

## **Recommendations**

1. In that there is a sufficiently supply of commercially designated land in existing greenfield areas, no new district or regional scale commercial designations should be considered within currently designated greenfield lands. This would not preclude regional or district commercial activities required as part of the planning for intensification areas, including the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, as well as district scale retail required to serve the future residents in the Whitebelt growth area.
2. A strategy should be developed to accommodate additional commercial space in intensification areas. The strategy should identify the amount of space that could be accommodated in each area, together with formats and appropriate uses. The study should ensure that intensification areas with over 5,000 persons can accommodate or be located in proximity to grocery and other food stores. Intensification areas with over 10,000 residents should accommodate or be located in proximity to a full scale supermarket.
3. Commercial development in intensification areas should provide for a variety of store sizes. The majority of space would consist of small units – under 2,000 square feet, which would be appropriate for services, independent businesses, and smaller chain outlets. Larger units should be available for medium sized outlets (e.g. 5,000 to 25,000 square feet), to accommodate pharmacies, small supermarkets, and specialty retailers); larger outlets (e.g. 25,000 to 75,000 square feet) for theatres and entertainment establishments, full scale supermarkets, and larger format specialty stores; and very large outlets (75,000 square feet and over) to house multi-plex theatres, department stores, superstores, home design stores, and other specialty outlets).
4. Future neighbourhood scale retail nodes should be limited to a maximum of 10,000 square metres. Neighbourhood retail nodes should be spaced appropriately so as not to constitute a larger cluster that may compete for tenants with designated district retail sites. A neighbourhood scale retail facility should serve approximately 10,000 to 15,000 residents and should be located so that the residents of the area it serves should not have to travel more than two kilometres. Depending on residential densities, neighbourhood shopping destinations should be spaced approximately two to four kilometres apart. The location of future neighbourhood and lower order retail centres should be undertaken through the Secondary Plan process.
5. The designation of lands for retail shopping centres and retail warehouses in employment areas is not required, and as a matter of policy should be avoided to protect the City's employment land supply. This is consistent with the findings of the Hemson Employment Lands study conducted as part of the Official Plan

Review and the draft York Region Official Plan. However, it will continue to be important to accommodate some commercial uses in employment areas that may not be appropriate elsewhere in the hierarchy<sup>3</sup>, or would support local businesses. We estimate that approximately 15% of Vaughan’s current supply of commercial space is located within employment areas. As Vaughan grows and its employment areas continue to evolve and their formats change we expect this proportion to decrease to between 5% and 10%. As such, of the projected 8.2 million square feet of warranted commercial space in the City, we would recommend that the City plan to accommodate approximately 600,000 square feet within employment areas. Commercial uses that are appropriately accommodated within employment areas should include:

- Small-scale specialty building supply outlets and home renovation outlets<sup>4</sup>;
  - Restaurants and eating establishments to serve the local employment base;
  - Automotive supply and repair shops;
  - Accessory office and accessory retail uses;
  - Banks and business services;
  - Small scale convenience retail and services oriented to serving the employment area;
  - Business and professional offices; and
  - Commercial schools.
6. While the ultimate population in the Kleinburg-Nashville study area has yet to be determined, commercial space in this area should be sensitive to the rural and heritage character of the area. Commercial space should be limited to local serving facilities and should total between 15 and 20 square feet per resident
7. The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre should be the highest order commercial centre in the City. When fully developed, the commercial space should fulfill a variety of functions:
- A super regional commercial node containing the full range of comparison facilities to serve a market extending well beyond the City boundaries;

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<sup>3</sup> For example building supply outlets requiring outside storage (e.g. marble, monument, pool and spa dealers), building supply outlets which require warehousing, repair or assembly space (e.g. flooring outlets, kitchen cabinet dealers, air conditioning/heating suppliers), and certain automotive repair establishments (e.g. body shops, general repair facilities).

<sup>4</sup> Examples of these types of uses would include kitchen cabinet outlets, flooring supply dealers, plumbing supply stores, pool and spa supply dealers. The vast majority of these uses would be under 10,000 square feet, although there may be some exceptions. Large scale, general home improvement centres should not be permitted in employment areas.

- A neighbourhood shopping destination to serve the future residential population within it, containing supermarket, specialty food, convenience retail facilities and services;
  - A convenience and business service node serving the future businesses and employees of the surrounding offices;
  - An entertainment, recreation and hospitality centre catering to tourists, hotel guests, regional visitors and Vaughan residents.
8. As Vaughan's downtown, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre should be developed with the highest densities in the City. For the most part, commercial space should be developed as part of mixed use developments. Where possible, commercial space should allow for street front orientation, with curb side parking. Internal mall space may be appropriate, providing that it is developed as an integral part of mixed use development for street-front retailing and does not detract from the overall commercial district.
9. As has proven successful in many mixed use and lifestyle centres, high quality landscaping, public amenities, environmental features, open spaces, and recreation/entertainment facilities should augment the overall experience at Vaughan Metropolitan Centre. This will be especially important to offset the hard edges created by Highways 407 and 400.
10. There is a distinct difference between the potential retail experience on the east and west sides of the former Vaughan Corporate Centre. The east side (now the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre), which will be connected to the future subway, will contain the highest densities. Commercial space in this area should be part of mixed use developments, should have a high degree of pedestrian accessibility and should be animated by public amenities. There will, however, still be a requirement for large retail outlets which may require more flexible planning and design approaches. These larger retail units, which would act as regional anchors, could be accommodated west of Highway 400. Notwithstanding this, because the the western side of the Highway 400/7 interchange is still within an intensification area, it should still be subject to high design standards, increased densities and commercial space should be provided as part of mixed use developments. At present the two sides of the interchange are connected only by the busy Highway 7 overpass over Highway 400. An additional, connection should be provided to facilitate local traffic, pedestrian and bicycle movement between the two sides.
11. Design guidelines should be implemented to ensure that new forms of retail development are better able to integrate into the urban fabric and are consistent with the City's sustainable planning goals. New retail development should be encouraged:

- To be part of mixed use nodes;
  - To enhance the on-site pedestrian environment by reducing distances between store entrances, providing pedestrian friendly walkways between project components; and by amenities, such as street furniture, landscaping, and publically accessible open spaces;
  - To enhance accessibility onto and within the site for non-automotive traffic including bicycles and mobility scooters, by providing bicycle racks and dedicated lanes free from vehicular traffic;
  - To facilitate greater transit accessibility; and,
  - To adopt formats which better integrate with nearby residential and business districts by maximizing pedestrian connections to store entrances and through design and site plan policies which provide for a more seamless transition between commercial and other land uses.
12. To provide an opportunity for low density commercial sites to convert to more intensive urban uses by expanding the range of permitted residential and office uses.
  13. In that the retail hierarchy has become blurred as individual stores expand their merchandise into non-traditional lines, policies regulating retail development should generally be focused around design and size as a means of distinguishing function, rather than on specific store types.
  14. Where possible public spaces and public amenities, including sidewalks, public squares, recreational pathways, parks, public art, etc. should be integrated into retail areas.
  15. Commercial development should be planned according to environmentally sustainable design principles, which would include design guidelines with respect to: building orientation; landscaping; the re-use of existing structures; energy and water conservation; reducing land requirements; minimizing driving distances; encouraging travel by modes other than private car; and, the use of environmentally supportive building materials. Drive-throughs, which promote vehicle idling and detract from pedestrian precincts should be not be permitted within intensification areas, the Village Cores and other commercial areas where pedestrian activity is encouraged.
  16. Opportunities for neighbourhood and convenience serving retail facilities should be enhanced throughout the entire City. This would include:

- Designating sites appropriate for supermarkets and grocery stores within intensification areas;
  - Ensuring that new neighbourhoods are planned to accommodate convenience and neighbourhood shopping facilities within approximately two kilometres of residences; and,
  - Providing for neighbourhood scale retail facilities at strategic gateways into new residential communities. Other locations, which are in proximity to high density residential nodes or clusters of community activities may also be considered if sufficient market draw is available and impacts on nearby residential uses are minimized.
17. The Village Cores are irreplaceable in the City’s commercial hierarchy and should be strengthened and supported with an economic policy and climate that allows them to fulfill several key functions:
- As neighbourhood centres providing food, convenient retail and services for nearby residents;
  - As locations for small independent retailers and service providers that may not desire or be able to afford locations in power centres or planned shopping centres; and,
  - As cultural, heritage, recreation and small scale entertainment centres serving visitors and Vaughan residents.
18. Strategies with respect to the Village Cores should:
- Encourage residential intensification within and in proximity to the core areas, where feasible;
  - Promote a continuous and concentrated commercial street front by discouraging at-grade commercial parking between sidewalks and store entrances, and internal mall retailing.
  - Encourage the formation of Business Improvement Areas in Woodbridge, Maple and Thornhill;
  - Identify opportunities for Civic functions, such as libraries, community centres, recreation facilities, etc. within the pedestrian precinct of each core;

- Provide flexible zoning standards to allow for both small stores and larger stores that can act as anchors;
  - Provide for on-street parking, where practical;
  - Maintain high design standards with opportunities for creative public spaces; and,
  - Where possible, develop urban design guidelines that maximize sunlight within key pedestrian areas.
19. When evaluating applications for new commercial designations, the City should adopt the following criteria :
- That there is need to support the proposed additional commercial space and that they are not merely replacing facilities located elsewhere in Vaughan;
  - That they will not draw away from the existing or future market required to support identified intensification areas or the market to support required retail facilities in the Whitebelt;
  - That they will not draw away from the existing or future market required to support designated district centres;
  - That they will not adversely impact the neighbourhood or convenience retail services available to Vaughan residents; and,
  - That they will provide sufficient opportunities for non-automotive related shopping, including pedestrian connectivity to surrounding residential development and proximity to transit stops.
20. To ensure that proposed new retail designations above the neighbourhood serving level of the hierarchy are warranted, the City should require a market study for all applications for new commercial designations which exceed 10,000 square metres. The market studies would be subject to a peer review by a consultant selected by the City at the proponent's expense. The market studies should demonstrate, whether there is sufficient market to support the proposed facility, without:
- significantly impacting the planned function of existing retail nodes; or
  - reducing the opportunity for the commercial expansion of currently designated commercial areas, including: the Vaughan Metropolitan Area,

Primary Centres, Local Centres, intensification areas, and neighbourhood retail facilities.

- eliminating or significantly detracting from the ability of residential neighbourhoods and intensification areas from being served by nearby neighbourhood and convenience shopping facilities.

This study has provided general guidelines for the allocation of future warranted and undesignated commercial space to 2031 as follows:

- 100,000 square feet within Kleinburg-Nashville;
- 600,000 square feet within employment areas;
- 1,600,000 square feet within intensification areas; and,
- 700,000 square feet within the Whitebelt.

As detailed planning and zoning for individual areas is finalized, these allocations should be refined to recognize the capacity of each area to accommodate new commercial development. These more refined allocations can be used as the basis for determining whether proposed new designations would detract from the commercial space planned for each individual area.