

WILLIAM BAKER Neighbourhood

# **Phase Two** **Community Feedback Report**

March, 2020

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# Process Recap & Update

## Process Recap

William Baker is one of many future new neighbourhoods that will continue to transform the lands surrounding Downsview Park. The first task in planning the future William Baker Neighbourhood is developing a District Plan. The process for developing the District Plan began in early 2019 and Canada Lands Company (Canada Lands) expects it will take two to three years to finish and gain City of Toronto approval of the District Plan. Based on that timeline, 2022-2023 would be the earliest that construction would be expected to begin.

## Phase One Consultation Review

The process for developing the District Plan for William Baker includes a number of consultation activities where Canada Lands Company (Canada Lands) and its consultant team shared information, sought ideas, aspirations, and other feedback to help inform the development of the District Plan. The Phase One Consultation feedback revealed a number of perspectives that helped inform the three draft concept options shared during the Phase Two Consultations. Details on the phase one consultation, including the full Community Feedback Report and materials shared at the consultation activities, are available on the project website at [www.williambakerneighbourhood.ca](http://www.williambakerneighbourhood.ca)

## Phase Two Consultation Overview

The second phase of consultation took place in fall 2019 and early winter 2020. Canada Lands and its consultant team hosted public open house sessions in November 2019 and subsequent meetings with local community groups to share and seek feedback on the guiding principles and three draft concept options for the District Plan. The materials shared at the open house sessions and an interactive online feedback form were also made available on the project website. The graphic below provides an overview of the process being followed, with more details on the phase two consultation activities included in Appendix 1.



## Overall Observations

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In broad strokes, Phase Two public consultation feedback revealed a number of perspectives related to the guiding principles and three draft concept options that Canada Lands shared regarding the William Baker District Plan.

**Interest in the process and future neighbourhood.** Similar to the Phase One, many participants expressed interest in the development and are keen to see a neighbourhood that can offer additional community amenities to existing and future residents.

**Designing the neighbourhood for everyone.** There was continued support from many participants for planning for seniors with growing interest in housing, amenities, and mobility options that would make the future neighbourhood comfortable and accessible for seniors. Participants also said the neighbourhood should be for everyone, not just seniors. Some of the other specific groups that participants said should be considered and planned for include veterans and people with disabilities.

**Mixed opinions about the three development options.** There was a mix of opinions about the three options and the elements of each, especially where to concentrate development. Generally, people supported:

- Well protected and defined green spaces with connections to/from Downsview Park and residential areas in the neighbourhood;
- Opportunities for and connections to amenities in the neighbourhood (e.g. retail and commercial uses, especially a grocery store)
- Safe and comfortable pedestrian and cycling infrastructure throughout the neighbourhood, especially to/from transit (both the Downsview TTC/GO station and buses at Keele and Sheppard).
- A street design that mitigates traffic congestion in the surrounding area (i.e. Keele and Sheppard) and in the neighbourhood.

## Summary of Feedback

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The Phase Two consultations focused primarily on sharing and seeking feedback on three draft concept options developed for the future William Baker District Plan. Canada Lands and its consultant team (the Project Team) provided information about each of the three concept options, including details about the key features of the options; highlighting differences of each.

In addition to the three draft concept options, the Project Team also shared and sought feedback on six guiding principles for the District Plan and shared information about who William Baker is and asked for ideas on how to commemorate him in the future parkland and/or neighbourhood.

Participants shared feedback at the November Open House Sessions and subsequent meetings with community groups; through the online feedback form and by email. All feedback received during Phase Two has been integrated in this feedback report.

The intent of the consultation was to capture the range of perspectives shared, and as a result there are references to “few”, “some”, and “many” participants sharing a particular point of view. Participants were not asked to confirm whether they did (or did not) agree with any particular point raised by the other participants. As a result, the summaries are necessarily qualitative in nature and are based on what people said or wrote.

## Draft Concept Options

### Overview

As noted above, the Project Team shared and sought feedback on three draft concept options for the District Plan. The three concept options from Phase Two are:

1. Keele/Sheppard Focus;
2. Central Focus; and
3. Station Focus.

Each concept option includes three key features, including:

1. Neighbourhood Focus;
2. Woodlot, Parks and Pedestrian Bridge; and
3. Residential Land Use and Built Form.

The Project Team provided detailed information about each of the concept options, including some of the anticipated outcomes of using different options (e.g. how the location of the neighbourhood focus area could impact the ability to support retail/commercial uses in the neighbourhood). A snapshot of the three draft concept options is included below; full details are available in the presentation panels on the project website.

