

# Markham about to get a \$3 billion makeover

Private funds launch 20-year project  
Home for 9,500; workplace for 16,000

NAOMI CARNIOL  
STAFF REPORTER

Move over urban sprawl, there's a new plan in town.

The Town of Markham and a developer are planning a glittering \$3 billion downtown that will gain momentum in June when a sales office opens its doors.

Don't expect a dull strip mall or rows and rows of look-alike homes. Downtown Markham will feature glamorous boutiques, restaurants, hotels, parks, offices, condos and townhouses.

Drawings for the project show wide sidewalks and ritzy shops that look like Manhattan's Fifth Avenue.

The cafes look like they came straight from Brussels' town square.

The planned nightclubs, theatres and skateboard park are all part of an effort to create a place people can live, work and play, said Serena Quaglia, marketing director for the Remington Group, which owns the 98 hectares where the downtown will be built.

The entire project will take about 20 years to build and will run from Warden Ave. to the GO

Transit tracks near Kennedy Rd. and between Highway 7 and Highway 407.

About 9,500 people will call the spot home while 16,000 employees will work in the nearby shops, restaurants and offices.

The high density will reduce the amount of farmland chewed up to build new housing for the GTA's growing population. "It's better for the environment," Quaglia said.

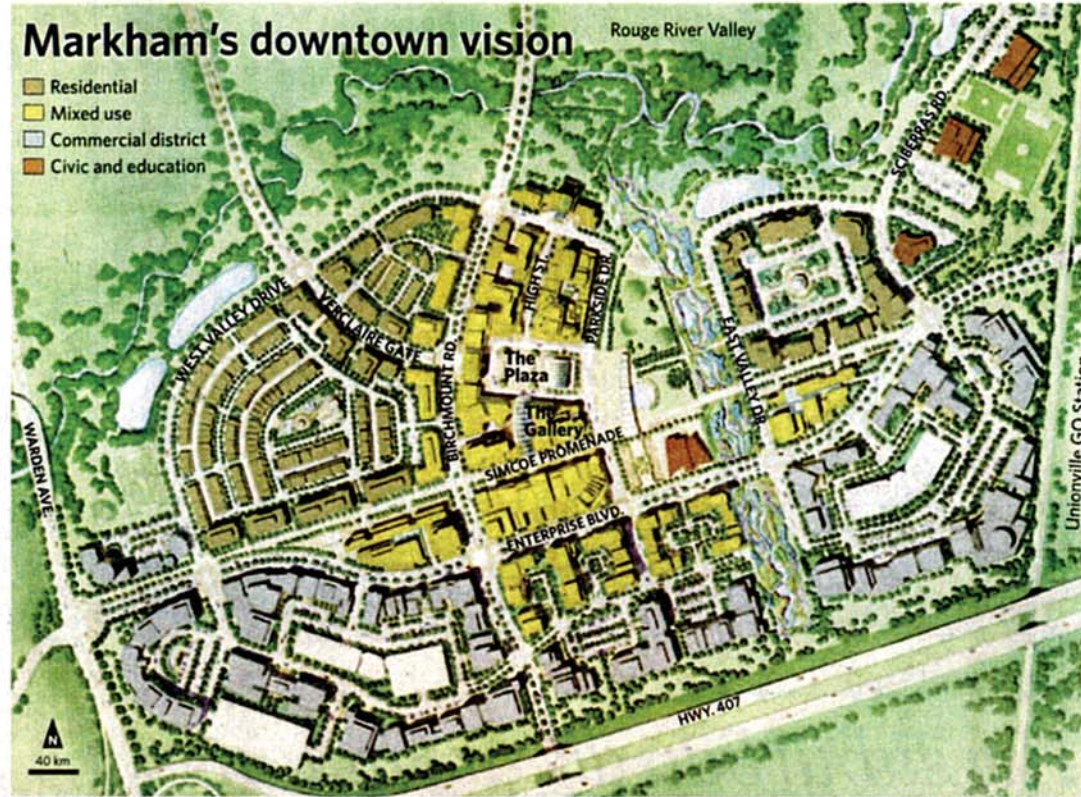
The project may also encourage more people to leave their cars at home. It takes into account already announced transit improvements in the area, including enhanced bus service and additional GO Transit service.

In some suburban developments, you need to drive to buy a carton of milk.

In downtown Markham, "you could run downstairs and run across the street to a convenience store.

"Things are in walkable distances," Quaglia says.

Creating a pedestrian-friendly place doesn't just benefit the environment. It builds a sense of community, which is also one of the reasons behind the planned Piazza or outdoor square. "We



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want to encourage... social interaction," Quaglia said.

The square will host art exhibitions, jazz quartets, fashion shows and a farmers' market. It will be a place people can mingle over their lunch hour or after work, Quaglia says. "Our vision is it's really

everyone's outdoor living room."

The Remington Group and the Town of Markham have been discussing the project for more than a decade, but the opening of a sales office in June will send a signal that plans are firming up.

So far, the project has been privately funded by the Remington Group, but "a heap of public money" will go toward things like roads and utilities, says Markham Mayor Don Cousens.

"These are not small investments."

Markham council has approved the project, Cousens said.

"It will give us a new heart and centre."



This is how planners at the Remington Group and the town of Markham envision High St. in a glittering new downtown.