

Preferred Urban Structure Option Report

Yonge Street North Planning Study

May 2013



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Executive Summary

Study Purpose

The City of Toronto initiated the Yonge Street North Planning Study to develop a vision for the future of the Yonge Street corridor between Finch Avenue and Steeles Avenue in response to the advancement of the planned northerly extension of the Yonge subway line, and existing and anticipated development pressures in the area. The City recognizes that the actual delivery of improved transportation capacity remains uncertain.

The focus of the Study is the Yonge Street Corridor, but the Study Area includes the lands between Steeles Avenue on the north, Willowdale Avenue on the east, Finch Avenue on the south and Talbot Road/Hilda Avenue on the west. The Study Area incorporates some areas that are not expected to undergo significant change; however such lands may be affected by redevelopment which does occur and so must be considered as part of the Study. The Yonge Street Corridor comprises property on or in close proximity to Yonge Street where the appropriate areas for redevelopment must be identified and where physical change must be anticipated, facilitated and managed.

The Study is being carried out in three phases. Phase 1 included background research to review the current policy framework, existing facilities and conditions, and to identify major opportunities and constraints to development in the Study Area. The results of Phase 1 are reported in the Background Report.

Phase 2 of the Study involves the preparation and evaluation of a series of conceptual urban structure, transportation and public realm alternatives. As part of the evaluation of the alternatives, the public were invited to rank specific elements, as well as the alternatives as a whole at a workshop held on June 5, 2012. Over the course of 2012 and early 2013 City Staff also met with many individuals and groups of residents and landowners to discuss the Study and understand their questions and comments. Staff was also invited and attended the Silverview Ratepayers Annual General Meeting and held a 'mini-workshop' with approximately 50 residents. Detailed urban structure options and transportation alternatives were prepared based on the feedback and evaluated. The preferred option was then developed.

The preferred option was brought back to the public for input at a meeting on May 9, 2013. The meeting was attended by 56 residents and landowners. City staff also held a number of meetings with stakeholders. In addition, numerous inquiries and written comments were received by the City. All the input illustrated a range of viewpoints including a significant number of residents who supported Option1, Centre Extended as the preferred option. This view reflected a feeling that issues with density and lack of transition could be addressed and that the greater density was needed to attract development to the area. Support for Option 1 however, was balanced by the views of a number of residents who were concerned with the impacts of development including noise, litter, and traffic.

Phase 3 will involve preparation of a final report and recommendations which reflects public input and will include any draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments. This final report will be reviewed with the public at a public meeting/open house and then will be presented to Community Council.

In terms of the infrastructure and transportation improvements, the Yonge Street North Planning Study is also being conducted in accordance with the master planning process outlined in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) planning and design process published by the Municipal Engineers Association and which was approved by the Ministry of the Environment in October 2000, as amended in 2007 and more recently on August 17, 2011. Infrastructure and Transportation Master Plans have been prepared under separate cover to address Phase 1 and 2 of the Master Plan process.

Background Analysis Conclusions

The Background Report, found under separate cover, provides a detailed review of key background information which formed the basis for the development of the conceptual urban structure and transportation alternatives. The Background Report provides information on:

- Existing land use, built form and proposed development;
- The policy and regulatory framework;
- Public input;
- Community facility assessment;
- Existing and proposed transportation infrastructure; and,
- Existing servicing infrastructure.

In summary, the background analysis concluded that the Yonge Street North Corridor already contains a diversity of uses ranging from low rise, small scale commercial uses to high rise development. However, there are still significant opportunities for intensification, a direction which is supported by Provincial and City policy and generally by the public.

Careful attention will have to be paid to the design of such future development to ensure an appropriate transition to, and compatibility with, low and medium density areas which will remain east and west of the corridor. In addition, increases in population and employment may require additional park and recreation facilities and consideration of the capacity of other community facilities. Improvements to the transportation system, particularly facilities for pedestrian and cyclists will also be necessary. With respect to services, all trunk sewers have spare capacity and Yonge Street already has larger diameter water mains to service commercial and mixed use development. However, further study will be required through the development process to determine what modifications may be necessary to support proposed development.

Priority Directions and Vision Statement

As a basis for future planning in the Study Area, Priority Directions and a Preliminary Vision Statement for the Study Area were identified, as well as:

- Certain common structural elements which form a framework for the future development alternatives; and,
- Conceptual urban structure alternatives, as well as transportation alternatives.

Priority Directions

Yonge Street is the central corridor and organizing element around which the community has and will continue to evolve. The three proposed priority directions are designed to guide the continuing evolution of the corridor.

1. Transportation Networks and Connections:

- Extend the Yonge Subway north to Steeles Avenue;
- Enhance pedestrian access and linkages to Yonge Street and surrounding neighbourhoods;
- Improve the public road network and connectivity in the area;
- Provide a bicycle network and facilities for cyclists;
- Integrate pedestrian connections to subway stations from adjacent developments; and,
- Provide a Yonge Street Centre Median.

2. Public Realm

Streetscape

- Create a continuous unified streetscape framed by appropriately massed buildings and a variety of activities on the street;
- Create pedestrian-friendly streets with widened sidewalks, centre medians, trees, lights, furniture; and,
- Enhance the Yonge Street corridor with a continuation of the existing landscape median treatment.

Parks and Open Space

- Expand the open space system in relation to areas of intensification;
- Create an interconnected parks and open space network that provides parks and recreation opportunities at a variety of scales and functions including parks, squares, plazas, sitting areas, natural heritage areas and tree-lined streets; and,
- Link major community facilities and Yonge Street with parks and open spaces.

3. Built Form/Density

- Focus intensification around subway nodes;
- Support increased density with transportation improvements, including active transportation improvements; and,
- Provide a transition from high, to mid and to low-rise buildings in surrounding neighbourhoods.

Vision Statement

“The character of Yonge Street North will be distinct and memorable building upon its local assets:

- **An efficient and connected transportation network;**
- **A green and vibrant public realm; and,**

- **Urban built form with intensification concentrated at transit nodes and heights transitioning down to respect surrounding stable residential areas.”**

Future Directions

Based on the background analysis, priority directions and vision statement, a number of conceptual urban structure alternatives and transportation alternatives were developed, all of which reflect certain common structural elements.

Common Structural Elements

To achieve the proposed vision for the Yonge Street North Corridor Area, it is important that certain common key structural elements form the basis for the development of all of the development alternatives.

- **Connectivity/Accessibility**
 - Enhancement of access to the area is essential; and,
 - Improved connectivity/enhancement of facilities for transit users, pedestrians and cyclists including:
 - Increased road alternatives for all modes of travel;
 - Complete sidewalk system;
 - Bicycle route system; and
 - Connections through large blocks of land.

