

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE, JUNE 17, 2002**

### **JOINT STUDY, MARKHAM/VAUGHAN/THORNHILL MAIN STREET STUDY (YONGE STREET)**

#### **Recommendation**

Ward 5 Councillor Susan Kadis recommends:

1. THAT the City of Vaughan participate with the Town of Markham in a joint study, the, "Thornhill Main Street Study", (Yonge Street), and,
2. THAT the Ward 5 Councillor play an active role in this study, as required, and,
3. THAT the City of Vaughan financially support the portion of this study respecting the City of Vaughan up to a maximum of \$20,000, and,
4. THAT the Commissioner of Planning be directed to determine the specific details respecting the level and nature of the City's participation in this study, including the amount of financial support required to represent The City of Vaughan's planning and urban design interests.

#### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of this joint study with the Town of Markham is to establish guidelines that can be implemented by both municipalities to strengthen the sense of place and improve the physical attractiveness of the Yonge Street corridor within the Thornhill Community.

#### **Background**

On January 10, 2002, a meeting of citizens interested in the study area in the Town of Markham met to discuss a possible main street study for the Yonge Street corridor. A written summary of the results of their discussion was provided to Town of Markham Planning Staff for consideration. On February 12, 2002, Markham staff provided City of Vaughan Staff with a brief description of a possible joint consultant study. Subsequently, a draft Terms of Reference for the, "Thornhill Main Street Study" (Yonge Street) was prepared by Markham Staff for consideration by the City of Vaughan.

Specifically the study will:

1. Assess the Thornhill community's expectations for the Yonge Street corridor through a workshop process
2. Establish a coordinated urban design vision for the Yonge Street corridor in Markham and Vaughan, having regard for existing Official Plan and Secondary Plan design policies and guidelines and the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan
3. Assess the retail and commercial characteristics, trends and opportunities for the study area and identify strategies to strengthen and enhance retail and commercial uses within the study area
4. Make recommendations for amendments to established policy and guidelines in each municipality that may be required to achieve the urban design vision
5. Establish a coordinated streetscape improvement strategy for the study area
6. Recommend an implementation and phasing strategy for the proposed streetscape improvements

Vaughan Community Planning and Urban Design Staff have reviewed the Terms of Reference and agree in principle that participation of the City of Vaughan in this study has merit. This study presents an opportunity to coordinate possibly beneficial planning and design policy, guidelines and possible streetscape improvements in both municipalities.

The Town of Markham Council has now approved the Terms of Reference for this study and has approved \$30,000 for the Markham portion of the budget. To date, Town and City Staff have not finalized discussions of the Terms of Reference, but could do so by July, 2002. The Town of Markham approval of this study permits adjustments to the Terms of Reference during the consultant assignment process.

For this reason, it is timely that the City of Vaughan agree to participate, both financially and with the participation of appropriate City Staff, to enable the work to commence. In this regard, it would appear that the requirements for improvements to the Vaughan side of Yonge Street are somewhat less than on the Markham side. Therefore, the size of any Vaughan contribution to study costs should be determined through discussions with Town of Markham Staff. In any case, this amount should not exceed \$20,000. The final agreed contribution should be determined by the Commissioner of Planning.

### **Conclusion**

Based upon the above, it is concluded that the City of Vaughan should participate with the Town of Markham in the Thornhill Main Street Study (Yonge Street), both financially and with Staff participation. The amount of financial participation should be determined at by the Commissioner of Planning following discussions between Markham and Vaughan Staff on the Terms of Reference, but should only be up to a maximum of \$20,000. This amount is available in the Community Planning Department 2002 budget.

### **Attachments**

1 Thornhill Main Street Study, Terms of Reference

### **Report prepared by:**

Councillor Susan Kadis

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Kadis  
Councillor, Ward 5

ATTACHMENT 1

THORNHILL MAIN STREET STUDY  
**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

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## Introduction

The Town of Markham wishes to retain a consultant to establish a new urban design and commercial main street vision for Yonge Street between the York Farmer's Market property south of Elgin Street and the lands immediately north of Thornhill Summit Drive/Centre Street, to the edge of the ravine. Over the years, the Town of Markham has taken steps to establish identifiable community focal points for its residents and business community. While this section of Yonge Street travels through the historic heart of the Thornhill Community, it currently lacks a coherent visual character which would help to provide a community focus for the Thornhill Heritage District and the adjacent commercial and residential areas. Furthermore, over the years, there have been proposals to convert retail and commercial properties to other uses, raising concerns about the long-term viability of retail and commercial uses along this section of the Yonge Street corridor.

