

TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL

Agenda Item

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

November 5, 2001

SRE.01.112

Engineering & Public Works Department

SUBJECT: POLICY LIMITING PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF LANEWAYS IN NEW DEVELOPMENT
OUR FILE: D00-DE

PURPOSE:

To advise Council on the history of the emergence of rear laneways in new development and recommend future restrictions.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee of the Whole receive Staff Report SRE.01.112 and recommend to Council that new laneways be approved for use only when ownership (and maintenance) is to be carried out privately through a plan of condominium and that any proposed exceptions to this policy be the subject of separate reporting and approval of Council.

Contact: Eugene Zawadowsky, Ext. 3510.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

[Signature of Bruce Macgregor]

Bruce Macgregor, P.Eng.
Commissioner of Engineering & Public Works

[Signature of C.D. Weldon]

C.D. Weldon, Chief Administrative Officer

BACKGROUND:

The use of laneways in new development was first proposed in Bayview North by Law Development in 1996. This involved a street townhouse development fronting on Shirley Drive at Redstone Road. The site plan was approved with a private laneway to achieve the following objectives:

- Improve the aesthetics of the streetscape on Shirley Drive;

- Reduce the number of driveways accessing Shirley Drive to improve its performance as a major collector road.

Laneways reemerged in the 1990's in an effort to improve streetscapes and minimize traffic disruption on major arterial and collector roads. Until then, the roads were either backlogged or were bounded by side lots and buffers. In some cases, laneways can be accommodated without adding to the extent of public roadway (i.e., the laneway replaces what would have alternatively been a single loaded or buffer road). In others, however, they impose additional maintenance obligations (i.e., requirement to maintain two roads).

Engineering and Public Works staff identified various concerns relating to:

- The extra cost of maintaining laneways (i.e. snow clearing, pavement management, lighting etc.);
- Substandard design respecting road geometrics, drainage and long term structural worthiness.

Given the Town's approval obligations, these concerns are relevant regardless of whether the laneway is public or private. Public owned facilities however have a bearing on property taxes and must be substantiated by traffic and/or streetscaping improvements on the adjacent roads.

Since this initial application, several development applications were received proposing public laneways. A total of 9 laneways have been approved, mostly in the Bayview Glen Community but also in Bayview North and Elgin West. Appendix 'A' (6 pages) provides a complete description of laneways in the Town and the rationale for their approval. All but the Law Development laneway in Bayview North are public and maintained by the Town.

During this period, the use of laneways was being encouraged by the Province as part of their alternate development standards for new growth. In the Provincial Guideline entitled "Making Choices" published in April 1995, rear lanes are promoted as an effective way of achieving compact development. This was an initiative to stimulate innovative and more efficient forms of housing and reduced servicing costs.

By moving the garage from the front of the house, both lot frontage and building setback can be reduced resulting in significantly decreased land requirements. In this way, rear lanes provide the added benefit of improving the streetscape. Instead of garages, community supportive features such as gardens, porches and house entrances dominate the street. The Provincial Guideline also identified the negative aspects of laneways regarding increased snow removal costs, security and public safety issues.

The Bayview Glen Community has the highest concentration of laneways within the Town, utilizing them mainly with townhouse developments fronting on Yonge street. In approving these laneways, it was understood that they would not be accepted universally, but only where an urban design or streetscape objective could be achieved. In particular, the Yonge Street frontage would especially benefit from laneways by removing garages and driveways from the streetscape. In

addition, by eliminating vehicular access, traffic flow on Yonge Street would also be maintained. Other services, such as garbage collection would also be provided via the laneways.

Now that Operations staff have been maintaining laneways for the last number of years, it has become increasingly clear that routine costs for snow removal are significantly higher than for typical local roads. Because laneways are the only vehicular access to these homes, snow clearing priority is rated the same as local streets. Adequate area for snow storage is not available in the laneway resulting in the need for extra equipment such as loaders and trucks in addition to plows to remove snow off site. This has increased costs of approximately \$2,000 per laneway per snowfall event. Given an estimated forty homes serviced by a typical laneway and assuming two snowfall events per year, this results in an extra average annual snow-clearing cost of \$100 per home. Comparing this to our normal cost of plowing conventional residential roads of \$33 per home per year, it becomes very clear that rear lanes are much more expensive to maintain on a per capita basis.

Additional costs would also be incurred for streetlighting, however, there would be offsetting efficiencies in garbage collection since narrower laneways typically allow collection in one pass.

Notwithstanding the aesthetic benefits in improved streetscapes, staff have always resisted laneways in new development. In our view, the increased maintenance costs, duplication of infrastructure and potential safety issues (e.g. lighting, isolation, vandalism) outweigh, in most cases, the potential visual enhancements.

Although several other municipalities have accepted the use of laneways, we maintain that alternatives are available to achieve the same objectives and should be thoroughly investigated. For example, the long standing practice of using service roads abutting arterial roadways presents an attractive streetscape but without the extraordinary maintenance requirements.

At present, there are only four new laneways pending in the Yonge Bayview Community (see Appendix 'B' for locations).

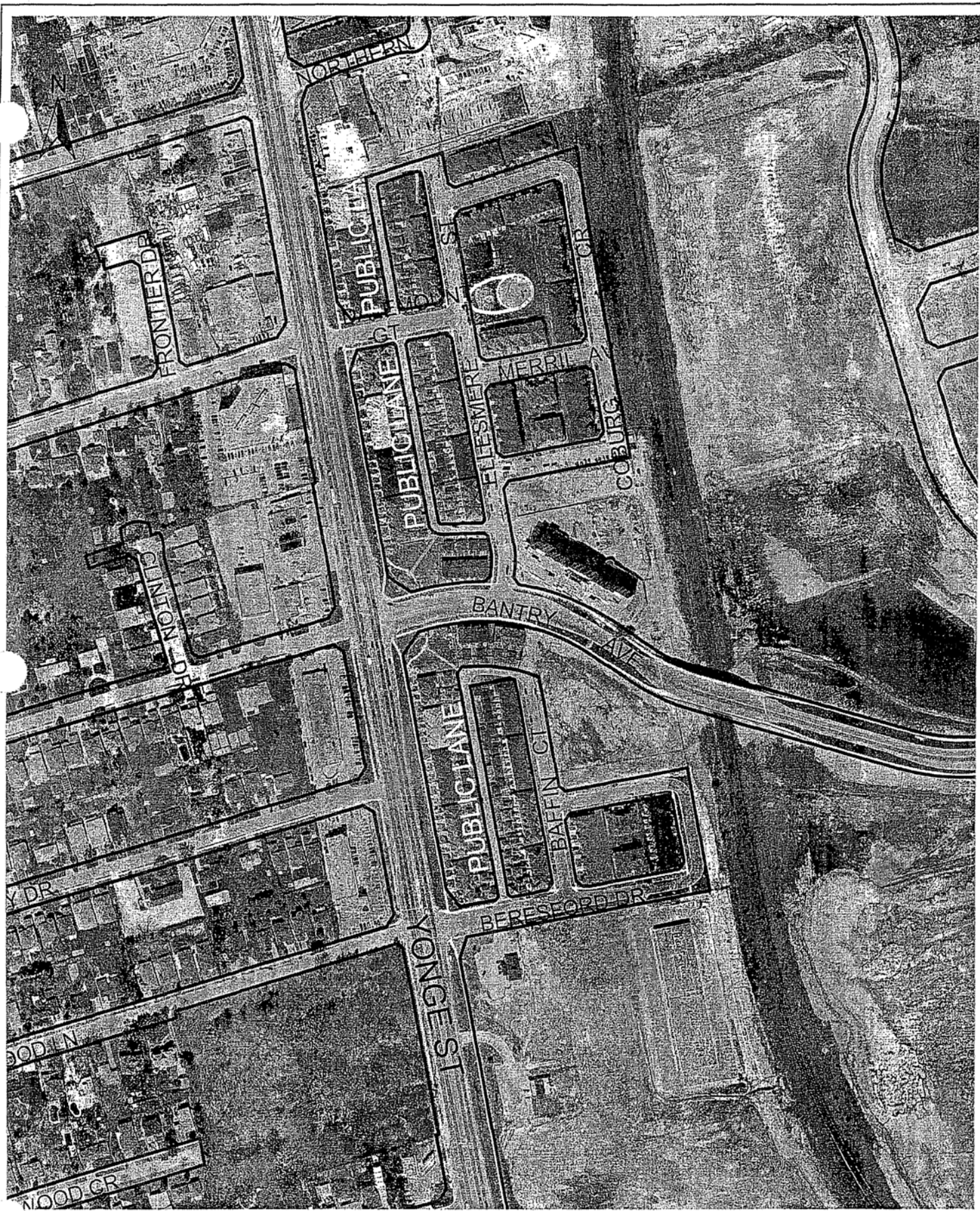
Even though laneways may have appropriate applications in certain special circumstances, staff cannot justify recommending their use as public facilities except under exceptional circumstances. Laneways should be privately maintained by the benefiting residents. Recent revisions to the Condominium Act will facilitate the arrangements.

