



MARKHAM CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN UPDATE

Development Concept Report

July 2022



The City of Markham has retained a multidisciplinary team to undertake the Markham Centre Secondary Plan Update. The team is led by Gladki Planning Associates, supported by DTAH, Greenberg Consultants, Stantec and Steer.

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Contents

1. Introduction

- 1.1 What is a Secondary Plan?
- 1.2 Development Concept
- 1.3 Structure of this Document
- 1.4 Supporting Documents
- 1.5 Supporting Studies

2. How We Got Here

- 2.1 Process
- 2.2 Existing Conditions
- 2.3 Development Options
- 2.4 What We Heard

3. Vision

4. Guiding Principles

5. Summary of Big Moves

6. Structure, Land Use, Built Form Intensity

- 6.1 Urban Texture: From Coarse to Fine
- 6.2 Land Uses
- 6.3 Built Form Intensity - Density
- 6.4 Built Form Intensity - Height
- 6.5 Population and Jobs
- 6.6 MTSA

4

4

6

6

6

7

8

8

10

12

16

18

20

31

40

40

42

44

46

50

52

7. Parks, Open Spaces, Community Facilities

- 7.1 Parks and Open Space System
- 7.2 Community Services and Facilities

54

55

64

8. Transportation

- 8.1 Overview
- 8.2 Street Network
- 8.3 Active Transportation
- 8.4 Transit

68

68

70

72

76

9. Districts

- 9.1 Overview of Districts
- 9.2 Community Structure
- 9.3 Downtown Demonstration
- 9.4 Uptown Demonstration
- 9.5 Fairburn Demonstration
- 9.6 Kennedy Demonstration

78

78

80

82

94

104

106

10. Next Steps

108

1. Introduction

Markham Centre is evolving.

In the 1990s, a Secondary Plan was created for Markham Centre to guide the area's evolution from mostly farmland to a downtown for the Markham community. The Secondary Plan set out an ambitious vision for Markham Centre as a high-intensity urban place and prosperous economic centre with all the amenities and activities to support an excellent quality of life.

Great progress has been made toward that vision. However, much has changed since the adoption of the Secondary Plan. The area has been successful in attracting development, and the scale of recent proposals is significantly taller and denser than anything envisioned in the original plan. The construction and proposed expansion of higher order transit promises to create a major interchange point centred on the current Unionville GO station. A number of significant public sector investments – the Pan Am Centre and York University – have been attracted to the area, as have a number of major employers. Markham Centre needs a Secondary Plan re-calibrated to present realities.

To achieve this, the City of Markham is undertaking an update of the Secondary Plan for Markham Centre. The update will revisit the vision and principles that have guided the area's evolution, look at what has been achieved to date, and create a planning policy framework that builds on success and hones the effectiveness of policies in realizing the highest aspirations of the City for its centre.

1.1 Markham Centre Secondary Plan Area

Through comparative aerial photographs from 1994 and 2020, Figure 1.1 shows the progress that has been made in creating Markham Centre. The figures also show how the boundaries of the Secondary Plan area have been expanded as part of the Secondary Plan update.

The study area for the current update is roughly formed by Highway 7, Kennedy Road, Highway 407 and the Beaver Creek valley, with some additions north of Highway 7 and east of Kennedy Road. It has a total area of 494 ha.

New areas included in the study area include commercial plazas at Warden Avenue and Highway 7 and Kennedy Road and Highway 7, employment and commercial areas to the west of the original boundary and an area featuring a number of car dealerships east of Kennedy Road. These areas are candidates for redevelopment. They have been incorporated into the Secondary Plan area to ensure that any future development contributes in a cohesive manner to Markham Centre.

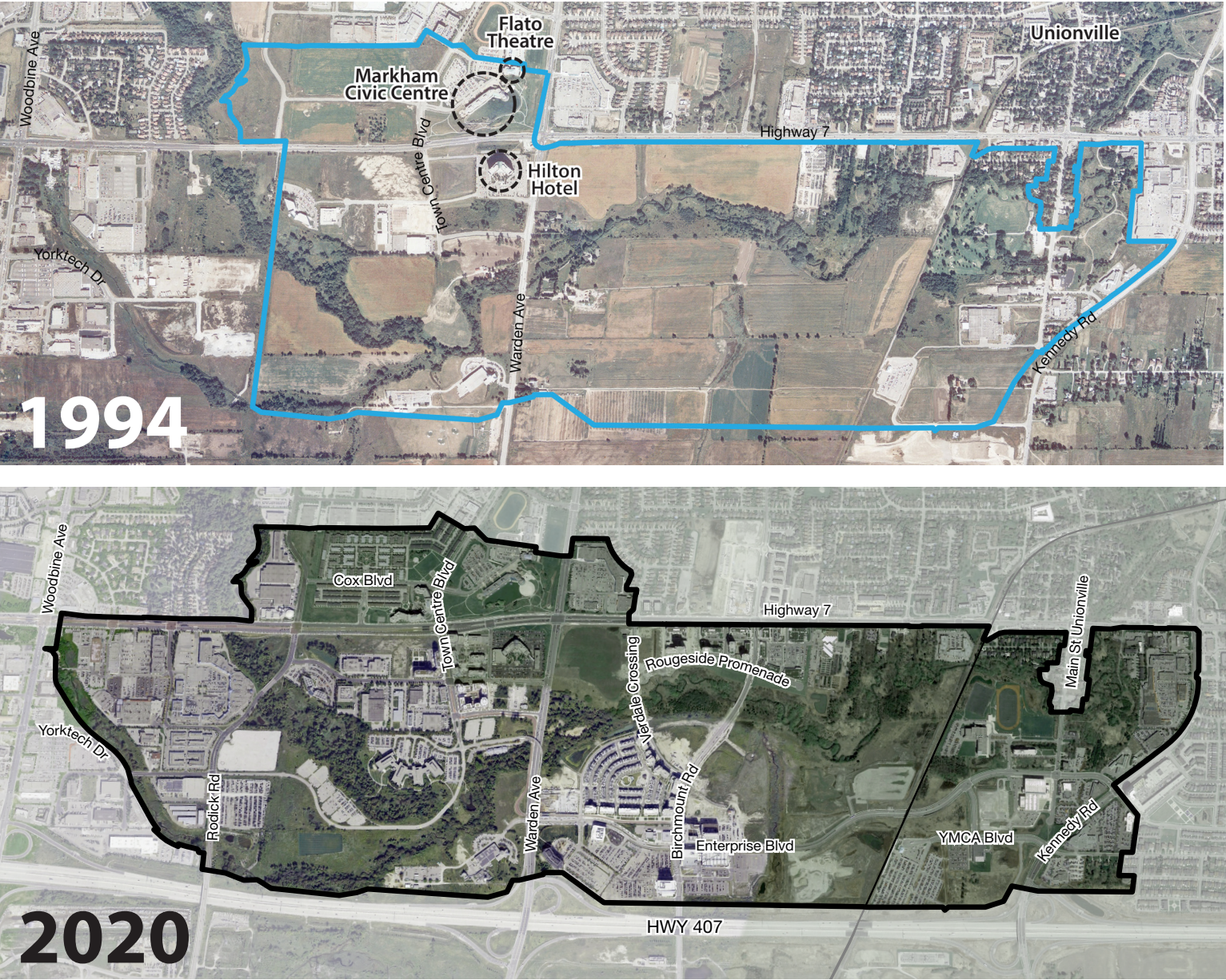


Figure 1.1 Study Area for the Markham Centre Secondary Plan

1.2 What is a Secondary Plan?

A Secondary Plan is a tool that guides change in a particular area of the city through detailed policies on land use, built form, infrastructure, public spaces, transportation, community services, smart city strategies, and the environment. A Secondary Plan is adopted as an amendment to the City of Markham Official Plan.

Property owners and the City of Markham will use the new Secondary Plan for the next 20-30 years to guide their decisions about where different uses (e.g., residential, employment, commercial/retail, institutional, etc.) should be located, how tall/big the buildings should be, and which community amenities (e.g., parks, schools, community centres, day cares, libraries, hospitals, etc.) are needed.

The implementation of the Secondary Plan will be supported by a number of other documents, including a Transportation Study, Municipal Servicing Strategy, Smart City Strategy and Community Energy Plan.

1.3 Development Concept

This report presents a Development Concept for Markham Centre.

The Development Concept describes a potential future for Markham Centre. It addresses land uses, built form heights and densities, parks and open spaces, schools and community facilities, the street network, and transportation systems.

In addition to describing these layers, it demonstrates how these elements come together, at the level of the whole area and in the creation of individual neighbourhoods/districts. It communicates the qualities of the urban environment and the variety of experiences that will make Markham Centre a distinct and special place.

The foundation of the Development Concept is the Vision and Guiding Principles established in consultation with the public and stakeholders earlier in the Secondary Plan update process. The Vision and Guiding Principles informed the creation of Development Options which tested out different ideas for the area's evolution. The options were also the subject of significant consultation, consolidation, and refinement to produce the Development Concept.

Based on further consultation, the Development Concept will be refined. The revised Development Concept will then serve as the study's recommendation and the basis for the development of the Secondary Plan.

1.4 Structure of this Document

This document's key sections are as follows:

Section 2 – How We Got Here describes the process by which the Development Concept was created, paying particular attention to the development options phase and feedback from the public and stakeholders.

Section 3 – Vision is a statement of Markham's ambitions for its centre.

Section 4 – Guiding Principles provides a further level of detail of how the vision will be achieved and broken into specific objectives.

Section 5 – Big Moves summarizes the 8 big ideas that are represented in the Development Concept.

Section 6 – Structure, Land Use & Built Form Intensity outlines, in broad strokes, the key elements defining the urban texture and structure of Markham Centre. This includes planned land uses, heights and densities, and the implications of these for the number of people and jobs in Markham Centre at full build-out.

Section 7 – Parks, Open Spaces & Community Facilities describes key components of the parks and open space system, implications on amount of parkland per capita, and approaches to community facilities.

Section 8 – Transportation describes the different ways of getting to, from and through Markham Centre. It describes the networks needed to support the intensity of development proposed for Markham Centre, with a strong focus on encouraging walking, cycling and the use of transit.

Section 9 – Districts presents Markham Centre's districts and the community structure that will serve as focal points around which districts will cohere. Demonstrations explore potential ways that the key elements and features of each district may be configured.

Section 10 – Next Steps details the future trajectory of the project to evolve the Development Concept into the final Secondary Plan.

1.5 Supporting Studies

The development of a number of supporting documents is proceeding concurrently and will support the implementation of the final Markham Centre Secondary Plan. These are:

Transportation Study – The Transportation Study will make recommendations on creating a multi-modal transportation system to support the final development concept for Markham Centre. The Transportation Study will include Transportation Demand Management and Parking Strategies.

Municipal Servicing Study – The Municipal Servicing Study will make recommendations to support the land uses and densities represented by the Secondary Plan with infrastructure comprising the water distribution system, sanitary sewer system and stormwater management.

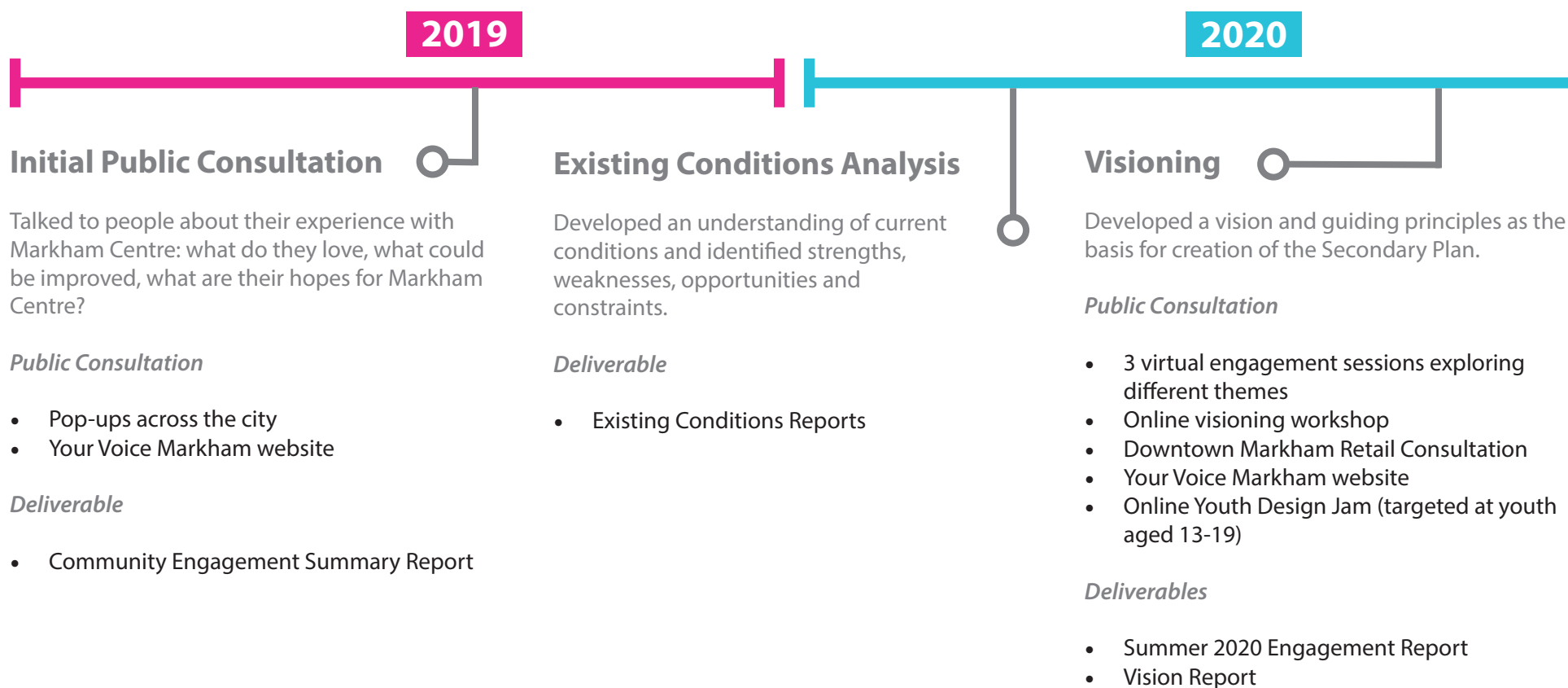
Smart City Strategy – The Smart City Strategy will make recommendations addressing the use, management, and governance of technology to achieve city-building objectives in Markham Centre.

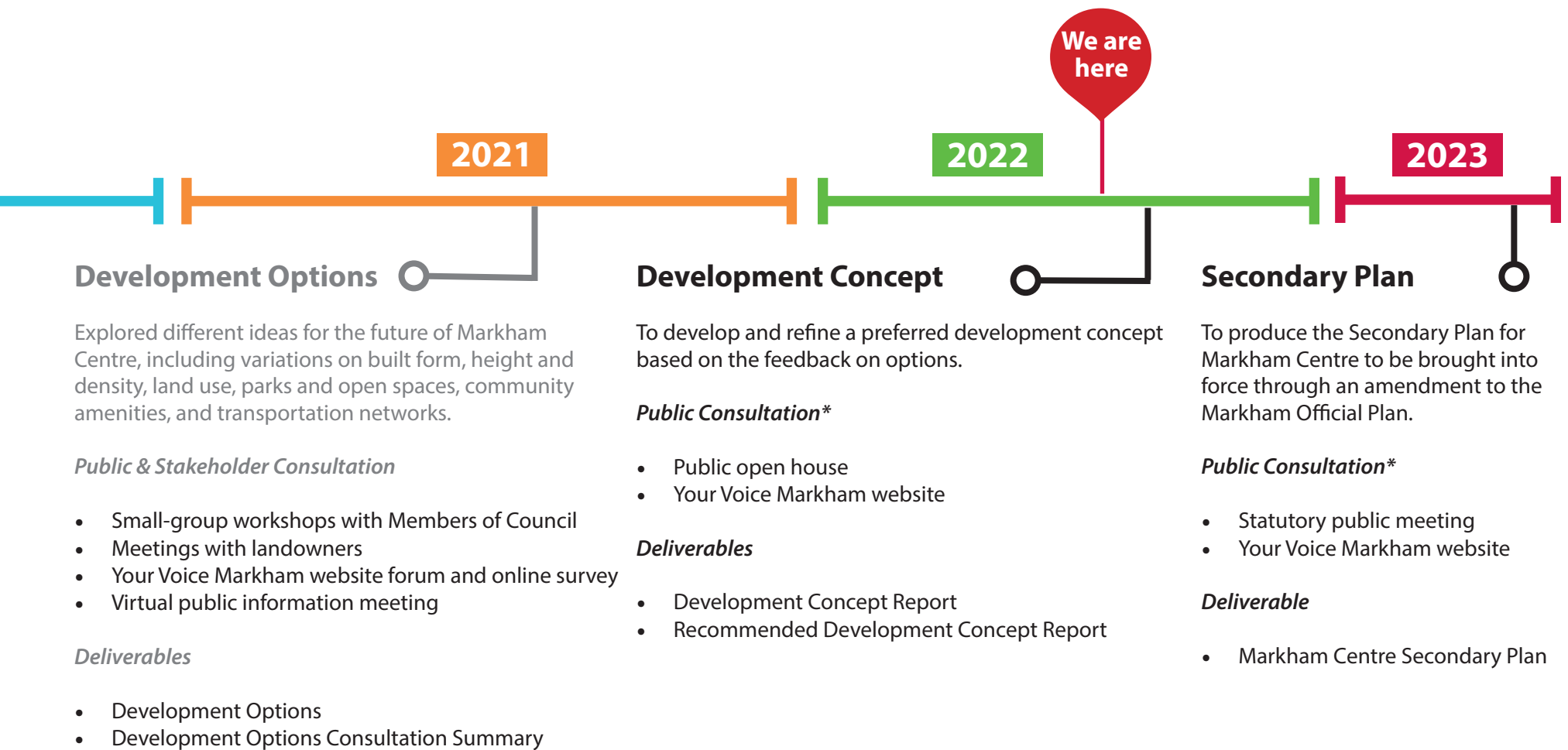
Community Energy Plan – The Community Energy Plan will be a companion document to the Markham Centre Secondary Plan. The Community Energy Plan will identify and advance sustainable development practices as they relate to energy use and generation within Markham Centre.

2. HOW WE GOT HERE

2.1 Process

The Markham Centre Secondary Plan Update began in 2019 and is proceeding over 6 phases described in the figure below. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, changes have been made to the study timeline and public consultation program.





**Future public consultation approaches will be determined based on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to use virtual platforms rather than in-person events.*

2.2 Existing Conditions

At the beginning of the study, an analysis of existing conditions was completed to establish a base of knowledge and analysis in which subsequent phases of work could be grounded. The complete analysis can be found in Markham Centre Secondary Plan Update – Existing Conditions Report (August 2020).

The context for the development of Markham Centre is the original Secondary Plan, completed in the 1990s. The vision established in that document has proven durable over time and remains highly relevant. It envisioned Markham Centre as a high-intensity urban place, with all the amenities and activities to support an amazing quality of life.

Elements of the vision included: fostering a complete community where people can live, work, study and recreate; balancing intensity of development with protection of nature; creating a central location for the life of the city in terms of arts, culture, sports, entertainment and social activities; and building a place that is well-connected by transit and easily accessed on foot.

Great progress has been made toward the original vision. However, much has changed since the adoption of the Secondary Plan as well.

Attracting Development

Markham Centre has been successful in attracting development, which to date has created a variety of built form, including town houses, mid-rise buildings, stand-alone office buildings and tower and podium residential buildings. To date, Markham Centre has also had success attracting a balance of residential and employment uses to the area. Major employers have been drawn to Markham Centre, including IBM and Aviva, and have set up in campus environments and more urban formats.

Recent trends have seen a shift in development interest heavily weighted to residential uses in tower formats.



Image 2.1 Midrise Building along Radpidway

Building a Parks and Open Space System

The Rouge River Valley is a defining feature for Markham Centre. It runs through the area west to east, dividing it into sub-areas and giving all parts of Markham Centre close access to nature. Although planning is underway for its integration into the urban environment, this is still a work in progress.

Similarly, the broader parks system is also a work in progress. One of the great challenges to be addressed by the Secondary Plan update is to create a network of parks providing opportunities for the full range of active and passive recreational activities to serve the population of a high density urban environment.



Image 2.2 Rouge River

Creating a Place

Areas of different character are taking shape in different portions of Markham Centre, in terms of built form and in the kinds of amenities on offer. The area around Birchmount Road and Enterprise Boulevard has established itself as one pole, with a good entertainment offer, a hotel and mix of residential and office uses.

Much of the recent development in Markham Centre demonstrates an intent to create a positive relationship between built form and streets to create a pleasant and activated public realm, including uses that relate directly to the street. This conscious and conscientious approach to creating Markham Centre as a distinct place must be a priority as development proceeds.



Image 2.3 Cineplex

Shifting the Way People Get Around

Planned and built rapid transit infrastructure – the Viva Rapidway Bus Rapid Transit, two-way all-day GO rail service, and the 407 transitway – promise to make Markham Centre a major hub with excellent access to the broader region.

However, at present, travel by car is by far the predominant way of getting around and to and from Markham Centre. The Secondary Plan will improve the connectivity of the road network. It must also lay the foundations for a major shift in how people get around, moving people out of cars and into walking, cycling and transit.



Image 2.4 Viva Rapidway

Offering Amenities

Markham Centre has been the location of a number of significant public sector investments, most notably the Pan Am Centre and the Markham campus of York University. These amenities have a regional draw.

The amenities on offer in Markham Centre need to be expanded in two ways:

- To create facilities that solidify Markham Centre's role as a downtown for the whole Markham community. Potential facilities include a central library and a performing arts centre; and
- To create facilities that ensure an appropriate level of service to the local population through the provision of community spaces, recreational facilities, day cares and schools.



Image 2.5 Pam Am Centre

2.3 Development Options

A key step in the creation of the Development Concept was the elaboration of development options. The development options explored how the draft Vision and Guiding Principles could be applied to Markham Centre. The options were intended to be broad stroke and experiment with ideas and stimulate discussion. Two development options were elaborated:

Option 1: Business as Usual

Demonstrates the implications of how Markham Centre will evolve based on its current trajectory, as established by proposed development, approved Environmental Assessments and planned parks.

Key features:

- Intensity of development (height and density) spread in a somewhat undifferentiated manner.
- Existing and approved parks.
- EA approved alignments of the Viva Rapidway and 407 Transitway.
- Limited road crossings of the Rouge River and Beaver Creek, and an indirect Yorktech Drive-Enterprise Boulevard connection.

Estimated Population: 127,000

Estimated Jobs: 75,000



Figure 2.1 3-D Demonstration of Business as Usual Option

Option 2: Preliminary Concept

Tests out an alternative trajectory for Markham Centre based on big moves that strongly implement the Vision and Guiding Principles.

Key features:

- A hierarchy of built form intensity, with a primary concentration of height and density around the Unionville Multi-Modal Station, and secondary concentrations centred on the intersections of Warden Avenue/Highway 7 and Enterprise Boulevard/Birchmount Road.
- The creation of a Civic Precinct by moving the Civic Centre to the station area, to be co-located with a major civic square, central library and performing arts centre.
- A network of local community focal points offering retail, community facilities and parks, and community meeting places at a neighbourhood scale.
- The Rouge Valley system as a central uniting feature, offering a variety of recreational experiences while preserving its ecological integrity.
- An expanded park system, and the inclusion of larger parks for active recreation.
- An alignment of the 407 Transitway that improves the developability of the station area.
- A new alignment of the Viva Rapidway to avoid underground infrastructure.
- Additional road crossings of the Rouge River and Beaver Creek.
- A more extensive network of trails and street-related cycling facilities.

Estimated Population: 101,000

Estimated Jobs: 55,000

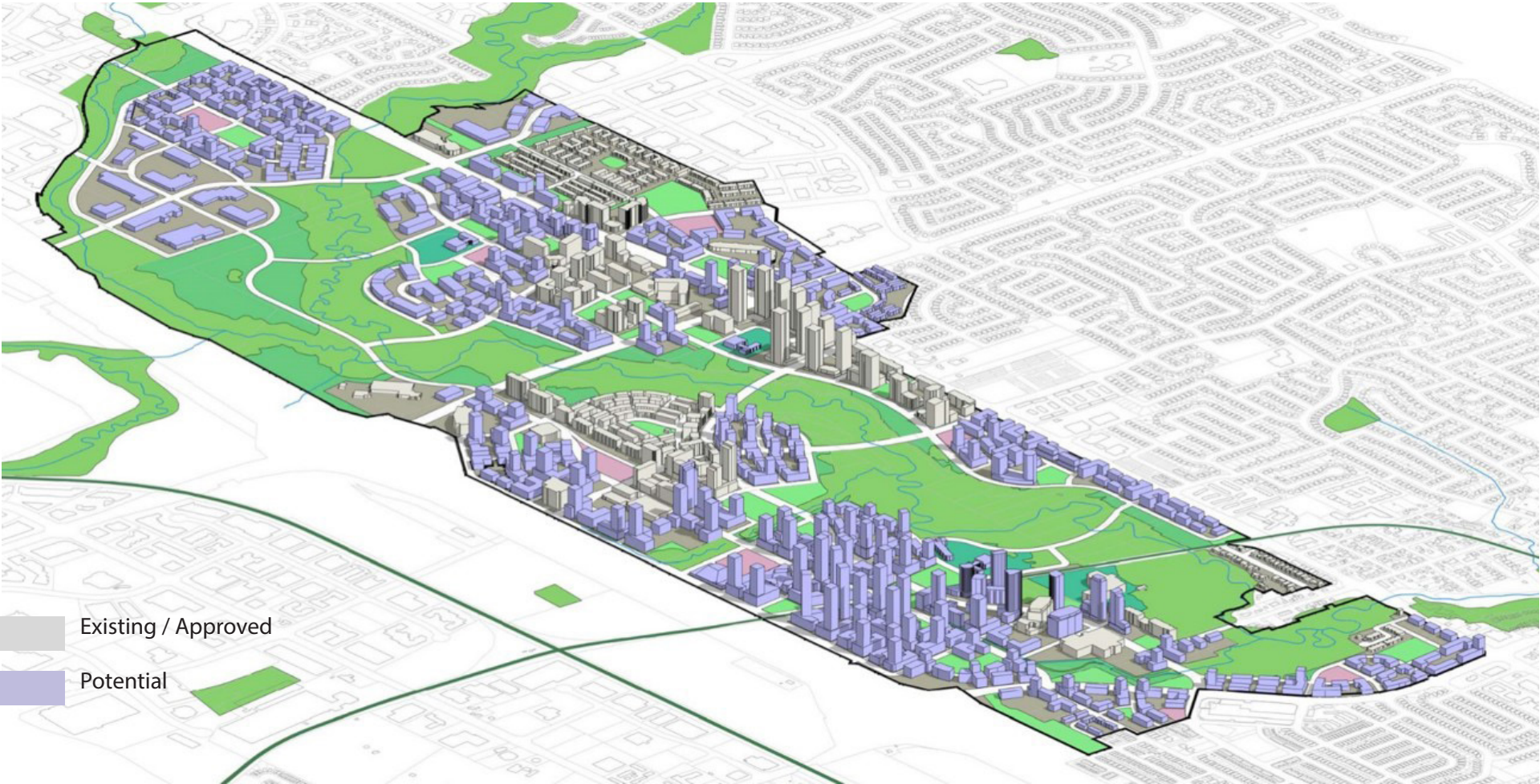


Figure 2.2 3-D Demonstration of Preliminary Concept

2.4 What We Heard

The Development Options were shared with stakeholders and the public during March-June 2021 through: small-group workshops with Council Members; one-on-one meetings with Markham Centre Landowners; a public survey and forum on Your Voice Markham, the City's online engagement platform; and a virtual public information meeting on Zoom, with small-group discussions in breakout rooms. Detailed reporting on this engagement can be found in the [Development Options Engagement Summary \(June 2021\)](#). Key feedback is outlined below with an indication of the level of consensus among Councillors, landowners, and the public.

Building Forms and Heights

- General consensus that the greatest intensity of built form (height and density) should be located close to higher order transit, with a primary area of focus centred on the Unionville Multi-Modal Station.
- Many thought the intersection of Warden and Highway 7 should serve as secondary area of intensity.
- Some landowners indicated that Warden and Highway 7 should feature a concentration of similar intensity to the node centred on the Unionville Multi-Modal Station, anchored by the Civic Centre.
- General consensus that Markham Centre should have a variety of built form and height, which includes tall and mid-rise buildings. Built form should respond to its context and transition appropriately to adjacent low-rise areas.

- Many viewed mid-rise buildings as a way of creating diversity, balance, and harmony in built form. Mid-rise buildings were seen as a positive contribution to the pedestrian experience of the area.
- Many residents did not want Markham Centre to be a collection of only tall buildings and expressed concerns with the proposed heights of 40+ storeys in new developments. Heights and densities should be gradually lowered and transition from the centre of nodes toward the edges.
- Most landowners indicated that the heights and densities proposed in the Preliminary Concept were too low.

Mix of Uses

- Many Council members expressed a strong desire that Markham Centre have a balance of people and jobs in order to fulfill its role as Markham's Downtown and contribute to the community's prosperity.

- Some landowners indicated that left to the market much future development would be predominantly residential. At present, there is less interest in developing office uses.

