

Welcome

The Cornell Centre Precinct Plan was initiated by the Town of Markham in early 2011. The purpose of the study is to provide greater planning and design direction for the growth and evolution of Cornell Centre. The major outcomes of the project are as follows:

- To confirm and refine the directions of the Secondary Plan
- To align recent development proposals and infrastructure requirements with the Secondary Plan and emerging Precinct Plan
- To provide greater detail and certainty through an effective development framework and design guidelines



Key Plan



Study Area

Project Team

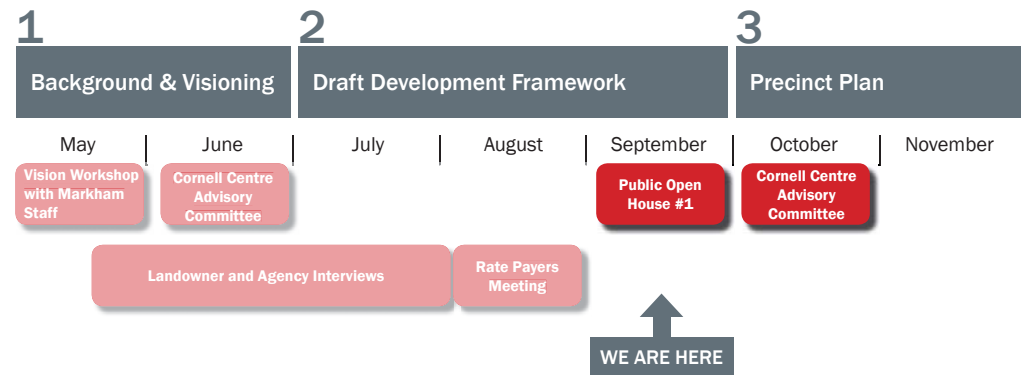
Initiated by the Town of Markham in early 2011, the project is being led by the Planning and Urban Design Department and managed by Catherine Jay, manager of Urban Design.

Urban Strategies Inc., an integrated urban design and planning firm, is leading the consultant team in the preparation of the Precinct Plan. Urban Strategies is responsible for the urban structure planning, urban design, and stakeholder and public engagement portions of the project. Urban Strategies developed the open space master plan for the Cornell community nearly 15 years ago. They are supported by IBI Group, who is responsible for the transportation analysis.

The Precinct Plan development process is informed by a larger steering committee made up of Town staff. Members of the steering committee represent a diversity of interests and expertise, including planning, urban design, transportation, transit, parks and infrastructure. The steering committee is regularly involved through vision sessions, project update meetings and other review processes.

Work Plan and Process

The project kicked off in the spring of 2011 with an extensive period of information gathering and background analysis. A visioning session with Town staff was held to confirm project guidelines and initial directions. This was followed by a series of landowner and stakeholder meetings to understand development intentions for Cornell Centre. Throughout this process, ongoing meetings with the project team and steering committee have guided the evolution of the project and emerging vision.



Today's Open House

This open house is intended to provide an update on the status and initial findings of the Precinct Plan process.

- Panels 3 through 5 provide a background understanding of the Cornell Community and recent planning initiatives.
- Panels 6 and 7 outline the emerging vision for the Precinct Plan.
- Panels 8 through 14 further describe the emerging vision by examining the urban structure components in more detail.
- Panel 15 includes contact information for further feedback.