- **Vibrant Streetscape on Yonge Street**

Yonge Street should be a vibrant place for people with a mix of uses and unifying and continuously connected streetscape including:

- Extension of Yonge Street Promenade and Centre Median;
- Creation of Urban Open Space Areas and Public Art on Yonge Street; and,
- Limit vehicular conflicts with pedestrians.

- **Creation of a Linked Parks and Open Space Network**

- Additional parks and open space will be required as redevelopment occurs;
- Need for public meeting places on Yonge St. corridor; and
- Link open space system by enhanced pedestrian connections along public streets and rights-of-way.

- **Appropriate Transitions in scale between High and Medium Density Development along Yonge Street and adjacent Low and Medium Density Neighbourhoods**

- Stability of low and medium density neighbourhoods adjacent to redevelopment areas is to be maintained; and,
- Appropriate transitions between development along Yonge Street and adjacent low and medium density development will be ensured through a range of design approaches.

Urban Structure Options

Context

The City's Official Plan directs growth to specific areas of the City which includes areas identified as "Centres" and "Avenues". The portion of the Yonge Street North Corridor Study Area south of Drewry and Cummer Avenues is part of the North York Centre, while the remainder of the corridor is designated as an "Avenue".

Building on these current Official Plan urban structure elements proposed conceptual urban structure options were developed for the June 5, 2012 Public Workshop. Based on the input received at the Workshop, the conceptual urban structure concepts were refined with details being added with respect to building height and density (Floor Space Index (FSI)).

The public input, while not establishing a consensus, provided that careful consideration was to be given to the integration of new high density development with the adjacent remaining low density development. To establish whether this objective could be achieved, the refined Options were based on the following assumptions:

- Highest densities and heights concentrated at subway nodes due to factors such as lot depth and context;
- Heights will transition from nodes, both north-south (based on a 400 m walking radius from the node) and east-west (based on transitions to adjacent residential uses); and,
- To achieve taller buildings beyond the nodes, where lots are 35-45 metres deep, assembly of land in existing neighbourhoods will be required.

In developing the refined Options, careful attention was paid to the City's "Design Criteria for Review of Tall Buildings Proposals". These Criteria apply to buildings "whose height is greater than the width of the right of way of the principal street on which it is located". The criteria reflect site context, site organization, buildings massing and pedestrian realm. In particular, a key criteria is that new development will be massed to fit harmoniously into its existing planned context. It will limit its impacts on neighbouring streets, parks, buildings and open space. Building heights were established based on the City's guidelines with respect to maximum angular plane in relation to adjacent low density development.

Other factors which were considered in the refinement of the options included:

- The City's Mid-Rise and Avenue Guidelines;
- Appropriate transitions from existing and future neighbourhoods to Yonge Street;
- The existing and planned context south of Finch Avenue in the North York Centre and north of Steeles Avenue in York Region;
- Technical input with respect to transportation and servicing; and,
- Parkland strategies and the open space network and connections.

The options are further described below and reflect an existing study area population estimated to be 17,472 in 9,200 residential units with employment of 10,512 (2011). It should be noted in all cases that regardless of the identified maximum height, actual permitted height will depend on the relationship of the site to adjacent low density residential development and will be determined based on consideration of the City's Tall Building Guidelines particularly the calculation of a 45 degree angular plane. In addition, maximum height and density reflect

maximums after application of the City's density incentive policy under Section 37 of the *Planning Act* to secure specified public benefits such as community centres, social facilities, and lands for new roads in exchange for density increases.

Do Nothing Option

The Do Nothing Urban Structure Option would involve the build out of the existing Centre and Avenue designations, and related zoning (See Map 2a and 2b Existing Land Use). This option is forecasted to have 13,100 residential units and employment of 8,900 jobs.

Centre Extended

The Centre Extended Option (See Map 8A) and the refined Option (see Map 8B) identify the entire Yonge Street North Corridor as a Centre – extending the current designation northerly from Drewry and Cummer Avenues to Steeles Avenue. Transition areas between the Centre and remaining existing low density residential areas are also established. The Option as refined is estimated to result in approximately 21,000 residential units and employment of 25,000.

Nodes and Avenue

The Nodes and Avenue Option (See Map 9A) and the refined Option (See Map 9B), continues the current approach in the Official Plan of recognizing the lands south of Drewry and Cummer Avenues as a “Centre” and the lands north of Drewry and Cummer Avenue to Steeles Avenue as an “Avenue”. However, a Node designation is also proposed to apply to lands adjacent to the proposed subway stations at Drewry/Cummer and Steeles. The Node designation will recognize that high density, mixed use development similar to that adjacent to the Finch subway station is permitted and encouraged in these areas. The Option as refined is estimated to result in approximately 16,900 residential units and employment of 9,500.

Nodes and Wider Avenue

The Nodes and Wider Avenue Option (See Map 10A) and the refined Option (See Map 10B), is similar to the Nodes and Avenue Option, but it provides for a wider area to be included in the Avenue designation. The wider area provides to the east of Yonge for a better transition for mid-rise buildings to the low density neighbourhoods, and on the west also includes a wider low density transition area to Goulding Park and the proposed north-south collector road. This provides more flexibility in development form and additional potential for intensification. This Option was estimated to result in approximately 17,500 residential units and employment of 15,800.

Transportation Alternatives

Context

The Existing Transportation Conditions Report prepared by LEA Consulting Ltd., as part of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) process, identified a number of constraints within the transportation network especially south of Cummer/Drewry and in the northwest section of the Study Area. The identified constraints included discontinuous networks, lack of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, operational issues at intersections within the study area and a poor pedestrian environment.

Arising from this analysis, a Problem/Opportunity Statement was developed which indicates that the transportation network requires a more urban pattern of streets and blocks to:

- Facilitate future development;
- Improve accessibility to and within the study area for non-auto modes of transportation (i.e. walking, cycling);
- Improve vehicular access to the study area; and,
- Address vehicular constraints.

The alternatives are intended to address these constraints by introducing a more urban pattern of streets and blocks.

Transportation Alternative 1: Do Nothing

Transportation Alternative 1, Do Nothing (See Map 11) is a baseline condition from which to compare and evaluate all other alternative solutions. Within this alternative, no active changes to the existing capacity or configuration of the transportation system are proposed other than those already planned by the City. There are four such improvements:

- Extension of Beecroft Avenue/completion of planned Service Road;
- The installation of bicycle lanes on Willowdale; and,
- The installation of a bicycle trail along the Finch Hydro Corridor.

Beyond the structural changes, there are a number of actions associated with the implementation of the above that will improve the pedestrian and cyclist environment in a *Do-Nothing* scenario. First, the Yonge streetscape would be improved by widening the sidewalk, installing a central median, adding street trees to foster a welcoming microclimate, and installing pedestrian-friendly lighting. The details of this streetscape should be determined through the detailed design stage. Second, the streetscape can be further improved by including urban design provisions for future development that ensures new buildings have a human scale, address the street directly, and have set-backs to further the pedestrian environment. Third, new developments are proposed to be required to at least maintain and preferably improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists through intra-block connections.

