

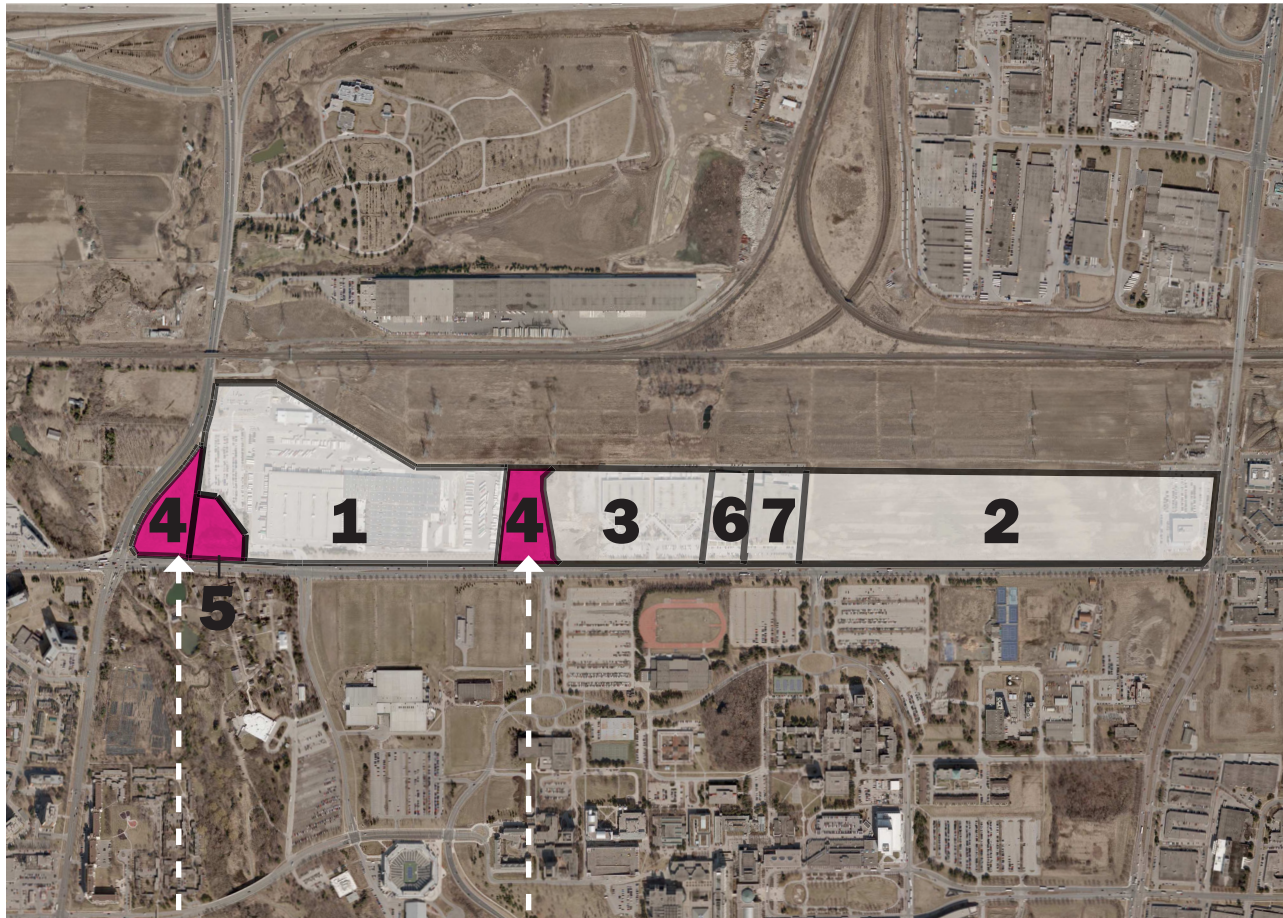
# Existing Conditions

- Lot Fabric
- Open Spaces and Natural Features
- Circulation (Pedestrian, Cycling, Transit, Vehicular)
- Built Form
- Issues and Constraints
- Opportunities

**An understanding of the existing Study Area and context is essential in the formulation of any good long-range planning document. This Plan assesses the existing elements of the site as a “baseline” from which the Plan can build.**

**While the Steeles West Secondary Plan envisions a radically different future for the Study Area, there are also important current realities that must be accommodated.**

# Existing Conditions



Key site

Key site

Above:  
Overlay of the existing land ownership with air photo.

