



York Region Centres & Corridors Strategy



MAKING IT HAPPEN!

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MESSAGE FROM YORK REGIONAL COUNCIL

Since its creation in 1971 York Region has evolved from being a predominantly bedroom community to one of Canada's fastest growing and most diversified and desirable municipalities for both people and businesses to locate. Looking forward to the future York Region is anticipated to grow to 1.28 million residents and 696,000 jobs by 2026. The Region is at a critical juncture in terms of managing growth, attracting business and maintaining the quality of life residents currently enjoy. A key part of York Region's Growth Management Strategy will be the development of our Regional centres and corridors. However, York Region will continue to offer a balanced and broad range of housing options and choice.

Much progress has been made in developing compact new communities, however a new approach to developing our centres and corridors is required. Centres need to become attractive environments with a full range of amenities so that people can live, work, shop and enjoy recreation and entertainment facilities in the same community.

The proposed Strategy is an action plan that will promote the development of the planned urban structure of Regional centres and corridors and strengthen the relationship between land use, transportation and transit. The Strategy is premised on four action areas:

- Policy
- Financial policy and tools
- Infrastructure investment
- Supportive programs

During the Vision 2026 exercise the public told us that they wanted careful growth management that maintained and enhanced York Region's quality of life. The initiatives and actions within this Strategy represents practical steps York Region and its partners can take in pursuit of these goals.

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WHAT IS A REGIONAL CENTRE?

Regional centres are vibrant, higher density mixed use precincts. They will be the Region's "downtown." Uses will include office buildings, higher density residential, community and public squares as well as a wide variety of restaurants, shops, cultural, institutional, human service and administrative facilities. These

centres will offer an attractive pedestrian oriented environment that will be serviced by efficient, convenient transit. York Region residents will be able to live and work in the same areas as well as enjoy nearby commercial, retail and cultural facilities all within walking distance.

URBAN AND LOCAL CENTRES

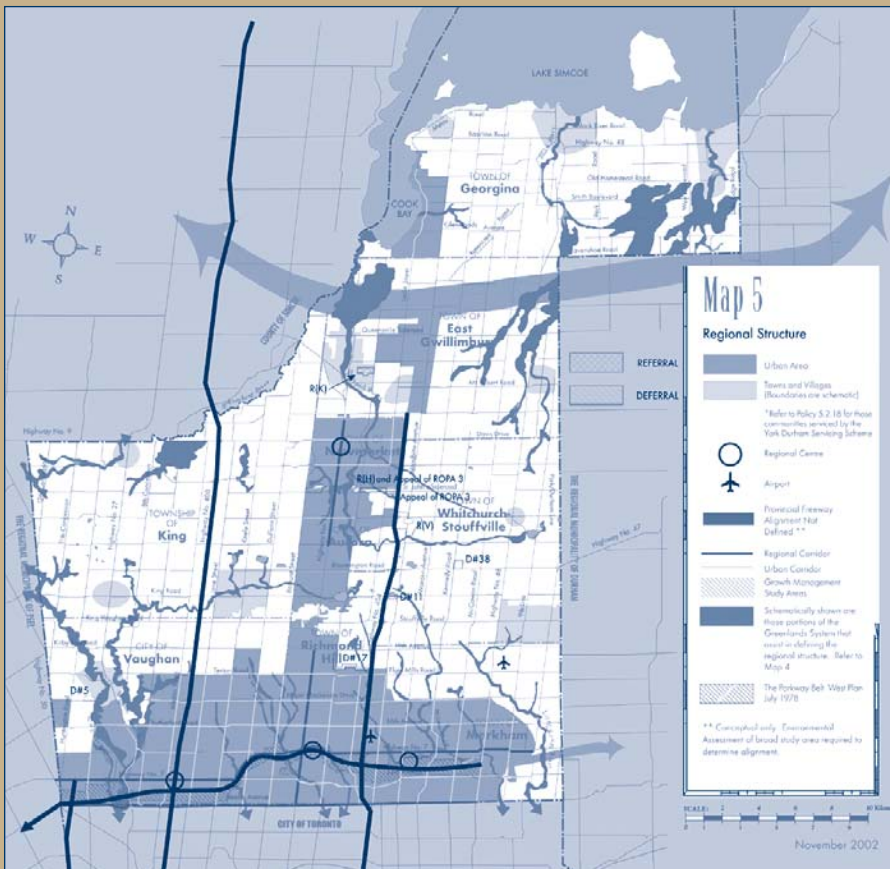
In addition to Regional centres, a series of urban and local centres are identified in local official plans. Although offering a range of land uses and generally higher density levels, these centres are typically smaller in both the scale and massing of development. Urban centres are existing centres that have historic streetscapes and/or central business areas and main streets that could accommodate more growth and present an opportunity for mixed-use development and redevelopment. Examples of urban centres in York Region include old Woodbridge, Unionville, and old Richmond Hill.

