

Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

Final Report

October 2025

Prepared for:
The City of Vaughan
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Limitations and Sign-off

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Executive Summary

Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Stantec) was retained by the City of Vaughan (the City) to conduct an update to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District (THCD) Plan. In 1988, the Town of Vaughan (present-day City of Vaughan) established the THCD. In 2007, the Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan was updated in response to new legislation and since this time has guided conservation, restoration, demolition, new development, and streetscaping/landscaping within the area. The overarching goal and objective of the THCD has been to maintain the village-like character of the HCD and guide new development and alterations in a sympathetic manner.

Since the establishment of the THCD in 1988 and its Update in 2007, the district has continued to evolve. To determine the effectiveness of the THCD and to respond to legislative changes to the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) made in 2023, the City initiated a review of the THCD. This project is a two-phase undertaking: Phase 1 includes analysis of the existing conditions of the THCD, the applicable policy framework, and completion of a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) review related to the HCD as it currently exists and a review of the existing boundary of the THCD. Phase 2 includes the preparation of an updated HCD Plan to improve how change is managed in the area in response to the SWOT findings. This report is the result of the Phase 1 Study.

In general, the THCD has been successful in achieving the objectives of the 2007 THCD Update. It has provided a detailed framework for guiding new development so that it maintains a village-like character and reflects the material and architectural character of some of the heritage resources in the HCD. The presence of the HCD has resulted in the retention and incorporation of heritage residences into new development. Much of this new development has been constructed in a manner to evoke historic building styles, albeit often larger than traditional styles.



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The following recommendations have been prepared to acknowledge and build on the existing strengths of the THCD, identify areas for improvement, and address potential identified threats:

Ontario Heritage Act Conformity: The existing THCD Plan conformed to most of the requirements of the 2005 amendment of the OHA. Subsequent amendments to the OHA that took effect on July 1, 2023, have not altered the requirements for HCD Plans. In 2023, amendments to the OHA established criteria for the evaluation of an HCD. Under this amendment, 25% of properties within a HCD must meet two or more criteria of O. Reg. 9/06. Over 25% of the properties meet two or more criteria of the OHA and the existing THCD is considered to meet this threshold and therefore conforms.

Designated Heritage Property Pilot Grant Program and Other Financial Incentives:

The City passed By-law 011-2025 in 2025 to establish a Designated Heritage Property Grant Pilot Program. The program established \$200,000 to be allocated over two years to award up to award up to 50% of the eligible cost of structural repairs up to a maximum of \$10,000 and for non-structural or aesthetic repairs up to a maximum of \$5,000 for commercial and industrial properties and \$10,000 for residential properties (City of Vaughan 2025a). It is recommended that in the City expand eligibility so that a property in the THCD can be part of this pilot program.

In addition, the City of Vaughan is currently completing CIP studies to provide incentives to property owners to encourage revitalization and development to achieve local goals. An updated HCD Plan can recommend the THCD be included in the City's CIP studies.

Boundaries: Based on the analysis conducted in preceding sections of this report, it is recommended that the existing THCD boundaries be maintained. Currently, 59% of properties within THCD are considered contributing and meet two or more criteria of O. Reg. 9/06. A high-level screening of areas adjacent to THCD indicated that adjacent areas had a much higher number of mid-20th century to early 21st century structures that



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had limited potential to satisfy the criteria of O. Reg. 9/06 or enhance THCD's rural and village-like character.

Sustainability: The 2007 HCD Plan does not provide information regarding compatible sustainable design in the THCD. An updated HCD Plan can provide information regarding appropriate sustainable components such as solar panels, heat pumps, and electric car infrastructure. An updated HCD Plan can also note that retention *in situ* and rehabilitation of structures is often preferred from a sustainability perspective as the energy required to demolish, remove, and construct a replacement structure generally has negative environmental impacts.

Accessibility: An updated HCD Plan can provide guidance on harmonizing the need for accessible street infrastructure such as sidewalks, curbs, and bike lanes with the objective of conserving the THCD's rural and village-like character and the standards outlined in the City of Vaughan's Inclusive Design Standards (City of Vaughan 2020). This should be completed in coordination with the Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management department.

Revised Statement of Significance and Heritage Attributes: The existing THCD Plan contains a statement of heritage value that links the significance of the HCD to its history as a rural hamlet and later Police Village. The statement does not clearly define the historical periods of significance, key factors of development, or heritage attributes of the HCD.

Revised Objectives: The existing THCD Objectives are generally appropriate. Namely, the primary objective of the THCD Plan will continue to be the retention and conservation of the THCD's heritage resources and character and to guide change in a way that is compatible with the THCD character. As community consultation continues, existing objectives may be refined and additional objectives may be added based on public consultation relating to active transportation, public amenities, heritage commemoration and interpretation.



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Identification of Contributing and Non-Contributing Properties: It is recommended that the updated THCD Plan clearly articulate properties that are contributing and non-contributing to the THCD character. This should include detailed mapping and address listing so property owners, City staff, and Council can readily ascertain a property's status and follow the applicable policies and guidelines of the updated THCD Plan.

Policies and Guidelines: An updated HCD Plan should provide more specific policy guidance contributing properties in the THCD so it is clear to property owners, property developers, public agencies, the general public, City staff, and Council when alterations or additions are acceptable and what type of new development is considered compatible with the heritage character of THCD.

Signage and Public Art: Currently the THCD Plan does not permit murals within the THCD. Murals, as part of a holistic public art program, can be a valuable tool in enhancing heritage character, providing wayfinding, and promoting tourism and local identity. It is recommended that the City, as part of the THCD Plan Update, revisit policies that prohibit murals and allow them (in accordance with updated HCD policies and guidelines) as a means of enhancing the character of the THCD, tangibly linking the THCD with its historical association with the Group of Seven and fulfilling the objectives of the City-Wide Public Art Program (CWPAP).

As these policies appear to be in conflict, consideration should be given during the THCD Plan Update process to identifying new policies for murals and public art that align with the City-Wide Public Art Program.

Sympathetic Intensification: Development pressure is expected to increase within and adjacent to the THCD. An updated HCD Plan can provide specific guidelines concerning parts of the THCD where sympathetic intensification of existing land uses may be appropriate. Guidelines can also be prepared to respond to provincial policy direction for secondary dwelling units and garden suites, and how these can be



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incorporated in a compatible manner to the THCD. This will be determined in conjunction with further community, stakeholder and municipal consultation.

The Executive Summary highlights key points from the report only; for complete information and findings, the reader should examine the complete report.



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Appendix B Statement of Cultural Heritage Value



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BA	Bachelor of Arts
B Arch	Bachelor of Architecture
C1	Restricted Commercial Zone
C2	General Commercial Zone
CAHP	Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals
CC	Convenience Commercial Zone
CHIA	Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments
CHL	Cultural Heritage Landscapes
CIP	Community Improvement Plan
DVA	Department of Veterans Affairs
EP	Environmental Protection Zone
GC	General Commercial Zone
GGH	Greater Golden Horseshoe
GMU	General Mixed-use Zone
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
HAP	Heritage Alteration Permit
HCD	Heritage Conservation District
I1	General Institutional Zone
LACAC	Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LPAT	Local Planning Appeal Tribunal
m	Metres



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Acronyms and Abbreviations
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m ²	Square Metres
MA	Masters
MA Plan	Masters of Planning
MCM	Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism
MMAH	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
MTHCD	Markham Thornhill Heritage Conservation District
N/A	Not Applicable
NC	Neighbourhood Commercial Zone
OHA	Ontario Heritage Act
OHT	Ontario Heritage Trust
OLT	Ontario Land Tribunal
OMB	Ontario Municipal Board
OP	Official Plan
O. Reg	Ontario Regulation 9.06
OS	Open Space Zone
PIC	Public Information Centre
PMTSA	Protected Major Transit Station Area
PPB	Prescribed Public Body
PPS	Provincial Planning Statement
R1	First Density Residential Zone
RM2	Multiple Unit Residential Zone
SWOT	Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report
SYSCPM	South Young Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan
THCD	Thornhill Heritage Conservation District



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Acronyms and Abbreviations
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VCWPAP	Vaughn City Wide Public Art Program
VOP	Vaughn Official Plan
YNSE	Yonge North Subway Expansion
YROP	York Region Official Plan
YSCSP	Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan



1 Introduction

1.1 Study Purpose

Stantec Consulting Ltd. (Stantec) was retained by the City of Vaughan (the City) to conduct an update to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District (THCD) Plan. In 1988, the Town of Vaughan (present-day City of Vaughan) established the THCD¹. In 2007, the Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Plan was updated in response to new legislation and since this time has guided conservation, restoration, demolition, new development, and streetscaping/landscaping. The overarching goal of the THCD has been to maintain the village-like character of the HCD and guide new development and alterations in a sympathetic manner.

The THCD is located within the City of Vaughan and consists of properties fronting the west side of Yonge Street between the south side of Thornhill Avenue to the south side of Arnold Avenue. The THCD also includes properties on Old Yonge Street, Centre Street, Brooke Street, Old Jane Street, and Elizabeth Street (Figure 1 and Figure 2). It is bounded along Yonge Street by the Markham Thornhill Heritage Conservation District (MTHCD), in the City of Markham to the east.

The MTHCD is linked to THCD through its shared history with the former Police Village of Thornhill and parallel development as the original HCD Study and Plan for the MTHCD was completed by Philip Carter. In 2007, the MTHCD Plan was also updated by Philip Carter (Town of Markham 2007; Carter 1986). As a result of their shared historical development and the parallel evolution of both HCDs, the THCD and the MTHCD share similar objectives (City of Markham 2024). As the MTHCD is located within a separate municipality, the SWOT report and HCD Plan Update for this current

¹ While the designating by-law for the THCD was not enacted until 1988, the Study and Plan for THCD were completed in 1984. Therefore, the year 1984 is used when referring to this document and the year 1988 is used when referring to when the THCD was established.

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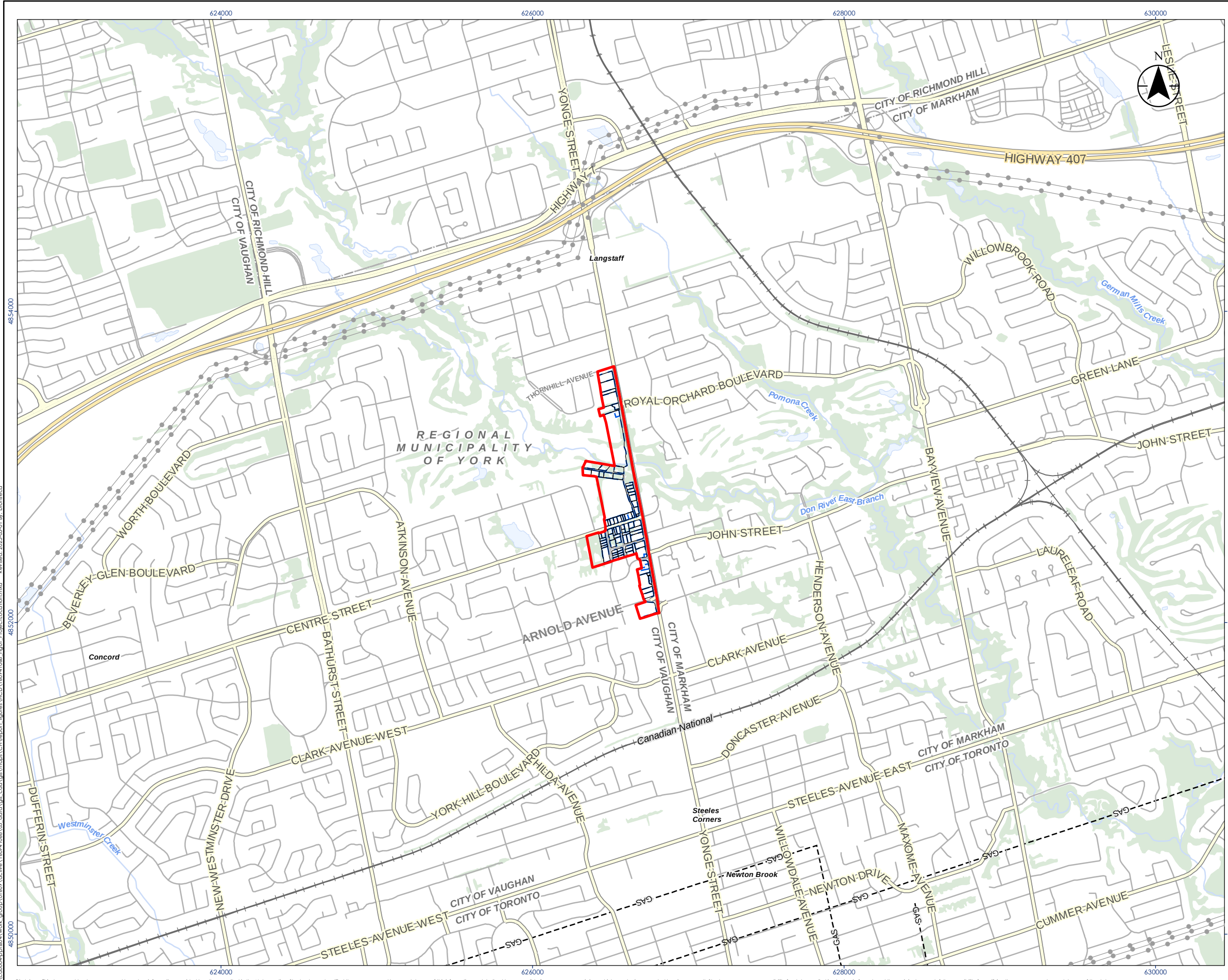
1 Introduction

October 2025

project pertains only to the THCD within the City of Vaughan on the west side of Yonge Street.

Since the establishment of the THCD in 1988 and its 2007 Update, the district has continued to evolve. To determine the effectiveness of the THCD and to respond to legislative changes to the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA) made in 2023, the City initiated a review of the THCD. This project is a two-phase undertaking: Phase 1 includes analysis of the existing conditions of the THCD, the applicable policy framework, and completion of a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) review related to the HCD as it currently exists. This includes a review of the existing boundary of the THCD. Phase 2 includes preparation of an updated HCD Plan to improve how change is managed in the area in response to the SWOT findings. This report is the result of the Phase 1 Study.





- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
 - Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area

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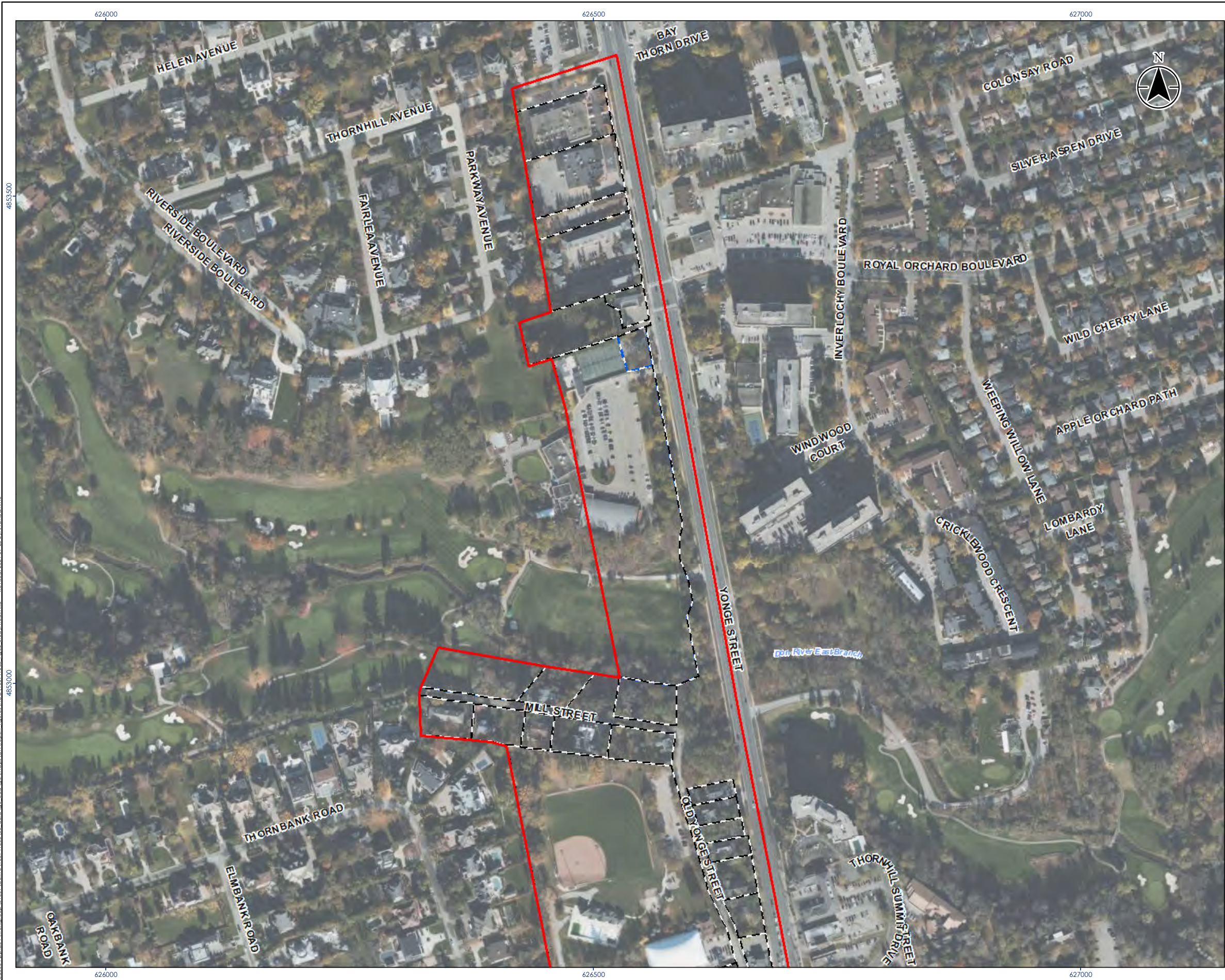


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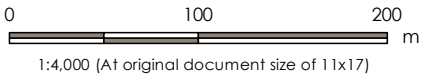
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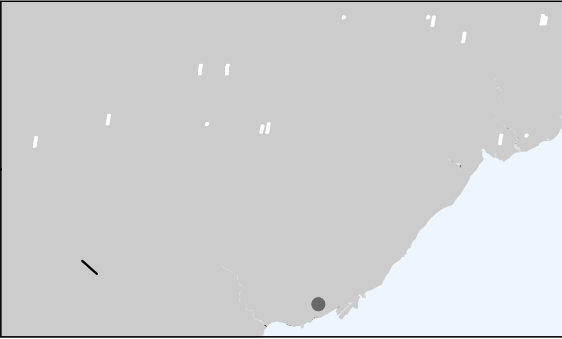
Title
**Location of the Thornhill Heritage
Conservation District**



- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel



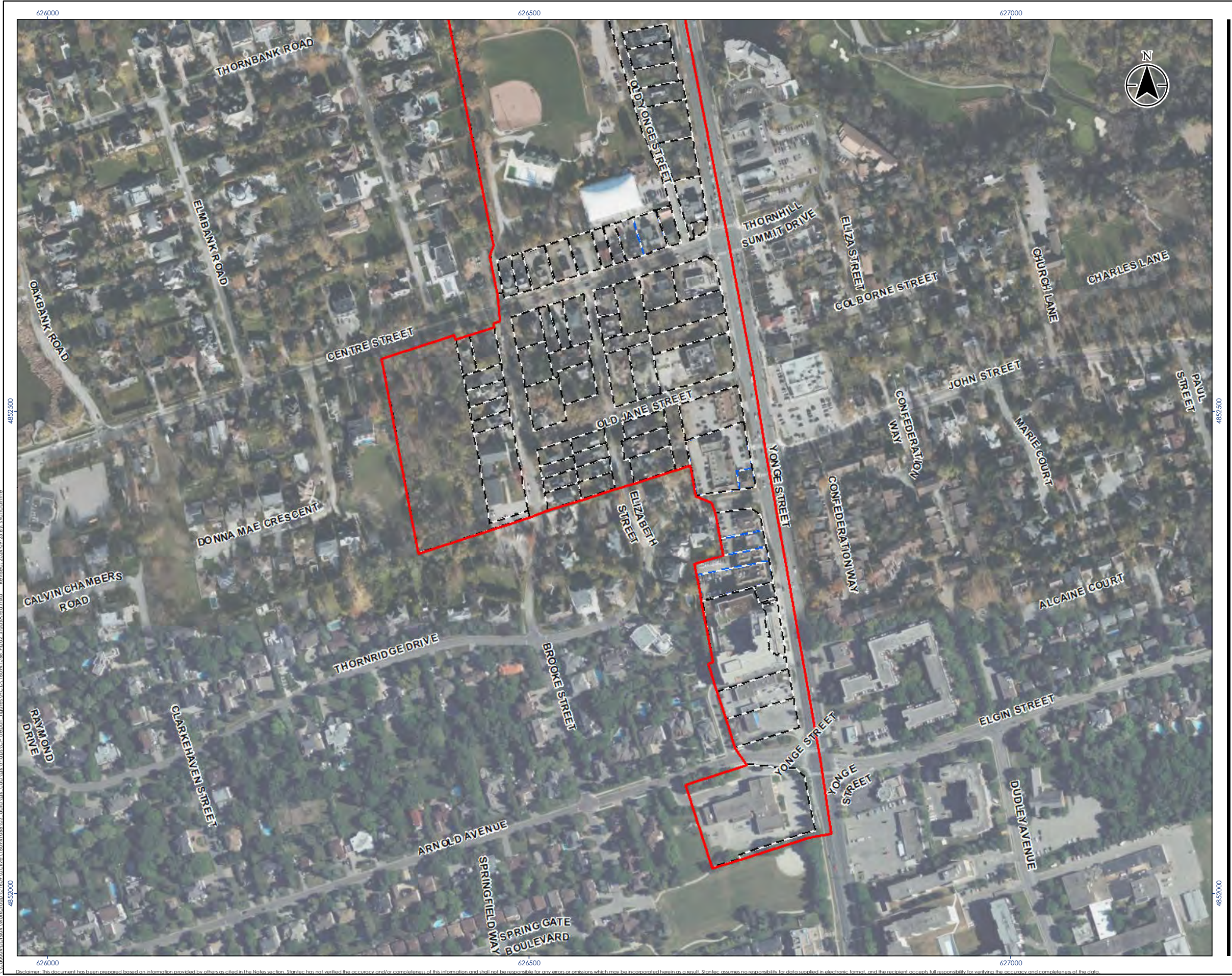
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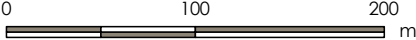
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Legend

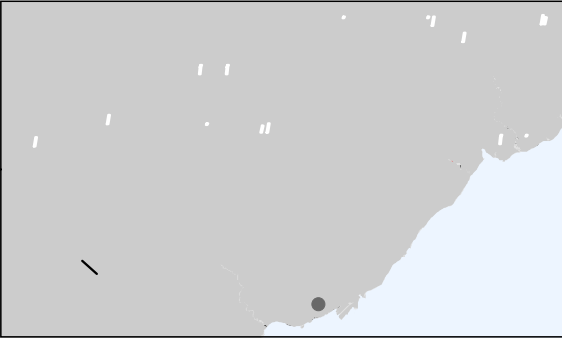
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-  Property Parcel
-  Separate Address and Structure within Parcel



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Project Location	160941068 REV2
City of Vaughan	Prepared by BF on 2024-09-25
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Client/Project	CITY OF VAUGHAN
	THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.	2.2
Title	Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

626000 626500 627000

4852000 4852500

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2 Previously Completed Heritage Conservation District Studies and Plans

Conservation and enhancement of Thornhill’s village character within Vaughan began in the 1980s. In 1984, the Town of Vaughan (now the City) retained Phillip H. Carter to prepare the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Study (Carter 1984). In 2007, Phillip Carter was once again retained by the City to prepare an updated HCD Plan for the district following amendments to the OHA in 2005 (Carter 2007). The result was the current HCD Plan that has been in effect since 2007. In 2023, updates were made to the OHA which initiated the review of the current THCD. To understand the context within which the THCD Plan is being reviewed, the 1984 Plan and 2007 Plan are reviewed in Sections 2.1 and 2.2.

2.1 1984 Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Study and Plan

2.1.1 Background

In 1976, Vaughan’s Council established a Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) to compile an inventory of heritage properties. That same year, a Thornhill-specific committee was formed to prepare a report containing an inventory and history of properties in the community. This report was completed in 1979 and recommended the designation of buildings and establishment of a district (Carter 1984: 10). In 1980, the first HCDs were enacted in Ontario when the Meadowvale Village HCD and Barriefield Village HCD were established in Mississauga and the Township of Pittsburgh (presently part of the City of Kingston), respectively (Ontario Heritage Trust [OHT] 2024). In 1983, Philip Carter was retained to prepare the Thornhill HCD Study (Carter 1984: 11).

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In 1984, the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Study was prepared to, “provide the supporting data and policies necessary to effect the designation of the Old Village of Thornhill” (Carter 1984: 1). The impetus for this designation was noted to be the heavy suburbanization of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in the decades following the Second World War as rural communities were becoming increasingly absorbed by urban and suburban growth. Carter noted that, “Thornhill, which lies just north of Steeles Avenue, is now fully engulfed by the same type of urban growth” (Carter 1984: 2).

The 1984 Study noted that Thornhill was established as an agricultural community centred around milling activity and its location on Yonge Street. By the late 19th century, the importance of milling declined, and Thornhill became one of many typical rural communities in York County. During the 20th century, improvements in transportation increasingly interconnected Thornhill with Toronto. As previously referenced, this trend was accelerated after the Second World War and Carter noted, “The Old Village is part of the Metropolitan Toronto and Area urban complex. It still retains much of its old identity and character – a unique resource in these times” (Carter 1984: 9).

The physical character of the THCD at the time was noted as distinct from the surrounding suburban developments through its presence of pre-20th century structures, mixed-uses, and the varied pattern of development which stands in contrast to postwar neighbourhoods. The 1984 Study also noted that Thornhill continued to maintain various aspects commonly associated with a village including a commercial area and downtown, post office, professional offices, churches, parks, a community centre, school, and a library (Carter 1984: 24-26).

The landscaping of the THCD also played an important role in adding a sense of distinction, including the residential areas with mature plantings and gardens. In residential areas, the lack of sidewalks and use of ditches and natural drainage were also noted as creating a distinct sense of place. At the time of the 1984 Study, some streets in the community remained paved with gravel (Carter 1984: 24-25).



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Other distinct landscape elements included the creek bed within the residential area, the Don River Valley, and Trinity Cemetery (Carter 1984: 31). While the landscaping of the residential areas was praised, it was noted in the Study that Yonge Street had been largely transformed into a major provincial highway designed for high-speed traffic. As a result, the Study noted that, “the role of Yonge Street as the “Main Street” of the village, has been seriously eroded” (Carter 1984: 24-26).

The 1984 Study noted that while Thornhill’s population growth had stabilized by the late 1970s, the areas to the west and south were growing rapidly and contained a higher density. In 1984, THCD contained 60 residences, the vast majority of which were single family detached dwellings. That year, the THCD also contained seven apartment units within commercial buildings, and one semi-detached residence (Carter 1984: 21).

While the HCD Study was completed in 1984, the THCD was not designated until July 13, 1988, when the Town of Vaughan passed By-Law 308-88, entitled “A By-Law to designate the Thornhill heritage Conservation District under the Ontario Heritage Act” (Town of Vaughan 1988).

2.1.2 Objectives

The 1984 Study included objectives through preparation of goals. This has been included to illustrate the original objectives of the HCD, their evolution over time, and assist with the SWOT analysis. The goals guiding the establishment of a boundary in the 1984 Study for THCD were the following and are taken verbatim from the 1984 Study:

- a) To establish a sense of continuity and to make the village more identifiable, the District boundaries should encompass a contiguous area.
- b) The District should include as many of the buildings identified by Vaughan LACAC as having historical or architectural merit as practical, respecting the goal of contiguity.
- c) The District should approximate the boundaries of the Old Police Village of Thornhill, especially as it concerns areas which front onto Yonge Street.



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- d) The District should include areas of unique or significant landscape features, important transportation routes, and landmarks which contribute to the village character of Thornhill.
- e) The District should be large enough to maintain and encourage the evolution of an appropriate environment for the important historical and landscape elements of the Old Village.

(Carter 1984: 12)

The 1984 Plan also included goals and objectives, which were the following and are taken verbatim from the 1984 Plan:

- 1) To sensitively manage that portion of the former Village of Thornhill that remains as an identifiable entity on Yonge Street through the preservation of the existing historic buildings and the unique environmental features which give the Village its special character.
- 2) To preserve architecturally and historically significant buildings by encouraging their rehabilitation and restoration.
- 3) To encourage the development of vacant lands and other redevelopment sites in a way which will enhance the character of Thornhill as established in the HCD Study.
- 4) To recommend improvements to Yonge Street which will make the section of Yonge Street passing through Thornhill more compatible with the human scale of the Village.
- 5) To suggest improvements to Centre Street which will improve the streetscape while maintaining the existing two-lane rural character of the street.
- 6) To encourage the development of the shopping area within the village to create a viable and healthy commercial area serving local needs.
- 7) To preserve and enhance the non-built environment in a way which compliments the existing character of the area, i.e. landscape, streetscape, signage, etc.
- 8) To reduce the visual impact of the automobile within the area.
- 9) To develop guidelines for redevelopment, renovations, alterations, additions, and restoration within both the residential and commercial areas to reinforce the village character and encourage quality development.



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- 10) To suggest changes to the Official Plan and to zoning by-laws to ensure that they are compatible with the Village concept.
- 11) To establish for the residents of Thornhill-Vaughan a historical focus for the expanding community by emphasizing the significance of the Old Village.

(Carter 1984: 51-52)

2.2 2007 Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan Update

2.2.1 Background

In 2007, Philip Carter was once again retained by the City to prepare a revised THCD Plan based on changes to the OHA enacted in 2005, Vaughan's Official Plan, and to reflect the continued development activity in THCD over the preceding 20 years. The 2007 Update generally noted that the THCD had been a success and the community retained much of the character described in the 1984 Plan. While nearly all heritage buildings had been retained, a number of smaller mid-20th century residences had been replaced by newer and larger structures that did not reflect "local heritage precedents" (Carter 2007: 5). Public feedback noted that the HCD had succeeded in promoting a village atmosphere and walkability. However, the public also noted that Yonge Street remained congested and noisy, and some new construction was considered out of character (Carter 2007: 8).

2.2.2 Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

In accordance with changes to the OHA and development of A Guide to District Designation under the Ontario Heritage Act (Government of Ontario 2006) since the creation of the THCD, a statement of significance was prepared for the THCD.

The 2007 statement of significance for the THCD is as follows:

The THCD is a distinct community in the City of Vaughan, characterized by a wealth of heritage buildings, historic sites, and landscapes. Although



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none of Thornhill's mills or earliest houses have survived, a wealth of buildings, both residential and commercial, dating from the 1830s, 40s, '50s [sic] remain—largely intact. These constitute the original basis of the village's heritage character.

The continuing development of Thornhill saw new buildings erected, decade by decade. Houses dating from the mid-19th century through the early 20th century represent many of the styles developed during those prolific decades. Victorian vernacular, Victorian Gothic, Queen Anne, Four Square/Edwardian, Arts and Crafts, and Craftsman Bungalow styles are all represented in the district. Many of the mid-20th century houses, including the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) housing, were built in the Cape Cod Cottage style, which shares the New England Georgian model with the old village houses of a century before, and many of the more recent houses have made an effort to reflect the heritage styles in the village.

The ongoing development of Thornhill has maintained the scale and character of the older part of the village, with a variety of lot sizes and sitings, mostly modest-sized buildings, mature and rich planting and landscaping, and a rural or modified-rural road profile in many places. This character is strongly maintained in most of the village. Although the mills and their ponds are long gone, the river valley remains unbuilt, as woodland and grass (the golf course), and serves as a reminder of the mill-town origins of Thornhill.

The quality of the heritage resources in the District is indicated by the number of properties carried on municipal, provincial and national inventories, as listed above on Page 8.

(Carter 2007: 10)



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The heritage attributes of the THCD were identified as follows:

The heritage attributes of the THCD are embodied in its buildings and landscapes, which are shown and described in detail in the 1984 Study, and reviewed in Section 2 of this document, and in the built form, architectural detail, and historical associations, which are depicted and described in more detail in the District inventory. These attributes are worthy of preservation.

(Carter 2007: 11)

The 2007 Plan defined heritage buildings as structures designated or listed on the City's heritage register; this included the following properties, whose address information has been updated based on current municipal address point data from the City.

Designated (Part IV) Properties	Designated (Part IV) Properties
• 140 Brooke Street (Holy Trinity Anglican Church)	• 7788 Yonge Street (Methodist Church)
• 121 Centre Street (MacDonald House)	• 8038 Yonge Street (Soules Inn)
• 7780 Yonge Street (Robert West House)	

Listed Properties	Listed Properties	Listed Properties
• 140 Brooke Street	• 25 Elizabeth Street	• 7780 Yonge Street
• 18 Centre Street	• 15 Mill Street	• 7788 Yonge Street
• 19 Centre Street	• 42 Old Yonge Street	• 7808 Yonge Street
• 24 Centre Street	• 7554 Yonge Street	• 7822 Yonge Street
• 33 Centre Street	• 7616 Yonge Street	• 8000 Yonge Street
• 39 Centre Street	• 7626 Yonge Street	• 8018 Yonge Street
• 46 Centre Street	• 7636 Yonge Street	• 8038 Yonge Street



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Listed Properties	Listed Properties	Listed Properties
• 66 Centre Street	• 7666 Yonge Street	• 8088 Yonge Street
• 78 Centre Street	• 7714 Yonge Street	
• 121 Centre Street	• 7716 Yonge Street	

2.2.3 Objectives

The 2007 THCD included a series of objectives focused on heritage and non-heritage buildings alongside specific objectives for supporting infrastructure and municipal goals. The remainder of the 2007 THCD Plan set forth the THCD policies and illustrated guidelines to achieve the objectives by outlining policies for heritage buildings, non-heritage buildings, new construction, and landscapes. These are reviewed briefly below.

The overall objective of the THCD in the 2007 Plan is as follows:

To ensure the retention and conservation of the District's cultural heritage resources and heritage character, and to guide change so that it continues to and does not detract from, the District's architectural, historical, and contextual character.

(Carter 2007: 11)

The objectives for heritage buildings in the THCD in the 2007 Plan is as follows:

- To retain and conserve the heritage buildings as identified in the City of Vaughan Listing of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Value.
- To conserve heritage attributes and distinguishing qualities of heritage buildings and prevent the removal or alteration of any historic or distinctive architectural feature.
- To correct unsympathetic alterations to heritage buildings.
- To facilitate the restoration of heritage buildings based on a thorough examination of archival and pictorial evidence, physical evidence, and an understanding of the history of the local community.
- To promote retention and reuse of heritage buildings to prevent their demolition.



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(Carter 2007: 11)

The objectives for non-heritage buildings in the THCD in the 2007 Plan is as follows:

- To discourage the demolition of those non-heritage buildings which are supportive of the overall heritage character of the area.
- To encourage improvements to non-heritage buildings that will enhance the District's heritage character.

(Carter 2007: 11)

The objectives for landscape/streetscape elements in the THCD in the 2007 Plan are as follows:

- To facilitate the introduction of, as well as conservation of, historic landscape treatments in both the public and private realm.
- To preserve trees and mature vegetation and encourage the planting of species characteristic of the District.
- To preserve historic fences and introduce new fences that respect historic patterns and styles while meeting contemporary needs.
- To preserve the existing street pattern and rural cross-sections and refrain from widening existing pavement and road allowances.
- To introduce landscape, streetscape, and infrastructure improvements that will enhance the heritage character of the District.

(Carter 2007: 11)

The objectives for new development in the THCD in the 2007 Plan are as follows:

- To ensure compatible infill construction that will enhance the District's heritage character and complement the area's village-like, human scale of development.
- To guide the design of new development to be sympathetic and compatible with the heritage resources and character of the District while providing for contemporary needs.

(Carter 2007: 12)



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The objectives for community support in the THCD in the 2007 Plan are as follows:

- To foster community support, pride and appreciation of the heritage buildings, landscapes, and character of the District, and promote the need to conserve these resources for future generations.
- To facilitate public participation and involvement in the conservation of heritage resources and further development of the District.
- To offer assistance and incentives to individual heritage property owners to encourage the use of proper conservation approaches when undertaking projects.

(Carter 2007: 12)

The objectives for business and tourism in the THCD in the 2007 Plan are as follows:

- To work with owners on Yonge Street to maintain a progressive business environment while at the same time protecting the heritage attributes of the District that make the area a unique and distinctive shopping environment.
- To acknowledge that the Heritage District is an asset that the City can leverage and celebrate in order to contribute to the greater commercial success of the City.

(Carter 2007: 12)



3 Historical Development

3.1 Introduction

The following historical section is not meant to provide a definitive account of the history of Thornhill or Vaughan. The purpose of this overview is to provide context for the THCD Update and build upon the historical overview provided in the 1984 Study and 2007 Update by Philip Carter. While it is acknowledged that the community of Thornhill was historically situated within both the Township of Vaughan and Township of Markham, the focus of this overview is Thornhill's relationship to Vaughan.

A further discussion on the Indigenous and archaeological context of the THCD is contained in Appendix A.

3.2 Physiography

The community of Thornhill is located within the Peel Plain physiographic region of southern Ontario. This region consists of an approximately 775 square kilometre area of clay soil with a level to rolling topography within the Regions of York, Peel, and Halton. In general, the area slopes downwards towards Lake Ontario. Several watercourses have cut valleys into the Peel Plain including the Credit River, Don River, Rouge River, Etobicoke Creek, Oakville Creek, and Bronte Creek (Chapman and Putnam 1984: 175). The valley cut by the Don River is partially located within the THCD and presently contains the Thornhill Club.

Part of the east branch of the Don River is located within the borders of the THCD. The Don River begins to the north in the Oak Ridges Moraine and flows approximately 38 kilometres south towards Lake Ontario. The Don River watershed encompasses about 89,000 acres of land and is one of the most urbanized watersheds in Canada (Toronto and Region Conservation Authority 2024). Like many watercourses in Ontario, the Don River provided an important source of waterpower for early colonial settlers.

3.3 Indigenous Context

3.3.1 Pre-Contact Indigenous History

It has been demonstrated that Indigenous people began occupying southern Ontario as the Laurentide glacier receded, as early as 11,000 years ago (Ellis and Ferris 1990:13). Much of what is understood about the lifeways of these Indigenous peoples is derived from archaeological evidence and ethnographic analogy. In Ontario, Indigenous culture prior to the period of contact with European peoples has been distinguished into archaeological periods based on observed changes in material culture. These archaeological periods are largely based on observed changes to formal lithic tools and are separated into the Early Paleo, Late Paleo, Early Archaic, Middle Archaic, Late Archaic, and Terminal Archaic periods. Following the advent of ceramic technology in the Indigenous archaeological record, archaeological periods are separated into the Early Woodland, Middle Woodland, and Late Woodland periods, based primarily on observed changes in formal ceramic decoration. It should be noted that these archaeological periods do not necessarily represent specific cultural identities but are a useful paradigm for understanding changes in Indigenous culture through time.

Paleo Period

Between 9000 and 8000 BCE, Indigenous populations were sustained by hunting, fishing, and foraging and lived a relatively nomadic existence across an extensive geographic territory. Despite these wide territories, social ties were maintained between groups. One method of maintaining social ties was through gift exchange, evident through exotic lithic material documented on many sites (Ellis 2013:35-40).

Archaic Period

By approximately 8000 BCE, evidence existed and became more common for producing ground-stone tools such as axes, chisels, and adzes. These tools themselves are believed to be indicative specifically of woodworking. This evidence can be extended to indicate an increased craft production and, arguably, craft specialization.



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This latter statement is also supported by evidence, dating to approximately 7000 BCE of ornately carved stone objects which would be laborious to produce and have explicit aesthetic qualities (Ellis 2013:41). This is indirectly indicative of changes in the social organization which permitted individuals to devote time and effort to craft specialization. Since 8000 BCE, the Great Lakes basin experienced a low-water phase, with shorelines significantly below current lake levels (Stewart 2013: Figure 1.1.C). It is presumed that most human settlements would have been focused along these former shorelines. At approximately 6500 BCE, the climate had warmed considerably since the recession of the glaciers, and the environment had grown more similar to the present day. By approximately 4500 BCE, evidence exists from southern Ontario for the utilization of native copper, i.e., naturally occurring pure copper metal (Ellis 2013:42). The recorded origin of this material along the north shore of Lake Superior indicates the existence of extensive exchange networks across the Great Lakes basin.

At approximately 3500 BCE, the isostatic rebound of the North American plate following the melt of the Laurentide glacier had reached a point that significantly affected the Great Lakes basin watershed. Before this, the Upper Great Lakes had drained down the Ottawa Valley via the French-Mattawa River valleys. Following this shift in the watershed, the drainage course of the Great Lakes basin changed to its present course. This also prompted a significant increase in water-level to approximately current levels (with a brief high-water period); this change in water levels is believed to have occurred catastrophically (Stewart 2013:28-30). This change in geography coincides with the earliest evidence for cemeteries (Ellis 2013:46). By 2500 BCE, the earliest evidence exists for the construction of fishing weirs (Ellis et al. 1990: Figure 4.1). However, the construction of fishing weirs could have occurred as early as 6650 BCE (Stevens 2004). Regardless, the construction of these weirs would have required a large amount of communal labour and are indicative of the continued development of the social organization and communal identity. The large-scale procurement of food at a single location also has significant implications for the permanence of settlement within the



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landscape. This period is also marked by further population increase, and by 1500 BCE, evidence exists for substantial permanent structures (Ellis 2013:45-46).

Woodland Period

By approximately 950 BCE, the earliest evidence exists for populations using ceramics. Populations are understood to have continued to exploit natural resources seasonally. This advent of ceramic technology correlated, however, with the intensive exploitation of seed foods such as goosefoot and knotweed as well as mast such as nuts (Williamson 2013:48). The use of ceramics implies changes in the social organization of food storage as well as in the cooking of food and changes in diet. Fish also continued to be an important facet of the economy at this time. Evidence continues to exist for the expansion of social organization (including hierarchy), group identity, ceremonialism (particularly in burial), interregional exchange throughout the Great Lakes basin and beyond, and craft production (Williamson 2013:48-54).

By approximately 550 CE, evidence emerged for the introduction of maize into southern Ontario. This crop would have initially only supplemented Indigenous people's diet and economy (Birch and Williamson 2013:13-14). Maize-based agriculture gradually became more important to societies. By approximately 900 CE, permanent communities emerged primarily focused on agriculture and the storage of crops, with satellite locations oriented toward procuring other resources such as hunting, fishing, and foraging. By approximately 1250 CE, evidence exists for the common cultivation of historic Indigenous cultigens, including maize, beans, squash, sunflower, and tobacco. The extant archaeological record demonstrates many cultural traits similar to historical Indigenous nations (Williamson 2013:55).

This archaeologically defined culture, known as the Late Woodland in southern Ontario, is often divided into three temporal components: Early, Middle, and Late Late Woodland. Sites associated with the Early Late Woodland period indicate that there was a continuation of similar subsistence practices and settlement patterns as the Middle



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Woodland. Villages tended to be small, with small longhouse dwellings that housed either nuclear or, with increasingly, extended families. Smaller camps and hamlets associated with villages served as temporary bases from which wild plant and game resources were acquired. Horticulture appears to have been for the most part a supplement to wild foods, rather than a staple.

The Middle Late Woodland period marks the point at which a fully developed horticultural system emerged, and at which point cultivars became the staple food source. By approximately 1250 CE, evidence exists for the common cultivation of the historical Indigenous cultigens, such as maize, beans, squash, sunflower, and tobacco. In this period villages become much larger than in the Early Late Woodland period, and longhouses also become much larger, housing multiple, though related, nuclear families. For those Indigenous peoples who began practicing cultivation, food production through horticulture resulted in the abandonment of seasonal mobility that had characterized Indigenous life for millennia. Hunting, fishing, and gathering of wild food activities continued to occur at satellite camps. However, for the most part, most Iroquoian people inhabited large, sometimes fortified villages throughout southern Ontario.

During the Late Late Woodland period longhouses became smaller again, although villages became even larger. The villages were abandoned in the 16th century and the region was used as a buffer between the Huron and the Five Nations Iroquois. The Late Late Woodland period along the north shore of Lake Ontario is marked by the emergence of the Huron-Wendat people, one of several discrete groups that emerge out of the Middle Late Woodland period. Pre-contact Huron villages have been documented in clusters along the north shore of Lake Ontario from just west of Toronto to Bellville, and north up through the Kawartha Lakes region. The Huron were similar to other Iroquoian societies in many ways, including material culture, semi-permanent settlement practices, and a tendency toward agricultural mixed with hunting and gathering subsistence strategy (Ramsden 1990). Huron settlements include large



villages of several longhouses and camps for specialized extractive activities such as hunting and fishing, although there is discussion that these camps may actually be ancestral Mississauga sites (J. Kapyrka, personal communication, 2019). During the Late Late Woodland period, Huron settlements along the north shore of Lake Ontario begin to move through the Humber River, Don River, Duffins Creek/Rouge River and Trent River systems and eventually coalesce into what is now Simcoe County and the area traditionally identified as “Huronian” (Birch 2015).

