

Clause 4 in Report No. 9 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on May 25, 2017.

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2016 Regional Centres and Corridors Update

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated May 5, 2017 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to all local municipalities, the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and York Region Members of Federal and Provincial Parliament as an example of the Region's continued commitment to focusing growth within centres and corridors.
2. Council continue to seek Federal and Provincial assistance with respect to providing critical infrastructure, including the Yonge North Subway required to support forecasted levels of growth and intensification within Regional centres and corridors.

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Report dated May 5, 2017 from the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner now follows:

1. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to all local municipalities, the Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and York Region Members of Federal and Provincial Parliament as an example of the Region's continued commitment to focusing growth within centres and corridors.
2. Council continue to seek Federal and Provincial assistance with respect to providing critical infrastructure, including the Yonge North Subway required to support forecasted levels of growth and intensification within Regional centres and corridors.

## 2. Purpose

This report provides an update of the development activities and transit investment that occurred in 2016 within the Regional centres and corridors that demonstrate Regional and local municipal city building initiatives and commitment to planning for transit oriented complete communities.

## 3. Background

Centres and Corridors form the foundation of York Region's city building initiatives

The centres and corridors program is a long-term strategy to advance the Region and local municipality building efforts. In 1994, York Region's first Official Plan established an urban structure focused on centres and corridors to guide transit investment and residential and commercial growth.

The Region's centres and corridors implement the Provincial Growth Plan's priority to focus growth in urban areas. The Growth Plan identifies four Provincial Urban Growth Centres in York Region.

- Markham Centre (Highway 7 and Warden Avenue)
- Newmarket Centre (Yonge St. and Davis Drive)
- Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway (Highway 407 and Yonge Street)
- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (Highway 7 and Jane Street)

Centres and Corridors are evolving as vibrant, transit-oriented urban communities

Centres are planned for the highest and most intense concentrations of development within the Region and are expected to accommodate a significant share of population and employment growth. Together with the Regional corridors (Highway 7, Yonge Street, portions of Davis Drive and Green Lane), these areas are evolving into highly active urban areas, serviced by rapid transit and the York Spadina subway extension. The Region's commitment to city building and creating compact, mixed use, transit-oriented communities can be seen across the Region.

Annual updates continue to highlight the Region's city building achievements and opportunities

Regional staff have been providing Council with an update on the development of centres and corridors since 2013. This is the 5<sup>th</sup> annual update.

In 2016, the Regional Chairman forwarded the annual centres and corridors update report to York Region's members of parliament, Provincial and Federal ministers. This was done to highlight the Region's commitment to focusing growth within the Province's identified Urban Growth Centres and Mobility Hubs and to also identify the need for the continued collective investment, by all levels of government, in transit infrastructure to support city building envisioned by the Growth Plan.

#### 4. Analysis and Options

Centres and Corridors are home to 50,000 people with a majority household composition of 1 to 2 persons

Approximately 50,000 people (4.3 percent of the Region's population) live in the Region's centres and corridors which make up 1.6 percent of the Region's total land area. Apartment buildings (greater than 5 storeys) make up 76 percent of the housing stock in the centres and corridors. Outlined below is a profile of the residents living in centres and corridors, as compared to the Region as a whole. Staff developed the profile using Environics Analytics (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Profile of residents living in Centres and Corridors**



