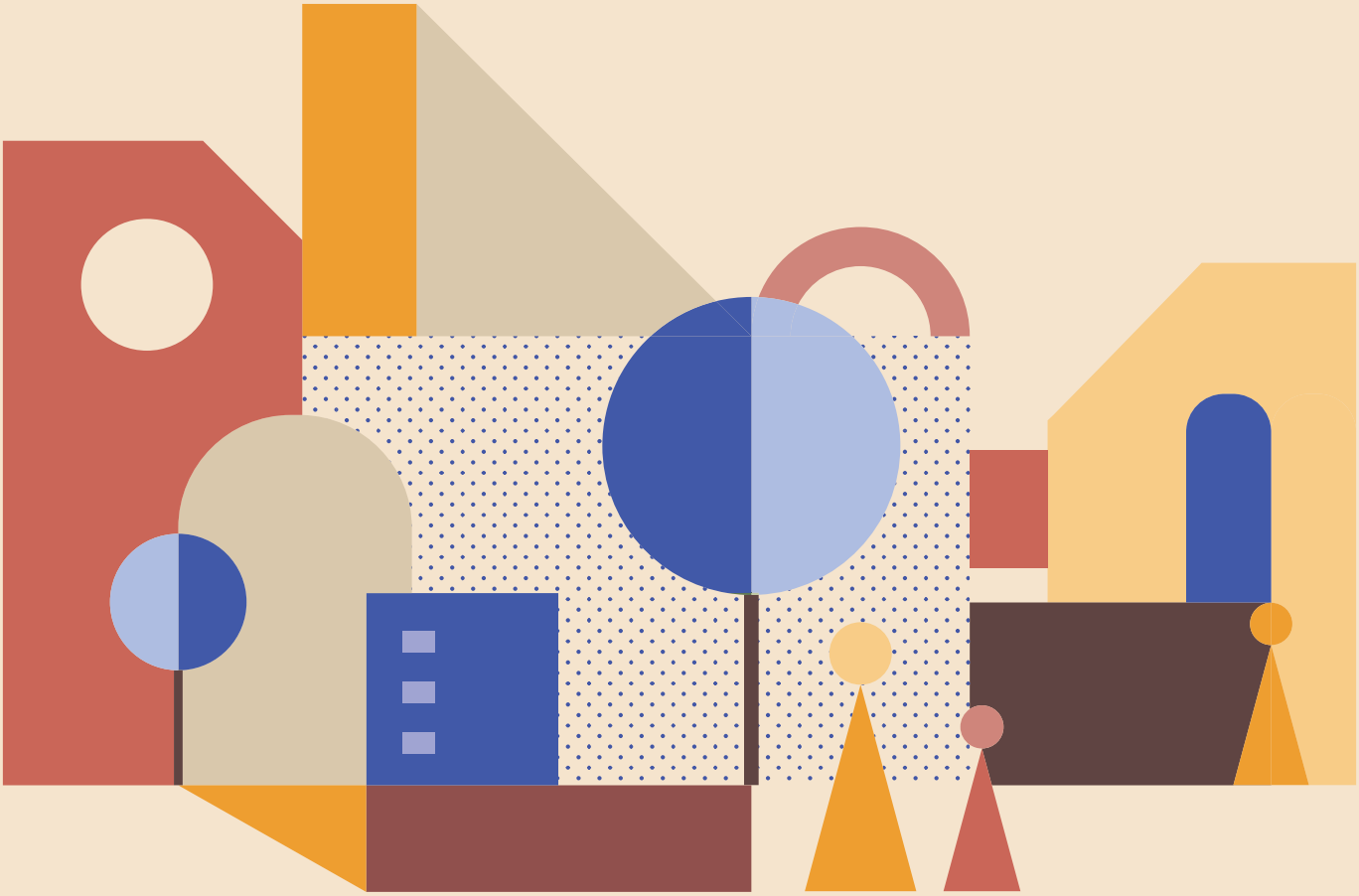
north york at the centre

Phase 1 Background Report: Study Area Analysis

October 2024



TORONTO

05. Study Area Analysis

05. STUDY AREA ANALYSIS

This chapter of the Background Report discusses and analyzes the various elements of the natural and built environment within North York Centre and the ways in which residents and visitors of the Centre live, work, shop, recreate and travel to, and around the Centre.

In each of the following sections, the report discusses applicable policies, plans and strategies, as well as the existing and planned conditions related to the following subjects:

- Natural Environment, Parks and Open Space;
- Climate and Resiliency;
- Land Use;
- Housing;
- Office and Retail;
- Community Services and Facilities;
- Mobility and Public Realm;
- Built Form; and
- Servicing

5.1 Natural Environment, Parks, and Open Space

This section of the report provides a summary of existing policies and defines, summarizes, and analyzes all the elements that make up the *Green Space System* in the North York Centre Secondary Plan (NYCSP) area, Boundary Expansion Study Area (BESA) and Parks Context Area (PCA) today. In the Official Plan, the City defines the *Green Space System* as the natural heritage system, parks and open spaces, and a variety of privately managed but publicly accessible spaces. In addition to these spaces this section analyzes trails and placekeeping features.

Policy

Planning Act

The *Planning Act* (R.S.O. 1990, c. P. 13) is provincial legislation that establishes an overarching framework for land use planning and development in Ontario. Section 2 of the *Planning Act* sets out matters of provincial interest including the protection of ecological systems (natural areas, features and functions).

Parkland dedication is one of the tools provided to municipal planning authorities by the *Planning Act.* Section 42 authorizes the conveyance of land to a municipality for park or other public recreational purposes at a rate of two percent for non-residential uses and five percent for residential uses (or equivalent cash-in-lieu of parkland) as a condition of the development of land. The *Planning Act* also authorizes the use of an alternative parkland dedication rate for land developed for residential uses. Section 37 of the *Planning Act* authorizes municipalities to collect community benefits charges to fund the capital costs of any public service associated with new growth, including parkland, if those costs are not already recovered from development charges and parkland provisions.

The *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022, made significant legislative changes to parkland dedication provisions in the *Planning Act*, including:

- Exempting certain types of development from parkland dedication requirements, including affordable and attainable housing units and units provided through inclusionary zoning;
- Reducing and capping the alternative parkland dedication rate. The alternative rate now permits up to one hectare for each 600 net residential units proposed. For sites of five hectares or less in area the rate is capped at a maximum of 10% of the land and for sites greater than five hectares in area the rate is capped at a maximum of 15% of the land; and
- Allowing encumbered parkland/strata parks and privately owned publicly accessible spaces (POPS) to be eligible for parkland credits.

These legislative changes limit the amount of new parkland that the City will be able to acquire in the Centre.

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and Proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. Chapter 1.0 of the PPS addresses building strong and healthy communities including Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails and Open Space (Section 1.5). Chapter 2.0 of the PPS addresses the Wise Use and Management of Resources including Natural Heritage (Section 2.1) and Water (Section 2.2).

The Draft Provincial Planning Statement was introduced by the Province in 2023 and revised in April 2024 as a replacement for the PPS and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The natural heritage and water policies of the in-force PPS are largely brought forward in the proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. The proposed Provincial Planning Statement includes policies for Public Spaces, Recreation, Parks, Trails and Open

Space under Section 3.9 and for Natural Heritage under Section 4.1. To summarize, policies under these sections emphasize that:

- Public streets, spaces and facilities are to be safe, meet the needs of pedestrians, foster social interaction, and facilitate active transportation and connectivity;
- The needs of persons of all ages and abilities and a full range and equitable distribution of spaces for recreation should be provided;
- Negative impacts on protected areas should be avoided or minimized; and
- The long-term ecological functions and biodiversity of natural heritage systems should be maintained, restored, or improved.

In the case of significant natural heritage features, development and site alteration are not permitted, unless it can be demonstrated that there will be 'no negative impact' on the features or their ecological functions.

Official Plan

The City of Toronto Official Plan includes policies for the *Green Space System* and Waterfront under section 2.3.2, Parks and Open Spaces under section 3.2.3 and the Natural Environment under Section 3.4.

Policies under Section 2.3.2 of the Official Plan emphasize the importance and role of Toronto's *Green Space System* and outline requirements which include:

- Improving, maintaining, restoring, creating, and protecting the *Green Space System* (ravines, watercourses, parks and other open spaces) (Policy 2.3.2.1 a), b) and c));
- Encouraging partnerships in the stewardship of lands and waters (Policy 2.3.2.1 d);
- Acquiring linkages between existing parks and open spaces to stitch together the broader open space network (Policy 2.3.2.3); and
- Ensuring that private development does not result in the loss of public space within the *Green Space System* (Policy 2.3.2.5).

Section 3.2.3 of the Official Plan provides policies for parks and open spaces including the addition of new parks and amenities, the design of high quality parks and amenities, protecting access to existing publicly accessible open spaces and promoting the use of private open spaces to supplement City-owned parks. Policy 4 of Section 3.2.3 implements the base parkland dedication rates provided for by the *Planning Act* and Policy 5 identifies that an alternative parkland rate of 0.4 hectares per 300 units will be applied to proposals for residential development and the residential portion of mixed-use development. Policy 5 also describes the conditions for use of the alternative parkland dedication rate and use of cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication. The alternative parkland dedication rate and policies in the North York Centre Secondary Plan (NYCSP) differ slightly from those in the Official Plan as described under the NYCSP section below. The City is currently undertaking a study to consider a density-responsive alternative parkland dedication approach that will be presented to City Council following further consultation.

Section 3.1.1 of the Official Plan provides direction to design public squares that are integrated into the broader public realm, have direct and accessible pedestrian connections, support a variety of programs, and support temporary facilities such as markets or performance spaces. Squares should be enhanced and opportunities to create new public squares will help support the open space network. These policies are relevant to Mel Lastman Square, one of the most important open spaces within the NYCSP area with over 20,000 square feet of open space and programming.

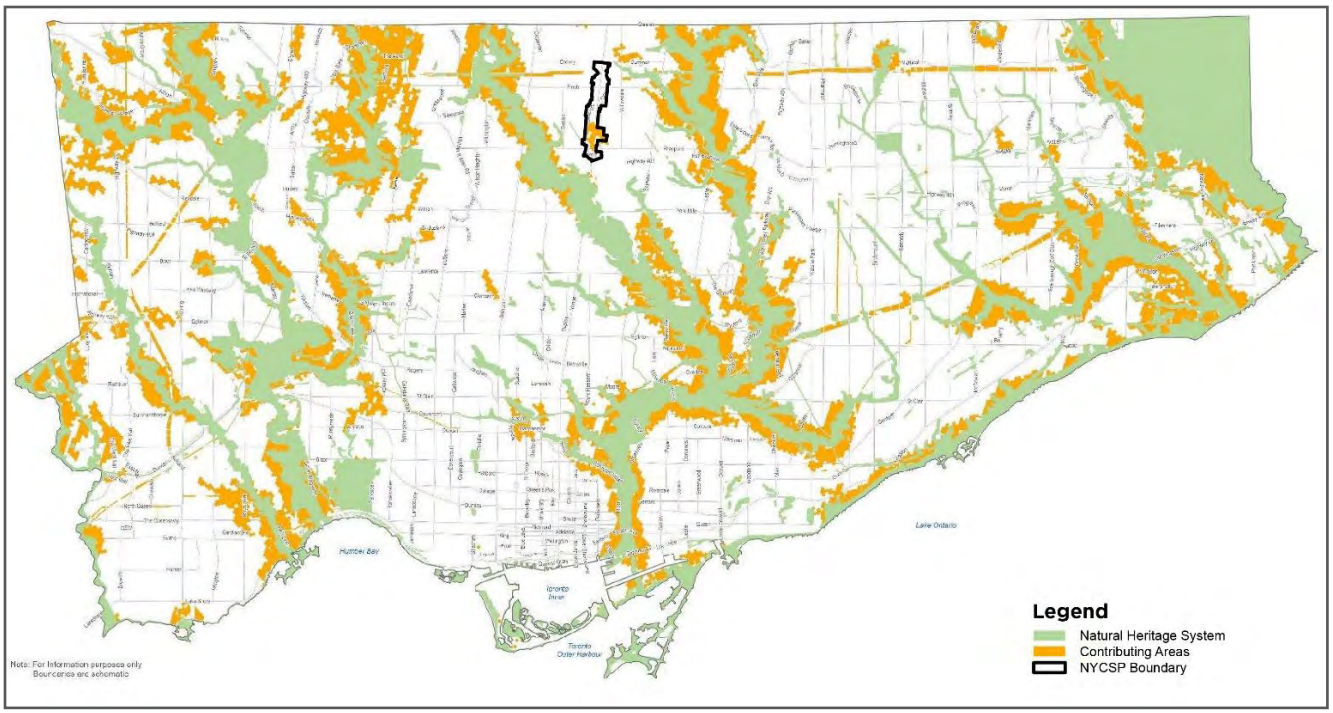
Section 3.4 of the Official Plan provides direction to protect, enhance and restore Toronto's natural environment. This section implements and builds on the PPS's natural heritage and water policies (PPS 2.1 & 2.2). The policies address various aspects of the development process, including building design, on-site servicing, and stormwater management, all with a view to incorporate environmentally friendly approaches and practices.

To protect the natural environment, Section 3.4 policies direct new development away from the Natural Heritage System (Map 9), natural hazards and Environmentally Significant Areas (Map 12), and require an assessment be undertaken for any proposed development adjacent to natural areas. Specifically, Policy 3.4.1(b) encourages all city-building activities and built environment changes to integrate "ecological improvements".

OPA 583, adopted by Council in 2022, introduces new *Contributing Areas* to the Natural Heritage System mapping (identified in updated Map 9A of the Official Plan), with policy direction that new development within *Contributing Areas* should demonstrate a net increase in ecological function and biodiversity on the development site. This would include measures such as maintaining and enhancing existing tree canopy and soft landscaping and encouraging other green infrastructure measures. The Centre includes a "*Contributing Area*" in the southern half. OPA 583 also includes a sidebar on historical watercourses. The sidebar notes that urbanization has resulted in extensive creek burial and diversion of water flows into sewers and directs that opportunities to restore or daylight historical watercourses on public parklands or as part of comprehensive redevelopment should be considered. Wilket Creek may offer such an opportunity within the Secondary Plan area and will be evaluated as part of the study. OPA 583 has not yet received Ministerial approval.

The broader natural environment – from the proximity to the ravine system to the tree coverage throughout The Centre – is emphasized in the Official Plan, including through Section 3.4. The policies in this section require all city-building activities and changes to the built environment to preserve and enhance the urban forest by:

- Providing suitable growing environments for trees;
- Increasing tree canopy coverage and diversity, especially of long-lived native and large shade trees; and
- Regulating the injury and destruction of trees.



(Source: OPA 583)

Figure 5-1: Natural Heritage System and Contributing Areas

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North York Centre Secondary Plan

The NYCSP articulates a Conceptual Parks and Open Space Plan for the Centre consisting of the following public and private open space components:

- The Yonge Street promenade;
- Parks and Private Publicly Accessible Open Spaces;
- Areas under consideration for additional parks;
- Linear parks along the Service Roads;
- The Wilket Creek parks system; and
- Treed streets and pedestrian links within the Centre and to the parks and open space system outside the Centre.

The NYCSP also outlines policy directions for parkland dedication, including criteria for the types of lands that will be accepted and the amount of land and/or cash in lieu that is to be provided in

Alternative Parkland Dedication Rate Summary

- The *Planning Act*, as amended by the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022, authorizes an alternative parkland dedication rate of up to one hectare for each 600 net residential units and includes caps of 10% of the land (for sites five hectares or less) and 15% of the land (for sites greater than five hectares).
- The Official Plan alternative parkland dedication rate requires 0.4 hectares per 300 net residential units.
- The current NYCSP alternative parkland dedication rate requires 0.6 hectares per 560 dwelling units.

Updates to the Secondary Plan policies for alternative parkland dedication will be considered through North York at the Centre.

relation to the size of the development site. As noted above, the NYCSP uses a slightly different alternative parkland dedication rate than the current city-wide rate: Section 6.5 of the NYCSP includes an alternative parkland dedication rate of 0.6 hectares per 560 units. Off-site parkland dedication may be considered under certain circumstances within 0.8 km of the site. Updates to the Secondary Plan policies for alternative parkland dedication will be considered through North York at the Centre.

The NYCSP successfully established a parks and open space network in and near the Secondary Plan area where very little previously existed. The policy framework and the sites within the current boundary have influenced the nature of the parks and open space network: minimal new parkland has been created within the Centre; however new significant parkland has been created along the periphery of the NYCSP, in part due to surplus property arising from the acquisition of land to construct the service roads, namely Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road.

Although there is a linear network of parks connecting the neighbourhood, in many cases these parks are limited in functionality and generally serve as a buffer between the Centre and surrounding neighbourhoods rather than functional park space for residents. More recently, new parks of significant size have been created at some distance from the NYCSP and do not serve residents of the Centre. North York at the Centre will consider opportunities to expand and improve existing park spaces to make them more functional, while adding new park space that can accommodate a variety of parks programming. The project will also review the parks and open space network with other open spaces such as the Don River Valley, York Cemetery, and indoor and outdoor POPS.

Lessons from Other Secondary Plans

Golden Mile Secondary Plan

The Golden Mile Secondary Plan established a framework for the comprehensive transformation of a significant area of Employment Lands into a mixed-use community. This includes new streets and blocks as well as parks. As such, the overall urban structure does not apply directly to the Centre, which is a more mature mixed-use area, characterized by infill development. That said, the following policies related to parks and open spaces could be relevant:

- **Shadow impact:** The Golden Mile Secondary Plan includes detailed shadow impact policies, with different levels of shadow mitigation afforded to named existing parks, new parks, and sidewalks on the north side of certain east-west streets. Sun-shadow testing of the options in Phase 2 of North York at the Centre will assist in developing context-appropriate shadow impact policies for the Centre.
- **Green Nodes:** The Golden Mile Secondary Plan introduces the concept of Green Nodes and identifies intersections where they should be located. A Green Node is a group of publicly-owned and publicly accessible open spaces or landscapes located at a street intersection where a park is located, typically consisting of a portion of the park on one corner of the intersection, and POPS or additional building setbacks with enhanced landscaping and pedestrian amenities on the other corners of the intersection. Green Nodes are intended to serve as centres of community and cultural activities with adequate space for programming and activities provided in both public and private open spaces.

Guidelines

Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces Design Guidelines (Draft)

The Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS) Design Guidelines provide direction to the development community and City staff on the location and design of new POPS and the revitalization of existing POPS. Open space classifications identified in the Guidelines include courtyards, plazas, gardens, walkways/mid-block pedestrian connections, forecourts, landscaped setbacks/boulevards, and publicly accessible interior pedestrian connections. POPS do not count towards parkland dedication.

The Centre's open space network includes open spaces that fit into all the classifications identified in the POPS Design Guidelines. Some of them are formally identified as POPS and some are not. The POPS Design Guidelines will be considered in recommendations for enhancements to existing open spaces and identification and recommendations for new open spaces as part of a comprehensive open space network in the Centre.

Pet Friendly Design Guidelines And Best Practices For New Multi-Unit Buildings

The Pet Friendly Design Guidelines and Best Practices for new Multi-Unit Buildings are intended to guide new developments to be more supportive of a growing pet population, consider opportunities to reduce the burden on the public realm, and provide pet amenities for high density residential communities. The Guidelines are broken into those that apply at the neighbourhood scale, the building scale and the unit scale.

As a neighbourhood of primarily multi-unit buildings that will accommodate most of its growth through new multi-unit buildings, the Pet Friendly Design Guidelines are very applicable in the Centre. The guidelines at the neighbourhood scale address how to evaluate the context of open spaces around a new development to assess the type of on-site amenities that should be provided and reduce the burden on the parks system. North York at the Centre will both evaluate the need for pet-friendly amenities within the parks system and the need for policy guidance for on-site pet amenities.

Plans and Strategies

The plans and strategies discussed below represent the City's intentions with regard to reconciliation, the acquisition of parkland, the stewardship of Toronto's ravines, and the fostering of improved biodiversity. While these plans and strategies do not necessarily have the authority of policy, they guide investment and decision-making by the City.

Reconciliation Action Plan

The City has a priority to incorporate Indigenous placekeeping (also sometime referred to as placemaking) in Toronto's parks and public realm system. Action #15 of the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAC) - Support Indigenous Placekeeping – reflects this commitment. The RAC describes placekeeping as an action or process that strives towards collective re-imagining of public spaces to strengthen the connection between place, community, values, culture, past, present and future. Action #15 of the RAC highlights a few ways to support Indigenous placekeeping through the parks and open space network that could be advanced through North York at the Centre:

- Providing access to land and waters for ceremony, stewardship and other cultural activities;
- Elevating Indigenous languages in placemaking and placekeeping initiatives;
- Supporting co-management of spaces that can be developed in partnership between the City and Indigenous partners;
- Developing an approach to sacred fires, including identifying designated locations across the city that are barrier-free;

- Increasing access to, planning of, and stewardship of areas in parks and ravine areas of historical, cultural and spiritual importance; and
- Advancing historical or heritage designations for sites of Indigenous significance.

In December 2020, staff presented an Indigenous Placemaking Framework to the City's Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee. The goals of the Indigenous Placemaking Framework are to:

- Expand and ensure presentation and commemoration of Indigenous histories and cultures;
- Create space – physically, and in process and policy – for ceremony, teaching and community;
- Strengthen Indigenous connections with lands and waters, both traditionally and contemporarily used; and
- Build capacity for land-based Indigenous engagement, and for greater cultural competency in City of Toronto staff.

The Placemaking Framework has four focus areas: public art, places and naming, policy and capacity, and engagement/consultation.

Parkland Strategy

The Parkland Strategy is a 20-year plan that guides long-term planning for new and expanded public parks, aiming to improve access to parklands across the City. The Parkland Strategy measures parkland provision by examining the amount of parkland available to residents by dissemination block. It identifies areas of relatively low or high parkland provision, as well as "Areas of Parkland Need", which are priority areas for parkland planning and acquisition, and have been determined based on compounding factors such as low park supply, low income, and high growth. It also includes walkability gaps, highlighting areas where a resident is not able to access a park within 500 m walking distance.

This Report uses the measures identified in the Parkland Strategy to assess parkland provision and walkability gaps in the Centre. The emerging priorities identified in the guiding principles of the Parkland Strategy will inform the Parks Strategy for the Centre, and include: expanding/creating new parkland, improving the functionality of existing parkland, creating welcoming and accessible places and establishing physical and visual connections.

The Parkland Strategy categorizes parks based on the size of parks and the various functions that parkland can serve based on the types of programming and assets within the park. Each park size has an associated catchment area based on a reasonable distance to travel to access the park. As the size of a park increases, so does its catchment area. This is based on two assumptions: larger parks contain more space to accommodate various features and functions, and people are generally willing to travel greater distances to parks with more amenities.

Examples of spaces and features that form part of each park function include:

- **Passive + Ecological:** ponds, wetlands, beaches, ravines, pathways etc;
- **Sport + Play:** playgrounds, soccer fields, basketball courts, skating rinks, etc; and
- **Community + Civic:** picnic sites, community gardens, community recreation centres, amphitheatres, fire pits, etc.

**City and Legacy parks have not been given a specific catchment area due to their very large size, the unique features they contain, which attract and serve a city-wide function.*

(Source: City of Toronto Parkland Strategy, 2019)

Figure 5-2: Park Classifications According to Function and Size

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Toronto Ravine Strategy

The Toronto Ravine Strategy guides future decisions on ravine management, use, enhancement and protection. The Ravine Strategy and Implementation Report outline a plan to build the Loop Trail, an 81-kilometre off-road, multi-use facility that will connect multiple ravines, including a connection through the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail located at the northern periphery of the Centre.

The Centre sits in the Don River Watershed and although a ravine does not directly cut through the study area, it is surrounded by ravine lands on all sides. The proximity to nature offers opportunities to support improved connections and/or expanded naturalization. North York at the Centre will consider how the Loop Trail can be implemented through the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail and connected to other active transportation routes in the Secondary Plan area.

Toronto Biodiversity Strategy

In 2019, the City passed the Toronto Biodiversity Strategy, which aims to promote a livable city that supports biodiversity and an increased awareness of nature through the articulation of a vision, 10 principles, and 23 actions under the themes of protect, restore, design, and engage.

Action 8 of the Toronto Biodiversity Strategy specifies that Secondary Plan policies should be reviewed for opportunities to support biodiversity, and Action 9 encourages the identification of priority sites for restoration, such as hydro corridors, green roofs, and appropriate areas in the public realm. As well, Action 11 encourages the promotion of planting native plant species over invasive non-native species. Moreover, by pursuing the actions referenced above, the North York at the Centre initiative and future Review can also contribute to Action 13 under the design theme, serving as an example of 'best practices' for integrating biodiversity into the built environment.

Considering the Centre is a dense urban environment with relatively limited natural areas, the linear and connected parkland structures on both sides of the Yonge Street corridor is an important element to foster biodiversity within/adjacent the Study Area. Relevant actions from the Biodiversity Strategy for the Primary Study Area will focus on restoration such as promoting native planting and increasing biodiversity on underutilized spaces such as hydro corridors.

Existing and Planned Conditions

The following describes the existing and planned natural environment, parks, open spaces, trails and placekeeping features located within the Centre.

Natural Environment

The Official Plan (and Map 9) defines the natural heritage system to include significant landforms and physical features, watercourses and hydrological features, the riparian zone, valley slopes and floodplains, terrestrial natural habitat types, aquatic features, vegetation communities and species of concern, and significant biological features as identified in Provincial policy.

Topography

The Centre is characterized by a relatively flat topography sloping generally from the north-north-west, down to the south-south-east. The southern edge of the Centre sits at approximately 170-185 metres above sea level (ASL) and 185-195 metres ASL at the north (**Figure 5-3**). Nearby lands to the east and west sit at a much lower level, as they form branches of the Don River ravine system, tributaries of which can be seen along Senlac Road at the North York Cemetery.

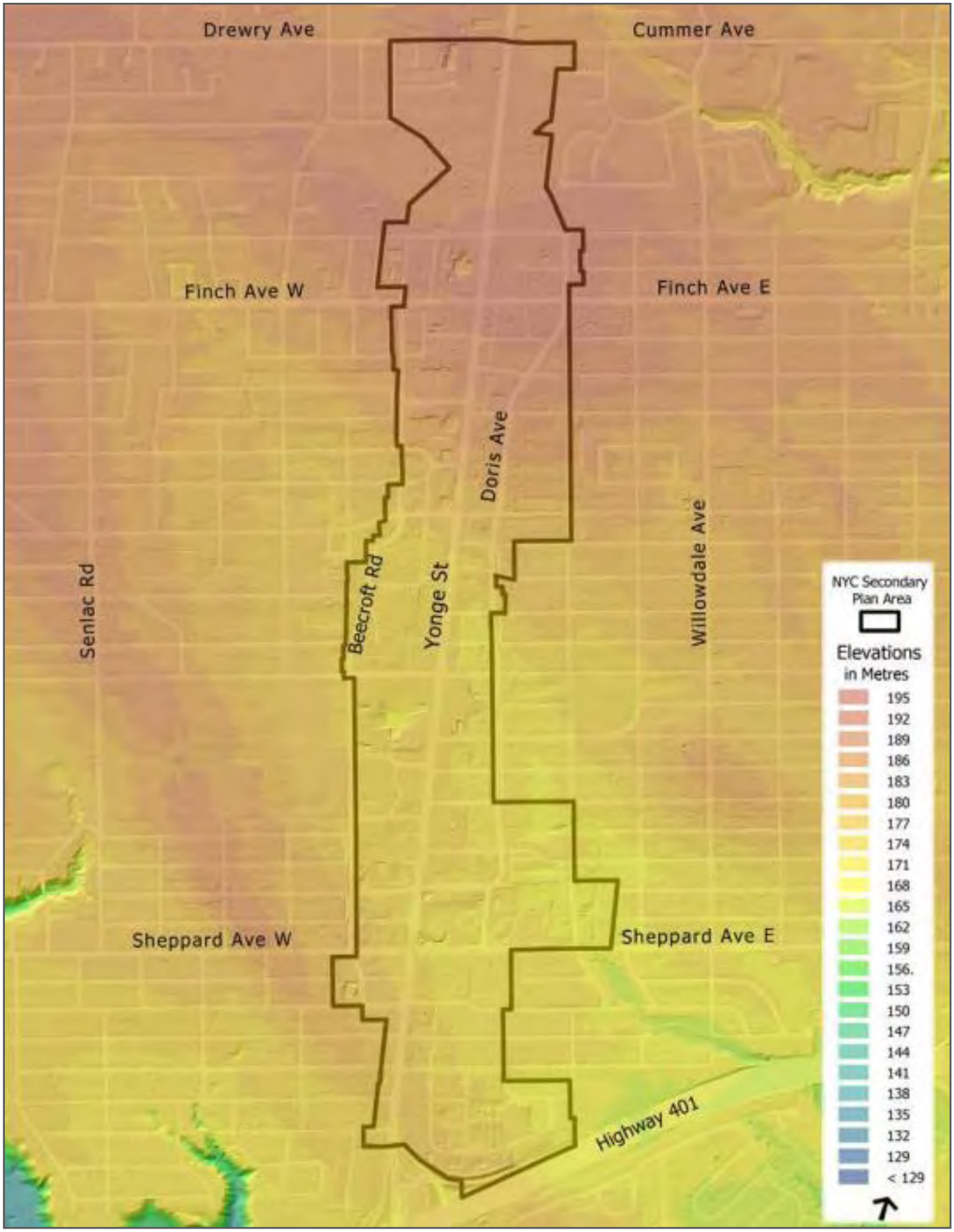


Figure 5-3: Topography Within the Cent

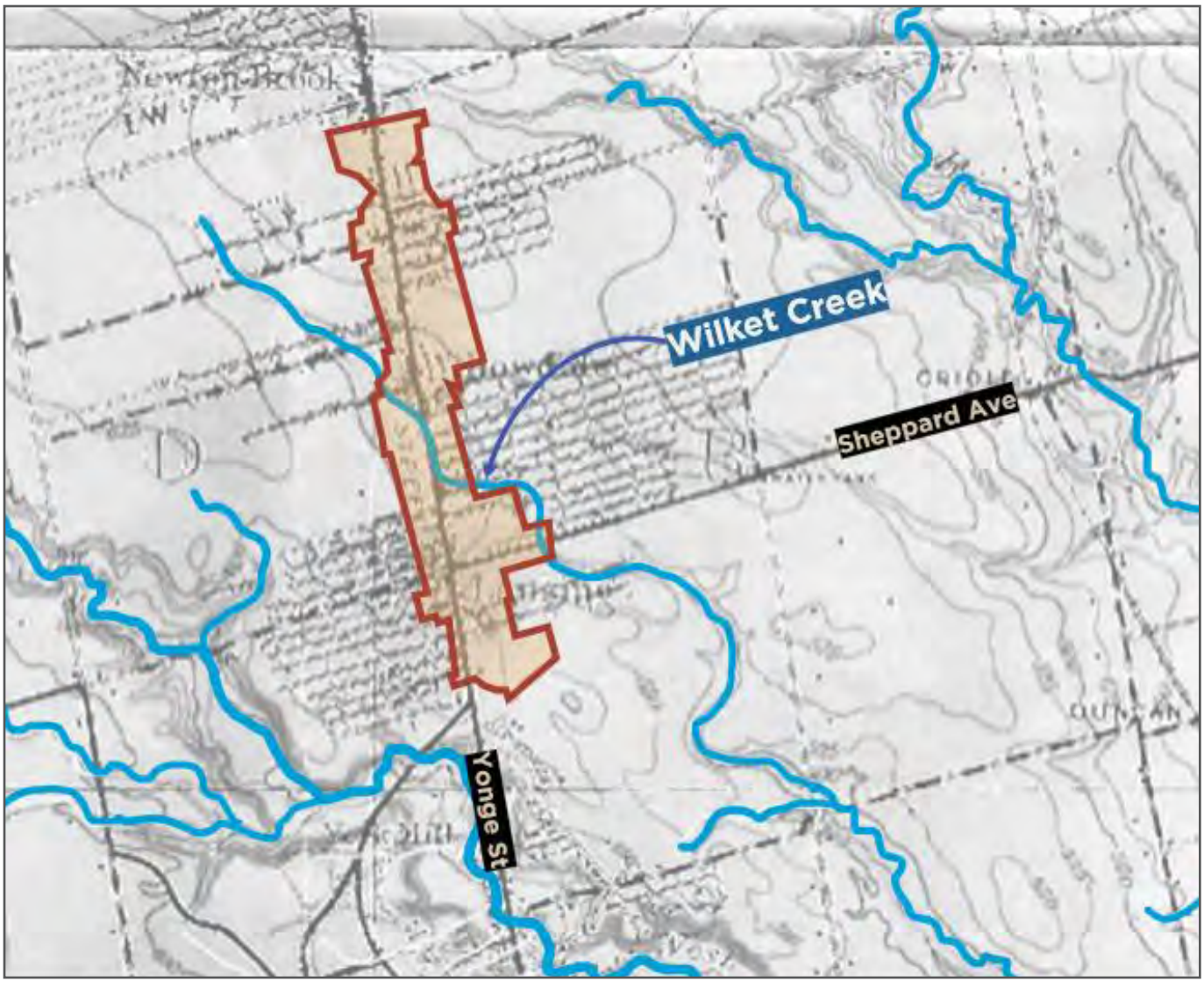


Figure 5-4: 1802 Lost Rivers of Toronto Map Showing Wilket Creek

Archival maps from 1802 note the presence of Wilket Creek, a tributary of the Don River, that cuts right through the Study Area (**Figure 5-4**). The creek was buried underground more than a century ago and reconfigured to serve as part of the City's Stormwater Management System, while its path at-grade forms part of the area's open space network. The creek emerges above ground south of the Study Area near Bayview Road and York Mills Road. As noted above, a sidebar in Official Plan Amendment 583 indicates the City's interest in restoring or daylighting historical watercourses like Wilket Creek where feasible.

Ravines

The study area sits within the Don River watershed, one of the most urbanized watersheds in Canada. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) administers the Don River Watershed Plan, which is intended to inform and guide municipalities in planning for the watershed. The extensive urbanization and prevalence of paved surfaces across the Don River watershed result in limited opportunities for stormwater infiltration into the soil or absorption by vegetation. The east and west branches of Don River system lie just outside the Study Area and will not be subject to development

pressure as they fall within the TRCA and the City's Ravine and Natural Feature Protection By-law. The Study Area is in close proximity to rich natural heritage, but it lacks direct physical access to the ravines. Limited trail access and entrances to the ravine coupled with substandard sidewalk along the spine network all create challenges for residents to access the ravine.

Parks

Parks are integral to providing a healthy, natural ecosystem and high quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors of the Centre. They not only offer places to socialize and engage in recreational activities, but also provide opportunities to connect with nature and take respite from the urban environment. Parks help to promote physical health and mental well-being in the urbanizing city.

The parks and open space system in the Centre is comprised of city owned parkland, the hydro corridor, cemeteries and squares and plazas. The network is also supplemented by POPS and public-school yards where the city does not have ownership over an open space, it must rely on partnerships and agreements to provide public access.

Parks close to but outside of the Centre also serve residents of the Centre, therefore the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation department uses a larger Parks Context Area (PCA) to analyze parkland.

Existing Parks

The City has identified 33 existing parks that serve the Study Area, totalling approximately 516,705 m^2 (over 51 ha). These parks, illustrated in **Figure 5-5**, can be classified based on their size into the following categories from the Toronto Parkland Strategy: Small Park and Parkette (0-1.5 ha); Medium Park (1.5 3.0 ha); and Large Park (3-5 ha).

Small Park and Parkette (0-1.5 ha)

The majority of the existing parks in the NYCSP area are small parks and parkettes. This includes the network of parks that run along Beecroft Road (Beecroft Parkette, Loraine Drive Park and Kempford Parkette) and Doris Avenue (Doris Norton Park, Mackenzie Parkette and Ring Road Linear Park). Numerous small parks and parkettes trace the route of the currently buried Wilket Creek, extending from Edithvale Park to Glendora Park. These areas serve as crucial nodes within the neighbourhood.

Many parks in the area support Community and Civic functions, which is common for smaller parkettes in more urban settings. Where parks have been identified as providing Passive and Ecological functions, these are more often associated with landscaped gardens rather than naturalized open spaces. Where Sport and Play functions have been identified, many of these parks have child-focused amenities such as playgrounds and/or splashpads.

Medium Park (1.5 - 3.0 ha)

Medium parks in the PCA such as Demsey Park, Mitchell Field Park and Silverview Park, in addition to playing a civic role, also host sports fields, gardens, playgrounds and shading structures.

Large Park (3-5 ha)

Three of the large parks in the Centre include:

- Willowdale Park, which is located in the southeast portion Study Area;
- Glendora Park, which is located near the Centre's southern boundary above Highway 401; and,
- Hendon Park, which is located more centrally.

These parks attract people from a larger catchment area due to the presence of many amenities, including splashpads, larger playgrounds, sports fields and courts, and public art within them.

Figure 5-5: Parks and Open Spaces Map

Figure 5-6: Lee Lifeson Art Park

(Source: ChatterBlock)

Figure 5-7: Glendora Park

Parkland Provision Levels

The 2019 Parkland Strategy provides an assessment of parkland provision city-wide, measuring the amount of parkland available to residents per census dissemination block.

The majority of the residents in the Study Area experience a parkland provision rate below the city-wide average of 28 m^2 per person (**Figure 5-8**). Parkland provision levels are highest in the northern section of the PCA near Hendon and Silverview Parks. There are many areas with very low parkland provision levels between 0-4 m^2 per person, especially east of Yonge Street along Willowdale Avenue and west of Yonge and Sheppard intersection

Walkability to Parks

The Parkland Strategy measures walkability – or the ability of a resident to access a park within 500 metres. Walkability is impacted by distance but also by physical barriers that prevent a pedestrian from directly accessing a park, such as steep slopes or fences. **Figure 5-9** illustrates walkability gaps as areas in yellow where residents are not able to access a park within approximately a 500-metre distance or a 5-to-10-minute walk of their homes.

Although most of the Study Area has relatively low parkland provision levels, the walkability gaps are small and are predominantly located in the northern part of the Study Area.

Future and Planned Parks

The Parkland Strategy estimates the impact of population growth on the parks network to 2034 based on Development Pipeline information and existing and planned parks. **Figure 5-10** illustrates the resulting percentage change in parkland provision based on Development Pipeline data and includes existing and some anticipated future parks. Future parks within the Study Area include new parkland that will be located at: 25 Holmes Avenue, 223 Gladys Alison Place, and 37 Norton Avenue. Additional future parkland that is earlier in the process includes planned parks on Inez Court and Averill Crescent in the northernmost part of the Centre (**Figure 5-5**).

If no additional parkland is added aside from the planned parks noted above, parkland provision rates are anticipated to decline as growth occurs in the Study Area. Most notably a decline of between 10% to 20% is expected in the areas north of Hendon Avenue and greater than 25% near Sheppard Avenue West and Senlac Road. It is important to note that these projections are based on Development Pipeline data from a point in time and do not necessarily reflect population growth that may occur following updates to the planning framework brought forward through North York at the Centre.

Figure 5-8: Parkland Provision

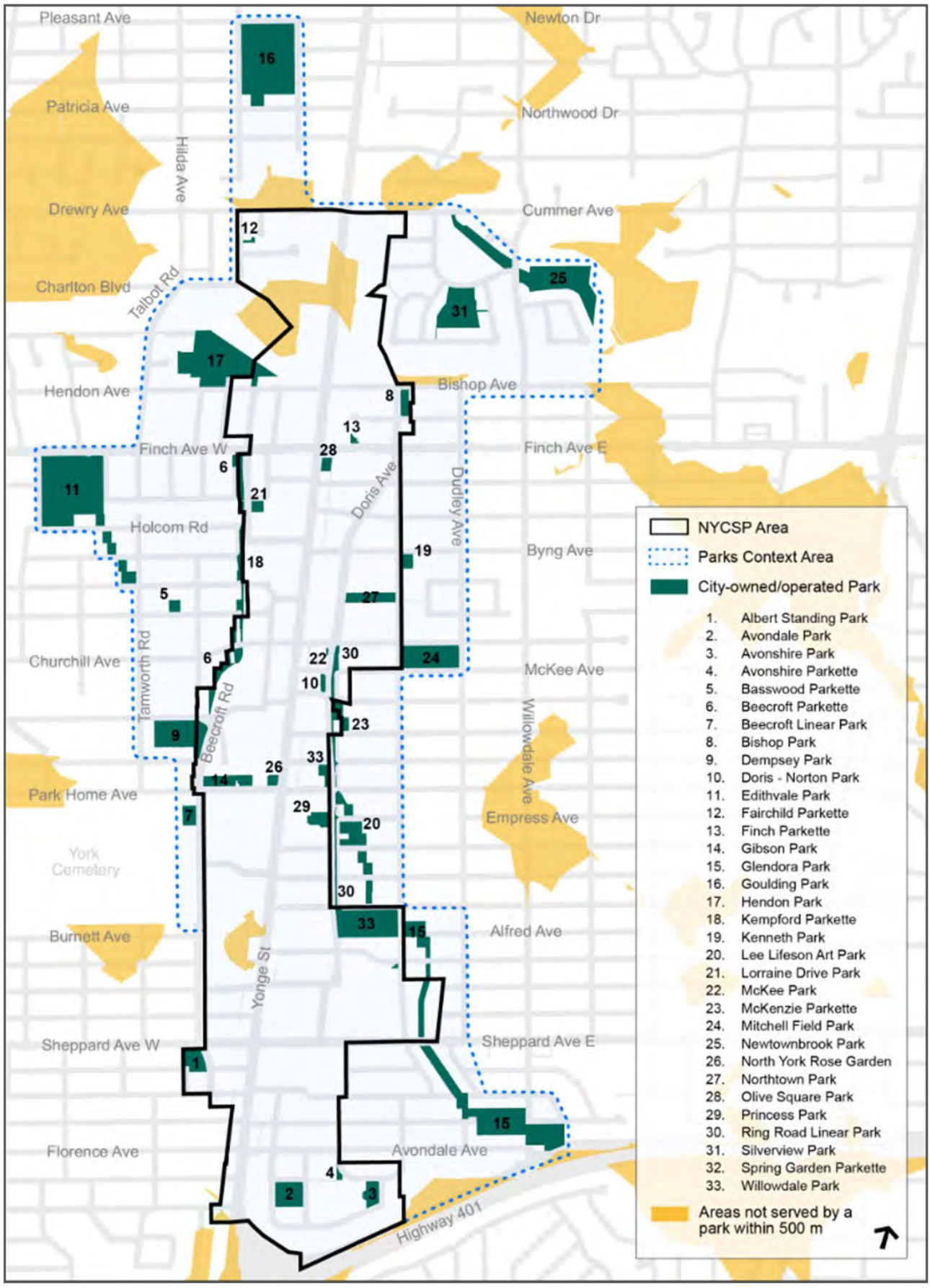


Figure 5-9: Parkland Walkability Gaps

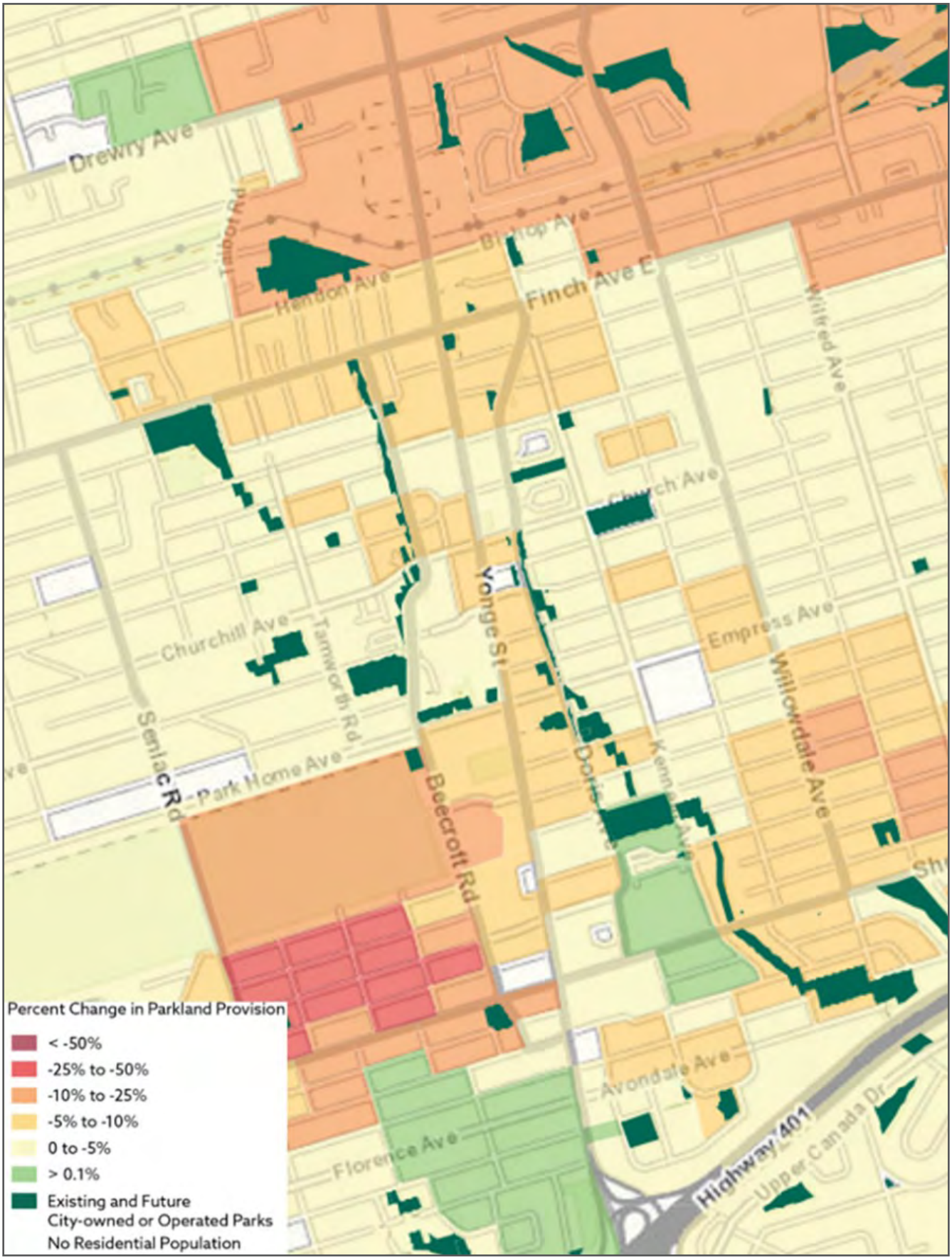


Figure 5-10: Percentage Change in Parkland Provision

Other Open Spaces

The broader *Green Space System*, as defined in the Official Plan, includes other open spaces such as hydro corridors, squares, school yards, cemeteries, and privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces. Although these spaces contribute to the public realm and play an important role in the *Green Space System*, they do not replace the need for City-owned parkland.

Finch Hydro Corridor

The Finch Hydro Corridor runs east to west across the northern section of the Study Area (**Figure 5-11**). Portions of this corridor serve as a parking area for the GO Bus and the TTC Terminal Station at Finch Avenue. With the planned TTC Line 1 extension to Langstaff Station in the north, the use of Finch Station will change and there will be a potential drop in parking demand as it ceases to be a terminal station and as new parking may be provided at other stations along the extension. It should be noted that the TTC currently has no plans to reduce parking at Finch Station under the Finch Hydro Corridor. Opportunities may exist to revisit parking requirements once the Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) is operational, which can present new opportunities to accommodate additional uses with this area. Coordination with the TTC at that time will be required.

Hydro corridors present opportunities to create new green spaces, additional sports and recreational facilities and community gardens. There are complexities in implementing any public realm improvements within the hydro corridor, however, as these need to be pursued in partnership with Hydro One Networks and implemented in accordance with that authority's design standards to ensure the primacy for electricity transmission and distribution systems. Secondary uses, such as active and passive recreation, agriculture, community gardens and other utilities, are possible on the hydro corridor, where compatible with surrounding land uses. Such secondary uses require the approval of the utility company. The Finch Hydro Corridor can also play a significant role in improving sustainability in the area with added green cover and improved rainwater infiltration.

Figure 5-11: Aerial View of the Finch Hydro Corridor Used as TTC Parking Lot

Cemeteries

The York Cemetery spans from Senlac Road in the west to Beecroft Road in the east, covering an area of 70 hectares (173 acres). The cemetery contributes significantly towards the open space network in the Study Area where residents frequently use the cemetery as a thoroughfare and for recreation such as walking and biking. The large green space also contributes towards the sustainability and stormwater drainage in the area. Currently, the York Cemetery is accessed by main entrances along Beecroft Road, Senlac Road, and Bathurst Street, with access points also at Don River Boulevard, Alonzo Road, and Wentworth Avenue via Burnett Park. Its access hours are 8:00 am to 5:30 pm from November to March and 8:00 am to 8:00 pm from April to October.

Cummer Burial Grounds is another cemetery that is also used as a green space. This cemetery is closed off with fences and its adjacency to Yonge Street with busy throughfare traffic makes it less inviting for the community.

School Yards

There are five school properties with outdoor school yards within the PCA. School yards primarily function as important outdoor amenities for students but may also provide opportunities to support community access to green space and recreational facilities during non-school hours. School sites can also help contribute to the overall connectivity within the study area. Partnerships between school boards and the City are key in pursuing these valuable opportunities.

Squares

Squares are public open spaces that are found outside of, or in-between, buildings. Mel Lastman Square, located in front of North York Civic Cmelentre, is a well-used and prominent square in North York Centre (**Figure 5-5**).

Mel Lastman Square has several functions such as a welcome plaza, ice rink and an open-air theatre that can accommodate a wide range of programming across different seasons. Transform Yonge envisions improvements to Mel Lastman Square as an extension of the streetscape. Currently, the square does not have an active edge on the north and south due to the difference in elevation that slopes from east to west. This elevation change also causes accessibility challenges. As a key open space that acts a prime gathering space for residents in the area, improvements to Mel Lastman Square should be considered.

Other Open Spaces

All the other unprogrammed open spaces in the Study Area are categorized as other open spaces. Although not programmed, these open spaces play a crucial role in connecting existing parks, increasing the permeable surfaces in the area, helping with rainwater infiltration. These open spaces, based on their location, can also potentially offer opportunities to transform into programmed open spaces such as small parks, parkettes and plazas. Small open spaces also provide opportunities for urban food production through allotment gardens or volunteer-run community gardens. However, this requires coordination with the City of Toronto and landowners.

Trails and Access

The Centre is surrounded by numerous large green spaces such as the ravine, hydro corridor and multiple parks. Despite the proximity to these green spaces, the Centre lacks physical and ecological connectivity between its parks and open spaces (**Figure 5-13**). Access to ravines is extremely limited throughout the Study Area with few access points to the ravine (**Figure 5-14**). A trail network does run along the now buried Wilket Creek through a series of parks and parkettes, but this trail is discontinuous. A direct physical connection of these trails would help establish an alternative east west active transportation route for residents.

Presently, the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail runs alongside the hydro corridor but is interrupted by the Finch Station parking area. Design work to connect this missing link is currently underway by Transportation Services as part of the Beecroft Extension project and presents an opportunity to connect the Study Area with the rest of the trail network. Beecroft Road will be extended from its current terminus at Finch Avenue West north to Drewry Avenue, adding a new east-west street connecting to Yonge Street within the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail. The design of the Beecroft Extension will include pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and accommodate space for street trees/plantings and will improve connections to the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail from the neighbourhoods.

The Finch Hydro Corridor Trail also has the potential to connect to the Loop Trail, which has been envisioned as an implementing project for the Toronto Ravine Strategy. In partnership with Evergreen and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Loop Trail project seeks to create a continuous, 81-kilometre off-road, multi-use ring trail, knitting together five Ravine Priority Investment Areas, 22 Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, the Humber River and Don River ravine systems, the waterfront and neighbourhoods along the Finch corridor. The Loop Trail would also connect to and support the Meadoway, which is the continuous multi-use trail that will ultimately link downtown Toronto to the Rouge Urban National Park and allows people to travel between the two without ever leaving nature. Clear wayfinding signage can be used to improve connectivity to the ravine through existing connections.

Figure 5-12: Buried Wilket Creek at Beecroft Road

Precedents

The Meadoway:

"The Meadoway" is a transformative project that aims to create a continuous urban park and green corridor along a hydro corridor that stretches for approximately 16 kilometres in Scarborough. The trail provides a critical connection between downtown Toronto and Rouge National Urban Park, providing a safer and more naturalized option for users.

Jane Finch Neighbourhood:

Similarly, in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood, the hydro corridor hosts various sports fields and neighbourhood allotment gardens, all interconnected by the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail.

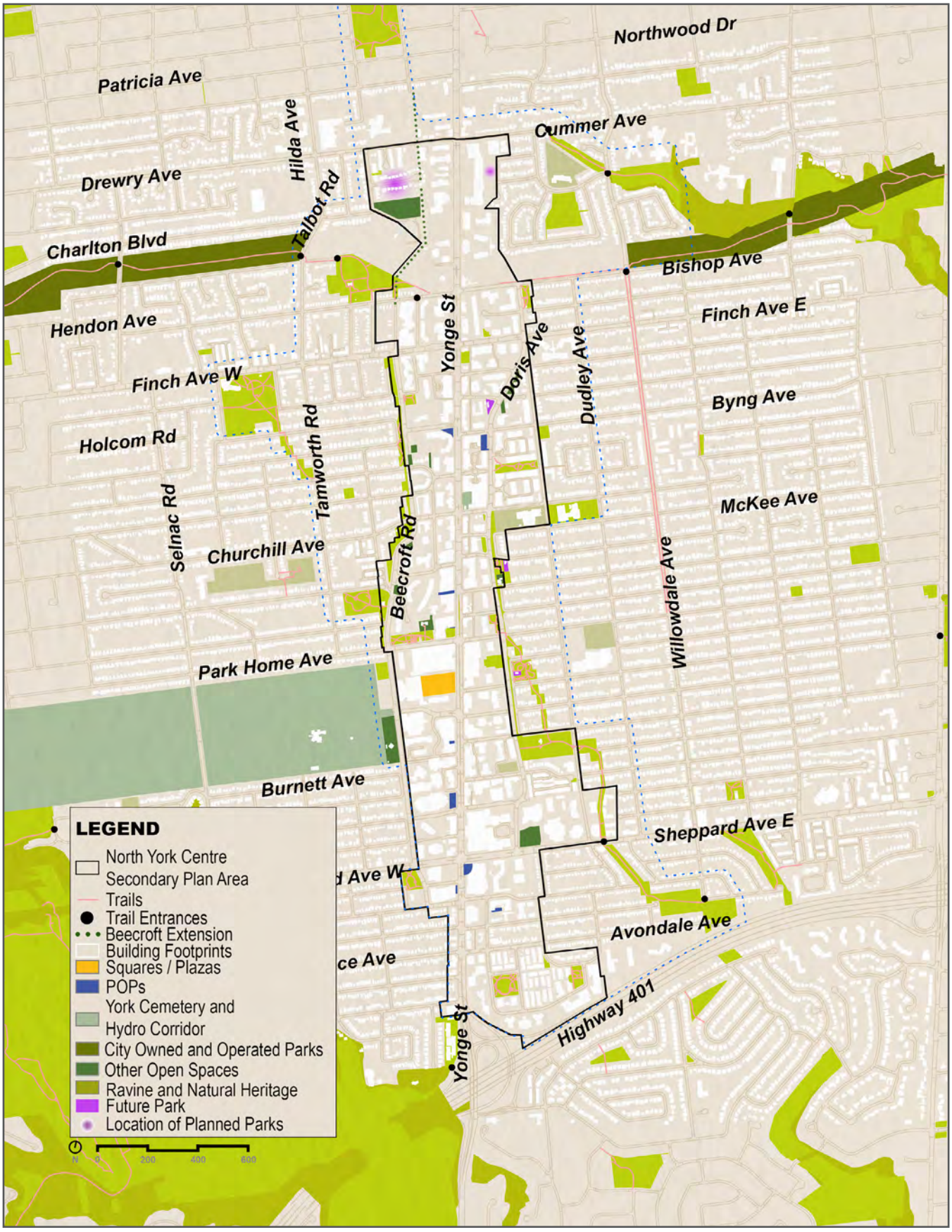


Figure 5-13: Existing Trails and Entrances



Figure 5-14: Entrance to Ravines lacking signages and adequate trail infrastructure: Maxome Avenue (Left), Willowdale Avenue (Middle) and Highway 401 ramp (Right)

Placekeeping Features

To support reconciliation, the following opportunities for Indigenous placekeeping have been identified through the review of existing and planned conditions in North York Centre and engagement with the local Indigenous community and First Nations:

- Wilket Creek, which used to run through the study area, offers an opportunity to strengthen Indigenous connections with land and water. This could include restoring and daylighting the creek itself in more segments in the Study Area, re-naturalizing adjacent lands, and/or introducing signage and wayfinding that incorporates the history of Wilket Creek.
- Potential spaces for ceremony and community in North York Centre can be identified through Indigenous engagement.
- Bright colours, adequate lighting, and Indigenous imagery are important features in public spaces. This could include use of the four direction colours.
- Parks, ravines and open spaces offer opportunities for Indigenous stewardship of the land.
- It is important to green the land, including by planting native species such as paw paw trees, incorporating places to grow food and creating space for medicine gardens.
- Opportunities such as land-based learning spaces for kids in parks can be used to share Indigenous knowledge of the land.
- Indigenous arts and culture should be shared and celebrated in parks and public spaces.
- Renaming opportunities can work to address erasure of Indigenous peoples on the land.

Precedents

Downsview Master Plan

The master plan for the Downsview neighbourhood is closely intertwined with Indigenous reconciliation efforts. Indigenous placekeeping practices are integrated across various aspects of the planning process, including architecture, landscape architecture, public art, commemoration and naming, public education, parks and open spaces, as well as dedicated cultural and ceremonial spaces. The master plan prioritizes the creation of new natural green spaces that hold significance for Indigenous communities, serving as places for connecting with the land, hosting ceremonies, and facilitating gatherings.

The Downsview planning process actively engaged Indigenous voices to shape both the built and natural environment, infusing Indigenous values, histories, and living cultures into the fabric of the neighbourhood. The community engagement process was designed to have specific dialogue reserved for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, ensuring that their perspectives and insights are central to decision-making and implementation.

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- **Low parkland provision rate:** The parkland provision rate in the Parks Context Area falls below the city average of 28m^2 per person, with several areas, particularly east of the Yonge and Sheppard intersection, registering as low as 0-4m^2 per person.
- **Walkability:** The Study Area has good walkability to parks, though walkable access to parks is notably deficient in the northeastern section of the Study Area.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- **Linear park network along Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue:** The planned network of connected parks along both sides of these roadways provides ecological benefits and allows pedestrians and cyclists to cross the area from north to south through a route more connected to parks and nature. Although small in size, this linear park structure provides a number of small-scale amenities that offer a place of refuge from the hard landscapes along Yonge Street.
- **Small parkettes:** Smaller parkettes dispersed throughout the Study Area serve as spaces of relief in this dense urban area.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

- **Improving access to parks and open spaces:** Improve and expand accessible connections to the nearby ravine network and east-west connections between parks and open spaces throughout the Centre, bridging both sides of Yonge Street.
- **Making the most of existing parks and open spaces:**
  - Improve Mel Lastman Square as envisioned by Transform Yonge to be an extension to the streetscape and the central civic gathering space of the area.
  - Preserve and expand existing parks and private greenspaces.
  - Explore opportunities to offer formal and informal programming in existing parks and open spaces including school yards, cemeteries, and private green spaces, with a focus on age-friendly and inclusive activities can address community needs.
  - Explore configuring public rights of way in support of recreational or other uses as part of the comprehensive mobility and public realm review.
  - Leverage the collection of smaller parks to function in more ways and support limited recreational activity.
- **New parks and parkland provision rate:** The parkland provision rate is currently below the city average. As development occurs in the Centre, new parkland will be provided. Priority should be given to expanding existing parkland and exploring opportunities to create large green spaces in collaboration with TTC/Hydro One Networks along the Finch Hydro Corridor and throughout the BESA to support specific programming needs. There is a need to provide parks of a sufficient size

and configuration (new parks or expansions of existing parks) to support active recreation including outdoor facilities.

- **Indigenous placekeeping efforts:** Implementing placekeeping initiatives across the parks and open space network will acknowledge and honour Indigenous connections to nature within the Study Area. This can be done through ceremonial and gathering spaces, cultural heritage preservation, native planting, Indigenous art, symbols and colours, and educational opportunities.
- **Commemorating natural heritage:** The legacy of the historic watercourses such as Wilket Creek should be recognized and opportunities for increasing awareness of the location of the creek and restoration should be explored.
- **Biodiversity:** There are opportunities to improve biodiversity and pollinator habitat throughout parks and open spaces, rights of way, and future development sites.

5.2 Climate and Resiliency

Climate change and resiliency policy at all levels of government has advanced significantly since the adoption of the current NYCSP. This section explores the current policies, plans, and strategies in place to influence climate and resiliency. It analyzes the following elements in the Centre today as well as trends for the future: climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, heat vulnerability, land cover and tree canopy, green roofs, and flooding.

Policy

Planning Act

The *Planning Act* provides direction for integrating matters related to climate and the environment into land use and development processes in Ontario. Section 2 of the *Planning Act* sets out matters of provincial interest including mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and Proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

In addition to the policies governing the natural environment, parks, and other open spaces, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 (PPS) and proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 outline additional policies related to climate and resiliency.

The Provincial Policy Statement, 2020, identifies relevant matters of provincial interest including natural resource protection and climate change mitigation and adaptation. As such, the PPS establishes policies that require climate and the environment to be considered in all aspects of development and community building, from servicing and transportation infrastructure to public service facilities and land use patterns.

Regarding settlement areas and designated growth areas, the PPS requires new development to address climate and the environment by supporting existing or planned transit, promoting energy efficiency, minimizing negative impacts to air quality, and mitigating and preparing for the impacts of climate change. These directions are supported by general PPS policies as well, several of which are relevant to the NYCSP review:

- Section 1.6 Infrastructure and Public Service Facilities promotes the use of green infrastructure, particularly in relation to stormwater management;
- Section 1.8 Energy Conservation, Air Quality and Climate Change addresses these same matters by promoting compact development forms that are well served by transit and active transportation infrastructure, and which achieve a mixture of residential and employment uses. As well, it promotes the use of green infrastructure, and the efficient use of energy and maximation of vegetation in settlement areas; and,
- Section 2.1 Natural Heritage establishes policies related to the natural environment including direction for where development may occur in relation to natural features and areas, while also encouraging natural heritage systems to be maintained, restored or, wherever possible, improved.

Section 2.9 of the proposed Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 includes policies that support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the impacts of a changing climate through:

- Supporting compact, transit-supportive and complete communities;
- Incorporating climate change considerations such as stormwater management systems and public service facilities;
- Supporting energy conservation and efficiency; and
- Promoting green infrastructure, low impact development, and active transportation.

A Place To Grow: Growth Plan For The Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020

The Growth Plan directs communities to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate, improve resilience, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contribute to environmental sustainability, and integrate green infrastructure and appropriate low impact development into future planning.

The Growth Plan also provides direction for municipalities to address climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in their Official Plans, requiring policies and actions for protecting natural heritage and water resource systems, promoting food security, and reducing dependence on the automobile and supporting transit and active transportation infrastructure. Additional requirements relevant to the NYCSP review include:

- Assessing infrastructure risks and vulnerabilities and identifying actions and investments to address these challenges, such as through planning and designing stormwater infrastructure to handle the impacts of extreme weather events, as well as incorporating green infrastructure and low impact development practices where appropriate (3.2.1); and,
- Assessing current greenhouse gas emission sources, establishing targets for reduction, and monitoring the outcomes (4.2.10).

Official Plan

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are key themes in the Official Plan. City Council recently adopted changes to Chapter 1 which identify taking action on climate change and its impacts as a planning priority and developing a sustainable and resilient city as part of the vision for 2051. The Council decision included a motion to City staff to give priority to reducing fossil fuel consumption in buildings and transportation when implementing the Chapter 1 priorities, vision and principles in Secondary Plans, area studies, zoning by-laws and future policy reviews.

Policies addressing climate change run throughout the Official Plan, but for the context of the North York Centre Secondary Plan, key policies are found within the following policy areas: *Centres* (2.2.2), Sustainable Transportation (2.4), the Public Realm (3.1), the Natural Environment (3.4), Site Plan Control (5.1.3), and Secondary Plans (5.2.1).

Among the most important policies addressing climate change are those that help to enable the Toronto Green Standard and implement subsection 114(5)(2)(iv) of the *City of Toronto Act* within the Site Plan Control section (5.1.3). These policies are applied to all new development subject to Site Plan Control and allow the City to secure sustainable design features in development related to the exterior building and site matters (more below on the Toronto Green Standard).

Other important Official Plan policies seek to preserve and enhance the urban forest throughout the city, including in *Parks and Open Space Areas* (4.3.6(a)), in privately-owned publicly accessible spaces (3.1.1.20), and within rights-of-way (3.1.1.6(a)). Requiring new development to protect existing trees and provide new trees is also an important focus of Official Plan policies, such as built form policy 3.1.3.1(e), site plan control policy 5.1.3.3(e), and public realm policy 3.1.1.16. This direction is further reinforced in section 3.4 The Natural Environment, which requires all city-building activities and changes to the built environment to preserve and enhance the urban forest by: providing suitable growing environments for trees; increasing tree canopy coverage and diversity, especially of long-lived native and large shade trees; and regulating the injury and destruction of trees (3.4.1(d)).

The North York Centre Secondary Plan

Climate change and resiliency are key gaps in the current NYCSP. Updates to the Secondary Plan should address the climate emergency and promote climate mitigation and adaptation strategies such as low or zero carbon development and green infrastructure and reducing fossil fuel consumption in buildings and transportation.

Lessons From Other Secondary Plans

The Downsview Secondary Plan includes contemporary climate change adaptation and mitigation policies that can inform the approach taken in North York Centre. While some are dependent on the unique context at Downsview, others are equally relevant anywhere. These include:

- **Low-carbon development:** Policies encourage designs, methods and materials that reduce embodied carbon emissions such as avoiding or minimizing transfer slabs and below grade structures and using lower-carbon methods and materials such as mass timber, low-carbon concrete and biogenic insulation.
- **Clean energy and energy efficiency:** Policies encourage low carbon thermal energy technologies, de-centralized on-site renewable energy generation and passive design measures that conserve energy and reduce energy emissions.

OPA 583, adopted by Council in 2022 but still awaiting Ministerial approval and not yet in force, updates Official Plan policies related to the climate and resiliency. The proposed updates relate to three themes:

- Net zero and climate change, which includes updates related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and guiding new development on a pathway to achieving net zero emissions by 2040;
- Resilience and adaptation, which includes updates related to biodiversity, natural heritage, water resources, stormwater management, andurban forests; and
- Waste and circular economy, which includes updates related to reducing waste and achieving Council's aspirational goal of zero waste and a circular economy.

Changes introduced through OPA 583 that would impact the Centre include:

- Requiring Secondary Plans for Centres to assess opportunities for achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions, including impacts from transportation and building materials.

Plans and Strategies

The plans and strategies discussed below represent the City's intentions with regard to achieving net zero carbon emissions, thermal comfort, applying a green building standard and standards for green roofs. While these plans and strategies do not necessarily have the authority of policy, they guide investment and decision-making by the City.

Transformto Net Zero Strategy

The TransformTO Net Zero Strategy outlines a blueprint for reducing community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Toronto. The strategy establishes the following ambitious targets for reducing city-wide GHG emissions from 1990 levels:

- 30 per cent by 2020;
- 45 per cent by 2025;
- 65 per cent by 2030; and,
- Net zero by 2040.

The following are some highlights of the 2030 city-wide targets/strategies of TransformTO:

Homes & Buildings

- All new homes and buildings will be designed and built to be near zero greenhouse gas emissions
- Greenhouse gas emissions from existing buildings will be cut in half from 2008 levels

Energy

- 50% of community-wide energy will come from renewable or low-carbon sources
- 25% of commercial and industrial floor area will be connected to low carbon thermal energy sources

Transportation

- 30% of registered vehicles in Toronto will be electric
- 75% of school/work trips under 5km will be by foot, by bike or by transit

Waste

- 70% residential waste diversion from the City of Toronto's waste management system
- Identify pathways to more sustainable consumption in City of Toronto operations and in Toronto's economy

In order to achieve these targets, the reduction of carbon emissions must be a consideration in long-term plans for areas such as the Centre. The two largest emissions sectors, buildings and transportation, can both be directly impacted by the way the Centre grows.

Toronto Thermal Comfort Study

The Thermal Comfort Study is intended to address thermal comfort in the public realm and shared outdoor amenity spaces, taking into consideration future climate projections and the impacts of surrounding built form. Thermal comfort recommendations will be developed through the project and will provide design direction for thermal comfort in the public realm to be implemented through new and/or updated guidelines, standards and/or policies. If recommendations from the Thermal Comfort Study are released during North York at the Centre, they will inform options testing relating to sun, shadows and wind and will be considered in policy recommendations relating to thermal comfort in the public realm.

Toronto Green Standard

The Toronto Green Standard (TGS) helps advance sustainability outcomes in new public and private developments. The TGS implements the environmental policies of the Official Plan and commitment made by City Council for new development through the development approvals process. The TGS addresses many of the City of Toronto's environmental priorities to:

- Improve air quality and reduce the urban heat island effect;
- Reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions from new buildings (aiming to require near zero emissions for new construction by 2030);
- Increase the resilience of buildings to power disruptions and encourage the use of renewable and district energy systems;
- Reduce storm water runoff and potable water consumption while improving the quality of storm water draining to Lake Ontario;
- Protect and enhance ecological functions, integrate landscapes and habitats, and decrease building-related bird collisions and mortalities; and
- Divert household and construction waste from going to landfill sites.

This is achieved by requiring sustainable site and building design for all new development going through Site Plan Control. The TGS uses a tiered system of performance measures. Tier 1 is required through the planning approval process, while Tiers 2 and above are higher level, voluntary standards associated with financial incentives, which are then verified once construction is completed. All new development by City Agencies, Corporations, and Divisions are required to meet the highest standards of the TGS.

The TGS is updated periodically to advance the City's energy performance targets and to push higher environmental performance in new development. City Council has committed to accelerate the greenhouse gas intensity targets of the TGS for new applications submitted in 2025 and 2028 in order to achieve the City's Net Zero goals.

Toronto Green Roof By-Law

The Green Roof By-law, Chapter 492 of the Toronto Municipal Code, defines green roofs as "an extension of an above grade roof, built on top of a human-made structure, that allows vegetation to grow in a growing medium and which is designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with the Toronto Green Roof Construction Standard". The By-law requires new development or additions that are greater than 2,000 m^2 in gross floor area to include a green roof facility that makes up between 20-60% of the building's available roof space.

As described in the Official Plan, green roofs offer the potential to achieve a variety of positive outcomes related to the environment and efforts to address climate change. For instance, they can help reduce the urban heat island effect and associated energy use, manage stormwater runoff, reduce pollutants entering our waterways, improve air quality, and beautify the city. Green roofs also offer an opportunity to create habitat and enhance biodiversity in urban areas.

Existing and Planned Conditions

The following describes existing and planned conditions in the Centre related to climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, heat vulnerability, land cover and tree canopy, prevalence of green roofs and potential for flooding.

Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

According to reports from the Prairie Climate Centre, which develops and shares data on climate change across the country through the Climate Atlas of Canada, the Toronto area can expect to see a range of changes related to climate. It is projected that there will be significantly more very hot days (+30°C or higher) and nights (+20°C or higher) annually.

The severity of changes projected by the Prairie Climate Centre varies based on our carbon emissions moving forward. The City of Toronto Sector based Emission Inventory (2021) identifies the sources of greenhouse gas emissions across Toronto. As of 2021 the largest source of emissions was buildings at 56%, followed by transportation at 35% and waste at 9% (**Figure 5-15**).

Decarbonizing buildings in the Centre is a crucial action for Toronto to reach the goal of net-zero emissions by 2040. Decarbonization can occur by connecting multiple buildings together to a centralized energy source, such as district energy, or by having a low-carbon energy system on an individual site. There are opportunities to connect new and existing buildings to low carbon energy sources, such as waste water energy or geo-exchange. These low-carbon energy sources could be used to heat and cool local buildings. Another important action to decarbonize the Centre is to increase on-site renewable energy generation, such as solar energy. **Figure 5-16** is a snapshot of the SolarTO Map and illustrates the rooftop solar potential for the Centre's surrounding area.

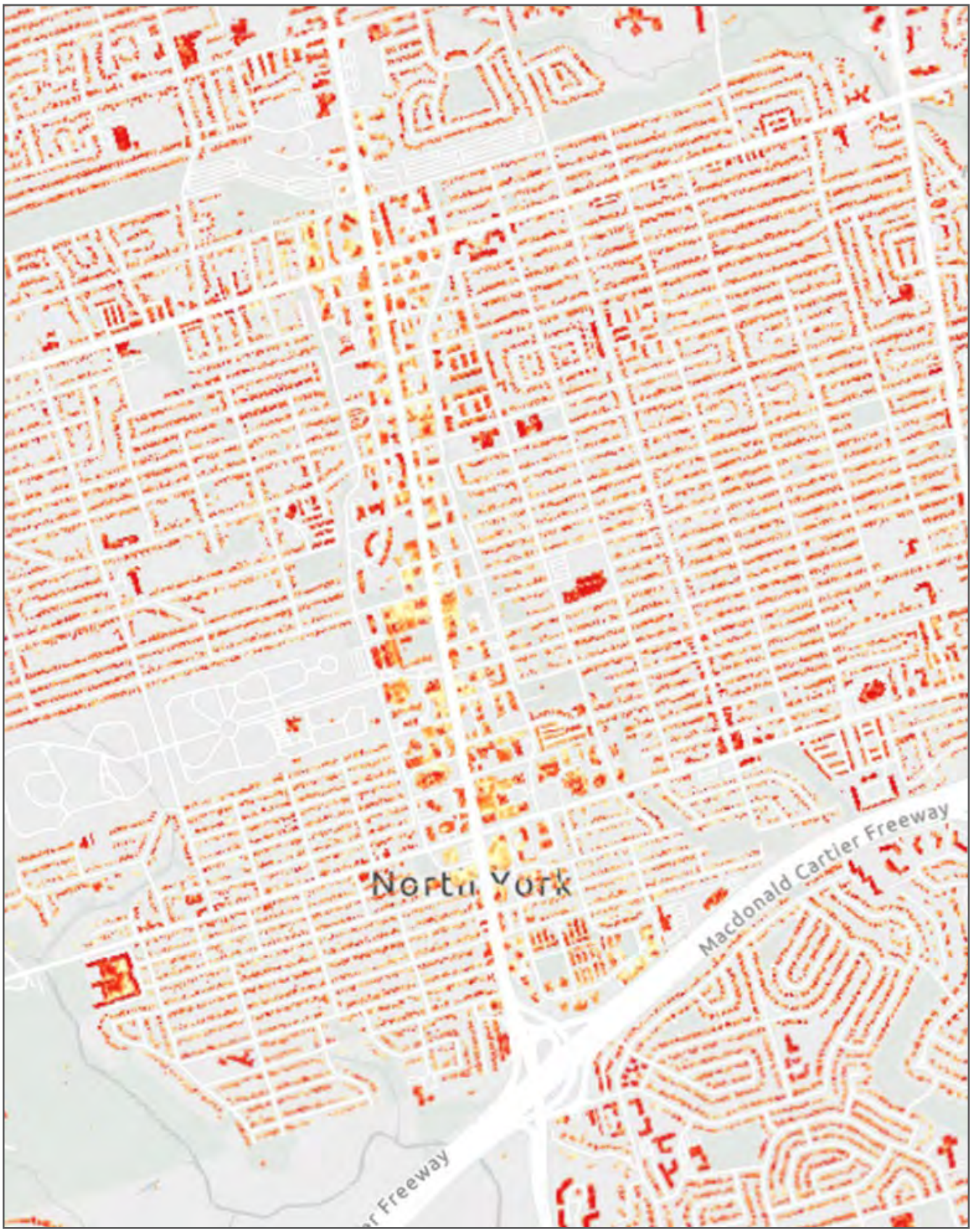
The Centre's existing building stock will need to decarbonize in alignment with the City's Net Zero Existing Buildings Strategy and the proposed **Emission Performance Standards**. Some existing building owners may be required to make incremental building improvements to comply with greenhouse gas emissions targets for their building type and size. The City of Toronto offers a variety of incentives, tools, and programs that facilitate the decarbonization of all types and sizes of buildings, including:

- Navigation Support Services (NSS)
- Sustainable Towers Engaging People Program (STEP)
- High-Rise Retrofit Improvement Support Program (Hi-RIS)
- Better HomesTO (BHTO)
- Home Energy Loan Program (HELP)
- Sustainable Energy Plan Financing (SEPF)
- Energy Retrofit Loan (ERL)
- Green Will Initiative (GWI)

(Source: 2021 City of Toronto Sector Based Emissions Inventory)

Figure 5-15: Toronto's Carbon Emission Sources

Refer to the City of Toronto's Wastewater Energy Map to locate the nearest trunk sewer and view its available heating and cooling capacities.