Together, these developments promise a substantially more pedestrian-friendly environment than that which exists at present. This is expected to encourage the use of active transport or active transport as one component in public transit trips.

Transportation Alternative 2: Nodal Improvements

Transportation Alternative 2: Nodal Improvements (See Map 12) includes three elements that differ from the Do-Nothing Alternative.

First, accessibility around the proposed subway station nodes is improved through the introduction of a collector road system around both the Steeles and Drewry/Cummer nodes. Second, Kenneth Avenue is extended to Yonge Street. Third, a new framework for a road network is introduced at the current location of Centrepoint Mall.

The nodal collector roads provide the benefits of a grid system in close proximity to the planned subway stations thereby providing alternatives and greater connections to and around these areas. They improve accessibility for all modes of transport. The collector roads around Finch Station and the planned Cummer station are both integrated with the extension of the Beecroft service road. This will help relieve operational constraints at signalized intersections along Yonge Street from Cummer Avenue / Drewry Avenue to Finch Avenue as well as provide additional access to the Finch subway station parking lots.

The Kenneth Avenue extension to Yonge Street enhances access to the existing east commuter parking lot at Finch Station. The existing western entrance to the parking lot is shared with the Finch Bus Terminal. This confuses drivers as to whether the parking lot may be accessed at this point. Extending Kenneth Avenue to meet Yonge Street formalizes the intersection and makes it less confusing. The Kenneth Avenue extension also provides an alternative northbound/southbound route to Willowdale Avenue, linking the parking lot with Finch Avenue.

The node surrounding Steeles subway station includes the present site of Centrepoint Mall. The size of this mall is such that it is appropriate to include not only a single collector road system but also a further local road network framework. This will ensure multimodal accessibility to the subway station and define a framework for future development on the Centrepoint Mall property. A new local road network is also provided on the east side of the Yonge and Steeles node to serve the same functions.

Transportation Alternative 3: Network Improvements

Transportation Alternative 3: Network Improvements (See Map 13) builds on Alternative 2. It includes all the elements from the proposed *Nodal Improvements* network and connects the nodal collector roads with additional east-west and north-south collector roads both parallel and crossing Yonge Street.

The additional north-south collector roads provide viable north-south alternatives to Hilda Avenue, Yonge Street, and Willowdale Avenue. This has three benefits. First, it would relieve operational constraints found at intersections along the existing north-south streets in both the central and northern portions of the study area. Second, it would enable areas north of Cummer Avenue / Drewry Avenue to more easily access the Finch Station parking lots. Finally, it would divert traffic away from Yonge Street and enable Yonge Street to carry less traffic and thus be more easily re-imagined as a promenade or complete street space.

The *Network Improvements* scenario adds east-west routes at Centrepoint Mall and through the Finch utility corridor. At Centrepoint Mall, the new east-west collector is proposed to address traffic constraints observed in the northwest corner of the study area. Hilda Avenue and Yonge Street are the only vehicular access points to Steeles Avenue West in the study area, resulting in constraints experienced at both the Steeles-Hilda and Steeles -Yonge intersections. This alternative provides more options to access Steeles Avenue West via an extension of Lariviere Road west of Yonge Street and should provide operational relief at these intersections. This grid network also provides a good level of pedestrian and cycling connectivity. This network develops a framework that can inform and contribute to the detailed design process for the Steeles subway station.

The proposed east-west road in the Finch utility corridor would need to be designed in collaboration with Toronto Hydro. It is envisioned to stretch from Bathurst Street in the west to

Bayview Avenue in the east. This new roadway would provide a major east-west alternative to Finch Avenue and Cummer Avenue / Drewry Avenue.

Option Evaluation

Process

The Urban Structure Options and Transportation Alternatives were reviewed at a public workshop on June 5, 2012. In addition, three written submissions were received and over the course of 2012 and early 2013 City Staff also met with many individuals and groups of residents and landowners to discuss the Study and understand their questions and comments. Staff was also invited and attended the Silverview Ratepayers Annual General Meeting and held a 'mini-workshop' with approximately 50 residents. Based on this public input and additional detailed analysis by City staff and the Consultant Team, refinements were identified to the Urban Structure Options and Transportation Alternatives.

The Options/Alternatives were then evaluated with respect to transportation and servicing considerations. This technical evaluation provided input to the planning and urban design evaluation. A model of the preferred urban structure option and related transportation alternative – Nodes and Wider Avenue - was then prepared, together with supporting statistics.

Public Input

Public Workshop

Approximately 80 people attended the Options Workshop on June 5, 2012. Following a presentation, participants worked in groups to provide feedback on the Urban Structure Options and Transportation Alternatives. Each group also was provided an opportunity to review and comment using "Post-It Notes" on a large physical model of the Yonge Street corridor where urban structure alternatives were illustrated through a number of demonstration sites.

With respect to the Urban Structure Options, the majority of the tables preferred the Centre Extended Option, although there was one table which had support for all three options and three tables which preferred the Nodes and Wider Avenue Option because of concerns with density and a view that it was the best option with respect to transitions to adjacent areas. The groups also provided a range of comments including support for a mix of uses along the Yonge Street corridor with retail at grade; high density at the nodes to support the subway; underground pathways; more parks, open space and other neighbourhood features; wide sidewalks; stepbacks for tall buildings; unique architecture; and concerns with shadow and wind impacts.

In terms of the Transportation Alternatives, four tables preferred Alternative 3, Network Improvements, while one table preferred Alternative 2, Nodal Improvements. The other tables did not identify a preferred alternative, but did provide detailed comments, as did the tables which identified a preferred alternative. Key comments include the need to coordinate plans with Markham and Vaughan; support for the extension of the subway; coordinate development with creation of new roads to minimize traffic impacts; greater traffic controls recommended to increase safety; and additional sidewalks and cycling paths required.

Other Public Input

Three written submissions were received. Two of the written submissions reflect input from the Silverview residents which identified concerns with more intense development, and in particular, a direction that infrastructure would have to be improved before development takes place. Transportation Alternative 3 was supported by the Silverview group.

Over the course of 2012 and early 2013 City Staff also met with many individuals and groups of residents and landowners to discuss the Study and understand their questions and comments. Staff was also invited and attended the Silverview Ratepayers Annual General Meeting and held a 'mini-workshop' with approximately 50 residents.

Overall, there was no absolute consensus on the appropriate scale and extent of redevelopment in the area. There was some general recognition of the need to locate taller buildings and higher densities on Yonge Street near the subway stations. There was however some overall consensus from residents about the need to manage change and development in the area by providing the infrastructure necessary to support planned growth.

Meetings were also held with many landowners in the area, some of which also have proposed applications for redevelopment in the area, or acknowledge they are contemplating a future development proposal on their lands.