EZ/js  
Attachments

APPENDIX 'A'

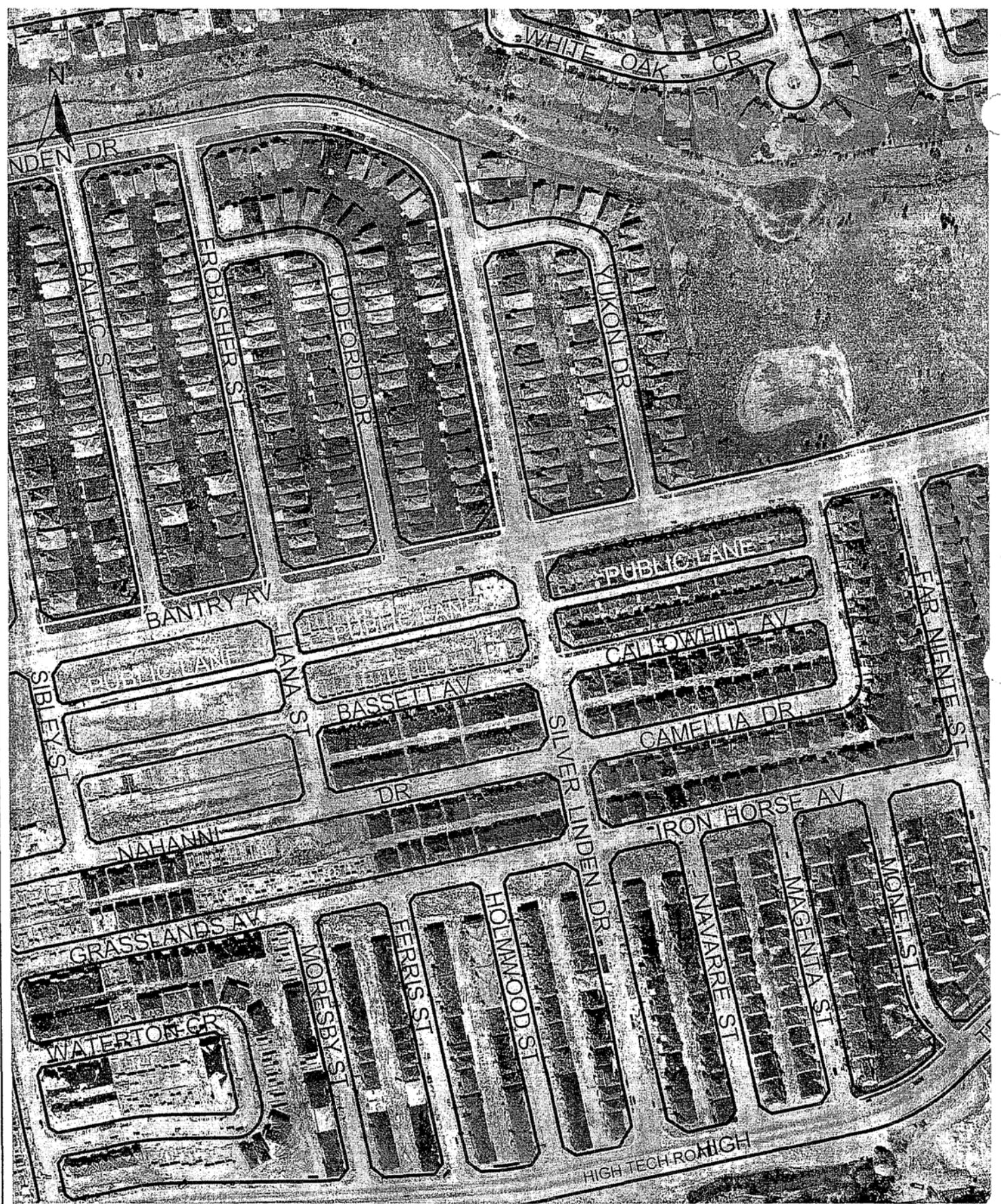
No.	Subdivision		Location	Owner-ship	Rationale
	Name	Date Draft Approved			
1	Yonge Bayview Holdings	Nov. 28, 1996	S. of Bantry btwn Sibley St. & Liana St.	Public	Improved streetscape, reduced traffic conflicts
2	Same	Same	S. of Bantry btwn Liana & Silver Linden	Public	same
3	Same	Same	S. of Bantry btwn Silver Linden & Camellia Dr.	Public	same
4	Same	Same	E. of Yonge St. N. of Beresford	Public	same
5	Same	Same	E. of Yonge St. N. of Bantry	Public	same
6	Same	Same	E. of Yonge St. N. of Dalemont	Public	same
7	Elgin-West	Mar. 23, 1998	N. of Canyon Hill btwn Leyburn & Abitibi	Public	same
8	Bayview-North	July 27, 1995 (OMB)	E. of Bayview N. of Frank Endean	Public	same
9	Bayview-North	June 24, 1998 (OMB)	E. of Shirley S. of Redstone	Private	same