History of Cornell

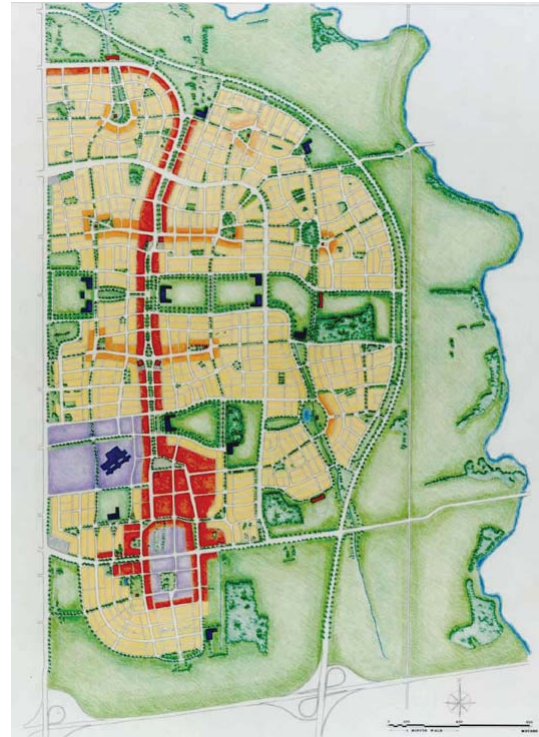
Located at the northeast corner of the urbanized GTA, the Cornell community was planned on a greenfield site. Urban development, was preceded only by the construction of the Markham-Stouffville Hospital, which opened in 1990. The hospital serves as a regional health centre and a major employment anchor, supporting hospital, medical office and other related uses.

Cornell is unique in that it is a planned community, designed in the mid-1990's by Duany Plater-Zyberk, an internationally recognized design firm. Cornell was designed according to principles of New Urbanism, which is an approach to urban development that promotes walkable, mixed-use communities that value connectivity, high quality design and human-scaled open space. The Cornell Community was masterplanned in accordance with these principles. The overall vision for Cornell included a series of local neighbourhoods organized around a retail corridor along Bur Oak Avenue and an integrated open space network that provides linkages to the surrounding natural areas and countryside.

Cornell Today

The original Cornell master plan established a detailed pattern for the development of the entire community. Over time, this vision has begun to be realized through the development of several residential neighbourhoods and small retail areas. Today, Cornell's built neighbourhoods are characterized by a diversity of unique housing types, a grid-like pattern of streets and laneways, intimate open spaces and a mix of uses.

Though Cornell has seen extensive residential development, many areas remain undeveloped, most notably, Cornell Centre. Cornell Centre was always intended to be the heart of Cornell, a higher density mixed use centre with a retail core. This vision continues to be relevant. The continued application of the principles of new urbanism within a high density, mixed use environment is one of the challenges addressed in the Precinct Plan.



Cornell Plan, 1994

Cornell continues to evolve from the original plan, shown here, to meet today's reality. Although some of the physical design has changed, Cornell has remained true to its guiding planning principals. This evolution has allowed the plan to take advantage of intensification targets, development trends and transit investment while still creating the kind of community originally envisioned.