(Source: City of Toronto)

Figure 5-16: Rooftop Solar Potential in the NYCSP Area

Heat Vulnerability

Heat vulnerability is one of the issues that is exacerbated by a warming climate, particularly in a dense urban area like the Centre. The Climate Atlas of Canada describes how high-density buildings and paved surfaces amplify and trap more heat than natural ecosystems and rural areas, creating the urban heat island effect. Cities also generate their own heat, which is released from sources such as furnaces, air conditioners, and vehicles, whereas natural ecosystems and rural areas are often shaded by trees and vegetation and cooled by evaporating moisture. Areas that experience these 'heat island' effects also experience increased energy costs (for air conditioning), increased air pollution levels, and increased heat-related illnesses and mortality.

A 2010 study by Toronto Public Health assessed heat vulnerability across the City of Toronto illustrated in **Figure 5-17**. The Heat Vulnerability Index considers multiple variables, such as surface temperature, distance from green spaces, tree canopy shading, dwellings in high-rise buildings, and the population of low-income children, among others. This study shows that heat vulnerability was not consistent across the Centre. Some areas east of Yonge Street are shown as having a "High" vulnerability, with other areas of the Centre ranging from "Medium-High" to "Low-Medium" (**Figure 5-17**). The Centre also has few public facilities, such as the North York Central Library, where people can take refuge during major climate events. Other cool spaces located within City facilities also help support heat vulnerability, as seen on the City's Cool Spaces Near You map, which is activated during the Hot Weather Season (May 15 to September 30). The potential addition of new parkland and new facilities offer an opportunity to increase the number of cool spaces in the Centre.

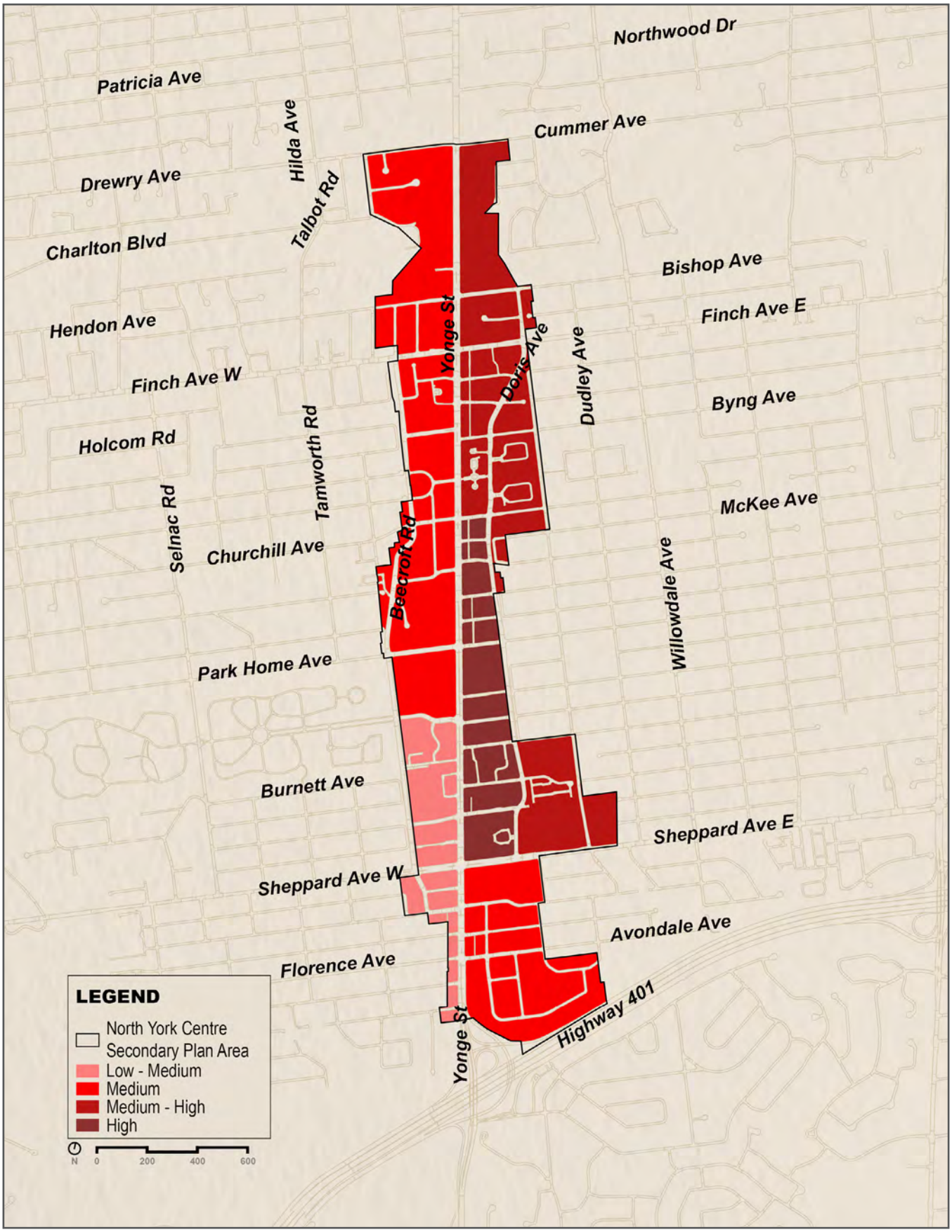


Figure 5-17: Heat Vulnerability in North York Centre

Land Cover and Tree Canopy

The extent of impermeable surfaces in the Centre is significant, especially in comparison to surrounding neighbourhoods (**Figure 5-18**). Large swaths of surface parking lots, such as in the hydro corridor by Finch Station, are completely impermeable.

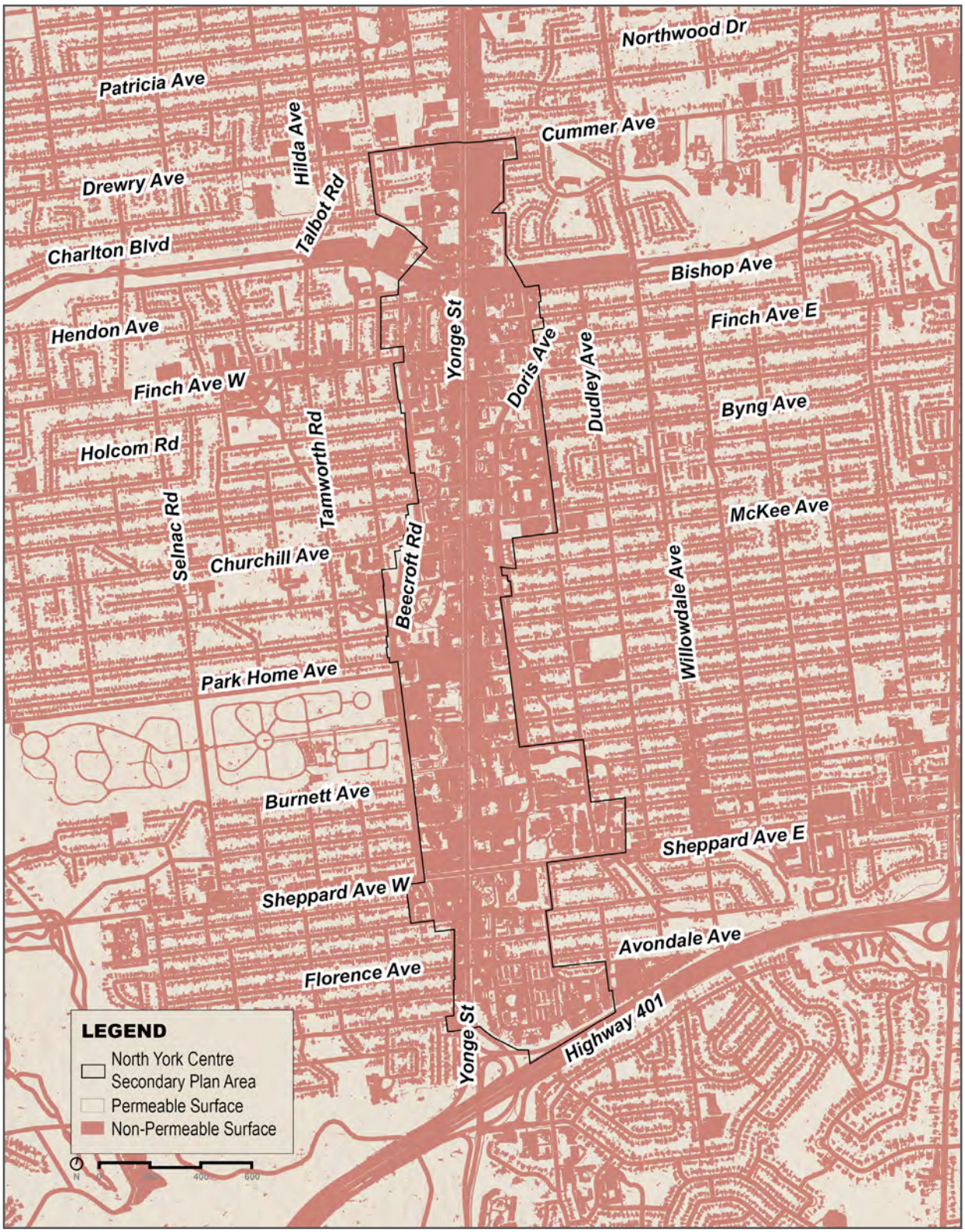


Figure 5-18: Permeability in North York Centre

Breaking land cover down further, about 40% of the Centre is made up of buildings and roads (**Figure 5-19** and **Figure 5-20**). A further 31% is made up of other paved surfaces, and only 29% is made up of trees, shrubs, grass and other vegetation. The physical environment of the Centre today typifies the conditions that create the urban heat island effect. While there are also other factors in determining people's vulnerability to heat (e.g., age, income, building age and condition, presence of functioning air conditioning), the composition of the land cover in the Centre has a large impact. Land cover also affects flood risk and air quality.

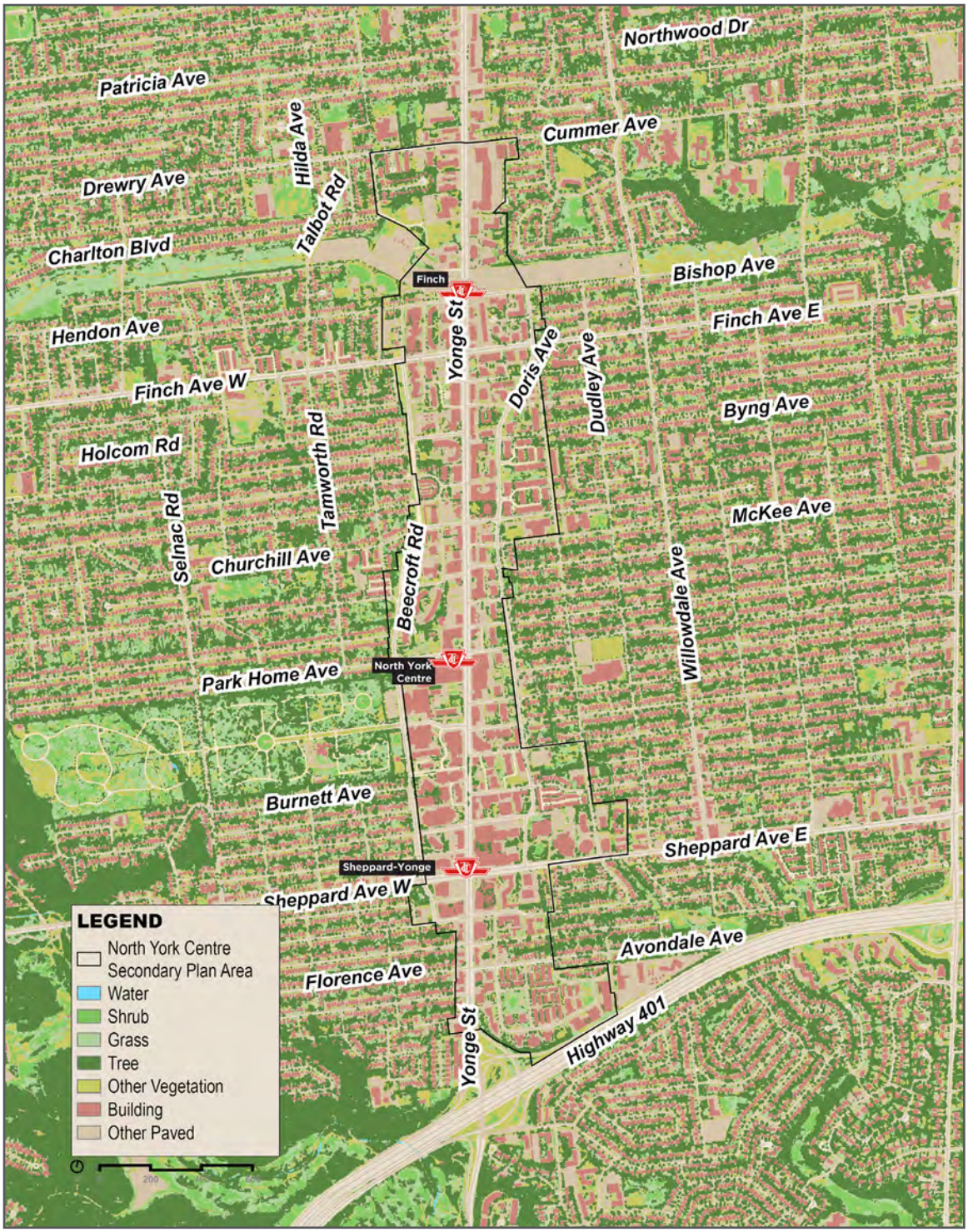


Figure 5-19: Land Cover in North York Centre

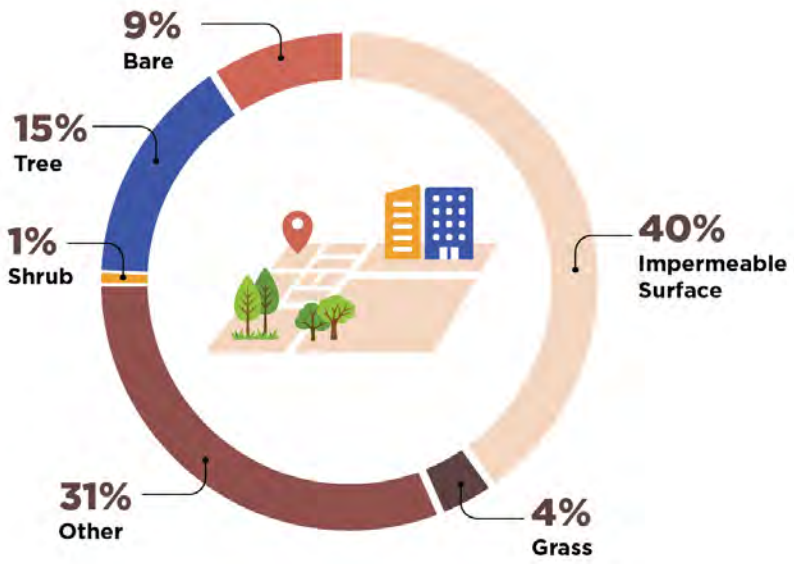


Figure 5-20: Land Cover Breakdown by Type

The City of Toronto has a city-wide goal of reaching 40% tree canopy coverage by 2050. Street trees (**Figure 5-21**) are extremely valuable to the streetscape in terms of combating the urban heat island effect, supporting biodiversity and habitat creation, and providing the mental health benefits of greenery in the urban environment. Tree canopy coverage is currently significantly lower in the Centre than in surrounding areas, shown in **Figure 5-22** which illustrates density of tree locations.

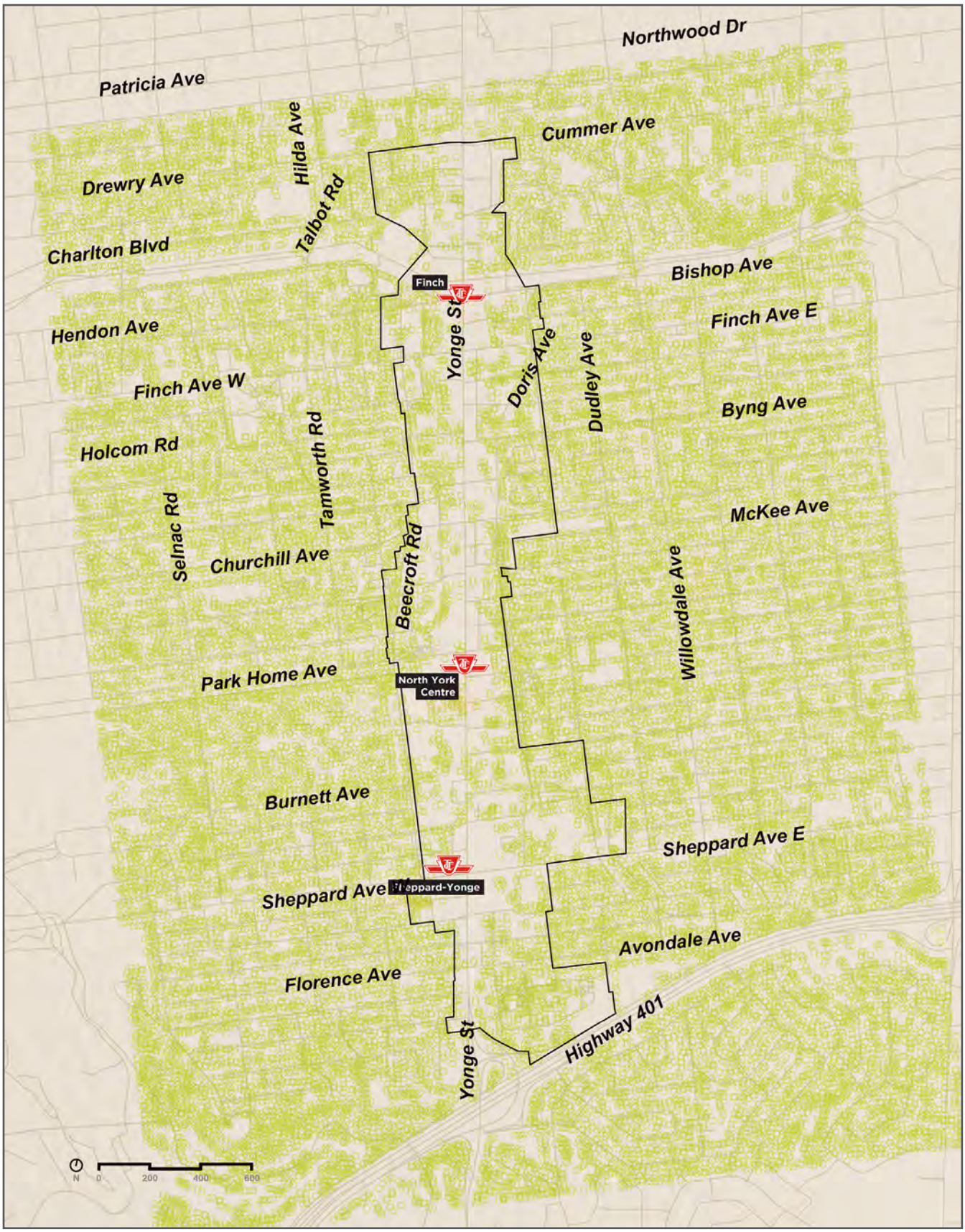


Figure 5-21: Tree Locations in North York Centre

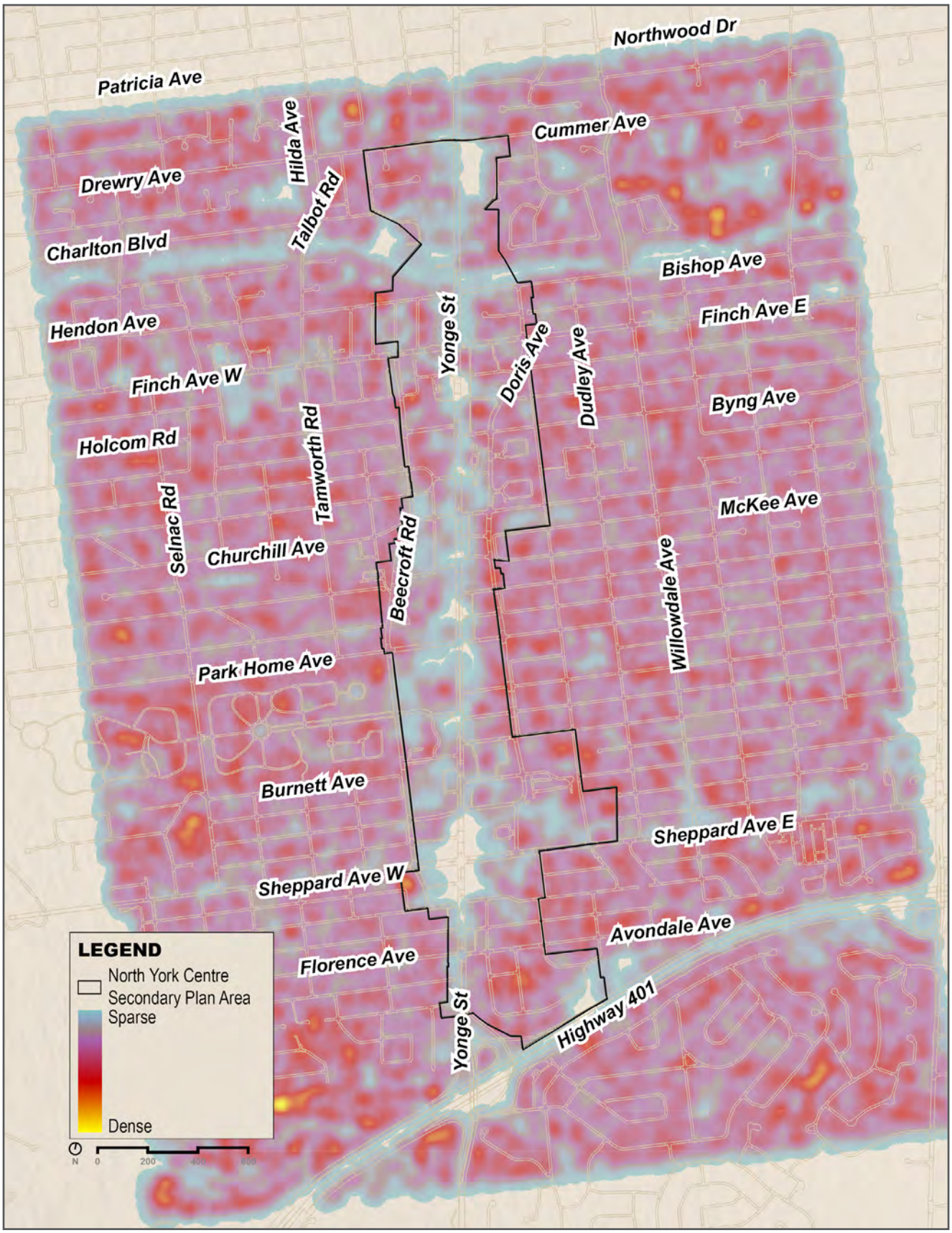


Figure 5-22: Tree Heatmap in North York Centre

Green Roofs

Green roofs are vegetated roofing systems and are another way to reduce the urban heat island effect, provide habitat, and support stormwater management in a dense urban environment like North York Centre where natural areas are limited. Several buildings in the Centre already have a green roof incorporated into the design, which is a requirement for certain types of development under the Toronto Green Roof By-law, as discussed above.

Flooding

Greater precipitation during the spring and winter is another change the Prairie Climate Centre is projecting for Toronto. Although the amount of annual precipitation may not change significantly, receiving much more of it within condensed periods can pose problems for the city. Wet weather events can overwhelm stormwater management systems that do not have the capacity to respond to these changes, resulting in flooding of homes and buildings. These risks are currently managed through the City's Wet Weather Flow Management Guide. Implementing Low Impact Development (LID) infrastructure such as permeable pavers, rain gardens, infiltration trenches, bioswales and bioretention planters, rainwater harvesting etc. can mimic natural water cycles and help mitigate flooding risks.

(Source: City of Toronto)

Figure 5-23: Example of a Bioretention Planter, an LID Intervention

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- A 2010 study by Toronto Public Health shows that heat vulnerability was not consistent across the Centre. Some areas east of Yonge Street are shown as having a “High” vulnerability, with other areas of the Centre ranging from “Medium-High” to “Low-Medium”.
- The extent of impermeable surfaces in the Centre is significant, especially in comparison to surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Based on the City of Toronto Sector based Emission Inventory (2021), the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions across Toronto came from buildings at 56%.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- The neighbourhoods surrounding the Centre have an extensive tree canopy and much lower levels of impermeable surfaces than the Centre itself.
- The Toronto Green Standard has led to higher-performing buildings when compared to the Ontario Building Code minimums for energy performance.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

- **Energy:**
  - Encourage new buildings within the Centre to achieve higher performance levels of the Toronto Green Standard by integrating low carbon thermal energy technologies, wastewater heat reclamation, on-site renewables and/or passive design strategies. Ensure new buildings consider all opportunities to reduce or eliminate fossil fuel usage.
  - Leverage the significant public ownership in parts of the Centre to kick-start the creation of low carbon district energy systems that then expand to include adjacent private buildings. The relatively high proportion of office uses in the Centre makes it well suited to implement district energy as there can be transfers between office uses and neighbouring residential uses.
  - Develop area specific built form guidelines that improve energy performance and embodied carbon of new buildings.
- **Embodied Carbon:**
  - Consider opportunities to encourage lower embodied carbon by using low-carbon building materials, minimizing below grade parking structures and limiting transfer slabs.

- **Green infrastructure:**
  - Deploy municipal green infrastructure and permeable surfaces to manage stormwater and in updates to the public realm. The Transform Yonge streetscape can potentially be part of this effort, the opportunity will be explored during detailed design.
  - Mitigate the urban heat island effect by increasing the urban tree canopy and creating new cool spaces with expanded parkland.
  - Should part or all of the BESA be recommended for inclusion in the Secondary Plan boundary, include policies and strategies to maintain the high levels of permeable surfaces and tree canopy as redevelopment takes place.

5.3 Land Use

As the planned downtown for the former municipality of North York, the Centre has a diverse and vibrant mix of existing uses. It is the civic and administrative heart of North York with government and agency headquarters, the cultural heart of North York with major arts venues, and the retail and culinary heart of North York with both small-scale and large-scale retail offerings. North York Centre is the second largest office hub in the city after the *Downtown.* It is also increasingly a place that many people call home with a substantial housing stock and many additional housing units in the Development Pipeline.

The following provides an overview of land use policies that apply within the Centre and the existing and planned conditions related to the range and mix of land uses, arts and culture facilities, food security, in-process development applications and potential sites for new development. Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 provide more detail on housing and office uses in the Centre.

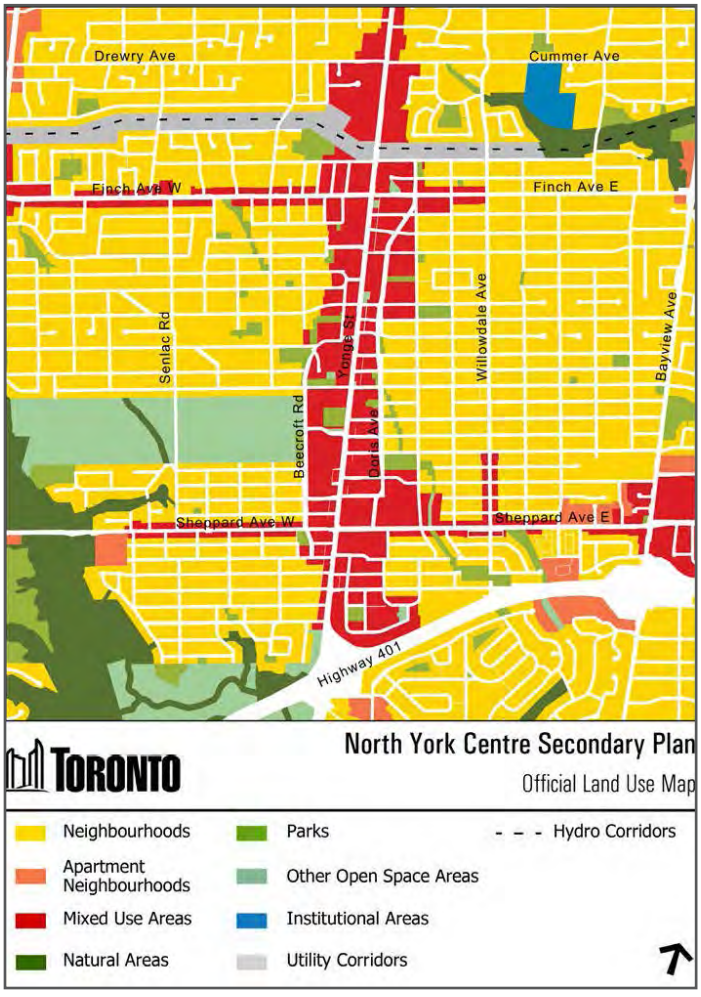
Policy

Official Plan

The vast majority of lands within the Centre are designated as *Mixed Use Areas* (**Figure 5-24**). Policies for the development of *Mixed Use Areas* are provided in section 4.5 of the Official Plan. *Mixed Use Areas* combine a broad array of residential uses, offices, retail and services, institutions, entertainment, recreation and cultural activities, and open spaces. They are intended to accommodate most of the city's new retail, office and service employment as well as significant new housing.

There are also several designated *Parks* distributed throughout the Centre, together with the Finch Hydro Corridor, which is designated as a *Utility Corridor* within the Official Plan. Aside from the *Mixed Use Areas* extending along Finch Avenue and Sheppard Avenue, lands adjacent to the Centre are for the most part designated *Neighbourhoods.* This includes most lands within the Boundary Expansion Study Area (BESA).

Should lands within the BESA be recommended for inclusion within the NYCSP boundary, changes to the Official Plan land use map may be required to redesignate them in part or in whole as *Mixed Use Areas*.



(Source: City of Toronto)

Figure 5-24: Official Plan Land Use Designations

Major Transit Station Areas

Under the Official Plan, and in accordance with the Growth Plan (2020) and Draft Provincial Planning Statement (2024), areas around higher order transit stations are established as Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) (**Figure 5-25**). Within the Centre, this applies to the Finch, North York Centre, and Sheppard-Yonge subway stations. These areas are intended to be focal points for intensification through high-density residential and commercial development, alongside convenient, direct, and accessible transit facilities. MTSAs around subway stations have a minimum density target of 200 people and jobs combined per hectare. All three of the MTSAs in the Centre have been designated as Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) under OPA 570, adopted by Council in 2022 and pending approval by the Province.

Under Section 16(5.1) of the *Planning Act*, once a PMTSA is approved by the Province, the City can adopt enabling policies to require affordable housing through an Inclusionary Zoning By-Law. The City has adopted enabling policies through OPA 557 which identify Market Areas 1, 2, 3 to recognize varying market viability in different areas of the city. Finch, North York Centre, and Sheppard-Yonge subway stations all fall within Market Area 3. Development located within Market Area 3 is subject to the following:

- If a condominium development is proposed, a minimum of 7 percent of the total new residential gross floor area shall be secured as affordable ownership housing or a minimum of 5 percent of the total new residential gross floor area shall be secured as affordable rental housing; or
- If a purpose-built rental development is proposed, there is no minimum requirement for affordable rental housing.

OPA 570 and OPA 557 are still awaiting decision by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, therefore the policy framework adopted by Council is not yet in force.

The introduction of MTSAs/PMTSAs is a major new policy direction since the NYCSP was developed. Updates to the NYCSP will build on the MTSA/PMTSA designations and revisit their density targets (including considering whether part or all of the MTSA/PMTSA areas should be brought into the Secondary Plan boundary).

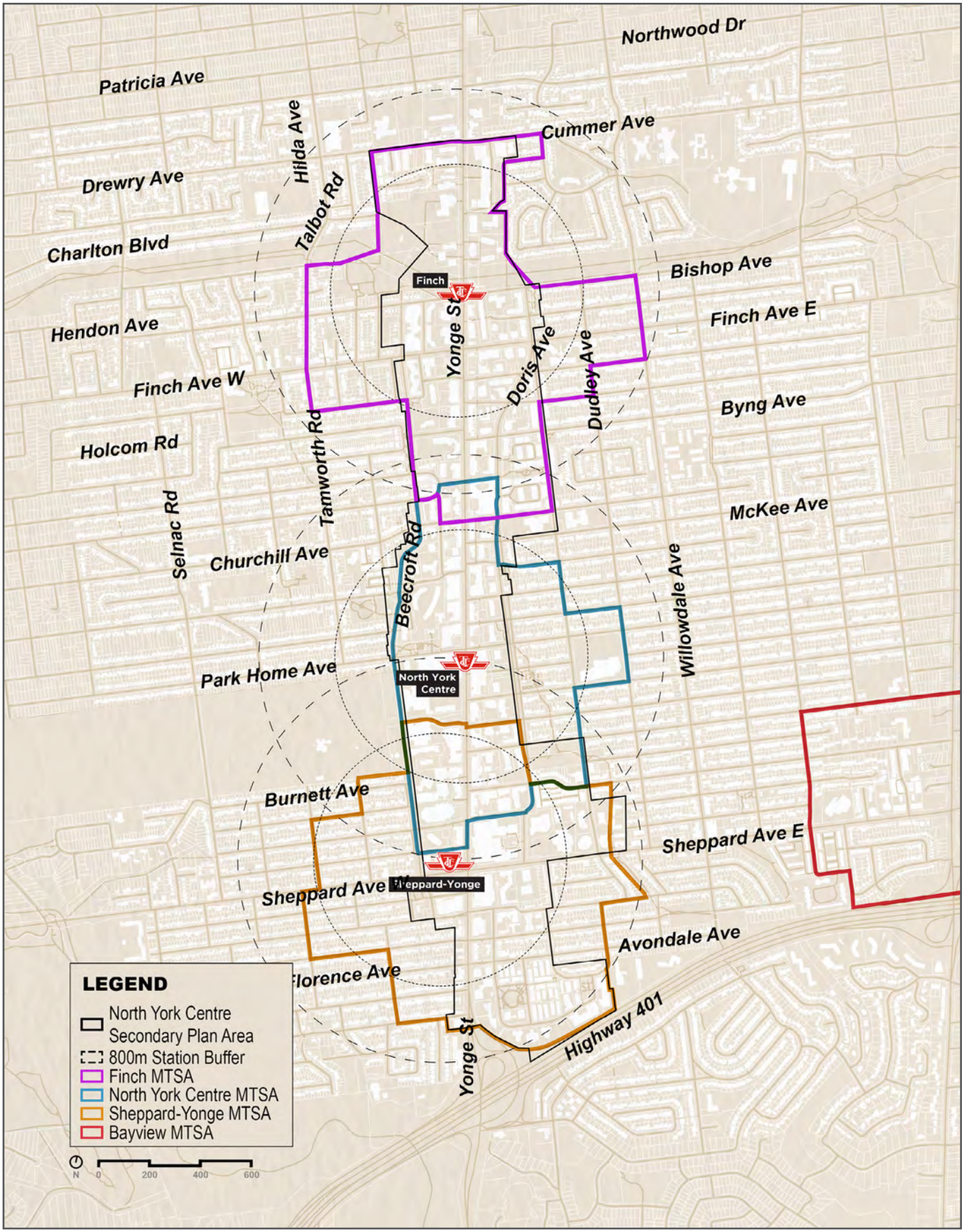


Figure 5-25: Major Transit Station Areas in North York Centre

The North York Centre Secondary Plan

The NYCSP divides the study area into North York Centre South and North York Centre North, which are further divided into a hierarchy of *Mixed Use Areas* with corresponding land use policies.

North York Centre South is intended to be a mixed-use area with a particular emphasis on establishing commercial nodes and supporting substantial office buildings. Accordingly, Section 2.1.2 of the Secondary Plan prohibits residential uses in *Mixed Use Area A* and limits the allowable percentage of residential uses to 50% in *Mixed Use Area B*. This requirement for developments to be entirely or significantly composed of non-residential uses is challenging for the market to deliver, particularly in the post-pandemic era. North York at the Centre will reconsider non-residential requirements for new development.

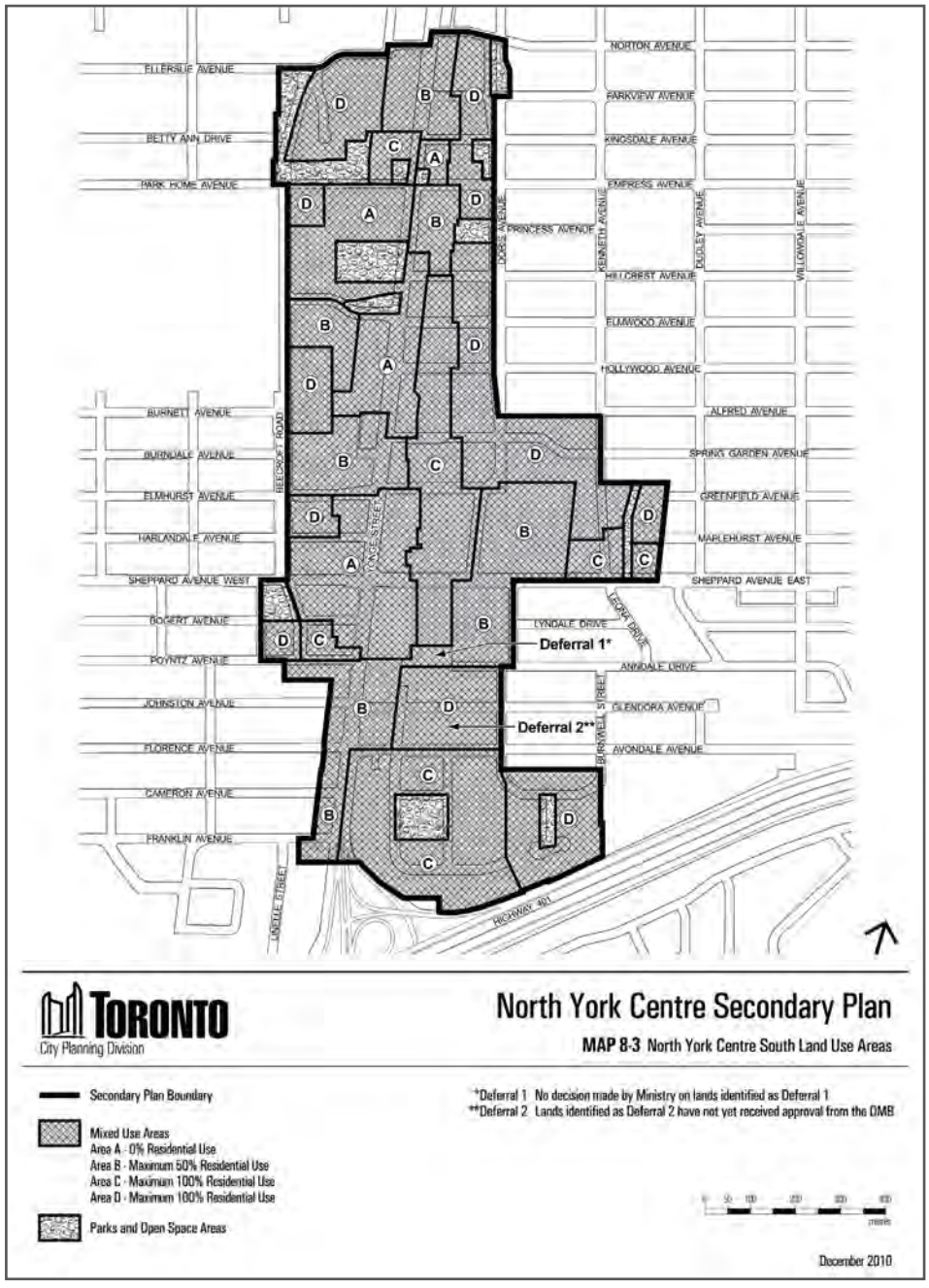


Figure 5-26: North York South Land Use Designations

North York Centre North is intended to be a predominantly residential area with open space, recreational, and community-related uses located throughout. Accordingly, Section 2.2.3 of the NYCSP limits commercial use percentages to focus new development on residential uses in *Mixed Use Areas E-G*. In *Mixed Use Area H* permitted uses are limited to institutional uses. Maximum percentages of commercial uses in *Mixed Use Areas E-G* range from 20%-65% of total gross floor area

Figure 5-27: North York Centre North Land Use Designations

Lessons From Other Secondary Plans

If a boundary expansion is recommended for the NYCSP, the Yonge Street North Secondary Plan – which is immediately adjacent to the NYCSP to the north – provides an interesting approach to land use designations that could be implemented through North York at the Centre. While most of the Yonge Street North Secondary Plan area is designated *Mixed Use Area* (including a significant area that was redesignated from *Neighbourhoods*) the easternmost block from Dumont Street to Willowdale Avenue retains the *Neighbourhoods* designation except the block fronting Steeles Avenue East. Redesignating lands from *Neighbourhoods* to Mixed Use Area and retaining some Neighbourhoods within the Secondary Plan area could both be considered in an expanded Centre, similar to the Yonge Street North Secondary Plan.

Existing and Planned Conditions

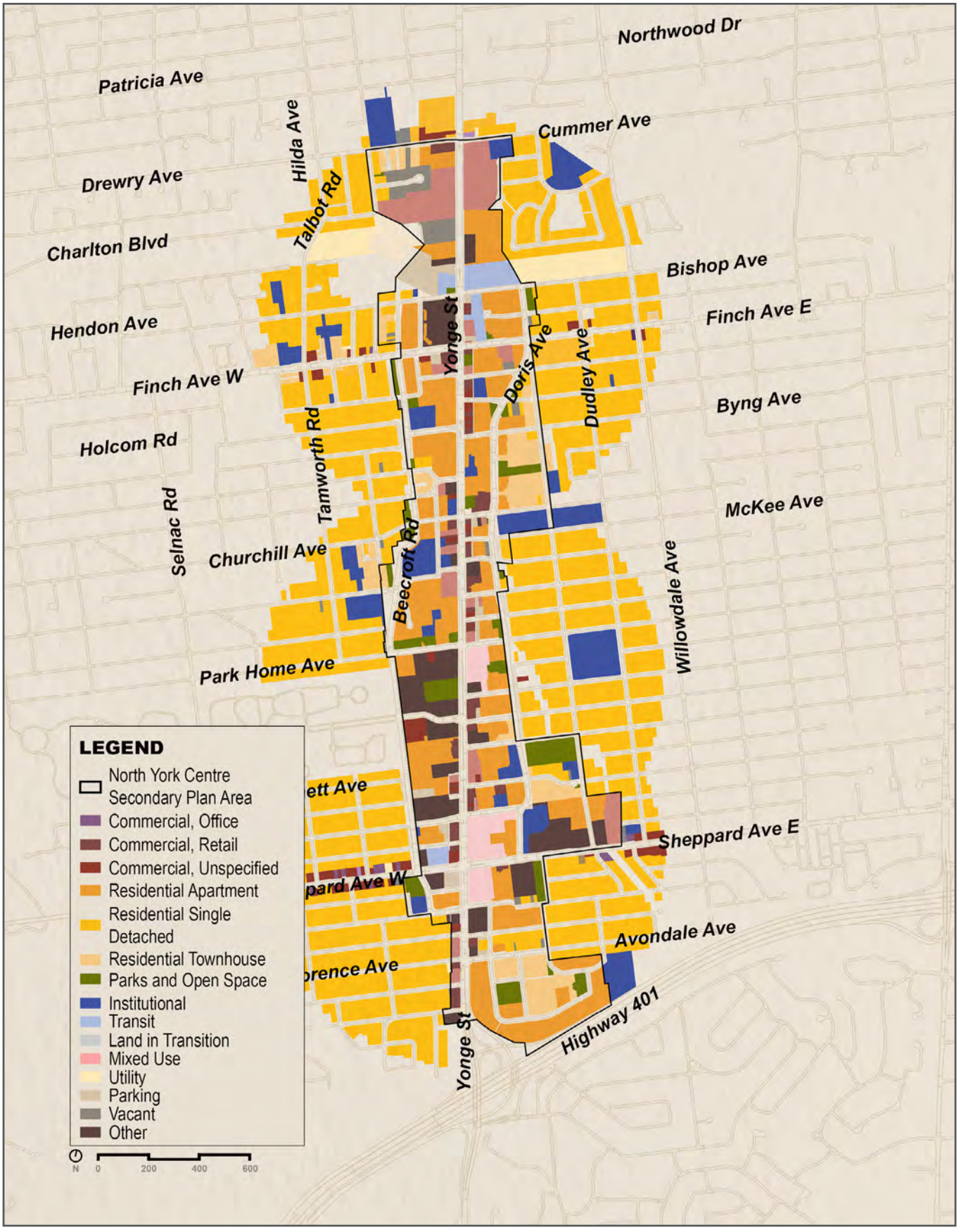
The following describes existing and planned conditions in the Centre related to the range and mix of land uses, arts and culture facilities, food security, in-process development applications, and potential development sites.

Range And Mix of Land Uses

A diverse mix of land uses can be found in and around the Centre today. Uses differ significantly between the current NYCSP area and the BESA which are 500- and 800-metre radii around existing subway stations. The BESA is almost entirely made up of single detached dwellings with some institutional uses such as schools. The Sheppard Avenue frontage is primarily comprised of small-scale commercial uses.

Prominent land uses in the NYCSP area include different types of residential, commercial, institutional and mixed-use developments (**Figure 5-28**). Residential apartments, often in the form of apartment towers, are widely distributed throughout the Centre. The Centre also includes a centralized hub of public services, including significant government office buildings such as the Joseph Shepard Federal Building, North York Civic Centre, and Toronto District School Board offices. Publicly owned assets in the Centre include parks, community facilities, transit stations, and City-owned vehicle parking facilities, including surface parking lots.

There are differences between land uses in North York Centre South and North York Centre North which reflect Secondary Plan policy for these areas. North York Centre South (south of Ellerslie Avenue/ Norton Avenue) is generally more mixed-use than North York Centre North and has a primarily residential character. In North York Centre South, offices are a prominent use along Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue. North of North York Civic Centre the Secondary Plan area becomes more residential. The only significant offices in North York Centre North are between Finch Avenue and Hendon Avenue. Retail uses are distributed throughout the Centre either in the podium of mixed-use developments or as two-storey retail plazas. Podium retail is more common in North York Centre South whereas retail plazas are more common in North York Centre North.



Source: Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) Data and the City of Toronto Land Use Information System II.

Figure 5-28: Existing Land Use in NYCSP and BESA

Arts and Culture Facilities

There is a strong and established arts and culture scene in the Centre that is supported by various facilities, organizations, and programs, from a museum to a multi-purpose arts centre. **Table 5-1** provides a summary of the arts and cultural facilities located in the Centre, which are primarily situated in the southern portion of the area.

Table 5-1: List of Arts and Culture Facilities

Name	Type	Address
Star Dance Centre	Performing Arts – Classes	4750 Yonge Street
May Art Studio	Visual Arts – Education and Gallery	4789 Yonge Street
915 Dance Studio	Performing Arts – Classes	4905 Yonge Street
Pac Christi Chorale	Performing Arts – Venue and Programs	98 Spring Garden Avenue
Meridian Arts Centre	Performing Arts – Venue and Programs	5040 Yonge Street
Gibson House Museum	Historical – Destination	5172 Yonge Street
Rashmi Academy of Performing Arts	Performing Arts – Classes	238 Doris Avenue

Food Security Assets

Larger grocery stores are primarily located in North York Centre South, while grocery store options in North York Centre North tend to be quite small. This affects food security, which is based on residents' ability to access healthy, affordable and culturally relevant food without barriers. A broader assessment of food assets includes other sources of food available within the community, including community gardens, food markets, community food services and emergency food services. These sources were identified with the help of the Toronto Food Policy Council's Food by Ward map and verified through desktop research and site visits. While primarily focused on the NYCSP Area, assets located within roughly 500 metres of the plan area boundary are also included, provided they are not separated by an expressway or significant natural feature such as a ravine or watercourse (**Figure 5-29**).

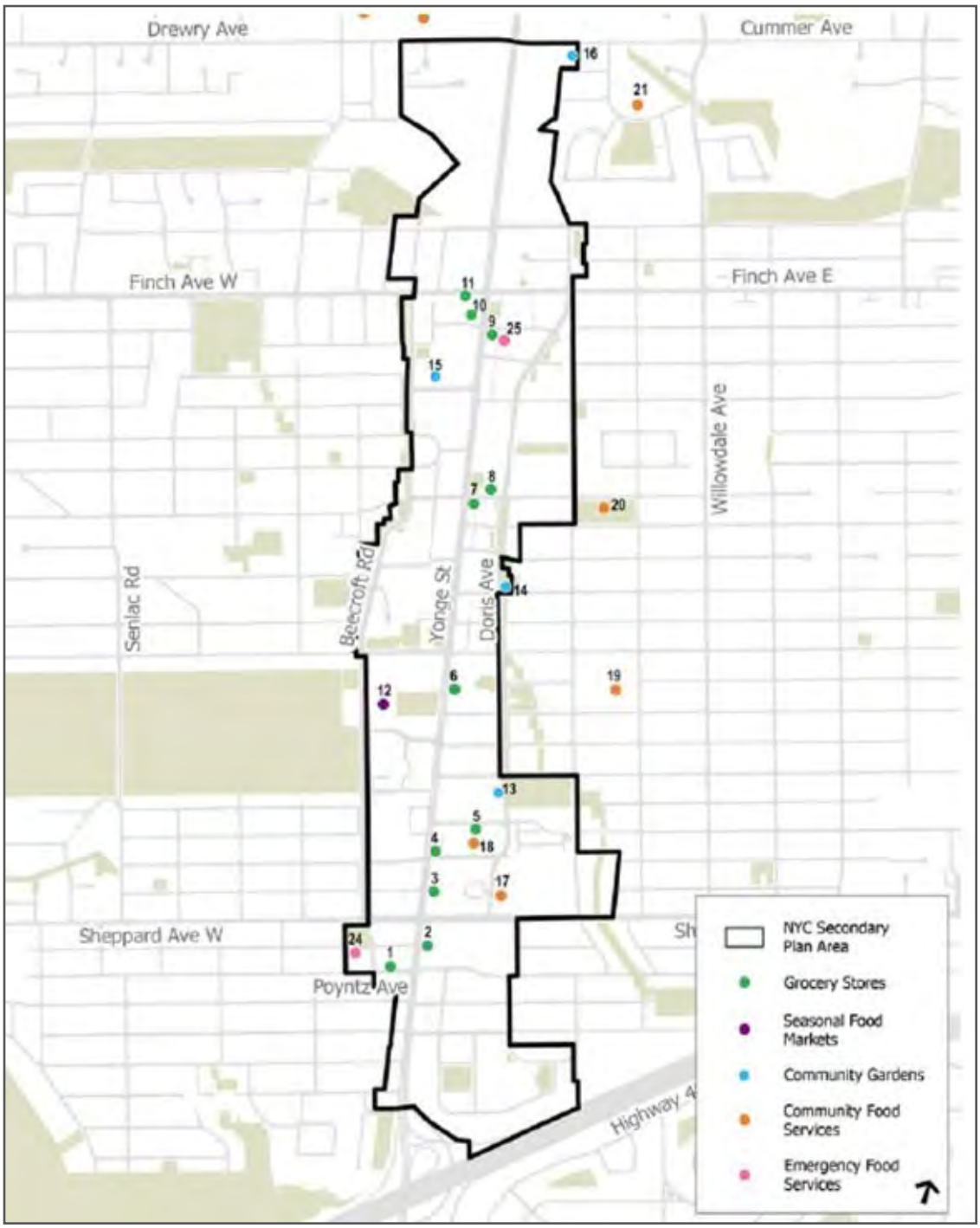


Figure 5-29: Location of Food Security Assets

Table 5-2 lists Food Security Assets found within, or near, the Centre, including 11 grocery stores, a seasonal food market, four community gardens, seven community food services, and two emergency food services. The community gardens are particularly important in a dense area with limited private outdoor space for residents. Parkview Neighbourhood Garden is on public land and is managed by community volunteers with support from the City. The other three community gardens are on school and church properties. Of the community food services, the majority are student nutrition programs located within public schools, with just two that are accessible to the general population within the Centre.

Table 5-2: Food Security Assets by Type

Type	Organization/Store Name	Address
Grocery Store	1. Food Basics	22 Poyntz Avenue
	2. Whole Foods Market	4771 Yonge Street
	3. Longo's Yonge & Sheppard / Shoppers Drug Mart	4841 Yonge Street
	4. M2M Asian Grocery Store	4885 Yonge Street
	5. PAT Spring Garden Market	63 Spring Garden Avenue
	6. Loblaws Yonge Street / Shoppers Drug Mart	5095 Yonge Street
	7. H Mart North York	5323 Yonge Street
	8. Metro Supermarket	20 Church Avenue
	9. H Mart Finch	5545 Yonge Street
	10. Shoppers Drug Mart	5576 Yonge Street
	11. Joy Mart	15 Finch Avenue W
Seasonal Market	12. North York Farmers' Market	5100 Yonge Street
Community Gardens	13. Claude Watson School for the Arts vegetable Garden Community	130 Doris Avenue
	14. Parkview Neighbourhood Garden	34 Parkview Avenue
	15. St. Cyril Catholic School vegetable Garden	18 Kempford Boulevard
	16. Newtonbrook Community Garden	53 Cummer Avenue
Community Food Services	17.North York Seniors Centre Adult Day Program / Meals on Wheels and More	80 Sheppard Avenue
	18. Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts Student Nutrition Program	36 Greenfield Avenue
	19. Earl Haig Secondary School Student Nutrition Program	100 Princess Avenue
	20. Mitchell Field Community Centre Community Kitchen	89 Church Avenue
	21. Avondale Secondary Alternative School Student Nutrition Program	24 Silverview Drive
	22. Drewry Secondary School Student Nutrition Program	70 Drewry Avenue
	23. Monseigneur-de-Charbonnel Catholic Secondary School Student Nutrition Program	110 Drewry Avenue
Emergency Food Services	24. Lansing United Church Food Bank	49 Bogert Avenue
	25. Cummer Avenue and Taiwanese United Church Meal Drop-in	15 Olive Avenue

Development Pipeline

The Development Pipeline includes current and planned development activity within the Centre. Development activity refers to projects at any stage of the approvals or development process from application submission to completion and occupancy. Projects in the Development Pipeline are categorized as being under *review, active* or *built* (see sidebar).

As of June 2023, there were 35 developments in the Centre that have experienced activity. These developments are distributed fairly evenly throughout the NYCSP area, with one notable cluster located toward the northern edge (**Figure 5-30**). These projects are at various stages of the development process, with 15 under review, 14 active, and six built. There are also 15 developments within the BESA; 12 of these are within the boundaries of the Sheppard Lansing, Sheppard Willowdale, or Central Finch Area Secondary Plans. As of June 2023, the Centre's Development Pipeline includes 13,750 new residential units and 81,169 square metres of non-residential GFA (**Table 5-3**) In the BESA, the Development Pipeline includes 334 new residential units and 4,305 square metres of non-residential GFA (**Table 5-4**).

Development Activity Definitions:

Under review projects are those which have not yet been approved or refused and those which are under appeal.

Active projects are those which have been approved, for which Building Permits have been applied or have been issued, and/or those which are under construction.

Built projects are those which became ready for occupancy and/or were completed.

As of June 2023, the Centre's Development Pipeline includes 13,750 new residential units.

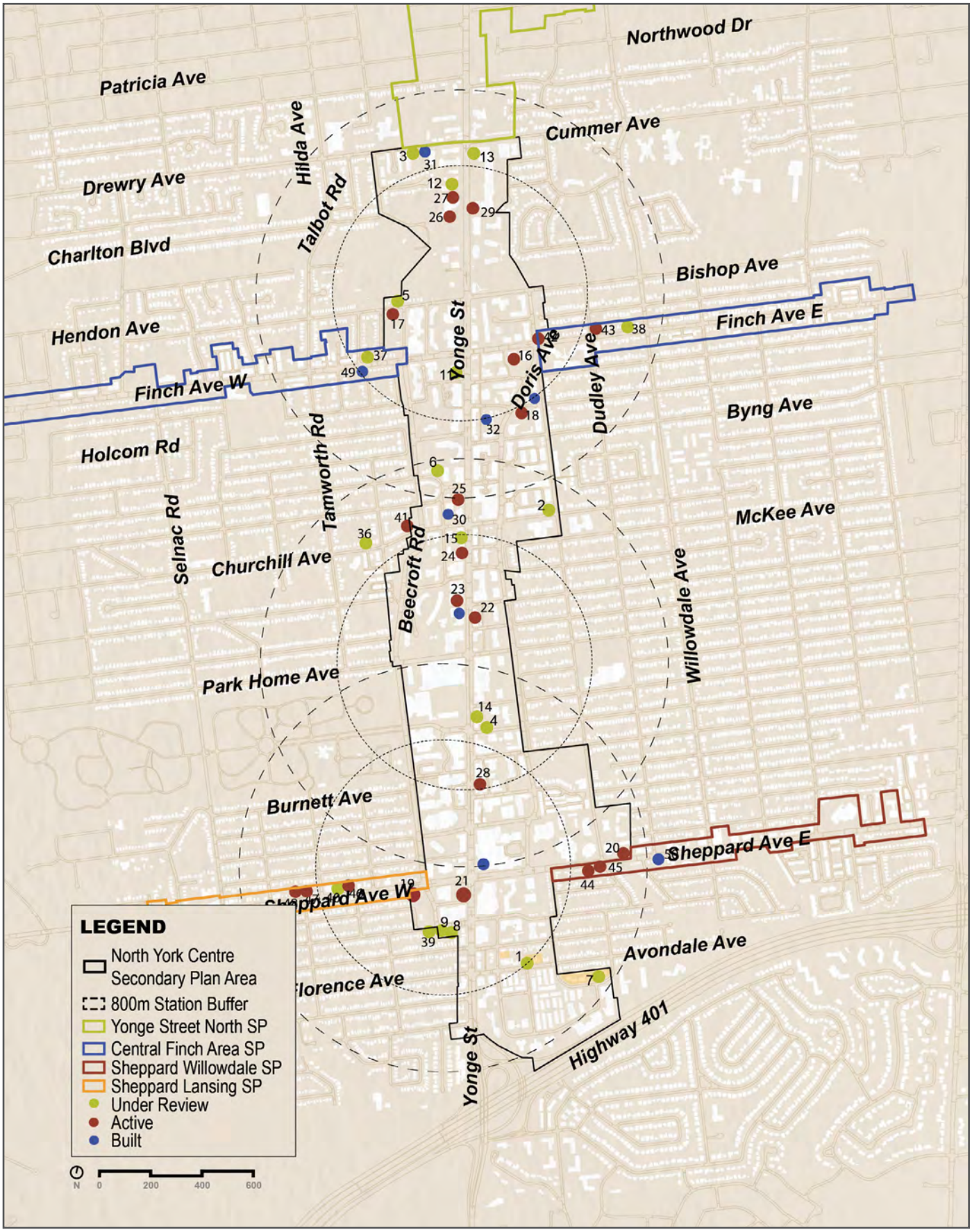


Figure 5-30: Development Pipeline in the Centre and Boundary Expansion Study Areas (2018-2023)

Table 5-3: Development Projects in the Secondary Plan Area with Recent Activities in the Last 5 Years (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2023)

Map ID	Pipeline Status	Address	Total Residential Unites Proposed	Proposed Non-Residential GFA (m^2)
1	Under Review	48 Avondale Ave	1,137	0
2	Under Review	72 Church Ave	14	0
3	Under Review	51 Drewry Ave	551	0
4	Under Review	10 Elmwood Ave	0	198
5	Under Review	40 Hendon Ave	30	0
6	Under Review	26 Hounslow Ave	111	0
7	Under Review	10 Oakburn Cres	452	0
8	Under Review	19 Poyntz Ave	8	0
9	Under Review	23 Poyntz Ave	41	656
10	Under Review	5576 Yonge St	608	507
11	Under Review	5799 Yonge St	856	3,831
12	Under Review	5840 Yonge St	0	2,261
13	Under Review	5915 Yonge St	496	4,215
14	Under Review	5051-5061 Yonge St	350	1,875
15	Under Review	5320-5324 Yonge St	862	1.464
16	Active	31 FInch Ave E	350	0
17	Active	45 Hendon Ave	19	0
18	Active	35 Holmes Ave	154	0
19	Active	53 Sheppard Ave W	365	219
20	Active	120 Sheppard Ave E	74	0
21	Active	4800 Yonge St	498	15,717
22	Active	5203 Yonge St	329	238
23	Active	5220 Yonge St	308	18,065
24	Active	5306 Yonge St	332	470
25	Active	5400 Yonge St	533	543
26	Active	5800 Yonge St	2,120	268
27	Active	5840 Yonge St	407	0
28	Active	4917-4975 Yonge St	371	8,519
29	Active	5799-8915 Yonge St	808	7,352
30	Built	75 Canterbury Pl	371	0

Map ID	Pipeline Status	Address	Total Residential Unites Proposed	Proposed Non-Residential GFA (m²)
31	Built	43 Drewry Ave	54	0
32	Built	15 Holmes Ave	358	0
33	Built	448 Kenneth Ave	29	0
34	Built	2 Sheppard Ave E	380	7,450
35	Built	5182-5190 Yonge St	374	5,582
		Total	**13,750**	**81,169**

Table 5-4: Development Projects in the BESA with Recent Activities in the Last 5 Years (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2023)

Map ID	Pipeline Status	Address	Total Residential Unites Proposed	Proposed Non-Residential GFA (m²)
36	Under Review	68 Churchill Ave	44	0
37	Under Review	52 Finch Ave W	2	238
38	Under Review	104 Finch Ave E	67	521
39	Under Review	35 Poyntz Ave	0	739
40	Under Review	120 Sheppard Ave W	30	0
41	Active	36 Churchill Ave	14	0
42	Active	50 Finch Ave E	42	106
43	Active	88 Finch Ave E	0	125
44	Active	101 Sheppard Ave E	0	1,160
45	Active	105 Sheppard Ave E	58	114
46	Active	110 Sheppard Ave W	30	0
47	Active	152 Sheppard Ave W	0	152
48	Active	160 Sheppard Ave W	0	500
49	Active	57 Finch Ave W	42	0
50	Active	139 Sheppard Ave E	0	652
		Total	**329**	**4,305**

The current NYCSP includes maximum residential percentages in North York Centre South and maximum commercial percentages in North York Centre North. The Development Pipeline is generally not achieving the amount of commercial development envisioned by the NYCSP, and recent OPAs sometimes include relief from these requirements as discussed in Chapter 4. As shown in **Figure 5-31**, 19 of the 35 developments in the Centre included some non-residential GFA. However, only two developments are standalone commercial buildings; the remainder are mixed-use developments.

In the BESA, 10 of 15 pipeline developments included some non-residential GFA. Six of these are standalone commercial developments – two of which are conversions of existing space to non-residential uses and four of which are new standalone, small-scale commercial buildings.

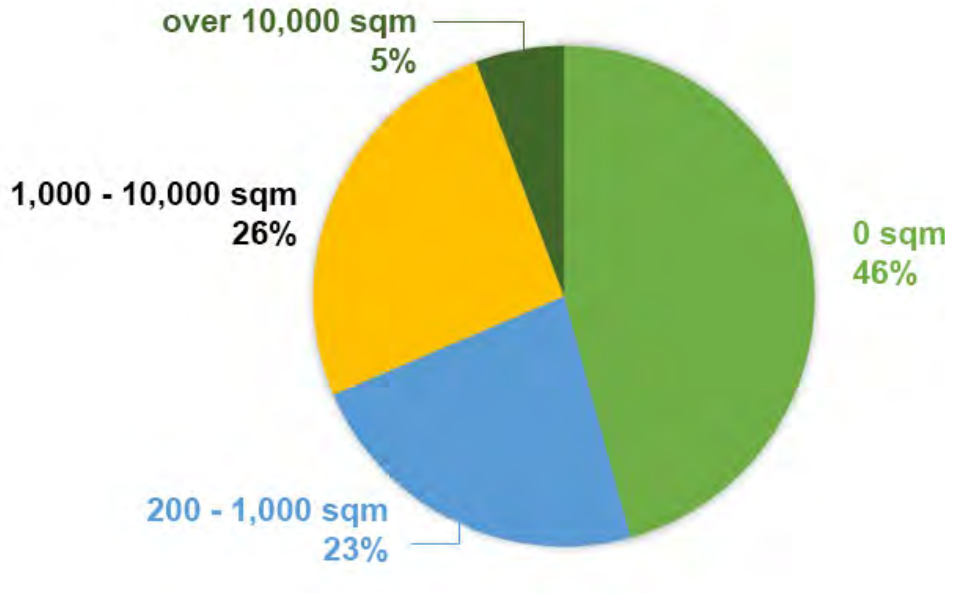


Figure 5-31: Non-residential GFA in the Development Pipeline in the Centre (July 2018 – June 2023)

Potential Development Sites

Potential development sites are sites that are considered likely to redevelop based on factors such as lot size, age, and condition of current buildings on the site, current uses on the site and replacement requirements, ownership, requirements for land assembly, technical issues such as contamination, and proximity to future transit. Most new growth in an already built up area like the Centre occurs through the redevelopment of these types of sites.

The following observations can be made based on a preliminary review of potential development sites in North York Centre:

- Many of the large sites in the Centre have already been developed. Many of the sites that remain require land assembly to create developable parcels or have other constraints (e.g., existing rental units which will need to be replaced).
- Many remaining potential development sites on Yonge Street are shallow, sometimes constrained by utilities. Applying the City's design standards in a contextual manner may be considered to accommodate appropriate development on these sites.

- The Centre has several older strip plazas that are considered potential development sites. These sites often contain the vibrant, small-scale retail that characterizes the Centre. Replicating this retail environment in new development will be a key challenge.
- There are quite a few City-owned sites in the Centre (mostly parking lots) that can be leveraged to meet City priorities (such as affordable housing). In addition, there are some sites owned by other levels of government or government agencies where partnerships could be made to facilitate achievement of multiple objectives on a single site (such as housing with a school in the podium, as has been seen in other dense areas of the city).
- Incorporating some or all of the BESA into the Secondary Plan area would allow for expansion of constrained sites and addition of more potential development sites.

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- There is a diverse mix of land uses in the Centre with a more mixed-use character in North York Centre South (south of Ellerslie Avenue/Norton Avenue) and a more residential character in North York Centre North, reflecting the permissions of the current Secondary Plan.
- Larger grocery stores are primarily located in North York Centre South, while grocery store options in North York Centre North tend to be quite small. This affects the food security of residents living in North York Centre North.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- There is a vibrant arts and cultural presence in North York Centre with facilities ranging from a museum to a multi-purpose arts centre.
- There is significant residential development in the Development Pipeline which has the potential to add nearly 14,000 new residential units to the area.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

- The geographic division of the Secondary Plan area into North York Centre North and North York Centre South in the current NYCSP should be reconsidered given the changing policy context and potential boundary expansion. A geographic division based on the three subway station areas / Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) and/or one that distinguishes areas in the BESA if recommended for inclusion in the Secondary Plan area may be more useful to develop policy that is tailored to the distinctive areas within the Centre.
- North York at the Centre should update the land use policies for the Centre, including the regime of *Mixed Use Areas A-H*. Specifically, alternative approaches to maintaining a strong non-residential base in the Centre will be explored as recent development has frequently sought exceptions to the existing non-residential requirements.
- The appropriate balance between residential and non-residential development is a key topic for North York at the Centre. Today the amount of non-residential GFA being provided in new developments is often lower than required by Secondary Plan policy. It will be important to maintain a critical mass of non-residential uses, including office and particularly in the south end of the NYCSP area, even as the ratio of non-residential to residential development declines. Flexibility in policy and zoning to allow innovative non-residential uses (such as vertical farms) may be considered.
- Given the constraints of development sites in the Centre, the BESA offer a key opportunity to provide additional growth and development in an expanded Centre.
- North York at the Centre should seek to improve food security throughout the Secondary Plan area, particularly in the north, by improving access to grocery stores.

5.3.1 Housing

Amidst an affordable housing crisis, housing will be one of the key focus areas for North York at the Centre. Both the Province and the City have made significant changes to the policy and regulatory framework to facilitate new housing construction. Affordable housing was also identified as a priority for the community through North York at the Centre's Phase 1 engagement process. Analyzing the composition of the existing housing stock and the pipeline of new residential developments will inform opportunities to increase the amount of housing - including affordable housing - and the housing options available to households of different sizes in the Centre.

Policy

Planning Act

Several recent legislative changes to the *Planning Act* relate to housing. The More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 updated policies for additional residential units to allow three residential units as-of-right on properties containing a single low-rise residential home. It also made changes to how inclusionary zoning can be implemented. Proposed amendments to the Provincial Inclusionary Zoning Regulation 232/18 include a 5% cap on the number of inclusionary units that can be required, a maximum 25-year affordability period, and an approach to determining the price or rent of an affordable unit under inclusionary zoning. The proposed regulation has not yet been finalized.

The *Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act*, 2023, which received Royal Assent in December 2023, has amended Schedule 1 of the *Development Charges Act,* 1997, to include updated definitions of rent and purchase price based on income. Under this amendment, affordable housing for each type of housing tenure is defined as housing where the household income falls at the 60th percentile in the applicable local municipality, with rents or purchase prices set at 30% of household income. These definitions are similar to the definitions of affordable rental housing and affordable ownership housing in the Official Plan in that they are income-based, however the Official Plan definitions also take into account household size and unit type.

Official Plan

The recently adopted changes to Chapter 1 of the Official Plan put a strong emphasis on addressing housing demand and providing housing supply and choice. Section 1.2 Planning Priorities states that the Official Plan takes a human rights-based approach to housing and seeks to enable a wider range of hosing options for all. Specifically looking at *Centres*, Section 2.2.2 emphasizes that Secondary Plans governing Centres will:

- Support residential development with the aim of creating a quality living environment for a large residential population, including a full range of housing opportunities in terms of type, tenure, unit size, and affordability.

Housing can come in all shapes and sizes, as emphasized in the range of building types supported under Section 3.1.4 of the Official Plan and detailed in Section 5.8 of this report.

Official Plan Section 3.2.1 Housing recognizes adequate and affordable housing as a basic requirement for well-being. Policies emphasize the need to provide a full range of housing options in terms of form, tenure and affordability, and the importance of maintaining and improving the existing housing stock. The Official Plan indicates a need to address the following priorities:

- **Stimulating production of new private sector rental housing supply:** especially at affordable and mid-range rents, working across federal, provincial, and municipal levels to promote a business environment that supports this;
- **Preserving what we have:** preserving our existing stock of affordable rental housing, treating it like treasured assets like heritage buildings;

- **Making efficient and effective use of the City's own housing resources to achieve a range of housing objectives:** acknowledging that our social housing stock is aging, the City needs to ensure that the housing needs of our most vulnerable populations are met; and
- **Working in partnership to take advantage of emerging opportunities:** partnering with other levels of government, as well as the private and non-profit sectors, will help encourage new affordable and social housing production.

In addition to the above, requirements related to housing in Section 3.2.1 include:

- Encouraging the renovation and retrofitting of older residential apartment buildings;
- Encouraging new housing supply through intensification and infill;
- Replacing existing rental or social housing units (same number, size, and type of unit) and similar rents, based on certain conditions such as total number of rental units, type of planning approval and nature of proposed new development;
- Achieving a mix of housing in terms of types and affordability on large sites (generally greater than 5 hectares in size):
  - A minimum of 30% of the new housing units will be in forms other than single-detached and semi-detached housing; and
  - If an increase in height and/or density is sought, the first priority community benefit will be the provision of 20% of additional residential units as affordable housing (under certain conditions).

For North York at the Centre, it will be important to implement the Official Plan policies related to housing in a manner that addresses the priorities and needs that are specific to the Centre, such as delivering affordable housing in new developments and providing a mix of housing and unit types to support a range of demographics, such as family-sized and supportive units.

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) is a City of Toronto initiative to facilitate gentle density in residential neighbourhoods to meet the needs of a growing city. The City is working to expand opportunities for "missing middle" housing forms in Toronto, ranging from duplexes to low-rise walk-up apartments. All these housing types can be found in many parts of Toronto today, but they are also limited in where they can be newly built. EHON is one solution among a range of current City initiatives to increase housing choice and access. EHON initiatives include:

- Allowing garden suites on properties without lane access in most residential zones – in February 2022, City Council adopted Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to permit Garden Suites city-wide.
- Permitting multiplexes (residential buildings with up to four units) across low-rise neighbourhoods – in May 2023, City Council adopted Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to permit multiplexes city-wide.
- Allowing development up to six storeys on properties with the *Neighbourhoods* designation that are located on "major streets" as shown on Official Plan Map 3 – in May 2024 City Council adopted Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to allow development up to six storeys on most major streets
- Supporting the preservation and growth of small-scale retail, service and office uses in the City's designated *Neighbourhoods* – in July 2022, City Council adopted Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to expand Home Occupation uses in low-rise *Neighbourhoods* across the city. In 2024 the City will be consulting on a proposed zoning approach to permit certain small-scale retail, service and office uses on residentially-zoned properties within *Neighbourhoods* city-wide, with the intent to bring a final report to Planning and Housing Committee for consideration in late 2024.

The NYCSP area is not subject to the city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013, so zoning changes approved under the EHON initiative will not apply until the area is brought into the city-wide by-law. The current boundary of the NYCSP does not include any lands designated *Neighbourhoods* in the Official Plan; however, the BESA includes areas designated *Neighbourhoods.* These may or may not be redesignated should they be proposed for inclusion in the Secondary Plan area. Even if lands designated Neighbourhoods in the BESA are not incorporated into the Secondary Plan area, zoning changes implemented under the EHON initiative would allow for a greater variety of housing choices in the vicinity of the Centre. The concept of allowing residential development of up to six storeys on certain streets to expand housing options and as part of a transition strategy may be considered as part of North York at the Centre.

