

THORNHILL TO RICHMOND HILL

A THESIS

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Bachelor of Arts in the Department
of Geography of McMaster University

by

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Fig. 1 Air photo of Thornhill from the south.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

LOCATION

Thornhill and Richmond Hill are located in Southern Ontario, to the north of Metropolitan Toronto. The study area is bounded by Metropolitan Toronto (Steele's Avenue) to the south and by main thoroughfares to the east and west, Bayview Avenue and Bathurst Street. Its northern limit is Elgin Mills Road.

Yonge Street, the central access route to Toronto from the north, runs through the centre of the study area and divides the area into two halves. The east half is in Markham Township and the west half is in Vaughan. The thesis area includes the lots numbered from 26 to 50 in the first consession of each township (see Map 5).

Another major transportation route runs through Thornhill. Highway seven west runs on lot 30 to Yonge Street, then it runs east from Yonge at lot 35.

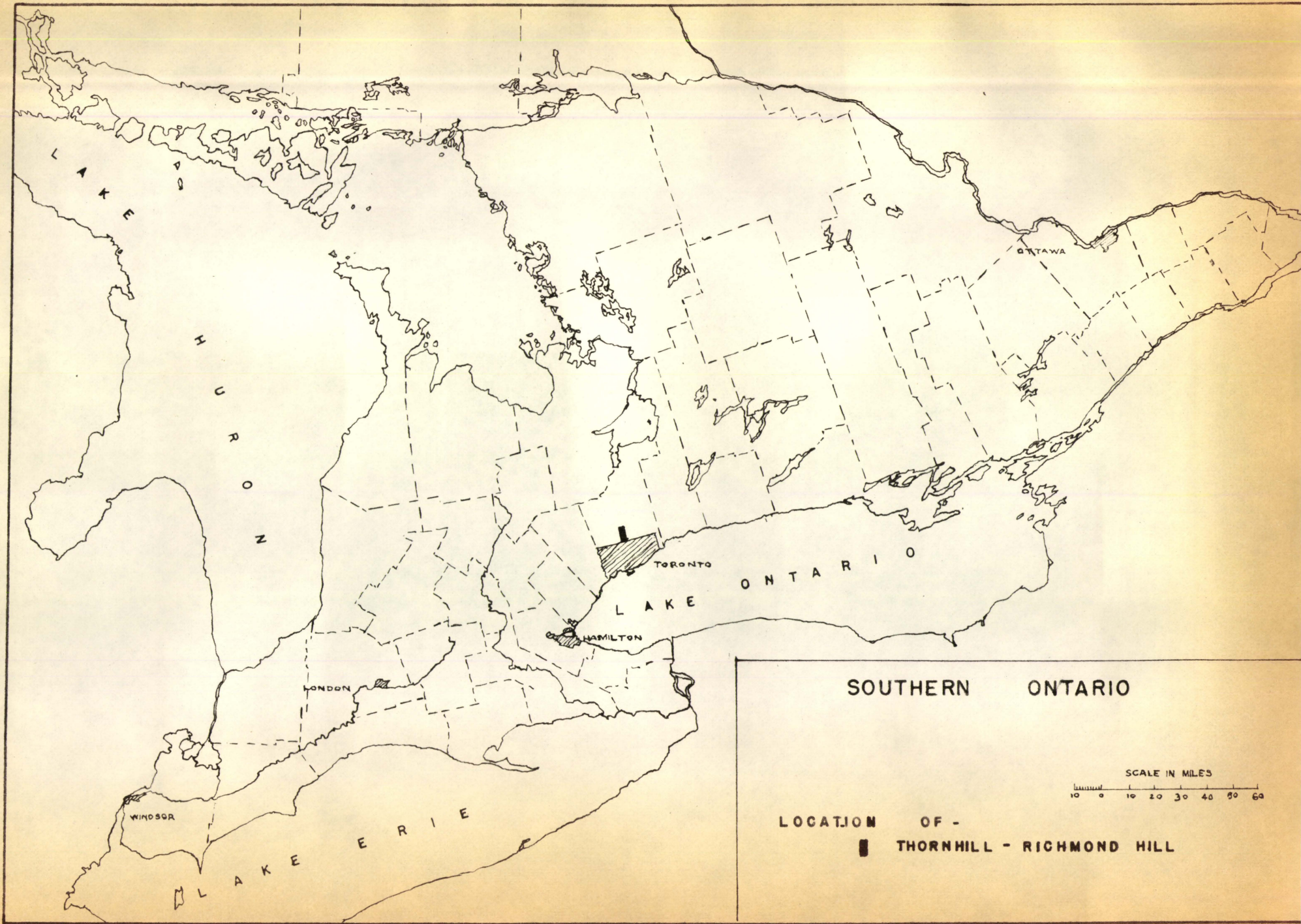
The study area is two and a half miles wide and 6.4 miles long. The total area is 16.05 square miles or 10,272 acres. Although there is a population of about 26,500 in the study area only two localities have urban government. The Town of Richmond Hill, in the

18,650 (1965)
north, has a population of 16,095. The Police Village of Thornhill,
near the south, has a population of 1,050. ^{1100 (1965)} Three smaller centres are
within the study area: Langstaff, north of Thornhill (over 2,600);
Richvale, immediately south of Richmond Hill (1,500) and the residential
section north of Steele's Avenue (about 2,500). The last named centre
is an extension of the populated area of Northern Metropolitan Toronto.

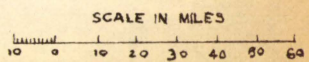
The purpose of the thesis is to study and understand the
differences between the various parts of this area, which is an urban-
rural fringe of Metropolitan Toronto.

The conglomerations of population (see Map 2) within the study
area allow us to divide it into sub-areas. Thornhill and Richmond Hill
have had distinctly separate functions and histories from each other.
The rest of the study area has had a more recent growth than Thornhill
and Richmond Hill. The Steele's sub-area is largely a result of the
northward expansion of Toronto more than a southward spread of
Thornhill. The sub-area of Langstaff-Richvale is filling the farmland
that occupied the three miles separating Thornhill and Richmond Hill.
This sub-area is still distinct from both of them, however.

The topography of the study area will be dealt with extensively
and its relation to the function of the early villages will later be
noted, as well as its influence on the present land use. The approach
will be mainly historical so that the development of the study area up
to the present time can be related to the important geographical
features. Each sub-area will be studied separately. Finally, the
features that tie the study area together will be presented. From the



SOUTHERN ONTARIO

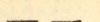




LOCATION OF -
■ THORNHILL - RICHMOND HILL

past geography of Thornhill and Richmond Hill, and through the present, some possibilities for the future will be mentioned.

SECTIONAL MAP

LEGEND

-  TOWN BOUNDARY
-  BOUNDARY OF SECTIONS
-  BUILT-UP AREAS

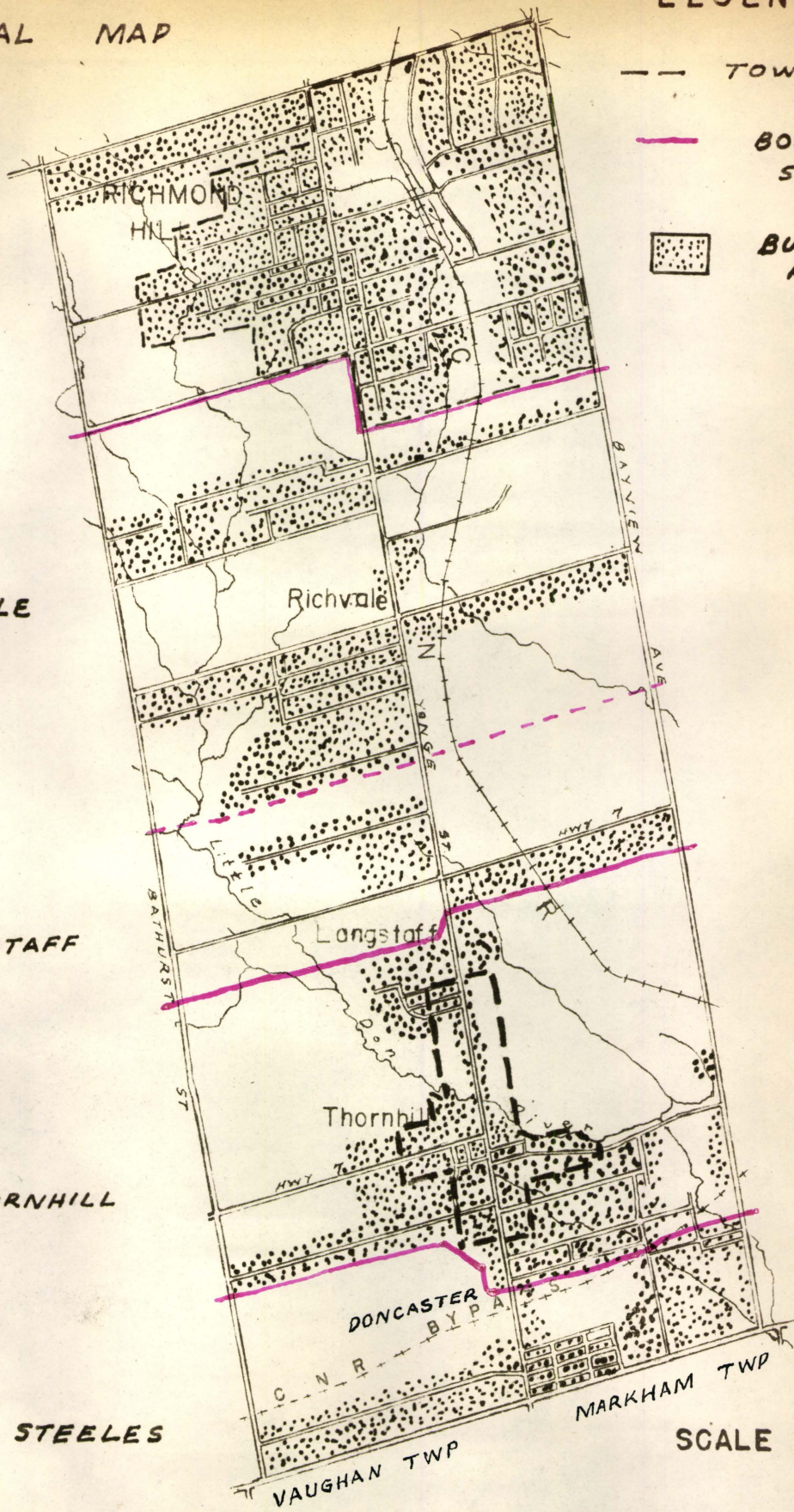
RICHMOND HILL

RICHVALE

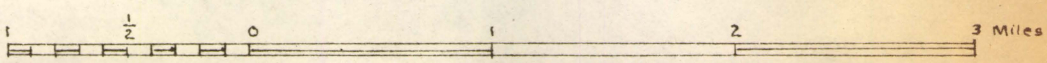
LANGSTAFF

THORNHILL

STEELES



SCALE 1:50,000



FOR REASONS OF CLARITY, THIS AND SIMILAR MAPS DO NOT SHOW ALL STREETS.

