

**CITY OF VAUGHAN**

**EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 22, 2016**

Item 14, Report No. 12, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted, as amended, by the Council of the City of Vaughan on March 22, 2016, as follows:

***By receiving the following Communications:***

- C9** Mr. Jim Levac, Glen Schnarr & Associates Inc., Kingsbridge Garden Circle, Mississauga, dated March 1, 2016;
- C10** Mr. Jim Levac, Glen Schnarr & Associates Inc., Kingsbridge Garden Circle, Mississauga, dated March 1, 2016; and
- C19** Mr. Leo Longo, Aird & Berlis, 181 Bay Street, Toronto, dated March 21, 2016.

**14**

**IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS  
COMMUNITY AREA POLICY REVIEW  
FOR LOW-RISE RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS  
FILE 15.120  
WARDS 1 TO 5**

**The Committee of the Whole recommends:**

- 1)** That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Deputy City Manager of Planning & Growth Management and the Director of Policy Planning & Environmental Sustainability, dated March 1, 2016, be approved subject to amending recommendation 2. to read as follows:
  - 2.** That the draft “General Low-Rise Residential Infill Guidelines” and the draft “Townhouse Infill Guidelines” set out in this report, applying to the Low-Rise Residential Areas within the Community Areas of VOP 2010, be received and distributed to stakeholders for comment and that such comment is requested no later than May 31, 2016, and that community meetings, if required, be organized in all Wards;
- 2)** That the presentation by Mr. Tim Smith, Urban Strategies Inc., Spadina Avenue, Toronto, and Communication C13, presentation material titled “*Community Area Policy Review for Low-Rise Residential Designations*”, dated March 1, 2016, be received;
- 3)** That the following deputations and Communication be received:
  - 1.** Mr. Gene Denzel, Idleswift Drive, Thornhill, Vaughan;
  - 2.** Ms. Linda Mahaney, Thornhill Avenue, Thornhill; and
  - 3.** Mr. Kevin Bechard, Weston Consulting Group, Millway Avenue, Vaughan, representing City Park Homes, and Communication C12, dated March 1, 2016, submitted at the meeting; and
- 4)** That the following Communications be received:
  - C6** Mr. Paul Tobia, Associate, Evans Planning Inc., Keele Street, Vaughan, dated March 1, 2016;
  - C7** Ms. Rosemarie L. Humphries, Humphries Planning Group Inc., Chrislea Road, Vaughan, dated March 1, 2016;
  - C8** Mr. Ryan Guetter, Vice President, Weston Consulting Group, Millway Avenue, Vaughan, dated March 1, 2016;
  - C9** Mr. Ryan Guetter, Vice President, Weston Consulting Group, Millway Avenue, Vaughan, dated March 1, 2016;

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**C10 Mr. Ryan Guetter, Vice President, Weston Consulting Group, Millway Avenue, Vaughan, dated March 1, 2016; and**

**C11 Mr. Leo F. Longo, Aird & Berlis LLP, Brookfield Place, Bay Street, Toronto, dated March 1, 2016.**

#### **Recommendation**

The Deputy City Manager of Planning & Growth Management and the Director of Policy Planning & Environmental Sustainability recommend:

1. That staff be directed to initiate an amendment to the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 to consider the incorporation of the draft amendments, as identified in this report, addressing the Land Use, Urban Design and Built Form policies applying to the Low-Rise Residential designation in the Community Areas, to ensure that the policies provide for infill development and redevelopment that respects, reinforces and is compatible with established neighbourhoods;
2. That the draft “General Low-Rise Residential Infill Guidelines” and the draft “Townhouse Infill Guidelines” set out in this report, applying to the Low-Rise Residential Areas within the Community Areas of VOP 2010, be endorsed for the purpose of their distribution to stakeholders for comment and that such comment is requested no later than April 1, 2016;
3. That staff report to Committee of the Whole for the purposes of obtaining Council approval of the Guidelines, subject to consideration and incorporation of any modifications resulting from the public comment process.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

The proposed recommendations are consistent with the Green Directions Vaughan mandate by supporting Goal 2:

- To ensure sustainable development and redevelopment.

#### **Economic Impact**

There are no economic impacts as a result of this report.

#### **Communications Plan**

Notice of this meeting was provided to stakeholders that attended or provided comment on the public hearing that was held on the Low Rise Residential Policy Review that took place on June 16, 2015.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommended implementation options resulting from the VOP 2010 Policy Review for lands designated Low-Rise Residential within the Community Area, as directed by Council on October 20, 2015; and to obtain Council direction on a preferred option.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

##### **Executive Summary**

This item reports on the implementation options for proceeding with the Community Area Policy Review for Low-Rise Residential Areas as directed by Council on October 20, 2015. The report is structured as follows, by providing:

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- Background on the origin of the Community Area Policy Review for Low-Rise Residential Areas;
- A discussion of current issues with interpretation of VOP 2010;
- A description of the study process and methodology;
- The findings and implementation options of the Community Area Policy Review for Low-Rise Residential Designations.
- Next steps and Recommendations for implementation

#### Study Origin and Response

On March 18, 2014 – Council adopted a resolution directing that a review of the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 (VOP 2010) be undertaken pertaining to policies that permit single and semi-detached houses and townhouses in Low-Rise Residential Areas. Staff were directed to specifically review the Low-Rise Residential Designation permissions and associated urban design, land use compatibility policies and report back to Committee with policy options to protect stable residential neighbourhoods including but not limited to opportunities for amendments to VOP 2010.

On September 2, 2014 a Members Motion was brought forward to Committee of the Whole seeking Council's direction to enact an Interim Control By-law (ICBL), freezing development within lands designated as Low-Rise Residential, fronting Keele Street from Church Street to Fieldgate Drive in the community of Maple until the completion of the City-wide policy review on Low-Rise Residential areas was complete.

On September 3, 2014, Council ratified the Committee recommendation authorizing the ICBL and enacted the Keele Street Interim Control By-law 120-2014, which was later subject to Ontario Municipal Board appeals.

At the June 16, 2015 Public Hearing, staff reported on the work of the City's consultant. The consultant's review encompassed both the City-wide Low-Rise Residential Policy Review and the Keele Street Interim Control By-law study.

The one-year term of the Interim Control By-law would end on September 3, 2015. On June 23, 2015, it was resolved "That Council not extend the interim control by-law and that any discussion of townhouse densities be referred to the comprehensive five year official plan review mandated by the Planning Act..."

