

**Policy Review:  
Vaughan Community Areas and  
Low-Rise Residential Areas Study**

**DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

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# Executive Summary

Like many mature cities in Canada, Vaughan is experiencing pressures for change in some of its stable community areas, in particular established low-rise neighbourhoods, as an increasing number of landowners and developers propose to replace small homes with much larger ones or assemble lands to build multi-unit developments. These pressures have raised questions about the strength and clarity of the city’s Official Plan policies intended to protect low-rise residential neighbourhoods in established community areas but also about where intensification is appropriate in these areas and how it should be regulated.

This report contains the findings of a policy review focused on Vaughan’s current policy regime policies applicable to designated Community Areas and Low-Rise Residential areas. The policies are examined in the context of the varying patterns of development in Vaughan’s established low-rise residential neighbours; the trends and issues observed with infill proposals and redevelopment in the neighbourhoods; and the policies and tools other municipalities have adopted to address similar trends and issues.

The key challenges identified through the policy review and the proposed solutions to address them are summarized below.

Key Challenge	Summary of Proposed Solutions
<p>Lack of clarity about which areas of the city constitute “older, established neighbourhoods” as described in the VOP 2010 and how the policies that apply to them should be interpreted, specifically the policy regarding severances and new subdivisions within these neighbourhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend Policy 9.1.2.3 regarding “older, established neighbourhoods” to clarify that it applies to the city’s “large-lot neighbourhoods” (i.e., those with frontage greater than 20 metres/65 feet), which include both older subdivisions and “newer” estate lot subdivisions.</li> <li>• Add a new schedule to the VOP 2010 that identifies the large-lot neighbourhoods to which Policy 9.1.2.3 applies.</li> <li>• Clarify Policy 9.1.2.3 to recognize that severances and new subdivisions in large-lot neighbourhoods may be appropriate, provided the new lots are not narrower or smaller than adjacent lots.</li> </ul>
<p>The replacement of original homes in a neighbourhood with much larger ones and/or ones that have a fundamentally different character from the street.</p>	<p>Adopt urban design guidelines for infill development in low-rise residential neighbourhoods that address such matters as setbacks, height transitions, entrances, garages and driveways.</p>
<p>Lack of clarity about where townhouse developments are appropriate in established Low-Rise Residential Areas and how the applicable general urban design policies should be interpreted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amend and augment the VOP 2010 urban design and townhouse policies to clarify that townhouses are generally not appropriate in established low-rise residential neighbourhoods except where they already exist and except in “arterial areas” along arterial roads, where atypically large lots fronting the road can comfortably accommodate them.</li> <li>• Amend and augment the VOP 2010 urban design and townhouse policies to also require townhouses in Low-Rise Residential areas to front a public street and specify setback and parking requirements to ensure townhouse developments meet the intent that they “respect and reinforce” and “be compatible with” the pattern and character of “low-rise residential neighbourhoods within designated established Community Areas.</li> <li>• Adopt urban design guidelines for townhouse developments in Low-Rise Residential areas that address such matters as orientation, setbacks, access and parking, rear yard amenity space, tree conservation and stormwater management.</li> </ul>

# 1/ Introduction

Across Canada, downtowns, other centres, major transportation corridors and industrial areas are undergoing major change as a result of population growth, economic and demographic shifts, new retail trends and planning policies that promote intensification. In between the centres and corridors of change are low-rise communities, where the desire among residents and planners is to minimize change to the essential physical character of each neighbourhood.

Vaughan is no exception to these development trends and policies. And, although it is still a relatively young city, it is, like many mature cities, also experiencing pressures for change in some of its stable community areas, in particular established low-rise neighbourhoods, as an increasing number of landowners and developers propose to replace small homes with much larger ones or assemble lands to build multi-unit developments. These pressures have raised questions about the strength of the city's Official Plan policies intended to protect low-rise residential neighbourhoods in established community areas but also about where intensification is appropriate in these areas and how it should be regulated.

In response to an increase in the number of recent development proposals for infill townhouse developments, Vaughan City Council initiated a policy review of the Low-Rise Residential policies the Vaughan Official Plan (VOP 2010). Specifically, Council requested that an examination of the policies consider the following:

- Clarity of interpretation;
- Ability to ensure compatibility;
- The need to provide more definitive policy and or schedules;
- Such criteria as may emerge as a result of the study;
- Recommended policy amendments or schedules as required;
- Best practices in other jurisdictions.

In addition, the study is intended to assist in identifying implementation options to address the above.

## Study Process

The policy review involved extensive consultation with staff in the City of Vaughan's Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability Department to understand the development pressures in established low-rise residential areas and discuss the issues raised by recent development applications. Urban Strategies undertook a high-level review of several recent applications, along with submissions from residents in response to them. An analysis of Vaughan's established low-rise neighbourhoods was then undertaken, followed by a review of policy approaches and planning tools used by other municipalities to guide development in similar neighbourhoods. The findings of the study to that point, together with preliminary policy and guideline recommendations, were documented in a draft report.

On March 1, 2016, City staff brought forward the draft report and implementation options to the Committee of the Whole for direction on how to proceed, and on March 22, 2016, Vaughan City Council directed City staff to distribute the draft report to stakeholders and organize community meetings for comments, with comments to be requested no later than May 31, 2016. Stakeholders were notified that the report was available on the City's web site, and three public open houses were held for residents and stakeholders, on April 19<sup>th</sup> (Maple), May 10<sup>th</sup> (Thornhill/Concord) and May 11<sup>th</sup> (Woodbridge/Kleinburg). Detailed information about the study and its preliminary recommendations were on display at the open houses, a presentation was given at each, and City staff and Urban Strategies attended to answer questions and receive feedback. In total, almost 200 people attended the open houses.

A summary of the feedback obtained through the stakeholder and public consultation process has been prepared as a separate report.

This final report is the culmination of the policy review in response to Council's direction and proposes options to consider for implementation. It begins by describing the different types of low-rise neighbourhoods in Vaughan and identifying their fundamental characteristics. It then reviews the relevant VOP 2010 policies. The study also comparatively examined best practice and precedent examples of existing low-rise residential policies and guidelines developed by other Ontario municipalities to inform recommendations for Vaughan. These precedents, summarized in Section 4, inform the policy recommendations in Section 5 and the proposed guidelines in Section 6. Both the policy recommendations and proposed guidelines in the draft report have been modified in response to feedback from stakeholders and the broader public.

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## 2/ Vaughan's Established Low-Rise Residential Neighbourhoods

Over the past 40 years, Vaughan has grown rapidly through primarily low-rise residential, industrial and commercial development. The city's four fully developed, mature communities, consisting mostly of detached houses, emerged around the historic villages of Thornhill, Woodbridge, Maple and Kleinburg beginning in the 1960s. In addition, several estate lot neighbourhoods were developed in Vaughan's rural area. Two newer communities – Vellore and Carrville – are well on their way to becoming established.

This section analyzes the established low-rise residential communities centred on the historic villages, as well as those located in the surrounding rural areas, and identifies three distinct neighbourhood typologies based on their physical characteristics. Understanding these characteristics is critical to assessing the effectiveness and completeness of the VOP 2010 policies that apply to low-rise residential areas and the issue of redevelopment as it relates to compatibility and character. The analysis considers the development pressures on each neighbourhood type and also revealed gaps in the fabric of low-rise residential areas where physical change is occurring but needs to be managed carefully to ensure compatibility with the surrounding established communities.

### Methodology for Determining Typologies of Established Community Areas in Vaughan

Schedule 1 (Urban Structure) and Schedule 13 (Land Use Designations) of the VOP 2010 were used to identify the limits of Vaughan's designated Community Areas and Low-Rise Residential areas. Detailed aerial photography of areas and community fabric was then used to identify the distinct types of neighbourhoods within these areas.

Lot frontage was used as the primary determinant of neighbourhood type, since the width of a lot typically has a direct relationship to the following characteristics, which are fundamental to defining the character of a neighbourhood:

- The sizes of houses (building height and massing);
- The setbacks of houses from the street and neighbouring properties;
- The extent of land used for tree planting and other green landscaping;
- The relationship of garages to houses (on larger lots they are typically a less dominant feature).

Other defining elements of neighbourhood character include architecture, tree size and canopy, and private landscaping such as pathways or light fixtures. Since these elements vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood and subject to change, they were not criteria used to categorize neighbourhoods. These elements were, however, considered, in assessing the need for, and proposing, policy refinements and guidelines for all established neighbourhoods.

As identified in Figure 1, Vaughan's residential subdivisions generally fall into five ranges of lot frontages: 30 metres (approx. 100 feet) and greater; 21-29 metres (approx. 70-95 feet); 14-20 metres (approx. 45-65 feet); 10-14 metres (approx. 35-45 feet); and 6-9 metres (approx. 20-34 feet). As described and illustrated below, low-rise residential areas with lot frontages in the first two ranges constitute "Large-Lot Neighbourhoods", areas with frontages in the next two ranges are "Medium-Lot Neighbourhoods", and areas with lots 9 metres wide or less are "Small-Lot Neighbourhoods".

The next layer of geographic analysis involved distinguishing "established Community Areas" from those that are still developing. Established Community Areas are considered to be the city's low-rise residential areas bounded by major arterial roads or other significant physical features that are fully or almost entirely developed and occupied. They mainly include all of Thornhill, Concord, Woodbridge and Maple as well as portions of Kleinburg, Vellore and Carrville (as shown in Figure 1). They also include estate lot subdivisions that are relatively isolated from other development. Since these areas are "built out", their physical character has been

established, even if the character will naturally evolve as new trees and houses age. The general expectation is that these neighbourhoods will not change significantly based on the policies of VOP 2010.

In contrast to established community areas, the portions of Kleinburg south of Nashville Road, Vellore north of Major Mackenzie Drive, and Carrville north of Rutherford Road and east of Dufferin Street constitute “developing communities.” The character of these areas has not been fully defined as they are relatively new and evolving, which is understood by the residents. As Vaughan builds out and evolves its remaining designated Community Areas, the boundaries of the established areas will need to be periodically reviewed and revised.



Figure 1: Vaughan's Neighbourhood Types by Lot Frontage

## 2.1/ Large-Lot Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods with lot frontages greater than 20 metres (approx. 65 feet) fall into two geographical sub-categories. Vaughan's earliest post-war subdivisions in Thornhill, Woodbridge and Maple had rectangular lots that were generally about 30 metres (100 feet) wide, though the second wave of development had lots closer to 21 metres (70 feet) wide. Ranch-style and split level homes were popular at the time, though many of these have since been replaced by much larger homes, resulting in a great deal of architectural variety. All properties have expansive front and rear yards. The current VOP 2010 identifies these areas as the city's "older, established residential neighbourhoods"; however, these areas are not mapped on a Schedule.

In the rural areas of Vaughan, isolated estate lot subdivisions have been gradually developed with equally large or even larger lots along curvilinear streets, often irregularly shaped and typically occupied by mansion-type homes. Compared to their more urban counterparts, houses on the estates lots are generally farther apart from one another, and many of the properties are heavily treed.

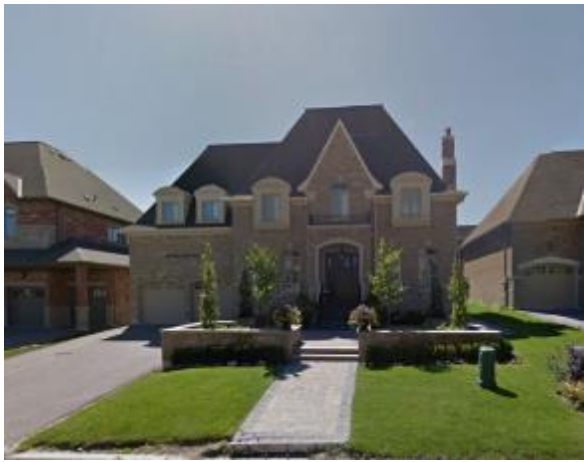
Although the settings for Vaughan's large-lot neighbourhoods vary, they share several characteristics including:

- Deep front setbacks of approximately 12 metres (39 feet) or greater
- Deep rear setbacks of 15 metres (49 feet) or greater
- Wide and/or circular/semi-circular driveways
- Attached garages that generally are not dominant features, with varying orientations and designs
- Large detached houses generally occupying less than a third of the lot
- Expansive landscaped front and rear yards

Development pressure in the large-lot neighbourhoods has come in two forms, both of which can be expected to continue. The first is the replacement of one and one-and-a-half storey houses with "monster homes" that appear to be two-and-a-half or three storeys tall. This has been occurring in many of Vaughan's older established neighbourhoods. In some cases, the differences between newly built homes versus older existing housing stock in these neighbourhoods, in terms of height and overall massing, are significant, and occasionally garages and/or overly wide driveways dominate the front appearance of new dwellings.

The second type of development pressure in large-lot neighbourhoods are proposals to subdivide lots into two or more lots for more intensive housing forms, which may include new detached, semi-detached or townhouse developments. When this occurs in the middle of large-lot neighbourhoods where the lot dimensions are consistent, the resulting lots and the new dwellings on them can significantly disrupt or change the character of the neighbourhood, as side yards are reduced and garages and driveways become more dominant features. However, the circumstances may be different where a large-lot neighbourhood interfaces with a medium-lot or small-lot neighbourhood, resulting in more variability among lot dimensions, for example, large lots on one side of a street and narrower lots on the opposite side. Where this conditions exists, a proposal to subdivide a large lot may result in development that fits with the general character of the surrounding neighbourhood and would generally meet the compatibility criteria in policies 9.1.2.1 and 9.1.2.3 of the VOP 2010.





