

8.0 > LAND USE, DENSITY AND BUILT FORM

The policies of this section build upon and supersede those in Section 9 of Volume 1 of the Official Plan.

While the policies of Sections 4-7 focus on the hard and soft infrastructure needed to support a vibrant, green and livable downtown, this section focuses on how land in the VMC should be used, the appropriate intensity of development in different areas and the forms it can take. The land use and physical vision behind the policies of this section is of a high density, mixed-use downtown core centred on the subway station, flanked by neighbourhoods containing a variety of building types, with employment uses providing a transition to Highway 400 to the west and industrial lands to the east. Buildings in all areas of the VMC, and all types, have a responsibility to help define the public realm, bring vitality to streets and parks, and contribute positively to the image of Vaughan's downtown.

The policies in this section support the objectives set out in Section 3, specifically Objectives 3.1 - 3.5 and 3.10. The further intent of the policies in this section is to:

- Accommodate the Provincial, Regional and City growth targets for the VMC.
- Encourage a wide range of uses and built forms in the VMC.
- Capitalize on and support rapid transit infrastructure, and facilitate the establishment of a downtown, by concentrating density around the planned subway and VIVA stations.
- Promote the development of diverse neighbourhoods with a variety of housing choices, including units suitable for families and a significant proportion of affordable housing.
- Ensure future development includes office uses and supports a live-work balance in the VMC.
- Focus retail development in the downtown core, on key streets, and ensure commercial uses contribute to an active pedestrian realm.
- Ensure the built form of development frames streets and open spaces and supports an inviting, comfortable and active public realm.
- Promote architectural excellence and the creation of a distinctive, high quality image for the VMC.

8.1 General Land Use and Density Policies

8.1.1 Schedule G delineates the following land use precincts in the VMC:

- Station Precinct (mixed-use)
- South Precinct (mixed-use)
- Neighbourhood Precincts (primarily residential)
- Technology Precincts (primarily employment)

Where the boundary of a land use precinct abuts a planned road, minor modifications to the boundary shall be permitted to align it with the precise location of the road. Where the boundaries of a land use precinct abut an existing road, any modifications to the boundary shall require an amendment to this plan. As specified in the subsections below, a range of uses is permitted in each of the land use precincts identified in Schedule G.

refer to
schedule G

8.1.2 The VMC is intended to accommodate a minimum of 5,000 new office jobs by 2031. Schedule H identifies areas in the VMC where office uses are encouraged, permitted and required.

refer to
schedule H

8.1.3 The VMC is intended to accommodate a minimum of 1,500 new retail and service jobs by 2031. Schedule I identifies areas for retail uses in the VMC where street-related commercial or public uses, including retail stores, restaurants, places of entertainment, personal and business services, professional offices and public institutions, shall be required or permitted on the ground floors of mixed use buildings. Single-storey commercial uses and drive-through establishments shall not be permitted in the VMC.

refer to
schedule I

8.1.4 The VMC is intended to accommodate a minimum of 12,000 residential units, in order to accommodate a significant proportion of Vaughan's projected population growth to 2031. A minimum of 35% of new housing units shall be *affordable*. The affordable housing shall comprise a range of compact housing forms and tenures and include intrinsically affordable units for low and moderate income households. As set out in Policy 7.5.1.2 of Volume 1 of the Official Plan, the City shall work with York Region to develop and affordable housing implementation framework. Subject to the implementation framework, rezoning applications for residential development may be required to include an Affordable Housing Plan that describes how these goals will be met on each development block or, where two or more blocks are proposed to be rezoned, how they will be met over multiple blocks.

HOUSING

8.1.5 To attract and accommodate households with children, at least half of the dwelling units in a *significant development* shall be encouraged to have two or more bedrooms.

8.1.6 Notwithstanding any of the policies of this section, previously approved and existing uses in the VMC shall be permitted, subject to Policy 9.2. Nevertheless, where existing uses are not consistent with the vision and objectives of this plan, redevelopment shall be encouraged.

8.1.7 Through the policies of this plan, the City shall seek to meet or exceed an overall density target of 200 people and jobs per hectare by 2031 in the Urban Growth Centre within the VMC, as defined in Schedule A. Notwithstanding the policies of Sections 8.2-8.4, residential uses shall not be permitted within the VMC outside the Urban Growth Centre until 8,000 residential units have been built or are under construction in the Urban Growth Centre, or until the City is otherwise satisfied the density target will be achieved.

