

Clause No. 6 in Report No. 5 of Committee of the Whole was adopted by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on March 27, 2014 with the following amendment:

**Add a further recommendation as follows:**

3. That staff report back to Council on the possibility of adding language that allows for a context-sensitive solution to density targets.

and change recommendation 2 to recommendation 3.

**6**  
**ACHIEVING DENSITY TARGETS**  
**FOR NEW COMMUNITIES IN YORK REGION**

**Committee of the Whole recommends:**

1. Receipt of the presentation by Valerie Shuttleworth, Director, Long Range Planning.
2. Adoption of the following recommendations contained in the report dated February 21, 2014 from the Executive Director, Corporate and Strategic Planning:

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Council endorse the *Achieving Density Targets for New Communities in York Region* guidelines as contained in Attachment 1 to the report.
2. The Regional Clerk circulate this report and the attached guidelines to the Planning Departments of each local municipality, the Building Industry and Land Development Association, York Chapter and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**2. PURPOSE**

The *Achieving Density Targets for New Communities in York Region* guidelines (“the guidelines”) has been prepared to serve as a tool for local municipalities and the building industry to use in planning for the *York Region Official Plan, 2010 (YROP-2010)* targets

of 20 units and 70 residents and jobs per developable hectare in new community areas. The guidelines outline an approach to measure the targets in York Region's new community areas and provide a consistent methodology for our partners in tracking these targets. Case studies of four communities are also included in the attached guidelines to highlight York Region's experience in achieving density targets in recently developed communities.

### 3. BACKGROUND

#### **YROP-2010 sets minimum density targets of 20 units and 70 residents and jobs per hectare for new community areas**

Provincial forecasts contained in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)* and the *YROP-2010* project that York Region will grow to 1.5 million residents and 780,000 jobs by 2031. As part of planning for and managing growth, the *Growth Plan* requires new development in designated greenfield areas to achieve a minimum density target of 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare.

There are a number of built, under construction, and approved developments in York Region's designated greenfield areas that have densities lower than this provincial target, while others are close to the required density. Most of these developments were approved prior to the *Growth Plan*. As well, it is anticipated that most employment areas in the designated greenfield areas will build out at less than 50 jobs per hectare. In light of this, *YROP-2010* (policy 5.6.3) stipulates that new community areas in the Region "shall be designed to meet or exceed a minimum density of 20 residential units per hectare and a minimum density of 70 residents and jobs per hectare in the developable area". While this requirement is higher than what is set out in the *Growth Plan*, it is necessary in order to achieve the 50 residents and jobs per hectare density target across the entire designated greenfield area in York Region.

#### **Employment lands are to meet a density target of 40 jobs per hectare**

Employment lands are treated separately from community lands in the new community areas. A density standard of 40 jobs per developable hectare is applied to urban expansion employment lands in ROPAs 1, 2, and 3. The same method used to calculate community density (see *Attachment 1*) is used to calculate employment density in employment areas.

#### **YROP-2010 new community density policy remains under appeal at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB)**

As part of the *YROP-2010*, new community areas were identified in the Town of East Gwillimbury, and the cities of Vaughan and Markham (ROPAs 1, 2, and 3). The

Regional density target of 20 units per hectare and 70 residents and jobs per hectare will apply to these areas. This density policy, however, remains under appeal at the OMB. ROPAs 1 and 2 are both now in effect. Parties in both ROPA 1 and 2 agreed, through minutes of settlement, to plan these new community areas in conformity with all related *YROP-2010* policies, including density targets in new community areas. The methodology presented in the guidelines to measure the policy targets will help guide our partners in providing a consistent approach to calculate density.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

##### **Achieving Density Targets for New Communities in York Region helps to inform discussion on building complete and compact communities**

As the Region works towards meeting the regional density target, it is important to confirm a consistent and accurate approach to measuring density. The attached *Achieving Density Targets for New Communities in York Region* guidelines will serve as one tool to help engage the public, planners, and the development industry as part of the important discussion about planning for new communities in the Region. Building compact communities will reduce the rate at which land is consumed. Along with this, the provision of a mix of housing and jobs in these communities will create opportunities for people to live and work in close proximity and create more complete communities. As future secondary plans in York Region's new community areas are proposed, density will be measured using the outlined methodology.

The guidelines provide an overview of density targets as stipulated in both the Provincial *Growth Plan* and *YROP-2010*. This is followed by a description of the various components and formulas used to calculate density in York Region. A step-by-step example on calculating density in a sample (fictitious) community is then shown, using the explained methodology and assumptions. Finally, the densities and community characteristics of four communities in York Region are reviewed, along with a discussion on the relationship between achieving densities and building complete communities.

##### **Recent communities in York Region are already coming close to meeting the density targets**

Measuring density is effective in enabling comparisons between different jurisdictions to occur. Four recently developed communities were analyzed to determine their densities at build-out. The four profiled communities were Cornell, Wismer Commons, and Cathedral in the City of Markham, and Bayview-Wellington Centre (OPA 6) and Bayview Wellington North (OPA 28) in the Town of Aurora. Using the methodology in the guidelines, *Table 1* summarizes the densities of each of the four communities.

**Table 1**  
Densities of Sampled Communities in York Region

<b>Community</b>	<b>Units per Developable Hectare</b>	<b>Residents and Jobs per Developable Hectare</b>
Cornell (Markham)	28	87
Wismer Commons (Markham)	18	66
Bayview-Wellington Centre and Bayview Wellington North (OPA 6 + 28 in Aurora)	17	68
Cathedral (Markham)	18	61

It is worth noting that the four sampled York Region communities were all planned before the Provincial *Growth Plan* and new density targets came into effect in 2006. Each of the four communities is profiled in more detail in the guidelines. Other communities throughout the Region are achieving more compact densities in recent years. Staff will be conducting additional research to look at other communities throughout the Region as part of the municipal comprehensive review (MCR) of the *YROP-2010*, scheduled to begin later this year.

### **York Region is striving to create compact and complete communities**

It is important to recognize that achieving density targets is not the only determinant of complete communities. Density should be considered in relation to other factors that affect the overall perception of a community by its residents. A complete community meets most residents' needs for daily living by providing residents with convenient access to housing, public transportation with options for cycling and walking, employment, local services, schools, and active and passive recreation.

Building complete communities begins with appropriate housing that meets the needs of residents and workers. Housing diversity – characterized by a varied mix of ground-related (single-detached, semi-detached, and rows) and multiple unit dwellings – is important to increase overall affordability in a community. Although the Wismer Commons community has a large share of single and semi-detached units, the proportion of multi-unit dwellings in the other three profiled community areas reflects the increasingly compact pattern of urban development across the Region.

### **Transit, human services and amenities are other components of complete communities**

Through the secondary plan process, new communities will strive for a housing mix and densities which will complement a transit supportive, compact built form. Complete communities are designed to enhance mobility through interconnected street patterns as well as accessibility to public transit. The *YROP-2010* mandates that the distance to a

transit stop in the Urban Area should be within 500 metres of 90% of residents, and within 200 metres of 50% of its residents. As shown in *Table 2*, a minimum density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare is considered necessary to support basic transit services of one bus for every 20 to 30 minutes. All four profiled communities from *Table 1* meet the suggested minimum density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare required for basic transit service. In fact, Cornell's density of 87 residents and jobs per hectare also exceeds the minimum density requirement for frequent transit service. As mentioned earlier, additional research will be undertaken in the coming years to assess other communities in York Region.

