

Town of Richmond Hill

# HARRIS-BEECH

**infill study**

November 22, 2013



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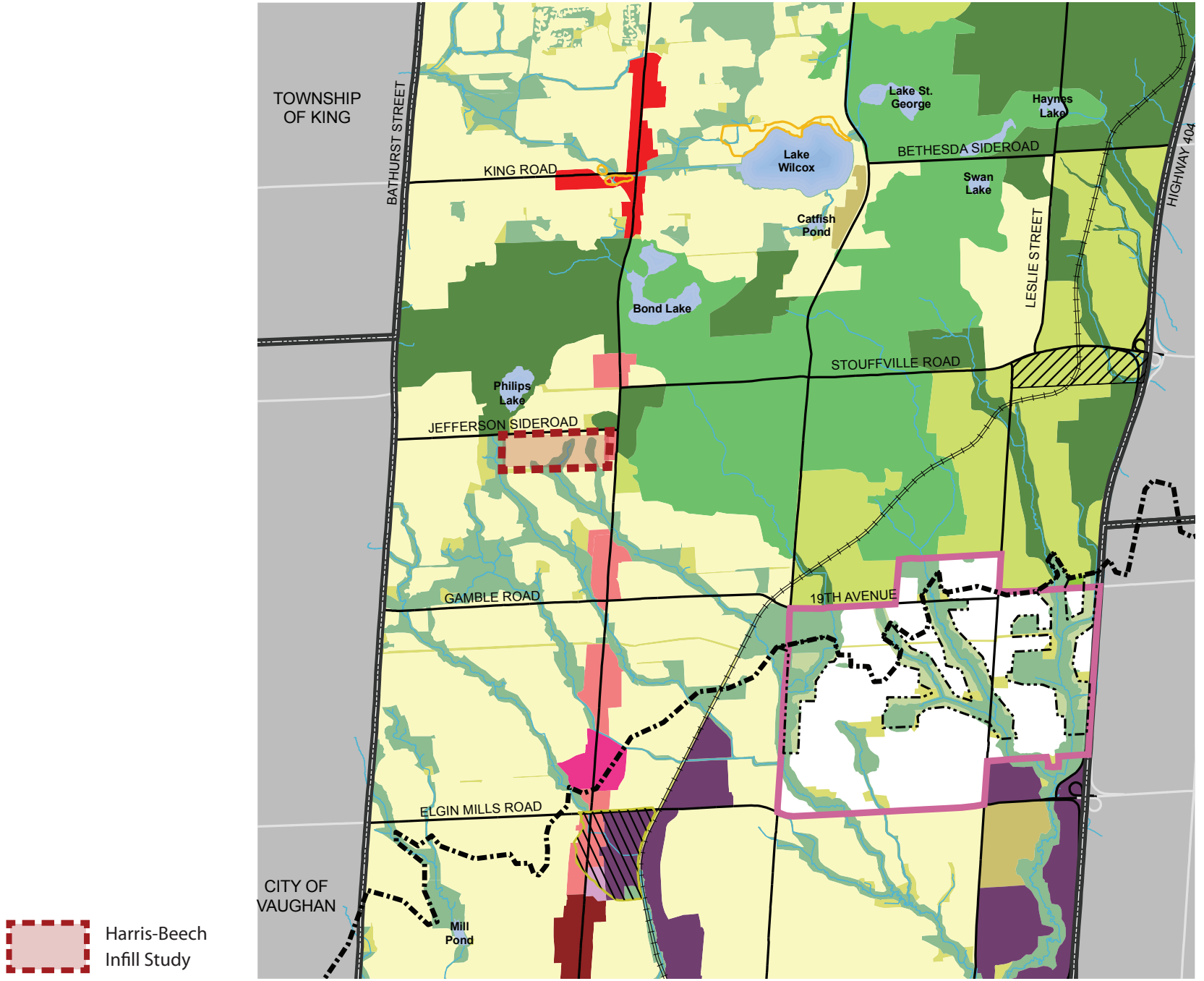


Figure 1 - Official Plan Land Use Schedule

# introduction

# 1.0

Guided by the Vision articulated in the Richmond Hill Official Plan (OP), and working towards 'Building a New Kind of Urban', the objective of the Harris-Beech Infill Study is to establish a framework to guide potential future development of these lands over the long-term. This study presents a series of development scenarios, which identify road layout, block/lot pattern and the open space system, together with a set urban design guidelines, which address built form design, streetscape design and parks and open space development.