Forming a Civic District

- General consensus that Markham Centre needs a civic square for gathering and celebration. The square should be anchored by civic facilities like a central library, community centre, museum, and/or performing arts centre.
- Many felt it was important that the civic district be located near the Unionville GO station to promote accessibility by transit and walking, and to reinforce the area as Markham's Downtown.

- Some felt the existing Civic Centre should remain in its location, while others suggested converting it to a large community centre or arts facility and moving some or all City offices closer to major transit. Employment, office, and retail uses should complement the civic uses near the Unionville Multi-Modal Station.
- Some Councillors felt that the presence of the Unionville Multi-Modal Station presented an important opportunity to create an iconic, world-class rail station as a gateway to Markham.

Complete Neighbourhoods

- Council members indicated that each neighbourhood within Markham Centre should have a distinct sense of place, with a unique mix of features related to architecture, public art, and placemaking.
- Community members strongly supported the idea of “15-minute” neighbourhoods, which combine many of the things residents

need in their day-to-day lives within walking distance of their homes. This includes retail, community facilities, parks, day cares, schools and opportunities for recreation.

- Many like the idea of urban squares being the focus of each neighbourhood and emphasized the importance of great street life - engaging to pedestrians and activated by retail, restaurants and services.

Transit, Walking, and Cycling

- Council members indicated that the capacity of the transportation system is an important consideration. People need to be able to move to, from, and through Markham Centre efficiently.
- General consensus that it should be easy and safe to walk, cycle and take transit between neighbourhoods in Markham Centre.
- General consensus that all-season infrastructure is important to encourage people to choose modes of transportation other than driving.

- General consensus that cycling facilities must be protected from road traffic to ensure safety for riders of all ages and abilities.

Parks and Open Spaces

- General consensus that Markham Centre needs more parkland to appropriately serve a growing population.
- General consensus that a parks system needed a variety of programming to encourage active and passive recreation.
- General consensus that the Rouge River Valley system is a key asset, and that parks and public spaces should complement this natural amenity.

3. VISION

Markham Centre is Markham's Downtown.

The Vision and Guiding Principles provide the foundation for the development of the Markham Centre Secondary Plan.

They are a clear statement of Markham's ambitions for its centre and will serve as a reference point for evaluating different options as the Secondary Plan process evolves. The Vision and Guiding Principles are based on an analysis of existing conditions, the identification of major opportunities and challenges and many discussions with the public, stakeholders, and staff.

It is the heart of the city and a vibrant, intensive, mixed use urban core.

As the centre of civic life and a hub of activity, it draws people from across Markham and the region to live, work, learn, play, and participate in the Markham community. Major public spaces, institutions, and facilities solidify its role as a meeting place. Building on its success as a high-tech hub and locus of innovation, a range of businesses serve as an engine of economic prosperity and establish Markham Centre as an area of significant employment. Retail and entertainment uses further establish the Downtown as a place to be. Together, this dynamic mix and range of uses create many reasons to come to Markham Centre, and many reasons to stay.

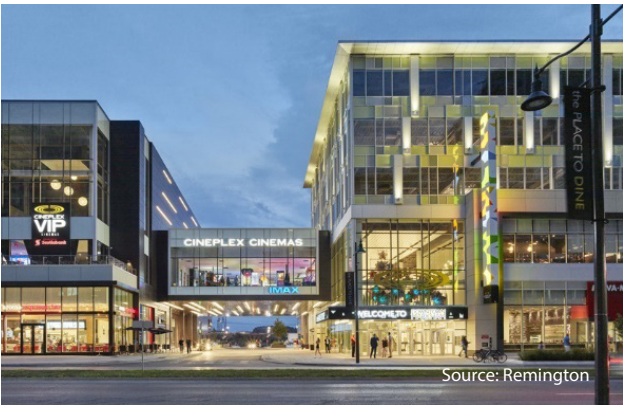
As well as a destination, Markham Centre is a home. A variety of housing provides options for people of all ages, household sizes, and incomes to create a diverse and inclusive community. Markham Centre is composed of smaller neighbourhoods, each of which serve as a complete community for their residents, allowing them to meet their daily needs locally and within convenient walking distances.

Although they have their own character, Markham Centre's neighbourhoods form a well connected and cohesive whole. The transportation system

establishes a fine-grained pattern of linkages and makes walking, cycling and transit attractive and viable alternatives to getting around by car. Excellent higher order transit links Markham Centre to the surrounding region. The transit routes and their interchange at the future Unionville Multi-Modal Station serve as focal points for development intensity.

The Rouge River Valley and a network of parks and greenspaces also link Markham Centre's neighbourhoods. This network is foundational to the area's ecological integrity and the quality of life of people who experience it. Careful treatment of the area's natural heritage is part of a broader approach to sustainability which establishes Markham Centre as a model of environmental performance.

When taken as a whole, Markham Centre's parts – private spaces and public spaces, streets and buildings, green spaces and hardscapes – come together to create an attractive and vital place. These parts are diverse, ranging from quiet intimate corners to places of great energy and excitement. They contribute to a distinct sense of identity that celebrates the variety of the Markham experience, reflecting on its past and encapsulating the multi-culturalism which is central to its dynamism.



4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Create a place that is the heart of Markham

Markham Centre will not be just another neighbourhood. It will be a Regional Centre and the City's Downtown. It will be the place where all residents can proudly congregate, celebrate, and connect. It will attract people from across the city and region with its private and public uses and amenities.

Objectives

- Establish major city-serving public spaces and civic facilities, including a major civic square as activity anchors drawing people to Markham Centre.
- Foster a diverse range of activities that make Markham Centre a destination for many different reasons and a lively place at different times of the day and week.
- Concentrate the most dynamic uses in a downtown precinct, near the future Unionville Multi-Modal Station .
- Build a strong identity for Markham Centre through placemaking features, including interesting architecture, public art, greenery, and heritage representation that tells the Markham story and creates a sense of belonging.



Image 4.1, 4.2 Celebration Square, co-located with the Mississauga Civic Centre and Central Library, is the natural meeting place for the Mississauga community.



Image 4.3, 4.4 The Calgary Central Library is an example of a public facility with a city-wide draw, reinforcing the Downtown as a focal point for the entire Calgary community and supporting the revitalization of the East Village neighbourhood. It is well-served by an integrated rapid transit station.

Support a diverse and prosperous economy

Markham Centre is already a successful and diversified economic hub that generates significant employment, particularly within the technology and service sectors. Employment uses will continue to be promoted in Markham Centre to further strengthen its regional economic status and achieve a healthy and prosperous balance between jobs and residents.

Objectives

- Promote a robust and diversified mix of uses that establishes Markham Centre as an area of significant employment.
- Foster a dynamic and attractive downtown urban area with great amenities to attract talent and employers.
- Support a healthy balance between population to jobs.
- Include a range of unit types and a mix of amenities that support an excellent home-based work environment.
- Promote the entertainment and tourism sectors to add to the attractions bringing people into Markham Centre.

- Build on the success of existing sectors to create ecosystems of complementary businesses.
- Provide a range of retail and service experiences that serve local needs and draw customers from a wider catchment, with particular focus on creating spaces for independent small businesses.



Image 4.5-4.7 Markham Centre has established a variety of office, retail, and service uses.

Support arts, culture, and recreation

Markham Centre consists of existing key cultural and community facilities, and public art installations that have become catalysts of activity in the Downtown. Building upon these strong foundations, Markham Centre will support and reinforce itself as the cultural and entertainment hub for the City of Markham.

Objectives

- Locate major public cultural facilities in Markham Centre, near the future Unionville Multi-Modal Station, to serve as incubators of cultural content.
- Use public art to create a distinct sense of place and celebrate the dynamism of the Markham community and its rich economic, entrepreneurial, innovative, and cultural history.
- Locate recreational facilities in Markham Centre to meet the needs of the local population.



Image 4.8-4.11 Public art, cultural attractions, and recreational facilities contribute to Markham Centre's lively identity.



Create an efficient and safe transportation system

Markham Centre will offer a robust transportation network that provides efficient, convenient and safe mobility options for people and goods, intermodal connections, and access to the regional transit system. Markham Centre will be an urban place that prioritizes and attracts active modes of transportation and transit to efficiently, conveniently, and safely move people and goods in a sustainable and healthy way as an alternative to driving.

Objectives

- Establish Markham Centre as a nexus for higher order transit, where 15-minute all-day GO rail service, Viva Bus Rapid Transit, local bus service, and the 407 transitway meet to create excellent local and regional connectivity.
- Create a comprehensive, separate, attractive and well-designed network for walking and cycling that allows people to easily get around within Markham Centre, including to the Unionville Multi-Modal Station.
- Prioritize movement by walking, cycling, and transit over that of cars.



Image 4.12-4.16 Markham Centre's existing transportation system includes movement by car, train, bus, bike, and foot.

Create a great public realm

Markham Centre will be a place people want to be. Critical in realizing this ambition is the creation of an exceptional public realm: animated, stimulating, attractive and safe. Streets, parks, privately owned publicly accessible spaces and all the other “in-between” spaces, as well as the buildings that frame and animate them, will be designed to achieve this goal. Together, these elements of the public realm will form the connective tissue that integrates the area into a cohesive and connected whole.

Objectives

- Establish a fine-grained street and block pattern to create character, intimacy, and permeability.
- Build streets as public places designed for vibrancy and safety to encourage walking, cycling, relaxing, and socializing.
- Ensure buildings create a positive relationship to their surroundings with particular focus on the pedestrian experience.
- Establish a hierarchy of parks and open spaces that contribute to a unique Markham Centre identity by integrating the natural environment, built form, and recreational and creative features.



Source: Nicola Betts



Image 4.17-4.19 Toronto's West Don Lands neighbourhood includes pedestrian-oriented roads (woonerfs), a network of open spaces, and Canada's first community-scale comprehensive master art plan.

Foster diverse built form

Markham Centre will be an intense urban environment, but not an undifferentiated mass of tall buildings. Markham Centre will include a variety of built form in order to create visual interest, establish a human scale, relate well to surrounding streets and open spaces, and generate a true mix of housing types.

Objectives

- Achieve targeted densities through a mix of built form within development blocks and areas, which represent a range and hierarchy of height and density.
- Locate densities and uses in a manner that maximizes opportunities for walking, cycling, and transit ridership, while reducing dependency on the car.
- Strive for architectural excellence and variety.
- Provide a range of unit sizes and types within residential buildings.
- Create buildings with a positive animating relationship to surrounding streets and other elements of the public realm.

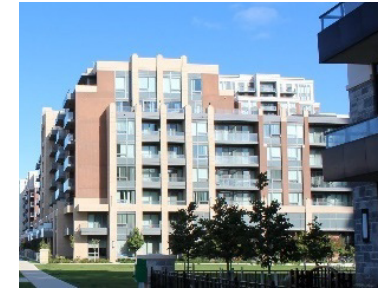


Image 4.20-4.28 Examples of Markham Centre's existing built form.

Build neighbourhoods with access to all the things needed for daily life

“15-minute” neighbourhoods are complete communities where people have easy and convenient access to many of the places and services they use on a daily basis, including retail, restaurants, schools, and parks, without relying heavily on cars. Markham Centre covers a large area, but a number of features divide it into sub-areas. These sub-areas will evolve into well-defined “15-minute” neighbourhoods that will be self-sustaining at a walkable scale with connections to other neighbourhoods.

Objectives

- Promote a mix of uses that ensures that an appropriate range of amenities – potentially including retail, services, schools, parks, and community facilities – are within a 15-minute walk of areas with residential and employment uses.
- Create a network for walking and cycling that increases the accessibility of destinations and has features that make these ways of moving around the community safe, viable, and attractive.



Image 4.29-4.32 Toronto’s Canoe Landing Centre is a multi-use community hub serving a high-density urban neighbourhood incorporating schools and a child care centre with parkland, athletic facilities, a public plaza, community kitchen, meeting rooms, and other amenities.

Realize the full potential of the Rouge River Valley as an environmental and placemaking feature

The Rouge River is an incredible natural amenity in Markham Centre, creating a distinct identity that features the river as the “lungs” of the Downtown. Markham Centre’s built environment will connect to and complement the Rouge River Valley to celebrate this natural feature. The treatment of the Rouge River will balance the benefits of access, education, and public amenity with the need to preserve and enhance its ecological integrity and natural heritage.

Objectives

- Preserve and enhance the ecological function of the natural heritage features that are present in Markham Centre, including those related to the Rouge River.
- Incorporate the Rouge River Valley into a parks and open space network, providing appropriate access for passive recreational and educational purposes.
- Create a trail system alongside and across the Rouge River Valley that forms the spine of an active transportation network that connects Markham Centre internally and establishes strong linkages to the rest of the city.

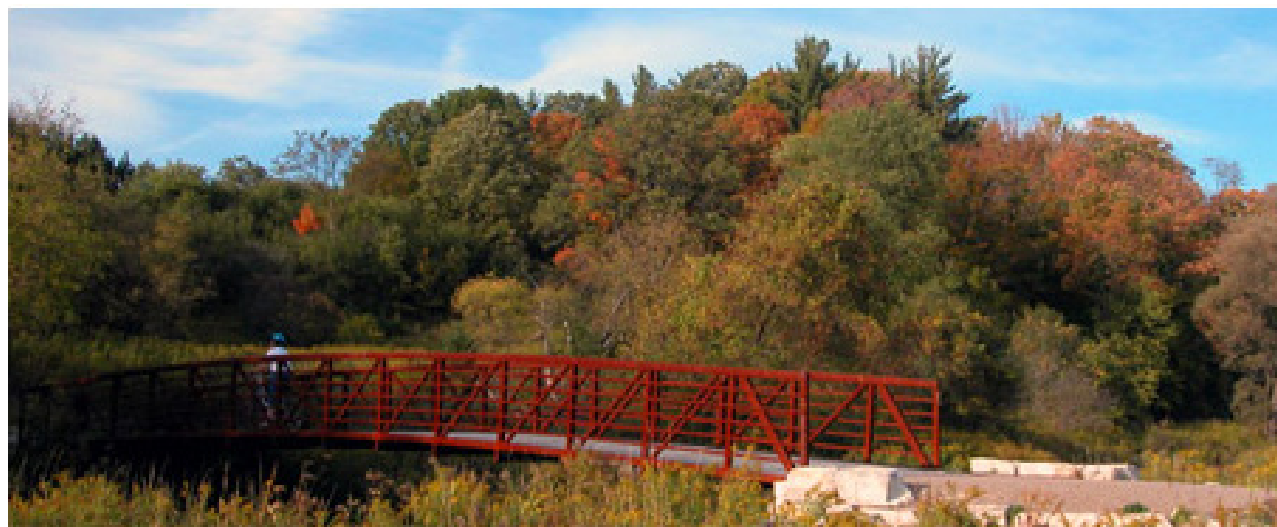


Image 4.33, 4.34 The Humber River Valley in western Toronto contains trails of varying intensity, connecting neighbourhoods and linking together parks along an open space system.

Champion sustainability and environmental performance

Markham Centre has realized significant sustainability achievements through district energy, green building standards and implementing innovative stormwater management solutions. Markham Centre will continue to serve as a model for sustainability and environmental performance.

Objectives

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through building efficiency and a transition to sustainable modes of transportation.
- Support the expansion of the district energy system and the transition to less carbon-intensive sources of fuel.
- Increase green building requirements, with the ultimate objective of net-zero buildings.
- Employ innovative approaches to address the environmental performance of the urban environment, including managing waste and stormwater.
- Promote vegetative cover and an expansion of the tree canopy throughout Markham Centre.



Image 4.35-4.37 Low-Impact Development practices at Markham's Bill Crothers Secondary School include bioretention areas, vegetated swales, constructed wetland type stormwater management facilities, and a rainwater harvesting system. Many streets within Markham Centre have good tree canopies.

Plan for inclusive neighbourhoods

Anyone will be able to find a home in Markham Centre, regardless of age, household size, and income. A variety of housing options will promote Markham Centre as an inclusive complete community to ensure it will be home to a diversity of households, with particular focus on purpose-built rental, varying unit sizes, and affordable options, all supported by a robust mix of uses, mobility options and amenities.

Objectives

- Provide a mix of housing options that includes variety in terms of housing type, unit size, and tenure.
- Consider incentives to provide purpose-built rental and affordable housing.

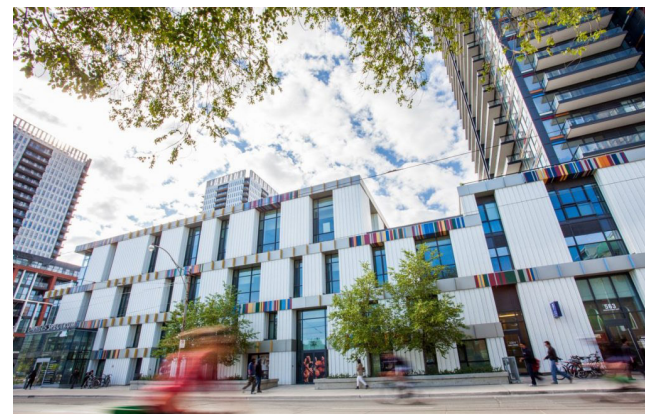


Image 4.38-4.41 Toronto's Regent Park neighbourhood is a mixed-use, mixed-income community with a blend of market and rent-geared-to-income housing units along with commercial and employment uses and community amenities including parkland, athletic facilities, and a multi-use arts and culture centre.

Transition from suburban to urban

The vision for Markham Centre is for an intense urban place. It will feature denser built form and a greater mixing of uses than is the norm in most other parts of Markham. People will drive less and walk, cycle and take transit more. These changes will not come over night. Certain aspects of this transition, particularly regarding transportation, will require care to ensure current approaches remain viable in the short and medium term, while long term goals are pursued. Another aspect of this transition is the use of technology to change how urban areas operate.

Objectives

- Phase out surface parking within Markham Centre over time.
- Consider interim uses, such as structured parking, which can meet present demands while offering opportunities for retrofit to other uses when demand changes.
- Use digital technologies to enhance quality of life and improve the efficiency and resiliency of Markham Centre.



Image 4.42-4.44 Marine Gateway is Vancouver's first transit-oriented, mixed-use community, featuring residential, retail, entertainment, and office uses and providing an intermodal transfer between the Canada Line Skytrain and public buses.

5. SUMMARY OF BIG MOVES

The Development Concept implements the Vision and Guiding Principles outlined in Section 3. It is characterized by 8 Big Moves.

1) Downtown Markham is centred on Enterprise Boulevard, the city's "Main Street".

Markham Centre will be an intense urban place. Downtown Markham will be the peak of that intensity. This intensity will manifest itself in the heights and densities of buildings, but more importantly in the variety of uses and activities, the richness of amenities and experiences, and the vitality and animation of public spaces.

Enterprise Boulevard will serve as the spine of this Downtown. It will be a dynamic and engaging place to be and experience on foot. It will connect the different kinds of activity and amenity present in the Downtown : the retail/entertainment focus at Birchmount Avenue; the institutional cluster of York University, the Pan Am Centre and the YMCA; the station area which serves as an important gateway to Markham and the Downtown ; and the civic heart of the city centred on a major new civic square.

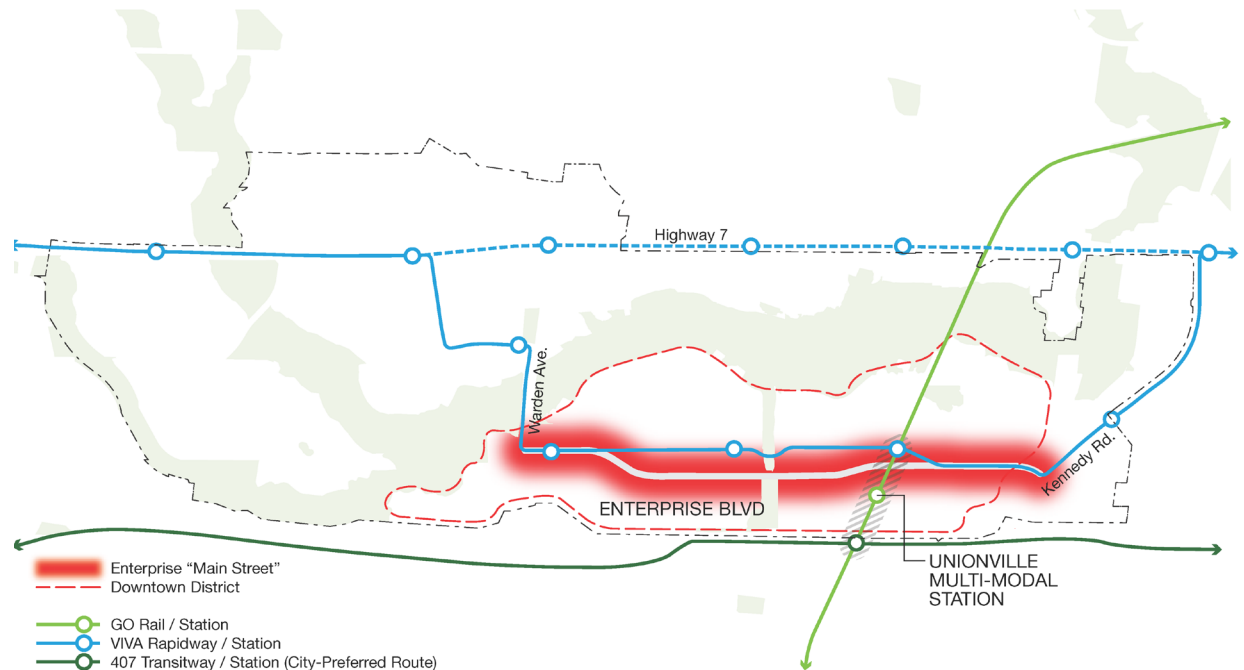


Figure 5.1 Big Move 1: Enterprise Boulevard is Downtown Markham's Central Spine

**2) Variation in built form and height—
more intense at particular nodes and
less intense in peripheral areas.**

Markham Centre is a large area, broken up into districts and sub-districts of different built form character, mix of land uses and configuration of community amenities. The primary focus of built form intensity is at the primary transit node, anchored by the Unionville Multi-Modal Station and the intersection of three lines of higher order transit. A secondary node is centred at Birchmount Avenue and Enterprise Boulevard and is the continuation of the Downtown at a lower scale. Another secondary node is centred on the intersection of Warden Avenue and Highway 7, the traditional focal point of the area, anchored by the Civic Centre and Hilton Hotel.

Outside of these nodes are areas of lower intensity intended to have a different kind of built form mid-rise rather than high-rise in character.

Within all these areas, architectural variety and positive integration with the public realm creates a visually attractive and pleasant experience, particularly at ground level.

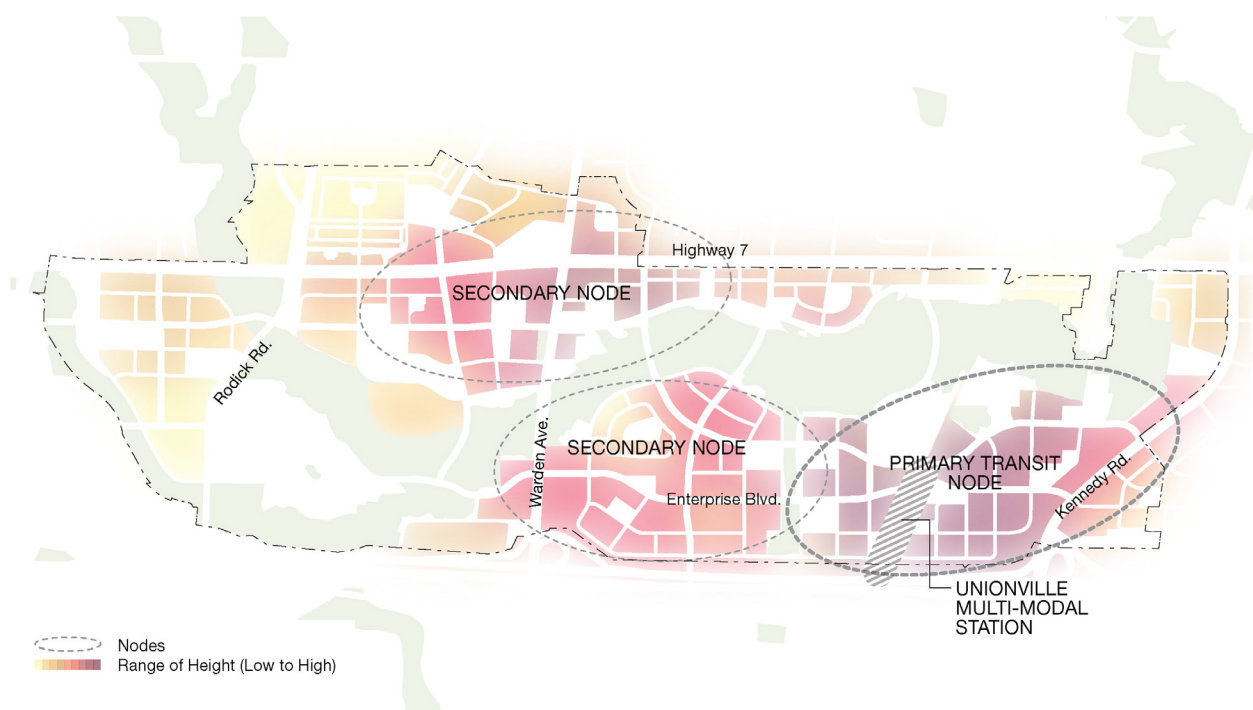


Figure 5.2 Blg Move 2: Focusing Built Form Intensity at Particular Nodes

3) *Balancing employment and residential uses.*

Markham Centre is a downtown not a dormitory. While many people will call the area home, many others will come to work, shop and access services and amenities. Getting the balance of uses right is critical to realizing a complete community and a real downtown.

While it is acknowledged that Mixed Use areas will likely be predominantly residential, with appropriate quantities of retail and services, significant areas are reserved for employment-generating uses through Mixed Use Office Priority and Employment designations. In this way, Markham Centre will continue to build on its success as a diversified economic hub that generates significant employment and contributes to Markham’s brand as future-oriented business location.

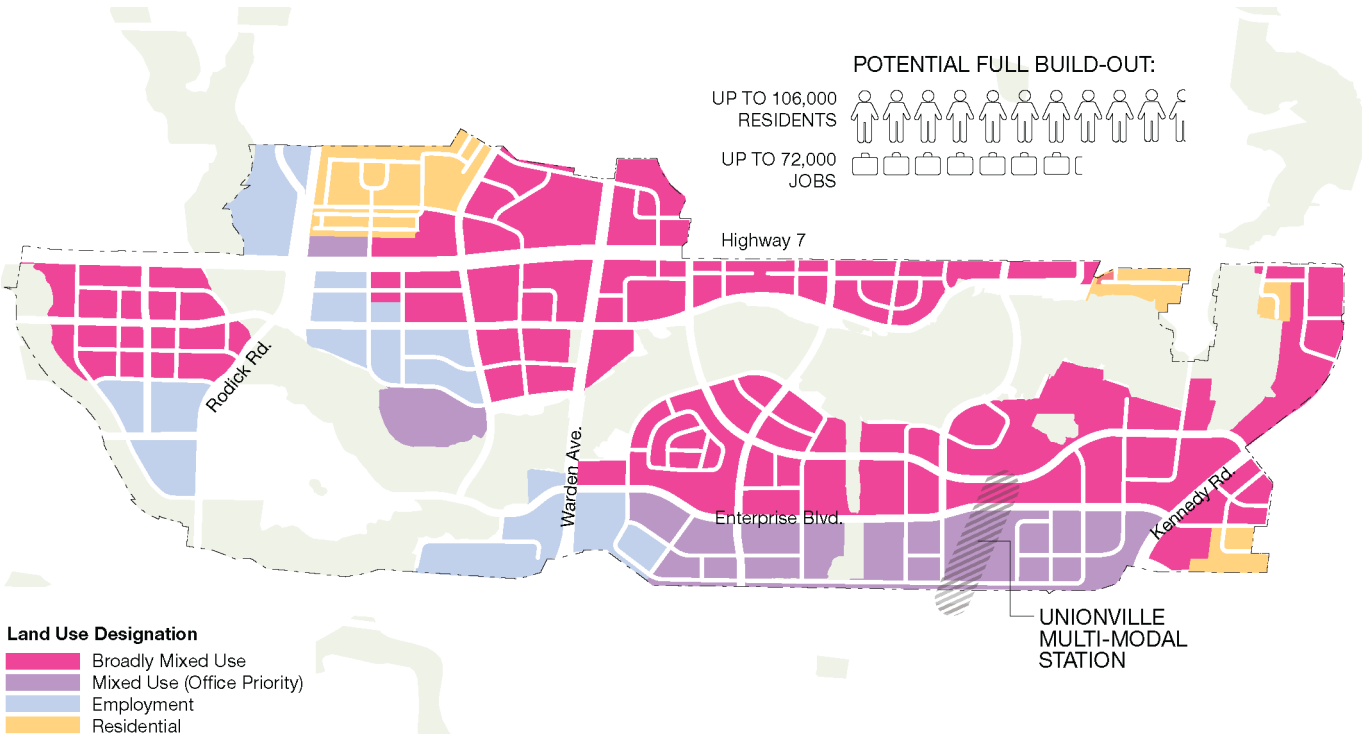


Figure 5.3 Big Move 3: Balancing Employment and Residential Uses

4) A network of neighbourhoods, each anchored by an active core.

