

Parks and Environment Options

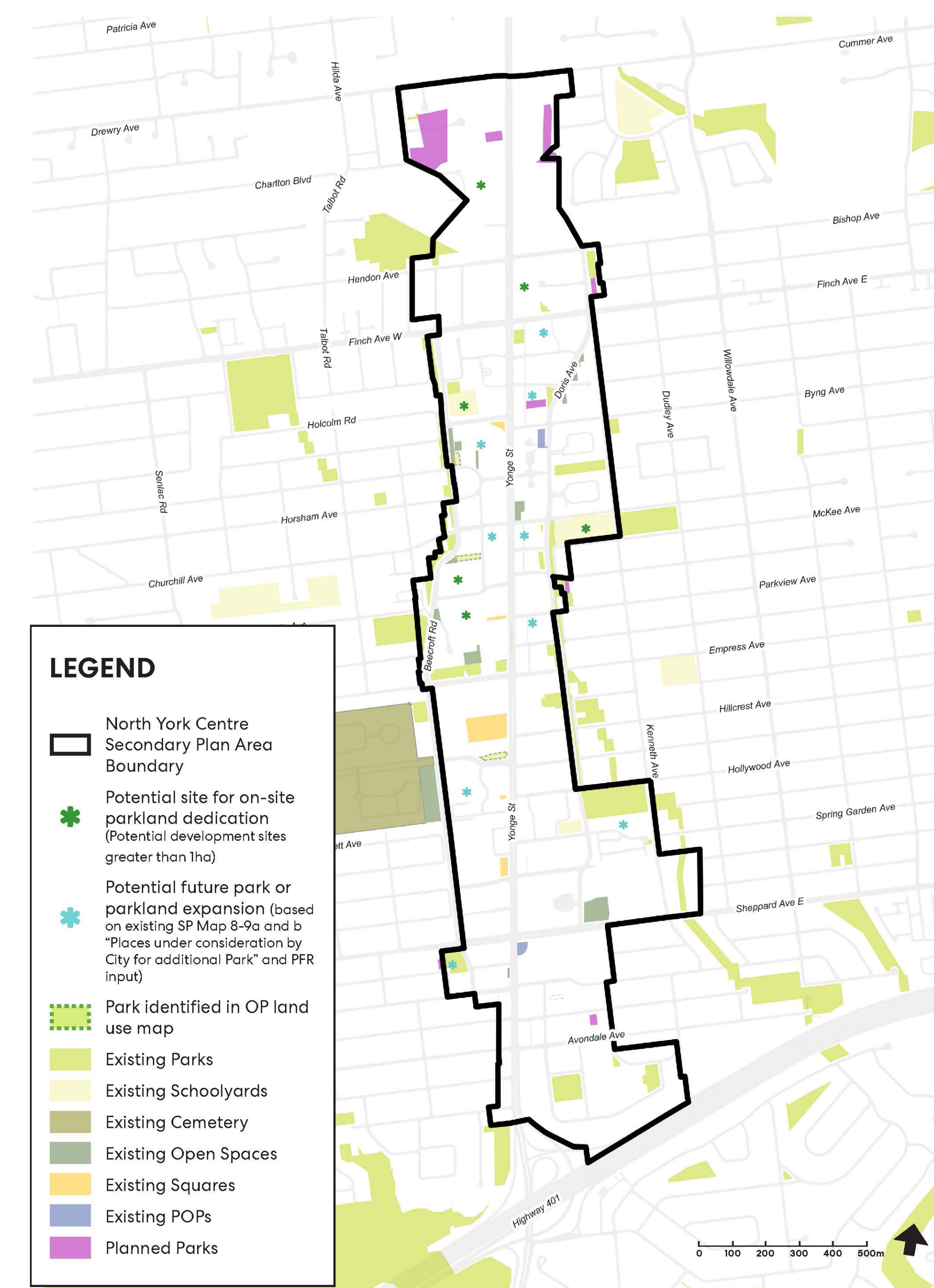
Background

Parks and Environment are integral to providing a healthy, natural ecosystem and high quality of life for residents, workers, and visitors to the Centre. The options were developed to consider:

