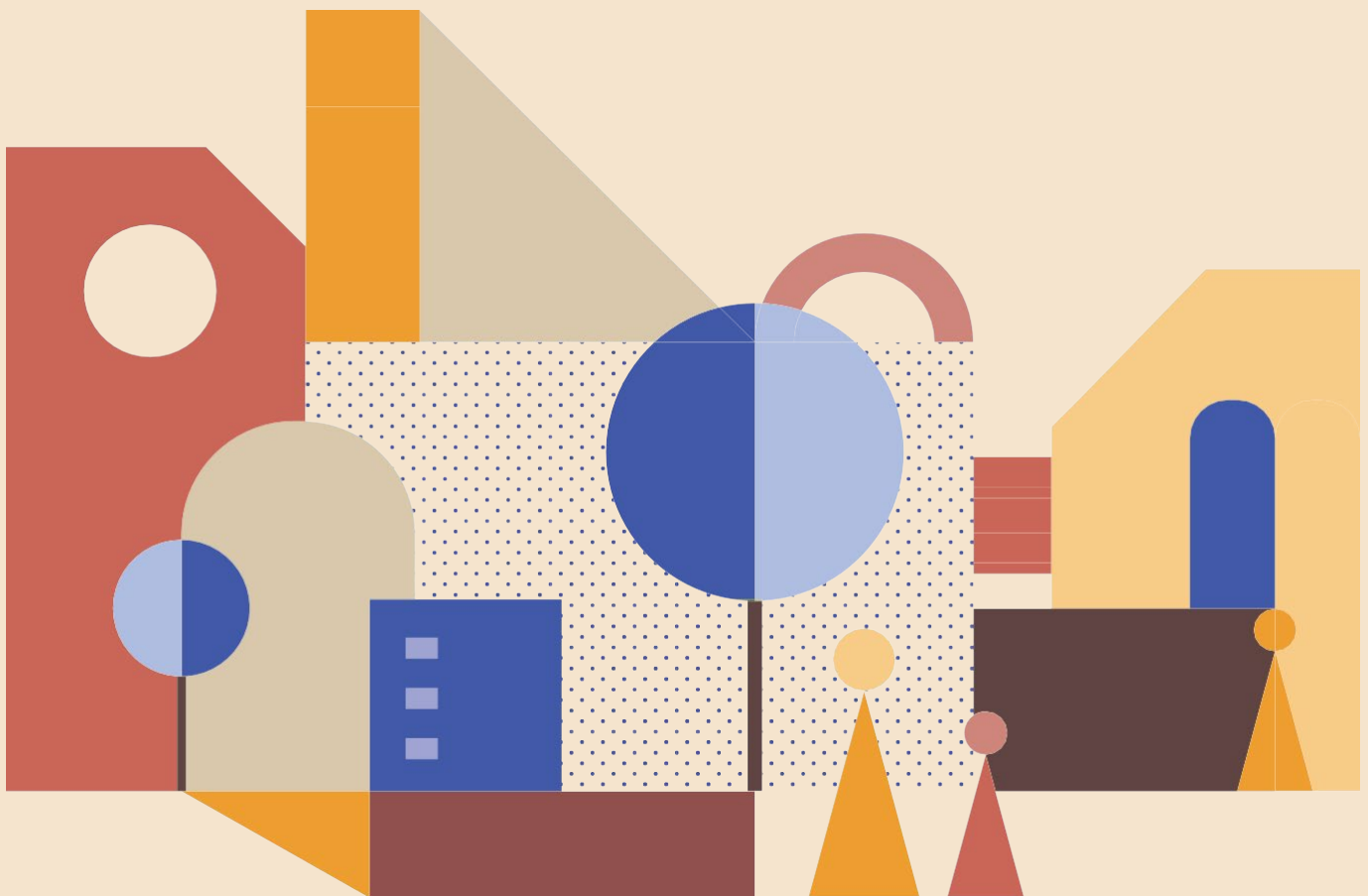


Draft Options and Directions Report

June 2025



City of Toronto

North York at the Centre – Draft Options and Directions Report

Project Website: toronto.ca/nycentre

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that North York Centre is located on lands within the City of Toronto that are the traditional territory of the Anishnabeg, Haudenosaunee and Wendat peoples, and now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The lands in Toronto where North York Centre is located are covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

AFRICAN ANCESTRAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Toronto acknowledges all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.

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Economic Development and Culture

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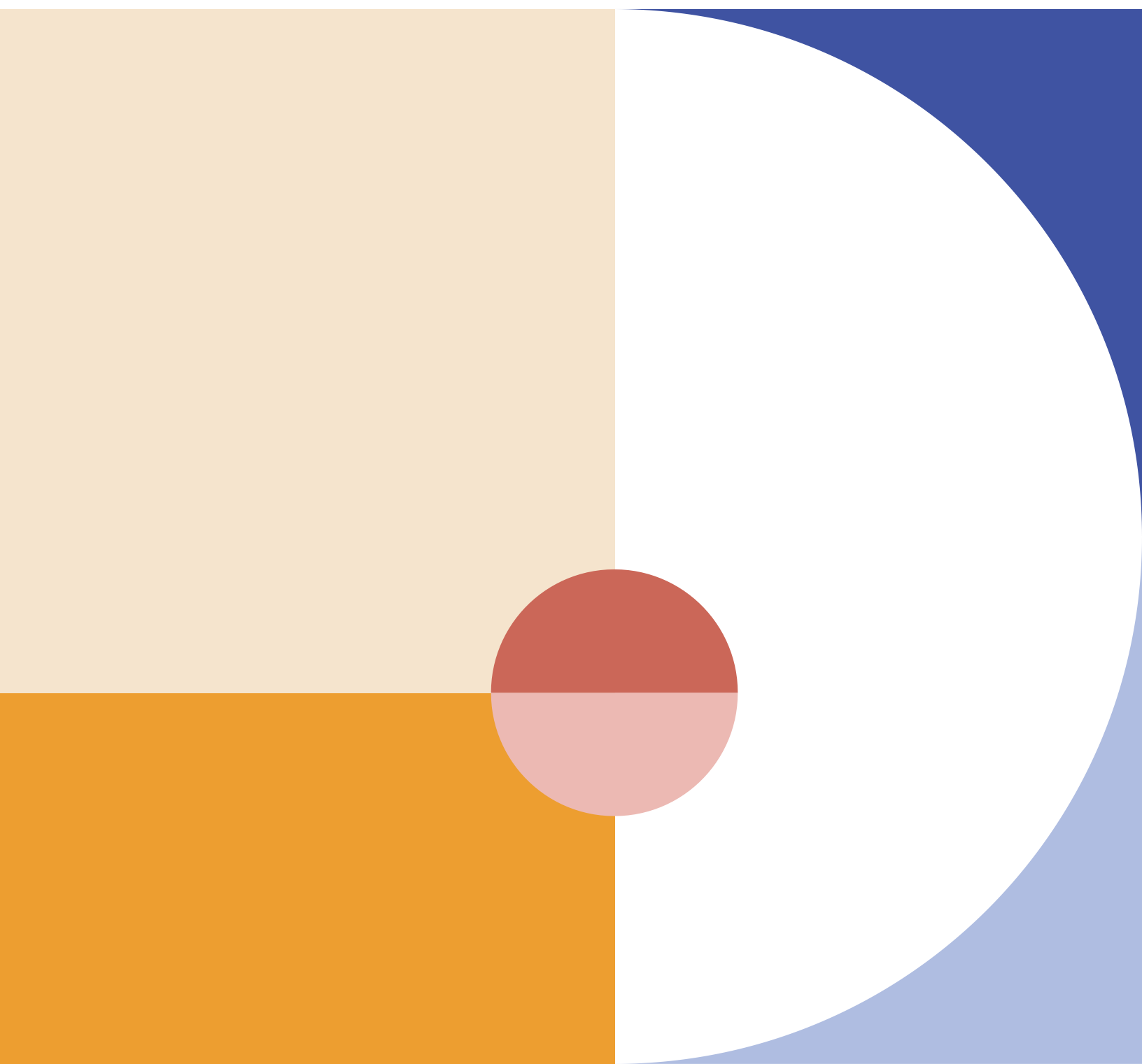
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Executive Summary



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Toronto is undertaking a review of the North York Centre Secondary Plan (NYCSP) to refresh the vision for the Centre and develop new policy directions to shape the area as an inclusive, resilient, and complete community. The purpose of the Options and Directions Report is to summarize the work completed in Phase 2 of North York at the Centre, leading towards a Preferred Option for how to manage growth and change in the Centre over the next 25 years.

This Draft Report describes three draft options and how well they achieve the visioning framework and guiding principles that were identified with the community in Phase 1 of the project. This Draft Report also presents an Emerging Preferred Option that builds on the best performing parts of the three draft options. The Emerging Preferred Option was shared with the community in March, April and May 2025 through a series of public meetings and an online survey.

A Final Options and Directions Report will be released later in Phase 2 with a recommended Preferred Option that reflects feedback from the community and other analysis.

Learn more about Community Engagement in Section 1.4.

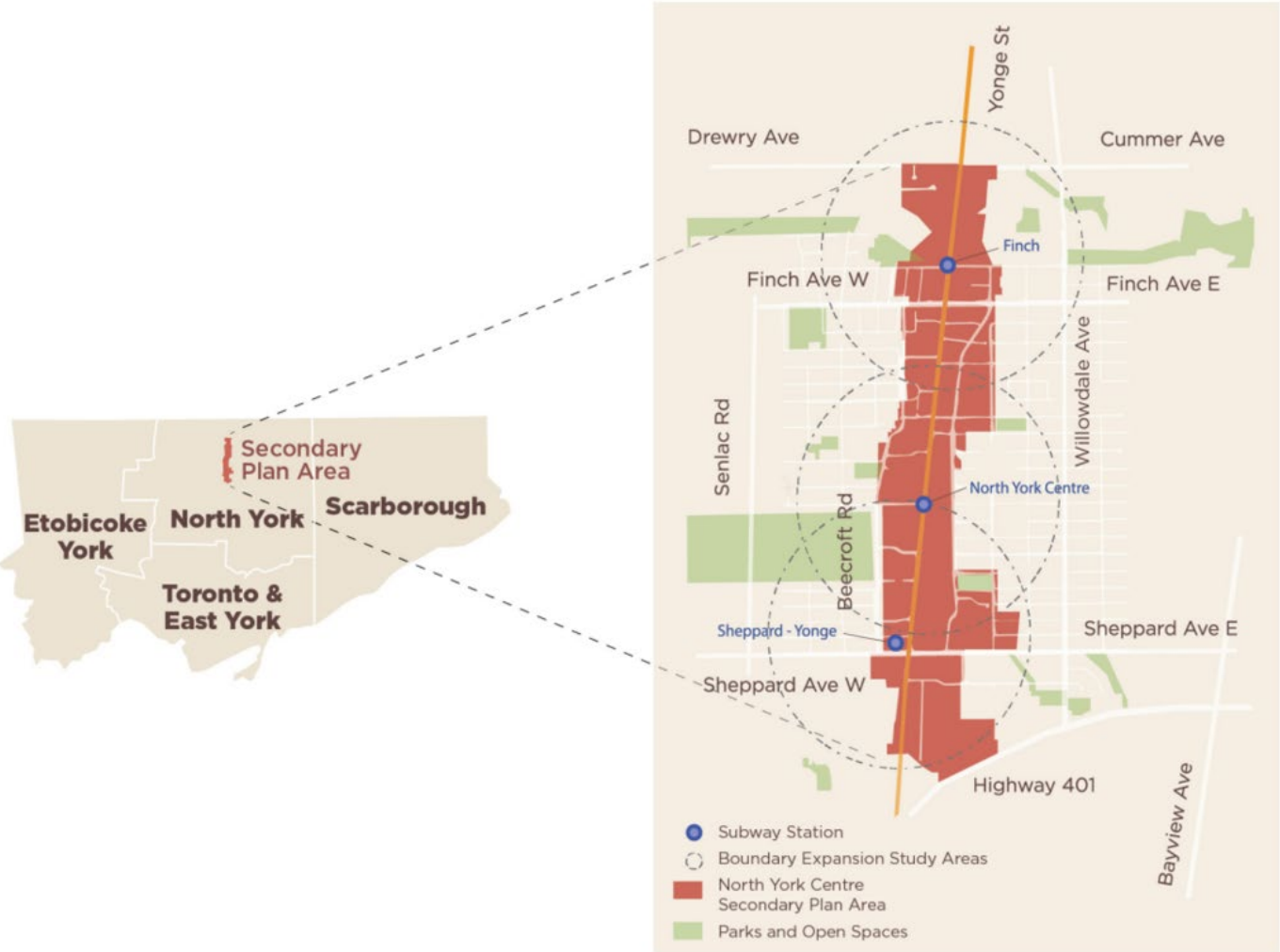


Figure 0-1: Study Area Map

What is a Secondary Plan?

- Secondary Plans are chapters in Toronto's Official Plan, and they include maps and policies that are used to set the rules and expectations for private development projects (like new condos or office buildings) and public projects (like parks and street improvements).
- Secondary Plans are prepared for areas where major change is expected or desired, and they provide community planners with tools to manage growth across a bigger area than one development site or block.
- Secondary Plans address many components that define a community, like building design, the mix of housing and jobs, parks, community services and facilities, the public realm, mobility network, and sewers and watermains.

Why update the North York Centre Secondary Plan?

- The original North York Centre Secondary Plan was adopted in 1997 and has shaped the significant amount of development and public investment that has taken place in the community over the last 25 years to create a vibrant downtown for North York.
- The vision from the 1997 Secondary Plan has largely been achieved, but development pressure continues today because North York Centre is a desirable place to live and work and because it is well-served by transit and other amenities. Updated policies are needed to provide a plan for how the Centre should continue to grow in the coming decades.
- Updates are also needed because the current Secondary Plan is not consistent with Provincial planning policies and regulations and can no longer be used to evaluate development proposals.

Visioning Framework

The visioning framework establishes our shared ambitions for the North York at the Centre. It is based on community input and technical analysis of issues, opportunities and priorities undertaken in Phase 1. In Phase 2, the visioning framework is being used to guide the development and evaluation of options for the Centre's future growth.

The visioning framework for North York Centre includes three overarching lenses and five guiding principles.

Overarching Lenses

Three overarching lenses articulate values for the community that should be reflected through all aspects of the project and options:



Equity and Inclusion - means identifying needs, barriers, impacts, and mitigation strategies to ensure that the review process and secondary plan policies benefit equity deserving communities.



Truth and Reconciliation - means advancing the actions of the City's Reconciliation Action Plan, and committing to truth, justice, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.



Action on Climate Change - means planning to help adapt to the realities of climate change and mitigate the impacts, in support of the City-wide target of net zero emissions by 2040.

Guiding Principles

Five guiding principles reflect aspirations for the next stage of the Centre's growth:



Grow a Complete Community – means providing housing options for everyone and ensuring investment in infrastructure and facilities keeps pace with growth.



Reinforce the Centre as a Vibrant Hub for Work, Arts and Culture – means protecting and celebrating the mix of uses – from offices to retail and arts and cultural facilities – that define the area's status as a regional centre.



Green North York Centre – is about how to introduce green into a dense urban centre and how North York Centre can play its part in achieving the City's climate targets.



Build Connectivity – is about defining the vision for how people move to, from, and through North York Centre and the quality of experience as they do so.



Design Places for People – is about defining the character of place in North York Centre in terms of built form and open space design.

A set of objectives for each principle were also prepared and used to evaluate the draft options.

Learn more about the visioning framework in Section 2.

Draft Options

Three options were prepared to illustrate how the Centre could grow and the policies that could be put in place to guide its growth.

Business As Usual (BAU)

The BAU applies the existing planning policy framework in the North York Centre Secondary Plan as a baseline or “do nothing” scenario. It maintains the current Secondary Plan area boundary and existing land use permissions, which limit residential development in the south part of the Centre and commercial development in the north part of the Centre. The BAU maintains current permissions for buildings heights of up to 33-storeys along Yonge Street, stepping down to the east and west.

The BAU assumes new parks and mobility and public realm investments that are already planned, including the Yonge North Subway Extension, Transform Yonge, Beecroft and Doris Extension, and other projects in the City's Cycling Network Plan, RapidTO Surface Transit Network Plan, and Secondary Plans.

The BAU also considers potential improvements that are subject to further study such as the Sheppard Subway Extension, Finch West LRT East Extension, and Yonge /401 Interchange.

The BAU is not considered to be a viable alternative as the Ontario Land Tribunal has determined that the existing Secondary Plan is not consistent with provincial policy.

Alternative 1 (Alt 1)

Alternative 1 would expand the Secondary Plan area to align with the Yonge-Sheppard, North York Centre and Finch Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) to optimize density near transit. Alt 1 includes heights that are greater than the BAU but in line with recent development approvals. The tallest heights would be approximately 50 storeys at the subway stations and would gradually step down to approximately six storeys adjacent to existing neighbourhoods on the east and west. Land use permissions would focus office uses at Sheppard Avenue and Yonge Street, with a broader mix of residential, commercial, institutional and community uses along the remainder of Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue. Areas further from the main streets would be primarily residential with flexibility for small scale non-residential uses.

In addition to the parks, public realm and mobility improvements identified in BAU, Alt 1 focuses on greening, safety for all, and improving east-west connections. Public realm moves include linear “Parkways” along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road, “Social Streets” flanking Yonge Street and a signature trail along Wilket Creek. Potential locations for new parks would be expanded in Alt 1, as would open spaces, including potentially within the Finch Hydro Corridor.

Alternative 2 (Alt 2)

Alternative 2 would expand the boundary further east to Willowdale Avenue to allow a transition in building heights, provide more housing options and create a secondary main street. Alt 2 includes heights greater than BAU and Alt 1, in line with heights approved in other *Centres*. Permitted heights would be around 60 storeys near subway stations, transitioning down gradually across the expanded Secondary Plan area, down to six-storey mid-rise buildings. Land use designations in Alt 2 would be similar to Alt 1, with an additional neighbourhood main street on Willowdale Avenue to complement Yonge Street and provide a different type of main street retail experience.

Alt 2 would build on the parks and open space network in Alternative 1 with additional potential locations for new parks. Alt 2 also proposes a broader series of mobility and public realm improvements aimed at facilitating easier east-west access.

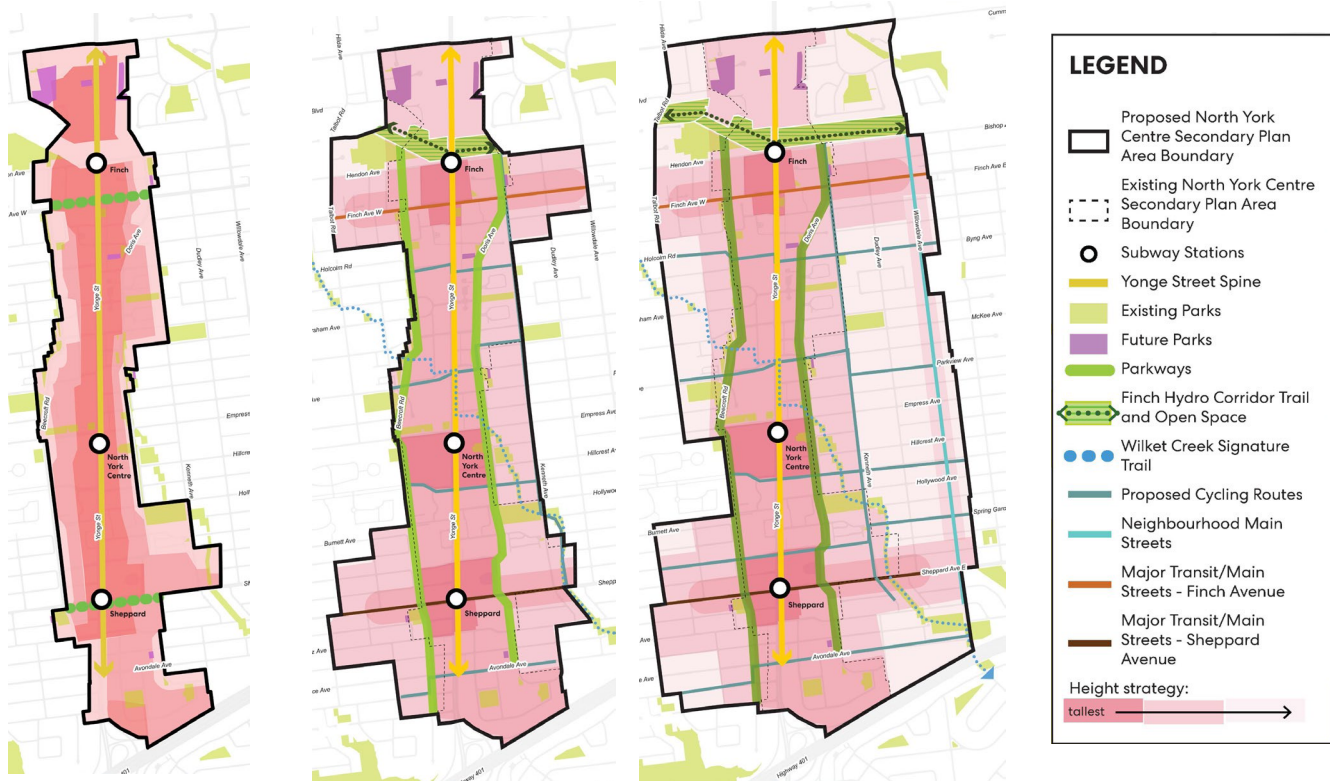


Figure 0-2. BAU, Alt 1 and Alt 2 Structure Maps

Learn more about the Options and view full page maps in Section 3.1.

Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

The Provincial Planning Statement 2024 defines Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) as areas within approximately 500 to 800 metres of higher order transit stations where high-density development is encouraged. There are three MTSAs in the Centre at the Finch, North York Centre, and Sheppard-Yonge subway stations. All three have been designated as Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) under Official Plan Amendment 570, adopted by City Council in 2022 and pending approval by the Province.

Table 0-1 - Population and Jobs Estimates for Each Option

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Total Population	98,542	184,667	298,651
Population in MTSAs	96,705	178,028	226,163
Jobs in MTSAs	42,686	41,420	46,000
Density in MTSAs (people and jobs per hectare)	506	513	637

Evaluation Summary

The visioning framework was used to evaluate how well each of the options (BAU, Alt 1 and Alt 2) achieves the vision for North York Centre and what features and policies should be brought forward as recommended directions for the Preferred Option.

Key findings from the evaluation include that Alt 1 and Alt 2 deliver benefits in terms of increased housing units and density near transit, greater diversity of building types and better height transition to surrounding areas, potential new parkland and improved connectivity of parks, and improved multi-modal mobility and safety. However, the level of growth in Alt 2 could be challenging to serve with the necessary infrastructure, facilities and services to create a complete and livable community. Alt 2 also scored poorly on sunlight access, tree canopy cover and permeable surfaces due to the extent of intensification through the conversion of *Neighbourhoods* to *Mixed Use Areas*.

Elements of Alt 2 that performed strongly include the opportunity for more local-serving retail along Willowdale Avenue, the mix of building types and wind comfort and safety. The Emerging Preferred Option attempts to combine the most successful features of Alt 1 and Alt 2 into a new hybrid option for North York Centre.

Table 0-2: Scoring for Growing a Complete Community







	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Housing Units			
Density in MTSAs			

Table 0-3: Scoring for Reinforce the Centre as a Vibrant Hub for Work, Arts and Culture










	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Jobs/Population ratio			
Office GFA			
Retail GFA			

Table 0-4: Scoring for Green North York Centre













	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Potential for New Parkland and Recreational Space			
Connectivity of Parks			
Tree Canopy			
Green Infrastructure			

Table 0-5: Scoring for Build Connectivity











































	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Multi-Modal Mobility			
Active Transportation			
Transit			
Safety			
Mobility Choices and Innovation			
Streetscapes			
Cost and Feasibility			

Table 0-6: Scoring for Design Places for People

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Transition within North York Centre			
Transition to Surroundings			
Mix of Building Types			

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Wind Comfort			
Wind Safety			
Sunlight			
Non-Park Open Spaces			

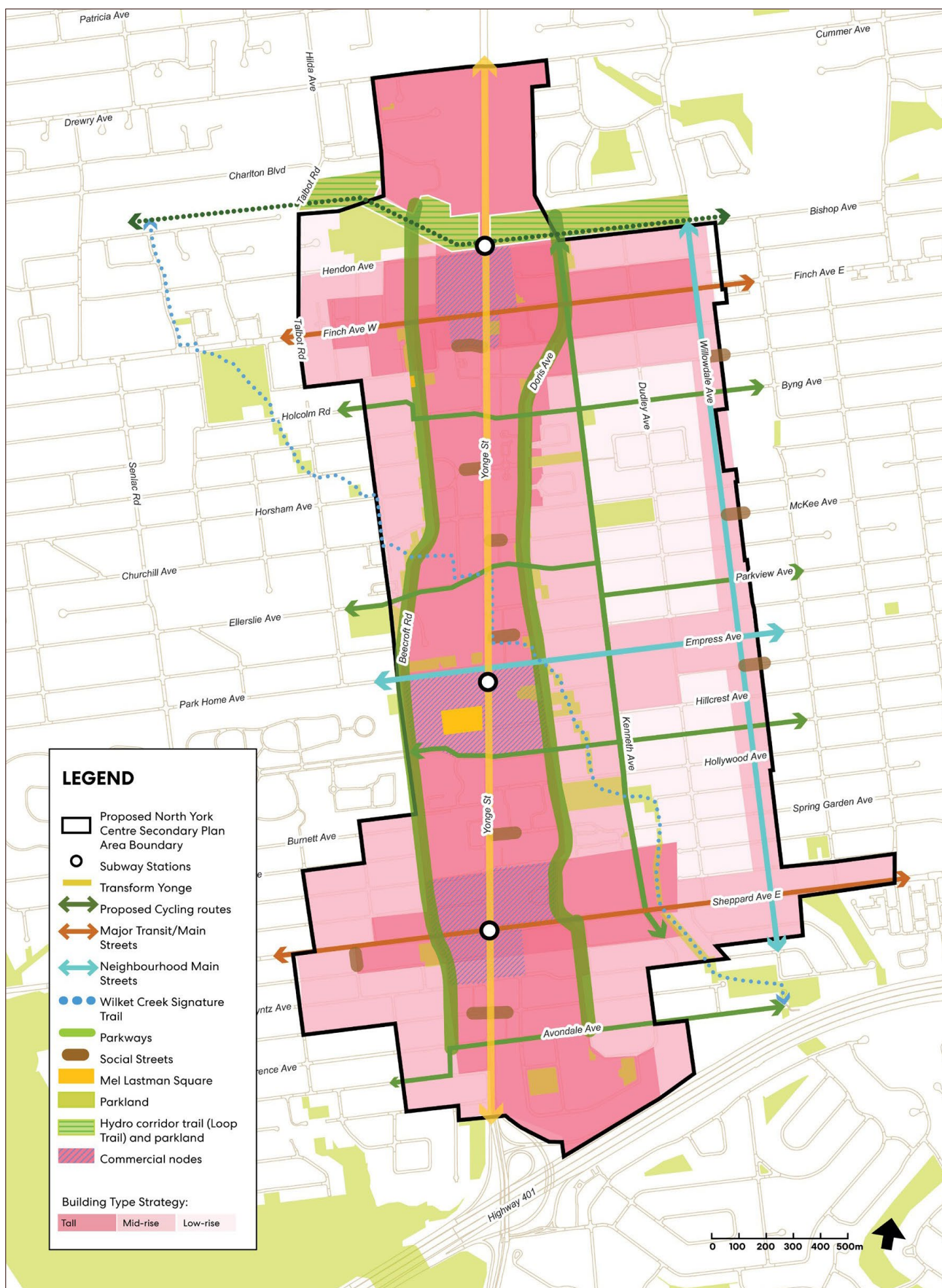
Learn more about the Options Evaluation in Section 3.

Emerging Preferred Option

The Emerging Preferred Option for North York Centre presents a starting point for engagement with the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities in Phase 2.

The Emerging Preferred Option proposes a foundation for the next stage of North York Centre's evolution as a complete, inclusive and resilient community and regional hub for the northern part of the city. Key elements are focused on introducing mid-rise buildings and more welcoming public spaces, stitching the Centre into the larger community, and filling in gaps in its offerings to set it up for success over the coming decades. The Emerging Preferred Option proposes to:

- Expand the boundary east to Willowdale Avenue to facilitate housing diversity, gradual height transition and better east-west connectivity.
- Green the public realm and better connect the parks and open space network by creating new linear “parkways” along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road and a signature trail along Wilket Creek.
- Introduce greater flexibility for both new residential and non-residential uses, protecting and growing the Centre's role as an employment hub.
- Celebrate and cultivate the range and diversity of the arts, cultural, retail, civic and institutional uses that draw people to North York Centre from across the city.
- Identify additional or improved community services and facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents.



The Emerging Preferred Option includes strategies for land use (housing, offices, stores, etc.), parks and open spaces, public realm, mobility and buildings. It also includes policy directions for North York Centre that are needed to achieve the objectives covering topics such as affordable housing, mix of unit types, community services and facilities, inclusive economic development, arts and culture, biodiversity, tree canopy, green infrastructure, action on climate change, Indigenous placekeeping, public art and culture heritage.

Learn more about the Emerging Preferred Option in Section 4.

Land Use

The Emerging Preferred Option proposes new land use designations to provide greater flexibility while supporting the Centre's role as an office hub and vibrant destination for retail, arts and culture uses. Four Mixed Use Area designations collectively focus office uses at Sheppard Avenue and Yonge Street, with a broader mix of residential, commercial, institutional and community uses directed to the remainder of Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue. Smaller-scale retail and service uses would also be permitted along Empress and Willowdale Avenues to provide daily amenities within walking distance of more homes. Areas where retail would be required versus encouraged are differentiated as Primary and Secondary Retail Streets. Other areas away from the main streets would remain residential.

Beyond the land use designations, proposed policies on inclusive economic development, housing and community services and facilities would:

- Encourage the replacement of existing office space with alternative non-residential uses and provide incentives to support the conversion or adaptation of vacant office space into other non-residential employment.
- Maintain and enhance the diversity of retail and service establishments by continuing to provide a range of commercial spaces, including smaller-scale units to support local and independent businesses.
- Encourage the retention, expansion and creation of community-scale spaces for arts and culture sector uses throughout North York Centre, and particularly in the southern portion of the Secondary Plan area along Yonge Street.
- Prioritize affordable and supportive housing, where appropriate, on City-owned sites, built through partnerships with non-profit housing providers, Indigenous housing providers, other orders of government, and the private sector.
- Specify the unit mix of 1-2-3 bedrooms for developments with more than 80 units.
- Direct community planners and development applicants to the Community Services and Facilities Strategy for North York Centre to identify needed investment in amenities like community recreation centres, libraries, schools and child care.

Learn more about the proposed land use designations and other recommended policy directions in Section 4.2.

Parks and Environment

The Emerging Preferred Option envisions a North York Centre where existing parks are expanded, new parks are created, parks are connected, and the natural environment supports ecological health and biodiversity. New parkland has been proposed in areas with existing parkland need and walkability gaps, and to support future growth.

The categories of parks and open spaces in the Emerging Preferred Option include existing Parks, Planned Parks that have already been secured through development or acquisition, Priority Areas for Park Expansion next to existing parks, Priority Areas for Future Parks, Other Open Spaces like Mel Lastman Square, and Potential Open Space Opportunities, primarily in the Finch Hydro Corridor.

Alongside parks and open space designations and policies, proposed policies on placekeeping and the environment would:

- Recognize, celebrate and commemorate Indigenous cultures and histories in parks and the public realm network in partnership with Indigenous communities.
- Include 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.

Learn more about the proposed policy directions for parks and environment in Section 4.3.

Public Realm

Public realm moves in the Emerging Preferred Option are proposed to create a green, resilient and connected network of spaces that stitch North York Centre together and provides places for people to gather and rest. Key elements include Parkways on Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road characterized by wide green linear open spaces on either side of the boulevard; a Wilket Creek Signature Trail to celebrate this historic watercourse and connect the public realm network; Social Streets, envisioned as short side street segments abutting Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue and Willowdale Avenue that are flexibly designed to provide public open space, with the potential to be closed for special events; Neighbourhood Main Streets along Willowdale and Empress Avenues; and Mid-block Connections that provide pedestrian pathways between blocks.

Alongside these public realm moves, proposed policies would:

- Protect and enhance the tree canopy in the public boulevard through streetscape improvements and on private property through building setbacks.

- Identify priority locations in North York Centre for public art that expresses North York Centre's history, diverse cultures and natural heritage.
- Provide direction to secure Privately-Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS) through development to augment other open spaces and better connect and enhance the public realm.

Learn more about the proposed public realm network and policy directions in Section 4.4.

Mobility

The Emerging Preferred Option envisions a North York Centre with improved east-west connectivity that is safe and convenient to move around by multiple modes of transportation. Local improvements are proposed to fill in gaps and complement other existing transportation projects that are addressing transportation needs in the Centre, including Transform Yonge, the Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road Extensions, the Highway 401 Interchange Environmental Assessment, and the Yonge North Subway Extension.

Proposed policies would support a multi-modal mobility network in the Centre with:

- New signalized intersections and pedestrian crossings at key locations to reduce distances between protected crossings.
- Pedestrian and cycling priority locations for safety improvements at key locations including intersections and mid-block locations.
- Additional local cycling routes to enhance connectivity and accessibility by filling in existing network gaps and improving access to key destinations.
- First-/last-mile connections to transit stations and stops, including enhanced indoor and outdoor access.
- More mobility choices through the introduction of shared mobility hubs at key locations.

Learn more about the proposed mobility network and policy directions in Section 4.5.

Buildings

The Emerging Preferred Option provides a mix of building types and heights that would create variety in the urban landscape, improve wind conditions by introducing a transition in building heights, maintain some areas of low-rise buildings, and allow for different housing forms that meet the needs of different types of households

The Emerging Preferred Option proposes different categories of tall buildings, with the tallest clustered around the three subway stations. The maximum proposed height of 65 storeys would match recent development in other *Centres* in the city. Mid-rise buildings could range from five to fourteen storeys, with the height generally matching the width of the right-of-way of the adjacent street. The proposed plan introduces significant new areas for mid-rise buildings to provide transition from high-rise to low-rise

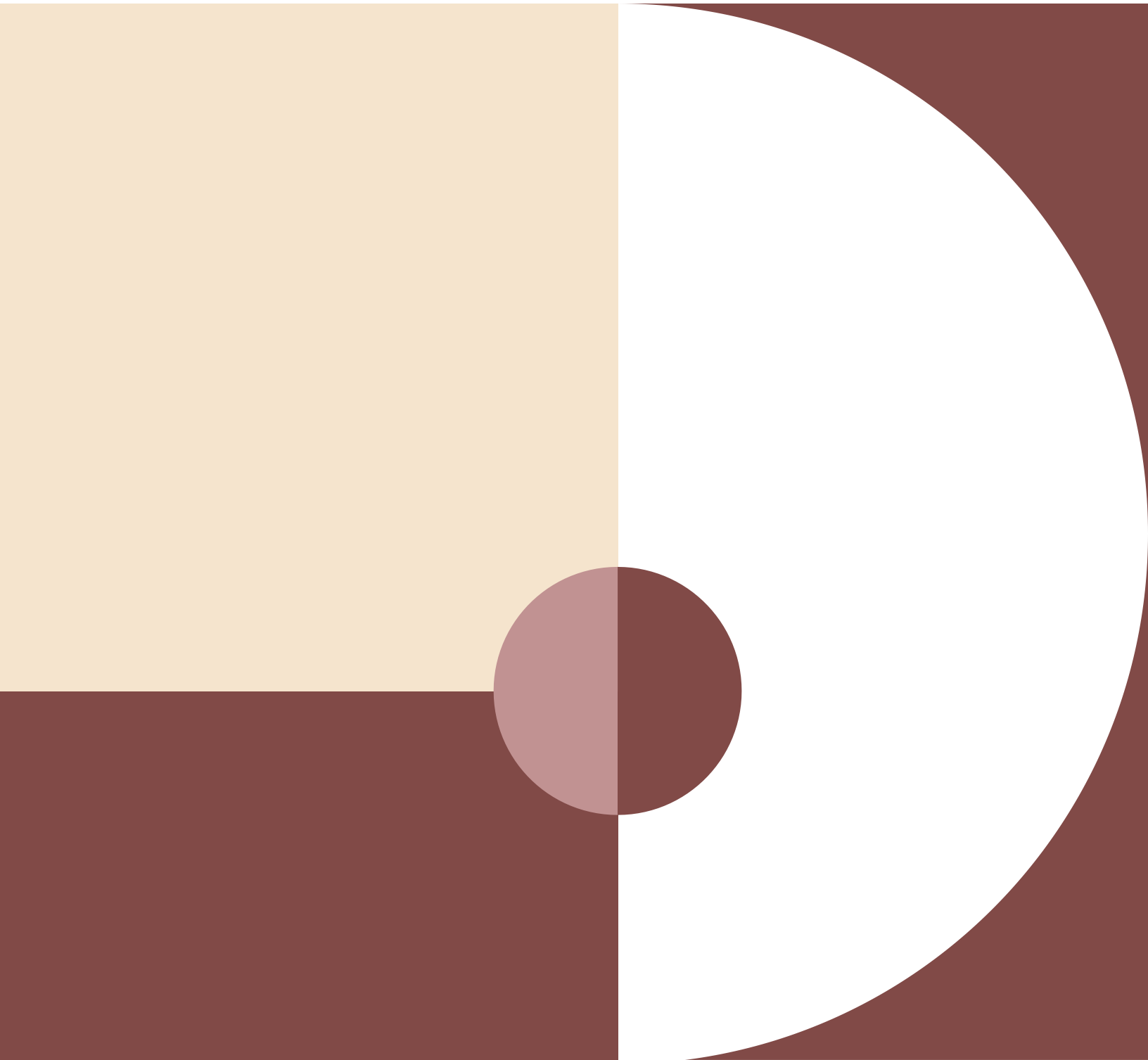
areas, offer more variety in built form and choice for residents. Low-rise buildings are defined as buildings under five storeys. The proposed plan includes retaining some existing areas of low-rise buildings within the expanded Secondary Plan area to provide a full spectrum of building forms. Tall, mid-rise and low-rise buildings will be subject to existing city-wide guidelines. Context-specific design guidance will be provided in the Urban Design Guidelines for North York Centre.

Learn more about the proposed policy directions for buildings in Section 4.6.

Next Steps

Following a review of the community's feedback on the Emerging Preferred Option and other analysis, a Preferred Option will be identified by the project team and documented in a Final Options and Directions Report. The Final Report will be presented to Council at the end of Phase 2 for endorsement as the basis for updating the North York Centre Secondary Plan in Phase 3 of the project.

01. Introduction



01. INTRODUCTION

1.1 North York at the Centre

The City of Toronto is undertaking a review of the North York Centre Secondary Plan (NYCSP) to refresh the vision for the Centre and develop new policy directions to shape the area as an inclusive, resilient, and complete community.

The project, known as “North York at the Centre”, includes engagement with the community and interested parties to identify aspirations, determine priorities, and recommend updates to the planning policies that guide growth and investment in the area. North York at the Centre will address the environment, parks and open spaces, climate change mitigation and adaptation, land use, housing, economic development, community services and facilities, mobility, public realm, built form and servicing.

What is a Secondary Plan?

The City of Toronto Official Plan provides a city-wide framework for guiding growth and development. Secondary Plans provide more detailed land use designations and policy directions to fit local contexts in areas where major physical change is expected or desired. Secondary Plans comprise policies and maps that are adopted into the Official Plan to guide growth and development.

