



City of Vaughan

Community Area Policy Review for Low-Rise Residential Designations

Public Open House
April 19, 2016

7:00 Sign in and review the information on display

7:30 Presentation – summary of findings and recommendations

8:00 Q&A

8:15 Talk to members of the study team and complete a comment sheet

Background

- **Increasing number of development applications** for redevelopment and intensification in Vaughan's established "Community Areas"
 - Townhouse developments on unusually large lots or assembled lots
 - Subdivision of large lots
 - "Monster home" phenomenon
- **On October 20, 2015, Council ratified a member's motion to undertake a study** of the policies governing land use change in Community Areas of VOP 2010 and to consider the following criteria:
 - clarity of interpretation
 - ability to ensure compatibility
 - the need to provide more definitive policy or schedules
 - such criteria may emerge as a result of the study
 - recommended policy amendments or schedules as required
 - best practices in other jurisdictions

- **On March 1, 2016, City staff brought forward implementation options to Committee of the Whole** for direction on how to proceed. Staff were directed to proceed with the process to amend the policies in VOP 2010 and adopt Urban Design Guidelines.
- **On March 22, 2016 Council received the draft *Community Area Policy Review for Low-Rise Residential Designations Report* (USI, January 2016) and directed staff to “distribute to stakeholders for comment and that such comment is requested no later than May 31, 2016, and that community meetings, if required, be organized in all wards.”**

Study Purpose and Goal

Purpose:

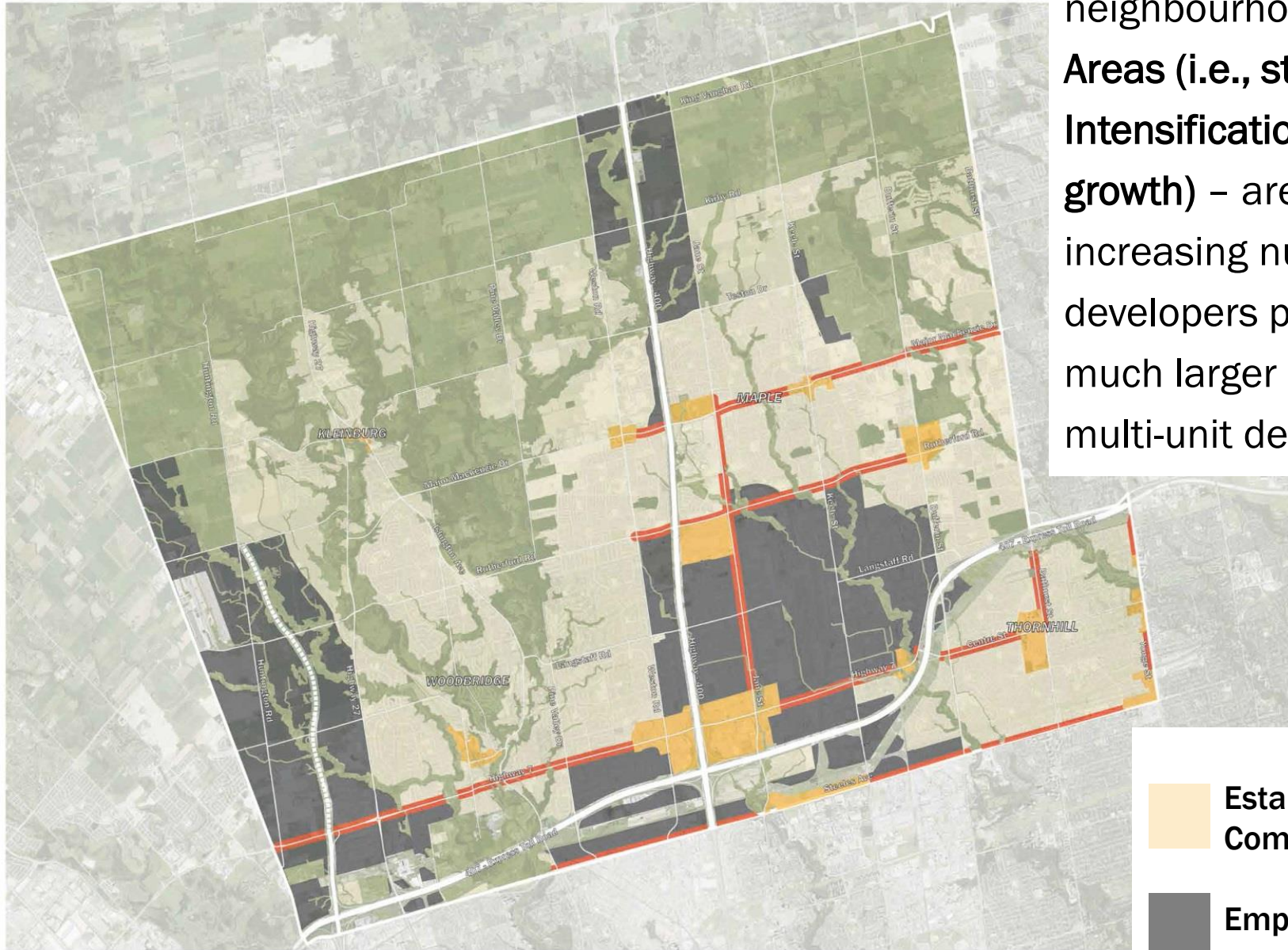
Review the policies in the Vaughan Official Plan (VOP 2010) applicable to established low-rise neighbourhoods, in the context of development pressures, and recommend implementation options (i.e., policy amendments and/or guidelines)

Goal:

Ensure new development in Vaughan's established low-rise residential neighbourhoods meets the intent to "reinforce and respect" the pattern and character of existing development.

Vaughan's Urban Structure

Some of Vaughan's low-rise residential neighbourhoods within designated **Community Areas** (i.e., stable areas) – *outside Intensification Areas* (i.e., areas intended for growth) – are under pressure to change as an increasing number of landowners and developers propose to replace small homes with much larger ones or assemble lands to building multi-unit developments.