These communities living within the region of the THCD are believed to have possessed many cultural traits similar to the historic Indigenous Nations (Williamson 2013:55). Both Huron-Wendat and Anishnaabeg traditional history indicate that the Huron-Wendat and Anishnaabeg cohabited the region (Kapyrka 2018).

3.3.2 Post-Contact Indigenous History

During the early post-contact period the north shore of Lake Ontario was occupied by two distinct peoples with different cultural traditions: the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg (Mississauga Anishinaabeg) and the Huron-Wendat. It has long been the understanding of archaeologists that prior to the 16th century the north shore of Lake Ontario was occupied by Iroquoian-speaking populations (Birch and Williamson 2013; Birch 2015; Dermarker et al. 2016). Recently, the direct correlation in Ontario between archaeology and ethnicity, and especially regional identity, has been questioned (cf. Fox 2015:23; Gaudreau and Lesage 2016:9-12; Ramsden 2016:124). Recent considerations of Indigenous sources on cultural history has led to the understanding that prior to the 16th century the north shore of Lake Ontario was co-habited by Iroquoian and more mobile Anishnaabeg populations (Kapyrka 2018), the latter of whom have not been represented in previous analyses of the archaeological record and most likely left a more ephemeral archaeological record than that of more densely populated agricultural settlements. The apparent void of semi-permanent village settlement along the north shore of Lake Ontario continued through the first half of the 17th century; however, this does not preclude the occupation of the region by mobile Anishnaabeg peoples. Both

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Huron and Mississauga traditional history indicate that the Huron-Wendat and Mississauga cohabited the region (Kapyrka 2018).

The Mississauga traditional homeland stretched along the north shore of Lake Ontario and its tributary rivers from present-day Gananoque in the east to Long Point on Lake Erie in the west. In the winter the communities dispersed into smaller groups and travelled in-land to the north, to the area around present-day Bancroft and the Haliburton Highlands. Mississauga oral history relates that their ancestors occupied this part of southern Ontario from the time of the last deglaciation and continued to occupy it up to the start of the Contact period (Migizi 2018:119-123).

The Mississauga traditional territory was located between two powerful confederacies: the Three Fires Confederacy (consisting of the Odawa, Ojibwa, and Pottawatomi) located to the north and west and the Haudenosaunee (Five Nations Iroquois) Confederacy on the south shore of Lake Ontario in present-day New York State. In this geo-political context, the Mississauga acted as peacekeepers among the various Indigenous communities and nations, acting as negotiators and emissaries (Migizi 2018:29).

Traditionally, the Huron-Wendat were farmers and fishermen-hunter-gatherers with a population of between 30,000 and 40,000 individuals. The Huron-Wendat traveled widely across a territory stretching from the Gaspé Peninsula in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, along both sides of the Saint Lawrence River, and throughout the Great Lakes. The Huron-Wendat were, and continue to be, intimately linked to the Saint Lawrence River and its estuary, which is the main route of its activities and way of life. The Huron-Wendat formed alliances and traded goods with other Indigenous partners among the networks that stretched across the continent and later incorporated the French into that trading network.



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By the turn of the 16th century, the region of the THCD appears to have been abandoned of semi-permanent village settlement. In 1649, the Seneca and the Mohawk led a campaign to the north shore of Lake Ontario and dispersed the Huron-Wendat, Tionontati (Petun) and Atawandaron (Neutral) nations (Trigger 1978:354-356). At this time the semi-permanent settlements associated with the Huron-Wendat (the Huron) were abandoned and the Mississauga retreated from the area along the north shore of Lake Ontario into the hinterlands of their territory, waiting until the conflicts had ended and the political situation had stabilized before returning (Heidenreich 1990; Migizi 2018:122-123; Ramsden 1990).

After 1650 a series of villages affiliated with the Five Nations Iroquois were established along the north shore of Lake Ontario and through the Trent Valley. The closest of these were the Seneca villages of Teiaiagon, located at Baby Point on the Humber River, approximately 17 kilometres to the southwest, and Ganestiquiagon, located at the mouth of the Rouge River, 23 kilometres to the southeast of the THCD (Konrad 1981). Travel along the north shore of Lake Ontario and the connecting rivers occurred frequently.

In 1667, surviving Huron-Wendat warriors joined in alliance with the French-allied Ojibwa and Mississaugas to counterattack the Iroquois who had settled along the north shore of Lake Ontario. By 1690, Ojibwa (Anishinaabe) speaking people had begun moving south into the lower Great Lakes basin (Konrad 1981; Rogers 1978).

Mississauga oral traditions, as told by Chief Robert Paudash and recorded in 1905, indicate that after the Mississauga defeat of the Mohawk Nation, the Mohawk retreated to their homeland south of Lake Ontario and a peace treaty was negotiated between those groups around 1695 (Paudash 1905). Upon the Mississaugas' return they settled permanently in southern Ontario and began to reestablish their role as peacekeepers in the region, extending that to include the incoming Euro-Canadian settlers (Curve Lake First Nation no date [n.d.]; Migizi and Kapyrka 2015). The Huron-Wendat permanently left the region, moving to the east in Quebec and to the southwest in the present-day



United States. Appendix A contains a summary of the archaeological resources within the THCD.

The City of Vaughan is situated on lands covered by Treaty 13, also known as the Toronto Purchase Treaty. This treaty was signed in 1805 between the Crown and the Mississaugas and included 250,800 acres of land (Government of Ontario 2024).

3.4 Survey and Settlement

The early colonial settlement of the Township of Vaughan and Thornhill is linked to the aftermath of the American Revolution (1775-1783). Historians continue to debate the total number of Loyalists in the Thirteen Colonies as well as the number of Loyalists who left the United States for Great Britain and other British colonies, including Canada (Ranlet 2014). Regardless, the development of the area north of Lake Ontario in the late 18th and early 19th centuries was strongly influenced by a migration of Loyalists.

Initial plans for the settlement of Vaughan Township date to 1788, when Surveyor John Stegmon submitted a “rough plan for location in Vaughan” to the Surveyor Generals Office (Miles and Co. 1878). However, the first formal survey of the township did not begin until 1795 and was undertaken by Abraham Iredell. The survey was expanded over subsequent decades and completed in 1851 (Reaman 1971: 45). Within Vaughan Township, the community of Thornhill is historically located on Lots 29 to 33, West of Yonge Street.

Yonge Street was initially a military road planned by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe to connect York (Toronto) with Penetanguishene. While this road was envisioned foremost as a way to facilitate troop movements, it could also be used to place settlers and connect to the fur trade routes used by the North West Company. The surveyor Augustus Jones and the Queen’s Rangers were tasked with surveying the road. Despite the road’s importance, it remained ramshackle for much of the early 19th century (Reamen 1971: 50; Guillet 1963: 93-94).

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To encourage settlement of Upper Canada, Simcoe offered free 200-acre land grants beginning in 1792. The earliest settlers in the Township of Vaughan were United Empire Loyalists and a later wave of American immigration to Upper Canada that lasted until the War of 1812 (Reaman 1971: 19). Early settlers in the township preferred land in the south closer to the adjacent Township of York and its growing townsite (Reaman 1971: 20). Despite its poor condition, Yonge Street served as the main thoroughfare within the township (Reaman 1971: 20).

Due to its position on Yonge Street and proximity to the Don River, the site of present-day Thornhill was one of the first parts of Vaughan Township to be settled. The township's first log structure was completed in 1794 by Asa Johnson on Lot 29, Concession 1 (Reaman 1971: 122). While this lot is partially within the THCD, it is unclear if the structure was located within the THCD's boundaries. The first sawmill which served Vaughan Township was built in 1801 near where Yonge Street crossed the Don River in present-day Thornhill. This mill was built by John Lyons, an immigrant from New York State. The next year, Lyons retained Jeremiah Atkinson to build a grist mill and dam. The community of Thornhill grew around this mill site (Reaman 1971: 54-55). The lots historically associated with the community of Thornhill within Vaughan Township were granted by the Crown between 1796 and 1811 (Reaman 1971: 32). Early settlers around present-day Thornhill included John Lyons, Balser Matthew, Stillwell Wilson, S.R. Frizzell, Stephen Colby, Nicholas Cober, David Soules, Elisha Dexter, and Jacob Fisher (Reaman 1971: 122).

3.5 19th Century Development

As a result of the mill site's prosperity, Methodist church services began near the mill site, and the first school was opened in a former home belonging to Balser Munshaw. John Lyons died in 1814, and his mill properties were purchased by William Purdy. Under his ownership, milling activity was expanded and a tannery was also opened (Reaman 1971: 55). The hamlet was originally known variously as Lyon's Mills, Atkinson's Mills, and Purdy's Mills. By the early 1820s, the settlement had grown to



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include the mills and tannery, a hotel, a store, and stables near the river on the west side of Yonge Street. The first post office was established in the community in 1823 (Reaman 1971: 122).

In 1828, Purdy's flour mill was destroyed by fire, and he decided to sell his entire enterprise to Benjamin Thorne and William Parsons. Together, they rebuilt the flour mill and expanded operations on the site. Thorne and Parsons milled the agricultural products of many surrounding farms and much of their product was exported to the United Kingdom. As a result of Thorne's influence in the community, the hamlet variously became known as Thorn's Mills, Thorne's Hill, Thorne Hills and Thorn Hill. The name Thornhill was settled upon by the early 1840s (Reaman 1971: 122).

In 1846, Smith's Canadian Gazetteer described Thornhill as "A settlement on Yonge Street, eleven miles from Toronto. A branch of the River Don passes through it, on which is a grist and sawmill, and tannery. There are also in the settlement, three stores, a manufactory for making threshing machines and other machinery, one blacksmith, one waggon maker, two shoemakers, one tailor" (Smith 1846: 190). While Smith did not note a population for the hamlet, he noted that along with Richmond Hill it was among the most substantial communities in Vaughan Township despite the presence of other hamlets (Smith 1846: 199).

The railway age began in present-day Ontario during the 1850s. Between 1852 and 1859, over 1,400 miles (2,253 kilometres) of railway were built in the province (McCalla 1993: 203). By the end of the 1850s, rail transport was thoroughly entrenched in the province's export and import markets and rivaled Great Lakes shipping. Compared to shipping on the Great Lakes, rail service was cheaper, was less risky, and was not impeded by winter (McCalla 1993: 210). As a result, the arrival of a railway in a community often proved a boon to the surrounding economy. The first railway in Vaughan Township was completed in 1853 when the Ontario, Simcoe & Huron Railroad was built in phases between Toronto and Collingwood (Peltenburg 2020). This railway line was built to the west of Thornhill. While Thornhill was bypassed by railway service,



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it was connected to Toronto and points north by stagecoach service along Yonge Street (Reaman 1971: 80).

Since Thornhill was not incorporated, it is not enumerated separately in census records. An article in the Toronto Globe from 1886 noted that the population was just over 700. The same article also noted “Thornhill contained a Methodist, a Catholic, an Episcopal (Anglican), and a Presbyterian Church as well as “good public schools.” The community was most well known during this time for its mineral water and the Hawthorn Mineral Spring near the present-day Thornhill Club was an important part of the community’s economy (Toronto Globe 1886). The lack of growth of Thornhill during the second half of the 19th century can be attributed to its lack of direct rail service and the overall decline of Ontario’s rural population during this timeframe. Between 1871 and 1891, Vaughan Township’s population decreased from 7,657 to 5,292 (Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1953).

During this same timeframe, the importance of Thornhill as a milling centre declined as cheaper grain from the American and Canadian west proliferated. As the area’s farmers turned to dairying, the mill at Thornhill closed in 1872 and the dam was destroyed in an 1878 rainstorm. In the words of the Globe and Mail, Thornhill became a “a drowsy, residential village” (Globe and Mail 1948).

Thornhill was finally connected to Toronto by rail service in 1896 when the Metropolitan Railway was built on Yonge Street between Toronto and Newmarket. This railway line was electric and improved the movement of people and freight between Toronto and Thornhill (Reaman 1971: 81; Richmond Hill Liberal 2022).

3.6 20th Century Development

After 1911 the population of Vaughan Township once again began to increase and was recorded as 5,080 in 1921 (Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1953). This growth trend resulted in farms close to Toronto and along Yonge Street being purchased for residential development or subdivision into five-acre parcels for more limited agricultural



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use. The hamlets of Vaughan Township also began to grow, and communities such as Thornhill, Richmond Hill, Woodbridge, Maple, and Kleinburg developed into bedroom communities of Toronto (Reaman 1971: 94). Reflecting its increasingly close relationship with Toronto, the Thornhill Club was opened in the river valley in 1922. The golf club was popular with Torontonians and remains well known for its 18-hole golf course designed by the prominent golf course architect Stanley Thompson (Toronto Globe 1926; Thornhill Club 2024).

In 1930, the residents of Thornhill in both Vaughan Township and Markham Township began efforts to incorporate as a police village (Toronto Globe 1930). Their efforts were successful, and Thornhill became a police village in 1931 (Reaman 1971: 123). A Police Village was generally established in communities that did not wish to fully incorporate or hamlets that were too small for incorporation. A Police Village had an appointed Board of Police which had limited powers to pass by-laws and maintain public order. Otherwise, a Police Village remained part of its surrounding township (Archives of Ontario 2019).

While Thornhill experienced modest growth and incorporated as a Police Village in the early 20th century, it remained a small community known for its collection of picturesque old homes and mature trees. However, the community remained serviced by the public transportation line running along Yonge Street between Toronto and Richmond Hill (Bow 2020). Around this time, Thornhill's first gas station was established at the corner of Yonge Street and Centre Street. This property remains a gas station into the present-day.

During this time, the community attracted numerous artists. This included Fred S. Haines, the Principal of the Ontario College of Art, who established his art studio in Thornhill (Globe and Mail 1948). Thornhill's most celebrated artist is James Edward Hervey MacDonald, usually known as J.E.H. MacDonald. He was born in England in 1873 and moved to Canada with his parents in 1887. In Canada, MacDonald studied art and in 1894 was hired by Grip Printing in Toronto. After a brief return to England, he



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was rehired by Grip Printing in 1907 as their head designer. In 1911, he left Grip to pursue painting fulltime. Two years later, MacDonald purchased 121 Centre Street in the THCD. He mainly lived on the property during the summer and on holidays and the grounds were the subject of several of his paintings, most notably *The Tangled Garden*. MacDonald became a founding member of the Group of Seven and encouraged other members to reside in Thornhill. At various times during the early 20th century Group of Seven members Frank Johnson, Arthur Lismer, Franklin Carmichael, and Frederick Horsman Varley lived within the Markham side of Thornhill. (Thornhill Historical Society 2024a; City of Vaughan 2021; Silcox 2023).

Like much of Canada and the United States, Vaughan and Thornhill experienced rapid growth in the decades following the Second World War. Only two years after the end of the war, over 50 new homes had been built in Thornhill, and three new subdivisions were in the planning phase. Most of the community's new residents were young families from Toronto who were drawn to the area by the easy commute to Toronto (*Globe and Mail* 1948). This growth in Thornhill and Vaughan was supported by the construction of King's Highway 400. The highway was completed in 1952 between Barrie and Toronto and created an important transportation corridor through Vaughan Township. It also reduced the travel time between Vaughan and Toronto, encouraging suburban development in the southern part of the township (Bever 2020; York Region 2022). As part of a broader reorientation towards motor vehicle use, all streetcar service was replaced by bus service on Yonge Street in 1949 (Bow 2020).

As Thornhill grew to a population of around 1,000 by the mid-1950s, residents began efforts to fully incorporate as a village or town (*Globe and Mail* 1950; 1955). However, by the 1960s the Provincial government started planning to consolidate the burgeoning municipalities of southern Ontario. As a result, the provincial government introduced Regional governments to replace county government in heavily populated areas. Generally, the regional government had more power than a county and could more effectively coordinate land-use planning, social services, and infrastructure (Archives of



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Ontario 2015). In 1970, the Regional Municipality of York was created to replace York County. As part of this reorganization, the Town of Vaughan and Town of Markham were created, the Police Village of Thornhill was dissolved, and the community was once again divided between Vaughan and Markham (Welch et al. 2020; Government of Ontario 1970; Archives Association of Ontario 2024).

During the 1970s and 1980s, the farmlands surrounding Thornhill increasingly gave way to new residential subdivisions. In 1974, the Yonge Subway was extended on Yonge Street to Finch, approximately 3.5 kilometres south of the THCD (Bow 2020). By the close of the 1980s, nearly all the surrounding farmlands had been developed, and Thornhill was largely enveloped by suburban sprawl (York Region 2024). During the 1980s, residents of Thornhill recognized that much of the 19th century character of Thornhill remained despite the increasingly suburbanized character of the area. In response, the Town Council of Vaughan designated the former boundary of the Thornhill Police Village within Vaughan as an HCD in 1984. Around the same time, the Town of Markham also designated their portion of Thornhill as an HCD (Carter 1984; City of Markham 2024; Carter 1986).

In 1991, Vaughan changed its municipal status to a City (Welch et al. 2020). The City of Vaughan has continued to experience steady population growth in the first decades of the 21st century. Between 2001 and 2021, Vaughan's population increased from 182,022 to 323,103 (Statistics Canada 2016; Statistics Canada 2022).

3.7 Identification of Key Themes

The THCD reflects the evolution of Thornhill from the late 18th century to the present-day. The overall development of the THCD has been influenced by several key themes.

Pioneer Period (1792-1850): The early development of Thornhill is linked to the aftermath of the American Revolution and Loyalist settlement in southern Ontario. The community of Thornhill grew at the crossing of Yonge Street, an important colonization road, and the Don River. The presence of this water source and key transportation route



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attracted settlers to the area by the 1790s. Milling flourished in Thornhill as settlers logged the area and cleared land for agricultural use. The ample waterpower of the area made Thornhill, along with Richmond Hill, the earliest settled communities in Vaughan Township.

Post Railway Period (1851-1871): The first railway line in Vaughan Township was completed to the west of Thornhill in 1853. The bypassing of Thornhill contributed to a lack of growth in the community during the second half of the 19th century. However, during this time milling activity continued in Thornhill, and the community was also well known for its mineral water.

Mill Closure and Decline (1872-1895): Increased competition from newly opened agricultural lands resulted in the end of milling in Thornhill. Farmers increasingly turned to dairying and Thornhill became one of the many typical rural hamlets which provided services to area farmers. During this time, the overall population of Vaughan Township decreased as many rural residents were attracted to Ontario's burgeoning cities.

Street Railway and Renewed Growth (1896-1919): In 1896, Thornhill was connected to Toronto by rail service when an electric railway line was completed on Yonge Street between Newmarket and Toronto. This railway line facilitated the movement of people and freight in the area and brought Thornhill within Toronto's sphere of influence. During the mid-20th century, this line was replaced by bus service.

Incorporation and Early Suburbanization (1920-1945): The first half of the 20th century marked increasing interconnection between Thornhill and Toronto as improvements to the road network and the prevalence of the automobile proliferated. This was evidenced in 1922 when the Thornhill Club was opened in the Don River Valley. The increasing growth and prosperity of Thornhill led to its incorporation as a Police Village in 1930.



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Suburbanization (1946-1969): Like much of Canada and the United States, Vaughan and Thornhill experienced rapid growth in the decades following the Second World War as Thornhill and much of southern Vaughan Township continued to suburbanize. Only two years after the end of the war, over 50 new homes had been built in Thornhill, and three new subdivisions were in the planning phase. Most of the community's new residents were young families from Toronto who were drawn to the area by the easy commute to Toronto. This growth in Thornhill and Vaughan was supported by the construction of King's Highway 400.

Integration (1970-1984): In 1970, the Regional Municipality of York was created to replace York County. As part of this reorganization, the Town of Vaughan and Town of Markham were created, and the Police Village of Thornhill was dissolved, once again dividing the community between Vaughan and Markham. During the 1970s and 1980s, the farmlands surrounding Thornhill increasingly gave way to new residential subdivisions. Despite the redivision of Thornhill, residents of the community continued to work together to conserve the area's history, as evidenced by the founding of the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill (presently known as the Thornhill Historical Society) in 1974 (Thornhill Historical Society 2024b).

Thornhill HCD Adopted (1985-Present): During the 1980s, residents of Thornhill recognized that much of the 19th century character of Thornhill remained despite the increasingly suburbanized character of the area. In response, the Town Council of Vaughan designated the former boundary of the Thornhill Police Village within Vaughan as a HCD in 1984. Around the same time, the Town of Markham also designated their portion of Thornhill as an HCD.



4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

4.1 Introduction

An important part of the THCD Plan Update process is to determine what the HCD looks like in its current form. By taking stock of existing conditions, the City can measure how the HCD has performed since the last update undertaken in 2007 and determine whether the objectives are being met. To identify existing conditions of the HCD, the Project Team reviewed City data such as the Zoning By-law and relevant planning policies including Official Plans, Secondary Plans, and data collected during the field program using ArcGIS Collector.

The THCD contains 80 property parcels with 85 municipal address points that reflect distinct structures with differing construction periods and physical attributes. The analysis contained within this report uses the 85 municipal address points as its basis to more accurately reflect instances where one property parcel contains multiple individual structures for which data were collected.

The team collected data for each municipal address, including the historical use of each structure (i.e., original property use), current use, building height, cladding, architectural style or influence, construction date, and presence of mature vegetation or landscape features. The results of this data collection are summarized in the following sections, and illustrated through the accompanying charts, maps, and figures. It should also be noted that property parcels and municipal addresses are subject to change over time. The addresses used in this report reflect current data provided by the City of Vaughan.

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4.2 Policy Framework

4.2.1 Introduction

The responsibilities for long-term land use planning in Ontario is a shared responsibility between the Province, the regions, and municipal governments. The Province sets out broad direction for land use planning through the Planning Act and the Provincial Planning Statement (PPS). Decisions at the municipal level are required to be consistent with the PPS, 2024.

In some parts of the Province, Provincial plans provide more detailed and geographically specific policies to meet certain objectives, such as managing growth. Municipal decisions in areas with a defined provincial plan had a more stringent standard for compliance, as decisions were required to “conform” or “not conflict” with the policies in these plans.

Other Provincial regulatory systems are connected to land use planning, including the OHA. This Act enables municipalities and the Province to preserve Ontario’s heritage by protecting heritage properties and archaeological sites. The OHA also provides specific guidance on implementing heritage conservation in HCDs.

Official Plans (OP)s and Secondary Plans, at the local level, are the primary vehicle for implementing provincial land use policy. With OPs being updated regularly to reflect Provincial interests, these documents are used as a tool to guide the integration of matters that impact land use decisions, such as infrastructure, housing, economic development, and cultural heritage. In addition, zoning is a tool enabled through the Planning Act and guided by municipal plans. Zoning further regulates the provisions of the use of land within municipalities.

Together, the Provincial and local policies and statements provide the framework for protection of built and cultural heritage resources. The following sections outline the existing policy framework within the City of Vaughan.



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4.2.2 Planning Act

The legal basis of Ontario's land use planning system is outlined by the Planning Act. This legislative document identifies the approach to planning and assigns responsibilities and duties to those involved in the land use decision-making process, including policy development, land subdivision, development control, administration, and public participation. It sets out requirements for land use planning across the Province.

Under the Planning Act, the Minister, the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board, or the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) are responsible for carrying out the conservation of features of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological, or scientific interest (Government of Ontario 1990). A key purpose of the Planning Act is to integrate matters of Provincial interest into Provincial and municipal planning decisions. Under the Act, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) may also issue Provincial statements on matters related to land use planning that are of Provincial interest. Further policy guidance on these matters of Provincial interest is provided in the PPS.

It is important to note that where conflicts arise regarding policies pursuant *Planning Act*, such as municipal by-laws, the HCD Plan prevails to the extent of the conflict.

4.2.3 Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS is applied province wide. On August 20, 2024, the Province announced the release of the new PPS, issued pursuant to Section 3 of the Planning Act (Government of Ontario 2024a, Government of Ontario 1990). The new PPS replaces both the PPS from 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, also known as the Provincial Growth Plan (Government of Ontario 2020a and 2020b). The merging of these planning documents created a comprehensive, streamlined provincial planning framework to guide land use planning.



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The PPS includes properties designated under Part IV, Part V, or VI of the OHA as protected heritage properties. Under the PPS, “protected heritage property” is defined as follows:

property designated under Parts IV or VI of the Ontario Heritage Act; property included in an area designated as a heritage conservation district under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act; property subject to a heritage conservation easement or covenant under Part II or Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act; property identified by a provincial ministry or prescribed public body as property having cultural heritage value or interest under the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties; property protected under federal heritage legislation; and UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

(Government of Ontario 2024a)

Relevant policies within the PPS that speak to the conservation of heritage resources include the following, with terms that are italicized being defined terms within the PPS:

- Protected heritage property, which may contain built heritage resources or cultural heritage landscapes, shall be conserved. (4.6.1)
- Planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on lands containing archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential unless the significant archaeological resources have been conserved. (4.6.2)
- Planning authorities shall not permit development and site alteration on adjacent lands to protected heritage property unless the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved. (4.6.3)
- Planning authorities are encouraged to develop and implement:
 - archaeological management plans for conserving archaeological resources; and
 - proactive strategies for conserving significant built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. (4.6.4)



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- Planning authorities shall engage early with Indigenous communities and ensure their interests are considered when identifying, protecting and managing archaeological resources, built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. (4.6.5)
- A coordinated, integrated and comprehensive approach should be used when dealing with planning matters within municipalities, across lower, single and/or upper-tier municipal boundaries, and with other orders of government, agencies, boards, and Service Managers including managing natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral, and cultural heritage and archaeological resources. (6.2.1 c)

(Government of Ontario 2024a)

The PPS does not specifically identify HCDs but does provide the framework for conserving protected heritage properties as seen in Section 4.6. In addition, the PPS outlines that applicants who propose development adjacent to protected heritage properties are required to assess the impacts to heritage resources. The PPS includes properties designated under Part V of the OHA as protected properties, thereby requiring that impacts to HCD character be considered as part of the planning process.

4.2.4 Ontario Heritage Act

The OHA was enacted in 1975 with the purpose of giving the Province and municipalities the power to protect heritage properties and archaeological sites. The OHA underwent comprehensive amendments in 2005 and 2023. The 2005 amendments strengthened and improved heritage protection in Ontario, as the Province and municipalities were given new powers to delay and stop the demolition of heritage properties while an appeals process was established that respected the rights of property owners. The 2005 amendment also provided enhanced protection of marine heritage sites, archaeological resources, and HCDs.



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On January 1, 2023, changes made to the OHA under the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) came into effect as did regulatory changes to Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 9/06 and O. Reg. 385/21. With respect to HCDs, the 2023 amendments include the following:

- Adhere to the 90-day timelines for applications to alter or demolish a property protected under the OHA, from the time notice of receipt of complete application is issued
- Adhere to 90 day timeline for designation from the issuance of a notice of intention to designate a property under Part IV, or for Council to make decisions regarding the designation of a property.
- Include clarification that the term “demolition” applies to the removal or demolition of heritage attributes in a designating by-law as well as a building or structure.
- Adhere to the new process for appeals to the OLT for applications to alter heritage properties.
- Adhere to the new process for objections for notices of intention to designate properties under the OHA.
- Follow the guidance for designating properties under Part IV of the OHA by including a clear articulation of the heritage value of a property and its heritage attributes.

In addition, it is required that 25% of the properties within a proposed HCD meet two or more of the prescribed criteria (O. Reg. 9/06 as amended by O. Reg. 385/21).

4.2.4.1 Ontario Regulation 9/06

As discussed, the 2023 amendments to the OHA established criteria for the evaluation of an HCD. The following is the prescribed criteria under O. Reg. 9/06 as amended by O. Reg. 569/22:

- At least 25 % of the properties within the municipality or defined area or areas satisfy two or more of the following:
 - i. The properties have design value or physical value because they are rare, unique, representative or early examples of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.



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- ii. The properties have design value or physical value because they display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
- iii. The properties have design value or physical value because they demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
- iv. The properties have historical value or associative value because they have a direct association with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
- v. The properties have historical value or associative value because they yield, or have the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
- vi. The properties have historical value or associative value because they demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
- vii. The properties have contextual value because they define, maintain or support the character of the district.
- viii. The properties have contextual value because they are physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to each other.
- ix. The properties have contextual value because they are defined by, planned around or are themselves a landmark.

(Government of Ontario 2023)

4.2.4.2 Ontario Heritage Toolkit

To supplement evaluation of HCDs using the criteria of O. Reg. 9/06, the project team also considers guidance from the Ontario Heritage Toolkit (the Toolkit), which notes that while each HCD is unique, many HCDs share a common set of characteristics as outlined in Table 1:

Table 1 HCD Characteristics of the Ontario Heritage Toolkit

Characteristic	Description
A concentration of heritage resources	HCDs typically contain a concentration of historic buildings, structures, landscapes, or landscape elements, and/or natural features that are linked together by a shared context, culture, use, or history.



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Characteristic	Description
A framework of structured elements	HCDs often include structured components that define or contribute to an area's character. These may include major natural features (topography, landforms, landscapes, or water courses) or built features such as road or street patterns, nodes or intersections, landmarks, approaches, or defined edges.
A sense of visual coherence	HCDs often have a visual coherence that is indicative of their heritage value as being of a particular place or time. The visual coherence comes from similarities in resource types, scale, materials, massing, setbacks, or landscape patterns.
A distinctiveness	HCDs may be distinct from the surrounding area by virtue of the resources they contain or the ways in which they are situated.

4.2.5 York Region Official Plan

The 2022 York Region Official Plan (YROP) was adopted in November 2022 and updated in June 2024 to reflect changes from Bill 150 and Bill 162. Due to changes in provincial legislation, as of July 1, 2024, the Region of York no longer has approval authority on land use and planning matters. The City, as the lower-tier municipality, has assumed approval authority for all Planning Act decisions, with continued support from the region. (York Region)

The YROP provides direction for growth and development across nine local municipalities, including Vaughan and Markham. Section 2 of the YROP outlines the policies related to providing for sustainable, complete communities with a strong economic base which includes cultural heritage. The YROP includes an objective, “to recognize, conserve, and promote cultural heritage resources, cultural landscapes and built heritage of York Region and preserve their value and benefit to the community for present and future residents”. (York Region, 2024) In particular, the following policies of Council are designed to promote and conserve cultural heritage resources:

- That cultural heritage resources shall be conserved to foster a sense of place and benefit communities. (2.4.1)



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- To promote well-designed built form and cultural heritage planning and to conserve features that help define character, including built heritage resources and cultural heritage landscapes. (2.4.2)
- To ensure that cultural heritage resources under York Region's ownership are conserved. (2.4.3)
- To require that cultural heritage resources within secondary plan study areas be identified and any significant resources be conserved. (2.4.4)
- To require local municipalities to adopt official plan policies to conserve cultural heritage resources, including significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes, to ensure that development and site alteration on adjacent lands to protected heritage properties will conserve the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property. (2.4.5)
- To support local municipal efforts in promoting heritage awareness, establishing heritage conservation districts, and integrating identified cultural heritage landscapes into official plans and engaging with Indigenous communities in these efforts, where appropriate. (2.4.6)
- That local municipalities shall compile and maintain a register of significant cultural heritage resources protected under the Ontario Heritage Act and other significant heritage resources, in consultation with heritage experts, local heritage committees, and other levels of government. (2.4.7)
- To ensure that identified cultural heritage resources are evaluated and conserved in capital public works projects. (2.4.8)
- To encourage local municipalities to use community improvement plans and programs to conserve cultural heritage resources. (2.4.9)
- To encourage local municipalities to consider urban design standards or guidelines in core historic areas that reflect the areas' heritage, character, and streetscape. (2.4.10)
- To encourage access to core historic areas by walking, cycling, and transit, and to ensure that the design of roads, vehicular access, and parking complements the historic built form. (2.4.11)
- To recognize and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of York Region's ethnic and cultural groups. (2.4.12)

(York Region 2024)



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The YROP supports the establishment of municipal tools such as HCDs, and community improvement plans to encourage cultural heritage preservation across the Region.

4.2.6 City of Vaughan Official Plan

The Vaughan Official Plan, 2010 (VOP 2010) was adopted by City Council in 2010 and endorsed with modifications by the Region of York in June of 2012. VOP 2010 was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) and received partial approval.

VOP 2010 describes Thornhill as one of the four historic villages in the City. The City policies aim to support the protection of cultural heritage resources and support the use and educational potential of these resources.

Generally, the cultural heritage policies of the City's OP are to:

- Recognize and conserve cultural heritage resources, including heritage buildings and structures, cultural heritage landscapes, and other cultural heritage resources, and to promote the maintenance and development of an appropriate setting within, around, and adjacent to all such resources. (6.1.1.1)
- Support an active and engaged approach to heritage conservation and interpretation that maximizes awareness and education and encourages innovation in the use and conservation of heritage resources. (6.1.1.2)

(City of Vaughan 2010)

As such, the growth management strategy for the City of Vaughan, as expressed in Section 1.2 of VOP 2010, outlines the integration and concurrent completion of the “Built Cultural Heritage Study” and the “Cultural Heritage Landscape Plan”, which include policies to preserve and protect built cultural heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes, including designated property and HCDs. The policies of the OP broadly apply an understanding of heritage within its context and landscape, with direction that encourages providing for the comprehensive protection of heritage resources.



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In promoting tourism and enhancing economic diversity, VOP 2010 also speaks to the unique ability for cultural resources to support the City's goals. Vaughan continues to nurture several existing and successful main street and mixed-use retail areas, particularly in their historic villages. Policy 5.2.3.3 seeks to, "protect the economic vitality of small-scale main street retail in Vaughan's historic villages of Nashville/Kleinburg, Woodbridge, Maple, and Thornhill and to support the development of business associations in these areas as a means to enhance retail opportunities and attract visitors". Vaughan's policies support existing retail areas and seek to create new main street retail environments that help provide opportunities for small-scale commercial activities, accommodate residential or office/service uses above grade, and allow for a diverse pedestrian-oriented retail experience. Furthermore, major retail uses (over 10,000 square metres [m²]) may be subject to more detailed policies contained in HCD Plans (Policy 5.2.3.6), as may gas stations (Policy 5.2.3.12 d.).

Additionally, recognizing that Vaughan's historic villages attract a large number of visitors, the City aims to "promote cultural resources, facilities, and events as unique regional tourism destinations, and to promote tourism activities in Vaughan's Heritage Conservation Districts" (Policy 5.2.7.5).

VOP 2010 also contains several policies related to development on and adjacent to designated heritage properties, including those in HCDs. This includes the requirement for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments (CHIA) as noted in policy 6.2.2.5, and heritage permit applications as outlined in policy 6.2.2.6. VOP 2010 also includes policies specific to development adjacent to HCDs in policy 6.2.2.9, requiring that they be compatible by:

- a. respecting the massing, profile and character of adjacent heritage buildings;
- b. maintaining a building width along the street frontage that is consistent with the width of adjacent heritage buildings;
- c. maintaining the established setback pattern on the street;



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- d. being physically oriented to the street in a similar fashion to existing heritage buildings;
- e. minimizing shadowing on adjacent heritage properties, particularly on landscaped open spaces and outdoor amenity areas;
- f. having minimal impact on the heritage qualities of the street as a public place;
- g. minimizing the loss of landscaped open space;
- h. designing any permitted above-grade parking facilities, so that they are integrated into the development in a manner that is compatible with the heritage surroundings; and
- i. requiring local utility companies to place metering equipment, transformer boxes, power lines, conduit equipment boxes and other utility equipment and devices in locations that do not detract from the visual character or architectural integrity of the heritage resource.

4.2.6.1 Heritage Conservation District Policies

Section 6.3 – Cultural Heritage Landscapes of VOP 2010 outlines the policies that guide cultural heritage landscapes (CHLs) and HCDs in the City. HCDs can be a form of a CHL or may contain a CHL. VOP 2010 recognizes a CHL as an area with a recognized cluster of, “related heritage structures, lands, vegetation, archaeological resources, and other heritage resources”. VOP 2010 contains the following policies with respect to CHLs:

- To conserve and protect cultural heritage landscapes deemed significant through cultural heritage surveys or other studies. (6.3.1.1)
- To prepare and maintain an inventory of cultural heritage landscapes and include significant cultural heritage landscapes in the Heritage register. (6.3.1.2)
- To showcase cultural heritage landscapes by – among other things – encouraging, where appropriate, public access and preserving viewpoints, viewsheds, and vistas to and from cultural heritage landscapes. (6.3.1.3)
- That, where cultural heritage landscapes are located within close proximity to natural heritage resources, opportunities to integrate these resources through conservation and interpretation be considered. (6.3.1.4)

(City of Vaughan 2010)



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HCDs, including the THCD, are important tools to control new development and site alteration within a historic part of the community. Therefore, more specific policy direction is provided in the OP for HCDs, including:

- That Heritage Conservation Districts shall possess one or more of the following attributes:
 - a group of buildings, features and spaces that reflect an aspect of local history through association with a person, group, activity, or development of a community or a neighbourhood;
 - buildings and structures that are of architectural or vernacular value or interest; and
 - important physical and aesthetic characteristics that provide context for cultural heritage resources or associations within the area, including features such as buildings, structures, landscapes, topography, natural heritage, and archaeological sites. (6.3.2.1)
- To develop Heritage Conservation District plans and corresponding design guidelines for all identified Heritage Conservation Districts in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act. (6.3.2.2)
- To conserve Heritage Conservation Districts by approving only those alterations, additions, new developments, demolitions, removals, and public works in accordance with the respective Heritage Conservation District Plans and the policies of this Plan. When there is a conflict between the policies of the Heritage Conservation District Plan and the policies of this Plan, the Heritage Conservation District Plan shall prevail. (6.3.2.3)
- That any proposed private or public development within or adjacent to a Heritage Conservation District will be designed to respect and complement the identified heritage character of the district as described in the Heritage Conservation District Plan. (6.3.2.4)
- That a demolition permit for a building or part of a building within a Heritage Conservation District shall not be issued until plans for a replacement structure have been submitted to the City and Council has approved the replacement structure and any related proposed landscaping features in accordance with the relevant Heritage Conservation District Plan, the Vaughan Heritage Conservation Guidelines, and the policies of this Plan. (6.3.2.5)

(City of Vaughan 2010)



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Cultural Heritage Character Areas (Section 6.3.3) are also outlined in VOP 2010 as a tool that can be employed when the heritage characteristics of an area may not merit a designation under the OHA, but special conservation efforts are still warranted (e.g. farmsteads, old industrial landscapes, etc.). While designation of these areas may not be appropriate, recognition and protection of these resources is seen as important to preserve Vaughan's past. Policies enable the municipality to require impact assessments, conservation objectives, and specific design guidelines for these areas, through the policies outlined in Section 6.3.3.

4.2.7 City of Vaughan Official Plan (Draft 2025)

The City is in the process of developing a new OP 2025 (VOP 2025), which once approved, will guide development and implement the long-term vision for the City up to 2051. The VOP 2025 encourages creativity, culture, and tourism to be a strong contributor to Vaughan's diverse economic base, seeking to "promote Vaughan's cultural heritage, natural heritage and agricultural base through tourism and cultural opportunities that capitalize on these resources, including promoting cultural heritage buildings and districts, museums and other Cultural Heritage Resources" (3.4.3.65 c.) (City of Vaughan 2025b). The preparation of a Cultural Heritage Survey to identify sites of cultural heritage value (3.7.3.2) and engagement with Indigenous Peoples to promote the recognition and use of heritage resources (3.7.3.3), has been referenced as part of efforts to promote Vaughan's cultural heritage (City of Vaughan 2025b).

With respect to Designated Heritage Properties, a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment will be required when a proposed development activity has the potential to adversely impact a cultural heritage resource (3.7.5.6), in addition to the current requirements. Additionally, a new policy has been introduced to provide financial incentives through a Heritage Grant Program, to partially offset the cost of approved repairs for certain properties designated under Part IV and Part V of the OHA (3.7.5.11) (City of Vaughan 2025b).



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The VOP 2025 introduces several additions to policies regarding Non-Designated Heritage Properties, including the following:

- When Development is proposed on a property that is not designated under the Ontario Heritage Act but is listed on the Heritage Inventory, recognized as a Cultural Heritage Character Area, or identified as having potential cultural heritage value, the applicant shall:
 - a. provide a minimum of sixty days notice to the City prior to demolition or removal of any portion of a building or structure on the property; and
 - b. submit a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment when:
 - i. the proposal requires an Official Plan amendment, a Zoning By-Law amendment, a Plan of Subdivision, a Plan of Condominium, a Minor Variance, Consent, or a Site Plan application;
 - ii. the proposal involves the demolition of a building, or the removal of a building or part thereof, or a heritage landscape feature; or
 - iii. there is potential for adverse impact to a Cultural Heritage Resource from the proposed Development activities. (3.7.6.1)
- If provided notice of the Development of a property listed on the Heritage Inventory, Council may issue a Notice of Intention to Designate the property, and will within 120 days, either:
 - a. designate the property, pursuant to subsection 3.7.5 of this Plan; or
 - b. remove the property from the Heritage Inventory. (3.7.6.2)
- That a property which has been listed on the Heritage Inventory will be removed from the Inventory two years from its date of listing if it has not been designated, and cannot be re-listed on the Heritage Inventory for a minimum of five years after its removal. (3.7.6.3)

The following policies associated with HCDs have been added or revised in VOP 2025:



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- That the historic villages of Kleinburg/Nashville, Maple, Woodbridge, and Thornhill are designated as Heritage Conservation Districts on Schedule 14B to this Plan and are guided by the Ontario Heritage Act, as well as the policies of this Plan and applicable Provincial, Regional, and Conservation Authority policies. (3.7.9.1)
- To develop Heritage Conservation District plans and corresponding design guidelines for all identified Heritage Conservation Districts in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act, the Provincial Planning Statement, the Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties, and guidelines and procedures for managing change in the Heritage Conservation District, and other Provincial and/or Federal policy and guidelines may also be used. (3.7.9.3) (City of Vaughan 2025b).
- That all applications for irreversible alterations, additions, or other activities affecting properties within Heritage Conservation Districts must be accompanied by a Cultural Heritage Assessment report and/or a Heritage Conservation District Conformity report that attests to the proposal's adherence to the policies and guidelines specified in the Heritage Conservation Districts Plan and the Ontario Heritage Act. (3.7.9.7) (City of Vaughan 2025b).

Several other updates incorporated into VOP 2025 relevant to cultural heritage include:

- The criteria for inclusion in the Heritage Register has been expanded to include properties designated under Part VI and those listed under Part IV of the OHA. (3.7.2.1.a.)
- When listing a property in the Heritage Inventory, the City will provide notice to the property owner including the following:
 - a statement explaining why Council believes the property to be of cultural heritage value or interest;
 - a description of the property that is sufficient to readily ascertain the property;
 - a statement that if the owner of the property objects to the property being included in the Inventory that they may object to the property's inclusion by serving to the City Clerk a notice of objection setting out the reasons for the objection and all the relevant facts; and



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- an explanation of the restrictions concerning the demolition or removal, or the permitting of the demolition or removal, of a building or structure on the property. (3.7.2.8)
- The threshold for designated under Part IV of the OHA has been raised to require a minimum of two criteria, as set out in O. Reg 9/06 (3.7.2.9).
- The inclusion of definitions for Cultural Heritage Resources, Built Heritage Resources, and Cultural Properties of Heritage Significance.
- Additional policies focus on preserving heritage resources through adaptive reuse, while avoiding insensitive alterations, removals, and demolitions (3.7.4.3). These policies also emphasize the identification and conservation of heritage sources within secondary plan areas (3.7.4.4), and offering incentives, such as heritage grants or Community Improvement Plans, to support their protection, restoration, and reuse. (3.7.4.7)
- The City may, at its discretion, require a peer review of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessments (3.7.7.2.c.), in addition to the current policies.
- Cultural Heritage Landscape Protection policies now include partnerships with Indigenous Peoples and Aboriginal and Treaty right holders (3.7.8.1).
- Policies related to Cultural Heritage Character Areas remain largely unchanged from those in the current OP.

(City of Vaughan 2025b)

4.2.8 Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan

The Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan (YSCSP) provides a framework for development and intensification of the Yonge-Steeles Corridor within the City of Vaughan and is also the future home of sections of the Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE).

The YSCSP is divided into two parts which straddle the THCD – the north area and the south area. The north area extends along Yonge Street from the main driveway of the Thornhill Club to just north of Longbridge Road and includes a portion of the THCD from Riverside Park to Thornhill Avenue.



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The south area of the YSCSP, bisected by the CN Railway, is an L-shaped boundary that runs along Yonge Street from Steeles Avenue to the Thornhill Public School and along Steeles Avenue West, from Yonge Street to Palm Gate Boulevard (OLT 2022).

The YSCSP aims to promote well-designed intensification to increase the use of existing and planned infrastructure while catering to a range of uses, activities, opportunities, and housing types. In particular, the area within the THCD, south of Thornhill Avenue, is recognized for its important heritage assets that need protection under the YSCSP and the THCD.

Development potential in this area is limited to a maximum height of five storeys and a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 1.5, except for one parcel south of Thornhill Avenue, which permits a maximum height of 12 storeys and an FSI of 3.8. Lands north of Thornhill Avenue and south of Gallanough Park, which lie outside the THCD, will sensitively transition to higher mixed-use development. In Section 3.1, the YSCSP notes that all future development must conform to the urban design policies outlined in this plan, The City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines, and the Yonge Steeles Corridor Urban Design Guidelines and Streetscape Plan to create an attractive, safe, and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood that respects the existing character. Additionally, any new development adjacent to designated heritage buildings within the Low-Rise Mixed-Use land use designation is required to conform to THCD policies and respect the significant built-form features of the heritage buildings through measures such as setbacks, stepbacks, landscaping, and protection of view corridors, where appropriate (OLT 2022).

