



Planning & Housing Committee

Meeting Summary

Date & Time: July 5, 2022, 1:30 pm

Location: City Hall/WebEx

Project Team Attendees:

City of Toronto – Greg Lintern, Jeff Cantos, Philip Parker, Christina Heydorn

Dillon Consulting – Kristin Lillyman

Meeting Overview

Members of the City of Toronto (the City) Official Plan Team attended the July 5, 2022 meeting of Planning & Housing Committee to present the Land Needs Assessment (item PH35.14), the recommended Official Plan Amendment for City-wide Employment Policies and Conversion Requests - Final Report (item PH35.15), and the City-wide 115 Proposed Major Transit Station Area (MTSA)/Protected Major Transit Station Area (PMTSA) Delineations - Final Report (item PH 35.17). City staff gave a presentation in three separate reports with opportunity for public deputations and questions from Committee members between the presentations.

Discussion on Land Needs Assessment

No deputations.

Questions from committee members:

Question (Q): Why can't we have residential in employment areas?

Answer (A): The aspect of compatibility - In employment areas there are certain uses such as heavy industrial that may create conflicts with sensitive uses such as residential. For example, Toronto has seen an uptick in warehousing and logistics centres, and they have a high volume of truck traffic associated with that use which is not appropriate in residential areas.

Another aspect, is conflict between residential uses when permitted within employment areas. Introducing residential has the potential of putting that employment use out of business in part because of the environmental conditions that the employment use must now introduce and operate under to mitigate against complaints from the surrounding residents. The cost of remediation and impact to their operations as a result may lead them to leave the area. Another concern is that once these lands are converted from employment, they are usually not converted back so the City loses that land permanently. The City guards these employment lands due to their contribution to our



city's economy and jobs, especially for new Canadians. Employment lands supports the whole ecosystem of the economy as highlighted through Covid. When we do convert those conversions are supported through strategic reasons to support employment and other city goals

Q: There are economic factors including land values involved. Has it been your experience that when there is employment land conversion to residential, the value for residential is much greater than employment, so the tendency is to drive out employment?

A: Correct it creates speculation, the tendency is for the employment lands to be outbid by residential. Residential has a higher land value so employment uses get outbid and land value goes up, taxes go up, and other costs, it becomes a vicious cycle.

Q: So, the residential pressure is driving out other employment uses, and spillover effect for surrounding landowners who may now wish to convert land as well?

A: That is correct, we have seen fierce competition for the land. When council does the odd conversion, it needs to be done carefully and meet other city strategic goals.

Q: Are there other broader global trends with shipping, warehousing, logistics the City is monitoring? Toronto having one of the tighter markets sitting at below 1% vacancy. What sort of policy mindset or a strategy are we doing as it relates to warehousing, or logistics? If we are not, are there other jurisdictions considering this?

A: Warehousing and logistics are the best performing real estate sectors at the moment. There are two trends happening: One, major facilities in the outskirts of the City (major warehousing), and Second, smaller facilities closer to where people live (mid-sized), and even one level below, micro-sized facilities often operating even within neighbourhoods.

Q: With respect to compatibility, is there a growing pressure to have that space for logistics in the City? Will this change our approach to employment lands? Are there peer cities looking at that?

A: We have good permissive zoning when it comes to facilitating at the distribution hierarchy as described. A few examples which are showing up in south Etobicoke, North York and in Scarborough. Then more micro facilities closer in other areas of the city in former plazas. The whole dynamic draws our attention to the fact that an employment land resource in the long term is very strategically important for the city. Because it accommodates changes and trends. These lands tend to be recycled for other employment uses. An example is a Lowe's built in Etobicoke less than 20 years ago is being torn down and rebuilt as a Microsoft facility. Ultimately the diversity of the city's economy has benefited from this over the years as trends come and go and we've got the land resource to support the change in the economy.



Q: Population projections seem to say that there is more than sufficient supply but most of the growth will be high-rise oriented supply, not as much ground-oriented housing? There is a lack of balance in the way we are delivering housing supply. Is there a message in here that we need to go further in the diversity of our housing stock?

