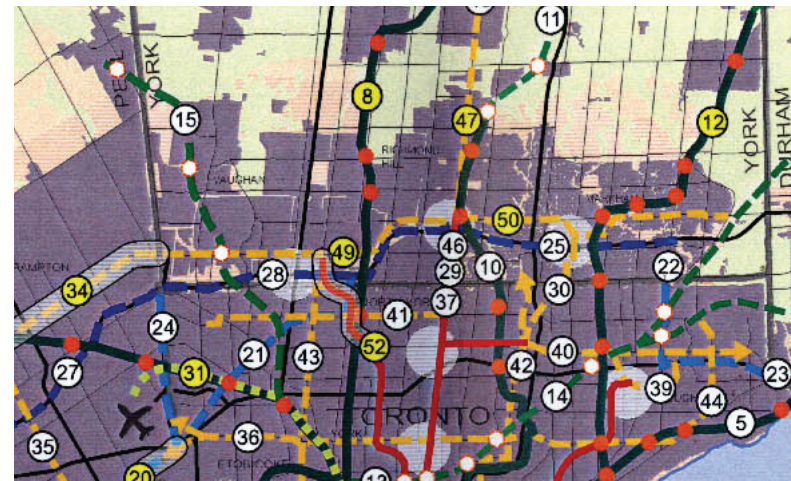


The Regional Transportation Plan

The Greater Toronto Transportation Authority – now Metrolinx – was established to coordinate transportation planning at the scale of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, including York Region. Metrolinx is charged with preparing a Regional Transportation Master Plan and Vaughan will figure highly in it as both the Spadina and Yonge subway extensions include stops in the city. It will be important to ensure that appropriate land use policies are in place at the municipal levels to justify and ensure the success of these projects.



Map Source: Metrolinx

Questions and Implications for the Official Plan

In reviewing the provincial policy context in which the new official plan is being undertaken, many questions or implications for the official plan arise. Many of these will be echoed in upcoming editions of the Citizens' Bulletin, and all will be addressed as the Vaughan Tomorrow process continues.

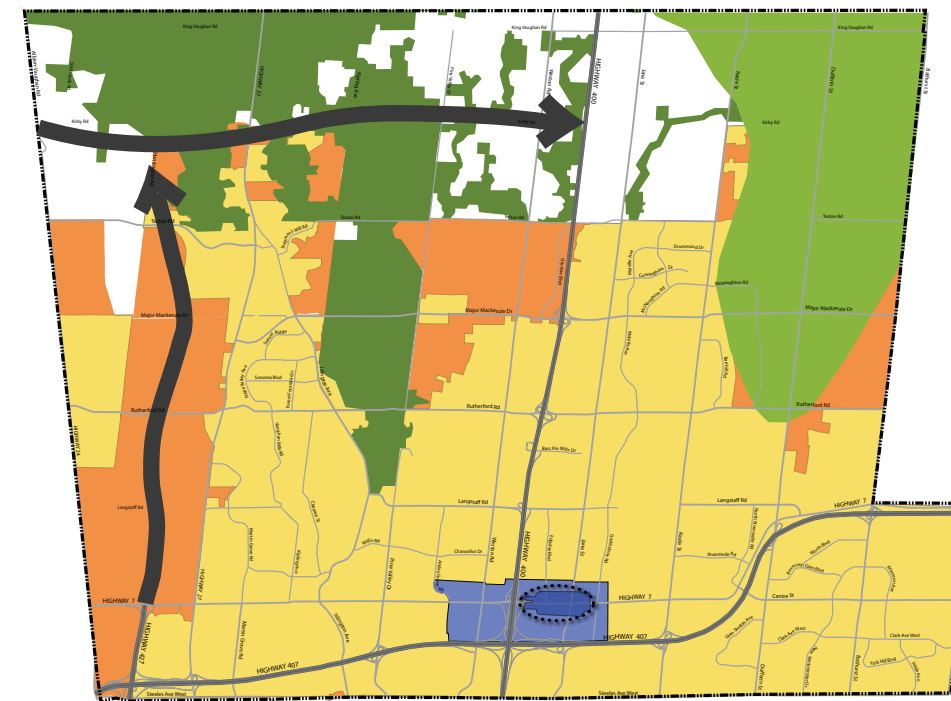
- How can the protected Greenbelt and Moraine lands be used to Vaughan's advantage? To what extent can a bicycle and walking path network through these areas be a new layer in the city's transportation system?
- Where should *intensification* in the city be directed?
- What are appropriate minimum densities for *intensification* areas?
- What will these new parts of existing areas look like? How will they fit in?
- How can the character and quality of life in stable neighbourhoods be maintained as the city *intensifies*?
- Beyond establishing minimum densities how can *intensification* of the Vaughan Corporate Centre be promoted through the official plan?

- Given the opportunity for future employment lands adjacent to new highways, are any of Vaughan's existing employment lands appropriate for conversion to other uses?
- With limited potential *greenfield* lands (i.e. "whitebelt") and major transportation corridors planned or envisioned, how much population growth can be accommodated outside Vaughan's built-up areas?
- What are the right minimum density targets for *greenfield* areas?
- How do we promote the creation of complete communities that offer places to live in all stages of life, work, shop and play?
- Where are the future not-yet-planned transit hubs where growth can be concentrated?
- Should Vaughan work with the Region to develop a transit-first policy in new areas to establish good habits? How can the communities be designed to support efficient transit?