Subsequently, on October 7, 2015, a Members motion was brought forward to Committee of the Whole seeking Council's direction for staff to undertake a study of the policies governing land use change in the Community Area of VOP 2010. The resolution provided:

*Whereas, the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 (VOP-2010) identifies Community Areas, which are primarily characterized by ground related residential housing stock that is subject to the Low Rise Residential designation of the Plan;*

*Whereas, policies are provided in VOP 2010 to protect and strengthen the character of these areas;*

*Whereas, the Community Areas will remain mostly stable; while some incremental change is expected to occur as neighbourhoods mature, such change is not intended to result in significant physical change;*

*Whereas, limited intensification may be permitted in Community Areas, provided that such development must be sensitive to and compatible with the character, form and planned function of the surrounding areas;*

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*Whereas, in consideration of the application of the current Community Areas policies, it is appropriate to review the policies pertaining to the Community Areas, to ensure that they provide the appropriate level of clarity and direction necessary to maintain the special character of these areas.*

*It is therefore recommended: that staff undertake a study of the policies governing land use change in the Community Areas of VOP 2010;*

1. *That the study examine such policies in consideration of the following criteria:*
  - *Clarity of interpretation;*
  - *Ability to ensure compatibility;*
  - *The need to provide more definitive policy and or schedules;*
  - *Such criteria as may emerge as a result of the study;*
  - *Recommended policy amendments or schedules as required;*
2. *That the study identify implementation options for the consideration of Council, as required;*
3. *That staff report in the first quarter of 2016 on the findings of the study implementation options and to obtain Council direction on further actions.*

Committee of the Whole approved the resolution which went to Council on October 20, 2015 for ratification. Council, in its approval, modified the Committee recommendation by directing staff to reconsider the matter, and by modifying recommendation 1 to the resolution to have staff also consider *best practices in other jurisdictions*.

In response to the Council direction, the consultant submitted a report ("Policy Review: Vaughan's Community Areas and Low-Rise Residential Areas"), which proposes responses and implementation options based on the findings of the review. It begins by describing the different types of low-rise residential neighbourhoods in Vaughan and identifying their fundamental characteristics. It is then followed by a review of the relevant VOP 2010 policies. The study also comparatively examines best practices and precedent examples of existing low-rise residential policies and guidelines developed by other Ontario municipalities to inform recommendations for Vaughan. It identifies potential amendments to VOP 2010 which would strengthen and clarify its policies in regard to the protection of low rise residential neighbourhoods and provides urban design guidelines for Low Rise Residential Areas and Townhouse Infill Guidelines to assist in the interpretation of the current policies.

This staff report provides a synopsis of the main elements of the policy review and sets out the options for proceeding based on the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the review. These are discussed in the following sections of the report.

#### **Identifying Vaughan's Established Low-Rise Residential Neighbourhoods**

##### **Methodology for Determining Typologies of Established Community Areas in Vaughan**

Vaughan has a long history of development extending back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Most of the development has taken place since 1950. As a result the city has a variety of neighbourhood typologies that reflect the period of development, lot sizes, building types and landscape treatments. The review also considered existing Official Plan policies and zoning by-laws, as well as urban design guidelines, and Heritage Conservation District policies. It was determined that the Official Plan in some instances, needed more specific direction on how to achieve development that respects the character of the host community. Having a solid understanding of

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the neighbourhood types will serve to guide and assign policies and guidelines to the appropriate areas and situations.

Schedule 1 (Urban Structure) and Schedule 13 (Land Use Designations) of the VOP 2010 were used to identify the limits of Vaughan's designated Community Areas and Low-Rise Residential areas. Detailed aerial photography of the areas and the community fabric and design was then used to identify the distinct types of neighbourhoods within these areas.

Lot frontage was used as the primary determinant of neighbourhood type, since the width of a lot typically has a direct relationship to the following characteristics, which are fundamental to defining the character of a neighbourhood:

- The sizes of houses (building height and massing);
- The setbacks of houses from the street and neighbouring properties;
- The extent of land used for tree planting and other green landscaping;
- The relationship of garages to houses (on larger lots they are typically a less dominant feature).

Other defining elements of neighbourhood character include architecture, tree size and canopy, and private landscaping such as pathways or light fixtures. Since these elements vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood and are subject to change, they were not criteria used to categorize neighbourhoods. These elements were, however, considered, in assessing the need for, and proposing, policy refinements and guidelines for all established neighbourhoods.

Based on this analysis, Vaughan's residential subdivisions generally fall into five ranges of lot frontages: 30 metres (approx. 100 feet) and greater; 21-29 metres (approx. 70-95 feet); 14-20 metres (approx. 45-65 feet); 10-14 metres (approx. 35-45 feet); and 6-9 metres (approx. 20-34 feet). It was determined that low-rise residential areas with lot frontages in the first two ranges constitute "Large-Lot Neighbourhoods", areas with frontages in the next two ranges are "Medium-Lot Neighbourhoods", and areas with lots 9 metres wide or less are "Small-Lot Neighbourhoods" (Refer to Attachment 2.)

#### **Summary of Neighbourhood Types**

The three neighbourhood types exhibited the following characteristics:

##### **a) Large Lot Neighbourhoods (approximately 21 metres frontage or greater)**

- Deep front setbacks of approximately 12 metres (39 feet) or greater
- Deep rear setbacks of 15 metres (49 feet) or greater
- Wide and/or circular/semi-circular driveways
- Attached garages that generally are not dominant features, with varying orientations and designs
- Large detached houses
- Expansive landscaped front and rear yards

#### **Findings:**

Large Lot Neighbourhoods are experiencing two types of development pressure which can ultimately alter the character of the neighbourhood if not compatible with the surrounding established development. The first is the replacement of one and one-and-a-half storey houses with "monster homes" that appear to be two-and-a-half or three storeys tall. This has been occurring in many of Vaughan's older established neighbourhoods. However, in some cases, the transition between newly built homes versus older existing housing stock in these

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neighbourhoods is significant, and occasionally, garages and/or overly wide driveways dominate the front elevation of the new dwellings.

The second type of development pressure in large-lot neighbourhoods are proposals to subdivide lots into two or more lots for new detached or semi-detached houses where lot dimensions are consistent. Proposals to subdivide these properties alter the consistency of lot frontage and size of dwelling which may potentially change the character of the neighbourhood disrupting the flow of consistency and continuity of the Large Lot characteristics, as side yards are reduced and garages and driveways become more dominant features.

#### b) Medium Lot Neighbourhoods (approximately 10 metres frontage or greater)

- Lot frontage of 10 to 20 metres (33 to 65 feet)
- Front setbacks of 6 to 15 metres (20 to 50 feet)
- Interior side yard setbacks of typically 1.5 metres (5 feet)
- Rear setbacks of 7.5 to 10 metres (25 to 33 feet)
- Wide driveways
- Front yard landscaped area generally less than 50% of the yard.
- 2-storey detached house is the predominant housing type

#### Findings:

Development pressure in Medium Lot Established Neighbourhoods is less acute than in the large-lot neighbourhoods, since the housing stock in these neighbourhoods is relatively newer, and the site and zoning restrictions prevent significantly larger homes from being built. There has been an influx of development applications on medium-lot neighbourhoods proposing to intensify and replace bungalows with 2-storey homes, and rear yard additions are becoming more common. There are some instances where plans of the subdivision of wider size lots were proposed in these neighbourhoods.

