

## Question & Answer Session following the presentation

Answers provided by Councilor Stintz, Paul Bain, Project Manager (City of Toronto), Neil Cresswell, Planning Manager for North District (City of Toronto) and Anne McIlroy, Partner (Brook McIlroy/Pace Architects)

**Q1:** Why is the proposed Shoppers Drug Mart (at the NW corner of Avenue Road & Lawrence) only one storey when the City's strategy is to intensify?

**A1:** The City encouraged more intensity on 4 occasions. It is an extremely prominent corner, however Smart Centres is doing their development as-of-right. The original proposal had the building at the back and parking at the street, but the City required that the building be brought out to the street. The City also required that the building design be enhanced. The planning process will continue for the next 3 to 4 more months, until the building permit is issued. Construction may start late summer, early fall. As well, the City now has power to set minimum densities and heights.

**Q2:** There is an issue of trust with this process. The RioCan Working Group worked for two and a half years. Two weeks before Community Council meeting the Working Group found out that the Planning Department supported the project.

- Why intensification should happen here, considering it isn't happening at a major transit node (Yonge & Sheppard). Disingenuous when City hasn't followed its own policy elsewhere for intensification.
- The neighbourhoods surrounding Avenue Road are intensifying and the roads and schools are already full.

**A2:** Avenue Road is different from other Avenue studies because there is limited immediate development potential – there are only 5 or 6 large consolidated sites where intensification could occur. There is not much potential even for mid-rise development. When looking at ownership patterns, it would be difficult to consolidate sites. More development is already taking place on the side streets. On these larger sites, there will be intensification, with buildings taller than 2-storeys.

**Q3:** Has there been consideration to provide funding for playground structures for children and consideration for senior's recreation? The City should also consider the multicultural nature of Toronto and community. Tourism should also be considered. Avenue Road needs aesthetic improvement through colour – it looks grey and concrete. Consider colourful lampposts and sculptures in parks.

**A3:** School yards are funded by the Toronto District School Board. There is parks deficiency, particularly east of Avenue Road. There have been examples of joint-ventures between school and city. There is parks levy money from development.

**Q4:** The community is upset about RioCan and felt they had no say. There is no consideration for traffic that is being dumped on side streets. How much of what people say be taken into consideration?

**A4:** Through this process, we hope to sit down (with LAC) and look at zoning and urban design guidelines that will work. 40% to 50% of buildings currently don't meet the existing zoning and we have to come up with something responsible and defensible. The City has a good track record for other Avenue studies and has never had any residents/ratepayer groups appeal new zoning as result of Avenue studies.

**Q5:** A resident who lives 100 ft from the proposed development site for Shoppers' Drug Mart is 'shocked' to hear "minimum heights" discussed and doesn't want anything higher than a 1-storey building. The resident is unclear as to why there needs to be a study for Avenue Road and is worried about increasing property taxes.

**Q6:** The City is making design decisions regarding the location of buildings (in reference to Shopper's Drug Mart at the street edge) and setbacks. Maybe this isn't what the community wants. The criteria should be: 1 - Green buildings and 2 - Interaction with neighbouring communities. The new OP makes clear development on Avenues needs to be compatible.

**Q7:** In 2030 there will be 1 million (20%) more people. If you increase to 4 storeys, it will be a 300% increase. We can have modest growth that can be satisfied with lower buildings. We've had infill for many years. We are concerned about development without rules. Residents groups have a vision of how Avenue Road should develop and will be happy to share it.

**A7:** Through this process we are looking for common expectations so that everyone can be aware of the outcomes. If we don't have that, we will have distrust. The future of Avenue Road will not be a continuous wall of 6-storey buildings from Lawrence to Wilson. But there will be some sites that may be designed taller than 4-storeys.

**Q8:** A major concern is traffic and it has not been discussed yet. Why can't the City address traffic traveling into the City?

**Q9:** The Avenue Road study should look at how to get more from Section 37 agreements. The benefits for the RioCan are not in the immediate community. If there is going to be intensification, the community wants benefits to schools, parkland, community centres etc.

**A9:** Through this process, we can begin to identify possible community benefits if there are Section 37 agreements in this area, as well as to recommend whether an alternative higher parks levy should apply to new development.

**Q10:** The City should pass an interim control by-law (ICB). The working group has approached Councillor Stintz about implementing this.

**A10:** An ICB is about prohibiting something that is allowed now. Right now, only 1 times density or 3-storeys is allowed. Anything less could be subject to interim control. Zoning is currently minimal and further restrictions will not be helpful.

**Q11:** Avenue Road functions well now, but there is an opportunity for the avenue to function better. Provide a landscaped median where driveways can be restricted, or no driveways. It is unfortunate that the current streetscape work has not considered a median, but one could be considered in the future.

**Q12:** The community must realize that Avenue Road is going to change and that's a good thing. The more we dig in our heels and resist, the less likely we will have good outcome, and more likely OMB hearings will be. The 1-storey Shopper's Drug Mart at the corner of Avenue Road and Lawrence is a missed opportunity and this will lead to inappropriate development elsewhere.

**Q13:** Development is going to happen, but hopefully not a continuation of RioCan. 3 to 5 storey buildings with nice streetscape, more trees, and flowers are appropriate. If people are upset about streetscape on Avenue Road, if you want to see poor development – look at the

“monster homes” on the east-west, flanking streets. Good design is more important than height concerns.

**Q14:** Will there be encroachment of commercial on residential side streets. There is a developer buying up residential homes. The City should encourage green roofs to be implemented.

**Q15:** We should focus on how the process is going to provide new services? The neighbourhoods are under-serviced by parks and school space. How is money going to be funneled back into community?

**A15:** The Avenue Road study will identify opportunities such as possible sites for new parks. Parks levies will be considered and recommendations made if this area is to have the higher alternative rate of parks levy.

**Q16:** Should the owners of these 5 or 6 large sites be part of this study?

**Q17:** What is the difference between by-laws and this Avenue Study? Do Avenue Studies give more power to the City?

**A17:** Zoning by-laws set out heights, setbacks, uses, lot frontage etc. Current zoning is the remnant bottom tier of a former 2-tier system, and almost half of the existing buildings on this part of Avenue Road exceed the current zoning permission. Part of this exercise is to create something that is defensible. We can't guarantee that there will be no more proposals that exceed this, but the City will have a more defensible base.

**Q18:** How much green space will be provided?

**A18:** The parks levy will be 10% for priority areas starting in 2008, and is currently 5% of the value of the land (applicable to Riocan property).

**Q19:** We don't have to rush these decisions. The City has grown over 150 years and we can see how haphazard that has been. There are lots of “eyesores” around - junky benches, billboards, etc. We should see what we can do to make great development.