entitled, “Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan Study - Interim Report” be received;
2. THAT the Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan Study- Interim Report and emerging concept be released for public consultation and input; and
3. THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Markham has initiated the Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan Study (the “YCSP”) to inform the preparation of a new Secondary Plan. This work builds upon the work undertaken in the [2022 Yonge Corridor Land Use and Built Form Study](#). The requirement for a new secondary plan for the Yonge Corridor area is identified by the Markham Official Plan 2014. The intent of the new secondary plan is to guide the development of a new community that integrates a mix of uses and amenities (e.g., housing, employment, shopping, recreation and parks), and will address land use and urban design, transportation and municipal servicing to support the development of a sustainable and complete community along the Yonge Corridor.

The YCSP considers land use, transportation and municipal servicing in an integrated way to ensure intensification is achieved in a manner that is sustainable and sensitive to the area’s social, economic and environmental needs. The purpose is to provide policy guidance on a range of matters including land use, built form, public spaces, community services, natural and cultural heritage, retail and office, service employment, transportation, municipal servicing and infrastructure.

The YCSP study area and expanded preliminary secondary plan area boundary are shown on Figure 1. The Preliminary Secondary Plan Area includes the City of Markham lands contained within the three Protected Major Transit Station Areas (the “PMTSA”s) along the Yonge Corridor: Steeles Station Area, Clark Station Area, and Royal Orchard Station Area. At this stage of the study, the Secondary Plan Area boundary has not been finalized and may be adjusted to better respond to City, stakeholder, and community priorities as the policy framework evolves.

The Interim Report outlines existing conditions, introduces emerging directions and concepts, and presents preliminary demonstration massing. It is recommended for release to serve as the foundation for the next stage of community consultation, which will help shape the development of the secondary plan.

PURPOSE:

This report provides a summary of the work completed to date on the YCSP study, and results of the Interim Report prepared by the consultant team retained by the City, attached as Appendix 'A'. The report also brings forward the emerging concept and policy directions, as well as preliminary demonstration massing, and identifies the next steps including obtaining feedback on the Interim Report through public consultation.

BACKGROUND:

A new secondary plan for the Yonge Corridor is required to guide the development of a complete community at transit supportive densities.

The 2014 Markham Official Plan identifies a number of Key Development Areas (KDA) that require new or updated secondary plans, and/or local area studies, including the Yonge Steeles Corridor KDA north of Steeles Avenue East and the Yonge North Corridor KDA north and south of Royal Orchard Boulevard.

In March 2021, Metrolinx recommended advancing the Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) with up to four stations: Steeles, Bridge, High Tech, and one additional station at Cumber, Clark, or Royal Orchard. By July 2021, Clark Station was confirmed, and in April 2022, Royal Orchard was added as the fifth station.

In response, to the identification on the subway stations, Council directed staff to complete a [Yonge Corridor Land Use and Built Form Study](#) for the areas surrounding the Steeles, Clark, and Royal Orchard Areas. The study, finalized in June 2022, informs the need to complete a secondary plan along the Yonge Corridor that extends beyond the Yonge Steeles Corridor KDA.

Provincial planning legislation, including the *Planning Act* and the Provincial Planning Statement 2024, establishes the requirement of delineating boundaries and setting minimum density targets for Protected Major Transit Station Areas (the "PMTSA"). Located around existing or planned higher-order transit stations, these areas are designated to encourage higher density, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development, ensuring PMTSAs are well-planned and support sustainable growth. Within the majority of the corridor, there are three, each with specific boundaries /density targets defined in the York Regional Official Plan.

PMTSA	Minimum Density Targets¹
PMTSA 20 - Steeles Subway Station	300 People and Jobs/HA
PMTSA 9 - Clark Subway Station	250 People and Jobs/HA
PMTSA 19 - Royal Orchard Subway Station	250 People and Jobs/HA

¹ York Region Official Plan Appendix 2

Building on this previous work and provincial policy, the YCSP will provide specific policy direction for land use, built form, public spaces, community services, cultural heritage resources, retail and office, transportation, and municipal servicing infrastructure. The study consists of three main technical components: land use and urban design, transportation and municipal servicing; to help form the preparation of the Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan.

