

David Dunlap Observatory Lands

Planning and Conservation Management Study | Town of Richmond Hill
Official Plan Task Force





DAVID DUNLAP OBSERVATORY LANDS

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DAVID DUNLAP OBSERVATORY LANDS

PROJECT PROCESS

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Site Analysis

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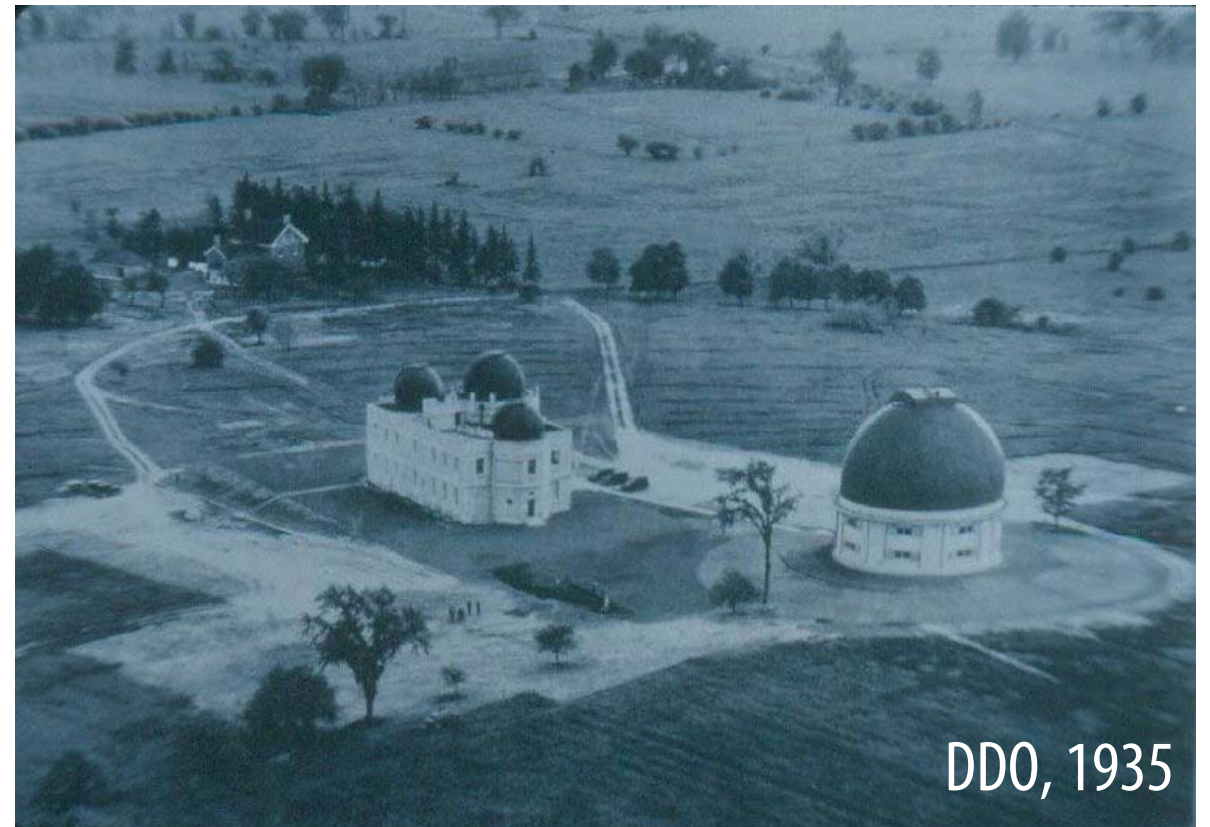
01 PROJECT PROCESS

David Dunlap Observatory Lands Planning and Conservation Management Study



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The Planning and Conservation Management Study articulates the Town's vision for the DDO Lands and enhances the regulatory framework guiding change on the site:

- By establishing a **Conservation Management Plan (CMP)** and implementation strategies for managing, maintaining and protecting the property's heritage attributes
- By developing a **Planning Framework**, informed by the CMP, that sets out a strategic direction for the site in future – one that will protect, enhance and celebrate its uniqueness and special value

