



## CENTRE STREET WORKSHOP 2 SUMMARY

### 1.0 Study Background

The City of Vaughan, with the assistance of the Consultant Team of The Planning Partnership and Polous & Chung, are currently undertaking a Centre Street corridor study that will provide:

- **Land Use Recommendations** for a study area encompassing properties fronting the north side of Centre Street between New Westminster Drive to Vaughan Boulevard (Site 1) and Vaughan Boulevard to Concord Road (Site 2);
- An **Urban Design Vision and Guidelines** for both sides of Centre Street, between Bathurst Street to the east and Hwy 407 to the west;
- A **Streetscape Master Plan** for both sides of Centre Street, between Bathurst Street to the east and Hwy 407 to the west, which will inform the future streetscape design for the planned Regional vivaNext bus rapid transit project within the study area; and,
- An **Implementation and Phasing Strategy** to assist the City of Vaughan in identifying investment priorities and funding mechanisms for the area improvements.

### 2.0 Overview of the Workshops

Two public consultation/workshop events for the land use component of the Centre Street Study took place the evening of Thursday May 5<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday June 7<sup>th</sup> 2011. Various stakeholders including adjacent residents and affected landowners attended the meetings. The intent of the meetings was to present an update on the study progress including the Streetscape Mater Plan, as well as to introduce and conduct a workshop on the land use component of the study and receive feedback.

Both workshops began with an introduction to the consultant team, background on the purpose of the consultation, supporting land use planning policy, landscape and urban design framework and Streetscape Master Plan. Case study examples were presented to showcase best practices that could help to inform the type and quality of change that could be achieved along Centre Street. The consultant team presented three options for both sites and asked participants to comment on *“how they could make the options better.”* Participants rotated amongst tables and discussed the options with other stakeholders and the consultant team. As part of this exercise, models were used to illustrate potential land use options for each site. At the end of this event, comments were posted on the wall and a general discussion/recap with all participants summarized commentary for each option. Specific themes arising from these comments are further described below.



### 3.0 Site 1 (New Westminster Drive to Vaughan Boulevard)

#### 3.1 Option 1 (Status Quo)

This Option explores a scenario that maintains the status quo with respect to existing development permissions. It generally proposes 3 - 4 storeys of mixed retail and office uses placed close to the street edge with surface parking directed to the rear. The following general themes resulted in response to this option:

- **Uses:** Participants suggested that the proposed development scenario host a mix of uses including retail, office and residential; integrating amenity uses into this development was seen as a priority. Some also recognized that the land devoted to surface parking was an underutilization of land and increased densities were needed to support area planning objectives and transit investment. However, others preferred to keep the densities / heights as low as possible.
- **Height & Built Form:** Heights were seen to be consistent with those in the surrounding neighbourhood and it was suggested that buildings step down to 2.5 storeys where adjacent to low-rise residential properties. For some, the building near the corner of New Westminster Drive and Katerina Avenue was thought to be too tall and it was recommended that it be brought down to 2.5 storeys.
- **Public Realm:** There was general agreement among participants that an enhanced pedestrian realm was necessary for the success of future development along this stretch of Centre Street. High quality facades that are engaging and permeable to pedestrians are preferable, in comparison to the design quality of the Walmart at Centre Street and Bathurst Street. There was a general consensus among participants that the amount of surface parking would not only lead to increased noise and pollution, but was also wasted potential land for additional buildings and/or green space. Additional green space such as a central open space was suggested, achieved by placing the parking below grade. Others suggested the addition of drainage swales and permeable surfaces to mitigate environmental issues associated with the large surface parking areas. It was suggested that a wider landscaped buffer be provided between the existing residential properties and surface parking so as to mitigate any impacts.
- **Access & Circulation:** While some participants were in support of pedestrian access from the MacArthur Drive cul-de-sac, there was also a participant that disagreed. For some, vehicular access to and from Vaughan Boulevard was strongly discouraged. Some suggest on-street parking be provided on Centre Street.

