

## CITY OF VAUGHAN

### **EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2021**

Item 15, Report No.39, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on September 27, 2021.

#### **15. THORNHILL SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PROGRAM - ACTION PLAN**

**The Committee of the Whole recommends approval of the recommendations contained in the report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management dated September 14, 2021.**

#### **Recommendations**

1. That the Action Plan for the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program be endorsed; and
2. That City staff be directed to seek external funding to implement unfunded projects identified in the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program Action Plan.

## Committee of the Whole (1) Report

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**DATE:** Tuesday, September 14, 2021

**WARD:** 5

**TITLE: THORNHILL SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PROGRAM – ACTION PLAN**

**FROM:**

Haiqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

**ACTION:** DECISION

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**Purpose**

To seek endorsement of the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program Action Plan (herein referred as SNAP Action Plan or Action Plan), including the planning and implementation of the Integrated Action Areas and identified Signature Projects, where feasible.

**Report Highlights**

- The City of Vaughan and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority staff, along with local residents and stakeholders from the Thornhill community, co-developed the Action Plan for the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program.
- The Action Plan identifies three Integrated Action Areas that represent key themes to be addressed through the delivery of the Signature Projects and provides guiding direction for future initiatives.
- Four Signature Projects have been identified for Thornhill that align with planned capital projects and the implementation of these projects will demonstrate how diverse, community-wide objectives can be achieved.
- A “High-Level Resilience Strategy for Thornhill” was developed as a supplementary study and recommends 24 climate adaptation strategies that will be incorporated into future Thornhill initiatives.

## **Recommendations**

1. That the Action Plan for the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program be endorsed; and
2. That City staff be directed to seek external funding to implement unfunded projects identified in the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program Action Plan.

## **Background**

### ***Council supports the first Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program***

On May 14, 2019, Council passed a Member's Resolution to support the City's commitment to a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) project in partnership with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) focused on the Thornhill neighbourhood.

At the May 5, 2021 Committee of the Whole (Working Session) meeting, City and TRCA staff provided a joint presentation to update the Mayor and Members of Council on the progress of the Thornhill SNAP. The presentation provided an overview of the TRCA's SNAP Program, background on how the Thornhill neighbourhood was selected as Vaughan's first SNAP, and how the City worked with local residents and stakeholders to develop themes to guide the action planning process.

The Thornhill SNAP Action Plan was created using a three-phased action planning process that promoted multi-stakeholder engagement throughout all phases. Local knowledge and input were integral to identifying important community characteristics that contributed to the final Action Plan's concepts and recommendations.

### ***Community engagement shaped the development of the Action Plan***

A critical component of any SNAP project success involves taking a highly collaborative approach to foster a sense of ownership among the neighbourhood's stakeholders and community members. There were extensive community engagement activities throughout the action planning process to gain an understanding of the past and present conditions of the Thornhill neighbourhood and how the community envisions their neighbourhood in the future. The following engagement techniques and activities were utilized to gather community input:

- "SNAP into Action" survey
- One day co-planning workshop
- Meetings with the local ward Councillor

- One-on-one meetings with local stakeholders such as the SpringFarm Ratepayers Association, the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill, Thornhill Heritage Foundation, Windfall Ecology Centre, etc.
- Meetings with representatives from Indigenous Peoples including Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation and Hiawatha First Nation
- Two virtual open house sessions
- Online Action Plan map engagement
- Three virtual co-design workshops for the signature projects

Over 1450 comments were received and over 300 residents were engaged during the engagement activities that informed the development of the Action Plan. Some of the main themes that emerged from the community engagement are as follows:

- The need for increased access and connectivity through the creation of connected trail systems utilizing multi-use pathways across the neighbourhood
- Residents expressed a sense of isolation and disconnection; encourage community building and connections through physical improvements, events, and programming
- Add native plants, trees, pollinator gardens and other wildlife features to increase biodiversity
- Increase educational function within parks by creating learning spaces and adding educational and wayfinding signage where feasible
- Incorporate art and colour in parks and along streets to create areas that are unique destinations
- The recognition of many opportunities to retrofit homes and commercial buildings and properties, and there is significant interest to participate in programs that will help residents improve their properties

### **Previous Reports/Authority**

Previous reports considered by City Council regarding the Plan can be found at the following links:

[Council meeting extract, May 14, 2019](#) – A Member’s Resolution was passed by Council in May 2019 in support of the Thornhill SNAP.

[Member’s Resolution, June 4, 2019](#) – Council passed a Member’s Resolution to declare a climate emergency and lists actions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, including the Thornhill SNAP.

[Council meeting extract, December 17, 2019](#) – Council adopted Green Directions Vaughan 2019 and includes a specific action to explore a SNAP project in Vaughan.

[Council meeting extract, May 5, 2021](#) – Council received a progress update on the Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program.

## **Analysis and Options**

### ***The Thornhill SNAP Action Plan is a comprehensive plan for neighbourhood resilience and revitalization***

The Action Plan integrates local community interests, sustainability objectives and climate adaptation strategies under the overarching theme of “historically rich, culturally diverse, green and connected”. When implemented, the proposed actions, projects and programs will achieve the following neighbourhood vision:

*A green, walkable and bikeable neighbourhood that is prepared for extreme weather events and provides connected amenities and where nature thrives around sustainable homes and buildings. A neighbourhood where public spaces are interesting places for residents to meet each other while staying active and neighbours celebrate together and support each other.*

An executive summary of the Action Plan is appended as Attachment 1. To access the full report: <https://trca.ca/conservation/sustainable-neighbourhoods/snap-neighbourhood-projects/thornhill-snap/>

### ***Three Integrated Action Areas were developed to identify key themes***

The Action Plan is centered on three Integrated Action Areas that were developed in consideration of neighbourhood technical objectives for sustainability and resilience, planned capital projects and the community’s overall vision that was expressed through public engagement. The implementation of these Integrated Action Areas will also address multiple goals and objectives outlined in the City’s master sustainability plan, Green Directions Vaughan 2019 (GDV). They are as follows:

- 1. Connected People, Places and Ecosystems** – Identifies active transportation, trails, green infrastructure, parks and open space elements and recommendations for connecting the community to green spaces and programming. This Action Area addresses Objective 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.3, and 4.1 in GDV.
- 2. Residential Retrofits** – Provides support to homeowners who are interested in retrofitting their homes to make single family residential properties in Thornhill

more efficient and resilient to extreme climate events. This Action Area addresses Objective 1.2 in GDV.

- 3. Greening and Humanization of Commercial and Institutional Properties and Multi-Unit Residential Buildings** – Brings together property owners, not-for-profits, and businesses to implement property-specific initiatives to encourage community connections, natural heritage improvements, and promote sustainable and resilient buildings. This Action Area addresses Objective 1.2 and 2.1 in GDV.

