

# Gerrard-Carlaw North

Virtual Open House #1 and Survey Analysis  
**Engagement Summary Report**

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# Gerrard-Carlaw North

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# Gerrard-Carlaw North

## 1. Project Background

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

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

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 is located in the Riverdale neighbourhood.

The proposed TOC at Gerrard-Carlaw North will provide convenient and safe connections to downtown Toronto and surrounding areas and will provide the community with a new public park and privately-owned public open space (POPS). 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 trees and landscaping, and other high-quality design features to create a welcoming environment and foster opportunities for social connections.

The site currently includes a No Frills grocery store within the Riverdale Shopping Centre. Choice Properties is working to bring a grocery store back to the site. A new grocery store and commercial space are proposed as part of the plans for the proposed TOC, which will maintain the Site's original use. New commercial space will create more jobs, while supporting community growth and convenience.

The TOC program was created by the Province of Ontario to improve transit access and bring more housing, jobs, retail, and public amenities near 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.

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## 1. Project Background [cont'd]

### Economic Activity

Comprised of a mix of residential units, including affordable housing options, 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 cohesive public space, including access to retail, a potential grocery store and amenities space.

### 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.

### Housing

The proposed TOC is anticipated to deliver approximately 1,080 residential units, including affordable housing options. New residential buildings will be complemented by high-quality 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. These indoor amenities will be defined at a later stage in the project.

### 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.

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## 2. Engagement Overview

### Community Engagement Session #1

On Tuesday, November 29, 2022, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., the Province of Ontario and Choice Properties hosted the first community engagement session about the proposed Gerrard-Carlaw North TOC using Zoom Webinar. The virtual open house was attended by 247 participants. There were 250 written questions and comments received through the Zoom Webinar Q&A function and 44 questions submitted via email prior to the meeting. Questions were also answered verbally through the raised hand function.

This meeting focused on introducing the proposal to the community, answering questions about the proposal, and gathering public feedback on the vision for the site. The session concentrated on public realm components of the proposal such as parkland, amenities, and connectivity. Materials and a recording of the meeting can be accessed at <https://engagegcn.ca/>.

The meeting was facilitated by LURA Consulting and the agenda included: opening remarks by Councillor Paula Fletcher; presentations by Infrastructure Ontario, City of Toronto and Choice Properties, followed by a question/answer discussion.

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.

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## 2. Engagement Overview [cont'd]

### Survey #1

An online survey was opened on Tuesday November 29, 2022, following the virtual open house, and closed on January 4, 2023. Participants were invited to share their feedback on the proposed development for the project team. The survey received 564 responses.

***\*Note, the survey was deployed online using SurveyMonkey – a third party software to ensure transparency and maximum accessibility for all users.***

### Feedback Themes

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

- **Housing** including affordability, number of units, unit sizes, and accessibility for all ages;
- **Transportation** including traffic impacts, the new street proposed, transit infrastructure details, TTC ridership capacity, integration with Gerrard Station, density requirements for a TOC, road/pedestrian safety, improved connectivity, and cycling and vehicle parking;
- **Amenities** including grocery, childcare facilities and schools, a community centre, and local goods/services;
- **Development and design** including closures of the grocery store/goods/services, heights of buildings, project and construction timelines, and wind and noise impacts;
- **Public realm improvements** including size/type of park/greenspace, pedestrian bridge changes, improved pedestrian experience, and cycling and walking trails;
- **Community engagement** including how to get involved, what elements can be changed, and details about the establishment of the Local Advisory Committee.

These themes were consistent in both the virtual open house Q&A session and in feedback received via the online survey.

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## 3. What We Heard

The following is a summary of participant feedback gathered through the virtual open house and received via the online survey.

### Housing

Participants provided several questions and comments related to housing and the residential components of the project. Many comments were made about the importance of affordable housing, and accessibility for all ages and larger units (including 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom sizes) for families. Questions were asked about the affordability commitment of housing on the site including percentages of units, potential provincial benefits, number of units and sizes, green standard requirements, and accessibility. Some also suggested that the proposed park could prevent more people from living close to transit and there should be more housing included on the portion of the site proposed as a park.