- **Parks** – The City's Parkland Strategy guides long-term planning and investment in new and expanded public parks, aiming to improve access to parkland across the city. Community feedback and technical analysis in Phase 1 of North York at the Centre identified priority areas for parkland expansion, especially east of Yonge Street along Willowdale Avenue and west of the intersection of Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue where parkland provision is the lowest. Opportunities to improve programming, visibility, accessibility and connectivity of the parkland to the broader open space network were also highlighted.
- **Green infrastructure** – The Official Plan promotes green infrastructure as a more sustainable way to manage stormwater than the grey infrastructure of pipes and sewers. Green infrastructure includes elements like natural heritage features, parkland, stormwater management systems, trees, natural channels, permeable surfaces, and green roofs.
- **Tree canopy** – The City of Toronto has a city-wide goal of reaching 40 per cent tree canopy cover by 2050. Some areas of the city will enjoy more than 40 per cent canopy cover while others will achieve less. Equitable distribution of tree canopy cover is important, as trees provide public health and well-being benefits including removing pollutants from the air, reducing the urban heat island effect, and positively impacting mental health.
- **Biodiversity** – The City's Toronto Biodiversity Strategy directs the City to review secondary plans for opportunities to support biodiversity, and it encourages planting native species and identifying priority sites for restoration.
- **Reconciliation** – The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAC) guides the City's actions to advance truth, justice, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Action #15 of the RAC is to Support Indigenous Placekeeping. Through engagement with the local Indigenous community and First Nations in Phase 1 of the project it was identified that there are few existing examples of Indigenous placekeeping in North York Centre but many opportunities to advance placekeeping through the Secondary Plan update.

