

Yonge Street North Planning Study Report

Date:	June 2, 2011
To:	North York Community Council
From:	Director, Community Planning, North York District
Wards:	23, 24
Reference Number:	File No. 2011 191325 NPS 00 TM

SUMMARY

This information report summarizes and initiates the ‘Yonge Street North Planning Study’ in the context of increasing development pressures and the appropriateness of current and potential future amendments to Official Plan policies and designations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. this staff report on the Yonge Street North Planning Study be received for information.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts from adopting the recommendation in this report. The study budget has been approved in the capital budget for the City Planning Division.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Development applications have been proposed and additional applications are anticipated in the Yonge Street area between Finch and Steeles Avenues. A land use planning study prepared in consultation with the community would provide guidance on both the active and anticipated applications and set the stage for managing growth within a defined area.

This report reviews the existing land use planning and transportation policy context, and identifies issues to be addressed through the “Yonge Street North Planning Study” and consultant retention process. The proposed draft study area is in Attachment 1.

Provincial Policy Statement & Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) indicates that opportunities for intensification and redevelopment are to be identified and promoted that take into account the existing building stock or areas and availability of infrastructure and public service facilities for example, such as transit improvements. City Council’s planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

While the PPS provides broad provincial policy direction, The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (“Growth Plan”) provides a more specific framework for managing growth. Schedule 4 of the Growth Plan identifies a structure of 25 Urban Growth Centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Located at the current north limit of the Yonge Street subway line, ‘North York Centre’ is one of 5 Urban Growth Centres in the City of Toronto (Attachment 2) with the others being Yonge-Eglinton Centre, Scarborough Centre, Etobicoke Centre and Downtown Toronto.

The Growth Plan provides a regional land use structure of Urban Growth Centres that “accommodate and support major transit infrastructure” by serving as high density major employment centres that will attract provincially, nationally or internationally significant employment uses” and “accommodate a significant share of population and employment growth.”

The Growth Plan contains transportation policies relating to “Moving People” and identifies Public Transit as the “first priority for transportation infrastructure planning and major transportation investments”. The strategic framework for future transit investments in the Greater Golden Horseshoe is on Schedule 5 (Attachment 3). The schedule conceptually identifies the existing Yonge Street subway line around the North York Urban Growth Centre as “Improved Higher Order Transit”. It also identifies a “Proposed Higher Order Transit to 2031” extension of the Yonge subway line northwards and connecting to the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre.

The Growth Plan indicates that Schedule 5 is a “strategic framework for future transit investment decisions, including capacity improvements to existing transit systems to support intensification, and proposed higher order transit and inter-regional transit links between urban growth centres” and that the “actual timing, phasing and alignments are subject to further study and where applicable, the environmental assessment process.” City Council’s planning decisions are required to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Metrolinx “Big Move”

In 2008 the Provincial Government agency Metrolinx adopted the Regional Transportation Plan named “The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area” (the “Big Move”). One of the Big Move’s 10 key strategies is to develop a comprehensive regional rapid transit network. Schedule 1 (Attachment 4) represents projects proposed for full or substantial completion within the first 15 years of the plan's adoption. One of the top transit priorities is for “Yonge Subway capacity improvements and extension to Richmond Hill” with the goal of connecting the North York Urban Growth Centre to the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre. In the 25-year plan, the Big Move also identifies east west rapid transit service along the entire Steeles Avenue corridor in Toronto, and serving York and Durham Regions.

The Big Move states that: “The regional rapid transit and highway network in Schedules 1 and 2 shall be incorporated into all municipal Official Plans, and these planned transit services shall be used as the basis for determining appropriate land uses and densities in conformity with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.”

The Big Move provides an investment strategy that includes developing recommended revenue and financial tools including the opportunity for the “value uplift” of lands adjacent to future rapid transit corridors to pay towards the cost of transit improvements. The investment strategy includes establishing a task force on land value enhancement in collaboration with municipalities, the Provincial Government and the development industry and consulting on a potential “Transit and Transportation Investment Fund” for transit expansion projects.

City of Toronto Official Plan

A foundation of the City’s Official Plan is to focus future growth around the transportation network. Growth is being directed to, and is being achieved in Centres, Avenues, Employment Districts and the Downtown as they are areas well-served by existing surface and rapid transit infrastructure. Map 2 conceptually illustrates the North York ‘Centre’ extending in a linear fashion along Yonge Street from Highway 401 to Drewry and Cummer Avenues with Yonge Street to the north as an ‘Avenue’ (Attachment 5).

The Official Plan provides policies to guide the growth of Centres through more detailed Secondary Plans, and in the case of Avenues through ‘Avenue Studies’ and segment studies, all with a goal of facilitating transit-supportive land uses.

The Official Plan’s transportation policies place priority on maintaining the existing transportation system in a state of good repair and for continued safe and comfortable service. Additional transit service in exclusive right-of-ways as identified on Map 4 is to be implemented when the Environmental Assessment review process is complete and funding becomes available. Map 4 identifies a “Transit Corridor” expansion element extending from the Finch TTC station northwards to Steeles Avenue and beyond (Attachment 6).

Map 16 of the Official Plan designates the lands in North York Centre and fronting on Yonge Street as *Mixed Use Areas* (Attachment 7). Lands east and west of Yonge Street are largely designated *Neighbourhoods*, with the lands west of Centrepoint Mall having an *Apartment Neighbourhood* designation. Adjacent to transit, the *Mixed Use Areas* designation provides for a broad range of residential and commercial land uses that are to adequately limit shadow impacts and provide for a transition to adjacent lower scale *Neighbourhoods*.

North York Centre Secondary Plan

A portion of the proposed study area is within the northerly limits of the North York Centre Secondary Plan (Attachment 8). ‘North York Centre North’ is focused around the Finch subway station which is currently the northern terminus of the Yonge Subway line. The Secondary Plan provides for major concentrations of population and employment growth and locates the highest densities and intensities of uses in those locations closest to the subway station.

Around the Finch subway station, a density, or floor space index (FSI) of 5 times the area of the lands is provided (Attachment 9). This density decreases to 1.5 FSI with distance from the station and proximity to the adjacent stable low density neighbourhoods outside the Secondary Plan area. Further north from Finch Avenue, the density decreases from 3.0 FSI to 1.5 and 2.2 FSI at the most northerly edge of the Secondary Plan.

The North York Secondary Plan also includes a prescriptive density incentive policy under Section 37 of the *Planning Act* to secure specified public benefits such as community centres, social facilities, and lands for the service road in exchange for density increases. This policy has successfully implemented major transportation improvements that support North York Centre, the major example being the North York Centre Service Road (Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue - see Attachment 10).

