



## **Staff Report for Committee of the Whole Meeting**

**Date of Meeting:** November 1, 2023

**Report Number:** SRPBS.23.028

**Department:** Planning and Building Services

**Division:** Policy Planning

**Subject:** SRPBS.23.028 Request for Approval – OPA 18.6  
Village Local Centre (City File No.: MOPA-23-0001)

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### **Purpose:**

A request for approval concerning a municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to the City's Official Plan for the Village Local Centre (refer to Appendix A). The OPA seeks to update the Downtown Local Centre designation policies in the Official Plan to guide future development in the Local Centre.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- a) That Staff Report SRPBS.23.028 be received.
- b) That Council adopt Official Plan Amendment 18.6 (attached to SRPBS.23.028 as Appendix A), and that the City's Official Plan be amended in accordance with the modifications set out in OPA 18.6; and
- c) That following adoption of the Official Plan Amendment 18.6 by City Council, a copy of the amendment be forwarded to York Region as the approval authority for consideration and approval.

### **Contact Person:**

Megan Cobbold, Senior Planner, phone number 905-747-6309

Brian DeFreitas, Acting Manager of Policy, phone number 905-771-5431

### **Report Approval:**

**Submitted by:** Kelvin Kwan, Commissioner of Planning and Building Services

**Approved by:** Darlene Joslin, City Manager

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All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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### Executive Summary:

Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 18.6 is one of four area-specific amendments that form part of the Batch 2 amendments of the City's Official Plan Update (OP Update) project. This amendment mainly updates the Downtown Local Centre policies of the Official Plan by removing reference to the Downtown Local Centre and related policies and replacing them with new policies respecting the Village Local Centre. In addition, OPA 18.6 recommends modifications to existing policies of the Official Plan to ensure future planning for this area conforms with recent changes to Provincial and Regional policies and represents a comprehensive secondary plan for the Village Local Centre area. The amendment implements many of the Key Directions from the [Key Directions Report](#), and addresses feedback received on the draft OPA. An overview of the policy changes proposed in OPA 18.6 is available in [Staff Report SRPI.23.067](#).

Extensive public consultation has occurred for this OPA and has taken place in tandem with the development of the recommended policy frameworks for the other three Centres that are being recommended to Council for adoption. Following the release of the draft OPA 18.6 on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a statutory open house under the *Planning Act* took place on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023 followed by a statutory public meeting which was held on June 20, 2023; beyond these, City staff also met with a residents association, land owners, and prescribed bodies on the proposed amendment. In total, the City received numerous submissions that were in response to OPA 18.6 from the general public, government agencies, and landowners during the public comment period. The feedback received on OPA 18.6 has generally been positive, with there being support for modest levels of intensification in the Village Local Centre given its unique and sensitive context and heritage attributes, supported by public rapid transit along Yonge Street. However, some concerns were raised regarding the heights and densities proposed in the OPA and the impacts on traffic, views, transition to adjacent low density neighbourhood lands and for the need for public parks and open space to service new growth.

As a result of the feedback received, changes are proposed to OPA 18.6 from the previous draft version that was released for consultation in May 2023 and which was presented to Council at the statutory Council Public Meeting on June 20, 2023. A summary of these changes are shown in Appendix E to this report.

Overall, City staff note that the majority of the recommended changes to OPA 18.6 are technical and minor in nature, and do not propose substantial modifications to what was presented to Council at the June 20<sup>th</sup> CPM. Accordingly, the recommended changes to the OPA, as described in this staff report, are intended to provide additional clarity and certainty to the policy framework for the Village Local Centre area to guide development within the Local Centre to 2051 and beyond.

In summary, the changes for OPA 18.6 consist of:

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- Restructuring the land use policies and permissions for the Village Local Centre to reference and include permissions for low and medium density residential uses within the same policy;
- Modification of the side bar regarding the developable portion of the site area to clarify that hazard lands would not be included;
- Modification to remove the term “mid-rise” and “high-rise” from the proposed building height policy;
- Additional policy language in keeping with existing OP policies regarding non-residential development abutting the neighbourhood, to ensure that future non-residential development complements the residential character of the surrounding area;
- Modification to the policies of the Plan to clarify the limits of the Village Local Centre in relation to the boundary of the Regional Mixed Use Corridor lands north and south of the Local Centre.

The aforementioned modifications amend the land use and design policies of the Official Plan for the Local Centre which are being recommended to Council for adoption. Overall, OPA 18.6 is consistent with the policies of the Provincial Policy Statement 2020, and conforms to the relevant provincial plans. The amendment also conforms to the York Region 2022 Official Plan which was approved by the Province in November 2022.

The subsequent sections of this report elaborate on the aforementioned updates and changes to OPA 18.6 which are recommended to Council for adoption in response to the input and feedback received from the public and prescribed bodies. In addition, the staff report also responds to the comments and concerns that were raised respecting certain policies and themes in OPA 18.6 which did not result in the need for further changes to the policies. In this regard, City staff have provided a summary of the concerns raised, followed by a response with supporting rationale.

### Location Map:

Below is a map displaying the lands subject to Official Plan Amendment 18.6 (“OPA 18.6”). The Official Plan Amendment generally applies to lands as shown below. Should you require an alternative format, please call the contact person listed in this document.