The Yonge Street corridor encompasses a wide variety of land uses and building forms. South of the study area, a mix of retail and residential uses predominate. Within the study area, between Elgin Street and Thornhill Summit Drive, Yonge Street travels through the core of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District. However, much of the heritage character of this section of Yonge Street has been diluted over the years by a mix of competing development types including street-oriented storefronts, car-oriented retail strips, pockets of medium and high density housing and the few remaining heritage buildings. East and west of the study area, residential neighbourhoods predominate, including the Thornhill Heritage District, which bisects the middle of the study area. North of the study area, Yonge Street crosses the East Branch of the Don River, where its character briefly changes from an urban, highway-oriented commercial corridor, to a more green, natural area dominated by open space and recreational areas. Further north, Yonge Street again reverts to a predominantly retail commercial area.

In addition to its role as a mixed use commercial corridor, Yonge Street also serves as the boundary between the Town of Markham on the east side and the City of Vaughan on the west side. A coordinated approach between these two municipalities will be crucial to the success of this study.

The primary intent of this study is to establish guidelines that can be implemented to strengthen the sense of place and improve the physical attractiveness of the Yonge Street corridor within the Thornhill Community. Specifically, the study will:

1. Asses the Thornhill community's expectations for the Yonge Street corridor, through the use of a community workshop process;
2. Establish an urban design vision for the Yonge Street corridor, having regard for existing Official Plan and Secondary Plan design policies and guidelines and the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan;
3. Assess the retail and commercial characteristics, trends and opportunities for this section of the Yonge Street corridor, and identify strategies to strengthen and enhance retail and commercial uses within the study area;
4. Make recommendations for amendments to established design policies and guidelines that may be required in order to achieve the goals of the urban design vision;
5. Establish a streetscape improvement strategy for the study area;
6. Recommend an implementation and phasing strategy for the proposed streetscape improvements.

## Study Structure

The final sequence and detail of study tasks will be determined in consultation with the successful consultant. Tasks will be structured to provide thorough research and analysis, and the development of a set of applicable recommendations.

Main tasks will include:

- Establish a public consultation process;
- Establish urban design goals and objectives for the study area;
- Identify existing opportunities and constraints within the study area;
- Set out an urban design vision for the study area;

- Review current development proposals;
- Identify and test potential redevelopment sites with use and built form alternatives;
- Develop built form guidelines and streetscape improvement strategies that will achieve the urban design objectives for the study area, setting out among other matters:
  - built form guidelines including building placement, height, massing, setbacks or build-to requirements and special architectural features;
  - guidelines for access, location and layout of parking areas;
  - streetscape and boulevard treatments including landscaping, pedestrian amenities;
  - gateway features;
  - cost estimates for recommended streetscape improvements on a linear foot basis;
  - recommendations from the public consultation process;
  - liaison between the Town of Markham, the City of Vaughan and the Region of York; and
  - recommendations relating to an implementation and phasing strategy.
- Develop a commercial and retail revitalization strategy for the study area, setting out, among other matters:
  - Retail characteristics, trends and opportunities for the study area;
  - The relative merit, from a retail standpoint, of the physical improvements noted above;
  - Parking accessibility;
  - Land use mix and retail store mix;
  - Storefront presentation and appeal of retail streetscape;
  - Recommendations regarding formation and role of a Business Improvement Area within the study area.
  - Recommendations regarding the range of viable retail and commercial uses within the study area.
- Proposed to Secondary Plan and Zoning By-law provisions, to implement study recommendations.

## **Study Area Boundaries**

The study area for the proposed project includes the Yonge Street Corridor and fronting properties from the southern boundary of the York Farmers Market (located at the south east corner of Yonge Street and Elgin Street) to the northern boundary of the Thornhill Mews property, located north of Thornhill Summit Drive. The Study Area Boundaries are shown on the attached map.

## **Available information**

The following background information is available for review:

- Town of Markham Official Plan (Revised 1987) Office Consolidation;
- Thornhill Secondary Plan;
- Thornhill Secondary Plan Background Studies;
- Thornhill Heritage Conservation District Plan, 1986;
- Town of Markham Zoning By-laws;
- Urban Design Guidelines for Commercial Corridors;

## **Public Consultation**

The Town of Markham recognizes the importance and value of public consultation in the planning process. The Thornhill Main Street Study will require public consultation with residents and local business owners, through a workshop consultation process in order to:

- Obtain public input;
- Obtain input from the business community;
- Determine community expectations; and

- Determine alternative strategies to address issues raised.

## **Consultant**

The study requires a consultant, which has knowledge in planning and urban design. Close involvement with Town staff involved in planning, design, and engineering is expected. The following aspects will be considered in evaluating consultant proposals:

- Study work program – content and description of tasks;
- Relevant experience;
- Related projects successfully implemented;
- Program for public consultation; and
- Budget, work program and benchmark targets.