#### c) Small Lot Neighbourhoods (approximately 6 to 9 metres frontage)

- Lot frontages of 6 to 9 metres (20 to 30 feet)
- Front setbacks of approximately 5 to 12 metres (16 to 40 feet)
- Side setbacks of approximately 0 to 1.5 metres
- Rear setbacks of approximately 6 to 10 metres
- Single or double car garages
- 2-storeys detached, semi-detached houses and townhouse building type

#### Findings:

Development pressures for these neighbourhoods is also less acute than in the large-lot neighbourhoods, since the housing stock is generally of recent construction, and site and zoning restrictions prevent significantly larger homes from being built. The lots are too narrow for subdivision to be considered.

#### d) Arterial Areas

The results of the analysis reveal a number of instances where the lotting and development pattern along an arterial road in some parts of the Community Area is inconsistent with the surrounding neighbourhoods on either side of the arterial road. These areas are generally a result of subdivisions being built around existing houses on large, formerly rural lots, that have arterial

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frontage. Results from the review also indicate that individual lots and assembled lots along these arterial areas are typically larger than lots in the established host neighbourhood areas. These lots can typically accommodate townhouse developments that are not appropriate on sites internal to large-lot and medium-lot neighbourhoods because they would be of an incompatible character.

As these areas fall within the “Community Area” designation as per Schedule 1 (Urban Structure) of VOP 2010, they are generally not intended for intensification as per policies 2.2.3.1 to 2.2.3.4. Development along these arterial areas should be addressed through additional policies in the VOP 2010, in accordance with supplementary urban design guidelines informing their design, so as to ensure they are compatible with the character and context of neighbouring properties and their surrounding established low-rise residential communities.

The report recommends particular policies and urban design guidelines to address a range of issues posed by recent development proposals for arterial areas as well as potential issues that may arise with future proposals, with emphasis on addressing:

- **The introduction of a private driveway / street parallel or perpendicular to the arterial street to provide frontage for dwelling units located behind units fronting the arterial** – the use of laneways, driveways or private streets to provide frontage for development at the rear of units fronting the arterial is not consistent with the pattern of development in Vaughan’s established low-rise neighborhoods, where houses generally front a public street. Front-to-back condition would be created as a result and would result in a significant loss of privacy for the units facing the arterial street.
- **The introduction of private street and pathway networks on very large sites** – Vaughan’s established low-rise residential neighbourhoods are structured and serviced by networks of local public streets that facilitate navigation that is clear and understandable and function as multi-purpose public spaces. Private streets are generally not designed to the standards of a public street and typically prevent opportunities for public connections through sites, which may create issues of safety and security.
- **The use of reduced front yard and rear yard setbacks to maximize density on the site** – the clustering of townhouses on a site requiring reduced setbacks that do not reflect the prevailing setbacks in the surrounding area, creates significantly greater massing and visual impact of the houses in the adjacent established neighbourhood. Landscaped front yards should provide room for mature trees, with a minimum front setback of 4.5 metres to reinforce the green character of host neighbourhoods. Rear setbacks that do not respect the existing pattern and zoning standards for the neighbourhood may lead to adverse light, overlook and loss of privacy impacts.
- **Loss of Mature Trees** – townhouse developments that cover much of a site invariably result in the loss of mature trees, which are a defining characteristic of many of Vaughan’s established low-rise neighbourhoods.

It is important to note that the aforementioned issues, respecting arterial areas apply to designated Low-Rise Residential areas within Community Areas, as set-out in Schedule 1 of VOP 2010. In these areas the intent of VOP 2010 is for new development to respect and reinforce the established pattern and character of the area. Issues associated with townhouse development in designated “Intensification Areas” might be quite different from those discussed above, since the intent of designated “intensification” areas versus “stable” residential areas differs in the context of VOP 2010. Intensification Areas seek to achieve higher density development in centres and corridors that are, or will be supported, by a high level of transit service.

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The study suggests that compatibility in low-rise residential areas along arterial streets can be achieved by respecting and maintaining the prevailing pattern of building orientation, setbacks and landscaping; and can fit compatibly within each distinct type of neighbourhood in the City. The recommended policy amendments and urban design guidelines will help ensure that each infill application respects and reinforces the existing character of the host community area.

#### **Vaughan Official Plan and Zoning By-law**

##### **Review of VOP 2010 Policies**

A review of existing policy regime in VOP 2010 and By-law 1-88 was undertaken as part of this study. The current policy regime provides guidance as to the City's expectations for development in its stable residential areas, respecting the fact that the City has established Intensification Areas where major redevelopment and infill is already permitted. Section 3 of Attachment 1, highlights the policies related to the regulation of infill development in areas designated Low-Rise Residential in the Community Areas of VOP 2010.

Key policies in Volume 1 of VOP 2010 identified in the study include:

- Community Area Policies – 2.2.1.1 (b), 2.2.3.2. and 2.2.3.3., addressing the degree of change planned in Community Areas i.e. stable areas not intended to experience significant physical change;
- Mobility Policies – 4.2.1.5, 4.2.1.26, also relevant to intensification oriented development proposals;
- Public Realm Policies – 9.1.1.2, 9.1.1.3, 9.1.1.4, 9.1.1.5, addressing requirements for public streets and accessibility including their function, layout and design;
- Urban Design Policies – 9.1.2.1, 9.1.2.2, 9.1.2.3, 9.2.2.1, containing policies on the design and form of development including compatibility criteria for new development;
- Low-Rise Residential Policies – 9.2.3.1, 9.2.3.2, establishes the development criteria for detached, semi-detached and townhouse building forms;
- Heritage Policies – 6.2.2.9, 6.3.2.4, addresses development adjacent to a Heritage Conservation District and establishes compatibility criteria which must be considered in development applications; and that the character prescribed in the Heritage Conservation District must also be respected and complemented;
- Implementation Policies – 10.1.1, 10.1.1.14 – 10.1.1.26, 10.1.1.29, establishes the criteria and framework for policy implementation, which includes the application of the Block Plan process to coordinate the development of multi-ownership parcels.

Recommended changes to these policies resulting from the study, are later in this report.