Why Update the Secondary Plan?

The existing North York Centre Secondary Plan was adopted in 1997 and has positively shaped growth in the Centre for over two decades, providing direction on matters such as land use, built form, mobility, the public realm, parks, and community services and facilities. A review is needed now to examine current conditions and trends, and to set the stage for a policy refresh to guide growth in the Centre over the coming decades. Alongside the recently completed plans for Downtown (TOcore) and Midtown (Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan), and the ongoing Our Scarborough Centre study, North York at the Centre will contribute to an updated and more contemporary policy framework for the City’s *Centres* to guide growth and development over the long-term.



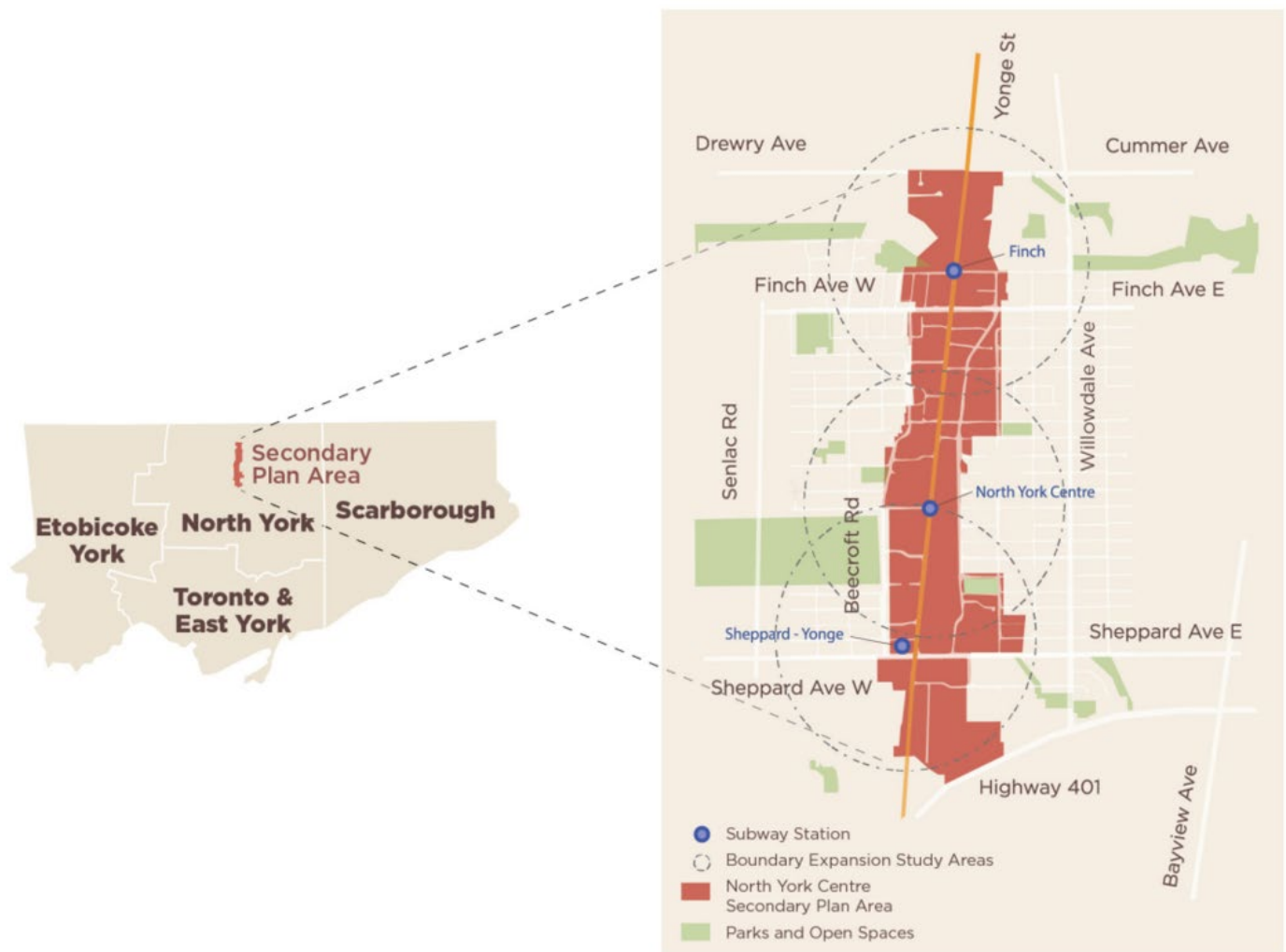


Figure 1-1: Study Area Map



Aerial view of North York Centre and the surrounding community, looking north

1.2 Project Phases

North York at the Centre is being completed in three phases, with engagement events and activities held in each phase to inform the project components.

- Phase 1 – Background Review
- Phase 2 – Options and Directions
- Phase 3 – Implementation Strategy and Secondary Plan Update

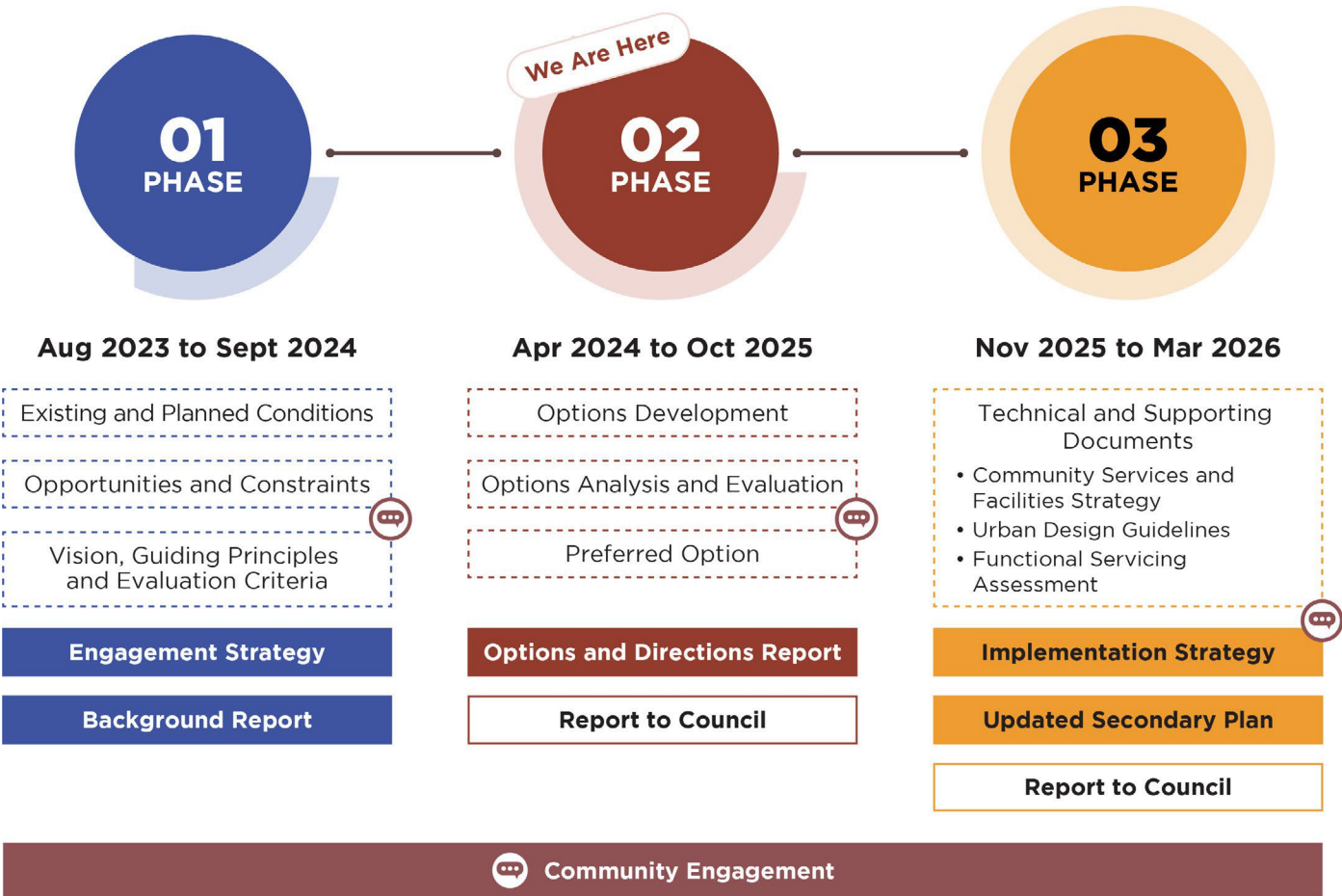


Figure 1-2: North York at the Centre Project Phases

1.3 Purpose of the Options and Directions Report

The purpose of the Options and Directions Report is to summarize the work completed in Phase 2 of North York at the Centre, leading towards a Preferred Option that provides a basis for updating the North York Centre Secondary Plan.

The Options and Direction Report includes five chapters:

- Chapter 1 provides an overview of the project, study area, and community engagement completed to-date.

- Chapter 2 presents the visioning framework, including the overarching lenses and guiding principles for North York Centre developed in Phase 1 and refined in Phase 2.
- Chapter 3 presents options for managing growth and change in North York Centre and an evaluation of how well those options achieve the guiding principles. Directions for the Emerging Preferred Option are identified based on this evaluation.
- Chapter 4 notes next steps in the North York at the Centre project.

The options were developed using input received from the community during Phase 1 combined with issues, opportunities and trends that are summarized in the Phase 1 Background Report. The options that were evaluated include Business As Usual (BAU), Alternative 1 (Alt 1), and Alternative 2 (Alt 2). BAU is provided as a “do nothing” scenario for comparative purposes only. It reflects current Secondary Plan policies for North York Centre that were adopted by the City in 1997, which are no longer consistent with provincial policy and require updating. Alt 1 and Alt 2 explore different ways to achieve the objectives for North York Centre. Each option integrates all components of the study, including land use, building types and heights, parks and open space, public realm, and mobility.

The Emerging Preferred Option was developed based on the outcome of the evaluation of the options. In addition to proposed plans for land use, building types and heights, parks and open space, public realm, and mobility, it provides recommended policy directions addressing topics such as community services and facilities, inclusive economic development, arts and culture, action on climate change and cultural heritage.

1.4 Community Engagement

Phase 1 Engagement Summary

Phase 1 engagement for North York at the Centre was focused on raising project awareness, understanding existing conditions, and developing a visioning framework to inform the work that would come in Phase 2. The project team reached out to the North York Centre community through a Public Visioning Workshop in November 2023 that was attended by over 150 participants. Alongside the Workshop, an online community mapping exercise resulted in 65 place-based comments, and a visioning survey received 47 responses to help inform the Visioning Framework. A Local Advisory Committee was also formed in October 2023, including members representing various community groups and stakeholders in North York Centre. The project team held eight community pop-up events to reach more people in the community between November 2023 and September 2024.

To identify opportunities for truth and reconciliation through the project, the team met with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council from January to February 2024, and hosted a Local Indigenous Community meeting in May 2024.

Key messages shared by participants through the Phase 1 Community Engagement included:

- A need for a broader range of building types and heights, affordable housing options, family- sized housing units, and opportunities for local economic development, arts and culture, and heritage commemoration.
- A desire to expand, improve, and maintain parks and natural features.

- Concerns related to speeding, transit access, sidewalk design, and the cycling network and a desire to make the Centre more accessible, walkable, and safe for pedestrians and people cycling.
- The need for more schools, child care centres, libraries, recreation centres, and human services to support the growing community.

The Phase 1 Engagement Summary is available at toronto.ca/nycentre

Phase 2 Engagement

Phase 2 Engagement is focused on sharing how feedback gathered in Phase 1 helped shape the visioning framework, and presenting the options evaluation and Emerging Preferred Option to the community for feedback. The Engagement Program has included three public meetings, a local Indigenous community meeting, six workshops held by Local Advisory Committee members, and an online survey. Additional public meetings and community pop-ups are planned for Summer 2025. A Phase 2 Engagement Summary and information on future engagement opportunities will be posted at toronto.ca/nycentre.



Visioning Workshop (November 2023) and Public Meeting on Emerging Preferred Option (March 2025)

02. Visioning Framework



02. VISIONING FRAMEWORK

A visioning framework is a clear statement of the future we want. Once a shared vision is articulated, it underpins the development of alternative options and the elements of the options that perform best.

The visioning framework for North York at the Centre was developed in Phase 1 to guide the development and evaluation of options for the Centre's future growth and inform recommended directions. The visioning framework is based on community input and technical analysis of issues, opportunities and priorities for the future of North York Centre. The visioning framework includes:

- **Three overarching lenses** that articulate overall values for the type of community we are working towards in North York Centre. These are: Truth and Reconciliation, Equity and Inclusion, and Action on Climate Change;
- **Five guiding principles** that reflect aspirations for the next stage of the Centre's growth in key areas. These are: Grow a Complete Community; Reinforce the Centre as a Vibrant Hub for Work, Arts and Culture; Green North York Centre; Build Connectivity; and Design Places for People; and
- **A series of objectives** tied to each guiding principle that define more specifically what North York at the Centre is striving to achieve under each of the principles.

2.1 Overarching Lenses

The three overarching lenses permeate all aspects of the project and are addressed by many different guiding principles and objectives for North York Centre. The three overarching lenses are:



Truth and Reconciliation: One of the major developments since the last iteration of the North York Centre Secondary Plan is the deep commitment to advancing truth, justice and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples at all levels of government. At the City of Toronto, this commitment is reflected in the Reconciliation Action Plan, which should be implemented across City-led activities including planning projects. North York at the Centre includes an Indigenous engagement process which is helping to define how the Secondary Plan can advance truth and reconciliation.



Equity and Inclusion: Considerations for equitable and inclusive outcomes are essential in planning for the growth of a community. Identifying needs, barriers, impacts, and mitigation strategies that can benefit equity-deserving communities is a priority for the secondary plan review process.



Action on Climate Change: The City of Toronto declared a climate emergency in 2019 and all future planning must help communities adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change, and contribute to achieving the city-wide target of net zero emissions by 2040. North York at the Centre will set in place the framework for climate resilience in this rapidly growing part of the city.

2.2 Guiding Principles and Objectives

The Guiding Principles and related objectives establish the outcomes we are striving to achieve in each option and through the update of Secondary Plan policies.

1. Grow a Complete Community



This principle is about defining what makes North York Centre a complete community in terms of the type and amount of new housing and the social and physical infrastructure that supports its population. It responds to Provincial and City policy about transit supportive communities and expanding housing options; community feedback about affordability; and analysis of recent growth in North York Centre and community service needs.

Objectives

- 1.1 *Optimize people and jobs within walking distance of higher order transit*
- 1.2 *Increase the housing supply, including new affordable housing units*
- 1.3 *Provide a diversity of housing choices that meet the needs of all household types*
- 1.4 *Integrate new and expanded community services and facilities in the Centre to support the well-being of residents*
- 1.5 *Provide access to safe drinking water and reliable wastewater servicing and manage stormwater run-off as the area grows**

**Assessed at the Preferred Option stage*

2. Reinforce the Centre as a Vibrant Hub for Work, Arts and Culture



This principle is about defining North York Centre's unique role as a regional centre for the north part of the city and how it can continue to develop as an important regional destination. It responds to the City's Official Plan policies for *Centres* and analysis of North York Centre's existing concentration of jobs, retail and arts and cultural facilities, as well as planned or proposed investments in transit infrastructure, such as the Yonge North Subway Extension and potential Line 4 extension to Scarborough Centre and Downsview, which could strengthen its regional prominence.

Objectives

- 2.1 *Maintain North York Centre as a significant civic and office hub*
- 2.2 *Facilitate diverse employment opportunities and inclusive economic development in North York Centre*
- 2.3 *Preserve and enhance the retail diversity of North York Centre*
- 2.4 *Grow and celebrate North York Centre as an arts and cultural destination*

3. Green North York Centre



This principle is about protecting and enhancing green space in a dense urban centre and how North York Centre can play its part in achieving the City's climate targets. It responds to an analysis of parks provision and land cover in North York Centre and what we heard from the community, such as growing and improving the connectivity of the parks system.

Objectives

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

**Assessed at the Preferred Option stage*

4. Build Connectivity



This principle is about defining the vision for how people move to, from, and through North York Centre and the quality of experience as they do so. It responds to City policy about moving people and goods safely and efficiently; providing better connectivity and accessibility of sustainable transportation options while building upon approved infrastructure improvements; community feedback about east-west connectivity; and opportunities for enhanced streetscape and public realm.

Objectives

- 4.1 *Improve the multi-modal mobility network to support the planned growth and demand*
- 4.2 *Encourage walking and cycling by improving connectivity, accessibility and user experience of the active transportation network*
- 4.3 *Promote and support transit*
- 4.4 *Improve safety for all road users*
- 4.5 *Enhance streetscape in North York Centre*
- 4.6 *Increase mobility choices and support new mobility innovations*
- 4.7 *Optimize cost and technical feasibility*

5. Design Places for People



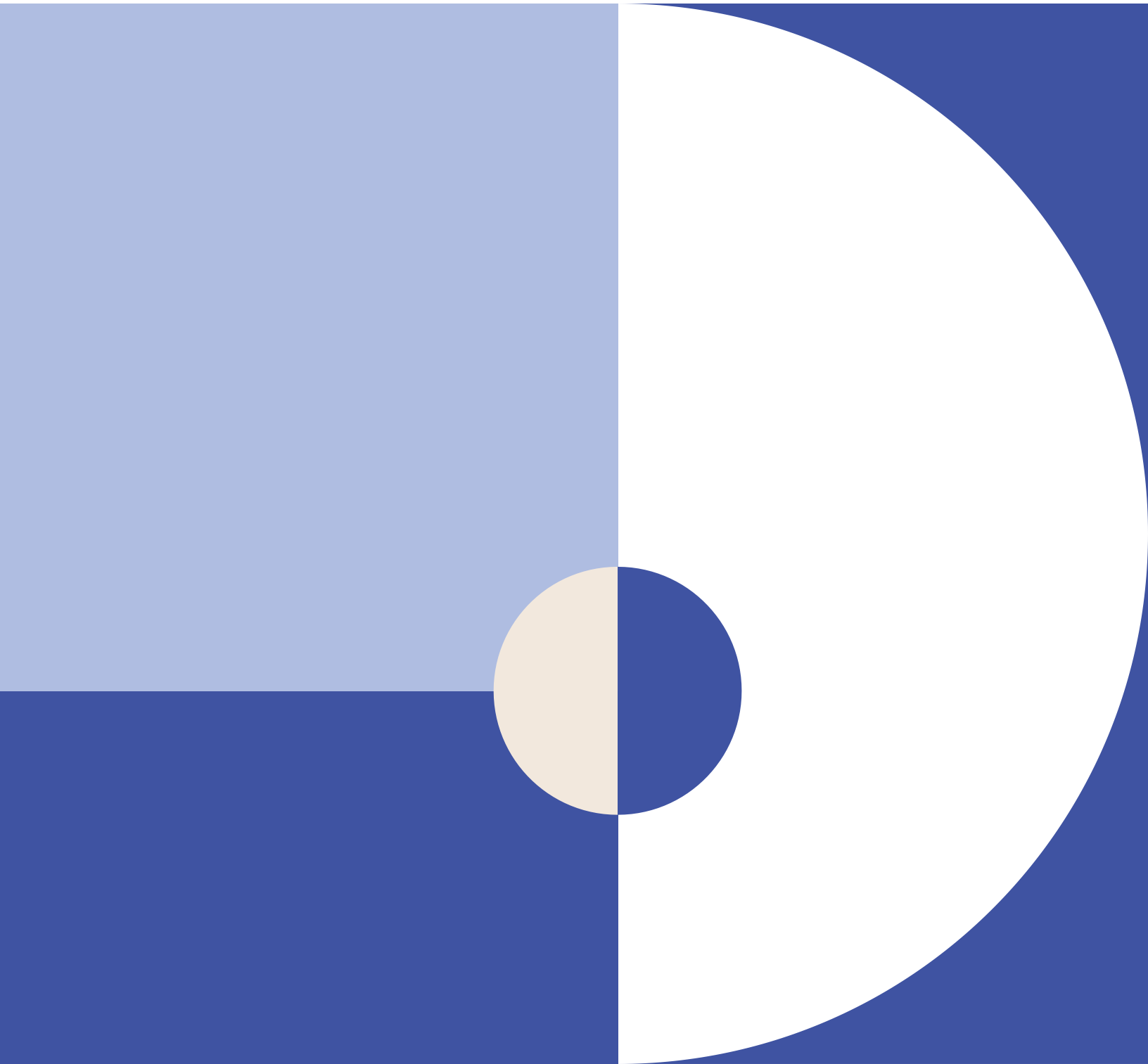
This principle is about defining the character of place in North York Centre in terms of built form and open space design. It responds to Official Plan policy and City guidelines relating to urban design, as well as analysis of building types, open spaces, ground floor activation, sun/shadow impacts, and wind impacts on the public realm. It also reflects what we heard from the community about the commemoration of local history and preservation and enhancement of public spaces.

Objectives

- 5.1 *Provide transition between areas of different building heights and intensity*
- 5.2 *Include a mix of building types and heights*
- 5.3 *Provide safe and comfortable wind conditions for pedestrians on ground level*
- 5.4 *Provide comfortable sun conditions in the public realm and adequate skyview*
- 5.5 *Animate the public realm with active ground floor spaces*
- 5.6 *Ensure built form defines and supports street proportions and public realm**
- 5.7 *Preserve and expand non-park open spaces*
- 5.8 *Conserve North York Centre's cultural heritage and celebrate public art*

**Assessed at the Preferred Option stage*

03. Options and Evaluation



03. OPTIONS AND EVALUATION

To determine how best to achieve the objectives for North York Centre, the study team developed and evaluated different options for how the Centre could grow. Three structural options (BAU, Alternative 1 and Alternative 2) allowed the team to evaluate different boundaries, land uses, building heights and types, parks and open space systems, and public realm and mobility networks for the Centre.

The structural options are presented in this chapter along with a summary of their evaluation against the objectives in the Visioning Framework. Topic-specific maps regarding land use, retail, parks and open spaces, mobility and public realm, and building types and heights for each of the options are provided.

Each section of the chapter includes recommended directions for the Emerging Preferred Option based on what the study team learned through the evaluation. Additional policy directions regarding topics like housing, community services and facilities, inclusive economic development, environment and climate, mobility and design are presented alongside the Emerging Preferred Option in Chapter 4.

3.1 Options Overview

Business as Usual (BAU)

The BAU, shown in **Figure 3-1**, applies the existing policy framework as a baseline or “do nothing” scenario. It maintains the Secondary Plan area boundary and existing land use and height permissions and assumes new parks and mobility and public realm investments that are already planned.¹

The BAU is not considered to be a viable alternative as the Ontario Land Tribunal has determined that the existing Secondary Plan is not consistent with provincial policy, however it was important to include BAU to understand the baseline condition.

Alternative 1 (Alt 1)

Alternative 1, shown in **Figure 3-2**, would expand the Secondary Plan area to align with the City’s adopted boundaries for the Yonge- Sheppard, North York Centre and Finch Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) to optimize density near transit. Heights and densities are increased above current permissions to reflect recent development approvals. Alt 1 includes parks, public realm and mobility improvements focused on greening, safety for all, and improving east-west connections. The big moves for the public realm include greening Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road, greening the Finch Hydro Corridor if a time comes when the TTC no longer needs it for parking, and proposing a signature trail along Wilket Creek.

¹ These include the City’s Capital Projects, Cycling Network Plan, transit projects (e.g. Yonge North Subway Extension and RapidTO) and improvements recommended in all relevant Secondary Plans in the study area (i.e. Yonge Street North Secondary Plan, Central Finch Area Secondary Plan, Sheppard Willowdale Secondary Plan and Sheppard Lansing Secondary Plan). They also include recently approved Environmental Assessment (EA) projects such as Transform Yonge, Beecroft Road Extension and Doris Avenue Extension. Other potential improvements that are subject to further study include Sheppard Subway Extension Initial Business Case (IBC) and Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT) East Extension, as well as the Yonge Street Highway 401 Interchange EA to be initiated together by the City and Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

Alternative 2 (Alt 2)

Alternative 2, shown in **Figure 3-3**, would expand the boundary further east to Willowdale Avenue to allow a transition in heights, provide more housing options and create a secondary main street. Heights and densities are increased above both BAU and Alt 1 to reflect permitted heights in other *Centres*. Alt 2 also proposes to change Official Plan land use designations in parts of the Centre from *Neighbourhoods* to *Mixed Use Areas* to allow more flexibility for redevelopment. This option extends the parks, public realm and mobility improvements from Alt 1 across the community. Additional public realm moves include introducing Willowdale Avenue as a neighbourhood main street.

Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)

Under the Provincial Planning Statement (2024), Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) are defined as areas within approximately 500 to 800 metres of higher order transit stations where high-density residential and commercial development is encouraged.

There are three MTSAs in the Centre at the Finch, North York Centre, and Sheppard- Yonge subway stations. All three have been designated as Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) under OPA 570, adopted by City Council in 2022 and pending approval by the Province.

Districts

To help define the character of place in different parts of North York Centre, Alt 1 and Alt 2 were subdivided into districts, each of which is envisioned to have a unique character in terms of heights, building types, public realm and open spaces. BAU does not have districts as it follows the provisions of the current Secondary Plan, which does not include them.

As shown in **Figure 3-4**, Alternative 1 includes six districts: Subway Stations, the Yonge Spine, the Yonge Transition Zone, the Doris/Beecroft Frontage, the Doris/Beecroft Transition Zone and Finch/ Sheppard Avenues. From a heights perspective, the districts are designed to transition from the tallest and densest areas around the three subway stations down towards the expanded boundary of the Secondary Plan. The public realm, open space and built form character of each district supports the types of uses and activities within it and the way people need to move within it.

What is “character”?

Many factors contribute to the character of place that makes one part of the city feel different from another. The scale and pattern of buildings, the types of activities that people go there to do, the size and type of parks and open spaces, the extent of trees and green space, the width and design of the streets and how people move around all combine to define the character of different areas.

- **District 1 Subways Stations:** The three subway station areas would be the focus for the tallest buildings and greatest intensity of mixed uses, such as commercial, residential, community and arts and cultural uses. The public realm would be designed with features such as wide boulevards, plazas, seating and landscaping to support higher pedestrian volumes.

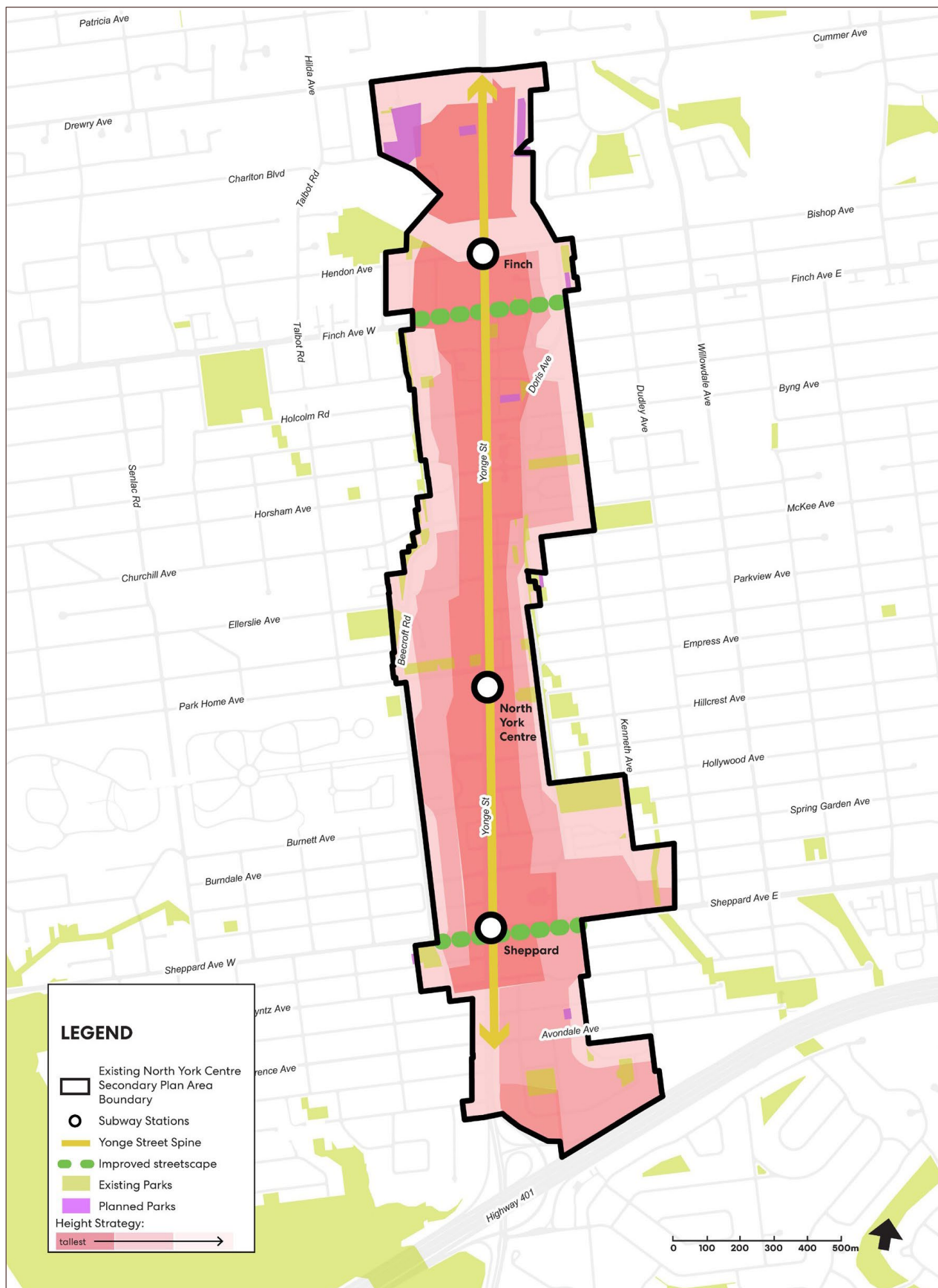


Figure 3-1: Business As Usual (BAU) Structure Map

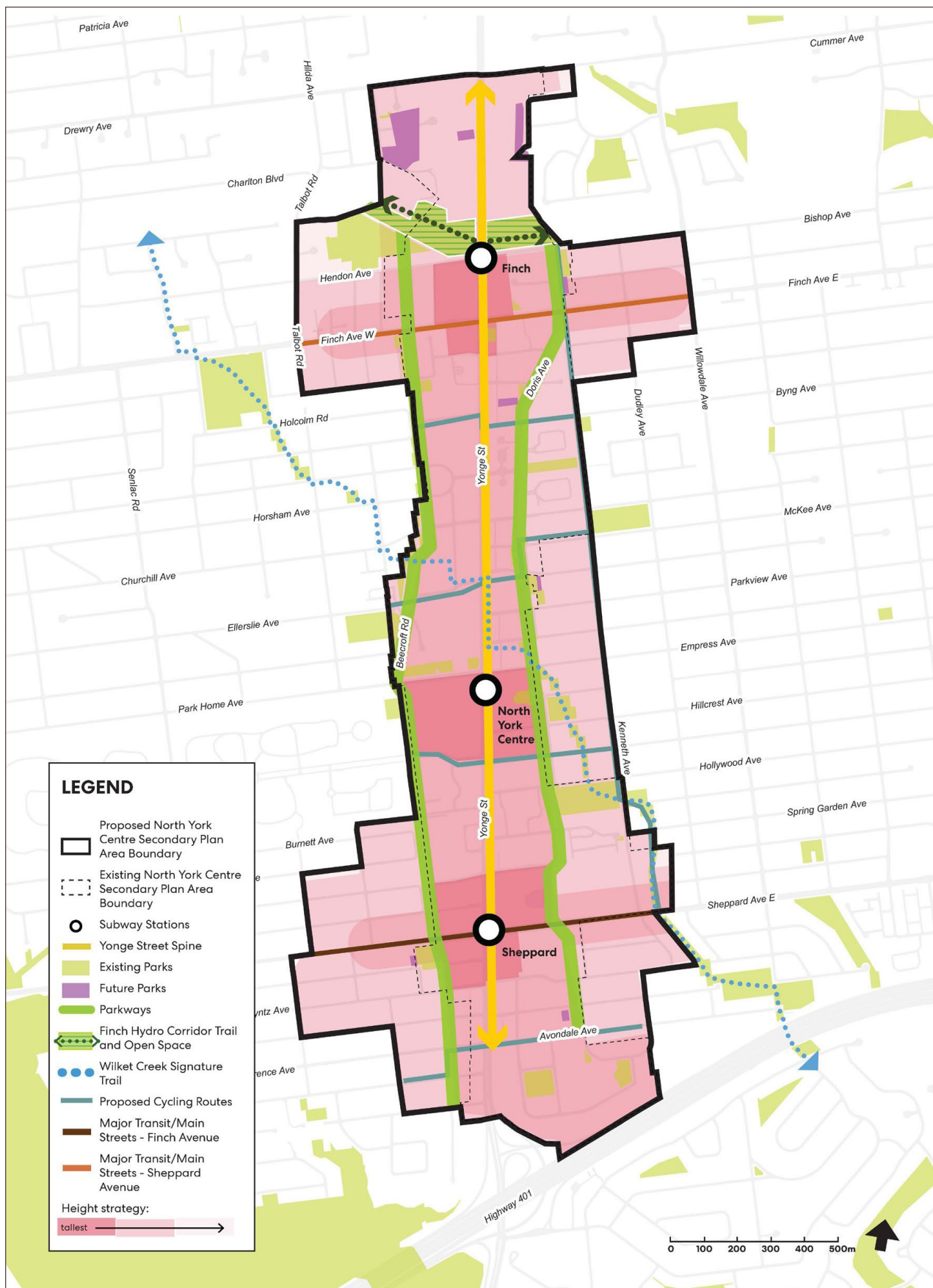


Figure 3-2: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Structure Map

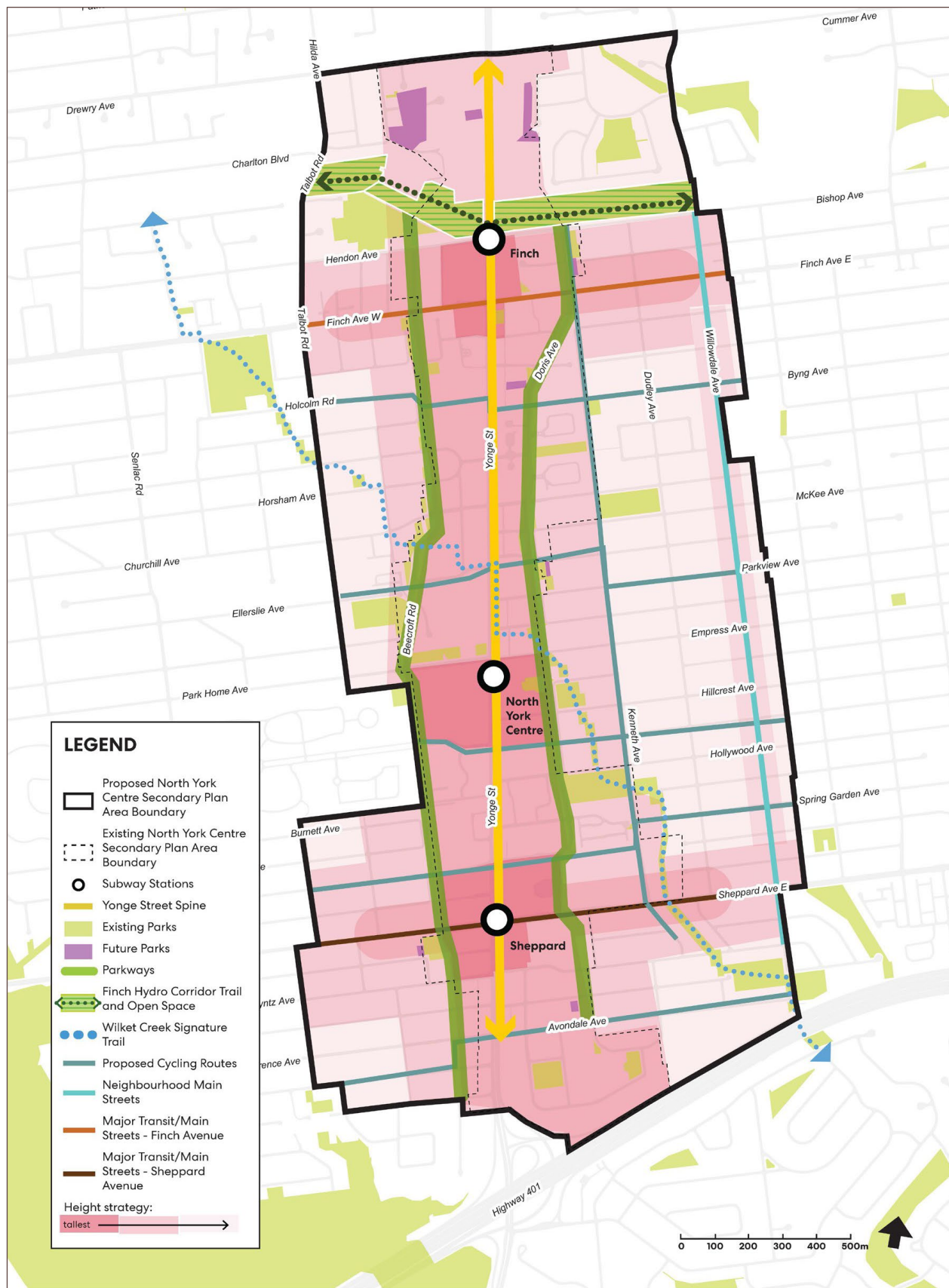


Figure 3-3: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Structure Map

- **District 2 Yonge Street Spine:** This district is built on the direction in the existing Secondary Plan that identifies Prime Frontage Areas along Yonge Street, characterized by vibrant retail, arts, and cultural activities. Tall buildings with retail at the ground floor would be prioritized along Yonge Street. The streetscape would be improved by both Transform Yonge and proposed public realm moves like social streets to support vibrancy along Yonge Street and the efficient movement of pedestrians and people cycling.
- **District 3 Yonge Transition Zone:** This district would provide transition in height and the intensity of mixed uses from Yonge Street to the east and west, towards Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue. Non-residential uses such as local amenities, shops, and services would be encouraged to meet the needs of the surrounding community.
- **District 4 Doris/Beecroft Frontage:** This district would include one row of tall buildings along the Doris and Beecroft frontages to achieve transition from the height peak along Yonge Street towards low-rise neighbourhoods outside the study area.
- **District 5 Doris/Beecroft Transition Zone:** This district would allow a mix of tall buildings and mid-rise buildings to establish transition from the tall buildings along Beecroft and Doris to the existing low-rise neighbourhood outside the study area. Tree protection and large front setbacks would be prioritized in this district.
- **District 6 Finch/Sheppard Avenues:** This district would be intensified with mix of tall buildings and mid-rise buildings that transition down toward the east and west. The streets would include an enhanced streetscape with wider boulevard, street trees and landscaping to support retail activity and the efficient movement of pedestrians and people cycling along Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue.

As shown in **Figure 3-5**, Alternative 2 includes the same districts as Alternative 1, plus two more – a Gentle Density Zone which would accommodate mid-rise buildings of up to six storeys if landowners have interest and the Willowdale Corridor focused around a new mixed use main street at the eastern edge of the expanded Secondary Plan area. Alt 2 also tested variations in building height from Alt 1.