Examples of development in Vaughan's large-lot neighbourhoods

## 2.2/ Medium-Lot Neighbourhoods

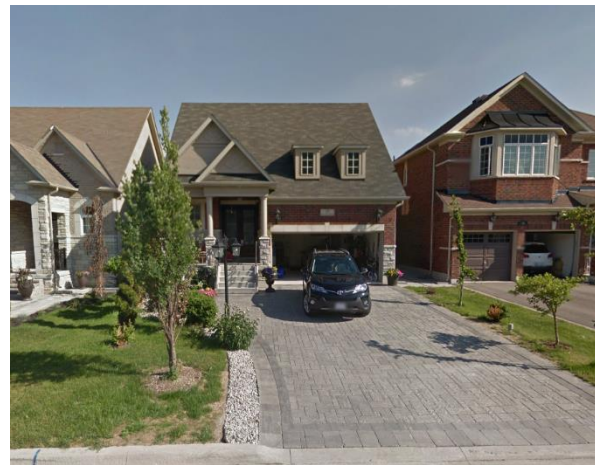
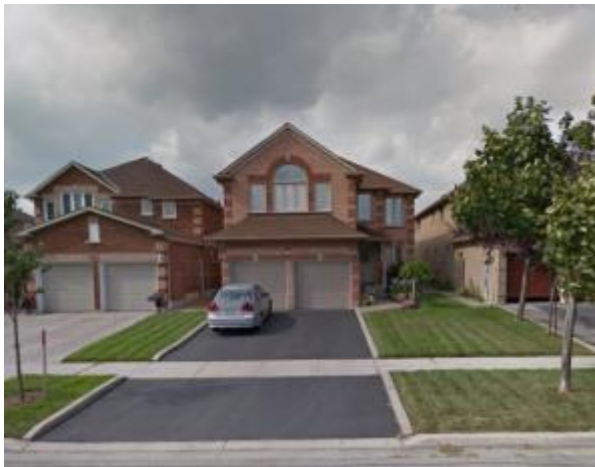
Much of the housing stock built in Vaughan since the 1980s falls into the category of mid-size and has lot frontages ranging from approximately 10 metres (33 feet) to 20 metres (65 feet). Older neighbourhoods of this type have houses that are one or one-and-a-half storeys, but most are defined by two-storey homes. In all cases, two-storey garages that typically project from the front of the house and dominate the view from the street are a distinguishing characteristic. Front setbacks vary from 6 to 15 metres (20 to 50 feet), but wide driveways limit the area for soft landscaping. Houses are relatively close to one another, with the typical side yard being 1.5 metres. The depth of rear yards is generally a minimum of 7.5 metres (25 feet) which generally reflects the zoning by-law but they are often deeper.

Summary of key characteristics:

- Lot frontage of 10 to 20 metres (33 to 65 feet)
- Front setbacks of 6 to 15 metres (20 to 50 feet)
- Interior side yard setbacks of typically 1.5 metres (5 feet)
- Rear setbacks of 7.5 to 10 metres (25 to 33 feet)
- Wide driveways
- Front yard landscaped area generally less than 50% of the yard
- 2-storey detached house is the predominant housing type

Development pressure within these neighbourhoods is less acute than in the large-lot neighbourhoods, since the housing stock generally in these neighbourhoods is relatively new, and site and zoning restrictions prevent significantly larger homes from being built. There is a trend in older medium-lot neighbourhoods that propose to replace bungalows with two-storey homes and rear yard additions. However, there may be an increase in proposals for subdivisions/severances only on the widest of mid-size lots.

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Examples of development in Vaughan's medium-lot neighbourhoods

## 2.3/ Small-Lot Neighbourhoods

Small-lot neighbourhoods with lot frontages of 6-9 metres (20 to 30 feet) are common in Thornhill and Maple but less so in Woodbridge, and non-existent in Kleinburg. These neighbourhoods are distinguished by a mix of detached and semi-detached houses and townhouses. The older small-lot neighbourhoods in Thornhill, first developed in the 1970s and 80s, generally have double garages that dominate the front of the house, whereas newer neighbourhoods have single front garages and porches that give the front door more prominence. The lot depths are similar to those found in medium-lot neighbourhoods, resulting in backyards with depths of 6-10 metres (20 to 32 feet). Side yard setbacks are minimal. The narrowness of the lot and the need to accommodate a driveway limit the area for soft landscaping in the front, especially on properties with double garages.

Summary of key characteristics:

- Lot frontages of 6 to 9 metres (20 to 30 feet)
- Front setbacks of approximately 5 to 12 metres (16 to 40 feet)
- Side setbacks of approximately 0 to 1.5 metres
- Rear setbacks of approximately 6 to 10 metres
- Single or double car garages
- 2-storeys detached, semi-detached houses and townhouse housing types

Development pressure within these neighbourhoods is less acute than in the large-lot neighbourhoods, since the housing stock is relatively recent in most of them, and site and zoning restrictions prevent significantly larger homes from being built. The lots are too narrow for subdivision to be considered.

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Examples of development in Vaughan's small-lot neighbourhoods

## 2.4/ Arterial Areas within Low-Rise Residential Neighbourhoods

The results of the analysis reveal a number of instances where the lotting and development pattern along an arterial road in a Community Area is inconsistent with the surrounding neighbourhoods on either side of the arterial road. These conditions exist in pockets of the city along Centre Street in Thornhill, Keele Street in Maple, and Islington Avenue and Pine Valley Road in Woodbridge. They are a result of subdivisions being built around existing houses on large, formerly rural lots. Because they are not integral parts of established neighbourhoods, they raise questions about how the VOP 2010 urban design and Low-Rise Residential policies that apply to them should be interpreted. Specifically, how should the development pattern in the established neighbourhood be respected and reinforced? And, are there opportunities to depart from the pattern if new, denser development forms permitted in Low-Rise Residential areas, namely semi-detached houses and townhouses, can be shown to respect the character of the neighbourhood and be “compatible” with adjacent development?

Results from the review indicate that individual lots and assembled lots in these “arterial areas” are typically larger than lots in the established adjacent neighbourhood areas; either wider or deeper or both. These lots can generally accommodate townhouse developments that are not appropriate on sites internal to large-lot and medium-lot neighbourhoods because they would be of an incompatible character. That these arterial areas typically front arterial streets, where there is generally more convenient access to public transit and other services, suggests that denser forms of housing are appropriate. Nevertheless, many of the arterial areas fall within the “Community Area” designation as per Schedule 1 (Urban Structure) of the VOP 2010 and are generally not intended for intensification as per policies 2.2.3.1 to 2.2.3.4. As such, development in the arterial areas should be addressed through additional policies in the VOP 2010, and supplementary urban design guidelines informing their design, so as to ensure they are compatible with the character of their neighbouring properties and their surrounding established low-rise residential communities.

Policies and urban design guidelines should address a range of issues posed by recent proposals for arterial areas as well as potential issues that may arise with future proposals, specifically the following:

- **The introduction of a private driveway/street parallel or perpendicular to the arterial street to provide frontage for dwelling units located behind units fronting the arterial.** Private laneways should be used to provide access to parking at the rear of townhouse units fronting an arterial street. However, the use of laneways, driveways or private streets to provide frontage for development at the rear of units fronting the arterial is not consistent with the pattern of development in Vaughan’s established low-rise neighbourhoods, where houses front a public street. A front-to-back condition would be created which would result in a significant loss of privacy for the units fronting the arterial street.
- **The introduction of private street and pathway networks on very large sites.** Vaughan’s established low-rise residential neighbourhoods are structured and serviced by networks of local public streets that facilitate navigation that is clear and understandable and function as multi-purpose public spaces. Private streets generally are not designed to the standards of a public street and typically prevent opportunities for public connections through sites. By preventing or discouraging public use, they may also create issues of safety and security.
- **The use of reduced front yard and rear yard setbacks to maximize density on the site.** When townhouses are clustered tightly on a site with reduced setbacks that do not reflect the prevailing setbacks in the surrounding area, their mass and visual impact will be significantly greater than the mass and impact of houses in the adjacent established neighbourhood. In addition, landscaped front yards should provide room for mature trees, with a minimum front setback of 4.5 metres, to reinforce the green character of Vaughan’s neighbourhoods. Rear setbacks that do not respect the existing pattern and zoning standard for the neighbourhood may lead to adverse light, overlook and loss of privacy impacts.

- **The loss of mature trees.** Townhouse developments that cover much of a site invariably result in the loss of mature trees, which are a defining characteristic of Vaughan's low-rise neighbourhoods.

It is important to note that the above issues apply to designated Low-Rise Residential areas, where the intent of the VOP 2010 is for new development to respect and reinforce the established pattern and character of the area. In contrast, issues associated with townhouse developments in designated Intensification Areas might be quite different and not include all of the above, since the intent is to change many of these areas to achieve a higher density form of development.

By respecting and maintaining the prevailing pattern of building orientation, setbacks and landscaping, infill townhouse developments on arterial streets in low-rise residential areas can fit compatibly with each distinct type of neighbourhood in the city. The recommended policy amendments and urban design guidelines in this report will help ensure each infill application in a Low-Rise area satisfies the intent of the VOP 2010 to respect and reinforce the existing character of the surrounding Low-Rise Residential neighbourhood. Prior to implementation of the amendments and guidelines, a detailed study, with public input, should define the precise location and boundaries of arterial areas that meet the criteria described above, i.e., comprise unusually large lots fronting an arterial road.

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## 3/ Vaughan Official Plan and Zoning By-law

This section documents the key policies in the Vaughan Official Plan (VOP 2010) that apply to the city's low-rise residential areas.

The VOP 2010 was adopted by City Council on September 7, 2010, approved by the Region with modifications in June 2012 and partially approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on July 23, 2013, December 2, 2013, February 3, 2014 and September 30, 2014. Its purpose is to manage growth within the City of Vaughan. Schedule 1 illustrates the city's Urban Structure and identifies areas that are suitable for intensification and those which are intended to be areas of stability (see Figure 2). This dual emphasis on growth and preservation is reflected in the set of policy objectives of the VOP which include:

- identifying Intensification Areas, consistent with the intensification objectives of this Plan and the Regional Official Plan, as the primary locations for accommodating intensification; (2.1.3.2 (c))
- ensuring the character of established communities are maintained; (2.1.3.2 (e))
- providing for a diversity of housing opportunities in terms of tenure, affordability, size and form; (2.1.3.2 (j))
- establishing a culture of design excellence with an emphasis on providing for a high quality public realm, appropriate built form and beautiful architecture through all new development. (2.1.3.2 (l))

### 3.1/ Community Area Policies

Maintaining the stability of Community Areas is a primary objective of the VOP 2010 and is to be accomplished by providing for a variety of Low Rise Residential uses on those lands (2.2.1.1 (b)). Two policies in Chapter 2 address the degree of change planned in Community Areas:

- Policy 2.2.3.2. [It is the policy of Council] that Community Areas are considered Stable Areas and therefore Community Areas with existing development are not intended to experience significant physical change. New development that respects and reinforces the existing scale, height, massing, lot pattern, building type, character, form and planned function of the immediate local area is permitted, as set out in the policies in Chapter 9 of this Plan.
- Policy 2.2.3.3. [It is the policy of Council] that limited intensification may be permitted in Community Areas as per the land use designations on Schedule 13 and in accordance with the policies of Chapter 9 of this Plan. The proposed development must be sensitive to and compatible with the character, form and planned function of the surrounding context.

Since many intensification-oriented development proposals include a street, laneway or pathway, the mobility and public realm policies of the VOP are also relevant.

### 3.2/ Mobility Policies

- Policy 4.2.1.5 states that it is the policy of Council:

To develop a connected and continuous, grid-like street network that supports convenient and efficient travel by all modes of transportation and to discourage the development of street types that disrupt the grid network. New development shall be planned to support a grid-like street network with multiple connections to collector and arterial streets.



- Regarding Local Streets, which are intended to provide access to individual properties within residential areas, Policy 4.2.1.26 states that local streets are oriented to the collector street system in a grid-like manner, while taking into account topographical constraints, desire for solar orientation, and special features, to:
  - a. provide convenient connections to collector streets, shopping, transit stops, schools, parks and other community amenities;
  - b. promote navigation within concession blocks that is clear and understandable; and,
  - c. minimize through-traffic on local streets.

### 3.3/ Public Realm Policies

The VOP's public realm policies also address public streets.

- Policy 9.1.1.2 states that it is the policy of Council that public streets and rights-of-way are considered significant public places and, therefore, their design should balance their multiple roles and functions by ensuring that they:
  - a. accommodate a variety of transportation functions, including walking, cycling, transit and driving;
  - b. accommodate municipal Infrastructure and Utilities and, to the greatest extent possible, these functions be provided below grade;
  - c. contribute to the greening of the City through the provision of street trees and landscaping;
  - d. contribute to the City's overall design aesthetic through high-quality hard and soft landscaping treatments and the incorporation of public art; and,
  - e. create an environment supportive of their function as gathering places by providing pedestrian amenities such as wide planted boulevards with appropriate and attractive street furniture and street lighting.
- Policy 9.1.1.3 states that it is the policy of Council to improve the pedestrian experience on public streets and rights-of-way by:
  - a. requiring sidewalks as per policy 4.2.3.4;
  - b. prohibiting rear-lotting on public streets;
  - c. avoiding blank facades along sidewalks;
  - d. requiring that surface parking areas be buffered and screened from sidewalks through the use of setbacks and landscaping;
  - e. providing a zone between pedestrians and high levels of vehicular traffic consisting of landscaping and street furniture, and, where appropriate, on-street parking.
- Policy 9.1.1.4 states that it is the policy of Council to promote an interconnected grid-like pattern of streets and blocks that is walkable and cyclable through the following measures:
  - a. ensuring the length of streets and blocks assists pedestrian and bicycle circulation;
  - b. providing mid-block pedestrian/bicycle pathways where appropriate;
  - c. maximizing the number of street connections to arterial roads;
  - d. limiting and discouraging cul-de-sacs and window streets; and,
  - e. designing streets that are safe for cyclists and, where appropriate, providing for on-street bike lanes.
- Policy 9.1.1.5 states it is the policy of Council to recognize that some condominium developments will contain common element streets and walkways. In such instances these features should be designed to simulate a public street and the policies outlined in policies 9.1.1.2, 9.1.1.3 and 9.1.1.4 shall apply.