Cornell Centre Precinct Plan - Open House Recent Development Proposals

Working Draft - For Discussion Purposes Only

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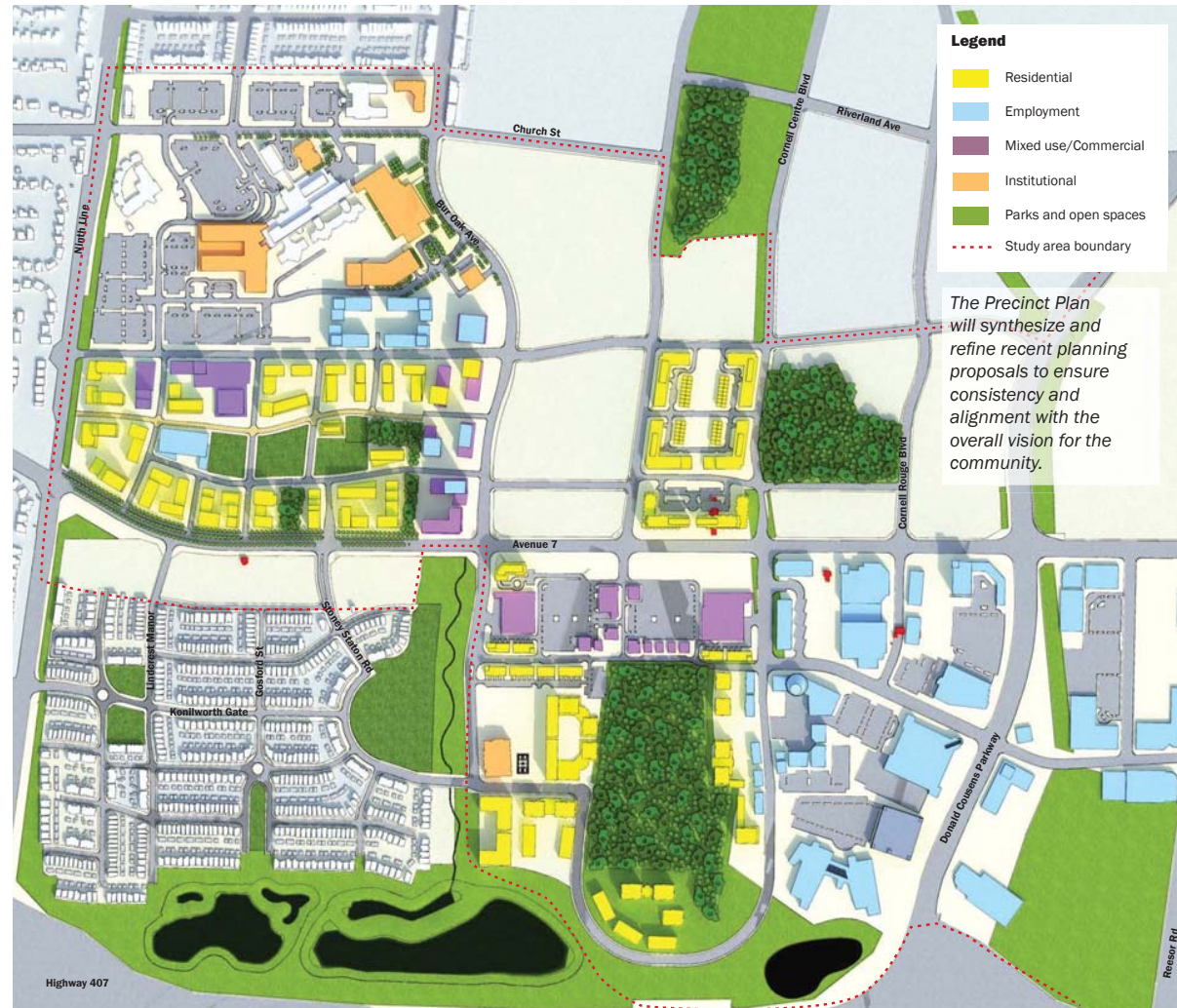
With the completion of the Cornell Secondary Plan in 2008, many of Cornell Centre's landowners have begun to plan new development opportunities. Planning for new development is in various stages of refinement and some planning approvals have already been granted for mixed-use residential development.

While the Secondary Plan provides detail planning direction for new development, the Precinct Plan will ensure further consistency between various development approvals and will provide a higher level of detail to support built form, transportation and other urban design considerations.

The Precinct Plan process has engaged landowners in a series of consultation meetings and project update packages to support design and planning coordination. Many of the concepts and ideas proposed by the landowners are consistent with the Secondary Plan and will be brought forward in the Precinct Plan. However, some changes may occur as the Precinct Plan is finalized in order to ensure the Secondary Plan's planning principles are upheld and the objectives for this planning process are met.



View from the south west



Development currently proposed by landowners

Cornell Centre Precinct Plan - Open House
The Emerging Precinct Plan

Working Draft - For Discussion Purposes Only

The emerging Precinct Plan expands on the directions of the Cornell Secondary Plan, providing additional detail around built form, transportation and other urban design considerations.

The mixed use heart of Cornell remains at the intersection of Avenue 7 and Bur Oak Avenue, with main street retail stretching north along Bur Oak. Avenue 7 will continue to support the greatest residential and employment heights and densities, supplemented by greater heights and densities along the retail main street portion of Bur Oak. Areas of transition at the edges of Cornell Centre and near existing residential neighbourhoods will experience lower heights and densities.