Inclusionary Zoning

On November 12, 2021, the City adopted an Inclusionary Zoning policy (OPA 557) and Zoning By-law (941-2021) that require new development around transit stations to include 5-10% of the development as affordable housing secured for 99 years. The Inclusionary Zoning policy applies to new development applications that are located in an approved Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA). All three of the Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) in the Centre have been delineated by the City as PMTSAs, however provincial approval of PMTSAs is currently outstanding. When the PMTSAs are approved by the Province this policy will be in place in the Centre and will not need to be replicated in the Secondary Plan.

The NYCSP area falls within Inclusionary Zoning Market Area 3. The City's Inclusionary Zoning By-law currently requires at least 5% of the residential gross floor area of a new condominium development to be provided as affordable rental housing units or at least 7% as affordable ownership housing units for this market area.

As noted above, the Province's *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022 proposed changes to how Inclusionary Zoning can be implemented. Should the Province issue an updated regulation as proposed, the City's Inclusionary Zoning policy and by-law may need to be amended to conform to the Provincial regulation.

The North York Centre Secondary Plan

Housing policy is a gap in the current NYCSP. The Plan does not speak to the diversity of the housing stock added to the Centre through new development, in terms of unit type, unit size, tenure (ownership versus rental), or affordability. Policies to ensure a diverse range of housing that meets the needs of all households should be added to the Secondary Plan as part of the review. This should include a focus on affordable housing and housing diversity.

Lessons From Other Secondary Plans

Recent Secondary Plans typically include policies to ensure a balanced mix of residential unit sizes. Policies are often based on the recommendations in the Growing Up Guidelines, discussed below. The development size at which the unit size policies apply differs slightly between Secondary Plans. In the Yonge Street North Secondary Plan, for developments that contain more than 80 new residential units, a minimum of 40% of the total number of new units are required to be a combination of two- and three-bedrooms units, including at least 15% two-bedroom units and 10% 3-bedroom units, with an additional 15% of the total units being a combination of two- and three-bedroom units.

There is a similar policy in the Downsview Secondary Plan which applies broadly to "developments with residential uses" but may be reduced where a development is providing social housing or other publicly funded/subsidized housing or housing to meet specialized needs which do not require multi-bedroom units. In the Sheppard

Willowdale Secondary Plan, mixed-use buildings with 20 or more units are required to provide a minimum of 15% 2-bedroom units and 10% 3-bedroom units.

Guidelines

Growing Up Urban Design Guidelines: Planning For Children In New Vertical Communities

The Growing Up Urban Design Guidelines aim to create vertical communities that meet the needs of all household types, particularly those with children. They are applied to all new multi-residential mid-rise and tall building development applications that include 20 units or more. One of the guidelines to create child-friendly development is to ensure that buildings include large units. Guideline 2.1.a specifies a minimum of 25% large units, of which 10% should be 3-bedroom units and 15% should be 2-bedroom units. Guidelines 3.0.a provides ideal unit sizes of 90 m^2 for 2-bedroom units and 106 m^2 for 3-bedroom units.

Other Initiatives

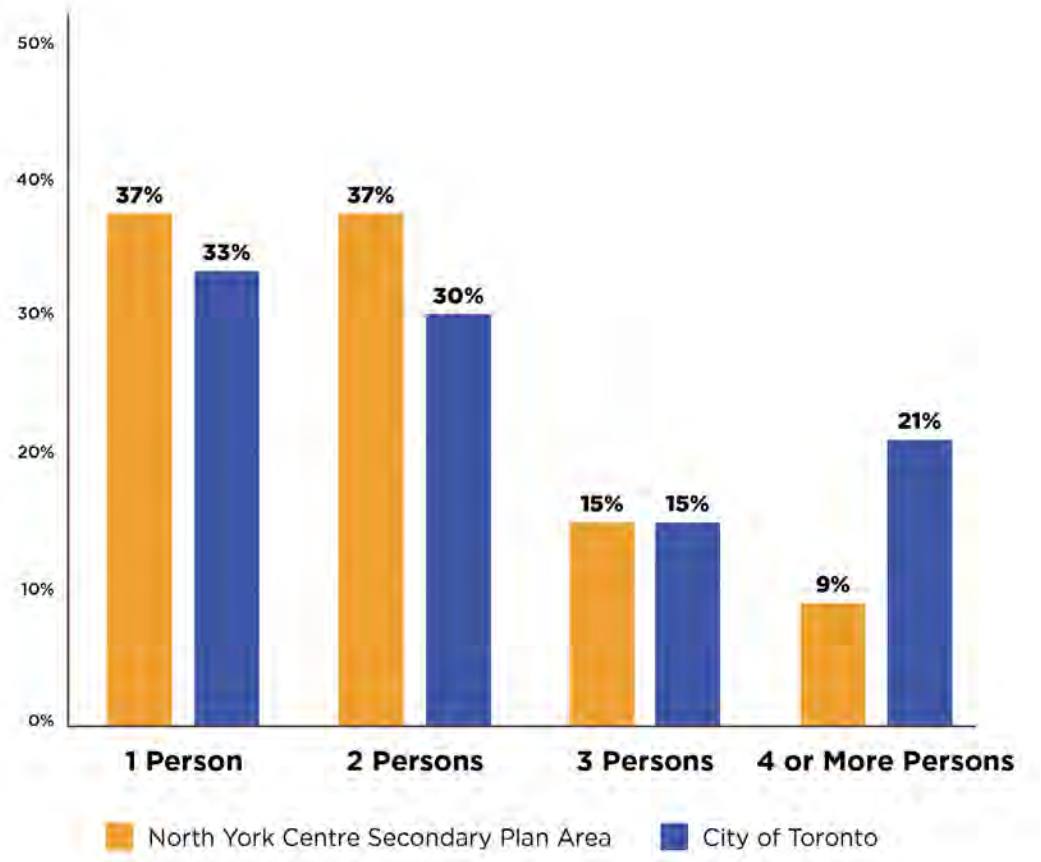
Housing Now is an initiative to activate City-owned sites for the development of affordable housing within mixed-income, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities. Currently there is one site identified as a Pipeline Housing Now site located in the Centre (5151 Yonge Street). North York at the Centre will consider permissions for this site to optimize height and density in support of affordable housing and/or other community benefits. Through discussions with City stakeholders, including the Housing Secretariat and CreateTO, it may be recommended that other City-owned sites in the Centre should be considered by City Council to be added to the properties being developed as part of the Housing Now initiative.

Existing and Planned Conditions

This section uses census data and the City's Development Pipeline data to describe existing and planned conditions in the Centre related to household sizes, housing affordability, housing type, tenure and age, and proposed new residential dwellings.

Household Sizes

The average household size in the Centre was two people in 2021, which was slightly lower than the city-wide average of 2.4 people (**Figure 5-32**). The greatest proportion of households in the Centre are one person households at 39%, while households with four or more people represent the smallest proportion at 9%.



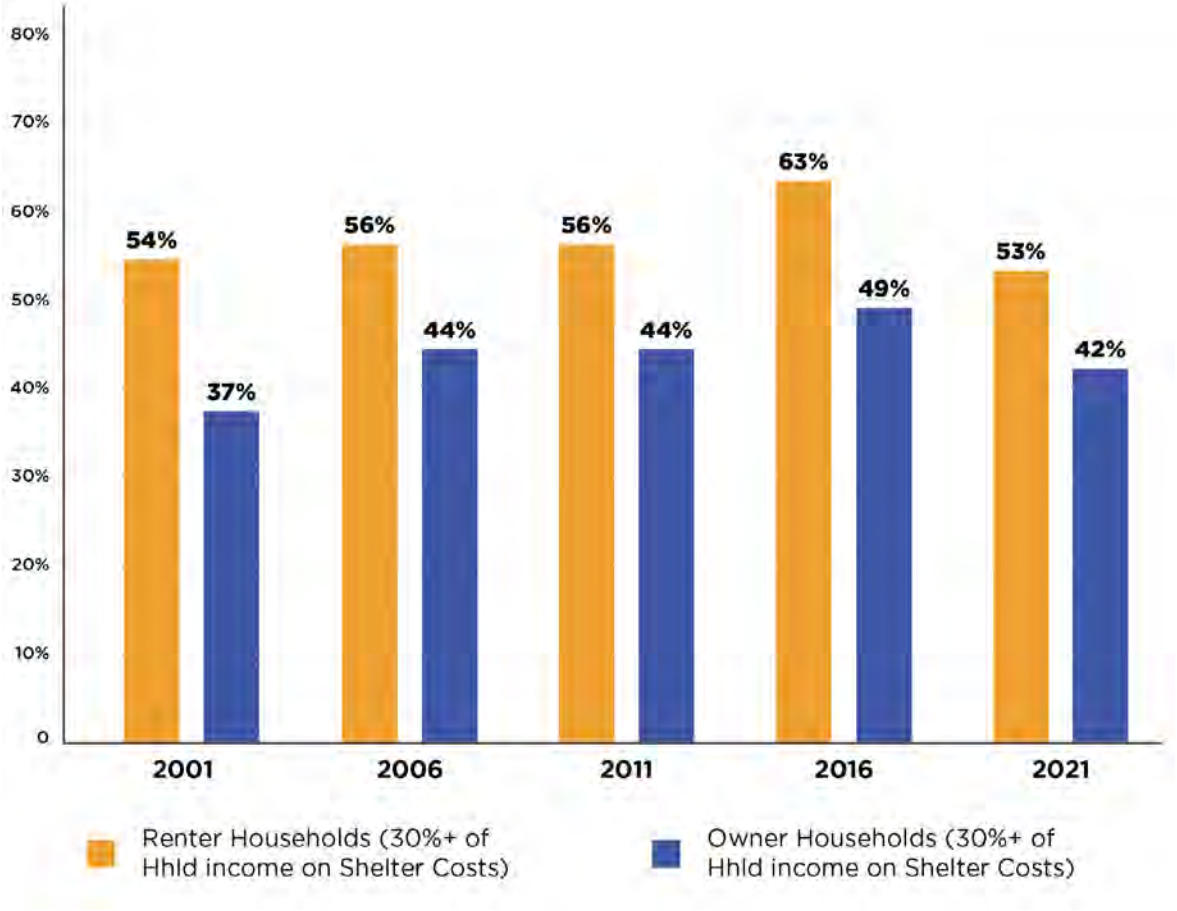
(Source: 2021 Census)

Figure 5-32: Households by Size

Of the 14,105 census families living in private households in the Centre in 2021, 7,350 (52%) had children while the remaining 6,755 (48%) did not. This is lower than the percentage in Toronto overall where about 64% of households had children. The percentage of households with children has declined since 2011, when it was 56%.

Housing Affordability

In 2021, 53% of renters and 42% of homeowners in the Centre were spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs. While this trend is prevalent throughout Toronto, the city-wide statistics are slightly better than those in the Centre, with 40% of renters and 26% of owners spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs. The number of renter households that are spending 30% of more of their income on shelter has not been this low since 2001 (**Figure 5-33**).

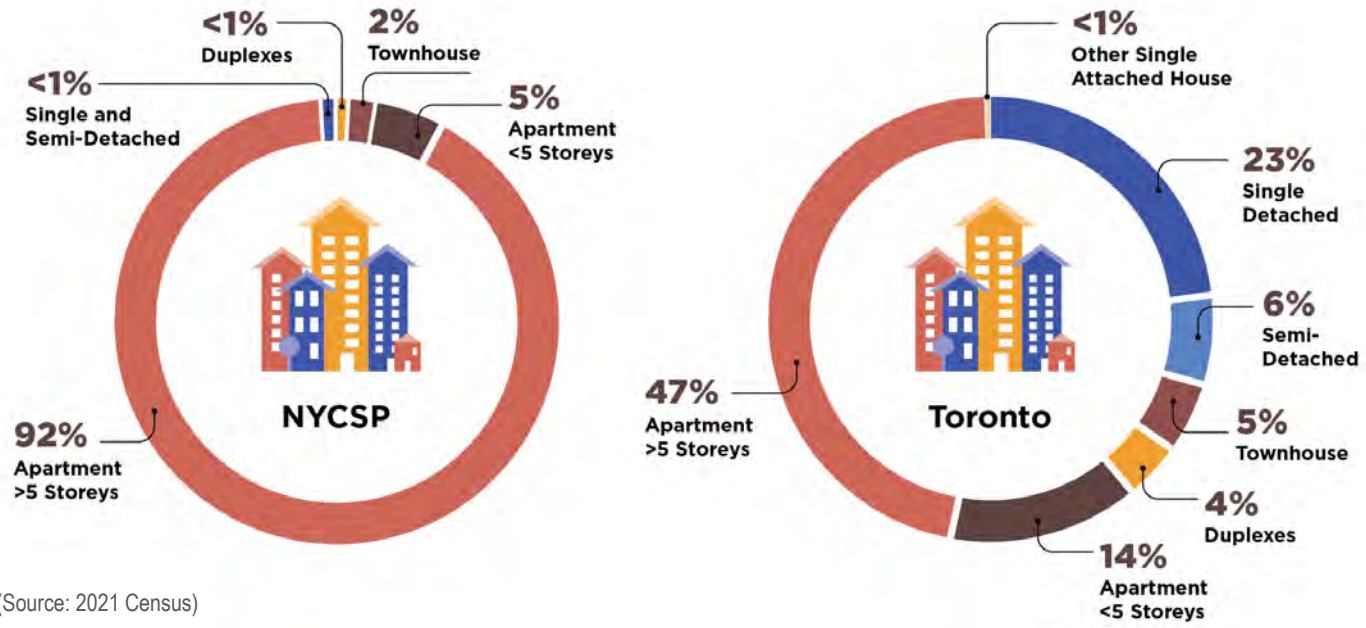


(Source: 2021 Census)

Figure 5-33: Housing Affordability by Tenure In North York Centre

Housing Type, Tenure and Age

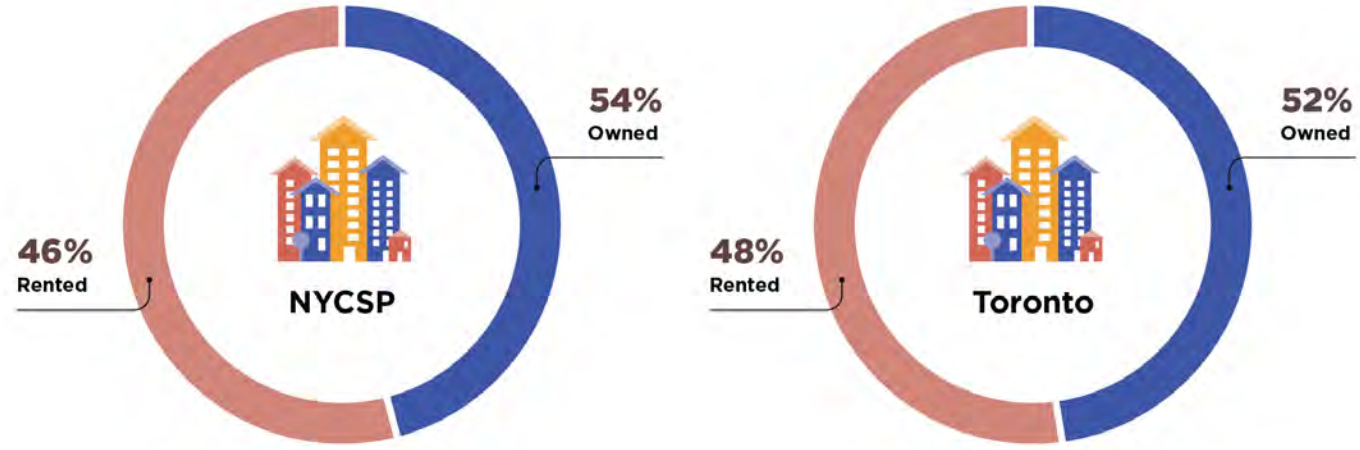
Today, 92% of the housing stock in the Centre is comprised of buildings with five or more storeys (**Figure 5-34**). This number has stayed fairly consistent over time, at 92% in 2016 and 90% in 2001. This means that the Centre has a very limited housing mix, which is important to give people access to housing options to meet their evolving physical abilities or financial means, as well as expand or contract their households over time.



(Source: 2021 Census)

Figure 5-34: Housing by Dwelling Structure Type

The balance between rental and ownership housing is fairly even in the Centre, with 46% of residents renting and 54% owning as of 2021 (**Figure 5-35**). This balance is generally consistent with Toronto overall, where 48% of residents are renters and 52% are owners.

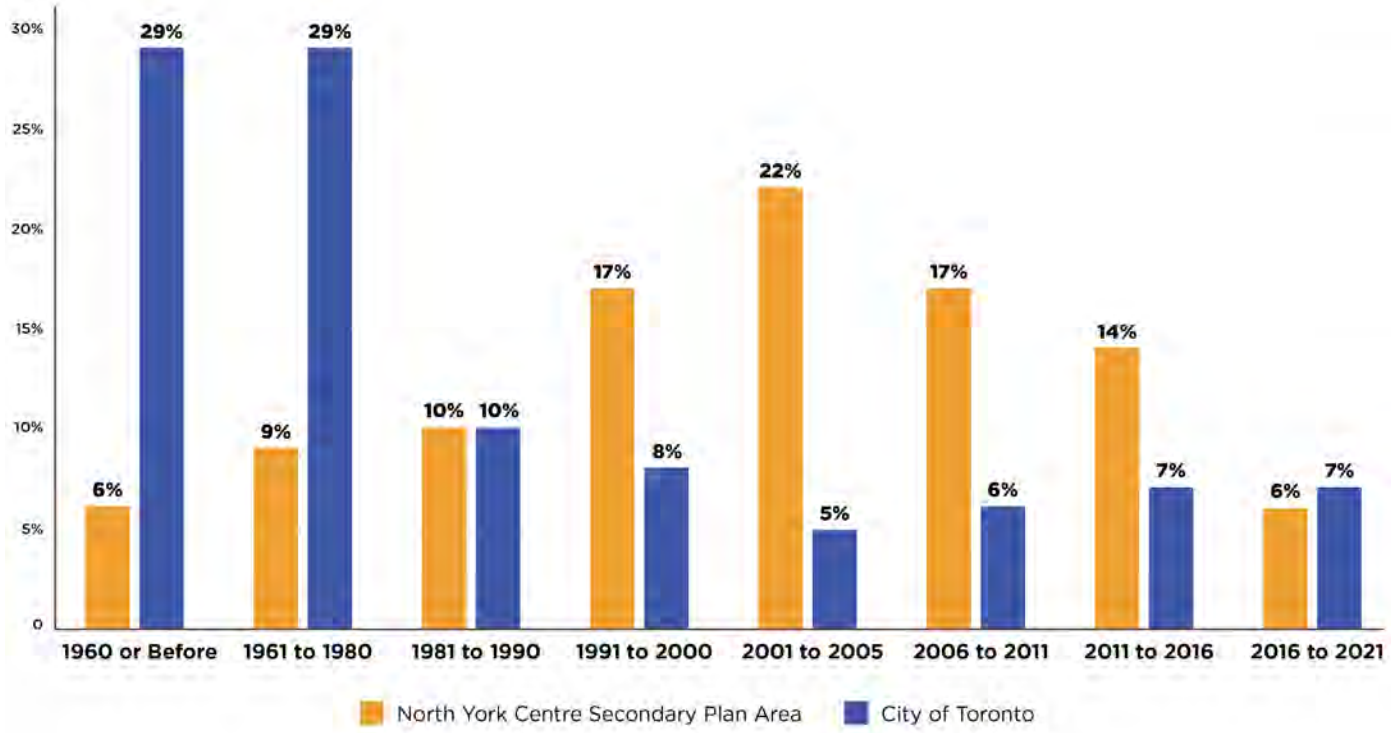


(Source: 2021 Census)

Figure 5-35: Housing Tenure

The majority of the Centre's dwellings were built after the year 2000, with 23% constructed in 2001-2005, 19% in 2006-2010, 15% in 2011-2016, and 6% in 2017-2021 (**Figure 5-36**). The proportion of tall apartment buildings (five storeys and taller) within the Centre has consistently grown over the past 20 years, especially relative to all other dwelling types.

Just 9% of existing dwellings were constructed before 1981, which is much lower than Toronto overall where 64% of dwellings had been built by that time. The Centre also has a larger proportion of apartment buildings five storeys and taller (92%) compared to the City of Toronto (47%) as of 2021.



(Source: 2021 Census)

Figure 5-36: Housing by Period of Construction

Development Pipeline

In the Secondary Plan area the majority of residential units (over 58%) in the Development Pipeline are one-bedroom dwellings, totalling 8,029 units (**Table 5-5**). Two-bedroom dwellings account for 32% (4,429 units). Dwellings with three or more bedrooms account for approximately 9% (1,167 units). Studio dwellings are the least common, accounting for approximately 1% (125 units). Based on this review of the Development Pipeline, the Secondary Plan area is close to achieving the percentage of larger units recommended by the Growing Up Urban Design Guidelines (10% three-bedroom units and 15% two-bedroom units) and recent Secondary Plans (40% larger units, including 10% three-bedroom units and 15% two-bedroom units).

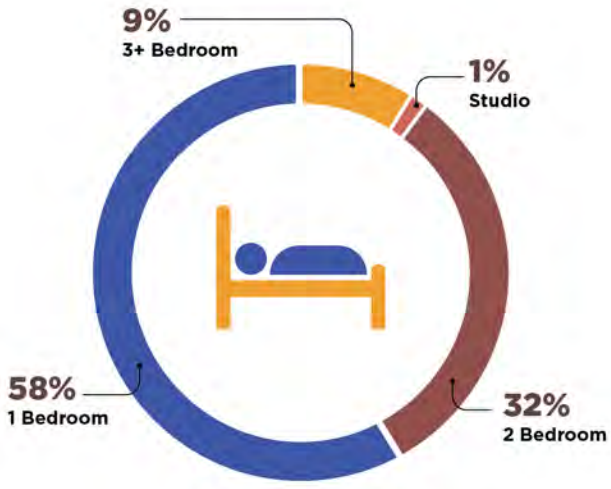


Figure 5-37: Residential Units in the Development Pipeline in the Secondary Plan Area by Number of Bedrooms (July 2018 – June 2023)

41% of units in the Development Pipeline in the Centre are 2- and 3-bedroom units, providing housing options for larger households.

In the Boundary Expansion Study Area, the breakdown of units by number of bedrooms in the Development Pipeline shows 40% (133) two-bedroom units, 31% (104) one-bedroom units, and 24% (81) 3- or more bedroom units (**Figure 5-38**). Policies supporting the redevelopment of the BESA could seek to maintain this greater mix of larger units to provide more housing options in the Centre, including more ground-related and family size units.

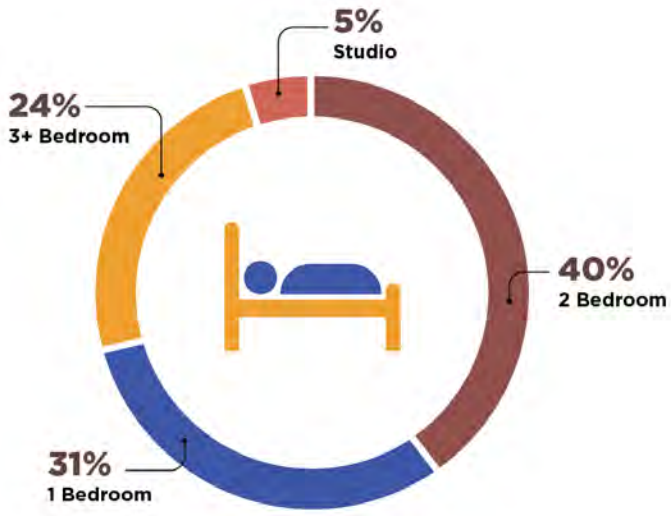


Figure 5-38: Residential Units in the Development Pipeline in the Boundary Expansion Study Areas by Number of Bedrooms (July 2018-June 2023)

Table 5-5: Development Pipeline in the Secondary Plan Area (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2023)

Map ID	Pipeline Status	Address	Proposed Number of Residential Unites				
			Studio	1 Bedrooms	2 Bedrooms	3+ Bedrooms	Total
1	Under Review	48 Avondale Ave	0	713	310	114	1,137
2	Under Review	72 Church Ave	3	0	8	3	14
3	Under Review	51 Drewry Ave	0	346	149	56	551
4	Under Review	10 Elmwood Ave	0	0	0	0	0
5	Under Review	40 Hendon Ave	0	0	12	18	30
6	Under Review	26 Hounslow Ave	0	77	23	11	111
7	Under Review	10 Oakburn Cres	0	248	159	45	452
8	Under Review	19 Poyntz Ave	0	0	8	0	8
9	Under Review	23 Poyntz Ave	0	25	13	3	41
10	Under Review	5576 Yonge St	32	366	154	56	608
11	Under Review	5799 Yonge St	19	339	419	79	856
12	Under Review	5840 Yonge St	0	0	0	0	0
13	Under Review	5915 Yonge St	13	274	178	31	496
14	Under Review	5051-5061 Yonge St	0	227	106	17	350

Map ID	Pipeline Status	Address	Proposed Number of Residential Unites				
			Studio	1 Bedrooms	2 Bedrooms	3+ Bedrooms	Total
15	Under Review	5320-5324 Yonge St	14	528	231	89	862
16	Active	31 Finch Ave E	0	237	78	35	350
17	Active	45 Hendon Ave	2	11	6	0	19
18	Active	35 Holmes Ave	0	107	31	16	154
19	Active	53 Sheppard Ave W	0	276	54	35	365
20	Active	120 Sheppard Ave E	0	48	26	0	74
21	Active	4800 Yonge St	0	372	102	24	498
22	Active	5203 Yonge St	30	179	90	30	329
23	Active	5220 Yonge St	0	218	90	0	308
24	Active	5306 Yonge St	0	250	43	39	332
25	Active	5400 Yonge St	0	399	80	54	533
27	Active	5840 Yonge St	4	154	208	41	407
28	Active	4917-4975 Yonge St	0	281	90	0	371
29	Active	5799-5915 Yonge St	6	278	455	69	808
30	Built	75 Canterbury Ave	2	189	149	31	371
31	Built	43 Drewry Ave	0	18	27	9	54
32	Built	15 Holmes Ave	0	231	91	36	358
33	Built	448 Kenneth Ave	0	1	28	0	29
34	Built	2 Sheppard Ave E	0	230	141	9	380
35	Built	5182-5190 Yonge St	0	167	207	0	374
		Total	**125**	**8,029**	**4,429**	**1,167**	**13,750**

Note: The Map ID numbers indicated on Table 5-5 and Table 5-6 correspond to development projects in the pipeline shown on Map 5-30.

Table 5-6: Development Pipeline in the Boundary Expansion Study Area (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2023)

Map ID	Pipeline Status	Address	Proposed Number of Residential Unites				
			Studio	1 Bedrooms	2 Bedrooms	3+ Bedrooms	Total
36	Under Review	68 Churchill Ave	0	9	0	40	49
37	Under Review	52 Finch Ave W	0	0	2	0	2
38	Under Review	104 Finch Ave E	10	31	15	11	67
39	Under Review	35 Poyntz Ave	0	0	0	0	0
40	Under Review	120 Sheppard Ave W	0	15	12	3	30
41	Active	36 Churchill Ave	0	0	14	0	14
42	Active	50 Finch Ave E	0	11	21	10	42
43	Active	88 Finch Ave E	0	0	0	0	0
44	Active	101 Sheppard Ave E	0	0	0	0	0
45	Active	105 Sheppard Ave E	6	34	12	6	58
46	Active	110 Sheppard Ave W	0	4	24	2	30
47	Active	152 Sheppard Ave W	0	0	0	0	0
48	Active	160 Sheppard Ave W	0	0	0	0	0
49	Built	57 FInch Ave W	0	0	33	9	42
50	Built	139 Sheppard Ave W	0	0	0	0	0
		Total	**16**	**104**	**133**	**81**	**334**

Note: The Map ID numbers indicated on Table 5-5 and Table 5-6 correspond to development projects in the pipeline shown on Map 5-30.

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- The greatest proportion of households in the Centre are one person households at 39%, while households with four or more people represent the smallest proportion at 9%.
- 92% of the housing stock in the Centre is comprised of buildings with five or more storeys.
- Households in North York Centre are struggling with housing costs. Fifty-three percent of renters and 42% of homeowners in the Centre were spending 30% or more of their income on shelter costs in 2021.
- In the Secondary Plan area, most residential units (over 58%) in the Development Pipeline are one-bedroom dwellings and only 1% of units are studio dwellings. Forty-one percent of units in the Development Pipeline are 2- and 3-bedroom units.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- The Development Pipeline data above demonstrates that North York Centre is performing well in relation to the targets in the Growing Up Guidelines for large units. Two-bedroom units are exceeding the Growing Up Guidelines (32% in the Development Pipeline compared to 15% in the Growing Up Guidelines) and three- or more bedroom units almost meet the Growing Up Guidelines (9% in the Development Pipeline compared to 10% in the Growing Up Guidelines). The Development Pipeline in the Boundary Expansion Study Area (BESA) provides even higher percentages of large units.
- Approaches for gentle intensification that have been developed through the EHON initiative and already apply in the *Neighbourhoods* could inform the new policy framework for the BESA.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

- Making the Centre a family-friendly area will require a multi-pronged approach – continuing to provide appropriate housing options for larger households and ensuring that the community offers the facilities, services and amenities that families require. Guidelines for larger units could be strengthened in Secondary Plan policy.
- Providing more affordable housing in the Centre is an urgent priority. This can be done through:
  - Once the PMTSAs are approved by the Province, additional density will be directed to those areas through the Secondary Plan and inclusionary zoning will be implemented to require affordable housing as a component of new development;
  - Housing Now: North York at the Centre should establish as-of-right permissions for the Pipeline Housing Now site at 5151 Yonge Street and identify potential additional sites to be considered as Pipeline Housing Now sites; and
  - Expanding the boundary of the NYCSP and redesignating existing Neighbourhoods in the BESA to *Mixed Use Areas* would provide opportunities for a greater mix of housing options, including ground-related housing units.

5.3.2 Office and Retail

The Centre is a vibrant neighbourhood that is largely characterized by the concentration of transit-based office and retail uses. As a *Centre*, it holds an important role as a destination for residents, workers, and visitors alike. The analysis within this section illustrates the regulatory frameworks that shape office and retail, an inventory of the office and dynamic retail throughout the Centre today, and the characteristics of these uses that make the Centre unique.

Policy

Official Plan

The potential of *Centres* to support various levels of commercial office growth outside of the *Downtown* is important as emphasized in Section 2.2.2 of the Official Plan. Specifically, the Official Plan preamble text describes North York Centre as a "major concentration of commercial office space where businesses benefit from excellent transit service to the *Downtown* core as well as from good highway access. It should continue to grow as an important commercial office location". The Official Plan policies emphasize the priority of creating a positive climate for economic growth and commercial office development in *Centres.*

Section 3.5.1 Creating a Strong and Diverse Civic Economy includes policies that emphasize providing locations for the retail, commercial, and institutional sectors to meet the needs of our city and region's growing population, through policies 3.5.1.1 a) through j) such as:

- Contributing to a broad range of stable full-time employment opportunities for all Torontonians;
- Attracting new and expanding employment clusters that are important to Toronto's competitive advantage;
- Offering sites for new businesses, including national and international businesses;
- Providing incubation space for new start-up firms and businesses;
- Providing support programs for equity-seeking groups so they have access to employment opportunities;
- Recognizing non-traditional employment areas, through regulations and policies that can support these activities;
- Providing locations and opportunities for new retail and service establishments with a focus on the cultural sector as a core component of our civic economy;
- Reducing the need for long-distance commuting and promoting transit, walking, and cycling to work;
- Balancing growth of jobs with growth of housing; and
- Maintaining, improving, and extending key infrastructure (roads, public transit, water and sewer lines, etc.) to support employment needs.

The Official Plan acknowledges the need to grow and support the employment base of the city, in tandem with supporting residential growth. It sets good groundwork for an updated Secondary Plan, including representing different forms of employment and a focus on equitable access to employment opportunities.

Acknowledging the evolution of retail over time in Toronto, Section 3.5.3 The Future of Retailing provides flexibility for owners and operators of retail properties to adapt to changing circumstances. Retail is a core component of the Centre today that contributes to the vibrancy of this neighbourhood. Requirements related to retail – in all forms from main street retail to shopping centres – include:

- Permitting a broad range of shopping opportunities for local residents and employees;

- Supporting retail that attracts tourists (e.g., within the Greater Toronto Area);
- Supporting effective business associations;
- Supporting retail that promotes pedestrian and transit use;
- Encouraging the sale of fresh food in areas currently lacking pedestrian access to fresh food;
- Developing compatible (in type, form, and density) retail within the existing and planned contexts of an area;
- Providing more intensive formats of retail;
- Integrating street related retail at the base of larger developments that include a fine grain of entrances and/or articulation of storefronts, especially along streets adjacent to higher order transit within Centres;
- Responding to the trend and growth of e-commerce through incorporating parcel delivery and pick-up spaces;
- Replacing retail spaces required to serve the daily needs of the local community, in the context of when applications propose the redevelopment of retail uses that serve that function;
- Encouraging local opportunities for small businesses through maximum store or commercial unit size and maximum first-storey heights through instruments like zoning regulations (considering characteristics like the prevailing sizes of existing stores and commercial units in the area, impacts of the surrounding shopping area, local needs like day-to-day convenience, and an assessment of vacancies); and
- Promoting street related retail on large sites through:
    - Streets, lanes, and driveways that break up large sites;
    - Safe and comfortable pedestrian connections between retail stores, parking, and public sidewalks around the site or on adjacent sites;
    - Development that frames and supports the public realm; and
    - Facilitating the continuation of retail and service uses through the phasing of redevelopment where appropriate.

The Official Plan retail policies define retail uses and recognize the role of businesses in responding to everyday local needs. An updated Secondary Plan can help create flexibility for new retail while preserving the rich retail landscapes that make North York Centre unique today.

The North York Centre Secondary Plan

The NYCSP identifies North York Centre South as the primary location for office, with generally higher densities and a greater concentration of commercial uses compared to North York Centre North (1.9). Official Plan policies for *Mixed Use Areas A* and *B* are reflected in the Secondary Plan's focus on commercial uses in North York Centre South. Within North York Centre North, large places of employment are to be located in proximity to arterial roads and transit, largely concentrated at the intersection of Yonge Street and Finch Avenue (2.2.1).

Map 8-2 of the Secondary Plan identifies a Prime Frontage Area along Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue, and Finch Avenue where at-grade street-related narrow frontage retail uses are required (1.16). Below-grade and internalized retail uses are discouraged. Outside of the Prime Frontage Area, street-related retail and service commercial uses are encouraged along arterial roads and along local roads in the immediate vicinity of arterial roads (2.1.3).

The Secondary Plan currently includes specific density incentives regarding office and retail uses, such as incentives for major office developments connected to transit terminals and street-related retail. Details of the density incentives from the

Secondary Plan are summarized in Section 4.2 of this report.

Yonge Street

Retail and office uses are core ingredients to the role and character of Yonge Street. Policies for Yonge Street within 5.3.2 state:

- Retail commercial is encouraged along Yonge Street to reflect the primacy of this corridor as the spine of the centre;
- Entrances at-grade with windows that allow views of and form the street are encouraged;
- Uses are encouraged to wrap around onto side streets, maintaining the ground orientation;
- Each retail store fronting on Yonge Street will have an entrance from Yonge Street;
- Individual retail/service commercial store front along Yonge Street is restricted to a maximum width of 14 metres; and
- Office and residential entrance lobbies along Yonge Street is restricted to a maximum width of 6 metres.

Sheppard and Finch Avenues

Along Sheppard and Finch Avenues, policies under Section 5.3.3 of the Secondary Plan require:

- Individual retail/service commercial storefronts to be restricted to a maximum width of 14 metres; and
- Office and residential entrance lobbies to be restricted to a maximum width of 6 metres.

Lessons From Other Secondary Plans

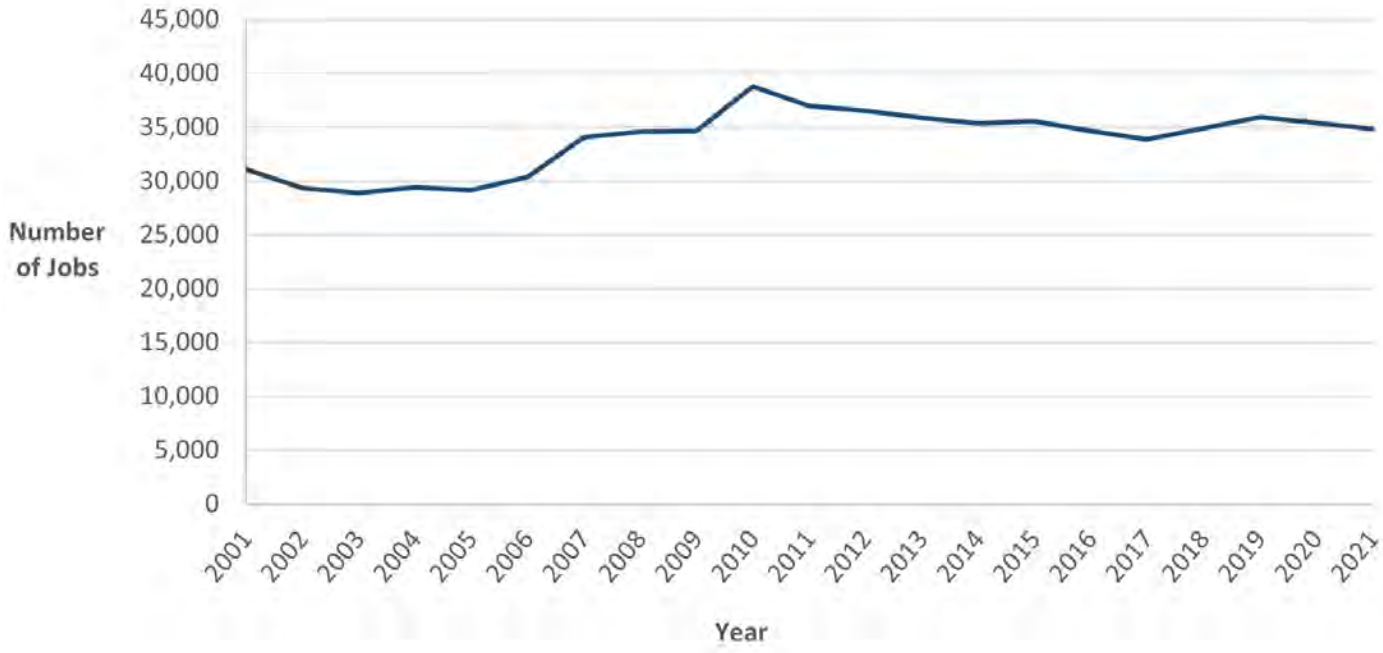
The Yonge Street North Secondary Plan identifies Yonge Street, Steeles Avenue West and Cummer Avenue/Drewry Avenue as a "Prime Pedestrian Area." Policies for the Prime Pedestrian Area in the Yonge Street North Secondary Plan are less prescriptive than those for the Prime Frontage Area in the current NYCSP (e.g., there is no maximum unit width). Street-related retail and community-related uses at grade are required on Yonge Street and encouraged on Steeles Avenue, Cummer Avenue and Drewry Avenue.

Existing and Planned Conditions

The following presents existing and planned conditions in the Centre related to number of jobs in the Centre, amount of office and retail space, the distribution and density of retail space, and retail usage patterns.

Employment In North York Centre

The Centre has the largest concentration of employment in Toronto outside of the *Downtown.* As of 2021, the Toronto Employment Survey (TES) reported just over 34,800 jobs in the Centre, with full time jobs accounting for 86% of the total. The number of jobs in the Centre grew by just over 3,700 (12%) between 2001 and 2021 (**Figure 5-39**). Much of the growth occurred earlier on, reaching a peak of nearly 38,800 jobs in 2010 before declining slightly and stabilizing around 35,000 for the bulk of the past decade.

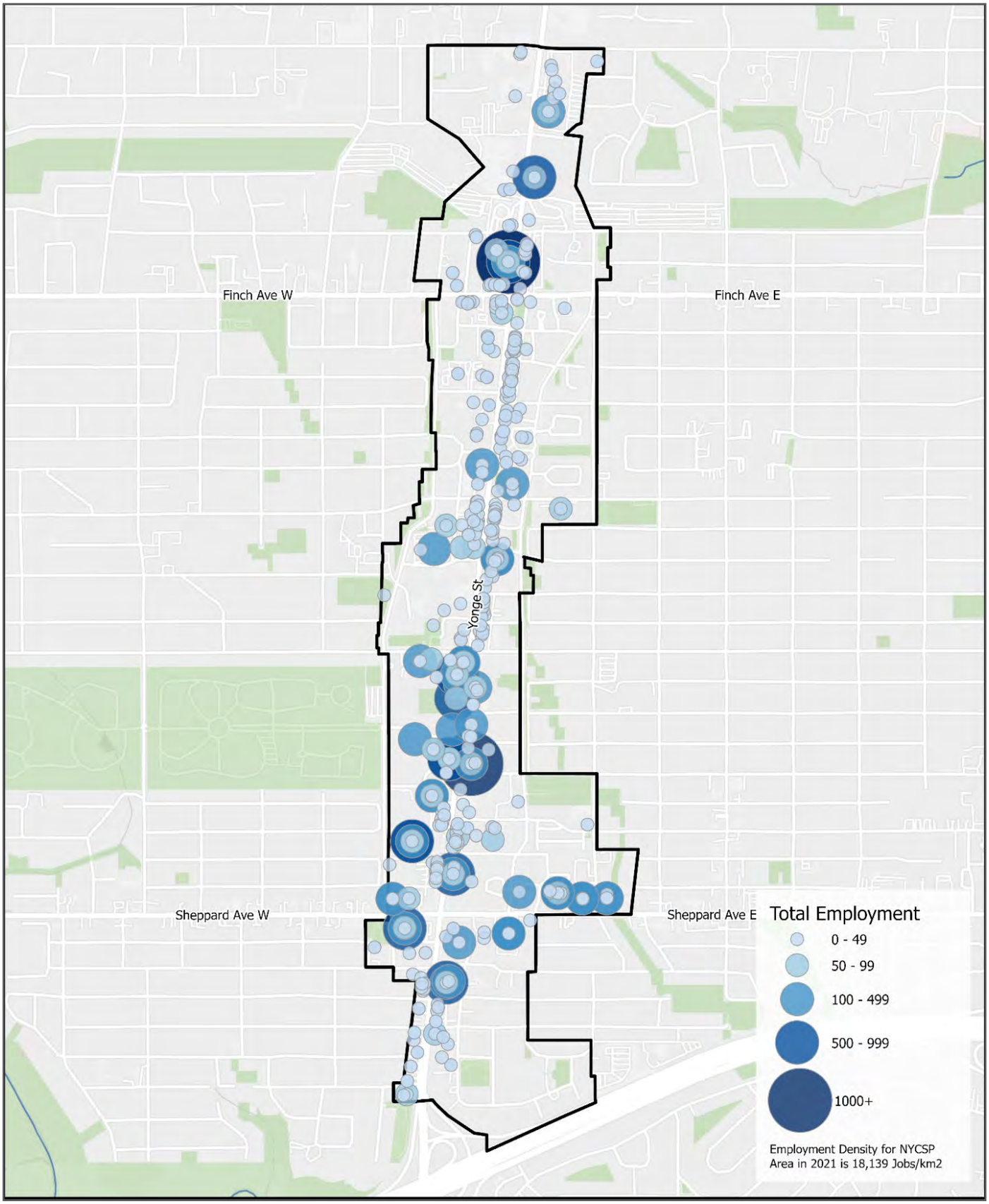


(Source: Toronto Employment Survey, 2021)

Figure 5-39: Total Employment in the Centre

In comparison to the three other *Centres* outside of *Downtown* (i.e., Scarborough, Etobicoke, and Yonge-Eglinton), North York Centre has more than twice as many jobs as the centre with the next largest employment concentration (Yonge-Eglinton Centre). The Centre, along with Scarborough Centre and Yonge-Eglinton Centre, experienced a slight decrease in employment over the past decade, while Etobicoke Centre experienced a slight increase.

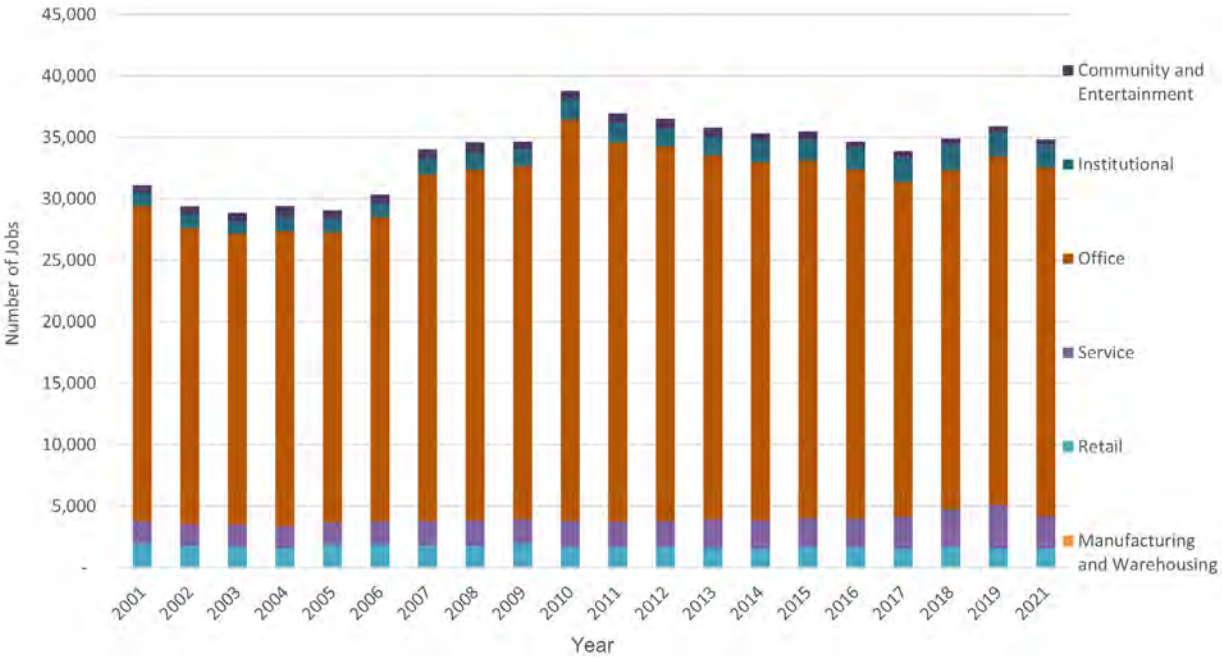
Jobs in the Centre are primarily situated along Yonge Street, with a higher concentration between Sheppard Avenue and Park Home / Empress Avenue where significant developments such as the North York Civic Centre and shopping mall are located (**Figure 5-40**). This translates to a job density of more than 18,000 jobs per square kilometre, or 180 jobs per hectare.



(Source: Toronto Employment Survey, 2021)

Figure 5-40: Job Density

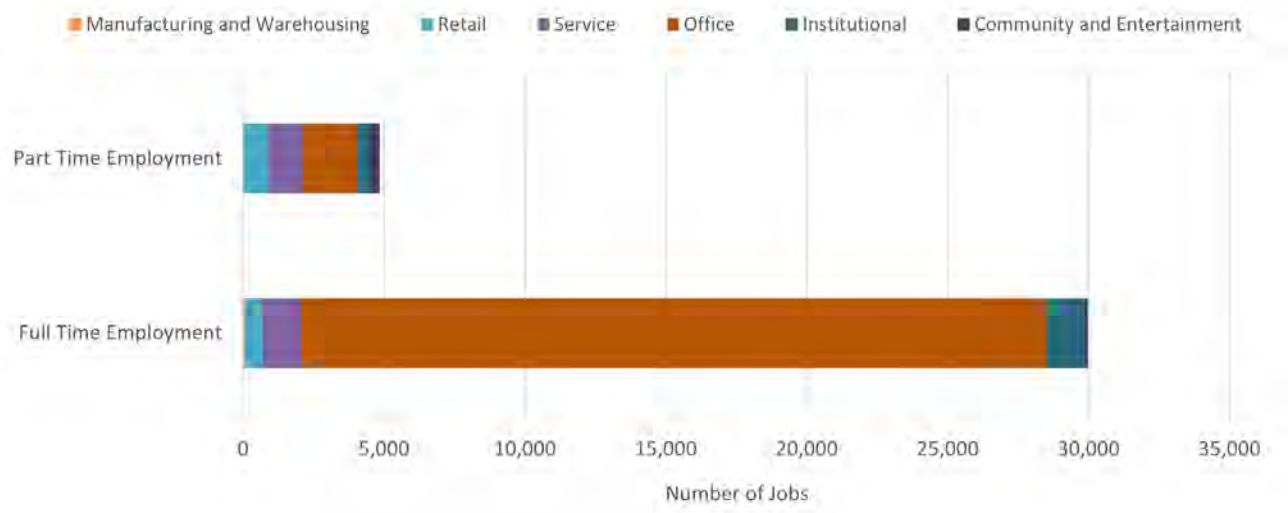
As defined by the TES land use categories, the vast majority of jobs in the Centre are classified as 'office' at more than 81%. In real numbers, there were 26,447 full-time and 1,933 part-time office jobs reported in 2021 (**Figure 5-41**). The sectors providing the next largest proportion of jobs according to these categories are 'service' (8%), 'institutional' (5%), and 'retail' (4%). Office jobs have been declining overall and as a percentage of all jobs over the past decade, with the decline partially offset by growth in service and institutional jobs.



(Source: Toronto Employment Survey, 2021)

Figure 5-41: Total Jobs by Sector in the Centre

While the breakdown of jobs by sector in **Figure 5-42** combines full-time and part-time jobs, separating the two reveals a greater prominence of categories beyond 'office' for part time workers. Although 'office' still represented the greatest proportion of part time jobs at 40%, 'service' and 'retail' were also prominent at approximately 26% and 18% respectively.



(Source: Toronto Employment Survey, 2021)

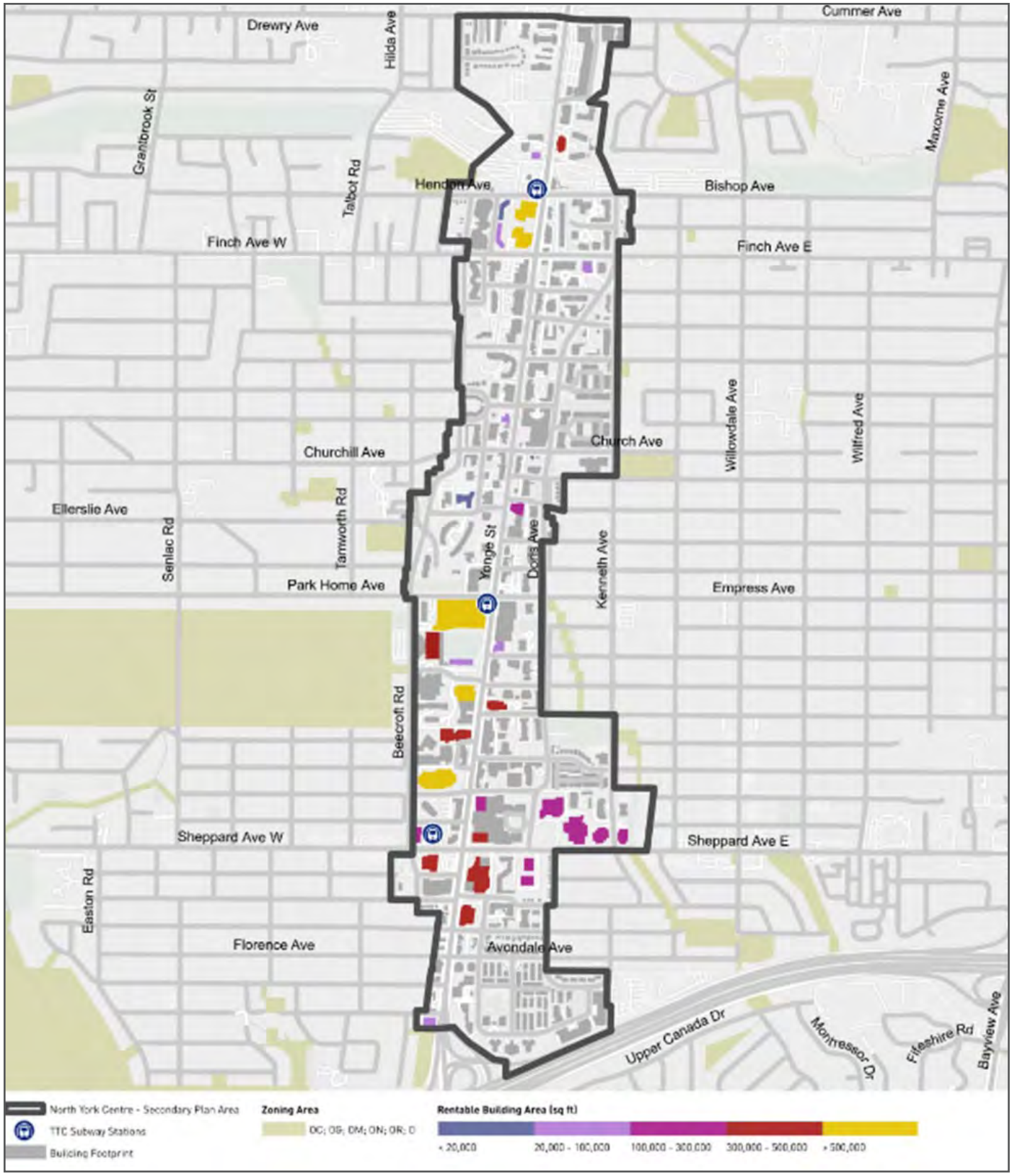
Figure 5-42: Full Time and Part Time Jobs by Sector in North York Centre

The City has initiated an Office Space Needs Study, which analyzes Toronto's office market trends to understand the opportunities and challenges of converting office spaces to alternative uses and forming strategies to address short- and long-term office space needs. Additionally, a Non-Residential Study is being undertaken for North York Centre to understand the current state of employment in the Centre and trends for the future. The following is a summary of the findings from the Non-Residential Study, prepared by Urban Systems, B&A Studios, and Sajecki Planning, in relation to office and retail markets.

Office

The high number of office-related jobs are supported by a large supply of office space in the Centre. Historically, the development of office space in the Centre has been prompted by various factors, in concert with the development of municipal and federal office buildings in the area, the former Borough of North York's favourable office development policies to create its own city centre, and the complementary efforts of the former Metropolitan Toronto government to decentralize office development. More recently, growth in office space has been bolstered by Toronto's Official Plan, which, outside of the *Downtown* and *Central Waterfront*, directs office growth to Centres like North York Centre (and, in particular, encourages development of large freestanding office buildings).

An inventory undertaken for the Non-Residential Study found that the Centre has approximately 8.98 million square feet of Rentable Building Area (RBA) for office use. The RBA is spread across 36 buildings, as shown in **Figure 5-43**.



(Source: Urban Systems)

Figure 5-43: Rentable Building Area in North York Centre

Office space in the Centre has been broken out into market classes 'A', 'B' and 'C' which have the following characteristics:

- **Class A:** The most desirable office properties with high quality finishes, abundant amenities and first-rate maintenance and management. These spaces tend to be newer (built in the past 10 years) or to have recently gone through significant retrofits. They are generally located in highly accessible and visible locations. They attract prestigious tenants who pay above average rents.
- **Class B:** These properties typically offer more utilitarian space without special attractions. They appeal to a wide range of tenants who pay average rents.
- **Class C:** These properties are generally older buildings that offer basic space. Building systems are often sub-standard and poorly maintained. They attract tenants based on lower rents.

Table 5-7 provides a summary of the inventory of office space by building class including vacancy and availability. Vacancy is a standard indicator of overall office market performance measured by how much square footage is not leased. Availability rates represent space that is actively on the market via lease, sublease or sale.

Table 5-7: Summary of North York Centre Office Space by Classification (October 2023)

Class	Buildings	Rentable Buildings Area (SF)	Market Rent (SF/YR)	Vacant Space (SF)	Vacancy (%)	Available Space (SF)	Available (%)
A	8	3,632,531	$43.20	700,205	19.3%	1,289,257	35.5%
B	21	4,630,540	$38.79	573,479	12.4%	856,746	18.5%
C	7	716,420	$34.40	-	0%	-	0%
Total	**36**	**8,979,491**	**$40.26**	**1,273,684**	**14.2%**	**2,146,003**	**23.9%**

(Source: Urban Systems, using data from CoStar)

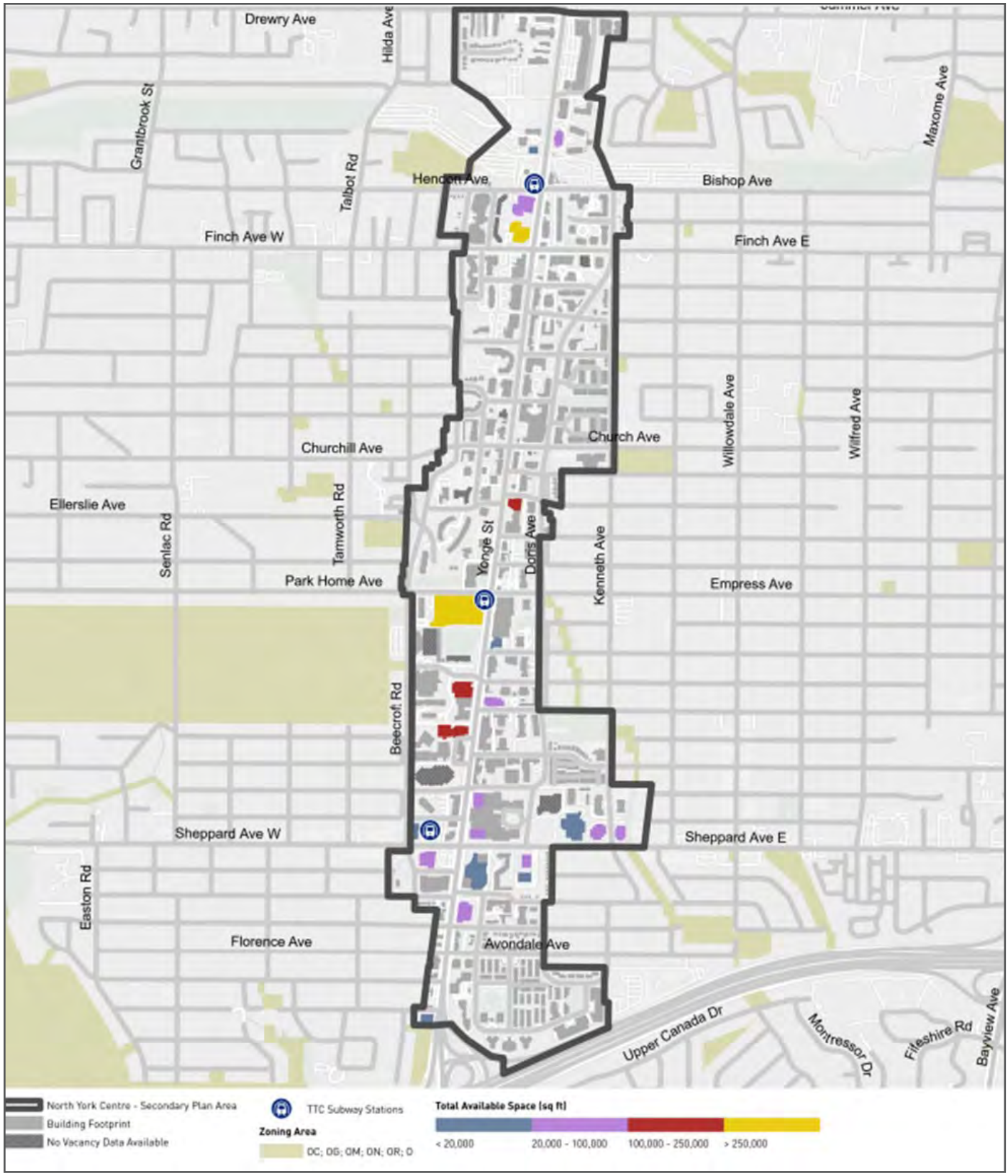
Class A space has the highest vacancy rate and availability rate in the Centre, though the availability rate is somewhat inflated by a single building; excluding this building brings the Class-wide availability from 35.5% down to 25.0%. The vacancy rate for Class A is 19.3%. These rates indicate that the Centre is struggling to attract the premier office tenants and larger employers that typically occupy Class A space. This is likely the result of multiple factors, including the impact of work-from-home and hybrid work arrangements and a competitive disadvantage for the Centre when compared to more desirable office nodes in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Class B is the predominant class of office in the area with 51% of the total supply. Though availability and vacancy rates are lower than for Class A, at 18.5% and 12.4%, respectively, they are still considered high for any office sub-market. These spaces can be an opportunity to house community organizations.

Class C buildings occupy the smallest total amount of office space in the Centre, comprising only 8% of the total supply. Most buildings are government-owned and used for civic institutional functions or are composed primarily of stratified owner operated spaces. This can be an opportunity for community

services and facilities, as affordable locations for human service agencies or other local organizations. Class C spaces tend to be fairly stable; however, rental and occupancy data is limited as they are rarely put out on the open market.

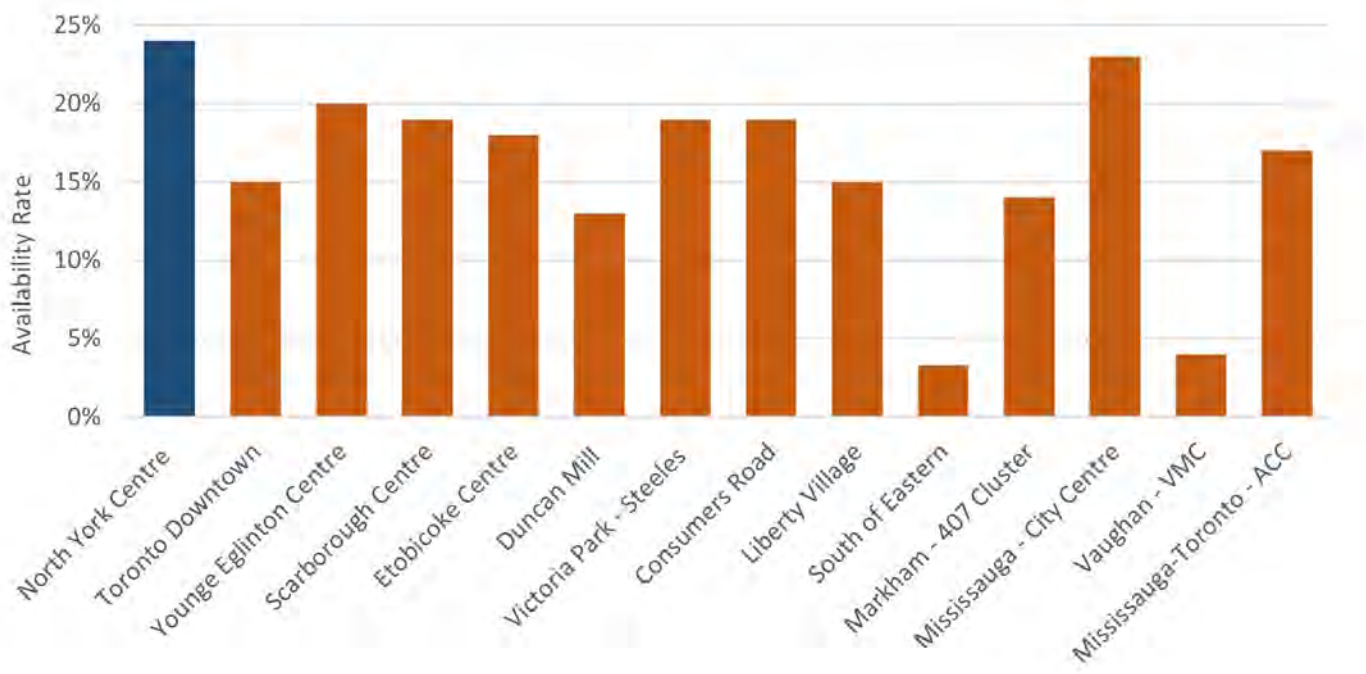
The most significant concentrations of available office space supply are found in larger Class A and B buildings located further north along the Yonge Street corridor towards the North York Centre station and Finch station as shown in **Figure 5-44**. The concentration of mid-sized office buildings near Sheppard-Yonge station and along Sheppard Avenue have comparatively lower supplies of available space. This location may be more desirable due to its close proximity to transit and Highway 401; thus, this area should be protected for office use.



(Source: Urban Systems)

Figure 5-44: Available Space by Building in North York Centre

When compared to other office submarkets in the GTA, the North York Centre submarket has the highest concentration of available space at just below 24% (**Figure 5-45**). At a larger scale, availability rates also remain high in other comparable North American office markets, as users continue to reassess their space needs following the COVID-19 pandemic and shift towards hybrid and work-from-home employment arrangements.



(Source: Urban Systems, using data from CoStar)

Figure 5-45: Availability Rate for Key Office Clusters in the GTA (December 2023)

Retail

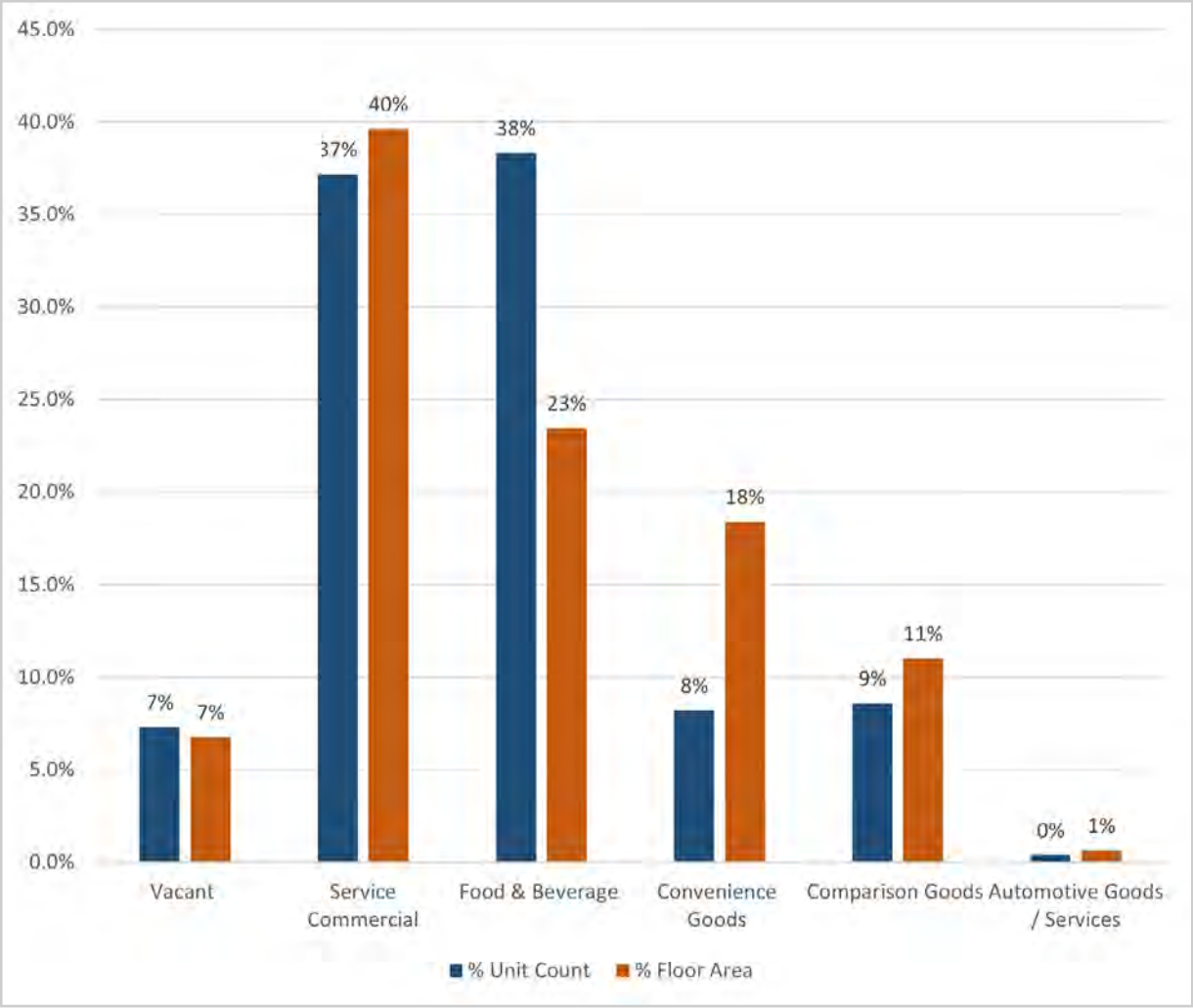
The Centre has nearly 1.5 million square feet of combined retail floor area (composed of retail, service commercial and restaurant uses), distributed across 784 storefronts. This retail serves the day-to-day needs of the local resident and office population as well as residents in the surrounding area and beyond. The Centre has a unique and highly robust, eclectic offering of restaurants and array of personal, professional and health services. The following analysis of the overall retail market in the Centre is complemented by an analysis of ground floor retail from a built form perspective in **Section 5.8** of this report.

A summary of the findings of the retail inventory undertaken for the Non-Residential Study Current Conditions Report is presented in **Table 5-8**.

Table 5-8: North York Centre Retail Inventory

Retail	Floor Area Total (sq. ft.)	Unit Count Total	Average Floor Area (sq. ft.)
Automotive Goods / Services	9,472	3	3,157
Comparison Goods (e.g., clothing, electronics, home furnishings)	159,373	66	2,415
Convenience Goods (e.g., grocery, health and personal care, liquor)	271,338	64	4,240
Food and Beverage	344,975	299	1,707
Service Commercial (e.g., educational, entertainment, health)	587,112	291	2,016
Vacant	100,196	61	1,643
Total	**1,472,466**	**784**	**1,877**

Convenience retail, and particularly supermarkets and other grocery stores, have a notable presence in the Centre. There are 11 grocery stores, ranging in size from under 2,000 square feet to 40,000 square feet, accounting for 59% of convenience floor space area. The large discrepancy in convenience goods as a percentage of total floor space versus total units (**Figure 5-46**) is a function of the larger size of grocery stores compared to other types of retail units.



(Source: Urban Systems)

Figure 5-46: Retail Categories in North York Centre as a Proportion of Total Retail Floor Area and Unit Counts

Retail vacancy in the Centre is just under 7% on a floor area basis and under 8% on a unit count basis. This is at the higher end of a 'healthy' vacancy rate range, which is typically considered 5-7%. If vacant spaces at the North York Centre Mall are removed from the inventory, overall vacancy for the Centre falls to only 5% on a floor area basis, and 5.8% on a unit count basis.

Distribution of Retail

Figure 5-47 illustrates the distribution and density of retail establishments within the study area. Yonge Street is an established retail corridor, and retail activity extends along Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue. The highest concentration of retail is observed at the intersection of Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue, particularly on the northeast corner, due to the presence of retail businesses in the podium and underground levels of the mixed-use towers surrounding the intersection. Higher concentrations of retail establishments are also located near Empress Walk Mall.

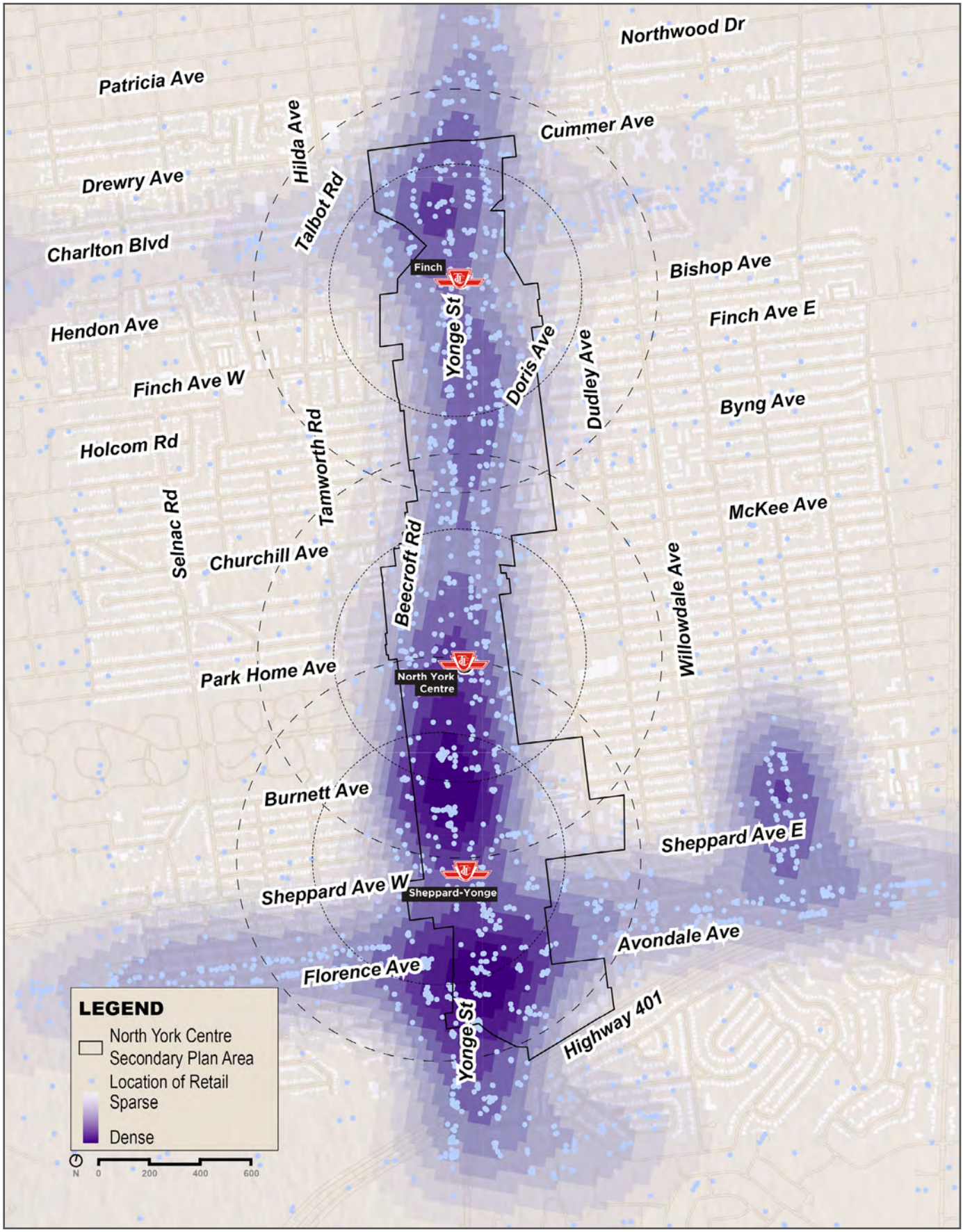


Figure 5-47: Retail Heatmap Showing Location and Concentration of Retail within North York Centre

Retail by Sub-Area (North vs. South)

The retail character and mix of North York Centre is quite distinct North vs. South. While the overall distribution of retail storefronts is slightly biased to the South (57%) versus the North (43%) (Figure 5-4**8**), the floor area distribution is notably Southern-focused (73% vs. 27%) (**Figure 5-49**). The South is also home to larger-scale enclosed shopping centres such as Hullmark Centre and Yonge Sheppard Centre, and contains the majority of the larger grocery stores (Loblaws, Whole Foods, Longo's and Food Basics in the South, vs. Metro in the North).

