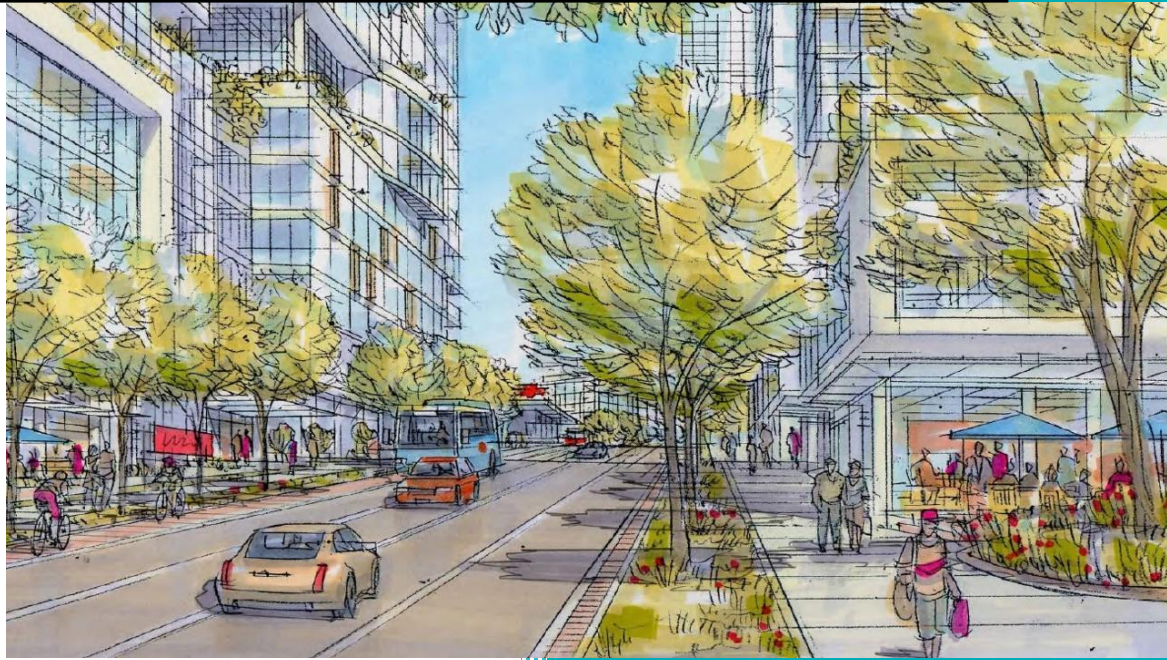


# Engage Bridge Public Engagement Summary Report



**Virtual Event**

**December 14, 2021**

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Prepared for:

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1/25/2022

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## Introduction

Transit-oriented communities (TOC) are part of the government’s plan to build new, sustainable transit. TOC will enhance the Province of Ontario’s (the Province) “New Subway Transit Plan for the GTA” by placing more housing and jobs near or at transit stations along the routes of the Province’s four priority subway projects, including the Ontario Line, the Yonge North Subway Extension, the Scarborough Subway Extension, and the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension.

The TOC proposal at the future Bridge station will create a complete mixed-use community that is compact, transit supportive and high density, and makes effective use of the Province’s infrastructure investment. The project looks to increase transit ridership and housing supply, while building a complete community that is a 15-minute walk from end to end. The site will be developed by the Province, in line with the stated objectives of the TOC program.

## Engagement Activities



A total of 1,500 postcards were distributed to residences and businesses within a one-kilometre radius of the centre of the proposed development to make them aware of the website and an upcoming open house opportunity.



A virtual open house was held on December 14, 2021 with a live Q&A session. Approximately 100 people registered for the event and a video recording was posted on the website the following day.

## Presentation

On Tuesday December 14, 2021, Infrastructure Ontario, Condor Properties Ltd. and Metrus Properties held a virtual open house for the Bridge TOC with a moderator from AECOM serving to facilitate the presentation and questions. The meeting began with a land acknowledgement, introductions, opening remarks from Wayne Emmerson, Chairman and CEO of York Region, and Michael Fedchyshyn, Senior Vice President, Transit Oriented Communities Program, Infrastructure Ontario, followed by a presentation on the Bridge TOC proposal by members of the development team: Andrew Ferancik, Planning Consultant from WND Associates and Henry Burstyn, Architect from IBI Group.

The facilitator explained that the focus of the open house session would be on the proposed TOC development, and questions regarding the subway alignment and other details should be redirected to the Yonge North Subway Extension team during their public engagement sessions on December 16, 2021, and January 5, 2022.

The presentation opened with Michael Fedchyshyn discussing the benefits and need for transit-oriented communities and sharing the vision of establishing a community for mixed uses including housing, transit, and public spaces.

Andrew Ferancik introduced the planning context and described the history of the plan to develop the Bridge Station area. He described the growing population in the GTA and the provincial Places to Grow vision that included plans for intensification at this location. He also highlighted the 2010 Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan, which was the initial draft of the City of Markham's vision for the area and the starting point for the current TOC proposal. The proposal will follow the TOC guiding principles to establish a complete, walkable community connected to transit. The focus of the TOC Program is to create a vibrant community at transit stations along priority transit lines with the intention of saving taxpayer dollars, reducing pollution, creating jobs, and aiding in economic recovery. The program aims to increase transit ridership, increase housing supply, catalyze complete communities, offset the cost of station construction, and stimulate the economy. Andrew emphasized the vision of a community with a true mix of uses including open public spaces, housing, including affordable housing, an extensive active transportation network and thoughtfully integrated residential and commercial space.