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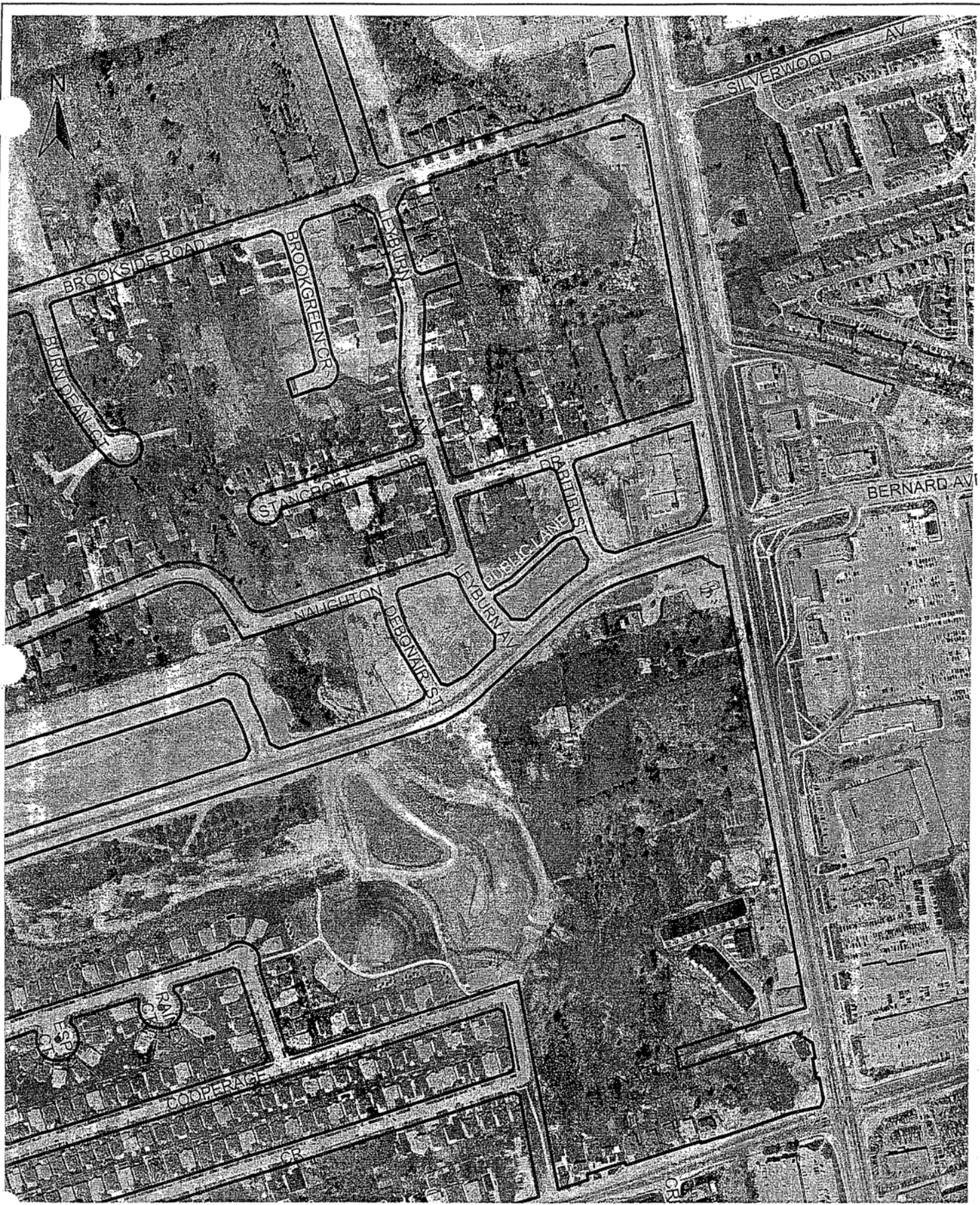
**Yonge Bayview**