- **District 7 Willowdale Corridor:** This district imagines Willowdale Avenue evolving as a neighbourhood main street with the introduction of mixed-use mid-rise buildings and an improved streetscape.
- **District 8 Gentle Density Zone:** This district would allow for gentle density in existing residential neighbourhoods. Tree protection and large front setbacks would be prioritized, consistent with the existing context.

Topic-specific maps regarding land use, retail, parks and open spaces, mobility and public realm, and building types and heights for each of the options are included throughout this chapter. Population and job estimates were also prepared for the options to support the evaluation.

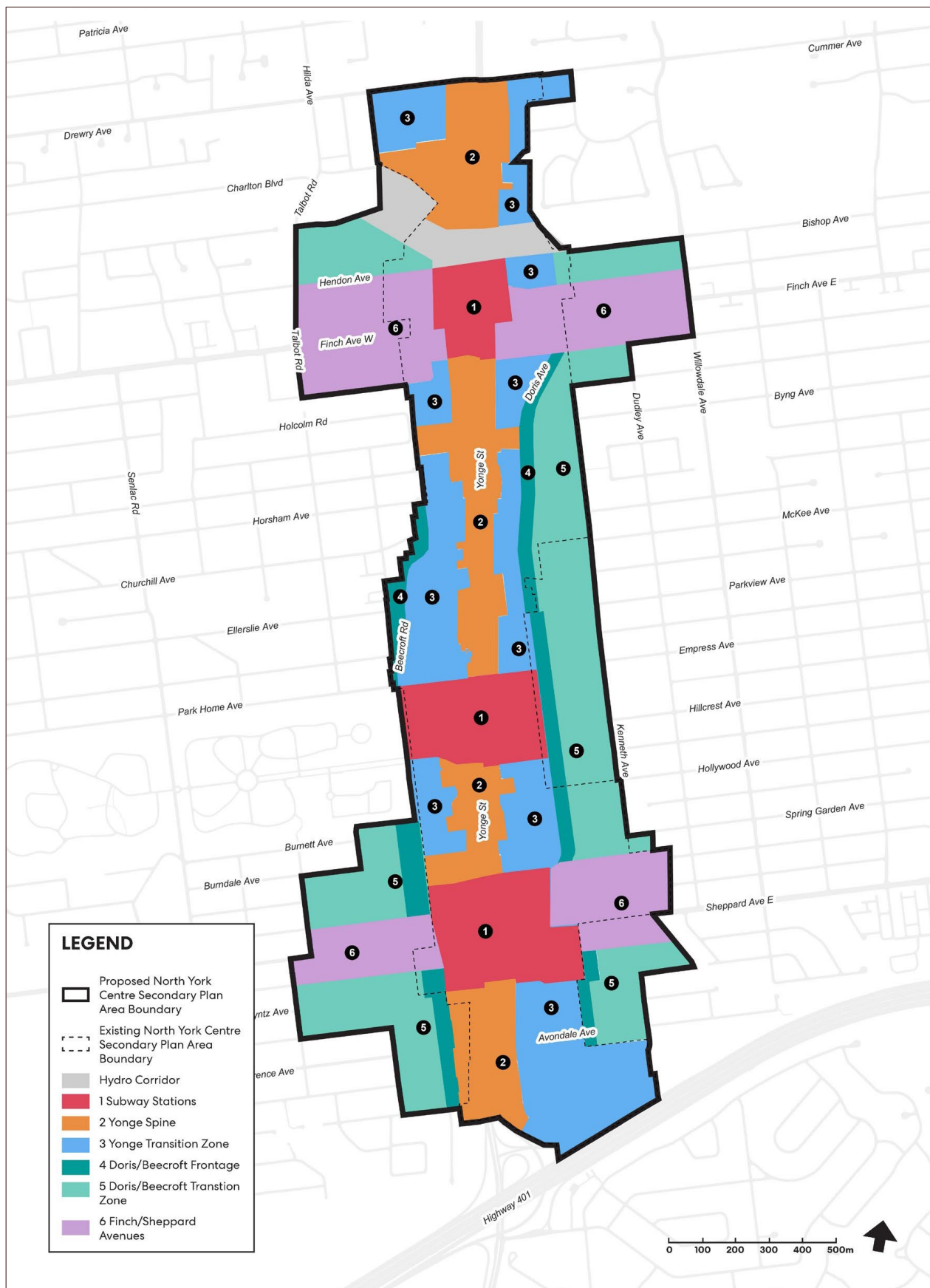


Figure 3-4: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) District Map

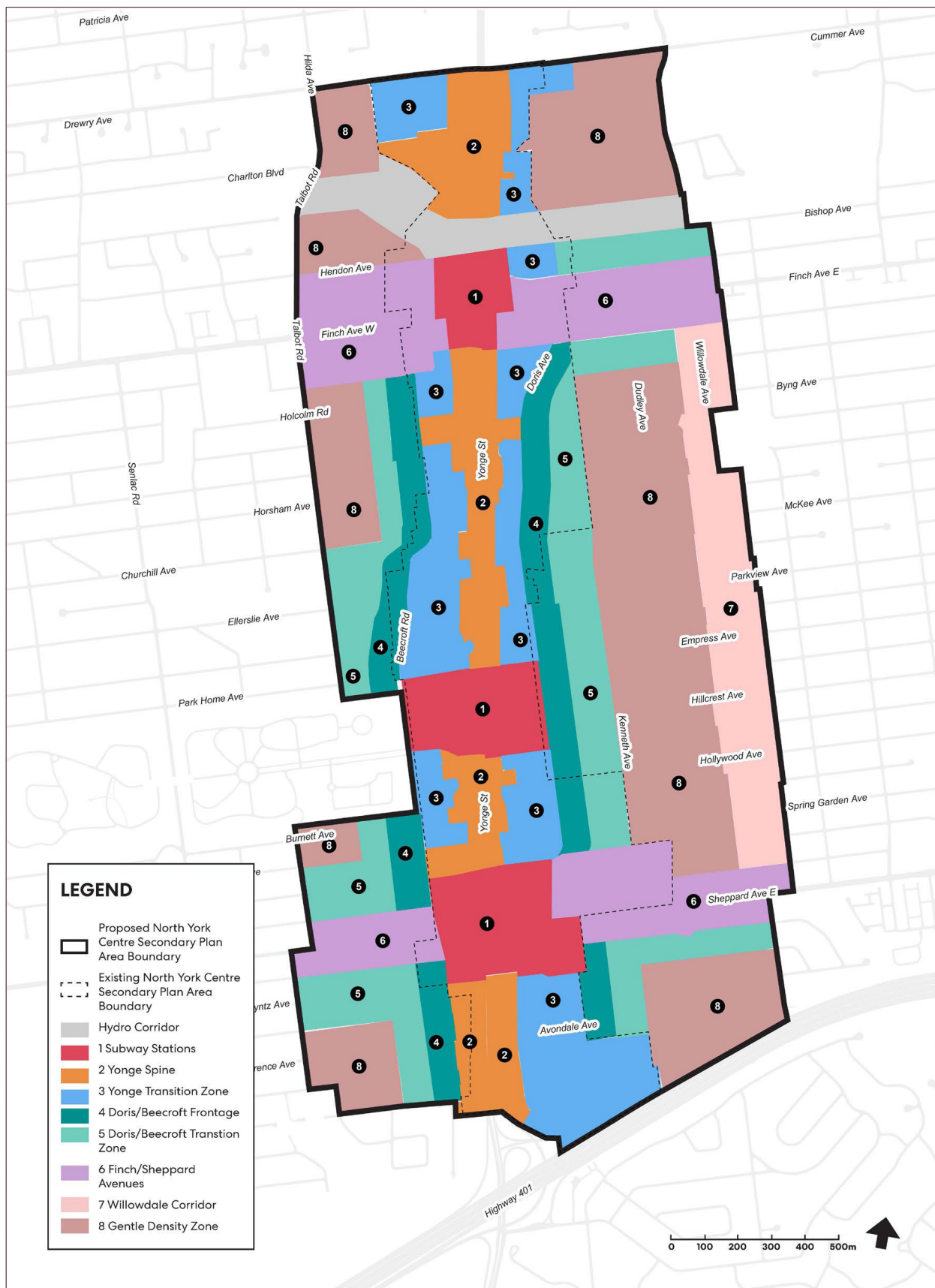


Figure 3-5: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) District Map



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

Figure 3-6: Business As Usual (BAU) Demonstration Model



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

Figure 3-7: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Demonstration Model



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

Figure 3-8: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Demonstration Model

3.2 Grow a Complete Community

Each of the three options included a land use plan (shown in **Figures 3-9 to 3-11**), which was used to evaluate the potential to provide a complete community in North York Centre.

- **BAU:** Land uses in Business as Usual follow the existing Secondary Plan, which limits residential development in the south part of the Centre and commercial development in the north part of the Centre. Four sub *Mixed Use Areas* in the southern part of the Secondary Plan area limit the percentage of residential uses to 0%, 50% or 100% and four sub *Mixed Use Areas* in the northern part of the Secondary Plan area limit the percentage of commercial uses to 0%, 20%, 50% or 65%. Areas where retail is required on the ground floor of buildings are based on the *Prime Frontage Areas* designation in the existing Secondary Plan.
- **Alt 1:** The land use plan for Alt 1 would include three main designations. *Mixed Use Area 1* at Sheppard Avenue and Yonge Street would permit residential uses but prioritize office uses. *Mixed Use Area 2* would extend along the remainder of Yonge Street, Finch Avenue and Sheppard Avenue with a broader mix of residential, commercial, institutional and community uses. *Mixed Use Area 3* in areas further from Yonge Street would be primarily residential with flexibility for small scale non-residential uses. Retail would be required on the ground floor of buildings on *Primary Retail Streets* and encouraged on *Secondary Retail Streets*.

- **Alt 2:** Alternative 2 would build on the land use designations in Alternative 1, introducing a new neighbourhood main street on Willowdale Avenue to complement Yonge Street and provide a different type of retail experience. Areas where retail would be required and encouraged would be expanded, including along the new neighbourhood main street.

In addition to the overall designation, sub *Mixed Use Areas* (shown in **Figures 3-12 to 3-14**) provide more specific requirements about the mix of uses in different parts of the Centre.

- **BAU:** The sub *Mixed Use Areas* from the existing Secondary Plan were maintained. Four sub *Mixed Use Areas* in the southern part of the Secondary Plan area limit the percentage of residential uses to 0%, 50% or 100% and four sub *Mixed Use Areas* in the northern part of the Secondary Plan area limit the percentage of commercial uses to 0%, 20%, 50% or 65%.
- **Alt 1:** Three new sub *Mixed Use Areas* were developed to respond to current trends and acknowledge market realities while reinforcing the long-term vision of the *Centre* as an employment hub. The priority focus for office was limited to the Sheppard subway station area where there is the most demand (*Mixed Use Area 1*), while the rest of the Yonge, Sheppard and Finch areas took a more flexible approach to commercial uses (*Mixed Use Area 2*). Areas outside of the main corridors allowed flexibility for small-scale commercial uses and community services without being prescriptive (*Mixed Use Area 3*).
- **Alt 2:** In addition to the sub *Mixed Use Areas* in Alt 1, in Alt 2 two further sub *Mixed Use Areas* were introduced in the expanded Secondary Plan area. *Mixed Use Area 4* was anticipated to be largely residential, though small scale commercial uses such as corner stores would be permitted. *Mixed Use Area 5* along Willowdale Avenue introduced the potential for a new secondary mixed use main street in North York Centre.

Official Plan Land Use Designations

The City's Official Plan uses land use designations to regulate what types of uses are permitted, encouraged or prohibited in different areas. The land use designations that are relevant to the North York Centre Secondary Plan area are:

Mixed Use Areas, which 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. Policies for the development of *Mixed Use Areas* are provided in section 4.5 of the Official Plan.

Neighbourhoods, which permit a range of residential uses within lower scale buildings, among other uses such as parks and schools. Policies for the development of *Neighbourhoods* are provided in section 4.1 of the Official Plan.

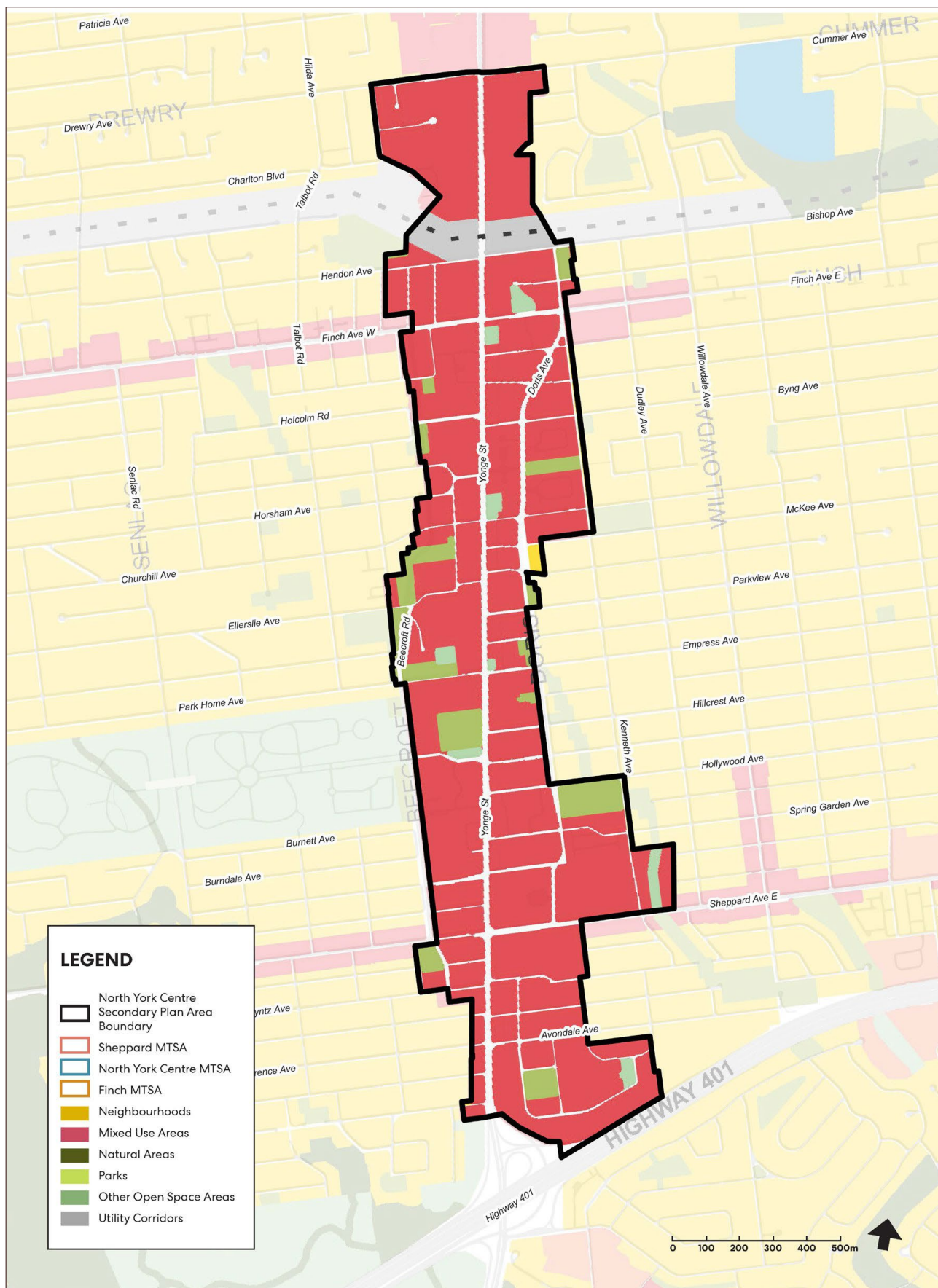


Figure 3-9: Business As Usual (BAU) Land Use Map

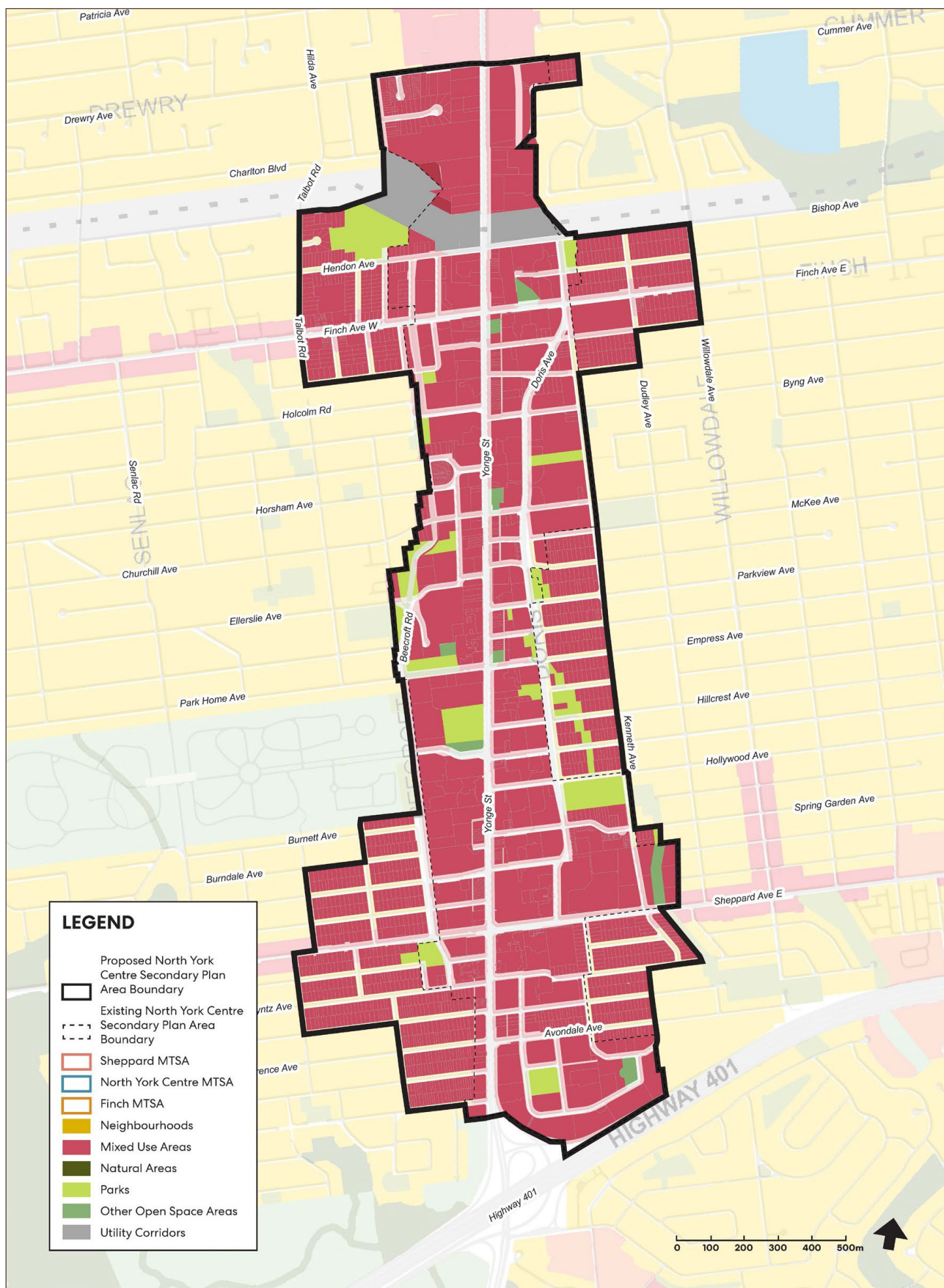


Figure 3-10: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Land Use Map

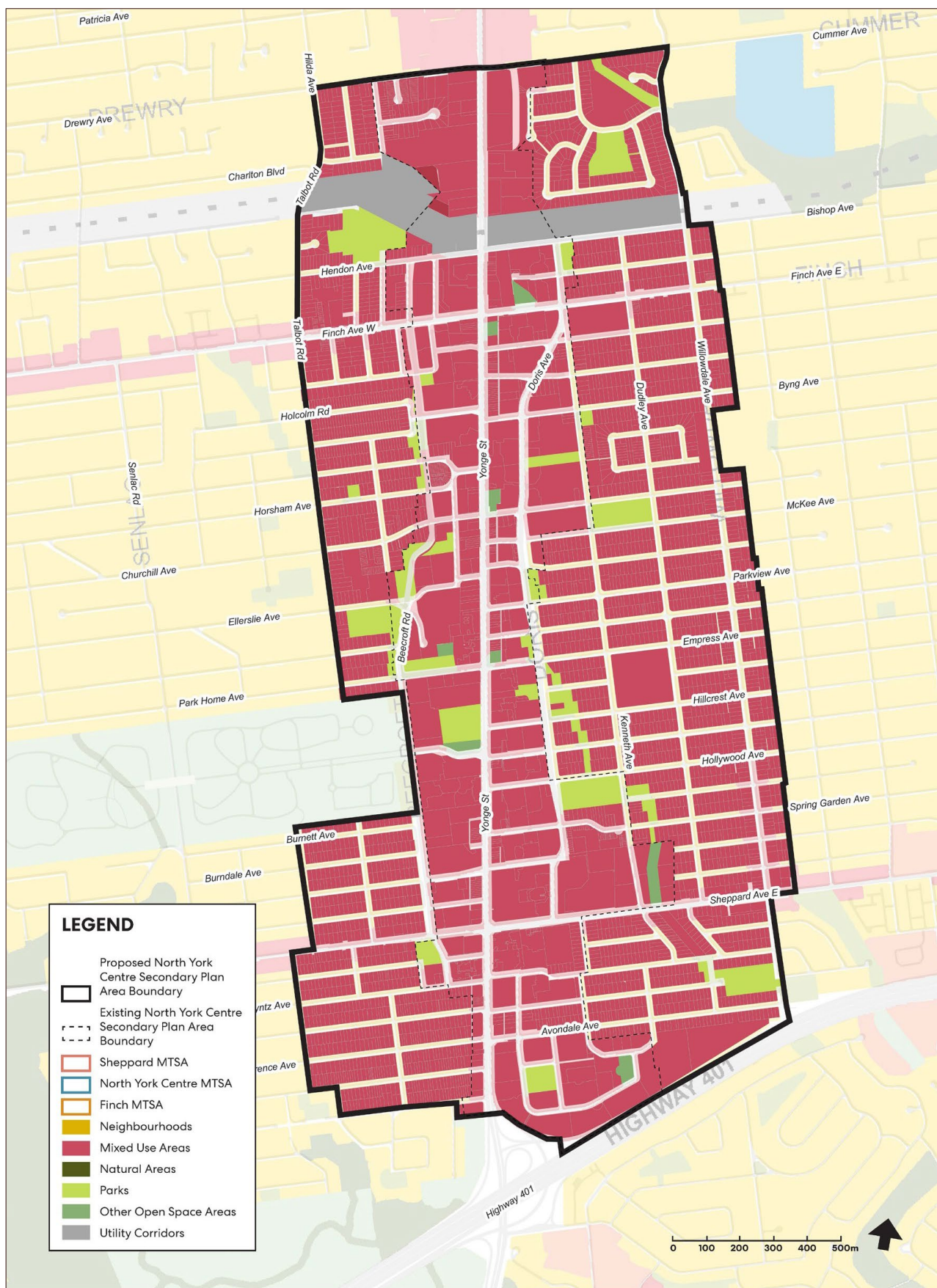


Figure 3-11: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Land Use Map

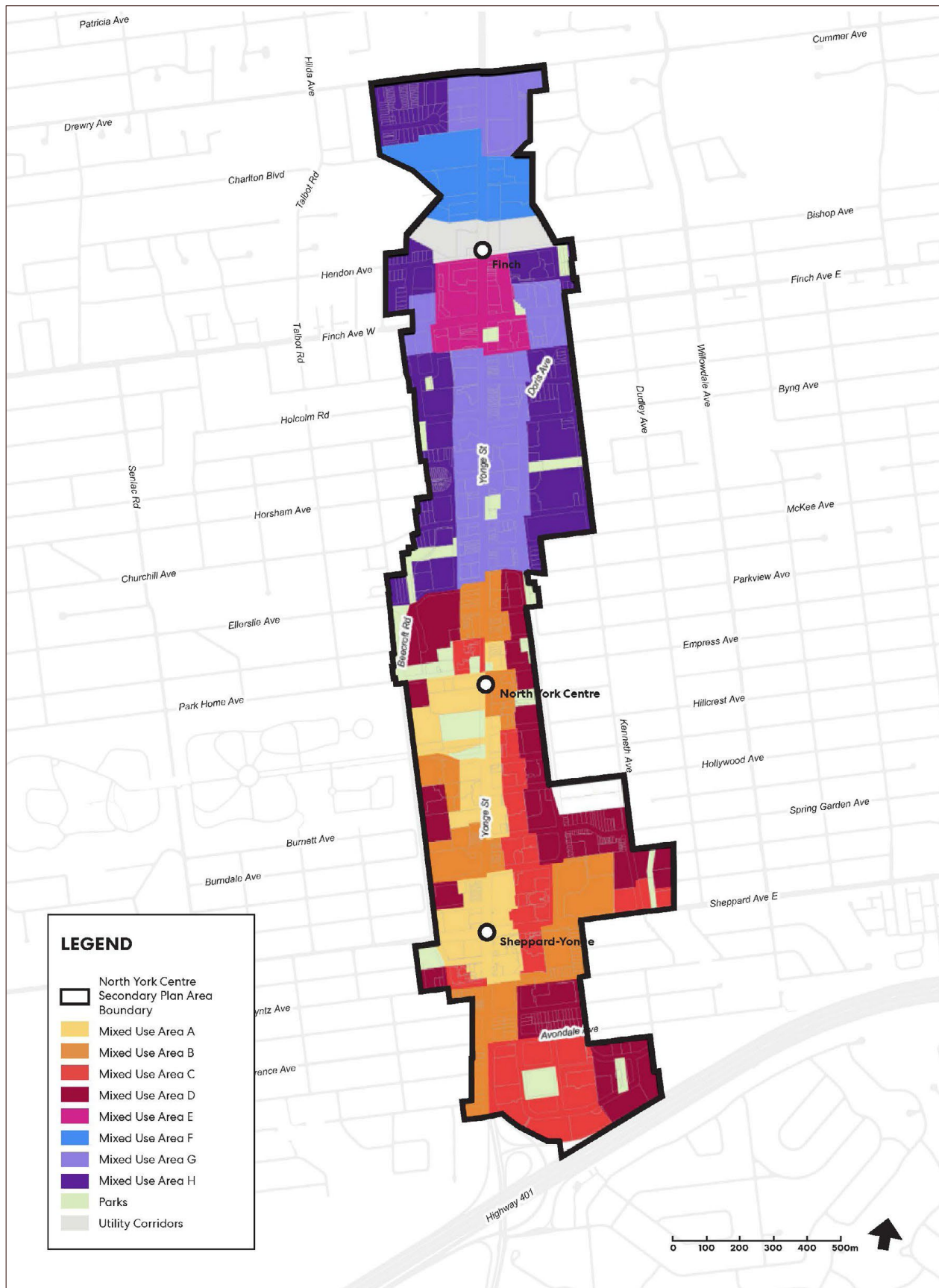
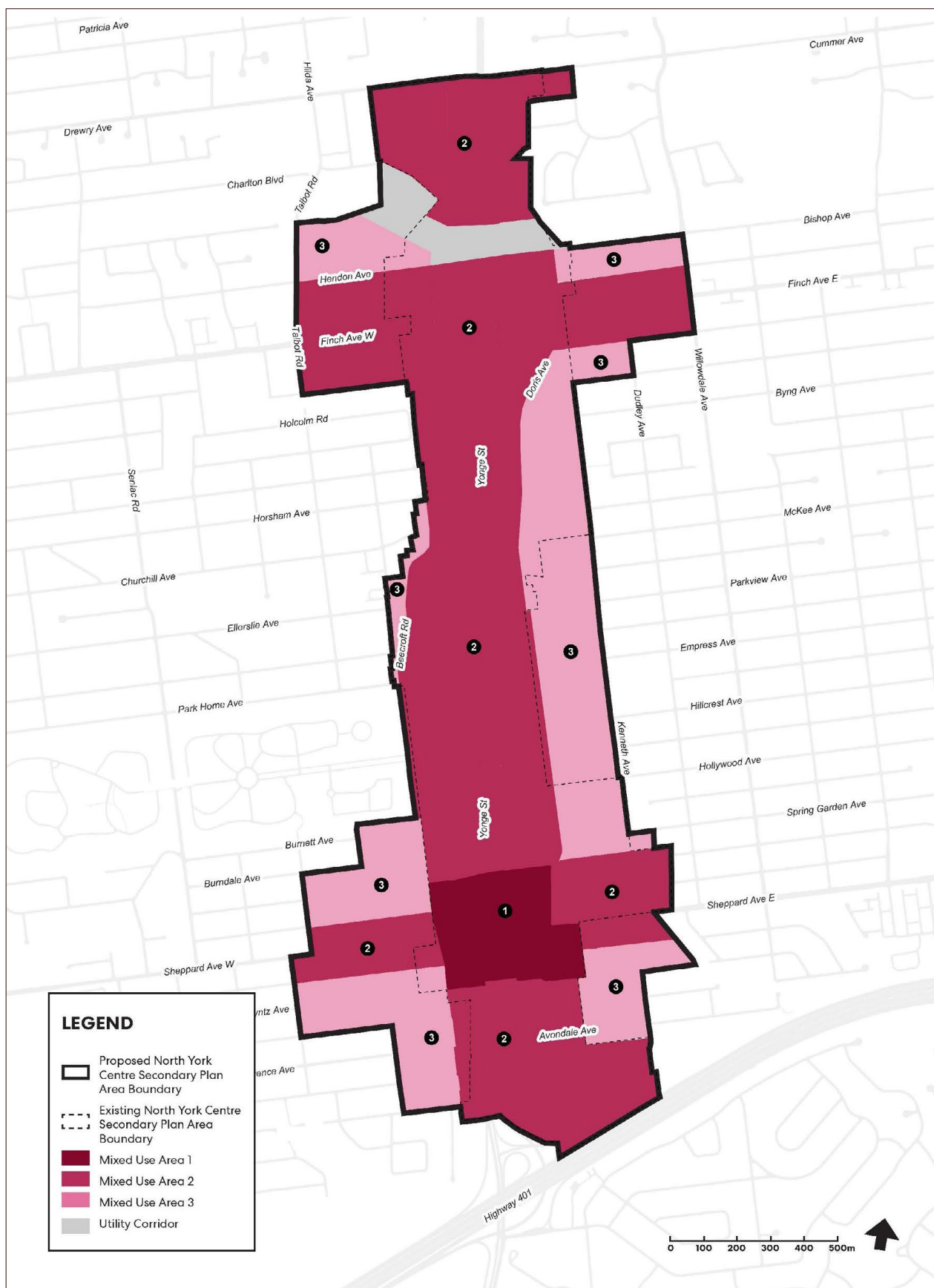


Figure 3-12: Business As Usual (BAU) Mixed Use Area Sub-areas



Housing

Amidst an affordable housing crisis, housing is 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. The extent to which the options increase housing supply in general, and opportunities for new *affordable* housing specifically, was a key component of the evaluation.

Opportunities for affordable housing are generally greatest on City-owned sites, as the City uses its own land to address major priorities like affordable housing. Not all units on City-owned sites will be affordable, but the greater the development potential on these sites the greater the opportunity to provide affordable units. If only 20% of the potential units on City-owned sites were allocated as affordable rental housing in Alt 1 or Alt 2, that would be around 1,000 new affordable units in North York Centre. Developing these units would require partnerships with all levels of government, non-profits and private sector partners.

There may be an opportunity in the future to encourage developers to provide additional affordable housing on privately-owned sites. The City has designated the three MTSA's in North York Centre as Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs), however these have not yet been approved by the Province. Following provincial approval of the PMTSAs the City could use its Inclusionary Zoning By-law to require affordable housing. This would be another tool to increase new affordable housing units in North York Centre.

Table 3-1: Potential New Housing Units


	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Total New units	53,629	103,933	170,804
Potential Units on City-owned Sites	1,990	5,095*	4,954*

*Alt 1 provides more units on City-owned sites than Alt 2 despite having lower heights and densities overall because its land use plan assigns one City-owned site to office uses.

Options Evaluation

Alt 1 performed most strongly in the evaluation because it significantly increased housing units to a level that could be sustained by infrastructure for mobility, servicing and community services and facilities. It also made most effective use of City-owned sites for new housing, including potentially affordable housing. The boundary of the existing Secondary Plan used in BAU resulted in missed opportunities to increase housing units. The high total of housing units in Alt 2 may be challenging to sustain with the necessary infrastructure for a complete community, and it included fewer potential units on City-owned sites.

Table 3-2: Scoring for Housing Units

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Housing Units			

Recommended Directions

1. Expand the Secondary Plan boundary and redesignate some *Neighbourhoods* to *Mixed Use Area* to allow more opportunity for new housing units of different types.
2. Provide flexible land use designations for City-owned sites that maximize opportunities for affordable housing.

Transit Supportive Development

Provincial and municipal policy directs density (both people and jobs) to areas surrounding higher order transit stations, known as Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). These areas are intended to be focal points for intensification through high-density residential and commercial development, alongside convenient, direct, and accessible transit facilities. Optimizing people and jobs within walking distance of higher order transit uses land efficiently, makes the best use of the investment in transit and makes it easy for people to choose to take transit.

Within North York Centre, there are MTSAs around Finch, North York Centre and Sheppard-Yonge subway stations. The Provincial Planning Statement specifies a minimum density of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare for MTSAs surrounding subway stations. The City delineated MTSAs and established their minimum planned densities through Official Plan Amendment 570. The Sheppard and Finch MTSAs have a minimum planned density of 350 residents and jobs combined per hectare and the North York Centre MTSA has a minimum planned density of 400 residents and jobs combined per hectare.

Table 3-3 provides growth estimates of the number of people and jobs that could be accommodated within the Dissemination Areas (DAs) touched by the MTSAs at full build out in each of the three options, based on the land use plan and height permissions in each of the options.




Table 3-3: Population and Jobs Estimates for each Option

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Total Population at Full Build Out	98,542	184,667	298,651
Population within MTSAs (all DAs)	96,705	178,028	226,163
Jobs within MTSAs (all DAs)	42,686	41,420	46,000
Population + Jobs/Hectare in MTSAs (all DAs)	506	513	637

Options Evaluation

The results of the evaluation were similar to the results for housing units. Alt 1 performed most strongly as it succeeded in optimizing density in MTSAs by increasing population and jobs significantly while balancing them with the ability to provide infrastructure, services and amenities for the population. The boundary of the existing Secondary Plan used in BAU resulted in missed opportunities to increase population, and the level of growth in Alt 2 may be challenging to sustain with the necessary infrastructure to create a complete community.

Table 3-4: Scoring for Density in MTSA

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Density in MTSA			

Recommended Direction

3. Explore increased height permissions within the MTSA to optimize people and jobs close to transit while maintaining a liveable community with a high-quality public realm and access to community facilities and services.

Growth Estimates Methodology

Growth estimates provide the City with an idea of how many new people and jobs might locate in an area if a particular development option is adopted. Permissions for land uses, building heights and the extent of the area undergoing change all affect the residential and employment population of an area. Understanding the estimated amount of growth allows the City to verify whether existing social and physical infrastructure (e.g. schools, child care centres, public transit, roads, water and wastewater pipes) can accommodate the growth, and if not, what additions and upgrades would be required.

Growth estimates were prepared for the three options for North York Centre for the year 2051 and full build out (the time when every site that could redevelop to be taller or denser has done so), which is assumed to be 50 years or more in the future. The methodology for preparing the growth estimates was as follows:

- Generate total gross floor area (GFA) for new residential, office and retail permitted in each of the options.
- Apply assumptions about the percentage of sites that will be built out in different parts of North York Centre by 2051.
- Translate GFA, assuming full occupancy of the generated GFA in both timeframes, into people and jobs using typical metrics for unit size and people per unit in the area and for floor space per worker by employment type.
- Integrate new people and jobs into the growth model area, accounting for existing people and jobs, to produce net population and employment figures. This generates the comprehensive growth estimates for North York Centre that are used in the evaluation*.

*The City's growth estimates for North York Centre use Statistics Canada data by dissemination area (DA). As the DAs do not exactly match the boundaries of the three options, the growth estimates use all DAs that touch the boundaries. This means that the growth estimates cover a slightly larger geographic area than the options, as they include areas within the DAs that are outside the boundaries.

3.3 Reinforce the Centre as a Vibrant Hub for Work, Arts and Culture

The land use plan described in Section 3.1 was also used to evaluate each option's potential to maintain and expand the Centre's role as an office hub. It was complemented by a retail plan which was based on input from the North York Centre Non-Residential Land Use Study and was used to evaluate each option's potential to grow North York Centre's vibrant retail offering.

Office Employment

North York Centre is the largest office employment hub outside of the Downtown. The Centre also serves as a public services hub, including significant government office buildings such as the Service Canada Centre, North York Civic Centre, and Toronto District School Board offices. Approximately 81% of jobs in the Centre are office jobs, which are supported by nearly 9,000,000 square feet (square feet) of office space. However, job numbers in the Centre have been relatively stagnant since 2010. Office space demand in North York Centre has also been impacted by increases to hybrid work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing new and protecting existing office gross floor area (GFA) is important to maintaining North York Centre's role as an office hub within the city. Maintaining a healthy balance of jobs to residential development is also important to preserving the Centre's mixed-use character and achieving Official Plan objectives for *Centres*.

Each of the options included a different amount of office space. In BAU, the amount was based on applying the permissions of the current Secondary Plan, which requires commercial uses in *Mixed Use Areas A-D* in the southern part of the Secondary Plan area and limits them in *Mixed Use Areas E-H* in the northern part of the Secondary Plan area. In Alt 1 and Alt 2, the amount of office was based on the North York Centre Non-Residential Land Use Study, which provided three office market scenarios for a time horizon of 2051 based on current conditions (Net Floor Space Need):

- Low demand: 161,600 square feet
- Medium demand: 731,600 square feet
- High demand: 1,544,400 square feet

Alt 1 provided an amount of office in between the low demand and medium demand scenarios, while Alt 2 provided an amount of office in line with the high demand scenario.

Table 3-5: Estimated Office Space Demand and Ratio of Jobs to Residents in each Option

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Office GFA Provided (square feet)	1,250,000	490,000	1,570,000
Jobs to Population Ratio within the Current Secondary Plan Area (2051)	42,427: 92,275 (1 : 2.2)	39,533: 108,535 (1 : 2.7)	44,827: 111,050 (1 : 2.5)







Options Evaluation

The amount of office space provided in all three options was within the range of forecasted demand in the low to high office market scenarios, therefore all options scored equally in the evaluation in terms of meeting market demand for office space.

The evaluation also considered the extent to which the ratio of jobs to population within the existing Secondary Plan area remained healthy in each of the three options. While the ratio was slightly lower in Alt 1 and Alt 2 than in BAU, all of the options succeeded in maintaining the Centre as a mixed-use office and civic hub, therefore all options scored equally.

Ensuring North York Centre’s future as a civic and office hub requires a balanced approach—one that acknowledges current market realities while reinforcing a long-term vision as an employment hub. Realistic, evidence-based planning should accommodate near-term market conditions while safeguarding office growth potential for future economic vitality and resilience as demand may return.

Table 3-6: Scoring for Office GFA and Ratio of Jobs to Residents

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Office GFA			
Jobs to Population Ratio			

Recommended Direction

- 4. Continue to require or encourage office uses in key locations in North York Centre such as the Sheppard subway station area, while increasing flexibility for other types of non-residential uses overall that support local employment.

