

FAQ Frequently Asked Questions

January 2026



Secondary Plan



**Recommended
Option**



**Protected Major
Transit Station Areas**



Boundary Expansion



**Population and Job
Growth**



**Infrastructure,
Facilities and Parks**



Mobility



Public Realm



Housing



**Building Types and
Heights**



Retail



Office



Click on a topic to read
the FAQs and visit
toronto.ca/nycentre to
learn more and sign up
for e-updates

SECONDARY PLAN



1. What is a Secondary Plan?

A Secondary Plan is a chapter in [Toronto's Official Plan](#) for a part of the city where major change is expected or desired.

Secondary Plans include maps and policies that are used to set the rules and expectations across a defined area for private development (like new residential or office buildings) and public projects (like parks, street improvements and community facilities). Secondary Plans are required for all *Centres* designated on [Map 2](#) of Toronto's Official Plan, including North York Centre.

Secondary Plans address things like the height and shape of buildings and what kind of activities are allowed inside them, as well as what the streets, parks and other publicly-accessible open spaces look like and how they're used. Secondary plans can also identify what infrastructure improvements will be needed over time to support growth, such as street improvements, bigger watermain or sewers, more community centres, child care spaces, and social services.

The review process for updating the North York Centre Secondary Plan is called “**North York at the Centre**”.

2. Why is the North York Centre Secondary Plan being updated?

The current North York Centre Secondary Plan is nearly 30 years old and a new plan is needed to guide growth in the community over the coming decades. Growth will continue in the Centre because it is a desirable place to live and work and because it is well-served by transit and other amenities. An updated Secondary Plan is an opportunity to shape that growth in ways that meet community needs and priorities.

The updated Secondary Plan must also respond to provincial policy and legislative changes that have occurred over the last three decades – on topics like transit-supportive development, housing, parkland, and community benefits. It is also an opportunity to align with Toronto's Official Plan on issues like complete communities, climate action and equity, which are not adequately addressed in the current Secondary Plan.

Read the [Background Report](#) to learn about the trends, issues and opportunities in North York Centre that were identified in Phase 1.



Aerial view of North York Centre

3. How has the community been engaged in Phase 1 and 2 of North York at the Centre?

Phase 1 and 2 of North York at the Centre included 10 community pop-ups, seven public meetings that were attended by over 1,000 people, plus six workshops hosted by members of the Local Advisory Committee. Public meeting materials and activities have been mirrored online and accessed by 1,300 people.

To support truth and reconciliation, Phases 1 and 2 included meetings with First Nations (including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Six Nations of the Grand River), the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, and local Indigenous communities.



Phase 1 Visioning Workshop



Phase 2 Public Meeting on Options and Directions

Guiding Principles

Five guiding principles were identified in Phase 1 to 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.

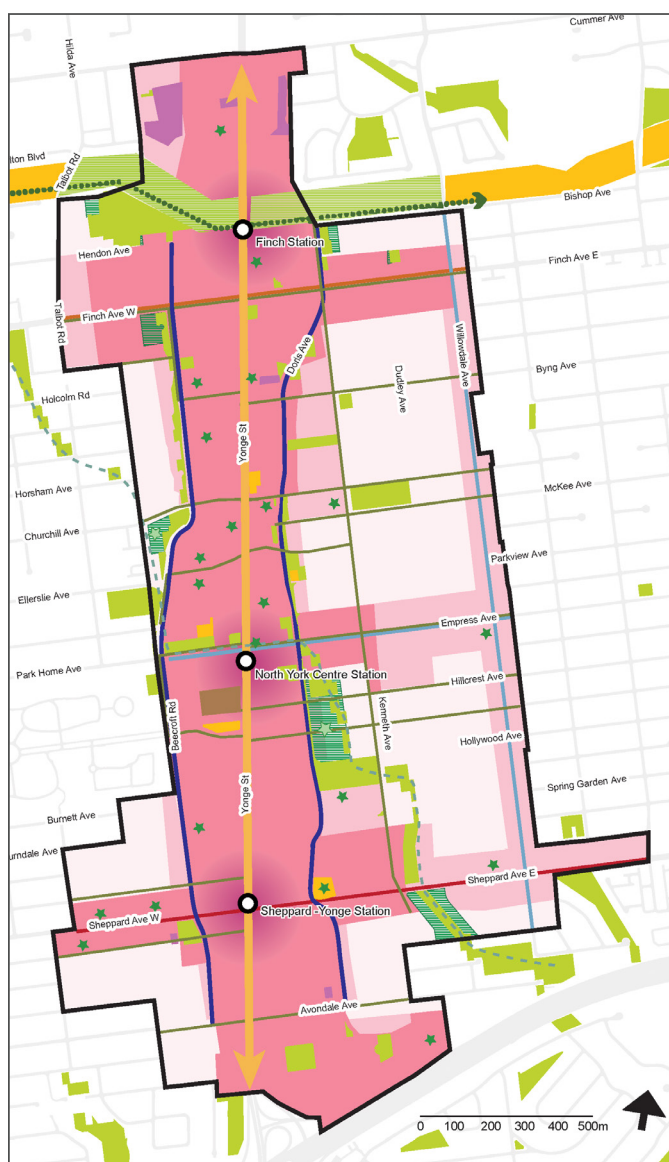
Check out the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Engagement Summaries at toronto.ca/nycentre under "Information & Reports".

