

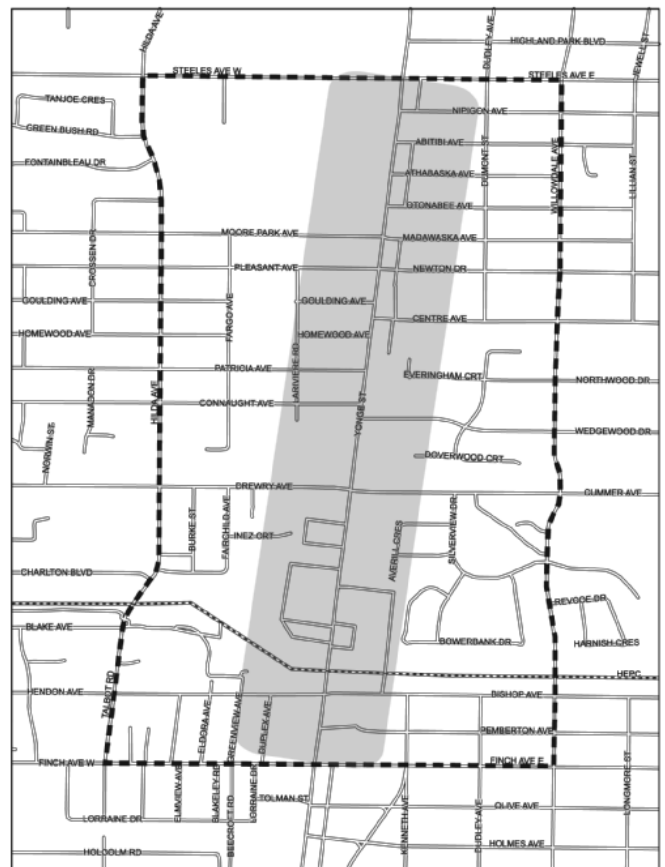
**Yonge Street North Planning Study  
Final Consultant's Report and  
Next Steps on Implementing Official Plan Amendments**

<b>Date:</b>	May 29, 2013
<b>To:</b>	North York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Director, Community Planning, North York District
<b>Wards:</b>	23 & 24
<b>Reference Number:</b>	11 191325 NPS 00 TM

**SUMMARY**

This report summarizes the findings of the Yonge Street North Planning Study. Following from the Study's findings, the report outlines key issues to be considered and next steps in preparing draft amendments to the Official Plan, for further consultation with the community in the fall of 2013.

This report recommends that Council authorize staff to use the consultant's final report in Attachment 2 as a guide to drafting Official Plan policies and other appropriate planning tools, and that they be the subject of a community consultation meeting in the fall of 2013.



Yonge Street North Planning Study

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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### The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council endorse the consultant's final report on the Yonge Street North Planning Study in Attachment 2 of this report;
2. Staff use the report as a guide for drafting Official Plan policies and other appropriate planning tools that address the matters identified in this report including, but not limited to: the appropriate mix of residential and non-residential uses; the extent and character of building types in the *Transition Areas*; the community improvements that are needed to support growth; and, the phasing of growth with transportation improvements;
3. Staff conduct community consultation on the draft Official Plan policies and other planning tools, prior to bringing forward an Official Plan Amendment for Community Council's consideration.

## DECISION HISTORY

On June 22, 2011 North York Community Council received the report from the Director of Community Planning, North York District, summarizing and initiating the Yonge Street North Planning Study:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.NY8.28>

In February 2009, notice of the completion of the Environmental Project Report was provided under the Provincial Transit Project Assessment Process, for the northerly extension of the Yonge subway line with new stations at both Drewry/Cummer Avenues at the north end of the North York Centre Secondary Plan, and at Steeles Avenue. To further advance the timing of the subway extension, 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 is currently underway.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Yonge Street North Planning Study area is located along the Yonge Street corridor between Finch Avenue and Steeles Avenue. The current character of the area generally consists of commercial plazas on the Yonge Street frontage with low-scale detached houses in neighbourhoods behind. Development applications being proposed in the corridor signify increased growth pressures and future potential changes. The Yonge Street North Planning Study was initiated to provide guidance on both the active and

anticipated development applications in the area, and provide a framework for reinvestment to guide future growth.