##### **Review of Zoning By-law 1-88**

The review considered existing zoning by-law permissions in the designated Community Areas as part of the establishment of “character”, as it provides the basis for understanding the pattern of development and built form controls that the new development in the area must “respect and reinforce”. Reflecting the predominance of detached houses, the most common zoning found in Community Areas is R1V, R1, R2 or R3. Section 3.8 of Attachment 1, provides a table summarizing the key regulations that apply in each zone as well as the typical low-rise residential



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zones where townhouses are permitted, RM1 and RM2. The study found that since the character of Vaughan's low-rise residential areas, in many respects, is determined by zoning standards, they have informed the recommended infill guidelines.

#### **Precedent Review: Best Practices in Other Jurisdictions**

One of the tasks identified in the Council direction was to review “best practices in other jurisdictions”. The consultant has summarized the policies and guidelines of other municipalities, primarily in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, that have been developed to regulate and guide change in mature low-rise neighbourhoods. For each, it looked at the methodology and approach, relevance to the City of Vaughan and provided some sample guidelines. The review included an examination of the cities of Toronto and Ottawa, which have been dealing with development pressures in their low-density communities for some time. It also examined the policies and guidelines adopted by some of the more mature suburban municipalities in the GTA, similar to the City of Vaughan. The following municipalities were reviewed:

- Toronto;
- Ottawa;
- Mississauga;
- Brampton;
- Markham;
- Whitchurch-Stouffville; and
- Oakville.

Generally, the official plan policies of the other municipalities were consistent in the identification of important character elements that needed to be preserved in Low-Rise areas and the use of guidelines was widespread. This research informed the preparation of the recommended changes to VOP 2010 and the design guidelines. The full review is set out in Attachment 1, Section 4 “Precedent Review”.

#### **Study Conclusions and Recommendations**

There have been an increasing number of applications that seemingly counter the vision and intent for the stable community areas provided in VOP 2010. The intent of VOP 2010 is to ensure development respects, reinforces and is compatible with, the existing scale, lot pattern, character and form of established neighbourhoods. However, to aid in implementation it would be beneficial if more clarity and information is provided on how the applicable policies should be applied to individual development applications. This has led to inconsistent interpretations of the policies in the plan.

The study recommends that the City consider refining the VOP 2010 to clarify existing policies and adopting urban design guidelines to support and further clarify the policy regime to address the concerns over the compatibility of infill development in Community Areas with a Low-Rise Residential designation. The study proposes a number of amendments to VOP 2010 and further proposes two sets of urban design guidelines, one for general infill development in established low-rise residential areas, and one specific to infill townhouse development.

While the proposed VOP 2010 amendments and urban design guidelines are complementary and mutually supportive, they can be implemented independently. Should the City wish to undertake an official plan amendment, it may adopt one or both sets of the urban design guidelines in the interim. The guidelines are non-statutory but provide assistance in interpreting the current VOP 2010 policies.

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**Options for Proposed Amendments to VOP 2010**

Below are the suggested modifications to the policies of VOP 2010. In the revised policies below, strikethroughs represent text proposed for deletion and bolded text represents new text. Each proposed modification is followed by the rationale for the changes. The proposed amendments are also set out in Section 5 of the study report, which forms Attachment 1.

**Community Area Policy Modifications**

Proposed amendment to Policy 2.2.3.2:

Community Areas are considered Stable Areas and therefore Community Areas with existing development are not intended to experience *significant* physical change **that would alter the general character of established neighbourhoods**. New development that respects and reinforces the existing scale, height, massing, lot pattern, building type **and orientation**, character, form and planned function of the immediate local area is permitted, as set out in the policies of Chapter 9.

*Rationale: The proposed amendment clarifies the meaning of “significant” in this context by relating it to a change that would alter the general character of a neighborhood. It also recognizes that in addition to the existing criteria, the orientation of buildings in a neighbourhood is also fundamental to its character and if altered through redevelopment would mark a significant physical change to the neighbourhood’s overall established character.*

**Urban Design and Built Form Policies**

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.1.2.1:

New development will respect and reinforce the existing and planned context within which it is situated. More specifically, the built form of new developments will be designed to achieve the following general objectives: (a) in Community Areas, new development will be designed to respect and reinforce the physical character of the established neighbourhood within which it is located as set out in policies 9.1.2.2 – **9.1.2.4** and 9.1.2.3...; (no change to remainder of policy)

*Rationale: The above amendment is appropriate if proposed new policy 9.1.2.4 below is adopted*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.1.2.2:

In Community Areas with established development, new development be designed to respect and reinforce the existing physical character and uses of the surrounding area, **specifically respecting and reinforcing** ~~paying particular attention to~~ the following elements:

- a. the local pattern of lots, streets and blocks;
- b. the size and configuration of lots;
- c. the building type of nearby residential properties;
- d. **the orientation of buildings;**
- e. the heights and scale of **immediately surrounding** ~~nearby~~ residential properties;
- f. the setback of buildings from the street;
- g. the pattern of rear and side-yard setbacks;
- h. **the presence of mature trees and general landscape character of the streetscape;**  
**the existing topography and drainage pattern on the lot and in the immediate surroundings;**
- i. conservation and enhancement of heritage buildings, heritage districts and cultural heritage landscapes;

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- j. the above elements are not meant to discourage the incorporation of features that can increase energy efficiency (e.g. solar configuration, solar panels) or environmental sustainability (e.g. natural lands, rain barrels).

*Rationale: The proposed amendment adds new elements that contribute to the character of a neighbourhood that should be “paid particular attention to” and should be respected and reinforced. The additions to the list of elements recognize that the orientation of buildings, the presence of trees and the general landscape character are fundamental elements that help to define the character of a neighbourhood. The proposed amendment also recognizes that topography and drainage are important considerations when redeveloping a site.*

#### Proposed amendment to Policy 9.1.2.3:

Within the Community Areas there are a number of ~~older~~, established residential neighbourhoods that are characterized **exclusively or predominantly by detached houses located on generally large lots with frontages exceeding 20 metres** and/or by their historical, architectural or landscape value. **These neighbourhoods are identified on Schedule [X] (Established Large-Lot Neighbourhoods).** Some of the ~~older~~, established neighbourhoods, as well as **newer estate lot neighbourhoods**, are also characterized by their substantial rear, front and side yards, and by lot coverages that contribute to expansive amenity areas, which provide opportunities for attractive landscape development and streetscapes. ~~Often, these areas are~~ **These include neighbourhoods** at or near ~~the core of the~~ **Local Centres** of Thornhill, Concord, Kleinburg, Maple and Woodbridge, and may also be part of the respective Heritage Conservation Districts.

In order to maintain the character of ~~these areas~~ **established, large-lot neighbourhoods**, the following policies shall apply to all developments within these areas (e.g., land severances, zoning by-law amendments and minor variances), based on the current zoning, and guide the preparation of any future City-initiated area specific or comprehensive zoning by-laws affecting these areas.