## Lot Fabric

The overall Study Area, at approximately 47.8 ha (118 acres), is broken down into 8 parcels of land, with 7 landowners. The most significant landholdings based on area are:

- 1) United Parcel Service Ltd. 16.45 ha 40.6 acres
- 2) Milestone Group 16.2 ha 40.1 acres
- 3) Glen Steeles East Ltd. 6.4 ha 15.9 acres
- 4) York Region & TTC 3.7 ha 9.1 acres (2 lots)
- 5) City of Vaughan 1.2 ha 3.0 acres
- 6) 1053364 Ontario Limited
- 7) 653135 Ontario Limited

The majority of the land area is held by a small number of landholders. These large parcels can accommodate multiple buildings on each site along with the creation of associated road connections and parks. This arrangement ultimately provides flexibility in the deployment of density and in the arrangement of viable building types within each parcel. The benefit of large area landholdings also includes easier and more potentially efficient street and park layouts.

Two government organizations (City of Vaughan and York Region) control approximately 10% of the land area. Further, the Region controls one of the most strategic and intense sites (at the location of the new subway station), as well as a key “corner” parcel (at Jane). These key, publicly-owned parcels have the ability to “set the tone” for development quality and intensity in the Study Area.



## Open Spaces and Natural Features



The lands were originally 19th century farmsteads. Portions of the Study Area are currently developed with one and two-storey industrial buildings, complete with surface parking lots and some container storage. The remainder of the lands are undeveloped and exist as cultural meadows and agricultural fields (five vegetation community types of cultural meadows, cultural woodlands, shallow marsh, open aquatic, and agricultural).

The study corridor is situated within the Peel Plan physiographic region, characterized as a level of undulating tract of clay soils with imperfect drainage. Soils are Chinguacousey clay loam, a shaly calcareous clay till with slight potential for erosion, and low run-off and slow percolation.



The cultural meadows are used as east-west travel corridors for mammals (coyotes, red fox and white-tailed deer) and breeding habitats for birds. Birds also use the agricultural fields. 17 of 25 species of birds listed on-site are protected by the Migratory Birds Convention Act (MBCA), and ten species are considered for conservation priority in York Region.

A cultural woodlot and cattail marsh (stormwater pond) is located at Jane Street and Steeles Avenue. Portions of the Hydro Corridor were leased for farming.

The land is relatively flat, and there are no watercourses within the Study Area. However, the ecologically and historically significant Black Creek Valley is a natural feature located adjacent to the Study Area, west of Jane Street. The entire Study Area is within the Black Creek sub watershed of the Humber River, and is designated a “Conservation Area/Regional Forest” in the York Region Regional Greenlands System. It is identified as a “highly sensitive” hydro geologically sensitive area.

# Existing Conditions

## Circulation

### Pedestrian

There are currently no sidewalks internal to the Study Area. The only sidewalk on Steeles Avenue is located between Jane Street and Northwest Gate, or approximately 1/3 of the Steeles Avenue frontage along the length of the Study Area. There are sidewalks on Jane Street and Keele Street at the edges of the site. In addition, there is an existing informal trail within the hydro corridor.

### Cycling

There is currently no dedicated infrastructure for cycling (lanes or trails) internal to the Study Area or on adjacent streets.