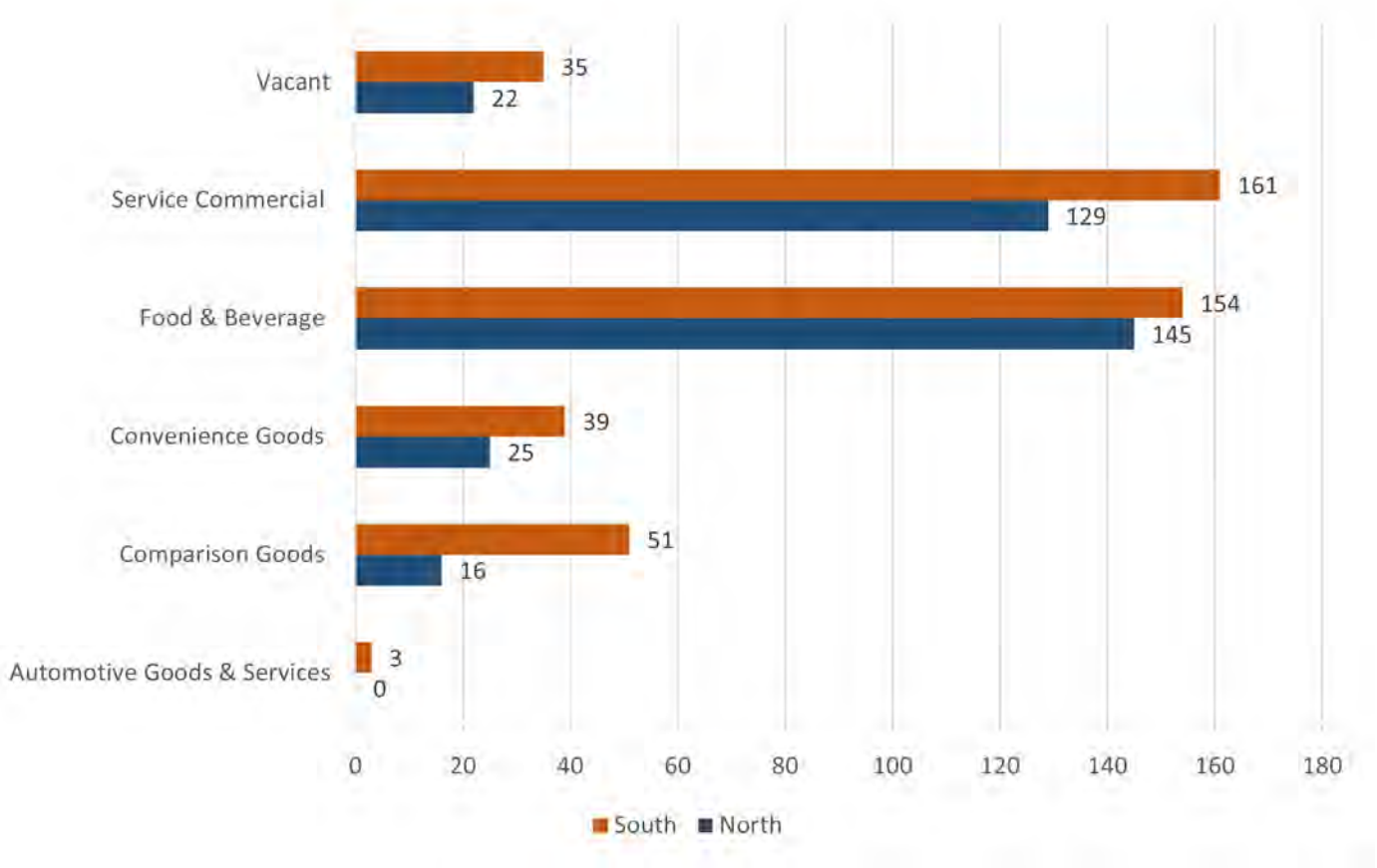


Figure 5-48: Unit Count by Category, North vs. South

The South has 2.5 times the retail floor space of the North, but only has 30% more businesses. The average business size in the South is over 2,400 square feet, while in the North it is approximately 1,200 square feet. The North also has an outsized proportion of the Study Area's inventory of Food & Beverage and Service Commercial businesses (48% and 44%, respectively) despite considerably less floor area (40% and 29%).

- **Comparison Goods:** This category is almost entirely represented in the South, which houses 92% of the category's floor area and 76% of its businesses.
- **Convenience Goods:** 79% of floor area and 61% of businesses are in the South; the substantially larger average business size for convenience retail in the South (5,476 vs. 2,312 square feet) is primarily due to the presence of larger supermarkets.

- The South is home to nearly 124,000 square feet of retail grocery, including the four major supermarkets (Whole Foods, Longo's, Loblaws, Food Basics).
- Retail grocery offerings in the North are quite limited, at only 35,000 combined square feet. Most of this floor area is contained within the Metro supermarket at 20 Church Avenue; the balance is distributed across three other grocers of 3500 square feet or less (Joy Mart and two H-Marts).

- **Food & Beverage:** The North stands out from a Food & Beverage offerings perspective. The distribution of floor space in this category is relatively balanced (48% north, 52% south). However, the unit count is more heavily weighted to the South (60% vs. 40%). There are many small, culturally diverse independent restaurateurs in the North. Average floor area is 945 square feet in the north and 1,356 square feet in the south.
- **Service Commercial:** Under 30% of floor space, but approximately 44% of units in this category are located in the northern part of the Study Area.
  - On a unit count basis, both the North and South show a service commercial balance weighted towards personal services and health services.
  - Personal services have an equal absolute presence in the two halves of the Study Area, while Health services are more prominent in the South.
  - On a floor area basis, Entertainment and Recreation stands out for its presence in the South vs. the North; this is due to the presence of the Cineplex theatre and four large commercial gyms.

- **Vacancy:** Vacancy rates are nearly equal in North and South on a floor area basis (6.7% vs. 6.8%), and slightly higher in the South vs. North on a unit count basis (7.9% vs. 6.5%). On either a unit count or floor area basis, vacancy rates in each half of the Study Area can be considered relatively healthy. Many of the vacancies in the Study Area are in the indoor or underground commercial spaces. In the South, a large portion of vacant space is located within North York Centre mall. Notably, two additional vacancies have been added to this inventory since completion of the survey, based on spot checks conducted as part of the post-inventory categorization process.

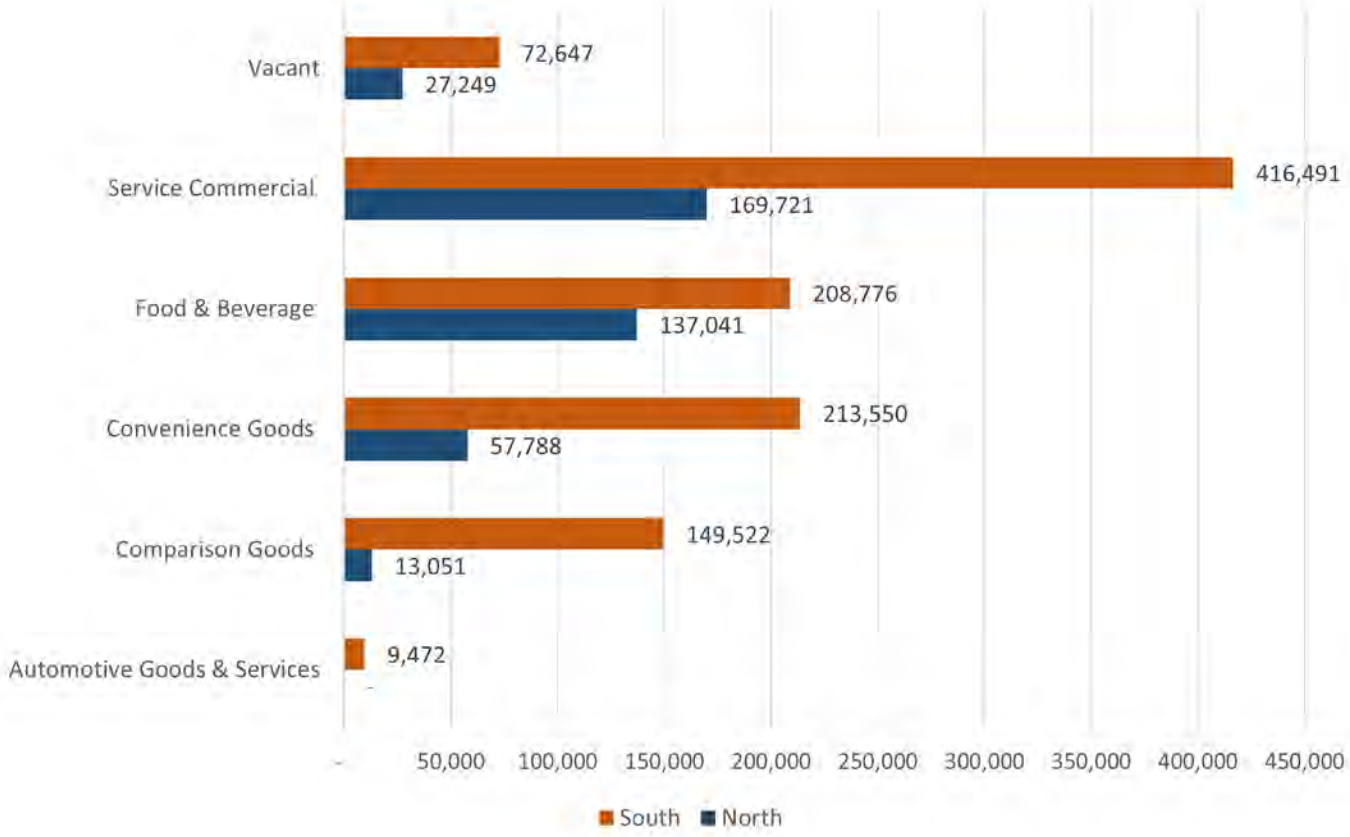


Figure 5-49: Floor Area (Square feet) by Category, North vs. South

Retail Usage Patterns

Most visits to retail locations in the Centre are attributable to residents who live within the Centre. According to the 2022 human movement data, residents account for nearly 72% of retail visits throughout the year versus 28% for non-residents. If the data is filtered to account only for usage of retail space outside of normal business hours (i.e., evenings and weekends), this pattern is more pronounced: 79% of retail visits are from residents, 21% are from non-residents. This pattern becomes somewhat less pronounced when focusing only on weekday business hours, likely due to the combined influence of residents leaving the Centre to work elsewhere and inbound commuters shopping and dining during the workday. Retail hotspots differ slightly between residents and non-residents, with more focus on transit stations and major retail hubs like the Yonge Sheppard Centre among non-residents.

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- As of 2021, the Toronto Employment Survey (TES) reported just over 34,800 jobs in the Centre, with full time jobs accounting for 86% of the total.
- An inventory undertaken for the Non-Residential Study found that the Centre has approximately 8.98 million square feet of Rentable Building Area (RBA) for office use within 36 buildings.
- The office vacancy rate in the Centre is high at just below 24%. This is the highest of any office submarket in the GTA.
- The Centre has nearly 1.5 million square feet of combined retail floor area (composed of retail, service commercial and restaurant uses), distributed across 784 storefronts.
- The retail character differs in the north and south of the Study Area. The north is characterized by more, smaller retail establishments while the south is characterized by larger retail establishments and enclosed shopping centres.
- Retail vacancies are slightly lower in the north (5-7%) than in the south (7-10%), both on a floor area and unit count basis.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- The Centre has the largest concentration of employment in Toronto outside of the *Downtown*. Job numbers have remained relatively stable for the past decade.
- The Centre has a unique and highly robust and eclectic offering of restaurants and array of personal, professional and health services. It is a well-regarded and known hub for hospitality and dining, particularly multicultural food offerings.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

- The convergence of high vacancy rates and availability rates in the Centre, juxtaposed with its mid-range market rent costs suggest a challenge to the office growth prospects in the area. The surplus of available office spaces may be difficult to fill in the near term given the competition and available space offered by regional competitors. Rethinking the role of office in the Centre's non-residential mix – both existing office space and requirements for non-residential space going forward – will be a key topic for North York at the Centre.
- There is an opportunity to expand retail square footage in the north to a level more comparable to the south of the Study Area as more development takes place there. At the same time, maintaining the vibrant, small-scale nature of the retail as many older retail plazas in the north redevelop will be a challenge.
- North York at the Centre should explore how non-residential uses other than office and retail could contribute to maintaining a healthy employment population in the area. Building on the presence of hotel uses could be a strategy for promoting the Centre as a destination.

5.4 Community Services and Facilities

Community Services and Facilities (CS&F) are publicly accessible, non-profit facilities and places where City Divisions, Agencies and Boards deliver programs and services such as public libraries, childcare and recreation centres, public schools and human services. CS&F contribute to the social, economic, and cultural development of the city and are vital in supporting livable communities. They support a strong network of programs and services that are essential to building community capacity as well as fostering complete communities.

The Official Plan identifies CS&F as an essential part of the City's social infrastructure, which is as vital to people's wellbeing as hard services like sewers, water, roads and transit. Ensuring that provision of CS&F meets both current and future community needs is fundamental in planning for new growth and development in the Centre.

As part of North York at the Centre, a Community Services and Facilities Strategy is being prepared and will identify current and projected needs, priorities and opportunities for the provision of community services and facilities, including for child care, EarlyON Child and Family Centres, schools, libraries, recreation facilities and human services. The CS&F Study Area comprises lands generally bounded by Steeles Avenue to the north, Highway 401 to the south, Bathurst Street to the west, and Bayview Avenue to the east. The CS&F Study Area will be considered as part of the North York Centre Secondary Plan.

Policy

Provincial Policy

Planning Act

Section 37 of the *Planning Act* enables municipalities to impose a Community Benefits Charge (CBC) at the time of approving development applications. The current provisions related to the CBC came into effect through Bill 197, the *COVID-19 Recovery Act*, 2020. This framework replaces former Section 37 policies regarding density bonusing and community benefits, which were negotiated on a site-specific basis. The new CBC provisions under Section 37 of the *Planning Act* enable municipalities to collect the CBC from new developments with five or more storeys and 10 or more residential units. Funds from the Community Benefits Charge are capped at 4% of the value of the land and may be used to fund projects such as community hubs, cultural centres, human services agency spaces, as identified in the City's CBC Strategy and CBC By-law.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The PPS provides policy direction to municipalities to coordinate the delivery of infrastructure and public service facilities with land use planning and growth management strategies. Section 1.6 states that public service facilities are to be provided in an efficient manner that prepares for the impacts of climate change while also accommodating projected needs. Furthermore, planning for public service facilities shall be coordinated and integrated with land use planning so that they are financially viable over their life cycle and available to meet current and future needs.

Section 1.6.3 notes that before consideration is given to developing new infrastructure and public service facilities:

- The use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities should be optimized; and
- Opportunities for adaptive re-use should be considered, wherever feasible.

Furthermore, section 1.6.4 provides direction that public service facilities should be strategically located to support the effective and efficient delivery of emergency management services, and to ensure the protection of public health and safety in accordance with the policies in Section 3.0: Protecting Public Health and Safety. Section 1.6.5 indicates that

public service facilities should be co-located in community hubs, where appropriate, to promote cost-effectiveness and facilitate service integration, access to transit and active transportation.

The PPS is proposed to be replaced by the Provincial Planning Statement. The draft Provincial Planning Statement released by the Province in April, 2024 includes similar direction in relation to public service facilities.

A Place to Grow: Growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

Section 3.1 of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020 (Growth Plan) directs that investment in public service facilities, including long-term care facilities, hospitals, libraries and schools is required to have appropriate infrastructure to support growth,. These facilities should be planned and located to support the development of complete communities, co-locating facilities in community hubs and prioritizing strategic growth areas.

Section 3.2.8 of the Growth Plan provides the following direction for public service facilities:

- Planning for public service facilities, land use planning and investment in public service facilities will be co-ordinated to implement this Plan.
- Public service facilities and public services should be co-located in community hubs and integrated to promote cost-effectiveness.
- Priority should be given to maintaining and adapting existing public service facilities and spaces as community hubs to meet the needs of the community and optimize the long-term viability of public investments.
- Existing public service facilities that are located in or near strategic growth areas and are easily accessible by active transportation and transit, where that service is available, should be the preferred location for community hubs.
- Municipalities will collaborate and consult with service planning, funding, and delivery sectors to facilitate the co-ordination and planning of community hubs and other public service facilities.
- New public service facilities, including hospitals and schools, should be located in settlement areas and preference should be given to sites that are easily accessible by active transportation and transit, where that service is available.

Toronto Official Plan

The Toronto Official Plan includes policies for the planning of community services and facilities to ensure the health and well-being of its residents. Planning for community services and facilities in areas that are experiencing significant growth is recognized as essential to the success of those areas as hard services like roads and sewers.

Section 2.2.2 of the Official Plan establishes requirements for Secondary Plans for areas identified as Centres on Map 2 Urban Structure. This includes a requirement to identify future public investment in community facilities and local amenities to support population and employment growth.

Section 3.2.2 of the Official Plan provides direction on equitable and adequate access to community services and facilities by:

- Providing and preserving local community service facilities;
- Improving and expanding local community service facilities in established neighbourhoods that are poorly served;
- Ensuring that an appropriate range of community services and facilities.

Policy 3.2.2.2 indicates surplus schools shall be kept for community service purposes where the need has been identified as a priority and where not feasible that alternate uses of closed schools are to be compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood, while continuing to provide residents with school playgrounds and playing fields.

Policy 3.2.2.3 speaks to encouraging shared use of multi-service facilities, including municipal and/or school facilities, places of worship and lands for community service purposes. Other uses on school sites, including other community service facilities, residential units, or office space, is permitted provided all uses can be accommodated.

Policy 3.2.2.4 indicates that schools are an integral community resource that serve as learning institutions as well as socio-cultural centres and a source of community open space. The City encourages and promotes shared use of schools, parks, and public open spaces. Additionally, the City would consider acquiring publicly owned school sites for parks and open space purposes, should they not be needed for learning.

Policy 3.2.2.5 provides that areas experiencing major growth or change will be informed through the preparation of a community services strategy that includes:

- A demographic profile of area residents;
- An inventory of existing services within the area, or readily accessible to area residents;
- Identification of existing capacity and service gaps in local facilities;
- Identification of local priorities;
- Recommended range of services and co-location opportunities; and
- Identification of funding strategies, including but not limited to, funds secured through the development approvals process, the City's capital and operating budgets and public/private partnerships

Policies 3.2.2.6 and 3.2.2.7 speak to community service strategies and implementation requirements for residential or mixed-use sites larger than 5 hectares and all new neighbourhoods, and that community service facilities will be encouraged in all significant private sector developments.

North York Centre Secondary Plan

Section 7.1 of the North York Centre Secondary Plan (NYCSP) includes provisions to encourage adequate community facilities to serve the residents in the Centre, while monitoring the appropriateness of community facilities as development proceeds. The policies state that development proposals will be monitored to assess their anticipated impact on existing and proposed community facilities, including schools.

Section 7.4 provides policy direction on schools within the Centre. The Secondary Plan indicates that adequate school facilities should be made available to meet the demands of new residential development. The Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board are to be consulted on new development applications, such as rezoning applications, to assess the impact of development on the existing and proposed school facilities and determine if any additional school facilities be required. Section 7.4 also provides that the City or private developer, may support adequate school facilities in the Centre and adjacent areas through the use of density incentives, density transfers and joint facilities with the school boards. As per the *Planning Act*, density incentives are no longer permitted. The Toronto District School Board is encouraged to locate a school site of 12,000-20,000m^2 in the area south of Sheppard Avenue.

Plans and Strategies

Newcomer Strategy

The Newcomer Strategy is a framework and roadmap for achieving a greater impact for newcomer success. It envisions the City as a leader in providing newcomers equitable access to municipal programs and services. The Strategy guides the City as it intensifies its efforts to plan for programs and services that are accessible to newcomers and help to improve their lives. For example, the Strategy prioritizes preparation and implementation of newcomer access plans for programs and services, with a high impact on newcomer wellbeing.

The Centre is home to a high proportion of newcomers, with 80% of its population comprising newcomers in 2021 compared to 50% in Toronto overall. Engaging newcomers on the future of their community and building a framework for the Centre's growth promotes newcomer success will be an important part of North York at the Centre.

Youth Equity Strategy

The Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (2014) identifies 28 key issues faced by youth most vulnerable to involvement in violence and crime that the City and its partners must address.

Several of the key issues identified in the Youth Equity Strategy are relevant to North York at the Centre and can be addressed through the Community Services and Facilities Strategy, including access to housing, access to services and access to safe spaces.

Toronto Licensed Child Care Growth Strategy (2017-2026)

The City of Toronto prepared the Toronto Licensed Child Care Growth Strategy (TLCCGS) in 2017 as a 10-year plan and vision for how to provide child care options for families with children between 0-4 years old that are affordable and of high quality. The vision for the TLCCGS was to provide licenced child care spaces for 50% of children under the age of four, along with the appropriate capacity within facilities to meet demand; support the child care workforce by retaining child care professionals and ensure public investments are continuously made to keep fees for child care affordable for everyone.

The TLCCGS provides guidance on the need to reduce fees and provide subsidies for all families, and that by 2026 fees for parents would be reduced by 25-40% lower than fees in 2017. This reduction in fees is to assist in increasing demand for spaces, however, families would still require a fee subsidy to access spaces in licensed child care. The TLCCGS indicates that a phased approach is needed to provide the appropriate child care services to 2026, and that by Phase 3 (2023-2026) funding priorities will shift to provide the necessary operating grants, number of available spaces, reduced fees and at least 35,000 children will have a fee subsidy. As part of the North York Centre CS&F Strategy, the number of existing and future child care spaces will be reviewed to assess how the CS&F area is contributing to the TLCCGS growth strategy.

Toronto Public Library Facilities Master Plan (2019)

TPL's Facilities Master Plan (Toronto Public Library FMP) guides effective management and planning of capital projects. Released in 2019, the Toronto Public Library FMP identifies and prioritizes investments in Library facilities over the short, medium, and long-term. The Toronto Public Library FMP establishes a Prioritization Framework for investment to support evidence-based decision-making.

It considers operational factors and investment requirements to achieve a balance between maintenance and growth-related capital projects. Flexibility was also considered in developing the Toronto Public Library FMP to ensure that decisions can be made to adapt to unique opportunities that present themselves across the city in this high growth environment.

The 2019 Toronto Public Library FMP identified the North York Central Library Phase 2 as a horizon A priority, which has now been completed. Beyond maintaining a state of good repair at this facility, no other capital improvements have been identified for the CS&F Study Area.

> Toronto Public Library's service delivery model distinguishes between neighbourhood libraries, district libraries, research and reference libraries, and online and digital channels.

Toronto Parks And Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2019-2038 (2017)

The Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2019-2038 (Parks and Recreation FMP) establishes a vision for recreational facility provisions to meet growth. The plan guides decision-making and investment in parks and recreation facilities that are owned and or operated by the City of Toronto over the next twenty years. The Plan has three strategic goals:

- renew and upgrade existing facilities;
- address gaps and growth-related needs; and,
- work with others and explore new opportunities.

It includes direction on community recreation centres, ice facilities, outdoor aquatics, sports fields and sport courts.

The Parks and Recreation FMP identifies Newtonbook Community Recreation Centre as a planned two-storey facility near Yonge Street and Cummer Avenue. It will be a mid-sized centre 4,273 square metres (46,000 square feet) with a gymnasium, multi-purpose spaces, community kitchen and a daycare integrated into the podium of a private development. Construction is targeted to begin in 2024 and completed in 2028.

The Parks and Recreation FMP identifies several additional priorities for investment within North York and within Ward 18. These include:

- New gymnasiums as part of expanded CRCs (2): North York (site to be determined);
- Replacement of one arena facility in North York with a twin pad arena: an additional study is required to identify potential sites;
- New community level skateparks in wards 6/18 (North York); and,
- Minimum of two (2) additional skating trails through expansions to existing outdoor artificial ice rinks at locations in North York.

Future need for additional recreational facilities within the Centre will be assessed through the city-wide FMP review.

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Long-Term Accommodation Plan 2023-2024

The TDSB's Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy (LTPAS) is updated annually and identifies studies that could lead to new programs, program relocations, school closures, boundary changes, grade reorganizations, and the exploration of new capital projects. The LTPAS for 2023-2032 includes several studies that impact schools located within the CS&F Study Area, including a future study to explore additional secondary school capacity in the area. The LTPAS is updated each year, and as such, the timing of studies may change, or they may be removed from the document entirely.

Recent utilization figures from the TDSB demonstrate that there are student accommodation pressures at both elementary and secondary levels at schools in the CS&F Study Area. Recent efforts to address accommodation pressures have included adding capacity through additions to Churchill Public School, McKee Public School, and Earl Haig Secondary School, as well as the rebuild of Avondale Public School. Since 2000, the TDSB has also been re-directing students emanating from new development within certain parts of the CS&F Study Area away from local schools where there is insufficient capacity.

Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) 15-Year Long Term Accommodation Program Plan

The TCDSB regularly conducts a board-wide review of all school facilities resulting in a 15-year Long Term Accommodation Program Plan (LTAPP), which is currently being updated. During the LTAPP review, the TCDSB's Planning and Development departments identify areas throughout the city that require boundary re-alignments, placement of portable classrooms, interior retrofits,

building additions, school consolidations and the construction of new schools. School consolidations or closures may be required in certain areas to optimize the use of available space in TCDSB facilities.

Community Space Tenancy

Toronto's Community Space Tenancy Policy provides a framework and policy for leasing City-owned community space at below market rent to non-profit organizations to deliver community and cultural services to residents and assist in achieving the City's strategic objectives. The policy provides three different tenancies: Community Partner, Incubator, and Community Hub. These tenancies provide opportunities for accessible community space through collaboration with the City and the non-profit organizations to support strong, diverse neighbourhoods with community, social, health, cultural and recreation programs.

Some of the services delivered under the Community Space Tenancy include community health, recreation, arts and culture, before and after school programs, settlement services and environmental planning.

Existing and Planned Conditions

As part of Phase 1, a Community Services and Facilities Background Report was prepared to inventory and document existing and planned community services and facilities in the CS&F Study Area (**Figure 5-50**). This report was informed by a review of existing service and capital plans and data provided by CS&F sectors. Consultation with City Divisions, Boards, Agencies, and human service agencies as well as a survey of existing human service agencies will be conducted in Phase 2 to better understand the nature and capacity of the community service sector in the CS&F Study Area.

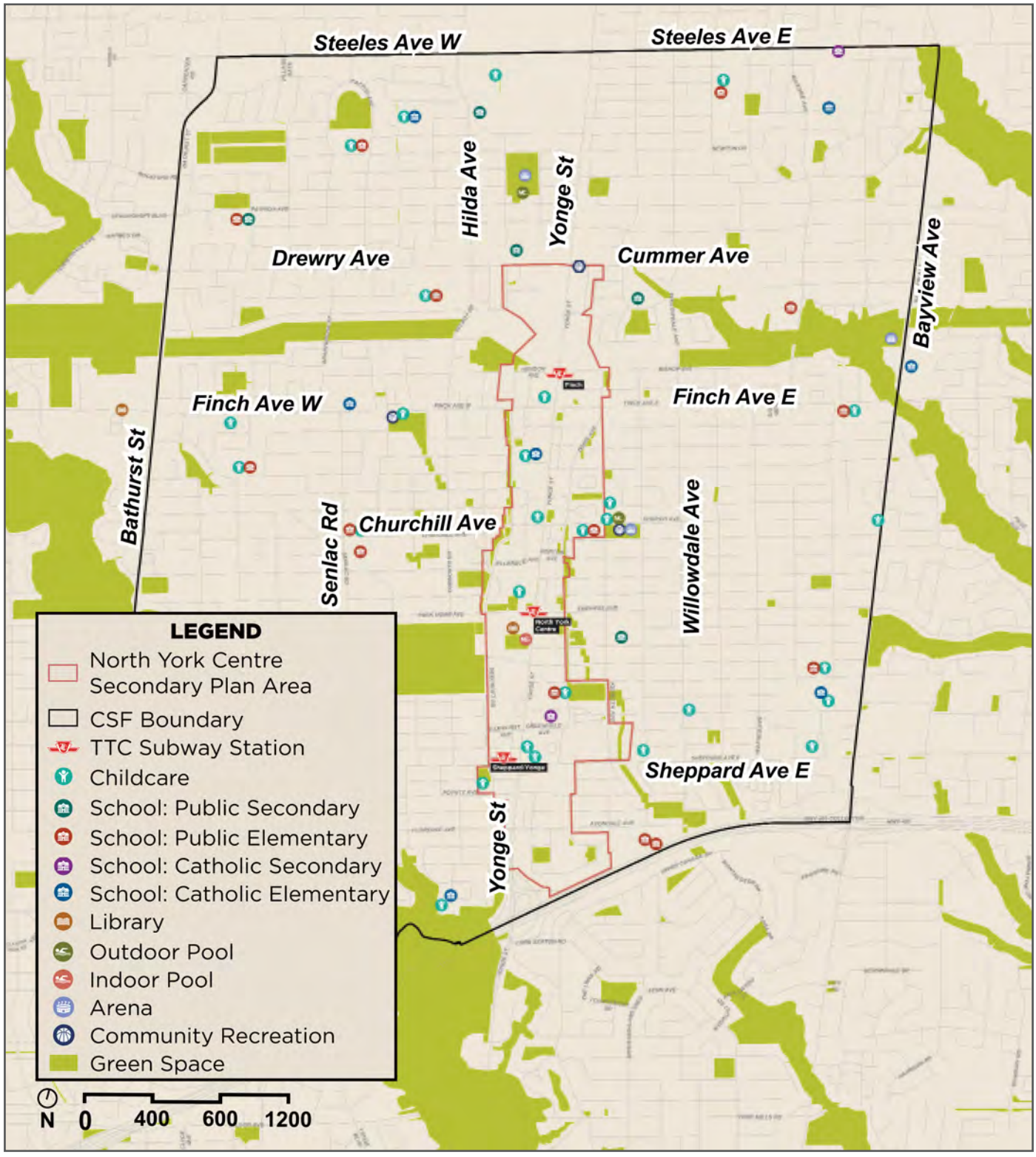


Figure 5-50: Community Services and Facilities within the CS&F Study Area

Table 5-9 provides an overview of the CS&F sectors, as well as an assessment of current and planned conditions.

Table 5-9: CS&F Sector Current and Planned Conditions

CS&F Sector	Current and Planned Conditions
Childcare	There are currently 31 childcare centres located in the CS&F Study Area providing 2,701 spaces for children aged 0-12. There are four capital projects (new centres and expansions) planned in the area which will provide 300 additional spaces. Planned new childcare facilities will likely address some of the near-term demand; however, the supply and demand for childcare facilities will need to be monitored to ensure the number of licensed spaces keeps pace with growth. In particular, the Avondale neighbourhood and Newtonbrook East Neighbourhood show the highest need and less than 20% of children 0-4 years are served by existing childcare facilities.
Libraries	There is one public library located in the CS&F Study Area, which is the North York Central Library (research and reference library). A multi-year renovation, recently completed, revitalized and reconfigured public spaces in the library, and a new 2024 capital project involves the redesign of the Teen Zone on the main floor to accommodate the Youth Hub. The North York Central Library (NYCL) experiences high usage, especially by children and youth. There is a growing demand for the use of space, both in terms of spaces to accommodate seating for study and leisure and spaces for community use. Based on Toronto Public Library's service provision targets, the NYCL meets the current demand for libraries in the CS&F Study Area.
Community Recreation	There are five City-run indoor recreation facilitieswithin the CS&F Study Area. They include three Community Recreation Centres, two of them with outdoor pools; one arena, as well as one stand-alone indoor pool. Although the existing community recreation centres are not identified in the Facilities Master Plan for improvements, one new community recreation centre is identified to serve the existing community and growing population in the Centre. The Newtonbrook Community Recreation Centre is a planned two-storey facility near Yonge Street and Cummer Avenue integrated into the podium of a private development, with construction planned from 2024-2028.

CS&F Sector	Current and Planned Conditions
Schools	There are a total of 31 schools in the Study Area; 20 are TDSB schools and 11 are TCDSB schools. Three TDSB elementary schools located within the Study Area, are currently operating over capacity while several others are nearly at 100% utilization. TDSB utilization rates do not account for students from new developments within certain parts of the Study Area who are re-directed away from local schools, and therefore do not provide a complete assessment in terms of over-utilization in local TDSB schools. The TDSB has obtained Provincial funding and expanded and rebuilt some schools in the area to add capacity. The school boards are open to co-location opportunities and partnerships (e.g., schools built as part of mixed-use developments) but are not seeking new sites in the CS&F Study Area. The TDSB plans to undertake a future study to explore additional secondary school capacity in the area at the appropriate time, which will be directed in part by the Board's system-wide Secondary Program Review, currently underway. Until sufficient additional capacity is secured, the redirection of elementary and secondary students away from the Study Area will continue as required. As part of the ongoing accommodations review, the TCDSB has identified it may require an additional elementary school facility in proximity to the North Yonge corridor in conjunction with residential intensification surrounding the Centrepoint Mall redevelopment. While this is located within the CS&F Study Area, it is located outside of the North York Centre Secondary Plan area, and within the Yonge Street North Secondary Plan area.
Human Service Agencies	There are 36 human service agencies in the CS&F Study Area. The programs and services within the Study Area include newcomer settlement and language services, supports for person with disabilities, seniors' services, family and counselling services, legal services and youth education. In addition to those programs and agencies included in this list, there are several facilities providing supportive housing and emergency shelter located in the CS&F Study Area. Currently, there is a gap of health services in the Study Area. Community service agencies are also vulnerable to rising rent costs, conversions and redevelopment proposals due to competition/land values.

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- Childcare continues to be an area of need. Key issues and challenges include insufficient funding and finding space in new developments due to outdoor space requirements.
- TDSB schools at both elementary and secondary levels have been experiencing student accommodation pressures. Funding for capital projects is often an issue with regards to TDSB's ability to increase capacity through new schools, rebuilds, and additions.
- Human service agencies continue to face increasing demand and the need for additional spaces. There are challenges with rising rent costs and costs associated with renovations. Health services have been identified as a gap in the Study Area. In addition, the demographic data shows there are higher proportion of newcomers in the NYCSP compared to the city as well as a growing senior population. Currently, there are limited services and programs offered for newcomers and seniors.
- There are limited tools for funding and delivering community facilities to fill gaps and serve the growing population. These tools include the Community Benefits Charge (capped at 4%).

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- The Centre is well connected to other neighbourhoods by transit, making it a hub for community services and facilities.
- Based on Toronto Public Library's service provision targets, the NYCL meets the current demand for libraries in the CS&F Study Area. The North York Central Library (NYCL) is a valued community facility and experiences very high use by children and youth.
- TCDSB schools are operating within an acceptable capacity both currently as well as projected into the near future.
- Newtonbook Community Centre is being delivered as part of a development near Yonge Street and Cummer Avenue.
- Existing plans by different sectors identify additional improvements to serve the Centre's existing population.
  - The TDSB plans to undertake a future study to explore additional secondary school capacity in the area at the appropriate time and is open to opportunities to explore partnerships with another entity.
  - The TCDSB has identified an opportunity for a new elementary school in proximity to the North Yonge corridor, outside of the NYCSP area.
  - The Parks and Recreation FMP Implementation Strategy identifies a new community centre in Ward 18 as a priority for investment. Other priorities for North York and/or Ward 18 include new gymnasiums, an arena facility replacement, new community level skateparks and additional skating trails.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

- North York at the Centre is an opportunity to assess future CS&F needs and identify priorities to serve the Centre's growing population. These needs and priorities can be integrated into the updated Secondary Plan and capital planning initiatives such as the Parks and Recreation FMP update.
- Secondary Plan policies can encourage the co-location of community services and facilities, collaboration among sectors and agencies, and for development to include the types of spaces required for CS&F, including affordable formats for human services.

5.5 Mobility and Public Realm

This section of the report reviews mobility and public realm conditions in North York Centre. Mobility refers to how people and goods move within and through the Centre whether by car, transit, bicycle or foot. The public realm refers to the public spaces between buildings and private property such as sidewalks, streets, boulevards. These spaces provide opportunities for public seating, programable space, public art or other features that can contribute to the attractiveness of the area. The following section outlines existing and planned facilities, a safety review, multi-modal analysis and Transportation Demand Management opportunities.

5.5.1 Policy and Guidelines

Provincial Policy

The following policies, plans, and guidelines related to transportation, mobility, and public realm were reviewed. These will play a critical role in shaping the update of the NYCSP.

2041 Regional Transportation Plan, 2018

The 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) outlines a long-range vision for transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The RTP provides guidance on transit infrastructure, the introduction of new services, transportation demand management, and fare integration. Metrolinx's role in operating transit across the GTHA and supporting local agencies has grown significantly in recent years, and the 2041 RTP continues to facilitate a continued increase in this role. The RTP identifies subway, light rail, and bus rapid transit projects along key corridors like Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue, Finch Avenue, and Steeles Avenue within the Mobility Study Area (MSA). The RTP also highlights fare and service integration between Toronto and York Region transit systems, which is particularly important due to York Region's proximity to the Centre. Major transit projects related to North York Centre are discussed in the subsection **Transit Network**.

Connecting the GGH: A Transportation Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2022

The Connecting the GGH plan, developed by MTO, guides the development of the region's transportation system and facilities from a multimodal perspective to 2051. This plan has significant implications for the Centre given its position at the heart of the Greater Golden Horseshoe and near major transportation arteries like Highway 401. The plan, which emphasizes road capacity, goods movement, and transit connectivity, will shape accessibility and mobility patterns to and from North York Centre.

Municipal Policy

Official Plan

The Official Plan contains a set of transportation policies aimed to optimize usage of the existing transportation infrastructure, encourage and prioritize travel by transit, walking and cycling, and reduce car dependency across the city. These policies reflect the importance of integrating transportation and land use, and the City's commitment to creating a more sustainable and accessible urban environment. Key themes relevant to transportation planning include, but are not limited to:

- Inclusive design for all users;
- Transportation infrastructure expansion (including the cycling network);
- Integration of active transportation infrastructure into street design;
- Transit support for growth areas, like North York Centre;
- Travel demand management (TDM) measures;
- Transportation-related requirements for new developments;

- Parking and curbside management strategies; and
- Sustainable and efficient goods movement strategy, among others.

Section 2.4 Bringing the City Together focuses on integrating transportation and land use planning, with particular emphasis on infrastructure design and TDM measures. Elements relevant to the Centre include:

- Encouraging active travel through pedestrian and cycling infrastructure;
- Limiting surface parking in areas well-served by transit;
- Implementing curbside management strategies to improve traffic circulation and pick-up/drop-off;
- Developing guidelines, programs and infrastructure to encourage people of all ages, abilities and means to walk and cycle for everyday transportation; and
- Working with the Province to improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians and people cycling near 400-series highways (e.g., Highway 401).

As noted, the Official Plan supports the development of a robust cycling network. Based on these policies, priority is given to enhancing cycling connections to nearby neighbourhood amenities, including transit stations, improvements to pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and expanding the public bike share system within North York.

Several corridors within the Centre are also identified as part of the Higher Order Transit Corridors system (Map 4 of the Official Plan) (**Figure 5-51**) that will accommodate future transit expansion, as well as arterial roads as prime candidates for transit priority measures and improvements.

Figure 5-51: Higher Order Transit Corridors from Map 4, Official Plan

Section 3.1 The Built Environment of the Official Plan speaks to the role of good public realm in supporting population and employment growth, health, liveability, social equity, and overall quality of life. Public realm policies outlined in *3.1.1 The Public Realm* offer guidance on the roles and key relationships between elements of the public realm as well as direction on the expansion, enhancement and maintenance of the public realm through development review and capital projects

- Fostering complete, well-connected walkable communities and employment areas that meet the daily needs of people and support a mix of activities.
- Providing a comfortable, attractive, and vibrant, safe and accessible setting for civic life and daily social interaction.
- Supporting growing population and changing needs by creating an inclusive public realm that supports people of all ages and abilities.
- Encouraging Indigenous consultation and collaboration in design and development.
- Implementing the Complete Streets approach to develop a street network that balances the needs and priorities of the various users and uses within the right-of-way.
- Improving the quality and convenience of active transportation options within all communities by considering the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transit users.
- Incorporating design measures which promote pedestrian safety and security will be applied to streetscapes, lanes, parks, other public and private open spaces, and all new and renovated buildings.
- Public squares to be designed to be integrated into the broader public realm with significant street frontage and direct pedestrian connections to the public sidewalk.

North York Centre Secondary Plan

The North York Centre Secondary Plan (NYCSP) supported the transition of North York Centre to a transit-oriented, mixed-use community, while leaving the traditional suburban neighbourhoods directly adjacent to the Yonge Street corridor intact. Key elements of the plan include:

- Transportation system improvements necessary to support the development of North York Centre to the permitted land uses and density levels, such as the construction of the Sheppard Subway Extension;
- Guidance for Service Roads and Enactment of Zoning By-Laws, Holding By-laws;
- Parking Management and Transportation Demand Management;
- Identification of long-range aggregate levels of development to balance growth with transportation system capacity;
- A modal share target of 60% for transit, 7% for walking and cycling and 33% for automobiles;
- Parking rate requirements of 0.9 occupant parking spaces per unit and 0.1 visitor parking spaces per unit;
- Assumptions of 1.8 residents per unit, 30 square metres of non-residential gross floor area per worker, and 62 square metres of residential gross floor area per resident; and
- A Monitoring Program for the transportation system in the Centre, considering such factors as trip generation rates, modal split, and travel characteristics.

Given a significant evolution in travel patterns (further discussed in the subsection **NYCSP Travel Characteristics**) and a policy shift towards complete streets and sustainable modes since the NYCSP was developed, an update to this plan is needed to align policies with the City's future goals and vision for the Centre. Recommendations for a

revised plan will introduce updated transportation improvements and design guidance to actively promote the ongoing mode shift towards walking, cycling and transit, reflecting the City's commitment to contemporary and sustainable urban planning.

The NYCSP also establishes urban design and public realm policies related to the pedestrian environment, and buffer areas, which are generally intended to help create an activated, comfortable, and attractive public realm. Policies cover matters such as block definition, street definition, streetscapes, street retail and the interface between the Centre and adjacent neighbourhoods. Pedestrian environment policies touch on many critical aspects of the public realm, such as design, connectivity, security, accessibility, and comfort. The plan identifies Yonge Street as a central spine that will have the primary promenades of the City with Public and private initiatives ensuring that pedestrians are provided with adequate safety to cross the street and have space for movement and recreation. Prime Frontage Areas are established along the majority of Yonge Street in North York Centre South and around the Yonge Street and Finch Avenue intersection in North York Centre North and are intended to create at grade, street-related, narrow frontage retail in these areas.

The objective of creating an activated, comfortable and attractive public realm in the Centre remains critical to the project and the urban design and public realm policies provide a solid basis for achieving this goal. In particular, there should be added focus on the tools for establishing a fine-grained pedestrian network, active transportation routes and a comfortable public realm.

Lessons From Other Secondary Plans

This section includes a summary of relevant information from Secondary Plans within or adjacent to the Mobility Study Area that will have impacts on North York Centre.

Yonge Street North Secondary Plan and Transportation Master Plan

The Yonge Street North Secondary Plan was undertaken to guide the development and intensification of Yonge Street from Drewry Avenue / Cummer Avenue to Steeles Avenue and surrounding area in time for the TTC Line 1 extension north. The Yonge Street North Secondary Plan area is situated at the northern edge of the BESA and within the Mobility Study Area, therefore, it will have significant impacts on the plans and policies developed for the NYCSP and mobility in the Centre.

The mobility policies in the NYCSP were informed by the Yonge Street North Transportation Master Plan. Both the Secondary Plan and TMP recommend new streets, reconfigured intersections, new cross-sections, active transportation infrastructure and enhancements, and shared mobility facilities. Key takeaways regarding mobility policies and the public realm are as follows:

- Infrastructure that supports walking, cycling, and public transit usage are emphasized to reduce reliance on driving and to leverage transit investments including the Yonge North Subway Extension;
- The impact of vehicular traffic is to be managed through street designs incorporating traffic calming and safety improvements protecting vulnerable users;
- Streets will be designed using a Complete Streets approach;

- An enhanced streetscape is to be provided along the entirety of Yonge Street within the Secondary Plan area to create the Yonge Street Promenade, which is conceptually an extension of REimagining Yonge Environmental Assessment (EA); and
- The Yonge Street North Secondary Plan area will include new and improved streets, lanes, pedestrian mid-block connections, parks and open spaces and POPS. The plan supports higher order transit by prioritizing direct and safe active transportation and connections to existing and planned transit facilities, cycling infrastructure, and pedestrian connections.

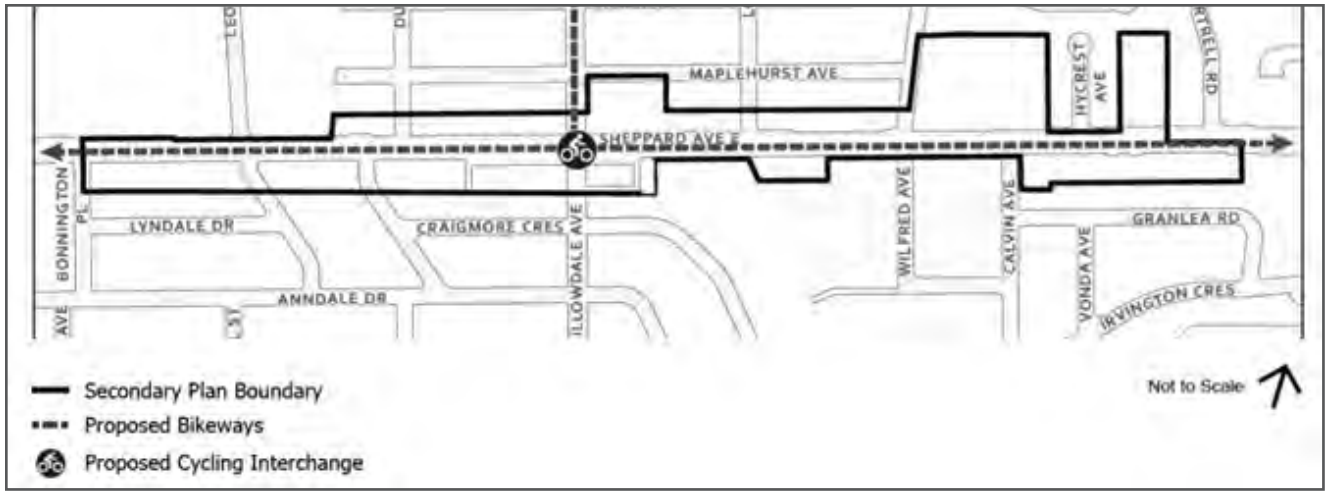
Sheppard Lansing Secondary Plan

Formally the Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan, this plan covers a stretch of Sheppard Avenue adjacent to Yonge Street. It aims to establish a sense of place along a corridor supportive of local shops, services, offices and residences, as well as to support a gradual transition from Mixed Use areas to adjacent Neighbourhoods. Policies specific to the Sheppard Lansing Secondary Plan related to mobility and public realm include:

- Extended Public Realm: Provision of the Sheppard Avenue West Promenade as an expanded public realm for the greening of the street and improved pedestrian amenities with elements, such as street trees, lay-bys, wider sidewalks and a potential location for a new mid-block pedestrian crossing.
- Complete Streets: Rebalance the Sheppard Avenue West right-of-way to create a complete Street to provide more space for the public realm and streetscape improvements including wider sidewalks; safer, dedicated cycling facilities and pedestrian amenities; shared mobility and other sustainable transportation facilities; and maintaining the right-of-way for transit priority and/or higher order transit.
- Active Transportation Network: Complete the transportation network for pedestrians and cyclist to connect existing and future cycling facilities.

Sheppard Willowdale Secondary Plan

The Sheppard Willowdale Secondary Plan spans along Sheppard Avenue East from Yonge-Sheppard Subway Station to Bayview Subway Station. Policies related to transportation and mobility aim to fully balance mobility choices through Complete Streets principles and enhance the network of private and public spaces to contribute to an attractive and safe pedestrian and cycling environment that incorporates green infrastructure. In addition to some transportation-related policies for new developments, such as TDM measures and strategies, the Secondary Plan also provides guidance on curbside management, parking, multimodal-supportive infrastructure, public realm improvements, and special policy areas that provide opportunities to expand the public realm and provide on-site open space. The Plan also proposes a physically separated cycling facility along Sheppard Avenue East, and north along Willowdale, with a proposed cycling interchange at Sheppard Avenue East / Willowdale Avenue (**Figure 5-52**).



(Source: Map 29-5 Cycling Connection)

Figure 5-52: Sheppard Willowdale Secondary Plan

The NYCSP update will consider how to extend mobility and public realm elements from these Secondary Plans through its area; for example, the Sheppard Avenue Promenade is a key feature in both Secondary Plans and many of the intersections along Sheppard Avenue are identified as High Order Pedestrian Zones.

Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan

In June of 2019, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issued their decision on the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan (OPA 405); it is now in force as modified by the Minister. Yonge-Eglinton shares many characteristics with North York Centre which makes it a useful precedent for North York Centre. These include:

- Both are Centres in the city's Urban Structure (Official Plan Map 2) organized around subway stations on the Yonge-University line.
- Yonge Street bisects both Secondary Plan areas and are in relatively proximity.
- Both are in close proximity to large green spaces, a ravine and a cemetery, which are both important parts of each Centre's open space network. Yonge-Eglinton has an additional cemetery open space and some slightly larger parks (e.g., Eglinton Park), but North York has access to the Finch Hydro Corridor.
- Service streets like Redpath Avenue and Duplex Avenue in Yonge-Eglinton are similar to Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue in North York, acting as parallel 'bookend' alternatives to Yonge Street, helping to facilitate transition.
- Outside of Yonge Street, other secondary north-south mid-concession block roads help shape both the Centre and North York. Yonge-Eglinton has Avenue Road and Mount Pleasant Road, while North York Centre has Senlac Road and Willowdale Avenue. A differentiator here is that roads like Avenue Road and Mount Pleasant Road have a more prominent commercial nature, which attracts more pedestrian and retail activity, compared to Senlac Road and Willowdale Avenue today, which are primarily residential.

Additionally, Yonge-Eglinton included tailored public realm improvements and strategies to support developments and promote safer, more comfortable, and more accessible experiences moving around an area. Some of the public realm approaches from Yonge-Eglinton can be extended to apply to North York Centre, such as:

- **Street Squares:** A series of distinctively landscaped and publicly accessible squares are planned along the stretch of Yonge Street that runs through the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan area. These will be created by re-aligning

offset east-west streets that connect to Yonge Street, to create consolidated, cohesive open spaces. Similar ideas of enhancing the squares along Yonge Street is also discussed in the REimagining Yonge streetscape plan.

- **Park Street Loop:** This is a multi-purpose, publicly accessible green promenade with wide pedestrian clearways, cycling facilities, and landscaping that provides green linkages. It connects Eglinton Park to community amenities and open spaces into the residential neighbourhoods. A similar approach in North York Centre, such as connecting the fragmented green spaces in the neighbourhoods on either side of Yonge Street with the cemetery grounds, the hydro corridor and the ravine through a continuous trail system, can be an example of a green 'loop' as well.
- **Community Street:** Davisville Community Street is an important local civic street connecting parks, schools, transit stations, and a future community hub. The direction in the Secondary Plan imagines Davisville Avenue as a complete street with reduced vehicle travel lane widths, tree canopies, bus service, and landscaping features. Similar streets in North York Centre (e.g., Hillcrest Avenue, Empress Avenue, Churchill Avenue) can receive similar treatment, with active transportation priority and a continuous tree canopy, to better connect amenities and transit together.

Plans and Strategies

Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, 2019

The Vision Zero Road Safety Plan (2019) is a comprehensive action plan focused to eliminate traffic-related serious injuries and fatalities on Toronto's streets. Vision Zero Road Safety Plan was approved by City Council in July 2016. An updated plan called Vision Zero 2.0 was approved in 2019 to refocus efforts and enhance progress. Under this program, several safety measures have been implemented in the Mobility Study Area. A full list of safety measures is included in **Appendix A**.

Cycling Network Plan, 2021

The Cycling Network Plan (CNP) is a comprehensive guide for the City's short and long-term cycling investments. It consists of three main components: the Long-Term Cycling Network Vision, Major City-Wide Cycling Routes, and a three-year rolling Near-Term Implementation Program. Several streets in the Mobility Study Area are designated as part of the Cycling Network Plan's Major City-Wide Cycling Routes network (**Figure 5-53**).

RapidTO: Surface Transit Network Plan

RapidTO is a joint program by the City of Toronto and Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) dedicated to enhancing bus and streetcar transit across the city through transit priority solutions that improve service reliability. These solutions include features like bus lanes, bus bays, high-occupancy-motor vehicle lanes, transit malls, and signal priority. Several east-west corridors have been identified as potential candidates for RapidTO measures, such as Steeles Avenue West, or as Priority Roadways proposed for roadway-specific study, including Bathurst Street, Wilson Avenue, Sheppard Avenue West, and Finch Avenue East to determine suitable surface transit priority measures and development of design options.

TTC 5-Year Service Plan & Customer Experience Action Plan (2024-2028), under development

The TTC 5-Year Service Plan & Customer Experience Action Plan 2024-2028 is undergoing development. It aims to establish the strategic direction for TTC initiatives from 2024 to 2028 and identify service-related improvements to public transit service and customer service. The Plan will inform decisions on short- and long-term priorities, as well as spending and funding decisions. The Plan is intended to replace the previous iteration which provided guidance from 2020-2024.

Figure 5-53: Cycling Network Plan Major City-Wide Cycling Routes

TTC Capital Investment Plan & Real Estate Investment Plan (2024-2038), 2023

The TTC's Capital Investment Plan (CIP) and supporting Real Estate Investment Plan (REIP) help to secure predictable and sustainable funding for operations and asset state of good repair for a 15-year planning horizon. They identify the TTC's capital requirements (both funded and unfunded) and required real estate portfolio to guide capital planning, priority setting, and advocacy with funding partners for critical investments. Both the CIP and REIP are updated annually to reflect refined estimates based on capital planning progress, changes to planned timing or requirements, and the addition of emerging needs. The latest 2024-2038 CIP and REIP has six investment programs with project portfolios that outline key capital needs.

TransformTO (Net Zero Strategy), 2017

In April 2017, the City of Toronto approved a long-range climate action plan called "TransformTO: Climate Action for a Healthy, Equitable and Prosperous Toronto - Report #2 - The Pathway to a Low Carbon Future". The report envisions net zero emissions in 2040. In October 2019, City Council voted to declare a climate emergency and accelerate efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. This led to the development of the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy, in which a more aggressive path to net zero emissions outlined. The strategy aims to reduce emissions by 45 percent by 2025, 65 percent by 2030, and to reach net zero emissions by 2040. With respect to specific mobility-related aims, the strategy anticipates that by 2030, 75 percent of school and work trips under 5 km will be walked, biked, or taken by transit, and that 30 percent of registered vehicles in the City will be electric.

Electric Vehicle Strategy, 2019

Toronto's Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy is a municipal-level plan aimed at increasing the adoption of EVs in the City of Toronto. This strategy outlines various initiatives to facilitate the transition to electric motor vehicles, including the implementation of EV charging stations at Toronto Parking Authority facilities and in new developments. These measures target barriers related to cost and convenience issues while also aiming to enhance public awareness of EVs.

Guidelines

Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM Books)

The Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) consists of several 'books' that offer direction on the planning, design, construction, and operation of traffic control devices and management systems in Ontario. These manuals aim to provide consistency in approaches throughout the province. OTM Book 15: Pedestrian Crossing Treatments and Book 18: Cycling Facilities offer recent innovations and guidance for planning and design decisions related to both on- and off-street pedestrian and cycling networks to enhance neighbourhood connectivity, accessibility, and safety for all street users, ultimately supporting a shift towards active travel. OTM Book 15 will inform the appropriate selection and design of pedestrian facilities and treatment options, while OTM Book 18 will inform decisions on cycling network facility selection, design, and implementation throughout North York Centre. The OTM Books provide overarching general guidance, while City Guidelines add specifics to cover contexts relevant to the City of Toronto.

Complete Streets Guidelines, 2017

The City of Toronto Complete Streets Guidelines offers direction on balancing the interests and needs of all street users in order to facilitate a transition to a more sustainable modal split and enhance accessibility for street users of all ages and abilities. The guidelines build on many of the City's existing policies, successful street design projects and construction efforts. They cover various aspects in street design, including designing streets for pedestrians and people cycling, transit,

green infrastructure, and intersections. Given the auto-centric nature and design of most streets in the Centre, adopting a complete streets approach to street design becomes particularly important. Streets like Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road, which act like barriers to the adjacent neighbourhoods, and several short east-west streets which do not extend beyond these two service roads, will benefit from a Complete Streets approach as it will introduce a broader range of uses to these streets and contribute to increased connectivity and accessibility within the neighbourhoods.

Streetscape Manual, 2019

The City of Toronto Streetscape Manual provides guidance for the design, implementation, and maintenance of sidewalk and boulevard improvements along Toronto's arterial street network. It categorizes major and minor arterial roads into Main Streets and Green Streets, further subdividing them based on character and function, and specific local and collector roads as Special Areas due to their unique planning circumstances (**Figure 5-55**). Depending on a road's designation, the manual outlines a set of standards for the design of treatments, street trees, medians, lighting, and street furniture along these roads. Within the Mobility Study Area, several streets are designated under this manual. As such, tailored streetscaping will be incorporated to match its unique character.

Green Streets Technical Guidelines, 2017

The City of Toronto Green Streets Technical Guidelines provides direction for integrating green infrastructure into the design and implementation of city streets. These guidelines offer standards, selection tools, and guidance for the planning, design, and maintenance of various green street retrofit/rehabilitation or new/reconstruction options across diverse street types and conditions, focusing predominately on stormwater management solutions. As the Centre experiences significant growth and increased density there are opportunities for street design to balance their function as conduits for pedestrians, transit, and other modes with the need to capture or direct stormwater and alleviate pressures on ecological systems.

Design Criteria for Green Infrastructure in the Right-of-Way, 2021

The Design Criteria for Green Infrastructure in the Right-of-Way establishes a consistent approach to the planning and design of green infrastructure within the public right-of-way. It outlines the essential design criteria that must be fulfilled for successful planning, siting, design, installation, and operation of green infrastructure within the right-of-way. In North York Centre, many streets have the potential to transition into complete streets that incorporate green infrastructure solutions, which will be imperative for improved stormwater management as the density within the Centre increases. This document will play a key role in developing specific design criteria for each green infrastructure system, and guide efforts to ensure successful implementation.

The City is currently undertaking a study to create a Green Streets Master Plan along with an update of Development Infrastructure Policy & Standards and Municipal Consent Requirements with an anticipated completion of Q2 2025.

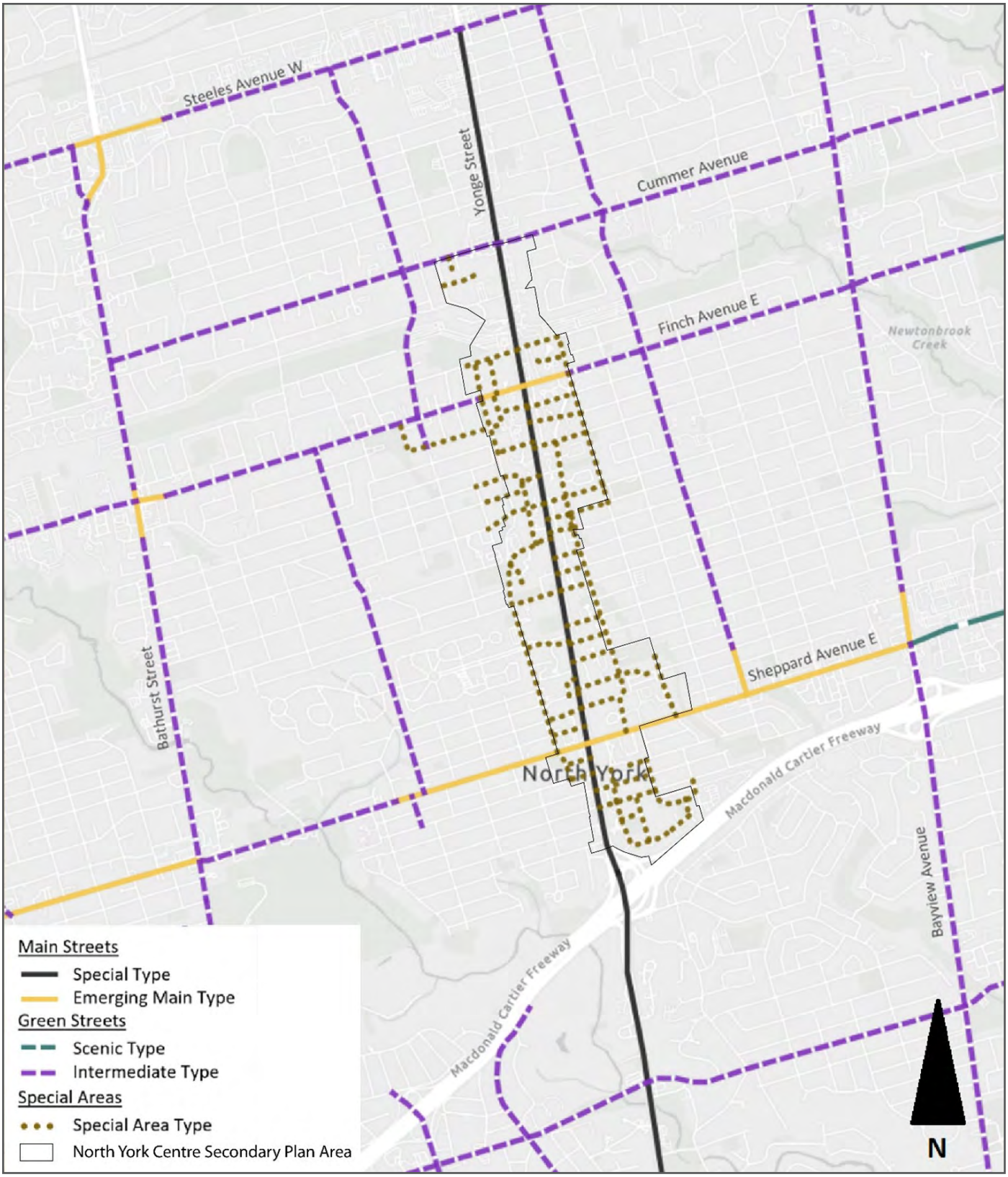


Figure 5-54: Streetscape Manual Map Street Designations within North York Centre

Multi-Use Trail Design Guidelines, 2015

The Toronto Multi-Use Trail Design Guidelines establish a comprehensive framework for planning and designing multi-use trails. The guide prioritizes accommodation of diverse user groups, such as pedestrians and people cycling, and aims to facilitate safe and efficient mobility across the city. Key elements of the guide include geometric and typical trail design, trail crossing and intersection design, trail amenities, and various accessibility considerations. This guide will serve as a reference for enhancing existing multi-use trails, implementing proposed trails, and planning new ones, as well as improving connections to the broader City trail network. A key approach will be addressing disruptions in continuity in the multi-use network where current gaps exist, such as the gap in the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail from Kenneth Avenue to Bishop Avenue which forces people cycling onto the street and creates discontinuity in the network and future Loop Trail.

On-Street Bikeway Design Guidelines, 2023

The On-Street Bikeway Design Guidelines provide a standardized set of technical specifications for the planning, design, and implementation of on-street cycling facilities for all ages and abilities to support the development of a safe, accessible, and interconnected bike network throughout Toronto. The guide covers various elements of on-street cycling facilities, including facility selection and design, intersection treatments, signal operations, and directive for the planning and design process. This Guide will be used to inform the design of accessible cycling facilities that meet City standards and help shape policy recommendations.

Road Engineering Design Guidelines

The City's Road Engineering Design Guidelines provide extensive guidance and standardized criteria for road design and construction across the City of Toronto. It is broken down into chapters that cover a specific element of road design. Relevant guidelines to the NYCSP will support a reimagination of the streets in North York Centre to improve accessibility and sustainability. These include the following:

- **Lane Widths Guideline, 2018:** This guide assists in determining the appropriate lane widths for roads with delineated lanes. Given that lane widths on streets in North York Centre generally exceed the targeted widths for lanes based on speed and volume of traffic, designs for planned road works in the area incorporate the targets from this guideline.
- **Curb Radii Guideline, 2017:** This guide is utilized to determine curb radii sizes at intersection corners to provide appropriate motor vehicle accommodations to reduce the speed of right-turning motor vehicles, which lessens the impacts in collisions and provide additional reaction time for drivers during unexpected events. This guideline will be a valuable reference for the redesign or adjustment of intersection corners within the Mobility Study Area experiencing issues with the existing curb radius, or any corners identified by Transportation Services.
- **Truck Aprons Guideline, 2021:** This guide is to be used in conjunction with the Curb Radii Design Guidelines, provides design guidance for truck aprons at intersection corners to accommodate both small and larger motor vehicles to turn at an intersection corner. Given Yonge Street experiences frequent right-turning trucks given the corridor's direct links to Highway 401, this guideline will be applicable to intersection corners in new road construction and those affected by reconstruction or resurfacing.
- **Curb Extensions Guideline, 2017:** This guideline directs the design and implementation of curb extensions throughout the city. It emphasizes significant enhancements to street infrastructure, particularly those geared towards improving the safety of pedestrians and other street users.

- **Raised Crosswalk and Intersection Guideline, 2020:** This guide provides direction for incorporating and designing raised crosswalks at stop-controlled locations and intersections. It will be used to determine appropriate locations for this treatment, particularly in areas with low stop control compliance, poor sightlines at pedestrian crossings, or where children frequently cross, and follow the design guidance outlined.

Accessibility Design Guidelines, 2021

The Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines provides strategies to identify, remove and prevent barriers faced by persons with disabilities. It was designed to support all sectors in creating a barrier-free community. The Guide emphasizes accessible and universal design principles to remove and prevent barriers for all, no matter their mobility, sight, hearing or cognitive abilities. These Guidelines form part of the City's Multi-year Accessibility Plan and Corporate Accessibility Policy. This guide's directives on universal design will be used to enhance accessibility by removing and preventing barriers to mobility. This is an integral element in supporting walking and rolling in the community and adopting a complete streets approach. The guide's recommendations, including those on street design, pedestrian crossings, signals, and wayfinding, will inform the planning and design stages of the NYCSP, and aid in addressing design challenges.

Transit Design Guide, 2022

The Toronto Transit Design Guide is a resource for the urban, architectural, and landscape planning and design of rapid transit projects and infrastructure citywide. The guide's current chapters provide design and planning guidance on ancillary buildings, bus terminals, elevated guideways, elevated stations, and portals and retaining walls, to ensure consistency in city transit infrastructure design.

Percent for Public Art Program Guidelines, 2010

The Percent for Public Art Program secures funds for public art through the planning and development approval process. The intent of these guidelines is to ensure that City Planning's public art program is applied in a consistent and informed manner citywide. The Program requires that the artwork must always be clearly visible from publicly accessible areas. In addressing the City's policy framework for public art, the developer has three options; 'On-site' Contribution, 'Off-site' (pooled) Contribution and 'On-site/Off-site' Combination. These public art opportunities include

- The conceptual framework to organize open spaces including parks, plazas, setbacks or streetscapes;
- An independent sculpture or two-dimensional work that marks an entryway, corner or feature area, and/or a view terminus;
- The combination of visual arts with building element design and/or landscape design including building facades, canopies, floors, etc. building facades, canopies, floors, etc.
- The idea behind an open space element such as the pavement and its pattern, a planted border, a wall, a fence, an entrance or exit; or
- Functional and decorative elements of a site such as benches, bus shelters, water features, light standards or other open space and streetscape amenities

Retail Design Manual, 2019

The Retail Design Manual offers comprehensive guidance for creating successful retail spaces, aiming to inspire stakeholders engaged in their design and implementation. The manual focuses on improving the design of ground floor retail space. This includes how the retail interfaces with the public realm as well as how the building facade and street work together to create complete communities and vibrant streets. The Street and Retail Frontage section highlights six key topics focusing on:

- **Sidewalk Interface:** Design the interface between the building and sidewalk to support walkability, social interaction and strong retail visibility.
- **Hierarchy of Retail Frontages:** Design one frontage of the building as the primary retail frontage to support retail visibility and ease of access. Retail entrances should be located on the primary frontage.
- **Contiguous Retail Frontage:** Promote a continuity of retail frontages to support retail vitality while ensuring the legibility of individual storefronts.
- **Entrances:** Ensure the transition from the sidewalk to the retail space is as seamless as possible to support access, visibility and the functional needs of tenants.
- **Display Windows:** Use display windows to provide visual interest, help promote the retailers' brand and identity, and support the pedestrian experience.
- **Identity, Branding and Signage:** Support retail visibility and the expression of the retailer's brand identity.

Tall Building Guidelines, 2013

The Tall Building Guidelines offer a unified set of performance measures for the evaluation of all tall building development applications across the city. The guidelines also provide essential guidance around the shaping of the pedestrian realm, particularly in relation to the base-building of a tall building in section 4.0 Pedestrian Realm. The guide highlights four key topics, focusing on:

- **Streetscape ad landscape design:** Provide high-quality, sustainable streetscape and landscape design between the tall building and adjacent streets, parks, and open space.
- **Sidewalk Zone:** Provide adequate space between the front of the building and adjacent street curbs to safely and comfortably accommodate pedestrian movement, streetscape elements, and activities related to the uses at grade.
- **Pedestrian level wind effects**: Locate, orient, and design tall buildings to promote air circulation and natural ventilation, yet minimize adverse wind conditions on adjacent streets, parks and open space, at building entrances, and in public and private outdoor amenity areas.
- **Pedestrian Weather Protection:** Ensure weather protection elements, such as overhangs and canopies, are well-integrated into building design, carefully designed and scaled to support the street, and positioned to maximize function and pedestrian comfort.

5.5.2 Existing and Planned Conditions

Historical Context

The streets and block network within the NYCSP finds its roots in the colonial survey of Ontario. Over the past two centuries, the NYCSP area has evolved from the concession grid to an urban core (**Figure 5-55**). The concession grid was surveyed at 5/4 miles, or approximately a two-kilometre grid, and includes east-west streets Lawrence, Sheppard, Finch and Steeles Avenues and north-south streets Bathurst Street, Yonge Street and Bayview Avenue. This grid went through several sub-divisions as the City developed, which resulted in 20 blocks between Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue.

The relatively flat topography, in comparison to a similar area surrounding Yonge Street and Eglinton Avenue, contributes to its uniform and fine-grained street grid of approximately 100 m by 250 m blocks. This configuration yields a high intersection density, which is indicative for connectivity and walkability.

This grid is interrupted by major infrastructural elements like Highway 401, the Finch Hydro Corridor, and the two branches of the Don River to the east and west of North York Centre (**Figure 5-56**).

Figure 5-55: Tremaine's Map, 1860 (Left), Yonge Redevelopment Area, 1967. These show the development of the street network along Yonge Street over roughly 100 years (Right)

Figure 5-56: North York Centre surrounded by Ravines with a two-kilometre concession grid and subdivided blocks resulting in fine grained grid (Left), North York Centre as it is today (Right)

NYCSP Travel Characteristics

This section provides a summary of demographic and travel pattern changes within the NYCSP area based on the Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) and Statistics Canada Census Data. The 2022 TTS data was not available at time of writing this report; the data will be incorporated into the study once it becomes available.

North York Centre Residents Commuting

For resident commuters, the Census (Journey to Work) data collected by Statistics Canada was used, given the significantly larger sample size than TTS. Key travel patterns for resident commuters, as illustrated in **Figure 5-57**, are as follows:

- Between 2001 and 2016 the commuter trips by residents grew by about 160% (from 8,800 to 23,100). However, in 2021, due to COVID, there were only 13,500 commuter trips by NYCSP residents dropping well below the 2006 levels.
- Between 2001 and 2016 the transit mode share and the active transportation (AT) mode share have been steadily increasing (growing from a combined 50% to 57%) at the expense of automobile travel. In 2021, AT mode shares saw a slight increase; however, this was overshadowed by a marked decrease in transit mode share. In 2021, the automobile was the dominant mode with 56% of the mode share.
- Since 2021, the transit ridership has started to increase across the City, and it is expected that the auto share is starting to decrease toward pre-pandemic levels.

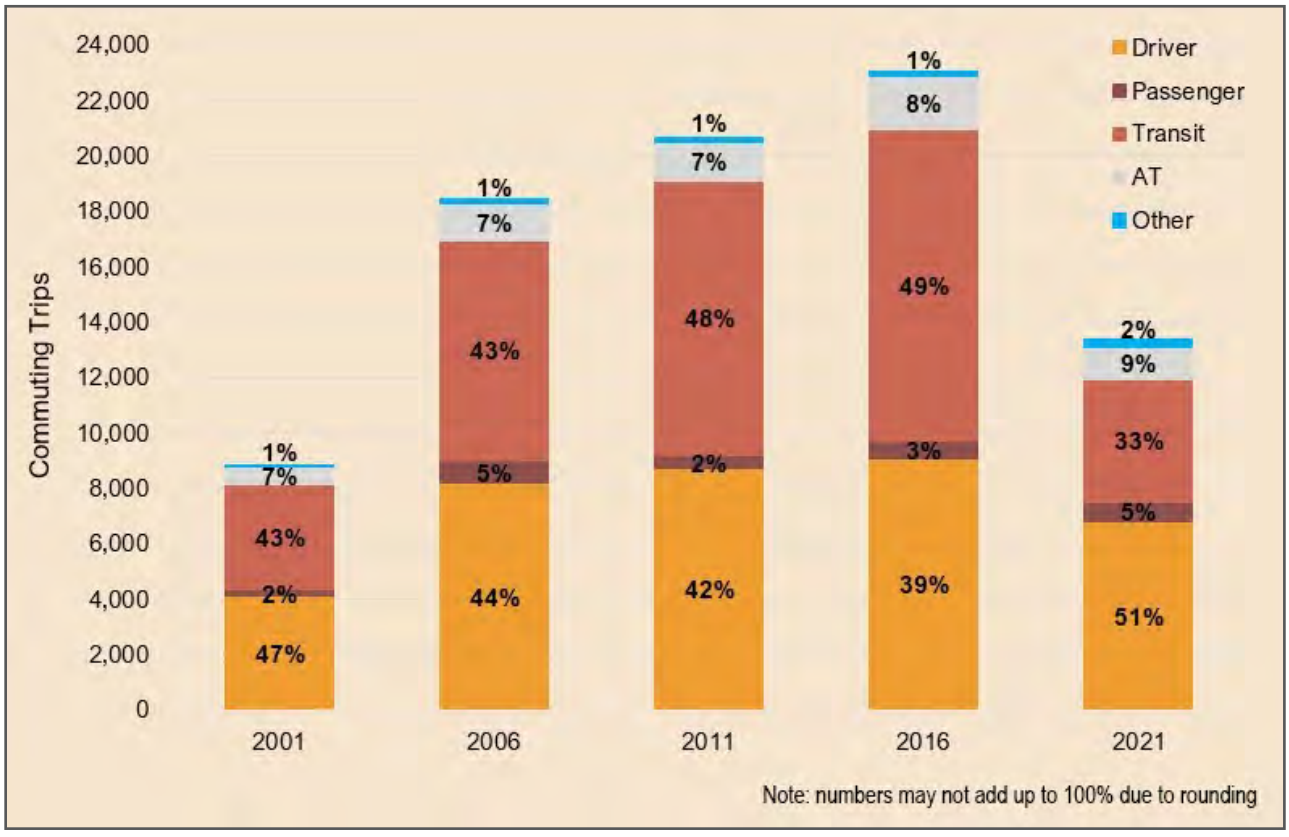


Figure 5-57: Commuter Trips and Mode Split by Centre Residents Based on Census

Auto Ownership

The role of auto ownership in North York Centre is significant. It influences mode choice, activity location, and activity frequency. Households in North York Centre can generally be grouped into three categories of auto ownership status (based on TTS data):

- **Zero-Car Households:** household members rely on using transit, active transportation, and/or Transportation Network Companies / ride-hailing companies (like Uber) for their travel needs, which may restrict the scope of their trips and activities.
- **Auto-deficit households (more driver licenses than motor vehicles):** household members must coordinate and plan their motor vehicle usage, as not all drivers have access to a motor vehicle throughout the day. Decisions include determining which individuals use the car(s) and when, whether the car stays at home for emergencies, or for errands for stay-at-home parents and children.
- **Auto parity / auto excess households (an equal or higher number of cars to licensed drivers):** every driver in the household has access to at least one motor vehicle.

