

## North York at the Centre: Directions Report for an Updated Secondary Plan

**Date:** November 19, 2025

**To:** Planning and Housing Committee

**From:** Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and Executive Director, Development Review

**Wards:** 18 Willowdale

### SUMMARY

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On January 19, 2021, the Planning and Housing Committee adopted [Item 2021.PH20.2](#) and directed City Planning to review the North York Centre Secondary Plan. This report summarizes the first two phases of community engagement for that review, known as 'North York at the Centre', and proposes guiding principles and directions for updating the Secondary Plan in the next phase of work.

The existing North York Centre Secondary Plan was adopted in 1997 and has shaped significant development and public investment in the area for nearly three decades. North York Centre is now home to more than 50,000 residents and nearly 35,000 employees, making it the largest office-based employment hub in Toronto outside of Downtown. It also plays a key role in welcoming newcomers, with over three quarters of its residents born outside of Canada.

While the original vision to create a downtown for North York has largely been achieved, development pressure continues. North York Centre remains a desirable place to live, work and play, with reliable transit connections and access to shops, services, public spaces, and community facilities. To support and address continued growth pressures in and surrounding North York Centre, updated policies are needed. These will help guide development over the coming decades and ensure the plan is consistent with current Provincial policy and regulations, which have changed significantly over the last two decades.

Over 1,000 attendees participated in seven public meetings held in Phases 1 and 2 of the project. Online engagement was also strong, with over 1,300 people participating in surveys and a community mapping exercise. Ten community pop-ups helped raise project awareness, and 555 people signed up to receive e-updates. The North York Centre Local Advisory Committee (LAC) met five times to review project materials, provide feedback and receive training to host six workshops within their own communities and organizations. Through the various engagement activities, a wide

range of diverse residents, including those from equity-deserving groups, provided input into the project. Additionally, to support truth and reconciliation, Phases 1 and 2 included meetings with First Nations (the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River), the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, and local Indigenous communities.

Three overarching lenses and five guiding principles were identified in Phase 1 to guide the review, based on community input and analysis of North York Centre's unique context. The Recommended Option, outlined in Attachment 1, builds on these foundations, with consideration for community feedback on preliminary options and recent changes to Official Plan policies for Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs). The Recommended Option proposes to:

- Expand the Secondary Plan boundary to include PMTSAs along TTC Line 1 and the area east to Willowdale Avenue. New mixed use and building height permissions in the boundary expansion area would facilitate a greater mix of housing types, provide a gradual height transition that mitigates existing wind conditions, improve east-west connectivity and create a more complete community structure.
- Green the public realm by planting more street trees and adding soft landscaping, while expanding parkland in strategic locations to create larger parks that can support a wider range of community programming.
- Introduce greater flexibility for new residential and non-residential uses, while continuing to protect and grow North York Centre's role as an employment hub.
- Celebrate and support the range of uses that make North York Centre a destination for people across the city -- including arts and culture, retail, civic spaces and institutional services.

Details about how the draft options were evaluated, along with a description of the Recommended Option, are provided in the Final Options and Directions Report (Attachment 1). A Community Services and Facilities (CS&F) Strategy (Attachment 2) outlines the investments required to support the level of growth proposed in the Recommended Option.

Pending Council's direction, Phase 3 of the study will begin in January 2026 and be completed in Q1 2027. This phase will include updates to Secondary Plan policies and a range of supporting technical studies and modelling, including for transportation, servicing, sun/shadow and wind. The Recommended Option will act as a baseline for the additional analysis to be undertaken. Phase 3 will also include a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment, Urban Design Guidelines, and an Infrastructure Implementation Strategy that outlines how and when transportation, servicing and community facilities will be delivered to support future growth. Community engagement will continue in Phase 3, providing opportunities for local residents, businesses, interested parties and Indigenous communities to review and provide feedback on draft materials and policies before they are finalized.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Development Review recommend that:

1. City Council endorse the North York at the Centre Final Options and Directions Report, found in Attachment 1 to this report, as the basis for the next phase of community engagement and direct staff to continue working with the Ward Councillor on the community engagement program for the Secondary Plan update in Phase 3 of the study.
2. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Development Review to report back to Planning and Housing Committee in Q1 2027 with recommended Official Plan Amendments for the North York Centre Secondary Plan and accompanying Urban Design Guidelines and an Infrastructure Implementation Strategy.
3. City Council request the Executive Director, Development Review, in consultation with other City Divisions, to consider the policy directions from the North York at the Centre Options and Directions Report, found in Attachment 1 to this report, in the review of development applications to support consistent planning outcomes during the interim period prior to the adoption of an updated Secondary Plan for North York Centre.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial implications for this budget year resulting from the recommendations included in this report. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **EQUITY AND RECONCILIATION IMPACT**

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Potential impacts on Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving populations, including vulnerable individuals, have been identified as part the North York Centre Secondary Plan review. The community in North York Centre is diverse with a high share of racialized residents (80%) and residents born outside of Canada (76%). Despite having high levels of post-secondary education, nearly a quarter of residents live in low-income households. The impacts of intersectional inequity, where individuals experience overlapping systems of discrimination or disadvantage based on their race, immigration status, age, gender, sexual orientation, income, disability and other characteristics, has also been considered.

