



CITY-BUILDING AND SUPPORTING TRANSIT THROUGH GOOD DESIGN

TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

ADOPTED BY
Regional Council
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DRAFT



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TOD and the REGIONAL URBAN STRUCTURE- AN INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Regional Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Guidelines is to advance the implementation of York Region's planned urban structure of Regional Centres linked by Regional Corridors, served by public transit. The Region, in partnership with its nine local municipalities, is committed to achieving this structure and has achieved considerable success to date. However, significant implementation opportunities remain.

Robust growth, development and re-development within York Region represents an excellent opportunity to shape urban form in a way that is transit-supportive, pedestrian-friendly, and well-designed. This approach is consistent with the Regional Official Plan (ROP), and is further supported by initiatives that aim to advance the ROP's themes of Economic Vitality, Environmental Sustainability and Healthy Communities, including:

- **Vision 2026**, setting out eight strategic goals to guide corporate priorities over the next 20 years based on a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process with York Region residents and businesses
- **York Region Transit (YRT)**, established in 2001 from the amalgamation of local municipal transit services to create a true Region-wide transit system with routes in all nine local municipalities
- **Transportation Master Plan**, prioritizing transit and road infrastructure improvements to meet the Region's transportation needs to 2031, with an emphasis on implementing a Regional Rapid Transit Plan linking the Regional Centres and Regional Corridors, including connections to the Toronto Transit Commission subway south of Steeles Avenue
- **York Region Centres + Corridors Strategy: Making it Happen!**, outlining a detailed action plan to make the Region's planned urban structure a reality through a four-faceted approach that employs Policy, Financial Tools, Infrastructure Investment and Supportive Programs
- **Regional Official Plan Amendment No. 43**, enhancing the Regional planning framework through a greater emphasis on compact development, urban design, implementation tools, and infrastructure investment including rapid transit
- **York Region Rapid Transit Plan Phase 1 - Viva Phase 1**, launched in September 2005 to improve the frequency, capacity and convenience of transit services along the Regional Corridors through state-of-the-art buses, traffic signal priority and off-board fare collection.

These initiatives represent a new approach to urban growth and development in York Region - one that emphasizes city-building through development and redevelopment that is compact, well-designed, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive. The traditional, auto-oriented suburban growth model is no longer sustainable from economic, environmental and social perspectives.



WHAT IS TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)?

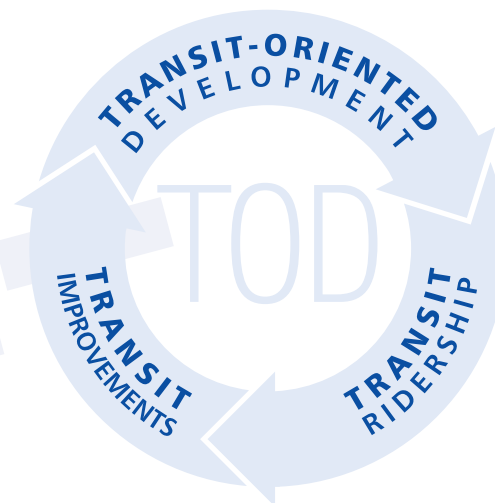
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is an approach to planning and design that recognizes the relationship between how we grow and our ability to provide efficient and effective transit services. The goal is to shape development in a way that responds to the needs of transit users and the transit service itself. Doing this effectively will generate ridership and enhance the quality and frequency of the transit system.

There are several elements to TOD, but some of the most common and widely-adopted include:

- Development is concentrated around transit stations
- Buildings are in a compact form and well-designed
- A mix of land uses are provided along transit routes, including a mix of commercial and residential in one building
- Activity-generating uses, like schools and shopping, are located along transit routes
- Buildings and the spaces in between are connected by sidewalks that lead to transit stations

The Regional Official Plan has many TOD elements incorporated into its policies, which are supported through local municipal official plans, secondary plans and zoning by-laws. Combined, these planning instruments form a comprehensive and consistent framework to encourage development in a manner that supports transit.

The guidelines outlined in this document will assist in the understanding and implementation of TOD land use policies in York Region. This, in turn, will support York Region's long-term investment in transit which includes rapid transit in the four Regional Corridors and the extension of the Toronto Transit Commission subway north to the Vaughan Corporate Centre.