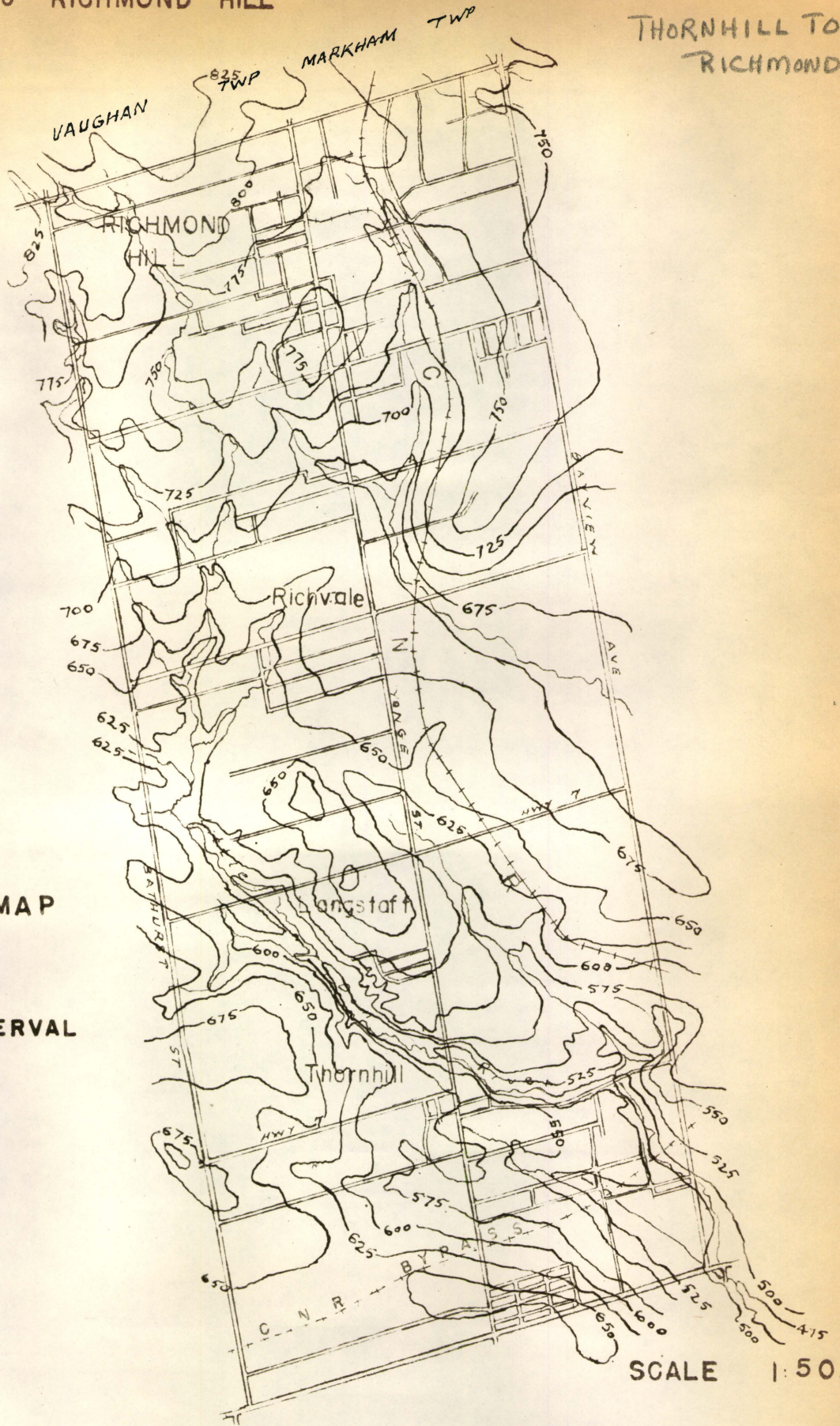
CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

The study area is in a section of flat, Paleozoic (sedimentary) rock strata which have given the area the flat appearance that much of it has. The noticeable surface features are those that have resulted from the Pleistocene glaciation and from the cutting of the Don River and its tributaries.

An ancient river once ran near Thornhill and cut deeply into the bedrock. This has since been filled in with unconsolidated material which stores a large quantity of ground water. The ancient valley has been traced for sixty miles north to Georgian Bay by a series of deep wells, the deepest of which is the one near Thornhill. It was sunk 650 feet before striking bedrock. Besides these deep wells, which now supply water through mains for some of the study area (the Town of Richmond Hill and the area south of Langstaff), many people have wells sunk about fifty or 100 feet.

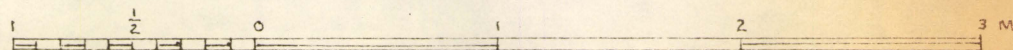
The Wisconsin glacial period ended with the deposition of a layer of calcareous and clay till over most of the study area. From the layer of till developed a series of clay soils on the Peel Plain of Thornhill and Richmond Hill. About three miles north of Richmond Hill the Interlobate Moraine was left after two Wisconsin ice lodes



CONTOUR MAP

CONTOUR INTERVAL
25 FEET

SCALE 1:50,000



receded, one to the north-west and one to the south. This higher area (called Oak Ridges) is the line of origin of many of the tributaries of rivers that cross the study area. These tributaries cut into the Peel Plain at intervals in their generally south and east courses. The Little Don River is the main one but the Rouge River (to the east) cuts the north-east corner of the study area.

The drainage is good in the study area since almost all the land is at least gently sloping. There are no noticeable swampy depressions or bogs except perhaps on the wide bottomlands of the stream valleys (see Soil Map). Although there are no storm sewers (except in Richmond Hill) there are roadside ditches in the built-up areas to carry away water that has run off from the land.

The original hardwood forest cover of sugar maple, beech, white oak, hickory and basswood has been entirely cut over and the good clay and clay-loam soils cleared of brush for farming. A small amount of depressional forest, mainly elm, white ash and white cedar have remained where the depressions were not cleared for mill ponds. The other forests were cut down for the timber trade in the early nineteenth century and the land has been kept cleared.

The climate is typical of Southern Ontario. The climate, in conjunction with the fertile soils, has been favourable for mixed farming, with grains and cattle. The study area is stone-free with no rock outcrops. Distance from markets has dictated the exact use of the farming land.



Fig. 2 The flat land of the Peel Plain is broken by the forested Don Valley in the background.



Fig. 3 A new road cut shows the stone-free clay parent material and soil that is characteristic of most of the area.

Thornhill and Richmond Hill differ greatly in the amount of slope of the land. The main branch of the Little Don River runs through the centre of Thornhill. This river valley is very much deeper and wider than farther north in Richmond Hill (see Contour Map). The deeper valley in the south has provided good sites to dam the Don River and harness its water power for mills. All the land around the slight eminence of Richmond Hill is fairly gently sloping. This did not give as good mill sites but instead the land was cultivated close to the village. Around Thornhill there is flat land to the west, south-west and north-west. Between the two villages there is much gently sloping land with no large mill sites. This land was used for farming.

SOIL MAP LEGEND

SOIL TYPE MAP SYMBOLS AND ACREAGES	CASHEL clay Cac -	PEEL clay Pec -	MALTON clay Mac -
COLOUR			
PARENT MATERIALS	Stonefree lacustrine clay over gritty clay till at depth of 3 feet or less.		
DRAINAGE	Good	Imperfect	Poor
TOPOGRAPHY	Smooth moderately sloping.	Smooth gently sloping.	Smooth very gently sloping.
SURFACE STONINESS	Stonefree.	Stonefree.	Stonefree.
SURFACE REACTION	Neutral.	Neutral to slightly alkaline.	Slightly alkaline.
GREAT SOIL GROUP	Grey-Brown Podzolic.	Grey-Brown Podzolic.	Dark Grey Gleisolic.

ONEIDA Clay loam Oc -	CHINGUACOUSEY clay loam Che -	SMITHFIELD clay loam Scl -	SIMCOE clay loam Sic - silt loam Sis -
Dark yellowish brown, shaly calcareous clay till. Lacustrine, grey, calcareous, clay or silty clay.			
Good	Imperfect	Imperfect	Poor
Smooth moderately sloping.	Smooth gently sloping.	Smooth gently sloping.	Smooth very gently sloping.
Few stones.	Few stones.	Stonefree.	Stonefree.
Slightly to medium acid.	Slightly acid.	Slightly alkaline.	Slightly alkaline to moderately alkaline.
Grey-Brown Podzolic.	Grey-Brown Podzolic.	Grey-Brown Podzolic.	Dark Grey Gleisolic.

BOOKTON sandy loam Bos -	BERRIEN sandy loam Bes -	BOTTOM LAND Variable B.L. -
Sandy outwash over calcareous clay till at depths of 3 feet or less.		
Good	Imperfect	Variable
Smooth gently sloping.	Smooth very gently sloping.	Variable.
Stonefree.	Stonefree.	Stonefree.
Slightly acid to neutral.	Neutral.	Variable.
Grey-Brown Podzolic.	Grey-Brown Podzolic.	Alluvial.



Fig. 4 Erosion on a road-side embankment. This is not common on the grass-covered fields. Note size of rills in relation to cigarette package in the centre.



Fig. 5 A stand of trees in the south-west of the area. This block is privately owned and shows a natural bush.

CHAPTER III

THORNHILL

A. HISTORY PRE-1945

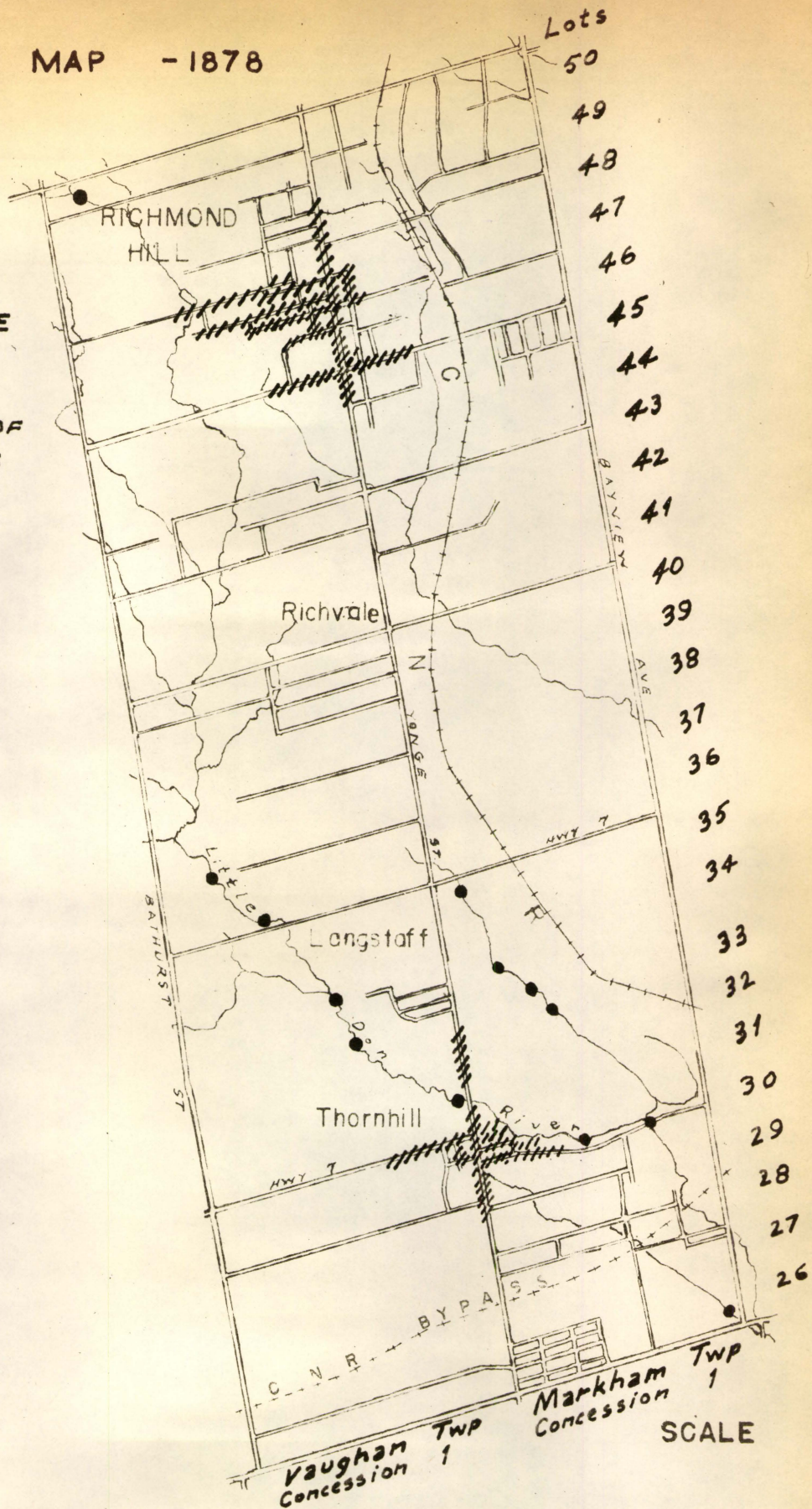
About 1790 the area from Thornhill to Richmond Hill was completely forested mainly with hardwoods. It was in this year that pioneer settlers began coming into the area. Inducements to United Empire Loyalists from the United States were offered by Governor Simcoe. A party of 60 German families led by William Berczy was among the first to respond to offers of free land. Berczy's party settled, in 1794, on the Rouge River to the east of Thornhill. There, at a place to be called German Mills, Berczy built saw and grist mills. Although they were located to the east of Thornhill the settlers crossed the area which later became Thornhill. With all their supplies loaded in wagons they journeyed through the bush north from York then turned eastwards to their settlement. There were no roads but the trails that they cut through the barren wilderness later were made into roads; the trail northward became Yonge Street and the eastward one was St. John Street (now John Street in Thornhill).

