

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Comprehensive Zoning By-law Update & Town-wide Urban Design Guidelines

Draft Discussion Paper #5: Residential Areas

April 17, 2026

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1. Introduction

This Discussion Paper provides a review and assessment of the zoning within designated residential areas of the Town. The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville’s 2025 Official Plan (the Official Plan) uses land-use designations and accompanying policies to guide the direction of land uses and development in all areas of the Town. This Paper will focus on the residentially designated areas within the Town, including the Urban Area, the Community Areas, and the Hamlet Areas.

The topics covered in this Paper are a critical component of the Zoning By-law Review project, and will overlap with many of the other Discussion Papers published by the project team and the Town. Discussion Paper #1 provides an overview of the Zoning By-law Review and Urban Design Guidelines project and other relevant background information. The second initiative of the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) project included a Discussion Paper that reviewed “missing middle” housing typologies and intensification policies for the urban, serviced portions of the Community of Stouffville. Discussion Paper #2 reviews rural settlement designations and policies for rural residential typologies. Discussion Paper #8 reviews built-form typologies and urban design topics related to low-rise and missing middle housing typologies, while Discussion Paper 9 focuses on mid- and high-rise buildings. These Discussion Papers should be consulted for additional context and analysis which is not within the scope of this Paper.

The main objective of this Paper is to introduce various issues and topics regarding the regulation of residential neighbourhoods in the Town. This will include an assessment of the existing zoning against the policies of the Official Plan. This Paper also reviews and identifies key topics to be addressed through zoning, including accessory uses and structures, the role of Heritage Conservation Districts, home occupations, and greenfield areas.

2. How do the Town's Planning Documents Shape Residential Neighbourhoods?

In Ontario, land use planning is guided through multiple layers of policy and regulation. This direction begins with the Provincial government and is filtered down through regional municipalities and conservation authorities to local municipalities, who develop their vision for the Town in an official plan. The Town's Official Plan sets the stage for the Zoning By-law to regulate what property owners can do on their land. This section reviews the ways in which these policies in the Official Plan and the Zoning By-law currently regulate residential areas, and the levers and tools that the Town should consider when developing a new zoning framework for these neighbourhoods.

2.1 Role of the Official Plan

The main focus of this Paper is to review the existing zoning for the residential areas of the Town against the updated vision of the Official Plan and the various innovations and best practices which have been incorporated into the Zoning By-laws of other municipalities. This section provides an overview of the relevant new policies related to the residential areas and the accompanying zoning.

The Town's Official Plan was adopted by Town Council in 2024 and approved in part by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) in September 2025. This new Official Plan sets out policies related to land use and development within the Town's various communities, hamlets, rural settlements, and rural areas. This section lays out the sections of the Official Plan which will be relevant when assessing the conformity of the existing zoning with the new plan.

2.1.1 Growth Management

One of the main roles of an official plan is to provide guidance for how a municipality will handle growth. Chapter 2 of the 2025 Official Plan speaks to the ways that the Town will plan to grow from a population of 51,400 in 2021 to 103,000 in 2051. The policies in this chapter reflect Provincial direction and plans, and the intentions of the Town.

2.1.1.1 Town Structure

The Town is made up of a variety of different Communities and Hamlets which each contain their own policies related to residential areas. The Official Plan uses a hierarchy of areas to regulate growth and intensity throughout the Town, as shown in **Figure 2-1**. There are residential settlements in all portions of the Town, though this Discussion Paper will focus on residential areas within the Urban Area, Community Area, and Hamlet Areas.

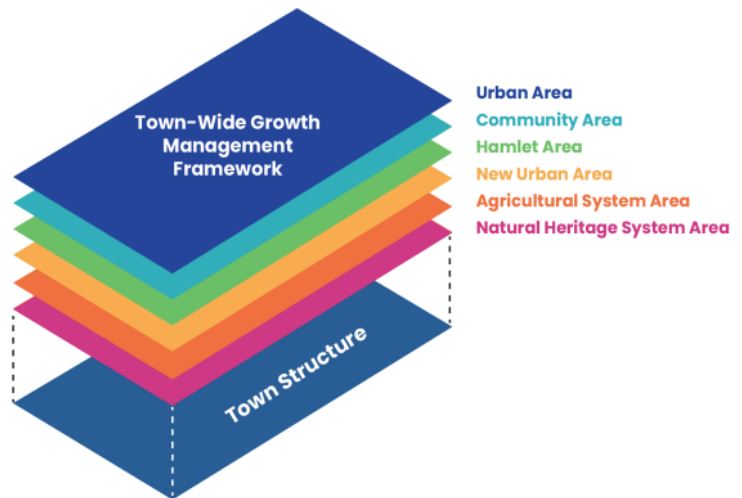


Figure 2-1: Town Structure from the Official Plan

The **Urban Area** refers to the Community of Stouffville, and recognizes that the majority of growth and intensification in the Town will be concentrated in this community. The Community of Stouffville provides full municipal water and wastewater services, as well as a higher concentration of community services and amenities. Section 2.2 of the Official Plan specifies additional policies related to growth management in the community of Stouffville, including specific policies for designated growth areas, such as the Stouffville GO Major Transit Station Area (MTSA), the Old Elm MTSA, other Strategic Growth Areas (SGA), the Built-up Area, and the Designated Greenfield Area.

The **Community Area** includes the Community of Ballantrae, and accommodates a range of uses and services in a scale which is appropriate for the context of the community. The Community of Ballantrae is partially serviced, with municipal water service and private wastewater treatment on-site for most properties. This community is expected to accommodate modest growth.

The **Hamlet Area** includes the Hamlets of Bloomington, Musselman’s Lake, Vandorf, and Gormley. The Hamlet Areas support existing rural communities and have local commercial uses to support the residents and surrounding agricultural areas. Limited intensification through infill development is anticipated by the Official Plan, as most properties are reliant on private water and wastewater systems on-site.

The **New Urban Area** refers to lands near the Community of Stouffville that are outside the Greenbelt Area which have been designated for future greenfield development. The New Urban Areas are planned to be connected to municipal water and wastewater services, and must be accommodated through a secondary planning process for detailed regulation of the new development.

2.1.2 Housing and Intensification

Chapter 3 of the Official Plan outlines policies which direct the development and intensification within the Town to move towards the concept of “Complete Communities”. The Official Plan provides the following definition for this concept:

“Places within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores, and services, a full range of housing, transportation options, public service facilities, and greenspaces. Complete communities are age friendly and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts.”

Section 3.1 of the Official Plan outlines a variety of policies related to the concept of complete communities, such as:

- 3.1.1.1(b): Require that growth is focused within the Town’s designated settlement areas to advance the creation of complete communities.
- 3.1.1.1(h): Encourage integration of gentle density and a mix and range of housing options within the settlement areas, where locally appropriate, through redevelopment of existing neighbourhoods.
- 3.1.1.1(j): Provide a diverse mix of housing types and tenures, housing affordability, and employment opportunities through good design, as well as ensuring provision of parks, trails, amenities and other uses.

These policies represent a shift away from the exclusionary zoning practices that have defined residential neighbourhoods for much of the 20th century. In addition to structural changes to the Town’s land-use fabric, the Official Plan also includes policies related to housing development which rely on zoning changes to implement. Section 3.2 includes policies which direct the Town’s development towards intensification and attainability. Standout policies include 3.2.1.1(a), which establishes a target of 18,020 new housing units by 2051, with 1,750 of them being purpose-built rental units. Policy 3.2.1.1(b) also introduces intensification targets which will shape the fabric of residential neighbourhoods within the Town by requiring 32% of new dwellings to be within high-density building typologies, and 27% within medium density building typologies.

2.1.3 Built Form and Urban Design

Section 3.6.1 of the Official Plan presents general built form and design policies which would impact the development within residential areas. This section supports a range of urban design policies, including:

- Ensuring transitions between taller buildings and low-rise residential neighbourhoods;
- Encouraging character-specific urban design standards; and
- Promoting architectural design features which complement the massing patterns, rhythms, and character of existing buildings while ushering in a new context.

The Official Plan also contains policies related to promoting walkability; creating landmarks and view corridors; locating surface parking in the rear of a lot in certain areas; and improving pedestrian infrastructure.

2.1.4 Land Use Designations

In addition to the general policies, Chapter 6 of the Official Plan includes a series of land use designations which implement the vision of the Town for specific areas in a series of schedules. Each land use designation includes a list of permitted and prohibited uses, along with development policies that describe the built form envisioned for the area. This Paper will focus on the following land use designations. Note that Section 2.1.4.9 of this Paper also provides an overview of the land use designations in Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake.

- Stouffville Neighbourhood Area
- Urban Medium Density Residential Area
- Urban High Density Residential Area
- Old Elm Medium-High Density Residential Area
- Old Elm Residential Area
- Gormley Neighbourhood Area
- Vandorf Neighbourhood Area
- Bloomington Hamlet Area

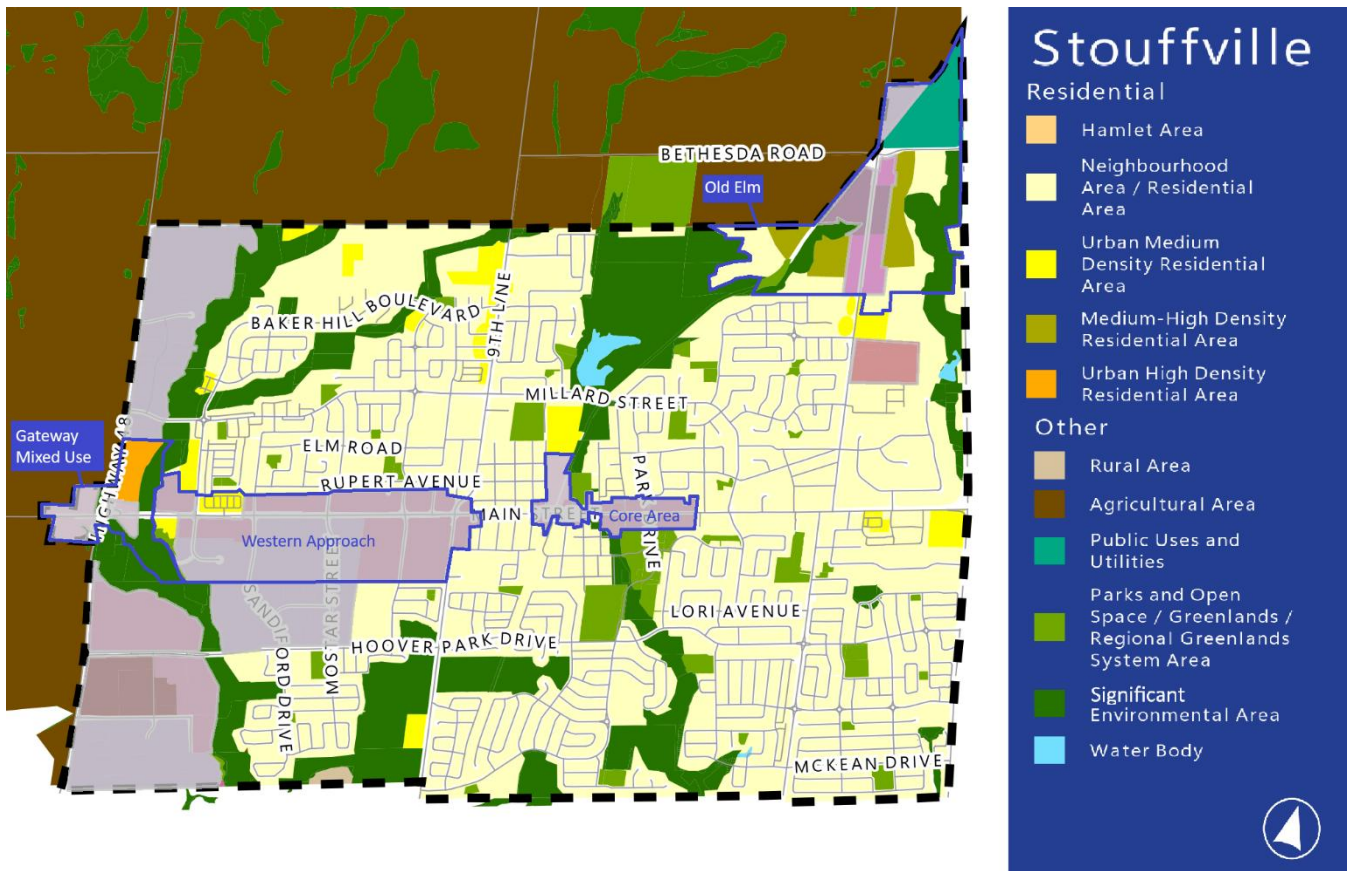


Figure 2-2: Land Use Designations in the Community of Stouffville

2.1.4.1 Stouffville Neighbourhood Area

The Neighbourhood Area designation policies are located in section 6.4.1 of the Official Plan, and provide for predominantly low-rise residential neighbourhoods while enabling gentle intensification and a full range of local community uses that support complete communities. This designation is applied to large portions of the Urban Area, as shown in **Figure 2-2**. Permitted forms include single and semi-detached dwellings, townhouses and other low-rise formats, together with parks, schools and other public service facilities. The intent is to keep a walkable, fine-grained block pattern and to integrate new housing types in a way that remains compatible in form and scale with adjacent established areas. The Neighbourhood Area designation occupies the majority of the Community of Stouffville.

New buildings are expected to be street-oriented, fit with neighbourhood character, and provide clear height transitions to lower-scale edges through setbacks, stepbacks and landscape buffering. Garages and surface parking should not dominate the streetscape. Regulations require that parking is directed to rear/side locations wherever feasible, with frequent front doors and legible pedestrian connections to support walkability. Detailed setbacks, frontage, height and lot standards are intended to be implemented through the Zoning By-law and Urban Design Guidelines to maintain a coherent streetwall and high-quality public realm.

2.1.4.2 Urban Medium Density Residential Area

Policies for this designation are found in Section 6.4.2 of the Official Plan, and are largely supportive of townhouses, including stacked/back-to-back townhouses, and low-rise apartment forms that broaden the housing mix. The designation is applied to specific areas to provide a transition between low-rise neighbourhoods and higher-intensity nodes/corridors, as shown in **Figure 2-2**. Uses commonly include live-work and community facilities, with a compact built form that supports transit and active transportation.

Policies direct that development should frame the street with frequent entrances and active residential frontages; blank walls are discouraged. Where next to low-rise areas, compatibility is achieved through setbacks, stepbacks/angular planes, and careful window/balcony placement. Parking should be located behind/within buildings or underground in larger sites, with surface parking screened and driveway access consolidated. The Official Plan also notes that proposals should be reviewed for pedestrian connectivity, landscaping and design quality, and the Town has discretion to require block plans to enable development.

2.1.4.3 Urban High Density Residential Area

The Urban High Density Residential Area is found in Section 6.4.3 of the Official Plan and is intended to accommodate mid/high-rise apartments and, in select locations, mixed-use buildings that concentrate residents close to transit, services and key corridors. As shown in **Figure 2-2**, this designation is only applied in the Gateway Mixed Use Area. The policy framework emphasizes intensification in appropriate locations while ensuring sensitive transitions to adjacent lower-scale areas.

Development policies dictate that buildings are organized with strong street-related podiums, stepbacks above mid-levels, and slender upper massing to manage shadow and sky-view, with active ground floors on key frontages. Structured/underground parking is encouraged and off-street parking between the building and street is discouraged to preserve a continuous streetwall and pedestrian realm. Height/massing transitions to nearby low-rise residential are addressed through angular planes, setbacks and stepbacks, and streetscapes are designed for high permeability and walkability. Similar to the Urban Medium Density Residential designation, block plans may be required to enable development.

2.1.4.4 Old Elm - Medium-High Density Residential Area

This designation's policies are found in Section 6.4.12 of the Official Plan, and exist within and just outside of the Old Elm Major Transit Station Area ("MTSA"). The designation enables townhouses, low-to mid-rise apartments, and related residential forms that deliver transit-supportive density within walking distance of the station while stepping down away from the core node. The designation's intent is to contribute to the MTSA's overall minimum density target and to concentrate people close to Tenth Line and planned collector roads, with residential entries and frequent doors reinforcing an animated public realm.

In addition to the policies of the Official Plan, built form is guided by the Old Elm Urban Design Guidelines. These guidelines direct that buildings frame Tenth Line and collector roads, provide stepbacks at upper storeys to mitigate scale, and deliver fine-grained pedestrian/bicycle connections through shorter blocks and mid-block links. Parking is to be directed to the rear/underground, with any interim surface parking only permitted where a phasing plan proves it won't compromise long-term density and site build-out. Proposals must demonstrate how they help achieve the MTSA's gross density target and include high-quality, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes with prioritized walking and cycling access to the GO platform.

2.1.4.5 Old Elm - Residential Area

This designation's policies are found in Section 6.4.13 of the Official Plan, and is the low-rise component of the Old Elm area. The designation is applied to undeveloped lands surrounding the MTSA. The designation allows for small-lot single detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, and townhouses that round out the unit mix while applying appropriate transitions to the edges of the community and rural interface. The designation also permits supportive community and institutional uses. It supports the station area's structure by placing modest densities within a highly walkable network tied to parks, schools and neighbourhood amenities.

Development policies emphasize street-oriented blocks, frequent unit entries, and careful garage/driveway placement to avoid streetscape dominance. Development must transition down toward lower-scale edges through setbacks, stepbacks and landscape buffering and maintain strong pedestrian connectivity to Tenth Line, collector roads and trail links. Parking should be located behind/within buildings where feasible, and designs must be reviewed for compatibility, public-realm quality and alignment with the Old Elm Urban Design Guidelines.

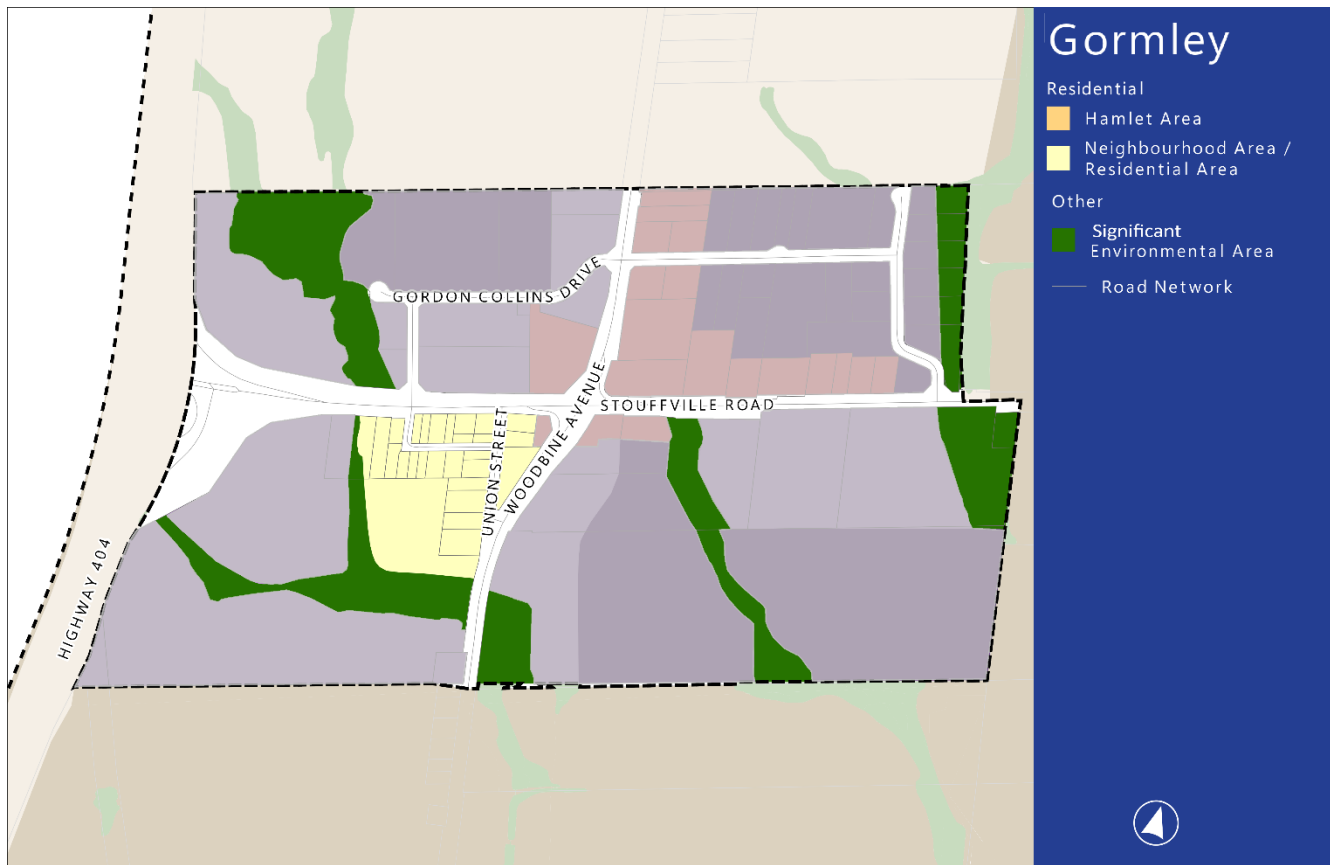


Figure 2-3: Land use designations in the Hamlet of Gormley

2.1.4.6 Gormley Neighbourhood Area

The Hamlet of Gormley has its own Neighbourhood Area designation, with policies included in Section 6.5.1 of the Official Plan. This Neighbourhood Area is applied to a small portion of the Hamlet (**Figure 2-3**) and recognizes a predominantly low-density residential fabric on private services, allowing limited, compatible infill/redevelopment and additional residential units while maintaining the Hamlet’s rural character and ensuring land-use compatibility with nearby industrial and commercial areas. Growth is explicitly constrained by servicing, and new multi-lot greenfield residential development will not be contemplated without comprehensive servicing solutions.

Development policies state that lot creation and built form must fit the established character, with siting, setbacks and landscaping used to buffer sensitive interfaces, especially at transitions to employment and industrial uses. Site planning directs parking to side/rear locations and encourages pedestrian-oriented frontages. Any proposal relying on individual onsite systems must demonstrate servicing feasibility and avoid adverse impacts. The policies promote exploring municipal or private communal systems through appropriate environmental assessment processes to support limited intensification in a manner that protects public health and the rural streetscape.