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### Background:

OPA 18.6 for the Village Local Centre is one of four centre-specific official plan amendments that have been developed as part of the City's Official Plan Update (OP Update). The three other centre-specific OPAs include: OPA 18.5 Yonge and Carrville/16<sup>th</sup> Ave Key Development Area (see SRPI.23.066), OPA 18.7 Newkirk Local Centre (see SRPI.23.068), and OPA 18.8 Oak Ridges Local Centre (see SRPI.23.069). Together, these four centre-specific OPAs form the series of Batch 2 amendments to

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the City's Official Plan Update<sup>1</sup> and focus on providing area-specific policies to guide future development in emerging growth centres in the City. The four centre-specific OPAs have been developed in accordance with the directions set out in the Official Plan Update [Key Directions Report](#) (the "Key Directions Report").

In June 2022, Council adopted OPA 18.3 which updated the City Structure in the Official Plan. The City Structure continues to recognize the Village area between Major Mackenzie Drive and Wright/Dunlop Streets as a Local Centre and strategic growth area due the presence of several major transit station areas that serve the centre along Yonge Street. The process to develop a new and updated policy framework for the Village Local Centre began after the initial Downtown Local Centre Secondary Plan was repealed in response to a Council motion in 2018. The secondary planning process was incorporated into the overall Official Plan Update process (as noted in Staff Report SRPRS.19.53), and as set out in the recommendations of the [Key Directions Report](#) endorsed by Council. In drafting OPA 18.6, the City has taken into consideration the earlier secondary plan work and has undertaken additional public consultation engagement and analysis to inform the proposed policy framework for the Local Centre.

On June 20, 2023 a statutory Council Public Meeting took place wherein Council considered the draft OPA 18.6 in accordance with the requirements of the *Planning Act*. At that meeting, Council received [Staff Report SRPI.23.067](#) for information purposes and directed that all comments on the proposed amendment be referred back to staff for consideration. The extract of this meeting is attached to this report as Appendix F.

### Impetus for the OPA:

OPA 18.6 aims to address matters that are important to the long-term planning of the Village Local Centre, including the vision for the area, permitted land uses, design elements, public realm, mix of land use, density of development, and recommended adjustments to the boundaries of the Local Centre in order to conform with the York Region Official Plan (2022) (ROP) and Provincial policies. The OPA implements the City Plan Key Directions endorsed by Council in February 2022, and supports the City's [Investment Attraction Strategy](#), [Affordable Housing Strategy](#), and [Parks Plan](#) which all have been approved by Council, and the Urban Master Environmental Servicing Plan and [Transportation Master Plan](#) which are currently in process. This proposed amendment intends to support economic development and job creation in the City. Furthermore, it also incorporates direction from the ROP regarding the delineation of Protected Major Transit Station Areas within and surrounding the Village Local Centre and proposes consequential changes to the Official Plan by re-designating certain lands from "Downtown Local Centre" and "Neighbourhood" to "Regional Mixed Use Corridor" (RMUC).

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<sup>1</sup> For more details regarding the City's Official Plan Update, including copies of past staff reports, please see the city's webpage: [www.RichmondHill.ca/OPUpdate](http://www.RichmondHill.ca/OPUpdate)

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The [Key Directions Report](#) identified several key policy considerations applicable to the Village Local Centre and the Yonge Street Regional Corridor adjacent to the Village Local Centre that were to be considered through the development of OPA 18.6. These directions relate to boundary changes, the vision, urban design principles to determine appropriate height and density, public realm updates, and transition of development to the surrounding neighbourhood. The Key Directions Report also directed that policy and mapping updates to the City's Official Plan address the four pillars of the OP Update process. The four pillars include: Growing our Economy, Design Excellence, Green and Sustainable, Protect and Enhance. A full description of the proposed OPA and how the four pillars are addressed is described in the corresponding staff report that was presented to Council for information at the June 20, 2023 Council Public Meeting (See [Staff Report SRPI.23.067](#)).

### Summary of Comments Received:

Leading up to this Council meeting, OPAs 18.5, 18.6, 18.7 and 18.8 have been available for review and public comment for over 120 days. Since that time, the City has received written and verbal comments regarding the proposed modifications under OPA 18.6. At the time of writing this staff report, a total of numerous written submissions have been received from the public, stakeholders, and public agencies. The correspondence was submitted to the City's Official Plan Update e-mail address in advance of the Council Public Meeting and also through the Clerk that formed part of the public record on the June 20th Council Public Meeting.

City staff have reviewed, synthesized and assessed the written and verbal comments received on the OPA and have summarized this feedback below. A more fulsome overview of the feedback on OPA 18.6 is set out in Appendix C to this staff report. Through this review, staff are recommending additional modifications to the draft OPA in response to some of the feedback received.

### Key Feedback Received from the Public and Stakeholders

The City received the following key comments and feedback on OPA 18.6 respecting the Village Local Centre:

- Concern that heights and densities are too high and request that densities be reduced from 2 FSI down to 1 FSI in certain areas;
- Concern that heights and densities are too low and request that heights and densities be increased to at least 15 storeys and at least 5 FSI;
- Request that no limit on heights and densities be prescribed and to let development be dictated by other urban design and development standards;
- Concern that angular plane and transition policies do not adequately protect heritage properties and request to apply a stricter angular plane policy of 30 degrees instead of 45 degrees on the west side of Yonge Street;
- Concern that angular plane policies hinder redevelopment and request that the angular plane requirements be removed; and

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- Concerns about new development's compatibility with the existing character of the area – in relation to both the size and scale of development and land uses.

