



405 Sherbourne Street
Community Consultation Meeting #2
MEETING SUMMARY
Thursday, April 1, 2021
7:00 – 9:00 pm, Virtual Meeting

Meeting Overview

On Thursday, April 1, 2021, 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. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Housing Now Initiative, and seek community feedback on the proposed development. Approximately 45 people participated along with Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, staff from the City of Toronto and CreateTO, and members of the project consultant team. The meeting included an overview presentation, questions of clarification, and a plenary discussion (see Attachment A for the meeting agenda).

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 local organizations and individuals that signed up for updates on the Housing Now website (createto.ca/housingnow); information on the project webpage (<http://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., independent facilitation team retained by CreateTO, facilitated the meeting and prepared this meeting summary and shared it with participants in draft for review prior to it being finalized. Participants were encouraged to send any additional feedback or questions not covered in the meeting by email to the project team until April 8th, 2021. This summary is intended to reflect key discussion points from the meeting and post meeting feedback; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

Key themes

These key themes highlight topics raised consistently at the meeting. More detail on each of these themes is provided in the remainder of this summary report.

Support for the revised development concept overall. As with the first meeting, several participants said that they support the Housing Now project at 405 Sherbourne Street including affordable housing. Others liked the architectural changes and changes to open space.

Concern about the increase in height of the revised development concept. Several participants were concerned with the increase in the building's height, saying it will set a precedent for future developers, create shadows on Bleecker Street residents, and does not fit in the neighbourhood.

Concern with parking and vehicular traffic. Participants were concerned with amount of parking provided, saying it would not be enough for future tenants and neighbourhood visitors. Others were concerned with potential traffic from drivers using the mid-block vehicular connection as a shortcut.

Questions of clarification

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

Questions about the revised development concept overall

Who is going to be paying for the construction of this development? *Once the zoning by-law is in place, there will be a competitive market offering to find a private non-profit developer partner who will build the project. The developer partner will fund the project, but the City of Toronto will offer incentives through the open-door program and leverage the value of the land to support the development of affordable housing.*

Can you clarify what the shadow impacts on the surrounding area are? *The City's key concern is to mitigate the shadow impact on public streets and parks, especially Winchester Park. The revised development has a similar shadow impact as the one shared in the first Community Consultation Meeting, with 3.5 percent shadow impact increase on Winchester Park between 4:18-5:18 p.m. during the spring equinox.*

How many levels below ground is the building? *The building includes one below ground level for parking.*

Questions about affordable units

How can someone apply for the affordable units? *Approximately six months prior to first occupancy, the selected developer will work closely with the City to identify residents based on the City's criteria (such as income). Because the demand for affordable units outweighs available units, there will be a random draw process from an eligible pool of residents. Information on how to apply and about current developments is available on the City's [website](#).*

How many affordable units will there be and how many bedrooms will the affordable units have? How much will the affordable units cost? *50 per cent, or 133 units will be affordable rental units. Note added after the meeting: Following the meeting the project team clarified that of the 133 affordable units, 9 percent will be studio units, 54 percent will be 1-bedroom units, 28 percent will be 2-bedroom units, and 9 percent will be 3-bedroom units. The Housing Now program requires affordable units to achieve an average of 80 percent of average*

market rent, with a minimum of 10 percent of the affordable units targeting 40 percent of average market rent.

Questions about sustainability

Has the consultant team conducted a life cycle analysis to understand the building's impacts on the environment? *We have not done so yet, but more detailed analysis will happen in the future phases once the rezoning is complete. The City of Toronto is moving towards better green standards and, once the developer is chosen, that developer will have to meet Tier 2 Version 3 of the Toronto Green Standards, which addresses a range of environmental impacts, including stormwater retention and air quality. The public will be able to access this information as the project moves along.*

What percentage of the building has a green roof? *50 percent of available roof space will be green.*

How many Electric Vehicle parking spaces will be built? *The Toronto Green Standards requires 20 percent of parking spaces to be for Electric Vehicles.*

In order to reduce construction time and construction waste, can the City consider building a hybrid structure with mass timber? *We won't dictate construction types to future proponents, but we are looking at mass timber to understand it more for potential future offerings. We will also reward proponents who bring in environmental considerations for the building.*

Questions about community space

Is there a reduction in community space relative to the concept shared in the first Community Meeting? *Yes, in order to include a bike room, mail room, and waste disposal room we had to reduce the size of the community space. That said, community space remains a priority for the City and we will explore opportunities to increase it through the Site Plan Application process.*

Is there a specific tenant or intended use for the community spaces and services? Can the City direct what type of service can go into that space? *Currently there is no specified tenant for the community space, but once the site is on the market it will be up to proponent to identify a suitable tenant for the space in their proposal. Deciding what type of services goes into that space depends on how the Request for Proposal (RFP) is structured, and the City can place conditions on the terms of use or types of use. We know there are already many social services in the community, so if there are any specific uses for the space that the community thinks are beneficial you can suggest them to the project team. We want to keep the space flexible and animated while meeting the requirements of the program and needs of the community.*

Detailed summary of feedback

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

Feedback about the revised development concept overall

General support and excitement for the development, the Housing Now program, and the affordable housing component of the project. Several participants said they supported the City's efforts to address Toronto's housing affordability crisis with Housing Now. Specific things participants liked about the revised concept were:

- the architecture and dips within the façade, which better complement the townhouses on Bleecker and the heritage context of the area;
- the podium changes that allow for more depth on Sherbourne Street;
- the setback from Sherbourne Street with the use of plants;
- the removal of the canopy on the north side, and
- the increase in width of the midblock connection at the north end of the site.