Local centres serve towns and villages as well as rural and agricultural areas. The main streets of towns such as Stouffville, King City, and Sutton have served the needs of the surrounding settlements and agricultural community. Local centres present opportunities to build on and broaden existing residential, commercial and employment activity.

SUCCESSSES

York Region has already had a number of successes that set the stage for the development of centres and corridors:

- The Amalgamation of transit systems into York Region Transit in 2001.
- The construction of a number of higher density mixed use buildings in and adjacent to several Regional centres in Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Newmarket.
- The completion of the York Region Transportation Master Plan and the Housing Supply Strategy.
- Initiation of the York Region Transit Plan Public - Private Partnership.
- The reduction of the Multi-Residential tax rate to encourage more housing choice, diversity and affordability.
- The creation of clear, high density mixed use graphic visions for the Region's centres and corridors.



WHAT IS A REGIONAL CORRIDOR?

The Regional corridors of Yonge Street and Highway 7 have the greatest opportunity to add new housing units, employment and services in a mixed-use form that is supportive of higher order transit services and features a high degree of pedestrian oriented design. The corridors will provide efficient transportation links to the Regional centres as well as other centres throughout the GTA. Their character will change over their length including compact mixed-use centres, historical and new mainstreet

areas, employment and business areas as well as rural natural areas. The proposed Strategy recognizes the unique characteristics of Highway 7 and Yonge Street. Policies and programs that reflect, protect and enhance the individual nature of Highway 7 and Yonge Street will be required. Appropriate land-uses, design and densities will depend upon site-specific circumstances and the nature of development along and adjacent to the corridors.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

York Region's Official Plan calls for the creation of compact well designed communities in order to protect our agricultural lands, rural countryside and green spaces like the Oak Ridges Moraine. In order to protect these areas the Region needs to direct a significant portion of our growth to existing urban areas. A key part of this Strategy is the creation of a system of Regional centres linked by rapid transit in Regional corridors.

Although the Region has created compact development there has been less success in developing our Regional centres and corridors. This Strategy is a coordinated effort with our local municipal partners to realize our Regional centres and corridors goals.

A STRATEGY FOR CENTRES AND CORRIDORS

Developing Regional centres and corridors will require us to build on our successes and to work closely with our local municipal partners, the private sector, as well as the people of York Region and senior levels of government.

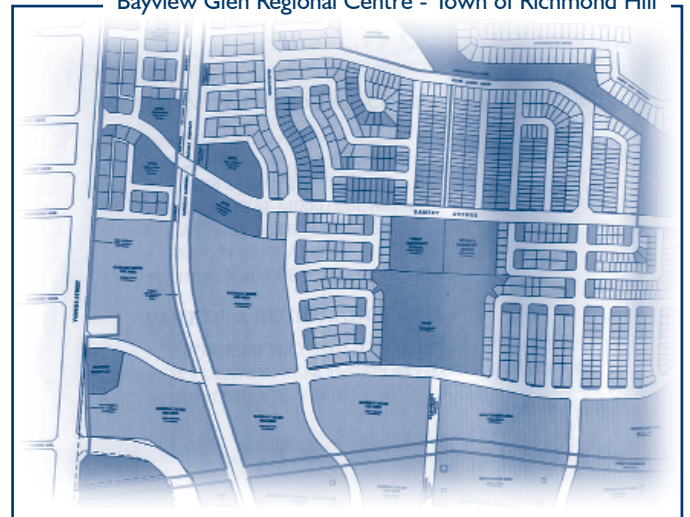
The proposed Strategy focuses on four key action areas:

- POLICY
- FINANCIAL POLICY AND TOOLS
- INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT
- SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS

Markham Centre Plan - Town of Markham



Bayview Glen Regional Centre - Town of Richmond Hill



REGIONAL CENTRE PLANS

York Region has designated four Regional centres: Markham Centre, Newmarket Centre, Bayview Glen in Richmond Hill and the Vaughan Corporate Centre. These centres are linked by the Regional corridors of Yonge Street and Highway 7. The local municipalities have already prepared detailed plans for those centres.

