

City of Vaughan

# Urban Design Guidelines for Community Areas and Low-Rise Residential Areas

Committee of the Whole  
October 5, 2016



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# Background

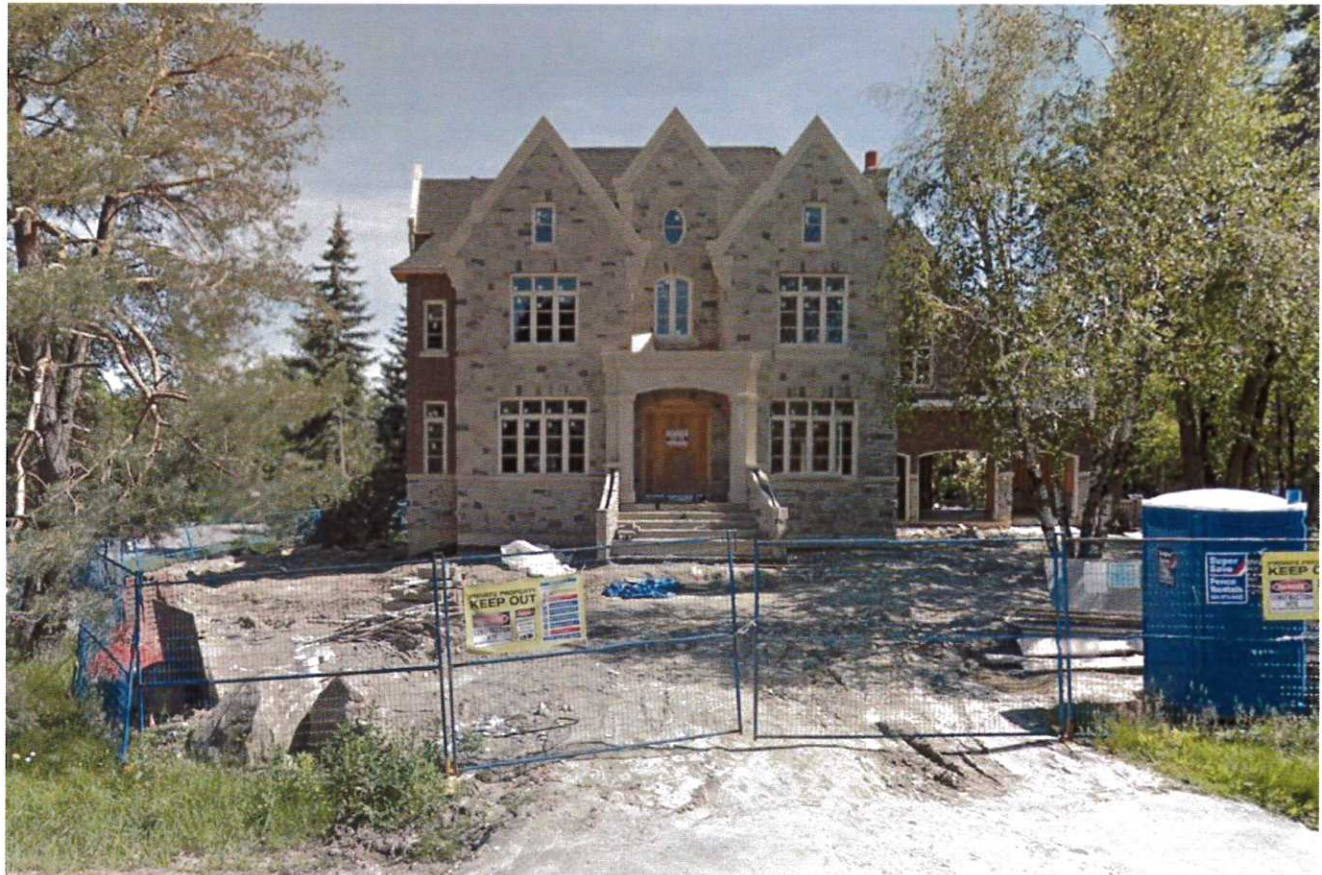
In October 2015, a policy review was initiated for lands designated Low-Rise Residential within Community Areas in VOP 2010, with the following Council direction:

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

**Goal:** Ensure new development in Vaughan's established low-rise residential neighbourhoods meets the intent to "reinforce and respect" the pattern and character of existing development.