**Table 2**  
Suggested Minimum Densities for Various Transit

<b>Transit Service Type</b>	<b>Suggested Minimum Density</b>
Basic Transit Service (One bus every 20-30 minutes)	22 units per hectare or 50 residents and jobs per hectare
Frequent Transit Service (One bus every 10-15 minutes)	37 units per hectare or 80 residents and jobs per hectare
Very Frequent Bus Service (One bus every 5 minutes with potential for LRT or BRT)	45 units per hectare or 100 residents and jobs per hectare
Dedicated Rapid Transit (LRT/BRT)	72 units per hectare or 160 residents and jobs per hectare
Subway	90 units per hectare or 200 residents and jobs per hectare

Source: Ontario Ministry of Transportation, *Transit Supportive Guidelines*, 2012

To service a population, human services (i.e., health care, education, housing, social services, and transit) provide an integral component of a complete community. In alignment with *Vision 2051*, strong, caring, and safe communities are fostered through the availability of community amenities. The four community areas analyzed in the guidelines include community amenities, such as schools, places of worship, fire stations, hospitals, long-term care residences, and open spaces for recreational purposes.

### **Link to key Council-approved plans**

Measuring the density of communities in the Region supports goals and objectives outlined in the *YROP-2010*, the *2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan*, and *Vision 2051*. Assessing the extent to which current communities are meeting the density targets and proposing a standard methodology with which to measure the density of all future communities in the Region supports the *YROP-2010* goal of “ensuring the Region’s new community areas prioritize people, sustainability, and liveability.” Tracking this information also supports the *Vision 2051* goal areas of “A Place Where Everyone Can Thrive”, “Liveable Cities

and Complete Communities”, “Appropriate Housing for All Ages and Stages”, and “Interconnected Systems for Mobility”.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The community density analysis work was completed within the existing staff complement and within approved budget allocations.

## **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

Local municipalities were consulted regarding the compilation of the data for the four profiled communities used in the attached guidelines. As new communities develop, consultations between the Region and its local municipalities will continue to ensure that the build-out of these areas are in conformity with *YROP-2010* policies as they relate to building complete communities. Local municipalities should find the guideline to be a helpful tool as they move forward with new community development.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This report and the attached guidelines, *Achieving Density Targets for New Communities in York Region*, provide a consistent and accurate approach to measuring the Regional Official Plan density targets. It also assesses the densities and community characteristics of four recently developed communities in the Region using the prescribed density calculation methodology. This is to highlight the Region’s experience in achieving these density targets thus far.

It is hoped that the guidelines will serve as one tool to help engage the public, planners, and the development industry as part of the important discussion about planning for new communities in York Region. As future secondary plans in York Region’s new communities are proposed, density should be measured using the outlined methodology.

For more information on this report, please contact Valerie Shuttleworth, Director, Long Range Planning at 905-830-4444, Ext. 71525, or Paul Bottomley, Manager, Growth Management Ext. 71530.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

# Achieving Density Targets

## For New Communities in York Region



2014

# Introduction

Provincial forecasts contained in the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan)* and the *York Region Official Plan, 2010 (YROP-2010)* anticipate that York Region will grow to 1.5 million residents and 780,000 jobs by 2031.

In planning and managing this growth, the *Growth Plan* requires new development in designated greenfield areas to achieve a minimum density target that is not less than 50 residents and jobs combined per hectare. As the Region works towards meeting the required density target, it is important to confirm a consistent and accurate approach to measuring density.

This document will serve as one tool to help engage the public, planners, and the development industry as part of the important discussion about planning for new communities in the Region.

## What are new community areas?

As part of the YROP - 2010, new community areas were identified in the Town of East Gwillimbury and the Cities of Vaughan and Markham through Regional Official Plan Amendments (ROPAs) 1, 2 and 3 (see map on page 5). New community areas newly designated urban areas in the Region which will accommodate growth to 2031.

## What is density?

Density is calculated as a percentage of a certain measure of activity (i.e., population, employment, or households) to a land area base, such as gross, developable or net area.

$$\text{Density} = \frac{\text{Measure of Activity (i.e. population, employment, households)}}{\text{Land Area Base (i.e. gross, developable, net)}}$$

## What is York Region’s density target for new communities?

*YROP-2010* stipulates that these new community areas in York Region are to be designed to meet or exceed a **minimum density of 20 residential units per hectare or 70 residents and jobs per hectare** in the developable area. Given that there are existing communities with densities lower than the Provincial *Growth Plan’s* 50 residents and jobs target, it is necessary for York Region to achieve the 70 residents and jobs density target for new communities in order to attain the 50 residents and jobs density target across the entire designated greenfield area.

### Suggested Minimum Densities for Various Transit

Transit Service Type	Suggested Minimum Density
Basic Transit Services (One bus every 20-30 minutes)	22 units per hectare or 50 residents and jobs per hectare
Frequent Transit Service (One bus every 10-15 minutes)	37 units per hectare or 80 residents and jobs per hectare
Very Frequent Bus Service (One bus every 5 minutes with potential for LRT or BRT)	45 units per hectare or 100 residents and jobs per hectare
Dedicated Rapid Transit (LRT/BRT)	72 units per hectare or 160 residents and jobs per hectare
Subway	90 units per hectare or 200 residents and jobs per hectare

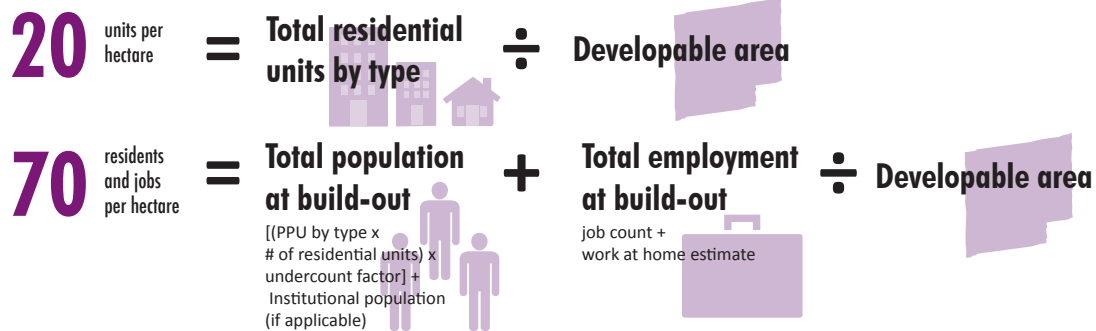
Source: Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Transit Supportive Guidelines

The 20 units per hectare density included in the *YROP-2010* is more reflective of the compact transit supportive communities that the Region is planning. According to the Provincial *Transit Supportive Guidelines (2012)*, densities of around 20 units per hectare are typical thresholds required for basic levels of transit services, which includes one bus every 20 to 30 minutes.



# Calculating Density in New Communities

The components used to calculate the density of York Region’s new community areas are discussed below. As future secondary plans in these areas are proposed, density should be measured using the following methodology.



**Developable area** includes all lands available for development for both public and private uses, including residential and employment uses, parks, and infrastructure (i.e., local and regional roads, as well as stormwater management ponds). Half of the arterial roads that surround the secondary plan area—measured to the centre line of the road—are also included in the developable area.

Developable area **excludes**: environmental features identified in the Provincial Growth Plan, the Regional Greenlands System, key natural features and key hydrologic features, major infrastructure and infrastructure right-of-ways (i.e., existing 400-series highways and finalized route alignment for extensions or future 400-series highways, utility lines, and rail lines), and existing uses (e.g., cemeteries and estate subdivisions).

