

Richmond Hill Centre Draft Secondary Plan Update

Addendum to the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary
Plan Study Report (October 7, 2021)

March 2023

**URBAN
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1.1 Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Update - Background and Context

Richmond Hill Centre (“RHC”), is identified in the City of Richmond Hill’s Official Plan as the City’s primary intensification area, a place intended to develop into a compact, mixed-use centre. Located north of Highway 7 and along Yonge Street, RHC is expected to transform into a new downtown for Richmond Hill. Capitalizing on an extensive network of existing and planned transit routes including the Yonge North Subway Extension, GO Transit, VIVA BRT, York Region Transit and future

407 Transitway, RHC is envisioned to become a regional destination for residential and employment growth. RHC is also identified as an Urban Growth Centre in the Province’s Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and a Regional Centre in both the York Region Official Plan and the Richmond Hill Official Plan, and is consequently expected to accommodate a large portion of Richmond Hill’s intensification over time.

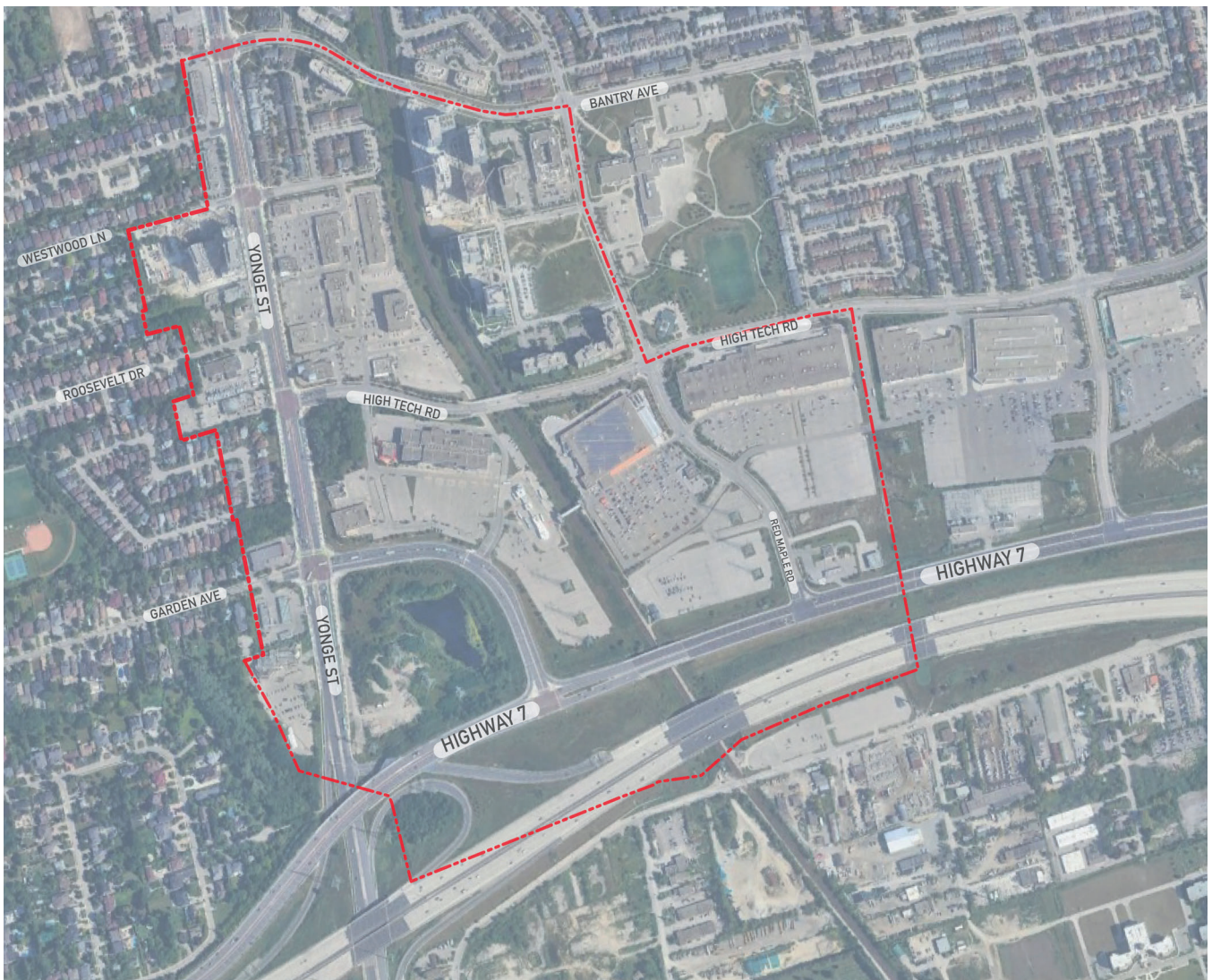


Figure 1. Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Area

To shape the future of the RHC community, the City of Richmond Hill (the "City") initiated the RHC Secondary Plan Study in Spring 2019 to create a Secondary Plan for the area. The Secondary Plan is intended to establish a site-specific policy framework for RHC's transformation, containing development principles and policies to guide expected growth. A consultant team including Urban Strategies Inc. (land use planning), HDR (transportation), TYLin, formerly TMIG (servicing), and Urban Equation (sustainability) was selected by the City to lead the development of the Secondary Plan.

The latest draft of the RHC Secondary Plan was prepared in late 2021, based on the outcomes and recommendations of the overall secondary plan process, public engagement, and background studies undertaken by the consultant team between 2019 and 2021. The 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan was proposed to be finalized and brought forward for final Council approval in spring 2022.

In April 2022, the Province of Ontario enacted an Enhanced Ministerial Zoning Order (EMZO) 'O. Regulation 344/22: Zoning Order – City of Richmond Hill, Regional Municipality of York', referred to in this report as the "High Tech EMZO", over a substantial portion of the RHC Secondary Plan area, as part of the Province's Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) initiative.

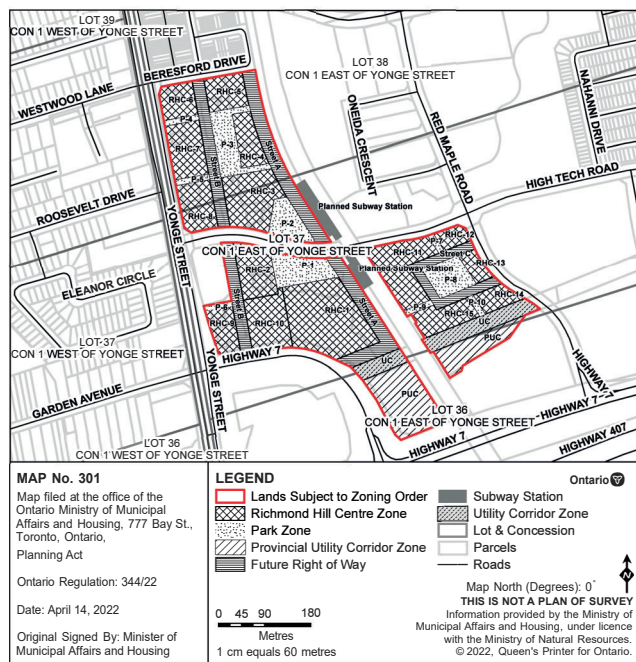


Figure 2. High Tech EMZO ('O. Regulation 344/22' - Map No. 301)

The High Tech EMZO is situated south of Beresford Drive and High Tech Road, east of Yonge Street, north of Highway 7, and west of Red Maple Road. It is approximately 19 hectares in size and comprises approximately a third of the net developable area of the RHC Secondary Plan area.