### Transit

The boundaries of the Study Area are currently serviced by York Region Transit (YRT/Viva), Brampton Transit, Go Transit and TTC. The transit routes that service the arterial street network which borders the Study Area include:

- VIVA Orange (full along Jane and Steeles).
- VIVA Purple (full along Keele and Steeles)
- YRT Route 20 (full along Jane and Steeles)
- YRT Route 20A (full along Janes and Steeles)
- YRT Route 3 (along Steeles)
- YRT Route 22A (along Keele and Steeles)
- YRT Route 10 (full along Steeles)
- GO Transit (along Keele and Jane)
- TTC Route 35D (limited along Jane)
- TTC Route 107 B/C/D (full along Keele)
- TTC Route 60 (Steeles)
- TTC Route 35B (along Steeles)

Brampton Transit Züm 501 (along Keele, Jane and Steeles)

Brampton Transit Züm 501A (along Keele and Steeles)

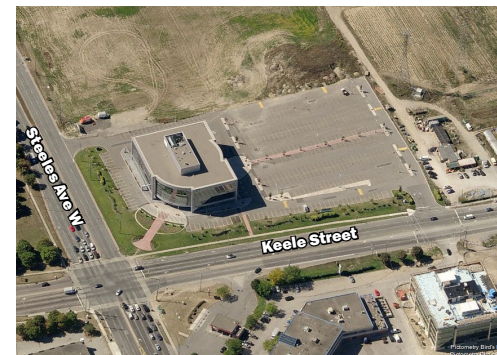
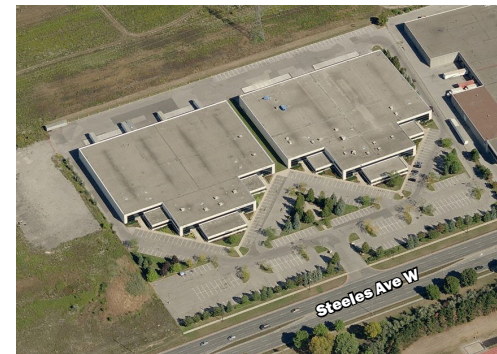
### Vehicular

Vehicles currently travel along the main arterial streets, Steeles Avenue, Jane Street and Keele Street. There are no internal streets in the Study Area. Individual properties are serviced by individual driveways with access from curb cuts, generally from Steeles Avenue (although United Parcel Service Canada Ltd. has access on Jane Street, and Milestones has access on Keele Street). These main arterial roads carry significant volumes of traffic, particularly in rush hour, when they are often very congested and slow moving.

North of Steeles Avenue, Jane Street and Keele Street are major north-south arterial roads in the City of Vaughan, under the jurisdiction of the Regional Municipality of York. South of Steeles Avenue, Jane Street and Keele Street are major north-south arterial roads under the jurisdiction of the City of Toronto. Steeles Avenue is a major east-west arterial road under the jurisdiction of the City of Toronto.

### Rail

The CN Rail line crosses over Jane Street and under Keele Street. The rail lines north of the site are currently used by freight trains (CN Rail).





## Built Form

Within the Study Area, there are 6 existing buildings at the following locations:

**1) 2900 Steeles Avenue West**

UPS distribution centre, a large, single storey industrial warehouse, recently expanded and doubled in size. This large building is setback from the street, and surrounded by shipping container parking and driveway aisles.



**2) 2720 & 2740 Steeles Avenue West:**

Two identically shaped, concrete and glass, office and light industrial two-storey buildings, well set back from Steeles, and surrounded by surface parking.



**3) 2700 Steeles Avenue West**

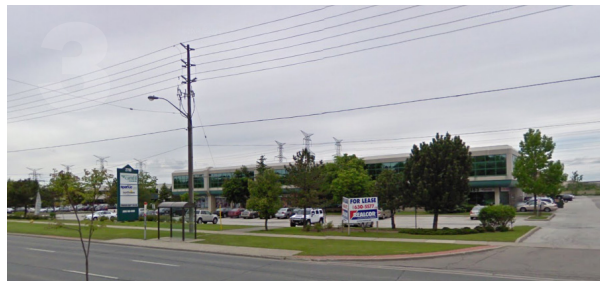
One concrete and glass, two-storey office building, surrounded by surface parking.

**4) 2600 Steeles West**

One red brick, two-storey office building, surrounded by surface parking.

**5) 2300 Steeles West**

One four-storey office building, surrounded by surface parking (located at Keele Street).



