

Building Heights in Centres and Corridors

Presentation to

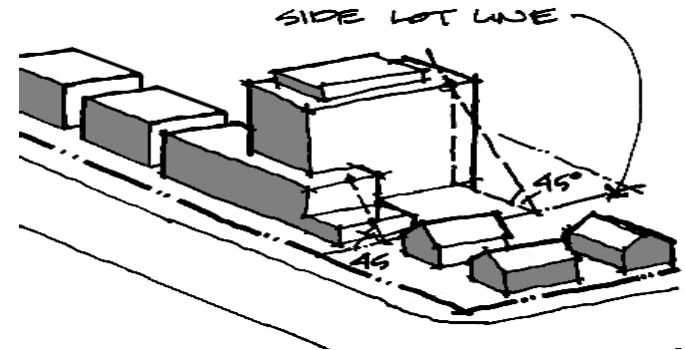
Planning and Economic
Development Committee

Jason Ezer

June 13, 2012

Overview

- ❑ Planning Policy Framework
- ❑ Key Considerations for Tall Buildings and Design
- ❑ Sustainability Initiatives
- ❑ Local Implementation
- ❑ 'On the Ground' Examples of tall buildings in the Region



Angular planes are used to limit the height impact of tall buildings and to achieve appropriate transition from lower scaled buildings on the block



Highway 7 at Commerce Valley



Yonge Street Study Area

The Planning Framework

Provincial land-use policy, legislation and plans **direct municipalities** to promote **compact and sustainable** built form



Planning Act

Provides legislative basis for land use planning and community design in Ontario



Provincial Policy Statement

Provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest



Provincial Plans

Provide direction for specific geographical areas, addressing matters such as growth management, transportation, environmental protection, and economic development

“Places to Grow” calls for Compact Development - Intensification



“Places to Grow” requires:

- ❑ A minimum of 40% of new residential development directed to existing urban areas by 2015
- ❑ Intensification Corridors based on transit
- ❑ Minimum densities; (200 persons and jobs/ha urban growth centres)
- ❑ Regional Centres and Corridors are being planned to a ‘mature state’ of high density – beyond 2031 at full build out (e.g., Langstaff Centre - 881 people and jobs per hectare)

- ❑ **Challenge:** To alleviate the negative perceptions of tall buildings, by properly planning to ensure the built form is sensitive to its environs



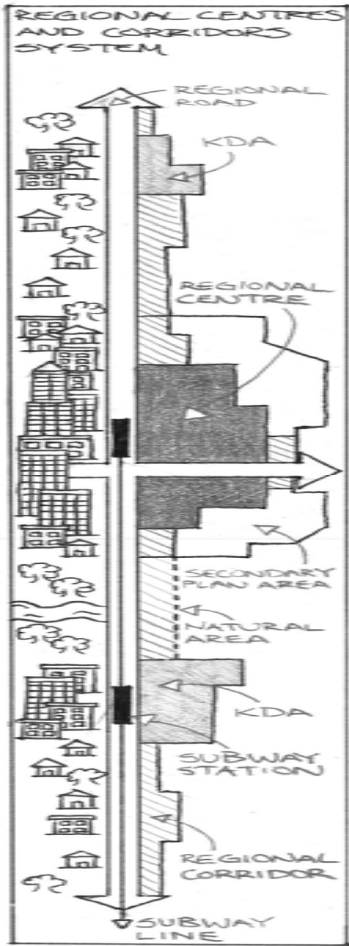
Condominium in Thornhill City Centre

- ❑ **Opportunity:** To promote the efficient use of land through infill, and design attractive and sustainable buildings that are transit-supportive and fit within neighbourhoods

2011 GTA New Home and Condo Market Study conducted by RealNet states that:

“The Provincial Growth Plan put in place the framework for the new home market shift to high rise.”