RECOMMENDED OPTION



4. What is the Recommended Option?

The “Recommended Option” is a set of maps and policy directions that have been proposed to help shape future growth in North York Centre. The maps and policy directions address topics like land use, building types and heights, parks, public realm and mobility. The “Recommended Option” is proposed to serve as the basis for updating the North York Centre Secondary Plan in Phase 3 of the project.



Recommended Option Structure Map (Excerpt)

5. What are the top five moves in the Recommended Option?



- *Revitalize Yonge Street* to keep jobs in the community and places for people to enjoy arts, culture, restaurants and other amenities.



- *Expand the Secondary Plan area to create more housing options and bring retail and services closer to where people live* along new Major Transit Main Streets and Neighbourhood Main Streets.



- *Expand the parkland system with large Gateway Parks* that have improved facilities and provide places for all members of the community to come together, rest and play.



- *Enhance the Wilket Creek Trail* as part of a greener public realm network that supports walking and provides opportunities to connect with the land and water.



- *Plan for long-term investment in infrastructure to support growth*, like community services and facilities, the street network, and sewers and water mains.



The Recommended Option was developed based on an evaluation of what worked well and didn't work well in a set of draft options. For more information on the Recommended Option and the options evaluation that was completed in Phase 2, read the North York at the Centre [Final Options and Directions Report](#).

6. How has community feedback shaped the Recommended Option?

Community feedback led to several changes between the Emerging Preferred Option (March 2025) and the final Recommended Option (December 2025).

For example:

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

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

PROTECTED MAJOR TRANSIT STATION AREAS (PMTSA)



7. What are MTSA and PMTSA?

The [Provincial Planning Statement 2024](#) directs development to be focused within a 10-minute walk of transit stations, in what are known as Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs).

Under the Provincial [Planning Act](#), municipalities can also identify Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) where inclusionary zoning (affordable housing requirements) can be required. PMTSAs are subject to the same minimum density targets as MTSAs (i.e. people and jobs per hectare - see next page), and additionally must satisfy building height and/or [floor space index](#) (FSI) requirements.

8. Why is the City proposing to go beyond the minimum density requirements for PMTSAs in North York Centre?

Within the three PMTSAs located in North York Centre, the Province’s Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) has approved development applications with higher densities than the City supported, including 49 storeys at Yonge-Sheppard. As part of those decisions, the OLT ruled that meeting minimum density targets is not a reason for refusing further intensification or development.

In this context, North York at the Centre was initiated to develop recommendations for planning policies that better reflect the area’s access to rapid transit, provincial policy and recent OLT decisions. The proposed density in the Recommended Option is comparable to other *Centres* (see Table 3), as well as recent development in other Secondary Plan areas, including Yonge North, Renew Sheppard and Don Mills Crossing. The goal has been to create a plan that reflects good planning principles, while identifying the infrastructure and community facilities needed to support growth.

Density by the Numbers

In August 2025, the Province approved boundaries, density targets (people and jobs per hectare), building height permissions and floor space index (FSI) requirements for most PMTSAs in Toronto, including ones located in North York Centre. Those PMTSA policies are now part of [Chapter 8](#) of Toronto's Official Plan.

Table 1. People and Jobs Per Hectare

PMTSA	Current density (2021)	Minimum density target
Sheppard-Yonge	377	350
North York Centre	431	400
Finch	273	350
Recommended Option		Proposed Density
Recommended North York Centre Secondary Plan Area		532
Portion within existing Secondary Plan area only		813
Portion within the boundary expansion areas only		274

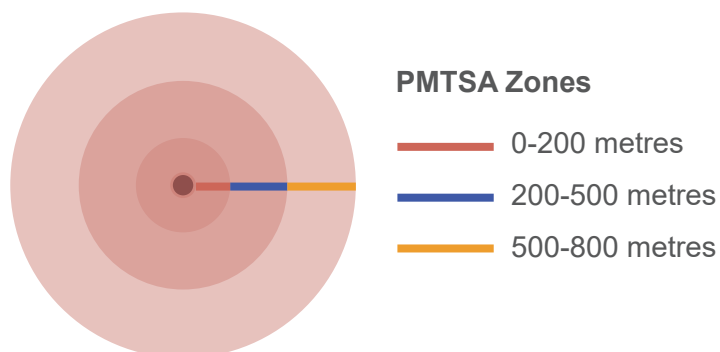
Table 1 highlights the current density and minimum density targets for the three PMTSAs located in North York Centre, as well as the density that would result from the Recommended Option if it was fully built out.

Table 2. Floor Space Index Requirements and Estimates for Sites in North York Centre

Location within PMTSA	FSI Requirements/ Building Height Permissions	Recommended Option	
		Max. Building Height	Estimated FSI
200 metre zone	Min. 8 FSI	60-storeys	15-20 FSI
		55-storeys	10-17 FSI
200-500 metre zone	Min. 6 FSI	45-storeys	10-17 FSI
		25-storeys	6-10 FSI
Neighbourhoods along Major Street	6-storeys	6-storeys	2.5-3.5 FSI

Table 2 highlights FSI requirements and building height permissions for PMTSAs in the proposed North York Centre Secondary Plan area, alongside estimated FSI for representative sites in the Recommended Option.