Markham Centre is too big to be just one place. As well as a Downtown, it is a series of neighbourhoods, connected to each other and the greater whole, integrated but self-reliant.

Each district sub-area has a community focal point, which combines a public space like an urban square or park with retail streets. These areas will be the crossroads of community and feature many of the amenities needed for day-to-day life. Everyone who lives and works in Markham Centre will be able to access a variety of retail, services, parks and community facilities within a 15-minute walk.

These district sub-areas will take on a different character, with varying combinations/configurations of built form, public spaces, retail/services and community uses.

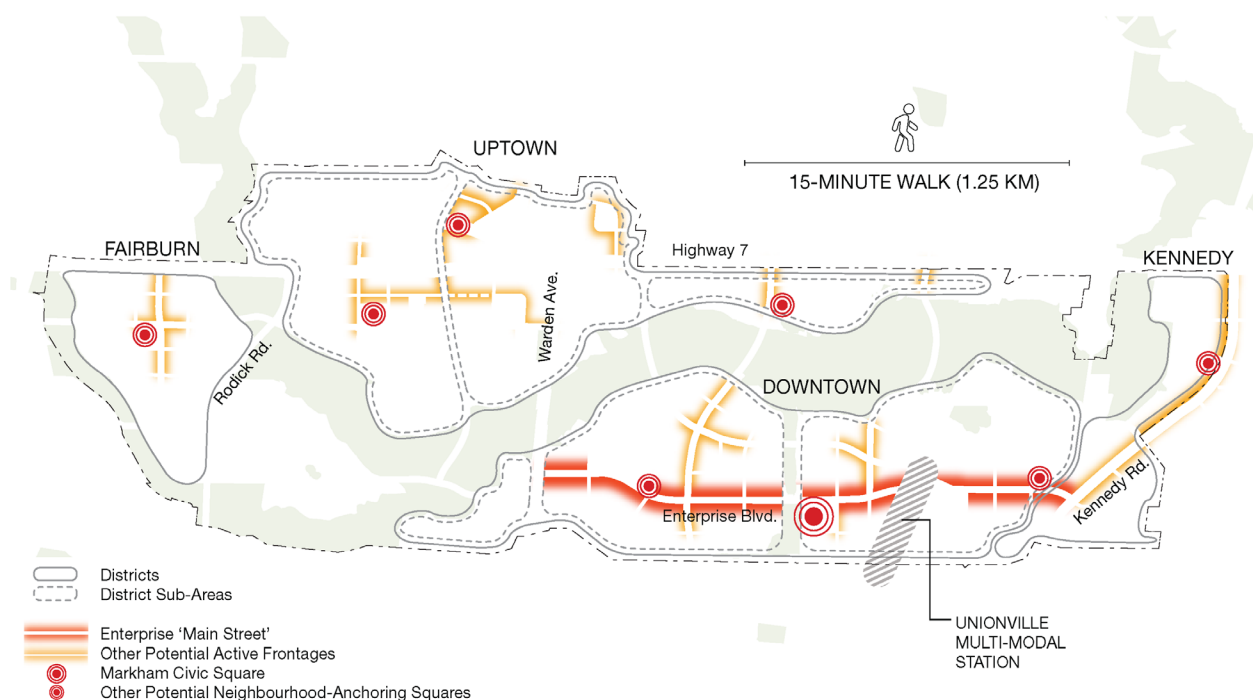


Figure 5.4 Big Move 4: A Network of Neighbourhoods Each Anchored by an Active Core

5) Focus on the Greenway as the Centre's key identifier and public space.

The Greenway, largely defined by the Rouge River Valley system, is a valuable natural asset. It will set Markham Centre apart from other intensification areas in the GTA, in terms of amenity and identity.

The Greenway presents an opportunity to bring an experience of nature into the heart of a very urban and intense place. Thoughtful consideration will be paid to balancing its ecological integrity and recreational amenity, while contributing to the variety of experiences available in Markham Centre.

The built portion of Markham Centre will be integrated with its natural core, by creating great connectivity to and through the Greenway, and orienting buildings, parks and other public realm elements toward it.



Figure 5.5 Big Move 5: Focus on the Greenway as the Centre's Key Identifier and Public Space

6) Creation of a new civic district.

At the heart of the Downtown District, a cluster of public amenities will create a place where the Markham community comes to meet, celebrate and develop a sense of shared experience.

The Downtown Civic Cluster will include: a major outdoor gathering spot in the form of a civic square; a major indoor amenity, combining a central library, living lab and community centre; and a performance venue for the expression of arts and culture.

These city-serving amenities will create a crossroads for the broader Markham community and serve as important activity anchors drawing people to their Downtown. A quality public realm network will connect the cluster to other Downtown amenities, particularly the retail and entertainment found along Enterprise Boulevard. It will contribute to the sense of arrival as people come to the area via the Unionville Multi-Modal Station.

The existing Civic Centre will be the anchor of an Uptown Civic Cluster. Together, the clusters will offer two distinct poles of civic activity in Markham Centre.

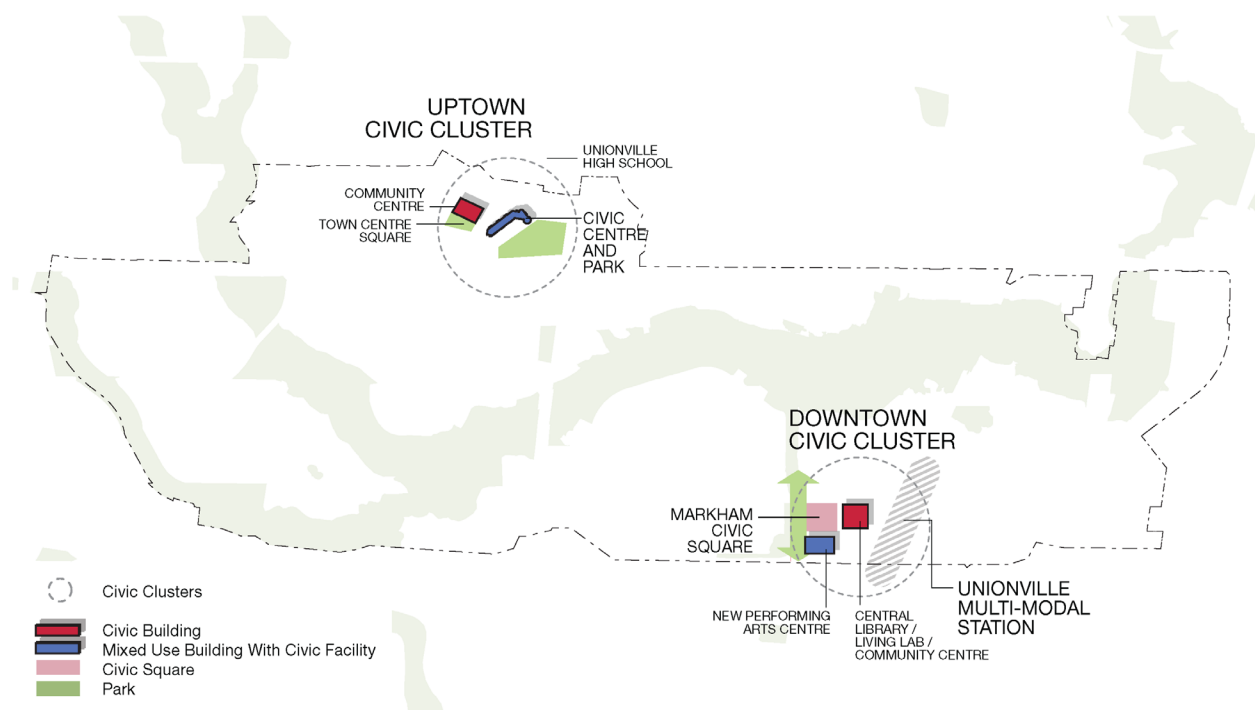


Figure 5.6 Big Move 6: Creation of a New Civic District

7) A parks and open space network, and consideration of the hydro corridors.

Parks and urban squares are located at the centre of each district sub-area. Co-located with other amenities like retail streets and community facilities, they are intended to serve as community focal points. These and other local parks provide amenity within a short walk of every resident in Markham Centre. Smaller local parks are supplemented by larger active recreation parks, which provide the scale and space for more land extensive facilities, like sports fields. This park system links in with the Rouge River Valley system.

Through the quality of design and programming, these components contribute to the variety of experiences available in Markham Centre, and play a key role in building identity and contributing to the character of its district sub-areas.

While heavily constrained due to the presence of transmission infrastructure, hydro corridors have potential to have secondary uses, like trails, that could complement the parks and open space system.

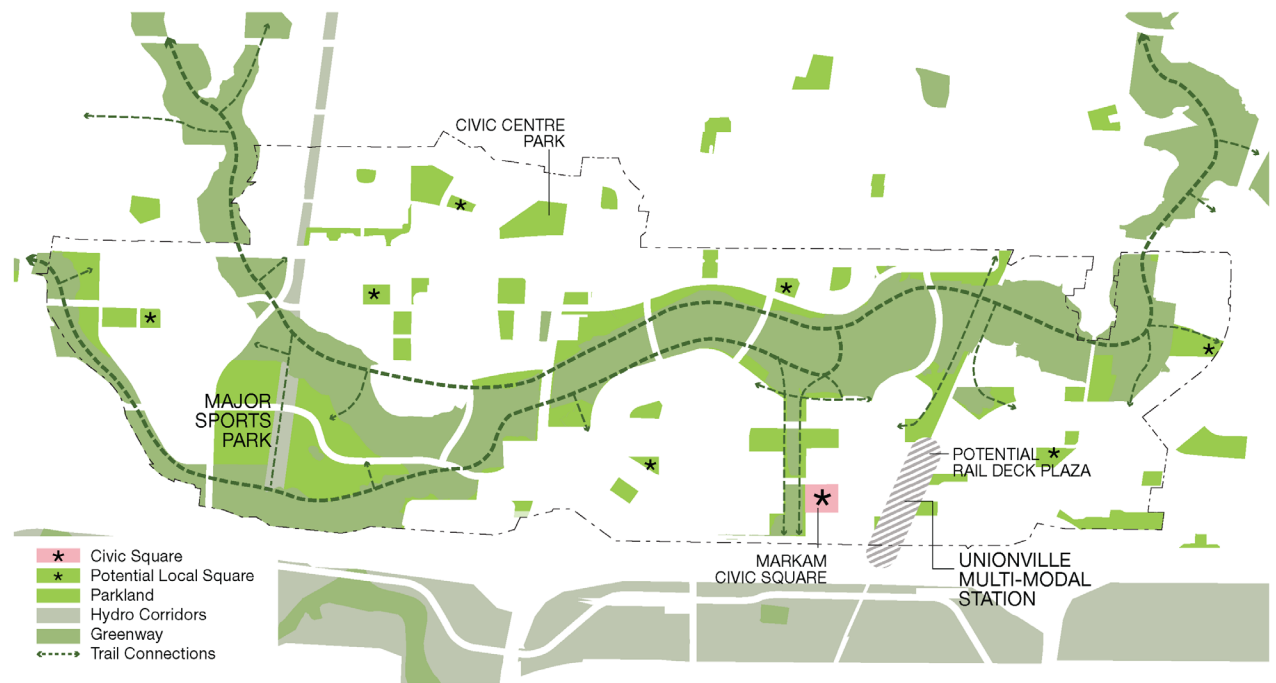


Figure 5.7 Big Move 7: A Parks and Open Space Network

8) An environment that truly prioritizes walking, cycling and transit.

An intense urban place requires an urban approach to mobility. Traditional approaches that prioritize the car will not work. Markham Centre will be an urban environment that overwhelmingly signals that getting around by walking, cycling and transit is the norm.

Walking and cycling networks will be comprehensive and be designed for users' safety and comfort. Buildings, streets and public realm elements will create an environment designed to be experienced at the scale and speed of a pedestrian, making active ways of getting around convenient and visually interesting.

The area will feature multiple forms of higher order transit, including bus rapid transit and two-way all-day rail service, that offer connections at the regional scale. These will be complemented by frequent and reliable local transit service.

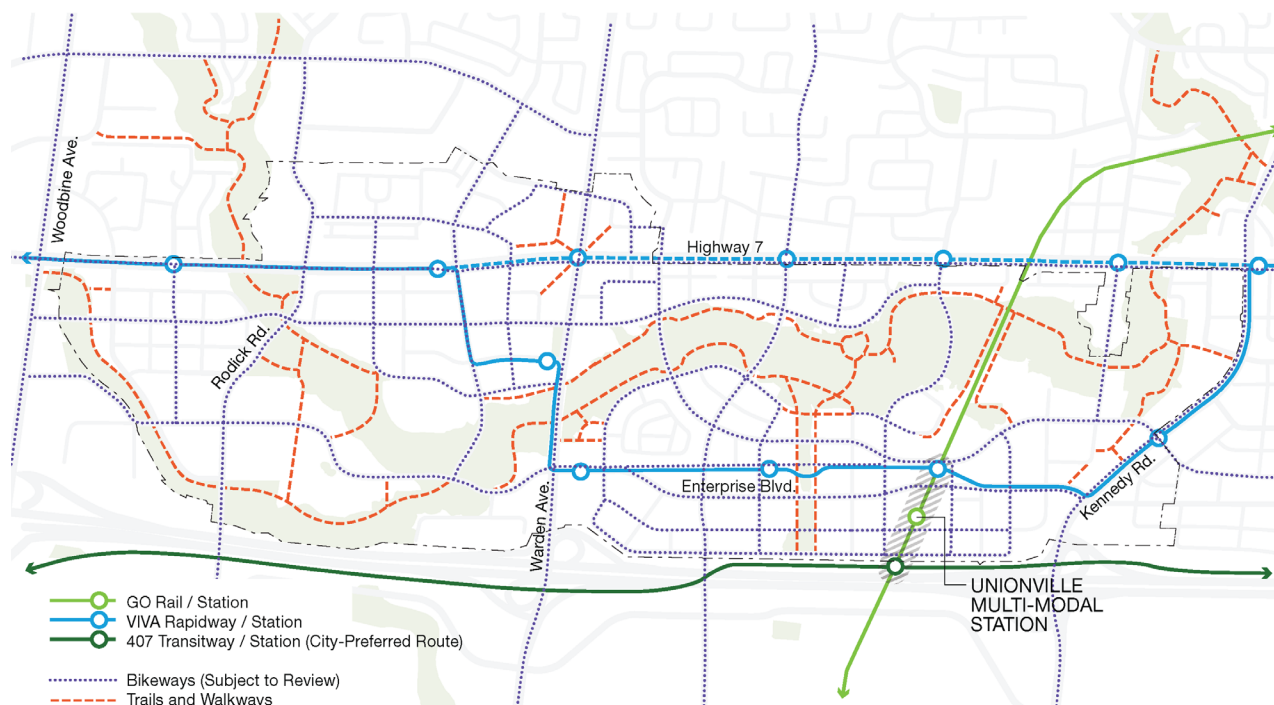


Figure 5.8 Big Move 8: An Environment that Prioritizes Walking, Cycling and Transit

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6. Structure, Land Use & Built Form Intensity

The major issues determining the scale and structure of growth and development in Markham Centre are addressed in this section: the pattern of streets and blocks; the kinds of land uses permitted and their location; and the intensity of built form.

6.1 Urban Texture: From Coarse to Fine

Both natural and planned features in Markham Centre serve to divide the area into districts, sub-districts, and blocks and give the area an urban texture.

The Greenway is the dominant feature in Markham Centre. It traverses the length of the area, dividing it into neighbourhoods, but also offering incredible opportunities for a common green amenity that unites these sub-areas into a greater whole.

Streets serve as primary routes for transportation and subdivide the area into development blocks. They include elements of different grain:

- Arterials serve as high volume routes to, from and through the area;
- Collectors serve as main streets that provide access to, and connections between, Markham Centre's neighbourhoods, creating limited but strategic crossings of the Greenway; and
- Local roads provide the finest grain access.

Overall this network is fine grained and laid out in a modified grid, allowing for good permeability of the area for all forms of transportation and block sizes appropriate for urban development.

Supplementing streets is a network of trails and mid-block connections. These break up blocks even further, enhancing the permeability of the urban environment for pedestrians and cyclists. They also provide an important interface between the Greenway and the built environment, improving accessibility to natural amenities and enhancing connectivity between neighbourhoods.

Higher order transit is another defining feature of Markham Centre. While it does not contribute to the division of the area into blocks, it influences the landscape of uses and built form intensities. The Viva Rapidway, GO Rail line, and future 407 Transitway transform the potential of Markham Centre, making it an appropriate place for intensification and transit-oriented development. The intersection of these lines at the Unionville

Multi-Modal Station serves as an important focal point for intensity of development and a gateway into Markham Centre.

Note: Depictions of the 407 transitway in this report show an EA (Environmental Assessment)-approved route and a City-preferred route. The EA-approved route runs through the centre of the Downtown District presenting challenges to intensification and a regular street pattern in the area around the station. The City-preferred route rectifies this challenge by pushing the alignment to the southern edge of the Downtown. The final alignment of the transitway will be determined through further study and discussions with the Province.

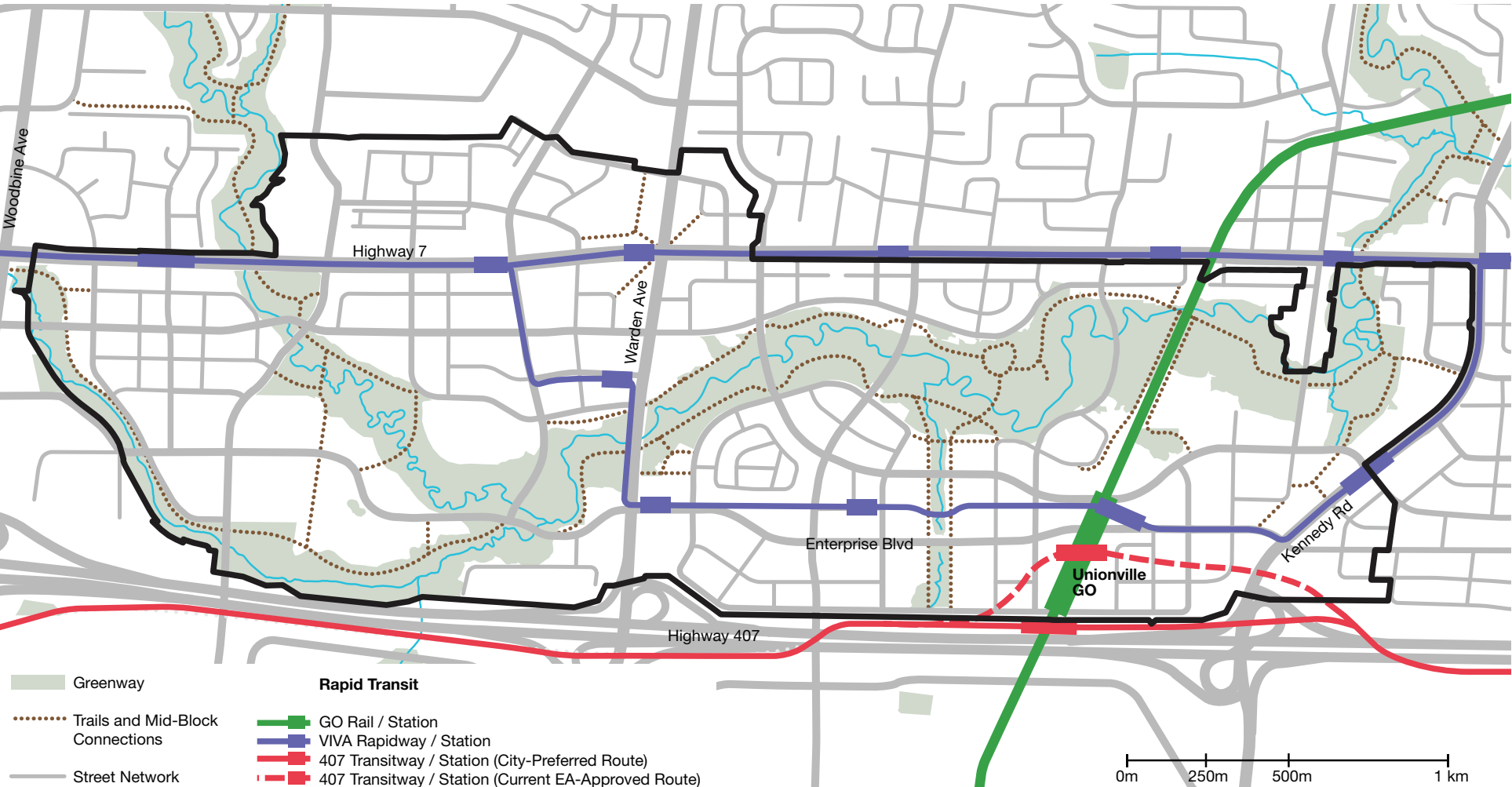


Figure 6.1 Urban Texture

6.2 Land Uses

Land use refers to the kinds of activities that can occur on a parcel of land (e.g. residential, retail, services, offices, industrial, etc.). The land uses proposed in the Development Concept largely follow the same categories as the land use designations in the Markham Official Plan, although the heights and densities permitted will be revised to reflect the built form intensities outlined in sub-section 6.3.

Markham Centre is a balance of mixed use areas that allow residential along with other compatible uses, and employment-oriented areas that are meant to ensure a variety of jobs, are located in Markham Centre. The categories of land use are:

Residential

Residential Low-Rise – Existing residential neighbourhoods, with lower-scale buildings such as detached and semi-detached dwellings, duplexes and townhouses, which will experience minimal physical change in the future.

Residential Mid-Rise – Areas characterized by mid-rise residential buildings that provide for a diversity of housing mix and building types and modest levels of intensification.

Mixed Use

Mixed Use Low-Rise – Areas that provide a diverse range of small-scale retail, service, office, community, institutional and recreational uses to neighbourhoods.

Mixed Use Mid-Rise – Areas with a full range of small-, medium- and large-sized retail and service functions integrated with community and residential uses in a mixed-use setting in a manner that is transit-supportive and pedestrian-oriented.

Mixed Use High-Rise – Attractive, liveable, high density urban environments with a full mix of uses and range of building types. By virtue of their high levels of transit access, these areas have potential to provide major opportunities for office employment as well as significant residential intensification.

Mixed Use Office Priority – Areas intended primarily for office employment uses but may also contain multiple-unit residential uses and street-related retail and service uses integrated with the office uses.

Employment Lands

Business Park Employment – Areas that provide strategic locations planned and developed for prestige, larger scale, industrial and office development in business park settings offering high visibility and excellent access to 400 series highways, arterial roads and transit services.

Business Park Office Priority Employment – Areas that serve as strategic locations for the clustering of higher-density prestige office development in business park settings with excellent access to 400 series highways, arterial roads and rapid transit services.

General Employment – Areas that provide locations for primarily industrial and warehousing uses, as well as accessory retail or service uses.

Other

Major Park – Areas intended for large parks that provide opportunities for active recreation, particularly land extensive facilities such as sports fields.

Greenway – Areas intended to protect natural heritage and hydrologic features, while supporting protection of wildlife habitat, passive recreation uses, natural heritage enhancement opportunities and nature appreciation.

Transportation and Utilities – Areas that serve as corridors for facilities such as highways, railways, hydroelectric transmission, gas and oil pipelines, telephone and any other cabled services. Appropriate secondary uses in hydroelectric transmission corridors are possible.

Figure 6.2 shows the application of these land use designations to Markham Centre. Areas that represent a recommended change in land use relative to the existing Official Plan land use designation are noted.

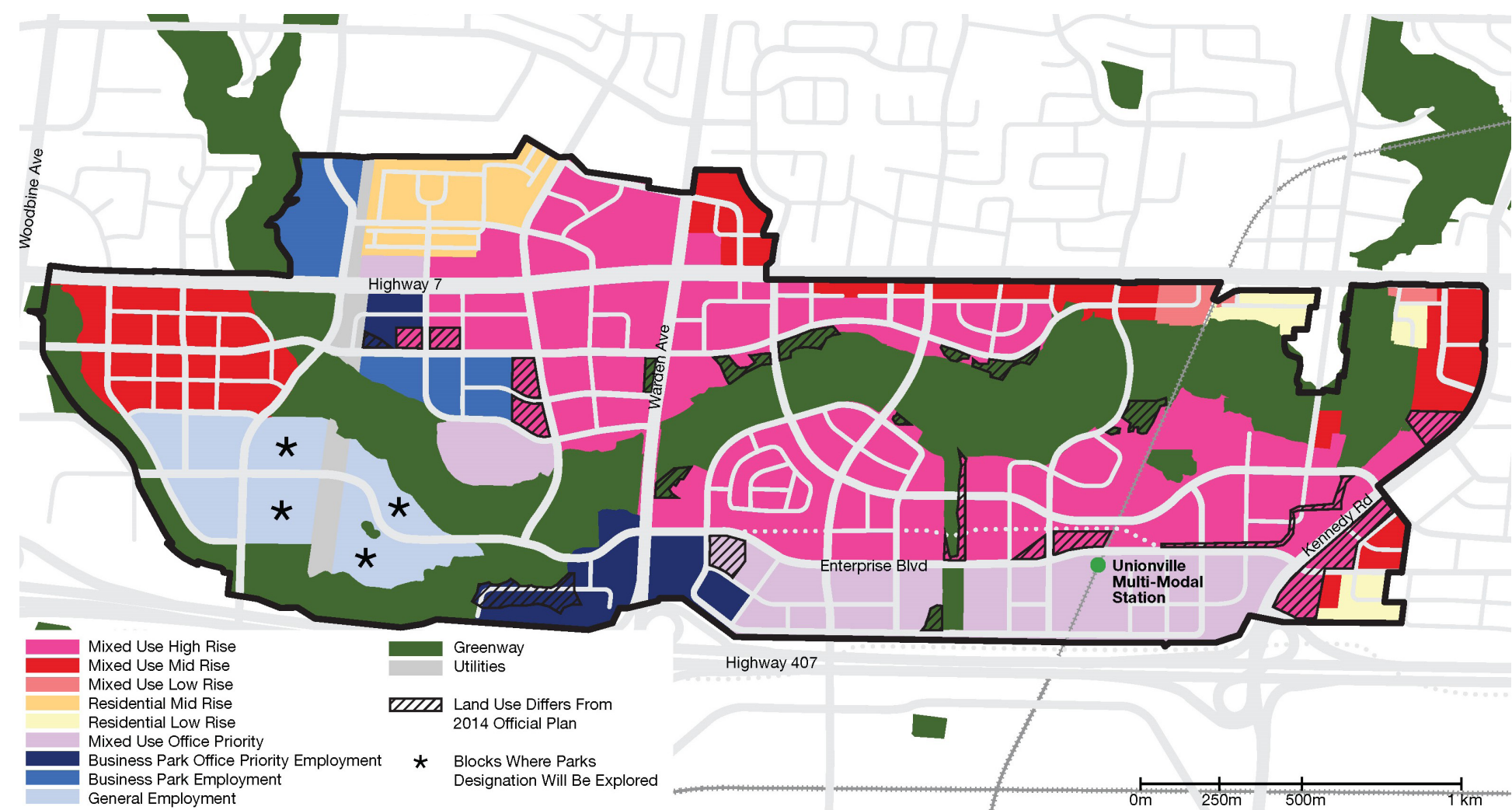


Figure 6.2 Land Use

6.3 Built Form Intensity - Density

The Development Concept presents a hierarchy of built form intensity.

The primary focus of this intensity is the station area around the Unionville Multi-Modal Station, where three lines of higher order transit – GO rail, the Viva Rapidway Bus Rapid Transit and the 407 Transitway – are planned to intersect. Locating built form intensity in this area concentrates people and jobs within a short walk of excellent higher order transit with fast and efficient connections to the broader region.

A secondary focus of intensity is centred on Birchmount Avenue and Enterprise Boulevard. This area is a continuation of the Downtown at a moderate scale, west of the station area.

This area has relatively good proximity to the station area and closer higher order transit connections via the Viva Rapidway. Intensity in this area will support Enterprise Boulevard as Markham's Main Street and centre of activity.

Another secondary focus of intensity is centred on the intersection of Warden Avenue and Highway 7. With the presence of the Civic Centre and Hilton Hotel, this area is a traditional focal point for Markham Centre. These properties will likely be at least partially redeveloped to support a greater intensity of built form, which reflects a transition from a suburban to an urban place. This area also has good proximity to Viva Rapidway stations.

Built form intensity decreases transitioning from the centre of these areas to the periphery and to the lower density areas beyond the secondary plan boundaries.

One dimension of built form intensity is density – the amount of Gross Floor Area permitted on a block relative to site area. Proposed maximum densities at the block level are shown on Figure 6.3.

Note: The Maximum Density (FSI) Per Block as shown in Figure 6.3 reflects development approvals, as well as permissions proposed by this study. In some instances, the permissions suggested by this study for blocks surrounding existing approvals represent an intensity of development which is less than the approvals. This is the result of considering the cumulative impacts of development at the scale of the whole Secondary Plan area.

