



UPDATE >>> **DOWNSVIEW**

Virtual Public Meeting Summary

May 29, 2023

Prepared by City Planning,

City of Toronto

July 2023

Background

The Update Downsview Study is reimagining the future of the Downsview area and creating a new framework to guide change. To this end, the Project Team presented its second [Staff Report](#) to the April 27, 2023 Planning and Housing Committee and May 10, 2023 Council meeting, which included the draft Secondary Plan, Community Development Plan priorities, and Urban Design Guidelines outline as well as an update on the Environmental Assessment (EA) Study.

To begin Phase 3 of the Study, the Project Team delivered a virtual public meeting on May 29 and an in-person open house at the Downsview Public Library from May 30 to June 3, 2023. The purpose of these engagement activities was to provide an update and seek feedback on the Update Downsview Study as well as the draft documents presented through the second Staff Report.

Meeting Overview

The City of Toronto hosted a virtual public meeting on Monday, May 29, 2023 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. to share information with the public, answer questions and receive comments on the Update Downsview Study, including the Environmental Assessment, draft Secondary Plan, Community Development Plan priorities, and Urban Design Guidelines outline. The event was promoted by sending 58,500 flyers to addresses closest to the Downsview area, through the Update Downsview and id8 Downsview e-update subscriber lists, City of Toronto's social media channels (Twitter, Instagram), on the [Update Downsview webpage](#) as well as in the *Toronto Star*, *North York Mirror* and *Lo Specchio* newspapers.

Over 125 participants attended live as well as project team members and City of Toronto staff from City Planning, Engineering & Construction Services, Transportation Services, Social Development, Finance and Administration and Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Representatives of Northcrest Developments and Canada Lands Company, the Official Plan Amendment (OPA) applicants, were also in attendance and available to respond to questions. For a full list of panelists in attendance, please refer to the Appendix on page 11.

Following introductions and housekeeping, Councillor Pasternak delivered opening remarks. Sarah Phipps from the City Planning division spoke on behalf of the City Planning team. Her presentation provided an update on the Update Downsview Study, including draft policy directions for the Secondary Plan and the Urban Design Guidelines outline. Sundus Balata from the Social Development, Finance and Administration division presented on the Community Development Plan, including the priorities and potential short, medium and long-term actions. Greg Moore of HDR and Joshua Battiston of ARUP represented the technical Environmental Assessment (EA) team, providing an update on the EA including the preferred options for streets, sanitary, servicing and stormwater management.

Following presentations given by the project team, participants had an opportunity to ask questions of the panel and share their thoughts.

Questions & Answers

The Q & A portion of the event gave rise to the below thematic questions from the public:

- General Study
- Project Phasing & Implementation
- Housing
- Density
- Community Services & Facilities
- Parks & Open Space
- Transportation / Mobility Network
- Arts & Culture
- Safety

Questions submitted at the virtual meeting have been consolidated and answered by staff below, based on the information presented by the City on May 29. Participants were also encouraged to attend the in-person open house at the Downsview Public Library from May 30 to June 3 to learn more and speak with staff.

This report is not intended to provide a verbatim transcript of the meeting, but instead provides a high-level summary of participant feedback.

General Study

- ***Many studies have been conducted on these lands. What has changed? Is it anticipated that the outcome changes as a result of more studies?***

In 2018, Bombardier announced that their operations would be leaving the Downsview Airport and Bombardier Aerospace Campus by the end of 2023. The lands are now owned by the Public Sector Pension Investment Board (represented by Northcrest Developments), in addition to other nearby lands owned by Parc Downsview Park Inc. (represented by Canada Lands Company Ltd.), who jointly submitted an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) application for the airport lands in October 2021. This change, particularly the imminent departure of the airport use, has required an update to the existing 2011 Downsview Area Secondary Plan, as well as the preparation of other deliverables, through the Update Downsview Study process.