The June 2011 Staff report identified the matters to be reviewed in the Study including identifying: the location of various densities and built forms; the level and type of development that can be supported before and after a Yonge subway extension; necessary improvements to transportation and servicing infrastructure; appropriate pedestrian amenities and streetscapes; and, community facilities, parks and open space improvements. The Study was also to review the full range of planning tools that can best achieve the vision for the area, including many of the tools already used in the North York Centre Secondary Plan.

## **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND STUDY PROCESS**

Following the retention of a consultant team the Study was conducted in three phases. The first phase was the preparation of background research and introduction of the Study process to the community. Notices were sent to the approximately 9,000 properties in the Study Area. A Study page was established on the City's web-site at [http://www.toronto.ca/planning/yonge\\_north.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/planning/yonge_north.htm), and materials were posted on the website as the Study progressed. An e-mail group was also established and Study updates were also regularly provided.

The first Community Meeting was a "Visioning Workshop" held in December 2011. This session introduced the Study and summarized the existing conditions and planning context for the area. The workshop format gave the community an opportunity to create a preferred vision for the future of the area.

The second phase involved preparing the various land use options. A second Community Workshop was held on June 5, 2012. A background summary report was presented, and based on the vision developed at the first meeting, the community discussed and provided input on a wide range of conceptual land use options and transportation alternatives. The consulting team and staff then evaluated the land use options and transportation alternatives and prepared a draft *Preferred Option* for further community input. This draft *Preferred Option* was presented to the community for their feedback at the third meeting held on May 9, 2013.

At the first 2 community meetings approximately 100+/- people attended including residents, land and business owners and developers. About 60 people attended the third workshop in May 2013. Staff also met over the course of the Study with area residents, ratepayers associations, and individual landowners and shared the input from those meetings with the consultants.

The third phase of the Study includes the consultant's final report and preparing draft implementing amendments for further community consultation. This staff report presents the consultant's final report, and recommends further community consultation on the implementing amendments/documents be held in the fall of 2013.

## **DEVELOPING A VISION FOR YONGE STREET NORTH – URBAN STRUCTURE OPTIONS & TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES**

To help develop a vision for the area, a wide range of conceptual urban structure options and transportation alternatives were prepared.

From the consultant's work and consultation with the community, 3 options for how to guide growth were developed. A detailed description of the urban structure options is found in Section 3.5 of the consultant's report. The 3 options can be summarized as:

- 1) extending the North York Centre Secondary Plan north to Steeles Avenue with its associated heights and densities on Yonge Street transitioning down to the surrounding residential areas (*Centre Extended*);
- 2) providing for taller building heights and higher densities around the subway stations at Drewry/Cummer and Steeles Avenue with a medium scale development along the remaining Yonge Street frontage between the stations (*Nodes & Avenue*);
- 3) providing for the *Nodes & Avenue* option 2 above, modified to have wider depths of mid-rise buildings on Yonge Street, and an additional low scale transition zone on the west side of Yonge Street to Lariviere Road and Goulding Park (*Nodes & Wider Avenue*).

In addition to the urban structure options 3 transportation alternatives were developed. A more detailed description of the range of transportation alternatives is found in Section 3.6 of the consultant's report and in summary consists of:

- 1) a *Do Nothing* alternative that included completing the already planned Beecroft Road/North York Centre Service Road extension to Drewry Avenue and Yonge Street, the addition of bicycle lanes on Willowdale Avenue and in the hydro corridor;
- 2) a *Nodal Improvement* alternative that included a collector road system around each subway station *Node*, extension of Kenneth Avenue through the hydro corridor to Yonge Street, and an additional north/south collector through the Centrepoint Mall site;
- 3) a *Network Improvement* alternative that included all of the *Nodal Improvement* elements in #2 above, with additional north-south collector roads parallel to Yonge Street, a new east-west road within the hydro corridor, and an additional east/west collector road through Centerpoint Mall

These urban structure options and transportation alternatives were modelled and assessed to prepare the *Preferred Option*.