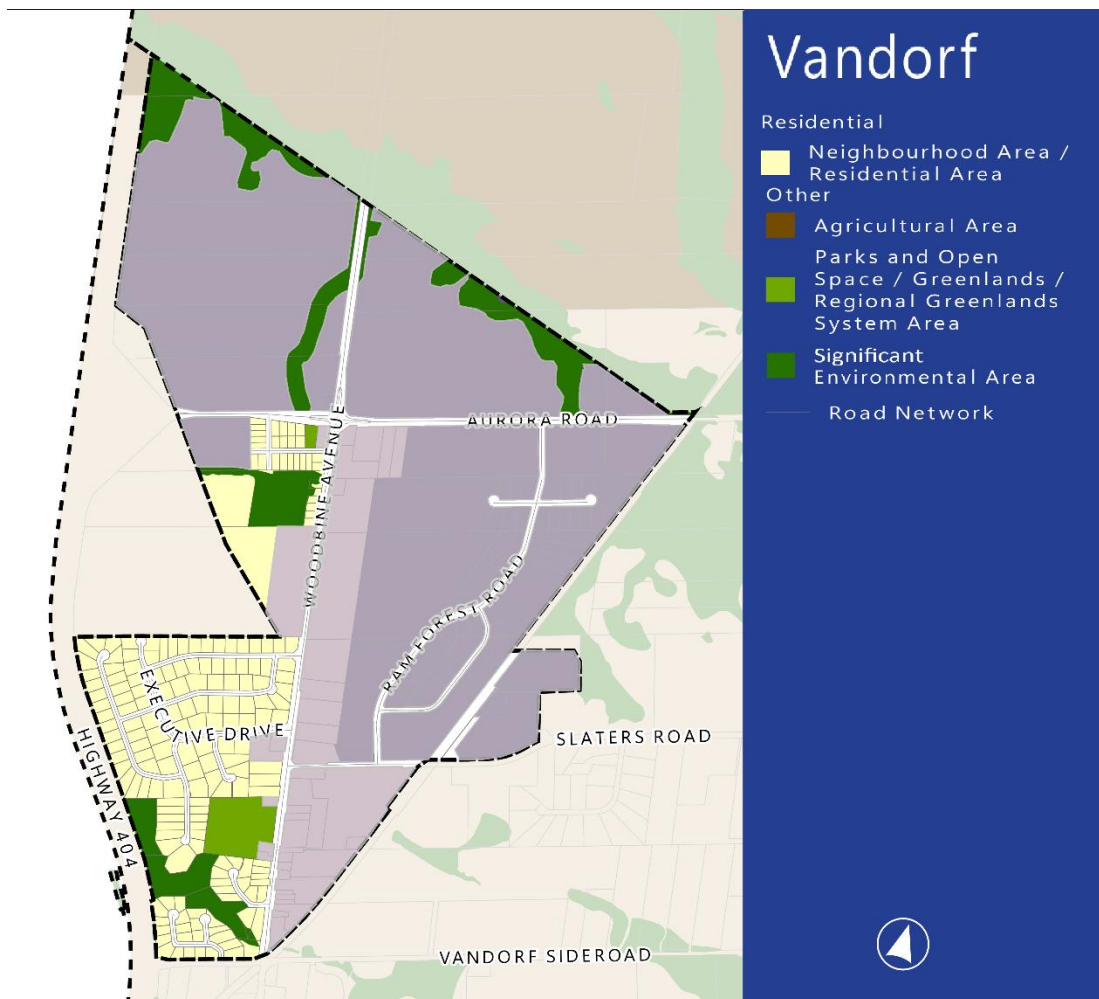


Figure 2-4: Land use designations in the Hamlet of Vandorf

2.1.4.7 Vandorf Neighbourhood Area

Similar to Gormley, the Hamlet of Vandorf also has a dedicated Neighbourhood Area designation, found in Section 6.8.2 of the Official Plan. As shown in **Figure 2-4**, the Neighbourhood Area is applied to a portion of the Hamlet. This Neighbourhood Area designation supports a low-rise mix consisting of single detached, semi-detached, duplex, and converted dwellings with additional residential units through minor infill that respects the Hamlet’s rural setting. As with Gormley, servicing is the key limiter. Development generally proceeds on individual on-site water and sewage unless a comprehensive Master Environmental Servicing Plan and Environmental Assessment processes identify preferred communal/municipal solutions.

New lots and buildings must be compatible with established lotting and form, maintain generous setbacks/landscaping, and ensure safe access and walkable connections to community amenities. Proposals are evaluated for well interference and groundwater sensitivity for wells and septic systems and buffering or mitigation is required where the neighbourhood abuts mixed-use or employment

designations. The Town may require block-level coordination of road extensions and pedestrian links to maintain permeability while preserving the Hamlet character.

2.1.4.8 Bloomington Hamlet Area

Unlike the other Hamlets in the Town, Bloomington is given a general designation for all land use activities in Section 6.9.1 of the Official Plan. This Hamlet Area designation permits both single-detached dwellings and commercial uses, with some direction for the Zoning By-law to separate the uses through zoning. While development opportunities in the Hamlet are meant to be limited, the designation permits low-density residential uses in most areas, with small-scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses permitted on properties with frontage onto Bloomington Road or Ninth Line.

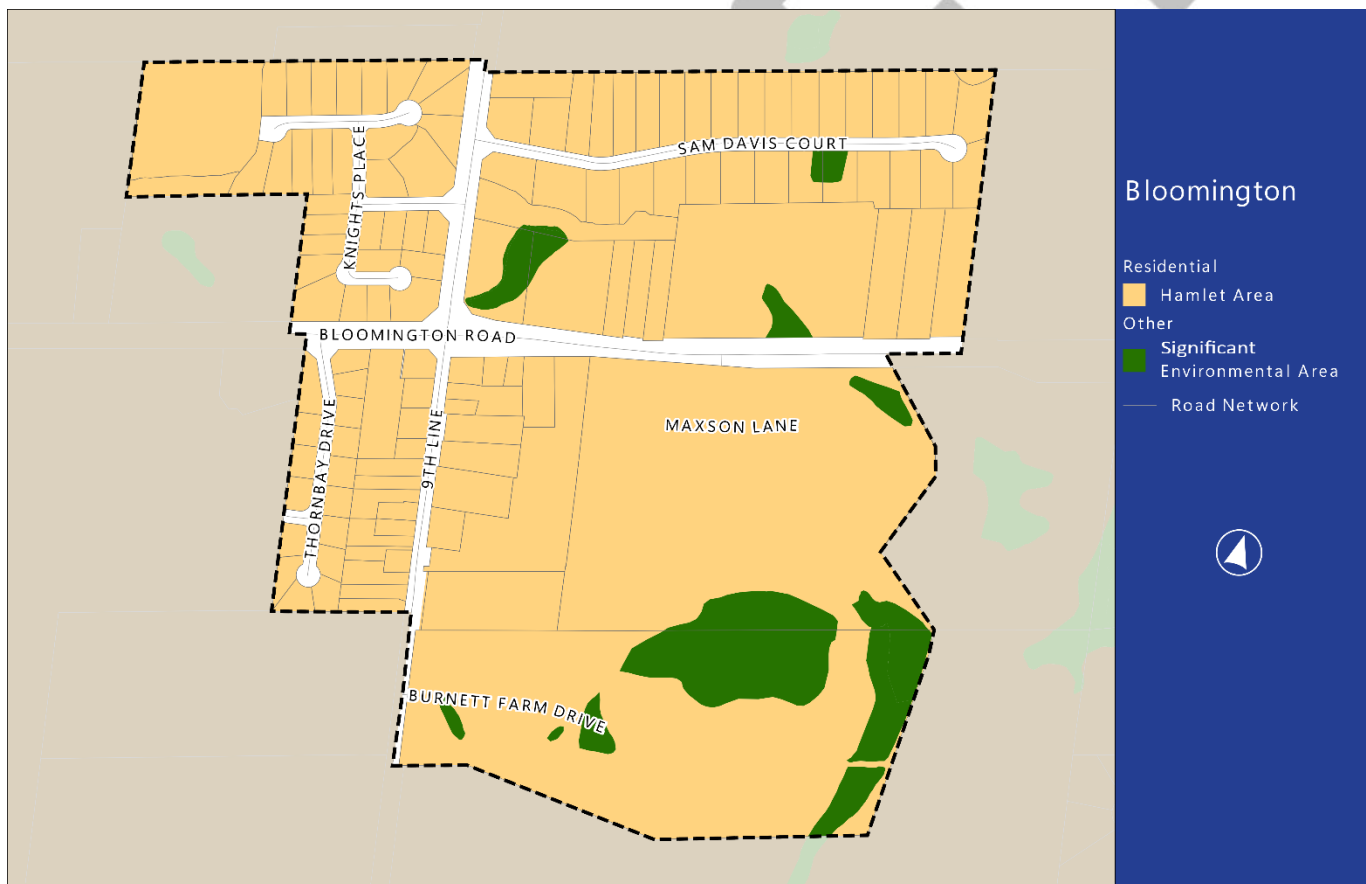


Figure 2-5: Land use designations in the Hamlet of Bloomington

2.1.4.9 Ballantrae and Musselman’s Lake

The 2025 Official Plan does not include land use designations or specific policies for the Community of Ballantrae and the Hamlet of Musselman’s Lake. Instead, the land use designations and community-specific policies are still contained in the 2004 Official Plan, as amended by the Ontario Land Tribunal (“OLT”) in January, 2025. The Land use designations in the 2004 Official Plan are shown in **Figure 2-6**.

It is noted that the Town is undertaking a housekeeping official plan amendment to consolidate the Ballantrae and Musselman’s Lake policies and land use designations within the 2025 Official Plan.

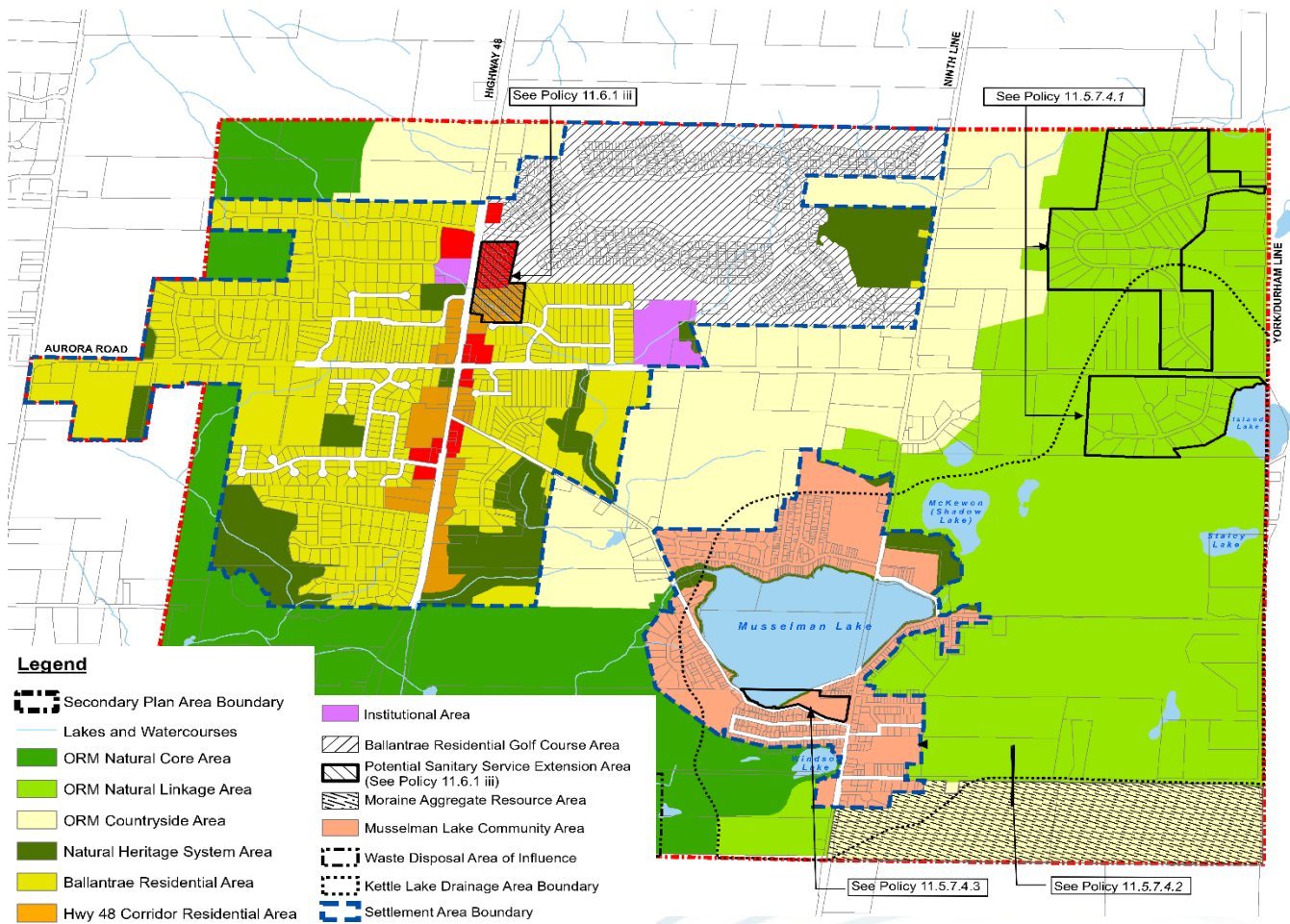


Figure 2-6: Land use designations for Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake

This OLT decision was the approval of Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 136, which dates back to 2013. OPA 136 updated the Ballantrae–Musselman’s Lake and Environs Secondary Plan to address access on Highway 48, servicing constraints, and natural heritage system connectivity¹. It was predicated on the original 1994 secondary plan and a 2007 amendment for ORMCP conformity. The update was supported by technical studies completed in 2012–2013 on servicing, access management, environmental management, trails, and urban design. The OPA was accompanied by a Zoning by-law amendment aimed at implementing the policy changes. Council adopted OPA 136 on December 17, 2013 and passed implementing by-laws on January 21, 2014, then forwarded the amendment to York Region. Regional approval was delayed pending an Environmental Assessment to address water system capacity beyond the historical 5,900-person limit. Multiple landowner appeals followed, leading to phased Ontario Land Tribunal proceedings and mediation.

¹ <https://pub-townofws.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=12106>

Due to the ongoing appeal, the 2025 Official Plan excluded the Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake secondary plan, leaving it in effect through the 2004 Official Plan. With the approval of both the OPA and Zoning By-law amendment in January 2025, the Zoning By-law is largely aligned with the policies related to the land use designations for this area. Though the policies are already in effect through the 2004 Official Plan, it is the intention of the Town to amend the 2025 Official Plan at a future date to incorporate the policies of OPA 136.

Recommendation | Retain OPA 136 changes – It is recommended that the Zoning By-law changes introduced through OPA 136 be carried forward into the new Zoning by-law, though modifications may need to be made to support integration with the new zoning framework.

2.2 Role of the Zoning By-law

The Zoning By-law contains specific, measurable regulations which apply directly to properties in the Town. While the official plan sets the vision for how the Town is organized, it is the Zoning By-law which contains the rules which translate this vision into specific, measurable rules and regulations which must be followed. As properties are changed over time, the rules which the Zoning By-law impose for those redevelopments will slowly change the Town in accordance with the Official Plan's vision. This section explains the tools and levers available within the Zoning By-law to enact this vision.

2.2.1 Regulation of Uses

One of the keystone powers of the land use by-law is the power to restrict the use of land, which is enabled by Section 34(1)1 of the *Planning Act*. The practice of land use restriction typically takes the form of prohibiting everything except for a defined set of uses, with each zone permitting a different suite of uses. This section reviews the various ways that the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville currently regulates residential uses, and provides a brief commentary on alternative approaches implemented by other jurisdictions.

2.2.1.1 Regulated Residential Typologies

The Town's existing Zoning By-law takes a traditional approach to residential use regulation by parsing out individual building typologies as regulated uses. Different typologies are allowed in different zones. This results in a long list of regulated residential uses, with each building typology needing to be individually permitted within the Zoning By-law to be allowed on a property. The Zoning By-law also includes a series of illustrations to help visually explain these uses, which are shown in this section. The definitions of the residential uses regulated by the Zoning By-law include:

Single Detached Dwelling: A building that contains one dwelling unit, and up to one additional residential unit as shown in **Figure 2-5**.

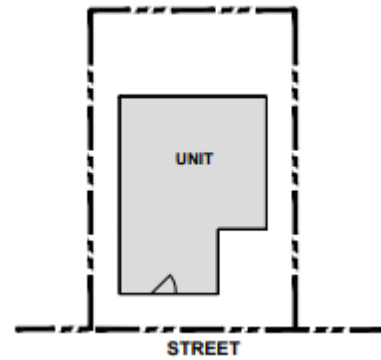


Figure 2-5: Single Detached Dwelling Illustration

Semi-Detached Dwelling: a building containing two dwelling units, divided vertically by a common wall extending from the base of the foundation to the roof line. Each dwelling unit shall have a separate entrance at grade, as shown in **Figure 2-6**.

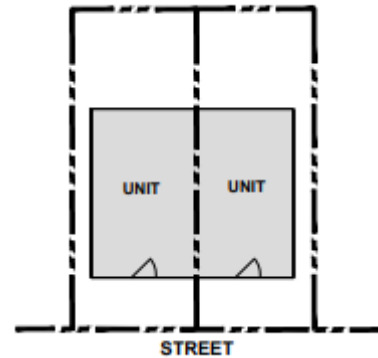


Figure 2-6: Semi-Detached Dwelling Illustration

Duplex Dwelling: a building divided horizontally into two separate dwelling units, each of which has an independent entrance directly to the outside or through a common vestibule, as shown in **Figure 2-7**.

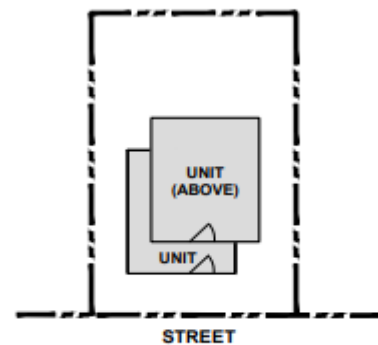


Figure 2-7: Duplex Dwelling Illustration

Apartment Building: a building containing three or more dwelling units, external access to which is through a common vestibule and/or a common corridor or corridors, as shown in **Figure 2-8**.

It is common for older zoning by-laws to regulate all higher-density dwellings as a single use, though contemporary zoning by-laws further specify the different types of apartment dwellings, such as mid-rise apartments, high-rise apartments, and mixed-use residential buildings.

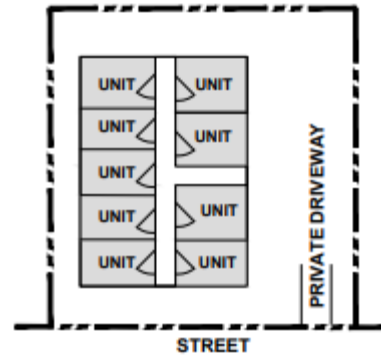


Figure 2-8: Apartment Building Illustration

Townhouse Dwelling: a building vertically divided into three or more dwelling units by common walls extending from the base of the foundation to the roof. Each dwelling unit shall have a separate entrance directly to the outside. Townhouse dwellings shall not occupy freehold lots, as shown in **Figure 2-9**.

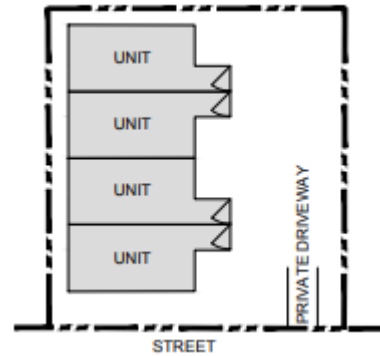


Figure 2-9: Townhouse Dwelling

Street Townhouse Dwelling: a building vertically divided into three or more dwelling units by common walls extending from the base of the foundation to the roof. Each dwelling unit shall have a separate entrance directly to the outside, and shall be situated on a freehold lot, as shown in **Figure 2-10**.

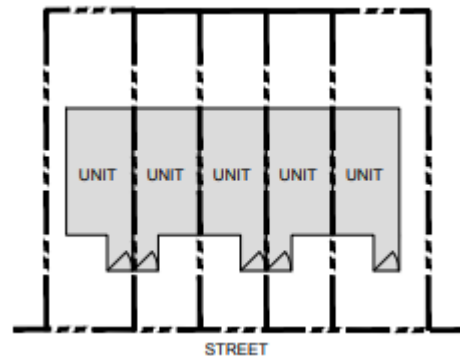


Figure 2-10: Street Townhouse Dwelling

Stacked Townhouse Dwelling: two townhouse dwellings, one on top of the other, as shown in **Figure 2-11**.

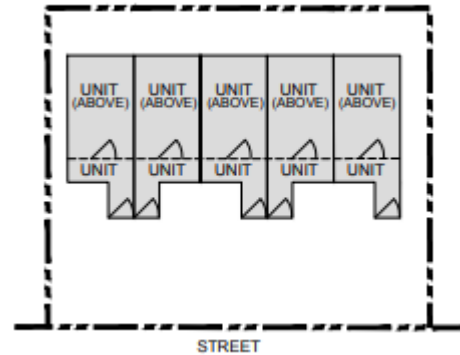


Figure 2-11: Stacked Townhouse Dwelling

Back-to-back Townhouse Dwelling: a building containing a minimum of four dwelling units that are divided vertically by common walls, including a common rear wall without a rear yard. Each dwelling unit has an independent direct entrance to grade, as shown in **Figure 2-12**.

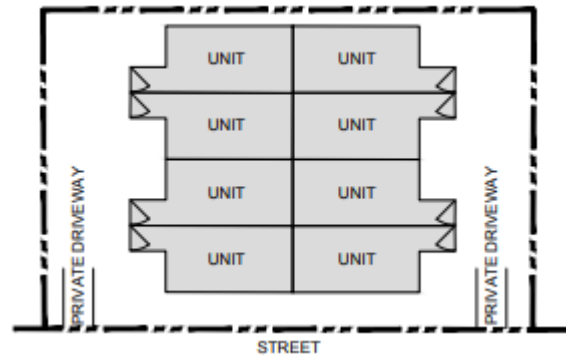


Figure 2-12: Back-to-back Townhouse Dwelling

Stacked, Back-to-back Townhouse Dwelling: a building containing a minimum of four dwelling units that are stacked vertically and divided by common walls, including a common rear wall. Each dwelling unit has an independent direct entrance to grade, as shown in **Figure 2-13**.