01 PROJECT PROCESS

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Planning Framework

December 4th: the Town will release planning scenarios based on conservation management, planning and design principles

Stakeholders are invited to comment on the scenarios by email and letter before December 20th

January 18th: Town staff will present the Study's planning report and recommendations for the endorsement of Committee of the Whole

The Study's principles and guidelines will also be recommended for incorporation in the Town's new Official Plan

01 PROJECT PROCESS

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Conservation Management Plan

February 2010: The Study will present a detailed Conservation Management Plan that defines procedures for protection, maintenance and ongoing operation of identified heritage attributes into the future

The CMP will also:

- Provide the Town with criteria to evaluate the impacts of change on heritage resources
- Provide guidance relating to the treatment and monitoring of heritage resources, including rehabilitation and adaptive re-use

01 PROJECT PROCESS

David Dunlap Observatory Lands Planning and Conservation Management Study



Project Team

- Town of Richmond Hill
- planningAlliance – Land Use, Urban Design, Project Management
- Andre Scheinman – Cultural Heritage
- Dougan & Associates – Natural Heritage
- Poulos & Chung – Transportation, Transit
- AMEC Philips – Servicing, Stormwater Management



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02 SITE ANALYSIS

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To inform the planning vision for the DDO, we have assessed existing conditions in terms of:

- Cultural heritage
- Natural heritage and environment
- Transportation and transit
- Stormwater management and servicing
- Current formal and informal uses
- Urban context
- Town, regional and provincial regulations and policy direction

02 SITE ANALYSIS

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Key Considerations

The DDO Lands:

- Are private property
- Are zoned Institutional by the Town's Zoning By-law and Official Plan
- Are subject to the Heritage Designation By-law (By-law No. 100-09)
- Are located in the urban area of the Town of Richmond Hill, on a north-south arterial, close to Yonge Street
- Have a long history of institutional use and informal recreational use
- Include valued cultural heritage features and significant natural heritage areas

The current owner is likely to submit an Official Plan Amendment, Zoning By-Law Amendment and Plan of Subdivision in early 2009

02 SITE ANALYSIS

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Cultural Heritage

Designating by-law designates 51 ha (71% of DDO) as a Cultural Heritage Landscape (CHL)

Changes and alterations that impact upon identified heritage attributes or relationships require Council's written consent through the heritage permit process

Cultural heritage landscape defines the DDO as a unique landmark in Richmond Hill and GTA

Cultural heritage buildings continue to be used

Cultural heritage precinct can attract a broader constituency of visitors

02 SITE ANALYSIS

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Mapping Cultural Heritage

Protection areas ensure that both the designated attributes and the meaning and experience of the CHL as a whole is protected

