



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Town of Markham Yonge and Steeles Corridor Study and City of Vaughan Yonge Street Area Study

Date:	August 14, 2009
To:	North York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, North York District
Wards:	n/a
Reference Number:	File No. 09 116973 NPS 00 TM

SUMMARY

This report provides information on the planning studies being conducted by the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan for the area around Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue. The final report for the Town of Markham Yonge and Steeles Corridor Study was endorsed in principle by Markham Council in October 2008 and the next step is to prepare a draft Official Plan Amendment implementing the Study's recommendations and hold the Statutory Public Meeting.

The City of Vaughan Yonge Street Area Study is underway and is currently in the public consultation stage. A draft final report is expected within the next few months. The study area boundaries are shown on Attachment 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council receive this report for information purposes and recommend City staff continue to monitor and report further, if necessary, on the Town of Markham Yonge and Steeles Corridor Study, and the City of Vaughan Yonge Street Area Study.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At its meeting of April 8, 2008, North York Community Council directed the City Solicitor to submit a report providing further clarification of the City of Toronto's planning authority as it relates to lands in York Region. An information report from the City Solicitor was considered by City Council at its meeting on April 28 and 29, 2008 and can be found at <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/cc/bgrd/ny14.53a.pdf>.

At its meeting of November 18, 2008, North York Community Council "Directed the Director, Community Planning, North York District and the Director, Transportation Services, North York District, to report all planning applications abutting the North York District which the City of Toronto receives in regard to the lands on the north side of Steeles Avenue in York Region, to North York Community Council".

On April 6, 2009, City Council considered a planning report providing information on a rezoning application at 378 Steeles Avenue East in the Town of Markham. The report can be found at www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ny/bgrd/backgroundfile-19524.pdf. It was the direction of City Council that on this application, and other similar applications in the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan, that Markham and Vaughan:

- Forward copies of preliminary planning reports to North York Community Council at the time they are tabled at the respective Councils;
- Include properties in the City of Toronto which are located within the North York Community Council boundary area in the statutory circulation area for these developments; and
- Notify the City of Toronto and the corresponding local Councillor(s) of any community meetings being held to discuss the relevant application.

City Council also directed City Planning staff to discuss the matter with Markham and Vaughan staff with a view to developing a common protocol for handling all development applications within 300 metres of Steeles Avenue and report back to the May 14, 2009 North York Community Council meeting and to further report to the Planning and Growth Management Committee on broader policy issues respecting planning protocols with bordering municipalities.

On May 14, 2009, North York Community Council received a planning report regarding the review of the protocol for handling planning applications located on the north side of Steeles Avenue. The report identified that City Planning staff and Markham and Vaughan staff are currently developing the common protocol and will report to North York Community Council after further meetings with Markham and Vaughan staff have been held. The report can be found at <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ny/bgrd/backgroundfile-20764.pdf>.

YONGE STREET CORRIDOR

The Yonge Street corridor, both north and south of Steeles Avenue, is considered to be an area under study due to the following factors

- Intensification objectives of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe;
- The York Region Official Plan intensification objectives for the Yonge Street corridor;
- The City of Toronto Official Plan has identified Yonge Street, between Steeles Avenue and Cummer/Drewry Avenue, as an *Avenue*, which is an area for study. City Council recently endorsed a larger study for this stretch of Yonge Street in response to the proposed subway extension; and
- Proposed Public transit initiatives for this portion of Yonge Street, specifically, the Yonge Street dedicated transitway and most recently the proposed extension of the Yonge Street subway from Finch Avenue to Richmond Hill at Highway 407.

TOWN OF MARKHAM YONGE STEELES CORRIDOR STUDY

The Town of Markham Yonge Steeles Corridor Study was initiated in March 2007. The study area is bounded by Yonge Street on the west, Steeles Avenue on the south, Dudley Avenue on the east, and north on Yonge Street to the Farmers Market property just south of Elgin Street. The block bounded by Dudley Avenue, Highland Park, Willowdale Avenue and Steeles Avenue is also within the study area. The complete study area is shown on Attachment 1.

