



NON-RESIDENTIAL AND COMPLETE COMMUNITIES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Background and Options Study
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 What is a Community Improvement Plan?

A Community Improvement Plan is a land use planning tool that allows municipalities like Vaughan to provide financial incentives, such as grants and loans, and other non-financial incentives to private landowners to encourage investment in identified areas that support the City's development, social, and environmental goals. Financial incentives help fund certain types and forms of development and redevelopment that are prioritized through secondary plans, area-specific plans, the Official Plan, and other local plans and studies. Authorized under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, municipalities may designate specific areas and issues for community improvement. In addition to the *Planning Act*, other legislation such as the *Municipal Act* and *Development Charges Act* also provide municipalities with the power to create and implement financial incentives.

In the past, Community Improvement Plans were primarily used to focus on downtown revitalization and the redevelopment of areas targeted for certain planning goals per the local Official Plan. Of late, many municipalities across Ontario are using Community Improvement Plans in more creative and innovative ways to address locally specific needs, as well as broader Provincial and national planning priorities, such as housing, sustainability, transportation, economic development, and more.



Typically, Section 106 (1) and (2) of the *Municipal Act*, 2001 prohibits municipalities from providing direct or indirect assistance to any manufacturing business or other industrial or commercial enterprise through the allocation of bonuses. This includes actions such as granting or loaning municipal property, including funds; guaranteeing loans; leasing or selling municipal assets below their fair market value; and offering total or partial exemptions from fees, charges, or levies. This set of restrictions is commonly referred to as the "bonusing rule." However, Section 106 (3) of the *Municipal Act*, 2001 outlines an exception to this rule for Councils acting under Subsections 28 of the *Planning Act*, as is the case with this CIP.

The Non-Residential and Complete Communities Background and Options Study explores opportunities for Vaughan to leverage the CIP toolkit model and assist in the City's transition to a more vibrant urban environment. It will identify solutions to create mixed-use communities by incentivizing an appropriate mix of residential and non-residential land uses to provide the necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities. This includes promoting access to jobs, local stores, and cultural amenities that will support and incentivize residential development, including affordable housing in Vaughan's Secondary Plan Areas.

1.2 Overview of the CIP Studies

The City of Vaughan is excited to introduce two CIP Background Studies that have been initiated to explore financial incentive tools to assist the City’s transition from a suburban to an urban built form and economy, and to elevate/enhance its community and economic development role.

Through public and private sector investments in transportation infrastructure, mixed-use development, housing, complete communities, and more, the CIP is intended to help position the City as a competitive and attractive urban location for residents, talent, and businesses alike.

The goal of this CIP Background Study is to explore and establish the planning and economic development tools and policies that will help support the development of complete communities by incentivizing the appropriate mix of retail, cultural, institutional, and office uses.

Both CIP Background Studies will result in the creation of financial incentive programs that support the City of Vaughan’s evolution. To ensure a clear, transparent review that incorporates community and stakeholder input as well as relevant background research, evidence, and technical analysis, the overall Study process has been divided into the following five distinct phases with regular opportunities for feedback from landowners, businesses, stakeholders, residents, City Staff, and Council. A workflow graphic for the projects process is shown below.



1.3 About Complete Communities

Vaughan is a municipality in York Region, centrally located within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. It is one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, with a population of more than 344,412 people and 240,100 jobs as of 2022. Looking forward to the year 2051, Vaughan will be home to 228,800 more people, bringing the anticipated population to more than 575,900 people. Further, businesses in the City will provide 111,400 more jobs, bringing employment to approximately 354,300 jobs. Notably, these projections will account for almost one third of York Region’s growth over the next three decades.

Vaughan enjoys strong rail and road transportation links to its neighbours and other Regional municipalities. The City has attracted great investment in infrastructure, which supports Vaughan’s future growth. Notably, it includes the Toronto Transit Commission’s Yonge-University subway line from the City of Toronto into Vaughan, three existing subway stations, a planned Yonge North Subway Expansion, the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital, the expansion of a natural gas pipeline, and the extension of Highway 427. With significant access to infrastructure projects, planning for growth requires targeted incentives to support its development into a complete community. The goal of this CIP is to support Vaughan’s evolution by encouraging and supporting a mix of uses and the development of rental housing, among other elements of a complete community, particularly within intensification areas.

According to the 2024 Provincial Planning Statement (PPS 2024), complete communities are defined as:

... places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas that offer and support opportunities for equitable access to many necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities, including an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing, transportation options, public service facilities, local stores and services. Complete communities are inclusive and may take different

shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts to meet the diverse needs of their populations.

Over the past few decades, municipalities across Canada and the U.S. have sought to move away from suburban forms of development, which often necessitate the use of cars to access jobs and services, resulting in increased greenhouse gas emissions, poor walkability, and fewer opportunities for social interaction. There is now a trend towards revitalization strategies that prioritize mixed-use development (i.e., residential plus retail or office within the same building, etc.), public transit, accessibility, and pedestrian-friendly environments. This shift aims to create vibrant communities that not only reduce environmental impacts but also improve quality of life and enhance local economies. By reimagining existing suburban spaces, cities are advancing a more sustainable future that emphasizes connectivity, inclusivity, and resilience.

Many cities across Canada are also currently facing housing affordability challenges, and some residents, including low-income individuals, seniors, and young professionals, are confronted with difficult housing choices. With significant population growth projected in the next thirty years, the PPS 2024 also emphasizes maximizing urbanized land and discouraging sprawl.

In Vaughan, there is also a strong focus on creating jobs and fostering employment as part of building complete communities. This includes promoting office spaces and other non-residential uses that aim to support the growth of the City's knowledge-based industries. To attract and retain a highly educated and skilled workforce, it is essential to develop lively, balanced mixed-use communities that enhance the quality of life for residents. By encouraging non-residential development, Vaughan aims to cultivate a vibrant cultural scene and engaging public spaces, reinforcing its role as a leader in driving transformative changes in urban living.

Overall, the City of Vaughan recognizes the need to encourage more compact, complete communities to better use its land resources and strengthen neighbourhoods City-wide, in

the City's Secondary Plan Areas, and in Protected Major Transit Station Areas. The approved Official Plan, VOP, 2025, defines "complete communities" as:

Places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for equitable access to many necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities, including an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing, and transportation options, Public Service Facilities, local stores and services. Complete Communities are inclusive and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts to meet the diverse needs of their populations.

Through the Non-Residential and Complete Communities CIP, the City can build on policy directions and goals to achieve more complete communities by providing incentives to support the development of desired uses and the intensification of existing neighbourhoods within secondary plan areas and regional corridors. The City may consider expanding the incentives of the Complete Communities CIP to new community and employment areas in the future, through an amendment to the CIP By-law. This could include incentives to:

- Include transit-supportive non-residential land uses, including commercial, retail, and major office, in addition to residential uses;
- Support the use of public transit, walking, cycling, and use of micromobility devices such as e-scooters, as alternatives to single-occupant vehicle use; and
- Curated community amenities, such as privately owned publicly accessible spaces (POPS), public art, and cultural or recreational uses.

The objective of the Complete Communities CIP Study is to explore opportunities to use planning tools under Section 28 of the *Planning Act* to encourage landowners to participate in Vaughan's transformation into a more urban environment with the development of complete communities.

Opportunity Statement

What interventions can be incentivized in Vaughan on private property to:

- Stimulate Non-Residential Development to increase vibrancy:
 - Encourage a greater mix of uses, such as commercial, retail, major office, curated amenities, and institutional uses in community areas.

1.4 Purpose

This Background Study is the first major milestone in the City of Vaughan Community Improvement Plan and looks at legislative tools, local policies, existing conditions, best practices, and market trends to identify potential incentive programs that will best address Vaughan’s unique development opportunities and needs, and to allow for informed decision-making on:

1. The designation of a Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) that responds to parts of the City that have specific needs and opportunities related to complete communities;
2. The identification of financial and non-financial incentive programs that are aligned with the City’s policy directions, goals, and opportunity statement for non-residential development and complete communities; and
3. Ideas and options for short and long-term implementation, and other key elements of a CIP.

2.0 Legislative Overview

2.1 Section 28 of the *Planning Act*

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* is the enabling legislation for Community Improvement Plans, which could offer potential pathways to make last-mile solutions and employment development more feasible or attractive for development proponents and potential talent.

The *Planning Act* is the primary piece of legislation that provides for the preparation of CIPs and sets out:

1. Types of projects/activities/works that are considered ‘community improvement’;
2. A process by which a municipality can identify a ‘community improvement project area’ and prepare a ‘community improvement plan’;
3. Tools that can be implemented once a ‘community improvement plan’ is prepared; and
4. Eligible costs for which a municipality can provide incentives (i.e., grants and loans).

Community Improvement

Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act* defines “community improvement” as

The planning or replanning, design or redesign, resubdivision, clearance, development or redevelopment, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation, improvement of energy efficiency, or any of them, of a Community Improvement Project Area, and the provision of such residential, commercial, industrial, public, recreational, institutional, religious, charitable or other uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities, or spaces therefore, as may be appropriate or necessary.

Section 28(2) states that:

Where there is an official plan in effect in a local Municipality or in a prescribed upper-tier Municipality that contains provisions relating to ‘community improvement’, the Council may, by By-law, designate the whole or any part of an area covered by such an official plan as a ‘community improvement project area’.

Community Improvement Plan

Section 28(1) defines the term “community improvement plan” as: “a plan for the community improvement of a community improvement project area” and Section 28(4) of the Planning Act states that once a “community improvement project area’ has been designated by By-law, the Council may provide for the preparation of a plan suitable for adoption as a Community Improvement Plan for the Community Improvement Project Area”.

Community Improvement Project Areas (CIPA)

Section 28(1) of the *Planning Act* defines the term “community improvement project area” as

A Municipality or an area within a Municipality, the Community Improvement of which in the opinion of the Council is desirable because of age, dilapidation, overcrowding, faulty arrangement, unsuitability of buildings or for any other environmental, social or community economic development reason.

Community Improvement Tools

The Municipality may then prepare and use a “community improvement plan” to:

- Acquire, hold, clear, grade or otherwise prepare land (Section 28(3))
- Construct, repair, rehabilitate or improve buildings on land acquired or held by the Municipality (Section 28(6))
- Sell, lease or dispose of any land and buildings acquired or held by the Municipality (Section 28(6))

- Make grants or loans to owners and tenants of land and buildings within the community improvement project area to pay for the whole or any part of ‘eligible costs’ related to community improvement (Section 28(7))

Eligible Costs

“Eligible costs” are specified in Section 28 (7.1) of the *Planning Act*, and include costs related to:

environmental site assessment, environmental remediation, development, redevelopment, construction and reconstruction of lands and buildings for rehabilitation purposes or for the provision of energy efficient uses, buildings, structures, works, improvements or facilities.

Finally, Section 28 (7.3) states that the total of the grants and loans that is provided in respect of the lands and buildings shall not exceed the eligible cost of the community improvement project with respect to those lands and buildings.