Transportation Evaluation

The three transportation planning alternatives were evaluated using five criteria:

1. continuity of the network
 - fills gaps within the existing network
 - creates a dense urban pattern of streets
 - connects a variety of neighbourhood origins and destinations
2. comfort of the users within the network
 - facilitates appropriate traffic control measures
 - supports active modes of transportation
3. capacity of the network
 - accommodates the projected demands
4. cost of the network alternative
 - minimizes street construction/reconstruction cost
 - minimizes the number of properties affected
5. conservation of environmental potential
 - maintains appropriately shaped and sized blocks for development
 - protects existing communities
 - minimizes impact to natural environment

Continuity, comfort, cost, and conservation were evaluated qualitatively. Vehicular capacity was evaluated quantitatively using screenlines to determine how well traffic would flow through specific movements and using a cordon around the entire study area to determine how well

traffic could flow as a whole. A combination of vehicular capacity and land use was removed from consideration if it resulted in volume exceeding capacity in at least one screenline or it resulted in the overall cordon area volume/capacity (V/C) ratio exceeding 0.85.

The analysis showed that the *Do Nothing* solution could not accommodate any of the proposed land use options. It also showed that the *Nodal Improvements* solution could support up to the *Nodes and Wider Avenue* land use option without exceeding the threshold values. The *Network Improvements* scenario had higher capacity. The *Network Improvements* alternative had the greatest capacity, however also the greatest impact on local neighbourhoods, especially on the neighbourhood near Everingham Court. The added capacity from those improvements was seen to be less important than avoiding such significant impacts to the residential communities.

The transportation alternatives were also analyzed without the subway constructed to suggest phasing of the transportation network relative to the land use option. In the short-term, pre-subway condition, it was concluded that the greatest land use that could be considered was the Nodes and Avenue. The *Nodal Improvements* solution could provide sufficient capacity for this land use in the pre-subway short-run. In the long-run, post-subway condition, a land use option between the Nodes and Wider Avenue and the Centre Extended options could be supported so long as the transportation network lay somewhere between the *Nodal Improvements* solution and the *Network Improvements* solution.

Servicing Evaluation

The potential impact on municipal servicing (storm, sanitary and watermains) by the proposed Yonge Street North Planning Study land use options was evaluated qualitatively with regards to natural environment, economic and social effects, feasibility and cost, and technical aspects. Details are provided in below.

Evaluation Criteria of Land Use Options

MAIN CRITERIA	SUB-CRITERIA
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	Having regard for protecting the natural and physical components of the environment, included considerations of terrestrial habitat, aquatic habitat, surface water quality, ground water quality, aesthetics and landscaping as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrestrial • Land • Water
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC	Having regard for the potential impact related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural heritage resource • Recreational and tourism • Traffic considerations • Health and safety • Employment • Noise and vibration
FEASIBILITY AND COST	Having regard for the cost associated with the municipal servicing requirement and feasibility of servicing improvement:

MAIN CRITERIA	SUB-CRITERIA
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feasibility of construction • Cost – Capital and operational • Ease of operation/maintenance • Implementation possibility
TECHNICAL	<p>Having regard for the impact/requirement on the servicing of each land use option, considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service reliability • Level of servicing demand • Extent of servicing disruption

Evaluation of Land Use Options on Municipal Services

The potential impact on municipal services by the proposed land use options was evaluated qualitatively with regards to natural environment, economy and society, feasibility and cost, and other technical aspect. The Table below shows the preliminary assessment of the impact on municipal services.

Land Use Impact Assessment

CRITERIA		LAND USE OPTION			
		0	1	2	3
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	Terrestrial	•	•	●	•
	Land	•	•	●	•
	Water	•	•	●	•
SOCIAL & ECONOMIC	Cultural Heritage	●	•	•	•
	Recreation and Tourism	•	●	•	•
	Traffic	●	•	●	•
	Health and Safety	•	•	●	•
	Employment	•	●	•	•
	Noise and Vibration	●	•	●	•
FEASIBILITY AND COST	Feasibility	•	•	●	•

CRITERIA		LAND USE OPTION			
		0	1	2	3
	Cost of Servicing Improvement	●	•	●	●
	Maintenance Requirement	•	•	●	●
	Implementation Possibility	•	•	●	●
TECHNICAL	Service Reliability	•	•	●	●
	Level of Servicing Demand	•	•	●	●
	Extent of Servicing Disruption	•	•	●	●
RECOMMENDED OPTION			√		

KEY	• Poor	● Average	● Good
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The qualitative impact assessment indicates land use option impacts to municipal services, from a high impact to a low impact.

- Option 1 - Centre Extended: High impact
- Option 3 - Nodes and Wider Avenue: Intermediate impact
- Option 2 – Nodes and Avenue: Low impact

The Do Nothing (Option 0) alternative will not have any impact on Municipal Services and therefore has not been included evaluation matrix.

Option-2 has the least impact on the municipal servicing infrastructure, and therefore would be considered the preferred land use option **from the perspective of municipal servicing**.

Planning and Urban Design Evaluation

The Transportation and Servicing Evaluations indicate that selection of any urban structure option, including the Do Nothing Option, will require improvements to infrastructure. In particular, the Transportation Evaluation demonstrated that, with the combination of subway with supporting road networks any of the proposed levels of development can be accommodated. However, depending on the ultimate level of development, the associated road network is required to be more extensive.

In addition, there was no overall absolute consensus from the public on the appropriate scale and extent of redevelopment in the area. There was however consensus from residents about the need to manage change and development in the area by providing the infrastructure necessary to support planned growth.

Consequently, from a planning perspective, the critical evaluation factors relate to which urban structure option best implements Provincial and City planning policy which encourage efficient development and intensification, while establishing the appropriate balance between that intensification and the massing of new development so it “creates appropriate transitions in scale to neighbouring existing and planned buildings” (Official Plan Section 3.1.2 (3b)), particularly low density neighbourhoods which will remain to the east and west of the Yonge Street corridor.

As part of addressing this consideration, careful attention was paid to the City’s “Design Criteria for Review of Tall Buildings Proposals”. Specifically, the evaluation process with respect to building height considered the following objectives:

- Appropriate transitions between new development and existing stable low rise residential neighbourhoods;
- Balanced heights on both sides of Yonge Street;
- Greatest heights on Yonge Street and at transit nodes; and,
- Relationship of building heights within individual development parcels.

The evaluation with respect to height:

- Applied a 45 degree angular plane from existing low rise neighbourhoods to buildings along Yonge to determine the maximum building heights;
- Adjusted maximum heights to create consistent building heights on both sides of Yonge Street; and,
- Adjusted heights of buildings at the back of buildings facing Yonge Street to create a transition between and within adjacent development parcels.