The Harris-Beech Infill Study Area is identified in the Official Plan as a 'Priority Infill Area', consisting primarily of the 'Neighbourhood' designation, with a smaller portion of land located along Yonge Street, identified as 'Regional Mixed Use Corridor'.

The study area is bounded by Jefferson Sideroad to the north, Yonge Street to the east, the northern boundary of Subdivision Plan Number 65M-3754 and including the limits of Plan 1916, known as the Harris-Beech Neighbourhood.

The general area is characterized by significant natural areas, some of which are identified as Oak Ridges Moraine (ORM) Natural Core area and ORM Natural Linkage area. Within the study area itself, Natural Core area extends from the south and divides the site into east and west portions. These areas present both a constraint to development and an opportunity to link the open space and trail network.

Relatively new residential development (within the last 10 years), consisting largely of low-rise single-detached homes, are located to the north, south and west of the area while the site itself is characterized by existing low-rise single-detached homes on relatively large lots.



Looking west on Harris Avenue (east side)



Looking east on Harris Avenue (west side)



Looking south on Beech Avenue

# 2.0 guiding principles

*The Guiding Principles for the Harris-Beech Infill Study area are:*

## compatible development

- need for appropriate development along existing and new streets
- new development should represent a “good fit” within the existing context of the surrounding area, with respect to building forms, types and massing, street, block, and lotting pattern, landscape areas and treatments and general pattern of yard setbacks
- transitions between new and existing areas and different forms of residential as well as commercial development should be provided



Example of compatible development

## leadership in urban design

- strive for design excellence - promoting high-quality urban design, and coordination of the private and public realm, buildings and landscapes
- enhance “place-making” - to recognize and enhance the unique aspects of the area and create a sense of community

## create walkable streets and people places

- enhance connectivity and mobility - between neighbourhoods and to community amenities
- create pedestrian-oriented spaces and places



Example of a pedestrian-oriented place

# development foundations

3.0

## regional mixed-use corridor designation

As per the policies of the Official Plan section 4.6, which identifies the following range of higher order transit supportive uses:

- Medium and high density residential
- Major Office; Office
- Commercial, including automotive service commercial
- Major Retail; Retail
- Community Uses
- Live-Work
- Parks and urban open spaces

## neighbourhood designation

As per the policies of the Official Plan section 4.9 which identifies the following residential uses:

- Low-density residential uses such as low-rise detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings.
- Medium-density residential uses such as low-rise townhouses and walk-up apartments on lands that have frontages on the following:
  - an arterial street;
  - a collector street, and is within walking distance to a public transit stop, and as identified in a Tertiary Plan undertaken by the Town and approved by Council or as identified as part of a priority infill area; and
  - a local street and only in proximity to an existing medium-density residential development, as identified in a Tertiary Plan undertaken by the Town and approved by Council or as identified as part of a priority infill area

- Development within a priority infill area shall be subject to the applicable infill study and shall be assessed based on conformity with the approved infill and urban design guidelines.

## existing street edges

Along Yonge Street, the Official plan establishes design guidelines that minimize setbacks, encourages a relatively higher streetwall than in other areas of the Town, and appropriate transitions to adjacent neighbourhoods, with the goal of `Building a Strong, Vibrant Identity and Character` and creating `Walkable Streets and People Places`. Although the Official plan does not specifically speak to Jefferson Sideroad, the Town`s Urban Design Guidelines provide a vision and set of design standards to guide its design towards the same end goal.

## internal streets

- Harris Avenue and Beech Avenue are designated as local roads.

## existing character

The study area is characterized by large rural lots having an average area of 0.4 hectares (1.0 acres). Until recently, there was a large farm holding within the central part of the neighbourhood. Due to a combination of environmental and land use factors, Harris Avenue is not a continuous improved street through the neighbourhood, which results in it being comprised of two discreet areas. The westerly area is entirely residential in character while the easterly area, which abuts Yonge Street, has both commercial and residential uses. This area present both a constraint to development and an opportunity to link the open space and trail network.

