

On Thursday, July 8, 2021, approximately 114 people participated in the first of two Round 3 Virtual Townhalls hosted by Northcrest Developments and Canada Lands Company as part of the id8 Downsview public engagement process. Participants included members of the public and the project team (representatives of Northcrest and Canada Lands and their consultants from Urban Strategies Inc., Henning Larsen, and SLA Architects), as well as Toronto City Councillor James Pasternak who represents Ward 6 York Centre. A recording of this public session and a copy of the presentation are available at www.id8downsview.ca.

This Virtual Townhall was held online using Zoom video conferencing software and included opening remarks from Councillor Pasternak (enclosed), a presentation overview of the vision and the emerging ideas for the future of the site, followed by a facilitated discussion period open to all participants. Participants also shared comments and questions in the Zoom chat and are included in this summary. Answers to the chat questions not already answered verbally during the meeting will be provided in a separate document and posted on the project website.

The meeting was facilitated and documented by Swerhun Inc. As facilitators that are not advocating for any particular outcome of this project, the intent is to capture the perspectives shared during the discussion, not to assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives. This summary does not indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Northcrest or Canada Lands.

This summary was subject to participant review prior to being finalized. If you have any questions about what's here, please contact the id8 Downsview team at info@id8downsview.ca.

id8 Downsview

Round 3 Virtual Townhall

Thursday, July 8, 2021, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Overall sentiment

- Many participants expressed support and excitement for the presented vision and ideas, calling it “grand”, “ambitious”, “impressive” and commending the team for the quality of work. In particular, there was support for the green connections, the addition of 100 acres of new green space, connections across the rail, and mixed-income housing.
- Some were cautiously optimistic, reminding the team of the history of broken promises in the area and the importance of working together with the community.
- A few were skeptical, expressing concerns over already gridlocked streets and the loss of the greenery due to development in the past.
- Participants asked a range of questions, shared considerable advice, and suggested many new ideas, including reflecting the history and representation of Indigenous peoples and the heritage of family farming; incorporating lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic; and adding community pools and arts and culture venues.

Detailed feedback

This summary reflects the feedback shared by participants. When Northcrest, Canada Lands, and/or their consultants responded to questions or offered comments, those responses are written in *italics*.

Continue preserving Downsview Park and design open spaces using lessons learned from the pandemic.

- **What is the relationship between Downsview Park and this work? Will there be encroachment on Downsview Park that people enjoy today?**

Downsview Park is outside of the study area. The size of Downsview Park is not changing. The 100 acres of new green space that we are planning to add is in addition to Downsview Park. We value the park as the heart of community. One of the goals of this plan is to facilitate

better connections, so it will make east-west connections easier and create pedestrian and alternative mobility across the rail. Downsview Park will be better knitted into the existing communities.

- **It is important to incorporate all the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly around open spaces and public amenities.**

What we learned from this pandemic is that we need healthy cities that can support healthy daily life through healthy daily activities. We also need spaces to separate ourselves to prevent transmissions. We know that the pandemic has hit poor people harder than the rich, older people harder than younger. We also know that the pandemic has reintroduced fear in the urban realm and took it in a wrong direction. That is why it is important for us to use values to build a place that is democratic, with green open spaces where people can behave equally. We believe a city-nature approach can be a good solution for the future.

The connection over the rail is great. Ensure new connections support existing businesses.

- **The approach to connecting the area over the rail line is very impressive.** It is clear that the project team has heard loud and clear over the last two rounds of consultation that the rail line is a big challenge for the community and park users. If realized the way it is imagined, it would be a big win for the community and this development.
- **Are there any roads between Keele Street and Dufferin Street that will allow people from new developments to access Wilson Avenue and patronize local businesses?**

The new one we are working on is the Dufferin extension. There are also existing streets, like Garratt Boulevard, that connect north-south from Wilson to the Hanger. We also welcome sitting down with local businesses to discuss how these new developments could benefit local businesses – it's really important for us.

- **How are you planning to treat the rail connection?**

The rail is going to stay where it is. Metrolinx is planning to double track the Barrie Corridor. Our plan is to go under the rail to enable the connections that need to happen.

- **Ensure that the noise from the GO train does not interfere with people's enjoyment of the area.** For example, the rendering shows the balcony overlooking the courtyard right next to the rail line.

Ensure new and redeveloped spaces for businesses and jobs serve existing communities and users.

- **Ensure that the use of the Depot, where many immigrants come to get affordable and culturally appropriate food, is not lost through the upmarket treatment.** Consider repurposing the Depot into the community garden with a vending space to sell produce from the community garden. This area is designated a food desert by Toronto Environmental Alliance and Unison Health Network.
- **Where will the new film studios be built?**

Directly north of the existing Bombardier buildings and directly south of the existing sports

fields in the Park Commons. We are also just about to make an application for a site plan, so there is still a process to go through.