The review involves identifying updates to the North York Centre Secondary Plan that are needed to support the development of a more complete, inclusive and resilient community that meets the needs of all people, including the specific needs of Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities. The review and subsequent

update of the Secondary Plan can have a positive impact on Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities in the study area, including by:

- supporting greater housing choices including a range of affordable housing options;
- retaining and expanding opportunities for locally based employment;
- improving and expanding community infrastructure such as childcare centres, agency space, libraries, community centres, and parks as critical amenities for social, mental, physical and economic well-being;
- illuminating the area's Indigenous history and creating spaces to celebrate Indigenous cultural practices, traditions and contributions;
- improving active transportation and transit connections that provide access to employment and other opportunities; and
- protecting the land and water, and promoting sustainability, climate mitigation and resilience.

In striving for an inclusive community engagement program, the following strategies and tools will continue to be used to alleviate barriers and improve opportunities for participation and leadership by Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities:

- print and oral translation services;
- accessible print, video and oral communications;
- flexible event times, and options for virtual and in-person activities, to suit a variety of work schedules and care-giver obligations;
- outreach to equity-deserving communities, and racialized community organizations, to raise awareness of the review and opportunities to participate;
- barrier-free event venues with resting places; and,
- developing an anti-hate, violence, harassment and discrimination policy for participants.

To support implementation of the City of Toronto's Reconciliation Action Plan, four Actions have been advanced through North York at the Centre:

- Enhance Indigenous Civic Engagement (#7);
- Increase Access to Affordable Housing (#14);
- Support Indigenous Placekeeping (#15); and
- Decolonize Honoraria Practices (#21).

An Indigenous Facilitator supported meaningful relationship-building with First Nations and local Indigenous communities throughout the engagement process.

## **CLIMATE IMPACT**

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On October 2, 2019, City Council declared a climate emergency for the purpose of "naming, framing and deepening our commitment to protecting our economy, our ecosystems and our community from climate change" (Item MM10.3). City Council has adopted an ambitious strategy to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions in

Toronto to net zero by 2040 – 10 years earlier than initially proposed – and to be more resilient and adapt to the impacts that climate change will have on the City and its residents. City Council has also recently adopted a new vision through updates to Chapter 1 of the Official Plan which seek to achieve net zero emissions throughout the City by applying a climate change lens to all aspects of planning and becoming resilient and adaptable to the future impacts of a changing climate.

Permitting additional opportunities for a range of housing types within an expanded Secondary Plan area helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the efficient use of land and resources. The proposed directions for updating the North York Centre Secondary Plan also support: public realm and mobility improvements to enhance multi-modal connectivity and safer walking and cycling; tree canopy expansion and protection, particularly throughout the public realm; the use of green infrastructure in public projects and private development to better manage stormwater; and approaches to development that minimize energy demand, embodied carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.

Housing built in Toronto also reduces regional sprawl and transportation-driven greenhouse gas emissions and optimizes the use of existing infrastructure, which avoids carbon intensive infrastructure built elsewhere.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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On January 19, 2021, the Planning and Housing Committee requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to initiate a review of the North York Centre Secondary Plan and provide recommendations on maximum densities for the Secondary Plan area. The Committee also requested that the work program for this study be undertaken in consultation with the Ward Councillor.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.PH20.2>

On December 5, 2024, the Planning and Housing Committee requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning and the Executive Director, Development Review to explore opportunities to use the City-wide Office Space Needs Study findings and principles in the ongoing North York Centre Secondary Plan review and report back as necessary to the Planning and Housing Committee as part of the North York Secondary Plan review project.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH17.13>

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **North York Centre has Experienced Waves of Change and Growth**

The land where North York Centre is located was home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation. In the 1640s, during the period known as the Beaver Wars, the Haudenosaunee moved into what is today southern Ontario, leading to the dispersal of the Huron-Wendat. By the 1680s, the Haudenosaunee were then displaced by the

Anishnabeg peoples. Among them, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation inhabited the area, now today as Toronto, when the British Crown sought to establish it as a new centre of European settlement in the late 1700s and remain treaty holders today. North York Centre's civic history began with the construction of the North York Township municipal office building in 1923 on Yonge Street -- recognizing the street's role as a corridor for transportation and settlement. Since the early to mid-twentieth century, residential growth has expanded east and west from the spine of Yonge Street.

Rapid urban expansion in the 1950s was driven by the completion of Highways 400 and 401 and the removal of a 35-foot building height limit in 1957. In the 1970s, the former City of North York began to plan a "downtown" for North York along Yonge Street, which led to the area evolving from a low-rise commercial street to a high-density mixed-use area that is now recognized as North York Centre. The area's evolution was supported by planning studies in the 1970s and 80s that led to the current North York Centre Secondary Plan being adopted in 1997.

The area's evolution has also been driven by transit expansion. By 1987, three subway stations in North York Centre -- Sheppard-Yonge, North York Centre, and Finch -- were open, connecting the area to communities north and south. The east-west Sheppard subway line opened in 2002, making Sheppard-Yonge an interchange station between two subway lines. Looking ahead, the North York Centre is planned to undergo more transformation with major transportation upgrades, including the extension of TTC's Line 1 Yonge-University into York Region, the Doris Avenue Extension, Beecroft Road Extension, and the Transform Yonge initiative. Additional improvements under consideration include the Sheppard subway extension, Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT) East extension, and upgrades to the Yonge Street/Highway 401 interchange.

