

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR RESIDENTIAL DESIGN STANDARDS

2.1 A Vision for the City of Vaughan

Establish a Community Framework Plan

This standards review has developed the design parameters that can collectively shape a community framework plan for future development. In order to visualize the potential of the overall community vision, the creation of a community framework plan (or master plan) typically illustrates those development projects that are currently being considered, as well as future developments and places them within the overall context of creating a significant new community area. The Community Framework Plan provides a coordinated illustration of the major elements of the community including buildings, streetscapes, walkways, parkland, open space and natural features. The Framework Plan is not a fixed or finalized plan, but it serves as both an illustration of design principles and an important point of reference for the ongoing evaluation of development proposals.

The guiding principles for the recommended design standards include:

a) Variety of Architectural Expression

The City of Vaughan has a variety of residential, commercial and public use building types and architectural expressions within each type. The result is a rich and varied building fabric that has evolved over the City's history. To ensure an interesting building fabric with diverse residential opportunities, a variety of architectural expressions and a mixture of building types are recommended. **(Photo 13)**

b) High Quality and Consistency

Buildings must demonstrate a high quality of architectural design appropriately applied to its context. **(Photos 14 & 15)**

c) Human Scale and Safety

The design and location of residential building elements including porches, entrances, windows and building projections should be scaled and detailed to support the comfort and safety of pedestrian activity between the public and private realm.

The recommendations for residential design are based on the following design objectives.

2.1.1 General Objectives

- a) Wherever possible, maximize public access and visibility to stream corridors, parks, stormwater management ponds, woodlots and other open space areas. For example, parks should have at least two street frontages to provide access and visibility of the entire area. This can be achieved through reasonable proportions of single loaded road and direct frontage by adjacent housing. **(Photos 13 & 14)** The effect of back lotting privatizes the public enjoyment of these scenic community amenity areas.



Photo 12: A variety of house forms and styles contributes to a memorable impression of the neighbourhood



Photo 13: Housing that is connected to neighbourhood parks and open space helps to create a sense of neighbourhood enclaves.



Photo 14: The garage and house can coexist through appropriate transitions of scale



Photo 15: Legacy, Markham. Housing front onto a single loaded road adjacent to a woodlot

- b) At an arterial or open space edge where a feature road such as a cul-de-sac or open crescent is used, the buildings on the flanking lots should front onto the street as well as the edge condition, including entry and porch treatments.
- c) Access to parking and/or garages should generally be from the street, and only where required from a rear lane.
- d) A variety of dwelling types and front yard building setbacks should be integrated within neighbourhood blocks to contribute to a diverse and distinct neighbourhood image. A minimum setback of 4.5 metres will provide for a variety of treatments including front porches and bay windows in the building street wall.
- e) A sub-neighbourhood area may be distinguished by a dominant housing type, provided there is some intermixing of dwelling types and a variety of visible building elements and materials within each block.

- f) Higher density housing should be generally placed along arterial, collector or other primary roads, as well as around open spaces and at the end of blocks.
- g) Front porches or covered entrances are strongly encouraged as a transitional area between the principle dwelling and the front yard to provide both visual interest to the building and opportunity for informal social activity contributing to casual surveillance and safety on the street. Encroachments into the front yard setback should encourage the provision of porches.
- h) Rear yard porches or decks are encouraged in the rear yard. The encroachment of these elements should allow for a reasonable rear yard amenity area (approximately 50 square metres).
- i) Dwellings on corner and flankage lots, gateways and at the terminus of streets should employ building elements and designs that emphasize their visibility and potential role as feature or orienting structures within the community.

2.1.2 Attractive Street Character

- a) A variety of street and block configurations to contribute to a sense of orientation and place.
- b) Residential design in which lot sizes, house types, building types, materials and colours contribute to visual interest and variety within a block, in contrast to subdivisions where the same house type is repeated for an entire block.
- c) A variety of setbacks that contributes to the character and visual interest of the streetscape.
- d) Above grade services that are located with the least physical disturbance and visibility within the public realm.
- e) Streets that are consistently lined with street trees on both sides. Tree monocultures with respect to potential disease should be considered in the consistent use of one species.
- f) Community entrance features including walls and elements within central street medians that through their design and location signify their role as significant community elements.
- g) The predominant use of a modified street grid system, minimizing the use of culs-de-sac to areas where circumstances such as topography or the desire to preserve natural features warrants their use.
- h) The use of laneways where their use benefits the design of the community, its streets and the provision of parking on private property.

2.1.3 House and Lot Design

- a) A strong public face that encourages actively lived-in areas of the house accentuated by front entrances, front steps, porches and windows and a variety of rooflines. Active use of principle rooms and areas within the front yard facing the street will assist in neighbourhood safety through increased surveillance opportunities of the street.

- b) Garages and driveways that are subordinate to the house and lot design. In contrast to houses where the garage is placed forward of the front wall of the house, and is often the widest element of the front façade, the garage should be set back from the front wall and be scaled to provide a balance between the proportion of the garage to the overall width of the house. Similarly the driveway should not dominate the front yard.
- c) Dual frontage on corner lots that give expression to the two street frontages through the use of wrap around sunrooms and front porches, projecting bay windows and side entrances.
- d) Privacy fencing where it is used to screen the backyard facing the side street, is minimized in length.