



1631 Queen Street East
Community Consultation Meeting #1 (of 2)

MEETING SUMMARY

Monday, December 7, 2020
6:30 - 8:30 pm, Online Meeting

Meeting Overview

On Monday, December 7th, 2020, the City of Toronto and CreateTO hosted an online Community Consultation Meeting for the proposed redevelopment of 1631 Queen Street East, part of the Housing Now Initiative. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Housing Now Initiative, introduce the concept of Indigenous place-keeping at Kishigo Lane, discuss the area context and present and seek feedback on the preliminary development concept for the site. Approximately 60 people participated, including 45 members of the public. Other participants included City Councillor Brad Bradford, staff from the City of Toronto and CreateTO, and members of the project consultant team. (see Attachment A for the meeting agenda).

The meeting was advertised through the following: mailed notice to residents and businesses surrounding the site (approximately 3,500 notices mailed); emails sent to individuals who signed up for updates on the Housing Now website (createto.ca/housingnow); posters distributed in the community; information on the project webpage (www.createto.ca/1631queen); City Councillor Brad Bradford's Newsletter; and via CreateTO's social media channels.

A recording of the meeting is available on CreateTO's YouTube channel.

- [Watch the recording](#)

Swerhun Inc., the independent facilitation team retained by CreateTO, facilitated the meeting and prepared this summary and share it with participants for review prior to being finalized. The summary is intended to reflect key discussion points from the meeting and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

Key Themes in Feedback Received

There were key themes that emerged from the feedback shared by participants. More detail on each of these themes is provided in the remainder of this summary report.

Many participants supported affordable housing at 1631 Queen Street East.

Many participants who spoke at the meeting raised concerns that the proposed development exceeds the area's Urban Design Guidelines. These participants raised concerns about constructing a building taller than six-storeys, especially fronting directly onto Queen Street East. Concerns included setting a precedent for future developments in the area and not adhering to the Queen Street East Urban Design Guidelines (2012), which were developed in close consultation with the community over several years. One participant said they understood the need to increase density to support affordable housing and suggested exploring options other than increasing height to do so. One participant supported an exception to the Queen East Urban Design Guidelines to support 25% more affordable housing on the site, noting that this possibility had been raised when the Urban Design Guidelines were developed.

Some participants shared concerns about potential cumulative impacts of the various developments occurring in the area, including concerns about traffic impacts, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, parking, and overcrowding on the 501 Queen Streetcar.

Several participants liked the idea of having a small local business on-site but raised concerns about the viability this site for retail. They said that many storefronts in the area have closed down in recent years and the COVID-19 pandemic has stressed retail even more.

Questions of Clarification

Following the presentation, participants asked questions of clarification. Participant questions appear first, followed by responses and comments shared by the project team in *italics*.

Questions about the development overall.

What will happen to the daycare during construction? *The daycare centre will be temporarily relocated during construction. The City of Toronto and CreateTO are actively looking for a temporary space. We will ensure it will be a smooth transition. The future daycare space on-site will have an increased capacity, going up from 26 spaces to 62 spaces.*

How will public transportation accommodate a higher density of people? *The proposal will be circulated to the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) so that they can undertake an analysis of increased rider numbers and build that into service models, if/where necessary.*

Who will own the retail storefront on the proposed site? *The City will continue to own the land. The development partner will operate the retail space based on a 99-year lease with the City of Toronto.*

Will the size of the units built accommodate families? *Yes, some of the units will be sized to accommodate families and larger households. City Council adopted the Growing Up Guidelines that look to address three scales (one of which is the unit scale) on how tall buildings can include high quality living environments for larger households. The staff team on this project file will be pushing for a building layout and units to adhere to those guidelines.*

Will the height along Queen Street East be six storeys, following the Urban Design Guidelines? *We will be using the Urban Design Guidelines as our guiding direction, including following the angular plane requirements to push the building mass back along Eastern Avenue. You will likely see a proposed taller built form, however defining exactly what that will be is part*

of this planning and consultation process. We're looking to balance the planning framework and surrounding context with the directive to maximize affordable housing.

Questions about the proposed site's environmental sustainability.