- a. Lot frontage: In the case of lot creation, new lots should be equal to or exceed the frontages of the ~~adjacent nearby and facing~~ **adjoining or facing** lots;
- b. Lot area: The area of new lots should be consistent with the size of ~~adjacent and nearby~~ **adjoining or facing** lots;
- c. Lot configuration: New lots should respect the existing lotting fabric **in the immediate vicinity**;
- d. Front yards and exterior side yards: Buildings should maintain the established pattern of setbacks for the neighbourhood to retain a consistent streetscape;
- e. Rear yards: Buildings should maintain the established pattern of setbacks for the neighbourhood to minimize visual intrusion on the adjacent residential lots;
- f. **Dwelling types: A new dwelling replacing an existing one shall be of the same type, as defined in Section 9.2.3 of this Plan, except on a lot fronting an Arterial Street, as identified in Schedule 9 (Future Transportation Network), where a semi-detached or townhouse dwelling replacing a detached dwelling may be permitted, subject to Policy 9.1.2.4 and the other urban design policies of this plan;**
- g. Building heights and massing: Should respect the scale of adjacent residential buildings and any city urban design guidelines prepared for ~~these~~ Community Areas;
- h. Lot coverage: In order to maintain the low density character of these areas and ensure opportunities for generous amenity and landscaping areas, lot coverage consistent with development in the area and as provided for in the zoning by-law is required to regulate the area of the building footprint within the building envelope, as defined by the minimum yard requirements of the zoning by-law.

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*Rationale: The proposed amendment recognizes that in addition to the older, established neighbourhoods found in Thornhill, Concord, Kleinburg, Maple and Woodbridge, there are “newer” estate lot neighbourhoods within Community Areas with similar characteristics to be respected and reinforced. The addition of a new schedule, consistent with Figure 2 of the study (Vaughan’s Large Lot Neighbourhoods), will clarify to which areas of the city this policy applies. By having the policy apply to established large-lot neighbourhoods generally, the question of the age of a neighbourhood and whether or not it qualifies as “older” becomes less relevant and more emphasis is placed on the characteristics of these neighbourhoods to be respected and reinforced by new development. The proposed amendments to 9.1.2.3(a) and (b) clarify the area to be considered when lot severances are proposed, recognizing that lot frontages and areas vary across Community Areas; so long as new lots are consistent with the size of adjacent lots or those immediately across the street, that aspect of the neighbourhood’s character should be respected and reinforced. The proposed new policy regarding dwelling types recognizes that Vaughan’s large-lot neighbourhoods are defined by single detached dwellings, and more intense dwelling types might be appropriate only at the edges of the neighbourhood along arterial roads.*

Proposed new Policy 9.1.2.4:

**Notwithstanding Policy 9.1.2.3, where a lot in an established Low-Rise Residential neighbourhood in a Community Area fronts an Arterial Street, as identified in Schedule 9 (Future Transportation Network) of this Plan, limited intensification in the form of semi-detached or townhouse dwellings may be permitted, subject to the following:**

- a. All new dwellings shall front and address a public street to be consistent with the orientation of existing dwellings in the established neighbourhood;**
- b. Parking shall be located at the rear of units or underground, accessed by a shared private laneway or driveway requiring minimal curb cuts, to minimize the impact of parking and driveways on the streetscape;**
- c. Private laneways or driveways shall not be used to provide frontage for residential dwellings;**
- d. The general pattern of front, side and rear yard setbacks in the adjacent established neighbourhood shall be respected and maintained. Front yard setbacks shall be a minimum of 4.5 metres to provide an appropriate buffer between the road and the dwellings and to accommodate landscaping. Rear yard setbacks generally shall be a minimum of 7.5 metres;**
- e. The scale and massing of townhouse developments shall respect the scale and massing of adjacent development and any applicable urban design guidelines.**

*Rationale: This proposed new policy recognizes that townhouse developments, as well as semi-detached houses, are not common in most of Vaughan’s long established neighbourhoods in Community Areas and if introduced would mark a significant physical change, which would be contrary to Policy 2.2.3.2. The policy also recognizes, however, that unusually deep and/or wide lots at the edges of established communities along arterial roads may present opportunities to accommodate townhouse developments with minimal or no adverse impact on the larger established neighbourhood. The criteria in the proposed policy are intended to ensure that townhouse developments respect the physical character of the established neighbourhood and achieve compatibility.*

Proposed new Policy 9.1.2.5:

**Where a new street network and other infrastructure are required to facilitate and service new development on deep, formerly rural lots in Community Areas, the City may require a Block Plan, as per Policies 10.1.1.14 - 10.1.1.15, to address such matters as:**

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- a. the configuration and design of streets;
- b. traffic management;
- c. extensions and connections to existing pedestrian and cycling networks;
- d. the provision of public and private services and the detailed approach to stormwater management;
- e. the protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage Network;
- f. the precise locations of natural and cultural heritage features of the area;
- g. the precise location of any parks and open spaces;
- h. the proposed implementation of sustainable development policies as contained in subsection 9.1.3 of this Plan;
- i. phasing of development.

*Rationale: Policy 10.1.1.14 states that the City may identify areas subject to a Block Plan through the development review process to address complexities in smaller planning units. The proposed new policy clarifies that unusually large lots within Community Areas, or assemblages of such lots, may constitute a smaller planning unit that requires a Block Plan to ensure they develop in a rational and efficient manner that fully conforms to the VOP 2010.*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.1(b):

In **established** Community Areas **where Detached Houses and Semi-Detached Houses exist**, ~~with existing development~~, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of **new** Detached Houses and Semi-Detached Houses will respect and reinforce the scale, massing, setback and orientation of other built and approved ~~Detached Houses and/or Semi-Detached houses~~ **of the same type** in the immediate area. Variations are permitted for the purposes of minimizing driveways.

*Rationale: The proposed amendment clarifies that the policy is intended to apply to proposed new development in established neighbourhoods and ensure new detached and semi-detached houses are only introduced where they already exist.*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.2(b):

In **established** Community Areas **where Townhouses exist**, ~~with existing development~~, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of **new** Townhouses will respect and reinforce the scale, massing, setback and orientation of other built and approved Townhouses in the immediate area. Variations are permitted for the purposes of minimizing driveways and having front entrances and porches located closer to the street than garages. **Back-to-back townhouses shall not be permitted in established Community Areas.**

*Rationale: The proposed amendment clarifies that the policy is intended to apply to proposed new development in established neighbourhoods and ensure new townhouses are only introduced where they already exist. The prohibition against back-to-back townhouses recognizes that their form and orientation are not in keeping with the pattern and character of existing development in established neighbourhoods.*

Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.2(c):

In ~~areas of new development~~ **developing Community Areas**, the scale, massing, setback and orientation of Townhouses will be determined through the process of developing and approving Secondary Plans, Block Plans, Plans of Subdivision, Zoning By-laws, and/or urban design guidelines.