A: The study shows a mismatch in housing demand and expected housing supply. We have found about 70% of the units required to be anticipated after the turnover of housing from one generation to the next over the next 35 years. We have found a significant proportion but in total not enough. We recognize through our various studies that there needs to be ideally a shift in the potential housing supply from the high-rise mid-rise stock to more ground related housing. Consequently, the projections provide really good context to expanding housing options neighbourhood initiatives. That by encouraging these different forms of ground related housing it will help to address the difference between demand and supply over the long term

It doesn't help the City to have the polarized housing with only tall buildings and single-detached family housing stock. The City will be much richer if we provide a more diverse housing stock, different typologies, with different levels of affordability.

End of item.

Discussion on Employment Lands

Key points from deputations:

- Concerns about industrial operators that provide good jobs which are located in provincially significant areas for employment being constantly squeezed out by encroaching residential lands. There are not enough core employment areas for heavy industrial in the city and existing lands need to be protected. Industry operating 24 hours a day and seven days a week cannot find core employment land in the rest of the city to do what we need to do for our businesses. When sensitive uses are introduced in the areas, the impact on the industrial adjacent area is significant – businesses receive complaints, and need to change operations which reduces economic competitiveness. It seems more and more that we are being pushed out of the city of Toronto even though the city needs businesses to sustain and create jobs and generate tax revenue to fund the services that residents need, provide the services and construction that the city requires and keep the city running. We have been told that the reason for these developments to be considered because of proximity to transit hubs this is understandable and a superficial consideration however when all residential development around transit replaces employment areas where is the transit going to take these residents? Transit hubs can do a very good at bringing people to



jobs as it does to their homes. The Lands Needs Assessment stated that employment lands need to be protected as there is next to zero vacancy rates.

- Questions from the committee to the deputant:
 - Q: Does it surprise you in a core employment area that the province has introduced a Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) in order to add 4000 residential units? Does it concern you that MZOs are being used in that way?
 - A: Considering that we managed to get status as a Provincially Significant Employment Zone (PSEZ); anything brought forward by any level of government is concerning and incomprehensible. Risking to damage what we accomplish and potentially displace thousands of jobs outside of the city that desperately needs the tax dollars.
- The business Cement Roadstone Holdings (CRH) Canada at 1940 McCowan Road is a 24-hour concrete operation in a Provincially Significant Employment Zone. There are proposed conversion requests that are not consistent with the City's Future of Toronto Employment Areas and the Office Market. Intensification for the city is achievable without these conversions. Concrete is a perishable product and service areas is typically within 30 mins of travel, it needs to be close to market. The Scarborough plant is in a pivotal location to support development projects in all of east end of the City. Lands available to accommodate concrete batching is extremely rare, therefore it is important to protect them from the encroachment of sensitive land uses. Request to oppose the proposed conversion request for 4630 and 4570 Sheppard Avenue East or at a minimum we request to consider minimizing the proposed regeneration areas designation so it is closer to the 300 meter area of influence limit. They requested alternative considerations and revised amendment wording if supported by Council.
- Questions from committee to the deputant:
 - Q: What is the staff response to your request?
 - A: Staff have indicated that they would consider recommendations; however, they were not able to make any changes at this point but to bring forward requests through committee and council.
 - Q: Were there public meetings that you were involved with to voice your concerns?
 - A: We have submitted private communications to staff and are attending this Statutory public meeting.
- Representative from the Toronto Lands Corporation (TLC) voiced concerns about the ability of the school board to respond to development applications, and for schools to accommodate new students. Many conversion requests do not have official conversion requests or density numbers, so it is difficult to provide response to the City about the school capacity. They want the city to monitor



development applications and SASPs with the TDSB on an ongoing basis taking into consideration the availability of local school accommodation. Policy language has been provided to the City from the TLC about local school accommodation needs and consider opportunities for delivery of new school place if required for new residents to provide for complete communities. Request to amend to include policy language proposed by TLC or consider and report back to Council.

- Questions from committee to deputant:
 - Q: What has been the staff response to this request?
 - A: Staff have advised they will circulate the conversion requests for school capacity considerations. Our concern is with the limited time for review. The policy would promote early engagement with school boards through planning applications and ensure through policy that we're consulted on areas that haven't been historically planned for residential uses.
- An important issue for the Toronto Industrial Network (TIN) and the impact to employment lands. The amount of lands under conversion request total about 12% of employment lands available. Even if half of this goes forward, it is a potential disaster. Vacancy rate is very low and almost impossible to find lands for new industrial or expansions. All of this is coupled with global pandemic and supply chain issues. Toronto has more than enough land available for new residential development, but conversion requests continue to get approved. How do we know about the cumulative impact on our employment lands in our city? We need a stable platform and certainty for our operations, and the 140 conversion requests do not provide that reassurance. Request that these conversion requests be refused.