Vaughan Tomorrow

The City of Vaughan is now one of the fastest growing municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area in terms of both new residents and new jobs – and poised to evolve into a cohesive urban place. With its population and employment projected to almost double between 2006 and 2031, Vaughan needs to think carefully about how it grows.

The Provincial Policy Context



- Built-up area
- Designated Greenfield
- Whitebelt
- Greenbelt
- Vaughan Corporate Center
- Vaughan Corporate Center Node
- Approximate urban growth center location
- ➔ GTA West future transportation corridor
- ➔ Highway 427 extension corridor

Recent changes to provincial land use planning policy and legislation have created a new era in planning for growth across the Greater Golden Horseshoe, including the City of Vaughan. The Province has taken a bold step and created a suite of tools that will help municipalities plan for and achieve more efficient land use. These tools include: The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and Greenbelt Plan, Places to Grow: the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and The Regional Transportation Plan.

The Province requires that all upper- and lower-tier municipal official plans to conform with these provincial policies. The City of Vaughan has initiated a growth management exercise, Vaughan Tomorrow, to integrate these policies in a new official plan. The Region of York is also in the process of updating the Regional official plan and we are working closely together with our Regional partners to prepare well coordinated planning documents.

The new provincial policies are described briefly in this Bulletin.

Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan & the Greenbelt Plan

The Vaughan official plan has already been updated to reflect the policies in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. The Greenbelt Plan builds on the protection of the moraine and extends similar protection to other natural features and undeveloped areas.

A significant amount of land in Vaughan is now protected from further development by these two plans (the green areas on the map). While a strong system of linked green spaces and natural heritage features is a tremendous asset for Vaughan, it does mean that there is little potential developable land remaining after the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine lands are accounted for.



The Greenbelt lands are an important asset to the City of Vaughan.

Places To Grow: A Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

The Growth Plan is a framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe over the next 25 years. It attempts to balance the needs of a growing population base and healthy economy with the parallel desire to protect lands for the future by changing the way we grow. The Growth Plan emphasizes:

- the efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- the creation of complete communities so that residents can meet their basic needs close to home;
- the preservation of employment areas for future economic opportunity;
- conservation of natural heritage areas; and
- multiple modes of safe and efficient transportation to move around.

The Growth Plan sets out specific policies that will guide municipalities in achieving these goals.



Hypothetical downtown depicting the Growth Plan's density targets for urban growth centres, such as Vaughan Corporate Centre, of approximately 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare. Photo Source: Ontario Growth Secretariat, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal



High density, mixed use redevelopment around a hypothetical major transit station. Photo Source: Ontario Growth Secretariat, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal

Intensification

Intensification is the development of an area at a higher density than currently exists. This can be achieved by development of vacant or underused lots within an area, redevelopment of existing lots, or the expansion or conversion of existing buildings. The Growth Plan requires municipalities to *intensify* their existing built-up areas (the yellow areas on the map). At a minimum, 40% of all annual residential development must be accommodated through *intensification* of the built-up area by the year 2015, and every year thereafter.

Intensification in Vaughan is already happening. In fact, about 20% of all new development in the city is happening in the built-up area. The new official plan will determine what parts of the already built-up areas of Vaughan are best suited to accommodating additional development. Obvious *intensification* areas may include the Highway 7 and Steeles Avenue corridors, and the Vaughan Corporate Centre Node.

The Vaughan Corporate Centre Node is a special *intensification* area under the Growth Plan. It has been identified as an urban growth centre, which should be a place where institutional, cultural, commercial, retail, entertainment and residential uses come together, arranged in a compact urban form, linked by an attractive public realm, and supportive of major transit infrastructure, such as the planned Spadina Subway extension. The Growth Plan requires that by 2031 the Vaughan urban growth centre should achieve a minimum density of 200 people and jobs combined per hectare. A sample of what this density might look like is shown in the image at left. This density is only slightly higher than the density already planned along "Avenue 7".

Building better in Greenfield areas

While *intensification* will account for a large amount of development in the future, Vaughan will still have to use yet undeveloped lands to accommodate the projected population growth. A maximum 60% of all new residential development annually will be permitted in *greenfield* areas (orange and white areas on the map). The Growth Plan requires that these new areas be built out at a Regional average minimum density of 50 people and jobs per hectare to create transit-supportive, walkable places that offer people real options for living, working and meeting their daily needs in their neighborhoods. A sample of what this density might look like is shown in the image below.

Protecting Employment Areas

Despite increasing efforts to *intensify* existing areas, the limited *greenfield* land supply will no doubt place pressure on all lands for development. The Growth Plan provides municipalities with stronger support for designating and protecting strategically located employment areas for all types of employment uses. Areas around major transit stations or areas with frequent transit service should be planned to accommodate major office development. Areas in the vicinity of major highway interchanges or rail yards, are to be designated and protected for more intensive employment uses.



Hypothetical streetscape depicting the Growth Plan's density targets for designated greenfield areas of approximately 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare. Photo Source: Ontario Growth Secretariat, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal