

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

Draft Discussion Paper #3: Commercial Uses, Mixed Use
Areas, and Downtown Zoning

April 17, 2026

CA0058827.4311



Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Policy Context & Existing Zoning	5
2.1	Official Plan Vision	5
2.1.1	Community of Stouffville	5
2.1.2	Hamlet Designations	12
2.1.3	Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake	13
2.1.4	Summary and Reflections	14
2.2	Existing Zoning Permissions	14
2.2.1	Commercial Zones	16
2.2.2	Minor Variances	18
2.2.3	Site-Specific Exception Zones	20
3.	Official Plan Conformity	22
3.1	Application of New Designations	22
3.2	Zoning Conformity with New Designations	23
4.	Modernization of Commercial Use Permissions	25
4.1	Jurisdictional Scan	25
4.2	Uses Outside of Existing Zoning Framework	29
4.3	Implementation Options	31
5.	Area Specific Zoning Review	32
5.1	Stouffville GO MTSA	32
5.1.1	Current Zoning	33
5.1.2	Built Form	34
5.1.3	Key Considerations for Implementation	34
5.2	Old Elm MTSA	35
5.2.1	Current Zoning	36
5.2.2	Built Form	37
5.2.3	Key Considerations for Implementation	38
5.3	Gateway Mixed Use Area	38
5.3.1	Current Zoning	39
5.3.2	Built Form	39

5.3.3	Key Considerations for Implementation	39
5.4	Highway 48 Mixed Use Area	40
5.4.1	Current Zoning	40
5.4.2	Built Form	41
5.4.3	Key Considerations for Implementation	41
5.5	Regional Retail Area	41
5.5.1	Current Zoning	41
5.5.2	Built Form	42
5.5.3	Key Considerations for Implementation	42
5.6	Neighbourhood Retail Area	43
5.6.1	Current Zoning	43
5.6.2	Built Form	43
5.6.3	Key Considerations for Implementation	44
5.7	Western Approach – Mixed Use Area	44
5.7.1	Current Zoning	45
5.7.2	Built Form	45
5.7.3	Key Considerations for Implementation	45
5.8	Vandorf Mixed Use Area	45
5.8.1	Current Zoning	46
5.8.2	Built Form	47
5.8.3	Key Considerations	47
5.9	Gormley General Commercial Area	47
5.9.1	Current Zoning	48
5.9.2	Built Form	48
5.9.3	Key Considerations for Implementation	49
5.10	Bloomington Hamlet Area	49
5.10.1	Current Zoning	49
5.10.2	Built Form	49
5.10.3	Key Implementation Insights	50
5.11	Ballantrae & Musselman’s Lake	50
5.12	Preliminary Zone Structure	50
6.	Conclusions and Recommendations	53
	Appendix A – Commercial Zones and Permitted Uses in the Zoning By-law	57
	Appendix B – Zoning Within Commercial Land Use Designations	59

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1. Introduction

This Discussion Paper provides an assessment of the policies and zoning within the various commercial areas of the Town, as designated by the 2025 Official Plan. Commercial areas are an important part of a complete community, and are a major economic driver within the Town. The Official Plan's updated vision for commercial areas in the Town has shifted the focus of commercial areas towards a mixed use framework which enables intensification within the fast-growing and geographically constrained Community of Stouffville. The Official Plan also provides direction for commercial areas in the various other Communities and Hamlets in the Town.

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to review and evaluate the existing commercial zoning and provide recommendations on how to implement the vision of the Official Plan. This includes a review of the regulated use framework, a jurisdictional scan to identify innovative and modern uses to be added to the framework, and establishes key built form approaches for the Town's mixed use and commercial areas. This Paper also contains an Official Plan conformity exercise, as well as a review of the zoning in all areas of the Town, including within the two Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs).

This Discussion Paper focuses primarily on commercial and mixed use zoning. Other Discussion Papers produced through this project provide greater context and analysis on relevant topics which should be consulted:

- Discussion Papers #1 and 7 provide greater context on the project and the legislative context of the Zoning By-law review process;
- Discussion Paper #4 explores employment areas and industrial uses; and
- Discussion Paper #9 speaks to the design and zoning requirements for mid and high-rise buildings.

2. Policy Context & Existing Zoning

2.1 Official Plan Vision

The Official Plan is a long-term planning document adopted by the Town to guide land-use and development through a policy-driven vision. This vision sets out direction for how land should be developed, used, and managed over time. The 2025 Official Plan contains two overarching tools which guide the planning of the Town: Community structure, and land use designations. The Town’s community structure sets the broad vision for how the Town will continue to grow with context-specific policies which seek to address, promote, and preserve the distinctive communities and landscapes within the municipality. The six components of the Town’s structure, overlaid from least to most intensive development pattern, are shown in **Figure 2-1**.

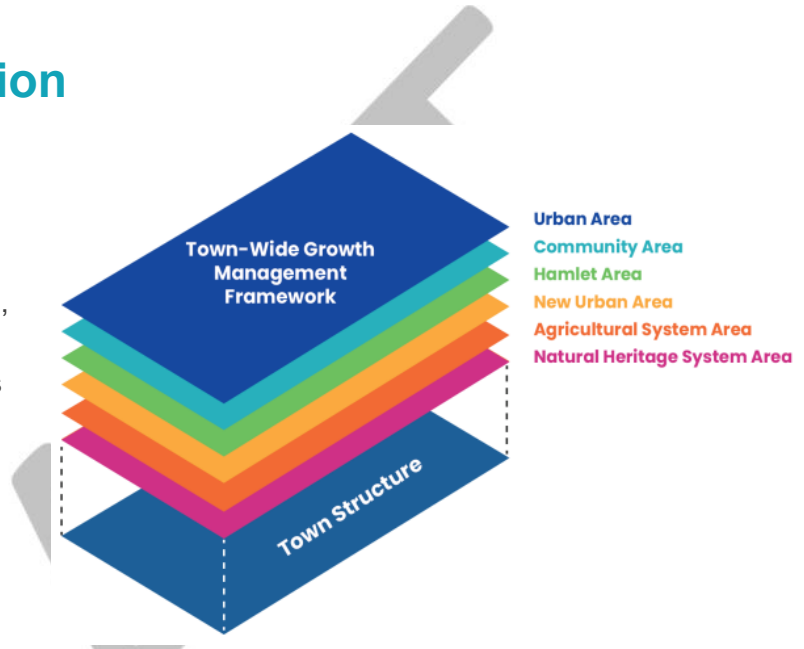


Figure 2-1: The Official Plan's Town Structure

Within each of the components of the Town structure, specific policies around community fabric and land use are applied through land use designations. Similar to zones, land use designations set high-level policies which translate into broad visions for the areas which they are applied. While the designations cannot be directly implemented by the Official Plan, the zoning applied by the Zoning By-law must be consistent with the uses prescribed by the designations. Within the 2025 OP, 29 distinct designations are applied to lands throughout the Town, with some designations having community-specific rules and regulations. Of these 29 land use designations, 12 are directly tied to commercial or mixed use land uses. This section reviews the intent and effect of these designations.

2.1.1 Community of Stouffville

As the primary urban area of the Town, Stouffville contains a variety of land use designations which bring detailed visioning to specific portions of the community. The designations within Stouffville are shown in **Figure 2-2**.

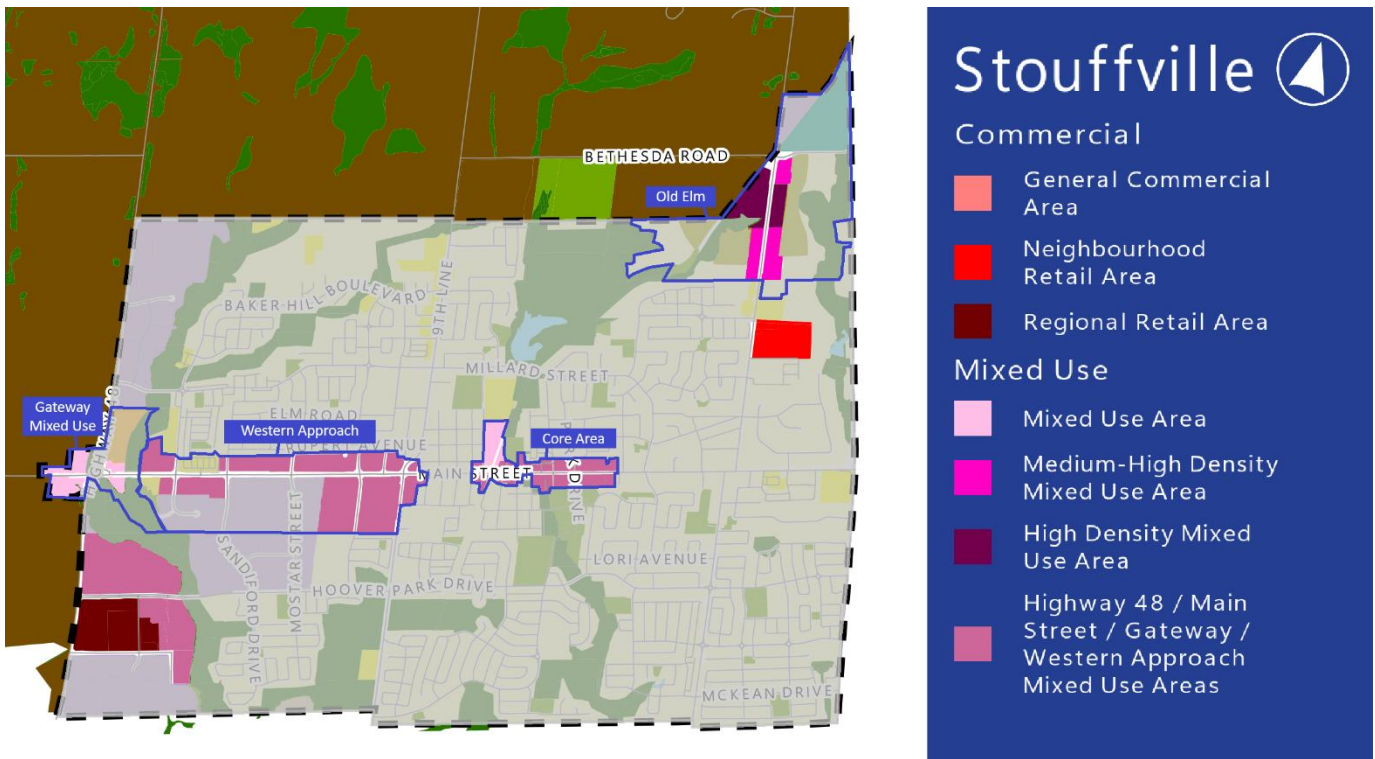


Figure 2-2: Official Plan Land Use Designations for Commercial and Mixed Use Areas of Stouffville

2.1.1.1 Gateway - Mixed Use Area

The Gateway – Mixed Use Area is a Strategic Growth Area (“SGA”) located at the intersection of Highway 48 and Main Street in the Community of Stouffville. This area is primarily undeveloped, and will become the “gateway” to the Community of Stouffville. The intent of this designation is to introduce a framework to guide the development of this “gateway”, which is characterized by mixed use permissions. The provisions within this designation envision mid-rise and high-rise buildings between 5 and 20 storeys in height, with a mandatory mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses in buildings that front onto Stouffville Road or Highway 48. For the required mixed use buildings, the designation requires activation of the ground floor to cultivate an active streetscape which is conducive to a complete community. While the focus of this designation is on mixed use buildings, a variety of community and cultural facilities are permitted as well. The development policies in this designation are detailed, and require a variety of technical studies to enable development. Conversely, development is not tied to a secondary planning process, and this area will need to be pre-zoned to realize the Official Plan’s vision.

This designation also prohibits the following uses:

- Standalone retail plazas;
- Commercial ‘self-storage’ warehouses;

- Standalone automobile sales and service use; and
- Gas bars and car washes.

2.1.1.2 Highway 48 - Mixed Use Area

The Official Plan describes the Highway 48 - Mixed Use Area as a SGA that is intended to be developed as a higher-density mixed use community. The designation is applied around the intersection of Highway 48 and Hoover Park Drive, surrounding the Regional Retail Area designation. The SGA comprises both of these designations. The Official Plan envisions this area as a new “Main Street” for the Town, with midrise and high-rise buildings between 3 and 20 storeys in height. The designation does permit some lower-density residential uses, such as townhouses and low-rise apartments, though taller buildings are directed to be closer to the major roads in the designation. Likewise, buildings which front onto Hoover Park Drive or Highway 48 will be required to include a mix of uses, with activated frontages and ground-floor commercial uses. The Official Plan policies also reinforce the creation of complete communities through development policies, as well as expanded use permissions for community uses and facilities. The permitted uses allow a wide range of commercial and employment-supportive uses, including:

- Grocery stores, supermarkets and food stores;
- Restaurants;
- Medical clinics;
- Retail and service commercial;
- Personal service uses;
- Recreation and entertainment uses;
- Hotels, conference, convention and banquet facilities;
- Financial establishments;
- Light industrial innovation makerspaces;
- Offices;
- Research and development;
- Education and training;
- Data processing;
- Institutional and cultural uses;
- Community facilities; and
- Farmer’s market and urban agriculture centre.

This designation also prohibits the following uses:

- Drive-thru facilities;
- Automobile and recreational vehicle sales and service uses;
- Commercial self-storage warehouses; and
- Gas bars and car washes.

2.1.1.3 Regional Retail Area

The Regional Retail Area designation is part of the Highway 48 Mixed Use Corridor SGA, and is intended to host larger, regionally-focused businesses, such as big-box retail, provided they do not

threaten the viability of the Town's commercial and mixed use areas. The designation recognizes the area's existing form, and aims to guide development towards a mixed use node over time. The designation permits residential uses in the form of mid-rise and high-rise mixed use buildings between 3 and 20 storeys in height. While the tallest buildings are to be located closest to the major roadways, the designation also permits standalone retail and commercial uses with a height of 2 storeys. This designation permits the following commercial uses:

- Grocery stores, supermarkets and food stores;
- Restaurants, including drive-thru restaurants;
- Medical clinics;
- Offices;
- Retail and service commercial uses;
- Personal service uses;
- Recreation and entertainment uses;
- Hotels, conference, convention and banquet facilities;
- Financial establishments;
- Light industrial innovation makerspaces;
- Education and training;
- Institutional and cultural uses; and
- Community facilities.

This designation also prohibits the following uses:

- Automobile and recreational vehicle sales and service uses;
- Commercial self-storage warehouses; and
- Gas bars and car washes.

2.1.1.4 Neighbourhood Retail Area

The Neighbourhood Retail Area designation is applied to a section of northeastern Stouffville which contains neighbourhood-focused commercial activity. This designation is envisioned to support the creation of complete communities by allowing residents to access commercial businesses within walking distance of their homes. The built form of these local commercial buildings are envisioned to be between 2 and 5 storeys in height, with massing controls such as setbacks required to reduce the impact of taller buildings on the pedestrian environment. In addition to residential uses in mixed use buildings, the permitted commercial uses in this designation are:

- Small-scale retail and commercial uses;
- Personal service uses;
- Community facilities;
- Professional and Medical offices;
- Studio;
- Restaurants; and
- Institutional and cultural uses.

This designation also prohibits the following uses:

- Standalone residential uses;
- Retail stores greater than 3,950 square meters;
- Entertainment uses;
- Outside storage and display;
- Drive-thru facilities;
- Automobile and recreational vehicle sales and service uses;
- Commercial self-storage warehouses; and
- Gas bars and car washes.

2.1.1.5 Western Approach - Mixed Use Area

The Western Approach - Mixed Use Area designation is applied to the western portion of Stouffville along Main Street, generally between the Core Area and the Gateway Mixed Use Area, and is part of the Western Approach Mixed Use Area SGA. The OP's vision for this area is to create a vibrant commercial district which combines employment, institutional, cultural, entertainment, and residential uses. The intention is that this designation area will evolve into an intensive commercial corridor. Buildings within this designation will be between 2 and 20 storeys in height, with areas east of Sandiford Drive being limited to generally 12 storeys, and subject to the area specific low-rise and mid-rise development height limitations identified on Schedule D-2. Standalone commercial uses are permitted, though the intention is that most buildings in the designation will be mixed use, with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses above. The permitted commercial uses in this designation include:

- Grocery stores, supermarkets and food stores;
- Restaurants, including drive-thru restaurants;
- Professional and medical office;
- Retail and service commercial uses;
- Personal service uses;
- Recreation and entertainment uses;
- Hotels, conference, convention and banquet facilities;
- Financial establishments;
- Offices;
- Research and development;
- Educational and training facilities;
- Institutional and cultural uses; and
- Community facilities.

This designation also prohibits the following uses:

- Low-rise residential uses, such as single detached, semi-detached, and tri-plex apartments;
- Automobile and recreational vehicle sales and service uses
- Commercial self-storage warehouses; and
- Gas bars and car washes.

2.1.1.6 Core Area – Main Street

The Core Area of Stouffville is a major focal point of the community, consisting of the areas of Main Street between Albert Street and Pine Street, and the areas east of Edward Street and Bramble

Crescent. This area surrounds the Stouffville GO Train station, and constitutes a Major Transit Station Area (“MTSA”) under the *Planning Act*. The Core Area – Main Street designation occupies most of Main Street, and is the downtown area of the community. Buildings in this designation shall be between 2 and 6 storeys in height, with buildings taller than 4 storeys being stepped-back to ensure appropriate pedestrian enclosure at the street. Low-rise residential uses are permitted, though they must not have frontage onto Main Street. The Official Plan envisions the downtown areas as a vibrant, pedestrian oriented commercial district with a variety of businesses, amenities, and services to draw in residents. This vision is supported by built form policies which require high-activity uses to occupy the ground floor of all buildings along Main Street, such as retail and restaurant uses. The commercial uses permitted in this designation are as follows:

- Restaurants;
- Retail and personal service commercial uses;
- Personal service uses;
- Professional and medical offices;
- Financial establishments;
- Recreation and entertainment uses;
- Institutional and cultural uses; and
- Community facilities.

This designation also prohibits the following uses:

- Stand-alone office or residential buildings with frontage on Main Street;
- Drive-thru facilities;
- Automobile and recreational vehicle sales and service uses;
- Commercial self-storage warehouses; and
- Gas bars and car washes.

2.1.1.7 Core Area – Mixed Use

The Core Area – Mixed Use designation is applied to the existing industrial and commercial businesses surrounding the Stouffville GO Transit station. The Official Plan recognizes the potential for this area to redevelop into a residential and mixed use district which will complement and enhance the Main Street. The designation permits mid-rise residential and mixed use buildings between 2 and 10 storeys in height, with requirements related to tower separation and angular planes to ensure the pedestrian realm is prioritised. Ground-floor commercial uses are required along Edward Street, south of Schell Street, with the stipulation that taller buildings should be concentrated along the rail corridor. This designation permits the following commercial uses:

- Restaurants;
- Retail and personal service commercial uses;
- Personal service uses;
- Professional and medical offices;
- Recreation and entertainment uses;
- Existing industrial and commercial uses;
- Transportation terminal;

- Institutional and cultural uses; and
- Community facilities.

2.1.1.8 Old Elm - High Density Mixed Use Area

The Old Elm GO Transit station area is an MTSA in the Town, located in the northeast corner of Stouffville. The Old Elm High Density Mixed Use Area is directly east of the train station platform, and is envisioned in the Official Plan as a new mixed use core area. A significant portion of this designation, as well as some policies are deferred from the Official Plan pending an Ontario Land Tribunal (“OLT”) appeal of Official Plan Amendment 155. This designation is intended to have the greatest mix of uses and highest density appropriate, with the goal of creating a vibrant mixed use community. This will be realized through mid-rise buildings which are between 5 and 8 storeys in height, with buildings up to 12 storeys permitted subject to additional criteria. Standalone residential uses are not permitted, though mixed use buildings are encouraged with ground-floor commercial uses to animate the streetscape. The permitted commercial uses in this designation are as follows:

- Restaurants;
- Banks and similar commercial services;
- Personal service shops;
- Medical offices;
- Day care uses;
- Convenience retail; and
- Small-scale retail uses.

This designation also prohibits the following uses:

- Drive-thru facilities;
- Automobile service uses; and
- Gas bars and car washes.

2.1.1.9 Old Elm - Medium-High Density Mixed Use Area

The Old Elm MTSA area only contains two designations, and the Medium-High Density Mixed Use Area comprises all areas along Tenth Line which are outside of the High Density Mixed Use Area designation. The intent of this designation is to provide medium and high-density uses surrounding the new high-density core in the Old Elm area. The envisioned built form consists of low-rise residential uses such as apartments, stacked, and street townhouses, with some mid-rise buildings between 3 and 10 storeys. Street townhouses and laneway townhouses are not permitted along the Tenth Line frontage, and mixed use frontage areas are required in the locations identified on Schedule D-4. Development along Tenth Line will have a minimum height of 4 storeys. This designation intends to direct most commercial uses to the ground floor of mixed use buildings, and permits the following commercial uses:

- Offices;
- Restaurants;
- Banks and similar commercial services;
- Personal service shops;
- Medical offices;
- Day care uses;

- Convenience retail; and
- Small-scale retail uses.

This designation also prohibits the following uses:

- Drive-thru facilities;
- Gas bars and car washes.
- Automobile service uses; and

2.1.2 Hamlet Designations

Outside of the Community of Stouffville, the Town includes a handful of smaller Rural Settlements, including Communities, and Hamlets. The 2025 Official Plan includes policies for the Hamlets of Bloomington, Gormley, and Vandorf. The Community of Ballantrae and the Hamlet of Musselman’s Lake are not included in the 2025 Official Plan due to a 2025 OLT decision, which resulted in an amendment to the 2004 Official Plan. As a result, the 2004 Official Plan land use designations still apply to these areas.

2.1.2.1 Hamlet Area – Bloomington

The Bloomington Hamlet Area designation is applied to the entire Hamlet, and recognizes the rural nature of the settlement. 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.

2.1.2.2 General Commercial Area – Gormley

Certain policies in the OP, including the Gormley General Commercial Area designation, were deferred in their entirety by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (“MMAH”) due to Provincial policy updates that came into effect through Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (“PPS”) before the Plan could receive Provincial approval. This deferral stems from changes to Employment Areas in the PPS, 2024, which are explored in detail through Discussion Paper 4. Notwithstanding, the 2004 Official Plan policies for the General Commercial Area continue to apply and are generally consistent with the 2025 OP. The General Commercial Area designation is the only commercial designation in Gormley, and the deferred schedule shows it being applied in the core of the Hamlet around the intersection of Woodbine Avenue and Stouffville Road. Development policies for the General Commercial Area do not specify specific built form regulations, instead focusing on site-design and transition policies to reduce potential negative impacts on neighbouring residential areas. This land use designation permits the following uses:

- Commercial and retail uses;
- Professional and medical offices;
- Restaurants and service uses, including drive-thrus;
- Day care centres;
- Automotive service uses, sales and repairs;
- Garden centres or nurseries;
- Hotels, banquet and convention facilities;

- Financial institutions;
- Recreation and entertainment uses;
- Personal Service uses;
- Printing Establishments; and
- Funeral Establishments.

2.1.2.3 Mixed Use Area – Vandorf

Similar to the Gormley General Commercial Area, the Vandorf Mixed Use Area was deferred by the MMAH due to non-compliance with the PPS. The industrial lands will be reviewed through Discussion Paper 4. Within the deferred schedule, the Mixed Use Area designation is applied to most lands on the eastern side of Woodbine Avenue south of Aurora Road, with some lands on the western side. Mixed use buildings are encouraged along the Woodbine Avenue and Aurora Road frontage, with low-rise residential dwellings directed to the periphery of the designation. The Mixed Use Area is the only commercial designation in Vandorf. This designation permits the following commercial uses:

- Bed and breakfast establishments;
- Commercial and retail uses;
- Offices;
- Institutional uses; and
- Community facilities.

2.1.3 Ballantrae and Musselman’s Lake

The 2025 Official Plan does not include land use designations or development policies for the Community of Ballantrae and the Hamlet of Musselman’s Lake. Instead, the land use designations and community-specific development policies are still contained in the 2004 Official Plan, as amended by the OLT in January, 2025. This OLT decision was the approval of an Official Plan amendment and Zoning By-law amendment from 2014, which the Region of York had failed to approve within the legislative timeline. The purpose of the amendments were to bring the Ballantrae-Musselman’s Lake and Environs Secondary Plan into conformity with the 2004 Official Plan, and to update the Zoning By-law accordingly.

One of the major changes from this amendment was the creation of the Highway 48 Corridor Commercial/Mixed Use Area designation, as shown in **Figure 2-3**. This designation was created to support the growing commercial need within the Community of Ballantrae, and is applied to certain lands on both sides of the Highway within the community. This designation permits the following commercial uses:

- Grocery and food stores;
- Convenience stores
- Personal service uses;
- Restaurants;
- Institutional uses;
- Offices; and
- Coffee shops.

Due to the ongoing appeal at the time, the 2025 Official Plan excluded certain land use designation and development policies of the Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake and Environs Secondary Plan, leaving it in effect through the 2004 Official Plan. With the approval of both the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment in January 2025, the Zoning By-law is now in conformity with the 2004 OP, which remains in effect for this area. This suggests that the area is in full conformity with the land use designations of the 2004 Official Plan, though general policies of the 2025 Official Plan would still apply to these areas, and will be addressed through the Zoning By-law review project. It is the Town's intent to consolidate the policies in the 2025 OP, through a housekeeping amendment in Q2 2026.

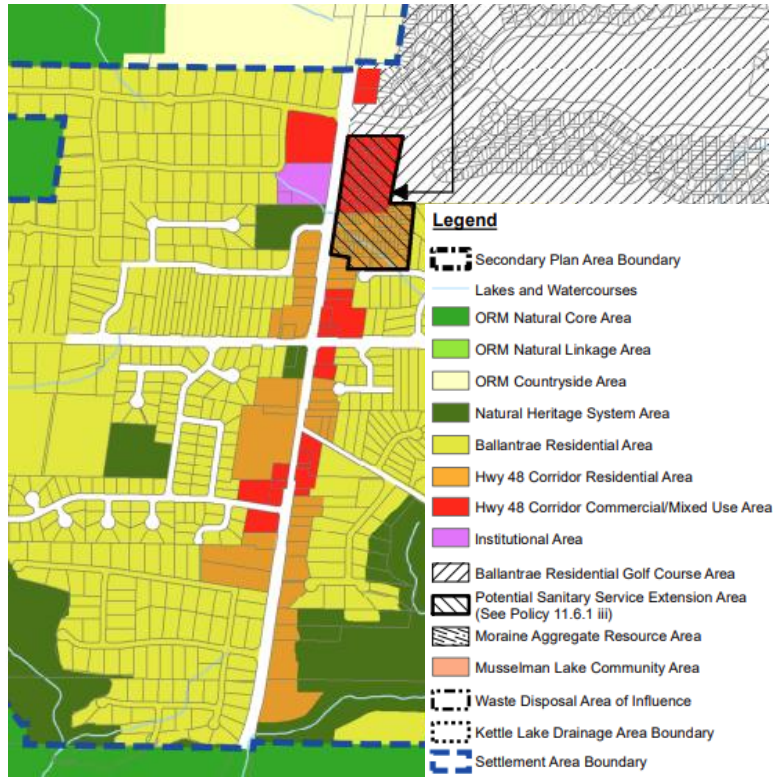


Figure 2-3: Ballantrae-Musselman's Lake Land Use Designations

2.1.4 Summary and Reflections

Within the Community of Stouffville, all commercial designations in the Official Plan are moving towards a mixed use framework that permits or requires ground-floor commercial uses below a multi-unit residential building. This framework recognizes the constrained borders of the Town which necessitate densification and intensification of the settlement areas in lieu of greenfield expansion. There are also key policies with implications for the Zoning By-law, including the prohibition of automobile-oriented land uses, such as gas bars, drive-thrus, and auto-related service stations in key designations to promote pedestrian-oriented development, particularly in the MTSA and SGA areas. Within the Hamlet Areas, a similar, less-pronounced trend towards mixed use was also noted, though the implementation of the deferred policies will only follow updates and approvals of the Employment Area policies, which are discussed in detail in Discussion Paper 4: Employment Areas.

2.2 Existing Zoning Permissions

The Town's existing Zoning By-law contains 42 parent zones, which are organized within the document according to zone type. Each zone type is given an entire section, which includes a matrix which shows all permitted uses within the zone, as well as a table which communicates the basic lot and building

regulations for each zone. This section reviews the existing commercial zoning within the Town, including a broad commentary on the permitted uses in each zone, the specific lot requirements, and the site-specific zones assigned to each zone.

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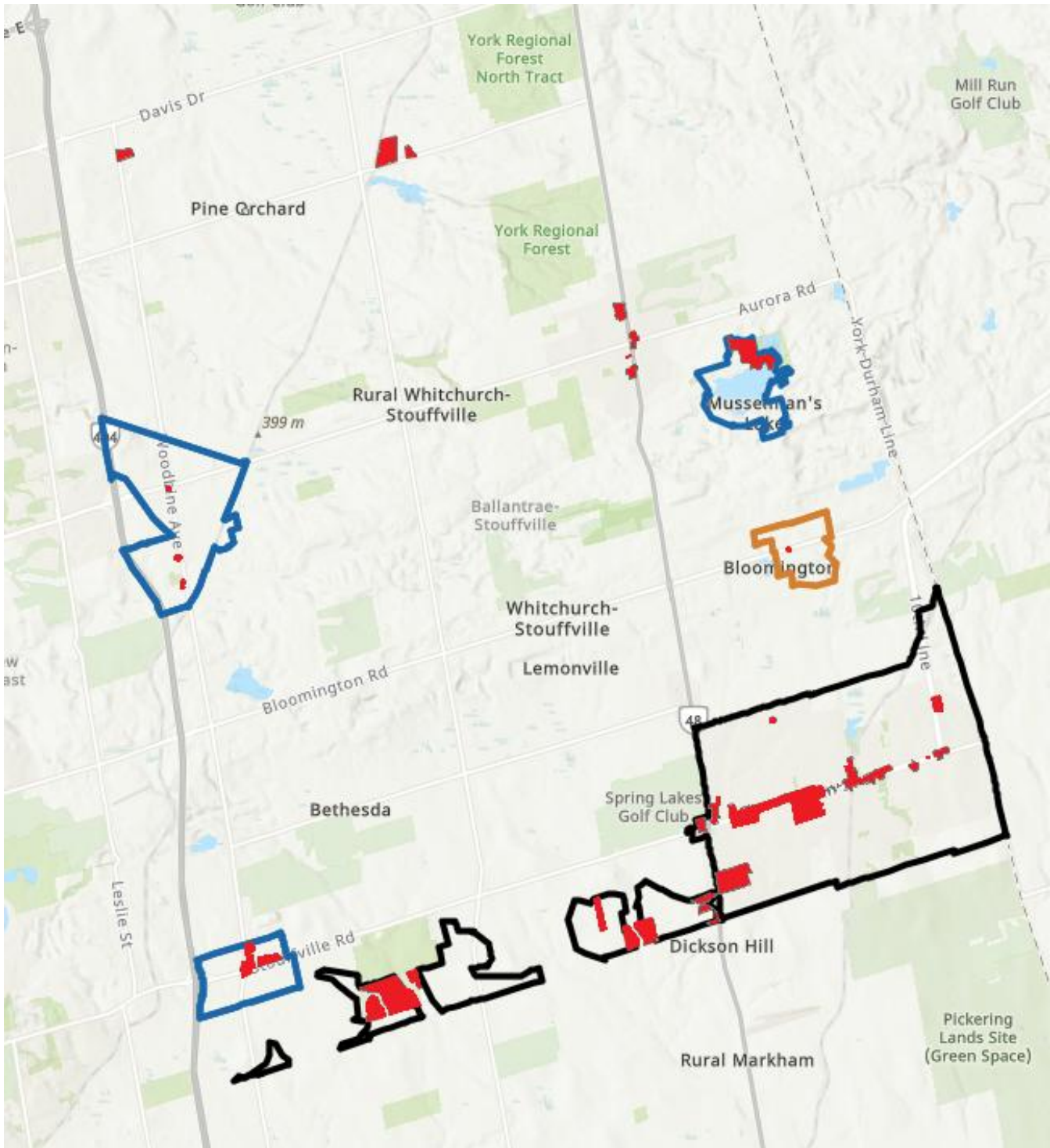


Figure 2-4: Location of all commercial zones in the Town

2.2.1 Commercial Zones

There are 7 commercial zones in the Zoning By-law. As shown in **Figure 2-4**, commercial zoning is present in all settlement areas, with the Community of Stouffville hosting most of the commercial properties in the Town. **Appendix A** contains the permitted use matrix taken directly from the Town’s Zoning By-law. The in-effect Zoning By-law currently regulates 45 individual land uses within the commercial areas, comprised of a spectrum of commercial, service, residential, institutional, automotive, and recreational uses.

Figure 2-5 provides a high-level review of the number of uses permitted within each zone.

Though each zone applies a different level of intensity, mix, and built form regulation, the number of permitted uses is generally correlated with the level of intensity expected within the zone.

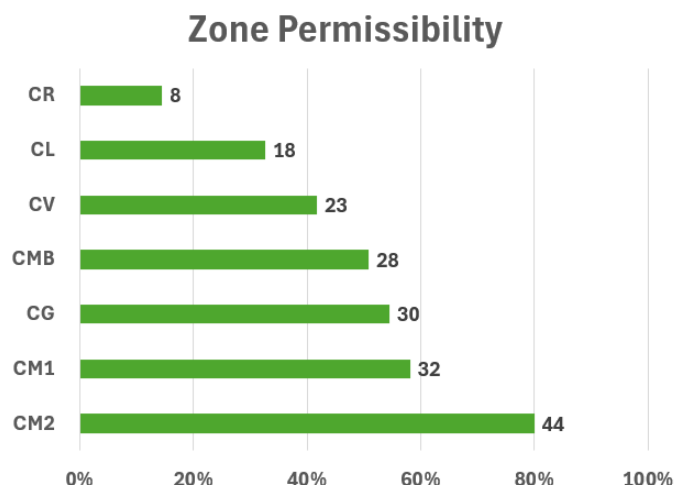


Figure 2-5: Zone Permissibility

- **General Commercial (CG):** The CG zone is flexible, broad-spectrum commercial zone that permits just over half of all regulated commercial uses as shown in **Figure 2-5**. This zone permits most typical commercial uses, including car-oriented uses such as gas bars, drive-thrus, and car washes. This zone does not permit apartment dwellings, but does permit a single unit above commercial uses.
- **Local Commercial (CL):** The CL zone is a low-intensity commercial zone intended for use within established residential neighbourhoods to promote convenient access to businesses and services. The CL zone permits a narrow band of uses, such as small-scale retail uses, restaurants, professional offices, and daycare centres. The zone also permits a single dwelling unit above a commercial use. The CL zone is applied very sparingly within the Town.
- **Village Commercial (CV):** The CV zone is a low-intensity commercial zone which is primarily applied in settlement areas outside of Stouffville. This zone permits a nominal band of low-intensity uses such as retail uses, restaurants, personal service shops, and community uses such as libraries and daycares. The zone also permits a single residential unit above a commercial use.
- **Commercial Residential Mixed – Community Core Area (CM1):** The CM1 zone is applied in downtown Stouffville along Main Street. This zone is intended to be a higher-intensity mixed use commercial zone with residential uses permitted above the second floor. The zone is intended to provide a compact, walkable urban form, and permits uses which would animate the streetscape such as retail, service, and restaurant uses. The zone also permits other uses typical of urban centres, such as offices, institutional uses, and recreation facilities within mixed use buildings.
- **Commercial Residential Mixed – Western Approach (CM2):** The CM2 zone is the most permissive commercial zone in the Town, allowing for a flexibility and higher-intensity with a

combination of commercial, residential, and institutional uses. This zone is applied to lands in the Western Approach region of Stouffville, which are along Main Street to the west of the Core Area.

- **Commercial Residential Mixed – Ballantrae (CMB):** The CMB zone exists only within the Community of Ballantrae, and is a context-specific general commercial zone. This zone permits a slightly smaller range of uses than the CG zone, and has a greater focus on service provision than the CG zone.
- **Commercial Recreation (CR):** The CR zone is applied to recreational lands, and only permits recreational uses such as campgrounds, places of amusement, golf courses, or other commercial recreation uses. The CR zone is comparatively the least permissive zone, as shown in **Figure 2-5**, though the uses permitted are largely unique to this zone. Nearly all instances of commercial zones outside of the Urban and Hamlet areas in **Figure 2-4** are zoned CR.

The intent of the various commercial zones within the Zoning By-law does not appear to align with the vision of the Official Plan. While numerous changes have been made to these zones through Zoning By-law amendments, these ad-hoc changes continue to reflect an outdated policy framework from the 2004 Official Plan. Only the CM1 and CM2 zones contain the mixed use development which is envisioned by the Official Plan for the Community of Stouffville. The general commercial zones applied to some of the Hamlet areas may also be considered in conformity with the deferred commercial policies, though conformity will also require a review of the permitted use framework for these zones, which is considered later in this Discussion Paper.

2.2.2 Minor Variances

If a landowner wishes to develop a property in a way which is not fully consistent with the zoning on the site, they have the option to apply for a minor variance from the requirements of the Zoning By-law. Between 2020 and 2025, the Town received 248 applications for minor variances, with 498 individual requests to relax provisions within the zoning. Of these 498 requests, 22 variances were requested for properties with commercial zoning.

Table 2-1: Summary of Minor Variances within Commercial Zones

File Number	Zone	No. of requested variances	Summary of proposed activity
CA-24-50	AG, FH, ENV, CR(1)	2	Severance of ~13.6 ha agricultural/environmental lands; retained lands continue Willowgrove Farm; severed parcel remains agricultural; variances permit 0 m frontage and lot not fronting a street.
CA-22-11	CG	2	Development of automotive repair facility with 10 bays, office, employee area, and customer space; variances allow parking reduction (51 to 39) and increased exterior side setback (18 m to 18.5 m).

File Number	Zone	No. of requested variances	Summary of proposed activity
CA-23-47	CL(1) / RM1(1)	2	Conversion of convenience store to café/take-out with no exterior changes; variances permit café use and reduce parking requirement (20 to 12).
CA-23-22	CM1	2	Conversion of beauty spa to dental office with second floor converted to storage; variances reduce parking (8 to 2) and remove 1 required barrier-free space.
CA-24-17	CM1	2	Construction of 4-storey mixed-use building with 35 residential units and 1 commercial unit; variances reduce yard abutting residential zone (4.5 m to 3.07 m) and parking (55 to 40 spaces).
CA-25-01	CM1	1	Legalization and renovation of detached rear structure to create a dwelling unit accessory to a commercial use, which is otherwise not permitted.
CA-23-21	CM2	3	Development of gas station with 4-pump gas bar and conversion of existing building to convenience store; variances increase front yard setback (3 m to 7.39 m), reduce FSI (0.5 to 0.04), and reduce landscape buffer (4.5 m to 2.62 m).
CA-23-74	CM2	1	Three-phase seniors' campus including 6-storey LTC home (192 beds) and two 12-storey retirement residences; variance permits 2 loading spaces instead of 5.
CA-25-13	CM2(1)	1	Permission for a Dental Hygienist Office within a live/work townhouse where professional office uses are not permitted.
CA-22-42	CM2(10)	5	Construction of 417 m ² commercial real estate office; variances modify front yard setbacks (0–5 m required to 16–23 m), reduce parking (25 to 21), eliminate landscaped area in parking lot, eliminate landscape strip (4.5 m to 0 m), and reduce FSI (0.34 min to 0.02).
CA-23-14	CM2(11)	1	Commercial development requesting parking reduction from 149 required spaces to 142 spaces.

Table 2-1 shows a summary of the requested variances in the existing commercial zones. As shown in **Figure 2-6**, the most common type of variance requested is a reduction in parking requirements. These seven variance applications each requested a significant reduction the number of required parking spaces, with the Committee of Adjustment granting an average 31% reduction to sites that apply. In addition, a single application was granted relief from barrier-free parking standards entirely. These applications suggest that parking requirements could be a

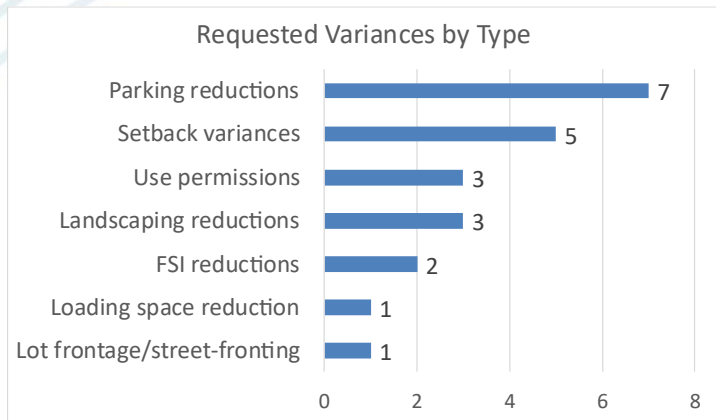


Figure 2-6: Requested Variances by Type

barrier to commercial development in the region. Parking rates are considered in greater detail in Discussion Paper 6: Parking and Transportation.

Another trend identified in the minor variance data was frequent requests to modify setbacks for proposed developments, with 5 applications seeking relief. These applications included requests to both decrease and increase setbacks, including those required for transitions between uses. A single application for a commercial real estate office in the Gateway Mixed Use Area provided a variance to the existing zoning requirements for limited front-yard setbacks of 0-5 m, requesting a larger 16-24 m setback to match the existing context in the area. This could suggest that pre-zoning greenfield areas may be insufficient to bring in a new context, and may require a more structured approach such as a block plan.

The final trend identified through the analysis of minor variances was the expansion of use permissions for commercial properties. Three applications sought to receive permission for the following uses:

- A dental hygienist office within a connected live/work townhouse unit; and
- A café within a local commercial zone that only permits convenience stores.

These variances suggest that greater flexibility of use permissions could be introduced to reduce the number of variance applications received.

2.2.3 Site-Specific 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 2-2** shows an overview of these exception zones which have been added to the commercial zones of the Town over the years:

Table 2-2: Overview of Commercial Site-specific Exception Zones in the Zoning By-law

Parent zone	No. of exception zones	Summary of exception zones
CG	16	Most of the exception zones for the CG zone apply site-specific control t by limiting the permitted uses to a handful of commercial types, with updated lot provisions.

Parent zone	No. of exception zones	Summary of exception zones
CL	3	The three exception zones vary between a single permitted use with strict prescribed size restrictions, to a comprehensive zone change for a commercial subdivision.
CV	4	Two of the four exceptions have holding symbols applied, and all apply restrictions to commercial uses, with some expansion of residential uses.
CM1	1	The single CM1 exception zone is a comprehensive change to allow a mixed use building.
CM2	18	The majority of the exception zones in the CM2 zone provided more prescribed control by reducing the permitted uses, with some zones prohibiting commercial uses and only allowing residential. Nearly all the exceptions were comprehensive changes.
CMB	2	One comprehensive change to permit a shopping centre, and a second exception to permit residential uses.
CR	2	Both exceptions provide comprehensive changes to the lot requirements and tweak the uses, but neither change the nature of the zone.

The 46 exception zones applied to commercial areas provide some insight into how the current Zoning By-law is functioning within the Town. One takeaway is many of these exception zones are tied to specific developments, resulting in tailored provisions that permit a narrow band of uses alongside more lenient built form provisions to enable the proposed development. This suggests that the Town has been willing to provide lenience in built form control in exchange for certainty in the uses being added to certain areas, particularly within the Core Area of Stouffville. There were also a number of exception zones which added residential uses to the commercial areas, suggesting that there is already a market demand for mixed use developments in areas that do not otherwise allow it. Lastly, the comprehensive nature of these exception zones suggests that the current built form provisions applied to these zones may not be compatible with the desires of the development community, and the Town must carefully review these requirements during the review process. The Zoning Strategy Report will go into further detail on these requirements to assist in the decision-making process.

3. Official Plan Conformity

One of the major drivers of the Zoning By-law review project is the implementation of the new Official Plan. To understand what changes are required to the Zoning By-law to ensure conformity with the Official Plan, this section reviews the extent of the various designations applied to the commercial areas of the Town, and the zoning which is applied within these designations. This section also examines the extent to which the existing zoning framework could be applied to conform to the new framework applied by the Official Plan.

3.1 Application of New Designations

Within the Official Plan, 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 B** contains a table which shows the zoning which is applied to the various commercial 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 commercial zoning applied.

Table 3-1: Existing Zoning Within Official Plan Designations

Land Use Designation	Percent of Designation Zoned Commercial
Gateway Mixed Use Area - Stouffville	36%
General Commercial Area - Gormley	77%
Hamlet Area - Bloomington	>1%
High Density Mixed Use Area - Old Elm	0%
Highway 48 Mixed Use - Stouffville	9%
Main Street - Stouffville Core	66%
Medium-High Density Mixed Use Area - Old Elm	0%
Mixed Use - Stouffville Core	90%
Mixed Use Area - Vandorf	2%
Neighbourhood Retail Area - Stouffville	28%
Regional Retail Area - Stouffville	100%
Western Approach Mixed Use - Stouffville Western Approach	85%

The analysis shown in **Table 3-1** is broad, and simply depicts the percentage of lands within the designation which are zoned for commercial uses. Many of the other zones within the designation could still be in conformity with the designation, as land use designations are not meant to be as prescriptive

as zoning. The zoning applied in the 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. As such, it is not expected that 100% of the lands within a designation will conform to the vision of the designation. The results of this analysis show that the introduction of the new land use designations from the Official Plan represent a major shift in the organization of the Town’s commercial areas, with only four of the designations likely in conformity with the general direction of the designation of expanding the permissibility of commercial uses throughout the Town. This table does not show full conformity, which is to be expected as the current Zoning By-law was not written to conform to the 2025 Official Plan.

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 Official Plan 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 description of all commercial designations in the Official Plan, and lists the closest matching zone from the Zoning By-law which would best implement the policies of the Official Plan.

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

Designation	Description of Implementing Zoning	Closest Existing Zone
Gateway Mixed Use Area - Stouffville	High-rise mixed use zone which permits some standalone residential use with ground floor commercial, or adaptive re-use of existing commercial buildings. Commercial, office, and institutional uses permitted on ground floor.	CM2
General Commercial Area - Gormley	Low-density, community focused commercial zone to serve the local shopping and daily needs of the Hamlet.	CV
Hamlet Area - Bloomington	Small scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses along Bloomington Road and Ninth Line	CMB
High Density Mixed Use Area - Old Elm	High-density urban zone which permits mixed use buildings, standalone offices, and standalone residential uses.	CM2
Highway 48 Mixed Use - Stouffville	Mid to high-rise urban zone which permits mixed use development with personal service, commercial, and institutional uses on the ground floor of residential buildings.	CM1
Main Street - Stouffville Core	Pedestrian-friendly commercial district zone with mid-rise residential uses and commercial on the ground floor.	CM1

Designation	Description of Implementing Zoning	Closest Existing Zone
Medium-High Density Mixed Use Area - Old Elm	High-density mixed use zone with some standalone office or residential, and limited commercial uses.	CM1
Mixed Use - Stouffville Core	Mid-rise mixed use zone which permits larger commercial uses, institutional uses, and community focused services in a mid-rise typology.	CM2
Mixed Use Area - Vandorf	Low-density mixed use zone which permits most commercial uses and standalone residential uses.	CV
Neighbourhood Retail Area - Stouffville	Mid-rise mixed use zone with small-scale commercial, institutional, and professional service uses on the ground floor.	CM1
Regional Retail Area - Stouffville	Mid to high-rise mixed use zone which permits larger commercial uses and institutional uses.	CM2
Western Approach Mixed Use - Stouffville Western Approach	Mid to high-rise mixed use zone which permits most commercial uses, including institutional uses and offices.	CM2

Due to the comprehensive changes present in the Official Plan, none of the existing zones will fulsomely implement the vision of the Plan. **Table 3-2** demonstrates that the organization of commercial zoning in the Town must shift towards a mixed use framework which blends medium to high-density residential uses in almost all commercial areas within the Town's settlement areas. This means that the CM1 and CM2 zones, which are the only mixed use zones in the existing Zoning By-law, are a broad representation of what zoning will be required in many of the commercial areas of the Town under this new framework. The two Hamlet designations are the exception, recognizing that lower-density rural settlements do not possess the density to support multiple uses within a building, and instead permit a broader range of uses within the commercial zoning.

4. Modernization of Commercial Use Permissions

Zoning by-laws provide direction for land use within a municipality by using specific, legal descriptions of activities in order to apply regulations effectively and consistently. These land uses are normally accompanied by a definition which explains exactly what each term means, which further narrows the scope of each use. Over time, as new ideas for commercial businesses are proposed, or as new problems worthy of regulation are identified, municipalities may choose to modify their zoning by-laws to include additional uses and definitions. Alternatively, an applicant may request a Minor Variance or a Zoning By-law Amendment to consider proposed uses that are not already defined in the Zoning By-law. In the case of Whitchurch-Stouffville, the Zoning By-law contains a list of 45 commercial uses which are used to regulate land uses within the Town.

4.1 Jurisdictional Scan

Although specific land use regulations are often valued for their targeted outcomes, the ongoing need to update zoning provisions in response to emerging or evolving land uses has led some municipalities to adopt broader permitted use categories. This practice aligns with the idea of form-based zoning, which emphasizes urban form instead of function to achieve a desired aesthetic quality as opposed to a desired use. This practice is becoming more popular in Canadian municipalities.

This section reviews the commercial use framework of three Canadian municipalities with new Zoning By-laws and compares them to the Town. The three municipalities chosen were:

- Ottawa, ON, who adopted a new Zoning By-law on January 28, 2026;
- Markham, ON, who adopted a new Zoning By-law in 2024; and
- Edmonton, AB, who adopted a new Zoning By-law in 2024 which won an award of Planning Excellence from the Canadian Institute of Planners for innovation in zoning and form-based regulation.

The results of this jurisdictional scan are shown in **Table 4-1**. These municipalities were selected because they have implemented newer zoning frameworks and they address a variety of urban contexts. This table shows the 45 uses that are regulated by the Town's current Zoning By-law, and compares them to the corresponding use in the frameworks from the reviewed municipalities. Cells which are highlighted indicate that that term corresponds with more than one use within the Town's framework. Cells which have multiple entries indicate that the Town's framework is more inclusive than the reviewed municipality.

Table 4-1: Comparison of Permitted Use Frameworks from Canadian Municipalities

Whitchurch-Stouffville	Edmonton, AB	Markham, ON	Ottawa, ON
Adult Retraining Schools	Indoor sales and service	Commercial school	Instructional facility
Animal Grooming Centre	Indoor sales and service	Pet services centre	Animal Care Establishment
Auto body shop	Auto body repair and paint shop	Motor vehicle repair and body shop	Automobile body shop
Automobile Service Station	Vehicle Support Services	Motor vehicle fueling station	Gas bar
Automotive Sales and Service Uses	Outdoor sales and service	Motor vehicle sales establishment	Automobile dealership
		Motor vehicle rental office	
		Motor vehicle rental establishment	
Bed and Breakfast Establishment	Indoor sales and service	Hotel	Short-term rental
Building supply and lumber store	Indoor sales and service	Retail store	Retail store
Business Services	Indoor sales and service	Business office	Office
Car Wash	Vehicle Support Services	Motor vehicle washing establishment	Car wash
Craft brewery or craft cidery	Bar	Brewery, craft	Storefront industry
		Brewery, retail	
Club	Indoor sales and service	Non-profit private club	Place of assembly
Commercial Recreation Use	Minor indoor entertainment	Entertainment centre, minor local	Amusement park
	Major indoor entertainment	Entertainment centre, major regional	Indoor entertainment facility
	Outdoor entertainment		Sports arena
Commercial School	Indoor sales and service	Commercial school	Instructional facility
Convenience Store	Indoor sales and service	Retail store	Retail store
Day Care Centre	Child care service	Child care centre	Day Care
Drive Thru Facility	Food and drink service	Drive-through service establishment	Restaurant
Dry Cleaning Establishment	Indoor sales and service	Personal services establishment	Personal service business
Equipment Sales and Rental	Indoor sales and service	Motor vehicle rental establishment	Heavy equipment and vehicle sales, rental, and servicing
		Motor vehicle sales establishment	
Financial Institution	Office	Business office	Bank
Fitness and Recreation Facilities	Minor indoor entertainment	Fitness centre, studio	Recreation and athletic facility
		Fitness centre, recreational	
Funeral Home	Indoor sales and service	Funeral establishment	Funeral home

Whitchurch-Stouffville	Edmonton, AB	Markham, ON	Ottawa, ON
Garden Supply Establishment	Outdoor sales and service	Retail store	Retail store
Gas Bar	Vehicle Support Services	Motor vehicle fueling station	Gas bar
Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	Hotel
Kennel	Kennel	Kennel	Kennel
Conference, Convention or Banquet Facility	Major indoor entertainment	Banquet facility	Place of assembly
Medical office	Health service	Business office	Medical facility
Office	Office	Business office	Office
Personal Service Establishment	Indoor sales and service	Personal services establishment	Personal service business
Place of Amusement	Minor indoor entertainment	Entertainment centre, minor local	Indoor entertainment facility
Plant Nursery	Outdoor sales and service	Agricultural use	Agricultural use
Private Club	Food and drink service	Non-profit private club	Place of assembly
Public Garage	Vehicle Support Services	Motor vehicle maintenance shop	Automobile service station
Public Storage Facility	Indoor self storage	Commercial storage facility	Warehouse
Recording Studio	Indoor sales and service	Film studio	Broadcasting and production studio
Recreational Vehicle Sales and Service	Outdoor sales and service	Motor vehicle sales establishment	Automobile dealership
Research and Development Establishment	Minor industrial	Industrial use	Research and development centre
Restaurant	Food and drink service	Restaurant	Restaurant
Retail Store	Indoor sales and service	Retail store	Retail store
Service Establishment	Indoor sales and service	Service and repair establishment	Personal service business
Shopping Centre	Indoor sales and service	Shopping centre	Retail store
Studio	Indoor sales and service	Artist studio	Artist studio
Take out Restaurant	Food and drink service	Restaurant	Restaurant
Veterinary Clinic	Indoor sales and service	Veterinary clinic	Animal care establishment
Total Uses in Framework: 45	Total Uses in Framework: 17	Total Uses in Framework: 35	Total Uses in Framework: 32

The results of this analysis show that the Town’s in-effect Zoning By-law is far more specific in the regulation of uses than other municipalities, which take a more general approach to defining land uses and businesses. The comparison of the total number of regulated uses shown in **Table 4-1** highlights the different approaches the three selected municipalities have opted for when crafting their use frameworks. **Figure 4-1** compares the total number of regulated uses in each observed municipality, showing Whitchurch-Stouffville at the top with 45 uses, and the City of Edmonton at the bottom with only 17 uses regulated.

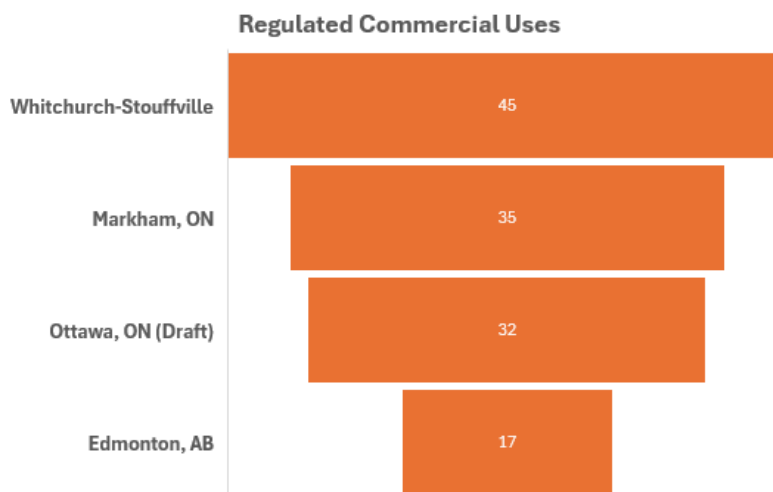


Figure 4-1: Comparison of regulated Use Frameworks Across Canadian Municipalities

The way these municipalities achieved reductions in their number of permitted uses was by introducing broader definitions for uses which encompass many of the previously regulated uses. One notable example is the City of Edmonton’s “Indoor sales and service”, which is defined as “a development where a business offers sales and services such as retail, personal service, or commercial school activities inside a building.” This innovative definition relies on form-based controls to ensure that uses do not result in disruption of neighbouring properties, and acknowledges that most retail or service businesses which are located entirely within a building are likely to have a similar level of impact. This single definition is equivalent to 18 of the Town’s regulated uses. Other innovative groupings from Edmonton include Outdoor sales and service, vehicle support services, and minor indoor entertainment.

The City of Markham is an example of a modernized commercial use framework which applies a traditional approach to form-based zoning. The 35 regulated uses are specific and narrowly defined, much like the Town’s in-effect Zoning By-law. However, the framework benefits from contemporary phrasing of certain uses, such as “motor vehicle maintenance shop” compared to “public garage”. Nonetheless, Markham does still combine certain retail uses for ease of regulation, such as convenience stores and garden supply establishments.

The new City of Ottawa Zoning By-law is an example of a balanced approach which advances toward a form-based regulatory framework while retaining a relatively detailed classification of land uses. This is primarily accomplished through the broadening of retail, restaurant, and personal service business definitions to include two or more of Whitchurch-Stouffville’s regulated uses.

Overall, all reviewed municipalities defined fewer uses than the Town, relying upon more general and flexible frameworks to capture more specific uses in broader categories. This may be due to context-specific adjustments made to the Town’s by-law over time, and each use will be carefully reviewed. The reductions in regulated uses result in reduced complexity when administering the Zoning By-law, and

could result in a reduction in minor variances or Zoning By-law Amendments to accommodate unique uses, which function similarly.

A more form-based approach with broader definitions may also add complications to the administration or legality of the Zoning By-law. A broader, more generalized zoning framework has the potential to add additional challenges for zoning administration staff, who will be required to navigate greater ambiguities through the broader definitions. There may also be some conflicts with the *Planning Act*, which has increasingly introduced Provincially mandated land use provisions, such as within designated Employment Areas. The *Planning Act* may also be interpreted to suggest that Zoning By-laws must be as specific as possible when regulating land uses, which can cast doubt upon the compliance of broader use categories with the legislation. This may also explain the higher-degree of form-based regulation in the Edmonton Zoning By-law than municipalities reviewed within Ontario.

4.2 Uses Outside of Existing Zoning Framework

A major flaw in the prescriptive land-use framework used by traditional zoning by-laws is that it cannot easily accommodate new or emerging business types that are not already listed in the use matrix. As part of the Zoning By-law review project, a contemporary zoning framework will be introduced which may address many of the deficits in the existing framework, though a targeted review will ensure as many uses are considered as is required to comprehensively regulate land uses within the Town. The jurisdictional scan found some examples of uses which are not particularly new, but could fall outside of the framework and frustrate the permitting process if they were contemplated within the Town:

- Nightclubs;
- Catering establishments;
- Standalone parking structures;
- Incubator/co-working spaces;
- Pop-up shops;
- Fitness facilities;
- Breweries, Cideries, and wineries;
- Non-traditional childcare facilities;
- Bakeries;
- Farmer's markets; and
- Museums.

In addition to uses identified in the jurisdictional scan, site-specific exception zones and minor variances were reviewed to identify the following uses which are either absent from the zoning framework, or were restricted in such a way that they blocked an application for their development. The following uses were

identified in Section 2.2.2 of this Paper, and were granted permission to be developed by the Committee of Adjustment following applications for minor variances:

- A dental hygienist office within a connected live/work townhouse unit; and
- A café within a local commercial zone that only permits convenience stores.

These two uses are regulated by the existing framework, but exemplified how rigidity in the zoning framework can frustrate the development process for uses which may otherwise be appropriate for the area.

Site-specific exception zones are another avenue for uses outside the framework to be approved for development. Uses which are frequently requested could identify gaps in the framework. The following uses were identified as part of the exception zone review in Section 2.2.3 of this Paper:

- Medical, health, and institutional uses were commonly specified in site specific zones, with the following uses having site-specific definitions included:
 - Dementia Adult Day Program; and
 - Living Classroom.
- Automotive, mechanical, and light industrial uses were frequently added, with the following unique uses being added:
 - Automotive campus use (Referring to vehicle sales and service in a specific corner of Stouffville);
 - Small engine sales, repair, and service; and
 - Automatic car wash, which is more specific than the defined car wash use.
- Hospitality and recreation uses were frequently added, with more specificity than the existing definitions:
 - Motels;
 - Movie theatre;
 - Retreat centres (site-specific definition)
 - Batting cage;
 - Miniature golf course; and
 - Recreational air supported structure (Air inflated structure).
- Retail and service commercial uses were frequently added, with the following specific uses existing outside of the existing framework:
 - Telecommunications store; and

- Liquor/beer retail outlet.
- The exception zones also added the following community and open space uses which do exist in the zoning framework, but speak to the need for greater flexibility within the commercial areas:
 - Private parks;
 - Campground;
 - Private camp;
 - Place of worship;
 - School; and
 - Library.

Emerging trends in commercial business activity should also be reviewed when updating the zoning framework for commercial areas. Many of the emerging commercial uses which may be outside of the current zoning framework involve the combination of existing uses which would be otherwise permitted in the zoning, but do not fit when combined. Examples of combined uses which have often had difficulty fitting into zoning frameworks include:

- Boardgame cafes, which combine retail, food service, and entertainment uses;
- Ghost kitchens, which blur the lines between restaurants, catering uses, and wholesale food production uses; and
- Craft breweries, which combine wholesale food production, retail, and restaurant or bar uses, and required an amendment to fit into the Town's Zoning By-law in 2020.

4.3 Implementation Options

A major flaw in the prescriptive land-use framework used by traditional zoning by-laws is that it cannot easily accommodate new or emerging business types that are not already listed in the use matrix. To accommodate new and creative businesses, while also addressing some of the existing shortcomings in the zoning framework, the Town could adopt one of three general strategies identified:

Option 1 | Maintain a prescriptive use framework - Add policies in the Official Plan to enable Zoning By-law Amendments to permit additional uses through site specific exception zoning as new uses arise.

Option 2 | Add a co-location clause – Add a provision to the Zoning By-law to permit uses which seek to combine one or more permitted use.

Option 3 | More forward form-based regulation - Adopt a more flexible and broad use regulation framework by defining uses broadly based on their external impacts, such as the City of Edmonton.

5. Area Specific Zoning Review

The 2025 Official Plan must be implemented through a new Zoning By-law. This section reviews the existing zoning of these areas and provides direction on how these areas should be incorporated into the new Zoning By-law. The review of each area includes a preliminary recommendation on implementation of the zones through pre-zoning or other tools. Further analysis on implementation will be conducted through the Zoning Strategy Report. This section concludes with a preliminary zone structure that would implement the Official Plan vision in all designations.

5.1 Stouffville GO MTSA

The Stouffville GO MTSA is one of the key focus areas for intensification within the Official Plan, and contains a series of policies designed to foster this area of the Town. This section reviews the policies in place for this area, and suggests some approaches which could be used to implement the vision of the Official Plan when creating the Zoning By-law.

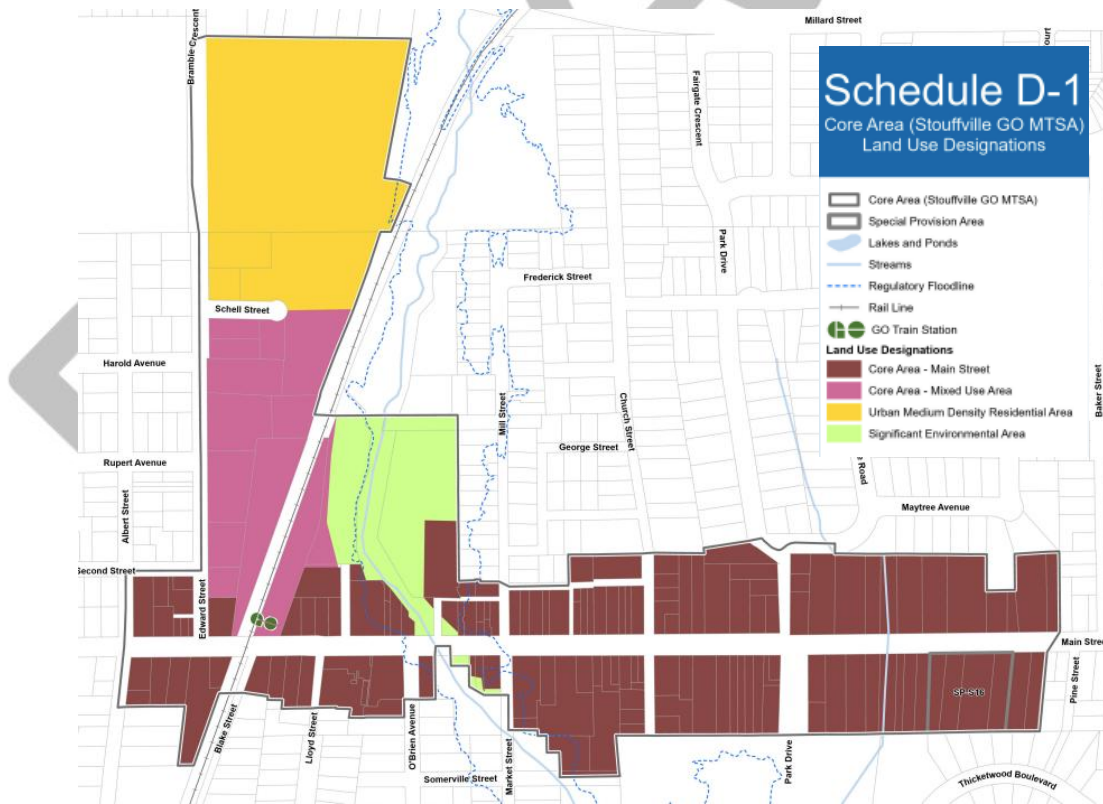


Figure 5-1: Stouffville GO MTSA Land Use Designations

As reviewed in Section 2 of this Paper and shown in **Figure 5-1**, the Stouffville GO MTSA is split into three land use designations by the Official Plan. The Core Area – Mixed Use Area designation contains a prime portion of the downtown area fronting Main Street, and is envisioned to become a high-density residential and commercial hub which is oriented towards the GO Transit station. The Core Area - Main Street designation, on the other hand, occupies the prime portion of the Town’s historic Main Street, and is envisioned to redevelop into a vibrant commercial corridor which respects the historic value of the streetscape. The Urban Medium Density Residential designation is located to the north of the mixed use area, and envisions a more intensive district with opportunities for increased building heights. This area is located between the higher-density core area and the lower-density existing neighbourhoods, and the built form regulations call for intentional transitions to be less impactful on the neighbouring areas.

5.1.1 Current Zoning

The majority of the Core Area is currently zoned Commercial Residential Mixed – Community Core Area (CM1). This zoning is relatively permissive compared to the rest of the Town, and allows a broad mix of commercial, residential, and institutional uses through mixed use development. The new vision for the area, as evidenced by the split designations, foresees a greater amount of density in the area, though it may also foresee a change in the uses permitted in the area. The permitted uses shown in the zones in Section 2 of this Paper are broad, though they do not rise to the level of intensity described in the Official Plan, and will need to be reviewed further.

5.1.1.1 Downtown Use Survey

The review of permitted uses in this MTSA is assisted by the results of a recent survey conducted by the Town. On June 5, 2024, Town Council directed staff to study the possibility of prohibiting office uses within the first storey of buildings along Main Street in downtown Stouffville. While the survey was aimed at the removal of office uses from the streetscape, the survey also queried residents on the types of uses they would prefer to see at the ground floor of businesses in the downtown area. Of the 123 responses to the question of what uses residents would like to see downtown, the following answers were the most common:

- **Food and Beverage establishments**, such as restaurants, cafes, bakeries, and pubs.
- **Retail uses**, such as book stores, clothing and shoe stores, gift stores, and thrift stores.
- **Entertainment uses**, such as board-game cafes, bowling alleys, arcades, escape rooms, and movie theatres.

Overall, responses to the survey were supportive of the Town’s direction to limit ground-floor office, and supported the creation of a more vibrant downtown area by allowing businesses which generated more foot traffic.

5.1.2 Built Form

The Stouffville GO MTSA area is the most urbanized area in the Town, defined by a clear and pedestrian scaled commercial strip along Main Street which is serviced by a major regional railway station. The built form of the Main Street consists of a variety of building typologies between one and three storeys, along with a single five-storey mid-rise development located at the intersection of Main Street and Lloyd Street. The top portion of the MTSA extends north along Edward Street, and includes the Stouffville GO transit station park & ride lot, as well as a number of commercial uses, including a hardware store and lumber yard.

The Stouffville GO MTSA is envisioned to have a minimum density of 150 people and jobs per hectare through Policy 2.2.2.5(a) of the Official Plan. With a total area of nearly 28 hectares, this means that this MTSA area is envisioned to house at least 4,200 people and jobs.

The Main Street area contains policies in section 6.4.6.3 which direct redevelopment to be between two and six storeys tall, with a minimum floor space index (FSI) of 1.0. The Plan places an emphasis on the streetscape along Main Street by prohibiting low-rise residential forms on properties which front onto Main Street. The existing CM1 zone permits mixed use buildings with an FSI between 1.0 and 3.0.

The Mixed Use area has policies which support even higher density, with buildings required to be between 2 and 10 storeys in height according to section 6.4.7.2 of the Official Plan. The policies also call for properties which front onto Edward Street (south of Schell Street) to be between 3 and 4 storeys tall. This designation calls for a minimum FSI of 2.5, which is far greater than the CM1's minimum FSI of 1.0.

The Urban Medium Density residential area calls for a general built form of up to 9 storeys tall, with a minimum FSI of 1.0. This FSI limit is matched by the CM1 zone, but the zone has a maximum height of 20 m which is significantly shorter than the 9 storeys permitted in the designation. This designation does not permit standalone commercial uses, though it does permit some commercial and office uses on the ground floor of a mixed use building. This designation is discussed further through both Discussion Paper 5: Residential Areas, and Discussion Paper 9: Mid and High-rise Buildings.

The current zoning for the Core Area MTSA is accompanied by a set of area-specific urban design guidelines which expand upon the Zoning By-law to provide detailed guidance to ensure that the downtown area develops with the highest possible standards for urban design. While these guidelines set a good precedent for urban design in the area, the introduction of this new built form framework through the Official Plan and eventually the Zoning By-law will require a comprehensive update to these guidelines.

5.1.3 Key Considerations for Implementation

The current zoning for the Stouffville GO MTSA touches on much of the vision for the area that is defined within the Official Plan. While the CM1 zone permits mixed use development and has some tools to protect and encourage a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, it does not rise to the level of intensification that is called for by the Official Plan. The CM1 zone's built form controls, permitted uses, and performance standards fall short of what the Official Plan describes as a vibrant, mixed use, and

pedestrian oriented main street. As the keystone urban area of the Town, implementation of the policies set out in the Official Plan for this MTSA requires careful consideration and public consultation to finalize a direction. The following key changes should be considered when developing new zoning for the Stouffville GO MTSA area:

- Introduce a new zoning framework which implements the increased density and provincial direction for the MTSA areas while respecting the differences in the three land use designations in the MTSA. The Official Plan contains a detailed vision for this area, and is accompanied by MTSA requirements set out in the *Planning Act*. Accordingly, it is recommended to implement the proposed zone structure through pre-zoning of the entire area.
- Require buildings to be mixed use, with an active commercial use on the ground floor in certain areas. The CM2 zone includes provisions which require a percentage of the lot area to be dedicated to residential uses, though this provision does not apply to the existing CM1 zone;
- Introduce use permissions for social gathering spaces, such as cultural venues, entertainment uses, and artisan spaces; and
- Add a co-location clause which states that two uses which are already permitted in the zone may co-locate within a single property or unit to allow for greater flexibility for emerging and innovative businesses.

5.2 Old Elm MTSA

The Old Elm MTSA consists of the area around the Old Elm GO Transit station, which was formerly called the Lincolnville GO Transit Station. This area is currently surrounded by agricultural uses, and is envisioned by the Official Plan to develop as a mixed use, transit supportive greenfield development in the vicinity of the GO Transit station. The Old Elm MTSA policies which exist in the Official Plan stem from a land use study commissioned by the Town to develop a land use plan for the Old Elm GO Transit station. The recommendations from this land use plan resulted in Official Plan Amendment 155,

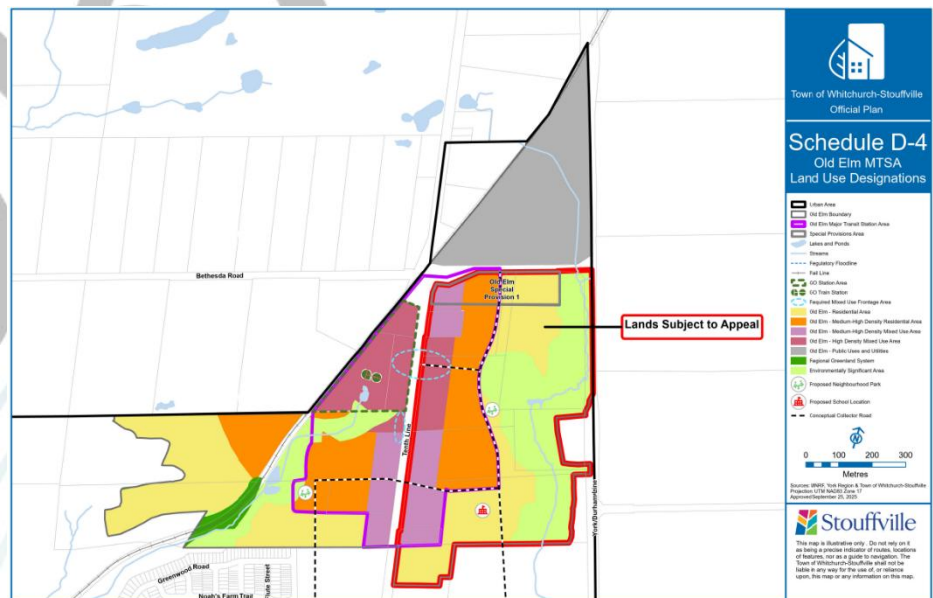


Figure 5-2: Old Elm MTSA Land Use Designations

which was approved by Town Council in 2023. This amendment was appealed by a group of property owners, and the amendment was partially approved by the OLT in March 2024, with the lands subject to the appeal (east of Tenth Line) deferred from the approval. The lands subject to this appeal are shown in **Figure 5-2**. This section reviews all policies, including the deferred sections as it relates to the introduction of new zoning, with the understanding that new analysis will need to be conducted once the appeal is resolved.

Figure 5-2 shows that the Old Elm MTSA consists of five land use designations which are unique to this area, as well as large portions of lands designated regional Greenland system and Environmentally Significant Area. The plan's vision for how this area will develop begins with an acknowledgement that the conceptual roads and boundaries shown in **Figure 5-2** are subject to change throughout the planning and design phase of this new neighbourhood. As this MTSA will be developed almost entirely as greenfield development, the Official Plan has identified four conceptual collector nodes which will divide the large agricultural parcels into more urban-style blocks.

The lands immediately surrounding the GO Transit station, as well as some lands across Tenth Line are designated as High-density Mixed Use Area, which permits offices, apartments, and mixed use buildings. Certain areas have been designated as having required ground-floor commercial along Tenth Line and one of the conceptual roads. The designation requires development to be between 5 to 12 storeys in height, and places a limit on commercial floor area of 1,500 square meters per unit. The designation is planned to achieve a density of 200 to 520 units per hectare.

The remaining lands along Tenth Line are designated Medium-High Density Mixed Use Area, which is a primarily residential designation with some permissions for commercial uses within mixed use buildings. This designation permits buildings between 3 and 10 storeys in height, and prohibits townhouses which front onto Tenth Line. This designation targets a density of 80 to 450 units per hectare.

The remainder of the MTSA lands, shown in purple on **Figure 5-2**, are designated Medium-High Density Residential Area, along with a portion of land to the west of the MTSA. This designation permits only residential uses and live-work units in buildings ranging from 2 to 10 storeys. Residential zoning is discussed further in Discussion Paper 5: Residential Areas.

Outside of the MTSA, most lands are designated Residential Area. This residential designation permits a suite of residential uses, ranging from small-lot single detached dwellings to apartments in buildings up to four storeys in height. Residential zoning is discussed further in Discussion Paper 5: Residential Areas.

5.2.1 Current Zoning

Much of the MTSA is currently zoned either institutional or agricultural, and therefore does not align with the Official Plan vision for the area. Implementation of the Official Plan vision for this MTSA will therefore involve pre-zoning the agricultural areas to match the intention of the plan. Pre-zoning as a concept is discussed in further detail in Discussion Paper 1 and should be consulted for more information.

As the Old Elm lands are currently used for agricultural uses and institutional uses related to the GO Transit station, significant infrastructure work must be completed before and private developments can occur. As noted in section 5.2.1 of this Paper, even the boundaries of the designations are subject to change based on the position of new collector roads proposed in the area. To prevent development which is premature, Section 36(1) of the *Planning Act* permits municipalities to pass a holding provision by-law. This by-law permits municipalities to apply a holding symbol “H” to a zone or designation, signalling that the affected provisions are only applicable upon the satisfaction of various conditions. Once these conditions are met, a by-law amendment can be passed to remove the holding symbol. The Town should therefore consider using holding symbols to indicate the intentions for the lands in the Zoning By-law, but delay construction until the infrastructure is completed.

5.2.2 Built Form



The built form envisioned by the Official Plan is accompanied by a series of prescriptive and measurable provisions which will be implemented through the Zoning By-law. These provisions are general, and relate mostly to building massing and positioning, which will be refined in greater detail through the Zoning By-law. The Old Elm land use study which informed the Official Plan vision was accompanied by a set of area-specific urban design guidelines, which will be reviewed and incorporated into the Town-wide urban design guidelines.

5.2.3 Key Considerations for Implementation

As mentioned above, the Old Elm MTSA and surrounding areas are an opportunity for the Town to provide detailed guidance and direction for a new neighbourhood in Stouffville which will see a large amount of density, and has the potential to become a high-density complete community which is unique from the rest of the Town. When developing the zoning which will be applied to this area, the Town should consider the following key changes:

- New zoning should be compatible and consistent with the zoning framework applied to the rest of the town while respecting the unique permissions in the Old Elm MTSA.
- The Zoning By-law should develop a framework to implement the vision of the Old Elm study through various avenues.

5.3 Gateway Mixed Use Area

The Gateway – Mixed Use Area is planned as a prominent, pedestrian-oriented entrance to the community that concentrates mid- and high-rise mixed-use buildings with active, non-residential uses at grade and residential or office uses above, in a compact and transit-supportive built form. Auto-oriented formats are deliberately excluded—drive-through facilities, gas bars, car washes, commercial self-storage, and automobile sales/service are prohibited—to preserve a continuous street edge and animated public realm. Development emphasizes active frontages and minimized surface parking, with urban design directions that frame the street and reinforce the district’s gateway role. The Gateway Mixed Use Area designation is shown on **Figure 5-3**.

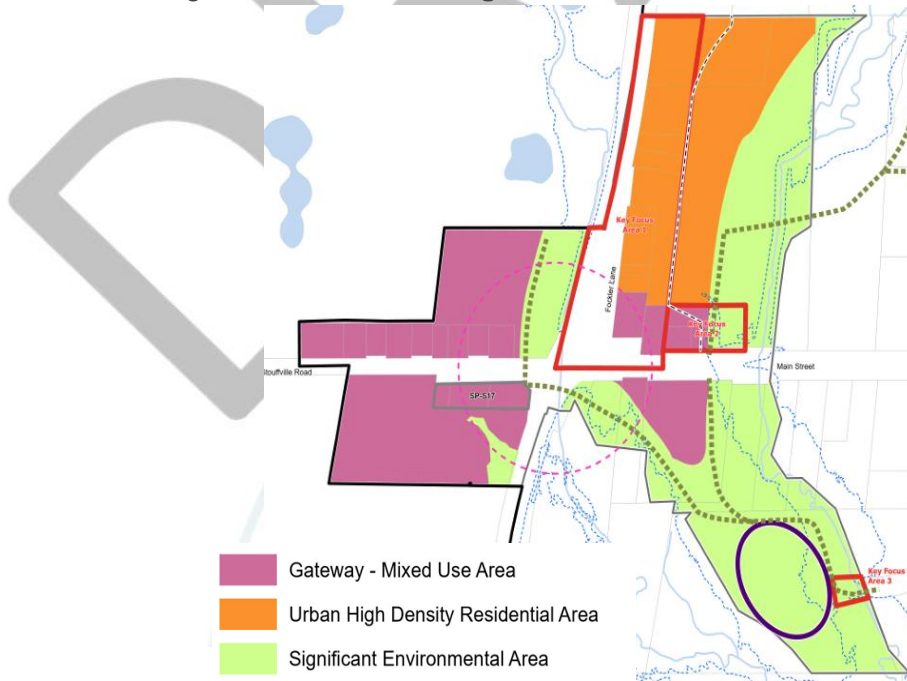


Figure 5-3: Land Use Designations for the Gateway area of Stouffville

5.3.1 Current Zoning

As discussed in Section 3.2 of this Paper, only around 36% of the Gateway Mixed Use Area designation currently has commercial zoning applied under the in-effect Zoning By-law. The most significant zone in this area is the Commercial Residential Mixed – Western Approach (CM2) zone. While this zone is the most permissive of all existing zones, it does not capture the nuanced vision for the area’s future built form. Much of the lands with this designation applied are currently undeveloped farmland, representing an opportunity for the Town to usher in an entirely new context for this area through greenfield development. This will place a greater emphasis on the policies within the Official Plan, as they will need thorough implementation to realize the vision through zoning and other avenues of development regulation.

5.3.2 Built Form

The built form policies require a compact, pedestrian-oriented mixed-use form with active non-residential at grade and upper-storey residential/office, reinforced by directions to minimize surface parking and frame streets with buildings; auto-oriented formats are expressly prohibited, including drive-throughs, gas bars, car washes, commercial self-storage, and automobile sales/service, to maintain the functional street edge and transit-supportive character. Density within the designation shall achieve an FSI of around 2.5, through mid- and high-rise buildings between 5 and 20 storeys in height.

5.3.3 Key Considerations for Implementation

The Gateway Mixed Use designation contains policies which provide insights for what kind of zoning would be appropriate for the area. The designation includes specific policies aimed preventing large-scale retail uses, including the requirement for developments which would add more than 30,000 square metres of floor area to undergo a retail impact analysis study. The Official Plan also recognizes the greenfield conditions of this designation, and includes policies aimed to supporting intentional development through coordinated block plans to encourage lot assembly. As such, the following insights have been recognized:

- Pre-zoning may not be appropriate or effective for this area, as the Official Plan encourages redevelopment through block plans and requires a variety of studies and cost-sharing agreements before development may be permitted. If pre-zoning was applied, holding conditions should be considered;
- The Official Plan requires high-rise developments to be located alongside arterial roads or highways, which could require two zones to implement; and
- Zoning applied should vary permitted heights according to surrounding land uses to encourage transitions between higher and lower density areas.

5.4 Highway 48 Mixed Use Area

The Highway 48 – Mixed Use Area is envisioned as a high-intensity, walkable main street with non-residential uses required at grade on Highway 48 and Hoover Park Drive, residential above, and a consistent 3- to 4-storey streetwall with taller elements stepping back. The built form targets mid- and high-rise intensity (generally 3 to 20 storeys where appropriate) with a minimum mixed-use FSI of 2.5 and clear siting/transition standards to protect adjacent areas. To maintain a pedestrian-first character, the area prohibits drive-throughs, commercial self-storage, gas bars, car washes, and stand-alone automobile sales/service. The Highway 48 Mixed Use Area is shown in **Figure 5-4**.

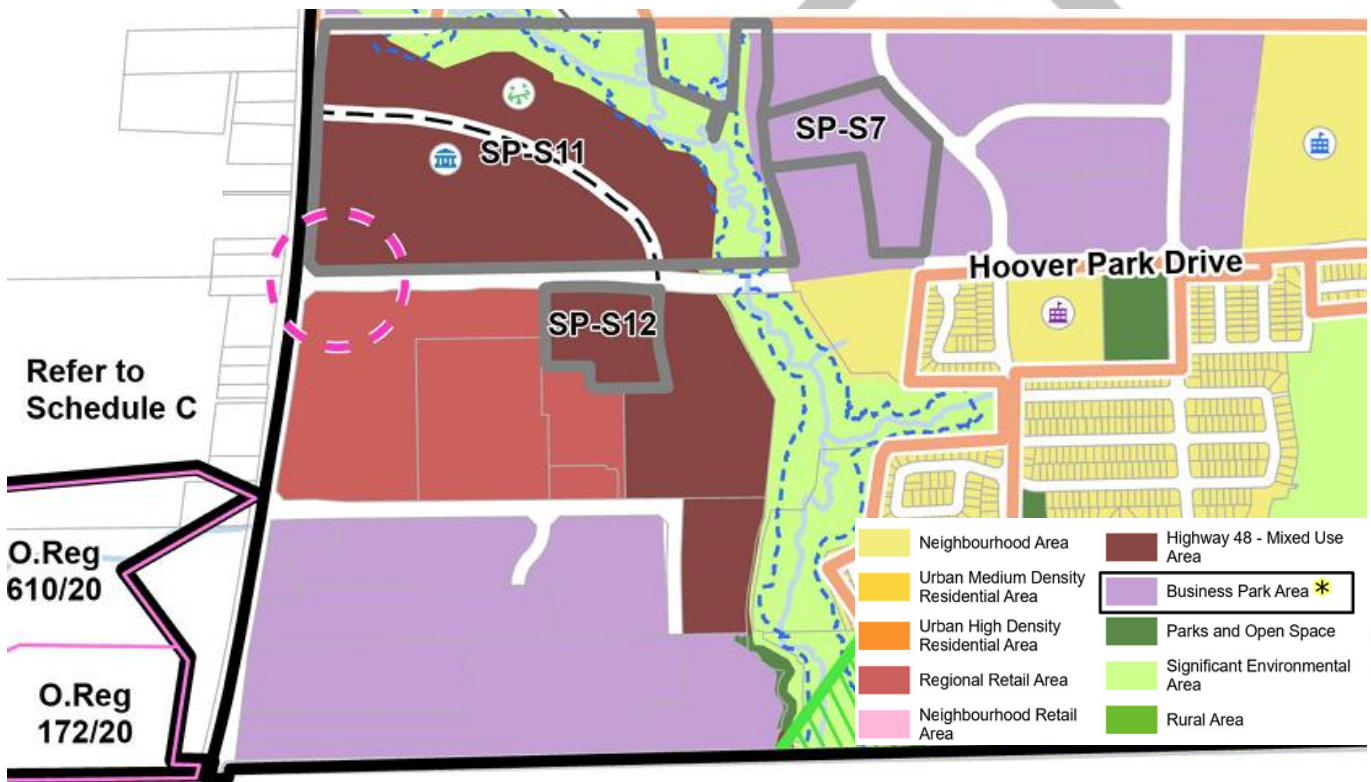


Figure 5-4: Land Use Designations in southwest Stouffville

5.4.1 Current Zoning

As reviewed in Section 2.1.1.2 of this Paper, much of the lands in the Highway 48 Mixed Use Area are not developed, and surround an existing low-density commercial power centre. The zoning for this area reflects a different vision than what the Official Plan calls for, with the vast majority of this area being zoned for employment or light industrial uses. A comprehensive change in zoning would be required to implement the Official Plan in this area.

5.4.2 Built Form

This designation includes policies which state that developments must be in the form of mixed-use buildings with non-residential ground floors on Highway 48 and Hoover Park Drive. These buildings must have a 3 to 4-storey streetwall with stepped-back upper storeys, and meet minimum intensity targets of 2.5 FSI for mid/high-rise forms and 1.0 FSI for low-rise buildings. Stand-alone one-storey commercial buildings are limited to interior blocks, and structured/underground parking structures are encouraged. Like many of the other mixed use areas, drive-thrus, self-storage, gas bars, car washes, and stand-alone auto sales/service are prohibited.

5.4.3 Key Considerations for Implementation

The considerations for the Highway 48 Mixed Use Area are similar to those in the Gateway Mixed Use Area:

- Pre-zoning may not be appropriate or effective for this area, as the Official Plan encourages redevelopment through block plans as set out in Section 7.3 of the Official Plan. If pre-zoning is applied, a holding zone is recommended to help implement the Official Plan's criteria;
- The Official Plan requires high-rise developments to be located alongside arterial roads or highways, which could require a separate zone or criteria to implement; and
- Zoning applied should vary permitted heights according to surrounding land uses to encourage transitions between higher and lower density areas.

5.5 Regional Retail Area

The Regional Retail Area is a regional serving commercial node that currently contains a low-density power centre that contains major retail and restaurant uses. The area is envisioned to retain its function as a major commercial node while introducing higher-density residential uses as well. To maintain the area's function and urban character, the Official Plan prohibits gas bars, automobile service centres, car washes, auto/RV sales, and self-storage, and requires commercial at grade on Highway 48/Hoover Park with no standalone residential forms. The designation's built form is generally 3 to 20 storeys with a three to four-storey streetwall, minimum mixed use intensity, strong pedestrian connections, and structured parking where feasible. The Regional Retail Area designation is shown on **Figure 5-4**.

5.5.1 Current Zoning

This entire area is zoned General Commercial, reflecting its existing function as a commercial power-node. The CG zone permits many of the same uses as the new Official Plan designation, with the notable exception of residential uses. The CG zone only permits a single dwelling unit above a commercial use, while the new vision would see up to 20 storeys of residential in a mixed use building.

5.5.2 Built Form

The designation's policies require commercial at grade on Highway 48/Hoover Park and do not permit stand-alone residential, delivering 3–20-storey envelopes at roughly 2.5 FSI with 3 to 4-storey streetwalls and stepped upper elements. Landmark buildings are directed at gateway corners, and structured parking is encouraged to increase land efficiency. Similar to the Gateway Mixed Use Area, a retail impact analysis is required for developments which aim to add more than 30,000 m² of leasable area, ensuring network, placemaking, and retail hierarchy objectives are met. While drive-thru restaurants are permitted, gas bars, auto service centres, car washes, auto/RV sales, and commercial self-storage are prohibited, maintaining pedestrian priority and curating the use mix.

5.5.3 Key Considerations for Implementation

Zoning for the Regional Retail Area should take the following considerations into account:

- This area is largely built up, and contains uses which support the entire Town and parts of the region. Redevelopment will likely be on a longer time horizon;
- Height limits are not applied uniformly, and may require different zoning or height precincts to align with the Official Plan; and
- The designation may require redevelopment through block plans as set out in Section 7.3 of the Official Plan, and is recommended to be pre-zoned according to the preliminary zone structure with some types of development requiring additional criteria.

5.6 Neighbourhood Retail Area

The Neighbourhood Retail Area is intended to provide small-scale, neighbourhood-serving commercial in two- to five-storey buildings with commercial at grade and the potential for residential above. Like many other designations, this area is not currently developed, and contains policies to help guide future development. The Neighbourhood Retail Area designation is shown in **Figure 5-5**.

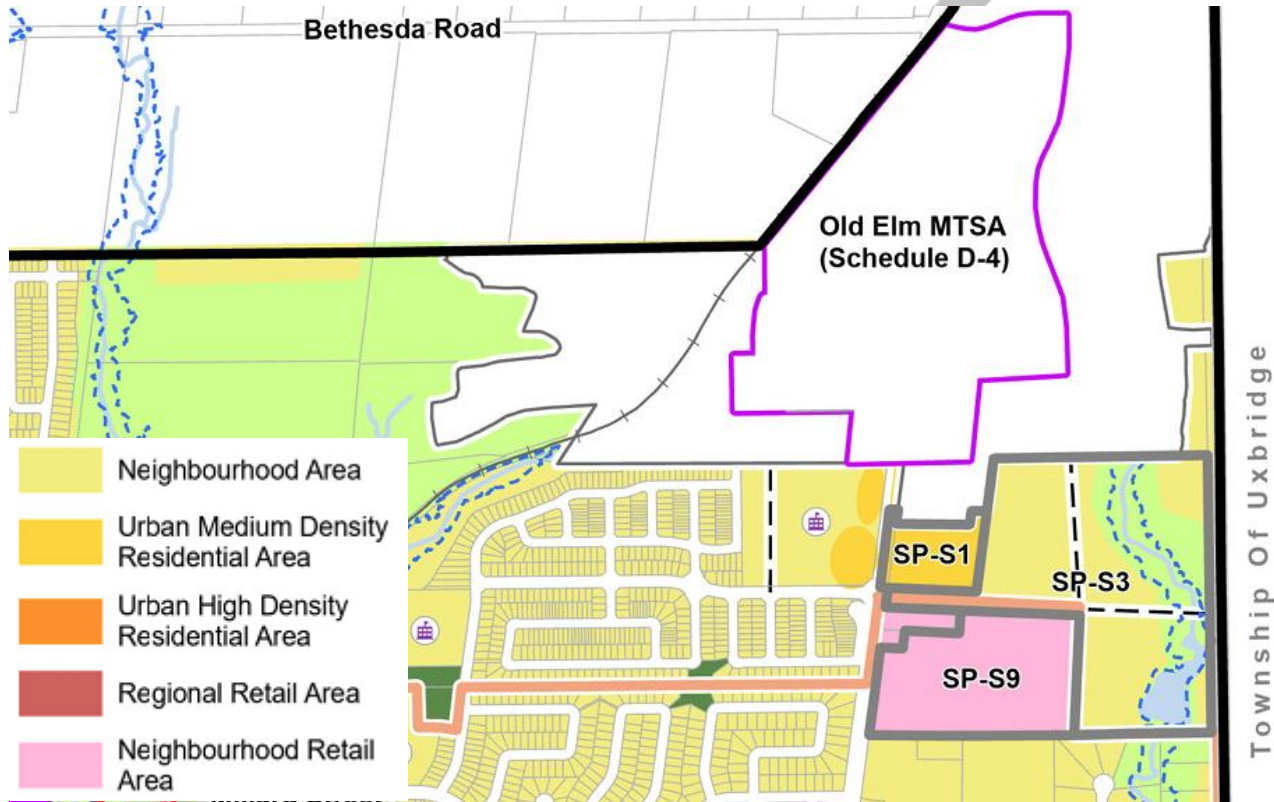


Figure 5-5: Land Use Designations in northeastern Stouffville

5.6.1 Current Zoning

The current zoning for this designation is split mainly between the New Residential 4, General Commercial, and New Residential 2 zones. Consideration must be made for the fact that this area is already pre-zoned for development, which would limit options to apply holding symbols to the area. As the designation is aimed at mixed use commercial development it is unlikely that implementing zoning will reduce the permissions held by current landowners.

