



**405 Sherbourne Street**  
Community Consultation Meeting #1 (of 2)

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

Monday, November 23, 2020  
7:00 – 9:00 pm, Virtual Meeting

### **Meeting Overview**

On Monday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, the City of Toronto and CreateTO hosted a virtual Community Consultation Meeting for the proposed redevelopment of 405 Sherbourne Street as part of the Housing Now Initiative. Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, staff from the City of Toronto and CreateTO, and members of the project consultant team also attended and participated in the meeting.

Following introductions and a review of the agenda from Ian Malczewski (Swerhun Inc.) and welcoming remarks from Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, staff from City Planning, CreateTO, and SvN Architects + Planners provided a presentation introducing the Housing Now Initiative, site analysis, planning framework, heritage considerations, preliminary development concept and the project schedule for the 405 Sherbourne Street site. Following the presentation, meeting participants asked questions and shared feedback through a facilitated discussion guided by a series of discussion questions. *See Attachment A for the meeting agenda.*

Approximately 70 people attended the meeting. The meeting was advertised through a variety of mechanisms including: mailed notice to residents and businesses surrounding the site (approximately 6,500 notices mailed); emails sent to individuals that signed up for updates on the housing now website ([createto.ca/housingnow](https://createto.ca/housingnow)); posters distributed in the community; information on the project webpage ([createto.ca/405sherbourne](https://createto.ca/405sherbourne)); Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam's Newsletter; and via CreateTO's social media channels.

A recording of the full 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 shared it in draft 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

These key themes highlight topics raised consistently at the meeting; they should be read in concert with the more detailed summary of questions and feedback that follows.

**General support for affordable housing.** Many participants supported the development of affordable housing at 405 Sherbourne and the Housing Now Initiative overall. Some suggested that the City and CreateTO consider adjusting parts of the preliminary development such as height, density, amount of underground parking, and composition of units (such as including studios or adding affordable homeownership units), to maximize the affordable housing opportunity and financial viability of the project.

**Mixed opinions about the proposed height and density of the development.** Several participants said the proposed concept is too tall. Concerns raised about the height of the building included shadow and wind impacts and the building not aligning with the existing heritage of the area. Others suggested the City and CreateTO increase the building's height and density to support or offset the cost of the affordable rental units.

**Concern about existing and potential for increased traffic.** Participants were concerned about potential traffic impacts — including pedestrian safety and traffic congestion — and advocated for strategies to mitigate these issues. Suggestions included installing a traffic light at Wellesley and Bleecker Streets and making the mid-block vehicle access within the site one-way.

**Strong support for public open space, mixed opinions about the location of open space on the site.** Generally, participants supported efforts to create safe, comfortable, public places for people to meet and spend time. There were mixed opinions about the location of the open space: some said it should be on the south side (away from the vehicle access area), while others said it should be on the north side to provide more opportunity for green space.

## 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.

### Questions about the preliminary development concept overall

**Has anyone conducted a shadow impact study to determine how residents and the public realm will be impacted?** *The project team has done some preliminary investigations into shadow impacts based on the current 22-storey height. These investigations — which look at the spring and summer equinoxes, when shadows are longest — have looked at the degree to which shadows land first on the public realm (streets and the parks) and second on neighbourhood homes. These investigations helped inform the orientation of the tower to minimize new shadow on nearby sidewalks, and public spaces. From this study, our initial findings are that the building will have no shadow impact on Winchester Park. The City considers a certain amount of shadow tolerable, and it needs to balance minimizing shadow impacts against the other objectives. The City requires a shadow study as part of the re-zoning process, so we will continue to look at shadows and will share more detail in our next community meeting.*

**I understand that the maximum height in the zoning by-law for this area is 3 stories (10 meters) high. How was a 22-story building approved? Why did the City decided to develop the building here, in such a concentrated rental area?** *City Council identified and directed staff to develop this site for Housing Now and maximize opportunities for affordable housing at this location. The Official Plan also identifies the site as suitable for an apartment*

*building. When deciding which sites will advance for Housing Now, the City considers sites it owns that are easily accessible via transit, and that can support new development. As a parking lot close to a subway station, 405 Sherbourne meets these criteria.*

**How many units are there per floor? Are there more than four?** *In the preliminary concept, the podium (the lower part of the building) has 15 units per floor and the tower has 10 units per floor. The final number of units per floor will be determined by the development partner selected through the market offering process.*

**Have the designers connected with Toronto Police to discuss and identify opportunities for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)?** *Not yet, but safety is important and we will consider connecting with the Toronto Police through the review of the Site Plan application. The team has considered safety by maximizing “eyes on the street” and on public spaces in the design.*