### 3.4/ Urban Design Policies

Chapter 9 contains the VOP's urban design and built form policies, the following being the most relevant to this study:

- Policy 9.1.2.1. [It is the policy of Council] that new development will respect and reinforce the existing and planned context within which it is situated. More specifically, the built form of new developments will be designed to achieve the following general objectives:
  - a. in Community Areas, new development will be designed to respect and reinforce the physical character of the established neighbourhood within which it is located as set out in policies 9.1.2.2 and 9.1.2.3...;
- Policy 9.1.2.2. [It is the policy of Council] that in Community Areas with established development, new development be designed to respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area, paying particular attention to the following elements:
  - a. the local pattern of lots, streets and blocks;
  - b. the size and configuration of lots;
  - c. the building type of nearby residential properties;
  - d. the heights and scale of nearby residential properties;
  - e. the setback of buildings from the street;
  - f. the pattern of rear and side-yard setbacks;
  - g. conservation and enhancement of heritage buildings, heritage districts and cultural heritage landscapes; h. the above elements are not meant to discourage the incorporation of features that can increase energy efficiency (e.g. solar configuration, solar panels) or environmental sustainability (e.g. natural lands, rain barrels).
- Policy 9.1.2.3. Within the Community Areas there are a number of older, established residential neighbourhoods that are characterized by large lots and/or by their historical, architectural or landscape value. They are also characterized by their substantial rear, front and side yards, and by lot coverages that contribute to expansive amenity areas, which provide opportunities for attractive landscape development and streetscapes. Often, these areas are at or near the core of the founding communities of Thornhill, Concord, Kleinburg, Maple and Woodbridge, and may also be part of the respective Heritage Conservation Districts. In order to maintain the character of these areas the following policies shall apply to all developments within these areas (e.g., land severances, zoning by-law amendments and minor variances), based on the current zoning, and guide the preparation of any future City-initiated area specific or comprehensive zoning by-laws affecting these areas.
  - a. Lot frontage: In the case of lot creation, new lots should be equal to or exceed the frontages of the adjacent nearby and facing lots;
  - b. Lot area: The area of new lots should be consistent with the size of adjacent and nearby lots;
  - c. Lot configuration: New lots should respect the existing lotting fabric;
  - d. Front yards and exterior side yards: Buildings should maintain the established pattern of setbacks for the neighbourhood to retain a consistent streetscape;
  - e. Rear yards: Buildings should maintain the established pattern of setbacks for the neighbourhood to minimize visual intrusion on the adjacent residential lots;

- f. Building heights and massing: Should respect the scale of adjacent residential buildings and any city urban design guidelines prepared for these Community Areas;
- g. Lot coverage: In order to maintain the low density character of these areas and ensure opportunities for generous amenity and landscaping areas, lot coverage consistent with development in the area and as provided for in the zoning by-law is required to regulate the area of the building footprint within the building envelope, as defined by the minimum yard requirements of the zoning by-law.

Under Policy 9.2.2.1, detached houses, semi-detached houses and townhouses are permitted building types in Low-Rise Residential areas. The maximum height is three storeys.

### 3.5/ Low-Rise Residential Policies

- Policy 9.2.3.1 sets out the following policies and development criteria for detached and semi-detached houses:
  - a. A Detached House is a Low-Rise Residential building, up to three storeys in height, situated on a single lot and not attached to any other residential building. A Semi- Detached House is a Low-Rise Residential building, up to three storeys in height, situated on a single lot and attached to no more than one other residential building situated on a separate parcel.
  - b. In Community Areas with existing development, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of Detached Houses and Semi-Detached Houses will respect and reinforce the scale, massing, setback and orientation of other built and approved Detached Houses and/or Semi-Detached Houses in the immediate area. Variations are permitted for the purposes of minimizing driveways.
- Policy 9.2.3.2 sets out the following policies and development criteria for townhouses:
  - a. A Townhouse is a Low-Rise Residential building, up to three storeys in height, situated on a single parcel and part of a row of at least three but no more than six attached residential units.
  - b. In Community Areas with existing development, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of Townhouses will respect and reinforce the scale, massing, setback and orientation of other built and approved Townhouses in the immediate area. Variations are permitted for the purposes of minimizing driveways and having front entrances and porches located closer to the street than garages.
  - c. In areas of new development, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of Townhouses will be determined through the process of developing and approving Secondary Plans, Block Plans, Plans of Subdivision, Zoning By-laws, and/or urban design guidelines.
  - d. Townhouses shall generally front onto a public street. Townhouse blocks not fronting onto a public street are only permitted if the unit(s) flanking a public street provide(s) a front-yard and front-door entrance facing the public street.
  - e. The facing distance between blocks of Townhouses that are not separated by a public street should generally be a minimum of 18 metres in order to maximize daylight, enhance landscaping treatments and provide privacy for individual units.

### 3.6/ Heritage Policies

The City of Vaughan contains several Heritage Conservation Districts with residential heritage buildings that are particularly sensitive to the adverse impacts of intensification development. Section 6.2.2 of the VOP concerns designated heritage properties.

- Policy 6.2.2.9 address development adjacent to a heritage-designated property or to a Heritage Conservation District:

That for all development applications, demolition control applications and infrastructure projects adjacent to a designated property and adjacent to a Heritage Conservation District, the proposal is compatible by:

- a. respecting the massing, profile and character of adjacent heritage buildings;
- b. maintaining a building width along the street frontage that is consistent with the width of adjacent heritage buildings;
- c. maintaining the established setback pattern on the street;
- d. being physically oriented to the street in a similar fashion to existing heritage buildings;
- e. minimizing shadowing on adjacent heritage properties, particularly on landscaped open spaces and outdoor amenity areas;
- f. having minimal impact on the heritage qualities of the street as a public place;
- g. minimizing the loss of landscaped open space;
- h. designing any permitted above-grade parking facilities, so that they are integrated into the development in a manner that is compatible with the heritage surroundings; and
- i. requiring local utility companies to place metering equipment, transformer boxes,
- j. power lines, conduit equipment boxes and other utility equipment and devices in locations that do not detract from the visual character or architectural integrity of the heritage resource.

- Policy 6.3.2.4 speaks specifically to development within or adjacent to a Heritage Conservation District. It states:

That any proposed private or public development within or adjacent to a Heritage Conservation District will be designed to respect and complement the identified heritage character of the district as described in the Heritage Conservation District Plan.

### 3.7/ Implementation Policies

The implementation policies of the VOP are also relevant to proposals for intensification in existing community areas.

- Policy 10.1.1, dealing with detailed planning states:

Some areas of the City, which may or not be subject to Secondary Plans and/or Block Plans, will also be subject to Site and Area Specific Policies. These policies are to reflect historical conditions or development permissions that have been previously approved and still maintain the main goals and objectives of this Plan, but do not fit within the specific policy structure that has been created in this Plan. Council may approve additional Site and Area Specific Policies through the review of development applications where it is felt that the goals and objectives of this Plan are maintained but a modification to the policy structure is required.

Policies 10.1.1.14 – 10.1.1.26 address Block Plans.

- Policy 10.1.1.14 states that the City will identify areas subject to a Block Plan process through either the Secondary Plan process or the development review process, to address complexities in smaller planning units, scoped as required in accordance with policy 10.1.1.15. Policy 10.1.1.15 describes a Block Plan as a comprehensive planning framework that describes how the following policy aspects of development will be addressed:
  - a. the proposed land uses, housing mix and densities;
  - b. traffic management, including the expected traffic volumes on all collector and local streets to precisely define the requirements for items such as traffic signals, stop signs, turn lanes and transit stop locations, traffic-calming measures, and transportation demand management;
  - c. the provision of public transit, pedestrian and cycling networks;
  - d. the provision of public and private services and the detailed approach to stormwater management;
  - e. protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage Network, including the detailed evaluation and demarcation of Core Features and Enhancement Areas;
  - f. the precise locations of natural and cultural heritage features of the area, including built heritage and potential archaeological resources and proposed approaches to conservation and or enhancement;
  - g. the precise location of any parks, open spaces, schools, community centres, and libraries;
  - h. the proposed implementation of sustainable development policies as contained in subsection 9.1.3 of this Plan;
  - i. phasing of development; and,
  - j. evaluation of opportunities for coordination with environmental assessment processes for roads and infrastructure that are subject to the Environmental Assessment Act.

Addressing site and area specific policies, Policy 10.1.1.29 state that Council will establish, from time to time, new Site and Area Specific policies, to be contained in Volume 2 of this Plan, through the processing of development applications where it has been demonstrated that the goals and objectives of this Plan are being met.

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### 3.8/ Zoning By-law

The character of neighbourhoods in designated Community Areas is regulated in part by the Zoning By-law, and current zoning provisions provide a basis for understanding the pattern of development and built form controls that new development in the area must “respect and reinforce”. Reflecting the predominance of detached houses, the most common zoning in Community Areas is R1V, R1, R2 or R3. The table below summarizes the key regulations that apply in these zones as well as the typical low-rise residential zones where townhouses are permitted, RM1 and RM2. Since the character of Vaughan’s low-rise residential areas in many respects is determined by the zoning standards below, they have informed the recommended infill guidelines in Section 5.

Zoning	Minimum Lot Frontage	Minimum Lot Area	Minimum Front Setback	Minimum Rear Setback	Minimum Interior Side Setback	Minimum Exterior Side Setback	Minimum Landscape Coverage	Maximum Lot Coverage	Minimum Amenity Area	Maximum Height
R1V	30 m	845 m <sup>2</sup>	9.0 m	7.5 m	1.5 m	9 m	10%	20%	N/A	9.5 m
R1	18 m	540 m <sup>2</sup>	7.5 m	7.5 m	1.5 m	4.5 m	10%	35%	N/A	9.5 m
R2	15 m	450 m <sup>2</sup>	4.5 m	7.5 m	1.2 m	4.5 m	10%	40%	N/A	9.5 m
R3	12 m	360 m <sup>2</sup>	4.5 m	7.5 m	1.2 m	4.5 m	10%	40%	N/A	9.5 m
RM1	6 m/unit	180 m <sup>2</sup> / unit	4.5 m	7.5 m	1.5 m	4.5 m	10%	50%	N/A	11 m
RM2	30 m	230 m <sup>2</sup> / unit	4.5 m	4.5 m	1.5 m	4.5 m	10%	50%	55 m <sup>2</sup> (2 brm) -- 90 m <sup>2</sup> (3 brm)	11 m

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## 4/ Precedent Review

The City of Vaughan is not alone in experiencing significant pressure for intensification and redevelopment within its existing low-rise residential neighbourhoods. Municipalities across Ontario, and in particular the Greater Golden Horseshoe, have been balancing the challenges of encouraging intensification and maintaining the character and stability of predominantly low-rise neighbourhoods.

This section summarizes policies and guidelines other municipalities have developed to regulate and guide change in mature low-rise neighbourhoods. They informed the recommended Official Plan amendments and guidelines for Vaughan in the sections that follow. The precedent review included the long-established cities of Toronto and Ottawa, which have been dealing with development pressures in its low-density communities for some time. The review also looked at policies and guidelines adopted by mature suburban municipalities in the GTA facing issues similar to Vaughan's.

### 4.1/ City of Toronto

#### Toronto Official Plan

The Toronto Official Plan generally directs residential growth and intensification to three areas of the city identified on Map 2: the Avenues, Centres, and the Downtown and Central Waterfront. In areas designated “Neighbourhoods” on the Official Plan’s land use maps, where residential growth is not significantly anticipated, policies carefully control intensification and limit the negative impacts of growth on the areas’ low-rise character. Given that Toronto is an older and more built-up city than Vaughan, the “low-rise character” of the designated Neighbourhoods includes a range of building typologies from single detached houses to four storey walk-up apartment buildings. Development in lands designated Neighbourhood is required to “respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the neighbourhood”. In this case, the character of a neighbourhood is defined by criteria which includes:

- a) the patterns of streets, blocks, and lanes
- b) the size and configuration of lots
- c) the height, massing, scale, and dwelling type of nearby residential properties
- d) prevailing building types
- e) setbacks of buildings from the street or streets
- f) pattern of rear and side yard setbacks
- g) continuation of special landscape or built form features
- h) heritage buildings, structures, and landscapes

This contextual approach to defining the character of low-rise residential neighbourhoods is reinforced by further policy language that stipulates that “no changes will be made through rezoning, minor variance, consent or other public action that are out of keeping with the physical character of the neighbourhood”. Notwithstanding the robust approach taken by the City of Toronto to managing intensification in its mature neighbourhoods, growth is still permitted with the understanding that neighbourhoods are “stable but not static” areas where development is contemplated insofar as it supports the physical character of the neighbourhood. No density or other quantitative controls are utilized.

## Toronto Urban Design Guidelines – Infill Townhouses (2003)

**Introduction:** While Toronto is generally defined by its high-rise downtown skyline, fully three-quarters of its land area is composed of stable and generally low-rise residential neighbourhoods and other areas where only limited intensification that minimizes physical change is contemplated. To ensure that this limited intensification meets the city’s stated urban design goal to “maintain an appropriate overall scale and pattern of development within its context”, the “Toronto Urban Design Guidelines – Infill Townhouses” were implemented in January 2003.

**Methodology and Approach:** The guidelines are organized into four topic areas: Streets and Open Spaces, Building Location and Organization, Building Form, and A Comfortable Environment for Pedestrians. Each section is then further divided into subsections such as “Parking” or “Light, View and Privacy”. Within each section and subsection the guidelines are described using a combination of prose, bulleted text, captioned photographs, and diagrammatic illustrations. The guidelines themselves generally take a principle-based approach and largely refrain from quantifying certain development criteria. However, in certain cases such as setback distances and parking requirements, specific parameters are provided to ensure consistency across the city.

**Relevance:** A common thread throughout the guidelines is the primary emphasis on the creation of a safe and comfortable pedestrian realm that promotes connectivity and walkability. However, ensuring compatibility with existing building stock and/or neighbourhood character through massing guidelines, for example, is minimally addressed. Section 2.1 (Setbacks from the Street) states townhouses should “locate the main façade parallel to the street and set in line with adjacent buildings” and Section 3.3 (Light, View and Privacy) states that “when integrating new townhouses into an existing streetscape, use the same sideyard setbacks as the neighbouring properties”. Nevertheless, the guidelines in their commitment to current and future residents’ quality of life articulates principles that parallel Vaughan’s commitment to livable communities in the VOP 2010.

### Sample Guidelines:

- Enhance and extend the local street network into the new development to create strong visual and physical links with adjacent neighbourhoods
- Match the front yard setback so it is equivalent to the existing adjacent properties
- Provide appropriate design treatment to both street facades when the building is on a corner. The design of a corner building can be unique and incorporate special features such as towers, corner bays and gables
- Maximize the amount of soft landscaping on both the public right of way and private lot respecting pedestrian, cycling, and motorist safety and maintenance activities
- Preserve and protect existing healthy trees and green space

## Toronto Draft Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines (2015)

**Introduction:** Currently in draft form, the “Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines” are intended to expand upon and replace the “Toronto Urban Design Guidelines – Infill Townhouses” in order to respond to a broader set of conditions and building typologies than the original guidelines contemplated as well as conform to newer policies such as the Development Infrastructure Policy & Standards which places limits on the creation and design of private residential streets.