Established
Community Areas

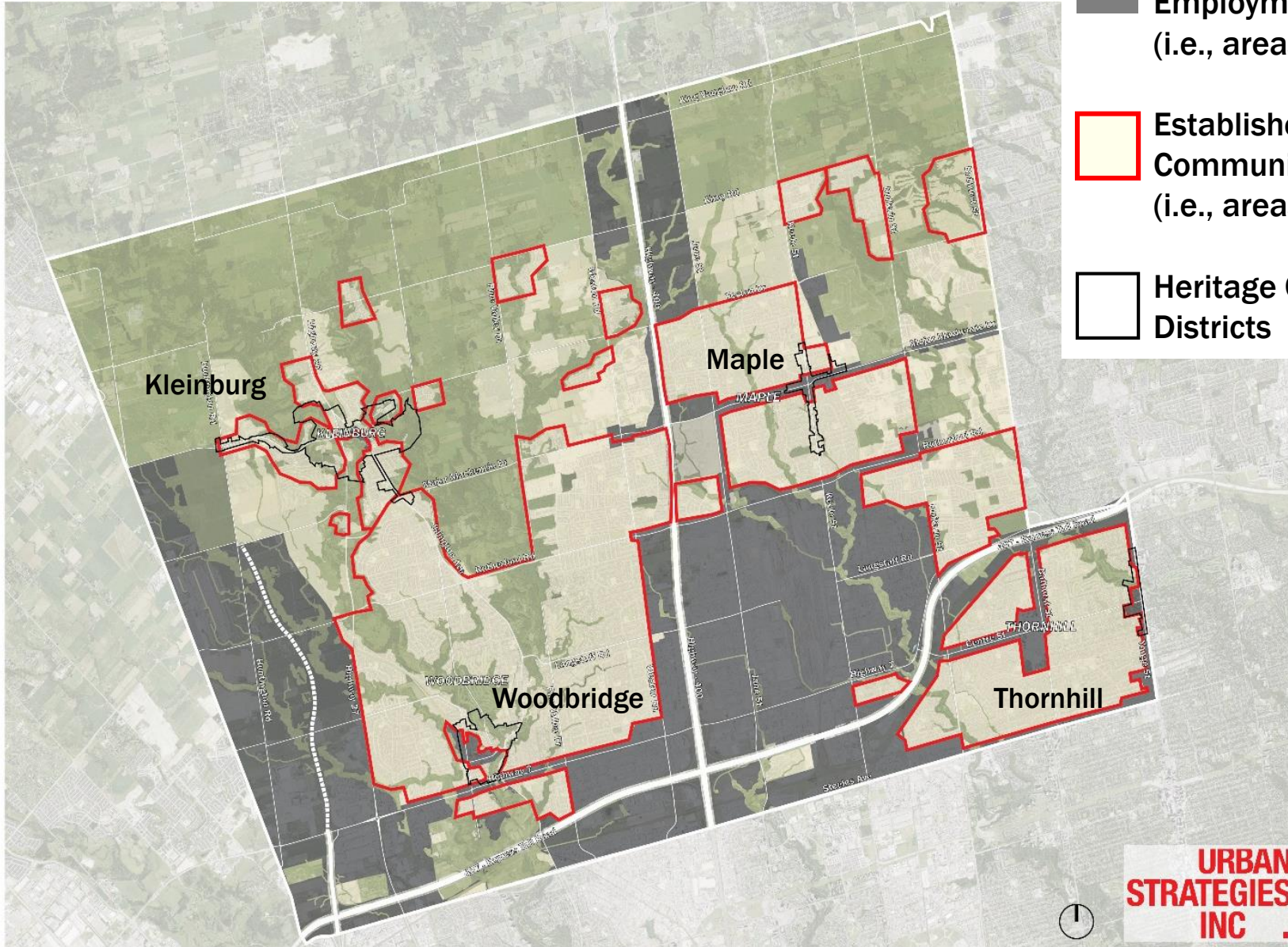
Primary and Local
Centres

Employment Areas

Intensification
Corridors

Vaughan's Urban Structure

-  Intensification & Employment Areas (i.e., areas for change)
-  Established Community Areas (i.e., areas of stability)
-  Heritage Conservation Districts



Current Official Plan Policies

Community Area Policies

- “Community Areas with existing development are not intended to experience significant physical change”
- “Limited intensification may be permitted” if development is “sensitive to and compatible with the character, form, and planned function of the surrounding context”