# 4.0 framework plan



Green Link



New Roads



Neighbourhood park



Urban Hedgerow



Streetscaping



Pedestrian walkways

Merging the Guiding Principles with the foundations for development, the Framework Plan establishes the key structuring elements that will form the basis of the community. These include:

1. The natural features, which will be preserved, enhanced and integrated within the open space system and features of the community;
2. A centrally located neighbourhood park that is connected to the central natural feature, and that has street frontage/presence on at least two sides;
3. The existing roads, upon which a new road system should be developed. Accordingly, any new intersections will be coordinated and aligned with any existing intersections;
4. Transitions of medium scale and intensity of uses from Yonge Street to the western portion of the community and from Jefferson Sideroad to the southern portion of the community;
5. Streetscaping along Jefferson Sideroad that creates an Urban Hedgerow along this important edge;
6. Gateways at the intersections along Jefferson Sideroad (at Beech Avenue and Street A) and Yonge Street (at Harris Avenue and Jefferson Sideroad);
7. Potential trail connections to the feature at the western limit of the study area;
8. A mix and range of housing forms including medium density housing forms;
9. Potential locations for stormwater management facilities;
10. Potential locations for townhouses, a medium density form of housing;
11. A continuous east-west 'green' link that allows connections from Yonge Street to the most westerly portion of natural feature through pedestrian walkways and vista blocks.

*The Framework Plan forms the basis of the 4 Development Scenarios on the following pages. The 4 Scenarios represent several ways in which to achieve the objectives while recognizing land ownership boundaries to the extent possible*

# scenario A



- - - Study Boundary
- Natural Feature
- Park
- Low Density (Single/Semi Detached)
- Medium Density
- Mixed-Use/Commercial
- ↔ Potential Pedestrian Link/Vista Block
- ↔ Urban Hedgerow
- \* Potential Stormwater Management Pond Location
- Public Road
- Potential Private Road/Lane
- Potential Driveway Access

Figure 2: Scheme A

# development scenarios

5.0



Figure 3: Demonstration Plan A1



Figure 4: Demonstration A2

## Building on the Framework Plan elements, Scenario A proposes the following:

- Window Streets along the south side of Jefferson Sideroad which mimic the road pattern on the north side. This pattern allows views to and from the community and provides the opportunity to create building forms along this edge.
- Potential locations for townhouses along Jefferson Sideroad and as a transition from the regional mixed-use corridor along Yonge Street to the low density residential uses to the west in the neighbourhood.
- New public streets connecting Harris Avenue to Street C, a new public street parallel to Jefferson Sideroad.

- A major east-west green link that combines the streetscape along Harris Avenue, the trails within the natural feature and central park, and a series of walkways blocks.
- A secondary east-west green link located mid-block that is formed by a combination of local streetscapes and walkway blocks.

**Additionally, Demonstration Plan A1 illustrates how the area west of Beech Avenue may be developed within this context. The Plan shows the following:**

- A public road that is single-loaded along the limit of the western feature;
- Private lane that access the sites to the north and south;
- Townhouses are located to the north and fronting directly onto Jefferson Sideroad;
- Single-detached dwellings are oriented to Beech Avenue and internal lanes.

**Demonstration Plan A2 illustrates how the a portion of the most easterly neighbourhood may be developed to include a lane-based townhouse site adjacent to Jefferson Sideroad accessed by Street C.**

# scenario B



- - - - Study Boundary
- Natural Feature
- Park
- Low Density (Single/Semi Detached)
- Medium Density
- Mixed-Use/Commercial
- ↔ Potential Pedestrian Link/Vista Block
- ↔ Urban Hedgerow
- \* Potential Stormwater Management Pond Location
- Public Road
- Potential Private Road/Lane
- Potential Driveway Access

Figure 5: Scheme B

# development scenarios

# 5.0



Figure 6: Demonstration Plan B1



Figure 7: Demonstration Plan B2

## Building on the Framework Plan elements, Scenario B proposes the following:

- Window Streets along the south side of Jefferson Sideroad which mimic the road pattern on the north side. This pattern allows views to and from the community and provides the opportunity to create building forms along this edge and 'eyes-on-the-street'.
- Potential locations for townhouses centred at the intersections of Beech Avenue and Jefferson Sideroad, Street A and Jefferson Sideroad and as a transition from the regional mixed-use corridor along Yonge Street to the low density residential uses to the west in the neighbourhood.