Given that the development of the Downsview area will take place over the next 30+ years, it is anticipated that the plan may undergo changes/updates over time based on various factors (i.e. social, economic, political) to best reflect the needs of the existing and future community. In any case, development applications and supporting technical studies must be submitted to the City for review and approval to ensure conformity with the planning policy framework, including the Downsview Secondary Plan, for future developments.

Project Phasing & Implementation

- ***Have City staff notified the Premier of the anticipated population for the Downsview area, and therefore potentially less development directed to the Greenbelt?***

As with all development applications received by the City, notice is provided to appropriate stakeholders, including government agencies such as the Provincial government.

- ***The Banting Park Homeowners Association is concerned that Council decisions keep changing and the potential impact this could have on the Allen East district planning process.***

Since the Allen East District Plan was adopted by Council on October 4, 2021, the context has changed, in large part due to the imminent departure of the Downsview Airport use which has removed significant development constraints. Further, Canada Lands Company Ltd. and Northcrest Developments submitted an Official Plan Amendment application (“OPA”) on October 14, 2021 to amend the Secondary Plan to reflect their vision for their lands.

In February 2021, City Council adopted Site and Area-Specific Policy 596 (“SASP 596”) for a portion of the 2011 Downsview Area Secondary Plan area which requires, among other matters, an update to the Secondary Plan. In alignment with the densities proposed for lands adjacent to other subway stations within the Secondary Plan area, the draft Secondary Plan similarly reflects densities in the Allen East district that are appropriate given the district’s proximity to a subway station. While the Secondary Plan includes increased densities for the Allen East district, it does not propose changes to the road network or park locations, and proposes to maintain the low-rise neighbourhood area. Further development applications, including a Zoning By-law Amendment application, are still required for development to occur in the Allen East District.

- ***What are the timelines for the Jane Finch Initiative?***

The Jane Finch Initiative is separate from the Update Downsview Study and is similarly developing a Secondary Plan and Community Development Plan that will be presented to Council in 2024. Both the Update Downsview and Jane Finch

Initiative Community Development Plan processes will explore opportunities to jointly deliver some of the priorities after establishing a set of actions.

Housing

- ***The requirement for 40% 2-bedroom and 10% 3-bedroom accommodations are not enough. Why concentrate on singles or couples?***

The City recognizes the need to have a wide range of housing choices, including a range of unit sizes and number of bedrooms in any new community. The proposed percentages in the City's recent Secondary Plans, including the draft Downsview Secondary Plan, have exceeded the City's [Growing Up Guidelines](#) standards in recognition of the need for more units with multiple bedrooms to accommodate different household types, including larger and multi-generational families. Providing an appropriate range and mix of unit types, without prioritizing one particular unit type, is encouraged and reflected in the draft Secondary Plan policies.

- ***Will there be housing options for adults with developmental disabilities? Perhaps an opportunity for one or more organizations (i.e. Montage, Meta Centre) to have access to provide such housing?***

This level of detail does not fall within the scope of a Secondary Plan. As noted above, draft Secondary Plan highlights the need for the provision of a full range of housing options to meet a spectrum of needs. It should be noted that the Accessibility portion of the Ontario Building Code states that at least 15% of all suites in multi-unit residential buildings must be built with basic accessibility features, such as barrier-free pass of travel into the kitchen, bedrooms and bathrooms. In addition, the City's [Affordable Rental Housing Design Guidelines](#) requires all affordable rental housing buildings to have a target of 5% of total units to be fully accessible.

Organizations are encouraged to connect with developers at the District Plan stage when there is more detailed design work and potential opportunities for partnerships.

- ***With Bombardier's departure by the end of 2023/early 2024, will you be ready for shovels in the ground to create the needed infrastructure to build the housing needed now, including affordable housing? When can we expect occupancy of affordable housing on these lands? Can this be fast-tracked?***

The City and the landowners for the airport lands are working together to advance the Environmental Assessment (EA), which is required to facilitate the infrastructure needed to support this proposed growth.