Retail

North York Centre’s diverse fine-grained retail is one of its greatest strengths. Part of reinforcing the Centre’s vibrant non-residential character as it grows is accommodating new retail spaces to serve both people who live and work there and who travel there because of its retail offering.

The North York Centre Non-Residential Land Use Study provided a Net Floor Space Need for retail in each option. The projected floor area for each scenario was then distributed across potential sites as identified on the retail plan maps (Figures 3-15 to 3-17).

The term “retail” applies to stores selling merchandise, such as clothing or household goods, as well as to restaurants, personal services, entertainment venues, small medical, financial and professional offices and other uses that typically occupy ground floor space in commercial districts and buildings.

- **BAU:** Map 8-2 Prime Frontage Area from the existing Secondary Plan was used as the basis of the retail plan. Prime Frontage Areas are located along Yonge Street from just south of Sheppard Avenue to Park Home and Empress Avenues, and for a few blocks north and south of Finch Avenue. They wrap the corners onto Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue.

- **Alt 1:** A new retail plan was developed for the Centre. Based on the recommendations of the North York Centre Non-Residential Land Use Study certain streets were defined as “retail required” or “retail encouraged” streets. All other streets within the Mixed Use Area were assumed to permit retail should there be demand.
- **Alt 2:** A new retail plan was developed for the Centre. The same approach as Alt 1 was taken, with additional “retail required” or “retail encouraged” areas along Sheppard Avenue, Finch Avenue and Willowdale Avenue included due to the larger boundary.



Table 3-7 : Estimated Retail Space Demand in each Option

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Retail GFA Provided (square feet)	609,000	954,000	1,366,000

Options Evaluation

In BAU, the Prime Frontage Area in the current Secondary Plan was not sufficient to accommodate the demand projection, suggesting a missed opportunity to require retail on more streets in the Centre. For Alt 1 and 2, the retail strategy maps are consistent with the demand projections, demonstrating there is an opportunity to accommodate retail and service space demand along Priority and Secondary Retail Streets in each scenario. Alt 2, however, does offer a greater diversity of locations for these types of spaces and ultimately more flexibility in meeting demand. This would limit the need for retail spaces to be located internally within buildings or above ground floors, which do not have a positive impact on the public realm and often face challenges attracting visitors.

Table 3-8: Scoring for Retail GFA

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Retail GFA			

Recommended Direction

5. Expand areas where retail is required in North York Centre, as well as introduce areas where retail is encouraged or permitted to promote continued retail vibrancy in North York Centre and an active at-grade experience for pedestrians.

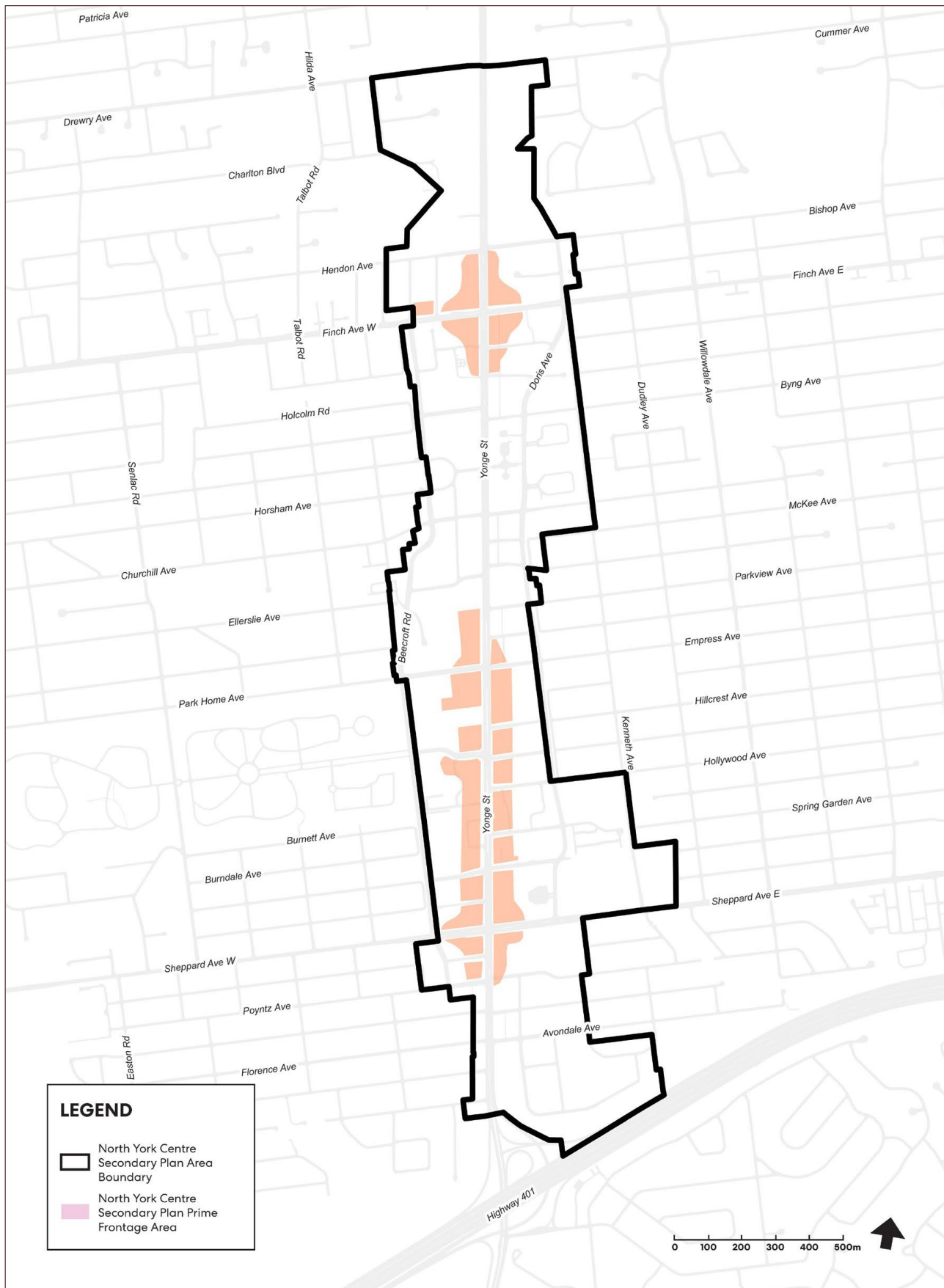


Figure 3-15: Business As Usual (BAU) Retail Map

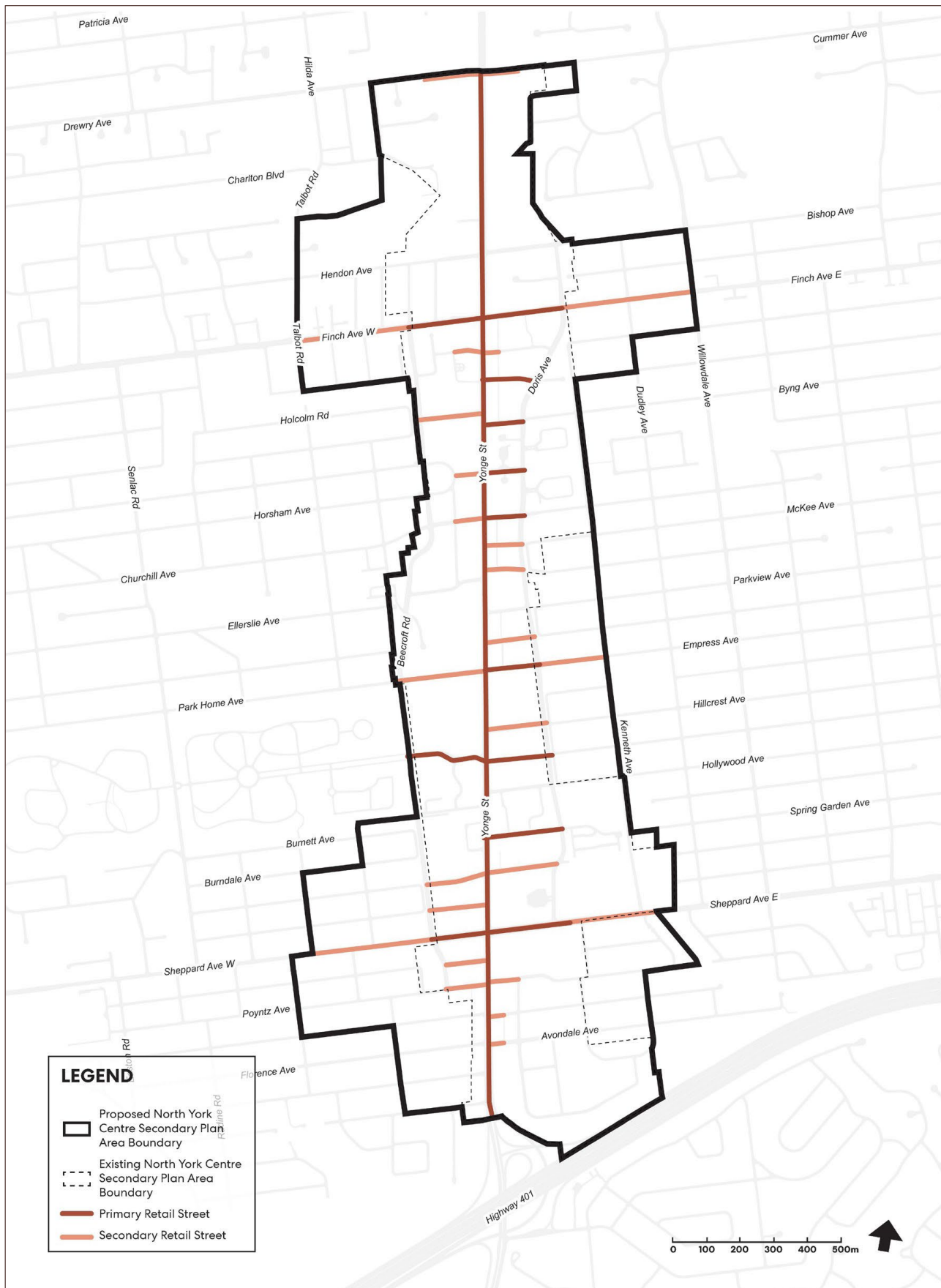


Figure 3-16: Alternative 1 (ALT 1) Retail Map

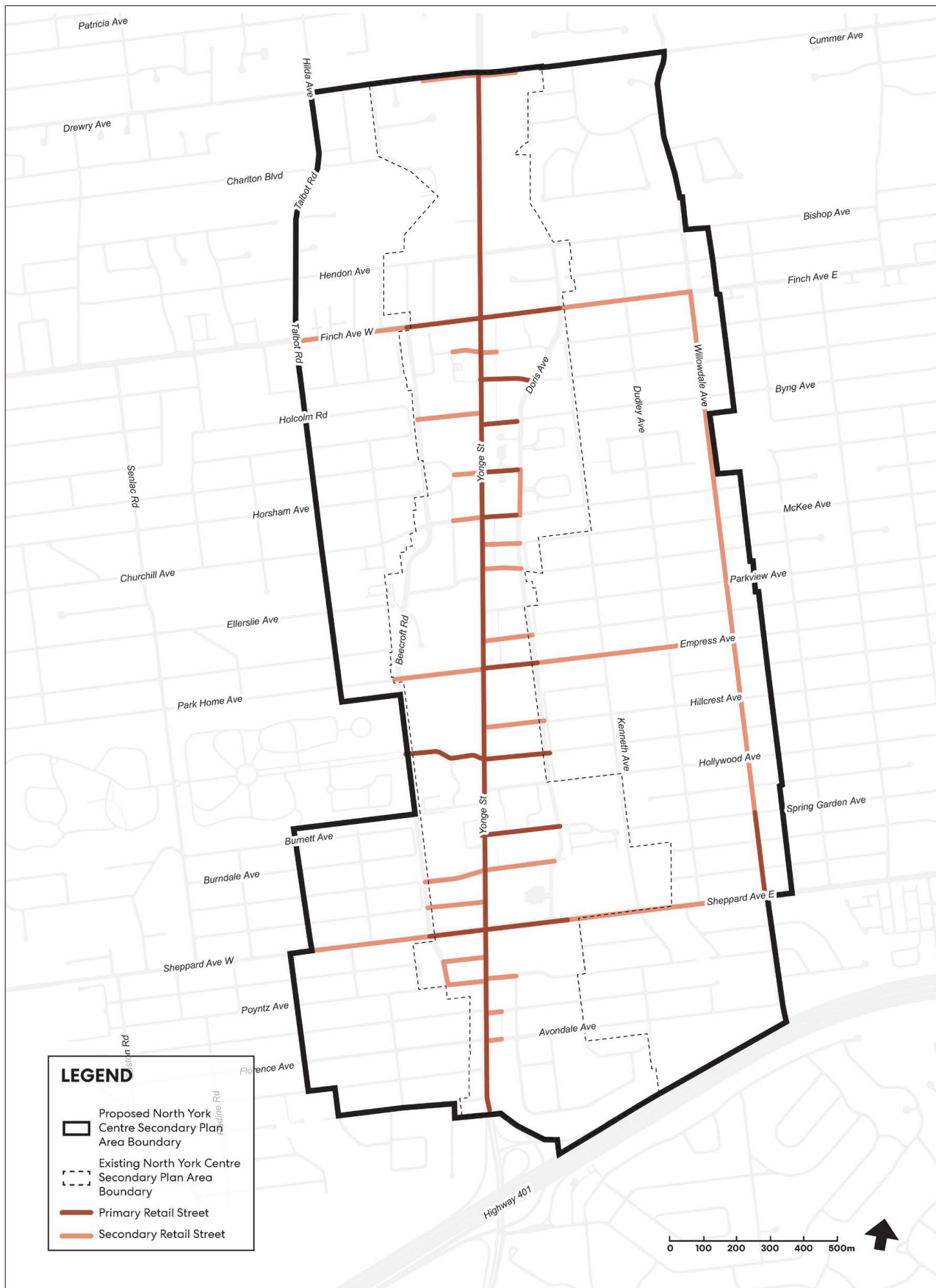


Figure 3-17: Alternative 2 (ALT 2) Retail Map

3.4 Green North York Centre

Each of the three options included a parks and open spaces plan (shown in **Figures 3-18 to 3-20**), which was used to evaluate access to parks.

- **BAU:** This option includes existing parks and open spaces, parks identified in the current Secondary Plan and Official Plan, new parks and parkland expansions that have been secured as part of recent development, potential parks and parkland expansions identified by the City's Parks and Recreation Division, and potential sites for on-site parkland dedication when they are redeveloped.
- **Alt 1:** Building on what is shown in BAU, this option shows additional opportunities for potential future parks or parkland expansions within an expanded boundary. It also includes the potential to improve public access to existing Open Space in the Finch Hydro Corridor lands if a time come when the TTC determines parking is no longer needed in the hydro corridor to serve Finch Subway Station.
- **Alt 2:** In addition to what is shown in BAU and Alt 1, this option shows additional opportunities for potential parkland expansions within its expanded boundary.

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, cemeteries and plazas. The network is also supplemented by privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS) and public school yards. Parks close to but outside of the Centre also serve residents of the Centre, therefore the City's Parks and Recreation Division uses a larger Parks Context Area (PCA) to analyze parkland provision. There are 33 existing parks that are located entirely or partially within the North York Centre Secondary Plan Parks Context Area, with an additional three future parks planned and a number of park expansions recently added or anticipated to be added in in the next few years.

The City's Parkland Strategy is a 20-year plan that guides long-term planning for new and expanded public parks, aiming to improve access to parkland across the city. It identifies areas of relatively low or high parkland provision, as well as "Areas of Parkland Need" and walkability gaps. 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, especially east of Yonge Street along Willowdale Avenue and west of the Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue intersection.

The City achieves new parkland through on- site or off-site parkland dedication as part of the development process, by acquiring land with funds received through cash-in-lieu, or through jurisdictional transfers from other City divisions or agencies. Establishing a connected system of parks and green spaces that are linked through pathways, trails and green corridors is important to creating a safe and healthy community for people and enhancing ecological health. Connectivity of open spaces has climate benefits, biodiversity benefits and health benefits for the people who live in the area. Elements of the public realm can contribute to connectivity – beyond City-owned parks this includes non-park open spaces like school yards and cemeteries, privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS), utility corridors, natural features like ravines and continuous streetscape features like green infrastructure and street trees.

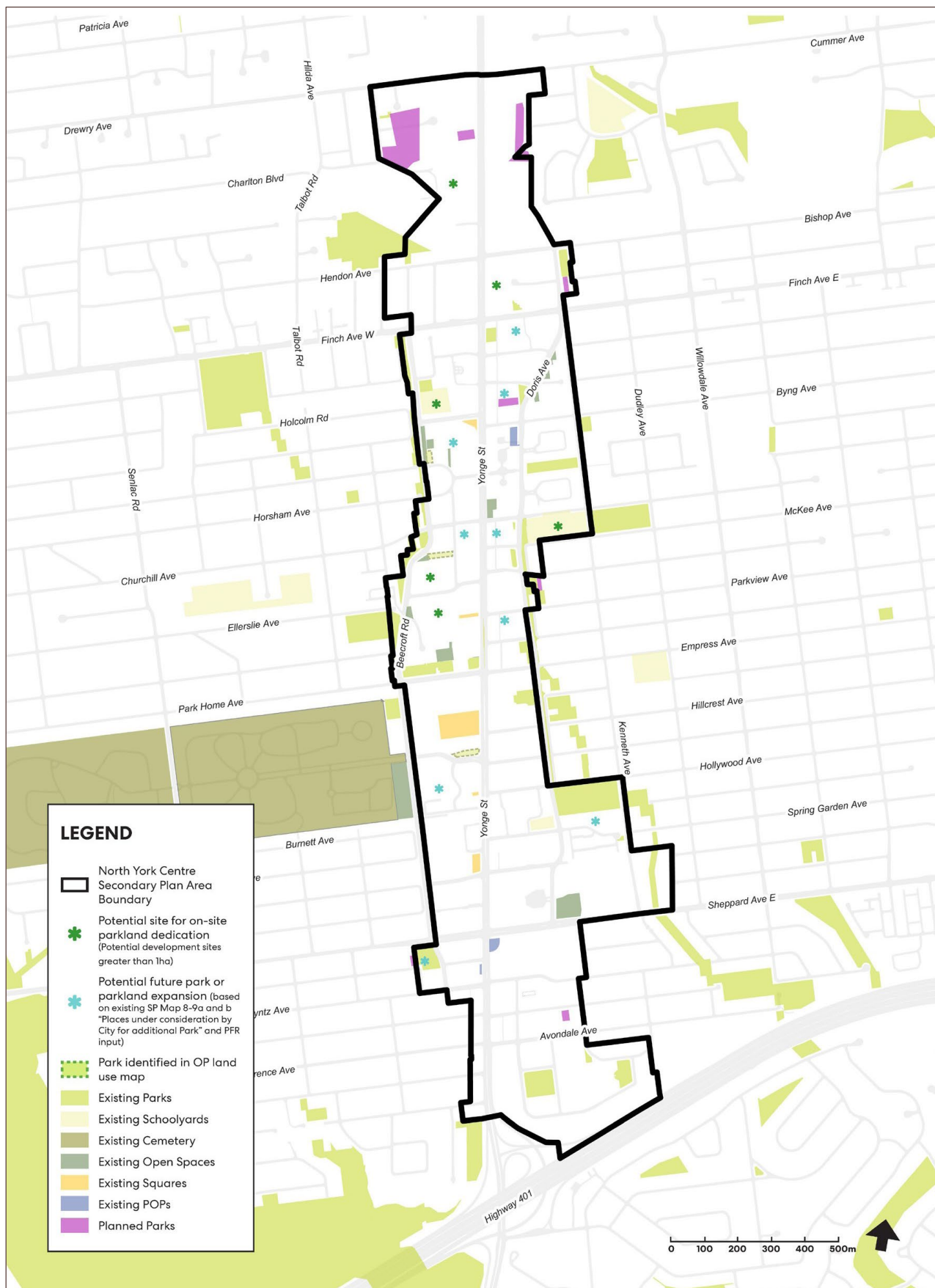


Figure 3-18: Business As Usual (BAU) Parks and Open Spaces Map

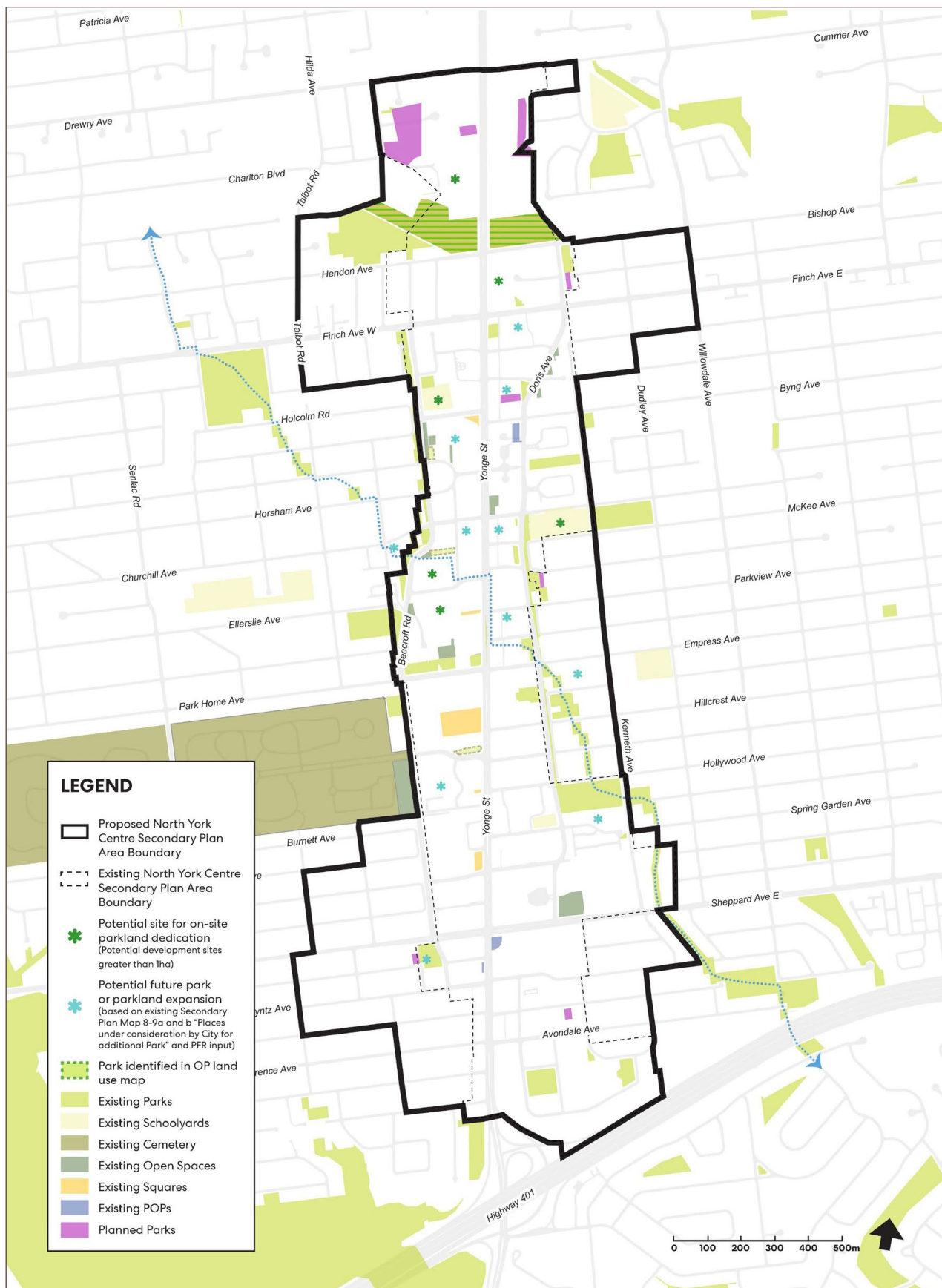


Figure 3-19: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Parks and Open Spaces Map









Figure 3-20: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Parks and Open Spaces Map

Options Evaluation

Opportunities for new parkland were evaluated in the three options. The evaluation found that significant new parkland could be achieved if all potential development sites in the current Secondary Plan area were redeveloped. This parkland would most likely consist of new parks on large development sites and strategic expansions to existing parks and open spaces in the Centre. More parkland could be achieved through the redevelopment of sites in the expanded Secondary Plan area in Alt 1 and further expanded Secondary Plan area in Alt 2; however, while Alt 1 and Alt 2 provide the potential to achieve more new parkland, they would also result in larger populations which may still have a net decrease in the amount of parkland per person. All the options were found to successfully maintain and expand parkland within the current Secondary Plan area; however, Alt 1 and Alt 2 scored higher because they also provide opportunities to expand parkland and open space outside of the current Secondary Plan area.

Opportunities for connectivity of the parks and open space network were also evaluated. In BAU, the conceptual parks and open space plan from the existing Secondary Plan included a number of elements that stitched the open space network together, including a promenade along Yonge Street (now being realized in the Transform Yonge project), treed arterial and collector roads and treed side streets and pedestrian links. The addition of potential sites for on-site parkland dedication further enhanced the connectivity of the parks and open space network in BAU. Alt 1 and Alt 2 carried these ideas forward and added major new connective elements like the potential greening of the Finch Hydro Corridor and Trail and the expansion of Wilket Creek Signature Trail. Elements of the public realm such as the parkways introduced along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road (described in Section 3.5) also connected the parks and open space network. Due to the introduction of these elements, Alt 1 and Alt 2 were found to have more connected parks and open space networks than BAU.

Table 3-9: Scoring for New Parkland and Recreational Space and Connectivity of Parks

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Potential for New Parkland and Recreational Space			
Connectivity of Parks			

Recommended Directions

6. Leverage parkland dedication from future developments to expand and improve the parkland network serving the Secondary Plan area.
7. Prioritize new and expanded parkland in areas that:
 - a. Can address identified areas of parkland need and walkability gaps;
 - b. Connect to adjacent trail system and ravine areas;
 - c. Regularize the shape and improve access and visibility of existing parks; and
 - d. Improve connectivity and visibility to the Wilket Trail Wilket Creek Signature Trail.

Parkland Dedication

Under Section 42 of the provincial *Planning Act*, municipalities can require parkland dedication when land is developed. Parkland dedication means legally conveying land to a municipality for park or other public recreational purposes. Parkland dedication can be required by the City at a rate of two percent (2%) of the developed land for non-residential uses (e.g. offices and stores) and five percent (5%) of the developed land for residential uses, or an equivalent cash amount, which is referred to as “cash-in-lieu of parkland”. Under the *Planning Act*, municipalities can identify an alternative parkland dedication rate of up to one hectare for each 600 net residential units, up to a cap of 10% of the land for sites five hectares or less and 15% of the land for sites greater than five hectares. The alternative parkland dedication rate identified in Toronto’s Official Plan is 0.4 hectares per 300 net residential units. The North York at the Centre boundary falls within the area identified for the alternative parkland dedication rate.

Tree Canopy




The City of Toronto has a city-wide goal of reaching 40% tree canopy coverage by 2050. Trees are vital to public health, well-being and climate resilience. A healthy and balanced streetscape canopy aids in addressing environmental inequities, mitigating the urban heat island effect, while supporting biodiversity and habitat creation, and providing the mental health benefits of greenery in the urban environment. Tree canopy cover is currently 15% in the Secondary Plan area and is significantly lower than in the surrounding neighbourhoods to the east and west.

Options Evaluation

The three options were evaluated for the impact to existing tree canopy cover and opportunity to expand tree canopy. The qualitative assessment was based on opportunities for streetscape/tree canopy improvement through redevelopment in areas currently lacking trees, and potential for tree canopy loss through redevelopment (i.e. in areas currently designated *Neighbourhoods*).

In BAU, the tree canopy in *Neighbourhoods* is maintained, but opportunities for improving the streetscape/tree canopy are limited primarily to Yonge Street. In Alt 1, the tree canopy in *Neighbourhoods* is also mostly maintained, and there are greater opportunities for streetscape/tree canopy improvement along Sheppard Avenue, Finch Avenue, Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue (as well as Yonge Street). Alt 2 has the greatest opportunities for tree canopy improvement (in areas similar to Alt 1, plus Willowdale Avenue), but the tree canopy in existing private yards throughout the large area of *Neighbourhoods* proposed for conversion to *Mixed Use Area* is likely to decrease significantly through intensification.

Table 3-10: Scoring for Tree Canopy

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Tree Canopy			

Recommended Direction

- 8. Maximize opportunities to protect existing trees and improve tree canopy cover by:
 - a. Maintaining some areas designated as *Neighbourhoods* within an expanded Secondary Play area; and
 - b. Pursuing streetscape improvements in *Mixed Use Areas* where change is anticipated.

Green Infrastructure




Green infrastructure means natural and human-made elements that provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes. Green infrastructure may include components such as natural heritage features and systems, parklands, stormwater management systems, street trees, urban forests, natural channels, permeable surfaces, and green roofs. It is a more sustainable way to manage stormwater than the grey infrastructure of sewers that our cities have historically relied on.

Permeable surfaces are a type of green infrastructure used in low impact development to reduce run-off and improve stormwater management and provide growing space for trees. Currently the extent of impermeable surfaces in North York Centre is significant, especially in comparison to surrounding neighbourhoods. Large areas of surface parking lots, wide roads and land covered by buildings throughout the Centre are completely impermeable, while in surrounding low-rise neighbourhoods more land is covered by lawns and trees that provide ample permeability.

Options Evaluation

The three options were evaluated for the impact of redevelopment on existing permeable surfaces and opportunities to increase permeable surfaces. The results of the evaluation were very similar to the evaluation regarding tree canopy cover. While BAU maintains the extensive permeability of surrounding *Neighbourhoods*, it does not offer significant opportunity to increase permeability within the existing Secondary Plan area. Alt 1 also mostly maintains permeability in surrounding *Neighbourhoods*, but also offers opportunities to increase permeability through expansions to the parks and open space network and the potential greening of the TTC’s Finch Subway Station parking lot in the hydro corridor, which would significantly increase permeable ground cover in the Centre. Alt 2 has similar opportunities to increase permeability, but the existing permeability in *Neighbourhoods* is likely to decrease through intensification.

Table 3-11: Scoring for Green Infrastructure

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Green Infrastructure			

Recommended Direction

- 9. Maximize opportunities to protect existing permeability and improve permeability by:
 - a. Expanding and connecting parks and open spaces to support and enhance green infrastructure;
 - b. Maintaining some areas designated as *Neighbourhoods* within an expanded Secondary Plan area;
 - c. Pursuing initiatives to green the public realm in areas where change is anticipated; and
 - d. Exploring opportunities to use Finch Hydro Corridor lands to expand the open space network in consultation with the TTC.

3.5 Build Connectivity

Each of the options includes a set of mobility solutions (**Figures 3-21 to 3-23**) that aim to improve safety, pedestrian access and comfort, active transportation, transit, transportation demand management and shared mobility. Together, the package of solutions in each option are intended to create the conditions necessary for a shift to a more diverse modal split in North York Centre.

- **BAU:** This option leverages existing and planned mobility and public realm improvements, including the City’s capital projects, Cycling Network Plan, transit projects (e.g. Yonge North Subway Extension and RapidTO) and improvements recommended in all relevant Secondary Plans in the study area (i.e. North York Centre Secondary Plan, Yonge Street North Secondary Plan, Central Finch Area Secondary Plan, Sheppard Willowdale Secondary Plan and Sheppard Lansing Secondary Plan). It also includes recently approved Environmental Assessment (EA) projects such as Transform Yonge, Beecroft Road Extension and Doris Avenue Extension. Other potential improvements that are subject to further study include Sheppard Subway Extension Initial Business Case (IBC) and Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT) East Extension, as well as the Yonge Street Highway 401 Interchange EA to be initiated together by the City and Ontario Ministry of Transportation.
- **Alternative 1:** This option builds on the BAU scenario by providing a series of local mobility improvements throughout an expanded Secondary Plan area. A major priority for Alternative 1 is making it easier to cross the two service roads—Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road—which have historically delineated North York Centre from the neighbourhoods beside it. This is done through new pedestrian crossovers and traffic lights at intersections, pedestrian connections, and improvements to cycling safety and access through the addition of new active transportation routes. Alternative 1 introduces mobility and public realm improvements along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road in the form of new “parkways”, which may provide additional park space or open space where feasible along certain sections of the service roads. It expands and provides new accesses to the Wilket Creek Trail, enhancing active mobility across the Secondary Plan area. Other public realm improvements include “social streets”, which include expanded public realm extending a short distance down local side streets intersecting Yonge Street or another main street, prioritizing walking, cycling, and placemaking. Social streets are flexibly designed to provide public open space and may include wider sidewalks, streetscaping elements and civic plazas.
- **Alternative 2:** In addition to those improvements noted in Alt 1, mobility improvements in this option aim to improve local access and connectivity in the expanded Secondary Plan area. The improvements include more east-west cycling routes, street extensions, and potential for local transit improvements on Empress Avenue and Park Home Avenue. Several potential new intersections are also being explored along Doris Avenue, Beecroft Road and Sheppard Avenue. Public realm enhancements include a new neighbourhood main street along Willowdale Avenue, providing an opportunity to reimagine its role and physical features, and additional social streets along Willowdale Avenue.

What is a Parkway?

Parkways are corridors lined with extensive green spaces like parks, parkettes and/or wide landscaped setbacks, providing opportunities for amenities like playgrounds, benches, and tree planting. In Alternatives 1 and 2, this term applies to Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road and builds on their existing character.



Daldy Street Linear Park, Auckland

What is a Social Street?

A Social Street is a local side street that extends from an intersection with Yonge Street, Willowdale Avenue or other prominent streets and prioritizes walking, cycling and placemaking. The concept largely encompasses design elements at a street corner, and may include trees, patio seating and retail frontages.