- An east-west green link consisting of a local road streetscape connecting from the natural feature to Beech Avenue and continuing in the form of a vista block adjacent to the west feature.
- Direct road connection and views from Yonge Street to the central feature, by way of the park located at the end of Harris Avenue.

**Additionally, Demonstration Plan B1 illustrates how the area west of Beech Avenue may be developed within this context. The Plan shows the following:**

- A series of potential private lanes accessed from Beech Avenue and the Harris Avenue cul-de-sac, to service new development.
- Townhouses north of the vista block with buildings that front directly onto Jefferson Sideroad.
- Single-detached dwellings south of the vista block

**Demonstration Plan B2 illustrates how a portion of the most easterly neighbourhood may be developed to include a lane-based townhouse site adjacent to Jefferson Sideroad accessed by a cul-de-sac road from Harris Avenue.**

# scenario C



Figure 8: Scheme C

# development scenarios

5.0



Figure 9: Demonstration Plan C1



Figure 10: Demonstration Plan C3



Figure 11: Demonstration Plan C2

## Building on the Framework Plan elements, Scenario C proposes the following:

- Direct frontage lots along Jefferson Sideroad that have garage access from a private rear lane. This pattern provides building presence along the road and promotes a pedestrian-oriented and pedestrian-scaled streetscape that encourages 'eyes-on-the-street'.
- Potential locations for townhouses to the west of Beech Avenue and south Jefferson Sideroad, Street A and Jefferson Sideroad and in the transition area adjacent to the regional mixed-use corridor along Yonge Street.
- A single-loaded road along the northern limit of the central feature, and an extension of Street A to the feature, which allow for views to the feature from Jefferson Sideroad.
- An east-west green link along the Harris Avenue streetscape connecting from the natural feature to Beech Avenue and continuing in the form of a vista block adjacent to the west feature.
- Mid-block pedestrian walkways that enhance east-west connectivity through the community.
- Potential walkway blocks at mid-block locations to facilitate east-west connectivity.

## Additionally, Demonstration Plan C1 illustrates how the area west of Beech Avenue may be developed within this context. The Plan shows the following:

- A series of potential private lanes accessed from Beech Avenue to service new development.
- The elimination of the existing Harris Avenue cul-de-sac.
- Townhouses adjacent to and fronting directly onto Jefferson Sideroad.
- Townhouses along a private lane adjacent to the natural feature. This area abuts open space on two sides and is of sufficient size to function as a self contained medium density pocket.
- Single-detached dwellings fronting onto Beech Avenue.

**Demonstration Plan C2 illustrates how a portion of the most easterly neighbourhood may be developed to include a townhouse site adjacent to Jefferson Sideroad accessed by a private lane that connects Jefferson Sideroad to Harris Avenue.**

**Demonstration Plan C3 illustrates how the Street A and Jefferson Sideroad location may be developed to include a townhouses that are accessed from a private rear lane.**

# scenario D



Prepared by The Planning Partnership / November, 2013













- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Study Boundary                     |  Potential Pedestrian Link/Vista Block         |
|  Natural Feature                    |  Urban Hedgerow                                |
|  Park                               |  Potential Stormwater Management Pond Location |
|  Low Density (Single/Semi Detached) |  Public Road                                   |
|  Medium Density                     |  Potential Private Road/Lane                   |
|  Mixed-Use/Commercial               |  Potential Driveway Access                     |