### **North York Centre is a Diverse Community with a High Concentration of Office Jobs**

Today, North York Centre is a diverse community, with a high proportion of racialized residents and people born outside of Canada. Although many residents have post-secondary education, nearly one in four live in low-income households, and almost half face challenges with housing affordability. North York Centre is also a major employment hub, with the majority (81%) of jobs in the office sector. However, in the post-pandemic era, office vacancy rates have risen to 24%, the highest of any office submarket in the GTA.

### **The Planning Framework Has Changed Since the Existing Secondary Plan was Adopted in 1997**

North York Centre is one of four *Centres* identified in Toronto's Official Plan, alongside Etobicoke Centre, Scarborough Centre and Yonge-Eglinton Centre. *Centres* are transit-oriented, dynamic, vital mixed-use communities where jobs, housing and services will be concentrated. The Official Plan requires each *Centre* to have a Secondary Plan that provides more detailed guidance for growth. Since its adoption in 1997, the existing Secondary Plan has helped shape North York Centre into an important regional destination. It is now the largest office employment hub outside of Downtown and the civic and cultural heart of North York.

Nearly three decades have passed since the North York Centre Secondary Plan was first adopted and an update is required to respond to the many changes that have occurred in that time. Recent updates to Provincial policies and legislation include new rules for parkland dedication, Community Benefits Charges, Inclusionary Zoning, and Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs). In 2024, the Province also adopted a new Provincial Planning Statement that introduces a housing-supportive policy framework.

Recent decisions by the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) have challenged parts of the Secondary Plan, finding that its policies on density and mobility are not consistent with provincial direction, particularly in terms of optimizing transit infrastructure through greater density permissions.

Toronto's Official Plan has also evolved over the last 30 years and now includes new directions on issues like complete communities, housing, climate action and equity -- none of which are reflected in the existing Secondary Plan. Planning requirements for North York Centre have also changed under recently updated policies for PMTSAs, which were approved by the Province in August 2025. These new policies allow for greater building heights and densities within 500 metres of transit stations -- including within the approved boundaries of the Sheppard-Yonge, North York Centre and Finch PMTSAs.

Alongside the recently completed plans for Downtown (TOcore), Midtown (Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan), and Scarborough Centre, North York at the Centre will contribute to an updated and more contemporary policy framework for Toronto's Centres to guide growth and development over the long term.

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Expanding the Secondary Plan Area Brings More People Closer to Transit**

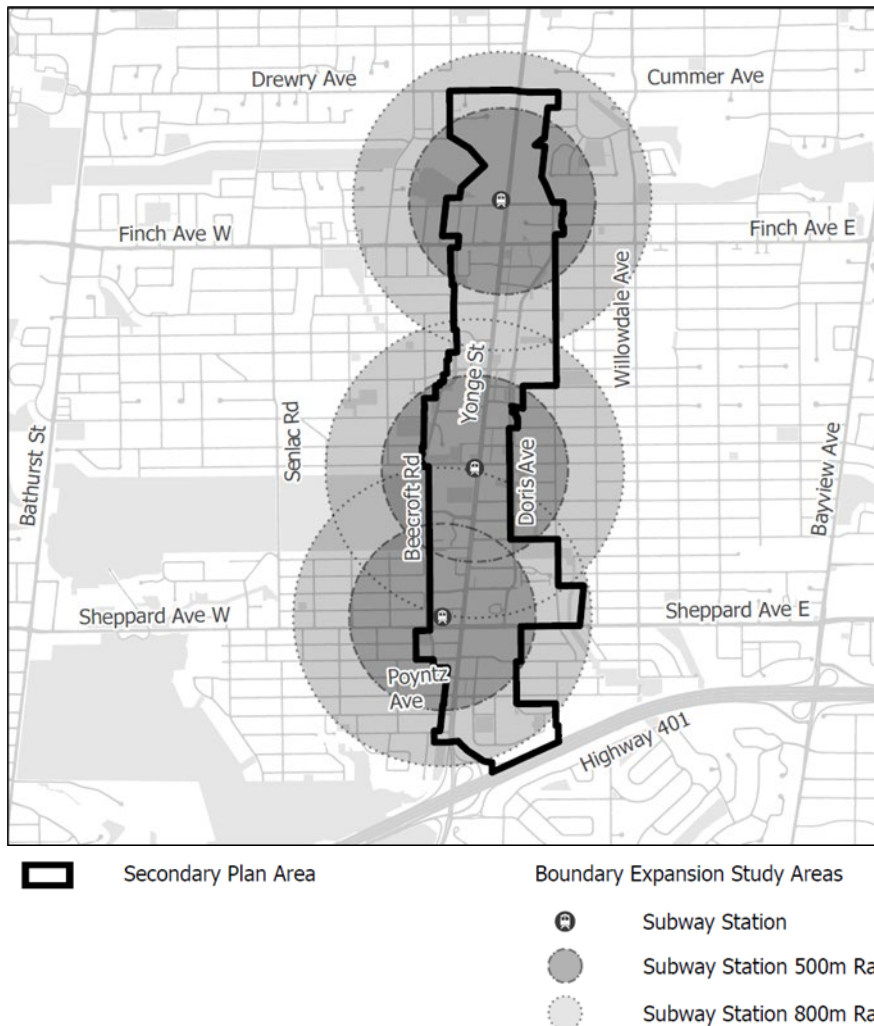
The North York at the Centre study area includes two parts: the current Secondary Plan area and a Boundary Expansion Study Area (BESA) (Figure 1). The current Secondary Plan area extends along Yonge Street from Highway 401 in the south to Drewry Avenue/Cummer Avenue in the north, bounded by Beecroft Avenue in the west, and Doris Avenue/Kenneth Avenue in the east. The BESA includes lands within 800 metres of the three subway stations in the study area -- Sheppard, North York Centre and Finch. Technical components of the study required broader study areas, including analysis of municipal servicing, mobility, parks and community services and facilities. Refer to the [Phase 1 Background Report](#) for the technical study area maps.