**I am concerned with the proposal for a 22-storey building; how can I register my protest?** *In addition to raising concerns in this meeting, you can register to depute at the City’s Planning and Housing Committee when the process moves to the formal Council approval stage. If you received a notice for this meeting, you will receive notice for that meeting, which will also tell you how to register comments with the City Clerk’s Office. Anyone participating today can send any comments to Thomas Rees (Community Planner) at [thomas.rees@toronto.ca](mailto:thomas.rees@toronto.ca).*

**Will there be accessible spaces for mobility devices?** *Yes, there will be fully accessible common spaces and a portion of the of units will be fully accessible.*

## **Questions about affordable units**

**Many residents in this area receive funding from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) or other support systems. Are any of the units slated to be Rent Geared to Income (RGI) units for low-income residents?** *At this moment, there are no RGI units. The proposed composition is 50% affordable rental units (which is 40-80% of the Average Market Rent [AMR] in Toronto). A minimum of 10% of the affordable units will be at 40% of average market rental. All the units are income tested, with 40% of AMR units going to people with low-incomes. The City also provides housing supplements and rent subsidies to improve affordability.*

**How can one apply for affordable housing units on this site? Is there a waitlist?** *The City will manage the process of accessing the new affordable housing units. The household incomes eligible for these affordable units will align with the income eligibility of the City’s affordable housing waitlist. Note added after the meeting: Following the meeting, staff from the Housing Secretariat provided further details, explaining that advertisement for these new housing opportunities will start approximately one year in advance of the construction completion. The City, through the Housing Secretariat, will ensure open and equitable access to the public for the affordable homes. 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.*

**Why are all the units affordable rentals instead of affordable ownership units?** *In May 2020, Council approved this site to be provided as affordable rental units. The majority of housing built in Toronto in recent years has been condos; we have not seen a diversity in housing types, including family friendly units or affordable rental units. This mixed income, mixed use type of housing is missing, so prioritizing affordable rentals helps fill this gap.*

**Is Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) involved in this development?** *TCHC plays an important role in providing housing across the City; however, Housing Now sites*

*will not be operated by TCHC or include social housing. Housing Now sites are developed through CreateTO working with the City of Toronto's City Planning Division and Housing Secretariat. Together, the City and CreateTO develop a concept and accompanying zoning, which it then markets to potential development partners. Once selected, that partner will build the development and be required through contract to provide housing at affordable levels. The developer may be a non-profit developer or a cooperative housing developer.*

**Are any of the units for sale?** *No, the development will be 100% rental with 50% of the units being affordable rental units and the remaining 50% being market rental.*

## Questions about environmental standards

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

## Summary of Feedback

Participants shared feedback on a variety of topics through a facilitated discussion, summarized below. Participant feedback is **bold**, while comments and responses shared by the project team are in *italics*.

### Feedback about the preliminary development concept overall

**Mixed opinions about the proposed height.** Some said the proposed height of 22-storeys is too tall, saying they were concerned about shadow and wind impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood (especially nearby homes on Bleecker St). There were also concerns raised that the proposed height would not align with the character and heritage of the area. Another participant advocated for increased heights and density suggesting both 25 or 27 storeys be considered to offset the costs of the affordable units. The developments at 40 Homewood (31 storeys) and 159 Wellesley East (36 storeys) are examples of nearby taller buildings.

**Consider providing servicing access from Sherbourne Street.** Bleecker Street often ends up being the "back of the building" where noisy servicing like garbage pick-up happens. Consider instead designing for waste removal from Sherbourne Street, which is wider and may be less disruptive. *The City requires buildings like this to provide an enclosed space for waste collection and removal to reduce public noise. We don't want to create a "back of the building," we want to make both the Sherbourne and Bleecker Street sides of the building face their surroundings.*

### Feedback about affordable housing

**Strong support for affordable housing.** Several participants supported the focus on providing affordable housing at 405 Sherbourne.

**Interest in seeing options for affordable home ownership (in addition to affordable rental).** Consider including affordable ownership units to help residents to build equity — affordable rental may not provide tenants with the same protections as ownership. *Because the City is involved in overseeing the managing of Housing Now rental units, residents will have protections that are different and more protective than those renting in private homes or condos. Purpose-built rental buildings provide more security of tenure than other forms of rental stock.*

**Additional height and/or market ownership units may be required to support the affordable units.** This is a difficult and expensive area to build and operate in. Additional height (up to 27-storeys), some market condo units, and/or smaller unit sizes may be needed to offset the costs of building affordable units on the site.