**Centres and Corridors are home to 50,000 people**

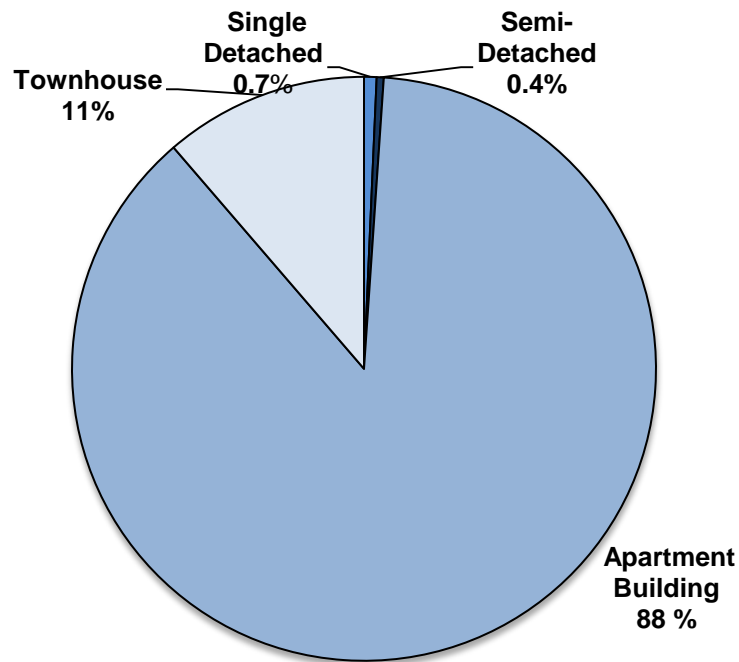
\*When compared to the Region as a whole

Condominium apartment developments dominate new residential unit starts in Centres and Corridors

Approximately 21 percent (2,309 units) of all residential unit starts in York Region in 2016 were located within the Regional centres and corridors.

The majority of this activity (88 percent) was in new condominium apartment unit starts. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of the new unit start by type within centres and corridors in 2016.

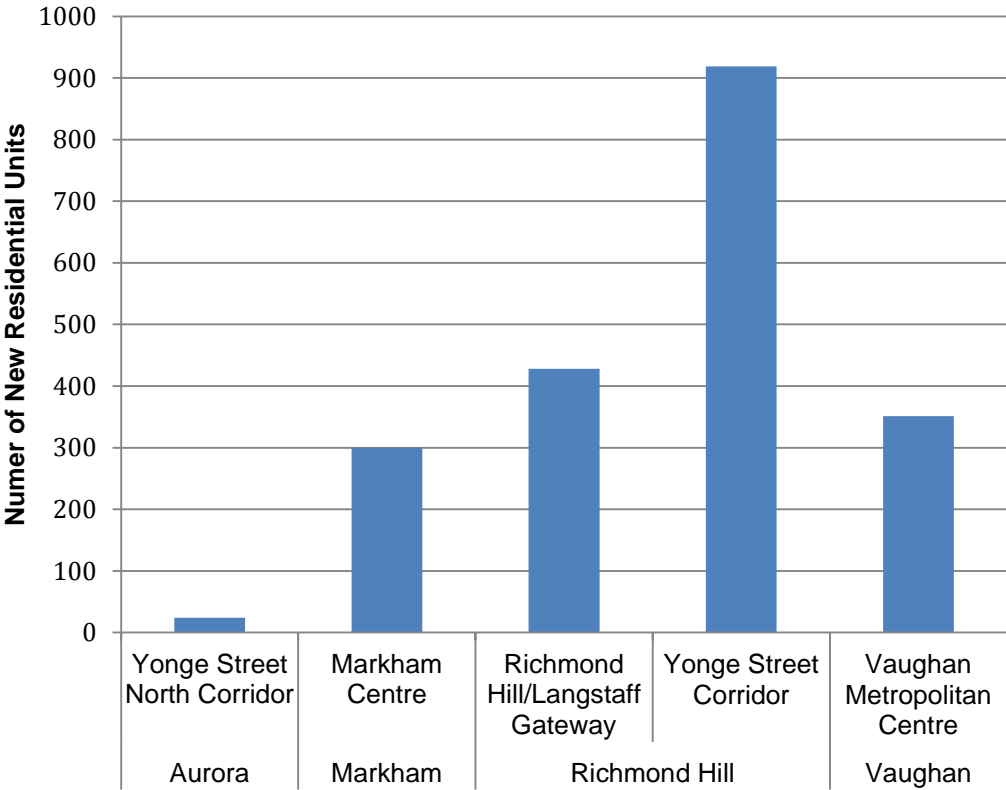
**Figure 2**  
**New Unit Starts in Centres and Corridors by Housing Type**



57 per cent of new 2016 high density residential development was located in centres and corridors

In 2016, approximately 57 per cent (2,022 units) of all new high-density residential unit starts in York Region were located within the Regional centres and corridors. The highest activity was seen in Richmond Hill (1,347 units) particularly along the Yonge Street corridor, which accounted for 45 percent (919 units) of all high-density residential unit starts in 2016 (see Figure 3 below).

