

*On Thursday, October 8, 2020 Northcrest and Canada Lands hosted a public workshop that shared and sought feedback on emerging ideas related to Getting Around & Across the 520 acres that are the focus of the id8 Downsview process. There were 18 community and stakeholder participants including: 12 local residents, a resident that lives further south of the site, two students, and representatives of the Our Greenway Conservancy, Toronto Kite Fliers, and the DUKE Heights BIA (Business Improvement Area).*

*The public workshop was held online using Zoom video conferencing software and included a brief overview of the project from Derek Goring (Northcrest) and Deana Grinnell (Canada Lands). Accompanied by a more detailed presentation by Daniel Baumann (Henning Larsen) and Amy Jiang (BA Group), consultants supporting the id8 Downsview process. This was followed by four breakout discussions and a wrap-up plenary. Other consultants supporting Northcrest and Canada Lands also participated, including representatives of Urban Strategies Inc., as did staff from the City of Toronto's Planning Division.*

*The meeting was facilitated by a team from Swerhun Inc., who also wrote this summary. 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](mailto:info@id8downsview.ca).*

## Getting Around & Across the Site

id8 Downsview Public Workshop  
Tuesday, October 8, 2020, 7 – 9 pm

### SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

This summary reflects an integration of the feedback shared in the four breakout rooms and the plenary discussion. Key themes and topics shared by participants are listed below, with more detail provided on the following pages. Please note that feedback from participants is in regular text, and responses (where provided) from Northcrest, Canada Lands, and their consultants are documented in *italics*.

#### Key themes and topics shared by participants

- 1. Interest in more information about the general intent of the id8 Downsview project;**
- 2. Mix of perspectives on Downsview as a place to get to and/or to get through,** with a number of detailed suggestions related to north-south and east-west connections;
- 3. Support for connections for wildlife, nature, and green space;**
- 4. Mitigate impacts on local residents,** particularly in the Ancaster neighbourhood;
- 5. Feedback on priorities,** including removing connectivity barriers and ensuring safety for all road users;
- 6. Different perspectives on cycling,** with many very supportive and some concerns;
- 7. Suggestions related to land use planning,** including more density closer to transit and stations, good connections to retail;
- 8. A number of process suggestions;** and
- 9. Other comments.**

## 1. Interest in the general intent of the project

- **What are you planning here? What's the general intent of the id8 Downsview project?** *Our intent is to create multiple new neighbourhoods with a mix of residential, employment, cultural, educational and other uses – with Downsview Park as a great anchor. There is an opportunity for significant development on this site because its very large, it is connected to the subway, and there are a lot of people moving to Toronto. We're working to create a mix of uses to give people an opportunity to live, work, and play here – so they don't have to drive everywhere.*
- **Will Downsview be like Liberty Village?** *This site is very different for many reasons, but one key thing is that the Liberty Village site is very constrained. We can avoid their challenges by making the connections that we're talking about tonight.*

## 2. Mix of perspectives on Downsview as a place to get to and/or to get through

- **Some participants said that it's important to treat Downsview as a destination to get to, not a place to go through.** They talked about designing the mobility networks in a way that minimizes traffic impact on the local neighbourhoods, improves the local walking and cycling experience, and prioritizes public transit. The mobility network should be designed to move away from a suburban feel and more towards an urban residential neighbourhood, similar to the Annex neighbourhood in Toronto. It was also suggested that this area could be a destination for students.
- **Other participants focused on the importance of getting through Downsview** with a number of suggestions that related to the ideas shared for potential new north-south and east-west connections (see details below).

### North-south connections

- **A “central spine” through the site is vital** and creates an amazing opportunity to not only connect people through the site (north and south) but also create a sense of community identity within the site. Extending Dufferin north through the site would be a great way to do this. The other public streets proposed could help spread out the load. Look at providing greenspace, community space, a greenway as part of a “central spine” – it could be a large public space (rectangular block) that runs along the central spine, possibly between the new roads shown.
- **Think BIG about the “central spine”.** This is a once in a lifetime opportunity that shouldn't be missed. Think about different activities that could happen in this “central spine” space (e.g. flying kites – a great idea that was heard from the Townhall; skateparks are also really popular).