### Key Feedback from External Agencies and Prescribed Bodies

OPA 18.6 was circulated to external agencies and prescribed bodies as required by the *Planning Act* on May 11, 2023. Key messages from these agencies received on the Village Local Centre are as follows:

- The City did not receive objections to OPA 18.6 from the prescribed bodies. These organizations are: York Region, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), Metrolinx, York Region District School Board, York Catholic District School Board, Canadian National Railway Company, Bell Canada, and TransCanada PipeLines Limited;
- It should be noted that the City did not receive comments from the Indigenous communities, nor did it receive comments from neighbouring municipalities regarding OPA 18.6;
- The two York Region schoolboards provided comments and feedback on the proposed OPA. In meeting with representatives, the York Catholic District Schoolboard (YCDSB) did not raise any specific concerns with the amendment and noted that there is generally sufficient capacity in nearby schools to accommodate the proposed increase in population in the Local Centre. The York Region District School board indicated that due to the significant development in the area, students may need to be accommodated outside of the local community and, should the ultimate residential development exceed envisioned targets for the area, the Board may require a new school. With respect to the Conseil Scolaire Viamonde, the City did not receive feedback from the French School board;
- The Region of York provided technical comments on OPA 18.6 regarding protected major transit station areas (PMTSAs), affordable housing, water and wastewater servicing, public health, transportation, and water resources. It should be noted that staff met with York Region and worked closely with Regional planning staff through subsequent meetings to address their comments;
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) provided comments on the draft OPA regarding an unevaluated wetland east of Addison Street which would be confirmed through the development application review process.

In addition to the foregoing, the following sections of this staff report highlight thematic comments received on OPA 18.6, as well as proposed changes to the amendment with supporting rationale, and areas where no policy changes are warranted/recommended.



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### Detailed Response to Comments Received and Proposed Changes to OPA

The following feedback and key themes were raised during public consultation on OPA 18.6. These themes represent important aspects of the proposed policy framework that are expected to have the most notable and lasting impacts on the future vision and planning for the Village Local Centre over the long-term planning horizon. In that regard, and based on a fulsome review of the feedback received, City staff are recommending that additional modifications to the policies and associated schedules of OPA 18.6 be approved by Council in response to the themes as follows. A full list of recommended modifications to OPA 18.6 is attached to this report as Appendix E.

#### Permitted Uses

Comments were received on the proposed list of permitted uses in the Local Centre. The feedback requested that the City allow for a broad mix of residential uses throughout the Village. In response, staff are recommending a minor modification to OPA 18.6 to restructure proposed policy 4.3.1.1(3) so that it references and includes low, medium, and high density residential uses all within the same policy. Previously, low and medium density residential uses were listed in a separate policy with additional location criteria. This modification simplifies the list of permitted uses into one policy for readability purposes and clarifies that low and medium residential uses are permitted within the Local Centre except along Yonge Street and Major Mackenzie Drive frontages.

#### Developable Portion of the Site Area

Staff recommend that OPA 18.6 be modified to include a new sidebar alongside policy 4.3.1.1(9), in order to provide an explanation regarding the calculation of density. Staff are also recommending proposed modifications to the wording in this sidebar, in order to provide additional clarity and reduce duplication by referring to terms already defined in the OP (such as *developable area* and *hazard lands*).

#### Height

With respect to building heights, staff recommend that a minor revision be made to Policy 4.3.1.1(11) to rephrase the wording in the policy text to clarify the location of where the height permissions apply. If approved, the recommended modification would clarify building height permissions in the Village Local Centre in relation to lands that are north or south of Wright Street and Dunlop Street. Also, the revision replaces the words “street wall” with “base building” to clarify maximum height permissions for base building heights and to stipulate when the building would need to step back for remaining floors. In addition, staff recommend that Policy 4.3.1.1(13) of the OPA be deleted as it was determined to be redundant and duplicative of the intent of other policies.

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### Terminology

Policy 4.3.1.1(12) sets out the height permissions for various portions of the Local Centre. Staff received feedback with regards to (c and d), which lists a maximum “mid-rise” building height of 9 storeys and a maximum “high-rise” building height of 15 storeys north of Wright and Dunlop Street. The terms “mid-rise” and “high-rise” as referenced in the policy are not defined. While intended to describe the general built form for the area, the use of the term “mid-rise” in its plain meaning has the potential to cause confusion with the existing definition of *mid-rise* in the City’s Official Plan. The term “mid-rise” as originally proposed in the May 11th draft of the OPA, did not italicize the term, and therefore it was not intended to have the OP definition of the term apply in this policy. Thus, the normal meaning of the word would apply, but this resulted in confusion. As a result, staff are recommending that this term be removed altogether so as to eliminate any potential confusion with the definition prescribed in the OP. In addition, staff note that the use of the term “mid-rise” in its plain meaning does not materially add any benefit or clarity to the policy wording and therefore can be removed. With respect to the term “high-rise”, staff recommend that this term also be removed in order to eliminate any conflicts between the height of buildings prescribed in Policy 4.3.1.1(12)(d) and the definition of “high-rise” as presently defined in the Part I OP.

### Land Use Compatibility

Comments were received regarding the compatibility of non-residential uses in the Village and their potential adjacency to residential uses in the Neighbourhood, specifically as it relates to concerns regarding noise, odors and other noxious effects. To address this concern, Staff are recommending that the existing wording in the Official Plan respecting “compatibility” with the surrounding area be carried forward under OPA 18.6. This wording would address transition to the Neighbourhood designation where lands are located in the Village Local Centre. If approved, the recommended modification to OPA 18.6 would direct that non-residential uses be required to complement the residential character of the area. In addition, staff will continue to explore whether the compatibility concerns can be further addressed via appropriate provisions in the implementing zoning by-law through inclusion of additional criteria. OPA 18.6 also proposes a modification to rephrase the policy to provide more flexibility in what is considered a negative impact to the abutting Neighbourhood designation and not limit these impacts to only privacy, noise, and lighting.

