

Our Scarborough Centre

Community Consultation Meeting

Meeting Summary



December 9, 2021
6:30-8:30 PM



Background

City of Toronto staff are updating the Scarborough Centre Secondary Plan, which was approved by Council in 2005. A Secondary Plan is a tool that guides change in a particular area of the City through detailed policies promoting compatibility and coordination among buildings and development, parks and public spaces, transportation, community services and facilities, and land use.

A lot has changed in Scarborough Centre since 2005, including a number of new residential towers, a new park and a new library. The approved Scarborough Subway Extension will bring increased growth along with a new station and bus terminal.

The “Our Scarborough Centre” Study Area is bounded by Highway 401 in the north, Bellamy Road North in the east, Ellesmere Road in the south and west of Brimley Road in the west. The Study has four phases. Phase 1, completed in April 2019, resulted in an updated vision, [preliminary public realm plan](#), and [information report to Scarborough Community Council](#). Phase 2, completed in August 2021, included a virtual community [Visioning Workshop](#) and resulted in an analysis of existing conditions and development of preliminary development concepts, captured in a [background report](#). We are currently in Phase 3, focused on the analysis and testing of development concepts. Phase 4, in 2022, will include final design and Secondary Plan development.

Meeting Overview

On Thursday, December 9, 2021, staff from City Planning were joined by representatives from Deputy Mayor Thompson (Ward 21) and Councillor Ainslie's offices (Ward 24) for a Virtual Community Consultation Meeting for the OurSC Study. Based on the expert advice of the City's Medical Officer of Health to practice physical distancing to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of Toronto residents and City staff, the Open House was held online and phone-in only. The purpose of the meeting was to present the development concepts that were generated based on the feedback received at the Visioning Workshop, answer questions and receive feedback from the public.

Over 48 people joined the meeting, including 33 public participants as well as members of the Study team and City staff. Following opening remarks, consultants John Gladki of Gladki Planning Associates and Brent Raymond of DTAH delivered a presentation that provided background on the previous Study phases and shared draft development options for Scarborough Centre, including strategies for building heights, land uses and density. Gary Miedemas from the City's Heritage Preservation Services team also delivered an update on the City's Cultural Heritage Research Assessment for Scarborough Centre. The full presentation is available on the [project website](#).

Toronto Community Consultation Meeting
Virtual

We invite you to get involved!
Join us for a Virtual Community Consultation Meeting and learn more about the Our Scarborough Centre Study and help plan the future of Scarborough Centre.

Our Scarborough Centre
Phase 3 Community Consultation
Virtual Meeting

Based on the expert advice of our Medical Officer of Health to practice physical distancing to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of Toronto residents and our staff, this meeting will be online and phone-in only.

Meeting Details
Thursday December 9, 2021
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Background / Proposal
The City of Toronto Planning Division is undertaking a focused review of the Scarborough Centre Secondary Plan, which was approved by Council in 2005. The intent of the Study is to update and further articulate a clear and compelling vision, planning framework and policies in the Secondary Plan to guide future development and support positive change and place-making over the coming decades in Scarborough Centre.

The Study is being undertaken in four phases. Phase 1, completed in May 2019, focused on synthesizing work completed to date, developing an updated vision and planning principles and creating a Draft Preliminary Public Realm Plan. Phase 2, completed in October 2021, focused on further development of Phase 1 work, preliminary development ideas and concepts, a visioning workshop and a detailed Background Report. All materials can be found on the study website.

Join us at the Community Consultation Virtual Meeting to participate in Phase 3 of the Study, which will include:

- an update on the status of the Study;
- three potential building height options;
- open space, land uses and built form strategies;
- opportunities for local residents, employees, businesses and landowners to provide feedback; and
- next steps for the Study.