Shamrock Avenue, Montreal

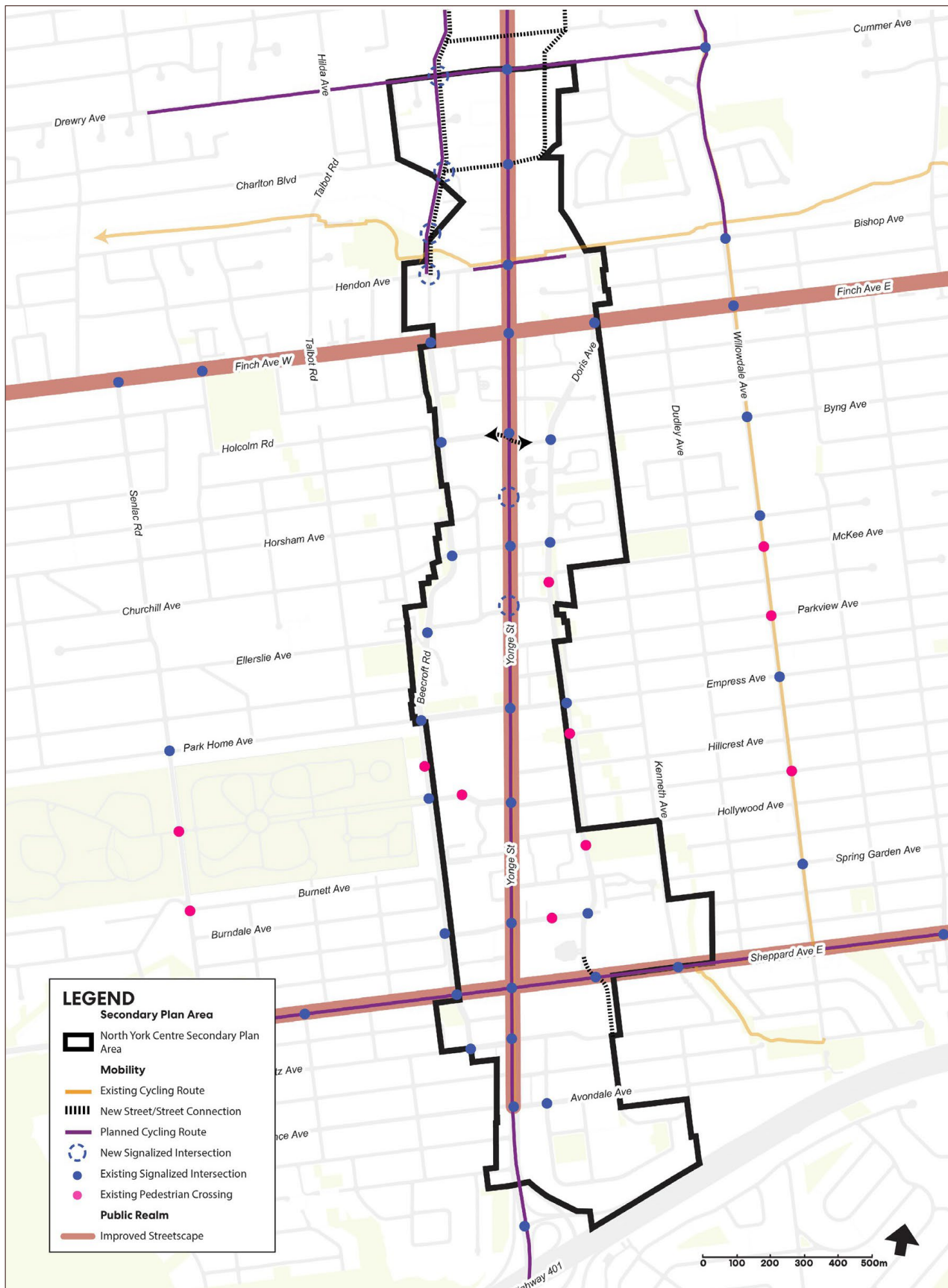


Figure 3-21: Business As Usual (BAU) Mobility and Public Realm Map

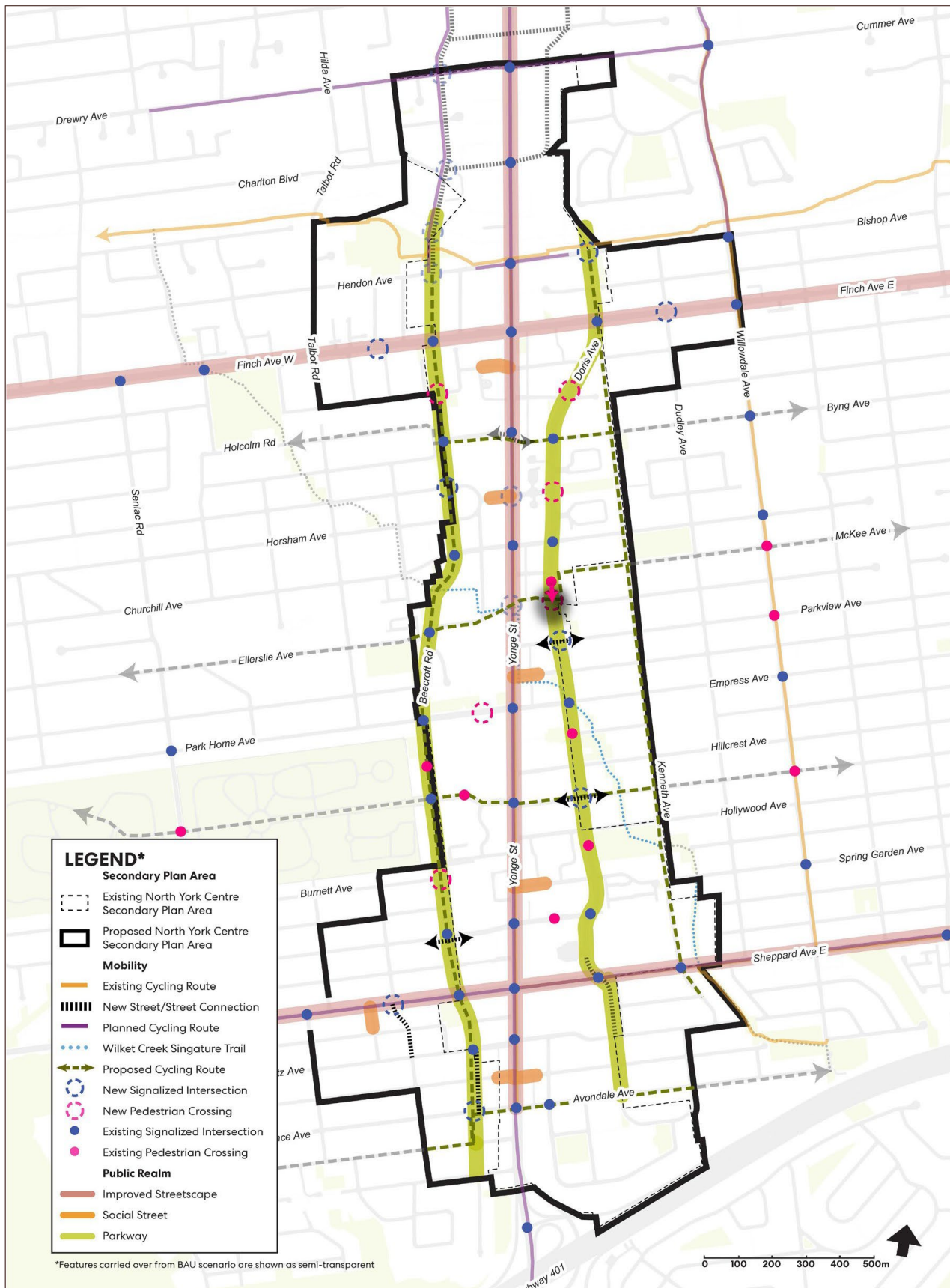


Figure 3-22: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Mobility and Public Realm Map

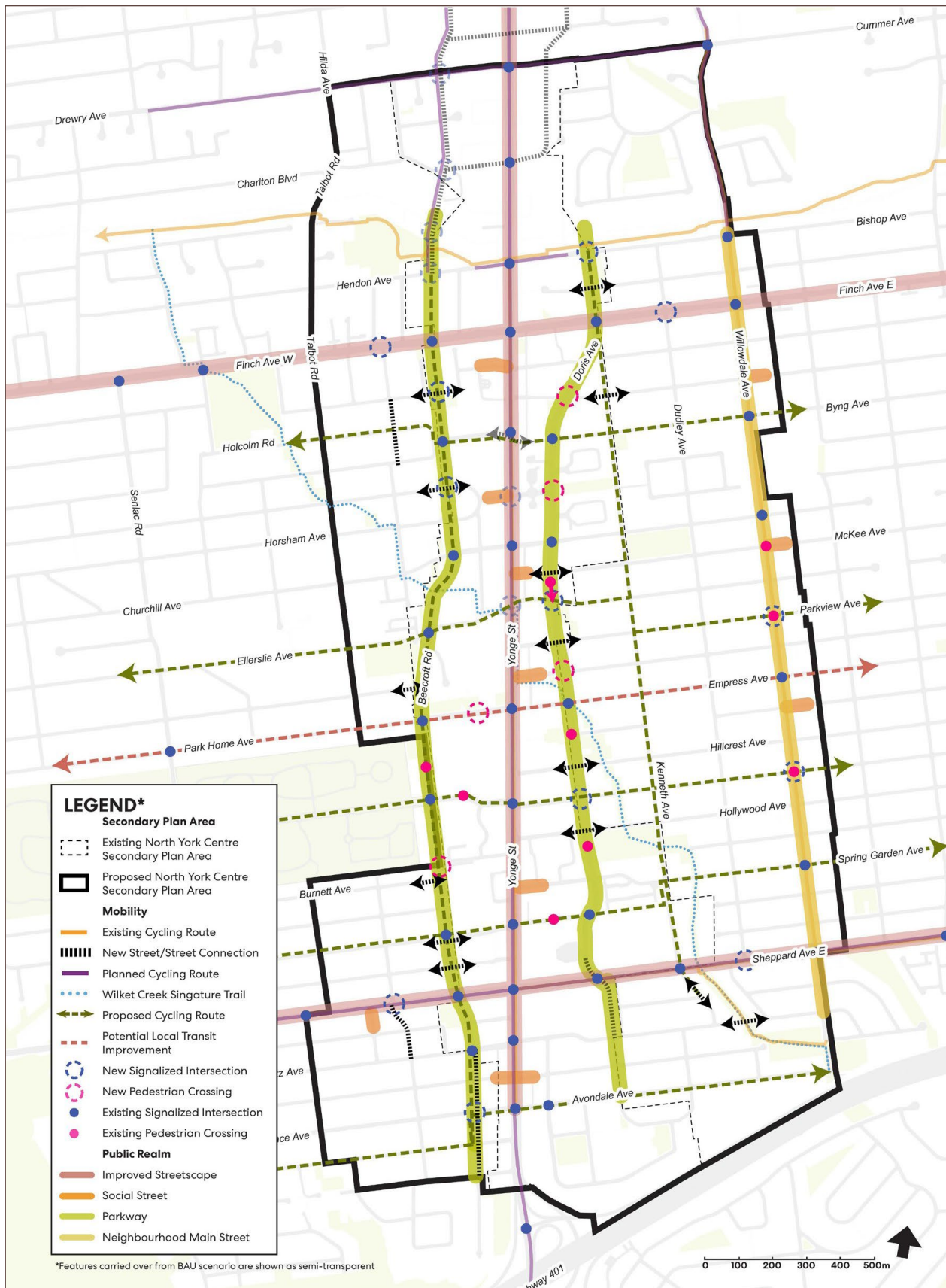
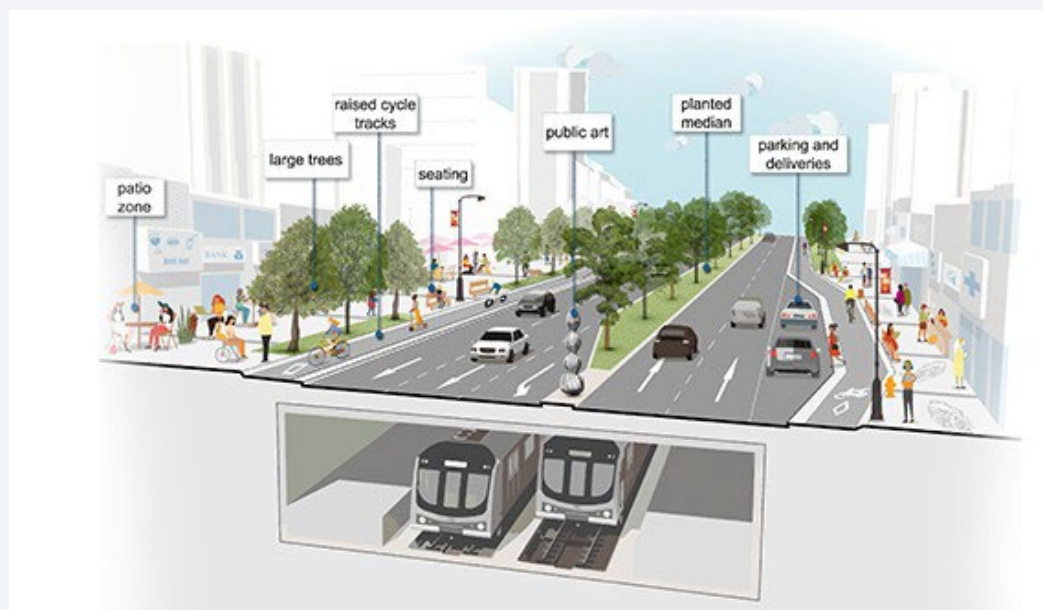


Figure 3-23: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Mobility and Public Realm Map

Transform Yonge

The Reimagining Yonge Street Environmental Assessment (2020) proposed improvements to streetscaping and public realm for all users along Yonge Street from Sheppard Avenue to the Finch Hydro Corridor. The preferred design concept, Transform Yonge, includes four motor vehicle lanes between Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue, expanded pedestrian space, new and enhanced crossings, raised physically-separated cycle tracks, on-street parking lay-bys, extension of the centre landscape median, and other public realm improvements.



Artistic rendering of the approved cross-section on Yonge Street as part of Transform Yonge.

Doris Avenue Extension

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.

Beecroft Road Extension

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). 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.

Multi-modal Mobility Network




This objective considers how to encourage multi-modal travel options, including transit, walking, and cycling, for people living, working, and visiting in North York Centre.

Options Evaluation

The BAU option improves the multi-modal level of service through planned and approved projects. Key improvements including the Yonge North Subway Extension, Transform Yonge, Doris Extension and Beecroft Extension. Building upon the planned improvements in BAU, Alternatives 1 and 2 will provide opportunities for additional finer grained local improvements in the expanded Secondary Plan area.

All scenarios generally incorporate a similar overall street network, with relatively minor modifications being proposed in Alternatives 1 and 2, including potential new street connections and proposed new signalized intersections/pedestrian crossings along Doris Avenue, Beecroft Road, and Sheppard Avenue. Alternatives 1 and 2 also include proposed cycling routes in addition to planned/approved improvements to fill gaps in the expanded Secondary Plan area. The multi-modal mobility network in each option is qualitatively analyzed through the proposed improvements for motor vehicles, pedestrians, people cycling and transit. Overall, Alternatives 1 and 2 score higher than BAU—and similarly to one another—due to broadly similar improvements made to their respective proposed multi-modal mobility networks.

Table 3-12: Scoring for Multi-modal Mobility

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Multi-modal Mobility			

Recommended Directions

- 10. Explore potential to re-establish access to Beecroft Road, Doris Avenue and Sheppard Avenue where appropriate and feasible.
- 11. Implement a series of safety, access and operational improvements along the Centre’s mobility network.

Walking and Cycling



Through the introduction of new and improved walking and cycling connections, the connectivity and accessibility of walking and cycling network through North York Centre will be improved.

Options Evaluation

The BAU option includes improvements as recommended in the City’s Cycling Network Plan and approved Secondary Plans in the Mobility Study Area. Alternatives 1 and 2 include additional local improvements such as the proposed east-west cycling routes, a cycling facility along Beecroft Road, as well as new pedestrian connections.

The options are assessed according to the level of access they provide active transportation users, as well as the number of route options they provide. In Alternatives 1 and 2, these options are enhanced through the introduction of new pedestrian crossings and connections, as well as new cycling routes. These new local facilities result in modest improvements to the active transportation network. Accordingly, all three options score the same.

Table 3-13: Scoring for Active Transportation

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Active Transportation			

What is a Right-of-way?

A right-of-way comprises the city-owned land on which road facilities, including sidewalks, soft landscaping, boulevards and utilities are situated.

What is a Walking Connection?

Walking connections complement the sidewalk network and provide pedestrian access to and through city blocks that may otherwise be off-limits for those travelling by foot. North York Centre already has several mid-block walking connections under both private and public

ownership. A number of new locations may be recommended for walking connections as part of the updated North York Centre Secondary Plan. These new connections may be implemented through the development applications process as various blocks in the Centre undergo redevelopment.

What is a Cycling Connection?

Cycling Connections include on-street cycling facilities and off-road trails used by people to bicycle within the Centre and beyond.

Recommended Directions

- 12. Establish a series of new cycling routes in the centre.
- 13. Look for opportunities to break down large blocks with pedestrian connections.
- 14. Consider the expansion of trails, including the Wilket Creek Signature Trail, to provide additional connections throughout the centre.
- 15. Implement new signalized intersections and pedestrian crossings at key strategic locations, where necessary to reduce long distances between crossings, and where necessary to support a designated active transportation route.

Transit

One goal of this project is to promote and support transit by improving accessibility to existing and planned transit stops/stations and protecting for future transit improvements.



North York Centre is already a transit-oriented neighbourhood, and is anticipated to become increasingly so. There are three TTC subway stations servicing two subway lines, and several TTC, YRT and GO bus routes.

Options Evaluation

All alternatives broadly contain the same future transit network including all transit projects currently planned for North York Centre (i.e. the Yonge North Subway Extension and RapidTO transit priority measures on major streets). Other transit initiatives with an impact on North York Centre include the Sheppard Subway Extension Initial Business Case, and the possible extension of the Finch West LRT eastward from Finch West Station to Finch Subway Station at Yonge Street. Alternative 2 also identifies the opportunity to explore potential local transit improvements on Empress Avenue and Park Home Avenue.

All alternatives include the same major upcoming transit improvements, though Alternative 2 includes the exploration of a potential local transit improvement along Empress and Park Home Avenues. Overall, all three score similarly.

Table 3-14: Scoring for Transit

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Transit			

Recommended Directions

- 16. Explore opportunities to enhance the existing network of indoor connections between subway stations and nearby buildings.
- 17. Explore potential for local transit improvements on Empress Avenue and Park Home Avenue.

Safety

Improvements to intersections and streets aimed at enhancing safety across all modes, particularly for vulnerable road users, were considered to align with the City’s policy objective to prioritize the safety of the most vulnerable road users—pedestrians, people cycling and people on motorcycles, as well as older adults, school children, and persons with a disability.

Options Evaluation




BAU entails implementing the City’s Vision Zero Road Safety Plan and other planned improvements in the study area including the new signals along Yonge Street as part of Transform Yonge at Northtown Way and Norton Avenue to reduce the distance between protected pedestrian crossings, planned cycling routes on Yonge Street, Beecroft Extension and Sheppard Avenue, as well as the recommended elimination of the jogged intersection at Yonge Street and Kempford Boulevard/Byng Avenue in the current North York Centre Secondary Plan.

Building on the improvements in the BAU option, Alternative 1 recommends safety improvements at locations identified as collision hotspots as part of the Phase 1 analysis. In addition, safety improvements are anticipated as part of the conversion of the service roads into “parkways”, which includes the conversion of paved surfaces into green space and the addition of new signalized intersections and pedestrian crossings. Alternative 1 also contemplates four east-west cycling routes which cross the Centre, as well as north-south routes along Beecroft Road and Kenneth Avenue, in addition to the planned cycling routes on Yonge Street and Sheppard Avenue.

Alternative 2 builds on Alternative 1, and includes six new designated cycling routes, and a greater number of improved intersections and road segments aimed at enhancing safety.

Alternative 2 has the most opportunity to implement safety improvements through road work and development. This is followed closely by Alternative 1. It is important to align safety interventions with land use, built form and public realm elements, such as streetscaping that encourages lower vehicle speeds while providing enhanced green space. Overall, Alternatives 1 and 2 score higher than BAU – and similarly to one another – due to broadly similar potential for safety improvements.

Table 3-15: Scoring for Safety

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Safety			

Recommended Directions

- 18. Designate pedestrian priority locations adjacent to all schools and community facilities where pedestrian volumes are higher, and prioritize safety interventions in these areas.
- 19. Designate cycling priority locations along all planned cycling routes in North York Centre, and other key locations where people cycling are anticipated to interact with higher traffic volumes and speeds.

Transportation Demand Management & Shared Mobility

Mobility choices in the Centre could potentially be improved by the introduction of shared mobility hubs throughout North York Centre, which could help travelers make use of multiple modes and improve their access to all forms of mobility.

Options Evaluation




BAU has few opportunities for the introduction of shared mobility hubs as there is currently no policy in the existing North York Centre Secondary Plan. Alternatives 1 and 2 have the opportunity to promote emerging mobility trends, and introduce more viable mobility choices to the Centre to support reducing car dependency by identifying potential locations for shared mobility hubs that include a mix of elements such as bike share stations, carshare spaces, micromobility stations, high-occupancy vehicle parking, ride share hailing points, and public electric vehicle parking and charging stations.

What is a Shared Mobility Hub?

A shared mobility hub is a one-stop service point for multimodal transportation. It may include a variety of shared mobility facilities such as bike share stations, publicly accessible carshare spaces, public electric vehicle charging stations, and micromobility stations. Hubs may vary in size and configuration, with large hubs located near subway stations and smaller hubs near development blocks and bus stops.

Shared mobility hubs may facilitate the expanded use of modes such as cycling, car share, EVs, and connections to public transit. Redevelopment projects have the opportunity to introduce and/or contribute to these new facilities in addition to City’s programs and initiatives. As such, Alternatives 1 and 2 score slightly higher than BAU.

Table 3-16: Scoring for Mobility Choices and Innovation

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Mobility Choices and Innovation			

Recommended Direction

- Identify potential shared mobility hub at strategic locations such as major transit stations and key destinations in the Centre.

Streetscape

Streets are our largest public open spaces and serve many purposes beyond movement. Streets provide space for people to linger and browse shop windows, wait for the bus, sit on patios, or host festivals. Features such as street trees provide shade on hot days and respite from winter winds, and green infrastructure helps to manage stormwater and prevent flooding events. Plantings can even support pollinators or grow food. Transform Yonge is an example within North York Centre of a project that took a street – Yonge Street – that is currently focused on movement, primarily of cars, and reimagined it from the perspective of all the different things a street can do.

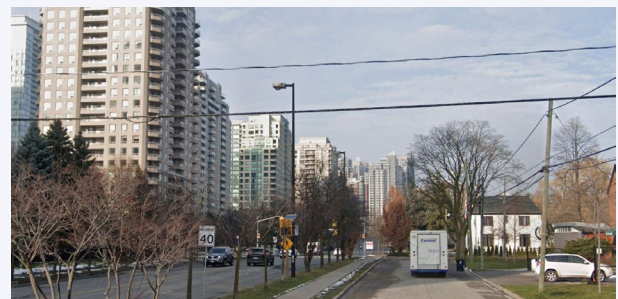
Options Evaluation

The options considered streets holistically, not just for their movement function but also for the other roles that streets can play, but are not always designed to play.

BAU includes streetscape improvements from the existing Secondary Plan, including a Yonge Street Promenade (now being implemented through Transform Yonge), treed arterial and collector roads, and treed side streets and pedestrian links. Alternative 1 builds on the improvements in BAU with new ideas. It creates “parkways” along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road by repurposing window streets and using parkland dedication and open spaces to complete the linear green corridors along them. It also introduces social streets that prioritize walking, cycling and placemaking on side streets at intersections along Yonge Street and Willowdale Avenue. In addition to the improvements in Alternative 1, Alternative 2 identifies a new neighbourhood main street on Willowdale Avenue, with opportunities for additional social streets along it.

What is a Window Street?

A window street is a road parallel to an arterial road, designed to connect local neighbourhood streets or provide property access, and limit direct vehicular access to the main streets. In North York Centre, window streets exist adjacent to Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road.



Window street in North York Centre

The new streetscape features in Alt 1 and Alt 2 better achieved the objective to enhance streetscapes in North York Centre, since they both present a greater range of opportunities to enhance streetscapes through development and City capital works projects.

Table 3-17: Scoring for Streetscapes

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Streetscapes			

Recommended Directions

- 21. Enhance Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road with linear parkways that may be achieved through parkland dedication, repurposing window streets or securing wide open spaces through the development process.
- 22. Consider greening and streetscape opportunities on every local street in North York Centre which comes up for reconstruction.

Cost and Feasibility

The cost and technical feasibility of each structural option is important to consider as it will ultimately have an impact on implementation.




Options Evaluation

Considerations in assessing cost and feasibility include whether specific improvements are anticipated to be achieved through the development process or by direct initiative of the City. In addition, the scale of proposed public infrastructure improvements in each structural option was considered.

BAU reflects a continuation of the status quo, with developments guided by the existing Secondary Plan. Future improvements only include approved and funded projects. Alternative 1 proposes a modest amount of improvements throughout the expanded North York Centre Secondary Plan area that have potential property impacts. Alternative 2 proposes a more ambitious range of improvements than Alternative 1, which are anticipated to have greater potential property impacts. Feasibility of the proposed improvements in Alternatives 1 and 2 will be further assessed through functional design and reflected in the Implementation Strategy in Phase 3.

Cost and property impacts are most significant for Alternative 2, followed by Alternative 1, to implement the proposed/potential mobility and public realm improvements such as the potential new streets/street connections.

Table 3-18: Scoring for Cost and Feasibility

Measure	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Cost and Feasibility			

3.6 Design Places for People

The options were evaluated for how well they achieved transition, their mix of building types, sun and wind conditions, public realm animation and non-park open spaces. To assist with these evaluations, a height plan for each option (shown in **Figures 3-24 to 3-26**), provides specificity on maximum heights.

- **BAU:** Heights follow the permissions of the existing Secondary Plan, which range from 11 metres (3 storeys) to 100 metres (32 storeys) generally descending from Yonge Street to the east and west. Transition to surrounding neighbourhoods is achieved in some areas through height permissions calculated as a percentage of the distance to the Relevant Residential Property Line.
- **Alt 1:** Height peaks are at the subway stations at 160 metres (52 storeys) with a transition down to 20 metres (6 storeys) away from Yonge Street. Heights within the existing Secondary Plan area generally range from 32 to 52 storeys, in line with recent approvals at the Ontario Land Tribunal. Heights in the expanded area generally provide a gradual transition from 26 storeys to 6 storeys next to existing low-rise neighbourhoods.
- **Alt 2:** The height plan is generally the same as Alt 1, with slightly higher height peaks at subway stations at 190 metres (62 storeys), which is consistent with building heights in other *Centres*. Transition is more gradual due to the larger Secondary Plan area, with heights in the expanded area ranging from 32 storeys to 6 storeys.

Transition

Transition in scale is the geometric relationship between areas of low-scale development, parks or open spaces and taller, more intense development. It provides a measure of the impacts, including shadows and privacy, of larger-scale development on low-scale neighbourhoods and the public realm. It can be achieved using a variety of measures – individually or in different combinations – including stepping height limits, location and orientation of buildings, the use of setbacks and step-backs of building mass, and separation distances.

The City's policy and guideline documents provide direction on the effective integration of taller buildings into the urban context. The Official Plan states that development will be required to provide good transition in scale between areas of different building heights and/or intensity of use in consideration of both the existing and planned contexts of neighbouring properties and the public realm. The Tall Building Design Guidelines state that tall buildings should respect the scale of the local context and display an appropriate transition in height and intensity, especially when adjacent to areas of differing land use, lower-scale built form, and heritage properties. Design guidance is also provided for mid- and low-rise areas through the Mid-Rise Guidelines and Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines.

Options Evaluation

Within the boundaries of each option there is a transition in height between different areas. BAU contains some abrupt height transitions and therefore scores lower than Alt 1 and Alt 2 which provide more gradual transitions within the Secondary Plan area.

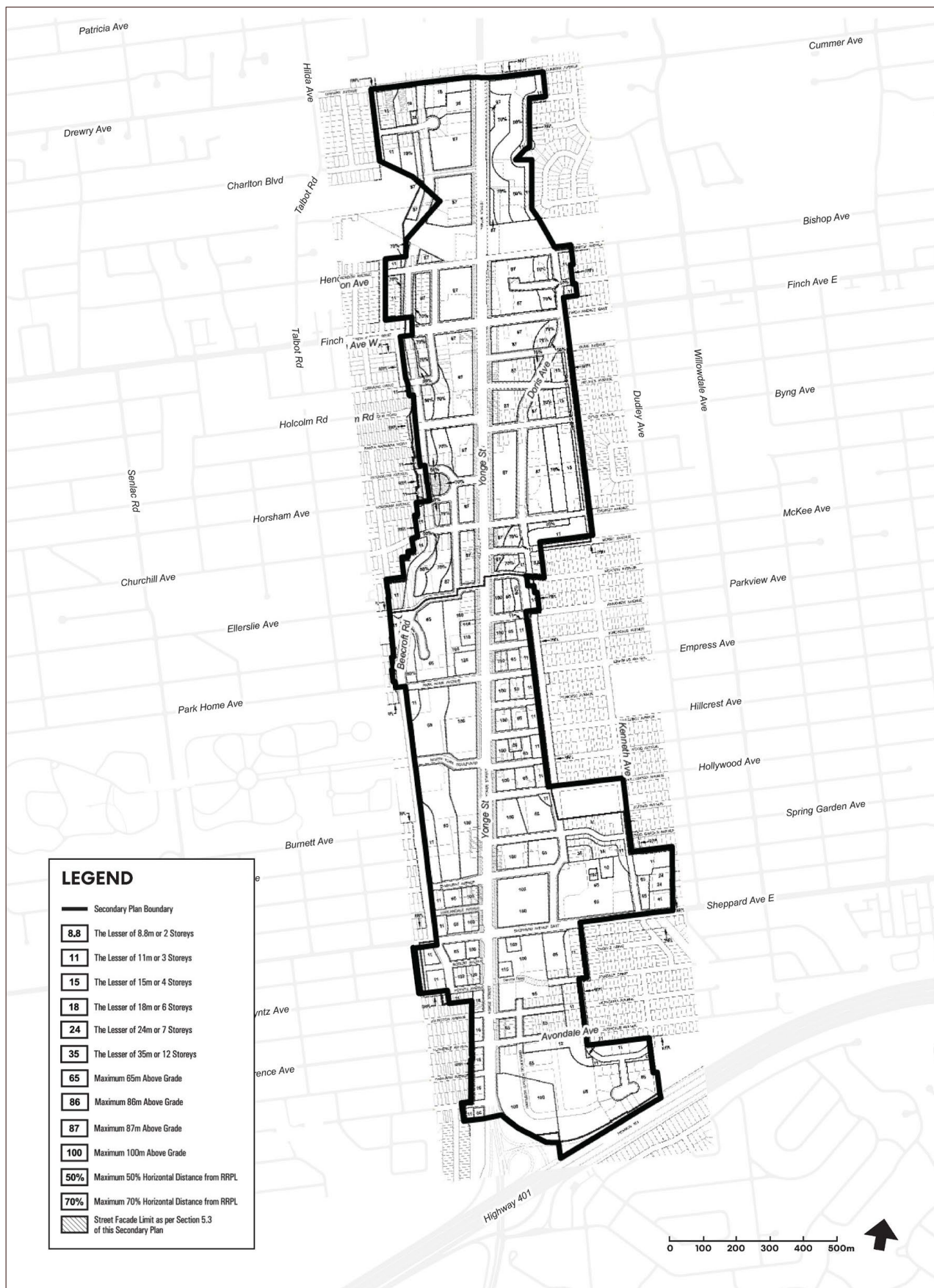


Figure 3-24: Business As Usual (BAU) Building Height Map

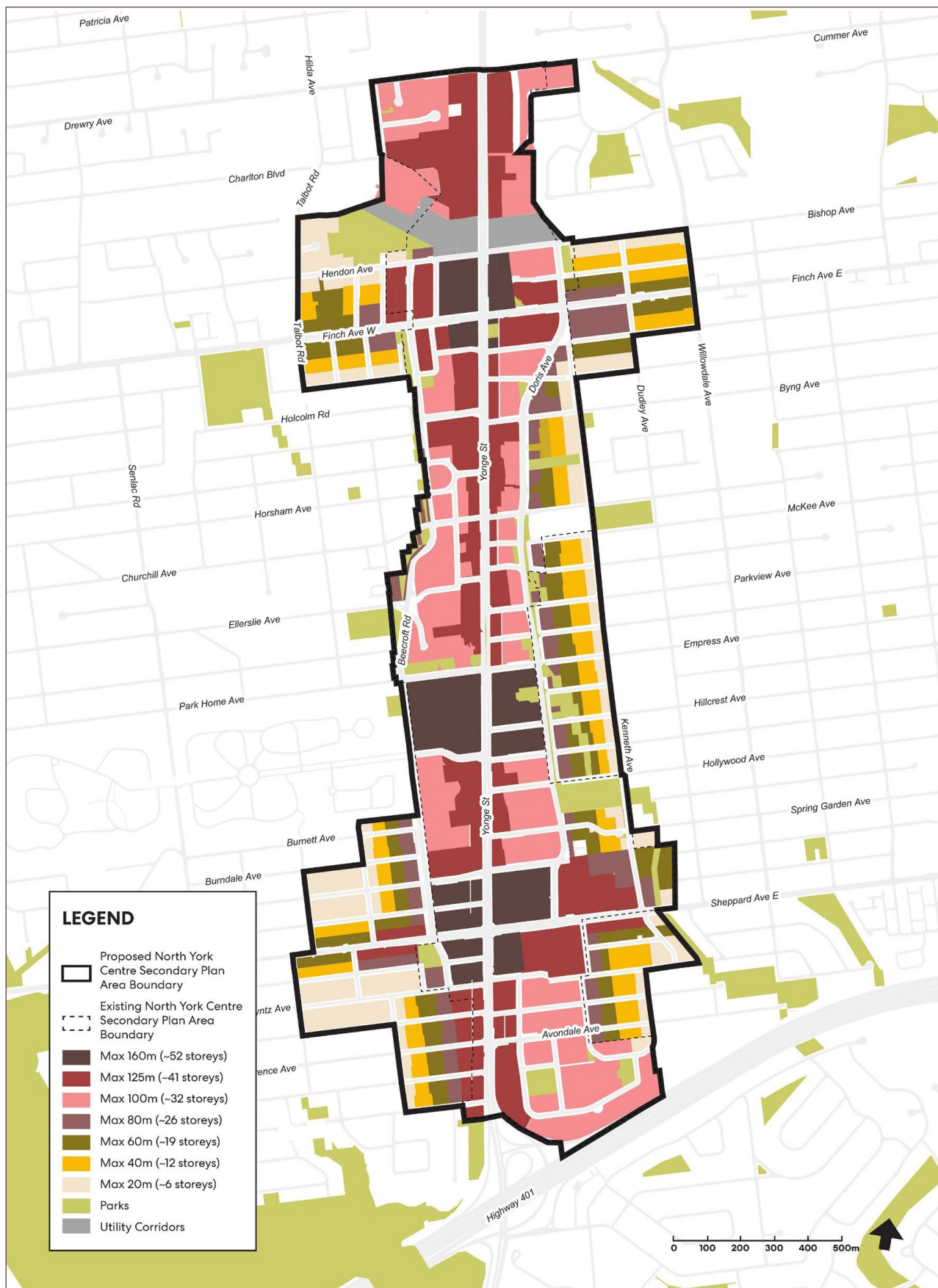


Figure 3-25: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Building Height Map

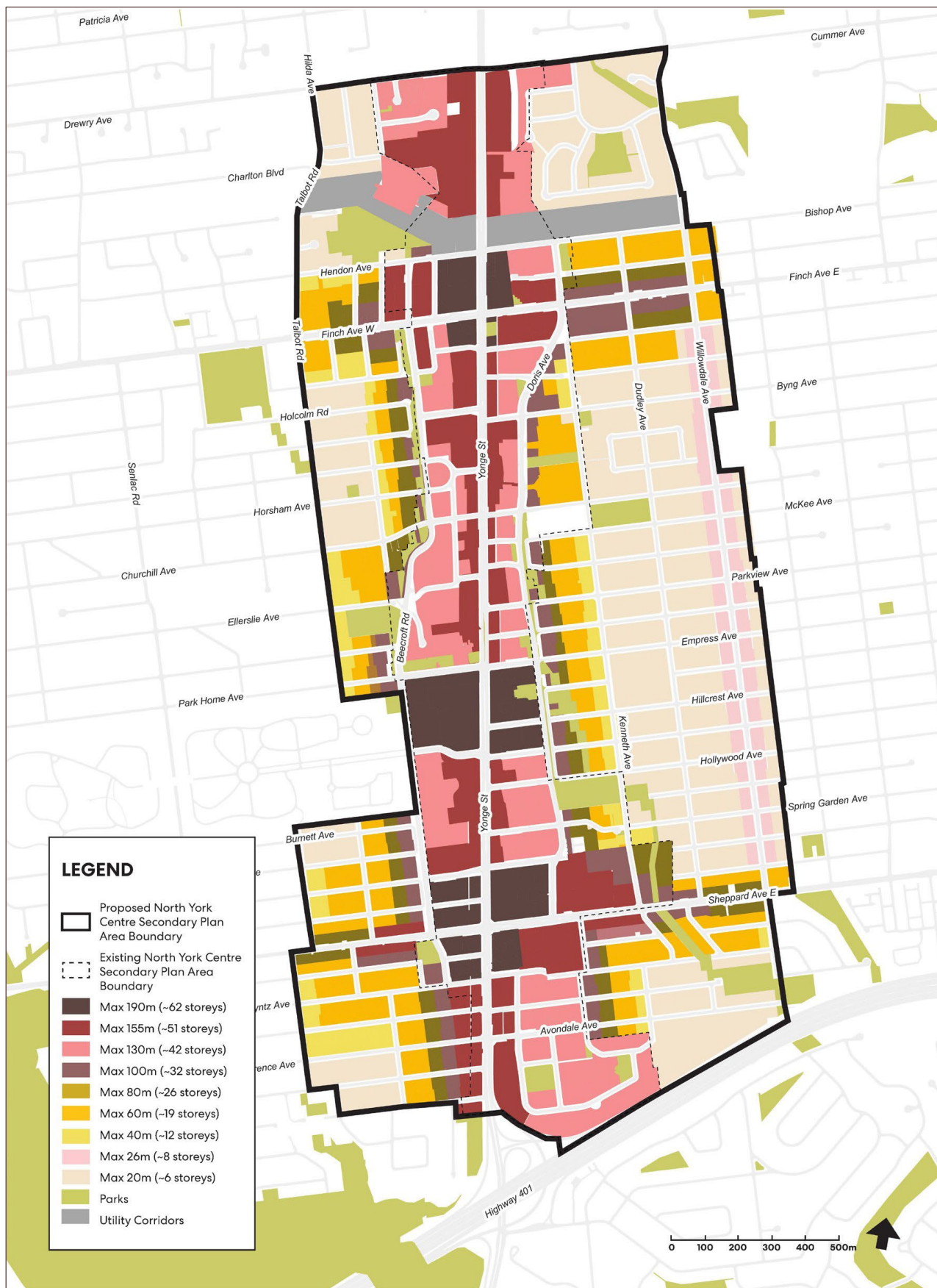


Figure 3-26: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Building Height Map

Each of the options also provides an overall transition in scale from a peak along Yonge Street to surrounding neighbourhoods outside the Secondary Plan area (shown in **Figures 3-27 to 3-29**). The expanded Secondary Plan areas in Alt 1 and Alt 2 allow for a more gradual transition to surrounding low-rise buildings than BAU, so they performed better in the evaluation, with the largest Secondary Plan area in Alt 2 allowing for the most gradual transition.

Table 3-19: Scoring for Transition

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Transition within North York Centre			
Transition to Surroundings			

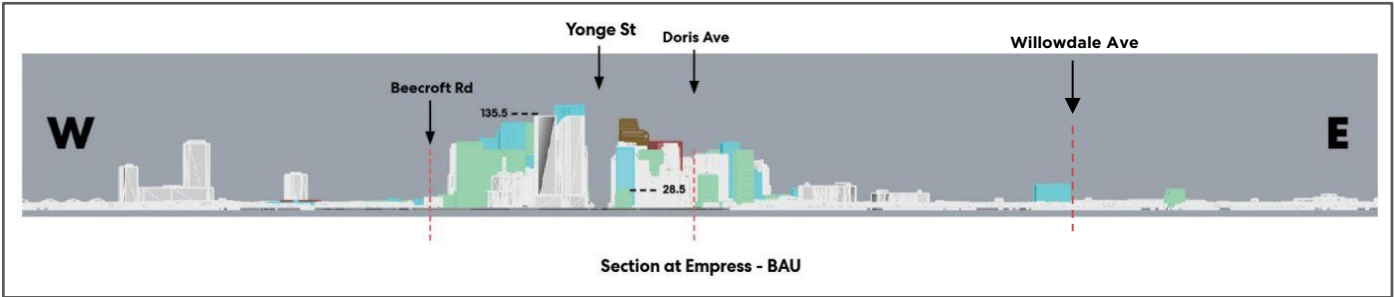


Figure 3-27: Business As Usual (BAU) Cross Section showing built form transition

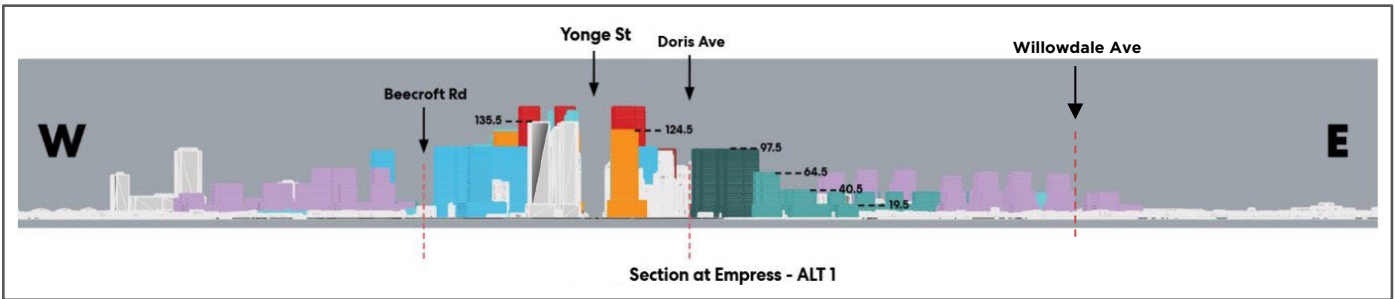


Figure 3-28: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Cross Section showing built form transition

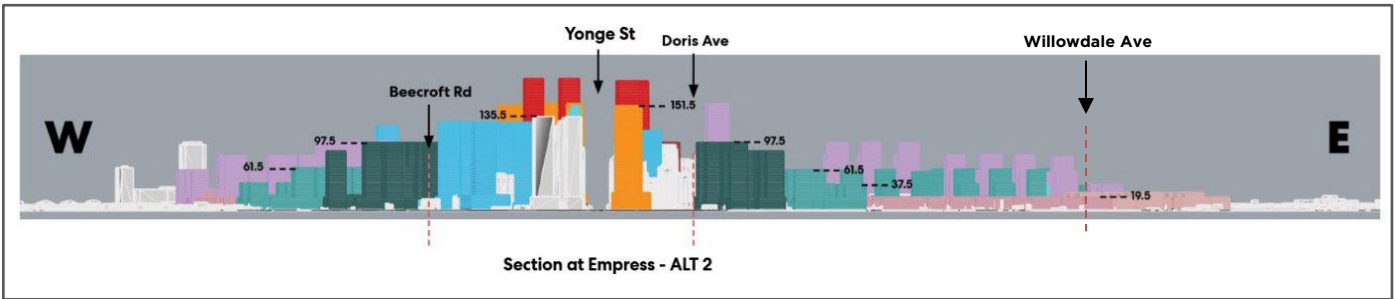


Figure 3-29: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Cross Section showing built form transition

The overall transition in scale of buildings measured in the evaluation will need to be complemented by a more nuanced transition strategy that also considers transition tools beyond building heights and transition in specific local contexts within the Centre, such as transition to important open spaces.

Recommended Directions

- 23. Introduce a more gradual transition in scale from Yonge Street, Finch Avenue and Sheppard Avenue to surrounding low-rise neighbourhoods throughout an expanded Secondary Plan area.
- 24. Explore the use of tower separation distances, setbacks, stepbacks and open spaces to enhance the transition approach.
- 25. Ensure effective transition to key open spaces in the Centre such as Mel Lastman Square.

Building Types




A mix of building types provides variety in the urban landscape and allows for different housing forms that meet the needs of different types of households. Some households are drawn to tall buildings with beautiful views, while others prefer the more intimate scale of a mid-rise building and still others value the direct access to outdoor space provided by low-rise housing. All should be able to find a home in North York Centre.

