
Community Meeting Summary

805 Wellington Street West

April 2026



Background

CreateTO is supporting the Housing Development Office in advancing City-initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments (OPA/ZBA) for 805 Wellington Street West, also known as 53 Strachan Avenue. This redevelopment project will bring supportive housing back to the site, in addition to introducing affordable housing and purpose-built rental. It will also advance heritage conservation and support the relocation of the existing Garrison Flats community garden to the adjacent park. 805 Wellington Street West is subject to the City's new Toronto Builds Policy Framework, which guides the development of a range of new rental homes within mixed-income communities on City-owned land.

As the development concept for this site has evolved, CreateTO and City of Toronto staff have been engaging the local community in conversations about the future of this site. CreateTO is also working to support the City in ensuring that the vacant portions of the site are made safe. On March 14th, 2026, CreateTO submitted the OPA/ZBA Applications to the City for review. The Community Meeting is one way City staff share and receive comments to help inform their review and comments on planning applications. Following their review, City staff will present a planning report to the City's Planning and Housing Committee for review and consideration with a recommendation to City Council who will then make a decision. Members of the public are also welcome to make deputations at the Planning and Housing Committee meeting. Details about the meeting will be shared, once available.

Community engagement about the development has been ongoing since early 2026. This engagement has included one-on-one and small group conversations, two in-community pop-ups and the community meeting on April 15. CreateTO has also shared information through its website, an email list, social media, and mail-outs to households within approximately a 350-metre radius of the site (approximately 9,000 residences and businesses). In-community engagement events for this project were also promoted via Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik's newsletter, as well as through the City of Toronto social media channels.

For more information about this project, email 805wellington@createto.ca or visit the project webpage: www.createto.ca/805wellington.

About This Summary

This summary synthesizes the discussion at a Community Consultation Meeting held at the Fort York National Historic Site (Blue Barracks building) on April 15, 2026. It includes the following sections:

- Meeting overview
- Overall discussion themes
- Detailed summary

This summary was prepared by Third Party Public – independent facilitators retained by CreateTO to support community engagement for 805 Wellington Street West. It is not intended to be a verbatim transcript; rather, it summarizes and synthesizes the

discussion. The summary was shared in draft with participants for review prior to being finalized.

During the review period, seven members of the community shared feedback related to the process and content of the meeting. Submitted feedback is summarized in Attachment B; specific suggested edits were also noted in the summary as “comment(s) provided during the review period”.

Meeting Overview

The Community Meeting began with an open house, during which participants learned more about the project through display boards and conversations with project team members. After the open house, all participants gathered for a presentation which started with a welcome, land acknowledgement, and opening remarks from Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik (local Councillor for Ward 10 – Spadina–Fort York). Members of the project team - including CreateTO and their consultants, the City’s Housing Development Office, and Community Planning - then gave a presentation, after which participants asked questions and shared feedback in a plenary discussion. Other City staffers were in attendance, including Urban Design, Heritage and Transportation Services. Following the plenary discussion, participants and team members returned to the open house for further one-on-one discussions. Approximately 60 people attended the meeting.

Please see Attachment A for the Agenda. The presentation slides and open house panels are available on the project webpage (www.createto.ca/805wellington).

Overall Discussion Themes

- **Many in the community support the inclusion of affordable and supportive housing.** Participants shared support for the inclusion of both the proposed supportive and affordable housing. Some expressed that they would like to see more or even all of the units be affordable and questioned the need for more market rental homes in the area. Others said they would like to see the affordable and supportive units be built as quickly as possible.
- **Mixed opinions about the proposed height and density.** Many participants advised that a 30-storey building will not fit into the existing community and shared concerns about impacts from the height and additional density, including shadows and additional strain on transit, traffic, sewers, schools, and other hard and soft infrastructure. A few people said they are supportive of the height and density and emphasized the need for more housing in the city.
- **Concerns about cumulative impacts of development in the area.** Participants said the impacts of this development need to be reviewed in conjunction with the impacts from existing and planned developments in the area. They also raised concerns that findings from studies do not align with their lived experience, noting that traffic is already over capacity, and no increases in trips within a day can be accommodated.
- **Heritage preservation.** There were mixed opinions about heritage preservation. Some shared strong support, noting that preserving the heritage will benefit the local

community now and in the future. Others shared concerns that the cost of preserving the heritage will limit the amount of affordable housing that can be provided. Some participants asked that the City include the cost of preserving heritage in future reports on housing projects such as 805 Wellington Street West.