Figure 12: Scheme D

# development scenarios

# 5.0



Figure 13: Demonstration Plan D1



Figure 14: Demonstration Plan D2

## Building on the Framework Plan elements, Scenario D proposes the following:

- Reverse frontage lots along the south side of Jefferson Sideroad. This pattern of development does not encourage 'eyes-on-the-street' and requires enhanced landscape treatments including fencing, walls and planting as well as pedestrian walkways to enhance permeability.
- Additionally, with this lotting pattern, a row of trees should be provided adjacent to the rear lot line, in the private rear yard, as part of the 'Urban Hedgerow' envisioned along Jefferson Sideroad.
- Potential locations for townhouses are on the south side of Jefferson Sideroad, west of Beech Avenue, and in the transition area adjacent to the regional mixed-use corridor along Yonge Street.
- An east-west green link along the Harris Avenue streetscape and terminating at a vista block located at the existing cul-de-sac.

- A walkway block from Street B to the neighbourhood park.
- Potential walkway blocks at mid-block locations to facilitate east-west connectivity.

Additionally, Demonstration Plan D1 illustrates how the area west of Beech Avenue may be developed within this context. The Plan shows the following:

- A series of potential private lanes accessed from Beech Avenue and the Harris Avenue cul-de-sac, to service new development.
- Townhouses at the north end, with buildings that front directly onto Jefferson Sideroad and single-detached dwellings within the other areas of the site.

Demonstration Plan D2 illustrates how a portion of the most easterly neighbourhood may be developed to include a lane-based townhouse site adjacent to Jefferson Sideroad accessed by a cul-de-sac road from Harris Avenue.

# 6.0

# design guidelines

*The Design Guidelines for the Harris-Beech Infill Study area address:*

**Built Form**

**Site Design**

**Landscape Design**

## 6.1 built form

### Low-Density Housing Forms:

- *Single Detached Dwellings (12.0m to 18.0m)*
- *Semi-detached Dwellings (14.6m to 18.0m)*
- *Minimum 15.0m frontage on existing streets + 12.0m on new streets*
- *lot depths below 28.0m require a minimum 13.5m frontage (i.e. wide shallow module)*
- *Maximum of 2 storeys.*



Single Detached 12m Frontage



Single Detached 13.5m Frontage

### Medium-Density Housing Forms:

- *Street Townhouse Dwellings (6.0m min.)*
- *Lane-Accessed Townhouse Dwellings (6.0m min.)*
- *Back-to-Back Townhouse Dwellings (6.0m min.)*
- *Maximum of 3 Storeys except 4 storeys on Jefferson Sideroad*

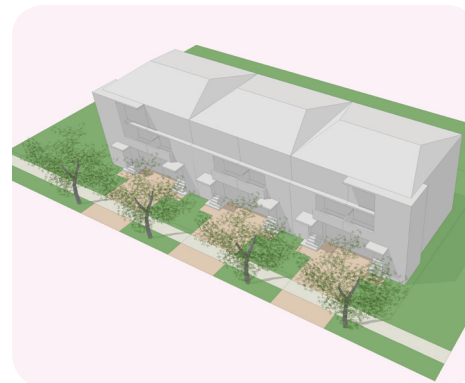


Figure 15: Front loaded street townhouse

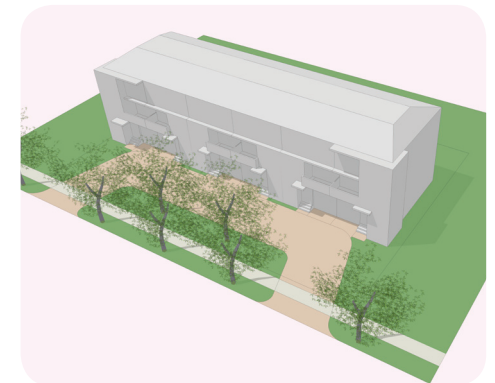


Figure 16: Front loaded lane access

# design guidelines

6.0



Single Detached 15m Frontage



Single Detached 18m Frontage



Semi Detached



Rear laneway garage access



Figure 17: Rear lane access

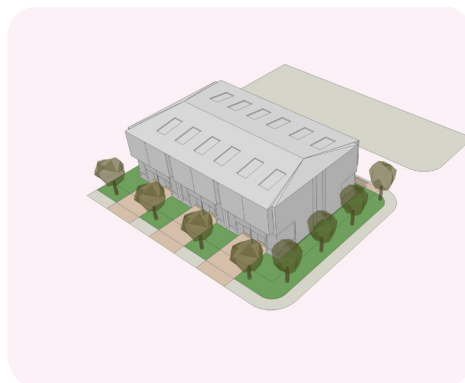


Figure 18: Back to Back Stacked front driveway access



Figure 19: Back to Back Stacked underground parking



Example of Rear lane access

# 6.0

## design guidelines

### Mixed-Use/Commercial Buildings

- Permitted within the regional mixed-use corridor lands.