Section 5.2 of the Regional Official Plan outlines the importance of *Pedestrian-friendly Streetscapes* as follows:

- Locate buildings close to street edge
- Keep height of buildings and width of street in proportion
- Avoid walls, berms or fences that cut off the street from buildings
- Locate retail stores and services at grade
- Locate parking areas in rear or side yards
- Minimize number of mid-block entry points for vehicles
- Include amenities such as canopies or arcades along walkways and sidewalks and boulevard trees along the streetfront
- Provide landscape and building design that improves wind patterns
- Provide continuous sidewalks
- Design intersections to accommodate pedestrians as well as vehicles
- Explore alternatives to reverse lotting along arterials and collector roads

(ROP, Section 5.2)

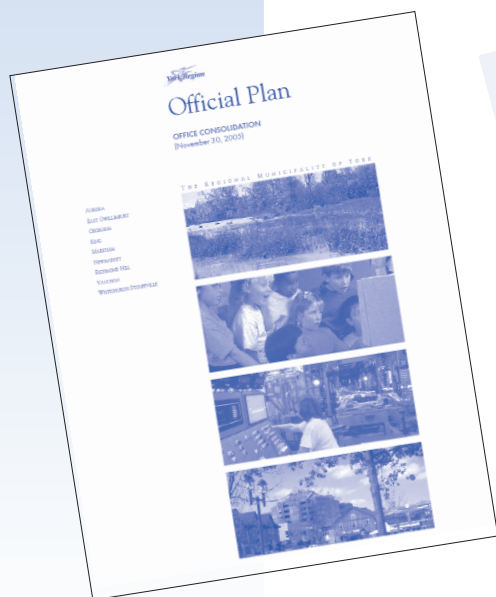


USING THESE GUIDELINES

The Regional TOD Guidelines are not new policy or regulation. Rather, they are a tool to advance the understanding and implementation of existing Regional policies and programs that encourage transit-supportive, pedestrian-friendly and well-designed development. They not only incorporate essential elements of Regional policies and programs, but also reflect best practices from local municipal secondary plans for their respective segments of Regional Centres and Regional Corridors.

Readers should consider the Guidelines inclusively; each as part of a broader approach to transit-oriented development. Furthermore, readers should view the Guidelines in the context of Regional Official Plan policies and related programs, which are referenced in the sidebars of the document.

These Guidelines are intended to serve a number of purposes, including education, awareness, advocacy, and the further implementation of the Region's planned urban structure of Regional Centres linked by Regional Corridors, served by public transit. These Guidelines can assist developers in the preparation of planning applications. They can assist in the review and evaluation of planning applications by municipal staff and councils. They can help residents and businesses gain a better understanding of how the built environment within their communities can enhance daily life.



DRAFT



FRAMEWORK and PRINCIPLES - CREATING the GUIDELINES

The Regional TOD Guidelines are part of an integrated, comprehensive approach to implement the Region's planned urban structure of Regional Centres linked by Regional Corridors, served by public transit. As such, the basis for these guidelines can be found not only in the Regional Official Plan, but also in several related programs including the Centres + Corridors Strategy and Viva Rapid Transit, as outlined in the previous section of this document. All of these initiatives are linked together and are essential to the ultimate success of planning implementation.

Five key elements were endorsed by Regional Council in March 2005 to establish the scope and content of these Guidelines, based on Regional Official Plan policy and related programs. These five elements are:

- The massing, height and density of buildings
- Quantity and design of surface and above/below-grade parking
- Pedestrian safety and comfort
- The layout of streets, sidewalks and other pedestrian connections
- Distances and connections between transit stops and buildings

Regional staff, together with staff from the local area municipalities, then applied the five elements to focus the background research of TOD and to further refine the scope and content of these Guidelines. Based on this work, the Guidelines outlined in this document are based on six themes or "lenses" to provide a logical and strategic focus. These six themes or "lenses" are:

- Pedestrians
- Parking
- Land Use
- Built Form
- Connections
- Implementation



Oakland Corporate Centre, Pedestrians - Allstate Business Park

The TOD concept is established in Regional Official Plan policy, as seen below.