## Pressures for change in established neighbourhoods

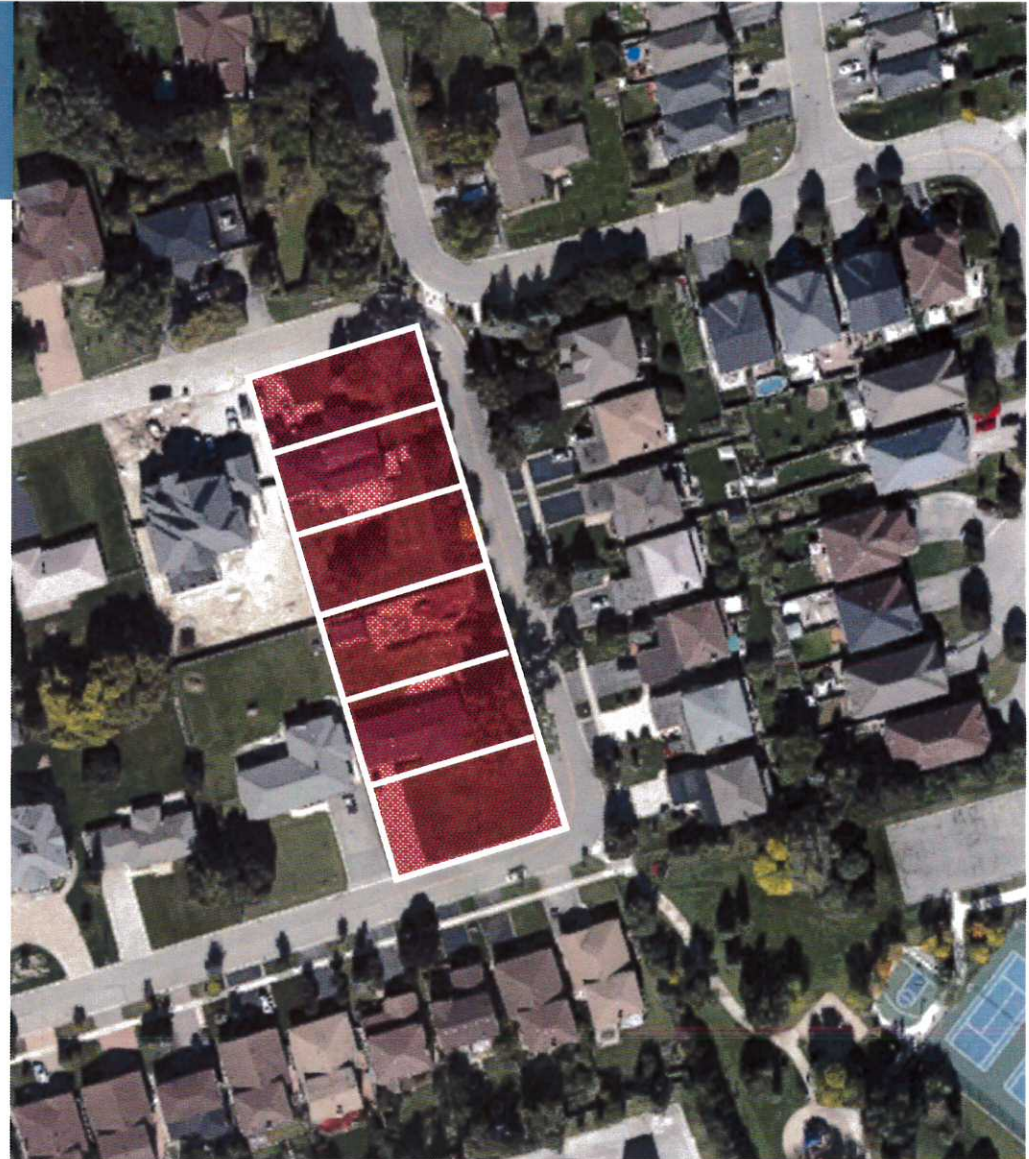
- Big houses replacing smaller houses
- Increasing pressure for new developments in “large-lot neighbourhoods” (e.g. Thornhill, Kleinburg and Woodbridge)