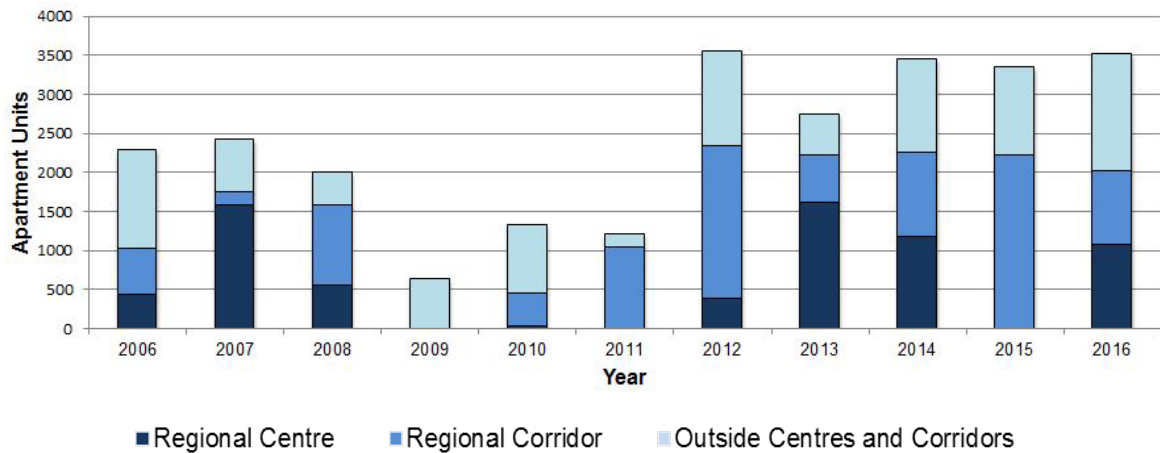
**Figure 3**  
**2016 Total New Apartment Unit Starts in Centres and Corridors**



Apartment growth outside of the centres and corridors is up 48 percent from 2015 (1,013 units). In 2016, 43 percent (1,502 units) of new high-density residential unit starts were located outside of the centres and corridors (see Figure 4). The majority of this activity (79 percent) was in Markham (1,192 units) followed by Aurora (257 units).

Figure 4 below shows the amount of multi storey apartment unit starts within the Regional centres, Regional corridors and all other areas of the Region. This figure indicates that intensification is happening within the Region. Centres and corridors continue to be the focus for high density residential development in the Region. Overall, there has been steady growth in high density development within centres and corridors over the last 5 years.

**Figure 4**  
**2006-2016 Multi-Storey Apartment Unit Starts in York Region**



York Link campaign showcases the relationship between city building and economic development

In 2016, the centres and corridors program partnered with the York Link office attraction campaign to showcase the relationship between city building and economic development. The key objective of this new marketing and communications strategy was to facilitate growth in office employment and demand for new office space in York Region, primarily within mixed-use regional centres and along major transit corridors.

It is important to attract the right mix of quality jobs and commercial office development in order to realize the shared vision of complete communities. The [York Link](#) campaign will support the creation of high quality employment opportunities for York Region’s talented workforce and ensure the long-term success of the Regional centres and corridors.