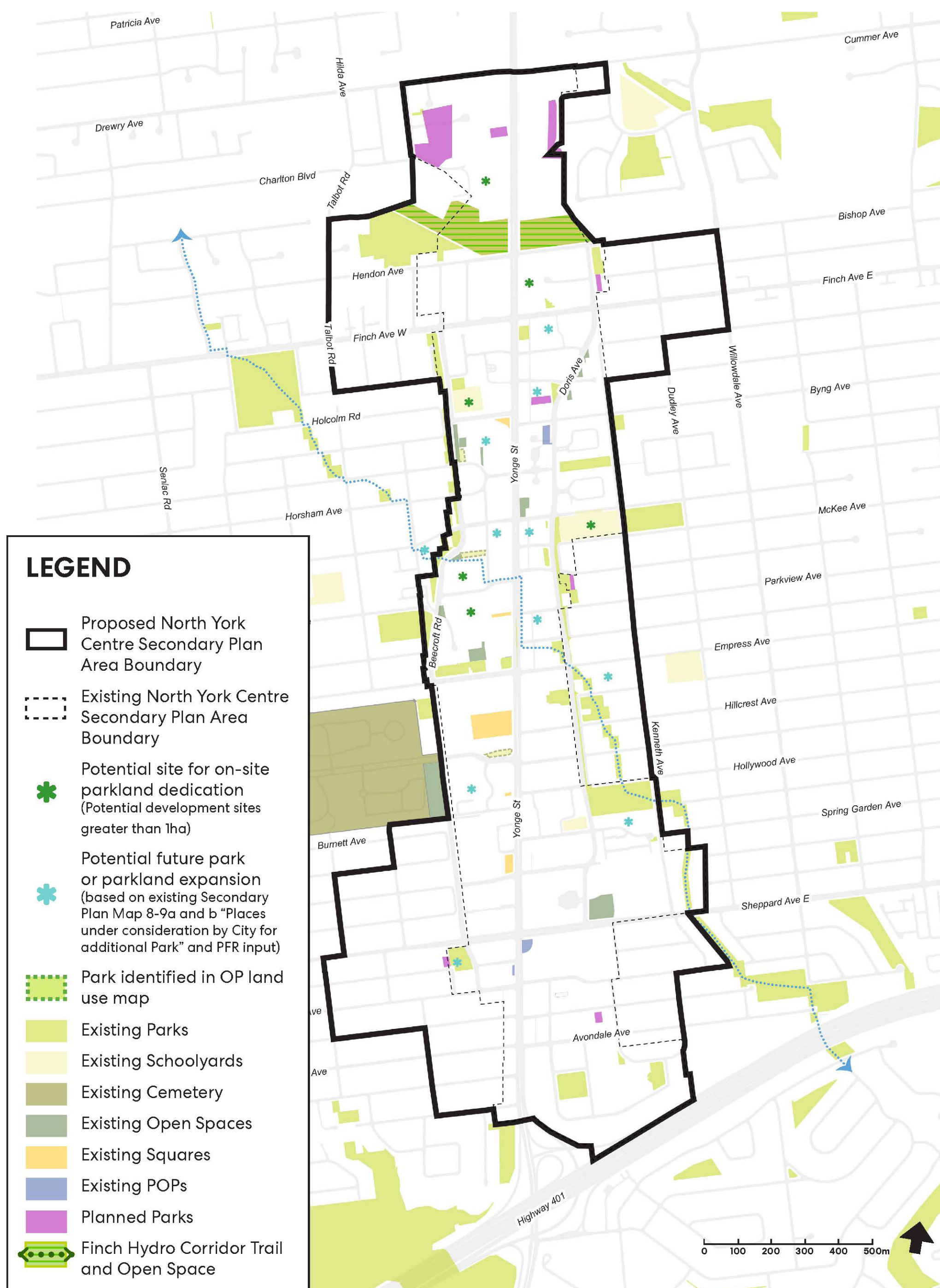
Business As Usual

Parks in Business as Usual reflect the existing Secondary Plan and Official Plan, planned parks and potential locations for new parks.