More information about MTSA and PMTSAs can be found on the [City's Official Plan Review web page](#).



To bring more people within walking distance of transit, density is typically the highest in the 0-200 metre zone of PMTSAs and gradually steps down in the 200-500 metre and 500-800 metre zones.

BOUNDARY EXPANSION ↗

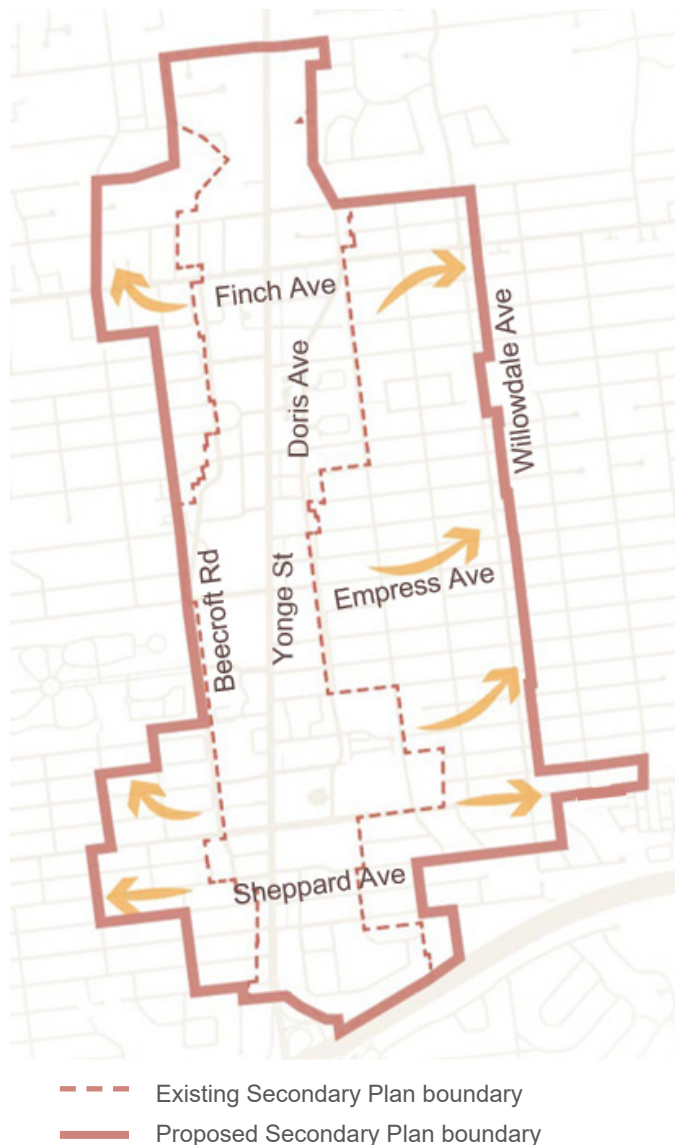
9. Why is the City proposing to expand the Secondary Plan boundary?

An expanded Secondary Plan area is being proposed to:

- proactively plan for potential future pressures that may occur beyond the current Secondary Plan area, particularly within PMTSAs;
- support comprehensive planning for community-building elements beyond height and density, such as parks, public spaces, mobility, community facilities and environmental sustainability, and
- address existing issues that were identified by the community and through technical analysis, such as improving the mix of housing and building types, providing a more gradual transition in scale and intensity between different areas, and creating new opportunities for local shops and services closer to where people live.

10. Why does the proposed Secondary Plan boundary extend beyond the PMTSA boundaries?

PMTSA boundaries in North York Centre are irregular and overlap one another. They are a tool for directing density and development near higher-order transit, not comprehensive community planning. The proposed Secondary Plan area would extend beyond the PMTSA boundaries to align with the street network and include whole blocks that share a similar look and function. This would provide a more complete community structure to guide future growth and investment.



Boundary Expansion by the Numbers

- 71% of the proposed Secondary Plan area falls within PMTSA boundaries.
- Of the 29% of lands in the Recommended Option that are outside PMTSA boundaries, the majority (66%) are proposed to remain designated *Neighbourhoods*.

11. Why does the Secondary Plan boundary extend east to Willowdale Avenue but not west to Senlac Road?

Existing and planned conditions to the east and west of Yonge Street are quite different.

With subway Line 4 along the Sheppard East Corridor, Willowdale East is already experiencing redevelopment and is planned to intensify further as envisioned in the Sheppard East Corridor Secondary Plan and the recent Renew Sheppard East Secondary Plan. Willowdale Avenue already includes a mixed-use area on the three blocks north of Sheppard Avenue and is a good candidate to serve as a neighbourhood main street along the eastern border of an expanded Centre.

In contrast, Willowdale West between Yonge Street and Senlac Road does not have existing high-order transit or retail uses, and has a more irregular street network due to the cemetery and natural heritage.