### **Currently in Phase 2 of 4 to Update the Secondary Plan**

North York at the Centre includes four phases, with Phase 1 and 2 now complete. Phase 1 began in Fall 2023 with a background review of existing and planned conditions and a community visioning exercise that helped identify overarching lenses and guiding principles for the Secondary Plan review. In Phase 2, which began in Spring 2024, those guiding principles were used to develop and evaluate options for

updating the Secondary Plan. Phase 2 is now complete, and this report presents the Recommended Option for managing growth and change in North York Centre. It also includes a Community Services and Facilities (CS&F) Strategy, which outlines the investments needed to support that growth. Pending Council's direction, the Secondary Plan policies will be updated in Phase 3, which is targeted to begin in January 2026 and be completed in Q1 2027. In Phase 4, the implementing zoning for North York Centre will be developed to reflect the new Secondary Plan policies.

**Figure 1: North York at the Centre Study Area**



## A Series of Background Reports have Informed the Recommended Option

Background reports completed in Phase 1 identified important trends, issues and opportunities. These findings helped shape the Recommended Option and the proposed policy directions.

- The [Phase 1 Background Report: Trends, Issues, Opportunities](#) (October 2024) looked at the history of North York Centre, its residents, and current policy and conditions related to the environment, parks, housing, jobs, land use, mobility, built form and public realm within the existing Secondary Plan area. Along with

community input and technical analysis covered in other background reports, this information helped shape the guiding principles for the Secondary Plan review. Key observations included:

- Most housing in North York Centre is in tall buildings -- over 90% of homes are in buildings over five storeys tall - most of which are tall buildings.
  - Parkland provision rates in the majority of the Centre fall below the city-wide average, with many areas experiencing very low parkland provision levels.
  - North York Centre also has 40% impermeable surface cover, like roads and building, and lower tree canopy cover than surrounding neighbourhoods, which contributes to heat vulnerability, flood risk and poor air quality.
  - While nearly half of residents used public transit for work trips in 2016, this dropped to a third in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic due to an increased reliance on driving at that time. Changes in how travel behaviour has changed since the COVID-19 pandemic ended will be reflected in the 2025 Census data, which is not yet available.
- The [Community Services and Facilities \(CS&F\) Background Report](#) (February 2024) reviewed existing facilities and services within North York Centre and the surrounding area across five sectors (child care, schools, libraries, recreation, and human services). The report found existing gaps in childcare, Toronto District School Board (TDSB) elementary and secondary school capacity, and space for community agencies. Needs associated with future growth are addressed in the Phase 2 CS&F Strategy.
  - The [Non-Residential Current Conditions and Projections Report](#) (March 2025) looked at existing retail and office space within North York Centre and estimated future space needs based on growth estimates and market trends. It found strong demand for retail space and low vacancy rates. However, it can be a challenge to require new development to include the type and scale of retail spaces that are desired by local businesses. For office space, the key challenge is competing against both downtown and suburban markets in the post COVID-19 market, as vacancy rates are currently high in all sub-markets and demand over the mid- and long-term remains uncertain.
  - The [Servicing Background Report \(July 2024\)](#) found that the existing watermain network meets the standards set by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks. No surcharging (when sewers overflow due to capacity issues) can be seen in the sewer system under dry weather flow. However, the sewer system may require upsizing to address surcharging based on future growth. Any watermain and sewer upgrades that may be required to serve growth will be assessed in Phase 3, based on the Recommended Option.

## **Community Engagement is a Key Part of Each Project Phase**

Throughout Phases 1 and 2, an interdivisional staff team worked together to engage the local Ward Councillor, community members and interested parties on a renewed vision for the area and recommendations for updating the Secondary Plan.

In Phase 1, the City held an in-person Visioning Workshop in November 2023 to introduce the study and hear from the community about what they value, want to protect, or would like to see change in North York Centre. The same activities were also available online through Social Pinpoint. Over 150 people attended the Workshop and 257 participated online.