Lands immediately around the Yonge Street/Finch Avenue intersection are provided a maximum building height of 87 metres that transition downward towards the outlying stable residential areas to the east, west and north (Attachment 11).

The *Mixed Use Area ‘E’* designation located around the Finch subway station limits commercial floor space to a maximum of 65% with further reductions on lands that are closer to the surrounding lower density residential areas outside the Centre (Attachment 12).

Comments

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe provides a region-wide strategic vision for transit improvements to connect Urban Growth Centres. While the Growth Plan identifies the Yonge subway extension as “Proposed Higher Order Transit to 2031”, and places priority on public transit and increasing the capacity of existing transit in intensification areas, the actual delivery of the transit capacity is uncertain. The Growth

Plan does acknowledge that the actual timing of improvements is subject to further study and the Environmental Assessment process. However, City Council's planning decisions are nonetheless required in the meantime to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan. The Growth Plan recognizes that a range of planning and fiscal tools are necessary for successful implementation, and that plans prepared under the *Planning Act* are instrumental to realizing its vision.

The Big Move includes the northerly extension of the Yonge subway line as one of several projects proposed for full or substantial completion within the first 15 years. While the Big Move outlines a strategy to finance the system, like the Growth Plan, the actual delivery of the improved transportation capacity remains uncertain.

Based upon these Provincial policies, considerable land use planning has been undertaken by York Region, City of Vaughan and Town of Markham that support and/or are premised upon the northerly extension of the Yonge Street subway. The City of Toronto now also has a role in preparing a land use plan that supports and facilitates the Yonge Street subway extension.

In February 2009, notice of the completion of the Environmental Project Report was provided under the Provincial Transit Project Assessment Process. The report indicates that the extended Yonge subway line would have new stations at both Drewry/Cummer Avenue at the north end of the North York Centre Secondary Plan, and at Steeles Avenue. The Toronto Transit Commission, in partnership with The Regional Municipality of York, the City of Toronto and York Region Rapid Transit Corporation have awarded a contract to help prepare the next level of engineering design and enable a more accurate cost estimate for the project. This work should further advance the timing of the subway extension.

In light of the advancement of the planned northerly extension of the Yonge subway line and associated subway stations, it is appropriate to study this area and determine how it can appropriately manage the growth pressures that will occur, and are already occurring.

In response, staff are initiating the Yonge Street North Planning Study including retaining consulting services. Among other matters, the study will review:

Location of various densities and built forms. The study will develop a vision for the future of the area. Through the use of 3D modelling, this vision will help determine what areas may be appropriate for redevelopment, and within these areas, the suitable locations and design for any tall, mid-rise and/or low-scale built forms and transition to adjacent low-density neighbourhoods.

Level of development prior to and after a Yonge subway extension. With the timing of the subway being uncertain, it is necessary to understand what level or type of development can reasonably be supported by the existing transportation network, and what planning mechanisms can coordinate the development of transit-supportive land uses with the actual provision of transit.

Transportation and infrastructure improvements. The study should address all opportunities for improving the existing road network and capacity and what additions to this road capacity and function can be made such as through potential new service roads and/or road connections. The study would also fulfill the requirements of the Environmental Assessment process for any new road improvements. Other infrastructure improvements such as sewer and water systems also need to be reviewed, and the method of implementing these infrastructure improvements identified.

Pedestrian amenities and streetscape. As part of creating transit-supportive land uses, the study will review what streetscape improvements can be made to conveniently and comfortably connect pedestrians from the community to new subway stations and community facilities.

Community infrastructure, parks and open space improvements. The study will review the existing inventory of community facilities, parks and open space in the area, identify needed improvements or locations for new facilities, and develop a strategy for integrating those improvements into the vision for the area.

Implementation strategies. The study will review the full range of planning tools that can best achieve the vision for the area. Many of these tools are already used in the North York Centre Secondary Plan, and the lessons learned from that Secondary Plan are expected to provide considerable guidance throughout this study.

After retaining consulting services the study will be conducted in 3 phases: the first phase will be to prepare background research and present the study process to the community; the second phase will be to prepare, model and test draft land use concepts; and, the third will be to prepare the final report and any proposed amendments to planning documents. Each phase of the study will include consultation meetings and/or workshops with the local community.

CONTACT

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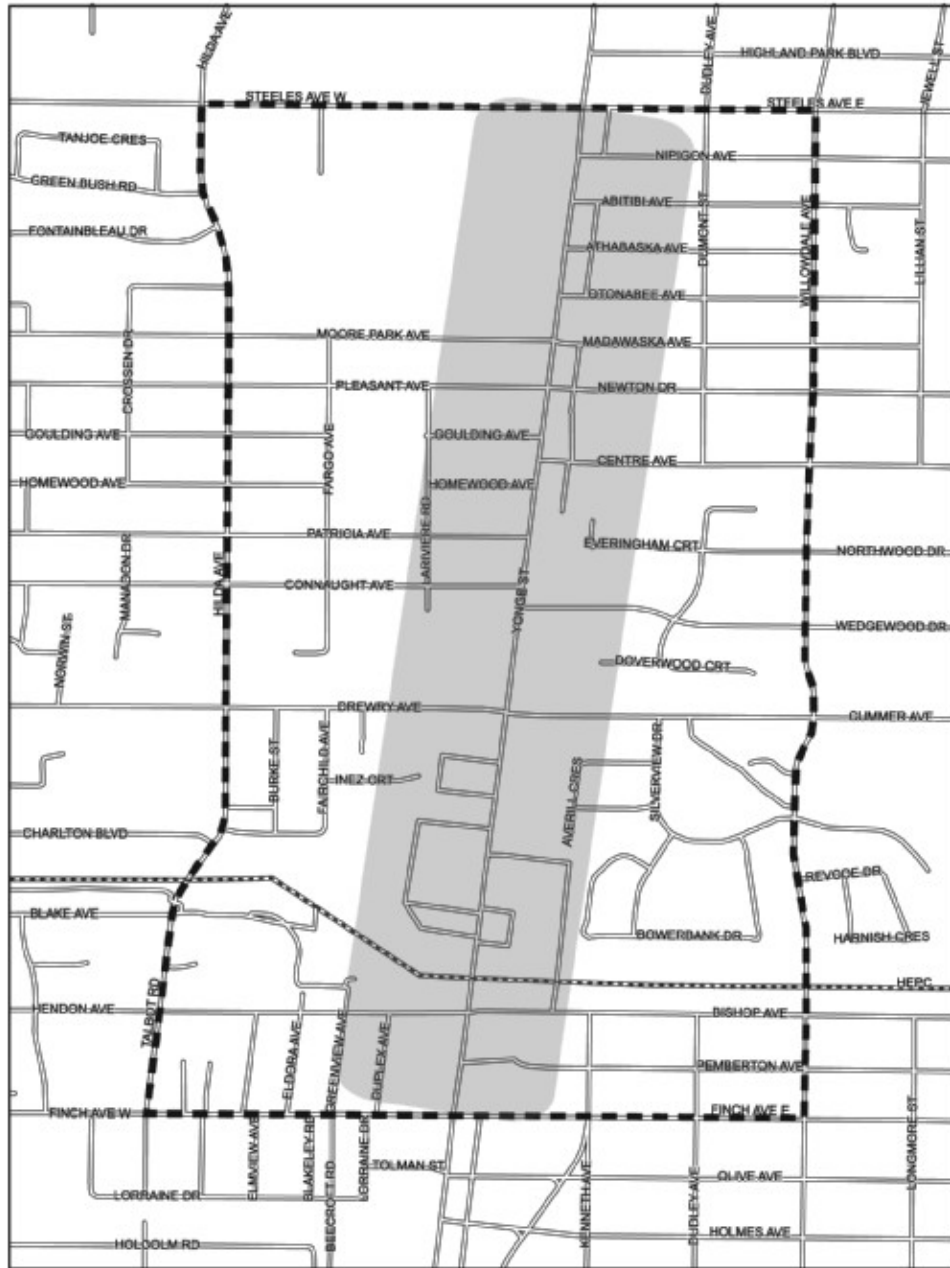
SIGNATURE