**Methodology and Approach:** Whereas the “Toronto Urban Design Guidelines – Infill Townhouses” approaches the design of townhouses with uniform standards and universal applicability, the “Draft Townhouse and Low-



Rise Apartment Guidelines” takes a contextual approach. The need to take this approach was informed by an inventory of relevant past planning applications, site tours, selected case studies and a review of best practices. As such, the document begins with a set of high-level principles that reveal an emphasis on ensuring townhouses and other limited intensification projects “fit” within their context. In this case, the context of a proposed project includes a number of factors such as heritage resources, natural features such as mature vegetation and topography, neighbourhood character, and the scale and massing of adjacent or nearby buildings.

The “Draft Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines” uses a combination of illustrations, schematic diagrams, photographs, and text descriptions to communicate the design intent of each discrete sections. Each section – such as Building Placement, Streetscape, or Building Types – is concluded with a thorough rationale that summarizes and provides justification for the preceding criteria. Although the document articulates general criteria according to thematic topics such as “Building Design” or “Public Realm”, Section 5 goes a step further and identifies six typical development scenarios to provide specific guidance. Examples of these scenarios include “Shallow Mid-Block Parcel”, “Parcel with Multiple Building Blocks” and “Large Development with Multiple Development Blocks”.

**Relevance:** Although Toronto has a significantly different urban form than Vaughan, the development pressures that the two cities’ established low-rise residential neighbourhoods are experiencing are quite similar. The “Draft Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines” provide a wide variety of criteria from the general to the specific that can apply in both contexts. In particular, the guidance the document provides with regard to defining and assessing the context of a development site as well as the scenario-based approach to informing the design of different types of townhouses is informative and innovative.

#### **Sample Guidelines:**

- When a proposed building is adjacent to a lower-scale heritage property design new buildings to respect the urban grain, scale, setbacks, proportions, visual relationships, topography and materials of the historic context
- In general, build parallel to the street and extend the building the length of the site along the edges of streets, parks, and open space with front doors on the primary façade facing these areas
- Locate unit entrances so that they are directly visible and accessible from the public sidewalk
- Incorporate parking garage ramps and access stairs, garbage collection areas and loading areas into the building
- For new buildings where the adjacent context is lower in scale and not anticipated to change, provide a transition in the building height down to the lower-scale neighbours. Match at least the first building, unit or bay immediately adjacent to the lower-scaled context to the scale and height of neighbouring buildings
- Retain and protect existing trees, vegetation, natural slopes and native soils to integrate these features into the overall landscape plan

## **4.2/ City of Ottawa**

### **City of Ottawa Official Plan**

Like Toronto, the City of Ottawa’s Official Plan seeks to guide intensification to appropriate locations and mitigate significant growth within its low-rise residential areas. Whereas the City of Toronto designates lands through the Official Plan to be targeted for intensification, Ottawa’s Official Plan identifies locations typologically such as sites within 600 metres of rapid transit stations, older industrial areas, under-utilized shopping centres, and surface parking lots. Concerning development in its stable, low-rise residential neighbourhoods, the City of Ottawa is supportive of intensification insofar as “it will enhance and complement

its desirable characteristics and long term renewal”. In determining whether proposed intensification projects “enhance and complement” the character of low-rise residential neighbourhoods, the Ottawa Official Plan states that the City will “evaluate the compatibility of development applications”. Compatibility is described as development that “fits well” within its physical context and “works well” among its surrounding functions. More specific compatibility criteria are articulated in a series of mutually reinforcing urban design objectives, frameworks, annexes, and policies but include the following considerations:

- a) Minimization of traffic impacts off of arterial roads
- b) Respect for privacy of adjacent outdoor amenity areas
- c) Minimization of shadowing of adjacent properties
- d) Prevailing height, massing, and scale of buildings in the area
- e) Similar pattern of rear and sideyard setbacks and landscaped open spaces

Recommended building typologies that are appropriate for intensification projects within stable residential areas include duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes provided the design of these projects satisfies their evaluation against the stated compatibility criteria and urban design objectives.

## City of Ottawa Urban Design Guidelines for Low-Rise Infill Housing

**Introduction:** The City of Ottawa Urban Design Guidelines for Low-Rise Infill Housing provide further detail to, and “help fulfill some of the design strategies for”, the urban design objectives, strategies, policies articulated in the City of Ottawa Official Plan. Whereas the Official Plan’s urban design policies for intensification in low-rise residential neighbourhoods applies to all types of development within those areas, this document has a narrower focus on “the development of vacant lots or portions of vacant lots in established urban areas” created through severances, demolition, or the assembly of smaller lots.

**Methodology and Approach:** The Design Guidelines described in this document apply to all infill development on lands designated “General Urban” in the Ottawa Official Plan and include single and semi-detached homes, duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and low-rise apartments. Similar to how the Ottawa Official Plan’s urban design policies address the compatibility of new development with existing development, the Urban Design Guidelines for Low-Rise Infill Housing also regard compatibility as a desirable objective. However, the Guidelines articulate a wider set of considerations for and broaden the definition of compatibility to include the overall contribution to the public realm of a neighbourhood including streetscape and landscape design guidelines. With regard to informing the built form of infill housing, the Design Guidelines are concerned primarily with contextual design considerations such as the relationship of the ground floor to the street, transitions to nearby properties and amenity areas, contribution to the animation and enrichment of the detail of the neighbourhood, and the promotion of variety and diversity while respecting existing styles and historical forms. Particular attention is paid to the design and organization of parking areas, garages, and servicing infrastructure insofar as they have the potential to significantly adversely impact the creation of a safe and comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Finally, site-specific guidelines are provided regarding infill development that affects heritage buildings and infill on narrow lots, with each given their own relevant section in the document. Annotated diagrams and photographs are included throughout the Design Guidelines to provide precedents and clarify individual guidelines for readers.

**Relevance:** While the City of Ottawa’s Official Plan contains an extensive set of urban design policies, objectives, and strategies, the Urban Design Guidelines for Low-Rise Infill Housing are useful in providing further detail and articulating specific approaches to satisfying those policies and achieving the Official Plan’s design objectives. In particular, the design guidelines that address infill housing on narrow lots and development affecting heritage resources are germane to the issues confronting the City of Vaughan in its older established neighbourhoods which are often located in heritage conservation districts and are composed of historical lots that are narrow by contemporary standards.

### Sample Guidelines:

- Reflect the desirable aspects of the established streetscape character. If the streetscape character and pattern is less desirable, with asphalt parking lots and few trees lining the street, build infill which contributes to a more desirable pedestrian character and landscape pattern
- Ensure new infill faces and animates the public streets. Ground floors with principal entries, windows, porches and key internal uses at street level and facing onto the street, contribute to the animation, safety and security of the street
- Locate and build infill in a manner that reflects the existing or desirable planned neighbourhood pattern of development in terms of building height, elevation and the location of primary entrances, the elevation of the first floor, yard encroachments such as porches and stair projections, as well as front, rear, and side yard setbacks
- In determining infill lot sizes, recognize the provisions of the Zoning By-law, the Official Plan's intensification policies, and local lot sizes including lot width, the existing relationship between lot size, yard setbacks and the scale of homes
- Avoid the arrangement of units where the front of one dwelling faces the back of another
- Where the new development is higher than the existing buildings, create a transition in building heights through the harmonization and manipulation of mass. Add architectural features such as porches and bays, and use materials, colours and textures, to visually reduce the height and mass of the building
- Where access to a garage is at the front, design infill so that the proportional relationship between the width of the garage and the width of the lot is similar to the pattern of the neighbourhood. For example, if front garages occupy 25% of the lot frontage of existing homes, reflect this characteristic in the proposed infill home.

## 4.3/ City of Mississauga

### City of Mississauga Official Plan

The City of Mississauga's Official Plan directs growth and encourages intensification to designated areas identified on Schedule 1b (Urban System – City Structure). These areas are the Downtown, Major Nodes, and Community Nodes. Schedule 2 (Intensification Areas) further identifies areas within 500 metres of a Major Transit Station and Intensification Corridors as additional locations appropriate for significant growth. The majority of the remaining municipal area is designated Neighbourhood on Schedule 1b and is further subdivided into four residential land use designations (Low Density I & II, Medium Density, and High Density) on Schedule 10 (Land Use Designations). Although the heights of buildings within Neighbourhoods is generally restricted to a maximum of four storeys, further detail is provided in urban design and land use policies for twenty-two different "Neighbourhood Character Areas". In Section 16 of the Mississauga Official Plan, each of the Neighbourhood Character Areas are mapped, approved density – measured in floor-space index – targets identified geographically, and specific policies described to manage growth. For example, in the Applewood Character Area, townhouses are not permitted on lands that are designated "Residential Low Density II" even though the general policy regarding lands designated "Residential Low Density II" permits them. Moreover, site-specific policies addressing particular addresses and/or properties provide a further level of detail with regard to permitted uses and urban design considerations.

## City of Mississauga Urban Design Guidelines: New Dwellings, Replacement Housing, and Additions

**Introduction:** The purpose of the City of Mississauga Urban Design Guidelines: New Dwellings, Replacement Housing, and Additions is to “assist homeowners, designers, architects and landscape architects by outlining the framework and design principles on which the guidelines for Site Plan approval are based”. As such, this document should be considered and read not as a supplementary policy document to the Mississauga Official Plan, but as a development aide.

**Methodology and Approach:** The Urban Design Guidelines: New Dwellings, Replacement Housing, and Additions describes guidelines and principles to mitigate potential conflicts with regard to achieving compatibility with the character of the existing neighbourhood. The design guidelines themselves are generally broad and generic such as “the massing of the dwelling should be consistent with the adjacent homes” and are supported by illustrations, diagrams, and precedent photos for further clarification. Each design guideline is further supported by “preferred” and “not preferred” examples to demonstrate how to meet the described guideline. Topics covered include neighbourhood scale and character, building height, materials, and garages. The second half of the document describes the site plan process and requirements for obtaining approvals.

**Relevance:** The City of Mississauga Urban Design Guidelines: New Dwellings, Replacement Housing, and Additions, while useful for the layperson to interpret the urban design policies contained in the Mississauga Official Plan, does not provide any substantial insight for Vaughan’s specific context and unique policy and development challenges.

### Sample Guidelines:

- House designs which fit with the scale and character of the local area and take advantage of a particular site are encouraged. The use of standard, repeat designs is strongly discouraged
- The design of the dwelling should not appear to be higher than existing dwellings
- Garages should be located behind or in line with the front door of the dwelling to ensure visibility to the street. Projected garages are discouraged.
- The greatest proportion of paved surface should be located directly in front of the garage. Paved surfaces should not result in additional parking spaces in the front yard of a dwelling.
- The location or relocation of utilities should minimize the impact on existing landscape features.

## City of Mississauga Urban Design Handbook: Low-Rise Multiple Dwellings

**Introduction:** The City of Mississauga Urban Design Handbook: Low-Rise Multiple Dwellings addresses the design and development of townhouses, stacked townhouses, low-rise apartments and other alternatives to traditional single and semi-detached residential forms in order to ensure that intensification within or adjacent to low-rise residential areas is compatible with the existing character of the neighbourhoods. Its purpose is two-fold: to increase the design quality of new low-rise multiple dwellings while integrating them sensitively with their surrounding development and the public realm.

**Methodology and Approach:** This document generally applies to development in zoning categories that permit residential buildings with more than two dwelling units but do not exceed four storeys in height. It is divided into three primary sections: Compatibility, Connectivity, and Characteristics. In the first section, Compatibility, the Urban Design Handbook recognizes that townhouses and other forms of low-rise, multiple dwelling typologies are located on transition sites, and between low-density and higher-density areas. As such, this section describes guidelines for creating harmonious relationships between different types and scales of development. Approaches such as setbacks, street width to building height ratios, and setbacks are detailed

and supported by additional suggestions such as providing greater floor-to-floor heights or arranging building mass with vertical emphasis to create sensitive transitions between areas of different character. The second section, Connectivity, describes design guidelines for ensuring that townhouses contribute positively to the public realm. Issues such as the design of private streets, the extension of existing public street networks, the preservation of trees and other landscape features, and the siting of open space and amenity areas are articulated in this section. Specific building elements such as the roof, façade, entrances, and lighting are addressed in the third and final section, Characteristics. In each of the sections, illustrations and photographs reinforce the design guidelines which are divided themselves into qualitative and quantitative statements.

**Relevance:** Unlike the City of Mississauga Urban Design Guidelines: New Dwellings, Replacement Housing, and Additions, this document is a supplementary policy document to the Mississauga Official Plan, the zoning by-law, and other City Council endorsed design documents such as the Accessibility Design Handbook. Its greater level of specificity and clear design direction make it useful as a reference. Moreover, given that the City of Vaughan is experiencing similar significant development pressure with regard to townhouse development on the edges of, and within, established residential neighbourhoods, the City of Mississauga Urban Design Handbook: Low-Rise Multiple Dwellings is well-suited to inform the development of similar guidelines for the City of Vaughan.

#### **Sample Guidelines:**

- Create horizontal emphases that relate to the cornice lines, podium heights and/or the window pattern of adjacent buildings.
- Respect the height, scale and massing of neighbouring buildings. Where the proposed building is taller or larger than adjacent buildings, create a transition in building height and form.
- Site buildings with the front façade facing the public street. Avoid rear yards fronting the public street.
- When consistent and desirable front yard setbacks exist on adjacent properties, site new development to reflect that condition.
- Buildings should be contained within a 45-degree angular plane, measured from the rear property line when abutting lower-scale residential buildings. For more intensively developed areas, determine an appropriate setback or angular plane to protect the privacy, light and views of neighbours.
- Design private streets to function and appear like public streets with landscaping buildings frontages and addresses, sidewalks and on-street parking.
- Enhance and reflect the existing streetscape character through consistent setbacks, landscaping, parking patterns and scale of buildings while preserving existing street trees

## **4.4/ City of Brampton**

### **Brampton Official Plan**

The City of Brampton utilizes a variety of controls and policy approaches of varying specificity to manage intensification within its low-rise residential neighbourhoods. The coarsest mechanism for regulating infill development and other forms of increased density is a general restriction on the height and density of residential development outside of designated intensification areas including Mobility Hubs, Urban Growth Centres, and Intensification Corridors, to four storeys and 50 units per hectare, respectively. More fine-grained built form controls are described in the 54 Secondary Plans that are identified on Schedule G of the Official Plan and cover the vast majority of the Brampton municipal area. Within each of the Secondary Plan, land is designated with one of six density categories ranging from “Single Detached Density”, which suggests 0-25 units per net hectare and limits development to single detached homes, to “Apartment or High Density” which suggests densities of 76-198 units per net hectare and buildings with elevators. The most restrictive control on

infill development and intensification is reserved for Brampton’s “older, mature neighbourhoods” which are not geographically identified, but are defined as follows:

“‘Older, Mature Neighbourhood’ means a residential area where the majority of dwellings were built prior to 1980. These dwellings are generally not constructed to the minimum building setback and maximum lot coverage regulations of the Zoning Bylaw. Typical characteristics of older, mature neighbourhoods are generous separation distances between dwellings, greater front and rear yard setbacks, and lower lot coverage than in newer neighbourhoods with dwellings built after 1980.”

