



City of Markham  
**OFFICIAL PLAN**

**Open House 6 to 7 pm**

**November 6, 2012**



# What is an Official Plan



**The Official Plan is a statutory document that provides direction for Markham Council, residents, businesses and investors about the appropriate use of land and form of development in Markham.**

In general, the Official Plan provides guidance on:

- Where new housing, industry, offices and shops will be located
- Where and how growth will occur in the community
- What services such as parks, schools, roads/transit, sewers will be needed to support growth





# Why do we need an Official Plan now?



## A new Official Plan is needed for several reasons:

- To comply with the Planning Act requirement that municipalities review their Official Plan every 5 years
- To conform with provincial policy and plans (e.g., the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan) and the new York Region Official Plan
- To reflect the direction Markham has been taking in planning new communities in recent years
- To incorporate Council's endorsed growth alternative to 2031





# Planning for Growth in Markham to 2031



## Forecast Growth (2031)

<b>Population</b>	<b>422,000</b>
<b>Jobs</b>	<b>240,000</b>

**In May 2010, Council endorsed a growth alternative that accommodates population and employment growth in Markham to 2031.**

The growth alternative involved three main elements:

- **Protecting the natural environment**, in the form of an identified Greenway System that is off limits to development
- **Directing most of the residential growth (approx. 60%) to the existing urban area** within mixed-use centres and corridors along rapid transit routes within the current urban area of the City (referred to as intensification)
- **Allowing limited expansion of the urban area** (referred to as the Future Urban Area) to accommodate some growth

By directing growth to mixed-use centres and corridors, established low-density residential neighbourhoods and heritage districts can remain largely unchanged.

This strategy for focusing growth in the urban area is consistent with the provincial and York Region plans, and is also consistent with the way Markham has been planning for many years.



# Markham Structure

The strategy for accommodating growth results in a physical structure for the City that consists of the following components:

**Greenway System** – lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Provincial Greenbelt, as well as protected environmental features outside of these areas

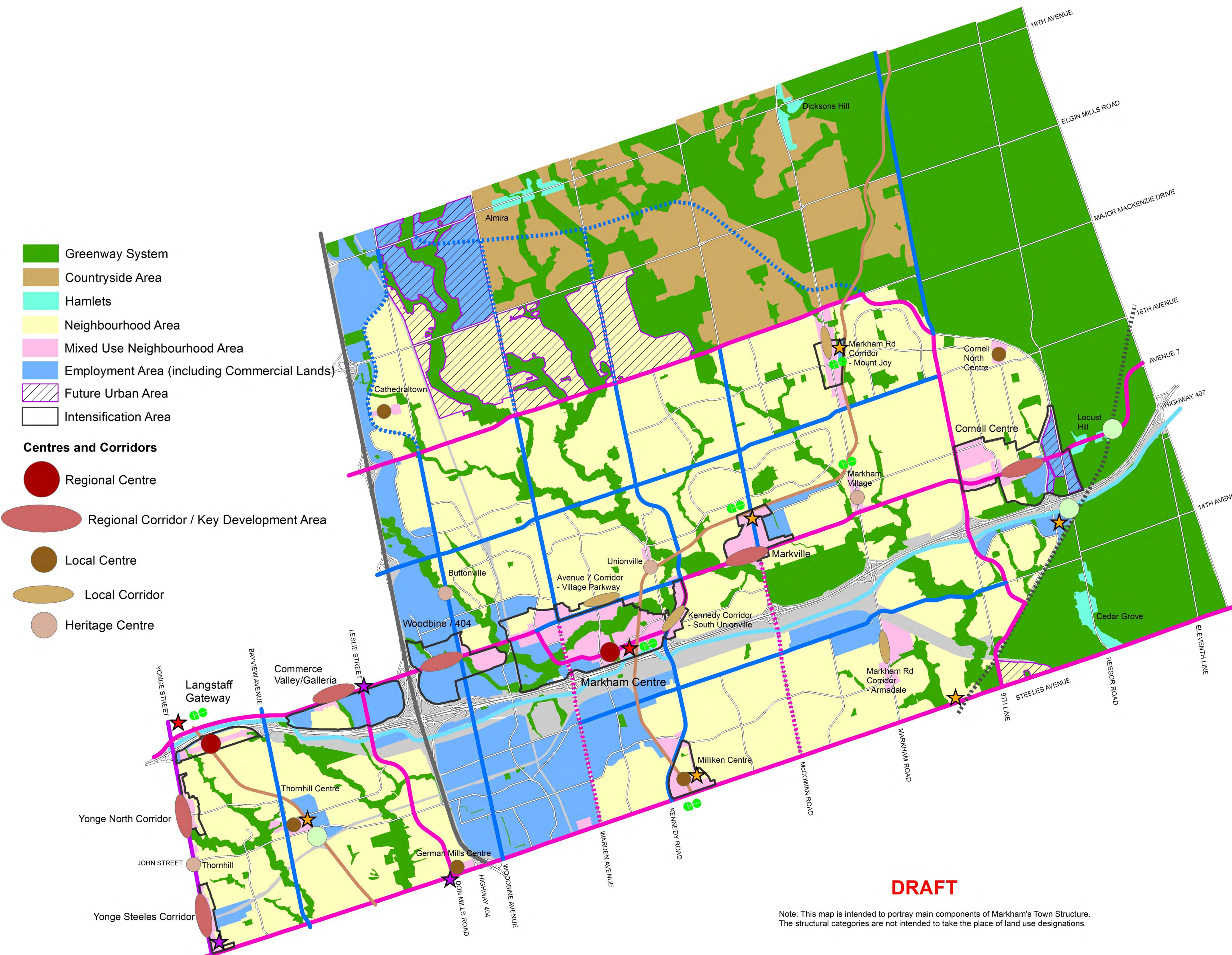
**Countryside Area** – lands outside the Greenway System and outside the urban area, to be used primarily for agricultural purposes

**Employment Area** – lands which accommodate the majority of the economic activity within Markham, such as manufacturing, warehousing, office and supporting services

**Neighbourhood Area** – residential lands, developed primarily in ground-related housing forms, together with supporting parkland, institutional, retail and service uses

**Mixed Use Neighbourhood Areas** – areas identified for higher intensity mixed-use development primarily in Centres and Corridors along rapid transit corridors

**Centres and Corridors** aligned along rapid transit corridors – the areas where most of Markham's intensification growth will occur



Note: This map is intended to portray main components of Markham's Town Structure. The structural categories are not intended to take the place of land use designations.



# Centres and Corridors



**Centres and Corridors are intended to be developed with higher intensity mixed-use development that is served by rapid transit.**

The rapid transit routes include the planned Yonge Street subway extension, the Avenue 7 (Highway 7) rapid transit corridor, the future Highway 407 Transitway and GO rail lines.

Centres and Corridors will be developed with well-designed, pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented buildings.