Upper-Tier Participation

An upper-tier municipality can contribute financially to CIP programs adopted by its local municipalities. Section 28 (7.2) of the *Planning Act* states:

The council of an upper-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of a lower-tier municipality and the council of a lower-tier municipality may make grants or loans to the council of the upper-tier municipality, for the purpose of carrying out a community improvement plan that has come into effect, on such terms as to security and otherwise as the council considers appropriate, but only if the official plan of the municipality making the grant or loan contains provisions relating to the making of such grants or loans.

This means that the Region of York can participate financially in a CIP adopted and implemented by one or more of its local municipalities, including Vaughan, subject to having required Official Plan policies in place (which is the case, as discussed later in this study).

Consultation and Engagement

Section 28 of the *Planning Act* requires that municipalities consult with the public and hold at least one public meeting before adopting a CIP, as outlined in Section 17(15) and Section 17(16). A Statutory Public Meeting was held on November 18, 2025, where the draft Plan was presented to Committee of the Whole Public Meeting. All written comments were collected, and the draft Plan was updated. This Study provides an overview of the consultation process so far, including internal meetings with various City departments, plus workshops with the business and development community, York Region staff, and other agencies. In addition, an online survey was conducted using the platform MentiMeter, which allowed participants to share their questions and concerns anonymously. Participants stated that they want to see investments in reducing car dominance, supporting nonprofits, incentivizing development near GO Rail and MTSAs, and bringing destinations to Vaughan.

Approval

The process for adopting or amending a CIP is guided by Section 17 of the *Planning Act* and is comparable to an official plan amendment, which is exempt from the Minister's approval. Essentially, Council is responsible for preparing/amending and adopting a CIP, which then comes into effect after adoption. To date, the City of Vaughan has notified the appropriate Ministry staff of the initiation of the CIP project and will continue to engage and provide updates in advance of Council adoption.

2.2 Additional Legislation

Planning Act

Outside of Section 28, municipalities also use provisions from Section 69 of the *Planning Act* (related to establishing tariffs of fees in respect to planning and building) as part of community improvement plans. Under Section 69(2), municipalities are permitted to reduce the amount of, or waive entirely, the requirement for the payment of a fee in respect of an application where the Council, planning board, or committee is satisfied that it would be unreasonable to require payment. However, a CIP is not required as a basis for implementing this tool. Alternatively, a municipality can collect fees and then provide a partial or total rebate of fees in the form of a grant, but this must be done through a CIP.

Municipal Act

Section 365.1 of the *Municipal Act* enables municipalities to implement the Brownfields Financial Tax Incentive Program (BFTIP), which is intended to bring brownfields back into productive use. Under this program, municipalities may pass By-laws providing for the cancellation of all or a portion of the taxes for municipal purposes levied on eligible properties for which a phase-two environmental site assessment has been conducted. The Province shares in the cost of the program by funding the education portion of the property tax relief. To use this tool, a CIP must be in place, including the Province's eligibility criteria, funding parameters, and other general conditions. A CIP is required to implement the BFTIP program, and each individually approved application and agreement must be adopted by By-law.

Development Charges Act

In addition to the range of community improvement tools established by the *Planning Act*, Section 5 of the *Development Charges Act* allows a Municipality (through its development charge By-law) to provide for full or partial development charge exemptions for certain

types of development. This tool is often incorporated into municipal CIPs; however, a CIP is not required to use it.

Bill 17

Bill 17, the Protect Ontario by *Building Faster and Smarter Act*, received Royal Assent on June 5, 2025. The Bill enacts changes to several existing Acts, including the *Development Charges Act*, *Planning Act*, and *Building Code Act*.

Key highlights of Bill 17 that may impact, or in some cases work in conjunction with, the incentives of the Complete Communities CIP are provided below¹. The summary below is not an exhaustive list of the changes proposed by Bill 17, but rather a high-level summary of some of the more relevant proposed modifications, as it relates to the financial incentive programs proposed under this CIP.

Development Charges

- Payment may be deferred from building permit issuance to occupancy permit, which was previously only available to rental housing and institutional development.
- If no occupancy permit is required, securities (the type of which will be prescribed by regulation) could be required at the time of building permit issuance.
- Rates are currently frozen as of the date that a zoning By-law or site plan application is made. The charges payable will be the lower of the frozen rate, or the DC rate in place at the time of payment.

¹ Osler (Chris Barnett, Andrew Rintoul, Evan Barz), “Ontario Government Proposes Bill 17 to Advance Home-building Target”, May 13, 2025.

- A reduction in DCs by a municipality would not require a background study or consultation.
- The Minister will be able to make regulations (not yet released) in relation to:
 - prescribing limit and exceptions to eligible capital costs, including land costs;
 - merging related service categories for the purpose of DC credits, expanding the ability of developers to receive credits for the construction of infrastructure;
 - following consultation, prescribing a methodology to calculate the benefit to existing development of new infrastructure. Also known as BTE, the amount that existing development benefits from new infrastructure reduces the amount that can be charged to new development in a DC By-law;
 - expand the requirement that municipalities must spend or allocate 60% at the beginning of each year to all services covered by the *Development Charges Act*; and
 - define local services to standardize what infrastructure is captured under development charges versus local services.

Further, Bill 17 provides additional clarity that the powers of the *Municipal Act* do not enable municipalities to pass By-laws respecting the construction or demolition of buildings, including green or sustainable building standards.

3.0 Guiding Policies and Directions

3.1 Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The latest Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) came into effect on October 20, 2024, and emphasizes that a prosperous and successful Ontario will support a strong and competitive modern economy. The PPS Vision Statement sets out that the people who live and work in this Province are the key to its success. It also clearly prioritizes compact and transit-supportive design and investments in infrastructure and public service facilities that will support convenient access to housing, quality employment, services, and recreation for all Ontarians. Overall, the PPS Vision Statement provides a goal and direction for community improvement planning and supports the preparation of CIPs that are in alignment.

The City of Vaughan is identified by the PPS, 2024 as a large and fast-growing municipality, to which the following policies apply:

- The City is encouraged to plan for fifty residents and jobs per gross hectare in the Designated Growth Areas;
- Designated Growth Areas are defined as “lands within settlement areas designated for growth or lands added to settlement areas that have not yet been fully developed. Designated Growth Areas include lands which are designated and available for residential growth in accordance with policy 2.1.4.a), as well as lands required for employment and other uses”; and
- Within a Major Transit Station Area served by commuter or Regional rail, the City shall plan for a minimum density target of 150 residents and jobs combined per hectare.

Further, Section 2.3.1.4 states that the City shall establish and implement minimum targets for intensification and redevelopment within built-up areas, to support the development of

complete communities. Overall, the City is positioned by Provincial policy to promote intensification and enhance density, as it pertains to housing.

Through the PPS, 2024, the Province of Ontario has provided clear direction that municipalities, particularly those in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, are to grow in a way that maximizes existing urbanized land and services. Development is to be highly transit-supportive and connected to vibrant, mixed-use communities, where a broad range of housing types and tenures is provided.

Defined in the PPS, 2024 “complete communities” means:

...places such as mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns, and settlement areas that offer and support opportunities for equitable access to many necessities for daily living for people of all ages and abilities, including an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing, transportation options, public service facilities, local stores and services. Complete communities are inclusive and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts to meet the diverse needs of their populations.

Regarding Provincial direction on building homes, sustaining strong and competitive communities, and planning for people and homes, Section 2.1.6 of the PPS, 2024 provides that planning authorities should support the achievement of complete communities by:

- a) *accommodating an appropriate range and mix of land uses, housing options, transportation options with multimodal access, employment, public service facilities and other institutional uses (including schools and associated child care facilities, long term care facilities, places of worship and cemeteries), recreation, parks and open space, and other uses to meet long-term needs;*
- b) *improving accessibility for people of all ages and abilities by addressing land use barriers which restrict their full participation in society; and*

- c) *improving social equity and overall quality of life for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes, including equity-deserving groups.*

Intensification and redevelopment are specifically identified by the PPS, 2024 as an approach to achieving complete communities, as follows:

Planning authorities shall support general intensification and redevelopment to support the achievement of complete communities, including by planning for a range and mix of housing options and prioritizing planning and investment in the necessary infrastructure and public service facilities (Policy 2.3.1.3).

To support the achievement of complete communities, a range and mix of housing options, intensification, more mixed-use development, and strategic growth areas should be planned:

- a) *to accommodate significant population and employment growth;*
b) *as focal areas for education, commercial, recreational, and cultural uses;*
c) *to accommodate and support the transit network and provide connection points for inter- and intra-regional transit; and*
d) *to support affordable, accessible, and equitable housing (Policy 2.4.1.2).*

Section 2.4.1.3 provides direction for supporting complete communities in strategic growth areas, and Section 2.4.2.3 identifies that development and intensification should be encouraged in major transit station areas, where appropriate. Further, encouraging intensification of employment uses and compatible, compact, mixed-use development can support the achievement of complete communities (Policy 2.8.1.1).

Overall, the PPS, 2024 supports the use of CIPs by generally emphasizing community revitalization and sustainable development with a focus on enhancing the provision of complete communities. The City's Complete Communities CIP can help achieve both, support the City's growth directions, and encourage the development of complete communities, as discussed in this CIP Study.

3.2 Regional Official Plan

Regional Planning Responsibilities

On July 1, 2024, the Province of Ontario identified the York Region as an “upper-tier municipality without planning responsibilities”. The City is responsible for implementing the Regional Official Plan and has discretion to amend or revoke the Official Plan. The Regional Official Plan therefore currently remains a guiding document for land use planning in Vaughan and will be repealed once VOP 2025 is approved. The Region may still develop and contribute financially to area municipalities’ CIPs.

In its vision of planning for York Region's future, the Region highlights the importance of complete community development in providing a range of amenities, services, and housing typologies (Section 2.0). Further, The Region identifies the following objective (Section 2.3):

To create vibrant, complete, sustainable communities where people can live, work, play, learn and enjoy a high quality of life.

Community Improvement

The York Region Official Plan identifies the use of Local Municipal CIPs to implement specific policies, including:

- Section 7.3.6 contains the Region’s CIP policies, which specify that the Region may participate in a Community Improvement Plan of a local municipality.
- Section 7.3.7 identifies when the Region may use CIPs for a variety of purposes, of which the following are relevant:
 - Infrastructure that is within York’s jurisdiction;
 - Sustainable buildings (or development) designed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to changing climate; and,
 - Other matters as the Province may prescribe in accordance with the *Planning Act*.

3.3 Vaughan Official Plan, 2010 (VOP, 2010)

The following review of CIP policies focuses on the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 (VOP, 2010), although it is acknowledged that the City is presently undertaking a review of its Official Plan and has recently released a first draft of a new Official Plan (May 2025) for public review and comment.

