

#### 4. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND KEY CONCERNS

The Studies have involved an extensive public consultation process, including the creation of Advisory Panels for each of the two Study Areas; comprised of residents, service providers, landowners and area Councillors, and regular presentations to these panels for feedback regarding both our Phase 1 and Phase 2 work. In addition, a charette (community design workshop) was held on May 8th for both Study Areas and there were a number of community meetings over the course of the studies. We have also received copies of all written comments received by City staff, and have had input regarding community services and facilities needs and concerns from staff and the two Councillors whose wards include the Study Areas.

Both the Phase 1 Report and the Charette Summary Report set out a range of issues, opportunities and concerns considered in the development of the recommendations in this Phase 2 Report. We believe that our recommended vision for the Study Areas and together with our other recommendations represent a balanced response to the issues and concerns raised during the Studies. However, three specific areas were, in our view, the focus of the greatest concern to those representing community interests: the inter-related issues of community services and facilities and the intensity of new development in the two Study Areas, and concerns about the TTC's proposed station improvements. These three issues are addressed further below.

##### 4.1 Community Services and Facilities

In addition to the input received through community and Advisory Panel meetings and in the charette, Community Policy Staff in the Urban Development Services Department circulated an agency questionnaire to solicit input on community services and facilities issues to approximately 20 service providers that deliver local programs and services in the larger Context Area for the Studies, **Figure 2**. The responses will be used to assist City staff, in consultation with the agencies that plan, fund and operate community services and facilities, to identify needs and set priorities. The results will be determined in Phase 3 Implementation of the Study, and form part of the Phase 3 Implementation Report to City Council. The needs identified by these service providers, based on their experience and perceptions, reinforced concerns heard at community and Advisory Panel meetings, and included:

in terms of specific facilities:

- full size gymnasium;
- community health centre;
- library;
- recreational space, particularly for youth;
- long term care facility; and

in terms of programs and services:

- after school youth and children's programs;
- early intervention programs;
- adult programs;
- programs that aim to reduce isolation, particularly for new immigrants
- affordable grocery stores;
- medical offices; and
- local convenience services, including variety stores, banks, etc.

In considering these responses and similar feed-back during the community consultation process and in responses to the agency questionnaire, we believe it is important to note the following:

- Although there were suggestions at the charette and at public meetings afterwards that one and possibly two stand-alone community centers should be developed in the area, the needs seem to be more specific. That is, the facilities and programs receiving the greatest emphasis (listed above) are ones that could possibly be provided through satellite facilities incorporated into development proposals on larger sites, including the TTC lands.
- Although the Warden Woods Community Centre is not a City-run facility, it provides a wide range of significant and valued community services, some of which are in danger of losing space as the result of development pressures. For example, Warden Woods operates the seniors' programs at the Bell Estate, which has been purchased by the Goldman Group, leaving these programs with a highly uncertain future. Centennial College was also home to recreation programs for youth, but has been shut down since it was sold to the Goldman Group.

Recognizing the importance of providing the necessary community services and facilities in step with new development, we have recommended that City staff develop a Community Services and Facilities Strategy to accompany any Official Plan and zoning changes recommended in the Phase 3 Implementation Report.

#### **4.2 Density and Height of New Development**

A number of residents in the existing communities within and adjacent to the two Study Areas have raised concerns regarding the amount of new development which would ultimately result from the proposed land use changes and development scenarios presented over the course of the Studies. Height and density are particularly sensitive issues because of the number of high-rise residential buildings already located in the Study Areas, and the demographic features, including incomes, family size and number of young children, identified in the Phase 1 Report. Concerns have also been raised regarding the transportation impacts of new development.

In response to these concerns we have reduced the number of dwelling units initially proposed for the two Study Areas in the Potential Development Scenarios and have also reduced the heights of certain buildings. As a result, the approximately 4700 units referred to in our June 29th presentation have been reduced in the Development Scenarios presented in this report to approximately 3,300 units.