Option 1: Keele/Sheppard Focus



Option 2: Central Focus



Option 3: Station Focus



**Option 1: Keele/Sheppard Focus.** The neighbourhood's heart is located at the Keele and Sheppard intersection, and includes a high density mixed use block framed by the new pedestrian bridge/gateway, near the potential community centre site, the Downsview Hub and Education Centre, and the Play Zone. The park and open space areas around the woodlot are naturalized.

**Option 2: Central Focus.** The neighbourhood's heart is located along the new east-west street to the north of the woodlot. It includes a high density mixed use block and high and mid rise residential blocks. Development blocks are tucked around the edges of the woodlot, and the parks and open spaces around the woodlot are naturalized. A park/open space makes a connection between the woodlot and the new pedestrian bridge.

**Option 3:** The neighbourhood's heart is located in the north east area closest to the TTC/GO transit station. It includes high and mid rise residential blocks and the park along Transit Road. The parks and open spaces around the woodlot provide recreational amenities.

### **Specific feedback on different aspects of the draft concept options**

The Project Team asked participants what they like and don't like generally about the different concept options as well as what they like and don't like about the key features of each concept option. The feedback provided is summarized below.

#### **Option 1. Keele/Sheppard Focus**

What participants liked: having the neighbourhood focus near Sheppard and Keele to support retail and locate more people close to Downsview Park and the bus hub at the intersection; the links/connections to the woodlot and greenspace; the multi-use/multi-modal streets shown throughout the neighbourhood; having retail close to Keele and Sheppard. It was also noted that the Keele/Sheppard focus would be especially beneficial if the future community centre is located at the south-east corner of Keele and Sheppard because more people would live within walking distance to the community centre.

What participants didn't like or raised concerns about: the potential for increased traffic congestion at Sheppard and Keele and the distance from the TTC/Go station, which may make it difficult for people to access the station without a car.

#### **Option 2. Central Focus**

What participants liked: potential spaces for small restaurants and shops in the centre of the neighbourhood; providing equal access to the concentration of community amenities and creating a more integrated community by locating the neighbourhood focus in the centre of the neighbourhood; and potential for less traffic congestion at Keele & Sheppard.

What participants didn't like or raised concerns about: the east-west road may be heavily trafficked with vehicles trying to avoid using Keele or Sheppard when they're busy. This concern relates to all three options.

### Option 3. Station Focus

What participants like: having the neighbourhood focus and more residential development close to the TTC/GO Station so that more people can walk to/from the station.

What participants didn't like or raised concerns about: the high density residential development shown on either side of the pedestrian connection between the woodlot and Downsview Park because it may make for an closed off environment for pedestrians.

#### **General feedback on the concept options**

Participants also provided feedback about different aspects of the concept options, irrespective of which option they were identified within. The topics participants shared feedback about included: the woodlot, parks and pedestrian bridge; residential land use and built form; retail and commercial uses; and transportation and mobility.

#### **Woodlot, parks and pedestrian bridge**

**Continued support for protecting the woodlot and enhancing the pedestrian bridge.** Many participants reiterated support shared in Phase One consultations for protecting and enhancing the woodlot and trees. Participants also restated support for enhancing the pedestrian bridge that connects the neighbourhood to Downsview Park.

**Mixed opinions about programming parkland.** Some participants said they would like to see active uses planned in the parkland shown around the woodlot (e.g. recreation facilities and playgrounds). Others said the parkland should be primarily passive space to protect the integrity of the woodlot (e.g. natural pathways and open space).

**Support for a wider open space connection between the woodlot and Downsview Park.** Many participants said they really like the proposed open space connection between the woodlot and Downsview park shown in all three concept options. Some participants said they prefer the wider open space connection shown in Option 2: Central Focus, noting that this would create a more comfortable and enjoyable experience for pedestrians.

**Ensure the woodlot and parks are accessible for everyone.** Some participants said the park space, regardless of the exact programming, should be accessible for all ages and abilities.