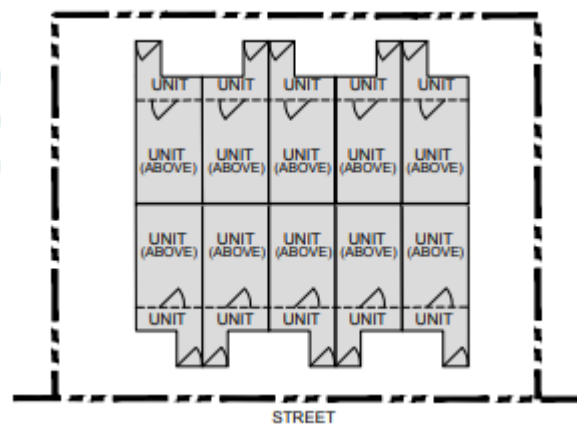


Figure 2-13: Stacked Back-to-back Townhouse Dwelling

Additional Residential Unit (ARU): a self-contained Dwelling Unit with a private kitchen, bathroom facilities and sleeping areas within a Single Detached, Semi-Detached or Townhouse Dwelling, or a Building or Structure ancillary to a Single Detached, Semi Detached or Townhouse Dwelling. An ARU can take the form of an 'Integrated ARU' which is located within or attached to

the Principal Dwelling Unit or an ‘Ancillary ARU’ which is detached from the Principal Dwelling Unit. A Garden Suite as identified in Section 39 of the *Planning Act* and an Accessory Farm Dwelling Unit is not included in the definition of Additional Residential Unit.

Garden Suite: a detached self-contained dwelling that is comprised of a kitchen, bathroom and living area. This dwelling unit shall be ancillary to an existing principal dwelling unit that is located on the same lot, and it represents a form of accommodation appropriate for a senior family member who is capable of a degree of independent living, but who may require support from the occupants of the principal dwelling. The Garden Suite shall be permitted as a temporary use on the residential lot and shall be sited in accordance with the zone provisions established for the lands.

2.2.1.2 Innovative Housing Typologies

The management of urban growth and development through the restriction of architectural typologies is a common practice in zoning by-laws. This practice is closely related to the concept of “exclusionary zoning”, where permitted uses are so tightly controlled that specific uses are ascribed their own zone and require lengthy administrative processes to differ from the prevailing single-use zoning. This type of regulation has the benefit of being prescriptive for the type and style of development which will occur in the communities, though this form of regulation is inflexible for property owners who wish to develop innovative typologies which are not considered by the zoning by-law.

A brief jurisdictional scan has found the following examples of innovative housing typologies which are not considered by the Town’s current Zoning By-law:

- **Cluster Housing/Cottage Courts:**

Cluster housing, sometimes referred to as “cottage courts” or “pocket neighbourhoods”, refers to a residential use which sees multiple residential buildings on a single lot, with buildings often oriented towards an internal courtyard or parking lot as opposed to the street, as shown in **Figure 2-14**. This is similar to townhouse block developments which use a plan of condominium to permit individual ownership of dwellings on a single lot. However, the Edmonton model of cluster housing is adaptable to include smaller implementations, such as tiny home communities. The City of Edmonton permits cluster housing in many low-density residential zones as of right.

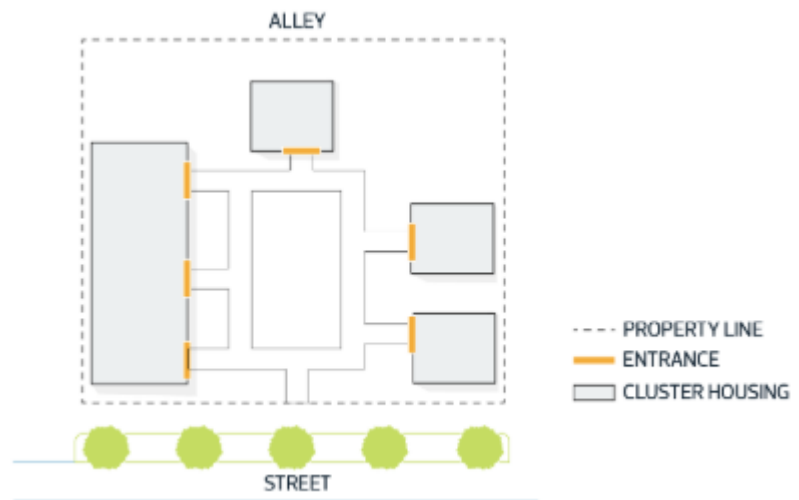
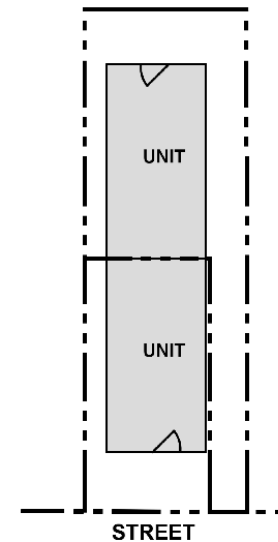


Figure 2-14: Diagram of Cluster Housing. Source: City of Edmonton.

- Long Semi-Detached Dwellings:** The City of Ottawa regulates a form of back-to-back residential infill housing called the long semi-detached dwelling, or the “long semi”. This housing typology is similar to a regular semi-detached dwelling in that it has two units in a single building which are vertically separated, and are often on separate lots. The difference is the orientation, as long semis are typically developed on narrow urban infill lots, with the land severance taking the form of a flag lot for the rear dwelling unit as shown in **Figure 2-15**.



LONG SEMI DETACHED DWELLING

Figure 2-15: Illustration of a long semi-detached dwelling

2.2.1.3 Innovative Regulatory Frameworks

Up until recently, the best practice for land use planning was to develop a Zoning By-law which applies prescriptive and exclusionary permissions to defined portions of land for the purpose of separating potentially noxious and disruptive land uses from residential areas. This practice is known as “Euclidean zoning”, and is named for the Town which pioneered it in the early 20th century. Throughout the rest of the 20th century, this separation of uses became collectively more restrictive, reaching a form of land use control sometimes referred to “Exclusionary Zoning”. This is a form of zoning where permitted uses are so tightly controlled that specific uses are ascribed their own zone. In this framework, a proponent which wishes to use land for a use not considered by the zone is required to undergo a lengthy administrative process to differ from the prevailing single-use zoning.

In response to the growing challenges posed by Euclidean Zoning, many North American jurisdictions have begun to adopt a newer land use regulation framework known as “Form-based Zoning”. Form-based zoning is a form of development regulation which shifts the focus away from uses towards the physical form of the buildings. By focusing on the size, shape, and architectural styling of the building rather than the use, form-based zoning can create predictable, prescriptive urban form. Many Canadian jurisdictions are moving towards form-based zoning to regulate their urban development.

City of Edmonton, Alberta

The City of Edmonton introduced a new Zoning By-law in 2024 which is considered to be a leading example of form-based land use regulation in Canada, and was recognized for planning excellence by the Canadian Institute of Planners. The City’s Zoning By-law-20001 forgoes the traditional use-based regulations by permitting all uses by categories and relying on built-form provisions to regulate any potential incompatibilities. For instance, residential zones permit “residential uses”, as opposed to individual building typologies. In Zoning By-law-20001, “Residential uses” are defined as follows:

Residential means a development where a building or part of a building is designed for people to live in. The building contains 1 or more Dwellings or 1 or more Sleeping Units.

This includes: Backyard Housing, Duplex Housing, Lodging Houses, Multi-unit Housing, Row Housing, Secondary Suites, Semi-detached Housing, Single Detached Housing, and Supportive Housing.

Edmonton’s Zoning By-law still defines different residential building typologies, though these definitions correspond to the form-based regulation in each zone, and are rarely used to define permitted uses within a zone. This implementation supports the premise of form-based zoning by focusing less on the actual uses inside a building, instead applying specific and prescriptive regulations which control the aesthetic and off-site impacts of the building.

City of Cambridge, Ontario

The City of Cambridge is in the process of introducing a new Comprehensive Zoning By-law which incorporates form-based residential zoning. Cambridge’s April 2025 draft Zoning By-law replaces Cambridge’s existing 16 use-specific residential zones with 4 form-based zones which regulate built-form and intensity through building dimensions. Within the portions of the city where properties have full municipal servicing, all residential zones allow single-detached dwellings, duplexes, row houses, and apartment buildings with no cap on density. Instead, the zones dictate a “zoning envelope” (**Figure 2-16**) which dictates the maximum building dimensions for each zone, which has been set to match the existing context of each area. To allow more density, the zoning envelope is expanded.

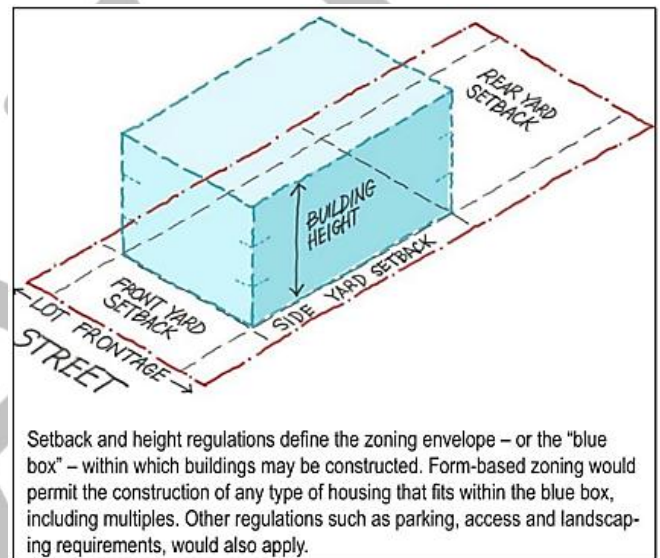


Figure 2-16: Visualizing Form-based Zoning (Source: City of Cambridge)

By setting regulations which control maximum building dimensions instead of the specific uses or densities, the City of Cambridge is codifying the existing urban form of its neighbourhoods while allowing greater density.

City of Ottawa, Ontario

The City of Ottawa approved a new Zoning By-law on January 28, 2026 which advances beyond the City of Edmonton and the City of Cambridge in approach to form-based and contemporary zoning. Zoning By-law 2026-50 takes a similar approach to Edmonton in using a category-based use permission system for residential uses, permitting a “dwelling unit” in all zones where residential uses are appropriate. “Dwelling Unit” is defined as follows:

“Dwelling Unit means a residential unit that:

1. is used or intended for use as a residential premises by one household and not more than three roomers or boarders; and
2. contains no more than four bedrooms.”

Edmonton clearly defines each type of dwelling or building typology under their blanket terminology, while Ottawa's Zoning By-law 2026-50 refrains from elaborating more. Instead, Ottawa's new Zoning By-law regulates density through the parent zones, and then applies sub-zones that regulate neighbourhood character through specific built-form regulations such as setbacks and heights. The Zoning By-law does contain an interpretation section with specific use definitions, though these definitions are limited only to specific rural zones that were retained, and site-specific exception zones that continue to apply.

2.2.2 Zoning Levers

The *Planning Act* delegates authority to municipalities to regulate land use through prescriptive language, enabling municipalities to implement a suite of levers to regulate specific topics within a zoning by-law. The Town's in-effect Zoning By-law uses a conventional suite of levers that add specific direction for new structures. When reviewed individually, these regulations may seem disconnected, though they form a mosaic of built-form control that implement the vision of the Official Plan. The levers used by the Zoning By-law regulate topics such as lot area and frontage, residential density by zone and dwelling type, building placement, building massing, and vehicle parking.

Lot Size and Dimensions

The Zoning By-law regulates minimum lot area and frontage to control the overall composition of the lot fabric in a given community. In particular, the minimum lot size for an area will determine the overall character of each parcel, with urbanized areas typically permitting a far greater concentration of parcels through more, smaller lots. Conversely, rural areas may restrict lot area to larger parcels that maintain the rural character, but also maintain the parcel's ability to accommodate a septic system.

Similarly, lot frontage minimums can support the overall character of an area, and can impact the effectiveness of the transportation network. For instance, lot frontage requirements on Provincial highways are generally quite large, as each property will have at least one access point to the road network, a greater concentration of properties will result in more opportunities for traffic to be disrupted by vehicles turning onto the road. Similarly, some zoning by-laws introduce lot depth minimums to encourage smaller lot frontages.

It is becoming more common for greenfield developments in an urban setting to request smaller and narrower parcels to accommodate more units within a given tract of land. Moreover, strict requirements around linear parcel dimensions can result in frustration for developments on tracts of land that have geographical constraints, and may result in a fragmented or abnormal lot fabric. These conditions also give rise to increased minor variance or site specific exemption requests. To address this, some municipalities have begun to regulate lot fabric through more adaptable levers, such as lot frontage averaging or a frontage-to-depth ratio.

Lot frontage averaging is a zoning lever that is used to ensure that lot fabric in a subdivision plan generally results in similarly sized lots, while providing flexibility for the subdivision to include irregularly shaped lots. It involves measuring the narrowest and widest sections of a parcel to get the average width of the lot, as opposed to only measuring the width of the parcel that meets the road.

A frontage-to-depth ratio is another zoning lever that can provide additional flexibility for development. This lever involves regulating parcel size through a ratio rather than strict figures. Frontage-to-depth ratios are typically used in property valuation, and regulating lot size through a frontage ratio can provide greater flexibility for residential developments.

Lot Size and Dimensions

Option 1 | Maintain static lot regulations – Static requirements for minimum and maximum lot frontage and area are standard zoning levers, and flexibility is built into the system through minor variances and site-specific exception zones.

Option 2 | Introduce increased flexibility through new levers – Adaptable zoning levers can be implemented strategically for new urban areas and greenfield areas to reduce requirements for minor variances and site-specific exception zones.

Residential Density

The Zoning By-law regulates residential density to shape the overall intensity and character of neighbourhoods. In practice, density is managed through the combination of permitted building typologies in each zone and explicit density parameters set as minimums and maximums. Traditional and New Residential zones list which forms are allowed, and some higher-density zones assign net density targets to guide how many dwellings may be developed on a site.

The Zoning By-law also uses absolute unit caps and tailored provisions in exception zones to fine-tune outcomes on specific plans of subdivision or parcels. In these cases, the Zoning By-law identifies a maximum number of units or a site-specific density range that fits the surrounding context and servicing. This approach is often paired with the permitted building forms in the parent zone so that both product type and intensity are aligned.

Greenfield proposals in urban settings continue to seek higher yields within the same land base, that has resulted in a patchwork of density levers through parent zones and site-specific exception zones. As the Official Plan ushers in a new, higher-density vision for the Urban Areas of the Town, there is an opportunity for the Zoning By-law to develop a single approach for residential density regulation.

A units-per-acre metric is one lever that can simplify early testing on concept plans where net areas are still shifting. Bedrooms-per-acre is another lever that aligns density with actual occupancy and service demand, that can improve how schools, parks, and transit plan for growth.

Floor space index (“FSI”) is another lever that controls overall bulk rather than only the count of units. FSI can be combined with minimum and maximum ranges so that building massing and yield move together in mixed-use or apartment contexts.

Residential Density Regulation

Option 1 | Regulate residential density through traditional levers – The existing framework uses residential typologies to regulate residential density, and relies on minor variances and exception zones to provide flexibility.

Option 2 | Introduce explicit density expectations – Higher-density and mixed-use zones can regulate expected density through net density targets, which can be calibrated with servicing and infrastructure capacity.

Option 3 | Adopt a form-based framework - Aligning with other recommendations for a form-based framework, residential density has been effectively managed in other municipalities through built-form limits such as typology regulations, building height limits, or FSI ranges.

Building Placement

The in-effect Zoning By-law sets minimum front, exterior side, interior side, and rear yard setbacks to position buildings on a lot. These baselines organize street edges, support access, and protect light, privacy, and usable outdoor space. In addition, the Zoning By-law requires a minimum setback of 6 m from the front or exterior side lot line to the vehicular access door of a garage, which ensures a vehicle can park in the driveway without encroaching into the sidewalk or boulevard.

Building placement regulations are occasionally adjusted through exceptions where rear lanes, corner conditions, or unusual block patterns warrant different yard treatments. In these cases, the Zoning By-law clarifies which edge is the front lot line and how to apply setbacks so that site planning remains consistent across a block or condominium street network.

Through intensification and redevelopment, it has become common for projects in evolving neighbourhoods to request relief from fixed setbacks to better align new buildings with established streetwalls. Applying uniform distances on irregular blocks can also produce awkward side yards and fragmented frontages, that can undermine streetscape quality. More adaptable approaches can address these fit-to-context needs without frequent variances.

Build-to lines offer a clear target distance from the street where the main wall should be placed. A build-to line specifies the minimum distance from a property line where a building's façade must be placed, ensuring that structures are uniformly and consistently aligned to the road. This tool can be paired with a modest range to allow articulation while maintaining a consistent street edge.

Front yard averaging is another lever that calibrates new construction to prevailing setbacks on a block. A maximum setback line can further prevent buildings from drifting too far back, and a minimum separation distance between principal buildings can supplement side yard metrics in compact formats.

Building Placement

Option 1 | Maintain existing levers – The existing regulatory levers in the Zoning By-law have effectively managed development, and maintaining the existing regulatory framework may reduce conflict with the development community.

Option 2 | Introduce built-to lines for new and existing neighbourhoods – Zoning levers such as built-to lines can ensure that neighbourhood character is maintained more directly as residential areas begin to intensify.

Building Size and Massing

The Zoning By-law controls building size and massing through height limits, length limits, and transition tools. Traditional Residential zones cap building height and, on narrow lots, limit maximum building length to protect daylight, privacy, and rear yard usability. New Residential zones apply height caps by form and introduce an angular plane requirement for taller buildings to manage transitions to lower-rise areas.

Angular plane is a zoning lever that requires buildings to adjust massing according to a defined angle. An angular plane is an imaginary flat surface that projects upward from a defined line at a set inclination and is used to shape a building's upper massing. Municipalities apply angular planes to manage height transition next to low-rise areas or parks and to help maintain sunlight, sky view, and privacy. Zoning by-laws identify where the plane begins and the angle to use, commonly a 45-degree plane taken from a property line or from the far side of the street right-of-way. Upper storeys then step back so the building does not pierce the plane, as shown in **Figure 2-17**.

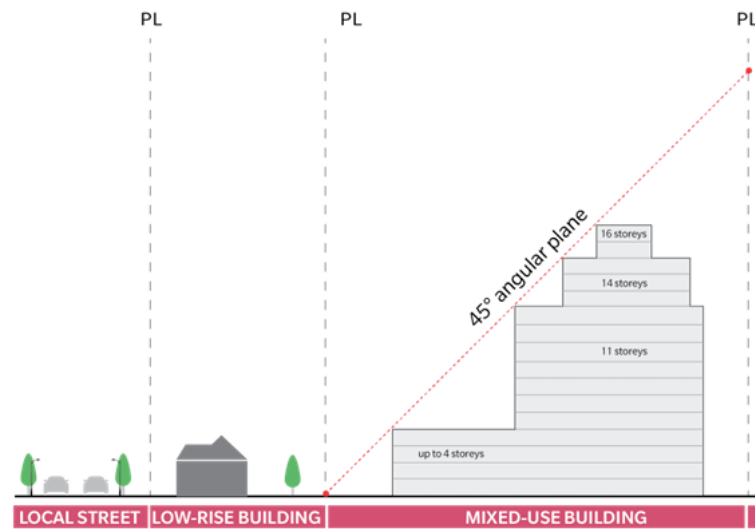


Figure 2-17: Example of Angular Plane and its impact on higher density development. (Source: City of Markham)

These tools work together with setbacks to shape the streetscape and limit shadow and overlook. In higher-density and mixed-use contexts, exceptions refine the base standards, set context-specific heights, or adjust the angular plane to reflect street width and block geometry. This allows larger sites to step massing down toward sensitive edges while maintaining viable building plates.

Angular plane has also been criticized for both its administration and effects. Structures subject to angular plane generally have a smaller unit yield than other methods, especially on shallow lots where the rear transition plan can cut significantly into the envelope. Angular plane has also been criticized for its static approach to dynamic problems such as shadows and overlook. Additionally, angular plane and the required studies can significantly increase the cost of construction when compared to alternatives such as defined setbacks by adding a layer of complexity and uncertainty to the design process.

Simple height caps may not fully capture how width and depth contribute to bulk, or how separation affects privacy and sky view. Additional zoning levers can clarify expectations early and reduce the need for repeated site specific amendments.

Maximum building envelope dimensions set explicit limits on width and depth in addition to height. This lever helps prevent bulky forms on small lots and supports better light and sky exposure. Building envelopes can also serve as an alternative to angular plane regulations by including pre-determined step-backs and articulation requirements in a format that is easier to understand for end users.

Shadow impact standards, podium heights, and tower separation rules are complementary tools. Together, these levers manage how massing relates to sidewalks, open space, and neighbouring dwellings, and they can be paired with floor plate size maximums to ensure slender towers and better tower spacing where apartments are contemplated.

Building Height and Massing

Option 1 | Maintain existing levers – The existing regulatory levers in the Zoning By-law have effectively managed development, and maintaining the existing regulatory framework may reduce conflict with the development community.

Option 2 | Apply form-based regulations – Following the City of Cambridge, residential density can effectively be managed through simplified regulations such as building envelopes. This approach reduces the complexity of regulations within the Zoning By-law.

