



UPDATE >>>> **DOWNSVIEW**

Taxiway West District Community Consultation Meeting #1

Meeting Summary

February 13, 2024, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Ancaster Community Centre, 41 Ancaster Road

*Report prepared by City Planning
City of Toronto*

Attendees

Public Participants

Approximately 97 members of the public attended, including 81 registrants, 6 people accompanying registrants, and 10 protestors.

City of Toronto

Councillor James Pasternak	Ward 6: York Centre
Akheim Cooke	Ward 6: York Centre
Phyllis Arturi	Ward 6: York Centre
Sophie Knowles	Community Planning (Chairperson)
Shelly Cham	Community Planning
Ben DiRaimo	Community Planning
Sarah Phipps	Strategic Initiatives
PC Wasserman	Urban Design
Andrew Au	Transportation Planning
Justin Shin	Transportation Planning
Edward Presta	Transportation Services

Applicant

Arleigh Hack	Northcrest
Chris Eby	Northcrest
Peter Maleganovski	Northcrest
Aytakin Mohammadi	Northcrest
Meg Black	Northcrest
Yulia Pak	Third Party Public
Matthew Wheatley	Third Party Public

Background

The Taxiway West District is 1 of 15 districts identified in the Downsview Secondary Plan for more detailed planning. The Taxiway West District is 40.9 hectares (101 acres) and is located between the Park Commons and Ancaster community. The lands are owned by PSPIB Downsview Investments Inc (“PSP”).

Northcrest Developments (“Northcrest”), a subsidiary of PSP, submitted a District Plan and associated Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision applications to the City of Toronto on May 16, 2022, to re-develop the Taxiway West District. Revised applications were submitted on July 7, 2023. The Community Consultation Meeting held on February 13, 2024, engaged community members and interested parties to hear their feedback about the second submission of the Taxiway West District Plan and associated applications.

The Taxiway West District has been divided into two sub-districts for planning purposes. Community Consultation Meeting #1 focused on the South Sub-district which is 22.8 hectares (56 acres) in the southern portion of the District.

Notification Area

Approximately 1,500 notices were mailed to interested parties as well as residents and landowners in the area bound by Stanley Greene Boulevard to the west, Downsview Park and the Northcrest/Bombardier Airport lands to the north and east, and Wilson Avenue to the south. Most people who attended were residents from the Ancaster community.

Meeting Agenda

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.	Open House
6:30 and 7:30 p.m.*	Presentations and Question-and-Answer (Q&A)

*The agenda was amended from two separate presentations to a single presentation due to an unexpected protest by approximately 10 people. The protest was against rent increases at 71, 75, and 79 Thorncliffe Park Drive which are owned by PSP Investments, the parent company of Northcrest. After the protesters left, the meeting resumed with the applicant’s presentation, followed by the Q&A period.

Community Feedback

Feedback has been grouped into themes below. The Q&A period is summarized in Appendix 1.

Traffic Connections to Ancaster Neighbourhood

Participants expressed strong concerns about the potential for increased traffic through the Ancaster neighbourhood due to the proposed development. Residents petitioned to keep Ancaster Road, Home Road, Powell Road, and Maniza Road closed to vehicle traffic from the Taxiway West District to maintain the quiet, low-traffic neighbourhood.

Residents were particularly concerned about the impact of increased traffic on pedestrians on Ancaster Road due to the school, park, community centre, and daycare on this street. Some people preferred that the cul-de-sac streets adjacent to Beffort Road and Hanover Roads should be closed to traffic. One resident suggested creating a by-pass road around the Ancaster neighbourhood to prevent through traffic.

Generally, participants supported maintaining connections between Ancaster Road and Taxiway West for active transportation (cycling and walking).

Dufferin Extension and Major Streets

Residents were concerned about possible traffic, noise, and pollution impacts from the proposed Dufferin Street Extension on the Ancaster community. Some participants asked why the proposed Dufferin Street Extension is not a north-south street. There were also questions about the road design and number of lanes proposed for the Dufferin Street Extension.

Alternative suggestions included having one major north-south street (instead of two) located to the east of the runway (Billy Bishop Way), moving the proposed major streets further east and directing Dufferin Street east by expropriating the service station, or using the Barrie GO corridor for a new major street.