## **Regional Centres**

### **Markham Centre and the Langstaff Gateway**

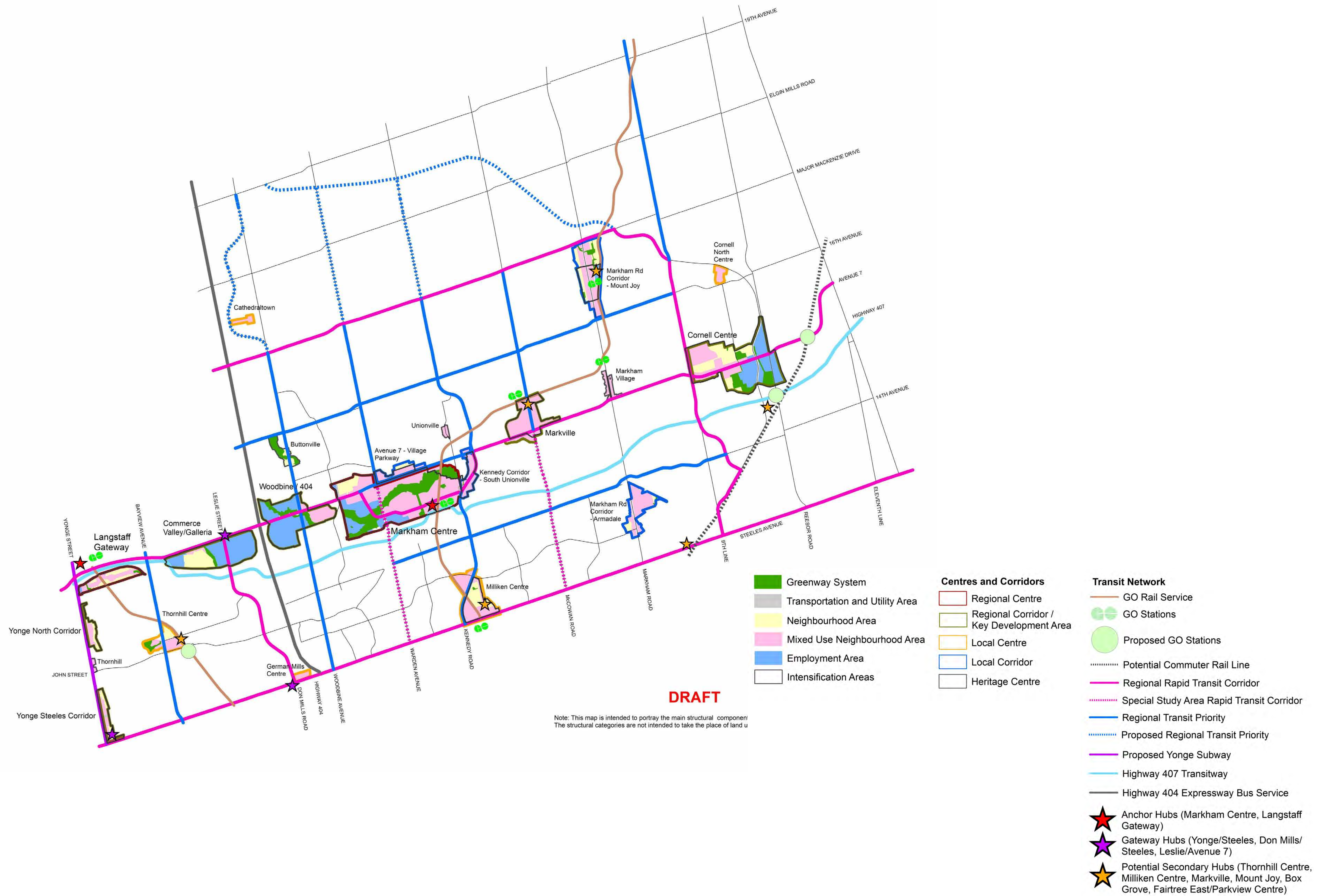
The majority of forecast growth will be directed to the Markham Centre and the Langstaff Gateway regional centres.

These areas will contain the highest concentration and greatest mix and intensity of uses and activities in Markham and will be developed with mid-rise and high-rise buildings.

Regional centres will have a long-term target of one job for every resident.



# Centres and Corridors and Transit Network



The Regional Centres and Regional Corridors/Key Development Areas are priority areas for intensification. Not all Local Centres and Heritage Centres have potential for further intensification.





# Centres and Corridors



## Regional Corridors/Key Development Areas

These are areas of retail and commercial development along the Yonge Street and Avenue 7 (Highway 7) rapid transit corridors where opportunities exist for more intensive residential or office uses. These areas will be developed with mid-rise and high-rise buildings.



## Local Centres and Corridors

These areas serve as important neighbourhood focal points and main streets and contain a mix of activities but on a smaller scale, serving the adjacent community. These centres are served by local transit offering connections to rapid transit, and in some cases contain GO stations.



**Heritage Centres (Thornhill, Buttonville, Unionville and Markham Village)** New development in these centres will be consistent with approved Heritage District Conservation Plans and secondary plans.





# Markham's new Official Plan

## The new Official Plan is made up of three parts:

- PART I** Contains the vision, goals, objectives, policies and maps that apply to Markham as a whole
- PART II** Will contain secondary plans that provide more detailed policies and maps for specific geographic areas within Markham
- PART III** Will contain area and site specific policies that vary from the City-wide policies contained in Part I

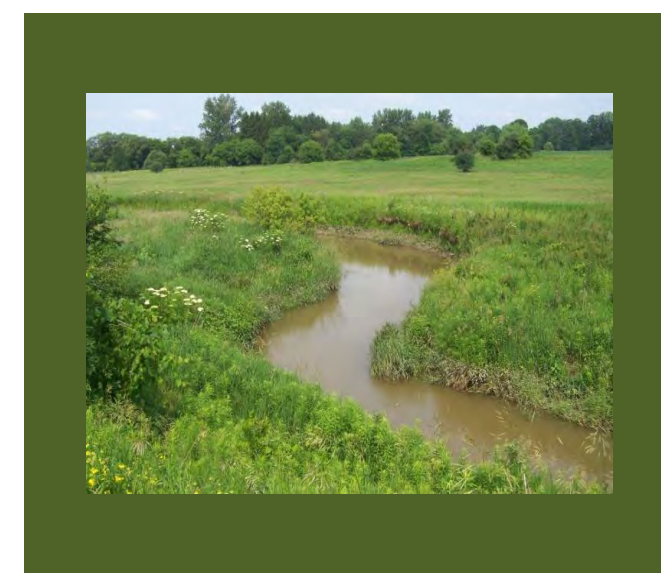
Part II and Part III will be released at a later date for review and comment.



# A Vision for Sustainable Growth

**The new Official Plan outlines a vision for sustainable growth in Markham to 2031 leading to a vibrant, liveable city.**

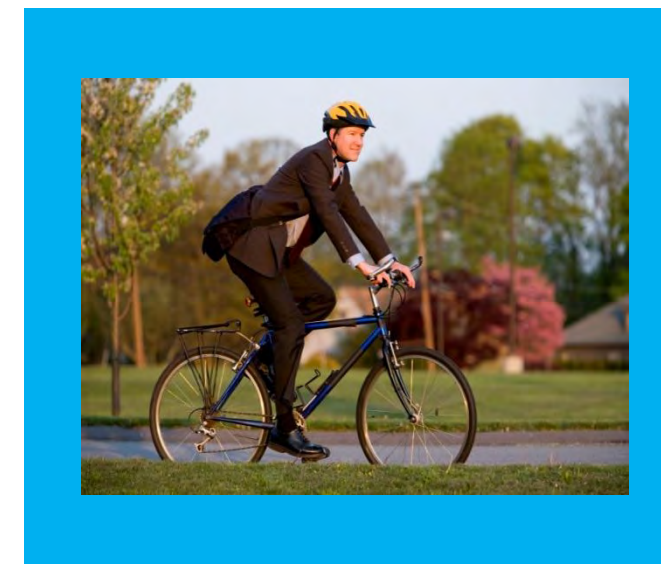
The vision for sustainable growth is based on four key themes:



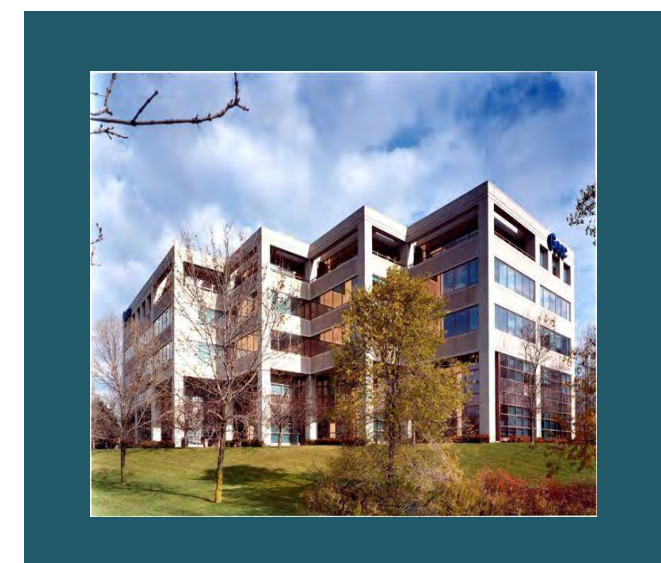
Protecting the natural environment and agricultural lands



Building complete communities



Increasing travel options



Maintaining a vibrant and competitive economy

The goals and strategic objectives associated with the four themes provide the basis for all of the policies in the new Official Plan.



# Protecting the natural environment



## The Official Plan identifies a protected Greenway System of natural features.

The Greenway System includes:

- valleylands and river and stream corridors
- wetlands and woodlands
- sensitive groundwater features
- significant wildlife habitat
- buffers needed to protect these features and functions
- enhancement lands (linkages and restoration)
- agricultural lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt

**GOAL:** To ensure the protection and enhancement of Markham's waterways, woodlands and wetlands, and promote the enhancement of ecological corridors and the protection of agricultural lands.

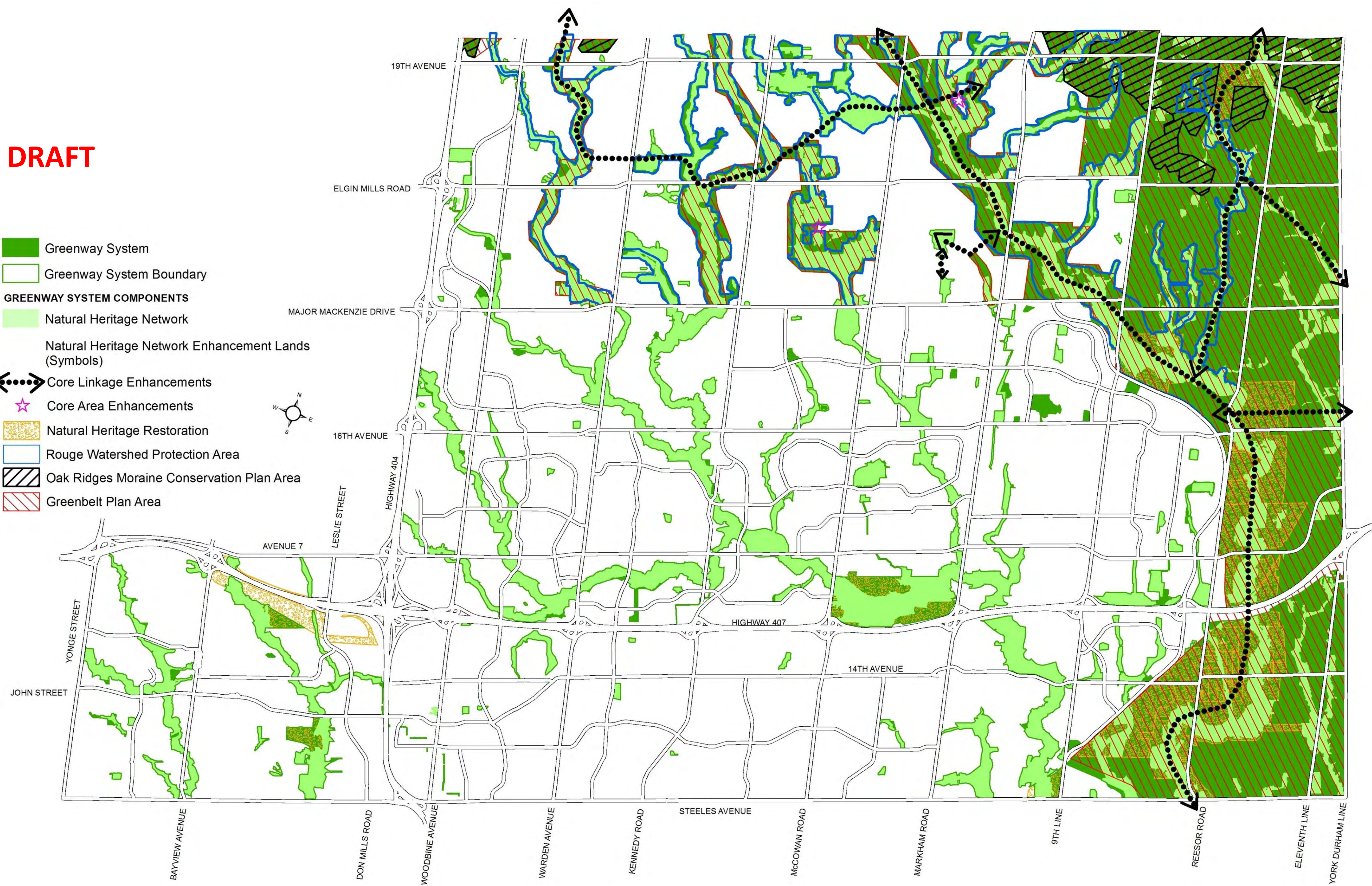


# Greenway System



**DRAFT**

- Greenway System
- Greenway System Boundary
- GREENWAY SYSTEM COMPONENTS**
- Natural Heritage Network
- Natural Heritage Network Enhancement Lands (Symbols)
- Core Linkage Enhancements
- Core Area Enhancements
- Natural Heritage Restoration
- Rouge Watershed Protection Area
- Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area
- Greenbelt Plan Area



The Greenway System, encompassing approximately 33% of Markham's land base, is not available for development.



# Protect agricultural lands



**Markham recognizes the importance of agricultural functions to the sustainability of Markham.**

**The Official Plan contains policies to:**

- Protect and support local food production
- Promote efficient agricultural operations
- Address the economic viability of agricultural activities
- Support complementary agri-business activities
- Encourage food production within the existing urban area and new communities (e.g., community gardens)





# Building Complete Communities



**A key goal of this Plan is to create a city in which the day-to-day needs of Markham's residents, including housing, employment, recreation, shopping, health care, education and personal service, are met.**

This will be accomplished by planning for compact urban development, accommodating a mix and range of housing, job opportunities and services for all residents regardless of age or income, with convenient access by transit, walking or cycling.

To reduce the distance between where people live and where they work, Markham will need to diversify the types of housing that are available and increase the supply of employment lands to accommodate a range of employment opportunities. In addition, we need to facilitate the development of mixed-use, higher-density buildings in the Centres and Corridors located along the rapid transit network.

High urban design standards and sustainable building practices will be applied to all development, but particularly within Centres and Corridors. The vision for these areas is to have well-designed buildings housing a variety of activities located along attractive pedestrian-friendly streets with access to parks, squares and open spaces at key locations.