4.3 Municipal Heritage Properties

Several properties within the THCD have been designated under Part IV of the OHA and several are listed on the City's Heritage Register (see Section 2.2.2). In accordance with Section 6.2.2 of the VOP 2010 and Section 27(1), Part IV of the OHA, a municipality may maintain a register of properties that contain or have the potential to contain cultural heritage value or interest. With amendments to the OHA in 2023, a Part



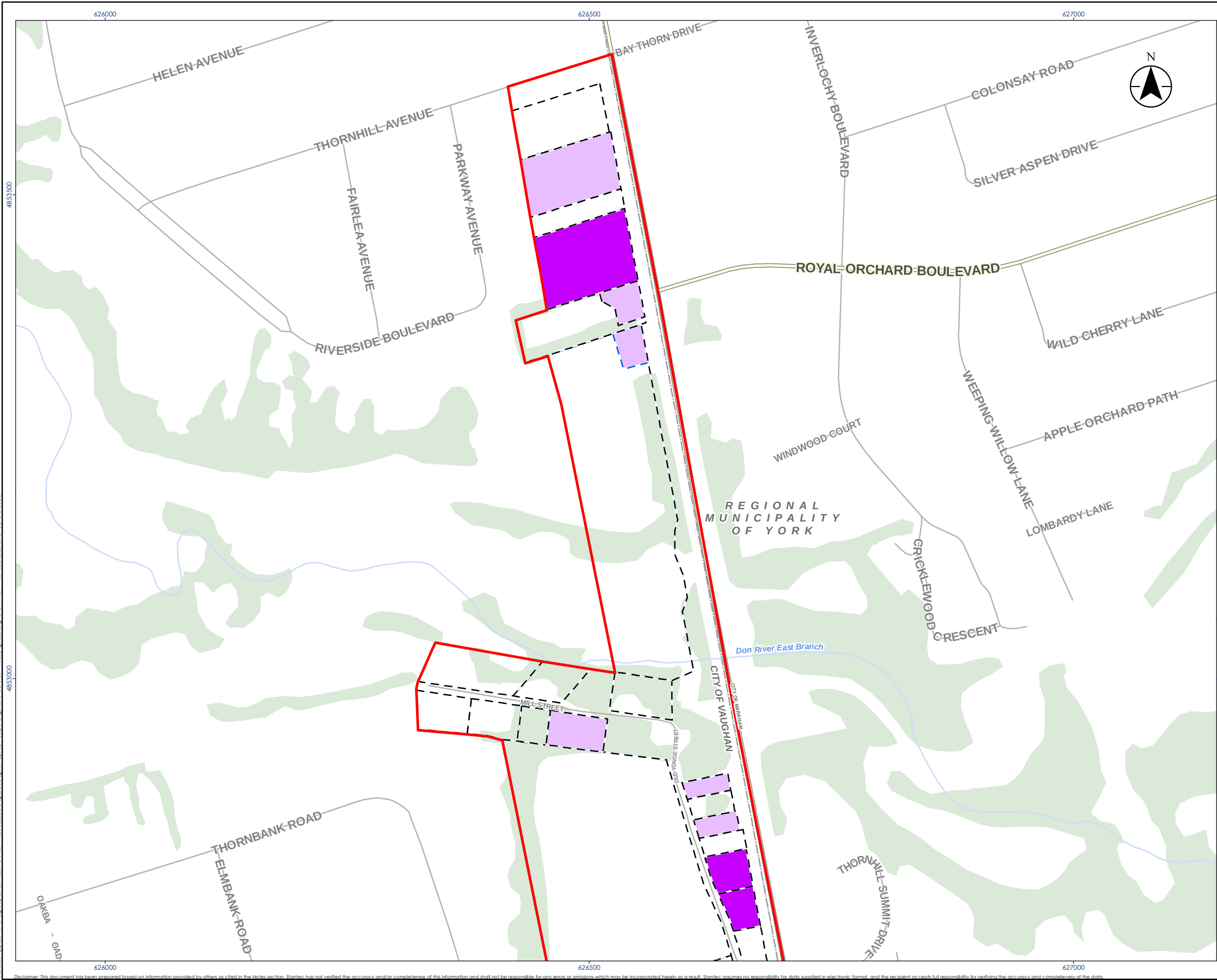
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IV designated property is now required to meet two or more criteria under O. Reg. 9/06. In addition, listed properties can only remain on a register for two years before a municipality must decide to designate or de-list the property. Properties cannot be re-listed within five years from their date of removal. The location of current listed and designated properties within the THCD are depicted on Figure 3 and are summarized in Section 2.2.2.





Legend

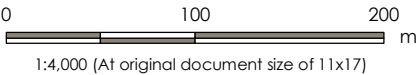
- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Property Type

- Designated (Part IV)
- Listed

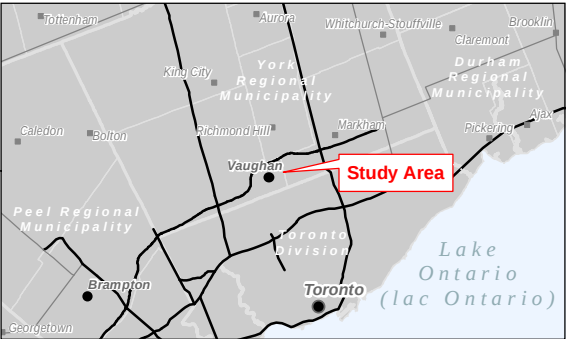
Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



Notes

1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
2. Base features produced under license with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry © King's Printer for Ontario, 2024.
3. This figure contains parcel data sublicensed to the City of Vaughan by Teranet Inc.
4. Orthoimagery . Date of imagery, unknown.



Project Location 160941068 REV3
City of Vaughan Prepared by BF on 2025-05-01
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
3

Title
**Designated and Listed Properties within
HCD Boundary**

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4.4 Land Use

4.4.1 Zoning By-law

The City's Comprehensive Zoning By-law 001-2021 came into effect on October 20, 2021, with several outstanding appeals. Zoning By-law 1-88 was the City's previous Zoning By-law prior to Zoning By-law 001-2021.

The THCD includes properties that are subject to both Zoning By-law 1-88 and Zoning By-law 001-2021. The portion of lands between Thornhill Avenue and Riverside Park that are within the YSCSP are still governed by Zoning By-law 1-88. All other properties within the THCD are subject to By-law 001-2021.

As shown in Figure 4, the THCD contains ten zones under Zoning By-law 001-2021:

- First Density Residential Zone (R1, R1A, R1E)
- Multiple Residential Unit Zone (RM2)
- General Mixed-Use Zone (GMU)
- Convenience Commercial Zone (CC)
- Neighbourhood Commercial Zone (NC)
- General Commercial Zone (GC)
- General Institutional Zone (I1)
- Open Space Zone (OS1)
- Open Space Zone (OS2)
- Environmental Protection Zone (EP)

The portion of the THCD which is subject to Zoning By-law 1-88 contains five zones:

- R1 Residential Zone (R1)
- Multiple Residential Zone (RM2)
- Restricted Commercial Zone (C1)
- General Commercial Zone (C2)
- Open Space Park Zone (OS2)



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The permitted uses in each of the zones, and applicable zoning provisions are summarized in Table 2 below. Provisions applicable to the THCD include those that factor into the visual and contextual character of the area, including height, front yard setbacks, and maximum lot coverage.

The zones within the THCD support a mix of residential, non-residential, and open space uses, minimum setbacks of 3 metres from any property line, and maximum height ranging from 8 to 11 metres. While a few parcels with RM2 Zoning permit a height of up to 44 metres, there are podium, tower, and step back requirements in place that allow for a transition to the surrounding context. Overall, while the subject area is identified for intensification as per the OP, the zoning regulations generally maintain compatibility with the low-rise character and built environment of the community.



Table 2 Permitted Uses and Applicable Zoning Provisions Subject to Zoning By-law 001-2021

Zone	Permitted Uses	Applicable Provisions
First Density Residential Zone (R1, R1A, R1E)	Residential: Independent living facility, single detached dwelling. Non-Residential: Community garden, school, model home, temporary sales office, home occupation, secondary suite, short-term rental.	Minimum lot frontage: 18 m (R1, R1A), 30 m (R1E) Minimum lot area: 420 m ² (R1), 540 m ² (R1A), 845 m ² (R1E) Minimum front yard: 4.5 m (R1), 7.5 m (R1A), 9 m (R1E) Minimum rear yard: 7.5 m (R1, R1A, R1E) Minimum interior side yard: 1.2 m (R1), 1.5 (R1A, R1E) Minimum exterior side yard: 2.4 m (R1), 4.5 m (R1A), 9 m (R1E) Maximum lot coverage: Not specified (R1), 40% (R1A), 20% (R1E) Maximum height: 9.5 m (R1, R1A), 11 m (R1E)
Multiple Unit Residential Zone (RM2)	Residential: Apartment dwelling, independent living facility, podium townhouse dwelling, retirement residence, supportive living facility. Non-Residential: Community garden, school, urban square, temporary sales office, home occupation, short-term rental.	Minimum lot frontage: 30 m Minimum lot area: 80.0 m ² /unit Minimum front, interior, and exterior side yard: 4.5 m Minimum rear yard: 7.5 m Minimum separation between buildings containing dwelling units: Not specified Maximum lot coverage: Not specified Maximum height: 44 m 45-degree angular plane requirement: Applies Maximum width of the front main wall of a block of multiple-unit townhouse dwellings: Not specified Podium and tower requirements: Applies if the building height is greater than 20 m - Podium height: 10.5 m to 20 m - Minimum tower step-back: 3 m - Maximum tower floor plate: 850 m² - Minimum tower separation: 30 m - Minimum tower setback from any rear lot line and interior side lot line: 12.5 m Minimum landscape: 10 % Minimum required landscape strip on any interior side lot line or rear lot line abutting any other Residential Zone except Townhouse Residential or Multiple Unit Residential Zones: 3 m Minimum landscape strip abutting a street line: 3 m



Zone	Permitted Uses	Applicable Provisions
General Mixed-Use Zone (GMU)	Non-Residential: Art studio, business service, automotive dwelling, clinic, commercial school, financial institution, funeral services, health and fitness centre, hotel, hotel (small scale), micro-manufacturing, office, personal service, pet care establishment, per services establishment, place of assembly, place of entertainment, restaurant, restaurant – take out, retail, retail – convenience, service or repair shop, supermarket, theatre, veterinary clinic, community facility, community garden, place of worship, public parking, school, urban square, outdoor display area, outdoor patio, seasonal outdoor display area, temporary sales office.	Minimum lot frontage: 18 m Minimum lot area: 800 m ² Minimum front yard, exterior side yard: 3.5 m Required build-to zone: 3.5 to 7 m (to a minimum of 20% of street frontage or a minimum of 55% of street frontage on a corner lot) Minimum rear yard: 7.5 m Minimum interior side yard: 3 m Height: 8 m to 11 m Minimum street wall: Not specified Minimum ground floor height: 4.5 m Parking permitted in the form of a surface parking lot, and an above- or below-grade parking structure Minimum landscape strip abutting a street line: 3.5 m Minimum required landscape strip on any interior side lot line or rear lot line abutting a Residential or Open Space Zone: 3 m Minimum landscape: 10%
Convenience Commercial Zone (CC)	Non-Residential: Financial institution, personal service, pet care establishment, restaurant, restaurant – take out, retail, retail – convenience, shopping centre, community garden, day care centre, seasonal outdoor display area, temporary sales office.	Minimum lot frontage: 15 m Minimum lot area: 6500 m ² Minimum front yard, exterior side yard: 4.5 m Minimum rear yard: 7.5 m Minimum interior side yard: 3 m Maximum lot coverage: 35% Maximum height: 9.5 m Minimum setback from any building or structure to a lot line abutting a Residential, Institutional or Open Space Zone: 6 m Minimum landscape: 20% Minimum landscape strip abutting any street line: 3 m Minimum landscape strip on any interior side lot line or rear lot line butting a Residential or Open Space Zone: 4.5 m



Zone	Permitted Uses	Applicable Provisions
Neighbourhood Commercial Zone (NC)	Non-Residential: Business service, clinic, financial institution, health and fitness centre, hotel (small scale), micro-manufacturing, office, personal service, pet services establishment, restaurant, restaurant – take out, retail, retail – convenience, shopping centre, veterinary clinic, community facility, community garden, day care centre, public parking, drive-through, outdoor display area, outdoor patio, seasonal outdoor display area, temporary sales office.	Minimum lot frontage: 30 m Minimum lot area: 1000 m ² Minimum front yard: 4.5 m Minimum rear yard: 12 m Minimum interior and exterior side yard: 6 m Maximum lot coverage: 35% Maximum height: 11 m Minimum setback from any building or structure to a lot line abutting a Residential, Institutional or Open Space Zone: 7.5 m Minimum landscape: 10% Minimum landscape strip abutting any street line: 3 m Minimum landscape strip on any interior side lot line or rear lot line butting a Residential or Open Space Zone: 6 m
General Commercial Zone (GC)	Non-Residential: Art studio, automotive detailing, business service, clinic, commercial school, commercial storage, financial institution, funeral services, garden centre, health and fitness centre, heavy equipment sales/rental and service establishment, hotel, hotel (small scale), micro-manufacturing, motor vehicle rental, motor vehicle repair, motor vehicle sales, office, personal service, pet care establishment, place of assembly, place of entertainment, research and development, restaurant, restaurant – take out, retail, retail – convenience, service or repair shop, shopping centre, supermarket, taxi stand, theatre, veterinary clinic, community facility, community garden, day care centre, place of worship, public parking, drive-through, outdoor display area, outdoor patio, seasonal outdoor display area, temporary sales office.	Minimum lot frontage: 20 m Minimum lot area: 900 m ² Minimum interior and exterior side yard: 4.5 m Minimum rear yard: 12 m Minimum interior side yard: 3 m Maximum lot coverage: 50% Maximum height: 11 m Minimum setback from any building or structure to a lot line abutting a Residential, Institutional or Open Space Zone: 12 m Minimum landscape: 10% Minimum landscape strip abutting any street line: 3 m Minimum landscape strip on any interior side lot line or rear lot line butting a Residential or Open Space Zone: 6 m

Zone	Permitted Uses	Applicable Provisions
General Institutional Zone (I1)	Residential: Retirement residence. Non-Residential: Community facility, community garden, conservation use, car care centre, long term care facility, passive recreational use, place of worship, school, urban square, agriculture, temporary sales office.	Minimum lot frontage: 15 m Minimum lot area: 650 m ² Minimum interior and exterior side yard: 3 m Minimum rear yard: 7.5 m Minimum interior side yard: 4.5 m Maximum height: 11 m Maximum lot coverage: Not specified Minimum landscape strip abutting any street line: 3 m Minimum landscape strip along any interior side lot line or rear lot line butting a Residential or Open Space Zone: 3 m
Open Space Zone (OS1, OS2)	Non-Residential (OS1): Active recreational use, cemetery, community garden, conservation use, park, passive recreational use, decommissioning activities, stormwater management facility. Non-Residential (OS2): Driving range, golf course, active recreational use, cemetery, community garden, conservation use, park, passive recreational use, decommissioning activities, stormwater management facility.	Minimum lot frontage: 12 m (OS1), 20 m (OS2) Minimum lot area: Not specified Minimum front yard: 9 m (OS1), 15 m (OS2) Minimum rear yard: 15 m Minimum interior, exterior side yard: 4.5 m (OS1), 15 m (OS2) Maximum lot coverage: 10% Maximum height: 11 m
Environmental Protection Zone (EP)	Non-Residential: Conservation use, passive recreational use.	Minimum lot frontage, lot area: Not specified Minimum front, rear, interior and exterior side yard: 15 m Maximum lot coverage: 5% Maximum height: 9.5 m

Table 3 Permitted Uses and Applicable Zoning Provisions Subject to Zoning By-law 1-88

Zone	Permitted Uses	Applicable Provisions
Residential (R1)	Residential: Single family detached dwelling	Minimum lot frontage: 18 m Minimum lot area: 540 m ² Minimum front yard: 7.5 m Minimum rear yard: 7.5 m Minimum interior side yard: 1.5 m Minimum exterior side yard: 4.5 m Maximum height: 9.5 m Maximum lot coverage: 35%
Multiple Unit Residential Zone (RM2)	Residential: Apartment dwelling, multiple family dwelling, block townhouse dwelling Non-Residential: Day nursery	Minimum lot frontage: 30 m Minimum lot area: 230 m ² /unit Minimum front, rear, and exterior side yard: 4.5 m Minimum interior side yard: 1.5 m Maximum height: 11 m Maximum lot coverage: 50%
Commercial Zones: Restricted Commercial(C1) and General Commercial (C2)	Non-Residential: Automotive retail store, banking or financial institution, boating showroom, business or professional office, club or health centre, eating establishment, eating, funeral home, hotel, laboratory, motor vehicle sales establishment, office building, personal service shop, pharmacy, photography studio, place of entertainment, radio transmission establishment, retail store, service or repair shop, video store, auditorium, lodge, association or institutional hall, long term care facility, public or private hospital, recreational. Additional Non-Residential Uses in C2: car rental service, car wash, fruit stand, lumber or building materials supply dealing with new materials only, motel, pet grooming establishment to be contained within a wholly enclosed building, place of amusement, retail nursery, taxi stand or station, veterinary clinic, correctional or crises care group home.	Minimum front yard: 9 m (C1), 15 m (C2) Minimum rear yard: 15 m Minimum interior side yard: 6 m (C2) Minimum exterior side yard: 9 m Maximum lot coverage: 50% (C1), 30% (C2) Minimum lot depth: 60 m Maximum height: 11 m Minimum setback from any 'R' zone to any building structure or open storage use: 9 m (C1), 13.5 m (C2)



Zone	Permitted Uses	Applicable Provisions
Open Space Park Zone (OS2)	Non-Residential: Driving range, golf course, miniature golf course, recreational uses as defined in Section 2, cemetery, mausoleum, columbarium and crematorium (subject to approval), conservation and forestry project.	No specific provisions mentioned. General provisions for all zones (Section 3) are applicable.



Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

October 2025

4.4.2 Land Use Policies

The THCD is located within the City’s Urban Boundary, as outlined by Schedule 1 – Urban Structure of the VOP 2010. The area centering around the intersection of Centre Street and Yonge Street, has been identified as a “Local Centre” which is deemed as an “Intensification Area”, aimed at accommodating growth and greater density while providing a mixed-use focus for the surrounding community. As a “Local Centre,” this area is lower in scale compared to other areas of intensification and offers a limited range of uses to maintain compatibility with the surrounding local context.

An Open Space area within the THCD forms a “Core Feature” of the connected Natural Heritage Network in the City. Core Features of the network include wetlands, woodlands, valley and stream corridors, wildlife and fish habitat, and significant habitat of endangered and threatened species. The VOP 2010 identifies these natural features to be protected and enhanced. Development and/or site alteration on these lands and lands adjacent is prohibited except for natural area management, flood/erosion control projects, transportation, infrastructure, utilities, and passive recreational activities. The VOP 2010 provides several policies on the protection, restoration, and enhancement of the Natural Heritage Network over time, including the identification of “Enhancement Areas” to add to or connect the Core Features.

North and south of the Local Centre, there are areas designated as “Regional Intensification Corridors.” While these areas do not form part of the THCD, they are aimed at providing the most intensive and greatest mix of development in the city. The intended use and transit priority of these areas will encourage growth and connectivity between Regional Centers along the Yonge Street Corridor. In addition, a few “Established Large-Lot Neighbourhoods” are identified outside of the existing THCD, which are typical to see at or near the core of the founding communities of Thornhill, Concord, Kleinburg, Maple, and Woodbridge. These areas are characterized by their substantial yards and lot coverages that provide opportunities for landscape development and streetscapes.



Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

October 2025

The THCD is subject to the Land Uses identified by the VOP 2010, with an area north of the Thornhill County Club along Yonge Street subject to the YSCSP. The land uses comprised within the THCD, including lands subject to the YSCSP, as seen in Figure 5, include Low Rise Residential, Low-Rise Mixed-Use, Mid-Rise Mixed-Use, Parks, Natural Areas, and Private Open Space.

Buildings in the Low-Rise Residential zone primarily comprise of dwelling units and must have a maximum height of three storeys, or five storeys within the YSCSP boundary.

Low-Rise Mixed-Use Areas integrate residential, community, and small-scale retail uses for the local community. Buildings here must blend well with their surroundings, respect existing heritage buildings, and adhere to high architectural and urban design standards to transition smoothly to adjacent low-rise residential areas. These areas should encourage ground floor activation along Yonge Street and include a 3-metre setback from the building to the lot line. The height of buildings in this zone may range from a minimum of two storeys, or a maximum of five storeys within the YSCSP boundary.

The Mid-Rise Mixed-Use zone enables transit-oriented intensification along the Yonge Street Corridor while providing smooth transitions to adjacent low-rise residential areas. It supports a mix of residential, retail, community, and institutional uses. Building heights along Yonge Street may range from a minimum of four storeys, or a maximum of twelve storeys within the YSCSP boundary. Ground floor activation and setback requirements in this zone align with those of Low-Rise Mixed-Use areas along Yonge Street.

4.4.3 Land Use Type

Based on information from the previous HCD inventories and historical mapping, existing structures in the THCD were historically predominantly residential, accounting for 77% of the THCD. Of the remaining 24% of the structures within the THCD, 13% were commercial, 5% were places of worship, 1% were cemeteries, 1% were



Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

October 2025

institutional, 1% were mixed use, 1% were parks or open space, and 1% were other original land use types (Figure 7).

The current land uses within the THCD have shifted compared to the historic distribution. The structures are now predominantly residential and commercial, accounting for 48% and 39% of the existing structures respectively (Photo 1 to Photo 2). In addition, 4% are currently places of worship (Photo 3) , 2% are other land use types, 2% are parks or open space (Photo 4), 1% are cemeteries (Photo 5), 1% are civic (Photo 6), 1% are institutional (Photo 7), and 1% are mixed use (Photo 8) (Figure 8).

These changes indicate that multiple properties have been converted from a likely residential use (based on their structure types and architectural features) to commercial or other uses in the HCD. Commercial property use experienced the largest increase, with a more moderate increase in properties used as parks or open space and a small decrease in properties used as places of worship. These converted properties include:

Converted Properties	Converted Properties	Converted Properties
• 77 Centre Street	• 67 Centre Street	• 7666 Yonge Street
• 78 Centre Street	• 66 Centre Street	• 7636 Yonge Street
• 69 Centre Street	• 7616 Yonge Street	• 7756 Yonge Street
• 18 Centre Street	• 38 Centre Street	• 2 Centre Street
• 34 Centre Street	• 7808 Yonge Street	• 19 Centre Street
• 7626 Yonge Street	• 12 Centre Street	• 57 Centre Street
• 8000 Yonge Street	• 80 Centre Street	• 8054 Yonge Street
• 39 Centre Street	• 8088 Yonge Street	• 56 Centre Street
• 7822 Yonge Street	• 121 Centre Street	



Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

October 2025



Photo 1 Historic residential structure at 25 Elizabeth Street constructed between 1896 and 1919, looking east



Photo 2 Contemporary residential structure at 133 Brooke Street constructed between 2014 and 2018, looking east



Photo 3 Commercial structure at 7716 Yonge Street, looking west



Photo 4 Place of worship (Holy Trinity Anglican Church) at 140 Brooke Street, looking west

Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

October 2025



Photo 5 Park or open space (Thornhill Park) at 26 Old Yonge Street, looking south



Photo 6 Cemetery at 8004 Yonge Street, looking west



Photo 7 Former residence converted to civic use at 121 Centre Street (the MacDonald House and city park), looking northeast



Photo 8 Institutional structure at 7554 Yonge Street, looking west

Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

October 2025

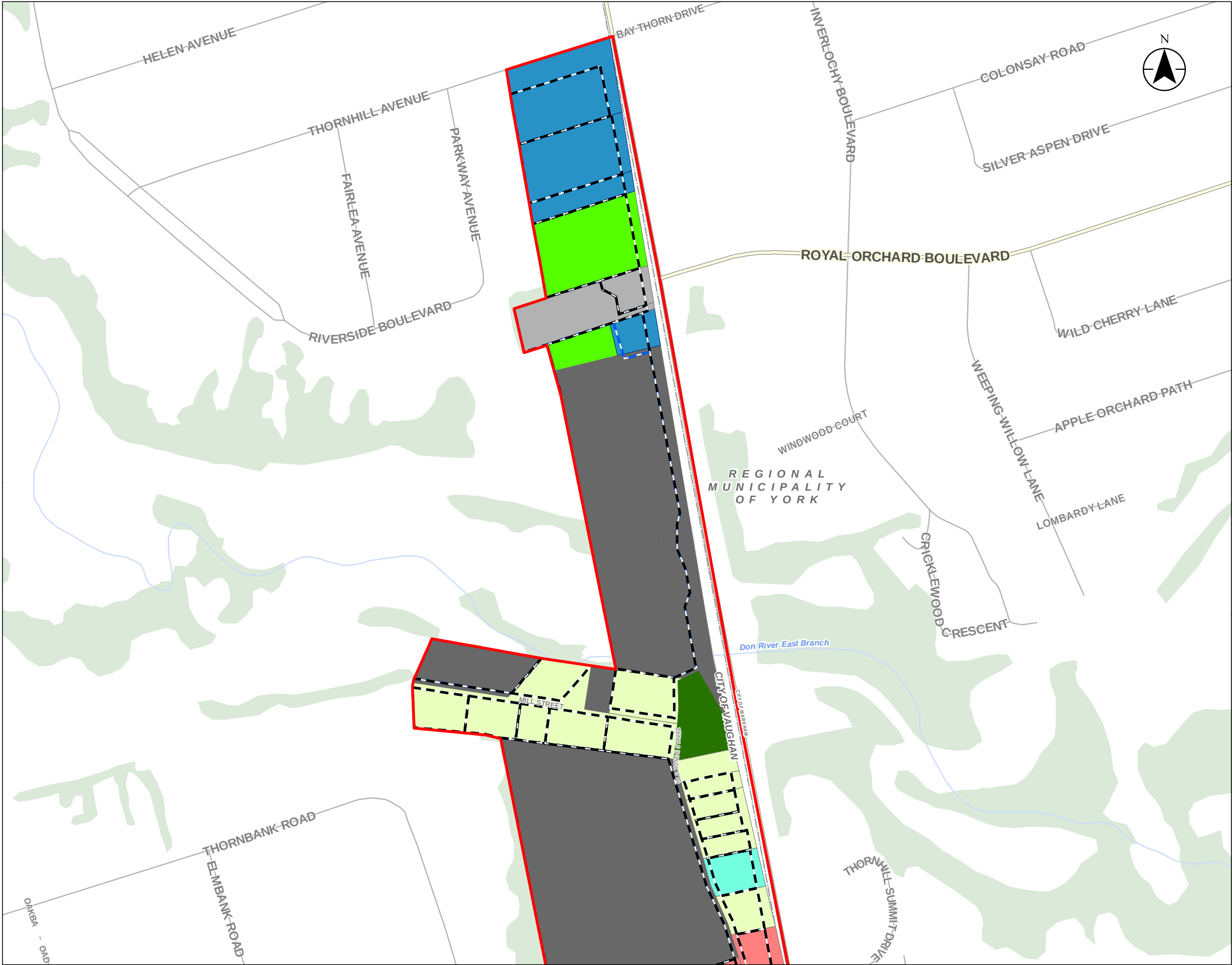


Photo 9 Mixed use structure at 7608 Yonge Street, looking southwest



Photo 10 Residential structure converted to commercial use at 66 Centre Street, looking north

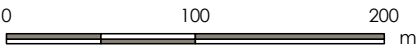
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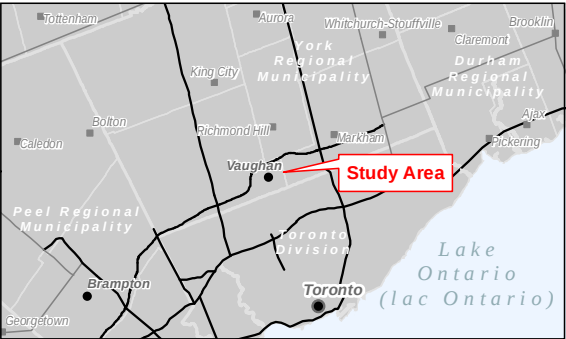
- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

- Zone Description
- Commercial Zone (I-88)
 - Convenience Commercial Zone (I-21)
 - Neighbourhood Commercial Zone (I-21)
 - Residential Zone (I-88)
 - First Density Residential Zone (I-21)
 - Open Space Zone (I-21)
 - Open Space (I-88)
 - Environmental Protection Zone (I-21)

- Base Features
- Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



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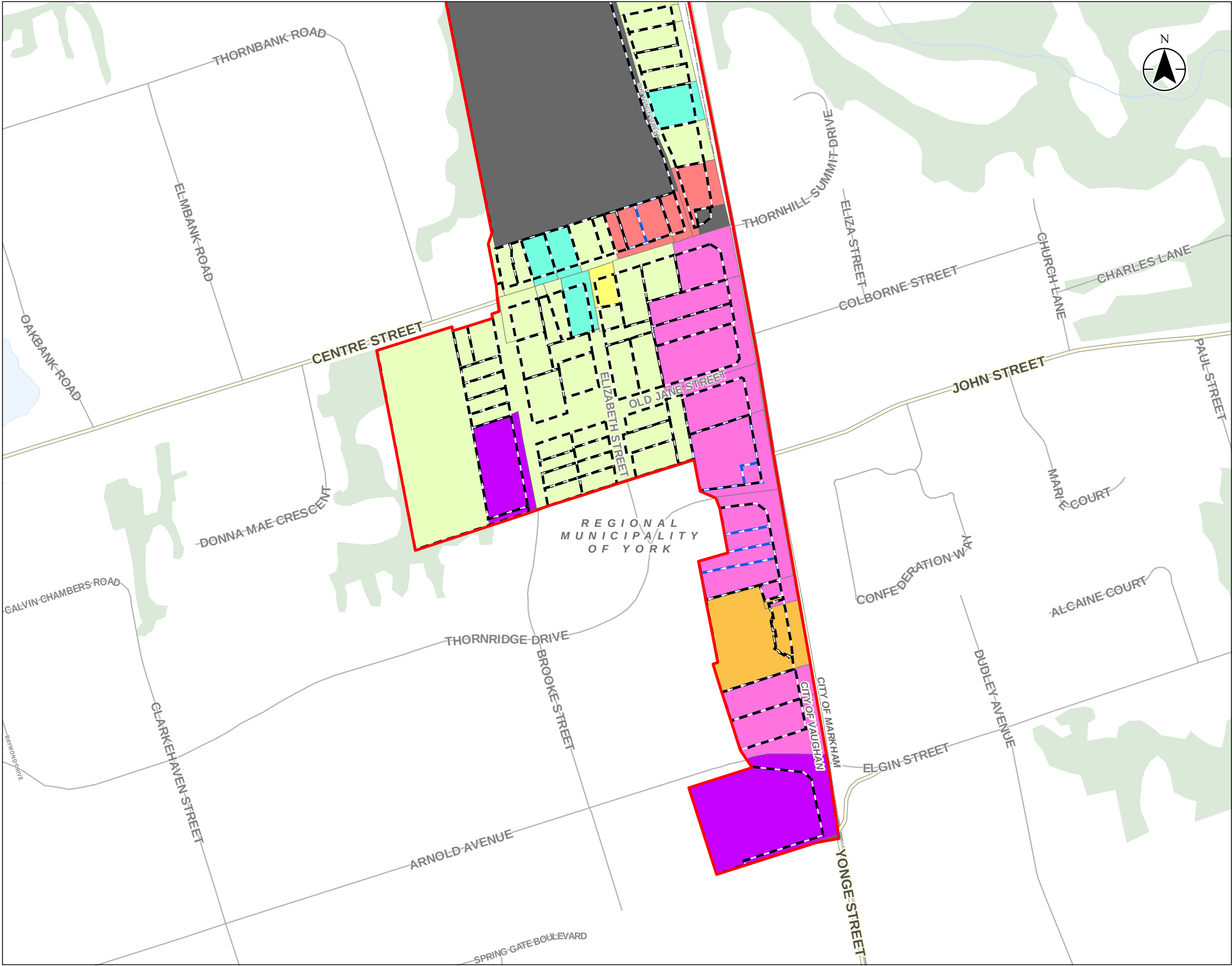
Project Location
City of Vaughan
160941068 REV1
Prepared by BF on 2024-09-25
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
4.1

Title
Zoning within HCD Boundary

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Stantec

Legend

-  HCD Boundary
-  Property Parcel
-  Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Zone Description

-  Convenience Commercial Zone (I-21)
-  General Commercial Zone (I-21)
-  Neighbourhood Commercial Zone (I-21)
-  First Density Residential Zone (I-21)
-  Multiple Unit Residential Zone (I-21)
-  General Institutional Zone (I-21)
-  General Mixed-Use Zone (I-21)
-  Open Space Zone (I-21)

Base Features

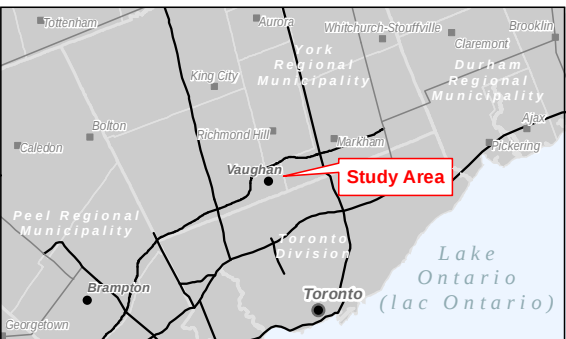
-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Watercourse
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary, Lower
-  Wooded Area

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Notes

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Study Area

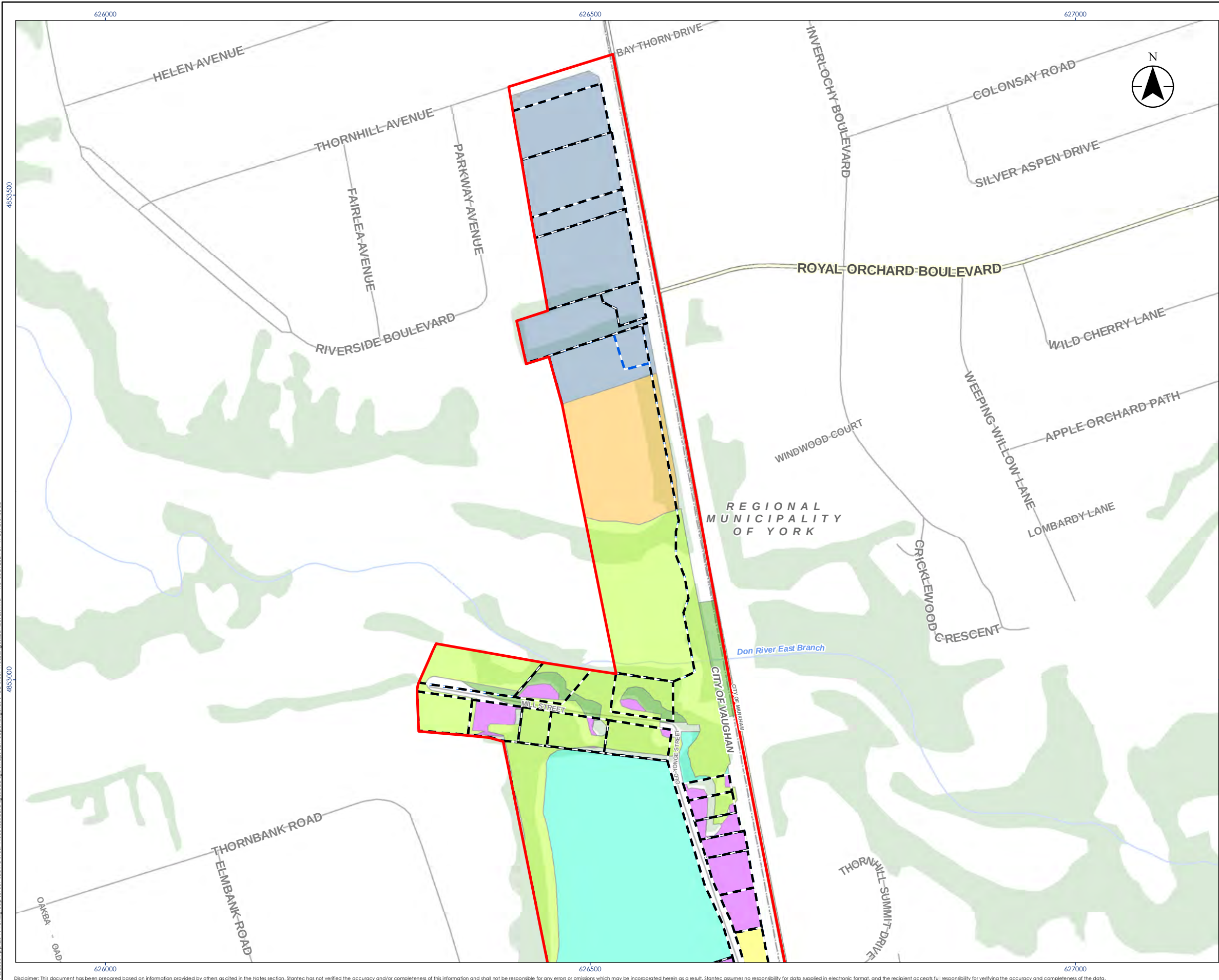
Project Location
City of Vaughan

160941068 REV1
Prepared by BF on 2024-09-25
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

Client/Project
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THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
4.2

Title
Zoning within HCD Boundary



Legend

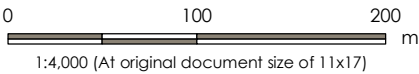
- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Land Use

- Greenbelt Plan Area & Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area
- Lands Subject to Secondary Plans
- Low-rise Mixed-use
- Low-rise Residential
- Natural Areas
- Parks
- Private Open Spaces

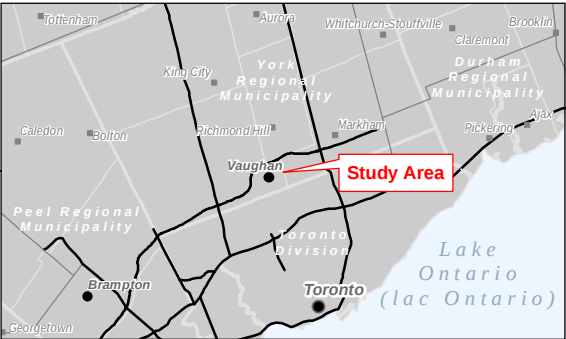
Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



Notes

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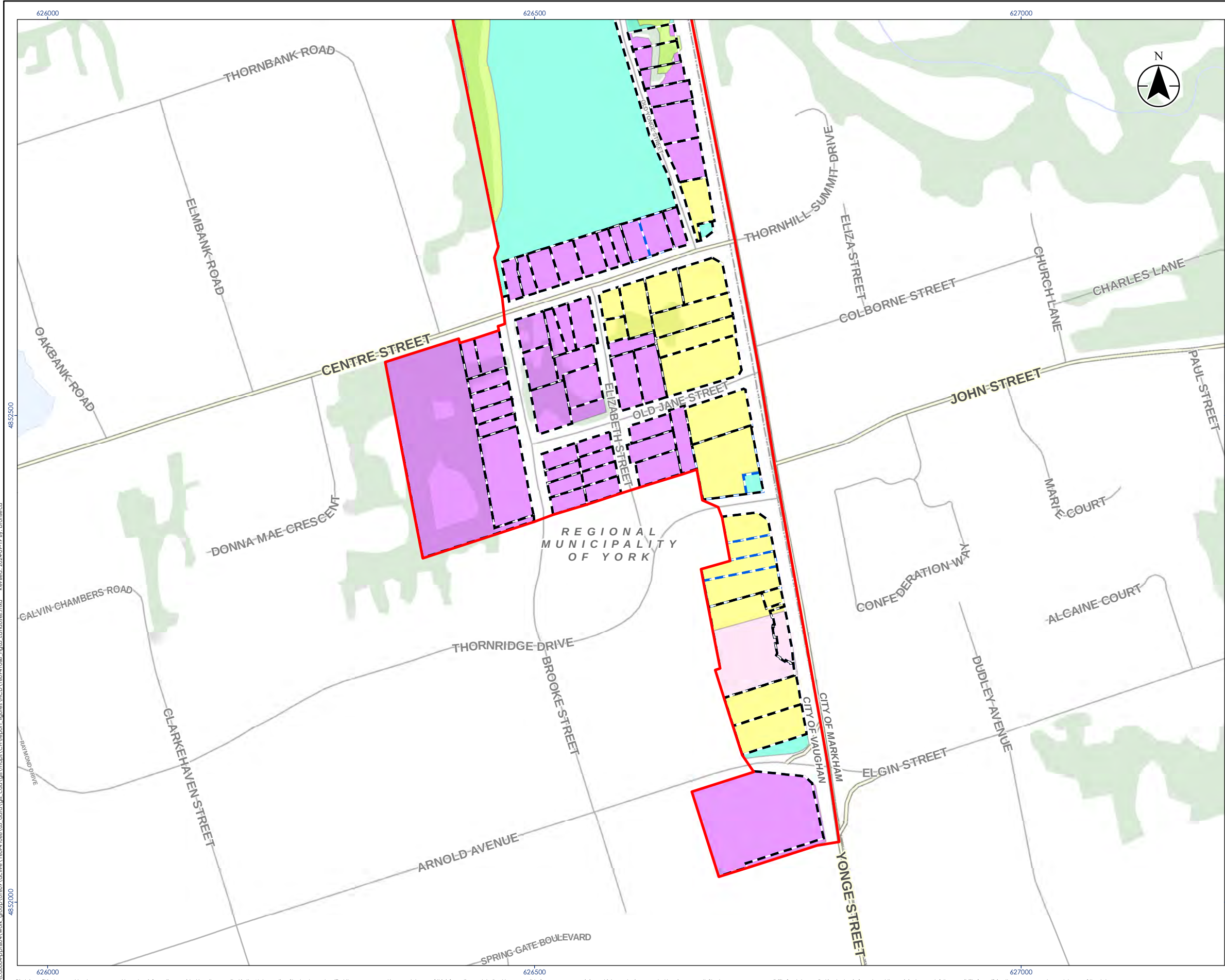


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City of Vaughan
160941068 REV2
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CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
5.1

Title
Land Uses within HCD Boundary



Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Land Use

- Lands Subject to Secondary Plans
- Low-rise Mixed-use
- Low-rise Residential
- Mid-rise Mixed-use
- Natural Areas
- Parks

Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area

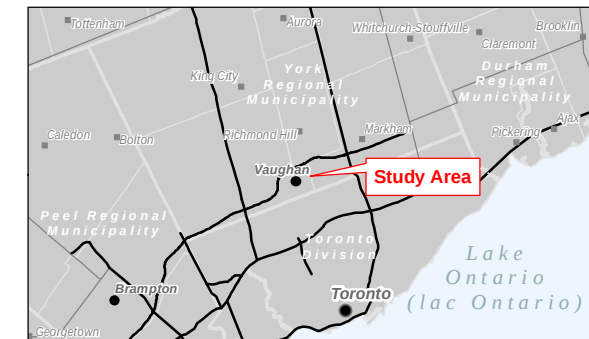
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Client/Project

CITY OF VAUGHAN

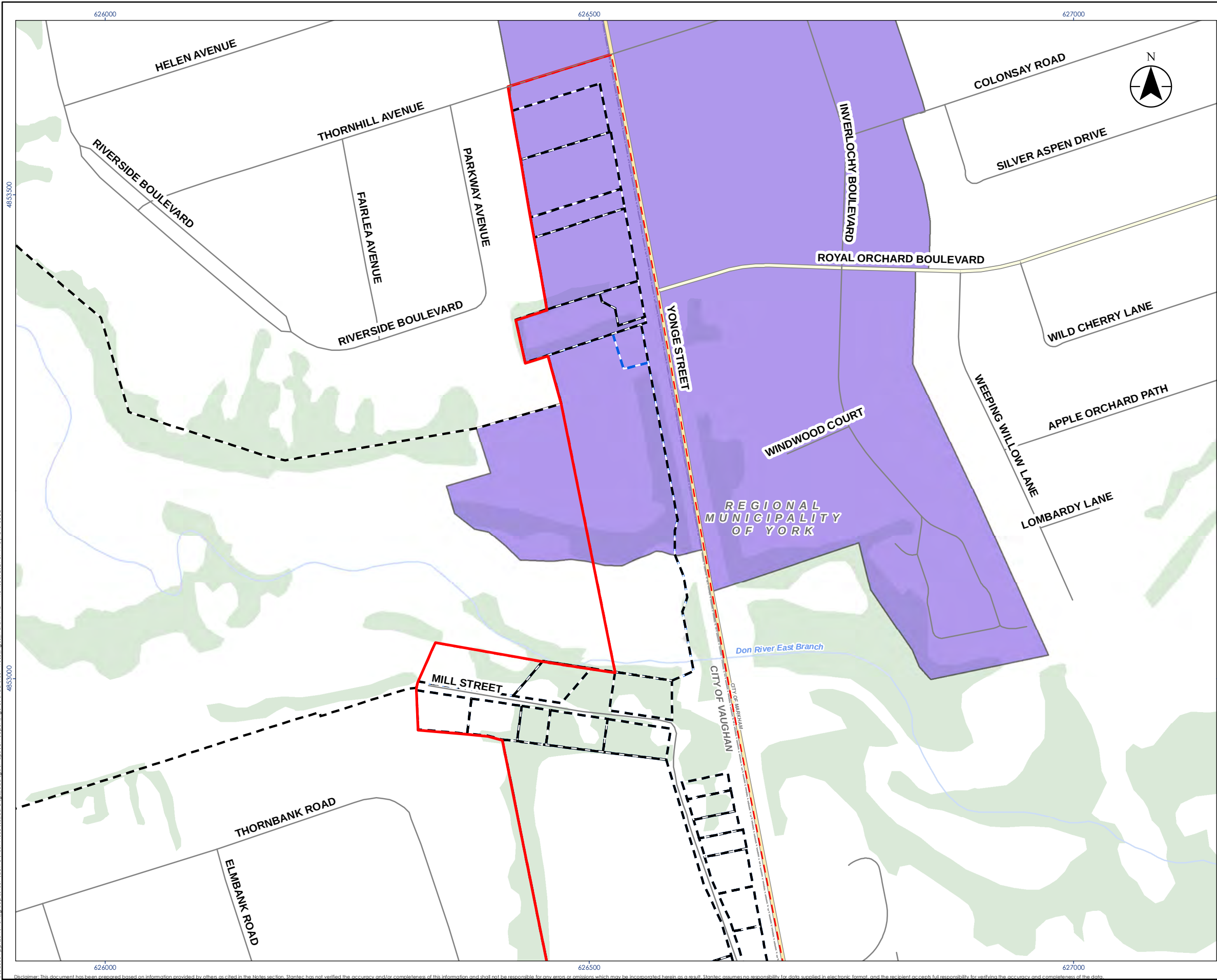
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.