Is there a green roof planned for this site? *Yes, green roofs are a by-law requirement for building permits in the City of Toronto with approximately 35 per cent of the roofs being green roofs.*

Which green standard targets will apply to this development? *City Council has directed us to target a minimum Toronto Green Standard (TGS) Tier 2, Version 3. We are currently targeting TGS Tier 4, Version 3 for this site. This Tier is the closest to providing net zero emissions without being entirely net zero.*

Will there be sufficient bike storage both inside and outside of the development? *The typical ratio for bike parking spaces is one parking spot per unit (which includes long-term and short-term biking storage). This will meet the Toronto Green Standard Tier 4 requirements, which includes a requirement for bike storage.*

Questions about the public realm features.

Will there be a connection to the park via a walkway across Eastern Avenue? *Potential crossings will be looked at in more detail once the transportation consultant is brought on board. We want to make sure any crossing is created safely and doesn't lead to conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.*

Questions about affordable housing.

How does the application for affordable housing work? Can it target a diverse range of people from around the City? *Advertisement of these new housing opportunities will start approximately six months to one year in advance of the construction completion. The City, through the Housing Secretariat, will ensure open and equitable access for the affordable units to a pool of diverse applicants. Tenants of affordable units will be required to meet certain eligibility requirements (such as income) and the City will work closely with the selected proponents to make sure affordability is secured for 99 years.*

Detailed Feedback

Participants shared feedback on a variety of topics through a facilitated discussion, summarized below. Participant feedback appears first, followed by comments and responses shared by the project team in *italics*.

Feedback about the preliminary development concept overall.

Many participants who spoke at the meeting raised concerns Some difference of opinion.

Several participants shared concerns about the possibility that development will be higher than six storeys along the Queen Street East frontage. They are worried that the proposed development concept will set a precedent for future developments in the area that are inconsistent with the Urban Design Guidelines for the area that were developed in close consultation with the local community over several years. Participants noted two planned developments east of the site, one ten storeys and one seventeen storeys. One participant shared support for going higher than six-storeys, commenting that affordable housing isn't feasible with a six-storey building and that these concerns were raised during the development of the Urban Design Guidelines. They went on to say that Urban Design Guidelines and Heritage Designations should include exemptions for building heights, angular planes, and parking requirements when building affordable housing. They encouraged the City to move

quickly and boldly with the development of this site, prioritizing affordable housing. *We have a set of urban design guidelines as guiding directions, but this is a City-initiated project to increase affordable housing and you may see a proposal for a taller built-form that is over six storeys high. We will be looking at the site and neighbourhood context and building an angular plane requirement along Queen Street. It is critical to create good character along Queen Street and Eastern Avenue, as well as a development concept that is viable to provide 50 per cent of units as affordable rental housing.*

General concerns over the Harvey's Restaurant not being part of the proposed redevelopment. Participants commented that the location “sticks out” as it is practically on the proposed site but not included in the plans. Some participants asked if there were options for acquiring the Harvey's site. One participant suggested that a larger building may allow the City to make a better deal with the owner of the Harveys' site and make it more feasible to acquire the land. *Unfortunately, we cannot control how the owner uses that plot of land. The principle of CreateTO is to leverage city-owned land to build affordable housing. The cost of purchasing the Harvey's site at market value would limit the amount of funds that can be put towards building affordable housing. This would conflict with our objective of maximizing the amount of affordable units that be developed on the site.*

Feedback on how to reflect the characteristics of the existing neighbourhood and include Indigenous place-keeping.

Ensure the development fits in with the neighbourhood. Other new developments in the area have a glass-iron feel that doesn't fit in with the unique character of the neighbourhood. *One of the great things about the Urban Design Guidelines is they focus on the public realm and provide guidance on how to maintain the character of this area. Bringing Indigeneity into the development may result in a mix of materials and textures that reflects the area and its history. Indigenous heritage may also be reflected in the designs drawing inspiration from bead work, brick patterns or basket weave patterns. It is a fine line to make the Indigenous concepts authentic in new construction.*

Consider adding colour/public art to the façade of the building. *We are looking to identify an artist that can create an art installation along Kishigo Lane. There will also be opportunities for the children's playground to be naturalized by introducing wood, log and stone textures and we will try to incorporate natural materials throughout the development where possible. We also want to add some saturated colours. We are looking forward to future community sessions where these themes can be discussed further.*

Feedback about the proposed new retail space in the development.

