3.0 POLICY

A review was undertaken of various documents describing the planned function of arterial streets in York Region.

This review includes planning policy documents, such as official plans, secondary plans, and vision documents, which identify the preferred endpoint in arterial street function and design, as well as urban design guidelines.

Specifically, the York Region Official Plan and the Official Plans for all nine municipalities identify the existing general policy approach in terms of the intended functions and form of arterial roads in York Region. A review of the more detailed Secondary Plan policies for Markham Central Area Planning District and Bayview Glen in Richmond Hill, as well as the Secondary Plan and urban design guidelines for the Vaughan Corporate Centre, identify the specific approaches at the local level to maintaining the ability to move people and goods, while better incorporating major arterial streets into the community. The review of vision documents included the Vision for Highway 7 and the Yonge Street Vision to provide images of the potential future corridors to guide public and private sector activities along these corridors. Additionally, the North Yonge Urban Design Guidelines, developed for the Oak Ridges community in Richmond Hill, outline an approach to address the function and design of an arterial street in a smaller community.

The following sections provide a brief review of the key policies, visions and urban design guidelines related to arterial roads, with a concluding synopsis providing a general overview of the planned function and role of arterial roads in York Region.

3.1 OFFICIAL PLANS

3.1.1 York Region Official Plan, Office Consolidation (As of November 30, 2005)

York Region differentiates its street network primarily on the basis of planned basic road widths, and does not generally differentiate between street types by function or intended traffic volume. The streets identified as part of the “Regional Roads Network” are identified as arterial roads and highways, owned and maintained by the area municipalities, the Region and the Province of Ontario.

York Region clearly states in its Official Plan (OP) that there is a strong relationship between transportation and urban form. The OP indicates that where regional streets travel through urban communities, streetscapes need to be designed in such a way as to encourage walking, bicycling and transit use. Further, the Plan states that a more compact, mixed-use urban form will encourage and be able to support a higher level of transit service, while at the same time helping to reduce the overall average trip length required for work, shopping, school or other purposes.

The Region identifies the need to coordinate roadway systems, to protect rights-of-way for future system improvements and to recognize that rights-of-way will increasingly provide shared corridors for transit, goods, pedestrian and bicycle movements. Specifically, the objectives include:
Towards Great Regional Streets – A Path to Improvement (Revision)
Regional Municipality of York, December, 2008

- To plan and protect street and road corridors so that they can be developed in a manner that is supportive of the future urban and rural structure of York Region and that can accommodate future transportation demands.

- To ensure that roads are improved in a manner that is supportive of all modes of transportation including walking, cycling, automobile, transit and truck and that minimizes conflicts between these different modes.

- To increase the total person-carrying and goods-carrying capability of the regional street and road network in a manner that is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of this Plan. (6.1)

Excerpts from the specific policies of Council that identify the planned role of significant transportation corridors in York Region include:

- That the hierarchy of roads on Maps 8 and 9 (of the Official Plan) be designed to support the Region’s proposed urban structure, including centres and corridors. These corridors are to be used by all forms of transportation where appropriate (pedestrian, cyclist, transit, automobiles, trucks), as well as public and private utilities and may also be considered for the implementation of rapid transit facilities. (6.1.1)

- That right-of-way widths may be varied, as identified on Map 9, in order to protect the character of existing heritage streetscapes. (6.1.7)

- To recognize that certain roads under the jurisdiction of the local municipalities, identified on Map 9, serve an arterial road function, and to request that these roadways be protected as such. (6.1.8)

- That priority will be given to protecting existing heritage streetscapes using techniques such as variable rights-of-way, use of by-passes and innovative road cross-section standards. In the case of Sharon, a 30 metre right-of-way will be protected until a bypass is assured. (6.1.12)

- To encourage all local municipalities to ensure that continuous mid-concession block collector roads are implemented east-west and north-south in all new urban developments. Such continuous collector roads are required not only to serve automobile traffic in the local areas but also to serve efficient and effective transit systems. (6.1.15)

- To identify and implement a network of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on regional roads as appropriate. This network should be designed to integrate with networks in the City of Toronto and other regions. (6.1.16)

In keeping with the Region’s objectives to achieve attractive and vibrant Regional Corridors that support public transit and link Regional Centres, it is the policy of Council:

- To require official plans for Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Newmarket, Vaughan, Richmond Hill and Markham to identify and designate Regional Corridors in accordance with the locations identified on Map 5. (5.5.1)
Towards Great Regional Streets – A Path to Improvement (Revision)
Regional Municipality of York, December, 2008

- That the Region, as requested by and in association with the area municipalities, consider extensions to the existing Regional Corridors, as shown on Map 5 of this Plan. (5.5.2)