THORNHILL To RICHMOND HILL

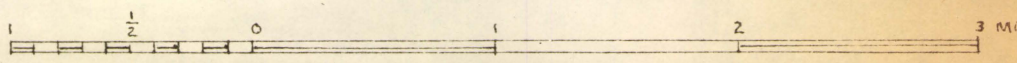
HISTORICAL MAP - 1878

LEGEND

- MILL SITE
- //// SETTLED AREAS OF VILLAGES



SCALE 1:50,000



The rivers and creeks were obstacles to settlement to the pioneers. The Don and its tributaries were probably of much larger volume in the 18th and 19th centuries than they are now. They were very difficult to cross; there were a great many sawmills and other mills erected on them. It was known that Atlantic Salmon ran in the rivers. Because the area was in virgin forest then there was probably greater runoff in the river channels than now; also, there is a great deal of water used from wells at the present time which formerly would have run off the land.

By 1850 there were thirteen grist and twenty-four sawmills in Markham Township, with about eight of these sites near Thornhill. In Vaughan Township twelve sawmills, seven grist mills and three distilleries were built on the Don and its tributaries. About half a dozen sites were in the Thornhill area. All the mills utilized the water power of the Don. The greater number of mills in Markham Township indicates the better mill sites there than in Vaughan Township to the west, since the river valley is deeper and wider.

One of the most important sites was that of the first sawmill built in Vaughan Township by John Lyons in 1801. It was built on the main branch of the Little Don where Yonge Street crosses it at Thornhill. In 1802 Lyons built a grist mill with a dam over 200 feet long and 10 feet high. The pond thus formed was almost a quarter of a mile long and covered the area now used for golf greens by the Thornhill Golf and Country Club. Other mills were added at this site and later the property was bought by a Mr. Parsons and his brother-in-law



Fig. 6 The Don River flows under Yonge Street and past a golf course where once stood the biggest mills and mill pond in the area.



Fig. 7 Another section of the Don Valley where a mill pond once stood close to Bayview Avenue. This is now used as pasture land.

Mr. B. Thorne. They built a new flour mill and a tannery in 1830 and did a very good business until Thorne failed financially in 1847.

The village was named Thornhill for Mr. Thorne when he applied to the Government for a post office to be located there. Previously the village had been known as Atkinson's Mills, Lyons' Mills and Purdy's Mills. The fact that the village name included the word "mills" tells of the supreme importance of the mills to the early community. That the mills were built in such abundance attests to the fact that Thornhill had many excellent mill sites. The river has an average gradient of about 40 feet to a mile yet the river bottom is fairly flat and wide at this point. Because there was abundant milling activity there was probably agriculture and forestry to support most of the mills from the time they were built until the end of the 19th century. Raw materials were available all through the townships, hence the scarceness of mills north of lot 36 implies that the rivers are smaller there as they are today. Thornhill, with all its mills, was the milling centre and people came with their wheat from miles around to have it milled.

Thornhill was the only community in the south of the study area. Because Mr. Langstaff, who built a steam sawmill and planing mills (at Langstaff Road), belonged to the English church in Thornhill we can infer that Thornhill was the most important village in the study area apart from Richmond Hill.

The township lots were surveyed early in the 19th century. The survey pattern was a grid pattern laid over the whole of each

township regardless of slope. On these lots there soon was built many farmhouses, except in the river valleys. Some of these good houses are still standing and they can be seen from Yonge Street. Since Yonge was one of the only early roads (and the first north-south road) many of the houses were built near that street. The fertile flat lands east and west of Yonge were cultivated.

In 1849 the crops grown in Markham and Vaughan Townships were very comparable in amount (see Appendix B). In that year it is evident that wheat and oats were the two most important crops. Wheat was the dominant single crop. By 1881 oats and barley had surpassed the other crops in importance and root crops were being grown in larger quantities. Although wheat did not decrease appreciably in actual cultivation it declined considerably in relative importance of crops.

Between the time that the first settlers arrived and the present there were a number of periods of immigration to the area. After the United Empire Loyalists came from the United States there was a period of settlement by soldiers and half-pay officers of the Napoleonic War. There was a fairly complete settlement of the land.

Thornhill was prosperous from the start. Its mills were started in the first years and increased in number and output, especially between the year's 1820 and 1850. The exports of flour and wheat were sent to the growing town of Toronto. Wheat was shipped to the United States and a little was shipped as far as England. The most

prominent miller in the area was Mr. Thorne, who became wealthy by shipping flour to England until 1847 when his business failed.

The importance of wheat and flour milling decreased from 1845 until 1860 when the export of wheat virtually ceased. By then a shift had been completed to mixed farming and dairying. The reasons for this decrease in export of grain are:

1. England removed its former preference for Canadian wheat.
2. Competition for wheat production for export grew in other parts of Canada (the Prairies).
3. The Canadian National Railways line bypassed Thornhill entirely. (This is the line through Concord. See Map 6.)

Between 1849 and 1881 agricultural production increased in the townships. In Thornhill there was some hardship for the village changed from a milling centre to a small farm-service centre. Despite the presence of good agriculture in the vicinity there is very little flat-lying land closer than half a mile to the early site of the village because of the steeply sloping valleys of the Don River System nearby.

The population of Thornhill remained stationary at about 700 from about 1860 to the end of the 19th century because the village had as its main function the servicing of the local farms. The few stores that existed then show that this function was not very prosperous.

After the turn of the century, until 1928, there was a boom in the farming of alfalfa. This was the last boom in agricultural staples for the Thornhill area. Since then the whole study area has become a part of the milkshed of Toronto. The expanding city of Toronto needed



Fig. 8 A home classed as R1, on a very large lot, near Thornhill and Bayview Avenue.



Fig. 9 An R2 home in Thornhill. Note that this area has water, but there are no sewers; ditches line the roadside.

milk and the well-established good road network of the study area allowed easy trucking to the city.

After 1896 a few commuters moved into Thornhill from Toronto. They used the radial line streetcar railway that was built in 1896 from Toronto to Lake Simcoe. This line went out of service in the late 1940's to be replaced by the bus and the automobile.

B. HISTORY POST-1945

The Second World War had been a period of increased production. After the war came a period of prosperity when people could make use of the improvements in motor vehicles (and the greater supply of gasoline) to travel greater distances to their jobs. A great influx of commuters to the area began in 1946. This influx was the start of the present period of land use in the study area. Homes have been built by commuters as the land to the south in Metropolitan Toronto has become built up. This is the period of influence from the City of Toronto.

The homes in the Thornhill sub-area reflect the period in which they were built. Most of the pre-World War II houses date from the previous farming periods. Since the war, with the great influx of commuters, the landscape reflects the suburban aspects considerably more than before. The change from a rural community into a suburban area is evident in the entire study area (see Appendix C).

Most of the homes built in Thornhill since 1945 are along new streets in new sub-divisions for the commuter class. The houses on Thornbank Drive, which have helped to set the pace as first class homes, were all built during the commuter rush to Toronto's suburbs.

The first house was built on that street in 1938 but most have been built since 1946.

Thornhill is situated on Yonge Street which is a central and accessible route to Toronto. Yonge Street, at this point, crosses the scenic valley of the Little Don Valley providing good building sites for first class homes around the river valley and gullies. With moderately sloping land at the tops of the valleys there is good drainage of the soil. Large and expensive homes can be built on large lots. These types of homes are the ones that constitute the new R1 class of houses that are seen in the north-east of Thornhill. Since Thornhill has much sloping land near the river valleys, with a core of first class homes already built, Thornhill is a good potential residential area.

The industry of Thornhill has been virtually non-existent for 100 years. From 1800 to 1860 there was an industry based on lumber and agricultural products. When the land had been cut over, when the wheat was no longer profitable, and when the rivers in the area decreased in volume this type of industry came to an end. Industry in Ontario changed; it came to depend on the railways and highways and it began using fuels and hydro-electric power instead of water power. Thornhill had no railway line and there were no remaining local industries in the small village. Thornhill had no water mains or garbage collection until 1956 and has not yet any other method of sewage disposal than septic tanks. Consequently, Thornhill has not attracted any industry to the area.



Fig. 10 Thornhill High School. Only a few years old, it is already expanding.



Fig. 11 Thornhill United Church. This new building is representative of the growth in institutional construction that is proceeding.

Thornhill was incorporated as a police village in 1931, with a population of about 800. (Despite the unknown origin of the name, the "police village" was a common form of village formed in the early part of this century. It was an early form of local government designed to enable small communities to supply a limited number of the amenities which are not required by a purely rural settlement but are required by a community of over 500 persons, which is not solvent enough to incorporate.) Thornhill, like other police villages, is governed by an elected board of trustees who are responsible to the Townships of Markham and Vaughan for the proper running of the village. The police village has no direct power of taxation but receives monies from the townships for street repairs, street lighting and other services. In Thornhill the tax rate is lower than in the surrounding townships since the citizens pay only for their own roads and not for the township roads.

The fact that there was no industry has always been a major factor in the decision of Thornhill not to incorporate. If any incorporation were effected it would have to include an area large enough to accommodate sufficient industry to make the municipality prosperous.

Although there are now 1,050 people within the police village, there is a greater number living outside the village limits. Most of these persons receive mail at the village post office but are not in the actual police village. In the block bounded by Bathurst, Bayview, Steele's and Number Seven Highway East-Langstaff Road there are over

6,000 people. Only those within the limits of the police village receive the services provided by Thornhill.

It has been felt that this area would be convenient to incorporate as a village or town but in a study made in 1956 incorporation was found to be very uneconomical. There are enough residents but the assessment is out of the proportion necessary for an incorporated town. The 1956 figures for land use are shown in Table I. A very high expenditure would be necessary for the provision of urban services and this would not be done without an absurdly high mill rate.