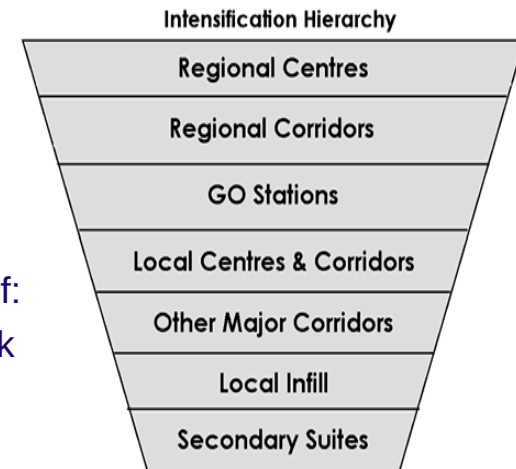
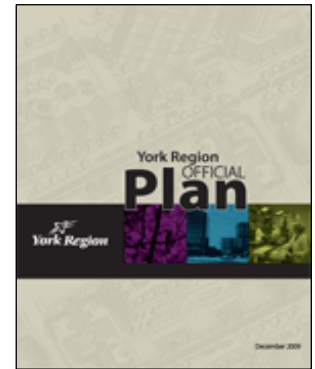
York Region Official Plan – Intensification Framework



- ❑ The Regional Official Plan provides policies on an intensification hierarchy that reflect where and how intensification will occur (e.g., centres and corridors)
- ❑ Our local municipalities create intensification strategies that will direct their Official Plan and Secondary Plan policies
- ❑ Local Official Plans and Zoning By-laws balance the overall objectives for intensification through development applications
- ❑ The Regional Official Plan does not prescribe height; however, minimum densities are identified:

York Region Official Plan Policy on Density:

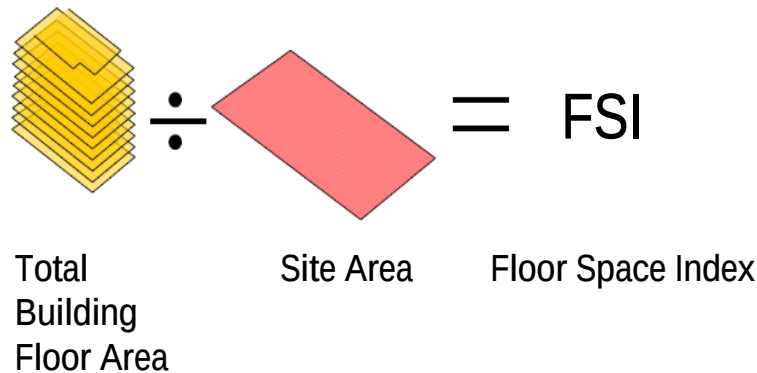
- ❑ Regional Centres and key development areas within corridors shall achieve a minimum density of:
 - a. 2.5 Floor Space Index (FSI) per development block
 - b. 3.5 FSI per development block at major subway stations



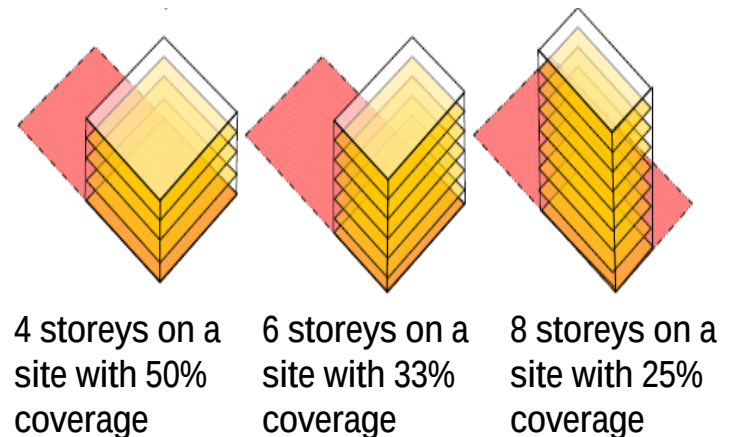
Density – A Component of Height

- Density (generally expressed as Floor Space Index (FSI)) is a significant component of building height, but lot coverage and scale also effect density
- Generally, in achieving the same FSI, the smaller the footprint, the taller the building will be

The same density (FSI) can look very different depending on how it is configured on the site


$$\frac{\text{Total Building Floor Area}}{\text{Site Area}} = \text{FSI}$$

Total Building Floor Area Site Area Floor Space Index



'City Building' in York Region

- ❑ 'City building' - to create an urban landscape to foster urban communities that are compact and well-designed
- ❑ 'City building' is about building "up and not out" – and creating an adaptable urban form
- ❑ Tall buildings are appropriate in the Region within an urban built form that relates to communities and public realm
- ❑ Opportunities for efficiencies in infrastructure (e.g., roads, transit, water/wastewater) and assessment growth