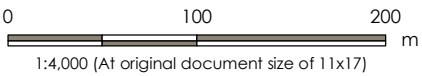
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Title

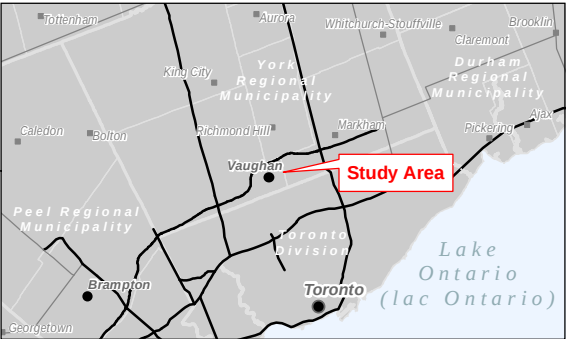
Land Uses within HCD Boundary



- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Road Class
- Arterial
 - Collector
 - Local Street
- Protected Major Transit Station Area
- PMTSA 19 - Royal Orchard Subway Station (Approximate)



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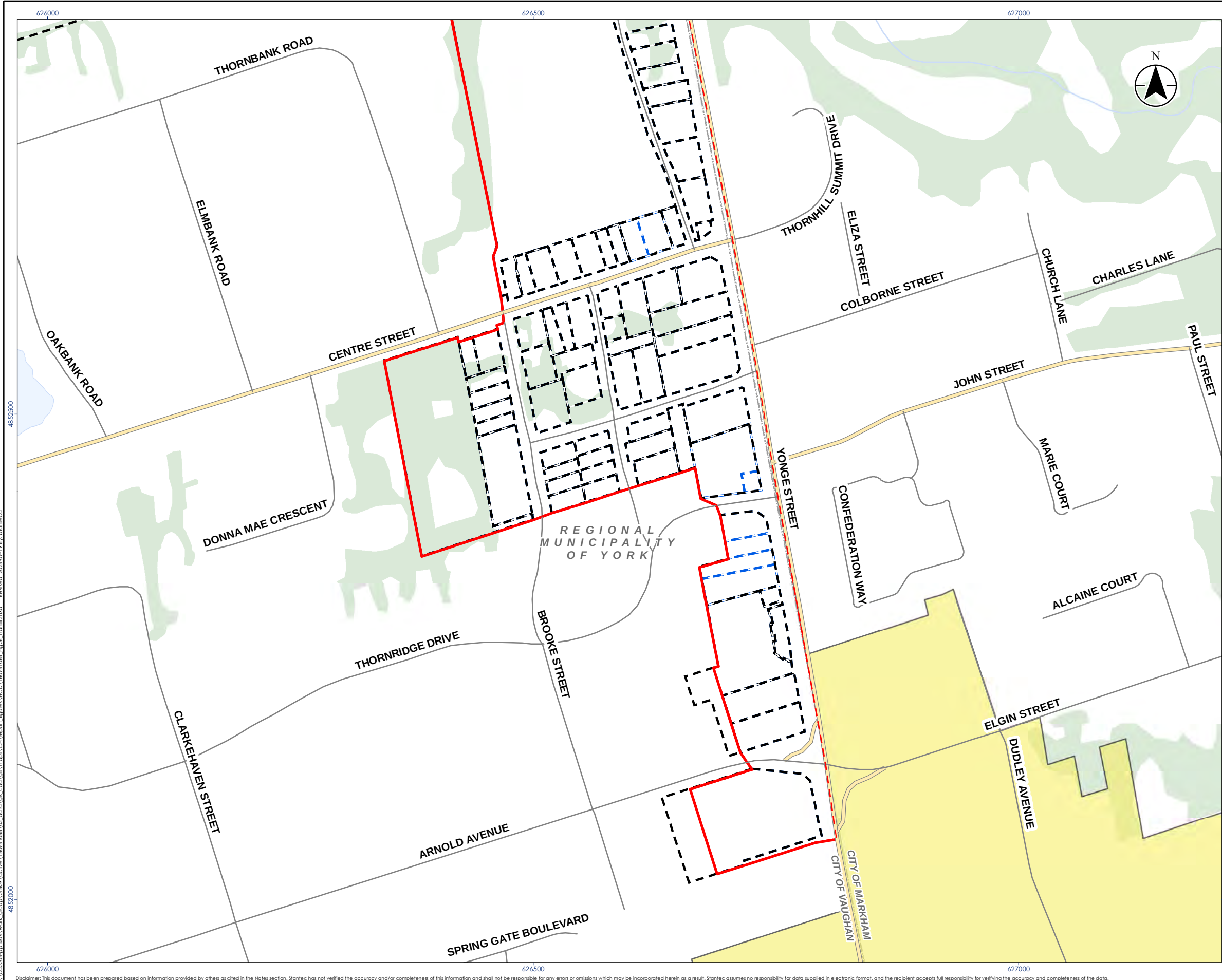


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City of Vaughan
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Prepared by BF on 2024-09-19
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
6.1

Title
**Road Classification and/or Protected
Major Transit Station Area within HCD
Boundary**



Legend

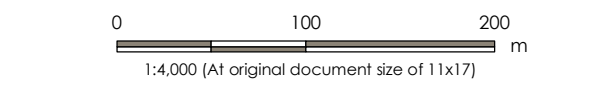
- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Road Class

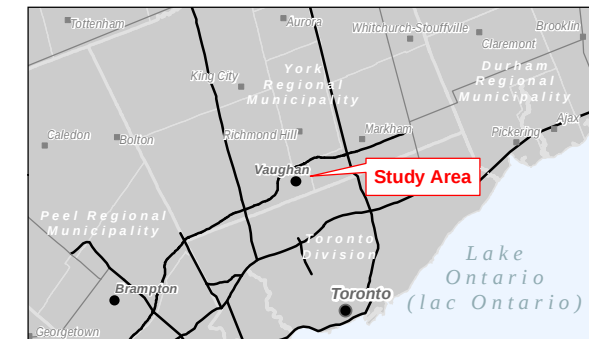
- Arterial
- Local Street

Protected Major Transit Station Area

- PMTSA 9 - Clark Subway Station (Approximate)



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Project Location

City of Vaughan

160941068 REV2

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Client/Project

CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.

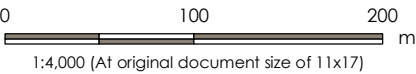
6.2

Title

Road Classification and/or Protected
Major Transit Station Area within HCD
Boundary



- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Original Property Use
- Cemetery
 - Commercial
 - Other
 - Park/Open Space
 - Place of Worship
 - Residential
- Base Features
- Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



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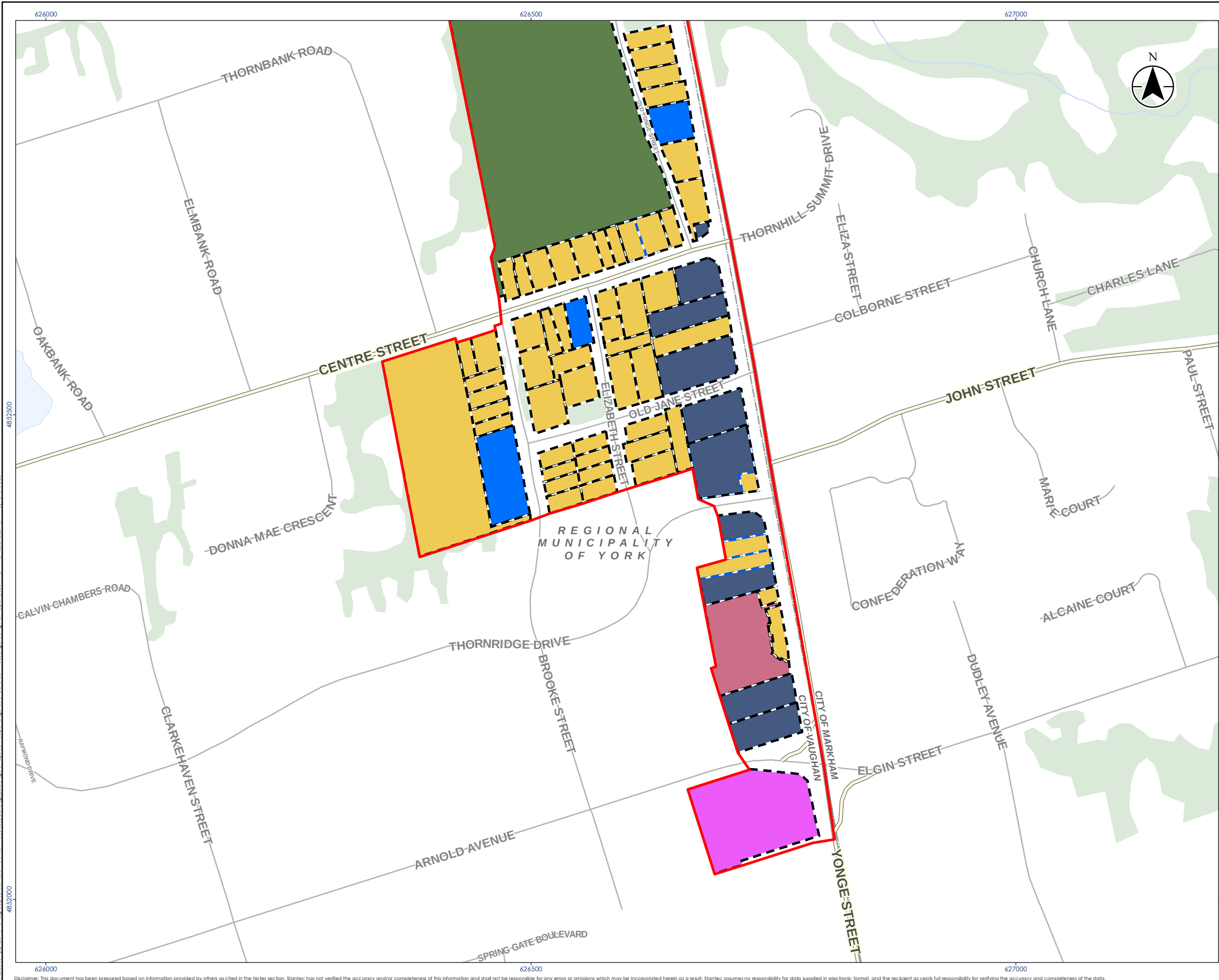
Project Location
City of Vaughan

160941068 REV2
Prepared by BF on 2024-09-19
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

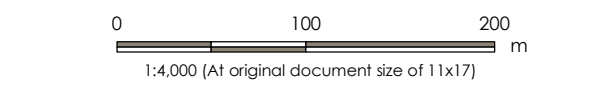
Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
7.1

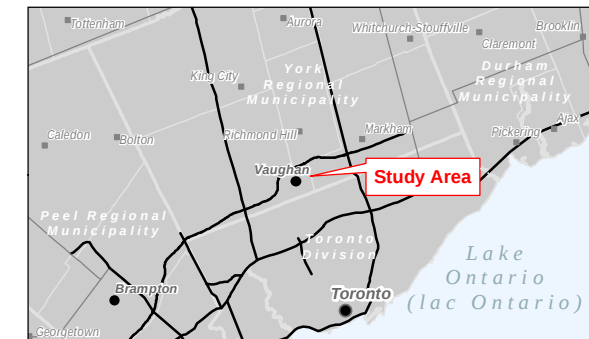
Title
Original Property Use



- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Original Property Use
- Commercial
 - Institutional
 - Mixed Use
 - Other
 - Park/Open Space
 - Place of Worship
 - Residential
- Base Features
- Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



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City of Vaughan

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Prepared by BF on 2024-09-19
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
7.2

Title
Original Property Use



Legend

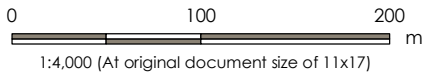
- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Current Property Use

- Cemetery
- Commercial
- Other
- Park/Open Space
- Place of Worship
- Residential

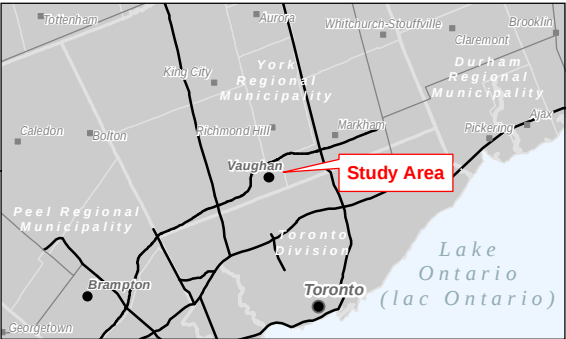
Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



Notes

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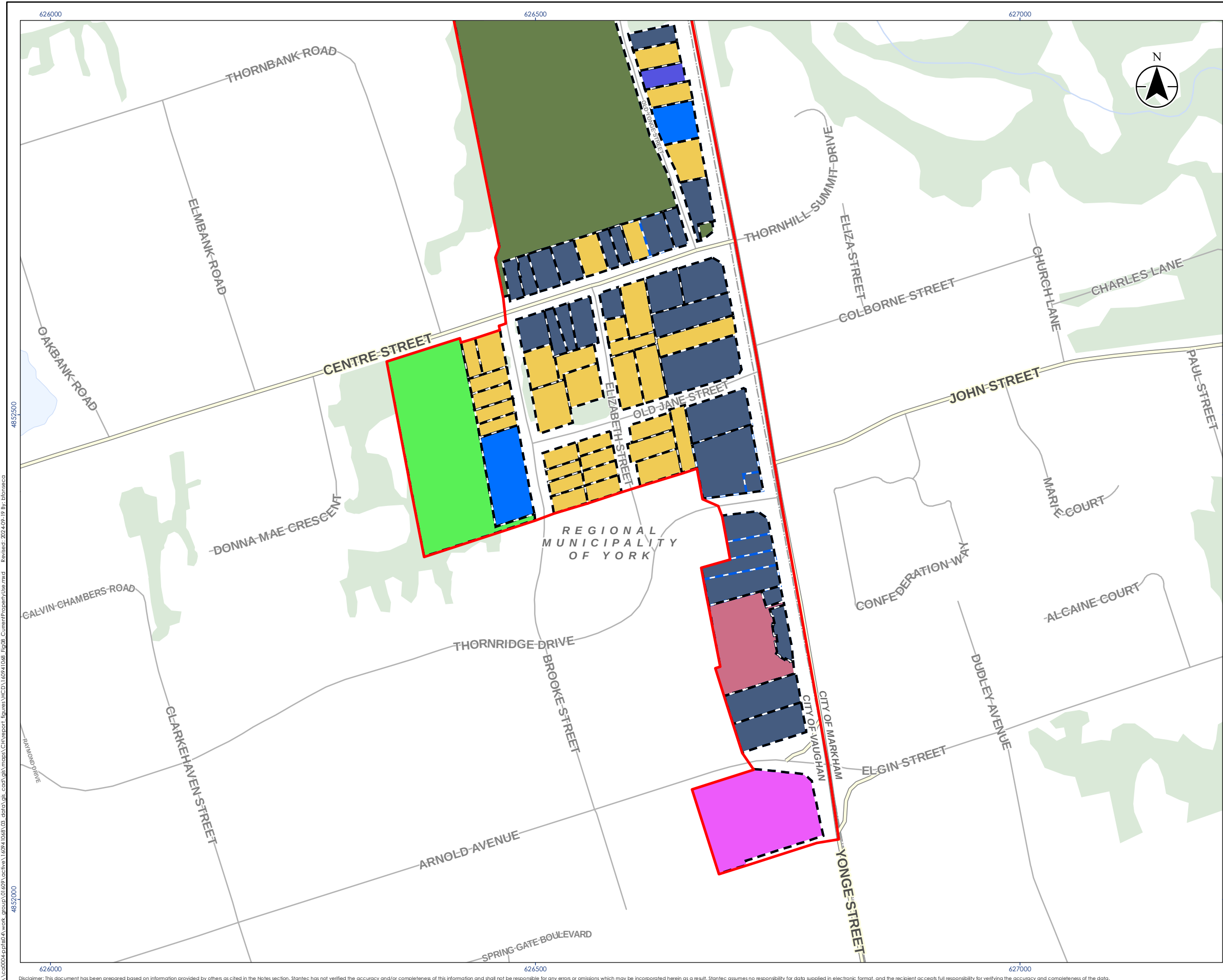


Project Location 160941068 REV2
City of Vaughan Prepared by BF on 2024-09-19
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
8.1

Title
Current Property Use



Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Current Property Use

- Civic
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Mixed Use
- Other
- Park/Open Space
- Place of Worship
- Residential

Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area

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Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

Client/Project

CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.

8.2

Title

Current Property Use

Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

October 2025

4.5 Municipal Policies

4.5.1 Sign By-law

All signage within the THCD is subject to the City's By-law Number 140-2018: A By-law to Regulate Signs in the City of Vaughan (City of Vaughan 2018). The THCD falls under a "Special Sign District" as outlined in the bylaw, which requires that all applications for signs in the district be forwarded to the Manager of Urban Design for comment prior to being granted a sign permit. The by-law does not allow readograph signs in the THCD and requires that signs not interfere with architectural features on a building. The by-law also provides guidance in Special Sign Districts for the height and size of ground signs, wall signs, canopy signs, projecting signs, and window signs.

The existing THCD Plan provides overarching guidance for signage in support of a HCD, particularly commercial signage. It encourages a simple and distinctive signage design to promote awareness of the THCD. It supports the installation of public signage at three gateway points, a distinctive sidewalk stamp, a village notice board with a map of the THCD near Lions Club Parkette and a name sign marking the Don River's crossing at Yonge Street. In addition, it encourages interpretive signs to complement the THCD's character and street elements and maintain a listing of commemorative and interpretive plaques.

4.5.2 Public Art

Under the City's Special Sign District policies and the existing THCD Plan, public art is not presently permitted in the THCD. In 2016 the City of Vaughan released a City-Wide Public Art Program, which identified that HCDs in Vaughan should be focus areas for establishing more specific, location-based strategies for public art. Recognizing the potential to enhance the identity of the City's historic centres with public art, the program highlights key locations within the HCDs for public art, such as gateways to the HCD, open spaces and trails, historic buildings and heritage sites, and public and cultural



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institutions. Community specific strategies for Thornhill include prioritized preferences for public art locations as follows:

- **Gateways** such as entrances to Thornhill Village from west on Centre Street and from north and south on Yonge Street.
- **Historic Buildings and Heritage Sites** such as The Francis Block, Thoreau MacDonald House, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, William Armstrong House, Robert West House, Methodist Church, and Soules Inn
- **Premium Streetscapes** such as Yonge Street or **Enhanced Streetscapes** such as Centre Street and Steeles Avenue.

Additionally, the strategies highlight important parks, open spaces, and trails, public and cultural institutions, key destinations, important intersections, view termini, and infrastructure as preferred locations for public art in Thornhill (City of Vaughan 2016).

4.5.3 City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines

The City prepared City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines (“the Guidelines”) in 2018 (City of Vaughan, 2018) that are applicable to new development throughout the City. The intent of these guidelines is to provide objectives and performance standards for building, landscape, and site design to achieve high quality design and place-making in support of the vision outlined in the City’s policies, including the HCD Plans and Guidelines for Thornhill, Kleinburg/Nashville, Woodbridge, and Maple. According to Section 2.2.2 of the Guidelines, Thornhill is recognized as both a Historic Settlement Node and a Local Centre located along intensification corridors. This designation requires that the historic character of Thornhill be protected, and that any new development be designed in keeping with the local context.

The Guidelines speak specifically to development within or adjacent to HCDs in Section 4.3 Public Realm Framework, Performance Standard No. 4.3.7, which states that “development sites within or adjacent to Heritage Conservation District resources or listed/Part IV heritage properties should consider and respond to the attributes and character of Heritage buildings and landscapes. Development adjacent to heritage



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buildings and landscapes should contribute to and enhance their existing heritage character.” Specific policies include:

- New development sites within Heritage Conservation Districts or designated heritage properties shall be consistent with the policies and guidelines contained within the respective Heritage Conservation District Plan.
- Proposed buildings within or adjacent to a Heritage Conservation District or designated heritage property shall respond to and be sympathetic to the design characteristics of heritage resources without reflecting those characteristics in a way that is inauthentic or anachronistic.
- Infill buildings shall consider:
 - Incorporating a consistent front setback, or a recessed setback to highlight the heritage component, where appropriate.
 - Incorporating a height-to-width ratio that is similar to existing heritage buildings.
 - Retaining and highlighting important views of heritage resources.
 - Establishing similar vertical or horizontal bays and storefronts, where appropriate.
 - Using materials that complement adjacent heritage buildings.
 - Maintaining lot shape and orientation.
- Where an infill building is developed adjacent to a heritage building with a continuous street wall, the new building shall:
 - Establish a base building that has a consistent height to the heritage building.
 - Step back from the building face at or within one to two storeys of the height of the existing building.
 - Match floor heights with the adjacent heritage building or align horizontal elements to achieve consistency where contemporary commercial ground floor heights must be taller than heritage ground floor heights.

Additions to listed or Part IV heritage properties shall respect the character, scale and form of existing heritage properties. Additions shall complement preserved portions of the building and should remain subordinate to the existing architecture.

(City of Vaughan, 2018)



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The guidelines also provide performance standards for CHLs, noting that “development adjacent to heritage landscapes shall preserve viewpoints, viewsheds and vistas to and from these landscapes.” (City of Vaughan, 2018) This includes maintaining clearly visible public entrances, using native, non-invasive planting species, not disrupting significant view corridors, and providing landscape buffers between CHLs and proposed development. In addition, the guidelines encourage highlighting cultural heritage features using site signage, wayfinding, and site lighting.

4.5.4 Yonge-Steeles Urban Design Guidelines and Streetscape Plan

The Yonge-Steeles Urban Design Guidelines and Streetscape Plan was prepared by the City, along with Perkins & Will, in 2023. This document, along with the Yonge and Steeles Secondary Plan (Section 4.2.8), aims to guide both public and private development along the Yonge-Steeles Corridor, supporting its transformation into an attractive destination. This corridor extends approximately four kilometres along Yonge Street and 1.4 kilometres along Steeles Avenue West. The “Old Thornhill Village” character segment of this corridor overlaps with the THCD boundary. While the streetscape policies outlined in the York Region's South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan and the Thornhill HCD are intended to guide the streetscape of this character segment, the following policies are relevant to the integration of development adjacent to existing cultural heritage within this segment:

- For development adjacent to cultural heritage and/or existing buildings, the frontage zone should provide a setback or recessed setback which aligns with the heritage and/or existing buildings. (3.2.2.b.iv)
- Transitions to Heritage Resources
 - New development adjacent to designated heritage buildings shall be designed to respect the significant built-form features of the heritage buildings, through such measures as appropriate setbacks, stepbacks, landscaping and, where appropriate, protection of view corridors. Any development on, or adjacent to, a heritage property shall conform to the policies of the Thornhill Heritage District Conservation Plan.



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- Where the Secondary Plan Area boundary overlaps with the Thornhill Vaughan HCD boundary, directions from the Thornhill Vaughan HCD Plan prevail. (3.2.3.b)

(City of Vaughan, 2023)

4.6 Built Form

4.6.1 Introduction

The following analysis of built form within the THCD is based on data collected during site visits conducted in August 2024. Data for each property were collected using ArcGIS Collector to record key information of each property: municipal address, property type (e.g. the historic building type of the property), current use, primary building or cladding material, architectural style or influence, presence of mature vegetation or landscape features, and integrity of heritage features. In assessing heritage integrity, definitions are as follows:

- **High:** The structure clearly displays historical features, such as cladding, windows, doors, porches, trim, or architectural details that demonstrate a historical architectural style or have been replaced or modified in a manner that is sympathetic to the historical architecture (Photo 11)
- **Medium:** Some elements of the building have been modified, replaced, or obscured but the historical form, building type, or understanding of architectural style or influence is still apparent (Photo 12)
- **Low:** Few, if any, heritage features are apparent, and changes have been unsympathetic to the historical architecture, form, or type (Photo 13)
- **Not Applicable (N/A):** the property does not contain a structure, or the structure is of recent construction (post-1984) (Photo 14)

Data related to built form were collected for 85 existing municipal address points within the THCD. This information was used to better understand existing conditions, determine the heritage integrity of each structure, and to identify contributing properties. The construction dates provided for each municipal address point were based on historical data from the 2007 Inventory, updates and notes collected by the City in 2023



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and a review of mapping and aerial photographs (City of Vaughan 2007, City of Vaughan 2023). The dates were recorded in date ranges created based on available historical mapping and aerial photography sources.



Photo 11 Structure with high heritage integrity, 7780 Yonge Street, looking west



Photo 12 Structure with medium heritage integrity, 7616 Yonge Street, looking west



Photo 13 Structure with low heritage integrity, 143 Brooke Street, looking north



Photo 14 Contemporary replica of historical style built after 2008 for which heritage integrity is not applicable, 135 Brooke Street, looking east

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4.6.2 Development Pattern

The development pattern in the THCD is largely based around the former rural hamlet and police village of Thornhill, which was laid out on Lots 29 to 33, West of Yonge Street. Development still reflects the former village, including the characteristically rural layout of the streets which developed around millsites, the Don River Valley, and a concentration of historic buildings. In the late 19th to early 20th century, development in the village was encouraged by early suburbanization. By the late 20th century, Thornhill's development had begun to reflect larger regional trends of suburbanization and urban sprawl seen across southern Ontario.

Despite increasingly urban surroundings and a growing connection to the City of Vaughan and Toronto, Thornhill retained reflections of its rural character and a road network that continues to be rooted in the community's origins as a rural hamlet. Contemporary change in the THCD since the 2007 update of the HCD Plan reflects a current trend of replacing early to mid-20th century residences with larger contemporary ones that are designed to evoke historic design styles.

4.6.3 Building Analysis

4.6.3.1 Height

The buildings in the THCD consist almost entirely of low-rise structures ranging from 1 to 2.5 storeys. Of the 85 properties in the HCD, 2 properties contain no buildings or structures (2%), 14 properties contain one storey structures (17%), 29 properties contain one and one half storey structures (34%), 31 properties contain two storey structures (37%), 8 properties contain two and one half storey structures (9%), and 1 property contains a 6 storey structure (1%) (Chart 1) (Figure 9). When combined, one and one half to two storey structures account for 71% of the building stock within the HCD.

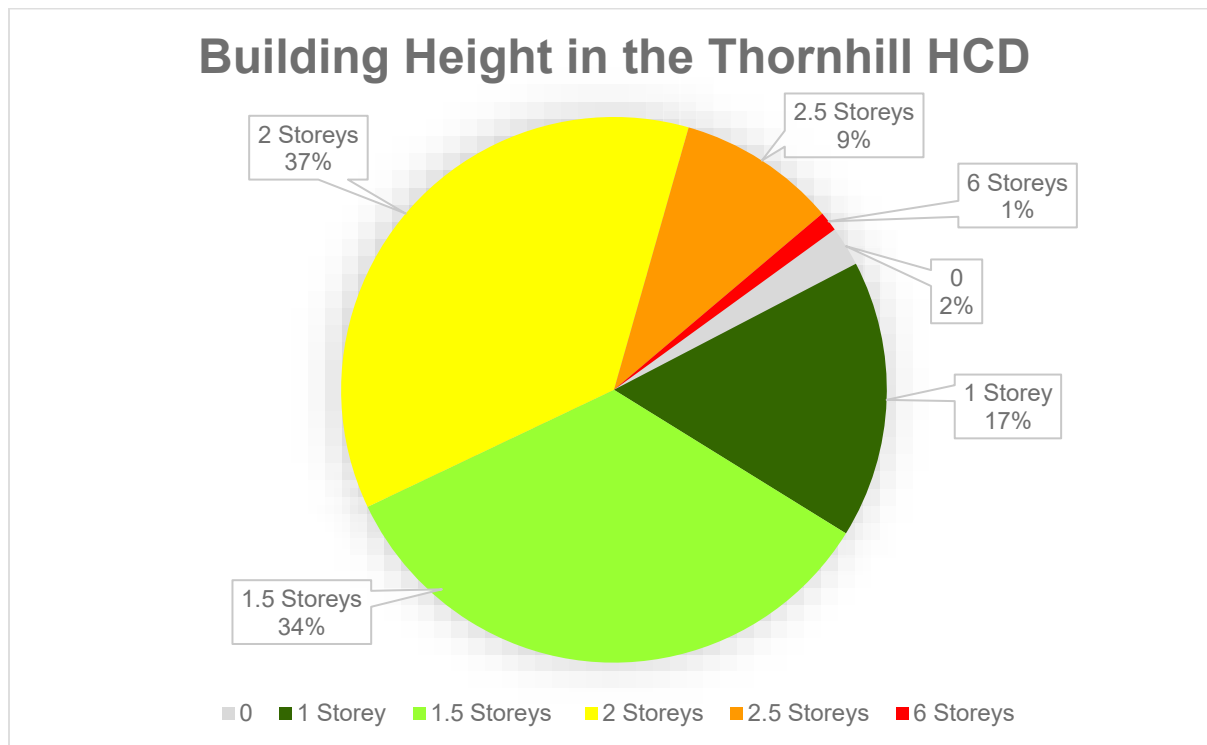


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Chart 1 Building Height in the Thornhill HCD



4.6.3.2 Construction Periods

Construction dates were recorded for buildings in the THCD using historical data from the 2007 Inventory, updates and notes collected by the City in 2023 and a review of mapping and aerial photographs (City of Vaughan 2007, City of Vaughan 2023).

Stantec only altered the dates provided if discrepancies were identified. Dates were recorded within date ranges created based on available historical mapping and aerial photography sources.

Of the 85 structures in the THCD (Chart 2 and Figure 10):

- Thirteen structures were constructed pre-1850 (15%)
- Six structures were constructed between 1851 and 1871 (7%)
- Five structures were constructed between 1872 and 1895 (6%)
- Six structures were constructed between 1896 and 1919 (7%)
- Nineteen structures were constructed between 1920 and 1945 (22%)



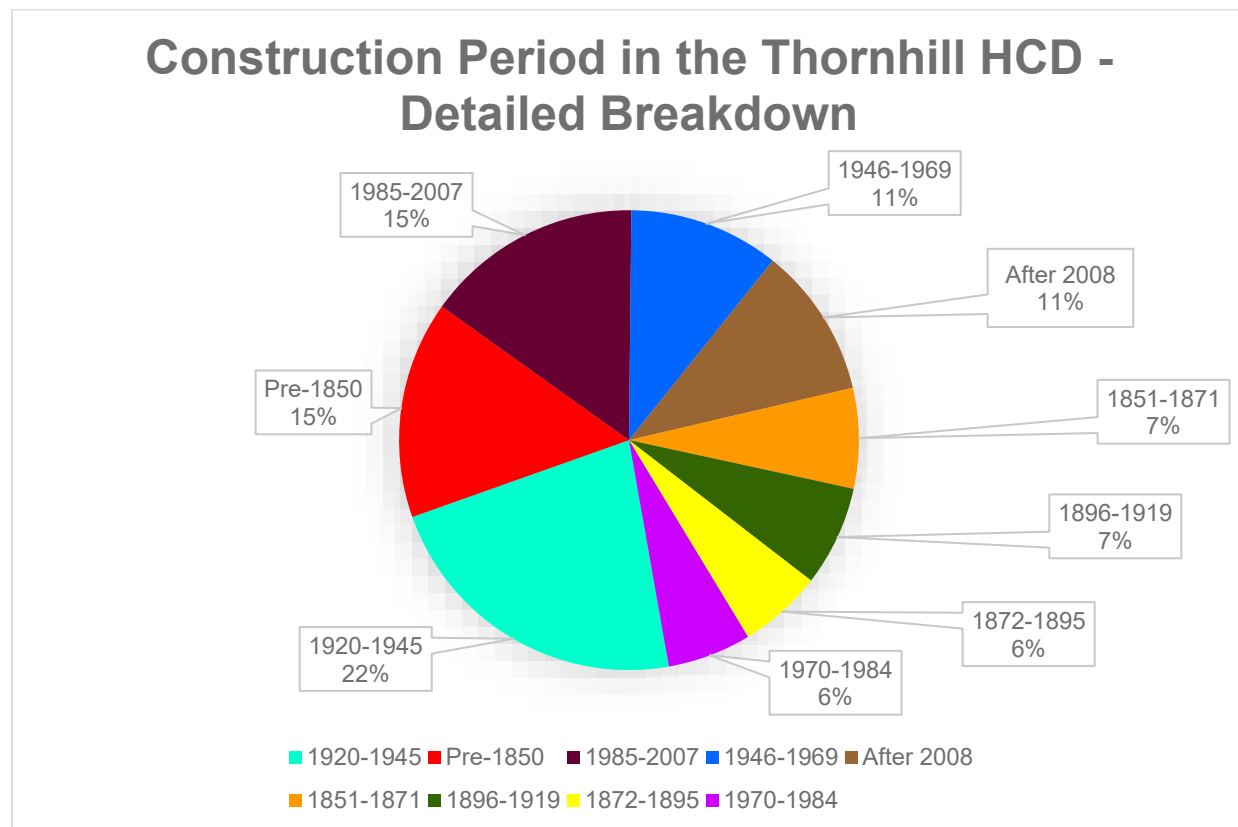
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- Nine structures were constructed between 1946 and 1969 (11%)
- Five structures (including the portion of the Thornhill Club contained within the THCD) were constructed between 1970 and 1984 (6%)
- Thirteen structures were constructed between 1985 and 2007 (15%)
- Nine structures were constructed after 2008 (11%)

Chart 2 Construction Period in the Thornhill HCD – Detailed Breakdown



To categorize construction within the THCD more broadly, 22% of the THCD's structures were constructed during Thornhill's early development (Chart 3). This period was characterized by the arrival of European settlers and a local economy that relied heavily on milling. This early period was followed by a brief period of decline when Thornhill's milling industry closed due to increased competition from the surrounding area. Thornhill's economy shifted to dairying and providing services to area farmers, but the overall population of Vaughan Township decreased during this period due to rural to urban migration. Only 6% of the HCD's structures were built during this period. The



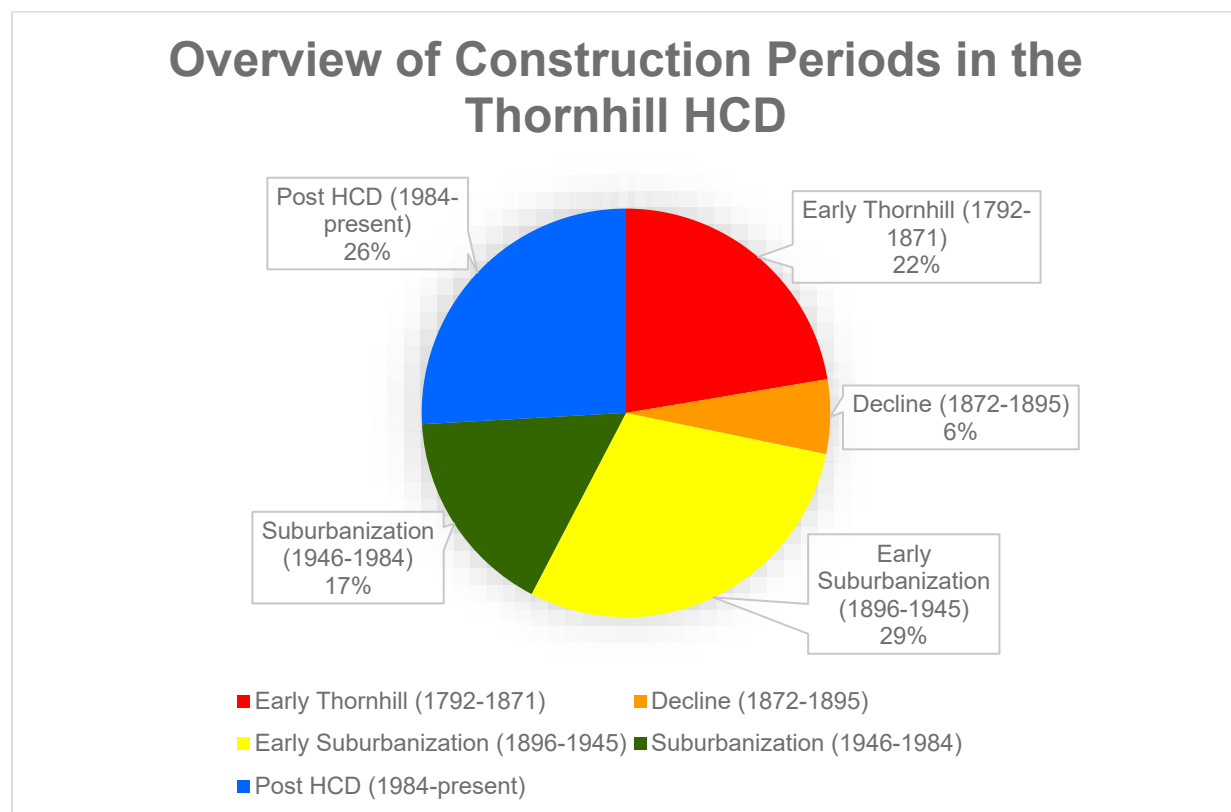
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construction of a street railway and additional connection to Toronto resulted in a period of growth and early suburbanization during the late 19th and early 20th centuries when 29% of the THCDs structures were built. Moderate growth continued throughout the second half of the 20th century as Thornhill was suburbanized and incorporated into the Regional Municipality of York, resulting in construction of 17% of the HCD's structures. Modern infill constructed after the creation of the THCD in 1984 accounts for 26% of the structures.

Chart 3 Overview Construction Periods in the Thornhill HCD



4.6.3.3 Architectural Styles and Influences

The THCD contains a wide range of architectural styles and influences, both historic and contemporary. Within the THCD's collection of 19th and early 20th century structures, the following styles or influences are present:

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- Classical Revival (Photo 15)
- Craftsman/Arts and Crafts (Photo 16)
- Edwardian (Photo 17), Gothic Revival (Photo 18)
- Vernacular (Photo 19 and Photo 20)

Mid to late 20th century styles include:

- Contemporary replicas of historical styles (Photo 21)
- Minimal Traditional (Photo 22)
- Brutalist (Photo 23)
- Modernist (Photo 24)
- Other 20th century Modern styles (Photo 25)

A breakdown of the architectural styles and influences present within the THCD is provided in Chart 4 below (note: N/A was applied to properties without a structure, such as the cemetery and parks/open space) (Figure 11).



Photo 15 Classical Revival place of worship, 140 Brooke Street, looking west



Photo 16 Craftsman/Arts and Crafts influenced residence, 77 Centre Street, looking south

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Photo 17 Edwardian influenced residence, 7666 Yonge Street, looking southwest



Photo 18 Gothic Revival residence, 18 Centre Street, looking northwest



Photo 19 19th century vernacular residence, 34 Centre Street, looking north



Photo 20 20th century vernacular residence, 137 Brooke Street, looking east

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Photo 21 Contemporary replica of a historical style, 7646 Yonge Street, looking west



Photo 22 Minimal Traditional Residence, 109 Centre Street, looking south



Photo 23 Brutalist structure, 7700 Yonge Street, looking west



Photo 24 Modernist residence, 18 Mill Street, looking north

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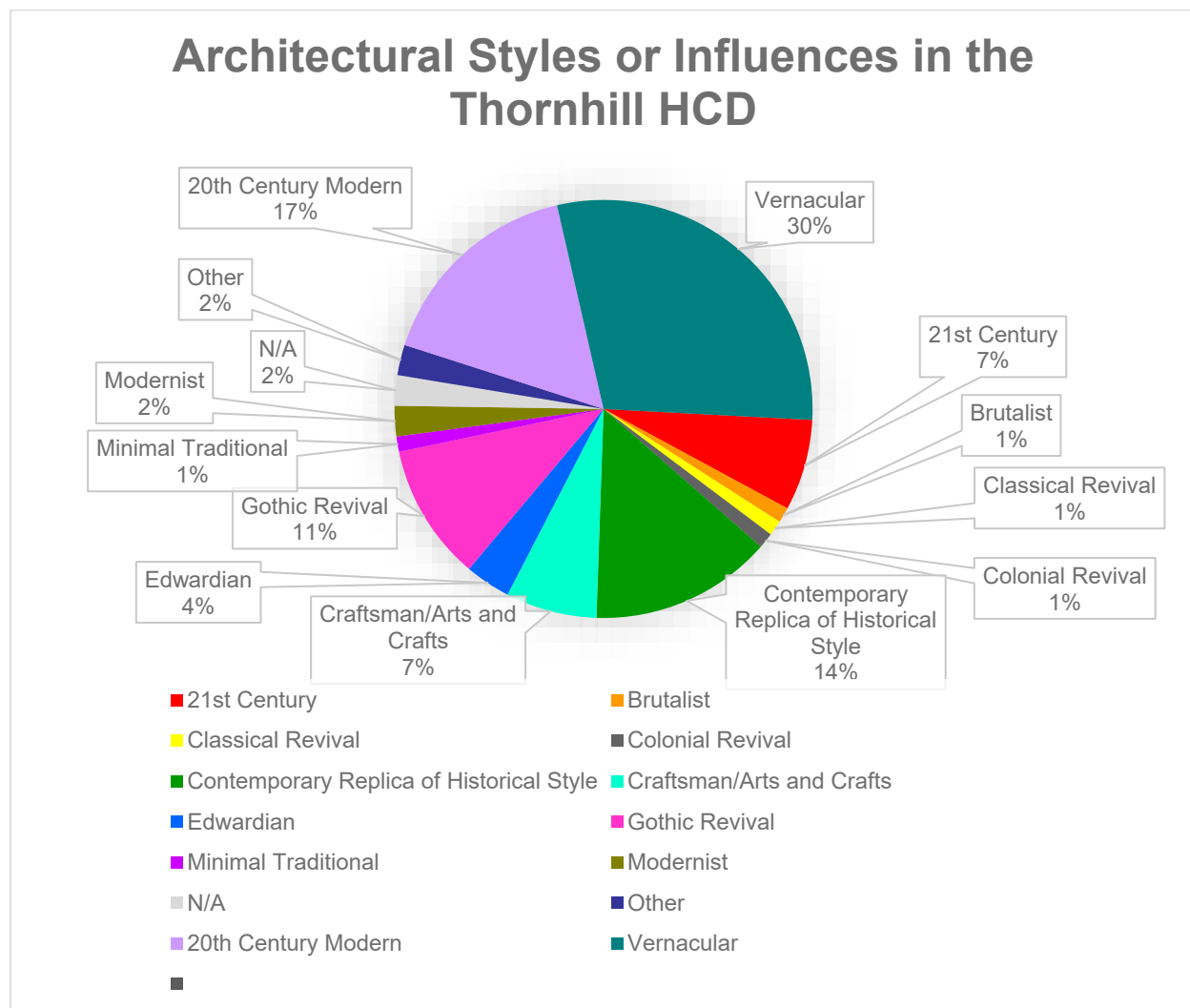
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**Photo 25 Other 20th Century Modern,
156 Brooke Street, looking
west**

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Chart 4 Architectural Styles or Influences in the Thornhill HCD



Vernacular structures are the most common structures within the THCD at 29% of the building stock. Vernacular architecture is characterized as making use of local materials and forms (Humphreys and Sykes 1974). Within the THCD, vernacular architectural trends are illustrated in a wide variety of structures, ranging from early to mid-19th century frame or brick houses to mid-20th century bungalows and one- and one-half storey residences. Vernacular trends are also illustrated in the THCD through the blending of architectural styles or modifications over time that have resulted in some residences no longer having one distinct architectural style. The prevalence of

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vernacular architecture from the early to mid-19th century through the mid-20th century reflects Thornhill's largely rural and mill-associated character along with the socio-economic class of Thornhill's historic population, contributing to the historic sense of place still observable within the THCD.

