

On Thursday July 22, 2021 representatives of resident and tenant groups from the Downsview area were invited to participate in a focus group that reconvened to discuss the future of 520 acres of the Downsview lands. Two representatives from the Downsview Lands Community Voice attended this meeting.

The focus group was held online using Zoom video conferencing software. Representatives from Northcrest Developments and Canada Lands Corporation, as well as their consultants from Urban Strategies and Henning Larsen answered participant questions in a facilitated discussion.

The meeting was facilitated by Yulia Pak and Ruth Belay 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 assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives nor does it indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Northcrest Developments or Canada Lands Company.

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

July 2021 Focus Group Residents and Tenants

Thursday, July 22, 2021, 7:00 – 9:00 pm

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Overall sentiment:

- The plan was well received by participants. Participants asked and shared their thoughts about the phasing of development, approaches to improving region-wide connectivity, and future employment uses in the 520 acres of Downsview lands.
- Participants encouraged Northcrest and Canada Lands to develop the Bombardier lands faster, as they would not want to see abandoned buildings and a parking lot.

More detailed feedback:

Feedback from participants is in regular text, and responses (where provided) from Northcrest, Canada Lands, and their consultants are noted in *italics*.

Connectivity

- Prioritize establishing connections through the 520 acres to surrounding areas, starting with connections to the south to Downsview Park. Similarly, building a north-south connection through Stanley Greene will increase access in and around the area and will help with regional connectivity. Improving region-wide connectivity will help mitigate congestion, help with community support, and as such is an essential first step to development.
- Consider a linear path parallel to the rail track with a bridge right over into Downsview Park. It is important to reflect critically on how to establish better connections to Downsview Park and ensure connectivity of green spaces throughout. The City's proposed connection through an alleyway to Stanley Greene should be re-evaluated. Consider looking for new land to build connections from the East and South.
- Create connections to support local businesses on Wilson Avenue. Consider a pedestrian bridge that connects at Murray Road and extends further into surrounding neighbourhood (Ancaster).

- Continue prioritizing pedestrian and bike pathways. Consider extending Downsview Park Boulevard to connect the Ancaster neighbourhood. One discussed option was developing a connection through the Media District and then to the Downsview Park with a new E-W pedestrian/cycling bridge.
- There is already a bus route through the neighbourhood with stops at various locations around Bombardier. There is one right in front of the Bombardier administration building.

Local Employment Opportunities

- Continue to foster local opportunities and develop employment hubs that shape the identity of the different neighbourhoods. Keep all the recreational activities around the Hanger area to preserve its use and character.
- Explore employment opportunities that will support local economic growth. *Northcrest and Canada Lands will continue to work with the aerospace group to promote more of their partners to come to the site, such as innovation and technology research, creative industry type maker spaces, and a whole host of commercial activities, between office and retail spaces.*

Phasing

- Project team confirmed that Wilson and East Rail Districts will be the first districts to be developed. Additionally, it was re-iterated that there will be a transition between existing neighbourhoods with higher density builds situated around transit stations. The project team also clarified that the new builds in the East Rail District could happen primarily at the parking lot, and potentially between the bays.
- Critically reflect on what kind of development makes sense for the existing Bombardier Administration Buildings. An interested developer would have to work closely with surrounding communities.
- Ensure that the 520 acres should not be left vacant following the departure of Bombardier. Local communities do not want to be surrounded by abandoned and vacant property (for example the existing parking lot and buildings).
- Prioritize building parks and public spaces in the districts, especially East Rail which will be near existing neighbourhoods (for example, Ancaster and Stanley Greene).

Other Comments

- A participant recommended Northcrest and Canada Lands to reach out to the Bob Rumball School for the Deaf to explore relocation opportunities to Downsview. They are searching for a new home close to a transit hub and Downsview would be a perfect fit.

NEXT STEPS

Both Northcrest and Canada Lands thanked everyone who joined the meeting and reminded that Round 3 will remain open until the end of July 2021. Participants were encouraged to apply to the id8 Downsview Community Resource Group ([available here](#)).

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