

urban Metrics

55 Busato Drive

Commercial Feasibility Assessment

Whitechurch Stouffville, Ontario

Prepared for **Sorbara/L&M G.P. Inc.**

October 8, 2026

urban Metrics

Sorbara/L&M G.P. Inc.

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October 8, 2026

Natalie Shurigina, RPP, MCIP
Manager, Development
Sorbara/L&M G.P. Inc.
3700 Steeles Avenue West, Suite 800
Vaughan, Ontario L4L 8M9

Dear Ms. Shurigina:

RE: **55 Busato Drive** – Commercial Feasibility Assessment (Whitechurch Stouffville, Ontario)

urbanMetrics Inc. is pleased to submit our report evaluating the market potential for commercial uses on your site at 55 Busato Drive in the Community of Stouffville. We find that, in general, the Site does not have the characteristics suitable for supporting commercial space, and that the needs of residents of the local area are being met through the existing live-work units on Tenth Line and through convenient access to established commercial nodes elsewhere in the Town.

It has been our pleasure to complete this report on your behalf. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rowan Faludi, RPP, MCIP, PLE, CMC
Partner
urbanMetrics inc.



Tywen Thomas, PLE
Associate Partner
urbanMetrics inc.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose & Approach

This Commercial Feasibility Assessment has been prepared to evaluate the feasibility of developing commercial uses on the property known municipally as 55 Busato Drive ("the Subject Site") in the Stouffville urban area ("Stouffville") of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville ("the Town").

This study evaluates the market potential for commercial uses on the site in the context of present and future demand for commercial uses within a defined Local Area and the Community of Stouffville, based on expected population growth and the supply of current and planned commercial uses. It also considers factors that impact how market demand translates into support for uses on the Subject Site, including site characteristics, travel patterns, and alignment with the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan ("the OP"), as well as the commercial-related background studies that informed the development of the OP.

1.2 Context

The property is approximately 2.45 hectares in size and was initially identified during the Plan of Subdivision process as a potential location for an elementary school. As such, it was not considered for residential or commercial uses and was left undeveloped, while the remainder of the subdivision was realized over several phases. Later, the local school board exercised its option to build the planned school on a different property in Stouffville. This left the site vacant and, to a degree, unplanned.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan was approved, with modifications by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing on September 25th, 2025. This Official Plan was initially required to align with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019 and the Region of York Official Plan, 2022. Subsequently, approval of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, required all new Official Plans to conform to the new policy framework set out therein.

The new Official Plan designates the Subject Site and the surrounding area as "Neighbourhood Area", although Official Plan Schedule "D" still retains a "Proposed

School" Symbol on the site. Section 2.1 discusses the implications of the Neighbourhood Area designation.

1.3 Site and Access

The site is situated on the west side of 10th Line on the southern boundary of the Town. North of the site, 10th Line is a two-lane Town Arterial road that connects the site to Main Street, about 1.5 kilometres away. To the south, 10th Line becomes Reesor Road, a two-lane paved rural road designated in the Town of Markham Official Plan as a Collector Road. Between the Town boundary and Main Street, 10th Line functions as a local serving road, with 40-kilometre speed limits, driveways connecting directly to the street north of Hoover Park, and layby parking near the site. South of the site, the land is part of the Oak Ridges Moraine and protected Green Belt lands, with no development potential in the foreseeable future.

Main Street, north of the site, is Stouffville's principal commercial street, containing the historic downtown and arterial commercial sites closer to Highway 48. At 10th Line and Main Street, several retail properties provide a range of convenience commercial uses, including food, health and personal services, a Shoppers Drug Mart, and a gas station, among others. Directly across the street from the Subject Site are two blocks of convenience commercial uses in a mixed residential format. These include a convenience store, a pharmacy, and personal and other services. As discussed later in this report, several of these commercial units are vacant.

From a market perspective, the Subject Site is not well situated to support retail uses. With no prospect of urban development south of the Subject Site, retail uses on the property would effectively draw from only half a trade area. To the west, an environmental corridor bisects the neighbourhood, limiting travel from that direction. The part of Stouffville where the site is located is also already built out, with new development confined mainly to the other side of the community, not near the site.

Stouffville is also relatively car-centric, with limited high-frequency transit connecting disparate commercial and residential areas of the municipality. Lower-density housing near the site lengthens walking distances, while driving times to other commercial nodes in the Town are very short. For example, the Shoppers Drug Mart on 10th Line is only a three-minute drive from the site; Downtown is a five-minute drive; while the Walmart on Highway 48 is under ten minutes. There are also commercial uses directly across the street from the Subject Site. In our