People were interested in the phasing of Downsview Park Boulevard and Northern East West Street in the draft Downsview Secondary Plan.

Traffic Impacts on Surrounding Area

Participants asked about possible traffic impacts from other developments beyond Downsview, such as Yorkdale. There was also concern that additional traffic from the Taxiway West District could worsen congestion on surrounding major streets, particularly at the intersection of Keele and Wilson accessing Highway 401. It was suggested that a second left turn lane may address additional traffic. Another suggestion was to consider a Sheppard West subway extension.

Construction Impacts

Participants advocated to reduce possible construction impacts and were interested in strategies to minimize traffic, noise, and dust from construction activities. They requested a contact person who they could call for construction-related issues. There

was a suggestion for a short-term road connection from Taxiway West to Allan Road or Transit Road to minimize construction traffic impacts on the Ancaster community. Northcrest seemed amenable to this idea.

Active Transportation

Participants supported active transportation improvements and proposed cycling routes. There were requests for additional cycling routes (Street “D”). People preferred that cycling infrastructure be physically protected instead of painted road lines and asked about connections to cycling infrastructure beyond the Secondary Plan area.

Accessibility

Participants advocated for accessible community design, particularly to support people with physical disabilities as well as to provide active mobility and exercise opportunities for seniors. Suggestions included exploring covered walkways and providing seating and rest stops.

Density

Some people suggested that the proposed density was too high and should be reduced. There was a question about the distribution of density within the Downsview Secondary Plan area and why the proposed density for Taxiway West was lower than the Runway South District.

Building Heights

Some participants requested a more gradual transition in building heights from the low-rise Ancaster neighbourhood to the Taxiway West District. There were suggestions that building heights (10-11 storeys) adjacent to the Ancaster community should be reduced and that 14-storey buildings be located in other districts, away from the Ancaster community. Shadowing and privacy impacts were concerns.

Housing

Participants suggested increasing the proportion of 2+ bedroom units from 40% to 50 or 60%. There were questions about seniors housing and retirement homes as well as affordable housing types and funding.

Community Services and Facilities

Participants advocated for proactive investments in community service facilities, particularly school planning, to support the projected population growth.

Community Engagement

Participants appreciated the in-person meeting and the mailed meeting invitations. They expressed a desire to be involved in the development review process. People requested a larger venue for future meetings and requested that the Q&A discussions be made publicly available. Participants asked how decisions about the development will be made and how community input will be used in the decision-making process.

Other Comments

Participants would like to know what historical buildings or portions of buildings will be maintained.

Participants suggested that new residents could support businesses along Wilson Avenue as some businesses on Wilson Avenue have closed with Bombardier moving.

There was a question regarding when and why the Murray District was added to the Secondary Plan.

There was a question about what environmental studies have been completed that consider impacts from the site's former industrial use.

Appendix 1: Q&A Discussion Summary

This summary of the Q&A discussion is not a verbatim transcript but is intended to provide a high-level record of questions, comments, and answers from the meeting.

Road Network and Traffic

1. **Question:** Why are two major roads parallel to the runway? One arterial road on the east side of the runway may be sufficient. Can more information about the design of major streets be provided? Are these north-south major streets proposed to have four lanes or two lanes?

Answer: New streets are required to service the planned growth throughout the Downsview area. One north-south road will be four lanes and the other road will be two lanes. The next phases of the Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP) will determine the right-of-way widths of these two major streets and investigate alternative alignments. Traffic, noise, and pollution concerns will be evaluated through the next phase of the MESP work.

2. **Question:** (The speaker read a petition signed by more than 500 people). We are concerned about safety, traffic, and pollution that may result from the Dufferin Extension. We do not want existing dead-end roads to be opened to vehicles from the new development, but active mobility connections are okay. The existing access to the new development should stay the same – Beffort Road, Garratt Boulevard, and Murray Road. We want mitigation measures implemented on these access routes. We do not support the Dufferin Extension. We suggest either one major road on Billy Bishop or two roads to connect east of the Dufferin and Wilson intersection.

The Ancaster community is arguably the existing residential area that is the most impacted by the Downsview development. We request that the City of Toronto, the developer, and the Councillor listen to the community and implement the necessary measures to protect it.