- **The existing community garden is an essential community asset.** Participants raised concerns about moving the existing community garden to the adjacent park, including concerns about the loss of existing plants. They encouraged the team to explore ways to retain a small piece of land on the existing site for the garden.

Detailed Summary

The summary below captures participant questions and feedback shared verbally and in writing at the meeting. Responses from the project team are included in *italics*, where provided.

Affordable and supportive housing

Support for affordable and supportive housing. Many participants shared strong support for adding affordable and supportive housing to the site. There were mixed opinions about how to provide affordable and supportive housing in relation to the overall development:

- Some stated that they would like the City to build only the supportive and affordable housing, without the market rental housing, so that the building height and size could be substantially reduced. They shared concerns that there seems to be unoccupied apartments in the area (primarily condominiums) and that they do not want to see profits for a development partner result in a taller building.
- A few participants said they are supportive of the proposed height and are excited by the opportunity to see a mix of new housing types come to the area so that more people could live in a safe community that is close to transit. They encouraged the City to move as quickly as possible to develop the site. They also asked if additional affordable and/or supportive units could be provided if additional market rental units were provided.
- Some participants asked why it takes so many market rental units to pay for so few affordable rental units. It was emphasized that, given the demand for affordable housing, such ratios were insufficient.

Members of the project team explained that:

- *The market rental homes support revenue generation for the project and thereby make the affordable and supportive homes financially viable.*
- *The planning process takes time because many technical studies are required to evaluate the proposal. This process allows the City to do its due diligence to ensure the proposal meets City technical requirements, while balancing many City planning objectives including helping address the City's housing crisis and minimizing impacts of development on the local community. Additional height and market units could result in more affordable and supportive homes. However, part of the process is doing a market study to help identify the number of market units that can be*

supported on this site and the broader area. Studies to date indicate that the number of units proposed will likely be well absorbed by the current / forecasted need.

- *The housing delivery model for the market and affordable rental building is yet to be determined. Currently, different options are being explored under the Toronto Builds Policy Framework. One option would see the City select a development partner to build and operate the housing. In this scenario, the City would retain ownership of the land and enter into a long-term lease (likely for 99-years) with the development partner.*

Additional information provided by the project team during the review period:

- *Toronto City Council directed staff to advance a partnership with Homes First Society as the future operator of the supportive housing program, facilitating the organization's return to the site after it was previously required to vacate due to significant building deterioration.*
- *While the specific population to be served has not yet been determined by the City and Homes First, the program is expected to support individuals whose needs are more compatible with the demographics of surrounding community context and who are likely to require a lower level of support, in comparison to the previous program that ceased operations in early 2022.*

Interest in the proposed unit mix. Participants discussed the importance of including family-sized units in the purpose-built rental building and asked about the proposed unit mix, i.e., the percentage of bachelor, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom units.

The project team explained that they are targeting a unit mix to meet the [City's Growing Up Guidelines](#) and are aiming to go beyond the minimum number of family sized units recommended in the Guidelines. The proposal is currently targeting to have 35% of all units (106 units) be 2-bedrooms, 10% (30 units) 3-bedrooms, 45% (135 units) 1-bedroom and 10% (30 units) studios in the rental market and affordable rental building, following the targets of the Toronto Builds Policy Framework.

Additional comments provided during the review period:

- A concern about drug use and prostitution at and around Strachan House when it operated before 2020 and a desire to understand how this happened, what can be learned from past mistakes to avoid such situations going forward.
- A concern about lack of evidence that Black and Indigenous people have been engaged in a meaningful way despite the fact that the presentation materials note that Black and Indigenous people experience homelessness at a higher rate than other groups.
- A suggestion to identify the future community served by the supportive housing program early in the process so that the design can respond to their needs (e.g., seniors will have different needs than new families).

Height and Density

The proposed height of the taller 30-storey building is a concern for many. Several participants shared concerns about the proposed height and density, including:

- A 30-storey building does not fit into the existing community, which includes 14 to 15-storey buildings across the street. Taller buildings in the area are all south of the rail corridor.
- Casting shadows on the neighbourhood, especially local parks. The local community already experiences significant shadows from existing tall buildings. It is important that shadow studies for this development take into consideration and show the existing shadows (including from existing buildings on Ordinance Street) and if, how, and where shadows will increase as a result of this development.
- That the increasing density in the area is continually reducing the amount of space people have to live, which impacts their quality of life.

Comment provided during the review period: A concern that the responses from City staff about “fast-moving” shadows were misleading.

Participants asked if/how the character of the existing neighbourhood and shadows from the proposed development are being considered?