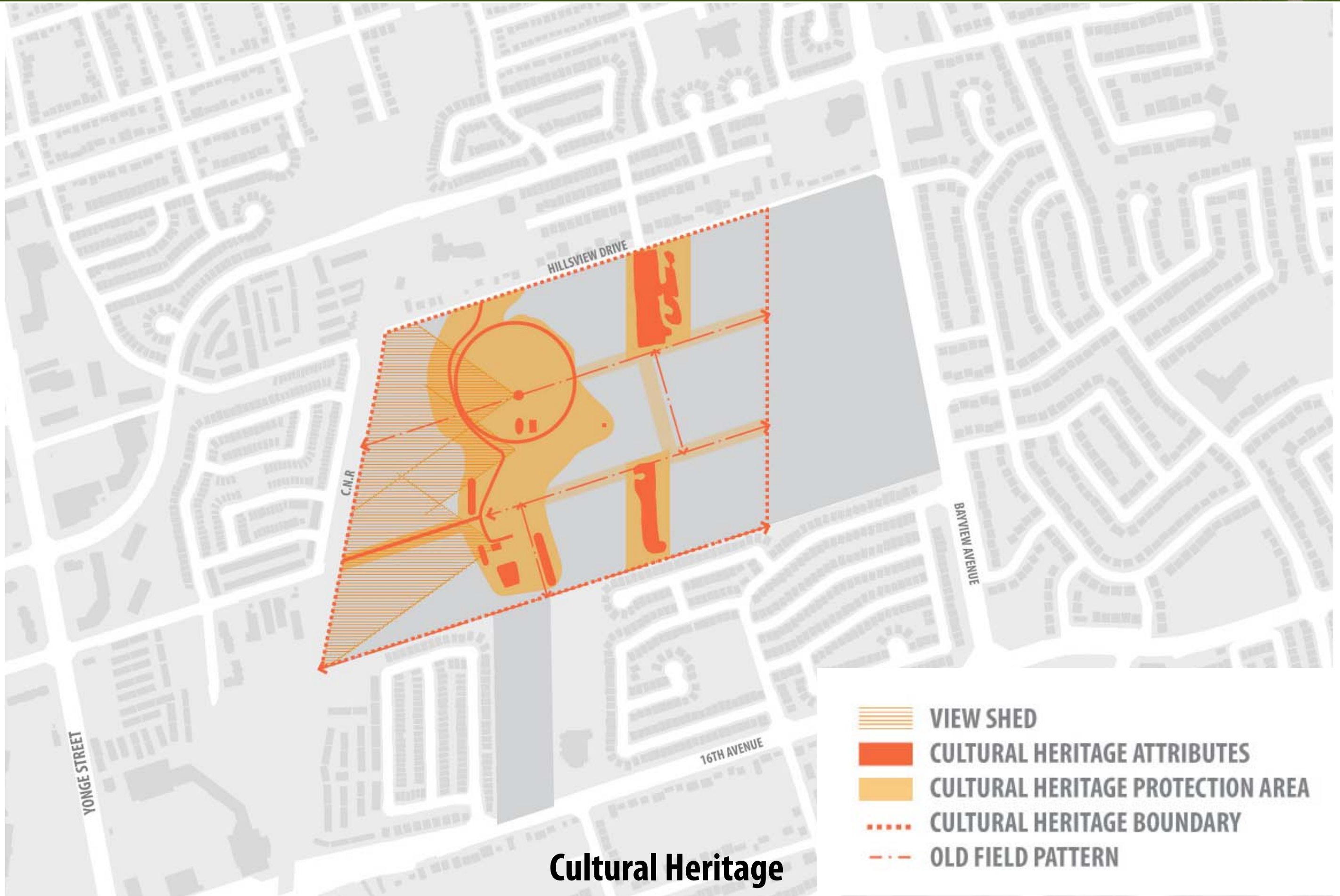
Buffers around vegetation elements of the CHL minimize impacts of new uses and enable appropriate transitions

Protected view sheds restrict visual impacts of new uses

Old field patterns should remain legible

02 SITE ANALYSIS

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02 SITE ANALYSIS

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Natural Heritage

Natural heritage areas also contribute to distinct feel and function of DDO Lands

Significant natural heritage areas plus important contiguous features

Animal movement corridor to German Mills system

Environment

High water table

Problems with stormwater run-off to south

Steep topography in NW corner

02 SITE ANALYSIS

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Transportation and Access

Bayview and Yonge are regional transit corridors

Traffic issues on Bayview

Hillview is undersized road

Limited options for additional signalized intersections on Bayview Avenue and 16th Avenue

Plantations prohibit 4-way intersection at Kirsten and Hillview

No road connections and only at-grade pedestrian crossings (incl. informal) across CN line