Urban Design Policies

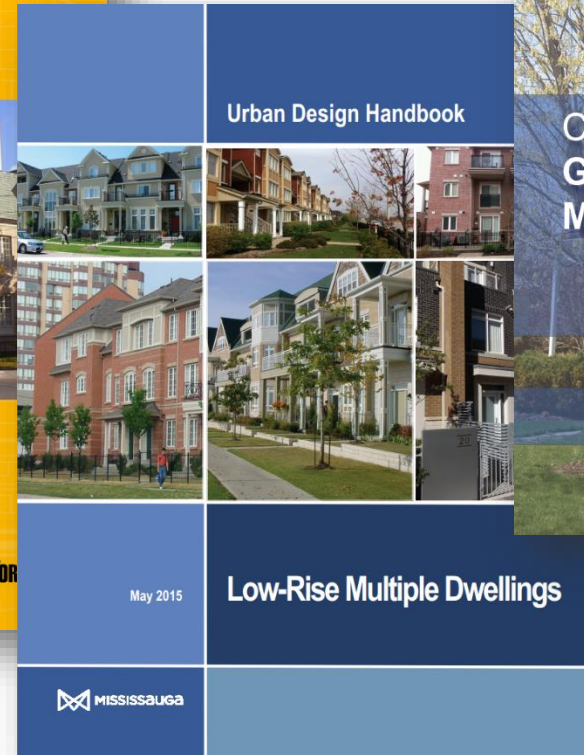
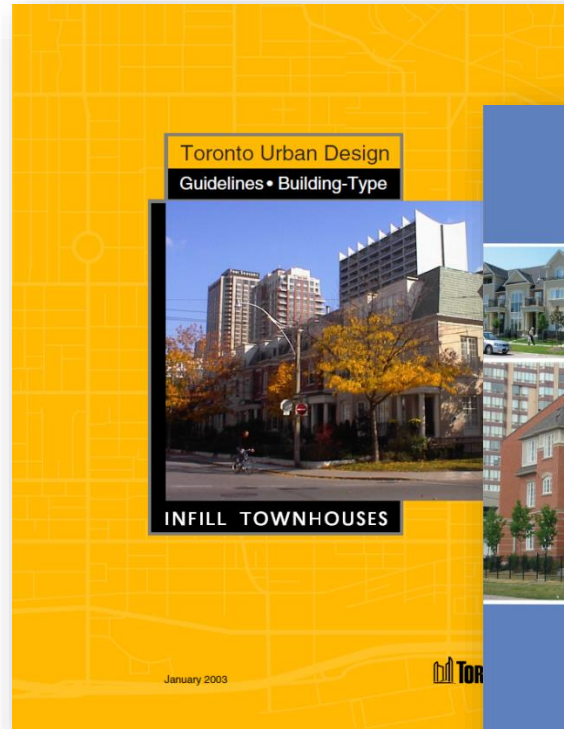
- New development “will be designed to respect and reinforce the physical character of the established neighbourhood within which it is located” (size and configuration of lots; heights and scale of nearby residential properties; front, side and rear yard setbacks; etc.)
- A more prescriptive policy applies to “older, established” neighbourhoods

Low-Rise Residential Policies

- Detached houses, semi-detached houses and townhouses permitted
- Each dwelling must “respect and reinforce the scale, massing, setback and orientation of other built and approved” housing of the same type in the immediate area

Many mature cities have adopted urban design guidelines to better manage change in their established low-rise neighbourhoods

- Toronto
- Ottawa
- Mississauga
- Brampton
- Oakville
- Stouffville



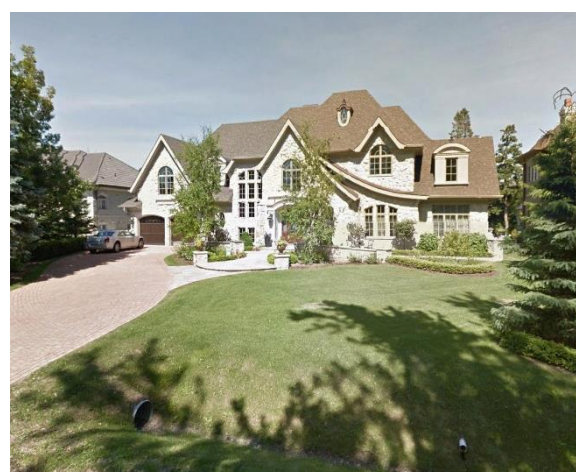
Study Methodology



- Identify the City’s “Low-Rise Residential” Neighbourhoods
- Aerial review of development patterns, reinforced by ground-level checks
- Lot frontage and size is a primary determinant of neighbourhood character, since it affects:
 - Size of houses
 - Setbacks from the street and neighbouring properties
 - Amount of soft landscaping vs. driveway
 - Relationship of garages to the house
- Another fundamental characteristic of existing low-rise neighbourhoods is the orientation of houses to a public street.

Large-Lot Neighbourhoods

- Lot frontage greater than 20 metres (65 feet)
- Deep front and rear setbacks
- Expansive landscaped front and rear yards
- Wide or circular driveways common
- Large 1 or 2 storey detached houses generally occupying less than a third of the lot
- Garages generally are not dominant features



Large-Lot Neighbourhoods

Development Pressures

- Replacement of one and one-and-a-half storey houses with much larger homes, often with steeply pitched roofs that give the appearance of a two-and-a-half or three-storey house.
- Proposals to subdivide lots into two or more lots for more intensive housing forms, which may include new detached, semi-detached or townhouse developments. The resulting lots and the new dwellings on them can significantly disrupt or change the character of the neighbourhood.



Large-Lot Neighbourhoods

Development Pressures

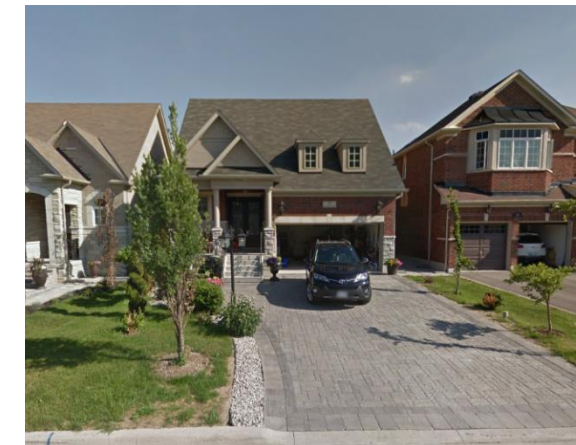
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Medium-Lot Neighbourhoods

- Lot frontage of 10 - 20 metres (33 - 65 feet)
- Front setbacks of 6 - 15 metres (20 - 50 feet)
- Rear setbacks of 7.5 - 10 metres (25 - 33 feet)
- Wide driveways and 2-car garages
- Front yard landscaped area generally less than 50% of the yard
- 2-storey detached house is the predominant housing type

Development pressures within these neighbourhoods are less acute since the housing stock is generally newer and site and zoning restrictions prevent significantly larger homes, although it is common to replace bungalows and add additions at the rear.