## Residential units by type

As new secondary plans are submitted, build-out targets by unit type should be used. If available, units from plans of subdivision can be used to derive units in the new community as well.

## Total employment estimate at build-out

Jobs that occur in new community areas are primarily population-serving, which include retail, personal services, institutional, and office jobs. Employment densities (jobs per developable hectare) specific to the job type should be used in estimating employment in new communities (i.e. 60 jobs per developable hectare for retail is reflective of densities in existing retail areas in the Region). Actual employment estimates should be used where available.

A work at home factor based on the ratio of work-at-home employment to population for York Region is then added to the employment estimate. In 2011, work-at-home employment in York Region was approximately 4 per cent of the population.

## Population estimate at build-out

Population estimates are derived by applying persons-per-unit (PPU) factors to residential unit growth. Region-wide PPU by structure type (single detached, semi-detached, row, and apartments) from the 2010 York Region Land Budget are currently being used to measure density in existing communities.

Unit Type	PPU
Single Detached	3.61
Semi-Detached	3.30
Row House	3.02
Apartment	1.98

An undercount (also known as census net undercoverage) factor should then be applied to the population estimate to capture residents who were not counted during the census in order to derive a more representative population estimate. A 4 per cent adjustment is a typical undercount percentage from Census releases.

Where applicable, an estimate of the population in institutions such as nursing homes should also be added.

# Sample Community Density Calculation

The density calculation for a sample community with a gross area of 400 hectares is provided below, using the guidelines provided on the previous page.

## STEP 1

### Calculate developable area

Gross to Developable Area		
	Hectares	Per cent
Gross Area	400	100%
Environmental features	40	10%
Developable Area	360	90%
Components of Developable Area		
	Hectares	% of Developable Area
Residential	198	55%
Commercial	18	5%
Open Space (parks and stormwater)	43	12%
Institutional (schools, churches, etc.)	22	6%
Roads (major and local roads)	79	22%
<b>Total Developable Area</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100%</b>

## STEP 2

### Determine population and housing at build-out

Housing Units at Build-Out			Units	Per cent		
Single-detached		3,600	50%			
Semi-detached		720	10%			
Row houses		2,160	30%			
Apartments		720	10%			
<b>Total Units</b>		<b>7,200</b>	<b>100%</b>			
Population at Build-Out			Units	PPU	Population	With 4% Undercount Factor
Single-detached		3,600	3.61	12,996	13,516	
Semi-detached		720	3.30	2,376	2,471	
Row houses		2,160	3.02	6,523	6,784	
Apartments		720	1.98	1,426	1,483	
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,200</b>		<b>23,321</b>	<b>24,254</b>	

## STEP 3

### Estimate employment at build-out

Commercial Land Area	18 net hectares
Commercial Employment Density <sup>1</sup>	60 jobs per net hectare
Projected Commercial Employment	1,080 jobs
Elementary Schools	2 schools
Jobs per elementary school	40 jobs per school
Total elementary school employment	80 jobs
Secondary Schools	1 school
Jobs per secondary school	110 jobs per school
Total secondary school employment	110 jobs
<b>Work at Home Employment</b>	970 jobs
% of total population	4%
<b>Total Employment at Build-Out</b>	<b>2,240 jobs</b>

<sup>1</sup> Density assumptions will depend on type of use.

## STEP 4

### Calculate densities

Land Area	Units	Area (Ha)	Units per Ha	
Gross area	7,200	400	18.0	
Developable area	7,200	360	20.0	
Net residential area	7,200	198	36.4	
Land Area	Residents	Jobs	Area (Ha)	Residents and Jobs per Ha
Gross area	24,254	2,240	400	66.2
Developable area	24,254	2,240	360	73.6

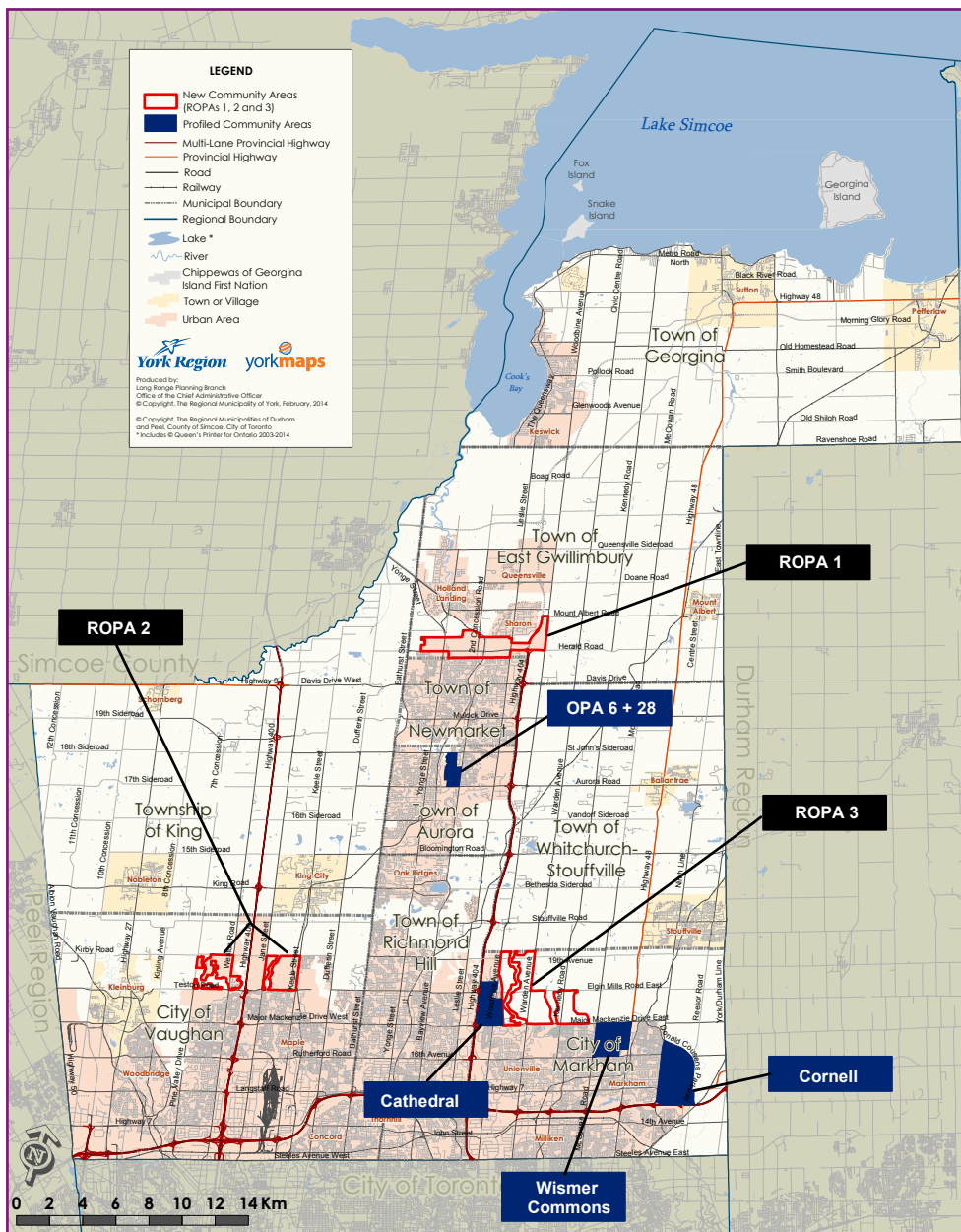
# Profiling Four York Region Communities

The densities of four existing communities in York Region were analyzed in order to assess the extent to which they are achieving the *YROP-2010* standard of 20 units per hectare and 70 residents and jobs per hectare at full build-out. The four communities are: Cornell (City of Markham), Wismer Commons (City of Markham), Bayview-Wellington Centre (OPA 6) and Bayview Wellington North (OPA 28) (Town of Aurora) and Cathedral (City of Markham). All four profiled communities were planned before the Provincial *Growth Plan* and new density targets came into effect in 2006.