To achieve higher transit usage by supporting improvements in service, convenient access and good urban design. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- minimizing the walking distance to anticipated transit stops through such measure as the provision of walkways and more direct road patterns. In urban areas, the distance to a transit stop of generally no more than 500 metres (a 5-10 minute walk) for 90% of the residents and no more than 200 metres for 50% of residents;
- providing bus bays, bus shelters and bus loops where required;
- locating medium and higher density urban development adjacent to transit-intensive urban arterial roads;
- providing for and promoting the provision of parking and drop-off facilities for commuters in appropriate locations and as close as possible to commuter trip origins by developing and implementing Regional commuter parking and carpool parking plans;
- providing transit facilities at appropriate locations;
- providing continuous collector road systems that permit the linking of several adjacent developments with direct transit routings; and
- creating site plan control that gives priority to pedestrian access to transit over automobile access and parking in urban areas.

(ROP, 6.2.6)



THE GUIDELINES



PEDESTRIANS



PARKING



LAND USE



BUILT FORM



CONNECTIONS



IMPLEMENTATION

PEDESTRIANS - Encourage access, safety and comfort

SUPPORTING ROP POLICIES

5.5.12g - Area municipalities will undertake the regular review of their official plans as required under the Planning Act and establish or review secondary plans that include segments of the Regional Corridors, consistent with the following: buildings and sites are designed to provide convenient access for public transit users, pedestrians, cyclists and persons with disabilities.

6.3.6 - To recognize the importance of providing for bicycle and pedestrian safety and convenience and of protecting the quality of the existing pedestrian environment.

5.5.12b - Area municipalities will undertake the regular review of their official plans as required under the Planning Act and establish or review secondary plans that include segments of the Regional Corridors, consistent with the following: promote public transit ridership through high quality urban design, human scale, land use mix, and compact development.

For more information, please see:

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001
<http://www.elaws.gov.on.ca:81//SYSquery/IRL9F1B.tmp/2/doc>

CPTED Ontario
<http://www.cptedontario.ca/>

Moving Forward: York Region's 2005 Accessibility Plan.
 Please contact York Region Planning and Development Services Department for a copy.



Accommodate people with disabilities and special needs

- The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, sets out the requirements for barrier-free design of buildings and public realm
- Sidewalk connections between transit stops and buildings should be seamless and at-grade (i.e. no steps)
- Cross-walks should be signalized, with ample time for people to safely cross the street

Promote safety and comfort through building and site design

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles are an instructive tool in the design of safe environments
- Awnings and arcades should be incorporated into building design to protect pedestrians from the elements
- Transit shelters should be plentiful (where warranted) along routes, with direct sidewalk connections to buildings and adjacent to communities
- Streetscaping principles should be incorporated to provide high quality pedestrian amenities, such as benches and garbage receptacles.



Yonge Street and 19th Avenue, Richmond Hill



PEDESTRIANS - continued

Locate activity-generating land uses at street level

- The ground floors of mixed-use buildings should contain land uses that serve people (i.e. retail, doctor's office, etc.)
- People-oriented land uses should be located as close to the street and transit services as possible



Hwy. 7 and Town Centre Blvd., Markham



Woodbridge Avenue, Vaughan



PARKING-Provide well-designed, attractive facilities that put transit first

SUPPORTING ROP POLICIES

5.4.4p - That area municipalities prepare secondary plans or other appropriate studies for Local Centres that address the following criteria: methods to reduce or slow down traffic, as well as improvements to parking in support of local business, including on-street parking. It should be recognized that compact development, over time, will generate below-grade parking in urban areas.

5.6.1e - That development and redevelopment in the Local Corridors address the following criteria: establish site-specific parking requirements that recognize the level of planned public transit service and the need for residential and commercial activities, and to encourage the provision of alternatives to on-street parking along the street frontage (for example, underground parking or parking at the rear of buildings with appropriate screening)

5.3.12d - That the area municipalities, working with the Region, are encouraged to develop implementation strategies for secondary plans, which may include: promoting transit ridership through controlled parking standards within the Regional Centres including the implementation of maximum parking standards, parking authorities and cash-in-lieu of parking under the Planning Act.

The quantity and design of vehicle parking facilities impacts the character, cost and phasing of development. The goals of providing adequate vehicle parking and encouraging transit use can be achieved in an inclusive manner - there can be a balance between form and function.