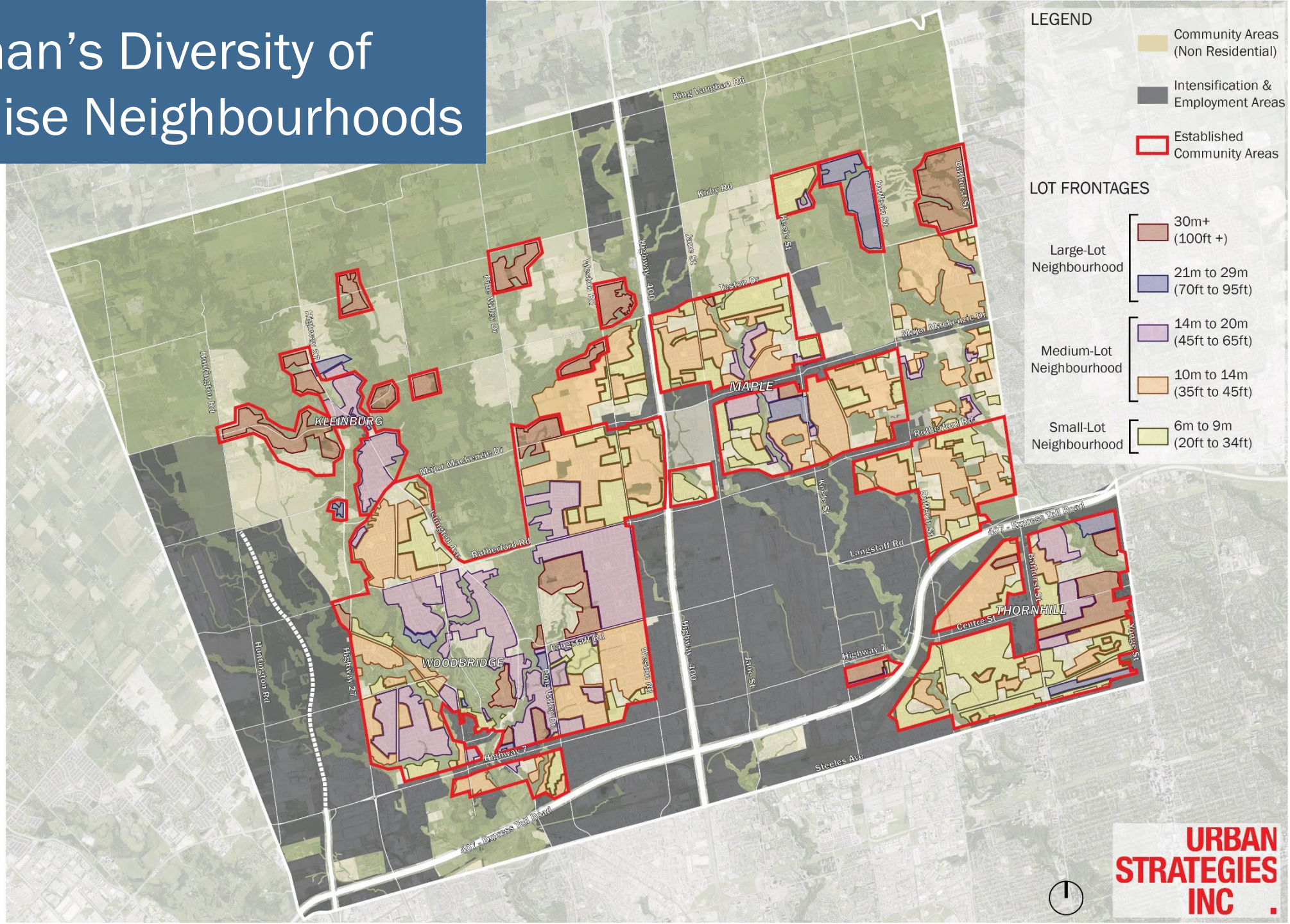
Small-Lot Neighbourhoods

- Lot frontages of 6 - 9 metres (20 - 30 feet)
- Front setbacks of 5 - 12 metres (16 - 40 feet)
- Rear setbacks of 7.5 - 10 metres (25 - 33 feet)
- 2-storey detached and semi-detached houses and townhouses
- Single car garages more common

Development pressure within these neighbourhoods is also less acute due to the age of the homes and site and zoning restrictions. Lots are too narrow for subdivisions to be considered.