#### NOTE:

- \* *Centre Street is intended to support an overall long-term density target of up to 2.5 floor space index (FSI) for developable areas as stipulated by the York Region Official Plan – December 16, 2009. This Option achieves 0.49 FSI, which meets approximately 20% of this target.*



Centre Street / Site 1 - Option 1



Centre Street / Site 1 - Option 1

### 3.2 Option 2 (Mixed-Uses in Low and Mid-Rise Forms)

Option 2 explores a scenario that includes a mix of commercial and residential uses predominantly in a mid-rise built form. The site is organized into smaller walkable blocks, focused on a series of paved and green open spaces. Building heights are generally 8-storeys along Centre Street, stepping down to 6 storeys internal to the site, with 3 storey transitional townhouses placed adjacent to existing low-rise residential properties to the north. 10 storey buildings on 3 sites help to define key intersections. This option generated the following responses:

- **Uses:** Some participants expressed a desire for a greater mix of uses including a full range of retail, restaurant and office uses rather than primarily residential uses. Animated uses such as cafes were desired at the street level. Some participants expressed concern over the proximity of the townhouses to the existing residential. Overall, this option was generally the most preferred with some modifications.
- **Height & Built Form:** Although some participants felt this was the most preferred option, there were still reservations about the scale of some buildings. Some participants felt that the heights should provide greater transitions to the surrounding low-rise residential properties, specifically that buildings step down gradually from 6 to 4 to 3 storeys. Others felt that taller buildings should remain out of sight, while some preferred to keep heights to a 2 storey maximum to minimize privacy and shadow impacts.
- **Public Realm:** Some participants wanted to include the flex-space (see Option 3) for this option as it would aid in creating a more pedestrian friendly area and would buffer pedestrians from the traffic on Centre Street while providing spontaneous short-term parking. Participants liked the idea of additional green space enabled by underground parking as a result of higher densities. It was recommended that the green space backing on to existing residential properties be maximized and possibly turned into a linear park space. Concern was raised about the amount of open space and it was suggested that the small pockets of green space be consolidated into one large area. Participants recommended the inclusion of roof-top gardens/ green roofs.
- **Access & Circulation:** Vehicular access on to Vaughan Boulevard from the new development was seen as a negative aspect of this option. The flexible boulevard (see Option 3) was seen to be a good idea to introduce in this Option. While some desired a pedestrian access from the MacArthur Drive cul-de-sac, others did not.

**NOTE:**

- \* *Centre Street is intended to support an overall long-term density target of up to 2.5 floor space index (FSI) for developable areas as stipulated by the York Region Official Plan - December 16, 2009. This Option achieves 1.83 FSI, which meets approximately 73% of this target.*



Centre Street / Site 1 - Option 2



Centre Street / Site 1 - Option 2

### 3.3 Option 3 (Mixed-Use in a Low, Mid and High-Rise Forms)

Option 3 explores a scenario that includes a mix of commercial and residential uses in a variety of built form types. The site is organized into smaller walkable blocks, focused on a series of paved and green open spaces. Building heights are generally 6 storeys along Centre Street, while internal to the site there are 16 storey buildings with low-rise 3 storey podiums. 3 storey transitional townhouses are placed adjacent to existing low-rise residential properties to the north. A flexible boulevard is provided along Centre Street that includes the 'flexible street,' a narrow street with on-street parking that can be closed off to traffic during warmer months to accommodate markets, events and outdoor sidewalk cafes. The following general themes resulted in response to this option:

- **Uses:** Feedback regarding uses were similar to Option 1. Some expressed the need to include more commercial uses and some expressed concern at the possible loss of the grocery store and wanted to ensure that its replacement was possible.
- **Height & Built Form:** While some felt that this option was appropriate, most participants felt that the 16 storey buildings were too tall and there was concern about the associated impacts on privacy and shadows. It was suggested that building heights should step down to 2 stories on Vaughan Boulevard, with some participants requesting that all buildings be no greater than 2 to 6 storeys. Some participants felt that taller buildings were viable if directed to the right locations, specifically at New Westminster Drive. Other participants recommended a clustering of tall buildings in one area so as to enable the provision of additional open space.
- **Public Realm:** Many participants liked the idea of the flexible boulevard. Some felt that this option lacked enough open space.
- **Access & Circulation:** Some participants were concerned about the potential impacts on traffic, including congestion and noise. Some suggested no vehicular access to Vaughan Boulevard. Some participants wanted to ensure that adequate parking was provided, while others felt that the speed limit for Centre Street should be reduced.

#### NOTE:

- \* *Centre Street is intended to support an overall long-term density target of up to 2.5 floor space index (FSI) for developable areas as stipulated by the York Region Official Plan - December 16, 2009. This Option achieves 1.88 FSI, which meets approximately 75% of this target.*



Centre Street / Site 1 - Option 3



Centre Street / Site 1 - Option 3



## 4.0 Site 2 (Vaughan Boulevard to Concord Road)

### 4.1 Option 1 (Status Quo)

Option 1 explores a scenario that maintains the status quo with respect to existing development permissions. It comprises 2.5 storeys within sloped roof buildings containing office uses fronting on to Centre Street. Surface parking is placed to the rear of the site. The following general themes resulted in response to this option:

- **Uses:** Some participants were concerned with potential noise associated with rear garbage pick-up.
- **Height & Built Form:** Some participants were comfortable with the heights given their consistency with the existing surrounding heights.
- **Access & Circulation:** The rear lane access to Vaughan Boulevard was seen as a negative aspect by some of the participants and positive by others.