### **The four Signature Projects identified innovative projects to be implemented**

Four Signature Projects have been identified in the Action Plan that will address the Integrated Action Area's key themes. These Signature Projects align with planned capital projects or City initiatives and are intended to be innovative projects that have been developed based on input from the community and technical staff from the City and TRCA. Implementation of Signature Projects will be phased, with some elements being implemented in the shorter term through the City's capital infrastructure budget, while other elements will require joint fundraising efforts from the City, TRCA and community partners.

#### **1. Gallanough Park Redevelopment**

Gallanough Park was identified as a Signature Project based on feedback from the community combined with the City's existing capital project to construct a stormwater management facility in the park to alleviate localized flooding. Park redevelopment recommendations for Gallanough Park include adapting and enhancing existing park functions to create a well-connected space that provides comfortable, safe, and continuous experience while enhancing wildlife habitat to increase biodiversity. Feedback from the community helped focus some key recommendations for the park including:

- Improved playground and additional activity areas with accessible options that appeal to multi-age and multi-sensory experiences
- Extended trail network to improve connectivity with neighbouring institutions
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage to promote connection within and beyond the park
- Wildlife enhancements in the form of tree plantings and pollinator gardens to allow residents an opportunity to connect with nature
- Revitalized facilities and programming for the Gallanough Resource Centre and the John Arnold House

A concept plan for Gallanough Park is appended as Attachment 2. Recommendations include the addition of 495m<sup>2</sup> of pollinator habitat, 1200m<sup>2</sup> of trees planted, and a total of 355m of trail added to the Park. All of the recommendations in the concept plan are not intended to be integrated immediately into the approved capital project for the Stormwater Management Improvements Gallanough Park and Surrounding Area Project. Rather, the intent is to consider the additional elements in future capital project review and to fundraise for these elements separately where needed.

## **2. York Hill District Park Redevelopment**

York Hill District Park was identified as a Signature Project because of the planned capital project to renovate the Garnet A. Williams Community Centre (GAWCC) and redevelop the York Hill District Park. Feedback from the community helped focus some key recommendations for the park including:

- Expanded and improved multi-use pathways to improve access and connectivity throughout the park as well as to neighbouring institutions
- Wayfinding and interpretive signage to promote connection within and beyond the park
- Activity options for all ages and increased educational learning through the creation of a series of activity zones throughout the park
- Creation of a park focal feature that can serve as a non-permitted community gathering place, as well as for organized events
- Introduction of urban agriculture through the addition of community gardens, fruit trees, and a farmer's market
- Improved seating and shade through the planting of trees and increased accessible seating options

A concept plan for York Hill District Park is appended as Attachment 3. Recommendations include the addition of 4800m<sup>2</sup> of pollinator habitat, 3360m<sup>2</sup> of trees planted, and a total of 615m of trail added to the Park. All of the recommendations in the concept plan are not intended to be integrated immediately into the already approved capital project for the York Hill Park Redevelopment Project. The intent is to consider the additional elements in future capital project review and to fundraise for these elements separately where needed.

### **3. Complete Streets Project**

The Complete Streets project identifies active transportation improvements and opportunities for three collector roads (Atkinson Avenue, Hilda Avenue and Centre Street) that run through the Thornhill neighbourhood. These collector roads were identified based on input from the community and alignment with the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. The Complete Streets concept was used to guide engagement discussions to ensure that feedback encompassed all street users while also considering the key themes identified in the Integrated Action Areas. Feedback from the community helped focus some key recommendations including:

- Pedestrian improvements focusing on safety and amenities to make the pedestrian experience more enjoyable
- Improvement of quality of street life, including more seating and rest areas and more trees or physical structures to provide shade
- Cycling improvements focusing on safety and increased signage to improve education on how to properly use cycling infrastructure
- Greening of streets with the addition of street trees and planting beds or rain gardens
- Celebration of art, history, and cultural heritage through the incorporation of art and colour where possible

A concept plan for the Complete Streets project is appended as Attachment 4. Recommendations include the addition of five bicycle repair stations, five bicycle racks, twenty-one rest areas, five wayfinding opportunities, seven art installations, thirteen pollinator gardens, and two potential pedestrian connections. These recommendations have not yet been included in any existing capital projects but are intended to be considered as a part of future projects in Thornhill. Additional elements will be fundraised for separately where needed.

### **4. Thornhill Home Retrofit Program**

A pilot Home Retrofit Program (Program) for the Thornhill neighbourhood incorporates key themes from the Residential Retrofits Integrated Action Area. The Program will offer a support service and educational activities to help homeowners decide on the best way to retrofit their homes across multiple sustainability themes (e.g., energy, water, stormwater management, eco-landscaping). This Program will also leverage existing incentive programs and continue the City's efforts to plan for a Local Improvement Charges (LIC) financing program for energy retrofits. The Program plans to offer:



- In-person home visits to Thornhill SNAP residents to educate homeowners on home retrofit opportunities that will increase energy savings
- A concierge service that will provide homeowners a “one-stop shop” to help homeowners arrange energy audits, source contractors, secure building permits and oversee work
- An online resource library including workshops and webinars to connect homeowners with information and tools to increase knowledge for a range of retrofit interests

City staff are currently seeking funding options and exploring resident interest in this Program.

***The High-Level Resilience Strategy for Thornhill was developed as a supplementary study***

The High-Level Resilience Strategy for Thornhill was completed as a supplementary study to identify climate change vulnerabilities for the Thornhill neighbourhood.

The climate change vulnerability assessment evaluated the specific community risks posed by climate change. The vulnerability assessment was informed by community engagement and technical analysis to:

- determine the community’s likelihood of exposure to changing climate conditions
- assess neighbourhood characteristics to identify their sensitivity to climate change
- assess the community’s current ability to adapt to the effects of climate change

Twenty-four climate adaptation recommendations are outlined in the Action Plan to address the key vulnerabilities for the Thornhill neighbourhood that were identified through this assessment.