With respect to densities, the evaluation process:

- Reflected the context –specific height recommendations;
- Intensification focused around transit nodes;
- Provision of a transition from high to mid and to low rise buildings in surrounding neighbourhoods; and,
- Consideration of land acquisition/assembly requirements.

Centre Extended Option

The Centre Extended Option provides the maximum opportunity for intensification along the corridor. It would result in the extension of the Centre designation which is currently applicable to the area from Finch to Drewry/Cummer, north to Steeles Avenue. As such, the Centre Extended Option best achieves the growth and intensification objectives of Provincial policy as reflected in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan).

The Centre Extended Option:

- Maximizes development opportunities;
- Provides for balanced development west and east of Yonge Street;
- Provides for, and requires, the largest transition zone to adjacent existing low density residential neighbourhoods among the three Options; and,

- Provides the potential for the establishment of larger parks along Yonge Street.

However, the refined Option also will:

- Create greater challenges for implementation because of the uncertainties of land assembly/acquisition for both private development and public infrastructure, in particular the creation of the north/south collector road will be a challenge with respect to land acquisition and mitigation of impacts on existing low density residential neighbourhoods;
- Create the potential for greater impacts on existing residential neighbourhoods as a result of new development;
- Provide for less variety of building form along the Yonge Street frontage; and,
- Does not reflect the current development pattern which concentrates the highest density of development adjacent to subway stations, a direction which is encouraged in the Growth Plan (Section 2.2.5).

Nodes and Avenues Option

The Nodes and Avenues Option provides the most limited opportunity of the three options for intensification along the Yonge Street corridor. However, it would result in the potential for the creation of complete development nodes around the proposed Drewry/Cummer and Steeles subway stations, and some intensification of the Avenue between the two nodes in conformity with the directions in the Growth Plan (Section 2.2.5). As such, this Option would still achieve the basic objectives of Provincial and City policy as reflected in the PPS, Growth Plan and the City's Official Plan.

The Nodes and Avenues Option:

- Provides minimum impacts on existing low density residential neighbourhoods;
- Requires the minimum amount of land assembly/acquisition;
- Provides the potential for a diversified built-form including both mid-rise and high-rise and related to this, a greater opportunity for a varied character along Yonge Street;
- Concentrates development around the proposed subway stations;
- Provides fewer challenges for implementation because of the less uncertainties with respect to land assembly/acquisition for both private development and public infrastructure; and,
- Provides for balanced development west and east of Yonge Street.

However, the refined Option also will:

- Result in much more limited development opportunities;
- Result in limited transition zones; and,
- Have less potential to create additional park space.

Nodes and Wider Avenue

The Nodes and Wider Avenue Option is designed to reflect key directions in the other two options. It provides for additional development opportunities and wider transition zones, while not leading to the same potential for impact on the existing low density residential neighbourhoods. It would result in the creation of a better relationship between the improved road and parks structure and connections to the area of redevelopment around the proposed

Drewry/Cummer and Steeles subway stations than found in the Nodes and Avenues Options, and greater intensification of the Avenue between the two nodes. As such, the Option would achieve more than just the basic objectives of Provincial and City policy as reflected in the PPS, Growth Plan and the City's Official Plan.

The Wider Avenue Option:

- Supports larger scale and higher density development than the Nodes and Avenues Option, but does not need the large-scale land assembly/acquisition required for the Centre Extended Option;
- Provides the potential for a diversified built-form including both mid-rise and high-rise and related to this, a greater opportunity for a varied character along Yonge Street;
- Concentrates development around the proposed subway stations;
- Provides fewer challenges for implementation than the Centre Extended Option, although somewhat more challenges than the Nodes and Avenues Option, because there is less uncertainty with respect to land assembly/acquisition for both private development and public infrastructure;
- Provides for larger transition zones than the Nodes and Avenues Option, without the need for a north/south collector road on the east side; and,
- Provides for greater potential to create more park space than the Nodes and Avenues Option with the creation of a large open space linking Centre Park to the east of Yonge Street with Goulding Park on the west side of Yonge Street being a priority.

However, the refined Option also will result in more development west of Yonge Street and potential issues with connectivity east of Yonge Street.

Conclusions and Directions

The Nodes and Wider Avenue Option is recommended as the Preferred Option (See Map 15 and Appendix A) on which to base the development of the Yonge Street North Planning Area (17,700 residential units and 15,800 jobs). However, the Option is modified to designate the lands bounded by Athabaska, Dumont, Newton and Yonge to allow for some lower density redevelopment through an easterly extension of the Node Transition designation (Maximum FSI 3, Maximum Height 6 storeys, 11 storeys on Yonge Street), and the introduction of an additional Transition Area designation (Maximum FSI 1.5-2, Maximum Height 4 storeys). This Option is results in an increase of residential gross floor area over existing by 1,350,000m² and employment gross floor area by 265,000m².

Special consideration needs to be given to the redevelopment of the Centrepont Mall lands. This site represents a unique opportunity not found elsewhere in the Yonge Street North corridor as the largest assembled single property in terms of land area and frontage on major arterial roads. In addition, the owner has expressed a willingness to have the Steeles multi-modal station on its lands. The Secondary Plan should acknowledge the special circumstances of this site and include specific planning policies to guide its redevelopment.

The related transportation network closely resembles that of the *Network Improvements* solution but removes the north-south collector road between Centre Avenue and Wedgewood Drive. It also reclassifies some proposed roads from collector roads to local roads near Steeles given the proposed changes in their role in the network.

The recommended transit plan consists of introducing two new subway stations at Cummer and Steeles. The introduction of these stations obviates the needs for a large volume of buses on Yonge and permits the diamond lanes on Yonge to be repurposed. These subway stations will be supported by a land use plan that locates high densities near the stations and a high degree of pedestrian and cyclist accessibility. Indeed, the pedestrian and cyclist network aims to enable such users to travel to and from subway stations with ease. Multi-use trails, bicycle lanes, major pedestrian routes with sidewalks on both sides of the road, and a revitalization of the Yonge promenade are all proposed to further the use of active transport. Within the design right-of-way the most vulnerable users will take precedence over all other modes of transportation.

The success and lessons learned through years of implementing the North York Centre Secondary Plan also should be taken into account in the development of the Yonge Street North Area, as will the key structural elements which formed the basis for the development of all of the development alternatives including:

- Connectivity/Accessibility;
- Vibrant Streetscape on Yonge Street;
- Creation of a Linked Parks and Open Space Network; and,
- Appropriate Transitions in scale between High and Medium Density Development along Yonge Street and adjacent Low and Medium Density Neighbourhoods.

