

2.0 Policy Context

The Yonge Street Area Study is subject to a number of policy documents that are described below.

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) came into effect on March 1, 2005 and establishes the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land in Ontario. Key directions include wisely managing change to promote efficient development and land use patterns. Managing land use is based on accommodating an appropriate range and mix of uses, intensification and redevelopment of land, efficient use of infrastructure and services that protects the diversity of natural connections, and providing housing forms that promote densities which use land, resources and infrastructure efficiently.

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

2.2 Places to Grow Provincial Growth Plan

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

Integral to the Growth Plan is an emphasis on intensification and reurbanization of existing built-up areas with a focus on urban growth centres, intensification corridors, major transit station sites, brownfields, and greyfields. These areas are envisioned to attract a significant portion of the population and employment growth, provide a diverse range of uses and high quality public open spaces in support of vibrant neigh-

bourhoods that support transit, walking and cycling for daily activities, achieve higher densities than surrounding areas, and provide for appropriate transitions to adjacent neighbourhoods.

The Plan requires municipalities within the GGH to amend their policies to accommodate, by 2015, a minimum of 40% of all residential development on an annual basis within built up boundaries.

Yonge Street is identified in the Growth Plan as an improved higher order transit corridor in the southern portion of the study area. In the northern portion of the study area, Yonge Street is identified as a corridor that is proposed for higher order transit to 2031 which extends northward past the designated urban growth centre at Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway.

Intensification corridors are anticipated to be areas for increased residential and employment density that are transit-supportive for existing and planned transit services. They are to be places for appropriate mixes of residential, office, institutional and commercial development and are to be planned to accommodate local services including recreational, cultural, and entertainment uses.

Major transit station areas are to be planned to accommodate a range of transportation modes including walking, cycling, and commuting. They are defined as areas within an approximate 500 metre radius of any existing or planned higher order transit station.

2.3 Region of York Official Plan

The Region of York Official Plan was first approved in 1994. The most current office consolidation reflects the status of the Plan as of June 1, 2008. The Regional Official Plan provides a framework for more coordinated and detailed planning that affects the use of land across the Region's nine municipalities, including Vaughan. The Region is currently engaged in a review of its growth management plan which will be followed by updates to its Official Plan.

The Regional Official Plan proposes a system of centres and corridors for the urban area that are envisioned to be places that support compact,

mixed-use and transit-supportive development. A minimum of 30% of the regional forecasted population increase is to be directed to existing built-up portions of urban areas, towns and villages. *(Note: The May 2008 Preferred Growth Scenario prepared as part of the Growth Management Plan as an update to the Official Plan indicates this is now 40%).* Infill and intensification is to occur in Regional Centres and Regional Corridors; the most intensive efforts are to be directed at Regional Centres and Key Development Areas within Regional Corridors. Smaller scale infill and intensification is to be directed at Local Centres and Local Corridors.

The Regional Official Plan identifies Regional Corridors as having great potential for intensive, mixed-use development that are supported by rapid transit. Yonge Street is identified as a Regional Corridor on Map 5 (see figure 3) and a Regional Rapid Transit Corridor on Map 10. Highway 7, a former provincial highway, is identified as another important Regional Corridor.

Regional Corridors are the key connectors between Regional Centres and provide for the movement of goods and people. It is recognized that Regional Corridors are not uniform across their entire length and that there are different conditions that establish the character of the corridor. The Region is to work with municipalities in identifying different conditions along Regional Corridors and identify Key Development Areas which exhibit one or more of the following:

- Opportunity for compact and mixed-use development;
- Assigned early priority for rapid transit services and infrastructure;
- Abutting or adjacent to rapid transit stations; and
- Intersecting with other major transportation routes or facilities, including passenger rail and other surface transit services.