2.3 Housing Accelerator Fund Initiatives

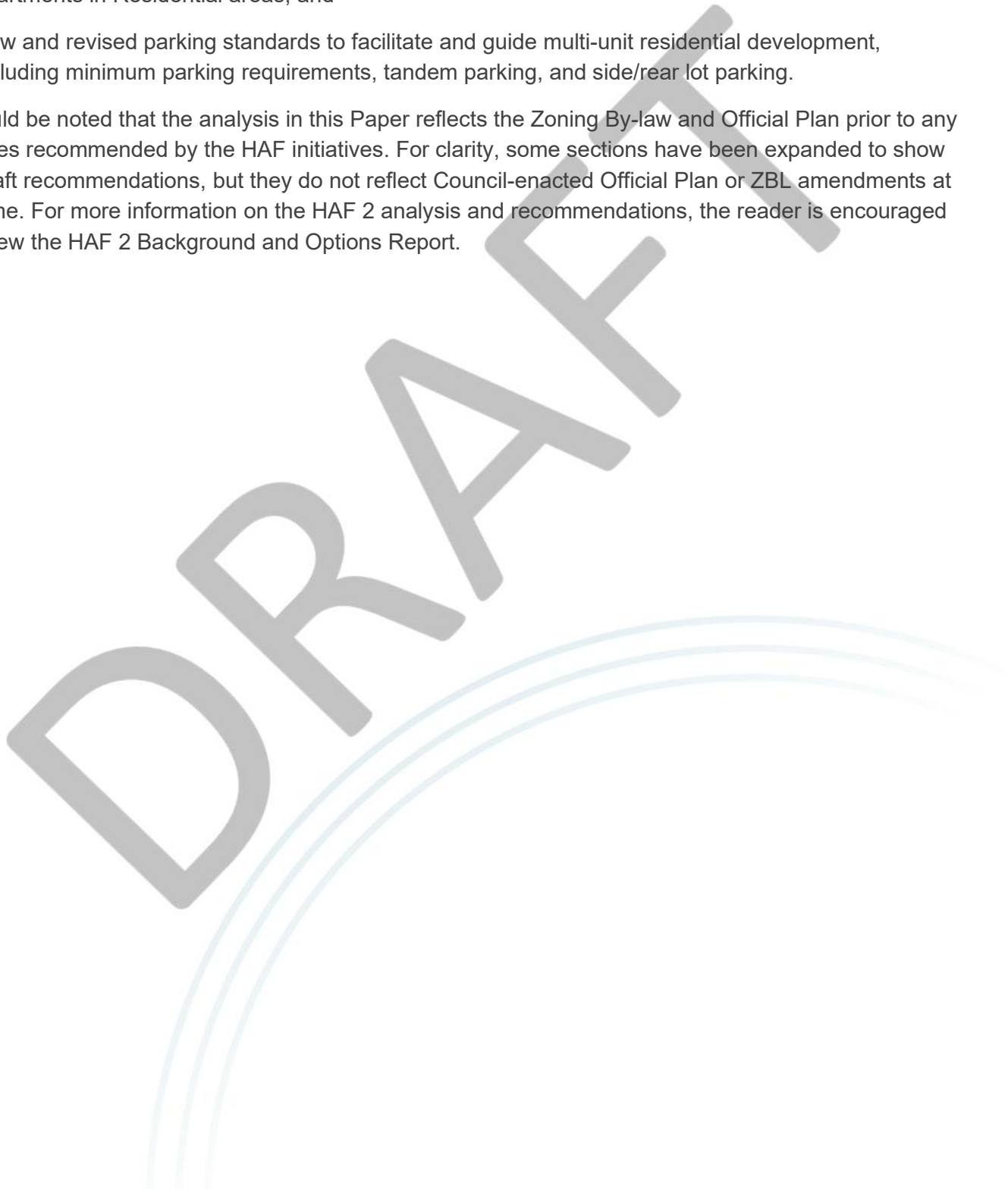
The new zoning framework should also incorporate any changes implemented through the two Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) initiatives being advanced by the Town in conjunction with the Zoning By-law Review project. In particular, the outcomes of HAF Initiative #2 (“HAF 2”), which is considering allowing more missing middle housing typologies in the Town’s existing residential neighbourhoods, will have direct relevance to zoning for Residential areas. HAF 2 was supported by a Background and Options Report, which included a comprehensive consideration of various housing typologies and their potential impacts (or lack thereof) on established low-rise residential uses.

As of the writing of this report, the following changes to the residential zoning structure have been proposed and consulted on with the public, and will be brought forward for Council enactment ahead of the Zoning By-law review:

- Expanded permission for semi-detached dwellings, street townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in all municipally serviced residential zones, subject to typology-specific lot and building provisions;
- Expanded permission for ARUs to allow up to three total ARUs on lots with a single-detached dwelling and up to two ARUs for semi-detached and townhouse dwellings;

- New permission for up to two ARUs in an accessory building, subject to lot and building provisions;
- Revised standards in the RM1 zone to streamline zoning by-law amendment process for low-rise apartments in Residential areas; and
- New and revised parking standards to facilitate and guide multi-unit residential development, including minimum parking requirements, tandem parking, and side/rear lot parking.

It should be noted that the analysis in this Paper reflects the Zoning By-law and Official Plan prior to any changes recommended by the HAF initiatives. For clarity, some sections have been expanded to show the draft recommendations, but they do not reflect Council-enacted Official Plan or ZBL amendments at this time. For more information on the HAF 2 analysis and recommendations, the reader is encouraged to review the HAF 2 Background and Options Report.



3. Official Plan Conformity Assessment

In accordance with the *Planning Act*, zoning must be reviewed for conformity with the applicable policies of the Official Plan following an Official Plan Review process. This review is a major objective of the Zoning By-law review project, and will result in an entirely refreshed Zoning By-law to implement the 2025 Official Plan. This section assesses the general conformity of the in-effect Zoning By-law with the 2025 Official Plan.

3.1 Application of New Designations

As discussed in Section 2 of this Paper, the Official Plan’s land use designations set out the Town’s vision for land use organization, and the Zoning By-law must be consistent with the land use designations when applying zoning. **Appendix A** contains a table that shows the zoning applied to the various residential designations within the Town’s Official Plan, and the proportions of the designation which are occupied by each zone. Analysis of this data has been distilled into **Table 3-1**, which shows the proportion of each designation which has residential zoning applied.

Table 3-1: Existing Zoning Within Official Plan Designations

Land Use Designation	Residential Zones Present in Designation	Percent of Designation Zoned Residential
Stouffville Neighbourhood Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Commercial Residential Mixed – Western Approach ■ New Residential 1 ■ New Residential 2 ■ New Residential 3 ■ New Residential 4 ■ New Residential 5 ■ Residential 1 ■ Residential 2 ■ Residential 3 ■ Residential 4 ■ Residential Multiple 1 ■ Residential Village 	81%
Urban Medium Density Residential Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Commercial Residential Mixed – Community Core Area ■ Commercial Residential Mixed – Western Approach ■ New Residential 3 ■ New Residential 4 ■ New Residential 5 ■ Residential 1 ■ Residential Multiple 2 ■ Residential Village 	49%

Land Use Designation	Residential Zones Present in Designation	Percent of Designation Zoned Residential
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New Residential 1 	
Urban High Density Residential Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Commercial Residential Mixed – Western Approach 	29%
Old Elm Medium-High Density Residential Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New Residential 4 ■ New Residential 5 	29%
Old Elm Residential Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ New Residential 2 ■ New Residential 3 ■ New Residential 4 ■ New Residential 5 	8%
Gormley Neighbourhood Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential Private Services 	54%
Vandorf Neighbourhood Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential Private Services 	82%
Bloomington Hamlet area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential Private Services 	62%

The analysis shown in **Table 3-1** indicates that the zoning present in many of the residential land use designations are varied, despite not comprising the entirety of every designation. The result showing less than 100% of the designation being zoned for residential uses does not necessarily constitute a non-conformity with the Official Plan, as land use designations are not meant to be as prescriptive as zoning. The zoning applied in the Zoning By-law should be in conformity with the Official Plan, though some zones, such as the floodplain (FP) zone respond to policies outside of the land use designations. Nonetheless, designations with less than 50% of the area zoned for residential uses indicate that the Official Plan has introduced new contexts for these areas. The Old Elm – Residential Area is of note for less than 8% of the area being designated for residential use, which corresponds with the nature of the land use designation as a greenfield area which requires pre-zoning to enable development. Conversely, the Stouffville Neighbourhood Area designation is applied to existing residential areas, explaining the high percentage of residential lands. In this instance, the variety of residential zones is a more telling result, indicating that the new Official Plan has introduced a uniform approach to these areas. This suggests that the zoning framework for this area could also adopt a uniform approach.

3.2 Zoning Conformity with New Designations

Given the comprehensive refresh of the Official Plan’s land use designations and the age of the existing zoning framework, there is limited alignment between the zones and their designations. Many zones were created to implement to policies of land-use designations which no longer exist. Conversely, some land use designations are not implemented at all through the zoning. **Table 3-2** provides a narrative of what implementing zoning for each land use designation should look like in the Zoning By-law.

Table 3-2: Analysis of Land Use designation Implementation through Existing Zoning

Land Use Designation	What Zoning Should Look Like in this Designation
Neighbourhood Area	The implementing zoning should establish a low-rise neighbourhood zone that permits ground-related dwellings, small community facilities and parks, with accessory home-based uses and additional residential units where servicing and lot standards are satisfied. Built form should be limited to 2 to 4 storeys, with explicit transition requirements that use setbacks, stepbacks and angular planes to ensure compatibility with adjacent lots. Higher intensity forms are best directed to collector and arterial frontages and to locations with strong pedestrian and cycling connections to local centres, parks and transit. Site plan control should secure street-oriented entrances, reduced visual prominence of garages, rear or side-yard parking, tree planting, and pedestrian linkages to the open space network, supported by confirmation of municipal servicing capacity.
Urban Medium Density Residential Area	The zoning framework should create a medium-density residential zone that permits townhouses in multiple formats, low-rise apartments and live-work units, with limited non-residential uses only where integrated at grade in a mixed-use building and where they support a complete community. A height of 3 to 9 storeys should be paired with massing controls and transition standards to protect adjacent low-rise areas, including stepbacks above lower storeys, side and rear landscape buffers and privacy measures. Location criteria should favour collector and arterial corridors and areas with access to transit, schools, parks and local commercial services, reinforced by requirements for active frontages, minimized curb cuts and screened onsite parking. Holding provisions should be used to stage development to servicing availability and to secure urban design submissions that demonstrate compliance with the Town’s Urban Design Guidelines.
Urban High Density Residential Area	The high-density residential zone should enable apartment buildings and compatible tall midrise forms, with active ground-floor uses where identified along corridors, and with reduced parking ratios that reflect transit-supportive intent. Typical height permissions should be in the 10 to 20 storey range, with potential for greater height within MTSA’s or Strategic Growth Areas where urban design, transition and servicing criteria are met. Zoning should require podium and tower or stepped mid-rise massing, continuous street walls, public realm improvements and bicycle facilities, and it should mandate compatibility studies where sites are adjacent to rail corridors.
Old Elm Medium-High Density Residential Area	Within the Old Elm MTSA and surrounding areas, a medium-high residential zone should permit townhouses in all formats, low and midrise apartments and live-work townhouses, and it should require compact blocks, short internal connections and buildings that frame Tenth Line and the collector network. Building heights should be between 3 and 8 storeys tall. The tallest forms should concentrate closest to the GO station and mixed-use nodes, with explicit transition to adjacent low-rise neighbourhoods through height limits at edges, step-backs and landscaped buffers. The zoning should be informed by the Old Elm Urban Design Guidelines and include a density implementation clause that recognizes the MTSA minimum is a station-area target achieved cumulatively, while still setting minimum net density expectations for individual sites. Phasing policies should allow interim

Land Use Designation	What Zoning Should Look Like in this Designation
	surface parking only where a phasing plan demonstrates delivery of the ultimate built form and density without dependency on rebuilding early phases.
Old Elm Residential Area	A neighbourhood residential zone for Old Elm should focus on ground-related, low-rise forms that step down from the higher-intensity Old Elm precincts and use clear interface standards to protect established areas. Permissions should include singles, semis, townhouses and limited low-rise apartments, together with live-work units and additional residential units, subject to street orientation and block permeability requirements. The zoning should require compatibility studies and design briefs for edge sites, and it should incorporate similar phasing policies to the Old Elm Medium-High Density Residential Area.
Gormley Residential Area	The Gormley neighbourhood zone should recognize the private servicing context and the hamlet's employment interface by limiting new residential development to low-density forms on large lots that can be supported by individual wells and septic systems. The Zoning By-law should prohibit uses with significant water or sewage demand and reinforce the expectation for dry industrial performance where employment lands are proximate, while allowing modest infill only where hydrogeological and compatibility evidence is provided. Subdivision activity should be tied to an approved Master Drainage Plan and functional servicing analyses, and design standards should secure rural character through greater setbacks, landscape screening and limits on lighting and outdoor storage.
Vandorf Neighbourhood Area	A Vandorf neighbourhood zone should permit low-rise dwellings with additional residential units and small community or institutional uses, while requiring comprehensive functional and hydrogeological studies that demonstrate well capacity, septic suitability and protection against well interference before approvals proceed. The zone should allow only limited infill and redevelopment that preserves rural character through massing controls, material guidance, landscape buffers and a frontage and lot area regime calibrated to private servicing. The Zone should provide for the potential transition to communal or municipal services through holding symbols linked to a Master Environmental Servicing Plan, and it should phase any multi-lot proposals to infrastructure delivery.
Bloomington Hamlet area	The Bloomington Hamlet Area residential zone should maintain the rural settlement pattern by permitting low density dwellings with additional residential units and small scale community uses, while tying lot areas and frontages to demonstrated private servicing capacity. The zoning should allow only modest infill or rounding out that respects established built form, streetscape and views, and it should require buffering and interface controls where residential lots abut commercial, institutional or agricultural activities.

Due to the comprehensive changes present in the Official Plan, none of the existing zones will fulsomely implement the vision of the plan. Instead, some land use designations will require multiple zones to fully implement the nuances of the policies stated in the Official Plan. The Hamlet areas are an exception to this, as the implementing zoning would largely be compliant if the RV zone were applied. Nonetheless, the RV zone requires significant overhaul to improve implementation and effectiveness, as discussed in Section 4.4.1 of this Paper.

The description of what implementing zoning could look like in **Table 3-2** represents the overall intention of the Official Plan for these areas, and is subject to interpretation through the Zoning By-law. With the level of prescriptive detail in the 2025 Official Plan, it is possible to develop a zoning framework which mirrors the designations. Nonetheless, the role of zoning is different than that of the land use designations, and considerations must be made for the granular details present on the ground. Section 5 of this Paper discusses the options for the zoning framework, which will guide the implementation of the zoning described in **Table 3-2**.

DRAFT

4. Residential Zone Issues and Opportunities

The Town's Zoning By-law must implement the vision of the Official Plan, though priorities in planning and governance have changed significantly since the Zoning By-law's adoption in 2010. This section reviews the existing zone structure present in the Zoning By-law, and outlines some major changes in the Town's land use structure which should be addressed through zoning, such as the designation of new greenfield lands, the introduction of Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs), and the opportunity to refresh the zone structure using contemporary methodologies.

4.1 Existing Conditions

Unlike the Official Plan, the Zoning By-law is intended to introduce granular and specific regulations to shape the development and redevelopment of communities and neighbourhoods. An understanding of what currently exists in each neighbourhood will support the development of regulations aimed at either introducing a new context or maintaining the current character of the area. This section reviews the different types of residential neighbourhoods found in the Town, and provides an overview of the types of dwellings present in each. This analysis will support the creation of the zoning framework options in Section 5 of this Paper.

As part of the Housing Accelerator Fund initiatives, the Study Team conducted a review of the different typologies which exist within the Town. This section includes an expanded version of this analysis to include areas which were excluded due to the limited scope of the Housing Accelerator Fund initiatives. The existing residential neighbourhoods of the Town vary widely in development patterns and building typologies. Reviewing and characterizing the neighbourhood context is critical to developing policies, provisions, and regulations that are contextually appropriate with the established built form. The Study Team conducted a review of lot and building characteristics in the Town, using aerial imagery. Five typical contexts were observed in the Town, which are described below. The description of these contexts is purely to characterize the neighbourhoods for the purposes of the analysis.

4.1.1 Privately Serviced Residential

These areas consist of residential lots outside of urban areas which do not have municipal water or wastewater services, instead relying on private well and septic services. Lots in these areas are typically clustered together in rural and hamlet communities, with an average lot size exceeding 5,000 m². All lots of this type are zoned Residential Private Services (RPS). Privately serviced residential lots are intended to be the largest and least-urban settlement types, with new lots requiring a minimum lot area of 8,000 m² and a minimum frontage of 45 m. The zoning also requires the largest setbacks of all the residential

areas, and only permits single detached dwelling units. These regulations result in very low-density neighbourhoods which can be found in all areas of the Town including the Community of Stouffville, but are most often located in the Town's Hamlet areas, such as Vandorf, Gormley, and Bloomington. These areas are characterized by large, deep and wide lots with strong tree coverage and substantial front and rear yards. The rural character of these residential areas often places them directly adjacent to agricultural or conservation uses, as shown in **Figures 4-1** and **4-2**.

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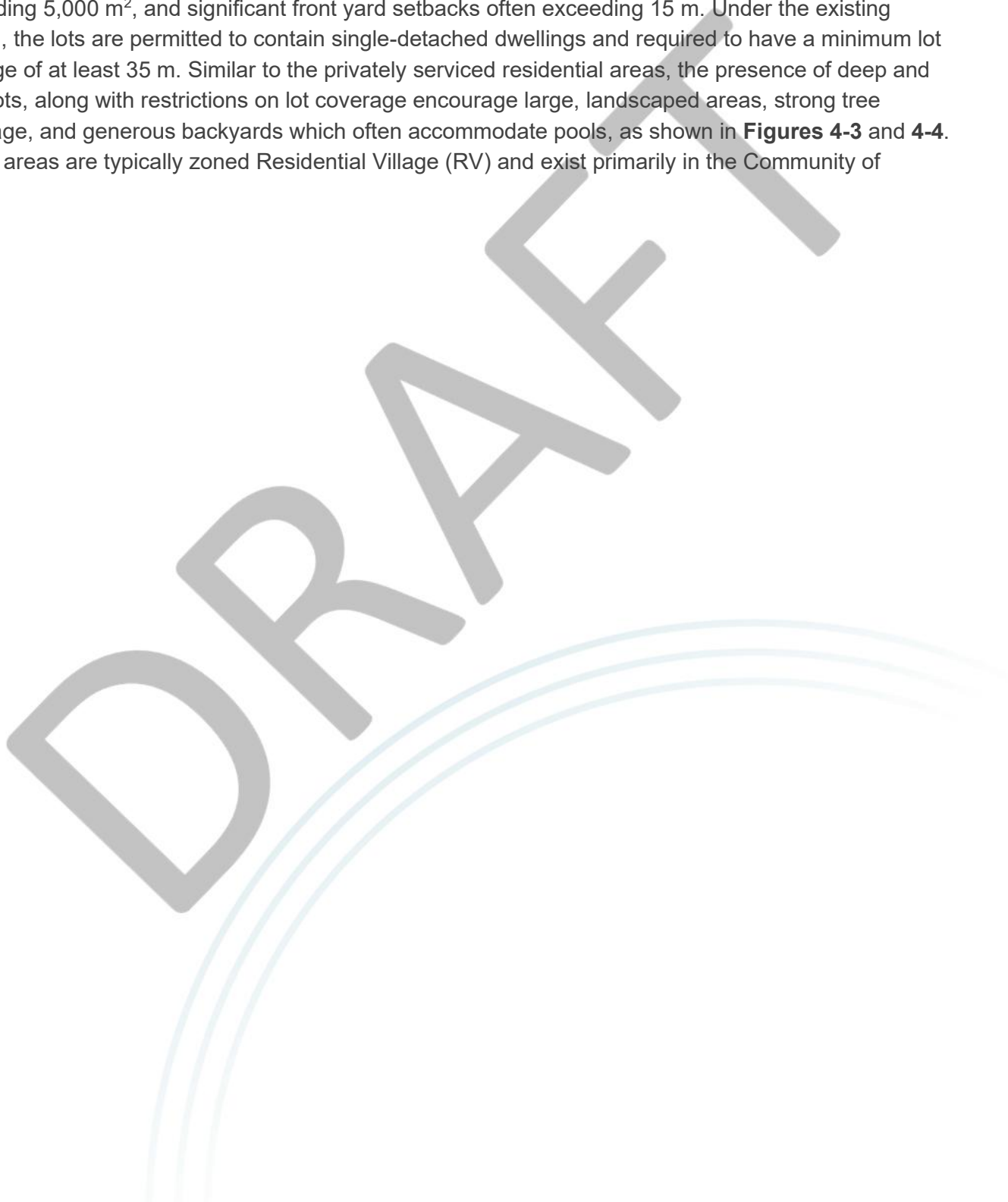
Figure 4-1: Example of privately serviced neighbourhood density and block pattern.



Figure 4-2: Examples of one-storey (left) and two-storey (right) single-detached dwellings on privately serviced lots.

4.1.2 Village Lot Residential Areas

These areas are characterized by a curvilinear street pattern, and larger, estate style lots, typically exceeding 5,000 m², and significant front yard setbacks often exceeding 15 m. Under the existing zoning, the lots are permitted to contain single-detached dwellings and required to have a minimum lot frontage of at least 35 m. Similar to the privately serviced residential areas, the presence of deep and wide lots, along with restrictions on lot coverage encourage large, landscaped areas, strong tree coverage, and generous backyards which often accommodate pools, as shown in **Figures 4-3** and **4-4**. These areas are typically zoned Residential Village (RV) and exist primarily in the Community of



Ballantrae and the Hamlet of Musselman’s Lake, along with two clusters of properties in the eastern portion of the Community of Stouffville.



Figure 4-3: Example of large estate lot neighbourhood density and block pattern



Figure 4-4: Examples of one-storey (left) and two-storey (right) single-detached dwellings on large lots

4.1.3 Older Urban Residential Areas

These areas are dominated by single-detached dwellings on orthogonal street grids with deeper blocks and generous setbacks, as shown in **Figures 4-5** and **4-6**. These neighbourhoods are the oldest in the Town, with a mature tree canopy and housing stock ranging from the 19th century to brand new replacement housing builds. Many of the replacement homes are much larger than the historically built homes, reflective of more recent market conditions which demand larger home sizes. While OP policies and zoning have maintained the single-detached nature of these areas they are also characterized by a broad range of architectural styles and massing. The new Official Plan enables gentle density and a broader range of housing typologies in these traditional residential areas. These areas are typically zoned Residential One (R1), Residential Two (R2), or Residential Three (R3).

The Town has three established Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD) designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* which encompass some of the more traditional residential neighbourhoods. The HCD designation regulates the built form of buildings and requires Heritage Permits for changes to designated properties. The Heritage Conservation District Plan primarily establishes objectives for high-quality urban design and architectural considerations, which does not necessarily impede the development of multi-unit properties. HCDs are discussed further in Section 4.10 of this Paper.



Figure 4-5: Example of older neighbourhood density and block pattern



Figure 4-6: Examples of various single-detached dwellings in older neighbourhoods.

4.1.4 Suburban Residential Areas

Like the older urban residential areas, these areas are dominated by single-detached dwellings, but with more consistent architecture, massing, and lot and block size than the older neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods feature a mix of crescents, boulevards, cul-de-sacs, and looped street patterns with mature landscaping that contributes to the Town's tree canopy. Dwellings are generally located on rectangular and consistently-sized lots with large and uniform front setbacks, with integrated garages and modest rear yards as shown in **Figures 4-7** and **4-8**. These areas are generally zoned Residential One (R1) or Residential Two (R2) in the Town's in-effect Zoning By-law.



