



UPDATE >>> **DOWNSVIEW**

Fall 2023 Engagement Summary

Prepared by City Planning,

City of Toronto

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Background

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

These draft documents were updated and further refined as part of Phase 3 of the Study, following the May 2023 Council meeting and subsequent engagement. In November and December 2023, a revised draft Secondary Plan as well as Urban Design Guidelines and Zoning By-law for Interim Uses were posted online for viewing and feedback.

As part of the public engagement for Phase 3 of the Study, the City of Toronto hosted an in-person Open House at Toronto Public Library – Downsview Branch on October 16, 2023 from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The purpose of the Open House was to provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the Update Downsview Study as well as share information and seek feedback on the Environmental Assessment (EA) Study. The Open House included information on general project updates with a focus on the street and servicing network improvements required outside of the Downsview lands and details on how the transportation network has been evaluated.

Approximately 100 participants attended the Open House. Generally, participants were looking for more information on the overall Study and asked questions of clarification on the timelines for development/construction, the Major Street network, district planning processes and the potential Dufferin Street expansion.

Specific themes from the input received at the Open House are as follows:

- Support for improved active mobility connections across the Downsview lands.
- Concerns from residents of the Ancaster neighbourhood regarding:
 - New automobile traffic volumes within the neighbourhood as a result of development;
 - The opening of existing dead-end streets to automobiles and the recommended alignment of Dufferin Street; and
 - Mixed input regarding how Ancaster residents want to access the community by automobile.
- Concern regarding the proposed street widening for future improvements to existing sections of Dufferin Street.
- Support for continued public engagement opportunities to learn about the Study and provide input and simple and easy to follow review materials.

In addition, City staff hosted a virtual public meeting on November 21, 2023. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an update and seek feedback on the Update Downsview Study draft documents. These include the draft Secondary Plan,

Community Development Plan priorities and actions, Zoning By-law for Interim Uses, Urban Design Guidelines and Master Environmental Servicing Plan. Further details on the meeting can be found below.

Meeting Overview

The virtual public meeting hosted on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. included a presentation that provided an update on the Study deliverables as well as a question and answer period through thematic breakout rooms. The open house and virtual public meeting were promoted by sending 58,600 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* and *Lo Specchio* newspapers.

Over 120 participants attended live as well as City of Toronto project team members from City Planning, Engineering & Construction Services, Toronto Water, Transportation Services, Social Development, Finance and Administration and Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Representatives of Northcrest Developments and Canada Lands Company (CLC), the Official Plan Amendment (OPA) applicants, were also in attendance and available to respond to questions.

Following introductions and housekeeping, Councillor Pasternak and Sarah Phipps delivered opening remarks. Jessica Krushnisky and Erika Ivanic from the City Planning division spoke on behalf of the City Planning team. Their presentation provided a comprehensive and thematic overview of the Update Downsview Study deliverables.

Following presentations given by the project team, participants had an opportunity to join breakout rooms of their choice to ask questions of staff and share their thoughts. The breakout rooms included:

- 1) General Study and Policies;
- 2) Streets and Servicing;
- 3) Zoning By-law for Interim Uses;
- 4) Built Form, Density and Housing.
- 5) Parks and Community Facilities; and
- 6) Community Development Plan.

Comments, Questions & Answers

Comments and questions submitted at the virtual public meeting have been consolidated and answered by staff below, based on the information presented by the City on November 21. The presentation is available on the Study webpage under "Meetings & Events".

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

General Study and Policies

- ***Are these draft or final documents?***

These are draft documents and subject to Council approval in May 2024. We will continue to collect and consider feedback as the documents are finalized.

- ***The Framework Plan is not dense enough to house 110,000 residents and 47,000 jobs – will the plan be updated?***

The Secondary Plan area is approximately 540 hectares in size. The Framework Plan submitted by CLC and Northcrest Developments is approximately 210 hectares in size and represents much of the vacant lands which are developable within the Secondary Plan area. In addition, there are Wilson South and Allen East Districts which will contribute to the achievement of targets for residents and jobs. The estimated population and jobs were calculated by the City based on the draft densities for the Secondary Plan.

- ***Is a “Neighbourhoods” land use designation better suited for an appropriate transition?***

The Neighbourhoods designation would not allow us to achieve the goal of a mixed use, complete community. The land use designations in the draft Secondary Plan ensure for appropriate transitions, including the Taxiway West District which is a mid-rise neighbourhood that will appropriately transition to adjacent existing neighbourhoods such as Ancaster.