TABLE I

USE OF LAND, 1956

THORNHILL			BAYVIEW - BATHURST - STEELE'S NUMBER SEVEN (EAST) BLOCK	
<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total Acreage</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>% of Total Acreage</u>
Residential	192.5	57.7	1101.1	27.5
Commercial	14.0	4.2	42.9	1.0
Industrial	1.1	0.4	26.7	0.7
Open Space	28.0	11.5	453.0	11.3
Public Land	10.4	3.1	178.4	4.4
Agricultural	36.1	10.9	1190.7	29.7
Vacant	12.2	3.7	840.9	20.9
Roads	28.2	8.5	179.4	4.5
TOTALS	332.5	100.0	4013.1	100.0

C. PRESENT LAND USE

Thornhill grew around a small core at the junction of Yonge Street and Centre Street (Highway Seven West). The village spread slowly out along the main streets so that there is now an older core along Yonge Street, west along Highway Seven and east along John Street. Some of the older houses were farmhouses but are now used for purely residential purposes. Much of the farmland has been subdivided and more is lying idle for future sub-division. Because of more legislation regarding sewage and lot size sub-divisions are not being built upon at the present time. The trustees are interested in attracting industry to the area before it is completely built up as a residential area.

In the Thornhill sub-area there is much land that is used for other than urban purposes. To the south and west there is still some land being farmed. Some of this will probably be sub-divided for residential purposes. The C.N.R. has bought up land around the railway line being constructed and this will probably be zoned as industrial land. There are three golf clubs in the sub-area, which use mainly the valley lands. Much land is held by the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation (of Toronto) and a Roman Catholic cemetery. The Shouldice Hospital is located at the north rim of the Don Valley on the land of



Fig. 12 These stores make up the greater part of Thornhill's shopping facilities. The centre is at the main intersection of Thornhill.



Fig. 13 These three stores have all recently closed down because of lack of business. They are situated directly across Yonge Street from the other stores but they have too limited parking facilities.

a former estate. The Heintzman Farm, just north of the Ladies Golf Club, has just been sold and is open for development as residential land. The sub-divisions that are already built on are on the flat land mainly to the west of the core south of the Don Valley.

Although Thornhill has a variety of land uses the village is mainly residential. Some commercial (shopping) facilities exist in the police village mainly at the intersection of Yonge and Highway Seven, the old village core. These are in a precarious position financially. The local business is small and three stores were forced to close down in the summer of 1961. The vacant stores, although they were constructed only a few years ago, have not been re-occupied. The lack of parking facilities is probably most responsible for the poor business.

Thornhill has a Farmers' Market fronting on Yonge Street, with adequate parking space for many shoppers. Customers come from three or four miles around to the market. Every Saturday farmers come from the surrounding area and from as far away as Schomberg, Aurora, Elgin Mills, Richvale, Maple and Buttonville.

In 1948 Vaughan Township stated in its plan for development that it was desirable to maintain a low density of population throughout the township with portions having a greater density as the trends became more clearly defined. The township is rural, where the type of development will not require the provision of public waters or sewers by the municipality. Thornhill does require these public facilities



Fig. 14 Thornhill Golf Club is well known for its good course and well-kept appearance. This is one of three golf clubs in Thornhill.



Fig. 15 With the valley behind and a sub-division to one side this orchard has limited use as a township park.

but at the present has to rely on the townships to provide them or on the developers of sub-divisions to install them.

According to D. W. Little, for a town of over 5,000 people, in which complete urban facilities are expected, the minimum proportions of industrial and commercial land uses necessary are: 18% industrial, 28% commercial; also, there should be: 32% residential, 2% open land, 10% public land and 10% roads. Thornhill's land uses are not in this proportion; there is not enough industrial, commercial or public land. Thus, if Thornhill is to be a stable urban community its largest problem is how to convert the unused and agricultural land into those uses that are presently lacking.

Space still exists for residential growth but in the future there should be much more commercial and industrial land than there is now. The logical location for industry in the vicinity of Thornhill is the small belt adjacent to the Canadian National Railways' trunk line that is being constructed north of Steele's Avenue. This belt is the best location because the railway line will supply transportation and also because the industry can be separated from the residential areas by a small greenbelt.

Even though Thornhill desperately needs more industry and commerce there is very little space for these land uses where the quality of housing in Thornhill would not be adversely affected. Sometimes the conflict between residential land use and other land use flares up. In 1961 plans for the construction of a large discount

department store south of the Catholic cemetery were halted by a court decision. It was decided that besides not planning good traffic access to the store parking lot from the main streets, the store would have an adverse affect on the good quality housing in the district. According to one planner, Mr. Falludi, "Thornhill has very great potential as a high class residential area and the effect of this discount store would be to put a blight on the village".

It is still felt that incorporation is not advisable, at least not for the police village. But if there is to be planning for the future, a more rational distribution of land uses is necessary. Because projections of the future suggest that the area will be a suburban development in conjunction with Metropolitan Toronto, Thornhill should be thinking of providing the necessary urban facilities.

Thornhill has had great changes in its history. It was first a prosperous milling centre, then a poor farming service centre. It is now a suburban residential section. Because Thornhill developed at an intersection of roads around Yonge and John Streets and Highway Seven, the core of the village, and the local stores, sprang up at the intersection. Growth has occurred in all directions but the largest sub-divisions have been in the north-west, west and south where flat land is more abundant.

Because Thornhill is a police village it is considered part of the townships. The Markham and Vaughan sides of Thornhill are united in community spirit and actions, however, much more than the areas outside

the police village. The trustees of Thornhill are concerned with the whole village and thus are able to co-ordinate the plans of both townships.

CHAPTER IV

RICHMOND HILL

A. HISTORY

"Richmond Hill stands on an eminence overlooking richly cultivated land. It is situated on Yonge Street about 16 miles north of Toronto." This is a description published in 1885 in the History of York County. Now Toronto is much closer to Richmond Hill and the village has grown to become a large town of nearly 17,000. The northern edge of Metropolitan Toronto is only about 4 miles to the south and Thornhill is 3 miles south on Yonge Street. The town is situated in the centre of very fertile country and Richmond Hill has always been a centre of agriculture. The village became essentially a farm service centre for these surrounding farmers.

In the early 19th century a settlement sprang up in this location and it was first named Miles Hill, then re-named Mount Pleasant. If the early names of Thornhill emphasized the mills in that area these early names stressed the slight eminence above the Don Valley. The village received its present name in 1819 in honour of a visit by the Duke of Richmond, the Governor-General of Canada. A small

log school house was built in the village in 1810 and a Presbyterian Church in 1819. Richmond Hill was a pleasant village that was already growing well.

In the early 1800's land was cheap beside Yonge Street and houses sprang up along the street. Yonge Street itself was only a newly-surveyed "bush track" for foot and horse travel in the year 1800. Contributions were given to make Yonge Street a good road.

About 1850 a daily stage coach ran to Richmond Hill from Toronto. This coach was drawn by four horses for the strenuous trip up the road at Hogg's Hollow (now at Highway 401 and Yonge Street) and the horses were changed at Thornhill. From there northward only two horses were used to pull the coach. Thornhill had one or two hotels but Richmond Hill seemed even more prosperous. At this time there were at least five hotels in Richmond Hill, as well as some local industry; there were two carriage makers, some sawmills, flour mills and a tannery. There were also a number of general merchants and shopkeepers. Judging from the number of shops in the area there probably was more commerce with the surrounding area than Thornhill had at the time. In 1849 the village formed an Agricultural Society, which is one of the oldest in Canada.

Because its prime function was to service the rich agricultural land around Richmond Hill the village gained a stability that Thornhill did not have. Thornhill was probably more prosperous in its boom periods because of the number of excellent mill sites that it had. But when the mills became less profitable Thornhill did not have the solid



Fig. 16 Part of the main street of Richmond Hill, showing the type of stores there.



Fig. 17 The modern shopping plaza in Richmond Hill. There are stores ranging from groceries, hardwares, to clothing and specialty shops.

basis of service to fall back on that Richmond Hill had. The latter had at no time as many mills as the former but it had a more stable and longer lasting basis of commerce and local industry. This basis has lasted to the present day so that Richmond Hill has become a well-rounded town, whereas Thornhill is mainly residential.

In reports of the history of the study area there is a reference to a hurricane in 1878. This produced a great flood which washed out the dams around Thornhill. There is no mention of any damage around Richmond Hill since the Don Valley that far north is shallower and smaller, thus less conducive to flooding. Also, there are fewer good mill sites such as Thornhill possessed.

In 1869 Richmond Hill was described as a flourishing village with a population of about 900. Richmond Hill was incorporated as a village in 1872. It had not changed much in shape since its earliest years; it was a long straggling place with the houses spread mainly along Yonge Street instead of grouping around a centre. In 1881 an accurate count of the population showed 867 people living in the village. In 1885 there were about 900 residents.

In 1872 there was little industry in the Richmond Hill sub-area except the mills that were soon to close down and the carriage makers which did not last much past 1900. In the early part of the 20th century the C.N.R. built a railway line through the area. Before that time, however, the closest line was the one through Richmond Hill Station (Maple) about 3 miles to the west of the village (see Map 6).

In the last ten years Richmond Hill has encouraged the establishment of industry, mainly in a planned belt through the eastern sector of the town adjacent to the newer C.N.R. line. The industries can choose their means of transport, either road or rail. The light industries, in small factories, prefer road. Most of the industries in Richmond Hill are subsidiaries of large companies and are oriented toward Toronto. They are not local industries but are branches of companies that have moved out from Toronto to the suburbs. Richmond Hill still has much vacant industrially zoned land which will be built on within a few years, if the rate of growth of the last five years continues.

The figures in Table II show the assessment of Richmond Hill. Residential land use pays the major portion of the assessment but the commercial and industrial land uses are increasing. For a proportionate division of assessment it is desired that industry will pay more than it now does. When all the industrially zoned land is occupied the desired ratio of assessment division will be more nearly achieved (see Map 7).

Richmond Hill has expanded greatly in the recent years, especially since 1953 when 1,000 acres was annexed from Markham Township. There has been an increase in population in that time from 2,500 to the present 16,095. The rapid expansion has caused many problems to the town and it is now striving to increase its services and industries in a manner proportionate to the population increase.

TABLE II

RICHMOND HILL - ASSESSMENT OF LAND USE

Item	1957	% of Total	1960	% of Total
Population	10,932		16,095	
LAND USE				
Residential	\$17,766,290	85.0%	\$23,644,050	79.85%
Commercial	2,245,040	10.8	4,673,498	15.85
Industrial	768,385	3.7	1,240,765	4.2
Public Utilities	110,292	.5	27,535	.1
Total Taxable Assessment	\$20,890,007	100.0%	\$29,585,848	100.0%



Fig. 18 Ratcliff's of Canada, maker's of copper and brass strip. This is one of the largest plants to have located in Richmond Hill in recent years.



Fig. 19 A freight train passes a plant and open fields zoned for industry.

Table II shows that there has been a slight increase in the percentage of industry in total assessment. The town invites the investigation by industries of "an ideal geographic location in a receptive community".

To answer the demand for more water the town has supplemented its waterworks plant (built in 1921) with a 500,000 gallon elevated tank which is near the new sub-divisions on the east side and the the industrial area. Richmond Hill gets its water from four deep wells.

The town has been able to deal with its sewage since a disposal plant was built in 1951 and enlarged since then to service the large new sub-divisions and industrial plants.

Because the town now has adequate services, including water, sewage, good roads, etc. and available land with good transport, it is attractive for the location of new industrial plants.



Fig. 20 There are whole blocks of duplexes like this in the north-east sub-division of Richmond Hill.



Fig. 21 Only a few apartments have been built in the area; they are all about this size and most have only one or two buildings in the same locality.

