

1293 and 1301 Bloor Street West and 510-514 Lansdowne Avenue

Public Open House Engagement Meeting Summary

September 27th, 6:30 – 9:00

Ethica Coffee Roasters, 213 Sterling Road

Summary and Purpose of the Event

On the evening of September 27, 2022, the project team hosted a Public Open House to introduce a proposed development at the south-west corner of the Bloor Street West and Lansdowne Avenue intersection. Representatives from the project team included members from RioCan (landowner), SvN (Planner; Engagement), Kirkor (Architect) and LandArtDesign (Landscape Architect). The purpose of the event was to inform community members about the preliminary proposal for a 28 storey residential building with retail at-grade, provide an opportunity for the public to meet and ask questions of the project team, and invite public feedback on the proposed development. The meeting was held at a local café within walking distance to the development site.

The event was run as an open drop-in session. 11 informational boards were displayed across the room which provided an overview of the site, the neighbourhood and transportation context and surrounding development activity. The display boards included key information about the proposed development, including the design drivers, key benefits, ground floor plan, development statistics, and preliminary renderings. 8 boards were interactive, which invited attendees to leave comments on sticky notes or add stickers on images that appeal to them. The project team was on hand to answer any questions and receive input from participants. Attendees were encouraged to fill in comment sheets addressing the following questions:

- What are your overall thoughts on the proposal (i.e interface with street, outdoor at-grade community space, sidewalk improvements, unit mix)?
- What opportunities stand out to you?
- What concerns stand out to you?
- What retail uses, within the size and scale proposed by this project, do you think would be beneficial to the community?
- What type of public-facing amenity do you think would be beneficial to the community?

Approximately 20 community members, tenants and neighbours attended the session. Some attendees also brought their children along.

What We Heard

A number of key questions, themes and messages were raised by participants through three mediums: display boards, comment cards, and in-person conversations with project team members. Below is a summary of what we heard, organized thematically.

Residential Units

- Happy to see multi-unit housing proposed
- Desire for larger family-friendly units – many families have to move because the spaces do not accommodate a growing family that wants to live in the City but don't want a house
- How many apartments are 3 bedrooms and how big are the bedrooms?
- How do the replacement units compare in size and rent?
- How many units will be affordable?

Retail Space

- Is only one retail space proposed?
- Desire for small, local and affordable grocers and retailers

- Desire for independent (rather than chain) shops, suggested consideration of those that may be displaced by surrounding development activity
- Preference for specialty stores and personal service shop retail typologies
- Other specific ideas for retail space: Independent grocery; independent hardware store; bank, post office, postal services, pharmacy, medical services, coffee shop; candy store; butcher; organic produce; tailor/ dry cleaner/laundry service; pet care; day care; pop up space with regular turnover to help new entrepreneurs; toy store

Public Realm

- Would like to see seasonal planters along Bloor and more greenery along the Bloor frontage (ie. growing plants up columns, façade)
- Community access or benches for people walking along alley
- Ensure good lighting for safety
- Keep it living and organic
- Maintaining movement and meeting space on all sides of the building is good
- Will there be a competition for public art?
- Will the public art be local? Could local artists be featured on the art wall and in the garden?
- Will there be a space rentable by the community?

Outdoor Amenity

- Preference for: public art; community backyard; street trees and furniture
- Instead of having 2 outdoor spaces for dogs, add more space for children to play (play area/playground)
- Mounds or natural elements on playground
- Swings, pool in outdoor amenity area
- Outdoor venues for artists or market-like space (ie. what was on Cumberland)
- Can the community use the outdoor amenity space?
- Strong desire to have outdoor space to be open to and explicitly open to all of local community
- Currently designed as 'fortress' to keep surrounding areas out – how can it be connected to what is already here?
- Suggested precedent: Goldie Mill Park in Guelph – retained portion of existing space to integrate into gardens, provide privacy to adjacent properties, allowed “controlled decay” through redevelopment, introduced climbing vines
- Suggested precedent: Dundas west of Keele where façade of old building was retained next to open space

Access and Parking

- While the other builders are providing limited guest parking spaces, what accommodations are you making for parking? Need to consider parking needs of retail at-grade, ride-share, tenants, visitors etc.
- Car entrance on Lansdowne will further congest traffic on Lansdowne, no lights here
- Knowing RioCan's reputation for attracting great retail, need to accommodate for vehicle traffic
- Consider potential for publicly-accessible parking lot – today that area serves as parking for Bloor St retail near Lansdowne
- Consider parking and traffic impacts due to overall area developments – people drive here for destination spots (ie. restaurants, strip clubs, churches)

Building Design

- Happy to see development in the area - generally well-designed site and structure, but 'devil is in the details'
- Pretty barren-looking along the main street, need additional greenery

- The design is not interesting or attractive
- Show how design principles are reflected in building and landscape design
- Need to understand specific units and design elements to ideally replace or replicate in new building
- Importance of responding to local community character and introducing 'personality' into spaces and design
- Need for long-lasting materials – or else the place will fall apart in 7-10 years
- Can the podium be designed as a loft space (greater floor to floor heights, design features, elements and materials such as brick and beam)?
- Consider simple / "restrained" design vs. overloading the program
- Relook at amenity space to accommodate large, open space feel
- Rethink composition of interior amenity space to better meet the specific needs of residents