- **Is the plan so far to keep the track and soccer fields?**

Yes, the plan is to keep them. They are actually north of the study boundary, so they will be unaffected and retained.

- **What is the plan for the Centennial College Aerospace Campus?** They opened only two years ago with millions in donations and federal contributions, including a jet aeroplane and a helicopter. What is the contractual relationship between Centennial College and the runway? What repercussions will the public face when these ties are severed?

Centennial College's tenure on our lands will not be affected by these plans. They have a multi-decade tenure, and they are part of the Park Commons area, which is outside of the study area. They do not operate the jet, so they will not need the runway.

Certain infrastructure needs to be built first. To support new developments and more people coming to the area, certain infrastructure needs to be built first, including:

- **The extension of Dufferin Street up to Chesswood Drive.** Allen Road and Keele Street are heavily used. Emergency vehicles are forced to drive on sidewalks to get through the traffic, especially on Keele Street and Wilson Avenue. Consider at least five lanes of road, as two lanes will not be sufficient to move the traffic.

The presented map is focused on the major roads, not a reflection of the entire road network that will be built overtime. As we go neighbourhood by neighbourhood, we will look at smaller streets. We know that traffic is a major concern in the area. Part of the Secondary Plan process will include a traffic study. We will work with technical consultants and City staff looking at the road cross-sections to determine the appropriate width.

- **The community centre.** This area is lacking community services and facilities, including day cares and schools, especially west of Keele Street. This new community centre with the new community services is important.

We are actively supporting the City in looking for infrastructure funding for the community centre. We are also looking at ways to mobilize our resources to help make it a success. Canada Lands has identified the corner of Keele Street and Sheppard Avenue as a place for the community centre. It is going to take a lot of work to see it realized but everyone is pointing at that direction.

Councillor Pasternak added: *There have been active conversations around it, and when the federal and the provincial funding will become available, the City of Toronto will put this community centre at the top of the list. There is enormous competition for these funds across the province, but we are fully committed to getting it done. Section 37 from the development will also be directed at the community centre. Building a community centre usually costs \$65-\$85million, and we are going to fight very hard for it in partnership with Canada Lands that is supplying the land and Northcrest that is supplying some of the money.*

- Sewers need to be built.
- Pedestrian east-west path to the transit station.

Bombardier will be operation on the site until the end of 2023. We cannot start doing anything until after that. We would like to get these kinds of pieces of infrastructure to get installed in the early days. We are still figuring out when exactly. There is an existing Secondary Plan. Nothing can be changed until we get the new Secondary Plan and that's the application we are submitting to the City in the fall. This application is only the start of the process. There will be many months of collaboration with the community and City staff to make sure that this plan meets the needs of the stakeholders. Once we have a proper plan in place, there will be more opportunities to get more feedback from everyone through the statutory process.

Recognize, reflect, and incorporate the history of people on these lands.

- **It is important to have Indigenous presence and voices on this site and reflect the history of Indigenous peoples on these lands.**

We are engaging multiple Indigenous communities through robust and diverse Indigenous consultation. We have been working directly with the Rights Holders, which include the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Six Nations of the Grand River, and the Huron-Wendat Nation, as well as with the Metis Nation of Ontario and with urban Indigenous communities -- Indigenous friendship centres, and Indigenous-serving and Indigenous-led agencies and organizations. On July 14th, we will be holding an Indigenous Sharing Meeting specifically for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities. We want to create space that reflects the history and the living culture of Indigenous peoples, with commemoration and celebration of Indigenous Ways of Being and Indigenous Ways of Knowing. It is especially important these days, when the first female National Chief of Assembly of First Nations has just been elected, and now that we are starting to remember the truth of residential schools. There are a lot of stories to tell, to tell that truth and to reflect it in the landscapes of Downsview.

- **Recognize the history and legacy of family farming.** Remember that this area was all farming lands. Lots of families lived here and had family farms, and a lot of people lost their homes at the start of the change in the 1950s. The new community centre could be a place for this recognition. Also, to the architects working on this project – think huge barns!

Continue thinking about sustainability and biodiversity.

- **Real concern about climate change and heat domes.** Heat dome happened in Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Norway. We need to start thinking how to protect community as a community asset.
- **How do you ensure that wildlife is not affected and protected?**

One thing that matters a lot for biodiversity is connectivity; and that goes completely hand-in-hand with our strategy of the green network. We are inspired by Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy, and we are working with our biologists and some of you in the community to think about how to preserve habitat. We are trying to achieve a balance between development and nature by embedding values in our development strategies. Green infrastructure is also about respecting biodiversity and wildlife when we start developing the area.

