

ConsumersNext: Planning for People and Business at Sheppard and Victoria Park

## Local Advisory Committee 3 Summary

Tuesday, September 20, 2016

6:30-8:30pm

Radisson Toronto East

55 Hallcrown Place

### MEETING OVERVIEW

On September 20, 2016 the City of Toronto hosted the third and final ConsumersNext Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting. The purpose of the LAC is to provide an ongoing forum for feedback, guidance and advice to the ConsumersNext Study Team at key points during the process. The LAC is composed of organizations representing a range of interests including local residents, property owners and managers, local employees, community groups and transportation advocates. Representatives from 10 organizations participated in the meeting (see attached participant list). Councillor Shelley Carroll also attended the meeting.

This was the third of three LAC meetings that were held over the first three phases of the study. The purpose of this meeting was to share and seek feedback on the emerging preferred development scenario and ideas related to: (1) the overall land use and built form; (2) key transportation moves; and, (3) key moves, quick wins, and interim solutions for the business park.

This summary was written by Swerhun Facilitation, an independent facilitation firm that is part of the R.E. Millward & Associates-led consultant team. This report is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting but instead provides a high level summary of the views provided by participants.

This summary was subject to participant review prior to being finalized.

### SUMMARY OF ADVICE & QUESTIONS

The summary of advice and questions below have been organized into three categories, based on the three components discussed at the meeting. These categories are (1) land use and built form, (2) key transportation moves, and (3) key moves, quick wins and interim solutions. Responses from the study team are provided in *italics* following each question.

#### Land Use & Built Form

##### Existing Development Applications

- Will existing development applications have to follow the guidelines in this plan? *The development applications that have been submitted will have certain rights afforded to them based on current policies. That being said, whenever the City adopts new policies it looks to advance those policies for future development.*

- Currently, when there is opposition to developments we have been told that they will go before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB); will this still happen even with this plan? *We anticipate this plan will make the policies clearer for developers so fewer applications would be appealed to the OMB. This plan will also give us a bigger hammer in our toolbox that we could take to the OMB, if needed.*
- Are there any current applications for this area? *Currently, there are no formal applications with the City except for the site plans that have already received their approvals.*

#### Land Use Recommendations

- Except for the large retail/food area in the business park, it seems that the majority of ideas in the plan are focused on the perimeter of the business park; will there be any other ideas for the interior? *We are hoping that the retail area in the proposed Consumers Main Street area will jump start the redevelopment of the area and be supportive to the employment uses in the business park.*
- It appears this proposed plan is recommending some employment areas be changed to residential; will there still be office space? *The proposal builds on the current mixed use designation along Sheppard and Victoria Park frontages which is shown in pink on the map and would include residential, retail, office and other uses. There is a policy for the business park that any employment areas removed be replaced.*
- Would it be possible to rezone an employment area through a variance? *No, it would require a change to the City's Official Plan.*
- The plan refers to a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 1 times coverage for employment areas, what does this mean? *The FSI is the ratio of a building's total floor area to the size of the piece of land upon which it is built. Properties in the employment areas are allowed up to 1.5 times FSI but many buildings have lower FSIs. The 1 times coverage is being used as an average for modelling to test different scenarios. It is not a policy direction or a cap.*

#### Built Form Recommendations

- One LAC member felt that allowing high-rise developments at the nodes/corners of the business park would increase traffic and make it less attractive for businesses to develop within core of the business park.

## **Key Transportation Moves**

#### Transit Mobility

- Several members of the LAC repeated their preference for an extension of the Sheppard subway instead of an LRT. They felt that a subway would reduce traffic congestion because it would be underground and would provide the capacity required for the area's projected growth. Participants also said a subway would make more sense because the Environmental Assessment has been approved. *Deciding between subway and LRT is outside of the scope of this study. This plan recognizes future higher-order transit along Sheppard Avenue East but is technology agnostic, meaning that it could work with either subway or LRT.*

- One LAC member said planning the “last mile” in the business park will be crucial to the success of any transit option. They said sidewalks, shading, lighting, benches and connections to active transportation choices will be needed.

