

## **YONGE STREET AREA STUDY**

### **Terms of Reference**

The City is seeking a multi-disciplinary consulting team to prepare a land use and urban design study for the Yonge Street Area Study which will address the Study's objectives as set out below. The Yonge Street Area Study examines two components of the Yonge Street corridor in Vaughan, Yonge North and Yonge South. The work on Yonge South will proceed first, in coordination with a Town of Markham study currently underway on the east side of Yonge Street. The work on Yonge North will follow, and will also require coordination with the Town of Markham.

#### **1. STUDY AREA**

The proposed Study Area is located on the west side of Yonge Street and the north side of Steeles Avenue from Yonge Street to west of Hilda Avenue. The Yonge Street frontage can best be described in three components: 1) Yonge South, from Steeles Avenue to the Thornhill Public School property; 2) Yonge Central, from the Thornhill Public School to the southern edge of the East Don River Valley; and 3) Yonge North, from the southern edge of the East Don River Valley to the Highway 407 right-of-way.

The main focus of the Study is the properties fronting Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue where redevelopment potential appears most significant. The Study Area also includes some of the neighbouring properties off Yonge and Steeles, to take account of the context of existing built development. The Yonge Central area will be considered as part of the broader community context, but will not be the subject of investigation for redevelopment, as it was recently addressed by the Thornhill Yonge Street Study, which primarily focused on the Yonge Street frontage within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. The Study will take into account the results of the Thornhill Yonge Street Study.

The Study Area is shown schematically on Map A.

The lands at the Yonge-Steeles intersection are of particular importance because they are strategically located within the Greater Toronto Area, with potential to evolve into a significant mixed use node. The area is currently served by a variety of surface transit routes. In addition, York Region and the City of Toronto are working toward implementing the Yonge Street Transitway, a dedicated busway to be located in the centre of Yonge Street extending from Finch Avenue north to Richmond Hill. The transitway could provide a catalyst for major redevelopment at a number of potential locations along Yonge Street, and particularly on sites located close to proposed transitway stops.

Both Yonge North and Yonge South are characterized by the predominance of one and two storey commercial buildings, many of which are in a strip mall format with parking lots in front, with little if any attention paid to streetscaping. There are also some high density residential buildings, particularly between the York rail subdivision and Clark

Avenue, and some mid-rise buildings with ground floor retail and apartments above, just north of Clark Avenue. Yonge North also includes a few single detached homes rear-lotted onto Yonge Street, and a townhouse development. Generally, commercial development is confined to the Yonge and Steeles frontages, although there are some larger concentrations, particularly at the Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue intersection. West of Yonge Street, much of the surrounding area consists of stable residential neighbourhoods.

On the east (Markham) side of Yonge Street from north of Steeles Avenue to the Heritage District, the Yonge frontage is characterized by low-rise retail and highway commercial uses, including retail plazas. North of Clark Avenue, there are older, mid-rise apartment buildings. This area is currently the subject of a separate study by the Town of Markham. The Vaughan and Markham studies will be closely coordinated to ensure land use and urban design solutions which are mutually complementary.

On the east (Markham) side of Yonge Street north of the East Don River Valley, much of the frontage is low and mid-rise commercial buildings, including a concentration at Royal Orchard Drive and Yonge Street. North and south of Royal Orchard, there are a number of high-rise apartment buildings. This area may be the subject of a future study by the Town of Markham following completion of their current study further south.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

In 1987, OPA 210-The Thornhill/Vaughan Community Plan was approved. In the Yonge South area, it established General Commercial designations, permitting a wide variety of retail and office commercial uses, on the properties at the Yonge/Steeles intersection extending north to the CN Rail corridor. Medium Density designations were applied to the Yonge frontage north and south of Clark Avenue, but were subsequently amended (by OPA 255) to Mixed Commercial/Residential Area, permitting up to 124 units per hectare. In the Yonge North Area, OPA 210 designated the Yonge frontage as General Commercial.

In 1987, the City carried out the Yonge-Steeles Study, a comprehensive study of land use and development options for the lands generally located near the Yonge and Steeles intersection between Steeles Avenue and Crestwood Road. It proposed development of a mix of retail, office and high density residential uses at densities up to 150 residential units per hectare, and 3.0 FSI for office/commercial uses, with a maximum gross density overall of 2.5 FSI. Based on the Study, OPA 291 was adopted by Council in 1989. However, OPA 291 was not approved by the Province, mainly due to concerns associated with its proposed development, and other development proposals east of Yonge Street in Markham, and south of Yonge Street in Toronto, and associated traffic impacts.