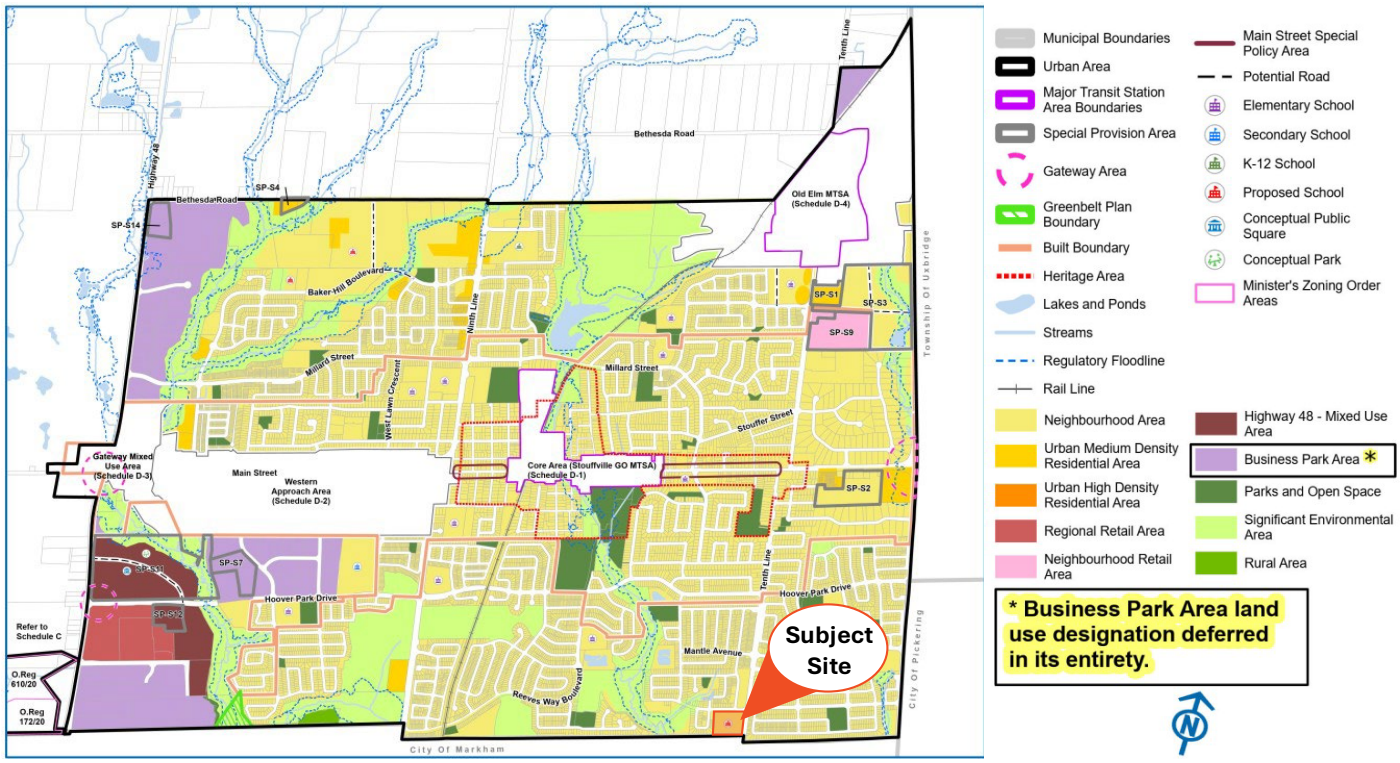
opinion, the neighbourhoods surrounding the site are exceptionally well served by existing retail uses.

In summary, the site is not well situated to provide for commercial uses because of its extreme location at the edge of the community, while nearby residents already enjoy excellent access to local commercial uses, including the historic downtown.

1.4 Surrounding Land Uses

The Subject Site is located in the south-eastern portion of Stouffville, immediately north of the boundary of the urban area and of the municipality, with the City of Markham boundary forming the Site's southern boundary. To the west, the site borders multiple low-density residential properties; the northern boundary is Busato Drive, across from which are additional low-density residential properties. Tenth Line runs north-south east of the site. As shown in Figure 1, the surrounding area in the Town is entirely designated *Neighbourhood Area* in the Whitchurch-Stouffville OP.