Businesses in centres and corridors employ over 118,000 people

Surveyed employment within centres and corridors grew by 3.1 percent (or 3,516 jobs) as of mid-year 2016 to approximately 118,000 jobs. Since 2009, approximately 18,000 new jobs have been created in the centres and corridors supporting over 7,900 businesses. The strongest employment growth in 2016 was observed in Markham Centre and the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) where employment grew to 10,868 jobs (734 jobs added) and 6,056 jobs (520 jobs added) respectively.

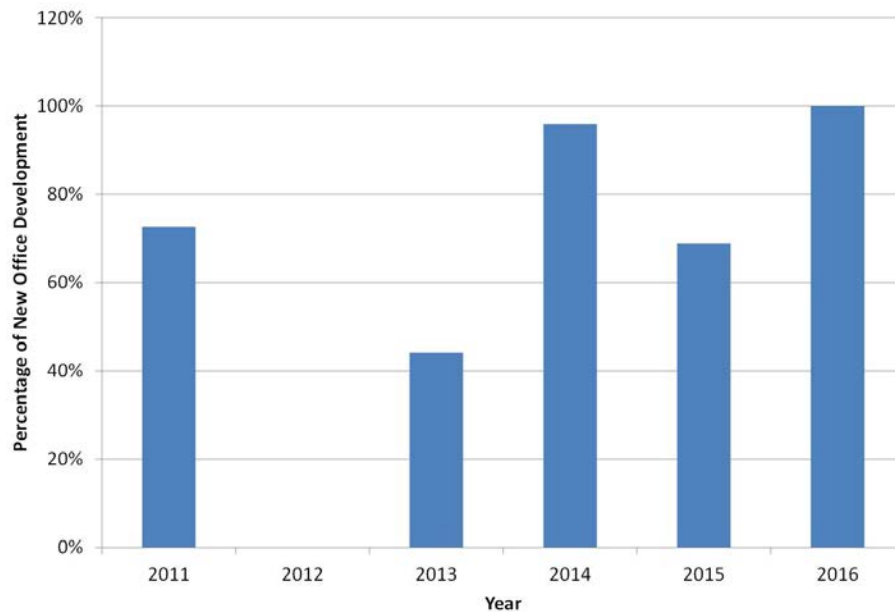
Much of this growth is attributable to growth within existing businesses and newly completed commercial space. Staff anticipates this trend to continue in 2017.

should be noted that at the time of the 2016 employment survey, KPMG and Aviva Canada had not yet occupied their newly completed Class A office space. These two offices will add at least an additional 1,500 jobs.

New office development is concentrating in Centres and Corridors

In 2016, building permits for over 40,000 square metres (430,000 square feet) of office space were approved in the Region's centres and corridors, compared to 2015 which saw 12,000 square metres (130,000 square feet) approved. Figure 5 shows building permit activity for new office development approved over the last 5 years.