Official Plan policy states that *Centres* should encourage a full range of housing opportunities. Redevelopment in North York Centre since the adoption of the current Secondary Plan has primarily been in the form of tall buildings. The Centre is surrounded by low-rise residential housing which has easy access to its amenities. What is currently missing is the in-between scale – anyone looking for a home between two storeys and 20 storeys does not have many options in North York Centre.

Options Evaluation

The evaluation considered the extent to which the options allow for an appropriate mix of low-rise buildings (under 5 storeys), mid-rise buildings (5-14 storeys) and tall buildings. Representing the current Secondary Plan, BAU was found to be lacking in opportunities for mid-rise buildings. Alt 1 introduces some limited opportunities for mid-rise buildings within its expanded boundary. Alt 2 introduces extensive new mid-rise buildings, but in doing so replaces some of the low-rise housing that currently surrounds the *Centre*.

Table 3-20: Scoring for Mix of Building Types

Measure	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Mix of Building Types			

Recommended Directions

- 26. Introduce opportunities for mid-rise buildings along secondary corridors in the expanded Secondary Plan area for North York Centre.

- 27. To provide a full variety of building types, consider maintaining some low-rise areas within the expanded boundary, as is common in other Secondary Plans for *Centres* such as the Downtown Plan and the Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan.
- 28. Align with City-wide guidelines for different building types.

Wind Conditions

North York Centre is a windy place, as was noted in the public engagement done as part of Phase 1. New development can both help wind conditions by adding buildings that act as a wind barrier and exacerbate wind conditions if buildings are designed without regard to their impact on wind patterns. In extreme cases wind conditions can be considered unsafe and must be mitigated.







A Pedestrian Level Wind Study conducted Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) simulations for existing conditions and BAU, Alt 1 and Alt 2 to examine wind comfort conditions for pedestrians in each season of the year. The simulations determined which areas in North York Centre would be comfortable for sitting, standing, or walking or would be uncomfortable for pedestrians based on wind conditions.

Options Evaluation

All the options (BAU, Alt 1 and Alt 2) improved wind comfort compared to existing conditions. The reduced wind speeds compared to existing conditions were influenced by the addition of new tall and mid-rise buildings at the periphery of the existing Secondary Plan area east of Doris Avenue and west of Beecroft Road. These buildings would be shorter than buildings along Yonge Street, providing a transition in building heights that disrupts and blocks prevailing winds. Alt 2 performed the best due to the addition of more buildings east and west of Yonge Street that would be shorter than buildings along the Yonge Street Spine, providing a more gradual transition in height. Wind comfort in the options is shown in **Figures 3-30 to 3-32**.

In terms of wind safety, all options (BAU, Alt 1 and Alt 2) also performed better than existing conditions, with Alt 2 performing the best. The primary factor influencing the predicted wind safety conditions is the channelling of westerly winds between the tall buildings along Yonge Street. Areas where wind safety thresholds were exceeded tend to have open spaces to the west, which allow winds to flow freely between the buildings without obstruction. Wind safety in the options is shown in **Figures 3-33 to 3-35**.

Table 3-21: Scoring for Wind Comfort and Safety

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Wind Comfort			
Wind Safety			

Recommended Directions

- 29. Expand the Secondary Plan area and introduce lower buildings flanking the existing Centre to disrupt wind flows and provide better wind conditions for pedestrians.
- 30. Address areas where wind safety thresholds are exceeded by developing open lots in the west where possible to provide obstruction.

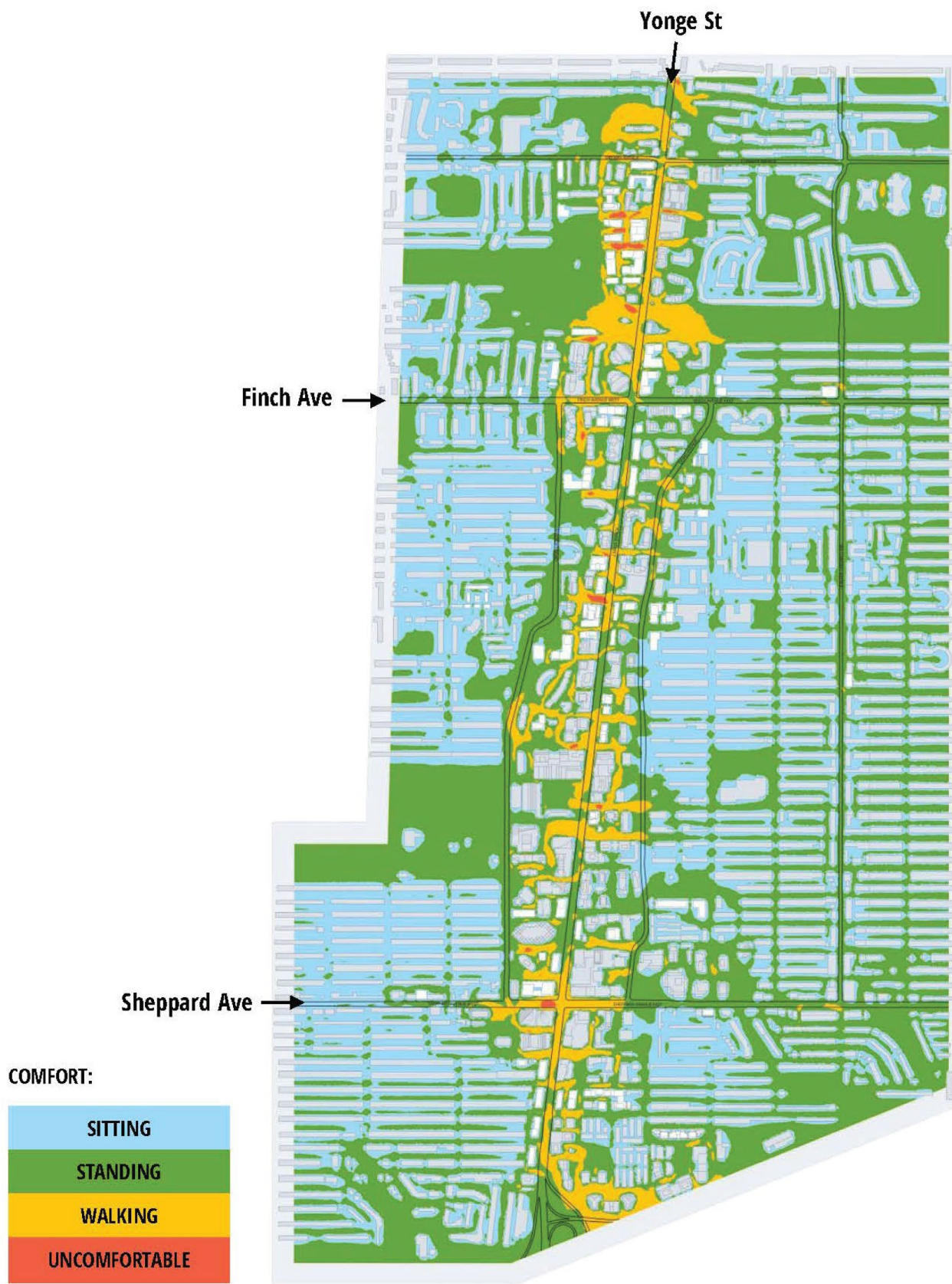


Figure 3-30: Business As Usual (BAU) Wind Comfort

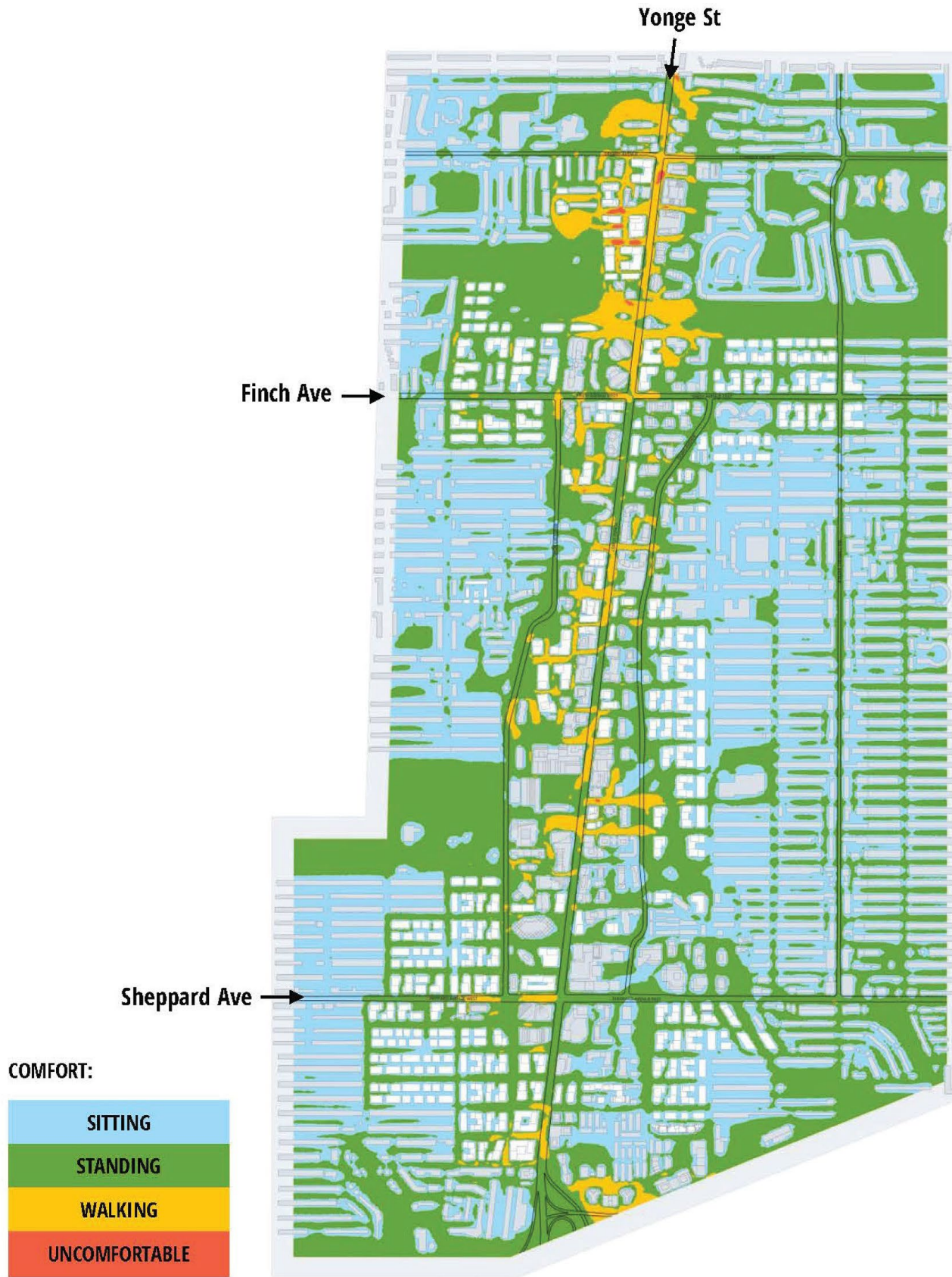


Figure 3-31: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Wind Comfort



Figure 3-32: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Wind Comfort



Figure 3-33: Business As Usual (BAU) Wind Safety



Figure 3-34: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Wind Safety



Figure 3-35: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Wind Safety

Sun Conditions




Dense urban places like North York Centre tend to have a lot of shadows. More sunlight in public spaces makes them more comfortable for pedestrians, particularly in the shoulder seasons of spring and fall, so the Official Plan directs that buildings should limit shadow impacts on the public realm and on parks and open spaces. Some secondary plans identify hours of sunlight that must be preserved on key parks and open spaces, while others simply try to minimize shadow impacts.

Options Evaluation

Shadow modeling was undertaken for each of the options to understand shadows on September 21st from 9:18 am to 6:18 pm. Sun and shadow conditions in the options are shown in **Figures 3-36 to 3-38**. The options were evaluated for shadowing impacts on key streets and open spaces:

- **Streets:** Under the provisions of the existing Secondary Plan, represented by BAU, streets in the Centre generally had two to six hours of sunlight, and in some cases as little as one hour of sunlight such as on parts of Finch Avenue and Yonge Street. This is a common condition in *Centres* given the relative height of buildings to width of streets. Sunlight on streets is similar to BAU in Alt 1 and Alt 2, with some local areas of further reduced hours of sunlight.
- **Squares:** Overall, BAU offers the best solar access on Mel Lastman Square and other existing squares in the Secondary Plan area (4-9 hours). Alt 1 and Alt 2 had reduced sunlight hours, with differences by square.
- **Parkways:** Solar access ranges significantly across different areas of the parkways in BAU. The additional tall buildings along the parkways introduced in Alt 1 and Alt 2 reduce sunlight on the parkways.
- **Parks outside the current Secondary Plan:** These areas have high solar access due to being surrounded by low-rise development in BAU. The introduction of mid-rise and tall buildings in Alt 1 and Alt 2 reduces sunlight on most of these spaces.

Table 3-22: Scoring for Sunlight

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Sunlight			

Recommended Directions

1. Review opportunities to sculpt buildings on a site-specific basis to minimize shadows on key parks and civic squares like Mel Lastman Square.
2. Consider mid-rise buildings on Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road and outside the current Secondary Plan area to limit shadowing on adjacent streets, parks and open spaces.

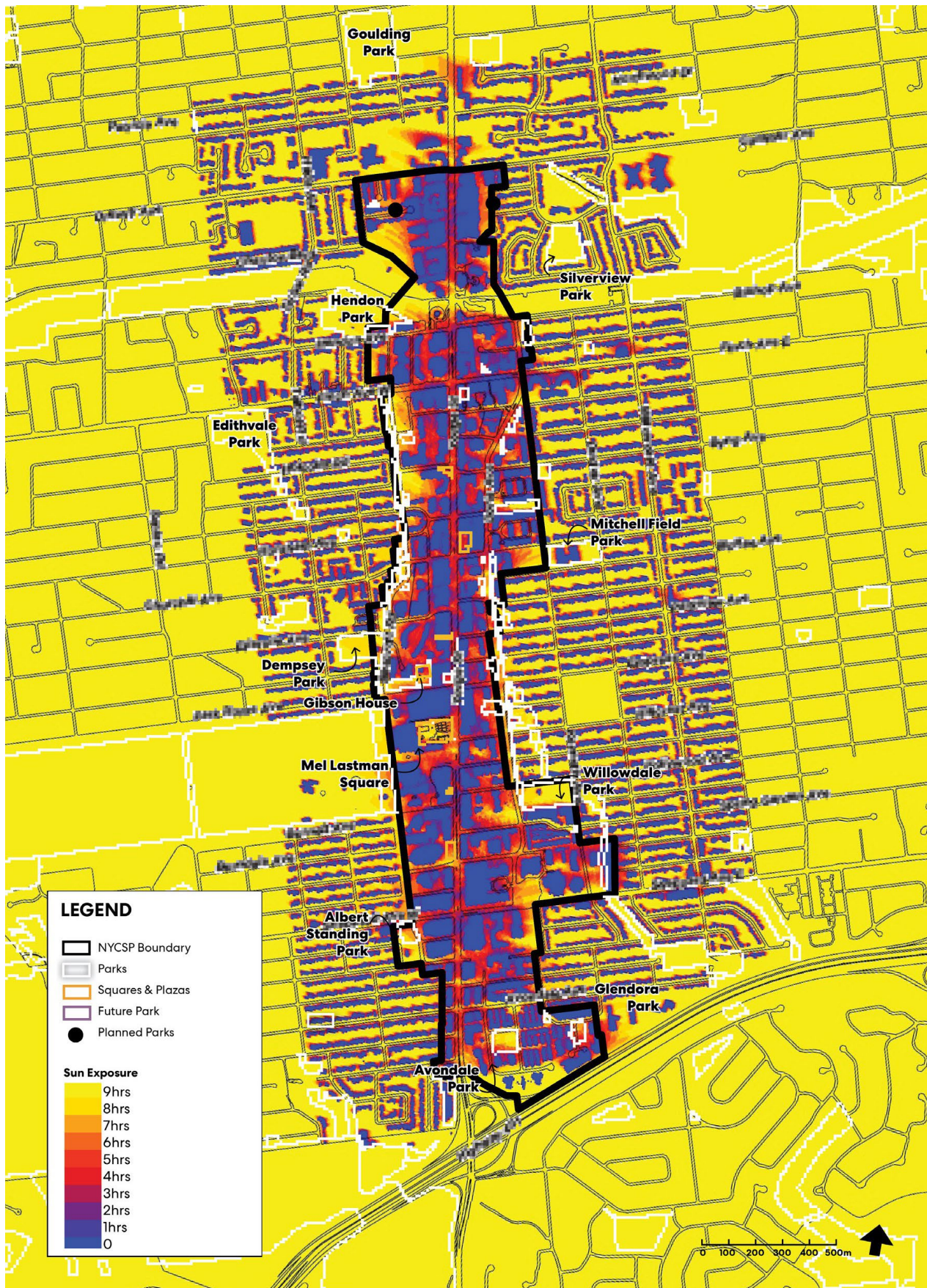


Figure 3-36: Business As Usual (BAU) Sun Conditions

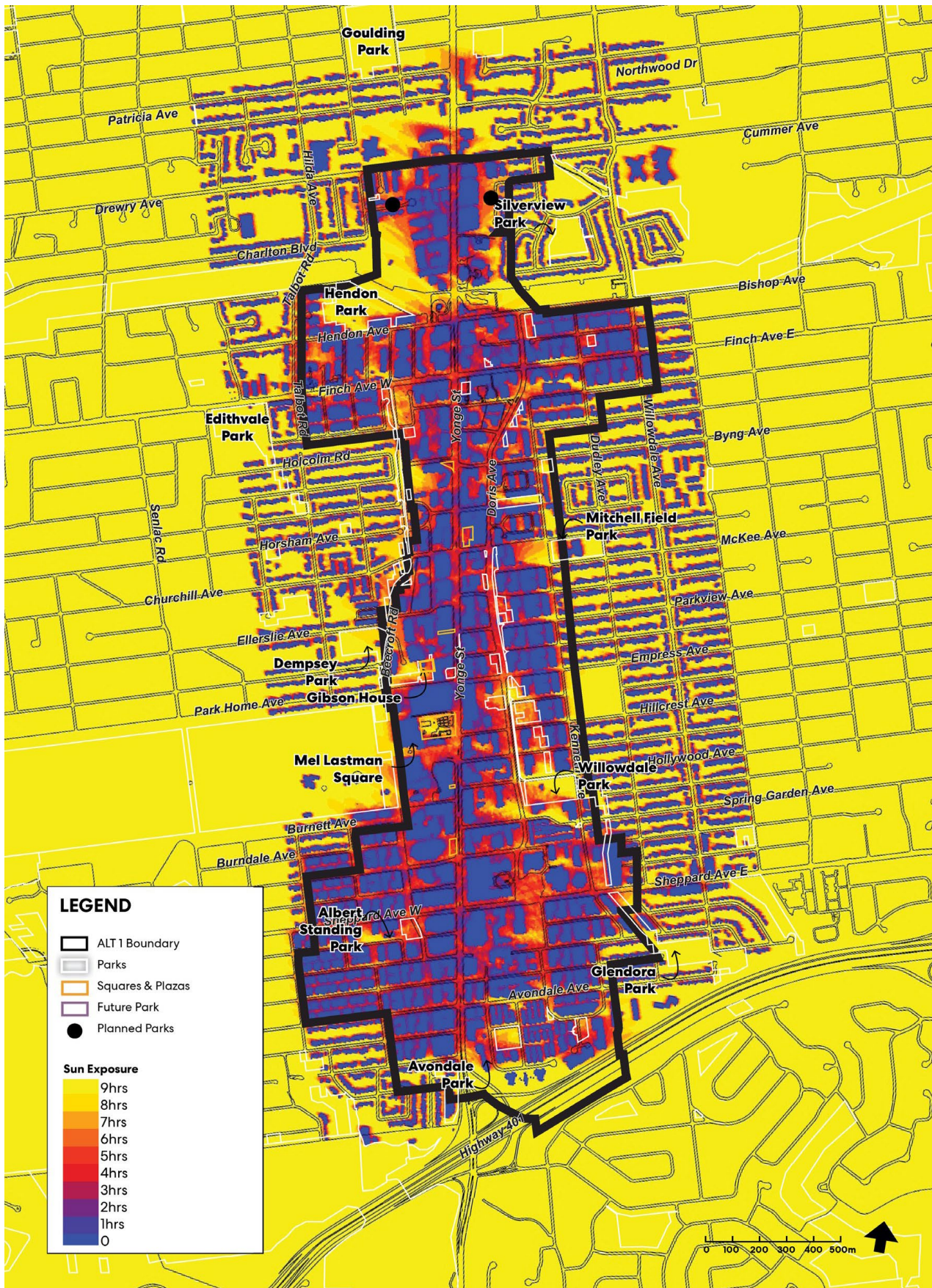


Figure 3-37: Alternative 1 (Alt 1) Sun Conditions

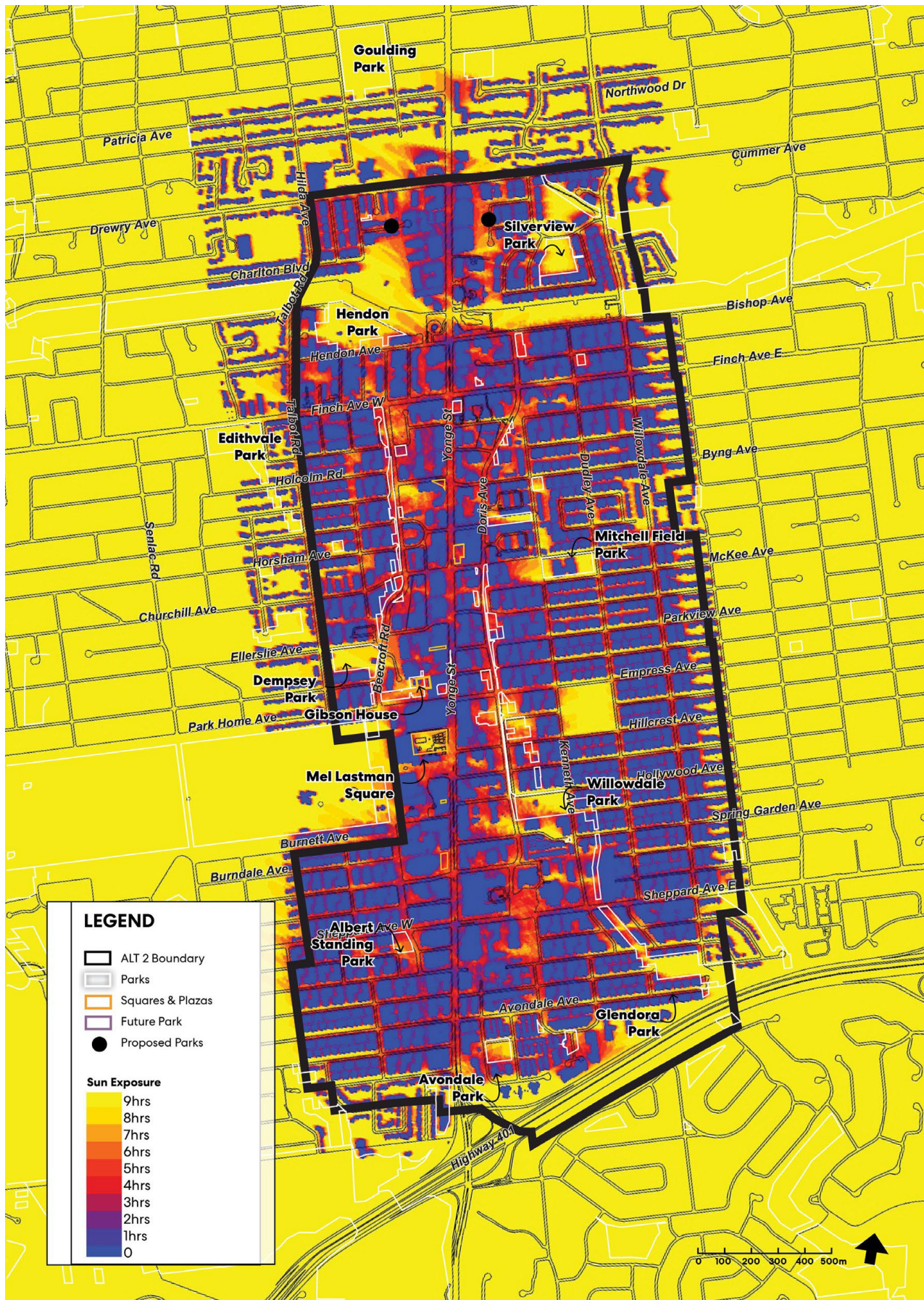


Figure 3-38: Alternative 2 (Alt 2) Sun Conditions




Non-park Open Spaces

In addition to City-owned parkland, non-park open spaces enhance the vibrancy of neighbourhoods by serving as important cultural and social hubs for residents and visitors. Publicly-accessible open spaces like cemeteries, plazas and public school yards augment and complement the parks network. In some cases the City secures public access to these spaces as privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS), while in other cases spaces are used informally by the public.

Options Evaluation

The evaluation considered the extent to which the options preserved existing non-park open spaces and expanded the network of non-park open spaces. All options preserved existing non-park open spaces within the Centre. BAU included only opportunities for expansion identified in the current Secondary Plan’s conceptual parks and open spaces plan. Alt 1 and Alt 2 introduced new opportunities, including social streets, open spaces along the Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road parkways and the potential greening of the Finch Hydro Corridor. Alt 1 and Alt 2 performed most strongly in the evaluation due to these additional non-park open spaces.

Table 3-23: Scoring for Non-park Open Spaces

Measure	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Non-park Open Spaces			

Recommended Direction

31. Augment the parkland network with non-park open spaces such as social streets.

3.7 Summary of Options Evaluation

The evaluation undertaken on the three options led to many lessons learned about what features help to achieve the vision and guiding principles for North York Centre. These are documented in the recommended directions for the Emerging Preferred Option identified throughout this chapter and consolidated in the sidebar.

The expanded boundary in Alt 1 and 2 was found to have many benefits relating to increased housing units, potential new parkland and improved connectivity of parks, improved multimodal mobility and safety, and better transition to surrounding areas. However, the level of growth in Alt 2 could be challenging to serve with the necessary infrastructure, facilities and services to create a complete and liveable community. Alt 2 also scored poorly with regard to sunlight access as well as tree canopy cover and permeable surfaces due to the extent of conversion of *Neighbourhoods* to *Mixed Use Areas*. Overall, Alt 1 performed most strongly in the evaluation. Elements of Alt 2 that performed strongly include the opportunity for diverse retail provided by the inclusion of Willowdale Avenue, the mix of building types and wind comfort and safety. The Emerging Preferred Option described in Chapter 4 attempts to combine the most successful features of Alt 1 and Alt 2 into a new hybrid option for North York Centre.

Table 3-24: Scoring for Growing a Complete Community







	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Housing Units			
Density in MTSAs			

Table 3-25: Scoring for Reinforce the Centre as a Vibrant Hub for Work, Arts and Culture










	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Jobs/Population ratio			
Office GFA			
Retail GFA			

Table 3-26: Scoring for Green North York Centre













	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Potential for New Parkland and Recreational Space			
Connectivity of Parks			
Tree Canopy			
Green Infrastructure			

Table 3-27: Scoring for Build Connectivity











































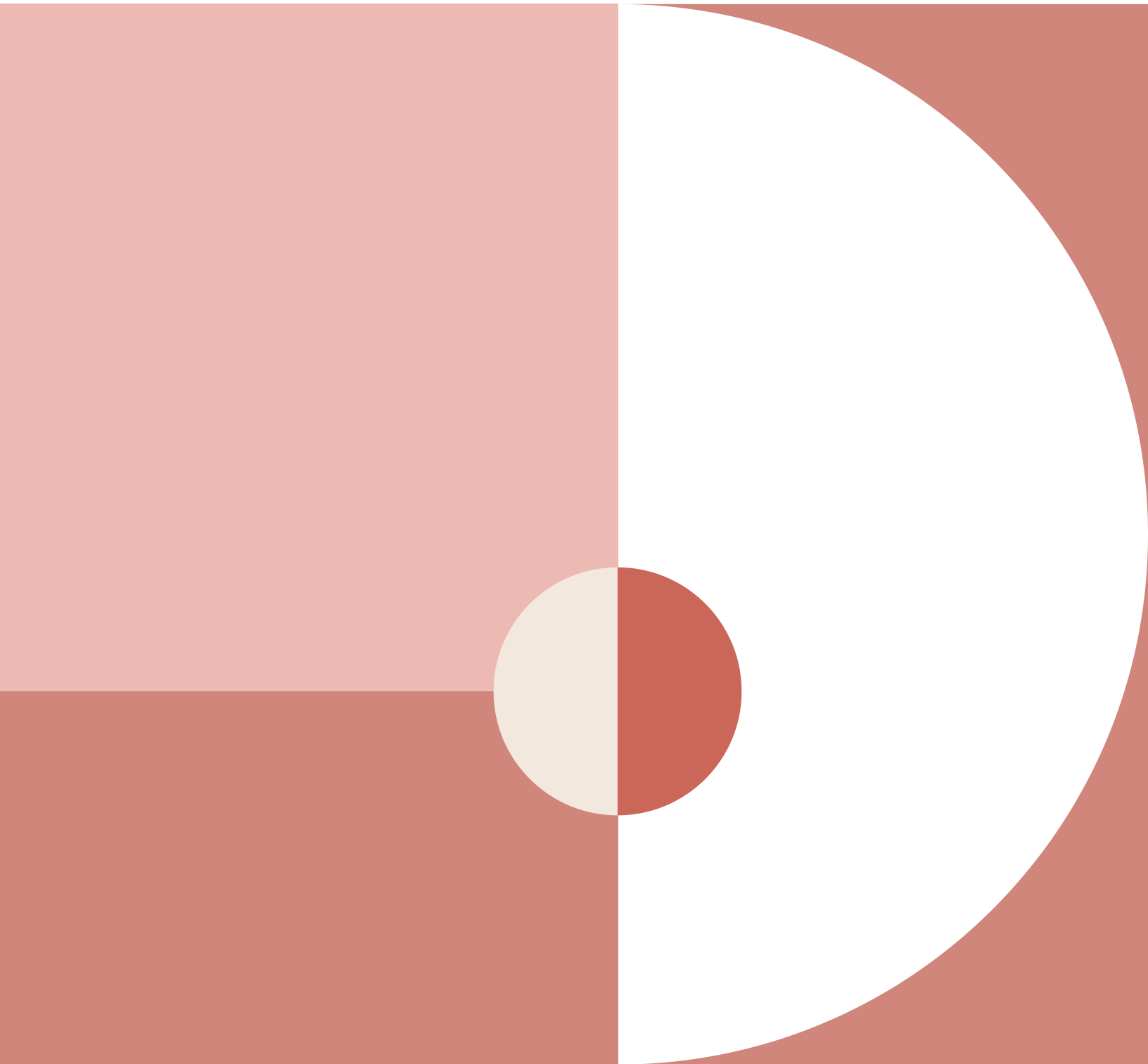
	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Multi-Modal Mobility			
Active Transportation			
Transit			
Safety			
Mobility Choices and Innovation			
Streetscapes			
Cost and Feasibility			

Table 3-28: Scoring for Design Places for People

	BAU	Alt 1	Alt 2
Transition within North York Centre			
Transition to Surroundings			
Mix of Building Types			
Wind Comfort			
Wind Safety			
Sunlight			
Non-Park Open Spaces			

04. Emerging Preferred Option



04. EMERGING PREFERRED OPTION

4.1 Introduction

The Emerging Preferred Option for North York Centre was developed based on the evaluation of the options and the background work and engagement undertaken in Phase 1 of North York at the Centre. It presents a starting point for engagement with the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities in Phase 2. Following this engagement process a final Preferred Option will be prepared. Complete statistics and analyses, including updated growth estimates, a Sun/Shadow Study, a Pedestrian Level Wind Study, and traffic and servicing assessments will be undertaken for the final Preferred Option.

The Emerging Preferred Option aims to set the foundation for the next stage of North York Centre's evolution as a complete, inclusive and resilient community and regional hub for the northern part of the city. North York Centre has grown quickly in the past three decades and the next phase of its development will be focused on introducing mid-rise buildings and more welcoming public spaces, stitching the Centre into the larger community, and filling in gaps in its offerings to set it up for success over the coming decades. The Emerging Preferred Option proposes to:

- Expand the boundary east to Willowdale Avenue to facilitate housing diversity, gradual height transition and better east-west connectivity.
- Green the public realm and better connect the parks and open space network by creating new linear “parkways” and expanding existing
- parkland along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road and enhancing the signature trail along Wilket Creek.
- Introduce greater flexibility for both new residential and non-residential uses, protecting and growing the Centre's role as an employment hub.
- Celebrate and cultivate the range and diversity of the arts, cultural, retail, civic and institutional uses that draw people to North York Centre from across the city.
- Identify additional or improved community services and facilities to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

The Emerging Preferred Option includes strategies for land use (housing, offices, stores, etc.), parks and open spaces, public realm (street boulevards, squares, mid-block connections, etc.), mobility and buildings. It also includes policy directions for North York Centre that are needed to achieve the objectives covering topics such as affordable housing, mix of unit types, community services and facilities, inclusive economic development, biodiversity, Indigenous placekeeping and ground floor animation.

A structure map for the Emerging Preferred Option (shown in **Figure 4-1**) conceptually illustrates its key features:

- **Boundary:** The recommended Secondary Plan boundary is expanded to include the three Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) and extend to Willowdale Avenue in the east.

- **Yonge Street Spine:** Yonge Street will remain the spine of North York Centre and the location for the tallest buildings and focus for jobs, arts, culture, retail, and services. Its public realm will be upgraded with the implementation of Transform Yonge.
- **Commercial Nodes:** Areas around the three subway stations that will be focal points for arts, culture, retail, office and institutional uses, as well as community services and facilities.
- **Major Transit/Main Streets:** Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue will continue to be major transit routes and main streets for the Centre, with tall buildings transitioning to mid-rise buildings to the east and west and an enhanced streetscape.
A wide variety of non-residential uses including office would be focused along Sheppard Avenue, while Finch Avenue would provide local-serving retail on the ground floor of buildings alongside residential development.
- **Neighbourhood Main Streets:** New local main streets on Willowdale Avenue and Empress Avenue would be encouraged with mid-rise buildings and a mix of uses, including housing, community uses and small-scale retail and services to meet people's daily needs.
- **Neighbourhoods:** Some low-rise *Neighbourhoods* east of Doris Avenue are retained to provide a full spectrum of housing options.
- **Mel Lastman Square:** The central civic space of North York Centre will be enhanced and celebrated.
- **Parks:** New and expanded parks will be provided throughout the community to improve access, visibility and programming opportunities.
- **Wilket Creek Signature Trail:** The trail along Wilket Creek, which exists in parts of the Centre, will be completed to celebrate this historical watercourse, provide connectivity and more access to open space and nature.
- **Finch Hydro Corridor Trail (Loop Trail) and greenspace:** Potential to green the Finch Hydro Corridor to enhance the open space network and expand recreational amenity opportunities if a time comes when the TTC deems it is no longer needed for parking.
- **Parkways:** Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road will have expanded parks and wide green linear open spaces on either side lined with tall and mid-rise buildings that provide a transition from the intensity of the Centre to surrounding residential areas.
- **Social Streets:** Short side street segments abutting Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue and Willowdale Avenue that are flexibly designed to provide public open space.
- **Local mobility improvements:** Local improvements such as cycling routes are proposed to support the approved Yonge North Subway Extension, Transform Yonge, and Doris and Beecroft Extensions.

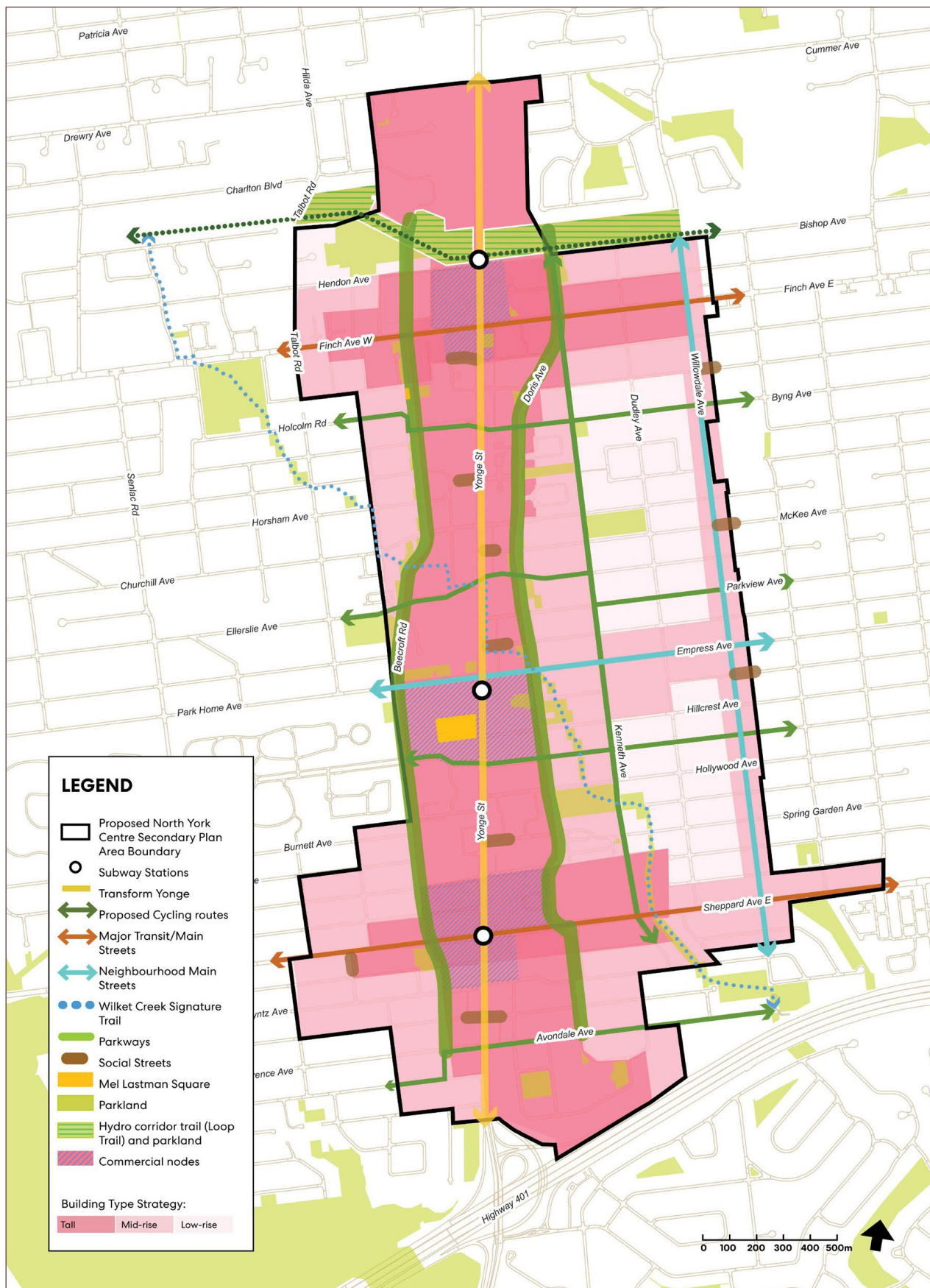


Figure 4-1: Emerging Preferred Option Structure Map

The Emerging Preferred Option divides North York Centre into six districts (shown in **Figure 4-2**), each of which is envisioned to have a distinct identity in terms of building types and heights, public realm and open spaces. The districts are:

District 1 – Subway Stations

District 1a – Yonge – Sheppard Subway Station Area: This district would serve as the main commercial hub of the Centre and is its most densely developed area. Office uses would be prioritized within this district alongside a mix of uses and its built form would be characterized by tall buildings. The public realm within this district would be designed to support the large volumes of pedestrians and people cycling, including both residents and office workers, with features such as wide boulevards, plazas, seating and landscape features to support the busy transit activity.