Figure 1: Site Location & Official Plan Context

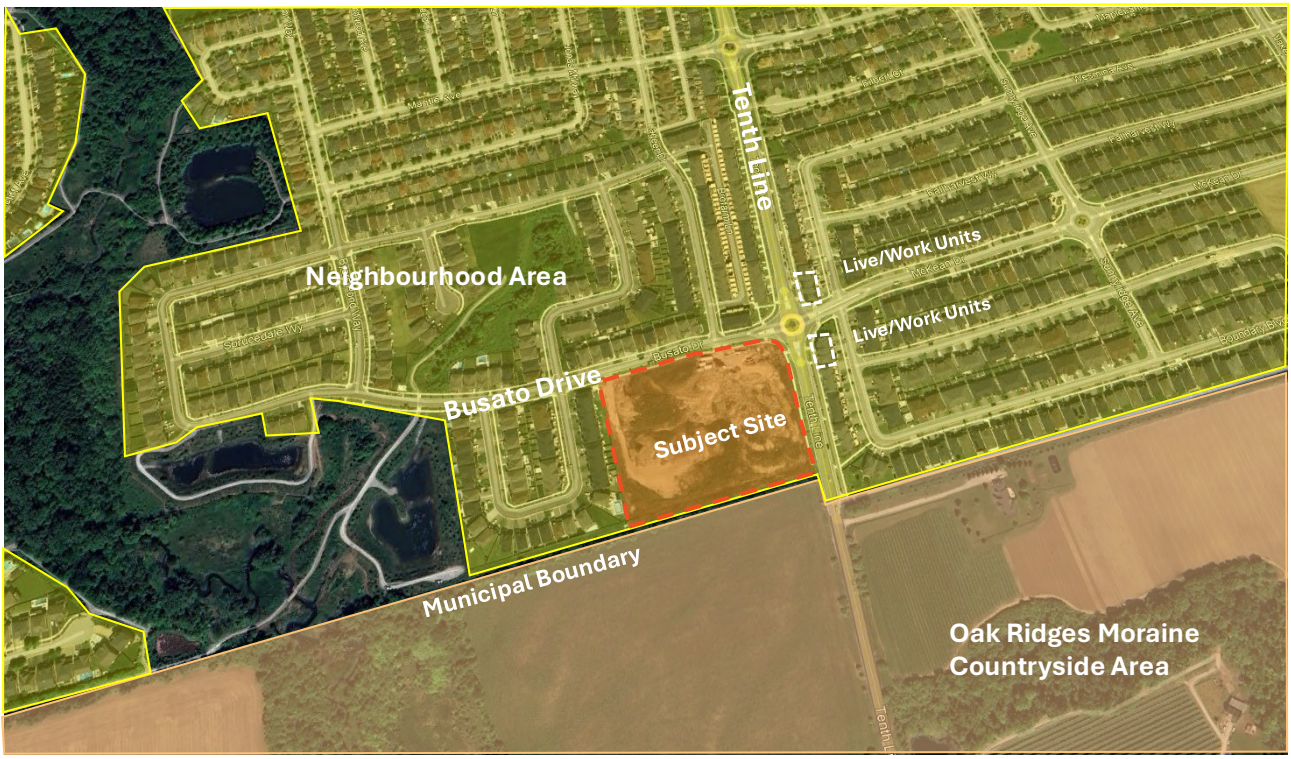


SOURCE: Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan

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While the property is surrounded on three sides by lands with the Neighbourhood Areas designation, 8 units to the east, on the other side of Tenth Line, are live-work units with commercial spaces at grade. To the south, across the municipal boundary in Markham, lands are designated as part of the Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside Area (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Surrounding Land Uses



SOURCE: urbanMetrics Inc.

2 Policy Review

2.1 Land Use Designations

The Subject Site is designated as a *Neighbourhood Area* in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan (2025). This designation primarily accommodates low- and medium-density residential uses, supported by a limited set of neighbourhood-serving institutional and community functions such as schools, places of worship, parks, and open spaces.

Among the Guiding Principles outlined in Section 1.3.1, is to maintain the downtown as a central meeting place and shopping area for the community and adjacent areas. Stouffville is also intended to be the primary focus of intensification, with new growth focused largely within Major Transit Station Areas ("MTSAs") and Strategic Growth Areas ("SGAs").

The Strategic Growth Areas are:

- The Western Approach Mixed Use Area on Main Street west of the Downtown is planned to be a "diverse, thriving commercial district" (Policy 2.2.5.5)
- The Gateway Mixed Use Area to the west of the Western Approach recognizes the strategic nature of the Main Street/Highway 48 intersection. It is intended to accommodate high- and medium-density residential uses with commercial units on the ground floor (Policy 2.2.5.6)
- The Highway 48 Mixed Use Corridor is the location of the Regional Retail Area and is intended to accommodate mid- and high-density development, including major regional retail and commercial uses in a mixed-use setting. (Policy 2.2.5.7)

In addition to these areas, the Official Plan identifies two Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs):

- Old Elm GO MTSA will develop into a complete, transit-supportive community that is anchored by a mixed-use node at the intersection of Tenth Line and the entrance to Old Elm GO Station. The new community will be served by the Old Elm GO Station, which provides an exceptional opportunity to create a transit-supportive neighbourhood with a wide range

of housing opportunities, including affordable housing, recreational and community participation opportunities, and complementary commercial and office uses that will contribute to a complete, mixed-use community. (Policy 2.2.4)

- Stouffville GO MTSA includes the Community of Stouffville Core Area – Main Street, Core Area – Mixed Use, and Urban Medium Density Residential Area designations. The purpose of the Core Area is to serve as a focal point for promoting a mix of uses, along with community services through appropriate redevelopment and expansion. This includes evolving into a notable commercial district, with a strong residential community, fully integrated with entertainment and cultural facilities, offices, and restaurants that complement and support a host of smaller-scale retail and personal service commercial uses. (Policy 2.2.3)

The background Commercial Market & Policy Study completed on behalf of Whitchurch-Stouffville by the Planning Partnership and urbanMetrics in 2020 directed most projected commercial development to the SGAs and MTSAs, as well as the Gateway/Western Approach area and lands designated for Regional Commercial uses. Only a modest amount of additional commercial development was identified as likely to materialize in low-density Neighbourhood Areas.

As such, the Official Plan does not include any Mixed Use or Retail designations on the Subject Site or in its immediate surrounding area. The Subject Site does not fall within any identified commercial node or intensification area. Its location—at the southern boundary of the municipality, with limited visibility and no traffic exposure—does not closely align with the OP's intended framework for commercial development.

2.2 Population

The 2022 York Region Official Plan projects a total population of 2,063,900 residents and 989,200 jobs by 2051. Based on a 2021 estimated population of 1,209,300, the plan projected an additional 854,600 residents over the next 30 years.