POPULATION AND JOB GROWTH



12. How much growth is being proposed for North York Centre?

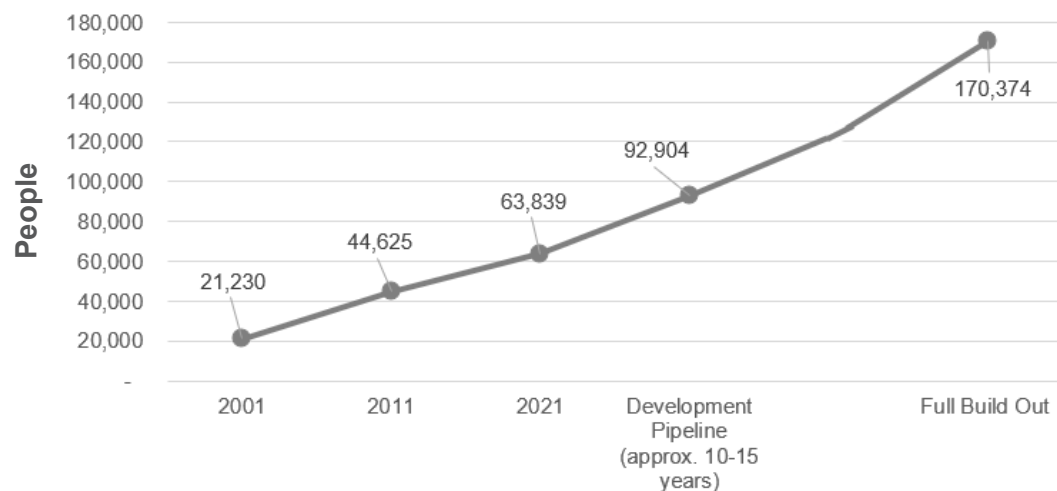
Based on the Recommended Option, the proposed Secondary Plan area could grow from approximately 64,000 people in 2021 to 170,000 people at full build out (Table 3). This would mean a potential to triple North York Centre's population over the coming decades. Full build out is expected to occur over approximately 30 years and depends on landowners choosing to redevelop their properties.

13. How does the level of growth proposed for North York Centre compare to other parts of the city?

Growth is happening all over the city, especially near transit. Like North York Centre, all three of Toronto's other designated Centres are planned to triple their population or more (Table 3). This includes Yonge-Eglinton, Scarborough Centre, and Etobicoke Centre.

14. When will neighbourhoods in North York Centre start to change?

If a new Secondary Plan is adopted by City Council, the planning policies would only result in changes in North York Centre's neighbourhoods if someone chooses to redevelop their property. That could happen next year or twenty years from now. Secondary Plans policies cover a 30-year horizon during which changes usually occur slowly over time.

Figure 1. Past and Future Estimated Population Growth in North York Centre


The addition of just over **100,000 people** in North York Centre over the next 30 years reflects its strong transit context and would represent **4.5% of the City's maximum growth** over this time period, as projected in the [Land Needs Assessment](#).

Table 3. Planned Growth in the City's Centres

Secondary Plan Area	Base Population*	Planned Population**	Planned Jobs**	Planned Density	Population Growth (2016/2021-2051)	
					Number	Percent
North York Centre (Recommended Option)	63,839	170,374	43,698	532	106,535	167%
Yonge-Eglinton Centre	72,193	185,158	34,914	318	112,965	156%
Scarborough Centre***	14,010	23,361	15,401	215	9,351	68%
Etobicoke Centre	18,805	50,355	21,100	432	31,550	168%
Downtown	240,000	475,000	915,000	843	235,000	98%

*Base population is from the 2021 Census, except for the Downtown, which is from the 2016 Census.

**High estimate

***Population estimate does not account for the planning and development framework set out in the Draft Scarborough Secondary Plan, which has the potential to increase population beyond earlier estimates of 48,000 to 75,000 people (SC24.2).

Development Pipeline Definitions

- **Under review** projects are those which have not yet been approved or refused and those which are under appeal.
- **Active** projects are those which have been approved, for which Building Permits have been applied or have been issued, and/or those which are under construction.
- **Built** projects are those which became ready for occupancy and/or were completed.

As of June 2025, the Development Pipeline for the recommended North York Centre Secondary Plan area includes 6,641 approved residential units and 10,806 residential units that are under review.

INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND PARKS

15. What infrastructure and facility improvements will be needed to address existing gaps and support growth in North York Centre?

Infrastructure and facility improvements that are needed to address existing gaps and serve future growth are being identified as part of the Secondary Plan review. The needs are being identified through parkland analysis, transportation modelling, a servicing assessment for sewers and watermains and the [Community Services and Facilities Strategy](#), which was completed in Phase 2 and addresses schools, child care, recreation, libraries and human service agencies.

The infrastructure improvements will not all be needed today – they will be needed over time as the population grows. Divisions and agencies regularly monitor the [development pipeline](#) to track population growth, and use that information to support facilities planning.

For example, public school expansion is expected to occur over time, with:

- up to three new elementary schools and one new secondary school needed in the next 10-15 years based on existing needs and growth that is already approved in the development pipeline, and
- up to five more elementary schools and two more secondary schools delivered over time (beginning in 20 years+) until the full build-out of the Recommended Option is achieved.