5.6.2 Built Form

Within the designation, development policies establish expected heights of 2 to 4 storeys with a maximum of 5 storeys. Buildings are required to have commercial uses at grade with potential residential above, and provide a continuous streetwall with upper-storey setbacks. The designation protects local

scale and walkability by prohibiting drive-through restaurants, commercial self-storage, gas bars, car washes, auto sales/service, and outside storage/display, and by capping any single retail use at roughly 3,950 m² GFA. The designation also required screened/loading and parking arrangements that avoid front-yard locations and mitigate impacts to adjacent residential uses.

5.6.3 Key Considerations for Implementation

The following insights have been identified, and should be considered when developing new zoning for this area:

- This designation is subject to Special Provision SP-29, which states that the designation may be expanded or contracted through a comprehensive concept plan without an amendment to the Official Plan;
- The presence of existing zoning permissions should be considered when developing new zoning; and
- The built form provisions in the Official Plan are very prescriptive. It is therefore recommended to create unique zone for this area, and to apply it through pre-zoning.

5.7 Western Approach – Mixed Use Area

The Western Approach – Mixed Use Area is just west of the Core Area, and contains a mixture of commercial, employment, residential and institutional uses which are integral to the function of the Community of Stouffville. The Official Plan has envisioned this area to transform into a more intense mixed use corridor which supports all existing uses while transforming into a more pedestrian friendly environment. The Land Use designations are shown in **Figure 5-6**.



Figure 5-6: Land Use designations in the Western Approach Area

5.7.1 Current Zoning

The current zoning for this area contains a wide spread of zones, though 85% of the land is zoned CM2 – Commercial Residential Mixed – Western Approach. As discussed in Section 2.2.1 of this Paper, the CM2 zone is the most permissive zone in the in-effect Zoning By-law, and broadly aligns with the mixed use vision within the Official Plan. Key differences between these zones exist in the built form regulations, which do not contain the detailed urban design interventions called for in the Official Plan. The CM2 zone is also limited in the heights permitted for buildings, which are capped at 20 m in contrast to the 20 storey heights envisioned in certain locations in the Official Plan. The CM2 zone also has a lower permitted FSI, allowing between 0.5 and 1.0, compared to the envisioned minimum FSI of 1.5.

5.7.2 Built Form

The corridor applies height limits of 2 to 20 storeys west of Sandiford Drive and up to 12 storeys east (subject to area specific height restrictions), with a minimum 1.5 FSI and mandatory at-grade commercial/retail/office on Main Street. Stand-alone residential uses are not permitted on Main Street to protect activation, instead requiring ground floor commercial, office or institutional uses. Development policies require a 3 to 4-storey streetwall, stepbacks for taller elements, and structured parking either behind or within building bases, including provisions to demonstrate future structuring where initial phases are constrained. Any lost retail GFA must be replaced within the designation, maintaining retail capacity. Restaurant drive-throughs are only contemplated where not adjacent to residential and must be designed to suppress visual and traffic impacts; Block Plans may be required for multi-site coordination.

5.7.3 Key Considerations for Implementation

When developing the zoning for this designation, the following key considerations have been identified:

- The Official Plan requires transitions be built into the Zoning By-law between the taller buildings and the surrounding Neighbourhood areas. This implies that height limits are not applied uniformly, and may require different zoning or height precincts to align with the Official Plan;
- This area is already built up, and contains uses which support the entire Town and parts of the region. Redevelopment will likely be on a longer time horizon; and
- The Official Plan encourages the use of block plans to coordinate redevelopment of larger parcels, though does not require them. Pre-zoning would be an option for this area, though additional criteria may be required.

5.8 Vandorf Mixed Use Area

As mentioned in Section 2.1.2 of this Paper, the Vandorf Mixed Use Area designation is intended to develop as a “main street” for the Hamlet, and will contain a broad range of uses that support the

residents of the Hamlet and the surrounding employment uses. The Mixed Use Area designation is shown below in **Figure 5-7**.



Figure 5-7: Land Use Designations in central Vandorf

5.8.1 Current Zoning

The vast majority of the lands in the Vandorf Mixed Use Area are currently zoned Development Reserve. This is due to the 2004 Official Plan’s tight control of the Hamlet’s land uses, which designated the majority of the Hamlet for future development. The 2025 Official Plan sought to release those development holds, and opened up a significant portion of Woodbine Avenue up for development. Currently, only 2% of this designation contains commercial zoning.

5.8.2 Built Form

The Vandorf Mixed Use Area envisions a low-rise (2 to 4 storeys) main-street format with buildings brought close to the street line, front-yard parking minimized, and gateway-quality design emphasized. Where the mixed-use frontage abuts employment lands, buffers and setbacks are required to manage interface conditions. Open storage of vehicles, machinery, or equipment is not permitted, preserving main-street character and hamlet-scale operations. The combined standards ensure compatible intensification without compromising the Hamlet's rural context.

5.8.3 Key Considerations

When developing the zoning for this designation, the following key considerations have been identified:

- Schedule G of the Official Plan, which contains the extent of the lands which the designation is applied to, has been deferred from approval and does not currently form part of the Official Plan. Discussion Paper 4: Employment Areas speaks to the reasoning for the deferral and the pathway towards approval. At present, this designation cannot be implemented through the Zoning By-law. Nonetheless, once the deferral is resolved, this area could be implemented through pre-zoning; and
- The designation required appropriate screening and buffering from the neighbouring Employment Areas. When developing the setbacks and screening requirements for this zone, the "D-Series" environmental land use planning guides published by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks should be consulted.
- Without municipal water or wastewater services in the Hamlet, water restrictions may need to be introduced to prevent the construction of uses that could be inappropriate for private services.

5.9 Gormley General Commercial Area

As mentioned in Section 2.1.2.2 of this Paper, the Gormley General Commercial Area designation was deferred from the Official Plan's approval due to the timing of the publication of the PPS, 2024. Accordingly, this designation does not form a part of the Official Plan until such a time that the Town implements an Official Plan amendment to bring the Employment Areas designations into alignment with the PPS, 2024. This process is further documented in Discussion Paper 4: Employment Areas.

The General Commercial Area designation is meant to provide lands for commercial businesses that serve the residents and employment uses in the Hamlet of Gormley. The Official Plan recognizes the existing context of the Hamlet, and envisions a commercial-only designation which will continue to serve the community, but also act as a buffer between the main roads in the Hamlet and the employment uses. The General Commercial Area designations is shown in **Figure 5-8**.



Figure 5-8: Land Use Designations in Gormley

5.9.1 Current Zoning

The current zoning in the Gormley Commercial Area designation is made up almost entirely by the General Commercial (CG) zone. The CG zone implements this status-quo vision almost entirely, though there is an opportunity to further align the zoning with the newer built form policies in the Official Plan.

5.9.2 Built Form

This designation delivers hamlet-scale, low-rise commercial with facades near the front lot line, landscaped street edges, and rear/screened loading, subject to explicit compatibility and individual or communal systems consistent with ORMCP and servicing policies. The designation permits most commercial uses, including retail, restaurants, personal services, offices/clinics, financial institutions, and community facilities. The Official Plan permits drive-thrus, automotive sales/repair, gas bars, car washes, and storage/warehousing to reflect the needs of the Hamlet. The development policies will help ensure that new proposals address access, screening, buffering, and fit-to-context prior to approval.

5.9.3 Key Considerations for Implementation

Similar to the Vandorf Mixed Use Area designation, the following key considerations have been identified:

- Schedule G of the Official Plan, which contains the extent of the lands which the designation is applied to, has been deferred from approval and does not currently form part of the Official Plan. Discussion Paper 4: Employment Areas speaks to the reasoning for the deferral and the pathway towards approval. At present, this designation cannot be implemented through the Zoning By-law. Nonetheless, once the deferral is resolved, this area could be implemented through pre-zoning; and
- The designation requires appropriate screening and buffering from the neighbouring Employment Areas. When developing the setbacks and screening requirements for this zone, the “D-Series” environmental land use planning guides published by the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks should be consulted.

5.10 Bloomington Hamlet Area

The Bloomington Hamlet Area is applied to the entire rural settlement, and is meant to provide general permission for all uses that could be found in the Hamlet. Permitted uses are broad, though intended to be small-scale and locally serving. This includes a variety of commercial, industrial, and institutional uses which are limited to roads with frontage onto arterial roads.

5.10.1 Current Zoning

As the designation applies to the entire settlement, the analysis included in **Appendix B** is less useful than other designations, as it shows the zoning applied to the entire Hamlet. Nonetheless, the analysis reveals that the General Commercial zone is applied to two parcels within the Hamlet. As with the General Commercial Area designation in Gormley, the intention within the Official Plan is to maintain standalone commercial uses along designated streets.

5.10.2 Built Form

Growth is limited to compatible infill and redevelopment on individual on-site water and sewage services, with commercial uses restricted to arterial frontages and a minimum lot area of roughly 0.4 ha (with specified, study-supported exceptions). Built form must retain rural views and low-rise character, applying siting and scale controls to maintain compatibility with surrounding rural/agricultural lands. The servicing framework functions as a binding constraint, requiring lots and uses to demonstrate feasibility under private-servicing conditions. These measures collectively prevent urban encroachment while allowing modest, context-appropriate development.

5.10.3 Key Implementation Insights

While the implementation of new zoning in this designation likely will not require large reforms, the following items must be considered when developing the new zoning framework:

- The Hamlet Area allows for a more flexible zoning framework that permit a wider range of uses, though the level of intensification should be informed through public consultation;
- The application of this zone should be limited to existing commercial properties, and should be given the option to expand through Zoning By-law Amendment processes; and
- The limited scope of application would likely not justify a Bloomington-specific zone. Instead, it is recommended to retain a General Commercial zone which may be augmented through Hamlet-specific provisions.

5.11 Ballantrae & Musselman's Lake

Section 2.1.3 of this Paper elaborates on the history behind the Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake and Environs secondary plan. As the land use designations in the areas subject to the Ballantrae - Musselman's Lake and Environs secondary plan were only implemented in January 2025, and were accompanied by a Zoning By-law amendment, these areas are in alignment with their land use designations. When updating the zoning for these areas, the project team must take the existing designations in the secondary plan into account, though there is opportunity to introduce a modernized zone for the area nonetheless.

5.12 Preliminary Zone Structure

Table 5-1 proposes a preliminary zone structure which attempts to harmonize all of the commercial and mixed use designations into a logical approach that organizes similar visions into a single zone with consistent naming across the framework. This preliminary framework was developed using the preceding discussions and analysis, as well as analysis of permitted uses in the Official Plan designations in **Appendix C**. Each commercial zone is organized according to the general breadth of permitted uses described in the land use designations of the Official Plan, with the intention that built form provisions will be incorporated through zone-specific provisions and overlay maps.

The approach to the zone structure described in **Table 5-1** is preliminary, and may be subject to change through further consultation with residents and Town staff. The preliminary zoning structure also does not consider implementation of the zones which are noted in Section 5.1 through 5.10 of this Paper, and will be expanded upon in the Zoning Strategy Report.

Table 5-1: Preliminary Commercial/Mixed Use Zone Structure

Land Use Designation	Potential Commercial Zone	Description
Core Area – Main Street	CA - Core Area	The Core Area zone is applied to all areas within the MTSAs of the Town, and permits a wide range of commercial, institutional, and residential uses with strict urban design provisions and built forms consistent with pedestrian oriented urban centres. This zone will likely follow the broad vision of the CM1 or CM2 zone.
Core Area – Mixed Use Area		
Old Elm – High Density Mixed Use Area		
Old Elm – Medium-High Density Mixed Use Area		
Neighbourhood Retail Area		
Ballantrae – Commercial/Mixed Use Area	CMB – Commercial/Mixed Ballantrae (Refreshed existing zone)	The CMB zone should be retained, due to the relative age of the enabling policies in the Ballantrae-Musselman’s Lake & Environs secondary plan. Minor updates will be made to incorporate this zone into the updated framework.
Gormley – General Commercial Area	HC – Hamlet Commercial	The Hamlet Commercial Zone is a refreshed General Commercial Zone and is applied to the Hamlet of Gormley where residential intensification is envisioned to be limited, and separation of commercial and residential uses is required.
Bloomington – Hamlet Area	LC – Local Commercial	The limited commercial demand within the Hamlet of Bloomington do not necessitate a standalone zone, and could likely be served by a local commercial zone.
Western Approach – Mixed Use Area	MU-1 – Mixed Use 1	The MU-1 Zone is intended to implement the new vision for the major mixed use areas in the western portion of Stouffville.
Gateway – Mixed Use Area		
Highway 48 – Mixed Use Area		
Regional Retail Area	MU-2 – Mixed Use 2 (Area Specific)	The MU-2 Zone is intended to implement the unique permitted uses within the Regional Retail Area.

Land Use Designation	Potential Commercial Zone	Description
Vandorf – Mixed Use Area	MU-H – Mixed Use Hamlet	The MU-H zone is intended to implement a mixed use commercial and residential zoning framework for Hamlet areas that have enabling policy. This is only the case in Vandorf.

DRAFT

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Through the new Official Plan, the Town has introduced a major shift in the commercial zoning framework by adding the direction to allow residential uses in almost all commercial areas through a mixed use approach. While the in-effect Zoning By-law does contain some mixed use zones, the extent to which mixed use permissions have been expanded in the Official Plan require a fulsome review of the zoning framework, including the creation of new zones.

This Discussion Paper has conducted a review of all aspects of the existing zoning, and compared the existing zoning to the Official Plan's Land Use Designations to identify which areas require the greatest change. Many of the commercial designations provide a detailed list of permitted uses which are largely similar, with the potential for a simplified zoning framework to support implementation of the Official Plan without the creation of unique zones for each designation. There is also potential for the Town to reduce the number of zones required by introducing a broader, more flexible permitted use regulation framework. This section provides a series of recommendations, and options to implement them when developing the new Zoning By-law. These recommendations are presented in **Table 6-1**, and are subject to further consultation and input, and will be elaborated upon in the Zoning Strategy Report.