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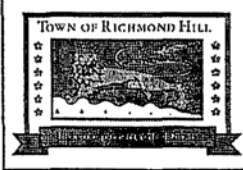
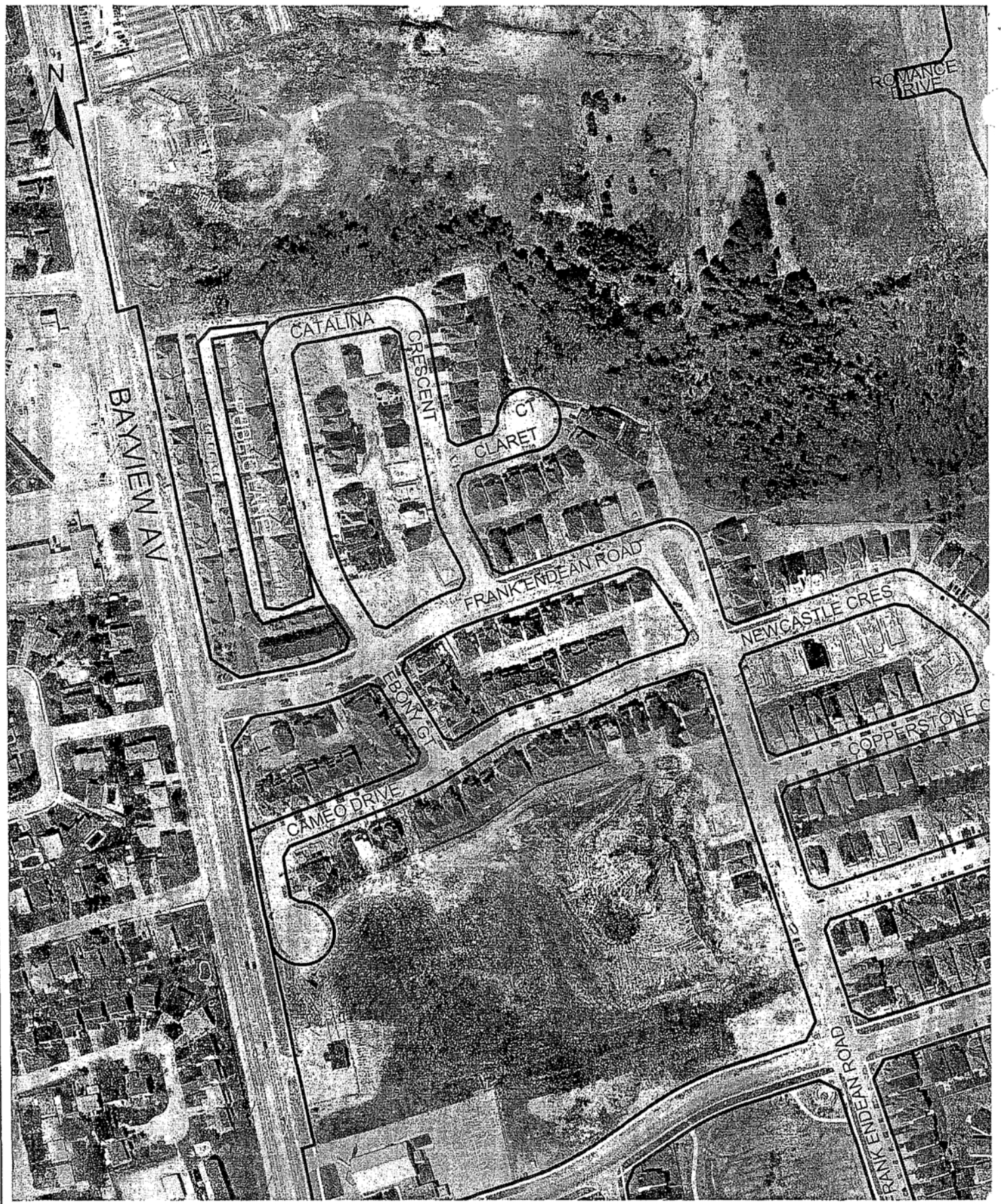
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# Yonge Bayview