02 SITE ANALYSIS

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Urban Context

Low-rise residential neighbourhoods to north, east and south

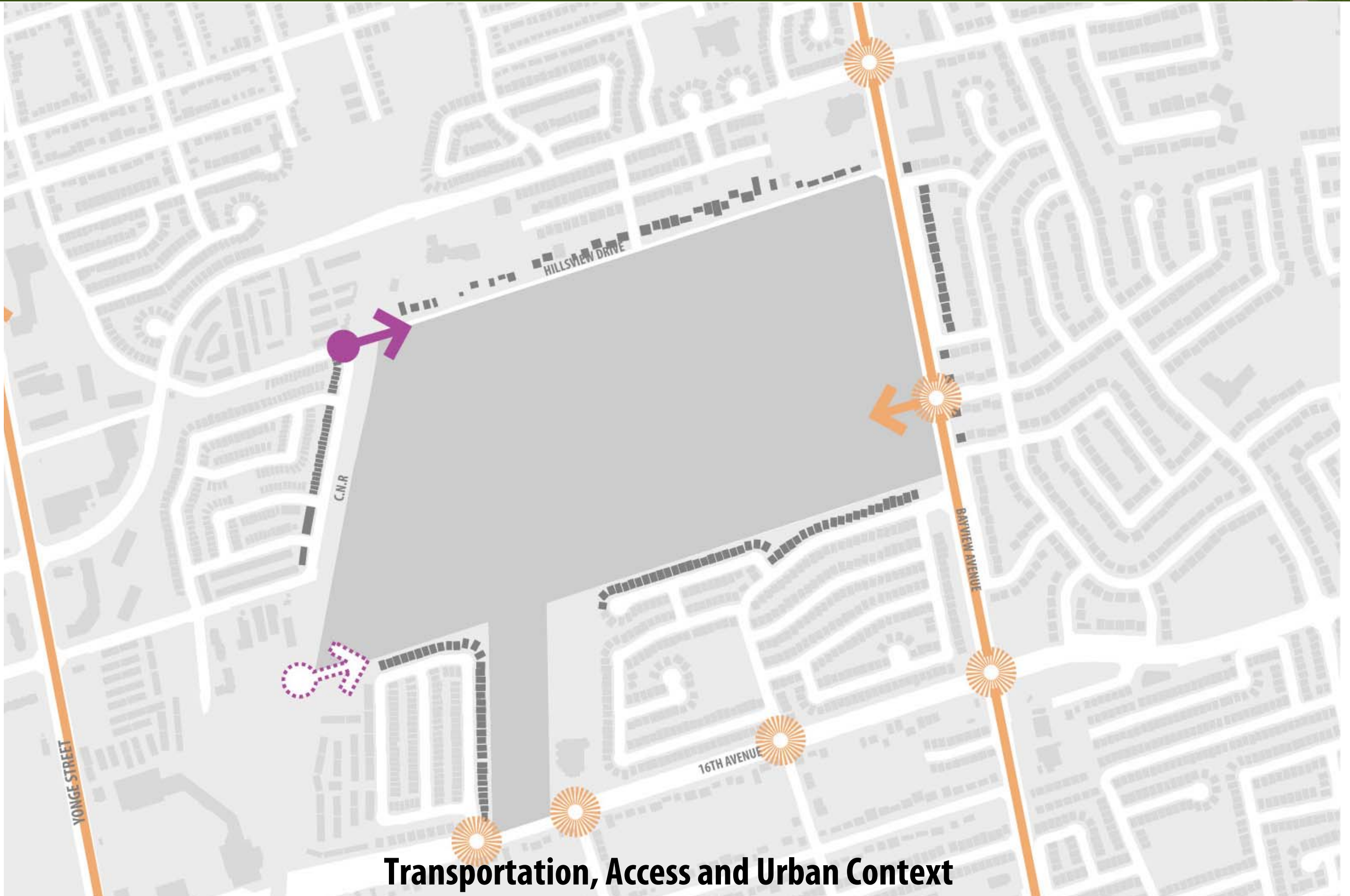
Proximity to Yonge street retail and high-rise residential neighbourhoods

Site of informal recreational use by Town residents and people across region

Unique treed edge on Bayview, contrasts with surrounding built-up form

02 SITE ANALYSIS

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Transportation, Access and Urban Context



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03 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Conservation Management Plan To Date

Undertaking a study of both the interiors and exteriors of the heritage buildings