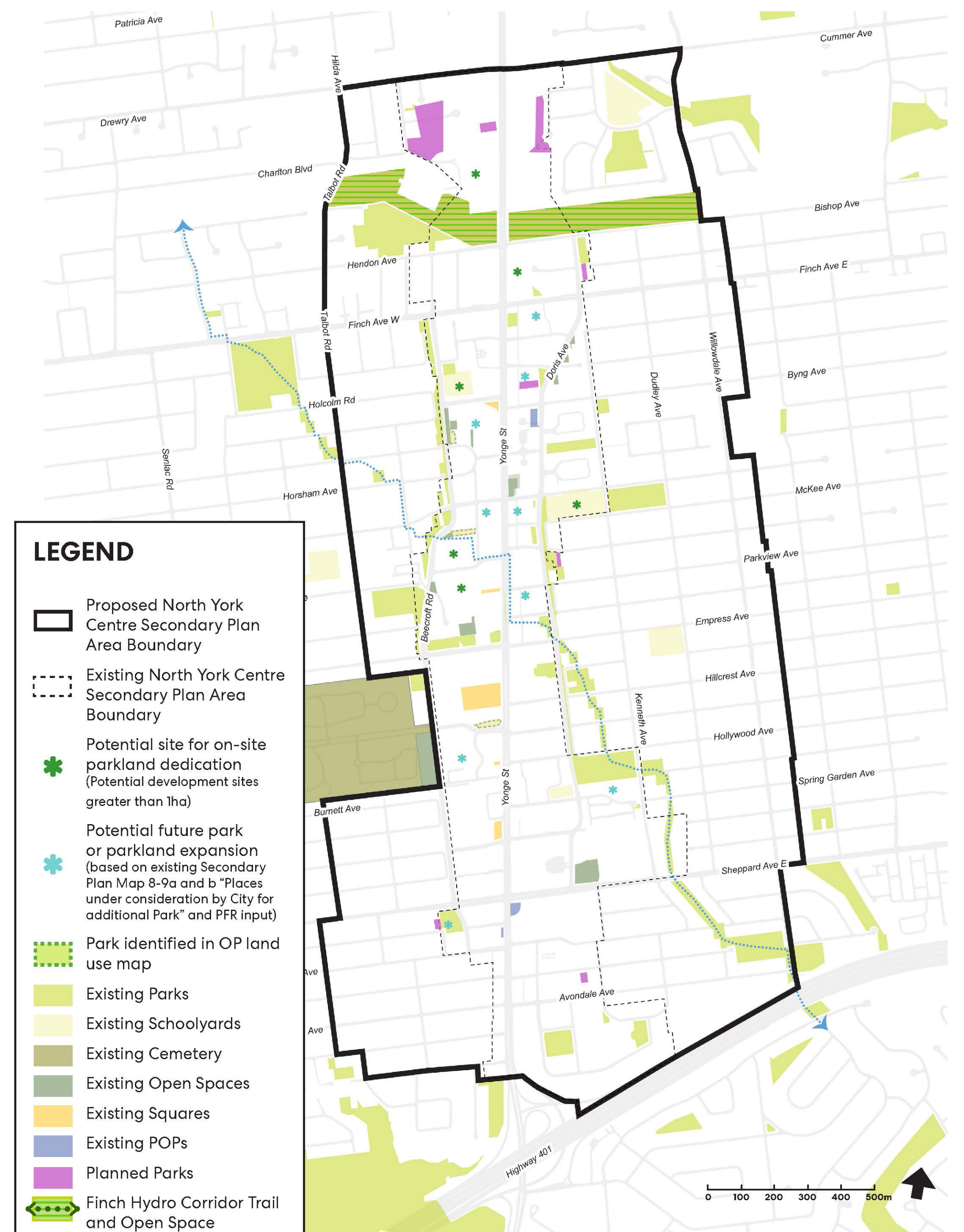
Alternative #1

Potential locations for new parks would be expanded in Alternative 1 and connected with complementary open spaces including a signature trail along Wilket Creek.



Alternative #2

Alternative 2 would build on the parks and open space network in Alternative 1 with additional potential locations for new parks and more opportunities for east-west connectivity.



Note: Options are presented for discussion purposes and are subject to feasibility analysis, public consultation, and Council approval.

Evaluation of Options

Parkland

- BAU offers limited new parks and open space opportunities.
- Alternatives #1 and #2 introduce new opportunities for parks and recreational space.
- Alternative #2 allows for potential additional and/or extension of existing parkland across the neighbourhood through new development.

Connectivity of Parks

- Alternatives #1 and #2 introduce new opportunities to connect parks and open spaces.