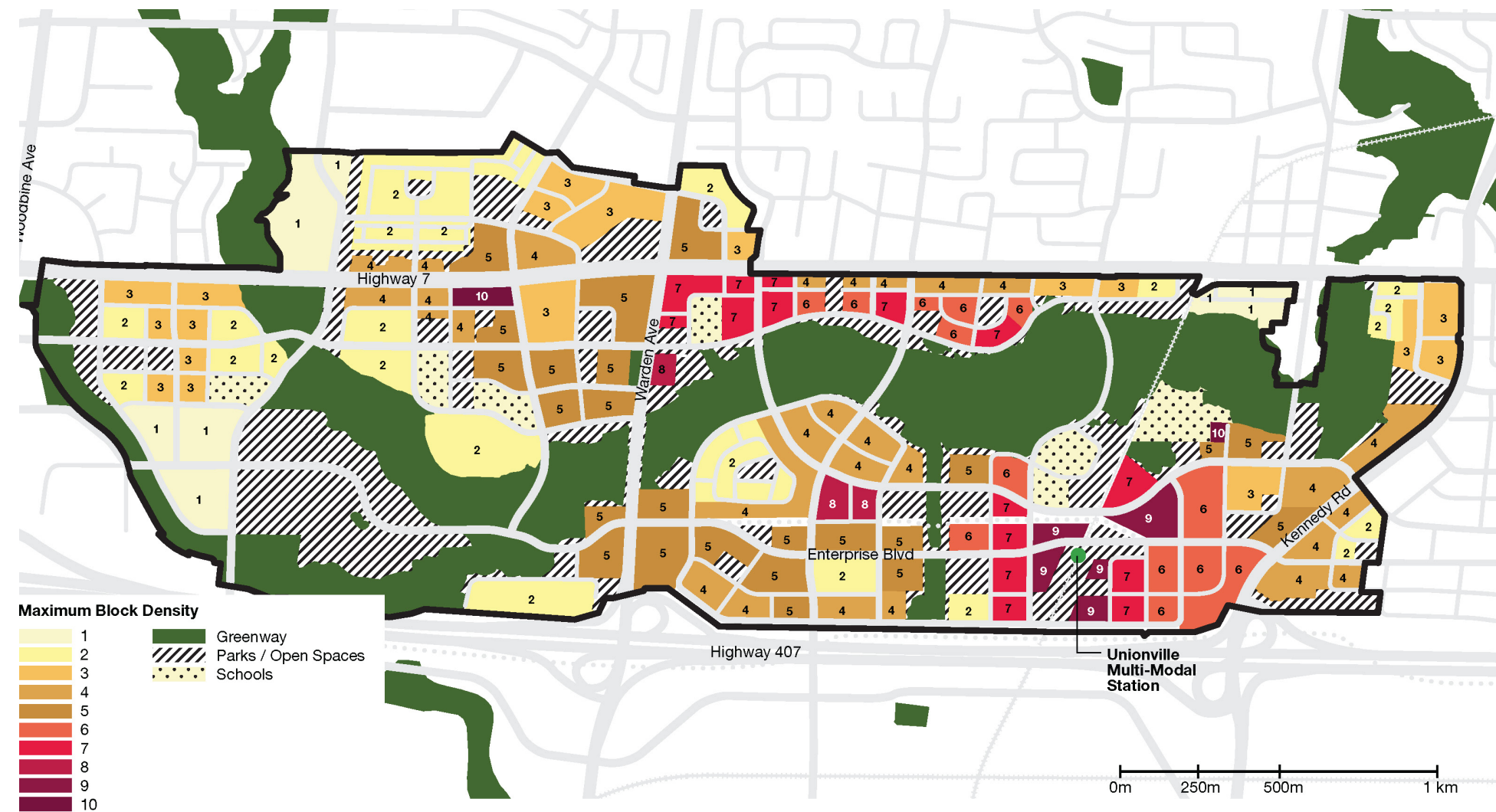


Figure 6.3 Maximum Density (FSI) Per Block

6.4 Built Form Intensity - Height

Another dimension of built form intensity is height. The proposed height ranges in storeys at the block level are shown on Figure 6.4.

The hierarchy of heights follows the spatial distribution of built form intensity described on the previous page:

- Primary focus: Station Area
- Secondary focus: Birchmount Avenue & Enterprise Boulevard
- Secondary focus: Warden Avenue & Highway

7

It is anticipated that built form height will mark out these areas as focal points and create a skyline for Markham Centre which is distinct and iconic. Heights will decrease moving from the centre of these areas to the periphery, with transitions to low-rise built form beyond the study area's boundaries.

A height range is included as built form densities can manifest themselves in different ways to support a variety of building types and scales. Built form will vary between areas of different built form intensity, but also within blocks. Density and height will be deployed in different ways, incorporating combinations of lower scale and higher scale elements to create visual interest and frame and animate adjacent public spaces, like streets, plazas and parks, in a positive way.

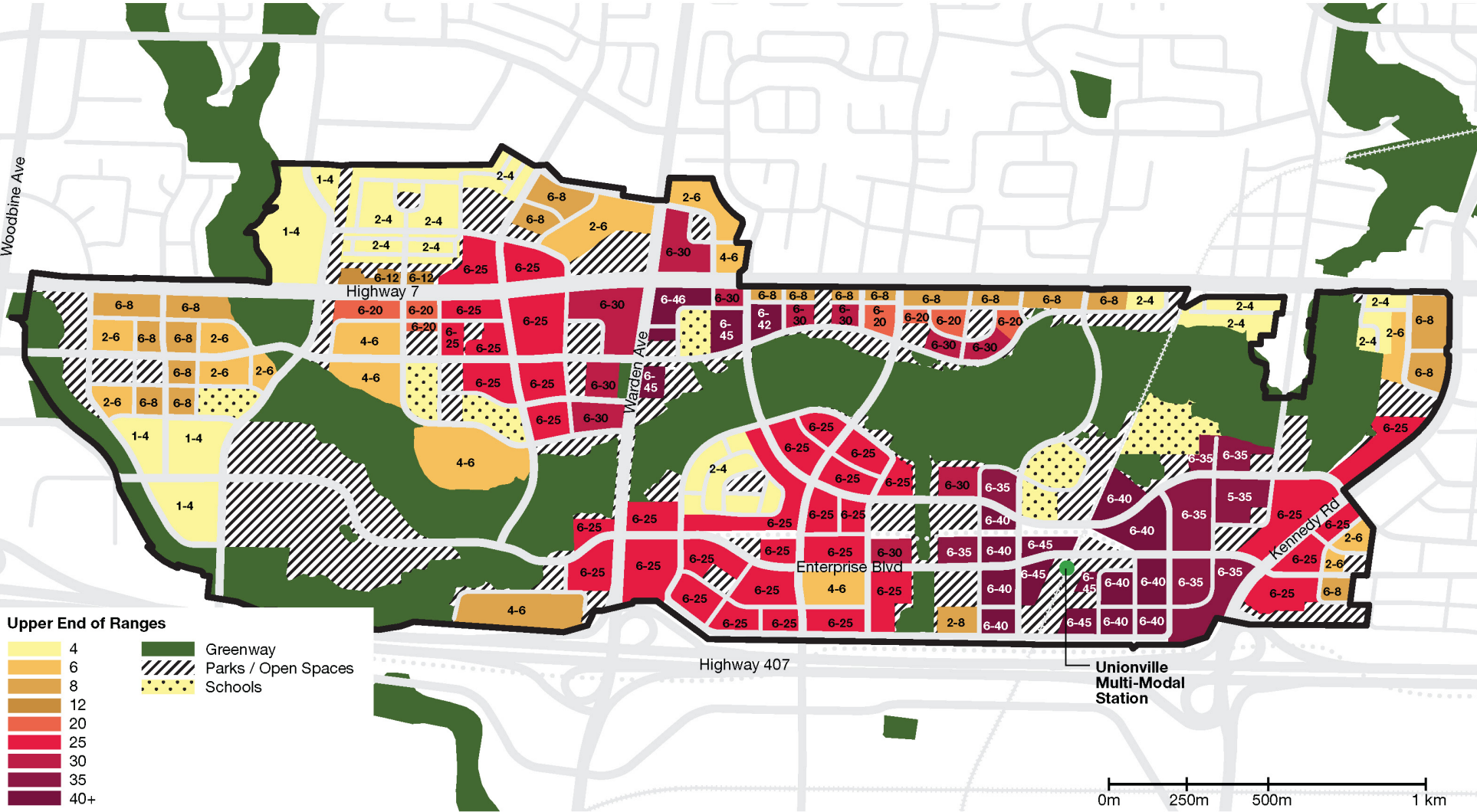


Figure 6.4 Height Range (Storeys) Per Block



Figure 6.5 Visualization of Markham Centre Facing Northwest



Figure 6.5 3D Model View of Markham Centre

6.5 Population and Jobs

The built form intensity represented by the Development Concept, at full build-out, is estimated to have a population of 106,000 and be the location of 72,000 jobs.

The population and jobs estimate by sub-area is shown in Figure 6.6. The vision for Markham Centre is that it evolves to become a true downtown with a balance of uses that supports a diversity of activities. Economic activity and employment-generating uses are critical to that vision.

The Markham Official Plan establishes a long-term resident-to-employee target ratio of 1:1 for Markham Centre. The Development Concept makes good progress toward this goal. The estimated population-to-jobs ration of the Development Concept at full build-out is 1.5:1.



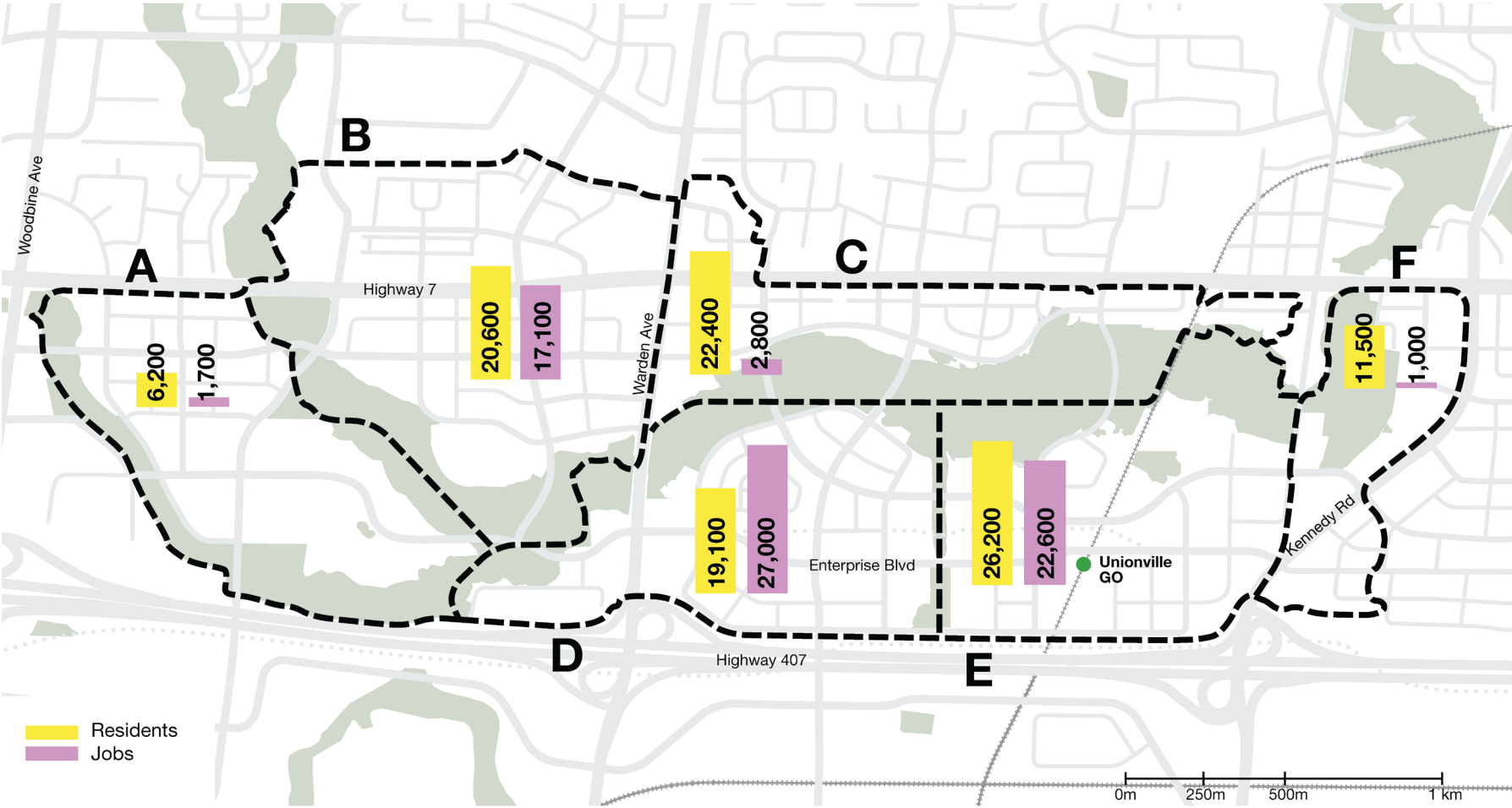


Figure 6.6 Residents and Jobs by Development Area

6.6 MTSA

York Region is currently undertaking a Municipal Comprehensive Review of its Regional Official Plan. As part of this process, the Region has updated its intensification strategy. In this update, the Growth Plan requires the Region to delineate the boundaries of major transit station areas (MTSAs) and to set minimum density targets for MTSAs located on priority transit corridors. MTSAs will be designated under Section 16 of the Planning Act and therefore be protected from land use planning appeals related to height and density. Draft MTSA boundaries and minimum density targets have been proposed by the Region. Seven MTSAs fall within the boundaries of Markham Centre.

Figure 6.7 shows the proposed MTSA boundaries, the proposed minimum density targets and estimates of the densities represented by the Development Concept at full build-out.

For all proposed MTSA, the Development Concept represents a number of people and jobs that exceeds the proposed minimum density targets, in most instances, by a significant margin.

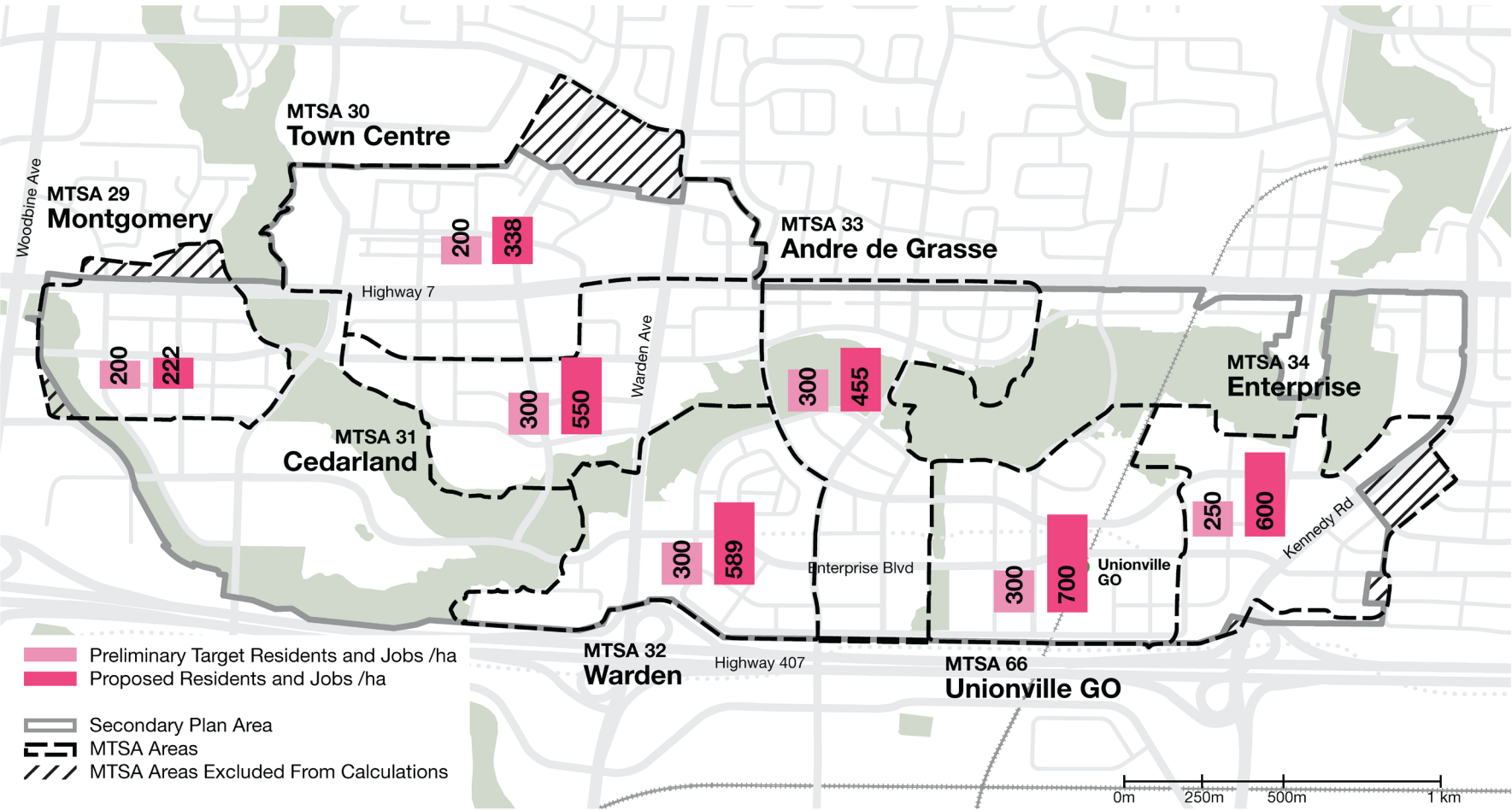


Figure 6.7 Residents and Jobs/ha by MTSA

7. PARKS, OPEN SPACES & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Parks, open spaces and community facilities will contribute to the identity and experience of Markham Centre. This section details how these kinds of amenities will be provided and integrated into the area, emphasizing the importance of meeting the needs of an intense, urban population.

7.1 Parks and Open Space System

7.1.1 Overview

The parks and open space system will be critical to the identity of Markham Centre and the quality of life of those that live, work in or visit the area. Markham Centre is blessed with some great natural amenities, but also challenged to find an appropriate provision of parkland given the planned intensity of people and jobs.

Key features of the parks and open space system are shown in Figure 7.1. They are:

- **The Greenway**, which is largely comprised of natural heritage areas associated with the Rouge River and its tributaries. The Greenway is an incredible amenity that runs through the centre of Markham Centre from east to west. The Greenway will be the central component of the open space system and will be treated as key to Markham Centre's identity. It will contribute to passive recreation opportunities, through a trail system which balances the benefits of access, amenity and connectivity with the imperative to preserve the area's natural integrity;
- **A network of urban squares** and local parks that serves as the focal point of community and provides a variety of amenities accessible at the neighbourhood scale;
- **A major civic square** as a part of a new cluster of civic facilities in the heart of the Downtown. The civic square will be a focal point for the Markham community as a whole;
- **Active recreation parks**, particularly a significant park east of Rodick Road, which are large enough to accommodate outdoor active recreation facilities, like sports fields.
- **Schools**, whose outdoor yards and amenities contribute to spaces and facilities available at the neighbourhood scale; and
- **Hydro corridors**, which contribute to the sense of openness and greenery and, subject to technical review, host secondary uses like trails and other recreational uses.

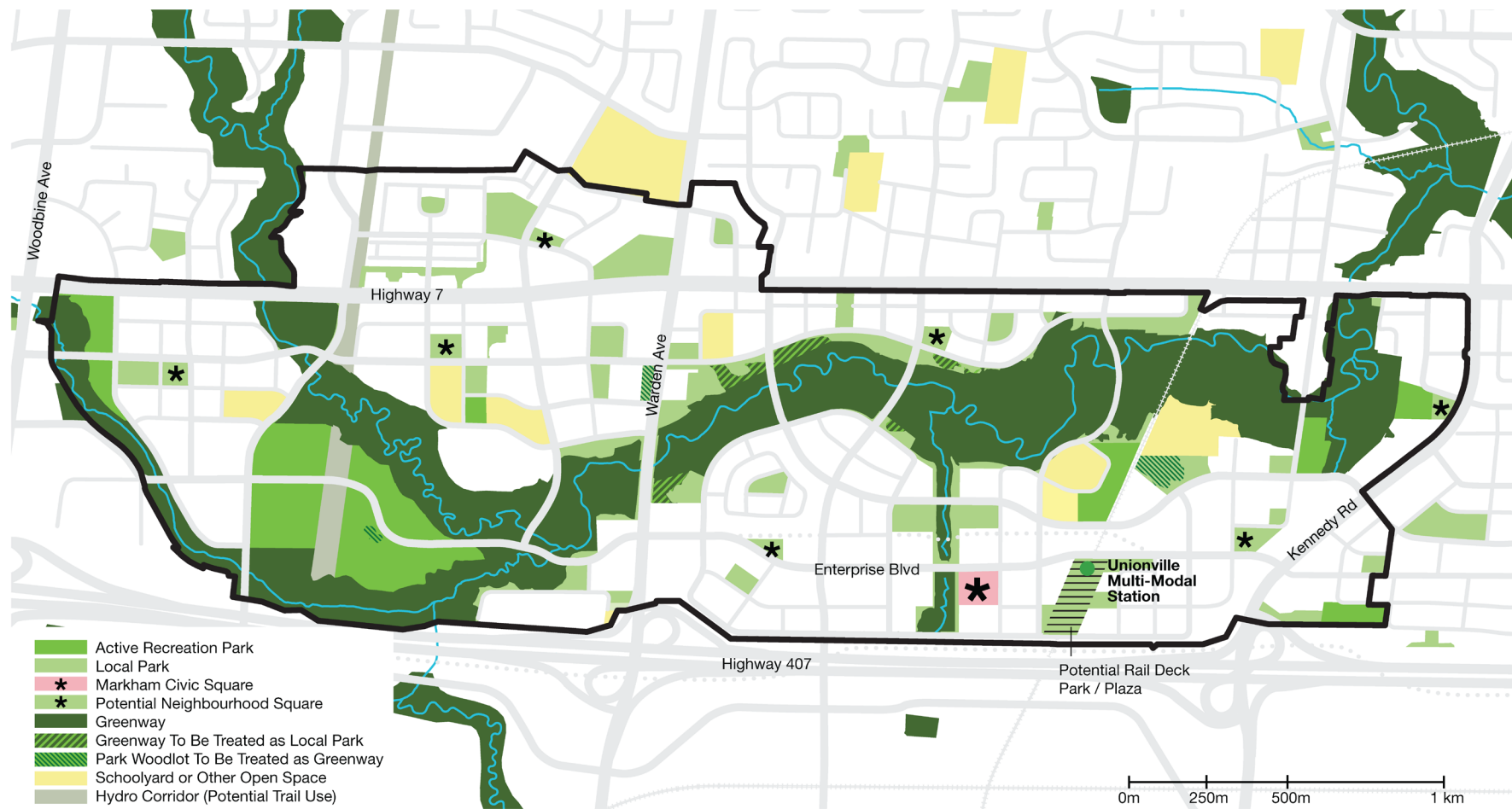


Figure 7.1 Parks and Open Space System

7.1.2 Parkland Provision

The Markham Official Plan establishes a minimum rate of provision for City Parks of 1.2 hectares per 1,000 persons. The City of Markham's Integrated Leisure Master Plan identifies a future active parkland requirement of 1.7 hectares per 1,000 residents.

The Development Concept falls short of these city-wide standards at 0.57 hectares per 1,000 residents. Figure 7.2 shows how parkland provision rates vary by sub-area. These parkland provision rates reflect the intense urban environment planned for Markham Centre. This rate of parkland provision can create a great parks system for Markham Centre, if:

- All the parks shown, or their equivalent, are secured. This is particularly essential for the major active recreation parks, which due to their size are able to host land-extensive facilities, like sports fields. These parks are vital to providing a park system of an appropriate area and amenity, but may have land acquisition challenges that need to be overcome to support their implementation;
- Parks are constructed and maintained to reflect an intensity of use that is a result of their urban condition;
- Any increase in development permissions that exceed those in the plan, are accompanied by an expanded parkland provision; and
- Consideration is paid to how other city parks and active recreational facilities, outside Markham Centre, can meet the needs of Markham Centre residents.

Although natural heritage areas, like the Greenway, contribute to the parks and open space system, they can not be considered a substitute for actively programmed park space.

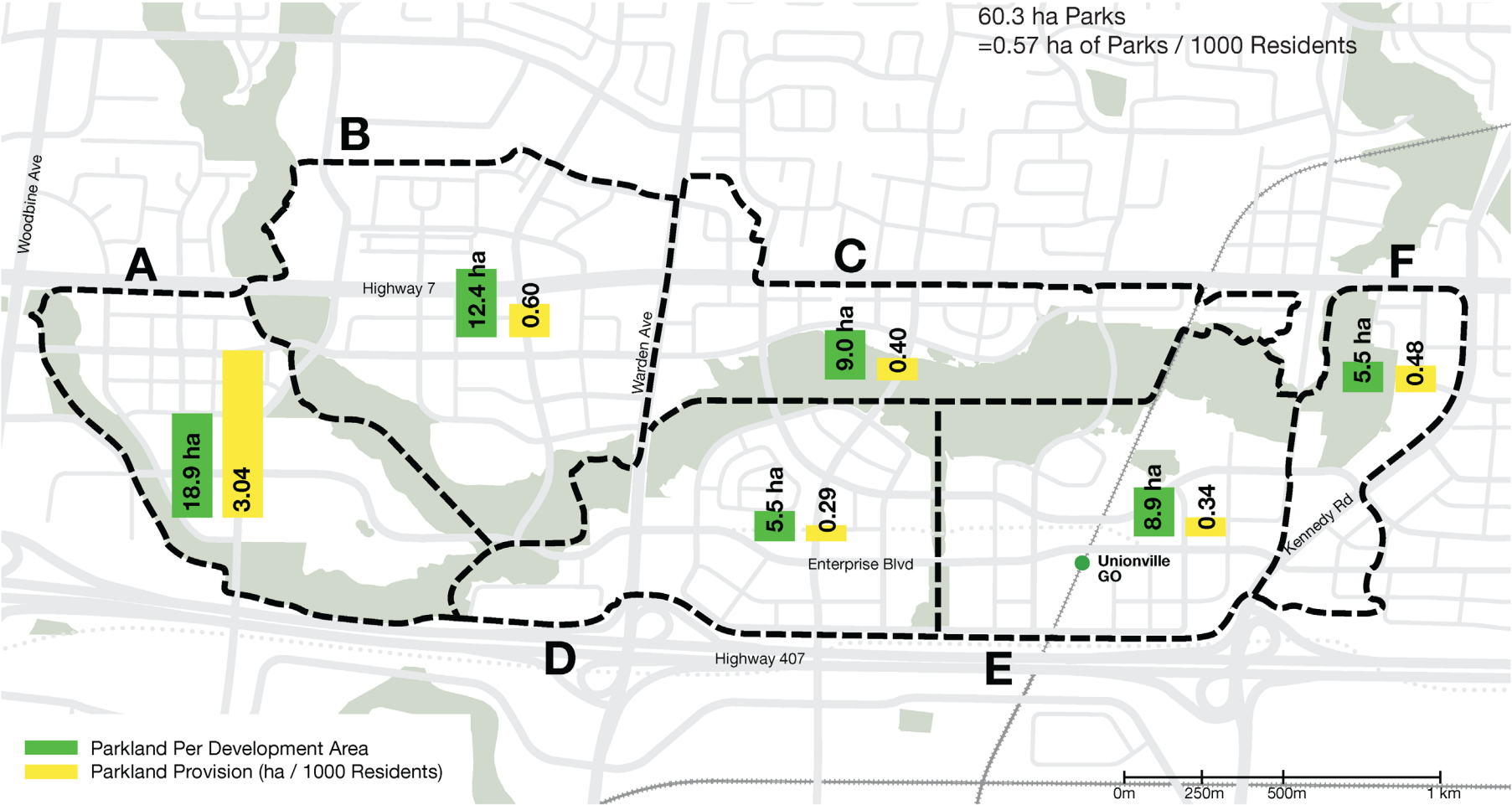


Figure 7.2 Parkland by Development Area

7.1.3 Greenway

The Rouge River Valley runs through Markham Centre, roughly from east to west over approximately 4.8 km. Over 22% of the study area is designated as Greenway, mostly associated with the river valley and its associated tributaries. The Markham Official Plan establishes that greenways are areas intended to protect natural heritage and hydrologic features, while supporting protection of wildlife habitat, passive recreation uses, natural heritage enhancement opportunities and nature appreciation.