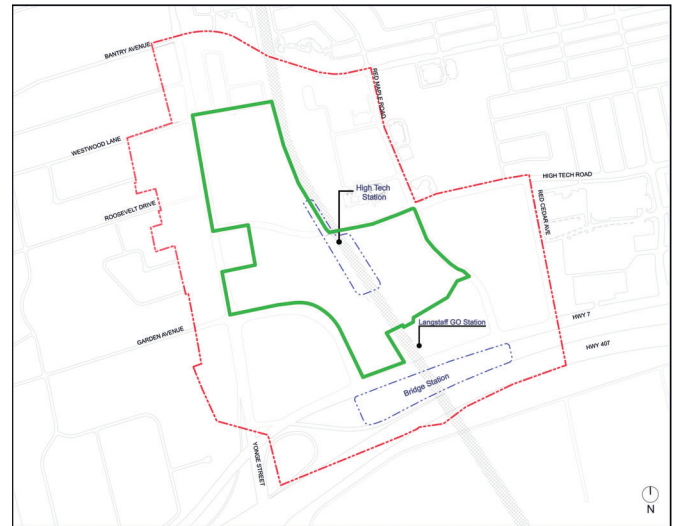


Figure 3. Approximate boundary of the High Tech EMZO in relation to the RHC Secondary Plan Area (green outline)

The High Tech EMZO enables a significant increase in development densities, beyond what was contemplated in the 2021 draft of the RHC Secondary Plan, resulting in a greater projected number of planned people and jobs. The High Tech EMZO also makes modifications to the planned street, block, and open space network.

As a result of the High Tech EMZO, the technical background studies which informed the recommendations of the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan must be updated. The background study updates are necessary to reflect the in-force High Tech EMZO-derived development permissions and associated development yields, assess the associated impacts to RHC, and reconsider recommendations for Secondary Plan policy direction.

In addition to the High Tech EMZO, a range of other municipal, Regional, and Provincial planning policy updates have been approved since October 2021, which also impact RHC and the RHC Secondary Plan.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of this Report

The purpose of this addendum is to:

- Summarize all relevant planning policy updates occurring since the October 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan that impact the RHC;
- Summarize the outcomes of the updated transportation and servicing background studies that were undertaken in the winter 2022-2023 to update baseline expectations for growth based on the High Tech EMZO-derived assumptions related to density, number of units, projected people and jobs, and planned street, block, and open space network; and
- Identify areas within the October 2021 draft of the RHC Secondary Plan draft that will need to be updated as a result of the above.

1.3 Overall RHC Secondary Plan Timeline

The RHC Secondary Plan process commenced in Spring 2019 and is expected to be completed in May 2023. The key project-related milestones are as follows:

- **RHC Secondary Plan Study initiated**
Spring 2019
- **Public Open House 1**
June 26, 2019
- **Public Open House 2**
November 11, 2019
- **Public Open House 3**
May 26, 2021
- **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting 1**
June 19, 2019
- **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting 2**
September 25, 2019
- **Technical Advisory Committee Meeting 3**
March 9, 2020
- **Special Council Education and Training Session 1**
June 19, 2019
- **Special Council Education and Training Session 1**
September 25, 2019
- **Special Council Education and Training Session 1**
May 17, 2021
- **Council Public Meeting
(Draft RHC Secondary Plan)**
October 28, 2021
- **High Tech EMZO ('O. Regulation 344/22')**
enacted April 14, 2022
- **RHC Secondary Plan
addendum and update process**
September 2022 to February 2023
- **Special Council Education and Training Meeting**
January 17, 2023
- **Public Information Meeting**
February 9, 2023
- **Final RHC Secondary Plan adopted by Council**
target May 2023

In addition to the High Tech EMZO, several land use policy-related updates at the Provincial, Regional, and City levels have been developed and/or approved since the October 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan, which will impact the final draft of the Secondary Plan. The following provides a summary of key changes to the land use planning framework that will impact the policy direction of the RHC Secondary Plan.

2.1 Bill 109 - More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022

Bill 109: More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 was introduced on March 30, 2022, and received Royal Assent on April 14, 2022. Bill 109 is a first-step response to the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Report's 55 recommendations released on February 8, 2022, including increasing housing by 1.5 million units over the next decade. There are provisions immediately in force, and some came into force on January 1, 2023.

Bill 109 amends five pieces of legislation: the *Planning Act*, the *City of Toronto Act*, the *Development Charges Act*, the *New Home Construction Licensing Act*, and the *Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act*.

Through amendments to the *Planning Act*, there are several key changes affecting the development review process and consequently the draft directions of the RHC Secondary Plan:

- There are maximum and tiered alternative parkland contributions for lands designated Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC), specifically 10% of the development land or its value on sites 5 hectares or less, and 15% of the development land or its value on sites larger than 5 hectares.
- The Minister can identify encumbered land at TOC development sites that could be conveyed as parkland.

There are other notable changes that will affect administrative and review processes, but not the content and directions of the RHC Secondary Plan, such as:

- The Minister can suspend timelines for approval, and to refer all or parts of new Official Plans or Official Plan amendments to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) for a recommendation or a decision.

Key Implications for the RHC Secondary Plan

The RHC Secondary Plan area contains the High Tech TOC (the subject lands of the High Tech EMZO), as discussed in Section 2.3.1 below. As a result of Bill 109's newly legislated parkland dedication caps and permissions, the 2021 draft of the RHC Secondary Plan must be updated to reflect the parkland obligations outlined in the High Tech TOC and EMZO and their implementing agreements.

2.2 Bill 23 - More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022

Bill 23: More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 was introduced by the Province on October 25, 2022 and received Royal Assent on November 28, 2022. Similar to Bill 109, the aim of Bill 23 is to introduce legislative changes which support Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan.

Bill 23 amends six pieces of legislation: the *Planning Act*, the *City of Toronto Act/Municipal Act*, the *Conservation Authorities Act*, the *Development Charges Act*, the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and the *Ontario Land Tribunal Act*. The changes came into force at different times: either on the day the bill received Royal Assent or on January 1, 2023.

Through the amendments to the *Planning Act*, there are several key changes that affect planning and development processes and consequently the directions of the RHC Secondary Plan:

- **Ministerial Amendment of Official Plan:** Currently, where the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is of the opinion that a matter of provincial interest as set out in a policy statement issued under section 3 of the *Planning Act* is, or is likely to be, affected by a municipal Official Plan, the Minister may request that the municipal council adopt certain amendments or directly make the specified amendment(s) to the Official Plan. In the latter case, the Minister may (by choice) or must (on request of any person or municipality) request the Ontario Land Tribunal to hold a hearing on the proposed amendment. The proposed amendments through Bill 23 permit the Minister to order an amendment to an Official Plan, and this order will have the same effect as an amendment to the Plan adopted by council and approved by the appropriate approval authority.
- **Upper-Tier Municipalities' Planning Responsibilities (amendments to come into effect on a date of proclamation by the Lieutenant Governor):** York Region has been identified as an "upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities", meaning the Region is proposed to no longer constitute a "public body" nor have the rights of appeal regarding Official Plans. Several amendments provide lower-tier municipalities, such as the City of Richmond Hill, with planning functions and approval authorities similar to those of single-tier municipalities. Transition provisions stipulate that portions of any in-force Official Plan of an upper-tier municipality

without planning responsibilities is now deemed to be an Official Plan of the lower-tier municipality to which that part applies. In the case of Official Plans or amendments not yet in effect, the approval process for those instruments continues in accordance with the Act and the lower-tier municipality (in this case the City of Richmond Hill) is deemed to have adopted the portions of the plan or amendment that apply to it.

