

NY10.2 - 1350 Sheppard Avenue West - Subdivision Application - Decision Report

Dear members of the North York Community Council,

The Toronto Community Benefits Network is submitting this letter today, as a local Downsview stakeholder, in order to highlight the need for the City to support the inclusion of a Community Benefits Agreement and increased affordable housing as part of the proposed William Baker District development, which in itself is a part of the larger Downsview Secondary Plan Area project.

TCBN has engaged in extensive community consultations with local stakeholders and member organizations over the past 2 years through our CBAforDownsview campaign. The formation of our Downsview Community Benefits Committee in 2022 was instrumental in obtaining feedback from local community members, groups and organizations.

The following are a number of key themes and priorities that we were able to identify as a result of our consultation process and would like to include as part of a Community Benefits Agreement as part of each development phase:

1. Good jobs and inclusive economic opportunities
 - a. Minimum 10% of apprenticeships trades and/or craft working hours on a trade-by-trade basis to be performed by apprentices from historically disadvantaged communities and equity deserving groups
 - b. Proposed minimum 50% target for equity hiring and minimum 25% for local hiring in new professional, administrative, technical, operations and maintenance roles
 - c. Ensure employment opportunities that pay a living wage across all phases of construction and development
2. Social procurement
 - a. Minimum 20% social procurement target through purchasing goods and/or services from local businesses, social enterprises and businesses that are owned by persons who identify as Indigenous, Black or Persons of Colour.
3. Neighbourhood Improvements
 - a. Minimum 30% affordable housing and/or affordable ownership in each phase of development with 50% of that being deeply affordable or Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) for a minimum of 99 years.
 - b. Ensure access to affordable below market rate commercial and micro retail space opportunities are available to social enterprises and Black, Indigenous or racialized businesses across all phases of development.



- c. Commit to neighbourhood improvements such as affordable child care centres, public community centres and community spaces, public parks and affordable recreation spaces, investments in social infrastructure and initiatives to address food insecurity.
4. Environmental sustainability
 - a. Ensure environmental sustainability that supports a 'just transition' for jobs and careers, green building design and materials, sustainable micro mobility initiatives, preserves public parks and open spaces for culturally appropriate community-led initiatives.
5. Accountability and Transparency
 - a. A commitment by each landowner to sign a Community Benefits Framework with TCBN that ensures a Community Benefits Agreement for each phase of development at Downsview. Such frameworks would commit to including measurable targets in development contracts and a commitment to ongoing monitoring, tracking, public reporting and community oversight in each phase of development.

Downsview Community Benefits Agreement

On April 27, 2023, TCBN received support from the City Council's Planning & Housing Committee to move a [motion](#) in support of continuing discussions in order to advance a shared vision for Community Benefits during the construction phase of the catchment area for the Downsview Secondary Plan.

City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, to facilitate discussions with the community and stakeholders, including the Toronto Community Benefits Network, in conjunction with the local Councillor, in order to advance a shared vision for Community Benefits during the construction phase of the catchment area for the Downsview Secondary Plan.

TCBN has yet to participate in formal discussions with Canada Lands Company on community benefits related to the construction of the William Baker district and would like to see the City support these discussions, through the local City Councillor and SDFA Community Benefits Unit, in order to negotiate a CBA that reflects local community priorities and targets for good local jobs and equitable development in advance of construction of the William Baker district.



We have experience and expertise in working with a number of public and private stakeholders (i.e. CreateTO - Housing Now, Metrolinx, Casino Woodbine CBA, etc.) as well as developing strategies and best practices in relation to Community Benefits Agreements on large scale infrastructure, housing and development projects in the City of Toronto.

TCBN and our network members have been active participants in numerous consultations related to the Update Downsview Secondary Plan process and Community Development Plan where Community Benefits and economic development has been identified as a key theme.

We share concerns that development proposals at Downsview like this continue to move forward while the Update Downsview Secondary Plan and Community Development Plan have yet to be finalized. Large scale developments in the City of Toronto have demonstrated the opportunity to build infrastructure and housing but also ensure that active and measurable steps are taken to include Black, Indigenous and racialized communities, who often face barriers to participating in the city building opportunities like this. Since 2015, TCBN has supported over 2,000 individuals from historically disadvantaged communities and equity deserving groups into apprenticeships, professional, administrative and technical opportunities through local pathways on projects with Community Benefits Agreements.