The draft Secondary Plan highlights the need for the provision of a full range of housing options to meet a spectrum of needs, particularly those of equity-deserving communities, and to create a welcoming and inclusive community, including housing

for seniors, multi-generational housing, deeply affordable housing, supportive housing and rent-geared-to-income housing. The Secondary Plan and the Site and Area-Specific Policy specifies that 20% of units must be affordable. In addition, a minimum of 300 affordable housing units are required in the Allen East district—which is identified as a pipeline ‘Housing Now’ project.

Affordable housing will be provided in all areas where residential growth occurs, but it is difficult to provide a specific date at this point. Development will begin in the next couple years, with full-build out over the next 30 years.

Density

- ***It appears that the densities for the Allen East District are being reconsidered. If so, groups such as the Banting Neighbourhood Association should be engaged further. In addition, the Banting Neighbourhood will now potentially see an opportunity loss for a major park.***

As noted above, restrictions around the Downsview Airport lands have been lifted due to Bombardier’s announced departure by the end of 2023/early 2024. This has created an opportunity to allow for more density, including around subway stations to meet the policy direction in both Provincial and City plans. The draft Secondary Plan proposes a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 3.5 (gross) for lands in proximity to Sheppard West Station, consistent with the densities proposed for Downsview Park and Wilson subway stations. Lands designated ‘Neighbourhoods’ in the Allen East District will remain low scale and the parks in the approved District Plan are not proposed to be changed. This includes the expanded parkland proposed through the Allen East District Plan, which is not being impacted. This is the beginning of the consultation on the revised densities for Allen East, with further discussion to be coordinated in the future with interested stakeholders.

Community Services & Facilities

- ***Has the City considered the pressure that 110,000 new residents will have on the healthcare system?***

Healthcare is a provincial responsibility. The City has engaged with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to advise of the anticipated population and phasing. We have also heard the need for healthcare through engagement on the Community Development Plan priorities. City staff will continue having conversations with provincial partners to highlight the need for affordable health care services and will report back on the outcomes of these discussions.

- ***What is the reason for 11 elementary schools and only 1 high school. Wouldn’t those students want to attend a high school close to home to reduce travel?***

As part of the Update Downsview Study, the City and OPA applicants are working with the school boards and other stakeholders to understand the future needs. The

projected need for 11 elementary schools and 1 high school have been identified by the school boards based on their modeling analysis and capacity available at other nearby schools. Secondary schools also tend to be much larger to accommodate more students within a larger catchment area. At the time District Plans come forward, confirmation of school board needs will be undertaken, and schools will be built as required.

- ***There should be 3 recreation centres and each should have both an indoor and outdoor swimming pool for the public. Also, consider including an Olympic size pool to encourage hosting competitions and to give qualified swimmers opportunity for training.***

City staff will take back the feedback regarding a competitive swimming pool. The draft Secondary Plan currently identifies the requirement for at least two Community Recreation Centres. The City will monitor growth and assess need on a regular basis. The Council-approved Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan directs that each new and replacement Community Recreation Center (CRC) should be anchored by a regulation-size gymnasium and/or indoor swimming pool. Facility design and services must reflect local needs and current trends, with input from residents and stakeholders. The intent for the Downsview CRC (Keele/Sheppard) is to include a 25 metre, 6 lane lap pool, leisure pool with barrier-free ramp access, water play features, and viewing gallery.

- ***Where will amenities (i.e. firehall, ambulance, schools, community centres, medical facility) be placed in the community?***

City staff and agencies have identified the estimated number of facilities required to support future growth in the Downsview area, though specific locations have generally not been identified. At this point, a Community Recreation Centre (CRC) is planned for Keele and Sheppard and it is the intent that other CRCs may be located near transit stations. City staff also understand the importance of equitably distributing these facilities throughout the area. More information and analysis on specific locations will be determined at the District Plan stage when we know more about the local street and block configurations.

- ***Is there consideration for sports facilities?***

Park-based recreational facilities will be guided by the target provision levels set out in the [Facilities Master Plan](#). They will be determined at the time of park design in several years, but are being considered at a high level as part of the development of this Plan.