Within the “older, mature neighbourhoods” the Official Plan indicates that that “a scoped site plan control process...may be used...[but] will only assess building massing, scale, siting, height, coverage, setbacks and architecture, and landscaping and fencing on the lot”. Finally, urban design policies provide a final layer of qualitative controls on “Community Revitalization” development, a catch-all category that includes infill, intensification, replacement, and redevelopment. These policies require that new development is compatible with existing development including lot sizing, use, scale, form, character, height, massing, and other characteristics of infill development.

## City of Brampton Guide for Infill Housing in Mature Neighbourhoods

**Introduction:** Brampton’s Guide for Infill Housing is intended to “provide guidance for homeowners, designers, architects and landscape architects” in designing replacement homes or additions to current dwellings within existing low-rise residential neighbourhoods. It is primarily concerned with ensuring that new development within neighbourhoods is compatible to the existing character of the area and “to direct how new development can be designed to maintain and preserve neighbourhood character”.

**Methodology and Approach:** The Guide for Infill Housing specifically addresses a defined area within the City of Brampton, generally bounded by Steeles Avenue, Chinguacousy Road, Bovaird Drive, and Torbram Road, which is designated as a “Mature Neighbourhood Area” where the guidelines will apply. The document first explains how a neighbourhood’s character is established through elements such as building setbacks, building heights and massing, and front entrance treatment, and then summarizes the process for undertaking an infill housing project from consultation through to municipal approvals. The last section of the Guide for Infill Housing describes in accessible, relatively jargon-free, terms five sets of guidelines: setbacks, height and massing, garage and driveway, front entrance treatment, and landscape. The guidelines are supported by precedent illustrations, diagrammatic illustrations, and references to particular sections and chapters of the City of Brampton’s Development Design Guidelines. Guidelines such as “scale may be minimized by...limiting your building height to two storeys” or “avoiding features with strong vertical orientation” suggests that the primary emphasis of Brampton’s Guide for Infill Housing is managing the development of exceedingly large homes – as opposed to mitigating the introduction of exceedingly dense building typologies that are incompatible with low-density low-rise residential neighbourhoods.

**Relevance:** Brampton’s Guide for Infill Housing in Mature Neighbourhoods offers a user-friendly approach to informing development, but lacks the level of detail, specific criteria, and compatibility requirements needed to act as a supplemental policy document for the City of Vaughan’s purpose. They also primarily address situations where over-large homes are proposed within mature neighbourhoods, a condition which is secondary to Vaughan’s concern of inappropriate or incompatible intensification. However, the accessible language and use of clear diagrams are elements that should be emulated to provide clarity and ease of interpretation for future design guidelines crafted specifically for Vaughan’s needs.

### Sample Guidelines:

- Slope the new roof back from adjacent houses.
- Architectural style of new houses and substantial remodeling should be compatible with the architectural styles found in the surrounding neighborhood. No specific style is recommended, but whether your new home is contemporary or replicates a style found in the neighbourhood, it should be compatible. Ensure that its design employs building scale, massing, roof lines, and building orientations that are commonly found in the neighborhood.
- In general, new garages should be located and sized to be consistent with the established pattern in your neighbourhood. In neighbourhoods where there are detached garages located in the rear yard, new garages should also be located at the rear of the house. In neighborhoods where there are attached garages, new garages located either at the front or side of the house should be recessed from the main building face.
- Main entrances should be prominent, oriented to the street and in appropriate scale to the block as well as the house.
- Preserve mature trees wherever possible.
- Avoid privacy fencing anywhere in front of the house.

## 4.5/ City of Markham

### City of Markham Official Plan

The City of Markham Official Plan directs growth and intensification to Regional Centres, Regional Corridors, Local Centres, and Local Corridors identified on Map 1 (Markham Structure). Outside of these designated intensification areas, the Neighbourhood Area identified on the same map is further divided into a four residential land use designations (Estate, Low Rise, Mid Rise, and High Rise) on Map 3 (Land Use) of the Official Plan. The Residential Low Rise designation constitutes “most of the existing residential neighbourhoods in Markham...with lower-scale buildings such as detached and semi-detached dwellings, duplexes and townhouses, which will experience minimal physical change in the future”. The “minimal physical change” contemplated includes detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, and small multiplex buildings containing 3 to 6 units all with direct frontage on a public street and limited to a maximum height of three storeys. Notwithstanding these permitted typologies, back to back townhouses are prohibited. Within lands designated Residential Low Rise, two different sets of development criteria are articulated, one for infill development and one for new development. The development criteria for infill development includes the following:

- a. the lot frontage(s) and lot area(s) of the proposed new lot(s) shall be consistent with the sizes of existing lots on both sides of the street on which the property is located
- b. the proposed new building(s) shall have heights, massing and scale appropriate for the site and generally consistent with the permitted by the zoning for adjacent properties and properties on the same street
- c. front and rear yard setbacks for the new building(s) shall be consistent with the front and rear yards that exist on the same side of the street
- d. the setback between new building(s) and the interior side lot line shall increase as the lot frontage increases
- e. the new building(s) shall have a complementary relationship with existing buildings, while accommodating a diversity of building styles, materials and colours
- f. existing trees and vegetation shall be retained and enhanced through new street tree planting and additional on-site landscaping

- g. the width of garage(s) and driveway(s) at the front of new building(s) shall be limited to ensure that the streetscape is not dominated by garages and driveways
- h. impacts on adjacent properties shall be minimized in relation to grading, drainage, access and circulation, privacy and microclimatic conditions such as shadowing

No density controls are used to manage growth and development in lands designated Residential Low Rise and no supplementary design guidelines currently exist to further clarify and/or provide further detail to managing change within existing mature neighbourhoods.

## 4.6/ Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

### Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan

Given that the majority of the Whitchurch-Stouffville municipal area is rural and/or agricultural, Official Plan policies addressing intensification are contained within a Secondary Plan for Downtown Stouffville. The Downtown Stouffville Secondary Plan manages growth and intensification by identifying a range of land use designations wherein progressively denser forms of residential development are encouraged. From least dense to most dense, these designations are Main Street and Community Core Area, Urban Medium Density Residential Area, Residential Area, and Existing Residential Area. While intensification is encouraged to a greater or lesser extent within each of these designations, policies addressing compatibility are primarily contained in those sections detailing the Existing Residential Area and the Residential Area designations identified in the Secondary Plan.

Within lands designated as Existing Residential Area, intensification is expected to consist “primarily of limited infill and secondary suites” and generally directs medium residential uses such as townhouse dwellings and low-rise apartments to other residential areas or to “the edge of neighbourhoods typically fronting onto or adjacent to collector/arterial roads”. To ensure compatibility within Existing Residential Areas, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville may also require site plan approval with compatibility evaluated as use that is “reflective and sympathetic to the built form of the established neighbourhood” which includes the orientation and presence of the garage, heights of buildings, building materials, window and door treatment, roof design, and the massing and positioning of the buildings.

With regard to lands designated Residential Area, a wider range of building typologies are permitted including townhouses, low-rise apartments, stacked townhouses and similar typologies. Unlike Existing Residential Areas, however, density controls rather than urban design criteria are utilized to manage intensification. Within lands designated Residential Area, a minimum density of 20 units/hectare and a maximum density of 45 units/hectare is established for townhouse development. Moreover, to facilitate the development of a diversity of housing types, townhouses are generally restricted to a maximum of 15% of a plan of subdivision.

### The Community of Stouffville Residential Intensification Urban Design Guidelines

**Introduction:** As a predominantly rural municipality, Stouffville’s downtown, like many similarly-sized municipalities, is linear with a centre located at the intersection of two regional arterial roads. Its main street is lined with commercial and mixed-uses and low-rise residential neighbourhoods extend behind the first row of properties in orderly subdivisions. The Community of Stouffville Residential Intensification Urban Design Guidelines provide direction for infill and other intensification development proposals in this main street and related-residential area. The purpose of the document, broadly, is to ensure new development within Stouffville’s built boundary maintains the municipality’s “small town tradition between the country and the city”



while sensitively increasing densities to meet growth targets established in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

**Methodology and Approach:** The Stouffville Residential Intensification Urban Design Guidelines are divided into three main sections: the first identifies locations that are suitable for intensification by type, such as “infill sites” or “vacant sites”, and by geography on a land use map of the municipality; the second articulates a vision and a set of high-level objectives for intensification in Stouffville; and the third describes the guidelines themselves. In this third section, the guidelines address three typical building typologies: buildings above three storeys, townhouses, and heritage infill projects. Although the specific criteria and guidelines differ by typology, a shared concern is the maintenance of the integrity of the “main street” character of Stouffville’s downtown and of the low-rise residential neighbourhoods behind it. Preserving this “small town tradition between the country and the city” is accomplished by establishing parameters for specific building characteristics such as window treatments (“Clear glass is preferred for all glazing to promote a high level of visibility”) or materials (“In general, the appearance of building materials should be true to their nature and should not mimic other materials”) as well as more general criteria such as the maintenance of 45 degree angular planes to adjacent neighbourhoods and a requirement for building setbacks above the third storey “to express a base, middle and top, and also to control the overall massing of the building”. For townhouse-specific parameters, the Stouffville Residential Intensification Design Guidelines provide a high degree of flexibility, requiring design to “consider overall form, massing and proportions...to create consistent and attractive, but not repetitive, buildings” and that “the proportion of rooflines, wall planes and openings should be consistent with other buildings on the street”. Some slightly more restrictive language stipulates townhouses “should generally be limited to 6 attached units” and rear yard amenity areas of townhouse blocks “should have a minimum depth of 5.5 metres and a minimum area requirement of 45 square metres”. Guidelines describing vehicular access, parking, and servicing for intensification proposals conclude the document and serve to minimize the impact of such necessities on the built form of Stouffville’s downtown.

**Relevance:** While the townhouse-specific guidelines are useful to inform similar guidelines for the City of Vaughan, the primary thrust of the Stouffville Residential Intensification Urban Design Guidelines indicates that Stouffville, like Vaughan, is seeking to encourage the intensification of its main street, mixed use corridors rather than mitigate or manage intensification in inappropriate areas such as within established low-rise neighbourhoods. As such, Stouffville’s guidelines are of limited value for informing approaches to guiding sensitive and compatible infill at the edges of or within residential neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, the guidelines that address elements common to all development, such as managing the impact of vehicular infrastructure, are helpful in a general sense.

#### **Sample Guidelines:**

- All new buildings and developments should be a minimum of 2-storeys in height. Buildings that are taller than 3-storeys should employ measures to reduce the height and mass of the upper floors, including setbacks
- Main building entrances should face public streets and be directly accessible from public sidewalks. They should be easily identifiable through location and articulation.
- The design of townhouses should consider overall form, massing and proportions, as well as the rhythm of repetitive building elements (i.e. windows, roof design) to create consistent and attractive, but not repetitive, buildings.
- End units in a townhouse or multiplex block should provide windows and entrances that address both streets to encourage these areas to be attractive, active and safe.
- New development should be complementary in height and scale to adjacent heritage buildings.
- New buildings should generally match the pre-established setback of adjacent buildings. This is extremely beneficial on sites where buildings are currently setback from the street or are missing altogether.

## 4.7/ Town of Oakville

### Oakville Official Plan

Similar to the other municipalities surveyed in Section 4, the Town of Oakville Official Plan generally directs residential growth to areas designated “Growth Areas” on Schedule A1. These include Downtown and Midtown Oakville, and the villages of Kerr and Bronte. The majority of Oakville’s municipal area, however, is identified as “Residential Area” on the Official Plan’s Urban Structure Map. Within the lands designated “Residential Area”, the Official Plan’s Land Use Schedules identify three types of residential land use areas: low density, medium density, and high density. The Low Density Residential lands generally correspond to the existing and stable neighbourhoods typified by their low-rise houseform character. Within these lands, a maximum density of 29 units per hectare is set and building typologies are generally restricted to detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, and duplexes in order to strictly control intensification. Higher densities and a broader range of building typologies are permitted in the Medium Density and High Density Residential Areas. Furthermore, within Low Density Residential Areas, specific locations such as “at the intersection of arterial and/or collector roads, or sites with existing non-residential uses, that have sufficient frontage and depth to accommodate appropriate intensification” are identified. However, development within “all stable residential communities shall be evaluated...to maintain and protect the existing neighbourhood character”. Like the City of Ottawa, the evaluation is undertaken according to criteria such as:

- a. scale, height, massing, architectural character and materials that are compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood
- b. compatible setbacks, building orientations, and separation distances
- c. height transitions from adjacent development
- d. compatible lotting patterns with the predominant lotting pattern of the neighbourhood
- e. maintenance and/or extension of the public street network to ensure appropriate connectivity and access for pedestrians and cyclists
- f. minimization of impacts on adjacent properties in relation to grading, drainage, location of service areas, privacy, and microclimatic conditions such as shadowing

Finally, compatible, as it is used in the evaluation of proposed development within stable residential communities, is defined as “the development of redevelopment of uses which may not necessarily be the same as, or similar to, the existing development, but can coexist with the surrounding area without unacceptable adverse impact”.

### Town of Oakville Design Guidelines for Stable Residential Communities

**Introduction:** The Town of Oakville Design Guidelines for Stable Residential Communities are intended to serve as a framework to inform the design of new detached dwellings or additions to existing detached dwellings within stable residential communities. Its primary focus is to help homeowners and prospective developers achieve compatibility and maintain and preserve the character of Oakville’s low-rise residential neighbourhoods.

**Methodology and Approach:** Following an introductory section and a policy summary that highlights the key sections of the Oakville Official Plan, the Design Guidelines describe four categories of design objectives: Neighbourhood Context, Architectural Context, Site Context, and Heritage Resource Context. Within each topic area, design principles supported by illustrations and precedent photographs are articulated that provide direction on how new residential dwellings can be integrated in a compatible manner. Specific characteristics covered include lotting pattern, rear yard privacy, primary façade, landscaping, and garages. Collectively, the

guidelines demonstrate a sensitivity to ensuring the style of new dwellings closely mimics the existing traditional houseform design typified by generous front yards, recessed garages, and gable-form rooves.