The three communities of Wismer Commons, Bayview-Wellington Centre/Bayview-Wellington North, and Cathedral are close to the 20 units per developable hectare density target. At full build-out, Cornell is expected to exceed the target at 28 units per developable hectare.

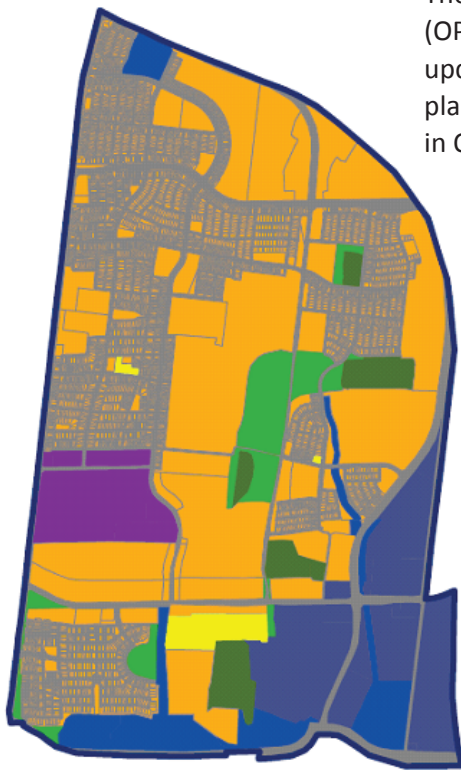
Cornell exceeds the *YROP-2010* policy of achieving 70 residents and jobs per developable hectare at full build-out. Bayview-Wellington Centre/Bayview-Wellington North, Cathedral, and Wismer Commons, are all approaching the 70 density standard.

## Location of New Community Areas in York Region and Profiled Communities



# Cornell and Wismer Commons

## Cornell Secondary Plan Area



The original Cornell secondary plan (OPA 20) was adopted in 1994 and updated in 2008. It was the first planned “new urbanist” community in Ontario.

### Density

28 units per hectare  
87 residents and jobs per hectare

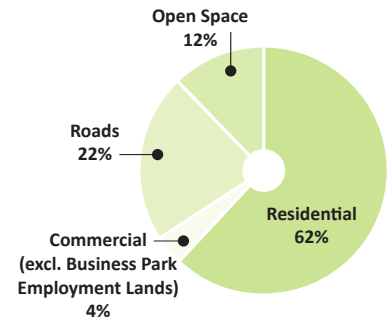
### Area Boundaries

North: Donald Cousens Parkway  
South: Highway 407  
East: Reesor Road  
West: Ninth Line

### Legend

- Residential
- Major Commercial
- Institutional
- Park/Open Space
- Stormwater Management
- Environmental/Hazard Lands
- Business Park

### Developable Area - 570 hectares



### Residential Units at Full Build-Out

Build-Out	Units	%
Single Detached	3,399	21%
Semi-Detached	1,187	7%
Townhomes	3,996	25%
Apartments	7,475	47%
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>16,057</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Population at Full Build-Out 45,239**

### Employment at Full Build-Out

	Jobs
Schools and Institutional jobs	1,286
Retail/Service/Office	1,175
Work at Home	1,794
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>4,255</b>

## Wismer Commons Secondary Plan Area



The Wismer Commons secondary plan (OPA 37) was adopted by the City of Markham in 1996 and is largely built-out. This community has a fairly high share of ground-related units (i.e., single detached, semi-detached, and row houses), at approximately 87% of total residential units.

### Legend

- Residential
- Major Commercial
- Institutional
- Park/Open Space
- Stormwater Management
- Environmental/Hazard Lands
- Business Park

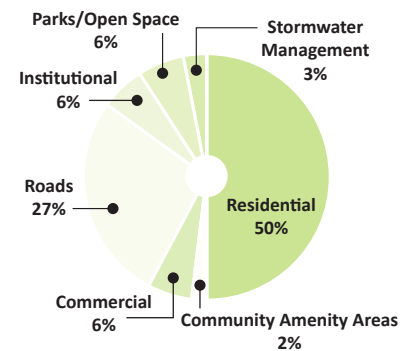
### Density

18 units per hectare  
66 residents and jobs per hectare

### Area Boundaries

North: Major Mackenzie Drive East  
South: 16th Avenue  
East: Highway 48  
West: McCowan Road

### Developable Area - 377 hectares



### Residential Units at Full Build-Out

Build-Out	Units	%
Single Detached	3,498	53%
Semi-Detached	1,276	19%
Townhomes	1,003	15%
Apartments	853	13%
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>6,630</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Population at Full Build-Out 22,452**

### Employment at Full Build-Out

	Jobs
Schools and Institutional jobs	528
Retail/Service/Office	452
Additional job potential on vacant lands	1,071
Work at Home	898
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>2,949</b>

# Bayview-Wellington Centre/ Bayview Wellington North and Cathedral

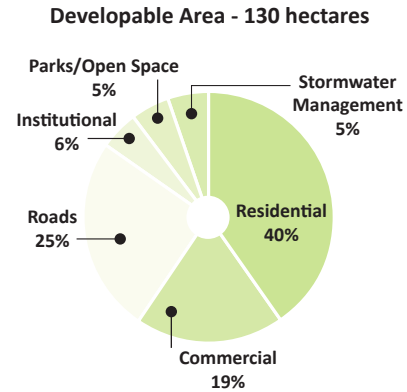
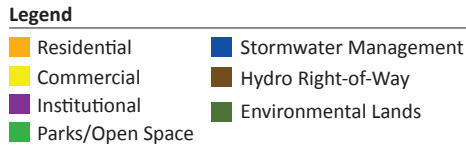
## Bayview-Wellington Centre (OPA 6) and Bayview Wellington North (OPA 28) Secondary Plan Areas



OPA 6 was originally adopted by the Town of Aurora in 1994, while OPA 28 was adopted in 1999. This area is largely built-out with a high ratio of ground-related units.

**Density**  
17 units per hectare  
68 residents and jobs per hectare

**Area Boundaries**  
North: St. John's Sideroad  
South: Wellington Road East  
East: Bayview Avenue  
West: Open space



**Residential Units at Full Build-Out**

Build-Out	Units	%
Single Detached	647	29%
Semi-Detached	290	13%
Townhomes	806	37%
Apartments	451	21%
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>2,194</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Population at Full Build-Out</b>	<b>6,895</b>	

**Employment at Full Build-Out**

	Jobs
Schools and Institutional jobs	237
Retail/Service/Office	1,292
Additional job potential on vacant lands	87
Work at Home	276
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>1,892</b>

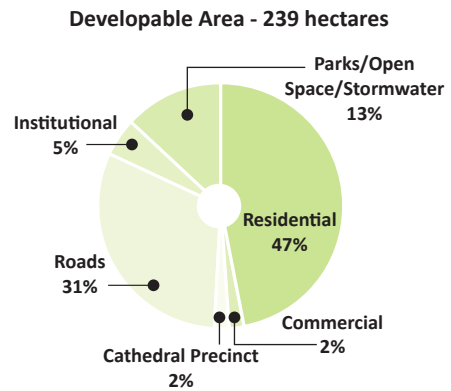
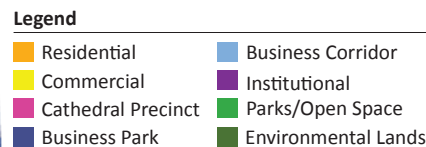
## Cathedral Secondary Plan Area



The Cathedral secondary plan was originally adopted in 1996, with an amended secondary plan adopted in 2004 by the City of Markham.

