

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (WORKING SESSION) MAY 22, 2012**

**SOUTH YONGE STREET CORRIDOR STREETScape MASTER PLAN  
FILE 19.31  
WARD 5 - YONGE STREET BETWEEN STEELES AVENUE AND BANTRY AVENUE**

**Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Planning in collaboration with York Region staff recommends:

1. THAT the staff report and York Region presentation on the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan, BE RECEIVED for information and discussion.
2. THAT staff be directed to participate in the Implementation Strategy Team led by York Region to implement the streetscape master plan along Yonge Street, including a financial impact analysis and associated funding strategy, and report back to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

**Contribution to Sustainability**

The South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan contributes to the goals and objectives within "Green Directions Vaughan", the City's "Sustainability and Environmental Master Plan", specifically:

Goal 1: To significantly reduce our use of natural resources and the amount of waste we generate.

*Objective 1.3 "To support enhanced standards of stormwater management at the City and work with others to care for Vaughan's watersheds"*

Goal 2: To ensure sustainable development and redevelopment.

*Objective 2.2 "To develop Vaughan as a City with maximum greenspace and an urban form that supports our expected population growth"*

Goal 3: To ensure that getting around in Vaughan is easy and has a low environmental impact.

*Objective 3.1 "To develop and sustain a network of sidewalks, paths and trails that supports all modes of non-vehicular transportation"*

Goal 4: To create a vibrant community for citizens, businesses and visitors.

*Objective 4.1 "To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage"*

*Objective 4.2 "To ensure that the City of Vaughan attracts businesses and investment that will result in well-paying jobs for Vaughan citizens, a sustainable tax base, and continuing prosperity into the 21<sup>st</sup> century"*

Goal 5: To be a leader on sustainability issues.

The South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan promotes the following goals, which directly relate to those of *Green Directions Vaughan*, specifically:

- Communicate a streetscape and open space framework that is both resilient and adaptable to support short, medium and long term urban transformations;

- Integrate transit infrastructure with the emerging urban fabric;
- Support the pedestrian, cyclist, transit and motorist experience for all ages and abilities;
- Define catalytic public realm design strategies and tactics that will promote cultural, social, commercial and recreational activities within the urban core, and enhance overall quality of life; and,
- Identify opportunities and implementation strategies to incorporate public art into the public realm.

### **Economic Impact**

There are no immediate budgetary impacts resulting from this report and presentation. However, the implementation of streetscape plans can create a significant financial impact recognizing current revenue sources. Overall, the capital expenditure required to fully implement the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan is estimated at approximately \$45 million over the life of the plan. In the absence of funding for the Yonge Subway Extension, the Master Plan anticipates an approximate 20-year period for the implementation of the plan (2031). The implementation of the plan will be primarily triggered by development and will involve coordination and contribution from a range of partners for both capital and maintenance.

The estimated capital cost of improvements and annual maintenance (in 2011 dollars) for the Streetscape Master Plan is summarized in the table below. These costs are for both sides of Yonge Street, which would be shared with a range of partners, and exclude the cost of underground power distribution, other utilities and public art.

**Table 1**  
Cost of Streetscape Improvements

Phase	Total Cost of Streetscape Improvements* (excluding HST)	Annual Maintenance of Streetscape (excluding HST)
Phase 1 – Pre-Subway	\$38M (\$6.8M/km)	\$1.35M (245K/km)
Phase 2 – Subway	\$7M (\$1.2M/km)	\$600K (105K/km)
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$45M (\$8.0M/km)</b>	<b>\$2.0M (350K/km)</b>

The City of Vaughan currently does not have a long term financial strategy to support the additional operating and capital funding, which will be required in future years to successfully implement and maintain the higher streetscape service levels associated with Vaughan's planned intensification areas, including the South Yonge Street Corridor.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommendations of the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan Study from Steeles Avenue to Bantry Avenue and to seek Council direction to proceed with the implementation strategy of the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan.

## **Background - Analysis and Options**

### **In 2009, the City of Vaughan passed a Council Resolution requesting a streetscape study for the South Yonge Street corridor**

In early 2009, The Towns of Richmond Hill, Markham and the City of Vaughan passed resolutions requesting York Region to undertake a streetscape study for South Yonge Street. In February 2010, Regional Council approved \$450,000 for the development of the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan, between Steeles Avenue and Bantry Avenue, by re-allocating funds from the Municipal Streetscape Partnership Program (MSPP).

