



## Public Open House Meetings Summary – May 2023

### Date & Time:

May 15, 2023 – 1:00-3:00 pm – 34 Participants

May 15, 2023 – 6:00-8:00pm – 9 Participants

May 17, 2023 – 1:00-3:00pm – 51 Participants (Statutory Public Open House)

May 17, 2023 – 6:00-8:00pm – 7 Participants

**Location:** WebEx Virtual Event.

### Project Team Participants:

**City of Toronto** - Jeff Cantos, Carola Perez-Book, Kyle Fearon, Pauline Beaupre, Gerry Rogalski, Janani Mahendran, Jason Tsang, Cole Solish, Jessica Tam, Ali Darouiche, Rafael Mejia Ortiz, Candice Valente, Matthew Premru

The purpose of the Open Houses was to discuss the revised Official Plan Chapter 1 and Employment Area conversions going forward to the June 1, 2023 Planning and Housing Committee.

The City of Toronto Official Plan Team held four (4) public meetings to consult communities on Our Plan Toronto. Participants over the four meetings included members of the public, business community, BIAs, planning consultants, conversion request applicants and members from non-profit organizations.

The common [slide deck](#) for the May 15 and 17 Open Houses can be found on the Our Plan Toronto website, in the Engagement section of the website under the heading Spring 2023 Open Houses and Public Meetings.

Participants were encouraged to provide additional feedback to the project team by emailing [opreview@toronto.ca](mailto:opreview@toronto.ca). This summary is intended to reflect the key discussion points from the meeting and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

## 1.0 Summary of Facilitated Q&A

The following summary documents the questions, comments and responses during the facilitated Q&A following the presentation for each of the four Public Open House meetings. This summary is intended to reflect the key discussion points and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript. Participant questions and comments appear in bold text, followed by responses shared by the project team when responses were provided.



**May 15, 2023 – 1:00-3:00 pm**

**Can you show the relevance to the people who live in the Don Mills west area for this presentation? How does this relate to the provinces ability to override the City's decisions?**

- There are clusters of requests on both Don Mills East and West. While many of these requests are being reported on in the June report, we are not reporting on these two clusters in June.
- When the Province makes big changes, there is typically a transition period before it is implemented, and we are proceeding with our review under the in-effect Growth Plan and Provincial policies. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) is the approval authority for the Municipal Comprehensive Review, and has the ability to approve, modify, or reject what staff recommends and what Council approves.

**The Province has planned for 700,000 new residents in the city and 400,000 new jobs over the next 30 years and aggressive new housing goals. Not much attention is made to the employment numbers and the kinds of jobs that are needed for newcomers to Toronto. Losing employment lands for newcomers runs the risk of exacerbating a current problem with limited employment lands. A large concern in Scarborough is that it will turn into a bedroom community and won't be the home of complete communities. Losing employment lands would hurt Scarborough's ability to build itself up. How will the City make sure this does not happen?**

- Part of Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) is to conduct a land needs assessment (LNA). We brought recommendations forward last year with the results of the assessment, which was that there is sufficient potential housing in areas designated for residential development. When conversions are recommended, staff ensure that non-residential GFA and more employment/jobs are secured through this process, in addition to securing elements that contribute to a complete community.

**To ensure that employment land is available for the expected growth, how does the Official Plan team weigh vertical density compared to the physical land space of employment areas?**

- The intent of both the Provincial policy framework and the City's Official Plan is to preserve employment areas and ensure they can remain viable, as well as build complete communities. This process does not typically consider elements that would be part of a later development application. The careful consideration of employment land conversions is focused primarily on land use considerations and the criteria and principles of City and Provincial policies.



## **What is the future of the Leaside Business Park - are there any conversion requests in the business park?**

- The report to PHC on June 1<sup>st</sup> will include final assessments on conversion requests that are located in the Leaside Business Park. All of these assessments will include recommendations for the lands to be retained as *Employment Areas*.
- Conversion requests in this area are as follows: 26 Overlea Boulevard, 60 Overlea Boulevard, 85 & 115 Laird Drive, 105 & 109 Vanderhoof and 10 Brentcliffe Road.