***Implementing the Action Plan and Monitoring Progress***

To facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan, the SNAP team has outlined a preliminary implementation framework that identifies potential partnerships and collaboration opportunities over the next ten years. This implementation framework serves as a high-level guide to identify project leads, estimated timelines and potential funding sources. It will also be a living document that will be updated with additional details as projects are developed and implemented. Immediate next steps to implement the Action Plan include:

- Establish working groups for each of the Signature Projects (ongoing). These working groups will be comprised of technical staff and community stakeholders and will refine project plans, develop partnerships, assist with fundraising efforts, and provide ongoing input through the implementation phases of each Signature Project. Working groups members would include City staff from Public Works Portfolio (Parks, Forestry and Horticultural Operations and Environmental Services), Infrastructure Development Portfolio (Infrastructure Delivery, Infrastructure Planning & Corporate Asset Management, and Parks Planning and Development) and City Manager's Office (Economic and Cultural Development and Corporate and Strategic Communications)
- Support the ongoing design and implementation of the Gallanough Park Redevelopment and the York Hill District Park Redevelopment Signature Projects (2022-2023). For additional elements identified in the concept plans that are not already funded by the relevant capital projects, the SNAP team will work closely with the implementation working groups to identify funding opportunities, potential synergies with future capital projects, and any potential community groups that may want to be involved to design and construct these elements where feasible
- Consider the Complete Streets Concept Plan and recommended elements when reviewing future capital works projects that will be implemented in the Thornhill neighbourhood
- Develop an online progress tracking dashboard to allow TRCA and the City to monitor Action Plan project progress and outcomes (Q4 2022). This dashboard is intended to be interactive by allowing for community engagement by providing a platform for residents to input their own actions undertaken on private property
- Implement quick start projects to build community interest and excitement (Q4 2021). Current quick start projects include: public tree planting and pollinator garden planting events planned for the fall of 2021, free Home Energy Retrofit Orientation workshops offered to Thornhill residents and free webinars for business owners to explore retrofit options
- The Thornhill SNAP team will work with staff from the Economic Development department to identify partnership and sponsorship opportunities to fund elements of the Action Plan. Corporate and Strategic Communications staff will provide promotional support for the implementation of Action Plan projects where needed

Through the working group committee meetings, City staff will have the opportunity to identify projects (elements) that they should be able to prioritize and include in their work programs for implementation.

### **Financial Impact**

This project does not impact the 2021 approved operating or capital budgets. The City has identified existing budgets and has attained grants to support select Action Plan recommendations. To date, the following funding has been received/committed to facilitate the Action Plan:

- A grant of up to \$152,100 from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Green Municipal Fund
- A grant of \$25,000 through a TRCA application for the Transition 2050 funding stream for FCM's Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program. This funding has been provided directly to TRCA
- A grant of \$10,000 from Enbridge for the Thornhill Home Retrofit Program
- A budget of \$124,000 from the Stormwater Management Improvements in Gallanough Park and Surrounding Area Project Budget (Capital Project EN-1879-12) was allocated for engagement for the Thornhill SNAP
- A commitment from the City for 3 years of funding at \$25,000 per annum for demonstration projects under Capital Project PL-9575-20
- A grant of \$5,000 from York Region's Greening Action Partnership Fund to implement a quick start tree planting project at Rosedale Park North
- A grant of \$5,000 from TD Friends of the Environment to implement a quick start project at Oakbank Pond including a pollinator planting and educational signage

The larger capital infrastructure project budgets are not included in this summary. Any additional capital infrastructure projects/budgets as a result of the Action Plan will be brought forward through the annual budget approval process.

Fundraising will be needed to fund the implementation of additional SNAP project components that are not included in the existing scope and budgets for each of the individual capital infrastructure projects. Fundraising will be explored in collaboration with TRCA, property owners and other external stakeholders. The SNAP Team will also work with the City's Municipal Partnership Office in the Economic and Cultural Development department on the fundraising initiatives.

## **Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations**

Through the completion of the City's first SNAP project, we are joining other municipalities in York Region that have committed to a collaborative, neighbourhood-based approach for advancing urban renewal in older urban areas. The neighbourhood mapping exercise that was completed as a part of the Thornhill SNAP planning process also identified other neighbourhoods in the City that may be suitable for future SNAP projects. The action planning process that has been successfully used in the Thornhill SNAP can be translated to these other neighbourhoods to build an overall sustainable and resilient City.

## **Conclusion**

The SNAP initiative created by the TRCA is a tangible approach to translate the City's master sustainability plan, Green Directions Vaughan 2019, into a neighbourhood scale. The Thornhill SNAP Action Plan has been co-developed by the Thornhill community, City staff from multiple departments and TRCA to improve the local environment, build resiliency to climate change and encourage positive behaviour changes among residents. The Action Plan is based on technical objectives, planned municipal projects and resident priorities and it provides recommendations for sustainability actions on both private property and in the public realm. Implementation of Integrated Action Areas and Signature Projects in the short term and over the next five to ten years will make Thornhill more sustainable and livable.

**For more information**, please contact Monica Choy, Sustainability Coordinator, ext. 8941.

## **Attachments**

1. Thornhill SNAP Action Plan Executive Summary
2. Thornhill SNAP Gallanough Park Concept Plan
3. Thornhill SNAP York Hill District Park Concept Plan
4. Thornhill SNAP Complete Streets Concept Plan

## **Prepared by**

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# Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program

THORNHILL SNAP NEIGHBOURHOOD



## Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

*Historically rich, culturally diverse, green and connected*

Action Plan Executive Summary

September, 2021

In collaboration with:



## The Thornhill SNAP

### Historically rich, culturally diverse, green and connected

The Thornhill Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP) is a comprehensive Action Plan for neighbourhood resilience and revitalization that integrates local community interests, sustainability objectives and climate adaptation strategies under the overarching theme of historically rich, culturally diverse, green and connected.

The Thornhill neighbourhood was selected as the City of Vaughan’s first SNAP project through a neighbourhood screening process that was led by the Toronto and Region

Conservation Authority (TRCA), multiple City of Vaughan departments, and the Regional Municipality of York (York Region).

The screening process identified key technical priorities for the Thornhill neighbourhood (Box 1; Figure 1) that makes this area suited for a SNAP project:

- Thornhill has the highest number of flood calls in the City.
- Portions of the neighbourhood have the highest energy consumption rates in the City.
- One of the areas in York Region with the highest indoor and outdoor water consumption rates.
- An aging population combined with urban growth pressures.
- Aging park infrastructure with a series of planned City capital projects to revitalize these parks.
- Opportunities to connect with nature through enhancement of natural heritage features and improving greenspace connections.
- Opportunities for active transportation by promoting the use of newly installed dedicated cycle tracks along four collector roads in the neighbourhood.
- Opportunities to improve community connections and address the community’s concerns about isolation through programming and revitalization projects.