In Phase 2, three community meetings were held in March 2025 to share options for updating the Secondary Plan. The same information and engagement activities were available online through a YouTube video and Social Pinpoint survey. Over 350 people attended the March meetings and 1,086 participated in the online survey. In response to requests from the local Ward Councillor and community members, three additional meetings were held in June and July 2025. The goal was to continue the conversation on the options for updating the Secondary Plan with a focus on specific neighbourhoods in the study area. 564 people attended the summer meetings. Alongside the community meetings, the Local Advisory Committee met five times to review project materials, and 10 community pop-up events helped raise awareness of the project, connect with residents and workers, and share information on how to get involved. 555 people have signed up for e-updates. This extensive engagement approach provided the opportunity for staff to get input from a diverse range of residents, including those from equity-deserving groups.

As part of the City's commitment to truth and reconciliation, meetings were held with Indigenous communities and organizations during Phases 1 and 2. These included meetings with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) and Six Nations of the Grand River (SNGR) in February 2024, MCFN again in April 2025, the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) in January 2024 and March 2025, and local Indigenous communities in May 2024 and April 2025.

To make the process more inclusive, meeting notices were translated into the top three languages spoken at home in the study area based on the 2021 Census: Mandarin (Chinese simplified and traditional), Korean and Farsi. In-person translation services were also available upon request. Events were scheduled at different times -- afternoon and evening, weekday and weekend -- and options for both in-person and virtual activities were provided to suit a variety of work schedules and caregiver obligations.

As part of the CS&F Strategy, City Planning and Social Development also engaged 11 human service agencies who serve residents in North York Centre. Focus groups and an online survey in April 2025 were used to collect feedback on existing conditions, locational and space needs, current programming and capacity, and challenges and opportunities related to delivering programs and services.

## **Community Feedback is Focused on Livability**

The most discussed themes across different audiences during Phase 1 included:

- *Building a Complete Community* -- Provide a broader range of building types and heights, affordable housing options, and opportunities for local economic development, arts and culture, and heritage commemoration.

- *Parks and Environment* -- Expand, improve and maintain parks and natural features throughout North York Centre to support the continued access and enjoyment of green spaces.
- *Mobility and Public Realm* -- Address issues related to speeding, transit access, sidewalk design, and the cycling network to help make North York Centre more accessible, walkable and safe.
- *Community Services and Facilities* -- Libraries, schools, recreation centres and human services are important community assets, and more are needed to support the needs of the growing community.

The feedback collected is documented in the [Phase 1 Engagement Summary](#) (April 2024) (Attachment 3). This input helped shape the guiding principles that were used in Phase 2 to develop and test options for how North York Centre should grow and change.

In Phase 2, the project team gathered feedback on elements of an "Emerging Preferred Option". This included comments on built form, land use, public realm, parks and environment and mobility. Overall, community feedback showed different points of view on how North York Centre should grow in the coming decades, with mixed perspectives on expanding the Secondary Plan area and the evolution of existing neighbourhoods into a more urban place. Some community members view growth as contributing to North York Centre's vitality and support active transportation improvements and permissions for mid-rise buildings and ground floor retail in the boundary expansion areas. Other community members view growth as threatening the well-being and existing character of adjacent low-rise neighbourhoods.

Common themes expressed by the community throughout Phase 2 were often presented as conditions for future growth. These include:

- Future development must not compromise livability, safety or access to infrastructure and community services such as schools, healthcare and transit.
- Expand the tree canopy and access to green space to maintain livability, allow for natural drainage to mitigate flooding, and reduce the urban heat island effect.
- Address traffic congestion as the community continues to grow.
- Development should not worsen the existing wind tunnel effect on Yonge Street and shadow impacts from tall buildings should be minimized.

Community members also expressed concerns about what they see as a lack of investment in North York Centre's infrastructure and services, and maintenance for parks and the public realm, including Mel Lastman Square. A common message heard was that, if North York Centre is identified as a major growth area in the City's Official Plan, commensurate funding should be dedicated to improve infrastructure and services. Some community members expressed doubt that the City will follow through with the necessary improvements to serve growth, and worry that the area could become less livable as it grows. Community members also questioned the level of growth and intensification proposed, and whether it is disproportionate compared to other areas of the city.

The community's feedback on the "Emerging Preferred Option" is documented in the [Phase 2 Engagement Summary](#) (June 2025) and [Addendum](#) (September 2025) (Attachment 4). This input helped shape the changes that are now reflected in the Recommended Option.

## **Five Guiding Principles Provide a Foundation for the Recommended Option**

In Phase 1, community input and an analysis of North York Centre's unique context helped shape three overarching lenses and five guiding principles. The overarching lenses are drawn from strategic documents that guide the City's work:

- equity and inclusion;
- truth and reconciliation; and
- action on climate change.

The five guiding principles establish shared values for the future of North York Centre and include:

- *Grow a Complete Community* by providing housing options for everyone and ensuring investment in infrastructure and facilities keeps pace with growth.
- *Reinforce the Centre as a Vibrant Hub for Work, Arts and Culture* by protecting and celebrating the mix of uses – from offices to retail and arts and cultural facilities – that define the area's status as a regional centre.
- *Green North York Centre* by protecting and enhancing green spaces in a dense urban centre and contributing to the City's climate targets.
- *Build Connectivity* by addressing how people move to, from, and through North York Centre and the quality of experience as they do so.
- *Design Places for People* by defining the character of place in North York Centre in terms of built form and open space design.