B. LAND USE

The town grew around the main thoroughfare of Yonge Street and has only recently spread out. The newest sections are those east of the C.N.R. line. Here sub-divisions have been built on and they appear to be quite carefully planned. New schools and churches have been built in the residential areas. There is a narrow greenbelt separating the new eastern residential section, Beverly Acres, from the industrial section of Richmond Hill. But with the new type of factory being built for light and medium industry the appearance of the industrial area should be tidy, with green lawns and modern brick buildings.

The old residential area around Yonge Street is still in very good condition with no semblance of a slum area. The old section extends to the west along Mill Street where an old mill pond still exists and where the old waterworks is. Originally there was more village development to the west of Yonge Street, possibly because there was more milling there than to the east of Yonge.

Now development has been greatest to the east of Yonge where the land is slightly flatter. The C.N.R. line through the eastern part of the town has speeded the development of that section. It has been natural for industries to build near the railway. The newest sub-divisions, between the industrial belt and Bayview, have been completed very recently.



Fig. 22 A new Roman Catholic Church built in an area of new homes.



Fig. 23 A public school in Richmond Hill near new homes and the industrial section. The new water storage tower appears in the background.

This location of new housing was probably chosen instead of a location west of Yonge because of the slightly greater importance of Bayview as an artery than Bathurst. However, the situation of this residential area near Bayview has meant that there is easy access to the area.

Two new shopping plazas have been completed within the last four years in Richmond Hill. One of these is on Bayview, near the south-east corner of the town. The other is on Yonge Street, near the northern boundary of Richmond Hill. These stores offer a complete selection for the local residents and people living outside of Richmond Hill who come to the town to shop. There are many small shops along Yonge Street in the town but these stores are not as prosperous as those in the plazas. Richmond Hill and Thornhill have this point in common, that the shops along Yonge have insufficient parking facilities. Also, shoppers often prefer to patronize the plazas where there is a greater variety of shops within easy walking distance from a single parking lot.

Since the closest large towns (Maple, Aurora, Unionville and Markham) which offer similar shopping facilities to Richmond Hill are all at least three miles away it is probable that many rural dwellers who live between these towns and Richmond Hill come to Richmond Hill to shop. Thus, the shopping area of Richmond Hill is considered to be far larger than the study area. In the future Richmond Hill's function as a rural regional shopping centre may increase. Richmond Hill has always been a service centre but it has now begun to cater to the needs of the suburban dwellers also.

Although the trade area of Richmond Hill extends far outside the study area the boundaries of the study area were not moved out to include this trade area. Richmond Hill, with 16,095 residents, has a much higher population density than has the rural land surrounding it. The town, although probably more important now than in the past as a rural service centre, depends yet more on its suburban dwellers for its prosperity. As time passes the town is becoming even more urbanized. It is the study of its urban aspects that is emphasized here and at the present time only the study area is becoming urbanized. (Future studies may show that the surrounding rural land will become urbanized, yet there is no way to predict when this will occur and the extent of land involved.)

With the increase in population the amount of local traffic through the town (especially on Yonge Street) has become very heavy. The rush hour traffic gives the main street a thriving appearance but this is somewhat deceptive. The need for adequate parking facilities has arisen in the "downtown" area and there is a need for re-development of the stores there. Richmond Hill has a progressive attitude regarding its problems and planning, however, and the town (with its planning board) is striving to create a well laid out town with a welcoming appearance.

Roads and the railway seem to be most influential in the distribution of land uses in Richmond Hill. The original village was laid out along Yonge Street and has expanded mainly along the main roads and streets. The C.N.R. line has provided an attraction to build factories near it, for easy rail transportation. The eastern sub-divisions,

which were in the 1,000 acres annexed in 1953 from Markham Township, have developed as a separate part of the town from the old centre. They have done so because the whole section was built oriented inwards and because the industrial belt acts as a barrier to complete unity of the old and new sections of the town.

Although the residents of Richmond Hill are largely commuters, like those of Thornhill, Richmond Hill has grown to be much larger than Thornhill. This may be attributed to Richmond Hill's greater stability than Thornhill's in the past. This stability made possible more complete urban functions. When the railway was built through Richmond Hill this town had a very great advantage over Thornhill since it had transportation facilities for industry. Also, the terrain around Richmond Hill is flatter than in the vicinity of Thornhill. On this flat land development of industry was easier than in Thornhill. Thornhill may have a higher proportion of first class homes than Richmond Hill (where the first class homes are also in the valley sections west of Yonge) but Richmond Hill has become a thriving town with prospects of greater prosperity in the future, when more factories are built.

Richmond Hill will undoubtedly grow larger and expand its boundaries outward. Open land now exists in all directions but the town will probably expand north and south first since Yonge Street will remain the main transportation artery and the land along that street will have the highest land value. It is probable that the farmland south of Richmond Hill will be built up within the next decade.

CHAPTER V

THE TOWNSHIP SUB-AREAS

A. LANGSTAFF-RICHVALE

Langstaff-Richvale is the sub-area between Thornhill and Richmond Hill (see Map 2). It is classed as a separate sub-area because its history is distinct from Thornhill and Richmond Hill and it is not part of either at the present time. Instead, Langstaff and Richvale both are parts of the townships. This sub-area was part of the farmland around the two villages that furnished the village industries with raw materials and bought the goods sold in the villages.

The terrain is gently to moderately sloping in the sub-area with the steeper valley of the Don cutting into the western section. The land slopes up gently to the north and it forms a transition between the steeply sloping valleys of Thornhill and the slightly flatter land of Richmond Hill.

In the time of World War I some houses were built in this sub-area along streets running west from Yonge. These homes were built on farmland just south of Richmond Hill and immediately south of Richvale Road. Generally, these older homes are classified as R3 and R4 dwellings



Fig. 24 Originally all the land was good farmland like this.



Fig. 25 As seen from Yonge Street, the David Dunlop Observatory. Note the mixture of unused land, farmed land and houses along main roads.

and they have given the whole area an aura of shabbiness. Recently there have been many homes built along these same streets and in the surrounding area. The aura of shabbiness is being dispelled somewhat by the newer homes, which are in the area of R2 and R1 quality. Most of the best quality homes are in the one large sub-division which is located near the valley west of Yonge Street. This land is moderately sloping, with good drainage, on which it is profitable to build and sell expensive homes.

Aside from the suburban homes spread along the streets in the sub-area there are other land uses. Along Yonge is a mixture of highway commercial establishments, industrial factories and old homes. There are a few farms remaining but much of the land that is now farmland will be built up in a few years (see Map 7). However, most of the land marked on Map 8 as open space is being used for pasture and very little is unused in anticipation of development. The Don Valley sections in the west are the largest wooded sections but some sections of the valley have been cleared and are used as pasture.

One complete block is taken up by the Jail Farm. This farm was used during the Second World War as a prisoner-of-war farm, and subsequently as an Ontario Hospital. Recently the buildings have been unused but the land has been farmed by the neighbouring farmers. It has the appearance of being the best cropland in the sub-area, with very large well-tended fields. The land is quite flat but well drained.

In 1961 the sale of the 700 acre Jail Farm was approved. The Markham Township Council has outlined the land use division that is

desired (see Map 7). The Department of Highways will take 50 acres for the construction of a new highway north of Number Seven East, to be called Highway 404. This will be built across the study area, proceeding west near the Langstaff Road. Of the remaining land, 550 acres will be zoned as industrial land and 100 acres as residential. Some highway commercial land may be zoned, also.

The township is aware of the need for enough commercial and industrial land to help pay for urban services in the sub-area. When water mains are installed the area in the east will be opened for industry, which will use septic tanks or temporary sewage disposal plants. Until industries are established no application for residential land will be accepted in the Jail Farm area.

Some of the block to the north of the Jail Farm is occupied by the David Dunlop Observatory. Also in this block is some farmed land, commercial land, industry and houses. The homes were built sporadically, mainly along the road north of the Observatory running from Bayview to Yonge. These are old small dwellings on quite large lots.

South of the Richvale Road, east from Yonge, there are a number of streets along which exist old and new houses. The same type of homes are built on the streets south of Highway Seven east of Yonge.

The Langstaff-Richvale sub-area has a mixture of many land uses and is still in a state of change from the old uses (predominantly farming with some residential) to a suburban area with all the urban land uses. It has not yet been built up completely nor is there a feeling of unity among the citizens of the sub-area. Also, no section



Fig. 26 This house in the Richvale area on Bathurst Street is classed as R3. Many of the homes have large fields or gardens nearby.



Fig. 27 In Richvale there are many classes of homes intermingled. This R4 home is on a corner opposite a sub-division of mixed R1 and R2 homes.

is a part of Richmond Hill or Thornhill. Each small section of residential land is a neighbourhood but they do not yet fit together in a community. The sub-area is divided by the townships which border on Yonge Street and which do not plan the adjacent areas in the same manner. It is important that this sub-area be developed as a unit, if possible, with the desired end result in mind (see Map 7).

Most of the sub-area is gently sloping, with a part of the Don Valley in the western section. Since industry is essential to the sub-area's proper development, the ideal area for industrial land is in the flat section near the railway line and near the future Highway 404, i.e. the Jail Farm. Only one area has first class homes and that is the sub-division west of Yonge on the hilly and scenic land around the rim of the Don Valley. There will undoubtedly be more sub-divisions in the future and these will include good quality homes near the Don. But, some land must be left for recreational space and public park lands. There is much open space left in the sub-area presently and it may be presumed that there is no need for concern about adequate park land. But, the open fields will someday be sold and the entire sub-area will be built up with suburban homes, stores and industrial factories. At that time open space for parks will be taken or will be too costly for the municipality to purchase. There must be action soon for the danger of filling the sub-area too full is present.



Fig. 28 The Concrete Block Company in Richvale. This is one of the older plants in the area on Yonge.



Fig. 29 The Selkirk Sub-division opposite Thornhill near Bayview. Some of the houses were started but the whole plan has been left to rot due to inability of the sub-divider to continue.

B. THE STEELE'S SUB-AREA

The Steele's sub-area is between Thornhill and Metropolitan Toronto. It is a new and rapidly developing section that is joining to and filling the empty spaces between Thornhill and Toronto. It contains no incorporated town or village but is like the Langstaff-Richvale sub-area, in that it is governed by the townships.

There is one core of older homes, in Doncaster, which is immediately south and east of Thornhill. This section contains some buildings that are thought of as belonging to the police village, although they are outside the village limits, notably the Thornhill High School and Thornhill United Church. Because the area immediately around Thornhill is so close to Thornhill, both in proximity and in community spirit, some of the Doncaster area has been dealt with in Chapter III.

The exact boundary between the Thornhill and Steele's sub-areas is too nebulous to show accurately since the latter area shows affinity to both Thornhill and Toronto. As more people move into the sub-area and it becomes completely built up this affinity may serve to unite Thornhill and Toronto somewhat. At the present, however, it is still separate from both.



Fig. 30 Open space near Steele's Avenue. This land is awaiting the building of the C.N.R. line on it and probable industrial zoning.



Fig. 31 The new Government Employees' Discount Store on Yonge, seen across vacant land to the east of it.

The Don Valley runs through the eastern part of the sub-area and the rest of it is moderately sloping to flat land. It is also like the Langstaff-Richvale sub-area in that it was an area of farmland outside the early village of Thornhill. Its suburban growth is fairly recent and there has been no real core around which the sub-area developed. In fact, the Steele's area has been more recently developed than the Langstaff-Richvale sub-area.

Steele's Avenue, west of Yonge, has various land uses along its north side, including homes, churches, the Bell Telephone Company and open space. Yonge Street also has varied land uses, mainly commercial and residential.

The block west of Yonge has a simple land use pattern: residential and farming. However, the C.N.R. line which is being constructed through the sub-area will make a more complex land use. The land around the right of way will probably be zoned as industrial land.