Parks & Open Space

- ***There is currently a stormwater pond in the Stanley Greene neighbourhood—will the pond and the park be maintained (i.e. cutting the grass and planting more trees)?***

Stormwater Management Ponds are typically kept as ‘naturalized’ areas, with less emphasis on manicured maintenance. This adheres to the Landscape Plan developed as part of the Detailed Design for the Stanley Greene subdivision. The ‘Lake’ in Downsview Park will continue to be maintained by Canada Lands Company.

Transportation / Mobility Network

- ***Have there been transportation studies to determine how this plan, with 110,000 additional residents, will likely affect people commuting (on road and transit) from the local area and areas further north/north-west of the GTA that have to pass through the area to get to their jobs in downtown Toronto and elsewhere? All of the roadways in these lands seem to open out to Wilson Ave., Keele St., Sheppard Ave. and Allen Rd, though traffic is already congested.***

As part of the work being undertaken for the Update Downsview Study and associated Environmental Assessment Study, a traffic model is under development to help understand how traffic will move through the area and what infrastructure is required to support future growth. A major focus of this work is to provide new cycling and pedestrian facilities while enhancing existing transportation route with new or improved cycling and pedestrian opportunities. These opportunities are also tied to improved access to transit. In addition, there will be reduced parking rates for development, similar to what is used in the downtown setting, to reduce the use of cars and encourage more active travel modes. The framework streets planned for the Downsview area will also support increased walking, cycling and transit use will also help to alleviate automobile traffic in the area. This transportation work is supported by policy directing the development of mixed-use communities, where it is easy to access daily needs (e.g. housing, jobs, shopping, entertainment etc.) within the local community, without the need to drive.

Currently, the three subway stations and the existing GO station in the Downsview area operate significantly under capacity which can help accommodate the proposed population growth.

- ***Is there a pedestrian/cyclist only overpass or bridge planned to be built above Allen Road that connects Allen East to Downsview Park? A structure such as this would provide a safer crossing option.***

A pedestrian/cyclist overpass is not currently planned to be built above Allen Road,

however, there are four new active-only and multi-modal crossings proposed over the Barrie GO line which would provide more direct East/West connections to Downsview Park.

Through the Update Downsview Study, major street connections within the Downsview area will be identified and recommended, with deliberate connections to the lands and existing streets east of Allen Road. These major street connections will consider what is needed at these new intersections to support improved pedestrian and cycling crossing of Allen Road in conjunction with planned growth in the Downsview area.

- ***When is the street network proposed planned to be completed?***

The major street network will be built over the next 30 years and will be phased with the advancement of the District Plans.

- ***There was reference to an east-west street passing through the "Depot" building. Is this the building that currently houses the Merchant's Market and Farmer's Market? Would the road go under, over, or through the building? Would the building remain?***

There is a street currently proposed to pass through the building, as there are technical constraints associated with a street being located above or below the building. The majority of the building will be retained, which creates opportunities to open up the building for greater public access and integration with the new communities. Phase 3 of Environmental Assessment will further assess alignment and grading of new streets, as well as review impacts and opportunities to the existing buildings. In addition, consideration of how to both preserve and enhance cultural heritage elements of the building will be further reviewed in Phase 3 of the Environmental Assessment.

- ***Will the existing Carl Hall bridge over Sheppard Avenue will be evaluated as part of the Environmental Assessment? Does this mean it might be destroyed. If yes, when? I use the bridge regularly and would be disappointed to see it go.***

This question relates to the existing pedestrian bridge crossing Sheppard Avenue, east of Keele Street, towards the Arbo property (formerly William Baker) across from Downsview Park. This bridge is owned by Canada Lands Company (CLC). As part of the Arbo project and CLC's commitment to the neighbourhood, CLC will be removing the existing bridge and replacing it with a new bridge purposely designed for pedestrians. That work is planned to occur over the next several years, with timing for the demolition and replacement not yet confirmed.