#### Pedestrian Mobility

- Will there be a pedestrian crossing on the south side of Consumers Road and Victoria Park Avenue? *It would be difficult to introduce a pedestrian crossing here because of the heavy left hand turning traffic.*
- One LAC member suggested installing traffic circles, noting the centre of the circles could be used to enhance the pedestrian environment. *A traffic circle was an idea that was thought of early on in the process. They work well in low traffic areas but are not as safe as pedestrian crossings in high traffic areas. They also require a great deal of land acquisition.*
- There was a suggestion to make the southwest corner of Yorkland Boulevard and Sheppard Avenue East safer for pedestrians. *We haven't looked at this corner specifically but in principle it is something that could be done to create a safer pedestrian environment. We will look into this.*

#### Automobile Mobility

- One member of the LAC said that more needs to be done to improve the traffic in the area; especially with an additional 11,000 people and 50% more traffic expected. If traffic congestion is too bad, it will affect the economic potential of the area.
- One LAC member suggested adding more streets to help vent the traffic out of the business park, similar to the one proposed near the Armenian Community Centre and the Universal building.

### **Key Moves, Quick Wins and Interim Solutions**

#### Financial Incentives & Barriers

- One LAC member said the City should look into financial tools that could incentivize commercial developments, including but not limited to tax deferrals. *This is something that is being considered through the economic study that is being done in conjunction with this planning study.*
- A member of the LAC said that the current lease rates within the business park do not justify office development. They provided two examples of properties currently under development to illustrate their point, one being a parking lot and the other a car dealership.

#### Business Improvement Area (BIA)

- Some LAC members felt that introducing a BIA at this point may be premature and raised concerns about added costs/taxes. One member said it may be useful at a later point when there are opportunities for retail beautification.
- A LAC member from Smart Commute said any structure that would bring the businesses together as a group would allow them to acknowledge the site as a campus. Acknowledging the site as a campus would help to identify shared needs and introduce Smart Commute programs more efficiently.

### Eco Mobility Hub & Active Transportation

- Members of the LAC generally liked the idea of creating eco-mobility hubs. One member said it presents an opportunity to bring in private enterprise, such as car sharing companies.
- One member of the LAC suggested doing a count of the bike racks in the business park and installing more to make it easier to get around the area by bike.

## **FEEDBACK RECEIVED AFTER THE MEETING**

Following the meeting participants shared written feedback via email. This feedback has been summarized in the following section.

### **Land Use & Built Form**

#### Land Use Recommendations

- The park being proposed on the south west corner of 2450 Victoria Park Avenue should be located further west, closer to the larger density of residents and employees. Opportunities for publicly-owned private space would be preferred for 2450 Victoria Park Avenue as they would allow for linkage opportunities and on-site public amenities.
- Consider the impacts of the introducing residential uses in the south east corner of the Consumers Road Business Park and the daily functions of the Armenian Community Centre. Any development should respect the existing nature of the lands and the function of the Centre. Any uses which are incompatible with the existing community function should be restricted or eliminated.

There was an interest in intensifying the lands at 50 Hallcrown Place, including expansion of the existing school and the development of employment and employment supportive uses. Potential impacts to the existing and planned function of these lands deserves further assessment of nearby development applications.

#### Built Form Recommendations

- The mid-rise buildings, with a 45-degree angular plane to Victoria Park Avenue, envisioned for 2450 Victoria Park Avenue do not provide enough density for the property. 2450 Victoria Park Avenue has excellent access to transit and serves as a gateway to the area from Highway 401.

Phase 2 of the Study indicated that tall buildings act as landmarks when next to highways and provide visual interest. Limiting the built form to mid-rise would represent a lost opportunity to anchor the area with a landmark building.

Tall buildings can work well on 2450 Victoria Park Avenue without undue impacts on nearby properties. The western portion of the property is particularly appropriate for tall buildings because of the employment uses west of the property.

- Consider built form impacts on the Armenian Community Centre lands, particularly as it relates to overlook, massing, height and building position to ensure suitable built form types and heights that are compatible and transition towards the community centre are incorporated to limit potential impacts on the church.

### Infrastructure

- It is essential that sufficient infrastructure, especially water supply and waste water treatment capacities are available for the planned functions of the properties on the north and south side of Consumers Road that are characterized as large development blocks. Servicing infrastructure should be reserved to accommodate the future development of these blocks.