Since 2006, the number of two-or-more-car households in the Centre has decreased, while zero- and one-car households are increasing. When looking at the auto ownership status the analysis indicated that there has been an increase in zero-car households at the expense of auto deficit households, whereas households with auto parity have remained relatively steady. This might seem like a contradiction, so it should be noted that the steadiness in auto parity households is due to the decrease in average household size. As the average household size decreases less vehicles are required to reach parity, in addition, with single person households the auto ownership status options are either 0-car households or auto parity households. When compared to the rest of Toronto, the Centre has a lower percentage of zero-car households, and a higher percentage of auto deficit households.

Daily Trip Trends and Mode Share

An examination of total daily trip trends indicates that trips originating in the Centre have increased at a slower rate than the population and employment growth within the Centre area. This indicates that a lower number of trips are being made per resident and job.

Additionally, close to 40% of the weekday trips to the Centre are six kilometres or less, which is considered a suitable distance for cycling (approximately 20 minutes) as a viable mode of transportation for a commute. Within this distance, cycling only makes up 1% of the total trips, while auto drivers and passengers makes up 59%. This demonstrates a significant potential to convert local driving trips to active modes such as cycling.

An examination of mode share data for trips originating in the Centre since 2006 (as depicted in **Figure 5-58** and **Figure 5-59**) revealed the following findings and trends:

- Private auto and motor vehicle-passenger usage in the Centre continues to dominate, making up approximately 56% of the mode split; however, this is drastically down from 68% in 2006;
- In recent years, there has been a shift towards more transit (8% increase from 2006) and active transportation (5% increase from 2006) use. Most of the gains in active transportation have been through walking trips, as cycling rates remain very low;
- Trends show a shift in mode share for trips less than 20 km in distance. Notably, active modes are gaining more traction for short trips of 0-2 km. In 2016, active transportation accounted for 42% of trips (41% walking, 1% cycling) under 2 km, an increase of 75% over 10 years, while auto and passenger trips (46% of all trips) under 2 km decreased 35% over this same period;

- Beyond six kilometres, active transportation modes become almost non-existent, and trips are made using either auto or transit; and
- Transit accounts for a strong share of trips beyond two kilometres, particularly for trips 6 to 16 kilometres in length, where transit mode share matches or exceeds the driving mode share.

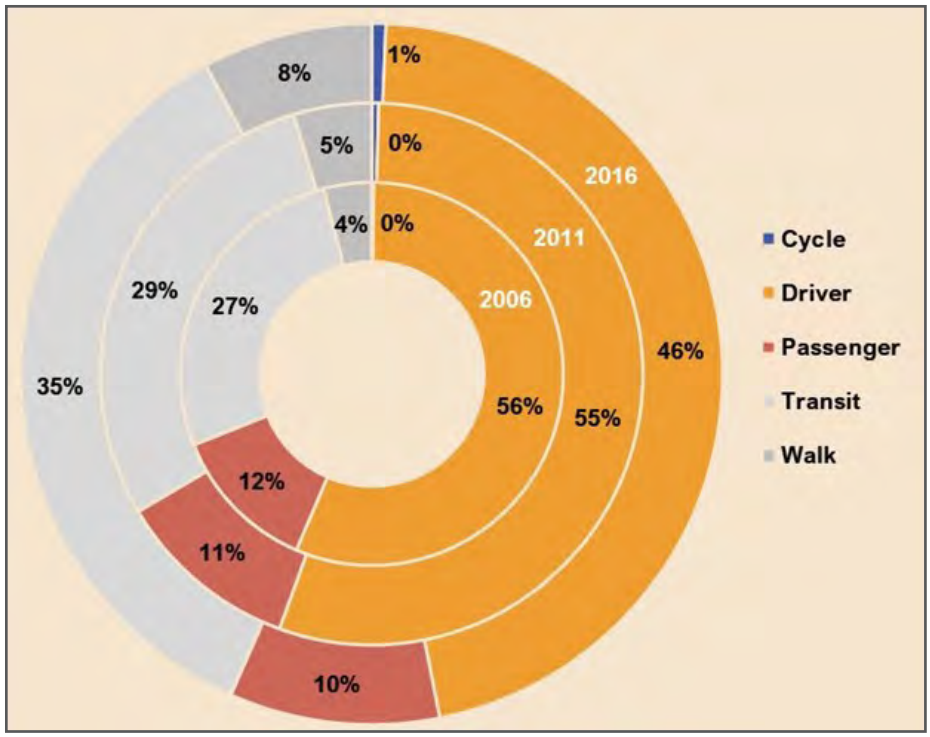


Figure 5-58: Weekday Modal Split for Trips Originating in the Centre (2016)

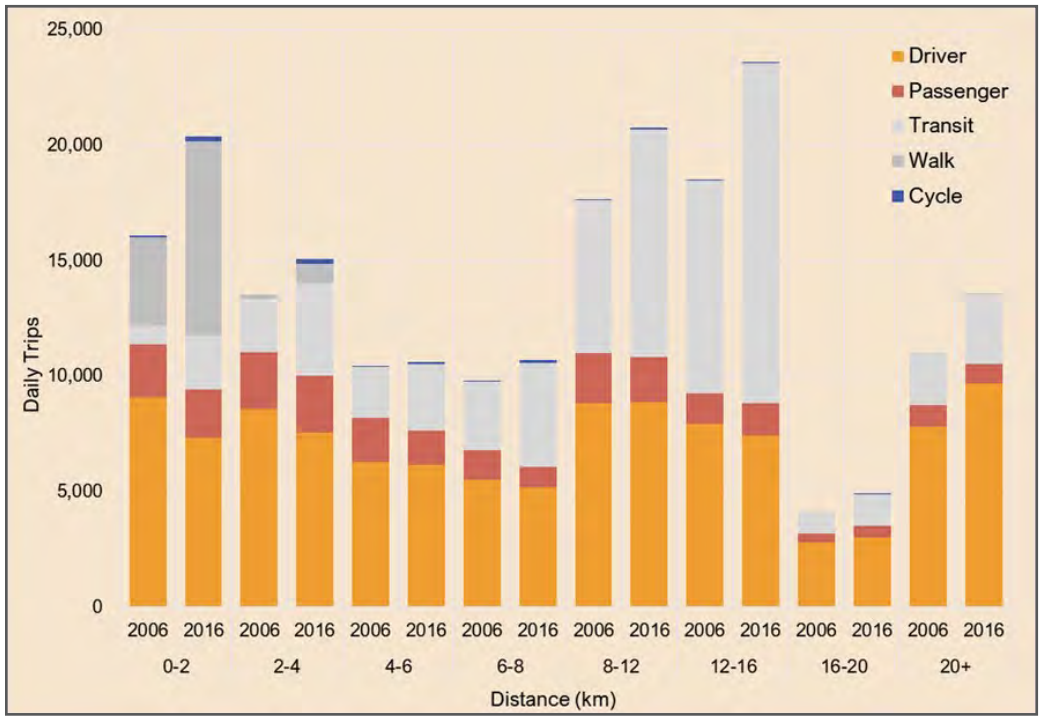


Figure 5-59: Total Trips by Distance and Mode (2006 and 2016)

Based on the Journey to Work data on mode share trends since 2016, it is expected that the auto mode share increased, at the expense of transit, in 2022 as people became more hesitant to be on transit vehicles during the pandemic.

The next three sections look at the trip patterns of North York Centre residents, employees, and other travellers to North York Centre. As this data was not available from Statistics Canada, all the data below is from the TTS.

North York Centre Residents

Centre Residents are defined as any person living in the NYCSP area. Key travel patterns of Centre residents are as follows:

- For non-commuter trips, even though there has been an increase in transit and active transportation mode shares since 2006, in 2016 auto drivers and passengers make up the major portion of mode shares (55%). The total number of non-commuter trips has increased since 2006, while the trip rate per capita has decreased, indicating that people are making fewer trips per person.
- Across most trip distances, auto drivers and passengers are the dominant mode for non-commuter trips. Even for trips less than six kilometres, the auto mode share accounts for close to 60% of trips.

North York Centre Employees

Centre employees are defined as any person that is employed within the Centre area. Note that there is an overlap with the Centre resident commuter trips previously discussed, as some people live and work in the same area. Key travel pattern observed of Centre employees are as follows:

- In 2016, the proportion of people living and working in the Centre has slightly decreased from 15.5% of the labour force in 2006, to 14% of the labour force.
- The most common places that Centre employees commute from are the rest of North York (14% of trips), Scarborough (11%), and Vaughan (8%).
- Although there has been a slight shift away from the use of autos during this time, the auto mode share continues to dominate the Centre employee commutes. Centre employees commuting to the Centre for work rely more heavily on autos (52%) than the Centre residents do for their commuting trips (38%). Transit accounts for 40% of Centre employee trips.
- Trips shorter than two kilometres are dominated by active transportation, making up over 80% of the mode share. This has significantly improved since 2006. However, for trips between two and six kilometres, the active transportation mode share is only 5%, with auto becoming more prevalent.
- The majority (52%) of the commuting trips to the Centre come from distances over 12 kilometres. For trip lengths greater than 16 kilometres, auto becomes the dominant mode.

Other Travellers to North York Centre

Other travellers (Others) are defined as those who do not live in the Centre area and do not work in the Centre area. These people most likely stopped in the area to make a discretionary trip. The following travel patterns of Others were observed:

- There was a general decrease in non-commuter trips between 2006 and 2016.
- Although there has been a shift away from the auto mode since 2006, auto is still the dominant mode share for Others to North York Centre, accounting for 71% of the trips.
- Even for short trips (< 6 km), the auto mode percentage is over 60%. Some of these trips might be one segment of a longer trip chain (i.e., the person was running errands and happened to stop in the area) therefore the trip distances could be deceiving.

A full review and analysis of the travel characteristics within the NYCSP is included in **Appendix A**.

Street Network

Road Classifications

The road network in the Mobility Study Area is made up of major and minor arterials, collector roads, local roads, and laneways. These are identified in **Figure 5-61**, based on the City of Toronto's Road Classification System.

While the Mobility Study Area is bounded by four existing major arterials (Steeles Avenue to the north, Bayview Avenue to the east, Wilson Avenue / York Mills Road to the south, and Bathurst Street to the west), Yonge Street is the only major arterial within North York Centre, running north-south through its core serving as the primary transportation corridor. Yonge Street supports a mix of land uses and provides key connections to the broader street network, which includes Highway 401 and east-west major arterials in the Mobility Study Area (including Finch Avenue and Sheppard Avenue). **Figure 5-60** below shows an example of an intersection along Yonge Street.

There are several minor arterial roads in the Mobility Study Area, including Drewry Avenue/ Cummer Avenue, Senlac Road, Beecroft Road, Doris Avenue, and Willowdale Avenue. They provide connections to residential neighbourhoods, mixed-use areas and institutional uses, parks, and to Yonge Street and other important corridors. These minor arterials often feature a handful of signalized intersections and Pedestrian Crossovers (PXOs).

Most roads within the Mobility Study Area are collectors and local roads that form a generally grid-like network. They provide connections throughout neighbourhoods and access to local facilities and arterial roads. In some locations within the Mobility Study Area, they have jogged intersections, are discontinuous, or end in cul-de-sacs. Notably, several local roads are terminated at Beecroft Road or Doris Avenue without providing access to either service roads or beyond to Yonge Street based on the policies in the existing North York Centre Secondary Plan. Further details are included in **Appendix A**.

North York Centre also has a network of laneways predominantly concentrated around Yonge Street and generally located behind traditional low-rise retail buildings. These laneways, typically accessed from the east-west streets which intersect Yonge, provide access to the adjacent properties.

An assessment of each of the arterial and collector roads is provided in **Appendix A.**

Figure 5-60: Example of a Major Arterial Road (Yonge Street at Elmhurst Avenue/Greenfield Avenue)

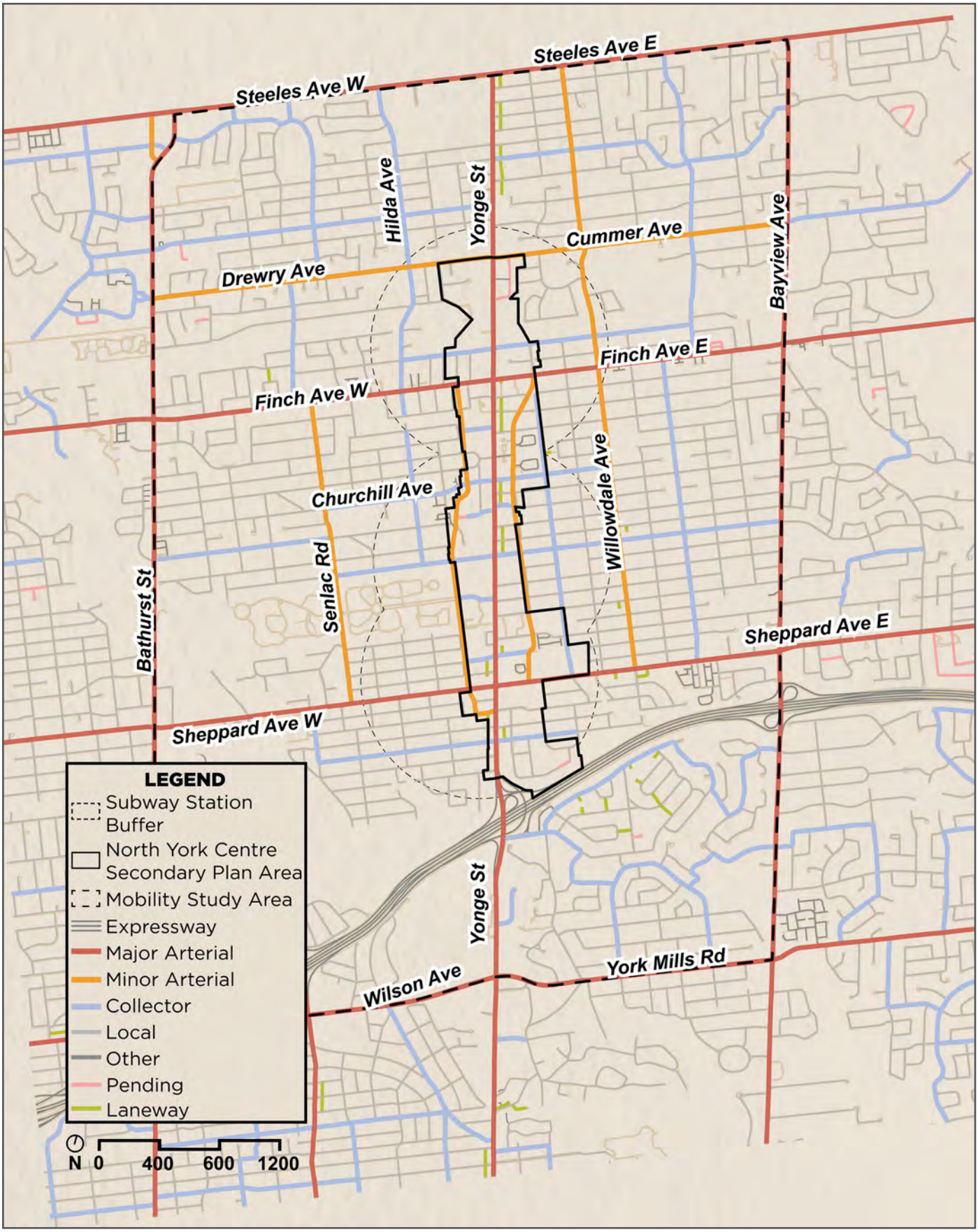


Figure 5-61: Road Classification for the Mobility Study Area

Street Typologies

The City of Toronto Complete Streets Guidelines provide an approach to balance the interests and needs of all street users to facilitate a transition to a more sustainable modal split and promote accessibility for street users of all ages and abilities.

Based on the existing conditions of the streets within the BESA, six Complete Streets typologies are proposed below which build upon the City's Complete Streets Guidelines while incorporating the local context within the Centre and the latest best practices.

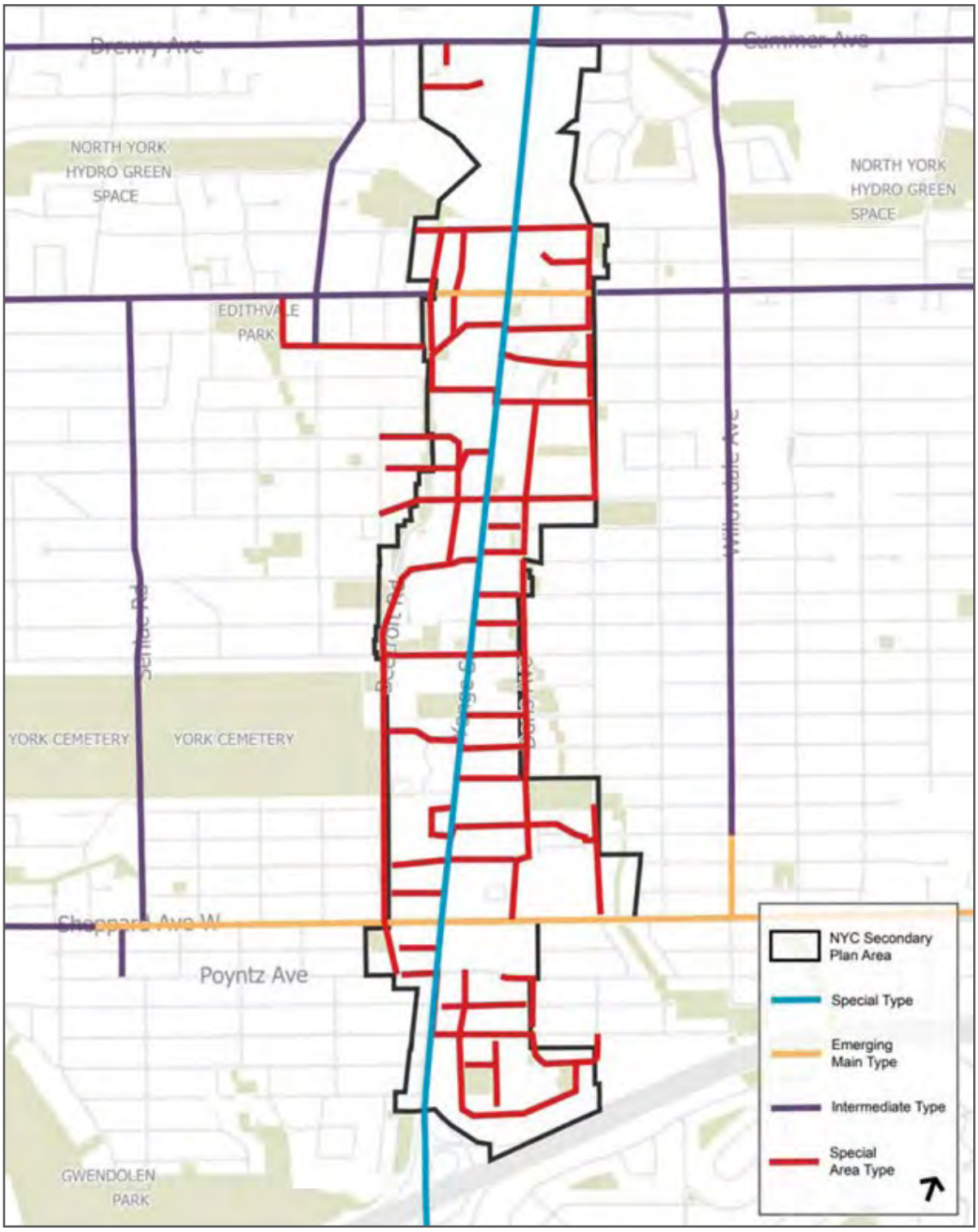
- **Main Street:** major arterials with two-three travel lanes per direction which facilitate the rapid movement of people via transit (surface or underground) and regional vehicular travel, while supporting high levels of pedestrian activity and a desire to accommodate dedicated cycling facilities in future. The abutting land are mixed-uses with generally continuous ground floor retail and generous pedestrian realms, with limited fronting vehicular accesses.
- **North-South Service Road:** minor arterials with two travel lanes per direction. These streets help with north-south vehicular circulation while also facilitating motor vehicle circulation between local, collector, and arterial streets. Some commercial entrances can be accessed off these streets. Placemaking on these streets is mostly in the form of softscaping, with some abutting parks, and typically form the boundary between mixed-use/urban core and neighbourhoods.
- **East-West Circulator:** collector roads with two-four total travel lanes. These streets prioritize east-west vehicular circulation and provide connections to major streets. Vehicular speeds are slower due to short blocks and curb lanes commonly serving as on-street parking. These streets are focal point in the pedestrian network due to their signalized crossings of major streets. In some cases, ground floor retail extends along these streets for a short distance off Yonge Street, and they facilitate access to private properties. Beyond the urban core area, many of these streets become Residential Connectors.
- **Urban Local Street:** east-west local streets with two-way motor vehicle travel within the urban core area, intersecting major north-south streets at unsignalized intersections. They often have on-street parking on one or both sides of the street. They accommodate circulation into and out of private accesses, and do not accommodate through traffic.
- **Residential Connector:** streets outside of the urban core area that perform a collector roads function from a mobility perspective, providing some movement across neighbourhoods and access to homes. These routes typically provide good east-west connectivity for one-to-four-kilometre trips to, from, and through the Centre.
- **Neighbourhood Local Street:** streets in low-density neighbourhood areas that perform a local mobility function and are intended to provide access to properties along the street. Abutting land uses are generally low-density residential. Many of these streets are intentionally discontinuous to discourage their use by through traffic and carry very low volumes of motor vehicle traffic.

Additionally, the streetscape types for existing streets in the BESA (**Figure 5-62**, based on the City's Streetscape Manual) dictate the way the boulevard space between the edge of the roadway to the building face will develop and the tailored design treatments each street will receive. Streetscape plays a key role in how people move within the neighbourhood. The following streetscape types are found in the BESA:

- **Special Streets Type:** Yonge Street
- **Emerging Main Streets Type:** Sheppard Avenue and parts of Finch Avenue

- **Intermediate Street Type:** Willowdale Avenue, Senlac Road, and parts of Finch Avenue
- **Special Area Type:** certain collector and local neighbourhood streets

An overview of Complete Streets methodology and an assessment of the typologies and streetscape types is included in **Appendix A**.



(Source: Streetscape Manual 2019)

Figure 5-62: Designated Streetscape Types within the Primary Study Area

Right-of-Way

The existing major arterial streets within the Mobility Study Area contain the widest rights-of-way, ranging from 30 to 36 m. Within the NYCSP boundary, right-of-way widths vary greatly, ranging from 20 m to 33 m. Beyond the NYCSP boundary, almost every street is a uniform 20 m right-of-way, except for Avondale Avenue, Empress Avenue, Hendon Avenue, and Bishop Avenue, which range between 23 m and 27 m. Opportunities exist to expand the planned ROWs to accommodate future multimodal demands, where appropriate.

Street Network Continuity & Connectivity

The street network within the BESA was evaluated for its continuity, compactness, and level of access. Typically, streets that provide high levels of these aspects indicate greatest potential for mobility, including for transit and cycling continuity. This evaluation will ultimately serve as the basis for reshaping and repurposing the Centre's street network to accommodate further intensification and growth in the area over the coming decades.

The evaluation revealed the following key findings:

- The BESA has adequate continuity within the City-owned Right-of-Way, along with a highly compact grid pattern and connected street network. This means that the City could leverage the existing street pattern to establish continuous streets and expand the street's mobility potential without the need for additional land acquisition, particularly through the realignment of jogged intersections and maintaining the continuity of specific streets currently interrupted at service roads.
- The streets with the greatest mobility potential based on street continuity include Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue, Finch Avenue, Empress and Park Home Avenues, Willowdale Avenue, Senlac Road, Cummer Avenue and Drewry Avenue. Each of these streets is presently classified as a collector or arterial road, and all of them except for Empress and Park Home Avenues feature TTC service.
- Other streets with moderate mobility potential include Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road and collector roads such as Church and Churchill Avenues, Hilda Avenue, and Talbot Road.
- Corridors which show significantly greater connectivity and potential for mobility in City-owned right-of-way than in street continuity include:
    - Ellerslie and Norton Avenues (which will have a signalized intersection with Yonge Street introduced as part of Transform Yonge)
    - Byng Avenue and Kempford Boulevard (which also has a jogged intersection at Yonge Street, previously identified in the current NYCSP and original EA)
    - North York Boulevard and Elmwood Avenues, which have potential to comprise an active transportation artery through the York Memorial Cemetery
    - Spring Garden Avenue
    - Elmhurst and Greenfield Avenue
- While pedestrian connectivity is high, the connectivity for active transportation modes falls below the desired levels. This reflects the importance of enhancing connectivity for active transportation with more well-connected facilities that are designed to be safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities.
- Intersection density within the BESA is lower than desired, reflecting the presence of several large undeveloped areas without street network connectivity, such as utility corridors, the cemetery, and surface parking lots. Greater levels of intersection density allow for mixed-used nodes and corridors that provide multiple options to access destinations with minimal travel times for all.

The full evaluation of street network continuity and connectivity is included in **Appendix A**.

Pavement Widths

A review of pavement widths for major streets within the BESA was completed, comparing the pavement width to a typical width for a new street based on the City's Lane Widths Guideline. The travel width of a street is the width between existing curb faces (inclusive of gutter) intended to facilitate motor vehicle travel and parking. Major streets are interpreted as those with four or more travel lanes. Travel widths were measured at mid-block locations and are not necessarily reflective of intersections where widths may be wider to accommodate auxiliary lanes. For simplicity, the target lane width values are assumed to be 3.3 metres for curb lanes and 3.0 metres for through and turning lanes.

Within the Mobility Study Area, almost all major streets exceed the specified target pavement width, with the majority exceeding by at least 1.0 metre. Streets that exceed by at least 1.5 metres include:

- Park Home Avenue and Poyntz Avenue (both Beecroft Road to Yonge Street);
- Bishop Avenue (Yonge Street to Maxome Avenue);
- Finch Avenue; and
- Sheppard Avenue.

Narrowing the pavement width when opportunities arise can encourage slower motor vehicle travel and create more space in the cross section for other street elements. This review did not consider on-street parking which would impact the potential of road narrowing. In some cases, conversion of off-peak parking lanes to full-time parking lanes could create potential for further narrowing.

A detailed overview of existing pavement width of major streets, including the potential excess pavement width relative to the typical width, is included in **Appendix A**.

Pedestrian Clearway

The pedestrian clearway is the width along the sidewalk that is free of obstructions. On traditional residential streets with grass boulevards, the sidewalk width and clearway are typically the same, but on urban streets without boulevards or with streetscaping, elements such as benches and poles can reduce the clearway.

Figure 5-64 presents the sidewalk clearway for major streets in the Centre, and whether they meet the minimum clearway of 1.5 metres specified in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA).

The sidewalk widths and pedestrian clearway in the BESA vary. Less than 40% of sidewalks measured meet the City's 2.1 metres minimum width standard. The major arterials including Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue, and Finch Avenue West, feature sidewalks ranging from 1.5 metres to 5.0 metres in width. The sidewalks along Yonge Street expand even further, reaching up to 8.0 metres in proximity to the Finch Subway Station. Minor Arterial and Collector streets, including Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue, have predominantly 1.5-metre-wide sidewalks, occasionally expanding to 2.0 metres at specific locations. The median sidewalk width in the BESA is just 1.7 metres, and the most common width is 1.5 metres, reflecting that most sidewalks were built prior to the City's current wider 2.1 metre standard. As part of the planned Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue extensions, new sidewalks will be upgraded to meet the current City standards.

While the City of Toronto maintains a standard minimum width of 2.1 metres for sidewalks, the City does not have guidance on when this width should be increased. According to the City's Pedestrian Clearway Widths on Sidewalks standard, the minimum width can be reduced to 1.8 metres on local roads with low pedestrian and motor vehicle volumes. It also says that in areas where higher pedestrian traffic, an increase in pedestrian clearway widths will be required. For such situations, the City advises consultation with staff to address the context-specific conditions.

The North Yok at the Centre project presents an opportunity to identify context specific targets for new development and reconstruction projects. A guide for benchmarking in the context of North York Centre is the Walking Space Guide published by New South Wales, Australia, further explored in **Appendix A**.

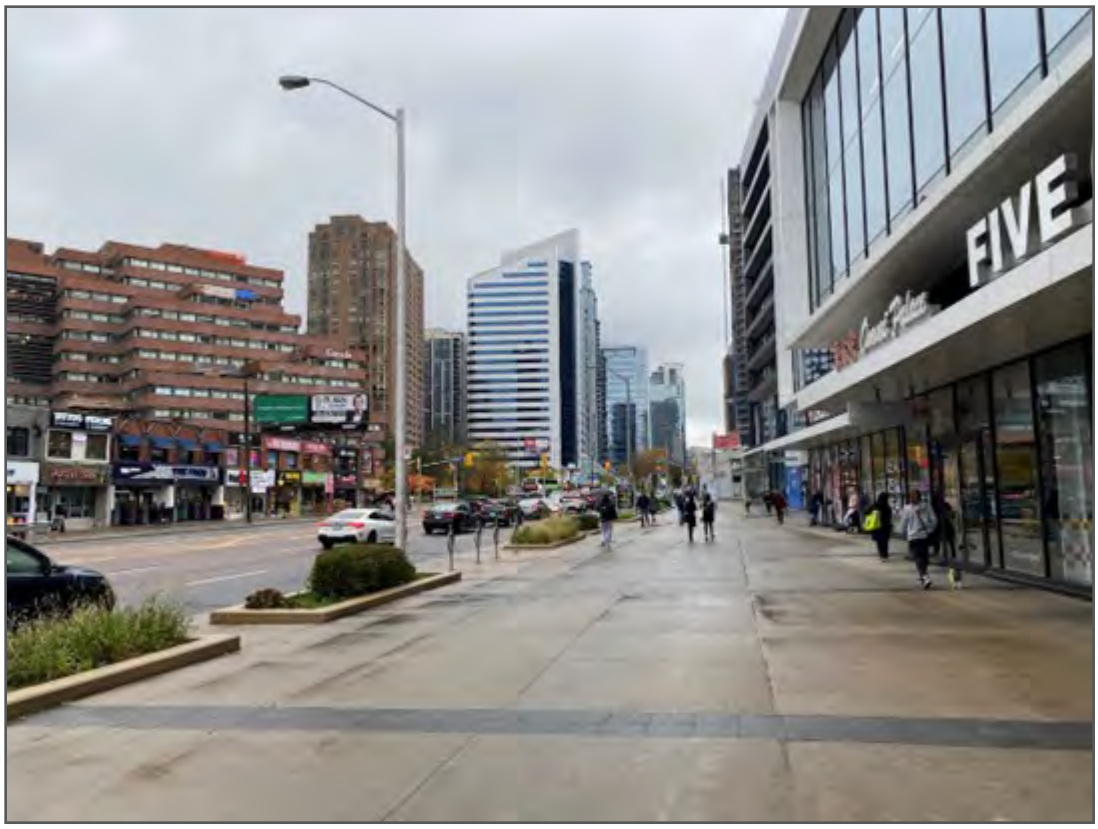


Figure 5-63: Example of a Wide Public Realm Fronting Yonge Street

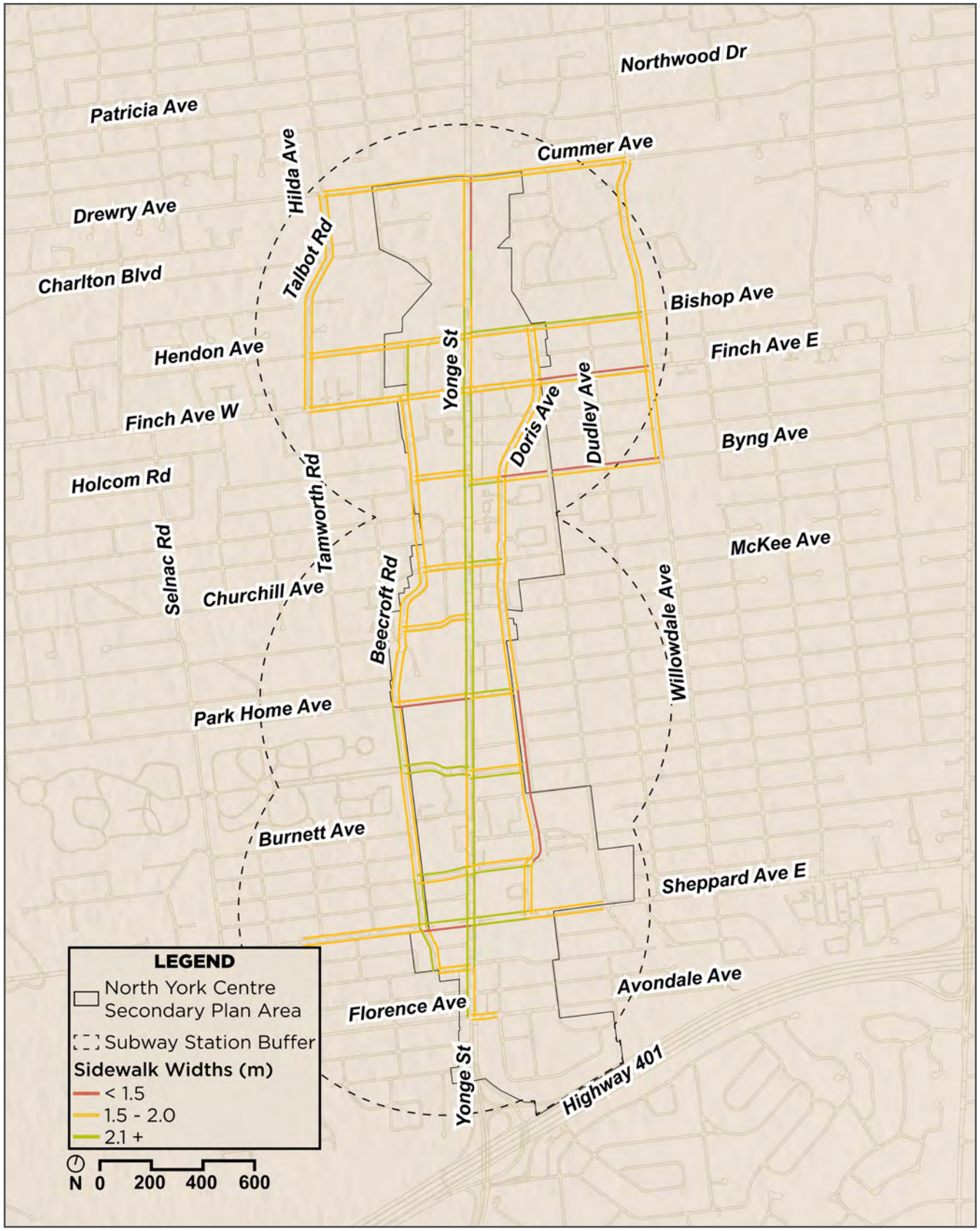


Figure 5-64: Sidewalk Widths within the Boundary Expansion Study Area

Sidewalk widths are based on whether the sidewalks do not meet the minimum clearway of 1.5 m specified in the AODA (red lines), if they do meet or exceed the AODA minimum but fall short of the City's standard minimum sidewalk width of 2.1 m (yellow lines), or if they meet or exceed the City's minimum standard (green lines).

Pavement Conditions

A review of pavement conditions within the Mobility Study Area was conducted and mapped in **Figure 5-65**. Assessing pavement conditions can be used to infer which street segments are more likely to be programmed for road work in the near-term, presenting opportunities to bundle other roadway improvements such as narrowing, addition of green infrastructure, sidewalks, or cycling facilities.

Roads were either classified as in poor, fair, or good condition. In general, the majority of arterial roads within the Mobility Study Area are in fair to poor condition. The map does not include the segment of Beecroft Road constructed between 2012 and 2014 and for the segment of Doris Avenue between Byng Avenue and Finch Avenue East; these segments can be considered in "good" condition based on the recency of their construction. Collector roads within the Mobility Study Area typically have fair pavement conditions, while local roads generally have fair to good pavement conditions.

Subsurface Utility Considerations

A review of subsurface municipal servicing infrastructure, utility considerations, and any potential conflicts was conducted. This review will inform the development and evaluation of mobility and public realm options. The approximate locations of the subsurface municipal servicing infrastructure within the BESA along Yonge Street are outlined in **Appendix A**.

Planned Road Work

A summary of the upcoming and recently completed projects in the City's capital plan is included in **Appendix A**.

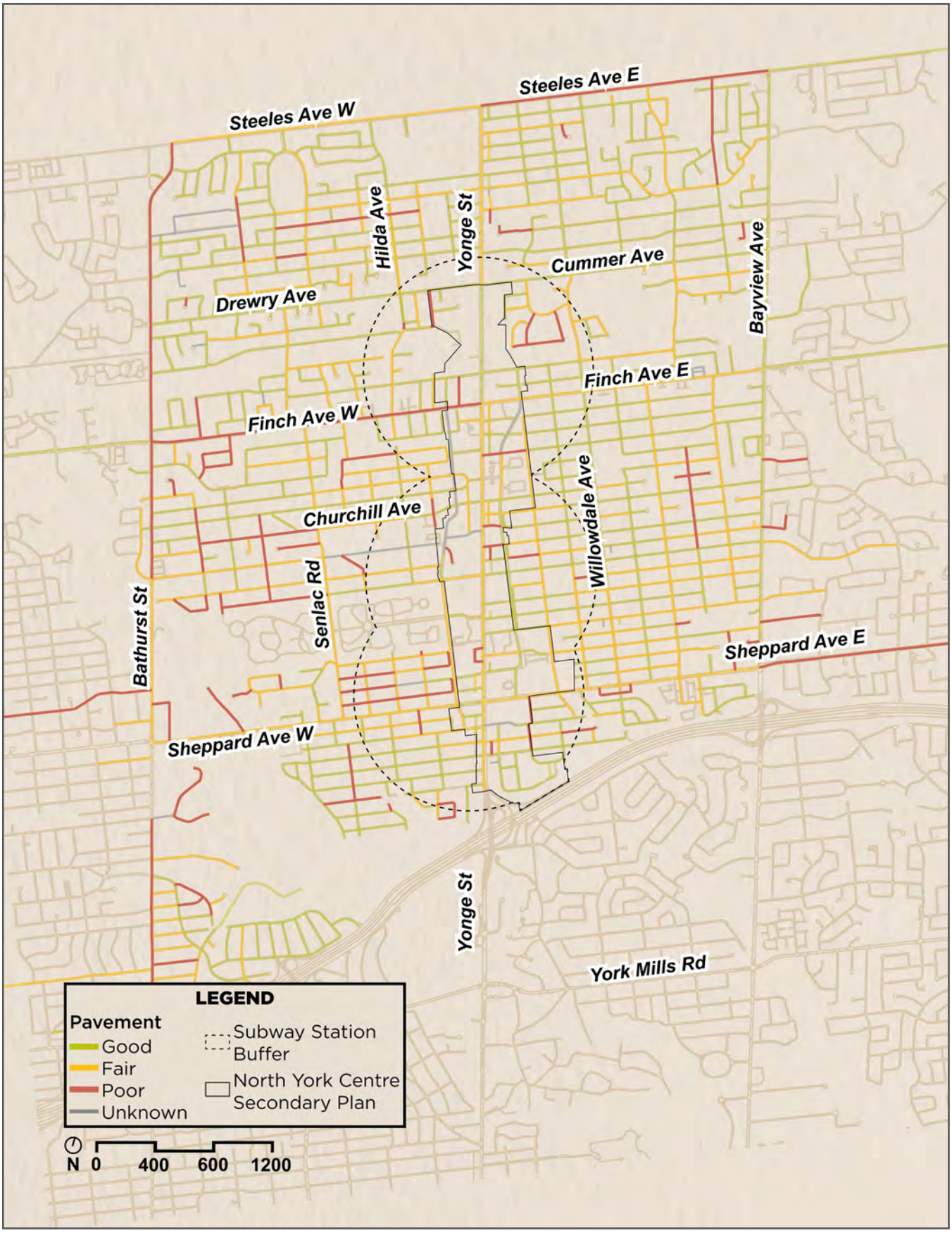


Figure 5-65: Pavement Quality

Major Street Projects

There are several major street projects at various stages of design and implementation that will significantly modify and enhance the street network in and around North York Centre, summarized below.

REimagining Yonge Street Environmental Assessment and Transform Yonge: The REimagining Yonge Street Environmental Assessment (2020) proposes improvements to streetscaping and public realm for all users along Yonge Street from Sheppard Avenue to the Finch Hydro Corridor. The preferred design concept for Yonge Street includes:

- A cross-section reduction from six to four traffic lanes between Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue, as well as lane widths reduced to match City guidelines;
- Wider sidewalks and boulevards;
- New and enhanced pedestrian crossings, traffic signals, and turn restrictions at some intersections, including new signals at Yonge Street / Ellerslie Avenue and Yonge Street / Horsham Avenue / Northtown Way;
- Extension of the centre landscaped median to the northern and southern extents of the Study Area;
- Addition of raised cycle tracks in the boulevard;
- On-street lay-bys for parking, loading and deliveries, where right-of way width permits;
- The removal of left-turn lanes at the intersection of Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue, to be accommodated by the future extension of the North York Centre Service Roads (Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue); and
- Modifications in the section of Yonge Street between Finch Avenue and Hendon Avenue/ Bishop Avenue to improve TTC bus travel.

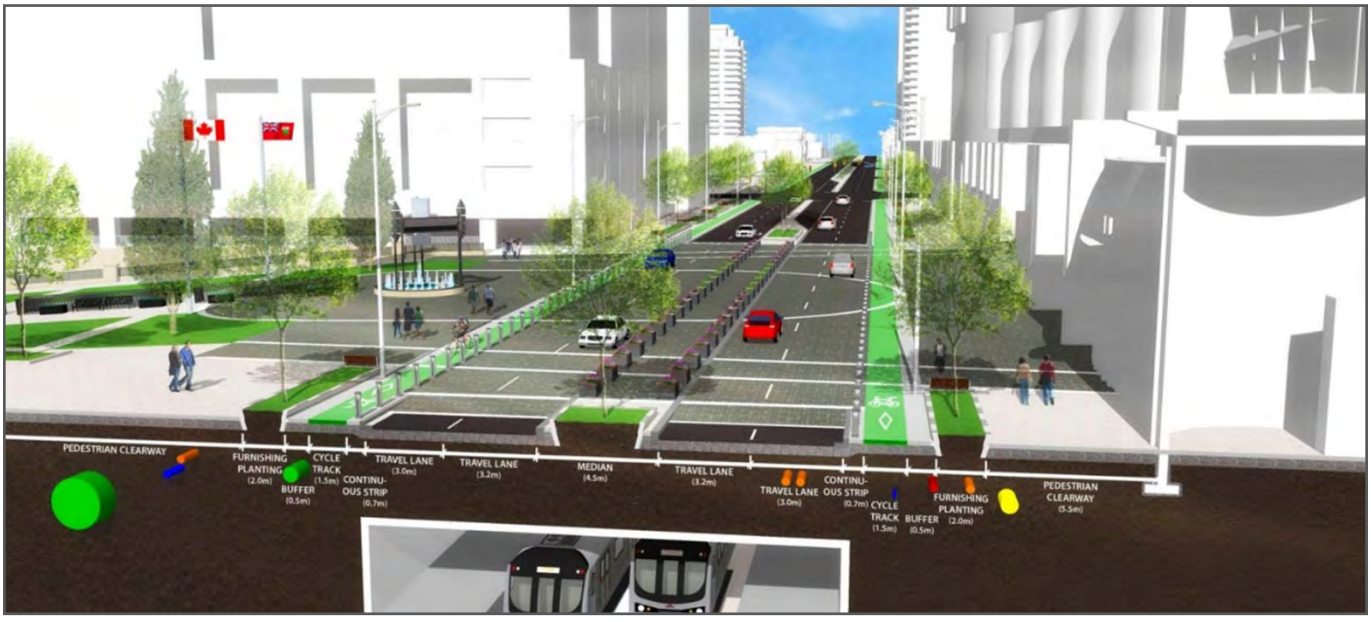


Figure 5-66: Rendering of the Yonge Street Cross Section Proposed by the REimagining Yonge Environmental Assessment

Beecroft Road Extension (2026-2027): Beecroft Road will be extended from its current terminus at Finch Avenue West north to Drewry Avenue, replacing and widening Greenview Avenue, based upon the preferred alternative solution identified in the Uptown Service Road and Associated Road Network Environment Study Report (1993), alongside the NYCSP. The design for the Beecroft Extension will include enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and accommodate for street trees/landscaping. Construction is scheduled to occur in 2026 to 2027. This work will be bundled with the closing of the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail gap from Duplex Avenue to Kenneth Avenue.

Doris Avenue Extension (2026-2027): The North York Centre South Service Road Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Addendum proposed a two phased approach to construct a new four-lane road connection between Doris Avenue and Tradewind Avenue with two lanes in each direction, sidewalks on both sides of the road, and a wider boulevard where feasible. In the interim condition, only two through lanes will be built south of Sheppard Avenue East. Construction is scheduled to occur in 2026 to 2027. This work will be bundled with the resurfacing of Sheppard Avenue East between Yonge Street and Kenneth Avenue and the addition of cycle tracks along the segment.

Highway 401 / Yonge Street Interchange Environmental Assessment: A 2015 feasibility study conducted jointly by the City of Toronto and MTO reviewed options for improving vehicular capacity of the Yonge Street/Highway 401 interchange, with consideration for new and/or improved cycling connections and pedestrian crossing opportunities. As a next step the City and MTO are planning to launch an environmental assessment study later in 2024.

Major street projects and the recommended Transportation Network in the Yonge Street North Transportation Master Plan (refer to Section **5.5.1 Policy and Guidelines** – Yonge Street North Secondary Plan and Transportation Master Plan) are shown in **Figure 5-67**.

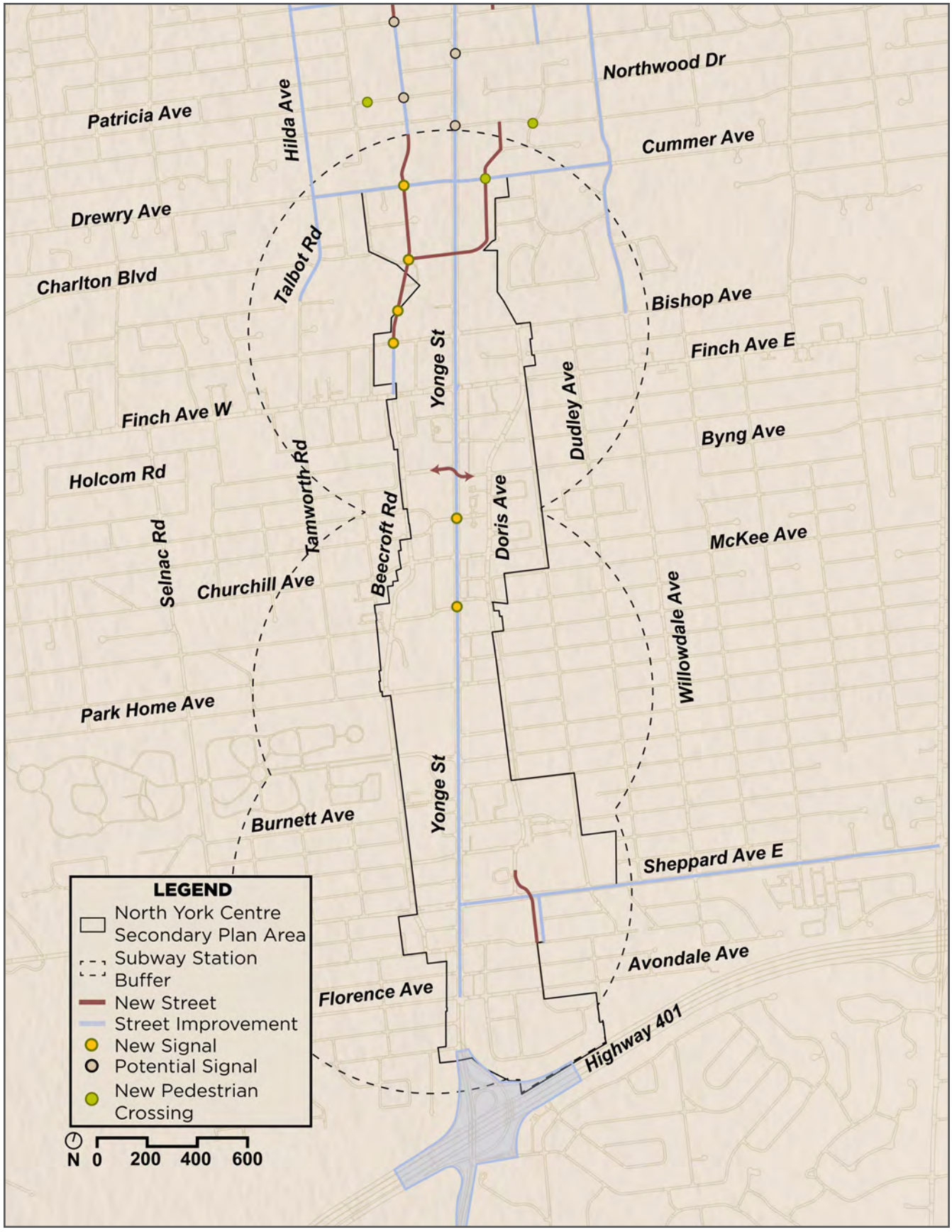


Figure 5-67: Map of Major Street Projects

Note: Potential signals are those identified in the Yonge Street North TMP that require further assessment.

Pedestrian Network

North York Centre consists of a vast network of sidewalks, walkways, trails, and midblock connections, depicted in **Figure 5-68**, each playing a unique role in shaping the overall urban environment.

Sidewalks

The sidewalk network forms the primary pedestrian infrastructure within the Mobility Study Area and is generally well-developed. The City of Toronto has a long-term goal to have sidewalks on both sides of arterials and collector roads and at minimum on one side of local roads.

Within the Mobility Study Area, all arterial roads feature sidewalks on both sides except for the segment of Yonge Street crossing Highway 401 where a sidewalk is present on only one side. Most collector roads also have sidewalks on both sides; however, many have segments where the sidewalk is only on one side. Notably, Newton Drive has a segment of road with no sidewalks on either side of the road. In contrast, local streets often only have a sidewalk on one side, or none at all. Within the Mobility Study Area, **25.6%** of local roads have a sidewalk on one side, and another **18.8%** of local road do not have any sidewalks. This deficiency in the pedestrian network directly impacts the walkability and overall pedestrian experience within the inner neighbourhoods.

Multiple streets (primarily local streets) near schools also lack sidewalks or any pedestrian infrastructure. Ensuring proper pedestrian facilities near schools is crucial for the safety of students, and to encourage physical activity like walking. A full list of both collector roads and local roads near schools missing sidewalks is listed in **Appendix A**.

Addressing these gaps in the sidewalk network is crucial for enhancing connectivity, accessibility, and safety for pedestrians within Centre and will greatly improve the overall pedestrian experience.

Informal/Desire Paths

Desire paths emerge when people choose more direct or convenient routes, especially in areas where the existing infrastructure does not meet their needs. Significant desire lines were observed at Bishop Avenue (north side), east of Yonge adjacent to the Finch Station parking lot; at North York Boulevard (north side), from Beecroft Road to North York Civic Centre; and at Bales Avenue (west side), from Avondale Avenue to Glendora Avenue. These desired paths play an essential role in establishing a continuous pedestrian network within the centre and must be protected and improved. Additionally, new pedestrian connections within the centre should also align with existing desired paths.

Internal Walkways

Along Yonge Street are numerous public buildings with entrances directly accessible from the street level, connecting pedestrian to an interior pedestrian network of indoor walkways. Among the public buildings with internal walkways are the Empress Walk Mall, North York Centre, Meridian Hall, and Sheppard Centre. These walkways connect podiums and atriums both above and underground to form a weather-protected network that serve as key connections within the broader pedestrian network, enhancing accessibility and connectivity in the area.

Midblock Connections

There are several pedestrian midblock connections all along the Primary Study Area (PSA) that connect Yonge Street with Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue, especially around North York Centre and Meridian Hall.

POPS can also create tertiary pedestrian connections offering relief and alternative routes. These enhance pedestrian access throughout the area, contributing to a more dynamic and interconnected pedestrian experience, such as the POPS at 27 Bales Avenue. Efforts to identify and enhance these midblock connections, focusing on improved safety and accessibility, are crucial. Encouraging midblock connections in new developments is also essential for creating a fine grained and accessible public realm.

Trails

The pedestrian network in North York Centre is complemented by a series of trails that weave through parks and connect to the ravines. Currently there are two major trail systems in the Mobility Study Area: the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail, and a continuous trail network within the parks and open spaces following a former creek bed. Connectivity between these trails is notably lacking within the Centre. Along the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail there is a gap in the trail from Duplex Avenue to Kenneth Avenue, which is planned to be addressed as part of the Beecroft Road Extension.

Efforts to enhance and establish trails connecting the urban centre with the nearby ravines could contribute to a more integrated and accessible pedestrian network that offers better access to the ravines.

Pedestrian walkways along private driveways and lanes

The pedestrian network in North York Centre also includes the pedestrian walkways along private driveways and lanes connecting public sidewalks in the public boulevard. Although these driveways are not public thoroughfares, the pedestrian walkways along them play a significant role in the overall connectivity of the pedestrian infrastructure.

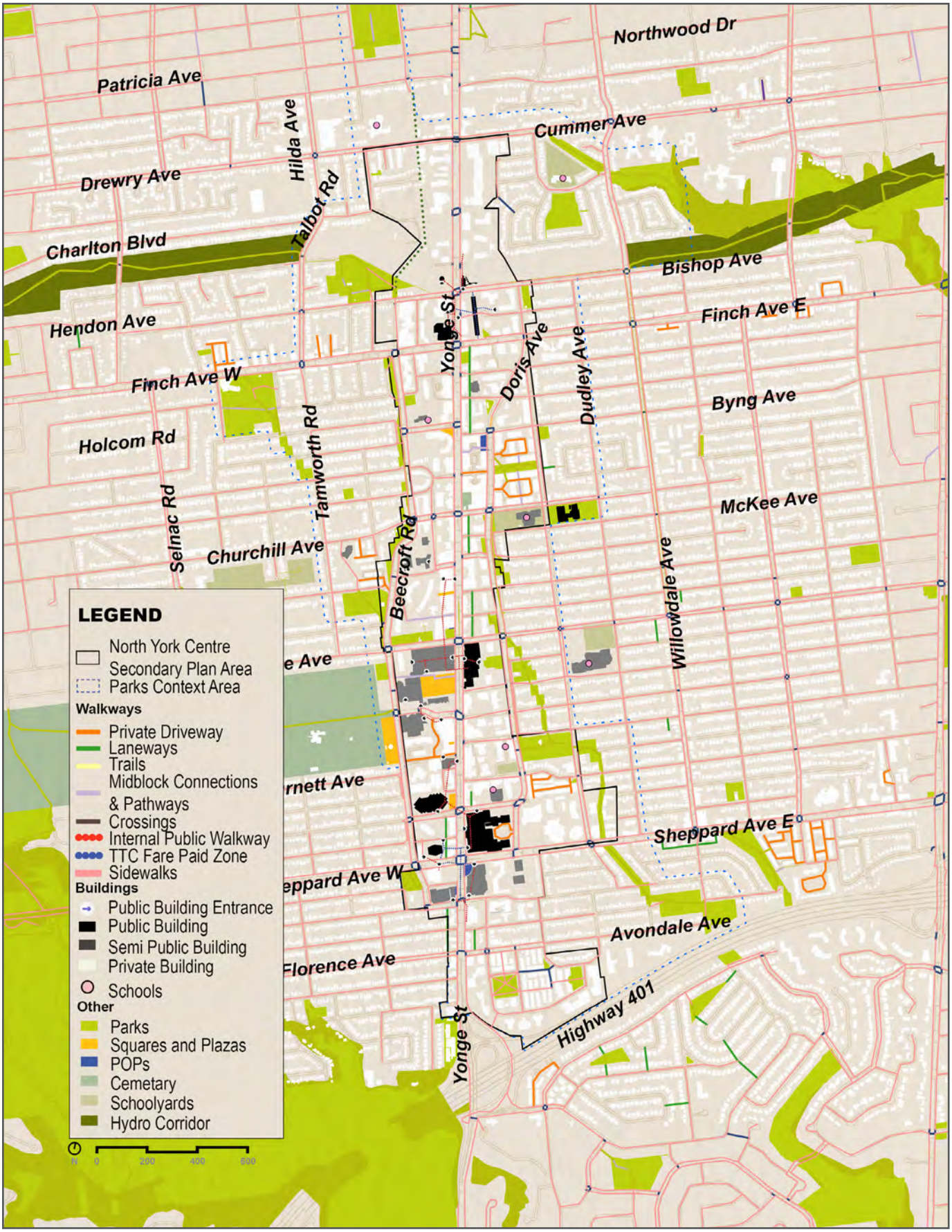


Figure 5-68: Pedestrian Network within the Mobility Study Area

Walkshed Analysis

A walkshed analysis delineates the pedestrian catchment area surrounding the TTC Subway Stations in the Centre, illustrated in **Figure 5-69**. This assessment aims to evaluate the accessibility of transit stations by walking. The analysis is based on the distance pedestrians are typically willing to walk to reach a transit station, set at 800 m or approximately a 10-minute walk. This approach differs from measuring an 800 m radius around transit stations, which may not accurately reflect pedestrian accessibility due to an inadequately connected street network or other barriers.

The analysis reveals that the area is generally compact and conducive to walking to reach rapid transit, and that nearly the entire Primary Study Area is within walking distance to the subway stations. It also highlights the enhanced east-west connectivity facilitated by small blocks, in contrast to the larger blocks between Byng Avenue and Churchill Avenue/ Church Avenue in the northern section near Finch station, where walking distances are constrained, and connectivity is reduced. North of Finch Station, the effect of the Finch Hydro Corridor and a lack of grid network design is particularly noticeable on the walkshed; for example, despite being less than 250 m from Finch Station, residents of Bowerbank Drive are not within the 800 m walkshed. Notably, an active transportation connection between Bowerbank Drive and the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail is planned as part of the Yonge Street North Transportation Master Plan.

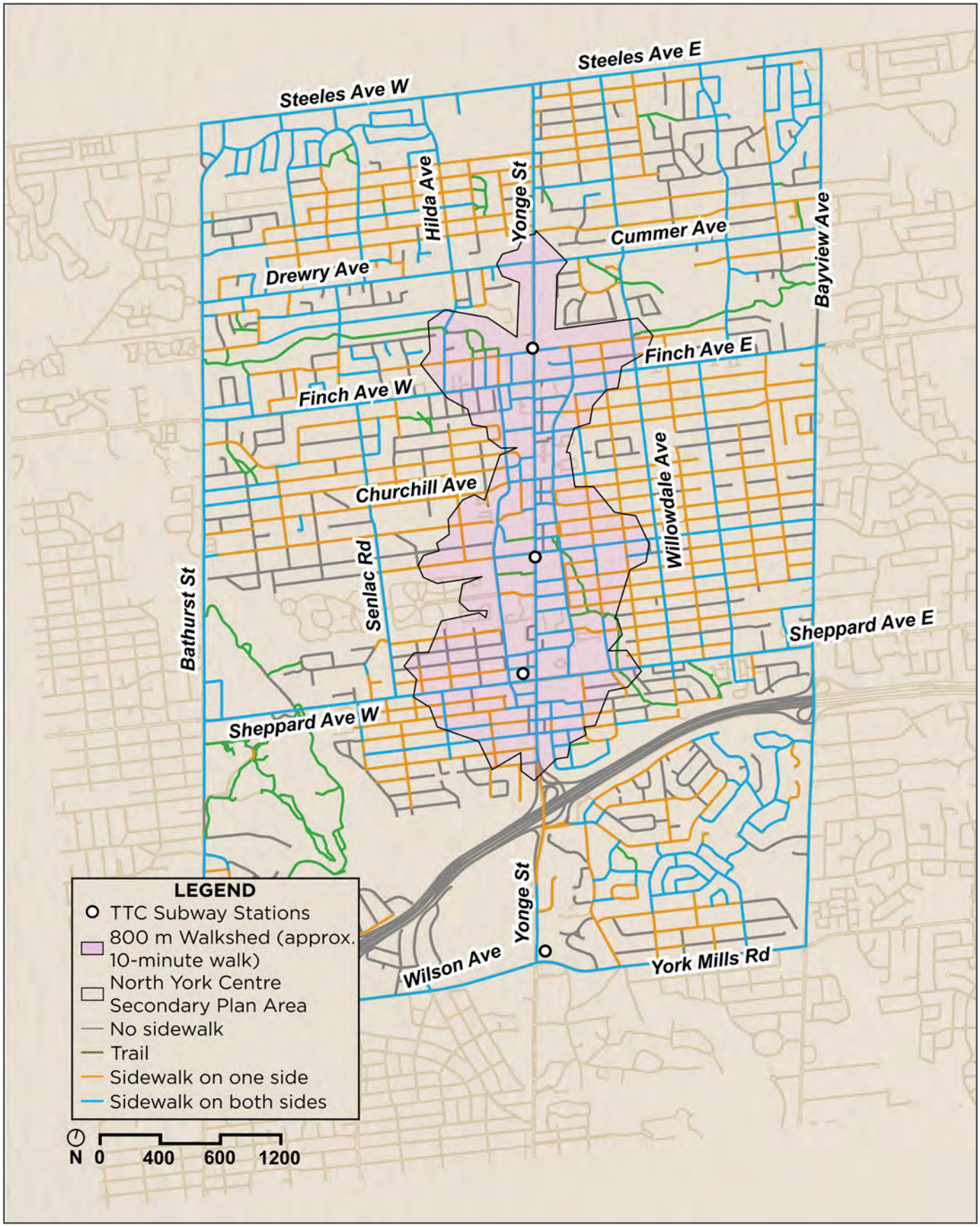


Figure 5-69: Walkshed Analysis within the Mobility Study Area

Streetscape

Frontage and Marketing

The Frontage and Marketing Zone refers to the space in front of the buildings that creates a buffer between pedestrians from windows, doorways, and other building appurtenances. This zone may consist of marketing, outdoor merchandise displays, boulevard cafés and/or landscaping, and in some cases, it may support street furniture. The current streetscape in North York Centre does not have a designated frontage and marketing zone except for some sections of Yonge Street where there are new streetscape improvements. Transform Yonge will transform the streetscape in the future to include designated Frontage and Marketing zones along Yonge Street. However, several businesses along Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue, Finch Avenue and other side streets have informally been using the space in front of their buildings as frontage zones for putting out their merchandise displays, menus, etc., and some of them also extend into Patios (**Figure 5-70**).

Patios

Patios are an integral part of businesses in North York Centre where they take several forms. Single storey retail structures mostly housing local businesses often contain patios extending into the setback, protected through fences, and covered using shade structures such as awnings and umbrellas. During the summer months, some of these patios also extend into the curb lane of the street as part of the City's CaféTO program (**Figure 5-82**), especially the ones that do not have enough boulevard space to accommodate a patio.

Slab towers with ground floor retail with wide setbacks from the public right-of-way also accommodate patios on the ground floor characterized by awnings.

Permanent canopy structures are part of the podium design in many of the newly constructed point towers, especially on Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue.

(Source: Google Earth)

Figure 5-70: Single Storey Retail Patios

(Source: Google Earth)

Figure 5-71: Point Towers with Ground Floor Retail Spilling on to the Setback

Furnishing and Planting Zone

The Streetscape Manual defines the Furnishing and Planting Zone as the zone directly adjacent to the Edge Zone. It may contain street furniture, sidewalk cafés, soft landscaping and tree plantings and other fixed objects. The Furnishing and Planting Zone provides an important comfort buffer between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. In North York Centre, the width of the Furnishing and Planting Zone varies widely based on the type of street and the following sections describe them in detail.

Street Furniture

Street furniture plays a significant role in improving the quality of the public realm by contributing towards the safety, comfort, and vibrancy of our streets.

Street furniture in the Centre is mostly found along Yonge Street where the wide right-of-way and boulevard widths can accommodate dedicated amenities including benches, bike racks, litterbins, information pillars, publication boxes and transit shelters. Additionally, the public realm along Yonge Street incorporates substantial planters with street trees and shrubbery that provides shade.

Despite their wide right-of-way of 35.6 metres, Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue have substandard boulevards with little to no street furniture.

While Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue both lack street furniture like benches and bike racks, they are connected by a series of small parks and parkettes that include street furniture, providing relief to pedestrians. Local streets often lack street furniture. There are opportunities to add and improve street furniture, especially better seating, bike racks and litter bins closer to intersections.

(Source: Google Earth)

Figure 5-72: Finch Avenue West (Left), Sheppard Avenue West (Right)

Soft Landscaping and Tree Planting

Dedicated soft landscaping and tree planting zones are found all along Yonge Street and their nature varies by street segment. The west side of Yonge Street from Ellerslie Avenue to Elmhurst Avenue contains a continuous line of young trees in standalone planters. Similar planting patterns are also observed in some parts of the boulevard on the east. Portions of Yonge Street accommodate mature trees in the roadway median. Parts of Finch Avenue are lined with a continuous row of trees and others contain rows of planters. Similar to Finch Avenue, Sheppard Avenue also lacks a consistent streetscape treatment, but the landscape zone contains a variety of plantings and trees, mostly implemented and maintained by private landowners. Doris Ave and Beecroft Rd are both lined with a continuous row of trees with a landscape zone that separates the roadway from the boulevards. All the neighbourhood streets have mature trees in the boulevard either separating the sidewalk from the roadway or located on private properties.

Edge Zone

The Edge Zone is located immediately adjacent to the roadway and provides clearance between the traveled portion of the road/parked motor vehicles and other sidewalk functions. This zone provides a safety buffer against such things as door swings and mirrors, and it can possibly accommodate sign and utility posts, garbage set out and snow windrow storage. Some of the newly improved streetscapes along Yonge Street have a designated edge zone that not only creates a buffer between the pedestrian clearway and the roadway but also house elements such as lighting, wayfinding and signage and garbage bins.

Signage and Wayfinding

Signage in Study Area exists in two forms: information pillars and main street retail signs. Information pillars are more formal ways of displaying wayfinding information through “Wayfinding360” maps and are implemented by the City within the public right-of-way. These information pillars are only found at major intersections. Main street retail signs, however, are more informal, and they add to the vibrancy of the area providing pedestrians with information of local establishments.

The Centre is also home to many publicly accessible buildings such as the North York Library, parts of North York Centre, Meridian Arts Centre, Empress Walk Mall and several atriums of office buildings. The Pedestrian network in the Centre could benefit from signage leading to midblock connections, internal pathways.

(Source: Google Earth)

Figure 5-73: Wayfinding360 Signage at Yonge Street and North York Boulevard

Public Art

Public art in North York Centre is comprised of a collection of many commemorative pieces that speak to the history of the neighbourhood. Their locations are mapped in **Figure 5-75**. A cluster of art installations is situated around the prominent government office buildings located within the Centre. Another prominent location with a cluster of artworks is seen in Lee Lifeson Art Park with significant pieces such as the “Limelight” and “180 Mirrors”. As per Map 8-14 of the Secondary Plan, additional installations were envisioned for the northern and southern gateways to the Centre and for other prominent locations. North York Centre also contains public art within POPS and within private buildings.

StreetARToronto (StART), an initiative by City of Toronto, is a suite of innovative programs designed specifically for streets and public spaces. StART has implemented several murals in the Centre by local artists.

Figure 5-74: Art in Lee Lifeson Art Park – Limelight (Left), 180 Mirrors (Right)

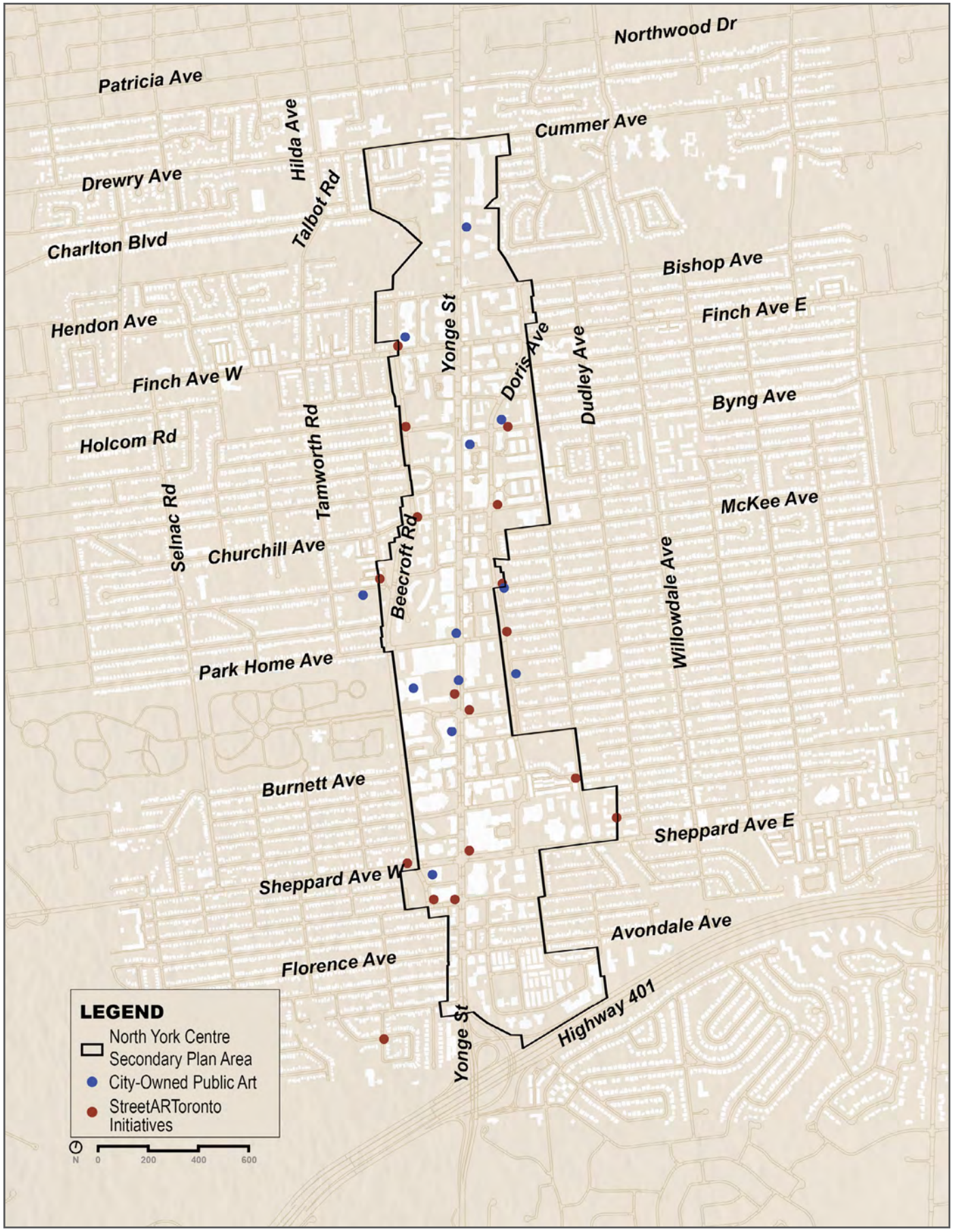


Figure 5-75: Public Art within the Centre

Cycling Network

Figure 5-76 illustrates the existing and planned cycling facilities as well as existing and proposed locations for Toronto Bike Share stations for the Mobility Study Area. The following categories are reflected in this map:

- **Existing Cycling Network:** Constructed as of January 2024, briefly summarized below.
- **Installation Underway or Scheduled:** Identified in the City's planned capital works.
- **Under Consideration for 2025 – 2027 Near-Term Program:** Presented in the 2025 – 2027 Near-Term Implementation Plan; only a subset of these routes will likely be built, and the final list may include streets not in this draft plan.
- **Additional Bikeways Under Consideration:** This includes the Long-Term Cycling Network Vision from the City's Cycling Network Plan and improvements included in a published plan with no set timeline for implementation, specifically improvements identified in adjacent secondary plans.

Existing cycling facilities within the Mobility Study Area are limited to the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail (with a notable gap between Duplex Avenue and Kenneth Avenue), the Willowdale Avenue cycle tracks between Bishop Avenue and Maplehurst Avenue, and a short trail connecting Sheppard Avenue East to Glendora Park.

Other components of the existing cycling network include bicycle lockers available at Finch TTC Station and bicycle repair stands are available at Finch and Sheppard-Yonge TTC Stations. There are three existing Bike Share Toronto stations within the Mobility Study Area at the following locations: TTC Finch Station, 19 Glendora Avenue and Esther Shiner Civic Stadium (Finch Hydro Corridor Trail at Bathurst Street).

Guiding the short and long-term cycling investments in Toronto is the City's Cycling Network Plan (CNP). The three main components of the CNP as it relates to the Mobility Study Area include the following:

- **Near-Term Implementation Program:** To realize the City's ultimate cycling network vision, the City has a rolling three-year near-term implementation program, which is flexible and relies on coordinated planning and capital works. Note that some projects from the 2022 – 2024 program have been delayed and will have implementation in 2025 or later. At the time of publication, the proposed Cycling Network 2025 – 2027 Near-Term Implementation Program has been recommended to the Infrastructure and Environment Committee and would be considered at City Council in June 2024. A list of the components that apply to the Mobility Study Area and candidate routes from this Program, are listed in **Appendix A**, along with suggested additions from the public to improve routes and connections.
- **Long-Term Cycling Network Vision:** This envisions that every street in Toronto should be considered for bikeways and other cycling upgrades. To help prioritize its near-term efforts, each street is regularly analysed to determine its value to the cycling network. Each street in Toronto was scored on its current and potential cycling demand, trip generators, transit access, connectivity, coverage, barriers, safety, and Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. Within the Mobility Study Area, Yonge Street was the only street to receive the highest score of "Top", while many other streets received the second-highest score of "High" including Finch Avenue, Sheppard Avenue, Beecroft Road, Dorris Avenue, Hilda Avenue, Empress Avenue, Park Home Avenue, and Florence Avenue.

