

**YONGE-STEELES CORRIDOR STUDY
COMMENT SHEET SUMMARY
JUNE 28, 2007**

The following is a summary of the feedback that was received from the Comment Sheets that were distributed at the June 28, 2007 Public Open House Meeting.

1. What do you like or dislike about the Yonge Street Corridor?

Likes:

- Central access to stores and other main thoroughfares
- Diversity of the area
- Proximity to public transit
- The three traffic lanes that are provided on Yonge Street (travelling both northbound and southbound)
- Trees/greenspace – I love the trees. I love the greenspace. I love the fact that we are not a suburb, but really a vibrant community where people live and get to know their neighbour. I like supporting local area businesses and the convenience that goes with being able to easily access them, including the free parking.
- The existing situation – we do like the Yonge & Steeles Corridor
- The existing Heritage Village and the leafy streets
- The greenery, the plentitude of well established trees that made this an attractive area for me to buy into. I can sit in my backyard and look north-east and just see trees. One fear I have is that the industrialization of Markham will infringe on the beauty that was.

Dislikes:

- Traffic congestion (vehicular and public transit)
- While the corridor is within walking distance, the streetscape, services and stores are so unattractive – the journey is not worth the time it takes getting to Yonge Street. I just drive to the mall.
- Excessive open concrete parking lots (Hy & Zel's plaza)
- The area is not very pedestrian friendly – there are no walkways or bicycle paths
- Dry open sidewalks
- The existing situation – redevelopment/redesign is needed and should go ahead
- Improvement of the existing condition is required and should be based on a better design and on creating a pleasant environment – I do not want to see any high-rise developments.
- Future developments that are proposing condominium buildings that are 39 and 32 storeys in height – these will create huge volumes of traffic and congestion along Steeles Avenue and Yonge Street, which is already overly congested – there are neighbouring quiet streets in the area.

- Future proposals – I would never live in a building above the 7th floor – fire ladders would not reach – 39 storeys is way too high.
- The unjustified idea of allowing condos for the rich, who are not public transit users
- We do not want high density adjacent to community centre. Dislike high density and further industrialization without adequate back up of facilities (i.e. transportation, schools, flow of traffic, etc.) – need complete infrastructure.

2. **Where do you think redevelopment should be focused?**

- From Steeles Avenue north to the CN Railway tracks
- Within the proposed study area boundaries, with a focus closest to the Yonge Street frontage
- Not only along Yonge Street, but between Yonge Street and Dudley Avenue, since a high-rise building and single-family residential do not match
- At the intersection of Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue
- Within the Yonge Street and Doncaster Avenue area
- Yonge Street, south of Steeles Avenue in North York – why does the Town of Markham and developers wish to consider towers up to 39 storeys in height? No residential area within the GTA has such ridiculous planning
- Can redevelop with smaller condos – 6 storeys – spread them out more along Yonge Street corridor – stores and cafes, etc. on ground level – this reduces congestion – overloading of one or two schools – portables
- Around the existing Hy & Zel’s site (northeast corner of Yonge Street and Doncaster Avenue), at the intersection of Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue, around the railway tracks (both north and south) – redevelopment efforts should be focused on getting rid of the “concrete desert” at the existing Hy & Zel’s site
- At the former Hy & Zel’s plaza, as well as the apartments, services and stores facing Yonge Street between Steeles Avenue and Clark Avenue
- Along the entire Yonge Street Corridor – redevelopment efforts should focus on promoting the subway to reduce traffic on the streets, as well as “greening” Yonge Street
- From the intersection of Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue north to Grandview Avenue, as well as Glen Cameron Road north to Clark Avenue
- Redevelopment efforts should focus on promoting a mix of uses, including retail, offices, and residential all within compact designs
- Redevelopment efforts should focus on a modern City/Town with new facilities
- Redevelopment efforts should focus on finding traffic solutions, sunlight/shadowing problems and visual impacts
- Redevelopment efforts should be focused on smaller condos (i.e. 6 storeys in height) – these developments should be spread out along the Yonge Street Corridor, with cafes, etc. at grade level – this reduces congestion
- Redevelopment efforts should focus on lower townhouse developments on Dudley Avenue and lower rise apartments and condominiums at the intersection of Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue

3. What do you consider to be an appropriate building transition?

- Area development that is not focused on density
- Either use parkland as buffer or build low-rise to higher-rise between the residential area to Yonge Street
- Point towers with podiums
- More commercial and residential buildings
- I am not a Town Planner, so this is difficult for a layman to reply. The original By-laws restricted area to residential living and Doncaster Avenue was only intended for one-storey industrial and commercial buildings.
- Six-storey buildings that are more spread out and located away from main intersections
- We need variety – not high rises
- Stepped low-rise buildings (i.e. townhouses) to mid-high rise buildings with green spaces (i.e. parks)
- Tall commercial buildings at Yonge Street & Steeles Avenue, transitioning to lower residential (10 storey condos) going north on Yonge Street
- If Yonge Street – 5-8 storeys, if area – 3 storeys – maximum coverage 2.5 – 3.0 coverage
- Buildings that are maximum 4 storeys in height
- Graduated or “stepped” mixed-use buildings with low-rises near the street, mid and possibly point towers set further back and green space between high-rise and existing single-dwellings. Wider sidewalks with plantings and benches. Bicycle lanes.