York Region consulted and collaborated with the local municipalities and affected agencies to ensure that the recommendations of previous studies that were undertaken for Yonge Street by the 3 York municipalities and City of Toronto were incorporated into the Scope of Work for the Master Plan. In 2010, the Region retained the services of EDA Collaborative, a landscape architecture consultant firm, to undertake the Study.

### **The Streetscape Master Plan builds on the several land use studies carried out by local municipalities**

In response to the Provincial direction for Yonge Street, the Region and local area municipalities and the City of Toronto, have carried out several intensification, urban design, transportation planning and land use studies to guide development, built-form, and transportation along the corridor and Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Mobility Hub. The Master Plan integrates the findings of six planning policy and infrastructure plans, 17 urban design and special studies and seven transportation studies to create one cohesive streetscape strategy for the entire corridor.

### **Development proposals along South Yonge Street require a coordinated and consistent Streetscape Master Plan**

In support of Provincial direction for intensification along the Yonge Street corridor, coupled with the Yonge Subway extension, local municipalities and the Region have been receiving an increasing number of development applications for high-density residential/mixed-use development, and anticipate seeing an accelerated number of these types of applications in the near future. As a condition of approval, developers have been required to implement, or contribute to, the streetscape treatment within the boulevard fronting their property.

However, in the absence of a streetscape vision for South Yonge Street, the Region and the local municipalities have faced challenges in providing clear direction on the physical design of the boulevard or to be able to accurately estimate the value of a contribution toward such works. A consolidated Streetscape Master Plan will provide a framework and design direction for Regional and local planning staff, and the development community. This will help create certainty, and assist in expediting approvals for development applications.

## **Funding and Implementation Considerations**

The long term planning for streetscaping is necessary to ensure an understanding of the future financial commitments required, as well as, develop strategies that can address future funding requirements for the maintenance, operation, rehabilitation and replacement of this infrastructure. At present a number of streetscape plans have been prepared across the City. The determination of the life cycle costing of streetscaping infrastructure is essential to appropriately prepare budget forecasts. Comprehensive long-term financial plans need to be in place for such infrastructure in order to facilitate a proper decision making process for proceeding with the planning, design, construction and maintenance of these initiatives.

The acquisition/construction costs of the proposed streetscape master plan may be funded through a variety of sources, such as:

- Development Charges
- Site Plan Approval/Section 37 'Bonusing'
- Conditions of development approval
- York Region Municipal Streetscaping Partnership Program
- BIA funding opportunities
- Taxation

With an increase in streetscaping projects proposed throughout the City, it is imperative that a funding strategy is developed to ensure the long term financial sustainability of this infrastructure. The development of a streetscaping reserve can aid in reducing the funding gap for the construction and maintenance of these initiatives while ensuring the long term viability of these treatments. The timing of implementation and the level of service will need to be revisited as part of any long-term strategy, and in the development of upcoming streetscaping initiatives.

#### Operational and Maintenance Considerations

##### **Staff are collaborating with York Region on reviewing levels of service and maintenance on the streetscape design on Yonge Street**

Staff are collaborating with York Region to review maintenance practices and discussing acceptable levels of service. The outcome of these discussions will provide a more accurate cost estimate for annual streetscape maintenance.

As the Master Plan is implemented through site plan development on Yonge Street, the Region would continue to maintain the grass boulevard (where applicable), street trees, intersection treatments, medians and YRT improvements. The Regional cost to maintain the streetscape will be monitored and reflected in future operating budget submissions. Local municipalities would be responsible for the maintenance of streetscape features that exceed the Regional standard. These streetscape features include lighting, enhanced paving, public art, street furniture, lay-by parking, specialized planting, gateway features and signage.

#### Why We Do Streetscaping

Streetscapes are an important component of the public realm (public spaces where people interact), which helps to define a community's aesthetic quality, identity, economic activity, health, social cohesion and opportunity. Streetscapes can have a significant effect on how people perceive and interact with their community. If streetscapes are safe and inviting to pedestrians, people are more likely to walk, which can help reduce automobile traffic, improve public health, stimulate local economic activity, and attract residents and visitors to a community. A streetscape is made up of paving, lighting, trees, street furniture, transit shelters, signage, public art and sidewalks, framed by buildings and open spaces, which combine to form an overall vibrant high-quality public realm.