- That the Key Development Areas within Regional Corridors identified according to Policy 5.5.4 of this Plan serve as places where compact and mixed-use development is focused. This approach will provide clarity as to where the highest concentrations of infill and intensification will occur. (5.5.5)

- That Key Development Areas should support an overall, long-term density target of 2.5 Floor Space Index for Regional Corridors. (5.5.6)

- To explore opportunities with area municipalities to provide sidewalks and lighting in the street right-of-way to enhance the visual appearance of the streetscape. (5.5.11)

- That all the new developments shall either front or flank the Regional Corridor roadway or other routes for public transit services. New reverse lotting along the corridor will not be permitted. (5.5.18)

Further policies dealing with the Transit Network promote the implementation of a regional rapid transit network including:

- High-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to facilitate bus movements in congested areas. (6.2.9g)

Policies dealing with Cycling, Walking and Transit acknowledge the need for sidewalks:

- To work with area municipalities to ensure that sidewalks and street lighting are provided on both sides of all arterial and collector roads with transit service. (6.3.5)

3.1.2 Town of Markham Official Plan (Revised 1987), As Amended, Office Consolidation, July, 2005

The Town of Markham Official Plan states that arterial roads shall be designed to facilitate traffic flow between the major centres of activity within the Town and the surrounding region. The transportation schedule (Schedule ‘C’) in the OP designates York Region Arterial, City of Toronto Arterial, and Major and Minor Arterial Roads in the Town of Markham, based on anticipated traffic flow and their associated rights-of-way.

Provisions related to rights-of-way that identify the intended function of major streets in Markham include:

- Rights-of-way shall be established to provide for the future needs of public transportation and vehicular traffic (5.3.3 b i);

- The Town shall take into consideration the possibility of putting bicycle paths in rights-of-way adjacent to arterial roads where appropriate (5.3.3 b ii); and
- The right-of-way width for arterial roads under the jurisdiction of York Region and City of Toronto shall be in accordance with their respective Official Plans and road design standards. The right-of-way width for Major and Minor Arterial roads shall be 36.5 to 45.7 m (120 to 150 feet), and 26.2 to 36.5 m (86 to 120 feet), respectively. Notwithstanding this general requirement, the minimum right-of-way for that portion of Sixteenth Avenue between Woodbine Avenue and Warden Avenue shall be 33.3 metres (5.3.3b vi).

Markham has several general urban design related policies that can be applied to arterial corridors which support the development of pedestrian environments through general principles of improved physical appearance and the development of higher quality environments. These include:

- The Town shall endeavour to maintain and improve the physical character and appearance of existing communities (2.1.1 d); and

- It will be an objective of Council to foster the development of an environment that will enhance the state of well being and the quality of life for residents of the Town and to pursue human services policies that will meet people’s changing needs and promote and maintain a healthy community in keeping with the economic resources of the Town (2.1.1 e).

3.1.3 Town of Richmond Hill Official Plan Consolidation, December 31, 1998

Richmond Hill’s Official Plan contains the following policies that define arterial roads:

- Arterial roads are designed to carry large volumes of traffic between areas of the Town and through the Town. Direct access is usually from other arterial roads and collector roads as well as controlled access highways. Arterial roads are the primary routes for local transit services (2.2.3.2.4 a);

- The minimum right-of-way width for arterial roads shall generally range from 30 metres (100 feet) to 46 metres (150 feet). Additional right-of-way width shall be provided for additional lanes at arterial intersections or at other intersections, where required (2.2.3.2.4 c); and

- Building setbacks along arterial roads shall be required which will be sufficient to provide rights-of-way for the future needs of public transit and vehicular traffic (2.2.3.2.4 d).

3.1.4 City of Vaughan Official Plan Amendment 600 (Amending OPA 400), Office Consolidation, January, 2003

The City of Vaughan defines its hierarchy of streets based on a functional classification of traffic volume, vehicular operating speed, access, transit service, pedestrian and bicycle activity and development density. Arterial Roads in the City include both Regional and City streets, and are subject to the following provisions that expand upon their intended function:
- Provision will be made for sidewalks on both sides of all arterial roads in urban areas (8.2.3 d);

- Arterials will accommodate HOV or bus lanes where required (8.2.3 e); and

- Arterials may accommodate separate bikeways, where required and feasible (8.2.3 f).

### 3.1.5 Town of Aurora Official Plan, June 27, 1991 (January 2007 Office Consolidation)

The Town of Aurora Official Plan includes the following policy with respect to arterial roads:

**Arterial Roads** shall:

- be under the jurisdiction of the Province of Ontario, Region of York, or the Town of Aurora,
- carry large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds,
- distribute and collect traffic from the collector road system,
- restrict access to support the primary arterial road function of moving through traffic,
- give traffic flow priority over on-street parking,
- have the capability to accommodate public transit,
- have a minimum right-of-way width of 26 to 36 metres depending on anticipated traffic volumes,
- have generally 2 to 4 lanes with protection for 6 lanes where necessary,
- provide pedestrian sidewalks on both sides, with intersection curb cuts,
- where bike routes coincide with arterial roads and the Town’s resources permit, widened right lanes, or sidewalks, where pedestrian flow is light, shall allow for safe cycling,
- be required to have a minimum right-of-way width of 36 metres where bicycle paths, street landscaping, centre boulevards or wider boulevards are proposed. (3.10.1a ii).