Pedestrian walkway



Pedestrian plaza

### Transition Area

- Street Townhouse Dwellings (6.0m min.)
- Lane-Accessed Townhouse Dwellings (6.0m min.)
- Back-to-Back Townhouse Dwellings (6.0m min.)
- Semi Detached Dwellings only permitted where they provide a transition from townhouses to singles



Figure 20: Building height transition along the street

# design guidelines

6.0



Commercial plaza



Building oriented to corner



Coordinate palette of materials

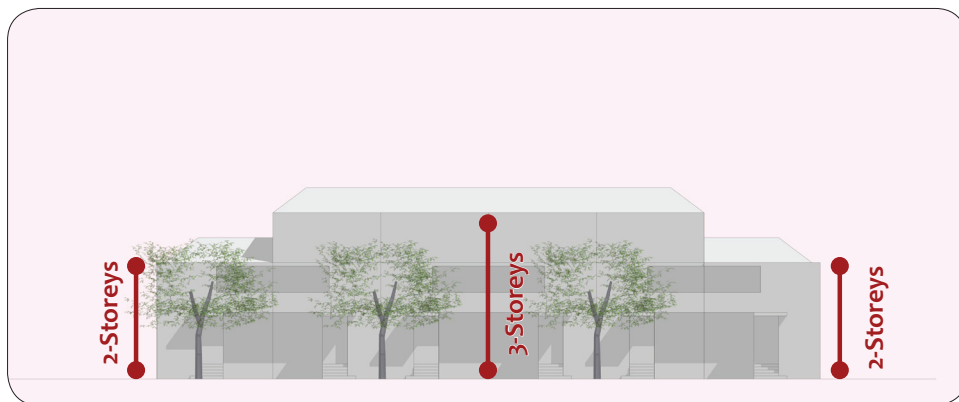


Figure 21: Building height transition within a townhouse block (one building)

# 6.0

# design guidelines

## 6.2 site design

### Buildings

- Orient buildings to the main road or gateway
- Provide appropriate massing/height at the related corner(s)
- Provide articulated facades along the main road(s)
- Use a coordinated / complementary palette of materials, details and forms

### Access/Circulation/Parking

- Minimize the potential for vehicular/pedestrian conflict; clearly demarcate pedestrian through design and signage
- Avoid large expanses of surface parking area
- Provide landscaping to minimize the visual impact of surface parking areas
- Locate loading/storage areas away from public view

### Landscaping

- Maximize permeable surface areas
- Consolidate landscaped areas
- Use a low maintenance, stress tolerant, native planting strategy
- Use landscaping as a unifying element for the community
- Preserve and incorporate existing trees into the design of the new development to the extent possible.



Orient buildings to the main road



Use of landscape elements to define the private and public interface



Views to open space



Landscaped buffer

## 6.3 landscape design

Jefferson Sideroad is the primary face of the new residential community and provides an opportunity to enhance and promote its character through landscaping. Referencing the natural characteristics of the area, the creation of an 'Urban Hedgerow' along the street will enhance the pedestrian experience, increase the urban canopy and provide a 'green' interface between houses and the street. The planting strategy for the Urban Hedgerow is to plant one row of trees within the public boulevard and one row of trees within the private lot, in a staggered pattern. For the reverse lot condition, the second row should be planted in the public right-of-way, in front the rear lot fencing. Recommended species for the outer boulevard trees include:

### Red Oak Group:

- *Quercus imbricaria* - Shingle Oak
- *Quercus rubra* - Red Oak
- *Quercus ellipsoidalis* - Northern Pin Oak
- *Quercus muehlenbergii* - Chinquapin Oak