- ***Who will be the tenants of the office spaces? How does the policy accommodate shifts in technology?***

Users (e.g. tenants) are not established at the Secondary Plan scale, rather, we are providing a framework for a variety of employment uses. By not specifying users, the policies in the Secondary Plan offer the flexibility to better accommodate future shifts and changes.

Applicant comment: Northcrest and CLC are interested in building on the already-growing industry and talent, including health sciences and clean technology.

Comments:

- The presentation was informative and great.

Streets & Servicing

- ***I am a resident of the Ancaster community. We want to preserve the level of current traffic and designated street access, and not have more through-traffic. In addition, we are opposed to the proposed Dufferin Street extension.***

As part of the Environmental Assessment (EA), new major streets have been identified and evaluated to provide north/south and east/west connectivity into/out of Downsview. Existing constraints and considerations for the alignment of the major streets include Ancaster neighbourhood, TTC Wilson Yard, and the Department of National Defence Lands. The Dufferin Street extension is not proposed to go through the Ancaster neighbourhood.

If approved by Council in Spring 2024, this work is subject to further stakeholder consultation, more detailed investigation and iteration. Detailed street design and assessment of local traffic impacts will be further analyzed at the District Plan stage and Phases 3 & 4 of the Environmental Assessment.

- ***Will Home Road connect to Dufferin?***

There are no plans to connect Home Road to Dufferin Street for auto use and the existing active connection between Home Road and Beffort Road is proposed to remain.

- ***Has a decision been made on what will happen regarding the Dufferin Street widening?***

No decision has been made regarding the existing Dufferin Street design. Through future work under Phases 3 and 4 of the Environmental Assessment, the team will look at two to four lane streets and consider other factors, such as existing property constraints and plans for transit. Through the Update Downsview Study deliverables, there is direction to ensure that all new streets provide full mobility options, including appropriate space for cyclists and pedestrians.

- ***Will Beffort Road be closed and merged with Dufferin Street?***

The Update Downsview Study work to date recommends that an extension of Dufferin Street is one of two preferred north-south major street alignments. The connection between the existing Beffort Road and a future extended Dufferin Street will be further assessed as part of future work under Phases 3 & 4 of the Environmental Assessment process.

- ***Will there be a connection provided over the GO Rail Line? When are the first active transportation connections expected? The Ancaster neighbourhood is currently disconnected from Downsview Park.***

The Study work recommends two new east-west streets for all travel modes and three new active-only crossings (no vehicles) over the GO Rail Line (See [Map 7-4: Mobility Network](#)). The Taxiway West District (located immediately north of Ancaster neighbourhood) will include connections to Downsview Park and new vehicle and

pedestrian through-connections. The nearest crossings to Ancaster community as recommended by Study work include an active-only crossing connecting the Taxiway West District (Downsview Park Bridge active crossing) and a new Major Street crossing just north of the Taxiway West District (Downsview Park Boulevard extension), in conjunction with the other Major Street and mobility infrastructure.

The details of these connections will be further refined through detailed district planning work and future Phases 3 & 4 of the Environmental Assessment process.

- ***Does the Downsview plan take the Yorkdale proposal and other surrounding developments into consideration? All of these proposals include building more apartments, and there is concern that will result in more congestion.***

As the Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP) Study Area is broader than the Downsview Secondary Plan area, the MESP has taken the Yorkdale Transportation Master Plan and other surrounding proposals into consideration. This includes the Yorkdale pedestrian bridge over Highway 401, public street extensions and networks.

- ***Will there be safe cycling and walking paths connecting Downsview Park to existing neighborhood on the east side of Wilson Heights to Bathurst?***

Yes, a comprehensive mobility network will be integrated throughout the Secondary Plan area. Notably, there will be greenways, safe pedestrian and cyclist routes and crossings, and a dedicated active-mobility corridor through the Green Spine that support connectivity within the eastern portion of the Plan Area. Improved connectivity for active travel modes is a priority of the Secondary Plan work.

- ***How much parking will be provided be capita?***

The City's current By-law has eliminated minimum parking requirements for most uses City-wide, and this By-law is also applicable for the Downsview Secondary Plan area. Parking supply has not been determined at this time and will be further defined during the development application process.

- ***Flooding has occurred on residential streets on the east side of Wilson Heights – better stormwater management and infrastructure is needed.***

A Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP) has been prepared to ensure the proposed development and associated servicing do not have negative impacts on the existing neighbourhoods. The City will review the development applications in multiple stages to ensure the conditions in the existing neighbourhoods are not worsened, if not improved.