**Desire to see smaller buildings near the woodlot and park space.** Some participants said they would prefer to see smaller buildings border parkland and woodlot with taller buildings further away.

**Ensure the parkland proposed at the northern edge of the district does not prevent future connections.** A concern was raised that that the parkland at the northern edge of the District may prevent future connections to lands to the north.

#### **Residential land use and built form**

**Interest in seeing variability in all aspects of the design of the future neighbourhood.** A few participants said they don't want to see standardization or uniformity in the design of the future neighbourhood, referencing the recent Stanley



Greene development as an example of what they do not want to see. There were suggestions to have multiple distinct spaces, a wide range of building designs and materials, and different types of public infrastructure (e.g. street furniture, lighting, etc.).

**Mixed opinions about tall buildings in the neighbourhood.** Some participants raised concerns about having tall buildings (i.e. over 12 storeys) in the neighbourhood and suggested having more low-rise development, including town houses. Others said tall buildings aren't a problem as long as they are done well and said they recognize the City has a housing crisis which needs to be addressed in all areas of the City.

### Retail and commercial uses

**Significant interest in having retail and commercial uses in the neighbourhood.** Many participants said they would like to see a variety of retail and commercial uses in neighbourhood that would allow people to live and shop in the same neighbourhood and rely less on a vehicle to make daily purchases and outings.

**Desire for a grocery / food store.** Some participants said they are comfortable with a smaller food store for day-to-day purchases. Others advocated strongly for a larger food store / supermarket to serve William Baker residents as well as other existing residents and future residents that will live in other districts in the Downsview area.

**Interest in more information about the types of retail that could exist.** Participants expressed an interest in having information that would help explain the types of retail/commercial uses the future neighbourhood could attract and support as well as the factors that influence this (e.g. expected population; existing retail in the area; etc.). Some participants suggested developing a strategy to proactively seek out businesses that may be interested in having space in the future neighbourhood.

### Transportation and mobility

**Strong support for a walkable neighbourhood.** Many participants said they support safe and comfortable pedestrian infrastructure, including good connections to/from the TTC/GO station. Participants also said providing good pedestrian (and cycling) connections within the neighbourhood and to surrounding areas will be important in helping to reduce car dependency.

**Support for detailed transportation analysis and planning.** Participants said they support the completion of the Transportation Impact Study that is required as a component of the District Plan. Participants also said they want to understand if and how vehicles will be able/allowed to connect with existing neighbourhoods to the west. Some participants showed a strong interest in seeing connections established to employment areas to the north of the District.

**Support for cycling infrastructure.** Some participants shared a continued interest in having cycling infrastructure (e.g. bike lands / paths) within William Baker that connects to the City's existing and emerging cycling network and nearby transit options. There was also an interest in seeing bike lockers, infrastructure for electric bikes, and Toronto Bike Share stations in the area, including at the TTC/GO station and the bus hub at Sheppard and Keele. There was also a suggestion to incorporate Complete Street principles to support a safer environment for both pedestrians and cyclists.



**Support for sustainable transport.** Some participants suggested the team consider planning for electric vehicle infrastructure and shuttle bus for seniors (and others) to/from the subway station.

## Guiding Principles

### Overview

The guiding principles are building blocks that will shape the design of the William Baker District Plan's streets, open spaces and buildings, and will inform placemaking opportunities. The guiding principles have been informed by the City's Downsview Area Secondary Plan and by the feedback shared during the Phase One consultations. The guiding principles will support the creation of a complete community.

Canada Lands and its consultant team shared and sought feedback on six guiding principles during the Phase Two consultations. The guiding principles include, create a resilient and sustainable neighbourhood; create a place for all; provide a well-connected network of mobility options; provide a range of housing options; create a neighbourhood focus to support community life; and design the parks and woodlot as the focus of the neighbourhood. Additional detail can be found in the presentation panels on the project website.

### Feedback about the guiding principles

**The guiding principles generally make sense.** Some participants said the principles look good and should work well, especially if they are well integrated.

**Implementation will be key.** A few participants said the guiding principles look great on paper, noting that the real test will be if and how they are implemented as the neighbourhood develops.