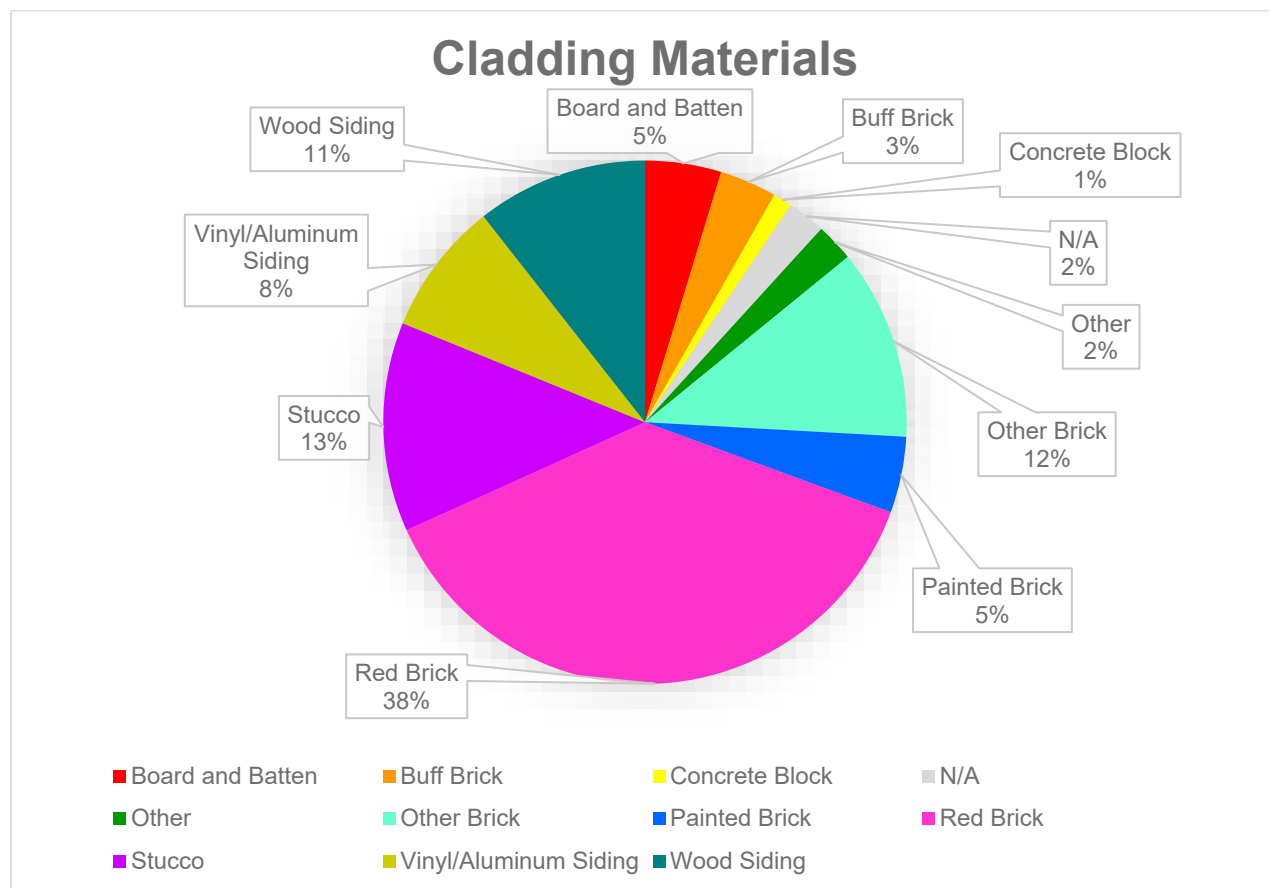
In addition to vernacular structures, 20th century modern structures and contemporary replicas of historical styles also account for larger portions of the building stock at 17% and 14% respectively. Together, vernacular, 20th century modern, and contemporary replicas of historical styles account for 60% of the 85 structures within the THCD. The remaining 40% of the building stock is split into small groups that include 11 different architectural styles or influences.

4.6.3.4 Cladding Materials

The THCD contains structures with a variety of cladding materials. Brick is the most common of these materials, with red brick cladding accounting for 38% of the structures (Chart 5 and Figure 12). Together, buff (or yellow) brick, painted brick, and other brick account for 20% of the building stock. Combined, all four types of brick account for the cladding on just over half of the structures within the THCD (58%). Brick cladding is associated with both historical and contemporary structures within the THCD. While brick is a common building material in Thornhill, it should be noted that it was also a common historical building material across much of southwestern Ontario.

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Chart 5 Cladding Materials



Other cladding materials identified included stucco (13%), wood siding (11%), vinyl or aluminum siding (8%), board and batten (5%), concrete block (1%), and other (2%) (Figure 12. There are two properties within the THCD that do not have structures associated with them for which cladding material was entered as N/A (2%).

4.6.3.5 Heritage Integrity

The discussion of integrity is an important factor in determining cultural heritage value or interest, particularly in HCDs. Integrity is one of the characteristics identified in the Ontario Heritage Toolkit for evaluating the heritage attributes of an HCD. The Toolkit notes that, to be considered heritage attributes, buildings or structures, together with their site, should retain a large part of their integrity (i.e., their relationship to the historical state) (Government of Ontario 2006). As outlined in Section 4.6.1, the Project

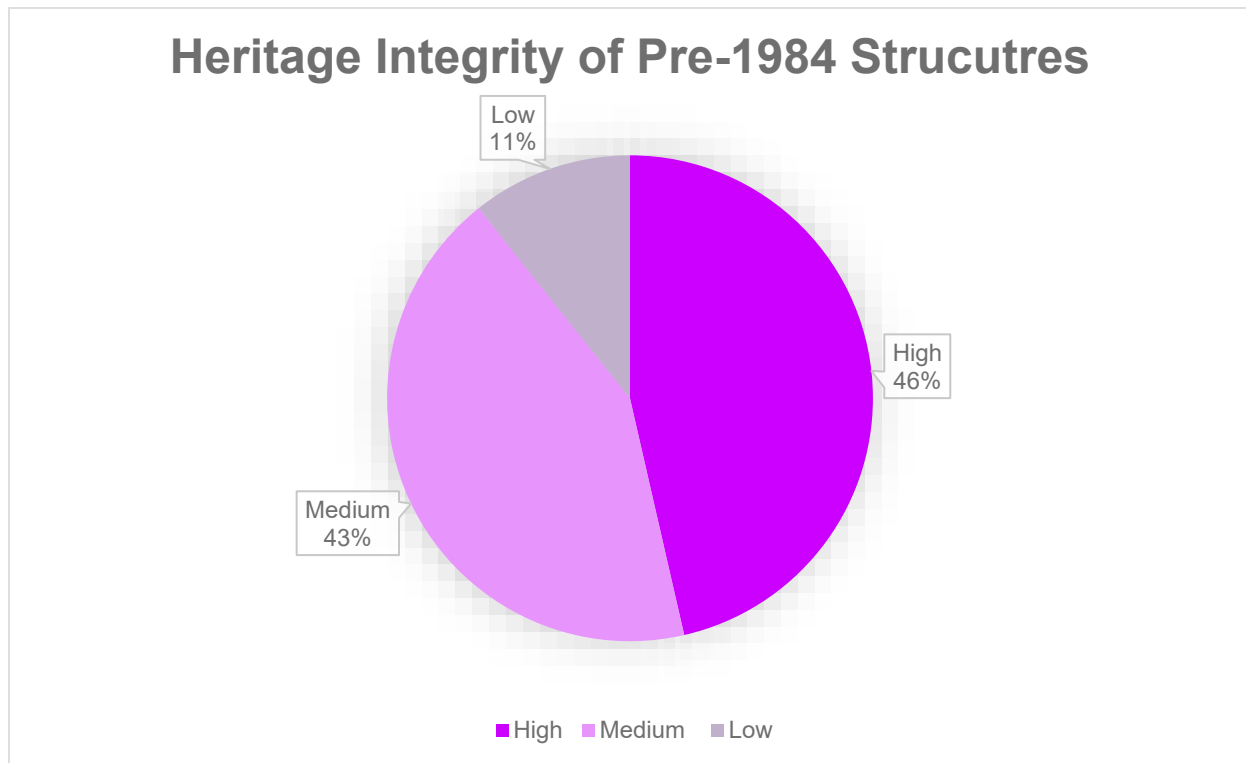
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Team classified the integrity of properties as high, medium, low, or N/A (for properties constructed after 1984). A total of 46% were identified as having a high degree of integrity, 43% were determined to retain moderate integrity, and 11% were classified as demonstrating low integrity (Chart 6) (Figure 13).

Chart 6 Heritage Integrity of Pre-1984 Structures



4.6.3.6 Historic Themes

Key themes were identified in Section 3.7 to reflect the evolution of Thornhill. To identify the prevalence of these themes in the built form, each theme has been associated with a structure or property based on the structure's age and a screening of historical associations and contextual value that was previously compiled for the 2007 Inventory, where applicable. There were 31 structures (approximately 36% of the THCD's building stock) for which the identified themes were not applicable. The remaining structures can be divided amongst the identified themes as follows:

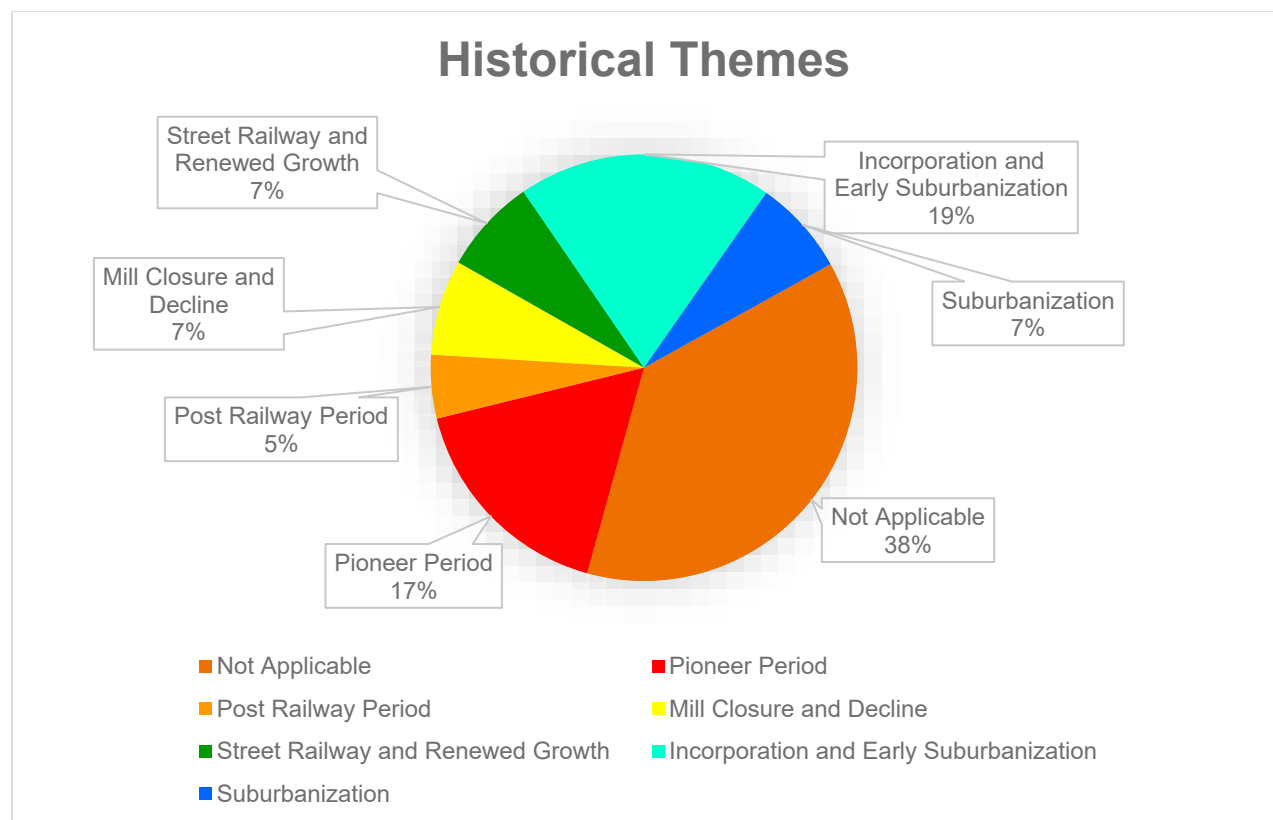
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- Pioneer Period (1792-1850) – 17%
- Post Railway Period (1851-1871) – 5%
- Mill Closure and Decline (1872-1895) – 7%
- Street Railway and Renewed Growth (1896-1919) – 7%
- Incorporation and Early Suburbanization (1920-1945) – 19%
- Suburbanization (1946-1969) – 9%
- Integration (1970-1984) – 0%
- Thornhill HCD Adopted (1984 to Present) – 0% (Figure 14 and Chart 7)

Chart 7 Historical Themes



Structures constructed between 1920 and 1945 and associated with the theme of “Incorporation and Early Suburbanization” form the largest group in the THCD, accounting for 19% of the structures. By the 1970s, the development of Thornhill had begun to merge with broader, regional trends in contrast to the unique, local trends historically associated with Thornhill’s development. As a result, no structures with local,



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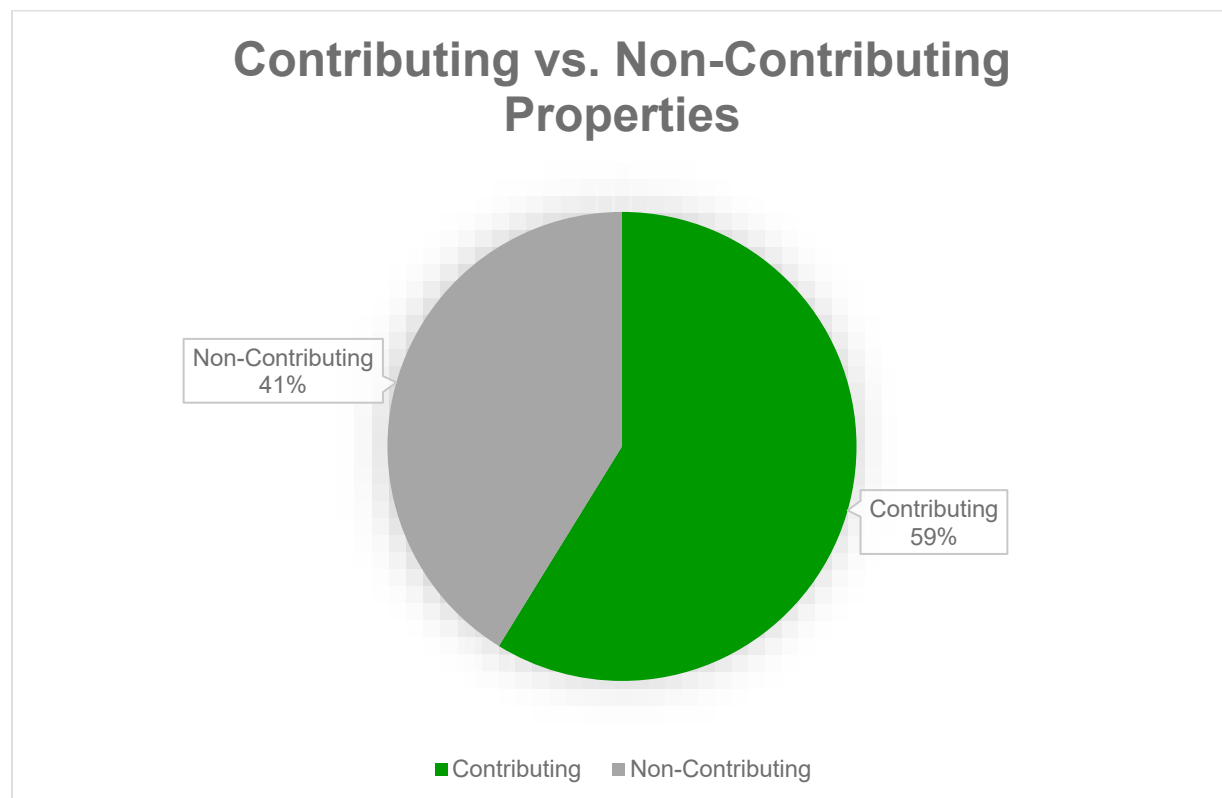
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identifiably Thornhill-related connections to the “Integration” and “Thornhill HCD Adopted” themes were identified.

4.6.3.7 Contributing Properties

As discussed in Section 4.2.4, revisions to the OHA and O. Reg. 9/06 require 25% of the properties within a proposed HCD meet two or more of the prescribed criteria. While THCD is already an existing HCD, this requirement provides a useful framework for determining which properties can be considered to be “contributing” to the HCD character. Within the THCD, 50 structures meet two criteria and are therefore considered to be contributing properties (Chart 8 and Figure 15).

Chart 8 Contributing vs. Non-Contributing Properties



In addition to contributing and non-contributing properties, landscape components, streetscaping, and vegetation can also contribute to an HCDs character. This is further discussed in Section 4.7.





Stantec

Legend

HCD Boundary

Property Parcel

Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Building Height (Number of Stories)

1

1.5

2

2.5

N/A

Base Features

Major Road

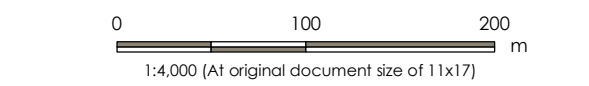
Minor Road

Watercourse

Municipal Boundary

Municipal Boundary, Lower

Wooded Area

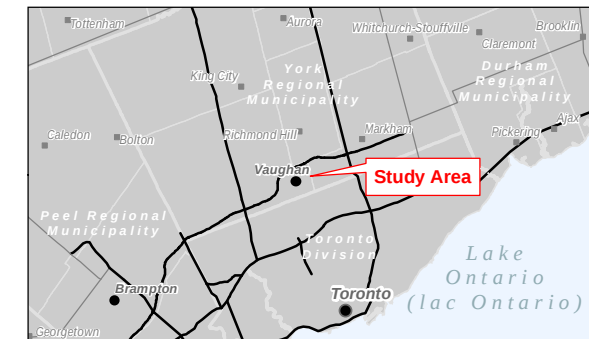


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4. Orthoimagery . Date of imagery, unknown.



Project Location

City of Vaughan

160941068 REV2

Prepared by BF on 2024-09-19

Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

Client/Project

CITY OF VAUGHAN

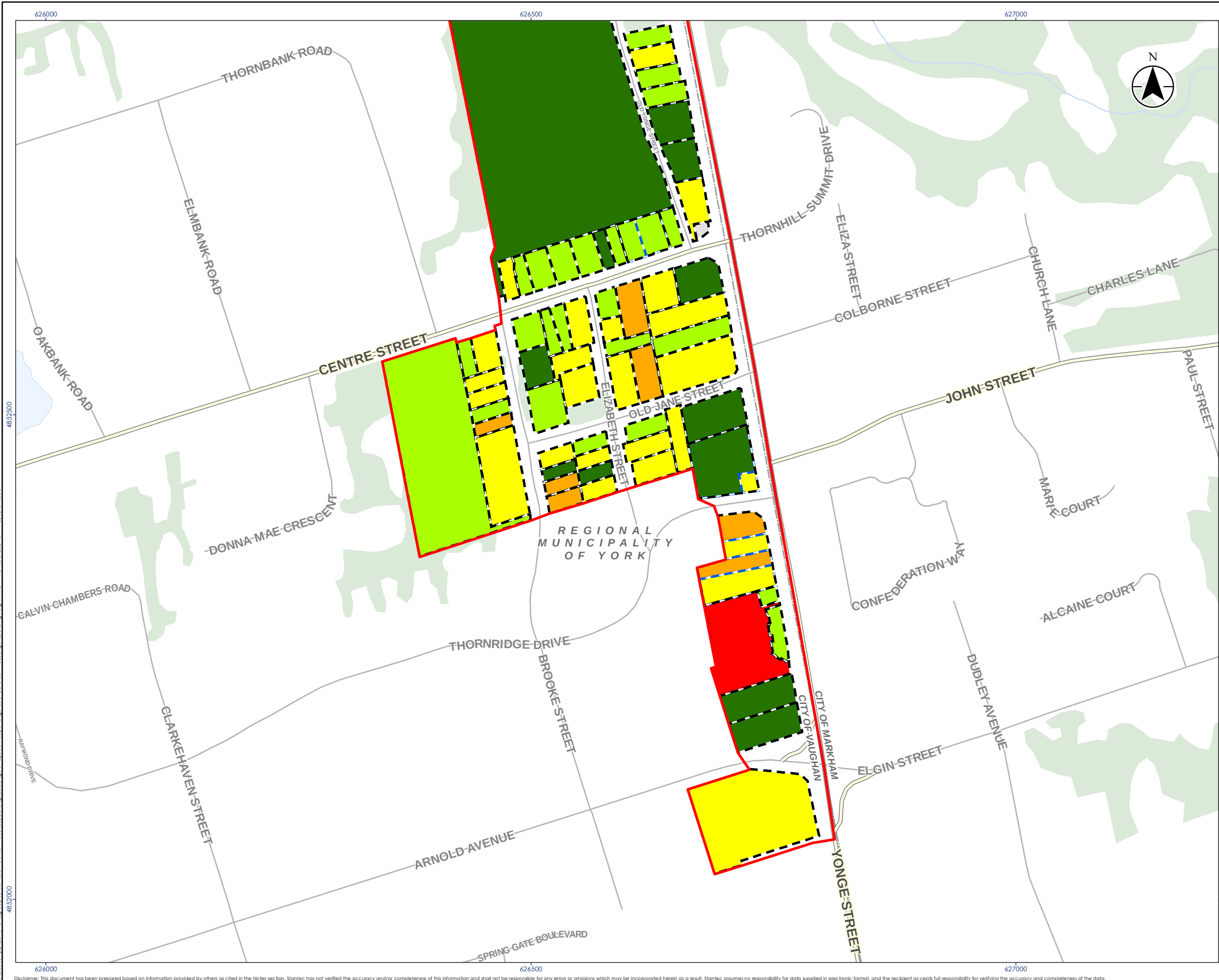
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Figure No.

9.1

Title

Building Height



Legend

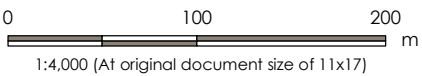
- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Building Height (Number of Stories)

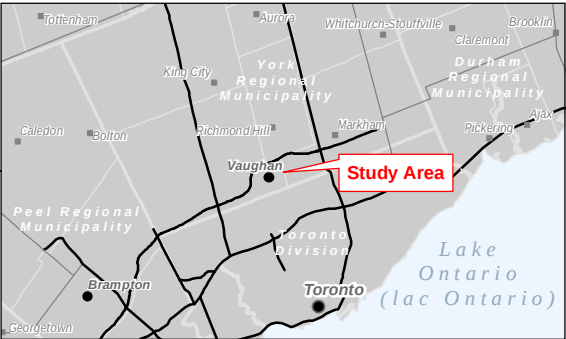
- 1
- 1.5
- 2
- 2.5
- 6
- N/A

Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



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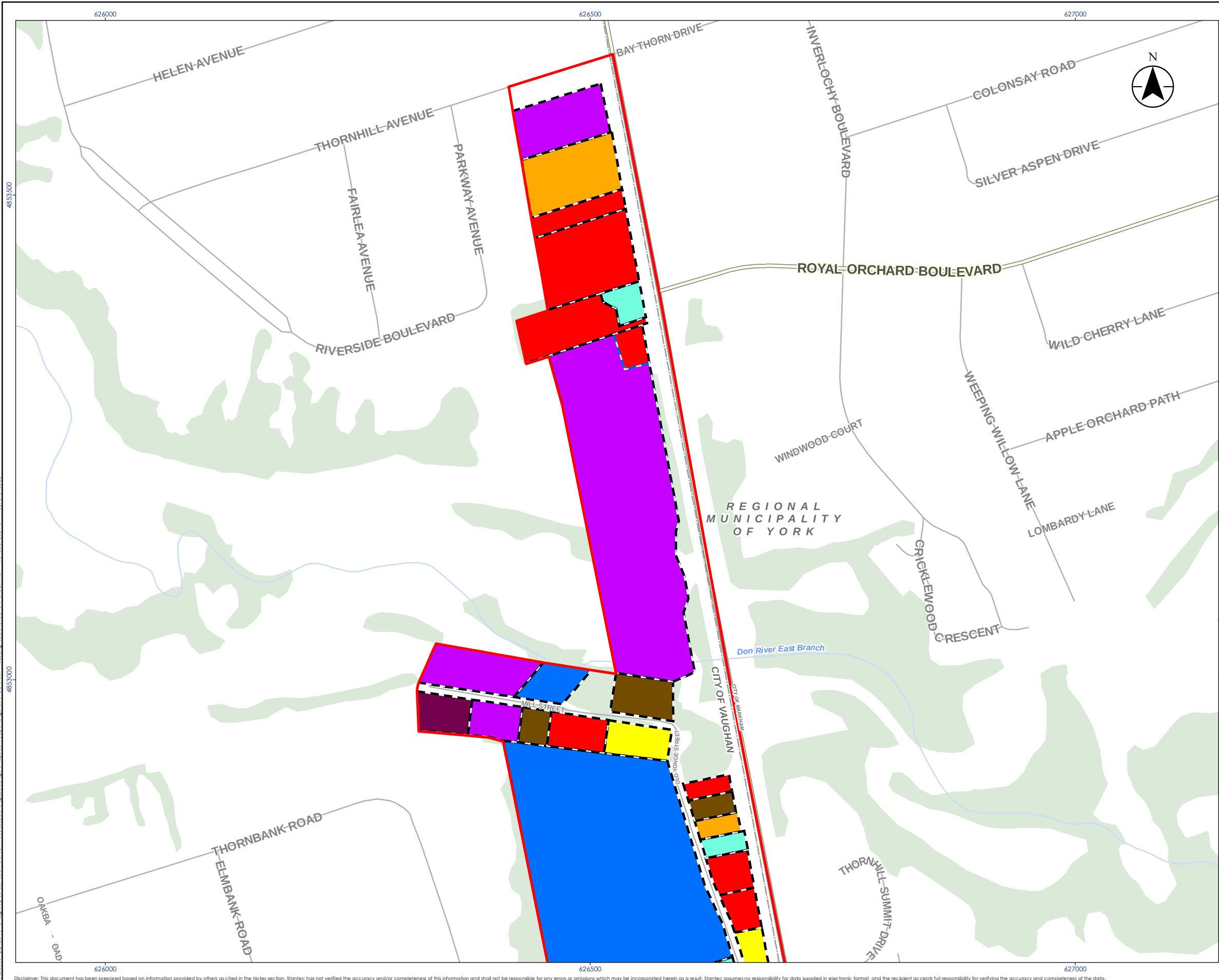
Project Location
City of Vaughan

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Prepared by BF on 2024-09-19
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

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Figure No.
9.2

Title
Building Height



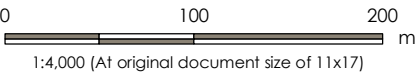
- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Construction Period

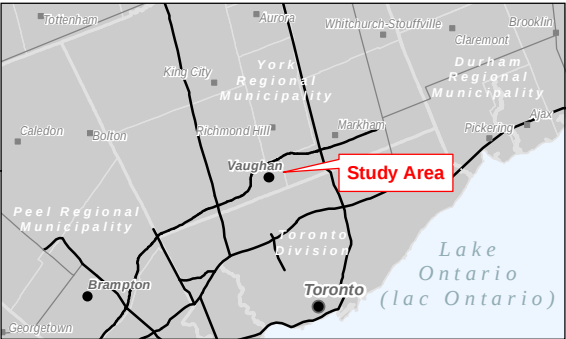
- Before 1850
- 1851-1871
- 1872-1895
- 1920-1945
- 1946-1969
- 1970-1984
- 1985-2007
- After 2008

Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



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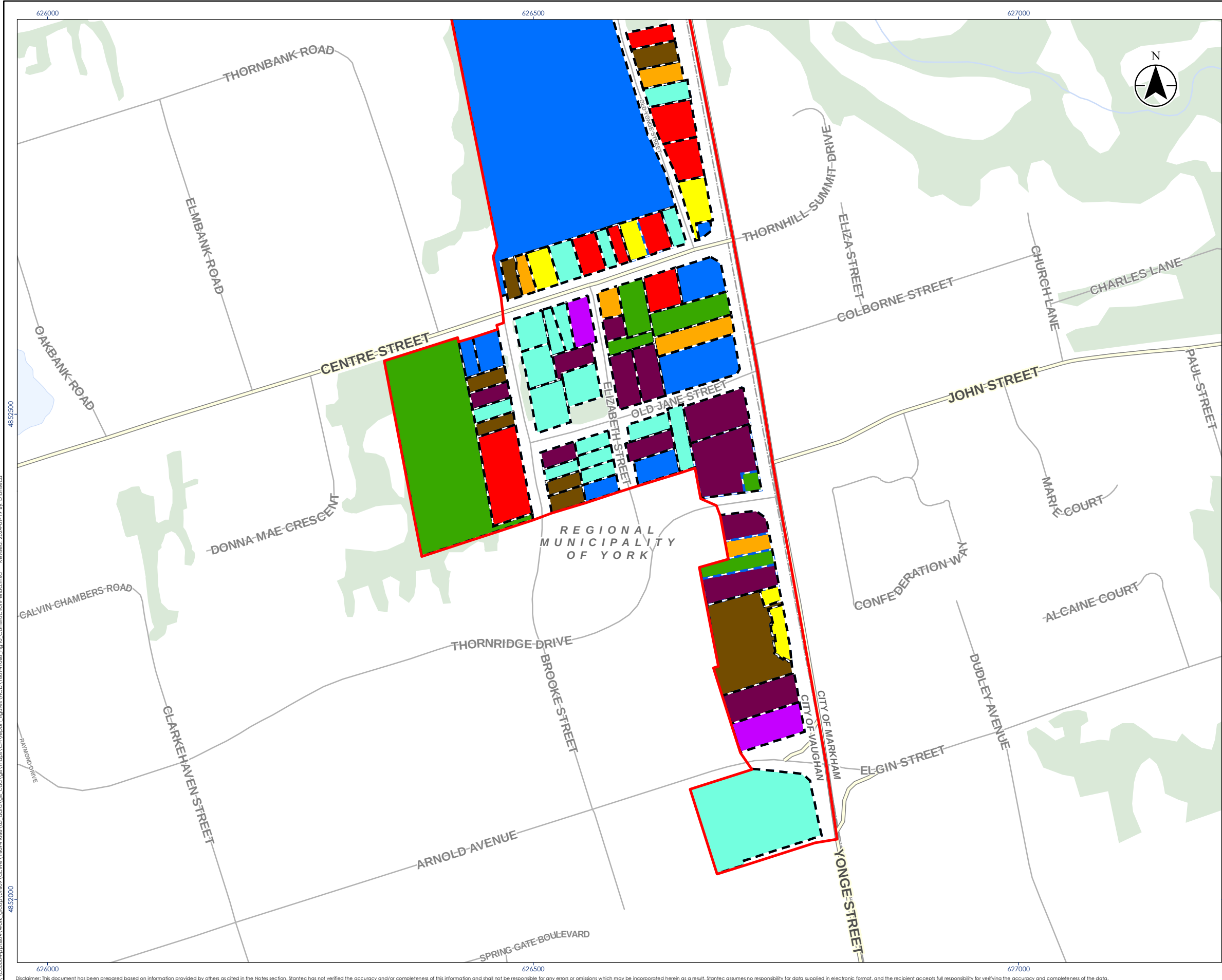


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Figure No.
10.1

Title
Construction Period



Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Construction Period

- Before 1850
- 1851-1871
- 1872-1895
- 1896-1919
- 1920-1945
- 1946-1969
- 1970-1984
- 1985-2007
- After 2008

Base Features

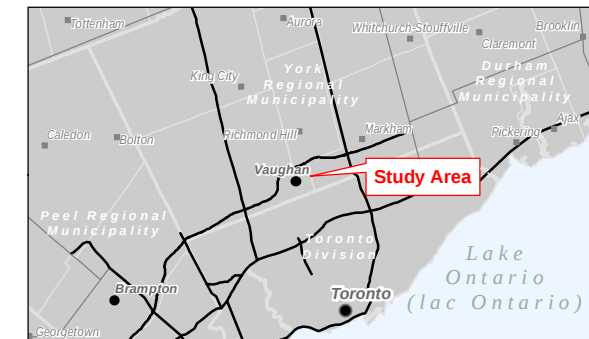
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area

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	Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19
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CITY OF VAUGHAN	
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT	
Figure No.	
10.2	
Title	
Construction Period	

626000 626500 627000

4852500 4852000

THORNBANK ROAD

ELMBANK ROAD

OAKBANK ROAD

CENTRE STREET

THORNHILL SUMMIT DRIVE

ELIZA STREET

COLBORNE STREET

CHURCH LANE

CHARLES LANE

PAUL STREET

DONNA MAE CRESCENT

CALVIN CHAMBERS ROAD

THORNTRIDGE DRIVE

BROOKE STREET

ARNOLD AVENUE

SPRING GATE BOULEVARD

YONGE STREET

ELGIN STREET

DUDLEY AVENUE

ALGAIN COURT

CONFEDERATION WAY

MARIE COURT

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

CITY OF VAUGHAN

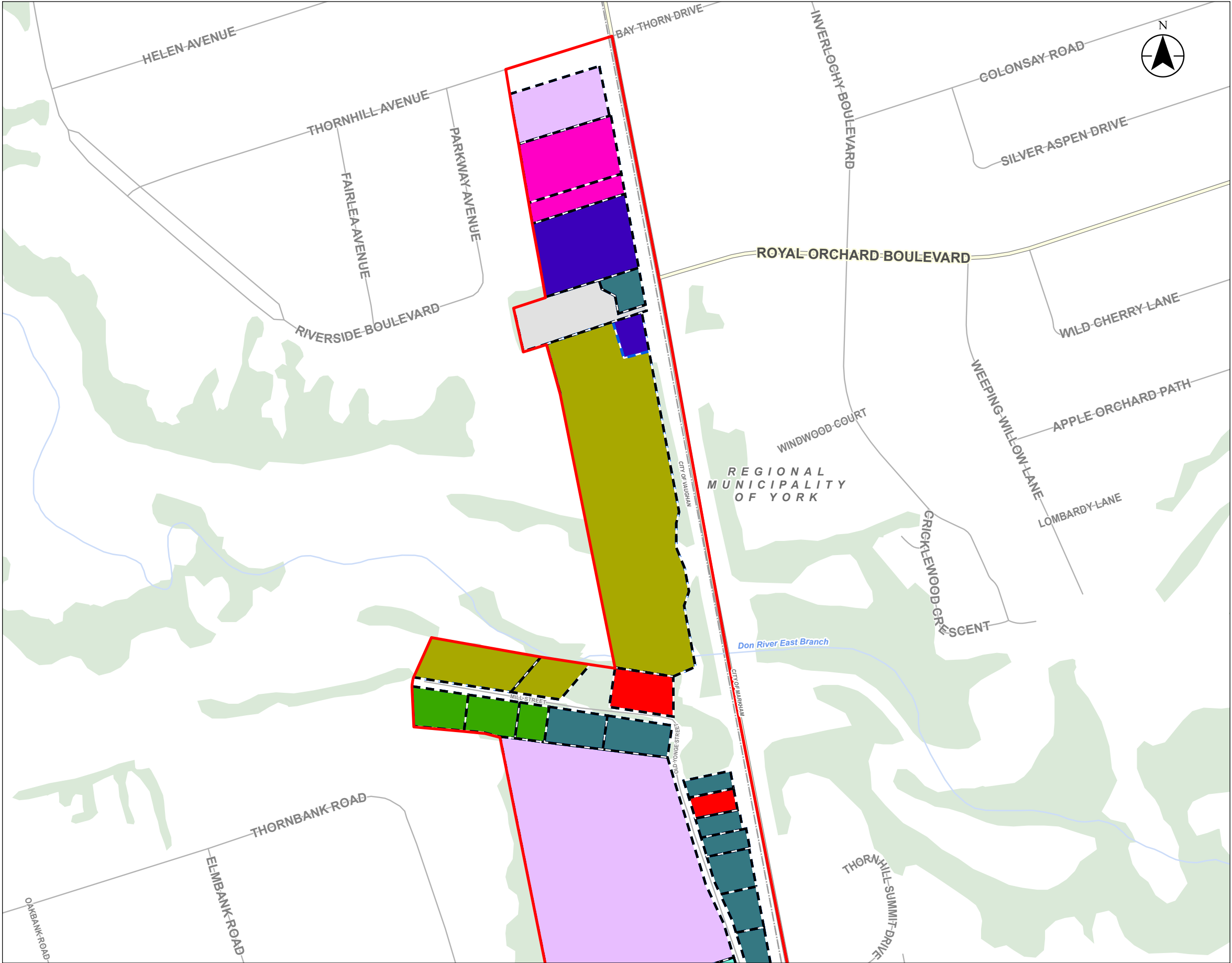
CITY OF MARKHAM

LAKE ONTARIO (lac Ontario)

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Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Architectural Style

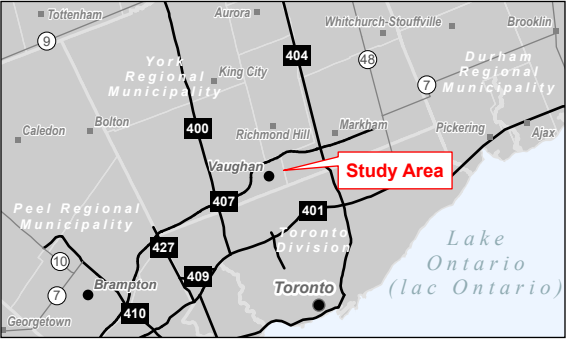
- 21st Century
- Brutalist
- Classical Revival
- Contemporary Replica of Historical Style
- Craftsman/Arts and Crafts
- Edwardian
- Gothic Revival
- Minimal Traditional
- Modernist
- Other
- 20th Century Modern
- Vernacular
- N/A

Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area

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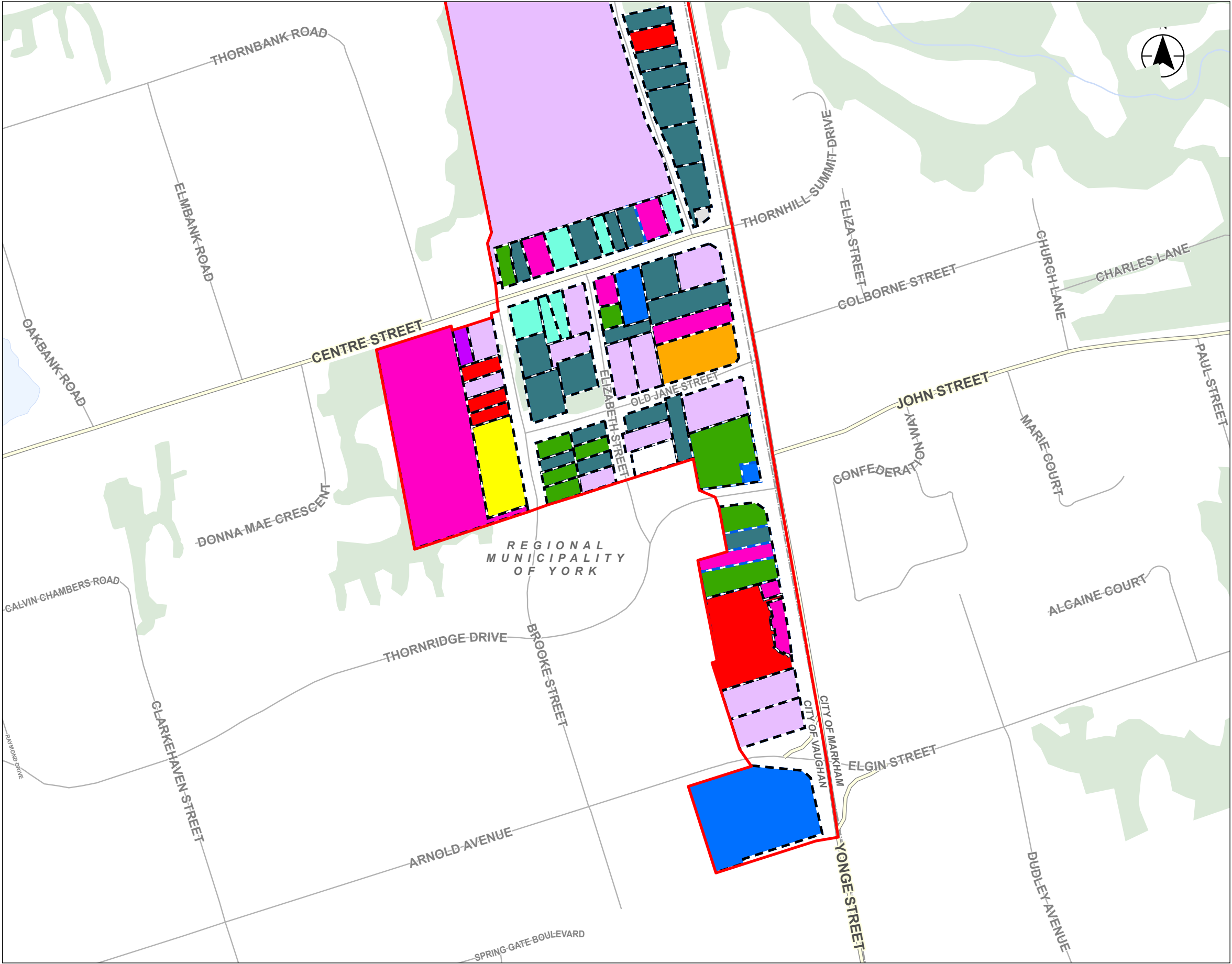
160941068 REV3
Prepared by BF on 2025-10-01
Technical Review by AW on 2025-10-01

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CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
11.1

Title
Architectural Style or Influence

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Revised: 2025-10-01 By: blonscca



Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Architectural Style

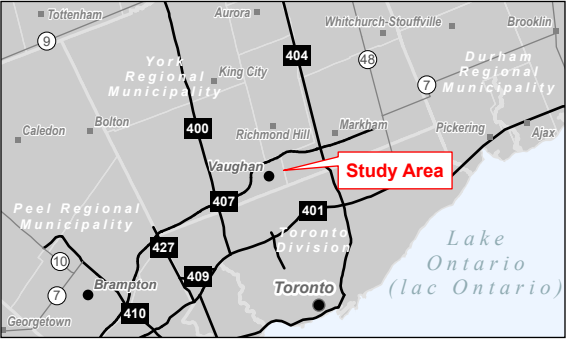
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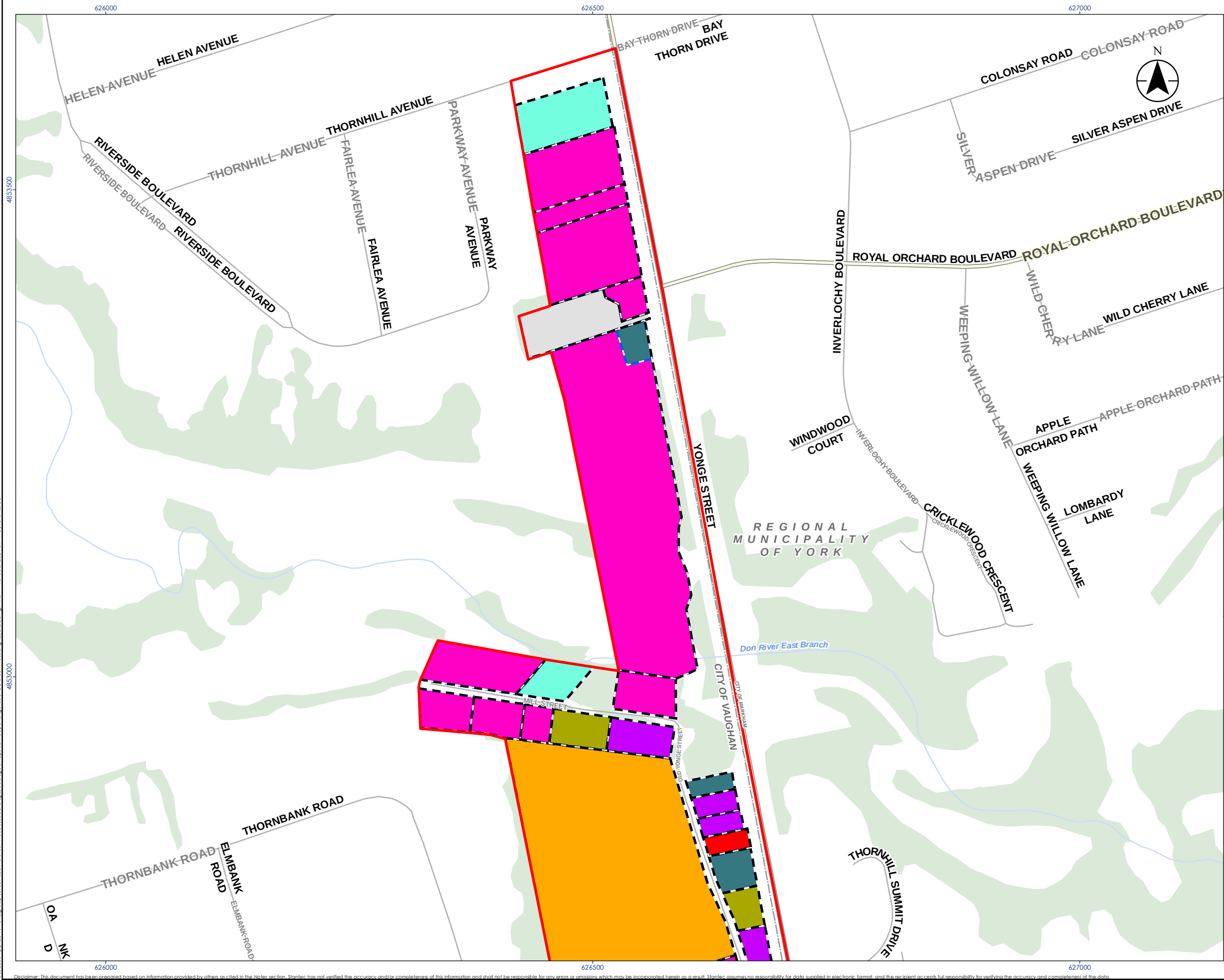