Schedule “E” to the Official Plan illustrates the proposed road classifications. Schedule “F” illustrates the proposed right-of-way designations, and these are listed in Schedule F-2.

A number of the policies in the Official Plan deal with the Oak Ridges Moraine, including road crossings of the Moraine. Policy 3.13.10 deals with Transportation, Infrastructure and Utilities within the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Policy in this section states that:

Transportation, infrastructure and utilities uses are permitted in all land use designations on the Oak Ridges Moraine, except as otherwise provided for in Subsections 3.13.4.c.viii, 3.13.4.c.ix, 3.13.4.c.x, 3.13.4.d.viii, 3.13.4.d.ix, 3.13.4.d.x, 3.13..4.e.ii, 3.13.4.f.ii, 3.13.5.1, 3.13.5.m, 3.13.5.u, 3.13.5.v, 3.13.10b, 3.13.10.c.
3.13.10.d, and 3.13.10.e. Transportation, infrastructure and utilities uses shall include:

i. public highways;

ii. transit lines, railways and related facilities;

iii. gas and oil pipelines;

iv. sewage and water service systems and lines and stormwater management facilities;

v. power transmission lines;

vi. telecommunications lines and facilities, including broadcasting towers;

vii. bridges, interchanges, stations, and other structures, above and below ground, that are required for the construction, operation or use of the facilities listed in Clauses i to vi above; and

viii. rights of way required for the facilities listed in Clauses i to vii above.

As indicated, there are a number of exceptions to Policy 3.13.10. These include, for example, Policy 3.13.4.c viii which states that:

On lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine Natural Core Area designation, transportation, infrastructure or utilities uses, shall not be approved unless:

a the need for the project has been demonstrated and that there is no reasonable alternative. Need shall be met through the Environmental Assessment Act, Planning Act, Condominium Act, Local Improvement Act approval processes or other applicable processes;

b that the following requirements will be satisfied, to the extent possible, while meeting all applicable safety standards:

i. The area of construction disturbance will be kept to a minimum;

ii. Right-of-way widths will be kept to the minimum consistent with meeting other objectives such as stormwater management and with locating as many transportation, infrastructure, and utilities uses within a single corridor as possible;

iii. The project will allow for wildlife movement;

iv. Lighting will be focused downwards and away; and

v. The planning, design and construction practices adopted will keep any adverse effects on the ecological integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine to a minimum.
c the project does not include and will not in the future require a highway interchange or a transit or railway station; and

d the project is located as close to the edge of the Oak Ridges Moraine Natural Core Area designation as possible.

3.1.6 Town of Georgina Official Plan (OPA 88), November, 2002

The Town of Georgina’s Official Plan contains the following policies that define arterial roads:

- Arterial roads are designed to serve regional travel demands, with limited access to abutting properties. The arterial roads are also divided into two types, namely major arterial and minor arterial. The major arteries include major Regional roads with right-of-way widths of 36 to 45 metres. The minor Arterials include Regional roads of lesser significance with right-of-way widths up to 30 metres (5.2.2.2 b i, ii).

Other road related policies include:

- The Town of Georgina shall ensure that arterial roads are designed to accommodate transit facilities (5.2.3.3 a); and

- Consideration shall be given to the inclusion of bicycle lanes in rights-of-way for new arterial roads. On existing arterial roads, the addition of facilities for bicycles shall be considered when such roads are reconstructed, or where it is physically and financially feasible to do so (5.2.4.2).

3.1.7 Town of Newmarket Official Plan, October 10, 2006

The Town of Newmarket Official Plan classifies the Town of Newmarket roadway system based on the function of the road, access, right-of-way width and daily traffic volumes. Arterial roads are designed to carry large volumes of traffic or inter-regional and intra-municipal traffic, and to connect major traffic generators, providing connections with the collector road system and to provide for movement of through traffic. The Official Plan contains the following policies related to arterial roads:

- The arterial roads shall accommodate the movement of traffic to and from the major traffic generating areas (15.2.3 e);

- For arterial roads, additional right-of-way widths may be required for such works as intersection improvements, site triangles, drainage culverts, bridges and underpass construction, cuts, fills, extra lanes at intersections, transit priority measures including HOV lanes, and accommodating bicycles, sidewalks and landscaping where appropriate and feasible (15.2.5); and

- Direct access to arterial roads shall be controlled wherever possible so as to minimize traffic hazards and avoid interference with the primary function of moving traffic.
through traffic. Minimum right-of-way widths of arterial roads range from 26 to 45 metres. No on-street parking shall be permitted on arterials. Sidewalks shall be provided on both sides of arterial roads (15.2 Table 2).