In 1991, an inter-municipal working committee, known as the "Yonge-Steeles Development Area Committee", was formed, consisting of planning and transportation staff from Markham, Vaughan, North York, Region of York and Metropolitan Toronto. Each municipality developed a series of land use scenarios for its respective quadrants. In

January 1994 the Committee issued a draft report entitled "The Yonge-Steeles Sub Centre: Recommended Planning Principles". The draft report recommended that development in the Yonge-Steeles Sub Centre must be staged in accordance with the availability of transportation capacity, and recommended a Stage 1 maximum density of 1.5 FSI, based on the transportation capacity available at that time. The Committee further recommended that any development beyond 1.5 FSI would require a comprehensive transportation study, to confirm the availability of capacity and strategies to accommodate the desired density and land use mix. The recommendations of the Committee were subsequently endorsed by the councils of each of the municipalities and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

In the past two years, a number of policy documents and guidelines, as well as infrastructure initiatives, have been approved, which will play an important role in the future redevelopment of the Yonge Steeles Area. These include:

***Region of York Official Plan Amendment No. 43 - Centres and Corridors Strategy:*** This document expands and updates York Region's Centres and Corridors policies. The objective is to encourage intensification, mixed use development and transit supportive densities along designated regional corridors, including Yonge Street. The plan directs area municipalities to undertake corridor studies to identify opportunities for compact, mixed use, transit supportive redevelopment. The policies establish an average density target of 2.5 FSI along corridors. The amendment also stresses the importance of high quality urban design and the need to integrate new development with existing development to maintain and enhance main streets. Area municipalities are directed to identify "key redevelopment areas", defined as sites that are abutting or adjacent to high priority transit lines.

***Region of York Transit-Oriented Design Guidelines:*** Endorsed by Regional Council in September 2006, the guidelines are intended to assist the Region and the Area Municipalities to implement planning for well-designed, pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive development, that reflects and supports existing transit-supportive planning initiatives at the Provincial, Regional and local municipal level.

***The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe:*** The recently-approved Provincial growth plan for the GGH establishes a policy framework for compact urban growth; sets intensification targets, directs growth to existing urban areas and transit corridors such as the Yonge Street Corridor; limits greenfield development; and promotes compact, transit-oriented development patterns.

***Thornhill Yonge Street Study:*** A joint study undertaken by the Town of Markham and the City of Vaughan, which identified redevelopment and streetscape opportunities along the Yonge Street corridor within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District and adjacent blocks. The Thornhill Yonge Street Study identified key redevelopment sites, identified maximum building heights on these sites, and established a streetscape improvement plan for the study within the context of the proposed Yonge Street transitway.

***The Yonge Steeles Corridor Public Transit Improvement Environmental Assessment:*** This EA, undertaken by York Region Transit and recently approved, recommends a dedicated Bus Rapid Transit corridor along Yonge Street from Finch Avenue north to Newmarket. The transitway may be upgraded to Light Rail Transit in the future. Markham has recently received a major redevelopment application on the former Hy and Zel's site) on the east side of Yonge at Meadowview Avenue. With the anticipated construction of the Yonge Street Transitway over the next decade, staff anticipate that considerable redevelopment interest is likely to be generated along the Yonge corridor.

### **3. STUDY GOALS**

The main goal of the Yonge Street Area Study is to prepare Land Use and Urban Design Plans to guide future redevelopment and intensification. The basis for these Plans will be the analyses of land use, urban design, market conditions, transportation, servicing infrastructure, and community services, including parks, enabling preparation of comprehensive plans for Yonge North and Yonge South. Official Plan amendments will implement the key policy elements of each plan.

