

**YONGE-STEELES CORRIDOR STUDY  
MINUTES FROM OPEN HOUSE  
JUNE 28, 2007**

**PRESENT:**

**Community Members at Large**

**Hon. Mario G. Racco, M.P.P. – Thornhill**

**Councillor Valerie Burke (Ward 1)**

**Members of Markham Planning Staff**

**Consultants/Study Team for Yonge-Steeles Corridor Study**

Attendees at the June 28, 2007 Open House Meeting were asked to provide comments on the following discussion questions:

- i) What do you like or dislike about the Yonge Street corridor?
- ii) Where do you think redevelopment should be focused?
- iii) What do you consider to be an appropriate transition between redevelopment areas and the existing neighbourhood?
- iv) What should redevelopment look like (point-towers with podiums vs. slab buildings vs. mid-rise)?
- v) What are the public amenities that most need to be improved in the corridor?

The comments received are provided below:

- Attendee: Concern regarding the 39 storey and 32 storey developments proposed on the Liberty Developments site.
- Attendee: Lots of good suggestions, re: density, provided in (Consultants') presentation.
- Attendee: Expressed concern regarding the high school site on the east side of Yonge Street (Thornhill Secondary School), re: bussing all the way to Thornlea Secondary School.
- Staff: Clarified concerns regarding using the high school site (Thornhill Secondary School) for community uses. The idea is to potentially use the former elementary school site (St. Luke's Catholic Elementary School) for community uses, not the high school.
- Attendee: Tremendous accolades regarding the presentation, especially the component on density.
- Attendee: Love the safety of the streets and the ability to walk to parks.
- Attendee: Struggle with infiltration traffic, but do not know how these plans will affect traffic in the streets and safety of pedestrians – fear that future development will exacerbate the existing problem of overflow traffic into the community.
- Staff: We will be dealing with traffic at our next Open House Meeting in October and have a traffic consultant on our Study Team.
- Attendee: Huge education effort required if we are to get people out of their cars.
- Attendee: Hope to have more live/work developments.

- Attendee: No sidewalks on any of the streets.
- Attendee: Henderson Avenue and Willowdale Boulevard are extremely busy.
- Attendee: Curious to know what the plans are of for the Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue quadrant. Concern that this will result in an increase in population to 4 times what currently exists.
- Staff: We are currently co-ordinating study with the City of Vaughan and the City of Toronto. Future redevelopment will take traffic into account.
- Attendee: Important to decide where development is needed – it should not take place in farm fields.
- Attendee: Well received presentation.
- Attendee: Do not like the heat/sun in Yonge Street Corridor – need greenery, trees, and appropriate building setbacks.
- In North York, to prevent infiltration, there is a boulevard, so that one cannot cross into the residential community – this might be a way to address infiltration in our area.
- Attendee: West side of Yonge Street is built for cars – we need a livable/walkable area.
- Attendee: I would like to see usable, human-scale, open space, like the busy parks in Paris.
- Attendee: Community gardens/allotments should be supported in future development plans.
- Consultant: However tall the building, the street should be lined with townhouses, so that the immediate frontage is normal.
- Attendee: In apartments, people tend to never go out onto the streets, so streets are uninhabited. We need to deal with this problem in future site planning.
- Attendee: Concerned with ‘ugly’ pedestrian bridge across railway line on east side of Yonge Street.
- Ward Councillor: Currently investigating ownership of bridge.
- Attendee: Asks that (Markham Planning staff) do not make Thornhill look like Toronto’s North York.
- Staff: Encouraged members of the public to continue participating in the Study – Markham Planning staff prefer “Made in Markham” solutions.
- Attendee: Concern that mandated higher densities should not be uniformly applied.
- Attendee: Need to protect existing low-rise residential areas, which are comprised of 1-2 storey dwellings.
- Attendee: Need to protect against sun and wind.
- Staff: We recognize the need to protect existing residential developments and will also consider sun and wind concerns.
- Consultant: Would like everyone to consider the two strategies presented at the meeting:
  - Focus density along lots fronting on Yonge Street; or,
  - Spread density along full blocks from Yonge Street to Dudley Avenue.
- Attendee: Like concept of 4 storey buildings along Yonge Street with six-storey setbacks.