Figure 4-7: Example of established suburban neighbourhood density and block pattern



Figure 4-8: Examples of typical dwellings in established suburban neighbourhoods

4.1.5 New Residential Areas

These areas are generally located towards the periphery of the Town’s Urban Area, and are characterized by newer, more recent phases of development which accommodate a broader range of housing forms, including single-detached dwellings, semi-detached dwellings, duplex dwellings, and townhouse dwellings on grid-like streets. As shown in **Figures 4-9** and **4-10**, the lots are typically smaller in overall lot area, with shallower setbacks and a more compact block structure, accommodating higher

densities than older urban residential areas or established suburban areas. Residential lots include landscaped areas, driveways, and modest rear yards, with most lots including private garages and boulevards which accommodate trees. These areas are zoned Residential New One (RN1), Residential New Two (RN2), Residential New Three (RN3), Residential New Four (RN4).

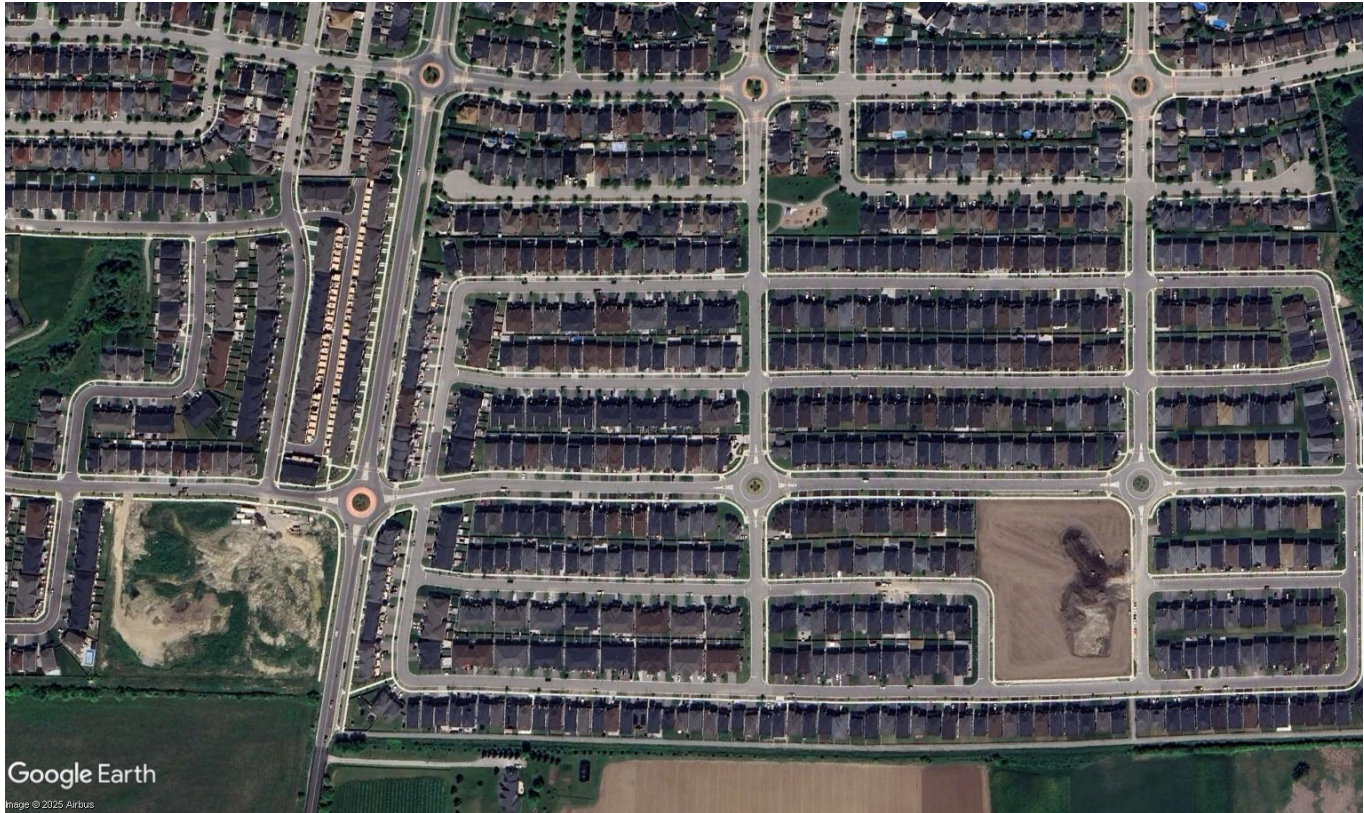


Figure 4-9: Example of newer residential area density and block pattern.



Figure 4-10: Examples of street townhouse dwellings (left) and single-detached dwellings (right) in newer residential areas.

4.2 Existing Zoning

The current Zoning By-law contains 13 residential zones, which are split into two categories. The Traditional Residential Zones represent the established residential neighbourhoods in the Town at the time of the Zoning By-law’s adoption in 2010. The eight residential zones in this category range from the high-density zoning along Main Street in Stouffville, to the rural residential zoning in the countryside. The second category is New Residential Zones, which were developed to support the greenfield expansion of the Community of Stouffville, and are nearly entirely built out today, with the exception of Old Elm. While each of these zones had a purpose at the time of adoption, as the residential areas of the Town begin to mature, some of these zones may have become redundant in their purpose of separating land uses. **Table 4-1** shows all thirteen residential zones in the Town, which have been sorted according to the residential uses which are permitted in each zone. The table also shows the minimum lot size for each zone, which can be used to discern the targeted density, as well as the number of parcels in the Town which have that zone applied.

Table 4-1: Comparison of Residential Zones

Zone	Permitted Housing Typologies	Minimum Lot Size	Maximum Building Height	No. of Zoned Properties
Residential Private services (RPS)	Single detached dwelling	0.8 ha	11 m	1,337
Residential Village (RV)	Single detached dwelling	0.5 ha	11 m	1,307
Residential One (R1)	Single detached dwelling	555 m ²	10 m	1,391
Residential Two (R2)	Single detached dwelling	370 m ²	10 m	908
Residential New One (RN1)	Single detached dwelling	370 m ²	10 m	735
Residential New Two (RN2)	Single detached dwelling	300 m ²	10 m	800
Residential New Three (RN3)	Single detached dwelling Semi-detached dwelling	235 m ² for single detached, 195 m ² for semi-detached	10 m	4,284
Residential Three (R3)	Single detached dwelling Semi-detached dwelling Duplex dwelling	370 m ²	10 m	560
Residential Four (R4)	Single detached dwelling Semi-detached dwelling	200 m ² to 222 m ² per unit,	10 m	69

Zone	Permitted Housing Typologies	Minimum Lot Size	Maximum Building Height	No. of Zoned Properties
	Duplex dwelling Street townhouse dwelling Townhouse dwelling	depending on typology		
Residential New Four (RN4)	Semi-detached dwelling Duplex dwelling Street townhouse dwelling Townhouse dwelling Back-to-back townhouse dwelling Stacked townhouse dwelling	195 m ² for semi-detached 80 m ² per unit for back-to-back townhouse 145 m ² per unit for stacked townhouse 153 m ² per unit for street townhouse 153 m ² per unit for townhouse	12 m for stacked townhouses, 10 m for all other uses	2,758
Residential Multiple One (RM1)	Street townhouse dwelling Townhouse dwelling Apartment building	222 m ² per unit for Townhouse dwellings, 222 m ² for apartment buildings	10 m for street townhouses, 12m for all other uses	8
Residential Multiple Two (RM2)	Stacked townhouse dwelling Apartment building	0.3 ha for apartment buildings, 145 m ² per unit for stacked townhouse dwellings	12 m for stacked townhouses, 20 m for apartment buildings	6
Residential New Five (RN5)	Apartment building	0.3 ha	20 m	32

As mentioned above, the zones in **Table 4-1** have been sorted according to their primary permitted uses. This is shown through the colour-coding in each cell, with similar zones shaded the same colour. This analysis shows that despite the broad range of zones, these thirteen can be sorted into four categories with similar permissions, as shown below in **Table 4-2**.

Table 4-2: Zone Comparison by Permitted Uses

Primary Uses	Zones Encompassed	Description
Single Detached Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential Private services (RPS) ■ Residential Village (RV) ■ Residential One (R1) ■ Residential Two (R2) ■ Residential New One (RN1) ■ Residential New Two (RN2) 	Combines the six zones which only permit single detached dwellings.
Semi-detached Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential New Three (RN3) ■ Residential Three (R3) 	Combines two zones, and permits single detached, semi-detached, and duplex dwellings.
Townhouse Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential Four (R4) ■ Residential New Four (RN4) 	Combines two zones which permit various forms of townhouse dwellings, but also single detached dwellings.
High density residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Residential Multiple One (RM1) ■ Residential Multiple Two (RM2) ■ Residential New Five (RN5) 	Combines three zones which permit townhouses and apartment units.

The zones sorted in Table 4-2 do not represent a preferred zoning structure, and instead highlight certain perceived redundancies in the existing Zoning By-law. While the combination of zones based on permitted uses could simplify the zoning structure, there are many additional factors which need to be considered when developing a new residential framework. Servicing capacity is a major consideration for the single-detached residential category, as parcels without centralized sewage services require significantly larger lot sizes to accommodate on-site septic systems. One key takeaway is that the current zoning framework regulates height within each zone based on the building typology. As discussed in Discussion Paper 1, this is a common characteristic of a traditional zoning by-law, which ascribes uncoordinated building controls which struggle to produce a consistent built form. Discussion Paper 1 also introduces the concept of “Form-based” regulations, which specify detailed requirements for the built form of an area and focus less on the discreet uses permitted within. A zoning structure for the residential areas will be determined in the Zoning Strategy Report.

4.3 Zoning By-law Amendments and Minor Variances

Zoning by-laws articulate the vision of the Town into specific, measurable rules and provisions, though the situation on the ground is constantly evolving in ways which are not always considered by the by-law. To address this, zoning by-laws have two mechanisms which allow for developments which do not fully comply with the provisions to proceed. If the deviation is minor in nature, the *Planning Act* enables minor variances to be passed through the Committee of Adjustment which allow for slight relaxation of the zoning by-law provisions. If the desired change is not minor in nature, a zoning by-law amendment is required to enable the development. Zoning by-law amendments are decided upon by Town Council and can constitute significant changes to the by-law. This section reviews the variances and amendments

approved for the residential areas of the Town to draw insights into the sections of the Zoning By-law which may not be working as intended.

4.3.1 Minor Variances

To understand the scale of minor variances approved in the Town, minor variance requests submitted to the Committee of Adjustment between February 2020 and September 2025 were analyzed. Of the 498 requested variances during this time period, **Figure 4-11** shows that 35% involved a residentially zoned property.

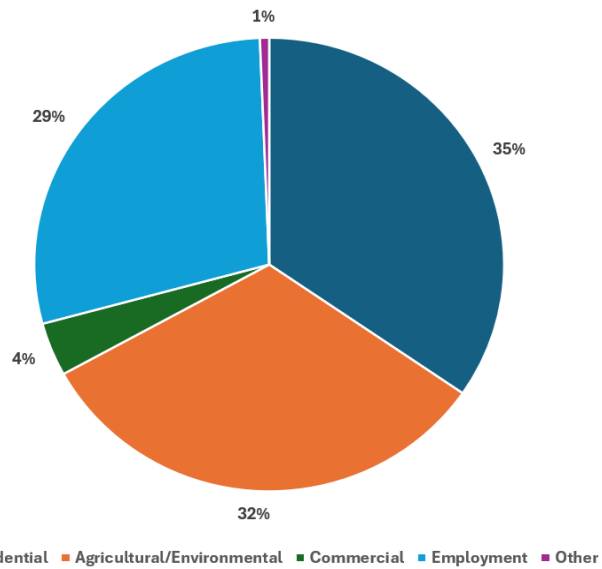


Table 4-3: Summary of Minor Variance Applications in Residential Zones

Figure 4-11: Minor Variance Requests by Zone Category

Zone	Key Takeaways from Minor Variances
R1	18 applications which commonly ask for narrower lot frontages and extended building dimensions.
R2	10 applications which asked for interior side yard and building length relief, with some driveway/parking tweaks.
R3	11 applications which sought frequent relief for accessory structures, interior side yards, and lot coverage.
RN1	5 applications which nearly all asked for building height to be adjusted to 10.8 m, with 1 request for accessory structure changes.
RN2	3 applications which asked for rear yard, side yard, and deck setback relief.
RN3	12 applications which sought relief from rear yard setbacks and reductions in detached ARU requirements.
R4	No minor variances on record.
RM1	No minor variances on record.
RM2	No minor variances on record.
RN5	2 applications which sought relief from parking space size requirements.
RPS	8 applications which requested relief from side yard and lot coverage requirements.
RV	25 applications which commonly sought relief from side, front, and rear lot setbacks, as well as lot frontage and coverage requirements.

The key takeaways from **Table 4-3** are that many of the residential zones may be too restrictive in their regulation of required side yard setbacks, lot frontage, and lot coverage. This supports a recent trend in greenfield development which sees larger structures being built on smaller lots, maximizing the amount of residential density achieved in a low-density subdivision without introducing higher-density housing typologies. The high number of variance requests for the RV zone suggest that the provisions within the Zoning By-law are not appropriate for the desired uses, and a change must be considered. Discussion Paper 7 explores minor variances from all zones and should be consulted for further details.

4.3.2 Zoning By-law Amendments and Exception Zones

If a proposed development does not comply with the provisions of the Zoning By-law, the project proponent may submit a Zoning By-law amendment application to establish site-specific regulations, subject to Council approval. These exception zones are a normal part of a Zoning By-law, and can be applied to a single property or multiple through the creation of a new zone which modifies all or part of the requirements of the parent zone, including uses, lot and building requirements, and even definitions which only apply to that exception zone. The role and analysis of these site-specific exception zones are further discussed in Discussion Paper 7, though this Paper provides a brief assessment of the site-specific exception zones applied to commercial zones within the Town. **Table 4-4** shows an overview of these exception zones which have been added to the residential zones of the Town over the years:

Table 4-4: Summary of Site-specific Exception Zones in Residential Areas

Zone	Key Takeaways from Exception Zones
R1	No active exception zones.
R2	No active exception zones.
R3	No active exception zones.
R4	2 exception zones which regulate townhouse forms for multiple lot subdivision projects.
RM1	2 exception zones which regulate small-scale apartment or multi-unit developments.
RM2	2 exception zones which add provisions for mid-rise and mid-density intensification.
RN1	3 exception zones which make small, site-specific changes to built form regulations for single-detached developments.
RN2	4 exception zones which address yard reductions, encroachment allowances, and minor height adjustments.
RN3	11 exceptions which address large greenfield subdivisions layouts, repeated relaxation of built-form provisions, and context-specific constraints.
RN4	29 exceptions which nearly all address multi-block townhouse subdivision developments, with context-specific provisions for each zone.
RN5	8 exception zones which provide site-specific regulation of mixed-use and high-rise developments, with changes to height, density, amenity spaces, and built form controls.
RPS	10 exception zones which preserve legacy provisions, expand large-lot parameters, and two zones which add uses, with one being a mixed-use node.
RV	10 exception zones with a wide range of changes which cover the rural-to-urban transition, such as preserving estate lots, permitting compact townhouse subdivisions, enabling small-lot infilling, and some changes to address contextual constraints.

Many of the exception zones noted in **Table 4-4** are the result of normal processes for a Zoning By-law, such as the codification of existing uses or approvals from previous Zoning By-laws. There are also a number of exception zones which are correlated with greenfield development in the New Residential zones. It is not unusual for greenfield development projects involved in the creation of multiple dwellings at the time to seek specific, tailored zoning provisions through an exception zone. The absence of exception zones in the R1, R2, and R3 zones suggests that these zones may be well aligned with the needs of the residents, but may also be representative of limited development interest in these areas.

Nonetheless, there are some minor variances indicative of inadequate zoning provisions, particularly in the RPS and RV zones. The expansion of uses in the RPS zone could suggest a greater development interest than previously anticipated for these areas, and should be reviewed when developing the zoning framework for the Hamlet Areas. The RV zone's 10 exception zones indicate that the zone is being applied in areas that require greater flexibility, as evidenced by the exception zones aimed at alleviating site-specific constraints to development. The exception zones in the RV zone aimed at enabling more urban-style developments also suggest that the context for these areas has changed since the zoning was applied, as townhouse blocks are typically not developed in the contexts that the RV zone was intended to support.

4.4 Residential Zoning in Hamlet Areas

4.4.1 Residential Village (RV) Zone

The RV zone is the primary residential zone for the Community of Ballantrae and the Hamlet of Musselman's Lake, and permits only single detached dwellings and accessory uses. The zone is presented as a more urbanized version of the Residential Private Services (RPS) zone, permitting all the same uses with smaller lot size, frontage, and yard requirements. The RV zone requires 0.5 ha (5,000 m²) of lot area, with 35 m of frontage, and a maximum lot coverage of 15%, consistent with the estate lot residential areas identified in Section 4.1 of this Paper.

The RV zone implements the policies of the Ballantrae Residential Area and Musselman's Lake Community Area, which are land use designations within the Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake and Environs Secondary Plan, as amended in April 2025 (See section 2.1.4.9 of this Paper).

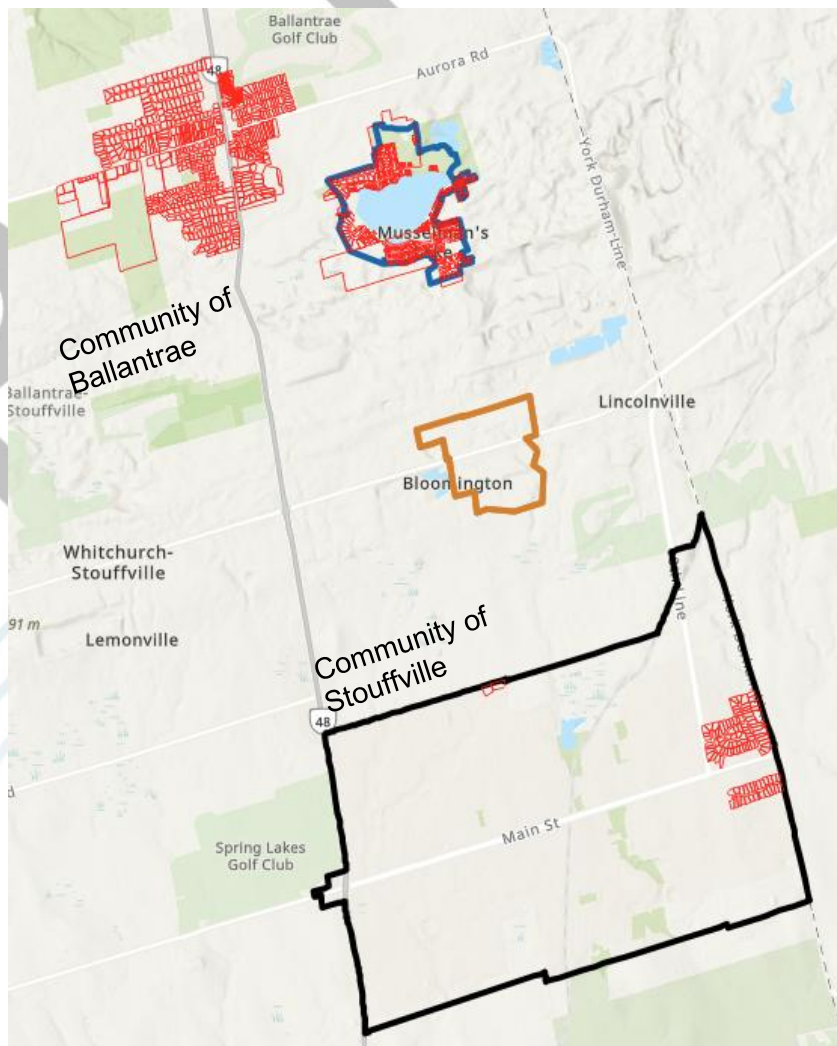


Figure 4-12: Areas in the Town zoned Residential Village (RV)

As discussed in Section 4.3.2 of this Paper, as well as Discussion Paper 7, the Residential Village (RV) zone has been noted by Town staff as being incompatible with the evolving needs of the Town. This is evidenced by an elevated number of minor variances and exception zones for this zone. **Figure 4-12** shows the extent of area in the Town zoned RV. Significantly, **Figure 4-12** shows that there are portions of the Town's Urban Area which are subject to the more rural-focused zone. It is possible that these areas were developed prior to a boundary expansion for the Community of Stouffville, though the continued application of a zone designed for areas with partial or private services is likely inappropriate for the new context.

Properties Currently Zoned RV

Recommendation | Review the application of the RV zone within the boundaries of the Community of Stouffville and rezone – The RV zone was never intended to be applied to properties where full municipal services are available, and properties within the Urban Area of the Town should have zoning that reflects their potential for full services.

The following options for the RV zone should be considered when developing the new zoning framework:

Modernization of the RV Zone

Option 1 | Carry over existing zoning while the Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake and Environs Secondary Plan policies are being reviewed – The Town will be updating the 2025 Official Plan in the future to incorporate the policies for Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake, which is an opportunity for the Town to review the land use designations for these areas. A zoning update would need to follow through a separate process.

Option 2 | Develop a new RV zone framework using the existing policies – The policies in the Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake and Environs Secondary Plan were updated to conform with the new legislative and policy framework by the OLT, and a new RV zoning framework could be developed and implemented using the policies from the 2004 Official Plan, which are being consolidated into the 2025 Official Plan.

4.4.2 Residential Private Services (RPS) Zone

Outside of Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake, the RPS zone is the primary residential zone in the Hamlets of Gormley, Vandorf, and Bloomington, and the rural estate developments. The RPS zone is characterized by large parcels, large setbacks, and the ability to accommodate on-site septic systems. The intentions for the residential areas of the various Hamlets are largely unchanged through the 2025 Official Plan, with designations emphasizing rural character and limited infill opportunities. Considering the relatively low instances of minor variances and exception zones related to actual development constraints outside of the ORMCP areas, the RPS zone is effective in achieving the vision of the Official Plan. Nonetheless, options exist which should be considered:

Residential Private services (RPS) Zone

Option 1 | Retain the RPS zone, and maintain application throughout the Hamlet Areas – Noting the relative effectiveness of the zone, option 1 would result in the zone being carried forward into the new Zoning by-law, with only minor changes to fit into the contemporary framework.

Option 2 | Split the RPS Zone into Rural and Hamlet areas – Option 2 would result in specific zoning for the Hamlet areas which would enable unique regulation of Hamlet-specific issues without impacting more rural settlement areas.

Option 3 | Rezone Hamlet areas to RV – Option 3 would involve greater reform to the RV zone to accommodate a wider range of applications outside of the Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake area. Similar to Option 2, this would result in more Hamlet-specific provisions that recognize the Hamlet areas as distinct settlement from the lowest-density areas within the Greenbelt and ORMCP areas of the Town.