CIP policies in the in-effect Official Plan (VOP, 2010) are set out in Section 10.1.2 and state that:

Achieving the objectives of this Plan and setting out the transformative agenda within it requires an ongoing commitment to implementing the policies of the Plan. Implementation is achieved in a variety of ways. Traditional planning tools, including Zoning By-laws, Site Plan Control, Subdivision Control, Consents and Minor Variances will all be used to implement the policies of this Plan are realized. Tools such as Bonusing, Holding By-laws, Temporary-use by-laws and Community Improvement Plans are also given effect in this section so that they can be applied from time to time, as appropriate.

Community Improvement Plan Area Criteria

Section 10.1.2.14 of the VOP, 2010 sets out that CIPAs may be designated by By-law, pursuant to Section 28 of the *Planning Act*, for areas that display any or all the following criteria shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Vaughan Official Plan, 2010 Criteria for Designating a CIPA

Criteria for a CIPA
a) Inadequate municipal infrastructure, including piped services, streets and streetscapes, public parking facilities and/or stormwater management facilities;
b) Inadequate community services such as public recreational/cultural facilities, public open space and/or social services including affordable housing;
c) Building and/or property deterioration, including façade treatment; to the extent that it has a negative effect on the overall image of the broader community;
d) Faulty arrangement of lands;
e) Encroachment of incompatible land uses;
f) Poor overall streetscape and design;
g) Existing or potential Business Improvement Areas;
h) Vacant lots with redevelopment or infill potential to achieve Urban Structure;
i) Underdeveloped properties which have potential for redevelopment or expansion to better utilize the land base to achieve the desired Urban Structure;
j) Development at densities that are too low to support planned transit facilities;
k) Barriers to the improvement or development of vacant or underutilized lands or buildings such as lots that are brownfields, contaminated soil, fragmented ownership or financial disincentive to private investment;

Criteria for a CIPA

- l) Conservation of heritage resources through restoration, rehabilitation and adaptive re-use; and/or
- m) Any other reason as provided for under the *Planning Act*.

Policies

Section 10.1.2 of VOP, 2010 sets out the policies for community improvement planning for Vaughan, and of note are the following criteria to be used for the evaluation and identification of CIPAs and the implementation of CIPs in the City:

- Policy 10.1.2.15: That a Community Improvement Plan will be prepared and adopted for the area with input from area residents, property owners and other interested stakeholders.
- Policy 10.1.2.16: That when the intent of a Community Improvement Plan has been carried out it may be dissolved by by-law.

Complete Community Policies

VOP, 2010 contains policies that provide a foundation for directing future growth in Vaughan and the achievement of a comprehensive, interconnected network of complete communities. Complete communities are defined in VOP 2010 as:

Communities that meet people's needs for daily living throughout an entire lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, local services, a full range of housing, and community infrastructure including affordable housing, schools, recreation and open space for their residents. Convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, nonmotorized travel is also provided."

Section 2.2.3 of VOP, 2010 directs that the City’s Community Areas are to “function as complete communities and encourage walking, cycling and transit use.” New Community Areas are also directed to be planned as complete communities, including a mix of uses and densities, and infrastructure to support active and public transportation.

Section 7 of the VOP, 2010 provides policies that address various elements of complete communities, including: community infrastructure, community services and facilities, parks and open spaces, food and food production, housing, and human and social services. The following is a snapshot of some of the key policy directions, used to help inform the Complete Communities CIP Study:

- Conveniently located and accessible community services and facilities contribute directly to the health and social well-being of communities. Community services and facilities should be integrated into existing and New Community Areas and located within Intensification Areas and other central locations in order to facilitate access and use;
- Facilities should have convenient transit and pedestrian access, site design that prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle movement, and should be built to the street for prominence and ease of access;
- Intensification Areas will require new and creative parkland opportunities provided on a more urban scale, mostly in the form of Neighbourhood Parks, Urban Parks, and Public Squares;
- The transformation of Vaughan to a healthy, sustainable, and vibrant urban place includes ensuring there is a diversity of housing options to accommodate all those who choose to make Vaughan their home. A wider variety of housing choices will mean that children who grow up in Vaughan will be able to stay close to their family as young adults, and seniors who have lived in the community can remain here in housing that best meets their needs. More housing choices will also mean less congestion on roads as more people who work in the City can also find housing opportunities here too; and

- Improving housing choice and access is a priority at both the Provincial and Regional level. Both the Provincial Growth Plan and the York Region Official Plan require municipalities to plan for a range and mix of housing options, including affordable housing.

Intensification and Secondary Plan Areas

Regarding future growth, the Vaughan Official Plan, 2010 requires that 45% of new residential development be primarily captured in the City's hierarchy of Intensification Areas. Developed in coordination with York Region's Official Plan, this hierarchy is as follows:

- The Vaughan Metropolitan Centre as the City's downtown and primary location of new growth, with a wide range of uses and a mix of building typologies including mid-rise and tall buildings;
- Regional Intensification Corridors to connect Regional Centres, which are to be the site of mixed-use or employment intensification;
- Primary Centres are intended to accommodate a wide range of uses but provide a transition to neighbouring areas;
- Primary Intensification Corridors link centres together and are also able to accommodate mixed-use or employment intensification, but at a lower rate than Regional Intensification Corridors; and
- Local Centres are the focus of historical communities like Woodbridge and Kleinburg and are lower in scale and range of uses and are to be primarily residential in character.

This hierarchy is considered as part of our assessment of "Areas of Interest" for the purpose of this Complete Communities CIP Study and documented later.

New communities are anticipated to accommodate the most significant change and growth over the planning horizon, and Vaughan Official Plan, 2010 requires that they are subject to

a Secondary Plan process as set out in policy 9.2.2.14. More detailed land use planning policies are provided by individual Secondary Plans, as currently set out in Volume 2 of the Official Plan. According to policy 10.1.1.3, Secondary Plans are to address the following policy aspects, which establish a framework for the creation of complete communities:

- Overall capacity for development, including projections for residential units and/or jobs;
- Land-use designations, building heights and densities;
- Built-form, urban design and public realm policies;
- Parks and open space requirements;
- Housing mix and strategies, including, where appropriate, opportunities for affordable housing;
- Employment mix and strategies, including, where appropriate, the provision of retail uses;
- The transportation network, including provisions for transit, walking and cycling within the Secondary Plan area and connections to City-wide networks;
- Provision of community services, including schools, libraries and community centres; and
- Consideration of human service needs, including educational, social, health, arts, culture and recreation facilities.

Secondary Plans also respond to and create policy addressing the conditions of individual Intensification Areas. Therefore, as part of our assessment of “Areas of Interest” for the purpose of identifying opportunities for community improvement planning and the creation of programs and incentives to help achieve desired growth, a more detailed review of Secondary Plan policies and existing land uses/built form is documented later in this Study.

3.4 City of Vaughan Official Plan, 2025 (Adopted)

To better serve the needs of current and future residents, businesses, and visitors, the City of Vaughan brought forward its Vaughan Official Plan, 2025 and received Council approval in October 2025 (awaiting Ministerial approval). Through the Vaughan Official Plan 2025, the City aims to seek opportunities to make existing communities more complete with access to amenities, services, parks and open space, and retail options within walking or cycling distance.

Vaughan Official Plan, 2025 intends to develop a new framework that accommodates future population growth in a way that moves beyond the suburbs of the past. Vaughan's vision is to be a place where people of a broad range of ages, professions and skills, backgrounds, and abilities can live and thrive, and its new, forthcoming Official Plan will contribute towards the achievement of complete communities, and the use of tools under Section 28 of the *Planning Act* can assist.

Vaughan Official Plan, 2025 contains new policies related to Community Improvement Plans. These updated policies include the recommended use of Community Improvement Plans to further development goals, such as increasing employment uses in identified secondary plan areas. There are no proposed changes to the CIPA designation criteria. The proposed Urban Structure hierarchy has been adjusted in Section 2.2.1.1 to include Protected Major Transit Station Areas, as follows (in descending order):

- i. Vaughan Metropolitan Centre;
- ii. Primary Corridors;
- iii. Primary Centre;
- iv. Local Corridors;
- v. Local Centres;
- vi. New Community Areas and New Employment Areas; and,

- vii. Community Areas and Employment Areas.

In addition, the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan and the Weston 7 Secondary Plan update process is currently ongoing. The proposed changes to these plans will be further detailed in the “Areas of Interest” analysis section of the Study.

Community Improvement Plan Area Criteria and Policies

Section 5.3.1.19 of the VOP, 2025 sets out that CIPAs may be designated by By-law, pursuant to Section 28 of the *Planning Act*. The criteria for determining a CIPA and the policies for preparing, adopting, and dissolving a CIP remain consistent with the criteria set out in the VOP, 2010.

3.5 Other City Plans, Policies, Guidelines

Since the in-effect Official Plan (VOP, 2010) adoption, the City has completed significant work with respect to its vision and direction for the creation of complete communities. These initiatives will work in tandem with the focus of the Complete Communities CIP on incentives for non-residential uses that will more broadly support and incentivize complete communities within the defined Community Improvement Project Area.

Economic Development Action Plan, 2024–2027

The Council-approved Economic Development Action Plan is intended to deliver the following key values to the local economy, which will contribute to the creation of complete communities over the planning horizon:

- Help businesses grow;
- Future-proof Vaughan’s economy;
- Position Vaughan as the leading livable and explorable city in York Region; and
- Promote the creation of living-wage jobs in Vaughan.

The Economic Development Action Plan is intended to serve as a road map to ensure Vaughan’s continued economic vitality. The Action Plan focuses on Vaughan’s key sectors, which are identified in the Council-approved Business Retention and Expansion Report 2023:

Vaughan’s established key sectors include:

- Advanced manufacturing led by agri-food processing and auto parts manufacturing
- Transportation and logistics
- Construction

Vaughan’s growing key sectors include:

- Finance and insurance
- Tourism and the creative industries
- Innovation economy

Vaughan’s emerging key sectors include:

- Health, healthcare technology, and life sciences
- Education and training

The Economic Development Action Plan outlines a set of objectives and actions for the implementation period of 2024 to 2027, as summarized in Table 2. The objectives and action areas address elements of a complete community—particularly the growth and enhancement of local businesses, employers, and industries.

Table 2: Economic Development Action Plan Objectives and Action Areas

Objective	Action Areas		
Empower the Local Business Community to Grow in Vaughan	Help businesses build resilience	Advance thought and community	Strengthen business, labour,

Objective	Action Areas		
	and seize new growth opportunities	leadership through knowledge broker activities	Regional, and international networks
Promote Vaughan’s Economy as Transformative, Ambitious and Purpose-Driven	Promote Vaughan’s main streets, employment centres, industrial parks, and corridors	Build international relations with gateway economies	Empower Council and our community leaders to champion local economic development
Undertake Strategic Initiatives to Bolster the Local Economy and Future Investment	Help businesses build resilience and seize new growth opportunities	Advance emerging opportunities in the health and healthcare industry, creative industries, and destination development	Generate value-added partnerships that demonstrate Vaughan’s leadership and enhance services to the community

Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan, 2022–2026

The Term of Council Service Excellence Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026 serves as a map to guide the City through the next four years. The Council's Strategic Plan identifies the following Vision for the City of Vaughan:

A city of choice that promotes diversity, innovation and opportunity for all citizens, fostering a vibrant community life that is inclusive, progressive, environmentally responsible and sustainable.