Key Development Areas are to be planned to support an overall, long-term density target of 2.5 Floor Space Index (FSI) and local municipalities are to consider the following when reviewing Regional Corridors:

- a) Identify the role and function of the secondary plan area;
- b) Promote public transit ridership through high quality urban de-

- sign, human scale, land use mix and compact development;
- c) Integrate new forms of development and existing development to maintain and enhance historical main streets;
- d) Recognize and protect cultural heritage resources;
- e) Orient buildings to the street to create a consistent setback and built form adjacent to the street right-of-way;
- f) Building design should set a high standard of urban design;
- g) Buildings and sites should be designed to provide convenient access for public transit users, pedestrians, cyclists and persons with disabilities;
- h) Achieve a mix of commercial, housing, employment and institutional uses in the Regional Corridor;
- i) Development should be consistent with Regional Streetscape Policies;
- j) Identify Key Development Areas consistent with policy 5.5.4 of the Official Plan;
- k) Identify existing areas that may not re-develop in the near future but have re-development potential in the longer term;
- l) Recognize that infill and intensification may occur incrementally over time as land uses evolve and mature, consistent with Policy 5.3.5 of the Official Plan;
- m) Provide for public gathering spaces, streetscaping and landscaping to create a pedestrian-friendly environment, integrated with the local and Regional Greenlands Systems including parks, bicycle and pedestrian systems and natural features;
- n) Appropriately integrate with and transition to surrounding land uses and built form through scale, land use and design; and
- o) Ensure consistency with other policies of the Official Plan.

Additionally, other key policies include:

- 5.5.17 - Residential designations should favour higher density, compact residential forms over those that are exclusively ground-related, like single and semi-detached dwelling types.
- 5.5.18 – That all new development shall either front or flank the Regional Corridor roadway or other routes for public transit services. proposed reverse lots (ie: lots that back onto the Yonge corridor) will not be permitted.

2.4 Thornhill Vaughan Community Plan (OPA #210)

The Thornhill Vaughan Community Plan (Official Plan Amendment #210), provides the detailed land use permissions for the area bounded by Keele Street to Yonge Street and from Steeles Avenue to Highway 407. It was originally approved in 1987 and was modified and consolidated in 1997.

Land use designations for the study area are identified in figures 4 and 5, OPA 210, Schedule A. In the south study area, the majority of lands adjacent to Steeles Avenue and Yonge Street, north to the CN Rail line are designated as General Commercial. Lands located north of the rail line on Yonge Street, are designated Medium Density Residential and Mixed Residential and Commercial.

In the north study area, the majority of lands are designated as General Commercial to Bunker Road and then transition to Low Density Residential up to Longbridge Road. There are also two school sites, one located at Uplands Avenue and another at Spring Gate Boulevard.

Residential categories have been defined so that there is no overlap in the uses permitted or the density. The transition between high and low density dwelling types is to be addressed through the use of buffers (S2.2.2.4b) and sites located adjacent the CN Rail line are subject to land use controls to address noise and vibration (S2.2.2.4o).

Low Density Residential

Low Density Residential uses are intended for single family detached units with a net density not to exceed 22 units per hectare. These uses are identified along Yonge Street, north of Bunker Road and in the interior of the study area. This pattern can be seen in the subdivision located north of Bunker Road.

Medium Density Residential

Medium Density Residential uses are identified along Yonge Street at Spring Gate Boulevard and just north of the rail line. Additionally, nodes are also located north of Clark Avenue and along Steeles Avenue, west of Hilda Avenue. Permitted uses include on-street townhouses, en-block townhouses, quadruplexes, maisonettes, stacked townhouses, and garden court apartments with a net density of 25 to 44 units per hectare. Permitted uses on the north side of Steeles Avenue also include Office Commercial (S2.2.2.4n)

High Density Residential

High Density Residential uses are identified along Yonge Street, adjacent to the rail line and permit apartment buildings with a net density of 124 units per hectare. Local Convenience Commercial uses are permitted without amendment.

General Commercial

General Commercial uses are primarily located along the Steeles Avenue frontage and along Yonge Street to the CN Rail line. Permitted uses include existing commercial uses, retail stores for the buying, leasing and exchanging of goods and services, restaurants, banks and business and professional offices. No residential uses are permitted in commercial areas other than as accessory uses.