The Planning Act was amended through the Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act (Bill 51), 2006. The amendments provided municipalities with new authority for site plan control related to Urban Design, Landscape Architecture and Sustainable Design Control. In addition, the Provincial Policy Statement (2005) and Growth Plan (2006) direct a significant proportion of growth (intensification) to Vaughan (VMC), and other intensification corridors such as the South Yonge Street Corridor, and Mobility Hubs. Given this emphasis on intensification, redevelopment and compact urban form, Urban Design policies and guidelines, and Streetscape Plans are necessary to guide development.

The City of Vaughan's new Official Plan provides Urban Design policies to promote a high standard of urban design, including the use of Streetscape Plan studies, as a key factor in establishing attractive, pedestrian scale, transit oriented and high quality design for the public and private realm.

Building a great City means bringing together in a functional, attractive and sustainable manner, the various components that create the urban fabric. The public streets and rights-of-ways are considered significant public spaces, and therefore, their streetscape design sets the stage for development, and should balance their multiple roles and functions by ensuring that they:

- a. accommodate a variety of transportation functions, including walking, cycling, public transit and vehicles;
- b. accommodate municipal infrastructure and utilities to the greatest extent possible, which should be provided below grade;
- c. inform streetscape conditions, standards and criteria required for development approval;
- d. contribute to the greening of Vaughan through the provision of street trees and landscaping;
- e. contribute to the City's overall vibrant streetscape design, through high-quality hard and soft landscape treatments, and the integration of public art;
- f. create a pedestrian oriented urban environment by providing amenities such as wide planted boulevards with appropriate and attractive street furniture and pedestrian scale street lighting; and,
- g. capitalize on potential future implementation funding opportunities by developing cost effective "shovel ready" realistic construction cost estimates.

**The Master Plan envisions a "Main Street" that is Bold and Vibrant; Green and Sustainable; Practical and Achievable**

The study vision is to create a gateway destination that is vibrant and engaging; environmentally, socially and economically sustainable; consistent and complementary to the function of the corridor while supporting local character and partnerships. This will make South Yonge Street a place where people will "travel to", rather than "travel through".

To achieve this vision, the Study outlines a streetscape design concept, detailed design guidelines as well as an implementation and phasing strategy that encourages an accessible, pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

Continuity strip paving, illumination, street furniture, public art, way finding and signage will create a consistent and unified boulevard. Appropriate and context-sensitive roadway standards, including the width of travel lanes, inclusion of bicycle lanes, medians / centre left-turn lanes will be implemented in a way that complements the streetscape and roadway function.

**Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report is consistent with the priorities set forth in Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan, through the following initiatives, specifically:

Service Excellence:

- Lead & Promote Environmental Sustainability
- Preserve our Heritage & Support Diversity, Arts & Culture

Organizational Excellence:

- Manage Corporate Assets
- Ensure Financial Sustainability
- Manage Growth & Economic Well-being

**Regional Implications**

York Region is a vital lead and partner in the implementation strategy of the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan.

The need for a Streetscape Master Plan for Yonge Street is identified in the *Regional Official Plan (2010)* and *Streetscape Policy (2001)*, which recognizes Yonge Street as a key Regional Corridor. Yonge Street will, therefore, require the highest quality urban design in order to attract a vibrant mix of housing, employment and recreation.

The Region's vision of the corridor is consistent with the Province's *Growth Plan (2006)* and Metrolinx's *The Big Move (2008)*. These policies identify Yonge Street as a higher order transit corridor, which will serve to support the Region's future Urban Growth Centres, in Richmond Hill/Langstaff and Newmarket. The Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Mobility Hub is located in the northern portion of the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan study area. A map of the study area context is shown in *Attachment #1*.

**Conclusion**

As directed by Council, staff have collaborated and participated with York Region on the South Yonge Street Corridor Streetscape Master Plan. This initiative demonstrates the City's commitment on building a great City in a functional, attractive and sustainable manner.