<b>Box 1: Neighbourhood Profile</b>	
<b>Study Area</b>	860 ha
<b>Land Use</b>	58% medium-low density residential 2% high density residential 9% commercial, institutional 7% recreational, open space 5% roads 5% meadow 4.5% forest 8% golf course 1.5% other
<b>Demographics (Based on 2020 EnviroNics data)</b>	Population: 29,253 Median age: 60 Number of households: 9,995 Most common home languages: English, Russian, Mandarin, Korean, Persian Private dwellings: 58% Apartments: 34%
<b>Transportation</b>	Percentage of residents who travel to work by: Car: 70% Public transportation: 20% Walking: 4% Cycling: 0.5%

In addition to the screening exercise and baseline analysis described above, TRCA's Ontario Climate Consortium staff completed a climate change vulnerability assessment for the Thornhill SNAP ([High Level Resilience Strategy for Thornhill](#)). This assessment provided insight into the specific community risks posed by climate change and provided 24 resilience strategies for Thornhill. Key adaptation opportunities include:

- enhanced knowledge and awareness of climate change risks
- improved access to greenspace
- improved street tree canopy cover
- improved active transportation and public transit
- improved sense of community



**Figure 1. Thornhill SNAP Boundary**

## Box 2: Who's Involved?

### Lead Partners

- TRCA
- City of Vaughan

### Local Groups

- Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation
- Shoresh
- Holy Trinity Anglican Church
- United Jewish Association Federation of Greater Toronto
- SpringFarm Ratepayers Association
- The Society for Preservation of Historic Thornhill
- Thornhill Heritage Foundation
- Windfall Ecology Centre
- Gallanough Resource Centre
- Developing and Nurturing Independence (DANI)
- Reena
- Blessed Scalabrini Catholic Elementary School
- Kayla's Children Centre
- Thornhill Public School

### Indigenous Peoples

- Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations
- Curve Lake First Nations
- Hiawatha First Nation



## How We Got Here

### Box 3: How We're Listening

#### Research Tools

- SNAP into Action Survey
- One-on-one stakeholder meetings

#### Feedback Sessions

- Co-visioning workshop
- Indigenous communities engagement
- Virtual open house sessions
- Action Plan map online commenting period
- Virtual signature project workshops

The Thornhill SNAP Action Plan was developed using a highly collaborative approach that brought together municipal and TRCA technical objectives with community priorities. The project was managed by key partners, including eleven departments from the City of Vaughan and four divisions from TRCA, through a Project Management Team. The community also participated actively in the development of the plan through a robust engagement process that included innovative visioning activities (Box 2; Box 3).

### Action Planning Process

The Thornhill SNAP Action Plan was developed following a phased model that promoted multi-stakeholder engagement at various stages (Figure 2). Local input was integral to identifying important community characteristics that contribute to local culture and values. Robust public engagement combined with technical analyses helped inform the recommended priority actions that are outlined in the Action Plan.

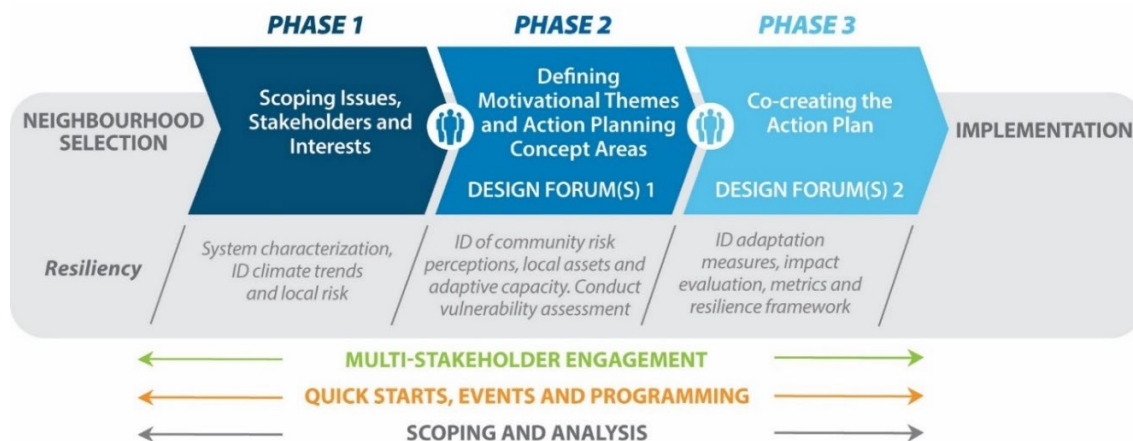


Figure 2. SNAP Action Planning Process

#### Phase 1 – Scoping issues, stakeholders and interests

Background research was conducted to understand the baseline scientific and socio-economic characteristics of the neighbourhood. One-on-one meetings were conducted with community leaders, organizations and not-for-profits to gain insight into their unique perspective on the neighbourhood needs. Technical meetings were also conducted with City, York Region and TRCA staff from multiple departments to assess technical challenges and opportunities within the neighbourhood.

### **Phase 2 – Defining vision, motivational themes and action planning concept areas**

A neighbourhood vision and motivational themes were identified through community engagement. Perceived risks and climate change vulnerabilities were discovered. The feedback and analysis, along with further community engagement, resulted in the development of the integrated action areas and a draft Action Plan map. Engagement activities in this phase included surveys, meetings with local organizations, and a full day visioning planning workshop.

### **Phase 3 – Co-creating the Action Plan**

The final phase of the action planning process involves finalizing the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan, identifying climate adaptation strategies, developing concept drawings for each of the signature projects, and identify quick start projects. Engagement activities involving visioning workshops for each of the signature projects were performed on virtual platforms in this phase due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Workshops brought together technical City and TRCA staff with residents to brainstorm ideas and recommendations for the signature projects.

## **A Closer Look at the Thornhill SNAP**

The Thornhill SNAP Action Plan is centered on **three Integrated Action Areas** that will each be implemented through a series of initiatives. The Integrated Action Areas were developed in consideration of neighbourhood technical issues and objectives, planned capital projects and motivating themes from the community. These action areas will serve to provide guiding direction for initiatives that are implemented as part of the Action Plan moving forward.

In addition, **four Signature Projects** have been identified for the Thornhill SNAP. These are innovative pilot projects that have been developed based on input from the community and technical City and TRCA staff. These projects will leverage planned capital budgets to achieve innovative elements and to maximize environmental and socio-economic benefits. Some elements of the Signature Projects will be implemented in the shorter term through the City's capital infrastructure budgets, while others will require joint fundraising efforts from the City, TRCA and community partners.

This Action Plan reflects the culmination of technical analyses, robust community and stakeholder engagement, and planned capital works (Figure 3). When implemented, the proposed actions will help achieve the following neighbourhood vision:

*A green, walkable and bikeable neighbourhood that is prepared for extreme weather events and provides connected amenities and where nature thrives around sustainable homes and buildings. A neighbourhood where public spaces are interesting places for residents to meet each other while staying active and neighbours celebrate together and support each other.*

## THORNHILL SNAP NEIGHBOURHOOD

## Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program



### Connected Places, People & Ecosystems

Series of initiatives, including an **Active Transportation Plan** for improved pedestrian and cycling options, a **Green Infrastructure Plan** to add more trees and habitat across the neighbourhood and improve stormwater management, as well as initiatives related to the **Revitalization of Parks and Open Spaces** as interesting destinations with diverse amenities that respond to current community priorities. Inclusion of educational and cultural programming and events to encourage community connections.

### Residential Retrofits

Provision of supports and programming for homeowners to assist them with identification and implementation of actions to make their homes and their properties more efficient and more resilient to extreme climate events.