Toronto City Planning
December 2 at 11:30 AM

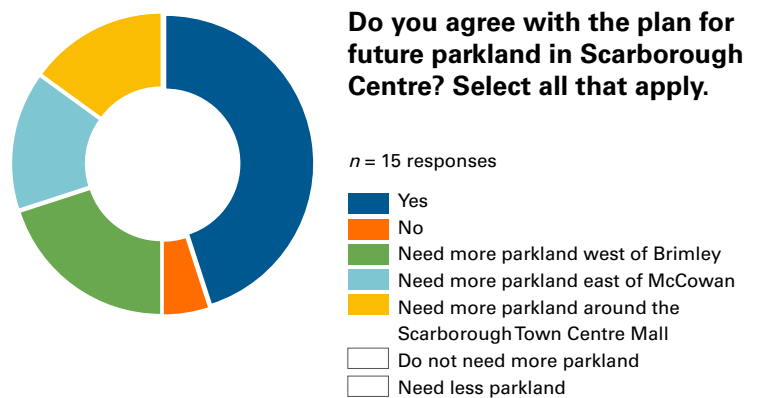
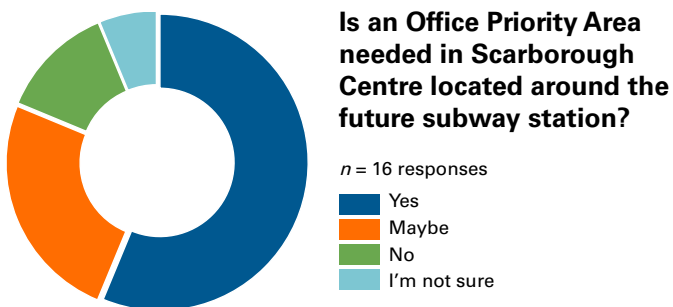
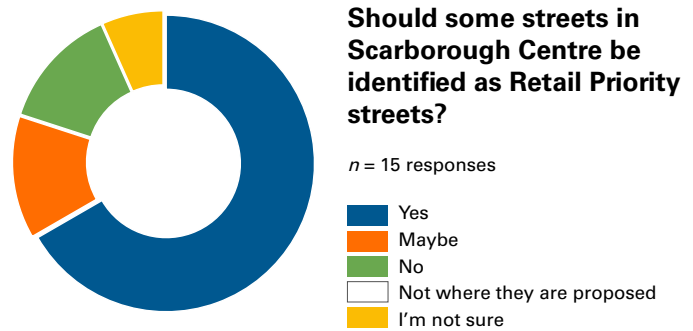
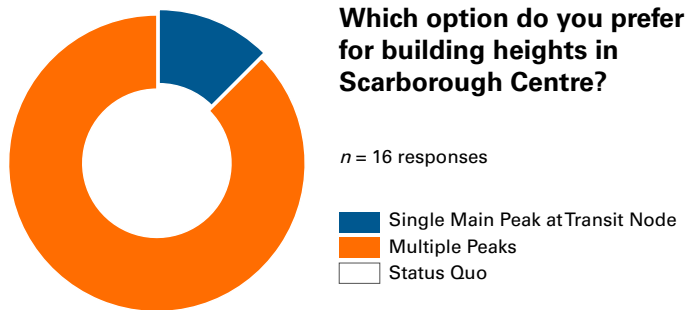
Join #CityofTO staff for a virtual Community Consultation Meeting on Dec 9 to discuss the future of Scarborough Centre. We've prepared development concepts and want to hear your thoughts! Register at <https://www.toronto.ca/.../planning.../scarborough-centre-review/CityPlanTO>

5 9 Shares

Mail notice and social media post promoting the meeting



During the presentation, participants were polled to understand their preferences on the preliminary development concepts. The poll results are presented below:



Participants then had an opportunity to ask questions and share their thoughts. Feedback was accepted in writing through the Q&A function on WebEx and verbally through the Raise Hand function. Over 27 questions and comments were received.

Questions & Answers

The participants asked a number of questions in the Q & A portion of the event. These are categorised by the following themes:

- Sustainability
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Walkability
- Miscellaneous

A full list of the questions received is provided here, accompanied by answers.



Sustainability

- **Do you consider the environmental effects of building a lot of high-rise buildings in this community?**

Sustainability includes concentrating density within a certain area and not sprawling into newer areas where people have to drive to access services that are spread wide across a larger area. People living in taller buildings actually use less energy per person than people living in lower buildings. We know there are concerns around unsustainable materials currently used in construction – particularly concrete – and see the industry identifying more sustainable alternatives. Our team has also been discussing ways to reduce the urban heat island effect through increasing the tree canopy in Scarborough Centre and considering where further growth of trees might be possible.

The [Toronto Green Standard](#) requires each new private and City-owned development in Toronto to adhere to performance measures and guidelines that promote sustainable site and building design. These standards have been systematically and progressively ramped up to be more ambitious over time: Tier 1 of the Standard is a mandatory requirement of the planning approval process, and financial incentives are offered for planning applications that meet higher level voluntary standards in Tiers 2 to 4. The City has a goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050; this includes the Scarborough Centre area.