## Pressures for change in established neighbourhoods

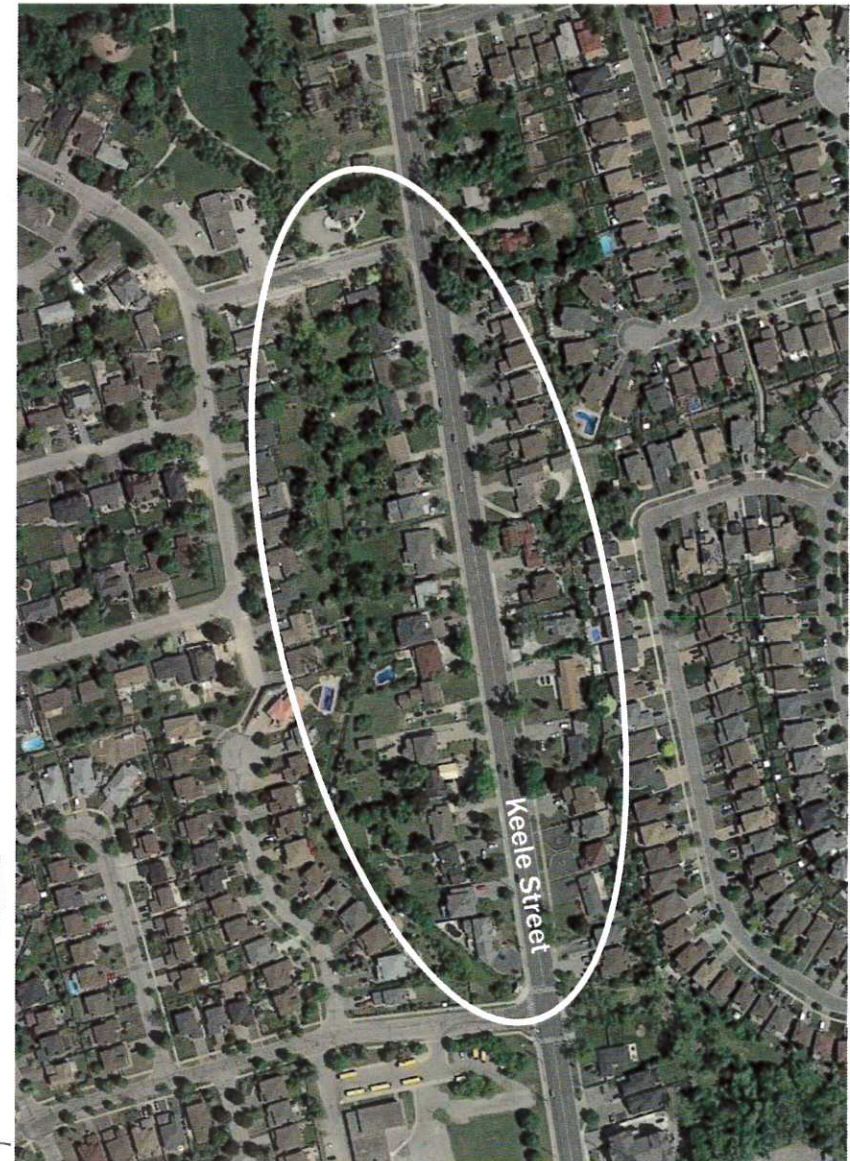
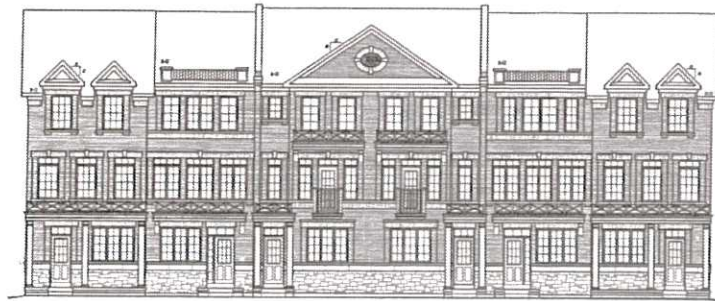
- Big houses replacing smaller houses
- Subdivision of large lots for multi-unit projects