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024, states that projections prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Finance ("MoF") should serve as the baseline for land use planning. The most recent MoF population forecasts released in September 2025 project York Region's 2025 population at 1,294,487 and its 2051 population at

1,577,131. This projection shows a reduction in absolute growth from approximately 854,600 to 282,800.

As shown in Figure 3, Whitchurch-Stouffville was allocated 51,600 of the projected 854,600 population increase between 2021 and 2051, equating to 6.03% of the Region's population growth.

Figure 3: Official Plan Population and Employment Forecast

	2016	2021	2031	2041	2051
Population	47,300	51,400	60,800	73,900	103,000
Employment	15,400	17,000	20,200	24,000	28,300

SOURCE: Table 1: Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan

If York Region's remaining population growth to 2051 aligns with the Ministry of Finance forecast of about 283,000, and Whitchurch-Stouffville accounts for 6% of that growth, the municipality would grow by about 17,100 residents.

The Ministry of Finance projections are prepared at the upper-tier (census division) level, but in September 2025, York Region estimated the Town's population at 57,500. Adding 17,100 residents would increase the municipal population to approximately 74,600 by 2051. This is a significant reduction from the previously anticipated 103,000.

While population forecasts always carry some uncertainty, the considerable difference between York Region's Official Plan projection and the current Ministry of Finance projection suggests caution when approving new commercial sites.

2.3 Summary

Although the Neighbourhood Area designation permits small-scale commercial uses, the OP does not require them, nor does it suggest that all Neighbourhood Areas should contain commercial activity. The designation's flexibility is intended to enable small businesses only where market conditions and built form warrant it.

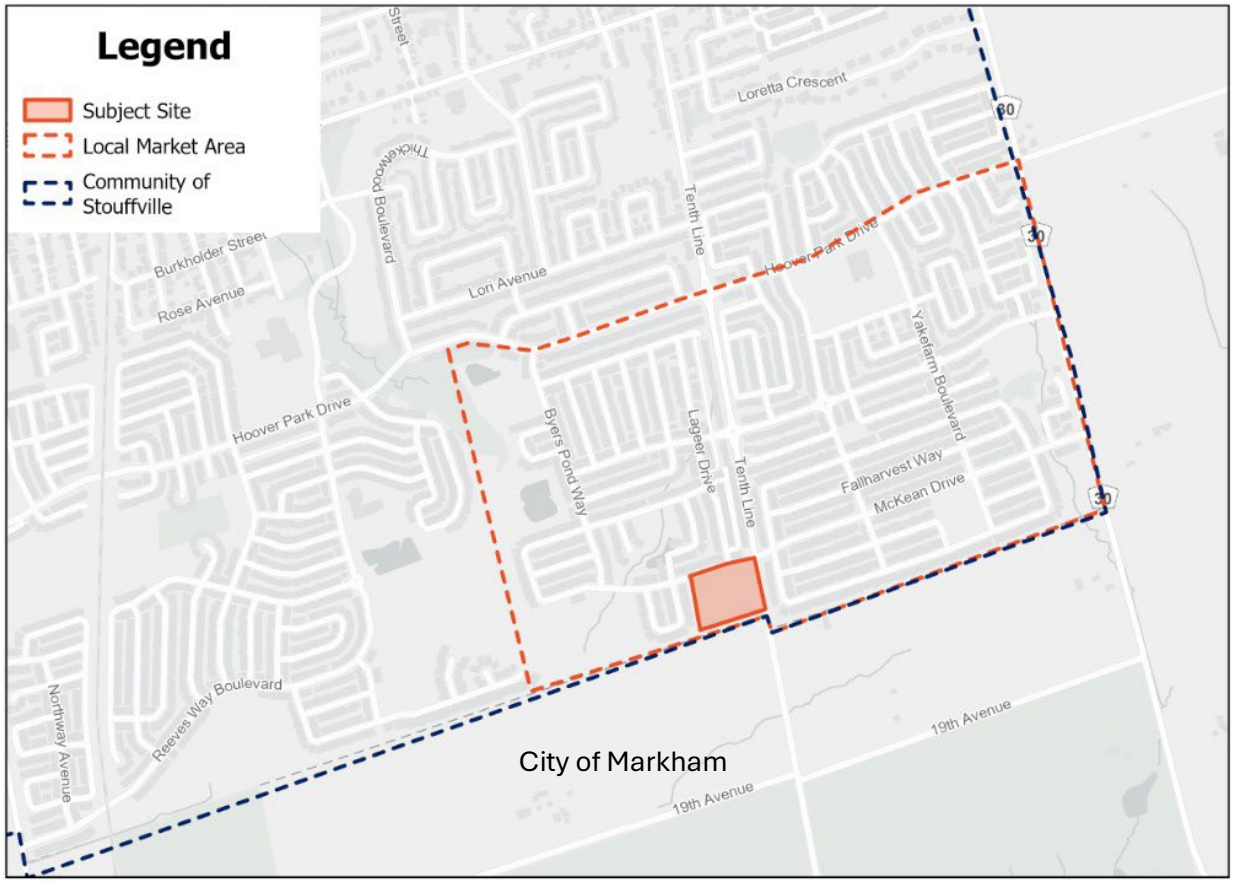
The applicable policy framework is permissive, not prescriptive, and supports the conclusion that commercial development is not required to achieve the OP's commercial objectives in this neighbourhood.