Recognize that once people get out of their cars, they are pedestrians

- Have regard for safe and convenient connections between parking and buildings
- Walkways within parking lots should be clearly identified and reserved for pedestrians

View existing surface parking lots as placeholders for future development

- Existing surface parking lots can represent logical next phases of development as land values increase and the surrounding areas continue to evolve and mature
- There comes a time in the development lifecycle - especially when frequent, high volume transit services are in place - that underground (or multi-level above-ground) parking becomes economically feasible, if not already in place at the initial phase of development



Highway 7, Vaughan Corporate Centre



Highway 7 and Interchange Way, Vaughan Corporate Centre



Underground parking, Markham Centre

Reduce the prominence of surface parking

- Main entrances of buildings should be oriented to the street, not parking lots
- Surface parking lots should be situated to the side or rear of buildings to increase street-presence



PARKING- continued

Adjust the quantity of parking to reflect the level of transit services available

- Establish maximum, rather than minimum parking standards for buildings
- Create lower, site-specific parking standards for developments that provide excellent transit access

Link parking supply to Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs

- Businesses can provide preferred parking for carpool vehicles
- Parking lots should also accommodate alternative modes of transportation, like bicycles
- Flexible, off-peak shifts for employees could decrease the amount of required parking spaces



Vanpool

Encourage on-street parking where possible

- On-street parking helps to foster a sense of safety along street frontages and sidewalks by creating a buffer between pedestrians and cars, as well as generating streetscape activity
- Although on-street parking is encouraged, it should not hinder or otherwise interfere with turning movement of buses and/or stops for public transit

Encourage shared parking arrangements among neighbouring properties

- Peak hours of operation vary from business to business, making shared parking a realistic option
- Reduces parking costs for landowners
- Increases the developable land area of the site



On-street parking on Yonge Street, Richmond Hill

SUPPORTING ROP POLICIES

6.2.4 - To work with the Area Municipalities to ensure Travel Demand Management strategies are formulated and implemented to encourage travelers to use non-auto modes, carpool, make fewer and shorter vehicle trips, and travel outside weekday peak periods.



LAND USE-Attract the right type, intensity and mix of land uses

SUPPORTING ROP POLICIES

5.5.12b - Area municipalities will undertake the regular review of their official plans as required under the Planning Act and establish or review secondary plans that include segments of the Regional Corridors, consistent with the following: promote public transit ridership through high quality urban design, human scale, land use mix, and compact development.

5.6.3 - that area municipalities concentrate new employment opportunities within 200 metres of transit stops

How we choose to use our land has a lasting and profound impact on our quality-of-life. It shapes the character of our communities and impacts the choices we make in our daily lives. The Region's long-term commitment to rapid transit serving the Regional Centres and Regional Corridors makes land use planning all the more critical to the viability and accessibility of transit services within our communities and beyond.

Mixed-used development is encouraged to generate a variety of activity and convenience for people

- A mix of uses - like residential and retail or office - within one building generates a wide variety of activity throughout the day
- Mixing uses can minimize walking distances - maximizing access and convenience for people
- Development should generate activity during both peak and off-peak periods



Woodbridge Avenue, Vaughan

Concentrate people-serving uses along transit corridors

- Service-oriented and institutional uses - like high schools, banks, medical offices and libraries - should be located in areas with frequent transit service
- Concentrations of people-serving uses around transit stops provide convenient destinations for transit users, and increases transit ridership overall
- Clustering of higher density, mixed-use development generates higher transit ridership

Employment-generating uses should be located along transit routes, or clustered around stations

- Office employment should be concentrated around transit hubs to provide people with easy access to and from work
- Concentrations of employment will support surrounding businesses (i.e. restaurants) and provide for a more vibrant public realm



LAND USE - continued

Early introduction of transit services

- New transit service should be introduced early in the development stage, and the infrastructure require for transit should be supported by all necessary parties in advance of development

Discourage inappropriate land uses along transit corridors and around stations

- Land-extensive, lower-density land uses should be discouraged on sites where there is excellent transit-oriented development potential



Green Lane, East Gwillimbury

Recognize redevelopment potential of sites

- Like surface parking, vacant lots and underdeveloped sites represent opportunities for further compact redevelopment
- Phasing plans should be prepared in order to demonstrate how an area can intensify over time



Artistic rendering of Main Street intensification, Richmond Hill

SUPPORTING ROP POLICIES

5.3.5 - To recognize that infill and intensification may occur incrementally over time as land uses evolve and mature. For this reason it is important that initial phases of development not preclude the fuller achievement in the future of a compact, pedestrian-friendly and transit-supportive urban form consistent with the policies of this Plan.