#### NOTE:

- \* *Centre Street is intended to support an overall long-term density target of up to 2.5 floor space index (FSI) for developable areas as stipulated by the York Region Official Plan - December 16, 2009. This Option achieves 0.60 FSI, which meets approximately 24% of this target.*



Centre Street / Site 2 - Option 1



Centre Street / Site 2 - Option 1



#### 4.2 Option 2 (Mixed-Uses in Low-Rise Forms)

This option explores a design scenario that includes a mix of residential and commercial uses contained within stacked townhouses and low-rise residential condo apartments with retail at grade along Centre Street. Heights range from 4 storeys along Centre Street, stepping down to 2.5 storeys along the northern edge of the site. Parking is primarily provided below grade, enabling a series of landscaped courtyards at the rear of the site. The following general themes resulted in response to this option:

- **Uses:** Some participants suggested cafes and shops along Centre Street. Some were concerned with potential noise associated with rear garbage pick-up.
- **Height & Built Form:** Many participants were generally satisfied with this option. Some expressed concern on the uniformity of heights and suggested varying the scale of buildings. Some felt that heights could be increased in the range of 5 to 10 storeys. Some suggested that the taller buildings would enable larger green spaces.
- **Access & Circulation:** The rear lane access to Vaughan Boulevard and Concord Road was seen as a negative aspect by some of the participants. Some saw underground parking as a positive attribute.

#### NOTE:

- \* *Centre Street is intended to support an overall long-term density target of up to 2.5 floor space index (FSI) for developable areas as stipulated by the York Region Official Plan - December 16, 2009. This Option achieves 1.18 FSI, which meets approximately 47% of this target.*



Centre Street / Site 2 - Option 2



Centre Street / Site 2 - Option 2

#### 4.3 Option 3 (Mixed-Uses in Low to Mid-Rise Forms)

This option explored a scenario that includes a mix of residential and commercial uses contained in buildings that ranged between 6 and 8 storeys along Centre Street, transitioning to 2 and 3 storeys towards the adjacent low-rise neighbourhoods. Parking is primarily provided below grade, enabling a series of landscaped courtyards at the rear of the site. A flexible boulevard is provided along Centre Street that include a narrow street with on-street parking that can be closed off to traffic during warmer months to accommodate markets, events and outdoor sidewalk cafes. The following general themes resulted in response to this option:

- **Uses:** Some participants suggested the incorporation of retirement/senior's homes, and that amenities such as a doctor and dentist should be provided. It was suggested that this stretch of Centre Street should resemble the same form and mix of uses as Bloor West Village in Toronto. Some felt that this land use option best utilized the land and was most supportive of transit.
- **Height & Built Form:** Some participants were generally in support of the proposed heights and densities to support transit investment, others thought they were too high. Green roofs were suggested by some.
- **Public Realm:** Some participants felt that the flexible boulevard was a positive attribute of this option and some were excited about incorporating a market into this space. Participants supported increasing the presence of pedestrians on the street.
- **Access & Circulation:** The rear lane access to Vaughan Boulevard and Concord Road was seen as a negative aspect by some of the participants, others thought that a more generous landscaped buffer along the lane would be positive. Some participants were concerned about the traffic impacts and ensuring adequate parking.

NOTE:

- \* *Centre Street is intended to support an overall long-term density target of up to 2.5 floor space index (FSI) for developable areas as stipulated by the York Region Official Plan - December 16, 2009. This Option achieves 1.90 FSI, which meets approximately 76% of this target.*



Centre Street / Site 2 - Option 3



Centre Street / Site 2 - Option 3



## 5.0 General Discussion

Discussion amongst participants occurred during and following the workshop. Participants were asked to comment on the options and examples presented. The following questions and concerns were raised as part of the general discussions:

- **Speed & Traffic:** Conversations took place concerning vehicle speeds along Centre Street and the perception of increased traffic volumes. It was recommended by an attendee that speeds be reduced to 40 km/h from 60 km/hr. In regards to traffic concerns, it was thought that the designation of this street as a transit corridor would address this issue. Participants were also wary about the inclusion of additional traffic lights associated with the vivaNext Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.
- **Timeline & Phasing:** Participants were curious about the projected timeline and phasing of this project, and what is planned for interim stages. It was recommended that construction coordination of any hydro and utilities infrastructure updates should be managed to ensure that they are made at the same time. Additionally, landowner agreements to insure a consolidated design approach were discussed.
- **Public Realm:** While participants were supportive of the flexible boulevard idea presented in Options 3 for both sites, many were unsure of how it would actually function on a day-to-day level. There was concern that the flexible boulevard would function solely as an additional parking lot and participants questioned its implementation. The consultant team explained that the delivery of the boulevard would require buy-in from landowners. The inclusion of trees in the centre median of Centre Street was discussed, with some participants unsure of the viability of this option as it had not been allowed elsewhere due to salt and water issues. The consultant team identified the key factors under consideration by vivaNext to promote healthy tree growth in the centre median, which included: the choice of tree species, the provision of increased soil volume and adequate water to flush away any toxins. Finally, participants felt that any new development needed to address the needs of pedestrians and provide an incentive to visit the area. The current opinion is that there is 'nowhere to go' along this corridor, with participants questioning why anyone would want to walk along Centre Street. In response, the consultant team spoke to the upcoming intensification of this area, including transit investment and the development of a mixed use destination. Additional green space was resoundingly supported, however participants wanted to avoid dog parks.

## 6.0 Conclusions and Next Steps

The public feedback summarized in this report will help to inform the preparation of a preferred land use option for both sites. The preferred options will be detailed and assessed from a policy context, planning, urban design and transportation perspective. A draft of the land use options in addition to draft urban design guidelines and a draft streetscape master plan will be presented back to the public for further comment at a public meeting in the Fall of 2011.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Workshop 2: Centre Street Notes Thursday May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2011**

#### **Site 1: Option 1**

- Consider pedestrian access on cul-de-sac on north side from residential to commercial uses
- Add drainage swales and permeable surface stones and more green space in parking lot
- Not enough pedestrian quality to street front
- No fake façade similar to Walmart at Centre Street and Bathurst
- Need understanding of what will be constructed across the street by New Westminster Drive to the east (need more surrounding context)
- On street parking in front
- Don't want access to the site to/from Vaughan Blvd
- Enforce traditional height adjacent to existing properties (2.5 storeys)
- Underground parking and more green space
- Density is required to support retail and commercial uses
- Status quo is not acceptable given significant investment in transit
- Need clarification on what amenities will be provided
- Appropriate mix of uses: full range of retail, restaurants, office (viability?)
- One central open space
- Neighbouring schools – how will they accommodate community impacts

#### **Site 1: Option 2**

- Blend the high density building on Vaughan Blvd with adjacent residential buildings
- Pedestrian access from cul-de-sac
- Add flex space to Centre Street to create more pedestrian presence and spontaneous parking (also buffer with traffic)
- Consider a green roof or rooftop gardens
- Like green space – more green space
- Consolidate green space
- What's in the buildings – cafes, animated uses?

#### **Site 1: Option 3**

- No access from Vaughan Blvd
- Between Bathurst and Dufferin Street the speed limit on Centre Street should be decreased to 40km/hr. (Carville between Bathurst and Yonge Street is 40 km/hr).
- Middle towers are too high
- Don't want additional traffic lights and traffic
- Ensure enough parking is provided
- Integration of new development and heights
- Concern about the visibility of new buildings from the neighbourhood
- Should be 2 storeys next to Vaughan Blvd
- Concentrate taller buildings in one location
- No frills discussion – how will this retailer be incorporated? This business market plan is based on lower rent buildings – what will happen with the redevelopment of this area?
- What happens when the grocery store goes away?
- How will parking be accomplished for large-scale retail?



### **Site 2: Option 1**

- No road access to Vaughan Blvd
- No problem with heights. Matches existing buildings on Centre Street and Vaughan (2.5 storeys)

### **Site 2: Option 2**

- Make heights 5-9 storeys
- Parking underground
- No access from Vaughan or Concord.
- 2.5 to 4 storeys is ok – generally happy with this option
- Vary the heights of the buildings from 2.5 – 9 storeys with less buildings

### **Site 2: Option 3**

- Greater amount of commercial uses
- More services – ie dentist and doctor
- No access from Vaughan and Concord. 6-8 storeys for the middle sections is preferable
- Mixed retail on main level
- Ensure transit supportive density – this will do it!
- Flex-street will make a difference – market in flex-street
- Traffic problem
- Ensure enough parking
- Yes to green roofs
- Great idea of pedestrian presence on street – but need to do this well (a flex street could work)
- Pedestrian walkway at back of buildings on 1<sup>st</sup> storey
- Nursing home – incorporating aging population into the design of this space
- Want this street to be like Bloor West Village