In addition, the City's [Basement Flooding Protection Program](#) team has also completed a number of studies in the surrounding areas of Downsview and the proposed solutions are being implemented to mitigate flooding issues.

Comments:

- Dufferin Street is a key access for Ancaster.
- Conduct traffic studies during different times, including weekends and school hours.
- Concerns regarding Regent Road and Ancaster Road.
- Concerns about opening the street network as Ancaster already has traffic congestion. Concerned about the impact on neighbourhood schools, churches, and seniors given the aging population.
- Concern with traffic that may be generated by a new GO Station. Consider having it veer off from the Shell Station, away from Ancaster.
- Current bike lanes are not safe.
- Want to see bicycle and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.

Zoning By-law for Interim Uses

- ***In terms of renewable energy, is there potential for district energy?***

Yes, CLC and Northcrest are exploring opportunities to include district energy. District energy is anticipated through district plans, rather than on an interim basis.

- ***What is the timing and scope of interim uses?***

The uses included in the Zoning By-law focus primarily on the Runway lands. There is potential for certain uses to be present for the 20-25-year interim period until full build-out over 30 years in accordance with the vision of the Secondary Plan.

- ***Who will determine the uses?***

The proposed Zoning By-law for Interim Uses outlines the uses permitted within the Downsview area until the lands are rezoned in the future through District level planning. Landowners and developers are responsible for identifying potential uses based on the City permissions. At present, Northcrest and CLC are involved in identifying potential activations for the lands.

- ***Will the landowners provide any structures long-term?***

Yes, we anticipate certain interim uses will include buildings, which would be subject to site plan approval by the City. Any buildings are not to preclude future development of the lands in accordance with the Secondary Plan. Future development will potentially result in the removal of structures that were initially developed to support interim uses.

- ***Will there be nightclubs? King Street West is a good example.***

Yes, nightclubs are currently proposed as a permitted use in the Zoning By-law. Standards for nightclubs are proposed to reflect the current City-wide review of the

[Night Economy](#). Amendments to the Zoning By-law as part of the Night Economy Review were adopted by [Council](#) on December 13, 2023.

- ***Could unused spaces be used to create interim parks?***

The Zoning By-law proposes to permit parks as a potential use. Once Bombardier departs the lands there will be more opportunities for interim activation.

Applicant comment: Northcrest Developments and CLC are open to receiving suggestions.

- ***Will there only be residential uses or can there be parks and industrial uses?***

The proposed Zoning By-law focuses on uses permitted in the interim years prior to full build-out of the Downsview area. These uses include public parks and certain employment uses. A full suite of uses in accordance with the Secondary Plan, including residential uses, will be permitted through future District-level zoning.

Comments:

- Generally supportive of interim uses.
- I like the idea of community gardens.
- There's a need for performance spaces, and supporting local grassroots arts and creative culture.
- Prioritize the telling of Toronto's story.
- Need to work with artists on activations and interim uses, as well as support informality and creativity.
- Interim activations need to happen more frequently and consistently. For example, Tempelhof Airport in Berlin has activities every weekend.
- Interest in a curling rink as an interim use.

Built Form, Density and Housing

- ***What is the density of these lands, and how do they compare to the waterfront? Will there be tall buildings? What was the rationale for adopting mid-rise typologies with relatively low densities?***

Densities vary across sites based on the site and area context, street network, major parks, and overall developable area. The densities within the Secondary Plan area range from 0 to 3.5 Floor Space Index (FSI). These are comparable to other large-scale, comprehensive redevelopment sites such as the Railway lands, Christie's redevelopment, and large-sites throughout the waterfront.

Based on the area context, modeling, servicing and transportation analysis, and other studies that assess impacts on the public realm, it was determined appropriate for the area to consist of primarily mid-rise buildings that create a more liveable

neighbourhood and provide an appropriate human-scale, with the higher densities of 3.5 FSI and taller building clusters directed closer to transit stations. It should be noted that the densities are 'gross' densities, meaning that it includes lands needed for streets, parks etc., so the densities for individual development sites may be higher once those lands are taken out.

- ***Will there be subsequent changes to building heights?***

The Update Downsview Study deliverables set out the high-level planning framework for the Downsview area, with more specific details regarding block sizes and building heights determined through the District Planning stage. [Map 7-6: Gross Density](#) of the Secondary Plan identifies the densities for each district. Building heights are not defined in the Secondary Plan.

Through the City's planning application process, property owners can submit an application for increased densities in the future, which are above what is permitted in the Secondary Plan, and would be subject to a public process including City review and engagement.