3.1.8 Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan Amendment 109, Office Consolidation, August 2004

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan states that the function of Regional and major arterial roads is to serve inter-regional, regional and local travel demands, including truck movements. In accordance with Section 5.2.2.2 Table 1:

- Direct access from abutting properties is generally restricted;
- Regional and major arterial roads shall have a maximum of four through lanes and transit/HOV lanes, if required; and
- Right-of-way widths shall be 30 metres (98 feet) to 45 metres (148 feet) except for specific areas such as sections of the 9th Line between Aurora and Vivian Roads, around Musselman Lake and just north of Stouffville Road, where a reduced right-of-way is required.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville also has several policies related to bicycle circulation and transit supportive design measures along the arterial roadways. These include:

- Consideration shall be given to the inclusion of bicycle lanes in road right-of-ways for new arterial and collector roads. On existing arterial and collector roads, the addition of facilities for bicycles shall be considered when such roads are reconstructed, or where it is physically and financially feasible to do so (5.2.3.1 ii); and
- It should be ensured that arterial and collector roads are designed to accommodate transit facilities (5.2.4.3 i).

3.1.9 Township of King Official Plan, November 23, 1970

The Township of King Official Plan contains the following policies that define arterial roads:

- Arterial roads should permit the movement of large volumes of traffic through the planning area to and from the major traffic generating areas (4.2 b);
- The planned basic road width of Regional and arterial roads range between 30 metres (98 feet) and 36 metres (118 feet), with the exception of Main Street, for which the planned road width is between 20 metres (66 feet) and 26 metres (85 feet) (4.3 b).
3.2 SECONDARY PLANS

3.2.1 Central Area Planning District (Markham Centre), July 1997

The Town of Markham’s Secondary Plan for the Central Planning District identifies Warden Avenue and Kennedy Road as major arterial roads, and Highway 7 as a Provincial Highway, as shown in Figure 3-1 on page 18.

The Secondary Plan for the Central Area Planning District states that:

- Notwithstanding the current designation of Highway 7 as a Provincial Highway, the Town supports the ultimate function of Highway 7 as a transit supportive urban arterial road, and supports urban development in conformity with the Urban Design policies in Section 3.4 of this Secondary Plan. (5.1.3 a)

- Prior to approval of development fronting onto Highway 7, a Comprehensive Streetscape Plan shall be prepared identifying built form and pedestrian access for Highway 7 through such features as boulevards, tree planting and street furniture and on-street parking while providing for an urban arterial traffic volume and higher order transit services. (5.1.3 b)

In order to create a transit supportive environment along Highway 7, the form of development must present an attractive alternative to the private automobile and encourage greater use of public transit. Development must be transit supportive, and transit facilities and services must be accessible to all potential users.

To realize this form of development along Highway 7, the Secondary Plan states that precinct plans, plans of subdivision and site plans will be reviewed relative to the guidelines and requirements of the Transit Supportive Land Use Planning Guidelines (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Transportation of Ontario) and the Town of Markham’s Transit Accessibility Implementation Plan and the Markham Transportation Planning Study. In particular, the following matters shall be addressed to the satisfaction of the Town:

a) Provision of a local road pattern and related pedestrian routes that provide for direct pedestrian access to transit routes and stops;
b) Documentation that all parts of the district are within acceptable walking distance of public transit;
c) Incorporation of bus bays/right turn lanes into road design requirements;
d) Provision for transit waiting areas in major buildings adjacent to transit stops;
e) Reverse lotting adjacent to Arterial and Collector Roads will not be permitted;
f) The main pedestrian entrance to major commercial and office buildings should front onto the street and on-site parking areas should be away from the front of buildings, where possible; Pedestrian amenities such as canopies and arcades for weather protection should be incorporated into the design of buildings along major transit routes;
g) Provision of pedestrian walkways and waiting areas which are attractive, weather protected, comfortable, well lit and contain seating, where appropriate. Walkways and waiting areas should provide for safe and unobstructed pedestrian movement to and from transit services; and
Source: Central Area Planning District (Markham Centre), July 1997
h) Review of the following to create an accessible environment for individuals who are mobility impaired:

- Design and placement of newspaper boxes, garbage containers and other street furniture in the vicinity of transit stops; and
- Design of sidewalks, including curb cuts to provide a continuous barrier free path to transit services. (5.1.8.2 a-i)

3.2.2 **Official Plan Amendment No. 155, Bayview Glen Secondary Plan, Town of Richmond Hill**

The Bayview Glen Secondary Plan, as shown in **Figure 3-2** on page 20, indicates that the right-of-way width for arterial roads shall generally be 36 metres (118 ft.). Additional widenings may be required at intersections and at other locations requiring cutting and filling. Sidewalks shall be provided by developers along both sides of arterial roads.