A series of Goal Statements are also established, including the goal to: “Build a world-class city based on good planning and urban design principles, which foster community well-being.”

As objectives to achieve this goal, the 2022-26 Strategic Plan sets out to:

- Grow Vaughan as a complete community with a focus on quality of life
- Engage in long-term planning and policy development to meet the city's housing needs
- Continue to invest in making Vaughan a “Smart City”

The Complete Communities CIP Study aims to explore these opportunities to help the City achieve the first of these three objectives, in particular.

Development Charge By-law, 2022 and Amendments

The City of Vaughan currently imposes development charges to recover the increase in the needs for servicing and infrastructure arising from development, in accordance with the *Development Charge Act*. The basis for the calculation of the City's current residential and non-residential DC is documented in the City's “2022 Development Charges Background Study” and implementing By-law.

However, in September 2024, in response to the above and the ongoing housing affordability crisis in Ontario, City staff were directed to "find solutions to this housing crisis, position the City to address affordability challenges, and to make life easier, particularly for young families." On November 19, 2024, Council approved substantial reductions in DC rates in the name of encouraging development and building more homes for their growing population, as follows:

- A revision of residential DC rates on all residential development applications to the rates that were in effect on September 21, 2018, until the later of November 19, 2029, or the passage of a new City-Wide Development Charges By-law, through the use of Section 27 agreements;
- A revision of DC rates on low-rise residential development applications deemed complete or equivalent prior to September 21, 2018, to the rates in effect when those applications are made, until November 19, 2029, or the passage of a new City-Wide Development Charges By-law, whichever is later, through the use of Section 27 Agreements;
- Provide a 24-month deferral for the collection of DCs for all residential development through the use of Section 27 agreements; and
- Deletion of the charging of interest for residential development applications pursuant to sections 26.1 and 26.2 of the Development Charges Act, helps provide an additional financial incentive to the development industry that could aid in the goal of improving housing affordability.

In 2022, the City of Vaughan identified that it was timely to update the economic and community profile for the City to understand the current economic context and clarify target sector positioning. Much of the data obtained to produce this Study helps to develop a picture of the extent to which Vaughan has achieved elements of a complete community, to date, and opportunities for improvement in the future.

Some key findings of the 2022 Data Report include the following:

- With an estimated population of 323,103 people in 2021, Vaughan represented 28% of the York Region's population and 4% of the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area (GTHA) population.
- Vaughan's population is expected to grow by around 230,000 people by 2051. This growth projection will be identified in the updated Official Plan and form the basis for growth management planning to 2051.
- Vaughan is less affordable than the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in terms of dwelling values. By 2021, the median value of absorbed dwellings in the City reached \$1,607,500, compared to \$1,190,000 in the Toronto CMA.
- Vaughan lags other municipalities in York Region in availability of purpose-built rental units. Most tenants in Vaughan rent on the secondary market, which is precarious and less affordable than purpose-built rental.
- Vaughan's labour force is centred in the following industry sectors:
 - Professional, scientific, and technical services – 20,500 people (12% of the total labour force)
 - Retail trade – 19,180 people (11% of the total labour force)
 - Construction – 16,740 people (9% of the total labour force)
- Vaughan's Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) offer an important avenue for the City to increase the competitiveness of its economic base. These lands not only accommodate a significant share of the city's business and employment, but they are also a critical aspect to Vaughan's economic competitiveness relative to the surrounding market area.

Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and Weston Road and Highway 7 Community Improvement Plan, 2015

In 2015, Vaughan introduced a CIP that applied to the following CIPAs, as shown by maps on the next page:

- “Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Community Improvement Plan Area” as illustrated in Schedule “A”; and
- “Weston Road and Highway 7 Community Improvement Plan Area” as illustrated in Schedule “B”.

By adopting these CIPAs and this CIP, Vaughan launched a four-year pilot specifically aimed at encouraging office development within these areas. The CIP offered the following incentives:

Year	Grant % ¹	Net Taxes Payable %
1	70	30
2	63	37
3	56	44
4	49	51
5	42	58
6	35	65
7	28	72
8	21	79
9	14	86
10	7	93

¹ Expressed as a percentage of the calculated Property Tax Increment

- A DC discount, which involved freezing DCs at the rates established in the 2008 DC By-law;
- A Tax Increment Equivalent Grant (TIEG) that featured a gradual increase in tax payments over ten years, reaching full payment by the eleventh year. In the first year, developers benefited from a 70% reduction in their tax obligations; and
- A complete exemption from Cash in Lieu of Parkland (CIL) for office developments, along with a discount of \$4,400 for each high-density residential unit built for every 70 square meters of office space constructed.





Throughout the pilot project, four applications were submitted. However, because financial incentive agreements were not finalized, no incentives were granted. Following the initial four-year pilot, the City extended the program for an additional three years, but no new applications were received, leading to the conclusion of the CIP pilot in 2022.

Other Incentives

Currently, both the City of Vaughan and the Region of York offer deferrals on development charges for office projects and non-luxury housing, which include:

- An eighteenth-month deferral offered by Vaughan for City-wide office developments that are at least four stories tall, with a forty-eight-month deferral offered by the Region; and

- A Regional DC deferral period ranging from five to twenty years for large office projects (limited to 1.5 million square feet) that are also a minimum of four stories and at least 75,000 square feet in gross floor area, specifically within the Highway 7 and Yonge Street Regional Centres and corridors. The length of the deferral depends on the size of the development.
- A proposed DC deferral policy for non-luxury residential rental units. If approved, this will help to increase the amount of non-luxury housing in Vaughan and work to create more inclusive and complete communities.

These deferral policies were established by the City of Vaughan in 2021, designed to align with the Region of York's incentive program. So far, there has been no uptake for office deferrals offered by the City of Vaughan.

Summary of Common Themes to Inform the CIP

Based on the above review of relevant planning and economic development documents, key themes for informing the CIP include:

1. **Encouraging Mixed-Use Development:** The Economic Development Action Plan identifies the importance of integrating residential and non-residential uses to enhance community vibrancy. By referencing this plan, the CIP can establish guidelines and incentives for mixed-use developments that combine housing, commercial, and office spaces, fostering dynamic and livable neighborhoods.
2. **Stimulating Non-Residential Development:** The Term of Council Strategic Plan outlines objectives for fostering economic growth and increasing vibrancy in community areas. The Complete Communities CIP can draw on this strategic direction to implement incentives for non-residential developments, such as commercial and office uses, that complement residential growth and create lively neighborhoods.
3. **Enhancing Walkability and Accessibility:** The PPS, 2024 and VOP, 2010 highlight the necessity of creating walkable communities and enhancing accessibility

through sustainable transportation options. The CIP can use these policies to promote developments that prioritize pedestrian-friendly designs and connectivity, ensuring easy access to amenities. *Note: this is also being explored though the Moving Goods and Talent CIP Study.*

4. **Developing Curated Community Amenities:** Planning policy documents encourage the inclusion of community amenities that promote social interaction and cultural engagement. The CIP can leverage this direction to incentivize the creation of curated community spaces, such as privately-owned public spaces (POPS) and recreational facilities, enhancing the quality of life for residents.
5. **Focusing on Sustainability and Environmental Resilience:** The VOP, 2010 and associated policies advocate for sustainable development practices. The CIP can incorporate these principles to encourage environmentally responsible design and construction practices in new developments, ensuring that Vaughan's communities are resilient and sustainable.

4.0 Insights: Benchmarking other CIPs

4.1 Complete Community CIPs across Ontario

The following is a review of complete community-based incentive programs (under Section 28 of the *Planning Act*) in other jurisdictions of the province. While there are CIPs explicitly geared towards complete communities, more CIPs address elements of a complete community—tied to one area of focus, such as housing, economic development, or revitalizing public spaces. The Vaughan Complete Communities CIP can be informed by the successes and drawbacks of existing CIPs to create a new, holistic framework. The following is a summary of some of the key findings from a scan of Ontario CIPs, an analysis of the type and frequency of programs available, the range of grant values, and how they can help to inform the City of Vaughan CIP.

Bradford West Gwillimbury

Bradford West Gwillimbury's Downtown Community Improvement Plan (CIP) 2022 aims to revitalize the downtown area by providing financial incentives to property owners and developers for various improvement projects. The plan includes a range of grant and loan programs designed to enhance both the exterior and interior of buildings, encourage accessibility improvements, and support environmental assessments.

Program details are outlined in Table 3 on the next page.

Table 3: Example CIP – Bradford West Gwillimbury Programs

Program Title	Program Details
Building Exterior Grant	This program provides a matching grant for exterior renovations, with a maximum of \$15,000 in interest areas and \$10,000 in all other areas.
Building Interior Grant	This program provides a forgivable loan for major interior renovations, offering up to \$25,000, forgivable over five years.
Fees and Permits Grant Program	This program reduces fees for non-residential developments, providing a grant equivalent to 75% of planning/building permit fees, up to \$25,000.
Development Charge Deferral Interest Grant Program	This program is intended to defer 100% of the Town's development charges on commercial developments for up to eighteen months, with a maximum of \$250,000.
Tax-Based Redevelopment Grant Program	This program offers up to 80% of the annual tax increment over a maximum of ten years for significant property rehabilitation, with a minimum assessment increase of \$1 million.
BWG Housing Program	This program supports accessibility improvements in existing commercial buildings, providing matching assistance up to \$10,000.
Environmental Site Assessment Grant Program	This program reimburses up to \$20,000 for Phase 2 environmental assessments, covering 50% of eligible costs.

City of Oshawa

The City of Oshawa has several area-specific CIPs, such as the Wentworth Street West CIP (2022), Urban Growth Centre CIP (2022), Harbour Road Area CIP (2022), and Simcoe Street South Renaissance CIP (2022). The incentives in these CIPs are designed to target smaller geographic areas with unique needs and/or objectives, and as such, there is significant variety in the range of programs. This geographically targeted approach is also the recommended direction for the Vaughan Complete Communities CIP.

Table 4 below highlights notable incentives within these CIPs.

Table 4: Example CIP – Oshawa Programs

CIP	Incentives
Brownfields Renaissance Community Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brownfields Study Grant Program: This program provides grants for environmental studies of brownfield sites. The amount given is based on 50% of the actual cost of the eligible study, to a maximum of \$10,000 for each individual Study. Brownfields Property Tax Cancellation Program: This program provides cancelled property taxes to property owners who clean up brownfields. The City may also apply to the Region of Durham for Regional property tax assistance. Additionally, the City may also apply to the Province for matching education property tax assistance. Brownfields Redevelopment Grant Program: This program <u>commences upon the completion of the Brownfields Tax Cancellation Program</u> and provides an annual City and Regional grant to property owners who undertake redevelopment of their properties in the project area, which will increase the assessment.