The following general policy directions would also apply to the Yonge Street North Area:

- Given that the timing of the subway has not been confirmed, development would be constrained, based on the recommendations of the Transportation Master Plan, to an increase in the residential gross floor area of 1,240,000 m² and employment gross floor area of 74,000 m² until subway construction is completed.
- A prescriptive density incentive policy under Section 37 of the *Planning Act* to secure specified public benefits such as community centres, social facilities, streetscape improvements such as including centre medians, and lands for new roads 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 located at the outskirts of the Plan area.
- The potential for density transfers for land for public purposes including parkland and from public land, and the conservation of heritage features, buildings and sites.
- A policy for residential development which will indicate that a review will be undertaken to determine which alternative parkland dedication rate should apply to new residential development.
- Residential areas not within the boundaries of Yonge Street North Area would be considered to be stable residential areas. The stability of these residential areas would be maintained and enhanced in accordance with established Official Plan policies for those areas.
- The height of buildings will be designed to protect stable residential areas, provide for appropriate transitions in height between the highest intensity areas along Yonge Street and the residential communities outside the Secondary Plan, encourage the highest

intensity developments along Yonge Street and in the vicinity of subway stations and achieve a comfortable human scale and sense of spatial enclosure along prime pedestrian streets.

- A fine grain urban street grid pattern is encouraged with small City blocks. As a condition of development approval, the provision of new public streets or pedestrian routes may be secured in order to increase the amenity, orientation and public access to and from Yonge Street.
- A linked park and open space system is established with a focus on the provision of parks and open space along the Yonge Street corridor.
- All streets are planted with street trees, have sidewalks on both sides and overhead wiring removed and utilities provided below grade, with the provision of public art.
- The Plan is designed to reduce reliance on the use of the automobile and attain a high transit modal split and to ensure that development levels do not exceed the capacity of infrastructure serving the area. Enhanced bicycle and pedestrian connections will be encouraged, in particular secure cycling links from local streets to Yonge Street and Transit Stations. Specifically the Plan should:
 - Establish policies to create a more urban pattern of streets and blocks to facilitate future development; improve accessibility for all modes of transportation and address the vehicle constraints currently being experienced, including adopting the recommended road network and associated right-of-way widths in the Transportation Master Plan and providing direction that public streets be designed as public spaces with distinct identities which act as lively urban connections, balancing the needs of all users as well as accommodating traffic flow;
 - Provide a flexible short and long term implementation framework to ensure that the required transportation infrastructure is provided as development proceeds over time;
 - Respect that future Municipal Class Environmental Assessment phases will be required for specific transportation improvements including the establishment of the exact location, alignment and design of new road alignments;
 - Include the recommended transit, pedestrian and cycling plans and development which supports transit; and,
 - Require spaces to be designed to be barrier free and universally accessible.
- The Yonge Street streetscape would be a Prime Pedestrian Areas with extra wide sidewalks, tree plantings and other features and the continuation of the North York Centre median. Pedestrian scale street wall conditions will be required along Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue, as well as Drewry/Cummer.

In addition, there will need to be a number of specific amendments to the Official Plan and North York Centre Secondary Plan and the addition of a new Yonge Street North Secondary Plan which would apply to the Yonge Street Corridor between Drewry/Cummer and Steeles Avenue. These changes would include:

- Delete the 'Avenue' segment on Map 2 on the Yonge Street corridor between North York Centre and Steeles Avenue;
- Expanding the *Mixed Use Areas* designations on Map 16 to reflect the boundaries of the North York Centre Secondary Plan and the new Yonge Street North Secondary Plan;
- Adding a new Yonge Street North Secondary Plan to Map 35 of the Official Plan and Chapter 6;
- Amendments to the North York Centre Secondary Plan:
 - In proximity to the planned Cummer subway station:
 - increasing permitted densities
 - increasing permitted heights
 - adding transit and transit-supportive infrastructure to the list of available density incentives/community benefits
 - revising transportation improvements
 - Increasing the long range development levels; and,
- Amendments to the Official Plan adding a new 'Yonge Street North Secondary Plan' in the Yonge Street corridor between the North York Centre Secondary Plan and Steeles Avenue:
 - Identifying the boundaries of the Yonge Street North Secondary Plan
 - Specifying permitted densities
 - Adding transit and transit-supportive infrastructure to the list of available density incentives/community benefits
 - Indicating permitted heights to provide highest heights at the Cummer and Steeles Subway stations transitioning down along Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue and towards the surrounding lower scale *Neighbourhoods*
 - Identifying necessary transportation and servicing improvements and associated policies
 - Identifying a conceptual parks and open space plan
 - Acknowledging the special circumstances of the Centrepoint Mall lands and including specific planning policies to guide its redevelopment.

1. Introduction

1.1 Study Purpose

The City of Toronto has initiated the Yonge Street North Planning Study to develop a vision for the future of the Yonge Street corridor between Finch Avenue and Steeles Avenue in response to the advancement of the planned northerly extension of the Yonge subway line, and existing and anticipated development pressures in the area. The City recognizes that the actual delivery of improved transportation capacity remains uncertain.

The Study is being undertaken in the context of existing Provincial policies and plans. In particular, the Province's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the Growth Plan) identifies 'urban growth centres', including the North York Centre, where significant employment and population growth is to be accommodated and linked by high order transit to other urban growth centres. The Province's Regional Transportation Plan (Metrolinx's "Big Move") identifies the northerly extension of the Yonge subway and east-west rapid transit along the Steeles Avenue corridor. It also identifies Yonge Street/Finch Avenue and Yonge Street/Steeles Avenue as gateway mobility hubs which consist of major transit stations and the surrounding area that can be comfortably accessed by foot.

Despite the directions in the Growth Plan, the actual delivery of improved transit capacity remains uncertain. In this context, the primary objective of the Study is to develop a vision for the area's future and to provide a comprehensive set of planning tools to realize that vision and to manage growth in the face of increasing development pressures. To do this, the Study will determine the level of development that can be supported by both the existing transportation network with minimal modifications, as well as the planned higher order transit system. It will also plan for the creation of enhanced pedestrian amenities, streetscapes, community facilities and open space system. Finally it will develop a strategy for implementation.