**Density**  
18 units per hectare  
61 residents and jobs per hectare

**Area Boundaries**  
North: Approximately one and a half concession blocks north of Elgin Mills Road East  
South: Major Mackenzie Drive  
East: Woodbine Avenue  
West: Highway 404



**Residential Units at Full Build-Out**

Build-Out	Units	%
Single Detached	1,670	40%
Semi-Detached	456	11%
Townhomes	936	22%
Apartments	1,136	27%
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>4,198</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Population at Full Build-Out</b>	<b>13,134</b>	

**Employment at Full Build-Out**

	Jobs
Schools and Institutional jobs	227
Retail/Service/Office	462
Additional job potential on vacant lands	161
Work at Home	525
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>1,375</b>

Note: Residential unit information for all four communities are accurate as of mid-year 2012

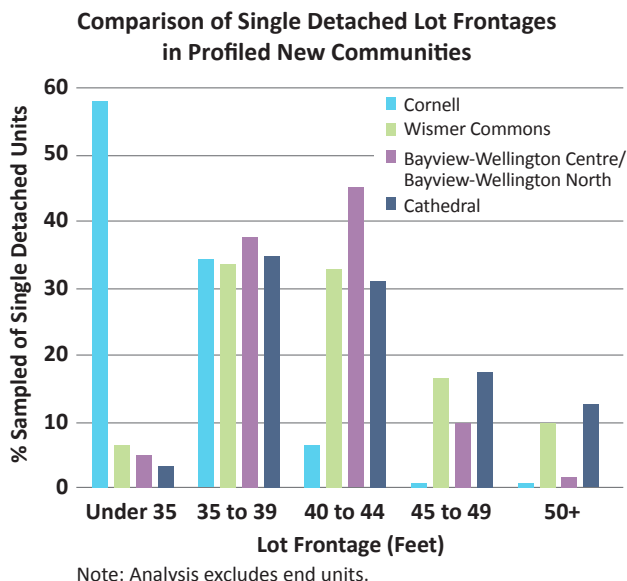
# Beyond Density: Other Considerations

## New density requirements can be met through a provision of a variety of unit types and lot sizes

Despite achieving high densities, it is important to assess the overall design in the community to ensure that qualities of a neighbourhood and home that are desired by residents are still accommodated. These include a variety of housing types and lot sizes, as well as adequate private amenity space, parks, shopping, and schools.

Each of the communities discussed above has a varied unit type mix. While Cornell's distribution of residential unit types are weighted more towards apartments, communities like Wismer and Bayview-Wellington Centre/Bayview Wellington North have a large share of ground-related units. This shows that it is possible to incorporate a variety of unit types – including ground-related units – into higher density communities.

Single detached units in denser communities are typically thought of as being smaller and more compact. With the exception of Cornell, the vast majority of single-detached units whose frontages were assessed in this exercise are 35 square feet or larger. It is evident, therefore, that larger lot sizes can be achieved in communities with higher densities.



## York Region is striving to create compact and complete communities

Density measures are effective in enabling comparisons between different jurisdictions to occur. Density targets should be considered in relation to other factors that affect the overall perception of a community by its residents, such as building types, walkability, access to transit, services, and shopping, and access to community facilities. Merely achieving the York Region 20/70 density standard does not necessarily imply that a community is “complete”.

A complete community meets most residents’ basic needs on a daily basis by providing residents with convenient access to housing, transit, employment, food and human services, and active and passive recreation options. Building complete communities begins with appropriate housing that meets the needs of residents and workers. Housing diversity characterized by a varied mix of ground-related and multiple unit dwellings is important to increase overall affordability in a community.

Through the secondary plan process, new communities will strive for a housing mix and densities which will complement a transit-supportive, compact built form. Complete communities are designed to enhance mobility through interconnected street patterns as well as accessibility to public transit.

In alignment with *Vision 2051*, strong, caring and safe communities are fostered through the availability of community amenities. The four community areas analyzed in the guidelines include community amenities, such as schools, places of worship, fire stations, hospitals, long-term care residences, and open spaces for recreational purposes.

For more information please contact:  
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# **Achieving Density Targets for New Communities in York Region**

**Presentation to  
Committee of the Whole**

**Valerie Shuttleworth, Director  
Long Range Planning  
March 6, 2014**

# Presentation Outline

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- Density targets
- Density calculation methodology
- Sample Density Calculation
- Case studies



# YROP-2010 sets minimum density targets

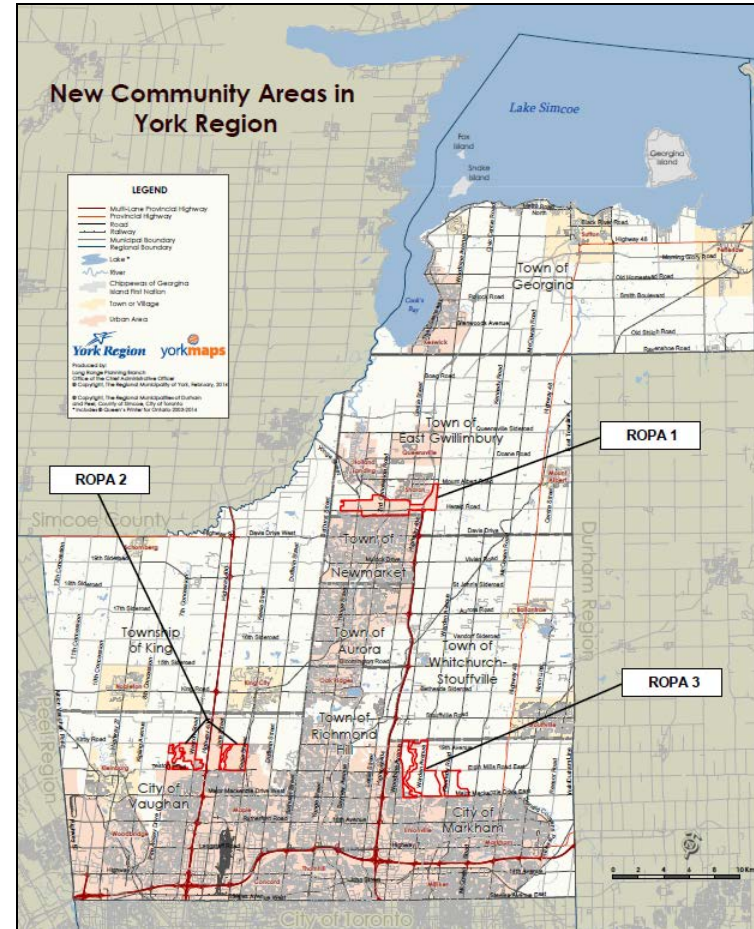
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- ❑ York Region will grow to 1.5 million residents and 780,000 jobs by 2031
- ❑ Provincial *Growth Plan* – minimum density target of **50 residents and jobs per developable hectare**
- ❑ *YROP-2010* – minimum density of **20 units and 70 residents and jobs per developable hectare**

YROP-2010 density target is higher than Provincial target to offset lower densities in existing communities