- **Zoning around PMTSAs:** Municipalities that adopt Official Plan policies for Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) are required to amend all in-effect zoning by-laws to regulate minimum height and densities in order to conform to those Official Plan policies within one year after they come into effect. Implementing zoning for PMTSAs is not protected from appeals if the updated zoning by-law is passed more than one year after the Official Plan policies for the PMTSA come into effect, or where an amendment to those PMTSA policies comes into effect.
- **Parkland:** Bill 23 introduces a number of changes to the alternative parkland dedication requirement, the types of units that are required to convey parkland or pay cash-in-lieu thereof, and the types of land a municipality must accept as parkland dedication. The RHC Secondary Plan must be consistent with this new direction.
- **Site Plan Control Exemptions:** The list of exempted forms of development that are not subject to site plan control is expanded to include any residential development that contains no more than 10 residential units. Furthermore, matters of exterior design are expressly excluded from site plan control, with the exception of matters relating to exterior access to a building that contains affordable housing units.

Through the amendments to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, there are several key changes that can affect planning and development processes:

- **Exemptions of Permits for Development:** Development that is authorized under the *Planning Act* and satisfies the conditions and restrictions which may be prescribed by the regulations, would be exempt from requiring a permit under the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

Key Implications for the RHC Secondary Plan

Many aspects of the land use planning system in Ontario will change as a result of Bill 23. The most notable changes which are anticipated to impact the update to the RHC Secondary Plan include the:

- Potential shifting roles of York Region and the City of Richmond Hill in land use planning matters, with the City of Richmond Hill obtaining planning functions and approval authorities similar to those of single-tier municipalities;
- Shifting role of the City in the evaluation of any future modifications or development in/ around the Woodland located on the southeast corner of the Yonge Street and High Tech Road intersection.

Many changes proposed through Bill 23 will not impact the overall vision or objectives for the RHC Secondary Plan area, but will have an impact on the implementation of the Secondary Plan, such as the content of what can be addressed through Site Plan application review, which will impact the degree to which the City can advance many of its public realm objectives.

The progress of Bill 23 and its impacts to the RHC Secondary Plan will continue to be monitored and assessed by the City.

2.3 Province of Ontario Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC)

The Province of Ontario is undertaking a 'Transit-Oriented Communities Program' to advance a new development typology in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), consisting of more sustainable and mixed-use communities within walking distance of transit stations located along the province's four subway projects, GO Transit, and Light Rail Transit (LRT) projects. Through the program, various Provincial agencies, such as Infrastructure Ontario and Metrolinx, are collaborating with the private sector and municipal partners to enable the construction of higher density, mixed-use developments structurally integrated with or directly adjacent to transit stations. By integrating transit delivery with development and promoting a scale and density of development typically exceeding the planned context of an area prior to new higher order transit, this approach aims to offset station construction costs and maximize transit investment.

The Province has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with York Region which establishes key objectives and is intended to ensure collaboration to enable Transit-Oriented Communities, including:

- The creation of complete and accessible communities, with employment and residential densities that support higher-order transit in a manner consistent with good land use planning and region-building principles;
- An increase in the housing supply, with a range and mix of types that are responsive to the specific context and nature of each unique TOC site, including affordable housing and other types;
- Growth in potential transit ridership and improvements/enhancements to the customer experience, as a result of direct access to rapid transit and connections to surface transit;
- Increased transit access for residents to employment areas, while further supporting employment growth;
- An offset of the costs of building and/or operating transit; and,
- The coordinated delivery of GO Expansion and the Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE) with integrated TOC initiatives that result in an adherence to the committed project schedules, and optimize the utilization of the resources of the Region and, as required, the lower-tier municipalities comprising the Region to which the TOC will apply.

The RHC Secondary Plan area includes lands identified as the High Tech TOC and is adjacent to lands identified as the Bridge TOC.

2.3.1 HIGH TECH TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITY

In September 2021, the Province announced two Transit-Oriented Communities (TOCs) for the Yonge North Subway Extension: High Tech TOC and Bridge TOC. Both the Bridge and High Tech TOCs are within the Richmond Hill-Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre, an area identified and planned for strategic population and employment growth in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The High Tech TOC is within the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan area to the north of Highway 407. The Bridge TOC is within the City of Markham's Langstaff Area Secondary Plan to the south of Highway 407. The High Tech TOC will be served by the planned Yonge North TTC Subway, Richmond Hill GO line, VIVA Rapid Transit, York Region (Local) Transit, and the future 407 Transitway.

The Province, through Infrastructure Ontario and the Ministry of Infrastructure, worked directly with the High Tech TOC landowner to prepare a concept for the proposed redevelopment, which was shared with the City of Richmond Hill in the summer of 2021, while the RHC Secondary Plan was under development.

The High Tech TOC concept was the foundation for the High Tech EMZO. The High Tech EMZO is the planning instrument which creates the development permissions necessary to implement the High Tech TOC concept. It is important to note that the High Tech EMZO makes a few adjustments to the High Tech TOC concept, most notably the exclusion of the Woodland at the southeast corner of High Tech Road and Yonge Street.

The High Tech TOC is organized into 15 development blocks with 31 mixed use towers ranging in height from approximately 40 to 80 storeys, with the tallest buildings located closest to the transit station. Based on the prescribed gross floor areas (GFAs) in the High Tech EMZO, the High Tech TOC lands can contain:

- A total **maximum** GFA of 1,717,998 square metres, (resulting in a density of approximately 10.6 times the net developable area);
- A **maximum** 1,540,520 square metres of residential space (resulting in approximately 16,200 dwelling units based on the average unit size assumption from York Region for use in the RHC Secondary Plan area);
- A **minimum** of 151,065 square metres of office space;
- A **minimum** of 26,413 square metres of other non-residential uses such as retail and entertainment;
- A **maximum** of 4.4 hectares of parkland.

In addition to the existing municipal rights-of-way, a total of three (3) new municipal streets are proposed.

Overall, nearly 35,000 people and nearly 8,000 new jobs are expected to result from the full build-out of the High Tech TOC, which is anticipated to occur over 25 to 40 years.



Figure 4. High Tech TOC Rendering

Key Implications for the RHC Secondary Plan

The implementation of the High Tech EMZO is the impetus for this planning addendum and the update to the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan.

Per Figure 5 below, the development permissions of the High Tech EMZO enable an approximately 50% increase of the residential population in the entire RHC Secondary Plan area and an approximately 40% decrease of jobs in the entire RHC Secondary Plan area compared to the projected yields in the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan, resulting in an overall 21% increase in the overall planned growth (people and jobs combined) for RHC. It is important to note that the High Tech EMZO specifies a **maximum** residential GFA and a **minimum** non-residential GFA, so the potential population could be lower and the potential number of jobs could be higher.

In addition, the High Tech EMZO has introduced structural differences from the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan in terms of the location and number of planned streets, blocks and open space network, as well as certain built form standards for future development.

It is important to note that an EMZO prevails if there is a conflict between an EMZO and a municipal bylaw. According to Clause 47 (1.1) of the *Planning Act*, an EMZO does not have to be consistent with policy statements on matters relating to municipal planning (such as the Provincial Policy Statement) and does not have to conform with provincial plans (such as the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe). The EMZO consequently prevails over a range of Provincial and municipal policies and regulations. The City's policies for the portion of the RHC Secondary Plan that is within the High Tech EMZO lands therefore cannot conflict with the permissions of the EMZO.