Meeting with the telescope operator and former users of the Observatory to gain better understanding of the operational and maintenance needs of the telescope (and Observatory building) and the sensitivity of the telescope to light and heat pollution

Reviewing options for conservation and enhancement of the CHL's vegetative and land form features in collaboration with Consultant Team's natural heritage expert

Undertaking concurrent heritage review of Panhandle lands

03 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

David Dunlap Observatory Lands Planning and Conservation Management Study



Conservation management perspective has been the foundational element of the planning process

Scenarios reflect need to maintain the CHL in a tangible and legible manner

Considerations include:

- Identified heritage attributes
- View sheds associated with identified attributes and relationships
- Defining meaningful buffers for the key attributes
- Ensuring that the special sense of place is protected and enhanced

03 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Conservation Management Principles

To develop a plan that:

1. Embodies best current practices for the preservation of cultural heritage landscapes, conservation of heritage structures, planning and design
2. Ensures that the themes embodied by the CHL are preserved and remain clearly legible for the future
3. Ensures that the identified heritage attributes of the site are appropriately conserved and that their historic inter-relationship can continue to be clearly understood
4. Assists in ensuring that the buildings continue to be actively and appropriately used

03 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

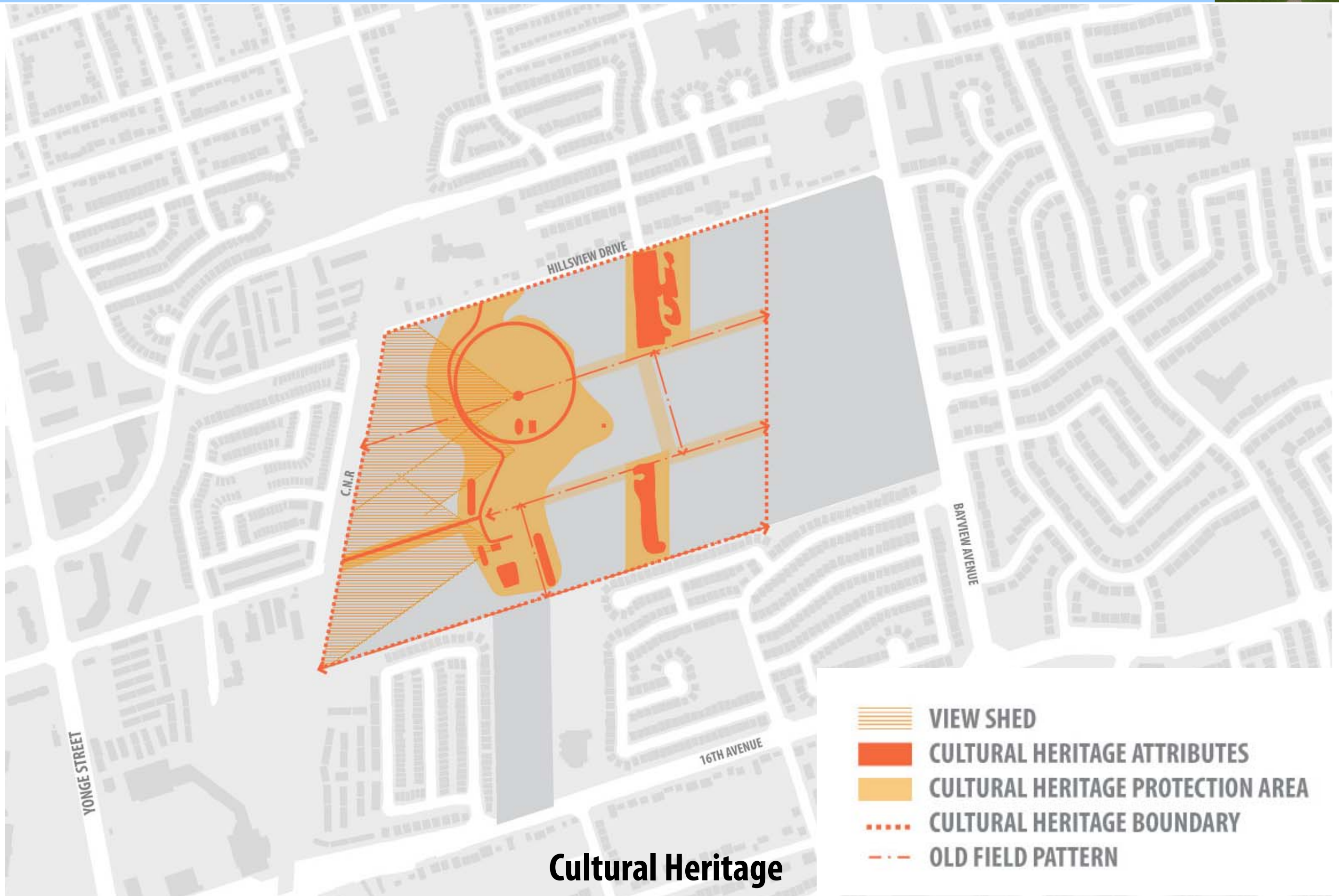
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5. Provides a realistic program for preserving/enhancing the landscape attributes of the CHL taking into account their inherent dynamism, transience and the potential impacts of various development scenarios
6. Emphasizes the opportunities for public access, public education and historic interpretation across the site
7. Describes and graphically demarcates the traditional view sheds to be preserved and/or restored
8. Integrates the cultural heritage component of the site with the natural heritage component where possible
9. Celebrates the uniqueness of the site