3 Market Evaluation

3.1 Population

To understand the demand patterns for commercial uses on the Subject Site, we have considered two key areas: the Stouffville community and a Local Market Area delineated by distance to the site and other nearby commercial uses. The Local Market Area is the hypothetical area served by the commercial uses on the Subject Site. These areas are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Community & Local Market Area



SOURCE: urbanMetrics Inc. with imagery from ESRI & Statistics Canada

A review of dissemination block-level data from the 2021 census identified a 2021 population of approximately 5,600 residents in the Local Market Area. Since 2021, two subdivision plans have been advanced at 11742 and 11731 Tenth Line, delivering 874 single, semi, and townhome units in the local area.

At the 3.265 persons-per-unit ratio used in the 2023 Development Charges Background, this adds 874 residents, bringing the total local area population to approximately 6,500.

This population is not sufficient to support a neighbourhood-scale commercial development anchored by a supermarket or major food store. These types of facilities require a minimum population threshold of at least 10,000 persons.

Under the right circumstances, a population of 6,500 persons could support a smaller local commercial node, commercial facilities on the Subject Site would be severely disadvantaged by several factors:

- As noted previously, the site is situated in a constrained trade area with virtually no opportunity for inflow into the trade area from the south, east and west. This is due to the lack of development to the south and east, and the natural heritage corridor to the west.
- 10th Line near the site functions as a local road with corresponding low speed limits, also limiting travel from outside of the trade area towards the site.
- Densities in the vicinity of the site are too low to support a sufficient pedestrian volume to support a retail node on its own and would rely on a predominantly auto-oriented market. In our opinion, the site is not well-positioned to accommodate an auto-oriented retail destination.
- The neighbourhoods surrounding the site are extremely heavily automobile-dependent. The site is situated in Whitchurch-Stouffville Ward 3, but borders on Ward 6. According to the 2022 Transportation for Tomorrow survey, 67% of households in Ward 6 have more than one vehicle, with only 2% lacking access to a motor vehicle. Some 77% of Ward 3 households have access to 2 or more vehicles. Fewer than 1% of households lack a car.
- Most retail destinations in Stouffville require a car trip of only a few minutes from the trade area, positioning a commercial facility on the Subject Site as competing with the entire commercial inventory in Stouffville. For example, someone who can drive downtown in five minutes would weigh that convenience against walking five minutes to a smaller retail destination, which could require dealing with inclement weather and carrying purchases.

- There already are two mixed-use blocks with convenience retail tenants directly across the street from the site. These blocks comprise some 8 units with several vacancies. In our opinion, these are sufficient to satisfy the market for convenience retail facilities in the vicinity of the site.
- The retail market in Stouffville is relatively balanced. In 2021, when urbanMetrics completed the Commercial Market and Policy Study on behalf of the Town, the vacancy rate was 6.5%, which represents a balanced market. An updated high-level inventory at the time of writing did not identify any significant shifts in absorption or vacancy. While new retail space will be required to support new growth, there are minimal growth prospects in the vicinity of the Site. Any new retail space in the Area would rely solely on the relatively small existing population to maintain viability.

In summary, the Site's location is considered poor for supporting new retail facilities, while the nearby population is very well served by commercial opportunities.

3.2 Existing Commercial Uses

Stouffville has a diverse range of commercial facilities. The 2021 urbanMetrics study found approximately 1.3 million square feet of commercial space in the Community, with most located in three areas: the historic downtown, the Western Approach, and the Regional Retail node at Hoover Park and Highway. A review of the municipality's development activity reports and brokerage data confirms that very little new dedicated commercial space was completed between 2021 and 2026.

The Historic Downtown

The historic core is the heart of the community, an important policy area, and a designated MTSA around the GO Station. It contains a strong mix of independent retailers and service providers in a walkable format. The downtown is approximately a five-minute drive from the Subject Site. At about 2.5 kilometres from the Subject Site, it is an eight-minute bike ride or a thirty-minute walk.

