

id8 Downsview

DRAFT 2022-2023 ENGAGEMENT PLAN

May 2022

We acknowledge that the Downsview lands are on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit who signed Treaty 13 (1805), and that these lands have also been the historic homelands of the Huron Wendat and Haudenosaunee people.

This engagement plan was developed for and with Northcrest Developments and Canada Lands Company by the following firms retained to support the id8 Downsview engagement process: Third Party Public Inc. (formerly Swerhun Inc.), the Department of Words & Deeds, Nbsiing Consulting, and Future Simple Studio.

Overview

Northcrest Developments (Northcrest) and Canada Lands Company (Canada Lands) are working together to plan the future of approximately 520 acres of land in Downsview (for the area generally bound by Sheppard Avenue West to the north, Allen Road to the East, Wilson Avenue to the south, and Downsview Park and the Park Commons to the west). The anticipated decommissioning of the airfield provides a unique opportunity to reconsider the potential of this site, strategically located in a growing city and region. These lands represent one of the largest redevelopment sites in Toronto and they will take decades to develop.

Northcrest and Canada Lands are committed to developing a plan for the future of these lands that is informed by community and stakeholder priorities, public policy priorities, and landowner priorities. From May 2020 through to August 2021, a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement process called “ideate” Downsview (known as “id8 Downsview”) was implemented. Over 16 months, three rounds of engagement were held to share information with and seek feedback from a wide range of different voices and interests related to the future of these lands. Total participation was over 3,000, including representatives of 105 organizations from a range of sectors.

id8 Downsview creates new avenues for residents to influence decisions that have the potential to impact their own communities, brings transparency and accountability to the land use planning and development process, and contributes to increased civic literacy through extensive information sharing.

The feedback received through the id8 Downsview engagement process has helped us understand the priorities that many different communities and stakeholders have for the future of these lands. The feedback informed the Framework Plan (the Plan) that Northcrest and Canada Lands submitted to the City of Toronto in the Fall of 2021 as part of the Official Plan Amendment (OPA) application. It also inspired the creation of XOXO Downsview, a celebration of public art, culture, and heritage created in collaborations with local artists that aims to strengthen communities and bring people together. Community voices will continue to be a critical driver of our efforts to understand how development of these lands can best respond to local priorities.

Submission of the proposed Plan to the City is just one step in what is an ongoing process of planning, learning, sharing, and working together to reimagine these lands as an urban mosaic that embraces diversity, creativity, and innovation, and a place where people and nature thrive and evolve together.

This 2022-2023 Engagement Plan includes our engagement objectives, principles, and planned activities for the next two years. It builds on the momentum of the robust engagement process that led to the submission of the Framework Plan in September of 2021. This Plan looks ahead to Council consideration of the updated Downsview Secondary Plan which the City of Toronto currently has scheduled for late 2023.

This is a public document for anyone interested in the future of the Downsview Lands. This plan is informed by feedback related to equity and inclusion received from participants to date and the landowners’ commitment to integrity, inclusion, and diversity. **It is a “living” document that we will update over time as we continue to learn more about how we can engage most meaningfully with others.**

Our Engagement Objective

Northcrest and Canada Lands are striving to bring a new model for development and city building to Downsview. That new model includes taking a leadership role in convening meaningful discussions, building strong relationships, and earning trust. We are committed to applying an equity and inclusion lens to all our work, particularly because of the unique context of northwest Toronto and the substantial change that development of these lands will bring to surrounding neighbourhoods and communities.

Our Engagement Approach

We will:

- Inform people about what's happened already, what's happening now, and what's to come.
- Listen closely to what people have to say and want to talk about. We will show how participant feedback informs decision-making.
- Be upfront and clear about the purpose of engagement, what's open for influence, and the roles of different actors. We will help make sense of this complex development process comprised of multiple layers, parties, processes, geographies, and timelines.
- Be open and welcoming to anyone interested in Downsview lands, and ensure processes are reflective of Downsview's many diverse communities and inclusive of those impacted by the future development.
- Aim to get people excited about our engagement work, outreach, relationship building and on-site programming. Our work will be dynamic and strive to be relevant, attractive, and fun so as to draw participation from people of all ages, interests, communities, and neighbourhoods across the city.
- Help build capacity through engagement and programming happening on the Downsview lands. This work will seek to connect individuals and communities, to leverage relationships and skillsets, strengthen networks and break down barriers.
- Work to support investments in Downsview (our own as landowners, as well as public investments) that align with and support community priorities and existing public policy (e.g. the Poverty Reduction, Youth Equity, Seniors, Resilience and Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategies).

Our Engagement Focus

There are three main topic areas where our id8 Downsview engagement work will focus through 2022 and 2023, including:

Planning.

Engagement activities will be focused on advancing and refining the proposed plan for the 520 acres. These activities will be implemented in coordination with City Planning, who are leading the process of updating the Downsview Area Secondary Plan informed by the OPA application from Northcrest and Canada Lands that includes our proposed plan for the future of 520 acres in Downsview. The City's engagement process began in early 2022 and will continue through to the end of 2023 when Council is expected to consider City staff recommendations related to the updated Downsview Area Secondary Plan and the OPA application.

Community Priorities.