- ***Who will design individual blocks?***

Following adoption of a Secondary Plan there would be subsequent District Plans and development applications required. Specific development partners are not known at this point. The selected development and design teams (e.g. planners, architects) for development block(s) will be responsible for designing the specific parcels within blocks based on the Secondary Plan policies and Urban Design Guidelines.

- ***What is the status of the Allen East District?***

The District Plan for Allen East was endorsed by Council in 2021 and assumed continuation of the Downsview airport. The draft Secondary Plan proposes increased densities to the District Plan to reflect the comprehensive planning for the broader Secondary Plan Area. Future development applications are required for development of the Allen East District, which will include a public process.

- ***What is anticipated south of Wilson Avenue, within the Downsview Secondary Plan area?***

The lands immediately south of Wilson Avenue were recently approved for an employment conversion by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Secondary Plan includes policies which speak to these lands, including the gross density, green space provision and mobility routes, and a District Plan would be required to outline more detailed plans for the area.

- ***How is Canada Lands Company responding to Minister Duclos' new minimum target for housing, which requires 20% of housing units to be affordable?***

Canada Lands Company (CLC) is committed to delivering a range of housing in Downsview including affordable housing and recognizes the importance of all partners contributing to the solution.

- ***Will particular industrial uses within the lands be maintained? Are you considering the industrial history of the area?***

The Secondary Plan includes a requirement for 1 million square metres of non-residential uses, with at least half dedicated for office and light manufacturing uses. The Secondary Plan and Community Development Plan collectively encourage a variety of employment uses, including manufacturing, arts, and creative culture. The Secondary Plan cannot maintain the presence of specific users, but includes land use designations and policies to ensure they are permitted and that employment-only lands are protected.

- ***In Europe, particularly France, housing is mixed with employment lands. Is this being considered for this Plan?***

European precedents have been considered through the development of the Update Downsview deliverables, including the Urban Design Guidelines. Most of the land within the Secondary Plan area is designated as mixed use, which allows for both housing and employment as well as opportunities for other services, facilities and amenities.

- ***Are there any designated historical sites within the Downsview area that need to be preserved? Will there be a museum commemorating the history of the site?***

The draft Secondary Plan includes policies for identifying and protecting cultural heritage resources. The City will continue to monitor and evaluate the historic potential of the site, particularly at the District Planning stage. The Urban Design Guidelines identify potential opportunities to commemorate and preserve the history of the lands (past, present, and future).

Parks and Community Facilities

- ***What are the anticipated recreation uses to be provided? How many parks will there be? Will the Plan include an outdoor swimming pool and playground?***

The Update Downsview Study deliverables set out the high-level planning framework, with a focus on key structural elements. The draft Secondary Plan requires 40 hectares of new parks and open spaces, which includes a minimum of 14 hectares of designated *Parks* through eight new Major Parks. The number and location of smaller local parks will be determined at the District Plan stage.

The draft Secondary Plan identifies the anticipated need for two or more community recreation centres to support the growth in the Secondary Plan area. Additional park-based recreational facilities will be provided, but we are not able to identify the

types of facilities at this stage in the planning process. Overall, the Plan Area will comprise a variety of parks and open spaces that are programmed to support the needs of the community. Further public consultation, studies and park design processes will take place in the future to determine the facilities needed.

- ***Is there a plan to upgrade existing facilities within the southern portion of the lands, such as the Ancaster Community Centre, which is small and requires upgrades? Is the new density taken into account when considering the size of the Ancaster Community Centre?***

Although the Ancaster neighbourhood is situated outside of the Downsview Secondary Plan boundary and therefore not subject to the policies or objectives of this Plan, the City's Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) division has a 10-year capital plan which identifies capital required for repairs and upgrades within existing City facilities. In addition, the City is initiating its review of the Facilities Master Plan (FMP), which is updated every 5 years to reflect changes throughout the City. The FMP review is a public process and subject to engagement with communities to understand concerns and identify future needs. The FMP review will take the updated planning framework for Downsview into account as well as the Capital Budget, which governs facility improvements.

The 2+ new Community Recreation Centres identified for Downsview are intended to service the new population.

- ***Are there any proposals or plans for the community centres? When will the new Community Recreation Centre be open and operating?***

City staff have determined that two or more Community Recreation Centres (CRCs) will be required to service the anticipated population. The Downsview CRC planned at Keele and Sheppard is anticipated to be the first to open, with a second CRC to be located near one of the TTC subway stations (i.e. Sheppard West or Wilson).