While the Secondary Plan places significant emphasis on the development of a public transportation node associated with the proposed Gateway Centre, the plan does not explicitly outline how public transportation will function along arterial roads in the Secondary Plan area. Further, the Plan refers to the provision of pedestrian and bicycle path linkages within the Plan area, but does not elaborate on how these facilities will interact with arterial roads.

The Secondary Plan indicates that Yonge Street will be developed as a “Main Street” corridor, with attention given to creating building, road and intersection dimensions which achieve pedestrian friendly streetscapes. Richmond Hill’s Council encourages the Region of York to ensure that any improvements to Yonge Street be undertaken in a manner which preserves pedestrian scale and “Main Street” character.

The Secondary Plan accentuates the unique role of Yonge Street as the “Main Street” of Richmond Hill, and indicates that Council will require that a streetscape plan for the east side of Yonge Street be prepared from Highway 7 north to 16th Avenue. This streetscape plan will provide guidelines addressing the landscape relationship of buildings to the street, pedestrian environments and the unity of streetscape elements. Additionally, entry features including both hard and soft landscaping elements shall be required at all intersections of collector roads with Yonge Street.
FIGURE 3-2
TRANSPORTATION AND SERVICES
SCHEDULE FOR BAYVIEW GLEN

Source: Official Plan Amendment No. 155, Bayview Glen Secondary Plan, Town of Richmond Hill
3.2.3 Amendment Number 500 to the Official Plan of the Vaughan Planning Area - Secondary Plan for the Vaughan Corporate Centre

The Vaughan Corporate Secondary Plan identifies Highway 7, Weston Road and Jane Street as arterial roads, as shown in Figure 3-3 on page 22. The planned functions of Weston Road and Jane Street are not elaborated upon, and thus, it is assumed that their function will remain generally unchanged. Highway 7, however, will undergo significant changes as a result of the Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan.

Part of the Secondary Plan deals specifically with urbanizing Highway 7 within the planned Corporate Centre. The Secondary Plan would preserve the existing six lane cross section and supplement it with two parallel service roads. Only limited access will be provided to the through lanes on Highway 7, thus preserving their existing function as regional traffic lanes.

The City of Vaughan Corporate Centre Urban Design Guidelines Report, January 1998, detailed the changes necessary to urbanize Highway 7 by transforming it into “Avenue Seven”. These guidelines outlined how to adapt Highway 7 to serve a new multifunctional role.

The design guidelines are designed to accommodate a wide range of uses and users, some of which require separate or segregated territories within the corridor. As the spine of the Corporate Centre Node, “Avenue Seven” will be lined by buildings with continuous street frontages of at-grade retail uses relating directly to safe, comfortable pedestrian sidewalks. As Figure 3-4 on page 23 shows, the public right-of-way between these frontages would be modified to accommodate:

- Transit vehicles on a reserved transitway or on HOV/bus priority lanes;
- Transit stops or stations and passenger waiting areas on transitway medians or expanded sidewalk areas;
- Pedestrian sidewalks and crossings;
- Local frontage traffic lanes and curbside parking;
- Continuous cycle routes on either wide traffic lanes or on separate cycle paths;
- Street-tree planting in sidewalk boulevards and medians; and
- Through (general) traffic moving and turning lanes.
FIGURE 3-3
TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR OPA 500

Source: Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan

Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan
Amendment No. 500

Highway 7/"Avenue 7"
Arterial Road
Collector Road

Local Road
Inter-regional Transitway (Potential)
Gateway Sites

Potential Connection to Spadina Subway and/or Inter-regional Transitway
Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan Area Boundary
Study Area Boundary

Schedule B - Transportation Plan

Source: Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan
BUILDING EDGE: continuous building frontages along the sidewalk with retail uses at ground level.

SIDEWALK: wide enough for outdoor seating, display and merchandising; planted with shade trees close to the curb.

LOCAL FRONTAGE STREETS: one-way east-bound with a single moving lane and a curb-side parking lane.

BOULEVARD: wide enough to accommodate a single line of shade trees and bus stop waiting areas.

THROUGH TRAFFIC ROADWAY: three lanes, east-bound road with transit priority/HOV curb lane.

CENTRAL MEDIAN: wide enough to accommodate single line of tree planting and street lighting standards. Left-turn lanes in median areas discouraged at crosswalk locations.

THROUGH TRAFFIC ROADWAY: three lanes, west-bound road with transit priority/HOV curb lane.