In the case of schools, the number of schools is an indicator of space needs rather than site counts, and the school boards may use existing schools, facilities, leased sites, and vacant land to accommodate growth.

16. How will infrastructure and facility improvements be funded and delivered?

Funding for infrastructure improvements comes from development charges, the community benefits charge, property taxes, user fees and transfers from other orders of government. Changes by the Province over the last few years - such as those under Bill 197 and Bill 108 that changed how community benefits and development charges are collected - have reduced how much the City can receive from developers to help pay for growth-related infrastructure. With fewer resources, funding is provided strategically across the city where it is needed most.

When a need is identified and prioritized, investment in infrastructure and facilities is advanced as part of development review and annual updates to the 10-year capital plans of divisions, agencies and boards. While most improvements are delivered through public capital plans, some improvements can be delivered in-kind through development and through partnerships with the private and non-profit sectors and other orders of government.

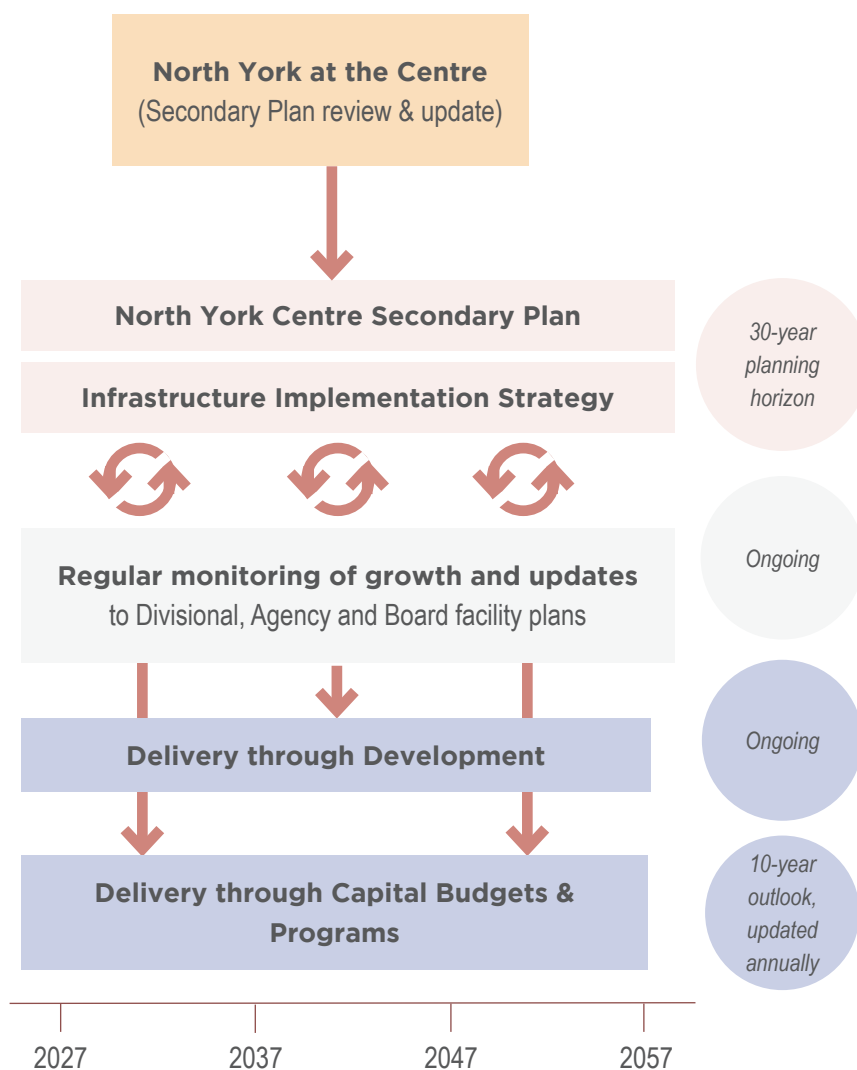
There are special delivery tools for parks, which can be created through:

- on- and off-site parkland dedication that happens when lands are developed,
- the purchase of lands using cash-in-lieu of parkland, and/or
- the internal transfer of City-owned lands.

Although land is expensive, since cash-in-lieu of parkland is based on local land values, it can support parkland acquisition in the same community.

Funding and Delivering Infrastructure in North York Centre

In Phase 3 of North York at the Centre, the Infrastructure Implementation Strategy will identify phasing and delivery mechanisms for community services and facilities, transportation and servicing improvements that are needed to meet existing needs and serve growth based on the growth estimate. The Infrastructure Implementation Strategy will provide a long-term (30-year) view for capital planning by City divisions, agencies and boards, alongside monitoring of actual development to identify what near (5 year) and mid-term (10-15 year) projects are needed to support growth over time.



17. What is the City's track record for delivering infrastructure alongside growth in North York Centre?

Since the existing North York Centre Secondary Plan was adopted in 1997, the population doubled from 21,230 in 2001 to 52,280 in 2021. To support that population growth, City divisions, agencies

and boards have been delivering new services, infrastructure and facilities over time, and will continue to do so as the population grows.