Process to Date:

The YCSP is a multi-phased study, with ongoing opportunities for stakeholder and public input, and was initiated to inform the preparation of the new secondary plan.

Initiated in February 2024, the YCSP study is being conducted by a multidisciplinary consultant team led by Urban Strategies Inc. Carried out in phases, the study integrates land use and urban design, transportation, and municipal servicing to comprehensively plan for a transit-oriented and complete community:

- Phase 1: Project Initiation
- Phase 2: Background Review
- Phase 3: Visioning & Detailed Technical Review
- **Phase 4: Emerging Concept & Interim Report (currently at this phase)**
- Phase 5: Refining Concept & Study Report
- Phase 6: Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan

Phases 1 through 3, consisted of background research into existing conditions, public and stakeholder engagement, technical analysis, and the development of an Emerging Concept for feedback. Study milestones for engagement to date have included the following and are summarized in Section 4.6 of the Interim Report.

- February 20, 2024: Project Launch [presentation](#) at Markham Development Services Committee
- March 8, 2024: Stakeholder Kick-Off meeting
- April 18, 2024: Hybrid Community Information Meeting #1 (Approx. 50 participants) to introduce the study and kick off the engagement of the study to stakeholders and members of the public.
- May 14 and 22, 2024: Two Community Engagement Pop-Ups (Approx. 195 participants) to interact with facilitators at the Thornhill Community Centre atrium to learn about the project and provide input.
- June 24, 2024: Visioning Workshop and Public Open House (Approx. 110 participants) to engage with city staff and agencies, ratepayer associations and members of the public.
- Other Engagement Opportunities/Activities:
 - Mobile Signs, Electronic Information Boards in various Community Centres, contact centre on-hold messages, Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, NextDoor), Markham NOW blog and 407 ETR Billboards were used to market the project and YCSP events
 - Ongoing engagement and study information on the City of Markham's Your Voice Markham at www.markham.ca/yongecorridor (over 1,800 participants have visited the page to date)

Overall, participants in public and stakeholder engagement recognized that development and change is coming to the Corridor, and Yonge Street in particular, and expressed a common interest in introducing policies that ensure incoming development responds to the Corridor's unique sense of place, and improves the quality of life of existing residents.

Comments received focused on:

- **Delivering Public Benefits:** new and improved parks and open spaces, destination "places of delight" for the community, new community facilities, additional services and amenities, and additional job-generating uses.

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- **Appropriate Integration:** built form that appropriately transitions between Yonge Street and established neighbourhoods, a variety of building types.
 - **Improving mobility options for all:** Connectivity should be improved, particularly for transit users, pedestrians, and cyclists.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Existing Conditions: *The Interim Report (Section 3) outlines and summarizes the existing conditions of the corridor as of fall 2024.*

The report provides an overview of the existing corridor covering: Demographics; Land Use and Built Form; Non-Residential Market Assessment; Community Services and Facilities; Affordable and Supportive Housing; Parks & Open Space; Transportation; Servicing; Natural Heritage; and Cultural Heritage. The existing conditions analysis captures strengths, constraints, and opportunities, which inform the Emerging Concept and Direction.