- **Think about heritage.** Think about how to use the central spine to celebrate the former airport/runway. Consider using the airport heritage to invite people and nature in – which would be a nice idea since airports usually push nature and people away.
- **Agree that Dufferin extension needs to be done, but there were participants who were not sure about the proposed approach of connecting via Chesswood.** This is because Chesswood ends at a T-intersection at Finch, could just move congestion up from Wilson to Finch. It could also make car travel convoluted and confusing. Some participants said that they want to see “Dufferin connect to Dufferin.” Suggestions from participants included:
  - if using Chesswood, add lots of traffic lights since it’s not currently designed for that volume of traffic;
  - consider using Rimrock (which is probably the easiest) or Steeprock to connect back to Dufferin;
  - using Champagne / Alness is also an option, though would be complicated since they currently don’t connect east to Dufferin like Rimrock and Steeprock (DUKE Heights BIA has done studies about connections in and around the area that it is willing to share); and
  - pretend the airport isn’t there and just go straight up *(the id8 team noted that there are challenges with this, including existing heritage and the fact that Dufferin would then run into Allen Road, creating another discontinuity in the road network).*
- **Look at connections to Yorkdale,** especially given redevelopment activity going on south of the 401. *We’re tossing around ideas on how to do this because it’s a strong desire line. It is a big challenge since there are not many ways to do this.*
- **Are there any thoughts to extending north** with a walking path or bike path towards the Finch corridor bike path? *We’re definitely interested in how our greenways on the site can connect to more regional greenways.*

#### East-west connections

- **“I’ve been involved in this process a long time, and there has to be a connection across from one side of the property to the other.”** That will benefit Downsview Park and make it a better park. People on the other side will have a place to go – Downsview Park really saved us during COVID. I like seeing the connections to the William Baker neighbourhood and to Downsview Park.
- **Is the current layout of Carl Hall Road something being considered in this process?** I encourage you to re-think Carl Hall Road in its entirety, including the convoluted way it comes into the site from Sheppard with its tight turns. *We’d like to continue to use Carl Hall Road as an at-grade crossing of the rail and we’re currently working on some improvements to that connection now. The layout is fairly constrained given land uses around it, especially on the west side of the rail line, but once the runway goes away there will be opportunities to reconfigure it on the east side of the rail which is definitely something that we’ll be looking at.*

- **A connection across the rail line between Downsview Park and the Downsview Park Commons** would be great.
- **Why not re-connect Sheppard the way it was?** *There are some constraints due to DND lands and heritage buildings.*
- **Some expressed support for the Sheppard subway extension** and going further to consider a potential future connection to Pearson. One participant asked if there's anything that can be done when planning the Downsview neighbourhood to prepare a small corridor to minimize the construction impacts of a future subway? *It's a good question. The City of Toronto has asked us to think about the extension of the Sheppard subway line as well. That was part of the direction from Council – to make provisions for the potential extension. The challenge for us is that we don't know the alignment so it's not obvious where to supply the corridor. It's a good idea, and we can talk about how we may be able to do something like that. We support the extension of the Sheppard subway west from Sheppard Station to Sheppard West Station and potentially into the site.*

### 3. Support for connections for wildlife, nature, and green space

- **Connections should be for the wildlife and nature, as well as roads and people.** The railway creates a big divide for everyone, including the wildlife. Consider creating a rail overpass for the wildlife that would connect the Downsview Park greenspace and strengthen the ecosystem.
- **It's important that the development does not encroach on Downsview Park, as the park provides an important habitat to many species, including snowy owls.** *We know that strengthening ecosystems and preserving biodiversity at Downsview Park is important to the community and it is important for Canada Lands as owners and stewards of the park. We have different community programs focused on sustainability and nature at the park led by our education team at the Discovery Centre. As part of this engagement process, we have connected with representatives of Bird Studies Canada, Our Greenway Project, Toronto Beekeepers' Collective, and other organizations focused on nature and biodiversity. It is also important to highlight that the size of Downsview Park will stay the same, and as part of this process we will only be looking at how to best integrate the edges of the park with the communities and improve connectivity through and around the park.*
- **Priority should be connections to green space** - this would be appreciated by residents and also help build community support for the project.