### Greening and Humanization of Commercial and Institutional (CI) Properties and Multi-Unit Residential Buildings (MURBs)

Focus on creating more sustainable and resilient buildings, parking lots and outdoor spaces associated with MUR, institutional and commercial properties within the community. Development of spaces within these properties that celebrate culture and history and that allow the community to gather and connect.

### PUBLIC REALM SIGNATURE PROJECTS

Innovative projects that will demonstrate how multiple co-benefits and diverse, neighbourhood-wide objectives can be achieved on the site.



In collaboration with City of Vaughan



\*This map represents proposed actions and projects based on community and stakeholder feedback. Feasibility of implementation and exact locations may vary and are subject to further analysis and refinement.

EXISTING/PROPOSED FEATURES	PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS
Water Course	Community Gathering Destination
Existing Trails/Pathways	Improved Walkability & Accessibility
Existing Cycling Routes	Programming
Proposed Cycling Routes	Playground Improvements
Proposed Subway Stations	Multi-season Recreation
Proposed 407 Transitway	Safety Considerations
Proposed Vaughan Super Trail	Art, History, & Cultural Celebration
Railway	Seating
Multi-unit Residential Buildings	Shade
	Traffic Improvements (calming, reduction)
	Stormwater & Drainage Management
	Green Parking Lots & EV Charging
	Resilient/Sustainable Buildings
	Trees, Flowers, Habitat, Ecolandscaping



0 50 150 250 500 m

For further information about this Action Plan, please visit [trca.ca/snap-thornhill](http://trca.ca/snap-thornhill)

Figure 3. SNAP Action Plan Map

## Integrated Action Areas

### 1. Connected Places, People and Ecosystems

This action area focuses on building and enhancing physical, social and ecological connections within the community. The following four components should be considered when planning and designing projects under this action area:

- Green Infrastructure Planning – an inventory of green infrastructure opportunities should be identified for the Thornhill neighbourhood to inform future development of public and private spaces
- Active Transportation Planning – active transportation and multi-modal transportation improvements should be included where possible to encourage cycling and increase accessibility
- Parks and Open Space Planning – parks and open space improvements should be included in the 12 parks and 4 parkettes where needed and identified by the community
- Educational, Cultural and Community Programming – cultural and community programming will foster community connections and help residents develop a deep sense of belonging and pride in their neighbourhood

### 2. Residential Retrofits

Through the engagement process, residents expressed significant interest in programs to help them retrofit their homes. This neighbourhood also has one of the highest energy consumption rates in the City and mainly consists of aging single family, semi-detached and row houses. This provides an excellent opportunity for retrofits that will improve energy efficiency and achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions. Residential retrofit programs could also target changes to improve water efficiency and consumption rates and address risks associated with heat stress and flooding.

### 3. Greening and Humanization of Commercial and Institutional Properties and Multi-Unit Residential Buildings (MURBs)

This action area will focus on private and publicly owned buildings to implement property-specific initiatives to support various sustainability objectives while addressing owner and tenant priorities. With 15 institutional buildings and 18 MURBs in the Thornhill neighbourhood, there is a significant opportunity to retrofit aging infrastructure to achieve energy and water efficiencies, encourage active transportation, and achieve ecological integrity and sustainable stormwater management.

## Signature Projects

### Gallanough Park Redevelopment

Gallanough Park (Park) is a community park that is a candidate for redevelopment in the City's 2018 Parks Redevelopment Strategy. The existing park currently includes playground equipment, an outdoor gazebo, swings and walking trails and is connected to a number of important community institutions. These connections provide an ideal opportunity to make Gallanough Park into a vibrant and exciting community gathering space. The Park was identified as a signature project based on feedback received from the community combined with the City's capital plans to construct a stormwater management facility in the park to alleviate urban flooding.

Revitalization recommendations feature an abundance of activities and experiences for residents by adapting and enhancing park functions (Figure 4). The goal is to create well-connected and cohesive spaces while providing comfortable and safe experiences and enhanced habitat for wildlife.



Figure 4. Gallanough Park Redevelopment Concept Drawing



## York Hill District Park Redevelopment

York Hill District Park (Park) is adjacent to the Garnet A. Williams Community Centre (GAWCC) and includes 3 playground areas, 2 baseball diamonds, a small gazebo, swings, tennis and basketball courts, an outdoor skating ring and a series of multi-purpose trails. The Park was identified as a signature project based on feedback received from the community combined with the City's capital plans for renovations at GAWCC and the availability of capital funding through Parks Infrastructure Planning and Development department to develop a revitalization plan for the Park (Figure 5).

The community's vision focused on the following main ideas:

- Access and connectivity including expanded and improved multi-use pathways
- Activity options for all ages and increased educational learning
- Creation of a park focal feature
- Introduction of urban agriculture and local food opportunities
- Increased number of trees and shade opportunities and resting areas



