



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: June 10, 2025

SUBJECT: INTERIM REPORT, Bayview John Community Engagement Visioning Working Sessions, Thornhill (Ward 1)

PREPARED BY: Rick Cefaratti, RPP, MCIP, Acting Manager, West District, Ext. 3675

REVIEWED BY: Stephen Lue, RPP, MCIP, Senior Manager, Development, Ext. 2520

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the interim report titled, "INTERIM REPORT, Bayview John Community Engagement Visioning Working Sessions, Thornhill (Ward 1)", be received;
2. AND THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

This report provides an update on the three Bayview John Community Engagement Visioning Working Sessions that were held in early 2025 at the Thornhill Community Centre. It details the public and stakeholder consultation through three topic-specific meetings led by Third Party Public, the city's retained facilitator. Appendix A includes the summary memorandum prepared by Third Party Public.

BACKGROUND:

Figure 1 shows the Study Area bounded by Drake Park to the north, the CN Rail Corridor to the south, the Employment Lands and the Otto townhouse development to the east, the Shouldice Hospital and Glynnwood Retirement Residence to the west (the "Subject Area").

On June 7, 2021, the Development Services ("DSC") directed staff to report back on an estimated cost for the studies, timing and financial resources to engage consultants for the Thornhill Centre Area secondary plan study. On February 7, 2024, the DSC provided a modified direction for Staff to undertake a visioning exercise, in lieu of a secondary plan, for the Subject Area that would identify potential new public roads, multi-use connections (active transportation network, local trail network), new public parks, and an assessment for additional community and commercial amenities to support an appropriate mix of land uses.

On June 25, 2024, the DSC directed Staff to retain Third Party Public ("the facilitator") to advance a public and stakeholder consultation process comprised of a series of three topic-specific working sessions for public input on the visioning work, as outlined below.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Working Session 1: Urban Design, Built Form, and Land Use

Held on January 13, 2025, approximately 150 participants attended working session 1, including City staff, the Mayor, the Local Ward Councillor, and area residents. The participants gathered to discuss their thoughts in response to the following focused questions:

1.1 What are the best and least liked characteristics of the Bayview John area?

Many of the participants expressed general content with the current facilities in the Study Area, including the Thornhill Community Centre as a focal point, the existing grocery store, library, drug store, and other commercial uses. However, many participants also stated that they disliked the increase in traffic in the area, especially in the vicinity of the Bayview and Green Lane intersection, the lack of green space/parks adjacent to the community centre, and that the area is not pedestrian-friendly.

1.2 What opportunities should be considered for the future?

Participants wanted improvements to the road network, including the connection from Royal Orchard Boulevard to Green Lane via Bayview Avenue, and more pedestrian-friendly environments to promote walkability and accessibility. Other suggestions included the possibility of pedestrian access across the CN Rail Corridor with a bridge connection and the maintenance of the existing parking supply at the community centre, but in a different format. In addition, comments were received about enhancing public transit services to support the seniors communities in the area. The participants further expressed a desire to have outdoor activity spaces for concerts to reinforce the Bayview John area as the community focal point.

1.3 What is the community's vision for Urban Design, Built Form, and Land Use for the Bayview John area?

Suggestions from the participants included a European style piazza to create a place to invite people to congregate and connect with trees, a beautiful public realm and artwork. Other suggestions included the programming of space on the Shouldice lands, improved infrastructure for EV charging, community gardens and more walking trails, reductions in hard surface areas, and the modernization of the Thornhill Community Centre. The participants recognized the existence of some high-rise development in the community such as the three "Landmark" towers on the east side of Bayview as well as the recently approved "Residences at Royal Bayview" by Tridel on the west side of Royal Orchard Boulevard. However, the participants expressed a desire to limit building heights for any future development to a maximum of 8-storeys as provided for under the mixed-use mid-rise designation of the 2014 Official Plan.

Working Session 2: Transportation and Mobility

The second session, held on January 22, 2025, in Room B1/B8 of the Thornhill Community Centre, was attended by approximately 90 participants including staff and the Local Ward Councillor. The focused questions included the following:

2.1 What challenges exist with transportation and mobility in the area?

2.2 What are the City's priorities when planning the future of transportation and mobility in the area?

The participant feedback received at this working session included concerns about overall traffic congestion in the area, the intersection challenges at Bayview Avenue and Green Lane, and John Street between Bayview Avenue and Leslie Street. Other comments included a desire to install red light cameras at the intersection of John Street and Porterfield Crescent, and the need for traffic signals at the intersection of Henderson Avenue and John Street. The participants suggested that pedestrian safety at the Bayview and John intersection be improved by providing

dedicated traffic lights for pedestrians. In addition, the participants identified the need to extend Royal Orchard Boulevard through the Shouldice property to provide a direct connection to green Lane and various other connectivity improvements.

The participants suggested that the future of transportation and mobility in the area should include the need for improved bus service along John Street, Royal Orchard Boulevard (including access to the future Yonge North Subway Extension), and the Langstaff GO station. In addition, several participants commented on the need for additional improvements to the active transportation network, including a connection between the Shouldice property and Pomona Mills Park through the valley. In terms of cycling, several participants sought opportunities to provide dedicated and protected bike lanes, away from the pavement, for safety.

Lastly, some participants suggested that the study area should be further expanded to recognize that most of the traffic generated originates outside of the study area.

Working Session 3: Community Uses

Held on February 13, 2025, in Rooms B1/B2 at the Thornhill Community Centre, the last working session was attended by approximately 50 participants, including staff and the Local Ward Councillor. City staff provided an overview of the Integrated Leisure Master Plan (“ILMP”) as it relates to the determination of additional community services/facilities, parks, sport fields etc. The participants were asked the following:

- 3.1 **Focus on the perceived overall vision for the future of community uses in the Subject Area in terms of physical infrastructure and programs and services.**
- 3.2 **Identify the existing strengths and opportunities to improve in the Subject Area.**

The participants commented that the existing community centre has an appropriate level of amenities/community spaces, a variety of programs including those for seniors; however, an expansion, perhaps vertically, could help with additional space. They also suggested upgrades to existing parks, more connections to green areas, and the creation of leisure and social spaces for more connections with all age groups. Other suggestions included conference spaces to attract visitors and an outdoor amateur theatre.

Staff will consult with the community prior to Final Report

Following the three working sessions, City staff committed to re-connecting with the participants with a draft of a final visioning report prior to reporting back to the Development Services Committee. The final report will be accompanied by an Official Plan amendment to add new area specific policies that reflect the feedback received at the Working Sessions. The intent of these future policies will be to expand upon the existing area specific policies of the Thornhill – Local Centre, and to identify future matters including, but not limited to, locations for future street, trail, and bridge connections, as well as land use and built form opportunities.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

N/A

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS:

N/A

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The proposed Visioning Exercise aligns with Goal 3 of the Building Markham's Future Together Strategic Plan – to build safe, sustainable, and complete communities.

BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Planning and Urban Design, Parks Planning, as well as Community Services Staff and Engineering and Transportation Staff will be engaged throughout the development of the recommendations for a final report.

RECOMMENDED BY:

Giulio Cescato, RPP, MCIP
Director, Planning and Urban Design

Arvin Prasad, RPP, MCIP
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1: Study Area Limits

Appendix 'A': Summary Memo – Completion of the three Bayview John Community Engagement Visioning Working Sessions

Figure 1: Study Area Limits