Places to Grow Provincial Growth Plan - Map 5

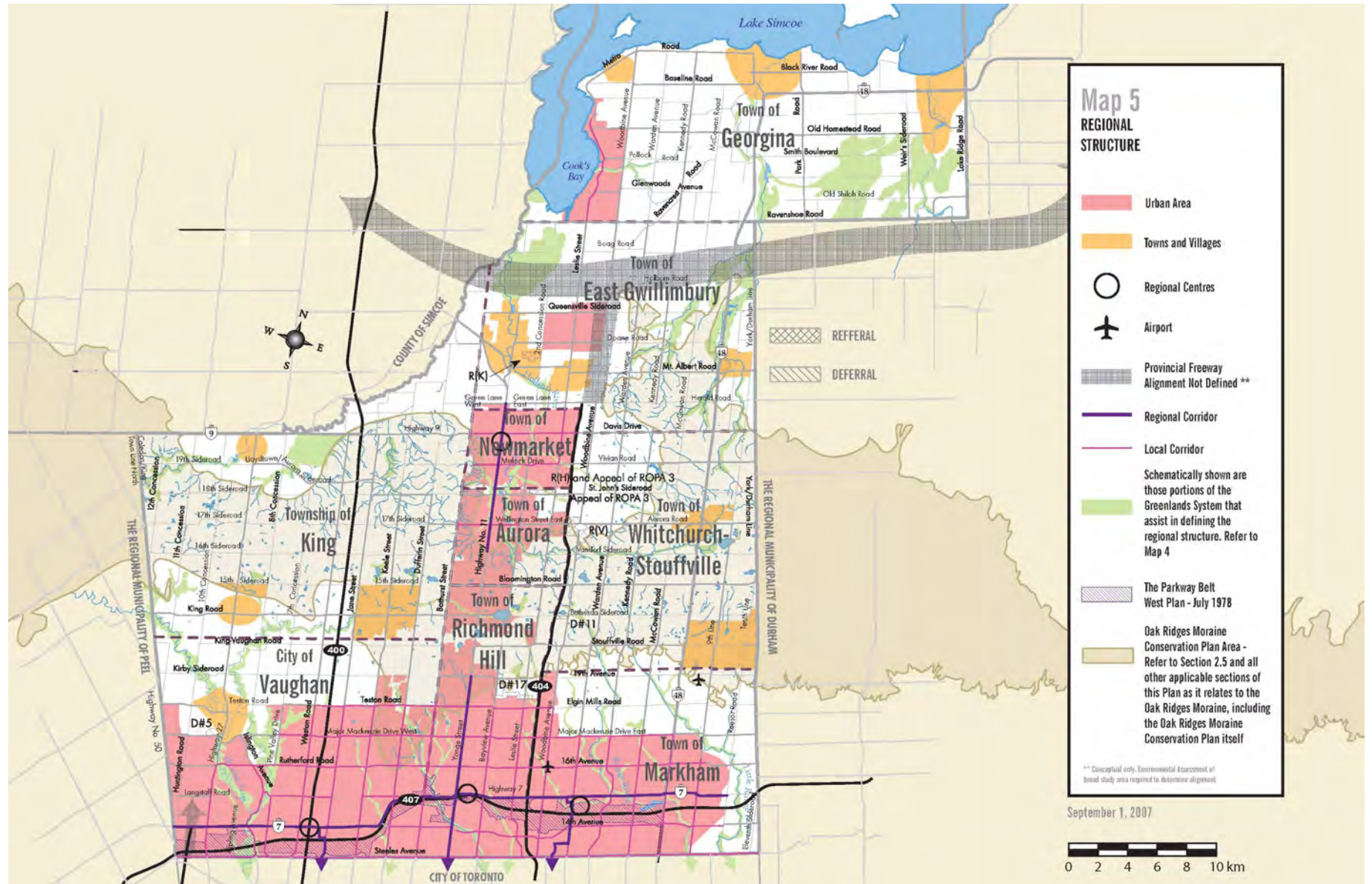


Fig. 3

OPA #210 Land Use Thornhill - Vaughan Community Plan
 South Study Area

Land Use Thornhill-Vaughan Community Plan
 (OPA #210)