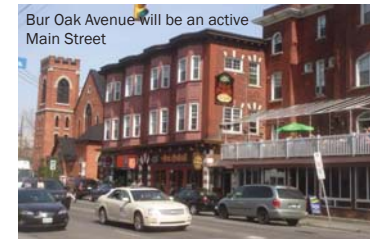
Cornell Centre will be developed as a pedestrian-oriented, mixed use community. Well-served by rapid and local transit, the community will evolve with a fine-grained street network and an extensive open space network. The existing hospital cluster will be better integrated with the community and linked to the retail main street by the new transit station location. The emerging employment district to the southeast will grow as a diverse employment hub, and wide-ranging residential built form will ensure a diversity of housing options for all members of the community.



View from the south west



Draft Framework Plan



Building form, street and open space precedents

Consistent with the original vision for Cornell and with the policies of the Cornell Secondary Plan, the portion of Bur Oak north of Avenue 7 will be developed as a retail main street for the entire Cornell community. This will be the mixed use and retail heart of Cornell Centre, supporting a wide variety of retail and service uses with higher density residential development above grade. The main street will serve as a retail spine and transit-oriented development, linking the retail district, hospital cluster and civic facilities and facilitating pedestrian activity and transit use.

A reduction in the size of retail area south of Avenue 7 will similarly strengthen commercial activity along the Bur Oak main street. Secondary Plan permissions for low density, large format retail uses south of Avenue 7 have been concentrated near Bur Oak. This allows for some large format retail to serve the community, but offers an opportunity for a higher density, urban big box style of retail development. The former retail area south of Avenue 7 will accommodate residential uses. At-grade retail requirements along most of Avenue 7 will be relaxed to support the development of a concentrated retail centre and main street at the intersection of Avenue 7 and Bur Oak.

In addition to the retail core at Avenue 7 and Bur Oak, local retail nodes within residential neighbourhoods and the employment district will meet day-to-day needs. These will be limited in size, providing some convenience retail and service functions (e.g. convenience store, café, dry cleaner, etc.) without taking activity away from the retail core.



Retail Centre



Great retail streets require more than just store fronts and sidewalks. Retail thrives in high quality pedestrian environments that include wide sidewalks, extensive trees and landscaping and appropriate street furniture. On-street parking supports access and creates a buffer from traffic, and a diversity of built form and space types allows a variety of retail operators to thrive.



Connectivity to the surrounding community is essential to retail success. A high density of local cross streets allows pedestrian access from surrounding neighbourhoods and creates additional retail frontage on corner lots. Increased local streets also provide more on-street parking opportunities adjacent to the main street and increase access to parking and servicing areas behind the storefronts.



Great retail streets are 3-dimensional in nature, extending beyond the main street storefronts to support necessary access and services. Large lot depths accommodate an increased built form options and allow the inclusion of residential above grade. Deep lots also support necessary loading and servicing and allow additional surface or structured parking to be located behind the retail stores. This area also serves as a transition in use and built form between the higher density and mixed use character of the main street to the surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

Retail Street Case Study - Winter Park, Florida

Cornell Centre Precinct Plan - Open House
Confirming Directions - Large Format Retail

Working Draft - For Discussion Purposes Only

South of Avenue 7, there is permission in the Secondary Plan for larger format retail. This panel illustrates two options for that retail area.

Option 1 illustrates an urban configuration for large format retail with structured parking. This option supports greater densities, a higher concentration of retail and the potential for more mixed use/ residential development overall.



Large Format Retail Option 1 - "Urban Big Box"

Option 2 illustrates a configuration where development is placed along the key retail streets, but surface parking is allowed adjacent the building. This option still supports a strong, connected pedestrian realm, but development densities are considerably lower.