Infrastructure and Facilities Delivered in North York Centre Over the Last 30 Years

Schools*



Toronto District School Board

- 2** new schools
- 2** existing schools **rebuilt**
- 3** schools **expanded**

Toronto Catholic District School Board

- 4** new schools
- 1** existing schools **rebuilt**
- 1** schools **expanded**

Community Recreation Centres*



Goulding Community Recreation Centre Improvements Phase 3, Indoor Arena Construction completed

1,858 New community space secured at square metres 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East

Child Care*



31 existing child care centres
2,701 existing child care spaces

Libraries*



2021 North York Central Library renovated to meet new service demands and uses

Parks



13 new parks (approximately 3.4 ha)
6 park improvement/expansion projects underway

Mobility



2002 Sheppard Subway



Sheppard Avenue East Complete Streets Project – cycle tracks on parts of Sheppard Avenue East and Willowdale Avenue **complete**, other improvements **underway**



See **page 14** for future mobility projects that are planned or underway.



See **page 12** for future community facility projects that are planned or underway.

*Information on facilities is for the North York Centre Community Services and Facilities study area, which is larger than the boundaries of the Secondary Plan.

Deep Dive: Community Services and Facilities (CS&F)

Based on a review of today's service provision levels, there is an existing need in North York Centre for more child care spaces, public school capacity at the elementary and secondary level, and human services – especially health services. CS&F sectors that are meeting their service provision targets today include libraries, Catholic public schools, and recreation.

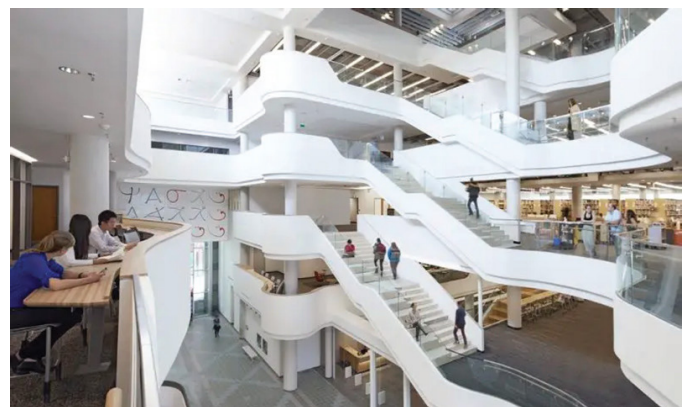
An assessment of future needs was also completed, based on full build out of the Recommended Option and the addition of approximately 100,000 people to North York Centre over the next 30 years. **New facilities will not be needed on 'day one' because it takes time for development to proceed. Community facilities will be added incrementally alongside actual development as the population grows over the next 10, 20, 30 years or more.**

Over time, estimated community service and facility needs include up to eight public elementary schools and three public secondary schools, one Catholic elementary school and potentially one new Catholic secondary school, 34 child care centres, one new community recreation centre, additional outdoor recreational facilities, and approximately 13,000 square metres of new community agency space. Parks and Recreation will further assess the facility needs in Ward 18 through the current [Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan Review](#).

Community services and facilities are already being delivered to address existing needs and provide capacity for future growth, including the recently completed renovation of the North York Central Library, the ongoing addition of classrooms at McKee Public School, two planned child care centres on Yonge Street, two planned City-owned and managed community service spaces on Yonge Street, and the planned [Newtonbrook Community Recreation Centre](#).



Rendering of planned Newtonbrook Community Recreation Centre



North York Central Library upgrades to meet new service demands



18. The area is already congested, won't more development make traffic worse?

Building new or wider roads to make room for more cars is challenging and often not possible in an already developed community, and any new lanes of traffic eventually become full as the population increases. This means that the City must invest in other sustainable modes of transportation, like walking cycling and transit, that enable people to get from A to B safely and efficiently. These investments over the long term will allow our roads to be less congested for those who have no choice but to drive.

Many improvements to transit, the street network and cycling facilities are already planned to address traffic conditions in North York Centre and the surrounding area (Table 4). With these major transportation improvements already planned, the primary focus of the Secondary Plan review is on local improvements that improve safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Phase 3 of the Secondary Plan review will include additional mobility modelling, feasibility analysis, and review of right-of-way (ROW) requirements to develop design concepts for mobility improvements.

19. What parking requirements are being proposed for North York Centre?

The *Planning Act* prohibits policies or zoning that require parking in Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs), which cover much of the Centre. Outside of PMTSAs, the majority of the area will continue to be subject to the general city-wide parking requirements (outside of Parking Zones A and B) based on Table 200.5.10.1 of the Zoning By-law 569-2013, [Chapter 200 Parking Spaces Regulations](#). These include maximum parking rates for residential and non-residential uses. The Zoning By-law does not include minimum parking requirements.

20. Does the Recommended Option include new bike lanes?

The Recommended Option identifies potential cycling routes, with multiple options for a single route (e.g., Cameron Avenue and Florence Avenue). The preferred route and type of facility will be informed by feasibility analysis in Phase 3 of North York at the Centre. The Recommended Option also shows planned cycling routes from the Council-approved Cycling Network Plan and other Secondary Plans.

