



**A Project of the Toronto York Region Labour Council
in Partnership with the United Way Greater Toronto**



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To: Planning and Housing Committee
Date: May 31, 2022
Re: PH34.11 - Update Downsview Study and 123 Garratt Boulevard and 70
Canuck Avenue - Official Plan Amendment Application - Status Report

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

Our shifting social, environmental, and economic reality demand a people-centred short and long-term visioning and planning approach. The May 13th Update Downsview Study and 123 Garratt Boulevard and 70 Canuck Avenue - Official Plan Amendment Application – Status Report is much appreciated.

We at Labour Community Service (LCS), a project of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council in partnership with United Way Greater Toronto, anticipated seeing more substantial commitments to Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) stated in the Status Report Summary (the report). The emerging direction contained in the report seems to imply but does not articulate the use of CBA.

The report states that the area covered by the Secondary Plan presents a generational and transformative opportunity to reconsider the potential of a large (560 hectares) and strategically located site and implement innovative ways of addressing existing City challenges and opportunities. If this is indeed the case, such *generational and transformative opportunity* must be fortified explicitly by the pronouncement of CBA. The opportunity for expanding the city's capacity to influence the creation of good jobs with living wages lies in a more holistic list of *Emerging Directions*. Absent from the report is an unequivocal articulation that entrenches CBA at this early stage of the visioning and planning for Downsview. Equally absent is a commitment to good jobs as efforts are made to redesignate employment lands in the surrounding area.

The "March 2021 approval of Site and Area Specific Policy ("SASP") 596 sets out conditions and requirements for the Secondary Plan review, including a minimum amount of non-residential uses, the provision of affordable housing, and several other studies and analyses that must be undertaken through this Study". While this is heartening, specific wording is needed to ensure that the city safeguards the redesignation of employment lands by establishing CBA as a conduit to good jobs with living wages. Such safeguards are vital in the face of the steep rise in inflation.

Toronto's revised definition of affordable housing is a step in the right direction in addressing housing and the cost of living. With the current inflation trend, the report's provision for affordable housing makes the

revised definition of affordable housing somewhat mute. For this reason, the provision for CBA in the emerging directions section of the report must be strengthened.

It is encouraging to read that the Update Downsview "Study will deliver an updated Secondary Plan, and area-specific zoning by-law, revised and/or new Urban Design Guidelines, a Master Environmental Servicing Plan (including a Transportation Master Plan) and a Community Development Plan." However, the absence of language on CAB in the report's 17 Emerging Directions is wanting. LCS hopes the Planning and Housing Committee will seize this as a time to truly concretize "*generational and transformative opportunity*" in the Downsview areas making it a place where employment lands are not simply redesignated but are reinvigorated as part of a complete community in which CBA is a lived reality. In closing, LCS recommends that Community Benefits Agreements be explicit in the Emerging Directions and Community Benefits be a condition of any redesignation of employment lands.

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