### Landscaping and Amenity

- The existing trees and green spaces throughout the Consumers Road Business Park should be conserved, wherever possible, to create an attractive and comfortable streetscape.

## **Key Transportation Moves**

### Automobile Mobility

- Concerns were raised about the suggestion that redevelopment of 2450 Victoria Park Avenue may be dependent upon completion of a new east-west public road between Hallcrown Place and Victoria Park Avenue. This would require a reconfiguration of the existing on-ramp, which is entirely within the control of MTO. This should not be a precondition to any redevelopment of 2450 Victoria Park Avenue.
- Intensification, particularly along the Victoria Park corridor, will likely make existing congestion worse and may negatively impact the function and safety of the Armenian Community Centre and the business park as a whole.
- There was a request for further details on the proposed street between the Armenian Community Centre and 2450 Victoria Park Avenue.

### Parking

- The ConsumersNext Study provides an opportunity to consolidate the parking standards for the various types of retail, employment, institutional and residential uses within the business park. Consolidating standards would maximize the benefits of shared parking throughout the area.

## **NEXT STEPS**

LAC members were thanked for their contributions and told that any additional feedback they provided to Steve Forrester ([sforrest@toronto.ca](mailto:sforrest@toronto.ca) or 416-395-7126) following the meeting and up until Friday, October 14, 2016 would be included in the LAC 3 summary. The facilitation team committed to sharing the draft summary with participants for their review and the City shared the presentation materials with LAC members upon request. Lastly, participants were reminded that a final community meeting would be held later in the fall and were encouraged to attend.

## ATTACHMENT 1 – LAC MEMBERS

The following is a list of the Local Advisory Committee members. Those members that attended LAC Meeting 3 are signified by bold text.

1. 150 Consumers Road
2. Abu Huraira Centre
3. Agincourt Community Services Association
4. **Agellan Commercial Properties**
5. American Express
6. **Armenian Community Centre**
7. Atria properties
8. **Brian Village Association**
9. Comfield Management Services
10. Cycle Toronto
11. Dillon Consulting Limited
12. **Don Valley East Ontario Early Years Centre**
13. **Enbridge**
14. Epic Realty
15. Fairview Mall
16. Family Day Care Services
17. Former School Board Trustee
18. **Gallean Property Management**
19. Gracepoint Baptist Church
20. **Henry Farm Community Interest Association**
21. Heron's Hill Condo Board
22. **Manulife Real Estate**
23. Parkway Forest Community Association
24. Parkway Place Holdings Ltd.
25. Redbourne Realty Advisors Inc.
26. RV Anderson
27. Sheppard Subway Action Coalition
28. **Shiplake Management Company**
29. Shoppers Drug Mart
30. **Smart Commute**
31. Total Credit Recovery Limited
32. TTCRiders
33. Universal Music
34. **WalkTO**
35. Ward 40 business owner
36. Ward 40 resident
37. Wishing Well Ratepayers' Committee
38. YMCA of Greater Toronto

## ATTACHMENT 2 – LAC 3 AGENDA

6:30pm	<b>Welcome, Introductions, Agenda Review</b> City of Toronto Swerhun Facilitation
6:40	<b>Presentation: Evaluation, Emerging Preferred Alternative, Refinements</b> Melanie Melnyk, R. E. Millward & Associates Brent Raymond, DTAH
7:00	<b>Discussion: Emerging Preferred Alternative and Refinements</b>  <u>Focus Questions:</u> 1. What do you think about the emerging preferred alternative? 2. What other refinements (if any) should we consider?
7:25	<b>Presentation: Key Transportation Moves</b> Jonathan Chai, HDR
7:40	<b>Discussion: Key Transportation Moves</b> 1. What do you think about the presented transportation moves? 2. What refinements (if any) would you suggest?
8:00	<b>Presentation: Key Moves, Quick Wins, Interim Solutions</b> Melanie Melnyk, R. E. Millward & Associates
8:10	<b>Discussion: Key Moves, Quick Wins, Interim Solutions</b>  <u>Focus Questions:</u> 1. What do you think about the key moves, quick wins, and interim solutions? 2. Are there any others you would like to see considered?
8:25	<b>Wrap Up &amp; Next Steps</b> Swerhun Facilitation City of Toronto
8:30	<b>Adjourn</b>