DENSITY

refer to
schedule A

8.1.8 Schedule J establishes the maximum and minimum densities in the VMC, expressed as floor space indices (FSI). No development, except a public school, shall have a density

refer to
schedule J

lower than the minimum FSI identified in Schedule J or a density higher than the maximum FSI identified in Schedule J. The FSI of a development is calculated by dividing the gross floor area by the area of the lot. The land area to be used for the calculation of permitted density shall include the land used for buildings, off-street parking and servicing areas, private streets and driveways, and private landscaped open space and shall exclude land for public streets, parks and other public infrastructure. The calculation of gross floor area shall not include the floor area of underground parking, bicycle parking and public transit uses, such as subway entrances and bus terminals.

8.1.9 As per Policy 9.2.1.8 of Volume 1 of the Official Plan, the use of the maximum FSI to justify extra height, the use of the maximum height to justify extra density, or use of either of those regulations to deviate from the other built form policies of this plan will be deemed to meet neither the intent nor spirit of this plan.

8.1.10 Notwithstanding Policy 8.1.8, where land is required to be conveyed to the City for the purposes of constructing or improving a major collector or minor arterial street, the area of the land to be conveyed shall be included in the land area used to calculate permitted density. In such cases, minor increases to the maximum permitted height on the site, as established in this plan, may be permitted, but only if it has been demonstrated that the other built form policies of the plan cannot be satisfied without increasing the height limit.

8.1.11 The City anticipates the use of bonusing provisions under Section 37 of the Planning Act to secure a range of public benefits in the VMC. In addition to the community benefits identified in Policy 10.1.2.8 of Volume 1 of the Official Plan that may qualify for bonusing, the following benefits may also qualify:

- secondary subway entrances in Millway Park;
- indoor public bicycle parking facility;
- contributions or facilities for the School Boards that optimize the size and use of school sites;
- emergency services facilities;
- dedicated structured public parking (below or above grade).

8.1.12 All development on lands adjacent to Provincial highways, including roads and buildings, shall be set back a minimum of 14 metres from the highway right-of-way.

8.1.13 Development shall not be permitted in Special Study Area A (West) identified on Schedule G until the final road alignments in the area have been determined to the satisfaction of the City, the Region of York and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

8.1.14 Proposed residential and other sensitive land uses close to existing industrial uses shall demonstrate compatibility and, where necessary, mitigate the impact of the existing use in terms of noise, vibration, air quality, lighting, overlook and traffic generation, in general accordance with all Provincial and municipal guidelines.

BONUSING

refer to
schedule G

NOISE AND VIBRATION

8.1.15 Further to Policy 8.1.14, the development of residential and other sensitive land uses shall have regard for potential noise and vibration impacts from industrial uses and major roads within and in proximity to the VMC. Applications for residential development and other sensitive land uses within the zones defined below shall include a noise and vibration study to the satisfaction of the City in consultation with CN and transit agencies, to identify any appropriate measures to mitigate adverse impacts from the source of noise and vibration:

- within 1,000 metres of the MacMillan Rail Yard
- within 300 metres of an industrial use
- within 300 metres of Highways 400 and 407
- within 100 metres of Highway 7, the subway or a bus station

8.1.16 Development adjacent to the subway line and station shall be subject to the policies of the Toronto Transit Commission applicable to such development.

8.1.17 Drive-through establishments are not consistent with the vision of a transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly downtown and shall not be permitted in the VMC.

8.1.18 The City shall review and update its Sign By-law to support the urban design objectives of this plan. Permanent pole-mounted, billboard and pylon signs as well as mobile signs shall be prohibited. Signage shall be incorporated into the design of buildings and landscapes.

8.2 Station Precinct

8.2.1 A broad mix of uses shall be encouraged in the Station Precinct, as shown on Schedule G, with a concentration of office and retail uses around the subway station. A mix of high-rise and mid-rise buildings, as described in Policy 8.6.1, shall also be encouraged.

refer to
schedule G

8.2.2 The following uses shall be permitted in the Station Precinct:

- Corporate, professional or government office;
- Hotel;
- Conference facility;
- College or university;
- Commercial school;
- Retail;
- Place of entertainment;
- Restaurant;
- Financial institution;
- Personal or business service;
- Residential dwelling;

refer to
schedule H

- Art studio;
- Place of worship;
- Daycare;
- Public institution;
- Public parking;
- Park.