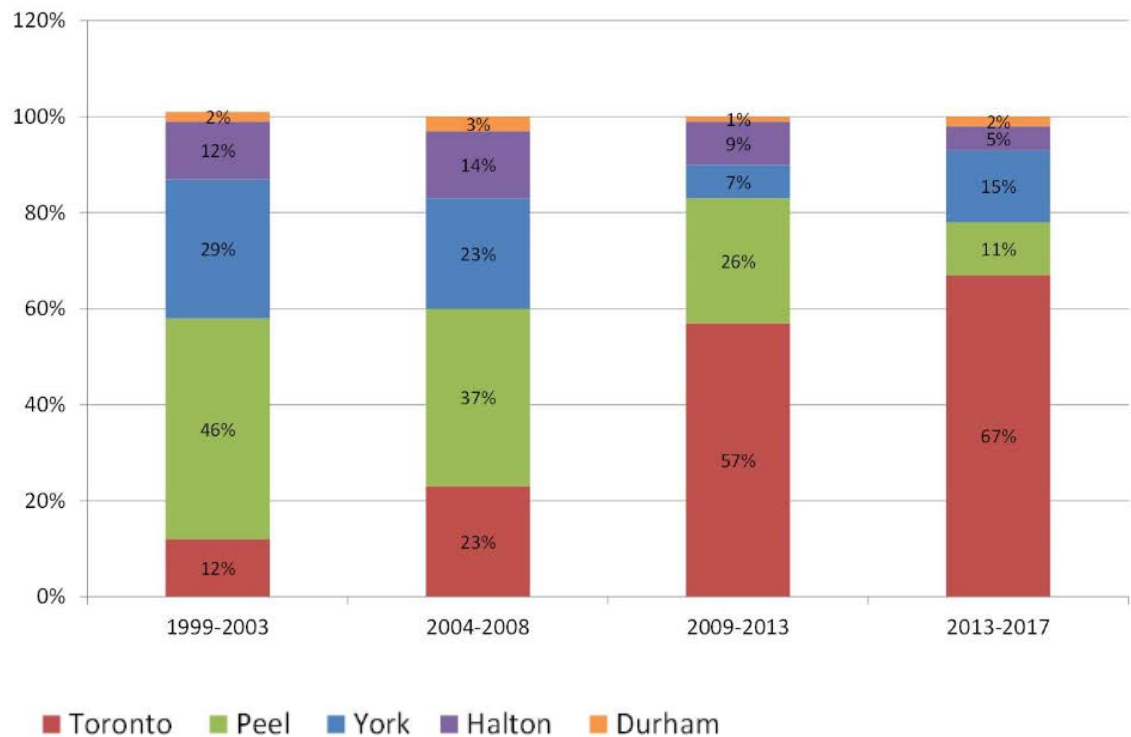
**Figure 5**  
**2011-2016 Total New Office Development Located in Centres and Corridors**



Since 2013, building permits for approximately 120,000 square metres (1.3 M square feet) of office space has been issued in the Region's centres and corridors. York Region is now second only to Toronto in new GTA office construction, increasing its share to 15%, up from 7% in the previous five year period (Figure 6).



**Figure 6**  
**Greater Toronto Area – Share of New Office Building Completion GFA by Upper/Single Tier 1999-2017**



Source: Costar, Office Attraction Study, Watson & Associates

York Region is successfully attracting new office buildings to the right locations - in its centres and corridors. Successful city building requires a balance and mix of residential and employment development in the right locations (centres and corridors) in order to build a successful downtown. New office development provides access to jobs for the Region’s talented workforce. Increasingly employers are making the decision to locate in the Region’s centres and corridors because it offers their employees lifestyle amenities (e.g. easy access to transit, walkability, retail).

This upward shift in the Region’s office market since 2013 is reflective of Council’s continued commitment to city building by:

- Investment in transit infrastructure (e.g. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre) and rapidways
- Supporting the new university campus in downtown Markham
- Promoting office attraction and live work mix of uses through the York Link campaign

To date over \$3.2 billion has been invested in transit infrastructure

York Region Council has made unprecedented investments in city building infrastructure and transit. To date over \$3.2 billion dollars have been invested in transit infrastructure projects in York Region collectively by all three levels of government. This investment includes:

- The Spadina subway extension to the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) – making York Region the only region outside of the City of Toronto with a direct subway connection to Toronto
- 36 km Viva Bus Rapid Transit System
- Road and streetscape improvements

This infrastructure increases the range of transportation options available to residents and workers to move within and between centres and unlocks new intensification opportunities. The Spadina Subway Extension is expected to open later this year and will provide a key connection for people in York Region and the City of Vaughan and the 25,000 future residents of the VMC with Toronto through an efficient rapid transit service. Also expected to open later this year to help further enhance the connectivity of the area is a new York Region Transit bus terminal in the VMC and a new 3.6 km stretch of vivaNext rapidway (from Boulevard/Interchange Way to Bowes Road/Baldwin Avenue).

The York Spadina subway extension is having a positive impact on the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

The City of Vaughan has approved developments in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) for approximately 3,845 residential units and close to 1 million square feet in office/commercial space. In addition, there are a number of development proposals currently being reviewed by local planning staff, which would add an additional 9,145 residential units and 355,000 square feet of office/commercial space in the VMC (see Table 1).