### Village Local Centre interface with Regional Mixed Use Corridor

Through OPA 18.6, staff are also recommending a minor technical modification to the Official Plan to update the density permissions applicable to lands within the Regional Mixed Use Corridor designation. As a result of changes introduced by OPA 18.6 to remove reference to the former “Downtown Local Centre” in the City’s Official Plan and replace it with “Village Local Centre”, several Regional Mixed Use Corridor policies in the Plan need to be updated. These policies require modifications to clarify how these lands interface with the Local Centre and to reflect the removal of the Uptown District from the Local Centre designation. To that end, staff are recommending a modification

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to policy 4.6.1(5) of the Official Plan through OPA 18.6 to remove reference to the “Downtown Local Centre designation” in the policy, and replace it with reference to Levensdale Road. In that regard Levensdale Road is recommended to become the northern limit of the Village Local Centre and where the Local Centre interfaces with lands within the Regional Corridor. Similarly, policy 4.6.1(8) of the OP is proposed to be modified through the amendment to reflect this change.

Staff note that the aforementioned modifications would continue to maintain the current OP maximum density permissions for the Regional Corridor allocated to lands north and south of Levensdale Road. These density permissions allow for a maximum density of 2.0 FSI along the Regional Mixed Use Corridor north of Levensdale Road, and a maximum density of 2.5 FSI along the Regional Mixed Use Corridor south of the Village Local Centre (south of Major Mackenzie Drive). Density permissions for the Regional Mixed Use Corridor may be revised via the forthcoming MTSA and Corridors OPA which will be addressed in the final phase of the City’s OP Update process.

### **Other Technical Matters**

In addition to the preceding, staff are also recommending that OPA 18.6 be modified to reflect a number of minor technical changes in order to improve readability and to provide greater clarity to the policies that apply to the Village Local Centre. The recommended modifications are listed below as follows:

- restructuring of Policy 4.3.1.1(1) so that the text is provided in separate sub-items instead of in a paragraph format.
- rephrasing of Policy 4.3.1.3(4) for readability regarding publicly accessible interconnections.
- revise Policy 4.3.1.3(7) to clarify that new development may provide additional parking, in excess of maximum parking rates.
- adding Policy 4.6.2(6) to clarify that minor adjustments to the location of parks described in policies 4.6.2(4) and (5) of the Official Plan would not require an amendment to the Plan, provided that the intent of the OP is maintained.
- Renumbering of the policies under Policy 4.3.1.1.

### **Response to Comments Resulting in No Additional Policy Changes to the OPA**

The following sections provide responses to comments received, but for which no further policy change is proposed.

#### **Angular Plane**

Several comments were received regarding the application of angular plane and the angular plane policies applicable to lands within the Village Local Centre designation. The angular plane policies in the Village are intended to protect views to significant heritage properties as well as transition to adjacent neighbourhoods. A 45 degree

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angular plane applies to development within the Village, with the exception of a 30 degree angular plane for development fronting onto Church Street east of Yonge Street. The feedback received requested that the City consider applying a more aggressive 30 degree angular plane within other parts of the Village in order to protect heritage properties. Conversely, other comments suggested removing the angular plane requirement altogether to accommodate more development.

In response, staff undertook a detailed review of the City's angular plane policies set out in the Official Plan to determine how these policies align with other municipal land use planning approaches related to transition. Overall, staff found that the City's policies are generally comparable to other municipal approaches and best practices regarding the application of angular plane. As the City continues to urbanize, staff will monitor how other urban jurisdictions apply transition policies in comparable neighbourhoods.

In light of the foregoing, Staff are not proposing changes to the City's angular plane policies including the provisions applicable to the Village Local Centre for the following reasons:

The City's Official Plan includes policies in addition to angular plane requirements to help regulate built form and transition to adjacent low density residential areas. When applied collectively, these policies help to achieve transition, without the need to apply more aggressive angular plane requirements. These include policies in the City's OP and other development standards regarding built form, massing, at-grade treatments, height, exterior design, streetscape design, sun/shadow studies and wind control, human scale urban design, tower separation, compatibility, setbacks, and base building heights, and requiring urban design reports. The combination of these policies and development standards alongside the application of a 45 degree angular plane requirement helps to achieve a desirable transition in built form. In addition, staff note that there are potential implications and unintended consequences associated with aggressive angular plane requirements. Applying a more aggressive angular plane across the board can reduce the number of potential units yielded by development which results in fewer people and jobs in the Centres. This difference may make redevelopment less attractive and may also negatively impact the City's ability to achieve its housing and employment targets.

Specific to the Village, the difference in angular plane requirements when measuring from Church Street (where the 30 degree angular plane applies) compared to the other edges is based on two main factors: block depths and elevation changes. East of Yonge, the depth of the blocks are much shallower compared to the west side of Yonge Street where lot depths are almost double in some areas. This means that lands west of Yonge Street generally can benefit from having more space for development to occur and to account for greater setbacks to accommodate built form transition without the need for an angular plane that is less than 45 degrees. In addition, there is a much more significant drop in elevation east of Yonge Street down to Church Street where the grade change equates to about 2 to 3 storeys in height. The drop in elevation results in

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creating a visual difference in building height where buildings of the same height would appear much taller when viewing them from the Neighbourhood on Church Street compared to the Neighbourhood west of Yonge. These differences in site conditions show that the potential impacts to the Neighbourhood are more consequential on the east side of the Local Centre. In that regard, to balance this difference and to help minimize the impacts to the Neighbourhood, a lower degree of angular plane is applied on Church Street. Accordingly, staff recommend that a 30 degree angular plane continue to apply for lands in the Village located east of Yonge Street and no changes are proposed to the policies of the Official Plan in that regard.