#### **TOC Guiding Principles**

- ✓ Appropriate Mix of Uses
- ✓ Transit Supportive Density
- ✓ Integration with Surrounding Area
- ✓ Great Public Realm
- ✓ Transit Infrastructure Integration
- ✓ Natural, Built, and Cultural Heritage
- ✓ Housing Supply and Jobs
- ✓ Community Amenities and Infrastructure

Henry Burstyn followed up to discuss the development plan in greater detail. He outlined the boundaries of the development and described key features of the area as well as the design of the road and active transportation network. He mentioned how the various transit systems would connect in the area, and how transit would be integrated into the community. He also highlighted the amenities and park spaces that were being planned, and the variety of residential, commercial and mixed-use buildings that would be included. He explained the grading of the site that would be needed to connect the community over the existing CN rail corridor.

The presentation concluded by examining the estimated timeline for the Bridge TOC with the various phases of development from 2021 to 2050.

## Questions and Answers

Following the presentation, a live question-and-answer period was conducted. Participants were able to submit questions ahead of time and during the session via the Zoom webinar Q&A feature. Attendees were also encouraged to continue providing input after the session through a short survey that was posted on the Engage Bridge website. A summary of the discussion and the survey findings is presented below by theme: height and density, design, traffic and parking, parks and green space, and long-term residents.

## Height and Density

Many of the respondents inquired about the height of the proposed buildings citing earlier plans which indicated buildings would be a maximum of 49-stories instead of the 80-stories currently proposed. Concerns were also raised about the population increase associated with the increased number of residential units. Respondents voiced their concern about the density of the development noting that it would make the area denser than Toronto's downtown core.



With respect to employment, two respondents indicated that the proposed amount of employment opportunities were much lower than earlier estimates.

The development team discussed the need for affordable housing, which influenced the heights of buildings and the density of the proposed development. The development team mentioned that there would be a variety of unit sizes and usages to accommodate new residents, including families. The development team also highlighted that the planned transit would connect the City of Toronto with York Region and that the improved infrastructure could support the increase in population and the transportation needs of the area.

The development team noted that the employment numbers were only a minimum and that there would be more potential employment opportunities over the 25-year lifespan of the project.

## Design

Respondents also made suggestions regarding the design of the transit-oriented community noting that the design would need to support pedestrian traffic, and that the community would need direct access to the subway station. One respondent questioned why Bridge station included so little land to the east of the station. Another respondent noted that the design of the proposal did not match what is currently in the area.



Holy Cross Cemetery was a primary concern for some respondents, and one mentioned that the development would be an eyesore for cemetery guests. Another person questioned whether it would be prudent to reorient the common boundary buildings to be east-west to provide greater privacy and to ensure balconies are not facing south, to avoid overlooking active funeral services.

The development team spoke about the plans for a highly walkable community, noting that 100% of the development is within a 10-minute walk. The development team also described the transportation network, which has been designed with a ring road system that runs around the perimeter of the site and frames 19 development blocks. The Bridge station master plan has been envisioned an animated, pedestrian friendly mix of shops, restaurants, cafes, patios, offices, a variety of civic uses, including provisions for a library and a school.

The development team committed to continue working with Holy Cross Cemetery representatives to address their concerns.

### Traffic and Parking

Many respondents were concerned the increased population would cause traffic jams between High Tech and Bridge Station. One respondent mentioned that the station would add to the daily commute of current residents. Another respondent at the open house asked if there would be bus transit routes within the development.



The development team noted that there would be roadways and bus routes through the complex to serve the community, but that the focus was on a robust active transportation network and residents would be more likely to walk, cycle or to take transit. With respect to parking provisions, the development team pointed out that there would be parking for some residents and to support transit, but that it would be limited.

### Parks and Green Space

One respondent suggested that there are not enough park spaces and amenities and recommended that spaces for gardens, picnics, recreation (skating, soccer fields, jogging, walking trails, tennis courts, basketball, swimming, skating, baseball diamonds, soccer fields) be considered in the design. In addition, a respondent suggested that the parks and playgrounds would need to match the number of anticipated residents in the high rises. A respondent also commented that wooded areas and creeks should be preserved.



The development team highlighted plans for the park including Spanish Steps, 6.4 acres of park land, grass mounds, a butterfly garden and an art garden. The development team reiterated that the planned amount of park space was far greater than comparable spaces in downtown Toronto for similar builds.

### Existing Residents

Three respondents noted the plans did not seem to consider current residents, and that there were no noticeable benefits for long-term residents. Another respondent was concerned that Markham Staff and Council were being ignored in the TOC planning process and reiterated that council would have the best understanding of the community and its needs.

The development team committed to continue working with the staff from the City of Markham and York Region to refine and implement the plan.

### Out of Scope Comments

Some respondents expressed their discontent at the prospect of tunneling under residences to build the Yonge North Subway extension.

Respondents also indicated that the subway should remain on Yonge Street and there should be a station at Royal Orchard to accommodate existing residents. A comment was also made that two stations so close together would impact future expansion and the speed of subway service.

Comments regarding the Yonge North Subway Extension were referred to Metrolinx for response.