The objectives of the Yonge Street Area Study include:

- To identify a preferred redevelopment/intensification scenario, focusing on opportunities for mixed-use development along Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue, and appropriate building forms and heights within the context of the Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 43 density target of 2.5 FSI for the Yonge Street Corridor;
- To assess, identify and provide an implementation strategy for parks, open space and/or recreation, cultural facilities and amenities suitable for the anticipated population in and adjacent to the redevelopment area;
- To provide a set of performance measures that assist in achieving environmentally sustainable development, including green roofs, energy efficiency, improved air quality, stormwater retention, temperature regulation, u/v protection, habitat creation, etc.;
- To ensure pedestrian convenience and comfort, taking into account height, massing, landscaping and the effects of wind and sun;
- To ensure a pedestrian and transit-supportive street level environment, particularly along the Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue frontages of the Study Area, with appropriate at-grade mixes of uses and building/street frontage relationships;
- To assess existing transportation and servicing infrastructure, and to determine required improvements, including possible alternative "green" technologies, to accommodate the preferred redevelopment scenario for the Study Area;
- To assess existing commercial and residential real estate market conditions and influences, and identify potential market opportunities;
- To establish appropriate phasing of development within the context of existing transportation and servicing infrastructure, and planned/required improvements;

- To provide appropriate transition between the redevelopment area and existing low density residential neighbourhoods, and to review existing road patterns in the area in the context of this objective;
- To provide an appropriate interface between the redevelopment area and adjoining industrial lands and the CN Rail line;
- To prepare an implementation strategy, including an amendment to OPA 210 - Thornhill Secondary Plan, and the implementing zoning by-law; and
- To provide detailed design concepts (with sufficient information to guide working drawings and costing) with respect to the street-related public realm on side-streets, and in the area outside the public right-of-way on Yonge Street (since the r.o.w. is being dealt with by the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation), and taking into account the detailed plans of YRRTC.

## **4. THE STUDY COMPONENTS**

### **4.1 Review Study Boundaries**

The Consulting team will be asked to review the proposed Study Area boundaries. Specifically, the consultant will provide recommendations concerning the scale, location and limits of recommended intensification or redevelopment areas, recognizing the need for appropriate transition and sensitivity to existing residential neighbourhoods.

### **4.2 Land Use and Urban Design Plan/Strategy**

The consultant will recommend a preferred land use and urban design plan, focusing on the lands along Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue within the Study Area. The intent will be to demonstrate how the lands close to the transit services on the arterials can evolve into an urban, mixed-use community, consisting of residential, offices, and retail and other commercial uses, in appropriately-scaled buildings. This component of the Study will address the following issues both comprehensively and on a block-by-block basis:

(i) A land use plan indicating the spatial distribution and mix of land uses within the blocks considered appropriate for redevelopment or intensification, primarily fronting on Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue. The scenario should identify:

- a) anticipated densities for residential, office and retail uses on a block-specific basis;
- b) recommended locations for these uses; and
- c) overall anticipated densities for each block within the context of the Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 43 target of 2.5 FSI average density within the Yonge Street corridor.

The land use plan will be used as a basis for evaluating existing transportation and servicing infrastructure in the Study Area. The land use plan will be supported by a real estate analysis of potential development sites and scenarios to ensure that concepts are well grounded and encourage investment from a financial point of view.

(ii) An urban design plan illustrating building heights adjacent to Yonge Street, Steeles Avenue, and other major roads; building massing and form; orientation of buildings relative to surrounding streets; location and form of parking areas and vehicular access points; and appropriate transition strategies to ensure compatibility with existing low-rise residential neighbourhoods.

(iii) Provision of publicly-accessible parks and recreation facilities, in a form and location suitable for the anticipated residential population.

(iv) Creating a pedestrian-supportive and vibrant environment with attractive streetscapes.

(v) Design guidelines addressing key aspects of the built environment including:

- Built form and massing;
- Siting and orientation of buildings;
- Mix of at-grade uses and street-friendly building facades (pedestrian-related ground floor uses);
- Detailed streetscaping (including signage, lighting, planting, street furniture for the public realm (on public and private lands) taking into account the detailed plans of YRRTC;
- Parks and open space;
- Opportunities for enhanced pedestrian connections throughout the Study Area, and a description of their form and character;
- Performance measures for environmental considerations, including energy efficiency, micro-climate, sun, shade, wind-tunnel, the integrity of the urban forest, light, view, privacy and sun exposure standards for pedestrian comfort, stormwater retention, temperature regulation, u/v protection, habitat creation, etc.;
- Strategies for minimizing the visual and physical impacts of parking areas and vehicular access points.

In addition, the recommended planning and urban design strategy must be developed within the context of existing and potential development within the other municipalities adjoining the Study Area, including the City of Toronto and the Town of Markham, at a sufficient level of detail to satisfy the requirements of the transportation and servicing analyses set out below. This will involve, in part, a thorough review of existing planning documents in these municipalities, and an analysis of the resulting transportation infrastructure requirements.