The project team emphasized the importance of the park as a community amenity and indicated that the province, the City of Toronto and Choice Properties are working closely to establish the right balance for park dedication onsite. They also noted that an affordable housing strategy will be developed as part of the process.

### Transportation

Participants shared many questions related to transportation. There were concerns and requests for more information about traffic impacts and how to address the influx of a new population. Concerns about safety were noted, particularly about the configuration of the proposed new street. Some participants wanted to know if a traffic study had been performed and, if so, whether it had indicated what impact the results would have on Gerrard and Carlaw. Many participants suggested that the new proposed street should be for pedestrian access and not a vehicular thoroughway. Several participants noted concerns about current TTC ridership capacity and whether added population density would lead to further overcrowding, especially on the 505 Dundas and 506 College streetcars as well as 72 Pape bus. The City provided information about its Gerrard-Carlaw Planning Study, which will be completed to achieve transit-supportive development. The Study Area comprises a variety of land uses that front onto Avenues or Major Streets or include areas that may be impacted/influenced by the addition of transit infrastructure. A Context Area surrounding the Study Area will assess transportation systems to ensure connectivity, and community services and facilities to support a complete community.

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## Transportation [cont'd]

Choice Properties also provided information on its proposed active transportation strategy, which is intended to provide new mobility infrastructure, such as a new street, signalized intersections, pedestrian linkages, public realm enhancements, bike racks and cycling paths, to enhance connectivity and build upon the excellent transit accessibility afforded by the immediate adjacency to Gerrard Station. Choice Properties will continue to work with the City of Toronto and the province on mobility solutions that prioritize walking, cycling and connections to transit to reduce car reliance and meet the City of Toronto's Green Standard requirements.

Some participants were seeking more transit infrastructure details and some inquired specifically about the TOC interface of the proposed station and whether integration with Gerrard Station is planned. Participants noted the importance of connectivity among all modes of transportation. The project team responded that Metrolinx would be able to best answer questions about transit and station-related questions and concerns.

Participants were interested in the proposed underground parking and how many parking spaces would be available and at what cost. Participants also noted the importance of including bike parking throughout the site.

## Amenities

Participants provided many questions about existing amenities and suggestions for future amenities. Many participants noted concerns about the future of existing goods/ services including No Frills, Mobil Gas, KalTire and Carpet Mill. Many participants were also concerned that a new grocery store will not be affordably priced and suggested that the project consider affordable grocery retail options for residents and opportunities for small independent businesses. Participants also noted concerns about the current capacity of schools, daycares and community centres in the area including Matty Eckler Community Centre. Several participants questioned if more schools will be built and/or if local schools will be renovated to accommodate more students.

Several participants expressed concerns about access to amenities such as affordable food, medical services, daycares, and schools, during the construction phases for the Ontario Line as well as for the project proposal.

The project team has advised they are working to bring a grocery store back to the site and will consider community feedback regarding potential future retail partners, when possible.



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## Amenities [cont'd]

The City of Toronto's Gerrard-Carlaw Planning Study, which will include an assessment of the existing community amenities, will help inform resources, programming, and amenities that are needed within the greater Riverdale community. This includes schools and facilities such as daycares and recreation centres. Choice Properties will work closely with the City of Toronto, and the completed study will help to inform the amenities provided in the study area. Opportunities for other public and community uses are being explored through ongoing discussions between the province, the City of Toronto, Local Advisory committee (LAC), and stakeholder groups.

