

WHAT WE'VE HEARD SO FAR

Box Grove Community Housing Development

14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway, City of Markham

Summary of Community Comments

Last updated: January 2024

PURPOSE

The *What We've Heard So Far* summary captures community comments and concerns raised during meetings and discussions surrounding the proposed Box Grove Community Housing Development at the corner of 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway in the City of Markham.

Answers to frequently asked questions from the community related to these comments and concerns are available in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) summary.

Planning for the proposed community housing development is ongoing. As plans evolve, information and details may change. York Region will share updated information online at york.ca/BoxGroveHYI.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Housing affordability is one of the great challenges facing York Region today. In February 2021, York Regional Council [passed a resolution](#) declaring a housing affordability crisis. Having diverse housing options, including purpose-built rental and affordable housing, is key for growth and creating complete communities. [York Region's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#) outlines actions that the Region is taking to address housing affordability and prevent homelessness.

York Region has extremely limited rental options. At only 18%, York Region's [proportion of rental housing](#) is the lowest in the Greater Toronto Area.

Affordable housing is also very limited. [Less than 1% of new ownership](#) units created in 2022 were deemed affordable. York Region's wait list for affordable housing continues to grow. Nearly [15,000 households](#) are on the Region's subsidized housing centralized waitlist, with wait times ranging from six to over eight years.

The Box Grove Community Housing Development represents an exciting opportunity to support a complete community. The site at 14th Avenue and Donald Cousens Parkway is Region-owned, has sufficient space to accommodate new housing, and will provide much-needed affordable and purpose-built rental housing in the City of Markham.

YORK REGION

1-877-464-9675
york.ca/BoxGroveHYI



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

York Region is committed to keeping community members informed and engaged throughout the planning, design, and construction phases. Thank you to all who have inquired or provided input on this project to date.

York Region completed the following engagement and outreach activities:

- Public Information Centre #1 – February 28, 2022
- Community Liaison Committee Meeting #1 – May 26, 2022
- Statutory City of Markham Public Meeting #1 – June 7, 2022
- First What We've Heard Report released – September 2022
- Year in Review Newsletter sent to e-newsletter subscribers – December 2022
- Community Liaison Committee Meeting #2 – February 23, 2023
- Community Liaison Committee Meeting #3 – October 26, 2023
- Neighbourhood Door-to-Door Outreach – November 1, 2023
- Public Information Centre #2 – November 9, 2023
- Community Newsletter sent to e-newsletter subscribers – January 2024
- City of Markham Public Meeting #2 – January 23, 2024

WHAT IS PROPOSED?

Housing York Inc. (HYI), York Region's housing company, is proposing to build new community housing in the City of Markham. The proposal includes approximately 150 new purpose-built rental units, including affordable and market rent options, within a building with 4- and 6-storey sections.

A comparison of the original (January 2022) and revised (December 2023) applications is shown below:

ORIGINAL APPLICATION



Original Two-phase Concept—Submitted January 2022

Units:	154 (1 and 2 bedrooms)
Gross Floor Area:	13,035 m ²
Height:	4 and 6 storeys
Parking:	154 vehicle parking spaces 58 surface, 96 underground
Bicycle Parking:	26 long-term and 4 short-term spaces
Landscaped Open Space:	5,336 m ²

REVISED APPLICATION



Revised Single-phase Concept—Resubmitted December 2023

Units:	153 (1, 2, 3+ bedrooms)
Gross Floor Area:	11,369 m ²
Height:	4 and 6 storeys
Parking:	169 vehicle parking spaces 23 surface (visitor), 146 underground (resident)
Bicycle Parking:	78 long-term and 15 short-term
Landscaped Open Space:	5,991 m ²

- The underground parking garage entrance has been relocated to the western side of the building to increase the distance away from neighbouring properties.
- The loading area location has not changed, as it requires access to the elevator shaft, which limits its location. The elevator shaft must be located within the southeast corner of the building as it must service the upper most floors. The loading area will be used for garbage collection, resident move-ins, and service vehicles. All waste collection will occur internal to the building. The loading area will be screened from neighbouring properties through fencing and landscaping and will remain closed when not in use. The consultant team is exploring alternative loading door options to implement a more aesthetically pleasing door with artistic expression to enhance the design.

Active Transportation and Pedestrian Amenities

The following concerns have been heard:

- Concern that there is a lack of active transportation and pedestrian amenities in the area which make walking and cycling unsafe. In particular, community members have identified a stretch of 14th Avenue located approximately 120 metres west of the site where the road narrows and cannot be easily travelled by active transportation.

The revised proposal responds to this feedback by:

- A sidewalk connection is proposed in front of the site along the south side of 14th Avenue, which will connect to existing sidewalks on Donald Cousens Parkway.
- The site is supported by a network of nearby active transportation amenities, including trails, multi-use pathways, and a separated shared pathway on Donald Cousens Parkway north of 14th Avenue, providing convenient and safe pedestrian and cycling access to nearby shops on Copper Creek Drive.
- Sidewalks on Regional Roads are the responsibility of our local municipalities. The Region continues to look for opportunities to support the City of Markham in the implementation of active transportation facilities through future capital projects and new developments.

Transit Opportunities

The following concerns have been heard:

- Concern that there is a lack of transit options in the area, limiting travel options for future residents who do not drive.

The revised proposal responds to this feedback by:

- The amount of transit service within a specific area is determined by ridership levels and demand. Higher-density projects like the Box Grove Community Housing Development help provide the density required to support more robust transit service over time.
- The site is directly serviced by YRT bus routes 14-14th Avenue and dedicated school route 411-Markham District via Box Grove with other routes including 1-Highway 7, 2-Milliken, 9-9th Line and 305-Box Grove Express within a 15-minute walk.
- YRT also offers multiple Mobility On-Request (MOR) services, including [MOR Paratransit](#) and [MOR 65+](#) for seniors, which provide door-to-door transit connectivity.

- A dedicated layby near the building's main entrance is proposed to provide door-to-door transit connectivity for future residents.
- The project team is collaborating with YRT to provide transit travel orientation to future residents, including pre-loaded Presto cards to support transit usage.

Parking and Traffic Improvements

The following concerns have been heard:

- Concern that there is a lack of parking available for future residents.
- Concern that the development will cause increased traffic, particularly on Vettese Court.

The revised proposal responds to this feedback by:

- The revised proposal includes more parking for both residents and visitors to the site. Currently, 169 parking spaces are proposed, including 23 dedicated visitor spaces and 146 resident spaces.
- All dedicated resident spaces are proposed to be located in a secured underground parking garage, reducing the amount of surface parking on the site and minimizing the impact on nearby neighbours.
- To enhance vehicular connectivity to the site, a new right-in, right-out driveway is proposed on Donald Cousens Parkway so vehicles entering and exiting the site have alternative access in addition to the proposed driveway on Vettese Court.
- A comprehensive transportation study has been undertaken as part of the planning approvals process, which demonstrates that the proposed amount of parking and the site design can accommodate the amount of anticipated traffic with minimal impact on the surrounding street network.

PROJECT STATUS

York Region is working with the City of Markham to address feedback received and provide information in response to questions and concerns raised by the community.

The proposed development is in the planning application review process. York Region will post information on york.ca/BoxGroveHYI and will notify the community using various other methods of communication as plans develop.

For more information, answers to frequently asked questions, details on how to get involved and to sign up for updates, visit york.ca/BoxGroveHYI

If you have questions or would like to learn more about this future emergency and transitional housing development, please contact the Community Liaison at 289-338-8063 or HousingDevelopment@york.ca