# Existing Conditions

## Existing Land Uses

York University and Black Creek Pioneer Village are located immediately south of the Study Area, and have entrances onto Steeles Avenue.

Low-rise industrial and commercial buildings front onto the north side of Steeles Avenue, along with large tracts of undeveloped land and altered landscapes. A large UPS distribution facility and expansion building is located near Jane Street and Steeles Avenue, on the north side of Steeles Avenue.

The Hydro One transmission corridor is to the north of the Study Area.

## Built Heritage and Cultural Landscapes

The roadscape bounding the Study Area and farmsteads once located within the Study Area are identified to have 19th century survey and settlement origins. However, no features in the study area are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act or are identified as being of heritage interest. There are heritage buildings and cultural heritage elements on the south side of Steeles, within York University lands. Of the original farmsteads built on York University lands, the Stong House and Barn and the Hoover House remain. Additionally, vestiges of the agricultural landscape remain, including woodlots, residual tree lines and drives and the York Pond.

## Fixed Elements

There are a number of “fixed” elements to the development of this District:

1. Portions associated with the subway station.

1a Transit infrastructure construction timelines.

1b Subway Station Main Entrances - already designed and under construction, these locations are set and will provide at-grade connections to the new subway station.

1c Transformer Station - will be developed as part of the subway station construction as an integral part of the power for the station’s operation. It will exist as a surface building north of the subway entrance.

1d YRT/ Viva Bus Terminal - will provide surface connections with various bus routes servicing the surrounding area.

1e Commuter Parking within Hydro Corridor - A large commuter parking lot will be constructed within the corridor by YRT/TTC to provide parking for commuters.

2. Hydro Corridor - will continue to function as an integral servicing element to the power distribution of surrounding areas.

3. Street network - the major streets are already allocated within the Official Plan (Steeles West Secondary Plan) and the East-West Collector Road Environmental Assessment.

Conceptual TTC Pioneer Village subway station site design at Steeles Avenue West and Street C (Janet Rosenberg & Studio)



## Issues and Constraints

As part of the analysis for the Study Area, various design issues and constraints were identified:

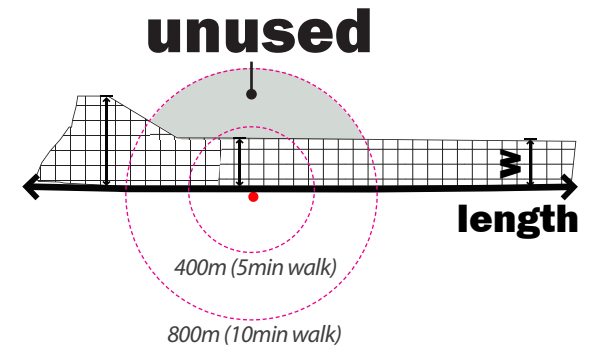
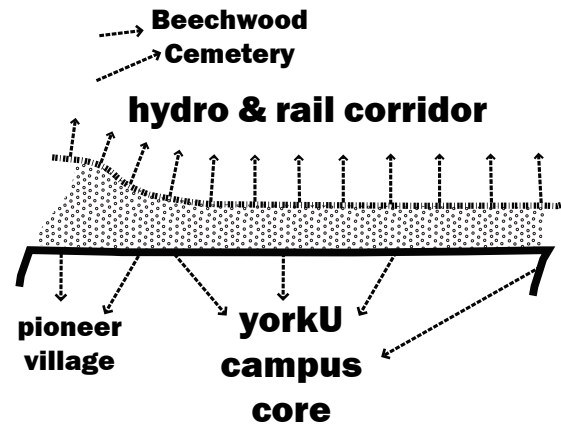
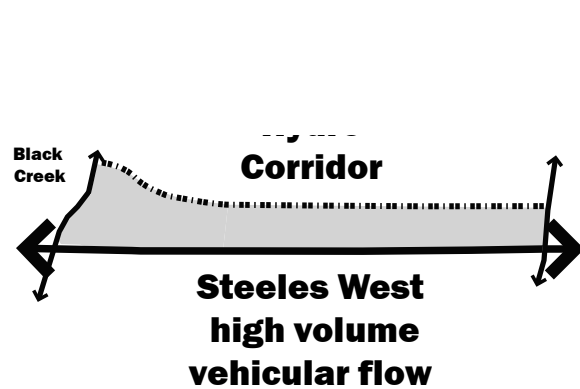
### Edges

Physical constraints create rigid “edges” to the area due to the large ROW widths and traffic flows, and utility corridors/railway.