- **Major City-Wide Cycling Routes:** There are several significant corridors where high order cycling infrastructure has been installed, is underway, or is planned. These Major City-Wide Cycling Routes support a connected system across the GTHA by linking with other cycling routes in neighbouring municipalities. These cycling routes complement those identified in broader Provincial and City Plans, including the Metrolinx Regional Cycling Network Plan and TOcore. The Major City-Wide Cycling Routes map, published in November 2021, identifies Yonge Street, Bathurst Street, Sheppard Avenue West, Sheppard Avenue East, and the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail as part of this network. Each route is currently in a different stage of development.

In addition, planned / proposed cycling facilities and network improvements are or will be identified as part of ongoing resurfacing, reconstruction, and new roadway projects underway at North York Centre, including:

- REimagining Yonge Street Environmental Assessment and Transform Yonge
- Beecroft Road Extension
- Doris Avenue Extension
- Highway 401 / Yonge Street Interchange Environmental Assessment
- Yonge Street North Secondary Plan and Transportation Master Plan
- Road Resurfacing on Sheppard Avenue between Kenneth Avenue and Bayview Avenue

Overall, the future potential cycling network places Yonge Street as the central spine of the network, supported by Willowdale Avenue and Hilda Avenue as secondary north-south routes. In the east-west directions, Sheppard Avenue and the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail provide major east-west connectivity, supported by Elmwood Avenue, Church Avenue, Churchill Avenue, and Drewry Avenue as secondary east-west routes.

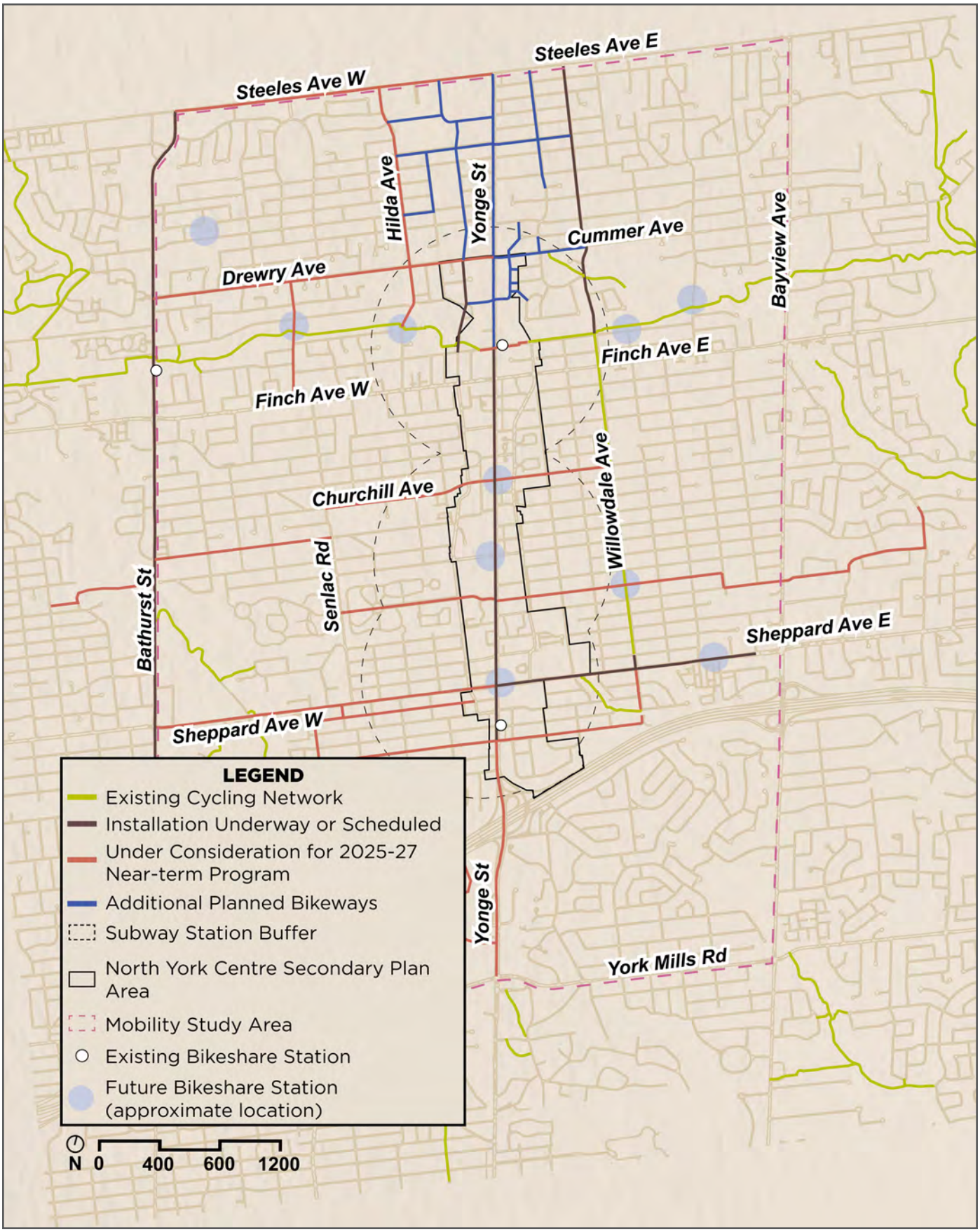


Figure 5-76: Existing and Planned Cycling Network within the Mobility Study Area

Cycleshed Analysis

The cycleshed analysis conducted for the Mobility Study Area is illustrated in **Figure 5-77**. It delineates a five-kilometre catchment area around the segment of Yonge Street that falls within the Mobility Study Area. The five-kilometre distance represents how far people cycling are typically willing to travel, equivalent to an approximately 15- to 20-minute ride, and it helps to visualize the area within and around North York Centre with potential to be accessed via cycling.

Within the five-kilometre catchment area, the analysis shows a 250 m buffer around each of the existing and future planned cycling facilities. This generally indicates that if all proposals were to materialize, the potential future cycling network of North York Centre would significantly improve accessibility to cycling with improved connectivity and higher quality facilities compared to existing conditions. This would make cycling an attractive travel mode particularly for the residents, employees, and visitors of the Mobility Study Area.

Note that the analysis indicates the following key sections of the Mobility Study Area that fall within the 5 km catchment area but are not covered by a 250 m infrastructure buffer, and thus may benefit from consideration of future cycling improvements:

- Areas to the northeast and southeast of Willowdale Avenue and Cummer Avenue
- Area to the northeast of Bathurst Street and Drewry Avenue
- Area to the southeast of Bathurst Street and Finch Avenue West
- Most of the area south of Sheppard Avenue East near Highway 401

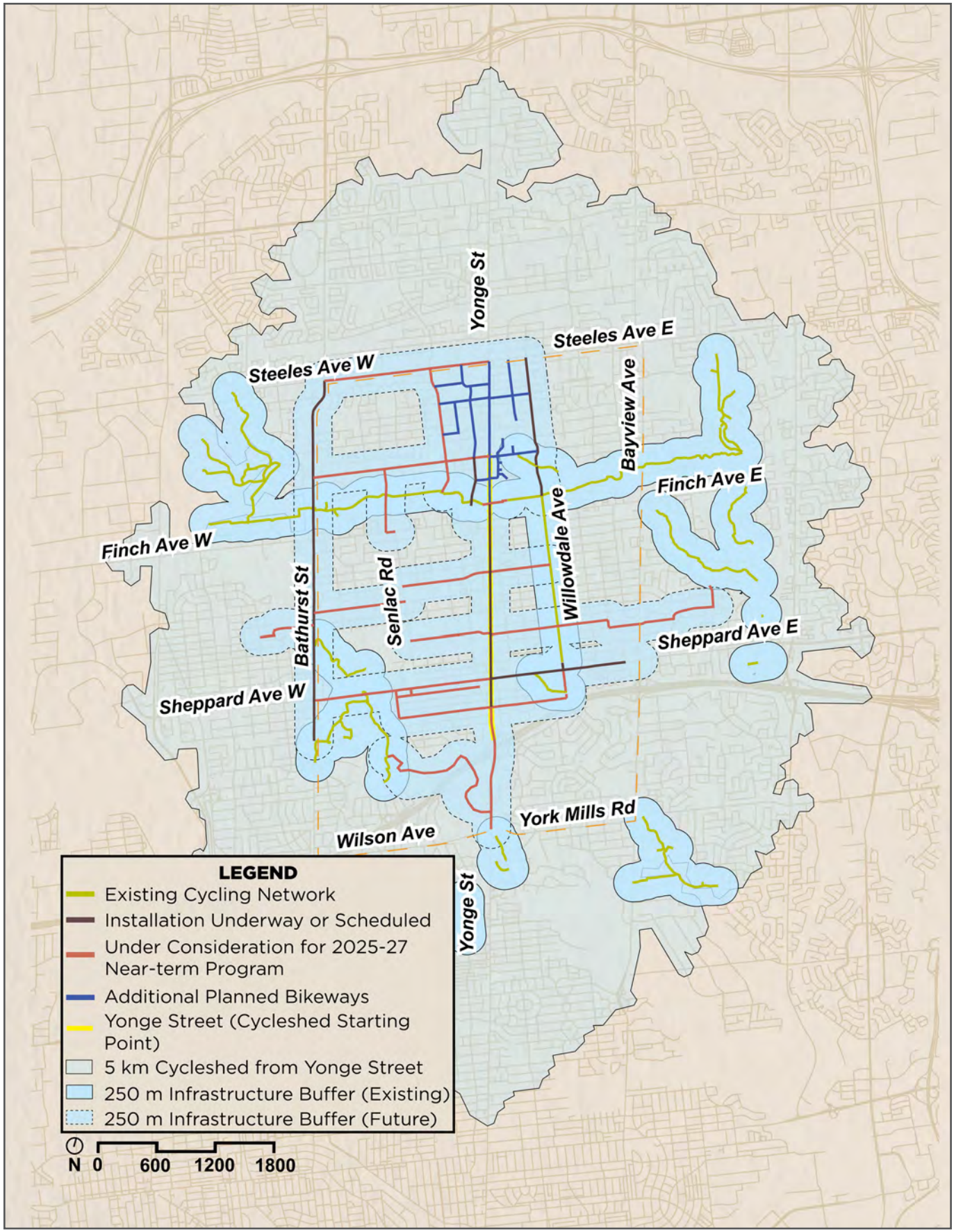


Figure 5-77: Cycleshed Analysis within the Mobility Study Area

Transit Network

The Centre is well served by public transit, including subway and bus. Within the Centre, there are Mobility Hubs along the Yonge Street Corridor at the three Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) subway stations of Sheppard-Yonge, North York Centre, and Finch, servicing two subway lines (Line 1: Yonge-University, and Line 4: Sheppard) and several TTC, York Region Transit (YRT), and GO bus routes. The subway system has been one of the key drivers of growth in the North York Centre area, while the surface bus routes are another critical component of the public transit network in the area. Transfers between transit modes in North York Centre are convenient and are an important part of inter-regional commutes. Transit passengers in the area can benefit from the recently implemented One Fare program where transfers between local transit agencies and GO transit are provided at a discounted price.

A map of the existing transit services within the Centre is shown in **Figure 5-78**.

Bus Routes

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC): The TTC operates 17 non-night bus routes (including four express routes) and six night buses along the periphery or within the MSA. These routes operate approximately every 10 to 20 minutes or better during the weekday peak periods.

York Regional Transit (YRT): The YRT's routes, including the VIVA express route, operate along Yonge Street and provide services between various terminals/areas in the York Region and the Finch GO Bus Terminal, connecting to higher order transit and other TTC and GO bus services. These routes generally operate every 30 minutes or better during the weekday peak periods. Based on the current headways, it is estimated that the YRT bus arrival frequency at Finch GO Terminal is more than 50 buses per hour during the morning peak hour and more than 40 buses per hour during the afternoon peak hour.

GO Transit: GO Transit (operated by Metrolinx) currently operates five bus routes within the MSA along Yonge Street between Highway 401 and Finch Station. Based on the headways, it is estimated that the GO bus arrival frequency at Finch GO Terminal is approximately 12 buses per hour during the weekday peak periods.

Subway

The TTC also operates the subway. The MSA is serviced by two subway lines: Line 1, which provides north-south connections to Downtown; and Line 4: Sheppard, connecting the Centre to neighbourhoods and commercial areas to the east. These subway lines are accessed through five subway stations within the MSA:

- Bayview Station (Line 4);
- Sheppard-Yonge Station (Line 1 and Line 4);
- North York Centre Station (Line 1);
- Finch Station (Line 1); and
- York Mills Station (Line 1).

More detailed discussion on transit routes, ridership, and utilization is provided in **Appendix A**.

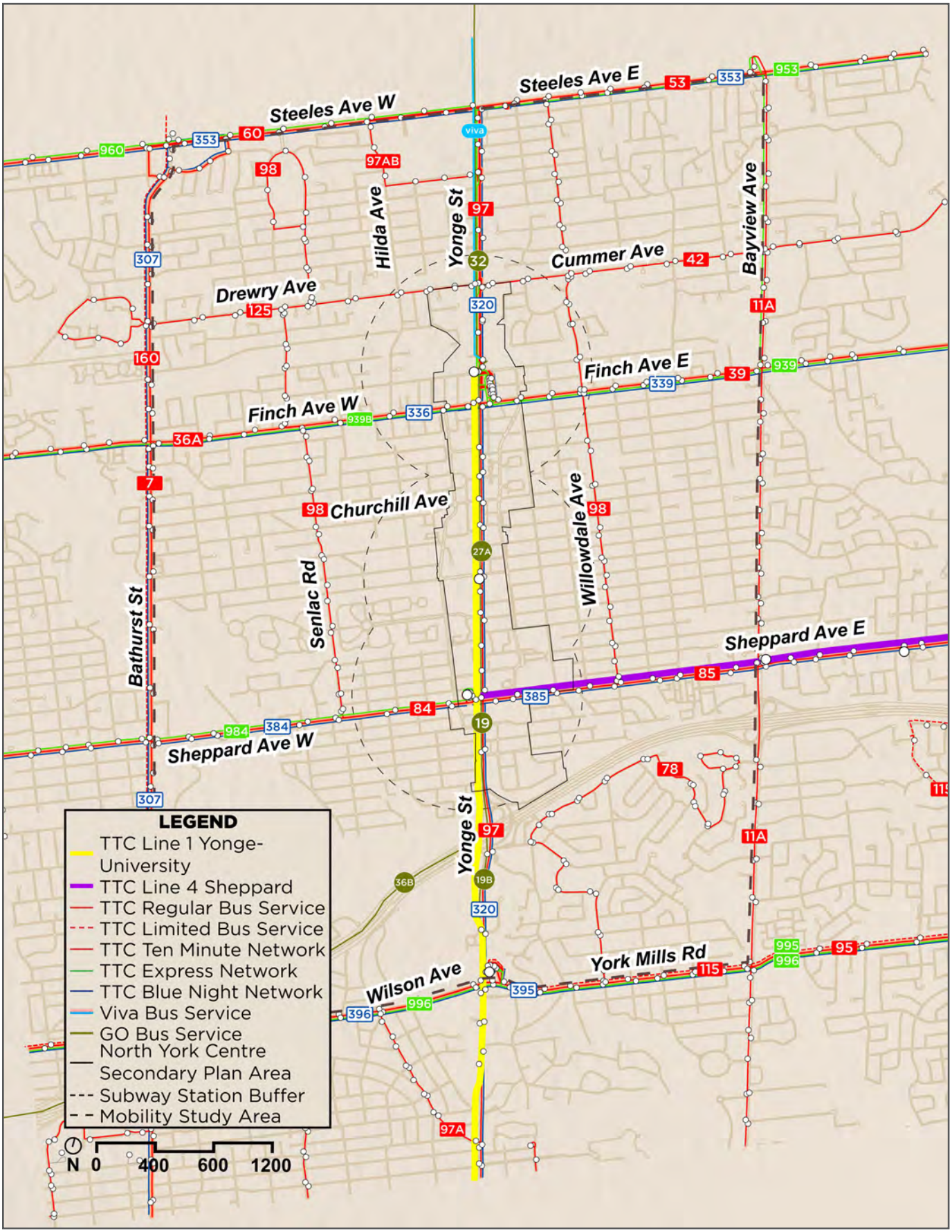


Figure 5-78: Transit Routes within the Mobility Study Area

Transit Infrastructure

The extensive infrastructure that is critical for the functioning of this transit service is also an integral component of the MSA. It includes the subway tunnels, bus terminals and auxiliary operations buildings, traction powered substations (which power portions of the subway), parking lots, as well as emergency exit buildings and fire ventilation infrastructure. Future growth and development in the MSA will need to work with, contribute to, and in some cases, expand and integrate with this essential and sometimes "hidden" infrastructure for transit to grow and support this growing population.

Planned Transit Projects and Studies

There are several major transit projects in the upcoming years which will transform the way people travel to, from, and within North York Centre and beyond (**Figure 5-79**). The following summarizes these projects and how they will impact the Centre:

- **Yonge North Subway Extension:** The Yonge North Subway Extension will extend TTC Line 1 service roughly 8km north from Finch Station to Vaughan, Markham, and Richmond Hill. The proposed extension will connect to the Richmond Hill GO train and Highway 407 GO bus service, as well as local bus routes at every station. This will transform the commute between the Centre and York Region, resulting in an additional 26,000 people living within walking distance to a subway station.
- **Sheppard Subway Extension:** Metrolinx is currently studying options and seeking community input to extend rapid transit along Sheppard Avenue both east and west. The study area includes the Sheppard Avenue corridor as far west as Downsview Station and as far east as Meadowvale Road (at minimum connecting with Line 2 Scarborough Subway Extension). A rapid transit extension on either side of TTC's Line 4 subway could create new links to Line 1 and Line 2, connect with up to three GO Transit train lines, and improve east-west travel in the region. The Sheppard Subway Extension would improve transit connections in Toronto's north end and make it easier and faster for people to get around Toronto and the GTA. It also has the potential to support economic development and new jobs in the region.
- **Finch West Light Rail Transit:** The Finch West Light Rail Transit (FWLRT) is an 11 km light rail transit line that will run along Finch Avenue West. It will connect Humber College Station to Finch West Station/Line 1 (Keele Street), which will provide better access to frequent and reliable transit, addressing the transit needs of communities in the northwest part of the city and facilitate links to other transit services, including GO, MiWay (Mississauga), Viva (York Region), and Züm (Brampton), facilitating essential connections to TTC Line 1 and local transit in York and Peel Region. The LRT line will be integrated with the TTC network as Line 6 Finch West the FWLRT upon completion which is planned for 2024. A potential extension of the FWLRT east to Yonge Street (Finch Station) is one of the projects shown in the Metrolinx 2041 Regional Transportation Plan.

- TTC 5-Year Service Plan and RapidTO: Under this program, there is an ongoing feasibility study along Steeles Avenue West between Bathurst Street and Bayview Avenue to determine the preferred configuration of surface transit priority infrastructure that would integrate with a future subway station at Yonge Street / Steeles Avenue as part of the Yonge North Subway Extension project.

Several other corridors within the MSA have been identified as Priority Roadways proposed for roadway-specific study, including Bathurst Street, Wilson Avenue, Sheppard Avenue West, and Finch Avenue East. These corridors will undergo further feasibility analysis to determine suitable surface transit priority measures and development of design options. Beyond these priority roadways, other corridors identified as candidates for long-term planning studies to be undertaken beyond 2032 include Finch Avenue West, Steeles Avenue East, York Mills Road and Bayview Avenue.

More information on these projects and how they will impact the Centre is included in **Appendix A**.

Figure 5-79: Planned Transit Projects in the Mobility Study Area

Private Vehicular Access, Parking and Curbside Uses

This section discusses the available private vehicular accesses, parking locations and utilization, street café locations, loading and laneways, and pick-up/drop-off (PUDO) areas applicable for the BESA.

Private Vehicular Accesses

The existing vehicular accesses for private properties for the BESA are outlined in **Figure 5-80** (northern segment) and **Figure 5-81** (southern segment).

North of Hendon Avenue / Bishop Avenue, there are several existing vehicular accesses on both sides of Yonge Street that provide access to mixed-use residential developments and commercial plazas as well as the Finch Station PUDO, parking lots, and bus terminals. Southward along the Yonge Street corridor, spacing between existing accesses is much greater until the southern end of the BESA, where several closely spaced accesses exist on the west side between Poyntz Avenue and Franklin Avenue for commercial developments.

Other areas within the BESA with notably higher access density include the following:

- Along Drewry Avenue / Cummer Avenue on both sides of Yonge Street, there are several closely spaced accesses for a school, commercial plazas, and residential developments.
- Along Hendon Avenue/ Bishop Avenue on both sides of Yonge Street, accesses are provided to the Finch Station PUDO, parking lots, and bus terminals.
- Along Finch Avenue West to the west of Yonge Street, there is a cluster of accesses for a church, residential developments, commercial plaza, and private laneways.
- South of Finch Avenue, there are several laneways that run north-south between private properties approximately 30 metres to 40 metres to the east of Yonge Street, including between Finch Avenue East and Byng Avenue, between Church Avenue and Empress Avenue, between Spring Garden Avenue and Greenfield Avenue, and between Glendora Avenue and Avondale Avenue.
- South of Finch Avenue, mixed-use residential developments located between Beecroft Road and Yonge Street have accesses off local roads, including Tolman Street, Kempford Boulevard, Horsham Avenue / Canterbury Place, Ellerslie Avenue, North York Boulevard, Elmhurst Avenue, and Harlandale Avenue.
- Along Sheppard Avenue East, to the west of Beecroft Road, there are several closely spaced accesses to residential, commercial, and institutional developments.
- Along Harrison Garden Boulevard, south of Avondale Avenue, several accesses are provided to mixed-use residential developments.

The remaining streets have fewer or further spaced accesses to private properties, including Beecroft Road, Doris Avenue, and local streets. These routes present ideal opportunities to consider implementing cycling facilities as their operating environments under existing conditions are expected to have less conflicts with drivers turning in and out of private accesses and thus would be more comfortable for people cycling of all ages and abilities. It is noted however that future development may change these operating environments.

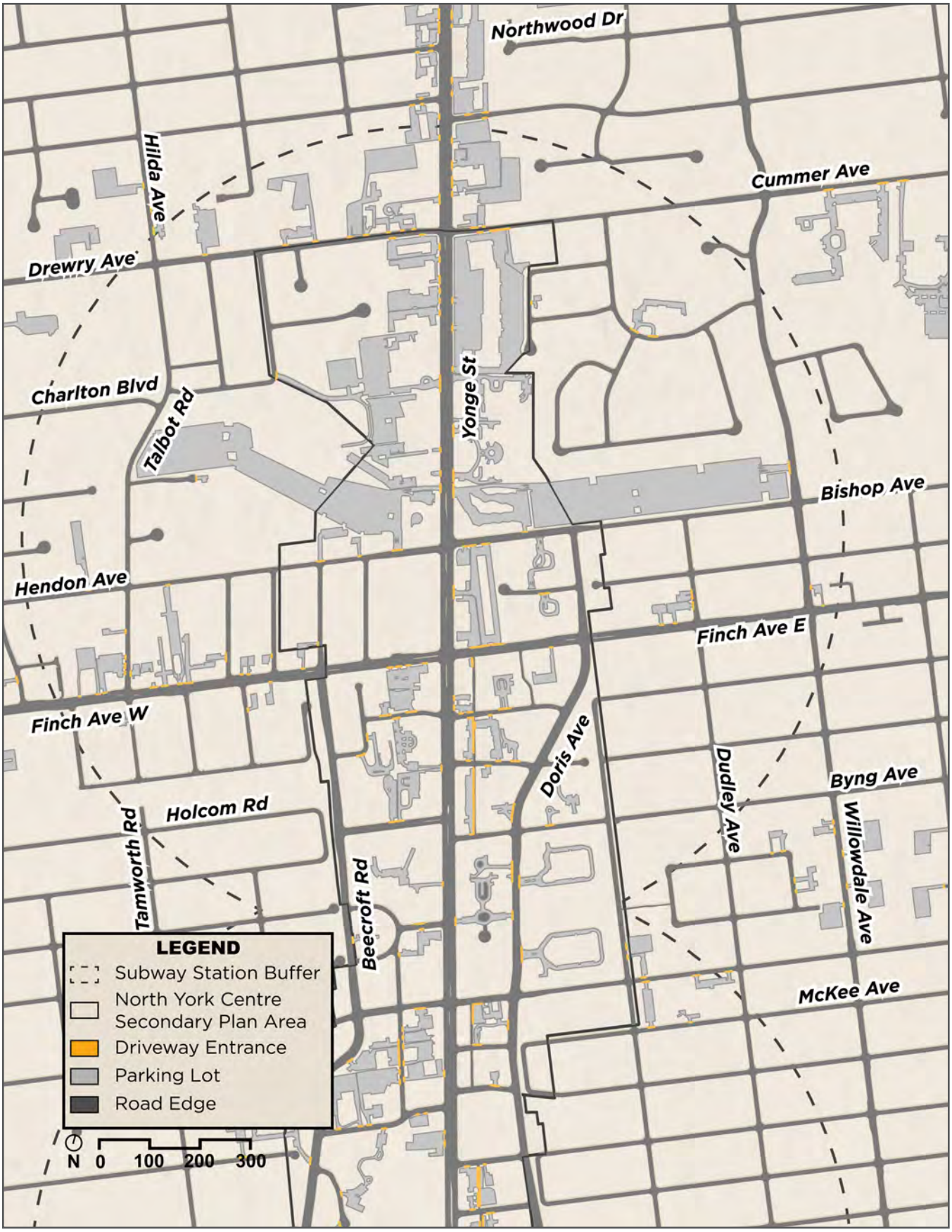


Figure 5-80: Existing Vehicular Private Accesses and Off-Street Parking Lots for Northern Segment of Boundary Expansion Study Area

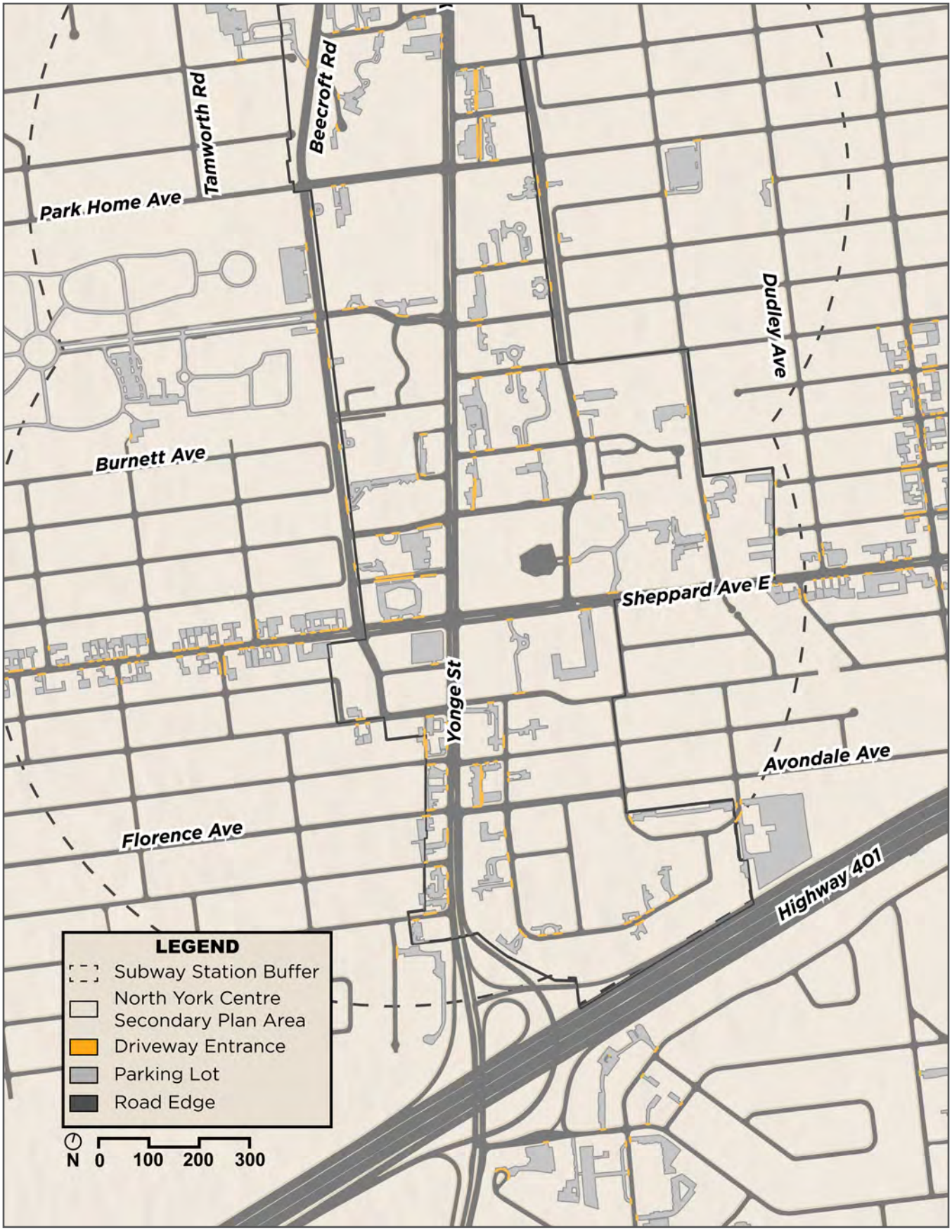


Figure 5-81: Existing Vehicular Private Accesses and Off-Street Parking Lots for Southern Segment of Boundary Expansion Study Area

On-Street and Off-Street Parking

Parking within the BESA includes publicly operated off-street parking lots, privately operated off-street parking lots, and on-street parking. **Figure 5-82** outlines the locations of off-street parking lots, on-street parking, as well as street cafés discussed in the next section.

Data on designated parking and utilization was provided by Toronto Parking Authority or sourced from work previously done in 2016 as part of the REimagining Yonge Street EA, documented in the Yonge Street Parking Memo, as found on the City's website.

Off-Street Parking

- **Publicly operated off-street parking:** Excluding the TTC Finch Station surface commuter parking lots, there are 9 publicly operated off-street parking lots within the BESA which range in size from 23 spaces to 386 spaces. Altogether, these lots provide a total of 1,088 parking spaces. Lot size and average daily peak occupancy data from 2023 was provided by Toronto Parking Authority. The data generally shows that most lots have an average daily peak occupancy below 85%.
- **TTC Finch Station surface commuter parking lots:** This includes the Finch East Lot (890 Willowdale Avenue) and Finch West Lot (18 Hendon Avenue). Together these lots provide a total of 3,227 parking spaces.
- **Privately operated off-street parking:** There are 29 privately operated off-street parking lots within the BESA, ranging in size from 7 spaces to 1,639 spaces. Altogether, these lots provide a total of 9,794 parking spaces. Lot size and midday occupancy data from 2016 was sourced from the Yonge Street Parking Memo conducted as part of the REimagining Yonge Street EA. The data generally shows that the privately operated facilities are well utilized during weekday mornings and afternoons with some capacity available.

On-Street Parking

- **On-street parking utilization:** There are a total of 900 on-street parking spaces within the BESA located along Yonge Street, Beecroft Road, and other connecting streets. Most locations restrict parking to off-peak hours during weekdays and to weekends with a 3-hour maximum. Peak times typically range between 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.
- The on-street parking is moderately to highly utilized throughout the day. Overall, the utilization of the existing on-street and off-street parking generally follows these patterns:
  - Weekdays exhibit high demands in some off-street facilities, typically those associated with high-density employment, and on-street parking is highly occupied in these areas.
  - There is available on-street capacity along most of the Yonge Street, Beecroft Road, and other connecting corridors.
- **On-street parking demand:** Most of the demand for on-street parking is within the southern portion of the BESA, south of Empress Avenue. On-street parking is divided into four categories based on each area's operating times and restrictions:
  - **Category A:** generally areas where weekday parking is restricted in peak hours, subject to payment during off-peak hours on weekdays, subject to payment throughout Saturday and on Sunday afternoons, and free of charge overnight;
  - **Category B:** generally areas with the same operating times and restrictions as areas in Category A, except parking is free of charge throughout Sunday;

- **Category C:** generally areas with no time-based parking restrictions, payment required throughout weekdays, Saturday, and on Sunday afternoons, as well as parking free of charge overnight; and
- **Category D:** generally areas with the same operating times as category C, but no payment required on Sunday.

A detailed summary of parking inventory and utilization is provided in **Appendix A**.

Street Cafés

There are numerous street cafés within the BESA participating through the CaféTO Program, as mapped in **Figure 5-83**. The CaféTO Program allows restaurants and bars in the city to expand their outdoor dining space with access to public space to create sidewalk cafés, curb lane cafés, or patios on private property. There are several locations with demand for the CaféTO program, primarily along both sides of Yonge Street between Hendon Avenue / Bishop Avenue and Park Home Avenue / Empress Avenue as well as between Spring Garden Avenue and Harlandale Avenue. There are also a few locations noted on both sides of Spring Garden Avenue just east of Yonge Street.

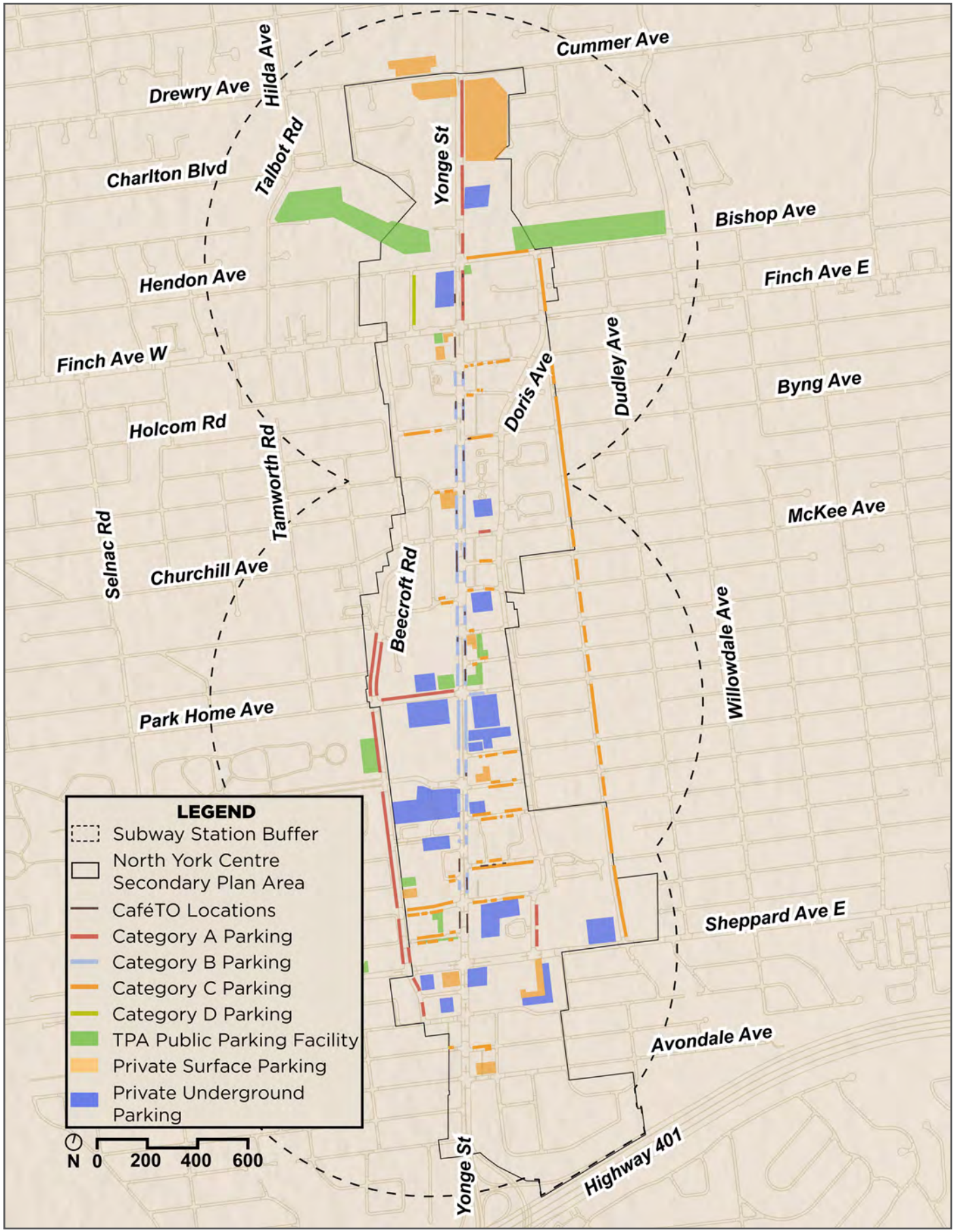


Figure 5-82: Parking and CaféTO Locations within the Boundary Expansion Study Area

Loading Zones

Based on a review of the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 950 Schedule VI and Schedule VII, the BESA does not currently have designated commercial or passenger loading zones.

Laneways

There are laneways provided to facilitate deliveries, which is a key consideration for a commercial corridor such as Yonge Street. Newer mixed-use high-rise development, built primarily by way of land consolidation, is designed at the site planning phase to incorporate delivery access on-site and not through a laneway. Approximately 65% of the older, non-consolidated parcels along Yonge Street have a rear laneway. The rear laneways often include rear yard parking and rear access to the structure, facilitating deliveries and maintenance access from the laneway rather than from curbside on Yonge Street.

Pick-up / Drop-off Areas

The main PUDO areas provided within the Mobility Study Area, including at existing subway stations, schools, childcare centres, and community centres, are listed below:

- At TTC Finch Station, designated area on the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Hendon Avenue / Bishop Avenue intersection
- At TTC Sheppard-Yonge Station, the station entrance located to the west of Yonge Street and Harlandale intersection has curb cuts and tactile plates, which may be used for PUDO activity
- At Cardinal Carter Academy for the Arts located, a school bus loading zone is designated to the east of Yonge Street and Greenfield Avenue intersection with parking allowed on the south of Greenfield Avenue
- At North York Civic Centre, a few accesses provide opportunities for PUDO activity, including the access off North York Boulevard and off Beecroft Road
- At EduKids Child Care Centres Yonge-Churchill, the access to the west of Yonge Street and Churchill Avenue intersection provides opportunity for PUDO activity
- At McKee Public School and McKee Mckids day care centre, a PUDO area exists to the east of Doris Avenue and Church Avenue intersection and a school bus loading zone and temporary parking for PUDO activity exists along McKee Avenue
- At St. Cyril Catholic School, a school bus loading zone and temporary parking for PUDO activity exists to the east of Beecroft Road and Kempford Boulevard intersection
- At Kids & Company day care centre, the access to the west of Yonge Street and Finch Avenue intersection provides opportunity for PUDO activity

5.5.3 Safety Review

Collision Analysis

Collision data for intersections and segments within the Mobility Study Area from 2013 to October 19, 2023 (when the analysis commenced) was used to analyze collisions involving motor vehicles and those involving Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs) for the Mobility Study Area, BESA, and Primary Study Area.

Collision Hot Spots

Figure 5-83 provides an overall heat map of all collisions within the Mobility Study Area.

Within the MSA, there was a total of 29,046 collisions between 2013 to 2023, 9,205 (32%) of which occurred within the BESA/PSA. Of the MSA collisions, 156 (0.54%) were ‘killed or seriously injured’ (KSI) collisions. Most of these KSI collisions occurred near or where an arterial intersects another street or driveway. Major intersections involving two arterial roads and their surrounding areas generally had a higher concentration of

collisions, which is expected as there are more interactions between different travel modes at those locations and consistent with the experience elsewhere in the city. The City's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan notes that arterial roadways often experience a much higher rate of KSI collisions than collector and local streets per 100 kilometres. Based on the analysis, several key observations were made:

- Yonge Street had more KSI collisions than other arterial roads; 52% (25) of the KSI collisions within the BESA were related to Yonge Street, either at an intersection or along the roadway segment. 12.5% (6) of the KSI collisions occurred along Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue.
- More KSI collisions related to Yonge Street occurred on the mid-block segments between the upstream and downstream arterial intersections rather than the area surrounding the intersections. The highest concentration occurred along the middle segment between Finch Avenue and Steeles Avenue and the segment at and south of Sheppard Avenue.
- The intersections of Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue and surrounding areas had considerably larger numbers of collisions (over 700), when compared with the other study intersections, which are both within the PSA.
- Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue, and Finch Avenue have posted speed limits ranging between 40 and 50 km/h. The significant amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, frequent bus arrivals, lack of cycling facilities, wide roadways, and potential for higher speeds along these roadways are some of the possible contributors to collisions.
- Willowdale Avenue, as a minor arterial road, had relatively more collisions than the other non-major-arterial roadways within the Mobility Study Area. Most of the collisions along Willowdale Avenue occurred at its intersections with other arterial roads. It should be noted that on-street cycle tracks were recently constructed on Willowdale Avenue. The cycle tracks between Bishop Avenue and Empress Avenue were completed around 2020 and the cycle tracks south of Empress Avenue were completed around 2023. In addition, in 2021, red light cameras were installed at the Willowdale Avenue intersections with Cummer Avenue, Bishop Avenue, and Spring Garden Avenue, and a new traffic signal was installed at Willowdale Avenue and Church Avenue. Between 2013 and 2020, there were a total of 642 collisions along Willowdale Avenue (92 cases per annum), and there were only 162 collisions from 2020 to 2023 (54 cases per annum). The aforementioned improvements between 2020 and 2023 may have partially contributed to the decrease in collisions rate.
- The above observations indicate that there are opportunities to enhance pedestrian and cycling safety along Yonge Street and other arterial roads within North York Centre.

Collision Types

Over 80% of the collisions that occurred between 2013 and 2023 within the BESA did not result in any injury. The most prominent impact type within the Mobility Study Area is motor vehicle rear-ended collisions, which constitutes approximately 30% of the total collisions. This is followed by collisions due to turning movements (25%) and sideswipes (20%).

Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Collisions

Figure 5-84 provides a heat map of all VRU collisions within the Mobility Study Area.

Vulnerable road users are notably more prone to serious or fatal injuries in a collision than motorists. There was a total of 1,597 collisions involving VRUs within the Mobility Study Area between 2013 and 2023 accounting for approximately 5.5% of the total collisions. Of the total KSI collisions in the Mobility Study Area, 53% involved VRUs.

Within the BESA there were 564 VRU collisions, constituting approximately 6.1% of the total BESA

collisions which is slightly higher than the proportion within the Mobility Study Area. Of the area's 48 KSI collisions, 31 (65%) involved VRUs. In summary, Yonge Street and Finch Avenue had the most VRU collisions, whereas Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue had the most overall collisions. This indicates that there was a relatively higher level of VRU-motor vehicle interactions at the intersection of Yonge Street and Finch Avenue. The patterns of VRU collisions generally align with the hotspots found in collision heat map in **Figure 5-84**.

Collision Trends

The years 2016 to 2019 had the most collisions, approximately 1,100 cases per annum. The number of collisions drastically decreased during the years 2020 and 2021, likely due to the restrictions placed during the COVID-19 pandemic and a lower level of traffic volumes. Additionally, the City's Vision Zero safety measures implemented in 2019/2020 may have also contributed to the decrease in collisions.

The number of collisions notably increased in 2022 when compared to the previous year but was still much lower than the pre-pandemic level, possibly because most of the pandemic-related travel restrictions were lifted in 2022 but many businesses/ academic institutions continued to allow hybrid or remote work/study arrangements. However, though traffic volumes were gradually returning to pre-pandemic levels, the least number of collisions occurred in 2023. Other than the fact that the 2023 collision data was only analyzed up to October 19th, the Vision Zero safety measures implemented within the Mobility Study Area may have attributed to the lower number of collisions in general.

There appears to be no direct correlation between the overall collisions and the number of KSI collisions in a year. Additionally, the number of KSI collisions that involved VRUs is generally consistent with the total number of KSI collisions. In 9 of the 11 years of data, half or more of the KSI collisions involved VRUs as they are prone to more serious injuries.

Additional Safety Opportunities

Along with mentioned existing safety measures, there will be additional opportunities for multimodal and intersection improvements within the North York Centre, such as for the remaining portion of Yonge Street, most segments of Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue, as well as Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue. These opportunities will be further explored as part of this Secondary Plan Review.

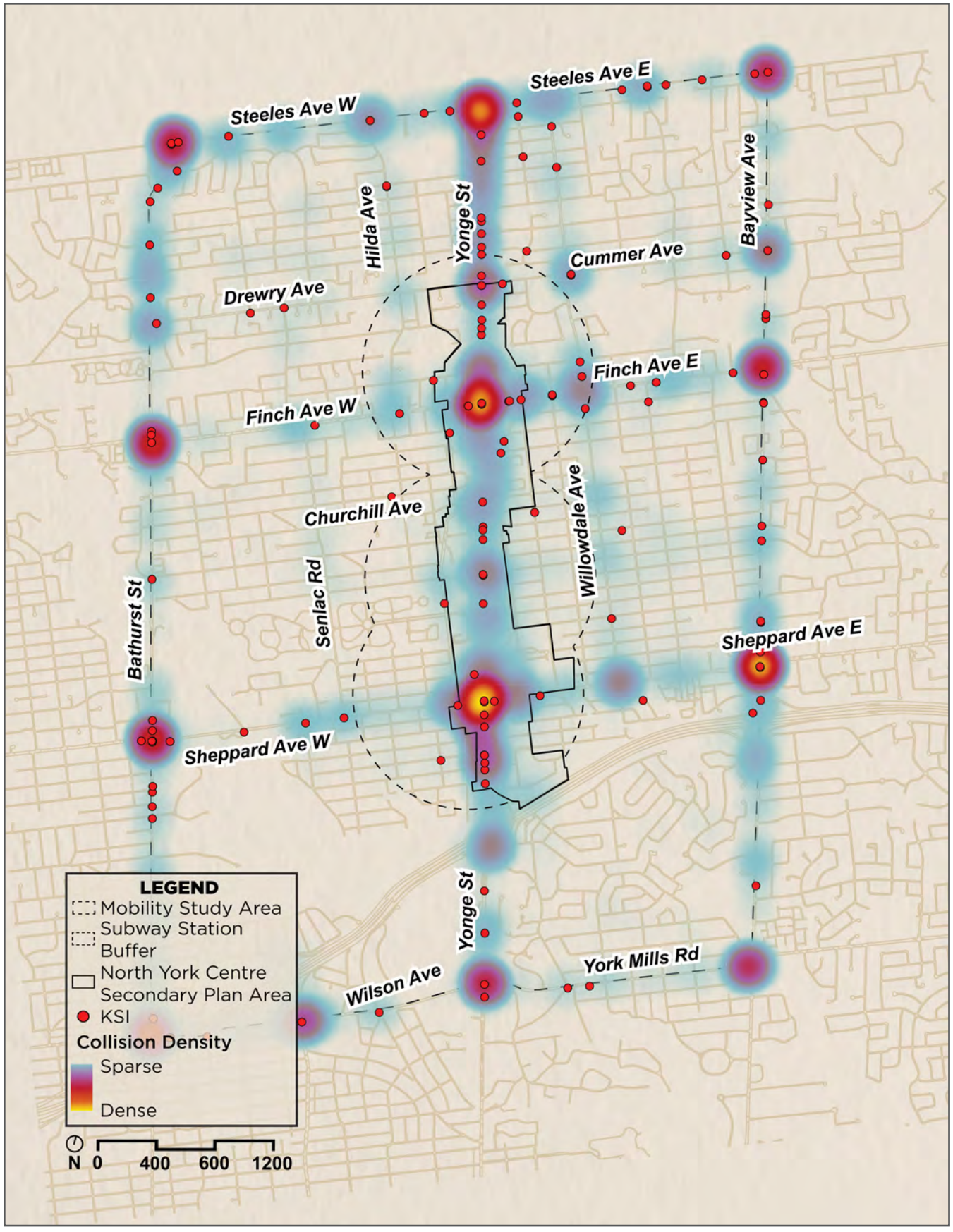


Figure 5-83: Collisions Heat Map with Killed or Seriously Injured Collisions within the Mobility Study Area

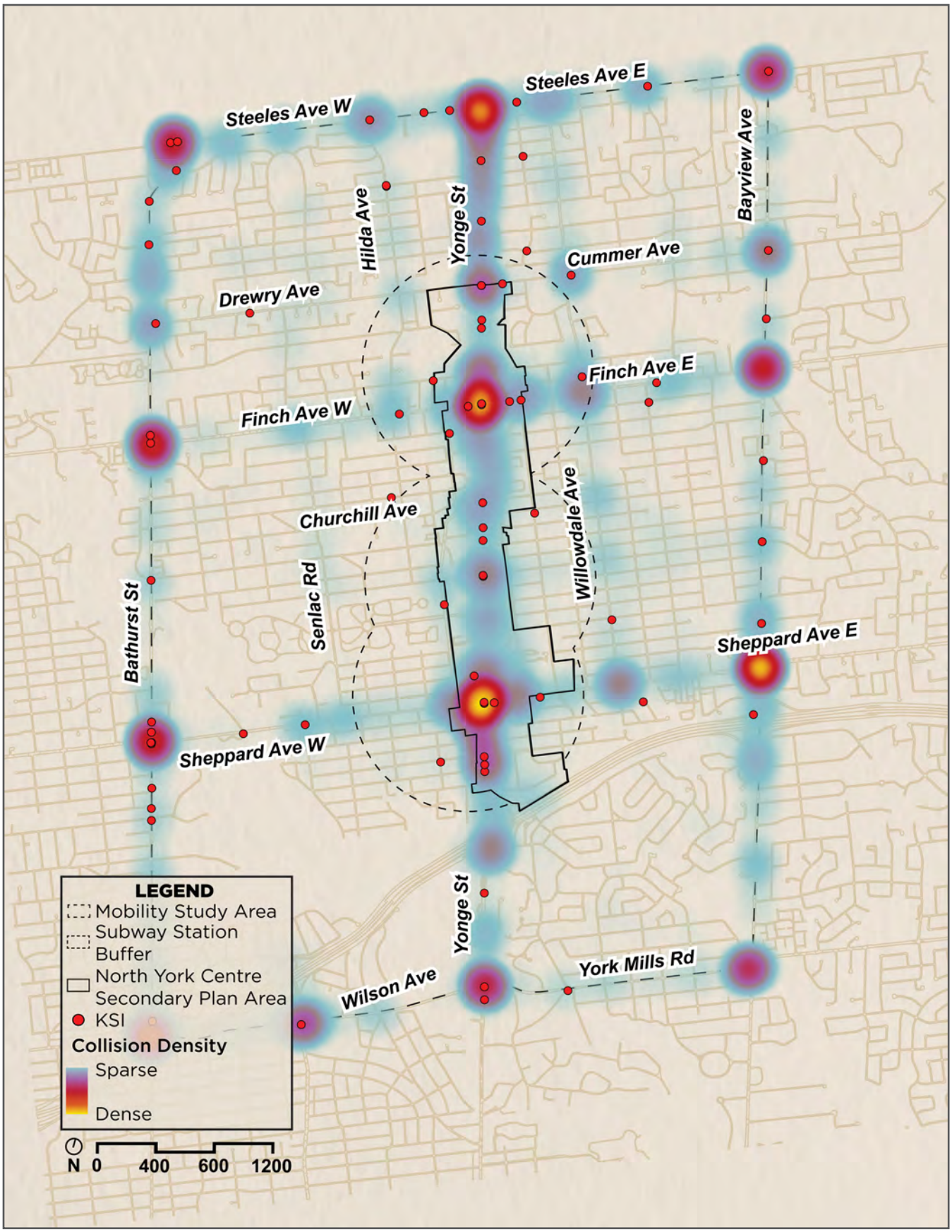


Figure 5-84: Vulnerable Road User Collisions Heat Map with Killed or Seriously Injured Collisions

Existing Safety And Traffic Calming Measures

This section provides an overview of the safety and traffic calming measures and projects, both existing and planned, within and around the BESA, that will improve safety for all street users moving throughout the area.

Vision Zero Road Safety Measures

Vision Zero Road safety measures within the MSA generally fall under the following categories:

- Engineering improvements (e.g., traffic calming, new sidewalks, etc.);
- Automated enforcement (e.g., red light and speed cameras);
- Speed limit reductions;
- Traffic control improvements (e.g., accessible pedestrian signal, pedestrian head start signal, etc.);
- Safety zones (community, school, and senior safety zones); and
- School crossing guards.

Most of these safety measures were implemented since late 2019, and they could be the one of contributing factors in the reduced number of collisions since 2020 other than the travel restrictions placed under the COVID-19 pandemic. The year 2023 saw the least collisions since 2020 although travel restrictions were lifted, and traffic patterns had mostly returned to a stable level.

Traffic Calming Measures

Within the Mobility Study Area, traffic calming measures are currently in place along Green Bush Road, Fountainbeau Drive, and Lillian Street, featuring a total of 13 speed humps. These speed humps are implemented along local roads within residential areas near schools to slow motor vehicles to appropriate speeds in locations where there is higher pedestrian traffic.

Planned Road Improvements Affecting Safety

There are several planned street infrastructure projects for the area in and around North York Centre, listed in the City's capital program. Four of the most significant projects are already underway, include:

- **REimagining Yonge EA and Transform Yonge:** The implementation of the REimagining Yonge EA and Transform Yonge detailed design will introduce significant roadway and active transportation improvements to the Yonge Street corridor between Florence Avenue / Avondale Avenue and Hendon Avenue / Bishop Avenue. The proposed cycle tracks will separate people cycling from the vehicular traffic and fill the current gaps of cycling connectivity along Yonge Street. Pedestrians will have a wider buffer from the travel lanes due to cycle tracks and improved sidewalks. Pedestrians and people cycling will be less exposed to collision risks at intersections with the proposed crossing enhancements and travel lane reductions.
- **North Service Road (Beecroft Extension) Detailed Design:** This project will extend Beecroft Road from Finch Avenue to Drewry Avenue and provide active transportation connections along the extended segment.
- **South Service Road (Doris Avenue Extension) Preliminary / Detailed Design:** This project will offer a more direct path for all modes of travel to cross Sheppard Avenue from either Doris Avenue or Tradewind Avenue. The ultimate design will minimize conflict points at this intersection and improve safety for all modes and users.
- **Yonge Street / Highway 401 Interchange EA:** This EA study will evaluate a number of alternative solutions identified in preceding feasibility studies, including new and/or realigned ramps, new facilities for active transportation on Yonge Street.

A detailed summary of safety and traffic calming measures as well as planned safety improvements is included in **Appendix A**.

5.5.4 Multi-Modal Analysis

The multi-modal level of service (MMLOS) analysis was conducted following the methodology of the *Ontario Traffic Council* (OTC) *Multi-Modal Level of Service Guidelines*, dated February 2022. These analyses consider motor vehicles, pedestrians, cycling, and transit.

Motor Vehicles

Traffic Volumes

To determine the existing level of motor vehicle traffic at individual signalized intersections within the BESA, turning movement counts (TMCs) were reviewed as well as intersection heavy motor vehicle volumes (only limited to right-turning heavy motor vehicles). TMC data obtained was from a variety of sources spanning from April 2013 to February 2023.

Similar patterns were observed for the A.M. and P.M. peak periods, as follows:

- The highest intersection volumes were recorded along Yonge Street south of Sheppard Avenue during each of the peak periods, ranging from approximately 4,900 to 6,000 motor vehicles.
- Moderate intersection volumes ranging from approximately 2,400 to 4,600 motor vehicles were recorded during each peak period along other major arterial segments, including Yonge Street (north of Finch Avenue), Sheppard Avenue, and Finch Avenue.
- The lowest range of intersection volumes were recorded between Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue, ranging from approximately 1,000 to 3,000 motor vehicles along Yonge Street and along connecting streets to the east and west of Yonge Street

Synchro Intersection Level of Service

Traffic modelling software, Synchro, has been used to analyze intersection operations at signalized intersections for motor vehicle movements. **Appendix A** describes the existing traffic conditions in detail, as assessed using Synchro including modelling methodology, intersection levels of service, critical movements, and queue lengths relative to available storage lengths.

All intersections assessed are operating at an acceptable level of service (LOS) “D” or better during both A.M. and P.M. peak periods. There are only four intersections that operate at the lower end of this range (LOS “D”) in either peak period:

- **During both A.M. and P.M. peak periods:** Yonge Street / Finch Avenue, Yonge Street / Sheppard Avenue, and Finch Avenue / Willowdale Avenue, and
- **During only the P.M. peak period:** Yonge Street / Cummer Avenue / Drewry Avenue.

While there are some intersection movements operating near capacity (referred to as critical movements), all are operating within capacity.

The results of the queueing analysis found that the majority of 95th percentile queues were contained within their available storage lengths. The 95th percentile queue lengths represent the ‘worst-case’ scenarios that would only occur 5% of the time, while 50th percentile queues represent the queuing conditions in an average cycle. There were only three instances during each peak period where both the projected 95th and 50th percentile queues exceeded the available storage lengths. In these cases, the 50th percentile queue only exceeded the storage length by less than a passenger car length (i.e., 5 to 6 metres) which can potentially be accommodated within the turn lane taper.

Goods Movement

Overall, the Centre is not a major generator of heavy motor vehicle trips and its roadways and intersections currently do not accommodate a significant amount of truck traffic.

Trip Generation

Truck travel data from October 2016 and truck turning movements from Fall 2019 reveal that freight trip generation within the PSA is low compared to the rest of the city. This is within expectations as there are limited truck trip generators in the area. Although this data is slightly dated, it still provides a comparison regarding heavy motor vehicle traffic between the Centre and the rest of the city.

Truck Volumes

There are lower truck volumes along the major arterials in North York Centre compared to several other major streets in the city. Yonge Street carries relatively more truck volumes compared to Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue, particularly south of Sheppard Avenue and near the Highway 401 interchange. This is likely because commercial motor vehicles travel on Yonge Street after exiting Highway 401 and then disperse to adjacent roads to make last kilometre deliveries. Steeles Avenue has notably higher daily truck volumes when compared to other arterials in the Mobility Study Area which is expected as there is a higher concentration of industrial uses along Steeles Avenue.

A detailed summary of the motor vehicle analyses conducted is included in **Appendix A**.

Pedestrian Analysis

Pedestrian Volumes

To determine the existing pedestrian demand at signalized intersections within the PSA, peak pedestrian crossing volumes were reviewed for both the A.M. and P.M. peak one-hour periods (**Figure 5-85** and **Figure 5-86**).

Areas with high levels of pedestrian foot traffic will aid in prioritizing locations for implementing enhanced safety measures, such as crosswalk enhancements, traffic calming measures, or improved pedestrian infrastructure, where appropriate. Key observations include:

- The highest pedestrian volumes in both A.M. and P.M. peak periods were at signalized intersections along Yonge Street at Sheppard Avenue, Park Home Avenue/Empress Avenue, Finch Avenue, and Elmhurst Avenue/Greenfield Avenue. The presence of subway stations at Sheppard Avenue, Park Home Avenue / Empress Avenue and Finch Avenue significantly contributed to their greater pedestrian volumes, as these transit nodes serve as major hubs for commuters and residents.
- The higher pedestrian volumes at Yonge Street/ Elmhurst Avenue / Greenfield Avenue are likely attributed to its proximity to Sheppard Station and other major pedestrian traffic generators including high-density residential, employment, and commercial uses, such as the Yonge Sheppard Centre, as well as the nearby Cardinal Carter School for the Arts.
- Other signalized intersections at Yonge Street/ Churchill Avenue, Yonge Street / Elmwood Avenue, and Yonge Street / Florence Avenue experience moderate pedestrian volumes.

Notable discrepancies in pedestrian demand between the A.M. and P.M. peak hours were also identified:

- Pedestrian activity at intersections near TTC subway stations was noticeably lower during the A.M. peak periods compared to the P.M. periods. This disparity could be attributed to varying arrival times at work or opting for remote work. In contrast, the surge in pedestrian activity during the evening peak period aligns with the rush of commuters heading home at similar hours, and people visiting the numerous amenities, entertainment, and commercial options within the area after working hours.
- Morning pedestrian volumes significantly exceeded those in the evening periods at intersections with Doris Avenue at Sheppard Avenue, Greenfield Avenue, and Empress Avenue. These discrepancies are likely attributed to their proximity to high schools, namely Cardinal Carter School for the Arts (Greenfield Avenue) and Earl Haig Secondary School (Empress Avenue). These institutions are significant pedestrian traffic generators during school hours, an aspect that would be captured in the A.M. peak period, but not captured during the evening peak hours as schools conclude before the P.M. peak period.
- North York Boulevard experienced significantly higher evening pedestrian volumes compared to the morning peak. This pattern is likely linked to increased foot traffic towards commercial establishments along Yonge Street, such as Empress Walk.

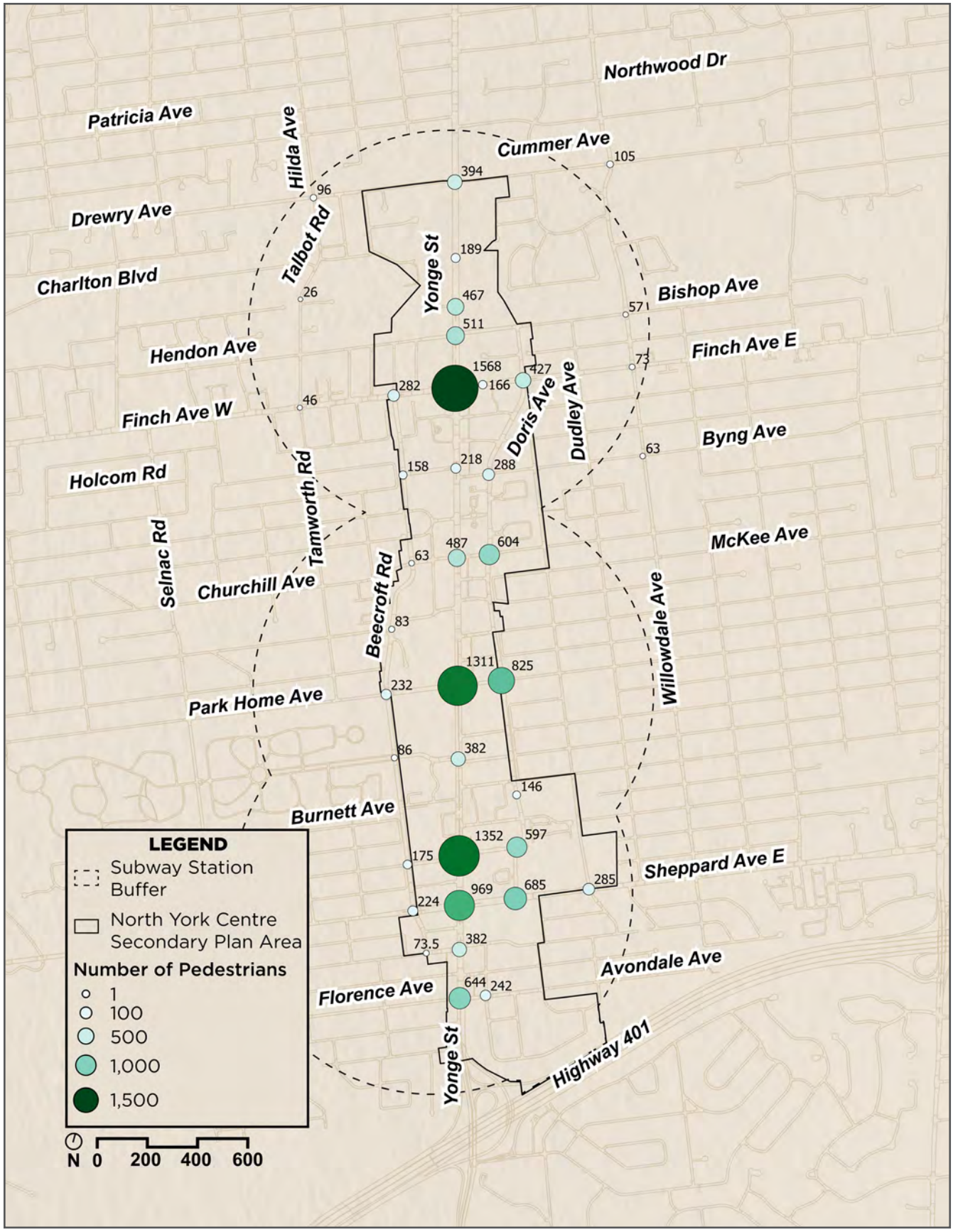


Figure 5-85: Pedestrian Volumes by Intersection (A.M.) within the Primary Study Area

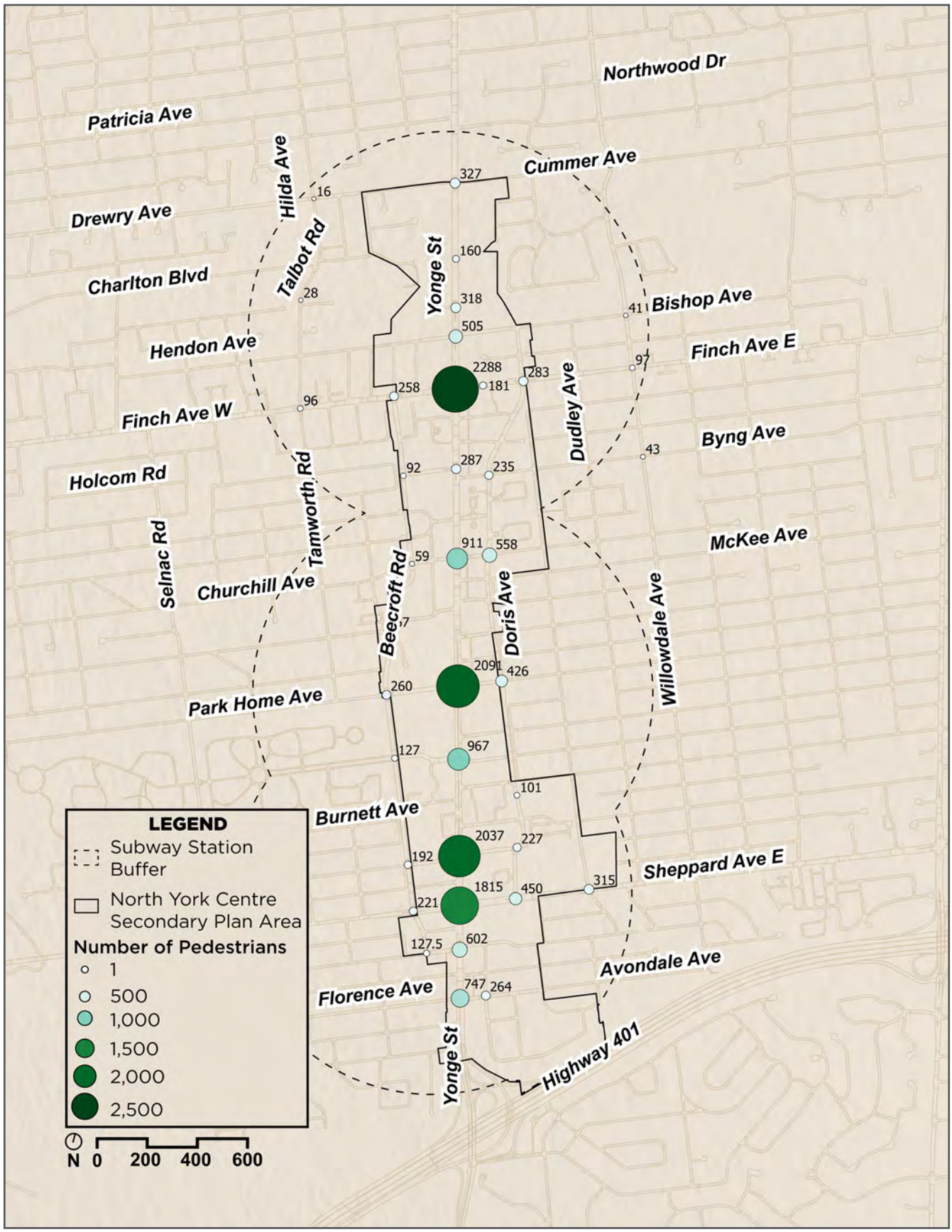


Figure 5-86: Pedestrian Volumes by Intersection (P.M.) within the Primary Study Area

Crossings and Desire Lines

The frequency of crossings available to pedestrians is an important contributor to a comfortable and safe pedestrian environment, particularly in urban centres with high levels of pedestrian traffic. The lack of a safe crossing at a location where someone wishes to cross will either lead to a person being detoured significantly out of their way or result in the person crossing midblock in a potentially unsafe condition. Even a 30-metre increase in the walking distance to a crossing adds an increase of up to one minute in a person's walking trip duration, and the greater the detour, the greater the likelihood that a pedestrian will cross midblock.

The Ontario MMLOS Guide lists "maximum distance between controlled crossings" as one of the three factors that determine the pedestrian level of service for a segment of roadway. A score of "A" is assigned to a maximum distance between crossings of 200 metres, which respects the minimum spacing for controlled crossings in OTM Book 12. A score of "F" is assigned to a maximum distance greater than 320 metres, equivalent to a three-minute walking detour to reach the nearest crossing.

Based on this, controlled crossings within the BESA were evaluated and **Figure 5-88** indicates the distance between crossings for each street segment, and the corresponding Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS) grade. This figure includes pedestrian crossings recently added through the City's Vision Zero Action Plan, including:

- New pedestrian crossover on Greenfield Avenue west of Doris Avenue (2022)
- New midblock pedestrian signal on Doris Avenue 90 metres south of Empress Avenue (2019)
- New midblock pedestrian signal on Doris Avenue 45 metres north of Norton Avenue (2023)

There are several street segments receiving a PLOS "F", as seen in red. The actual impact of each of these cases on the pedestrian experience varies based on the demand to cross at each location (more origins and destinations along the segment) as well as the layout of the road being crossed (a four-lane roadway is more challenging to cross than a two-lane roadway).

Figure 5-87: Existing Pedestrian Level of Service Based on Distances Between Crossings within the Boundary Expansion Study Area

Planned Pedestrian Crossings

Table 5-10 summarizes the planned new pedestrian crossings along with their impacts on the Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS) scores. **Figure 5-88** shows the future PLOS scores with planned improvements and highlights the remaining gaps that can be improved.

Table 5-10: Planned Pedestrian Crossings as Part of Major Projects

Delivery Project	Location	Crossing Type	Impact on PLOS Score for Distance Between Controlled Crossings
Transform Yonge	Yonge St. / Horsham Ave. / Northtown Way	New Full Signal	Score improves from "F" to "A" on both sides of new crossing
Transform Yonge	Yonge St. / Ellerslie Ave.	New Full Signal	Score improves from "F" to "A" on both sides of new crossing
Beecroft Extension	Beecroft Ave. / Drewry Ave.	New Full Signal	Score improves from "F" to "A" between Beecroft Ave. and Yonge St.
Beecroft Extension	Beecroft Ave. / Turnberry Ct.	New Full Signal	No impact from existing, as this signal is for a new road
Beecroft Extension	Beecroft Ave. / Finch Station Commuter Parking Access	New Full Signal	No impact from existing, as this signal is for a new road
Beecroft Extension	Beecroft Ave. / Hendon Ave.	New Full Signal	No impact from existing, as this replaces an existing all-way stop
Yonge Street North TMP	Cummer Ave. / Olympic Garden Dr.	Potential Pedestrian Crossing	Score improves from "F" to "A" between Yonge St. and Olympic Garden Dr.

Crossing Latent Demand Assessment

To assess the additional locations with the greatest opportunity for new midblock crossings, a desktop review and site visits within the BESA were also conducted. The desktop review identified trip attractors as well as evidence of pedestrian "desire paths", where the boulevard space is worn in a way that indicates a frequently travelled pedestrian route, while site visits qualitatively assessed crossing demand at pre-identified locations.

Eight pedestrian desire paths were identified and assessed along Doris Avenue, Beecroft Avenue, Bishop Avenue, and Park Home Avenue with varying degrees of mid-block crossing demand.

A full crossing latent demand assessment is included in **Appendix A**.

Figure 5-88: Future Pedestrian Level of Service Based on Distances Between Crossings within the Boundary Expansion Study Area

Pedestrian Level of Service Assessment

The Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS) assessment considered both signalized and unsignalized intersections and segments within the Primary Study Area (**Figure 5-89**). PLOS evaluates the user experience of pedestrians and quality of pedestrian infrastructure at specific segments and intersections. The assessment only takes into account existing segments and crossings and does not consider future or planned crossings.

A PLOS of A signifies the highest quality pedestrian experience, where pedestrian facilities take priority over other competing modes. Conversely, a PLOS of F indicates unfavourable conditions for pedestrians and indicates that the facility falls below the province's minimum standards due to various factors, including safety, comfort, access, and capacity. These factors collectively impact pedestrian movements and the overall walkability of the network. In a well-balanced pedestrian system, results typically fall within the middle range of the scale (B to E).

Street Segments

PLOS values for street segments are determined based on sidewalk width, buffer from traffic, and distance between existing controlled crossings. The majority of segments (76%) examined exhibit a PLOS rating of C and D, indicating an acceptable condition where pedestrians typically have sufficient space to walk or roll that is adequately separated from traffic. There are, however, several segments with a PLOS E and one segment with a PLOS rating of F. The segment rated PLOS F is located along Beecroft Road from Elmhurst Avenue to North York Boulevard, and its low rating is due to conditions on the west side of the road. These lower ratings are primarily due to greater distances between existing controlled crossings, narrow sidewalks, and narrow buffer between the sidewalk and traffic lanes.

Intersections

The PLOS assessment for existing intersections considered the presence of enhanced safety measures, effective turning radius, signal cycle length, and the number of uncontrolled conflicts.

Within the Primary Study Area, most existing intersections achieved a PLOS ranging from B to D. Intersections scoring a PLOS of B to C generally performed well across all categories, although some exhibited lower scores in the number of uncontrolled conflicts.

Intersections with a PLOS of D or E typically feature smaller effective turning radii but lack enhanced pedestrian measures, have longer cycle lengths, and have a higher number of uncontrolled conflicts. Notably, the intersections of Yonge Street with Empress Avenue / Park Home Avenue, and Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue received the lowest scores with a PLOS of E, primarily due to low scores in all categories except for effective turning radius.

A detailed breakdown of Pedestrian LOS scores by street segment and intersection is included in **Appendix A**.