As previously noted, the angular plane policies in the OPA support heritage protection and heritage buildings are required to be incorporated in the design of any new buildings where possible. The OPA does not change the status of any heritage designations. The policies continue to support the view protection of the historic church spires and the OP includes an existing policy in Chapter 3 (3.4.1(23) to protect significant views as supported by a view shed study. Accordingly, the Village Local Centre policies include requirements for angular plane to address maintaining significant views to the church spires for development on Yonge Street. This may require buildings to be lower in height and step back to meet the view requirements. The City's Urban Design Guidelines and Village Core Neighbourhood Design Guidelines reflect urban design elements that reinforce the human-scale and heritage context of the Village's unique character and identity. Staff will continue to explore opportunities to update these documents which may help address concerns on how transition relates to heritage properties through the application of modern and updated urban design principles.

### **Height and Density**

Comments were received on the proposed heights and densities in the Village Local Centre with some stakeholders requesting lower permissions, while others requested higher permissions, or none at all. Compared to the previous policies, modest increases in height and density are proposed to consider the existing heritage character of the area while still providing opportunities for intensification and redevelopment to occur in this strategic growth area of the City.

In light of the feedback received, staff are not recommending additional changes to the heights and densities in the Village Local Centre set out in OPA 18.6 for the following reasons:

Lowering the proposed heights and densities from what is proposed could have potential negative impacts and unintended consequences. Similar to the rationale regarding the request for a stricter angular plane, lowering density permissions can have an impact on the potential number of new units created in the Local Centre, making redevelopment less attractive and causing redevelopment to occur at a much slower pace further impacting the potential for reinvestment to occur. Fewer units can also result in fewer people and jobs which also impacts the City's ability to achieve its

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housing and employment targets. As noted above, there are many OP policies and development standards that address built-form transition to the surrounding Neighbourhood designation such as maximum street wall heights, human-scale urban design, the stepping back of buildings, and angular plane requirements. The policies are intended to be read together and to work in conjunction to support the vision and character of the area.

Since the vision for this area is the “Village within the City”, generally, the maximum height policies are proposed to ensure a certain built form character is strictly maintained in light of the existing physical context. Similarly, maximum density policies ensure the distribution of growth along the Centres and Corridors is planned appropriately to ensure sufficient infrastructure and services are available. The City Structure is intended to direct higher levels of intensification to other areas, such as the Richmond Hill Centre and the Key Development Areas where growth can be better accommodated. Based on 3D modeling exercises, the densities for the Village Local Centre shown on Schedule E1 to OPA 18.6 are intended to support predominantly mid-rise buildings up to a maximum of 9 storeys and, north of Wright/Dunlop Streets, high-rise buildings up to a maximum of 15 storeys. The proposed amendment of up to 9 storeys for most of the Village Local Centre enables a mid-rise character in the Village to be maintained while providing a reasonable height transition to the adjacent 15 storey limit at the north end towards the Regional Mixed Use Corridor designation. Redevelopment is intended to occur over the long term and in some areas, the amalgamation of properties may be required to facilitate redevelopment.

### **Water and Wastewater Servicing**

Comments were received regarding how water and wastewater servicing will support the estimated build out population in the Local Centre. As part of the City’s Urban MESP project, an analysis was undertaken through the master planning process and identifies the water and wastewater improvement projects that are required to accommodate the future growth. The work undertaken through the Urban MESP project has taken into consideration the proposed level of development in this area as part of the analysis and has indicated that the projected growth for this area can be accommodated.

### **Traffic**

Comments and concerns were received regarding traffic in the area and across the City resulting from the growth proposed through the centre-specific OPAs. Both the Region and City are committed to closely monitoring traffic conditions to identify and implement mitigation measures as needed. As growth occurs, an increasing shift towards alternative modes of transportation, such as transit and active transportation, will be encouraged to help accommodate higher volumes of traffic. This approach not only alleviates congestion but also promotes sustainable and environmentally friendly commuting options. In terms of specific traffic safety concerns, residents can contact the City’s Traffic Safety and Operations section to identify issues and address concerns.

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Moreover, the City is actively working towards creating 15-minute communities through the OPAs for the four Centres, which are designed to provide a diverse range of amenities and services within shorter distances (i.e. within 15 minutes of travel time) from residents' and workers' homes. By offering a mix of uses, these communities enhance accessibility, enabling individuals to conveniently access necessary facilities without the need for extensive travel. This holistic approach to community planning fosters a higher quality of life, promotes Richmond Hill's evolution into a more urban municipality, reduces dependency on cars, and encourages vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.

The City is also in the process of updating its Transportation Master Plan (TMP) to support planned growth as identified in the Official Plan Update by planning for future transportation infrastructure improvements. These infrastructure improvements have been phased by 2031, 2041, and 2051 horizon years to occur within the City's growth areas, through intensification along transportation corridors and in new greenfield development. The TMP proposes numerous City road network improvement projects (in addition to road projects led by the Region and the Province), and a considerable expansion to the City's active transportation network. These investments need to be supported by additional infrastructure in the transit network, such as the extension of the Yonge subway line to Richmond Hill, and continued expansion in transit service by York Region Transit and GO Transit.

While the TMP supports mobility to help accommodate the growth forecast, it is important to note congestion is forecast to increase above existing levels, even with the planned transportation investments. During peak travel hours, it is anticipated that the city will continue to experience higher volumes of traffic. The City is optimizing the network to provide operating conditions that remain functional but cannot "build our way out of congestion" with road expansion. A major focus of the TMP is on sustainable travel and making alternatives to the private automobile attractive for trips to accommodate future growth. These principles have helped inform the recommended policy framework set out in OPA 18.6 for the Village Local Centre.