BOULEVARD: wide enough to accommodate a single line of shade trees and bus stop waiting areas.

LOCAL FRONTAGE STREETS: one-way west-bound with a single moving lane and a curb-side parking lane.

SIDEWALK: wide enough for outdoor seating, display and merchandising; planted with shade trees close to the curb.

BUILDING EDGE: continuous building frontages along the sidewalk with retail uses at ground level.
3.2.4 Amendment Number 34 to the Yonge Street South Secondary Plan, Town of Aurora

The Yonge Street South Secondary Plan identifies Yonge Street, Bayview Avenue, Bloomington Road, and Bathurst Street as arterial roads, as shown in Figure 3-4 of that plan. The Yonge Street South area is contained within the Oak Ridges Moraine.

The Secondary Plan for the Yonge Street South area designates Yonge Street as a Heritage Resource. Yonge Street is intended to continue as the transportation spine of the area; however, it is not identified as an Urban Corridor by the Region’s Official Plan within this portion of the Region. Therefore, it is the intention of the Town of Aurora that the Yonge Street corridor within the secondary plan be developed in a sensitive and unobtrusive manner which preserves and enhances the distinctive topography and landscaped quality by incorporating the following urban design measures:

- A natural border to Yonge Street shall be preserved and new development shall:
  a. Be set back a minimum of 60 metres from the centre line of Yonge Street;
  b. Avoid all accessory buildings, facilities and structures, including parking areas, driveways and parallel service roads within the 60 metre setback;
  c. Include extensively landscaped areas which preserve existing landscape components;
  d. Respect the existing topography of the sites, to the maximum extent possible.

- Yonge Street through the Secondary Plan Area should continue to maintain a rural profile, with ditches on both sides of the street; and

- A lighted, hard-surfaced pedestrian path and bicycle route is to be provided within the boulevard of the street right-of-way, with the pedestrian path being located on the opposite site of the ditches to the road pavement. The path should be created in such a manner as to have low shrubbery on its street site, and the full scale landscaped setback, on the site bounded by private development.

3.2.5 OPA No. 528 Amending OPA 500 Transportation Plan for Vaughan

The purpose of OPA No. 528 was to identify and incorporate into OPA No. 500 (Vaughan Corporate Centre Secondary Plan Area) road network improvements and secondly to provide supporting policies related to the road network and road network improvements. A comprehensive package of improvements was incorporated into the Secondary Plan to accommodate planned levels of development and to provide relief for the existing road network, including Highway 7 and its intersections with other Regional roads, including Jane Street and Weston Road.

Not all secondary plans could be addressed in this document. These are simply referenced as examples of secondary plans that have implications on the Regional Street network.
3.3 **VISION DOCUMENTS**

3.3.1 **Vision 2026 – Towards a Sustainable Region**

The Vision 2026 – Towards a Sustainable Region report dated Spring, 2006 is the fourth annual report documenting the Region’s progress in achieving the strategic plan for the Region.

One of the Vision goal statements for York Region calls for the Region to have effective, efficient and environmentally sensitive transportation, waste management and water systems.

From a transportation perspective the Action Areas include:

- Developing an Integrated Transportation Network;
- Exploring and implementing innovations and technologies to reduce congestion;
- Planning our road system to work efficiently with provincial and interregional infrastructure;
- Ensuring that our transportation network co-ordinates with development;
- Providing for alternative forms of transportation such as walking and cycling;
- Promoting safety on York Region roads through effective policing, education and sensitive design.

Related to this are several Action Areas related to transit accessibility including:

- Continuing to improve service and infrastructure for successfully integrated transit service;
- Promoting transit usage as a practical and wise alternative to private vehicle use;
- Planning for high-level transit services to employment areas in the Region.

The report notes current modal split as being:

- 79 percent auto;
- 8 percent public transit;
- 7 percent walking and cycling; and
- 5 percent by school bus.
3.3.2 A Vision for Highway 7

The Vision for Highway 7 is a visual vision statement that presents an image of how Highway 7 could look given improvements in pedestrian amenity, public transit, and street, and transit related development. By serving as the desired function and design goal for Highway 7, the intent of this document is to help coordinate land use, urban design and streetscape, transportation, transit, public facilities, and other investments in this corridor. Figures 3-5 and 3-6 on pages 27 and 28 illustrate the idealized progression of Highway 7 from a suburban highway to an urban street through incremental changes in the corridor’s function and design, and the design of the surrounding land uses.