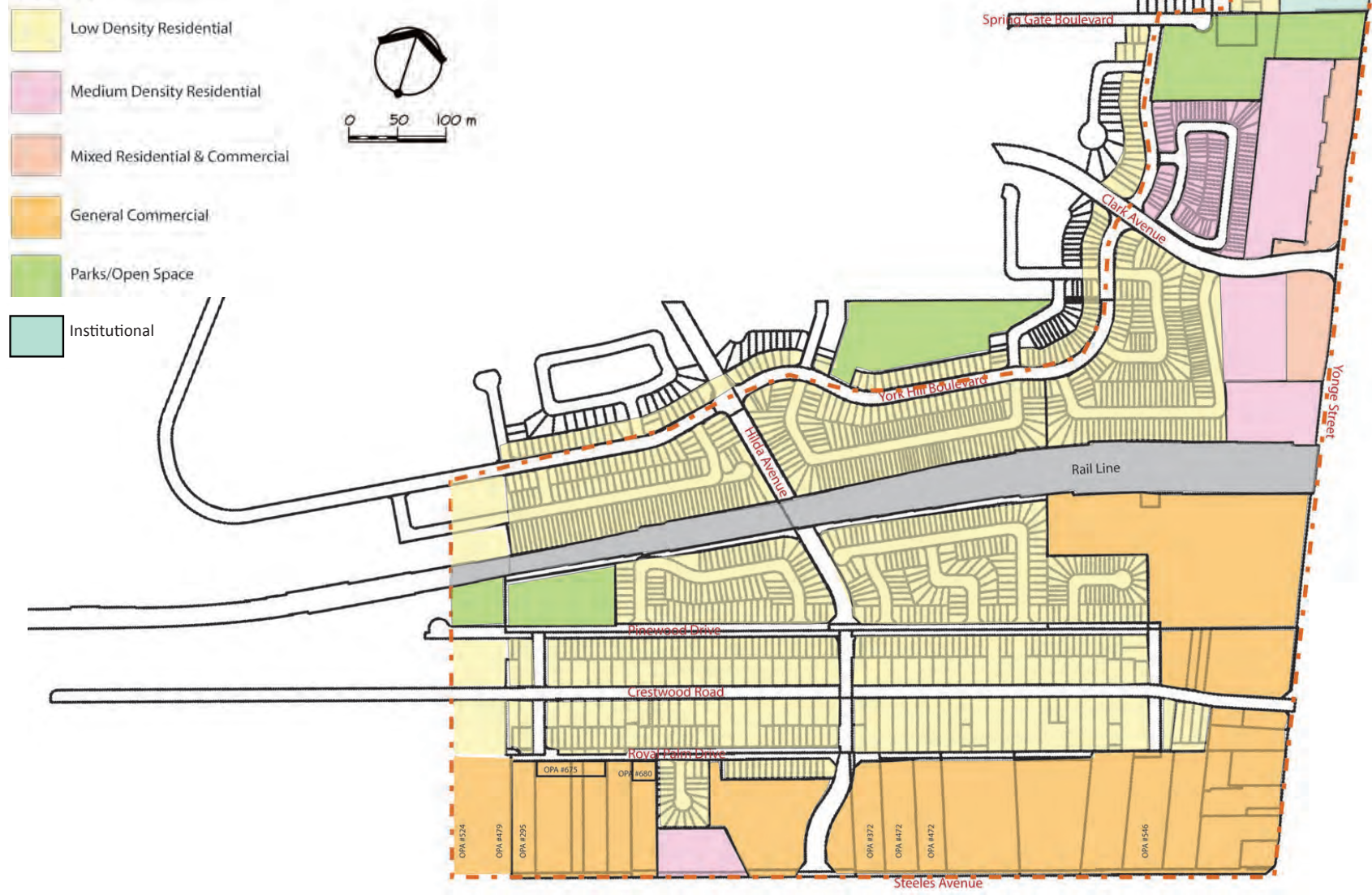


Fig. 4

OPA #210 Land Use Thornhill - Vaughan Community Plan

North Study Area

Land Use Thornhill-Vaughan Community Plan
(OPA #210)

-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium Density Residential
-  Mixed Residential & Commercial
-  General Commercial
-  Parks/Open Space
-  Institutional