The consultant is expected to perform the following tasks:

- Attend Information Meetings/Public Meetings as necessary;
- Set out a vision for the Yonge Street Corridor within the Thornhill Community;
- Prepare a detailed streetscape improvement strategy and urban design guidelines for the study area in document format, and presentation sized displays;
- Liaise with staff during the development of streetscape improvement strategies and urban design guidelines for the study area;
- Provide an implementation strategy, including phasing and cost estimates, for the proposed streetscape improvements;
- Make recommendations regarding amendments (if any) to existing policies.

Town staff will provide comments on the draft urban design and streetscape improvement guidelines prior to their finalization by the retained consultant.

On an as-needed basis, the consultant may also be engaged in the review of development applications submitted for lands within the study area. This may involve:

- the review, analysis and critique of development plans;
- attendance at meetings with applicants, Council, and members of the public; and
- participation at Ontario Municipal Board hearings.

The consultant's proposal must include a per diem rate that would be charged for the above potential involvement.

## **Budget, Schedule and Staffing**

The Town's approved 2001 capital budget includes \$30,000 (exclusive of GST) for the Thornhill Main Street Study. The study should be completed within 6 months of the execution of the study contract. Proposals should comment on the appropriateness of this budget and suggested timeframe, and propose variation if required.

The detailed budget will identify costing fees, meeting costs, costs for advertising and public relations, disbursements, contingencies and pertinent taxes, plus a payment schedule for each study phase. The work schedule outline will detail task timing, task sequence and meeting schedules. The staffing plan will identify the role and responsibilities of the consulting team and indicate the extent and schedule of involvement required by Town staff in the study process.

## **Contract**

The consultant will enter into a standard contract with the Town. The contract will incorporate a detailed work program, budget and payment schedule. Invoice requirements will be specified in the contract. No monies shall be paid to the consultant unless in accordance with the provisions of the contract. The terms of the awarded contract will be forwarded following the selection of the successful consultant.

## Study products

The main anticipated product is a set of recommendations regarding revitalization of retail and commercial land uses as well as built form and streetscape improvement guidelines that, when implemented, will create a community focus for the Thornhill Community. The final product will be provided in electronic format with at least 20 copies in printed form, and one unbound copy. The consultant will be expected to report on progress through meetings with staff and give two presentations to Council on the recommendations for the Yonge Street corridor through Thornhill: an initial presentation to review and preliminary recommendations, and a second presentation to present final recommendations. The presentation will include colour renderings to illustrate the study recommendations.

The deliverables for this exercise are as follows:

- 20 bound copies and one unbound copy;
- 1 electronic copy of the urban design and streetscape improvement guidelines for the study area;
- 1 set of drawings illustrating these guidelines, suitable for presentation to Markham Council.

## Proposals

The consultant selection is a three-stage process, as follows:

### Stage 1 - Proposal Submission

Consultant firms will be invited to submit study proposals to the Town no later than -----  
at **4:30 p.m.** The proposal should detail study costs, project management, study team and study approach. The proposal should identify the following:

- Project manager and lead consultant
- Project team background, overview of similar work experience
- Curriculum vitae for all principal study team members
- Role and responsibilities of each member of the consulting team, including project management responsibilities
- Standard pre-diem rates
- Proposed study budget and scope of work
- A detailed description of the above mentioned deliverables
- Identification of any potential conflicts of interest with other projects
- Draft work program including task timing, sequencing, meetings, Council and public consultation processes, study process, budget requirements, deliverables, and time frames
- Extent and timing of involvement required by Town staff in the study process
- Vision and approach to meeting the study objectives and tasks

Six copies of the proposals should be submitted to the Ron Blake, Senior Project Coordinator, West District, 101 Town Centre Boulevard, Markham, Ontario, L3R 9W3. If you have any further inquiries, please contact Ron Blake at (905) 477-7000 ext. 2600.

### Stage 2 - Interview

Potential consultants for the Thornhill Main Street Study will be requested to participate in formal interviews with Town staff. These meetings will be arranged following staff review of the proposals.

### Stage 3 – Detailed work program

The successful consultant will be required to submit a detailed work program, work schedule, staffing plan and study process, including the proposed public consultation process and financial arrangements to complete the study. The consultant will enter into a standard contract with the Town of Markham. The contract will incorporate the detailed work program, budget and payment schedule. Invoice requirements will be specified in the contract. No payments will be made to the consultant unless in accordance with the provisions of the contract.





Location Map  
Figure 1