The Development Concept aims to unlock the potential of this prominent feature and make it a central part of the identity of Markham Centre. In doing so, it will have to carefully balance a number of objectives:

Preserve and enhance ecological integrity

– The Greenway is a protected and valued natural asset to be enhanced and restored as a sustainable and biodiverse greenspace within a highly urbanized setting. The Development

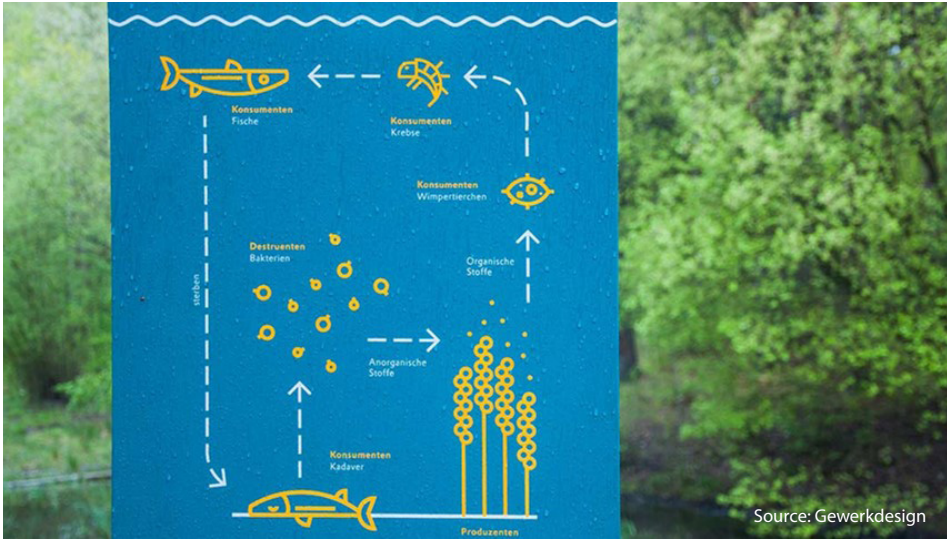
Concept supports protecting natural heritage features, functions and significant species. It also recognizes the potentially hazardous characteristics of water courses than need to be fully considered to ensure safety.

Realize recreational amenity – In a high density urban environment, the Greenway holds the potential to expand the diversity of experiences present in Markham Centre and contribute in important ways to the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors. The Greenway will serve as Markham Centre’s green lungs and provide different ways of accessing nature in the heart of the city through passive recreation.

Improve connectivity – The Rouge River Valley system serves as a natural barrier separating different parts of Markham Centre and preventing a fine-meshed grid network of local streets from being established. The number of road crossings are limited due to the Greenway’s sensitivity as a natural heritage area. The Development Concept

proposes to mitigate the limitations on road connections, through a network of active transportation linkages along and across the valley system, connecting Markham Centre through a common green spine and linking into broader walking and cycling networks beyond its boundaries.

The Development Concept supports the evolution of the Greenway to achieve the objectives above through the location and orientation of parks and the introduction of a trail system and crossings that connect into a broader active transportation network. However, a further, more detailed level of planning is required to carry out a review of the features and functions within the valley system and define potential future opportunities and constraints to creating a series of distinct experiences within the Greenway. A key recommendation of the Secondary Plan update is to develop a Greenway Master Plan that undertakes this analysis and creates a framework for implementation.



Images 7.3-7.6 Different Experiences of Nature Precedents

7.1.4 Park Types

The Development Concept proposes a diversified network of parks which aims to realize a number of objectives:

- To ensure that all residents of Markham Centre have parks within walking distance of their homes;
- To provide a park system which offers a variety of experiences, including opportunities for different kinds of passive and active recreation;
- To ensure that the provision of parks is appropriate for the anticipated population; and
- To promote a shift in parks programming and maintenance to reflect Markham Centre's urban condition and the intensity of use of park spaces by a significant population.

Figure 7.7 shows the different kinds of parks and open spaces planned for Markham Centre, using the parks and open space classification system established by the Markham Official Plan. Parks outside the study area have been shown for context, but are not considered part of the provision of parks required to meet the needs of Markham Centre.

Destination Parks attract residents from across Markham and the Region and include conservation areas that are intended to serve broader regional interest and perform an important environmental function. The Greenway fits into this category. Destination Parks do not count toward park provision as required under the Planning Act;

City-wide Parks are generally in excess of 12 hectares and provide programs and facilities for the entire city. Given its anticipated population, it is essential for Markham Centre to have at least one park that can host multiple active recreation facilities, such as sports fields and supporting amenities and infrastructure. The acquisition, programming, and maintenance of this kind of park must be a priority as Markham Centre grows.

Active Parks are neighbourhood parks that provide space for sports, playgrounds, and the recreational needs at the neighbourhood scale.

Urban Squares provide multifunctional flexible space and programming for social gatherings,

festivals, and civic functions and the recreational needs of a primarily mixed-use neighbourhood. Urban Squares accommodate special features such as public art that add visual interest and contribute to placemaking.

Parkettes generally provide a passive recreational space for local residents.

Urban Parkettes provide social spaces animated by their adjacent uses such as cafes and shops.

Open Space Lands provide benefits to the parks and open system beyond those provided by city parks, but are not suitable for park programs and facilities and therefore, are not accepted as parkland dedication under the *Planning Act*. Open Space Lands may include portions of the natural heritage network lands and associated vegetation protection zones, transportation and utility corridors, stormwater management facilities, lands required for pedestrian and bicycle routes, and other open space lands encumbered by easements or use restrictions.

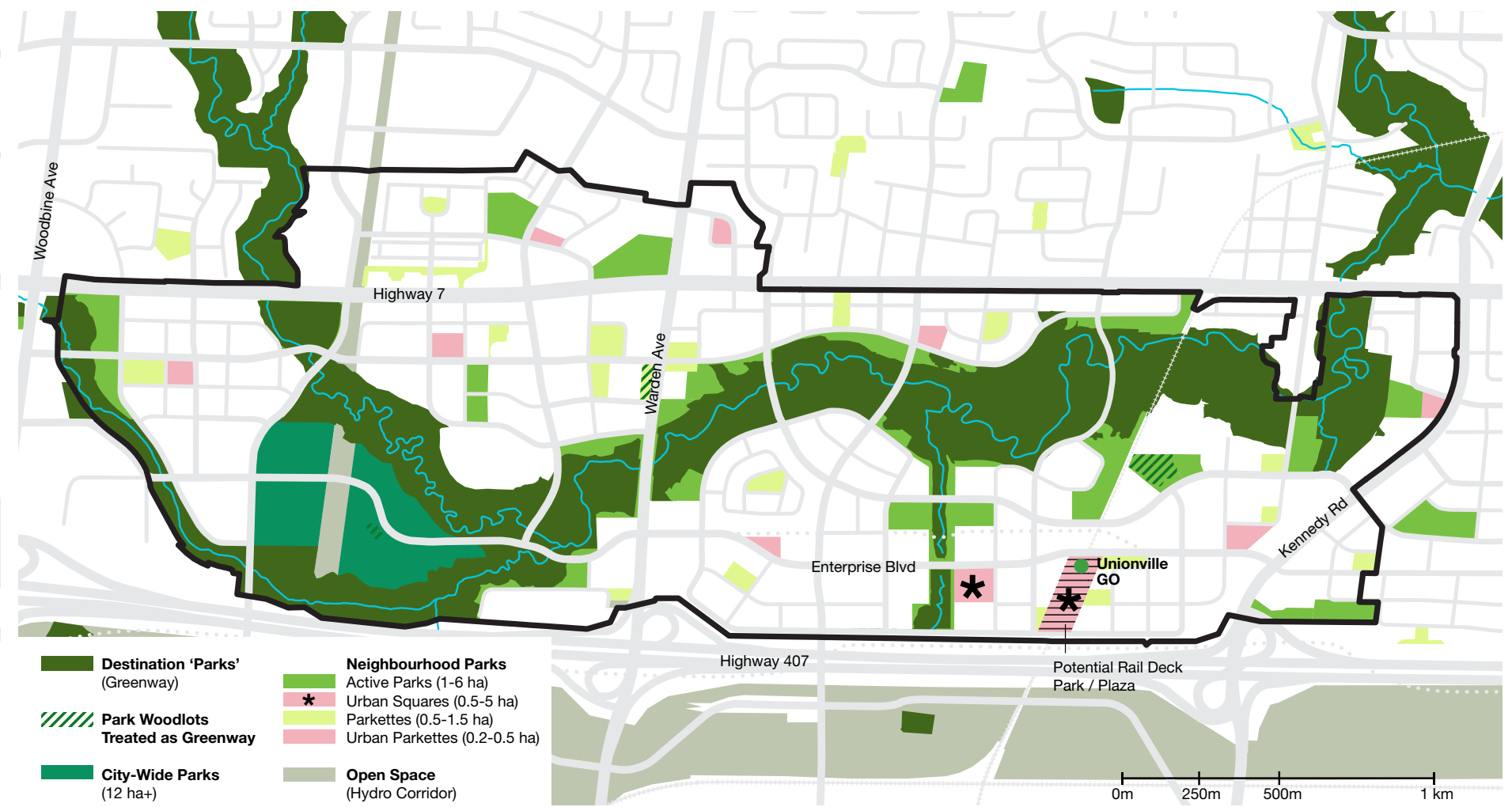


Figure 7.7 Parks and Open Space Hierarchy by OP Classification

7.1.5 Hydro Corridors

The primary function of hydro corridors is as a location of infrastructure supporting the transmission of electricity. However, in consultation with Hydro One, the infrastructure operator, and Infrastructure Ontario, (the owner of the land), some secondary uses are possible.

The types of secondary uses permitted depend on the kind of infrastructure present and plans for future use. Secondary uses generally cannot include structures or plantings that would interfere with the hydro infrastructure or limit the access of hydro crews to infrastructure.

The potential of hydro corridors to host secondary uses that would complement activities and uses in other parts of Markham Centre should be contemplated. At its most basic, without any secondary use in place, the hydro corridors contribute visually to a sense of open space and greenery. Trails could improve formal access to the greenery of hydro corridors, creating linkages by walking and cycling to other parts of the city and the region. Surface parking is another potential secondary use, which does not contribute to recreational amenity, but could service Markham Centre, supporting employment uses or access to the Unionville Multi-Modal Station. Any secondary uses would be subject to detailed technical review.

Within and adjacent to the study area are several hydro corridors:

- Within the study area, running north-south east of Rodick Road.
- Outside the study area, running parallel and south of Highway 407. This corridor includes major infrastructure, including the Parkway Transformer Station and a 500-kilovolt line which would restrict secondary uses.

These hydro corridors are shown on Figure 7.7.



Image 7.8-7.10 Visualizations of The Meadowway, a planned 16-km linear park along the Gattineau hydro corridor from the Rouge River National Park to the Don River Ravine



Image 7.11 A multi-use trail in the Finch Hydro Corridor, Toronto

7.2 Community Services and Facilities

7.2.1 Community Facilities

As Markham's Downtown, Markham Centre will have a range of community facilities that provide amenities and serve as focal points for community life at a variety of scales. Some facilities will be oriented to serving the local population, while others will have a city-wide draw and reinforce Markham Centre as a destination and a centre for the cultural life of the city.

Figure 7.12 shows the proposed location of key community and civic facilities and identifies four community hubs.

Facilities centred on Markham Centre Civic Square (See 1 in Figure 7.12) will provide a civic focal point for the Downtown and the city as a whole. Facilities in this location include:

- A central library for the City of Markham, which expands the offer of a traditional library to create a living lab incorporating access to technology, maker spaces, meeting places and other programming;

- A performance arts venue in the range of 3,000 seats;
- A community centre with a double gym and a variety of other spaces.

Together, these facilities will form a community, cultural and creative hub, linking to surrounding retail, restaurants and entertainment to create a destination for the whole Markham community.

Three other community centres are located within Markham Centre neighbourhoods to provide good access to amenities at a walkable scale (See 2-4 in Figure 7.12). These facilities would include amenities such as gyms, multipurpose spaces, meeting rooms, older adult spaces, youth rooms, teaching kitchens, and dance studios. These facilities will be co-located with schools, urban squares and parks and main-street-type retail to create community focal points at the neighbourhood scale.

Other facilities will not be operated directly through by the City, but add to the Markham Centre offer: the YMCA, York University, the PanAm Centre.

Through its Integrated Leisure Master Plan, the City will determine the kinds and quantity of facilities in more detail as development progresses. As in the case of parks, increases in development permissions will need to be accompanied by an expanded provision of community facilities.

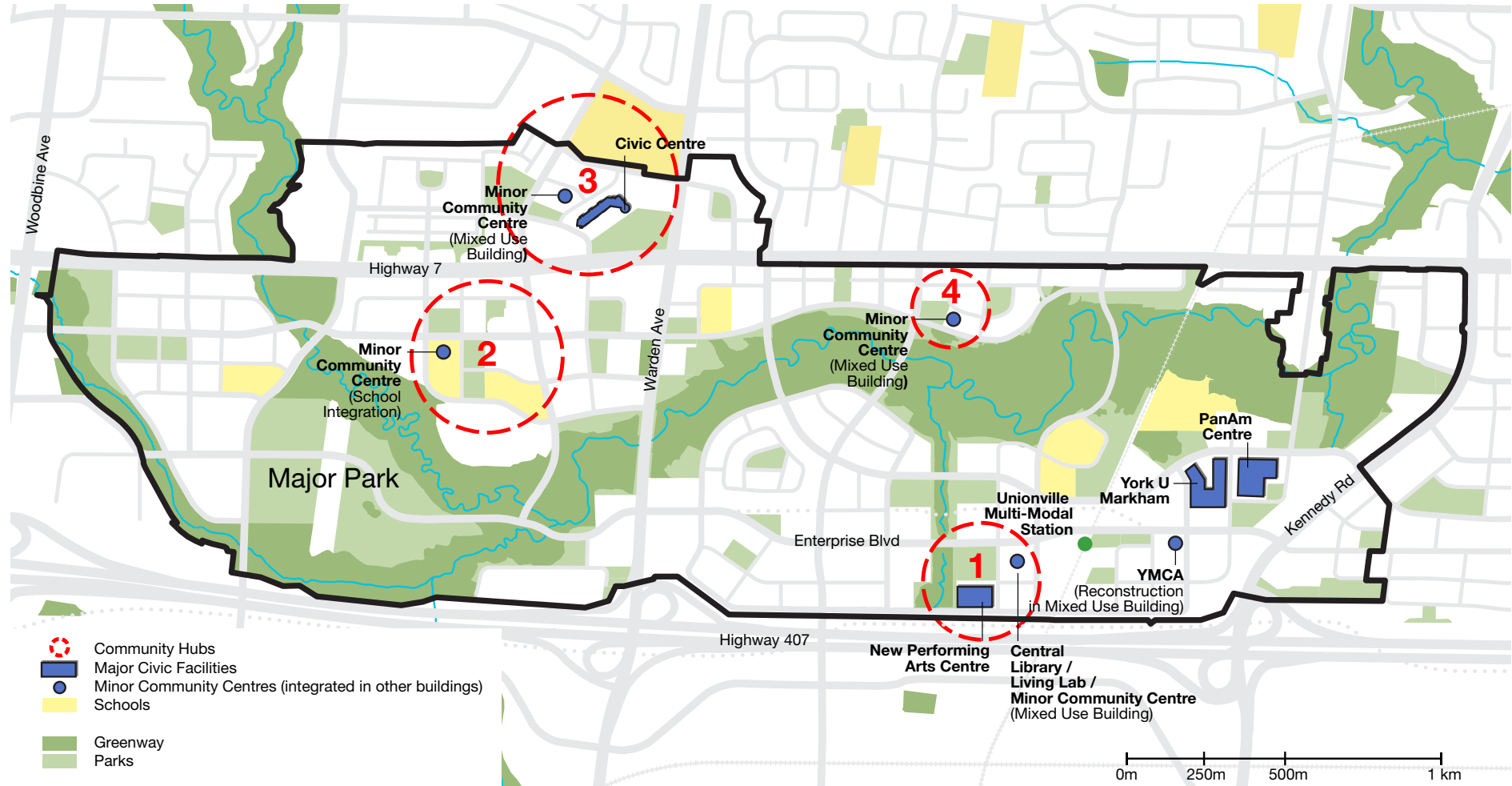


Figure 7.12 Community and Civic Facilities

7.2.2 Schools

The Development Concept proposes locations for six elementary schools in Markham Centre. These locations are shown on Figure 7.13. There are two high schools present in or near the area: Unionville High School and Bill Crothers High School.

Schools are dispersed among Markham Centre's neighbourhoods to promote accessibility by walking. They are co-located with other community facilities and parks where possible to create community focal points and to enable the potential sharing of facilities.

The York Region District School Board and York Catholic District School Board generally require school sites of 5 to 6 acres. These sites may be reduced in size pending detailed design in collaboration with developers. The school boards have also expressed interest in new models of school provision that would be well suited to an urban condition, including the co-location or sharing of facilities by public and Catholic schools, co-location with City-run community facilities, schools incorporated into mixed-use buildings and the provision of parking related to the schools underground.

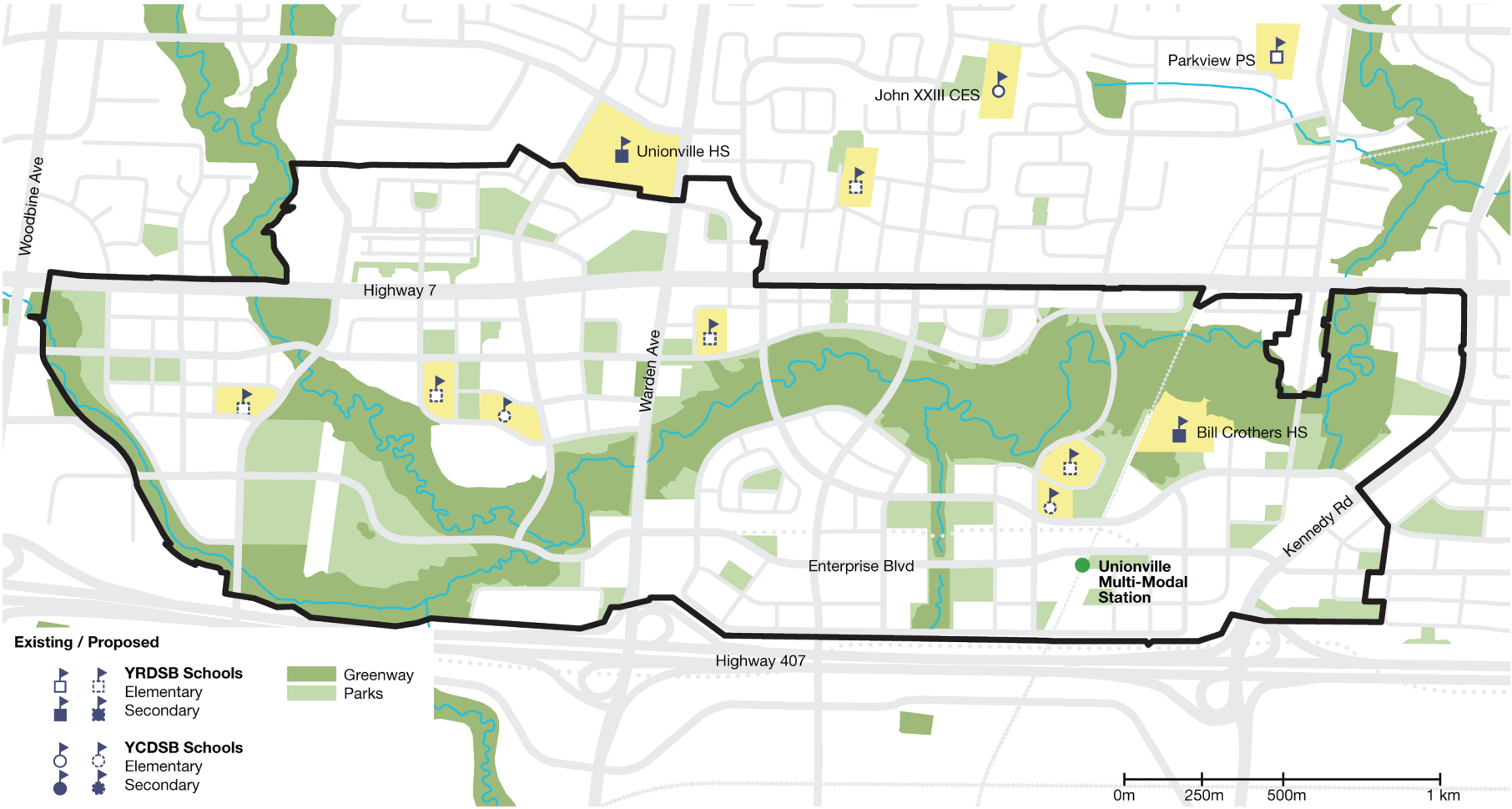


Figure 7.13 Schools

8. Transportation

Markham Centre will be a high intensity urban place. It needs a transportation system to match, one with many choices for getting around that are safe, comfortable, efficient and convenient.

8.1 Overview

A comprehensive transportation assessment of the Development Concept is provided in Markham Centre Secondary Plan Update – Transportation Assessment of the Draft Development Concept (September 2022) prepared by Steer. It proposes a transportation system in which networks for all modes of travel – walking, cycling, taking transit and driving private vehicles – are fully realized and integrated in a manner which provides real choice in how to get around.

The proposed transportation system works in tandem with other elements of the Development Concept – intensity of development, mix of uses, networks of parks, open spaces and community facilities, a quality public realm and streets designed as public places – to create a network of 15-Minute Complete Communities.

15-Minute Complete Communities are neighbourhoods where people can meet many of their needs within a 15-minute walk. Since it should only take up to 15 minutes to access the primary or secondary activities in each neighbourhood, all modes are viable and competitive with each other, and dependency on the car is reduced.

Markham has long been developed primarily as an auto-dependant community, just as most suburban bedroom communities in the GTHA (and elsewhere in Ontario and Canada) have. However, in Markham Centre, it will be impossible to accommodate all new residents, visitors and employees if they all drive. Having everyone drive will not allow for the dense, urban built form that these 15-Minute Complete Communities require. Therefore, in order to fulfil the vision of Markham Centre, the traditional prioritization hierarchy of modes needs to be flipped to actively prioritize walking, cycling and transit use over automobile use.

This represents a significant departure from the status quo. Presently in Markham Centre 72% of trips are made by automobile drivers, with 28% split among other modes: automobile passengers (17%), transit users (5%), pedestrians (3%), cyclists (1%) and other (2%). The mode split to support the vision for Markham Centre would require a decrease in automobile drivers to 41%. People will still drive but many will choose other means that vary based on the distances they need to travel (see Figure 8.1).

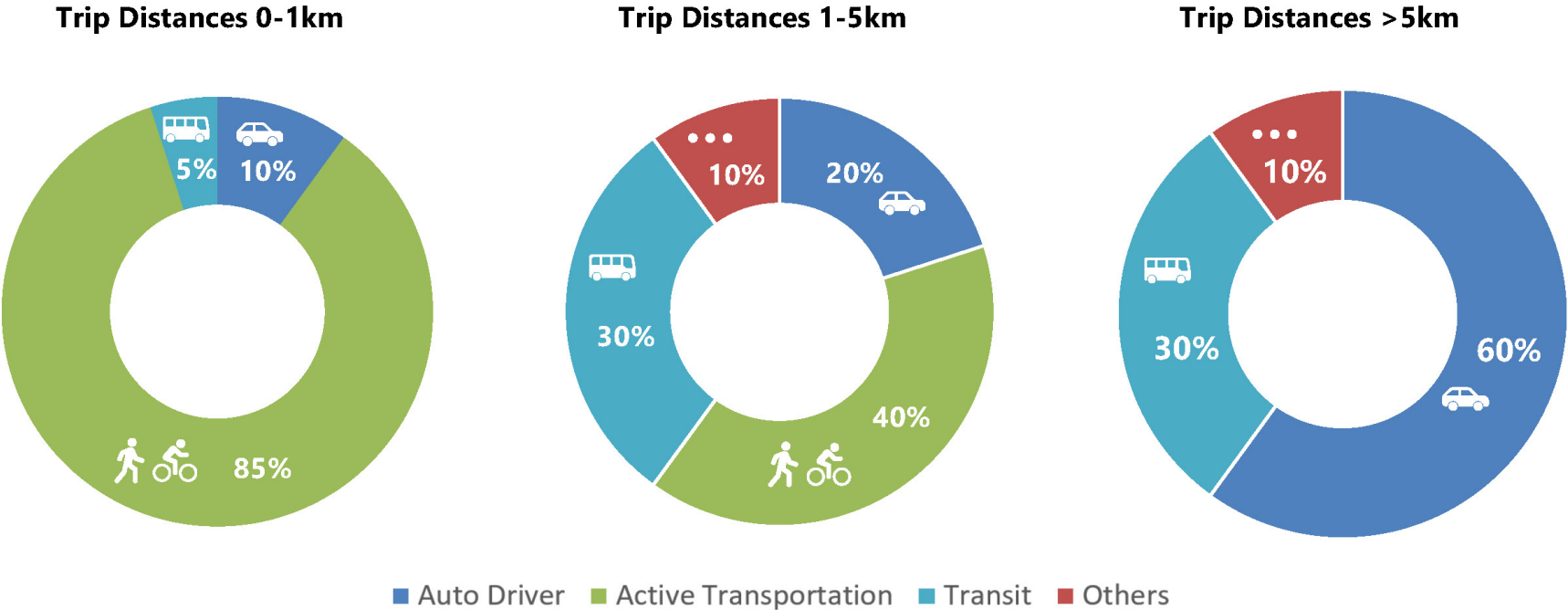


Figure 8.1 Required Mode Share by Trip Distance

8.2 Street Network

The Development Concept street network is presented in Figure 8.2. It differs significantly from the present day, with a much more fine-grained, grid-based network of streets throughout Markham Centre.

Key Connections

The street network includes a number of new connections and improvements that together:

- Create more direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Increase opportunities for local bus service routing and transit connectivity throughout Markham Centre;
- Improve dispersion of traffic which shifts auto demand away from existing congested corridors; and
- Better integrates Markham Centre's sub-areas.

Key connections and improvements include:

Clegg Road Extension – Extends Clegg Road between Woodbine Avenue and Rodick Road. The extension provides an important automobile connection which reduces traffic along Highway 7 and Yorktech Drive (assuming the extension is in place), as well as improving route options for pedestrians and cyclists, and contributing to local transit routing. (See Reference 1 on Figure 8.2)

Yorktech Drive Extension – Linking Yorktech Drive and Enterprise Boulevard through a connection between Rodick Road and Warden Avenue. This linkage relieves congestion on Highway 7 and Clegg Road, provides a critical connection that greatly reduces walking and cycling travel times, and also provides greater access to the amenities planned for this area as well as facilitates the connection of the eastern and western parts of Markham Centre with transit service. (See Reference 2 on Figure 8.2)

South Town Centre Bridge – Provides an important connection from the South Town Centre area to the park amenities planned in the area around the Yorktech Drive Extension, as well as dispersing traffic off of the main arterials. (See Reference 3 on Figure 8.2)

IBM Flyover Removal – Replaces the current IBM flyover on Warden Avenue with a formalized full-moves intersection with a northbound left-turn lane at the intersection of Warden Avenue and IBM Drive. The current flyover does not fit within the urban multi-modal environment that is being created in Markham Centre. (See Reference 4 on Figure 8.2)

Sciberras Road Extension – Provides an additional route into the heart of Markham Centre, which facilitates access to the Unionville Multi-Modal Station, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. (See Reference 5 on Figure 8.2)

Miller Avenue Extension – Provides an east-west connection south of Highway 407. Although this

improvement to the road network lies outside of the Secondary Plan area, it provides an alternative road connection which shifts demand away from Enterprise Boulevard and Verdale Crossing.

Reduced Speeds

Lowering speed limits is one of the best ways to improve traffic safety for all people moving, including the most vulnerable. The improved safety conditions makes it easier for people to choose alternative modes of transportation.

The Transportation Assessment recommends a reduction in speed limits throughout the Markham Centre:

- Arterials – a decrease from 60 km/hr to 50 km/hr
- Major and Minor Collectors – a decrease from 50 km/hr to 40 km/hr
- Local Roads – 30 km/hr

Roads by classification are shown on Figure 8.2.