Members of the project team explained that shadow studies have been completed as part of the study and the shadow studies examine new shadows created by the proposal (net new shadows) and focus on shadow impacts during the spring and fall equinoxes. Several design options were explored and tested in an effort to ensure the height and massing of the buildings are appropriate in this context, while minimizing shadow impacts. The taller portion of the building is located on the west side of the site to minimize shadow impacts on the park. They explained that the tower will cast shadows on some parts of the park but because of the proposed shape of the building (more slender), the shadows will pass quickly and only last for a couple of hours in the late afternoon, at the equinoxes. The project team also advised that the building will not cast shadows on the active play areas within the parks. The sun/shadow study is available on the City’s Application Information Centre under the supporting documentation tab (direct link: www.toronto.ca/805wellingtonStW).

Some support for the proposed height. Some participants said they support the proposed height and want to see more housing in the area, including affordable and supportive housing.

Cumulative Impacts

Interest in having cumulative impacts reviewed by independent professionals.

Participants said this proposed development cannot be reviewed in a vacuum but instead needs to be considered along with the existing and planned developments in the area to understand the cumulative impacts. There was also interest shared in having independent planning professionals, separate from the City, review cumulative impacts on transit, traffic, sewage, shadows, rail safety, etc.

Members of the project team explained that when reviewing any application, including this one, they look at the broader area to consider the cumulative impacts of existing and approved projects on the community. They also said that all development applications are reviewed on their merit by many professionals, including planners and engineers from various City departments, and external agencies such as Metrolinx. Certain studies, such as the Rail Safety Study, are also peer reviewed by additional

professionals retained by the City. The assumptions and findings of all studies must demonstrate that the proposal meets or exceeds the City's applicable standards and requirements in order for the proposed project to advance. The team shared that all supporting studies are available for review on the City's Application Information Centre under the supporting documentation tab (direct link www.toronto.ca/805wellingtonStW).

Traffic and Transit

Traffic and transit congestion is a concern for many. Participants said that local roads and transit are already over capacity and shared concerns that bringing more people to the area will only make things worse.

Members of the project team said the City reviews potential impacts on traffic and transit through a Transportation Impact Study. Engineers from the team explained that this study revealed that due to the limited parking being offered on-site, it will only add approximately 43 additional trips in the AM hours and approximately 29 additional trips in the PM hours, which are considered by City Staff as acceptable given the number of new homes it will add. The project team also acknowledged the need for additional transit and indicated that increased transit is being planned for the area, recognizing that this will not fix issues immediately but will help going forward.

Additional information provided by the project team during the review period:

Public transportation alternatives like the Ontario Line Exhibition and King-Bathurst stations are under construction, and further solutions to improve congestion are under consideration.

The findings described in the Transportation Impact Study do not align with their lived experience and even a few more trips are not acceptable, given that streets and transit network, specifically on Wellington, Strachan, and Niagara, are already over capacity. There was a suggestion to consider removing one-way bike lanes on Tecumseth Street as one way to help alleviate traffic congestion.

Comment provided during the review period: Some disagreed with the results / numbers shared from the Transportation Impact Study, in a particular, the number of new cars / vehicle trips that would be generated by the development.

Members of the project team from Transportation Services reviewing the project advised that would take this back and follow-up with a response on whether or not this feasible.

Community Garden

Interest in protecting space for the existing community garden on-site. Some participants, especially those involved with the existing community garden, expressed that they would like to see some of the existing community garden retained in place. They shared concerns about losing existing plants and trees, including an established Mulberry tree and native plants, through the move to the park adjacent to the site. There was a suggestion to reduce the size of the building footprints slightly to provide a small space for the existing community garden.

Comment provided during the review period: The current community garden sits on park land, this project will result in a loss of park land, not additional park land.

The project team explained that they looked at different opportunities to protect the existing tree/plant species. Even if space was provided on the site for the existing garden the existing trees and plants would not survive the construction process due to soil and root disruption. The current proposal demonstrates a total of 27 new trees with native species from Southern Ontario and North America. The team also explained that they have a mandate to provide as much affordable housing as possible and that reducing the size of either building would limit the number of supportive and affordable units that can be provided.

Heritage Conservation

Mixed opinions about heritage conservation and interest in understanding costs.

Some participants expressed that preserving the heritage elements and celebrating the history of the buildings on-site is very important. They said that these are central to the area's history and preservation will enhance and beautify the streetscape for current and future generations. Other participants raised concerns about the cost of heritage preservation for a City housing project and suggested that the money spent on heritage preservation would be better spent on supporting more affordable and supportive housing units. There was a request to include the cost of heritage preservation in City reports.