## THE PREFERRED OPTION

The consultant's Preferred Urban Structure Option Report in Attachment 2 outlines a future long-term vision for this section of Yonge Street. The *Preferred Option* is the *Nodes & Wider Avenue* option and *Network Improvement* alternative, modified to expand the *Transition Areas* where the proposed collector road network extends south on Dumont Street and to Newton Drive around the *Steeles Node*. The Preferred Option Map is shown on Attachment 1, and following this Map and the key issues to be addressed by the Study, the *Preferred Option* can be summarized as follows:

### Location of various densities and built forms

The Study has identified areas that are appropriate for redevelopment and within these areas, the suitable location and design for tall, mid-rise and/or low-scale built forms. The location and design of new buildings includes the appropriate transition to adjacent stable low-density neighbourhoods. The *Preferred Option* builds upon the priority directions and vision that evolved through the public workshops. The *Preferred Option* uses Yonge Street as the central organizing 'spine' of the area. It focuses the highest heights and densities around Yonge Street at the subway stations, and provides appropriate transitions from these areas to mid-rise and low-rise buildings in surrounding neighbourhoods. 3D modelling of the *Preferred Option* is found in Appendix A of the consultant's final report.

In general, the *Preferred Option* locates *Nodes* around both planned future subway stations at Drewry/Cummer and Steeles Avenues with a maximum density of 5 times the area of the lands (including density incentives) and building heights of up to 40 storeys. Between these *Nodes* the *Avenue* on Yonge Street consists of 11 storey mid-rise buildings with a maximum density of 4 times the area of the lands. Mid-rise *Node Transition* areas are also located around the *Steeles Node* (6 – 11 storeys and 3 times density), and lower scale, 4 storey *Transition Areas* abut adjacent lower density residential neighbourhoods outside the areas proposed for redevelopment.

For the lands located within the North York Centre Secondary Plan south of Drewry and Cummer Avenues, the increase in density and height above the current Secondary Plan permissions are focussed on the Yonge Street frontage north of the hydro corridor. *Transition Areas* are located to the east and west of the tall building parcels on Yonge Street at the Drewry/Cummer subway station with a maximum density of 2 times the area of the lands and heights of 4 storeys. The maximum 40 storey building height and 5 times density can be achieved in an appropriate tall building form around the subway station and on Yonge Street in a way that provides appropriate setbacks and transitions to existing residential neighbourhoods without the need to expand the boundaries of the North York Centre Secondary Plan. This scale and density of development is appropriate given the transit-supportive densities and heights that exist within the remainder of the North York Centre Secondary Plan to the south.

North of the North York Centre Secondary Plan Area, the Drewry/Cummer *Node* is established by extending the same density (5 times) and height (40 storeys) north and around the planned Cummer subway station area to Wedgewood Drive and Connaught Avenue. Similar to south of Drewry/Cummer Avenues, a *Transition Area* flanks the *Node* and provides a transition from the stable low density neighbourhood to the higher density and heights on Yonge Street.

North of the Drewry/Cummer *Node*, the *Avenue* area represents a parcel depth east and west of Yonge Street that would be sufficient to achieve a mid-rise built form that matches with the width of the Yonge Street right-of-way (33 metres). To the west of the mid-rise *Avenue* on Yonge Street, is a *Transition Area* (maximum 2 times density and 4 storeys) extending over to Lariviere Road and Goulding Park. This *Transition Area* of more modest forms of intensification also extends on the east side of Yonge Street north of Newton Drive and west of Dumont Street to provide a transition to the *Node* at the Steeles subway station. Along Yonge Street between the *Avenue* and Steeles *Node* and on the west side of the Steeles *Node* a further intermediary *Transition Node* is located, providing for a maximum density of 3 times, and 6 storey height, except on Yonge Street where mid-rise heights of up to 11 storeys are also provided. At the Steeles *Node* the same maximum density (5 times including incentives) and height (40 storeys) as the Drewry/ Cummer *Node* is envisioned.