- **Existing Land Uses:** The Study Area is diverse, encompassing a mix of residential and non-residential uses in various forms with high-rise residential and mixed-use development beginning to take place, primarily at key intersections of Yonge Street within the PMTSAs. Yonge Street is a commercial corridor integrated alongside a diverse mix of established neighbourhoods, cultural and natural heritage resources, and small-scale service and employment areas.
 - **Steeles Station Area:** The Steeles PMTSA has experienced the most significant level of development along the Yonge Corridor and continues to be the focus of development interest within Markham and the adjacent municipalities of Toronto and Vaughan. This portion of the corridor is characterized mainly by auto-oriented commercial development.
 - **Clark Station Area:** The area around the future Clark Station is similar to the Steeles Station Area, it features an eclectic mix of types, primarily low- to mid-rise in scale. The general trend has been the gradual replacement of low-rise auto-oriented development with mid-rise development at the intersection of Clark Avenue and Yonge Street. The major difference between the Clark Station Area and other portions of the corridor is the presence of the CN rail corridor, running perpendicular to Yonge Street, and the low-rise employment area flanking both sides.
 - **Royal Orchard Station Area:** The Royal Orchard Station area character is predominantly low-rise detached housing with pockets of higher density townhouses and apartment developments closer to Yonge Street. The area is centered on a large retail plaza and several commercial plazas line Yonge Street to the north. Some recent mid- and high-rise developments have been proposed, mainly on lots directly fronting Yonge Street. A mix of low-density commercial uses faces Yonge Street.
 - **Doncaster and Glen Cameron Employment Park Area:** functions as a service retail and employment area.
 - **Areas outside the PMTSA:** Areas east and west of Yonge Street are predominantly low-rise residential. The Thornhill Heritage Conservation District is located between the Clark Station and Royal Orchard outside of the PMTSAs.

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- ***Transportation: Interim Report (Section 3.7) provides a summary of the transportation conditions along the Corridor.*** This includes an analysis of existing travel patterns, the multi-modal mobility network, road safety, parking supply, and transportation demand management (TDM) measures. The preliminary assessment of the Emerging Concept highlights opportunities to reshape the transportation system in and around the area. Due to the peak-time road network constraints, mainly driven by growth in the broader York Region and Toronto, improvement to active transportation and transit connections within the Study Area, along with TDM policies, are essential to provide more travel options.
 - ***Servicing: Interim Report (Section 3.8) provides an overview of the existing functional servicing conditions within the Study Area, and provides a summary of the water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, and highlights:***
 - **Water:** at or approaching servicing capacity and increased development may further impact water pressure levels within the associated pressure districts.
 - **Wastewater:** several existing sewers and sub-trunks are near or exceeding their design capacities and under surcharge state.
 - **Stormwater:** Portions of the Study Area are located within the flood plain, including parts of Dudley Avenue, and future development will require mitigation measures.

The report summarizes that new development along the Corridor will require infrastructure improvements to ensure a high quality of service and livability for existing and future residents.

Vision Statement

The vision for the Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan will be to leverage transit investment to transform the Yonge Corridor of tomorrow from a connector into a place of connection: a stitch between the diverse neighbourhoods that intersect along its length, between new and existing development and between Markham and its municipal neighbours.

The Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan will:

- Encourage thoughtful development that responds to what exists along the corridor today.
- Improve livability for current and future residents by supporting the development of complete, connected communities, with diverse housing options, supported by increased access to valued amenities (retail, services, community facilities, parks) and employment opportunities.
- Develop Opportunity Sites as key places of connection — comprehensive mixed-use developments complemented by unique and signature public open space moments that encourage community gathering and reinforce community identity.
- Support new ways of getting around the community, focusing on connecting destinations within station areas and along the Corridor, rather than travelling through it.

The Preliminary Secondary Plan Area is expected to accommodate 58,700 new residents and 3,800 new jobs.

Emerging Directions:

A series of Emerging Directions, influenced by the background review and feedback received through the engagement to date, has been developed.

The Interim Report recommends a place-based approach to the emerging directional themes as detailed in Section 5.2 of the Interim Report. The key directional themes include but are not limited to the following:

- 1) **Community Structure:** The Emerging Directions divides the community structure of the Study Area into 4 different types of “places” as shown on Figure 2 and outlined below. The new Preliminary Secondary Plan Boundary is proposed to include ‘Areas of Change’, ‘Areas of Transition’, ‘Employment Lands’, ‘Areas of Continuity’ which are proposed to be outside of the secondary plan, (refer to Figures 1 and 2).

The Preliminary Secondary Plan Boundary has been expanded to create additional opportunities to deliver public benefit at grade – including consolidated parks, increased open space connections, and community facilities, as well as additional opportunities for non-residential uses and diverse housing, including affordable alternatives. The expansions can also support improved built form transition between areas experiencing significant development and established low-rise neighbourhoods.