Comment provided during the review period: Concern and questions about how the former Strachan House building became unlivable, especially after the former architects were awarded a Governor General's Award for Excellence in 1999 for their work on the building.

Additional information provided by the project team during the review period:

The project team advised that the City is required to evaluate buildings with heritage potential on City-owned lands for preservation, and that the Strachan House has been confirmed to possess heritage value through a comprehensive studies and analysis. They also noted that, while the building may appear to be in poor condition, detailed technical assessments determined that the existing masonry is structurally sound and has great potential to be retained and integrated into the future development.

Next Steps

CreateTO is currently working to address comments received through the community engagement events and the City Staff's review of the application. City Staff will present their report on the planning application to the City's Planning & Housing Committee for consideration and recommendation to City Council. This is currently anticipated to take place in July 2026. Members of the public are welcome to make deputations at Planning & Housing Committee.

To stay up to date on the process, including information about the Planning & Housing Committee meeting, email 805wellington@createto.ca or visit www.createto.ca/805wellington.

All OPA/ZBA Application materials, drawings, reports, and further updates are available at www.toronto.ca/805wellingtonStW.

Attachment A: Agenda

Community Information Meeting: 805 Wellington Street West

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Fort York National Historic Site, Blue Barracks

Meeting purpose: The City of Toronto, together with CreateTO, are hosting a community meeting to share information and answer questions about the proposed development concept at 805 Wellington Street West as part of the City-initiated Zoning By-Law Amendment process. Your feedback will help inform the City of Toronto's review of the proposed development concept submitted by CreateTO.

Proposed agenda

6:00 Open House

Participants are invited to read the boards and speak with City staff, CreateTO staff, and the project consultants.

6:30 Acknowledgement, welcome, agenda review

*Ausma Malik, Councillor for Ward 10 – Spadina –Fort York, and
Deputy Mayor for Toronto & East York*

Josh Estrella, Community Planning, City of Toronto

Yulia Pak, Third Party Public

6:40 Presentations

- *Project Overview – Sarah Corey, CreateTO*
- *HousingTO Action Plan and Affordable Housing – Aviva Levy, Housing Development Office*
- *Site Context & Planning Framework – Josh Estrella, Community Planning*
- *Design Concept – Brian Brownlie, DTAH*

7:15 Facilitated Q&A

All

8:00 Return to boards

8:30 pm Adjourn

Attachment B: Summary of comments provided during the draft summary review period

During the review period, seven community members shared feedback related to the process and content of the meeting. The feedback is summarized below; specific suggested edits are also noted in the summary as “comment(s) provided during the review period”. Answers from project team are noted in *italics*.

Content:

- Five of the six community members reinforced strong concerns shared at the meeting about the proposed height of the rental building, shadows, traffic congestion, and city services (e.g., water, wastewater, and transportation) - see “comments provided during the review period” for more details.

Process:

- One of the seven community members shared that the summary covered all the opinions they witnessed at the meeting. However, they expressed concern that most decisions have already been made and questioned if/how feedback shared at the meeting are being considered by the City. *Community feedback received through the engagement process is considered by City Planning as part of its review of the OPA/ZBA applications and the preparation of its recommendations to City Council. The feedback also informs CreateTO's work as the project advances into future phases, including the more detailed design process, when more meaningful opportunities to refine and influence the proposed development lies.*
- Six of the seven community members expressed concerns that the vast majority of people who attended the meeting were not supportive of the proposed height; and, it seemed to those who provided this feedback in writing, that some of those who were supportive of the proposed height either did not live locally and/or were intentionally invited to the meeting by the project team. *CreateTO and City staff confirmed that this was a public meeting open to all. Invitations were shared via Canada Post delivery to over 9,000 residences and businesses within a radius of approximately 300 m from the site, through CreateTO's social media channels, by email from CreateTO to those who signed up for project updates, and posted on the project webpage (www.createto.ca/805wellington). Invitation was also shared by the Deputy Mayor Ausma Malik (local Councillor for Ward 10 – Spadina–Fort York) newsletter. No individual invitations were made by CreateTO or City staff.*
- There was also concern that not everyone who attended the meeting received the draft meeting summary for review. *The facilitation team explained that the draft summary was sent by email to all individuals who signed in at the meeting and shared their email on the meeting sign-in sheet. They also worked with the submission authors to ensure everyone interested in receiving the summary moving forward is part of the meeting sign-in record.*