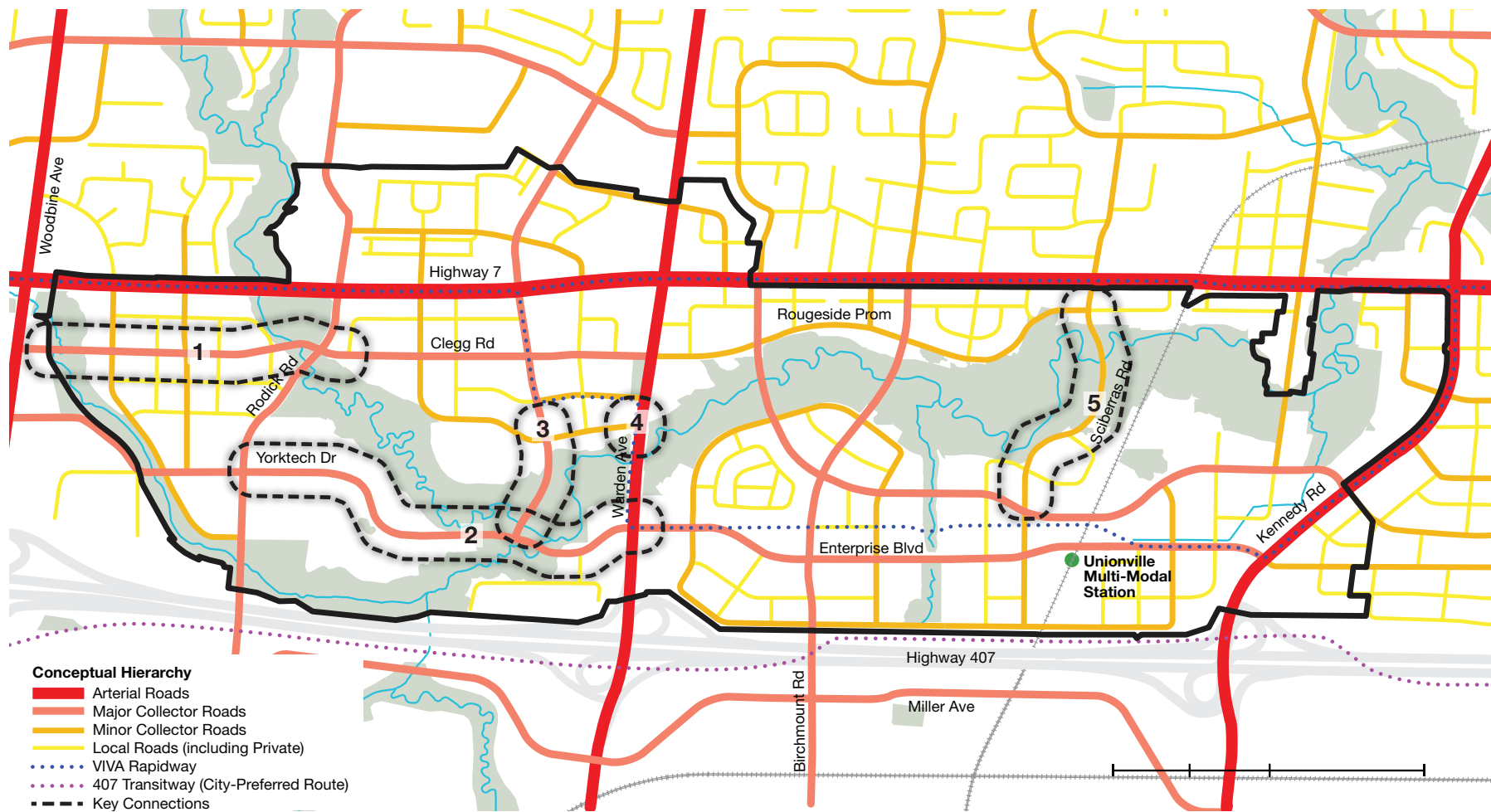


Figure 8.2 Street Network

8.3 Active Transportation

Active transportation is any form of travel where people use their own energy to get around. Walking and cycling are the primary forms of active transportation. The Development Concept has been crafted to support and facilitate walking and cycling through the mix of uses, intensity of built form, location of amenities, and focus on the quality of the public realm. The objective to get more people travelling by active modes aligns with nearly all the other objectives for Markham Centre. Simply put, a good place to walk and cycle is a good place to live, work and visit.

In order to make the shift to walking and cycling, several conditions need to be realized:

- **Proximity** – Destinations need to be within a walking or cycling distance.
- **Connectivity** – Routes to destinations need to be direct and efficient.
- **Safety** – People must be safe and, as importantly, feel safe as they walk and cycle around their community.
- **Comfort and Interest** – Environments need to be created with the experience of walkers and cyclist in mind: are sun and wind conditions comfortable? are routes visually interesting?
- **Street furnishings:** Street furniture, art installations and patios all help to create a space that pedestrians will want to spend time in.
- **Safer intersections:** A number of measures can be taken to improve pedestrian experience and safety at intersections, including:
 - Shorter crossing distances and mid crossing shelters, where appropriate;
 - Minimizing pedestrian delay where possible to avoid impatience that might lead to jay-walking.
 - Sharper corner radii which slow down traffic and decrease crossing distances for pedestrians.
 - Pavement markings, such as painted or bricked crosswalks, to improve pedestrian visibility and safety. Raised crosswalks or intersections should also be considered for low-speed streets not oriented towards maximizing auto throughput.

The Transportation Assessment establishes an active transportation network and makes recommendations for the types of infrastructure that can be implemented to support Markham Centre's transportation objectives and the overall vision.

Pedestrian Infrastructure

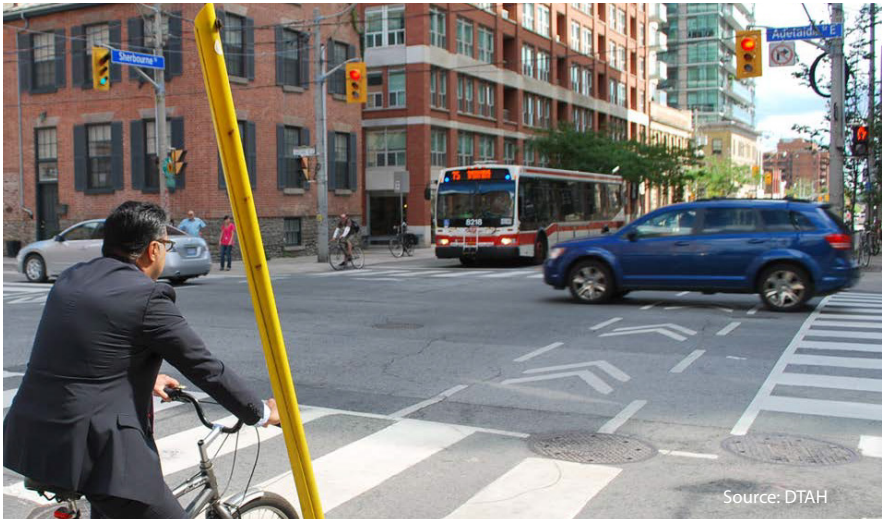
The Transportation Assessment recommends a number of infrastructure improvements to promote walking:

- **Low Vehicle Speeds:** Reducing speed limits along streets and designing streets to support those limits can greatly improve pedestrian safety
- **Wide sidewalks:** Sidewalk width must be adequate to safely accommodate pedestrian traffic, especially along those well-used streets that are destinations in and of themselves.



Source: The Centre for Active Transportation

Image 8.1 Pedestrian refuge islands improve safety at crossings



Source: DTAH

Image 8.2 Pavement markings help prevent conflicts at intersections



Source: The Social Life Project

Image 8.3 Wide sidewalks for destination streets



Source: DTAH

Image 8.4 Street furniture make the street a public place people want to spend time in

Cycling Infrastructure

The Transportation Assessment recommends a comprehensive network of cycling facilities implemented to provide safe routes based on local context. Figure 8.3 shows the proposed locations of these facilities. They include:

- **Bike Lanes**, where a portion of the right of way is dedicated to cyclists, generally separated from traffic with a painted line. This type of facility is appropriate for minor collector roads.
- **Buffered Bike Lanes** provide horizontal physical separation between the cyclist and the roadway using a painted buffer zone. They are appropriate on higher speed streets (50-60 km/hr) with moderate traffic volume.
- **Separated Bike Lanes** provide permanent physical separation between the cyclist and the roadway, generally via a concrete curb. They are appropriate on minor and major collector streets as well as arterials.

- **Cycle Tracks are bikeways** that are grade separated from the rest of the roadway via a slight elevation, providing both horizontal and vertical separation from traffic. They are appropriate on collector roads and arterials with higher speeds and volume.
- **Multi-Use Paths** are shared cycling/walking paths that are fully separated from the road.
- **Shared roadways** are streets where cyclists are not provided their own space on the road, nor any separation from cars. This type of cycling facility is appropriate only on low speed (30 km/hr) and low auto-volume routes.

A number of measures are recommended to make intersections safer for cyclists, including: bike boxes, two-stage queue boxes, median refuge islands, intersection crossing marks, and bike signals.

The Development Concept also includes an extensive trail network within or along the

Greenway which improves connectivity of both pedestrian and cycling networks, as well as providing access to this area of significant natural amenity.

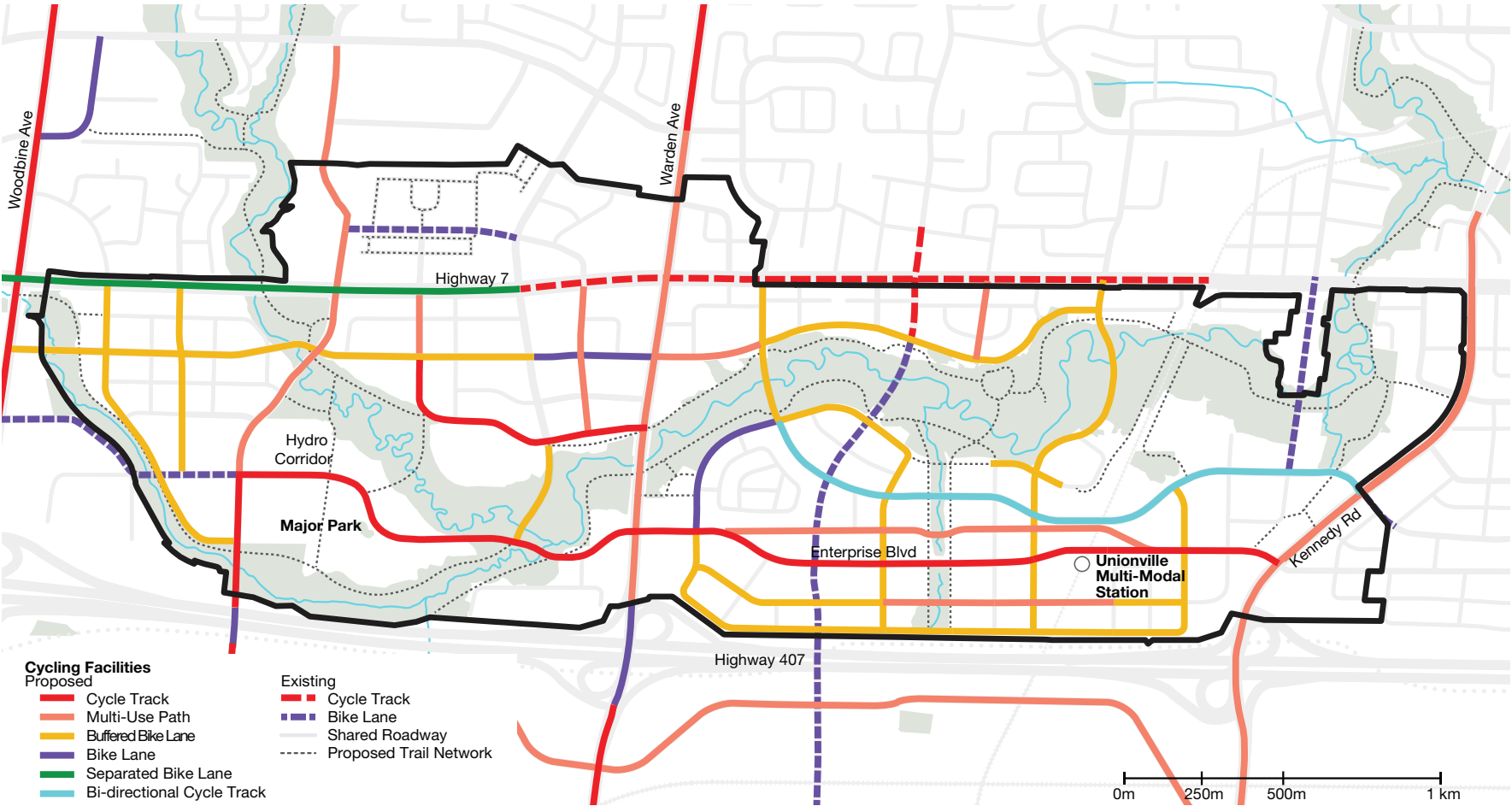


Figure 8.3 Cycling Infrastructure

8.4 Transit

Transit will play a critical role in enabling mobility in Markham Centre, both in connecting the area to the broader city and region, as well as for internal trips. The Transportation Assessment addresses the transit network in detail and includes high-level recommendations.

Higher Order Transit

Markham Centre has a number of higher order transit services, with plans for new services, as well as upgrades to existing ones. These routes are shown on Figure 8.4.

GO Rail Service – Markham Centre is served by the Stouffville GO Rail line at the Unionville Station. Major improvements are planned on the Stouffville GO Line as part of the ongoing GO Expansion to enable all-day, two-way, 15-minute frequency service between Unionville and downtown Toronto.

Viva Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) – The VIVA Purple service currently operates along a dedicated right of way (called the ‘VIVA rapidway’) that

runs along Highway 7 west of South Town Centre Boulevard before running south to Enterprise Boulevard. The rapidway currently ends at Enterprise Boulevard and Birchmount Road. The Transportation Assessment recommends that the rapidway be extended to the Unionville GO station before proceeding back to Highway 7 along Kennedy Road and continuing further east. East of South Town Centre Boulevard, some VIVA Purple buses run along Highway 7 in mixed traffic with curbside boarding. *Note:* Viva Pink and Green routes have traditionally served Markham Centre but have been suspended since the Covid-19 pandemic.

407 Transitway – This Bus Rapid Transit route is proposed to run along Highway 407, spanning the Greater Toronto Area between Burlington and Durham Region. There is an Environmental Assessment-approved alignment for this route that connects to the Unionville GO Station. The manner in which this alignment passes through Markham Centre would create significant constraints on developing the area around the station, otherwise an excellent location to concentrate built form intensity. The Development Concept uses an alternative alignment to address this issue.

Local Transit

An existing local bus network serves Markham Centre, but its lines are concentrated on the arterials, away from some parts of the area which will see the most intense development. The Transportation Assessment has a number of recommendations to improve local transit service:

- A loop line, internal to Markham Centre, that would connect the area’s various neighbourhoods and community focal points, with the potential for this service to run in HOV/transit lanes to improve service. (See Figure 8.4 for the alignment of the bus loop)
- Rerouting of local buses to connect to the Unionville Multi-Modal Station and a second interchange point in the western portion of Markham Centre, likely near Highway 7 and South Town Centre Boulevard.

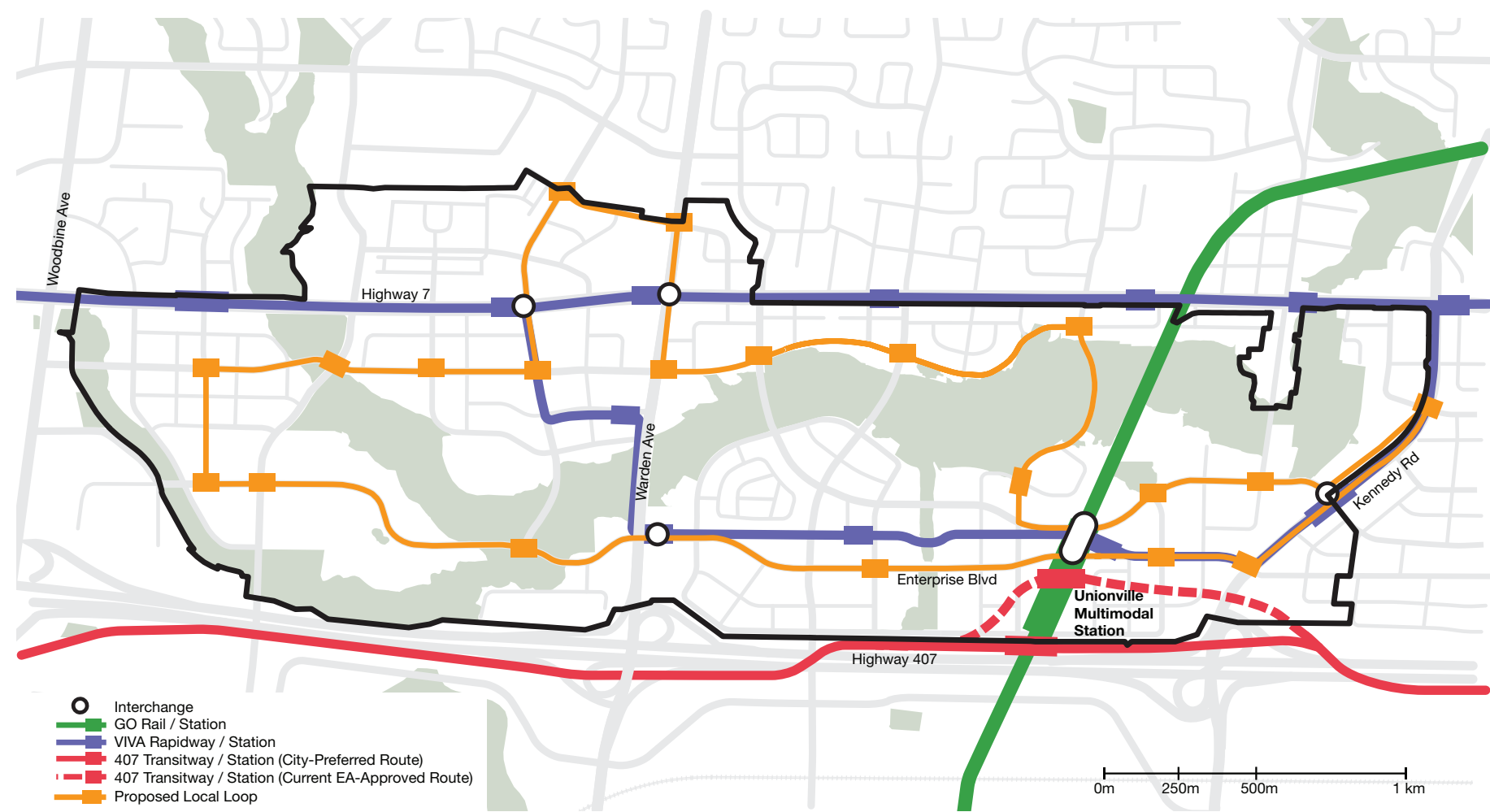


Figure 8.4 Rapid Transit and Local Transit Loop

9. Districts

Markham Centre is divided into districts and district sub-areas. This section presents these districts and their community structure. Demonstrations of how each district could develop are shown, drawing on precedent to illustrate how key elements and features could achieve built form, place-making, and community-building objectives.

9.1 Overview of Districts

Markham Centre covers a large area, 494 ha, and measures 4.5 km from end to end. It is too big an area to be just one place. Instead it will be many places: districts with their own combination of built form, uses, features and amenities that contribute to local character.

Figure 9.1 delineates districts and district sub-areas. In many instances there is a clear boundary feature, such as the Greenway, which divides them; in many others, they will blend together at their boundaries.

The Districts and Sub-areas:

Downtown – The Downtown District is Markham Centre’s heart, linked by Enterprise Boulevard as Markham’s premier Main Street. Its sub-areas include:

- The **Station Area**, Markham Centre’s area of greatest intensity and mix of uses centred on the Unionville Multi-Modal Station. It also features key clusters of city-serving civic amenities and institutional uses.

- **Birchmount**, the continuation of the Downtown to the west, with a mix of residential, office, entertainment and retail uses.
- **West**, an area of office uses west of Warden and interfacing with the Greenway.

Uptown – The Uptown District is Markham Centre’s secondary core. It includes important legacy uses, such as the Civic Centre and Hilton Hotel. Its sub-areas include:

- **Circa**, a mix of low-, mid- and high-rise buildings, with some significant employment uses and a cluster of schools and community facilities.
- **Warden / 7**, the traditional focal point for Markham Centre due to the presence of the Civic Centre, which will fill in as intensification proceeds.
- **7 Corridor**, a strip between Highway 7 and the Greenway.

Fairburn – The Fairburn District will be a mid-rise neighbourhood, somewhat removed from the rest of Markham Centre, but still linked through transit and active transportation connections and shared amenities. It features lower density employment uses in its southern portion. It will act as an area of transition between the higher densities within Markham Centre and the lower density areas to the north and west.

Kennedy – The Kennedy District is a centred on an urban and pedestrian-friendly vision of this arterial. It is a place of transition between the intensity of Markham Centre and the lower-scale neighbourhoods to the east.

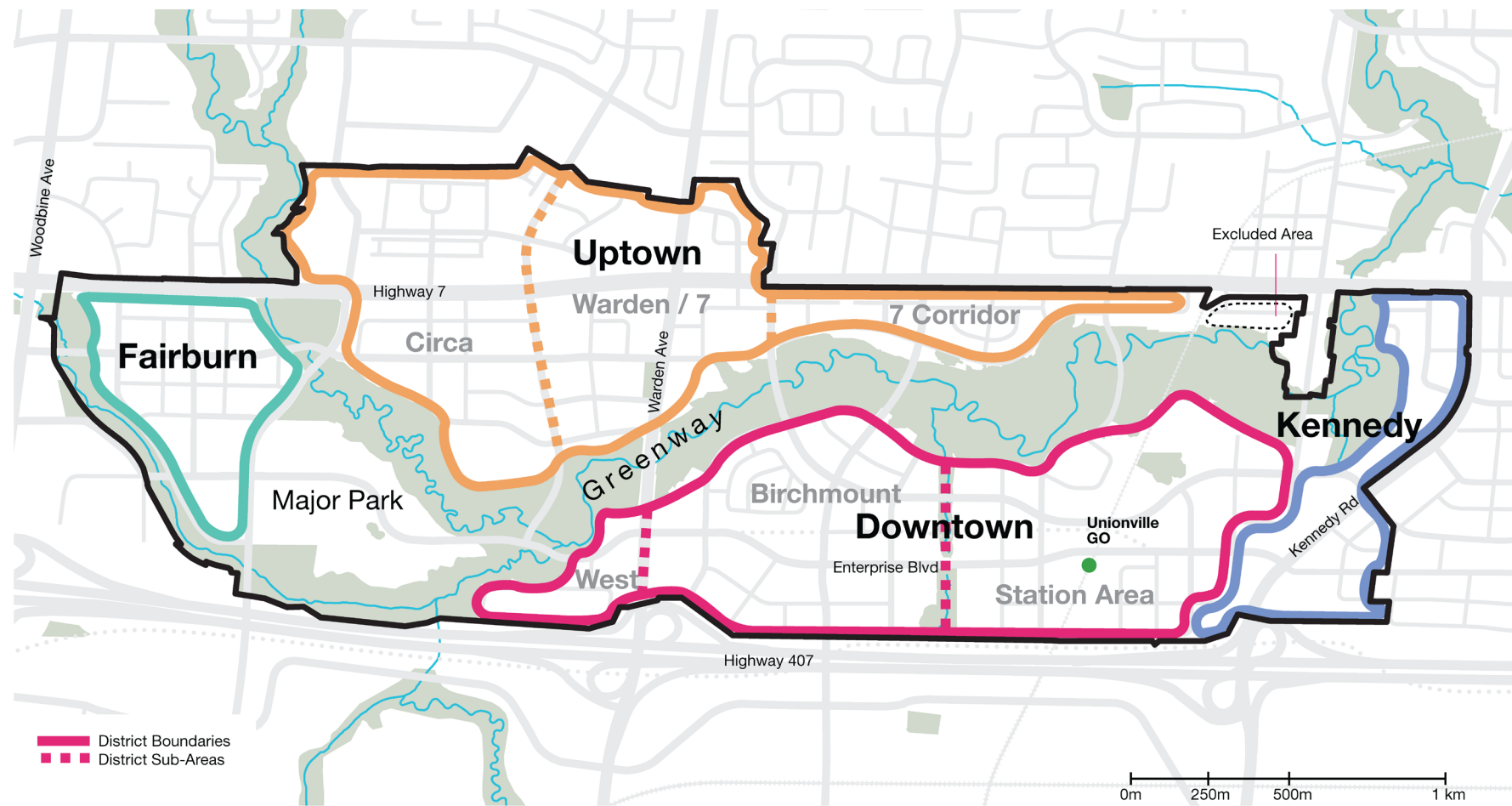


Figure 9.1 Districts and Sub-areas

9.2 Community Structure

Markham Centre is a collection of distinct neighbourhoods, and an interconnected whole. Its parts will serve as local communities for those who live there, as well as serving as a Downtown for the whole Markham community.

The Development Concept for Markham Centre has been developed based on the “15-minute” neighbourhood, the idea that residents should have access to most of the things they need in their daily lives within a 15-minute walk: retail, schools, day cares, community facilities, parks and even employment opportunities. A “15-minute” neighbourhood means that people can use active ways to get around, like walking and cycling, and spend less time in cars, sitting in traffic.

The Development Concept brings together many of these “15-minute” neighbourhood elements together to form community hubs, located throughout the districts. These community hubs are centred on retail streets and an outdoor public space, either an urban square or park. Where possible, schools and community facilities are also located at these community hubs. The location of community hubs supports walkable access to amenities. As importantly, through a mix of private and public amenities, they create a community focal point, a crossroads and meeting place where civic life can take place and flourish.

Figure 9.2 shows the community structure proposed for Markham Centre. Community hubs are located throughout Markham Centre to serve

as locally accessible centres of community. Important to note, the community hubs located within the Downtown District perform an additional function. As well as offering local access, the intensity of facilities and amenities is scaled to the Markham community, creating a centre of community with a city-wide and even regional draw. Community hubs of different character are strung along Enterprise Boulevard, which serves as the unifying retail spine linking these different areas. They include a retail and entertainment hub centred on Birchmount Square, a cluster of civic facilities, including a central library and performing arts centre co-located with a large public square, and an institutional hub incorporating York University and the PanAm Centre.

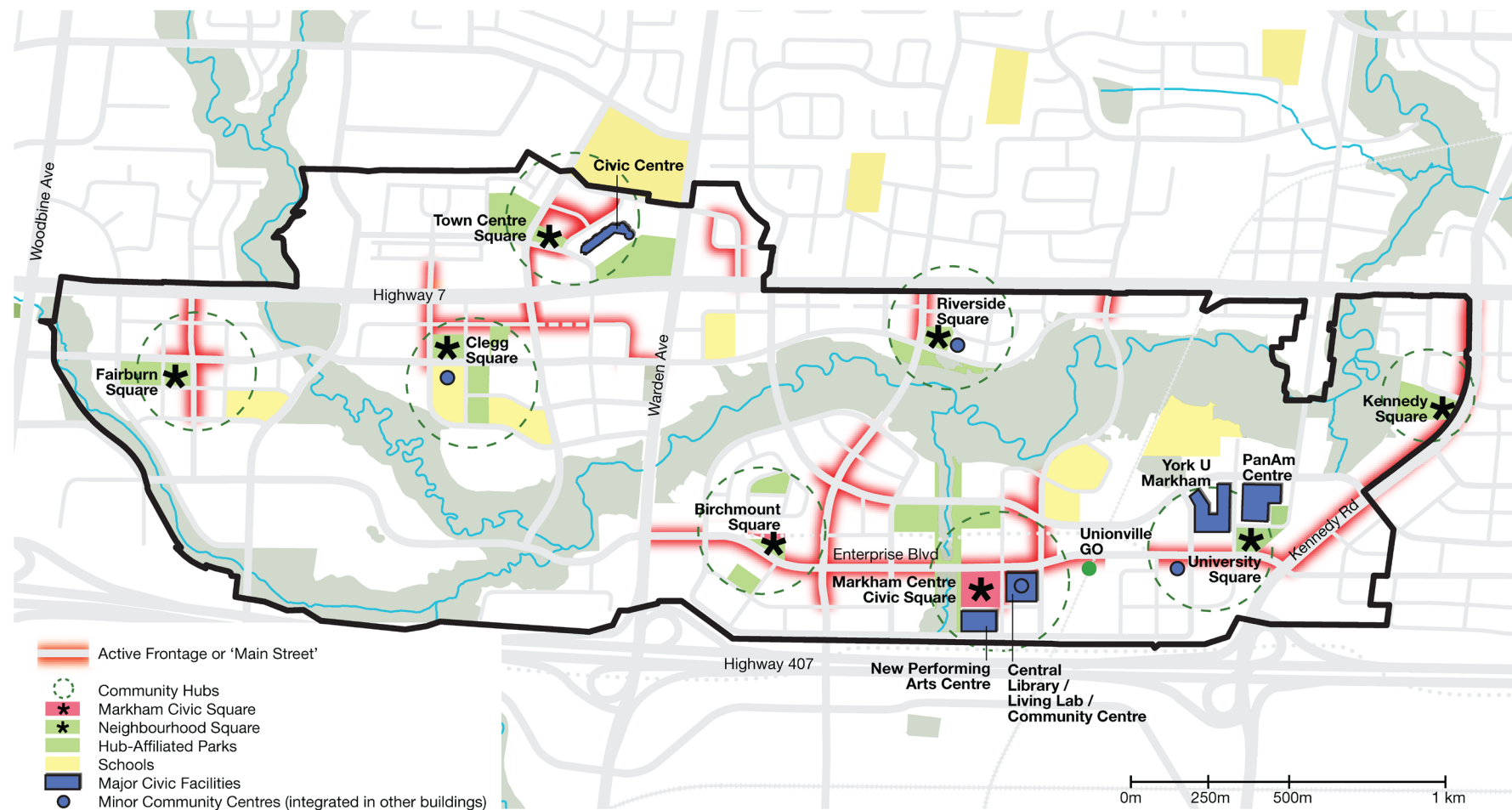


Figure 9.2 Community Structure

9.3 Downtown Demonstration

The Downtown District of Markham Centre will be the unmistakable centre of the city. From a built form perspective, it will be Markham's most intense. In terms of uses and activities, it will be Markham's most diverse. In terms of placemaking, it will be Markham's richest. The Downtown District will be a community crossroads, with many reasons to come to the area and many reasons to stay. It will be the location where Markham's many communities come together: a place of interaction, exchange, and energy.

The components of a successful Downtown District are diverse. Many people will call the district home, animating it with their presence. A critical mass of office uses will secure the Downtown District as the economic heart of the city. The retail offer will meet the local needs of residents and workers, but also have a regional draw. Community amenities, such as the central library and performing arts centre, will create an offer unlike any other part of the city. Streets, parks, and public spaces – framed and animated by great buildings – will create a compelling and pleasant place to be and experience on foot. The intersection of lines of higher order transit will ensure incredible access to all these amenities and experiences.