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THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
11.2

Title
Architectural Style or Influence



Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Cladding

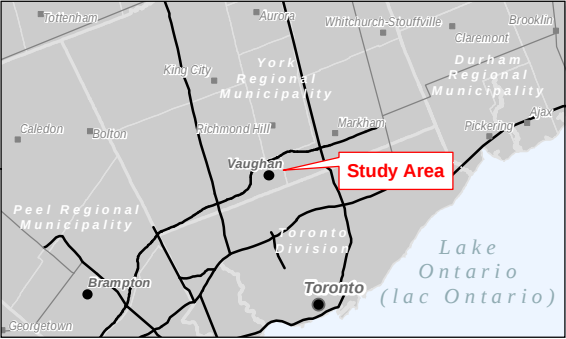
- Board and Batten
- Buff Brick
- Other Brick
- Painted Brick
- Red Brick
- Stucco
- Vinyl/Aluminum Siding
- Wood Siding
- N/A

Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area

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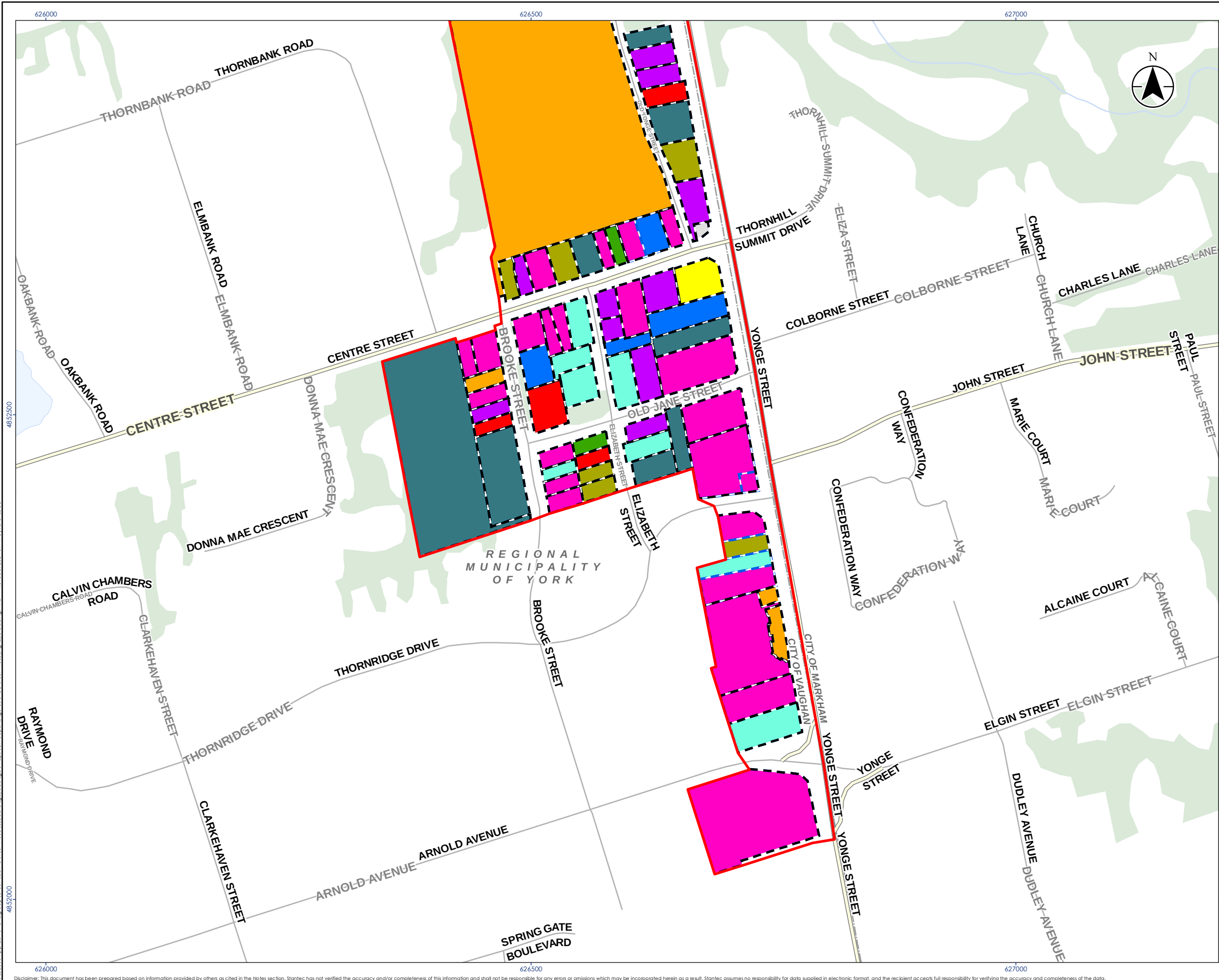
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CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
12.1

Title
Cladding



Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Cladding

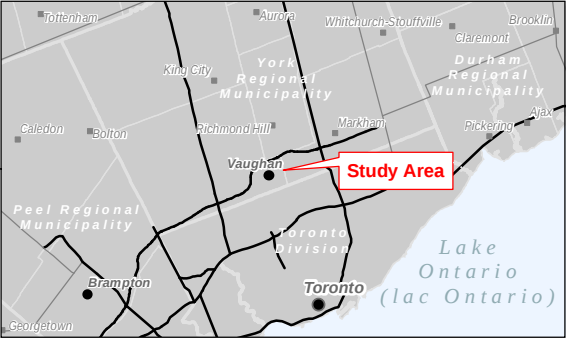
- Board and Batten
- Buff Brick
- Concrete Block
- Other
- Other Brick
- Painted Brick
- Red Brick
- Stucco
- Vinyl/Aluminum Siding
- Wood Siding
- N/A

Base Features

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- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
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- Notes
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CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
12.2

Title
Cladding

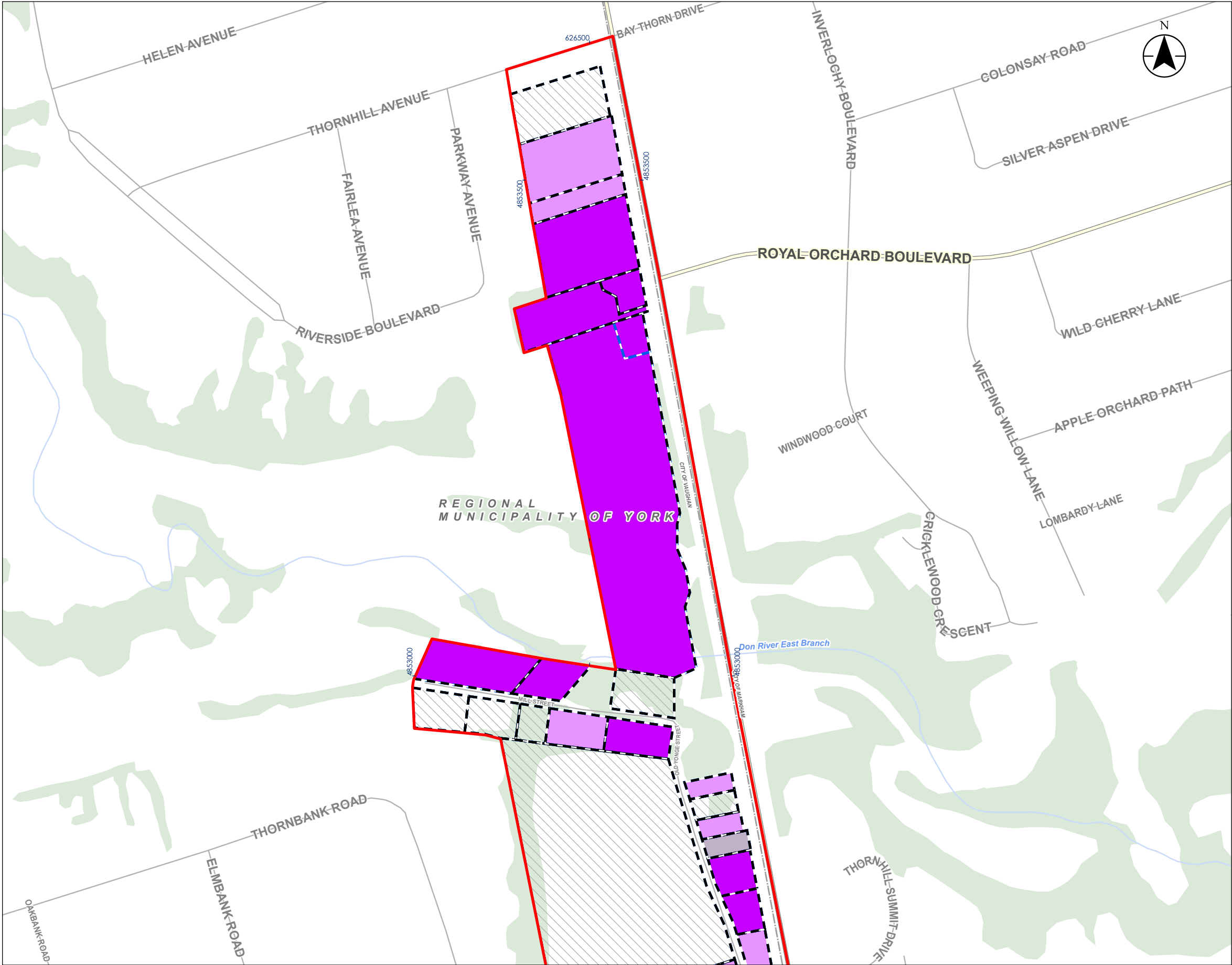
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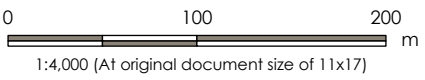
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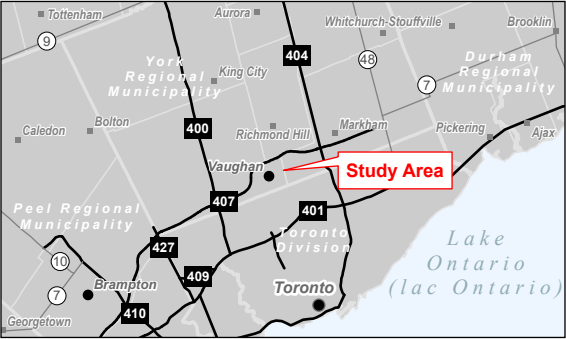
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- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Heritage Integrity**
- High
 - Medium
 - Low
 - N/A
- Base Features**
- Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



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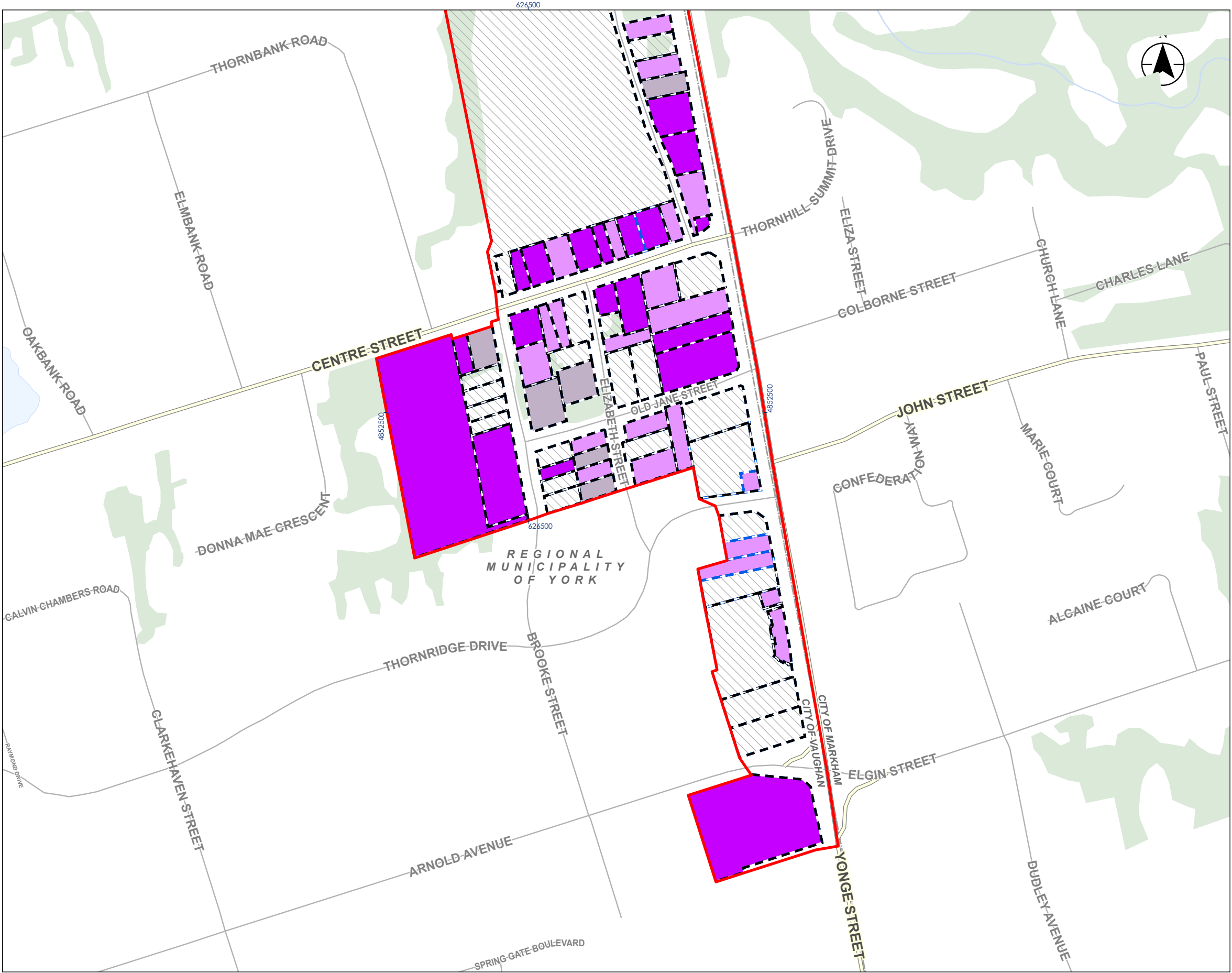
160941068 REV3
Prepared by BF on 2025-10-01
Technical Review by AW on 2025-10-01

Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

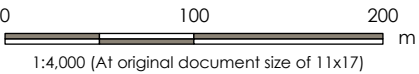
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Title
Heritage Integrity

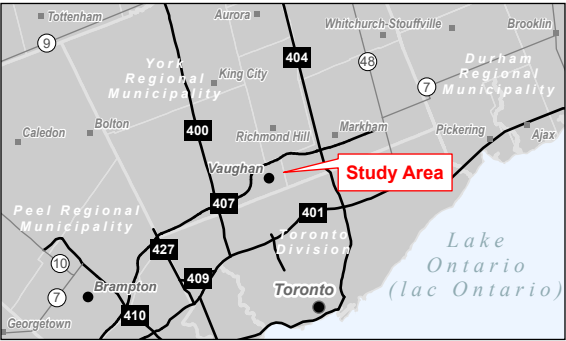
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- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Heritage Integrity**
- High
 - Medium
 - Low
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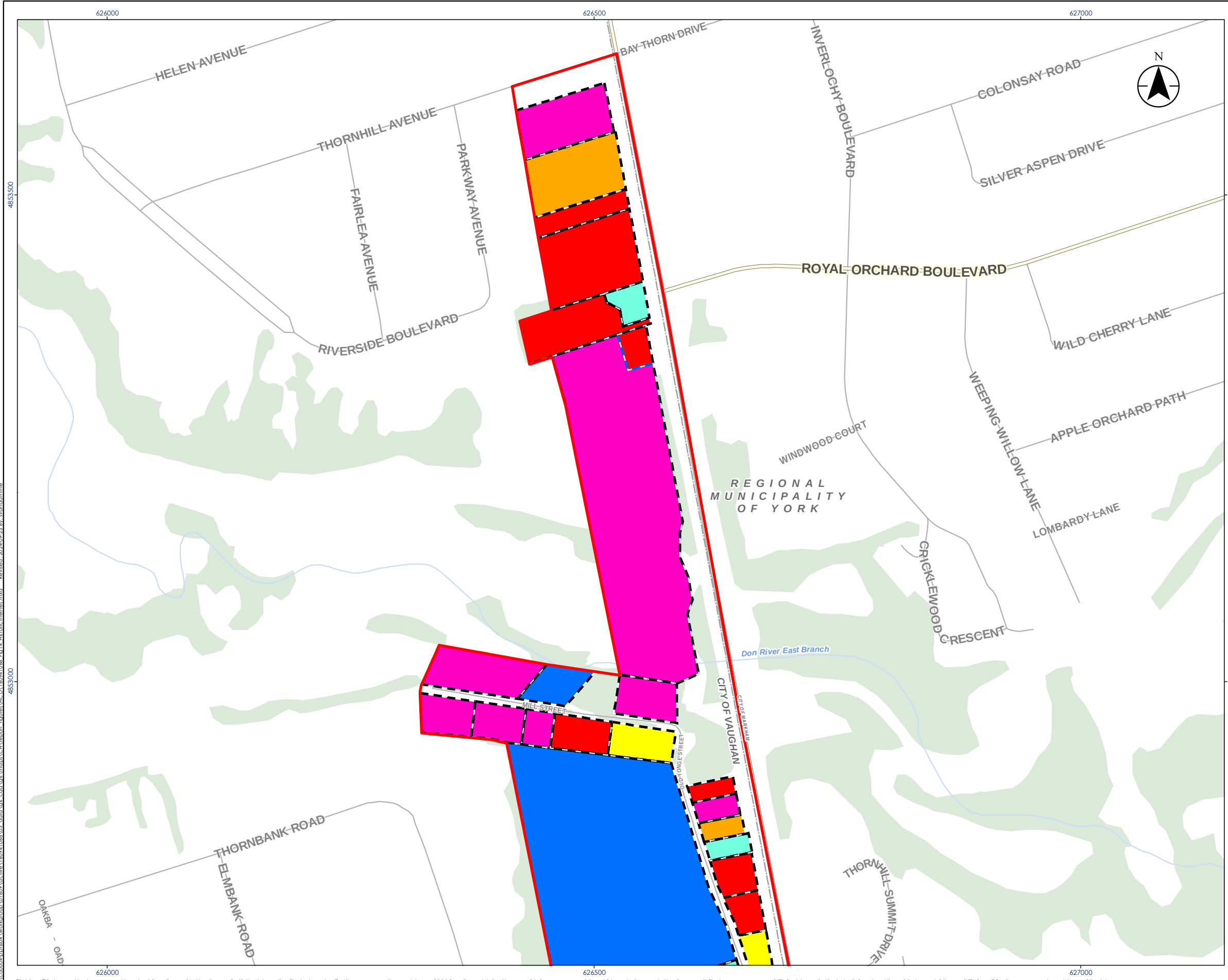
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Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
13.2

Title
Heritage Integrity



Legend

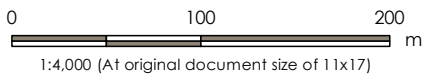
- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Thematic Period

- Pioneer Period (1792-1850)
- Post Railway Period (1851-1871)
- Mill Closure and Decline (1872-1895)
- Incorporation and Early Suburbanization (1920-1945)
- Suburbanization (1946-1969)
- Not Applicable

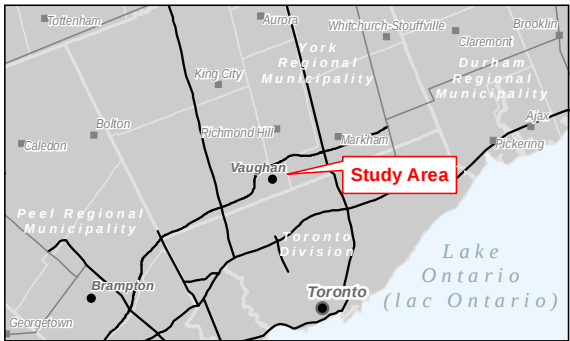
Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



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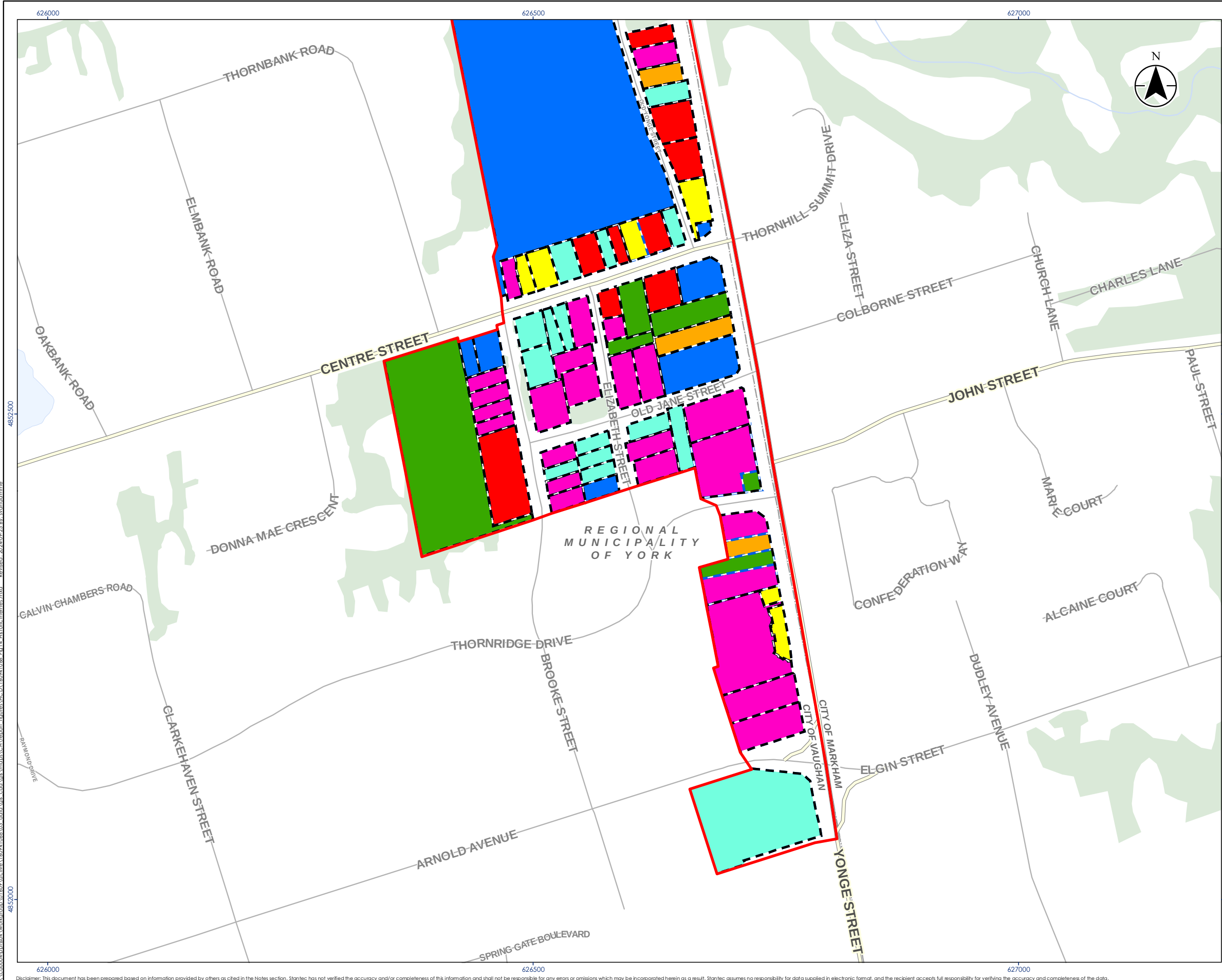


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CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
14.1

Title
Historic Themes





Legend

-  HCD Boundary
-  Property Parcel
-  Separate Address and Structure within Parcel

Thematic Period

-  Pioneer Period (1792-1850)
-  Post Railway Period (1851-1871)
-  Mill Closure and Decline (1872-1895)
-  Street Railway and Renewed Growth (1896-1919)
-  Incorporation and Early Suburbanization (1920-1945)
-  Suburbanization (1946-1969)
-  Not Applicable

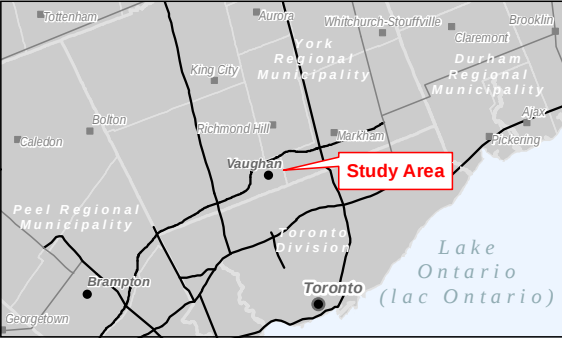
Base Features

-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Watercourse
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Municipal Boundary, Lower
-  Wooded Area

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CITY OF VAUGHAN

THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.

14.2

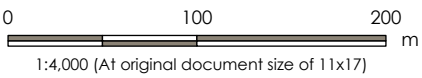
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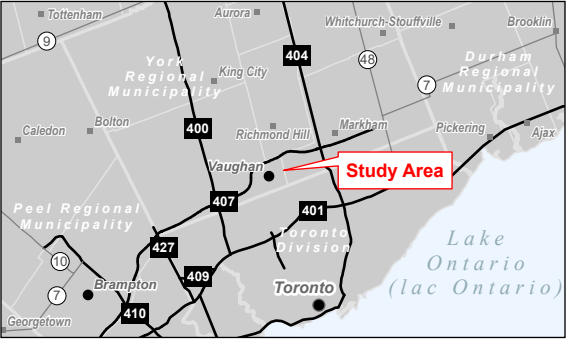
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- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
 - Contributing Properties
- Base Features
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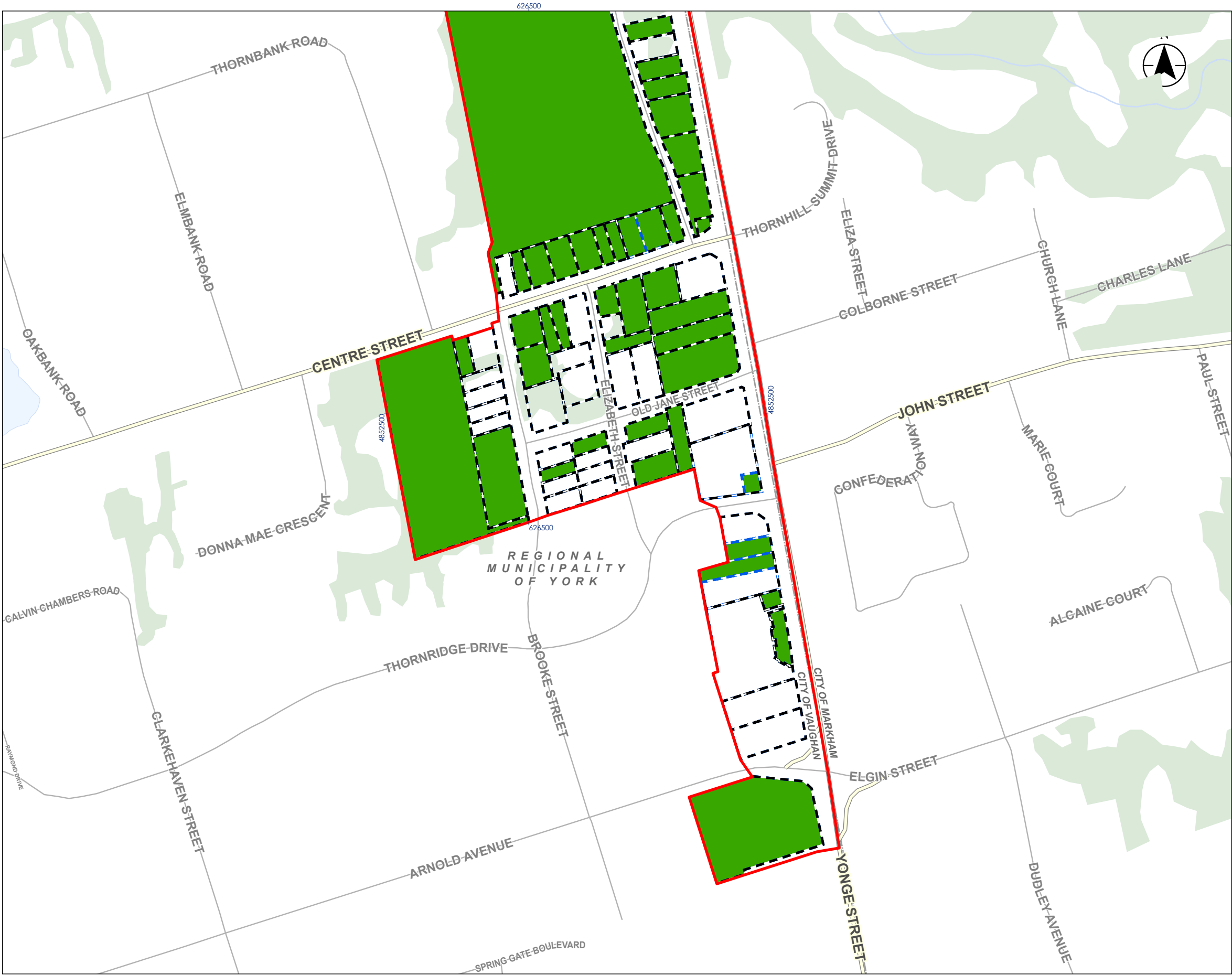
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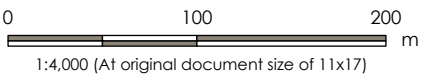
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CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
15.1

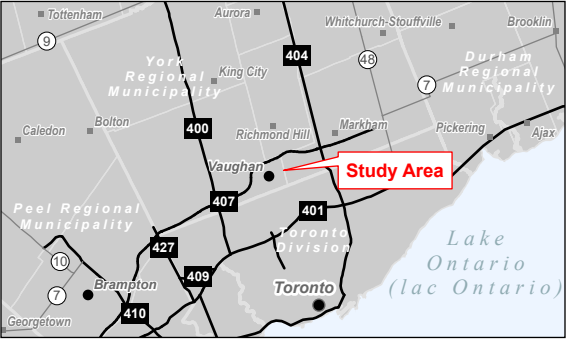
Title
Contributing Properties



- Legend
- HCD Boundary
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THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
15.2

Title
Contributing Properties

4.7 Landscaping, Streetscaping, and Vegetation

4.7.1 Approaches and Gateways

The main approaches and gateways to the THCD are located on Centre Street and Yonge Street. Approaches to or from a place are either detectable or undetectable and both physical and visual. Approaches that are considered detectable are those which are emphasized by gateways, or other signals, that indicate the space or place is somehow different from adjacent areas. Undetectable approaches are entries into an area that are not clearly defined or readily discernible from the surrounding context.

Within the THCD, the approaches are relatively undetectable. There are no dominant gateway features such as plantings, public art, changes in topography, or changes in land use exist to readily delineate the start of the THCD. The primary indicators of the THCD boundary are signs located on Centre Street and Yonge Street. In the case of the signs along Centre Street and the south boundary of Yonge Street, these signs are not actually located at the THCD boundary. This is by design, as the existing THCD Plan notes:

Gateway markers at principal entrances to the District would serve to reinforce its identity and promote the District as a place of unique historical character in the community and region. Markers should be placed so they reinforce an existing sense of entrance, rather than at the exact point that a roadway crosses the District boundary.

(Carter 2007: 129)

In keeping with this guideline's policy regarding the placement of entrance signs, the signs indicating the start of the THCD are in varied locations. On Centre Street, it is located approximately 100 metres east of the THCD boundary. On Yonge Street, the south sign is located approximately 250 metres to the north of the boundary and is located within the MTHCD. The north sign on Yonge Street is located near the start of

Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

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THCD. However, these approaches are mostly undetectable due to the lack of concentrations of contributing properties adjacent to the signs (Photo 26).



Photo 26 Gateway Sign Along the North Side of Yonge Street, Looking South

4.7.2 Streetscape

Yonge Street: Detailed streetscape planning for the Yonge Street corridor north of Steeles Avenue is contained in the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan (SYSCPM) prepared in 2011 (EDA Collaborative 2011). The SYSCPM identified the THCD as the “Old Thornhill District” and identified the THCD as a “vibrant heritage areas...to be protected and enhanced through recognition of the village character and scale” (EDA Collaborative 2011: 23).

Within and adjacent to the THCD, Yonge Street is a four-lane arterial roadway with dedicated turning lanes (Photo 27). Yonge Street is paved with asphalt and contains concrete curbs. There is limited on-street parking along Yonge Street itself, though parking is available in many of the shopping plazas. Within the THCD, a concrete sidewalk runs along the street. This concrete sidewalk is variously separated from the roadway by a grass boulevard, asphalt paved boulevard, interlocking brick pavers, and

Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

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raised planters. Wood utility poles with municipal streetlighting run along both sides of the roadway. Street trees within the THCD on Yonge Street are mostly small to intermediate trees, including Callery Pear and Japanese Lilac, some of which contain notable signs of decline. Many of the trees are located in raised planters. Busy roadways with large sidewalks are a challenging environment for street trees to flourish. The average urban street tree has a life expectancy of seven to 10 years. This is due to an inadequate volume of soil for tree root growth and the highly compacted nature of soil underneath sidewalks and roadways. Additional stress is caused by frequent salting during winter months (Cornell University 2009).

The general character of Yonge Street within the THCD is mixed and contains institutional, residential, commercial, and recreational properties. Institutional properties include the Thornhill Public School (7554 Yonge Street) and the Bell telephone building (7700 Yonge Street). Residential properties predominantly include 19th to early 20th century residences converted to commercial use, low-rise residences from the late 20th century, and a mid-rise apartment building with a commercial first storey. Commercial properties include shopping plazas and detached structures. The Thornhill Club fronts Yonge Street within the Don River Valley. The decline in elevation towards the valley and mature vegetation of this area stands in contrast to much of the surrounding area on Yonge Street (Photo 28). The SYSCPM identified this area as the “Don River Bridge Threshold” and noted this valley’s role as a potential interpretive gateway based on the “natural forest qualities” of the area (EDA Collaborative 2011: 34). As Yonge Street ascends out of the valley when traveling north, the Holy Trinity Cemetery is located on the west side of the roadway. The cemetery is set back and largely not visible from the roadway.

Centre Street: Within and adjacent to the THCD, Centre Street is a two-lane road paved with asphalt with concrete curbs. No on-street parking is available. Within the THCD, Centre Street contains concrete sidewalks separated from the roadway by grass boulevards. Wood utility poles with municipal streetlighting line both sides of the



Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

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roadway. Small to intermediate street trees are located along parts of the boulevard and primarily consist of Norway maple trees.

The general character of Centre Street is residential and includes residential properties which have been converted to commercial use. The two-lane configuration of the roadway, grass boulevards, and continued maintenance of front lawns with mature trees gives Centre Street a more suburban character when compared to Yonge Street. In addition, a number of 19th to early 20th century residences remain present, contributing to a more distinct sense of place along the street (Photo 29).

Old Jane Street, Brooke Street, and Elizabeth Street: Within and adjacent to the THCD, these streets are two-lane roads paved with asphalt. These roads contain no curbs and limited on-street parking. Aside from a small section of concrete sidewalk near Holy Trinity Church, there are no sidewalks within this area. Wood utility poles line the roadways and provide municipal streetlighting (Photo 30). A small creek bed runs east through this area. Two small bridges with stone barriers, spanning the creek, are located on Brooke Street and Elizabeth Street (Photo 31).

The general character of this area is residential and consists of a mix of 19th century through 21st century detached residences. The front yards of properties are landscaped with lawns; shrubs; gardens; and small, intermediate, and mature deciduous and coniferous trees. The differing styles, setbacks, and massing of the residences give this area a rural and village-like character. This character is supported by the lack of sidewalks and curbs. The Holy Trinity Church is a landmark structure within this area and is prominently visible when looking west down Old Jane Street.

Old Yonge Street and Mill Street: Old Yonge Street and Mill Street are located entirely within the THCD. These streets are two-lane roads paved with asphalt. Both roads contain no curbs or sidewalks, and no on-street parking is available (Photo 32). Wood utility poles line the roads and provide municipal streetlighting. Old Yonge Street begins at Centre Street and then declines in elevation towards the Don River Valley and



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4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

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Thornhill Club. Old Yonge Street becomes Mill Street at a sharp curve towards the west. Both sides of each road are lined with small, intermediate, and mature deciduous and coniferous trees.

The general character of this area is civic and residential. The east side of Old Yonge Street is lined mostly with 19th to early 20th century residences that also front Yonge Street, while the west side provides access to Thornhill Park. Mill Street contains a mix of 19th to early 20th century residences (some of which have been heavily modified), a mid-20th century ranch style residence, and a new residence that was under construction in the spring and summer of 2024.



Photo 27 Yonge Street at Centre Street intersection, looking south



Photo 28 Yonge Street within Don River Valley, looking south



Photo 29 Centre Street, looking west



Photo 30 Old Jane Street, looking west

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4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

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Photo 31 Bridge over creek on Elizabeth Street, looking south



Photo 32 Old Yonge Street, looking south

4.7.3 Parks and Open Spaces

The THCD contains a mix of private and public open space. This takes the form of a cemetery, passive and active-use parks, and a private club with a golf course. These parks and open spaces are further discussed below.

Holy Trinity Cemetery: The Holy Trinity Cemetery is located at 8004 Yonge Street. The cemetery is set back from the roadway and accessed from a parking lot shared with the Thornhill Baptist Church. As a result, the cemetery is not particularly notable to motorists traveling on Yonge Street. The cemetery contains mature vegetation, including a windbreak of Norway spruce trees. The cemetery contains markers comprised of mostly marble and granite, with many markers dating to the mid-19th century. The cemetery remains in active use. While the cemetery's markers are not prominently visible from the roadway, some of the mature trees are visible when traveling along Yonge Street (Photo 33).

Thornhill Club: The Thornhill Club is a member only club located within the Don River Valley and consists of an 18-hole golf course designed by Stanley Thompson and a 9-hole golf course for beginners. Other available sporting activities include tennis and curling. The Ladies' Golf Club of Toronto is located across the street from the Thornhill Club within the MTHCD. As a result of this similar land use and the decline in elevation



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towards the valley, the Thornhill Club and Ladies' Golf Club and its associated mature vegetation give this part of Yonge Street a distinct character which stands in contrast to the largely urbanized parts to the north and south. While the greens of the Thornhill Club are not visible from Yonge Street, Mill Street provides limited views of the golf course (Photo 34 and Photo 35).

Lions Club Parkette: Located at the northwest corner of Yonge Street and Centre Street, this small parkette plays an outsized role in the THCD. It is the location of numerous interpretive plaques, flagpoles, and landscaped gardens. Its role in the community is bolstered by its location at the busiest intersection within the THCD and its location adjacent to a bus stop. However, the noise and traffic associated with Yonge Street likely makes this parkette a less desirable recreational location when compared to the nearby Thornhill Park (Photo 36).

Thornhill Park: Thornhill Park is a primarily active-use park located on the west side of Old Yonge Street and entirely within the bounds of THCD. The park has a large asphalt parking lot and a variety of recreational amenities. This includes four tennis courts, an outdoor swimming pool, playground, and baseball field. The park is landscaped with a lawn, young deciduous and coniferous trees, intermediate deciduous and coniferous trees, and mature deciduous and coniferous trees. The Thornhill Park is the largest public area within the THCD (Photo 37).

J.E.H. MacDonald House: As discussed in Section 3.6, the property at 121 Centre Street was purchased by the artist J.E.H. MacDonald in 1913. Following his death, the property was inherited by his son Thoreau. He was an illustrator who lived on the property until 1974 when it was donated to the Town of Vaughan as a public park. The property is accessed from a pathway on Centre Street and a pathway just south of Holy Trinity Church. The property contains the MacDonalds' home and a large passive use area consisting mostly of mature vegetation and a garden where J.E.H. MacDonald is believed to have painted The Tangled Garden.



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4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

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Thoreau kept written records on an interior wall to note tree plantings, and this has helped to distinguish naturally occurring trees from planted trees. Because some of these trees have appeared in paintings and sketches by both J.E.H. MacDonald and Thoreau MacDonald, the property contains a culturally significant landscape. The property also contains walking paths that follow original circulation routes used by horse drawn wagons on the property (Photo 38). Located at the west boundary of the THCD, the property serves as a buffer along the western edge of the HCD, somewhat isolating the THCD from neighbouring private properties.

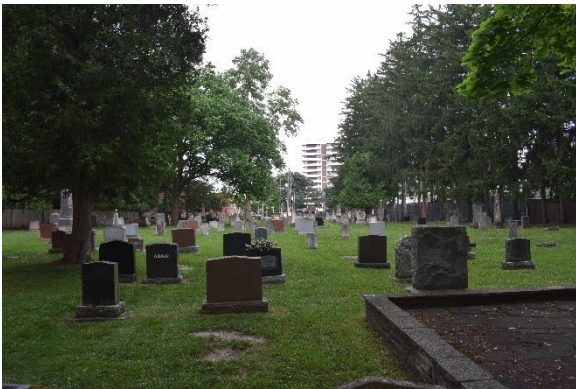


Photo 33 Holy Trinity Cemetery, looking east



Photo 34 Thornhill Club greens, looking north



Photo 35 Thornhill Club viewed from Yonge Street, looking west



Photo 36 Lions Club Parkette, looking northeast

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Photo 37 Thornhill Park, looking north



Photo 38 Thoreau MacDonald property, showing walking path, looking north

4.7.4 Mature Vegetation and Historic Landscapes

Based on the above discussion, areas with concentrations of mature vegetation and historic landscapes were identified in the THCD. Areas of mature vegetation are considered to consist of parts of the THCD which contain a notable amount of mature vegetation, often forming a tree canopy. Figure 16 identifies parts of THCD which were found to contain concentrations of mature vegetation. In total, two areas were identified: a northerly area beginning at the Holy Trinity Burial ground and continuing south to Thornhill Park; and a southerly area located in many of the residential areas south of Centre Street. While it is acknowledged that other properties and areas within THCD may contain some mature trees, these properties do not contain enough of a concentration or canopy to define, maintain, or support a mature vegetation area.

Figure 17 identifies areas with historic landscapes. This includes the Holy Trinity Burial Ground, an example of a 19th century cemetery still in active use, and the J.E.H. MacDonald House, containing a residence and property associated with J.E.H. MacDonald, a member of the Group of Seven, and the location depicted in the painting entitled *The Tangled Garden*. Municipal rights-of-way were also identified as historic landscapes including Old Yonge Street, Brooke Street south to Holy Trinity Church, Old Jane Street, and Elizabeth Street. These are examples of narrow streets without

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sidewalks and curbs which provide a distinct and rural sense of place within the THCD. The creek which runs through the THCD and is spanned by two small bridges with stone barriers on Brooke Street and Elizabeth Street was also identified. During the 20th century, many watercourses were channelized, and the continued presence of this watercourse also contributes to a distinct and rural sense of place.