### White Oak Group:

- *Quercus alba* - White Oaks
- *Quercus bicolor* - Swamp White Oak
- *Quercus macrocarpa* - Burr Oak
- *Quercus robur* - English Oak

### Aceraceae Family:

- *Acer campestre* - Hedge Maple
- *Acer x freemanii* - Freeman's Maple
- *Acer rubrum* - Red Maple
- *Acer saccharinum* - Silver Maple

### Ulmaceae Family:

- *Celtis occidentalis* - Common Hackberry
- *Ulmus americana* 'Princeton' - Princeton Elm
- *Ulmus americana* 'Valley Forge' - Valley Forge Elm
- *Ulmus* 'Morton Glossy' - Morton Glossy Elm
- *Zelkova serrata* - Japanese Zelkova

Recommended for the for the inner boulevard / private lot include:

### Sapindaceae Family:

- *Aesculus glabra* - Ohio Buckeye
- *Aesculus hippocastanum* - Common Horsechestnut

### Aceraceae Family:

- *Acer pseudoplatanus* - Sycamore Maple
- *Acer saccharum* - Sugar Maple
- *Acer saccharum var. nigrum* - Black Maple
- *Acer tarticum* - Tartarian Maple

### Fagaceae Family:

- *Fagus sylvatica* - European Beech
- *Quercus alba* - White Oak
- *Quercus coccinea* - Scarlet Oak
- *Quercus imbricaria* - Shingle Oak
- *Quercus palustris* - Pin Oak
- *Quercus prinoides* - Dwarf Chinquapin Oak



White Oak



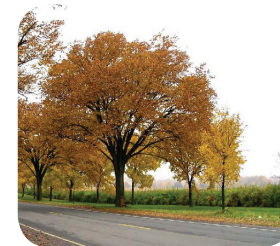
White Oak



Red Maple



Valley Forge Elm



Princeton Elm



White Oak



Scarlet Oak



Freeman's Maple

# 6.0

# design guidelines

## Gateways

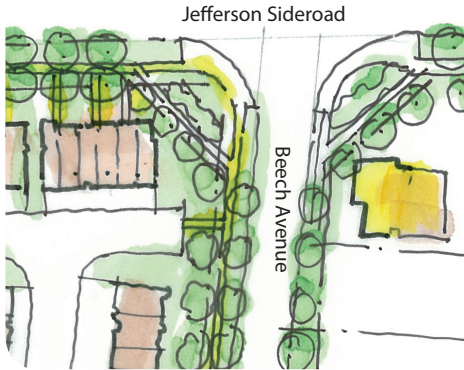


Figure 22: West Gateway

### West Gateway

- Adjacent buildings should be sited and oriented to frame the gateway
- Adjacent buildings should be designed to incorporate elements, massing, height, etc.... that help to distinguish these locations from the rest of the community
- Landscaping should also be used to create a distinct image in these special locations
- Consider including ornamental street trees in these locations

## Jefferson Sideroad / Urban Hedgerow



Figure 23: Direct Frontage Condition

### Direct Frontage (Front Yards)

- Provide landscape elements along the street line to create a transition and separation between the private and public space
- Landscape elements may include low decorative fencing located along the street line and combined with planting
- Planting should include trees species that are selected and planted to help form an 'Urban Hedgerow'

### Reverse Frontage (Rear Yards)

- Provide landscape elements along the street line to create an attractive edge to the community
- Landscape elements should include privacy or acoustic fencing in combination with planting
- Planting should include trees species that are selected and planted to help form an 'Urban Hedgerow'
- One row of trees should be planted adjacent to the rear lot line, in the private rear yard, as part of the Urban Hedgerow



### Window Streets (Local Street)

- Provide low decorative fencing along the street line, in combination with planting
- Planting should include trees species that are selected and planted to help form an 'Urban Hedgerow'



## Walkway Blocks

- Walkway Blocks are proposed throughout the community to facilitate pedestrian connectivity and, in particular, connections to green space
- Walkway Blocks are recommended to be 6.0 to 9.0 metres in width
- Include a minimum 1.5 metre wide paved walkway
- Include planting on either side of the walkway to provide screening to adjacent homes