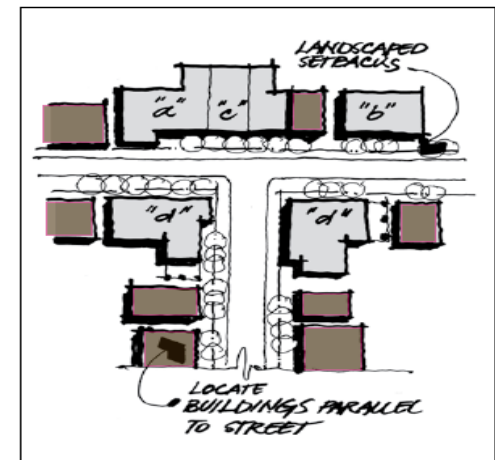
Proposed Vaughan Metropolitan Centre



Proposed Langstaff Gateway Centre

Regional / Local Roles in Planning and Development Approvals

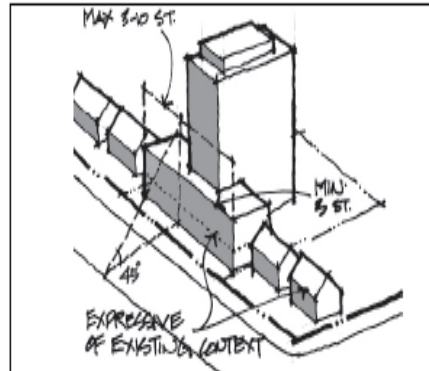
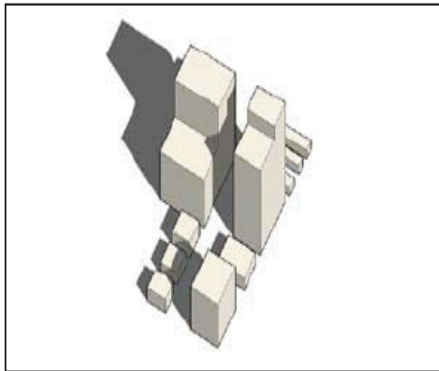
- ❑ Jointly ensure development applications conform to Provincial policies and plans, Official Plans, Master Plans and other Guidelines (e.g., Transit-oriented Development and Urban Design Guidelines)
- ❑ The Region is primarily responsible for:
 - ❑ The Regional road system (e.g., ROW and access requirements)
 - ❑ Water and wastewater (e.g., Infrastructure and capacity)
 - ❑ Transit requirements (YRT and VIVA)
- ❑ Local municipalities are primarily responsible for:
 - ❑ Community context (e.g., Massing and site design including height)
 - ❑ Parkland dedication
 - ❑ Local streets and parking standards
 - ❑ Community facilities and schools



Context for Tall Buildings in Cities – Urban Design and Community “Fit”

Important considerations for integrating tall buildings into urban environments:

- ❑ **Street context** (community viewsheds and neighbourhood transition)
- ❑ **Design of the Site** (building orientation, open space, and access)
- ❑ **Massing** (building form, floor plate, distance between towers, lighting and shadow)
- ❑ **Public/Pedestrian realm** (link to streetscape, scale, access to transit and public amenities)



Proposed Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Concept



Proposed Richmond Hill Centre Concept

Urban Design / Built Form

High rise built form building types:

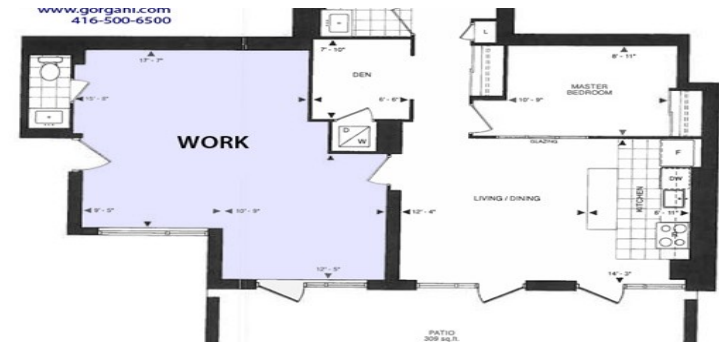
- ❑ **Slab** - No special definition or detailing at street edge
- ❑ **Point** – tall building with a typical tower footprint not exceeding 8,000 sq. ft.
- ❑ **Podium** Building base through openings, materials, height and street relationship
- ❑ **Terracing** - Step backs in building height to achieve articulations and gradation