**Elgin West**

990270



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# Bayview North

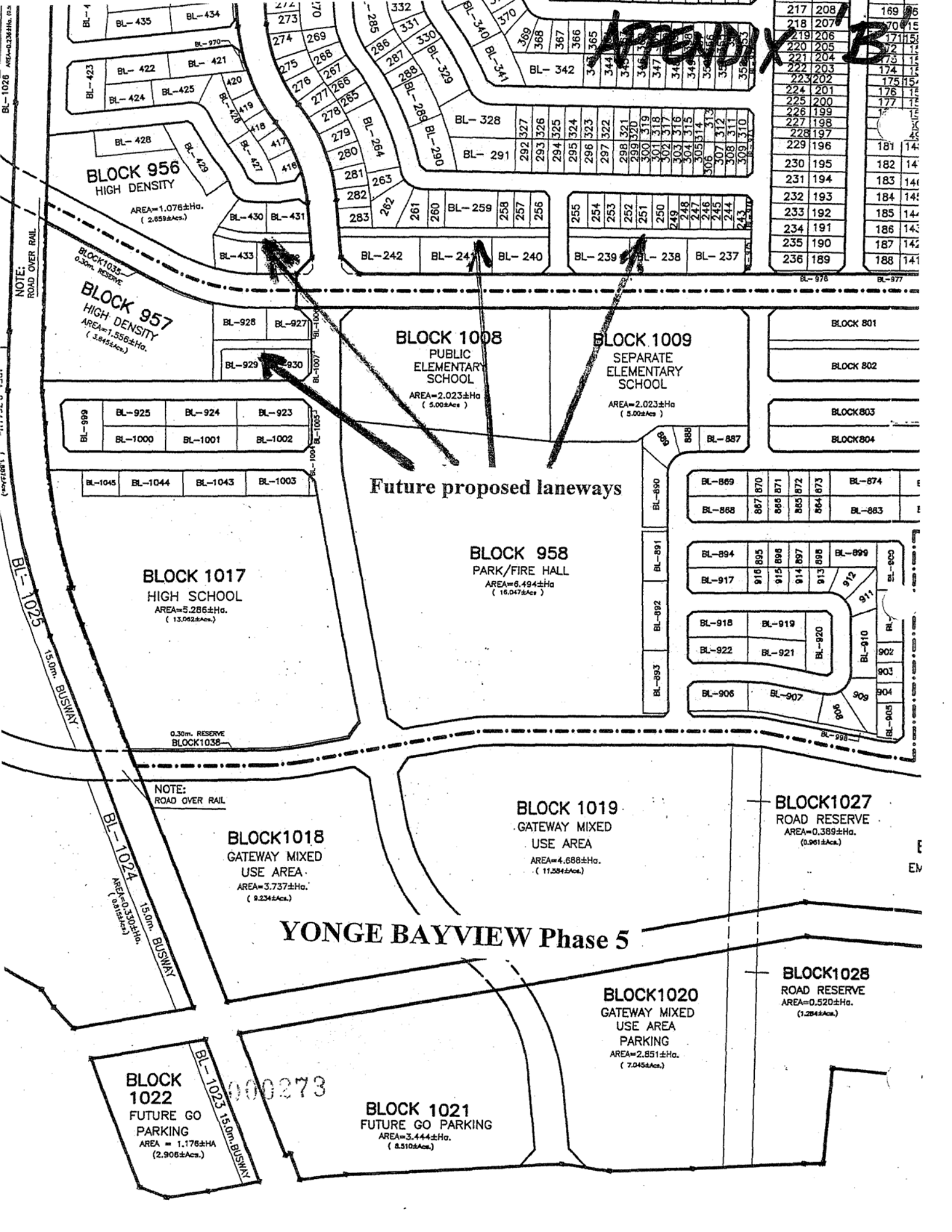




**Bayview North**

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APPENDIX B



217	208	169	165
218	207	170	164
219	206	171	163
220	205	172	162
221	204	173	161
222	203	174	160
223	202	175	159
224	201	176	158
225	200	177	157
226	199	178	156
227	198	179	155
228	197	180	154
229	196	181	153
230	195	182	152
231	194	183	151
232	193	184	150
233	192	185	149
234	191	186	148
235	190	187	147
236	189	188	146

NOTE: ROAD OVER RAIL

BL-1025 15.0m BUSWAY

BL-1024 15.0m BUSWAY

BL-1023 15.0m BUSWAY

**BLOCK 956**  
HIGH DENSITY  
AREA=1.076±Ha.  
(2.659±Ac.)

**BLOCK 957**  
HIGH DENSITY  
AREA=1.556±Ha.  
(3.845±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1008**  
PUBLIC  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL  
AREA=2.023±Ha  
(5.00±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1009**  
SEPARATE  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL  
AREA=2.023±Ha  
(5.00±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1017**  
HIGH SCHOOL  
AREA=5.286±Ha.  
(13.062±Ac.)

**BLOCK 958**  
PARK/FIRE HALL  
AREA=6.494±Ha  
(16.047±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1018**  
GATEWAY MIXED  
USE AREA  
AREA=3.737±Ha.  
(9.234±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1019**  
GATEWAY MIXED  
USE AREA  
AREA=4.688±Ha.  
(11.594±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1027**  
ROAD RESERVE  
AREA=0.389±Ha.  
(0.961±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1022**  
FUTURE GO  
PARKING  
AREA = 1.176±HA  
(2.908±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1021**  
FUTURE GO PARKING  
AREA=3.444±Ha.  
(8.510±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1020**  
GATEWAY MIXED  
USE AREA  
PARKING  
AREA=2.851±Ha.  
(7.045±Ac.)

**BLOCK 1028**  
ROAD RESERVE  
AREA=0.520±Ha.  
(1.284±Ac.)

Future proposed laneways

**YONGE BAYVIEW Phase 5**