The Community Context Study completed by the Centre for Connected Communities for Northcrest and Canada Lands identified that housing affordability, racial justice, economic inclusion, food systems, community health and safety, and climate mitigation and adaptation are all areas where community-led action is already taking place in the surrounding neighbourhoods. In addition to focusing on planning, as landowners we will continue to convene engagement activities that help identify, understand, and find opportunities to align and advance community priorities through the landowners' activities as well as through the allocation of public funds contributed by the landowners to the City of Toronto through the regulatory process.

Arts and Culture.

Support for interim activation of the site through arts and culture has been repeatedly expressed during the id8 Downsview engagement process. Northcrest and Canada Lands have responded by creating XOXO Downsview, a celebration of public art, culture, and local heritage on site that highlights local artists and aims to bring people together. XOXO Downsview is always changing, with new artists, installations, and activities being planned and implemented with the support of the community based XOXO Downsview Advisory Committee. Engagement of Rights Holders, the public, and a wide range of communities and stakeholders in XOXO Downsview will continue through 2022 and 2023.

In addition to these three areas of focus, planning for specific districts within the 520 acres is now underway and will be ongoing.

Process Overview

An ongoing process of planning, learning, sharing, and working together to reimagine these lands as an urban mosaic that embraces diversity and innovation, and as a place where people and nature thrive and evolve together.



Created in collaboration by Third Party Public, Dept of Words & Deeds, Nbising Consulting & Future Simple Studio

Participants

In addition to continuous efforts to reach new audiences locally, Northcrest and Canada Lands will keep working to stay connected to the many different communities and stakeholders who are interested in the future of Downsview Lands, including:

- First Nations Rights-holders;
- Indigenous communities and voices;
- African, Caribbean and Black communities;
- Youth;
- Seniors;
- Residents in and around Downsview;
- Local businesses and Business Improvement Areas;
- Local and city-wide community-serving organizations and advocates;
- Governments, public agencies, and advisory bodies;
- Over 1,500 people who signed up for id8 newsletter; and
- The general public.

Engagement Activities

There are a core set of engagement activities that will happen through 2022 and 2023 that focus on one or more of the three topic areas. These activities include:

- **Direct connections with the engagement team** that's available anytime by contacting info@id8downsview.ca or by calling us during business hours at 647 245 3399
- **Regular social media posts** to keep people up-to-speed with brief updates
- **id8 Downsview newsletter** with more comprehensive updates on what's happening on the site
- **Public site walks** (starting in the Spring of 2022) to give people a chance to get close to the latest art installations, learn about the history and heritage of the site, and understand the sheer size of the site, the opportunities it holds, the amount of time it will take to develop, and the important opportunities for connections to adjacent neighbourhoods
- **id8 Downsview Community Resource Group (CRG)**, a group of 22 organizations and individuals with a mandate to share their perspectives and advice with Northcrest and Canada Lands through the process of planning and development at Downsview (the CRG meets quarterly)
- **XOXO Downsview Advisory Committee**, a group of thirteen members, including representatives from local and city-wide arts communities, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, North York Arts, and the landowners, with a mandate to ensure projects meet XOXO Downsview's guiding principles and are of high artistic merit (the Advisory Committee meets two to three times per year)
- **XOXO Downsview Arts Jury** meets annually
- **Indigenous Community Sharing Meetings** twice a year for Northcrest and Canada Lands to share ideas and feedback with Indigenous voices on key topics of interest
- **Public Town Halls** twice a year for Northcrest and Canada Lands to share and seek feedback from the public on planning, community priorities, and arts and culture
- **Mail drops** twice a year to the approximately 62,000 residential and business addresses within 2 kilometers of the site to ensure neighbours receive materials right to their door with updates on what's happening and opportunities to get in touch and be involved
- **Participation in stakeholder and community-led activities**
- **Other engagement activities** identified and implemented as needs and opportunities arise in response to emerging issues, local priorities, a change in context, or other factors

Id8 Downsview engagement activities will be planned according to public health requirements, with in-person and virtual opportunities to ensure public safety and comfort in getting involved.. The implementation of all landowner-led engagement activities will be informed by equity and inclusion feedback received from participants to date and the landowners' commitment to integrity, inclusion, and diversity.

Communications and meetings with Rights Holders are happening at the same time as the id8 Downsview engagement process, led by Northcrest and Canada Lands, with the support of Bob Goulais from Nbising Consulting.

Engagement Impact

This engagement plan supports Northcrest and Canada Lands' commitment to create a positive impact in Downsview through delivering strong project outcomes, robust participation, and continually building our collective capacity to learn more and work together.

Informed by the City of Toronto's equity toolkit [Making Space: Centering Equity in Planning](#), we will be using the following categories of impact to understand and assess how the engagement process is unfolding and whether / how it should be refined:

- **Project outcomes** – how has the public feedback influenced plans, designs, policies, and other technical work.
- **Participation impact** – how many people participated (including new participants and those who have participated more than once) and what methods of participation were available / used.
- **Capacity impact** – what is the level of shared understanding of the project, what is the interest in engaging / continuing to work together, what are opportunities for collaboration.

Engagement impact will be documented as part of the engagement activity summary reports and will be posted on the project website.