In considering this number, it is important to remember that it is an estimate and not a requirement or even a recommended permission. The Land Use Framework (described in Sections 6.5.2 and 6.6.2) recommended for each of the Study Areas is considerably more precise than the framework provided by the Land Use component of the new Official Plan, but it is still relatively general, and is expressed in terms of unit types and maximum heights, rather than fixed density maximums.

In our view, the Land Use Framework for each Study Area is consistent with the Planning Objectives and Criteria set out in Section 2 of this report, as well as important City planning policies related to transit-supportive development, neighbourhood stability, the protection of natural areas, built form and urban design. We also consider that the Potential Development Scenarios (described in Sections 6.5.3 and 6.6.3) represent reasonable estimates of the amount and type of development new planning policies based on the recommended Land Use Framework would likely produce in the context of the market, as we understand it.

The transportation consultants on our team have assessed the anticipated transportation impacts of the Potential Development Scenarios presented on June 29th and in this report. While the earlier scenario raised concerns regarding the capacity of Warden Avenue, the scenarios put forward in this report do not (refer to Appendix 1).

On the other hand the amount and location of residential development included in the scenarios can reasonably be considered transit-supportive. The need for such development, as a means of using resources efficiently and helping to curb urban sprawl, is a policy objective at both the provincial and municipal level.

In terms of traffic impacts, it is important to note that the most serious impacts were associated with the larger amount of retail development contemplated in our earlier proposal, as presented on June 29th. This is because it appeared that that amount of destination, or large-scale retail development, would draw more non-resident drivers into the area than the existing roads could satisfactorily accommodate.

It should be noted that lands shown as Mixed Use, i.e. the Victoria Park and Warden Station lands and along Warden Avenue south of the Warden Station, could be developed for non-residential rather than primarily residential purposes, particularly on the two station sites. Such an outcome, although not reflected in the Potential Development Scenarios for the Mixed Use Areas, could also have a positive impact on transit use, particularly at the two station sites. However, while office development is considered to be more transit-supportive than destination retail uses, residential development, particularly at higher densities adjacent to a subway station, is considered to have the most beneficial consequences for increased transit use.

In terms of building height, it is important to acknowledge, as we have noted at various community meetings, that not all tall buildings are alike. Tall buildings that are designed to minimize negative microclimatic impacts, such as shadows and wind, and that allow for a generous and attractive public realm at grade can bring life and activity to an area, creating livelier and more interesting streets and public spaces in the process. In general, the higher densities associated with greater building height result in a reduced environmental impact when compared to the impact of accommodating the same population in smaller buildings developed at lower densities.

#### **4.3 Impacts of TTC Proposals**

A third significant area of concern during the public consultation process had to do with the particular station and bus terminal improvements proposed by the TTC staff. (These are summarized graphically on **Figures 7** and **8**, for the Warden and Victoria Park stations respectively.

TTC staff have, in parallel with the planning studies, embarked on their own public consultation process on the revised station concepts that have been developed to date, and have clearly indicated that their intention is to ensure that any changes to the two stations will increase their accessibility, safety and operational efficiency while at the same time make better use of the lands surrounding the stations.

New residential and/or mixed use development proposals for the TTC lands would be possible following the relocation and reconfiguration of station facilities (commuter parking, passenger pick up and drop off, entrances and bus terminals) to alternative locations. Conceptual design of these alternative facilities will not commence until 2005, (the station concepts shown to the public are

very preliminary in nature), will take several years to implement and will involve a formal public consultation process.

The formal public consultation process concerning the revised station concepts will be initiated as follows:

- A more detailed traffic impact study (TIS) will be undertaken;
- Public consultation on the revised station concept/TIS will be organized;
- A site plan application for the revised station facilities which address the public concerns will then be submitted to the City of Toronto (including public consultation as required); and
- A site plan agreement will be executed between the City of Toronto and the TTC detailing the TTC's site plan commitments.

Phased construction of the revised station concepts would commence after the above process has been completed. Proposals for the surplus TTC lands would only be entertained by the City, following construction and the eventual sale of surplus properties.

It is also important to note that while the nature and scale of development we have shown as appropriate for the station sites appears to be sufficient to fund important improvements to the stations, the generation of a specific amount of revenue was not an objective in developing our recommendations regarding land use and built form.