### **Parking**

Comments were also received regarding parking in the Local Centre. The lack of parking can be perceived as an issue with Yonge Street acting as a major conduit of through-traffic and only providing on-street parking during off-peak traffic hours. OPA 18.6 does not set a specific rate for parking spaces but does propose a policy to protect the existing amount of public parking spaces if redevelopment were to occur on a City-owned parking lot. Specific parking rates would be determined at the time of the implementing Comprehensive Zoning By-law, which is currently in development. The City is also in the process of updating its TMP which will provide additional actions and recommendations to help the City manage parking such as a framework to develop a City-wide municipal parking management strategy and actively reviewing and updating its parking requirements. As the area redevelops, provisions for parking supply will need

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to be balanced with the need to encourage more reliance on transit and other more sustainable travel modes, such as walking and cycling.

### Local Centre Boundary

Staff received comments requesting additional properties be added to the Local Centre boundary. These properties are generally located in the Neighborhood designation and were requested to be included in the Local Centre on the sole basis that they are located within a PMTSA. As noted in Staff Report SRPI.23.067, the Local Centre boundary predominantly reflects what was formerly known as the “Village District” in the former Downtown Local Centre, which generally supports the directions for the boundary adjustments as set out the Key Directions Report endorsed by Council. In addition, a small portion of lands within the Uptown District are proposed to remain within the Local Centre boundary due to its existing conditions and general alignment with the Village Business Improvement Area boundary and northern and southern limits of the Village Core Neighbourhood Design Guidelines. In that regard, staff recommend that the boundary of the Village Local Centre be maintained as set out in OPA 18.6, and that no further expansions are required to achieve conformity with Provincial and Regional policies respecting PMTSAs.

### Proposed Street Network

Comments were received on the proposed street network identified in OPA 18.6. The feedback requested clarification on the location and alignment of proposed streets in the Local Centre. Staff note that the planned street network and alignment of streets depicted on Schedule E2 to OPA 18.6 is conceptual and minor adjustments to the location may be required to support new development. Accordingly, requirements associated with the conveyance of lands for public rights of way are to be established and determined at the time of a specific development application and through the environmental assessment process, where required.

Staff also received comments specifically on the Elizabeth Street expansion with requests for more flexibility in the policies. Staff continue to look for opportunities to protect for a public connection in this area to add to the finer grained street network. As noted above, the TMP promotes alternative modes of transportation to support sustainable and environmentally friendly commuting options. OPA 18.6 continues to recommend the requirement of sidewalks on both sides of new streets to support walkability and the active transportation network.

### Parks

Comments were received regarding the perception of limited parks and urban open spaces in OPA 18.6. As is noted in the Basis section of OPA 18.6, the proposed OPA is informed by and implements the planned parks outlined in City’s 2022 Parks Plan. Furthermore, as was noted in [Staff Report SRPI.23.018](#), which was received by Council at the January 30, 2023 Special Council Meeting, Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 changed the *Planning Act* requirements for parkland dedication and cash-in-



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lieu to provide more certainty in parkland costs in order to facilitate housing development. The Bill 23 changes to the *Planning Act* reduced the amount of parkland/cash-in-lieu of parkland that municipalities are allowed to acquire as a community grows, specifically as it relates to areas with growing, intensified and largely vertical communities, for which new maximum parkland caps have been established.

The Village Local Centre is already well-served by existing parkland, as there are a number of public parks within a short walking distance of the Centre. In line with the 2022 Parks Plan, OPA 18.6 also includes policies which identify a proposed expansion to Kozak Parkette north of the Village Local Centre to accommodate growth and also a proposed destination park at the southwest corner of Major Mackenzie Drive West and Yonge Street to provide space for events and to connect with the wave pool and central library. Beyond this, the policies of proposed OPA 18.6 encourage new development to contribute urban plazas which are privately-owned, publicly-accessible spaces that help contribute to the public realm and provide many of the benefits of public parks, such as gathering places and connections, acting as local landmarks and establishing an identity for the Local Centre.

The amount of planned parkland identified in OPA 18.6 implements the City's 2022 Parks Plan service level standard with respect to walking distance to parkland while providing the maximum amount of parkland possible in the Local Centre as a result of the Bill 23 legislative changes to the *Planning Act*.

### Affordable Housing

Comments were received regarding affordable housing. As noted in the Basis section of OPA 18.6, the ROP directs that the Official Plan provide direction regarding providing affordable housing targets including 35% of new units being affordable within Protected Major Transit Station Areas. Presently, the Official Plan provides a minimum affordable housing target of 25% of new housing in the City overall. Through a subsequent OPA, the City will update its affordable housing targets and definitions to further implement the ROP direction for affordable housing as noted above.

### Planning Analysis:

Under the Ontario land use planning framework, the City of Richmond Hill is subject to the *Planning Act*, the Provincial Policy Statement, and a number of provincial plans, including A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (ORMCP), and the Parkway Belt West Plan.

Richmond Hill is also a lower-tier municipality, and as such, the City is subject to the Regional Official Plan of its upper-tier municipality – in this case, the Region of York's 2022 Official Plan. City staff reviewed the Regional Official Plan and conclude that OPA 18.6 conforms to the Regional Official Plan. It is important to recognize that OPA 18.6 is one of multiple proposed amendments that together will form the City's Official Plan Update. As noted in the OPA basis section, the policies of this OPA will conform to

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provincial and regional plans. Conformity with the York Region Official Plan shall be achieved through a combination of: (1) existing City-wide Official Plan policies; (2) area-specific policies contained in this Official Plan Amendment; and (3) future amendments to the Official Plan to satisfy requirements of the 2022 York Region Official Plan.