Essentially, this visual vision statement was designed to tie together and focus multiple Regional and local initiatives related to Highway 7. To achieve them, this vision proposes a set of planning principles to be applied across Highway 7 to ensure that it is planned in a comprehensive manner consistent with the vision. These principles include:

- The corridor should include the broadest mix of housing types and a mix of commercial, office and institutional uses;
- The corridor should act as a focal point for public buildings, community facilities and human services;
- Commercial uses should be of greater intensity at major intersections;
- Between such areas, uses should be predominantly residential, with commercial uses generally restricted to the ground floor of mixed use buildings;
- Maximum density for commercial development should be less than that permitted for mixed-use and solely residential developments, recognizing that commercial uses generally generate more traffic than residential uses; and
- Permit average densities across the corridor of 2.5 floor space index (FSI), which is the density of traditional main street development. Densities will be higher than 2.5 FSI at strategic locations along the corridor (i.e. within the three regional centres).

Urban design principles outlined to achieve the vision for Highway 7 include:

- Building heights along the corridor should be compatible in scale with adjacent development and generally be four to eight storeys;
- Additional building heights may be used to emphasize and define major street intersections;
- Continuous building facades should be included in areas that have concentrations of more intense development avoiding large gaps between buildings;
- There should be a transition in height from adjacent low density areas to the buildings fronting the corridor;
- Buildings should be brought as close to the streetline as possible;
- Parking lots should be located in rear yards or side yards;
- Long stretches of walls, berms or fences should be avoided; and
- Retail plazas should accommodate pedestrians and transit users with a direct connection to the sidewalks.
Existing Conditions

Bus Rapid Transit | Streetscape Improvements

Street Related Development | Pedestrian Amenities

Light Rail Transit | Transit Supportive Development | Connection to TTC

Source: A Vision for Highway 7 Attachment 1 (Report No. 6 of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee, Region of York – Meeting June 12, 2002)
FIGURE 3-6
VISION FOR HIGHWAY 7, WEST FROM MCCOWAN IN MARKHAM

Existing Conditions

Bus Rapid Transit | Streetscape Improvements

Street Related Development | Pedestrian Amenities

Light Rail Transit | Transit Supportive Development

Source: A Vision for Highway 7 Attachment 1 (Report No. 6 of the Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee, Region of York –Meeting June 12, 2002)
3.3.3 Yonge Street Vision – Richmond Hill Graphic Image

The Vision for Yonge Street was the second vision produced by York Region to act as a guiding image for the development and redevelopment of Yonge Street. However, while the vision for Highway 7 contained images that represented the potential outcome of development over the long-term, the image for Yonge Street in Richmond Hill illustrates what can be achieved over the medium-term, given the ongoing higher density, more pedestrian-friendly development in the Bayview Glen Community. Figure 3-7 on page 30 illustrates the idealized progression of Yonge Street from a suburban arterial to an urban street.

3.3.4 York Region Transit Five-Year Service Plan 2006 – 2010 Final Report

Following the amalgamation of the local transit services in 2001, transit ridership in York Region has grown from 7.5 million passengers in 2001, to 17.5 million (estimated) in 2006. The Five-Year Service Plan provides the direction for the next five years, based in part on a review of the past five years.

For the urban areas the new and revised strategies include:

- VIVA service integration with Brampton AcceleRide and Durham Region Transit
- Express routes
- Continued expansion of the Base Grid network as well as revised service levels and operating periods
- Shuttle services (e.g. to GO and VIVA stations)
- Community bus services on both fixed routes and demand responsive.

Strategies are also outlined for smaller urban communities and smaller urban communities to urban anchor connectors.

Inter-regional services are also discussed, including the potential for express routes, GO fare strategy applications and VIVA services and integration.

Perhaps one of the key implications of the Service Plan on the Towards Great Regional Streets Study is with respect to sidewalks. The extension of transit routes and transit service improvements would likely be ineffective in encouraging higher transit usage unless sidewalks are available along Regional streets to connect the bus stops with the land uses in the area. Sidewalks within the Regional right-of-way are a local matter.
FIGURE 3-7
VISION FOR YONGE STREET,
NORTH OF HIGHWAY 7
IN RICHMOND HILL

Source: Yonge Street Vision Richmond Hill Graphic Image (Report No. 6 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee, Region of York – Meeting June 18, 2003)
3.4 URBAN DESIGN OR STREETSCAPE POLICIES AND/OR GUIDELINES

3.4.1 A Regional Streetscape Policy, York Region, December 2001

In 2001, the Region developed and adopted the Regional Streetscape Policy which provides a methodology for the evaluation and development of streetscapes that reinforce the role of the Regional street as an urban place, while continuing to meet the transportation needs of the community. A “palette” of streetscape types was developed to clearly distinguish between the forms, character and function of each level of street. The palette for each streetscape type is divided into two sections: sections that are part of the 10-Year Roads Capital Program and a section that could be integrated into a design project through partnerships with local municipalities, or the private sector.