## Pressures for change in established neighbourhoods

- Big houses replacing smaller houses
- Subdivision of large lots for multi-unit projects
- Townhouse developments on irregular sites at the arterial edge of a neighbourhood



## Update on Study Process

- On **March 22, 2016**, Council directed:
  1. That staff initiate an amendment to VOP 2010 to ensure that it provides for infill development and redevelopment that is compatible with established neighbourhoods;
  2. That the draft “General Low-Rise Residential Infill Guidelines” and “Townhouse Infill Guidelines” be received to allow for stakeholder comment by May 31<sup>st</sup>, and that community meetings, if required, be held; and,
  3. That staff report to Committee of the Whole to obtain Council approval of the Guidelines.
- In **April and May, community meetings** were held in Maple (April 19), Thornhill/Concord (May 10) and Woodbridge/Kleinburg (May 11). Approximately 200 people attended, and many provided written and/or verbal feedback.
- Two **Technical Advisory Committee meetings** were held to obtain feedback from City, Regional and agency staff (**May 10, June 29**).



## Summary of what we heard

### **From residents:**

- Many recognize that townhouses can be compatible with neighbourhoods of single-detached.
- Proposed policies and guidelines address many of the issues.
- Will they be followed and enforced?
- Natural heritage areas need stronger protection.
- Traffic issues need to be addressed.

## Summary of what we heard

### **From developers' representatives:**

- Recommendations are counter to Provincial and Regional policies regarding efficient use of land, intensification, housing diversity and affordable housing.
- Proposed guidelines are too prescriptive.
- Requirement for public street frontage is too restrictive—private, common element streets should be allowed.
- Good precedents in Vaughan are being ignored.



## Summary of what we heard

### **From the Technical Advisory Committee:**

- Provide further clarification regarding the types of infill development that are appropriate and where.
- Region of York transportation policies should be referenced in the guidelines.
- Include more detail in guidelines for grading and landscaping.
- Minimize the use of terms that might be open to interpretation.
- Add a glossary to the guidelines.



An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing streets, buildings, and some green spaces. A large, semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text. The text is arranged in two paragraphs. The top paragraph reads: "Today we are bringing forward recommended Urban Design Guidelines for Infill Development for consideration by COW." The bottom paragraph reads: "On November 1<sup>st</sup>, a Public Hearing is planned to consider recommended amendments to VOP 2010." The text is in a clean, sans-serif font.

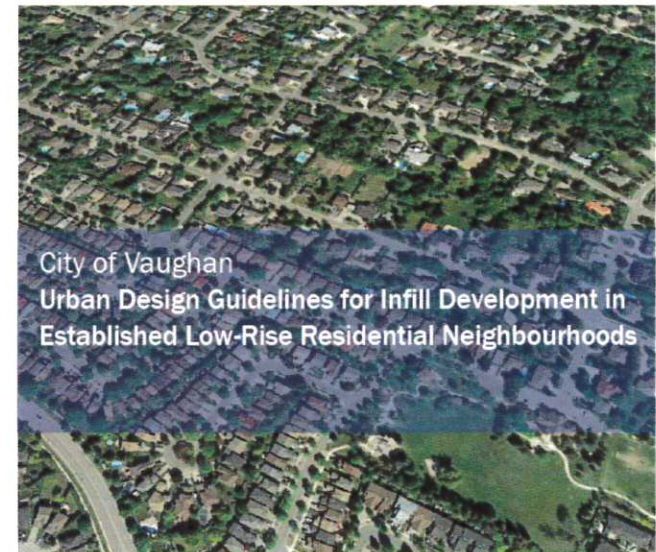
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# Recommended Urban Design Guidelines

