

id8 Downsview Community Resource Group (CRG) Site Tour with Northcrest and Canada Lands

Wednesday, May 11 from 3:00 pm – 7 p.m.



BRIEF SUMMARY NOTES

WHAT HAPPENED?

On Wednesday, May 11, 2022, Northcrest and Canada Land hosted a site tour of the 520 acres of Downsview lands and surrounding area, for the Community Resource Group (CRG) members. This was the second site tour for CRG members, and its purpose was to get members acquainted with the site in person, get to know each other, discuss ideas for the future of the site, and ask questions.

The first tour CRG tour was held in November 2021, and a summary of the tour can be found [here](#).

HOW DID IT WORK?

The tour was hosted by Ian Hanecak from Northcrest and David Anselmi from Canada Lands, with inputs along the way from Emily Reisman of Urban Strategies, and Bombardier staff. It was attended by four CRG members, all of whom had not previously attended the first tour.

The group moved around the site by bus, and made four stops where everyone left the bus and explored the area on foot. In the 3.5-hour period, the group explored:

- Bombardier Site (including a tour of runways and hangars on foot, and inputs from Bombardier staff)

- Centennial College (to visit the Bombardier Centre for Aerospace and Aviation)
- Downsview Park (including climbing the mound to see the XOXO Downsview art installation of the Wind Rose)
- Supply Depot at 40 Carl Hall Road

The tour ended with everyone coming together for dinner and conversations at the Canada Lands offices on the site.

WHY THESE NOTES?

This summary was written by the Third Party Public team (Pragya Priyadarshini and Yulia Pak) and is intended to capture the experience of the tour and ideas exchanged in very broad strokes. This summary is a mechanism to capture the collective insights and experiences of the CRG, and for the members who could not attend the tour to know more about the site and the shared discussions.

This summary has been reviewed by participants prior to being finalized.

SO HOW DID IT GO?

The site tour was the first time the participating CRG members were on the site, and meeting each other in person. The opportunity to explore 520 acres of Downsview lands was well received. This tour also continued to serve as one of the forums for CRG members to share insights about future possibilities on the site, observations on the work in progress, and ideas for collaboration with the community. Representatives from Northcrest, Canada Lands, and the CRG members also appreciated the opportunity to know and learn from each other in this setting.

WHAT DID PEOPLE TALK ABOUT?

Some of the comments, observations, and discussions focused on:

The tour is an important and unique opportunity. Visiting the site is a rare opportunity to witness and ‘feel’ the project – its possibilities, scale, and impact.

Look for opportunities to commemorate Bombardier in future developments. Ways to commemorate the presence of Bombardier, its workforce, and its contribution to Canadian aviation were discussed. Ideas included creating a Bombardier museum or a museum for the history of aviation in Canada, and having art installations commemorating Bombardier.

Explore exciting opportunities for adaptive reuse. The current buildings and structures are unique and impressive, they should be reused in a way that responds to community and market needs. There was a lot of appreciation for a way in which the new Bombardier Aviation Centre for Aviation and Aerospace at Centennial College was redeveloped, preserving key heritage features. Exciting possibilities for future reuse were also discussed, including a large trade and exhibit center at the current hangar buildings. It was noted that currently such places are in high demand and there are very limited opportunities elsewhere in Toronto to respond to this demand.

Prepare communities for the jobs to come. As the numbers and sectors of upcoming employment opportunities become clearer, it was discussed that communities, specifically local youth, should be given opportunities to develop skillsets required for these jobs. BIAs and trade unions could

also be involved in this process.

Continue art installations and events that engage local communities. The installation at Downsview mound can be regularly changed with community inputs on what the flags represent each time. This could also be an exciting opportunity to involve school-going youth and children in the engagement process.

NEXT STEPS:

The team from Northcrest and Canada Lands thanked the CRG members for participating in the tour. Over dinner,

everyone gathered to discuss the plans for the future of the site and the engagement process – including the upcoming open house events. The Third Party Public team shared that a short summary of the tour will be sent out for their review before being finalized.

Following the site tour, additional feedback was share by a participating CRG member (Please Attachment 1).

PARTICIPANTS ON THE TOUR INCLUDED:

Social Planning Toronto (Israt Ahmed), Duke Heights BIA (Joe Pantalone), Centennial College, (Andrew Petrou), Our Greenway Conservancy (Darnel Harris). **Landowners:** Northcrest (Ian Hanecack, Tracje Nikolov), Canada Lands (David Anselmi). **Land Use Planners:** Urban Strategies Inc. (Emily Reisman). **Facilitator:** Third Party Public (Yulia Pak, Pragya Priyadarshini).

Attachment 1: Additional Feedback Shared

Following is a summary of the written feedback shared by Social Planning Toronto after the CRG site tour.

Opportunities for new partnerships:

- Consider creating communication channels with the Department of National Defence. Even though their land is outside of the development scope, there will be shared construction or traffic impacts.
- It would be beneficial to all stakeholders if Ancaster community had a community or neighbourhood association.
- Consider enhancing participation and collaboration with Wilson and Duke BIAs and their members.
- Consider partnering with Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to create a plan or a planning process to prepare for the upcoming construction and post-construction commute.

Preparing for upcoming employment opportunities:

- A breakdown of number and kinds of employment opportunities will be beneficial for the community to know. It can also be used to connect with trade unions/training schools/BIAs to discuss how workforce from local communities can be prepared for the upcoming employment opportunities. This can be delegated to Toronto Community Benefit Network (TCBN) or others.

Ideas for retrofitting and interim use:

- A museum dedicated to Bombardier can be retrofitted in District 1 planning. It will be an opportunity to honor Canadian aviation history as well offer fun/learning opportunities for local community and visitors. Wright Brothers National Museum in Dayton, Ohio is a good example for this.
- An Indigenous Friendship Centre or space for a Healing Lodge can also be retrofitted in the vacant Bombardier infrastructure. This can be used as a space to disseminate

education such as that on genocide of Indigenous children and hope for reconciliation.

- Consider a reality TV show for the renovation of the Supply Depot at 40 Carl Hall Rd; focusing on 'opening renovation doors for local community'. This can be a participatory process for design, planning, construction, opening for business; and will build local capacity, advance construction, and urban planning related knowledge, and will be a role model for collaboration for other development projects in the country.

CRG process and participation:

- It would be interesting for CRG members to learn the decision-making process for retrofitting projects in the development (i.e., technical expert opinion, city planning condition, historical consideration, community interest, financial considerations etc. etc.)
- In addition to attending meetings, CRG members can also be engaged in monitoring the progress of community collaborations and projects, and measuring their impacts on proper metrics.