- i. **Areas of Change** are the three PMTSA where significant infill or redevelopment will occur, and comprise of Yonge Street Neighbourhood Blocks, Opportunity Sites, and Apartment Neighbourhoods.
 - *The Yonge Street Neighbourhood Blocks* are proposed to feature the tallest buildings, with noticeable height peaks near the stations. There will be a clear transition in building scale. This area will have a diverse mix of land uses, including various housing tenures, commercial retail units of different sizes, and a range of employment-generating uses.
 - *Opportunity Sites* are proposed to be located near the proposed stations, and are expected to be redeveloped into high-density, mixed-use areas centered around Signature Parks. These sites will offer diverse housing options and various uses, with non-residential activities positioned along the park edges.
 - *Apartment Neighbourhoods* are expected to undergo either gradual intensification or comprehensive redevelopment. Incremental intensification should add mid-block connections and more diverse ground-level uses. Comprehensive redevelopment should reintegrate the site with its surroundings, include a Signature Park, and follow a rental replacement framework.
- ii. **Areas of Transition** are places which support a transition in scale from high to low-rise development and are identified as appropriate for mid-rise development to support a transition in scale between Areas of Change and Areas of Continuity.
 - *The Dudley Community Seam* within Areas of Transition is a mid-rise corridor that transitions between taller developments along Yonge Street and low-rise areas. It is

prioritized for new parks, open spaces, and community facilities, and is designed to prioritize pedestrians and micromobility users.

- iii. **Corridor's Employment Lands** are identified as opportunities for expanded non-residential uses and job growth, with those closest to the new subway stations acknowledged for their potential to address a range of additional City and community priorities.
 - o **Potential Intensification Areas**, illustrated on Figure 3, are areas within the Corridor's Employment Lands closest to the future transit stations where a change to non-employment may be considered subject to a criteria-based evaluation framework that aligns with City priorities (e.g. job replacement and/or the delivery of community facilities, consolidated open space, or affordable house).
 - iiii. **Areas of Continuity** are places located outside the Preliminary Secondary Plan Boundary and are comprised of the Established Neighbourhoods and the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. No new policy directions are proposed within the Areas of Continuity.
- 2) **Land Uses and Amenities:** The Emerging Directions will focus on advancing development to improve access to essential services and amenities, provide new homes, and create jobs. It supports mixed-use developments that offer new amenities and job-generating uses, enhancing the vibrancy of public spaces. It also aims to deliver new, urban-format community services and facilities, and support new jobs and services at stations and within existing employment areas.
 - 3) **Built Form and Density:** The Emerging Directions promote a responsive approach to both existing conditions and emerging contexts. It encourages a diverse mix of building types and heights, with the tallest buildings near transit. Policies will ensure a transition in scale to low-rise areas. A performance-based approach to building design will facilitate variety and place-specific responses. Pedestrian-friendly designs will enhance the quality of public spaces at street level.
 - 4) **Preliminary Heights:** The Emerging Directions propose transition with the greatest heights along Yonge Street transition down moving east into the existing neighbourhood. The emerging concept suggests that the tallest buildings will be located along Yonge Street, with heights gradually decreasing as you move east into the existing neighborhood. As illustrated in Figure 4, the proposed building heights are generally up to 55 storeys along Yonge Street, stepping down to 35 storeys, then 11 storeys, and finally 6 storeys.
 - 5) **Parks and Open Space:** The Emerging Directions recognizes the need for parkland in the community, and includes expanding access by creating new parks and enhancing existing ones. During the next stage of the project, we will be exploring park strategies for the corridor. Investments will be made to improve existing parks, and parkland will be consolidated to provide functional spaces for both established and developing communities. Additionally, the development of a Signature Park within each Station Area will be encouraged.
 - 6) **Mobility and Streets:** The Emerging Directions aim to improve mobility throughout the Study Area by providing additional and convenient travel options. Yonge Street will be designed to safely accommodate all road users. Focusing on active transportation and transit, east-west connectivity will be strengthened, particularly to and from stations, while north-south connectivity will be enhanced by

creating new midblock connections, supporting Dudley as an active mobility corridor, and improving open space connections. The integration of transit infrastructure into future development designs is also encouraged.