**Consider reducing the parking ratio requirement to help offset the cost of the affordable units.** *The existing parking ratio of 0.35 parking spaces per unit would result in one-level of underground parking. This ratio is typical for tall buildings and would include parking for the market and affordable units and some visitor parking. We can investigate whether a smaller ratio is possible; we also need to be paying attention to any loss of parking in the existing Green P lot. We will confirm the ratio and number of parking spaces once we have retained a traffic consultant to support the design.*

**Consider excluding this site from Cabbagetown HCD policies to maximize affordable housing.** A participant suggested excluding this site from most of the Cabbagetown HCD policies and treating the site the same as the Bleeker Street co-op area, which is not included in the HCD area or subject to its policies.

## Feedback about parking, vehicular traffic, and impacts on the local street network

**Consider adding a traffic light at Wellesley and Bleeker Streets to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.** This intersection (and surrounding area) is already overcrowded with vehicles and can be dangerous for pedestrians and difficult for drivers to turn. Adding more residents and cars to the area will make it even busier. If the less busy intersection of Homewood and Wellesley has a traffic light, this intersection should have one, too. *As part of the rezoning application, we will require a traffic impact study and make sure it looks at turning movements and wait times at this intersection. (Facilitation team note: Councillor Wong-Tam added that the City does not need to wait for this development application to proceed in order to consider a traffic light at this intersection and encouraged interested participants to contact her office so she can follow-up with the City's Transportation Operations staff. Her office can be reached at [councillor\\_wongtam@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_wongtam@toronto.ca) or 416-696-4300).*

**Consider making the vehicular access to/from the building one-way** to make the area safer and create more space for pedestrians around the site. *We've done some preliminary examination of one-way versus two-way circulation options. We will continue to look at vehicular access design and operations and share that analysis at our next public meeting in 2021.*

## Feedback about public realm features

**A variety of opinions about the location(s) of the public open space around the building.** Generally, participants preferred one larger open space over two smaller spaces. Some suggested locating open space on the south side of the building to keep pedestrians and vehicles apart. Others suggested a larger open space on the north side would provide more room for existing trees and protect areas to the north from shadow impacts created by the building.

**COVID-19 has demonstrated the increased need for public open space and green space.** Participants discussed the importance of designing the public open space(s) to be safe and welcoming, in particular since the pandemic began. Specific suggestions for the public space around the site, included:

- space for dogs;
- space/equipment for outdoor calisthenics;
- appropriate soil volumes to support chosen vegetation; and
- encourage regular and consistent use to promote safety.

**Given the area's demographics, there is a need for public space that accommodates diverse families and cultures.** *We are aware of the need for family and community space, and the development will include communal spaces for people to meet. Outside the building, there*

*will be safe spaces for all people — including children — to meet. It will also include community agency space, though we do not yet have specifics on what type of space that will be. Consistent with the City of Toronto's Growing Up Guidelines, we will ensure the building is hospitable to families with children and larger households.*

## **Feedback on how to reflect the characteristics and heritage of the existing neighbourhood**

**Ensure the development respects the area's look and feel.** Participants said the design of the building should fit in and align with the architectural heritage of the area. One participant said the Beverley Street example shared is not a good precedent because it does not match the area's heritage or brick colour.

## **Next Steps**

The project team thanked participants for attending and sharing their feedback and committed to sharing a draft meeting summary in the coming weeks. Participants who would like to further share feedback or have additional questions about 405 Sherbourne Street, can contact Community Planner Thomas Rees at [Thomas.rees@toronto.ca](mailto:Thomas.rees@toronto.ca) or 416-392-1791. Participants can also find this information at [createto.ca/405sherbourne](https://createto.ca/405sherbourne).

## Attachment A. Meeting Agenda

Housing Now

**405 Sherbourne Street**

### **Community Consultation Meeting #1**

Monday, November 23, 2020

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Online and by phone

#### **Meeting Purpose**

To introduce the Housing Now Initiative and present and seek feedback on the preliminary development concept for 405 Sherbourne Street

#### **Agenda**

##### **7:00 Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review**

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam & Swerhun

##### **7:10 Presentation**

City Planning, CreateTO, SvN

*Questions of Clarification*

##### **7:45 Discussion**

###### Discussion Questions

- What types of public realm features (such as trees and plantings, walkways, street furniture) would you like to see around the building?
- What suggestions do you have, if any, on how best to reflect the characteristics of the neighbourhood and surrounding buildings in the preliminary development concept?
- What types of community agency space do you think would benefit the local community? (e.g. library, community health services, employment centre, senior services, etc.)
- Other comments?

##### **8:55 Wrap-up and Next Steps**

##### **9:00 Adjourn**