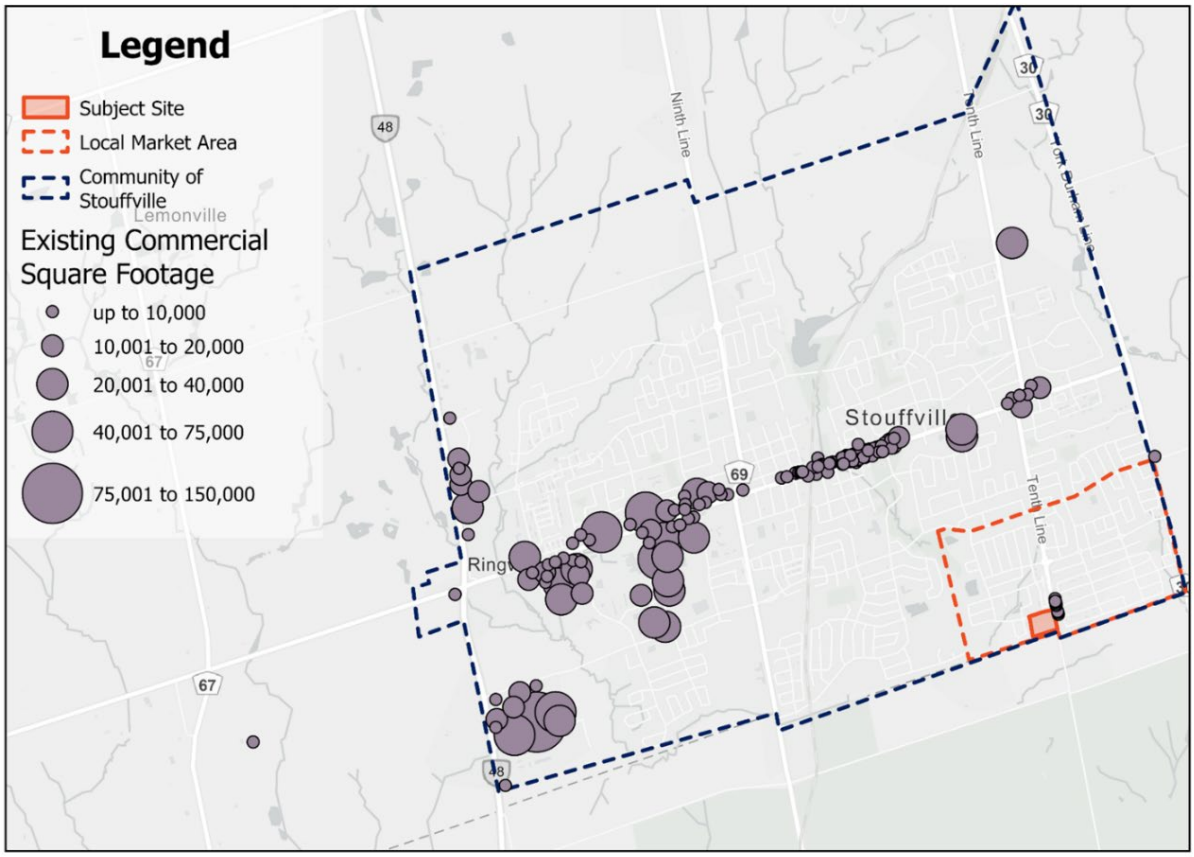
The Western Approach

The Western Approach is a predominantly auto-oriented arterial commercial strip containing a wide range of plazas and larger retailers that rely predominantly on automobile traffic. The Western Approach is a six-minute drive from the Subject Site or a thirteen-minute bike ride. It is likely beyond a reasonable walking distance.

Hoover Park Regional Retail Node

Hoover Park is home to the largest retailers in the community, including Walmart and Canadian Tire, as well as a range of other large-format retailers. It provides a regional function drawing from across the entire Town, as well as from Markham and other parts of York and Durham Regions. Hoover Park is a ten-minute drive from the Subject Site. It is within an eight-minute drive from the Subject Site and a fifteen-minute bike ride.

Figure 5: Existing Commercial Spaces



SOURCE: urbanMetrics Inc. with data from CoStar Realty Group.

In addition to these locations, two blocks of mixed commercial and residential units sit directly across from the site. These blocks provide for commercial units along Tenth Line. These spaces, generally between 600 and 800 square feet, have attracted seven commercial uses, including two hair salons, a convenience

store/cafe/ice cream shop, a drug store/pharmacy, a wellness practitioner, and an optician. Figure 6 shows these properties.

However, these existing businesses have identified and filled many viable market opportunities in these hyper-local areas. For the remaining units, market conditions have been challenging: one of the eight units has been vacant since at least October 2025 and was vacant as of September 2026. This translates to an estimated 12.5% vacancy rate. Turnover has been significant, with multiple spaces changing tenants several times in recent years.

One vacant unit was formerly occupied by a convenience store, which ceased operations after attempting to sell the business. In our opinion, the businesses at this location include most of the stores typically found in a convenience plaza, representing a higher-intensity commercial use in the neighbourhood. For this reason, and because a unit at this site remains vacant, there does not appear to be a need for additional convenience commercial space on the Subject Site.