8.2.3 In the areas where office uses are required, as identified in Schedule H, office uses shall occupy a minimum of 35% of the floor area on each development block, as defined by streets or open spaces, or a minimum of 35% of the floor area on combined development blocks on each side of Highway 7, where the combined blocks are the subject to a single development application. Development Concept Reports shall explain how this target will be achieved.

8.2.4 Notwithstanding Policy 8.2.2, street-related commercial uses, including retail stores, restaurants, places of entertainment, personal and business services, and professional offices shall be located on the primary, secondary and tertiary commercial streets identified in Schedule I, in mixed-use buildings. In addition, neighbourhood-oriented retail uses may be permitted on other streets. On the portions of Highway 7 and Jane Street where street-related commercial uses are required, such uses shall be continuous, interrupted only by building lobbies, transit station entrances or other public uses. Retail fronting these streets shall be permitted to occupy the second and third floors of buildings, in addition to the ground floor.

8.2.5 Consistent with Policy 4.1.3, retail and service commercial uses shall not be permitted below grade, except in the basements of buildings adjacent and connected to the subway station, where a limited number of such uses may be permitted.

8.3 South Precinct

8.3.1 A mix of uses shall be encouraged in the South Precinct, as shown on Schedule G, with a high proportion of office uses overall and retail on Interchange Way. The South Precinct is also a preferred location for a post-secondary institution. A mix of mid-rise and low-rise buildings, as described in Policy 8.6.1, shall be encouraged in the South Precinct, and high-rise buildings up to 15 storeys may also be appropriate subject to Policy 8.6.15.

8.3.2 The uses permitted in the Station Precinct, as set out in Policy 8.2.2, shall also be permitted in the South Precinct.

refer to
schedule G

8.3.3 Street-related commercial uses in the South Precinct, including retail stores, restaurants, places of entertainment, personal and business services, and professional offices shall be located on Interchange Way. In addition, small-scale, neighbourhood-oriented retail uses, such as convenience stores, dry cleaners, banks, cafes and restaurants, may be permitted on other streets.

8.4 Neighbourhood Precincts

8.4.1 The Neighbourhood Precincts, as shown in Schedule G, shall be developed primarily with residential uses, complemented by community amenities such as schools, parks, community centres and daycare facilities, as required. A mix of high-rise, mid-rise and low-rise buildings, as described in Policy 8.6.1, and a mix of apartment dwellings and townhouses shall be encouraged in each of the four Neighbourhood Precincts identified in Schedule G (N1, N2, N3 and N4).

8.4.2 Street-related commercial uses, including retail stores, restaurants, places of entertainment, personal and business services, and professional offices shall be permitted on Highway 7, near VIVA stations, and on Edgeley Road and the planned easterly extension of Interchange Way, as indicated in Schedule I. In addition, small-scale convenience retail may be permitted on corner lots within Neighbourhood Precincts.

8.4.3 A portion of the lands in the Neighbourhood Precinct east of Jane Street is located within the Black Creek floodplain. Subject to the recommendations of the Black Creek Stormwater Optimization Master Plan Class Environmental Assessment Study, which is considering improvements to the Black Creek, the City shall work with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to develop special land use policies for lands currently in the floodplain, but which are not expected to be in the floodplain once the creek is improved. In the interim, development shall not be permitted in Special Study Area B (East) identified on Schedule G until special land use policies have been developed for the floodplain within the study area.

8.5 Technology Precincts

8.5.1 A mix of office and other non-noxious employment uses shall be encouraged in the Technology Precincts, as shown in Schedule G. In addition to office buildings, the following may also be permitted: research and development facilities, light industrial uses and public institutions. Hotels and conference facilities are also permitted, provided they are located

refer to
schedule G

on a development block adjacent to Highway 7. A mix of mid-rise and low-rise buildings, as described in Policy 8.6.1, shall be encouraged in the Technology Precincts.

8.5.2 All uses within the Technology Precincts shall be wholly enclosed within a building, and no outdoor storage shall be permitted.

8.6 Built Form

The policies and guidelines below are illustrated by the figures in Appendix C.

8.6.1 A wide variety of building types shall be encouraged across the VMC. Notwithstanding Policy 9.2.3 of Volume 1 of the Official Plan, they shall include the following.