Different opinions about the building's height and proposed increase. A few liked the height increase and the additional affordable housing it allows. Several others reiterated concerns about the proposed height, citing shadow and wind impacts on Bleecker Street, concern with the building not fitting in with the neighbourhood context or the Heritage District Guidelines, and the height setting a precedent for future developers. They asked about the rationale for the increased height (given that some opposed the height in the first community meeting). *The rationale for increasing the height three stories came through the development review process where CreateTO and the City were directed to and continued to review opportunities to maximize the amount of new affordable units. Another factor influencing the change is the area's designation as Apartment Neighbourhood in the Official Plan, a designation that allows for more height. Every site is context-specific, so a 25-storey building on this site may not necessarily translate to more 25-storey buildings in the neighbourhood.*

Some concern about safety risks and interest in understanding why the City had identified this site for affordable housing (as opposed to the west end), given the density of social housing and services nearby. *Site selection is based on Council Direction and considers things like proximity to higher order transit and the ability to address Toronto's affordability crisis by redeveloping under-used land. Some of the largest Housing Now sites are in Etobicoke and North York.*

Feedback about affordable housing

Consider having fewer market rental units and using a co-operative housing model to increase affordability. *There are 17 Housing Now sites that will be developed by non-profit partners. Across the City's other affordable housing programs, the City is looking at increasing the number of cooperative housing units.*

Feedback about parking, traffic, and impacts on local streets

Concern with the small number of parking spaces. The proposed number of spaces does not replace the existing Green P parking and provides even less for future residents of the building. Some said the neighbourhood does not have enough parking to absorb the loss of this parking lot, while others who lived in nearby developments said their buildings have a number of empty parking spots that could be made available for those that need to drive. *Current trends across the city indicate there is a decrease in parking spaces needed. There is less desire to drive downtown, and the site's location gives future tenants other options such as cycling, transit and walking. We are also looking at a shared parking arrangement where tenants and the public can make use of the same parking lot.*

Concern with potential traffic impacts of the mid-block connection. Non-residents may use this connection as a shortcut, which could lead to more back-ups and congestion on the areas' streets. There was a suggestion to reverse access to the mid-block connection so that cars would enter from Bleecker and exit on to Sherbourne to reduce traffic on Bleecker and potential pedestrian/vehicle conflicts at Wellesley and Bleecker. *The intent is to keep this connection for residents only. Strategies like a signage, gates, retractable bollards or other traffic calming measures can help mitigate against this risk, either from the onset or later, if this type of activity becomes a problem.*

Suggestions for the revised development

Participants suggested additional refinements to the revised development concept, including

- orient the community space to the south end of Sherbourne Street;
- orient the entrance to the lobby towards the north so residents can take ownership of that space;
- conduct wind and shadow impact studies on Bleecker Street. *The shadow impact study is on the Application Information Centre [Website](#) or participants can email City Planner, Thomas Rees at Thomas.Rees@toronto.ca to request the study. The wind impact study will be conducted during the Site Plan application stage and will be publicly available at that time.*
- consider being flexible with the 750 square foot floorplate to allow for more affordable family sized units and add more square footage without having to build taller. *We prefer to stick with the 750-meter floorplate. Because of the building's relatively low height, square form, and minimal internal required servicing, the floorplate is compact and allows for more space than the previous version. We are looking at requiring half the family-sized units be on the lower levels to keep an equitable unit mix throughout the building. The current floorplate make up is: 1 studio unit, 6 one-bedroom units, 3 two-bedroom units, and 1 three-bedroom unit, with the two- and three-bedroom units occupying the corners. All architectural plans are on the Application Information Centre [website](#).*

Next Steps

The project team thanked participants for attending and sharing their feedback and committed to share a draft summary shared with participants. CreateTO will post updates on the Housing Now project website (www.createto.ca/405sherbourne), including meeting materials (presentation, a recording of the meeting, and the final meeting summary). Participants can also contact the Community Planner, Thomas Rees (Thomas.rees@toronto.ca) with any further questions or comments.

Attachment A. Meeting Agenda

Housing Now

405 Sherbourne Street

Community Consultation Meeting #2

Thursday, April 1, 2021

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Online and by phone

Meeting Purpose

To share and seek feedback on the revised development proposal for 405 Sherbourne Street.

Proposed Agenda

7:00 Welcome, land acknowledgement, introductions, agenda review

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam & Swerhun Inc.

7:10 Housing Now & Revised Development Proposal for 405 Sherbourne Street

City Planning, CreateTO, SvN, BA Group

Questions of clarification

8:00 Discussion

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you like about the revised development concept?
2. Do you have any suggested refinements to the revised development concept?
3. Do you have any other comments?

8:55 Wrap up and next steps

9:00 Adjourn