

Land Use Review

Steeles Avenue Corridor – Jane Street to Keele Street

Summary of Public Participation

The public consultation process undertaken as part of the Steeles Corridor Land Use Review included interviews with landowners within the study area and York University representatives; subsequent meetings with landowners to update them and obtain feedback; and two public open houses. Along with descriptions of these events, the public comments expressed at each are summarized below.

Interviews with Landowners – Dec. 12, 2002

All of the private landowners within the study area and York University officials were invited to an interview with the study team, with the following able to participate.

York University – Edward Spence, Bud Purves, Diana Iorio

- A key challenge is to change the divisive character of Steeles.
- The proposed bus rapid transit (BRT) link to York will require a terminus at Steeles.
- York may be interested in using parking lot in Hydro corridor.
- Off-campus student housing is desirable.
- There is an understanding within the University that the northwest part of York's lands will need density to support transit.
- There are currently no concrete proposals for new uses on the south side of Steeles.
- There may be potential for land use linkages between the Steeles Corridor and academic programs at the University, e.g., computer engineering, applied sciences, incubator space.
- Currently, 34,000 cars and 800 buses enter the campus daily and there are 12,000 parking spaces on campus.
- The University is committed to accommodating growth without increasing car traffic.
- The new Tennis Canada facility will open in 2004.
- Astronomy programs at the University make lighting an issue in the area.
- The University intends to retain the historic farm house and barn near Steeles and Keele.

Glen Group – Jordan Rose

- The Glen Group continues to own 4-5 acres of undeveloped land immediately east of the future transit station.
- The existing low-rise industrial/commercial buildings have seen a number of tenants over the years and gone through internal reconfigurations.
- Development levies are a severe disincentive to condominium development in the Corridor, but rental housing could be attractive.

Milestone Group – Bernie Moss, Peter Weston, Joseph Salvatore

- Milestone’s developments in the area total 4 million square feet and accommodate 3,000-4,000 employees.
- An office building is planned for Steeles and Keele, which will contain a bank and professional offices.
- Access is a huge issue in the area.
- Existing intersection and signal at Founders Road should be maintained, allowing for a north-south extension on the north side.
- An east-west road through the study area is necessary to serve future development.
- Communication between landowners and study team should be maintained through the study.

United Parcel Service (UPS) – Keilder Glen, Tim Bermingham

- The UPS distribution facility in the study area handles 70% of UPS packages in Canada.
- It’s a labour-hungry facility currently employing 500, excluding drivers.
- It’s quiet during the day, with sorting beginning 5-6 p.m. and ending 2-3 a.m.
- Reliant on almost around-the-clock transit service.
- Not concerned about being surrounded by transit facilities and associated parking.
- Want the right to expand protected.
- Expansion eastward would include significant parking.
- It’s critical that the existing intersections work
- Main ingress and egress is via Jane—sufficient cueing distance for trucks waiting to pick up packages is critical.
- New transit-oriented development policies should be locked to implementation of transit improvements.
- Okay to layer on higher order uses on lands provided current permissions are maintained.

Meeting with Milestone Group – Feb. 20, 2003

Members of the study team met with representatives of the Milestone Group at their request. Milestone presented a concept for a mixed-use development, including residential and commercial uses, on the entirety of their lands. They reiterated their desire for Founders Road to be extended north and indicated they would be interested in using the hydro corridor for parking if possible.

Update to Landowners – Feb. 27, 2003

Prior to the project’s first public open house, a preview of the Issues and Opportunities identified by the study team was presented to landowners. Representatives of the Milestone Group attended. The comments received did not include any new issues or concerns not previously raised.

Public Open House – Feb. 27, 2003

The Issues and Opportunities identified in the study's first phase were presented at a public open house held at the Dufferin Clark Library. Fewer than 10 citizens attended, most of whom represented the residential neighbourhoods south of Steeles Avenue and west of Jane Street. Councillor Mario Racco attended, as did Toronto Councillor Li Preti, who commented that residential and prestige offices that would support transit should be encouraged in the Steeles Corridor. Generally, attendees supported the objectives of the study.

Update to Landowners – Jan. 15, 2004

Prior to the project's second open house, landowners were again invited for a preview of the Preferred Directions and Preliminary Recommendations developed for the Steeles Corridor. Representatives of the Milestone Group attended. These were their main comments:

- They generally supported the transit-oriented development framework, including the concept of a grid street network, a mix of uses and higher densities.
- They were concerned that manufacturing and warehousing uses, as well as auto-oriented commercial uses, may not be permitted in future.
- They were concerned that an extension of the existing Founders Road was not being shown (the response was that the precise alignment of future north-south roads could only be determined as detailed development plans are prepared and coordinated on both sides of Steeles).
- They enquired as to how the issue of the location of the east-west road would be resolved with Hydro.
- They requested an increase in the proposed density targets for their lands.

Public Open House – Jan. 15, 2004

The second public open house was attended by approximately 25 citizens, including residents from Vaughan and Toronto and students and representatives of York University. The Preferred Directions and Preliminary Recommendations were well received with no significant concerns raised. York University staff (Ted Spence and Chris Wong) clarified some issues with respect to the conceptual road network shown on the south side of Steeles. Generally, the comments expressed were supportive of the objective to integrate the study area with York University by promoting a mix of residential and commercial uses and improving pedestrian connections.

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