4.5 Encroachments, Accessory Uses, Buildings, and Structures

Beyond primary uses, zoning by-laws also regulate uses, buildings, and structures which are generally considered secondary to the primary uses. These are referred to in the current Zoning By-law as “accessory” structures and uses, and are defined as “incidental and subordinate” to the principal use on a lot. This section reviews the framework within the in-effect Zoning By-law for regulating accessory uses, structures, and buildings, including their permitted encroachments into required yards, and specific uses such as additional residential units.

4.5.1 Encroachment Table

It is typical for zoning by-laws to regulate building placement on sites using required yards or setbacks from different property lines. These regulations are normally found within the provisions of each zone, and would apply to all structures, buildings, and fixtures to prevent negative impacts on the neighbouring properties. Nonetheless, there are elements of buildings and common accessories which are constrained by these strict yard requirements, and are granted relief from the yard requirements through the general provisions of the Zoning By-law. The Town's in-effect Zoning By-law grants this relief through an encroachment table, which lists the structure, yard, and maximum permitted projection. The regulations within the encroachment table have been summarized in **Table 4-5**.

Table 4-5: Existing Permitted Encroachments

Item that can encroach	Yards that can be encroached in	Depth of the permitted encroachment
Non-structural architectural elements (e.g., sills, belt courses, cornices, eaves, gutters, chimneys, pilasters, canopies)	Any yard	Up to 0.7 m (in addition to other permitted encroachments)
Window bays	Front, rear, interior side, exterior side	Up to 0.6 m (<i>over a maximum width of 3 m</i>)
Non-street entrance stairs, landings, access ramps, fire escapes	Rear, interior side, exterior side	Up to 1.8 m (<i>over a maximum horizontal length of 5 m</i>)
Street-entrance stairs, landings, access ramps	Front and exterior side	Projection permitted subject to the general setback rule (see last row)
Balconies (single detached, semi-detached, duplex, townhouse dwellings)	Front, rear, exterior side	Up to 2.0 m
Balconies (other residential buildings incl. apartments)	Any yard	Up to 2.0 m
One-storey porches (including eaves and cornices)	Front and exterior side	Up to 3.0 m
Underground structures	Any yard	May extend to the lot line
Decks	Rear, interior side, exterior side (<i>not permitted in a front yard or a minimum side yard</i>)	Not stated as a projection distance; must be set back at least 3.0 m from the rear lot line
Mechanical equipment; swimming-pool pumps/filters/heaters	Rear, interior side, exterior side	No maximum projection; must remain at least 0.6 m from the applicable lot line where the required setback is > 0.6 m
General rule (applies to all above-grade projections)	Front and exterior side	Must remain at least 1.5 m from the front and exterior side lot lines

It is common for municipalities to regulate permitted encroachments through a table, though there is an opportunity for simplification of the table by moving some items to a general provision such as notwithstanding clauses.

Permitted Encroachments

Recommendation | Refresh the Encroachment table for clarity - The introduction of a brand-new Zoning By-law presents an opportunity to update the encroachment table, and exclude certain provisions from the table. It is recommended to exclude statements that apply to all properties from the table, and instead list them as general provisions.

4.5.2 Additional Residential Units (ARUs) and Garden Suites

Additional Residential Units are dwelling units permitted accessory to low-density residential uses in a manner which does not change the overall use of the land. In recent years, ARUs have become subject to Provincial interests through amendments to legislation and policy. Section 16(3) of the *Planning Act* directs that official plans are to authorize the use of two residential units in single detached, semi-detached, and rowhouse dwellings, and to authorize the use of a residential unit in a building or structure accessory to a detached, semi-detached or rowhouse dwelling. Section 35.1(1) of the *Planning Act* directs that zoning by-laws be amended to implement policies for ARUs. Additionally, the Minister may make regulations regarding additional residential units.

The 2025 Official Plan contains a variety of policies related to the provision of ARUs, including a diagram explaining the different types of ARUs permitted in the Town, as shown in **Figure 4-12**. The Official Plan matches the Provincial direction in calling for up to two ARUs on all parcels of land that permit single detached, semi-detached or townhouse dwellings. The Official Plan includes additional policies related to the development of ARUs, such as the requirement for each ARU to have a single parking space, and prove to the Town that the parcel has adequate water and wastewater capacity to support the units.

As the Town is located within the significant environmental protection area of the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), the Official Plan includes direction for how ARUs may be permitted in these areas. Specifically, ARUs are prohibited in the Natural Core Area and Natural Linkage Area, or limited to an integrated single ARU in the Countryside Area (i.e., within an existing single detached dwelling), or a single integrated ARU or an ARU within an existing accessory building in the Protected Countryside Area of the Greenbelt Plan (but outside the Natural Heritage System). The Official Plan also prohibits ARUs from being constructed in areas that contain key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features, and natural hazards.

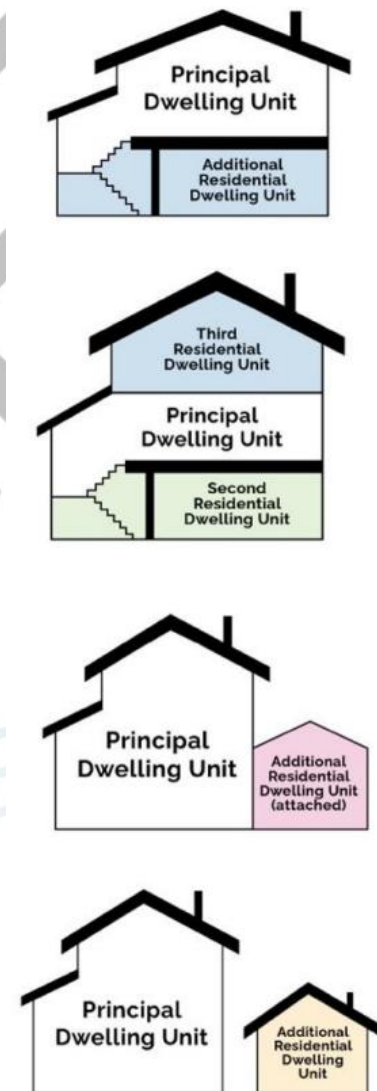


Figure 4-12: Description of ARU Typologies and combinations from the Official Plan

On June 19, 2024, the Town enacted Zoning By-law amendment 2024-078-ZO, which modified the Zoning By-law’s provisions around ARUs to match the Provincial policy and legislation. This amendment introduced expanded permissions for ARUs while utilizing some of the existing language of the Zoning By-law, referring to “integrated” and “ancillary” ARUs. The amendment was also accompanied by a schedule which visualized the ARU permissions through a map of the entire municipality, showing two ARUs permitted in Stouffville, one ARU permitted in the Hamlet Areas and some Countryside Areas, and prohibitions for the Natural Core and Linkage Areas, as shown in **Figure 4-13**.

Notwithstanding the different terminology, the Zoning by-law as amended does generally align with the Official Plan policies as they relate to ARUs. Policy 3.2.1.1(f) of the Official Plan directs the Zoning by-law to develop specific and measurable regulations for ARUs, which is fulfilled by a table of ARU regulations in Section 3.28 of the Zoning By-law. This table introduces regulations on detached ARUs according to the size of the parcel, and has specific requirements related to maximum lot coverage, rear yard landscaped area, maximum gross floor area, maximum building heights, and yard setbacks.

These regulations are also subject to Provincial interests, as the *Planning Act* permits the Minister to apply regulations which are specific to ARUs. O. Reg 299/19 is one of the primary Provincial regulations aimed at ARUs. This regulation contains some provisions regarding parking facilities, allowing for no parking to be required if set by the municipality. It also states that additional residential units may be occupied by any person regardless of relationship to the owner or occupant of the primary unit.

On December 4, 2024, changes to O. Reg. 299/19 under the *Planning Act* came into effect. These changes were enabled by *Planning Act* updates enacted through the *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024* which gave the Minister authority to make certain regulations. The updates to O. Reg 299/19 were to remove or update requirements related to ARUs and angular planes, maximum lot coverage, FSI, minimum lot size, and minimum building distance separation for parcels of urban residential land. These changes are intended to reduce or

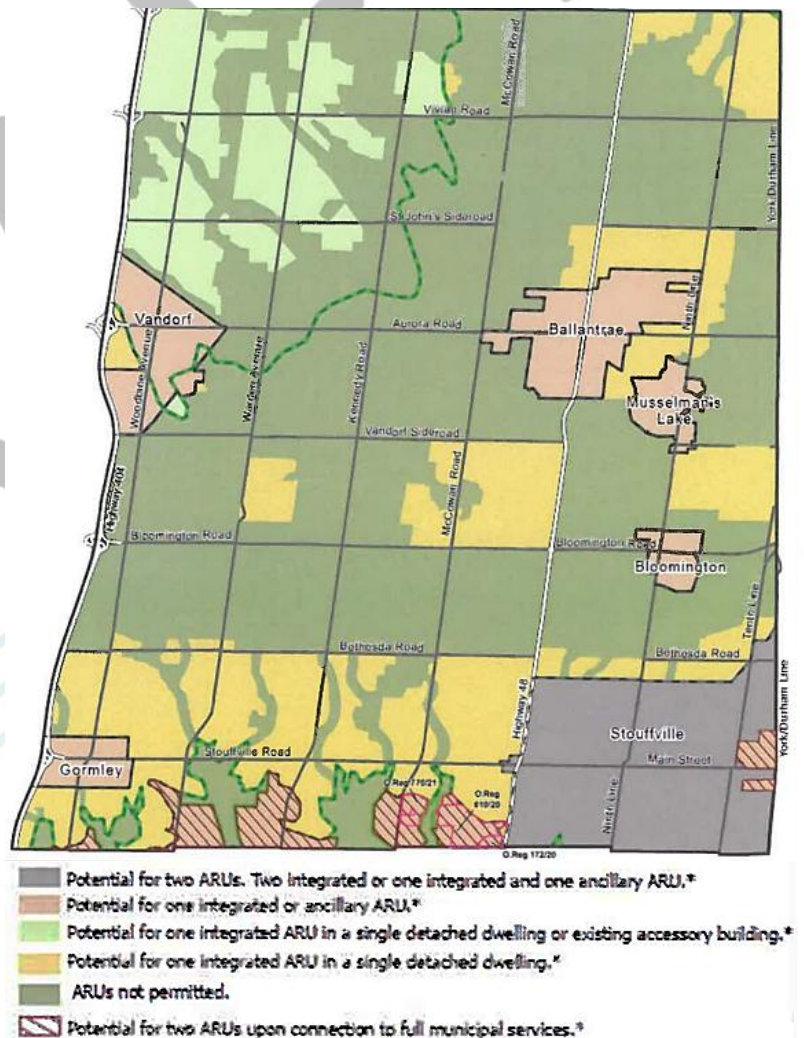


Figure 4-13: Schedule 65 from Zoning By-law Amendment 2024-078-ZO

eliminate the need for rezoning or minor variances, to facilitate development of ARUs. Specifically, the following changes were made to the way planning documents may regulate ARUs within urban, serviced lots:

- **Angular Plane:** Override all angular plane requirements in zoning by-laws for buildings with ARUs
- **Maximum Lot Coverage:** Allow up to 45% lot coverage for all buildings and structures on parcels with ARUs.
- **Floor Space Index (FSI):** Override all FSI requirements in zoning by-laws that apply to parcels with ARUs.
- **Minimum Lot Size:** Override all minimum lot size/lot area requirements that are specific to parcels with ARUs.
- **Building Distance Separation:** Restrict the minimum building distance separation requirements associated with any building containing ARUs (i.e. an ancillary structure with an ARU) from another building containing a residential unit (i.e. the primary dwelling) to a maximum of 4 metres.

The ARU provisions in the Zoning By-law appear to address some of the requirements of O. Reg 299/19, though it is recommended that the ARU section be refreshed in the new Zoning By-law using plain language to more effectively communicate requirements.

As noted above, through HAF Initiative #2, the Town is advancing Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to modify policies and provisions related to ARUs. The changes made to the Zoning By-law in the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment included:

- Permitting up to two Detached ARUs within a single accessory structure;
- Permitting up to 3 ARUs on a fully serviced lot with a single-detached dwelling;
- Permitting up to 2 ARUs on a serviced lot with a semi-detached or townhouse dwelling;
- Permitting 1 ARU on an unserviced lot within a settlement area;
- Applying revised minimum parking standards; and
- Adding more explicit provisions for building separation to comply with O. Reg 299/19.

Recommendation | Carry forward HAF changes – It is recommended that the new Zoning By-law should retain the changes made to the ARU provisions through the HAF project.

4.5.3 Accessory Structures

Accessory buildings and structures are regulated through the general provisions of the in-effect Zoning By-law, which sets height limits, yard and building setbacks, and size limits on structures in all zones. These provisions are found in section 3.6 of the Zoning By-law, and introduce nuanced regulations

which recognize the different contexts of the Town by providing slightly different requirements for urban, rural, commercial and industrial properties.

While the requirements for accessory structures are generally in line with other municipalities, there are considerations for the new residential contexts in the urban and community areas of the Town which should be incorporated into the new Zoning By-law. For instance, the greater level of intensification prescribed for the Neighbourhood and Medium-Density areas could necessitate the reduction of required building separations or yard setbacks to accommodate larger structures on these sites. In addition, there is an opportunity to rewrite this section for greater clarity. Accessory structures are a commonplace modification to residents' homes, and the provisions regulating these structures are most likely to impact the average homeowner directly.

Accessory Structures

Recommendation | Rewrite accessory structure section for clarity – The introduction of a brand-new Zoning By-law presents an opportunity to completely rewrite the accessory structure regulations in such a way as to be accessible and clear.

4.6 Intensification Policies

The zoning structure can also be informed by the description of residential typologies in the Official Plan's intensification targets. As mentioned in Section 2.1.2 of this Paper, Policy 3.2.1.1(b) of the Official Plan directs intensification within the Town to be targeted according to building typology. While this policy is a non-binding target, it does introduce definitions for the different densities envisioned for the Town:

- Low Density: Single detached and semi-detached dwellings;
- Medium Density: Townhouse and duplex dwellings; and
- High Density: Apartment buildings.

These definitions suggest the possibility of a three-zone approach which could be applied to all areas of the Town, with each zone only permitting the typologies identified in this policy. The options below speak to potential approaches to these policies, though will be influenced by the overall zoning philosophy chosen, as discussed in Section 5 of this Paper.

Medium and High-Density Residential Zoning

Option 1 | Zone according to desired building type – Aligning with a traditional approach, Option 1 would see mid and high-rise residential dwelling implemented through individual zones. Each zone would describe the desired height, built form, and massing.

Option 2 | Zone according to neighbourhood character – Instead of introducing regulations related to the general built form desired in the area, Option 2 would see zoning be applied to each area that would

be tailored to the area itself, and then regulate built form accordingly. This could be achieved through a general zone for each area, complemented by schedules to determine matters such as building height, required yard setbacks, and building separation.

As part of HAF Initiative 2, the Town is also considering options to expand zoning permissions for low-rise apartment buildings up to four storeys in height along certain major roads in the Community of Stouffville. These expanded permissions would implement policy direction from the Town's new Official Plan, distinguishing low-rise apartment buildings as any building with more than four dwelling units (i.e., larger than a fourplex). As of the writing of this Discussion Paper, no amendment to the Town's existing Zoning By-law is being brought forward to implement these changes, which require more consideration through the main Zoning By-law Review project.

HAF 2 Options for Low-Rise Apartments

Option 1 | Permit along major roads on select parcels – Through general provisions, permit low-rise apartment dwellings of 5 or more units if a residential parcel fronting onto Main Street, 9th Line, or 10th Line can meet the lot requirements set out in the RM1 Zone. Analysis shown in **Appendix B** shows that the number of parcels that meet these criteria are very limited, though there is potential for developments to proceed following parcel assembly.

Option 2 | Permit along major roads through broader permissions – Through rezoning, apply a low-rise residential zone to all residential properties which front onto Main Street, 9th Line, or 10th Line. The mapping shown in **Appendix B** shows that the rezoning approach would enable far more density as-of-right, though ambiguity exists in the approach as to which properties should be included in the rezoning.

4.7 New Urban / Greenfield Areas

As discussed in Discussion Paper #1, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is significantly constrained by the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP) and the Provincial Greenbelt Plan. These plans provide protections for environmentally significant lands in the Greater Toronto Area, and constrain the urban areas of the Town from expanding beyond a defined boundary. That said, the boundary set by the ORMCP and Greenbelt Plan do consider future expansion of the Town, and portions of land surrounding the Community of Stouffville, and along the southern Border with Markham have been designated as “New Urban Area” and “Designated Greenfield Area”, as shown on **Figure 4-14**.

The portions of land outside of the Community of Stouffville which are designated as greenfield area constitute lands commonly referred to as the “whitebelt lands”. The whitebelt lands encompass roughly 375 hectares of land along the Town’s southern border which are not a part of the ORMCP or the Greenbelt area. The York Region’s land forecasting indicated that these lands will be key to meeting the proposed population targets for 2051. The 2025 Official Plan acknowledges the need for new greenfield development and has designated the whitebelt lands as “New Urban Area” in the plan’s Town structure map. All Designated Greenfield Areas must be developed through larger planning exercises, such as Secondary Plans. New Urban Areas are also Designated Greenfield areas. Unlike the Designated Greenfield areas within the Community of Stouffville, the New Urban Areas must also complete subwatershed plans in accordance with the YROP.

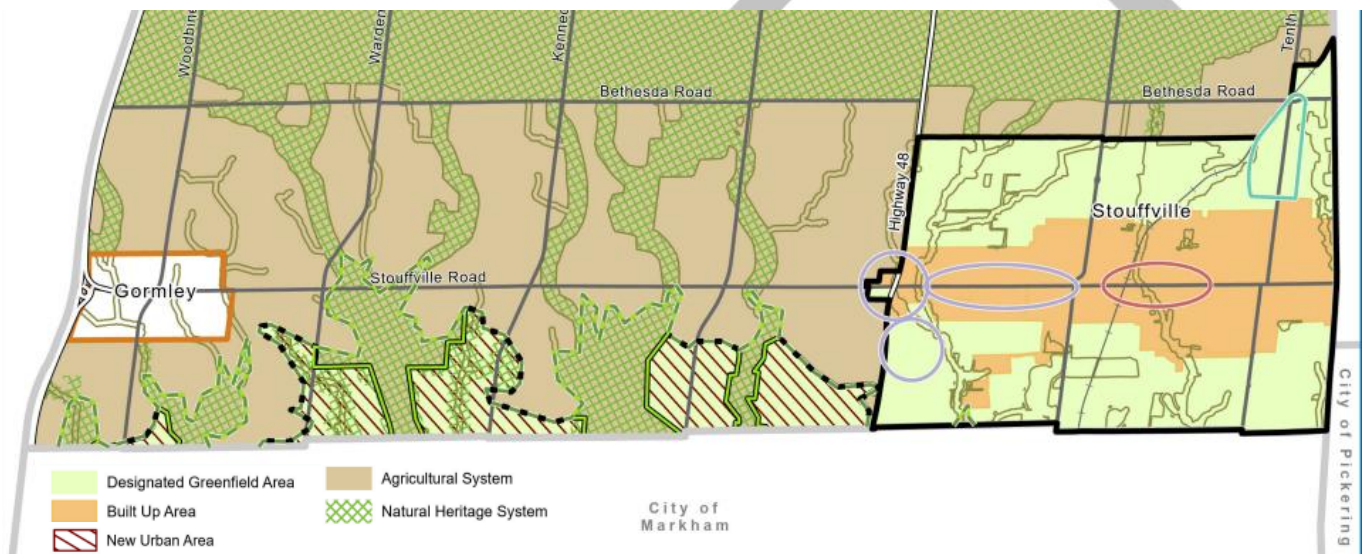


Figure 4-14: Designated Greenfield Areas from the Official Plan

The Official Plan includes a series of policies aimed at guiding the growth and development of the designated greenfield areas through the course of the plan’s horizon of 2051. Policy 2.8.1.1(k) notes that greenfield areas should be maintained to ensure a minimum 15 years of supply for the Town’s future growth. Policy 2.8.2.1(f) introduces intensification and density targets for designated greenfield areas and new urban areas of 55 jobs and persons per hectare and 65 jobs and persons per hectare respectively. The Official Plan also places a greater emphasis on lands within the New Urban Areas, with section 2.5 of the plan introducing policies aimed at guiding these communities as they build from the ground up. Significantly, Policy 2.5.1.1(a) and (b) note that these areas may only be developed through the creation of sub watershed and secondary plans to introduce a cohesive vision for the area to be developed. Secondary plans require amendments to the Official Plan to come into effect, and dictate a higher level of control over the development than the Official Plan would otherwise provide.

The implementation of the Official Plan’s intentions for the New Urban Areas is not solely the responsibility of the Zoning By-law due to the requirement for development to proceed through secondary plans, though the remaining designated greenfield areas within Stouffville do not contain the same restrictions on development. Significant portions of the undeveloped greenfield areas are already pre-zoned for development, such as the area in the northwest portion of the community shown in **Figure 4-15**.