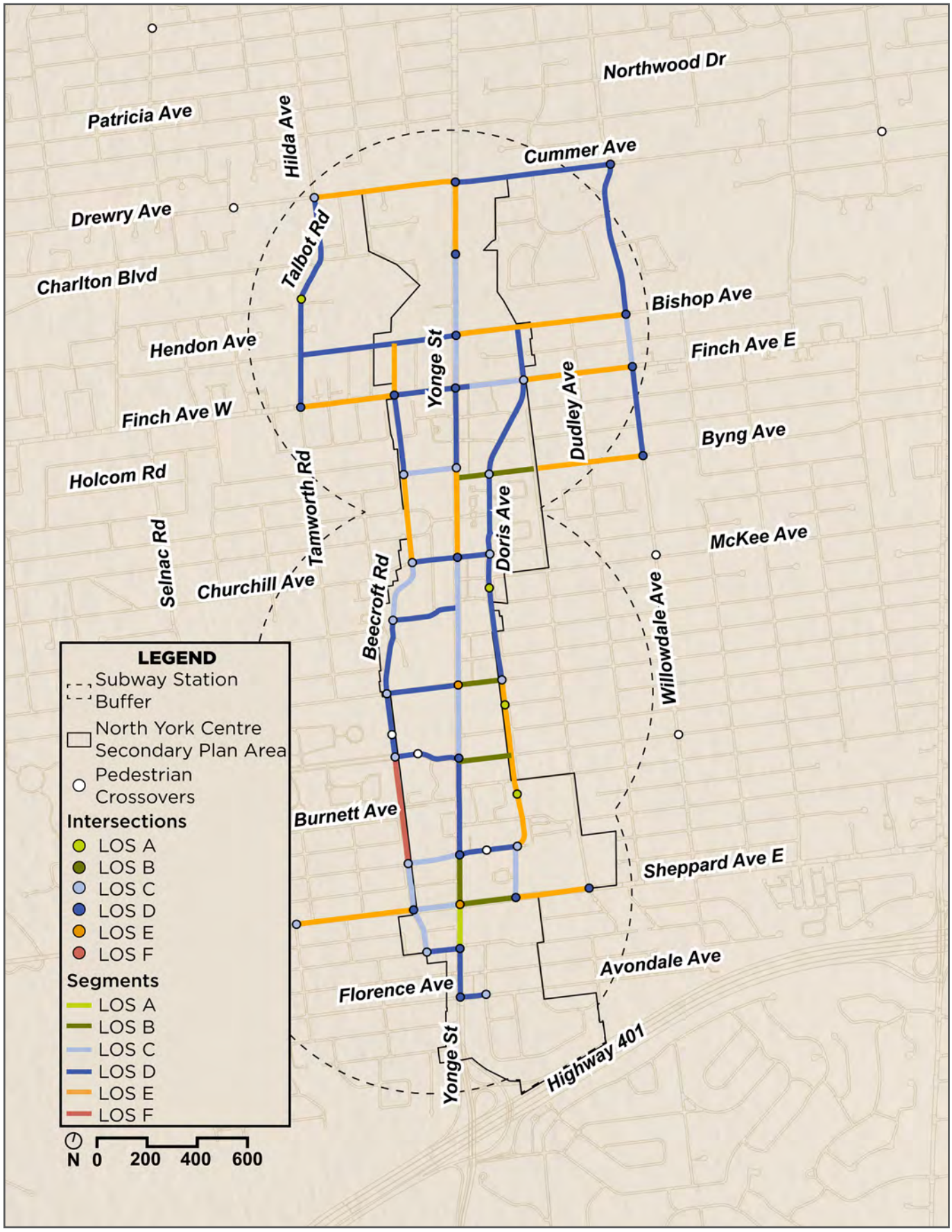


Figure 5-89: Pedestrian Level of Service for Segments and Intersections within the Boundary Expansion Study Area

Bicycle Analysis

Existing Cycling Volumes

Existing rates of cycling are very low in the BESA. In 2016, cycling accounted for 1% of all trips to the Centre based on Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) data. This reflects the general absence of dedicated cycling infrastructure, resulting in those who do cycle needing to ride on sidewalks or in mixed traffic on busy streets (**Figure 5-90**).

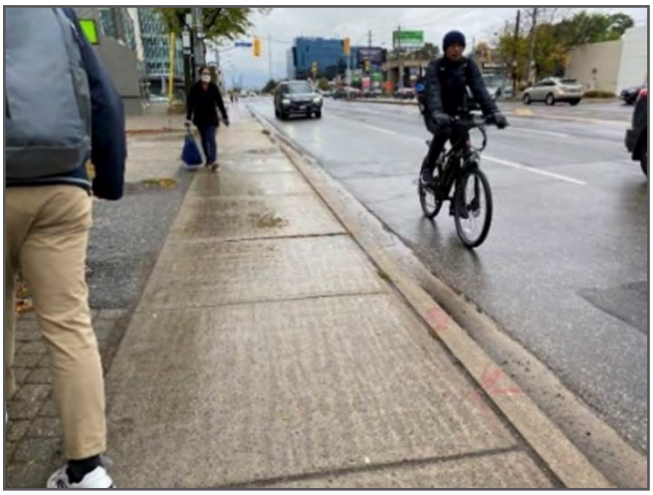


Figure 5-90: A Person Cycling on Yonge Street in Mixed Traffic, A Condition Not Acceptable for Most People Interested in Cycling

Bicycle Level of Service Assessment

The Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) assessment considered both street segments and signalized / unsignalized intersections within the Primary Study Area (**Figure 5-91**). BLOS evaluates the user experience of people cycling and quality of cycling infrastructure at specific segments and intersections. The BLOS assessment only considers existing segments and crossings and does not consider future or planned crossings. A BLOS of A indicates the highest positive and comfortable experience for people cycling, while a low BLOS of F suggests barriers or constraints such as a lack of cycling infrastructure, missed connections, and low safety and comfort levels.

Street Segments

BLOS values for street segments are influenced by measures such as bicycle facility width, bike buffer width, and conflicts with other modes. Most segments (95%) examined have a BLOS rating of F which can be attributed to the lack of dedicated cycling facilities. The only segment that has the highest rating of C within the evaluation is on Willowdale Avenue (Bishop Avenue to Finch Avenue), where there is a dedicated cycling facility that provides sufficient width and buffer from traffic. This indicates cycling improvements are needed along most street segments of the BESA.

Intersections

The combination of factors that collectively define the BLOS at intersections include the number of enhanced bicycle measures, effective turning radius, cycle length, and number of uncontrolled conflicts. The majority of intersections performed at BLOS ratings of C and D, while one indicator that has received BLOS B across all intersections as a result of the relatively small turning radius and reasonable cycle lengths, which enhances safety for people cycling when turning at intersections. However, there is a lack of measures to reduce conflicts between people cycling and other street users at intersections to enhance the LOS and overall user experience. Planned cycling improvements within the Centre, based on approved Environmental Assessment studies, will positively impact BLOS scores once implemented.

A detailed breakdown of Bicycle LOS scores by street segment and intersection is included in **Appendix A**.

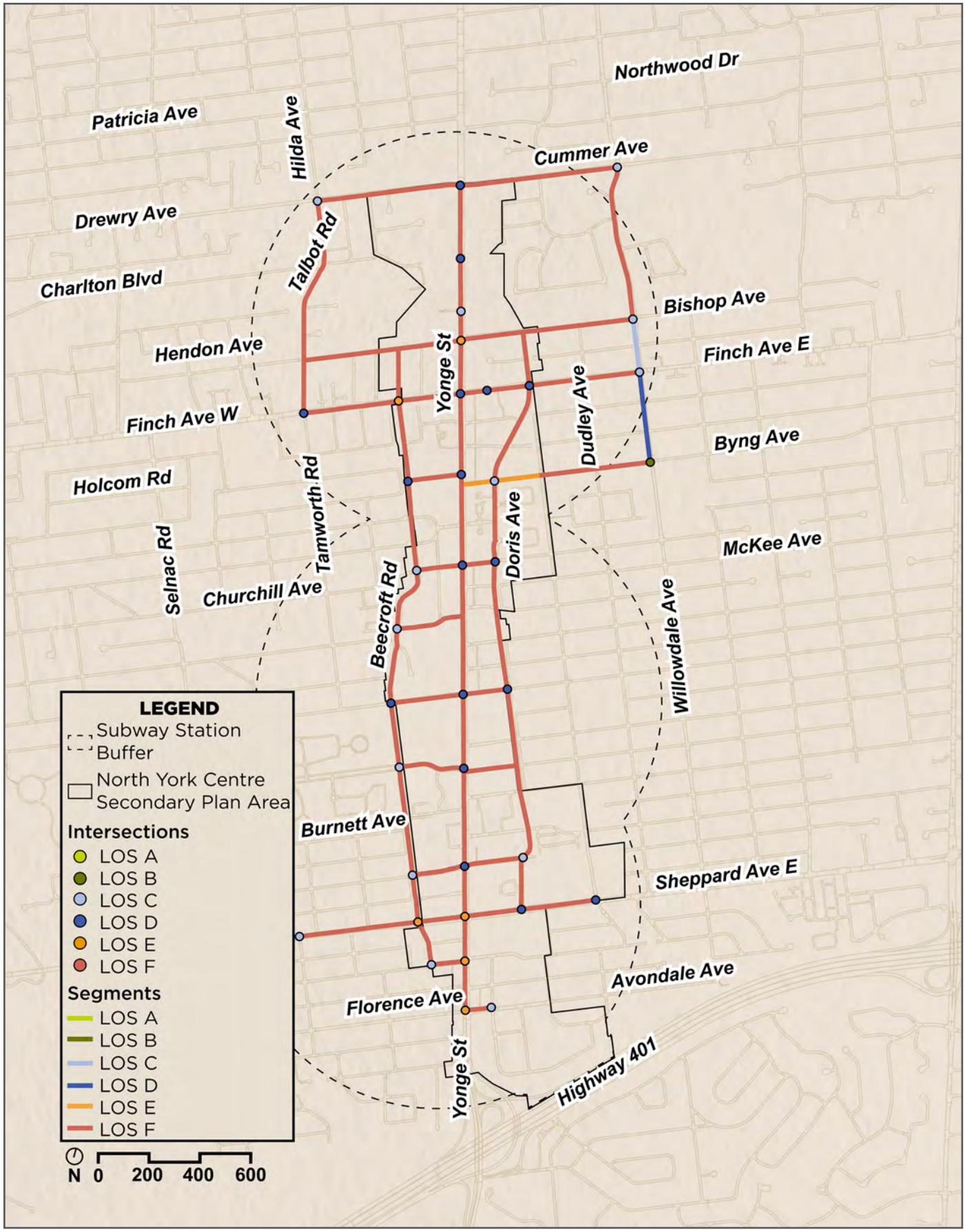


Figure 5-91: Bicycle Level of Service Assessment within the Boundary Expansion Study Area

Transit Analysis

Transit Ridership

Both subway and surface transit routes (TTC, YRT, and GO) are operating within their respective passenger carrying capacities.

Subway

Of the three subway stations within the Mobility Study Area, Finch Station carries the highest daily passengers, providing connection with many high-ridership TTC, YRT, and GO bus routes, as well as it being the terminus station of the Line 1 subway along Yonge Street. Directional patterns reveal that most Line 1 passengers travel southbound in the morning and northbound in the evening. The Line 4 passengers mostly travel westbound in the morning and eastbound in the evening. These patterns are consistent with the distribution of employment areas. It should be noted that even during the peak hours, both subway lines at these stations have available capacity, with average utilizations ranging from 2-32% in 2019 and 1-15% in 2022.

Local and Regional Bus

Average bus utilization was calculated for each TTC route using data collected in 2019 and 2023. The results indicate that TTC bus route utilization has remained at a similar level between 2019 and 2023, and that the bus routes are operating within capacity. Similarly, average utilization results indicate all YRT and GO bus routes operating within the Mobility Study Area are operating within capacity.

Transit Level of Service

The Transit Level of Service (TLOS) assessment considered both segments and signalized intersections within the Primary Study Area (**Figure 5-93**). TLOS evaluates the experience of transit users and the quality of transit infrastructure in the area. The analysis provides an indication of the aggregate performance of transit infrastructure at specific segments or intersections within the PSA. A TLOS rating of A indicates a positive and comfortable experience for transit users, while TLOS rating of F suggests barriers or constraints such as high delays and/or a low quality of infrastructure at transit stops.

Street Segments

TLOS values for street segments are influenced by measures such as transit facility type, the presence of passenger amenities, and segment pedestrian level of service. Most segments examined have TLOS rating of C or D, suggesting the existing surface transit operation is generally acceptable.

Intersections

The combination of factors that collectively define the level of service at intersections include the presence of transit priority measures, transit movement delay, and intersection PLOS. Similar to the results seen along segments, most intersections performed at an acceptable LOS C or D level.

A full transit utilization analysis is included in **Appendix A**.

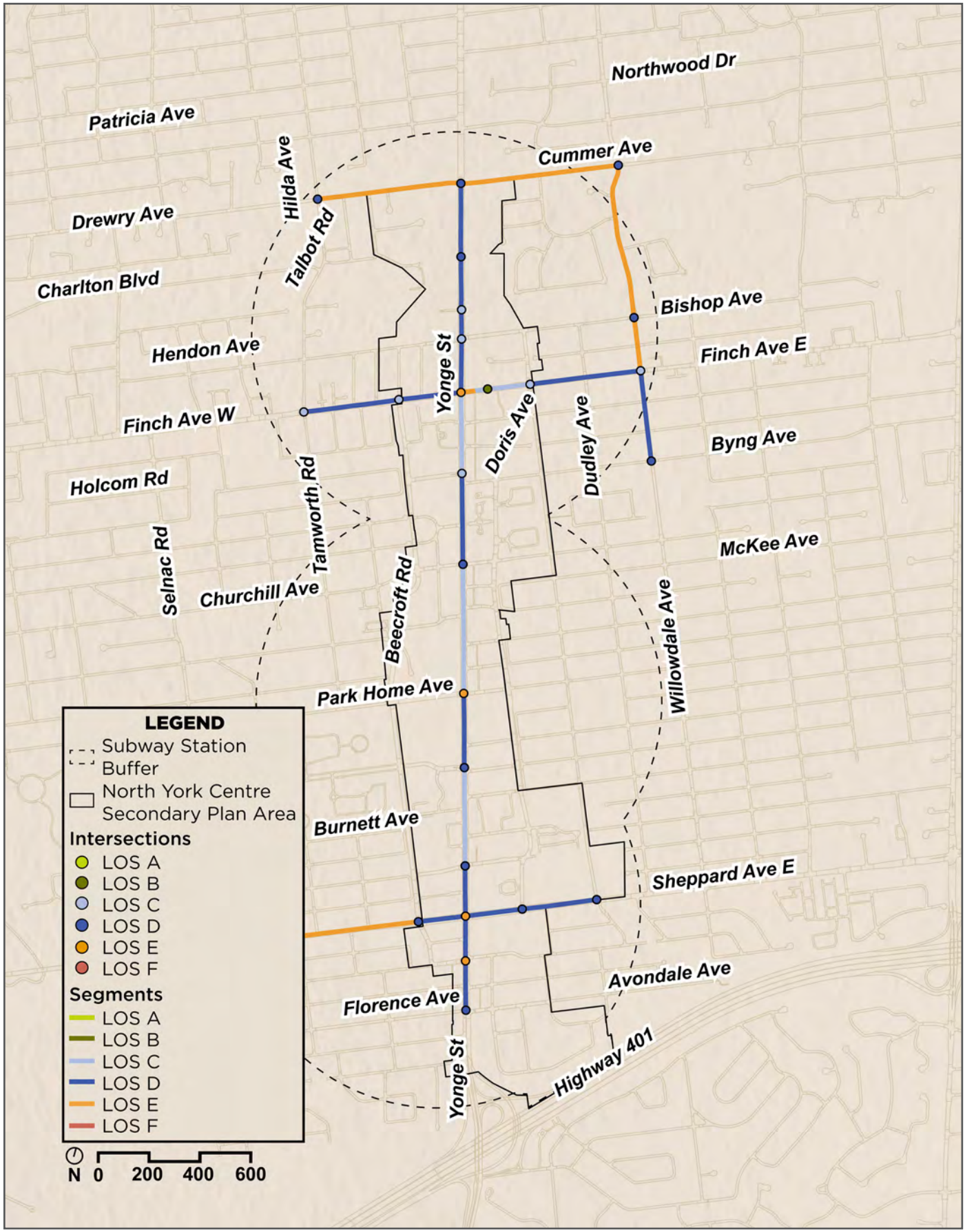


Figure 5-92: Transit Level of Service in the Boundary Expansion Study Area

5.5.5 Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategies

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is the active use of measures that influence travel behaviour and mode choices and promote sustainable alternatives to the single-occupant motor vehicle, which benefits the overall management of the transportation system.

An assessment of TDM strategies from other Secondary Plans and associated Area Transportation Master Plans in Toronto was conducted to identify effective approaches to TDM that could be applied throughout the Centre. **Table 5-11** provides a summary of the observed TDM policy and program types.

Table 5-11: TDM Policy and Program Types from the Precedent Review

Policy or Program Type	Description
Employer-Based Strategies	Smart Commute is the City's primary TDM program that offers services and support to employers to reduce private motor vehicle trips of employees, such as employee workshops, marketing materials, carpooling tools and commuter programs, and assistance developing telework and flexible work schedule policies.
Promotional and Educational Programming	Programs like Smart Commute also promote, educate, and provide resources to the public and employees on alternative commuting options beyond private motor vehicles, such as carpooling, transit use and active transportation.
New Development Requirements	The City imposes requirements that support TDM on new developments. These include requiring transportation impact studies to provide solutions for mitigating traffic impacts, which often include infrastructure investments and TDM measures designed to encourage alternatives to driving solo. These include parking reductions, end of trip cycling facilities, bike parking, and accessible pedestrian infrastructure. Based on the type and scale of the development, a formal TDM plan or strategy could be required.
Infrastructure and Amenity Investments	Several City policies emphasize ongoing support, investment, and implementation of active transportation and transit infrastructure to encourage other commuting options beyond private motor vehicles, reduce transportation demand, and help the City reach its mode share and emissions goals.
TDM and Parking Strategies	Several plans highlighted the importance of formal TDM plans, parking management strategies, and other mobility strategies, such as shared mobility strategies, specific to the area of the secondary plan for a more comprehensive management of transportation demand.
TDM-Adjacent Policies and Support	All of the Secondary Plans and TMPs reviewed contained policies that support the reduction of single occupancy motor vehicle use a variety of ways that may not directly fall under traditional TDM, such as encouraging shared mobility, increased density, and the roll out of the City's active transportation and transit networks.

Transportation Demand Management Opportunities in North York Centre

Based on the TDM precedent review, a number of opportunities for TDM measures have emerged that may be considered for the Centre to reduce single-occupant motor vehicle use and reduce traffic demand:

- **Sustainable Mobility Network:** The implementation of the REimagining Yonge EA, including the proposed in-boulevard cycle tracks and enhanced pedestrian realm/streetscape design, is a key element to support future mobility in North York Centre. Building upon this initiative using a complete streets approach will improve connectivity and the attractiveness of sustainable transportation modes across the entire Study Area.
- **TDM Programming:** Smart Commute has a long history in the City and can be expanded to improve the toolset available to the City of Toronto in managing demand, boost the depth of engagement with major employers, and develop programs that address transportation system capacity challenges outside of the typical commuting times and routes. This strategy could investigate needs and opportunities in residential and employer-based TDM, development requirements, incentive programs, and school-based trips.
- **Private Development:** All key destinations should have the highest performance levels of the Toronto Green Standard. This includes reducing single occupancy auto vehicle trips generated by proposed developments by 25% through a variety of multimodal infrastructure strategies and TDM measures; the provision of a significant supply of secure and sheltered bike parking for both tenants/residents and visitors, comfortable and accessible pedestrian infrastructure; and energized outlets (capable of providing Level 2 EV charging or higher) in residential and non-residential parking spaces to support low-emissions transportation and mobility options.
- **Shared Mobility:** Proactively preserve space along the Yonge Street corridor and within the BESA for frequent and easily accessible Bike Share Toronto stations as well as EV charging, where practical. The supply of existing and potential carshare services should also be evaluated to ensure it is adequately accommodating and meeting the demands of the growing population of the area to help provide alternatives to car ownership.

Bike Share

Bike Share Toronto is an integral part of Toronto's transportation network. Not only does it provide healthy and affordable mobility options, but it also supports the City in pushing forward with its long-term sustainability goals. Toronto Parking Authority, the operator of Bike Share Toronto, is currently implementing its Four-Year Bike Share Toronto Growth Plan (2022-2025), which provides strategic direction for the program's expansion to 2025 to meet the growing service demand. A key priority is to expand service beyond the central system (which currently serves primarily downtown areas south of Highway 401) into suburban communities and reach equity-seeking neighbourhoods with the greatest need for access to affordable mobility options. Major light rail transit projects underway in the City as well as corridors where new cycling infrastructure is planned by the City present key opportunities for the bike share system to support multimodal travel.

The recommended implementation schedule from the Four-Year Growth Plan identifies the following planned stations within and around the Mobility Study Area, which are shown in **Figure 5-76**:

- Between 2024 to 2025, there is a total of eleven stations expected to be installed within Ward 18 (Willowdale), five of which are expected to

be installed within the Mobility Study Area. The three stations planned for 2025 in the Mobility Study Area are at the intersections of Willowdale Avenue and Sheppard Avenue East, Willowdale Avenue and Bishop Avenue, and Drewry Avenue and Bathurst Street.

Key considerations for planning bike share stations identified by Toronto Parking Authority include:

- Require a minimum of 19 docking points or a minimum of 25 docking points if located near higher order transit and provision of e-bike charging infrastructure. Mel Lastman Square is a key candidate site, given that it is the main civic plaza in the Centre with access to higher order transit.
- Locate at candidate sites that allow for stations to be enlarged over time to accommodate population growth and organic membership growth.
- Consider hardscape stations, which include station bollards directly built into the ground with underground electrical conduits powering the station, along Yonge Street. Hardscape stations are less prone to rusting since no metal base plates are required, provide flexibility to create non-linear settings, and can be better integrated with the urban fabric of the city given their more permanent appearance.

These planned bike share stations are expected to provide significant access to cycling for residents and visitors of the Centre and overall Mobility Study Area, removing the need for residents to own and store a personal bicycle. Provision of stations beyond the Centre will support east-west trips along the Finch Hydro Corridor Trail.

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- **Trend towards transit and walking**. Based on Census data, prior to the pandemic there was a decreasing auto mode share, with more people opting to take transit and use active modes. Transit usage is particularly strong between the Centre and Downtown Toronto, but particularly weak for trips to/from York Region. There has been growth in walking as a sustainable mode of travel with more trips starting from and going to the Centre, recognizing the Centre's evolution as a more urbanized centre. The pandemic put a pause in this mode share trend, resulting in a notable increase in auto mode share in 2021. Since then, transit ridership has slowly been returning to the pre-pandemic levels.
- **Modest cycling rates.** Based on TTS data, while there has been a shift towards active transportation modes (5% increase from 2006), most of the gains in active transportation have been through walking trips, as cycling rates remain very low (under 1%) in 2016.
- **Different trip patterns among residents versus employees.** Based on TTS data, employees commuting to the Centre rely more heavily on autos (52%) than Centre residents do for their commuting trips (38%). Employee trips under 2 km are dominated by active transportation (over 80% in 2016), a significant improvement since 2006.
- **Largely uniform street grid.** North York Centre has a compact and consistent street grid, which provides robust connections for active users. This grid also has potential to undergo reconfiguration in a variety of ways in order to support anticipated population increases and a shift to a more sustainable modal split. This is bolstered by the consistency both of the grid pattern's layout, as well as its individual streets, most of which feature a 20-metre right-of-way. The Centre's uniform street grid is in large part interrupted by its service roads, which results in significantly larger blocks in certain parts of the centre adjacent to Yonge Street. These blocks are effectively broken down by the presence of informal mid-block pedestrian connections and indoor links between buildings.
- **Transit-oriented area.** North York Centre is well-served by higher-order transit, especially for trips to/from Downtown, and is anticipated to improve in this regard for other trips with the planned transit improvements.
- **A Yonge-centred public realm.** The public realm of North York Centre is very much focused on the Yonge Street corridor, with little retail presence or open space on adjacent streets, and an abrupt public realm transition to a stable neighbourhood as one moves beyond the service roads.
- **Transition away from office uses.** Pandemic-related disruptions to traditional working arrangements have had significant impacts on North York Centre, in which there is a notable presence of offices. This transition is anticipated to have further impacts on the Centre, specifically on the travel patterns during commuter peak periods and its network of indoor atriums and connections between buildings with small businesses that is dependent on foot traffic during working hours.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- **The pedestrian network is robust.** While sidewalk conditions and widths vary, in general in the core area, sidewalks are wide and comfortably buffered from the roadway. Off-street pedestrian connections further enhance this network, and the pedestrian experience at intersections is strengthened by compact corner radii and generally short signal cycle lengths.
- **New public realm vision through Transform Yonge.** Plans for Yonge Street include the development of a high-quality public realm with an integrated streetscape and open space network, additional spaces for pedestrian walkways, dedicated bikeways and continuous street tree canopy; a model that could inspire the transformation of other major streets.
- **Acceptable level of service for drivers.** The road network today provides sufficient capacity to accommodate car trips. During peak periods, all movements operate within capacity (v/c <= 1.00), and all intersections operate at an acceptable overall LOS of 'D' or better. The majority of 95th percentile queues at exclusive turning lanes are contained within the available storage lengths.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

Mobility and Public Realm Opportunity Themes

- **Enhance the pedestrian network.** While the sidewalk network in North York Centre is generally complete, there are several notable gaps in sidewalk completeness and availability of pedestrian crossings within the Centre that warrant attention. In addition, there are several opportunities to improve pedestrian connectivity and access through the introduction of new mid-block pedestrian connections, which would promote walkability in and around large city blocks.
- **Improve conditions for safety.** While Transform Yonge will introduce significant active transportation improvements to the Yonge Street corridor and has the potential to relieve the most critical issues, additional improvement opportunities still exist along the remaining segments of Yonge Street and other streets in the Centre.
- **Convert short trips to cycling.** Approximately 40% of the current weekday trips to North York Centre are 6 km or less, which is considered a suitable distance for cycling. Within this distance, cycling currently makes up 1% of the total trips, while auto drivers and passengers makes up 59%. This demonstrates a significant potential to convert the existing local auto driver and passenger trips under 6 km to active modes by adding cycling infrastructure and bike share stations to North York Centre to encourage people to cycle.
- **Expansion of bike share.** Key considerations include siting bike share stations with a specified minimum number of docking points at higher order transit stations, provision of e-bike charging infrastructure, planning for station expansion, and the use of hardscape stations.
- **Reconnect and expand the grid.** While much of the historical grid street network still exists, there are many instances of interruptions which reduce the network's effectiveness of moving people on foot, by bike, by transit, and by car. New developments should be encouraged to create breezeways, mid-block connections and internal pathways connecting to the existing pathways in the Centre.

- **Create a visible and functional hierarchy of east-west streets.** Opportunity exists to distinguish east-west corridors into separate typologies to prioritize different modes and enhanced public realm. For example, elements like streetscaping, green streets, cycling infrastructure, and wider sidewalks could be prioritized differently for different corridors.
- **Expand the Yonge Street public realm onto side streets.** Opportunities exist to see Yonge Street as the "trunk" of the Centre's public realm network, with the local streets intersecting Yonge serving as "branches", allowing public realm improvement to expand off the main street.
- **Grow transit mode share via surface transit improvements.** Long-term major transit projects will substantially improve transit connectivity to York Region. In the short and medium term, improvements should be explored through service improvements, transit signal priority measures, and upgraded bus stops to enhance the user experience for bus riders.
- **Improve pedestrian connectivity to the overall transit network.** Opportunities exist to encourage development and other public realm improvements to expand and improve pedestrian connections to subway stations and other key transit stops, with a focus on accessibility and wayfinding. This will be needed to better accommodate the planned population and employment growth in this area.
- **More placemaking.** Placemaking in the public realm should be improved through the establishment of public art installations, additional patio space, programmable streets, and additional open spaces, tree plantings, wayfinding and installation of pedestrian scale lighting and street furniture, such as benches. These improvements can help create an accessible, comfortable, sustainable and safe public realm.
- **More trees and green infrastructure in the street network.** The Centre currently lacks green spaces, presenting an opportunity for improvement. Enhancements can be achieved by increasing the tree canopy and plantings within the street right-of-way, while incorporating Low Impact Development (LID) infrastructure.
- **Re-invigorate Mel Lastman Square.** As the primary civic plaza within the Centre, Mel Lastman Square attracts a variety of programmed and passive activities. However, opportunities exist to better physically integrate the Square with Yonge Street, line the Square with active uses, improve accessibility and provide maintenance to the existing paved areas.
- **Create a network of civic plazas.** Smaller plazas throughout the Centre offer opportunities to act as social gathering places that bring people together, offer respite from the heat or simply a place to rest. Programming, wayfinding and maintenance opportunities should be explored to enhancethis network within the Centre.
- **Maintain a viable supply of on-street and off-street parking to support surrounding uses, including retail and commercial.** In consultation with Toronto Parking Authority, proposed street cross-section designs should carefully consider impacts to the area's parking supply. There is potential to re-envision the off-street parking portfolio for other uses like transit-oriented communities and housing.

5.6 Built Form

Built form is the study of the form and scale of buildings and the spatial orientation relative to their surrounding blocks, streets, and open spaces. The Centre is a diverse and dynamic urban centre that has experienced significant development and growth but has historically been around the automobile as the primary mode of transportation. This has resulted in large roadways that dominate the neighbourhood, a stark contrast to the tall, urban, mixed-use towers along Yonge Street with active street frontages and direct access to rapid transit networks. Studying the built form context today alongside the patterns and trends seen in recently proposed or built developments can help anticipate the opportunities for shaping built form through the update to the Secondary Plan. The analysis in this section summarizes the existing policies and guidelines that regulate built form today, and then focuses on key built form characteristics within the NYCSP and Boundary Expansion Study Area.

Policy

Official Plan

The Official Plan sets out visionary goals for the city, with policies that guide and shape the design of buildings. These policies help articulate how buildings are a core component in allowing the city to evolve, improve, and realize its full potential. Chapter 2 starts by acknowledging the impacts of urban growth and the relationship between built form, land use, and transportation. Chapter 3 focuses largely on the built environment, promoting matters that can improve our everyday lives, including high quality buildings that inspire us and make us feel proud. *Section 3.1.3 Built Form* establishes policies for buildings. Requirements related to built form include:

- Locating and organizing development within sites to:
  - Fit within the existing and planned contexts, considering and responding to streets, prominent destinations, parks and open spaces, transit stops, and natural areas;
  - Ensure main entrances face publicly accessible streets or open spaces;
  - Minimize impact of vehicular accesses, ramps, parking, loading, and related uses; and
  - Prioritize and provide sunlight and daylight on open spaces.
- Shaping the building's scale and massing to:
  - Provide streetwall heights and setbacks that fit harmoniously with the existing and planned context;
  - Reduce scale of building mass above the streetwall; and
  - Provide transition in scale within the site and to neighbouring properties.
- Improving the public realm through building design to:
  - Contribute to a pedestrian scale through high quality design;
  - Enhance relationships at-grade level such as through direct access and views;
  - Articulate rhythm along the street such as through breaking up long facades;
  - Provide weather protection; and
  - Implement improvements along boulevards and sidewalks such as landscape improvements, street trees, furniture, and amenities.
- Including private and shared amenity spaces to:
  - Meet the needs of residents of all ages and abilities over time and throughout the year; and
  - Provide accessible and usable spaces that prioritize privacy, comfort, and vibrancy.

Section 3.1.4 Built Form – Building Types encourage a range of building types, defining three main scales: Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartments; Mid-Rise; and Tall. They each have their own set of policies that speak to the broader built form goals. More importantly for the Centre, these assist in providing a mix of housing options, defining and supporting streets, parks and open spaces at a range of scales.

North York Centre Secondary Plan

The following section details the existing built form policies in the Secondary Plan today, including height limits, density limits and transfers, and urban design and public realm.

Building Height Limits

Building height policies generally reinforce and further articulate density policies, as they allow for the tallest buildings along Yonge Street and adjacent to the Highway 401, while also establishing a transition down in height to adjoining neighbourhoods. The heights schedule is very precise, providing heights in metres along Yonge Street and a transitional heights regime in parts of the NYCSP area approaching low-rise Neighbourhoods. The NYCSP establishes height maximums using a percentage of horizontal distance from Relevant Residential Property Lines (RRPL). Maximum heights are generally between 87 and 100 metres on Yonge Street (approximately 29 to 33 storeys).

Figure 5-93: Maximum Height Limits (Map 8-8a)

Figure 5-94: Maximum Height Limits (Map 8-8b)

Figure 5-95: Maximum Height Limits (Map 8-8c)

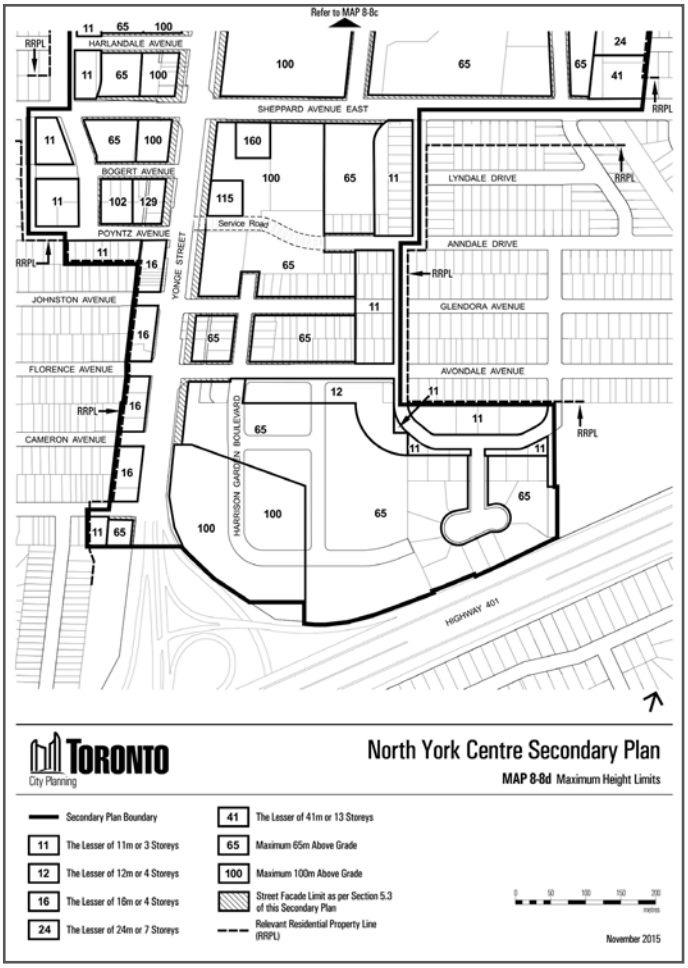


Figure 5-96: Maximum Height Limits (Map 8-8d)

The heights in the NYCSP no longer reflect the scale of development being proposed in the Secondary Plan area. Recent applications and approvals through the OLT have typically been in the 30 to 49 storey range. North York at the Centre will explore increased height limits and/or use of performance-based tools to control built form instead of height limits. A new strategy for ensuring appropriate height transition towards the neighbourhoods will be an important built form consideration, including considering infrastructure capacity, shadow impacts, and wind impacts of potential new development.

Density Limits and Transfers

Limits on development density throughout the Centre are established in the NYCSP, with a maximum Floor Space Index (FSI) of between 1.5 and 5.2 permitted in different areas with potential to increase through density bonusing/density transfer. The NYCSP also allows for density limits to be exceeded by up to a maximum of 33% through density transfers from other development sites.

Figure 5-97: North York Centre Secondary Plan Density Limits – North

Figure 5-98: North York Centre Secondary Plan Density Limits – South

OPA 570 establishes a density target of 350 residents and jobs combined per hectare for the Finch PMTSA, 400 residents and jobs combined for the North York Centre PMTSA, and 350 residents and jobs combined for the Sheppard-Yonge PMTSA.

Generally, greater density allowances are established adjacent to Yonge Street and Highway 401, particularly in proximity to higher order transit stations with limits decreasing to the east and west as they approach low-density neighbourhoods. The density limits are intended to encourage more people to live and work in areas with convenient access to public transportation, while also ensuring redevelopment is compatible with the surrounding neighbourhoods and does not exceed the capacity of physical infrastructure, including roads, sewers, and watermains.

The density limits in the NYCSP no longer reflect the intensity of development coming to the Plan area. Recent applications approved at the OLT have been in the 8-10 FSI range. North York at the Centre will explore increased density limits and/or use of performance-based tools to control built form instead of density limits, while continuing to ensure that development is compatible with surrounding neighbourhoods and does not exceed the capacity of physical infrastructure, including existing and planned servicing and road networks.

Urban Design and Public Realm

The NYCSP establishes urban design and public realm policies related to built form, heritage, the pedestrian environment, and buffer areas, which are generally intended to help create an activated, comfortable, and attractive public realm. Policies cover such matters as block definition, street definition, streetscapes, street retail and the interface between the Centre and adjacent neighbourhoods. Policies for building setbacks and build-to lines are established for specific streets and street types. Heritage policies are solely focused on the Gibson House (see Section 11), ensuring access to natural light and existing views from Yonge Street are preserved for the museum.

A buffer at the eastern and western edges of the Secondary Plan area is intended to create a well-defined boundary and facilitate a stable buffer from the surrounding residential neighbourhoods using roadways, parks, open space and transitional built form.

North York at the Centre will evaluate the success or failure of the specific policies, their ongoing relevance given changes in the past 25 years and gaps. In particular, the buffer area will need to be reviewed as a tool for transition to surrounding residential neighbourhoods if a change to the Secondary Plan boundary is proposed.

Specifically, the existing Secondary Plan includes the following general urban design objectives:

- Height, massing, and intensity of buildings will generally be focused along Yonge Street in the immediate vicinity of subway stations, with the highest building heights generally north of Sheppard Avenue and at Highway 401 on the east side of Yonge Street;
- Yonge Street will have the primary promenades of the City;
- A fine urban street grid with small blocks, with new east-west connections to increase access to and from Yonge Street;
- Street trees, continuous frontages, and human-scale height limits on all streets;
- Scale and massing of buildings (heights, setbacks, and build-to requirements) should relate to the specific context of each development site;
- Retain heritage buildings and public amenities;
- Buildings should have direct access from the streets or publicly accessible outdoor space; and
- Encourage public art.

Lessons from Other Secondary Plans

This section includes a summary of relevant information from adjacent Secondary Plans. It also reviews the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan for lessons that may be applicable to North York Centre as the two areas share many characteristics.

Yonge Street North Secondary Plan

- **Building heights, types and transition:** A map of building heights and types identifies areas for low-rise, mid-rise and tall buildings with maximum heights of 45 and 5 storeys and visible transition in height identified in the areas that permit tall buildings (**Figure 5-99**). Areas adjacent to the Secondary Plan boundary are generally identified as having a mix of mid-rise buildings and low-rise buildings for transition. The area designated Neighbourhoods provides further transition to the east with a maximum of four storeys. This is a much less prescriptive approach to height than that used in the current NYCSP.
- **Density:** There are no maximum FSI limits in the Secondary Plan as in the current NYCSP. The only reference to density is the minimum population and employment target for the Steeles Transit Station Area.

- **Yonge Drewry/Cummer Node:** A Yonge Drewry/Cummer Node is identified with the tallest building being 45 storeys and located at the intersection. Policy states that tall buildings are to be located on Yonge Street within the Node, and only if a higher order transit station is confirmed may tall buildings be located behind tall buildings which front onto Yonge Street. North York at the Centre will also need to address the uncertainty about a future subway station at Cummer Avenue/Drewry Avenue and the Yonge Street North Secondary Plan provides one approach to doing this.

Central Finch Area Secondary Plan

- **Height:** The Plan generally indicates low-rise to mid-rise (three to six storeys) development on Finch Avenue.

Sheppard Lansing Secondary Plan And Sheppard Willowdale Secondary Plan

- **Height:** Both Secondary Plans establish a character of mid-rise buildings along Sheppard Avenue, with slightly taller buildings being permitted in the Sheppard Willowdale Secondary Plan (five to seven storeys) than the Sheppard Lansing Secondary Plan (three to six storeys).
- **Transition:** Both Secondary Plans use a 45-degree angular plane from the property line of adjacent Neighbourhoods as the primary tool for transition.
- **Density:** Both Secondary Plans include maximum density maps with maximum permitted FSI of up to 3.0.

Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan

- **Transit Station Areas:** The Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan identifies transit station areas, which are within 250-500 metres of stations that aim to maximize the number of potential transit users within walking distance of each station.

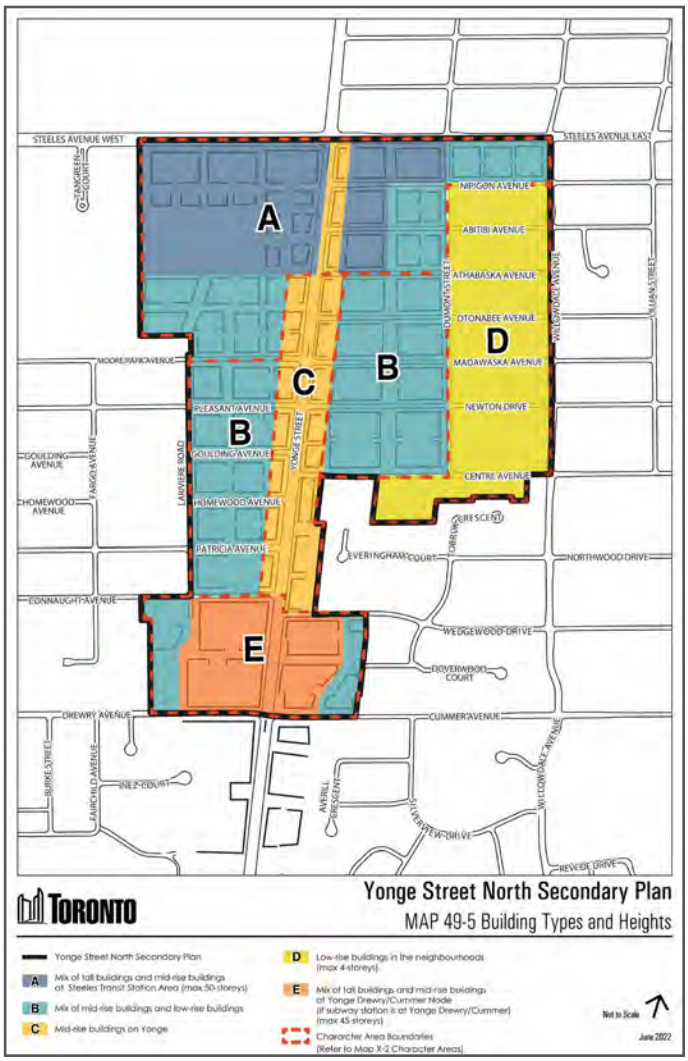


Figure 5-99: Yonge Street North Secondary Plan – Map 49-5 Building Types and Heights

Each Midtown Transit Station Area has specific density targets. Breaking down the station areas / MTSAs around the stations in North York Centre can help achieve transition, especially around the 'edges' of where *Mixed Use Areas* interface with Neighbourhoods. In Yonge-Eglinton, these are broken down into three types:

- Station Area Core zone, which includes the transit stations, residential intensification, a concentration of office uses, and collectively are areas of greater intensity than in the Secondary Zones.
- Secondary Zones, which support transit-supportive development and a mix of uses. These will be areas of less intensity than the Station Area Core and where development will generally transition down in height and scale.
- Areas within 250-500 metres of the transit station that includes transit-supportive development.

- **Character Areas:** Breaking down the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan study areas – particularly the growth areas, into distinct character areas helped to define individual performance and evaluation criteria for the built form testing, specific to each area's character. For example, this included testing 30 metre tower separations in some areas where sky view and openness were innate to that area's character. This approach could be applied in North York Centre where there are obvious character areas to allow built form, public realm, and mobility strategies to respond specifically to existing and planned contexts.
- **Building Types:** Broadening and adding to existing defined building types in Toronto, this plan offers context-specific types. For example, 'Midtown Infill Development' responds to constrained sites or additions to existing buildings.

Guidelines

The below guidelines govern built form design in the City today. Best practices from the Guidelines will be used in the assumptions for the development of built form options in Phase 2 of North York at the Centre.

Tall Building Design Guidelines

The City adopted the city-wide Tall Building Design Guidelines in 2013 to help ensure that tall buildings fit within their context and minimize their local impacts as directed by the Official Plan. They illustrate how the public realm and built form policy objectives of the Official Plan can be achieved within a tall building development. The Tall Building Design Guidelines are used by applicants and as part of the City's application review process for proposed tall buildings in the Centre.

The Urban Design Guidelines created for the Centre will use the Tall Building Design Guidelines as the starting point and tailor them to respond to the Centre's unique context. Particularly important built form guidelines for tall buildings may be recommended to be elevated to policy and included in the updated Secondary Plan.

Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards (2010), Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards Addendum (2016) and Mid-Rise Buildings Rear Transition Performance Standards Review & Draft Update

Council adopted the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards in 2010 and an Addendum to the Standards in 2016 to assist with the evaluation of mid-rise development applications. The Standards apply development controls to ensure that Toronto's Avenues develop in a context-sensitive manner. In particular, using various tools to maintain a proportional relationship between building height and street right-of-way and provide transition to areas to the rear.

The City is currently updating the rear transition performance standards to facilitate the development of mid-rise buildings and increased housing supply. This study is responding to the urgent need to increase housing supply in forms that are sustainable in the face of the climate emergency. This may help facilitate as-of-right development in more areas along Avenues and other Mixed Use Areas. A new suite of rear transition standards is being proposed.

There are no Avenues designated in the current NYCSP area where the Mid-Rise Building Performance Standards would apply. Avenues are designated along Finch Avenue and Sheppard Avenue immediately adjacent to the NYCSP area, which are included in the broader study area.

Growing Up Urban Design Guidelines: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities

The Growing up Guidelines focus on how new mid-rise and tall buildings can be developed as vertical communities that support social interaction and better accommodate the needs of all types of households (including those with children). They are applied to all new multi-residential mid-rise and tall building development applications that include 20 units or more. The majority of new units in North York Centre will be in mid-rise and tall buildings. Built form related guidelines include:

- Providing a critical mass of large units, primarily in lower floors of the building;
- Ideal unit size (as per Guideline 3.0) is 90 square metres for a 2-bedroom unit and 106 square metres for a 3-bedroom unit;
- Providing indoor and outdoor common amenity spaces to serve a range of ages and abilities;
- Shaping tower floorplates and overall massing to support and optimize for a large variety of unit types; and
- Including child-specific POPS to expand the network of open spaces.

Townhouse And Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines

Council adopted the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines in 2018 to illustrate how the public realm and built form policies of the Official Plan can be achieved in low-rise development. The Guidelines cover a range of issues including site context, site organization, building types, building design, and the public and private realms.

Townhouses and low-rise apartments are often used to create a transition in scale between primarily high-rise areas like the Centre and surrounding low-density neighbourhoods. There are several townhouse developments at the periphery of the current NYCSP area. This study will consider whether these building types should be included in the Centre as part of a transition in scale and to provide a diversity of housing options.

The Retail Design Manual

The Retail Design Manual is a collection of best practices intended to provide guidance on developing successful ground floor retail spaces. It was adopted by Council in 2020. It encourages the integration of design considerations for retail space into the planning of new development at an early stage in the process.

The Retail Design Manual will be used as part of the reconsideration of Prime Frontage Areas in North York at the Centre, including which streets should be prioritized for retail/active uses and the policies for the ground floor and public realm on these streets.

Existing and Planned Conditions

Density

While the land use policies of the existing Secondary Plan direct more residential density toward the northern portion of the Centre, concentrations of highly dense areas can be found throughout the Primary Study Area (**Figure 5-99**). Existing density is clustered around Yonge Street, Beecroft Road, and Doris Avenue, with significantly lower densities along the edges of the Primary Study Area, typically where the *Neighbourhood* land uses meet the *Mixed Use Areas*.

Parcel Fabric

Parcel fabric – including parcel lengths and areas, refers to the division and organization of land into individual lots within North York Centre. The way that parcels are sized and arranged can have a significant impact on the urban form and character of a place. The size of parcels directly influences the density and development potential in a neighbourhood, as well as the ability to enhance or restrict the overall connectivity of the urban fabric. This analysis (**Figure 5-100** to **Figure 5-102**) investigates parcel sizes and lengths within the Study Area, specifically patterns along key streets within the Boundary Expansion Study Areas.

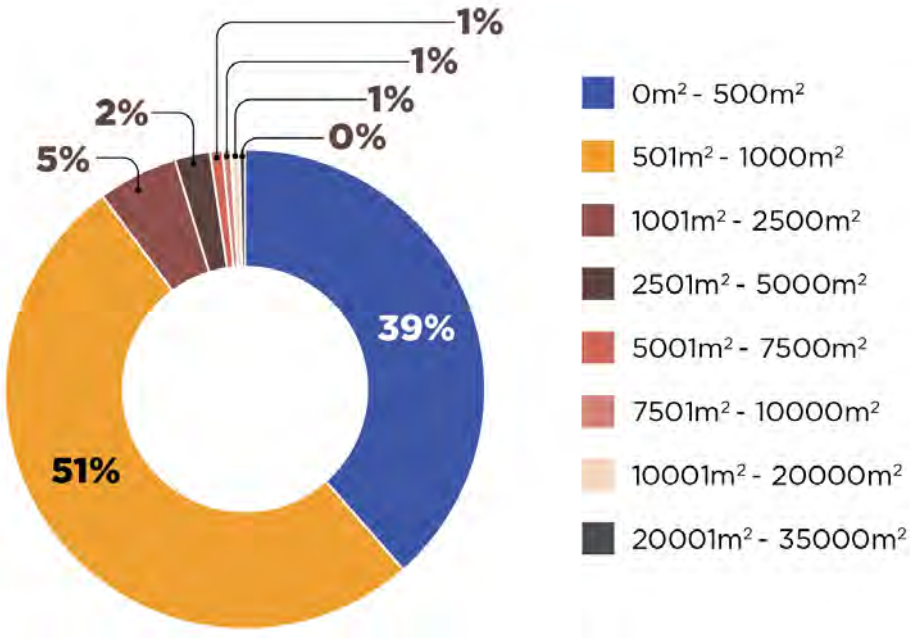


Figure 5-100: Breakdown of Parcel Sizes within the Primary Study Area and Boundary Expansion Study Areas

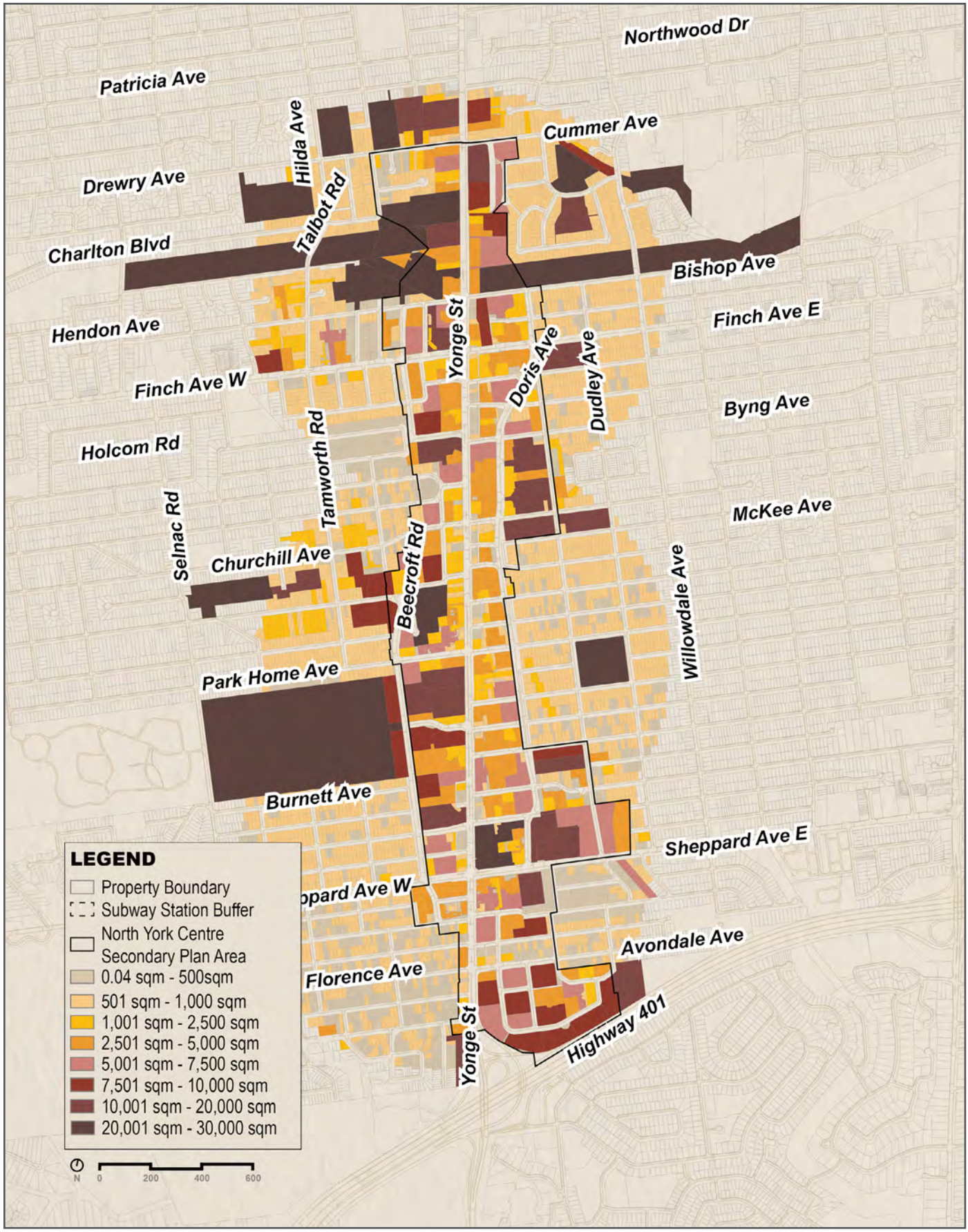


Figure 5-101: Parcel Sizes within the Boundary Expansion Study Area

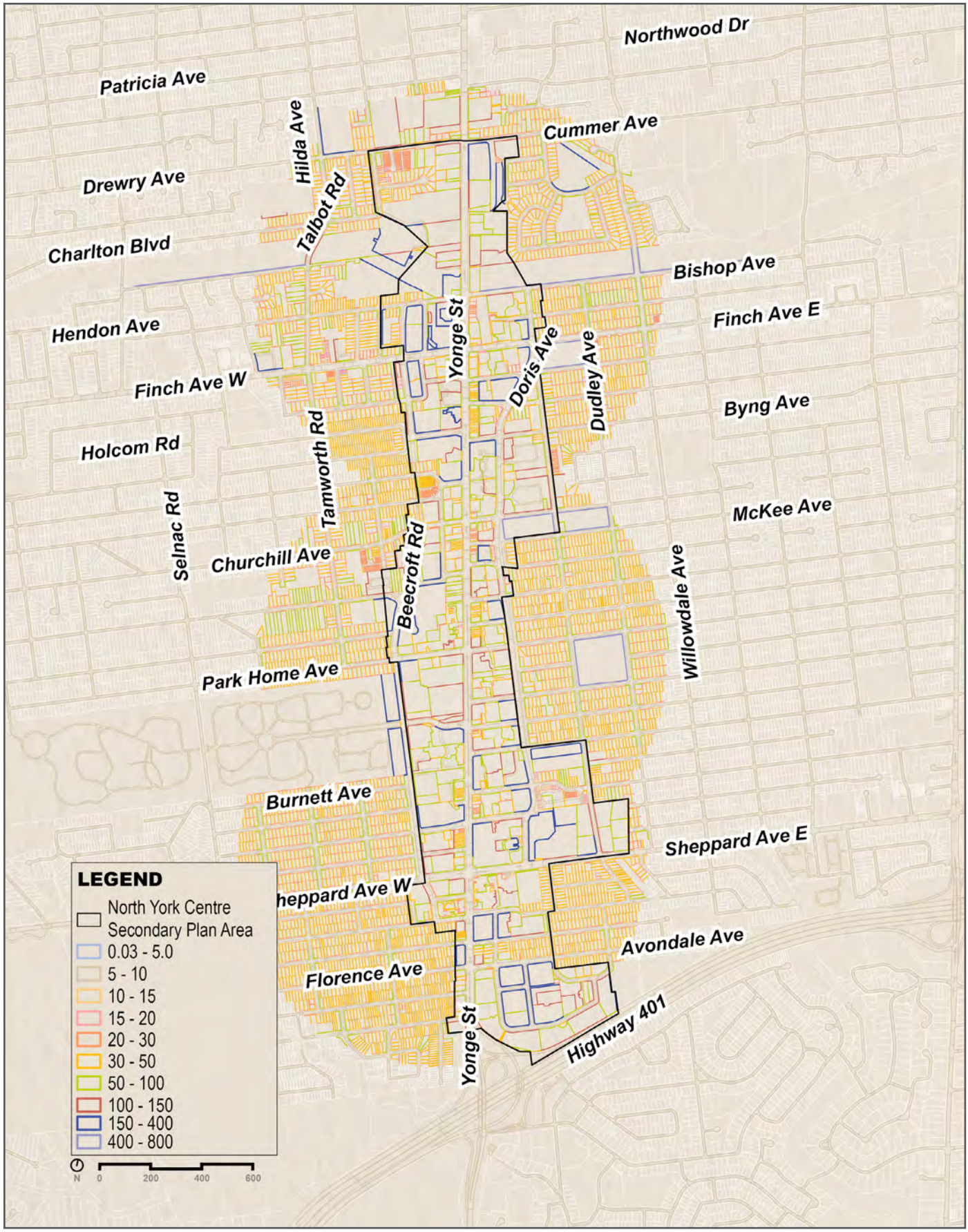


Figure 5-102: Parcel Lengths Map

Approximately 51% of the parcels in North York Centre are between 501 to 1,000 square metres in area and 39% are 500 square metres or less. Most of the smallest lots are within the areas designated Neighbourhoods, with single-detached dwellings. This contrasts with the larger parcels along Yonge Street, which were likely once small lots now assembled and redeveloped over time. Some of the largest parcels in the area today are sites that include:

- Large surface parking lots such as around Finch Station;
- Vacant parcels such as the provincially-owned site at 5769 Yonge Street;
- Open spaces such as the hydro corridor, the York Cemetery, parks, and school grounds; and
- Large apartment building sites that have been master planned, such as the complex on the southeast corner of Ellerslie Avenue and Beecroft Road.

Along Yonge Street, parcel frontages vary from as narrow as 5 metres for small-scaled retail shops (east side of Yonge Street, south of Holmes Avenue, **Figure 5-103**) to as wide as 120 metres, spanning almost an entire block, such as the Mel Lastman Square parcel.

Parcel depths along Yonge Street also vary, largely due to the non-linear nature of Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue. This creates deep parcels in some areas (such as the block bounded by Elmhurst Avenue, Beecroft Road, Yonge Street, and North York Boulevard) and narrow parcels in others. Many of the deepest parcels along Yonge stretch all the way to Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue, likely from consolidation over the past few decades and development activity in those areas. Attempts to break up the deeper blocks with subdivided parcels, laneways, and mid-block connections have occurred however, intersection density in this area is low.

The varying parcel sizes that exist today, primarily comparing the sites that have fine-grained retail with the larger assembled sites, can create a varied experience along streets like Yonge Street. As the pattern of parcel consolidation continues, this may present a challenge for where tall buildings can occur. Within the Primary Study Area, the individual parcel lengths and sizes create constrained conditions for redevelopment but offer important insights on street rhythm (such as narrow retail storefronts) that should be replicated or protected as a key defining feature of the neighbourhood. As a contrast, in the Boundary Expansion Study Area where parcels are more regular in size and shape, site assemblies can unlock opportunities for redevelopment.

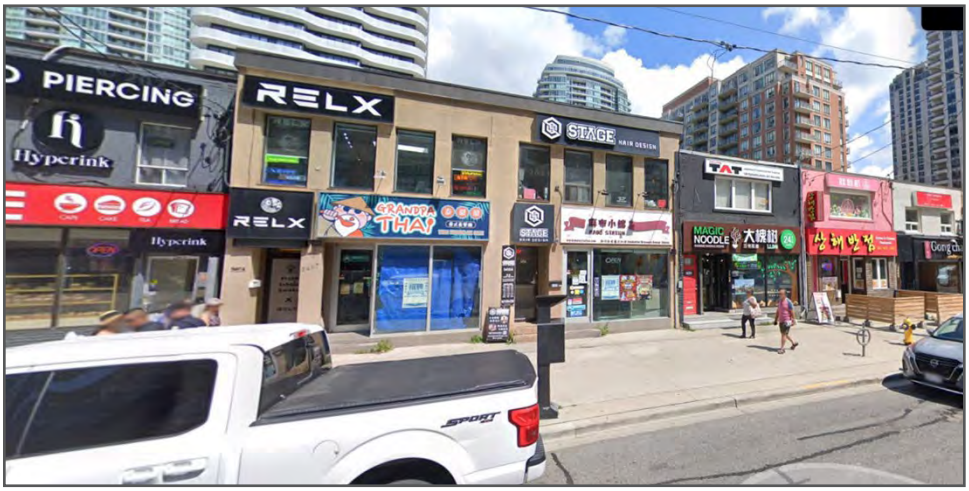


Figure 5-103: Retail Shops Along Yonge Street

Figure-Ground Analysis And Open Space Ratio

A figure-ground analysis (**Figure 5-105**) is a type of graphic representation used to study the spatial relationships between built and unbuilt areas. This distinguishes between positive (buildings, structures) and negative (open spaces, parking, roadway) spaces, helping us to understand the overall urban form.

An open space ratio analysis (**Figure 5-106**) helps further that understanding by calculating the percentage of each site that is open space, compared to the overall area of the site.

In the Neighbourhoods, where parcels are smallest, the buildings are more spread apart with more private open spaces in the form of front lawns and/or backyards. This high open space ratio is also seen on sites that contain older, tower-in-the-park style buildings.

On the other hand, there are areas where the parcel sizes are larger, but in many areas, that also comes with a higher lot coverage and slightly coarser urban grain. This includes areas recently developed, where buildings have little or no setback, or where there are larger ground floor plates.

Although the figure-ground and lot coverage analysis show higher coverage within the Centre, this analysis should be read in tandem with the pedestrian connectivity analysis in **Section 5.6**. In many instances, these larger buildings and deep and wide lots also include a finer grained network of atriums, pedestrian connections, tunnels, and large shared lobby areas that are not visible in a figure-ground analysis.

New linkages such as trails, mid-block connections, sidewalks will work in tandem with open space acquisition and expansion strategies, aiming to connect and broaden the public realm and mobility network. See **Section 5.1** for Trails and Access.

Figure 5-104: Low-rise Neighbourhoods and Tower-in-the-park Areas are Both Examples of Areas that Have High Open Space Ratio (Area Pictured is Beecroft Road, North of Park Home Avenue)

Figure 5-105: Figure-ground Analysis Map

Figure 5-106: Open Space Ratio Map

Building Types

Buildings in the Centre exist in a variety of shapes, sizes and heights. Organizing these into building "types" that share common physical characteristics can help us understand the historic patterns of development, current conditions and opportunities for changes in the future (**Figure 5-118** to **Figure 5-120**).

The following common building types have been identified across the broader Study Area:

Figure 5-107: Detached and Semi-detached Houses, Ellerslie Avenue

Detached and Semi-Detached Houses

The area outside the Secondary Plan Area is characterized by a diverse mix of detached houses that come in a variety of forms including modest bungalows and back-splits from the immediate post-war development era, that include generously landscaped front yards. More recent detached houses tend to be taller (2 stories) and larger (wider and deeper) with integrated garages. A small number of detached houses are found within the NYCSP Area, dating back to early settler-colonial development and are identified in the inventory of heritage resources. Some semi-detached forms are found throughout but generally located closer to the NYCSP boundary with the adjacent neighbourhoods.

Figure 5-108: Main Street Retail, Yonge Street North of Harlandale Avenue

Main Street Retail

Typically developed in tandem with the detached houses during the immediate post-war era, main street retail buildings are primarily two-storey buildings located largely along Yonge Street. They are typically found on narrow parcels, built to the street line and often serviced by a rear laneway. They often share demising walls with their neighbours on both sides. Some found south of Sheppard Avenue are set further back from Yonge Street and accommodate a single bay of surface parking.

A small number of more recent 2-3 storey commercial buildings can also be found along Sheppard and Finch Avenues.

Figure 5-109: Townhouses, William Poole Way

Townhouses

Townhouses are characterized by three or more residential units that share a demising wall. They are typically two stories and often rest above shared underground parking facilities or have their own at-grade parking with each unit. Generally found along the Doris Avenue, Beecroft Road or Finch Avenue frontages, or integrated into larger developments within the NYCSP area, a significant cluster is located in the master-planned community surrounding Avondale Park.

Figure 5-110: Tower in the Park, Ellerslie Ave

Tower in the Park

Tower in the Park buildings are residential apartment towers that were commonly constructed during the 1960s and ‘70s. They are characterized by long, narrow, slab-type floorplates with strip balconies that are repeated in a modular fashion, right down to the ground floor. They are typically set back from the street by generously landscaped green space and vehicular access drives and parking. Only a small number of buildings in the NYCSP area fall in this category, including the pair of crescent-shaped budlings at Beecroft Road and Ellerslie Avenue and 5900 Yonge Street.

Figure 5-111: Slab Towers, Doris Avenue

Slab Tower

Slab Towers are apartment towers that were commonly constructed during the 1980s and ‘90s and are found throughout the NYCSP area. They are characterized by long, narrow, slab-type floorplates. Unlike Tower in the Park buildings, they are often oriented more closely to the street (often with non-residential podiums) with a higher amount of hardscaped vehicular access drives. The podiums or lower floors are often articulated with a different material (brick or precast) with a variety of architectural features include cornices, pilasters, arcades or canopies. The Slab Tower Streetwall condition is typically characterized by one storey retail podiums that have a low (1-3 metre tower stepback).

Figure 5-112: Contemporary Point Tower, Hullmark Centre, Sheppard Avenue and Yonge Street

Contemporary Point Tower

Contemporary Point Towers werarear generally constructed after the adoption of the city's Tall Building Guidelines. They are characterized by "point towers" that are below 750 square metres in floorplate area and often square in plan. The towers rest on podiums that typically range in height from 3-8 stories and are stepped back from the podium by 3 metres or more. The podiums are generally organized with continuous streetwalls with minimal setbacks and house a mix of retail uses with residential above grade. They are located throughout the NYCSP area, mostly along Yonge Street, but some can be seen along Doris Avenue as well. These building types are typically the result of parcel assemblies.

Figure 5-113: Mid Rise Building, Beecroft Road

Midrise Buildings

Midrise buildings are defined as buildings that are no taller than the width of the adjacent right of way. There are a very small number of midrise buildings in the NYCSP area. They were generally constructed prior to the performance standards set out in the City's Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study, which were adopted by Council in 2010.

Figure 5-114: Office Building, Yonge Street and Franklin Avenue

Office

The Centre includes a high percentage of office uses found within its boundaries. Typical office buildings are located along Yonge Street and have much larger and deeper floorplates than residential buildings in the area. They typically have continuous streetwalls. Podiums and stepbacks are not commonly found among this building type with the tower facades generally extending directly down to street-level. Plan arrangements vary and office buildings often integrate some kind of outdoor plaza space and/or publicly accessible atriums that connect two different towers together.

Figure 5-115: St. Cyril Catholic School, Kempford Boulevard (Top), Mitchell Field Community Centre, Church Avenue (Bottom)

School and Community Centre

Schools and Community Centres are distinct in that they are typically 1-2 storeys, stand-alone buildings, located next to open spaces (school yard, track, and/or park). There are currently four schools within the Secondary Plan Area. The Mitchell Field Community Centre, just outside the NYCSP, and Earl Haig Secondary School are located in the Boundary Expansion Study Areas.

Figure 5-116: Fire Station 114 and Toronto Paramedic Services Station 58, Canterbury Place

Civic and Cultural

North York Centre is also home to a significant number of Civic and Cultural buildings including the North York Civic Centre, Meridian Arts Centre, 32 Division Police Station, Fire Station No. 114 and a number of churches and places of worship. These buildings vary greatly in their shape and form but are characterized by a public or community function and often command a central place in the community.

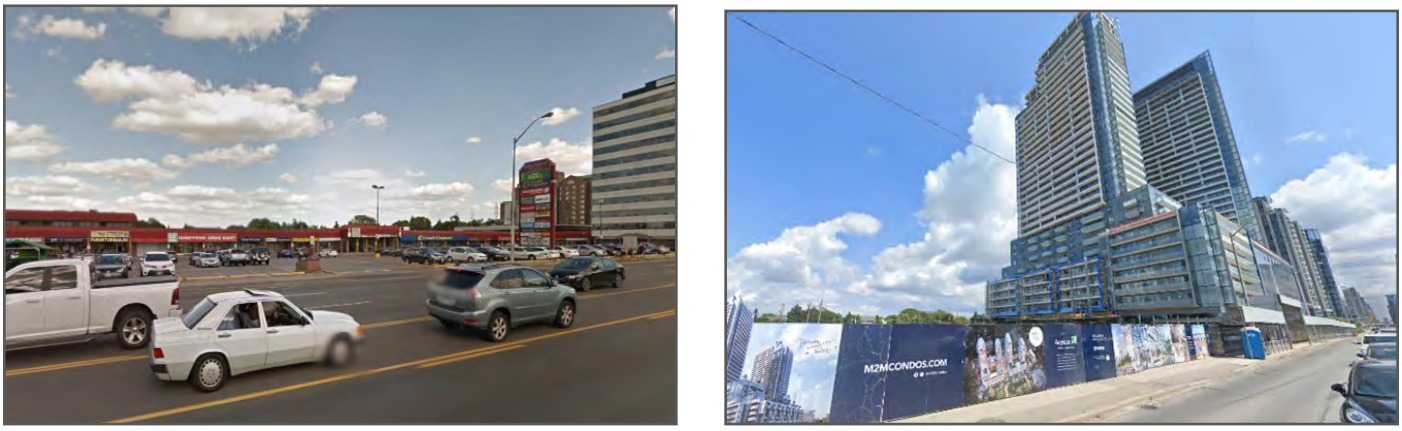


Figure 5-117: Newtonbrook Plaza, 2015 (Top) and Future Development on Newtonbrook Plaza Site Under Construction, 2023 (Bottom), on Yonge Street

In Transition

There are a number of properties that are currently under construction. Concentrated along Yonge Street, in the blocks south of Cummer/Drewry Avenues, these are typically larger strip-mall type properties with surface parking and being redeveloped as contemporary point tower building types.