- 7) **Employment:** The Emerging Directions encourage non-residential development with a mix of uses; Supporting work-from-home by enhancing public spaces and amenities; Providing flexible non-residential spaces, especially near transit, for new employment forms; Liberalizing permitted uses in Employment Lands to attract diverse businesses; Developing criteria for mixed-use intensification near transit; Considering incentives to enhance the viability of non-residential developments.

These Place-based series of Emerging Directions will be presented for feedback through community and stakeholder engagement, and collaboration with City Staff and other agencies. These Emerging Directions will be refined into policies in the next stages of work.

Next Steps:

Opportunities for stakeholders and the public engagement at Community Information Meeting #2, and work associated with the refinement of the Concept and drafting of Secondary Plan policies.

Following DSC consideration of the Interim Report, the study team will engage the commenting agencies, members of the public, and stakeholders for feedback and continue to analyze technical aspects of the Emerging Concept (including mobility, servicing, employment, community amenities, and schools). A particular focus will be on assessing the types of incentives that may be required to achieve greater levels of employment-generating uses along the Corridor and the phasing of infrastructure improvements needed to meet development needs. Staff are targeting Community Information Meeting #2 in Q1 2025.

Once further engagement and analysis have been completed, the study team will refine the Emerging Concept and Directions based on the feedback received from DSC, the public, stakeholders, and key landowners, as well as close collaboration with City Staff. The study team will consider these refinements in the preparation of the Preferred Concept for the Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan in phase 5, targeted in Q2 2025.

Next steps for Servicing and Mobility include:

- ***Water and Wastewater:*** The next study phase will involve hydraulic modeling to identify capacity shortfalls and determine necessary upgrades, including timely phasing and costs. The goal is to ensure all new developments are adequately serviced with no adverse impacts to the system
- ***Stormwater Management:*** The next phase will assess and clarify the necessary works to support development along Dudley Avenue and other affected watercourses
- ***Mobility Systems:*** The next phase of work involves refining the conceptual improvements through traffic modelling. This will help assess the impact of the mobility improvements and confirm their effectiveness.

CONCLUSION:

The YCSP study is a generational city-building opportunity to leverage the investment in transit and the resulting development to advance a broad range of City objectives and community priorities including: a diverse mix of uses, including employment; parks and open spaces; space for community facilities; preserving heritage resources; and greater focus on walking, micromobility, and transit. The Interim Report identifies existing conditions and introduces the Emerging Concept and Directions, and the preliminary demonstration massing.

The next steps following the Interim Report include opportunities for stakeholders and the public engagement at Community Information Meeting #2 targeted in Q1 2025, and work associated with the refinement of the Concept and Directions, which will help inform the Preferred Concept, Policy Directions and Draft Study report.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan study is being undertaken by an interdisciplinary team of City staff and consultants. Funding for the YCSP study was approved in the Capital Budget in 2022.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The YCSP aligns with the City's strategic priorities in the context of growth management and municipal services to ensure safe and sustainable communities. The YCSP study implements the City's 2014 Official Plan and supports Goal 3 – Safe, Sustainable and Complete Community in Building Markham's Future Together, 2020-2026.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Staff from Planning and Urban Design, Transportation, Engineering Review, Environmental Engineering, Community Services, Economic Development, were consulted in the drafting of the Interim Report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Giulio Cescato, MCIP, RPP
Director, Planning and Urban Design

Arvin Prasad, MCIP, RPP
Commissioner of Development
Services

ATTACHMENTS AND APPENDICES:

Figure 1: Study area and Preliminary Secondary Plan boundary
Figure 2: Proposed Place-Based Approach
Figure 3: Employment Lands
Figure 4: Preliminary Height Distribution

Appendix 'A': Yonge Corridor Secondary Plan: Interim Report