CIP	Incentives
Harbour Road Area Community Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Assessment Grant Program: This program will provide financial incentives for the development and redevelopment of properties in the Harbour Road Area by providing a grant to pay a portion of City taxes attributable to the increased assessment over a nine-year period.
Simcoe Street South Renaissance Community Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Stimulus Grant: This program is designed to assist with the financing of leasehold improvements and associated accessibility enhancements for non-residential properties on Simcoe Street South. Up to 50% of eligible costs to a maximum of \$20,000 per eligible floor per municipal street address, whichever is less, where at least \$40,000 in eligible leasehold improvement costs will be undertaken. No more than \$20,000 will be given per five years.
Urban Growth Centre Community Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion to Residential Grant: This program is intended to assist property owners with the financing of building improvements required to convert upper storey non-residential units or ground floor non-residential units to residential dwelling units within the Urban Growth Centre CIPA. The incentive is provided as a grant.

Bolton Community, Town of Caledon

The Bolton Community is a settlement area in the Town of Caledon. The Bolton Community Improvement Plan (2023) has a variety of grant programs intended to enhance industrial areas, commercial corridors, and the Bolton core. These incentives include grants for building improvements (e.g., façade or other aesthetic changes), energy efficiency, and public art.

In particular, the Privately Owned Public Spaces and Public Art Grant Program and Patio and Outdoor Café Grant Program are of note, as they are aligned with the Complete Communities framework.

The descriptions of the programs are listed in **Table 5** below.

Table 5: Example CIP – Bolton Programs

Program Title	Program Details
Privately Owned Public Spaces and Public Art Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This program is designed for office, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use properties and buildings within the Bolton Core. Designated non-residential heritage properties are also eligible. The grant is equal to 50% of total eligible costs, to a maximum of \$3,500. Eligible costs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation or refurbishment of permanent seating or tables, including pedestrian benches; Installation or refurbishment of decorative signage, lighting, or permanent landscaping features; New permanent public art installations such as wall murals, commemorative plaques or displays, monuments, memorials, sculptures, custom works, or interactive digital art or displays; Costs associated with commissioning, construction, and installation, including labour and materials.
Patio and Outdoor Café Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This program is designed for the installation or improvement of permanent sidewalk patios or outdoor cafes for commercial and mixed-use properties within the Bolton Core. The grant is equal to 50% of total eligible costs to a maximum of \$5000, whichever is less. Eligible costs include:

Program Title	Program Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent structural elements required for the patio or outdoor café area; • Permanent decorative fencing and/or barriers; • Permanent outdoor heaters; • Permanent awnings or similar cover; • Studies or reports prepared by a qualified professional, as may be required or requested by the Town in support of an application; and, • Temporary patio elements to be located in a public right-of-way or parking area, including structural elements, decorative fencing, and barriers.

City of Hamilton

The City of Hamilton’s Revitalizing Hamilton’s Commercial Districts CIP (2021) contains varying programs intended to address the investment needs of specific commercial districts in Hamilton. The suite of incentives includes grants, low-interest loans, forgivable loans, and Tax Increment Equivalent Grants.

Several of the Areas of Interest selected for the Vaughan Complete Community CIP are designed to be mixed-use communities with commercial, office, and residential components. Therefore, incentives for commercial and office development, particularly in current market conditions which may make mixed-use development less feasible, are an important consideration.

Notable programs are detailed in Table 6 on the next page.

Table 6: Example CIP – Hamilton Programs

Program Title	Program Details
<p>Commercial District Housing Opportunities Program</p>	<p>This program provides low-interest loans and grants to promote the improvement or development of dwelling units in selected commercial districts.</p> <p>The maximum loan amount is \$20,000 per dwelling unit, to a maximum of \$600,000 per property. The maximum grant amount available is \$5,000.</p>
<p>Revitalizing Hamilton Tax Increment Grant Program</p>	<p>This program is intended to provide a grant to incentivize property owners in selected commercial districts to develop, redevelop, or otherwise improve properties and/or buildings (including designated heritage buildings).</p> <p>Grants are provided relative to the actual increase in municipal property taxes that is generated due to an improvement/development undertaken on a property. Grants are provided over a maximum term of four annual payments.</p>
<p>Start-Up and Office Tenant Attraction Program</p>	<p>This program is intended to provide a low-interest loan and/or forgivable loan that will facilitate improvements to office space and</p>

Program Title	Program Details
	<p>support the creation of new office space in selected commercial districts.</p> <p>The maximum loan amount shall be the lesser of 90% of eligible leasehold improvement costs, or an amount calculated by a formula that considers the square foot area and terms of lease.</p>

Town of Halton Hills

The Town of Halton Hills Community Improvement Plan (2022) consists of ten programs to support several community improvement goals in the Town, including affordable housing, storefront revitalization, accessibility, climate change, and arts and culture. As such, it is similar to the intention of Vaughan’s Complete Community CIP. Incentives include forgivable loans, Development Charge deferrals, and grants.

Notable programs are detailed in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Example CIP – Town of Halton Hills Programs

Program Title	Program Details
Commercial Property Accessibility and Energy Efficiency Enhancement Program	This program provides grants for accessibility improvements and/or energy retrofits in the commercial and commercial portions of mixed-use properties.

Program Title	Program Details
	<p>For accessibility improvements, the grant covers 50% of eligible costs, up to \$5,000.</p> <p>For energy retrofits, the grant covers 50% of eligible costs, up to \$7,500.</p>
Building and Property Renovation Program	<p>This program is designed to provide forgivable loans to encourage the renovation of existing commercial, heritage, mixed-use, and non-residential buildings in the downtown area.</p> <p>The forgivable loan covers up to 50% of eligible costs, up to \$30,000.</p>

Housing-Focused CIPs

Announced in 2021, Canada’s Housing Accelerator Fund allocates \$4 billion until 2026–27 to encourage more homebuilding in cities like Vaughan. Since 2023, many municipalities across Ontario have created housing-focused CIPs to distribute the funding. A scan of housing-focused CIPs has been completed to inform the Vaughan Complete Communities Study, and the following Table 8 is a summary of some of the key findings.

Table 8: Housing-focused CIPs

Municipality	Year	# of Incentives	Summary of Program Types
Collingwood	2024	2	Capital grants for rapid Additional Residential Unit (ARU) development.
Mississauga	2024	2	Capital grants for affordable and below-market units.
Richmond Hill	2024	4	Capital grants, tax-based grants, non-financial incentives.
Cobourg	2024	11	Non-reserve fund programs, capital grants, loan programs.
Welland	2023	7	Non-reserve fund programs, capital grants, forgivable loans, non-financial incentives.

Findings of the CIP Scan

The CIP Scan presents the following key findings that could be considered by the City as it develops its own unique Housing CIP and set of financial incentive programs:

Types of Programs, Frequency, and Range

The following is a summary of the most typical categories of financial incentive programs that are included in the above noted CIPs from both a non-residential and residential perspective, with a basic explanation of what they are and how they are intended to work. It should be noted that these are typical *categories* of incentive programs only, and the range

of eligible costs, uses, and areas differs according to unique local circumstances and needs.

Capital and Improvement Grants: Frequently offered across the municipalities scanned, these grants are designed to support new construction, rehabilitation, and conversion of spaces for affordable housing. By providing direct funding, municipalities can lower the financial burden on homeowners and developers, making it more feasible to create affordable units. This, in turn, encourages the development of projects that might otherwise be too costly to pursue, ultimately increasing the availability of affordable housing options in the community. The range of capital grants provided in CIPs vary significantly, with some programs offering grants up to \$130,000 per unit in Mississauga or smaller amounts like \$10,000 for additional dwelling units in Collingwood. Many programs offer improvement grants in the range of \$5,000 to \$25,000. For instance, Bradford West Gwillimbury provides a maximum of \$15,000 for building exterior grants and \$25,000 for interior renovations.

Non-Reserve Fund Incentives: This category includes tax increment grants, fee waivers, and deferral programs aimed at reducing upfront costs for developers. Tax increment grants allow developers to retain a portion of the increased property tax revenue generated by their new development, which can be reinvested into the project. Fee waivers eliminate or reduce fees associated with building permits and other municipal services, directly lowering project costs. Deferral programs allow developers to delay the payment of certain fees until the project is completed and generating income, improving cash flow during development. These incentives are crucial in making projects financially viable and attractive to developers. Tax increment grants are often tied to the increase in property taxes over a specified period (i.e., ten years or twenty-five years), with no explicit maximum—other than the *Planning Act* requirement that no more money is provided than the equivalent of all eligible costs. Bradford West Gwillimbury provides fee reductions to non-residential developments of up to \$25,000 per project, which is approximately 75% of planning and building permit fees.



Forgivable Loans: These loans are offered to support development, with conditions tied to project completion. If the developer meets specific criteria, the loan may be forgiven, effectively turning it into a grant. Forgivable loans can significantly reduce the financial risk for developers while promoting the creation of certain uses that are much needed (such as offices, grocery stores, or affordable housing). In CIPs such as Hamilton, a forgivable loan program was applied in their Start-Up and Office Tenant Attraction program, providing \$25,000 per unit.

Overall, these programs collectively aim to incentivize complete communities.

5.0 Areas of Interest

An "Area of Interest" for Non-Residential Development and Complete Communities incentive programs refers to certain areas of the City identified for further analysis to assess non-residential-focused needs and opportunities, such as planning framework/permissions, development potential, and accessibility to transit and amenities.

The analysis aims to determine the level of need and opportunity for the City to potentially allocate resources, including grants and loans, to support the non-residential and complete community-focused development in these targeted locations. If warranted, Areas of Interest explored may be designated as Community Improvement Projects Areas (CIPA).

5.1 Identifying Areas of Interest

The "Areas of Interest" have been determined by the Secondary Plan areas that fall under the Intensification Areas in the VOP, 2010 (Schedule 1 – Urban Structure), including:

- Vaughan Metropolitan Centre
- Vaughan Mills Centre
- Yonge/Steeles Corridor
- Weston Road and Highway 7
- Promenade Centre
- Steeles West
- Concord GO Centre
- Protected Major Transit Station Areas

These Areas of Interest are mapped and analysed based on policy framework, land use patterns, housing stock, and other notable characteristics.

Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC)

Map 1: Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan Boundary – Area of Interest

Vaughan Community Improvement Plan Study
 Council approved Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan Boundary



Table 9: Areas of Interest - Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VMC Area of Interest is identified as a “Regional Centre” in the VOP, 2010’s Intensification Framework. The vision of the VMC is to serve as a vibrant downtown area for the city, with a range of activities and uses which can be accessed on foot. • The VMC Area of Interest is also designated as a Protected Major Transit Station Area.