Markham Centre	Approximately 40,000 people and jobs
Newmarket Centre	Approximately 5,000 people and jobs
Bayview Glen in Richmond Hill	Approximately 20,000 people and jobs
Vaughan Corporate Centre	Approximately 35,000 people and jobs



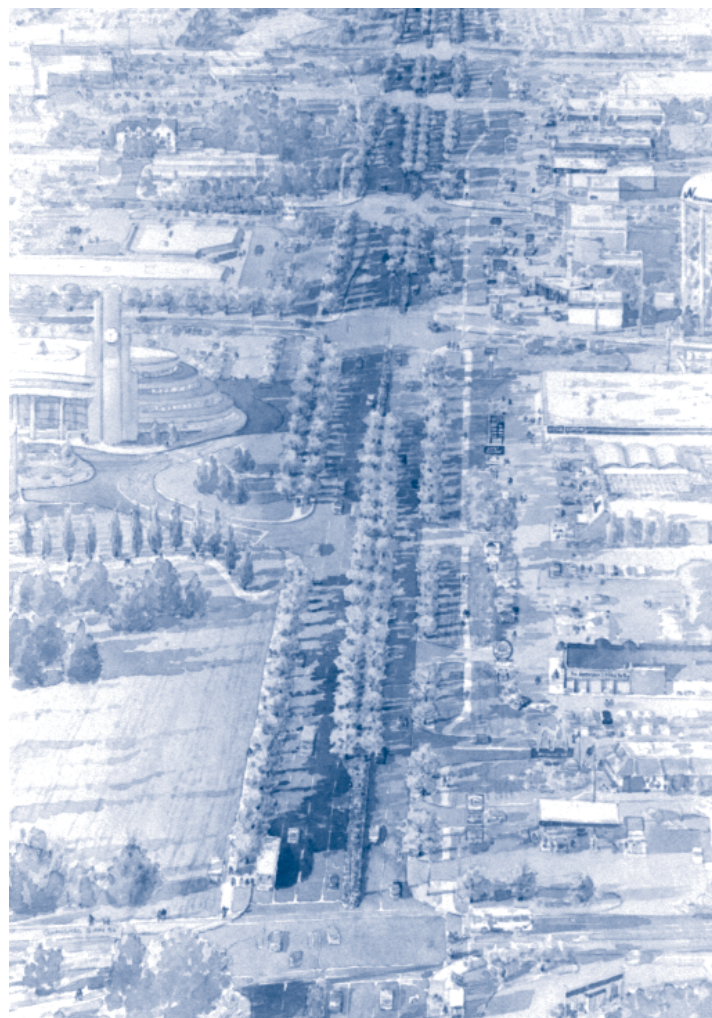
INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

- Provide higher order rapid transit along Regional corridors to connect Regional centres with links to centres and corridors in the GTA.
- Create special streetscaping in centres and corridors balancing transit, pedestrians and traffic.
- Review the Region's design guidelines for road construction ensuring that emphasis is placed on facilitating transit and pedestrian users.

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- Create a clear, high density, mixed use graphic vision for the Region's centres and corridors.
- Work with local municipalities to prepare detailed urban design guidelines for Regional centres and corridors.
- Establish a formal regional and local municipal review process for centre and corridor development. This process would evaluate development proposals based on the vision, principles and policies for the centres and corridors.
- Enshrine as-of-right-development within the Regional Official Plan and the official plans of local municipalities.
- Pursue the Region's Housing Supply Strategy to promote a range and mix of higher density housing options in centres and corridors.
- Identify areas within the centres and corridors where intensification is occurring.
- Provide strong planning guidance including density targets, urban design and streetscaping performance standards.
- Ensure development is phased in a logical manner with an emphasis placed upon intensification and potential redevelopment.
- Require the preparation of detailed secondary plans and tertiary plans if appropriate for the Regional centres and corridors. These plans should clearly identify the extent of centres and corridors including transition zones, key opportunities for intensive development and ensure public gathering places and parks are provided for.
- Direct office and service jobs to centres and corridors.
- Protect existing neighbourhood areas adjacent to centres and corridors by requiring transitions in scale, height and density.
- Ensure greenland systems are maintained and connected where possible.

—Newmarket Centre - Town of Newmarket



BENEFITS

Regional centres and corridors will achieve a number of benefits:

- Strengthen the Region's economy and assessment base through the attraction of more businesses.
- Facilitate the implementation of the York Region Official Plan, Growth Management Strategy and the Housing Supply Strategy.
- Promote development forms that support the financial viability of the York Region Rapid Transit initiative.
- Help protect agricultural lands, the rural countryside, our greenlands and improve our air quality.



INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT CONTINUED...