Provide spaces for arts and culture.

- **Besides public art and murals, what kind of cultural opportunities might be considered?**

We have heard about the desire for the festival space, smaller spaces for arts and culture exhibitors and makers, more places for Indigenous self-expression and place-based activities, entertainment venues. We are considering all these things now. As we move into the identification of community benefits, arts and culture will be a big part of that, and we'll look at how to utilize some of the commercial spaces as well. Important to note that the festival terrace is part of the Downsview Park, and it is a permanent space. There are also potential opportunities for interim uses. We've heard a lot about the food, as being part of culture, which is interesting. And if you have any suggestions, we want to hear from you.

Questions about land use and affordable housing

- **Can you elaborate on the specifics of the affordable housing that will be developed?**

Our intention is to deliver housing across the spectrum. In working with the City on a settlement agreement supporting mixed-use communities, it has been identified that this area will provide 20% of residential space for affordable housing or the equivalent of land area. It is certainly a component of the plan, but how it may be realized is too soon to tell. At the Secondary Plan stage we do not normally detail the type of built form or typologies. As we move into the district planning stages, we will be able to better identify the type of housing and even the spectrum of affordability.

- **Will there be a mix of uses on this site – housing, retail, etc.?**

The specific mix of uses has not been determined yet. The Secondary Plan process determines overall density and general land uses. The specifics around the types of retail, housing, and employment uses will be done in the subsequent processes on a district-by-district basis.

- **How will the runway be used in the end state?**

The approach is to build out the site over many years and in many phases, and we see it as an ever-changing environment. We are very interested in understanding interim activations for the runway before the development occurs. At the end state, the general idea is that the linear space of the runway will be public space. It won't always be the same widths all the way along, and it's not going to be the runway in its current form, but the orientation of the linear public space along the length and the general orientation of the runway is the big idea. The space will be fronted by the buildings and will have many different uses, including retail and other community uses, spilling out on the runway, so the space is active and well used by the community in all seasons. But it's very preliminary and the renderings are just concepts, not actual designs, so do not take them literally. Actual designs will be made during the district planning stages. The images will look different based on the location you are in, as you walk along the runway, you will experience different identities based on the communities you are going through. The existing runway is 2.5 km, but we maybe extending it further, between Downsview Park and Wilson Station which is about 3 km.

- **Is there any technology strategy that underlies the planning and design of the physical space?**

Our strong feeling is that technology serves strong communities, not drives them. We are trying to build complete communities that support people's wellness and will look at technology to help us do that at later stages. Making decisions around technology now as part of the Secondary Plan is not the right time, as technology will change by the time we are ready to implement. We are following very closely how the privacy in technology is unfolding. We want to follow best practices once regulations and policies are rolled out. We do not have specifics right now; we are very mindful that technology will have a role, but it is not the driver.

Process-related advice and questions

- **Great public space and complete communities will not be achieved if the work is not done with community.** For example, it is hard to imagine seniors enjoying the runway next to the hockey players. Some visuals of the greenery look very limited and need further discussion to reflect what the community wants. Go beyond taking a few points from the meeting to the drawing board. Consider charettes. York Centre Seniors Steering Committee (YCSC) has had several meetings with the landowners and would like to be more actively involved in the design moving forward. YCSC is also working with the Rick Hansen Foundation in Surrey, BC and could be a good resource for accessibility considerations.

We are looking to form a [Community Resource Group](#) for those who want to be engaged with us regularly, to continue this dialogue over many years with many opportunities to come. It's also important to acknowledge that we had over 1,100 participants contribute input over the last two rounds of consultation – incredibly valuable to inform this work. In terms of accessibility, it's a central part of all our considerations for this project and it's important that you brought it up. When we talk about a community for everyone, we also talk about a spectrum of ages. When the community works for elders and little children, it works for everyone.

- **Be mindful of the history of consultation in the area and broken promises.** Over the past three decades a lot of the promises have been made to the community and those promises have been broken, including Tree City and Central Park. The community has witnessed the abuse of power regarding these lands and now must live with the consequences of this abuse today.
- **Continue efforts to engage seniors and those who cannot participate online.** Half of the area south of this study area are seniors, who are not Zoom-savvy. They are not participating. How are they going to be informed?

For this round of engagement, just like the previous two rounds, we sent flyers to 62,000 doors in the area through Canada Post. Those who prefer to participate by mail, can give us a call and request a hard copy of materials and a workbook sent to them. We send these materials and include a return envelope with pre-paid postage. We are happy to report that people are using this method and we are receiving requests and responses via mail. Translation is also available in five different languages.