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Secondary Plan identifies four land use “precincts.” Two of the precincts are focused on mixed-use development, while the remaining two are focused on either primarily residential or employment. • Office uses, retail, service commercial, and public uses are required in some precincts, with retail, service commercial, and public uses generally recommended throughout the VMC. The residential precinct permits a mix of high-rise, mid-rise, and low-rise residential forms. • There are varying height and density parameters, ranging from three-storey minimums to thirty-five-storey maximums. • The new draft VMC Secondary Plan has several proposed changes from the existing framework, such as new land use designations and density targets. Notably, it sets out a target of minimum of 10,000 new office jobs by 2051, and 2,500 new retail and service jobs by 2051. It also states that office, retail, and commercial uses shall be required to account for 10% of total gross floor area on all sites within the Mixed-Use Designation.
Land Use Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VMC contains a mix of uses, including residential, office, employment, institutional, commercial, and retail. • Parcel sizes vary throughout the area but are primarily substantially sized parcels which accommodate large-scale commercial and residential uses, including

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
	<p>convention centres, recreational facilities, and post-secondary institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several surface parking lots associated with commercial, employment, and residential uses.
Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential uses are primarily high-rise condominiums and/or apartments.
Other Notable Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure capabilities, including water and sewage systems, are critical considerations during the development process. <p>The VMC is well-served by higher-order transit, as well as buses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental assessments are conducted to ensure that new developments adhere to sustainability practices and mitigate risks. • The VMC exists within the flood plain and Black Creek remediation area. • Within the VMC boundary, there is a post-secondary institution, retail stores, restaurants, and parks. Outside of the boundary, there is a grocery store, hospital, and a secondary institution.

As identified in Table 9, there are many opportunities for developing complete communities in the Vaughan Metropolitan Center. The existing fabric of the VMC contains a mix of uses, including residential, office/employment, and commercial. However, there is a desire from the City to increase non-residential uses, including office uses. For example, the current Secondary Plan mandates office and retail uses in some areas of the VMC. These uses may be difficult to develop due to fluctuating market conditions but are nonetheless

essential to the City’s vision for a Complete Community. Through engagement, it appears that there is minimal concern regarding incentivizing residential development in this area, but there is concern in facilitating supporting uses (e.g., employment, recreational, and cultural). As such, the CIP should focus on financial incentives to facilitate office uses, as well as other supporting non-residential uses.

Vaughan Mills Centre

Map 2: Areas of Interest - Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan Boundary

Vaughan Community Improvement Plan Study
Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan



Table 10: Areas of Interest - Vaughan Mills Centre

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Vaughan Mills Centre is identified as a Primary Intensification Area in the in the VOP, 2010 Intensification

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
	<p>Framework. The vision of the Vaughan Mills Centre is to be a “midtown” urban centre, defined by commerce, tourism, and entertainment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The land use designations in the Secondary Plan are generally in accordance with VOP, 2010 designations, with some modifications (e.g., additional permitted or restricted use permissions). These designations include High-Rise Mixed-Use, Mid-Rise Mixed-Use, Community Commercial Mixed-Use, Prestige Office Employment, and Low-Rise Residential.
Land Use Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a variety of retail, commercial, and institutional uses, including restaurants, banks, and travel agencies. Parcel sizes vary. However, there is a prevalence of large retail and commercial uses, as well as surface parking lots. There are several vacant parcels to the West of the “Area of Interest” boundary.
Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The abutting housing stock is primarily low-rise residential uses (Single Detached Homes), with varying lot sizes.
Other Notable Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure for water and sewage is adequate, although certain areas may require upgrades to handle increased densities associated with new developments. The Vaughan Mills Centre is adjacent to the Black Creek and West Don River Valley.

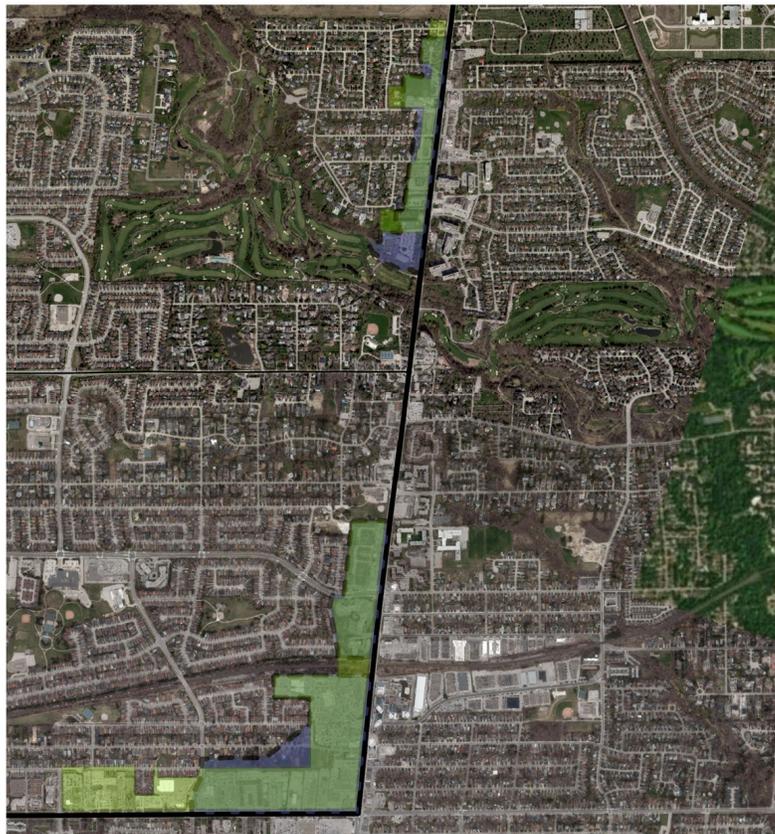


The Vaughan Mills Centre contains large and small-scale retail, commercial, and institutional uses, with some vacant lands. The intention of the Vaughan Mills Centre Secondary Plan is to create a mixed-use urban centre. The CIP program should focus on incentivizing the development of vacant parcels to further a variety of priority retail, commercial, and office uses.

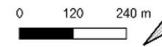
Yonge/Steeles Corridor

Map 3: Areas of Interest – Yonge/Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan Boundary

Vaughan Community Improvement Plan Study
Yonge/Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan Boundary



- Areas of Interest**
- Yonge/Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan Boundary
 - Protected Major Transit Station Area
- Base Map Items**
- Highway
 - Road Network



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Data provided from City of Vaughan, York Region
Project no: SRID 36017

Table 11: Areas of Interest – Yonge/Steeles Corridor

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Yonge/Steeles Corridor Area of Interest comprises both the Yonge/Steeles Corridor North, and Yonge/Steeles Corridor South. • The vision of the Yonge/Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan is to be an active live-work community with a wide range of uses. The Yonge/Steeles Corridor South is include transit-oriented developments. • Portions of the Yonge/Steeles Corridor Area of Interest are designated as Protected Major Transit Station Areas. • The land use designations in the Yonge/Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan are generally aligned with VOP, 2010 designations, with some modifications. These designations include “High-Rise Mixed-Use,” “High-Rise Residential,” “Mid-Rise Mixed-Use,” “Mid-Rise Residential,” “Low-Rise Mixed-Use,” “Low-Rise Residential,” and “Parks”. • Mandatory retail area is required along the ground floor within the “High-Rise Mixed-Use” designation.
Land Use Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a wide range of existing retail, office, tourism, institutional, and commercial uses along the corridor. Parcel sizes vary. • Existing maximum heights vary between five storeys to eighteen storeys on the Yonge/Steeles Corridor South area and three storeys to twelve storeys in the Yonge/Steeles Corridor North area.

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing housing stock along the Yonge Street corridor includes a mix of low-, mid-, and high-rise apartment buildings. • There are low-rise residential neighbourhoods (consisting of primarily single-detached homes) within the Yonge/Steeles Corridor north area and in areas abutting the Area of Interest boundaries.
Other Notable Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mixed-use nodes are generally well-served by existing infrastructure, including water, sewage, and waste management systems, although specifics can vary by area. • Infrastructure improvements are ongoing to ensure capacity meets the demands of increased density and new developments. • Transportation networks in these corridors are robust, as the Yonge/Steeles Corridor is well-served by transit and will be further supported by the future Yonge North Subway Expansion.

The intention of the future of the Yonge/Steeles Corridor Area is to accommodate a wide-range of uses and create a mixed-use, live-work community to support the future Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE). The existing fabric of the area contains a substantial mix of office, retail, and mid-to-high-rise residential uses. As such, CIP incentives should be focused towards continuing to develop office uses and a variety of priority retail and commercial uses. Incentives for improvements to the built environment (such as façade or accessibility) in existing developments may be considered.

Weston Road and Highway 7

Map 4: Areas of Interest – Weston Road and Highway 7 Secondary Plan Boundary

Vaughan Community Improvement Plan Study
Council approved Weston 7 Secondary Plan Boundary

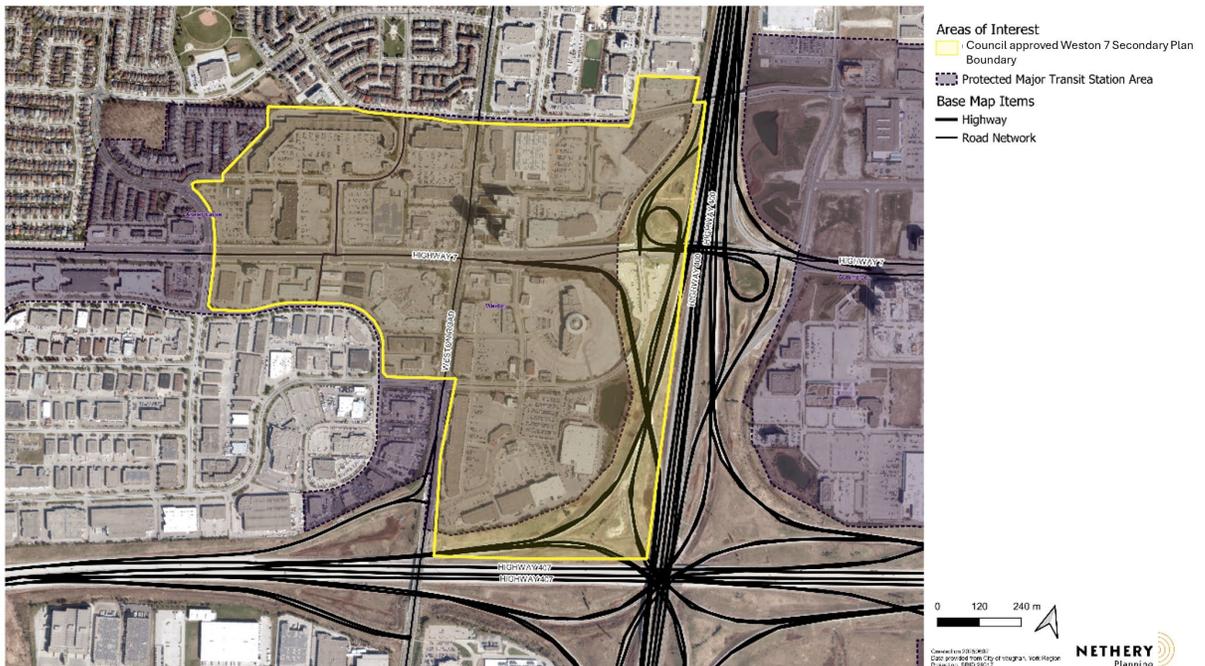


Table 12: Areas of Interest – Weston Road and Highway 7

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Weston Road and Highway 7 Secondary Plan was adopted by Council on October 28, 2025. The vision outlined in the Secondary Plan is to create an urban centre with a variety of commercial, cultural, and entertainment destinations, as well as housing and jobs.

