

Gerrard-Carlaw North (GCN) Transit-Oriented Community (TOC)

Virtual Open House #2
Engagement Final Summary Report

Prepared for Choice Properties & Infrastructure Ontario
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1. Project Background

Situated on the northeast corner of Gerrard Street and Carlaw Avenue, the 2.27-hectare site is proposed to be transformed into a mixed-use transit-oriented community (TOC) anchored by the future Gerrard Station along the Ontario Line.

The proposed TOC at Gerrard-Carlaw North would provide greater public access to enhanced parkland and greenspace, increase transit access and connectivity, optimize street connections to improve mobility via a new street connecting Carlaw Avenue and Pape Avenue, and provide new retail and housing units.

The TOC program was created by the Province of Ontario to improve transit access and bring more housing, jobs, retail, and public amenities at and around transit stations. The program encourages collaboration with all parties involved: province, private partners, municipalities, and local communities to offset the cost of station construction, which would save taxpayers' money.

Site Information

The site is located at the northeast corner of Carlaw Avenue and Gerrard Street, in the Riverdale neighbourhood. The site is triangular and bounded by Carlaw Avenue to the west and Pape Avenue to the east, a laneway to the north, and the Metrolinx rail corridor to the south. The site currently includes a No Frills grocery store and the Riverdale Shopping Centre.

Situated directly adjacent to the future Gerrard Station along the Ontario Line, the proposed Gerrard-Carlaw North TOC will provide convenient and safe connections to downtown Toronto and surrounding areas. The proposed TOC will cohesively provide the community with enhanced greenspace through a new public park and open spaces. A new and accessible public street will connect Pape Ave to Carlaw Ave to improve the flow of pedestrians and vehicles within and around the site. The attractive street design will include wide sidewalks, public seating, trees and landscaping, and other high-quality design features to create a welcoming environment and foster opportunities for social connections.

Economic Activity

Comprised of a mix of residential units, transit connections, retail space, and parkland, the proposed Gerrard-Carlaw North TOC will create approximately 225 new jobs at the heart of a future major transit station while providing convenient connections to thousands of commuters.

To enhance the quality of life for residents in the Riverdale neighbourhood, the proposed TOC would create approximately 7,810 square metres of commercial space, including new retail and a grocery store.

Environmental

The proposed TOC supports sustainability objectives outlined by the [Toronto Green Standards](#) and aims to exceed objectives by:

- Prioritizing energy efficiency by reducing window-to-wall ratio.
- Exploring the use of geothermal systems to reuse energy from cooling to heating seasonally.
- Prioritizing green roofs and permeable surfaces for onsite stormwater management.

The proposed TOC also aims to implement design elements that will help achieve high sustainability targets.

Housing

The proposed TOC is anticipated to deliver approximately 1,080 residential units, in a variety of sizes to meet the needs of a wide range of households. New residential buildings will be complemented by indoor and outdoor amenity spaces that will act as an extension of personal living space, contributing to the quality of life of residents and the community. A strategy to deliver affordable housing options will be developed through discussions with the province and the City of Toronto.

Connectivity

The future Gerrard Station will serve the surrounding neighbourhood as a transit hub, facilitating direct, convenient, and accessible connections between the Ontario Line subway and existing surface transit routes along Gerrard Avenue, Pape Avenue and Carlaw Avenue, including the 506 streetcar and the #72 bus.

The proposed TOC would also support active transportation by providing over 1,000 bicycle parking spots, including dedicated spaces reserved for transit users.

2. Engagement Overview

Virtual Open House #2

On Thursday, March 30, 2023, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., the Province of Ontario and Choice Properties hosted the second community engagement session about the future of Gerrard-Carlaw North as a proposed mixed-use transit-oriented community anchored by the future Gerrard Station on the Ontario Line, using Zoom Webinar. The virtual open house was attended by 171 participants (406 participants registered). This meeting focused on sharing an update about the project, seeking feedback about the future site and answering questions. Materials and a recording of the meeting can be accessed at <https://engagecn.ca/>.

The meeting was facilitated by LURA Consulting and the agenda included: opening remarks and introductions; presentations by Infrastructure Ontario, City of Toronto and Choice Properties; an engagement summary and feedback overview from the previous open house, followed by a question/answer discussion.

There were 144 written questions and comments received through the Zoom Webinar Q&A function, some of which were responded to during the session. Questions were also asked and answered verbally through the raised hand function. Thirteen live questions were responded to during the Q&A period. There were nine questions submitted via email prior to the meeting.

Councillor Paula Fletcher's office representative was in attendance as the councillor was unable to attend due to conflicting schedules with a city council meeting. The meeting was also attended by MPP Peter Tabuns.

Participants were invited to ask questions and provide feedback verbally or through writing in the Zoom Webinar Q&A function. Infrastructure Ontario, Choice Properties and City of Toronto staff responded to questions and LURA Consulting recorded feedback received.