## 4. Mitigate impacts on local residents

- **There is concern that once Dufferin Street and Sheppard Avenue West provide access through the site as major roads, the vehicular traffic and congestion will spill over into the local neighbourhoods.** There is also concern around the compatibility of the busy, overcrowded Dufferin Street and the calm and serene nature of the Downsview Park. Participants discussed ideas to address this, including:
  - design walking and cycling routes to the subway stations and public transit stops in the most efficient manner;
  - design major streets to be curved and scenic to force drivers to slow down and relax as they drive through the area;
  - consider implementing other traffic calming mechanisms, such as stop signs, traffic lights, speed bumps, etc.;
  - be bold and plan big by considering opening the planned Dufferin Street connection to public transit use only (since there is no car access through the site right now along Dufferin Street, people will be more accepting of the bus-only access);
  - consider minimal strategic access points for vehicular access on major streets going through the site and ensure all major streets going through the site have a dedicated bus lane;
  - consider designating local streets primarily for walking and cycling, only allowing local traffic; and
  - consider rush hour turning restrictions on Dufferin Street.

*Thank you for these ideas. It's important to note that the site has regional and city importance. The benefit of completing the street grid (by connecting Dufferin Street) is the relief and distribution of the traffic that flows through this area. The big opportunity here is to design the streets differently from what exists today, as we are building from the ground up. The new major streets will be designed to properly accommodate all modes of travel – with proper infrastructure for cycling and walking, weaving in green spaces. If we look at the Annex, we see that the fabric of the neighbourhood is established between major streets – Avenue Road and Bathurst Street. Its possible to achieve that urban residential feel between major streets.*

- **How do you think about mitigating increased noise and sound from the major streets?** Is there any consideration given to mitigating impacts on the air quality? *That is a good and interesting question. Generally, the level of noise and air pollution depend on the type of vehicle and the speed it travels at; the design of the street can somewhat help with this. In our first workshop, we talked quite a bit about the concept of City-nature, where nature is woven into and is an essential part of the urban design, including streets and roads. Incorporating natural elements, greening the streets, and designing streets in a way that calms the traffic should help with reducing impacts to air quality and addressing some of the noise generated by the traffic. Part of the planning is also to consider how the street network can accommodate autonomous vehicles in the future, which would reduce noise and air pollution.*

## Considerations specific to residents living in the Ancaster neighbourhood

- What is the black line on the map crossing the rail corridor in the Ancaster community? *That is a proposed location of a grade-separated crossing to provide pedestrians and cyclists a way to travel over the rail corridor. Its something that the City of Toronto is interested in doing and was included in the Downsview Area Secondary Plan. It's not on our property nor part of the id8 Downsview project – we understand that when and how that project moves forward is still to be determined.*
- Bombardier is leaving soon and there are neighbouring residents in Ancaster that have security concerns as well as concerns about flooding and other impacts. When Bombardier leaves, who will the neighbours contact with any concerns? *Bombardier will continue to be the main contact until 2023. After that time Northcrest will be responsible, and we'll have a property manager who will very likely be your contact.*

## 5. Feedback on Priorities

- **Quick wins / priorities should include removing / overcoming existing barriers** (especially for pedestrians and cyclists). Barriers include the highway/major roads, rail line, runway. Include direct and quick access through and to the site.
- **Safety for all road users needs to be a top priority**, especially for more vulnerable road users, e.g. cyclists, pedestrians, seniors, etc. Think about how cyclists use roads and design them to be safe for their use (e.g. how they move through intersections). Consider how younger people use the routes/paths – is it safe for a 6-year old on bike? Also the current Chesswood and Sheppard intersection is very unsafe because of Sheppard's curvy design and fast traffic — suggest looking at improving safety here.