## **Related to adjacencies, and specifically intersections identified as MTSA's, employment uses and complete streets when you have sensitive uses that arise, especially when you have *Core Employment Areas* that meet residential areas (*Mixed Use Areas*). Also adding, that Weston Road and Finch Avenue West is subject to the introduction of the future Finch LRT.**

- It is important to consider the entire context of policies and development in an area. MTSA's are an important component of that analysis, but are not the only one. It is important to note that MTSA's balance both residential and employment uses.

## **When you build in higher densities you are bound to have usage conflicts and fears that Weston Road and Finch Avenue West might be vulnerable to these issues.**

- We know these areas have heavier uses that can be impacted by new sensitive uses so we use require Compatibility and Mitigation studies to be provided by the requestors, which are then peer reviewed by an expert. This gives us data to help inform the City's analysis, in addition to site visits to get a better sense of how these areas function. Understanding issues of compatibility help ensure the continued viability of employment areas and potential for land use conflict.

## **One of the slides on the presentation had red boxes around certain areas and wanted a recap as to what they mean? Also, what is a SASP?**

- The scale of the map is large, so the red boxes are a way of highlighting the areas where we are recommending conversions. The areas that are in red are not changing entirely. The boxes are to help identify on a city-wide map the general location of recommended conversions.
- A SASP is a Site and Area Specific Policy that helps provide a policy framework at the Official Plan level that is specific to that area, in order to ensure orderly development and securing important city-building objectives.



**Where can we access more information for conversions in my area (Don Mills)? In Don Mills, there are more and more retail, offices and restaurants being removed for condo development. This will likely not provide the replacement. My comment is that this is affecting our neighbourhoods and livability in our community.**

- The project webpage is available online and has a lot of information on the conversion requests and the overall MCR process. In addition, staff email contacts are provided. If you have any questions on conversion requests in your area, please feel free to reach out to the staff identified on the project page.
- All recommendations to convert employment lands will include a policy framework that is intended to help address issues uncovered through the city's analysis, such as a need for more employment space or affordable housing, in order to create complete communities.

**Building permit applications also contain traffic studies. How is traffic incorporated into your recommendations and considerations?**

- Where we do have traffic info from past studies, that forms part of the analysis and part of the request process. However, traffic studies aren't required through the conversion request process.
- Careful consideration of employment land conversion requests look at the Provincial and municipal policy framework to understand whether a conversion would negatively impact an employment area. As an example, part of that framework includes consideration of how goods movement corridors could be impacted.

**May 15, 2023 – 6:00-8:00 pm**

**Can you please verify the conversion requests that staff will report on and provide their anticipated reporting dates to the Committee/Council in both June and July?**

- The agenda for the Planning and Housing Committee ('PHC') meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup> will be made available 10 days prior to the meeting. You can refer to the PHC agenda and the accompanying staff report to find more detailed information about the 40+ conversion sites that will be considered by the committee. This report will include details about the 6 conversions requests that are being approved, as well as the sites that staff are not recommending approval for. Stay tuned for the report to learn more.
- Additionally, there is a link available to a [report](#) that was submitted to the April PHC meeting. By accessing this report, you can gain insight into when each request is expected to be addressed.



**May 17, 2023 – 1:00-3:00 pm (Statutory Open House)**

**Are the conversion requests being presented at the June 1 meeting that are not referenced in OPA 644 being retained?**

- That is correct, OPA 644 shows the conversions that we are recommending. The staff report that will give the rationale for the retention of the conversion requests will be released 10 days before the June 1<sup>st</sup> Planning and Housing Committee meeting

**You listed the recommendations of not just the regeneration area, but also the Golden Mile, what about the other areas you are rezoning from employment use? Where are the rest of the lands?**

- In OPA 644 we are considering conversions from an employment designation to *Regeneration Areas*, retaining *Core Employment* with a SASP for additional uses, and converting *Core* to *General Employment*. The regeneration area was used as an example to speak to what the regeneration land use is.
- The conversion addresses that we are recommending in OPA 644 can be found [here](#). They will all be available in the staff report that will be released 10 days before the June 1<sup>st</sup> Planning and Housing Committee meeting.