4. What should redevelopment look like?

- A mix of uses
- Low to mid-rise buildings, so as not to obscure and overwhelm the existing residential homes next to the developed areas
- Mid-rise and slab buildings and townhouses
- Towers
- Point towers with podiums
- Redevelopment should be logical, beautiful, safe and deal with pollution
- Leave this up to Planning, Town, Province, developers, architects, etc. Leave well enough alone. We do not need world trade centre towers in Thornhill
- Redevelopment should not be comprised of buildings that are 39 storeys and 32 storeys – too high – too dense – have lower buildings that are 6-10 storeys
- Who knows? “Point Towers” or “Slab Buildings” – we need explanations of these
- Mixture of mid-rise and towers (20 – 30 storeys in height) – agree with the setbacks and the greening of Yonge Street and the railway corridor
- Mid-rise (5 storeys) residential buildings along Dudley Avenue – towers with retail/restaurant along Yonge Street – residential towers along Steeles Avenue
- Combination with variety – coverage of 2.5 – 3.0 F.S.I.
- Low-rise housing, townhouses, apartments (4-6 storeys in height)

5. What are the public amenities that most need to be improved in the corridor?

- Transportation, green space, sidewalks
- Better water mains (low water pressure) and sewer drains – increased public transit
- The area along Yonge Street so that people can walk and dine and be entertained, so that they do not have to drive all the way downtown for a nice dinner
- Walk-in clinics (medical), pharmacies and Doctor's offices
- Community services, small businesses and offices
- Public transit – subway – very high on wish list
- Everything that is convenient (and necessary) for residents
- If traffic bottlenecks cannot be resolved can we assure stop traffic control
- Clearing of snow from side streets in Thornhill
- Make it compatible with existing community who want good Town for life
- Subway system or overhead railway
- Improved sewer systems
- More schools if multi-dwelling places are to be built
- High quality restaurants and shops – not malls
- Parks/green space, walk and bicycle routes, improved transit
- Green space and open meeting areas, public walkways and cycling paths
- Schools (larger), parks (more), and libraries (larger)
- Traffic control
- I moved to the area, because I liked what I saw. I am not interested in change, as I would venture to guess, most of the area residents are.
- Get rid of walled streets – houses should never back onto major roads – roads should be pedestrian-friendly
- Public transit – a subway is best but it is expensive. It can also be less intrusive and obtrusive, easy to access and enables surface (and underground) redevelopment for commercial/retail/pedestrian/residential/community uses. Bicycle lanes – too dangerous for cyclists to ride on the road, especially children. Since there are a few pedestrians, cyclists tend to use the sidewalk and even then veer off onto the grass when they see a pedestrian. This is dangerous.
- I would like to see park planning that takes the surrounding area into consideration. In the area, there are two parks for small children - one behind Henderson Public School and one on Proctor Avenue. The toddler park is set on busy Proctor Avenue - ripe for an accident, while the intermediate park set is nestled behind the school. Notably the toddlers use the intermediate set instead - setting themselves up for an accident of a different kind.
- I would like to see a street built where the existing lane that runs from the gas station at Steeles Avenue and the remaining portions of the community eastward, blocked off from thru-traffic. This applies to the three streets north of Steeles Avenue. I have had one child hit by a car on Highland Park Boulevard.
- I would like to see a park developed to serve as a cultural meeting ground. Perhaps a band shell and splash pad would provide the necessary draw for both daily and special event utilization. I would like to see tall trees, and new mixed commercial residential buildings on a similar scale to the full grown trees.

- I would like to see less traffic in the community overall. Yonge Street is gridlock during rush hour, but the surrounding residential areas should not be.