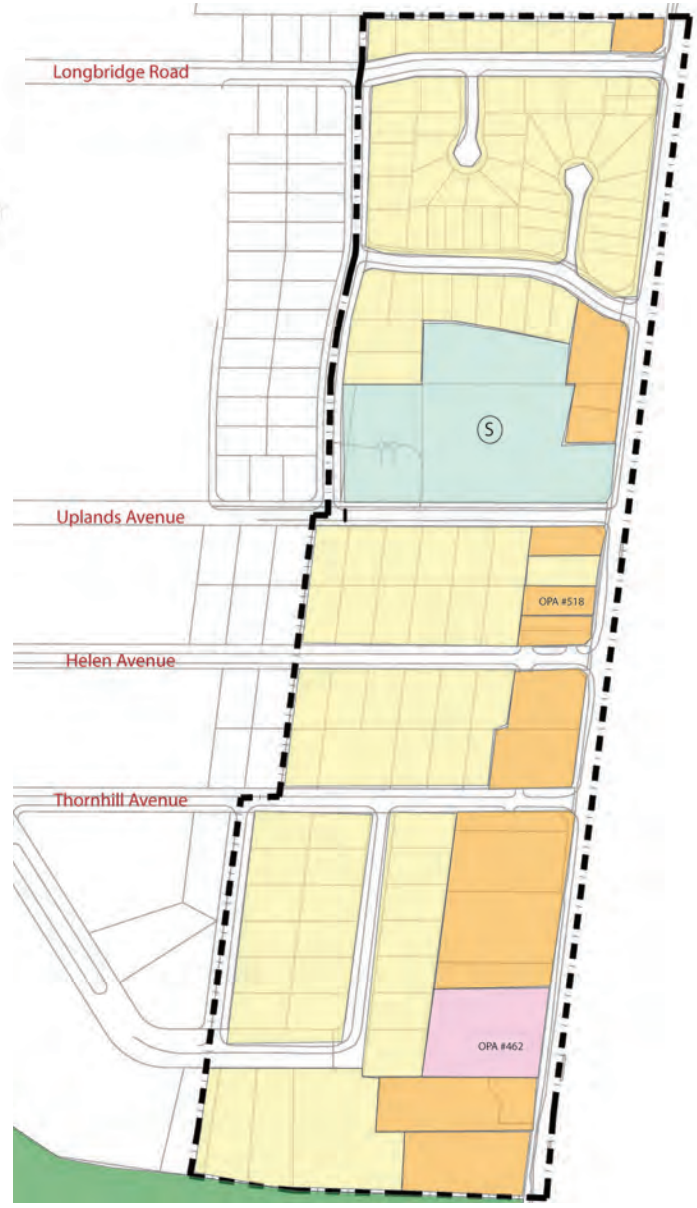
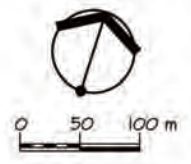


Fig. 5

Mixed Commercial/Residential Area

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

A number of site specific amendments apply to the north and south study area and are summarized in Table 1.

2.5 OPA #669 Thornhill/Yonge Street Study, 2006

In the fall of 2002, the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan jointly initiated the Thornhill/Yonge Street Study. With a planning horizon of 10-20 years, the aim of the study was to establish a coherent urban design framework to guide the physical renewal and evolution of the Yonge Street Corridor within the historic community of Thornhill, from a post-war highway-oriented commercial corridor to a more mixed use, pedestrian supportive main street.

The boundaries of the study area fall within the “Yonge Central” limits between the Elgin/Arnold intersection (including the Thornhill Public School site and York Farmer’s Market) and the Don Valley crossing of Yonge Street north of Centre Street and include properties with direct frontage on to Yonge Street. The Plan was approved by Council in 2006 with one site deferred for further discussion.

OPA 669 (see figure 6), which resulted from the Study, aims to guide the renewal of the lands and provide for a vibrant mixed use area, with at-grade commercial along Yonge Street with residential above. Development is to be street related to create a pedestrian-oriented main street character, and heritage assets are to be protected. Residential intensification is to encourage and support a rapid transit corridor.