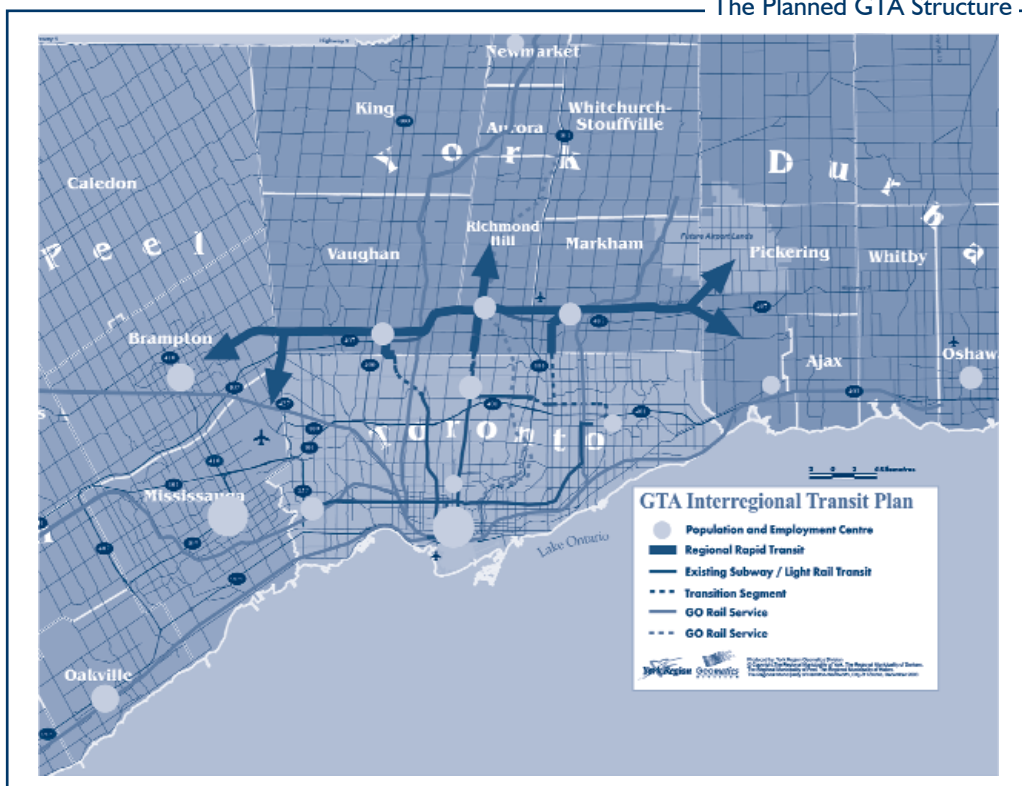
- Locate public buildings, community facilities, cultural facilities, human service and institutional buildings in Regional centres and along Regional corridors.
- Work with local municipalities to coordinate infrastructure investment with new development.
- Work with the local municipalities to create pedestrian amenities and enhance safety in centres and corridors.
- Create close live-work opportunities in centres and corridors.
- Protect and acquire sites and rights of way for high order transit services along corridors.



FINANCIAL POLICY AND TOOLS

- Undertake a study to review the non-residential development charges rate structure to examine the impact of alternative methods for recovering capital costs to encourage higher density development within centres and corridors, which is tied to land use density targets.
- Undertake a study to review the residential development charges rate structure to examine the cost of capital service needs tied to land use density targets.
- Work with the local municipalities and School Boards to reduce development charges in centres and corridors.
- Examine options to accelerate the early provision of key municipal infrastructure such as parking and streetscaping.
- Maintain the Multi Residential tax class at a level equal to the Residential Class.
- Investigate expanding the Municipal Capital Facilities By-law to cover other areas such as parking structures and transit infrastructure.
- Undertake a detailed TIF (Tax Increment Financing) option for specific regional centres and corridors.
- Set up a staff group to consider a range of policy enhancements that require provincial approval and/or legislation changes.
- Review land use density targets for population and employment within centres and corridors and detailed capital infrastructure requirements.