Allen Appleby, Director
Community Planning, North York District

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Yonge Street North Planning Study – Draft Study Area
- Attachment 2: Growth Plan –Urban Growth Centres - Schedule 4
- Attachment 3: Growth Plan –Moving People - Schedule 5
- Attachment 4: Metrolinx – Big Move –Moving People - Schedule 1
- Attachment 5: Official Plan – Structure - Map 2
- Attachment 6: Official Plan – Higher Order Transit Corridors - Map 4
- Attachment 7: Official Plan – Land Use - Map 16
- Attachment 8: North York Centre Secondary Plan - Boundaries – Map 8-1
- Attachment 9: North York Centre Secondary Plan – Density Limits - Map 8-7
- Attachment 10: North York Centre Secondary Plan – Service Road - Map 8-11
- Attachment 11: North York Centre Secondary Plan – Maximum Heights - Map 8-8a
- Attachment 12: North York Centre Secondary Plan – Land Use - Map 8-4

Attachment 1: Yonge Street North Planning Study – Draft Study Area



 Study Area
 Yonge Street North

Yonge Street North Planning Study

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Attachment 2: Growth Plan –Urban Growth Centres - Schedule 4



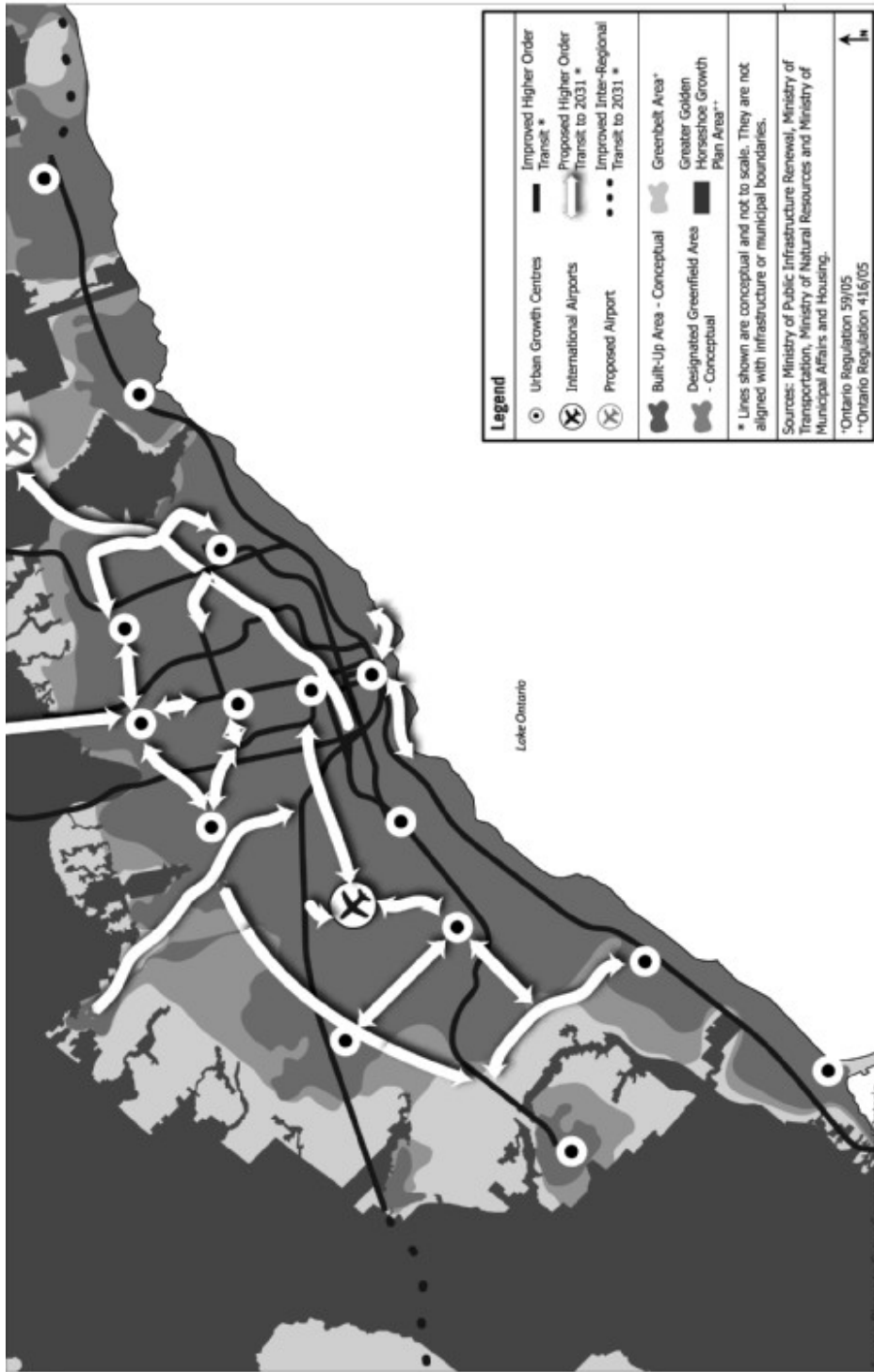
Yonge Street North Planning Study

Growth Plan - Urban Growth Centres - Schedule 4

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Attachment 3: Growth Plan –Moving People - Schedule 5



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Growth Plan - Moving People - Schedule 5

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Attachment 4: Metrolinx – Big Move –Moving People - Schedule 1