District 1b – North York Centre Station Area: This district would be home to key civic, cultural and community spaces within the Centre, including Mel Lastman Square, North York Civic Centre and the North York Central Library. It is envisioned as the civic heart of the area, with a public realm designed to support the numerous civic activities and celebrations that take place here. Tall buildings would be generally prioritized, though mid-rise structures may be considered in certain locations, depending on site-specific factors and surrounding conditions. The civic heart would also serve as a central node for future open space connections that connect the area east to west through Wilket Creek Trail improvements and north to south along the Yonge Street Spine.

District 1c – Yonge-Finch Subway Station Area: This district would serve as a secondary hub given its proximity to Finch Subway Station. Like the other subway station areas, it would be a location for tall buildings and a mix of uses. Improvements to the Finch Hydro Corridor Loop Trail have the potential to enhance open space connectivity within and beyond this district.

District 2 – The Yonge Spine

This district is built on the direction in the existing Secondary Plan that identifies Prime Frontage Areas along Yonge Street, characterized by vibrant retail, arts, and cultural activities. Tall buildings would be prioritized within the area, with the highest heights along the Yonge Street frontage itself. Transform Yonge will bring significant streetscape improvements to Yonge Street and the streetscape will support the efficient movement of pedestrians and people cycling. These streetscape improvements would also support retail activity along Yonge Street, creating a vibrant and active ground floor. This district would accommodate arts and cultural uses, community services and facilities, and retail spaces within newly proposed developments.

The portion of the district that does not directly front onto Yonge Street would start to provide transition to the east and west, towards Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue. This zone would encourage non-residential uses such as local amenities, shops, and services to meet the needs of the surrounding community.

District 3 – Doris/Beecroft Transition Zone

This district spans the blocks from Beecroft Road and Doris Avenue to Basswood Avenue and Kenneth Avenue, acting as a transitional area between the tall buildings in District 1 and 2 and the existing low-rise neighbourhoods. The proposed built form in this district primarily consists of mid-rise buildings. In addition to being the priority area for parkland expansion to achieve larger parks, this district would be characterized by deep setbacks establishing the Doris and Beecroft Parkways as significant green corridors that are a

defining feature of the public realm in North York Centre. The Parkways would establish a linear open space network that will further strengthen north south connectivity within the district, while improving green space and expanding tree canopy.

District 4 – Avenues

District 4a - Sheppard Avenue has the potential for intensification, given that this corridor is home to the Line 4 subway currently extending from Yonge Street to Leslie Street. The area around Sheppard Avenue and Yonge Street is a key office hub, with opportunities for further growth along the corridor. Taller buildings would be concentrated near the subway station, with heights gradually decreasing to mid-rise buildings as you move east and west of Yonge Street. This would create a gradual transition towards areas outside of the Secondary Plan boundary. An enhanced streetscape along Sheppard Avenue would improve pedestrian and cycling safety and comfort, facilitating access to Sheppard subway station from nearby neighbourhoods. Retail activity would also be encouraged along the corridor supporting the daily needs of the growing population.

District 4b – Finch Avenue holds the potential for future intensification, given that the corridor has been identified for the potential extension of the Finch West LRT to Yonge Street. Taller buildings are proposed near the subway station, and as you move east and west of Yonge Street heights are proposed to transition down to mid-rise buildings, creating a gradual transition towards the neighbourhoods beyond the study area. An enhanced streetscape along Finch Avenue would improve pedestrian and cycling safety and comfort, facilitating access to the Finch subway station from the nearby neighbourhoods. Retail activity would be encouraged along the corridor to support the daily needs of the growing population.

District 5 – Neighbourhood Main Streets

District 5a - Willowdale Neighbourhood Main Street imagines Willowdale Avenue to evolve with the introduction of mid-rise buildings. It builds from the existing Mixed Use Area designation on Willowdale Avenue north of Sheppard Avenue. Small-scale retail would be encouraged on Willowdale, creating a secondary retail spine for the Centre. This retail main street would be further supported by an improved streetscape, featuring social streets, wide sidewalks and a continuous canopy of street trees.

District 5b – Park Home/Empress Neighbourhood Main Street would build a strong east/west connection across the study area connecting District 3 and District 5a through Park Home/Empress Avenue. It would include blocks on both sides of Empress Avenue developed with mid-rise buildings. This district would allow a mix of uses including small-scale retail along Empress Avenue, with frequent midblock connections and courtyards forming a network of open spaces.

District 6 – Neighbourhoods

District 6 consists of an existing low-rise residential area that is proposed to remain within North York Centre. Currently this district features low-rise single-family homes with a deep front yard and backyard. This district is not anticipated to see significant change, with the exception of flexibility for gentle density enabled by the City's Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods initiative. Streetscape and mobility improvements will continue throughout this district, enhancing walkability.

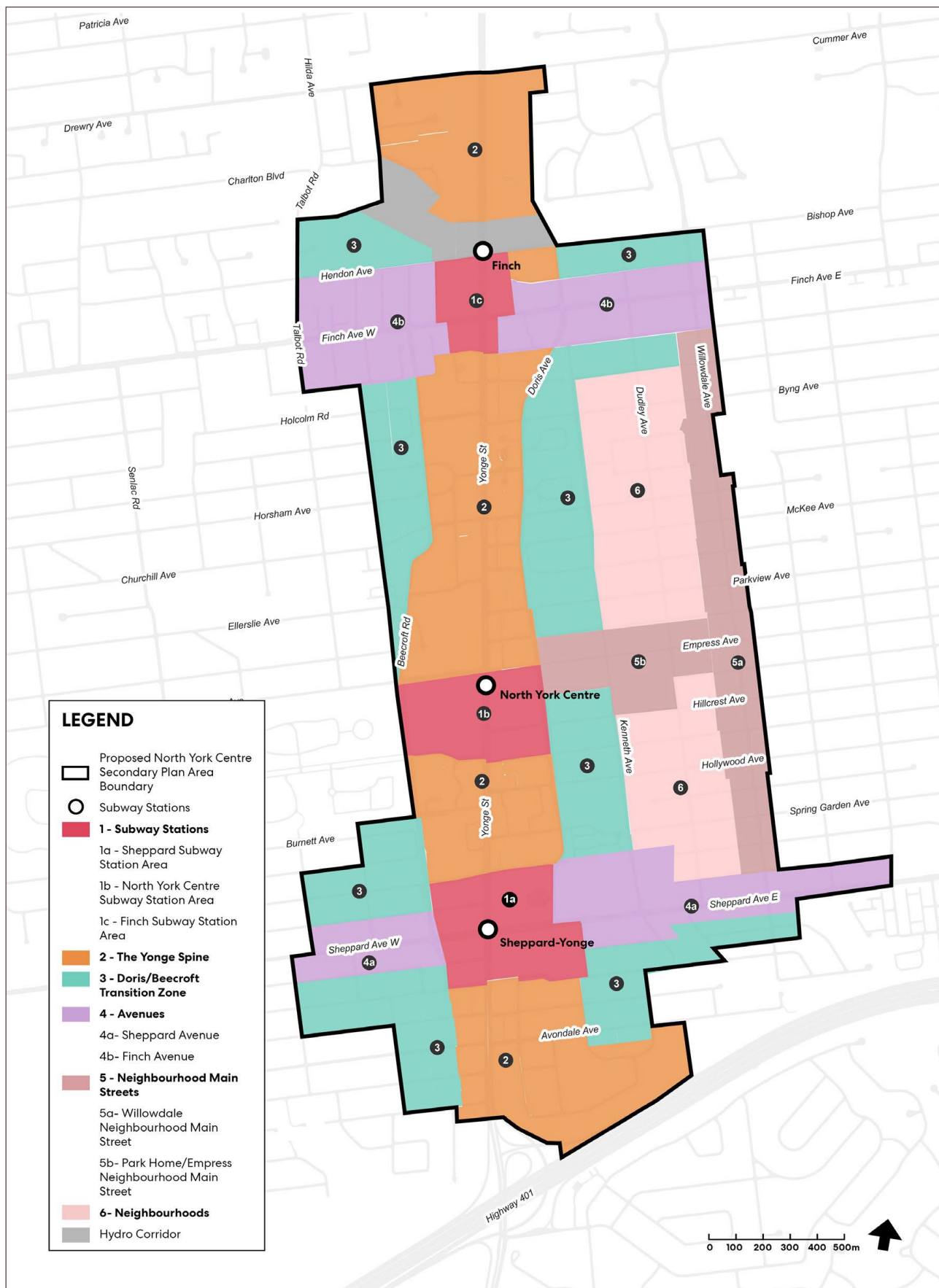


Figure 4-2: Emerging Preferred Option Districts Map

4.2 Land Use

The Emerging Preferred Option includes proposed plans and policies to achieve the guiding principles Grow a Complete Community and Reinforce the Centre as a Vibrant Hub for Work, Arts and Culture. Topics covered under land use include land use designations, affordable housing, housing unit mix and size, community services and facilities, office, retail, inclusive economic development and arts and culture.

Land Use Designations

The Emerging Preferred Option proposes to update the land use designations within the current Secondary Plan area and redesignate some areas within the proposed expanded boundary of North York Centre. Overall, the land use strategy would:

- Introduce new sub-*Mixed Use Area* designations to specify the land use in different parts of the Centre;
- Redesignate some areas from *Neighbourhoods* to *Mixed Use Areas*; and
- Retain some areas designated *Neighbourhoods* within the expanded boundary.

The proposed land use designations (shown in **Figure 4-3**) in the Emerging Preferred Option are:

Mixed Use Area 1

Mixed Use Area 1 (MUA 1) surrounds the Sheppard- Yonge subway station. With easy access to two subway lines and Highway 401, it is one of the most attractive areas for office in North York Centre and has a significant concentration of office uses already. It is envisioned to continue to be a focus for office in the Centre, in addition to permitting high- density residential development.

Mixed Use Area 2

Mixed Use Area 2 (MUA 2) includes the Yonge Street Spine - extending to Doris Avenue in the east and Beecroft Road in the west - as well as the Finch Avenue and Sheppard Avenue frontages. The existing character of these areas includes a wide variety of uses, including office, retail, residential and arts and cultural uses. Many sites have been intensified in the last 20 years with a significant amount of high-density residential development added. MUA 2 is envisioned to accommodate high- density residential development and permit new office if there is demand. Other non-residential uses such as institutions, arts and cultural facilities, and community services will be encouraged to locate in MUA 2 due to its accessibility by transit.

Mixed Use Area 3

Mixed Use Area 3 (MUA 3) includes areas beyond MUA 2 that are further away from the main spines of Yonge Street, Finch Avenue and Sheppard Avenue. The existing character of MUA 3 is mixed – some parts of it are within the current boundary of the Secondary Plan and have been redeveloped with high or medium-density residential uses. Others are outside the boundary of the current Secondary Plan and are characterized by low-density residential development. MUA 3 is envisioned to continue to see residential intensification at a lower intensity than MUA 1 and 2, with flexibility to include small- scale office uses or community services.

Mixed Use Area 4

Mixed Use Area 4 (MUA 4) includes the Willowdale Avenue frontage and Empress Avenue frontage. This MUA builds on the existing mixed-use character of Willowdale Avenue immediately north of Sheppard Avenue and transit accessibility by local bus. It envisions two secondary main streets for North York Centre with a smaller scale of non-residential uses to complement Yonge Street, in addition to residential intensification.

Neighbourhoods

Like many of Toronto's *Centres*, areas of low-rise residential development are included in the Emerging Preferred Option. These low-rise areas would maintain their existing *Neighbourhoods* designation and see less change than the rest of North York Centre.

Although no significant changes are proposed for these areas through the Secondary Plan update, new forms of low-rise multiplex housing may be developed as landowners take advantage of permissions introduced by the City in 2023 under the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) initiative. The potential to permit neighbourhood retail and services city-wide is also being explored under EHON.

Parks

The *Parks* designation includes existing, planned and proposed City-owned parkland.

Other Open Space Areas

The *Other Open Space Areas* designation includes existing, planned and proposed non-park open spaces in the Centre such as cemeteries.

Utility Corridors

The *Utility Corridors* designation includes the Finch Hydro Corridor.

Affordable Housing

A multi-pronged approach is required to address the housing crisis. The need for affordable housing was stressed by the public, stakeholders and Indigenous communities in the Phase 1 engagement process. Demographic analysis for the Phase 1 Background Report found that in 2021, 53% of renters and 42% of homeowners in the Centre were spending more than they can afford on shelter costs. The Emerging Preferred Option is designed to increase the housing supply by opening up opportunities for more new development in North York Centre. Policies are also proposed to address affordable housing needs and potential tools to support housing delivery.

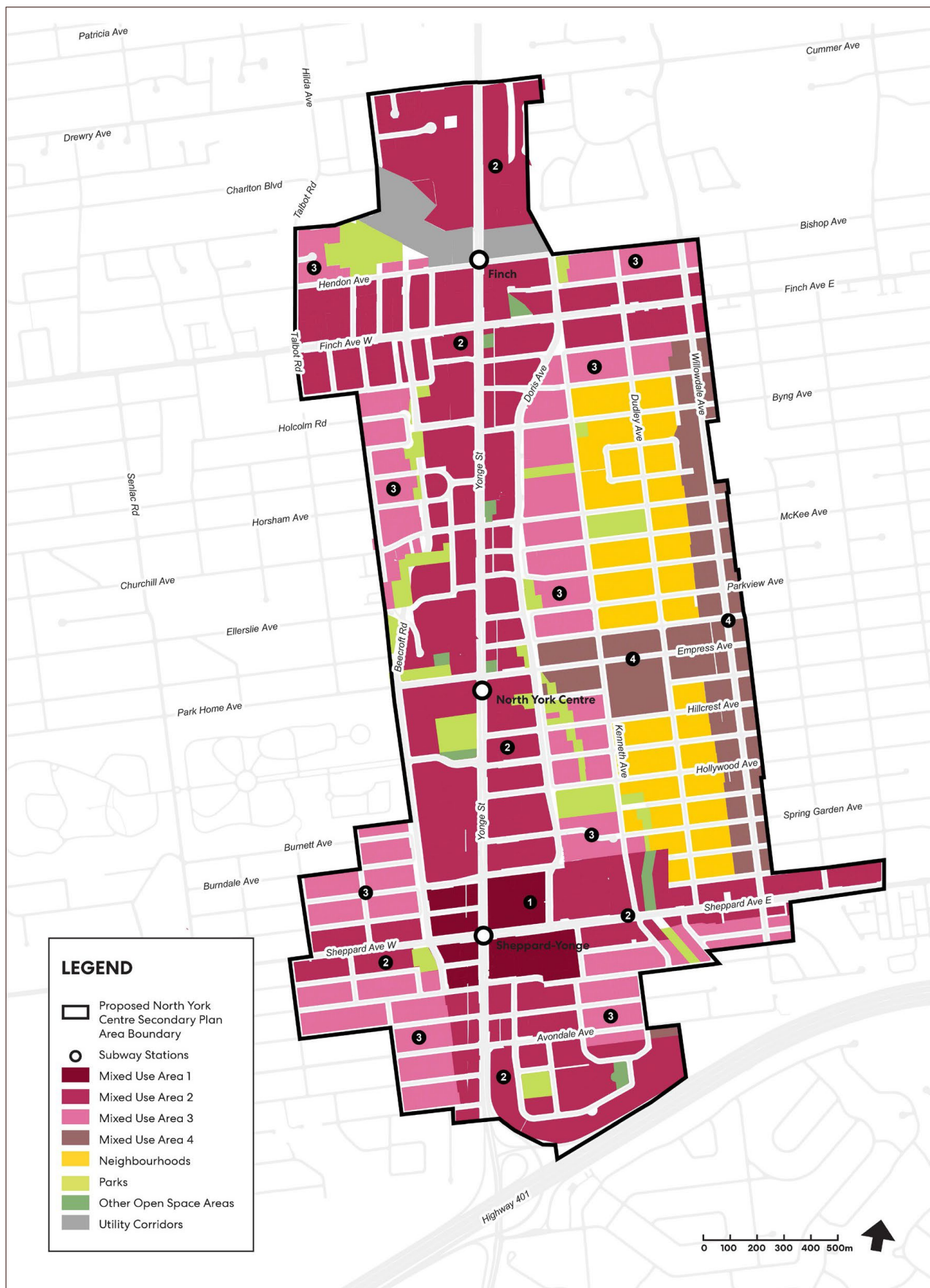


Figure 4-3: Emerging Preferred Option Land Use Map

Recommended Policy Directions

1. Development on City-owned land should prioritize affordable and/or supportive housing where appropriate, built through partnerships with non-profit housing providers, Indigenous housing providers, other orders of government, and the private sector.
2. Explore opportunities for partnerships with Indigenous housing providers to build affordable and/or supportive housing for Indigenous peoples on City-owned sites, in collaboration with other orders of government.
3. Where appropriate, the City should encourage intensification of existing sites with infill development. Where infill development occurs on existing apartment sites, services and amenities should be shared between the new and existing buildings.
4. Opportunities for community land trusts and cooperative models to secure new affordable housing will be encouraged.

Rental Housing Supply Program

The City has a Rental Housing Supply Program (RHSP) which supports a range of new rental homes including new:

- Rent-geared-to-income (RGI) homes;
- Affordable rental homes;
- Rent-controlled homes;
- Purpose-built rental homes.

RHSP provides City financial contributions including capital funding, relief from development fees and charges, and property taxes. RGI, affordable rental, rent-controlled, and purpose-built rental housing projects approved under RHSP are supported through a prioritized development review process.

Housing Unit Mix and Size

Different types of households require different unit types. Size of unit is the most important unit type characteristic, with families needing larger units with more bedrooms than individuals or couples. In a healthy community people should be able to find units that meet their needs throughout every life stage so that they can stay in their local community over time.

The City's 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 state that a building should provide a minimum of 25% large units: 10% of the units should be three-bedroom units and 15% of the units should be two bedroom units. Census data shows that the existing mix of units in North York Centre includes a much higher percentage of large units - 59% of units had two or more bedrooms. In the current development pipeline 32% of units are proposed as two-bedroom units and 9% as three-bedroom units. Despite North York Centre performing quite well in the provision of large units in relation to the Growing Up Guidelines, public engagement feedback noted a desire for more family-sized units. Therefore, the new Secondary Plan should establish more ambitious targets for large units in North York Centre.

Recommended Policy Directions

5. In all *Mixed Use Areas*, require developments of more than 80 units to include at least 40% 2- and 3-bedroom units, including at least 10% bedroom units, 15% 2-bedroom units, and the remaining 15% to be a mix of 2- and 3-bedroom units.
 - a. The City may reduce the unit mix requirements where development is providing:
 - i. Social housing or other publicly funded housing; or
 - ii. Specialized housing such as residences owned and operated by a post- secondary institution or a health care institution to house students, patients or seniors.
6. Encourage affordable and supportive housing to include options suitable for families.

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 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. A Community Services and Facilities (CS&F) Strategy is being prepared for North York Centre and it will identify the investments required to support growth, including in child care, EarlyON Child and Family Centres, schools, libraries, recreation facilities and human services.

Recommended Policy Directions

7. Refer to the North York Centre Community Services and Facilities Strategy to identify needed investment in community services and facilities investment in North York Centre.
8. Encourage new development and redevelopment to meet identified community services and facilities needs through on-site community benefits where feasible.
9. Encourage development on parcels with existing on-site community service facilities to replace the GFA of the community service facility on-site.
10. In addition to publicly-owned or leased CS&F assets, support the inclusion of uses that address identified CS&F needs in private development. Encourage the co-location of multiple services and agencies, including community service facilities, affordable and/or supportive housing, arts and culture facilities, and institutional uses.
11. Direct new development to provide new and/or expanded community services and facilities in a timely manner to support and be commensurate with growth.
 - a. In multi-phase development, any community services or facilities should generally be provided in the first phase of development.

- b. Where the provision of community services and facilities is not feasible in the first phase of a development, consideration should be given to accommodating temporary community service facilities, particularly where existing community services and facilities have been displaced by redevelopment.
12. Identify considerations that should guide the design of community service facilities, such as:
- a. Using a compact urban format that can be incorporated on the ground floor or on the second storey of multi-storey buildings wherever possible; and
 - b. Designing flexible, multi-purpose spaces that are able to adapt to varied needs and support diverse programming.

Office

Although long-term demand for office space across the City and region remains uncertain, the North York Centre Non-Residential Land Use Study found North York Centre's larger supply of older and lower-class office buildings puts it at a disadvantage. Recognizing the important role of North York Centre as an office employment hub, and the need to take a longer-term view when it comes to demand for office space, policies are required that encourage the protection of existing non-residential spaces and the provision of new space where warranted. Supporting major office and institutional developments in strategic growth areas like North York Centre is consistent with the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024. A City-wide Office Space Needs Study was adopted by Planning and Housing Committee in December 2024 and will be considered as policies related to the conversion or adaptation of existing office space in North York Centre are developed and refined.

Recommended Policy Directions

- 13. When redevelopment of existing vacant office space is proposed, encourage its replacement with alternative non-residential uses, such as institutional, community and entertainment uses, or clean industrial uses (subject to compatibility study).
- 14. Allow for the conversion of existing office space, provided a minimum percentage (to be determined) of the converted gross floor area (GFA) is dedicated to an alternative non-residential use or affordable / supportive housing.
 - a. More strongly encourage the provision of alternative non-residential space versus affordable / supportive housing in targeted areas (e.g. Sheppard-Yonge Station).
- 15. Revisit the office conversion policy framework every four (4) years or until, in Council's opinion, the supply and availability of office has returned to a healthy state based on vacancy rates.

Retail

North York Centre currently offers a vibrant mix of retail and commercial services that help animate the public realm and create a complete community. Currently, these establishments are primarily located on the ground floor along Yonge Street. Typically they are characterized by smaller, contiguous storefronts occupied by local / independent businesses, particularly in the north part of the Centre. It is common for redevelopment to have much larger retail units and higher rents, threatening the Centre's retail diversity and service uses. Maintaining diverse spaces for retail and service uses will be key to supporting the Centre's growing population and the established character of the area. The current Secondary Plan requires ground floor, street related retail within the Prime Frontage Area.

The proposed retail plan for the Emerging Preferred Option (shown in **Figure 4-4**) identifies where new retail should be located in North York Centre. It establishes requirements for new and replacement retail spaces on different streets in the Centre, which may help to mitigate displacement of businesses but does not address the cost of new space or the challenges associated with the construction period. Policies in the current Secondary Plan for sites abutting Yonge Street in the Prime Frontage Area encourage fine-grained retail that animates the street by requiring entrances onto Yonge Street, limiting individual store fronts to 14 metres and encouraging more active uses on the ground level. This policy has been important in allowing the City to require new development to maintain a small size of retail units. With the proposed expanded Secondary Plan area, greater nuance can be added to this policy based on the prevailing or desired character of retail in different parts of the Centre. Policy should also require that existing business owners have been consulted when redevelopment is proposed and understand their options.

Recommended Policy Directions

16. Require space to support retail, service commercial or other non-residential uses that help activate the public realm on the ground floor of Priority Retail Streets.
17. Encourage space to support retail, service commercial or other non-residential uses that help activate the public realm on the ground floor of Secondary Retail Streets.
 - a. Where non-residential space is not provided on the ground floor of Secondary Retail Streets, units should be designed for potential future adaptation.
18. Require replacement of existing ground floor non-residential space on Secondary Retail Streets.
19. Require street-related retail along 75% of the building's street frontage, where it is required.
20. Continue to limit individual store front widths to 14 metres. Consider further distinguishing unit width requirements by district or sub Mixed Use Area within North York Centre.
21. Only permit large format retail space with a gross floor area of 3,500 square metres or more within the southern portion of the Secondary Plan area.
22. Include a provision that development applications may be required to demonstrate, as part of the required Public Consultation Strategy Report, a record of community consultation conducted prior to the submission of a formal planning application, including with any existing businesses on the site.

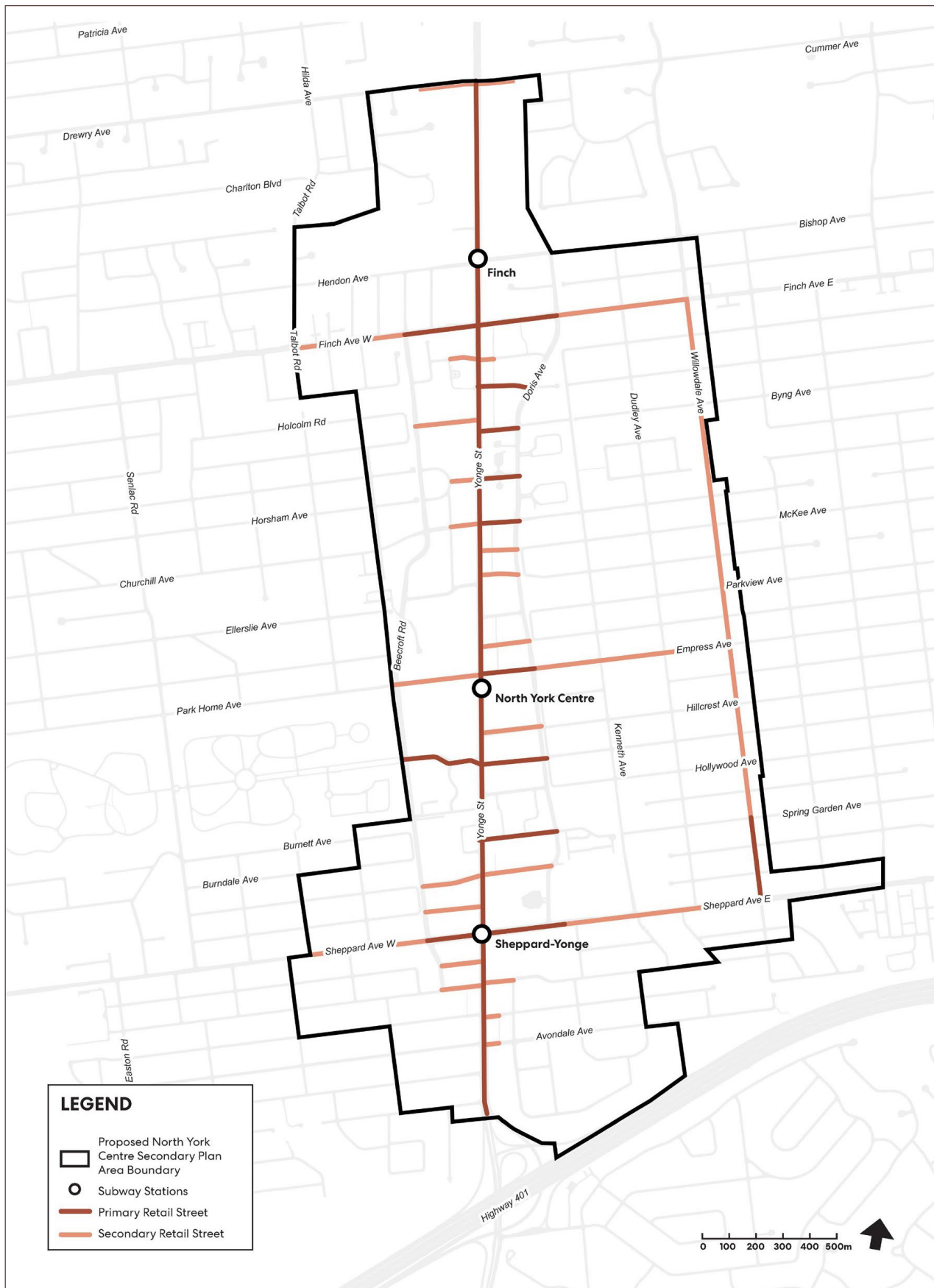


Figure 4-4: Emerging Preferred Option Retail Map

Inclusive Economic Development

Chapter One of the Official Plan establishes that the benefits of growth and development should be equitably distributed and that everyone should have opportunities to participate in the city's strong and competitive economy. Economic development in the city is guided by Sidewalks to Skylines – An Action Plan for Toronto's Economy, which was adopted by City Council in November 2024. As the Centre continues to grow, the City should be an active partner in supporting and guiding future investments to achieve more equitable and inclusive outcomes. To this end, programs and initiatives can be recommended in the Implementation Strategy for North York Centre that will complement Secondary Plan policies.

Recommended Policy Directions

23. Explore opportunities to provide incentives to support the conversion or adaptation of vacant office space into other non-residential employment uses to diversify local job opportunities.
24. Provide financial support for tenant improvements or fit-outs for small businesses and service providers, which may encourage more local and independent retailers to establish themselves in larger buildings. This may be achieved by expanding the existing Commercial Façade Improvement Grant Program, which is enabled through a Community Improvement Plan By-law.
25. Encourage partnerships between private landowners, the City, and/or non-profit organizations to facilitate co-investment in the development and operation of affordable spaces for first-storey retail and services, including those that would support newcomer enterprises.

Arts and Culture

There is a strong and established arts and culture scene in North York Centre that is supported by various facilities, organizations, and programs, from a museum to a multi-purpose arts centre. The current Secondary Plan identifies North York Centre South as the preferred location for arts and cultural uses and this is reflected in the location of existing arts and cultural facilities. There are benefits to clustering major arts and cultural destinations, and Yonge Street in the south part of the Secondary Plan area functions as a cultural corridor for all of North York and is a major asset to the area and the city.

Easy access to neighbourhood scale arts and cultural spaces for all residents is also important and residents in the north of North York Centre currently have poorer access. Neighbourhood scale arts and cultural spaces should be encouraged in the north as well as the south of the Centre to provide equitable access for residents.

Recommended Policy Directions

26. Identify appropriate districts or sub *Mixed Use Areas* in the southern portion of the Secondary Plan area as the priority location for destination cultural spaces to continue supporting this area's function as a cultural corridor for North York.
27. Encourage the retention, expansion and creation of community scale spaces for arts and culture sector uses throughout the Secondary Plan area.
28. Promote access to small scale arts and cultural spaces for Indigenous, Black and equity- deserving communities throughout North York Centre.

4.3 Parks and Environment

Greening North York Centre will involve expanding and creating new parkland and other open spaces, completing, connecting and expanding signature trails, introducing policies to protect and expand tree canopy and permeable land cover, and ensuring North York Centre is a climate resilient community.

Parks

The parks and open spaces plan (shown in **Figure 4-5**) identifies priority locations to expand and create new parkland in North York Centre. Priority is given to securing on-site or off-site parkland on larger development sites and expanding existing parkland to improve visibility, accessibility, connectivity, and programming opportunities. New parkland has been identified with a view to serving existing areas of parkland need and walkability gaps, and to support future growth. This includes leveraging changes in the public realm to expand and strengthen the parkland network, as well as create new connections to other open spaces both within and outside the Secondary Plan area, especially to the adjacent ravine and trail systems.

The parks and open spaces plan for the Emerging Preferred Option includes the following categories of parks:

- **Parks:** These are the existing parks in North York Centre.
- **Planned parks:** These parks have already been secured through the development process or acquisition.
- **Priority areas for park expansion:** These are areas adjacent to existing parkland that offer the opportunity to increase the functionality of a park by making it larger and better suited to hosting recreational facilities.
- **Priority areas for future parks:** These are areas where it would be beneficial to secure new parks through parkland dedication or acquisition to improve access to parkland and connectivity of the parks and open space network.

Recommended Policy Directions

29. Prioritize the expansion of existing parkland that improves visibility accessibility, connectivity, and programming opportunities.
30. Establish new parkland that serve areas of parkland need and addresses walkability gaps.
31. Require on-site or off-site parkland dedication on development sites above 0.5 hectares.
32. Work with other public organizations and partners to expand and better connect existing open spaces to the parkland network and ravine areas outside the Secondary Plan area.

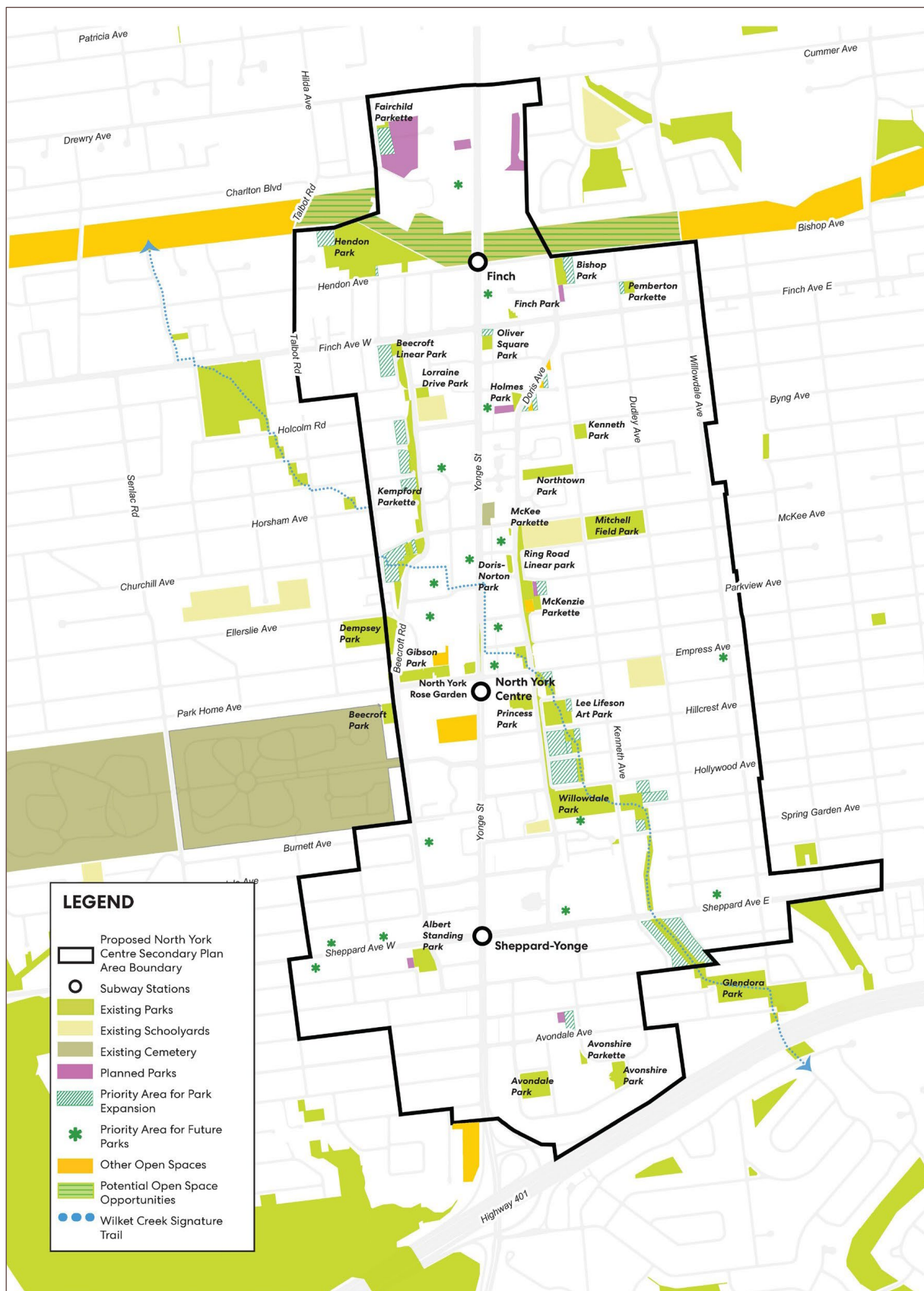


Figure 4-5: Emerging Preferred Option Parks and Open Spaces Map

Willet Creek Signature Trail

The trail along Wilket Creek, which exists in parts of the Centre but needs to be completed and expanded, is a signature move connecting the public realm network and providing opportunities for the community to connect with the land and water. This would look different in different parts of the Centre and may include signage or public art to recognize the historic watercourse, partial or full restoration or “daylighting” portions that are channelized.

Recommended Policy Direction

33. Improve connectivity and visibility to the Wilket Creek Signature Trail and celebrate this historic watercourse through signage, expansion of parkland along its length, incorporation into the trail network and daylighting where feasible.

Finch Hydro Corridor

The primary other open space opportunity is greening the Finch Hydro Corridor if a time comes when the TTC no longer needs it for parking.

Recommended Policy Direction

34. Work with the TTC to assess the feasibility of expanding the open space network by repurposing the existing Finch Subway Station parking lot located in the Finch Hydro Corridor after the Yonge North Subway Extension is operational.

Mel Lastman Square

Mel Lastman Square, located in front of North York Civic Centre, is a well-used and prominent civic square in North York Centre. It 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 Yonge Street 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 that celebrate its central civic role within North York Centre are needed.

Recommended Policy Directions

35. Establish a civic district surrounding Mel Lastman Square to recognize its role as the central outdoor civic space of North York.
36. Upgrade Mel Lastman Square to facilitate its function as an actively programmed civic gathering space that reflects the identity and diversity of North York.
37. Determine the heritage importance of Mel Lastman Square through a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment prior to any major changes.

Tree Canopy

The City of Toronto has a city-wide goal of reaching 40 per cent tree canopy cover by 2050. This target must consider the unique contexts of individual neighbourhoods to achieve that target. Some areas of the city will enjoy more than 40 per cent canopy cover while others will achieve less; this difference is based on geography, housing density and many other factors. Ensuring adequate tree canopy cover across the city must consider equitable distribution, 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.

The parks and public realm plans are designed to help North York Centre increase tree canopy cover, contributing to the city-wide target of 40 per cent and improving the equitable distribution of trees in this community. A tree canopy cover target tailored specifically to North York Centre is needed to measure progress.

Recommended Policy Direction

38. 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.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the rich variety of life forms and the critical roles they play within varied ecosystems. The greater the biodiversity of a geographic area, the greater the ecological health and resiliency of that area. The biodiversity found in small green spaces, street trees, green roofs, community gardens, hydro corridors, cemeteries, and backyards plays an important role in our urban ecosystem.

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 nonnative species. Biodiversity can be improved through both the treatment of private development sites and the public realm and parks.

Recommended Policy Directions

39. Encourage new development to incorporate biodiversity into site design by:
 - a. Creating habitats that provide shelter, refuge and food;
 - b. Planting a variety of species on ground level and on rooftops, including native plant species that are pollinator-friendly; and
 - c. Adopting bird-friendly design strategies.
40. Support habitat creation and connectivity and promote biodiversity, native species and pollinators.

Indigenous Placekeeping

The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAC) guides the City's actions to advance truth, justice, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through meaningful actions that restore truth, right relations and share power, provide justice, make financial reparations, and other actions related to the role of the Indigenous Affairs Office.

Background work undertaken in Phase 1 and Indigenous engagement to date have identified that there are few existing examples of Indigenous placekeeping in North York Centre but many opportunities to advance placekeeping through the Secondary Plan.