While there are no details on the community centres at this time, it is anticipated that they will be large, multi-use facilities that reflect the needs of future communities, as well as co-locate community facilities and services where possible (e.g. childcare, library). There will be further public consultation to obtain community feedback and input on CRCs in the future.

- ***Will the size of Downsview Park change?***

No, Downsview Park will not change in size and no development is planned for the park.

- ***What is the anticipated amount of community space and child care centres for current and future residents?***

Through the draft Secondary Plan there is a requirement for a minimum of 930 square metres community space to be provided per district to support reduced rent for non-profits. This policy will also help implement some Community Development Plan actions which refer to community and recreational programming.

Approximately 22-35 child care centres are estimated based on the anticipated population.

- ***There are many school boards, such as TDSB, TCDSB, and French schools. How does the one Secondary School anticipated serve all boards?***

There are four school boards within Toronto. The number of students per elementary school tends to be approximately 600 pupils, with approximately 1200 pupils per secondary school. At this point in the planning process, TDSB is the only school board that has identified a need for a Secondary School.

Given that the proposed development is a 30-year build out, estimates are subject to change and school boards will continue to be engaged with to monitor and identify needs.

Comments:

- Concerned about increased traffic impact on playgrounds and other community amenities.
- I have to go south of Lawrence to access an outdoor swimming pool. Would like to see something closer to the Ancaster community.
- Preference for the location of the second CRC to be near Wilson, close to Ancaster community.

Community Development Plan (CDP)

- ***How are we ensuring the long-term sustainability of the CDP? How are we reporting back to community and keeping track of progress?***

Through the engagement process, City staff are currently seeking feedback on the implementation structure, which includes how we report back and track progress.

- ***Downsview provides an opportunity to become a hub for arts and culture, and this should be an important component of the CDP. Is this being taken into account?***

Arts, Heritage and Education is one of the eight priorities established for the CDP, with various draft actions that can support Downsview becoming a hub for arts and culture. In addition, the CDP and Secondary Plan support the provision of below market rent community spaces, which could enable the presence of more social services, arts and culture uses.

- ***What will reporting back look like?***

The CDP that is presented to Council in 2024 will include a framework for implementation, including monitoring and reporting. The CDP will undergo a regular refresh through engagement with the community and other stakeholders to ensure it reflects the changing needs of Downsview.

We continue to encourage and seek feedback from community members to understand what they would like to see in terms of reporting back.

- ***What equity lens is being applied? It should be a critical priority.***

The Secondary Plan outlines the new vision for the area, which is guided by two overarching goals, including “Achieving equitable outcomes for Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving groups”. This goal represents a city-wide approach to looking at equity and is applied deeply through the CDP process, which has engaged with Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving groups to determine CDP priorities and actions.

- ***How do the eight CDP priorities work together?***

Many of the priorities and associated actions are inter-related and support one another. Crossover may happen through the implementation stage as well. For example, some actions related to the “Access to Healthy and Affordable Foods” priority will cross over with actions within the “Environment” priority.

- ***Are there any governance lessons from Regent Park that might be applicable?***

Through the Social Development Plan (SDP) process in Regent Park, we learned about the idea of a refresh. It is important to note things change, so incorporating a ‘refresh’ through the CDP process is important. There were also lessons learned regarding community structures, ranging from advisory circles to broader committees. We are looking at all governance and implementation structures as part of establishing an implementation framework for the Downsview CDP.

Comments:

- Implementation structure should be included in the report to City Council. This will provide political support and further backing of CDP.
- Emphasize the importance of community involvement in the CDP implementation structure.
- Want to hear on progress as different phases come forward on a yearly basis. Maybe tracking per individual strategies. Particularly the workforce actions would relate to the Community Benefits Framework. Whether apprenticeships or pre-apps.
- The emphasis on arts and culture in Downsview will make the difference between a great neighbourhood and an excellent neighbourhood.
- Activation of the Downsview lands should be done in partnership with local artists.
- Artists will have an important role throughout redevelopment. We should be striving to enable an organic artistic culture to evolve.

- Participants expressed that they would be happy with a community reporting-back structure that includes annual reporting or reporting after each district's phases.
- Want to make sure we look back on what was accomplished before we go forward.
- The strategy should be developed and approved with community for each CDP action.
- Would like to see more for equity-deserving communities and organizations that prioritize services for them.
- Great to see artists generate revitalization beyond the Downsview area. Artists usually get pushed out in Downtown. It is rare to see opportunities to impact city building.

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.