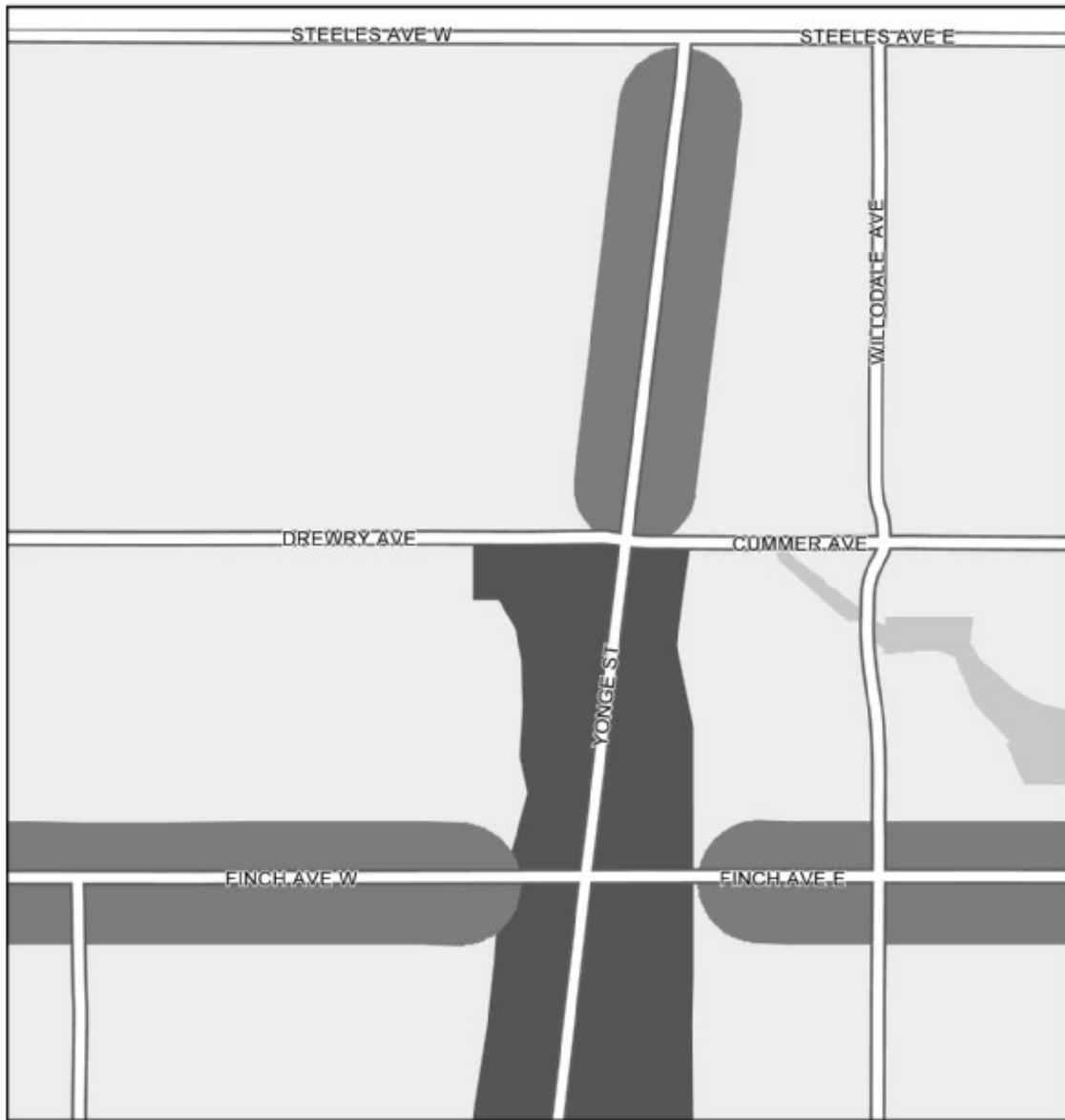
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The Big Move - Moving People - Schedule 1

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Attachment 5: Official Plan – Structure - Map 2



 **TORONTO** City Planning
Official Plan
Urban Structure Plan - Map 2

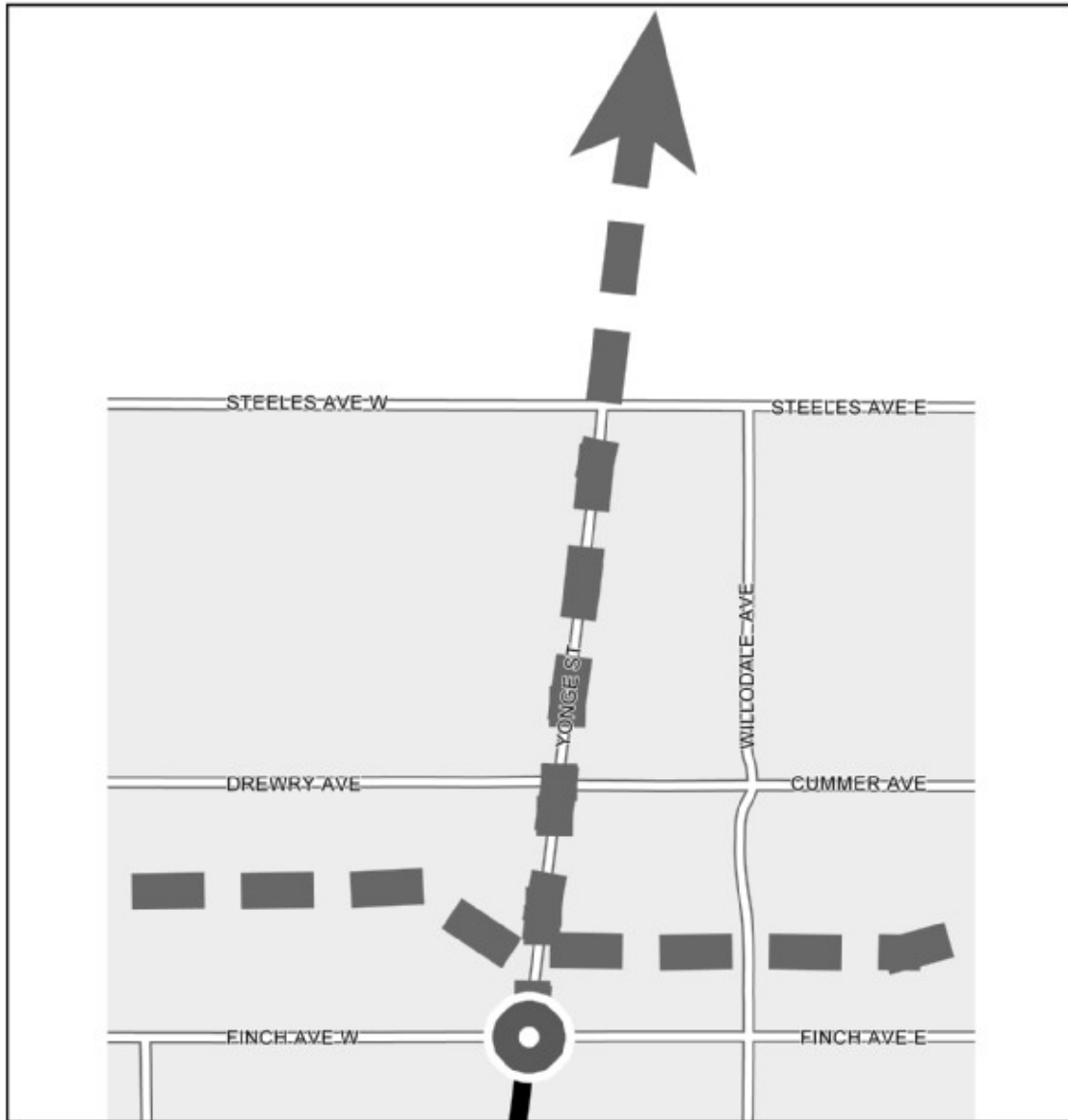
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 Centres
 Avenues
 Green Space System