Since Doncaster is an older residential section most of the homes are now R3 quality. This section can be distinguished on the land use map (Map 8) from the surrounding newer homes. Those houses in the south-west corner of Markham Township are fairly new. Near the Don Valley are some homes in a very new sub-division, most of them completed in 1961. They are very good quality homes but the lots are small and close together so they are classed as R2. Generally, the section north of Steele's and east of Yonge is an excellent residential area, partly because of the proximity to the valley and sloping land.



Fig. 32 A new R2 home in the Steele's area.

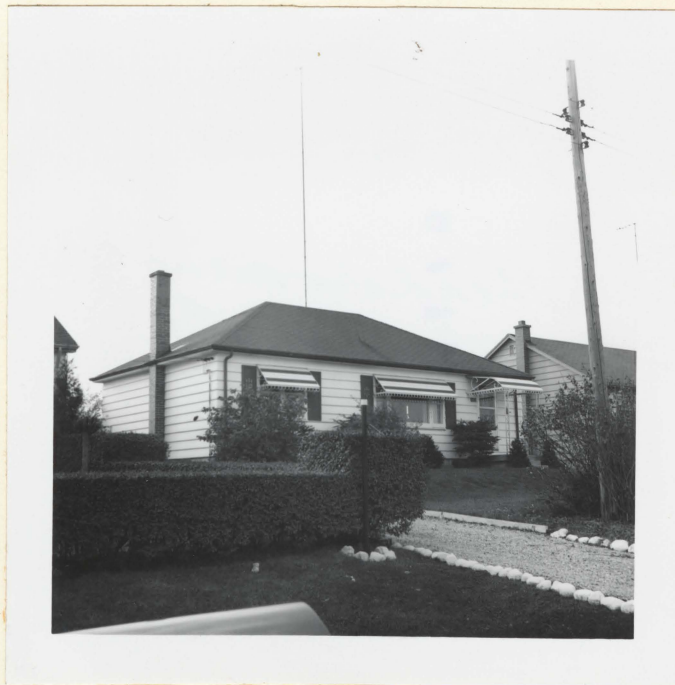


Fig. 33 A typical R2 home in the Steele's area,
a few years older than the one above.

A large Government Employees' Discount Store has just been built south of the railway beside Yonge Street. Across Yonge Street is a Loblaw's chain store. Both of these stores have large parking lots and they seem to be prosperous.

Future developments are likely to include industrial land and residential land but it is doubtful that much of the land will be used for plaza-type commercial land use. The reason for this is outside the study area; there is a large plaza located on the south-west corner of Yonge and Steele's. Except for the greenbelt zoning of the bottom lands of the Don Valley there is no space set aside for park lands. The lack of public open space is not yet a problem but it can soon become a problem when the sub-area is completely built up.

Even though the larger and presently less-developed sub-area of Langstaff-Richvale will have more future urban development than the Steele's sub-area both of the sub-areas are important to the future of the study area. When Richvale and Langstaff are built up they will form a link between the old villages of Thornhill and Richmond Hill. The Steele's sub-area will complete the urbanization of the study area, providing the link between Thornhill and Toronto. The manner in which these newer sub-areas are developed will in large measure determine whether or not the study area will become the unified urban community that it might become.



Fig. 34 R4 home between Steele's and Thornhill, in the Doncaster area. This is an older section which is now being met by the expanding new sub-divisions.



Fig. 35 This R1 home was just completed in the sub-division near Steele's and Bayview. The Don Valley makes an ideal setting for good quality homes.



Fig. 36 In Doncaster the land is unused or in scrub in a tributary of the Don Valley.

CHAPTER VI

YONGE STREET AND THE REGION

Yonge Street, one of the first surveyed roads in the vicinity of Toronto, was used as a base-line for surveys made of the Townships of Markham and Vaughan. Since 1800 it has been used as the main artery to the City of Toronto from the north.

In the early days towns located on the existing major transportation routes. For Thornhill these were the Don River (somewhat) and Yonge Street; for Richmond Hill, Yonge Street was the main route. Later routes were constructed through each of the villages: Highway Seven runs through Thornhill; Vaughan-Markham Road runs to the east and west just south of Richmond Hill.

The original settlement of the area was east and west from Yonge Street. Yonge continued to be the main access route to the settled areas and the main communication means for them, even though the dwellings on either side of the street were in different townships. Much growth has occurred since the early days of Thornhill and Richmond Hill but Yonge still serves as the main transportation route for the study area.

By making the township boundaries on an early road the townships were able to obtain a prominent boundary. The townships are governed from a central position, however, and are concerned with the over-all functioning of the municipality. In the 1800's probably nobody thought that one day the periphery of each township would be the area with the most growth in the township; that Toronto would extend its influence so far northwards along Yonge Street.

Yonge Street has been the unifying factor for the concessions on either side of it because of its importance as a transportation and communications route. The heavy traffic on this highway (Number 11) has seemingly made it difficult to cross on foot. But Yonge Street is still the unifying street in the study area since people do cross it, especially in the old villages where the villages were built around Yonge Street.

Some changes have occurred in the last decade. Highway 400 has supplanted Yonge Street as the main through highway north from Toronto. Yonge Street, however, still has much traffic but this is more than ever local traffic. There are many commuter cars travelling north and south on Yonge and local industries use Yonge as a trucking route to Toronto.

The newer sub-divisions are using Yonge Street less as a communications artery now but Yonge is still the major access route for these new sections. New homes are being built near Yonge but not along it. The new sub-divisions are planned neighbourhoods with twisting streets (and a minimum of grid-pattern through streets) that face inwards to the sub-division core. Schools and shopping plazas are being built



Fig. 37 Yonge Street is a four lane highway through most of the area. The speed limit is 30 in the two towns and 40 or 45 the rest of the way. Here it passes the intersection of Highway Seven West, in Thornhill.



Fig. 38 The new four lane bridge just completed over the C.N.R. trunk line route.

in easily accessible locations within or near the sub-divisions instead of along Yonge Street.

Examples of this new street pattern can be found anywhere in the study area where new construction is proceeding. In Langstaff, Steele's and the eastern section of Richmond Hill there are good examples of sub-divisions being built near to but removed from the central arteries. In Richmond Hill there are homes built adjacent to Bayview but only the backs of the houses face Bayview; all of them front on inner streets. This fills up the lots but does not diminish the usefulness of Bayview as a transportation route. There is relatively little safety problem since the neighbourhood faces away from Bayview. This new aspect of planning will probably make more difference than just in safety. In a decade or so, if the area to the east of Bayview is sub-divided in a like manner to the section west of Bayview, the street will still be used as a regional artery. But the sub-divisions will not face each other; instead they will be oriented inwards. The effect will be to create two very distinct areas of residence, separated by a street.

A different pattern of growth may be expected if this new planning method continues. Besides the creation of distinct neighbourhoods, the access arteries will not be cluttered with strip commercial land uses. Large central shopping plazas with ample parking areas will easily supplant the stores that are spread along the main streets of the old villages. The trend is toward a neater cleaner type of development with access routes that are free of shops and other things which would ordinarily slow up the regional traffic.

COMMUTER TRAFFIC

Since there is so much concern about traffic problems that a secondary artery such as Bayview is kept free of homes there is an indication that traffic volume is expected to increase, or at least hold its own, in the future. Ontario is building many new highways out of Toronto to carry the heavy traffic. Some of the traffic is through traffic, some of it is truck transport but the major proportion is daily commuter traffic. It is estimated that about 80% of the people in the study area are commuters (see Appendix C). Many commuters travel in car pools since they can reduce the number of cars on the highway and cut down the cost of driving into Toronto to work.

Besides the automobile traffic the buses (run by the Toronto Transit Commission) carry commuters and shoppers to and from Toronto.

One aspect of commuter traffic that has been in the news recently is by rail. Metropolitan Toronto has a very extensive rail line network totalling 260 miles of track. With the two existing railroads there has always been the complaint that commuter trains do not pay their way because of the short distances involved, short hours of the use of trains and high labour costs. The most recent suggestion is that the Toronto Terminals Railway Company, which owns and operates

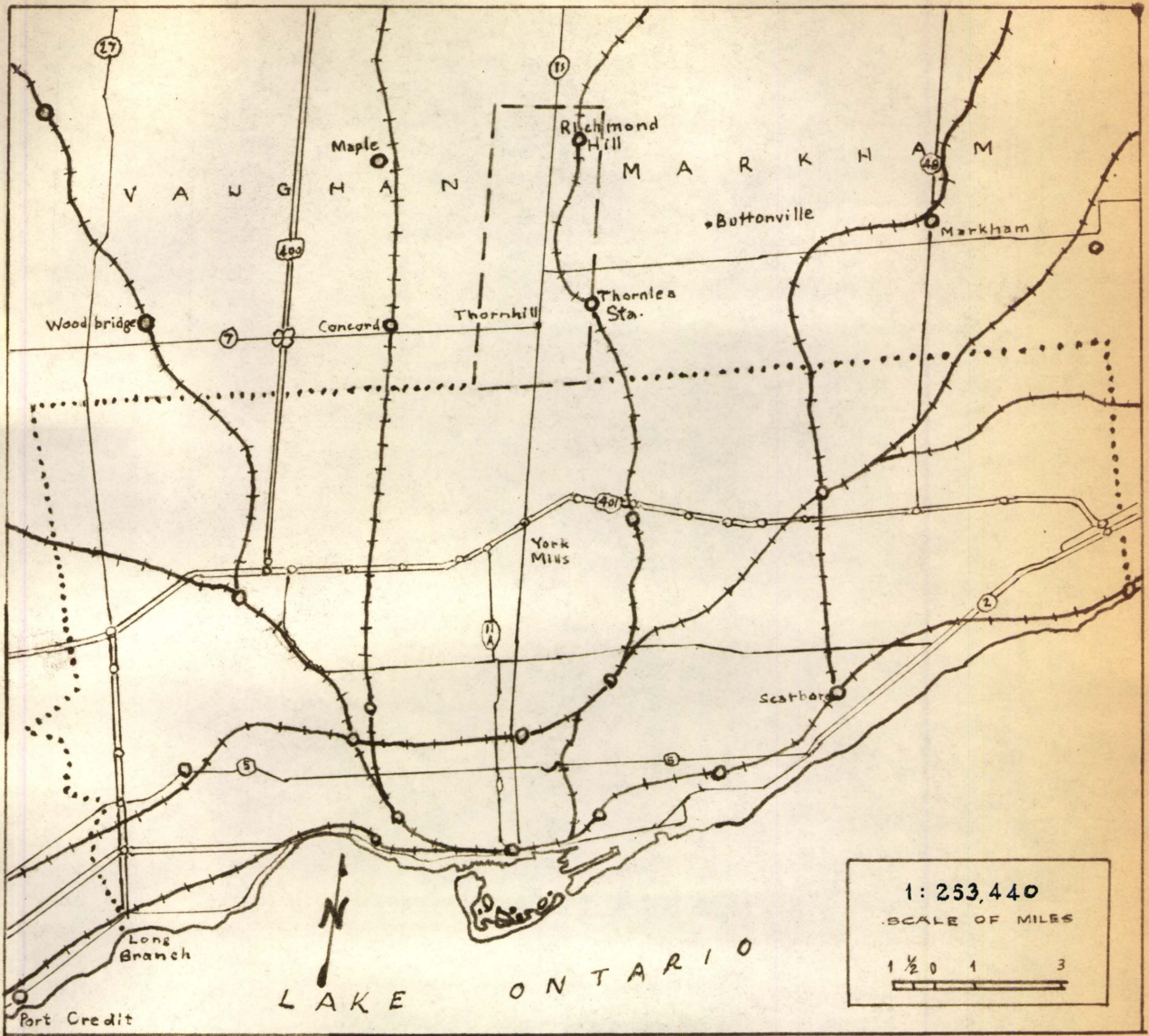
the Union Station (and can legally run a railway) be used to run a commuter service in the vicinity of Toronto.