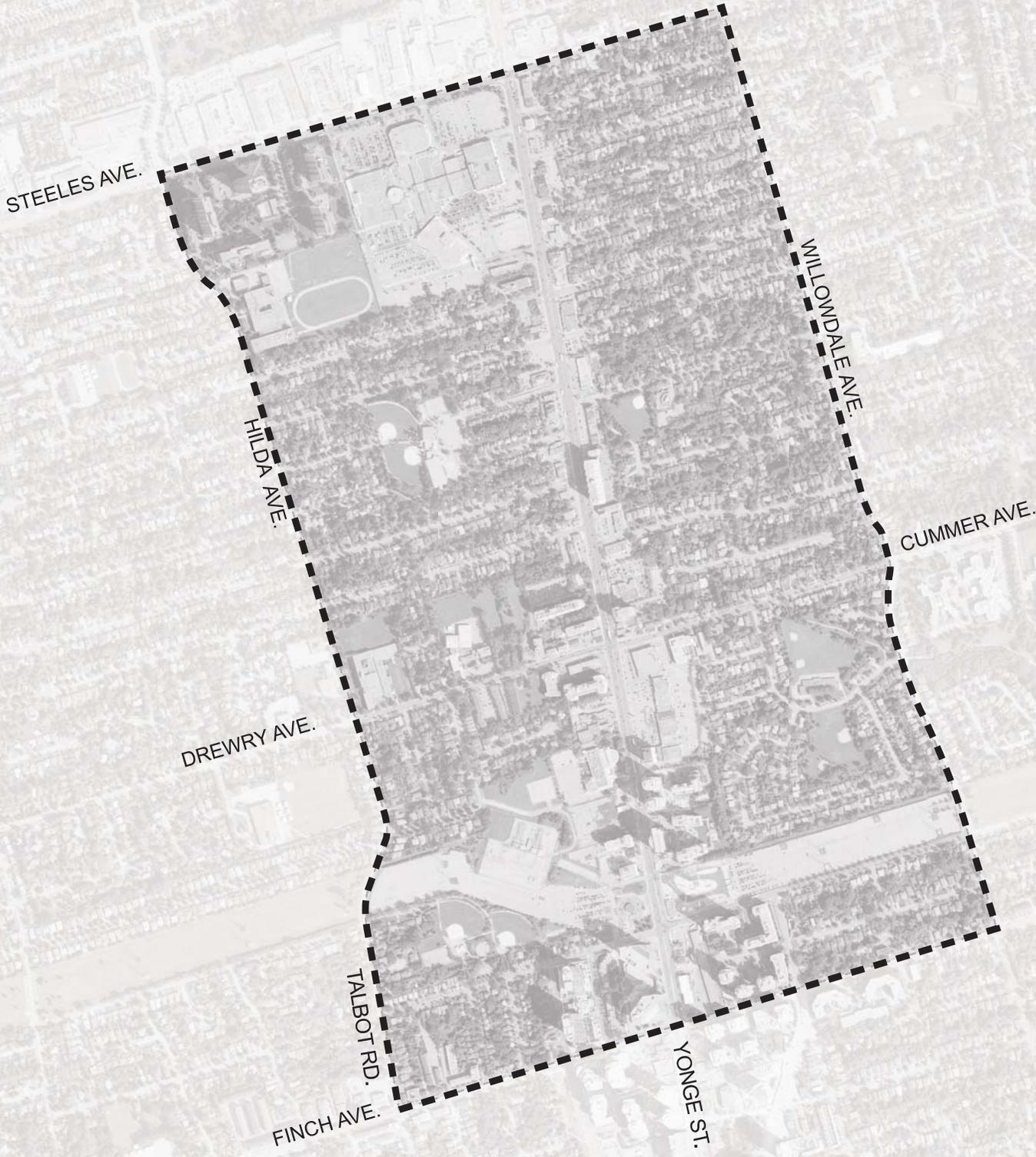
1.2 Study Area

The focus of the Study is the Yonge Street Corridor, but the Study Area includes the lands between Steeles Avenue on the north, Willowdale Avenue on the east, Finch Avenue on the south and Talbot Road/Hilda Avenue on the west. (See Map 1) The Study Area incorporates some areas that are not expected to undergo significant change; however such lands may be affected by redevelopment which does occur and so must be considered as part of the Study. The Yonge Street Corridor comprises property on or in close proximity to Yonge Street where the appropriate areas for redevelopment must be identified and where physical change must be anticipated, facilitated and managed.

1.3 Study Process

The Study is being carried out in three phases. Phase 1 included background research to review the current policy framework, existing facilities and conditions, and to identify major opportunities and constraints to development in the Study Area. Public consultation occurred at a visioning workshop held on December 8, 2011. The Yonge Street North Planning Study Background Report outlines the results of the background research, including input from the public.

Yonge Street North Planning Study



Phase 2 of the Study involves the preparation and evaluation of a series of conceptual urban structure, transportation and public realm alternatives. As part of the evaluation of the alternatives, the public were invited to rank specific elements, as well as the alternatives as a whole at a workshop held on June 5, 2012. Over the course of 2012 and early 2013 City Staff also met with many individuals and groups of residents and landowners to discuss the Study and understand their questions and comments. Staff was also invited and attended the Silverview Ratepayers Annual General Meeting and held a 'mini-workshop' with approximately 50 residents. Detailed urban structure options and transportation alternatives were prepared based on the feedback and evaluated. The preferred option was then developed.

The preferred option was brought back to the public for input at a meeting on May 9, 2013. The meeting was attended by 56 residents and landowners. City staff also held a number of meetings with stakeholders. In addition, numerous inquiries and written comments were received by the City. All the input illustrated a range of viewpoints including a significant number of residents who supported Option 1, Centre Extended as the preferred option. This view reflected a feeling that issues with density and lack of transition could be addressed and that the greater density was needed to attract development to the area. Support for Option 1 however, was balanced by the views of a number of residents who were concerned with the impacts of development including noise, litter, and traffic.

Phase 3 will involve preparation of a final report and recommendations based on public input and will include any draft Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments. This final report will be reviewed with the public at a public meeting/open house and then will be presented to Community Council.

In terms of the infrastructure and transportation improvements, the Yonge Street North Planning Study is also being conducted, in accordance with the master planning process outlined in the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA) planning and design process published by the Municipal Engineers Association and which was approved by the Ministry of the Environment in October 2000, as amended in 2007 and more recently on August 17, 2011. As a master planning study, the Yonge Street North Planning Study is required to fulfill the first two phases of the MCEA planning and design process. As a component of Phases 1 and 2, the Yonge Street North Planning Study involves an extensive public consultation program designed to:

- Provide information to the public as a basis for ensuring two-way meaningful participation;
- Seek the public's input on the problems/opportunities, alternative solutions, evaluation procedure and selection of the preferred alternative solution; and,
- Establish general support from the public for the studies recommendations.

While formal public meetings are mandated under the Municipal Class EA process, a more extensive public consultation plan is being undertaken for this study. Specifically, the project is integrating a combination of public and stakeholder workshops, formal public open houses and a wide variety of public outreach methods including mailings, websites and email. Overall, the objective of the public consultation process is to facilitate the engagement of the public and stakeholders in the decision making process. Infrastructure and Transportation Master Plans have been prepared under separate cover to address Phase 1 and 2 of the Master Plan process.

1.4 Report Purpose and Structure

This Draft Preferred Option report outlines key elements from the background research which contributed to the development of the urban structure options and the transportation alternatives and describes the proposed options and alternatives.

The Report is intended to provide a focus for discussion by residents, landowners, agencies and other stakeholders, which will lead to the formulation of a final preferred approach to the future planning of the Yonge Street North Area. It also outlines the evaluations of the conceptual urban structure options and transportation alternatives and related servicing.