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Attachment 6: Official Plan – Higher Order Transit Corridors - Map 4



Official Plan
Higher Order Transit Corridors - Map 4

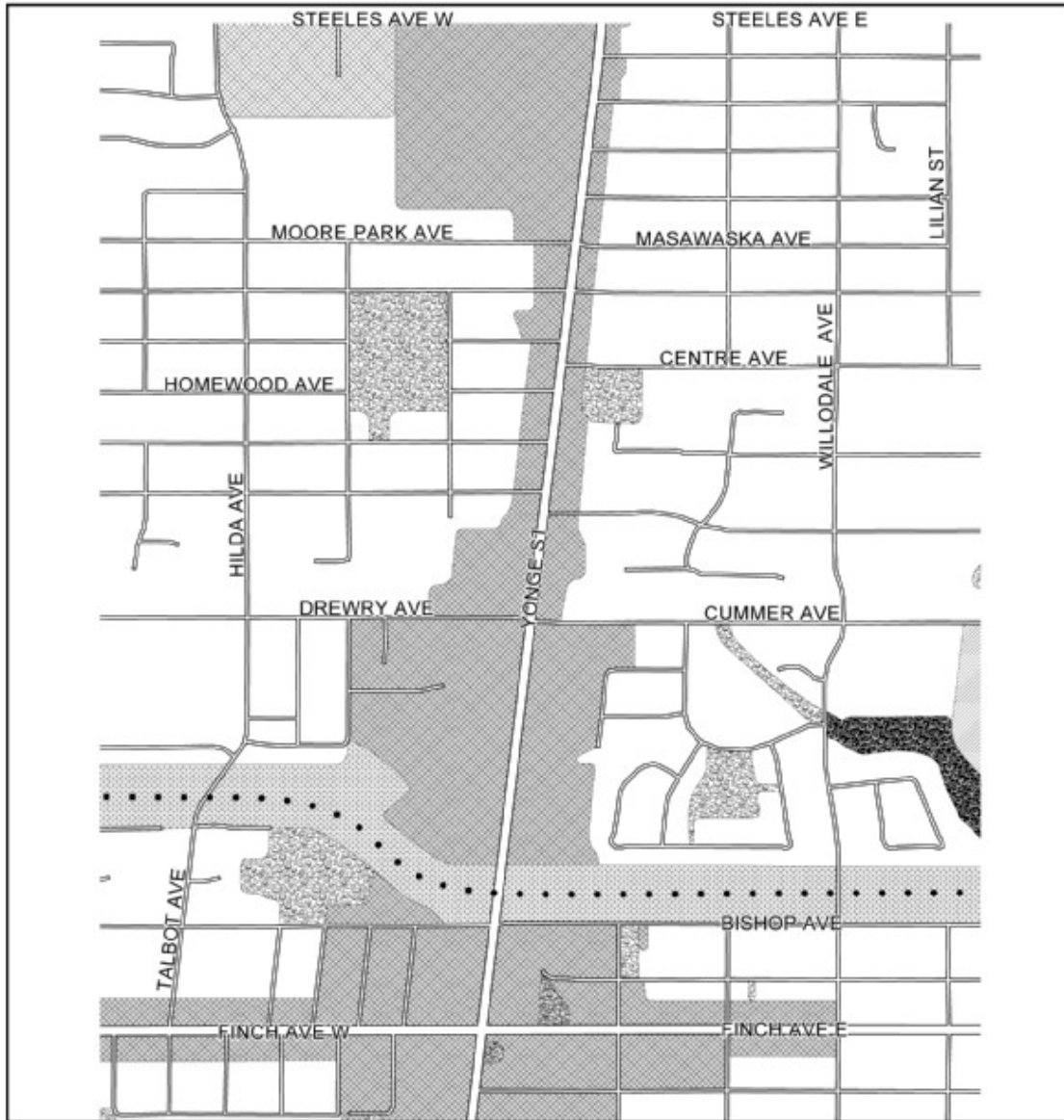
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- Existing
- TTC Subway and LRT Lines
- Expansion Elements
- Transit Corridors

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Attachment 7: Official Plan – Land Use - Map 16