Figure 5. York Hill District Park Redevelopment Concept Design

## Complete Streets Project

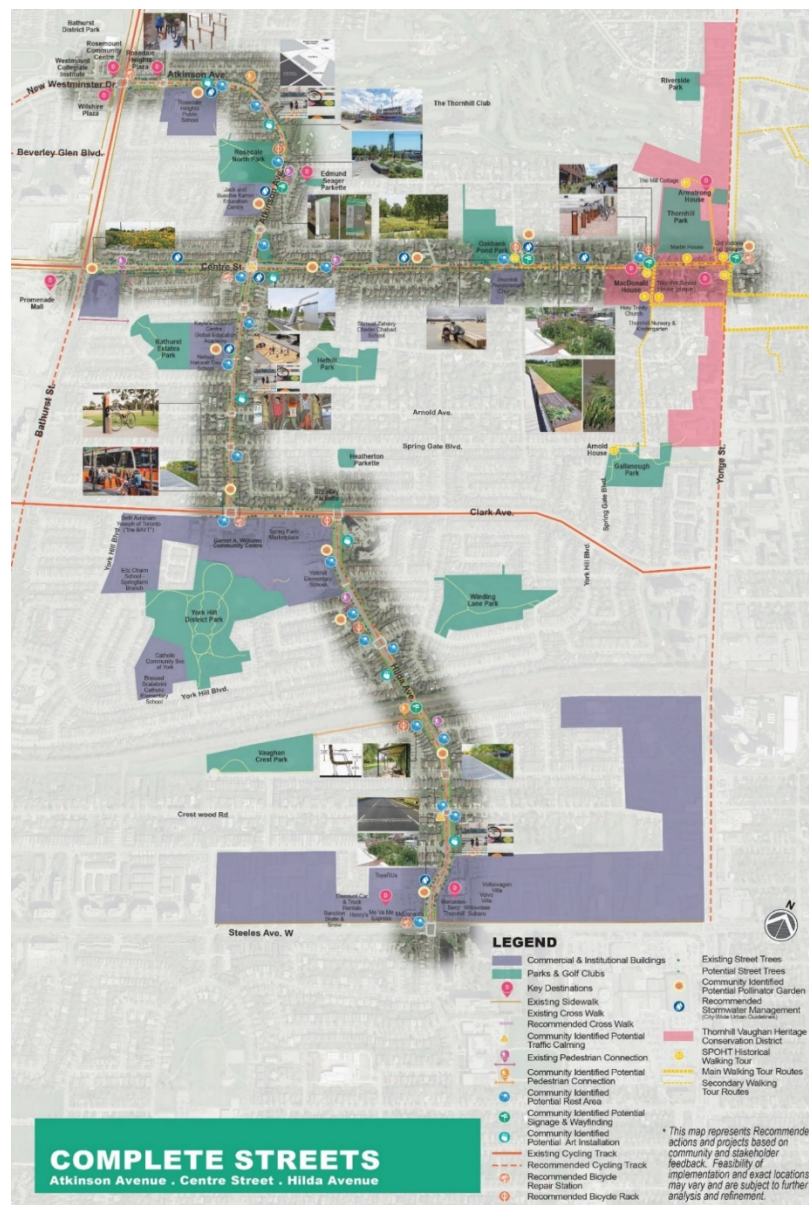


Figure 6. Complete Streets Project Concept Design

The Thornhill SNAP Complete Streets project identifies areas of opportunity on 3 collector roads in the Thornhill SNAP neighbourhood. These roads were identified based on input from the community and their alignment with the City of Vaughan’s Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. Sidewalks exist on both sides of the selected roads, but pedestrian connections between sidewalks, mid-block crossings, community amenities and open spaces need to be strengthened. In addition, community feedback indicated numerous suggestions for these streets, including improved walkability and traffic flow, reduction in pedestrian/cyclist crossing distances and times at intersections, midblock crossings, reduction in traffic congestion, implementation of cycling facilities, beautification and planting additional street trees.

The Complete Streets concept was utilized to help guide engagement discussions to ensure that feedback encompassed all potential street users including pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists while considering the broader SNAP guiding principles recommended by the community. The objective of the Complete Streets project is to create safe, inviting and vibrant streets and streetscapes that will attract both residents and visitors of all ages and abilities alike, while addressing the sustainability objectives identified for the community, including urban forest and habitat improvement and sustainable stormwater management. More specific recommendations for each user group can be found in the Action Plan (Figure 6).

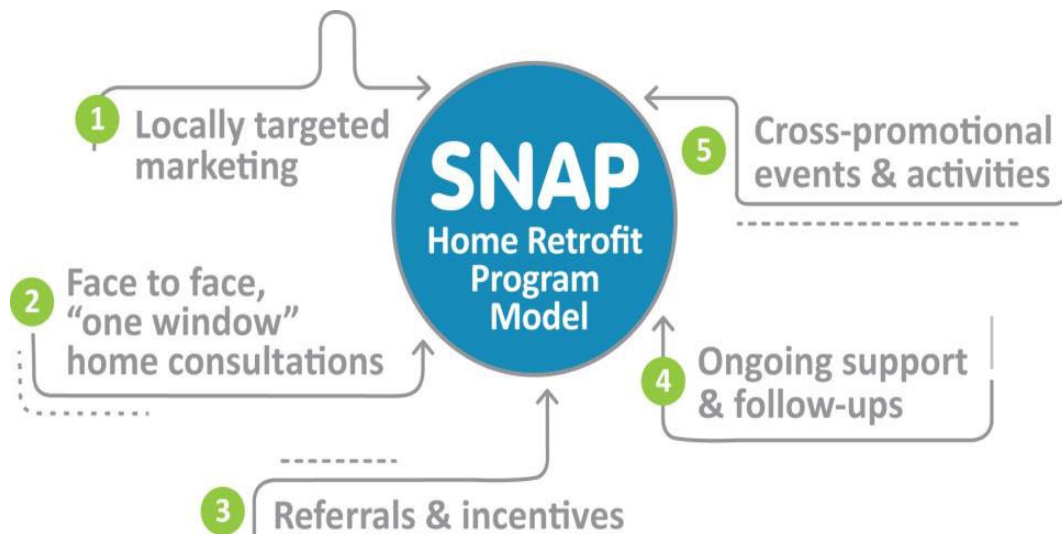
## Thornhill Home Retrofit Program



A pilot Home Retrofit Program was designed tailored to the Thornhill neighbourhood based on interest expressed during the SNAP public engagement activities. The design concept incorporates design principles from the Residential Retrofits Integrated Action Area. The program will offer support services and educational activities to help homeowners decide on key actions to be implemented at their homes

and to make the retrofit process as straightforward as possible. As per the guiding principles, the program will support actions across multiple sustainability and resilience themes (i.e., energy, water, stormwater management, eco-landscaping and flood prevention) and social themes such as aging in place. In addition, the proposed activities will help homeowners access existing incentive programs and continue the City's efforts to plan for a Local Improvement Charges financing program for energy retrofits.

The following program elements are proposed to include: in-person home visits, a concierge service for residents, online workshops and webinars, online resource library, community workshops, a discovery centre trailer, and a home demonstration project (Figure 7).



**Figure 7. SNAP Home Retrofit Program Model**



## Box 4: Key Outcomes

### Energy and climate

- Reduced greenhouse gas generation to support the City's Climate Emergency target of reducing per capita emissions to 2-3 tonnes eCO<sub>2</sub> by 2030
- Implement deep energy retrofits in 230 homes by 2031
- Improved neighbourhood resiliency to extreme climate events

### Stormwater management and water efficiency

- Reduced number of flood calls
- Increasing total area with stormwater quantity and quality controls
- Reduced inflow and infiltration into the sanitary system

### Ecosystem integrity

- Increased canopy cover to support York Region's recommended cover range for the City of Vaughan
- Increased natural cover and improved habitat quality, biological diversity and pollinator health
- Improved stewardship of local natural areas and the urban forest

### Health and well-being

- Improved physical and mental health for Thornhill residents through physical retrofits and programming to promote improved air quality, active living, connection with nature, social interaction and access to fresh local food

### Livable places and community connections

- Improved quality of life for all residents through the creation of engaging, meaningful opportunities and unique spaces that encourage community cohesion, inclusion, sense of belonging and civic pride

### Culture, heritage and education

- Improved access to the arts through installations and cultural events
- Improved appreciation and celebration of the distinct historical and Indigenous heritage
- Improved education of environmental issues

### Access and mobility

- Increased use of sustainable modes of transportation through the improvement of active and EV transportation infrastructure and through education and programming

## Next Steps

The SNAP team will continue working with multiple City departments and other stakeholder groups to move the identified Signature Projects through their planned phased designs. A preliminary implementation framework has been created which serves as a high-level guide to identify actions, lead roles, potential project partners, estimated timeframes, and potential funding sources (see Table 8 in the Action Plan). This framework is a living document and will be updated with additional details as projects are prioritized and engagement with stakeholders advances towards the implementation stage.