**Are any conversions going from employment to residential? Or only from *Core Employment* to *General Employment*?**

- Part of the MCR exercise includes a land needs assessment to assess the quantity of land required to accommodate forecasted growth to 2051.
- OPA 591 in July did have considerations for conversions, some to *Regeneration Areas* and others to *Mixed Use* with a SASP attached.
- Part of the conversions and what the City wants to achieve is affordable housing requirements and non-res GFA to ensure employment remain on lands intended for employment uses.
- For the upcoming OPA 644, there is recommendation for *Core* to *General* and employment lands to *Regeneration Areas* which will be studied further down the line and can be considered for residential. But none in specific in OPA 644 are being directly converted to a residential use.

**What is happening at Kennedy Commons?**

- That conversion request will be reported on in July

**Are PSEZs still applicable in the city?**

- Yes, we know that there is provincial draft language. But until that is in effect, we are still working within current legislation



## **What are minister approval periods approving? When do you expect it to finalize?**

- Normally the minister has 120 days to approve an OPA, we were given notice that the minister suspended that. We don't know when the minister will make a decision

## **At the July 2022 PHC, there was a recommendation from City Council to review the expansion of the uses in Employment Areas to permit sport facilities, places of assembly, places of worship etc. is that review happening concurrently with these conversion requests? Does it impact any of these requests?**

- It is happening concurrently with the review of the conversion requests, but the conversion requests final report will be completed first. We have initiated the study for the additional uses in employment areas which will help inform subsequent changes to the OP and it will be reported on later this fall

## **With the Provincial changes impacting the Official Plan processes that will come into effect, what happens with the OPA 591 recommendations that haven't been approved by the Minister?**

- It is important to note that we are currently doing this review with the in-effect framework. Our recommendations are consistent with the PPS 2020 and must conform to the Growth Plan 2020.
- However, the provincial framework in which we work changes and If the province changes those documents, we will do what is required to conform and stay consistent with the updated documents.

## **Are there any efforts being made to meet with landowners that have not been spoken with in advance of the reporting?**

- Staff have provided opportunities for all requestors to meet with requestors after the initial preliminary assessments. Staff have also made all attempts to accommodate consultations and meeting requests made out to them, including calls. We have done what we can and accommodated requests where possible. No request to meet has been declined.

## **Can you clarify what a Regeneration Areas does or does not include?**

- Until residential uses are permitted, we need to study an area. The study permits a comprehensive approach to a large site and/or with multiple owners or several phases proposed. *Regeneration Areas* open up unique areas of the City to a wide array of uses to help attract investment, re-use buildings, encourage new construction and bring life to the streets. Not all *Regeneration Areas* will have the same mix of uses or development policies. Each will differ in terms of its existing built context, character of adjacent areas and market opportunities for revitalization. *Regeneration Areas* will need strategies and frameworks for development, provided through a Secondary Plan.



## **What influence does a GO station have on the Regeneration Areas study when changing the land use to a residential use?**

- Transit stations is to accommodate both people and jobs. If an area was to go to Regeneration, it would look at where could residential occur but also at opportunities like the Christie example where the land remains designated for employment.

## **If a conversion is not dealt with in this OPA, is it assumed that the rest of the conversions going for July are going to be refused? Is there still an opportunity for the request to be approved for the July batch?**

- Whether it is going in June or July doesn't mean it is going either way. This was intentionally done as a load management approach, we are staggering the requests so the workload we are bringing to the Planning and Housing Committee and Council is a manageable one. We are not done our due diligence for the conversion request going to July but completing those going to June.