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*Rationale: The proposed amendment clarifies that it applies to new, still developing neighbourhoods and not any area where there is new development.*

#### Proposed amendment to Policy 9.2.3.2(d):

Townhouses in **designated Low-Rise Residential areas** shall ~~generally~~ front onto a public street or public open space. **Townhouses shall be encouraged to front a public street or public open space in other areas where permitted.** ~~Where a townhouse block does not front a public street but flanks one Townhouse blocks not fronting onto a public street are only permitted if the unit(s) flanking a public street,~~ **the flanking unit(s) shall** provide a front yard and front-door entrance facing the public street.

*Rationale: The proposed amendment recognizes that dwellings fronting a public street or open space is a defining characteristic of Vaughan's Community Areas and ensures this pattern will be maintained with new housing, including townhouses. It also recognizes that flexibility regarding this requirement may be needed in other areas, namely intensification areas, where frontage on private streets, mews or open spaces may be more practical and desirable for achieving density and other urban design objectives.*

#### Proposed new Policy 9.2.3.2(f):

**New townhouses in established Low-Rise Residential areas where townhouses do not currently exist in the immediate vicinity of the site or where the site does not front an Arterial Street, as identified in Schedule 9 (Future Transportation Network), will require an Official Plan Amendment.**

*Rationale: This new policy further clarifies and reinforces the intent of the proposed amendments to Policies 9.1.2.3 and 9.2.3.2 and new proposed new Policy 9.1.2.4.*

#### Options for Urban Design Guidelines

The study recommends that urban design guidelines be adopted to complement and support the policies of Section 9.1.2.2. and 9.1.2.3, and proposed policy 9.1.2.4, respecting "compatible development" in established and older established neighbourhoods in Community Areas with Low-Rise Residential Designations. Two sets of guidelines are proposed, one set for general infill development and the other for townhouse infill development in Low-Rise Residential areas.

The proposed Urban Design Guidelines are intended to guide the physical layout and massing of infill development as well as its relationships to neighbouring development and the public realm. The guidelines highlight the important elements of compatibility that will help ensure new development fits within the established context. It is anticipated that the application of these guidelines will be to facilitate sensitive and high-quality design for infill development projects that support and maintain the character of Vaughan's established residential neighbourhoods.

If adopted, the guidelines can be reproduced in a stand-alone document that includes the relevant policies supporting VOP 2010.

The Guidelines are set out in the study report which forms Sections 5.2 and 5.3 of Attachment 1 to this report.

#### i) Proposed Low-Rise Residential Infill Guidelines

**The form and character of infill development should be in keeping with the general form and character of existing development and streetscapes in the surrounding neighbourhood:**

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1. Infill development should reflect the existing neighbourhood pattern of development in terms of front, rear and side yard setbacks, building height and the location and treatment of primary entrances, to both the dwelling and the street. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3)
2. Development should reflect the desirable aspects of the established streetscape character. Where the streetscape needs improvement, infill development should contribute through high-quality building design, landscape architecture, and tree planting. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
3. The prevailing pattern of lot widths, lot depths and lot area in a neighbourhood should be maintained. The subdivision of a lot to create two or more lots should only occur if the width of the resulting lots is the same as or greater than the narrowest lot fronting the same street on the same block or the narrowest lot fronting the same street on the block across the street. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3)
4. An existing dwelling should only be replaced by a dwelling, or dwellings, of the same type (detached or semi-detached house or townhouse). (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3)
5. Consistent with the City's zoning standard for Vaughan's neighbourhoods of single-detached houses, the height of new dwelling should not exceed 9.5 metres. To ensure an appropriate transition to houses on adjacent lots, the roof line of houses with a height greater than 9.5 metres should slope or step down to a maximum height of 7.5 metres at the eaves at the side of the house (Policy 9.1.2.2/ 9.1.2.3/ 9.2.3.1)
6. Front entrances should be prominent and well detailed and incorporate a porch or stoop that is at least twice as wide as the front door. (Policy 9.2.3.1)
7. Development on corner lots should front both edges with articulated facades and windows that provide views of the street and/or open space from living areas. Blank walls visible from streets, parks or other public spaces generally should be avoided. (Policy 9.1.1.3)
8. Second-storey additions to a house should have architectural details that are uniformly expressed over the entire facade. (Policy 6.2.2.9 / 9.2.3.1)
9. Building finishes should be durable and consistent with materials used for dwellings in the immediately surround area. The use of vinyl siding is discouraged. (Policy 9.2.3.1)

**Infill development should have relationships to the public realm and adjacent properties that are consistent with the relationships of existing development in the immediate surroundings:**

10. Dwellings should be oriented to the street with their front entrance visible from a public street. (Policy 9.1.1.3)
11. Front yard setbacks should be consistent with the front yard setbacks of adjacent houses and houses immediately across the street. Where there is a uniform setback along a street, it should be matched by the new dwelling(s). Where there is variation in setbacks, the front yard setback of the new dwelling(s) should be the average of that of adjacent development. Front yard setback less than 4.5 metres is not permitted. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)
12. Side yard and rear yard setbacks should be consistent with the prevailing pattern of setbacks in the immediately surrounding residential area. A minimum rear yard setback of 7.5 metres should be maintained. The rear portion of the house should not create adverse shadow or overlook conditions on the adjacent properties. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)

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13. New development should not include second storey decks or balconies that would create adverse overlook impacts on adjacent properties. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)
14. New development should incorporate fencing, screening and/or landscaping to maintain the privacy of adjacent dwellings and their rear yards. (Policy 9.1.2.2 / 9.1.2.3 / 9.2.3.1)
15. Where there are opportunities, infill development should expand the network of sidewalks, pathways, trails, and crosswalks in the larger neighbourhood. New pathways should be barrier free. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3 / 9.1.1.4)

#### **Garages should be treated as accessories to dwellings, located and designed to be complementary to the main building and not a dominant feature of the property:**

16. On lots with a minimum width of 15 metres, the garage should be recessed from the front wall of the house, and the width of the garage should not be greater than the width of the house. On such lots, consideration should be given to locating the garage behind the house, accessed from a driveway at the side or on a flanking street. On a lot with a minimum width of 30 metres, the garage may face the side yard, provided the side of the garage is designed to blend with the façade of the house and has at least one window. Projecting garages should be avoided. (Policy 9.2.3.1)
17. Attached and detached garages should have materials and design elements consistent with the architecture of the dwelling and should not be a dominant feature. (Policy 9.2.3.1)
18. On corner lots, access to the garage should be from the flanking street. (Policy 9.1.1.3 / 9.2.3.1)
19. No portion of a garage should be located below the lowest grade of the lot at the street. Reverse slope driveways are not permitted as per zoning by-law 1-88 and the City of Vaughan's Engineering Design Criteria and Standard Documents (Section 4.1.4 (g)) (Policy 9.2.3.1)
20. Double garages should have two overhead doors. (Policy 9.2.3.1)