- Identifies locations where Infill Guidelines will apply
- Includes general infill guidelines and townhouse guidelines
- Links guidelines to the supporting VOP 2010 policies
- Illustrates guidelines with diagrams and photographs
- Defines key terms in a glossary

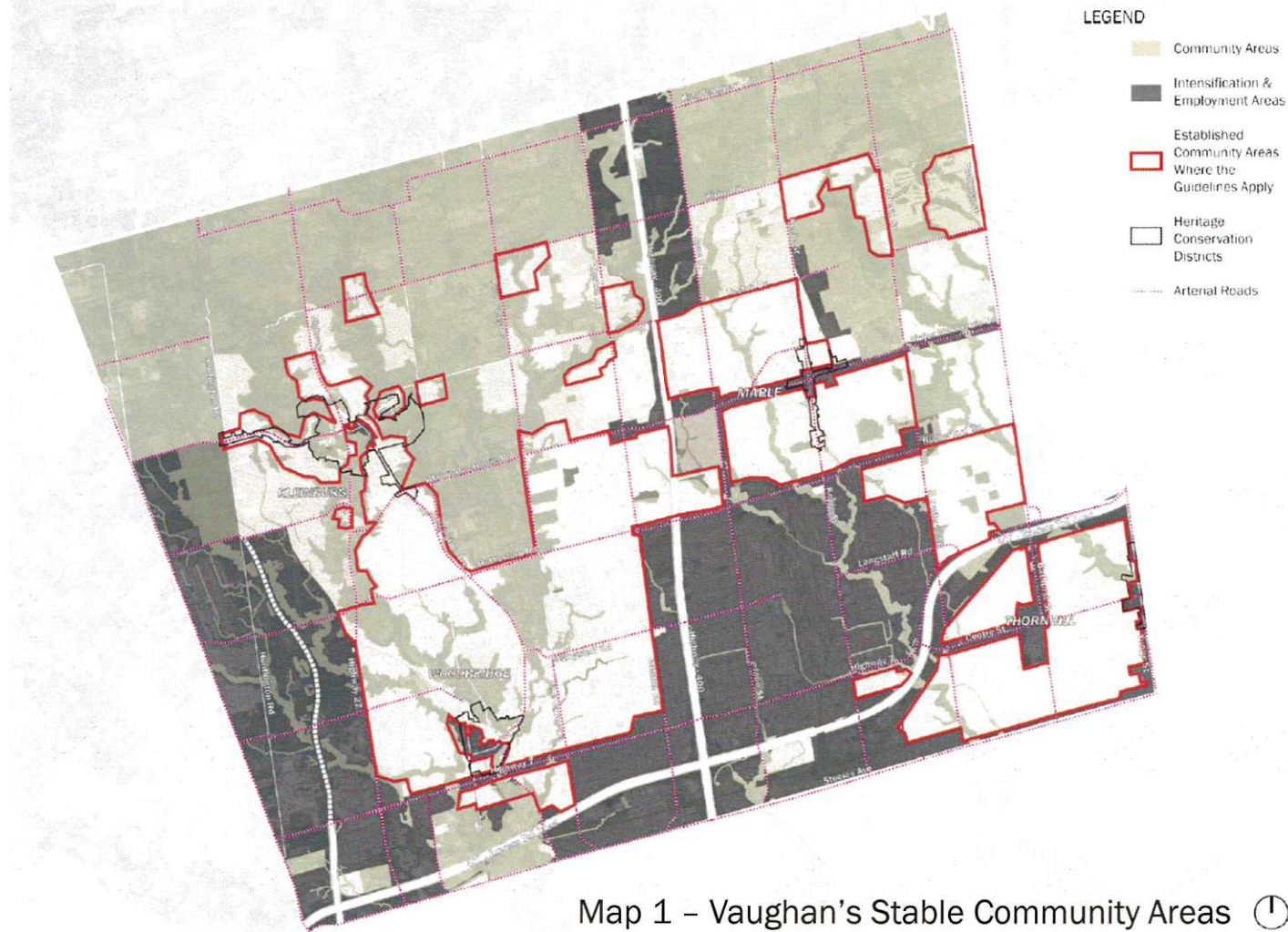


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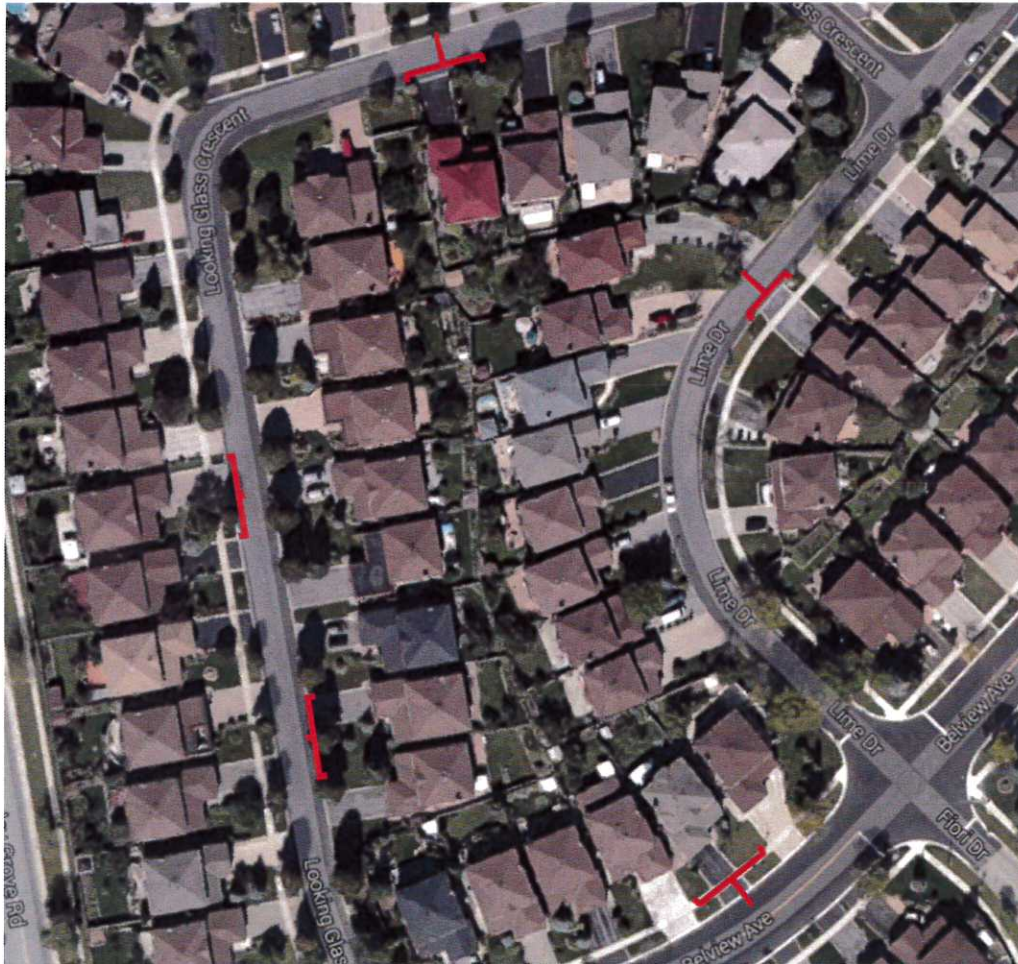
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# Where the guidelines will apply