## 6. Different perspectives on cycling

- Several participants supported the focus on cycling connections, with one noting that the ideas shared align well with Our Greenway's vision for a 21 km roadside linear park across northwest Toronto.
- There was also some caution expressed about cycling, with a participant noting that the cycling season in Toronto is very small and expressing concern about health and safety issues associated with cycling. *We're working to create as many options as we can for supporting people moving around the area, whether by bike, using private vehicles, or walking. We want to make the non-car travel options as easy and safe as possible. There are countries with similar climates where bike lanes are used a lot in all seasons – but if the snow isn't cleared, it's true that people won't use them. We're planning the transportation infrastructure for the site, including options for recreational and commuter cyclists, and ultimately the City will own most of that infrastructure.*

## 7. Suggestions related to land use planning

- **Land use planning and transportation planning need to be well coordinated.** There were participants who suggested having more intense/dense development near transit stations and lower density in existing established neighbourhoods (e.g. Ancaster). The importance of a strong urban framework and street network was also emphasized.
- **It's important to have good connectivity and pedestrian connections to retail.** The ground level experience is important with good destinations. Wide sidewalks, big patios are important, especially in light of COVID.
- **Think about connections to the last mile** (i.e. from transit stations/stops to people's homes / places of work).
- **Isn't it hard to plan connections without knowing all of the uses?** For example, if there are concert venues or a community centre that would attract a lot of people, wouldn't that need to be considered when figuring out the roads? *Yes it's a challenge because we're in the planning process and the number of people who will live and work here will emerge from that. We have thought about destination-type uses, and we need to make sure the transportation infrastructure can accommodate those uses. We do know that the population will likely be more concentrated around the three existing subway stations and that places further from the stations may have fewer people.*
- **Avoid creating islands like Stanley Greene** (currently only accessible by one road).

## 8. A number of process suggestions

- **Be transparent with decision-making.** Be clear on what is happening when and how decisions are being made. For example, will a decision be made about which of the three options related to major new public streets? Explain the pros/cons of different options and decisions.
- **It would be helpful to have more details on timelines.** I understand the site will take decades to develop, but do you have any closer timelines when certain decisions are supposed to be made? *The entire thing will take decades, but it's not that we want to wait that long to start to see things happen. We definitely want to see things happen sooner. The work we're doing is going to inform an application to the City to start a formal review process of the Secondary Plan starting next year that will lay out the main elements of infrastructure, the open space network, and things like density. That process can take a while – the timing isn't fixed – and it probably depends on how much consensus and support we can get, and how quickly. In addition to the updated Secondary Plan there will be District Plans, which are more fine-grained, detailed planning for individual neighbourhoods. We are also actively exploring opportunities to do earlier developments that are consistent with the existing planning approvals. Right now, the site is designated for employment, and we are actively working on trying to do some individual employment projects to help bring more jobs to the area.*

*And that may happen in the next few years – much sooner than this longer term visioning of creating these new communities. So there will be incremental change over time – it’s not like we’re going to wait decades and it’s all going to drop down all at once. We hope that over the next few years you’ll start to see small changes, and that will build over time. Individual neighbourhoods, probably concentrated in specific areas, will start to emerge, and other areas of the site may take longer, because we can’t build it all out at once.*

- **Recognize that many local residents don’t speak English.** There aren’t many people from my community (Ancaster) participating. They speak mostly Italian and Portuguese. Would it be possible to communicate the id8 information in different languages? Ideally with a focus on things that interest them – like urban gardening? *That is something the team is considering and useful to know, thank you.*