Mixed opinions on the viability of the proposed new retail space. A few participants would like to see the retail space on site be run by small businesses instead of having big chain stores taking over that space. Other participants raised concerns about the viability of retail in this area. Specific concerns raised included several smaller stores closing along Queen Street East and sites with retail space remaining vacant, including a development east of the site. One participant suggested the retail space be used to further expand the childcare facility instead. *For this site and other sites in the area the City reviewed main street retail, including ideal widths and depths of storefronts, from St Joseph's Hospital all the way to the other end of Queen Street. There are a wide range of commercial retail uses and they have been growing. We also know that commercial units are getting bigger, in part because of the space required for things like ventilation and HVAC systems that weren't present 100 years ago. We are working to find an appropriate balance that maintains the fine grain retail character of the area while providing some flexibility to make it viable for new commercial retail.*

Feedback about affordable housing.

Strong support for affordable housing. Generally, participants supported the direction to provide affordable housing at 1631 Queen Street East and across the City.

Explore working with Indigenous non-profit housing providers to ensure that some of the families moving in are Indigenous. *The Housing Secretariat is meeting with a number of Indigenous housing providers on a regular basis to look into upcoming opportunities for affordable housing (whether it be through subsidies or new housing). Further engagement with Indigenous housing providers will take place on a monthly basis to further identify opportunities.*

Additional height may be needed to support the affordable units. A participant encouraged the project team to consider making the development “bigger and bolder” to offset the costs of building affordable units on the site. *We want to be clear that affordable housing is our objective, but it is also important to respect and reinforce the characteristics of Queen Street East through building design. We will review the design guidelines very closely to see how we can leverage affordable housing with balancing the community context.*

Feedback about hard and soft infrastructure.

Consider introducing more community services, such as libraries or community centres, to accommodate the growing density of residents in the area. *The main contribution on this site specifically to meet the community needs is the expansion of the childcare facility and the 50 per cent affordable housing.*

Concerns about the cumulative impacts of development in the area. Participants raised concerns about the impacts of existing traffic congestion, especially during busy summer days and when events are held at Woodbine Park. Others shared concerns that there isn't adequate on-street parking in the neighbourhood, especially during busy days and having new developments will worsen this. Other participants mentioned that there is enough parking, noting there is a parking lot to the south of the development, as well as space at the health centre. There was also a suggestion to look into increasing transit service in the area to accommodate future growth. *Transportation requirements require that the project team look at the area as a whole. Permits will not be approved unless appropriate servicing and transportation is available.*

Next Steps

Councillor Bradford thanked everyone for contributing their time and ideas to the process. The project team also thanked participants for attending and sharing their feedback and committed to sharing a draft meeting summary in the coming weeks. The team explained the meeting materials will be made available on the project website at www.createto.ca/1631queen including the presentation, a recording of the meeting, and an online feedback form. Participants can also contact the Community Planner, Paul Mulé at 416-392-1306 or paul.mule@toronto.ca.

Attachment A. Agenda

Housing Now

1631 Queen Street East Community Consultation Meeting #1

Monday, December 7, 2020

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Online and by phone

Meeting Purpose

To introduce the Housing Now Initiative, present the site context for 1631 Queen Street East, introduce the concept of Indigenous place-keeping on site and Kishigo Lane, and present and seek feedback on early ideas for a preliminary development concept for the site.

Agenda

6:30 Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review

Elected Officials & Swerhun

6:40 Presentation

City Planning, CreateTO, Nbisiing, SvN, Two Row

Questions of Clarification

7:15 Discussion

Discussion Questions

- What are some important features of the existing neighbourhood that should be considered when redeveloping the site?
- Are there any opportunities to enhance the local neighbourhood that you would like to be considered? If so, what are they?
- Do you have any concerns about the redevelopment of the site? What suggestions do you have, if any, on how these concerns could be best addressed?
- Do you have any other comments or feedback for the Housing Now team?

8:25 Wrap-up and Next Steps

8:30 Adjourn