TORONTO City Planning
Official Plan
 Land Use - Map 16

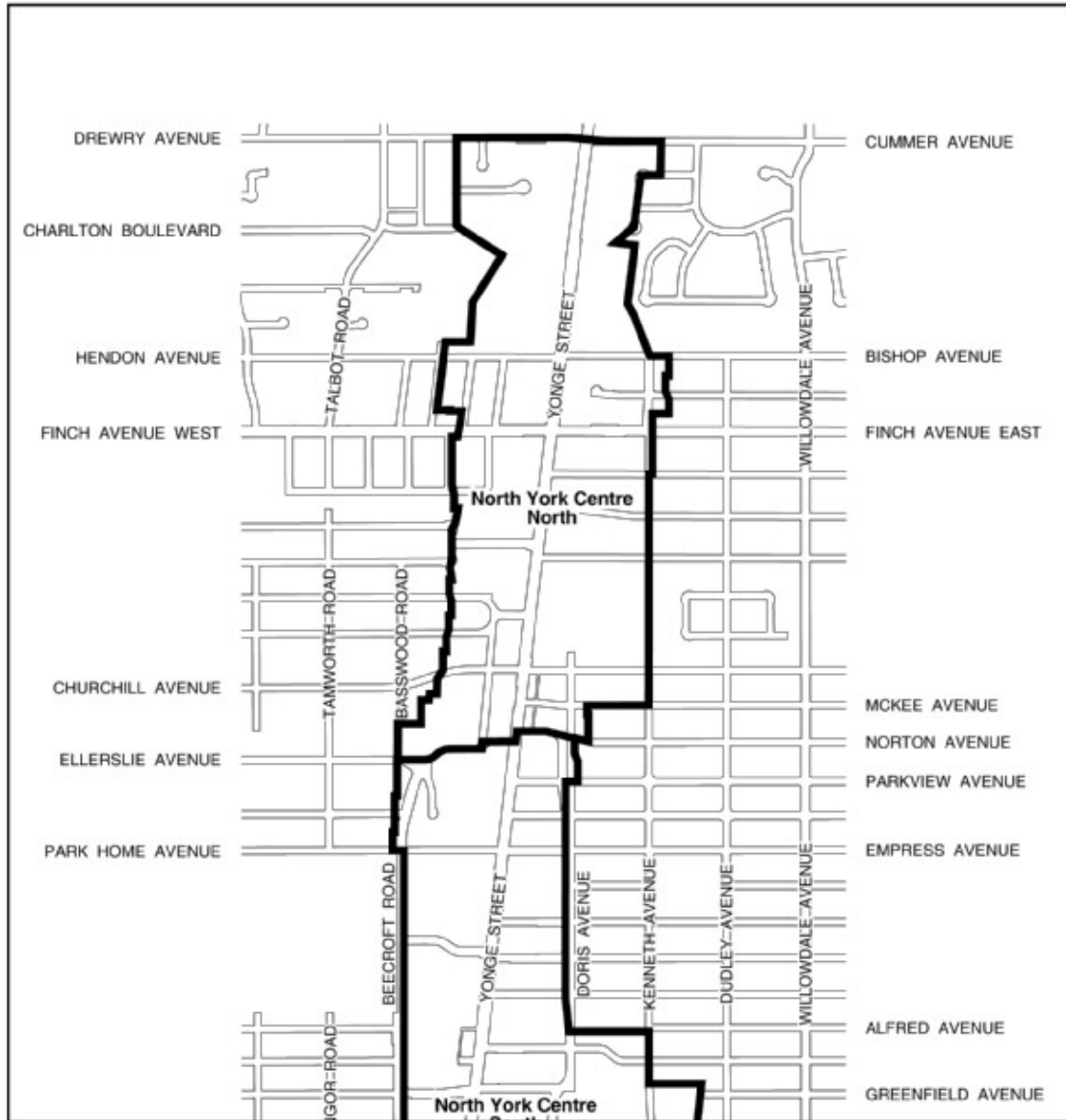
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Attachment 8: North York Centre Secondary Plan - Boundaries – Map 8-1



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North York Centre Secondary Plan
 Boundaries - Map 8-1

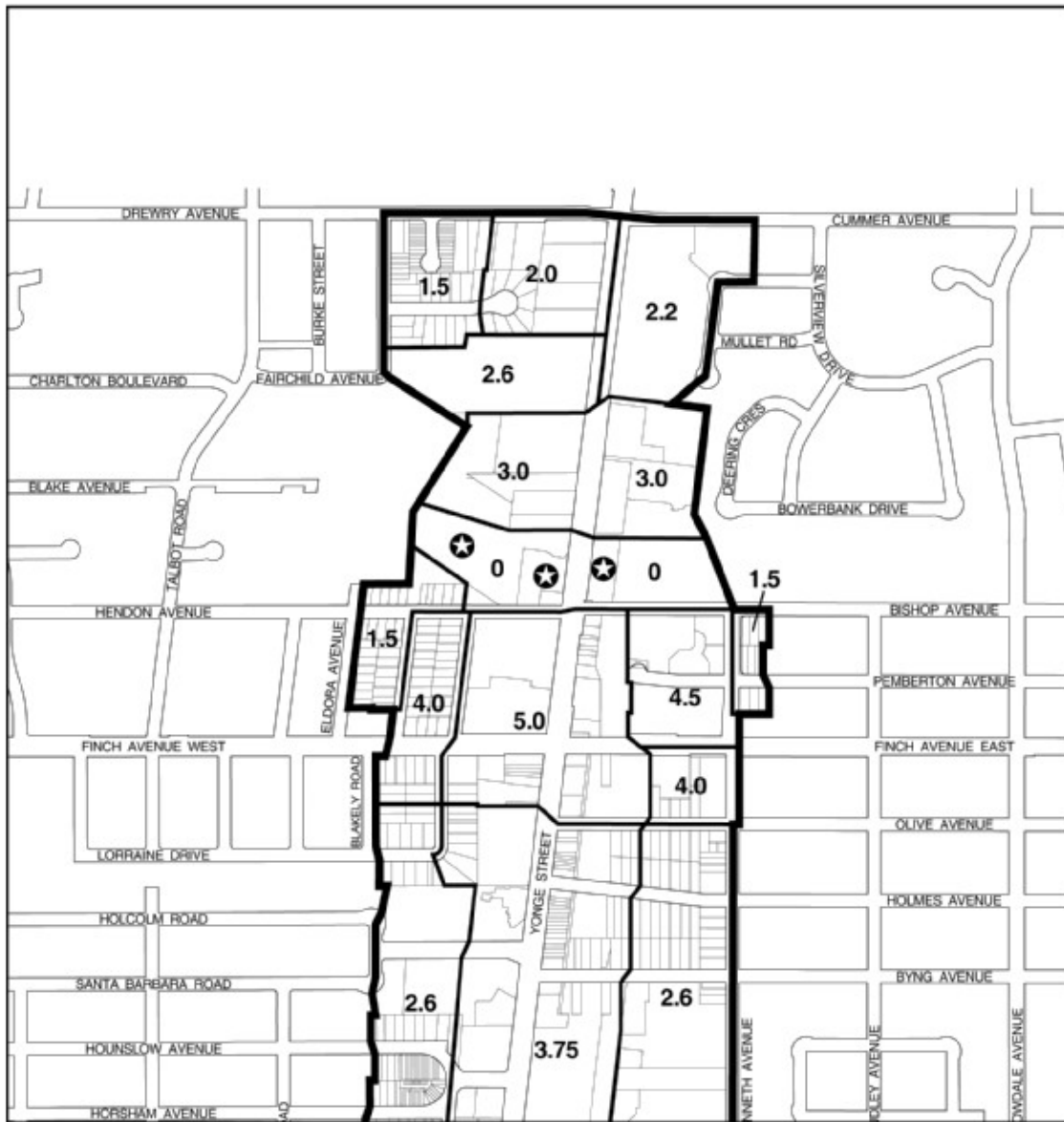
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— Secondary Plan Boundary