**GOAL:** To develop sustainable, compact and complete communities incorporating healthy active living, excellence in community design, efficient infrastructure, housing choices for all, and facilities and services meeting community needs, including a range of travel choices.



# Building Complete Communities



Housing choice is vital to the creation of healthy sustainable communities

**A choice of housing of various types, sizes, tenure and affordability contributes to the liveability of neighbourhoods and the quality of life for residents.**

## **The Official Plan contains policies:**

- To provide a greater diversity of housing types and sizes to address the changing composition of Markham households over time
- To provide a greater diversity of housing tenure that will assist those residents and workers with a preference for rental and shared accommodation given their household size and composition, their stage of life and level of ability, or their economic status
- To increase opportunities for affordable and shared housing options that will assist low and moderate income households experiencing affordability challenges, and those persons with special needs requiring support with daily living and personal care activities





# Building Complete Communities



**The Official Plan recognizes the importance of community facilities and services such as schools, libraries, community centres, parks, arts and culture, health and social services, in achieving complete communities.**

**The Official Plan contains policies:**

- To work with all community service providers to improve the delivery of services particularly in Centres and Corridors
- To provide flexible zoning standards and permissions which allow community infrastructure to evolve and adapt to the changing needs of the community
- To design and develop high-quality parks and open spaces that provide for comfortable, safe, accessible, year round use

**Community infrastructure is central to building a vibrant and liveable community**



# Building Complete Communities



**As Markham continues to grow and the population becomes more culturally diverse, the demand for community access to quality cultural programming, products, facilities and opportunities for personal cultural expression will increase.**

**The Official Plan contains policies:**

- To pursue opportunities for integrating arts and cultural facilities and programs as part of community design and the development approval process
- To locate new arts and culture programs, services and facilities in new mixed-use neighbourhoods and Centres and Corridors to create a mass of cultural activity

**It is important to create opportunities to engage in community life**



# Building Complete Communities



## **Markham has a wealth of cultural heritage resources and is a leader in cultural heritage conservation.**

By identifying, protecting, and managing Markham's cultural heritage and archaeological resources, there is an opportunity to preserve the heritage values, attitudes and integrity of Markham's historic settlements for the benefit of the community and for future generations.

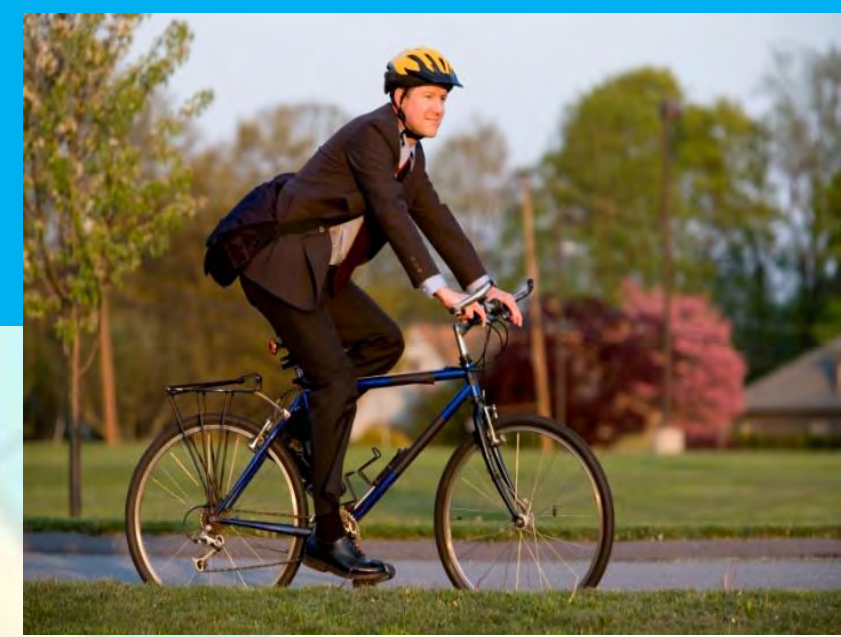
### **The Official Plan contains policies:**

- To promote conservation of Markham's cultural heritage resources by identifying and recognizing these resources and adopting and implementing programs for their protection
- To recognize the importance of conserving archaeological resources and the potential to incorporate archaeological discoveries in Markham's placemaking efforts

**Markham is committed to protecting and conserving its wealth of cultural heritage and archaeological resources.**



# Increasing travel options



The challenge for Markham over the next 20 years is to move from a primarily car-dependent community to one where walking, cycling, transit and carpooling are viable and attractive alternatives.

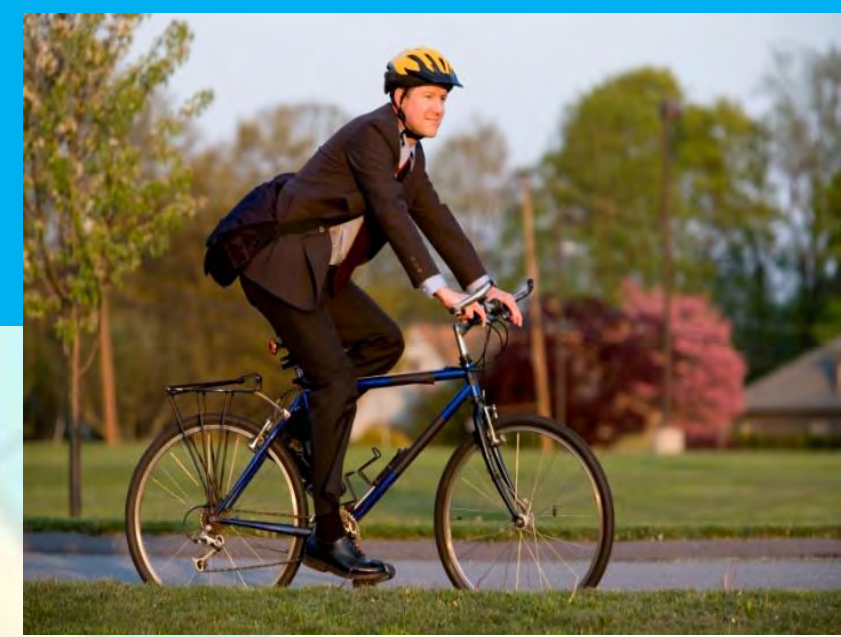


**GOAL:** To increase the level of accessibility and travel options for all residents, while reducing the environmental impacts of transportation

This includes encouraging a reduction in the number and length of trips, increasing overall accessibility for all residents by arranging land use patterns so that jobs and services are close to where people live.



# Increasing travel options



## Markham can provide a more balanced choice of travel options by pursuing transit-supportive development.

Most of Markham's new growth will be directed to centres and corridors and redevelopment areas with mixed-use, higher density served by rapid-transit.

