

North York Community Council

From: Downsview Newsletter <downsviewnewsletter@gmail.com>
Sent: June 22, 2021 4:50 PM
To: North York Community Council; Mary (Planning) MacDonald; Al Rezoski; Ben DiRaimo; Councillor Pasternak; Councillor Filion; Councillor Minnan-Wong; Councillor Colle8; Councillor Jaye Robinson; Councillor Carroll; Giulio Cescato; Cc: Geoff Kettel; Alex Grenzebach; Clerk
Subject: Submission for June 23 NYCC Meeting: Agenda Item 25.10

With this letter the undersigned would submit their objection to the proposed plan for developing the William Baker lands.

Please note that as a group we are not opposed to development at the Downsview Park site nor to the creation of much-needed community housing as we have long argued for quality design and responsible sustainability

The reason for our objection has to do with the existing woodlot which in our view is irreplaceable, yet expected to be the focal point of some 3985 housing units. While it may be difficult to balance a heritage woodlot with volume housing, in our view the district plan fails in this regard.

By way of preliminary, we would note that the applicant Canada Lands does not have a lot of experience in formulating district plans. On their first try (the 2015 Stanley Greene subdivision now nearing completion) they acknowledge a number of unintended or unexpected design failures (overly car-centric, unimaginative design, social isolation, lack of community services, etc.)

Our fear is that Canada Lands is making different, but equally devastating, missteps with respect to the proposed plan which will have the long term effect of undermining the unique character of this mature forested area. Due to being overly focused on real estate, the applicant does not appreciate the value of what it already has on its hands.

Some of the drawbacks of the plan are as follows::

1. The proposed plan splits the woodlot into a number of specific purpose areas. It is not treated as a single unit but parcelled out into at least two development phases, heritage woodlots, parklands, buffer areas, mixed use and apartment lands. While this subdividing may maximize usage, it makes it difficult if not impossible for the woodlot as a whole to respond to any existential threat. The district plan offers no safeguards with respect to ecological risk.
2. There is no awareness that a natural greenspace surrounded by 3940 residences is under significant existential pressure due to loss of habitat, ambient noise, intrusive structures, increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic, omnipresent utilities, parking spaces, etc., etc. Yet the plan shows no awareness that the park as a whole might need some blanket protection, and worse, proposes to introduce residential units in at least 4 locations along the margins. To say that these 4 intrusions represent nothing more than incidental "intensifications" is deeply misleading.
3. The plan is overly naive when it states that any loss of existing woodlot can be made up for by the creation of additional parkland at the north end of the development -- as if it is a matter of square footage. Currently the northern site is a largely treeless empty space while the planned intrusions

into the woodlot require the destruction of 3 to 4 dozen mature trees which have long been in harmonious relationship with the forested areas. This is not a fair trade-off.

Until these design oversights can be properly dealt with, it is our belief that the City should not approve the District Plan

Sites A, B, C & D (below) are all designated to have "built form" yet are existing parkland

Site A: 1-4 storey Apartment Neighbourhood, 25 condos

Site B: 1-4 storey Apartment Neighbourhood, 25 condos

Site C: 1-4 storey apartment Neighbourhood, 25 condos

Site D: 1-4 storeys, Mixed Use Neighbourhood, including 100 condos



"Built form" as visualized by the proposed District Plan



William Baker Neighbourhood
Downsview Area Secondary Plan

The Planning Partnership (January 22, 2020)
Built Form Concept Plan

Downsview Lands Community Voice Association
per:

Giuseppina Casciato
Patrick O'Neill
Donald DiProspero
Albert Krivickas
Rosanna Iaboni
Rita DelCasale
Linda Gagaro
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