Large Format Retail Option 2 - "Corner Oriented Big Box"



Queens Quay Loblaw's, Toronto



Canadian Tire, Toronto



Home Depot, Calgary

Large Format Retail Precedents



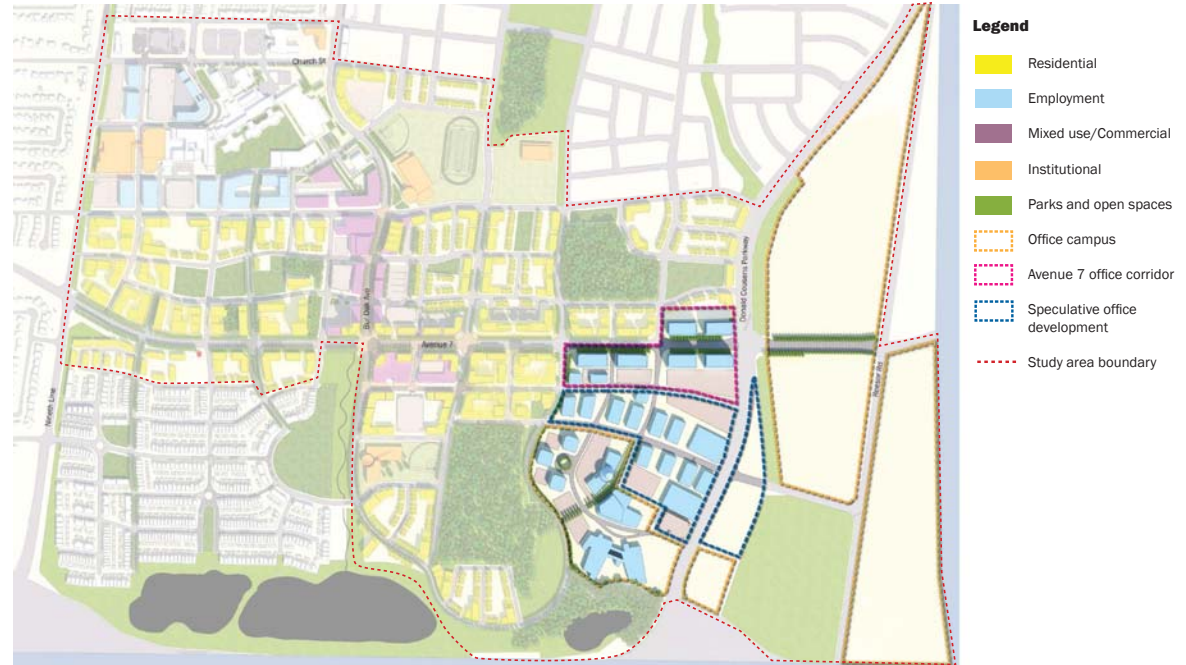
Shoppers Drug Mart, Ottawa



In addition to supporting high density residential and retail uses, Cornell Centre is expected to accommodate significant employment opportunities. The hospital is an existing employment cluster, and a planned employment district in the southeast will eventually provide thousands of jobs for local residents and support employment diversification.

As envisioned in the Cornell Secondary Plan, employment areas along Avenue 7 will accommodate mid-rise office-type buildings to reinforce the significance of this street and maximize transit potential. A campus-like office environment is envisioned adjacent to the large woodlot, open spaces along Highway 407 and along the Rouge Valley. These areas will accommodate prestige office in low- to mid-rise buildings. Remaining employment areas will accommodate prestige industrial uses at a density that supports employment targets. The Precinct Plan will provide design guidelines to support these three forms of employment development.

The employment district is fully integrated with Cornell Centre, and will benefit from transportation, retail and open space investments. Located along the future Avenue 7 rapid transit route and the future Highway 407 rapid transit corridor, the employment area will be well served by both regional rapid transit and local transit service. Retail permissions will support clusters of commercial activity that meet the day-to-day needs of employees, but will not allow large retail developments. Landscape buffers will provide transition to residential areas and open spaces, with enhanced pedestrian connections to new open spaces and existing and planned trails in the protected Rouge Valley.



Employment District



Places for office and light industrial buildings will provide opportunities to work close to home

Cornell Centre Precinct Plan - Open House

Confirming Directions - Residential Neighbourhoods

Working Draft - For Discussion Purposes Only

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The building heights and densities considered in the Cornell Secondary Plan remain relevant for Cornell Centre.