For Council approved projects like Transform Yonge, which includes cycle tracks on Yonge Street, the City will continue to review and analyze the impact of new Provincial legislation.

Facility types for cycling routes could include: bike lanes, physically separated cycle tracks, neighbourhood routes, and paved multi-use trails. To learn more, see the City's [Bikeway Design Guidelines](#).

City-wide Parking Initiatives

City Council has directed staff to review visitor parking requirements in the city-wide Zoning By-law 569-2013 ([PH18.3](#)), and a report is expected in early 2026.

Additionally, City Council adopted the new [City-wide Strategic Parking Framework: Big Moves, Policies and Actions for Toronto](#) in June 2025. One of the near-term actions is to develop and implement a framework for managing parking supply at an area level. This will consider the need for visitor parking, and it is intended to be completed in the next two years.

Table 4. Major Transportation Improvements*

Project	Status**
Streets and Highways	
Doris Avenue Extension	Construction in 2027-2028
Beecroft Road Extension	Construction in 2027-2028
Transform Yonge	Construction to start in 2029 (after Doris/ Beecroft are completed)
Highway 401 / Yonge Street Interchange	Environmental assessment to start in 2026
Transit	
Yonge North Subway Extension	Procurement for construction underway
Sheppard Subway Extension (to Sheppard West Station)	Initial Business Case to be completed by Province in 2026
Finch West LRT East Extension	Future project in the Province's 2041 Regional Transportation Plan
Rapid TO Surface Transit Network Plan (transit priority projects to improve bus and streetcar service)	
Priority Roadway Studies:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finch Avenue East (Yonge Street to McCowan Road) Sheppard Avenue West (Yonge Street to Weston Road) Steeles Avenue West (Yonge Street to west of Highway 27) 	Studies to be undertaken in the next 10 years
Long-Term Planning Studies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finch Avenue West (Yonge Street to Keele Street) Steeles Avenue East (Yonge Street to east of Markham Road) Yonge Street (Finch Avenue to Steeles Avenue) 	Studies to be undertaken beyond 2032
Cycling	
Cycling Network Plan, 2025-2027 Cycling Program	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Willowdale Avenue Cycle Track Upgrades and Extension (north of Bishop Avenue) 	Construction in 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finch Hydro Corridor Trail (missing gap across Yonge Street) Yonge Street (Bishop Avenue to Avondale Avenue) Sheppard Avenue (Bonnington Place to Beecroft Road) Beecroft Road (Finch Avenue West to Drewry Avenue) 	Subject to public consultation, Council approval, feasibility analysis, and capital infrastructure coordination.

*List does not include potential cycling routes or other mobility improvements proposed in the Recommended Option

**All timelines are subject to change

PUBLIC REALM

21. What is being proposed to improve public realm in the Centre?

A major public realm transformation has already been approved for Yonge Street through the [Transform Yonge](#) initiative. The Recommended Option includes Transform Yonge and prioritizes public realm improvements in other parts of the Centre, with an emphasis on greening and planting more street trees.

Public realm improvements that are proposed as part of the Recommended Option include a signature trail along Wilket Creek, expanded gateway parks along Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road, potential greening of the TTC parking lot within the Finch Hydro Corridor, streetscape improvements along main streets, new social streets abutting Yonge Street to provide more public open space, new squares, pedestrian mid-block connections and a study of potential improvements to Mel Lastman Square.



Example of potential improvements to Wilket Creek Trail

22. How will development impact the tree canopy?

The City of Toronto has a city-wide goal of reaching 40% tree canopy cover by 2050. Some areas of the city will enjoy more than 40% canopy cover while others will experience less.

Tree canopy cover in North York Centre, including the boundary expansion study areas, is just under 25% today. It is estimated the tree canopy cover would decrease to 21% if the Recommended Option were fully built out, not accounting for any street tree improvements that would be required. The proposed policy directions focus on maximizing tree protection and expanding the tree canopy, especially in public spaces where new development can support streetscape improvements.

The proposed Secondary Plan area has **25% tree cover** today, which will be maintained or improved through development.



Render of potential redevelopment along Willowdale Avenue with streetscape improvements, including more street trees

HOUSING

23. What types of housing are proposed?

Tall, midrise and low-rise buildings are proposed to be permitted in different parts of the Secondary Plan area to diversify the mix of housing options. While the City cannot specify whether buildings will include ownership or rental housing, in larger buildings that have over 80 units, the City is proposing to require 40% family-sized units with 2 or 3 bedrooms.

Under the city-wide Inclusionary Zoning By-law, new residential development in a Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) is required to provide 5% of the total residential gross floor area as affordable housing for 25 years. PMTSAs cover much of the proposed North York Centre Secondary Plan area, so 5% affordable housing would be required throughout much of the Centre as part of new development.

Learn more about affordable housing on the City’s [Housing](#) web page.