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Attachment 9: North York Centre Secondary Plan – Density Limits - Map 8-7



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North York Centre Secondary Plan
 Density Limits - Map 8-7

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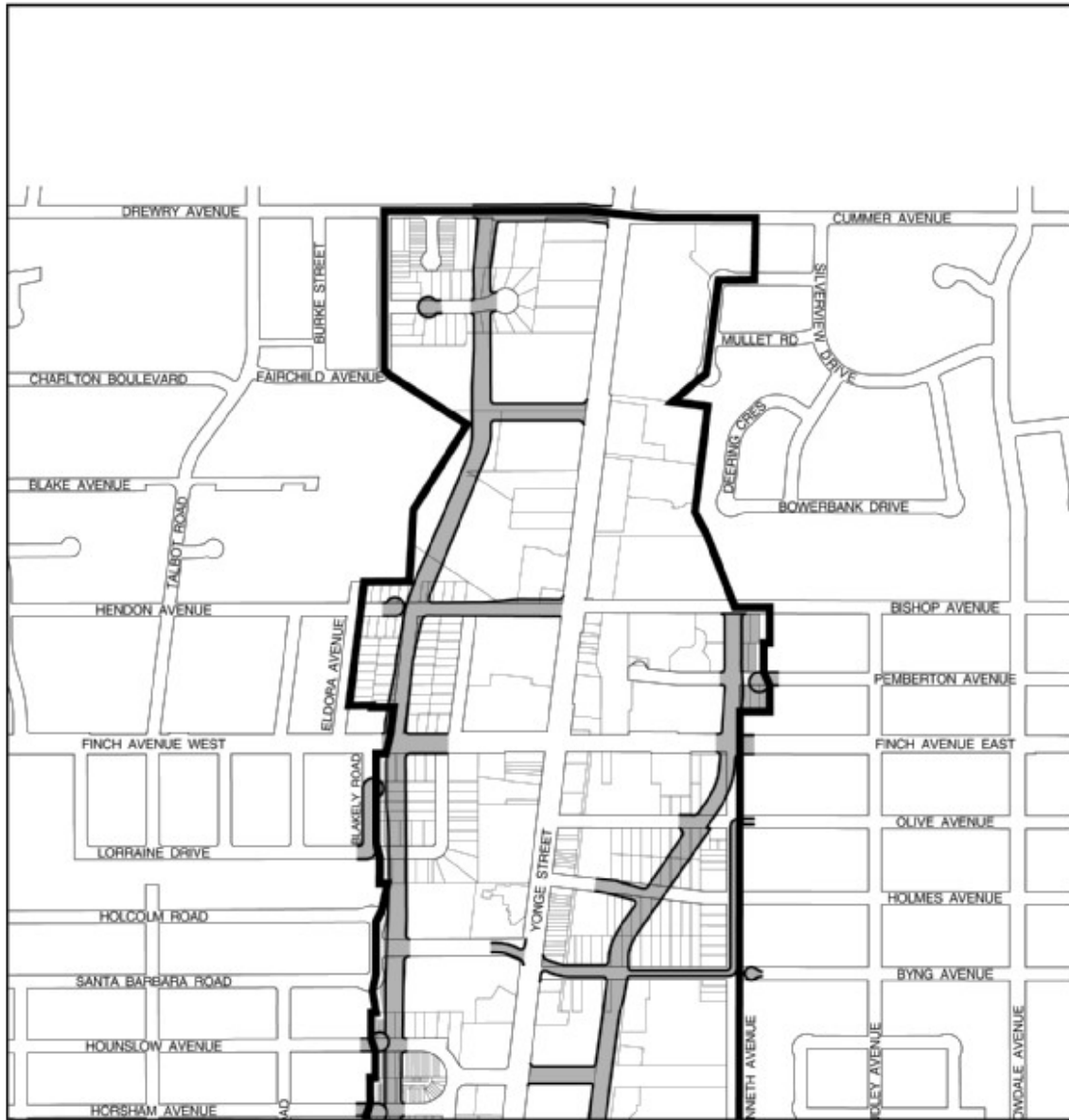
— Secondary Plan Boundary

★ Density can only be assigned to these lands pursuant to the Official Plan, North York Centre Secondary Plan, Section 3 or Section 13

Note: Density Limits are exclusive of density incentives and transfers

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Attachment 10: North York Centre Secondary Plan – Service Road - Map 8-11



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North York Centre Secondary Plan
Service Road - Map 8-11

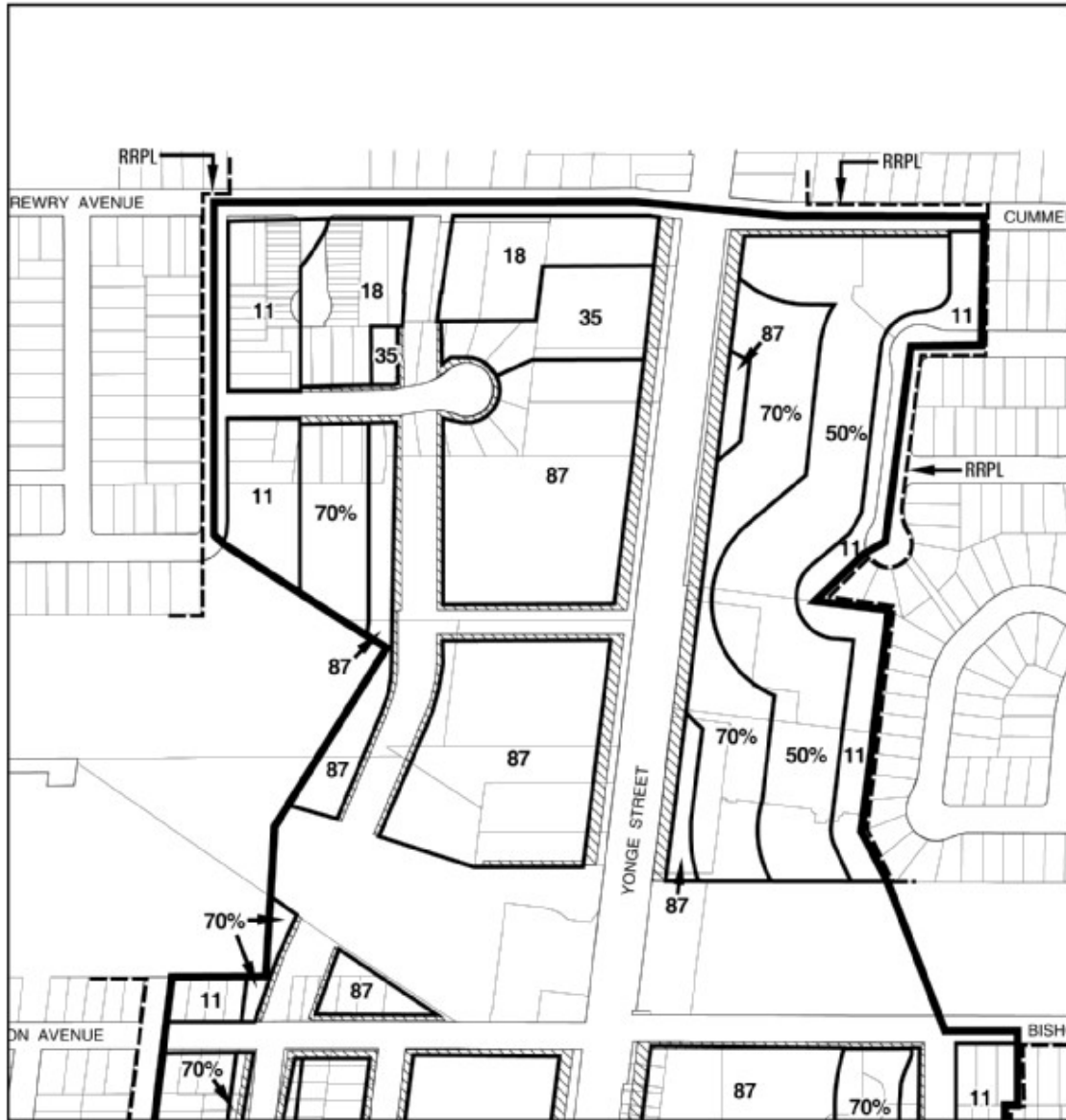
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-  Secondary Plan Boundary
-  Service Road and Associated Road Network and Buffer Areas