- a. Low-rise buildings (2-4 storeys) include townhouses, walk-up apartments and lower scale office, employment, institutional and mixed-use buildings. Low-rise buildings are appropriate in the Neighbourhood, Technology and South Precincts.
- b. Mid-rise buildings (5-10 storeys) may contain apartments, offices, institutional uses or a mix of uses. Mid-rise apartment buildings that do not have retail on the ground floor generally shall incorporate 1-2 storey grade-related units. The perceived mass of mid-rise buildings should be reduced through vertical articulation of the façade and building step-backs at the upper floors. Mid-rise buildings are appropriate throughout the VMC.
- c. High-rise buildings (above 10 storeys) may also contain a range of uses. To maintain a human scale street wall and mitigate shadow impacts, high-rise buildings shall take a podium and tower form. Depending on the location, podiums may contain apartments, grade-related units, office space, retail uses or a mix of these. High-rise buildings are appropriate in the Station Precinct, around VIVA stations and along Jane Street. They may also be appropriate in other locations adjacent to collector roads and parks, where it is demonstrated that they are compatible with the surrounding built form planned.

8.6.2 The location, massing and design of buildings shall contribute to human-scaled street walls, attractive streetscapes, a varied skyline and an active pedestrian realm by adhering to the following urban design criteria:

Setbacks

8.6.3 Buildings shall be built to a consistent build-to line defined in the Zoning By-law, generally 2-5 metres. Maximum and minimum setbacks and build-to lines shall be guided by Figures

refer to
appendix C

A-L appended to this plan and included in the Zoning By-law. Front setbacks of up to 5 metres may be appropriate along retail streets to provide an extension of the public realm and accommodate retail displays, street furniture and restaurant patios. In areas that are predominantly residential within each precinct, a setback of 3-5 metres from streets and open spaces will provide for front yards, gardens or patios and stairs.

- 8.6.4 Generally, mid-rise and high-rise buildings shall have a street wall of at least 3 storeys from grade before any step-backs.
- 8.6.5 Other than canopies, awnings and signage, and stairs and ramps where appropriate, no building elements should be located in a setback zone. This zone should be designed to serve the ground floor uses and feature high quality landscape treatments. Front yard fencing, where appropriate, shall be low, generally no higher than 0.9 metres, and built of attractive, long-lasting materials.

Ground Floors

- 8.6.6 The width of stores and the frequency of store entrances shall contribute to a continuously active public realm and give the street wall a visual rhythm.
- 8.6.7 All buildings should have detailed and well articulated street level façades with high quality materials. Blank walls shall be avoided.
- 8.6.8 Ground floor heights on retail streets generally shall be a minimum of approximately 5 metres floor to floor, and windows shall correspond appropriately to the height of ground floors. Generally, a minimum of approximately 75% of the street-facing ground floor wall of a mixed-use building shall be glazed. Where retail is permitted on second and third floors, they shall be substantially glazed.
- 8.6.9 Generally, entrances to retail establishments shall be flush with the sidewalk. In order to maintain a strong relationship to the street, the ground floor of buildings occupied by other uses should be raised no higher than one metre above the ground level elevation.
- 8.6.10 Fixed architectural awnings should be provided for weather protection for pedestrians. Colonnades along the street and fixed soft awnings generally shall not be permitted.
- 8.6.11 Entrances to major transit, civic, or commercial buildings should be celebrated and architecturally defined, especially when fronting a public open space.

8.6.12 Large residential lobby frontages, pick-up and drop-off areas and lay-bys should be located on local streets and/or laneways and generally shall not be located on arterial or collector streets.

8.6.14 Front patios for ground-floor residential units shall be elevated from the street.

Height

8.6.15 Schedule J identifies the maximum building heights generally permitted and the minimum building heights required in the VMC, measured in storeys. Where a maximum height of 10 storeys is identified, buildings up to 15 storeys may be permitted on properties fronting arterial streets, major or minor collector streets, a Neighbourhood Park or a Public Square identified in Schedule E, at the discretion of the City and subject to the submission of materials (e.g., shadow study, wind study, elevation drawings, three-dimensional model) demonstrating no significant adverse impacts from taller buildings on neighbouring planned uses or the public realm.

8.6.16 Institutional buildings lower than the minimum heights in Schedule J, such as schools, community centres, libraries and cultural facilities, shall be permitted.

Massing

8.6.17 Buildings shall be located and massed to define the edges of streets.

8.6.18 Buildings shall be massed to minimize as much as is practical the extent and duration of shadows on parks, other public open space, private amenity space and retail streets in the spring, summer and fall.