**Relevance:** The Design Guidelines for Stable Residential Communities, with their relatively narrow focus on replacement single-detached houseform buildings, are not particularly relevant to the development pressures being experienced by the City of Vaughan within, and on the edges of, its older established neighbourhoods. However, sample language and guidelines, in particular from the landscaping and heritage resource sections, are useful to review.

**Sample Guidelines:**

- New development should positively contribute to the surrounding neighbourhood character by incorporating building and site elements that provide a visual reference to existing neighbourhood features and that complement the qualities of the surrounding residential community.
- New development should be designed to maintain and preserve the scale and character of the site and its immediate context and to create compatible transitions between the new dwelling and existing dwellings in the surrounding neighbourhood.
- New development should maintain the setback or average of setbacks from the street frontage as the existing dwellings in the immediate area.
- New development should not have the appearance of being substantially larger than the existing dwellings in the immediate vicinity. If a larger massing is proposed, it should be subdivided into smaller building elements that respond to the context of the neighbourhood patterns.
- New development should be designed to mitigate potential impacts of overshadowing on adjacent properties by avoiding bulky massing close to the shared property line, by stepping down the height of the structure, and/or by increasing the setback(s) from the side and rear property lines.
- New development with an attached garage should make every effort to incorporate this feature into the design of the building, to achieve compatibility with the overall massing, scale and style of the dwelling and the immediate surroundings.
- New development should make every effort to retain established landscaping, such as healthy mature trees and existing topography, by designing new dwellings and building additions around these stable features.

DRAFT

## 5/ Conclusion and Recommendations

There has been an increasing number of applications that seemingly are not consistent with the vision and intent for stable community areas in the VOP 2010. Although the intent of the plan with respect to infill development is clear—to ensure it respects and reinforces, and is compatible with, the existing scale, lot pattern, character and form of established neighbourhoods—there is not complete clarity on how the applicable policies should be interpreted in individual applications. The result is inconsistent interpretation of the policies of the Plan, by property owners, developers, and residents, which are difficult to resolve.

In light of the issues associated with infill proposals in low-rise residential neighbourhoods, and tools other municipalities have adopted to try to address them, it is recommended that the City consider refining the VOP 2010 to clarify existing policies and by adopting urban design guidelines to provide further clarification. This section proposes a number of amendments to the VOP 2010 and follows these with two sets of draft urban design guidelines—one for general infill in established low-rise residential areas and one specific to infill townhouse developments.

While the proposed VOP 2010 amendments and urban design guidelines are complementary to one another and mutually supportive, they can be implemented independently. For example, if the City wishes to consider the proposed policy amendments at the time of the next Municipal Comprehensive Review of the VOP, it may wish to adopt infill guidelines in the interim, which are non-statutory but will assist in interpreting the current VOP policies.

### 5.1/ Proposed VOP 2010 Amendments

All of the proposed amendments below support the general intent of the VOP 2010 as it applies to designated Community Areas in the Urban Structure Plan (Schedule 1) and designated Low-Rise Residential areas in the Land Use Plan (Schedule 13). The proposed amendments are intended to clarify specific policies in the plan and augment them with policies specific to infill townhouse developments. The latter is intended to ensure townhouses are integrated into established neighbourhoods in a manner that meets the general intent of the compatibility policies in the VOP 2010 to respect and reinforce the character of such neighbourhoods.

In the proposed policy wording below, strikethroughs represent text proposed for deletion and **bolded text** represents new text. The rationale for each amendment follows the proposed text.

Changes that were made to the proposed amendments since January 2016 based on feedback received from the public, stakeholders and City staff have been highlighted with **boxed and bolded text**. Rationales with a “\*” relate to these changes.

#### Community Area Policies

##### Proposed amendment to Policy 2.2.3.2:

Community Areas are considered Stable Areas and therefore Community Areas with existing development are not intended to experience *significant* physical change **that would alter the general character of established neighbourhoods**. New development that respects and reinforces the existing scale, height, massing, lot pattern, building type **and orientation**, character, form and planned function of the immediate local area is permitted, as set out in the policies of Chapter 9.

*Rationale:*

*The proposed amendment clarifies the meaning of “significant” in this context by relating it to a change that would alter the general character of a neighbourhood. It also recognizes that in addition to the existing criteria, the orientation of buildings in a neighbourhood is also fundamental to its character and if altered through redevelopment would mark a significant physical change to the neighbourhood’s established character.*

## Urban Design and Built Form Policies

### Proposed amendment to Policy 9.1.2.1:

That new development will respect and reinforce the existing and planned context within which it is situated. More specifically, the built form of new developments will be designed to achieve the following general objectives: (a) in Community Areas, new development will be designed to respect and reinforce the physical character of the established neighbourhood within which it is located as set out in policies **9.1.2.2 – 9.1.2.4** and **9.1.2.3** or, where no established neighbourhood is located, it shall help establish an appropriate physical character that is compatible with its surroundings, as set out in policy **9.1.2.4-9.1.2.5**.

*Rationale:*

*The above amendment is appropriate if proposed new policy 9.1.2.4 below is approved and to ensure that policies are ordered numerically.*

### Proposed amendment to Policy 9.1.2.2:

In Community Areas with established development, new development, **as reflected in any zoning, variance, subdivision, consent or part lot control exemption application, will** be designed to respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area, **specifically respecting and reinforcing** ~~paying particular attention to~~ the following elements:

- a. the local pattern of lots, streets and blocks;
- b. the size and configuration of lots;
- c. the building type of nearby residential properties;
- d. **the orientation of buildings;**
- e. the heights and scale of **adjacent and immediately surrounding** ~~nearby~~ residential properties;
- f. the setback of buildings from the street;
- g. the pattern of rear and side-yard setbacks;
- h. **the presence of mature trees and general landscape character of the streetscape;**
- i. **the existing topography and drainage pattern on the lot and in the adjacent and immediately surrounding properties;**
- j. conservation and enhancement of heritage buildings, heritage districts and cultural heritage landscapes;
- k. the above elements are not meant to discourage the incorporation of features that can increase energy efficiency (e.g. solar configuration, solar panels) or environmental sustainability (e.g. natural lands, rain barrels).

*Rationale:*

*The proposed amendment adds new elements that contribute to the character of a neighbourhood that should be “paid particular attention to” and should be respected and reinforced. The additions to the list of elements recognize that the orientation of buildings, the presence of trees and the general landscape character are fundamental elements that help to define the character of a neighbourhood. The proposed amendment also*

recognizes that topography and drainage are important considerations when redeveloping a site. \*The wording has been slightly modified further to clarify that new development should respect and reinforce the physical character of adjacent properties as well as others in the immediate surroundings, and to clarify that Policy 9.1.2.2 applies to all types of development applications.

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.1.2.3:

Within the Community Areas there are a number of ~~older~~, established residential neighbourhoods that are characterized **exclusively or predominantly** by **Detached Houses located on generally large lots with frontages exceeding 20 metres** and/or by their historical, architectural or landscape value. **These neighbourhoods are generally identified on Schedule 1B “Areas Subject to Policy 9.1.2.3 – Vaughan’s Established Large Lot Neighbourhoods” [X] (~~Established Large Lot Neighbourhoods~~).** ~~Some of these older established neighbourhoods,~~ **as well as newer including estate lot neighbourhoods,** are also characterized by their substantial rear, front and side yards, and by lot coverages that contribute to expansive amenity areas, which provide opportunities for attractive landscape development and streetscapes. ~~Often, these areas are~~ **These include neighbourhoods** at or near the core of the **Local Centres** of Thornhill, Concord, Kleinburg, Maple and Woodbridge, and may also be part of the respective Heritage Conservation Districts. **For clarity, the policy text prevails over the mapping shown on Schedule 1B. In addition to those areas identified on Schedule 1B, this policy shall also apply to other areas where the subdivision and redevelopment of a large lot or multiple large lots would not respect and reinforce the elements identified in Policy 9.1.2.2.**

In order to maintain the character of ~~these areas~~ **established, large-lot neighbourhoods**, the following policies shall apply to all developments within these areas (e.g., land severances, zoning by-law amendments and minor variances), based on the current zoning, and guide the preparation of any future City-initiated area specific or comprehensive zoning by-laws affecting these areas.

- a. Lot frontage: In the case of lot creation, new lots should be equal to or exceed the frontages of the adjacent nearby and facing adjoining **or facing** lots, **or the average of the frontage of the adjoining lots where they differ;**
- b. Lot area: The area of new lots should be consistent with the size of adjacent and nearby adjoining **or facing** lots;
- c. Lot configuration: New lots should respect the existing lotting fabric in the **immediate vicinity immediately surrounding area;**
- d. Front yards and exterior side yards: Buildings should maintain the established pattern of setbacks for the neighbourhood to retain a consistent streetscape;
- e. Rear yards: Buildings should maintain the established pattern of setbacks for the neighbourhood to minimize visual intrusion on the adjacent residential lots;
- f. **Dwelling types: A new dwelling replacing an existing one shall be of the same type, as defined in Section 9.2.3 of this Plan, except on a lot fronting an Arterial Street, as identified in Schedule 9 (Future Transportation Network), where a Semi-detached House or Townhouse dwelling replacing a detached dwelling may be permitted, subject to Policy 9.1.2.4 and the other urban design policies of this plan;**
- g. Building heights and massing: Should respect the scale of adjacent residential buildings and any city urban design guidelines prepared for these Community Areas;
- h. Lot coverage: In order to maintain the low density character of these areas and ensure opportunities for generous amenity and landscaping areas, lot coverage consistent with development in the area and as provided for in the zoning by-law is required to regulate the area of the building footprint within the building envelope, as defined by the minimum yard requirements of the zoning by-law.

**Rationale:**

The proposed amendment recognizes that in addition to the older, established neighbourhoods found in Thornhill, Concord, Kleinburg, Maple and Woodbridge, there are “newer” estate lot neighbourhoods within Community Areas with similar characteristics to be respected and reinforced. The addition of a new schedule (Schedule 1B: Areas Subject to Policy 9.1.2.3 – Vaughan’s Large Lot Neighbourhoods), consistent with Figure 2 below, will clarify to which areas of the city this policy applies. By having the policy apply to established large-lot neighbourhoods generally, the question of the age of a neighbourhood and whether or not it qualifies as “older” becomes less relevant and more emphasis is placed on the characteristics of these neighbourhoods to be respected and reinforced by new development. The proposed amendments to 9.1.2.3(a) and (b) clarify the area to be considered when lot severances are proposed, recognizing that lot frontages and areas vary across Community Areas; so long as new lots are consistent with the size of adjacent lots or those immediately across the street, that aspect of the neighbourhood’s character should be respected and reinforced. The proposed new policy regarding dwelling types recognizes that Vaughan’s large-lot neighbourhoods are defined by single detached dwellings, and more intense dwelling types might be appropriate only at the edges of the neighbourhood along arterial roads.

\*The word “older” was removed from the third sentence for consistency with the original proposed removal of the word “older” from the first sentence. The word “facing” was removed from subpoint “b” in order to account for situations where lots across the street may be significantly different in size from the new lot under study. This change recognizes that permitting the subdivision of large lots on the basis that lots across the street are narrower disregards the precedent that would be set for other large lots on the same block, which could lead to incremental and significant change to the character of the neighbourhood.



Figure 2: Vaughan’s Established Large-Lot Neighbourhoods

*\*The language was updated in subpoint “c” for clarity of interpretation. The terms are capitalized in subpoint “f” to be consistent with their capitalization elsewhere in the VOP 2010.*

Proposed new Policy 9.1.2.4:

Notwithstanding Policy 9.1.2.3, where a lot in an established Low-Rise Residential neighbourhood fronts an Arterial Street, as identified in Schedule 9 (Future Transportation Network) of this Plan, limited intensification in the form of **Semi-detached Houses** or **Townhouses** may be permitted, subject to the following:

- a. All new dwellings shall front and address a public street **to be consistent with the orientation of existing dwellings in the established neighbourhood;**
- b. Parking **for units fronting on an Arterial Street** shall be located at the rear of units or underground, accessed by a shared private laneway or driveway requiring minimal curb cuts, to minimize the impact of parking and driveways on the streetscape;
- c. Private laneways or driveways shall not be used to provide frontage for residential dwellings;
- d. The general pattern of front, side and rear yard setbacks in the adjacent established neighbourhood shall be respected and maintained. Front yard setbacks shall be a minimum of 4.5 metres to provide an appropriate buffer between the road and the dwellings and to accommodate landscaping. Rear yard setbacks shall be a minimum of 7.5 metres;
- e. The scale and massing of townhouse developments shall respect the scale and massing of adjacent development and any applicable urban design guidelines.
- f. **Developments should protect for future interconnection with adjacent properties to minimize accesses to the Arterial Street. Access arrangements on Arterial Streets shall be to the satisfaction of York Region.**
- g. **Where a parcel does not front an Arterial Street, as identified on Schedule 9 (Future Transportation Network), townhouses shall not be permitted.**

*Rationale:*

*This proposed new policy recognizes that townhouse developments, as well as semi-detached houses, are not common in most of Vaughan’s long established neighbourhoods and if introduced would mark a significant physical change, which would be contrary to Policy 2.2.3.2. The policy also recognizes, however, that unusually deep and/or wide lots at the edges of established communities along arterial roads may present opportunities to accommodate townhouse developments with minimal or no adverse impact on the larger established neighbourhood. The criteria in the proposed policy are intended to ensure that townhouse developments respect the physical character of the established neighbourhood and achieve compatibility.*

*\*The terms are capitalized in the policy language to be consistent with their capitalization elsewhere in the VOP 2010.*

*\*Subpoint “f” was added to ensure that the proposed policy is consistent with the requirements of York Region. Regional Official Plan Policy 7.2.53 states that, “[It is the policy of Council] to restrict vehicle access from developments adjacent to Regional streets to maximize the efficiency of the Regional street system through techniques such as suitable local street access, shared driveways and interconnected properties. Exceptions may be made to this policy in Regional Centres and Corridors, and mainstreets.”*

*\*Policy 9.1.2.4 (g) has been added to clarify that new townhouse development will only be considered in the Low-Rise Residential designation on parcels where there is frontage and access onto an Arterial Street.*

*For clarity, proposed Policy 9.1.2.4 would be inserted after Policy 9.1.2.3 and subsequent policies would be renumbered accordingly.*



Proposed new Policy 9.1.2.5:

Where a new street network and other infrastructure are required to facilitate and service new development ~~on deep formerly rural lots~~ in established Community Areas, the City may require a Block Plan, as per Policies 10.1.1.14 - 10.1.1.15, to address such matters as:

- a. the configuration and design of streets;
- b. traffic management;
- c. extensions and connections to existing pedestrian and cycling networks;
- d. the provision of public and private services and the detailed approach to stormwater management;
- e. the protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage Network;
- f. the precise locations of natural and cultural heritage features of the area;
- g. the precise location of any parks and open spaces;
- h. the proposed implementation of sustainable development policies as contained in subsection 9.1.3 of this Plan; and,
- i. phasing of development.