This area primarily consists of older commercial retail buildings along Yonge Street with an established low density residential neighbourhood abutting to the east. On the Steeles Avenue East frontage, within the study area, there is an existing gasoline station at Yonge Street and a mid-rise rental apartment building at Dudley Ave.

The objectives of the study is to provide a gateway to Markham; provide a mix of uses while minimizing impacts on the abutting low density residential area; encouraging high quality parks and open spaces; creating a great street environment and taking advantage of the planned transit. As well, there is an objective to promote Markham's green agenda.

Subject to input received at the Statutory Public Meeting, the final report prepared by DuToit Allsop Hillier was endorsed by Town of Markham Council in October 2008 as the basis for Town initiated draft Official Plan Amendments.

As summarized in the Recommendation Report from Markham Planning staff, the Yonge Steeles Corridor Study recommends:

- “An average density of 2.5 FSI on the redevelopment blocks, plus an additional 1.0 FSI incentive for commercial/office uses along Yonge Street frontage;
- A requirement for commercial uses at grade along the Yonge Street frontage (as well as the first block fronting Steeles Avenue east of Yonge Street) within the southern section of the corridor between Steeles Avenue and the CN Rail line, with a more predominantly residential character north of the rail line (although at-grade commercial would be permitted, it will not be required along Yonge Street in this area);
- A “transition strategy” for the redevelopment blocks between Yonge Street and Dudley Avenue to reduce potential impacts of new development on existing residential neighbourhoods east of the corridor. Key elements of this strategy include:
 - Limiting building heights through the use of an “angular plane” that is lowest towards the low-rise neighbourhoods and increases in height away from the existing low-rise neighbourhoods at a 1:2 ratio (i.e. 1 m of height for every 2 m of horizontal distance);
 - Achieving a minimum street wall height of 15 metres (approx. 3 to 4 storeys) and a maximum streetwall height of 30 metres (7-9 storeys), with taller point towers in accordance with the angular plane, along the length of each block fronting Yonge Street;
 - Creating an integrated open space system consisting of a linear park and pedestrian connections on the eastern edge of the redevelopment blocks (adjacent to Dudley Avenue and the existing residential neighbourhoods to the east) to serve as a buffer between the redevelopment areas and the existing low rise residential area to the east; two publicly-owned neighbourhood parks; and a variety of privately owned but publicly accessible parkettes and squares;
- The study also included a review of servicing and transportation capacity in the surrounding area. Currently, both of these infrastructure elements are close to, or at capacity, and will require significant upgrading to accommodate redevelopment and intensification.”

City staff has attended a number of Technical Advisory Committee meetings and Open Houses since early 2007. The Study has recognized that there are servicing and transportation constraints and that significant upgrading is required to accommodate any redevelopment and intensification.

Although a final report has been presented to Markham Council for endorsement, the implementing planning documents still require approval. Town of Markham Planning staff has advised that a draft Official Plan Amendment will be prepared and a public meeting will be held in the near future. The draft Official Plan Amendment will be circulated to the City of Toronto for review and comment.

CITY OF VAUGHAN YONGE STREET AREA STUDY

The Vaughan Yonge Street Area Study began in the spring of 2008. The Study covers two separate areas along the Yonge Street corridor, as shown on the map in Attachment 1. Based on the City of Vaughan Public Meeting Notices, “the Study is to produce a policy framework to guide future development in the area, and address the future servicing, parks and transportation network needed to accommodate and support development in the Yonge Street area. Significant redevelopment is expected to occur in the study area in support of improved public transit, in the form of either an extension of the Yonge subway or surface transit facilities on Yonge Street.”

As the City of Vaughan plan for this area develops, we will report further.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Town of Markham and City of Vaughan Study Areas

Attachment 1: Town of Markham and City of Vaughan Study Areas



Yonge Street North Steeles Avenue to Highway 407
City of Vaughan and Town of Markham Study Areas

-  Town of Markham Study Areas
-  City of Vaughan Study Areas



09/18/2009 Not to Scale