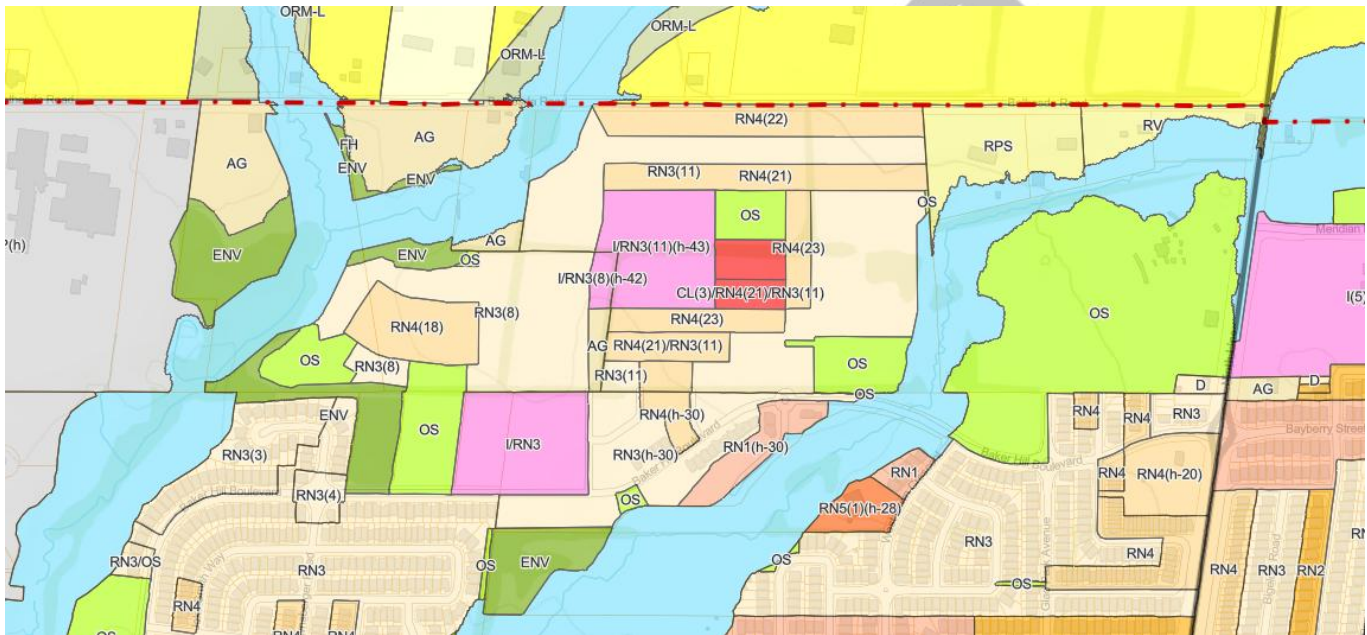


Figure 4-15: Current Zoning for a portion of the Designated Greenfield Areas

Other portions of the designated greenfield areas are not pre-zoned, and retain zoning which does not align with the Official Plan’s land use designations, such as the areas surrounding the Old Elm MTSA, as shown in **Figure 4-16**. Section 2.11.2 of the Official Plan lays out the policies related to the development of the Old Elm MTSA, including the areas designated as greenfield areas. Significantly, policy 2.11.2.1(a) requires the completion of a “comprehensive, coordinated strategy” to address the challenging environmental constraints in the area prior to any development being approved. Unlike a secondary plan, this strategy would not enable development directly, instead dictating a list of topics which need to be addressed through any development application.

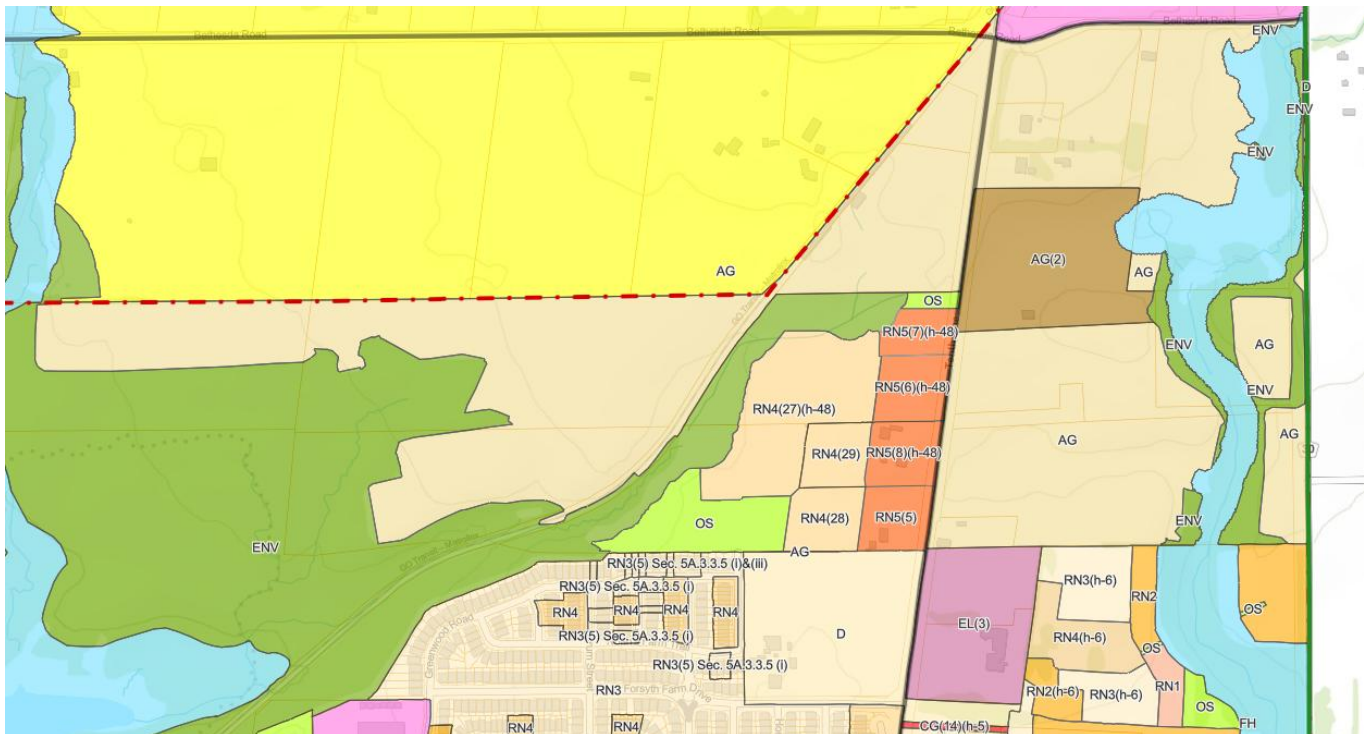


Figure 4-16: Zoning for areas surrounding the Old Elm MTSA

To implement the Official Plan’s policies for the greenfield areas, the Town can consider the following options:

Greenfield Areas

Option 1 | Pre-zone for development – Evaluate the zoning for each designated greenfield area and apply zoning to the areas to achieve the Official Plan vision.

Option 2 | Require secondary planning processes for development – Amend the Official Plan to require a secondary plan to implement the vision of the Official Plan.

Option 3 | Wait for applications – Retain existing zoning, and rely on Zoning By-law Amendments to implement the vision as development arise.

4.8 Home Occupations

It is common for municipalities to permit residents of low-density residential uses to conduct limited business activity within their homes or an accessory structure. Home occupations refer to small-scale businesses conducted entirely within a residential property, and are a secondary and subordinate use to the principal dwelling unit. The current Zoning By-law updated the definition of home occupation in June 2025:

“Home Occupation: an occupation or business carried out by an occupant within a single detached dwelling unit as an accessory use, relating to the provision of personal services or professional services, or the production of custom or artisanal products. Home occupations do not include kennels, animal services, automotive sales and service uses, motor vehicle body repair shop, paint shops, medical offices, restaurants, taxi services, bed and breakfast establishment or distribution centres.”

The general provisions of the Zoning By-law permit home occupations in all residential areas, with specific provisions for rural and environmental zones, new residential zones, and traditional residential zones. Generally, home occupations are permitted in single detached, semi-detached, stacked townhouse, back-to-back townhouse, and accessory structures. Specific provisions include:

- Limiting operations to one employee who does not live on site;
- A limit of 25% of the gross floor area of the dwelling or accessory structure which can be dedicated to the home occupation;
- Prohibiting outdoor storage or signage;
- Restricting the home occupation from resulting in changes to the exterior of a dwelling;
- Ensuring that the home occupation is operated by the principal occupant of the dwelling;
- Prohibiting retail sale on the site which is not of products produced or repaired on site;
- Prohibiting uses which could cause adverse effects on neighbouring properties; and
- A list of prohibited uses, including kennels, animal services, automotive sales, service, or autobody repair uses, paint shops, medical offices, restaurants, taxi services, bed and breakfast establishments, and distribution centres.

The 2025 Official Plan includes the following definition:

“Home Occupation Means an occupation for profit or gain conducted entirely within a dwelling unit that is incidental and secondary to the use of the dwelling unit for residential purposes and does not change the residential character of the dwelling unit.”

The Official Plan also lists home occupations as permitted uses in all residential land use designations, but does not contain specific policies related to their operation or regulation.

Generally, the home occupation policies are similar to many other municipalities. They are restrictive and put a lot of weight on reducing/minimizing impacts to neighbouring dwellings, such as noise, odour, dust, and parking impacts of clients/visitors. The Official Plan does not permit activities associated with home occupations outside of the dwelling unit, such as a garage or shed, so this will need to be ensured in the new Zoning By-law.

Home Occupations

Recommendation | Modernize use permissions for Home Occupations – Home occupations are a key source of diversified income, and can support complete community. It is recommended that the Town review the types of uses permitted within home occupations and update the framework to be more inclusive of newer businesses.

4.9 Local Commercial Uses within Neighbourhoods

Although traditional zoning has largely prohibited commercial uses within residential neighbourhoods, there has always been demand for small-scale commercial uses such as corner stores within communities.

The current Zoning By-law prohibits commercial uses within residential zones. None of the traditional or new residential zones allow for commercial uses beyond home occupations. The Zoning By-law instead contains a “local commercial” (CL) zone, permitting small-scale commercial uses with a residential dwelling unit on the second storey. It is a common approach for municipalities to permit local commercial uses through “template zones” which are not applied except through an applicant-led Zoning By-law Amendment. This framework has resulted in five parcels with the CL zoning applied in the Community of Stouffville.

This applicant-led framework has been criticized for placing undue burden on small businesses who would be less likely to afford costly Zoning By-law Amendments in order to open. Other municipalities have explored more attainable frameworks for local commercial uses that incorporate blanket permissions for local commercial uses, and regulate their placement through criteria.

The City of Toronto published the Neighbourhood Retail and Services Study in 2022². The report documents a long-term decline of small, walkable retail, service, and office uses in neighbourhood areas. It links this trend to socioeconomic shifts and to planning rules that limited new establishments. The report positions neighbourhood-scale commercial uses as a support for complete communities, climate objectives-, and local economic opportunities. It recommends a city-wide policy environment that enables appropriately scaled, low impact uses while safeguarding neighbourhood compatibility.

Following the release of the report, Toronto adopted a two-stage implementation path. Phase 1 amended Official Plan Policy 4.1.3 to remove the “Major Streets” constraint and the blanket requirement for site-specific rezonings, and to state that detailed location and performance standards will be set in the Zoning By-law. The City also equalized “home occupation” permissions across all residential zones, including specified personal services and medical offices with one additional employee, to establish a consistent baseline for low-impact commercial activity. Phase 2 defined as-of-right locations and standards through zoning, with options such as transit routes, cycling routes, and corner sites, and with maximum size limits and compatibility criteria. The City also plans to review the Commercial Local zone and explore supportive economic and administrative tools.

² <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.PH35.1>

The Town's Official Plan broadly enables small-scale commercial uses in residential areas with limited guidance on implementation. The Neighbourhood Area designation permits "Small scale commercial or office uses generally limited to the ground floor of a mixed use building". As a land use designation, this shifts the responsibility of granular regulation to the Zoning By-law. Outside of Stouffville, the Hamlet Areas do not permit commercial uses within their residential areas, with the exception of Bloomington's general land use designation.

The following options should be considered when developing the zoning framework for the residential areas in the Community of Stouffville.

Local Commercial Uses in Residential Areas

Option 1 | Retain an amendment-based zoning framework – Maintain a Local Commercial zone that is only available to applications through a Zoning By-law Amendment process.

Option 2 | Pre-zone key sites for local commercial uses – Apply local commercial zoning to key sites within the residential areas of the Town.

Option 3 | Introduce criteria-based commercial permissions – Allow local commercial uses in all residential areas, provided they meet pre-determined criteria, and place the onus on the applicant to prove they meet the criteria at the permitting stage.

4.10 Rooming Houses and Group Homes

Section 4.1 of this Paper notes that single detached dwellings and townhouse dwellings are the predominant form of housing in the Town, though a variety of housing options are required to support a functioning community. Rooming houses and group homes are alternative housing forms which should be contemplated and regulated by the Zoning By-law.

4.10.1 Rooming Houses

A rooming house is a residential dwelling where individual rooms are rented out to four or more people, often with shared facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms. They are sometimes referred to as "boarding houses", "lodging houses", or "multi-tenant houses", and are an affordable option for students, young professionals, or individuals with lower income. Rooming houses are therefore an important component of the housing spectrum. While rooming houses are not always architecturally distinct from other forms of dwelling units, they are often regulated in zoning by-laws as a unique use. These regulations often classify rooming houses as accessory to the principal dwelling unit, and place limits on the number of bedrooms permitted within a rooming house. The Ontario Building Code and the Ontario Fire Code also consider rooming houses to be unique land uses, and regulates them differently than other dwelling types³.

³ <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2024/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-243074.pdf>

The PPS, 2024 also provides direction related to rooming houses through Policy 2.2.1(b)(1), which states that:

“Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected needs of current and future residents of the regional market area by:

b) permitting and facilitating:

1. all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well being requirements of current and future residents, including additional needs housing and needs arising from demographic changes and employment opportunities...”

The PPS, 2024 includes rooming houses in the definition of “housing mix”, supporting the assertion that they are a key component of the housing spectrum.

The current Zoning By-law does not define rooming houses, and does not explicitly permit nor prohibit them in any areas of the Town. Similarly, the Official Plan does not contain specific policies which speak to regulating rooming houses. However, Official Plan Policy 3.2.1.1(g)(iii) states that the Town will provide for a mix and range of housing options, including co-housing, group rooming, and special needs housing. This policy could enable the Town to begin regulating and permitting rooming houses in the new Zoning By-law. The Town’s Housing Strategy Phase II report also recommended that the Town remove barriers to shared living arrangements, including boarding homes to support affordable housing options⁴.

Rooming Houses

Recommendation | Consider permitting Rooming Houses in certain residential areas – It is recommended that the Town explore rooming houses as a potential permitted use within the municipality to support affordable housing.

4.10.2 Group Homes

Group homes are a blanket term for residential facilities where a small number of unrelated individuals live together under supervision, receiving support and care that is tailored to their needs. These facilities are typically designed to support 4 to 16 residents, are meant to support vulnerable populations, including, at-risk children and youth, adults with developmental disabilities, adults with addictions or mental health needs, and other groups which require supportive living arrangements.

Most group homes are provincially regulated, and fall under the jurisdiction of the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, the *Homes for Special Care Act*, the *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act*, the *Residential Tenancies Act*. The *Municipal Act*, which sets rules for all municipalities in Ontario except for the City of Toronto, also includes direction

⁴ <https://whitchurch.civicweb.net/FileStorage/02B8E9707BA9450E94A37DB27A25E8E7-DS-001-22%20Housing%20Strategy.pdf>

for group homes. Section 163 of the *Municipal Act*, titled “Restrictions re. Group Homes” sets out the definition and requirements for group homes within municipalities in Ontario. The *Act* defines group homes as:

“group home” means a residence licensed or funded under a federal or provincial statute for the accommodation of three to 10 persons, exclusive of staff, living under supervision in a single housekeeping unit and who, by reason of their emotional, mental, social or physical condition or legal status, require a group living arrangement for their well being.

The *Act* allows municipalities to enact a business licencing by-law for group homes only if the municipality permits the establishment and use of group homes under section 34 of the *Planning Act* (i.e., in the Zoning By-law). A business licencing by-law for group homes can restrict the establishment of group homes to only those with a licence who may be required to pay licence fees and/or provide the municipality information in regard to the business name, ownership and contact information.

Group homes are also included in the definition of “housing mix” in the PPS, 2024, and subject to policy 2.2.1(b)(1) as noted in Section 4.9.1 of this Paper.

As a result of the various levels of Provincial interest in group homes, many municipalities refrain from directly regulating the location group homes through their zoning by-laws. Instead, some municipalities define the intensity of group homes by setting limits on the number of residents in each facility. Some municipalities permit them broadly across residential zones, acknowledging that they are a form of housing that is similar in function to single detached residences.

The Town’s current Zoning By-law does not follow this trend, and regulates the size, location, and placement of group homes. The Zoning By-law defines group homes as:

“Group Home: a dwelling unit, licensed by the appropriate government agency, in which 3 to 10 unrelated persons, excluding staff or receiving family who provide support or supervision, live together.”

This definition limits group homes to 10 residents. Group homes are permitted in most zones that permit residential uses, though the CL, CV, CR, RM1 and RM2 zones prohibit group homes entirely. The Zoning By-law also prohibits group homes from being located within 800 m of another group home in most zones. The Town’s Housing Strategy Phase II report also recommended removing the separation distance between group homes⁵.

The 2025 Official Plan provides specific guidance for group homes. Policy 6.1.1.1(a) notes that group homes shall be permitted “in all designations within settlement areas where residential uses are permitted provided the home is licensed or approved under provincial statute and complies with municipal by-laws and zoning standards and are not within areas susceptible to natural hazards”. The Official Plan also provides a new definition for group homes:

⁵ <https://www.cometogetherws.ca/26388/widgets/110969/documents/83014>

“**Group Home** shall mean a single housekeeping unit in a residential dwelling in which three to ten residents (excluding staff or the receiving family) live as a family under responsible supervision consistent with the requirements of its residents.”

This definition is slightly different from the current Zoning By-law, though it retains the 10-resident limit. It is recommended that the Town’s new Zoning By-law incorporate a new framework for group homes which conforms with the *Planning Act*, the PPS, 2024, and the 2025 Official Plan.

Group Homes

Option 1 | General Provisions – Permitting group homes through general provisions, with explicit prohibitions for non-residential areas. This allows for clear, Town-wide direction on group homes, and a potential reduction on the amount of effort needed to adjust if the Provincial direction changes in the future.

Option 2 | Zone Provisions – Permitting group homes through the use matrix of new zones, excluding non-residential areas. This would allow for more granular control of where group homes are permitted, and the potential for area-specific regulations.

4.11 Heritage Conservation Districts

As of June 5, 2024, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has three Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. These districts are shown on **Figure 4-17** and comprise the areas surrounding what would be considered “downtown” Stouffville. The Town also has a proposed HCD which would encompass properties along Main Street between Albert Street and Stouffer Street. This section reviews the role that HCDs have in land use planning, the areas which the districts are applied to, and the options that the Town will have to implement these HCDs through the Zoning By-law.

4.11.1 Role of HCDs

Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs) are areas of elevated heritage value and character which are protected by a municipality through a by-law passed under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. HCDs can be applied to a small cluster of buildings, or to an entire neighbourhood with hundreds of buildings. Designation of an HCD allows a municipality to manage and guide future change within the district with specific plans, policies, and guidelines to ensure that the heritage value is preserved or elevated through new development. These policies and guidelines are codified in district plans, which outline objectives of the plan, the significance of the heritage attributes in the district, and specific policies related to a variety of built-form topics which regulate development and public realm improvements.

4.11.2 Overview of Town’s HCDs

As mentioned above, the Town currently has three HCDs and is in the process of designating a fourth. All four HCDs are concentrated in the center of the Community of Stouffville and relate to the Town’s

historic origins in the 19th century. The three districts which are in place as of the time of writing this report include:

- Church Street/Village Centre North
- O'Brien Avenue/Village Centre South
- West Main Street/Stouffville Junction

These districts encompass early residential expansion in Stouffville following the establishment of a rail connection in 1871 to the early 20th century, and are shown on **Figure 4-17**. The Town's Official Plan recognizes a Heritage Area which is larger than the individual districts, and applies the Neighbourhood Area land use designation to most parcels in this area.

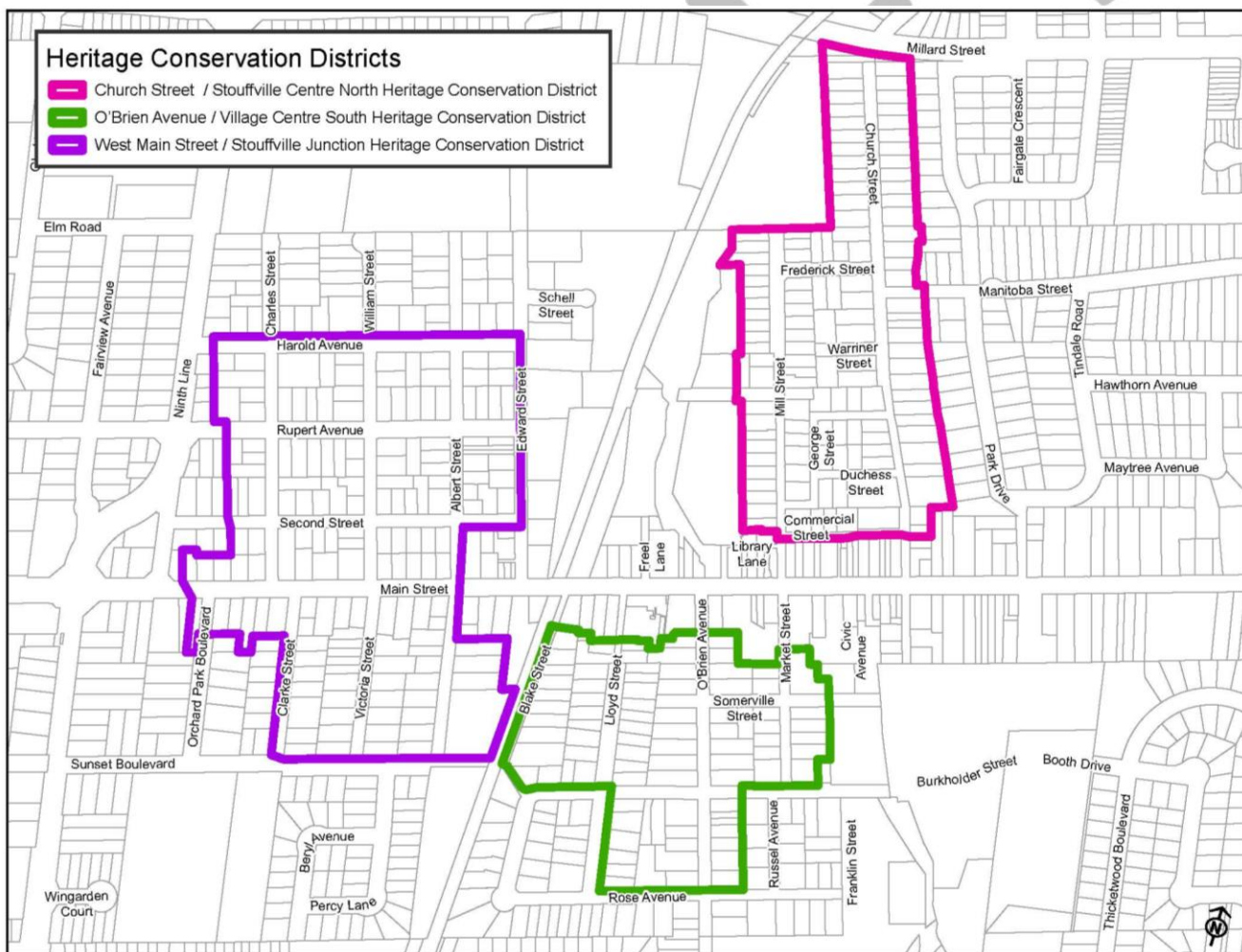


Figure 4-17: Heritage Conservation Districts within the Town

The Town is currently in the process of establishing a fourth HCD which would encompass the downtown portion of Stouffville from Albert Street to Stouffer Street, as shown on **Figure 4-18**. This HCD will encompass some of the oldest properties in the Town, dating back to the subdivision of Abraham

Stouffer’s lands into developable parcels in 1826. This HCD will include portions of the Stouffville GO Transit MTSA, but is limited to the areas designated Core Area – Main Street in the Official Plan. The HCD extends further east than the MTSA, where lands are designated Neighbourhood Area.