**Attachments**

1. Context Location Map

**Report prepared by:**

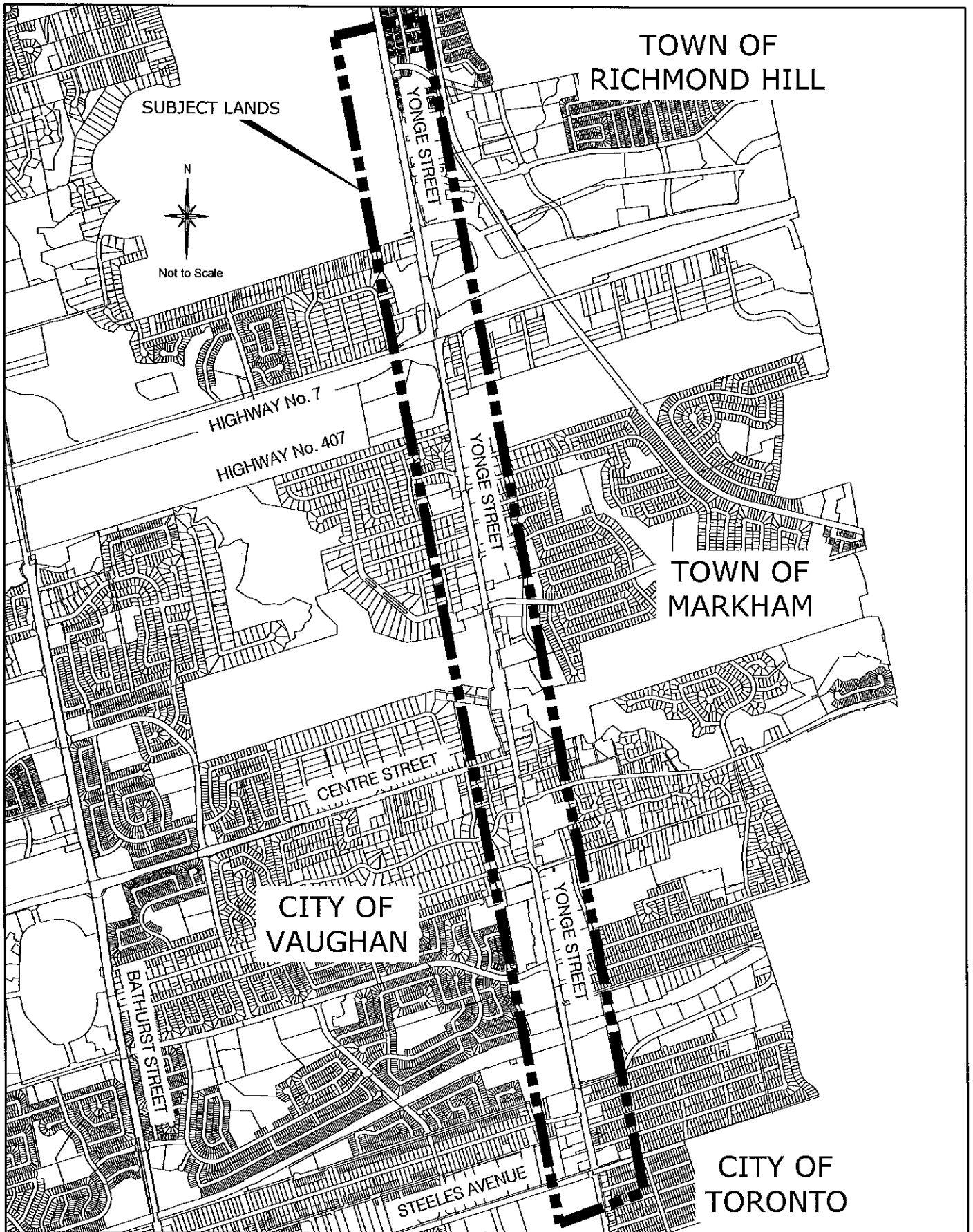
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Respectfully submitted,

JOHN MACKENZIE  
Commissioner of Planning

GRANT UYEVAMA  
Director of Development Planning

/CM



*Context Location Map*  
*Working Session*  
*May 22nd, 2012*



*Attachment*

File: N.A.

Date: May 9, 2012

**1**