5.2.7p - To require the preparation of comprehensive secondary plans by way of area municipal official plan amendment for new areas of development within the urban area shown on Map 5, based on the completion of a transit plan, working with York Region Transit (YRT), for the planning area which includes how the area can and will be serviced by public transit and how transit service and will be integrated with the Regional rapid transit system, the planned Provincial Highway 407 Transitway and GO Transit services.



BUILT FORM - Address transit through appropriate massing, density and height

SUPPORTING ROP POLICIES

5.5.12n - Area municipalities will undertake the regular review of their official plans as required under the Planning Act and establish or review secondary plans that include segments of the Regional Corridors, consistent with the following: appropriately integrate with and transition to surrounding land uses and built form through scale, land use and design.

5.3.4 - That development densities should be highest within the Regional Centres and should support an overall, long-term density target of 2.5 Floor Space Index (FSI).

FLOOR SPACE INDEX (FSI) - The ratio of gross floor area of a building to its respective lot area. For example, a building with a gross area of 25,000 sq.m. situated on a lot with an area of 10,000 sq.m. (1 hectare) has an FSI of 2.5.

5.5.12e - Area municipalities will undertake the regular review of their official plans as required under the Planning Act and establish or review secondary plans that include segments of the Regional Corridors, consistent with the following: buildings are oriented to the street to create a consistent setback and building for adjacent to the street right-of-way.

5.5.18 - That all new development shall either front or flank the Regional Corridor roadway or other routes for public transit services. New reverse lotting along the corridor will not be permitted.

Buildings have an important role in creating the character and feel of the public realm. They impact the accessibility of land uses and often influence how people feel about where they live and work. Buildings virtually house all of the functions that people depend on for daily life - from work, to school, to home. Paying particular attention to the design, scale and accessibility of buildings located along transit corridors and stations should have a positive impact on transit ridership and service.

Buildings should be compact, and maximize the site

- Denser, compact buildings make more efficient use of valuable land adjacent to transit
- Compact buildings create better human scale and provides opportunities for underground parking
- The long-term, overall density target for Regional Centres and Regional Corridors is 2.5 FSI (Floor Space Index)

Integrate buildings into the surrounding area, using appropriate scale and design

- There should be a gradual, consistent transition in building heights from a transit centre or node to surrounding areas

Enhance the pedestrian-scaled environment at street-level

- Buildings should create an attractive, human-scaled environment at ground level and around transit stations
- Taller buildings should have a 3-4 storey 'podium' that is oriented to the street; adding to the human scale of the public realm
- "False fronts" or façades at ground level should be eliminated, in favour of functioning doors and windows to improve pedestrian access and visibility



Approved redevelopment along Yonge St., Old Richmond hill

Orient buildings and building entrances to the street

- The front of the building should figure prominently on the street
- Entrances should be plentiful and directly accessed from the sidewalk



CONNECTIONS - Link buildings and the spaces between them to transit

Transit services and related development must be well-connected in order to maximize the benefits of transit-oriented development. Developments of every type and size should all consider connectivity to transit, streets and sidewalks. This approach will improve pedestrian movements between sites and transit, and will often improve traffic filtration.

Connect transit stops directly to sidewalks and buildings

- Transit stops, especially those with shelters, should be seamlessly connected to sidewalks and buildings
- Connections should be as direct as possible and barrier-free (e.g. at grade)
- Sidewalks should be wide enough (at least 1.5 metres) to allow for two people to walk side-by-side and, preferably, for a third person to pass
- Provide continuous lighting at pedestrian scale (i.e. not exclusively illuminating the street) along sidewalks



Yonge Street and 19th Avenue, Richmond Hill

Explore opportunities to harmonize lighting, sidewalk and road improvements within Regional rights-of-way

- New development and redevelopment often provides opportunities to improve and better harmonize improvements along roads through agreements between landowners, the Region and local area municipality
- Improve lighting at pedestrian cross-walks, particularly on Regional roads, so pedestrians can see, and be seen

Minimize walking distances between sites and transit stops

- Walking distances to and from transit stops should be no more than 200 to 500 metres (about a 5 to 10-minute walk)



SUPPORTING ROP POLICIES

5.5.11 - To explore opportunities with area municipalities to provide sidewalks and lighting in the street right-of-way to enhance the visual appearance of the streetscape.