This report is structured as follows:

- Section 2: Background Analysis Conclusions
 - 2.1 Purpose
 - 2.2 Existing and Proposed Development
 - 2.3 Policy and Regulatory Framework
 - 2.4 Community Facilities
 - 2.5 Transportation
 - 2.6 Servicing
 - 2.7 Initial Public Input
 - 2.8 Conclusions

- Section 3: Future Directions
 - 3.1 Purpose
 - 3.2 Priority Directions
 - 3.3 Vision Statement
 - 3.4 Common Structural Elements
 - 3.5 Urban Structure Options
 - 3.6 Transportation Alternatives

- Section 4: Option Evaluation
 - 4.1 Process
 - 4.2 Public Input
 - 4.3 Transportation Evaluation
 - 4.4 Servicing Evaluation
 - 4.5 Planning Evaluation
 - 4.6 Conclusions and Directions

2. Background Analysis Conclusions

2.1 Purpose

The Background Report, found under separate cover, provides a detailed review of key background information which formed the basis for the development of the conceptual urban structure options and transportation alternatives outlined in Section 3 of this Report. The Background Report provides information on:

- Existing land use, built form and proposed development;
- The policy and regulatory framework;
- Public input;
- Community facility assessment;
- Existing and proposed transportation infrastructure; and,
- Existing servicing infrastructure.

The following sections outline the key conclusions of the background review, as well the implications for future development in the Study Area.

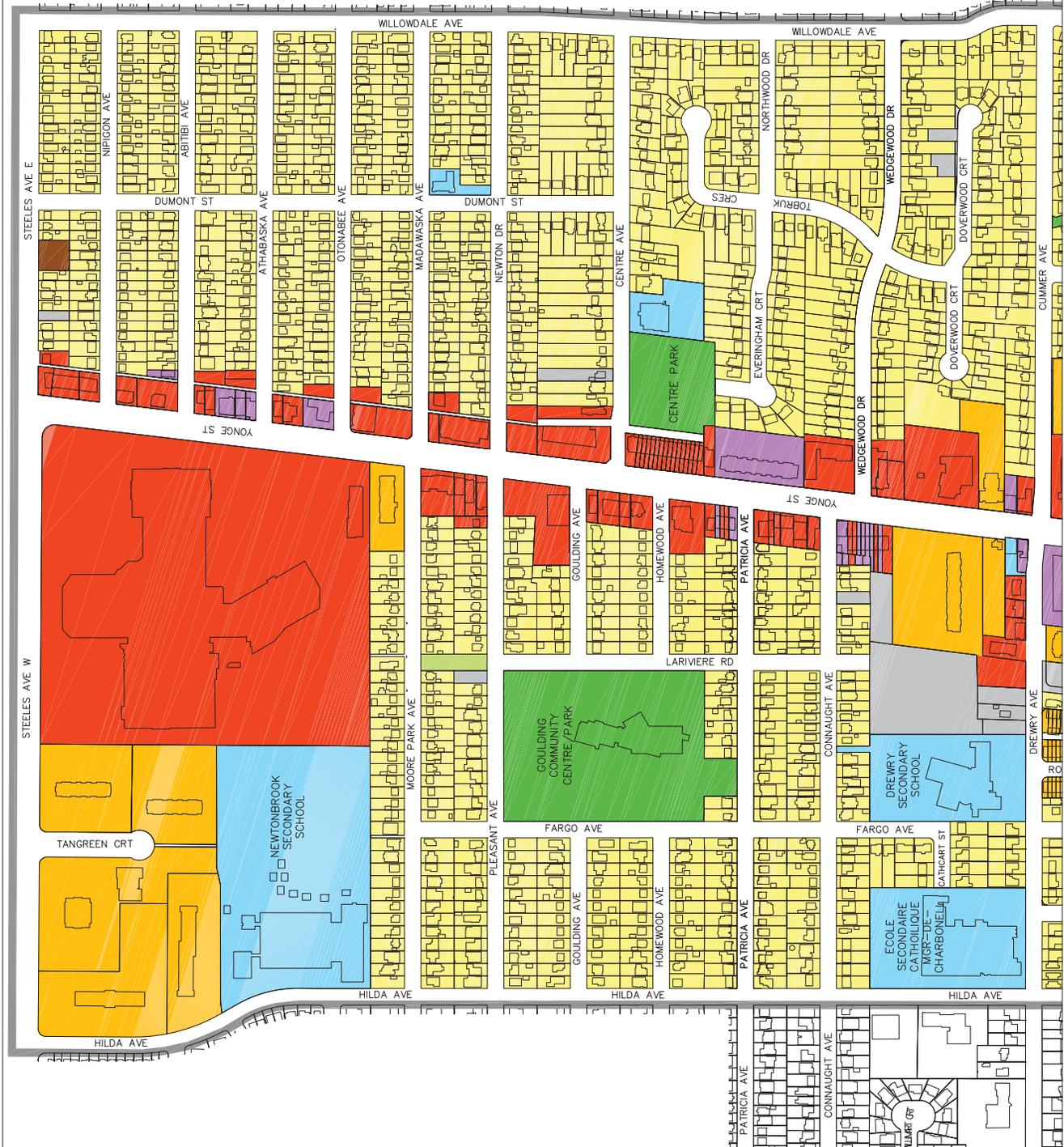
2.2 Existing and Proposed Development

Maps 2a and 2b illustrate existing land use, while Map 3 identifies information on building height. As the maps illustrate:

- The Study Area contains a diversity of uses. The uses along Yonge Street currently range from low rise, small scale, and automobile-oriented commercial development to the regionally-oriented Centrepont Mall, as well as high rise development containing office or apartment uses often with ground level retail uses. Lands to the east and west of the Yonge Street Corridor consist primarily of low density residential neighbourhoods with a number of parks, open space and institutional uses.
- There are still significant opportunities for intensification in the corridor in areas where there is existing low density development and areas of surface parking, recognizing the need to protect the identified cultural heritage sites. In particular, Centrepont Mall should be encouraged to redevelop to allow a built form which better addresses the street, improves accessibility to the site and reduces the visual impact of large parking areas.
- Careful attention will have to be paid to the design of future development in the Yonge Street corridor to ensure an appropriate transition to, and compatibility with, low density areas which will remain to the east and west.
- There are few remaining heritage buildings and consideration should be given to their maintenance and protection to assist in preserving the history of the area.
- Currently the population has a higher percentage of people in the 19 to 29 age category than the rest of the City. However, the percentage of seniors can be expected to

Map 2a
Existing Land Use
Yonge Street North Planning Study

- Detached Residential
- Multiple Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Park
- Open Space
- Utility
- Vacant



Map 2b
Existing Land Use
Yonge Street North Planning
Study

- Detached Residential
- Multiple Residential
- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Park
- Open Space
- Utility
- Vacant