8.6.19 Except on Highway 7, Jane Street and Millway Avenue, the upper floors of a mid-rise building shall be stepped back from the walls of the building facing a street or open space. On local streets the setback should occur at the fifth storey. On collector streets the setback should occur at the sixth or seventh storey. Exact heights for setbacks shall be defined in the Zoning By-law.

8.6.20 High-rise buildings shall consist of a podium, tower element and distinct top. Podiums throughout the VMC shall be a minimum of 3 storeys. The maximum height of podiums shall be 6 storeys in the Station Precinct and along Highway 7 and Jane Street generally. Elsewhere the maximum podium height generally shall be 4 storeys. Generally, towers shall be set back a minimum of 3 metres from the edges of podiums.

8.6.21 Tower elements of high-rise residential buildings shall be slender and spaced apart from one another to minimize shadow impacts and the loss of sky views, maintain privacy and contribute to an interesting skyline. The maximum size of a residential tower floor plate shall be approximately 750 square metres. There are no restrictions on office tower floorplates. The distance between the facing walls of two towers, whether office or residential, shall be a minimum of approximately 30 metres.

8.6.22 Building generally shall not be more than 80 metres long.

Building Exteriors

8.6.23 Long buildings, generally those over 40 metres long, shall break up their perceived mass with evenly spaced vertical recesses or other articulation and/or changes in material.

8.6.24 Generally, there should be variation in the building materials and design treatments on the lower floors or podiums of buildings on a block. There should also be variation in finishing materials between the podium and tower of a high-rise building.

8.6.25 Mechanical penthouses and elevator cores shall be screened and integrated into the design of buildings.

8.6.26 Generally balconies shall be recessed and/or integrated into the design of the building facade. Exposed concrete balconies generally shall not be permitted.

8.6.27 All buildings in the VMC should be finished with high quality, enduring materials, such as stone, brick and glass. Glass should be transparent or tinted with a neutral colour. Materials that do not age well, including stucco, vinyl, EIFS and brightly coloured glass, shall not be permitted.

8.6.28 As per Policy 5.5.3, flat roofs are required to incorporate green roofs, solar capture equipment and/or cool roof materials. Mid-rise buildings, particularly when neighbouring buildings are high-rise, shall be strongly encouraged to incorporate green roofs to enhance the views of those living or working in neighbouring high-rise buildings

8.7 Parking and Servicing Facilities

8.7.1 The location of parking and servicing facilities shall adhere to the following policies to ensure they are conveniently located but do not have an adverse impact on the public realm:

- a. Entrances to parking and servicing areas generally shall be on local streets and/or

laneways and should be consolidated in order to maximize and accentuate building frontages and/or front yards and minimize the number of curb cuts required. Shared driveways and parking ramps between two properties shall be encouraged.

- b. Loading and service areas shall be located in the interior of a development block, generally enclosed within a building. Where loading and servicing is visible at the rear or side of a building, it shall be screened. Underground loading and service areas shall be encouraged.
- c. Parking for residential uses, including visitor parking, generally shall be located underground. Parking for public and commercial uses, including office and retail, may be provided in above-grade or below-grade structures, in the interior of development blocks.
- d. Surface parking in the South and Neighbourhood Precincts, where appropriate, shall be located in the interior of a development block, accessed from a rear laneway and screened by buildings. Surface parking shall be permitted at the rear or sides of buildings in the Technology Precincts. Off-street surface parking shall not be located between the building and the street.
- e. Off-site parking may be permitted, provided it is located generally within 300 metres of the development.

8.7.2 Parking structures shall adhere to the following additional criteria to ensure they are well integrated with the VMC's built fabric:

- a. Above-grade parking structures generally shall be permitted in the Station, South and Technology Precincts to serve commercial and public uses, provided they are integrated with other development. They shall not be permitted in the Neighbourhood Precincts, except where they are used to reduce or eliminate an existing surface parking lot and are located at the edge of the precinct.
- b. Above-grade parking structures generally shall be accessed from a local street and located in the middle of a block, behind other uses fronting the street. The facade of an above-grade parking structure shall include commercial, institutional or residential uses for the entire height of the structure where it faces an arterial or major or minor collector street.
- c. Entrances to above-grade or underground parking structures on public streets shall be integrated into the design of the building.
- d. Pedestrian entrances to parking structures shall be clearly identified and well lighted.

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