Two new land use designations are identified: “Mid-Rise Mixed-Use” and Heritage Mains street”. The existing Low Density Residential, Institutional and Public Open Space/Plaza designations are subject to revised sec-

tions in OPA #210 and to site plan control. Other initiatives associated with the project implementation include a joint municipal Architectural and Development Peer Review Committee, a Streetscape and Transitway Project Management Team, and development of BIA.

The study established detailed guidelines for built form and streetscape treatment within the Study Area. It also proposed that a similar approach be applied elsewhere north and south on Yonge Street to complement anticipated public transit initiatives there.

Fig. 6 OPA #669 Land Use Thornhill - Vaughan Community Plan - Yonge Central Area

Land Use Plan OPA 669
Schedule A1

- Heritage Mainstreet, 1-3 storeys
- Low Density Residential
- Mid-Rise Mixed Use, 3-5 storeys
- Institutional
- Open Space/Plaza



Table 1 - Site Specific Amendments

OPA	Address	OP designation	Zoning	Current land use	Summary of proposed development
#295	434 Steeles	General Commercial	C2 9(434) and M1 at the rear	Car dealership	Existing car dealership
#372	228 Steeles	General Commercial	C2 9(754)	Car dealership	Existing dealership parking in the buffer. No commercial access to Royal Palm Drive, generous rear setback, sensitive siting of servicing areas, substantial landscape strip.
#472	212 Steeles	General Commercial	C2 9(932)	Car dealership	Existing dealership parking in the buffer. Generous rear setback as a buffer to adjacent residential, sensitive siting of servicing areas, substantial landscape strip along future Royal Palm Drive right-of-way.
#479	480 Steeles	Gen Commercial (exception to allow outdoor storage of cars)	C2 9(805)	Car dealership	Existing car dealership with outdoor storage of cars at the rear adjacent to Townsgate. This area was previously intended as a buffer strip.
#524	468 & 470 Steeles	Gen Commercial (exception to allow outdoor storage of cars)	C2 9(805)	Car dealership	Existing car dealership with outdoor storage of cars at the rear adjacent to Townsgate (this area was previously intended as a buffer strip)
#546	74 & 86 Steeles	General Commercial	C2 9(34)	Commercial plaza	Existing car dealership
#675	390 Steeles	LDR applies to the rear portion of the site	R4 9(1299)	Surplus parking area for commercial plaza	Approved for 6 single detached lots fronting onto Royal Palm Drive
#680	350 Steeles	LDR applies to the rear portion of the site	R4 9(106A)	Surplus parking area for the funeral home	Site approved for 4 single detached lots fronting onto Royal Palm Drive
#518	8150 Yonge Street	General Commercial	C2 9(508)	Commercial plaza	Existing plaza
#462	8038 Yonge Street	Medium Density Residential	RM2 9(627)	Townhouse development	Existing townhouse development

2.6 Yonge-Steeles Corridor Study - Town of Markham

The Town of Markham has recently completed a study of the Yonge and Steeles area, bounded by Yonge Street on the west, Dudley Avenue on the east, Steeles Avenue to the south and the Thornhill Heritage District to the north (see figure1). Existing uses include low rise commercial fronting on Yonge Street, pockets of medium and high rise apartment buildings, some industrial uses adjacent the CN Rail line and low density residential in the interior of the area. Similar to the Vaughan side of Yonge Street, this area includes numerous large format retail sites and car dealerships (see *Existing Land Use* maps, figures 12 and 13).

Overall principles identified during the study process include:

- Creating mixed-use infill development and varied building form
- Transition to stable residential neighbourhoods to the east and compatibility with adjacent heritage district to the north
- Transit-supportive built form with highest densities adjacent to rapid transit stations along Yonge Street
- Balance between pedestrian and vehicular priorities and maintaining building continuity by removing site access from Yonge Street, Steeles Avenue and Dudley Avenue
- Creating a better parks and open space network
- Improving pedestrian amenity
- Designing complete streets
- Providing grade-related uses
- Enhancing community services through redevelopment
- Strengthening the traditional streets and blocks pattern; and
- Improving the environmental quality of the Town

Key recommendations include the following:

- Average density of 2.5 Floor Space Index (FSI)
- Additional 1.0 FSI is permitted for commercial buildings or com-

mercial floor space within existing mixed residential/commercial buildings (Maximum density for a mixed-use building is 3.5 FSI)