Built form suitability depends on community and site context – ‘one size does not fit all’



Uses Associated with Tall Buildings

- ❑ Urban format schools
- ❑ Urban parks
- ❑ Shared community facilities (recreation centre/library)
- ❑ Retail and commercial at building base
- ❑ Live/work units



Proposed live/work unit for the Beverley Hills Development – Richmond Hill



Redevelopment of North Toronto Collegiate



Urban Format Grocery Store - Toronto



Proposed Markham Centre Urban Park

Mid-rise Development

Mid-rise Buildings

Definition: Buildings that are generally 4 – 12 storeys in height

- ❑ Official plan policies, in the context of centres and corridors high rise policies, may have complementary mid-rise policies for certain transition areas (e.g., heritage areas or specific neighbourhoods).
- ❑ Mid-rise development can usually achieve densities that support transit, while maintaining appropriate scale and relationship to the street



Renaissance Condominium – Downtown Richmond Hill



Proposed Markham Centre Downtown Street

Major Office Development

- ❑ Regional Centres and Corridors are planned to become the economic hubs of the Region
- ❑ They are preferred locations for major office, mixed-use commercial and high-density residential development



Liberty Square Markham – West Building
Tallest office building in York Region to date – 12 storeys



Multi-storey Office Building –
Highway 7 in Vaughan



Expo City – Vaughan Metropolitan Centre
Proposed Office Building

New Approaches: Sustainable Design & Technology

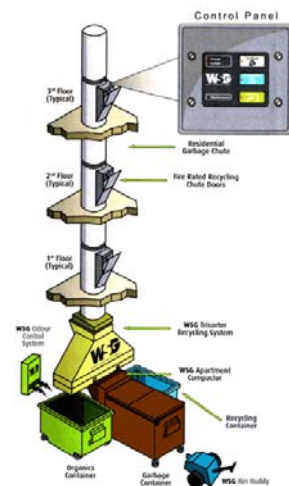
Many new tall buildings now include “green” design, features and technologies to minimize their impact on the environment



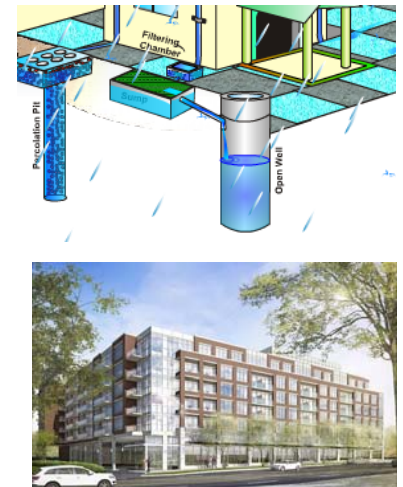
Green Roof
Tribeca Green,
New York City



**Water Efficient
Fixtures**

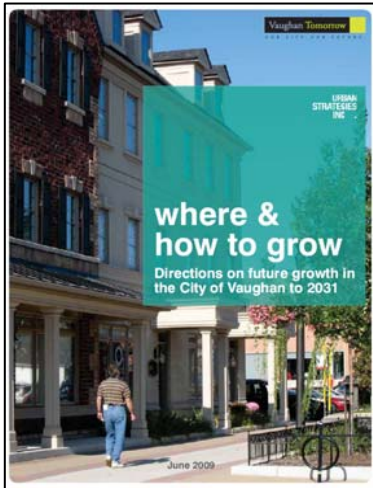


**3-stream waste
management
system**



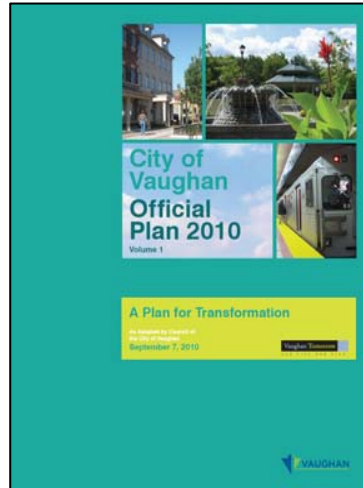
**Rainwater Harvesting
for Irrigation**
Minto Water Garden,
Vaughan

Planning Approaches for “High-Rise” City of Vaughan



“High-rise housing forms will be limited to the edges of residential neighbourhoods on main corridors well served by transit”

- ❑ Growth Management Study “Where and How to Grow” was completed in 2009
- ❑ Informed policies in Vaughan’s new Official Plan and VMC Secondary Plan, as adopted in 2010



“High-rise Buildings should be designed as slender towers and spaced appropriately...”