BUILDING TYPES AND HEIGHTS

24. What building heights are proposed?



The proposed building heights in the Recommended Option range by area and provide a

transition from tall buildings along Yonge Street to low-rise buildings within *Neighbourhoods*:

Table 5. Proposed Building Heights

Location	Policy Direction for Buildings	Heights
Yonge Street	Focus for tall buildings	Max. heights 45 to 60-storeys
Finch and Sheppard Avenues	Heights transition down east and west of Yonge Street	25 to 11-storeys
Empress Avenue		25 to 7-storeys
Doris Avenue and Beecroft Road	Transition zone	25 to 6-storeys
Willowdale Avenue	Mid-rise	Approximately 7-storeys
Neighbourhoods	Low-rise	Up to 4-storeys

RETAIL

25. Where would retail be allowed in the Recommended Option?

Retail is proposed to be *required* on the ground floor of buildings along Priority Retail Streets. This includes Yonge Street and selected streets that intersect with Yonge Street, as well as key intersections along Willowdale Avenue.

Retail is proposed to be *encouraged* on the ground floor of buildings along Secondary Retail Streets. This includes proposed main streets like Finch Avenue, Sheppard Avenue, Empress Avenue and Willowdale Avenue, as well as some side streets that intersect Yonge Street.

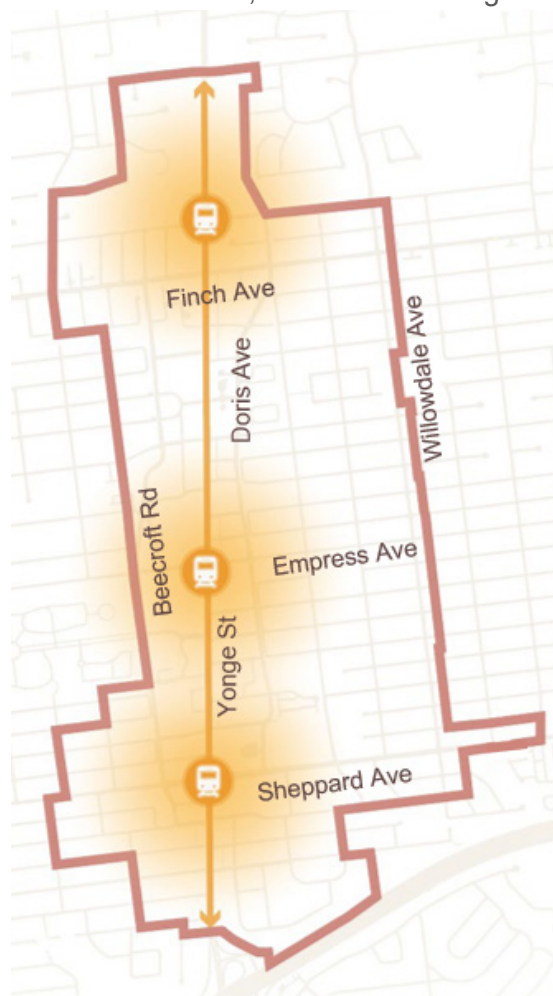
Elsewhere in the Secondary Plan area where Primary and Secondary Retail Streets are not proposed, retail would be:

- permitted (but not encouraged or required) in *Mixed Use Areas*, and
- not permitted in *Neighbourhoods*.

The term “retail” means stores that sell 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.

26. Will Yonge Street decline if retail is allowed on other streets?

The intent is for Yonge Street to remain the primary focus of commercial activity in the Centre. However, based on the growth estimate for the Recommended Option, the need for future retail space exceeds what can be supported on the ground floor of buildings along Yonge Street. Vacancy rates for retail space in the Centre are low, and some retail is already operating successfully beyond Yonge Street (e.g., on Spring Garden and Willowdale Avenues). This indicates that there is demand for more retail, on and off of Yonge Street.



The Yonge Street Spine is proposed to remain the primary focus of commercial activity.



27. What is being done to ensure offices and other places to work remain in the Centre?

A [study](#) was completed to better understand current and future office market conditions in North York Centre. A [City-wide Office Needs](#) study was also completed recently. Based on this work, the proposed policy directions are to:

- Encourage maintaining existing spaces that support employment generating uses.
- When redevelopment of these types of spaces is proposed, require some space for employment generating uses to be replaced.
- Where it is not possible to do so, require development to replace office space with other non-residential uses like community space, or affordable housing.

The City's Economic Development and Culture Division is also partnering with the Yonge North York Business Improvement Area to host a roundtable in April 2026. The roundtable will include major employers and commercial property owners with a focus on opportunities and directions to strengthen North York Centre's economic competitiveness.

28. What kind of assumptions have been made about hybrid work and the return to office for North York Centre?

The North York Centre [Non-Residential Current Conditions and Projections Report](#) considered a low, medium and high scenario for office space demand over the long-term. The medium scenario where workers return to the office for work three days a week was identified as the most realistic for modeling purposes. This assumption has informed the proposed policy directions for encouraging the retention of office space in the Centre.

Even with recent return-to-work mandates, most of the impact has been felt in the Downtown market, where there is a large supply of newer, higher-quality space. In contrast, North York Centre's office supply is generally older, so it is expected to take longer before demand for office space improves there.

Change in office vacancy rates from Q4 2023 to Q4 2025, by location

North York Centre
increased from 14% to 23%

Downtown
increased from 11% to 12.4%