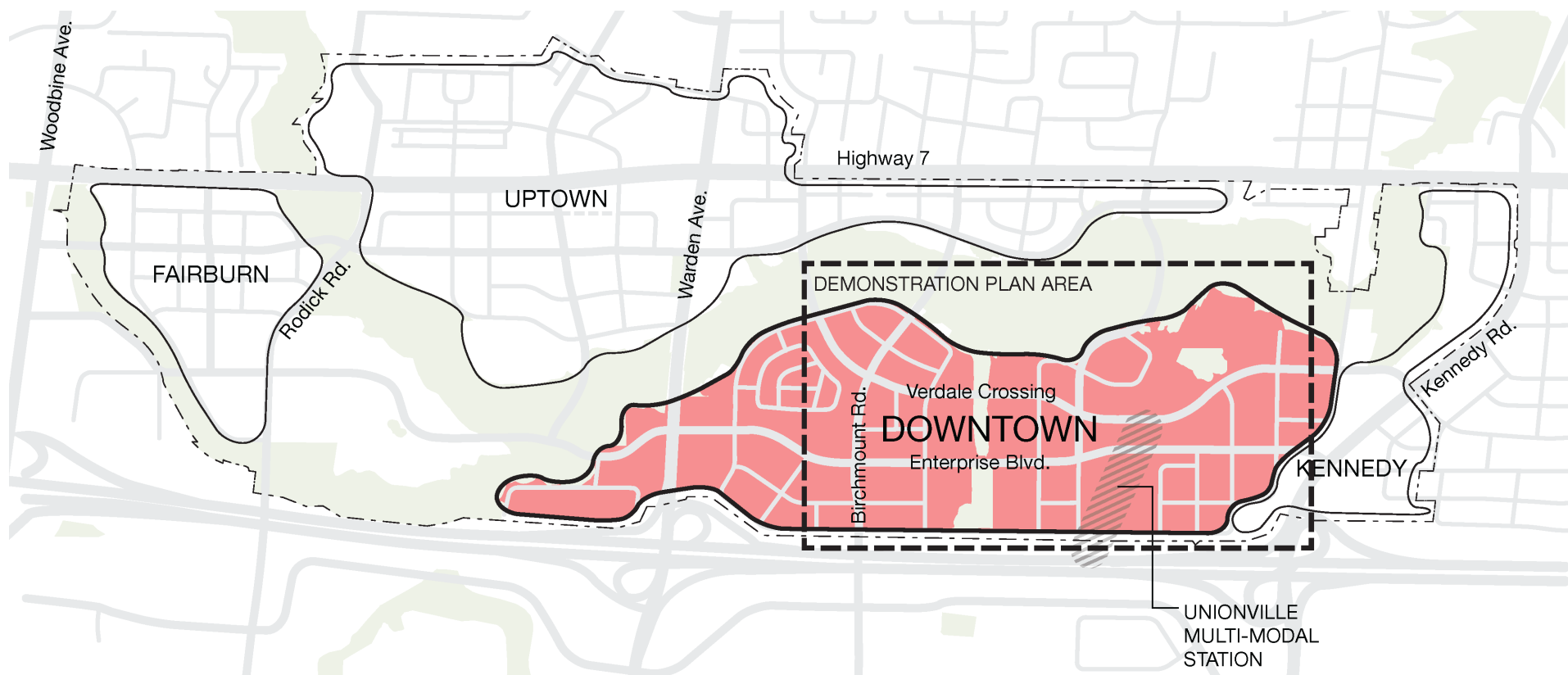


Figure 9.3.1 Location of the Downtown District

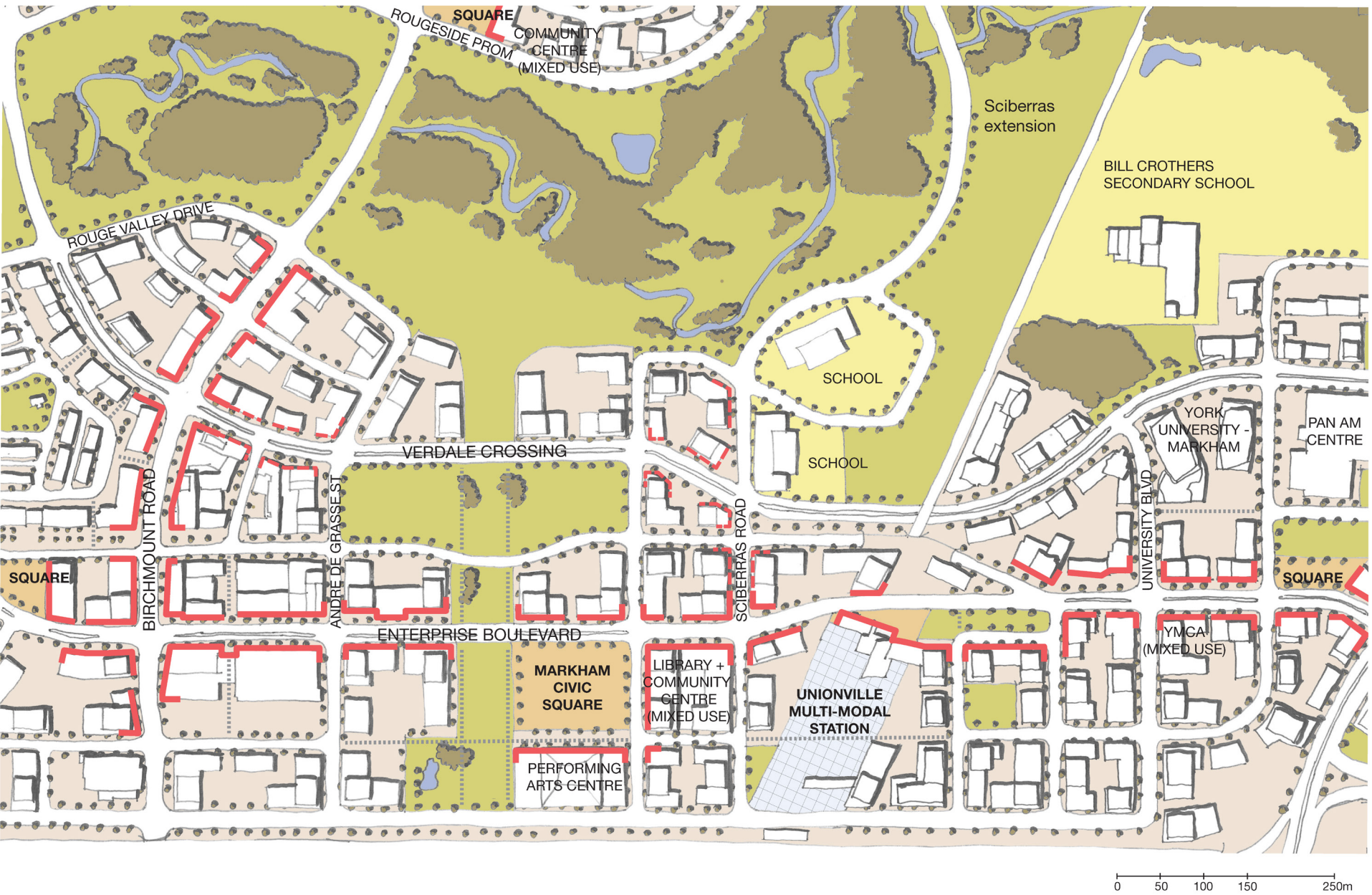


Figure 9.3.2 Downtown Demonstration Plan

Main Streets

The Development Concept identifies Enterprise Boulevard as the Downtown District's, and therefore Markham's, premier Main Street. It is the primary connective tissue bonding the district into one place and linking the many uses, activities and amenities found along its length, including retail, entertainment, the indoor and outdoor amenities and venues concentrated around the Markham Civic Square, York University, the Pan Am Sports Centre and the district's major transit gateway, the Multi-Modal Station.

A successful Enterprise Boulevard will require creating a pleasant and interesting place for people. Careful attention will need to be paid to fostering an experience for pedestrians that is safe, comfortable and inviting. Essential components include: providing enough room for pedestrians to walk and linger; including landscaping, plantings and street furniture; minimizing the impact of vehicular traffic on the pedestrian experience; and animating the street with active uses, primary among them, retail.

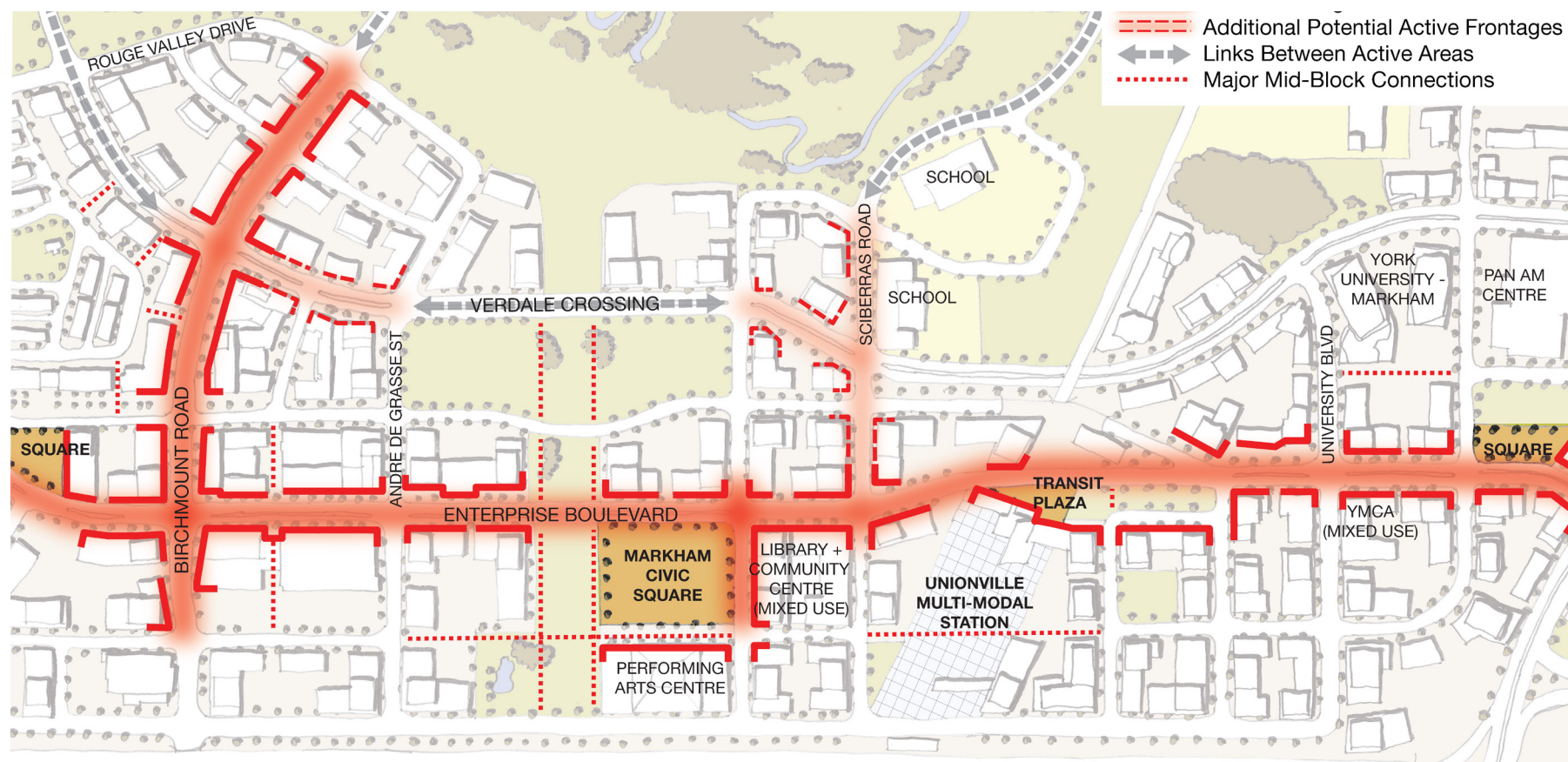


Figure 9.3.1 Enterprise Boulevard as Markham's Main Street

Main Streets

Precedents from around the world demonstrate that there are many ways to create a successful Main Street. One common aspect is that they are interesting at the scale and pace of a pedestrian, i.e. architectural characteristics and active uses at the ground floor facing the street (or even on the street) create visual interest. Another is that they are safe and pleasant, by providing things like adequate room, vegetation, protection from wind and sun, and protection from vehicular traffic.



Images 9.1-9.4 Main Street Precedents

Civic Features

Civic features, like parks, public squares and community facilities, are located throughout Markham Centre, providing focal points for community. The Development Concept proposes something of a different scale at the centre of the Downtown District. A new civic cluster will include major new outdoor and indoor community infrastructure:

- A civic square intended to be Markham's venue for gathering and celebration. The civic square will host festivals, performances, art installations and other events;
- A central library, which builds on the library system's traditional functions to create a venue for collaboration and community building;

- A performing arts centre that creates a space for cultural programming and performances scaled to a growing city; and
- A community centre.

The eastern and western extents of Enterprise Boulevard are anchored by public squares that serve as focal points for these portions of the Downtown District. Two new schools, one public, one Catholic, are proposed at a location within walking distance of much of the district.

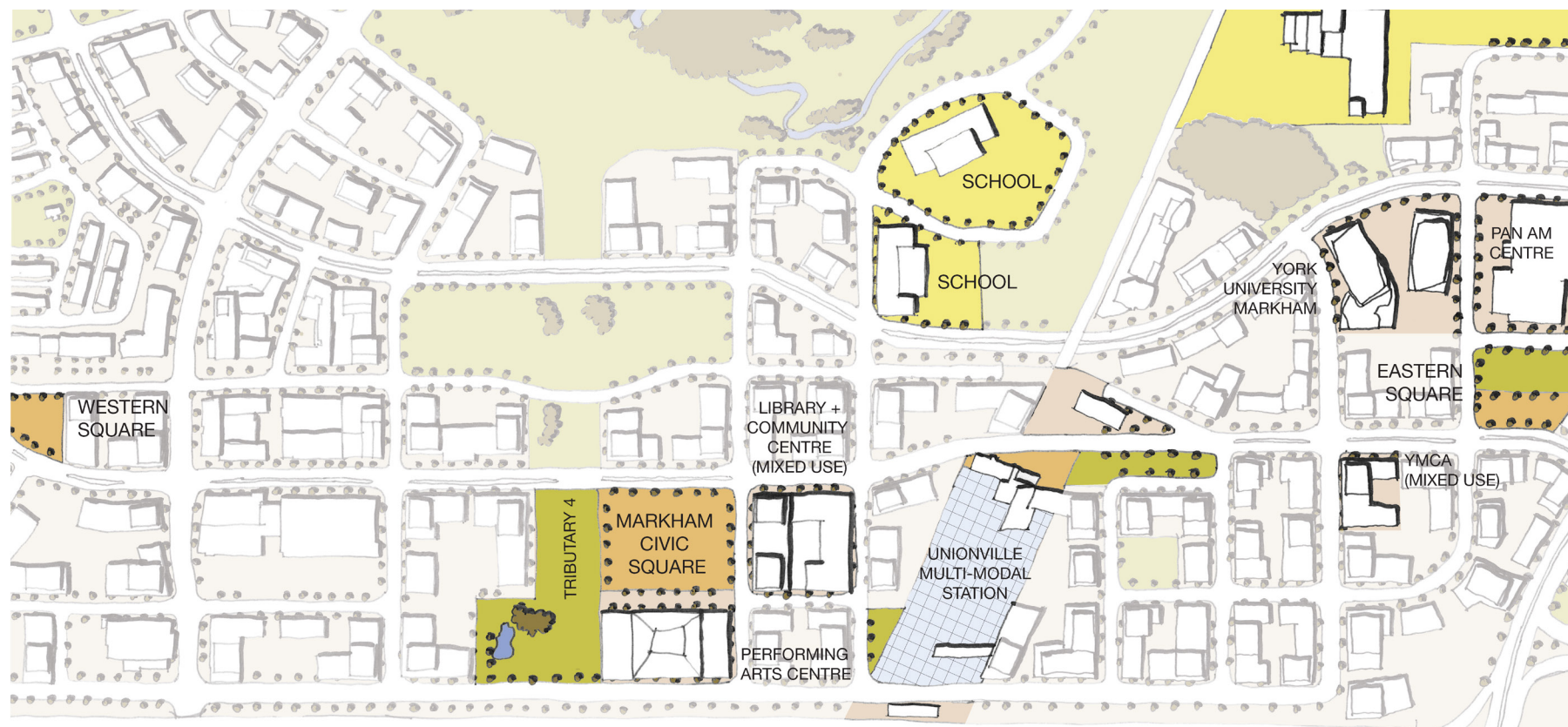


Figure 9.3.2 Downtown Civic Features

Civic Squares

Many municipalities have created civic squares which serve as a defining public space and location for civic gathering. These spaces are flexible and host a variety of activities that enrich the cultural and social life of their communities.



Images 9.5-9.10 Civic Square Precedents

Unionville Multi-Modal Station

Higher order transit planned for Markham Centre includes the Viva Rapidway, two-way all-day GO service along the Stouffville line, and the 407 transitway. The point of intersection of these lines is the current Unionville GO Station, giving the Downtown District excellent connectivity at a regional scale, both east-west and north-south.

The station and station area will be an important gateway into the Downtown, Markham Centre, and Markham as a whole. The station should

be treated as an important piece of civic architecture, contributing to an identity for Markham Centre and the wider city as well. The treatment of the surrounding public realm and connections to key destinations within the district, particularly Enterprise Boulevard and the Civic Square, will be important in creating a broader sense of arrival. Careful attention should be paid to how the station is integrated with surrounding built form, whether the station is a stand-alone building or incorporated into a mixed use development.

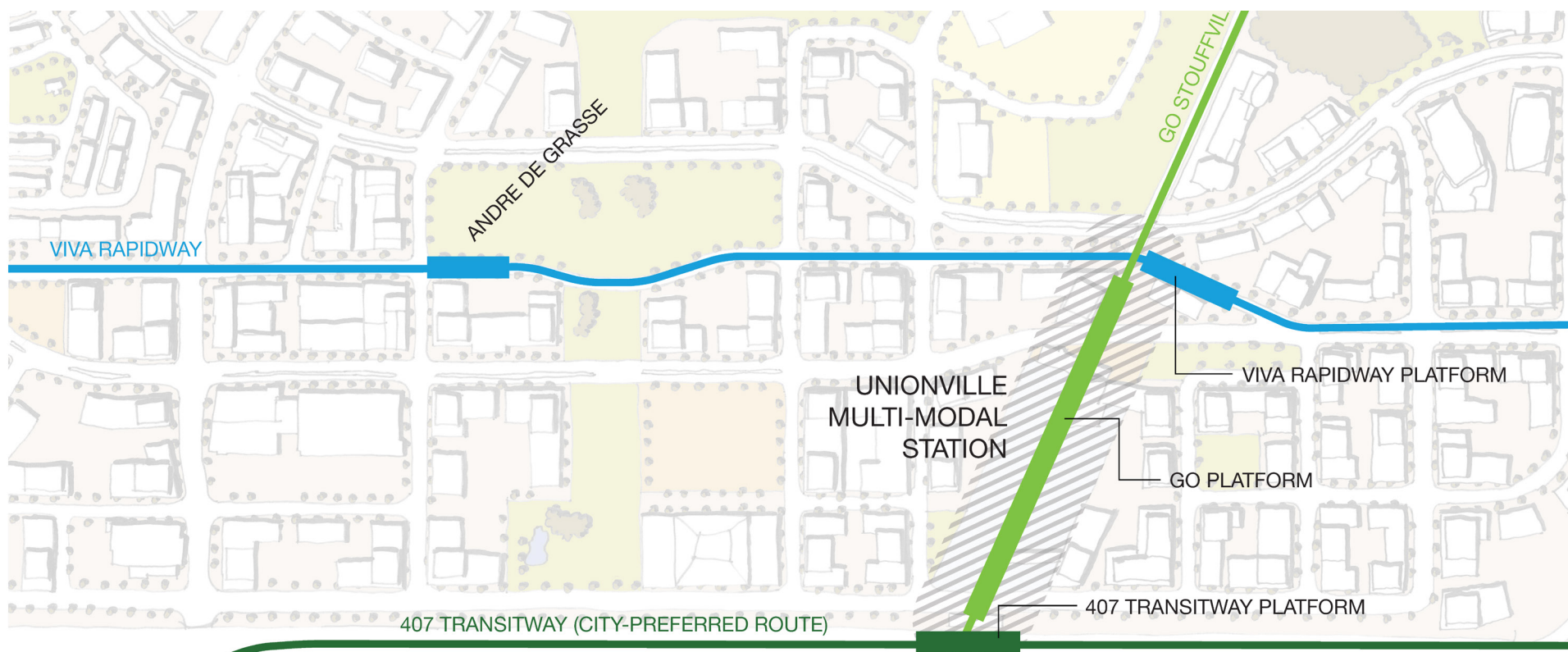


Figure 9.3.3 Downtown Rapid Transit

Urban Transit Stations

Urban transit stations can be designed to improve the functionality and aesthetics of the station area and make a place-making statement that contributes to civic identity. These stations often serve as gateways into an urban area, marking a sense of arrival. These stations often serve as gateways into an urban area, marking a sense of arrival.



Images 9.11-9.16 Urban Transit Station Precedents

Parks and Open Spaces

The Downtown District features a variety of parks and open spaces that contribute to the kinds of experiences that can be had in the area. These include hardscape urban squares, local parks, larger parks with sports fields and school yards.

The Greenway associated with the Rouge River Valley system is a prominent feature. Tributary 4 of this system extends into the heart of the district. It presents an interesting opportunity to integrate the built environment and parks spaces with this natural feature, in a manner that brings its ecology into

the identity of the Downtown District. Tributary 4's adjacency to the Civic Square will make this relationship particularly visible and symbolic. Preliminary ideas about the design of this part of the district promise to blur the line between natural and human-made space, while creating an experience of nature which preserves, restores and enhances the ecological integrity of Tributary 4. Trail connections to the main Greenway provide access to a much larger network.

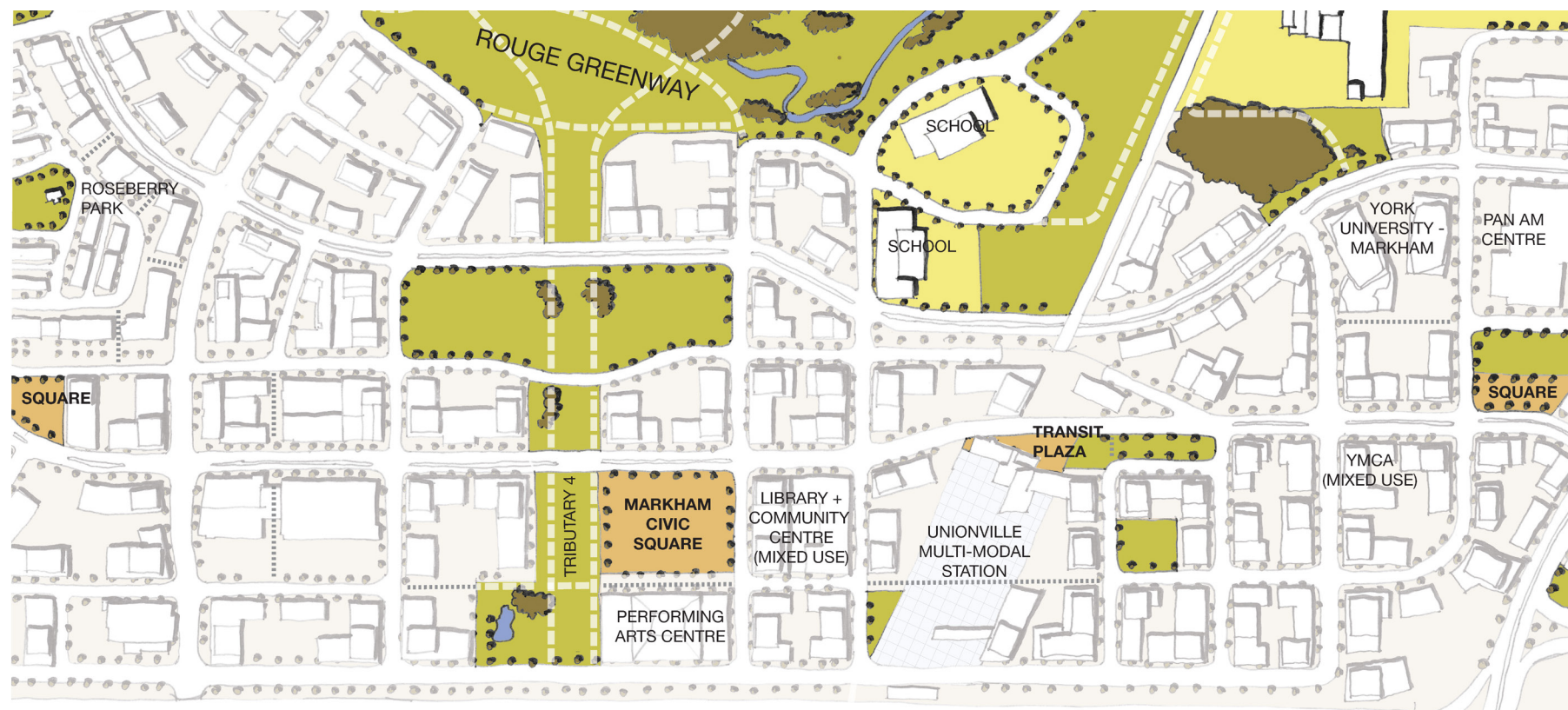


Figure 9.3.4 Downtown Parks and Open Spaces



Parks that build on the Greenway

Municipalities have undertaken the design of integrated parks and open spaces to achieve a number of objectives: creating an experience of nature in the city; providing areas of respite and refuge from the intensity of urban life; creating opportunities for passive recreation; and, through education approaches, deepening the understanding of the interaction of the natural and built environments.



Images 9.17-9.22 Naturalized Spaces in Urban Environments Precedents

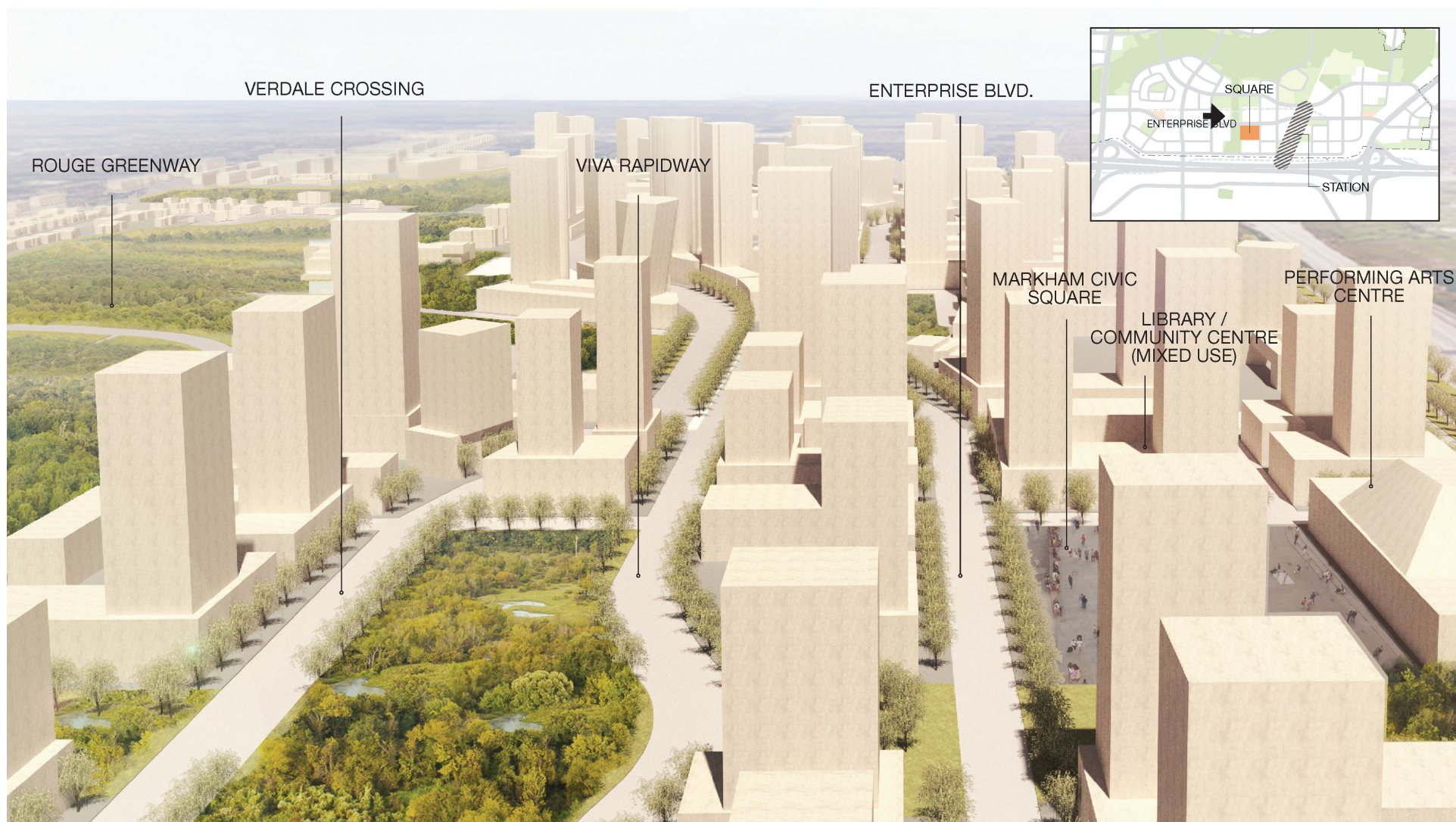


Figure 9.3.5 Visualization Facing East Along Enterprise Boulevard



Figure 9.3.6 Visualization of Civic Square and Performing Arts Centre

9.4 Uptown Demonstration

The Uptown District, centred around Highway 7 and Warden Avenue, will become one of the two main poles of Markham Centre. It will have a character distinct from the Downtown District: less intense, with a different configuration of uses, but also more varied in nature due to its longer history of development. The area already features built form representing different eras of development activity: low-rise townhouses, mixed-use mid-rise buildings, more recent high-rise developments and iconic landmark buildings, such as the Markham Civic Centre, Hilton Hotel and IBM campus.