- Restriction of 1.5 FSI closest to the established low density neighbourhoods
- A minimum of 1.0 FSI required on all redevelopment sites
- Commercial focus along Yonge Street from Steeles Avenue to the CN Rail line shifting to a more residential focus north of the rail line
- Commercial uses are required at-grade along the southern portion of the Yonge Street frontage to the rail line and the first block fronting Steeles Avenue. Commercial uses will be permitted (not required) north of the rail line
- A transition strategy for the blocks between Yonge Street and Dudley Avenue to reduce possible impacts of new development on existing residential areas on the east side of Dudley. Key elements include:
 - Using an angular plane to limit building heights that is lowest at the existing residential neighbourhood and rises toward Yonge Street at a 1:2 ratio;
 - Minimum street wall height of 15 metres (approximately 3 to 4 storeys) and maximum height of 30 metres (7-9 storeys);
 - Taller point towers are permitted along Yonge Street, within the angular plane limits;
 - An integrated open space system which consists of a linear park and pedestrian connections on the eastern edge of the blocks adjacent Dudley Avenue to serve as a buffer between redevelopment areas and existing low rise residential areas to the east. Also included are two publicly-owned neighbourhood parks and a variety of privately owned but publicly accessible parkettes and squares.

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

2.7 Town of Markham Official Plan

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

Commercial lands are to be used primarily for a full range of business establishments, including shopping facilities, personal and service commercial facilities, offices and mixed-use developments. Commercial lands north of the golf club to the cemetery are further categorized as a Community Amenity Area . These areas are to serve as a multi-use and multi-purpose focal points offering a diverse range of retail, service, community, institutional, and recreational uses serving the neighbourhoods nearby. These areas are also to accommodate office and medium to high density residential uses. Commercial lands are located from the Holy Cross Cemetery south to Bay Thorn Drive and around Royal Orchard Drive.

Urban Residential lands are to be used primarily for housing with limited allocations for complementary uses. Urban Residential uses apply just south of Bay Thorn Drive and south of Royal Orchard Boulevard. Generally, medium and higher density residential uses are to be permitted only when :

- in proximity to major shopping districts, commercial areas or centres; or,
- in proximity to major open space areas and areas of natural amenity, or, other community and recreational services and facilities; or
- adjacent to arterial roads or highways or public transit routes to

which access is readily available; and,

- where public schools, parks, roads and other municipal servicing infrastructure are adequate to accommodate the medium or higher density development; and,
- traffic generated by the development can be accommodated on the existing roads and directed away from adjacent local streets; and,
- adequate landscaping and amenity features, parking and setbacks can be accommodated by the medium to higher density site.

Institutional (Cemetery) such as the Holy Cross Cemetery lands permit cemeteries, mausolea, columbaria, and crematoria in conjunction with a cemetery, along with chapels.

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

2.8 City of Toronto Official Plan

Land use designations on the south side of Steeles Avenue in the City of Toronto include Apartment Neighbourhoods and mixed-use areas adjacent the Yonge Street/Steeles Avenue intersection. Further west as far as Cactus Avenue, lands are designated as Neighbourhoods which reflect the low density residential character of the area.

Neighbourhoods are considered to be physically stable areas comprised of residential uses in lower scale buildings. Permitted uses also include parks, low scale institutions, home occupations, cultural and recreational facilities, and small scale retail, service and office uses.

Apartment Neighbourhoods consist of apartment buildings, parks, local institutions, cultural and recreation facilities, small-scale retail, service and office uses. All uses permitted within Neighbourhoods, are also permitted in Apartment Neighbourhoods.

Mixed-use areas are comprised of a broad range of uses that include residential, office, retail, services, institutional, entertainment, recreational and cultural activities, parks and open space along avenues such as Steeles Avenue. Specifically, in Toronto's Official Plan, these areas are expected to absorb most of the growth in retail, office and service along with much of the new housing.

Yonge Street is designated as an Avenue on Map 2 of the Toronto Official Plan. Avenues are one of the areas that will absorb growth through incremental development. The City intends to carry out Avenue Studies to develop a framework for change that is tailored to the situation of each Avenue.