To ensure the development of a diverse community, a mix of housing types and tenures will be supported in Cornell Centre. New housing will include stacked townhouses, mid-rise condominiums and, at the intersection of Avenue 7 and Bur Oak, point tower forms. Residential parking will be accommodate primarily below grade. The provision of community resources and connected open spaces will support higher densities and increased populations, ensuring Cornell Centre develops with adequate resources to become a great place to live and work.

The intersection of Avenue 7 and Bur Oak is the focal point for Cornell Centre and will accommodate slightly increased building heights and densities with a maximum of 20 storeys and a floor plate no larger than 750 square metres. A small increase in height and density is planned along the Bur Oak retail corridor. These changes will support the vitality of commercial uses and help create a functioning main street for the Cornell community and built form guidelines will ensure appropriate transition and integration of this development into the surrounding neighbourhoods. Where the retail district south of Avenue 7 has been reduced in size, residential uses will be accommodated in place of retail uses.



- Legend**
- Residential
 - Employment
 - Mixed use/Commercial
 - Institutional
 - Parks and open spaces
 - Proposed residential area
 - Study area boundary
 - Slightly increased building heights beyond those currently permitted in the Secondary Plan to a maximum of 20 storeys
 - Minimal increase in height and density beyond those currently permitted in the Secondary Plan with a transition down to the surrounding neighbourhoods

Residential Neighbourhoods



A range of housing forms will support diversity and provide choice

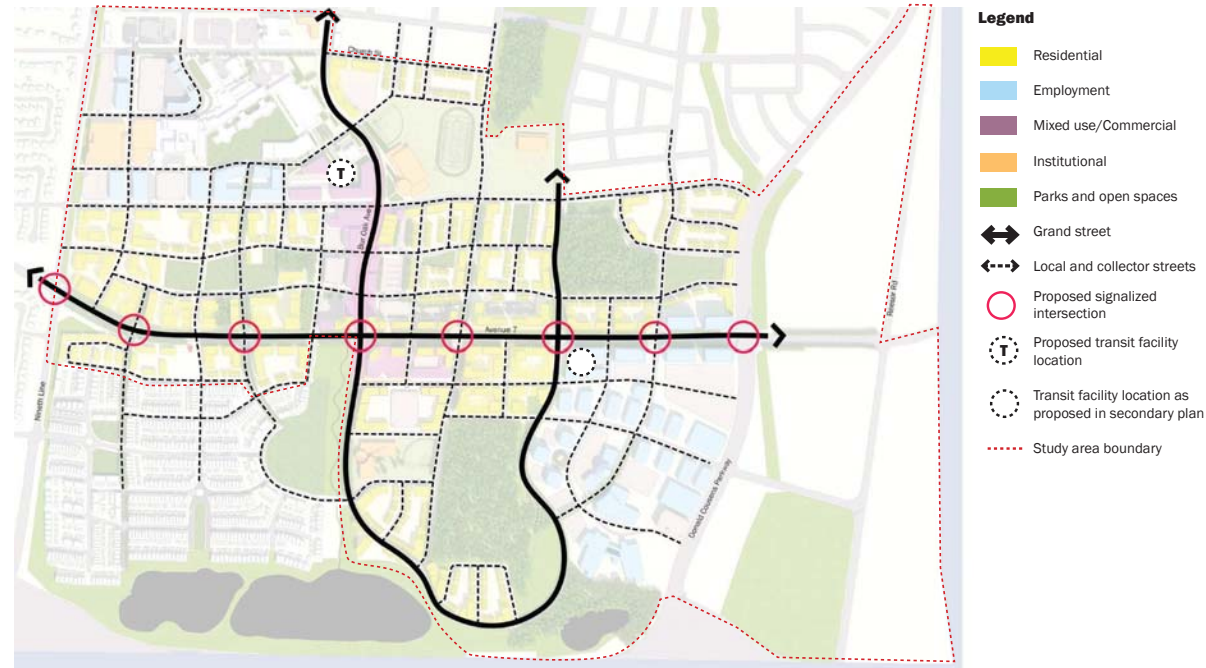
The road network established in the Cornell Secondary Plan has been carried forward into the Precinct Plan.