Table 6-1: Recommendation and Options for Implementation

Recommendation	Implementation Options
1. Introduce a new zoning framework for mixed use and commercial areas	It is recommended that the Town adopt a new zoning framework for commercial areas which recognize the shift towards a greater level of commercial and residential intensity in the Town.
2. Modernize use permission framework to support flexibility and remove barriers for businesses	It is recommended that a consolidated review of the permitted use framework should be undertaken to modernize the zoning by removing outdated uses and incorporating new and emerging activities. The updated framework should group uses by broader categories to reduce unnecessary granularity and increase flexibility in regulating land uses.
3. Permit multiple uses to operate within a single establishment through General Provisions	In addition to increased flexibility within the use framework, it is recommended that the new Zoning By-law introduce a co-location provision that enables dual-use or hybrid enterprises to operate within a single property or unit. In addition, the range of activities permitted through general provisions, such as home occupations, additional dwelling units, and group homes, should be expanded to provide greater adaptability and responsiveness to

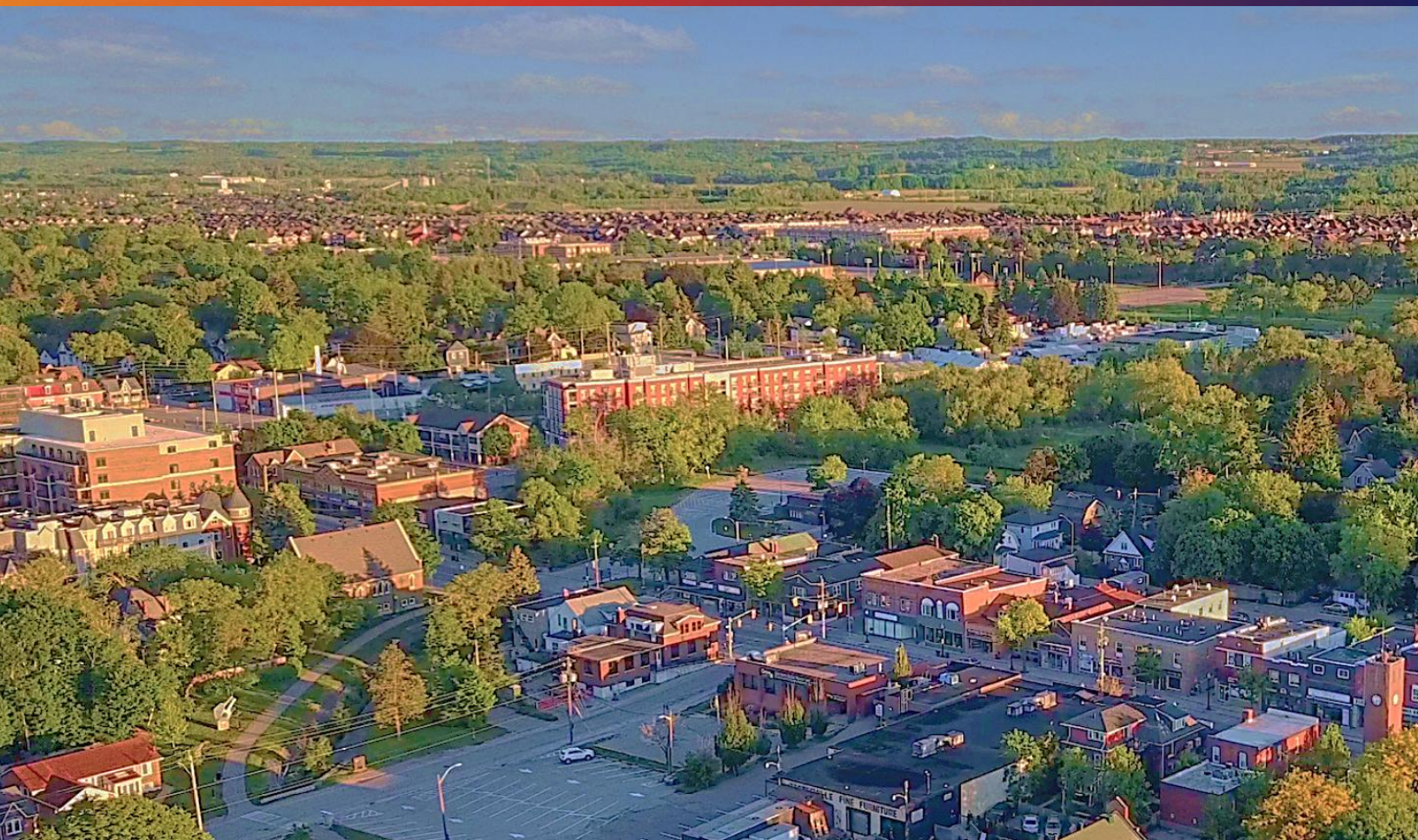
Recommendation	Implementation Options
	contemporary housing and economic needs in the mixed use areas.
4. Introduce expanded built form regulation through zoning	<p>The Official Plan includes many urban design policies which aim to create complete, walkable, and human scaled communities within the Town. To implement these policies, it is recommended that the Zoning By-law introduce new regulatory tools to prescribe greater urban design in the mixed use areas, such as active frontage areas, built-to lines, streetwall heights, and tower separation distances.</p>
5. Incorporate overlay-based built form regulations	<p>To simplify the zoning framework and allow for greater area-specific interventions in built form, certain provisions related to built form should be regulated through schedules, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Height; ■ FSI; ■ Yard setbacks; ■ Active frontage areas; and ■ Screening/buffering/setbacks between incompatible uses.
6. Introduce residential use permissions through a mixed use zoning framework	<p>The 2025 Official Plan has introduced a new framework for commercial areas which sees the blending of two previously separate functions into more urban environments. This has resulted in nearly all commercial designations being expanded to include residential permissions. It is recommended to create a general mixed use zone which corresponds with a single set of permitted uses that can be applied to all mixed use areas, with area-specific overlay zoning to provide greater direction on topics such as height, setbacks, and other built form regulations.</p>
7. Implement the Old Elm MTSA policies	<p>The Old Elm MTSA was designed through a detailed planning process, and some lands west of Tenth Line have been pre-zoned for development. While the Official Plan contains policies which prevent development without the completion of further studies, new zoning should be applied to prevent development which is incompatible with the Official Plan’s vision for the area. It is recommended that a framework for development be implemented, though pre-zoning is likely not the preferred approach.</p>
8. Apply holding symbols to key greenfield mixed use areas	<p>Many of the mixed use designations are applied to greenfield areas with the intention of development only being permitted following the completion of comprehensive planning, environmental, and economic studies. It is therefore recommended that a holding symbol be applied to areas within Old Elm, the Gateway Mixed Use Area, and the Highway 48 Mixed Use Area.</p>

Recommendation	Implementation Options
9. Maintain commercial-only zoning for Gormley	While most commercial areas in the Town have been given a mixed use vision by the Official Plan, the Gormley Commercial Area designation remains as a traditional commercial designation. It is recommended that this area retain a traditional, commercial only zone.
10. Retain the commercial zoning within Ballantrae	The secondary planning process approved in January 2025 introduced new zoning for commercial areas in Ballantrae through the CMB zone, and the 2025 Official Plan did not change the vision for this area. It is therefore recommended to retain the CMB zone, albeit refreshed through the new zoning framework.
11. Incorporate common variances and exception zones into zoning to reduce administrative burden	It is recommended that the variances noted in this Discussion Paper be reviewed to assess potential updates to the mixed use and commercial zone provisions during the completion of the Draft Zoning By-law. The site-specific zones will need to be reviewed and integrated into the new zone structure.
12. Review zoning requirements for Live/Work units	The Town's existing regulations for Live/Work units may be too restrictive on the commercial components, resulting in poor performance. It is recommended that the Town review expanding the commercial gross floor area limits for Live/Work units.



Appendices

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Appendix A – Commercial Zones and Permitted Uses in the Zoning By-law

Appendix A contains the use matrix found in the current Zoning By-law, and is included for convenience.

Uses	CG	CL	CV	CM1	CM2	CMB	CR
Animal Grooming Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Apartment Building				✓	✓		
Assembly Hall	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Automotive Sales and Service Uses	✓						
Automotive Service Station	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Bed and Breakfast Establishment					✓	✓	
Business Services				✓	✓	✓	
Campgrounds							✓(7)
Car Wash	✓(3)		✓(3)				
Club	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Combined Live Work Use	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Connected Live Work Use	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Commercial Recreation Use				✓	✓	✓	✓
Commercial School				✓	✓	✓	
Conference, Convention or Banquet Facility					✓		
Convenience Store	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Day Care Centre		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Drive Thru Facility	✓(5)		✓(5)		✓(5)	✓(5)	
Dry Cleaning Establishment			✓	✓	✓		
Dwelling Unit above a Commercial Use	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Equipment Sales and Rental	✓						
Existing Buildings and Structures						✓(6)	
Financial Institution	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Fitness and Recreation Facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Funeral Home	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Garden Supply Establishment	✓				✓		
Gas Bar	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Golf Course							✓
Golf Driving Range							✓
Group Home	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Hotel				✓	✓	✓	

Uses	CG	CL	CV	CM1	CM2	CMB	CR
Library			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Long Term Care Facility				✓	✓		
Manufacturing, or Assembling or Processing					✓(2)		
Office	✓	✓	✓(1)	✓	✓	✓	
Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Personal Service Establishment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Place of Amusement	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Place of Worship				✓(8)			
Private Camp							✓(7)
Private Park							✓(7)
Public Garage	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Restaurant	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Retail Store	✓(3)	✓(3)	✓(3)	✓(3)	✓(3)	✓(3)	
School				✓	✓	✓	
Senior Citizens' Home				✓	✓		
Service Establishment	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Shopping Centre	✓	✓	✓		✓		
Stacked Townhouse Dwelling					✓		
Street Townhouse Dwelling					✓		
Studio	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Take out Restaurant	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Townhouse Dwelling					✓		
Veterinary Clinic	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Wholesale Sales and Distribution					✓		

Appendix B – Zoning Within Commercial Land Use Designations

Appendix B 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
Gateway Mixed Use Area - Stouffville	7.36	73643.62	100%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Western Approach	2.26	22581.05	31%
Development Reserve	2.16243	21624.3927	
Oak Ridges Moraine - Countryside	9	4	29%
	2.12	21224.66	29%
General Commercial	0.39300		
Flood Hazard	1	3930.01367	5%
Open Space	0.30	3042.05	4%
General Commercial Area - Gormley	0.12	1241.45	2%
General Commercial	11.89	118928.30	100%
Flood Hazard	9.15	91503.94	77%
Employment Business Park - Gormley	1.32	13173.42	11%
Employment Heavy - Gormley	0.70	6996.63	6%
Employment Light - Gormley	0.44	4433.23	4%
Oak Ridges Moraine - Countryside	0.21	2086.31	2%
	0.07	734.76	1%
Hamlet Area - Bloomington	89.80	897988.90	100%
Residential Private Services	55.46	554565.56	62%
Development Reserve	12.99	129897.02	14%
Flood Hazard	10.97	109666.80	12%
Open Space	6.61	66092.03	7%
Institutional	2.42	24194.81	3%
Oak Ridges Moraine - Linkage	0.60	5968.02	1%
Environmental	0.55	5511.98	1%
General Commercial	0.21	2092.67	0%
High Density Mixed Use Area - Old Elm	8.14	81404.17	100%
Agricultural	7.75	77508.11	95%
Residential New Five	0.30	2960.96	4%
Open Space	0.08	822.54	1%
Environmental	0.01	112.57	0%
Highway 48 Mixed Use - Stouffville	31.11	311112.93	100%

Employment Business Park	18.01	180066.65	58%
Employment Light	9.87	98650.21	32%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Western Approach	2.74	27377.07	9%
Flood Hazard	0.28	2812.73	1%
Environmental	0.21	2146.38	1%
General Commercial	0.01	59.90	0%
Main Street - Stouffville Core	11.41	114093.01	100%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Community Core Area	7.51	75065.93	66%
New Residential 5	0.98	9751.87	9%
Residential 2	0.76	7649.36	7%
Residential New Four	0.65	6458.43	6%
Residential 3	0.62	6245.91	5%
Institutional	0.41	4080.80	4%
Flood Hazard	0.35	3523.21	3%
Residential 1	0.13	1303.56	1%
Medium-High Density Mixed Use Area - Old Elm	7.80	78049.57	100%
Agricultural	5.10	51026.87	65%
Residential New Five	2.70	26977.28	35%
Development Reserve	0.00	45.43	0%
Mixed Use - Stouffville Core	3.29	32947.37	100%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Community Core Area	2.98	29759.77	90%
Residential 3	0.20	2047.98	6%
Residential 1	0.11	1139.61	3%
Mixed Use Area - Vandorf	49.65	496464.59	100%
Development Reserve	34.34	343445.38	69%
Flood Hazard	9.03	90329.18	18%
Residential Private Services	2.50	25008.90	5%
Institutional	2.22	22221.35	4%
Village Commercial	0.81	8063.33	2%
Environmental	0.57	5657.60	1%
General Commercial	0.17	1738.86	0%
Neighbourhood Retail Area - Stouffville	17.07	170731.90	100%
New Residential 4	5.59	55942.16	33%
General Commercial	4.71	47112.89	28%
New Residential 2	2.83	28271.56	17%
New Residential 3	2.35	23527.26	14%
Development Reserve	0.95	9466.15	6%
New Residential 1	0.50	4971.95	3%
Open Space	0.14	1439.94	1%
Regional Retail Area - Stouffville	16.25	162540.02	100%

General Commercial	16.25	162540.02	100%
Western Approach Mixed Use - Stouffville Western Approach	40.15	401529.80	100%
Commercial Residential Mixed - Western Approach	34.30	343043.27	85%
Residential 1	2.07	20683.02	5%
Development Reserve	1.87	18711.60	5%
Environmental	0.71	7100.57	2%
Residential Multiple 2	0.29	2861.16	1%
Residential Multiple 1	0.22	2219.72	1%
Flood Hazard	0.20	2005.88	0%
Residential 3	0.17	1672.33	0%
Institutional	0.11	1126.21	0%
General Commercial	0.08	776.22	0%
Open Space	0.05	462.40	0%
Employment Business Park	0.05	459.41	0%
Residential 2	0.03	267.71	0%
New Residential 4	0.01	140.30	0%

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Appendix C – Permitted Uses in Official Plan Land Use Designations

Appendix C contains a permitted use matrix developed by the project team to compare the land use designations and support the creation of the zoning framework. Within the matrix, a checkmark indicates a use is permitted, an x indicates the use is prohibited, and a diamond indicates that the use is only permitted within a mixed use building.

Use	Gateway – Mixed Use Area	Western Approach – Mixed Use Area	Highway 48 – Mixed Use Area	Core Area – Main Street	Core Area – Mixed Use Area	Old Elm – High Density Mixed Use	Old Elm – Medium-High Density Mixed	Neighbourhood Retail Area	Regional Retail Area	Vandorf – Mixed Use Area	Bloomington – Hamlet Area
Low-rise residential (single/semi/duplex)		X						X		✓	✓
Townhouse (street/stacked/laneway)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X		✓	
Low-/Mid-/High-rise residential (apartments)	✓	✓	✓	◇	✓	✓	✓	◇	◇	✓	
Live/work units	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Retail / service commercial	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓	◇	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grocery / supermarket / food store	◇	✓	✓						✓	✓	
Restaurants (non drive-thru)	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓	◇	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓
Drive-thru facility	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Personal service establishments	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓	◇	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓
Office	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Use	Gateway – Mixed Use Area	Western Approach – Mixed Use Area	Highway 48 – Mixed Use Area	Core Area – Main Street	Core Area – Mixed Use Area	Old Elm – High Density Mixed Use	Old Elm – Medium-High Density Mixed	Neighbourhood Retail Area	Regional Retail Area	Vandorf – Mixed Use Area	Bloomington – Hamlet Area
Medical clinic	◇	✓	✓			◇	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hotel / conference / banquet		✓	✓						✓		
Recreation / entertainment	◇	✓	✓	✓	✓			✗	✓	✓	
Financial institution	◇	✓	✓			◇	◇		✓	✓	✓
Institutional/Cultural uses	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community/public service facilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Light industrial innovation makerspaces			✓						✓		✓
Innovation/education/data uses (R&D, training, data processing)			✓						✓		✓
Urban agriculture centre / farmers' market			✓								
Self-storage warehouse (commercial)	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Automobile sales/service	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Gas bar	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Car wash	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		
Transportation terminal					✓	✓					
Outside storage / outside display	✗							✗	✗	✗	
Bed & Breakfast										✓	✓

Use	Gateway – Mixed Use Area	Western Approach – Mixed Use Area	Highway 48 – Mixed Use Area	Core Area – Main Street	Core Area – Mixed Use Area	Old Elm – High Density Mixed Use	Old Elm – Medium-High Density Mixed	Neighbourhood Retail Area	Regional Retail Area	Vandorf – Mixed Use Area	Bloomington – Hamlet Area
Home occupation	✓					✓	✓			✓	✓

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