Immediate next steps for the Thornhill SNAP include:

1. **Implementation Committees and Working Groups.** Establish implementation committees/working groups for each of the signature projects and other major initiatives. These committees will refine project and program plans, develop partnerships, gather widespread support, assist with fundraising efforts and provide ongoing input throughout the implementation of these projects.
2. **Thornhill Home Retrofit Program.** Finalize detailed design, including program offerings, schedule, delivery partners, and marketing strategy for the Home Retrofit Program. The content and schedule will be partially dependent on City of Vaughan receiving federal funding to develop and administer the Local Improvement Charges program as outlined earlier in this report.
3. **Gallanough Stormwater Management Facility and Park Redevelopment.** Construction of the Gallanough stormwater facility is slated to begin late fall 2021. Detailed design for park redevelopment will take place after the construction of the stormwater facility is completed, ensuring SNAP design principles and community design concepts are incorporated.
4. **Garnet A. Williams Community Centre Retrofits and York Hill Park Redevelopment.** Proceed as planned with tendering for implementation of Garnet A. Williams Community Centre renovations and York Hill Park improvements. Initiate detailed design for park redevelopment, ensuring SNAP guiding principles and community design concepts are incorporated.
5. **Progress Tracking Dashboard.** Develop a monitoring dashboard that will track progress on SNAP project indicators towards the achievement of neighbourhood goals and will also allow community members to input actions undertaken in private property.
6. **Implement “Quick Start” Projects.** Initiate quick start projects in the short term including tree planting and pollinator garden planting events to provide community engagement opportunities and help maintain momentum and excitement for the SNAP.
7. **Council Endorsement.** Secure City of Vaughan Council endorsement for the Thornhill SNAP Action Plan in the fall of 2021.

# Attachment 2: Gallanough Park Concept Drawing



## RECOMMENDED TREE LIST

- Burr Oak
- Swamp White Oak
- Black Walnut
- Black Willow
- American linden
- Catalpa
- Cucumber Magnolia
- Hop Hornbeam
- Mitten Tree
- Eastern White Cedar
- Eastern White Pine

## LEGEND

- Property Boundaries
- Proposed Trails
- Underground Stormwater Management Facility
- Proposed Trees
- Existing Trees
- Proposed Shrubs

# GALLANOUGH PARK

\* This map represents proposed actions and projects based on community and stakeholder feedback. Feasibility of implementation and exact locations may vary and are subject to further analysis and refinement, budgetary considerations, and continued community input during design development and implementation.  
 \* Proposed elements within school property will be subject to further discussions with the School Board.



# Attachment 3: York Hill District Park Concept Drawing

Clark Ave.

PROPOSED GATEWAY SIGNAGE TO RECOGNIZE GAWCC AND YORK HILL PARK

**PHASE 1 GAWCC RENOVATIONS**  
To include new exterior ramp, pool deck and water play area. Consider installing outdoor water fountain or bottle filling station to help keep people cool during extreme heat events.



**PROPOSED FARM FRESH & LOCAL**  
Proposed seasonal farmer's market located on existing outdoor ice rink and close to parking for vendors and visitors. Potential opportunity to coordinate with activities at DANI greenhouse.

**GARNET A. WILLIAMS COMMUNITY CENTRE (GAWCC)**

**THE MAIN ATTRACTION**  
Transform existing amphitheatre into a vibrant, focal feature for the park while maintaining and improving stormwater function. Consider adding an infiltration trench at centre area to reduce flooding impacts. The revived space will serve as a central hub which celebrates local arts and culture, encourages environmental learning, and which connects GAWCC to the Park. The amphitheatre will provide an inviting space for visitors to come together for a casual exchange or for live events and community gatherings.

**ACTIVE LIVING**  
Creation of an active living zone along this trail, including self-guided fitness stations, sidewalk games/challenges, etc. to encourage exercise and healthy lifestyle.

**PROPOSED FITNESS STATION**

**PROPOSED TRAIL EXPANSION WITH INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE**

**YORKHILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Hilda Ave.

York Hill Blvd.

**PROPOSED ENTRY PLAZA**  
Entry features include signage, shade trees, permeable paving, seating, and pollinator garden.

**PROPOSED COMMUNITY GARDEN AND ORCHARD**  
Proposed community garden plots and fruit orchard and space for outdoor learning/gathering. Include interpretive signage to educate visitors on benefits of fresh, local food and local history of urban agriculture in this area (e.g. Springfarm). Connect with initiatives at DANI greenhouse adjacent to GAWCC. Consider harvesting stormwater as a source of water supply. Collect and purify stormwater runoff from tool shed and shade structure roof.

**PROPOSED SHADE STRUCTURE**

**PICKLEBALL STUDY UNDERWAY**

**PROPOSED TRAIL EXPANSION WITH INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE**

**PROPOSED SEATING AREAS ALLOW PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS ABILITY TO VIEW MULTIPLE PLAY AREAS AT ONE TIME**

**PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING ZONE**  
Bioretention facility to treat surface runoff and new pollinator gardens. Include interpretive signage to facilitate environmental learning.



**QUIET TIME**  
Creation of an inviting forest-like space for quiet reflection, meditation, and contact with nature, including pollinator gardens, additional trees and seating.

**AT YOUR SERVICE**  
Newly created service area with info kiosk/concession stand and seating

**BLESSED- SCALABRINI CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**PROPOSED ENTRY PLAZA WITH PERMEABLE PAVING, SEATING, AND POLLINATOR GARDEN**

## LEGEND

- Property Boundaries
- Proposed Trails
- Proposed Trees
- Existing Trees
- Proposed Flowering Trees
- Proposed Fruit Trees
- Wayfinding Signage
- Connecting Walkway
- AZ1 Growing Together Zone
- AZ2 Active Court
- AZ3 Serenity Eco-grounds
- AZ4 Community Commons

## RECOMMENDED TREE LIST

- Burr Oak
- Swamp White Oak
- Black Walnut
- Black Willow
- American linden
- Catalpa
- Cucumber Magnolia
- Hop Hornbeam
- Mitten Tree
- Eastern White Cedar
- Eastern White Pine

York Hill Blvd.

# YORK HILL DISTRICT PARK

\* This map represents proposed actions and projects based on community and stakeholder feedback. Feasibility of implementation and exact locations may vary and are subject to further analysis and refinement, budgetary considerations, and continued community input during design development and implementation.  
\* Proposed elements within school property will be subject to further discussions with the School Board.