- **Does the City supervise the builder in building high rise condos for safety and sustainability?**

The City has a number of checks and balances to ensure safety in construction. When an application gets to the building permit stage, the applicant is required to submit a construction management plan. As they proceed through construction, they are required to obtain certain permits along the way and undergo a variety of city inspections. More information can be found [here](#).

Parks and Open Spaces

- **Can we get a commitment that the Frank Faubert Wood Lot will not be touched and will be protected from the Scarborough Subway Extension?**

Wood lots are protected in the City's Official Plan policies, which identify them as *Natural Areas* to be preserved, protected and potentially expanded in the future. The Scarborough Centre Secondary Plan will protect the Frank Faubert Wood Lot.

- **How could future Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZOs) have an impact on the existing parkland and future green space?**

MZOs are a provincial initiative that cannot be addressed by City staff or the consultant team. However, parkland and green spaces are protected in the City's Official Plan.



- **Will you be making changes to Thompson Park?**

No, Thompson Park is outside the scope and boundaries of this Study. We are certainly looking at ways to expand green spaces in Scarborough Centre and improve connectivity to East and West Highland Creek; doing so will hopefully improve future connections to Thompson Park.

- **In the green area maintained by Scarborough Town Centre at the corner of Brimley and Progress (25 Borough Drive), I've seen a board go up asking for rezoning for a high-rise building. This seems like the only nice green space we have around that area right now. What are the City's plans for this green space? Does this mean the City is more inclined to allow high-rise in the area because it belongs to a developer?**

That land is owned by Oxford Properties, the owners of the mall. There is an active application proposing three tall buildings as well as an on-site public park at the south end of the site. The lands, while currently green space, are not designated *Parks* in the City's Official Plan. Staff are looking at this application to make sure it makes good planning sense going forward. We have had a public consultation meeting and the final report will require a public meeting at which time local residents will have an opportunity to comment again. More information about the development application can be found on the [City's website](#).

Walkability

- **Are there going to be standards about permeability within development blocks?**

The City has [design guidelines](#) for various building types (e.g., tall buildings, mid-rise buildings) that address the issue of permeability in development blocks. These guidelines will apply to Scarborough Centre. We are also looking closely at connectivity to ensure the blocks are a manageable size for moving through and around them.

- **What sort of planning goes into issues for users of the neighbourhood who are disabled and seniors? I use a wheelchair and I can walk for a short distance. I was glad to see improvements at my local park where I am now able to take my wheelchair into the park, but I continually run into difficulties in the neighbourhood. For example, I notice that not all the sidewalks are accessible and there is a really long distance for sitting down as you are walking.**

The City has [Accessibility Design Guidelines](#) that are part of the Building Code and include best practices to conduct accessibility audits and to plan for barrier-free development in the physical environment. We understand there is a need to retrofit existing infrastructure in Scarborough Centre. It is good to hear that progress is being made in your local park and we know there is more work that needs to be done. There are certainly parts of the sidewalks in a variety of areas that are uneven and cracked: if you do notice any of those, please call 311 to report them. There is a long list of short-term repairs that need to be fixed; certainly as new developments come in, if there is a substandard sidewalk we always ensure it is brought up to current standards.



- **Does the study look at potential underground or weather sheltered connections between key places?**

Our emphasis is on achieving an excellent pedestrian realm at grade with trees, generous sidewalks and boulevards that people will want to walk along at all times of year and in all kinds of weather. We are not looking at any underground pedestrian connections. We are anticipating that, over time, potential underground connections will occur both north and west from the subway station by way of knock-out panels.

Miscellaneous

- **How might this plan affect adjacent lands?**

We don't anticipate too much impact on the surrounding communities but as part of the study we are undertaking a transportation analysis, servicing analysis and community services and facilities study to ensure there are appropriate street-level connections, appropriate cycling facilities and appropriate services in places to accommodate future growth in Scarborough Centre.

- **What is the timeline for this plan?**

This is a four-phase study and we are currently in Phase 3. We anticipate this phase being completed in February 2022 and will conclude Phase 4 in mid-2022, followed by a report submitted to Scarborough Community Council and City Council with recommended updates and policy changes to the Scarborough Centre Secondary Plan.