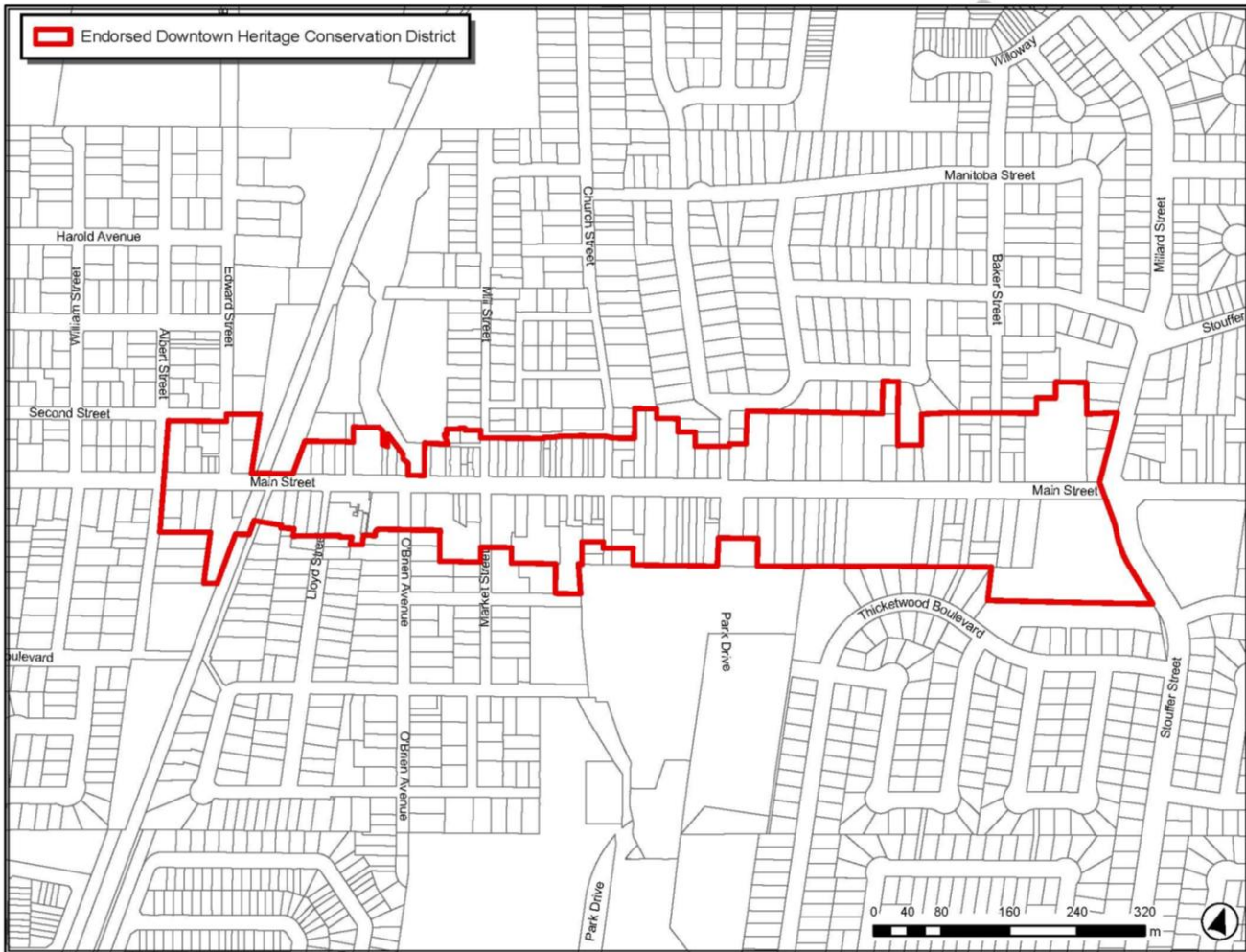


Figure 4--18: Proposed Downtown Heritage Conservation District

HCDs and their accompanying by-laws exist separately from a zoning by-law, and include a different permitting process that needs to be followed in addition to site plan control before a building permit can be issued. As heritage topics are not regulated under the *Planning Act*, it is uncommon for a zoning by-law to incorporate provisions related to an HCD. Few municipalities even acknowledge HCD boundaries on zoning schedules. One reason for keeping zoning by-laws and HCDs separate is the practice of reducing duplication wherever possible. If a provision is enforced through the HCD by-law, it would be redundant to enforce it through the zoning by-law as well. Nonetheless, there is utility in ensuring that the zoning by-law is not contradictory to the provisions of an HCD. This is currently the case for some properties in the Town, where the existing zoning permits uses that contradict the provisions of the HCD.

Heritage Conservation Districts

Option 1 | Acknowledge HCDs, but do not regulate them – Delineate HCDs within the Zoning By-law schedules and guide the user to the applicable HCD plan and by-law. This could be positioned as a non-operative part of the By-law, such as an appendix, since it would not have associated regulations.

Option 2 | Duplicate HCD regulations in the Zoning By-law – Reflect the intentions and contents of each District Plan into the Zoning By-law including consideration for updated setbacks, massing, or other measures. This could be incorporated as an overlay with associated general provisions or by dedicated zone categories. This will need to be coordinated with the requirements of the Official Plan and generally should pertain to character and not have the effect of reducing development permissions in the Official Plan.

Option 3 | Leave HCDs out of the Zoning By-law – Do not incorporate HCDs into the Zoning By-law and rely on the heritage permit process to implement the HCDs.

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5. Zoning Structure and Framework

The new Zoning By-law being prepared through this project will inherently improve on the existing Zoning By-law by reorganizing and updating the text, and the new Zoning By-law presents an opportunity to introduce a new zoning framework for the entire Town. As discussed throughout this Paper, contemporary zoning by-laws are moving towards form-based regulations that focus more on built form regulation than permitted uses. Before the composition and spread of zones for residential areas can be identified, the project team must determine the overall philosophy towards zoning regulations.

Through the background research and jurisdictional scan conducted in Section 2 of this Paper, the following approaches have been identified:

Approach 1 | Retain the Traditional Zoning Framework

Approach 1 recognizes the effectiveness of the existing framework, and recommends retaining this philosophy through the new Zoning By-law. This philosophy suggests that the Zoning By-law should retain granular regulation of all residential uses. All residential dwelling typologies should be defined and regulated individually in each zone. Specific regulations can be added for each typology, and more typologies can be added as they develop.

There are benefits related to this philosophy, particularly in relation to ease of administration. If every possible use is specifically permitted or prohibited and has an accompanying definition, reviews during site plan approval or building permit stages may involve fewer interpretive decisions by Town staff. There is also value in retaining an existing framework when developing a new Zoning By-law, as it maintains a level of familiarity within the development community and the public.

There are also noted drawbacks with the traditional system, as evidenced by the development of the form-based zoning framework. Traditional zoning by-laws which use prescriptive use regulation frameworks lack flexibility to respond to changes in market demand for new and innovative typologies. Through the regulation of individual housing typologies, there is also a risk of arbitrary administrative burden for housing typologies which would otherwise be preferred for a community.

Approach 2 | Adopt a Fully Form-Based Framework

Approach 2 acknowledges the drawbacks of the traditional framework, and recommends adopting a progressive framework that aggressively implements form-based zoning in the regulation of residential uses in the Town. As discussed in Section 2 of this Paper, the form-based approach to residential zoning asserts that neighbourhood character is rooted in the built form of the buildings, and suggests that the composition of dwelling units within a building are market decisions that do not need to be so tightly regulated. In practice, this would result in a Zoning by-law that removes all references to

housing typologies, and just permit dwelling units in conjunction with maximum number of units and/or density, lot and building standards, parking, and landscaping regulations.

The benefits of form-based regulation are most felt through the predictable and consistent built form that they require. Form-based regulations provide a clear framework for building designs, and greatly reduce the complexity of concept designs by standardizing the building massing and siting requirements for all uses. Form-based residential regulations also support greater housing mix in communities by removing unintended regulatory barriers to housing typologies which were not explicitly considered in the development of the Zoning By-law.

While form-based zoning is largely celebrated in the industry, there are some notable critiques. Building envelopes and other built-form regulations become the focus of the zoning, leading to relatively inflexible environments for architects and builders to try new and innovative designs. There are also drawbacks inherent in relinquishing control of permitted uses, as it removes the Town's ability to prohibit undesirable housing typologies as they develop.

Approach 3 | Adopt a Hybrid Framework

Approach 3 proposes a hybrid approach to residential zoning which combines aspects of both a traditional and form-based zoning by-law. This philosophy would adopt the built-form focus of a form-based zoning framework, while retaining the granularity and enforceability of a traditional zoning by-law. This approach asserts that a form-based approach does not need to relinquish the definition and regulation of individual uses and can be accomplished through simply expanding the permitted uses in each zone to include larger types of residential uses while retaining their definitions.

The benefits of this approach are primarily in the flexibility to include aspects of both form-based and traditional frameworks. This approach would allow for the development of a form-based zoning fabric while retaining control over the uses within each zone.

The drawbacks of the hybrid approach include the ability for the Town to slowly return to exclusionary zoning over time through future amendments. There is also potential for a hybrid approach to include inflexibility in both the permitted uses and the built form regulation.

Appendix A – Zoning Conformity with Official Plan Designations

Appendix A contains the results of mapping analysis conducted to determine the extent of the existing zones in the Zoning By-law within the Land Use designations of the 2025 Official Plan.

Zoning Applied by Designation	Area (ha)	Area (m ²)	Percent of Designation
Stouffville Neighbourhood Area	716.13	7,161,305.99	100%
New Residential 3	164.36	1,643,611	23%
Residential 1	99.75	997,503	14%
New Residential 4	72.50	724,965	10%
Residential 2	61.69	616,907	9%
Institutional	49.77	497,670	7%
Open Space	43.43	434,314	6%
Residential 3	40.75	407,466	6%
New Residential 1	39.61	396,124	6%
New Residential 2	36.98	369,787	5%
Residential Village	36.92	369,196	5%
Residential 4	18.61	186,140	3%
Flood Hazard	12.87	128,708	2%
Environmental	6.55	65,497	1%
Agricultural	5.15	51,522	1%
Development Reserve	4.91	49,132	1%
Institutional / New Residential 3	2.73	27,304	0%
Residential Multiple 1	2.62	26,235	0%
Residential Private Services	2.54	25,428	0%
General Commercial	2.51	25,132	0%
New Residential 3 / New Residential Four	1.59	15,866	0%
General Commercial / New Residential 5	1.38	13,783	0%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Community Core Area	1.31	13,117	0%
Institutional / Local Commercial	1.22	12,158	0%
Institutional / New Residential 5	0.86	8,595	0%
New Residential 3 / Open Space	0.17	1,740	0%
New Residential 5	0.15	1,547	0%
Institutional / New Residential 3	0.11	1,149	0%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Western Approach	0.07	692	0%
Employment Business Park	0.01	60	0%
Oak Ridges Moraine - Countryside	0.01	54	0%

Zoning Applied by Designation	Area (ha)	Area (m ²)	Percent of Designation
Employment Light	0.00	48	0%
Urban Medium Density Residential Area	36.81	368,069.82	100%
New Residential 5	5.03	50,345	14%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Western Approach	4.58	45,776	12%
Open Space	4.39	43,874	12%
Institutional	4.01	40,129	11%
New Residential 4	3.57	35,713	10%
Flood Hazard	3.10	30,962	8%
Employment Light	2.46	24,599	7%
Development Reserve	1.72	17,188	5%
Residential Multiple 2	1.36	13,556	4%
Agricultural	1.33	13,293	4%
New Residential 4 / New Residential 5	0.79	7,905	2%
New Residential 3	0.76	7,565	2%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Community Core Area	0.74	7,440	2%
Residential 1	0.44	4,396	1%
Environmental	0.34	3,429	1%
New Residential 1	0.27	2,725	1%
New Residential 2	0.26	2,624	1%
Institutional / New Residential Three	0.17	1,668	0%
New Residential 4 / New Residential 5 / Open Space	0.10	1,002	0%
Residential Village	0.03	254	0%
Urban High Density Residential Area	5.32	53,249	100%
Development Reserve	1.96	19,615	37%
Flood Hazard	1.78	17,829	33%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Western Approach	1.13	11,291	21%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Western Approach	0.39	3,934	7%
Open Space	0.05	546	1%
Environmental	0.00	35	0%
Old Elm Medium-High Density Residential Area	15.46	154,562	100%
Agricultural	10.89	108,926	70%
Residential New Four	4.04	40,447	26%
Residential New Five	0.46	4,629	3%
Oak Ridges Moraine - Countryside	0.06	559	0%
Old Elm Residential Area	24.60	245,969	100%
Agricultural	18.41	184,081	75%
Open Space	2.11	21,124	9%
Employment Light	1.94	19,445	8%
New Residential 4	1.69	16,861	7%
Flood Hazard	0.24	2,401	1%

Zoning Applied by Designation	Area (ha)	Area (m ²)	Percent of Designation
New Residential 5	0.16	1,588	1%
Environmental	0.03	340	0%
New Residential 3	0.01	66	0%
New Residential 2	0.00	45	0%
Oak Ridges Moraine - Countryside	0.00	16	0%
Vandorf Neighbourhood Area	61.61	616,118	100%
Residential Private Services	50.55	505,522	82%
Development Reserve	7.80	77,956	13%
Flood Hazard	2.82	28,164	5%
Institutional	0.19	1,861	0%
Village Commercial	0.15	1,506	0%
Environmental	0.10	1,045	0%
Oak Ridges Moraine - Countryside	0.00	38	0%
Open Space	0.00	16	0%
Gormley Neighbourhood Area	7.84	78,442	100%
Residential Private Services	4.24	42,355	54%
Open Space	1.56	15,557	20%
Flood Hazard	1.11	11,141	14%
Institutional	0.94	9,390	12%
Bloomington Hamlet Area	89.80	897,989	100%
Residential Private Services	55.46	554,566	62%
Development Reserve	12.99	129,897	14%
Flood Hazard	10.97	109,667	12%
Open Space	6.61	66,092	7%
Institutional	2.42	24,195	3%
Oak Ridges Moraine - Linkage	0.60	5,968	1%
Environmental	0.55	5,512	1%
General Commercial	0.21	2,093	0%

Appendix B – HAF Intensification Analysis

Appendix B includes the mapping analysis conducted to explore the intensification policies initiated by the HAF missing middle initiative.

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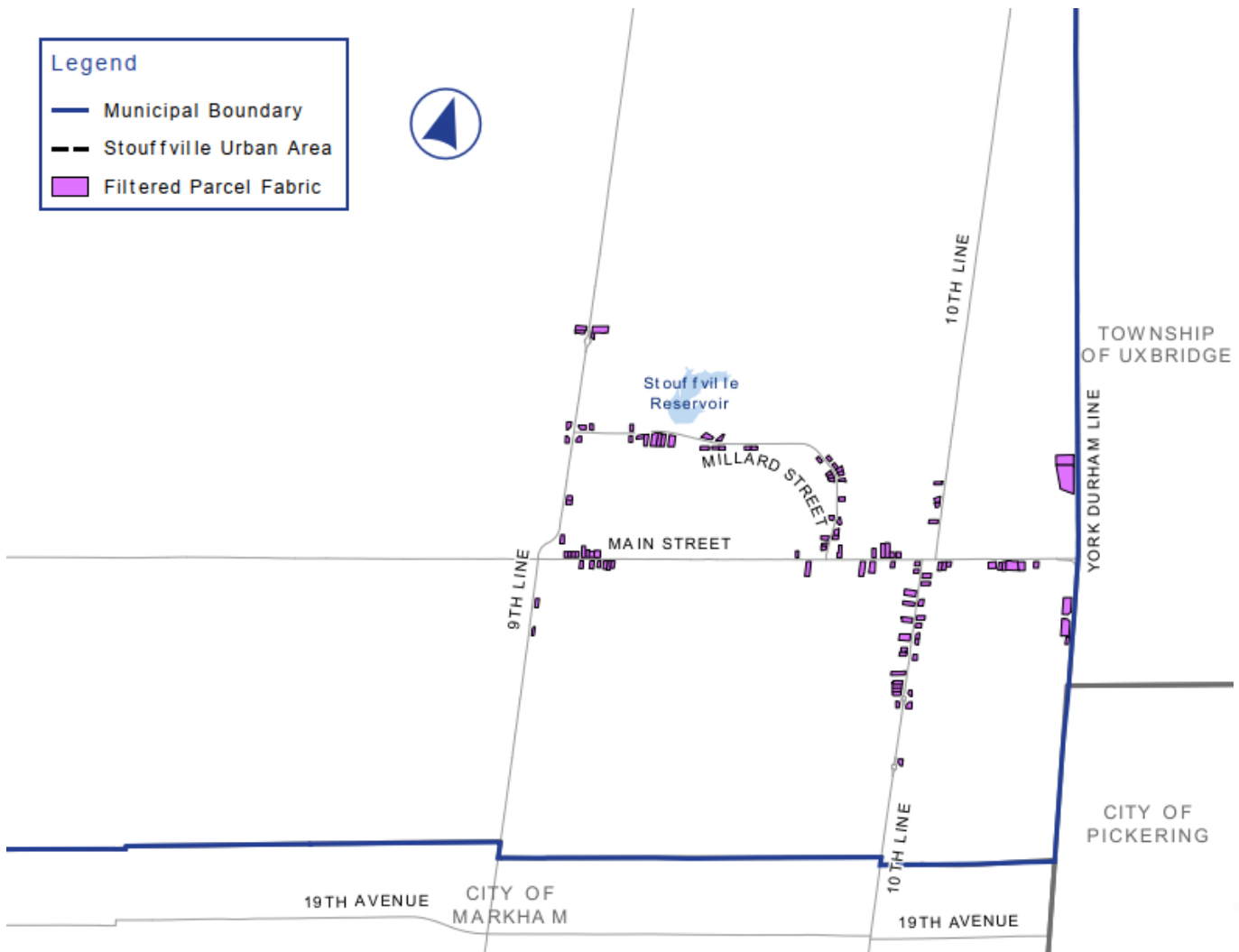


Figure B-1: HAF Intensification Approach 1: All parcels located along arterial roads which meet the lot frontage and size requirements of the RM1 zone.

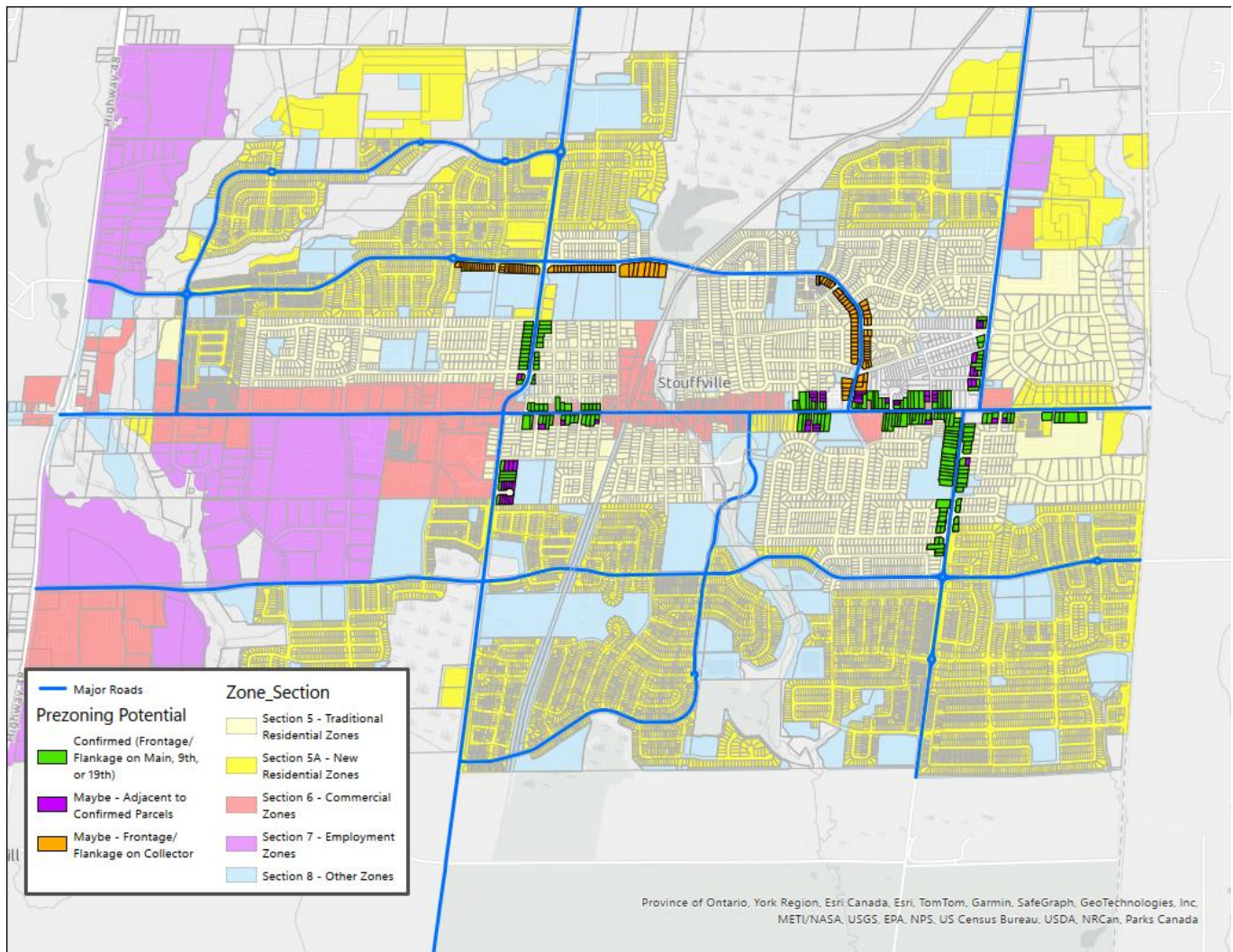


Figure B-2: Analysis of HAF Intensification Approach 2: All residential parcels fronting onto arterial roads in Stouffville.