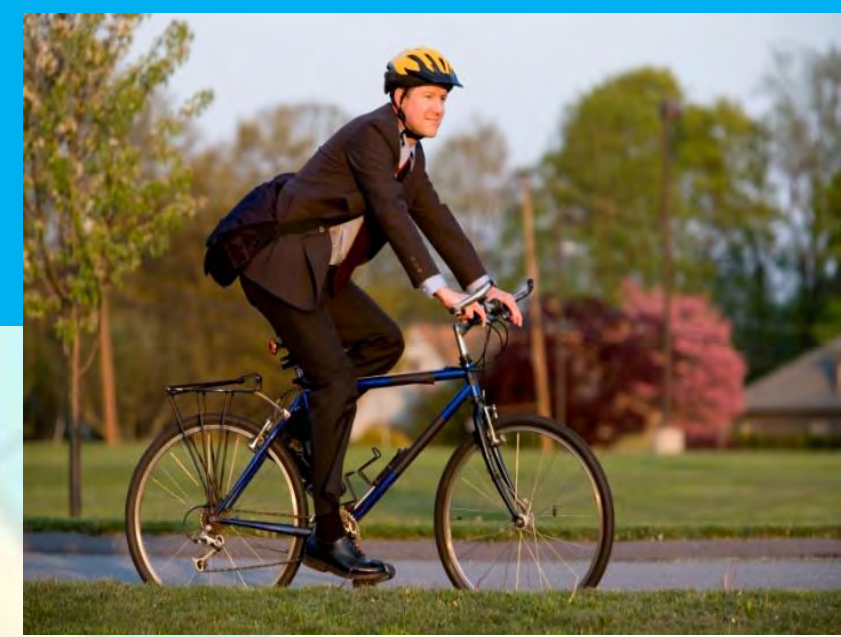
By putting transit and the movement of people first, Markham's passenger transportation system will develop in a manner that makes the alternatives to car travel increasingly attractive for many urban trips, particularly the journey to work.

Transit use can be further reinforced by appropriate streetscape design and better connections between transit stops/stations and surrounding development, as well as by improving linkages to the supporting network of pedestrian and cycling facilities.





# Increasing travel options



## The Official Plan contains policies to:

- Integrate land use and transportation planning
- Influence the amount and pattern of travel through education, public policies and service improvements
- Pursue a transit culture and placing priority on transit and active transportation modes
- Provide an integrated cycling and walking network
- Review strategic improvements to the road network
- Manage the supply of parking
- Improve road safety
- Facilitate goods movement
- Phase developments to ensure balance between transportation demand and capacity
- Support long-term transit funding





# Maintaining a vibrant and competitive economy



**Markham will build on its success as a major employment centre within York Region and the Greater Toronto Area, and continue to offer attractive accommodation to businesses of all types.**

This includes identifying an inventory of lands to accommodate a range of employment uses such as manufacturing, warehousing, and offices, and resisting pressures to develop these lands for other uses. The intent is to ensure the long term viability of the employment areas and a diverse and market-ready supply of well-located lands for these employment uses.

Large scale office development will be focused within Markham Centre and Langstaff Gateway and other Centres served by rapid transit. New retail and service development will be planned for in a transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly mixed-use context within the community.

The vision also includes healthy and vibrant main streets such as Main Street Unionville and Main Street Markham.

**GOAL:** To provide for a vibrant, competitive economy to sustain the financial health of residents, businesses and the municipality.



# Maintaining a vibrant and competitive economy



## The Official Plan contains policies:

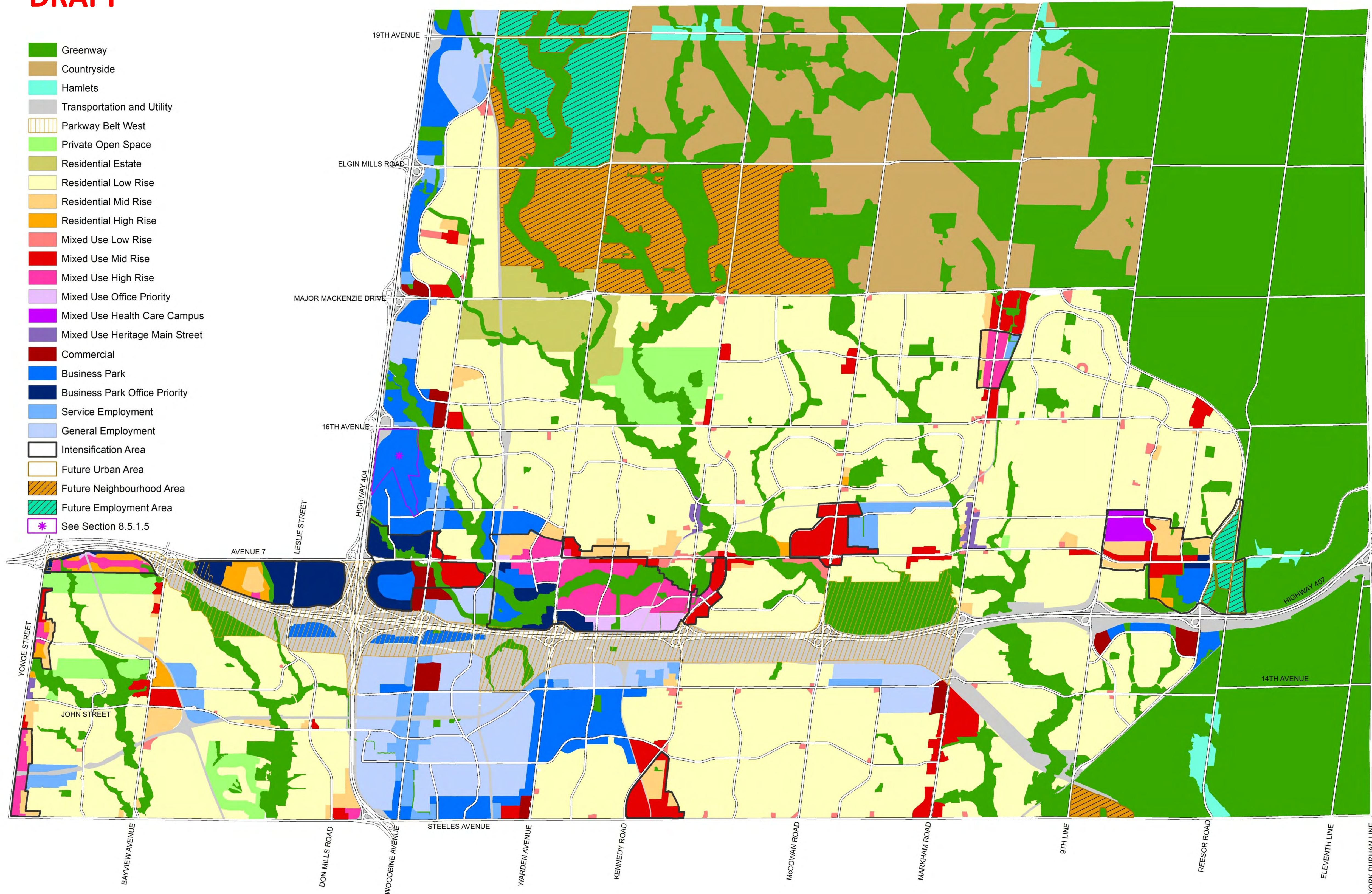
- To protect sufficient land to accommodate opportunities for future employment growth, including lands in the Future Urban Area
- To prevent the conversion of employment lands to non-employment uses
- To protect employment lands from incompatible land uses
- To encourage the business community to support green industry
- To accommodate retail in a mixed-use multi-storey format

**Complete communities rely on a strong economy**



# Land Use Designations

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The land use designations direct where, and under what conditions, housing, retail, office and other employment uses, parks and open space, natural and cultural heritage, and agricultural uses can locate within Markham.



# Land Use – Emphasis on Built Form and Urban Design



**The Residential, Mixed Use, Employment and Commercial designations identified on the Land Use Map are intended to provide for land uses that meet the day-to-day needs of Markham residents, such as housing, jobs, education, shopping and services.**

Most of the new growth in Markham will be directed to Centres and Corridors. Recognizing that most of the new development in these areas will be in the form of higher intensity development, the emphasis in controlling development has been shifting to a ‘built form’ approach in which height, massing and building types are the main considerations.