### **Level and/or type of development that can be supported prior to and after a Yonge subway extension**

The Study concludes that the level of development in the *Preferred Option* would not be constrained when the subway and proposed road network are in place. However with the uncertain timing of the subway extension and new stations, the Study also considered what level or type of development can reasonably be supported by the existing and proposed transportation network. Each of the urban structure options included a range of residential and non-residential land use mixes. The transportation alternatives were assessed against each land use option prior to the subway being in place, and the Study found that the *Nodal Improvement* road network would provide sufficient capacity for the level of development associated with the *Node and Avenue* option. More specifically, the Transportation Master Plan indicates that, while the *Preferred Option* would result in a forecasted increase of 1,350,000m<sup>2</sup> in residential gross floor area and 265,000m<sup>2</sup> in employment gross floor area, until the subway is completed, development levels beyond an additional 1,240,000 m<sup>2</sup> of residential gross floor area and 74,000 m<sup>2</sup> of employment gross floor area would be constrained. In other words, prior to the subway capacity being provided, the proposed road network would support up to approximately 80% of the *Preferred Option's* total planned gross floor area.

### **Necessary improvements to transportation and servicing infrastructure**

The Study identifies a range of opportunities for improving the existing road network and transportation capacity. The criteria used to evaluate each transportation alternative included road continuity, comfort, capacity, cost and conservation. The Study concludes

that the *Do Nothing* transportation alternative could not accommodate any of the three proposed land use options. Improvements to the transportation infrastructure are needed.

The *Preferred Option* includes transportation improvements that closely resemble that of the *Network Improvements* solution. The *Nodal Improvements* alternative could support a level of growth associated with the *Nodes and Wider Avenue* option; and while the *Network Improvements* provided higher capacity, components of it have greater impact on local neighbourhoods, in particular on the east side of Yonge Street where the character of the existing street, lot and block structure is disconnected from Yonge Street. The *Preferred Option* varies from the *Network Improvements* by not including a north-south link between Centre Avenue and Wedgewood Drive on the east side of Yonge Street.

The proposed road network improves accessibility through the introduction of a collector road network around each subway station *Node*, extends Kenneth Avenue to a new east-west collector road in the hydro corridor, proposes a new north-south collector road parallel to Yonge Street via Lariviere Road from Drewry Avenue to Steeles Avenue, and provides a framework for a road network in the Steeles *Node* area and Centerpoint Mall lands.

Other infrastructure improvements such as sewer and water systems have also been reviewed. The Master Servicing Plan defines the storm, sanitary and water servicing requirements for the *Preferred Option*, and identifies the required municipal servicing infrastructure improvements to meet the growth forecasts in the *Preferred Option*.

### **Pedestrian amenities and streetscapes**

As part of creating transit-supportive land uses, the Study reviewed what streetscape improvements should be made to conveniently and comfortably connect pedestrians from the community to new subway stations and community facilities. With Yonge Street as the organizing element for the area, the priority direction is to create a unified and continuous streetscape on Yonge Street, with widened sidewalks, planted centre median, street trees and street furniture. The *Preferred Option* builds upon and extends the enhanced Yonge Street streetscape in the North York Centre Secondary Plan up to Steeles Avenue and frames the streetscape and retail uses with appropriately scaled base buildings and setbacks from Yonge Street. The *Preferred Option* also adds increased pedestrian and bicycle connections in particular around the subway station *Nodes* as part of the additional collector and local roads.