Vaughan's Diversity of Low-Rise Neighbourhoods



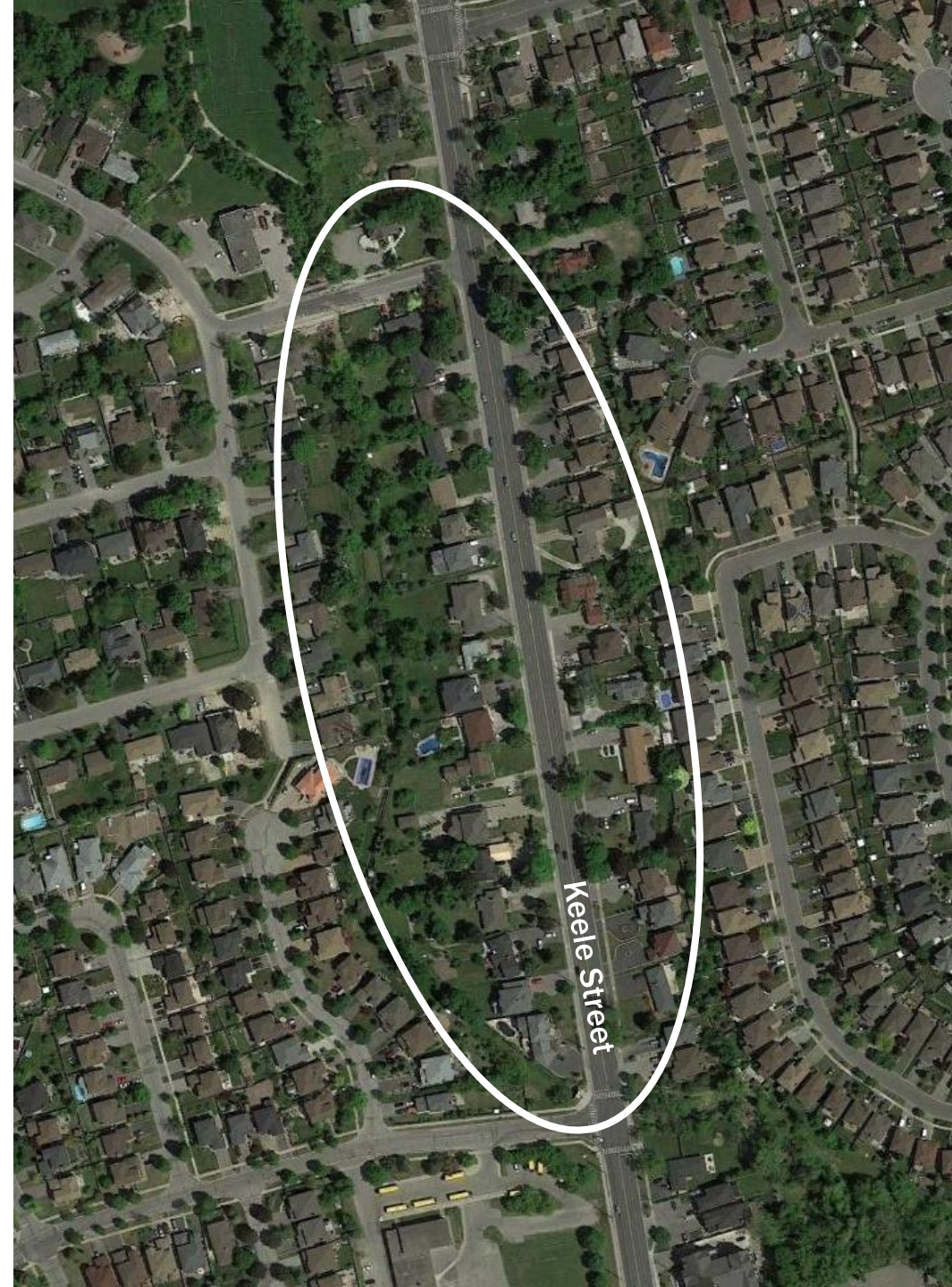
Large-Lot Neighbourhoods

...are the most vulnerable to significant changes



Pressures at the edges of neighbourhoods

There has been an increasing number of proposals to develop townhouses on irregular sites along arterial roads within established Community Areas.



Keys to ensuring townhouse developments respect the Community Area policies

- Orient units to the street
- Avoid private streets and “front-to-back” conditions
- Maintain the pattern of setbacks in the larger neighbourhood
- Protect mature trees



Based on the work completed to-date including a review of policies in other municipalities, the study provides two options:

1. Amend VOP 2010 to provide greater clarity in interpreting Official Plan and to address the issues;
2. Adopt general city-wide urban design guidelines for infill development and townhouse infill development in established neighbourhoods designated Low-Rise Residential by VOP 2010.

Hierarchy of Municipal Planning Tools

Official Plan

- General policy statements
- Statutory

Zoning By-Law

- Detailed regulations
- Statutory

Heritage Conservation District Plans

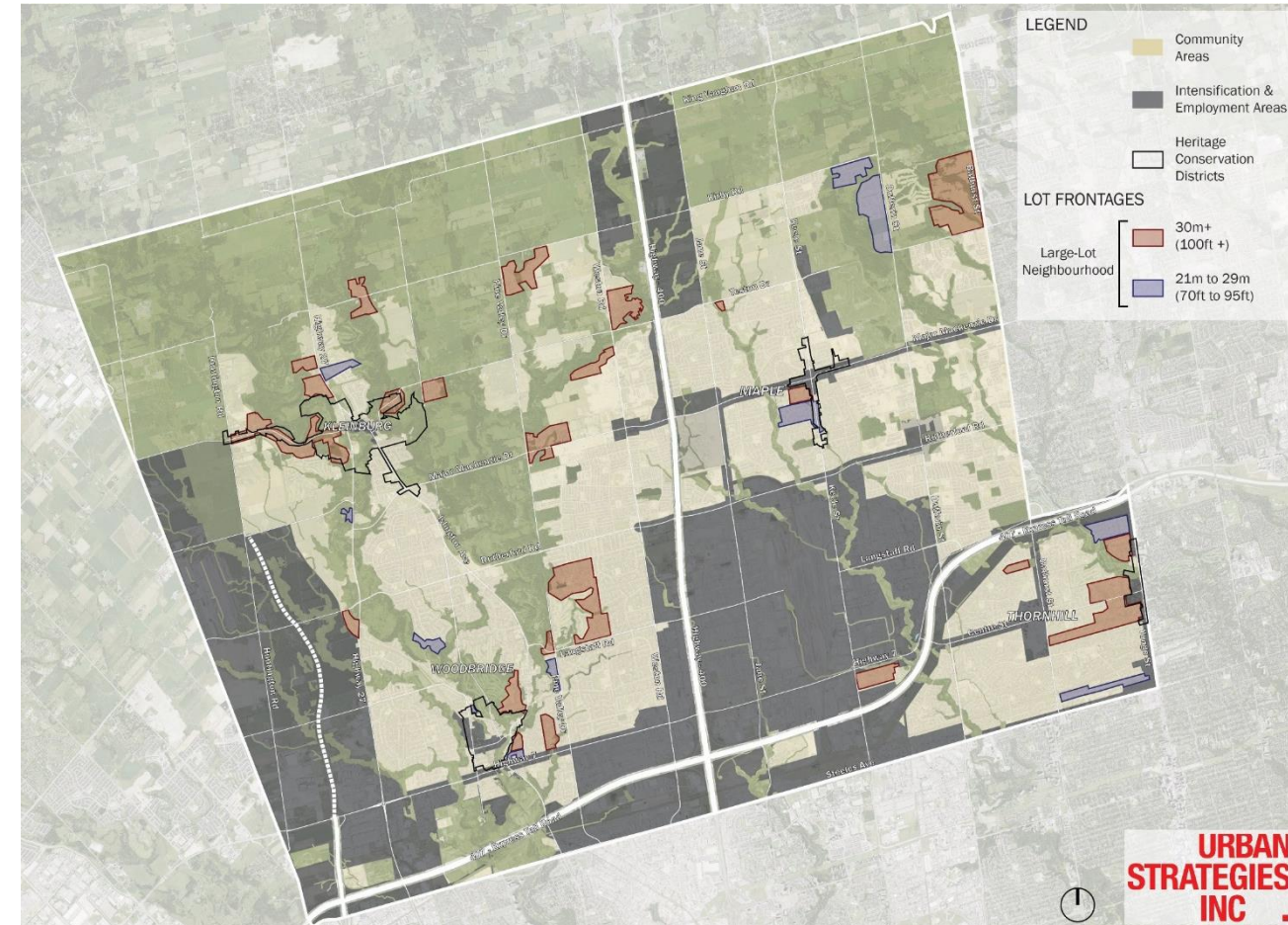
- Detailed guidelines for designated heritage areas
- Statutory