**Table 1**  
**Growth in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre**

Status of Development Application	Residential Units	Office/Commercial Gross floor area (square feet)
Built	704	360,000
Approved	3,141	660,000
Proposed	9,145	354,361
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,990</b>	<b>1,320,361</b>

Investment in rapid transit infrastructure is critical to building a successful downtown. Continued investment in rapid transit infrastructure (including the Yonge North Subway Extension) from all levels of government is required to support city building envisioned by the Growth Plan particularly for the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Growth Centre.

Yonge North Subway Extension is required to fully unlock the potential of the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway

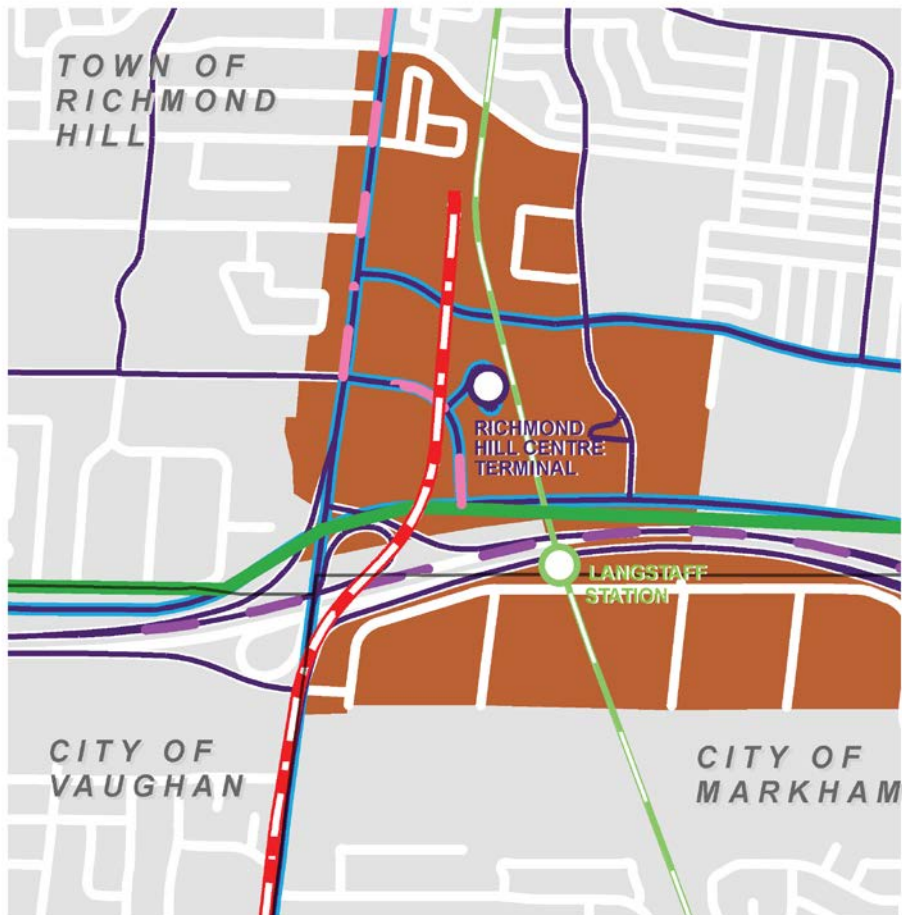
The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (Growth Plan) directs growth and supporting infrastructure investment to Urban Growth Centres. Urban Growth Centres are areas designated for mixed-use intensification, served by higher-order transit. Intensification can be seen throughout the urban area of York Region and some of the highest land use densities are being realized along Yonge Street and Highway 7 corridors.

The Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway Centre is designated in the Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP): The Big Move as an Anchor Mobility Hub and as an Urban Growth Centre in the Provincial Growth Plan. Water and wastewater servicing capacity is available to service the first phase of development within the Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway Centre. However, development potential within the Centre remains constrained due to the lack of transportation capacity.

The Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) is the critical missing link for this Urban Growth Centre/Anchor Mobility Hub and the Region's overall rapid transit system. This connection remains a top priority of the Region's Transportation Master Plan. This key mobility hub is envisioned to function like Union Station by linking a number of transit services (Figure 7) including:

- GO Train service and subway service
- Vivanext rapid transit
- York Region Transit
- Planned, future Highway 407 transitway

**Figure 7**  
**Proposed Rapid Transit Network**





Source: Metrolinx

Without this YNSE, development in the Richmond Hill Centre/Langstaff Gateway Centre is limited. The YNSE would allow these lands to achieve its full potential of 48,000 residents (approximately 23,000 units) and 31,000 jobs. The potential daily ridership is estimated at 165,000 (or 2 people/second).

Currently, it takes 2,500 bus trips per day to service Yonge Street to the Finch Subway Station. The YNSE would extend the subway system 7.4 kilometres north from Finch Station to the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre at Highway 7 and would include 5 stations, Richmond Hill Centre and Steeles Avenue intermodal terminals and 2,000 commuter parking spaces. The YNSE is ready to move to full engineering and construction.

To date, over \$10 million has been invested in studies and comprehensive community consultations to support the YNSE project. This investment builds on the over \$3.2 billion in existing investment by senior government in York Region rapid transit and aligns with Federal, Provincial and Municipal priorities to stimulate the economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and unlock the full development potential within a Provincial Urban Growth Centre.

The Centres and Corridors update monitors development activity to ensure the goals and objectives of Vision 2051 and the 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan are being met

This report highlights development activities and transit investment that occurred in 2016 within the Regional centres and corridors. Continued development activity in centres and corridors support the 2015 to 2019 Strategic Plan objectives of “encouraging growth along Regional centres and corridors” and “focusing on networks and systems that connect people, goods and services” by ensuring we plan for complete communities where people can live, work and play.

Vision 2051 recognizes that centres and corridors will help maintain economic competitiveness by encouraging the location of major office, institutional, cultural

and entertainment facilities in the centres and corridors with a goal of achieving a balance of employment and residential opportunities.

## 5. Financial Considerations

Development activity within the centres and corridors supports the ongoing delivery of infrastructure and services to support growth

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report. Staff resources associated with the ongoing delivery of the centres and corridors program and related initiatives are provided for under the 2017 York Region operating budget. Development charges and property taxes collected from development activities within the centres and corridors contribute to the capital infrastructure and associated services to support the creation of healthy, safe and sustainable communities.

## 6. Local Municipal Impact

Planning for Regional centres and corridors is a collaborative effort between Regional staff and our local municipal partners. Local municipalities are actively engaged in planning efforts to support the Region's structure and city building initiatives (e.g. mobility hub studies, high rise guidelines).

## 7. Conclusion

Centres and corridors form the foundation of York Region's city building initiatives. These areas are attracting people and businesses and evolving as vibrant, transit-oriented urban communities.

The growth and development highlighted in this report demonstrates that the Region's city building initiatives are working (see Attachment 1). Centres and corridors continue to be the focus for high density residential and office development. Condominium apartment developments have been steady over the last 5 years and continue to dominate new residential unit starts in centres and corridors. New office development is also concentrating in the Region's centres and corridors and York Region is now second only to Toronto in new GTA office construction.

## 2016 Regional Centres and Corridors Update

To date over \$3.2 billion dollars have been invested in transit infrastructure projects in York Region collectively by all three levels of government. The York Spadina Subway extension is expected to open later this year making

York Region the only Region outside of the City of Toronto with a direct subway connection to Toronto. Continued investment in rapid transit infrastructure from all levels of government including the Yonge North Subway Extension is required to support city building and unlock the potential of areas like the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Growth Centre.

For more information on this report, please contact Teema Kanji, Manager of Programs and Process Improvement at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71506.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

May 5, 2017

Attachment (1)

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Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request