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Area of Interest is identified as a “Primary Centre” in the VOP, 2010 Intensification Framework. • This Area of Interest is identified as a “Strategic Growth Area” in the PPS, 2024. • The Secondary Plan Land Use Designations on Schedule 13 of VOP, 2010 include “Mid-Rise Mixed-Use, High-Rise Mixed-Use, and Community Commercial Mixed-Use,” with no determined heights and densities. • PMTSA minimum density targets range between 200 to 250 people and jobs combined per hectare for Weston BRT PMTSA and Ansley Grove BRT PMTSA, respectively. • The adopted Weston 7 Secondary Plan generally designates the area as Mixed Use. Building height maximums vary, ranging from three to thirty-two storeys.
Land Use Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a prevalence of big-box commercial and retail uses with large surface parking areas (e.g., restaurants, movie theatres, or grocery stores). • Parcels are generally larger.
Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is limited housing within the Area of Interest boundaries as there is only one existing mixed-use development that includes residential condos, located directly north west of the intersection at Weston Rd. and Highway 7. There are low-rise residential uses abutting the area.

There are a prevalence of large-scale commercial and retail uses in the Weston Road and Highway 7 area, including restaurants, movie theatres, and grocery stores. This Secondary Plan Area is designed to be an urban centre with a variety of retail, commercial, and office uses. As such, the CIP program should be focused on incentivizing increased office uses, as well as a variety of differently sized priority retail and commercial uses.

Promenade Centre

Map 5: Areas of Interest – Promenade Centre Secondary Plan Boundary

Vaughan Community Improvement Plan Study
Promenade Centre Secondary Plan



Table 13: Areas of Interest – Promenade Centre

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Promenade Centre Area of Interest is identified as a “Primary Centre” in the VOP, 2010 Urban Structure. • The Secondary Plan sorts the area into precincts, each with a particular area of focus (i.e., transit, public spaces, high-rise/mixed-use development, existing residential, and community facilities). Land Use Designations within the precincts conform to the VOP, 2010, and include “High-Rise Mixed-Use, High-Rise Residential, Community Commercial Mixed-Use, and Major Institutional”. • There is a minimum density target of 200 people and jobs combined per hectare for lands located within the Disera-Promenade BRT Major Transit Station Area within the Secondary Plan boundary. • Target for 35% of all new units to be affordable. • Height maximums vary from two storey to thirty-five storeys.
Land Use Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of large retail uses and associated surface parking lots. The Secondary Plan provides for the redevelopment of the surface parking lot associated with the Promenade Mall. • Primarily commercial and retail uses surround the Promenade Centre. However, there is some variety in the uses (e.g., retirement home).
Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevalence of high-rise residential uses (condominium apartment towers), as well as townhouses.

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Area of Interest boundary abuts a low-rise residential neighbourhood.
Other Notable Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promenade Centre is generally well-serviced, with established infrastructure for water and wastewater management systems designed to support higher-density developments as well as existing community facilities within and immediately adjacent to the Secondary Plan boundary.

The Promenade Centre Secondary Plan is intended to ensure the development of a mixed-use community, including retail, commercial, public, and residential uses. The existing fabric of the area contains a mix of uses with a focus on retail and commercial uses, due to the presence of the Promenade Mall. Many of the parcels within the limited Secondary Plan Area boundary are developed. However, significant redevelopment is anticipated, therefore it is recommended that the Community Improvement Project Area boundaries are expanded. The CIP incentives should focus on facilitating a variety of different-sized retail and commercial uses.

Steeles West

Map 6: Areas of Interest – Steeles West Secondary Plan Boundary

Vaughan Community Improvement Plan Study
Steeles West Secondary Plan



Table 14: Areas of Interest – Steeles West

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Steeles West Area of Interest is identified as a “Primary Centre” in the VOP, 2010 Intensification Framework. • The Land Use Designations within the Secondary Plan follow the VOP and include Mid-Rise Mixed-Use and High-Rise Mixed-Use.

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial uses are to be provided at grade and part of a multi-storey, mixed-use building. • Density maximums tied to proximity to transit. • Non-transit-supportive land uses are not permitted (e.g., retail warehousing, drive-throughs). • Office uses are permitted but not required.
Land Use Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing uses are primarily commercial and retail, with associated surface parking lots • Prevalence of vacant/underdeveloped lands.
Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abutting low-rise residential uses, which consist of larger two-storey single detached on smaller lots. There are townhome developments to the north.

The existing fabric of the Steeles West area contains significant retail and commercial uses. The CIP program should include incentives to facilitate mixed-use development, with a focus on attracting priority retail and commercial uses, as ground-floor retail is a priority outlined in the Secondary Plan. There is a prevalence of underdeveloped or vacant lands, so incentives to facilitate interim, temporary, or pop-up uses may be considered as the area continues to develop. Incentives to retrofit or enhance the accessibility of existing retail and commercial uses should also be considered.

Concord GO Centre

Map 7: Areas of Interest – Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan Boundary

Vaughan Community Improvement Plan Study
Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan



Table 15: Areas of Interest – Concord GO Centre

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Concord GO Area of Interest is identified as a “Local Centre” in the VOP, 2010 Intensification framework. It is designed to accommodate 4,000 to 8,000 people, and 10,000 new jobs.

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designations in the Secondary Plan are aligned with the VOP, 2010, and include Low-Rise Mixed-Use, High-Rise Mixed-Use, and Employment Commercial Mixed-Use.
Land Use Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly vacant lands, which includes Environmental Protection zones and Open Space zones. Prevalence of employment and office uses, as well as retail.
Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abutting uses are primarily Low-Rise Residential (including Single Detached Dwellings on large lots).

The Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan is currently being updated along with two other studies at the City—that being a Transportation Master Plan (TMP) and the Concord Flooding Study. The area is set to see a significant amount of growth due to recent MZO approvals, both within the Secondary Plan boundary and the surrounding area. Furthermore, development approvals and ongoing applications with the City in and around the Secondary Plan boundary area will generate a population not anticipated by the in-force 2015 Secondary Plan.

The Concord GO Centre has several vacant parcels, some of which are environmentally sensitive. CIP incentives to facilitate interim, temporary, or pop-up uses may be considered as the area continues to develop. The CIP could incentivize office uses, as well as mixed-use development, particularly ground-floor priority retail and commercial uses.

Protected Major Transit Station Areas

Map 8: Areas of Interest – Protected Major Transit Station Area Boundaries

Vaughan Community Improvement Plan Study
Protected Major Transit Station Areas

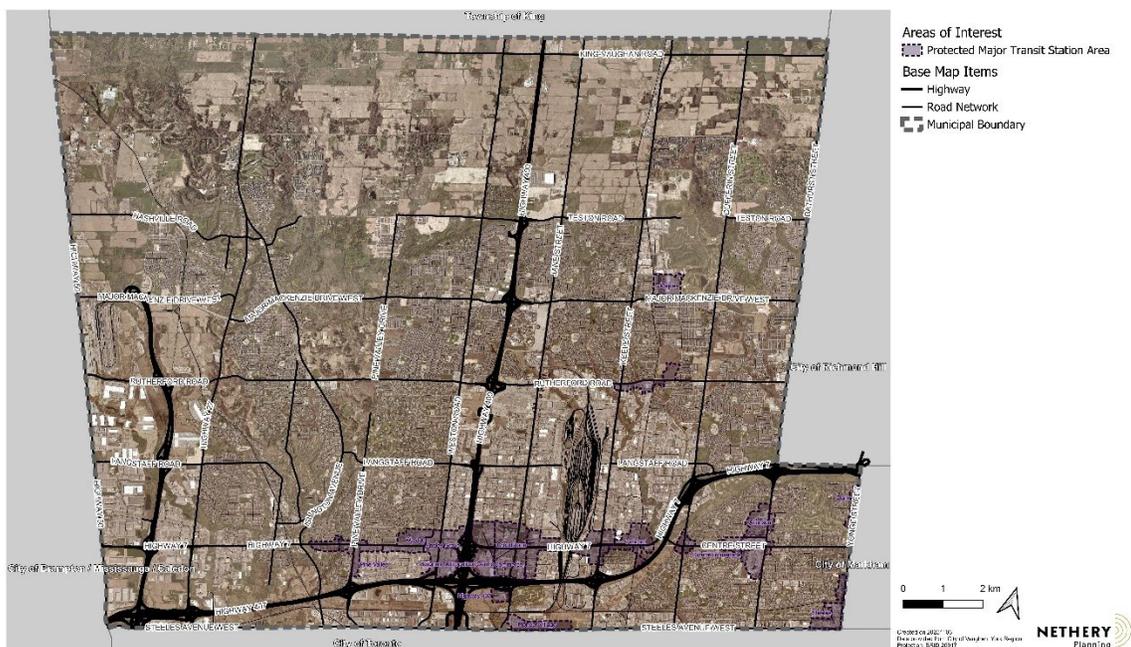


Table 16: Areas of Interest – Protected Major Transit Station Areas

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
Policy Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2020 Provincial growth plan, A Place to Grow, first designated Major Transit Station Areas as areas which have a potential for intensification, based on their proximity to transit services.

Assessment Criteria	Findings/Input
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since then, York Region has identified Protected Major Transit Station Areas within Priority Transit Corridors, including current and funded future corridors. • PMTSAs include minimum density and height designations, to encourage growth and development within their areas.
Land Use Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use patterns may vary across different PMTSAs, especially due to the differing density requirements of each site. • One common land use across all PMTSAs is the requirement for public transit in the area considered to be within a Priority Transit Corridor.
Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing stock varies across each PMTSA, with the target densities varying across the twenty sites from 0 Persons and Jobs per Hectare (Highway 407 Subway Station) to 400 Persons and Jobs per Hectare (Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Subway Station).

The City has twenty Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSAs) which require strategic planning to reach minimum targets for people and jobs per hectare. Many of the PMTSA-designated areas are either slated for growth and development, or already experience high densities, such as the VMC Subway Station.

These sites provide opportunities for development of housing, employment, and commercial uses across Vaughan, including development targeted by CIP incentives, such as development for office uses or ground-floor commercial.