Answer: The City has policies to create a fine-grained local public street network to provide equitable transportation choices, comfort, and connectivity. We heard the concerns from the community and are looking to create a balanced street network that maintains some of the dead-ends but still provides access to new residents. All proposed new streets will comply with the City's Complete Streets Guidelines that aim to accommodate all road users and enhance the local neighbourhood context and character. The City will ensure that emergency vehicles and transit buses can operate efficiently to serve both the Ancaster community and Taxiway West District.

City staff were directed by City Council to study the location of the Dufferin Extension north of Wilson Avenue and the design of Dufferin Street as part of the Phase 3-4 Environmental Assessment Study. Staff are currently working on further analysis and will incorporate local feedback as well as technical components such as traffic impacts on the local and major street networks, noise and air quality, and street network, transit and active transportation connectivity. The City will hold a

public meeting in Spring 2025 to present City staff recommendations on the alignment of Dufferin, the intersection design of Billy Bishop Way and Transit Road at Wilson Avenue, and the location of the dedicated north-south bus lanes, either on Dufferin Street or Billy Bishop Way.

- 3. Question:** There is concern about people from the new development accessing the highway because existing routes are already congested. Keele Street is at maximum, Allan Road is poorly designed, and Bathurst Street has no highway access. Wilson Avenue will be the most used, but there is a train crossing and the western portion has been closed during past flooding events. What traffic studies have been completed? Where will the traffic flow?

Answer: Traffic impacts for the broader Downsview area have been studied as part of the Secondary Plan and Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP). The MESP identified two new major east-west streets and two new major north-south streets. The Taxiway West District application is for a small portion of the larger Downsview area. The applicant has submitted a Transportation Impact Study that will be used to study traffic impacts on the local community and identify the local street network.

- 4. Comment:** There is support for the proposed development, but we want to ensure traffic from the new development does not disrupt the Ancaster community. We want to keep Ancaster as a quiet neighbourhood. We support connections at Garratt Boulevard and suggest opening Murray Road. Keep the dead-end streets that are east of Garratt Boulevard.
- 5. Question:** How did you decide to open Ancaster and Home Road to traffic? This will impact residents on these streets. Could other roads outside of Ancaster be used now and, if you have to open roads in the future, open them at that time. We support these road connections if they are only open to bikes. We are concerned that Ancaster, Powell, and Home Road will be flooded with cars.

Answer: The concern about traffic infiltration into the Ancaster community was recognized as a theme of this evening. This feedback was recorded.

- 6. Question:** I understand that part of the Yorkdale development is to straighten Caledonia Road and connect it to Murray Road. Has an alternative been considered to expropriate industrial lands next to the rail tracks to build an arterial road that connects to Murray Road and travels up to Sheppard instead of having two major streets on the east side? I would prefer a major road on each side.

Answer: As part of the Yorkdale Transportation Master Plan, a recommendation was made to extend Caledonia to Wilson and Murray. Property owners were engaged and informed that property would be required. The plan is to deliver this road in 10-20 years, and an environmental assessment needs to be completed.

Sheppard West Subway Extension

- 7. Question:** Will the Sheppard West subway extension be considered as part of this development?

Answer: There is coordination happening as part of the Secondary Plan. The Sheppard West transit expansion was considered as part of the MESP. City staff are working with Metrolinx to advance this work.

Cycling Infrastructure

- 8. Question:** I am a cyclist who bikes a lot. I typically ride on sidewalks which is not very safe. How will you protect cyclists? We want more than painted lines. There appears to be only one cycling route proposed, but there should be more.

Answer: Cycling and active mobility is a big theme of the MESP. The detailed designs are still being developed. The proposed cycling route within Taxiway West District will connect to other new cycling routes in the Secondary Plan area. An active mobility-only bridge across the GO Barrie line will connect the Taxiway West District with other Downsview lands to create a larger network. The cycling network in Taxiway West is still under review. On the east side of the Downsview Secondary Plan area, there will be a “bike highway” stretching from Wilson to Sheppard as part of a protected cycling network.

Pedestrian Comfort

- 9. Question:** We are glad to see there are walkable spaces. Have any spaces been considered as covered walkways to the subway, for transportation but also to promote walking?