- Attendee: Parks should not be built to focus on one specific development – they should be open to the whole community.
- Attendee: Do not want to see buildings that have been developed with spaces that will never be used.
- Attendee: Questioned the plans for the properties situated east of Yonge Street on the north side of Steeles Avenue – lots of poorly maintained single-detached dwellings that are owned by absentee landlords – these are an eyesore along Steeles Avenue.
- Staff: Recognize that Steeles Avenue frontage is not viable for single-detached dwellings – there has been one successful townhouse development at Steeles Avenue and Valloncliff Road.
- Consultant: If subway stop comes to Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue, this will likely become a highly prominent redevelopment site (Steeles Avenue frontage) – when we started the study, there was no subway proposed.
- Attendee: Low-rise condominiums with no access onto Steeles Avenue would not be appropriate – that works on Finch Avenue.
- Attendee: Steeles Avenue properties – along Yonge Street to Bayview Avenue – are “ugly” and study needs to address these.
- Properties on west side of Dudley Avenue have a lot of problems – absentee landlords, rats, etc. – want to see the whole area redeveloped rather than additional problems created – Study should not just focus on Yonge Street frontage.
- Attendee: Would like to see a mixture of styles/creativity/innovation in redevelopment efforts.
- Attendee: 39 storey towers are too massive to integrate into the existing community. Lower heights are easier to integrate with the historic village.
- Attendee: Concerns regarding the integration/transitioning of future development into Old Thornhill – maximum 3 storey developments.
- Attendee: Questioned F.S.I. of 2.5 when Official Plan states F.S.I. of 1.5 to 2.0.
- Staff: Town’s Official Plan policies (from 10 years ago) have never been in effect due to deferral of the policies applying to the Yonge Steeles Corridor between Steeles and the property north of the CN rail line – 2.5 F.S.I. comes from Regional Official Plan.
- Attendee: Prefers spreading the density out, rather than having huge point towers.
- Attendee: Point towers limit what can be done with the rest of the area – if densities are kept lower, we can have more choice.
- Attendee: Questions as to what the number of residents per acre will be – how does the F.S.I. translate into persons?
- Staff: We use those numbers (population figures) more in Greenfield areas – in intensification areas, the F.S.I. is a better measure of the built form – this is what matters most to communities – population numbers will be addressed with respect to provision of community facilities and hard infrastructure.
- Staff: We will address population targets, services, traffic, etc. F.S.I. is a starting point.

- Attendee: Wonder if some of our existing areas are well planned – traffic, blackouts, etc. Is someone planning for the growth of electrical consumption?
- Staff: Ontario Power Authority is responsible for planning of the energy system.
- Staff: Growth Plan has an infrastructure delivery component that addresses co-ordination of infrastructure.
- Staff: Town also had sustainability initiatives in place.
- Member of Provincial Parliament: Province is trying to reduce energy consumption through a number of education campaigns – trying to respond to local concerns, while also planning for the future.
- Attendee: We welcome the subway!
- Attendee: Have to solve the problem of crossing railway.
- Attendee: Would prefer to see high apartments next to Yonge Street with large boulevards – stores at grade level – neighbours could go to the stores without cars – more green space can be provided if buildings are higher.
- Attendee: Prefer large sidewalks with cafes and stores, like in European cities.
- Attendee: Concerned that traffic needs to be addressed today.
- Attendee: Schools need to be safe for children.
- Staff: Yonge-Steeles Corridor Study Team will look at traffic impacts; however, everything cannot be addressed this evening.
- Ward Councillor: encouraged by the discussion that has taken place this evening and thanks all of those who participated.

**Meeting was adjourned at 9.30 PM.**