- **What is the plan for affordable housing in the Scarborough Centre area?**

The City has adopted an [inclusionary zoning](#) policy that requires new residential developments located in particular areas to include a certain percentage of affordable housing units. Additional work is being advanced on inclusionary zoning implementation guidelines. Areas in Scarborough Centre will qualify for these policies due to proximity to the subway station. We will be looking at inclusionary zoning mechanisms in the next phase of the Study to address the specific needs of the area.

- **The presentation mentioned a 2:1 ratio of residents to jobs. Are these jobs mainly retail, or are there plans to bring more "office" jobs to the area? What is the current density of residents and jobs?**

The 2:1 ratio looks at office jobs. The current density in Scarborough Centre is 168 residents and jobs combined per hectare. The minimum density target for each Centre in the City of Toronto is 400 residents and jobs combined per hectare; Scarborough Centre is not there yet but will be closer to that number at full buildout.



- **Is there any consideration for family-sized housing in apartments in the new Secondary Plan?**

The City's [Growing Up Guidelines](#) focus on how new mid-rise and tall buildings can be developed as vertical communities that support social interaction and better accommodate the needs of all households, including those with children. Those guidelines recommend a minimum percentage of 2- and 3-bedroom units in all buildings. Our team recognizes the importance of providing housing for families and if there is a way to continue to strengthen those policies in the Secondary Plan we will do so.

- **On the retail avenues or retail focused areas, is it up to developers to lease out their properties at the grade level? Is there anything the City and other stakeholders can do to promote a variety of retail options and make sure spaces aren't left empty for long periods of time?**

Retail is market-driven and spaces are leased by developers to retailers interested in those spaces. There is very little that the municipality can do to require a certain type of retail. One of the things we may be looking at through the Secondary Plan is the pattern of retail frontages on successful main streets in Toronto and elsewhere. For example, there could be design guidelines that place limits on the size of retail spaces and encourage a mix of retail sizes on a street.

- **Is there any plan to build high-rise housing attached to the Scarborough Town Centre?**

There is a current development application that was submitted by Oxford Properties for the Scarborough Town Centre lands. They are proposing 21 blocks around the perimeter of the mall; in the current plan none of those blocks or proposed buildings are physically attached to the mall building.

- **Are there any developments on Omni Drive & Borough Drive? We have some lands beside Omni Forest Mansion.**

We do not have any current development applications at that specific intersection.

Comments & Feedback

In addition to the Q&A, the following comments were shared by participants during the meeting:

Heritage

- *I understand the reasoning to protect the Wood Lot as part of the heritage assessment, and maybe even the mall, but for something like the SRT I don't understand the push to protect that site. I disapprove and don't think it's something we need to preserve.*
- *I would say the mall would be a heritage site as well as the Civic Centre and Albert Campbell Square. Agreed re: the SRT track and some of the office buildings not being relevant to Scarborough culturally.*



- *There was a person who asked to remove the SRT track. I think that would be a good spot to be converted to green space or public space similar to New York's High Line Park.*
- *I think the SRT has the potential for heritage recognition as well as a compatible development for parks and recreation.*

Parks and Open Spaces

- *I would like to share an experience of living in the North East area. This summer, many people including many children had to utilize the parking lots south of Corporate Drive to play due to the lack of parkland. This may be a consideration for planning moving forward. This happens every evening in the summer.*
- *I am concerned that the density of the population will not match the public parkland that is needed. We as a community in Scarborough Centre and other people in Scarborough need to ensure we have sufficient green space and control development.*
- *I think making the area more walkable, as mentioned in the presentation, is a great idea, and a current shortcoming of the area. If the area became more walkable it could help to fill the gap of limited greenspace. For instance, currently there aren't great options to just "go for a walk" in the area.*
- *I would like to hear from the councillor specifically about protecting the Frank Faubert Wood Lot.*

Miscellaneous

- *The Scarborough YMCA has exceedingly high volunteer hours relative to other YMCAs. I suggest this be considered a community-oriented facility as part of the study.*

Next Steps

Kelly Dynes, Senior Planner with Toronto City Planning, concluded the meeting by explaining the next steps of the Study and outlining how community members can continue to provide their feedback, including through the [short online survey](#) or via email to ourSC@toronto.ca. Please visit the [Study website](#) for more information, materials, and meeting notices.