### **Community facilities, parks and open space improvements**

The Study reviewed the existing inventory and location of community facilities, parks and open space in the area. With the *Preferred Option* would come an estimated 17,700 residential units and 15,800 jobs. The planned growth associated with the *Preferred Option* enables an increase in approximately 4.5 hectares of parkland to be secured in the area. Potential locations for new parkland are illustrated on the *Preferred Option* and

include: expansion of Centre Park and Goulding Park to connect to Yonge Street; in the southwest area of the Steeles *Node* abutting the school; and, in the *Transition Area* to the southeast and southwest of the Steeles *Node*.

## HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE VISION – NEXT STEPS

The consultant's report establishes a vision for the Yonge Street North area and a *Preferred Option* that implements this vision. Staff recommend that the consultant's report guide the drafting of an implementing official plan amendment and other planning tools such as zoning by-law amendments or design guidelines.

In addition to providing a long-term vision for the area, the consultant's report raises a number of matters that should be further considered through these implementing planning tools. These include:

-appropriate mix of residential and non-residential uses

The *Preferred Option* includes a mix of residential and non-residential uses. A mix of uses contributes in many ways to achieving the vision for the community, and any implementing planning documents should consider how and where to reasonably achieve an appropriate mix of residential, retail and other non-residential land uses.

-extent and character of building types in the *Transition Areas*

The *Preferred Option's* lower scale *Transition Areas* are intended to provide appropriate transitions from the higher densities and heights on Yonge Street. These areas also serve to manage growth pressures in these 'shoulder' areas by providing opportunities for increased housing diversity such as smaller detached and semi-detached houses and townhouses. The extent and character of these *Transition Areas* needs to be carefully considered.

-community improvements that are needed to support growth

The *Preferred Option* includes a number of conceptual parks and other improvements such as streetscapes and community centres that are needed to support growth in the area. Any planning documents prepared for the area should also consider how tools such as density transfers, or bonuses under Section 37 of the *Planning Act*, can be used to implement and advance these improvements.

-phasing of growth with transportation improvements

The *Preferred Option* is based upon a level of growth associated with subway stations at Drewry/Cummer Avenues and Steeles Avenue. It also relies on a number of pedestrian, bicycle and road improvements. The implementing land use planning tools need to consider how to provide a flexible short and long term implementation framework to deliver required transportation infrastructure as development and growth proceeds over time. The remaining phases of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process will also need to be completed, including cross sections and detailed design of the various road improvements.



The Infrastructure and Transportation Master Plans that have been prepared to develop the *Preferred Option* and address Phase 1 and 2 of the Master Plan process would be presented to the public as part of the next phase in the Study.

Staff recommend that community consultation meetings be held on draft Official Plan policies and other planning tools that address the matters identified above, prior to bringing forward an Official Plan Amendment or other planning tools for City Council's consideration.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Yonge Street North area is undergoing change, and the rate of change is not expected to decrease in the future in particular as access to transit improves. The purpose of this Study has been to assess how the Yonge Street North area could evolve from largely commercial plazas on Yonge Street with low-scale detached houses in neighbourhoods behind, into a more diverse urban form and fabric.

The consultant has engaged the community to prepare a long-term vision and *Preferred Option* for the area. It is now staff's role to translate this vision into official plan policies and implementing zoning regulations or guidelines. To help prepare these planning tools, and prior to bringing forward any recommendations for City Council's consideration, Staff recommend that further community consultation meetings be held in the fall of 2013 to present and receive input on draft planning policies or other instruments based upon this report and consultant's study.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

