

5.0 District Policies—Streetscape and Infrastructure

5.1 Overview

The following policies address those components of the District located primarily in the public realm. These features include roads, curbs, municipal services, parking facilities, sidewalks, boulevards, street furniture, pedestrian amenities, lighting, utility wires, public signage, vegetation, parkettes, and open space. The proper treatment of these features can enhance the heritage character of the District.

5.2 Roads, Curbs, and Municipal Services

The provision of adequate roads, curbs, storm and sanitary sewers, and water supply are essential components for a living Heritage District.

Policies:

- a) Road, curb, and servicing improvements will be undertaken in a manner that preserves and enhances the heritage character of the District.
- b) Existing informal road edges on the residential streets, such as grassed verges and ditches, and the absence of curbs and gutters, are traditional village features and will be retained.
- c) Existing pavement widths and road right-of-ways on residential streets are a major contributor to the character of the District and should not be increased.
- d) Public works for Yonge Street will be guided by the vision of the Yonge Street Plan and the policies in Section 6.1 of this Plan.

5.3 Sidewalks and Boulevards

The existing sidewalk and boulevard treatment in the District, outside of the Yonge Street core, is predominantly informal in nature and helps differentiate the area from the surrounding newer development. Grassed boulevards with or without a curb treatment or sidewalk create a rural, village-like atmosphere.

Policies:

- a) The vision of Vaughan as a walking community and policies of the Pedestrian and Bike Plan are supported.
- b) Boulevards will remain grassed and sidewalks, where they exist, will be kept in good repair.
- c) The absence of sidewalks on the residential streets is supported as it contributes to the village character. Sidewalks, where required, will be constructed of poured concrete rather than modern materials that often take on an overly tailored appearance.
- d) Boulevards will remain grassed.

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5.4 Street Furniture and Pedestrian Amenities

Street furniture and related pedestrian amenities should be part of a co-ordinated design approach, to help define the District as a distinctive and special area.

Policies:

- a) Street furniture and related pedestrian amenities such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, bicycle racks, telephone booths, transit shelters, and newspaper box enclosures will be provided as required, and will be consistent throughout the District.
- b) Street furniture and related pedestrian amenities will be coordinated for the Vaughan and Markham heritage districts.

5.5 Street Lights and Utilities

Street lights and utilities are necessary parts of modern infrastructure. A distinct street light and the absence of overhead wires can be a cohesive element that ties the District together and defines it as a special area.

Policies:

- a) Over time, a consistent street light fixture will be used throughout the District to enhance its identity as a heritage area. The selected street light fixture will reflect the village-like, heritage character of the District. Consultation with the Town of Markham will be undertaken in developing a lighting approach to assess the feasibility of using the same fixture throughout both communities' components of the heritage district.
- b) Street and other outdoor lighting will be appropriate in light intensity to the function of the street. Consideration will be given to the height, spacing, and minimization of uplighting, in order to reduce glare, spillage, and night sky pollution in the neighbourhood.
- c) Any lighting fixtures introduced in parking lots (public or commercial) will reflect the heritage character of the District and be consistent with the design chosen to be used throughout the District. Consideration will be given to the height, spacing, and minimization of uplighting in the neighbourhood.
- d) Utilities such as switch boxes and transformers should be located so that they are not readily visible from the street and do not unduly impact the heritage qualities of the streetscape, wherever possible.
- e) Future re-location of overhead utility wires and associated infrastructure to underground installations is strongly supported.

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5.6 Public Signage

Typical public signage includes directional, regulatory, identity, and public information signs. If properly developed, these signs can promote a co-ordinated identity supportive of the heritage area.

- a) Regulatory signs should be the same type of sign used elsewhere in the municipality.
- b) A design for Heritage District identification signs should be developed to help promote awareness of the District. The design should have a simple, distinctive shape, and should be mounted with street name signage in the District.
- c) Heritage District entry signs should be designed and installed at the three gateway points. The design, colour, and materials of street name signs, entry signs, and other public information signage will be consistent and complementary to the District character.
- d) A distinctive sidewalk stamp for the District should be developed, to be embossed at intersections when new sidewalk sections are installed.
- e) A village notice board, including a map identifying the heritage conservation district, should be erected as part of the streetscape design near Lion's Parkette.
- f) The installation of a name sign marking the Don River's crossing at Yonge Street is supported.

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5.7 Vegetation

The vegetative cover in the public realm of the District significantly contributes to the area's human-scale and village-like character. Street trees, flowers in baskets, shrubs, and vegetation found in the valley environment all contribute to the area's distinctive character. In addition to their scenic beauty, trees and other vegetation are equally important for controlling the effects of climate by reducing wind velocity, providing shelter from sun, rain, and snow, and creating a moderated microclimate.

Policies:

- a) Plant material introduced to the public realm will be indigenous and/or historically appropriate.
- b) Existing mature trees and other vegetative amenities in the public realm will be retained and preserved except where removal is necessary due to disease or damage, or to ensure public health and safety.
- c) The shaping of street tree canopies for utility wires will be undertaken in a sensitive manner so as not to disfigure the tree. The impact of this process on existing trees may be a factor when burial of utility wires is being considered.
- d) An appraisal of the health of tree cover in the public realm will be undertaken with the result being a replanting policy or plan to replace unhealthy trees and coordinate new plantings.
- e) The placement of new tree-plantings will avoid screening principal views of buildings of cultural heritage value or interest.
- f) Plantings will contribute to screening less attractive sites in the District, including above-ground utilities, where practical from an operation and maintenance perspective.
- g) Guidelines for appropriate vegetation are located in Section 9.7.



Trees and planting are an important part of the character of Thornhill.