#### **4.3 Transportation**

In addition to the development potential within the City of Vaughan, significant intensification potential may also exist within the Town of Markham and the City of Toronto on lands adjoining the Study Area. Consultation and coordination with Toronto, Markham, and the Region of York are required in order to identify development potential within these adjoining jurisdictions, and ensure that the existing background traffic and future development potential in all three local municipalities is accurately reflected in the

analysis. Consideration should be given to the extent to which current planning documents in Vaughan, Markham and Toronto reflect the recommendations of the "Yonge-Steeles Development Area Committee" referenced above. The transportation infrastructure implications that may result from discrepancies between the recommendations of the Yonge-Steeles Development Area Committee and current municipal planning documents should also be reviewed at this time.

The transportation analysis will be required to evaluate the impacts of the proposed planning and urban design strategy (plus the development potential in the City of Toronto and Town of Markham based on their policy documents) on the existing transportation infrastructure. In addition, the transportation analysis will identify the transportation infrastructure improvements that will be needed to achieve anticipated ultimate development levels, including road and lane right-of-way locations, widths and intersections, transit, cycling and pedestrian improvements, and any phasing of development related to infrastructure delivery and timing. The analysis will also include an assessment of existing issues and conditions (ie. safety problems associated with left-turn movements).

Given the existing traffic conditions in this area, the transportation study will have a strong focus on transit and alternative modes of transportation (walking and cycling). In this regard, a comprehensive review of existing and projected travel demand to and through the Study Area will be required, utilizing the most up-to-date modeling information from both Toronto and York Region. The Study will review opportunities to improve pedestrian connections to support transit and other community needs. The Study will also identify modal split assumptions for horizon years in coordination with the Region of York's ongoing Transportation Master Plan. Potential new cycling routes (dedicated lanes and shared routes) and potential locations for bike parking as part of new development near transit stations for the Study Area will be reviewed to identify opportunities to link lands within the Study Area. A review of existing transit routes and opportunities to modify or add routes will be undertaken including opportunities and demand for community-based shuttles to provide a link to major transit destinations.

The Study will also examine the impact of traffic generated by redevelopment on the adjacent low density residential neighbourhoods, and produce recommendations to protect these neighbourhoods from traffic infiltration including opportunities for one-way street networks, traffic calming and turn prohibitions.

In addition to the above, the transportation analysis should address the following:

- Consideration of appropriate reductions in parking standards to reflect transit-supportive development in close proximity to transit rich routes such as Steeles Avenue, Yonge Street, and proposed Yonge Transitway stops;
- Potential for on-street parking on Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue to support retail uses;
- Requirement of Travel Demand Measures for new office development to support lower parking standards.

Any proposed reduction in parking standards must be considered within the context of minimizing potential overflow parking within adjacent residential neighbourhoods.

#### **4.4 Servicing**

Analysis of existing sanitary sewer, water and stormwater management (including opportunities to implement 'green' technologies) system capacities will be required, in order to determine any servicing capacity constraints that may affect the implementation and phasing of the preferred Land Use and Urban Design Plan within the Study Area. As part of the servicing component of this Study, an overall drainage plan has to be developed within the boundaries of the catchment areas to address surface drainage, stormwater management and sanitary sewers. Opportunities to retrofit infrastructure and/or add new facilities to provide quantity and quality control for stormwater have to be identified. The impact of redevelopment on downstream watercourses should also be addressed as part of this Study. The objective is to identify strategic opportunities and measures to ensure that redevelopment of the area will mitigate and improve the current situation, to the extent possible. This component of the Study will address the functional servicing requirements relating to municipal infrastructure improvements, their required timing and capital costs to accommodate the land uses and densities proposed in the recommended Land Use and Urban Design strategy. This information, together with the transportation analysis noted above, will feed directly into the Phasing and Implementation Strategy for the Study.

#### **4.5 Open Space and Recreation**

Alternative schemes for the provision of parks, open space and recreation facilities within and adjacent to the redevelopment area will be examined. The Study will identify the amount of parks, open space and specific recreation and cultural facilities relative to the anticipated resident and employment population in the Study Area, suitable locations for these facilities, and financial arrangements or other mechanisms needed to realize the required facilities.