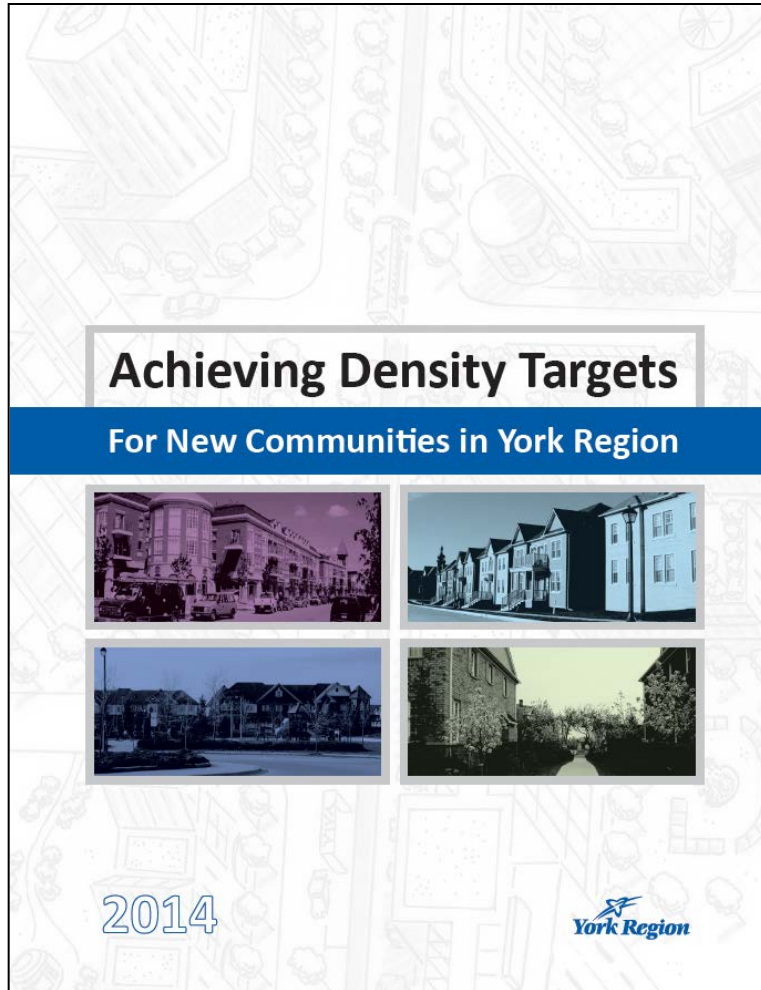
# Density target applies to new community areas

- ❑ YROP-2010 identified new community areas in:
  - ❑ Town of East Gwillimbury (ROPA 1)
  - ❑ City of Vaughan (ROPA 2)
  - ❑ City of Markham (ROPA 3)



**YROP-2010 new communities density policy remains under appeal at OMB**

# Guidelines will serve as a tool to help engage stakeholders in planning for new communities



- ❑ Overview of Provincial and *YROP-2010* density targets
- ❑ Description of components and formulas used to calculate density
- ❑ Step-by-step example on calculating density in sample community
- ❑ 4 York Region case studies

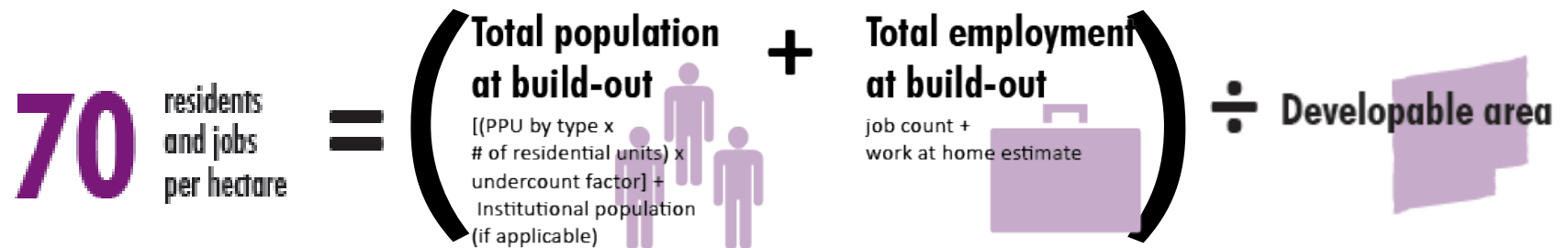
# Guidelines will outline consistent methodology to measure density

$$20 \text{ units per hectare} = \frac{\text{Total residential units by type}}{\text{Developable area}}$$


$$70 \text{ residents and jobs per hectare} = \frac{\left( \begin{array}{l} \text{Total population at build-out} \\ \text{Total employment at build-out} \end{array} \right)}{\text{Developable area}}$$

[[PPU by type x # of residential units] x undercount factor] + Institutional population (if applicable)

job count + work at home estimate



As future secondary plans are proposed, density should be measured using this methodology

# Densities and community characteristics of four communities were profiled

## Cornell Secondary Plan Area

The original Cornell secondary plan (OPA 20) was adopted in 1994 and updated in 2008. It was the first planned "new urbanist" community in Ontario.



### Density

28 units per hectare  
87 residents and jobs per hectare

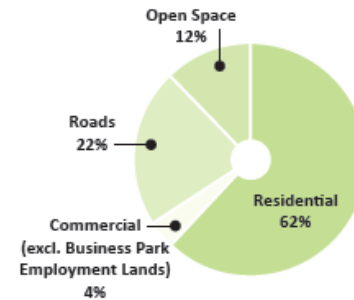
### Area Boundaries

North: Donald Cousens Parkway  
South: Highway 407  
East: Reesor Road  
West: Ninth Line

### Legend

- Residential
- Major Commercial
- Institutional
- Park/Open Space
- Stormwater Management
- Environmental/Hazard Lands
- Business Park

### Developable Area - 570 hectares



### Residential Units at Full

Build-Out	Units	%
Single Detached	3,399	21%
Semi-Detached	1,187	7%
Townhomes	3,996	25%
Apartments	7,475	47%
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>16,057</b>	<b>100%</b>

Population at Full Build-Out 45,239

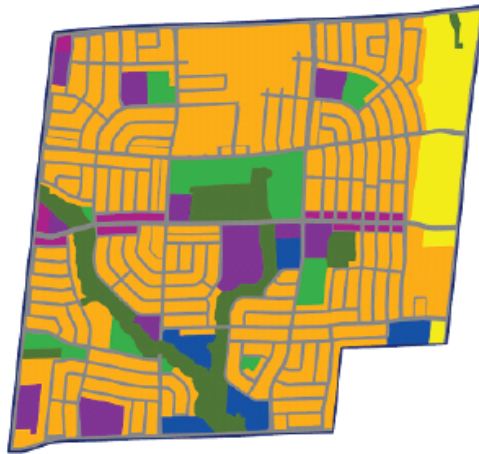
### Employment at Full Build-Out

	Jobs
Schools and Institutional jobs	1,286
Retail/Service/Office	1,175
Work at Home	1,794
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>4,255</b>

All four profiled communities were planned before the Provincial Growth Plan came into effect in 2006

# Densities and community characteristics of four communities were profiled

## Wismer Commons Secondary Plan Area



### Legend

- Residential
- Major Commercial
- Institutional
- Park/Open Space
- Stormwater Management
- Environmental/Hazard Lands
- Business Park

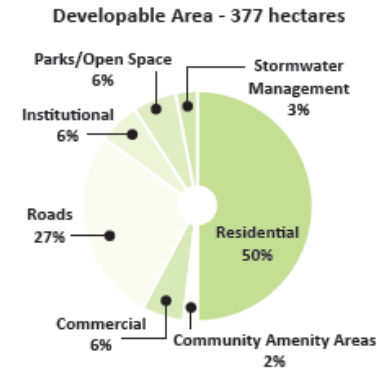
The Wismer Commons secondary plan (OPA 37) was adopted by the City of Markham in 1996 and is largely built-out. This community has a fairly high share of ground-related units (i.e., single detached, semi-detached, and row houses), at approximately 87% of total residential units.