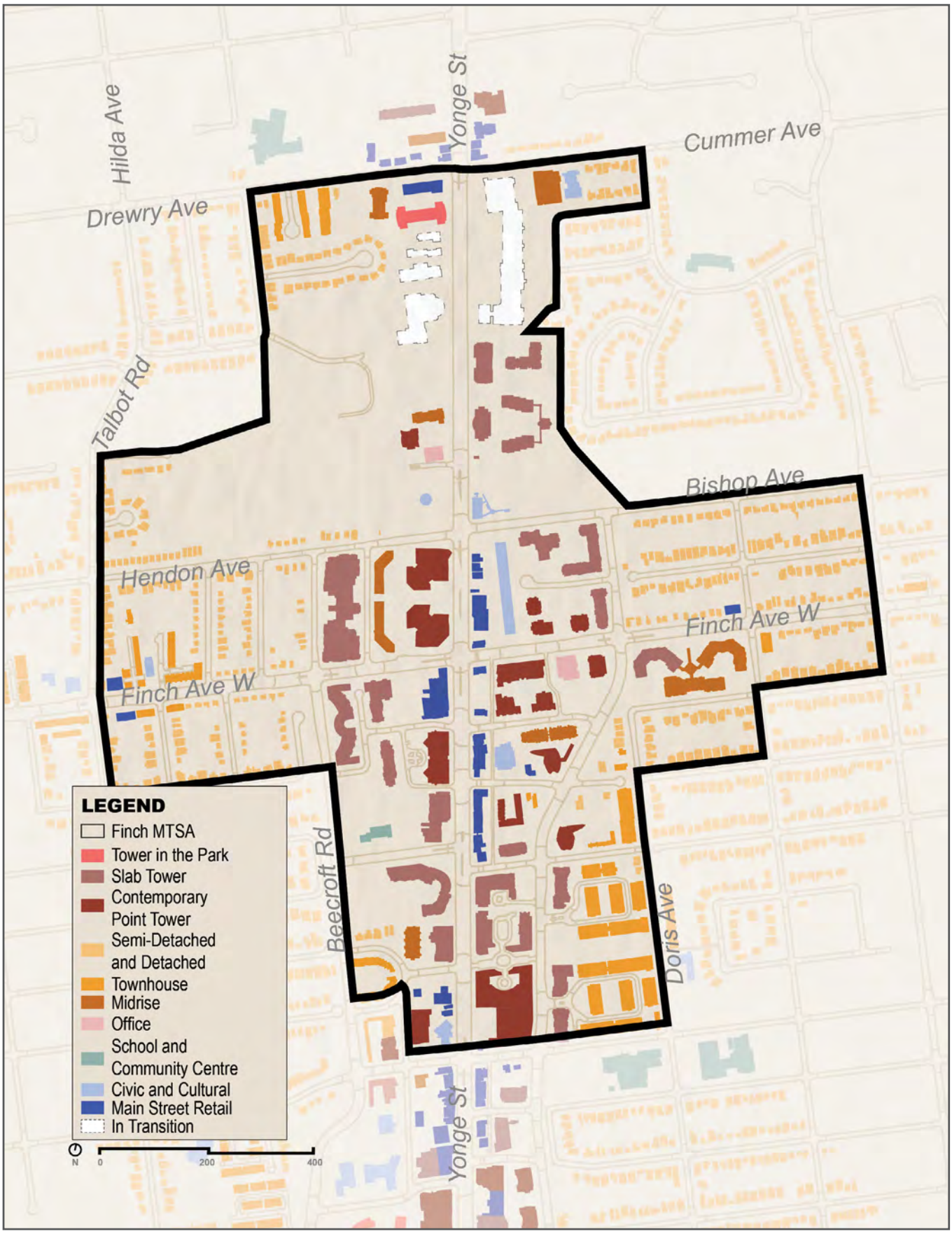


Figure 5-118: Building Types (North York Centre Secondary Plan Area North)

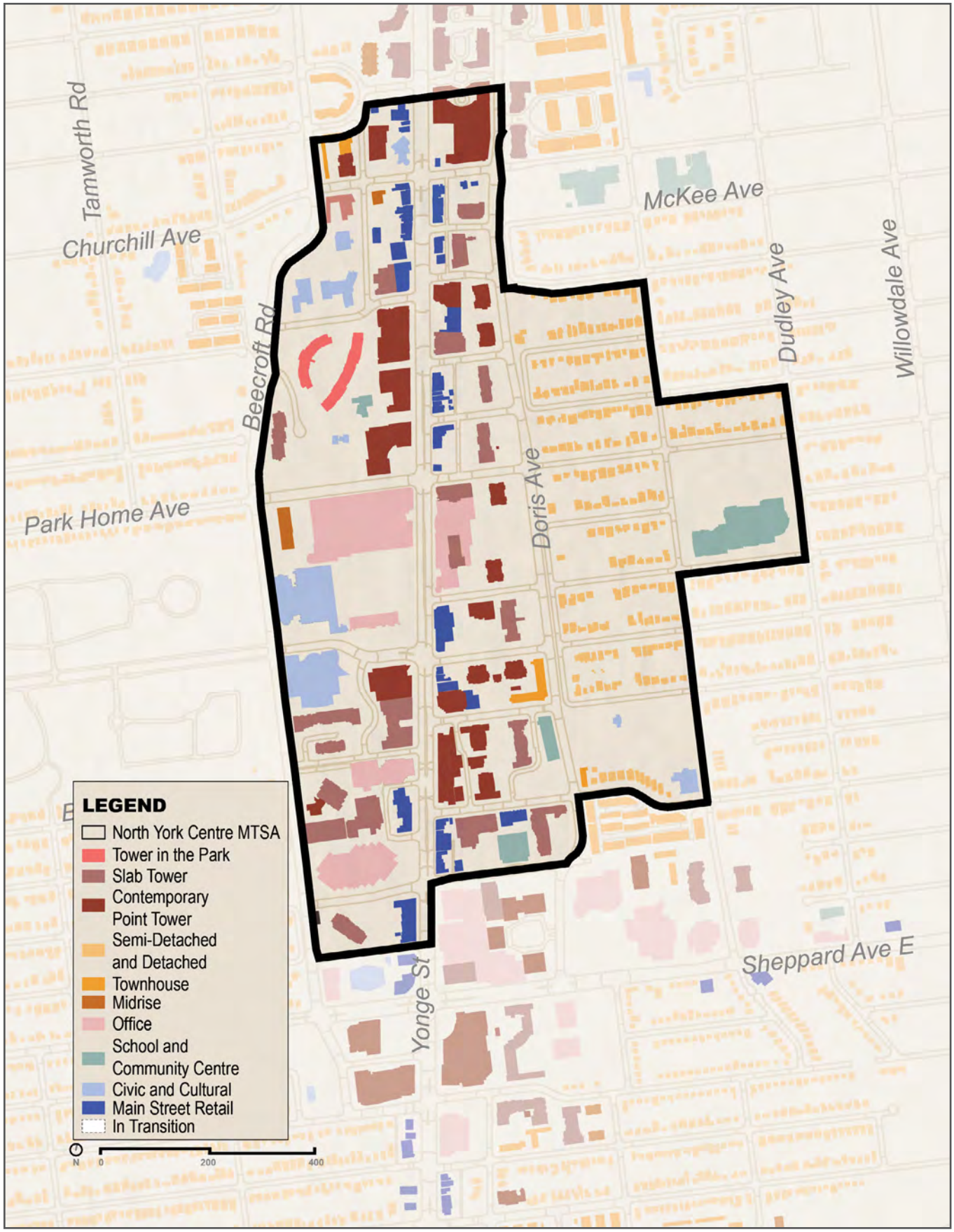


Figure 5-119: Building Types (North York Centre Secondary Plan Area South)

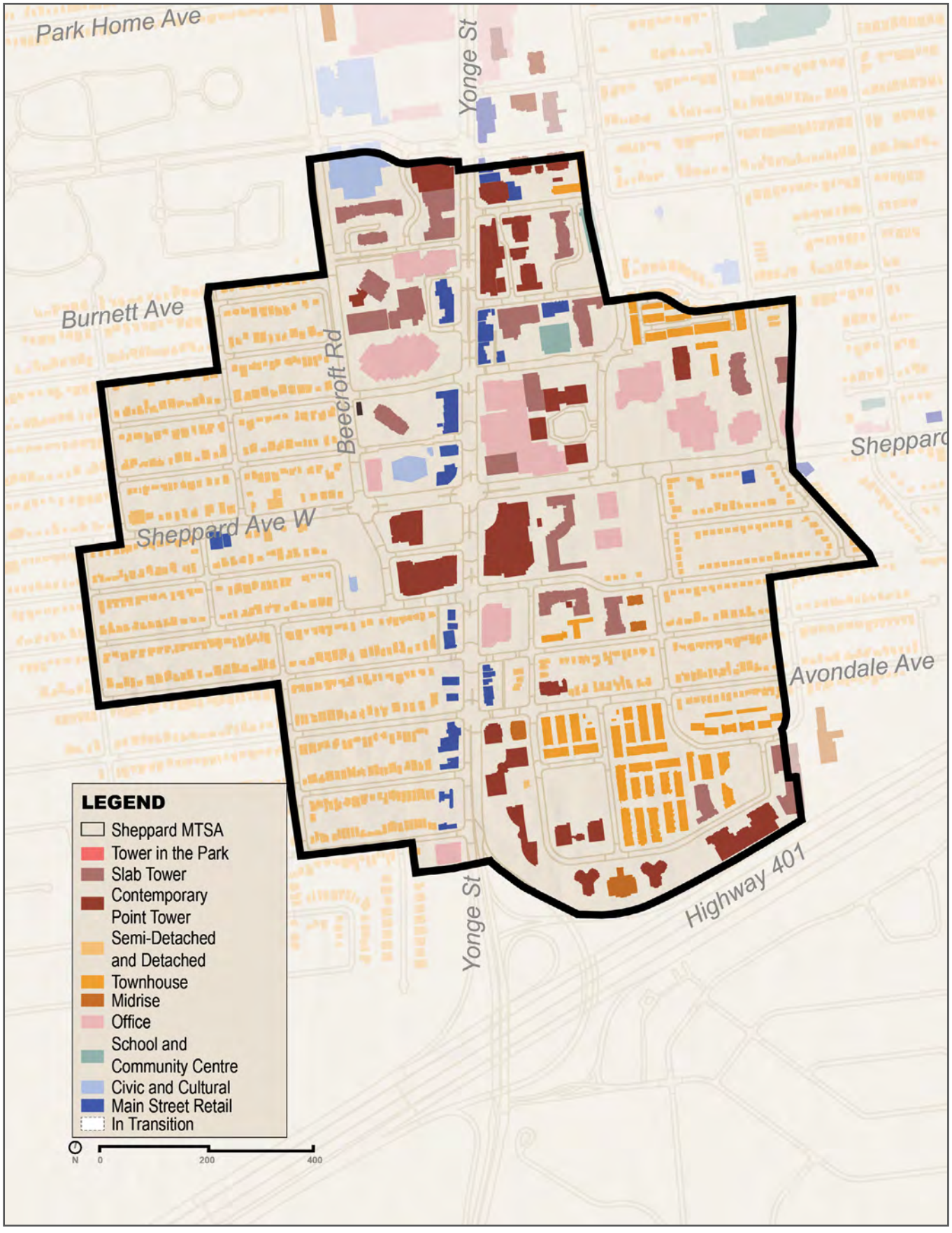


Figure 5-120: Building Types (North York Centre Secondary Plan Area Sheppard Ave)

Building Setbacks

Studying the distance between buildings and property lines helps assess the impact of setbacks on the public realm (**Figure 5-121** to **Figure 5-123**).

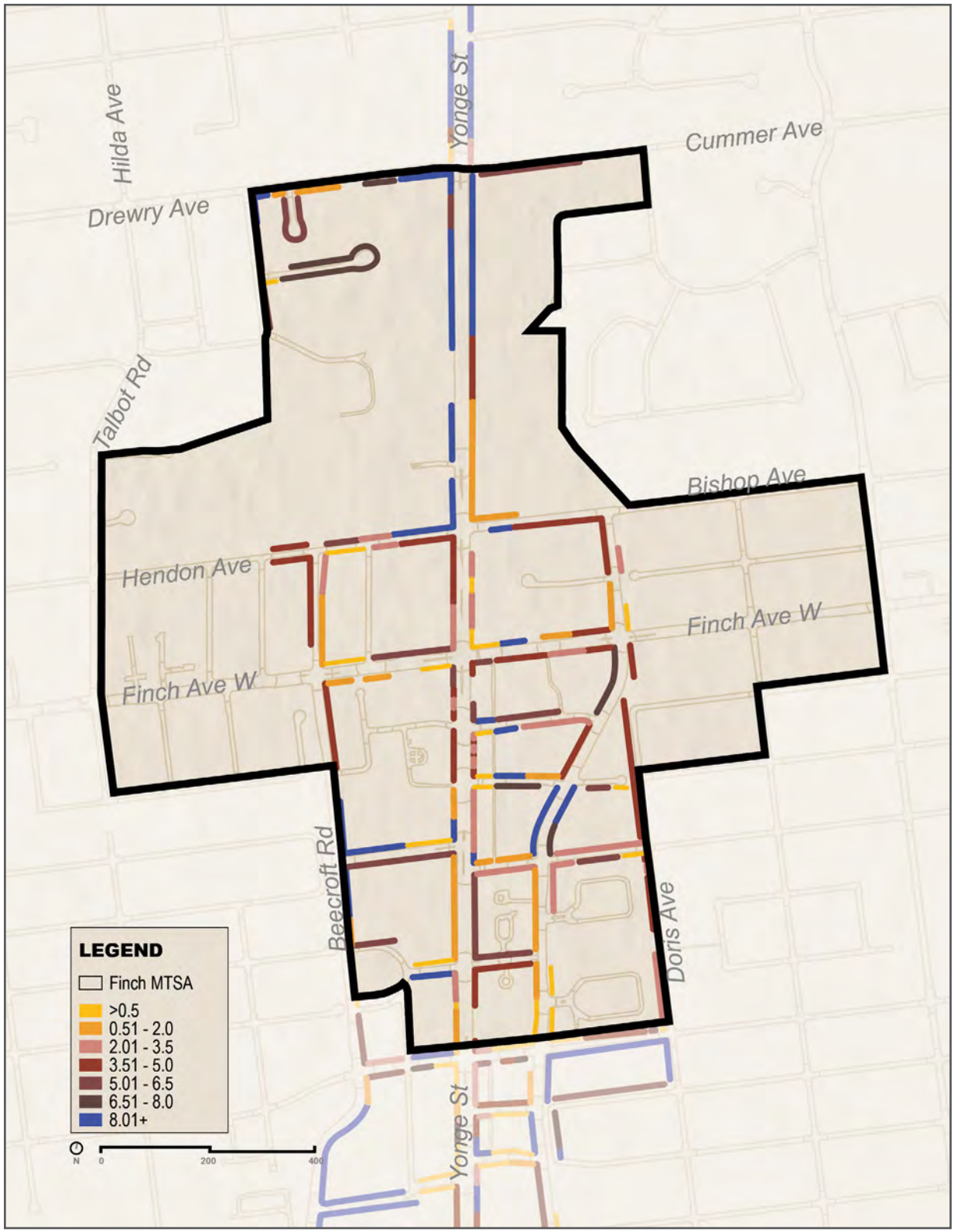


Figure 5-121: Buildings Setbacks (North York Centre Secondary Plan Area North)

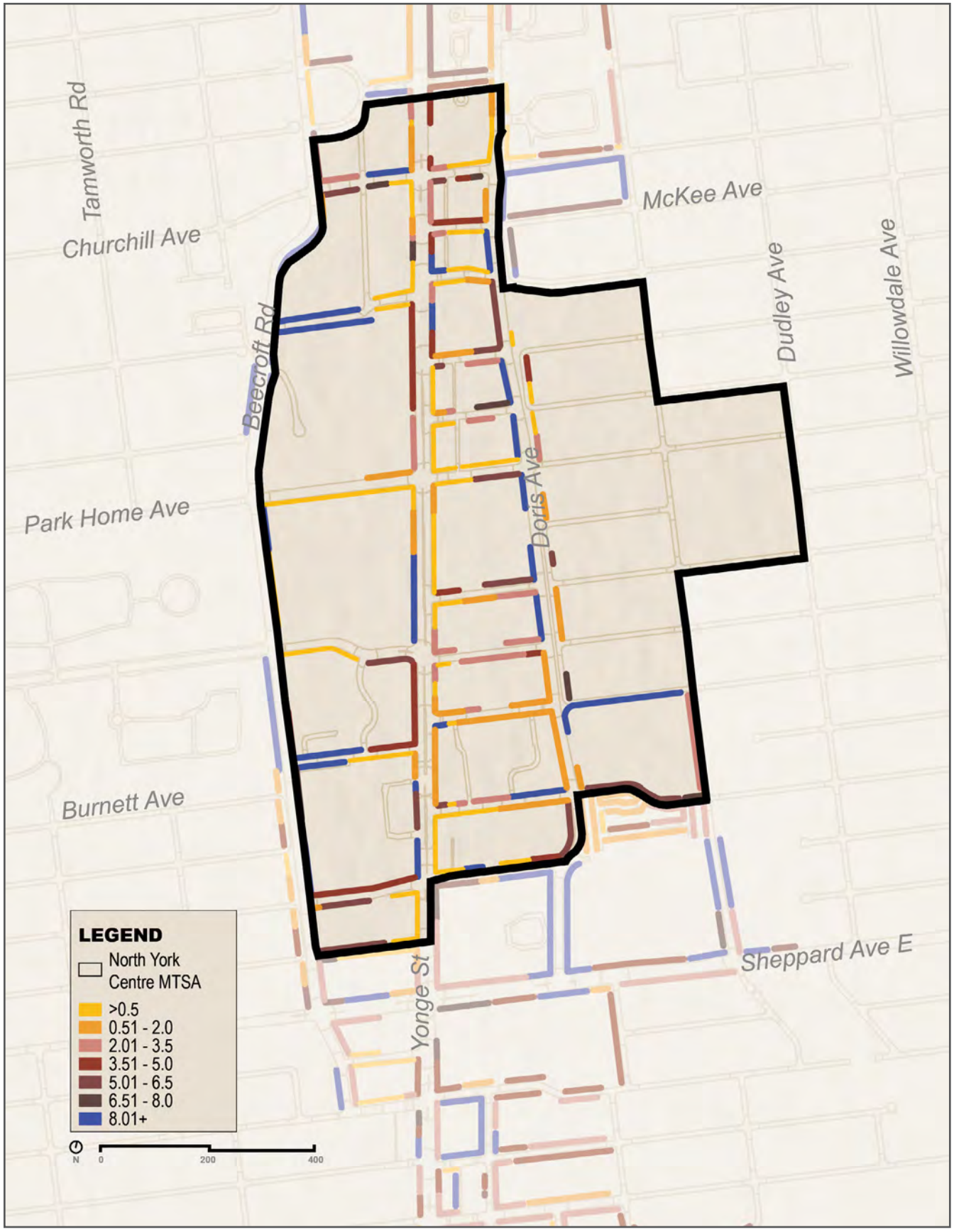


Figure 5-122: Buildings Setbacks (North York Centre Secondary Plan Area South)

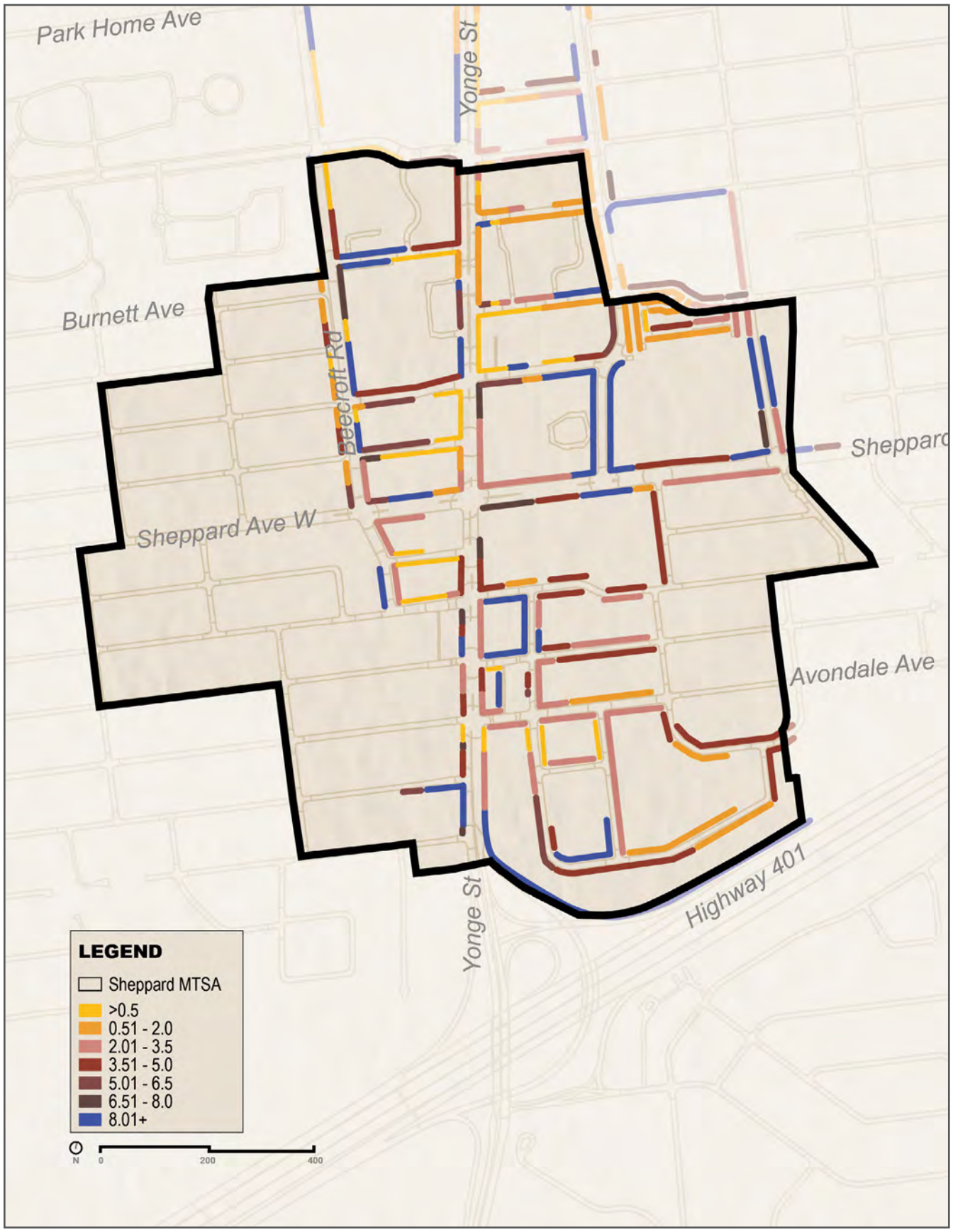


Figure 5-123: Buildings Setbacks (North York Centre Secondary Plan Area Sheppard Ave)

Generally, there are shallow setbacks along Yonge Street, with the majority of buildings set back a modest (5 metres and under) amount, with exceptions in areas where there are plazas like Mel Lastman Square or in front of the Joseph Shepard Building (**Figure 5-124**). Generally, these setbacks are also shallower along some east-west streets, such as Park Home Avenue, Avondale Avenue, and Byng Avenue, especially where building edges (for buildings where primary entrances face Yonge Street) turn the corner along these side streets.

Figure 5-124: Plaza Area in Front of 4900 Yonge Street

Conversely, setbacks are generally deeper (8 metres and higher) along Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue. This setback pattern is a result of the 'Buffer Area' outlined on Map 8-5 of the NYCSP (**Figure 5-125**), which was created to establish "a well-defined boundary and facilitate a stable buffer from the surrounding residential neighbourhoods" (North York Centre Secondary Plan Policy 5.3.6.a). This buffer area is drawn approximately 75 metres from the relevant residential property lines. Setbacks are applied along this buffer edge, creating large building enclosures (building face to building face distance) along Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue, making these areas look and feel wider. This change in setback pattern in these areas creates an abrupt change between Yonge Street and the north-south service roads.

Figure 5-125: Excerpt from Existing North York Centre Secondary Plan, Map 8-5 North York Centre North Buffer Area, Demonstrating the Extent and Location of the Buffer Areas

The setback areas along Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue are largely landscaped, with lush tree canopies in most areas, and often along building side yards or rear yards (**Figure 5-126**).

Figure 5-126: On this Segment of Beecroft Road North of Park Home Avenue, Looking West, Behind the Tree Canopy are Residential Side Yards for Single Family Homes

Retail Ground Floors

Retail uses are generally concentrated along the Yonge Street frontage, extending almost continuously from the southern boundary of the NYCSP to Finch Avenue in the north. (**Figure 5-127**). The only large breaks in retail use are around Mel Lastman Square, open spaces like the Cummer Burial Grounds north of Church Avenue and at the hydro corridor/Finch Station commuter parking lots. Planned developments north of the hydro corridor, continuing towards Cummer Avenue, will extend this retail experience to the north.

Figure 5-127: Retail Ground Floors Map

Retail uses 'turn the corner' on side streets immediately off of Yonge Street in a few locations, including Sheppard Avenue, Spring Garden Avenue, Northtown Way, and Byng Avenue (**Figure 5-128** and **Figure 5-129**). Generally, these retail uses only extend one block or less to the east or west, with Sheppard Avenue being the one exception. There is next to no retail within the NYCSP beyond the areas noted above.

Figure 5-128: Example of Retail Uses in Ground Floors of Buildings, Continuing Along Spring Garden Avenue from Yonge Street

Figure 5-129: Two Main Frontages (Yonge Street and Northtown Way) of this Building Have Retail Located on the Ground Floor. This Also Features Other Important Retail Design Features: Narrow Frontages, Frequent Entrances, Canopies, and Seating

Retail uses within the Study Area are supported by the following conditions:

- Relatively high office population (compared to other Centres);
- Small block sizes that support walkability and access; and
- Older buildings (impact on rents to be confirmed by commercial study).

The retail experience is physically heterogeneous (refer to Streetwalls and Enclosures for more detail), including the following forms:

Main Street Retail

Characterized by two storey buildings with minimal setbacks on small parcels, Main Street Retail spaces pair retail ground floor uses with residential or office uses above. These narrow frontages offer a fine-grained experience and the combination of eclectic signage, materials, and diversity in languages seen create a vibrant street. In some areas (**Figure 5-130**), the setback area allows for modest patio spaces.

Previously found along most of the Yonge Street frontage, Main Street Retail uses have been consistently replaced by new development. Main Street Retail is generally not found on other streets.

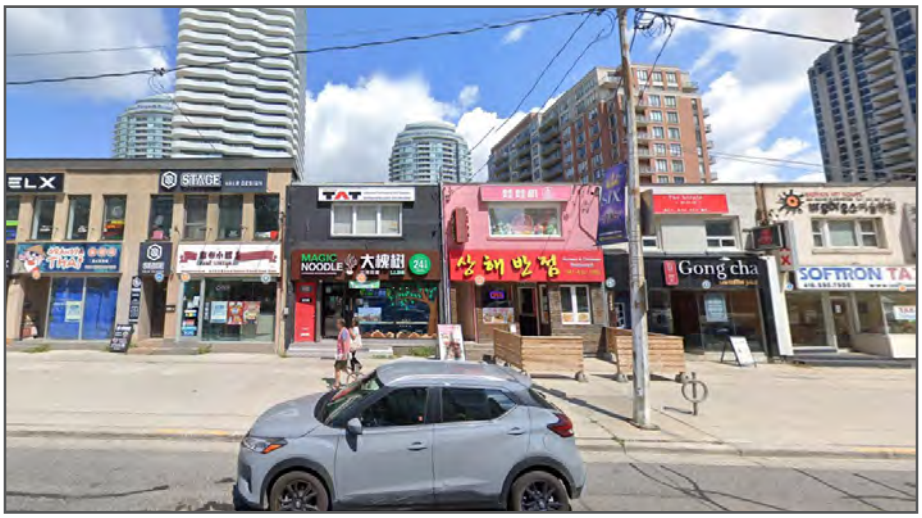


Figure 5-130: Example of Fine-grained Retail Along Yonge Street

Figure 5-131: Aerial Imagery of Same Retail Strip as the Figure Above, Which Demonstrates the Narrow Lots Along Yonge Street, with Laneway Along the Rear to Service the Individual Businesses

Slab Tower Retail

Many Slab Towers attempt to replicate the fine-grained scale and rhythm of Main Street Retail by integrating one storey retail podiums that are typically sub-divided into very narrow commercial retail units (6 metres wide) that support a wide variety of independent retailers. Most of the retail found on east-west side streets is of this type.

Figure 5-132: 10 Different Storefronts in 60 Metres, Representing One Every 6 Metres

Figure 5-133: Through Programs Like Caféto, Patios Are Seasonally Added Along Yonge Street To Provide Patrons The Option To Dine Outdoors. However, Through Consultation, It Has Been Noted That These Areas May Feel Windy, Loud, and Often Uncomfortable, Particular Adjacent to Slab Towers

Contemporary Point Towers with Retail

Increasingly, with parcel assembly, these fine-grained and lower-rise retail strips are being consolidated and replaced with taller mixed-use buildings (**Figure 5-134**). Many contemporary point towers integrate tall ground floors which allow for flexibility of commercial ventilation; however, the commercial units are often wide and shallow, leading to back-of-house facilities located along the main façade. Many tenants often blank out ground floor windows to accommodate back-of-house uses.

Figure 5-134: Buildings Like this Follow the 4.5 Metre Ground Floor Guidelines, But the Blank Walls Create a Dull and Uninviting Street Frontage

Multi-Storey and Interior Retail

The Study Area also includes a diverse mix of multi-storey and interior retail uses that form part of larger, mixed-use complexes with either residential or office uses above. These are often connected directly to the subway system via internal pedestrian connections and below-grade retail.

Figure 5-135: Emerald Park Condos Includes a Mix of Large Format (Food Basics, LCBO) and Independent Retail Uses as Part of 3-Storey Retail Podium, Located on the West Side of Yonge Street, South of Sheppard Avenue

These retail podiums include a mix of larger format retail (often above or below grade) like Food Basics, LCBO or Loblaws together with smaller, independent shops and food services.

Internal food courts can be found at multiple locations including the Upper East Food Club or the FLIP Kitchens at 5200 Yonge Street (**Figure 5-136**).

Figure 5-136: FLIP Kitchens Food Hall, in 5200 Yonge Street from the Outside (Left) and Inside (Right)

Building Heights And NYCSP Height Envelope

Tall buildings (37 to 117 metres) are the highest along Yonge Street, with slightly shorter buildings along Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue. The taller buildings are located around Sheppard-Yonge subway station and North York Centre subway station, modestly tapering towards the north. Generally, heights of tall buildings are quite uniform throughout the Centre. **Figure 5-137** demonstrates this range of heights throughout the Study Area.

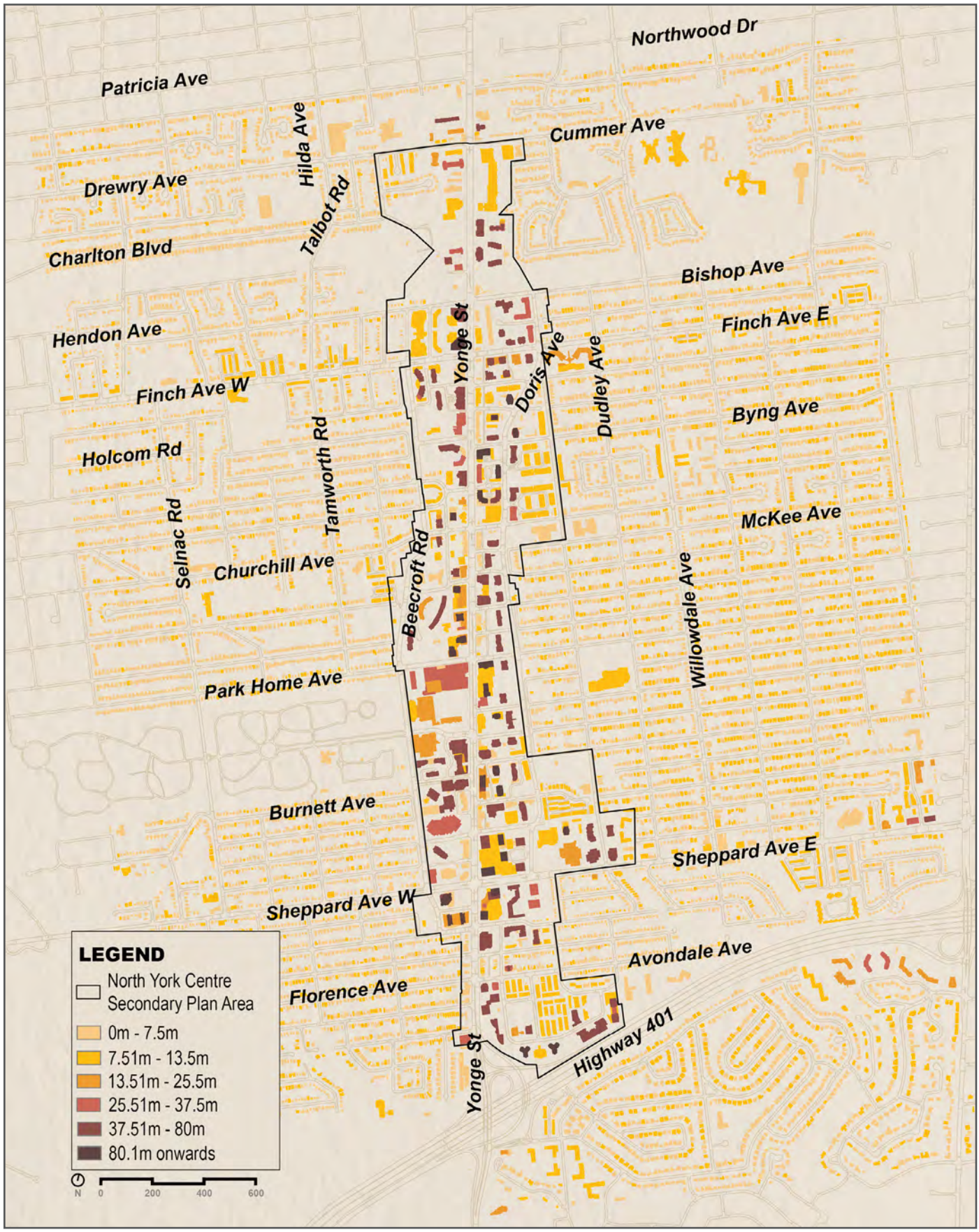


Figure 5-137: Building Heights within the Centre Study Area

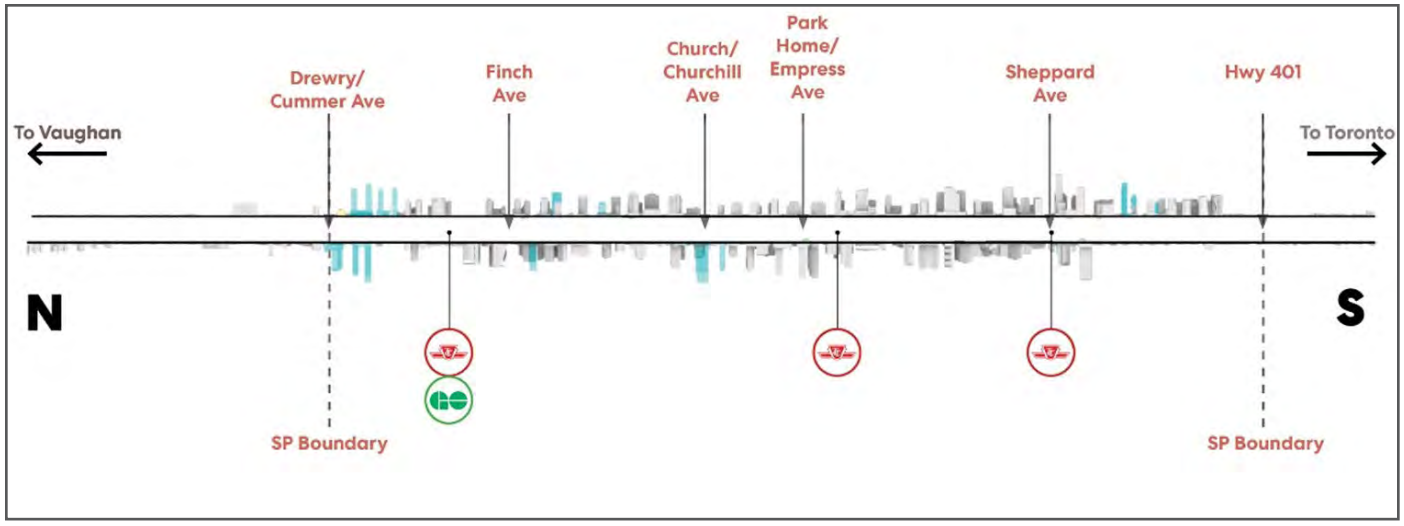


Figure 5-138: Elevation Along Yonge Street with Pipeline Developments in Blue (Future Conditions)

The height policies in the NYCSP shape the heights of buildings within the Centre. The Secondary Plan currently allows for the tallest buildings along Yonge Street, transitioning down in height to the surrounding neighbourhoods. At the moment, the tallest building in the Primary Study Area is one of the towers of Hullmark Centre, at 45 storeys (168 metres) tall. The NYCSP prescribes exact heights, including policies on maximum heights that are calculated by a percentage of horizontal distance from Relevant Residential Property Lines. Looking along key streets like Finch Avenue, Empress Avenue, and Sheppard Avenue, these transitions are clear, with a slight stepping down in heights towards Beecroft Road to the west and Doris Avenue to the east.

Recent developments have started to push this transition with taller buildings being built not just along Yonge Street (**Figure 5-141**), but also on sites close to, or along Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue, coming in taller than the existing context. These developments vary significantly in terms of scale, from single- and two-storey buildings to buildings over 40 storeys (**Table 5-12** and **Figure 5-144**). Most towers in the development pipeline are between 30 and 45 storeys, which is generally higher than the maximum height permissions in the current Secondary Plan. The tallest building in the development pipeline is 54 storeys. Developments in the Boundary Expansion Study Areas are in the low- to mid-rise range, generally in keeping with policy for these areas.

Figure 5-139: Axo View of Existing Buildings (Grey) and Proposed Buildings (Blue), Looking Northeast

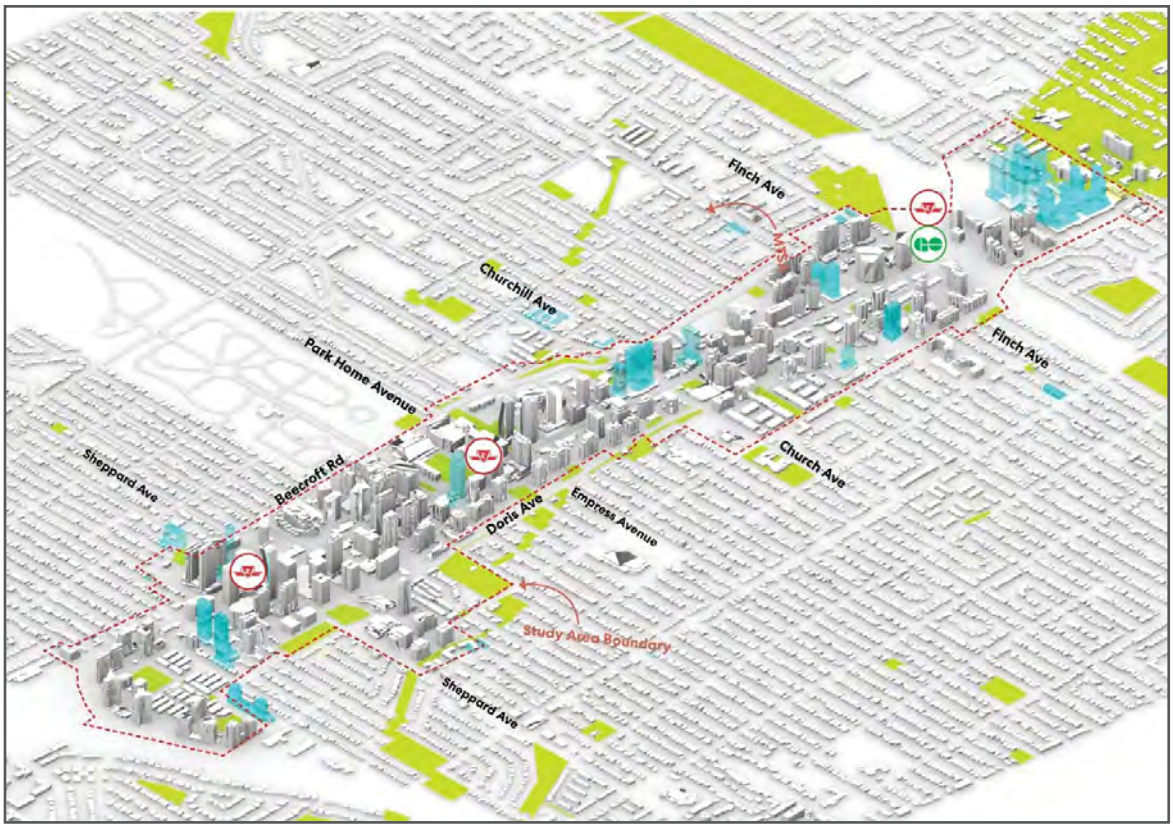


Figure 5-140:Axo View of Existing Buildings (Grey) and Proposed Buildings (Blue), Looking Northwest

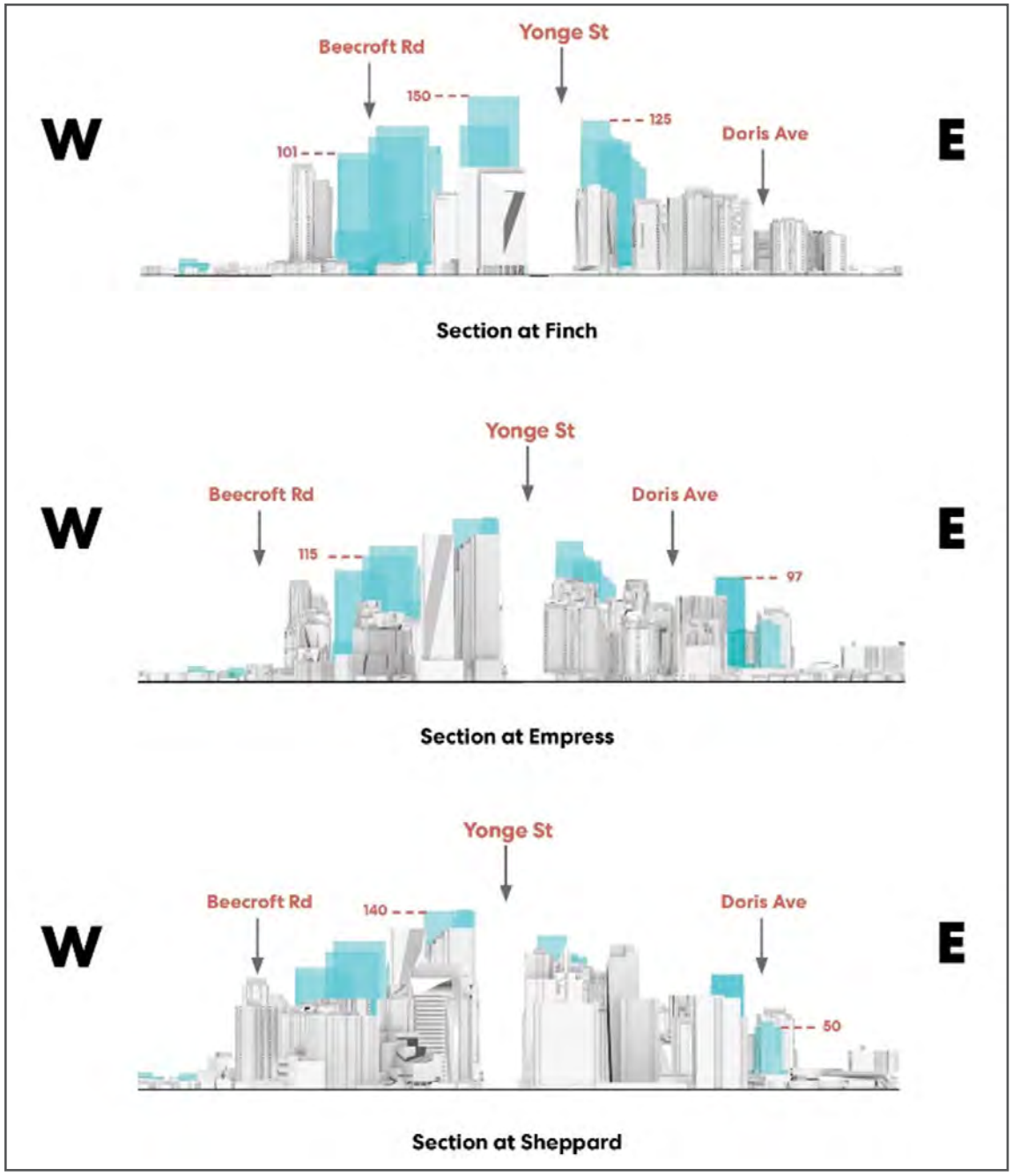


Figure 5-141: Sections Looking North on Yonge Street, Cut Along East-west Streets: Finch Avenue, Empress Avenue, and Sheppard Avenue with Existing (Grey) and Pipeline Developments in Blue

It is important to note that the height policies within the NYCSP have not resulted in all of the built form seen in North York Centre today. Recent Ontario Land Tribunal approvals have led to even taller buildings – above the limits outlined in the NYCSP, so North York at the Centre should revisit this framework given the new precedents and change in the Centre's skyline in recent years.

The existing height policies from the NYCSP can be visualized using a maximum height envelope (**Figure 5-142** and **Figure 5-143**), which demonstrates where buildings – especially newer buildings recently proposed are taller than permitted, 'piercing' through the height envelope.

Figure 5-142: Building Height Envelope Based on Secondary Plan Policy (Grey) and Recently Proposed Buildings (Blue), Looking Northeast. Callouts Depicting Renderings of Proposed Buildings and Proposed Heights

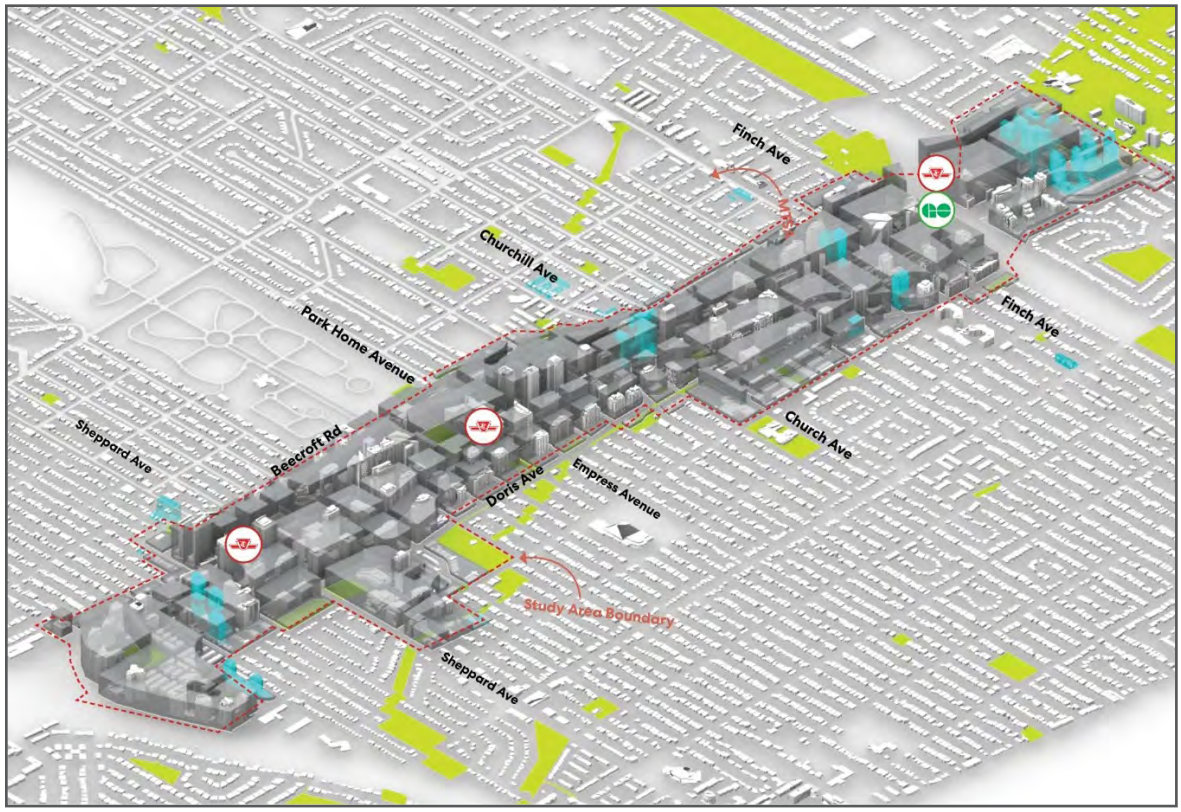


Figure 5-143: Building Height Envelope Based on Secondary Plan Policy (Grey) and Recently Proposed Buildings (Blue), Looking Northwest

Figure 5-144: Development Pipeline in North York Centre and Boundary Expansion Areas (July 2018-June 2023)

Table 5-12: Development Applications in the Secondary Plan Area with Recent Activities in the Last 5 Years (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2023)

Map ID	Pipeline Status	Address	Proposed Height (Storeys)
1	Under Review	48 Avondale Ave	45
2	Under Review	72 Church Ave	4
3	Under Review	51 Drewry Ave	32
4	Under Review	10 Elmwood Ave	1
5	Under Review	40 Hendon Ave	4
6	Under Review	26 Hounslow Ave	10
7	Under Review	10 Oakburn Cres	18
8	Under Review	19 Poyntz Ave	3
9	Under Review	23 Poyntz Ave	9
10	Under Review	5576 Yonge St	35
11	Under Review	5799 Yonge St	40
12	Under Review	5840 Yonge St	2
13	Under Review	5915 Yonge St	38
14	Under Review	5051-5061 Yonge St	39
15	Under Review	5320-5324 Yonge St	45
16	Active	31 FInch Ave E	29
17	Active	45 Hendon Ave	3
18	Active	35 Holmes Ave	17
19	Active	53 Sheppard Ave W	16
20	Active	120 Sheppard Ave E	4
21	Active	4800 Yonge St	49
22	Active	5203 Yonge St	32
23	Active	5220 Yonge St	31
24	Active	5306 Yonge St	33
25	Active	5400 Yonge St	32
26	Active	5800 Yonge St	54
27	Active	5840 Yonge St	32
28	Active	4917-4975 Yonge St	34
29	Active	5799-5915 Yonge St	36
30	Built	75 Canterbury Pl	30
31	Built	43 Drewry Ave	3
32	Built	15 Holmes Ave	0
33	Built	448 Kenneth Ave	4
34	Built	2 Sheppard Ave E	39
35	Built	5182-5190 Yonge St	35

Tower Separation Distances

The space between towers impacts privacy, sky view and shadows at ground level. Toronto's Tall Building Design Guidelines (implemented in 2013) recommend towers to be separated by at least 25 metres from each other (12.5 metres from side and rear property lines or centre lines of an abutting lane). Generally, buildings in the North York Centre meet (and often exceed) these requirements.

The small number of buildings that do not meet or exceed these requirements include older buildings like the Avondale or 35 Bales Avenue, that likely preceded implementation of the Tall Building Design Guidelines (**Figure 5-145**). One example of more recent trends with tower separation is the new residence at 5250 Yonge Street, where a building is located within 17 metres of an office building.

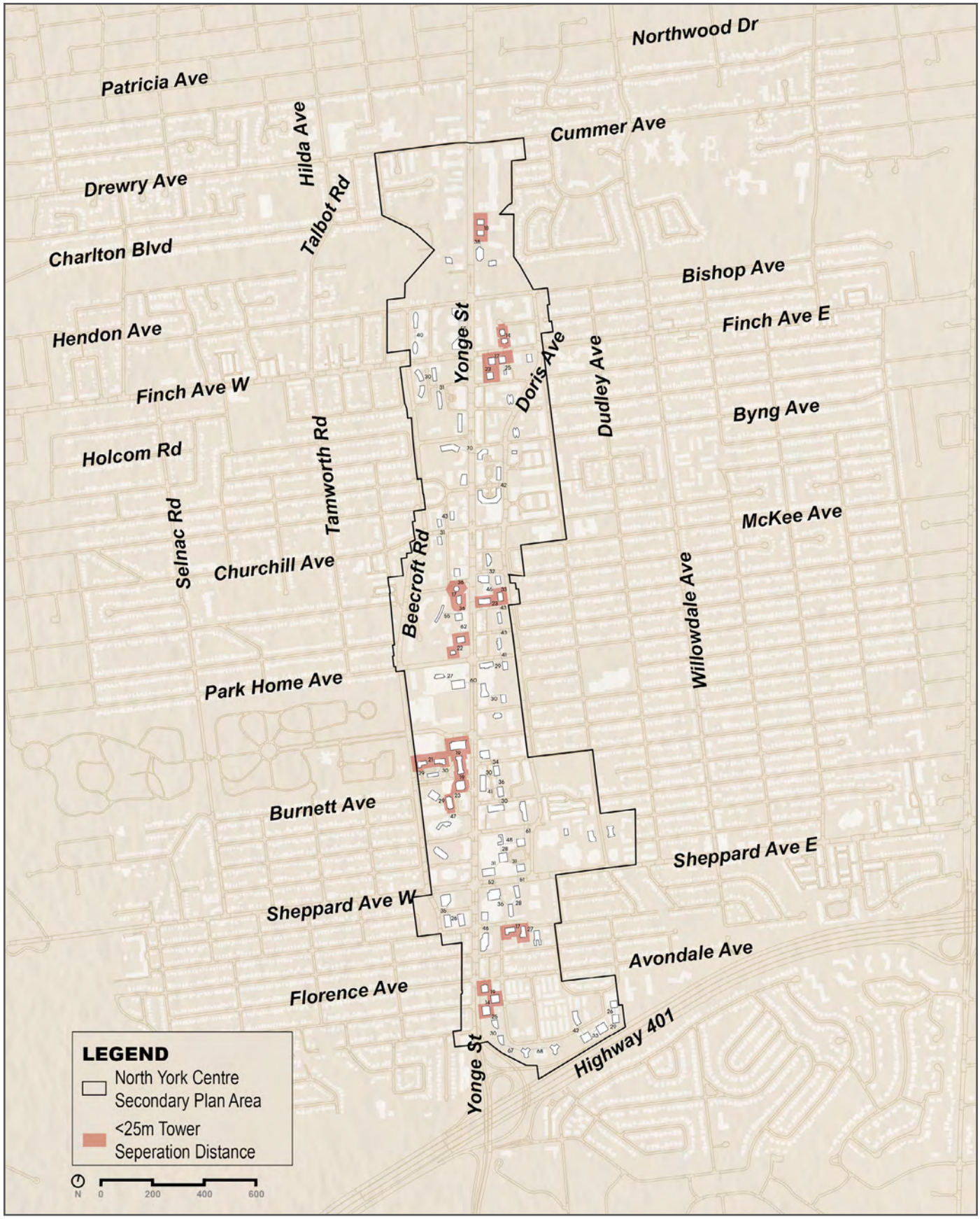


Figure 5-145: Tower Separation

Tower Stepback Distances

The placement of a tower back from the base, or podium, of a building is described as the “stepback”. A stepback can help limit the visual impact of the tower at-grade, reinforce the base-building as the defining element for the public realm, and mitigate negative wind conditions at street level by interrupting wind flow along the building’s face, before it hits the sidewalk. Toronto’s Tall Building Guidelines require a minimum of a 3 metre tower stepback, including balconies.

Given the diverse age, design and uses of buildings within the Centre, stepbacks vary significantly without discernable spatial patterns. The current stepbacks in the North York Centre area are illustrated in **Figure 5-149**.

Large portions of the Study Area include building types like main street retail, mid-rise, institutional or low-rise houses to which tower stepbacks do not apply and are not present.

Many buildings, especially older office buildings and the residential slab buildings at Ellerslie Avenue have no podiums and no stepbacks. Some of these include arcades and/or canopies that can mitigate some of the negative wind impacts at street level.

Figure 5-146: Tower with 0-3 Metre Stepback Along North York Boulevard

Most recent buildings, developed after implementation of the Tall Building Guidelines, include some form of stepbacks between 0-3 metre deep (**Figure 5-146**). Some recent exceptions include 5200 Yonge Street, which includes deeper stepbacks to a residential tower (**Figure 5-147**), and 5250 Yonge Street, an office building with no stepbacks (**Figure 5-148**).

Figure 5-147: 5200 and 5250 Yonge Street

Older buildings, developed before implementation of the Tall Building Guidelines, have a wide variety of conditions. Most include stepbacks between 0-3 metre (**Figure 5-146**), however some have no stepbacks (28 and 39 Pemberton Avenue) while others include much deeper stepbacks (5460 Yonge Street).

Figure 5-148: Some Older Buildings that Predate the Tall Building Guidelines Have Base-Buildings Too, Although Shorter than What is in the Guidelines and Seen in Recent Developments Today

Finally, a mix of hybrid building types including the Empress Walk, Hullmark Centre and Sheppard Centre, are mixed-use buildings that combine a diverse mix of irregular podium designs and stepbacks with mixed residential and office towers above.

Figure 5-149: Building Step-back Distances

Streetwalls and Enclosures

The shape and height of buildings impact how someone experiences a street and the neighbourhood. Factors like street width, building setbacks, streetwall and podium heights, building step-backs, building façade materials and land uses all contribute to this experience. The following analysis has grouped the combined experience into a series of streetwall "types" that illustrate some of the most common conditions within North York Centre.

Yonge Street

ROW and Street Width

Yonge Street has a generally consistent street width (+/-24 metres) and right-of-way width (+/-36 metres). Buildings are often aligned with a continuous streetwall. This is considerably wider than historic main streets within the old city of Toronto, such as Bloor, Queen or Yonge Streets that are typically +/-20 metres wide. This width is greater than the distance beyond which humans can typically recognize human faces or speak to each other across the street. These widths result in a street that is largely divided from one side to another.

Within the generally consistent ROW and street width, Yonge Street still consists of several streetwall types, differentiated by the types of land uses and other characteristics. These include Main Street Retail, Slab Tower, Contemporary Point Tower, and Office streetwall types.

Main Street Retail Streetwall

Characterized by two storey buildings with minimal setbacks on small parcels, Main Street Retail Streetwalls include retail uses on the ground floor, with residential or office uses above (**Figure 5-150**). Often made of brick with plenty of signage and eclectic detailing, these buildings have frequent entrances that contribute to a finer scale of activity along the street.

Previously found along most of the Yonge Street frontage, the Main Street Retail Streetwall condition has been consistently replaced by new development. Only a few segments of Yonge Street, towards the north of the Study Area, feature Main Street Retail Streetwalls on both sides of the street.

A short segment of Yonge Street, south of Sheppard Avenue features Main Street Retail buildings that are set further back from Yonge Street and accommodate a single bay of surface parking.

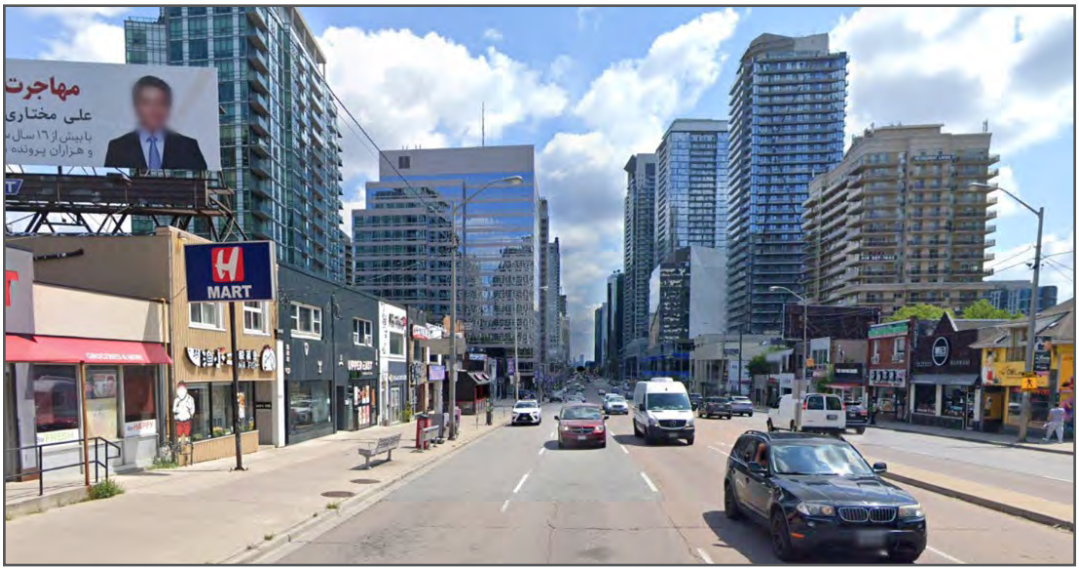


Figure 5-150: Main Street Retail Streetwall

Slab Tower Streetwall

The Slab Tower Streetwall condition is typically characterized by one storey retail podiums that have a low (1-3 metre) tower stepback. They vary significantly and include two to three storey podiums as well as tower stepbacks of 10 metres or more. The retail podiums generally follow a continuous streetwall edge with minimal setbacks and are often sub-divided into very narrow commercial retail units (6 metres wide) that support a wide variety of independent retailers. The podiums are typically finished in brick and/or pre-cast concrete with dedicated space for signage and sometimes include canopies that provide additional weather protection along the street.

Figure 5-151: Slab Tower Streetwall

Contemporary Point Tower Streetwall – Residential Podium

The Contemporary Point Tower Streetwall is characterized by podiums that range in height generally from three to seven stories and are organized with continuous streetwalls and minimal setbacks (**Figure 5-152**). They house a mix of retail uses at grade with residential above. The retail units at grade are typically taller (min. 4.5 metres) and much wider and larger than those found in Main Street Retail or Slab Tower Streetwall conditions. They are often filled with national chain establishments. The exterior is finished in repetitive facades of window- or curtainwall glazing with minimal solid surfaces.

Figure 5-152: Residential Point Tower Streetwall

Contemporary Point Tower Streetwall – Non-Residential Podium

Similar to the Residential Podium type, these Streetwalls are differentiated by non-residential uses above grade and often paired with internal corridors and/or atrium spaces that provide publicly accessible connections to further retail, office or residential uses, or direct subway connections. The exterior facades feature additional signage above grade and larger canopies at primary entrances.

Figure 5-153: Non-Residential Point Tower Streetwall

Office Streetwall

Office buildings within the Study Area generally do not include any podiums or tower stepbacks. They typically have continuous streetwalls and minimal setbacks with the tower facades generally extending directly down to street level. Plan arrangements vary and office buildings often integrate some kind of outdoor plaza space and/or publicly accessible atriums that offer a relief along the streetscape and can extend the public realm. There is often little to no retail at street level and the facades are typically finished with a combination of curtainwall and stone. Occasionally, canopies and/or arcades are integrated into the street level, providing additional weather protection to passersby.

Figure 5-154: Office Streetwall

Figure 5-155: Street Frontage Map

Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road

Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road were planned as “service roads” that act as buffers between the dense Centre and the adjacent low-rise *Neighbourhoods.* This results in a unique streetwall condition where low rise detached houses on one side are typically paired with slab towers with deep landscaped setbacks on the other.

East-West Streets

The east-west streets (with the exception of Finch and Sheppard Avenues) are typically narrower and with less traffic than Yonge Street.

In general, the Streetwall Types found along Yonge Street continue around the corners onto the east-west streets, however with less retail and active uses. The Main Street Retail Streetwall typically features a black sidewall condition on the east-west streets, with deeper side yard setbacks.

Finch and Sheppard Avenues are typically wider and feature a diverse mix of streetwall conditions including Slab Tower, Contemporary Point Tower and Office Strein paetwall Types. Portions of Finch and Sheppard Avenues also feature Mid-rise and Detached House types.

Neighbourhoods

The *Neighbourhoods,* largely throughout the Boundary Expansion Study Area, are characterized with narrower, local streets where deep landscaped setback, generous landscaping and street trees combine with detached, semi-detached and townhouse forms.

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- While the NYCSP assumes lower densities towards the northern half of Study Area, increased development pressure has resulted in increased residential densities being proposed in the northern half of the Study Area.
- Recent buildings proposed (and/or being approved at the OLT) throughout the Study Area are taller and denser than what the existing NYCSP permits for heights and densities. While applications push the limits on height and density, they generally conform to requirements for stepback, streetwall height, and setback.
- Most remaining development sites are on smaller and/or shallower parcels that may find it challenging to satisfy all requirements for tall buildings
- Assembly of smaller properties within the Study Area, for the purposes of redevelopment into larger, high density, mixed-use buildings continues.
- Most buildings developed since the implementation of the Tall Building Guidelines conform to the 25 metre tower separation.
- Retail spaces integrated into recent mixed-used developments are often wide and shallow (rather than narrow and deep). This results in "back-of-house" areas being located on main facades that then get blocked off, and not contributing to the adjacent street life.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- North York Centre has successfully provided homes for many residents as well as a relatively high concentration of office space, near rapid transit and local amenities.
- There is a clearly legible transition between the tall buildings within the North York Centre and surrounding Neighbourhoods to the east and west. This transition is comprised of a combination of setbacks, stepbacks, height limits, landscaped open spaces, public rights-of-way and a network of parks and open spaces.
- North York Centre includes many successful examples of new, fine-grained street-level retail spaces, integrated into the podiums of high-density mixed-use developments. These spaces are generally found in older (1980-90s) buildings and contribute to a vibrant street life along Yonge Street and adjacent side streets.
- The existing setback, streetwall and base-building height policies for Yonge Street help to reinforce the urban condition of the street, Yonge Street's role as a primary promenade in North York Centre and support the thriving retail vibrancy.
- North York Centre includes a significant proportion of purpose-built office buildings that host a wide variety of businesses and institutions.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

- Opportunities for a boundary expansion could require a new framework of transition policies that establish clear expectations for new housing, open spaces, privacy, views, overlook and shadow and wind impacts.
- A number of development sites across the Study Area offer opportunities to develop new housing and non-residential uses as envisioned by the Secondary Plan.
- Opportunities exist to diversify the building types beyond the tall buildings found within the Centre and low-rise housing found in the Boundary Expansion Study Area. Midrise and other built forms could offer housing for more diverse households.
- Opportunities exist to align built form policies in the Secondary Plan and Zoning Bylaw with city design guidelines and any area specific policies that may result from this update.
- Building heights and envelopes could be reviewed against recent OLT approvals, land use designations and impacts on the public realm and open spaces to help establish a new height regime. This can also be explored in tandem with future sun/shadow and wind testing.
- The use of density and bonusing within the Secondary Plan could be reviewed
- Opportunities in the Boundary Expansion Study Area could be reviewed in an effort to introduce midrise and other built forms currently missing within the Study Area.
- The use of Limiting Distance Agreements (or similar tools) could be explored in an effort to unlock the potential for tall buildings on constrained development sites that may not otherwise be able to satisfy the tower setback requirements.
- Loading and servicing requirements could be reviewed with regards to their impact on public realm and creating narrow and deep retail spaces to create finer grain retail and help animate the public realm.

5.7 Servicing

As the population and employment numbers within a given area increase, the impact on servicing infrastructure also increases. A Municipal Servicing Assessment is being undertaken for North York Centre to analyze and assess existing watermain, storm, and sanitary sewer network capacity and constraints, and identify any new or upgraded infrastructure needs to accommodate growth and innovative stormwater management practices needed to improve resilience to climate change.

A separate Servicing Background Report prepared as part of North York at the Centre documents the results of Phase 1 of the Municipal Servicing Background Review. The Report contains data collection, data review and analysis, and preliminary assessment of water distribution, wastewater collection system, and stormwater conveyance system, and stormwater management (SWM).

Key findings from the Servicing Background Report are summarized below based on each component of the overall servicing system.

Policy

Provincial Policy

Capitalizing on existing or planned servicing and infrastructure is a key policy direction set out by the Province through the PPS. Servicing is required to be integrated at all stages of the planning process. This is an important component of accommodating forecasted growth and planning for sewage and water services established by the PPS, 2020. Similarly, the Growth Plan requires municipalities to maintain servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units. This includes lands zoned for intensification and redevelopment.

Toronto Official Plan

The Toronto Official Plan includes policies that provide direction for the provision and planning of facilities to support new development, including appropriate servicing infrastructure. In the Toronto Official Plan, planning for hard services, such as the sewers and stormwater drains that move water throughout Toronto, is an important foundation for growth.

Chapter 2 provides direction on the management of the City's water, wastewater, and stormwater management infrastructure. Policy 2.2.9 identifies a list of actions the City will undertake to support the city-building objectives of the Toronto Official Plan. This includes but is not limited to:

- Providing adequate facilities to support new development and maintaining infrastructure in a state of good repair;
- Supporting, encouraging and implementing measures to reduce water consumption, groundwater discharge, and other measures to improve best management practices; and
- Acquiring land or easements to keep ravines and watercourses in a natural state, and implement stormwater management and sanitary and water disruption improvements.

Throughout the Toronto Official Plan, there is recognition of the role of green infrastructure in providing important infrastructure services. In Chapter 3, Policy 3.4.1 promotes green

> Water mains distribute water to buildings and sewers collect wastewater from buildings. The wastewater conveyance system consists of storm sewers that discharge stormwater to the lake, sanitary sewers that convey wastewater to treatment plants and combined sewers that discharge both stormwater and wastewater to treatment plants. During periods of intense heavy rainfall, the volume of stormwater that enters these combined sewers may exceed system capacity and overflow structures divert untreated wastewater and stormwater directly into creeks, rivers and the lake.

infrastructure to complement infrastructure. Policy 3.4.20 encourages development, redevelopment and infrastructure to assist in the reduction of greenhouse gas emission reductions.

North York Centre Secondary Plan

The current North York Centre Secondary Plan provides policies for servicing and infrastructure specifically in Chapter 8. Section 8.17 states the City will ensure adequate services and infrastructure for new and existing development within North York Centre will be provided through appropriate means, including but not limited to civic budget, conditions of site plan, or other tools available to the City.

Section 8.14 deals specifically with sanitary sewers and states that North York Centre is served by local sub-trunk sewers. This sections also recognizes that capacity constraints exist within the trunk sewer system. Section 8.15 provides policies for water supply, and notes that no constraints on water supply are evident, although local improvements may be required to accommodate specific development.

Existing and Planned Conditions

Wastewater Conveyance System

Underground sanitary sewers collect wastewater from buildings throughout North York Centre and the Sanitary Sewer Study Area. The system is serviced by a network of sanitary sewer gravity pipes flowing south, east, and west along the Centre's streets, which then connect to a trunk sewer that brings the wastewater to the Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant. East of Yonge Street, along most undeveloped blocks between Empress Walk and Finch Avenue, a sanitary sewer runs within the ROW of the laneway. This poses a constraint for redevelopment, as it helps create shallow properties with limited potential for intensification. The sanitary sewers within the study area vary in diameter from 200 mm to 1500 mm.

A key recommendation emerging from the review and analysis of existing conditions in the wastewater conveyance system is to upsize the sewers surcharging due to capacity constraints or backflow from the downstream pipes to meet the City's level of service. This is based on an analysis and consolidated model of the sanitary system prepared to understand performance of the sanitary sewer system under dry-weather and extreme wet-weather conditions. During the next phase of work, the model used to conduct the analysis will be updated to reflect the planned and projected population growth estimates, to determine the infrastructure updates required to meet the level of service. Also, downstream impacts on the trunk sewers due to developments along Yonge Street will be confirmed and recommendations for additional trunk sewer studies will be made.

Flood control solutions proposed by City of Toronto's Basement Flooding Prevention Program (BFPP) are to be integrated so that future developments will not affect the solutions. If they are affected, the flood control solutions may require adjustments and additional upgrades.

Stormwater System

North York Centre and the Stormwater Study Area are serviced by underground stormwater sewers, which gather any stormwater not absorbed naturally into the ground before directing it to various outfall locations (Figure 14.5). It is part of a separated sewer system, meaning the stormwater sewers are separated from the sanitary sewer system.

Based on the existing conditions analysis it is recommended to upsize the sewers surcharging due to capacity constraints or backflow from the downstream pipes to meet the City's level of service. During the next phase, the model will be updated to reflect the planned and projected development and land-use changes to determine the infrastructure updates required to meet the level of service. Also, downstream impacts on the system will be considered and remedial measures will be recommended accordingly.

On-site stormwater management to control stormwater runoff from post-development to pre-development conditions are required to be implemented according to City of Toronto's design guidelines.

Water Distribution System

Underground watermains distribute water to buildings throughout North York Centre and the broader Water Study Area. The system is serviced by a transmission line that runs east-west along Finch Avenue and north-south along Willowdale Avenue, which then connects to distribution lines running along streets throughout the Centre.

Overall, water modelling results detailed in the Servicing Background Report demonstrate there is room for growth within the North York Centre Secondary Plan Area, with pressures and head loss gradients throughout the water distribution system meeting Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) requirements. Areas within the water distribution system with high pressures are likely to lower with increased water demands associated with future growth, and there are currently no areas with pressures below the minimum requirement.

Key Findings

WHAT TRENDS ARE BEING OBSERVED?

- Some wastewater and stormwater sewers have been surcharging within The Centre due to capacity constraints or backflow from downstream pipes.
- The water distribution system has capacity for additional growth within The Centre.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN THE CENTRE?

- For the wastewater collection system, results of the analysis showed that the system meets required criteria under dry-weather conditions. Under extreme wet-weather conditions, there may be surcharging.
- For the water distribution system, the analysis found that all junctions met the pressure requirements across all scenarios, with the exception of ten junctions outside the North York Centre Secondary Plan Area.

WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE CENTRE?

- North York at the Centre will provide a comprehensive framework for new development and intensification within the Centre which will help inform necessary upgrades to infrastructure over the medium- to long-term.
- For the stormwater system, the analysis identified some areas throughout the North York Centre Secondary Plan Area where the existing system will require upgrades to meet the City's acceptable level of service.
- To support growth and change in North York Centre, it is anticipated that upgrades to infrastructure be considered to meet the City's level of service. During subsequent phases of the project, additional work will be undertaken to better understand and determine infrastructure updates required to meet the City's level of service.

5.8 Summary of Study Area Analysis

North York Centre continues to be an attractive place for people to live, businesses to operate and for members of the community to come together. The North York Centre of today is a product of planning polices and infrastructure investments that deliberately transformed a low-rise retail strip surrounded by single family houses into a dynamic, high-rise, mixed-use area, with an active civic life. The Centre is home to over 52,000 people and over 34,000 jobs, supported by significant investments in rapid transit and the public realm. Like the rest of the city, North York Centre continues to be under intense pressure to grow and there is little room left within the current planning framework to welcome new residents or businesses.

An updated Secondary Plan can serve to accommodate new residents while also ensuring that the neighbourhood includes a mix of housing types and forms; is supported by new parks and natural areas; is connected to area amenities; includes better retail; is safer to get around; and better connected to transit. It will provide an updated framework for success in North York Centre over the next 30 years.

The Study Area Analysis, summarized above, has identified a series of opportunities to support growth and improve quality of life, including:

Natural Environment, Parks and Open Space

- **New parks, open spaces and natural spaces that support public life, recreational programming and biodiversity** – New parks integrated into developments can serve the needs of local residents, while transforming parts of the Finch Hydro Corridor into recreational space and/or naturalized space would serve the broader community and enhance biodiversity. The network of large and small public open spaces can be augmented by working with landowners like the school boards and York Cemetery to increase public access, improving access into the ravines and expanding privately-owned publicly-accessible space.
- **Making the most of our existing parks and open spaces** – Many of the parks and open spaces, such as Mel Lastman Square, can be expanded, enhanced, or improved with better access points or additional programming. This will also help address areas of low parkland provision.
- **Connecting the system together** – New parks, open spaces, and park expansions will help connect the broader park system together, alongside public realm improvements. This includes exploring opportunities such as stronger east-west connections into neighbourhoods, the Wilket Creek trail, fulfilling the vision of the Loop Trail, and enhancing connections into the ravine system.
- **Prioritizing comfort and vibrancy** – The updated Secondary Plan should support comfortable microclimate conditions, especially as the area continues to develop with more tall buildings.
- **Indigenous placekeeping** – Through collaboration with local Indigenous communities and First Nations, identify opportunities to create spaces for ceremony and other cultural activities; incorporate Indigenous art, culture, language, and history in parks and the public realm through the use of: Indigenous place names, symbols, colours, Indigenous plant species, food and medicines, and interpretive features.
- **Commemorating natural heritage** – The legacy of historic watercourses, such as Wilket Creek, must be recognized. Opportunities for Indigenous placekeeping, fostering connections to the land and water, and increasing awareness of the creek's location and restoration should be explored through the Secondary Plan Policies.

Climate and Resiliency

- **Accelerating net-zero emissions and low carbon buildings** – New buildings within the North York Centre should be encouraged to exceed the latest versions of Toronto Green Standard and integrate low carbon thermal energy technologies, wastewater heat reclamation, on-site renewable and passive design strategies that reduce energy use and reduce fossil fuel consumption.
- **Expanding green infrastructure, street trees and nature-based solutions** – New street trees, green roofs and green infrastructure should be encouraged to reduce the "urban heat island" effect, help manage stormwater and expand pollinator habitats while contributing to the quality of life of residents and visitors alike.

Land Use

- **Integrating with the surrounding Neighbourhoods** – Expanding the Centre's boundary would allow for a greater diversity of housing types as well as better connections to shared community facilities and amenities.
- **More affordable housing in the Centre** – According to the data and feedback received from residents, a large percentage of income is spent on housing costs. There is an urgency for providing more affordable housing for residents in North York Centre.
- **A broader range of non-residential uses including, retail, commercial, CS&F and other uses** – Non-residential uses bring a variety of activities and support the economy of North York Centre. Spaces for new supermarkets, food stores and small businesses will support local residents and newcomers in meeting their daily needs and provide employment opportiunities. Office uses support a vibrant daytime economy for residents and non-residents of the Centre.
- **Celebrating North York as an arts and culture centre** – There is a strong and established arts and culture scene in the Centre, from a museum to a multi-purpose arts centre.
- **More family-friendly** – A key opportunity for North York Centre is to continue providing appropriate housing options for larger households. Guidelines for larger units could be solidified in Secondary Plan policy.

Community Services and Facilities

- **New community amenities and facilities** – North York at the Centre is an opportunity to reassess community service and facility needs for the Centre's growing population and identify capital planning priorities, e.g. for the Parks and Recreation FMP update. Secondary Plan policies can also encourage the co-location of community services and facilities, collaboration among sectors and agencies, and for development to include the types of spaces required for CS&F.

Mobility and Public Realm

- **Transform Yonge** – The central spine of North York Centre, Yonge Street is already planned to undergo a major transformation as part of Transform Yonge. New cycle tracks and a re-balanced street section will create safe mobility options for all users. Pairing this with a robust set of public realm improvements will support a vibrant street life. Integrating this with adjacent open spaces – plazas, squares and POPs, will serve to support area retail and commercial uses.
- **Re-invigorated Mel Lastman Square** – The primary civic square of North York, there are opportunities to upgrade the public realm of Mel Lastman Square, better surround it by active uses and review the programming to align with community needs.

- **A network of squares** – Offer a variety of public spaces that support the daily life of the Centre – places to gather, play, meet others, eat lunch or simply relax, in an urban context.
- **Safer streets for all users** – Improvements to the pedestrian and cycling networks across the Centre will encourage more trips by walking and rolling.
- **A mix of east-west streets** – Opportunity exists to distinguish east-west corridors into separate typologies to prioritize different modes and enhanced public realm. For example, elements like streetscaping, green streets, cycling infrastructure, and wider sidewalks could be prioritized differently for different corridors.
- **Reconnect and expand the grid** – While much of the historical grid street network still exists, there are many instances of interruptions which reduce the network's effectiveness of moving people on foot, by bike, by transit, and by car. New developments in the Study Area should be encouraged to create breezeways, midblock connections and internal pathways connecting to the existing pathways in the Centre.

Built Form

- **A more diverse mix of housing form, tenure and access** – Expanding the Centre allows for new housing that can come in forms that differ from the high-rise towers and low-rise houses that currently dominate the area. Mid-rise forms could offer a variety of unit sizes and types that are better connected to outdoor spaces and support families and/or larger households.
- **New framework for transition** – A boundary expansion and new framework of transition policies can establish clear expectations for new housing, open spaces, privacy, views, overlook and shadow impacts.
- **New approach to heights** – Building heights and envelopes could be reviewed against recent OLT approvals, impacts on the public realm and open spaces in an effort to establish a new height regime. New built form priorities can introduce mid-rise and other forms currently missing in the Study Area.

Servicing

- **Updating water, wastewater, and stormwater management services** – Existing infrastructure is sufficient to service the current population, but will require upgrades as new growth and development comes to the Centre.