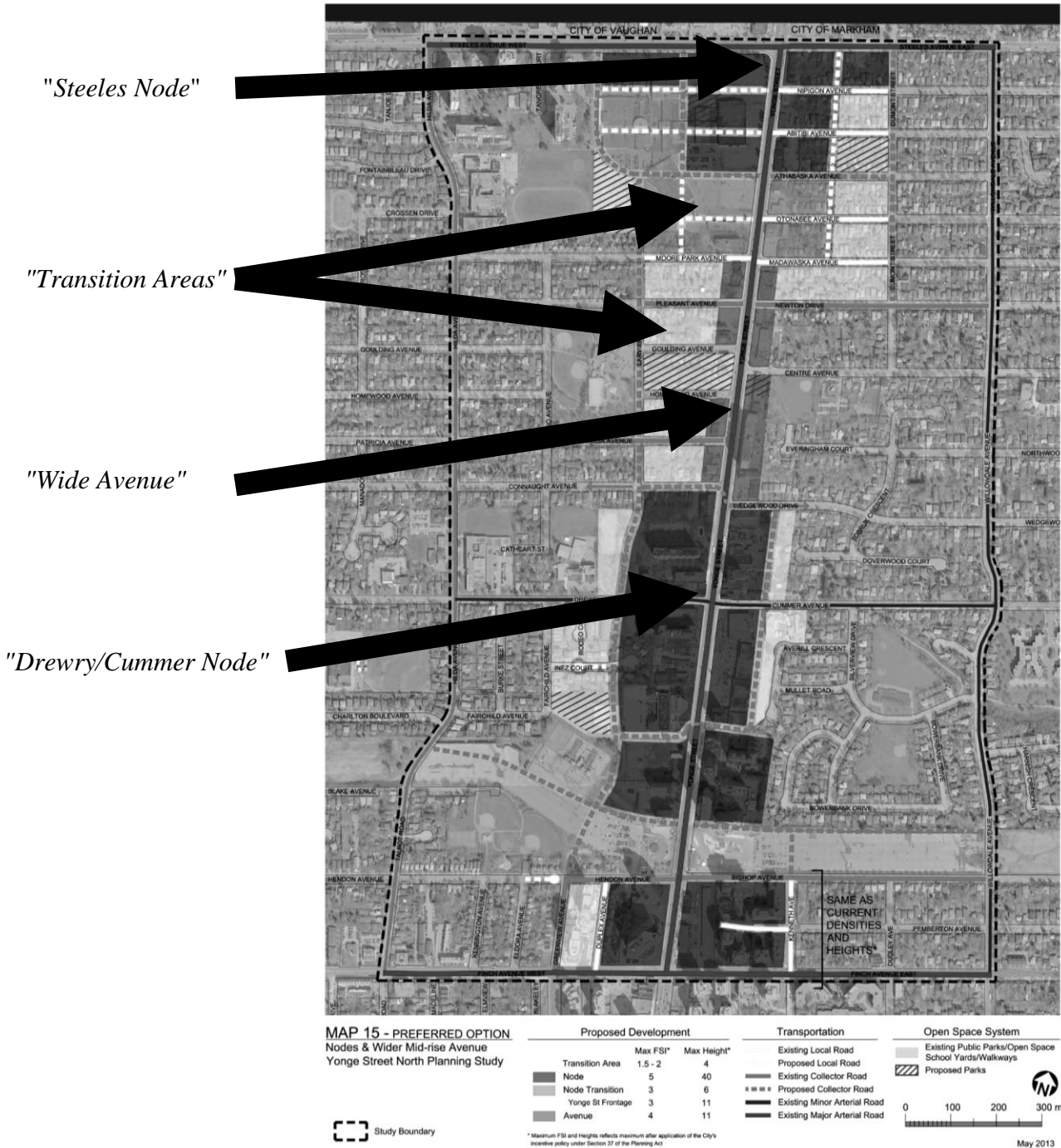
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Allen Appleby, Director  
Community Planning North York District

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Yonge Street North Planning Study – Preferred Option Map  
Attachment 2: Yonge Street North Planning Study – Preferred Urban Structure Option Report

# Attachment 1: Preferred Option



Preferred Option

Yonge Street North Planning Study

Not to Scale  
05/27/2013

File # 11 191325 NPS 00 TM

## **Attachment 2: Preferred Urban Structure Option Report**