**Additional ideas / principles to consider.** A few participants suggested a few additional ideas they would like to see incorporated into the guiding principles, including:

- Creating a community benefit framework, which could help map the local assets and include directions for services and programs, local hiring opportunities, and business opportunities.
- Emergency preparedness to help mitigate and prepare for climate events (e.g. flooding).
- A complete streets approach, including cycling infrastructure, with the goal of furthering the City's Vision Zero Plan.
- A proactive approach to crime mitigation to deter criminal behaviour and help people feel safe and comfortable in the community. There was support for incorporating Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into the design of the neighbourhood.

## Ideas for Commemorating William Baker

### Overview

Canada Lands and its consultant team shared information about William Baker, the individual that the District Plan is named after. Much of the information shared was

provided by the grandchildren of William Baker who have been in touch with Canada Lands. The information shared is available in the presentation panels on the project website. Participants were asked if they had any ideas on how to commemorate William Baker in the future parkland or neighbourhood.

### **Ideas on how to commemorate William Baker.**

Ideas shared by participants included:

- Install a monument and/or a memorial garden; and
- Use the park space to hold ceremonies / celebrations for current and past members of the armed forces (e.g. commissioning ceremonies, retirement celebrations, etc.).

### **Next Steps**

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The feedback received during the second phase of consultation will help inform the next stage of the District Plan process, including the development of an emerging concept plan for the neighbourhood. In the third phase of consultation, Canada Lands and its consultant team will share and seek feedback on the emerging concept plan prior to submitting the District Plan to the City of Toronto for review.

The third phase of consultation is anticipated to take place in the spring of 2020. Once confirmed, the notice of consultation activities will be shared with local elected officials, community organizations, anyone who participated in the first two rounds of consultation, and the public through a variety of mechanisms including, but not limited to, the project website ([www.williambakerhneighbourhood.ca](http://www.williambakerhneighbourhood.ca)). Canada Lands looks forward to continue working with the community on the development of the District Plan for the future William Baker Neighbourhood.

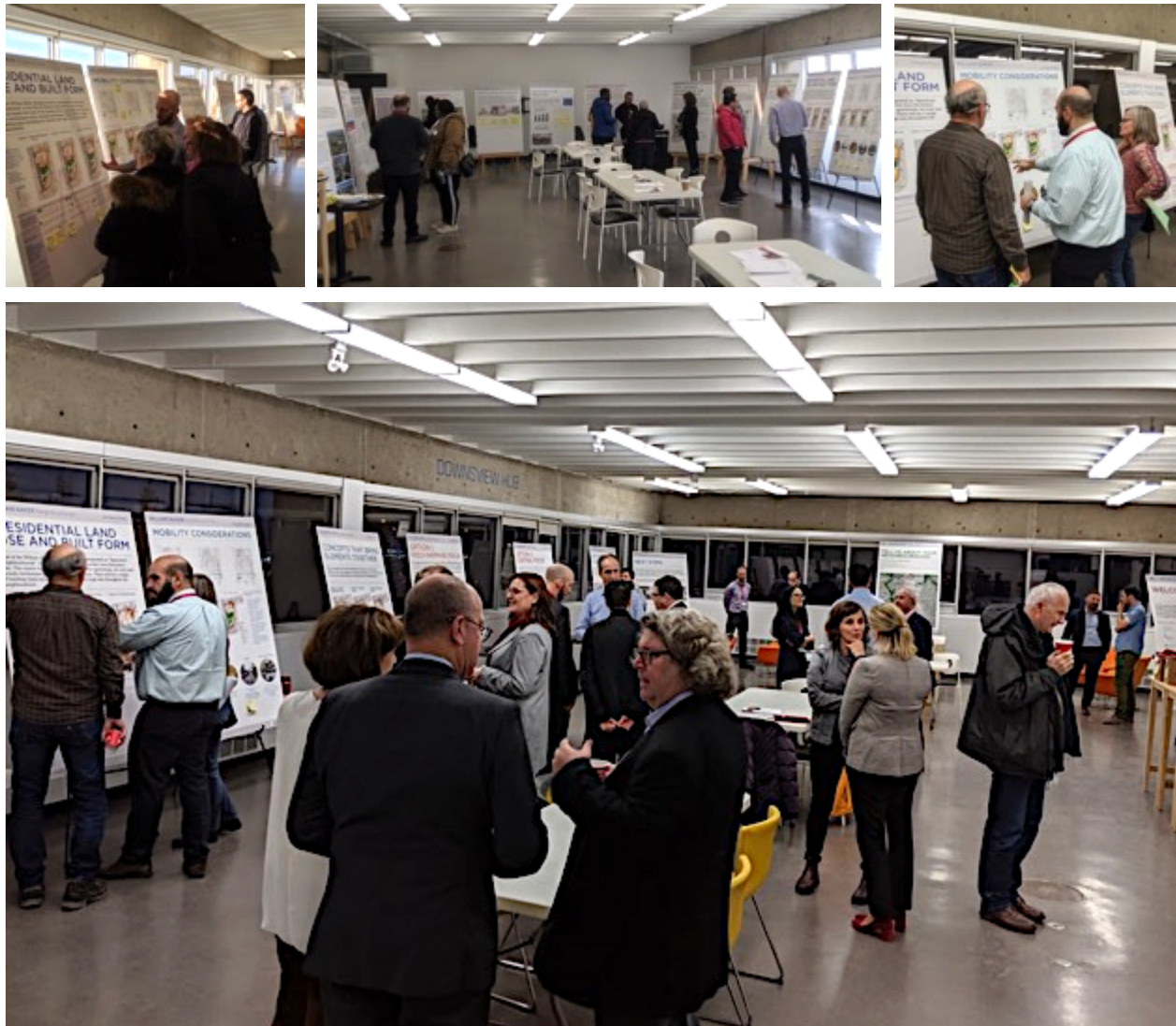
## **Appendix 1. Overview of Phase Two Consultation Activities**