## Development and Design

Participants asked many questions and had suggestions for the proposed development and design. Specific design elements to consider included taking into consideration the existing community, efficiencies such as solar panels, district heating and sustainable building / construction strategies, as well as optimizing views from the rail corridor and residential units. Some participants also suggested that the design consider materials of surrounding homes, not using the colour grey, ensuring wide sidewalks and deep setbacks. Many participants noted concerns and asked questions about the proposed building heights and impact of 'skyscrapers' on the character of the neighbourhood. Participants were also concerned about noise, air quality and wind impacts and wanted more clarity on how the project team will mitigate these issues. Participants specifically requested that additional documentation be shared including: sightlines from Pape and Danforth looking south, shadow modelling for the towers, setbacks and scale to the site plan, and a Pedestrian Level Wind Study including Gerrard Street "South" (east of Carlaw). Participants were also interested in an assessment of the impact on the water, sewage and electricity of the proposed development.

Several participants also noted concerns about the construction timelines and closures of community amenities, goods and services. There was lack of confidence noted in the Ontario Line timeline and concern about community access and quality of life during construction period. Participants suggested strategies for the community need to be developed and shared.

The project team noted that discussions and coordination with the City of Toronto and Metrolinx will be ongoing throughout the project process to minimize disturbance to the community as much as possible.

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## Development and Design [cont'd]

The project team has advised they have engaged noise and vibration consultants, as well as wind consultants, as a part of the TOC Zoning process. Technical Studies have been uploaded to the project website for the community to review, and 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.

The project team also advised that the renderings are conceptual only, and a design exercise will be completed to define materiality for the buildings later in the planning process, which will take cues from the surrounding Riverdale and Leslieville communities, such as the warehouse buildings to the south on Carlaw.

The project team advised the proposed density is based on an evaluation of provincial and municipal policy direction for achieving density in a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA), which is mandated for transit-oriented communities (TOC).

## Public Realm Improvements

Participants provided questions and suggestions regarding the public realm and indicated the importance of improving the pedestrian experience. Several participants asked questions about Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPs) including how they are managed, owned and maintained. Participants also inquired about below-grade tracks, the portal and pedestrian bridge changes. A few participants suggested that more information about these elements should be provided.

The size and type of park/greenspace was also noted. While some participants liked seeing added park/greenspace for public use and gathering, other participants expressed that the space would be better suited for additional housing. Participants also suggested that considerations for the type of goods and services provided adjacent to the proposed park, as well as traffic and safety, are important.

The project team advised that the site is designed to meet the needs of its residents and provide required transit access, while prioritizing green spaces for pedestrians and ensuring seamless access to the grocery store, and other retail. The project team will consider community feedback regarding park/greenspace, when possible. Choice Properties will be working closely with the City of Toronto and ensure discussions surrounding park amenities continue. The completed study initiated by the City of Toronto will help to inform the amenities provided in the study area, including parks and programming.

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## Community Engagement

Participants asked questions about how to get involved and what aspects of the process were open to input. Some stressed the importance of sharing information and it was suggested that meeting recordings, summaries, presentation materials and proposal application documents be posted to the webpage.

Several participants were also interested in the established LAC and wanted more information on who comprised the group and how interested residents could be involved. The LAC was established with key stakeholders and includes representatives from special interest groups, business owners, and local organizations. They participate in discussions and provide feedback and advice to the project team during the public engagement process for the proposed Gerrard-Carlaw North TOC.

Some participants also inquired about the overall engagement process, what aspects of the proposal were open to public input, and what elements would be changed/updated based on feedback.

The project team has advised that it is committed to gathering feedback from the community and ideas / suggestions will be considered and implemented, when possible. Community input is an important part of the process, and the project team thanks everyone who has participated in the TOC engagement so far.

## 4. Next Steps

The community engagement process will continue with a second public engagement session in early 2023 as well as further engagement with the established LAC. The LAC had its first meeting on Wednesday, November 30, 2022. Additional LAC meetings will be planned for early 2023.

Project and meeting materials, in addition to the event recording, have been posted to the project webpage at <http://engagegcn.ca>. The public can also reach the project team with questions at [info@engagegerrardcarlawnorth.ca](mailto:info@engagegerrardcarlawnorth.ca).