Questions from the committee:

Q: Why are we contemplating any conversion requests? Why are these being put forward?

A: We are reporting on 65 hectares out of 8000 hectares of employment lands. They are the ones we can support, have done the homework, and we have a process around each one. Many of them will require additional land use studies through regeneration studies for the Official Plan. These requests are related to other strategic initiatives like new transit, and maintaining employment in these areas.

Part of the reason why these are coming forward, it is the moment that land owners can request these. Land owners can make the requests every 5 years. We have reviewed these carefully with a phased approach and will have remaining 100 or so come forward in January 2023.

Q: Are there any conversion requests within core employment areas?



A: Of the 65 hectares, 10 hectares are in core employment. Some of these conversion requests are for institutional areas to permit long term care facilities.

Q: How do we engage the schools in the conversion requests to accommodate the issues raised?

A: We engage the school boards in the planning of complete communities. We don't engage in advance of any proposed conversion requests.

Q: Can you respond about the concerns regarding Dufferin concrete and the buffer needed between employment and potential sensitive uses?

A: We consider submissions that deal with compatibility mitigation and that helps us consider the context and mitigation opportunities. The land designation 'regeneration' allows us to consider what the best use for that land could be, which could provide that buffer. All of the conversion requests consider constraints

End of item.

Discussion on MTSA/PMTSAs

Key points from deputations:

- There is metis history within boundary of the Long Branch PMTSA and there is a connection between metis women and the water and protecting the environment. Concerns about the impact on environment from development including on the tree canopy. EHON will allow the removal of these trees as of right. Those trees are our heritage and we have international treaties to protect this resource that are not being recognized. Reducing the urban heat island is a matter of public health. Developers should not have the right to remove trees as of right. Long Branch has experienced a 13.5% population growth and planned density targets can be met by underdeveloped area at No Frills. Currently a study underway for basement flooding. If the City of Toronto continues to intensify without flood protection and adequate water infrastructure, homes may become uninsurable and flood more often.
- Concerns from the Long Branch Neighbourhood Association on the delineation. Revised PMTSA is still not correct and still requires revisions. Have written a letter to our Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) to endorse the delay of the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) deadline to 2023 so we can get the PMTSAs right. Thankful for the Site and Area Specific Plan, but proposed border didn't change and still goes quite deep into the neighbourhood, into the Residential Detached (RD) zones. The boundary goes beyond the 500-800 metre requirements of Province. There are areas that also go beyond 10 minute walking



distance. The City needs more time on individual sites to get the borders right. We also had concerns with Floor Space Index (FSI) minimums, which are too large.

- Concerns regarding the Long Branch GO PMTSA. Moved here to get away from high rise and rental housing. The concerns I have are about tree protection and our tree canopy, and the boundary for the Long Branch PMTSA that goes beyond 500-800 metre distance in the provincial guidelines. A higher FSI would not be a good fit in the neighbourhood due to large structures next to smaller bungalows. The higher FSI would mean a loss of landscaping and increased basement flooding concerns.
- South Long Branch concerns about increasing FSI minimums which will force building of monster homes. The blackburn maple tree will come down as of right. The intent of the provincial targets near major transit stations will not be the result. It will result in very expensive houses in the \$2-3 million range, will force building of monster homes and change the character of the neighbourhood, force the removal of the blackburn maple, destabilize the neighbourhood, gut the character guidelines, and reduce transit ridership. Will only benefit developers. Public engagement was one-sided and concerns were ignored about flooding.

Questions from the committee:

Q: These are all mandated provincially, correct?

A: Yes.

Comment: Mount Dennis is not included and we did complete the study.

A: The timing of the Mount Dennis of the study given the provincial requirements it will be forthcoming in the first quarter of 2023.

Q: Number of issues around ability of current infrastructure to take that amount of density such as water and energy? How did you look at that?

A: At a high level, the MTSA/PMTSA delineations reflect as of right zoning as much as possible especially in these areas. In a way, people are already permitted to take on this development. Local area studies do look at infrastructure comprehensively and uses a complete community lens. Individual applications are still required to go through development review.

End of item.