### **Open House Sessions & Online Consultation**

*November 2019*

On Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup> from 4:00 – 8:00 pm and Sunday November 24<sup>th</sup>, from 12:00 – 3:00 pm Canada Lands hosted two Open House Sessions at the Downsview Hub (70 Canuck Avenue) to continue discussions about developing the William Baker District Plan. The Open House Sessions included a series of display panels with updates on the process and information and feedback questions about the draft guiding principles and three draft concept options. During the Open House Sessions, Canada Lands and their consultant team shared information, answer questions, and recorded feedback.

Shortly after the Open House Sessions Canada Lands uploaded digital copies of the display panels to the project website along with an online feedback form that included the same questions asked at the Open House Sessions and was available for comment until January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020.



## **Community Group Meetings**

*December 2019 & January 2020*

Following the November Open House Sessions, Canada Lands and members of its consultant team had small group meetings with and heard from some local organizations that have been active throughout the process and shared an interest in having additional conversation about the draft concept options. The groups Canada Lands met with include the Duke Heights BIA, The York Centre Seniors Steering Committee (with participation from the International Federation on Ageing), and the Downsview Lands Community Voice Association. The Wilson Heights BIA also shared a letter with Canada Lands noting their support for creating an affordable and livable community with housing for seniors / senior's village in the future neighbourhood. Similar to the Open House Sessions, the purpose of the meetings was to provide an overview and seek feedback on the three draft concept options. Feedback shared at these meetings has been integrated into the Phase Two Community Feedback Report. Individual summaries of the meetings will also be made available on the project website.

### **Feedback Received by Member of Parliament Michael Levitt**

Following the first phase of consultation MP Michael Levitt's office distributed a survey in their newsletter asking respondents to identify priorities for the future neighbourhood. The MP's offices shared the following with Canada Lands:

Below are the results of the survey responses received from the community. The responses are listed in order from the category that received the most support to the least:

1. Community Centre
2. Protections of Woodlot and Greenspace
3. Sustainability and Resilience
4. Affordable Housing
5. Community Life
6. Options for Seniors Community
7. Pedestrian and Vehicle Connections

We had also included an "other" section in the survey. Below are the responses received in no particular order:

- a. No construction in Downsview Park but National Reserve
- b. High Rise Condos Across Subway
- c. Cleanliness, Litter, Pollution
- d. Build Bandstand Near Lake for Performances
- e. Prevention of Crime
- f. Single Detached Homes (affordable)
- g. Clean up of Neighbourhood
- h. More Road access to Keele or Wilson or Downsview Go Stations