Tree Canopy and Green Infrastructure

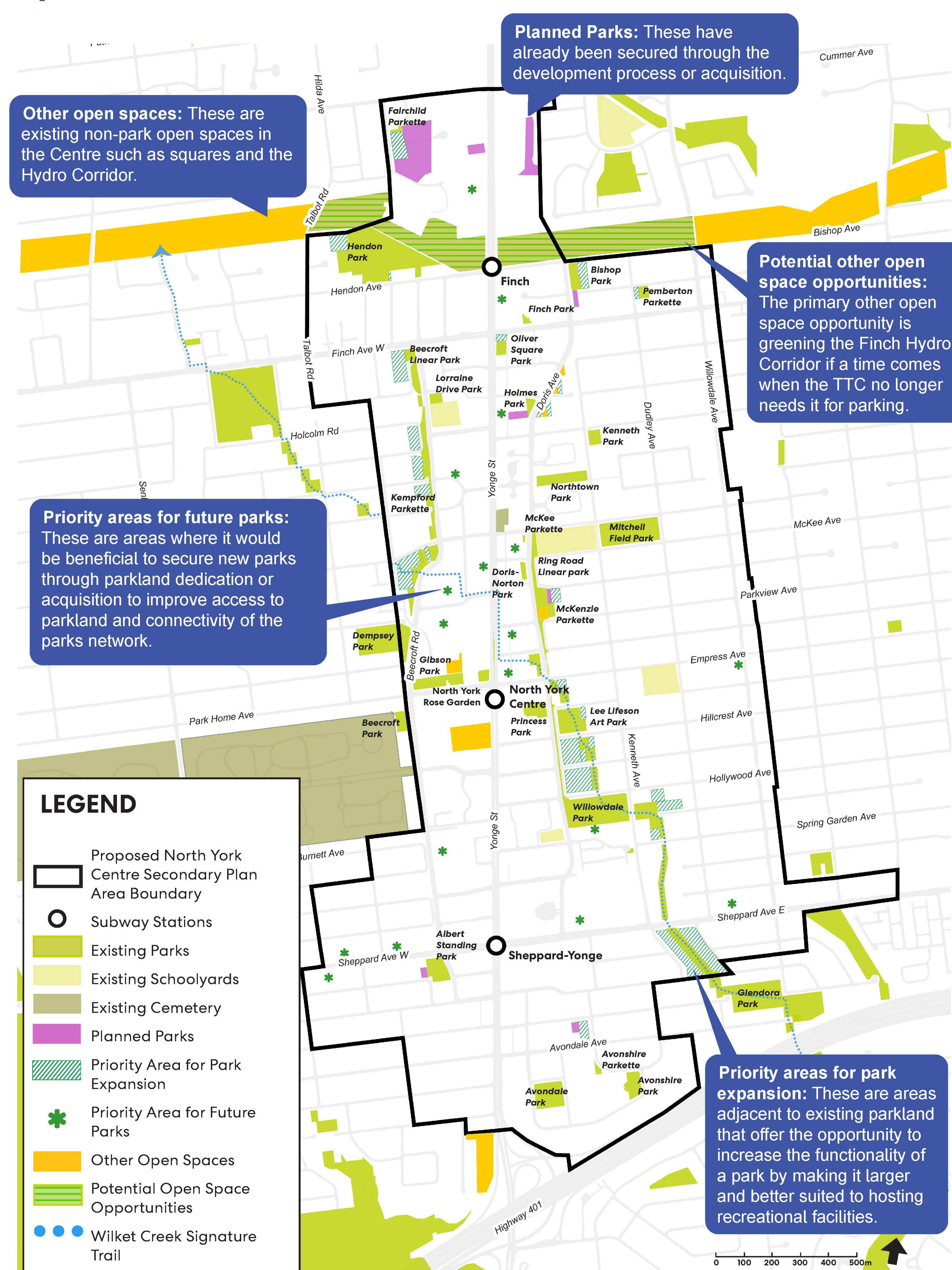
- BAU offers some opportunity to increase tree canopy and green infrastructure through new development.
- Alternative #1 offers opportunity to increase tree canopy and green infrastructure through new development as well as through major open space and streetscape improvements.
- Alternative #2 has potential to reduce existing tree canopy and green infrastructure through intensification of existing low-rise areas.

Scoring

Measure	BAU	ALT #1	ALT #2
Potential for new parkland and recreational space	☐	◐	◑
Connectivity of Parks	☐	◐	◑
Tree Canopy	☐	◐	◑
Green Infrastructure	☐	◐	◑

Parks and Environment Emerging Preferred Option

The Emerging Preferred Option envisions a North York Centre where existing parks are expanded, new parks are created, the parks and open space network is connected and the natural environment supports ecological health and biodiversity.



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Objectives

- Maintain and expand parkland and maximize opportunities for new parks and recreation programming
- Create a connected parks and open space network
- Improve people's access to parks
- Protect and enhance the tree canopy
- Promote biodiversity in the Centre
- Incorporate Indigenous placekeeping in parks and the public realm
- Incorporate green infrastructure throughout the public realm and development sites in North York Centre.
- Address the climate crisis and establish local strategies to achieve the City's climate targets

Proposed Policy Direction Highlights

- Recognize, celebrate and commemorate Indigenous cultures and histories in parks and the public realm network in partnership with Indigenous communities.
- Develop a target for tree canopy cover in North York Centre that improves tree equity by providing more trees for more people, particularly within the public realm.
- Support habitat creation and connectivity and promote biodiversity, native species and pollinators.
- Encourage development to achieve higher performance levels of the Toronto Green Standard in effect at the time of the development application.
- Optimize opportunities for water conservation, on-site infiltration and stormwater control by using low impact development approaches such as green roofs, rain gardens, greywater reuse and permeable paving.



Awen' Gathering Place in Collingwood that links to the Seven Ancestor Teachings (Source: Brook McIlroy)



Grange Park in Toronto is an example of a urban park that is accessible and engaging with more greenery (Source: CSLA)

Tell us what you think!

What do you like about the proposed directions for Parks and Environment?

What would you change about the proposed directions for Parks and Environment?

What's missing?