03 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

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04 PLANNING + DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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Cultural Heritage

1. Plan with conservation management at the core
2. Define a prominent, functional and accessible Cultural Heritage Precinct
3. Ensure implementation of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan
4. Promote continued and new uses that ensure viable and appropriate operation of heritage buildings
5. Protect designated and contemporary view corridors and relationships
6. Ensure adequate setbacks and appropriate spatial relationships are established between cultural heritage attributes and new uses

04 PLANNING + DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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Natural Heritage

7. Protect and link significant natural heritage areas
8. Protect connections to movement corridors and open space systems off-site
9. Capitalize on contiguous cultural heritage and natural heritage protection areas to form meaningful, protected, publicly accessible spaces
10. Enhance natural features to frame and protect cultural heritage attributes

04 PLANNING + DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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Good Planning Practice

11. Incorporate new uses that respect, are compatible with and enhance the cultural heritage landscape
12. Provide a built form and density consistent with the property's location in Town and appropriate to adjacent neighbourhoods
13. Plan for compact and complete neighbourhoods
14. Optimize the use of existing and new infrastructure

04 PLANNING + DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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Urban Design

15. Establish implementation strategies to limit impacts of light and heat pollution
16. Implement a high-quality urban design standard that complements the architectural and design legacy of the Observatory precinct and Elms Lea
17. Implement a high-quality urban design standard that integrates natural elements into areas of new use
18. Define a unique identity through gateways, views and well-designed public spaces

04 PLANNING + DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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Public Transportation and Access

19. Enable public penetration of the site with public trails and engaging streetscapes
20. Design a public realm that encourages activity and promotes public safety and security
21. Promote pedestrian and transit activity, including access to the Observatory and sites within the DDO Lands

04 PLANNING + DESIGN PRINCIPLES

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Servicing and Environmental Management

22. Implement exemplary management of environmental and servicing impacts
23. Manage stormwater and water table effects to mitigate impacts on site and in adjacent and downstream areas
24. Celebrate the DDO Lands as a special place for Richmond Hill and a model of conservation and responsible development



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Stakeholders are invited to comment on the scenarios by email and letter before December 20th

Public comments will contribute to the refinement of the scenarios, their evaluation and the selection of a preferred scenario

January 18th: Town staff will present the Study's planning report and recommendations for the endorsement of Committee of the Whole

05 NEXT STEPS

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Please visit www.richmondhill.ca/ddo for more information, updates and announcements

Project information will also continue to be made available through local news publications, by email and distributed as pamphlets