Figure 6: Local Commercial Properties on 10th Line across from the Subject Site

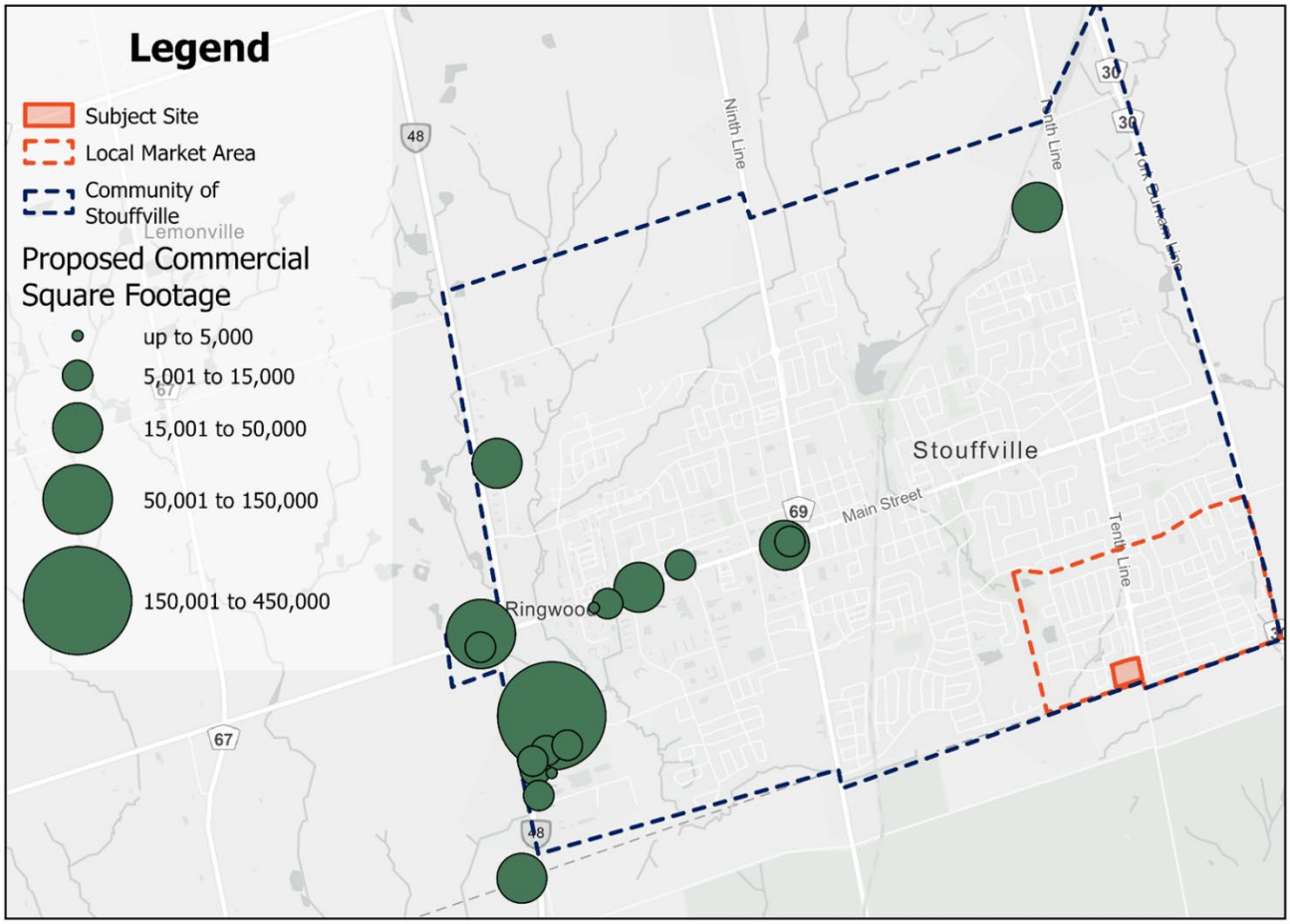


SOURCE: Photography from Sorbara Group.

3.3 Future Commercial Uses

Data from active development applications on the Town's website and data from CoStar Realty Group identify about 700,000 square feet of commercial space in the development pipeline. As shown in Figure 7, the majority of this space is provided in two developments: a large mixed-use development at 12049 Highway 48 and the intensification of the existing SmartCentres property through a series of applications on Hoover Park Drive and Sam's Way.

Figure 7: Proposed Commercial Space



SOURCE: urbanMetrics Inc. with data from CoStar Realty Group and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Development Applications

1. 12049 Highway 48 – Large Mixed-Use Development

This multi-block mixed-use proposal includes a broad range of commercial, office, hospitality, and institutional uses. While the overall gross commercial envelope is estimated at approximately 861,000 square feet, we have conservatively attributed 430,000 square feet to retail and service commercial uses relevant to the local market. Its location along a primary arterial corridor makes it significantly more viable than neighbourhood-scale retail at the Subject Site.

2. SmartCentres Intensification (Hoover Park Drive & Sam's Way)

Ongoing intensification applications propose multiple new commercial buildings and expansions of existing commercial formats. These projects will further strengthen Stouffville's principal commercial node and reinforce its role as a regional destination for retail and services.

The rest of the proposed space generally takes the form of infill and mixed-use intensification in the gateway and Main Street areas, in line with planning direction and market dynamics. Regardless of the size and speed of the next phase of growth, it will be characterized by intensification in existing commercial and mixed-use areas that capitalize on their locations and accessibility.

3.4 Feasibility

The viability of commercial development at 55 Busato Drive depends on market support, the property's functional characteristics, and its position within Stouffville's broader commercial ecosystem. Across all three dimensions, the Subject Site exhibits characteristics that significantly constrain commercial potential.

Limited Market Support & Challenging Site Characteristics

The primary driver of neighbourhood-scale commercial viability is population density and walkable catchment strength. The Subject Site's immediate trade area contains approximately 6,500 residents, below the level required to sustain a significant concentration of convenience-oriented retail or service uses. Importantly, the site draws very little traffic from the south, as it directly abuts the municipal boundary with Markham and is adjacent to lands within the Oak Ridges Moraine Countryside Area. This eliminates half of a potential catchment on a site surrounded by neighbourhoods on all four sides. Inflow into the trade area is constrained from all four directions.