In order to ensure policies of the draft RHC Secondary Plan do not conflict with the permissions of the High Tech EMZO, a review and update of the entire draft RHC Secondary Plan is required. The draft RHC Secondary Plan will have to be updated to reflect the increased and in-force High Tech EMZO-derived development permissions for a portion of the RHC Secondary Plan area. The draft RHC Secondary Plan must conform with the High Tech EMZO's prescribed development permissions and built form standards (including gross floor areas, heights, number of towers, amongst others) and street and open space network for the relevant lands, and not include policy direction that conflicts with these permissions.

	High Tech EMZO Lands ONLY	TOTAL RHC Secondary Plan Area (October 2021)	TOTAL RHC Secondary Plan Area (March 2023 - taking into account High Tech EMZO)	Differences in Yields Resulting from the EMZO in the TOTAL RHC Secondary Plan Area
Estimated Population	Up to 34,857	33,800	Up to 51,000	+ 17,200
Estimated Jobs	At least 7,939	16,500	At least 10,000	- 5,500
Total Estimated People and Jobs	42,796	50,300	61,000	+ 10,700
Estimated People + Jobs / Hectare	2,652	838	1,017	+ 179

Figure 5. Changes in Anticipated Population and Job Growth in the RHC Secondary Plan as a Result of the High Tech EMZO

2.3.2 BRIDGE TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITY

The Bridge TOC is located in the City of Markham, on the south side of Highway 407 and just south of the High Tech TOC and the RHC Secondary Plan area. The Bridge TOC is located with the City of Markham's Langstaff Secondary Plan area. The Langstaff Secondary Plan was approved by York Region in June 2011.

The Bridge TOC concept was submitted to the City of Markham in summer 2021. The Bridge TOC is organized into 19 development blocks with a total of 31 residential towers atop mixed-use base buildings and 3 standalone office buildings, ranging in height from 15 to 80 storeys, with the tallest buildings located closest to the transit station. The TOC is planned to contain a maximum of 1,568,953 square metres residential floor area and a minimum 145,701 square metres of office floor area, a minimum 17,350 square metres of retail floor area, and a minimum 17,522 square metres of future civic (community) space, including a future 3,000 square metre community centre and library, and

approximately 50,444 square metres (5.04 hectares or 12.46 acres) of parkland. The net overall density within the Bridge TOC is approximately 15.34 times the net developable site. Overall, over 35,000 people and over 9,000 new jobs are expected to result from the full build-out of the Bridge TOC, which is anticipated to occur over 25 to 30 years.

The Bridge TOC also proposes decking the subway/CN rail corridor and the creation of a public park atop the deck.

As with the High Tech TOC, the Bridge TOC concept was implemented by the Province through an EMZO titled 'O. Reg. 345/22: Zoning Order – City of Markham, Regional Municipality of York', referred to in this report as the "Bridge Station EMZO".



Figure 6. Bridge TOC 3D Model Site Plan

Key Implications for the RHC Secondary Plan

The proximity of the Bridge TOC to the RHC Secondary Plan area has implications for regional transportation and servicing infrastructure coordination.

The Bridge and High Tech TOCs are intended to be integrated and connected through future streets and multi-use paths. Currently, Yonge Street is the only north-south road connection between both TOC areas. The Bridge TOC proposes an extended Cedar Avenue, east of the rail corridor, as a north-south Primary Collector Street that will provide for a future extension north of Highway 407 and will accommodate additional north-south flows between the Bridge and High Tech TOCs. The Cedar Avenue extension has been long-identified by York Region, City of Markham, and City of Richmond Hill as an important connection between Langstaff and RHC. An environmental assessment of the Cedar Avenue extension was initiated in April 2019 and completed in October 2020.

The projected people and jobs in the Bridge TOC create additional demands on transportation and servicing infrastructure that is shared with RHC.

The RHC Secondary Plan will be reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect the appropriate connections to the Bridge TOC lands and situates RHC within the broader context of the shared goals of the City of Markham and City of Richmond Hill to realize the objectives of the Provincial Urban Growth Centre that is shared between the two municipalities.

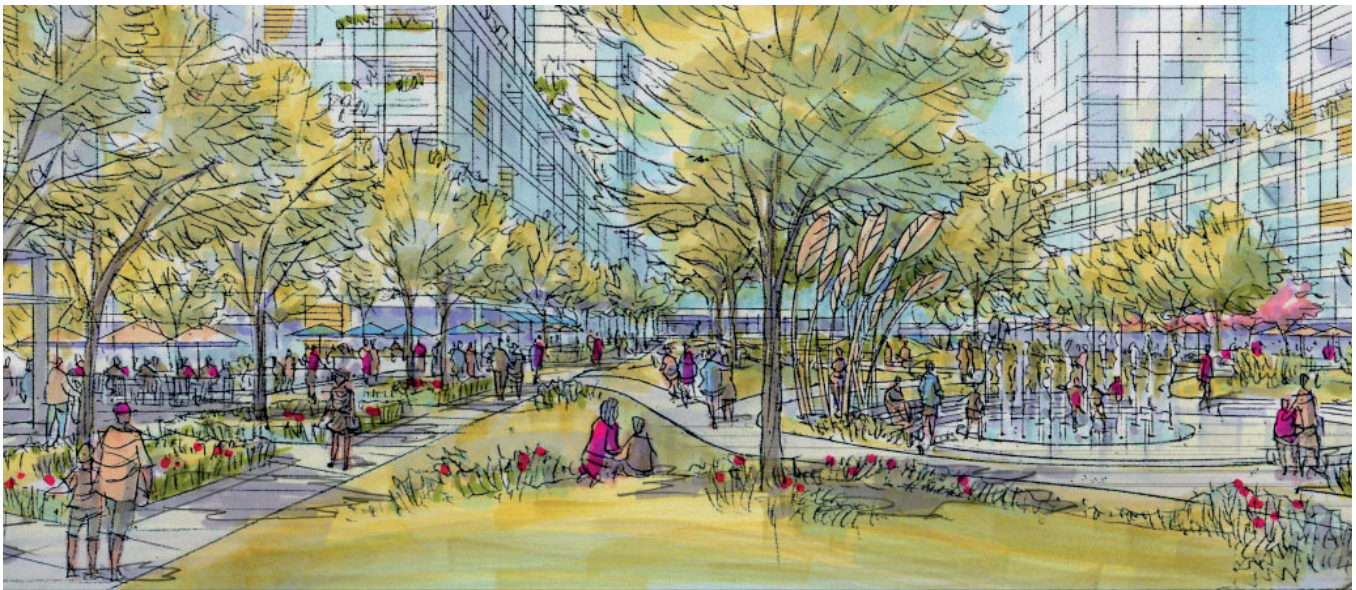


Figure 7. Bridge TOC - 'Bridge Park'

2.4 York Region Official Plan

The York Regional Official Plan (YROP) came into effect in 1994 and set the foundation for the urban, agricultural, and natural systems identified in the current YROP. In 2019, York Region commenced its Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) process to update the YROP in order to ensure conformity with updated Provincial Plans, and to reflect evolving Regional goals and priorities for future growth and development. York Region concluded its MCR with the adoption of the 2022 York Region Official Plan (2022 YROP) by Regional Council on June 30, 2022. The 2022 YROP was received by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on July 18, 2022 and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing used the authority granted to them through Bill 109 to delay the approval of the plan. The 2022 YROP was ultimately approved, with modifications, by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on November 4, 2022.

