

Committee of the Whole (Working Session) Report

DATE: Wednesday, May 31, 2023

WARD: 5

TITLE: YONGE STEELES CORRIDOR URBAN DESIGN AND
STREETSCAPE STUDY

FROM:

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek Council approval on the Yonge Steeles Corridor Urban Design and Streetscape Study, May 2023. (hereafter referred to as the “Study”), enabling staff and the development community to use this as a reference document in the design and review of applications and capital projects within the Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan area.

Report Highlights

- The Study will serve as a comprehensive reference document to provide design guidance for public realm and streetscapes within the Yonge Steeles Corridor based on the Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan policy framework.
- The Study provides a design framework to inform and coordinate public realm investment and to guide future growth and development to create a vibrant, urban destination that is well-connected to the larger community.
- The Study provides preliminary construction and operations maintenance costing that will be considered as part of the upcoming Development Charge Background Study update as well as operational budgeting.

Recommendation

1. THAT the Yonge Steeles Corridor Urban Design and Streetscape Study BE APPROVED.

Background

The Study commenced in August 2020 and was developed in six(6) phases of work, including:

- Phase 1 & 2: Background, Review and Analysis and Consultation Strategy (September-December 2020)
- Phase 3&4: Urban Design Framework and Streetscape Plan (January 2021-June 2021, September 2022-February 2023)

The Study was ON-HOLD for approximately a year between July 2021 and August 2022, pending appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) of the Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan and various development planning issues. Following OLT settlements and resolutions, an amended Secondary Plan came into effect in August 2022.

- Phase 5: Secondary Plan, Urban Design and Streetscape Policies (March-December 2022)
- Phase 5: Implementation and Phasing Strategy (December 2022-April 2023)

As part of the project, a comprehensive communication and engagement plan was established to ensure appropriate input and feedback was considered. The outreach and engagement activities included:

- Three (3) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings (Q4 2020, Q2 2022, Q4 2022) including internal departments such as Transportation Planning and Engineering, Policy Planning and Special Programs, Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development, Parks Forestry and Horticulture Operations, Roads Operations as well as the partnering agencies such as York Region, York Region Transit, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Metrolinx, City of Markham and City of Toronto.
- Two(2) Stakeholders Group Meetings (Q4 2020, Q4 2022) including Yonge Steeles Land Owners Group, Development proponents, Springfarm and Flamingo Ratepayers' Associations, and various landowners within the area.
- A consultation workshop (July 2021) with Vaughan Design Review Panel.
- A Public information Meeting / Open House (March 6, 2023) including all residents and landowners within 200m radius as well as all external stakeholders.

In addition, a dedicated project website was created to provide regular updates on the study:

[Yonge-Steeles Urban Design Study and Streetscape Plan | City of Vaughan](#)

Previous Reports/Authority

NA

Analysis and Options

Building upon the vision, principles and policies of the Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan, the Study supports the transition of Yonge Steeles Corridor from an auto-oriented area into an attractive walkable, transit-oriented, vibrant, and sustainable urban environment that leverages its potential as a great destination. The Study provides an integrated design solution to enhance the pedestrian/cyclist experience and to achieve the larger vision and objectives of the Secondary Plan. Some of the key objectives include:

- Transform the Yonge Steeles Corridor into a destination with a strong identity and sense of place by developing distinct character areas to be context sensitive and well-designed built environments paying attention to the enhancements of potential view corridors, thresholds design, transition to Thornhill HCD, gateways, and interfaces between different frontage types.
- Translate the vision, density, built form, land use, and streetscape policies of the Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan into set of comprehensive and graphic urban design and streetscape guidelines that support the creation of a livable and distinct destination.
- Articulate design principles and development strategies to consistently achieve high quality public realm and streetscape treatment that is designed in relation to its physical and spatial context, supports compatibility of uses, and strong development interfaces.
- Develop a mixed-use city streetscape through attention to the design of the public realm, hierarchy of streetscape network to establish a connected, legible, attractive, human-scale, and enjoyable people focused environment with varied visual interest.
- Integrate environmental sustainability into the design of the public realm.
- Ensure that all public and private spaces are designed in a manner that promote accessibility, legibility, and visibility to ensure safety.

The Study includes best practice design standards, guidelines as well as specific design solutions that will help structure the shape, form, function, and layout of the public realm in the study area. The highly graphic document fundamentally outlines clear, cohesive, and organized design guidelines framework that City departments and development community can reference to inform and coordinate all future private and public projects.

The Study consist of three main components:

1. Built Form and Public Realm Design Guidelines
2. Streetscape Plans and Guidelines
3. Implementation Strategy

The built form guidelines expand upon the Secondary Plan direction for designing buildings which enhance the pedestrian experience. These guidelines define height and scale parameters and set aspirations for how new buildings should interact with the public realm and contribute to the overall character of the Yonge Steeles Corridor. The built form priorities include design excellence, transit-oriented development, context-driven urban form, pedestrian comfort, and street life.

The public realm guidelines address the spaces in between the buildings that shape our experience of a community. These guidelines are primarily focused on the South Area where the Secondary Plan establishes a brand-new open space network to serve the new community and existing residents in surrounding areas. The North Area will continue to be served by Langstaff School Park and Riverside Park; however, these guidelines may still be relevant where there are opportunities to enhance the open space network through incremental change. The public realm priorities include distinct identity, diverse open spaces, safety, and accessibility, context-responsive, sustainability and resilience.