Challenging Site Characteristics

Traffic-based demand is similarly constrained. The site is located at the intersection of a local street and an arterial road. However, Tenth Line quickly transitions from what is effectively a local roadway into a rural road. With limited pass-by traffic and no established trip generators, a commercial tenant would struggle to achieve the baseline sales volumes required to operate sustainably.

Two blocks of commercial units sit across the street from the site, and two are vacant. One unit was formerly occupied by a convenience store that operated briefly before closing after attempting to sell the business.

All commercial facilities in Stouffville are within a ten-minute drive of the site. With the vast majority of households in the surrounding neighbourhoods owning two or more cars and only a negligible number lacking access to a vehicle, the practical need for additional small-scale convenience retail uses at this location is questionable.

These factors collectively reduce the site's competitiveness when compared to alternative commercial locations in Stouffville that offer superior visibility, traffic, and existing retail anchors.

Misalignment with the Commercial Ecosystem

The Town's commercial structure is oriented around established and emerging nodes along Main Street, the historic downtown, and major mixed-use corridors. These areas benefit from large catchments, strong traffic flows, existing anchors, and planned intensification that together support viable commercial activity. As shown in the public research that informed the Official Plan, residents have well-established shopping patterns that involve many established commercial nodes, as well as commercial properties in other municipalities.

Both planning policy and market trends direct commercial growth toward intensifying mixed-use nodes that can draw on a sufficient population. This population can be local, with a node integrated into higher-density residential areas, or spread across a larger area but accessible via superior transit corridors. Often, these properties are already established nodes, and are going through another phase of development.

In contrast, the Subject Site:

- Sits outside any designated commercial or mixed-use corridor;

- Was originally reserved for a school block, not envisioned as a retail node;
- Is peripheral to the Town's commercial hierarchy and separated from primary commercial destinations; and
- Could dilute demand for existing commercial areas, contrary to the OP's consolidation objectives.

Commercial development here would not meaningfully contribute to Stouffville's long-term commercial structure and would likely operate at a disadvantage relative to established nodes.

4 Conclusions

This assessment demonstrates that the Subject Site is not an appropriate or sustainable location for commercial development for the following key reasons:

1. **Insufficient market support**
   The local catchment population remains below the threshold needed to support more than a modest amount of commercial uses, particularly on a property with limited traffic exposure at the community's edge. The limited range of uses that can be supported in this type of location, such as convenience stores, cafes, personal care stores, and personal services, is already present in the immediate area.

2. **Underperforming existing units confirm weak local demand**
   In general, the existing live-work units along Tenth Line have attracted businesses appropriate to local needs. Despite this, 1 of the 8 units has remained vacant for an extended period, and many of the units have experienced significant turnover. The size of the local population and local purchasing patterns mean that market support for additional businesses is limited, and additional commercial supply would face significant challenges.

3. **Stouffville's commercial supply is already extensive and expanding**
   With approximately 1.5 million square feet of existing commercial space and roughly 700,000 square feet in the development pipeline, the community's emerging commercial needs are being met by better-located and better-supported commercial nodes that fit within established travel and purchasing patterns. With this development occurring in established mixed-use and commercial nodes, reduced regional population forecasts further limit the need for neighbourhood-scale commercial areas.

4. **The site does not align with Stouffville's existing commercial hierarchy or intensification dynamics**
   The Town's Official Plan directs commercial growth toward established mixed-use corridors, the Main Street area, and higher-order intensification areas, as these areas represent a core part of the community's next phase of growth. This was also the conclusion of the 2021 Commercial Market and Policy Study completed by urbanMetrics. The Subject Site lies outside these areas and within a relatively recently developed lower-density community.

5. **Commercial uses are not required under the Neighbourhood Area designation**
   The Official Plan permits small-scale commercial uses within mixed-use buildings only where appropriate and permits the flexibility to consider commercial uses in the future at the initiative of a landowner. In this case, the market evidence demonstrates that requiring such uses is neither necessary nor viable. In our opinion, a lack of commercial uses the Subject Site does not undermine planning objectives or compromise neighbourhood completeness.

6. **Local neighbourhood is already well served by local commercial space**
   The neighbourhood surrounding the Subject Site is already well served by commercial space, accessible by walking, cycling, and a very short drive. The commercial units across the street from the site are within an easy walk for most neighbourhood residents.

   The convenience commercial sites at 10th Line and Main Street are within a moderate twenty-minute walk of the site and within a five-minute bike ride. The historic downtown is within a five-minute drive, and Walmart at the far western end of Stouffville is within a ten-minute drive. There are more than a satisfactory number of retail and service uses available to serve the neighbourhood, even without the development of retail uses on the Subject Site.

7. **No adverse impacts from excluding commercial uses**
   Residents will continue to rely on the Main Street corridor, the historic downtown, and other west-end commercial nodes for daily goods and services. These locations are well-established, proximate, and accessible. The absence of new commercial supply at 55 Busato Drive will not create unmet needs or gaps in the Town's commercial structure.

In our opinion, there is no market-based rationale to require commercial uses at 55 Busato Drive. Commercial space on the site is likely unviable, and its absence does not affect the Site's alignment with the Town's broader objectives for neighbourhood structure, intensification, and commercial viability.