6.3.1 - To recognize the importance of providing for bicycle and pedestrian safety and convenience and of protecting the quality of the existing pedestrian environment.

6.2.6a - To achieve higher transit usage by supporting improvements in service, convenient access and good urban design. This includes but is not limited to the following: minimizing the walking distance to anticipated transit stops through such measures as the provision of walkways and more direct road patterns. In urban areas, the distance to a transit stop of generally no more than 500 metres (a 5-10 minute walk) for 90% of the residents and no more than 200 metres for 50% of the residents.



SUPPORTING ROP POLICIES

5.5.12 - That the area municipalities, working with the Region, are encouraged to develop implementation strategies for secondary plans

5.5.7 - That the implementation of rapid transit services should be initiated as early as possible in the Regional Corridors to encourage development and redevelopment consistent with the policies of ROP

5.5.13 - Development should be monitored by the Region and the local municipalities to determine the effectiveness of Regional Centres

For more information on Transit Drawings & Specifications, please contact YRT, Facilities Branch

IMPLEMENTATION-Apply TOD approaches throughout the planning process

Good planning policy is most effective when fully implemented. Everyone has a role to play in the implementation good planning - from municipal councils to staff to developers to residents. While these Guidelines are not new policy, they are a key implementation tool for existing policy. These Guidelines can be instructive to good planning implementation at virtually all stages of the development process from pre-consultation to site plan approval.

Local municipalities have an important role in planning implementation

- Official Plans, Secondary Plans, Zoning By-laws and Site Plan Control are important local instruments used to determine the density, scale and design of development along transit corridors and stations
- The Regional TOD Guidelines can support the local municipal planning process

Create site plan checklists to gauge TOD elements of proposed development

- Municipalities and developers alike can use checklists to measure how proposals reflect the key principles of TOD



Transportation Demand Management (TDM) initiatives can advance the TOD principles of development

- The Region and local municipalities are partners in TDM strategies with major employers to reduce travel times, traffic congestion and vehicle emissions
- Innovative TDM strategies include car-pooling programs, bicycle parking and related amenities for cyclists, reduced transit fares and flexible work periods



Implementation Team



CONTACT INFORMATION and FOLLOW-UP

Local Municipal Planning Departments -

Town of Aurora
Planning Department
1 Municipal Drive
Aurora, ON. L4G 6J1
(905) 727-1375

Town of East Gwillimbury
Planning Department
19000 Leslie St.
Sharon, ON. LOG 1V0
(905) 478-4282

Town of Georgina
Planning & Building Department
26557 Civic Centre Road
R.R. #2
Keswick, ON. L4P 3G1
(905) 476-4301

Township of King
Planning Department
2075 King Road
King City, ON. L7B 1A1
(905) 830-4444

Town of Markham
Planning & Urban Design Department
101 Town Centre Boulevard,
Markham, ON. L3R 9W3
(905) 477-7000

Town of Newmarket
Planning Department
395 Mulock Drive,
PO Box 328, STN Main
Newmarket, ON. L3Y 4X7
(905) 895-5193

Town of Richmond Hill
Planning & Development Department
225 East Beaver Creek
Richmond Hill, ON. L4C 4Y5
(905) 771-8800

City of Vaughan
Development Planning Department
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON. L6A 1T1
(905) 832-8565

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Development Services Department
37 Sandiford Dr., 4th Floor
Stouffville, ON. L4A 7X5
(905) 895-2423

York Region Planning Department -

Planning & Development Services Dept.
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON, L3Y 6Z1
(905) 830-4444



York Region Transit/Viva -

YRT Service Planning
50 High Tech Road, 5th Floor
Richmond Hill, Ontario L4B 4N7
905-762-2111





T R A N S I T - O R I E N T E D D E V E L O P M E N T G U I D E L I N E S

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