Urban Design Guidelines

- General and area-specific guidelines
- Aid in the interpretation of policies and the review of detailed proposals
- Non-statutory

Key Policy Recommendations for Draft Official Plan Amendment

- Add “building orientation” as element to be respected and reinforced (Policies 2.2.3.2 and 9.1.2.2)
- Remove “older” from reference to “older, established residential neighbourhoods” (Policy 9.1.2.3) and instead add new schedule identifying Large-Lot Neighbourhoods
- Require minimum lot frontages based on the widths of adjoining or facing lots



Key Policy Recommendations for Draft Official Plan Amendment

- **Permit townhouses** in established Community Areas designated as Low-Rise Residential **only on lots fronting an Arterial Road** (new Policy 9.1.2.4)
- **Require townhouses** in established neighbourhoods **to front a public street**, locate parking at the rear, and maintain the existing pattern of setbacks
- **Require block plans** where deep, formerly rural lots are clustered to create planning units that support development appropriate to the neighbourhood character.



Recommended Guidelines

General Infill Guidelines

Includes redevelopment of existing lots

- Consistent front, side and rear yard setbacks ①⑥⑦
- Barrier-free pathway to visible front entrance ②
- Protect existing mature trees ③
- Minimize driveway width at street ④
- Integrate and recess the garage ⑤
- Maintain privacy of adjacent dwellings ⑧

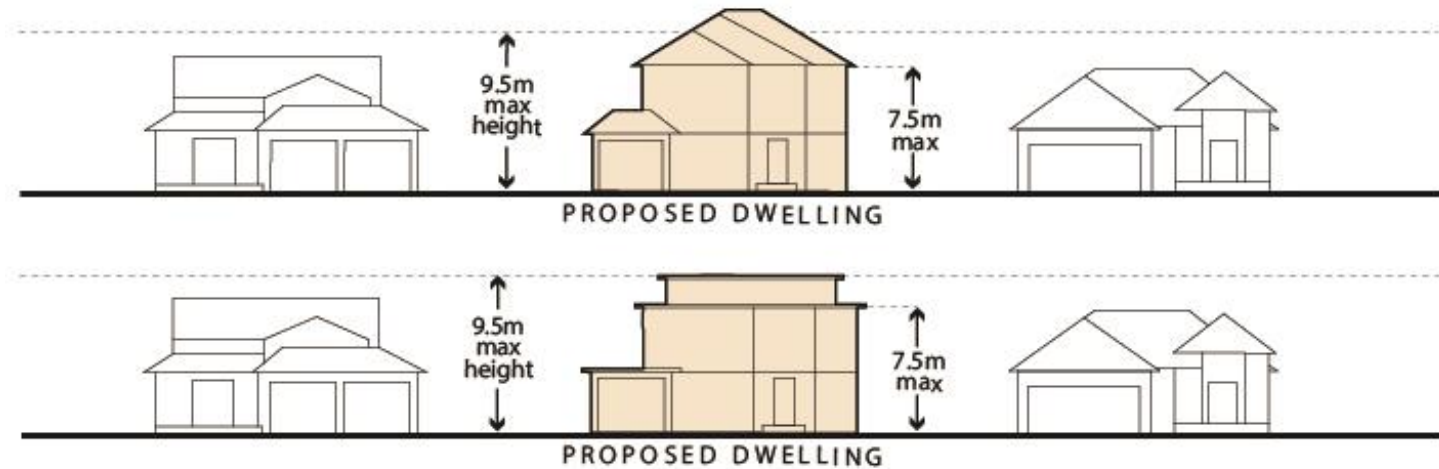


Recommended Guidelines

General Infill Guidelines

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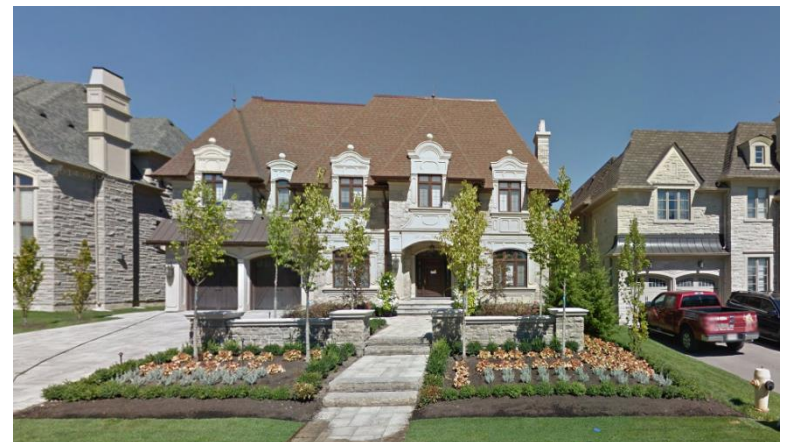
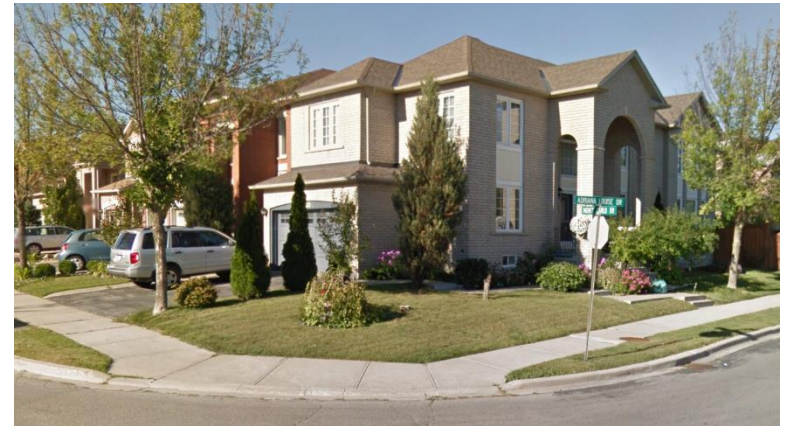
- Consistent front, side and rear yard setbacks (1) (6) (7)
- Barrier-free pathway to visible front entrance (2)
- Protect existing mature trees (3)
- Minimize driveway width at street (4)
- Integrate and recess the garage (5)
- Maintain privacy of adjacent dwellings (8)
- Limit height at the sides of a house to 7.5 metres



