

# CENTRE STREET CORRIDOR URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES AND STREETScape MASTER PLAN STUDY

## INTRODUCTION

The Centre Street Corridor Urban Design Guidelines and Streetscape Master Plan Study will be comprised of three components: i) the development of a design framework and urban design guidelines; ii) a streetscape master plan; and, iii) an implementation and phasing study.

## STUDY AREA

The proposed Centre Street Corridor Urban Design Guidelines and Streetscape Master Plan Study Area is located within the Thornhill community. The Study Area is approximately three kilometres in length, and extends from Bathurst Street in the east to the intersection of Centre Street with Highway 7 (just past Dufferin Street) to the west.

## BACKGROUND

The Thornhill Centre Street Study was undertaken by the City in 2004 in recognition of the changing Provincial, Regional and Municipal policy environment, the land use context, and continuing pressure for further development. It was a multi-disciplinary planning exercise combining land use, urban design and transportation considerations, to examine the lands fronting Centre Street from Bathurst Street to west of Dufferin Street.

Following out of the Thornhill Centre Street Study, two amendments to the Official Plan, OPA 671 and OPA 672, have been approved. Both OPAs came into force in July 2005. They establish the policy framework to guide development consistent with the recommendations of the study, including policy provisions addressing land use, urban design and streetscaping.

The Study Area lands are largely developed with the exception of some large vacant parcels at the Bathurst Street/Centre Street and Dufferin Street/Centre Street intersections. The Centre Street corridor will accommodate higher order public transit service when the Highway 7 transit initiatives are fully implemented. Centre Street will serve as a link in the York Rapid Transit Plan (YRTP), with stations along Centre Street at Dufferin Street, North Promenade Mall and potentially at Vaughan Boulevard, contributing to its evolution from an auto oriented thoroughfare to a multi-modal corridor. The Thornhill Center Street Study outlines that, "One of the greatest challenges within the corridor is the spine and its transformation from a primary highway and major transportation corridor to an attractive urban space that reinforces the connectivity to the surrounding community." The opportunity is to gradually evolve the Centre Street corridor into active, urban destination that is pedestrian-oriented, human in scale, transit-supportive, and well-connected to the larger community.

### **Provincial, Regional, Municipal and Stakeholder Policy Documents and Guidelines:**

A number of provincial, regional and municipal policy documents and guidelines, as well as infrastructure initiatives will play an important role in the future development of the Centre Street corridor. These include:

- The City of Vaughan Official Plan (Volume 1 draft document is now on-line. You may access the document by clicking on the link: <http://www.vaughantomorrow.ca/OPR/index.html>)
- City of Vaughan Active Together Master Plan, Parks, Recreation, Culture & Libraries Master Plan (2008)
- City of Vaughan Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Study (2008)
- City of Vaughan Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) General Guidelines in the Development Review Processes (2007)

- York Region Official Plan (as adopted by Regional Council, 16 December 2009)
- Planning for Tomorrow - York Region Growth Management Study (2006)
- York Region Sustainability Strategy (2007)
- York Region Transportation Master Plan – Planning (2003)
- York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008)
- Making it Happen! The York Region Centres and Corridors Study
- York Region Transit Highway 7 Corridor and Vaughan N-S Link Public Transit Improvements Environmental Assessment
- Viva Rapidway Design Standards (2007)
- Regional Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines (2006)
- York Region Transit Coordinated Street Furniture Urban Design Guidelines (2009)
- York Region Street Tree Preservation and Planting Design Guidelines (2009)
- Government of Ontario, Places to Grow Act, 2005 (Ontario Bill 136)
- Government of Ontario, The 2005 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

## **STUDY GOALS**

The main goals of the Centre Street Corridor Urban Design Guidelines and Streetscape Master Plan Study are: i) To prepare a preliminary design framework and detailed Urban Design Guidelines for Centre Street from Bathurst Street to just west of Dufferin Street; and, ii) To prepare a Streetscape Master Plan for the same area.

These two components will detail the comprehensive set of planning and urban design principles outlined in the Thornhill Centre Street Study, and support Vaughan and York Region Official Plan objectives.

Specifically, The Centre Street Corridor Urban Design Guidelines and Streetscape Master Plan Study will address the following objectives:

- a) Transform the Centre Street corridor into a destination with a strong identity and sense of place by enhancing the character of the landscape and built environment including streetscape, planting, wayfinding, building, and gateway design;
- b) Promote high quality design along the Centre Street corridor including streetscape, open space, pathways, architecture, and amenities;
- c) Develop a mixed-use city streetscape through attention to the design of the public realm, built form, and the relationship between architecture and the streetscape based on the following principles:
  - Evolve Centre Street from an auto oriented thoroughfare to a multi modal corridor that will provide more opportunity for people to walk, cycle, and take transit;
  - Enhance the pedestrian experience and facilitate pedestrian movement throughout the area by establishing the creation of a connected, clearly defined, safe and enjoyable walking environment with varied visual interest;

- Provide a unified and high quality streetscape design including lighting, planting, signage, street furniture and other pedestrian-oriented amenities;
- Integrate environmental sustainability into the design;
- Ensure development is appropriate scale and building form to integrate with the surrounding community, and appropriate scale, siting, and orientation to engage the streetscape;
- Ensure that all public and private spaces are designed in a manner which is accessible, safe, and subject to informal surveillance.