### **Presentation Questions:**

- Speed limits should be decreased from 60 – 40 km/hr
- Who is going to pay for this development?
- Mall – how do you address the interface with the surroundings?
- What happens in the interim?
- What is the timeline of this project?
- Ensure project coordination – (hydro and utilities)
- Boulevard (flex street option) how will this transform into a market space? How do you prevent this from being turned into a parking lot? (5 min stops allowed only)
- What is the width of the street and how are buildings positioned?
- Flooding and water considerations – need to address the gradient
- Safety issue/ nighttime noise issue – seen as more of an enforcement issue – design for safety and natural surveillance
- Retail on north side
- How can there be trees in median – how will they address salt and water issues?
  - The choice of trees
  - Increased soil volume
  - Need water going through to flush out
- How will bikes be incorporated? – want bikes to be allowed in bus lanes
- Bikes can use flex space – there will be dedicated bike lanes
- Concentrate high-rise buildings in one corner



- Concern that an increased population = more traffic
- Concern with more traffic lights
- Need more context of the surrounding area on the plans
- Need an excuse for people to walk (convenience stores and parks)
- More green space – want to avoid dog parks

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Workshop 2: Centre Street Notes**

**Thursday June 7th, 2011**

#### **Site 1: Option 1**

- To use the land for parking rather than buildings or any other housing seems to be a waste. Parking means a lot of noise and pollution for Katrina Street residences.
- Keep parking lots further away from backyards of Katrina Ave.
- This only improves Centre Street façade
- Too much parking –same as now. Not enough of a buffer between McArthur Drive houses and Vaughan Blvd houses.
- Build underground parking
- Building on corner of New Westminster and Katerina is too tall – should be 2.5 storeys high so it does not block the sun, and there is more privacy.
- Include a buffer and trees

#### **Site 1: Option 2**

- No pedestrian connection from cul-de-sac / provide pedestrian connection from cul-de-sac.
- Check to determine if park space is adequate
- Reduce height of buildings from 10 to 6, and from 6 to 4.
- More graduated condition 3-4-6.
- Still too dense but best option
- Vaughan Blvd and Centre Street – bring down height to match across the street (2.5 storeys).
- Maximize greenery (trees ect,) onto backyards north of the site – turn into a linear park.
- No access to/from Vaughan Blvd from new development
- Maintain mature trees at back side and enhance further
- No more than 2 storey buildings
- Don't like the townhomes backing onto the existing residential.
- No tall buildings – block the sun and give a bad view.
- Blvd Flex Street is a good idea if densities and other aspects get worked out.
- Better than Option 1 – buildings are not that high, and like the green space.
- No buildings. 2 storeys ok! No tall buildings.
- More residential buildings alone – will not improve our living style.

#### **Site 1: Option 3**

- Unacceptable to have buildings so high. Buildings backing onto Katerina must be 3 storeys max, and the 16 storey buildings should be no more than 4 storeys. Total lack of privacy.
- Noise level – too much traffic
- 16, 8, 6 storey buildings are out of the question
- No more than 2 storey buildings
- Horrible option



- Any building higher than 4 storeys backing onto existing houses is totally unacceptable = total lack of privacy and no sun in tiny townhouse garden.
- Buildings too high even if they don't back on to houses. Limit all heights to 4-6 storeys.
- Lack of park and open recreation areas
- Totally unacceptable – no more than 2 storey buildings
- Higher building heights are/can be compatible, 10-15 storey buildings in the right locations if appropriate and transit supportive.
- As the property owner with 50% of its lands abutting this development, this is an unacceptable option. (145 McArthur Drive)

**Site 2: Option 1**

- Garbage noise level

**Site 2: Option 2**

- Garbage noise level
- Looks uniform in height
- Almost cookie cutter style
- Vary heights to 5-8 storeys
- Cafes and shops near the Boulevard

**Site 2: Option 3**

- This is an excellent option, it can allow for higher density which can increase utilization of transit ridership.
- Provide for retirement residential
- 4-8 storeys office/medical would be well suited

**Presentation Questions:**

- Participants – not convinced by higher densities in the 'village' thought higher densities should occur from No Frills – to the west
- What happens if land owners don't cooperate to create the flexible boulevard? – need to commit to an agreement.