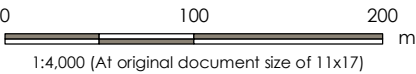


Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Mature or Historic Vegetation

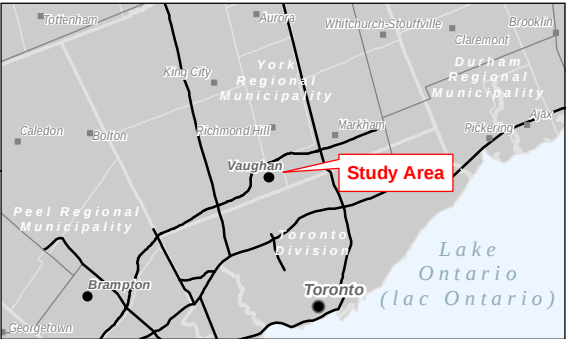
Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



Notes

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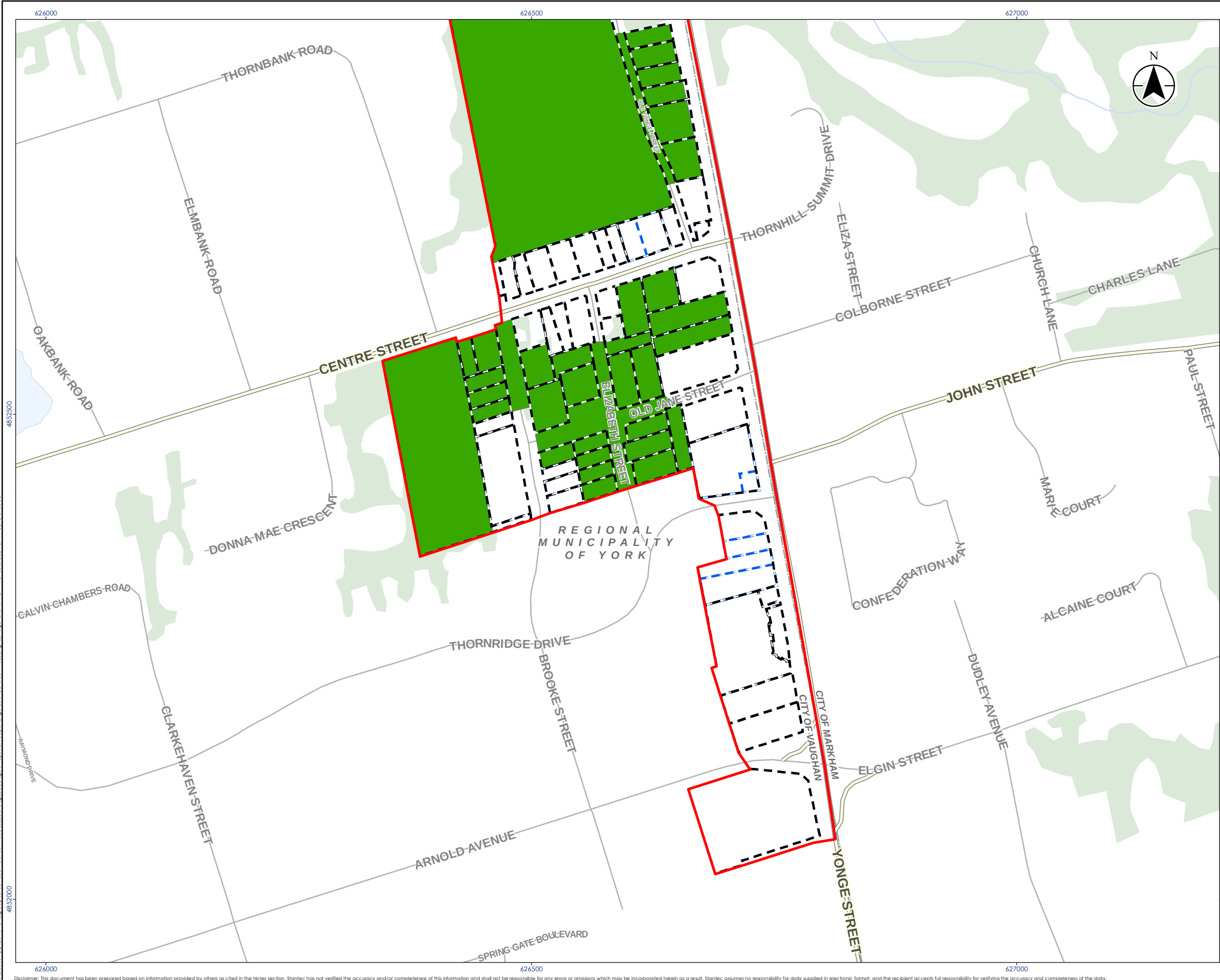


Project Location 160941068 REV2
City of Vaughan Prepared by BF on 2024-09-19
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

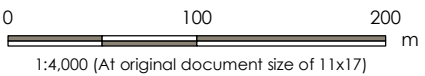
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Figure No.
16.1

Title
Mature or Historic Vegetation



- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
 - Mature or Historic Vegetation
- Base Features
- Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



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Figure No.
16.2

Title
Mature or Historic Vegetation

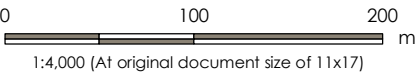


Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Historic Streetscapes
- Holy Trinity Cemetery

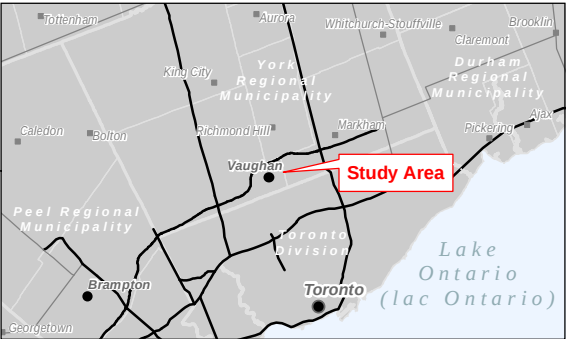
Base Features

- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



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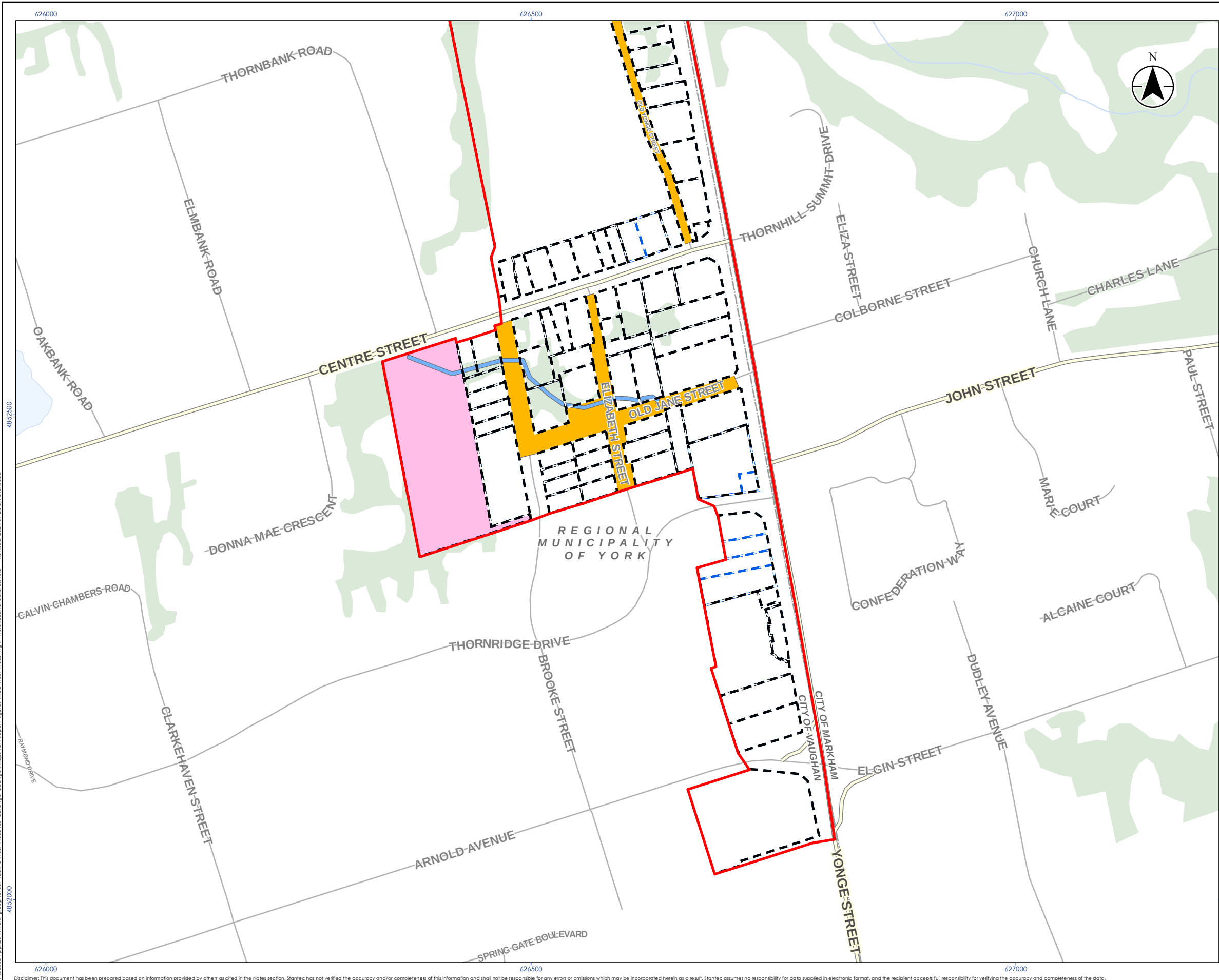
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City of Vaughan
160941068 REV3
Prepared by BF on 2024-09-20
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

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CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
17.1

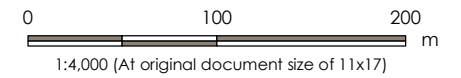
Title
Historic Landscape Features

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Revised: 2024-09-20 By: blaneeca



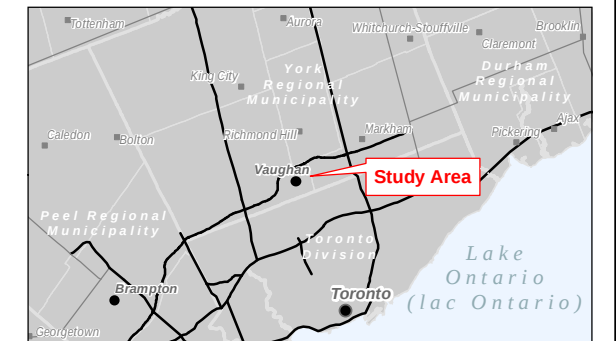
Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Creek Bed
- Historic Streetscapes
- J.E.H. MacDonald House
- Base Features
 - Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
- Municipal Boundary
- Municipal Boundary, Lower
- Wooded Area



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THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
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Figure No.
17.2

Title
Historic Landscape Features

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4.8 Views and Vistas

For this report, the identification of views and vistas in the THCD is based on the analytic process called viewscape analysis. There are two basic components to the viewscape analysis process: the observer point and the viewscape itself. For this report, the observer point is defined as the fixed vantage point from which a view is seen. The boundaries of viewscales are usually high points in the landscape such as ridges and hills, or the built environment, such as buildings or landscape features that will obstruct, frame, or truncate the view. Within the THCD, one unique vista and one unique view was identified.

The Don River Valley along Yonge Street forms a unique vista within the THCD. This area stands as a distinct contrast from the heavily urbanized areas to the north and south of the valley. Given the extent of the valley, the view is noticeable when traversing through the area both as a motorist and pedestrian. This valley consists mostly of mature vegetation that is part of the Thornhill Club within Vaughan and the Ladies' Golf Club within the MTHCD (Photo 39). This view is illustrated Figure 18.

Old Jane Street has a unique view towards Holy Trinity Church. The Church is located at the western terminus of Old Jane Street and is the only street within the THCD with such a distinct view. As a result, a motorist or pedestrian along Old Jane Street is visually drawn to the church and its spire as a focal point (Photo 40). This 19th century church, which was moved to this location in the mid-20th century, also reinforces the characterization of this part of THCD as having a rural village-like character. This view is illustrated in Figure 18.

The THCD also contains limited views of the Thornhill Club, mostly along Old Mill Street. However, these views are partially screened by fencing and vegetation and are located along a road with no outlet.



Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

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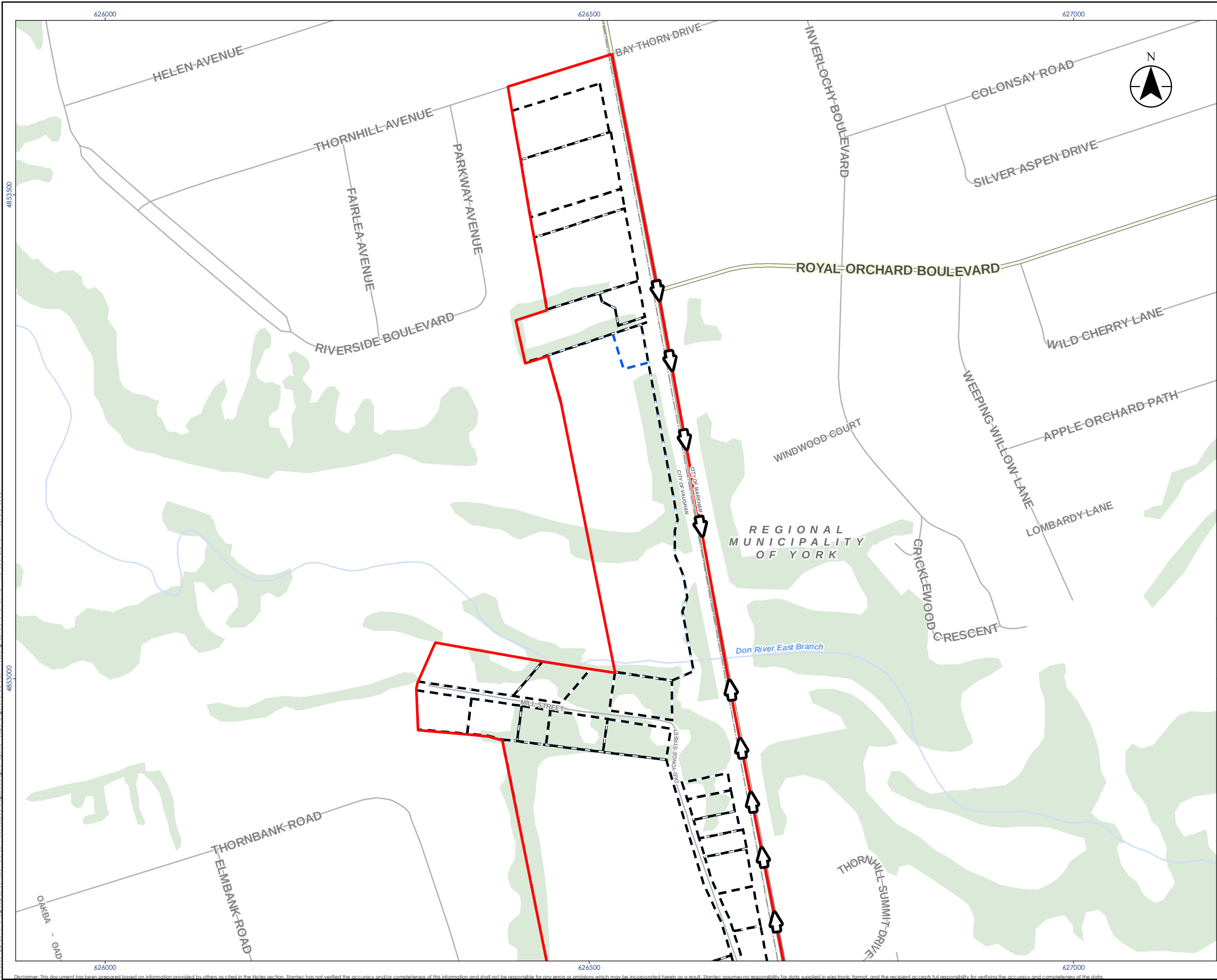
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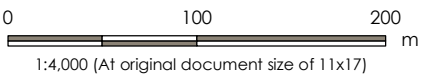
Photo 39 Don River Valley showing slope towards valley and dense vegetation



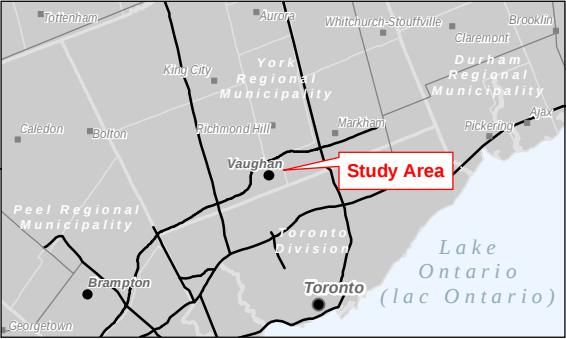
Photo 40 Looking west on Old Jane Street towards Holy Trinity Church



- Legend
- View towards Don River Valley
 - Study Area
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Base Features
- Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



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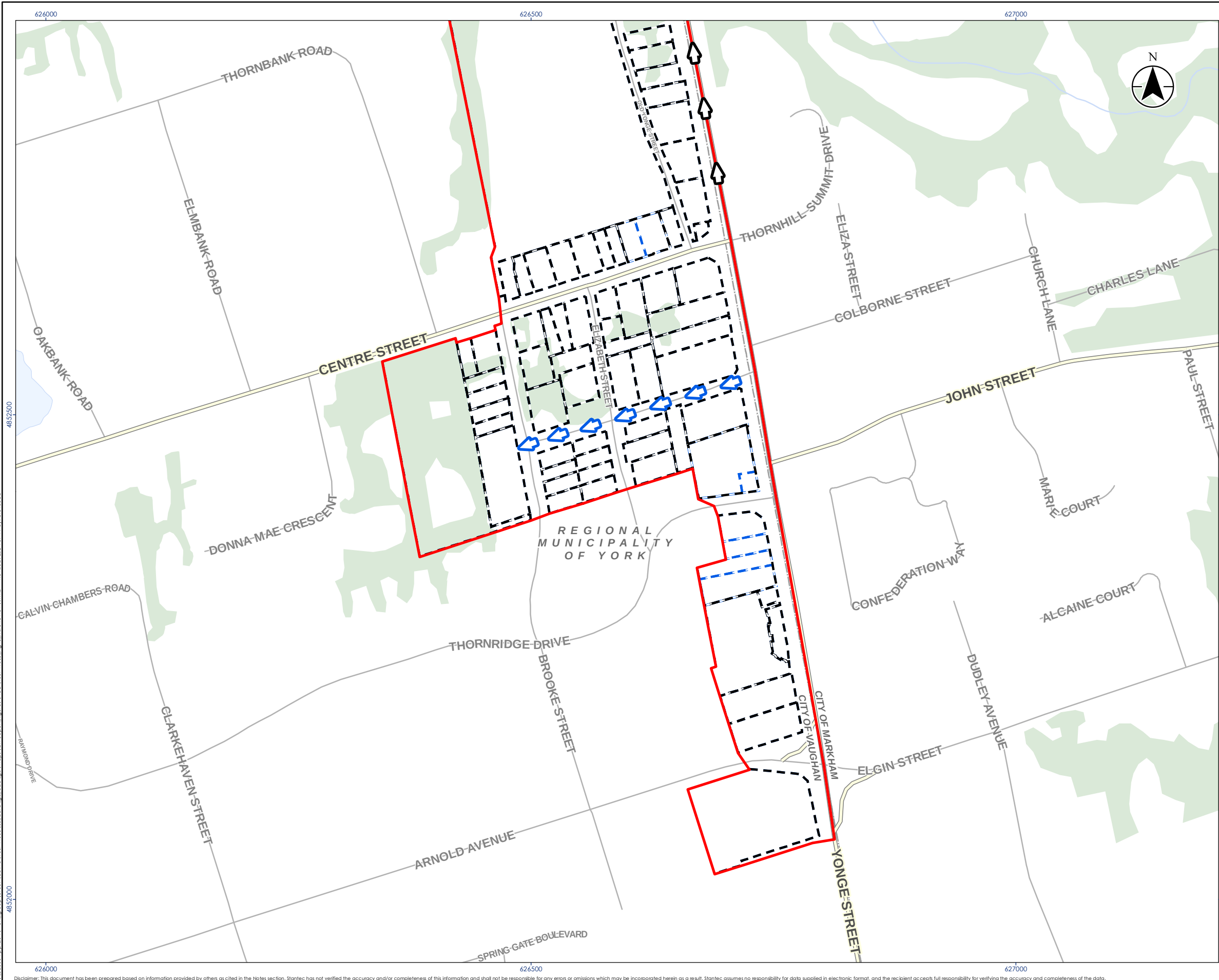
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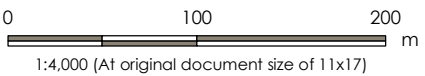
Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
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Figure No.
18.1

Title
Historic Views



- Legend
- View towards Don River Valley
 - View towards Holy Trinity Church
 - Study Area
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Base Features
- Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



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THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
18.2

Title
Historic Views

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4.9 Supportive Elements

For the purpose of this report, supportive elements are considered landscaping or hardscaping that supports the character of the THCD and is consistent with the THCD's landscaping policies. The following supportive elements were identified during the field program:

Signposts and Banners: Several signposts with banners and flag poles are located within the THCD along Yonge Street. These signposts and banners are also used in the MTHCD. Currently, these banners contain pictures and names of important early residents within Thornhill (Photo 41 and Photo 42).

Interpretive Plaques and Signage: Several metal plaques erected by Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill (presently known as the Thornhill Historical Society) are located within the THCD. Much of the THCD's interpretive signage is located within the Lions Club Parkette at the intersection of Yonge Street and Centre Street (Photo 43 and Photo 44). There are also two interpretive panels within the Thoreau MacDonald property located at the location where it was believed J.E.H. MacDonald painted his iconic Canadian painting *The Tangled Garden*. The panels focus on the period when J.E.H. MacDonald and his son Thoreau lived there, and on the garden itself.

Street Signs: Most street signs within THCD are typical guide signs with white lettering on a green background (Photo 45). However, several intersections contain custom street signs consisting of a metal rectangle with black lettering on a white background. These signs also contain a bale of wheat as a finial and the text "Village of Thornhill, circa 1794" along with a capitalized street name. Some of these street signs are beginning to delaminate or rust (Photo 46).



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Photo 41 Signposts on Yonge Street, looking south



Photo 42 Banner details on Yonge Street, looking south



Photo 43 Interpretive sign within Yonge and Centre Street Parkette



Photo 44 Interpretive plaque within Yonge and Centre Street Parkette



Photo 45 Typical white lettering on green background street sign



Photo 46 Metal street sign at intersection of Arnold Avenue and Yonge Street

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4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

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4.10 Transportation Infrastructure

4.10.1 Local and Regional Roads

The THCD is located along Yonge Street, the eastern edge of the City of Vaughan. Yonge Street is a four-lane Major Arterial regional road, designed to accommodate all types of movement, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit, automobiles and high-occupancy-vehicle or bus lanes. It is also a Subway Extension line with four planned transit stations (Yonge North Subway Extension), one of which lies within the THCD as noted in VOP 2010 Schedule 10. All other roads within the THCD are local roads, designed to be low capacity, low speed streets intended to provide access to individual properties within residential areas.

4.10.2 Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA)

A portion of the THCD Area falls within PMTSA 19 – Royal Orchard Subway Station as indicated in Schedule 1C of the VOP 2010 and shown in Figure 5. This area sets a minimum density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare. With a gross area of 24.49 hectares, the minimum population and jobs for this PMTSA is 7,898 and the gross minimum Floor Space Index is 1.1. While this PMTSA is not identified within an Intensification Corridor, they are primary locations to accommodate growth, and a mix of uses, heights, and densities.

4.10.3 Yonge North Subway Extension

The planned Yonge North Subway Extension is a 7.4-kilometre priority project led by Metrolinx as part of the regional rapid transit expansion efforts. This project will extend the Toronto Transit Corporation's Line 1 service north from Finch Station to Vaughan, Markham, and Richmond Hill, enhancing the comprehensive transit system in the region. Five stations are proposed along the Yonge Street Corridor, spanning approximately 80 kilometres. They will be located at Steeles Avenue East (Steeles Station), Clark Avenue (Clark Station), Royal Orchard Boulevard (Royal Orchard Station), between Highway 7 and Highway 407 (Bridge Station), and High Tech Road



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4 Existing Conditions of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

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(High Tech Station). The Bridge and High Tech stations are planned to be built at surface level, while the remaining stations will be underground.

Among the five proposed stations, Royal Orchard Station is proposed to be located in the THCD. This station aims to facilitate transit-oriented development by making the subway accessible within walking distance to 7,300 residents and 1,300 jobs in the Royal Orchard area of Thornhill. At this time, the detailed plans for the location and construction of the station are not known and it is not known whether station construction may impact the existing conditions of the THCD.



5 Evolution of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

5.1 Introduction

Forty years have passed since the initial creation of the THCD, with an Update to the plan undertaken in 2007. This section reviews available alteration permits and development applications, and a comparison to the 2007 Inventory as a means of analyzing the amount and types of change that has occurred in the THCD over time. Understanding the evolution of the THCD will help determine if the current policies are effectively meeting the goals and objectives of the HCD.

5.2 Heritage Alteration Permits

A review of heritage alteration permits (HAPs) in the City can help to understand the changes to individual properties since the creation of the THCD. At present, the City does not have a comprehensive, centralized list of HAPs that have been approved within the THCD. City Staff have compiled as many HAPs as possible from between 2007 when the HCD Plan was last updated and present; however, this may not provide an exhaustive account of the changes to individual structures within the THCD resulting from alterations, additions, or demolitions that were not part of a development application. Similarly, this report is unable to comment on non-permitted changes or offences under the OHA.

The HAPs for the THCD that have been compiled by the City are summarized below in Table 4 (Guy 2024).

Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report
5 Evolution of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District
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Table 4 Known Heritage Alteration Permits Between 2007 and 2024

Heritage Permit Number	Date	Property	Approved Work	Addenda
HP.2024.006.00	23-Jul-24	1 Brooke Street	Outdoor shade structure	N/A
HP.2023.001.00	8-Feb-23	33 Centre Street	Cut doorway into existing window	Walled up one existing opening
HP.2023.008.00	14-Jul-23	46 Centre Street	New construction	As per Heritage Vaughan (June 2022)
HP.2023.013.00	2-Nov-23	57 Centre Street	Finalized Site Plan dating back to 2020	Staff approval, no new construction or alterations to built structure, mostly changes to parking
HP.2022.007.00	10-Jun-22	10 Mill Street (THCD)	Demolition of existing structure, construction of new house	Approved at Council February 15, 2022, updated in 2024
HP.2022.013	9-Sep-22	8038 Yonge Street	Window replacement	Installation of storm door – exempt from Heritage Permit process
HP.2021.006.00	Unknown	57 Centre Street	Hard landscape alterations to driveway, yard, etc.	Approved drawing set
HP.2021.012.00	Unknown	19 Centre Street	Repair and application of stucco cladding, replacement of existing wooden shutters with same in material and design	Staff approval, September 9, 2021



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Heritage Permit Number	Date	Property	Approved Work	Addenda
HP.2021.013.00	Unknown	39 Centre Street	Site Plan DA.17.046 - Parking lot & fencing	Staff approval
HP.2019.004	Unknown	7802 Yonge Street	Alterations, removal of old addition, new additions	Proposed works that are to be approved by Cultural Heritage staff
HP.2019.007	Unknown	19 Centre Street	Removal of existing addition for new addition	June 21, 2017 Heritage Vaughan meeting
HP.2019.007.001	Unknown	19 Centre Street	Addition of skylight in addition	Approved by staff October 31, 2019
HP.2019.011	Unknown	57 Centre Street	Portico	Staff issued permit
HP.2017.016.00	Unknown	25 Elizabeth Street	Addition of three pairs of shutters and new carport	N/A
HP.2016.007.00	Unknown	31 Old Jane Street	Railings	N/A
HP.2016.016.00	Unknown	133 Brooke Street	Demolition and new house	Heritage Vaughan and Council
HP.2015.022	Unknown	21 Mill Street	New construction	Appealed to Ontario Municipal Board in 2015 and required to fulfill Heritage Permit Review Process and provide landscaping plan



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Additional information regarding HSPs within the THCD is pending. Once provided by the City of Vaughan, this information will be incorporated into the finalized SWOT report.

To supplement the review of HAPs in determining change in the THCD, a review of the 2007 Inventory and photographs taken during the August 2024 site visit was conducted. The review demonstrates that approximately 39 of the structures within the THCD had no visible changes; 27 structures were subject to minor alterations, repairs, or maintenance (e.g., replacement of windows or roofing, painting or landscaping changes); 7 structures have undergone major alterations (including 5 properties with major changes like additions or recladding and 2 that underwent restorative changes like removal of paint from brick); and 6 structures have been demolished and replaced with contemporary structures. There were 6 structures included for which comparative data was not available (either because the structures were not present in 2007 or were obscured from view during the August 2024 fieldwork) and 2 structures in the 2007 Inventory that are not included in the current inventory.

The properties not incorporated in the current inventory included 141 Centre Street and 7830 Yonge Street. The lot containing 141 Centre Street was subdivided to create a new house at 151 Centre Street. The residence that was referred to as 141 Centre Street in the 2007 Inventory remains extant on the new parcel associated with 151 Centre Street and has been listed, but the City no longer considers it within the THCD boundary. The address 7830 Yonge Street has been retired. The buildings were demolished between 1970 and 1978, and the lot is now vacant land. Table 5 summarizes the changes since 2007, where information is available.



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5 Evolution of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District
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Table 5 Summary of Changes to Heritage Properties since 2007 Inventory

Address of Heritage Property	Summary of Alterations
133 Brooke Street	Demolished: Vernacular Bungalow from 1952 demolished and replaced with a Contemporary Replica of a Historical Style constructed between 2014 and 2018
135 Brooke Street	Demolished: Vernacular Bungalow from the 1930s demolished and replaced with a Contemporary Replica of a Historical Style constructed between 2009 and 2014
137 Brooke Street	New asphalt shingles, vegetation has matured
140 Brooke Street	No visible changes, vegetation has matured
143 Brooke Street	Extensive renovations: Extensive alterations and additions have been used to create a frontage facing Old Jane Street, the residence contains replacement windows, the exterior has been reclad in board and batten and the asphalt shingles have been replaced with a metal roof. Landscaping and a driveway have also been added to the property.
144 Brooke Street	Demolished: Vernacular Bungalow from 1942 demolished and replaced with a 21 st Century Style residence between 2007 and 2014
146 Brooke Street	No visible changes, vegetation has matured
148 Brooke Street	Windows, doors, and garage doors replaced
150 Brooke Street	Demolished: Vernacular Bungalow with an unknown construction date demolished and replaced with a 21 st Century Style residence between 2011 and 2015
151 Brooke Street	No visible changes
156 Brooke Street	No visible changes



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Address of Heritage Property	Summary of Alterations
2 Centre Street	No visible changes, planters contain annuals changed seasonally (formerly 7750 Yonge Street in 2007 Inventory)
12 Centre Street	No visible changes
18 Centre Street	No visible changes
19 Centre Street	Stucco, soffits, porch gable, and porch columns have been repainted
24 Centre Street	Trim, shutters and porch supports have been painted, foundation plantings added, one mature tree from front lawn has been removed
33 Centre Street	No visible changes
34 Centre Street	Trim and porch supports painted, foundation plantings altered, vegetation has matured
38 Centre Street	No visible changes, vegetation has matured
39 Centre Street	Reclad in stucco (formerly siding) and trim has been painted =
46 Centre Street	Fabric awnings removed from windows
56 Centre Street	Siding has been painted or replaced and asphalt shingles have been replaced
57 Centre Street	Trim, shutter, porch roof, and porch supports have been painted, additional landscaping has been added, metal fence has been replaced
66 Centre Street	No visible changes to structure, foundation plantings have been changed
67 Centre Street	No visible changes, vegetation has matured
69 Centre Street	No visible changes, vegetation has matured
77 Centre Street	No visible changes



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Address of Heritage Property	Summary of Alterations
78 Centre Street	Stucco and trim have been repainted, central projecting bay has been clad in wood siding, picket fence has been removed
80 Centre Street	No data available – not contained in 2007 Inventory, constructed after 2008
109 Centre Street	Door replaced or painted, foundation plantings changed, vegetation has matured
121 Centre Street	No visible changes
5 Elizabeth Street	Windows replaced, shutters replaced or painted, siding replaced with slightly wider siding in the same colour, gable roof pediment over door replaced with flat roof porch with square support columns, landscaping altered
7 Elizabeth Street	Semi-circular windows replaced; vegetation has matured
8 Elizabeth Street	Door painted or replaced
10 Elizabeth Street	Shutters painted or replaced, metal porch supports replaced with turned supports with decorative brackets
12 Elizabeth Street	Shutters and porch supports painted, railing added to porch, large tree added to front yard
21 Elizabeth Street	No visible changes (This parcel is also referred to as 23 Elizabeth Street on some sources and maps, but note that the structure included as 23 Elizabeth Street in the 2007 Inventory was misfiled and is actually a second structure located on the parcel associated with 25 Elizabeth Street)
24 Elizabeth Street	No visible changes
25 Elizabeth Street	Brick and trim painted, shutters replaced or painted, porch supports replaced, asphalt shingles replaced, picket fence removed, landscaping altered



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Address of Heritage Property	Summary of Alterations
26 Elizabeth Street	No visible changes
27 Elizabeth Street	No data available – not contained in 2007 Inventory (constructed between 1985 and 2007)
10 Mill Street	Demolished: Modern style residence from 1969 demolished and is being replaced with a contemporary residence that is currently under construction
15 Mill Street	Single shed roof dormer has been replaced with three gable roof dormers, siding has been painted, window openings have been altered, windows and doors have been replaced, landscaping has been altered
18 Mill Street	No visible changes
21 Mill Street	No data available – not contained in 2007 Inventory, constructed after 2008
29 Mill Street	Shutter, trim, and garage doors have been painted
37 Mill Street	No visible changes (formerly 33 Mill Street in 2007 Inventory)
11 Old Jane Street	No visible changes, vegetation has matured
12 Old Jane Street	Residence has been reclad in stucco (formerly brick), windows have been replaced, vegetation has matured
17 Old Jane Street	The dormer has been reclad in board and batten (formerly stucco), some of the windows have been replaced, the stucco has been painted, the shutters and garage door have been painted
23 Old Jane Street	Windows have been replaced, trim has been repainted, steps/railing leading to the front entrance have been replaced, garage door has been removed, asphalt shingles appear to have been replaced
31 Old Jane Street	No visible changes, vegetation has matured



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Address of Heritage Property	Summary of Alterations
26 Old Yonge Street	Asphalt shingles on park buildings have been replaced, play structures have been replaced
42 Old Yonge Street	Stucco, trim, and door have been painted
7554 Yonge Street	No visible changes
7562 Yonge Street	No visible changes (formerly 7572 Yonge Street in 2007 Inventory)
7582 Yonge Street	No visible changes to structure, new signage and a metal fence has been added
7608 Yonge Street	Demolished: Strip plaza from the 1950s has been demolished and replaced with a 21 st century style low rise mixed use building (formerly 7584-7604 and 7610 Yonge Street in 2007 Inventory)
7616 Yonge Street	Paint has been removed from brick exposing dichromatic brick work, enclosed verandah has had the angle bay windows and doors removed, the upper storey of the verandah has been painted or reclad, the windows have been replaced, foundation plantings have been removed, and a fence has been added
7620 Yonge Street	No visible changes
7626 Yonge Street	Brackets removed from porch
7636 Yonge Street	No visible changes
7646 Yonge Street	No visible changes
7666 Yonge Street	No visible changes
7670 Yonge Street	No visible changes
7690 Yonge Street	No visible changes to structures, large trees removed



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Address of Heritage Property	Summary of Alterations
7700 Yonge Street	No visible changes
7714 Yonge Street	Siding and porch railings repainted; shutters added
7716 Yonge Street	Brick has been repainted (the 2007 Inventory uses both 7716 and 7724 Yonge Street as the address for this structure)
7738 Yonge Street	No visible changes
7756 Yonge Street	Building has been repainted, new signage and shutters have been added, evergreen trees and a fence have been added along Yonge Street
7780 Yonge Street	No visible changes to structure, picket fence has been moved and replaced, some of the vegetation has been removed/altered
7788 Yonge Street	Door, pilasters and trim in front vestibule have been repainted
7802 Yonge Street	Residence has been extensively renovated including addition, new dormer, and enclosed porch, paint has been removed from brick on chimney (or the chimney has been replaced), the exterior of the residence has been reclad in board and batten (formerly brick)
7808 Yonge Street	Property not occupied, windows and door have been boarded over, vegetation is overgrown
7820 Yonge Street	No data available – not contained in 2007 Inventory (constructed <i>circa</i> 2010)
7822 Yonge Street	Trim has been removed from the gable peak, the residence has been resided, window and door trim has been painted, door has been replaced
7994 Yonge Street	Obscured by distance from public right-of-way (the 2007 Inventory uses 7994, 7934, and 7946 Yonge Street as the addresses for this structure)
8000 Yonge Street	No visible changes



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Address of Heritage Property	Summary of Alterations
8004 Yonge Street	No visible changes (the 2007 Inventory uses 8010 Yonge Street as the address for this structure)
8018 Yonge Street	No visible changes (the 2007 Inventory uses 8010 Yonge Street as the address for this structure)
8038 Yonge Street	No visible changes
8054 Yonge Street	Bargeboard has been added to gable peak, enclosed porch has been opened and awning has been removed from the porch roof, railings on the steps have been replaced
8088 Yonge Street	No visible changes to structure, stepped brick wall has been removed (the 2007 Inventory uses 8064 Yonge Street as the address for this structure)
8100 Yonge Street	No visible changes (labeled as Corner of Yonge Street and Thornhill Avenue in 2007 Inventory)



5.3 Development Applications

To understand broader contextual changes that have occurred within the THCD, development applications were reviewed. Based on information provided by the City, 56 development applications were processed within the THCD since 2007, including:

- 31 minor variance applications. These include some that may have been withdrawn, adjourned, refused, or no decision granted, but about half of these appear to have been approved. The applications approved included a range of requests, including changes in property use, construction of new single-detached residences or accessory structures (with variances for lot coverage or setbacks), and parking.
- 23 site plan applications. About half of these applications are for change of use partial demolitions and new additions. The other applications include four which were for full demolition and replacement, while the remaining eight applications include those that were approved as heritage permit application, were withdrawn, or have no status.
- Two official plan amendment applications. Both were approved, with one (development at Yonge and Arnold) approved through the OMB.

This summary only includes development applications within the HCD. However there has been a surge of development activities in the surrounding area along Yonge Street, on both Vaughan and Markham side. These include many high-density developments. The planned Yonge North Subway Extension and its associated Royal Orchard Station within the THCD further increases the market demand and development pressures in the area. It is anticipated that continued development pressure for residential, commercial, and mixed-use buildings will occur in the surrounding area and within the THCD.

6 Consultation

6.1 Project Website

A project website for the THCD Plan Update was created to provide information about the project, updates on consultation events, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to project reports and documents. The project website is hosted on the City of Vaughan's website and contains contact information for the City. The project website will continue to be updated over the course of the project to include information following public meetings and report releases.

6.2 Public Consultation

Public consultation was conducted to gather information on how the THCD has been functioning since its establishment in 1988, including its 2007 update, and to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as experienced by the local community. A Public Information Centre (PIC) was held in person at the Garnet A. Williams Community Centre on February 12, 2025, from 5-7pm.

Fifteen members of the public, one City Councillor, and four City staff members attended the PIC along with three Stantec staff. The meeting was held using an open house format. Display boards were placed around the room providing an introduction to the THCD Plan Update project, an overview of the existing conditions and objectives of the HCD Plan, and an overview of preliminary SWOT findings to date. The project team encouraged attendees to provide comments about the HCD boundaries, their thoughts on development in the HCD, how the existing plan is working/not working, and how the HCD could be improved.

Large format maps of the Study Area were available for reference and comments. Comments provided on the maps included requests for a raised centre median on Yonge Street, buried power lines, and a way to protect trees from removal. Attendees also identified two locations where they felt the THCD boundary should be expanded.



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These included an open space parcel on the west side of Yonge Street at the southern end of the THCD and the parcel containing 141 Centre Street (located immediately west of the J.E.H. MacDonald House). One member of the public brought a set of drawings with them illustrating their ideas for redevelopment on Yonge Street and in Thornhill Park.

In addition to the maps, paper copies of a survey were also available for attendees to provide input. Three people completed the paper survey. A handout with a QR code for an online version of the same survey was also provided and a link to the survey was added to the project website. Four people completed the survey online, for a total of seven responses. Six out of the seven respondents were residents in the THCD and most of them indicated that they were somewhat familiar with the current THCD Plan. All of the respondents who were residents of the district indicated that their experience living in it had been somewhat positive or very positive.

Several of the survey's questions focused on determining if the public feels the current THCD Plan is meeting its objectives (provided in Section 2.2.3). Most people felt that the current plan is achieving its overall goal of retaining heritage resources and heritage character within the district. Most of them also felt that the district is successfully achieving its objectives related to heritage buildings. In contrast, most of the respondents were either unsure if the plan is achieving its objectives related to non-heritage buildings, the landscape/streetscape, new development, community support, and business and tourism or felt that it was not doing so successfully. When asked if they felt the THCD Plan required revised or new objectives, three respondents answered yes, one answered no, one answered that they were unsure, and two indicated that they did not know what the objectives were.

Five of the respondents indicated that the boundary for the THCD should remain unchanged, one indicated that it should be reduced, and one indicated that it should be discussed. A summary of items the respondents identified as being important to the



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heritage character of the THCD, as well as items that improve or reduce the heritage character of the THCD, is presented in Table 6.

Table 6 PIC 1 Survey Results: Items Important to the Heritage Character of the THCD

Survey Prompt	Response
Most important buildings, features, landscapes, or heritage attributes of the THCD	• Residential historic homes • Local churches like Holy Trinity • The landscape • Natural, open spaces • The village atmosphere felt on Elizabeth and Mill Street • J.E.H. MacDonald House (121 Centre Street) • Robert West House (7780 Yonge Street)
Types of features or buildings do you think improve the THCD's heritage character	• Preservation of original features on historic homes • Original 19th century buildings • Stone or pavers in driveways • Picket fences • Local history plaques • Historically inspired landscape plantings • New builds or renovations that match the style of the village
Types of buildings or features do you think reduce the THCD's heritage character	• Ultra modern buildings/infill that is too high or not sensitive to the heritage character • The large municipal flower urns • Vacant and unmaintained homes/structures • Changes to heritage homes

Additional items of concern the local community identified via the survey included preservation of open space, parking and traffic calming measures, heritage streetlights, and the importance of preserving the district as development pressures increase.



6.3 Municipal Consultation

Municipal consultation has included a review of the draft SWOT report by municipal staff and a presentation to the Heritage Vaughan Committee on November 7, 2024. The presentation provided similar information to the PIC, and asked the committee to provide input on how, from a committee's perspective, the HCD had been functioning, what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are, and how the HCD Plan should be updated to address existing challenges. Participants in the meeting noted the importance of viewing Thornhill as a single community located within both Markham and Vaughan and noted the importance of working closely with heritage planning staff in Markham.

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7.1 Effectiveness of Land Use Planning Policies and Municipal Policies

The 2007 THCD Plan noted that land use policies in place within the HCD at the time of its preparation included residential, commercial, and open space. The 2007 THCD Plan recommended not deviating from these uses but also noted that some of the existing development standards and zoning by-laws did not reflect traditional built form and streetscape character of the THCD. The THCD Update recommended that the zoning be altered to ensure that applications deemed to be consistent with the THCD Plan did not require variance applications to the Committee of Adjustment. Overall, the recent zoning by-laws do limit most of the HCD to residential, commercial, and open spaces uses, however as noted in Section 4.4.1 there is a parcel at 7608 Yonge Street that has been designated for higher density zoning and developed with a six storey residential building with ground floor commercial space, which is not reflective of the historic built form of the HCD.

Additional policy recommendations to align with the HCD Plan update may include the following:

- Future amendments to the VOP 2025, once in effect, and/or Zoning By-law shall be in accordance with and shall implement the policies and guidelines of The HCD Plan.
- Where development has potential negative impacts to the character of the HCD, the City, through its Official Plan policies shall require the submission of a Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment.

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7.2 Review of Objectives

As outlined in Section 2.2, the 2007 THCD Plan contained objectives regarding heritage buildings, non-heritage buildings, landscape/streetscape, new development, community support, and business and tourism.

Table 7 to Table 12 summarize how the objectives of the 2007 THCD Plan have been met and identifies areas where the objectives have not been satisfied.

It is important to note that in many cases the question of whether the objective has been met is nuanced and is not always strictly yes or no. In some cases, objectives have been met but have also resulted in unintended consequences for the THCD's character and heritage attributes.



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Table 7 Review of Objectives for Heritage Buildings

Objective	Met (Yes/No)	Discussion
Retain and conserve the heritage buildings as identified in the City of Vaughan Listing of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Value	Yes	No Part IV designated properties or listed properties have been demolished since the adoption of the 2007 THCD Plan.
Conserve heritage attributes and distinguishing qualities of heritage buildings and prevent the removal or alteration of any historic or distinctive architectural feature	Yes	No Part IV designated properties or listed properties have had significant alterations to historic or distinctive architectural features since the adoption of the 2007 THCD Plan.
Correct unsympathetic alterations to heritage buildings	Yes	Since the adoption of the 2007 THCD Plan, two properties have had unsympathetic alterations reversed, including the removal of unsympathetic cladding and removal of an unsympathetic enclosed porch.
Facilitate the restoration of heritage buildings based on a thorough examination of archival and pictorial evidence, physical evidence, and an understanding of the history of the local community	Yes	When 7616 Yonge Street was restored as part of a redevelopment, the restoration has been based on an examination of evidence and understanding of the typical features and elements that would have been part of the original building style and/or type.
Promote retention and reuse of heritage buildings to prevent their demolition	Yes	No Part IV designated properties have been removed and all Part IV designated properties in THCD are currently occupied. Only 11% of listed properties (33 Centre Street, 7808 Yonge Street, and 42 Old Yonge Street) are unoccupied at the time of preparation of this report.



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Table 8 Review of Objectives for Non-Heritage Buildings

Objective	Met (Yes/No)	Discussion
Discourage the demolition of those non-heritage buildings which are supportive of the overall heritage character of the area	No	Since the completion of the 2007 THCD Plan, six demolitions have occurred of residences built between the 1930s and 1960s which were supportive of the THCD's overall heritage character. The loss of mid-20 th century residences isolates the THCD from one of its historical thematic periods when it suburbanized and entered into a period of renewed growth in the early to mid-20 th century.
Encourage improvements to non-heritage buildings that will enhance the District's heritage character	Yes and No	Since the completion of the 2007 THCD Plan, improvements to non-heritage buildings have generally not diminished the character of THCD. Since 2007, no significant instances of non-heritage buildings being modified to enhance the character of THCD have been noted.