In Phase 2, the three lenses and five principles were used to develop and evaluate options for updating the Secondary Plan, with a focus on how to accommodate growth and address the issues and opportunities facing North York Centre.

## **The Recommended Option Provides a New Community Structure to Guide Incremental Growth Over the Next 25 to 30 Years**

In Phase 2, the project team used an iterative process to move from three draft options - Business as Usual, Alternative 1, Alternative 2 -- to an Emerging Preferred Option, and ultimately to the Recommended Option. Each option was evaluated based on how well it aligned with the five guiding principles and the feedback received from the community. The Recommended Option also reflects recent changes to Official Plan policies for Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs), which were approved by the Province in August 2025, and financial feasibility analysis. Details about the evaluation of the draft options and a description of the Recommended Option are included in the Final Options and Directions Report (Attachment 1).

The Recommended Option provides directions for North York Centre's development over the next 25 to 30 years. It focuses on introducing mid-rise buildings, creating more welcoming public spaces, better connecting the Centre with surrounding neighbourhoods, and filling gaps in retail, service and community facilities, while maintaining a strong office presence. The Recommended Option proposes to:

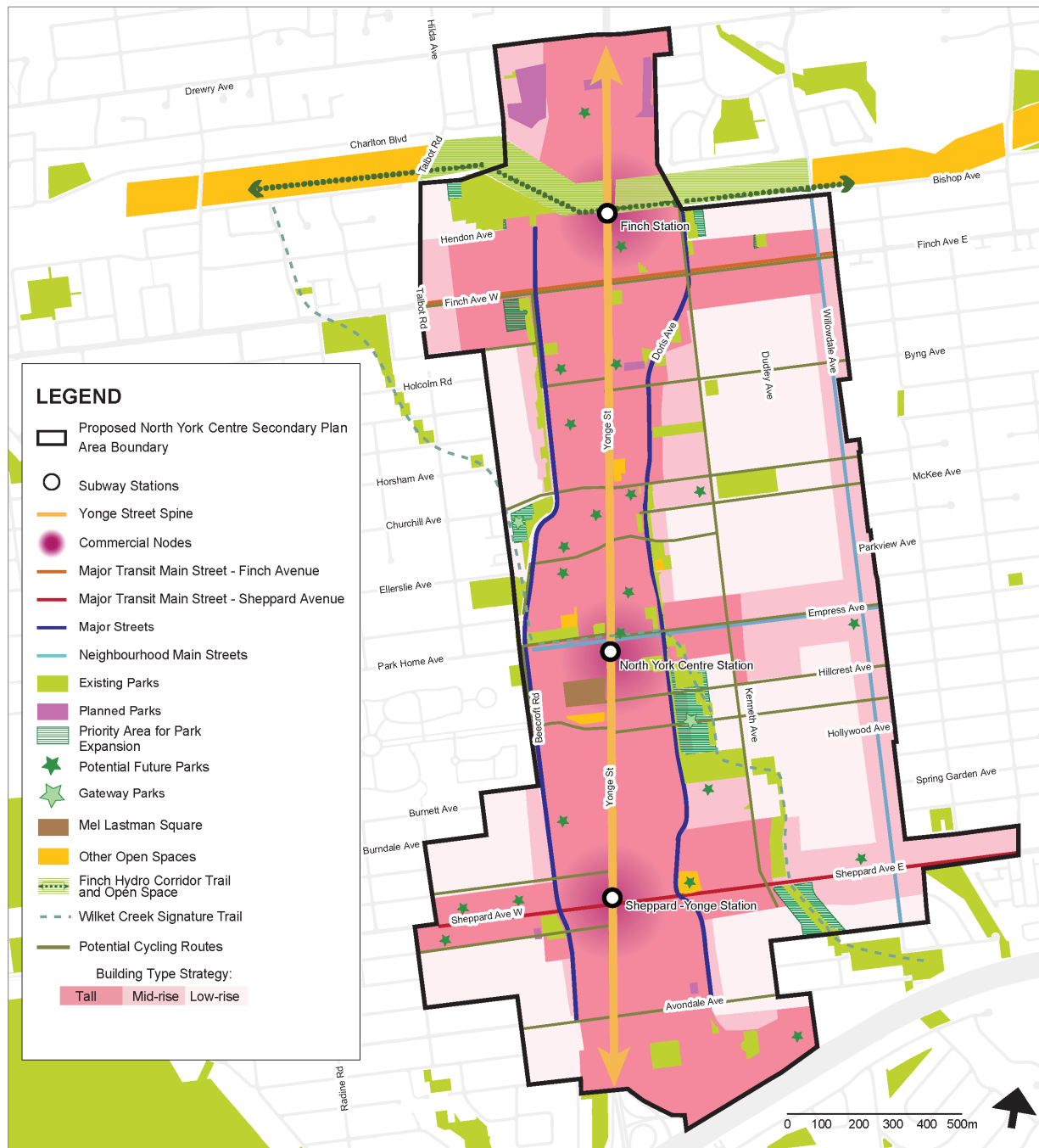
- Expand the boundary to include the Sheppard-Yonge, North York Centre and Finch PMTSAs, as well as the area east to Willowdale Avenue. New mixed use and building height permissions in the boundary expansion area would support a wider range of housing options, provide a gradual height transition that fits with the surrounding area and mitigates existing wind conditions, improve east-west connectivity, and create a more complete community structure.
- Green the public realm by planting more street trees and adding soft landscaping when sites are redeveloped, while also expanding parkland in strategic locations to create larger parks that can accommodate more activities and programming and improve ecological resilience.
- Allow more flexibility for new residential and non-residential uses, while protecting and growing North York Centre's role as an employment hub.
- Celebrate and cultivate the range and diversity of the arts, cultural, retail, civic and institutional uses that draw people to North York Centre from across the city.
- Identify additional or improved community services and facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