“Appendix C: Built Form Guidelines”



Proposed Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Concept

Planning Approaches for “High-Rise” Town of Markham

Tall Buildings

Key principles

- ❑ The “**Built Form, Massing and Height Study**” was completed in 2010 and will inform Markham’s new Official Plan and Secondary Plans on built form guidelines
- ❑ Tall Building Principles: Lower Street Edges; One Tower Per Block; Minimize Shadows; Minimum Tower Spacing; Maximum Floorplate

Guideline TB.01

In residential developments, set back tall buildings from the street edge. Locate low-rise building edges to define the street.



Guideline TB.02

Within the general approach to block dimensions described in SB.10, SB.11, SB.12, generally limit the distribution of tall buildings to one tower per block. This will allow views and sunlight onto adjacent open spaces and streets, and allow for skyview and a comfortable pedestrian realm.



~PR.01
~SB.10
~SB.11
~SB.12



Guideline TB.03

Design tall buildings to minimize shadows cast on public open spaces. Town to define the terms through Official Plan or Zoning By-law.



~PR.01
~PR.06



Planning Approaches for “High-Rise” Town of Richmond Hill



HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL INTENSIFICATION STUDY: RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

Town of Richmond Hill



SEPTEMBER 2009

“Tall buildings should be of differing styles and materials, and always of exceptional quality. They can rise from a mid-rise base or stand alone. They are best when respectful of their context, never overpowering their neighbours.”



Potential buildings massing at Yonge Street
and 16th Avenue

- ❑ The “**Housing and Residential Intensification Study**” was completed in 2009 and has informed the policies in the Town’s new Official Plan (adopted in 2010)

Existing High Rise Buildings – Vaughan (Thornhill City Centre)

- ❑ York Region's history of high rise buildings is typically under 15 storeys and has a slab-based form
- ❑ Recent developments have gone over 20 storeys and built form has significantly changed to point towers with a podium



Thornhill City Centre – Vista

7 North Park Road (near Bathurst and Centre streets)
22 storeys (tallest existing residential building in York Region)
6.89 FSI

Thornhill City Centre - Centre Park Condos

30 North Park Road (near Bathurst and Centre streets)
Building E - 18 storeys
Building F - 16 storeys
1.97 FSI



Existing High Rise Buildings – Markham (Markham Centre; Hwy. 7 Corridor)

Circa at Markham Town Centre

23 and 33 Cox Boulevard (near Highway 7)

Building 1 - 16 storeys

Building 2 - 16 storeys

5 FSI



Majestic Court Condominiums

60 South Town Centre Boulevard and 50 Clegg Road (near Highway 7 and Warden Ave.)

16 / 6 / 14 storeys

4.7 FSI



Existing High Rise Buildings – Richmond Hill (Yonge St. and Hwy. 7 Corridors)

Empire Place

29 Northern Heights Drive (at
Yonge St.)
14 storeys
2.5 FSI



The Richmond

18 Harding Blvd West (Yonge St. and
Major Mackenzie)
14 storeys
3.5 FSI



Existing High Rise Buildings – Toronto (North York Centre)

Triomphe at Northtown

15 Northtown Way (near Yonge St.)
30 storeys
4.5 FSI



Meridian South Building

15 Greenview Avenue (near Yonge St.)
31 storeys
5.32 FSI



Existing High Rise Buildings – Mississauga (City Centre)

Absolute World Condos

60 Absolute Avenue
56 storeys
11.54 FSI



One Park Tower

388 Prince of Wales Drive
38 storeys
6.23 FSI



Summary

- ❑ Tall buildings and higher densities are increasingly the Region's future for built form
- ❑ For our emerging urban form, how these tall buildings are integrated into our communities will be of critical importance (e.g., public realm, neighbourhood linkages, etc.)
- ❑ Many opportunities to make tall buildings work well in Centres and Corridors



'The Beverley Hills' development; approved
Yonge Street and 16th Avenue, Richmond Hill
11 – 24 storeys; 3.9 FSI



'World on Yonge' development; now under construction
Yonge Street, north of Steeles Avenue
18 – 31 storeys; 3.5 FSI