Recommended Policy Directions

41. Recognize, celebrate and commemorate Indigenous cultures and histories in parks and the public realm network in partnership with Indigenous communities through:
 - a. Placekeeping, placemaking, public art, and naming initiatives;
 - b. Protecting and creating safe spaces for Indigenous cultural and ceremonial practices;
 - c. Providing opportunities for non-Indigenous people to learn of Indigenous culture and history;
 - d. Increasing Indigenous plantings, foods and medicines; and
 - e. Creating opportunities for the community to connect with the land and water.
42. Undertake ongoing Indigenous engagement to identify, design and implement placekeeping measures in parks and the public realm.

Green Infrastructure

Enhancing green infrastructure including permeable surfaces in North York Centre will improve stormwater management by allowing water to infiltrate the ground. This will help reduce the risk of flooding during heavy rain events while also promoting a healthier ecosystem. Permeability can be improved both on individual development sites and within the broader parks and public realm of North York Centre.

Recommended Policy Directions

43. Public infrastructure projects should include space for trees and adequate soil volume where feasible, and other forms of green infrastructure where trees and adequate soil volume are not feasible.
44. New development should include green infrastructure to manage stormwater. Where street trees are not feasible in the public boulevard adjacent to new development, building setbacks should provide space for trees and adequate soil volume along the street frontage.
45. Support ecological health and resiliency, long- term tree growth and expansion of the urban forest by connecting parks and open spaces to the broader natural green infrastructure system, where appropriate.

Action on Climate Change

Climate change and resiliency policy at all levels of government has advanced significantly since the adoption of the current Secondary Plan, in particular with the City’s declaration of a climate emergency in 2019. This led to the development of the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy, which accelerates efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The strategy aims to reduce emissions by 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2025, 65 percent by 2030, and to reach net zero emissions by 2040.

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.

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. Another important action to decarbonize the Centre is to increase on-site renewable energy generation, such as solar energy. Minimizing embodied carbon – the energy used in all aspects of creating a building, from manufacturing its materials to assembling its structure – is another opportunity to decarbonize.

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.

Recommended Policy Directions

- 46. Encourage development to achieve higher performance levels of the Toronto Green Standard in effect at the time of the development application.
- 47. Design development to minimize energy demand and embodied carbon and pursue zero emissions and carbon positive development, including through appropriate building location and orientation, minimizing below ground parking structures and use of low-carbon materials.
- 48. Where possible, prioritize the retention and rehabilitation of large buildings over demolition to conserve their embodied carbon.

49. Encourage development to:

- a. Incorporate low carbon thermal energy technologies on site such as geo-exchange, wastewater energy recovery and heat recovery from sources such as data centres and industry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- b. Develop a thermal energy network, connect to an existing thermal energy network, or have the capability to connect to a future thermal energy network.

4.4 Public Realm

The public realm includes streets and non-park public or publicly-accessible open spaces like cemeteries, plazas and public school yards. Provincial policy limits the amount of new parkland that the City can require as development takes place, so complementing parkland by preserving and expanding non-park open spaces and finding opportunities for streets to serve as public gathering spaces is important to creating a comprehensive open space network to serve the people of North York Centre. The public realm plan for the Emerging Preferred Option is shown in **Figure 4-6**.

POPS

Privately-owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS) are open spaces within private developments that remain accessible to the public all year round. POPS increase the availability of open space within the urban fabric. POPS can also improve connectivity when they take the form of mid-block connections that provide convenient routes for pedestrians. New POPS can be secured through development and may be added to the public realm plan in high priority locations. In some cases, publicly-accessible open spaces or mid-block connections exist today on private sites but are not designated as parks or secured as POPS. This means that they could disappear as sites are redeveloped.

If landowners propose to redevelop these sites, the City can work with them to try to formalize these open spaces as parks or POPS.

Recommended Policy Directions

50. Protect existing non-park open spaces in North York Centre.
51. Secure POPS through development to augment the provision of other open spaces that better connect and enhance the public realm. POPS should be strategically located to support a continuous pedestrian network throughout the Secondary Plan area.

Social Streets

Social streets proposed in the options for North York Centre enhanced the public realm and have therefore been incorporated into the public realm plan for the Emerging Preferred Option. Social streets are short side street segments abutting Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue and Willowdale Avenue that are flexibly designed to provide public open space. Policy and guidelines will be required to direct how these new open spaces should be implemented in North York Centre.

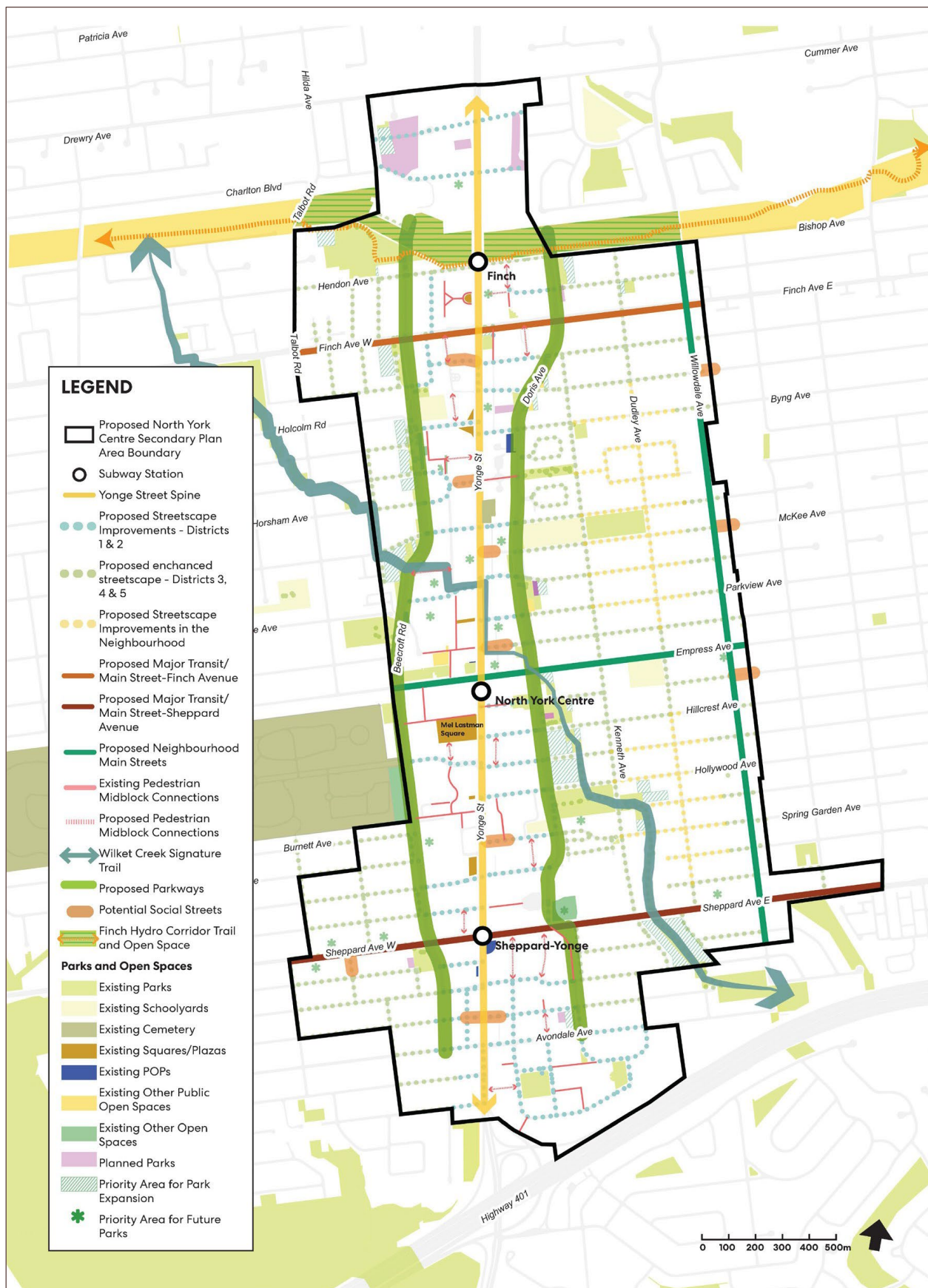
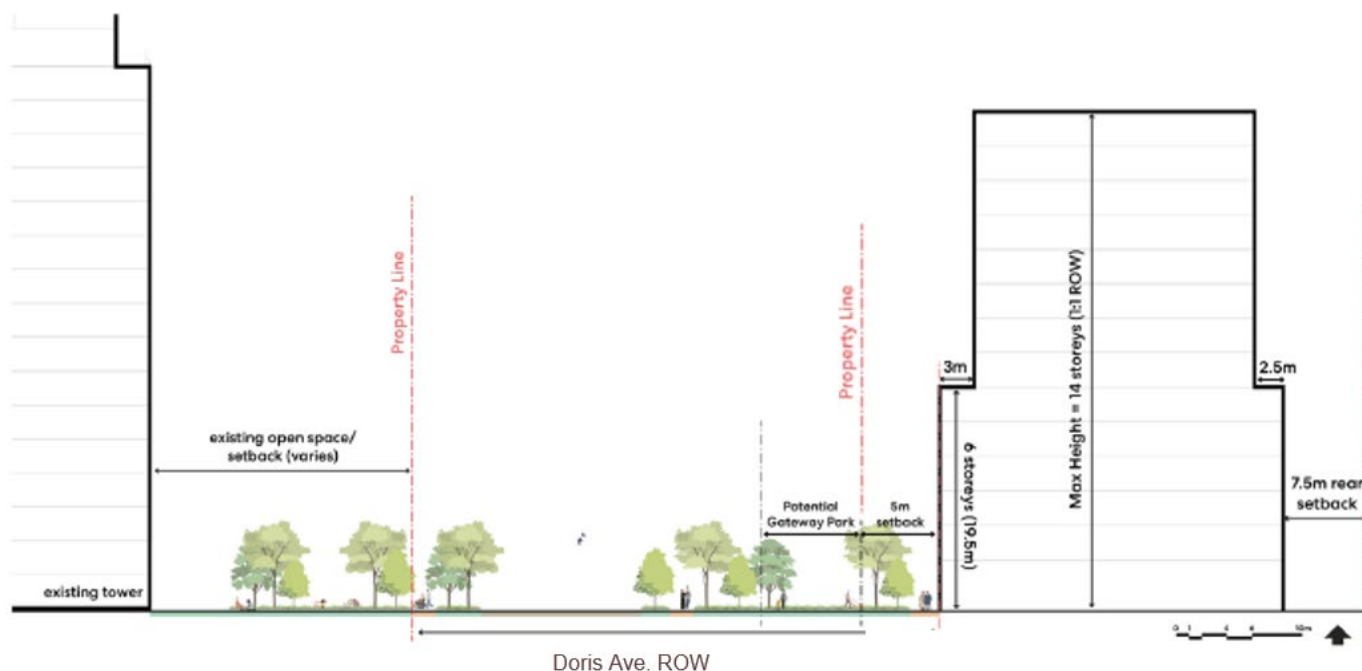


Figure 4-6: Emerging Preferred Option Public Realm Map



Figure 4-7: Demonstration of a Social Street (Example for Spring Garden Avenue, festival scenario (top), day-to-day operation (bottom))



Note: Conceptual cross section for discussion only, built form parameters and street design will be determined through a Preferred Option and Functional Concept Plan later in Phase 2.

Figure 4-8: Cross Section Showing the Doris Avenue Parkway

Recommended Policy Direction

52. Design social streets to:

- Have flexible infrastructure to accommodate permanent or temporary programming.
- Where possible, be framed by adjacent development with active frontages, large setbacks, POPS, enhanced soft landscaping and enhanced pedestrian amenities.

Parkways

The parkways proposed along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road in the options for North York Centre also enhanced the public realm and have been incorporated into the public realm plan for the Emerging Preferred Option. The consistent, wide green linear open spaces on either side of the parkways can be achieved by repurposing window streets or securing wide open spaces through the development process.

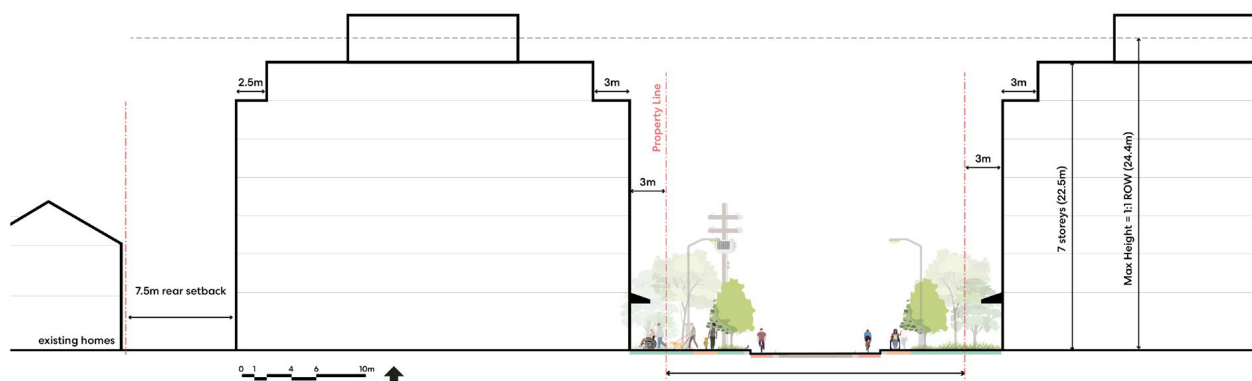
Recommended Policy Direction

53. Design parkways to:

- Provide functional parks and open spaces for the community, where possible;
- Connect to and enhance existing parks, open spaces and trails, where possible.
- Create consistent linear green corridors.

Neighbourhood Main Streets

Neighbourhood Main Streets along Empress Avenue and Willowdale Avenue will have a streetscape character that supports their function as smaller-scale mixed use main streets to complement Yonge Street.



Note: Conceptual cross section for discussion only, built form parameters and street design will be determined through a Preferred Option and Functional Concept Plan later in Phase 2.

Figure 4-9: Cross Section Showing the Willowdale Neighbourhood Main Street

Streetscape Improvements

Streetscape improvements are proposed throughout North York Centre to support pedestrian comfort and safety and resilience. The current status of the streetscapes and the path to implementation for improvements will be different in different parts of North York Centre. The public realm plan for the Emerging Preferred Option proposes the following streetscape types:

- **District 1 & 2 Streetscape Improvements:** Within the current Secondary Plan area, which is highly urbanized and lacking in tree canopy and green infrastructure, streetscape improvements will include wide boulevards and a continuous tree canopy, to enhance the vibrancy and greenery of the area.
- **District 3, 4 and 5 Enhanced Streetscapes:** These areas outside the current Secondary Plan area have a lush tree canopy today. As they intensify every effort will be made to preserve and enhance this tree canopy by requiring setbacks and space for new tree planting.
- **Neighbourhood Streetscapes:** In areas designated *Neighbourhoods* the existing green character of all streetscapes will be maintained.

Recommended Policy Direction

54. Where a continuous tree canopy cannot be provided within the public boulevard, provide building setbacks with space for trees with adequate soil volume along the street frontage.

Public Art

Public art is one way of celebrating an area's unique sense of place and reflecting its diverse history and vibrancy. A Public Art Strategy for the Yonge Street Corridor will be developed as part of the implementation of Transform Yonge and will establish a vision, guiding principles and a framework. Official Plan policies encouraging public art initiatives on City-owned properties, dedicating one per cent of the capital budget of all major municipal buildings and structures to public art, and encouraging the inclusion of public art in all significant private sector developments across the City will be used to secure new public art in North York Centre.

Recommended Policy Directions

55. Identify priority locations in North York Centre for public art on the public realm plan for the Preferred Option.
56. Public art is encouraged to express North York Centre's history, diverse cultures and natural heritage, including:
 - a. Indigenous place-keeping and cultural expression;
 - b. North York Centre's history and civic identity as the downtown of the former municipality of North York; and
 - c. Other themes that contribute to community identity, cultural diversity, and a sense of place.

4.5 Mobility

The Emerging Preferred Option (shown in **Figure 4-10**) incorporates a variety of local mobility-related improvements providing a comprehensive multi-modal mobility network to further support the planned/approved major improvements in the Centre (i.e. Yonge North Subway Extension, Transform Yonge, Beecroft Extension and Doris Extension; as well as other improvements identified in the City's Cycling Network Plan, Capital Plan and other Secondary Plans for nearby areas).

Street Network

Improvements to the street network include three potential new streets to improve local connectivity, access to growth areas and establish a finer street grid. These include a southerly extension of Beecroft Road, an extension of Botham Road to connect to the Sheppard Avenue/Bangor Road intersection, as well as an extension of Basswood Road to connect to the Elmview Avenue/Lorraine Drive intersection.

The Emerging Preferred Option also identified the potential to explore re-opening some local streets to improve connections to Doris Avenue, Beecroft Road and Sheppard Avenue East. These re-openings would be considered over time where appropriate and feasible through redevelopment.

Recommended Policy Direction

57. Identify potential new streets to improve local connectivity, improve access to growth areas and establish a more compact street grid.

Pedestrian Improvements

Pedestrian improvements in the Emerging Preferred Option include:

- Potential pedestrian connections identified in a number of key locations where pedestrian access is a priority;
- Proposed new signalized intersections and pedestrian crossovers to provide appropriate distances between protected crossings for vulnerable users and improve traffic flow; and,
- Proposed pedestrian priority locations at key intersections to improve road safety for all users.

Proposed new protected crossings along the existing service roads include Elmwood Avenue, Kingsdale Avenue, Northtown Way, Holmes Avenue, Lorraine Drive, Hounslow Avenue, and Burnett Avenue.

Pedestrian priority locations identified as part of the Emerging Preferred Option include major intersections such as Finch Avenue and Yonge Street, Sheppard Avenue and Yonge Street, and Empress and Park Home Avenues and Yonge Street, as well as adjacent to several community facilities such as Earl Haig Secondary School and McKee Public School.

Recommended Policy Directions

58. Provide pedestrian connections in key locations where pedestrian access is a priority.
59. Provide new signalized intersections and pedestrian crossings at key locations to reduce distances between protected crossings.
60. Propose pedestrian priority locations for safety improvements at key locations including intersections and mid-block locations.

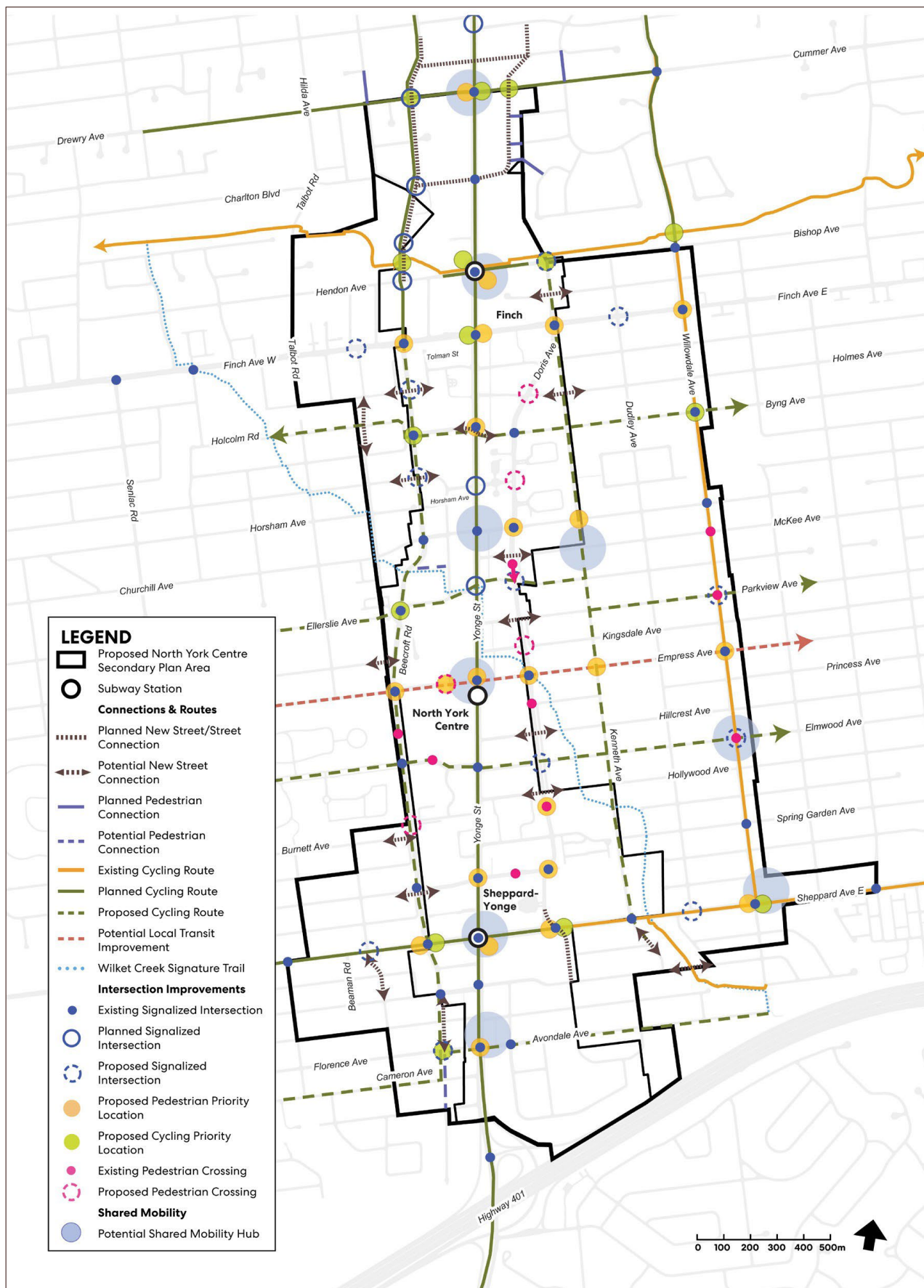


Figure 4-10: Emerging Preferred Option Mobility Map

Cycling Improvements

North York Centre's planned cycling network is anchored by the introduction of dedicated cycling facilities on Yonge Street as part of Transform Yonge and complemented by the recent expansion of Bike Share Toronto stations across the area. Proposed cycling routes in the Centre include Holcolm Road/Byng Avenue, Ellerslie Avenue/ Parkview Avenue, North York Boulevard/Elmwood Avenue, Avondale Avenue/Cameron Avenue, Beecroft Road, and Kenneth Avenue. The proposed cycling priority locations are generally located at intersections where major cycling routes meet to enable safe and convenient movements for people cycling and other road users.

Recommended Policy Directions

61. Provide additional local cycling routes to enhance connectivity and accessibility by filling in existing network gaps and improving access to key destinations.
62. Propose cycling priority locations for safety improvements at key intersections and mid- block locations.

Transit

The Emerging Preferred Option aims to promote and support transit by improving multi-modal connectivity to transit stations/stops, including indoor and outdoor connections between new buildings and nearby transit stations. There is also an opportunity to explore potential local transit improvements on Empress Avenue and Park Home Avenue as development in the Centre continues to evolve.

Recommended Policy Direction

63. Improve the first-/last-mile connections to transit stations and stops, including enhanced indoor and outdoor access.

Transportation Demand Management/Shared Mobility

The Emerging Preferred Option includes shared mobility hubs at key locations to provide more mobility choices in the Centre. These shared mobility hubs are generally proposed at locations near major transit stations, community facilities, and major intersections.

Recommended Policy Direction

64. Provide more mobility choices through the introduction of shared mobility hubs at key locations.

Mode Share Target

The existing North York Centre Secondary Plan includes a mode share target of 60% for transit, 33% for auto, and 7% for walking/cycling in support of the City's overarching policy objective to reduce car dependency. Background work undertaken in Phase 1 of North York at the Centre shows that this target has not been achieved yet, but the historical trend indicates a shift towards non-auto modes, with the exception of pandemic-related travel pattern changes. As North York Centre continues to grow, a key priority is to continue encouraging a transition away from car dependency to support the objectives of sustainability, livability and health of the community, and offering a range of viable non- auto travel options in the *Centre*.

Recommended Policy Direction

65. Develop an appropriate mode share target with supporting policies to secure and implement the recommended multi-modal mobility network and improvements.

4.6 Buildings

The scale and massing of buildings impacts how people feel in a place and the types of housing and uses that can be provided there. Similarly, the design of the ground floor of buildings affects the vibrancy of adjacent streets and open spaces and the types of activities that can be provided in ground floor spaces.

Building Types

The building types and heights plan for the Emerging Preferred Option (shown in **Figure 4-11**) aims to introduce more diverse building types in the Centre to offer more choice for residents. The building types are:

- **Tall buildings:** The proposed plan includes different categories of tall buildings within the current Secondary Plan area and extending to the east and west along Sheppard and Finch Avenues, with the tallest clustered around the three subway stations. The height of tall buildings transitions down away from the subway stations. The maximum proposed height of 65 storeys would match recent development in other *Centres* in the city.
- **Mid-rise buildings:** Mid-rise buildings can be from five to fourteen storeys, with the height generally matching the width of the right-of-way of the adjacent street. The proposed plan introduces significant new areas for mid-rise buildings east of Doris Avenue and west of Beecroft Road as well as along the neighbourhood main streets of Empress Avenue and Willowdale Avenue. These areas provide transition between tall buildings along the Yonge Street Spine, Sheppard Avenue and Finch Avenue and low-rise areas and offer more variety in built form and choice for residents. Based on right-of-way widths, mid-rise buildings would generally be around six storeys on Empress Avenue, seven to eight storeys on Willowdale Avenue and eight to twelve storeys on Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road.
- **Low-rise buildings:** Low-rise buildings are defined as buildings under five storeys. The proposed plan includes retaining some existing areas of low-rise buildings within North York Centre to provide a full spectrum of building types, retain mature trees and protect sunlight.

Tall, mid-rise and low-rise buildings will be designed in accordance with City-wide guidance provided in the Tall Building Design Guidelines, Mid-Rise Guidelines and Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment Guidelines. Context-specific design guidance will be provided in the Urban Design Guidelines for North York Centre.

Ground Floor Animation

The Official Plan requires that developments frame and support adjacent streets, lanes, parks and open spaces to promote civic life and the use of the public realm, and to improve safety, pedestrian comfort, interest and experience, and casual views to outdoor spaces. The exterior design of a façade on the ground floor is an important design consideration to help new development support the public realm and fit with the existing and/or planned context. In particular, the nature, scale and placement of doors and the placement, type and treatment of windows on the façade play an important role in supporting a safe, accessible and vibrant public realm. The location of parking and servicing entrances is also important to the public realm as these spaces are not active and interrupt the pedestrian experience.

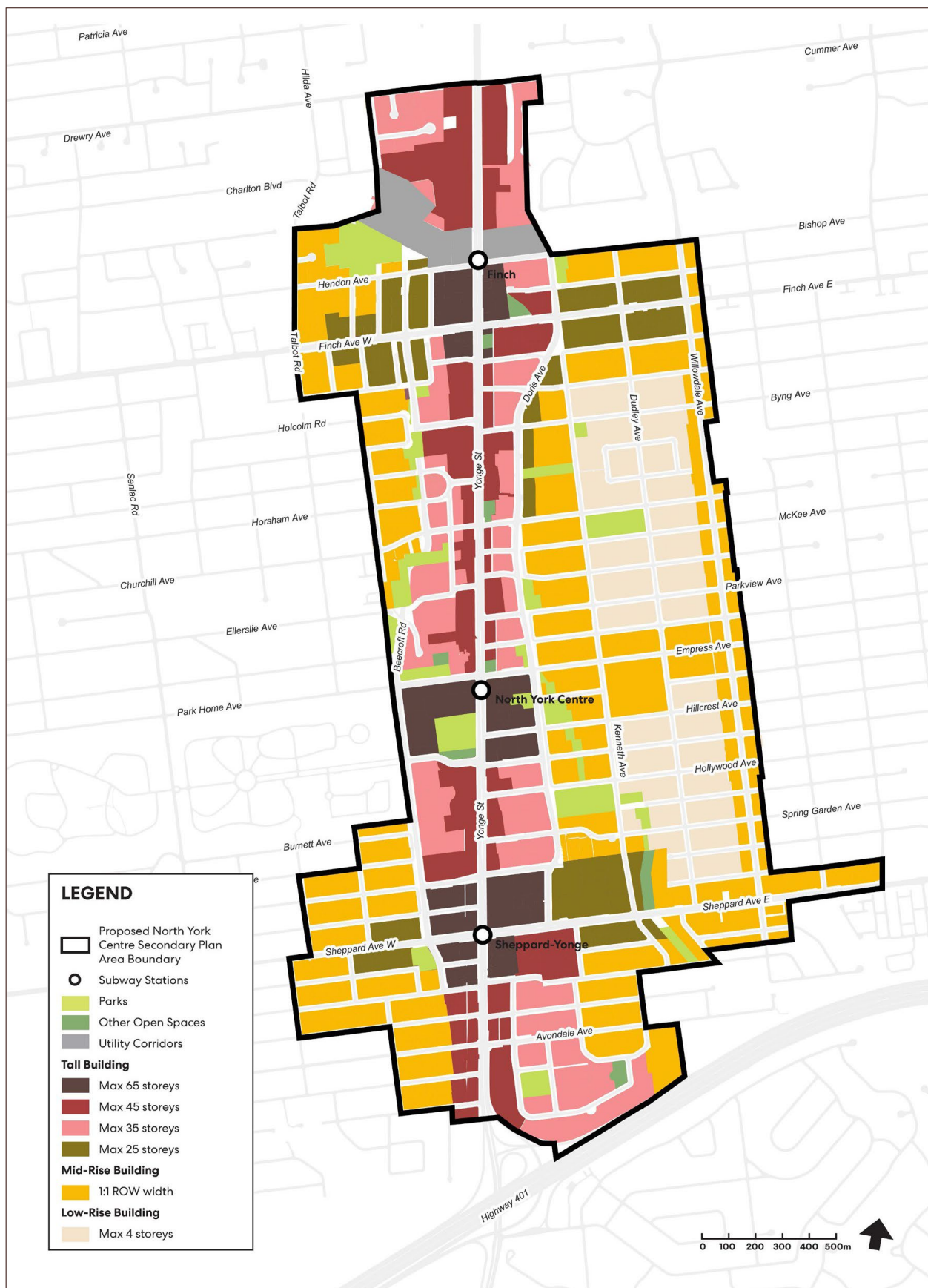
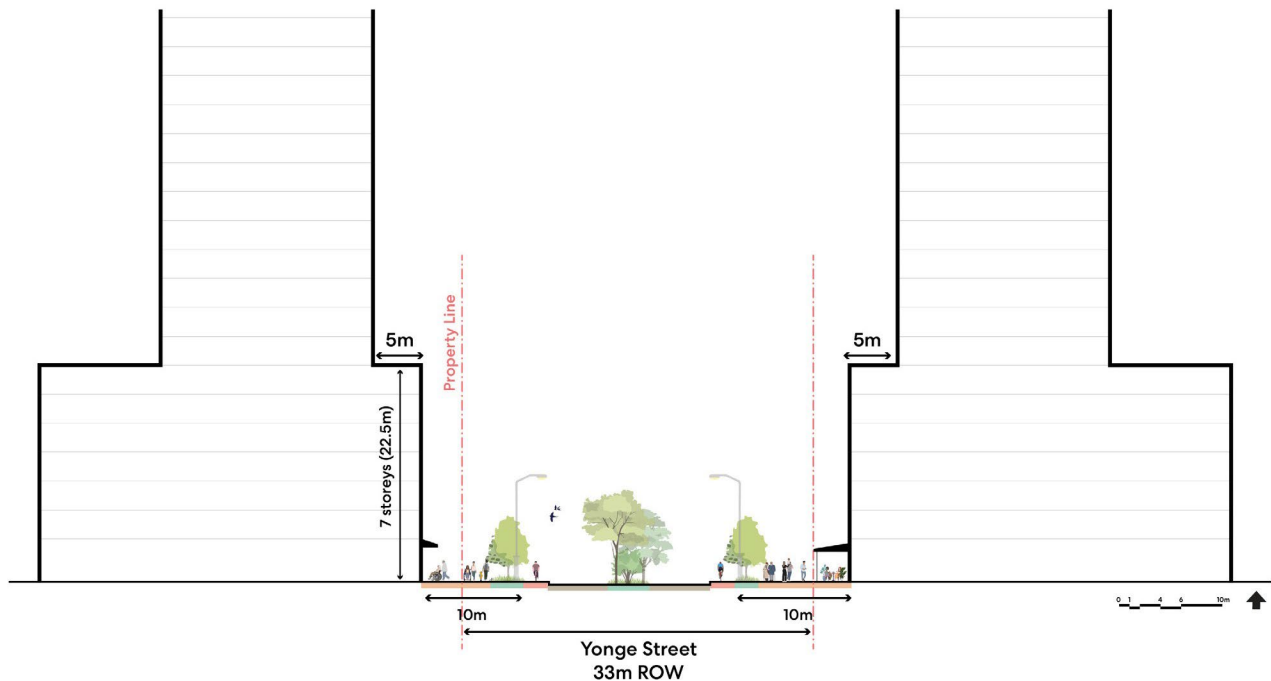


Figure 4-11: Emerging Preferred Option Building Heights and Types Map



Note: Conceptual cross section for discussion only, built form parameters and street design will be determined through a Preferred Option and Functional Concept Plan later in Phase 2.

Figure 4-13: Section Showing a Tall Building on Yonge Street

The City has extensive policy and guidelines to encourage an active public realm, including in the Tall Building Design Guidelines, the Mid-Rise Guidelines, the Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines and the Retail Design Manual. In general, it is desirable to have active interior spaces on the ground floor – spaces that, whatever the use, allow for transparency, interaction between indoors and outdoors and “eyes on the street.” Retail, if it is appropriately designed, can be an excellent animator of the adjacent public realm. Other commercial uses that are also appropriate for animating the ground floor of buildings include commercial services, human services, hospitality, and potentially some entertainment uses. Residential uses on ground floor can be designed to be active as well, with prominent entrance features, windows from active common spaces, and direct entrances from individual units onto the street.

Recommended Policy Directions

66. Ensure that entrances to vehicle parking, loading and servicing are from side streets, lanes or private shared driveways located towards the rear of the building.
67. Maximize opportunities for ground floor residential, community and institutional, and commercial uses to animate surrounding outdoor spaces with features like large windows and frequent entrances, where appropriate.

4.7 Cultural Heritage

As in any rapidly developing area of the city, conserving cultural heritage, including tangible and intangible heritage, is an important way to maintain a unique sense of place and recognize the varied stories of diverse communities. The Official Plan contains extensive heritage conservation policies to ensure that the City's cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is conserved.

An initial review of North York Centre's historical evolution and identification of its cultural heritage resources was completed in Phase 1. Cultural heritage resources include those on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register as well as modernist architectural resources that were identified in the Corporation of the City of North York's publication *North York's Modernist Inventory* (1997, revised in 2009). A Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) is being initiated alongside Phases 2 and 3 of North York at the Centre to inform the Secondary Plan update.

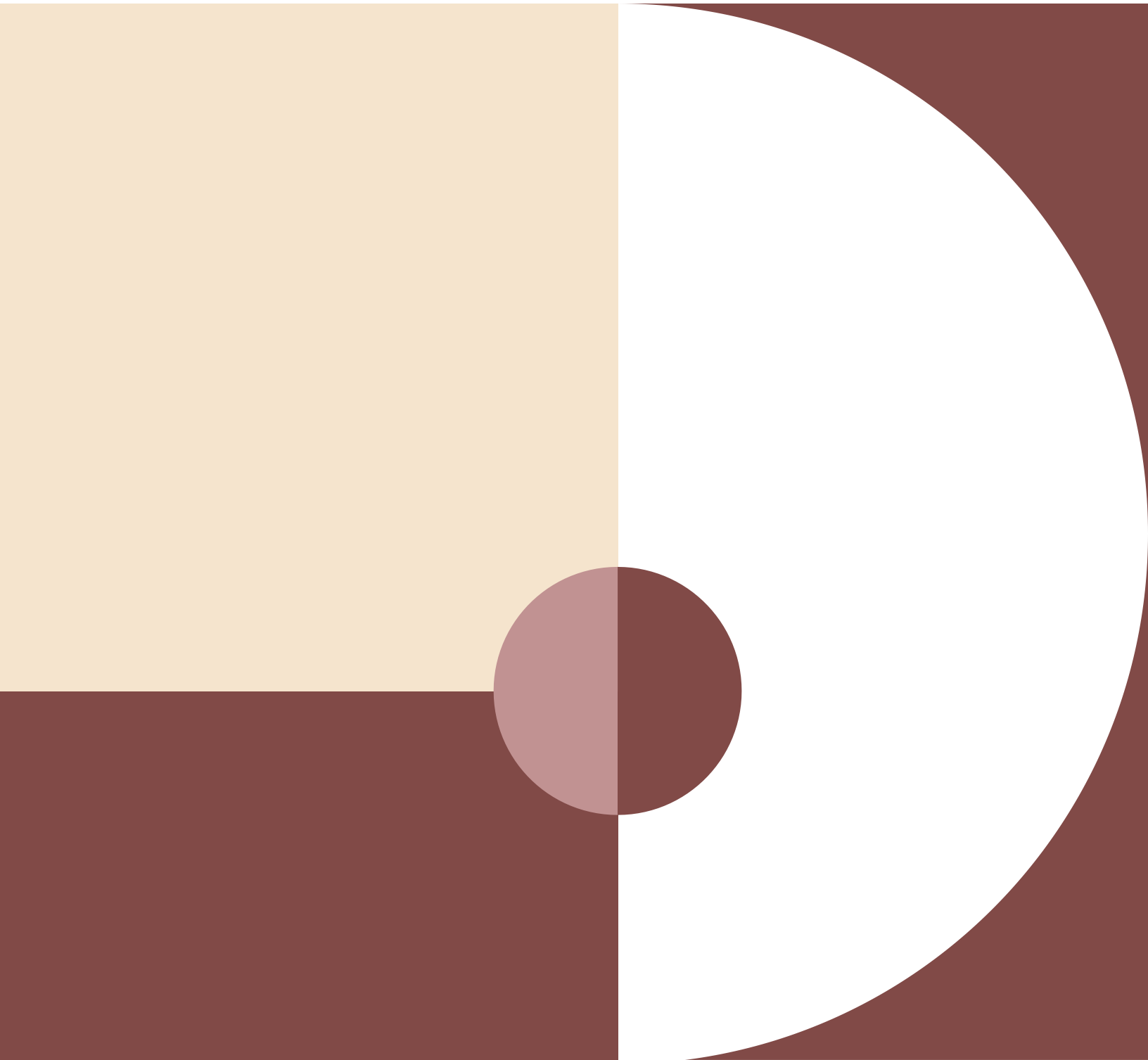
Recommended Policy Direction

68. Undertake a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report including a Historic Context Statement and Survey to inform policies for North York Centre.

Heritage Impact Assessments

Heritage Impact Assessments are a tool that enable the City to obtain information about the potential impacts a development or alteration may have on a property on its Heritage Register. A Heritage Impact Assessment shall consider and have regard for the property's cultural heritage values and attributes as identified by Council and will provide a basis for establishing how impacts may be mitigated or avoided, whether the impacts are acceptable, and how the cultural heritage values and attributes will be conserved.

05. Next Steps



05. NEXT STEPS

Phase 2 community engagement on the Emerging Preferred Option for North York at the Centre was undertaken in March to May 2025. The Engagement Program included three public meetings a local Indigenous community meeting, workshops held by Local Advisory Committee members, and an online survey. Additional meetings will be held in Summer 2025. Based a review of the community's feedback on the Emerging Preferred Option and other analysis, a Preferred Option will be prepared for North York Centre, along with supporting studies on mobility, servicing and community services and facilities. The Preferred Option will be presented to Council at the end of Phase 2 for endorsement as the basis of the Secondary Plan update and Implementation Plan which will be prepared in Phase 3.