The following planning analysis summarizes how OPA 18.6 complies with provincial legislation and policies. More details are provided in Appendix D which provides a fulsome conformity analysis of the relevant provincial and regional policies applicable to OPA 18.6 and how the amendment conforms to those policies.

### Planning Act

The *Planning Act* (1990) authorizes municipalities to identify and delineate the boundary of Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA) and to identify land uses and minimum and/or maximum density and/or heights of buildings or structures on lands within PMTSAs. Moreover, the aforementioned matters are protected from appeals. Accordingly, OPA 18.6 identifies the Village Local Centre and portions of the Regional Mixed Use Corridor (RMUC) along Yonge Street located immediately adjacent to the Village as an intensification area that is encompassed by two PMTSAs. These PMTSAs have been delineated by the Region and approved by the Province in the Region of York's 2022 Official Plan.

### Provincial Policy Statement, (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement (2020) includes policies which encourage compact, mixed-use development to support liveable and resilient communities while considering housing needs. Accordingly, OPA 18.6 is consistent with the policies of the PPS 2020 as it directs higher density development within the Local Centre in a range of forms of residential and non-residential development to support a mix of land uses.

### A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, (2020)

*A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)* includes policies which support the achievement of complete communities, prioritize Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) on priority transit corridors, and conserve cultural heritage resources. Accordingly, OPA 18.6 plans for a complete community by integrating a mix of uses in a compact form that provides for amenities and services within a 15-minute walk or 5-minute bike ride and also includes policies related to protecting heritage buildings.

### Regional Policy Considerations:

The York Region Official Plan (2022) was approved by the Province in November 2022 and includes policies which identify the Village Local Centre and portions of the Yonge Street RMUC immediately north and south of the Village as being located along a

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priority transit corridor, and encompassed by two Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA). These PMTSAs are #45 (Crosby BRT Station) and #48 (Major Mackenzie BRT Station). Both of these PMTSA's have a prescribed minimum density target of 160 residents and jobs per hectare. The purpose of PMTSAs, the process of identifying them, and the City's input into that Regional process is documented in Staff Report SRPRS.20.004.

To support the minimum prescribed density for the PMTSAs, the Regional Official Plan directs: (1) that the area support a mix of land uses to be identified in the City's Official Plan; (2) that the City provide direction regarding built form and scale of development to support and implement the Regional intensification hierarchy; (3) that the City consider identifying a residents to jobs ratio target to ensure live work opportunities and an appropriate balance of jobs to population; and (4) that the City provide affordable housing targets. Accordingly, OPA 18.6 designates portions of PMTSA #45 and #48 as Local Centre and RMUC and provides a target ratio of 7 residents to 3 jobs, which is intended to be achieved over the long term through the implementation of policies provided in the OP. Through a subsequent OPA, the City will update its affordable housing targets and definitions to further implement the ROP direction for affordable housing.

### **Local Policy Context and Considerations:**

Section 3.1.3 of the Official Plan outlines the City Structure, as well as the intensification hierarchy, which provides clarity and certainty on priority areas where new growth and intensification are directed. OPA 18.6 encompasses an area identified in the OP City Structure as a Local Centre. In accordance with the City Structure, the Village Local Centre will accommodate intensification at a scale and intensity that is less than the Key Development Areas and generally less than the abutting Regional Corridor. Local Centres will be important community focal points and will develop as revitalized, mixed-use centres with pedestrian-oriented, human-scaled main streets.

OPA 18.6 also builds upon the existing policy direction from the Official Plan wherein the Plan directs for all relevant policies of the Official Plan to be considered when reviewing and evaluating changes to land use, including any amendments to the Official Plan. The focus of this OPA is to supplement and in some cases amend existing policies of the Official Plan as it relates to the Village Local Centre by employing modern approaches to city building and good planning principles. The amendment also satisfies the secondary plan requirements of the Official Plan for this Local Centre, as set out in Section 5 of the City's Official Plan.

Future decisions regarding development in the Village Local Centre will rely on policies provided in this OPA in combination with other relevant policies of the Official Plan. It is important to recognize that the balance of Official Plan policies regarding City Vision, City Building, Implementation and Interpretation, must also be taken into consideration and applied as necessary.

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### Public Consultation:

In addition to the consultation detailed in Staff Report SRPI.23.067, further engagement occurred and has been summarized in a report prepared by LURA Consulting entitled “Phase 3 Batch 2: What We Heard – Official Plan Amendments 18.5, 18.6, 18.7, and 18.8 Summary Report” (refer to Appendix C). The What We Heard report represents a fulsome summary of the feedback received on the proposed amendments on the four growth centres – Yonge Street and Carrville Road/16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Key Development Area, Village Local Centre, Newkirk Local Centre, and Oak Ridges Local Centre. It provides a high level overview of the feedback and concerns described in earlier sections of this staff report. Comments respecting the other three OPAs are summarized under separate cover in staff reports (SRPBS.23.027, SRPBS.23.029, and SRPBS.23.030). Below is a summary of the consultation engagements and notification associated with the development and formulation of OPA 18.6

### Engagement

Staff conducted extensive consultation on OPA 18.6 using a variety of methods, as follows:

#### In-Person Open House

On June 7, 2023, the City hosted a combined public open house for the four OPAs. The event was held at the McConaghy Seniors' Centre, 10100 Yonge Street from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open House attendees had the opportunity to review material presented on a series of display boards, ask questions to City staff, and provide comments on each of the four proposed OPAs.

The Open House was well attended. The City received 224 registrations for the Open House, and 166 participants attended the Open House event.