6. Do you have any additional comments you would like to add?

- Small businesses should be encouraged to establish in the area
- Need more good leadership to introduce best solution – rather assessing other people – you show us, otherwise you should quit and leave – meeting locations should be close to Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue
- It seems that the Town has not given adequate notice to the community and I now have the feeling all parties wish to railroad the project to have more taxes and revenue
- What kind of increase in taxes will occur to pay for increase in schools, transport, etc.? No one has mentioned children – can they live in a 39 storey condo?
- Many of the residents do not have computers, so a web-site is of no help to people like me
- The area currently has a number of absentee landlords who do not maintain their houses/properties. I hope the proposed redevelopment will discourage more of this practice.
- Create a 60 ft setback for buildings along Yonge Street
- The area is damaged and should be redesigned to a modern one
- The quality of life of the residents should not be reduced. Their property value should not be negatively impacted by the changes made. Sewage and water (specifically water pressure) were mentioned at the last meeting. As I now recover from the umpteenth power failure in the area, it is obvious that the power grids north of Steeles Avenue are less robust than those south of Steeles Avenue. Will an increase in the population density make it worse? Reliability of these services must not be impacted by the proposed change. I live at the corner of Dudley Avenue and Highland Park Boulevard. If high rises or commercial buildings replace the existing single-family homes, my property value and the property value of everyone along Highland Park Boulevard (to Willowdale Avenue) and along Dudley Avenue will be impacted negatively.
- Establish Parking Authority – get rid of “free” parking requirements – developers should contribute to parking authority which will buy the land and charge motorists the real cost of parking
- Everyone uses the Yonge Subway. There are so many stores, services, restaurants on Yonge Street south of Steeles Avenue – it is a natural destination, not just a means to an end – or it could be. It is too easy to get lost or waste time taking the other subways or buses. Planners should just go with the flow and make it easy and attractive for people to access everything via Yonge Street. Mel Lastman’s plan to locate government offices, library, community centre, swimming pool, etc. along Yonge Street was great. My family and I often use North York’s amenities, because it is like being downtown without spending an hour commuting. There are a lot of buses on the arterial roads and they run late. It feels “safer” because there are a lot of pedestrians, shops, restaurants and theatres. With non-box like architecture, outside seating, plants and balconies, this could be a place where people actually sit and stay, rather than rush through en-route to someplace else.

- New side roads to give the new developments access to Steeles Avenue and Yonge Street should be developed. Flowing major traffic onto existing residential roads would be a mistake. Traffic onto Doncaster Avenue, in particular, will result in a flood of traffic onto Henderson Avenue and cause terrible problems for existing homeowners.

7. Additional Comments – received via e-mail correspondence:

- Get away from the car culture and make new development pedestrian/cyclist oriented. One of the worst developments is the Town Hall and the major hotel across the street at Warden Avenue and Hwy 7. They are across the street from each other, yet guests at the hotel DRIVE to the Town Hall. The entrances to the Town Hall are oriented away from Hwy 7 and Warden Avenue to the back of "free" parking lots. It tells anyone taking public transit that the Town really does not want you to visit.
- I just happened to come across the web site study for this area. Since the subway will be expanded, Finch to Highway 7, then Region should scrap any plans to create a dedicated bus corridor down the centre of Yonge Street over what will be the subway extension. The money saved by Region by not creating the dedicated bus corridor should then be spent on the subway plus the east/west roadways that will converge on the subway stops north of Steeles Avenue. The local Yonge Street merchants will also breathe easier.
- With the extended subway, Yonge north of Steeles can then become an extension of high density downtown North York on both sides of Yonge right up to Highway 7 and beyond.
- Only problem that is on the horizon, when mortgage rates hit 8-10% and higher, and it's coming, all those condos filled by purchasers that paid little or none down, and paying today's mortgage payments equivalent to today's rents, will be moving out in the middle of the night leaving those Gotham style condos derelict. The maintenance costs escalating to exorbitant amounts on those that remain. I have already heard of two situations in Vaughan where owners have just up and left their residences in the middle of the night.
- The great concern always in subway movement is to keep the routes short enough so when a problem occurs such as what happened a few months ago at Lawrence, the problem can be circumvented immediately within the subway system. That is a logistics problem far beyond my matrix algebra, but something to think about joining Jane subway with the very long Yonge to Hwy 7 subway.
- Oh yes, never forget the auto still rules supreme, and always will! How else would the politicians get to the meeting? And probably the greatest achievement Toronto ever accomplished was building the subway.
- Have a crisis free meeting
- Redevelopment should be built to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards, aiming for platinum certification. This is consistent with Markham's leadership in recycling and other "green" initiatives. This intersection joins Vaughan, Toronto, and Markham. Millions will pass by and through this area. It is an ideal location to showcase and demonstrate how redevelopment and intensification does not have to be feared as a "monster" that invades existing communities and ruins everything – safety, air and water quantity and quality, green

space, transportation and other services. With careful planning and design, this area can accommodate more people and businesses and, perhaps, actually be “good” for the community and the environment. Daniel’s Corporation is redeveloping Toronto’s Regent Park with a 22-storey building. Minto’s “Radiance” condo tower at Sheppard Avenue and Yonge Street has a silver LEED certification. If we haven’t already, we should look at these and other projects in the GTA to see how we can borrow and adapt ideas for this location.

Some members of the public also offered their opinions on specific types of neighbourhoods and buildings in the GTA that they thought would be a good example for redevelopment. These included the following:

- The Danforth near Broadway to say Logan Avenue – Bloor Street
- I think of Thornhill as the York Mills or Yonge and Lawrence of the north. Development in the area should be attractive and upscale. There has been some nice 5-8 storey development in the College Street area downtown. The new townhouses near Steeles Avenue and Grandview Avenue are attractive development examples in Thornhill.