The Planned GTA Structure

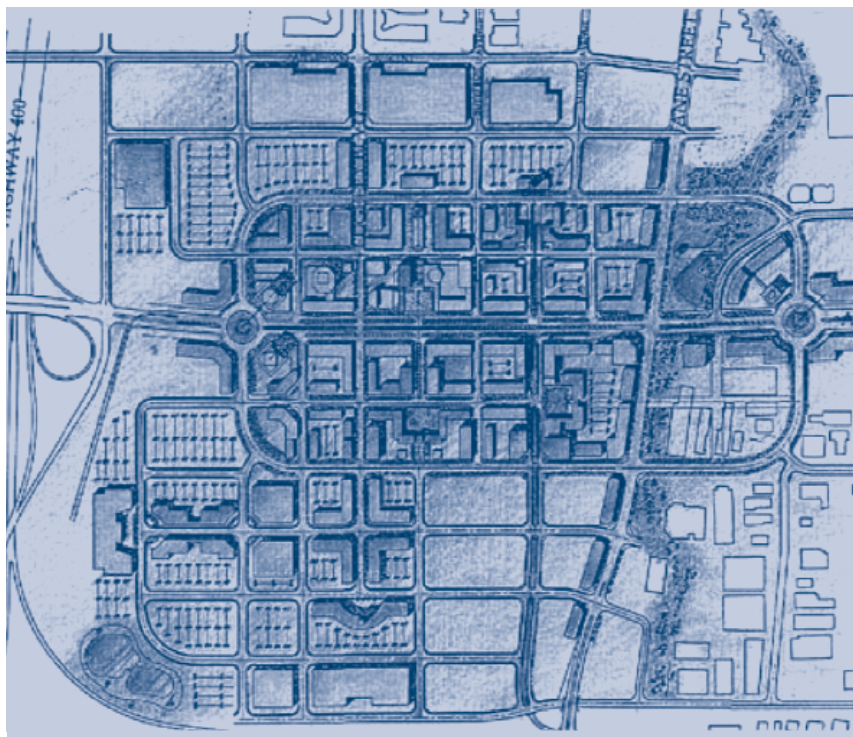


A VISION FOR HIGHWAY 7 - CITY OF VAUGHAN

SUPPORTIVE PROGRAMS

- Work with the local municipalities to create public parking authorities.
- Use a suite of Transportation Demand Management measures including the further establishment of Transportation Management Associations.
- Invest in housing initiatives in the regional centres and corridors.
- Investigate the use of strategic bonus provisions from Section 37 of the *Planning Act*.
- Investigate Community Improvement Plan designations (*Section 28*) to leverage investment and intensification.
- Investigate the use of a Development Permit System (*Section 70.2*) to streamline and promote development in a cost-effective and timely manner.
- Explore innovative partnerships with public agencies and the private sector regarding joint development opportunities around current or planned transit stations.
- Use a development or redevelopment authority as an implementation vehicle to initiate new appropriate development along centres and corridors.
- Work with the public agencies and the private sector to locate human service facilities in centres and corridors.
- Create a public education and marketing program to communicate the lifestyle benefits of compact urban form and the attractiveness of living and working in centres and corridors to the general public.
- Develop a database and a formalized monitoring and performance measurement system to monitor and track development in centres and corridors.

— Vaughan Corporate Centre - City of Vaughan —



ROLE OF SENIOR GOVERNMENTS

The success of this strategy will require the active and continual involvement of senior levels of government. Like other municipalities in Ontario and Canada, York Region needs to secure additional long-term sources of revenue to provide the infrastructure needed to support development within the Region's centres and corridors.

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

- Restore long term transit and housing funding.
- Provide stronger legislative tools to maintain urban boundaries and promote intensification.
- Prepare a new general and site specific Provincial Policy under *Section 3* of the *Planning Act* that links transit with land use and articulates a Provincial interest in supporting transit-supportive development in the Provincial Policy Statement.
- Transfer tax room to municipalities.
- Change appropriate sections of the *Planning Act*, *Income Tax Act*, *Development Charges Act* and *Building Code Act* to support centre and corridor development.
- Allocate a portion of the PST to municipalities.

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

- Implement an urban strategy that includes long-term and sustained funding based upon National Housing, Transit/Transportation and Infrastructure programs.
- Restore long-term funding for transit and affordable housing.
- Develop location efficient mortgages.
- Implement income tax credits for renters and landlords, encouraging the construction of rental housing.
- Transfer federal tax room to municipalities.
- Revise corporate and capital taxes to promote affordable housing.
- Allocate a portion of the GST and fuel taxes to municipalities.
- Make transit passes a non-taxable benefit.

KEEPING THE PUBLIC INFORMED

York Region's Centres and Corridors Strategy is a co-ordination of policy, financial tools, infrastructure investments and supportive programs that will make the planned urban structure a reality.

This draft brochure is intended to provide York Region residents, stakeholders and other interested parties with information regarding current and future actions, design principles and policy concepts that are required to successfully develop our Regional centres and corridors.

We welcome your comments and feedback on this material and we encourage you to contact us via one of the methods below.

Your support and participation in this strategy is key to its success.

Markham Centre Concept



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