If the Municipality of Toronto were to buy a partnership in this company they should supposedly be able to run trains on the basis of transit systems now in operation with much cheaper labour costs than long-haul railways. Initial costs would be relatively cheap, compared to Toronto's subways, since the tracks exist in radial pattern; only the coaches and a Centralized Traffic Control System would be needed. The plan is merely a suggestion and has not been tried yet.

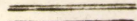


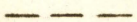

If the plan were tried successfully it would be the answer to Toronto's transit problem. Not only would it have an alleviating effect on the heavy downtown traffic but it might change the orientation within the suburbs. In that case there would be more emphasis on the railway stations and somewhat less on the main through streets. There would be parking facilities at the suburban stations for commuters. Thornlea, about a mile east of Thornhill and Richmond Hill, are two of these stations. If commuter rail service were installed these would be focal points for the surrounding residential areas, presumably leaving the main streets free for local and transport traffic. A secondary effect would be to place more emphasis on these new core areas and they would be subject to more rapid residential development.

There is no guarantee that a rail service like this would work out as planned nor that the commuters would be willing to use the service.

METROPOLITAN TORONTO AND VICINITY TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



LEGEND

-  **ROADS AND HIGHWAYS**
-  **RAILWAY LINES**
-  **RAILWAY STATIONS**
-  **BOUNDARY OF RICHMOND HILL-THORNHILL**
-  **METROPOLITAN TORONTO BOUNDARY**

It would be faster than travelling by car but people may not use it simply because they are used to commuting by car. Therefore, if the system is feasible, it would be wise to do some research and find out how many commuters would use it.

In the early days the main roads (notably Yonge Street) were used for occasional transportation to Toronto and as through highways. Now, the emphasis has changed to daily commuting to Toronto. Although the function of Yonge Street has changed, its importance is undiminished. The only real alternative to commuting via the main roads is by rail, and as we have seen, this is far from being established, if it will ever be done. The main roads, therefore, are expected to become busier and more important as the study area is built up more.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The study area may appear, at first sight, to be an area of land that has some built up sections and two towns surrounded by farmland. The study area has been examined in diverse sections. In this chapter the diversities will be summarized and the study area will be examined as a whole.

About 1800 two small villages were located on Yonge Street in the study area, Thornhill and Richmond Hill. These villages had different functions from the start; Richmond Hill was a farm service centre and Thornhill was a milling centre. After the middle of the 19th century Thornhill lost its prosperity while Richmond Hill continued as a prosperous shopping community. Gradually Richmond Hill grew large enough to incorporate as a town. Thornhill, still a small police village, had no dominant function except that it was a suburban residential area. The small number of stores in Thornhill have never been particularly prosperous and recently their financial position has become precarious.

Thus, Richmond Hill has grown larger than Thornhill because of its well-established function as a service centre. The presence of the

railway line through Richmond Hill is a factor in the greater industrial growth of that town compared to Thornhill. However, once the town was established its phenomenal growth can be attributed to the efforts of the town council to foster the growth of the town. In 1953 Richmond Hill had a population of 2,500, which is only a little larger than the population in the vicinity of Thornhill. In that year Richmond Hill annexed 1,000 acres of land from Markham Township, which is most of the land east of Yonge Street. Thus, in the last ten years, the eastern section of Richmond Hill has been sub-divided and built upon and a belt of land has been zoned for industry. By concerted efforts to expand Richmond Hill has increased its population to nearly 17,000. Thornhill, since it lacked a true service centre, could not afford to incorporate.

It has been shown that Richmond Hill and Thornhill have some essential contrasts. Richmond Hill is a growing town, separate from the townships, with many more commercial and industrial facilities than Thornhill. However, many of the residents of Richmond Hill are commuters, as indeed they are throughout the entire study area. The other sub-areas, Langstaff-Richvale and Steele's, differ from the town and village in that they are governed purely by the township councils. They have become built up more than a hundred years after the villages and they are even yet both urban and rural in nature. Steele's differs from Langstaff and Richvale in its orientation. Langstaff and Richvale are situated between Richmond Hill and Thornhill and their future growth is expected to link them to these towns, especially to Richmond Hill, the fastest growing town. Steele's is oriented more to the north part of Toronto since it

is a continuation of Toronto northwards. Also, the commuters living in Steele's travel daily to the south and less frequently to the north.

Markham and Vaughan Townships have had differing effects on the patterns of development in the study area ^{(omit} (see Maps 7 and 8).) Yonge Street has been the boundary between the two townships as well as the access route for the concessions on either side of Yonge. Although the residents of the study area are oriented towards Yonge, the pattern of urban land use has developed in a different manner on each side of that street. Especially in the sub-areas of Richvale-Langstaff and Steele's, sections have been sub-divided on one side of Yonge without regard to a continuity of residencing on the opposite side of Yonge.

The attitude of the townships towards zoning is also a factor in the differences apparent on opposite sides of Yonge. Markham has been progressive in its zoning policies and has zoned vacant land for urban uses, much of it industrial. Vaughan has not re-zoned much of its land from the present agricultural land use. However, the policies of zoning are dependent on other factors, such as the topography of the land and the size of lots as well as the desires of the township council. Vaughan has the Don Valley running through the section west of Yonge Street. The valleys that cut through Markham are much smaller in size than these and do not present as much of a problem for the zoning and development of large tracts of land that lie across the valley. In effect, therefore, the Don cuts Vaughan into more sections than it does in Markham. Markham has an advantage for over-all zoning since much land is in large lots. The Jail Farm has recently been zoned for complete development. There

is a large sub-division in the Heintzman Farm in Thornhill that is zoned as one residential unit (all the land between the Catholic Cemetery and the Ladies Golf Club). The general effect of the different patterns of development has been to give Markham a more urbanized appearance. Vaughan may achieve a like appearance if the agriculturally zoned land is re-zoned for urban uses.

The pattern of land use may seem somewhat strange when it is known that Metropolitan Toronto is directly to the south of the study area. It would be expected that the pattern of development would start at the south and progress northward with the result that the southern part would have the densest pattern of development. In the study area the densest section of urban land is in the north, in Richmond Hill, and the pattern of development seems to be spreading to the south.

It is known that Richmond Hill is a larger centre than Thornhill and that the other sub-areas developed somewhat independently of these centres. The commuter development is spreading south from Richmond Hill even though this town is farther from Toronto than is Thornhill, mainly because Richmond Hill can offer more urban services to its residents than can the other sub-areas. Richmond Hill can sub-divide its land and it can be built on easier than the land in the rest of the study area. Because of problems regarding types of sewage disposal, other urban services and lot size there is little sub-division being done in areas other than Richmond Hill at the present time. In time it is anticipated (see Map 7) that the whole study area will be developed.

TABLE III

SOURCE OF ZONING MAP

Markham Township:

Official Plan Map of the Markham Planning Area prepared in 1955.

Vaughan Township:

By-Law No. 2523, To regulate the use of lands in the townships, zone maps, prepared 1960.

Richmond Hill:

Zone Map, as ammended 1961.

There is some feeling that the zone maps, especially that of Vaughan Township, do not represent the final zoning of the area in its southern extremities. It is felt that the area around the new C.N.R. line, on which construction has only barely started, will be zoned as industrial land, especially that land owned by the railway beside its right of way.

The development of the study area for commuter suburban communities is the link between the sub-areas. Because of their different early settlement cores and growth the sub-areas have developed as separate and distinct units. But in the last decade the older sections have been integrated with the new ones and there is developing a pattern that is quite different than earlier.

Just as Willowdale (the northernmost part of Toronto) ten years ago had a sporadic development away from Yonge Street, and has since been filled in completely, so the area between Thornhill and Richmond Hill is starting to fill in along Yonge. Willowdale eventually spread across the concessions beside Yonge using Bayview and Bathurst as secondary access routes. Because the study area is farther north the built up area may not spread east and west; it may just continue to grow northwards and limit the extent of Toronto's greedy growth.

The most recent sub-divisions contain R1 homes. Richmond Hill has few of the best quality homes since the newest sub-divisions have included medium priced homes on fairly small lots. They have been built on rather flat land which does not seem conducive to the construction of the expensive homes. Also, it is too expensive for large lots to be made in a highly serviced area. The best quality houses are located in sections where the land is moderately sloping and where the lot size is large. The flat lands in Richvale and Langstaff have also not been conducive to the construction of expensive homes. The one area in Richvale with R1 homes is in a sloping section near the Don Valley. The other R1 sections have the same characteristics.

The Planning Director of Burlington, Norman Pearson, has said that the area around Lake Ontario, from Niagara Falls to Oshawa and as far north as Barrie will be one conurbation before the end of the 20th century. He designates this great series of cities as the "Mississauga Conurbation". It includes the area north of Toronto along Yonge Street and thus includes the study area as part of the urban developed area. The conurbation is proposed to include the area along Yonge Street but not much land outside the concessions on either side of Yonge.

Markham and Vaughan Townships each consider their first concession to be different from the rest of the township because it is built up and it has the priority in the township for the development of urban land. If the two first concessions, each thought of as being built up, were put together in one unit then the whole area would be able to develop in a co-ordinated (urban) manner. As it is the townships each cannot consider the policies of their neighbours too much. The question of sewage disposal is an example. Topographically, the study area drains through Markham Township via the Don River system. If each township installs its own sewage system one side of Yonge Street (Markham) will be serviced by a sewage plant while the other side (Vaughan) will have to pump its sewage against the slope through its own land. Both townships will have to make an agreement with Metropolitan Toronto for sewage so it would be desirable to co-ordinate the two halves of the study area into one unit now before urban services are installed.

Recently Markham Township has been considering sewage disposal for the southern part of the first concession. This would involve

linking into Toronto's disposal system at Steele's and Bayview. By paying a service charge (by volume) they would do away with the necessity of small expensive package disposal plants and also be able, in the future, to expand their disposal facilities.

Plans for sewage disposal are progressing slowly. Meanwhile, the lot size for housing is determined by the type of sewage disposal supplied. If the desire is to maintain a low density residential area it is accomplished by the fact that all of the sewage disposal (except Richmond Hill) is done with septic tanks. However, if industry is desired the lack of disposal plants is a deterrent to this industrial growth.

Each township has its own planning board and these are responsible to the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board. Both townships are within the Metropolitan Toronto Planning region. Since there is no direct co-ordination of the township planning boards, however, they each do not plan the study area with complete regard for the plans of the other.

The study area appears to be a unit growing in an urban manner. It is not yet a part of Toronto but because of Toronto's influence it is different from the surrounding rural land. Yonge Street has had a great influence on the area for it is along Yonge Street that Toronto has achieved its most spectacular growth. The strip of land along Yonge will probably someday be built up all the way north to Lake Simcoe.

To help the regional planning in the future "Mississauga Conurbation" this section of the urban land along Yonge Street would have to be incorporated. Since Thornhill is too small to incorporate it has

been suggested that the whole study area incorporate as a township in its own right. Better still, it might incorporate as a town. It is possible that Richmond Hill will expand southwards and eventually annex the whole study area. The resultant town would be fairly large (about 6 1/2 by 2 1/2 miles) but the population would be sufficient. Already there are about 26,000 people in the study area. A town of that size could act as a unit in planning its land use. It could obtain the necessary industry and commerce to pay for the urban services that it needs. These services would not be built until the study area were annexed by another town or city, possibly Metropolitan Toronto, and then the study area would be more fully built up and services harder and more expensive to install. The town could plan for the park space that its future citizens will need. Toronto now has a dearth of park space but there is no reason why Thornhill and Richmond Hill cannot plan ahead while land is still available.