## **THE STUDY COMPONENTS**

The following sections are intended to give an overview of the project and are not intended to be an exhaustive listing of the work activities required in each phase. The Consultant will be required to provide all of the necessary personnel and resources to complete the project except where materials or information are to be supplied by the City or other agencies as specifically indicated below:

### **Preliminary Design Framework and Development of Urban Design Guidelines:**

The development of a preliminary design framework and Urban Design Guidelines will ensure that development applications are in keeping with the vision of the urban design policies and objectives established in OPA 671 and OPA 672. This component will include the following:

- Preliminary design framework and objectives of the Urban Design Guidelines. Include analysis of OPA 671, OPA 672, and York Region Official Plans in relation to the development of Urban Design Guidelines.
- Development of an Urban Design Vision and Concept based upon an assessment of existing conditions, identification of issues, opportunities and constraints, and the recommended policy framework outlined in the Thornhill Centre Street Study.
- Development of Public Realm Guidelines including streetscapes; pedestrian crossings; mid-block connections; bicycle routes; bicycle parking, weather protection; public transit facilities; grade relationships; paving and soft landscaping; boulevard planting; visual screening and buffering; protection and enhancement of significant views; and gateways. The Streetscape Master Plan will be prepared based on these guidelines.
- Development of Built Form and Site Planning Guidelines including build-within zones; setbacks; minimum built frontage; spacing between buildings; maximum building depths; minimum/maximum building heights; building massing; angular plan setbacks; loading service and garbage areas; parking; site access; landscaping; lighting; pedestrian circulation. The criteria for building locations, forms, heights and massing in relation to the streetscape will be incorporated into the Streetscape Master Plan.
- Outline pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation networks, including improved pedestrian and bicycle linkages, parking, and integration with transit services. This section to include enhanced pedestrian crossing points; hierarchy of connections between open spaces, parks, streets and walkways; the location of primary pedestrian entrances to buildings in relation to the streetscape; the relationship of street frontages; accessibility; and how the role of the public street and pedestrian movement along the street are supported.
- Develop strategies for minimizing the visual and physical impacts of parking and vehicular access points on the streetscape.

- Outline strategies and measures to achieve sustainable development and an environmentally streetscape addressing: tree health and longevity, native and low input plantings, biodiversity, surface water (minimizing the quantity of storm water runoff that enters into storm drains), irrigation, heat island reduction, sustainable materials, energy efficiency, reduction of light pollution.

### **Streetscape Master Plan:**

The Streetscape Master Plan will provide the layout and detailed design of private and public streetscape spaces, pedestrian and bicycle connections, as well as an architectural strategy for building locations, forms, heights and massing in relation to the public realm within this important key planned area. This component will include the following:

- Preliminary site investigation and inspection of the topographical features and field survey work required to carry out and complete the project. Prepare criteria to guide future geotechnical analysis required as a component of the streetscape construction.
- Review and analyze background streetscape policies outlined in the Thornhill Centre Street Study, OPA 671, OPA 672, and City and York Region Official Plans, including York Region Official Plan Amendment 43.
- Prepare and present a recommended Streetscape Design Strategy to the City Steering Committee, based on a detailed analysis of existing conditions and Urban Design Guidelines (component 4.1).
- Design a Streetscape Master Plan for both the north and south sides of Centre Street, from Bathurst Street to west of Dufferin Street. The Streetscape Master Plan is to include (but is not limited to) gateways, street furniture, railings, street lighting, wayfinding, street signage, bicycle parking, planting, pedestrian weather protection, and the provision of criteria for building locations, forms, heights and massing in relation to the streetscape.
- Prepare cost estimates for Streetscape Master Plan.
- Prepare and submit preliminary drawings, investigations, and recommendations to the City on such alternatives or modifications to the Project that the Consultant, in her/his professional judgment, deems advantageous to the City.
- The Consultant will confirm any land requirements identified during preliminary design for the proposed works, and make recommendations regarding property acquisitions and working easements both for the project and for investigation purposes.
- Investigation and confirmation of the present location of all above ground utilities, and the preparation of additional drawings required for alternative utility relocation as required by the City. Underground utilities are to be indicated on the plans and profiles in accordance with information submitted by the respective utility.
- Public participation is important to the success of the study, it is envisioned that a Stakeholder Consultation Group (SCG) will be organized and actively participate throughout the design process. The (SCG) will consist of representatives from area ratepayer associations, local residents, and staff from City of Vaughan, Region of York and Toronto Region Conservation Authority.
- Participate in a reasonable number of meetings for informative, mediative, preventative or coordinative purposes with the City, Utilities and/or other regulatory agencies, in connection with the services provided under the terms of reference between the City and the Consultant.

### **Implementation Phasing Strategy and Schedule:**

- Prepare a detailed implementation phasing strategy and schedule.