- **When will we be able to meet in person?**

As soon as we can. Our general approach will be to get to in-person as soon as we can and continue doing online meetings, as they have been working well so far.

Councillor Pasternak added: Like everyone else, I am anxious to get to in-person meetings. I think we are close. We have high vaccination rate and need to get everyone vaccinated.

Summary of Comments and Suggestions from the Chat

This section includes a summary of comments and suggestions from the chat not shared verbally at the meeting. Please note that the list of questions asked in the chat that were not answered verbally during the meeting is attached.

- **Let's make Downsview a destination and not just another mass condo development.** Consider an additional permanent event venue for festivals to ensure more events happen in this area. Some participants thought the space would be better utilized for affordable housing, and some participants expressed concern over festivals increasing congestion, noise and air pollution.
- **Ensure that Downsview is built for all, including seniors.** There should be considerations for retirees and people requiring assisted living. Consider integrating new technology like drones, which would greatly benefit seniors, instead of laying down asphalt.
- **Design for liveability and desirability.** Consider buildings with larger balconies that would allow people to have their own gardens and outdoor spaces. It would greatly increase the liveability and desirability of living there. Consider vertical container gardens using state of art Agro Tech. It is the new family farm in 2021. Consider a big public pool, like Sunnyside in Toronto; outdoor exercise that will have Lo- Med- & Hi impact exercise options for all ages; seasonal rink.
- **Difference of opinion on the approach to greens space.** Some said they loved the ideas but were little disappointed that the additional 100 acres will be piecemeal within new neighbourhoods. A large contiguous park would be much better for protecting wildlife habitat and even for walking and cycling. Others said that they would love to see the green space plans presented today entrenched in the new Secondary Plan.
- **Enable closed captions on the call.**

NEXT STEPS

Northcrest and Canada Lands thanked everyone who joined the meeting and encouraged participants to attend the upcoming Townhall to share more feedback and continue staying in touch.

Remarks by Councillor Pasternak to Open the Meeting

Councillor James Pasternak kicked off the meeting with the following remarks:

- Thank you everybody for joining this evening. I hope very soon we will be able to meet in person. What's before you today and in the coming years is really a daunting task – we need your ideas on the future use of these lands.
- We need to make sure some of the key community components of complete communities are available – parkland, community centre, a daycare, trails, and a transportation grid that works.
- At the same time, we need responsible development of residential.
- Downsview Park has had a long history of consultation and not all of them lived up to community's expectations. I realize it is my responsibility is to listen, to learn, and fix some of those challenges, to ensure we create a community that respects surrounding communities.
- There is nothing cast in stone, no agreed plan to move forward yet – so thank you for listening in and sharing your thoughts. We rely heavily on you to make sure the future of these lands reflects the desires and priorities of the community.

ATTACHMENT A. List of Chat Questions not verbally answered during the meeting

The chat function was used as a secondary option for those more comfortable sharing written feedback/questions with Northcrest and Canada Lands. The facilitation team monitored the chat during the meeting and verbally integrated highlights of feedback into the larger plenary discussion for all (including those on the phone) to hear. The integrated feedback and some of the questions that were covered during the plenary are included in the main summary. This list includes all the questions from the chat that were not verbally answered during the meeting. Answers will be provided by the id8 Downsview team and posted online shortly in a separate document. The video recording of the townhall is available on the project website at www.id8downsview.ca

General

- What is the area of the entire site?
- Downsview Park and surrounding area is some of the highest ground in Toronto, with great 360-degree views... has this unique feature been considered in development plans? (e.g., rooftop public viewing areas)
- What about parking?

Community services, facilities, and amenities

- What about a big pool, like Sunnyside has/had?
- Maybe a seasonal rink?
- What about the developers, could they donate a centre?

Built form and range of housing

- Are there considerations for retirees or areas for assisted living occupants which is a challenge for the city?
- Any single-family homes contemplated?
- Are there any triplex or duplex style gentle density homes being contemplated as well?
- Will there be accessible housing and if so, what is the percentage?

Sustainability

- How will the proposals address environmental concerns? Will provisions be included for onsite storm water management? I didn't notice any storm water retention ponds in the plans and illustrations.

Other

- Any update on the developer who wants to make a Greenwich Village on the base?
- Is there any plan for increased walking/bicycle police patrol?
- What about a Canadian Forces/Aero Museum?

Process

- Are individuals from communities not welcome to apply at this juncture [Community Resource Group]?
- How then was today's Townhall meeting link mailed to us residents only recd. today?!!!