Polls

Two polls were provided to participants during the meeting to provide feedback. The first poll invited participants to share if they joined Virtual Open House #1. The results showed 32 per cent joined the first meeting and 68 per cent did not.

The second poll invited participants to provide feedback on their top three priority community needs based on a list of five community benefit options provided by the City of Toronto, which included: community space, upgrades to the Matty Eckler Recreation Centre, daycare facility, library funding and affordable housing options. The results showed that priority #1 is affordable housing options, priority #2 is community space and priority #3 is upgrades to the Matty Eckler Recreation Centre.

The detailed poll responses can be found in **Appendix A**.

Feedback Themes

During the virtual open house, participants asked questions and provided comments about the following themes:

- **Housing** including housing types, financing, affordability (including rent-geared-to-income), unit/bedroom sizes and process in developing a development housing strategy;
- **Transit, Transportation & Traffic** including traffic impacts and pedestrian connectivity from the new street proposed, transit infrastructure details, integration with the proposed Gerrard Station, road/pedestrian safety, and vehicle parking;
- **Design, Planning & Project** including wind tunnel effects, construction timing, pedestrian bridge maintenance/replacement, existing zoning, building heights, sustainability elements such as green roofs, climate change resilience planning and municipal infrastructure;

- **Parks & Public Realm** including park health and remediation process, responsibility of design and construction, and usage along the edge of Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPs);
- **Amenities & Community Facilities** including closures of No Frills and gas station, as well as replacement retail spaces, sizes, timing, and locations.

3. What We Heard

The following is a summary of participant feedback gathered through virtual open house #2. This feedback is aggregated and organized thematically.

Housing

Participants provided several questions and comments related to housing and the residential components of the project. It was suggested that rental housing and a mix of housing types should be included. Residents asked about the servicing and infrastructure requirements to support increased population, and requested a feasibility study be completed as part of the assessment. Some questions were raised around how the percentage of unit sizes (i.e. number of 3-bedroom units to be offered) was determined. It was suggested that the project team consider shared units where multigenerational families might live together.

Several comments were made about the importance of affordable housing, including rent-geared-to-income units as a concept. Questions were asked about the financing of housing, unit sizes, bedroom sizes and what the process will be for developing a housing strategy for the development.

The project team noted that affordable housing options, such as purpose-built rental, which is part of the portfolio for Choice Properties, is something that the team is considering for the site. The project team indicated that the strategy to deliver affordable housing options for the project will be developed through discussions with the province and the City of Toronto.

Transit, Transportation, and Traffic

Participants shared many questions related to transportation and traffic related to the development overall, as well as the new street proposed. Concerns were noted about the integration of this street in terms of congestion and added traffic in the community, as well as impacts on pedestrian connectivity and safety. This was particularly noted for pedestrians walking from Pape St. to Gerrard Square and/or Matty Eckler Community Centre. It was suggested that connections from the street through the podium (the base of the proposed buildings) to the Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPs) should be incorporated to better connect the space.

The project team provided more detail on the new street and how it will become a strong linkage between Pape Avenue and Carlaw Avenue, collecting new site traffic and orienting this activity along the main arterial rail corridors rather than onto the local street network. The new street will also improve the network available for pedestrian

and cyclist use and offer a strong public realm that will encourage and support active transportation use. The new mobility infrastructure, including the new street, signalized intersections, pedestrian linkages, public realm enhancements, bike racks and cycling paths, will enhance connectivity and fully integrate with the Station to maximize convenience, accessibility, and safety of transit travel for residents, visitors, and patrons.

The need for safety was also noted for both road users and pedestrians. Questions and concerns were raised around vehicle parking, loading zones and the number of parking spaces that will be available for vehicles and bikes. Some participants were pleased to see a large component of cycling parking being offered. It was suggested that EV charging ports be available for public use.

The project team also provided more detail about site grading, and communicated that this does not impact the ability to provide a strong public realm while meeting loading requirements for the grocery store. It was clarified that the future grocery store will be the same size as the existing store.

Choice Properties will continue to work with the City of Toronto and the province on mobility solutions that prioritize safe walking, cycling and connections to transit to reduce car reliance and meet the City of Toronto's [Green Standard](#) requirements.

Participants were interested in the transit infrastructure details as they relate to the Ontario Line and the overall integration of the proposed Gerrard Station into the community. The project team responded that Metrolinx would be able to best answer questions about transit and station-related questions and concerns.

Design, Planning and Project

Participants asked questions and offered comments regarding the design and planning of the project and expressed the importance of the proper integration of intensification in the community. Questions and concerns were raised about how the height of the three towers was determined, what will be done to address wind tunnel effect, the type of heating to be installed throughout the development, angles of the junction of the new proposed street, and maintenance of the pedestrian bridge. Some participants suggested that the pedestrian bridge be replaced completely. Further details on the shadow study, specifically including a December study, was also requested. It was noted that Community Employment Benefits opportunities would be valuable to ensure a local workforce development plan for youth in the area. It was suggested that office buildings be incorporated into the plans.