It should be noted that this upcoming work is associated with the approved Arbo Neighbourhood Plan, under the previous Secondary Plan, and is separate and

distinct from the Update Downsview and Environmental Assessment process currently underway.

For more information specific to the Arbo neighbourhood, please visit <https://www.clc-sic.ca/real-estate/arbo-downsview>.

Arts & Culture

- ***Artists living in Toronto experience so much red tape in the DIY communities, especially when it comes to noise by-laws. With this unique development, how do we establish a dialogue with the City, become more flexible, recognize this as a unique cultural space?***

This is a comment that will be taken back by City staff. Much of the lands are designated for employment uses in the draft Secondary Plan and the Community Development Plan will also prioritize arts and culture through various actions.

- ***Instead of the hangars, could the Runway be a destination space? How do we ensure this becomes a place people can congregate? There currently aren't many places within the City that are zoned for music (i.e. King St. W).***

The OPA applicants (Canada Lands Company and Northcrest Developments) have plans for the Runway to be a community connector, and a significant opportunity to contribute to the public realm for the site overall. In addition, interim uses on the 2.1km long Runway will transform the space into an exciting public area filled with short-term and longer-term activations. Northcrest has already started this with events such as 'Play on the Runway', ice skating and rollerblading and movie nights.

Safety

- ***Is Jane and Finch included in the Secondary Plan? What is the City's plan to control crime in the newly envisioned community?***

Jane and Finch area is not part of the Downsview Study Area and Secondary Plan, but is undergoing a separate Secondary Plan and Community Development Plan. We consider them 'sister communities' to try to leverage opportunities, where possible, to meet the needs of both communities. As it relates to community safety in general – all City services work in tandem to support community safety initiatives. Safety is a priority for both Jane and Finch and Downsview's Community Development Plans and actions will be collaborated for both communities.

- ***The public transit system is not fit for purpose and has safety issues. How many police stations are expected for the area and where will they be located?***

The Update Downsview team has engaged with City Divisions and have been in

touch with Police Services. At this point, the team has not been notified that new police facilities are needed and anticipate this to be identified at the District Plan stage. We will take this back and confer further with the Police Services Board.

Update Downsview will also consider and incorporate other strategies that contribute to community safety and well-being, including improving access to jobs, services, recreation and high quality public spaces.

Comments

Additional comments received from meeting participants included the following:

- This looks like a fabulous plan. Well done!
- Nothing has happened for 20 years and we need affordable housing now. Non-profit housing is the only avenue to produce truly affordable housing— stand-alone sites immediately to satisfy need for more affordable housing.
- Thank you all panelists for your time and patience. Tough job to please everyone. Hopefully some of the ideas mentioned by some of the audiences can be implemented. Progress is slow and is never perfect. It's great to be in a society where we have the option to have a voice. Thank you.

Next Steps

Please visit the [Update Downsview](#) webpage for more information or subscribe to receive Study updates. You can also contact City staff to provide your comments or ask directly:

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To contact the id8 Downsview team regarding their development application, visit <https://www.id8downsview.ca/> contact.

Appendix

The following panelists were present at the event:

City of Toronto

- Councillor James Pasternak – York Centre
- Sarah Phipps – Overall Study
- Jessica Krushnisky – Overall Study
- Perry Korouyenis – Site-Specific Applications
- PC Wasserman – Urban Design
- Andrew Au – Transportation
- Edward Presta – Transportation
- Tyler Lasko – Transportation
- Natasha Petzold – Parks and Open Spaces
- Sundus Balata – Community Development Plan
- Mijin Lee – Water/Wastewater Services
- Vivian Yao – Infrastructure

Applicants

- Aytakin Mohammadi – Northcrest Developments
- Kristy Shortall – Northcrest Developments
- David Anselmi – Canada Lands Company
- Emily Reisman – Urban Strategies

Environmental Assessment (EA) – Technical Consultants

- Greg Moore – HDR
- Joshua Battiston – ARUP
- Mark Pomeroy – WSP