Avenue 7 remains a grand boulevard and as a regional arterial street will accommodate the highest traffic volumes. In the future, regional rapid transit will occupy Avenue 7's centre median. Alignment of north-south streets across Avenue 7 will break down the barrier effects of this busy street and ensure a connected, grid-like network. A series of signalized intersections along Avenue 7 will support pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular crossings.

York Region Transit has identified a new location for the proposed rapid transit facility. While this will not impact the provision of rapid transit along Avenue 7, its central location between the hospital cluster and the Bur Oak retail main street will serve as a more effective focal point for local transit service. The grid-like road network will support effective local transit systems, which in the future will be organized around the rapid transit corridor.

Bur Oak Avenue will function as the primary north-south street, serving as a pedestrian-oriented retail main street and linking the surrounding Cornell neighbourhoods to Cornell Centre. Wide sidewalks, on-street parking, enhanced landscaping and a high quality public realm will support its main street retail character and function. On-street parking will be provided on most local streets throughout Cornell Centre, with additional surface and structure parking lots serving the main street and other retail uses.

Small adjustments to the Secondary Plan street network ensure appropriate alignment and connections, streamline travel patterns, and strengthen development potential. For example, the extension of Bur Oak Avenue south of Avenue 7 has been realigned to create a continuous main street through the southern portion of the site. The Precinct Plan also identifies additional local streets and small block sizes that will further support a fine-grained and diverse transportation network.



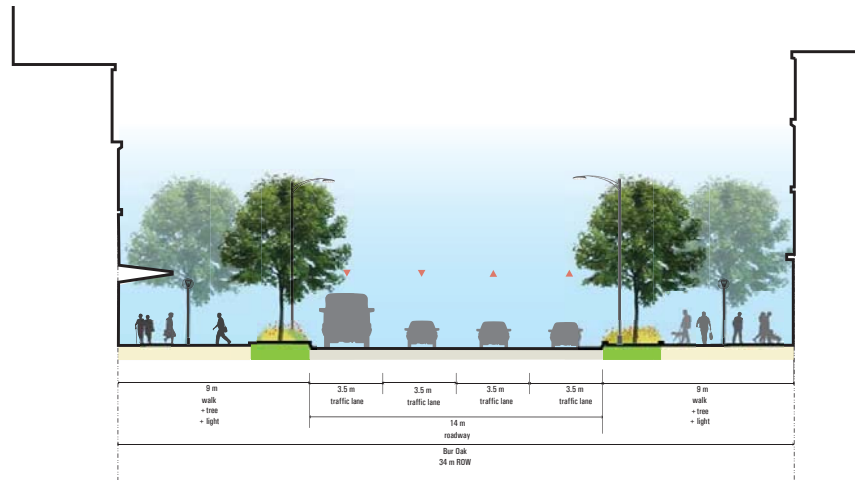
Street Network



A complete transportation network will support pedestrian, cyclist, transit and vehicular movement