The project team advised that they have engaged wind consultants, as well as noise and vibration consultants, as a part of the TOC Zoning process. The site plan application that will be submitted to the City of Toronto for review and approval will include a pedestrian-level wind study analysis. Other technical studies, such as a shadow study, have been uploaded to the project website for the community to review.

A December shadow study was not required as part of the submission but may be provided at a later date. Built-form relationships, including shadow impact, were explored by the consultant team to assess where height was best positioned on the site. The project team noted that heights are appropriate and have been determined based on proximity to higher-order transit and the site's location within a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA). The City of Toronto provided information about the Official Plan policies, Zoning By-Law Amendments, and the Gerrard-Carlaw Planning Study, which will provide direction on development potential around this higher-order transit station.

Discussions with the City of Toronto about the details of the proposed plans for the site will continue. Infrastructure assessments and recommendations for improvements will be part of the City of Toronto's Gerrard-Carlaw Planning Study.

Parks and Public Realm

Participants provided questions and comments regarding the park and public realm experience, and expressed the importance creating healthy park spaces. Questions were noted about the trains running under the POPS and the remediation process of the parkland to ensure safe conditions for parkland usage. Questions were noted around who will hold responsibility for the design and construction of Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) – be it developer or city-managed – and what planned building uses there will be along the edges of the park spaces.

The project team advised that the City of Toronto has standards for accepting land as part of a development application, and that the land conveyance process will ensure there are safe conditions for the parkland use. The City of Toronto advised that the Parks Department will manage the process for receiving new parkland and does not foresee any remediation concerns for this site.

The project team also advised that the ownership of the public park remains with the city, and a public parks design process will be undertaken separately by the City of Toronto. The current proposal is for Choice Properties to own the POPS above the Ontario Line corridor. The planned uses for the POPS are still being discussed. Choice Properties will continue to work with the City of Toronto to define the uses within the POPS.

Amenities and Community Facilities

Participants asked several questions about the closure and replacement plans for community amenities such as No Frills and the gas station. Many participants raised concerns about access to affordable groceries and food security. Questions and concerns were also noted about changes to retail spaces (including local businesses), particularly around what size replacements will be, where they will be located and when these changes will take place. Participants also noted that local schools are currently at capacity and questions were raised about where new residents will go to school.

Choice Properties advised they are working to bring a grocery store back to the site, and that the type of grocery store will be determined closer to the date of construction.

Choice Properties advised that we are very early in the process, and this project has a long timeline; it is key to ensure the grocery store banner is relevant to the Choice Properties retail tenancy plan. Choice Properties will continue to assess the viability of all grocery store options.

The project team also advised that the future grocery store in the proposed plans will be the same size as the existing grocery store, and that there are several affordable grocery options nearby. The Choice Properties leasing team is working with all existing site tenants on an ongoing basis.

Concerns were also raised around the timeline for Metrolinx's Ontario Line and the impact that might continue to have on closures of community amenities. It was suggested that as much advance notice should be provided to community members as possible, and that ongoing communication should be shared widely.

The project team responded that Metrolinx would be able to best respond to transit construction questions and concerns.

4. Next Steps

Project and meeting materials, in addition to the event recording, were posted to the project webpage at <http://engagegcn.ca>. The public can also contact the project team with questions at info@engagegerrardcarlawnorth.ca. The project team will continue to keep the community informed as the project progresses.

Community input is an important part of the process, and we would like to thank everyone who has participated in this TOC engagement.

Appendix A - Poll Results

The details of the poll results are outlined below.

1. Were you able to join us at Virtual Open House #1? Please select Yes or No.
 - a. Yes 32% (38/118)
 - b. No 68% (80/118)

2. What does your community need? In addition to the new transit station, park and POPs, what other community amenities would you want to see with this development? The City of Toronto has identified the following additional priorities for the community.
Please rank the three most important to you. We will provide three polls for you to rank your top three choices in order, starting with your first priority.
 - a. Daycare Facility
 - b. Affordable Housing Options
 - c. Library Funding
 - d. Community Space
 - e. Upgrades to the Matty Eckler Recreation Centre

Priority #1

- **45% (59/132) Affordable Housing Options**
- 20% (27/132) Community Space
- 20% (26/132) Upgrades to the Matty Eckler Recreation Centre
- 10% (13/132) Daycare Facility
- 5% (7/132) Library Funding

Priority #2

- **29% (37/129) Community Space**
- 26% (34/129) Upgrades to the Matty Eckler Recreation Centre
- 24% (31/129) Affordable Housing Options
- 12% (16/129) Daycare Facility
- 9% (11/129) Library Funding

Priority #3

- **26% (34/129) Upgrades to the Matty Eckler Recreation Centre**
- 23% (30/129) Community Space
- 22% (28/129) Library Funding
- 16% (20/129) Daycare Facility
- 13% (17/129) Affordable Housing Options

NOTE: respondents could provide the same answer for all three