#### **Front yards should be designed to contribute to an attractive, green streetscape in which trees are a dominant feature:**

21. The width of driveways at the street should be minimized and no greater than 6 metres. The maximum width of a driveway should not exceed the width of the garage. (Policy 9.1.1.3 / 9.2.3.1)
22. Circular driveways should only be considered on lots with a minimum width of 30 metres. (Policy 9.1.1.3 / 9.2.3.1)
23. Existing healthy, mature trees should be retained and protected. To ensure their survival, trenching for services and foundations should avoid the critical root zone of existing trees, generally defined by the tree's drip line. If the removal of any mature trees is justifiable, they should be replaced with new ones as per the provisions of a tree compensation plan. (Policy 9.1.1.2)
24. Other than the permitted driveway width, paving in the front yard should be limited to walkways and small areas leading to the front entrance. Walkways should be barrier-free. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)



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25. On lots with a width between 14 and 20 metres, at least 50% of the front yard should comprise soft landscaping, and a pathway should connect the front entrance to the sidewalk, where one exists. On lots with a width between 20 and 30 metres, this proportion should be 67%, and on 30-metre or wider lots, the proportion should be 80%. (Policy 9.1.1.3 / 9.2.3.1)
26. Fencing and/or perimeter landscaping, such as hedges, that obscures views of the front of a house from the street is discouraged. (Policy 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3)
27. Manage rainwater and snowmelt on-site with best practices in Low Impact Development that encourage infiltration, evapo-transpiration and water re-use through such measures as: planting trees, shrubs and other landscaping; creating bio-retention areas such as swales; and incorporating opportunities to harvest rainwater from rooftops and other hard surfaces for landscape irrigation.
28. Impermeable surfaces in landscaped open spaces should be minimized. Where hard surfaces are planned, the use of permeable materials are encouraged to manage stormwater run-off and reduce heat build-up.

**ii) Proposed Townhouse Infill Guidelines**

The following guidelines would apply to infill townhouse developments on arterial streets in designated Low-Rise Residential areas. Although many of the guidelines may be applied to Intensification Areas, a separate set of guidelines should be developed for those areas that support the applicable policy objectives, e.g., increased density.

**Orientation, Setbacks and Character (Policy 9.2.3.2)**

1. Townhouse dwellings should be oriented to and have their front entrance on a public street; alternatively, they may front a public park. Private driveways or laneways should not be used to provide frontage for townhouses either flanking the street or located at the rear of dwellings fronting the street. Such a condition would create a front-to-side or front-to-back condition that would adversely affect the rear privacy of adjacent dwellings or dwellings on the same lot that front the street.
2. Front paths should provide direct access to each unit from the sidewalk.
3. Front entrances should be prominent and well detailed and incorporate a porch or stoop.
4. The front entrance should be level with the first floor and raised 0.6-1.2 metres above the level of the front path.
5. Front yard setbacks for units fronting the arterial street should be a minimum of 5.0 metres and should be consistent across the site.
6. Interior side yard setbacks should be a minimum of 1.5 metres, and units flanking a public street should be setback a minimum of 4.5 metres from the street.
7. The end unit in a townhouse block flanking a street should address both streets with a side elevation that includes windows and details consistent with the front elevation.
8. The height and massing of townhouse blocks should be compatible with the character of the adjacent or surrounding neighbourhood. Blocks of townhouses shall consist of no more than 6 units consistent with VOP 2010 Policy 9.2.3.2 (a).

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9. The separation between townhouse blocks on the same site should be a minimum of 3 metres to allow for landscaping. Where the separation will provide pedestrian circulation, the separation between townhouse blocks on the same site should generally be 6 metres.
10. The rear of the townhouse unit should be setback by 12 metres from the rear laneway. A minimum of 3 metres landscaped buffer from the rear property line to the rear laneways should be provided.
11. Each townhouse dwelling should have a private backyard, fenced or screened with landscaping for privacy.
12. Where common outdoor amenity area is proposed in addition to private amenity space, the common space should be in a prominent location, visible and easily accessed from all units, and with plenty of exposure to sunlight.
13. A minimum of 50% of the area at the rear of townhouses should consist of soft landscaping, including high-branching deciduous trees.
14. The architecture and materials of new townhouses should respect and complement the character of the surrounding residential area.
15. Townhouses should have a minimum width of 6 metres and a minimum depth of 12 metres.
16. Existing healthy, mature trees should be retained and protected. To ensure their survival, trenching for services and foundations should avoid the critical root zone of existing trees. If the removal of any mature trees is justifiable, they should be replaced with new ones as per the provisions of a tree compensation plan.
17. Landscaping plans for front yards should incorporate the public boulevard and include street trees.

#### **Access, Parking and Service Areas (Policies 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.3 / 9.1.1.4)**

18. Parking and servicing areas for townhouses fronting an arterial street should be located at the rear of the units or underground, accessed from a laneway or driveway.
19. On corner sites, access to parking and servicing areas should be from the flanking street.
20. Laneways and driveways should be buffered from side property lines by a landscape strip with a minimum width of 1.5 metres and buffered from rear property lines by landscaped areas with a minimum width of 3 metres to soften and improve the transition between adjacent properties.
21. Parking access, servicing areas and utility boxes should be consolidated for efficiency and to minimize adverse impacts on neighbouring properties and the public realm. Waste storage areas and utility boxes should be screened from public views.
22. Accesses to underground parking should be integrated into the design of the building, should not be visible from a public street, and should be sited to prevent negative impacts to neighbouring properties.
23. Where a site is large enough to accommodate a local public street or street network to provide access and frontage for townhouse dwellings in the interior of the site, the street or street network should link to existing streets in the surrounding neighbourhood where possible, and opportunities to extend the street or street network across adjoining sites fronting the arterial in the future should be considered.

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24. Where townhouse dwellings front a new local street and it is not practical to accommodate parking at the rear of the units, single front garages may be considered provided the townhouses have a minimum width of 6 metres and the garage is flush with or recessed from the front wall of the townhouse so that it does not dominate the façade. In addition, the garage should be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the street to accommodate a parked car in the driveway.
25. Visitor parking should be located close to the site entrance(s). Where multiple townhouse blocks are proposed on a site, the visitor parking may be located in a central location at the rear of the units, provided convenient pathways between blocks of townhouses allow visitors to access the front entrances.
26. Pedestrian circulation areas should be barrier free and landscaped, have pedestrian-scale lighting, and have access to sunlight.