*Rationale:*

*Policy 10.1.1.14 states that the City may identify areas subject to a Block Plan through the development review process to address complexities in smaller planning units. The proposed new policy clarifies that unusually large lots within Community Areas, or assemblages of such lots, may constitute a smaller planning unit that requires a Block Plan to ensure they develop in a rational and efficient manner that fully conforms to the VOP 2010.*

*\*The phrase “on deep formerly rural lots” was removed because the requirement for a Block Plan may apply in more settings than on deep formerly rural lots. For clarity, proposed Policy 9.1.2.5 would be inserted after the new proposed Policy 9.1.2.4 and subsequent policies would be renumbered accordingly.*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.2.1(c):

The following Building Types are permitted in areas designated as Low-Rise Residential, pursuant to policies in subsection 9.2.3 of this Plan:

- i. Detached House;
- ii. Semi-Detached House, **subject to Policies 9.1.2.3, 9.1.2.4, and 9.2.3.1;**
- iii. Townhouse, **subject to Policies 9.1.2.3, 9.1.2.4, and 9.2.3.2;** and,
- iv. Public and Private Institutional Buildings.

*Rationale:*

*Policy 9.2.2.1 specifically identifies which building types are permitted in Low-Rise Residential Areas. The proposed amendment to the policy qualifies that these building types are subject to additional policies within the VOP 2010 that speak to the design and compatibility of those building types. The proposed amendment is intended to aid the interpretation of this policy and clarify the relationship between the built form and urban design policies of the VOP 2010.*

*\*Further modifications to Policy 9.2.2.1(c) are proposed to support and clarify the interpretation of VOP 2010.*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.1(b):

In **established** Community Areas **where Detached Houses and Semi-Detached Houses exist**, ~~with existing development~~, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of **new** Detached Houses and Semi-Detached Houses will respect and reinforce the scale, massing, setback and orientation of other built

and approved ~~Detached Houses and/or Semi-Detached~~ houses **of the same type** in the immediate area. Variations are permitted for the purposes of minimizing driveways.

*Rationale:*

*The proposed amendment clarifies that the policy is intended to apply to proposed new development in established neighbourhoods and ensure new detached and semi-detached houses are only introduced where they already exist.*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.2(b):

In **established** Community Areas **where Townhouses exist**, with existing development, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of **new** Townhouses will respect and reinforce the scale, massing, setback and orientation of other built and approved **Townhouses development** in the **immediate area surrounding area provided they are and shall be consistent with Policies 9.1.2.2, 9.1.2.3 and 9.1.2.4**. Variations are permitted for the purposes of minimizing driveways and having front entrances and porches located closer to the street than garages. **For clarity, back-to-back and stacked townhouses shall not be permitted in areas designated Low-Rise Residential. Back-to-back townhouses share a rear wall as well as a sidewall(s), resulting in a building with two facades where individual entrances to the units are located with no rear yard. Stacked townhouses are defined in Policy 9.2.3.3.**

*Rationale:*

*The proposed amendment clarifies that the policy is intended to apply to proposed new development in established neighbourhoods. The prohibition against back-to-back townhouses recognizes that their form and orientation are not in keeping with the pattern and character of existing development in areas designated Low-Rise Residential.*

*\*Reference to existing townhouses was removed as there are areas where there are no or few townhouse precedents. Further, this would now be counter to the intent of the proposed amendment and was removed.*

*\*The word "surrounding area" is added in place of "immediate area" to support the interpretation of the geographic extent to which the policy will apply.*

*\*The phrase "and shall be consistent with Policies 9.1.2.2, 9.1.2.3 and 9.1.2.4" is added to clarify that new townhouses should respect and reinforce the character of other built and approved development in the immediate surrounding area; they still need to be consistent with the updated provisions of VOP 2010.*

*\*Stacked townhouses are added to the final sentence to clarify that both stacked and back-to-back townhouses should not be permitted in established Community Areas.*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.2(c):

In ~~areas of new development~~ **developing Community Areas**, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of Townhouses will be determined through the process of developing and approving Secondary Plans, Block Plans, Plans of Subdivision, Zoning By-laws, and/or urban design guidelines.

*Rationale:*

*The proposed amendment clarifies that it applies to new, still developing neighbourhoods and not any area where there is new development.*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.2(d):

Townhouses in designated Low-Rise Residential areas shall generally front onto a public street ~~or public open space~~. ~~In other areas where Townhouses are permitted, they shall be encouraged to front a public street or public open space.~~ Where a townhouse ~~block~~ end unit does not front a public street but flanks one Townhouse blocks not fronting onto a public street are only permitted if the unit(s) flanking a public street, the flanking unit(s) shall provide a front yard and front-door entrance facing the public street.

*Rationale:*

*The proposed amendment recognizes that dwellings fronting a public street or open space is a defining characteristic of Vaughan's Community Areas and ensures this pattern will be maintained with new housing, including townhouses. It also recognizes that flexibility regarding this requirement may be needed in other areas, namely intensification areas, where frontage on private streets, mews or open spaces may be more practical and desirable for achieving density and other urban design objectives.*

*\*The word "block" is changed to "end unit" to ensure consistency with the above policy that encourages Townhouses to front a public street or open space. If an end unit flanks a public street, then the flanking unit(s) should be required to provide a front yard and front-door entrance facing the public street. The reference to townhouses fronting onto public open space in Low-Rise Residential areas has been removed to ensure consistency with proposed new Policy 9.1.2.4, consistent with VOP 2010.*

Proposed new Policy 9.2.3.2(f):

**New townhouses in established Low-Rise Residential areas where townhouses do not currently exist in the immediate vicinity of the site or where the site does not front an Arterial Street, as identified in Schedule 9 (Future Transportation Network), shall not be permitted.**

*Rationale:*

*This new policy further clarifies and reinforces the intent of the proposed amendments to Policies 9.1.2.3 and 9.2.3.2 and new proposed new Policy 9.1.2.4.*

*\*This policy was proposed in the January 2016 version of the study that proceeded to Council on March 22, 2016. It has been replaced by the addition of proposed new Policy 9.1.2.4 (g) which provides that "Where a parcel does not front an Arterial Street, as identified on Schedule 9 (Future Transportation Network), townhouses shall not be permitted."*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.3(a):

The following policies and development criteria apply to Stacked Townhouses:

- a) Stacked Townhouses are attached ~~Low-Rise Residential~~ houseform buildings comprising two to four separate residential units stacked on top of each other. Stacked Townhouse units are typically massed to resemble a street Townhouse and each unit is provided direct access to ground level.

*Rationale:*

*\*The removal of the phrase "Low-Rise Residential" to describe a stacked townhouse form is proposed in order to clarify that stacked townhouses are not a permitted built form as per Policy 9.2.2.1(c).*

## 5.2/ Proposed Urban Design Guidelines

This section articulates and illustrates draft urban design guidelines intended to complement and support the policies of Section 9.1.2.2 and 9.1.2.3, and proposed policy 9.1.2.4, respecting “compatible development” in “neighbourhoods in Community Areas with Low-Rise Residential Designations”. The general guidelines below would apply to all infill development in Vaughan’s Established Community Areas (see Figure 4), and the draft guidelines in Section 5.3 would apply specifically to townhouse developments on arterial streets in these areas. The policy numbers following each guideline refer to the VOP 2010 policies it is intended to clarify and support.

**Both the general infill and townhouse guidelines have been formatted with introductory text and additional illustrations in a stand-alone draft guideline document.**



Figure 4: Vaughan’s Established Community Areas

## Low-Rise Residential Infill Guidelines

**The form and character of infill development should be in keeping with the general form and character of existing development and streetscapes in the surrounding neighbourhood:**

1. Infill development should reflect the existing neighbourhood pattern of development in terms of front, rear and side yard setbacks, building height and the location and treatment of primary entrances, to both the dwelling and the street. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3)
2. Development should reflect the desirable aspects of the established streetscape character. Where the streetscape needs improvement, infill development should contribute through high-quality building design, landscape architecture, and tree planting. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
3. Development should protect and enhance Vaughan's interconnected system of natural features and the functions they perform including its Core Features, Enhancement Areas, Built-Up Valley Lands and other components identified on Schedule 2 of the VOP 2010. (Policy 3.2.3.1)
4. The prevailing pattern of lot widths, lot depths and lot area in a neighbourhood should be maintained. The subdivision of a lot to create two or more lots should only occur if the width of the resulting lots is the same as or greater than the narrowest lot fronting the same street on the same block or the narrowest lot fronting the same street on the block across the street. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3)
5. An existing dwelling should only be replaced by a dwelling, or dwellings, of the same type (Detached or Semi-detached House or Townhouse). (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3)
6. Consistent with the City's zoning standard for Vaughan's neighbourhoods of Detached Houses, the height of new dwelling should not exceed 9.5 metres. To ensure an appropriate transition to houses on adjacent lots, the roof line of houses with a height greater than 7.5 metres should slope or step down to a maximum height of 7.5 metres at the eaves at the side of the house. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)
7. Front entrances should be prominent and well detailed and incorporate a porch or stoop that is at least twice as wide as the front door. (Policy 9.2.3.1)
8. Development on corner lots should front both public streets with articulated facades and windows that provide views of the street and/or open space from living areas. Blank walls visible from streets, parks or other public spaces are prohibited. (Policy 9.1.1.3)
9. Second-storey additions to a house should have architectural details that are uniformly expressed over the entire facade. (Policy 6.2.2.9 / 9.2.3.1)
10. Building finishes should be durable and consistent with materials used for dwellings in the immediately surrounding area. The use of vinyl siding is discouraged. (Policy 9.2.3.1)

**Infill development should have relationships to the public realm and adjacent properties that are consistent with the relationships of existing development in the immediate surroundings:**

11. Dwellings should be oriented to the street with their front entrance visible from a public street. (Policy 9.1.1.3)
12. Front yard setbacks should be consistent with the front yard setbacks of adjacent houses and houses immediately across the street. Where there is a uniform setback along a street, it should be matched by the new dwelling(s). Where there is variation in setbacks, the front yard setback of the new dwelling(s)

should be the average of that of adjacent development. In no neighbourhood should the front yard setback be less than 4.5 metres. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)

13. Side yard and rear yard setbacks should be consistent with the prevailing pattern of setbacks in the immediately surrounding residential area. A minimum rear yard setback of 7.5 metres should be maintained. The rear portion of the house should not create adverse shadow or overlook conditions on the adjacent properties. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)
14. New development should not include second storey decks or balconies that would create adverse overlook impacts on adjacent properties. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)
15. New development should incorporate fencing, screening and/or landscaping to maintain the privacy of adjacent dwellings and their rear yards. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)
16. Where there are opportunities, infill development should expand the network of sidewalks, pathways, and trails in the larger neighbourhood. New pathways should be barrier free. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3 / 9.1.1.4)

**Garages should be treated as accessories to dwellings, located and designed to be complementary to the main building and not a dominant feature of the property:**

17. On lots with a minimum width of 15 metres, the garage should be recessed from the front wall of the house, and the width of the garage should not be greater than the width of the house. On such lots, consideration should be given to locating the garage behind the house, accessed from a driveway at the side or on a flanking street. On a lot with a minimum width of 30 metres, the garage may face the side yard, provided the side of the garage is designed to blend with the façade of the house and has at least one window. Projecting garages should be avoided. (Policy 9.2.3.1)
18. Attached and detached garages should have materials and design elements consistent with the architecture of the dwelling and should not be a dominant feature. (Policy 9.2.3.1)
19. On corner lots, access to the garage should be from the flanking street. (Policy 9.1.1.3 / 9.2.3.1)
20. No portion of a garage should be located below the lowest grade of the lot at the street. Reverse slope driveways are not permitted as per Zoning By-law 1-88 and the City of Vaughan's Engineering Design Criteria and Standard Documents (Section 4.1.4 (g)) (Policy 9.2.3.1)
21. Double garages should have two overhead doors. (Policy 9.2.3.1)

**Front yards should be designed to contribute to an attractive, green streetscape in which trees are a dominant feature:**

22. The width of driveways at the street should be minimized and no greater than 6 metres. The maximum width of a driveway should not exceed the width of the garage. (Policy 9.1.1.3 / 9.2.3.1)
23. Circular driveways should only be considered on lots with a minimum width of 30 metres. (Policy 9.1.1.3 / 9.2.3.1)
24. Existing healthy, mature trees should be retained and protected. To ensure their survival, trenching for services and foundations should avoid the critical root zone of existing trees, generally defined by the tree's drip line. If the removal of any mature tree(s) is justified and accepted by the City, they should be replaced with new ones as per the provisions of the City's Replacement Tree Requirement. (Policy 9.1.1.2)

25. Other than the permitted driveway width, paving in the front yard should be limited to walkways and small areas leading to the front entrance. Walkways should be barrier-free. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
26. On lots with a width between 14 and 20 metres, at least 50% of the front yard should comprise soft landscaping, and a pathway should connect the front entrance to the sidewalk, where one exists. On lots with a width between 20 and 30 metres, this requirement is 67%, and on 30-metre or wider lots, the requirement is 80%. (Policy 9.1.1.3 / 9.2.3.1)
27. Fencing and/or perimeter landscaping, such as hedges, that obscures views of the front of a house from the street is discouraged. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
28. Managing rainwater and snowmelt on-site with Low Impact Development Standards that encourage infiltration, evapo-transpiration and water re-use is required. Such measures as: planting trees, shrubs and other landscaping; creating bio-retention areas such as swales; and incorporating opportunities to harvest rainwater from rooftops and other hard surfaces for landscape irrigation are encouraged. Where such measures are installed, they should be appropriately designed and located to filter, store and/or convey the expected stormwater flows from surrounding paved areas. (Policy 3.6.6 / 9.1.3.1)
29. Impermeable surfaces in landscaped open spaces should be minimized. Where hard surfaces are planned, the use of permeable materials are encouraged to manage stormwater run-off and reduce heat build-up.