Recommended Guidelines

Other General Infill Guidelines

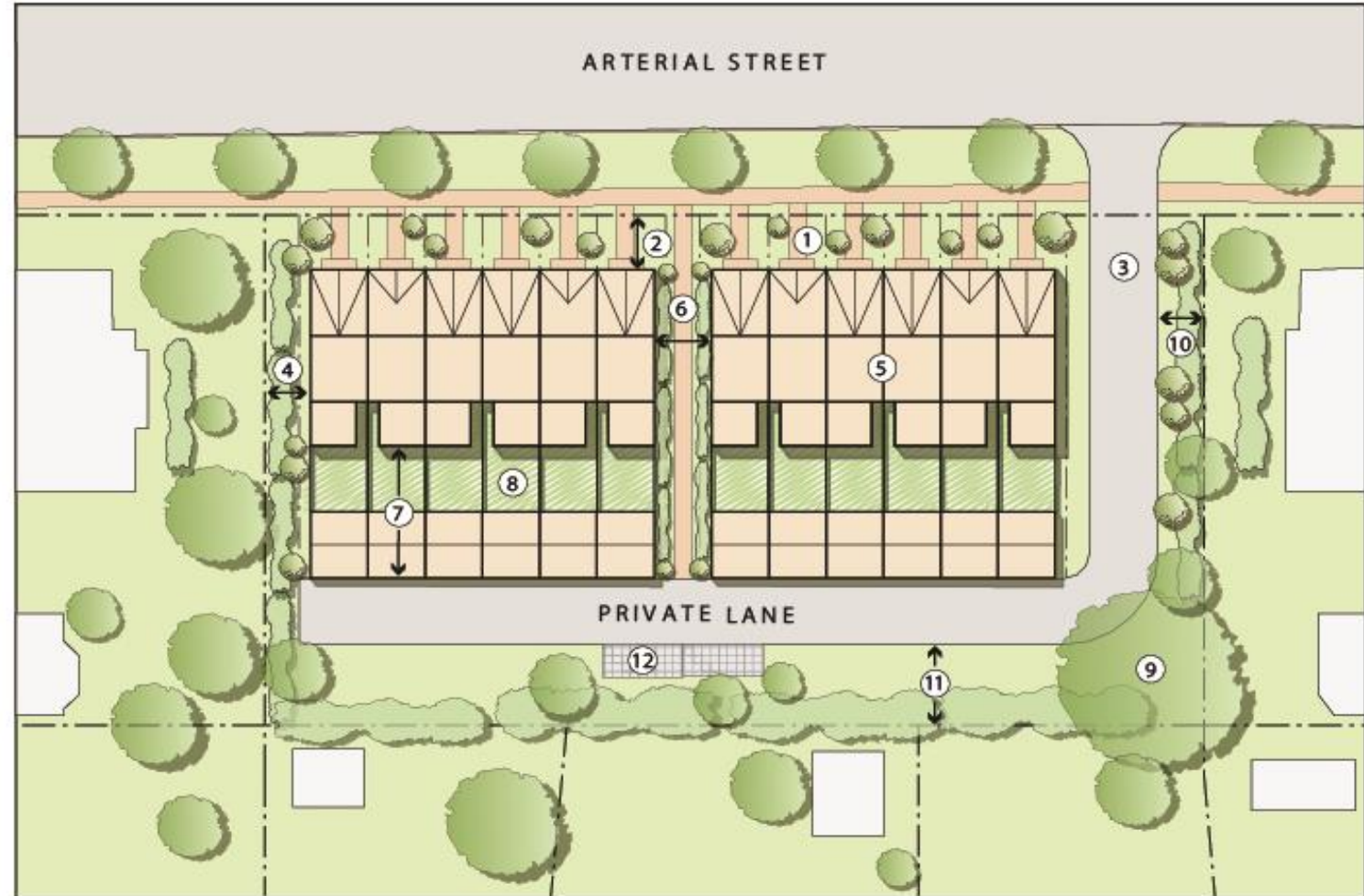
- Existing dwelling should only be replaced by a dwelling of the same type
- Development on corner lots should front both edges
- Building finishes should be durable and in keeping with the neighbourhood
- No decks or balconies that overlook neighbouring backyards
- Circular driveways only on lots with a minimum width of 30 metres
- Minimum front yard soft landscaping:
 - 50% where lot width is 14-20m
 - 67% where lot width is 20-30m
 - 80% where lot width is 30m+
- Low impact development encouraged