#### **Grading (Policies 9.1.1.3 / 9.1.1.2 / 9.1.1.4)**

27. Generally, there should be minimal changes to the existing grades on the site, and the existing natural grades at the property lines should be maintained.
28. Artificially raised or lowered grades, or low-lying areas where water collects, should be avoided.
29. The use of retaining walls along street frontages, parks and other open spaces areas should be avoided. Where a retaining wall cannot be avoided and the grade change is greater than one metre, the wall should be terraced.
30. If there is a significant grade difference across a site, townhouse blocks should be stepped to maintain an appropriate relationship to grade.
31. Drainage should have no adverse impacts on adjacent properties or the public realm.
32. Pedestrian routes across grade changes should be universally accessible.
33. Manage rainwater and snowmelt on-site with best practices in Low Impact Development that encourage infiltration, evapo-transpiration and water re-use through such measures as: planting trees, shrubs and other landscaping; creating bio-retention areas such as swales; and incorporating opportunities to harvest rainwater from rooftops and other hard surfaces for landscape irrigation.
34. Impermeable surfaces in landscaped open spaces should be minimized. Where hard surfaces are planned, the use of permeable materials are encouraged to manage stormwater run-off and reduce heat build-up.
35. Townhouse access will be designed in accordance with the City of Vaughan's Waste Collection Design Standard Policy.

#### **Next Steps: Evaluation of Options**

The Low Rise Residential Policy Review has resulted in two primary products. The first is two sets of implementation guidelines to assist in the interpretation and application of the Low Rise Residential policies of VOP 2010 and the supporting design and development policies. The second is suggested changes to a number of design and development policies of VOP 2010, which will provide clarity in the interpretation of the Plan and provide more specific policies addressing townhouse development.

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One of the objectives of this report is to provide Council with options for proceeding. Staff are satisfied that there is merit in adopting the guidelines at the earliest opportunity as they will serve to support the interpretation of the plan and also provide clarity as to the types of townhouse development that are considered compatible with the Low Rise Residential area in Community Areas. The advantage of the guidelines is that they can be adopted as a corporate policy and being non-statutory they are only subject to approval by Council. However, they carry less weight with approval authorities than official plan policies that have been approved through a Planning Act process.

The amendments to VOP 2010 identified in the report will assist in addressing the compatibility issues that have been identified in respect of infill development. However the process from the adoption of the amendment to final approval can be lengthy if appeals are encountered. Should Council wish to pursue an amendment to the official plan, it would also be prudent to adopt the guidelines to provide additional support, until the official plan amendment has been approved.

At this time, two courses of action are available to secure the changes to the official plan identified in the review. The first is for the City to initiate an amendment to VOP 2010 and proceed with a public hearing and a technical report, leading to the adoption and approval of an amendment. The second is to consider the changes as part of the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review/Official Plan Review (MCR/OPR). While both are subject to appeal, the first option may be quicker because the process could commence in the second quarter of 2016. Relying on the MCR/OPR process would result in the adoption of an official plan amendment in the first quarter of 2018.

Staff are supportive of adopting the guidelines under either circumstance as there will be a substantial lag time before amendments to the official plan can be approved. It is noted that the guidelines have not been subject to stakeholder consultation.

In consideration of these options, staff is of the opinion that a course of action that pursues a city-initiated official plan amendment is supportable. This would provide greater clarity and more definitive policy guidance. Proceeding with an issue specific amendment to the Official Plan will be quicker than proceeding by way of the MCR/OPR. Proceeding as part of the broader review process would result in an amendment not being adopted until the first quarter of 2018. Proceeding with a public hearing and technical report, on an individual basis, could result in the adoption of an amendment in the Fall of 2016.

To support the current policies, it is recommended that the Urban Design Guidelines be approved as soon as possible. Because there has been no consultation on the guidelines, staff suggest that they be made available for stakeholder review, with comment required no later than April 1, 2016. A report can be brought back to Committee of the Whole to obtain Council approval of the guidelines, subject to the review of the comments received and the incorporation of suggestions where appropriate.

As such, the following is recommended:

1. That staff be directed to initiate an amendment to the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 to consider the incorporation of the draft amendments, as identified in this report, addressing the Land Use, Urban Design and Built Form policies applying to the Low-Rise Residential designation in the Community Areas, to ensure that the policies provide for infill development and redevelopment that respects, reinforces and is compatible with established neighbourhoods;

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2. That the draft “General Low-Rise Residential Infill Guidelines” and the draft “Townhouse Infill Guidelines” set out in this report, applying to the Low-Rise Residential Areas within the Community Areas of VOP 2010, be endorsed for the purpose of their distribution to stakeholders for comment and that such comment is requested no later than April 1, 2016;
3. That staff report to Committee of the Whole for the purposes of obtaining Council approval of the Guidelines, subject to consideration and incorporation of any modifications resulting from the public comment process.

#### **Relationship to Term of Council Service Excellence Strategy Map (2014-2018)**

This report relates to the Term of Council Service Excellence Strategy by supporting the following initiatives:

- Continued cultivation of an environmentally sustainable city;
- Updating the Official Plan and supporting studies.

#### **Regional Implications**

York Region will be consulted in respect to any potential impacts on the Region’s arterial street network.

#### **Conclusion**

The consultant’s report has identified measures and options the City can consider to address issues that are emerging as a result of proposed infill development in Low-Rise Residential designated neighbourhoods within stable Community Areas. The measures include policy upgrades to VOP 2010 to be achieved by way of an amendment to the official plan and two sets of Urban Design Guidelines pertinent to infill development in the form of “Low Rise Residential Infill Guidelines” and “Townhouse Infill Guidelines”. These measures are intended to ensure that infill development respects, reinforces and is compatible with the City’s established Low Rise Residential Areas in the Community Areas.

In consideration of the options, staff are of the opinion that the preferred way of proceeding is to undertake a City-initiated Official Amendment to amend a number of the current policies of VOP 2010 and to adopt the Urban Design Guidelines cited above to provide more immediate guidance. The Official Plan amendment would follow the full public process required by the Planning Act. Since there has not been a public process on the Urban Design Guidelines, it is recommended that they be subject to a comment period extending to April 1, 2016. A follow-up report would be prepared to Committee of the Whole to obtain final approval of the Guidelines, subject to the potential incorporation of revisions resulting from any comments.

Recommendations to this effect have been provided in the Recommendation section of this report.

#### **Attachments**

1. Draft Policy Review: Vaughan Community Areas and Low-Rise Residential Areas Study.
2. Vaughan’s Neighbourhood Type By Lot Frontage

#### **Report prepared by:**

Melissa Rossi, Senior Policy Planner, ext. 8320

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)