Figure 24: Walkway Block



Figure 25: Vista Block

## Green Street

- Planting should be designed to frame views
- Green Streets serve the function of connecting green space and framing views to green space
- Plant street trees to create a connected canopy, along and across the street
- Tree species should be selected from the Town's list of approved street trees
- Select diverse species that are similar in form
- Consider incorporating decorative paving in the sidewalk at key locations



Example of a walkway



Figure 26: Vista Block

## Vista Block

- Vista Blocks are proposed in locations adjacent to natural features to provide opportunities for viewing and pedestrian connections
- Vista Blocks may vary in size
- Include seating, enhanced planting and walkways



Example of a green street

# 7.0 implementation

This section of the Infill Study describes the tools that shall be utilized for development proposed within the Harris-Beech Infill area. The tools described herein are derived from the policies set out in the Official Plan and should be read in conjunction with the policies of the Plan.

## 9.1 PRE-APPLICATION MEETINGS

In accordance with the policy requirements of the Official Plan, a pre-application meeting is required prior to the submission of applications for development. Development applications that are submitted to the Town prior to a pre-application meeting with the Town shall be considered incomplete.

Applicants who propose development in the Harris-Beech Infill area in accordance with the policies of the Official Plan are required to attend a pre-application meeting with the Town. The purpose of the pre-application meeting, among other matters, is to:

- scope the issues associated with development proposals within the Harris-Beech Infill Plan area;
- inform proponents of the Harris-Beech Infill Plan requirements, as approved by Council.

## 9.2 SITE PLAN CONTROL

Section 5.14 of the Town's Official Plan sets out policies and requirements for Site Plans, in accordance with the provisions prescribed under Section 41 of the Planning Act. The entire Richmond Hill Official Plan area is designated as a Site Plan Control area. On that basis, Council, by way of a Site Plan Control By-law passed under Section 41 of

the Planning Act, has identified specific areas and types of development that are subject to Site Plan Control whereby development may not be undertaken without Site Plan approval.

The intent of the Site Plan process is to ensure that development meets the standards and requirements set out by the Town, Region and other required agencies. The Site Plan process allows the Town to consider and impose conditions on development in accordance with the policies of the Official Plan, Design Guidelines and applicable Zoning Standards, that have been approved by Council.

## 9.3 CONCEPT PLAN AND URBAN DESIGN BRIEF REQUIREMENTS

### Concept Plans

Development in the Harris-Beech Infill Plan area may be required to submit a concept plan in accordance with the requirements set out in Section 5.2 of the Official Plan. Where required, the concept plan shall be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Official Plan and shall form part of the complete application submission requirements prescribed by the Planning Act.

Where required the concept plan shall, among other matters:

- Identify the boundaries proposed for development;
- Identify the layout and use of the land proposed for development; and
- Identify the form of development proposed and its relationship to abutting lands and the larger Infill Study area.

### Justification Report

In addition to the concept plan requirement, proponents shall be required to submit a Justification Report in support of their development proposal. The Justification Report shall be required to detail how the proposed development conforms to the Harris-Beech Infill Study, as approved by Council. Section 5.3 of the Official Plan sets out requirements for justification reports and other complete application submission requirements.

## 9.4 ZONING BY-LAW

The subject lands are currently zoned "Urban Residential (UR) Zone" and "General Commercial One (GC1a) Zone" under By-law Nos. 128-04 and 2523, as amended. The UR zone permits single detached dwellings on lots of record which existed on November 15, 2001, provided the zoning at that time permitted a single detached dwelling. The creation of new lots is not permitted. The GC1 zone permits a variety of commercial uses. A Zoning By-law Amendment will be required to permit any new development within the Infill Study area, as an amendment to By-law No. 235-97, the Jefferson Planning District Zoning by-law.

Until such time as Council has amended the Zoning By-law for the area, applications for development that propose amendments to Zoning By-law 235-97 to facilitate development in the Infill Study area shall be based on conformity with the policies of the Official Plan and the Harris-Beech Infill Study, as approved by Council.



