

1.0 Study Background

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The Yonge Street corridor offers opportunities for reinvestment in housing, employment and public realm improvements. The evolution of Yonge Street, Steeles Avenue and the residential neighbourhoods included in this study will be an incremental process with high quality, pedestrian oriented, transit-supportive public realm and other sustainability measures to create a successful, vibrant, desirable urban community.

The purpose of the Yonge Street Area Study is to:

- Direct physical growth of the study area by creating a sustainable development framework.
- Provide the community with a level of certainty about the character, form and height of proposed development.
- Determine a land use and urban design policy framework and a set of recommended changes for the area.
- Direct public realm and streetscape improvements. Guide development on privately owned lands.
- Develop criteria for introducing mixed-use mid-rise and tall buildings.
- Develop a plan for creating a public open space network and improving existing parks.
- Provide recommendations for optimizing the use of the road allowance and enhancing transit, walking and cycling.

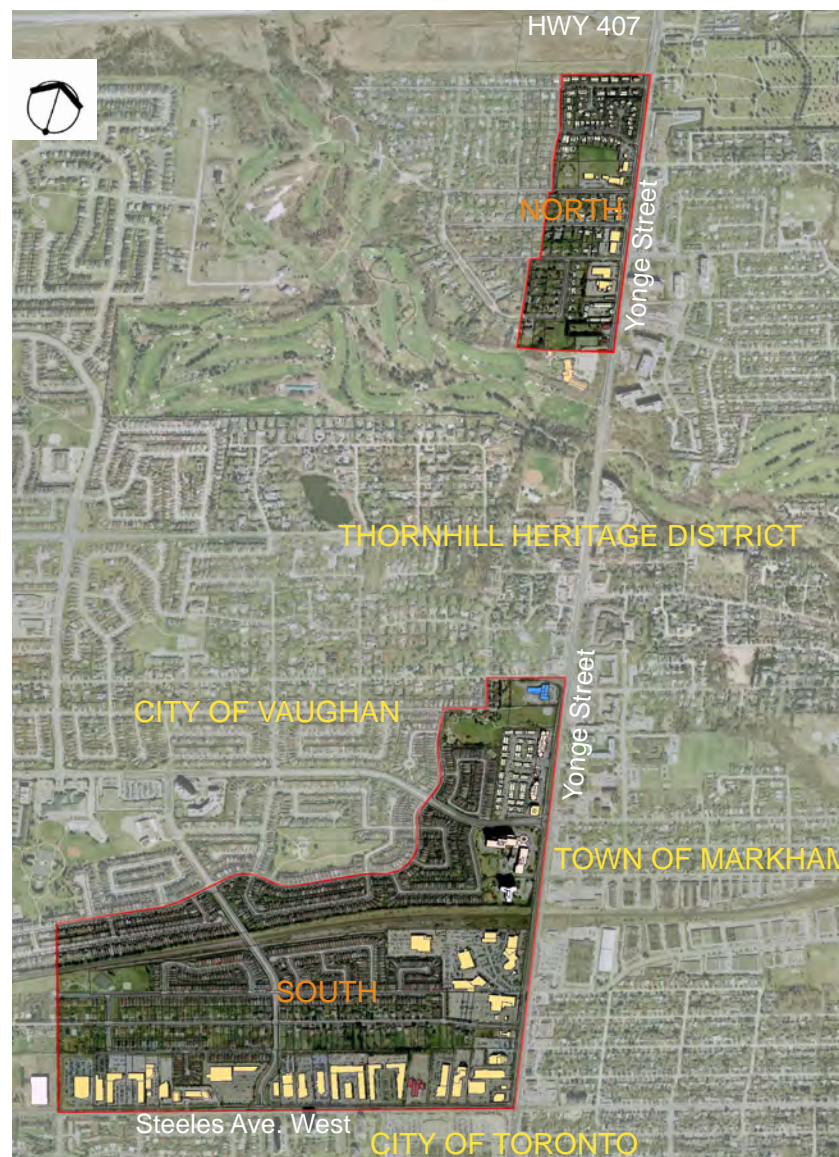


Fig. 1 Yonge Street Study Area Map

1.2 Study Process

The Yonge Street Area Study is based on an extensive consultation process with City staff and stakeholders, structured around a series of meetings and workshops as outlined on the Project Schedule (see fig 2).

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to guide the study and assist with identifying issues and generating development options. The TAC consisted of City staff, public agencies and representatives from neighbouring municipalities. Community meetings and workshops were also held to inform local residents (from Vaughan and adjoining jurisdictions) and the development community about the study, and solicit their input at each stage of the study process.

The study was conducted in the following three phases:

Phase 1: Background Research and Data Collection

The study team investigated relevant background data, reviewed the planning policy context, site servicing, traffic patterns and developed an understanding of the Study Area and its surroundings. An inventory of the existing site conditions was completed through a series of techniques, including mapping, analysis of precedents, photography and three-dimensional computer modeling of the existing built form. All of this information was presented at the first Public Open House.

The second Public Meeting consisted of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) workshop. The resulting set of draft planning principles was derived from the opportunities and constraints identified at the workshop. These were used to guide the discussions at the third public meeting, the Design Charrette. The summaries of the SWOT workshop and Design Charrette are provided in Section 4.

