

## 6.0 District Policies—Special Areas and Projects

### 6.1 Yonge Street

#### 6.1.1 Yonge Street Streetscape

The policies in this section reflect the vision for Yonge Street as depicted in the *Thornhill Yonge Street Study, 2005 – A Framework for Renewal, Reinvestment and Community Building* that was endorsed and amended by Council in April 2006.

The Thornhill Yonge Street Corridor Area is planned to become a vibrant, mixed use area. It is to be developed as a higher order transit corridor. Intensification and redevelopment will be promoted, at key locations within the corridor, in order to bring vitality to the area. The intent is to promote residential, commercial and employment growth, support transit use, and enhance the urban design quality of the corridor through redevelopment.

An attractive, high quality pedestrian friendly, transit supportive streetscape is proposed. Also proposed are new public parks and plazas and enhanced connections and gateways to the surrounding open space system.

Below:  
Conceptual illustrations of potential streetscape treatments from the Thornhill Yonge Street Study 2005 as prepared by Urban Strategies Inc.



Section of pedestrian realm



View south from Thornridge Drive intersection

## 6.0 District Policies—Special Areas and Projects

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### 6.1.1 Yonge Street Streetscape (continued)

#### *Policies*

- a) The Yonge Streetscape will reflect a minimum 7 metre public realm between the curb edge and the building front, and will include enhanced intersection treatments, a landscaped centre median with a dedicated rapid bus transitway, special paving and streetscape details and furnishings.
- b) The overall vision for the streetscape is predicated on the burial or relocation of existing hydro lines which is supported.
- c) Small high-quality urban street parks are envisioned at the north side of Arnold Ave, the north side of Thornridge Drive, and the north side of Centre Street, as part of the redevelopment of properties and dedicated rapid bus transitway improvements. Careful consideration will be given to their context, use of hard surface materials, vegetation selection and street furniture to ensure compatibility with the Heritage District.
- d) The design of the transitway median will be complementary to the heritage character of the area.
- e) Enhanced intersection and pedestrian crosswalk treatments are supported.
- f) All loose streetscape furnishings and fixed street furniture and lighting (including transit/bus shelters and kiosks) will be reflective of and complementary to the heritage character of the area.
- g) Streetscape and infrastructure improvements in the Yonge Street corridor will be generally consistent with the *Thornhill Yonge Street Study, 2005 – A Framework for Renewal, Reinvestment and Community*.

## 6.0 District Policies—Special Areas and Projects

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### 6.1.2 Yonge Street Redevelopment

In order to help retain and enhance the heritage character of the District, specific guidance is needed to address both new and existing commercial buildings on Yonge Street. Commercial features that have an impact on the exterior of buildings such as signage, awnings, restaurant patios, and parking lots are also important.

The City of Vaughan has endorsed the *Thornhill Yonge Street Study, 2005*, and adopted *Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 669* to implement the recommendations of that study. These documents provide a framework for renewal, reinvestment, and community building in this area. All of the commercial properties on Yonge Street in the District are within the boundaries of the above study. The Framework for Renewal provides urban design guidelines to establish a high-quality, pedestrian-friendly main street environment; and promotes new mixed used development that is appropriate to the transit corridor and existing heritage resources. However, the Yonge Street Study boundary did not include the northerly portion of the Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District.

The provisions and designations in OPA 669 of “Heritage Mainstreet, 1-3 storeys” and “Mid-Rise Mixed Use, 3-5 storeys” are appropriate. For consistency of scale and massing within the Heritage Conservation District, it is recommended that the stretch of Yonge Street north of Centre Street and south of Mill Street be guided by the residential policies of this plan. Further, it is recommended that north of Mill Street and extending to Thornhill Avenue be studied under the same principles as those for the *Thornhill Yonge Street Study, 2005*.

#### 6.1.2.1 Design Approach

- a) The design of new commercial buildings will be products of their own time, but should reflect an historic architectural style either traditionally found in the District or reflect traditional commercial architecture in a typical historic Ontario downtown setting.
- b) A design approach that reduces the actual and perceived scale of large developments will be pursued.
- c) Maximum building heights stated in the *Thornhill Yonge Street Study, 2005* and *OPA 669* are supported. On sites where buildings over 3 storeys are supported, the height of new buildings will include a transition of heights to respect heights of adjacent buildings of cultural heritage value or interest as well as heights of adjacent low density residential properties.
- d) Building heights on Yonge Street should preserve skyviews of residential properties behind, based on angular planes of 45 degrees from the base of the residential buildings.
- e) New commercial building construction in the District will conform with the guidelines found in Section 9.5.3.

### 6.2 Commemorative and Interpretive Signs

At present, properties in the District that have been individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act possess a bronze plaque. Some of the older buildings in the Heritage District possess wooden wall plaques installed in 1967 which detail the first owner, the occupation, and date of construction. Buildings that have been identified as being of cultural heritage value or interest should be recognized in a consistent manner.

*Policies:*

- a) A program of commemorating and interpreting buildings and properties of cultural heritage value or interest in the District will be considered.
- b) The design of interpretive signs will be complementary to the District character and be co-ordinated with other District elements such as street furniture, entry signage, street name signs, etc.
- c) A listing of all commemorative and interpretive plaques will be maintained.

## 6.0 District Policies—Special Areas and Projects

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### 6.3 Communication and Education

It is extremely important to ensure that all property owners and residents in a heritage conservation district are aware of, and have an understanding of, the policies, processes, and procedures which apply in the District. Education opportunities and a comprehensive communication strategy are essential.

#### 6.3.1 Communications

Effective communication of District goals, policies and guidelines is important to the success of any Heritage Conservation District.

*Policies:*

- a) information concerning the District and the District Plan, as well as related matters will be made available to property owners, residents and commercial tenants.
- b) The Heritage Conservation District by-law will be registered on title to every property in the district, in accordance with the *Ontario Heritage Act*.
- c) The heritage section of the City's website will ensure easy access to a Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District section which will include information such as:
  - a. a map of the District;
  - b. the Heritage Conservation District Plan, in the form of downloadable sections as PDF files;
  - c. links to external websites with helpful heritage information, such as those listed in Section 10 of this Plan.
- d) Additional opportunities and mechanisms to inform new homeowners and commercial tenants about the Heritage District and associated requirements through existing City departments, and operational requirements will be pursued.

## 6.0 District Policies—Special Areas and Projects

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### 6.3.2 Education

Education is a useful tool in preserving heritage resources, for owners of heritage properties, whether or not they are in the District, and for City Staff and members of Heritage Vaughan. Some recommended steps that might be undertaken include:

- a) The creation and promotion of learning opportunities for property owners in the District may be pursued. This may include special workshops or presentations, as well as the provision of written materials.
- b) The promotion of periodic learning opportunities for members of Heritage Vaughan to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the heritage conservation principles and policies.
- c) A user-friendly information handout might be prepared to explain the heritage conservation easement concept and the associated agreement.