Lower tier Official Plans must conform to Regional Official Plans. Accordingly, the conformity test for the RHC Secondary Plan will now be based on the latest in-force 2022 YROP, which identifies the RHC Secondary Plan area as part of:

- A **'Regional Centre'** located along two 'Regional Corridors' (Yonge Street and Highway 7) in the Region's 'Urban Area' (Map 1: Regional Structure);
- An **'Urban Growth Centre'**, as per Provincial delineations (Appendix 3); and
- Two **Protected Major Transit Station Areas:** PMTSA 49 'Richmond Hill Centre Subway Station' and PMTSA 41 'Bantry-Scott BRT Station' (Appendix 2).

The 2022 YROP envisions that the highest density, scale, and land use mix of development will occur in strategic growth areas, including Regional Centres and along Regional Corridors (policies 4.4.2, 4.4.3), with Regional Centres serving as the primary locations for the most intensive mixed-use development (policies 4.4.27 and 4.4.29). The planning and implementation of Regional Centres will provide the highest development densities and greatest mix of uses in York Region; a diverse mix of uses and built form to create complete communities including living, working, shopping, recreation and entertainment opportunities; mobility choices and associated facilities for walking, cycling, transit, and carpooling; a continuous fine-grained

street grid; accessible human services and related facilities; coordinated sequencing of infrastructure and development; a long-term resident-to-employee target ratio of 2:1; and high-density employment centres (policy 4.4.33).

The Plan directs that secondary plans within strategic growth areas specify that a minimum of 35% of new housing units within Regional Centres and Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) be affordable, offering a range of compact housing forms and tenures, and intrinsically affordable units for low and moderate income households (policy 4.4.21).

The 2022 YROP contains specific growth metrics for Urban Growth Centres, including the RHC area, to be achieved by 2031 or earlier. The Plan directs that PMTSA 49 'Richmond Hill Centre Subway Station' will be planned to achieve a minimum density target of 1,400 persons and jobs combined per hectare for the High Tech EMZO lands (policy 4.4.43.a.ii), and a minimum of 400 persons and jobs combined per hectare for the remaining lands within the PMTSA (Appendix 2). Policy 4.4.43.a.ii) reflects the development permissions that have been enabled by the High Tech EMZO. The Plan also directs that PMTSA 41 'Bantry-Scott BRT Station' will be planned to achieve a minimum density target of 200 persons and jobs per hectare.

In cases where an MTSA (including PMTSAs) and a designated Urban Growth Centre or Regional Centre overlap, the Plan directs that the higher density requirements shall apply (policy 4.4.39).

The in-effect 2022 YROP, incorporating modifications by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, contains other updates that are generally minor in nature and/or not relevant to the RHC Secondary Plan area.