The purpose of the Design Charrette was to obtain constructive public input regarding the vision for the study area and was organized as an interactive group discussion. To help facilitate communication and understanding, a series of precedents, a physical model of the study area,

design work books and physical model kits were prepared to enlighten the four parallel group discussions. The charrette outcomes were photographed and analyzed for subsequent use to inform the design exploration and synthesis stage. A summary of the Design Charrette stage can be found in Section 4.0.

Phase 2: Design Exploration and Synthesis

The team identified and formulated the conceptual urban design framework, which will become the basis of desired future character and proposed physical growth controls for Vaughan Yonge Street Corridor. Design explorations practices covered the following issues: land use strategies, structure plan, transportation and transit, built form, open space and connections, street network and streetscape, and infrastructure and sustainability strategies.

Throughout the study, a series of team workshops, TAC meetings and client review meetings were used to develop and inform a conceptual urban design framework, which ultimately formed the basis of the urban design guidelines and criteria for the recommendations and reporting stage.

Phase 3: Recommendations and Reporting

The final stage of the study involved the display of the draft urban design recommendations for public comment. Following the public review period, all feedback was considered and integrated into the guideline report. All of the recommendations were incorporated into the preparation of the Official Plan Amendments to direct the future growth of the Yonge Street Corridor and the City of Vaughan.

Project Schedule

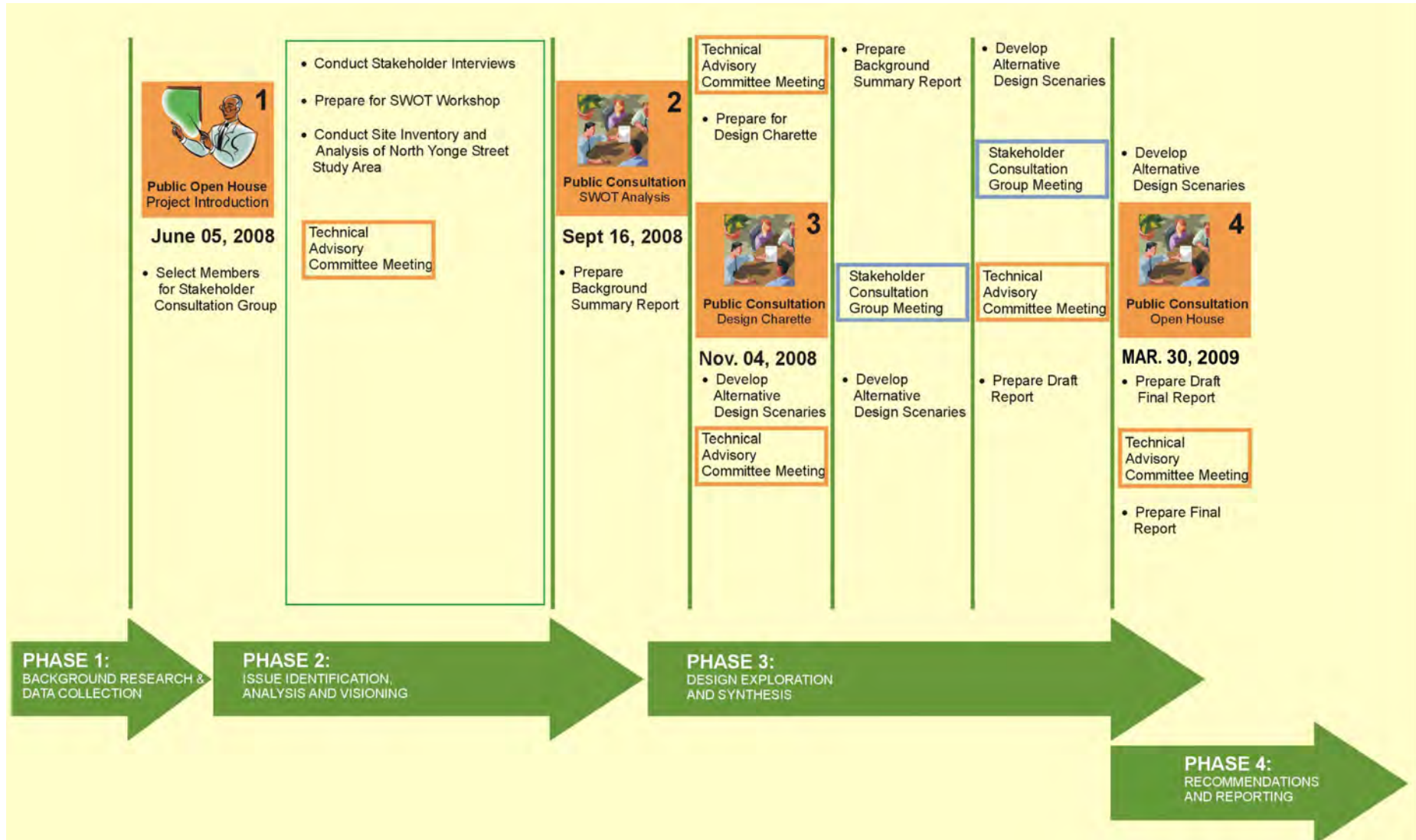


Fig. 2