TCBN continues to advocate for the federal government to leverage its investments in infrastructure, housing and development on public land to include mandates for Community Benefits Agreements. We have seen progress through the inclusion of minimum targets and CBA expectations as part of the federal funding for the four priority transit projects in Toronto. Such an approach should extend to development on publicly owned federal lands like Downsview.

Developing a Range and Mix of Affordable and Deeply Affordable Housing at Downsview

According to the six guiding principles of the *William Baker District Plan* (p.12-13), creating a place for all and providing a range of housing options are key concerns that we are happy to see reflected in the report. However, the minimum amount of affordable housing being set at 20% with 80% of Average Market Rent secured for 25 years (p. 24) is just simply not enough.

Recently, the City of Toronto and CreateTO announced a [partnership](#) with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto, Windmill Developments and Civic Developments in order to create a new housing project in the Eglinton Avenue East area. This includes the delivery of around 918 homes, 612 of which will be rent-geared-to-income (RGI), affordable and market rent-controlled co-operative homes set between 40 and 100 per cent of Average Market Rent. This is an excellent example and model of how deeply affordable housing can be achieved through strategic partnerships and efficient use of publicly owned lands.

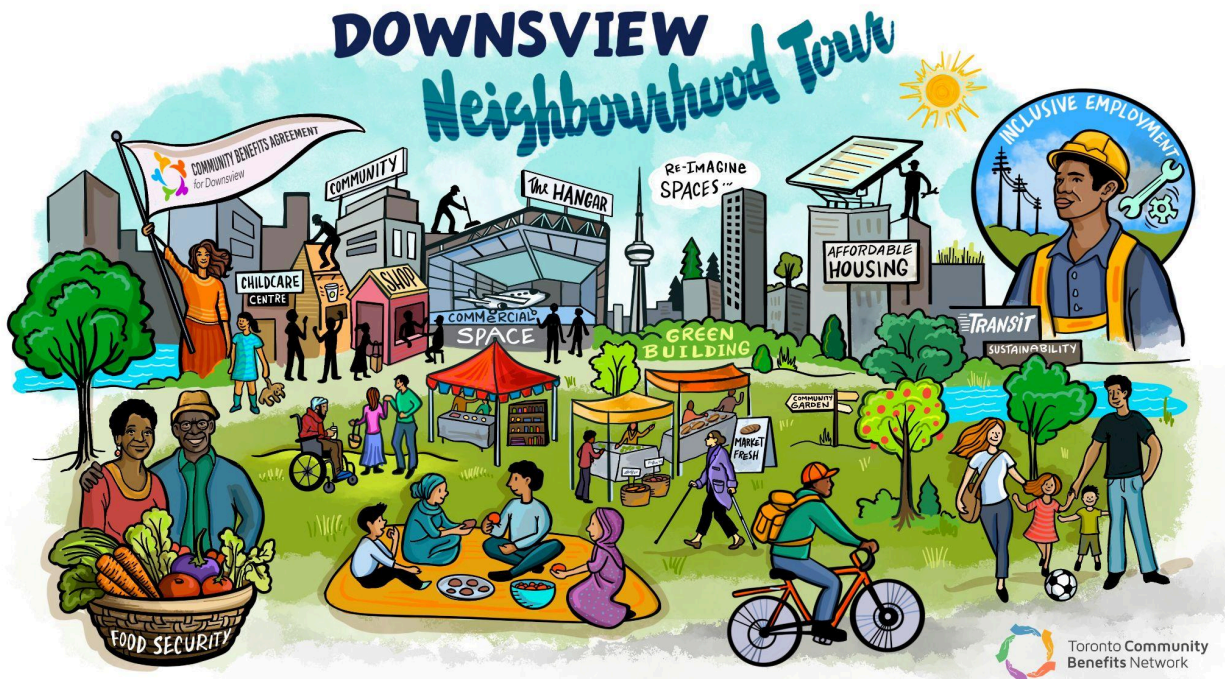
Amidst a housing affordability crisis in Toronto, we would like to see the City of Toronto call on Canada Lands Company and the federal government to develop a Downsview housing strategy that leverages federal, provincial and municipal programs and strategic partnerships to increase the number of affordable units, deeper affordability and increased tenure as part of this and future phases of development at Downsview.

We look forward to working with the City, local City Councillor James Pasternak, City staff and Canada Lands Company on achieving a Community Benefits Agreement and truly affordable community as part of the William Baker district and future districts at Downsview.

Sincerely,



Rosemarie Powell
Executive Director
Toronto Community Benefits Network



Graphic illustration from the TCBN Downsview Neighbourhood Tour on September 27, 2023