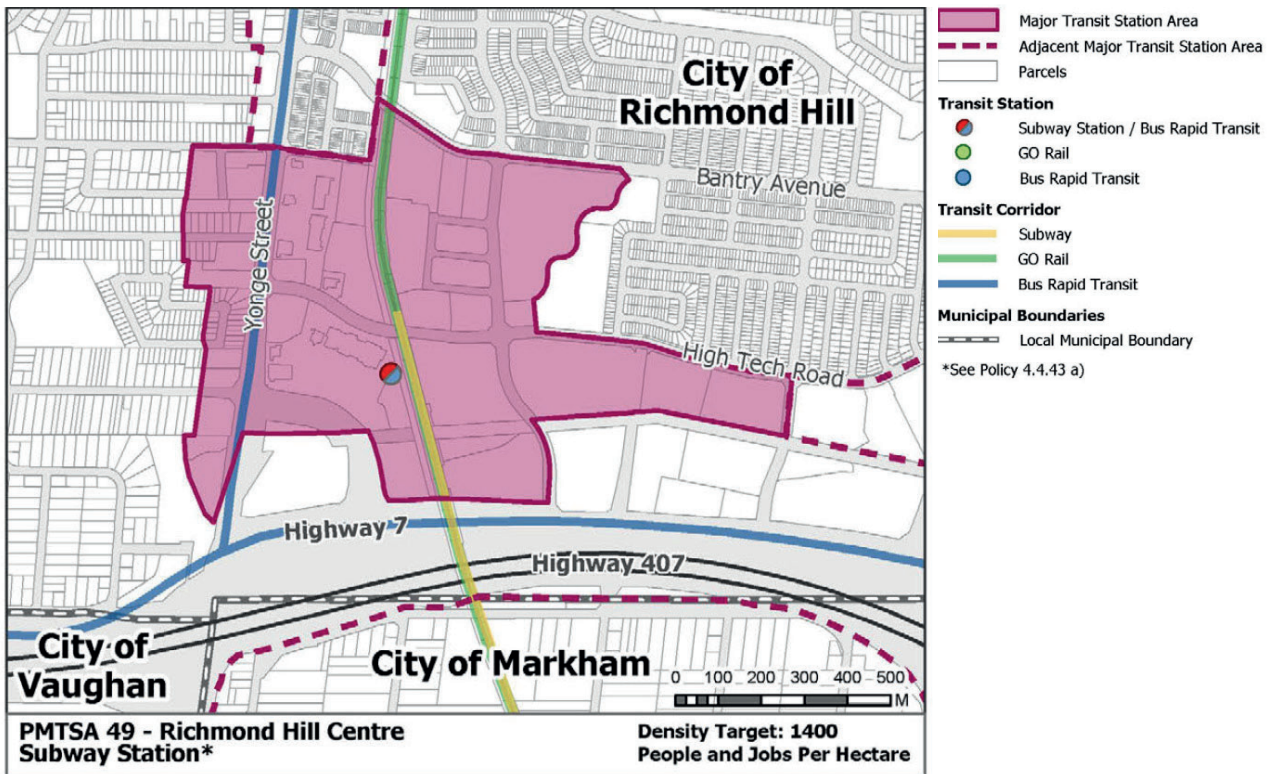


Figure 8. PMTSA 49 - Richmond Hill Centre Subway Station

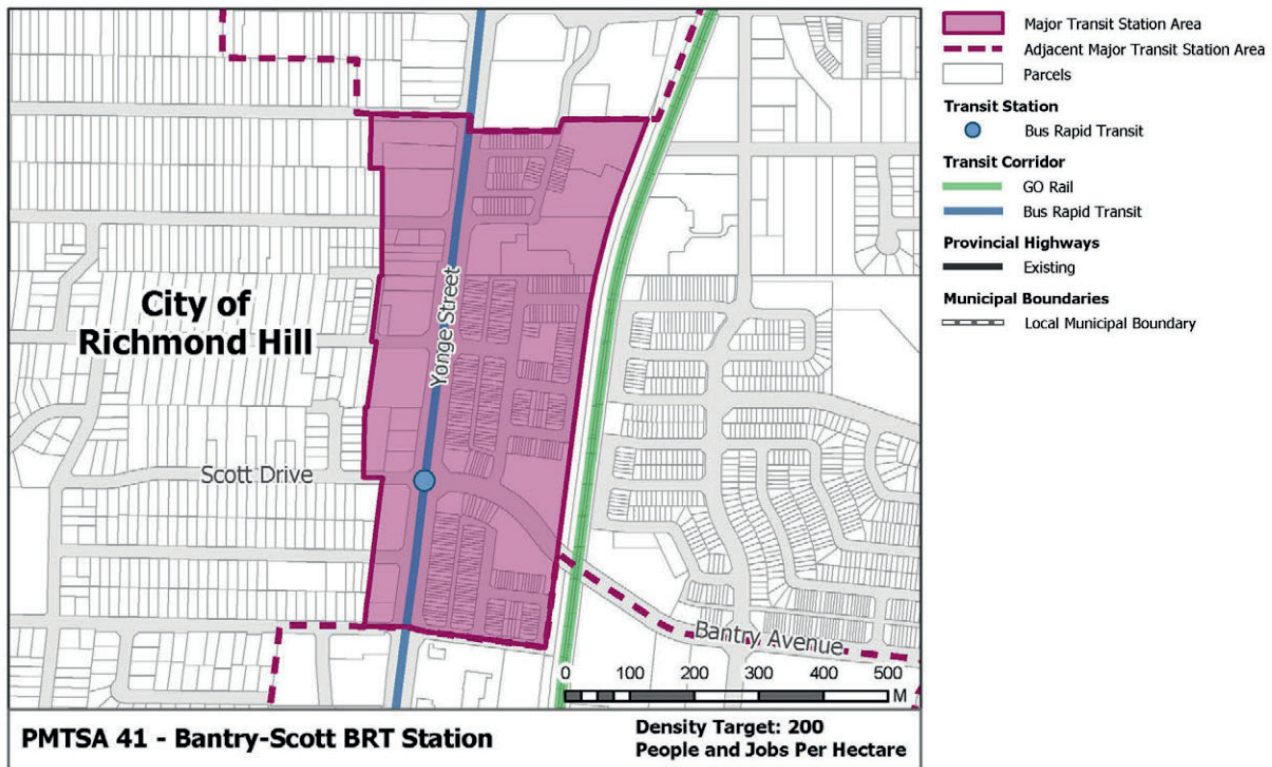


Figure 9. PMTSA 41 - Bantry-Scott BRT Station

Key Implications for the RHC Secondary Plan

The directions for the Richmond Hill Centre in the final YROP build on the 2010 YROP and are not materially different from the 2010 YROP policies. The 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan is generally aligned with and reinforces the latest Regional directions and the 2022 YROP policies for the RHC area, namely:

- reinforces the character of a Regional Centre located along two Regional Corridors (Yonge Street and Highway 7);
- meets and exceeds the Region's minimum density targets for Protected Major Transit Station Area #49 (400 people + jobs per hectare), and Protected Major Transit Station Area #41 (200 people + jobs per hectare); and
- reflects the affordable housing direction for a minimum of 35% of all new housing units being affordable within Regional Centres and MTSA's.

Given that the City's Official Plan, and Official Plan Amendments such as the RHC Secondary Plan, must conform with the YROP, the draft RHC Secondary Plan must be reviewed and updated to ensure conformity with the now in-force 2022 YROP, including an update to reflect the Minister's change to policies related to PMTSA 49.

As noted earlier, it is important to be aware that the High Tech EMZO prevails over all municipal/regional policies and permissions.

For instance, although the 2022 YROP specifies minimum affordable housing requirements in Major Transit Station Areas and Regional Centres, the High Tech EMZO does not specifically secure affordable housing within the High Tech TOC lands. As such, affordable housing will be secured through a TOC operating agreement between the Province and the City.

2.5 City of Richmond Hill Official Plan

In-Force Official Plan

The currently in-force Richmond Hill Official Plan (RHOP) came into effect in 2010 and provides land use planning directions to guide growth and development in Richmond Hill. The RHOP establishes Richmond Hill Centre as the primary intensification area for accommodating the greatest heights, densities, and range of land uses that are transit-oriented and concentrated around an integrated transit hub (policy 3.1.3.7), with density and residents-to-jobs ratios that are now outdated, based on in-force Provincial policies and the YROP. Policies specifically for Richmond Hill Centre stipulate primarily mixed-use, transit-oriented development, uses in a compact urban form and generally integrated in the same buildings, the development of an integrated transit hub, the growth of office development, at-grade commercial, retail or community uses particularly along Yonge Street, directions for heights and densities, and various design directions for the public realm, streets, open space network, and transition areas close to surrounding neighbourhoods (section 4.2.1).

Official Plan Review

The City of Richmond Hill is currently undertaking its Official Plan Review exercise to ensure the RHOP conforms to the 2051 planning horizon of Provincial Plans, conforms with the updated 2022 YROP, and reflects the changing needs, opportunities, and aspirations of Richmond Hill.

The RHOP will be updated through a series of Official Plan amendments which will be brought to City Council in several stages, with the bulk of amendments expected after the adoption of the YROP and throughout 2023. Amendments related to Centres and Corridors are anticipated in Fall/Winter 2023.

Key Directions Report for the Richmond Hill Official Plan Update

Through its Official Plan Review exercise, the City of Richmond Hill has signaled and adopted several key RHOP directions and amendments so far. The 'Key Directions Report for the Richmond Hill Official Plan Update' (November 2021) contains a preview of the anticipated types of updates, including the following key directions relevant to the RHC Secondary Plan area:

- Update policies, mapping, and definitions to conform with applicable Provincial Plans and the York Region Official Plan (2.7.2.1);
- Maintain the 2010 urban structure framework, with minor changes to align with Regional direction (Big Move 1), recognize MTSA's within the intensification hierarchy, and build "live-work-play" hubs, by directing context appropriate growth along the Yonge Street corridor, from Highway 7 to Bloomington Road (amongst others) (2.1.2.1);
- Support density with public realm elements that are commensurate with the proposed level of build-out density, and ensure that density is in keeping with directions set out in other City master plans (2.3.2.2);
- Recognize opportunities for privately owned publicly accessible spaces ("urban plazas") within the City's park typologies and open space system (2.2.2.3.1);
- Require 5% of new dwelling units in multi-unit residential developments with 20 or more proposed units to include units with 3 or more bedrooms (2.3.2.2);
- Within Centres, require (not simply encourage) a mix of use within sites, including office, commercial, community services, and entertainment (2.3.2.2);
- Apply "complete streets" principles which prioritize active transportation (2.3.2.3);
- Within intensification areas, promote development of spaces that are flexible in their use and can evolve over time as areas become more established (2.4.2.2);
- Provide a vibrant, noteworthy "main street" character on Yonge Street, which is vital for business attraction (2.4.2.1); and
- Add new policies to enable Inclusionary Zoning to increase the supply of affordable housing (2.6.2.1)

Official Plan Amendments 18.3 and 18.4

In June and July 2022, two ‘foundational’ Official Plan Amendments (OPAs) reflecting the ‘Key Directions Report’ were adopted by Council: Amendment 18.3 and Amendment 18.4. Both amendments were approved by York Region in September 2022. Appeals to both OPAs were made by a single appellant. As these appeals are very narrowly scoped, the balance of the OPAs are in full force and effect.

The purpose of Amendment 18.3 was to address and implement several main objectives of the ‘Key Directions Report’, including an update to the Official Plan’s Vision Statement, update to the city structure, clarification of the elements of the intensification hierarchy, addition of a new mobility hierarchy, introduction of new targets related to greenhouse gas emission reduction and tree canopy cover, and updates/clarifications to affordable housing, climate change, sustainable development, and urban design directions. The Amendment’s proposed City Structure continues to designate Richmond Hill Centre as a Regional Centre with the highest densities and greatest mix of uses, intending it to be a vibrant urban mixed-use centre, a place for major office growth, and focused around a major new inter-modal transit hub.

The purpose of Amendment 18.4 was to also address and implement several main objectives of the ‘Key Directions Report’, including recommendations set out in the City’s Affordable Housing Strategy (2021), and to also put into action measures that seek to facilitate the creation of complete communities, respect distinguishing features of neighbourhoods, and improve residents’ access to activities, services, and day-to-day needs within a 15-minute walking distance from their home. This Amendment is focused on Neighbourhoods, and is not as relevant to the RHC Secondary Plan area.