#### Council Public Meeting

A Council Public Meeting, pursuant to Section 26 (3) of the *Planning Act* was held on June 20, 2023, to notify the public and receive comments on the proposed Official Plan Amendments. Members of the public were invited to submit written comments before the meeting and provide oral delegations to Council during the meeting. Overall, 36 written comments were submitted, and 18 requests for oral delegations were received at the Council Public Meeting with respect to the four centre-specific OPAs. These submissions included other orders of government, regulatory agencies, property owners and/or their delegated representatives, community associations, individual residents/business owners, and other community members.

#### Stakeholder and Landowner Meetings

Stakeholder meetings with prescribed agencies (Metrolinx, York Region, Alectra, School Boards, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority) occurred in March 2023 to discuss the proposed OPA prior to the public release. Additional follow-up meetings with

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York Region planning staff occurred in June and September 2023 respectively to discuss additional feedback received. Landowner meetings were held in June, August, and September 2023 to discuss feedback received at the June 20 Council Public Meeting.

### Notification

OPA 18.6 has been initiated under Section 17 and 26 of the *Planning Act*. The *Planning Act* requires public consultation on the proposed amendment to be conducted through at least one public meeting with a minimum of 37-days notice issued beforehand. The statutory open house and council public meeting pursuant to the *Planning Act* took place on June 7, 2023 and on June 20, 2023 respectively. Notice for these events was issued on May 11, 2023 through the City's website, social media, and the Liberal newspaper, and re-issued on May 18, 2023.

Notice for today's meeting regarding the adoption of OPA 18.6 has been provided to all persons who formally requested to the City Clerk to be notified of a decision made by Council with respect to the proposed amendment, as well as to people on the OP Update notification list, and to people who have subscribed to the OP Update webpage.

### Next Steps:

Following Council adoption of OPA 18.6, the City Clerk will provide Notice of Adoption to all prescribed bodies and those who have requested to be notified of Council's adoption.

Additionally, the OPA and its associated record will be provided to the Region who is responsible for issuing approval of the Council adopted amendment. As the approval authority, the Region has the authority to approve, modify and approve, or refuse Council's decision to adopt an official plan amendment. Notification of the Region's decision will be issued to all prescribed bodies and to those who have requested notification. Following the 20-day appeal period, if there are no appeals, the amendment will come into force. In the meanwhile, staff will continue to work on the City's Official Plan Update, with public consultation on Batch 3 OPAs to be held in 2024.

### Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

The recommendations of this report do not have any financial, staffing or other implications. The approval of the updated OP policies will require changes to the City's Zoning By-Laws, which are presently under review and for which a separate workplan and budget is established.

### Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

Updating the Official Plan is identified as a Council Priority. OPA 18.6 supports all four of Council's Strategic Priorities by directing the majority of growth to strategic growth areas, such as this Local Centre. The draft OPA also helps to create a strong sense of belonging by diversifying housing choice and enhancing the public realm in this Local

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Centre. With regards to getting around the City, the draft OPA provides for a fine-grained street network, along with facilities for active transportation and transit expansion. Lastly, the draft OPA promotes fiscal responsibility by coordinating the secondary planning process with infrastructure planning through the Parks Plan, the Transportation Master Plan, and other important City initiatives.

### **Climate Change Considerations:**

OPA 18.6 proposes policies that consider climate change mitigation measures by supporting the creation of a mixed-use complete community to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions through improvements to transportation such as new public streets and cycling connections. These new connections will help provide opportunities for low carbon transportation options like biking and walking within the Local Centre. OPA 18.6 also helps to reduce emissions by providing policies that support transit-oriented development with higher levels of intensification proposed along the rapid transit routes.

### **Conclusion:**

The purpose of this report is to request that Council adopt OPA 18.6. This is a municipally-initiated Official Plan Amendment to the City's Official Plan (refer to Appendix A) which seeks to update the Downtown Local Centre designation policies in the Plan and replace them with specific policies that plan for this area of the City as a "Village" within the City. The recommended policies in the OPA address several key directions contained in the City Plan 2041 Key Directions Report endorsed by Council in February 2022 and implement provincial and regional policy directions regarding complete communities. Adoption of this OPA will complete the secondary planning process for the Village Local Centre and will help guide development in this important area of the City.

### **Attachments:**

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendixes, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Appendix A: Official Plan Amendment (OPA) 18.6 – Village Local Centre
- Appendix B: Implementing By-law 106-23
- Appendix C: Engagement Summary Report prepared by LURA ("What We Heard Report") Phase 3 Batch 2: What We Heard – Official Plan Amendments 18.5, 18.6, 18.7, and 18.8 Summary Report.
- Appendix D: Provincial and Regional Conformity Table
- Appendix E: Table of Proposed Changes to OPA
- Appendix F: Extract from the Council Public Meeting on June 20, 2023

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### Report Approval Details

Document Title:	SRPBS.23.028 - Request for Approval - OPA 18.6 Village Local Centre.docx
Attachments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Appendix A - OPA 18.6 Village Local Centre.pdf</li><li>- Appendix B - Implementing By-law.pdf</li><li>- Appendix C - Phase 3 Batch 2 18.5-8 Engagement Feedback Summary-AODA.pdf</li><li>- Appendix D - Provincial and Regional Conformity.pdf</li><li>- Appendix E - Table of Proposed Changes.pdf</li><li>- Appendix F - Council Extract.pdf</li></ul>
Final Approval Date:	Oct 12, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

**Maria Flores - Oct 11, 2023 - 11:41 AM**

**Kelvin Kwan - Oct 11, 2023 - 4:39 PM**

**Darlene Joslin - Oct 12, 2023 - 8:31 PM**