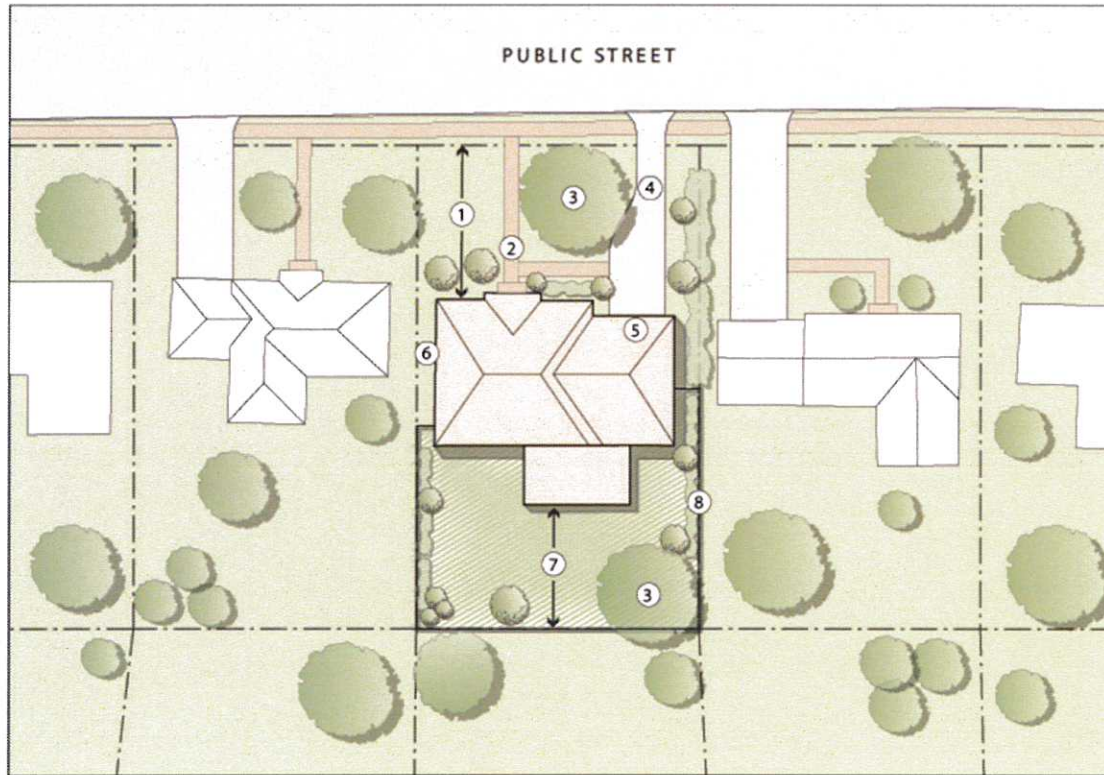
# Methodology



- Aerial review of development patterns, reinforced by ground-level checks
- Lot frontage and size is a primary determinant of neighbourhood character, since it affects:
  - Size of houses
  - Setbacks from the street and neighbouring properties
  - Amount of soft landscaping vs. driveway
  - Relationship of garages to the house
- Another fundamental characteristic of existing low-rise neighbourhoods is the orientation of houses to a public street.

# Key General Infill Guidelines

Apply to replacement houses (“monster home” phenomenon) and additions



1, 6, 7 – Consistent front, side and rear yard setbacks (min. 7.5m rear yard setback)