Key Implications for the RHC Secondary Plan

The RHC Secondary Plan will be an amendment to the latest in-force RHOP. The RHC Secondary Plan is proposed to be inserted as a new chapter in the RHOP, along with necessary technical amendments to various sections of the RHOP to fully integrate the RHC policy direction into the RHOP. The draft RHC Secondary Plan will be reviewed to ensure it conforms with recently adopted RHOP policies and has adequate regard for emerging direction and language in the RHOP.

It is anticipated that the final new RHOP will not result in the need for material changes to the RHC Secondary Plan, given that already-approved Official Plan Amendment 18.3 contains a City Structure which continues to designate Richmond Hill Centre as a Regional Centre with the highest densities and greatest mix of uses, aligning with the YROP.

2.6 City of Richmond Hill Transportation Master Plan

The City of Richmond Hill has initiated a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to update and integrate the City's Transportation Master Plan, Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan, and Trails Plan into one document and to align with the York Region Official Plan (2022), Richmond Hill Official Plan Update, and Richmond Hill Development Charges Update. The TMP will identify long-term road and transportation infrastructure needs and servicing strategies within the City to the year 2051, including proactively planning for walking, cycling, recreational trail, and road networks, as well as supporting the City's goals for a vibrant and connected community.

As of the time of writing of this report, the TMP update is an ongoing process and draft recommendations are subject to public input and changes.

It is anticipated that the TMP will be completed by late 2023.



Figure 10. City of Richmond Hill mobility hierarchy

Key Implications for the RHC Secondary Plan

Key draft directions in the TMP for the RHC Secondary Plan area include:

- Two new streets identified as “Local Roads Subject to Other Plans” (to conform with the EMZO’s proposed street network)
- The expansion of the active transportation network through key moves such as:
 - An east-west multimodal connection extending eastward from Garden Avenue, over the rail corridor and to Bayview Avenue;
 - A priority spine route along the rail corridor through the RHC Secondary Plan area to connect with the 16th-Carrville BRT Station PMTSA and Weldrick Road;
 - Various active transportation infrastructure throughout the RHC Secondary Plan area, including in-boulevard multi-use pathways and cycle tracks; and
 - A new north-south collector road on the west side of the RHC Secondary Plan area, located west of and generally parallel to Yonge Street.

The TMP emphasizes sustainable transportation modes throughout the City and particularly in RHC (per the mobility hierarchy shown in Figure 10), including physically-separated active transportation facilities which should be incorporated into new road design, retrofitted within the existing road network, and/or provided as off-road trail connections.

SUMMARY OF UPDATED TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

As part of the 2021 RHC Secondary Plan Study, a Transportation Analysis Report (TAR) was prepared by HDR Inc. to inform the development of the 2021 draft of the RHC Secondary Plan. An updated transportation analysis and addendum report were prepared by HDR Inc. in March 2023 in order to update the recommendations of the 2021 TAR to address the impacts of updated development density permissions, population and job projections, and road networks resulting from the High Tech EMZO and the Bridge EMZO.

The results of the analysis found that overall traffic volumes and congestion increased significantly as a result of the increased permitted densities, with numerous corridors and screenlines approaching or exceeding capacity in all directions. Intersection-level delays also worsened, with the number of intersections experiencing Level of Service (LOS) 'E' or worse increasing from five to six.

Of particular note is the increased congestion on High Tech Road where it crosses the rail corridor. This increased congestion may be partly attributable to the fact that the EMZO does not contain the Garden Avenue extension proposed by the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan. Without the Garden Avenue extension crossing over the rail corridor, the High Tech Road rail crossing has gone from 'uncongested' to 'approaching exceeding capacity' (depending on the travel direction and time of day). While the road network in the RHC can function without the Garden Avenue extension rail crossing, traffic volumes are impacted without this crossing.

Key Recommendations

To mitigate the impacts of these increased traffic volumes, the 2023 transportation addendum report recommends implementing the Travel Demand Management (TDM) strategies outlined in the 2021 TAR, with a strong focus on promoting mode shift away from auto modes and toward transit or active modes. This can be done using strategies such as:

- Continuing to promote a fine-grained street and movement network which promotes additional paths of movement for all modes, especially across major barriers such as rail corridors;
- Making use of mid-block connections for active modes so that the active transportation network can be denser than the auto street grid;
- Implementing a pedestrian and cycling crossing over the rail corridor north of High Tech Road;
- Prioritizing transit and active modes in intersection and road cross-section designs;
- Implementing the City's Parking and TDM Strategy for New Developments;
- Implementing the Mobility Hub concept to improve integration of multiple modes of travel;
- Mitigating infiltration of cut-through traffic on local streets through various modal prioritization and traffic calming and enforcement measures; and
- Supporting the development of and coordinating with other major transit services in the area.

New recommendations include:

- Encouraging the development of multimodal connections over the rail corridor, such as the previously proposed Garden Avenue extension rail crossing (ideally as a continuous east-west street supporting both active and automobile modes, but at a minimum, as a major pedestrian and cycling connection) to improve continuity and connectivity of the transportation infrastructure throughout the RHC Secondary Plan study area.
- Implementing transit priority measures on the Yonge Street/Highway 7 connector to ensure this critical connection is sufficiently able to serve buses accessing the Bridge Station bus terminal.

SUMMARY OF UPDATED SERVICING ANALYSIS

As part of the 2021 RHC Secondary Plan Study, a servicing analysis was prepared by TMIG Ltd. to inform the development of the 2021 draft of the RHC Secondary Plan. An updated servicing analysis and addendum report were prepared by TYLin (formerly TMIG Ltd.) in March 2023 in order to update the recommendations of the 2021 servicing analysis to address the impacts of updated development density permissions, population and job projections, and road networks resulting from the High Tech EMZO.

Key Recommendations

Water Servicing

The results of the water servicing analysis anticipate that some existing watermains will need to be replaced as they are currently in locations that do not suit the proposed streets and blocks layout. All new development will need to have an adjacent 300 mm watermain to achieve the required residual pressures under peak hour demands and maximum day plus fire flow scenario. The ultimate water distribution network has watermains on all streets and most blocks are adjacent to two streets.

Wastewater Servicing

The results of the wastewater servicing analysis indicate there is a need to establish a new west-east drainage boundary to ensure that a manageable amount of wastewater generated within the RHC is directed east to the new Regional Trunk Sewer. This can be achieved through a new sewer along the north-south roadway immediately west of the rail corridor (EMZO 'Street A') to convey the wastewater south towards the lower elevation within the RHC Secondary Plan area. From this location, the preferred option would be a gravity sewer under the rail corridor to the western limit of the existing trunk sewer on Red Maple Road. Through a preliminary review of the sewer grades for the Highway 7 Regional Trunk Sewer, a gravity sewer solution was developed, thus delineating two sewersheds (conveying wastewater to the Central Collector Trunk Sewer and the Region's Highway 7 Trunk Sewer).

A secondary option would be to pump the wastewater under the rail corridor, from a new sewage pumping station, with a potential location to be evaluated at a later stage.

Stormwater Servicing

The results of the stormwater servicing analysis indicate that the redevelopment of the RHC presents an opportunity to reduce the runoff to existing City sewers, as the overall imperviousness of the RHC lands is anticipated to decrease through the inclusion of new parks and open spaces. Any new buildings must be designed to the current stormwater management (SWM) standards, including the addition of site-controls to limit the release rate of stormwater to the municipal network. Because the street network and permitted densities of the High Tech EMZO represent a net reduction in the total runoff from the RHC, it is anticipated that no modifications to the existing SWM system, in terms of configuration or volume, are required. Furthermore, the existing local storm sewer system appears to generally line-up with the proposed road network.