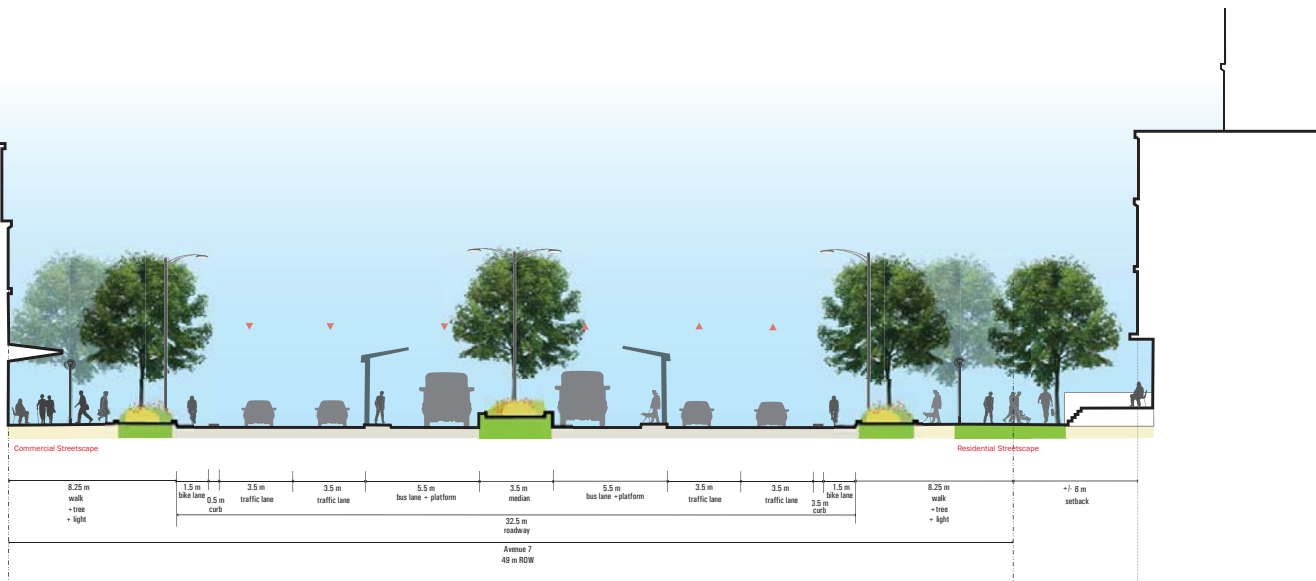
Bur Oak Avenue

Bur Oak Avenue will be a commercial main street, lined with shops and restaurants. It will have a generous sidewalk to accommodate landscaping and street furniture.



Avenue 7

Avenue 7 will be a grand, treed boulevard with centre lanes dedicated to transit. Portions of the street will have commercial uses at street level, while other portions of the street will be lined with residential uses.



Cornell Centre Precinct Plan - Open House

Confirming Directions - Open Space & Natural Heritage

Working Draft - For Discussion Purposes Only

The Cornell Secondary Plan identifies protected natural heritage features and outlines a comprehensive network of connected open spaces.

These features and functions will continue to be protected through the Precinct Plan, including further refinements to the open space network. The existing open space network includes large woodlots located along Cornell Centre Boulevard, a series of connected stormwater management ponds and related open spaces along Highway 407 and a large open space connected to the Grand Cornell community.

Existing open spaces will be augmented with new open spaces and parks, fully integrated and connected by a network of greenways. New urban parks will be introduced in a number of locations within Cornell Centre and will be designed to meet the intensive demands of a larger and more concentrated population. Avenue 7, Bur Oak Avenue and Cornell Centre Boulevard will serve as green corridors, with extensively landscaped boulevards and pedestrian areas that link larger open spaces and parks. These green streets will supplement protected greenways, streams and other linear open spaces. School sites are positioned adjacent to open spaces and will be designed to augment open space functions through sports fields and landscaped areas. The large stormwater areas along the Highway 407 corridor will continue to be developed with extensive path networks and opportunities for passive recreation.



Open Space Network



Open spaces will include natural areas, playgrounds, pocket parks, recreation areas and urban plazas

Thank You!

Thank you for your participation in the Cornell Centre Precinct Plan open house. Your participation and feedback will help make Cornell Centre a great community. If you have not already spoken to a member of the project team, please feel free to provide feedback to any of the project team members. You may also contact the below project team members:

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Following this open house, the project team will use the feedback from all stakeholders to inform and refine the draft Cornell Centre Precinct Plan. This draft Precinct Plan will then be reviewed and finalized for Council approval, likely in early 2012. If necessary, additional tasks that may arise from this process, such as technical amendments to the Cornell Secondary Plan or additional technical studies, will be addressed at that time. Thank you again for your participation in this open house.



Study Area