The Official Plan land use and urban design policies require that when proposals for mid-rise and high-rise development are reviewed, care is taken to ensure that the proposed height and building massing on the site are appropriate to the surrounding area.





# Urban Design

**The Official Plan recognizes the contribution of high-quality design to the liveability of the City.** Urban Design is about city building, placemaking, and community design through the integration of land use, built form and the public realm. High-quality urban design ensures that greater levels of density, the mix of land uses, and building mass and height are sensitive to established residential neighbourhoods, and are transit-supportive.

**The Official Plan contains** a set of urban design principles that address:

- the public realm
- streets and block patterns
- streetscapes
- landmarks and views
- parks and open space
- public art
- built form and site development

These principles will be developed in more detail at a local level through the use of secondary plans, precinct plans, comprehensive blocks plans and urban design guidelines.



Successful urban design contributes to the development of vibrant public spaces



# Urban Design



## The Public Realm

Safe, accessible and comfortable public spaces add to the creation of a vibrant, healthy and sustainable community by emphasizing walkable streets and people places.



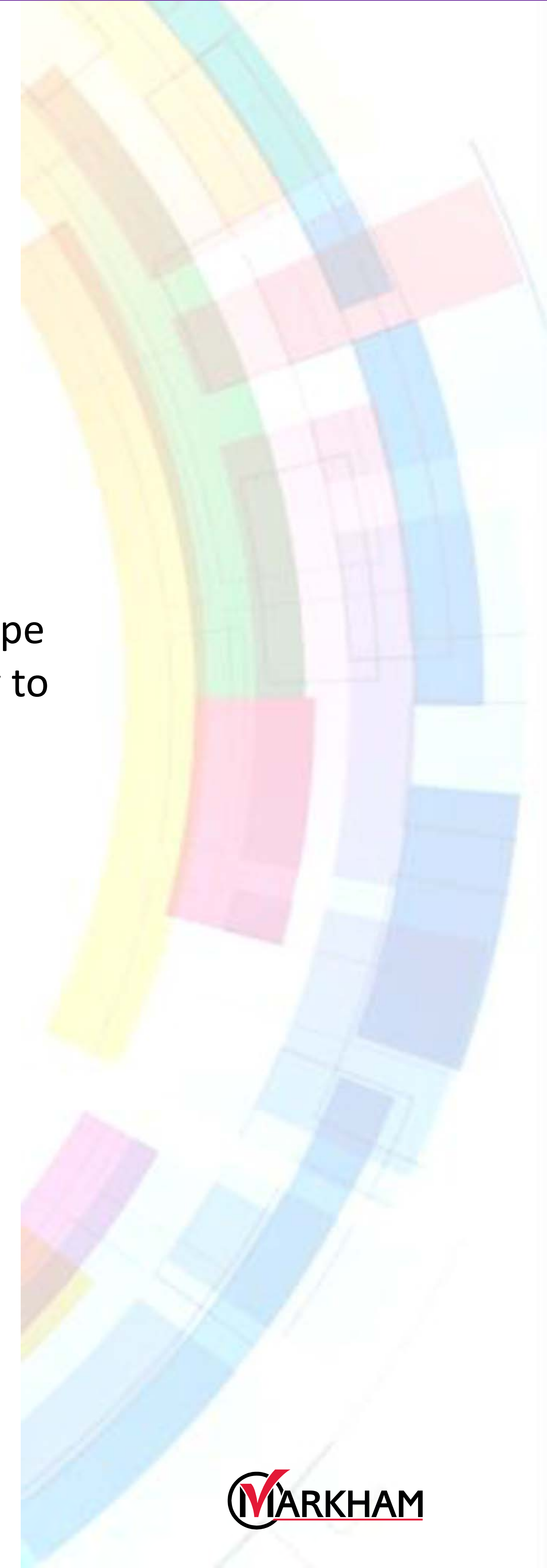
## Streets and Block Patterns

The quality and comfort of streets, and the size of a block, shape the perceptions of a community and influence the community to choose walking as a viable mode of travel.



## Streetscapes

Streetscapes can be designed to create a sense of identity for a particular community through the treatment of architectural features, built form, height and massing, site layout, orientation, landscaping, lighting and signage.





# Urban Design



## Landmarks and Views

Significant natural and cultural heritage features and architecturally significant buildings and landscapes can provide distinct identifiable landmarks that can influence the pattern of the street network and the character of the public realm of a community.



## Public Art

Public Art can enhance the urban fabric of the community by creating landmarks, recognizing local culture, as well as global influences and contributing to social and economic vibrancy.



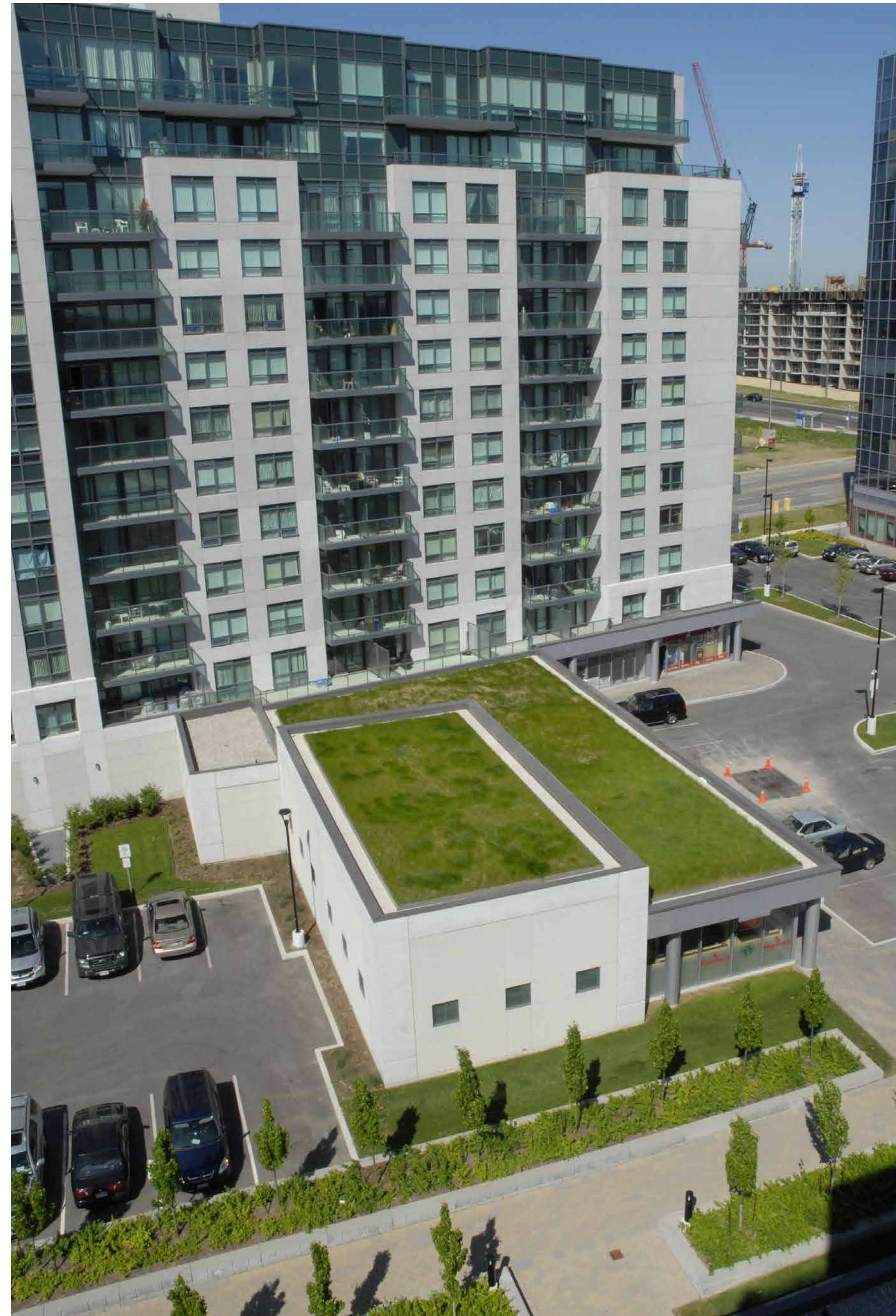
## Parks and Open Space

The parks and open space system will include public and private open spaces that are well designed, connected and publicly accessible to allow Markham residents, workers and visitors to socialize, recreate and appreciate the environment together.