There are some instances where existing storm sewers will need to be relocated to accommodate proposed new development blocks and avoid conflict with the future subway station. The Viva Next BRT project on Yonge Street will also likely introduce restrictions on the feasibility of Yonge Street service connections for properties along Yonge Street, therefore service connections may have to be focused on local or new City side streets or on easements abutting Yonge Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Study Report (October 2021) and supporting transportation, servicing and stormwater, and district energy appendices, which all informed the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan, included a number of recommendations for future study that the City of Richmond Hill should consider in order to best prepare for and manage the growth and change that will accompany the development of RHC. These recommendations included:

- Preparation of a Community Services and Facilities Study to quantify the necessary facilities and recommend the exact type and mix of facilities needed to support the planned population;
- Further study of the decking of the rail corridor as an option to create additional park space;
- Exploring potential for a District Energy System;
- Periodic review of traffic operations to implement additional improvements such as dedicated turning lanes, storage lengths, and signal timing plans;
- A High Tech Road Cycling Pilot Program to test the usage and performance of dedicated bike lanes on High Tech Road;
- Parking management strategies to be further investigated in collaboration with the City and in consideration of the City's Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy;
- A transportation monitoring program to be developed and undertaken with landowners to monitor development levels and travel patterns as the transportation network and associated improvements are implemented;
- Coordinating with Metrolinx/TTC studies for the Yonge Subway in regards to the location of and impacts on municipal infrastructure;
- Implementing a Transportation Innovation Zone (TIZ) in RHC, similar to the TIZ established by the City Toronto at Exhibition Place in 2020, for the purpose of understanding and testing emerging transportation technologies and assisting in implementing the Mobility Hub concept; and
- A city-wide Smart City Strategy, or similar proactive strategic guidance document, to guide the use and adoption of new technologies as part of 'smart city' approaches.

These further studies remain important investigations that the City should undertake to determine how to effectively implement the policy directions of the final RHC Secondary Plan and inform capital budget planning and coordination.

In addition to the existing recommendations, the changes that have occurred in the planning framework since the time of the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan have prompted consideration of additional studies that would further benefit the City in addressing and accommodating the planned growth in RHC, including:

- Best practices and recommendations for schools and community services and facilities in high density communities – To support transit-supportive densities permitted by the EMZO and contemplated by the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan, community services and facilities are expected to be incorporated as part of mixed use developments. Furthermore, the High Tech EMZO directly enables public schools in base buildings. Since mixed use developments containing public facilities are largely unprecedented in the City of Richmond Hill, it would be beneficial to prepare a guide addressing how to implement and maintain these types of facilities and how to work with the Ministry of Education and the school boards to realize this type of model;
- Guidelines for development and design in urban contexts, such as those focusing on tall buildings, accessibility/age-friendly design, streetscape design, vertically integrated spaces and mixed uses, and public spaces;
- Bird friendly guidelines for tall buildings;
- Public art plan;
- Park Master Plan for the High Tech TOC lands and larger RHC area (to coordinate and guide the type of active and passive park facilities to be placed in the new public parks and urban plazas, and to guide the look, feel, and coordination of these new public spaces with the planned active transportation/recreational trail networks);
- Establishing an urban design review panel to oversee RHC development in order to promote industry best practices and design solutions; and
- Regularly monitoring modal splits and undertaking pedestrian flow studies.

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UPDATES TO THE SECONDARY PLAN

Updated provincial planning legislation, new regional and local planning policies, and the High Tech EMZO are important new inputs that influence the content of the RHC Secondary Plan.

At a high-level, the intent and vision for RHC as established through the public Secondary Plan process between 2019 and 2021 and captured in the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan remain valid. However, there are a number of policies and schedules of the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan that will require refinement in order to demonstrate consistency with the High Tech EMZO and the updated planning framework, and to best reflect how the RHC Secondary Plan can inform development over the long term and respond to the findings of the updated technical analyses.

In addition, the following standard matters will also be addressed in the updated RHC Secondary Plan:

- The last round of Council and public feedback on the draft RHC Secondary Plan from the last Council Public Meeting (October 2021);
- Staff feedback on the latest draft RHC Secondary Plan; and
- The implications of active development applications to the RHC Secondary Plan.

The anticipated modifications to the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan are described at a high level in the following table, organized by the key sections of the 2021 draft RHC Secondary Plan. The table represents key anticipated areas of change, however additional changes may be identified through the detailed policy analysis and review undertaken as part of the secondary plan update itself.

Section Name	Anticipated Areas of Change
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reflect updated population and job yields and long-term build out ▪ Include reference to the updated YROP minimum density targets for PMTSA 49 'Richmond Hill Centre Subway Station' and PMTSA 41 'Bantry-Scott BRT Station'
Character Areas and Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update prescribed development densities within Character Areas that are impacted by EMZO development permissions ▪ Evaluate Character Area boundaries and policies (particularly regarding the Inner and Outer Transit Cores), as they relate to EMZO development permissions ▪ Ensure policies enable the parkland obligations outlined in the High Tech TOC and EMZO and their implementing agreements ▪ Review policy directions in the context of active development applications outside of the EMZO lands ▪ Review policy directions for the Yonge Street character in the context of the updated YROP and existing and emerging RHOP policies ▪ Consider modifications to Schedules 1 - 4 related to Character Area boundaries
Built Form, Height and Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revisit development standards/permissions and transition areas, particularly as they relate to the High Tech EMZO lands, to eliminate conflicts with EMZO permissions ▪ Clarify the overall approach to built form height and transitions, with the height and density peak around the High Tech Transit Station ▪ Introduce a RHC gateways policy to elaborate on the gateway identified at the intersection of Garden Avenue and Yonge Street in Part 1 of the RHOP ▪ Review policy directions in the context of active development applications outside of the EMZO lands ▪ Review Schedule 2 to consider modifications to the expression of density and to modify permitted densities to align with the EMZO's permitted densities (for the EMZO lands)
Mobility and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update policies to reflect the 2022 transportation analysis findings and recommendations, including the importance of multi-modal connections over the rail corridor, such as a multi-modal connector east of Garden Avenue and over the rail corridor ▪ Revisit policies to eliminate conflicts with EMZO directions as related to transportation-related facilities, movement, and streets ▪ Review policies to confirm there is adequate emphasis on the need for fine-grained movement patterns, active transportation, and Transit Demand Management ▪ Update Schedules 5 and 6 to reflect the EMZO street network (for the EMZO lands) and to identify any further recommended multi-modal/active transportation connections and extensions

Section Name	Anticipated Areas of Change
Parks and Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to emphasize the importance of parks/open spaces given increased permitted densities ▪ Provide more detailed direction on the desired characteristics of various types of open spaces, including linear parks and mid-block connections ▪ Ensure policies enable the parkland obligations outlined in the High Tech TOC and EMZO and their implementing agreements ▪ Update Schedule 3 to ensure proposed park locations align with the EMZO-established park zones
Community Services and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider updates to ensure consistency with the City’s Community Benefit Charges (CBC) by-law
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review approach to affordable housing policies in the context of the City’s Affordable Housing Strategy, the limitations on affordable housing in the EMZO, and the direction for affordable housing in the YROP
Servicing, Stormwater, and District Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review for modifications as necessary to reflect the 2022 servicing analysis findings and recommendations
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review for modifications as necessary, and demonstrate consistency with changes made in other sections of the Plan
Schedules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update schedules to reflect the EMZO street and open space network and identify recommended active transportation connections and extensions (as noted throughout this table) ▪ Consider modifications to Schedules 1 - 4 related to Character Area boundaries ▪ Consider combinations of separate Schedules, where appropriate, to better illustrate how different planned elements work together

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