### Density

18 units per hectare  
66 residents and jobs per hectare

### Area Boundaries

North: Major Mackenzie Drive East  
South: 16th Avenue  
East: Highway 48  
West: McCowan Road



### Residential Units at Full Build-Out

	Units	%
Single Detached	3,498	53%
Semi-Detached	1,276	19%
Townhomes	1,003	15%
Apartments	853	13%
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>6,630</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Population at Full Build-Out</b>	<b>22,452</b>	

### Employment at Full Build-Out

	Jobs
Schools and Institutional jobs	528
Retail/Service/Office	452
Additional job potential on vacant lands	1,071
Work at Home	898
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>2,949</b>

All four profiled communities were planned before the Provincial Growth Plan came into effect in 2006

# Densities and community characteristics of four communities were profiled

## Bayview-Wellington Centre (OPA 6) and Bayview Wellington North (OPA 28) Secondary Plan Areas



OPA 6 was originally adopted by the Town of Aurora in 1994, while OPA 28 was adopted in 1999. This area is largely built-out with a high ratio of ground-related units.

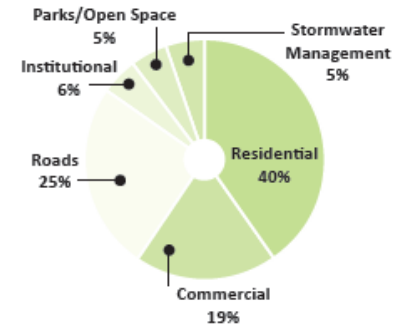
**Density**  
17 units per hectare  
68 residents and jobs per hectare

**Area Boundaries**  
North: St. John's Sideroad  
South: Wellington Road East  
East: Bayview Avenue  
West: Open space

**Legend**

<span style="color: orange;">■</span> Residential	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Stormwater Management
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Commercial	<span style="color: brown;">■</span> Hydro Right-of-Way
<span style="color: purple;">■</span> Institutional	<span style="color: darkgreen;">■</span> Environmental Lands
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Parks/Open Space	

### Developable Area - 130 hectares



Residential Units at Full Build-Out		
Build-Out	Units	%
Single Detached	647	29%
Semi-Detached	290	13%
Townhomes	806	37%
Apartments	451	21%
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>2,194</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Population at Full Build-Out 6,895</b>		
Employment at Full Build-Out		Jobs
Schools and Institutional jobs		237
Additional job potential on vacant lands		1,292
Retail/Service/Office		87
Work at Home		276
<b>Total Jobs</b>		<b>1,892</b>

**All four profiled communities were planned before the Provincial Growth Plan came into effect in 2006**

# Densities and community characteristics of four communities were profiled

## Cathedral Secondary Plan Area



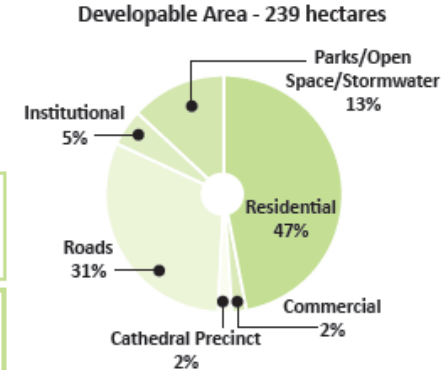
The Cathedral secondary plan was originally adopted in 1996, with an amended secondary plan adopted in 2004 by the City of Markham.

**Density**  
18 units per hectare  
61 residents and jobs per hectare

**Area Boundaries**  
North: Approximately one and a half concession blocks north of Elgin Mills Road East  
South: Major Mackenzie Drive  
East: Woodbine Avenue  
West: Highway 404

**Legend**

- Residential
- Commercial
- Cathedral Precinct
- Business Park
- Business Corridor
- Institutional
- Parks/Open Space
- Environmental Lands



Residential Units at Full Build-Out		
	Units	%
Single Detached	1,670	40%
Semi-Detached	456	11%
Townhomes	936	22%
Apartments	1,136	27%
<b>Total Residential Units</b>	<b>4,198</b>	<b>100%</b>
Population at Full Build-Out 13,134		
Employment at Full Build-Out		
	Jobs	
Schools and Institutional jobs	227	
Retail/Service/Office	462	
Additional job potential on vacant lands	161	
Work at Home	525	
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>1,375</b>	

All four profiled communities were planned before the Provincial Growth Plan came into effect in 2006



# Other York Region communities achieving more compact densities in recent years



# Other York Region communities achieving more compact densities in recent years



**Carrville Centre,  
Vaughan**

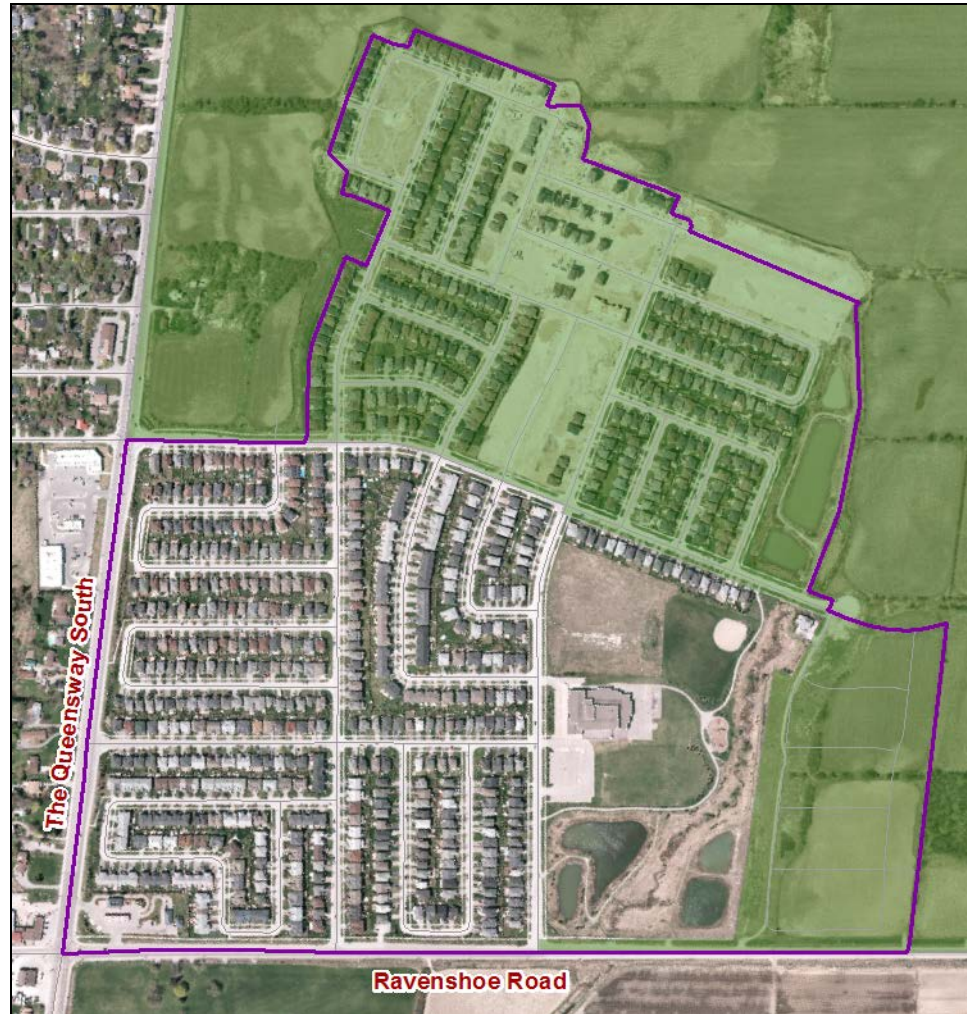
# Other York Region communities achieving more compact densities in recent years