The recommendations will seek to achieve an aesthetically pleasing balance between built form, open space and recreational opportunities suited to the community.

#### **4.6 Other Community Services**

The Study will examine the need for other community services (emergency, schools, libraries etc.) arising out of proposed redevelopment, and methods of addressing such needs. This analysis will include an inventory of existing facilities, services and capacities. If such services are needed within the Study Area, appropriate sites (or opportunities for combining required facilities within residential or commercial development) will be identified in the Land Use and Urban Design strategy. If new community facilities are not justified within the Study Area, then the Study will identify existing facilities capable of servicing the area.



#### **4.7 Phasing and Implementation Strategy**

The key to success in large redevelopment areas lies in implementation strategies which will ensure orderly change. The phasing and implementation strategies will address timing and phasing of development, land assembly requirements, criteria for assessing development applications, staging of infrastructure improvements and community services.

It is anticipated that the recommended land use and urban design strategies will require amendments to OPA 210. The Consultant Team will be required to prepare draft amendments to the Thornhill/Vaughan Community Plan to implement the recommended land use and urban design strategy and the phasing strategy. The amendments to OPA 210 will also identify a comprehensive list of background studies and issues that must be prepared in support of redevelopment applications.

The Consultant Team will also be required to make recommendations on detailed land uses and development standards, suitable for incorporation into implementing zoning by-law amendment(s) for the area.

#### **4.8 Consultation Program**

Public consultation and education will play a key role in this Study in order to achieve a broad level of public acceptance for the recommended Land Use and Urban Design plan. A variety of techniques should be used to convey a realistic impression of the built community and to facilitate public understanding of the proposed changes, possibly including a range of illustration techniques and computer modelling.

The Consultant will design and be responsible for organizing a full consultation and engagement program, including community information meetings with residents and landowners, regular meetings with a Technical Advisory Committee (comprising City staff, external agencies, adjacent municipalities and other stakeholders), and statutory public meeting(s) for draft Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments.

Formation of one or two Stakeholder Consultation Groups (SCGs) will be required, consisting of landowners within the Study Area, ratepayers and other residents, to provide input at key points in the study process.

### **5. THE CONSULTING TEAM**

The Study requires a multi-disciplinary team to address urban design, planning, marketing/economic development, servicing, transportation and community services issues. The team will be headed by a firm or consortium specializing in planning and urban design, with a demonstrated record in the design and implementation of large-scale redevelopment schemes. The lead firm will identify sub-consultants as part of the

proposal and clearly indicate the specific expertise offered to the Study and the extent of their involvement in the project.

## **6. SCHEDULE AND STAFFING**

The Study is expected to begin in Fall, 2007. Stage 1, focusing on Yonge South, should be completed by Spring, 2008. Stage 2, focusing on Yonge North, would be completed in Fall, 2008.

The consultant's detailed prices should identify task costs, meeting costs, costs for disbursements, contingencies and applicable taxes, plus a payment schedule for each study phase. The work program will detail task timing and sequencing and meeting schedules. The proposal will also identify the role and responsibility of each member of the consulting team, their direct involvement in the Study, and their relevant experience. The proposal will also identify the anticipated extent and schedule of City staff involvement in the study process.

## **7. STUDY PRODUCTS**

The key products of the study will include:

- Review of all current planning documents, and other relevant studies, within the Study Area and adjacent municipalities;
- The Land Use and Urban Design Plan/Strategy and the urban design guidelines report;
- The draft Secondary Plan Amendment; and
- Detailed land uses and development standards suitable for incorporation into implementing Zoning By-law Amendment(s).

It is anticipated that the following background reports will also be prepared:

- Transportation issues;
- Servicing, drainage and watercourse issues;
- Parks and open space, recreation facilities and other community services; and
- Phasing and implementation strategy