Answer: Covered walkways have not been considered yet. The applicant is looking at interim mobility strategies for the runway and Taxiway West District. Covered walkways are an interesting suggestion.

Accessibility

- 10. Question:** We want to see physical accessibility and seating along walking areas. How is accessibility being addressed through the application?

Answer: The applicant has engaged an accessibility consultant. Regular rest stops and amenities along sidewalks and public spaces are being considered that can serve people of all ages and abilities. There are no detailed designs yet, but feedback is welcome. All new development and City infrastructure is required to be compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Density

- 11. Question:** What is the population density for the Taxiway West District? There are 2,850 dwelling units proposed in the submission, but I calculated the density to be 14,000 people per square kilometre based on an assumed 3 people per unit.

Answer: The entire Taxiway West District is proposed to have a Floor Space Index (FSI) of 1.2 with the South Sub-district having an FSI of 1.6. Approximately 5,000 residents and 7,000 jobs are proposed. Staff will calculate the population and job density per kilometre.

12. Question: There are proposed to be about 2 dozen buildings and 2,850 residential units. Are there less dense alternatives being considered?

Answer: Density will be distributed appropriately throughout the 370-acre site. This district is proposed to be the lowest density district. This is one of the last big pieces of land in the City which is why there are so many City departments working to find the right balance of densities. The project team can look further into the transition of the built form from the district to the existing community but the overall density is not likely to be reduced. Housing is critical.

Building Height

13. Question: Building heights at the end of Home Road and Powell Road have increased from 4 storeys to around 10.5 storeys. The land is zoned as Commercial Residential. The only area with residential zoning is the townhouses at the north end of Powell.

Answer: The zone types will be further reviewed through the application process.

14. Question: Are there options for low-rise buildings along the Ancaster edge?

Answer: Yes, there can be lower buildings closer to the neighbourhood that transition to higher buildings.

15. Comment: There is a 10-storey building proposed next to a 4-storey building near Home Road. Including the roof and mechanical it seems like 15 storeys. A gradual transition of building heights would be better.

16. Question: Where is the 14-storey building proposed?

Answer: The 14-storey buildings are proposed at the northeast part of the Taxiway West South Sub-district.

17. Question: Why are the 10-storey buildings and 14-storey buildings proposed in this district? They are overshadowing homes. Put tall buildings in other districts further away from the Ancaster community.

Answer: There is a Shadow Study that shows there is very limited shadow impact on the Ancaster community with buildings of this height. The current renderings are not the final plan. Building heights and road designs are still being adjusted.

18. Question: I understand that the maximum building heights are informed by the right-of-way of the street. Is the width of streets on the table?

Answer: Yes, building heights and right-of-way widths are on the table.

Housing Mix

19. Question: 40% of the units are proposed to have 2 or 3 bedrooms, but if we want to build a family-friendly community, maybe we should increase the proportion of larger units to be 50, 60, or 65%.

Answer: A 40% proportion of multi-bedroom units is above the City's minimum standard in the Growing Up Guidelines. This application and the draft Downsview Secondary Plan exceed the City-wide standard for unit type.

20. Question: How much land is allocated for retirement homes?

Answer: There are currently no specific numbers for seniors housing. The neighbourhood design will consider the needs for people at all ages. The community agency spaces could include services that cater to seniors, such as a senior's centre.

Schools

21. Question: What is the plan for schools in the new development? Is there a plan for Ancaster Public School and St. Norbert Catholic School?

Answer: The application has been circulated to all public school boards. The TDSB has indicated that there is sufficient capacity within local TDSB elementary and secondary schools to serve the estimated children in the Taxiway West District. The TCDSB has indicated that there is not sufficient capacity in local Catholic schools. The school boards have been engaged in the Downsview Secondary Plan, which identified the need for 13 new elementary schools and 1 secondary school. Taxiway West is not targeted for a new school at this time, but pupil accommodation across the broader area is being considered and reviewed by the school boards.

Environmental Site Assessment

22. Question: Have there been any environmental studies completed? What is the environmental condition of the lands given the site's long industrial and aviation history?