**Nashville Heights,  
Vaughan**

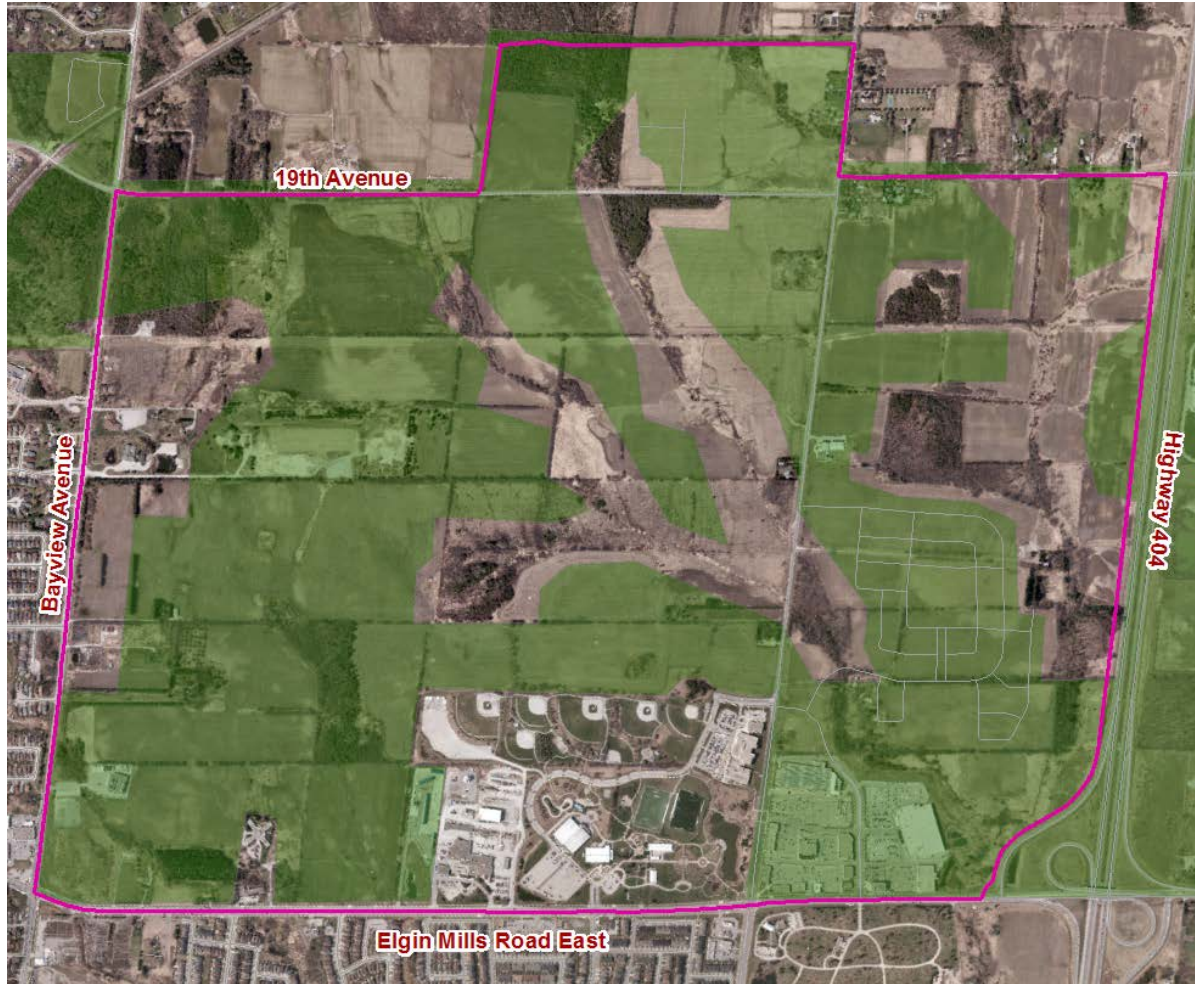


# Other York Region communities achieving more compact densities in recent years

**Simcoe Landing,  
Georgina**



# Other York Region communities achieving more compact densities in recent years



**North Leslie,  
Richmond Hill**

# Other York Region communities achieving more compact densities in recent years

Community of  
Stouffville,  
Whitchurch-Stouffville



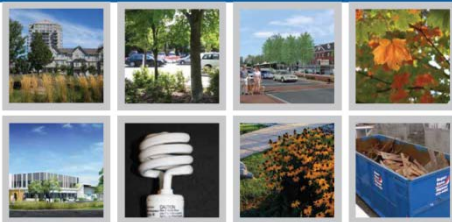
# Beyond Density: Other Considerations

- ❑ Convenient access to community amenities, employment, housing, transportation
- ❑ Community design
- ❑ Housing diversity



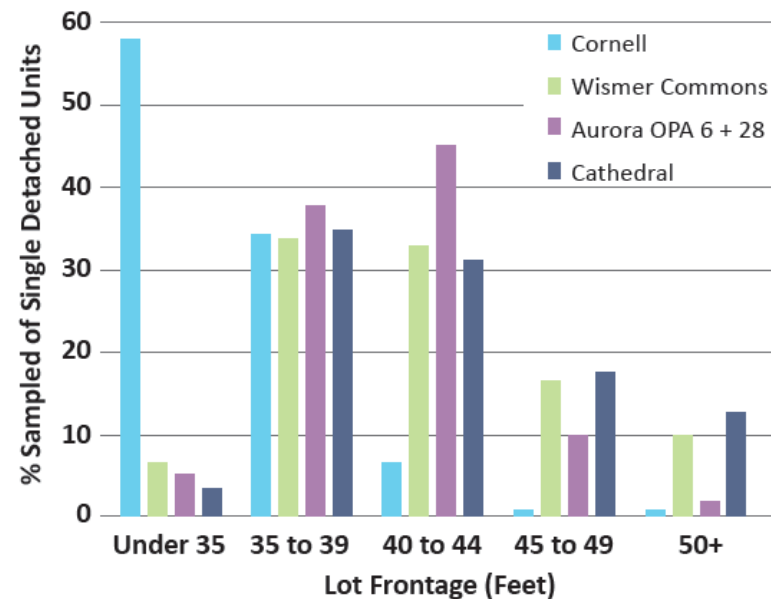
New Communities

## GUIDELINES



2013

Comparison of Single Detached Lot Frontages  
in Profiled New Communities



Note: Analysis excludes end units.

**York Region is striving to create complete and compact communities**

# Recommendations

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- ❑ Council endorse the *Achieving Density Targets for New Communities in York Region* guidelines.
- ❑ Regional Clerk circulate this report and the attached guidelines to the Planning Departments of each local municipality, the Building Industry and Land Development Association, York Chapter, and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.