The Yonge Steeles Corridor area will be home to three (3) new subway stations along Yonge Street, creating the impetus for the transformation of the streets within this intensification area. The major arterials of Steeles Avenue West and Yonge Street will be completely transformed into active, transit-rich main streets that safely accommodate a large number of people walking and traveling on bikes. Local streets with narrower rights of way will support the day-to-day lives of the residents within a safe and comfortable public realm. These are supported by a network of private streets and midblock connections that prioritize pedestrian movement within dense mixed-use developments while also accommodating loading and servicing needs.

Streetscape plans have been prepared for six public street types - Steeles Avenue West, three different conditions along Yonge Street, Royal Palm Drive and new local streets - and one private street type, the woonerf. The streetscape design priorities include Transit, Active Transportation, Pedestrian Comfort and Safety, Context-based Street Design and Green Infrastructure.

The transformation of the Yonge Steeles Corridor will take place incrementally over many years through actions by many players in both the public and private sectors.

The strategy for implementation and phasing will rely on coordination and cooperation between multiple departments, municipalities, agencies, landowners, and other stakeholders. The strategy for implementation of the vision articulated in the Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan and this Urban Design Study and Streetscape Plan will be different across the study area due to the vastly different patterns of existing parcels, land ownership and uses. The City of Vaughan will be required to take a more active role in the implementation of the new street and block pattern and open space network in the South Area, while the City’s role in implementation in the rest of the study area will be more focused on review of development applications to implement incremental change.

Financial Impact

The total preliminary construction cost per linear meter of the streets within Yonge Steeles Corridor is outlined in the following table. This table is developed based on the construction cost of Royal Palm Dr. extension to Yonge Street, and the local streets, with majority running north-south between Royal Palm Dr. and Steeles Ave.

Capital Construction Cost Estimate – Single side

Street Name / Type	Boulevard Cost (\$/m)	Length of Street (m)	Total Cost (\$/m)
Royal Palm Drive, Option 1 & 2, 24m ROW	\$4,147 - \$4,439	750	\$3,110,459 - \$3,329,482
Local Street, 23m ROW	\$3,372 - \$3,394	2180	\$7,339,430 - \$7,352,007

Notes / Assumptions:

- Works are priced at Q1 2023, with no escalation applied
- Scope included in this estimate are works between the edge curb up to R.O.W only
- Exclude Contingency cost
- Assumed no major phasing requirements
- No utilities works (new or relocation of existing are included in this costing

Operational Impact

The following table summarizes the future Operating and Maintenance Budget impact based on the preliminary costed streetscape works. Funds for annual repair, maintenance and operating are included in the total cost, and are based on guidance provided in the 2014 Council approved “City-wide Streetscape Implementation Manual and Financial Strategy” document and inflation rates since 2014.

Operations and Maintenance Yearly Cost Estimate - Single side

Street Name / Type	Boulevard Cost (\$/m)	Length of Street (m)	Total Cost (\$/m)
Royal Palm Drive, Option 1 & 2, 24m ROW	\$125 - \$131	750	\$93,918 - \$98,455
Local Street Boulevard A, 23m ROW	\$126 - \$132	2180	\$275,793 - \$288,953

Notes / Assumptions:

- *Costs are priced at Q1 2023, with no escalation applied*
- *Scope included in this estimate are works between the edge curb up to R.O.W only*
- *Exclude Contingency cost*

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

Yonge Street is under the jurisdiction of York Region, as such the streetscape design follows the South Yonge Street Streetscape Master Plan, updated 2021. York Region has also participated as a key technical advisor throughout the Study process. Further, consultation with the Region will be required for costing, implementation of the Streetscape Design as well as determining roles and responsibilities for operations and maintenance.

Steeles Avenue is under the jurisdiction of City of Toronto and is to be widened as part of the implementation of Bus Rapid transit (BRT) by Metrolinx. As such, further consultation with the City of Toronto and Metrolinx will be required for final design, costing, implementation of the Streetscape as well as determining roles and responsibilities for operations and maintenance.

York Region Transit (YRT, YRRTC), City of Toronto and Metrolinx have all participated as key stakeholders to coordinate the planning and design works relating to the future Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) along Yonge St, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along Steeles Ave, and various other transit facilities requirements throughout the Corridor.

Conclusion

The Yonge Steeles Corridor Urban Design and Streetscape Plan provides schematic design guidance for the public realm within the Study area to help achieve the vision, principles, and policies of the Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan.

The success of the public realm and the unique character of place are important for the long-term social, cultural, and economic prosperity of the Yonge Steeles Corridor. As one of the City's primary growth centers, the Study's ambition is to transform Yonge Steeles area into a pedestrian-oriented, multi-modal center with a coherent public realm identity that showcases sustainability and distinct character with well-designed public spaces, connections and amenities that enhance daily life. The Streetscape Design is a

long-term framework to coordinate public realm improvements and capital projects, and to inform future private development within the corridor.

For more information, please contact Shirley Marsh, Urban Design Project Manager, ext. 8561.

Attachments

1. The Yonge Street Corridor Urban Design and Streetscape Plan, May 2023, Final Report.
2. Council Workshop Presentation.

Prepared by

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