Answer: The applicant shared that multiple environmental studies have been completed. Considering the site's industrial history, this is a clean site. There are some spots with salt from salting the runway and roads, and some jet fuel spills, but Bombardier has done a good job remediating these areas. So far, nothing has been found that would constrain development. If additional contaminants are found, the risks will be dealt with. A peer review of an Environmental Site Assessment and filing a Record(s) of Site Condition under Ontario Regulation (O.Reg.) 153/04 will be required to confirm that all regulatory requirements are met prior to redevelopment.

Construction Impacts

23. Question: How will the disruption, particularly traffic disruption, from this development and other developments to the south (Yorkdale) be managed during the transitional time over the next 25 years? For example, the Eglinton LRT has been very disruptive for many years. We support the end goal but are concerned that the long-term disruptions will outweigh the benefits.

Answer: Applicants are required to submit construction management plans as part of the site plan application process which will deal with traffic mitigation. The broader area was studied as part of the Secondary Plan and Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP). The MESP identifies transportation investments that are required to support the development. This area is served by three major transit stations. Lower parking rates are being considered to reduce traffic demands.

24. Question: Community members previously met with Bombardier to discuss mitigating noise from snow removal and other non-aviation noise. Will there be time curfews for construction? A lot of us have Bombardier executives' contacts to call them when there are noise complaints. What are you going to do about the noise? Will there be someone who residents can contact?

Answer: Developers are required to comply with City-wide noise by-laws. The construction management plans will include measures to minimize and mitigate noise to a feasible degree. Construction will only happen during the day. Following Bombardier's departure on April 1, 2024, you can contact Northcrest with any noise concerns. There will also be an office on-site.

25. Question: Can there be a separate road connection in the short-term during construction (from Allan Road or Transit Road) so that construction workers will not travel through the Ancaster neighbourhood? Where will construction workers park?

Answer: There will be an access road through Allan Road to keep as many vehicles as possible out of the Ancaster community. Construction workers will park on-site.

Engagement

26. Question: Tonight's session was well attended because we received mailed invitations. We appreciate the meeting format and the opportunity for everybody to ask direct questions. What would be your advice as a community member to stay up to date? How can others who are not here tonight stay informed?

Answer: To stay informed with the City's development review processes, it is important to identify yourself as an interested party by signing into this meeting. You can also sign up as an interested party for the Update Downsview Secondary Plan Study and subscribe to the study's e-updates. You can call or email the contacts on the project webpages as well as the Ward 6 Councillor. There is information on the City of Toronto's website and the Ward 6 website. There will also be more engagement events.

The applicant will start a newsletter that will be emailed and they will knock on doors to leave mail. Additionally, there will be an in-person office opened on the site in May or June where there will be someone to answer questions.

27. Question: Can you book the gym next time?

Answer: Staff acknowledge that this is a small space. We planned for an agenda with two presentation sessions, but unfortunately this was not possible. The meeting was hosted here because the gym was not available and it was important to have an in-person meeting in the Ancaster community with the local councillor, before the applicant makes their next submission.

28. Question: Is this the only community consultation meeting for this district or will the City be holding more meetings?

Answer: There will be at least one more City-held meeting for this district prior to Council's decision. There are different processes taking place so the timing of the next meeting will be flexible, depending on Council's decision and depending on the next submission. Feedback about the format is welcome. City Planning staff are available to talk and meet with groups outside of these formal consultations.

29. Question: How will feedback be used? What is the impact of the feedback received by the City, for example, if 90% of people say they want this or do not want that, how is the feedback weighed?

Answer: Staff recommendations and Council decisions need to conform with the provincial Growth Plan and be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. Decisions are based on this policy framework, the site context, case law, and precedents as well as feedback from City departments, agencies, and the public. Community input is very important.

Governance of Northcrest

30. Question: Is Northcrest part of the federal government?

Answer: No, Northcrest is owned by a pension fund for the federal public service, military, and RCMP but is not part of the federal government.

Approval Process

31. Question: What are you approving in May 2024?

Answer: In May 2024, the draft Downsview Secondary Plan is proceeding to Council for a decision. Items related specifically to this district as part of the Secondary Plan include: a density of 1.2 FSI, Major Streets (e.g. Dufferin Street), minimum non-residential Gross Floor Area for jobs and economic development, a requirement for 40% 2- and 3-bedroom units, community services and facilities (min. 1 daycare, min. of 10,000 square feet of community agency space).