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### Summary of General Infill Guidelines

- ① The front yard setback should be consistent with those of adjacent houses (or an average of the two).
- ② A barrier-free walkway should lead to a clear front entrance visible from the street, with a porch or a stoop.
- ③ Retain and protect healthy, mature trees.
- ④ Minimize the width of the driveway at the street, and its maximum width should not exceed that of the garage.
- ⑤ Integrate the garage and recess it from the front wall of the house.
- ⑥ Provide side yard setbacks consistent with the pattern of side yard setbacks in the surrounding residential area.
- ⑦ The rear yard setback should be consistent with the prevailing pattern of setbacks in the immediately surrounding area and in no case should be less than 7.5 metres.
- ⑧ Incorporate fencing, screening and/or landscaping to maintain the privacy of adjacent dwellings.



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## Townhouse Infill Guidelines

The following guidelines would apply to infill townhouse developments on arterial streets in designated Low-Rise Residential areas. Although many of the guidelines may be applied to Intensification Areas, a separate set of guidelines should be developed for those areas that support the applicable policy objectives, e.g., increased density.

As a general guideline that informs many of those below, townhouse developments on arterial streets may have a greater density and mass than existing development in the surrounding established residential area but should have a relationship to the street and adjacent properties that is consistent with the prevailing pattern of building orientation, setbacks and landscaping.

### Orientation, Setbacks and Character

1. Townhouses should be oriented to and have their front entrance on a public street; alternatively, they may front a public park. Private driveways or laneways should not be used to provide frontage for townhouses either flanking the street or located at the rear of dwellings fronting the street. Such a condition would create a front-to-side or front-to-back condition that would adversely affect the rear privacy of adjacent dwellings or dwellings on the same lot that front the street. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
2. Front yard paths should provide direct access to each unit from the sidewalk. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
3. Front entrances should be prominent and well detailed and incorporate a porch or stoop. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
4. The front entrance should be level with the first floor and raised 0.6-1.2 metres above the level of the front path. Stairs should not dominate the entrance of a Townhouse (Policy 9.2.3.2)
5. Front yard setbacks for units fronting the arterial street should be a minimum of 4.5 metres and should be consistent across the site. A minimum of 50% of the front yard should consist of soft landscaping. Deciduous trees are encouraged. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
6. Interior side yard setbacks should be a minimum of 1.5 metres, and end units flanking a public street should be setback a minimum of 4.5 metres from the street. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
7. The end unit in a townhouse block flanking a street should address both streets with a side elevation that includes windows and details consistent with the front elevation. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
8. The height and massing of townhouse blocks should be compatible with the character of the adjacent or surrounding neighbourhood. Blocks of townhouses shall consist of no more than 6 units consistent with VOP 2010 Policy 9.2.3.2 (a). (Policy 9.2.3.2)
9. The separation between townhouse blocks on the same site should be a minimum of 3 metres to allow for landscaping. Where the separation will provide pedestrian circulation, the separation between townhouse blocks on the same site should generally be 6 metres. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
10. The rear of the townhouse unit should be setback by 12 metres from the rear laneway. A minimum of 3 metres landscaped buffer from the rear property line to the rear laneways should be provided. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
11. Each Townhouse should have a private backyard, fenced or screened with landscaping for privacy. (Policy 9.2.3.2)

12. Where common outdoor amenity area is proposed in addition to private amenity space, the common space should be in a prominent location, visible and easily accessed from all units, and with plenty of exposure to sunlight. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
13. A minimum of 50% of the area at the rear of townhouses should consist of soft landscaping, including high-branching deciduous trees. (Policy 9.1.3.1 / 9.2.3.2)
14. The architecture and materials of new townhouses should respect and complement the character of the surrounding residential area. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
15. Townhouses should have a minimum width of 6 metres and a minimum depth of 12 metres. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
16. Existing healthy, mature trees should be retained and protected. To ensure their survival, trenching for services and foundations should avoid the critical root zone of existing trees, generally defined by the tree's drip line. If the removal of any mature tree(s) is justified and accepted by the City, they should be replaced with new ones as per the provisions of the City's Replacement Tree Requirement. (Policy 9.1.1.2)
17. Landscaping plans for front yards should incorporate the public boulevard and include street trees. (Policy 9.2.3.2)
18. Rear laneways should be lighted for safety and security, but no spillover of such lighting on adjacent properties should occur. (Policy 9.1.1.2)

#### **Access, Parking and Service Areas**

19. Parking and servicing areas for townhouses fronting an arterial street should be located at the rear of the units or underground, accessed from a laneway or driveway. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
20. On corner sites, access to parking and servicing areas should be from the flanking street. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
21. Laneways and driveways should be buffered from side property lines by a landscape strip with a minimum width of 1.5 metres and buffered from rear property lines by landscaped areas with a minimum width of 3 metres to soften and improve the transition between adjacent properties. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
22. The location of a rear laneway should consider opportunities to link it to potential future laneways on adjoining properties and opportunities for shared access agreements and public easements. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
23. Parking access, servicing areas and utility boxes should be consolidated for efficiency and to minimize adverse impacts on neighbouring properties and the public realm. Waste storage areas and utility boxes should be screened from public views. Meters should be located below or under the front steps where feasible. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
24. Accesses to underground parking should be integrated into the design of the building, should not be visible from a public street, and should be sited to prevent negative impacts to neighbouring properties. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
25. Where a site is large enough to accommodate a local public street or street network to provide access and frontage for Townhouse in the interior of the site, the street or street network should link to existing streets in the surrounding neighbourhood where possible, and opportunities to extend the street or street network

across adjoining sites fronting the arterial in the future should be considered. Dead end streets, cul-de-sacs, streets that appear to be private and gated access points should be avoided. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3 / 9.1.1.4)

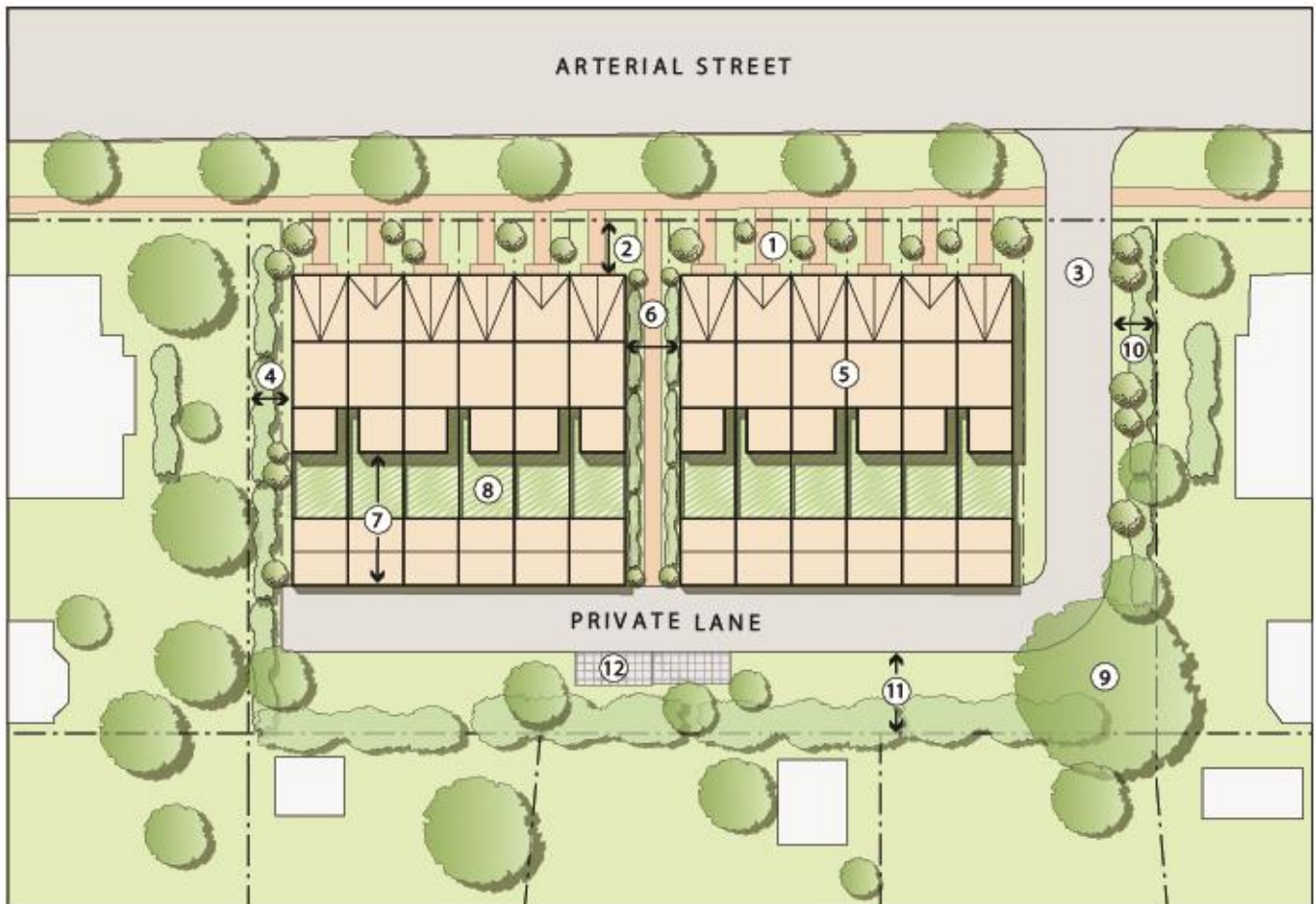
26. Where Townhouses front a new local street and it is not practical to accommodate parking at the rear of the units, single front garages may be considered provided the townhouses have a minimum width of 6 metres and the garage is flush with or recessed from the front wall of the townhouse so that it does not dominate the façade. In addition, the garage should be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the street to accommodate a parked car in the driveway. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
27. Visitor parking should be located close to the site entrance(s). Where multiple townhouse blocks are proposed on a site, the visitor parking may be located in a central location at the rear of the units, provided convenient pathways between blocks of townhouses allow visitors to access the front entrances. Where parking areas are located adjacent to a Townhouse, they should be appropriately screened from view through the use of, for example, shrubs or decorative fencing. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
28. Pedestrian circulation areas should be barrier free and landscaped, have pedestrian-scale lighting, and have access to sunlight. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
29. Where Townhouses front an Arterial Road, access onto the Arterial Road will be provided by a single point. Access to the townhouse units will be provided by a shared driveway or alternative access arrangements should be investigated, such as suitable local street access and through interconnected properties. (Policy 9.1.2.4)

#### **Grading**

30. Generally, there should be minimal changes to the existing grades on the site, and the existing natural grades at the property lines should be maintained. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
31. Artificially raised or lowered grades, or low-lying areas where water collects outside of swales or rain-gardens are prohibited. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
32. The use of retaining walls along street frontages, parks and other open spaces areas should be avoided. Where a retaining wall cannot be avoided and the grade change is greater than one metre, the wall should be set back from the property line and terraced to provide an appropriate transition. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
33. If there is a significant grade difference across a site, townhouse blocks should be stepped to maintain an appropriate relationship to grade. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
34. Drainage should have no adverse impacts on adjacent properties or the public realm. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
35. Pedestrian routes across grade changes should be universally accessible. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
36. Managing rainwater and snowmelt on-site with Low Impact Development Standards that encourage infiltration, evapo-transpiration and water re-use is required. Such measures as: planting trees, shrubs and other landscaping; creating bio-retention areas such as swales; and incorporating opportunities to harvest rainwater from rooftops and other hard surfaces for landscape irrigation are encouraged. Where such measures are installed, they should be appropriately designed and located to filter, store and/or convey the expected stormwater flows from surrounding paved areas. (Policy 3.6.6 / 9.1.3.1)

37. Impermeable surfaces in landscaped open spaces should be minimized. Where hard surfaces are planned, the use of permeable materials are encouraged to manage stormwater run-off and reduce heat build-up. (Policy 3.6.6 / 9.1.3.1)
38. Townhouse access will be designed in accordance with the City of Vaughan's Waste Collection Design Standard Policy. (Policy 8.6.1.1)

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### Summary of Townhouse Infill Guidelines

- ① Orient townhouses to have their front entrance on a public street.
- ② Provide front yard setbacks consistent across the site with a minimum of 4.5 metres.
- ③ Provide parking and servicing areas at the rear or underground, accessed from a laneway or driveway.
- ④ Provide an interior side yard setbacks of 1.5 metres minimum.
- ⑤ Build townhouses with a minimum width of 6 metres and a minimum depth of 12 metres. Blocks of townhouses shall consist of no more than 6 units.
- ⑥ Separate townhouse blocks by a minimum of 3 metres to allow for landscaping, a minimum 6 metres where the separation is needed for pedestrian circulation.
- ⑦ Provide a minimum setback of 12 metres from the rear of the townhouse to a rear laneway.
- ⑧ Give each townhouse a private backyard that is fenced or screened with landscaping for privacy.
- ⑨ Retain and protect existing healthy, mature trees.
- ⑩ Create a landscape strip with a minimum width of 1.5 metres to buffer laneways and driveways from side property lines.
- ⑪ Create a landscape strip with a minimum width of 3 metres to buffer laneways and driveways from rear property lines.
- ⑫ Place visitor parking in a central location at the rear of units with pathway(s) to allow visitors access to the front entrances.

### 5.3/ Next Steps

This report provides recommended options the City can consider to address issues that have recently emerged with development proposals in established low-rise residential neighbourhoods. The recommendations have been informed by an analysis of Vaughan's low-rise neighbourhoods, a review of recent development proposals, and consultation with key stakeholders and the broader community. The options include amending the VOP 2010, adopting urban design guidelines or doing both. As per the *Planning Act*, an additional statutory public meeting will be required prior to Council making a decision to amend the VOP 2010, should Council choose that option. Being a non-statutory document, the urban design guidelines may be approved and used without further public consultation.

Should Council decide to adopt policy amendments and/or urban design guidelines that include the maps contained in this report, a detailed GIS-based technical review of the maps should be completed, and where necessary site visits should be conducted, to ensure the mapping of large-lot neighbourhoods and established Community Areas is reasonably precise and accurate. The City may also wish to consider mapping the "arterial areas" described in this report, to clarify where the proposed townhouse guidelines for low-rise residential areas will primarily apply.

The characteristics of Vaughan's established low-rise neighbourhoods are highly valued by its residents. Clarifying the types of change that are appropriate in these neighbourhoods, through policy, guidelines and mapping, will help ensure they remain one of the city's greatest assets and continue to support a high quality of life for existing and future residents.

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