5.2 Meeting Official Plan Criteria for a CIPA

Section 10.1.2.14 of the VOP, 2010 sets out criteria for designating a Community Improvement Project Area. Shown in Table 16 below, the policy identifies where the Areas of Interest meet the criteria:

Table 16: Criteria for Designating a CIPA via the Vaughan Official Plan, 2010

Criteria for a CIPA and CIP	VMC	Vaughan Mills Centre	Yonge/Steeles Corridor	Weston Road and Highway 7	Promenade Centre	Steeles West	Concord GO	PMTSAs
a) inadequate municipal infrastructure, including piped services, streets and streetscapes, public parking facilities, and/or stormwater management facilities;								
b) inadequate community services such as public recreational/cultural facilities, public open space and/or social services, including affordable housing;			✓					
c) building and/or property deterioration, including facade treatment to the extent that it has a negative effect on the overall image of the broader community;								
d) faulty arrangement of lands;								
e) encroachment of incompatible land uses;	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Criteria for a CIPA and CIP	VMC	Vaughan Mills Centre	Yonge/Steeles Corridor	Weston Road and Highway 7	Promenade Centre	Steeles West	Concord GO	PMTSAs
f) poor overall streetscape and urban design;						✓		
g) existing or potential Business Improvement Areas;								
h) vacant lots with redevelopment or infill potential to achieve Urban Structure;		✓	✓			✓	✓	
i) underdeveloped properties which have potential for redevelopment or expansion to better utilize the land base to achieve the desired Urban Structure;	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
j) development at densities that are too low to support planned transit facilities;				✓				

Criteria for a CIPA and CIP	VMC	Vaughan Mills Centre	Yonge/Steeles Corridor	Weston Road and Highway 7	Promenade Centre	Steeles West	Concord GO	PMTSAs
k) barriers to the improvement or development of vacant or underutilized lands or buildings such as lots that are brownfields, contaminated soil, fragmented ownership, or financial disincentive to private investment;								
l) conservation of heritage resources through restoration, rehabilitation, and adaptive re-use; and/or								
m) any other reason as provided for under the <i>Planning Act</i> .	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

The Areas of Interests meet these criteria as outlined in the table above, based on their individual assessments in the previous section of this Study. As such, any of the aforementioned Areas of Interest could be identified as part of the CIPA.

6.0 What We've Heard: Engagement Inputs

The following is a summary of the key takeaways from the City of Vaughan CIP engagement workshops held throughout November to December 2024. These workshops included interested members of the public, government agencies, and stakeholders across development or other relevant industries. Additionally, a Project Steering Committee, made up of City of Vaughan Staff across various departments (including Policy Planning, Urban Design, Financial Planning and Development Finance, and Economic Development) was engaged throughout the project. Frequently heard comments from participants regarding the creation of more complete communities and the use of community improvement tools in the City of Vaughan are as follows:

- Incentives should be dispersed throughout Secondary Plan Areas (SPA), rather than being concentrated in a few areas within the SPA.
- There is no “one-size-fits-all approach;” the needs of each SPA are different.
- Accessible rental properties should be located near amenities; priority should be given to developments that are walkable to amenities.
- Consider encouraging cultural institutions, and balancing uses (increased recreational uses and social centres).
- Need for a diversity of uses, rather than similar plazas with chain stores.
- It is a challenge to balance new housing and protect employment uses; desire to see more ability to complement industrial/employment uses with retail.
- It is challenging to make 3+ bedroom rentals feasible.
- Lots of costs make the feasibility of development difficult (e.g., ground-floor retail requirements, accessible units).
- Consider incentives from desired types of retail/first-of-its-kind in a given area.
- Need to compare boundaries of natural areas with the Areas of Interest to ensure development is not encouraged in floodplains.

- Attracting post-secondary satellite campuses in Vaughan is desired.
- Consider incentivizing land trusts and creating opportunities for partnerships between the City and affordable housing groups (e.g., leasing vacant land) to create deeply affordable housing.
- Consider DC reductions for office and rental.
- The CIP must be flexible and acknowledge the evolution of sites—historically, CIPs only support if “everything is done at once”.
- Consider reimbursements for developers’ front-end servicing.
- Short-term uses should be allowed/more flexible due to the evolving nature of sites.
- Consider financial incentives for property owners to create secondary suites.
- Land is a significant prohibitor to nonprofit/affordable housing—City should take the initiative on this.
- Consider a designated point of contact to aid in the affordable housing development process.
- Need for further intensification, beyond current Provincial/legislative requirements.

7.0 Ideas and Options for the CIP

7.1 Potential Vision and Goals

Based on the research completed and documented in this Non-Residential and Complete Communities Study, a potential Vision Statement and set of goals have been identified for the CIP.

Vision Statement

Vaughan envisions a vibrant and inclusive City, where the needs of residents of all incomes, ages, and abilities are met through the provision of purpose-built rental housing, appropriate housing options and mixed-use developments. By integrating homes, shops, and offices, creating walkable neighbourhoods, prioritizing accessibility and physical and social connectivity, and providing economic opportunities, this vision can be realized.

Goals

Urban neighbourhoods that are socially cohesive and economically prosperous require a balance of uses to achieve vibrant, diverse, and complete urban neighbourhoods. The overarching goal of the Non-Residential and Complete Communities CIP is to respond to this need through the following actions:

1. Enhance Economic Vitality and Social Connectivity Through Increased Mixed-Use Development
 - o Establish guidelines and incentives for mixed-use developments that integrate residential, commercial, office spaces, and community spaces fostering dynamic and livable neighbourhoods.

- Boost economic prosperity by commercial and office use incentive programs that complement residential growth and create lively neighborhoods.
 - Provide incentive programs that promote the development and redevelopment of buildings that offer residential, commercial, and retail spaces.
 - Invest in complete communities where residents can live, work, and access amenities and services within walking distance.
2. Cultivate Partnerships with Stakeholders, Landowners, and Developers and Recognize for Exemplary Developments
- Promote developments that contribute to the vision of complete communities and focus on sustainability and accessibility.
 - Develop partnerships with landowners, organizations, and developers to maximize potential in creating complete communities through CIP incentives.

7.2 Ideas and Options for a CIPA

The CIPA for the Vaughan Complete Communities CIP could be:

1. CIP Precincts: Identify CIPA precincts based on Vaughan's existing Secondary Plan Areas within the Urban Area.
2. City-Wide: The CIPA could be identified as the entire City of Vaughan, and Official Plan and Zoning permissions will direct where incentives can be provided or are limited to certain areas (e.g., incentives available within Residential zones, or the Urban Area).

7.3 Financial Incentives and Options

CIP tools under the *Planning Act* are flexible in nature, meaning the City is provided the ability to be as locally responsive as needed to ensure the programs, eligibility criterion, and incentive values are appropriate to the needs of Vaughan today and into the future.

The following financial incentive programs have been identified, which the City of Vaughan could implement as part of its Non-Residential and Complete Communities Community Improvement Plan:

- Major Office Development Charges Deferral
- Urban Format Supermarkets, Grocery Stores for New Construction Development Charges Deferral, and Urban Format Supermarkets, Grocery Stores, and Food Services for Retrofit Forgivable Loan
- Urban Agriculture, Creative Industries, Incubation, Co-Working, or Research Facilities Forgivable Loan
- Sustainable Built Environment Grant
- Interim Activations (Retail or Recreation) Grant

It is recommended that the City consider these financial incentive programs for stakeholder input and implementation. The financial incentive programs, their purpose, proposed eligibility, and potential financial value have been identified in Table 17, on the following pages.

Table 17: Identified Financial Incentive Program Options

Incentive Program Type	Purpose	Eligibility	Potential Value / Financial Impact
Major Office and Convention Centre Development Charges Deferral	To incentivize the creation or maintenance of employment by targeting large format (major offices and convention centre) uses that would have significant economic benefit to the City or fill an existing gap. These DC Deferrals are designed to match York Region’s Large Office Financial Incentive, which was approved by Council in June 2025.	<p>Major Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. four storeys above grade Min. 75,000 sq. ft. of GFA <p>Convention Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. 90,000 sq. ft. of contiguous exhibit hall space on one floor 	<p>Major Office DC Deferral (until change of use)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% DC Deferral: 75,000 sq. ft. – 149,999 sq. ft. 75% DC Deferral: 150,000 sq. ft. – 249,999 sq. ft. 100% DC Deferral: 250,000 sq. ft. – 600,000 sq. ft. <p>Convention Centre DC Deferral (time based)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately \$5 million based on 90,000 sq. ft. (one facility)

<p>Food and Beverage Retail and Food Services – New Construction DC Deferral and Retrofit Forgivable Loan</p>	<p>To incentivize supermarkets and grocery stores with accessory food service in a less resource-intensive way and promote mixed-use buildings, or to repurpose existing uses and vacant/underutilized lots for food retails with accessory food service uses.</p>	<p>New Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DC Deferral for new supermarkets and grocery stores with a minimum floor area of 12,000 sq. ft. with or without accessory food services <p>Retrofit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A forgivable loan for retrofitted supermarkets and grocery stores with a minimum floor area of 12,000 sq. ft. with or without service space and food services Eligible costs include works related to Ontario Building Code or Fire Code compliance, professional services, and building 	<p>New Construction DC Deferral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 675,000 sq. ft. <p>Retrofit Forgivable Loan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$50,000 per retrofit (three retrofitted grocery stores for a City investment of \$150,000) (calculated based on vacancy rates in Primary Centres)
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Incentive Program Type	Purpose	Eligibility	Potential Value / Financial Impact
		<p>materials and labour required for construction.</p>	
<p>Urban Agriculture, Creative Industries, Incubation, Co-Working, or Research Facilities Forgivable Loan</p>	<p>To incentivize various non-residential uses to increase urban neighbourhood vibrancy and support maintaining employment, commercial, and office uses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets the definition of urban agriculture, creative industries, digital industries and incubation. Excludes dance studio facilities. • Eligible costs include works related to Ontario Building Code or Fire Code compliance, professional services, building materials and labour required for construction, finishing materials, and costs necessary to the establishment of the use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$50,000 per project, to a maximum of 80% of total project costs (five projects for a City investment of \$250,000)

Incentive Program Type	Purpose	Eligibility	Potential Value / Financial Impact
Sustainable Built Environment Grant	To incentivize accessible and sustainable design features that enhance the built environment and supports the development of complete communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants achieve a Gold threshold level through the Sustainability Metrics Program or applicants are existing tenants that are looking to make site improvements. • Eligible costs include the implementation of the metrics/installation applied for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$20,000 per project (seven projects for a City investment of \$140,000) (Cost-sharing grant of up to 80%)
Interim Activations (Retail or Recreation) Capital Grant	To incentivize interim uses that animate spaces, normalize foot traffic, and test commercial viability. These spaces improve market confidence and community perception during	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary indoor or outdoor retail installations and recreational spaces. • Minimum one-year activation of space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$50,000 per project (five projects for a City investment of \$250,000) (Cost-sharing grant of up to 80%)

Incentive Program Type	Purpose	Eligibility	Potential Value / Financial Impact
	<p>build-out phases to support improving the public realm and perceptions, as well as supporting community-focused interim activations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible costs include physical infrastructure costs only, and do not include operational costs. 	

8.0 Next Steps

The proposed financial incentive program identified in this Background Study will be presented to Council and shared with stakeholders and the public throughout Summer and Fall of 2025. The Project Team will put forward a draft CIP with the proposed incentives for further feedback in Fall 2025. The CIP will then be refined and adjusted based on the input gathered and presented to Council for further approval in Spring 2026.

Please visit the City's Community Improvement Plan website at www.vaughan.ca/cip to be informed on important dates, including upcoming engagement events and public meetings.