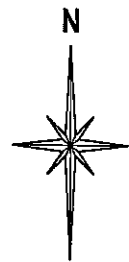
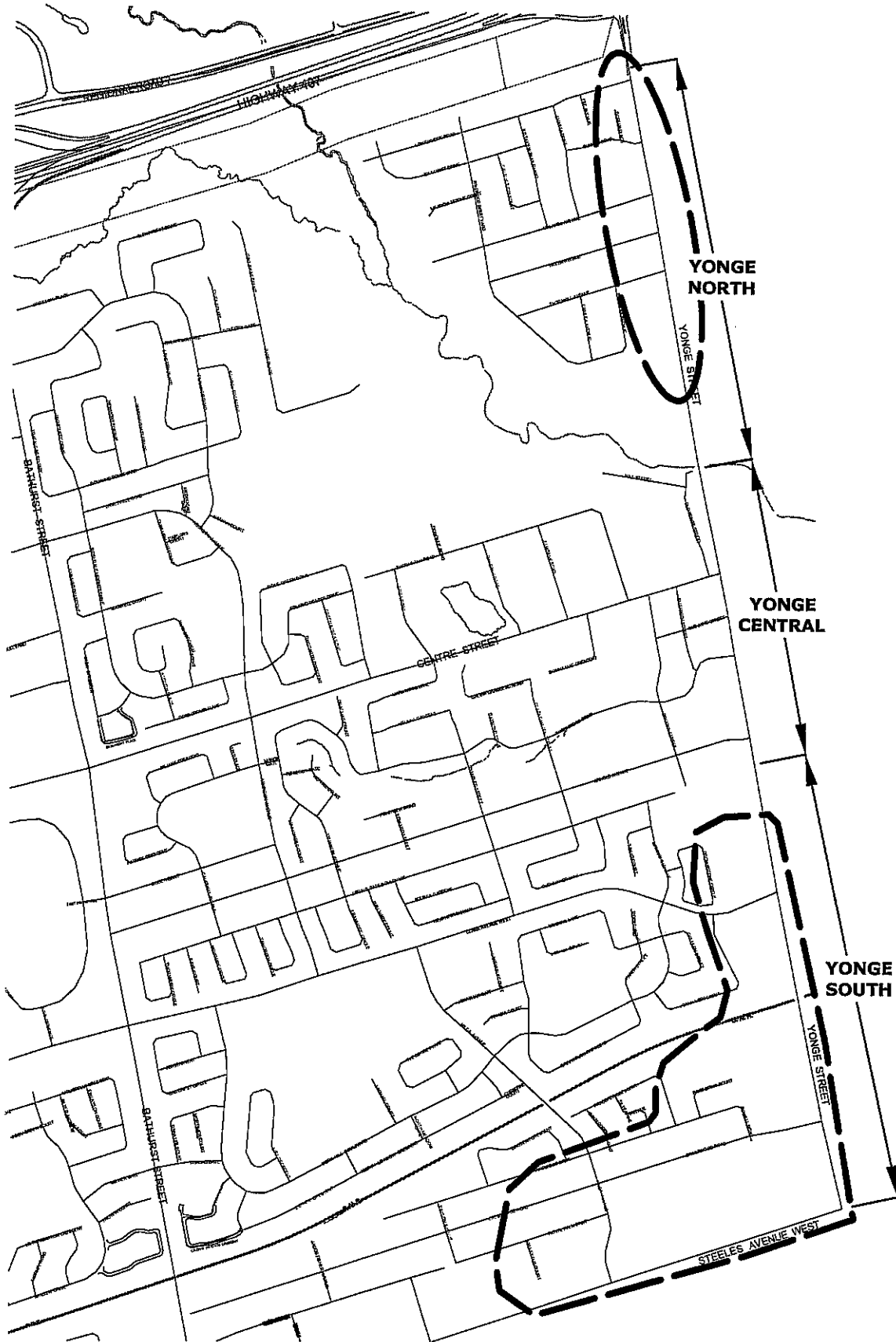
Prior to preparation of final reports, one or more draft reports will be prepared for discussion and review by the Technical Advisory Committee.

### Copies

1. 50 copies of the Land Use and Urban Design Plan/Strategy;
2. 50 copies of the urban design guidelines report, including illustrations, and maps as required;
3. 50 copies of the draft Secondary Plan Amendment;

In addition, for each of the items noted above, provide:

1. 1 digital print ready copy;
2. 1 digital copy, in a format that is readily editable;
3. 1 PDF copy; and
4. 1 digital copy of all images and mapping. Where appropriate, digital information shall be georeferenced in accordance with City standards (NAD 83, 6° UTM, Zone 17). Acceptable City formats include: jpeg photos, AutoCAD dwg (2004 version), jpeg/bmp/tif/Adobe graphics. Specific technical information will be provided to the selected consultant.



Not to Scale

TOWN OF  
MARKHAM

MAP A