Key features of the Recommended Option include:

- *The Yonge Street Spine*, which is proposed to remain the primary corridor for North York Centre with the tallest buildings peaking at subway stations and greatest concentration of jobs, arts, culture, retail, community facilities and services. Along the Yonge Street Spine, three commercial nodes centred on the subway stations would each have their own focus, ranging from office uses at Sheppard-Yonge station, civic and cultural spaces at North York Centre station, and community-serving retail and services at Finch station.
- *Major Transit Main Streets* along Finch and Sheppard Avenues where tall buildings would transition to mid-rise buildings to the east and west, with improved sidewalks, street trees, landscaping and pedestrian amenities in the public boulevard to support walking and ground-floor retail.
- *Major Streets* along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road generally characterized by mid-rise buildings and gateway parks, providing a greater mix of housing options and a transition in building heights and intensity of uses from the Yonge Street Spine to *Neighbourhoods*.
- *Neighbourhood Main Streets* along Empress Avenue and Willowdale Avenue to bring small-scale retail and services closer to where people live and provide more housing options in a mid-rise built form.

- *Neighbourhoods* in the remainder of the boundary expansion area to provide a full spectrum of housing options, including low-rise housing.

**Figure 2: North York Centre - Recommended Option - Structure Map**



- An *expanded parks and public realm network*, including a signature trail along Wilket Creek, expanded gateway parks along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road, potential greening of the TTC parking lot within the Finch Hydro Corridor, and social streets abutting Yonge Street that are flexibly designed to provide publicly accessible open spaces. The public realm would also include streetscape improvements, squares, and a network of pedestrian connections. A study to identify potential upgrades to

Mel Lastman Square is recommended to support the Square's role as an important civic and gathering space and to introduce opportunities for Indigenous placekeeping features that increase the visibility of Indigenous peoples, history and culture.

- *Local mobility improvements*, such as safety upgrades at intersections, shared mobility hubs and cycling routes, which together would complement already-approved projects, including the Yonge North Subway Extension, Transform Yonge, and Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road extensions.

These key features of the Recommended Option are represented through a series of maps and policy recommendations in Chapter 4 of the Final Options and Direction Report, including for Structure, Land Use, Parks and Open Spaces, Public Realm, Mobility and Building Types and Heights. Supporting policy recommendations are provided on topics such as affordable housing, mix of unit types, community services and facilities, inclusive economic development, biodiversity, Indigenous placekeeping, streetscapes, open spaces, ground floor animation, and cultural heritage.

Community feedback led to several changes between the Emerging Preferred Option and the final Recommended Option. For example:

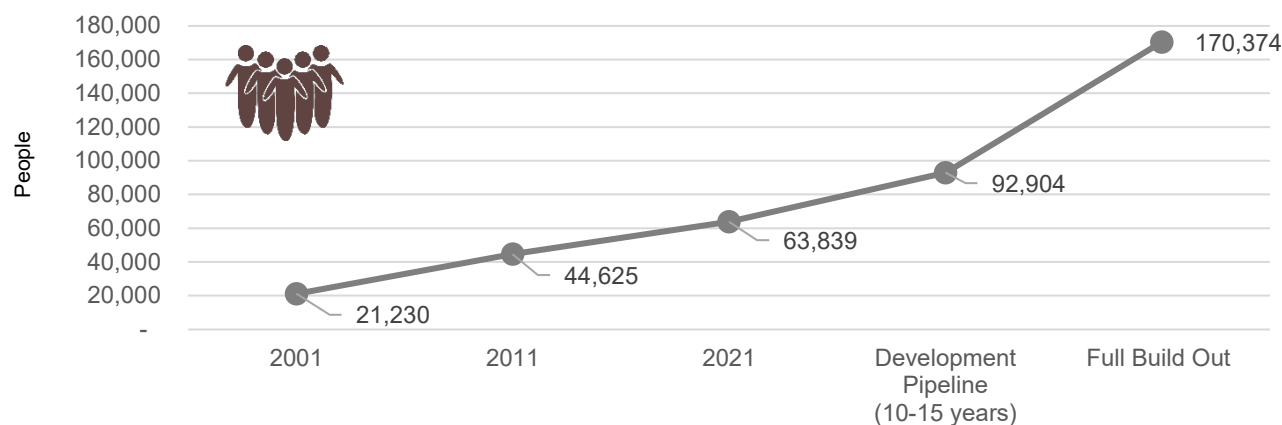
- Potential new street connections from neighbourhood streets to Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road were removed to address concerns about traffic cutting through residential areas.
- The earlier idea of green linear 'parkways' along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road was replaced with a strategy to expand existing parks, making them larger and better equipped to accommodate more programs and facilities.
- Peak building heights near subway stations were reduced from 65 storeys to 60 storeys at Sheppard-Yonge and 55 storeys at North York Centre and Finch.
- More clarity on building heights has also been achieved through changes to the Building Types and Heights Map, and the addition of a Sub-map for Mid-rise Buildings in the boundary expansion areas.