Change in the Uptown District will come from building out the remaining areas, evolving some existing built up areas to more intense urban forms, and adding critical community structuring elements, like retail main streets,

schools, parks, and community facilities. The addition of these elements will complete the Uptown community, increasing the amenities and community facilities within walking distance. Residents will be able to meet many of their needs locally on the “15-minute” neighbourhood model, but still with great access to the amenities and activities present in other parts of Markham Centre.

Highway 7 remains an important transportation spine running through the area and built form creates a consistent and positive environment along this arterial. However, areas of community focus and retail are located at a remove from Highway 7, to settings more comfortable for pedestrians.

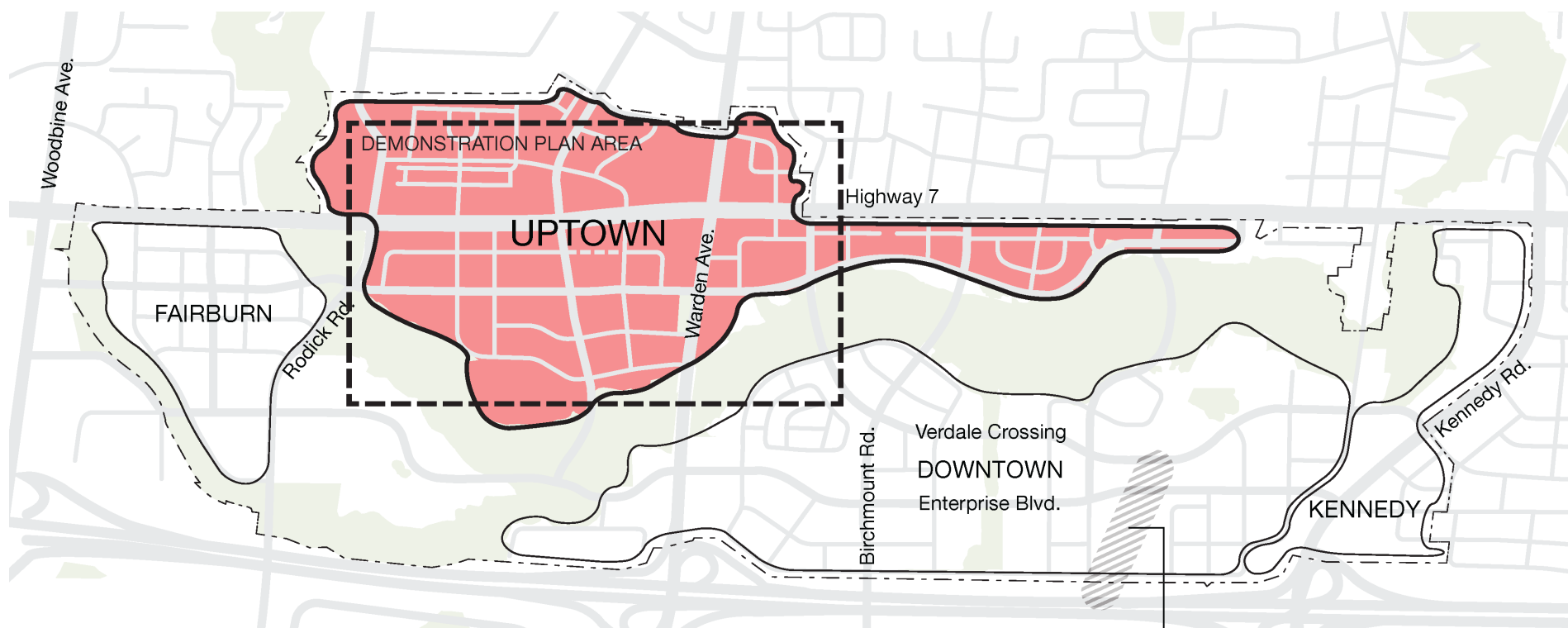


Figure 9.4.1 Location of the Uptown District



Figure 9.4.2 Uptown Demonstration Plan

Local Main Streets

Discussion of main streets in the Downtown District demonstration focused on Enterprise Boulevard, a Main Street scaled to the city as a whole. In addition to this Downtown Main Street, within each of the districts, there will be main streets whose retail is scaled to the local community and often provided in more intimate settings (e.g. featuring a narrower right-of-way). These Main Streets will be co-located with public amenities, like urban squares, parks and community facilities, where possible, in order to create community focal points and increase foot traffic to support local retail.

In the Uptown District, the local retail Main Streets, with active and animating uses on the ground floor facing the street, are located off of Highway 7 and deeper into the interior of neighbourhoods. This orientation provides good access by walking and environments scaled for pedestrian enjoyment.

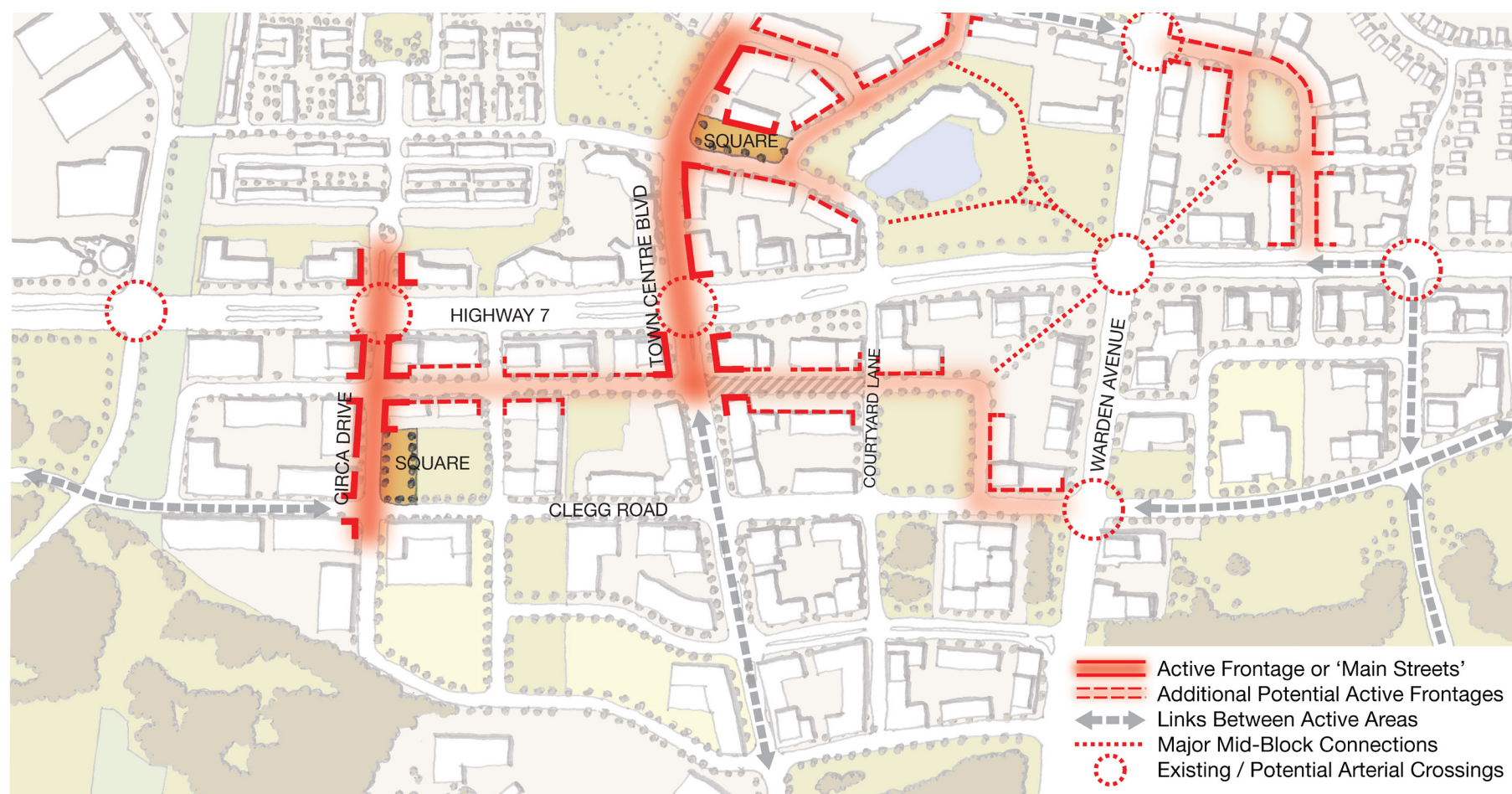


Figure 9.4.3 Uptown Main Streets

Local Retail Streets

Street life is a critical piece of creating a community that feels vital and alive. In order to attract people, streets need to offer what people want and create an environment that people want to be in. Successful local Main Streets have uses on the ground floor visible to passersby, or uses that spill out into the street, like patios. They have comfortable walking environments and a fine-grained rhythm of front doors and facades that create visual interest.



Image 9.23-8.28 Local Retail Street Precedents

Civic Clusters

The Uptown District includes a number of community and civic amenities organized into clusters to reinforce community focal points. Where possible, these amenities, which include parks, public squares, schools and community facilities, are co-located with retail Main Streets. This combination of private and public uses is mutually reinforcing, drawing people to the area for diverse reasons, and creating places where the community meets.

One prominent civic cluster will be centred on the current Civic Centre. As the area around the Civic Centre is filled in and urbanized, the offer of community amenities should grow to reinforce the area as one of public

amenity. Due to its symbolic prominence as the centre of civic life, the Civic Centre cluster is anticipated to draw people from across the city, and should have facilities scaled and oriented to this catchment.

A civic cluster with a more local draw, incorporating schools, a community centre, parks and an urban square, further animated by Main Street retail, is located in the area of east of Circa Drive and Clegg Road. An additional school is located east of Warden Avenue.



Figure 9.4.4 Uptown Civic Clusters

Public Sqaures

Civic clusters are groupings of “third places”, public and private places which are neither home, nor work, where community life and interaction takes place. The public square is a very old form of “third place”. They contribute to community in many ways, serving as venues for events or programming, or simply being a place to enjoy the day in a public spot surrounded by your fellow citizens.



Images 9.29-9.32 Civic Space Precedents

Parks and Open Spaces

The Uptown District includes a network of parks and open spaces that include local parks, urban squares, school yards and the Greenway. Access to the major active recreation park, across the Rouge River Valley to the southwest, is provided by road and trail connections.

Overall, parks in Markham Centre represent a huge opportunity to create a rich set of experiences, contribute to the identity of the area and improve the quality of life of those that use them. To achieve this, park planning needs to move away from a suburban model (land extensive, low density programming) to an urban one, where parks are programmed and maintained for intense use by a high-density population.

The park space around the current Civic Centre is an important opportunity to make this shift. Due to its co-location with the seat of municipal government, this park will be a high-profile public space. Consideration should be given to how the park will evolve over time to meet the needs of an area increasing in built form intensity. Creativity will be needed in all parks to find space for the combination of active and passive uses required to support a growing population with a limited supply of parkland.



Figure 9.4.5 Uptown Parks and Open Spaces



Local Parks with Unique Character

Markham Centre’s parks must be exceptional places that use a limited amount of space to create the greatest impact, in terms of amenity, identity and variety. Public art and playful design can contribute to the creation of unique and engaging places.



Image 9.33-9.37 Local Park Precedents



Figure 9.4.6 Visualization Facing Southeast to the Warden / 7 Intersection from above Millennium Park



Figure 9.4.7 Visualization Facing Northeast to the future Clegg / Circa Intersection

9.5 Fairburn Demonstration

Separated from the rest of Markham Centre by the Rouge Greenway and served by one BRT station, Fairburn will have a less intensive and more 'neighbourhood' feel than the other districts. It serves as an area of transition between higher density parts of Markham Centre and the lower density neighbourhoods and commercial areas to the north and west.

Fairburn has two predominant areas of character. The northern portion is predominantly mid-rise in form, harkening back to the built form vision of the original Secondary Plan. Although more residential than commercial, Fairburn is envisioned as a self-contained community with its own retail Main Street, public square, parks and school. Other amenities are located in surrounding areas: a major active recreation park hosting sports fields

and other active recreation infrastructure is located to the southeast; and a community centre is located east along Clegg Road in the Uptown District. Fairburn has excellent access to the Greenway, and the trails connections within, via the Rouge River Valley to the east and the Beaver Creek tributary to the south and west.

The southern portion of the Fairburn District, on the blocks north and south of Yorktech Drive and in closer proximity to Highway 407, features employment lands. This area will continue to serve an employment function, providing locations for industrial and warehousing facilities, as well as accessory retail and service uses.

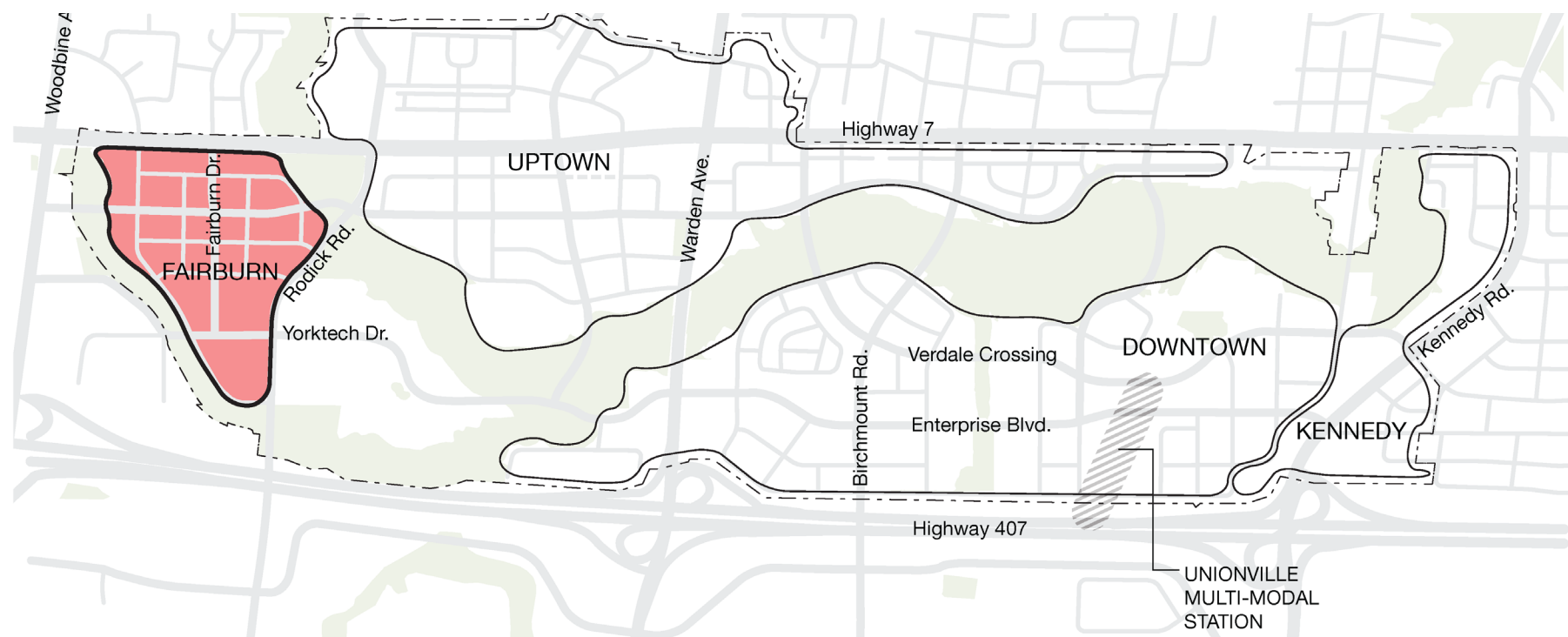


Figure 9.5.1 Location of the Fairburn District

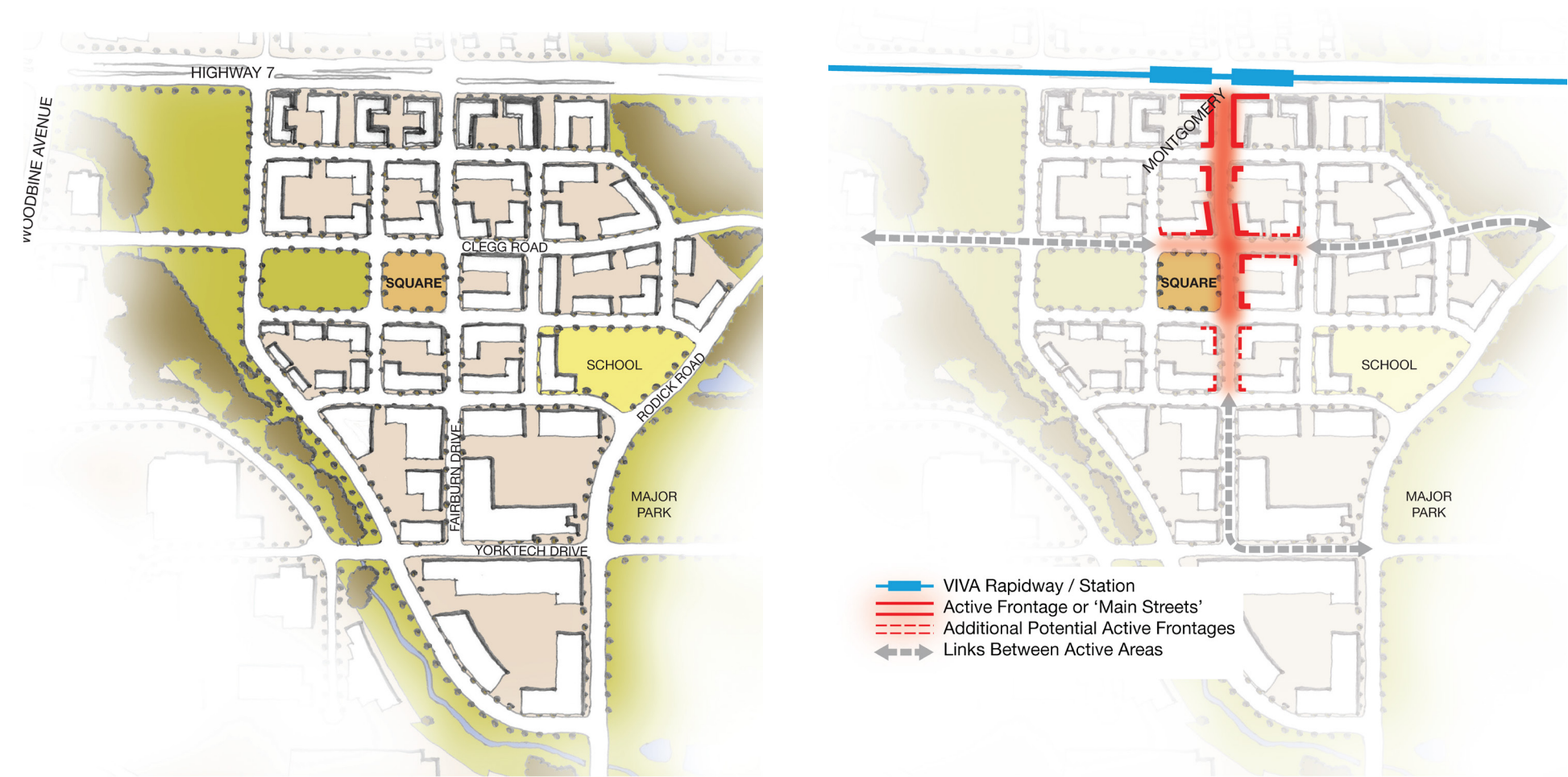


Figure 9.5.2 and 9.5.3 Fairburn Demonstration Plan and Rapid Transit and Main Streets

9.6 Kennedy Demonstration

With two BRT stations, the Kennedy District will build on the adjacent Downtown District, both extending the Main Street environment of the Enterprise Boulevard corridor and transitioning in terms of built form intensity to communities to the east.

Unlike most other broad arterials in Markham Centre, Kennedy Road has potential to serve as a Main Street, with active frontages, a retail offer and pedestrian-friendly environment. Achieving this will require a commitment by both the City and Region to create a welcoming urban environment along Kennedy Road. Careful planning will also be required to ensure that the Viva BRT can progress at an efficient pace as it leaves the Downtown on its eastward journey.

The Kennedy District also serves as a transition between the intensity of the Downtown District and the low-rise neighbourhoods to the east. As such, it will feature a stepping down in height and density between these two areas.

As a long and slender district, retail is the predominant amenity in the Kennedy District, punctuated by urban squares at key locations. Other amenity needs, for schools, larger parks, and community facilities, will be met in the Downtown District or in the surrounding areas outside the Secondary Plan boundary.

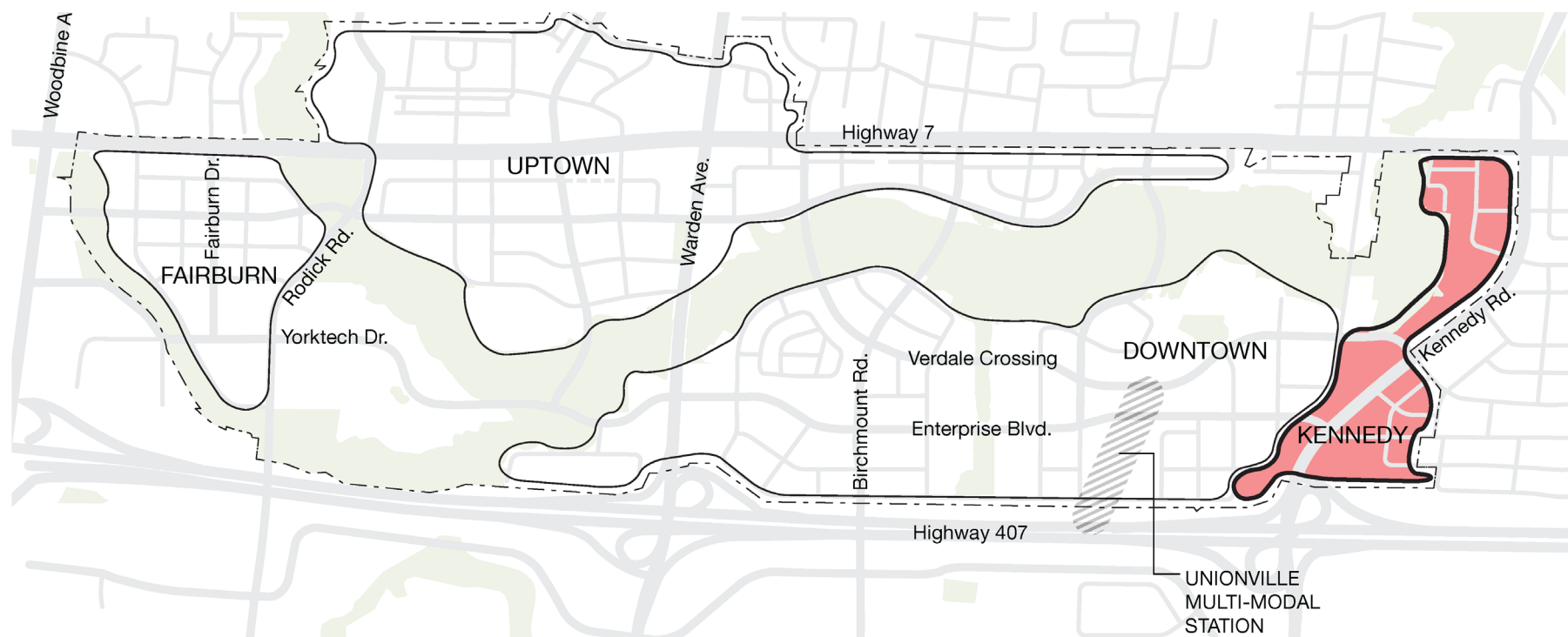


Figure 9.6.1 Location of the Kennedy District

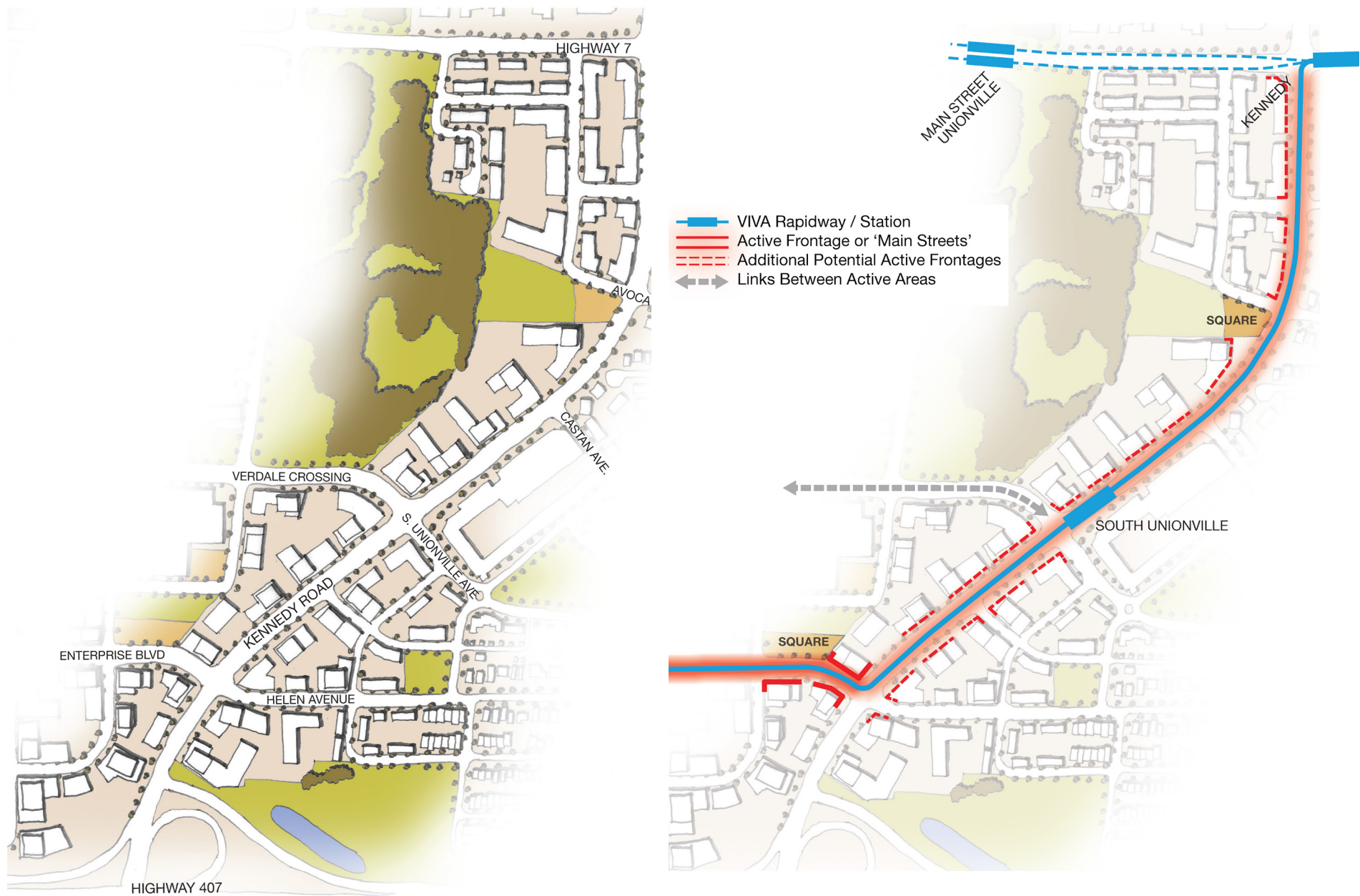


Figure 9.6.2 and 9.6.3 Kennedy Demonstration Plan and Rapid Transit and Main Streets

10. Next Steps

The Development Concept is an important step in the journey towards the creation of a new secondary plan for Markham Centre. It takes the strategic direction established through the Vision and Guiding Principles, and draws on the idea generation and experimentation of the Development Options, to elaborate a potential future for Markham Centre.

The Development Concept is intended to provoke discussion. It will be the subject of discussions and consultations with stakeholders and members of the public. It will be the subject of detailed testing and analysis from the perspectives of transportation and servicing functionality. Based on this feedback, the Development Concept will be refined to create the Recommended Development Concept.

The Recommended Development Concept will lay out the planned future of Markham Centre at a conceptual level. The final output of the process will be to draft a Secondary Plan which converts this concept into a policy framework that establishes the parameters for private sector development and directs public sector investments in Markham Centre. The Secondary Plan will be brought into force through an amendment to the City of Markham's Official Plan.

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