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Attachment 11: North York Centre Secondary Plan – Maximum Heights - Map 8-8a



TORONTO City Planning
North York Centre Secondary Plan
Maximum Height- Map 8-8a

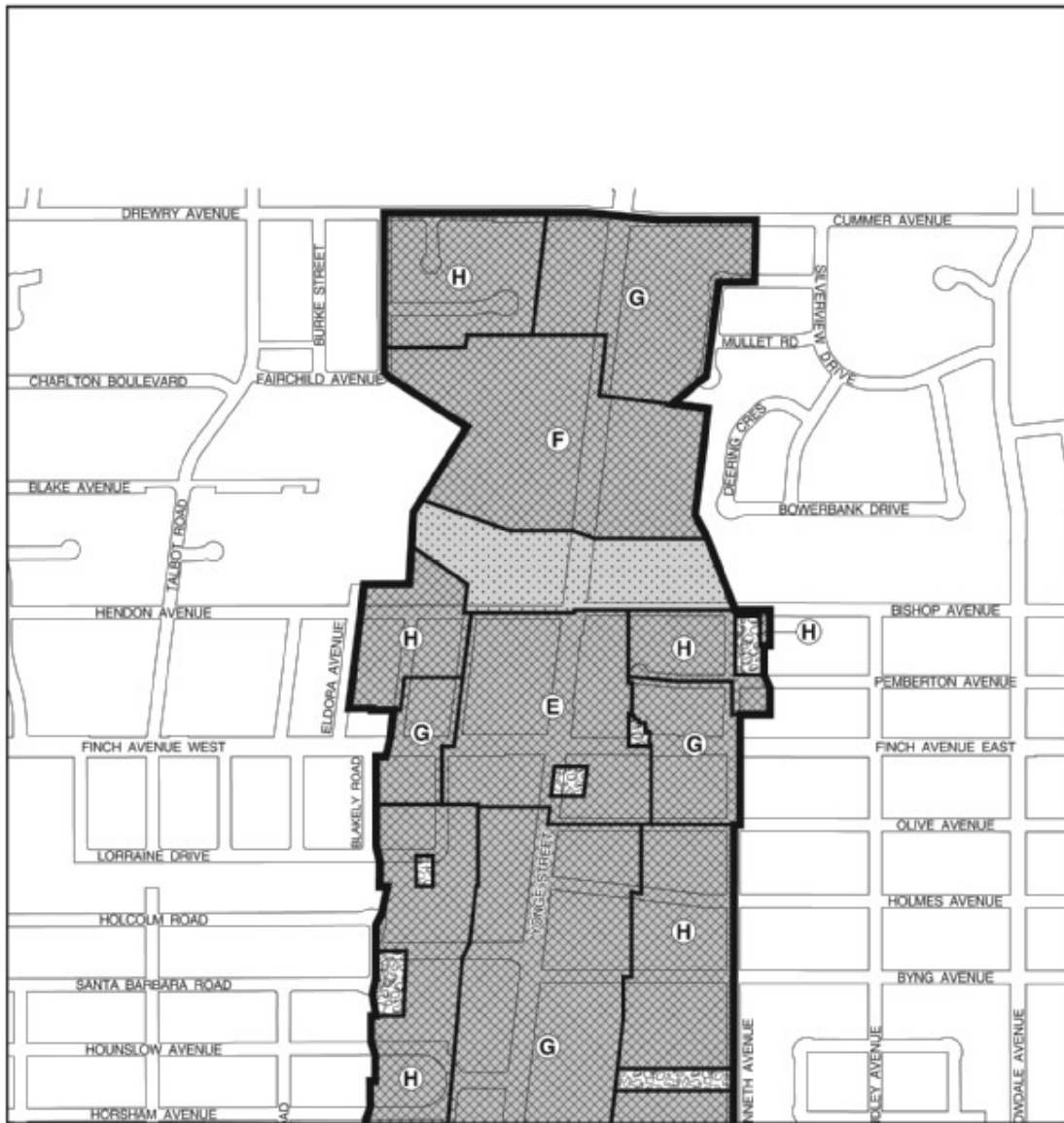
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- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Secondary Plan Boundary | The Lesser of 11m or 3 Storeys | Maximum 87m Above Grade | Street Facade Limit as per Section 5.3 of this Secondary Plan |
| The Lesser of 18m or 6 Storeys | Maximum 50% Horizontal Distance from RRPL | Relevant Residential Property Line (RRPL) | |
| The Lesser of 35m or 12 Storeys | Maximum 70% Horizontal Distance from RRPL | | |

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Attachment 12: North York Centre Secondary Plan – Land Use - Map 8-4



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North York Centre Secondary Plan
Land Use- Map 8-4

Yonge Street North Planning Study

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-  Secondary Plan Boundary
-  Mixed Use Areas
 - Area E - Maximum 65% Commercial Use
 - Area F - Maximum 50% Commercial Use
 - Area G - Maximum 20% Commercial Use
 - Area H - 0% Commercial Use
-  Parks and Open Space Areas
-  Utility Corridors


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