Community concerns about growth are also being addressed through the Community Services and Facilities Strategy, Infrastructure Implementation Strategy, and Secondary Plan policies and Urban Design Guidelines that focus on mitigating traffic, wind, and shadow impacts, and prioritizing green infrastructure in the public realm and on private property.

## **Proposed Growth in North York Centre Reflects its Transit Context**

It is estimated that the Recommended Option could accommodate approximately 170,000 people and 44,000 jobs at full build out. This would mean tripling North York Centre's population over the coming decades. At 170,000 people, North York Centre would be the second largest *Centre*, after Yonge-Eglinton. Full build out is expected to occur over approximately 30 years and depends on landowners choosing to redevelop their properties.

**Figure 3: Past and Future Estimated Population Growth in North York Centre**



The amount of growth proposed for North York Centre reflects its strong transit context. North York Centre has three subway stations, one of which is an interchange station between two lines. Line 1 Yonge-University is being extended north into York Region, which will further improve connectivity to North York Centre. Metrolinx is also studying options to extend Line 4 Sheppard to the east to connect with an extended Line 2 Bloor-Danforth and west to Downsview to improve transit connections in Toronto's north end. Together, these transit investments in and around North York Centre elevate its role as a place where growth will be focused over the mid- and long-term, in line with Provincial direction and Official Plan policies.

The growth estimate will be confirmed in Phase 3 and used to plan improvements to community services and facilities, the transportation system, sewers and watermains. It will provide a long-term view for capital planning, alongside monitoring of actual development to identify what near- and mid-term infrastructure investments are needed to support growth.

### **New Community Services and Facilities Will be Needed to Serve Growth**

Based on the long-term growth estimate for the Recommended Option, the CS&F Strategy identifies a number of community service facilities that will be needed to meet existing needs and support future growth over the coming decades as the area redevelops.

Near-term projects that are addressing existing needs include the recently completed renovation of the North York Central Library, the ongoing addition of classrooms at McKee Public School, two planned child care centres on Yonge Street that will provide 124 new spaces, two planned City-owned and managed community service spaces with a combined 6,826 square metres on Yonge Street, and the planned Newtonbrook Community Centre. Future needs identified in the CS&F Strategy include up to eight public elementary schools and three public secondary schools, one Catholic elementary school and potentially one new Catholic secondary school, 34 child care centres, one new community recreation centre, additional outdoor recreational facilities, and approximately 13,000 square metres of new community agency space. The CS&F Strategy addresses how to secure and deliver these spaces over time as North York

Centre grows to meet the needs, priorities and opportunities of each of the community service sectors. CS&F related policy recommendations in the Final Options and Directions Report acknowledge that meeting future community needs will require creative solutions that maximize the use of existing public assets, advance partnerships, emphasize integration and co-location.

## **Aligned Initiatives**

To advance Action 35 of the *Action Plan for Toronto's Economy* (APTE), in Q1 2026 Economic Development and Culture will partner with the Yonge North York Business Improvement Area to host a roundtable with major employers and commercial property owners on current challenges, opportunities and directions to strengthen North York Centre's economic competitiveness. Possible directions could include an Economic Development Strategy, more immediate initiatives, or other actions.

Also in 2026, Social Development will prepare a Social Infrastructure Roadmap to guide future investment in City-owned and managed spaces in North York Centre under the Community Space Tenancy Policy and Association of Community Centres (AOCC) Expansion Strategy. The Roadmap will support the development of long-term, affordable real estate for the non-profit sector and increased service delivery as the area grows.

## **Next Steps for Phase 3**

Pending Council's direction, staff will draft updated Secondary Plan policies in Phase 3, which is targeted to begin in January 2026. Staff expect to bring forward recommended policies to City Council for adoption in Q1 2027. The work plan for Phase 3 includes transportation, servicing, sun/shadow and wind studies and modelling for the Recommended Option; a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment; and Draft and Final Secondary Plan policies and Urban Design Guidelines. A Draft and Final Infrastructure Implementation Strategy will also be prepared in Phase 3 to identify phasing and delivery mechanisms for transportation, servicing and community facilities needed to support growth. Communications and engagement will continue in Phase 3, providing opportunities for the local community, stakeholders and Indigenous communities to provide input and feedback on draft materials before they are finalized.

Pending adoption of the Secondary Plan and resolution of any appeals, implementing zoning would be prepared in Phase 4 to reflect new Secondary Plan policies, as required under the *Planning Act*.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1. North York at the Centre: Final Options and Directions Report  
Attachment 2. Community Services and Facilities Strategy  
Attachment 3. Phase 1 Engagement Summary  
Attachment 4. Phase 2 Engagement Summary and Addendum  
Attachment 5. North York at the Centre: Phase 1 Background Report - Trends, Issues and Opportunities (At a Glance)