**Inward nature of surrounding uses**  
York University, employment lands, Beechwood Cemetery, Pioneer Village and the hydro corridor contain specific uses that all function inwardly.

### Linear arrangement of district

The Study Area is constrained in terms of overall depth in the north-south dimension due to the existing ‘edges’ of Steeles Avenue and the hydro corridor. This narrow configuration creates challenges in the ability to connect, as well as the traditional “transit access”, which is usually measured in a concentric ring surrounding the transit station within walking distance (400m and 800m, or 5 and 10min)





# Existing Conditions

## Coordination

Coordination must be coordinated between one Region (Region of York), two municipalities (Vaughan and Toronto) and one large single land-owner/operator (York University).

## Transit priorities

Valuable land will be occupied with the many “parts” that come with a new subway station: subway trench and cover, power (transformer), vent, access, station entrance design, bus terminal, transit demand management (parking) and safety requirements. These parts will all need to be coordinated and co-located where possible.

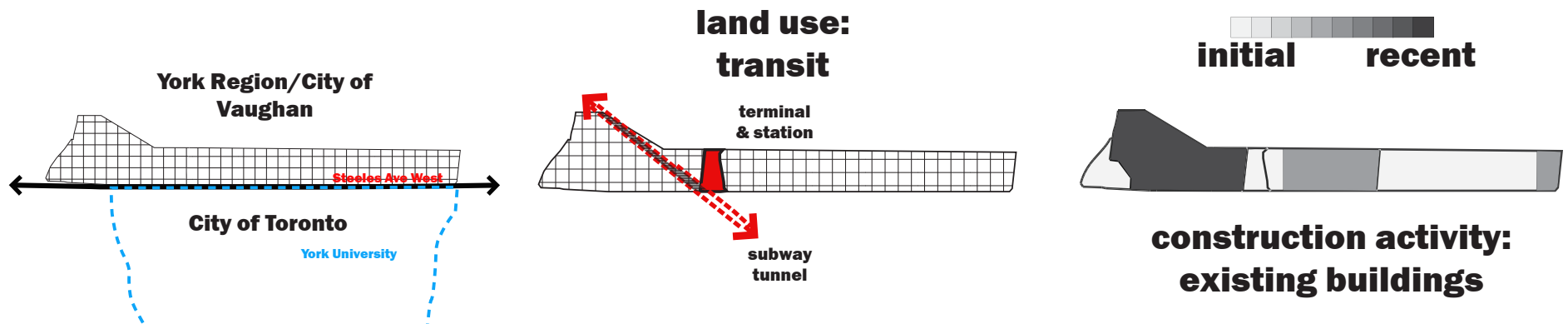
## Secondary Plan framework

Maximum heights, densities, park locations, conceptual roads and linkages are found within the Steeles West Secondary Plan. As discussed earlier, these initial parameters form the basis of the Steeles West Urban Design & Streetscape Plan.

## Recent investment of some landholders

United Parcel Service Ltd. (UPS), known municipally as 2900 Steeles Avenue West, is the owner of approximately 16.45 hectares of land. The property is generally located to the north and east of the intersection of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue West immediately north of the York University campus in the City of Toronto.

The existing UPS operation in the City of Vaughan is a key component of the UPS network and this location functions as a “hub” operation. Nearly 90% of all materials and packages delivered by UPS in Canada are processed at this operation. UPS’s facility processes and accommodates hundreds of tractor trailers of materials each day of the week with a large distribution fleet of trucks, including tractor trailers and their own smaller vehicles.