2 – Visible and accessible front entrances

3 – Protect existing mature trees

4 – Driveways should be minimized and never wider than 6 m

5 – Integrate and recess the garage

8 – Maintain privacy of adjacent dwellings with fencing, screening

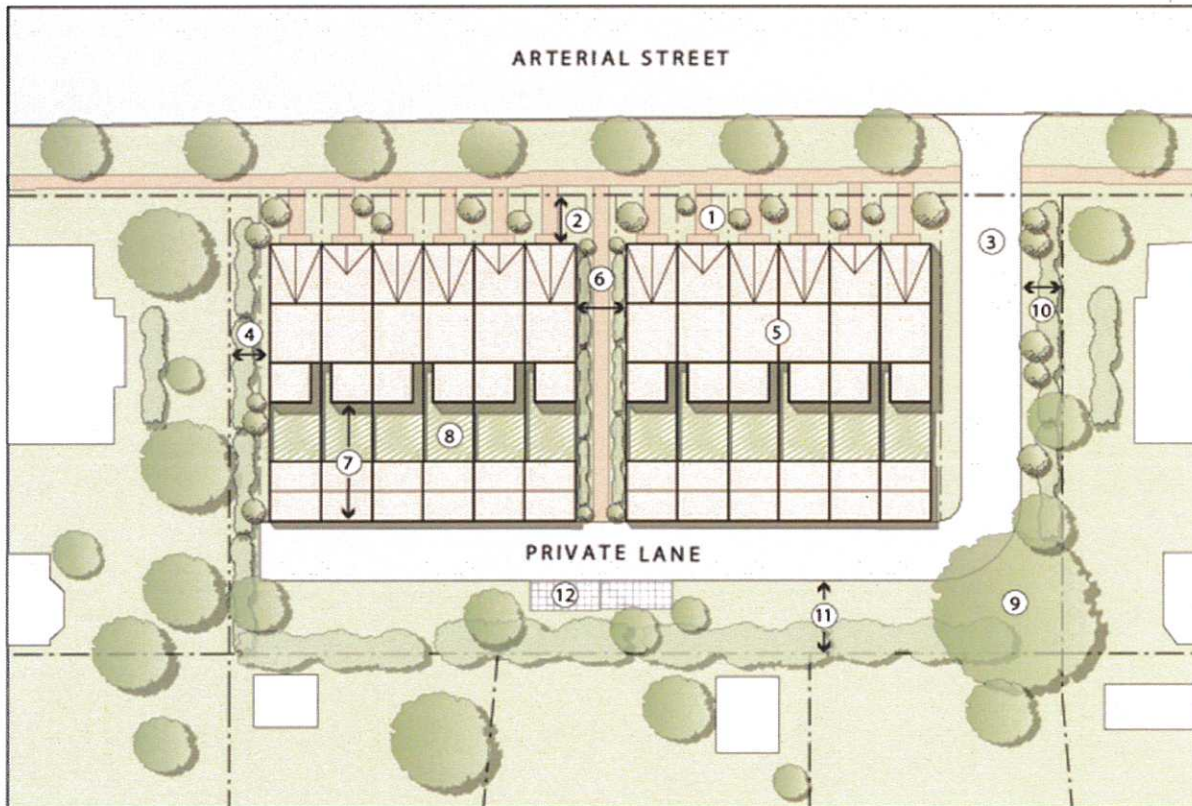
- Width of new lots should equal or exceed the width of adjacent lots
- Encourage low-impact development practices



# Infill Guideline Illustrations



# Key Townhouse Infill Guidelines



- 1 – Orient units to a public street
  - 2 – Consistent front setback
  - 3 – Parking and servicing at the rear or underground
  - 4, 7 – Minimum side and backyard setbacks
  - 5 – Minimum townhouse width of 6 metres, depth of 12 metres
  - 6 – Minimum 3 metres between townhouse blocks
  - 8 – Private rear yard for each unit
  - 9 – Protect mature trees
  - 10, 11 – Buffer laneways/driveways with landscape strips
  - 12 – Visitor parking in central location with access to front entrances
- No front-to-back conditions
  - Minimum 50% soft landscaping in the front yard



# Townhouse Guideline Illustrations



# Key Messages

## **The Urban Design Guidelines:**

- Will only apply to lands with a Low-Rise Residential designation within established Community Areas as identified on Map 1 – Vaughan's Stable Community Areas
- Will not apply to Community Areas under development via a recently approved Block Plan, subdivision, or zoning, and will not apply to designated intensification areas
- Will assist staff, developers, and the community in the interpretation of the existing policies of VOP 2010 when answering whether infill development conforms to the Official Plan
- If an OPA is submitted, it will be evaluated on its individual merits in consideration of its context and any pertinent policies. The guidelines are a useful reference tool for ensuring that the character of an existing neighbourhood is respected
- Will not change the land use policies of VOP 2010
- The land use policy amendments to VOP 2010 recommended by the study will be the subject of a future Public Hearing
- Will support staff and the public in addressing applications under the current Official Plan policies while the review of VOP 2010 policies continues
- Will be non-statutory and will come into effect upon Council approval