## **What are the thoughts around attaching policies to conversion requests for performance standards around affordable housing and environmental performance?**

- Economic Development and Culture is keenly aware of the pressures facing the office, industrial and manufacturing markets and facilities and we are looking at areas where there are employment uses that cannot operate next to residential, we are typically not talking about office towers.
- When recommending a site conversion, we want to ensure that operating businesses that want to stay and make investments where they are located can continue to do so without having sensitive residential uses nearby. We want to ensure that we can mitigate those effects, we want to ensure that existing industries that need access to goods movement can continue to do so without having to create traffic conflict with new residential automobile traffic, and where we do permit a request, more often or not, it is close to transit. We do what can to ensure affordable housing, making sure they are complete and inclusive and creating the most inclusive city in the world. Regarding TGS, T1 is mandatory for all residential buildings across the city. The city is on track for net zero before 2040. There are a lot considerations for considering requests.

## **Could you give a general high-level overview of the Toronto Our Plan OP process and timelines?**

- The MCR was initiated in June of 2020, the requests are just one piece of a few things going into the MCR. The employment conversion review is one piece of the MCR. This presentation was specific to the employment area conversion requests. Land owners a year window to submit a review, and we have and continue reporting on them, were able to go with approximately 30 last July, and now bringing approximately 40 to June and the final remaining 70 to July



**Given the performance standards that have just been identified, is there any weighing with how you deal with them, if so, when do the economic perspectives come in when you develop these areas into mixed use communities?**

- We look at each on a case-by-case basis, we don't rank them. The first and biggest consideration that we look at it is the negative impacts that residential would create for nearby industry, we don't want to put people out of jobs and businesses out of work. If there is an existing impactful industry where residential is proposed next door, we as land use planners don't want to create a land use conflict
- We know that 1 square metre of employment GFA generates double the transit ridership than residential so when we can recommend an approval, we do our best to secure as much employment GFA within a conversion request as a requirement so these lands we recommend for conversion don't become 99% residential, we want these lands to continue having the economic benefit that we were intended for
- We want to make sure that we are creating designation and jobs for people around the City of Toronto. Not everyone can work from home, essential and goods services across the city need to continue being essential and goods services. We need to ensure that they continue operating across the city.

**Are there outstanding council directives that have an impact or being weighed in as part of the review for the conversion requests submitted to the city?**

- Not for the requests that we have

**Where is the Official Plan at? Is there a date for when it will be done?**

- We're reviewing different components of the OP concurrently and bringing them forward individually instead of overwhelming City Council all at once. OP is consistently evolving and being reviewed and amended to deal with the issues that we have today
- There will always be issues that need to be addressed that will amend the OP

**The degree to which this current round of work the city is doing will set the stage with how the city will evolve over the next 20-30 years, to what extent is this a continuation or iteration of the past principals and paradigms that have guided the city's work thus far, balanced with the considerations of the very new and unique times?**

- We are consistently looking at the data to help inform and bring new policies to City Council. For example, we know that the federal government has increased immigration targets to Canada, we know that 40% of newcomers choose Toronto, and we know that housing is unaffordable
  - Part of our work is making sure there are low barrier entry jobs for those who come to Canada. We look at the Chapter 1 component in ensuring that we apply an equity lens to all of the decisions that we make
- We also use an equity lens, a net zero lens etc. to help inform the vision for Toronto to 2051 that is evidence based. Part of the reason why the OP is not a stagnant document, there is evolving data. We are always looking at our policies to make sure they ensure that we are addressing the issues and challenges that we have today





**May 17, 2023 – 6:00-8:00 pm**

**How does one find the lands that are requesting conversions?**

- The list of conversions can be found at the following link:  
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2023/ph/bgrd/backgroundfile-235449.pdf>

**Are the proposed conversion lands along Vine Avenue being recommended for conversion?**

- They are recommended to be retained.

**Because the province is proposing the removal of PSEZ's, would this impact staff's recommendations to council in relation to the conversion requests? Would the Province's proposed employment policies would seem to result in strengthened policies in the OP?**

- The province is still engaging in review of the policies related to the removal of PSEZ's. We won't be applying these draft policies as the ERO closes on June 5, 2023 and won't likely come in to power until the fall. Staff are still reviewing these policies as well and intend to provide comments to PHC on June 1, 2023.

## **2.0 Meeting Close**

Following the Q&A discussions, The OP team outlined the next steps of engagement, contact information and that the slide deck will be posted to the Official Plan Review website.