All realistic projections for the future indicate that Southern Ontario will be the home of a gigantic conurbation. If each city, town or village within this projected conurbation keeps spreading outwards towards the others, with no regional planning or development, the result will be at best unsightly and at worst chaotic. The urban areas, besides creating urban sprawl are creating an "urban shadow". Much of the "urban shadow" will spread over good farmland. If a regional planning scheme were installed it could promote a well balanced and attractive urban growth, as well as conserving the surrounding good farmland. There is need of both of these aims in the study area as well.

It is up to the citizens of the area to ensure that Richmond Hill, Thornhill and vicinity will be a scenic nice-to-live-in community rather than a blighted extension of the arm of the monster "urban sprawl".

APPENDIX A

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

The particular land use classification used on the map was developed specifically for this study. Since the main interest is how urban land encroaches upon rural land, rural land use was broadly generalized into three categories: cultivated land, pasture and open (unused) land and woodland.

After reconnaissance it was found that the urban land use of greatest acreage is residential so this was given the greatest emphasis by dividing it into five categories:

- R1 - excellent housing on large lots.
- R2 - very good housing on medium sized lots,
 - good housing on large lots.
- R3 - good housing on small lots,
 - fair housing.
- R4 - poor housing.
- R5 - apartment housing.

In all cases age of the homes has a considerable bearing upon its class. There was consideration for the condition of repair of the house.

The houses were all classed individually by travelling in an automobile on every street in the area. Aerial photographs were used mainly in determining field and lot boundaries.

The residential land use classification is not one with very clear-cut divisions between categories but it does show the relative quality of the homes in the entire area.

Other urban land use classifications are: Commercial, including both highway and plaza stores; parks, which include golf courses (marked as such); open land, included in the rural open land section; industrial, of all sorts; institutional, including churches, schools, government buildings, public libraries, fire departments, etc.

ZONE MAP (1961)

LEGEND

ZONES

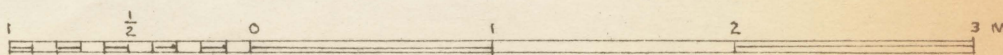
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL (LOCAL)
- COMMERCIAL (HIGHWAY)
- INDUSTRIAL
- PUBLIC PARK OR OPEN SPACE
- AGRICULTURAL
- GREENBELT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- PUBLIC OR SEPARATE SCHOOL
- ▲ HIGH SCHOOL
- + CHURCH
- ⊕ INSTITUTIONAL
- ++++ CEMETERY
- ⊕ HOSPITAL


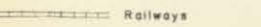
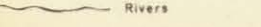
















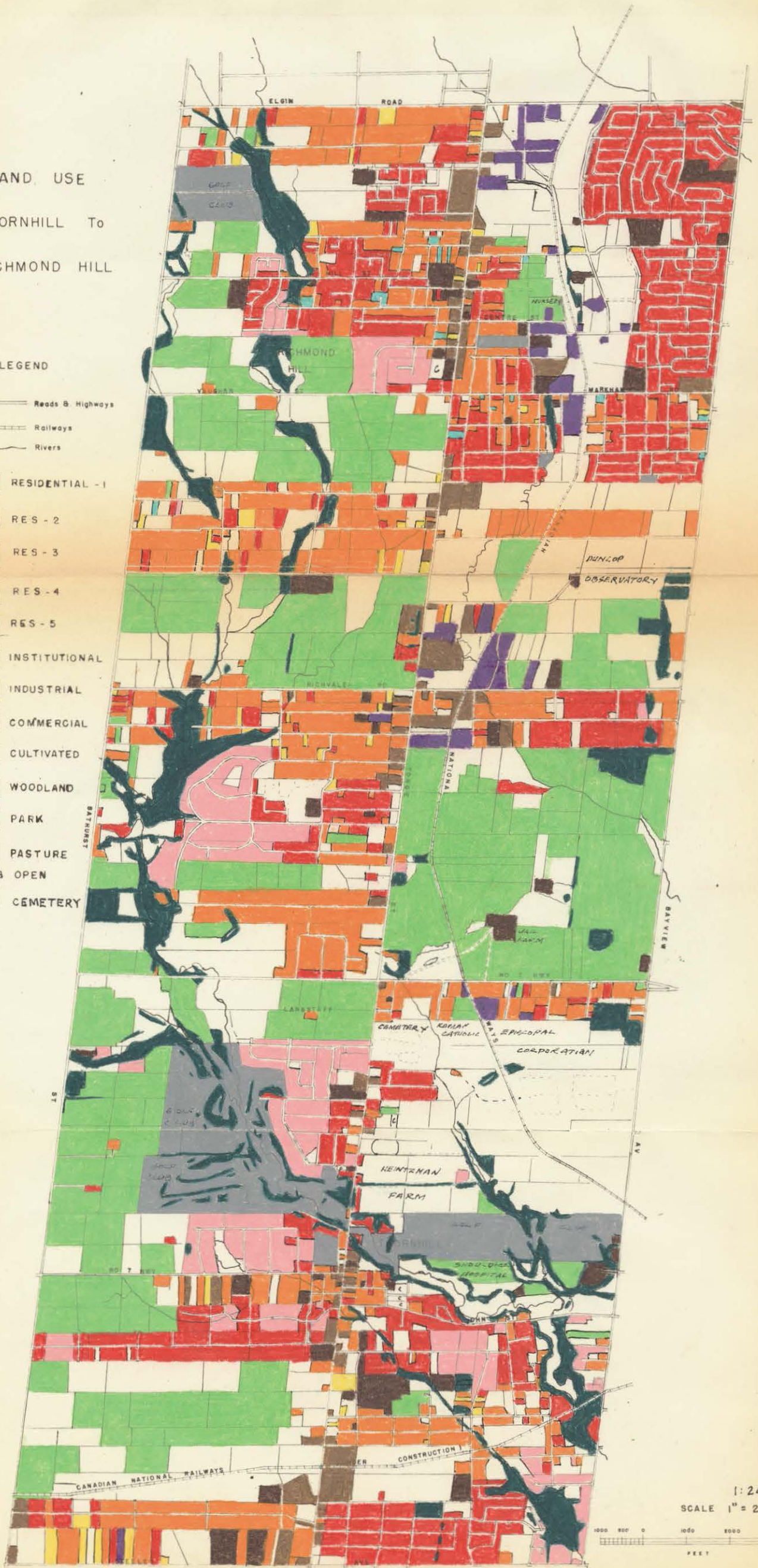
SCALE 1:50,000



LAND USE
THORNHILL To
RICHMOND HILL

LEGEND

-  Roads & Highways
-  Railways
-  Rivers
-  RESIDENTIAL - 1
-  RES - 2
-  RES - 3
-  RES - 4
-  RES - 5
-  INSTITUTIONAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  CULTIVATED
-  WOODLAND
-  PARK
-  PASTURE
-  B OPEN
-  C CEMETERY



1:24,000
SCALE 1" = 2,000'



APPENDIX B

CROPS AND CROP YIELDS IN MARKHAM AND VAUGHAN TOWNSHIPS

1849

<u>Markham</u>		<u>Vaughan</u>		<u>Crop</u>
150,000	Bushels	155,000	Bushels	Wheat
11,000		4,000		Barley
7,000		----		Rye
145,000		102,000		Oats
45,000		46,000		Peas
55,000		51,000		Potatoes
3,000		7,000		Turnips
3,000	Tons	----		Hay

1881

<u>Markham</u>		<u>Vaughan</u>		<u>Crop</u>
110,050	Bushels	152,996	Bushels	Wheat
199,181		149,795		Barley
271,851		242,483		Oats
55,954		75,283		Peas and Beans
10,280		----		Corn
89,671		103,622		Potatoes
122,312		32,890		Turnips
118,397		48,019		Other Root Crops
10,589	Tons	8,656	Tons	Hay



Fig. 39 This is the type of land that has extensive farming use in the area of Thornhill and Richmond Hill. It shows the increased use of land for oats and pasture.

APPENDIX C

To find how many of the people of Thornhill work in the area and how many commute a survey was taken. This survey was of 51 male adults living in the area. The method of sampling was to take all the members on the active list of the Thornhill Baptist Church, since it was believed that this would yield a representative sample of the population. It is supposed that religion has a negligible bearing upon the broad place that a person works.

This is a summary of the survey:

<u>Place of Work</u>	<u>Number of Workers</u>
Downtown Toronto	19
West End Toronto	13
Willowdale (Stores)	2
Willowdale (Teaching)	2
Students (Out of the Area)	2
Steele's - Yonge (Willowdale)	2
Thornhill	3
Richmond Hill (Teachers)	2
Richmond Hill	1
Retired	<u>5</u>
TOTAL	51

The total number of workers out of the 51 is 45. Of this number, 36 or 80% work outside the area, i.e., in Metro Toronto or to the west of that city. Also, 8 workers or 18% work in Thornhill or within the confines of the total thesis area.

These figures indicate the tremendous pull of Toronto on the work force of Thornhill and that the people here depend upon Toronto for their livelihood.

Besides using the index of the percentage of Toronto workers that make up the population of Thornhill there is another way to show the importance of Toronto to the citizens of the village. This is by comparing the spheres of influence of the various stores and services in the area and outside.

Newspaper coverage is a neutral criterion because most people receive at least two newspapers, usually one or more Toronto papers and a lot receive the Richmond Hill "Liberal". This latter paper is a weekly and it is sent through the mails to subscribers. The paper covers Richmond Hill news primarily but has sections for the other smaller villages around it. These areas are: Thornhill, Maple, Concord, Edgely, Temperanceville, King City, Oak Ridges, Lake Wilcos, Buttonville, Richvale, Victoria Square, Highland Park, Carrville, Langstaff and Thornlea. These centres are all serviced by volunteer correspondents to the newspaper.

This shows that all the small areas are serviced by this newspaper which concerns itself mainly with local news. There is no

conflict of areas of influence between this and Toronto papers. It is necessary for citizens to use both local and Toronto newspapers to get a full coverage so the two types of papers are more complimentary than in competition.

The two papers can be complimentary because of the distances involved. Although most people north of Thornhill strongly feel Toronto's dominant influence in some respects they are also local citizens. They moved into an area with some local history which was far enough away from the great city to keep that sense of individuality. Thornhill and the other sections which are farther away from Toronto have a small community feeling.

Stores and theatres can provide a criterion on which to base a study of the spheres of influence of local and outside services on Thornhill.

There is a great difference between the stores of Thornhill and those of Richmond Hill. The former are small in number, mainly local and "neighbourhood" stores, whereas the more numerous ones in Richmond Hill contain a large variety and stock of goods, able to service the surrounding population for most of their needs. Toronto exerts some influence on Richmond Hill in the same way that it does on Thornhill, i.e., the greater shopping in the large downtown department stores and specialty shops is for goods that are rare or expensive.

Thornhill citizens buy what they can in the village shops but most go to chain stores and larger stores for weekly or regular shopping. These latter stores are to the north and to the south, in Willowdale and

in Richmond Hill. Only in the last three years have many large shopping centres been built in Richmond Hill. Now, besides the fairly extensive strip commerce along Yonge Street there are two large shopping centres in Richmond Hill. These have succeeded in drawing a sizeable number of customers living to the south of Richmond Hill, who for a while patronized the shopping centres in Northern Metro Toronto. There is an ill-defined shopping boundary between those who go north for regular shopping and those who go south, which runs somewhere through the north of the Thornhill area.

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