Recommended Guidelines

Townhouse Infill Guidelines

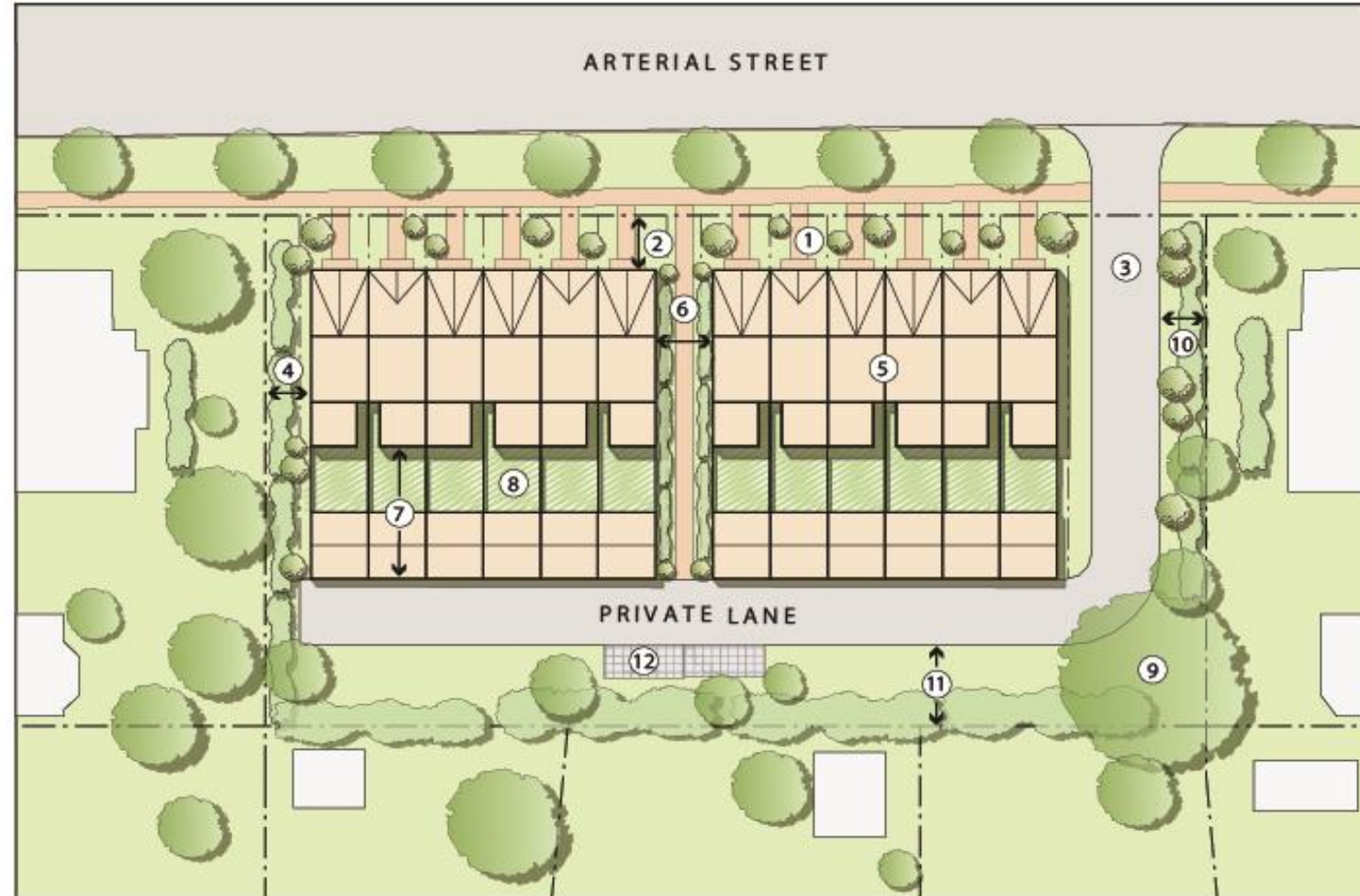
- Orient to a public street (1)
- Consistent front setback (2)
- Parking and servicing at the rear or underground (3)
- Minimum 1.5m interior side yard (4)
- Minimum townhouse width of 6 metres, depth of 12 metres (5)
- 3-6m separation between townhouse blocks (6)



Recommended Guidelines

Townhouse Infill Guidelines (cont.)

- Private rear yard for each unit (minimum 12m setback from lane)
⑦ ⑧
- Retain and protect mature trees ⑨
- Buffer laneways/driveways with landscape strips ⑩ ⑪
- Visitor parking in central location with access to front entrances ⑫
- Ensure site planning standards for safety and access



Recommended Guidelines

Other Townhouse Infill Guidelines

- Height and massing should be compatible with the neighbourhood
- End unit flanking a street should have an articulated side elevation
- Minimum 50% of the area at the rear should consist of soft landscaping
- Landscaping at the front should include street trees
- Parking access, servicing areas and utility boxes should be consolidated
- Where a plan of subdivision is appropriate, link new street networks to existing streets—avoid dead-end streets, cul-de-sacs and gated access points
- Minimize changes to existing grades and avoid retaining walls
- No adverse drainage impacts on adjacent properties or public spaces



Recommended Guidelines



Next Steps

- Complete Public Consultation:

 - Open House #2 – May 10, North Thornhill CC (7 pm – 9 pm)

 - Open House #3 – May 11, Vellore Village CC (7 pm – 9 pm)

- Complete Technical Advisory Committee Consultation process (commenting agencies and government organizations)
- Compile Comments from May 31, 2016 submissions
- Refine recommendations based on public feedback
- Present final urban design guidelines to Committee of the Whole – Fall 2016
- Present revised policy recommendations at a Public Hearing – Fall 2016

Tell us what you think

- **Please complete a feedback form before you leave**
- **Comments can also be submitted until May 31st to:**

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City of Vaughan
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Vaughan, Ontario, L6A 1T1
kyle.fearon@vaughan.ca

- **Visit the project web site for more information:**
www.vaughan.ca/projects/policy_planning_projects/Pages/Low-Rise-Residential-Designations.aspx

An aerial photograph of a city grid, showing a dense network of streets and buildings. A blue semi-transparent box is overlaid on the top left portion of the image, containing white text. The text reads "Community Area Policy Review for Low-Rise Residential Designations" followed by "QUESTIONS?" in a larger font.

Community Area Policy Review for
Low-Rise Residential Designations

QUESTIONS?