# Sustainable Development



**Sustainable community design, as well as the application of sustainable development practices in building and site design, are provided for in the new Official Plan.** These policies are aimed at minimizing the carbon footprint of development, and work in tandem with the broader sustainability principles in other parts of the Official Plan.

Innovative approaches to building construction, and community design with respect to improved circulation throughout and between communities, transit and active transportation (walking and cycling), alternative energy sources, and recycling, are examples of opportunities to minimize the impact on the environment of future and existing development.





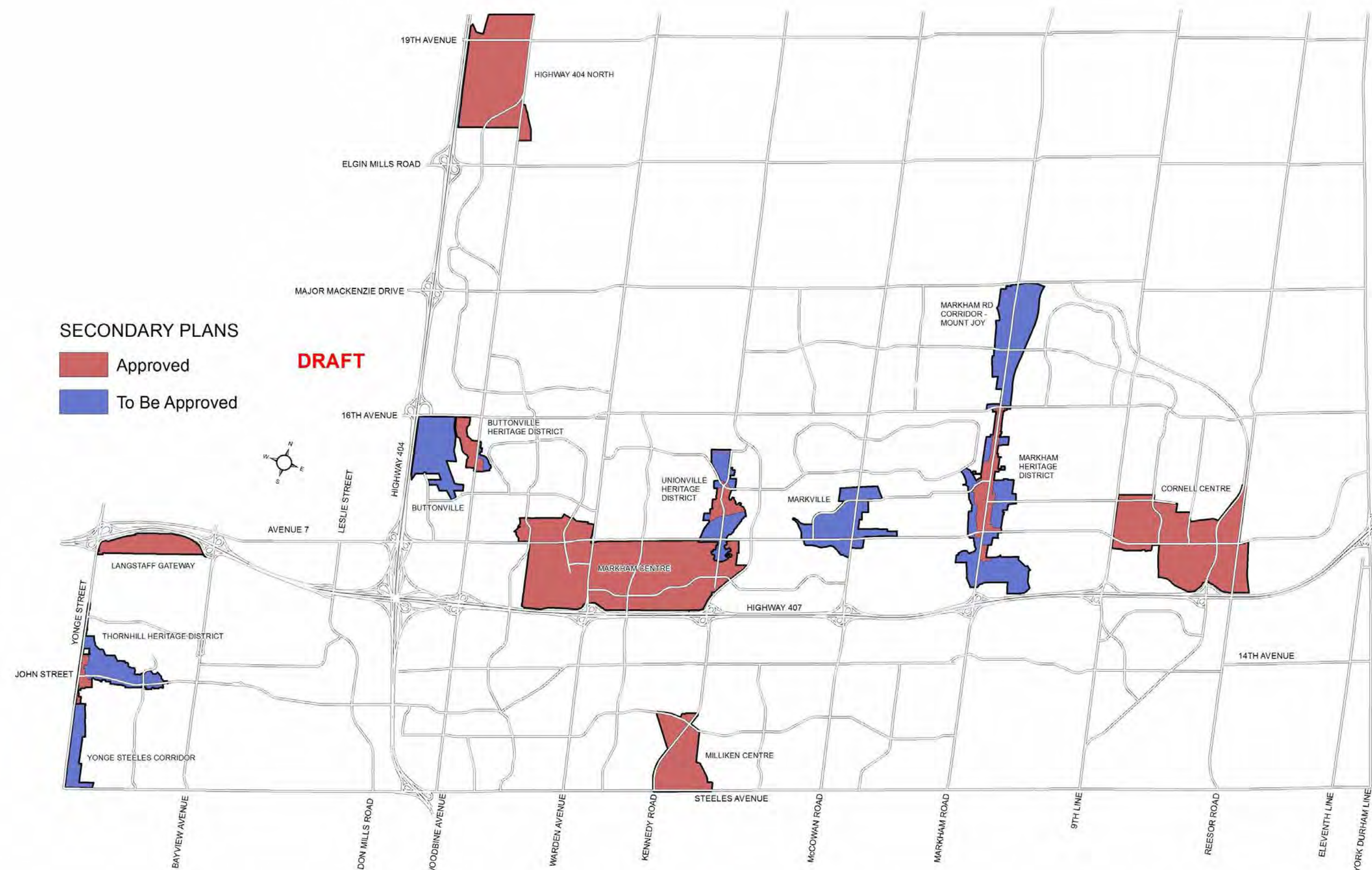
# Secondary Plans



Secondary plans, which are detailed land use plans for specific communities within the City, have been successfully used to guide development in Markham over the past three decades.

With this new Official Plan, secondary plans that are outdated or that are in place for communities that are substantially developed, will be repealed. Any policies from repealed secondary plans that are still required to guide development, will be included as area and site-specific policies in Part III of the new Official Plan.

There is still a continuing role for secondary plans, primarily in guiding development in areas of intensification, heritage districts, and in the Future Urban Area. The map below identifies areas that require new secondary plans, and identifies secondary plans that need to be updated to be consistent with the policies of the new Official Plan.



Markham's current Official Plan contains 49 secondary plans.