# Attachment 4: Complete Streets Concept Drawing



## LEGEND

- Commercial & Institutional Buildings
- Parks & Golf Clubs
- Key Destinations
- Existing Sidewalk
- Existing Cross Walk
- Recommended Cross Walk
- Community Identified Potential Traffic Calming
- Existing Pedestrian Connection
- Community Identified Potential Pedestrian Connection
- Community Identified Potential Rest Area
- Community Identified Potential Signage & Wayfinding
- Community Identified Potential Art Installation
- Existing Cycling Track
- Recommended Cycling Track
- Recommended Bicycle Repair Station
- Recommended Bicycle Rack
- Existing Street Trees
- Potential Street Trees
- Community Identified Potential Pollinator Garden
- Recommended Stormwater Management (City-Wide Urban Guidelines)
- Thornhill Vaughan Heritage Conservation District
- SPOHT Historical Walking Tour
- Main Walking Tour Routes
- Secondary Walking Tour Routes



# COMPLETE STREETS

Atkinson Avenue . Centre Street . Hilda Avenue

*\* This map represents Recommended actions and projects based on community and stakeholder feedback. Feasibility of implementation and exact locations may vary and are subject to further analysis and refinement.*

## RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIANS



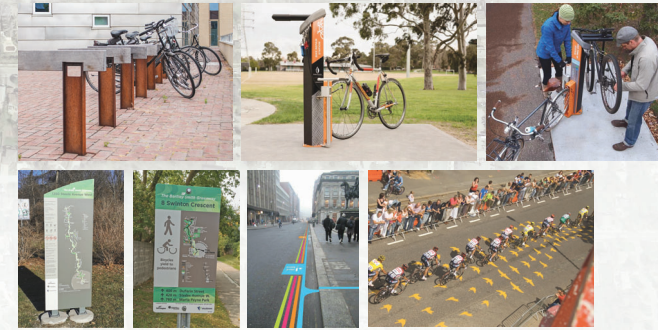
- Implement predictable, consistent infrastructure to help those with disabilities and mobility issues. Consider surface materials to improve traction (e.g. tactile paving/detectable warning surfaces) and to provide a stormwater management function (e.g. permeable surfacing). Recommended site improvement will coordinate with AODA, City of Vaughan's Inclusive Design Standard, and City-wide Urban Design Guidelines.
- Implement more seating, shade (e.g. trees, gazebos, shade canopies) and shelter/weather protection opportunities. Seating and shelter will encourage more people to walk on street, and will create comfortable outdoor space for community interaction. Recommended site improvement will coordinate with City of Vaughan's Inclusive Design Standard, and City-wide Urban Design Guidelines.
- Provide separated facilities for pedestrians and cyclists within the road allowance and consider improving/implementing pedestrian crossing at key locations.



## RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR CYCLISTS



- Provide separated in-boulevard infrastructure for cycling to improve comfort and safety of those riding bikes.
- Ensure adequate street lighting and visibility for bicycle use.
- Consider the year-round implications for cycling infrastructure (e.g. winter snow or low hanging branches)
- Provide ancillary cycling infrastructure to support users based on City-Wide Urban Guidelines. (e.g. bike parking, repair stations, washroom facilities). Recommended locations may vary.
- The pedestrian and cycling networks are coordinated with the transit network as per policies within the Official Plan.
- Provide more instructional/educational signage on how to transport bicycles on public transit.
- Provide more community-wide education and enforcement for rules of the road, including cyclists, e-scooters and e-bikes.



## RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR TRANSIT USERS



- Improve signage at bus stops to clarify route information (e.g. which bus stops at that location) and provide additional signage to direct users to the next bus throughout the neighbourhood.
- Consider addition of wayfinding signage at bus stops to inform users of nearby amenities and to encourage users to explore the neighbourhood.
- Add shade structures/shelters, seating, and safety measures at bus stops and make strategic stops highly visible.
- Continue to advocate for fare coordination between independent transit systems (e.g. TTC, YRT, and VIVA)
- Increase frequency of buses to give riders more options.



## RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR DRIVERS



- Consider implications to drivers sight lines and road conditions for driving (eg. low hanging branches and debris free catch basins to prevent roadway flooding)
- Consider traffic calming measures where appropriate (e.g. narrower lanes, planted gardens and trees in center island, trees with larger canopies). Measures and locations are subject to the City's further analysis.
- Provide more community-wide education and enforcement for rules of the road, including cyclists, e-scooters and e-bikes



## IMPROVEMENTS OF WALKABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY



- Improve connections with GAWCC, neighbouring parks and schools, businesses and residential areas and extend trail network to create continuous walking loops.
- Provide seating and shade structure for resting and more instructional signage on directions and options for walking loops. Implement native shade trees and pollinator gardens and incorporate measures to ensure health and longevity.
- Implement comfortable and beautiful outdoor spaces with stop/rest stations, and areas to encourage community interaction.
- Implement wayfinding & interpretive signage so people are encouraged to explore more of their neighbourhood (e.g. promote destinations, historical heritage, ecological adventures, local services/amenities). The location of recommended wayfinding & interpretive signage responds to community request and follows City-wide Urban Design Guidelines.



## ENVIRONMENTAL FUNCTIONALITY



- Improve biodiversity by planting a diverse selection of native trees and perennials. Native trees provide shade for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. Some tree species (e.g. Black Walnut and Catalpa) on the recommended tree list help maintain clean air and some (e.g. Black Willow and Mitten Tree) release chemicals in the air that benefit health and reduce anxiety. Native perennials in the bio-retention swale and pollinator garden contribute to wildlife habitats. Consider to add tree ID tags and brief introduction by community at key locations. Tree and pollinator garden locations are approximate and subject to further analysis from the City of Vaughan.
- Consider using recycled materials, such as recycled plastic and high density paper composite, as seating materials and consider use of natural materials, such as stone and reclaimed ash trees to create seating.
- Improve safety and access through incorporation of measures to reduce flood risk or mitigate associated impacts for street users at key locations on Centre Street (Centre & Atkinson, Centre at SE corner of Oakbank Pond).
- Consider using bio-retention swales, rain gardens, and infiltration trenches along Centre Street to mitigate flood risks by reducing peak flow and upgrade existing grass trench. Recommended locations coordinate with the Green Approach of City-Wide Urban Guidelines.
- Consider promoting environmental education through creative art and signage (e.g. art work could indicate the stormwater process or highlight native plants and pollinators).
- Consider using innovative energy for shade structure, signage, and lighting, such as solar panels and vertical wind turbines.



### RECOMMENDED TREE LIST

- |                 |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Burr Oak        | Catalpa      |
| Swamp White Oak | Hackberry    |
| Red Oak         | Tulip Tree   |
| Black Walnut    | Hop Hornbeam |
| Black Willow    | Mitten Tree  |
| American linden |              |

# COMPLETE STREETS

Atkinson Avenue . Centre Street . Hilda Avenue