UPS maintains their fleet of vehicles on site, and in addition, maintains fuel (gasoline, diesel, and propane) storage facilities for the fleet. Operations continue 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

After completing a second phase of development in 2009, the UPS property continues to have the capability for future expansion under existing zoning rights. The future expansion, for what would be a third phase of development, has been protected for in the municipal approvals for the site. The third phase of expansion is also referenced in the site plan approval of the second phase. Municipal site plan approval for the third phase will be required. It is anticipated that this third phase will result in the development of an additional 20,000 square metres of gross floor area.

**Steeles West Secondary Plan Policy Modifications:**  
*(See Ontario Municipal Board Order pertaining to United Parcel Service Canada Ltd.)*

The Steeles West Secondary Plan policy modifications protect UPS's existing use of its lands and its entitlement to expand such uses in accordance with policies and zoning in place prior to the adoption of the secondary plan.

As indicated above, UPS is a large industrial operation, with a large number of vehicles loading and off-loading goods and products on a 24 hour, 7 day per week basis. As such, this type of activity has the potential to negatively impact sensitive land uses, including residential uses. As a matter of

practice and consistent with Provincial guidelines, adjacent re-development will be required to demonstrate compatibility through appropriate studies and design with mitigation occurring within the new development site or in combination with mitigation at source (in this case on the UPS lands).

In the absence of any specific proposal for development of the surrounding lands, the policies of the Steeles West Secondary Plan have been modified to require that the existing and zoned industrial use(s) for the UPS lands be protected from the introduction of potentially incompatible, sensitive land uses.

The modifications require that all necessary studies be conducted and peer reviewed by the municipality prior to the approval of any zoning by-law amendments allowing for sensitive land uses in proximity to the UPS property. The required studies will need to demonstrate compliance with all relevant Provincial standards to satisfy matters of land use compatibility and to demonstrate that necessary mitigation will occur on those lands where the sensitive land uses are proposed to be introduced.

## Planned Transit Network

The Spadina Subway Transit Strategy (2015 Annual Service Plan) details the proposed YRT/Viva network following implementation of the Spadina Subway extension.

The subway extension will include three subway stations in York Region: Pioneer Village Station (Steeles West District), Highway 407 Station, and the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Station.

Within the Study Area, the Pioneer Village subway station is connected to a new bus terminal and a commuter parking lot with 1,850 spaces. Additionally, the existing surface bus network will be restructured to connect with the three new subway stations.

The Spadina Subway Transit Strategy proposes to direct numerous routes in Vaughan to the new subway stations and assume operation of some TTC contracted routes in Vaughan. Changes to the Viva network would see Viva orange and purple removed from the York University/Steeles West area. Service to York University from Richmond Hill Centre Terminal would be replaced by a new route, Route 101 York U Shuttle. Routing plans around/to the York University and Pioneer Village Stations have not yet been finalized at this time.

Currently, the Plan proposes that the following YRT/Viva routes provide service within/ adjacent to the Steeles West District Study Area:

- YRT Route 3 (along Steeles)
- YRT Route 20 (along Jane and Steeles)
- YRT Route 22A (along Keele and Steeles)
- YRT Route 29 (formerly TTC Route 107) (along Keele and Steeles)
- YRT Route 65 (formerly TTC Route 165) (along Steeles)
- YRT Route 75 (formerly TTC Route 105) (along Steeles)
- YRT Route 101 (along Keele, Steeles)

The above routes could use the new east-west street (Street X) as an alternative to Steeles Avenue.

All routings are subject to change.



*Stong Homestead, Black Creek  
Pioneer Village*



*York University Campus Sign*

## Opportunities

There are significant opportunities associated with the development of the Study Area. These include:

- 1. The land use and retail opportunities that come with transit-oriented development.**
- 2. Large landholdings allow for collaborated and consolidated infrastructure systems, including sustainable water, waste and energy.**
- 3. Proximity to York University and Black Creek Pioneer Village provide activity co-generators that can create an interesting mixture of visits and opportunities for new businesses.**
- 4. A large amount of urban and pedestrian activity that will be generated by the combination of commuter parking, bus terminals, the subway itself, and surrounding neighbourhood including York University.**