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Table 9 Review of Objectives for Landscape/Streetscape Elements

Objective	Met (Yes/No)	Discussion
Facilitate the introduction of, as well as conservation of, historic landscape treatments in both the public and private realm	Yes and No	In general, since the completion of the 2007 THCD Plan, the historic landscape has been conserved in the public realm and most historic landscape treatments in the private realm have been conserved. However, as the commercial use of Centre Street intensifies, there has been some loss of grassed boulevards and landscaped areas as parking is expanded.
Preserve trees and mature vegetation, and encourage the planting of species characteristic of the District	Yes and No	Much of THCD retains a mature tree canopy and there has been no notable loss of mature trees since the completion of the 2007 THCD Plan. However, trees are living entities with a finite lifespan, and some trees in the THCD, especially along Yonge Street, are in decline. In addition, the City has enacted a Tree Preservation Protocol to protect existing mature trees. Any declining and trees impacted by development require replanting to maintain a net zero loss of canopy.
Preserve historic fences and introduce new fences that respect historic patterns and styles while meeting contemporary needs	Yes	There has been no notable loss of historic fences since the completion of the 2007 THCD Plan nor have new fences notably deviated from respecting historic patterns and styles.
Preserve the existing street pattern and rural cross-sections and refrain from widening existing pavement and road allowances	Yes	The THCD retains the street pattern and cross sections noted in the 2007 THCD Plan. No road widenings have been completed.



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Objective	Met (Yes/No)	Discussion
Introduce landscape, streetscape, and infrastructure improvements that will enhance the heritage character of the District	Yes	New street furniture and interpretive signage have been introduced to the THCD since the completion of the 2007 THCD Plan. These new elements contribute to the heritage character of the THCD.

Table 10 Review of Objectives for New Development

Objective	Met (Yes/No)	Discussion
Ensure compatible infill construction that will enhance the District's heritage character and complement the area's village-like, human scale of development	Yes and No	Infill within the THCD has generally evoked compatible historical building styles. However, it has also introduced building styles, heights, materials, setbacks, massing, lot coverage, and architectural elements atypical to some styles within the THCD and not typically found in a small rural village.
Guide the design of new development to be sympathetic and compatible with the heritage resources and character of the District while providing for contemporary needs.	Yes and No	Infill within the THCD has generally evoked compatible historical building styles. However, it has also introduced building styles, heights, materials, setbacks, massing, lot coverage, and architectural elements atypical to some styles within the THCD and not typically found in a small rural village.



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Table 11 Review of Objectives for Community Support

Objective	Met (Yes/No)	Discussion
Foster community support, pride and appreciation of the heritage buildings, landscapes, and character of the District, and promote the need to conserve these resources for future generations Facilitate public participation and involvement in the conservation of heritage resources and further development of the District.	Yes	Community support for THCD is bolstered by the Thornhill Historical Society, which for over 50 years has advocated for Thornhill’s architectural heritage within both Vaughan and Markham. However, four out of seven respondents from the public survey (57%) indicated that did not feel the current THCD Plan was meeting its objectives related to community support. Two others answered that they were unsure and only one person answered yes. Additional comments provided indicated a desire to see more political support of the district.
Offer assistance and incentives to individual heritage property owners to encourage the use of proper conservation approaches when undertaking projects.	Yes	The City passed By-law 011-2025 in 2025 to establish a Designated Heritage Property Grant Pilot Program. The program established \$200,000 to be allocated over two years to award up to award up to 50% of the eligible cost of structural repairs up to a maximum of \$10,000 and for non-structural or aesthetic repairs up to a maximum of \$5,000 for commercial and industrial properties and \$10,000 for residential properties (City of Vaughan 2025).

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Table 12 Review of Objectives for Business and Tourism

Objective	Met (Yes/No)	Discussion
Work with owners on Yonge Street to maintain a progressive business environment while at the same time protecting the heritage attributes of the District that make the area a unique and distinctive shopping environment. Acknowledge that the Heritage District is an asset that the City can leverage and celebrate in order to contribute to the greater commercial success of the City	Unknown	Direct feedback from business owners regarding THCD and a competitive business environment has not been received to date. None of the respondents who completed the public survey indicated that they were business owners. Several developments in THCD since 2007 have included commercial space at ground-level, allowing for the area to increase opportunities as a shopping and/or service environment. However, efforts to define the unique or distinctive characteristics of the HCD relative to its role as a shopping or business area appear to have been limited. There is an opportunity to better define the characteristics of this area to support the growth of businesses and tourism expected with the completion of the Yonge North Subway Extension.

7.3 Effectiveness of Policies and Guidelines

As many of the contributing buildings in the THCD have not been substantially altered, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the THCD policies and guidelines. It may be that the presence of the THCD in part deters property owners from making substantial changes (like additions or major restoration/alterations). Conversely, it may be that the presence of the THCD has encouraged minimal change to heritage resources, many of which have a medium to high level of integrity.

The THCD has not succeeded in correcting unsympathetic changes to heritage properties for properties that have low levels of integrity unless properties are subject to major development applications and are required to be integrated and restored as part of the development process. However, it is important to note that relatively few unsympathetic changes are overall present within THCD. This has perhaps been one of the most visibly effective aspects of the THCD, in that when development is approved, it has retained several 19th to early 20th century residences along Yonge Street that have been restored and integrated into shopping plazas and other developments.

The THCD policies have also been effective in influencing the architectural style of new construction. While most new buildings are recognizable as contemporary structures, they have been designed to evoke 19th and early 20th century design language, as directed by the 2007 THCD Plan. New buildings have also generally followed guidance to reflect the immediate physical context, though it is noted that some of the new residences are distinct from existing more modest 19th century to mid-20th century structures and their scale and massing changed the built form within the THCD's desired rural character.

7.4 Heritage Conservation District Boundary

7.4.1 Character Areas

Historical research, analysis, and the field program identified five distinct character areas within THCD. The identification of character areas assists with the contextual evaluation of the THCD and helps to denote distinct characteristics and subareas within the THCD. These character areas are further discussed below and depicted in Figure 19.

Yonge Street South of Centre Street Area: This section of the THCD along Yonge Street consists of a variety of structures, including civic, residential, and commercial. These structures are a mix of 19th century to early 20th century residences, an early 20th century school, a mid-20th century telephone exchange, and mid to late 20th century shopping plazas. The overall character of this area is mixed and heavily influenced from a visual and auditory perspective by Yonge Street, a major arterial roadway.

Old Jane Residential Area: This section of the THCD is located south of Centre Street and west of Yonge Street. It consists primarily of single detached residences from the early 20th century to early 21st century. This area is visually tied together by its network of streets that mostly have no sidewalks or curbs and widespread mature vegetation. The Holy Trinity Anglican Church is an important landmark within this character area. The borders of this area are also clearly defined when contrasted with the mixed character of Centre Street and Yonge Street. These borders are defined by the wooded buffer from structures to the west provided by the J.E.H. MacDonald House, and the more contemporary design style of residences to the south.

Centre Street Area: This section of THCD is located along Centre Street and mostly consists of residential properties which have been converted to commercial use. Generally, these changes in land use have been sympathetic and the structures within this area remain readily identifiable as late 19th to early 20th century residences. The residential character of this area is further reinforced by the continued use of soft-

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scaped boulevards with lawns and street trees and the continued presence of lawns and trees in the front yards of properties.

Don River Valley Area: This section of THCD is located north of Centre Street, west of Yonge Street, and south of Royal Orchard Boulevard. It consists primarily of residential and recreational properties and includes the Holy Trinity Cemetery and Thornhill Baptist Church. While Old Yonge Street and Mill Street are reminiscent of rural roads and stand in stark contrast to Yonge Street, this entire area is unified by its location within the Don River Valley and the general slope downwards towards the river. The area is also unified by its mature vegetation and recreational use, including the public Thornhill Park and the private members only Thornhill Club.

Yonge Street North of Royal Orchard Boulevard Area: This relatively small area of THCD is located north of Royal Orchard Boulevard and consists of a commercial plaza and three 19th century structures integrated into mid to late 20th century redevelopments. As a result, the overall character of this area is mixed and heavily influenced from a visual and auditory perspective by Yonge Street, a major arterial roadway.

7.4.2 Adjacent Areas

Areas adjacent to the THCD within the City of Vaughan were screened at a high level to determine if they merited consideration as part of an expanded HCD boundary. Along Yonge Street within Vaughan, areas north of the THCD contained a similar land use consisting of commercial plazas. However, these plazas do not integrate 19th to early 20th century structures and are typical mid-20th to late 20th century shopping centres. To the south of the THCD along Yonge Street, the density begins to increase as mid-rise buildings increase in prevalence, which is uncharacteristic of the lower density found in much of the THCD along Yonge Street.

While residential areas to the west of the THCD also contain detached residences and many streets without sidewalks, most of these residences date from the mid-20th to



early 21st century and contain limited 19th to early 20th century structures. In addition, residences built in the late 20th to early 21st century typically were not built to evoke historic building styles.

7.4.3 Analysis of Existing Boundary

At their core, HCDs are designated based on whether they demonstrate natural, historic, aesthetic, architectural, scenic, scientific, social, or spiritual values (Government of Ontario 2006: 10). These may be expressed in the architectural building stock, landscape design, or through an association with historical themes, events, or people that may have shaped the appearance or development of the area. Many HCDs demonstrate value through the relationship they have to their surroundings or are landmark areas of character within the community.

As discussed in Section 4.2.4.2, the Ontario Heritage Toolkit provides a list of characteristics that are useful to consider when determining the merit of an HCD. Table 13 provides a summary of their applicability to the boundary of the THCD.

Table 13 Typical HCD Characteristics as per Ontario Heritage Toolkit

Characteristic	Met (Yes/No)	Applicability to Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Boundary
A concentration of heritage resources	Yes	Following an analysis of structures within the THCD, 59% were found to be contributing properties by satisfying at least two criteria of O. Reg. 9/06. Therefore, the existing HCD boundary contains a concentration of heritage resources.
A framework of structured elements	Yes	The THCD contains a framework based on its road network, concentration of mature vegetation, and collection of residences. Much of the THCD’s road network retains a rural and village-like atmosphere consisting of narrow roadways and no sidewalks or curbs. This framework is further supported by the mature vegetation and residences of varied age, setback, and massing. This provides a structured

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Characteristic	Met (Yes/No)	Applicability to Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Boundary
		framework based around Thornhill's history as a rural village. While Yonge Street is a major arterial roadway it is still a key structuring element of the THCD that is historically linked to the history of the THCD as it follows its original alignment and crosses the Don Valley.
A sense of visual coherence	Yes	While Yonge Street is a major arterial roadway, it retains a high concentration of contributing properties as many structures have been incorporated into newer developments, which provides a sense of visual coherence not exhibited in adjacent parts of Yonge Street. The THCD also retains a high sense of coherence through its road network, mature vegetation, and number of contributing properties.
A distinctiveness	Yes	When compared to surrounding areas, the THCD has a distinctive sense of place. While much of Yonge Street has been urbanized, the densely vegetated Don River Valley stands in distinctive contrast to the surrounding area. THCD also contains a distinctiveness along Centre Street and its side streets for retaining a high number of contributing properties and retaining elements of a rural village such as mature vegetation, residences with a varied age, setback, and massing, and many streets with no sidewalks or curbs.



8 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

8.1 Introduction

Based on the review and analysis contained in the preceding sections, a SWOT analysis was conducted for the THCD. The SWOT analysis helps to determine the priorities and direction for next steps in the THCD Plan Update process by identifying what is currently working well, what has not been effective, what the major threats to the THCD are, and how they can be resolved. This analysis will be supplemented and adjusted to reflect community consultation and internal consultation with different City of Vaughan departments.

8.2 Strengths

Limited Alteration of Many Heritage Properties: Many of the heritage properties in the THCD, particularly those not subject to development, have seen relatively little change since the establishment of the district. In this regard, their character, as was identified at the time of the original HCD Study, has largely been preserved.

Adherence of New Development: New development has occurred since the creation of the THCD and has largely followed the policies and guidelines of the HCD Plan. Most new development is low rise, residential or mixed use, and evokes historical design styles and materials. New development also incorporates and restores existing heritage structures within the THCD.

Limited Alteration of Landscape: The THCD retains areas of mature vegetation, sections of street networks with no sidewalks or curbs, both of which are identified as contributing to the THCD's rural and village-like character.

8.3 Weaknesses

Heritage Attributes: The 2007 HCD Plan Update did not strictly conform to the requirements of the OHA, as it does not clearly state heritage attributes of the HCD, but rather referred generally back to large descriptive sections of the HCD Study. This makes articulating the specific elements that contribute to the cultural heritage value or interest of the THCD challenging and open for interpretation. A clear list of attributes will provide the framework from which alterations, additions, and new development can be assessed to determine if they will impact the THCD character.

Lot Coverage Guidelines: The new development guidelines of the 2007 HCD Plan does not provide guidelines regarding appropriate lot coverage in the HCD. Increasing lot coverage on property parcels may result in the removal of mature trees and other landscaping elements that contribute to the THCD's rural village like character.

Inventory: The 2007 HCD Plan Update does not identify contributing and -non-contributing properties. An updated HCD Plan can provide consistent information for each property and a definition for what is considered a “contributing” and “non-contributing” property. A defined list of contributing and non-contributing properties can be developed as part of an updated HCD Plan.

Sustainability: The 2007 HCD Plan does not provide information regarding compatible sustainable design improvements in the THCD. An updated HCD Plan can provide information regarding appropriate sustainable components such as solar panels, heat pumps, and electric car infrastructure. An updated HCD Plan can also note that retention in situ and rehabilitation of structures is often preferred from a sustainability perspective as the energy required to demolish, remove, and construct a replacement structure generally has negative environmental impacts.

Accessibility: An updated HCD Plan can provide guidance on harmonizing the need for accessible street infrastructure such as sidewalks, curbs, and bike lanes with the

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8 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

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objective of conserving the THCD's rural and village-like character and the standards outlined in the City of Vaughan's Inclusive Design Standards (City of Vaughan 2020).

8.4 Opportunities

OHA Amendments: Amendments to the OHA and O. Reg. 9/06 concerning HCDs that came into effect in 2023 can be incorporated into the HCD Plan Update process.

Updated plans will be prepared in conformity with the Act with regard to implementing new procedures and timelines related to heritage alteration permit applications.

Heritage Attributes: An updated HCD Plan can provide specific heritage attributes that can be used by Staff and Council when making decisions regarding changes in the THCD. This can help to determine whether streetscaping, public works, alterations, additions, demolitions, or new development have a positive or negative effect on the THCD's attributes.

Sympathetic Intensification: Development pressure is expected to increase within and adjacent to the THCD. An updated HCD Plan can provide specific guidelines concerning parts of the THCD where sympathetic intensification of existing land uses may be appropriate. Guidelines can also be prepared to respond to provincial policy direction for secondary dwelling units and garden suites, and how these can be incorporated in a compatible manner to the HCD. This will be determined in conjunction with further community and municipal consultation.

Signage and Public Art: Current THCD policies prohibit murals in the THCD. However, murals can be an effective way of commemorating an area's Indigenous and post settlement history, contributing to an area's character, and creating a distinct sense of place. Given the THCD's historical associations with the Group of Seven, a revision of the public art policy can provide an opportunity to make this historical association more tangible and relevant in the present-day THCD. There are opportunities through the THCD Plan Update process to reflect on these guidelines with the community to determine if updates are required.



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Community Improvement Plan (CIP): The City of Vaughan is currently completing CIP studies to provide incentives to property owners to encourage revitalization and development to achieve local goals. An updated HCD Plan can recommend the THCD be included in the City's CIP studies.

Designated Heritage Property Pilot Grant Program: The City passed By-law 011-2025 in 2025 to establish a Designated Heritage Property Grant Pilot Program. The program established \$200,000 to be allocated over two years to award up to award up to 50% of the eligible cost of structural repairs up to a maximum of \$10,000 and for non-structural or aesthetic repairs up to a maximum of \$5,000 for commercial and industrial properties and \$10,000 for residential properties (City of Vaughan 2025). There is an opportunity for properties within THCD to participate in this pilot program.

Continued Collaboration with MTHCD: As discussed in Section 1, Introduction and Study Purpose, both the THCD and the MTHCD contain a shared pattern of historical development and each HCD developed in parallel. The original 1980s study and planning documents for both HCDs were written by Philip Carter as well as the 2007 updates for each HCD. As a result, both HCD Plans contain similar objectives. Due to the strong historical relationship between both HCDs, efforts should be made to continue to update each HCD in parallel. In addition, both THCD and MTHCD are located along Yonge Street and part of the SYSCSMP, which serves as a base for streetscape improvements along Yonge Street within both districts.

8.5 Threats

Development Pressure: Recent development applications near the HCD, especially along Yonge Street, have proposed higher density than the existing planning or HCD framework currently permits. It is anticipated that continued development pressure for residential, commercial, and mixed-use buildings will occur in the surrounding area and within the THCD. A new HCD Plan should clearly articulate what types of appropriate new development would harmonize with the THCD.



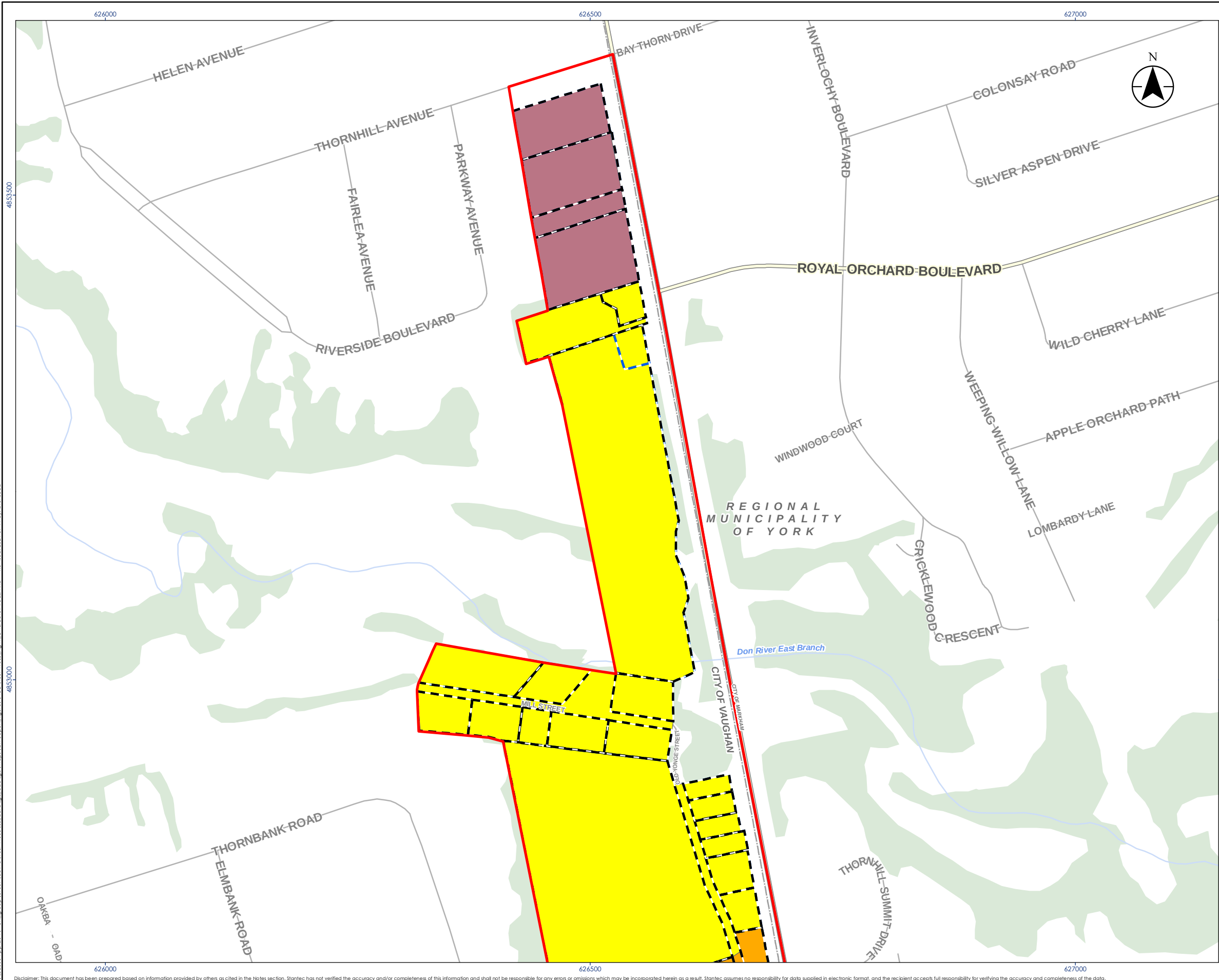
Thornhill Heritage Conservation District—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Report

8 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

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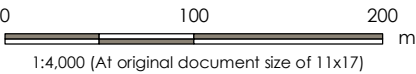
New Development: The amount of development in the HCD completed since the original adoption of THCD currently stands near 25%. Depending on the nature of future infill and redevelopment, there is potential that it may begin to overwhelm the concentration of buildings dating to the historic periods of the THCD's development.

Transportation Projects: The planned Yonge North Subway Extension and its associated Royal Orchard Station are located in the THCD. It is important to note Metrolinx is a Prescribed Public Body (PPB) and is not subject to Part IV or V of the OHA. PPBs are subject to Part III of the OHA, and the MCM Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties under which requirement are made to consider impacts to Part IV and Part V designated properties in the planning stage of provincial projects.



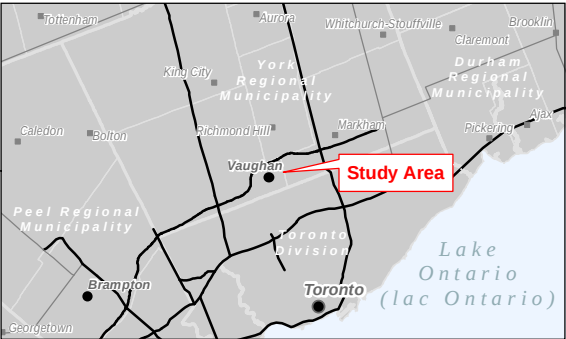
Legend

- HCD Boundary
- Property Parcel
- Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Character Area**
 - Centre Street
 - Don River Valley
 - Yonge Street North of Royal Orchard
- Base Features**
 - Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



Notes

1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 17N
2. Base features produced under license with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry © King's Printer for Ontario, 2024.
3. This figure contains data owned by the City of Vaughan and parcel data sublicensed to the City of Vaughan by Teranet Inc.
4. Orthoimagery . Date of imagery, unknown.

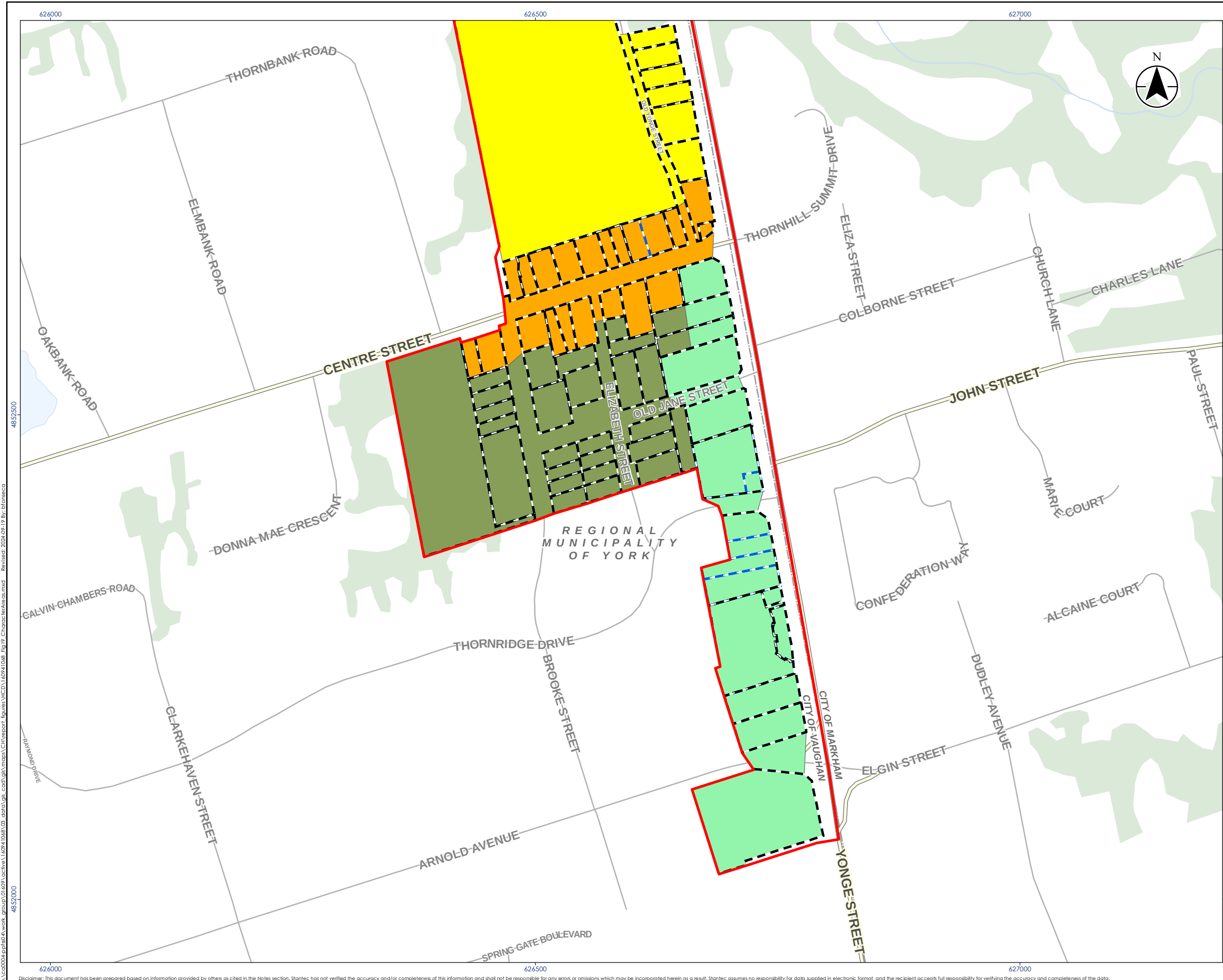


Project Location 160941068 REV2
City of Vaughan Prepared by BF on 2024-09-19
Technical Review by AW on 2024-09-19

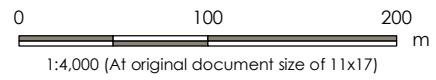
Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
19.1

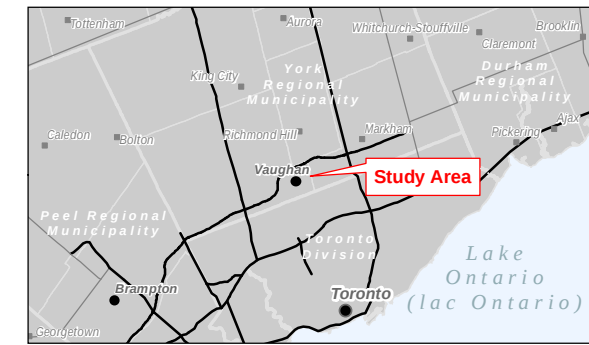
Title
Character Areas



- Legend
- HCD Boundary
 - Property Parcel
 - Separate Address and Structure within Parcel
- Character Area
- Centre Street
 - Don River Valley
 - Old Jane and Elizabeth Residential Area
 - Yonge Street South of Centre Street
- Base Features
- Major Road
 - Minor Road
 - Watercourse
 - Municipal Boundary
 - Municipal Boundary, Lower
 - Wooded Area



- Notes
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Project Location
City of Vaughan

160941068 REV2
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Client/Project
CITY OF VAUGHAN
THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT—STRENGTHS,
WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS REPORT

Figure No.
19.2

Title
Character Areas

9 Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

In general, the THCD has been successful in achieving the objectives of the 2007 THCD Update. It has provided a detailed framework for guiding new development so that it maintains a village-like character and reflects the material and architectural character of some of the heritage resources in the HCD. The presence of the HCD has resulted in the retention and incorporation of heritage residences into new development. Much of this new development has been constructed in a manner to evoke historic building styles, albeit often with larger massing. The following recommendations have been prepared to acknowledge and build on the existing strengths of the THCD and identify areas for improvement.

9.2 Ontario Heritage Act Conformity

The existing THCD Plan conformed to most of the requirements of the 2005 amendment of the OHA. Subsequent amendments to the OHA that took effect on July 1, 2023, have not altered the requirements for HCD Plans. In 2023, amendments to the OHA established criteria for the evaluation of an HCD. Under this amendment, 25% of properties within a HCD must meet two or more criteria of O. Reg. 9/06. As outlined in Section 4.6.3.7, over 25% of the properties meet two or more criteria of the OHA and the existing THCD is considered to meet this threshold and therefore conforms.

9.3 Designated Heritage Property Pilot Grant Program and Other Financial Incentives

The City passed By-law 011-2025 in 2025 to establish a Designated Heritage Property Grant Pilot Program. The program established \$200,000 to be allocated over two years to award up to award up to 50% of the eligible cost of structural repairs up to a maximum of \$10,000 and for non-structural or aesthetic repairs up to a maximum of \$5,000 for commercial and industrial properties and \$10,000 for residential properties



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(City of Vaughan 2025). It is recommended that at least one property in THCD should be included as part of this pilot program.

In addition, the City of Vaughan is currently completing CIP studies to provide incentives to property owners to encourage revitalization and development to achieve local goals. An updated HCD Plan can recommend the THCD be included in the City's CIP studies.

9.4 Boundaries

Based on the analysis conducted in preceding sections of this report, it is recommended that the existing THCD boundaries be maintained. Currently, 59% of properties within THCD are considered contributing and meet two or more criteria of O. Reg. 9/06. A high-level screening of areas adjacent to THCD indicated that adjacent areas had a much higher number of mid-20th century to early 21st century structures that had limited potential to satisfy the criteria of O. Reg. 9/06 or enhance THCD's rural and village-like character.

While this report does not recommend altering the boundaries of the THCD, it also acknowledges that the property parcel belonging to the Thornhill Club is only partially within the bounds of the THCD. While the boundaries of this parcel extend well beyond the historical Police Village boundaries, consideration should be given to conserving the 18-hole golf course historically associated with the prominent golf course architect Stanley Thompson through the listing or designation process.

9.5 Sustainability

The 2007 HCD Plan does not provide information regarding compatible sustainable design in the THCD. An updated HCD Plan can provide information regarding appropriate sustainable components such as solar panels, heat pumps, and electric car infrastructure. An updated HCD Plan can also note that retention in situ and rehabilitation of structures is often preferred from a sustainability perspective as the



energy required to demolish, remove, and construct a replacement structure generally has negative environmental impacts.

9.6 Accessibility

An updated HCD Plan can provide guidance on harmonizing the need for accessible street infrastructure such as sidewalks, curbs, and bike lanes with the objective of conserving the THCD's rural and village-like character and the standards outlined in the City of Vaughan's Inclusive Design Standards (City of Vaughan 2020). This should be completed in coordination with the Infrastructure Planning and Corporate Asset Management department.

9.7 Revised Statement of Significance and Heritage Attributes

The existing THCD Plan contains a statement of heritage value that links the significance of the HCD to its history as a rural hamlet and later Police Village. The statement does not clearly define the historical periods of significance, key factors of development, or heritage attributes of the HCD. An updated statement and detailed description of heritage attributes are required for the THCD and contained in Appendix B.

9.8 Revised Objectives

The existing THCD Objectives are generally appropriate. Namely, the primary objective of the THCD Plan will continue to be the retention and conservation of the THCD's heritage resources and character and to guide change in a way that is compatible with the THCD character. As community consultation continues, existing objectives may be refined and additional objectives may be added based on public consultation relating to active transportation, public amenities, heritage commemoration and interpretation.

9.9 Identification of Contributing and Non-Contributing Properties

It is recommended that the updated THCD Plan clearly articulate properties that are contributing and non-contributing to the THCD character. This should include detailed mapping and address listing so property owners, City staff, and Council can readily ascertain a property's status and follow the applicable policies and guidelines of the updated THCD Plan.

9.10 Policies and Guidelines

An updated HCD Plan should provide more specific policy guidance contributing properties in the THCD so it is clear to property owners, developers, City staff, and Council when alterations or additions are acceptable. Revisions to policies and guidelines should consider the following:

Alterations	Additions	New Construction
Maintenance	Height and massing	Height, massing, and setback
Façade patterns	Location of additions	Façade composition
Windows (and window materials)	Windows	Windows
Doors and entrances	Doors and entrances	Doors and entrances
Porches and storefronts	Architecture and style	Building materials
Exterior materials (masonry, wood, metal, glass, overcladding, paint, architectural details, and trim)	Materials	Architectural style and detailing
Roofs	Roofs	Roofs
Signage and lighting	Signage and lighting	Signage and lighting
	Lot coverage	Lot coverage
	Landscaping	Landscaping
		Secondary dwelling units or garden suites

Additional consultation will occur during the preparation of the updated THCD Plan to seek public feedback on specific policies and guidelines that should be included in the updated THCD Plan. The updated THCD Plan will continue to provide a list of actions that are exempt from requiring a heritage alteration permit, as well as policies for demolition.

9.11 Signage and Public Art

Currently the THCD Plan does not permit murals within the THCD. Murals, as part of a holistic public art program, can be a valuable tool in enhancing heritage character, providing wayfinding, and promoting tourism and local identity. It is recommended that the City, as part of the THCD Plan Update, revisit policies that prohibit murals and allow them (in accordance with updated HCD policies and guidelines) as a means of enhancing the character of the THCD, tangibly linking the THCD with its historical association with the Group of Seven and fulfilling the objectives of the City-Wide Public Art Program.

As these policies appear to be in conflict, consideration should be given during the THCD Plan Update process to identifying new policies for murals and public art that align with the City-Wide Public Art Program.

9.12 Sympathetic Intensification

Development pressure is expected to increase within and adjacent to the THCD. An updated HCD Plan can provide specific guidelines concerning parts of the THCD where sympathetic intensification of existing land uses may be appropriate. Guidelines can also be prepared to respond to provincial policy direction for secondary dwelling units and garden suites, and how these can be incorporated in a compatible manner to the THCD. This will be determined in conjunction with further community, stakeholder and municipal consultation.

10 Conclusion

In general, the findings and analysis contained in this SWOT report have determined that the THCD has been successful in achieving the objectives outlined in the 2007 THCD Update. It has provided a detailed framework for guiding new development so that it maintains a village-like character and reflects the material and architectural character of some of the heritage resources in the THCD. The presence of the THCD has resulted in the retention and incorporation of heritage residences into new development. Much of this new development has been constructed in a manner to evoke historic building styles, albeit often with larger massing and lot coverage.

As per the recommendations of the SWOT report, the THCD Plan should be updated to address sustainability and accessibility concerns, conformity with the OHA, a consideration of including the THCD in the Designated Heritage Property Pilot Grant Program and CIP programs, a revised statement of significance, revised objectives, a list of contributing and non-contributing properties, improved guidance and policies regarding alterations and new construction, and revised policies and guidelines concerning signage and public art.

Following the completion of the draft SWOT report, additional public consultation will occur, including with municipal staff. The results of the additional consultation will be reflected in the finalized SWOT report and updated HCD Plan.

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Appendices



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Appendix A Archaeological Context



Existing Archaeological Resources in the Vicinity of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

In Canada, archaeological sites are registered within the Borden system, a national grid system designed by Charles Borden in 1952 (Borden 1952). The grid covers the entire surface area of Canada and is divided into major units containing an area that is two degrees in latitude by four degrees in longitude. Major units are designated by upper case letters. Each major unit is subdivided into 288 basic unit areas, each containing an area of 10 minutes in latitude by 10 minutes in longitude. The width of basic units reduces as one moves north due to the curvature of the earth. In southern Ontario, each basic unit measures approximately 13.5 kilometres east-west by 18.5 kilometres north-south. In northern Ontario, adjacent to Hudson Bay, each basic unit measures approximately 10.2 kilometres east-west by 18.5 kilometres north-south. Basic units are designated by lower case letters. Individual sites are assigned a unique, sequential number as they are registered. These sequential numbers are issued by the MCM who maintain the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database. The THCD is located within Borden Block AkGu.

Information concerning specific site locations is protected by provincial policy and is not fully subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Government of Ontario 1990c). The release of such information in the past has led to looting or various forms of illegally conducted site destruction. Confidentiality extends to media capable of conveying location, including maps, drawings, or textual descriptions of a site location. The Archaeology Program Unit at the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism will provide information concerning archaeological site locations to the party or an agent of the party holding title to a property, or to a licensed archaeologist with relevant cultural resource management interests.

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To date, 14 archaeological sites have been registered within one kilometre of the THCD (Government of Ontario 2024). Six archaeological sites have been documented within the limits of the HCD as indicated by bold entries in the summarized list in Table A-1.



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Table A-1 Registered Archaeological Sites Within the THCD

Site Borden Number	Site Name	Classification
AkGu-14	Thornhill	Indigenous (Woodland era), campsite
AkGu-18	Ladies Golf Course	Indigenous (Woodland era and perhaps others), indeterminate
AkGu-61	Soules' Inn	Euro-Canadian, inn
AkGu-69	MacDonald Horse Barn	Euro-Canadian, homestead
AkGu-321	Thornhill Golf and Country Club Burial	Euro-Canadian, burial
AkGu-327	Pearl	Euro-Canadian, homestead
AkGu-334	Location 1	Euro-Canadian, homestead
AkGu-335	Location 2	Euro-Canadian, midden
AkGu-336	Location 1	Euro-Canadian, scatter
AlGu-95	Langstaff Jail Farm	Euro-Canadian, homestead
AlGu-116	POW	Indeterminate Indigenous, scatter
AlGu-118	None assigned	Indigenous (Archaic period), findspot
AlGu-120	Over	Multi-component (Euro-Canadian, Post-contact Indigenous), village
AlGu-506	Balser Munshaw	Euro-Canadian, homestead



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The Soules' Inn site (AkGu-61) was first registered in 1995, identified through four positive test pits yielding 35 artifacts from four areas within the site. The Stage 1-2 archaeological assessment completed by Archaeological Services Inc. determined that the Soules's Inn site (AkGu-61) relates to the original 1830s structure from the area. Stage 3 and Stage 4 reporting has been included in the Ontario Register of Archaeological Reports library for the Soules' Inn Site (AkGu-61) but has not been updated on the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database. The Soules' Inn site (AkGu-61) may retain cultural heritage value or interest, and further archaeological assessment is recommended prior to any future impacts to the site (Government of Ontario 2024).

The MacDonald Horse Barn site (AkGu-69) was first registered in 2002 with Stage 2 followed by Stage 3 archaeological assessments documenting the site. A total of 265 artifacts were recovered following the excavation of seven one-metre test units. The site still retains cultural heritage value or interest, and further archaeological assessment is recommended prior to any future impacts to the site (Government of Ontario 2024).

The Thornhill Golf and Country Club Burial site (AkGu-321) was first registered in 2015 during Stage 2/3 monitoring of asphalt removal adjacent to a documented church cemetery. A single burial was identified during the assessment but since the study area was only a small area around the church the potential for other burials in the adjacent areas remains. Further Stage 4 mitigation is required in the vicinity prior to any future impacts (Government of Ontario 2024).

The Pearl site (AkGu-327) was first registered in 2018 during a Stage 2 archaeological assessment with 30 artifacts collected from a 25 metre by nine metre area adjacent to an existing residential structure. During Stage 3 test unit excavation in 2019, over 800 additional Euro-Canadian artifacts were recovered. However, due to the late 19th century date of the site and evidence of previous disturbance, it was determined that the Pearl site (AkGu-327) did not retain further cultural heritage value or interest, and no further archaeological assessment was recommended (Government of Ontario 2024).



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Location 1 (AkGu-334) and Location 2 (AkGu-335) were first registered in 2022 during a Stage 2 archaeological assessment. Location 1 (AkGu-334) produced 299 Euro-Canadian artifacts from a 14 metre by 10 metre area associated with a Euro-Canadian homestead while Location 2 (AkGu-335) produced 31 Euro-Canadian artifacts from an adjacent six metre by four metre area that was interpreted as a midden area. Location 1 (AkGu-334) retains further cultural heritage value or interest, and further archaeological assessment is recommended prior to any future impacts to the site. Location 2 (AkGu-335) was determined to have been sufficiently documented and does not retain further cultural heritage value or interest; no further archaeological assessment (Government of Ontario 2024).



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Description of Historic Place

The Thornhill Heritage Conservation District (THCD) is located in the City of Vaughan, Ontario. The THCD includes portions of Yonge Street between Thornhill Public School and Thornhill Avenue; Old Yonge Street; Mill Street; portions of Centre Street between 121 Centre Street and Yonge Street; Old Jane Street; portions of Brooke Street between Centre Street and the Holy Trinity Anglican Church; and Elizabeth Street approximately 55 metres north of Thornridge Drive to Centre Street. The THCD is comprised of a mix of residential properties, commercial properties, places of worship, parks and open spaces, a school, and a cemetery. The THCD constitutes a concentration of historic properties which are associated with part of the former hamlet and later Police Village of Thornhill that is located within the City of Vaughan. The adjacent portion of the former hamlet and Police Village located within the City of Markham is also a designated heritage conservation district (HCD).

Heritage Value

The THCD is located within the bounds of the former Police Village of Thornhill that is presently located within the City of Vaughan. The remainder of the former police village is located within the City of Markham. Thornhill was an early and important community in 19th century Vaughan Township and Markham Township located along Yonge Street. This roadway was a military and colonization roadway between Toronto and Georgian Bay. Early settlers in both townships were attracted to the site of present-day Thornhill due to its location along Yonge Street and the proximity to the Don River. Due to ample waterpower, Thornhill became a milling centre in the area. During the mid-19th to late 19th century, the community declined as milling activity diminished and eventually ended due to changes in farming patterns. However, Thornhill once again began to grow as electric railway service was completed along Yonge Street in 1896. In 1930, Thornhill was incorporated as a Police Village, a type of small municipality with limited powers to pass bylaws and maintain public order.



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The boundary of the THCD reflects the former borders of the Police Village of Thornhill located within Vaughan and contains a concentration of heritage resources that date to the establishment of the rural hamlet in the early 19th century to its incorporation as a Police Village in 1930. After the Second World War, Thornhill continued to grow and became increasingly interconnected with Toronto and rapidly suburbanized. This is reflected by the number of mid-20th to early 21st century residences located within the THCD.

The THCD demonstrates design value for its collection of heritage resources which include low rise (one storey to two storey) single detached residences, two churches, a cemetery, and mixed use or commercial structures that reflect the history of the community as a rural village. Some of these residences, particularly along Centre Street, have been converted to commercial use. The architectural character of the THCD reflects the design influences and range of styles common to 19th and early 20th century Ontario, including vernacular, Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, Edwardian, and Craftsman.

The THCD demonstrates historical and associative value for its concentration of heritage resources which are linked to the early development of Thornhill in the early 19th century through its incorporation as a police village in 1930. Thornhill was a significant and important community in both Vaughan Township and Markham Township that contributed to the overall prosperity of the surrounding area as a milling centre and later regional service centre for farmers. As the 20th century began, Thornhill became increasingly interconnected and associated with Toronto as suburbanization and urbanization proceeded north in York County.

The THCD demonstrates contextual value in the streetscapes and landscapes that reflect the former rural character of the community. The streetscapes of Old Yonge Street, Mill Street, Old Jane Street, parts of Brooke Street, and parts of Elizabeth Street contain mature vegetation and roads with no sidewalks or curbs that support a rural



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character. South of Centre Street, a creek bed meanders through this area and is spanned by two bridges with stone barriers on Brooke Street and Elizabeth Street. This character is also supported by the J.E.H. MacDonald House and Thornhill Park, which contains concentrations of mature deciduous and coniferous trees which support the character of the THCD. On Yonge Street, the notable descent towards the Don River and the mature vegetation provides a contrast with the surrounding area and provides a distinct sense of place. Together, these help to define the character of the THCD.

Heritage Attributes

The following attributes have been identified that reflect the cultural heritage value or interest of the THCD:

- Concentration of early 19th century to mid 20th century residences, commercial buildings, places of worship, and a cemetery located within the former bounds of the Police Village of Thornhill.
- Concentration of architectural styles and elements related to typical early 19th century to mid 20th century styles including vernacular, Classical Revival, Gothic Revival, Edwardian, and Craftsman
- Predominance of one to two storey detached residential structures
- Predominant use of brick as a building material
- Residential side streets with no sidewalks or curbs
- Mature vegetation within residential areas and within the Don River Valley on Yonge Street
- Views of mature vegetation and slope towards the Don River Valley on the municipal right-of-way on Yonge Street north of Centre Street and south of Royal Orchard Boulevard
- Views towards Holy Trinity Anglican Church on the municipal right-of-way on Old Jane Street
- Creek bed which travels east from Centre Street to Old Jane Street and associated two bridges with stone clad barriers
- Public parks and open spaces including the J.E.H. MacDonald House, Lions Parkette, and Thornhill Park



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- Physical and historical link between the THCD and Yonge Street
- Physical and historical link between the THCD and the adjacent Markham Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