**Share information ahead of meetings to allow more time for discussion.** I appreciate the effort you put into the presentations. By any chance are you planning on making these presentations available in advance so that we can have more informative discussions with you when we meet? This is not an easy project, and as a member of the community that really wants to be engaged, if we receive the presentation a few days in advance, it gives us a chance to review it and come to these meetings with questions – a suggestion. *Thank you, that’s a good suggestion. We’ll take that advice and think about how we can adjust in our Round Three consultation. In the first round (of consultation) we made videos that people could watch in advance, and at the meetings people could ask questions. This time, because the team had so much more detail, we wanted to record them while they were delivering the presentation. In advance, we had distributed discussion guide materials in hard copy and online that’s an executive summary of what has been presented – one for each of the four workshops. If I hear you well, it’s better when you have more detail before the meeting, whether that be the slides or something recorded in advance.*

- **Involve the Jane and Finch community.** It’s probably one of the most dense parts of the city in terms of children and families. I heard earlier about the communication aspect of this and letting the community become aware of what’s going on here. It would be great – whether it be through schools or community organizations – having them have a place at the table on this as well. *That’s high on our list too. I don’t know if there’s anybody on the call tonight, but we’ve had organizations from the Jane-Finch area paying attention and some deliberate follow-up discussions around equity and inclusion and intentionally engaging Black communities. Jane-Finch is also going through a secondary planning process with the City so we’re trying to coordinate there, and we also paid a lot of attention to their experience with Metrolinx recently and we don’t want to repeat anything like that.*
- **Cynicism as a result of disappointment with previous consultation processes.** I’ve been involved for 15 years and nothing goes well. I don’t think there’s any chance of having the park stay here – land goes to developers and is gone forever. The plans do not work for vehicles, people aren’t using subways, and the bike lanes make things worse. *The almost 300-acre Downsview Park will remain and is not part of the id8*



*Downsview project. Our focus is on the runway, the area around the hangars, and the areas to the north and east owned by Canada Lands. We want to create new communities here. We recognize that traffic is a problem and we don't want to make it worse – in fact we hope the road connections we've talked about tonight will help make it better. We've heard these connections are a priority for many in the area, and the new north-south and east-west connections will also give residents better access to Downsview Park.*

## 9. Other

- **Participants had a mix of opinions about roundabouts.** Some supported them as a way of moving people more efficiently and safely (noting that they work well in Europe), while others were concerned that people in Canada don't know how to use them (even with lots of educational information provided) and roundabouts can/have resulted in unsafe scenarios due to user error.
- **How will this be funded?** Aren't governments strapped because of COVID? *CLC is a self-funding, arm's length, Crown corporation. We're not relying on government funding to make this happen. It will likely take longer because of COVID, but not due to a lack of government funding.*

## NEXT STEPS

Nicole Swerhun, the meeting facilitator, committed to talking to the id8 Downsview team about the process advice received tonight to see if it can be applied for the workshops next week – and if not, then it will feed into planning for Round Three consultations. She also reiterated that the Swerhun team will write a draft summary of the meeting and will send it to anyone who provided their email through Eventbrite when registering for the meeting. For those who joined the meeting directly through the id8downsview website, she asked that they please send us an email to [info@id8downsview.ca](mailto:info@id8downsview.ca) if interested in reviewing the draft summary.

Derek Goring (Northcrest) and Deana Grinnell (Canada Lands) wrapped up the meeting with the following remarks:

- Thanks to everyone for joining us and taking the time to spend the evening with us. It's clear from the conversation tonight that there are a lot of people who have given a lot of thought to the different questions we've asked you and provided some really constructive input, so thank you very much – and for continuing to ask your questions and challenging us. We really do get a lot out of it.
- Your comments are very much appreciated and help us create a better plan. We also appreciate that it's a lot of information about a complicated project, so we are committing to you that we are going to engage with you on an ongoing basis and hopefully through multiple opportunities to hear from us and talk with us, we can continue to work with you to refine the plans. We encourage you to stay with us.