The Regional Streetscape Palette for Regional streets includes the following components:

- Boulevards with street trees at 10 metres on centre maximum (or clustered as circumstances warrant);
- Landscaped medians with trees and splash strips (may be considered for Regional streets that were to be widened beyond five through lanes, subject to study);
- Continuous sidewalks – both sides of the street;
- Decorative transit shelters with street furnishings.

In addition to the Regional Streetscape Palette for Regional streets, the Regional Streetscape standards for Regional Corridors such as Highway 7 and Yonge Street also include a one tier landscaped median with trees and splash strip.

Other design considerations include:

- Designing different land uses abutting the Regional streets so as to be integrated with the Regional streets, following the suggestions within the Policy;
- Merging right turn lanes with through lanes where urban design and pedestrian goals would warrant this;
- Introducing, designing and maintaining cycle lanes within the Regional street rights-of-way;
- Placing utility facilities away from the daylighting triangles – or where this is not feasible, off-centre, so that direct diagonal pedestrian connections can be made.

3.4.2 North Yonge Street – Richmond Hill Urban Design Study, 2001

The North Yonge Street Urban Design Study commissioned by the Town of Richmond Hill outlines an urban design framework for future streetscape improvements related to property redevelopment and road improvements in the Oak Ridges community. Specifically, this document addresses issues related to:

- Reducing the impact of high speed traffic on the urban area of the Oak Ridges Community;
- Generating pedestrian friendly streetscapes;
- Creating a healthy environment for business in the area;
- Developing guidelines that will assure a consistent quality to the streetscape and the architecture of the area; and
The desire to see improvements made to the area in the form of sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting and other public realm features.

The built form recommendations from this report include that:

- The built form along Yonge Street should contribute to the visual appeal and sense of place of the Oak Ridges community;
- Residential development should address the road to reinforce the pedestrian environment and maintain a close relationship to the road; and
- Non-residential development should help reduce the prominence of parking areas, be located to create a defined street edge and should result in articulated facades at a human scale.

The streetscape recommendations from this report include that:

- Treed boulevards with clearly defined walkways, special landscaping at intersections, pedestrian lighting, coordinated street furnishings as well as identity markers will help develop a unique image for the community; and
- The scale of the right-of-way will be reduced through the creation of a median as well as the enclosure provided by new development and planting.

The right-of-way recommendations recognize that the final cross-section for Yonge Street will have to be sufficient to provide for the future traffic and transit needs of the Municipality and the Region. Thus, these recommendations are that:

- A 36 metre right-of-way be provided throughout the study area which is comprised of:
  - Two through lanes in each direction;
  - A third lane in each direction reserved for on-street parking and bus stops that can be used in the future to better accommodate transit needs;
  - A planted 4.5 metre median that provides for left turn lanes;
  - No right turn lanes except at critical intersections;
  - A planted boulevard on each side; and
  - Mid-block access generally restricted to right-turns only.

- The implementation of the 36 metre right-of-way through the narrow portion of Yonge Street should take place over an extended period of time, as redevelopment occurs.

This document identifies how these recommendations can be applied to areas of differing character within the study area, including a predominantly residential area, an urban main street area, and a transition area between the two. It provides a host of considerations related to building siting and elevations, parking, access, signage, lighting, landscaping, gateway features and open space to create a comfortable and attractive pedestrian environment in character with the Oak Ridges community. Figure 3-8 on page 33 illustrates some of these approaches to creating a pedestrian friendly environment in Oak Ridges.
FIGURE 3-8
AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO BUILT FORM, SITING AND STREETSCEAPE APPROACHES FOR YONGE STREET IN OAK RIDGES

Source: North Yonge Street – Richmond Hill Urban Design Study, 2001
3.5 SYNOPSIS

The visual vision statements developed by York Region clearly indicate the interconnected nature of the functions of Regional roads, their design, and the design and form of the surrounding uses.

The Official Plans of both the Region and the three southern municipalities clearly indicate the need to maintain arterial roads as vital transportation corridors for people and goods. However, emphasis is also placed on expanding their functions to include greater integration of transit facilities, as well as enhancing their design to encourage use by pedestrians and cyclists. Thus, these principles generally define arterial streets in York Region as multi-purpose transportation corridors.

The secondary plans and urban design guidelines define detailed approaches to urbanizing major arterial streets to maintain the functionality of the road, while improving the pedestrian environment and transit supportive nature through a combination of:

- mixed land uses;
- building siting, massing, design and higher density criteria;
- medians, service lanes with parking;
- sidewalks, crosswalks, tree plantings, landscaping, pedestrian-scale lighting;
- cycling lanes and paths;
- improved transit systems, high occupancy vehicle lanes; and
- transit passenger amenities such as indoor and covered waiting areas.

In summary, the existing policy and guideline documents of York Region and its constituent municipalities support preserving the functional aspects of arterial streets while developing new ways to integrate these major streets into the built environment to create an improved environment for transit, pedestrian and cyclist activities.