

William Baker Neighbourhood – Phase 2 Consultations
Downsview Lands Community Voice Association (DLCVA)
Downsview Hub, 70 Canuck Avenue
Wednesday, January 15, 2020
7:00 – 9:00 pm

Participants

Downsview Lands Community Voice Association (Josie Casciato, Rita Delcasale-Cimini, Donald Di Prospero, Linda Gargaro, Albert Krivickas, Rosanna Laboni, Patrick O’Neill)
Member of Parliament York Centre (Michael Levitt)
Canada Lands Company (James Cox, David Anselmi, Kristal Tanunagara)
City Planning (Ben DiRaimo)
The Planning Partnership (Donna Hinde)
Urban Metrics (Chris White)
Swerhun Inc. (Nicole Swerhun, Matthew Wheatley)

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc. and was shared with participants for review prior to being finalized. The summary provides a review of the key topics discussed in the conversation; it is not intended to be a verbatim transcript.

OVERVIEW

As part of the Phase 2 Consultation for the future William Baker Neighbourhood, Canada Lands and its consultant team are meeting with local stakeholder organizations. On Wednesday, January 15th, Canada Lands, members of its consultant team, and City Planning met with representatives of the DLCVA to provide an overview and seek feedback on the three draft concept options that have been developed for the future neighbourhood. MP Michael Levitt also attended and participated in the meeting.

Donna Hinde from The Planning Partnership presented the three draft concept options for the future Neighbourhood. Chris White from Urban Metrics provided an overview of what makes retail/commercial work and what may be feasible in the future neighbourhood. Ben DiRaimo from City Planning provided an overview on how City Planning is involved in the process. Nicole Swerhun of Swerhun Inc. facilitated the discussion. Responses and comments provided by Canada Lands, its consultant team, and City Planning are included in *italics*.

COMMENTS FROM MP MICHAEL LEVITT

Plans for the community centre are alive and well. The community centre (planned to be located just south of William Baker) is still very much alive with support and anticipated funding of about \$50 million from all levels of government (\$19 million from the federal government; \$16 million from the Province; and \$11 million from the City). Getting the community centre built is one of my key priorities. Councillor Pasternak has also been a huge advocate of the community centre and has been instrumental in getting us to this point.

Impressed with the process delivered by Canada Lands for William Baker. Several years ago Canada Lands was not as open and transparent as this. I made a promise then to improve things, and they have followed through.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Through the discussion, there were a number of areas where there was considerable common ground (and no major objections raised) in the feedback provided by members of the Voice, including:

- 1. Density should be concentrated near transit.** Putting taller buildings and more people near transit is preferred because it will allow more people in the neighbourhood to easily walk to / from the subway and GO station. Living near transit can also provide access to jobs.
- 2. The neighbourhood should be walkable to help reduce car dependency.** The neighbourhood should include retail and community services and facilities to help reduce the number of cars on the road.
- 3. The neighbourhood should be designed for everyone, not only seniors.** There has been a lot of talk about the need for housing and services for seniors. This is important but the neighbourhood shouldn't be exclusively for seniors; it should be for everyone. Other specific groups that should be planned for include veterans and people with disabilities.
- 4. Having the Neighbourhood Focus in the centre could work well.** Putting the Neighbourhood Focus in the centre could work well because it would provide a focal point with retail opportunities and community facilities between the subway and GO station to the north east and the future community centre to the south.
- 5. Tall buildings are not a problem as long as they are done well.** We need to acknowledge that we are in a housing crisis and this neighbourhood needs to have something for everyone.
- 6. Some concern about residential development cutting into proposed parkland.** Some participants said they do not want to see residential development cut into the proposed park space shown around the woodlot.

OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSED

An updated transportation for the area should be conducted. *James Cox (Canada Lands) - A transportation study will be conducted as part of the District Plan as well as number of other studies. Nicole Swerhun (Swerhun Inc.) - All the studies being completed as part of the District Plan are identified on the Open House panels, which are available on the project website (www.williamsbakerneighbourhood.com)*

Is Canada Lands willing to consider reducing the number of residential units, down from the 3550 identified in the Secondary Plan. *James Cox – We intend to follow the direction of the Secondary Plan. That said, this is something that can be considered; any discussions about reductions in density would require consideration of the tradeoffs (e.g. ability to support retail/commercial uses and community services and facilities).*

The neighbourhood should include a food store. There should be a grocery store that residents can walk to, so they don't have to drive to buy food. *James Cox - We would definitely support having a food store in the neighbourhood. Chris White - Given the number of units and expected population (approximately 6,000 people) it's more likely that a smaller food store (e.g. a Rabba) would locate and be successful in William Baker. A larger grocery store would*

generally require a minimum of 10,000 people. A member of the Voice said the expected population for William Baker should be 7,000 people, referencing Secondary Plan materials that recommend the William Baker District Plan accommodate approximately 6,700 residents and 300 employees. They also commented that given the expected population growth in William Baker and surrounding Districts will be great than 10,000 people there is a need to plan space for a full super market in the area.

We've heard there were plans to locate a health care facility in this area; what's happening with this? *James Cox – A key focus for us is providing housing and community amenities that can accommodate seniors; we have not had conversations about healthcare facility in the neighbourhood. This is why we're talking to local organizations such as the Voice and the public; we are sharing and seeking feedback on the draft concept plans. MP Michael Levitt – The discussion has always been about offering some residential units and community amenities that can be tailored to seniors (e.g. housing that is affordable and comfortable for seniors and services and retail that seniors will need), not about a specific healthcare facility.*

What steps are being taken to ensure the neighborhood doesn't become a crime incubator? *Ben DiRaimo (City Planning) - The City has learned a lot over the years and uses design principles from Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) to deter crime and help people feel safe and comfortable. These include things like greater visibility on streets and in community spaces, open access to public spaces, etc. City also looks for and supports developments that include mixed-income communities and variations and in architecture that have also show to help deter crime.*

We do not want another Stanley Greene style development. Nobody can walk to anything there, there isn't any variety in architecture, and it's isolated from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

NEXT STEPS

Canada Lands confirmed their interest in continuing to work with the DLCVA through the development of the District Plan, including the third phase of consultation where the Canada Lands and its consultant team will present and seek feedback on a preferred concept plan for the future neighbourhood. MP Michael Levitt also agreed to share the results of his community survey about William Baker with Canada Lands.