



777 Victoria Park Avenue
Community Meeting #1

MEETING SUMMARY

Monday, June 10, 2019

6:00 – 9:00 pm

Seicho-No-Ie Toronto Centre, 662 Victoria Park Avenue



MEETING OVERVIEW

On Monday, June 10, 2019, the City of Toronto and CreateTO hosted the first community meeting for **777 Victoria Park Avenue** as part of the Housing Now Initiative. Approximately 125 people attended, in addition to staff from the City of Toronto, CreateTO and the project consultant team.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Housing Now Initiative and share and seek feedback on the conceptual design and preliminary directions for 777 Victoria Park Avenue. The meeting included an open house, presentation and full room question and answer period.

This meeting summary was prepared by Swerhun Inc., an independent third-party facilitation firm supporting CreateTO and the City in their community engagement for Housing Now. The summary captures feedback shared at the meeting and is not intended to serve as a verbatim transcript. The summary was shared with participants for review before being finalized.

Feedback received after the meeting by email and through the project website up until July 31, 2019 will be shared with the project team for consideration as they advance the Housing Now Initiative and refine the the conceptual design for the proposed development at 777 Victoria Park Avenue in preparation for sharing at **Community Meeting #2 (planned for September 2019)**.

Note: The intent of this summary is to capture the range of perspectives that were shared at the meeting. It does not assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives, nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of the City of Toronto or CreateTO.

FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Participants shared feedback through one-on-one conversations with staff, by posting notes with feedback on the display panels, and through the full room discussion following the presentation. The points below summarize the feedback received. They have been grouped under the following headings: Housing, Planning, Development and Community Services & Facilities.

Housing

- **Concerns about adding more affordable housing to the area.** Participants said the area already has a high-level of affordable housing, compared to other parts of the City, and raised concerns about bringing more to this area. Concerns raised included: increased crime; decreased property values; increased property tax; and poor property maintenance of new affordable housing.
- **Interest expressed in living in the affordable housing units.** Through the one-on-one conversations with the Project Team during the Open House, a large number of participants said they are interested in living in the future affordable rental units and were very keen to understand how to apply for the units.

Planning

- **Use Inclusionary Zoning across the City.** Participants said that, instead of concentrating affordable housing in a few locations, the City should instead use Inclusionary Zoning to distribute affordable housing more evenly across the City. *City Planning said it is exploring Inclusionary Zoning through a separate process and is looking to use it to support more affordable housing in Toronto.*
- **Desire to better understand the financials supporting the initiative.** Participants were interested in understanding the business model of the Housing Now Initiative, the unit mix, and how the future development would be managed/leased. *The Project Team said they are currently working on the business cases for the sites and would be reporting back to the community at the second consultation meeting in September. The Team also explained that the City would retain ownership of the land. The land would be leased to an experienced developer and affordable housing operator for a period of 99-years who would be responsible for construction and management of the buildings. They also noted that the lease agreement would allow the City to ensure the operator is properly maintaining the buildings and lands.*

Development

- **Concerns related to parking.** Participants shared concerns about the potential loss of commuter parking on the site. Some said that the parking lot is an asset for the community, which is heavily used and generally full at 9 a.m. Participants also shared concerns that removal or reductions of commuter parking would result in more use of on-street parking in the surrounding neighbourhoods and that illegal on-street parking is already an issue.
- **Concerns about infrastructure stress from increased population.** There were concerns raised about the sewer and water capacity in the area and the impacts of adding more people to an already-strained system. Participants also said that new and existing

sidewalks should be wider, accessible, and need to be properly maintained to create a safe environment for pedestrians. They said that existing sidewalks are not properly cleared in the winter, which makes the area unsafe for pedestrians trying to access the subway station. There were also concerns raised that the development would increase traffic in the area, especially on Denton Avenue.

- **Limited transit capacity and access to the subway station.** Participants said the subway and buses are already overcrowded, which would become worse as more people move into the area. Participants suggested that the TTC be involved in these discussions and increase capacity on Line 2 and bus service in advance of more development. Participants also said pedestrians currently use the bus entrance to illegally enter the station to save time. There was a suggestion to add a legal pedestrian entrance near the bus entrance to improve safety and convenience.
- **Desire to see ownership units included in the development.** Participants said they would like to see a greater mix of unit types, emphasizing the development should include some market ownership to help create a mixed-income neighbourhood. Participants identified St. Lawrence Neighbourhood as an example of desirable mixed-income community in Toronto.
- **Suggested retail and commercial uses.** Some participants said the area would benefit from small affordable stores, e.g. restaurants, coffee shops.
- **Concern about tall building impacts.** Some were concerned that the proposed 22-storey building would reduce sunlight in the area and create wind tunnels.
- **Building maintenance.** Participants were interested to know who will be constructing and maintaining the buildings and what assurances would be put in place to guarantee buildings are properly maintained.
- **Noise impacts.** Some participants raised concerns about noise, including noise from construction and the noise from additional people living in the area. It was also noted that future residents of the proposed development would likely be impacted by noise from the subway.
- **Specific building suggestions.** Participants provided several comments about the site and proposed buildings, including suggestions to use excellent design and building materials and suggestions to provide space for car-sharing services. The Distillery District and the Beech House Development on Kingston Road (where residential units are on top of a community centre) were shared as good examples of building and neighbourhood design.

Community Services & Facilities

- **There are a number of desired community services and facilities.** Participants said they want to see additional community services and facilities in the area, including: a library, shared community space (e.g. a multi-purpose community space, ideally with a kitchen), affordable childcare, parks, recreation facilities with a pool, medical offices and services, and space for City-run agencies and non-profit organizations.
- **There is limited school capacity in the area.** Participants said the schools in the area are at or near capacity and suggested the City and CreateTO connect with the local school

boards to discuss how capacity can be increased. *The Project team said that it is consulting with local school boards about capacity as part of the community services and facilities assessment in this project.*

Next Steps

The Project Team thanked participants for attending the meeting and committed to writing a summary of the meeting and sharing it in draft with participants. The Team also committed to posting the presentation to the project website at www.createto.ca/housingnow. Finally, the Team explained that a second Community Meeting will be held in September 2019 to share a revised development concept for the site and to provide further information on the next stages of the Housing Now Initiative.