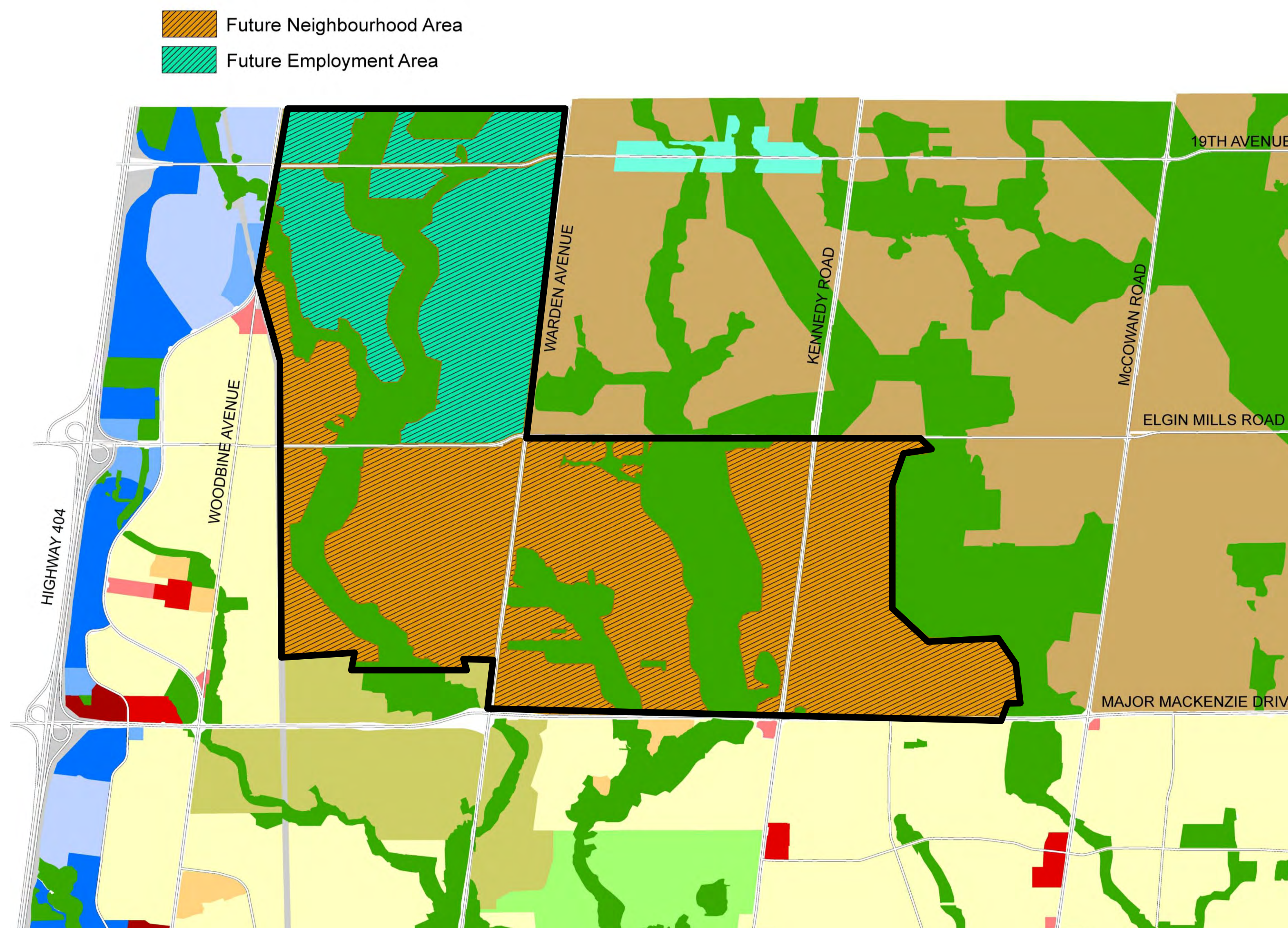


# Future Urban Area



Lands identified as Future Urban Area represent additional urban lands required to accommodate the projected population and employment growth for Markham to 2031. Most of the Future Urban Area lands are in northwest Markham, north of Major Mackenzie Drive.

Of the approximately 900 hectares of these Future Urban Area lands, an estimated 600 hectares will be developed with new communities. The remaining 300 hectares will be developed as employment lands.





# Future Urban Area

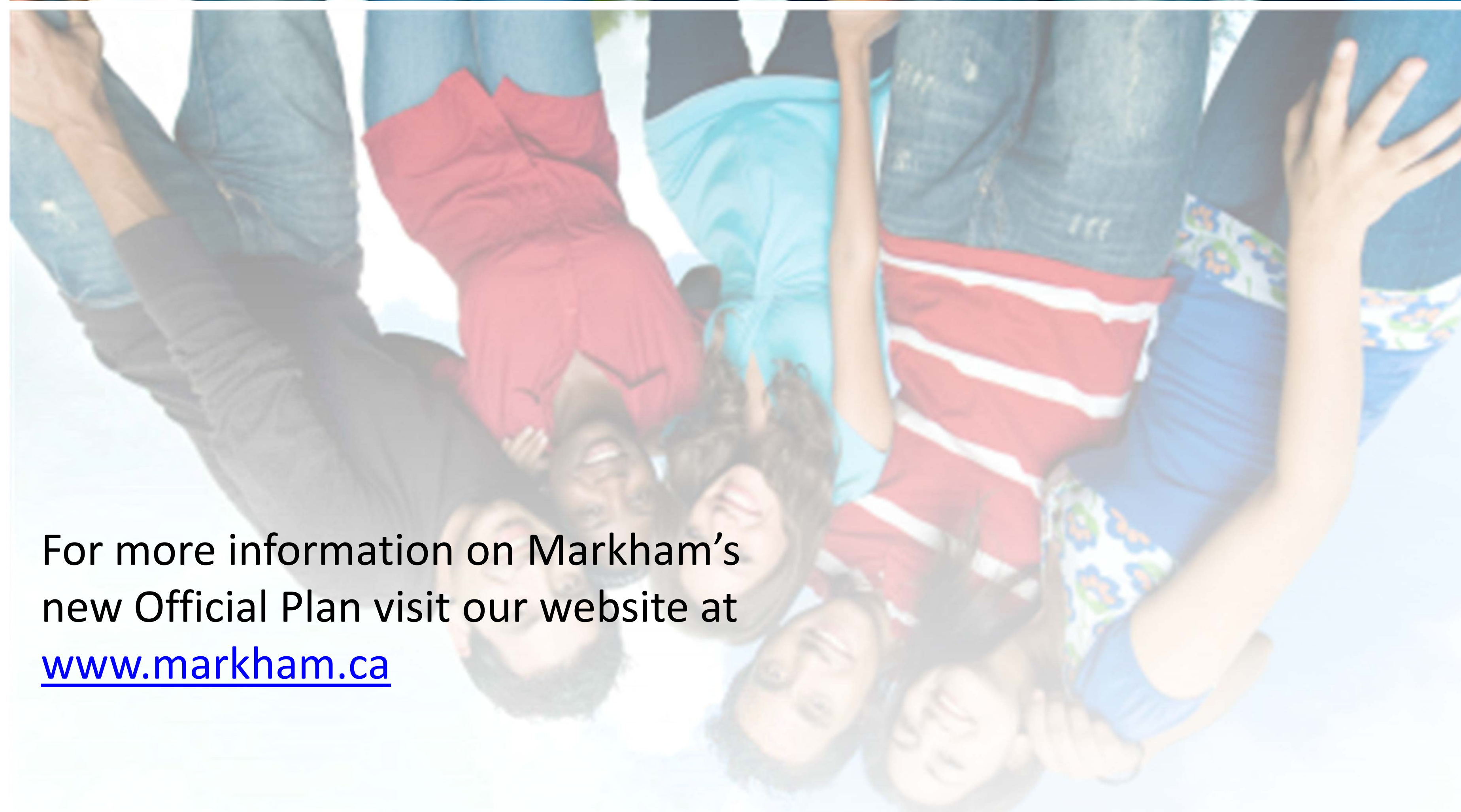


**The Future Urban Area lands will be planned and designed for sustainable and innovative neighbourhoods and employment areas.** The detailed planning required to bring the Future Urban Area in northwest Markham on-stream is outlined below.





# Next Steps



For more information on Markham's new Official Plan visit our website at [www.markham.ca](http://www.markham.ca)

Over the next three months, staff will be consulting with community groups, agencies, First Nations and Metis and other interested parties.

## Join us at one of our upcoming Community Open House

<b>Milliken Community</b> (Markham Civic Centre)	<b>November 14, 2012</b>
<b>Markham Community</b> (Markham Museum)	<b>November 21, 2012</b>
<b>Thornhill Community</b> (Thornlea Secondary School)	<b>December 3, 2012</b>
<b>Unionville Community</b> (Markham Civic Centre)	<b>December 10, 2012</b>

An additional public meeting will be held in early 2013.

Following the completion of public consultation, a revised Official Plan will be brought to Council.

Once the Plan is adopted by Markham Council, it will be forwarded to York Region for approval.