

WILLIAM BAKER Neighbourhood

Phase One Community Feedback Report

October, 2019

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Appendix 1. Overview of Phase 1 Consultation Activities

Overview of the Process

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

As a self-financing federal Crown corporation that specializes in real estate development and attractions management, Canada Lands has the goal of producing the best possible benefit for Canadian communities and the Government of Canada. Canada Lands' objectives, based on community and stakeholder feedback, for William Baker include: creating and supporting health and wellness; creating a resilient and sustainable neighbourhood; creating an age friendly environment; and creating a place for all to live.

Canada Lands is committed to working closely with the community through the planning process. Feedback from the public is critical to informing the District Plan and ultimately helping shape development of the new neighbourhood. The first phase of public consultation took place in the spring and summer of 2019, following a series of conversations with local elected officials and community groups that informed the design of the consultation process. During the first phase Canada Lands hosted a number of consultation activities to share information seek ideas, aspirations, and other feedback to inform the District Plan for the new William Baker Neighbourhood. The graphic below provides an overview of the anticipated process, with more details on the consultation activities included in Appendix 1.



Phase 1 consultation activities included two open house sessions, three pop-up consultations, and online consultation.

Overall Observations

In broad strokes, Phase One public consultation feedback revealed a number of perspectives related to the early vision that Canada Lands shared regarding the William Baker District Plan.

Many participants expressed support for protecting and enhancing the woodlot.

Participants were glad to hear that the woodlot will be preserved as a key feature of the new neighbourhood. Several people said that they regularly use the woodlot and that they consider it an important community asset for the new neighbourhood.

Many participants expressed interest in the development of the neighbourhood and potential community amenities.

Participants said they were excited about the potential for William Baker, especially for new community services and facilities to serve new residents as well as existing residents in the surrounding neighbourhoods.

There was support expressed by many participants for seniors housing and supporting amenities.

These participants discussed a growing senior's population in the area and shared strong support for housing and supporting amenities (e.g. medical services, community programs, and recreation facilities) for seniors.

Some participants expressed interest in seeing Canada Lands both doing less and doing more with the development than is permitted in the City of Toronto

Downsview Area Secondary Plan. Some participants suggested Canada Lands and the team investigate reducing the number of residential units. There were also participants who were interested in seeing Canada Lands explore opportunities to include more mixed-use development than is permitted in the Secondary Plan.

Summary of Feedback

The following section summarizes the feedback received during phase one of public consultation, including feedback shared at the June Open House Sessions, the Pop-Up Events and by email. The feedback has been organized around the six themes Canada Lands and their consultants sought feedback on, including: the woodlot and greenspace; resilience and sustainability; mobility and getting around; housing; community life; and options for seniors. Participants were also asked to share what they would most like to do at different times of the day through an activity called "A Day in the Life in William Baker". This feedback is also summarized in this section of the 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.

Woodlot and Greenspace

Strong support for protecting and enhancing the woodlot. Many participants were glad to hear the woodlot will be preserved as a key feature of the new neighbourhood.

There were questions about the extent of the woodlot. Other suggestions and comments related to the woodlot include:

- Avoid putting trails or pathways through dense areas of the woodlot;
- Look for opportunities to provide workshops in the woodlot to provide education about plant life in the area and help build a sense of community;
- Include indigenous plants in the woodlot with acknowledgement of their existence and history;
- Ensure as many trees as possible are preserved and properly maintained, especially mature trees.

Provide greenspace with opportunities for passive and active recreation. There were participants who were keen to see greenspace in William Baker, in addition to the woodlot, which would allow residents to participate in both active and passive recreation.

Resilience and Sustainability

Invest in environmentally sustainable and climate change resilient design features. There were participants who suggested having green roofs to promote environmental sustainability. There were also participants who suggested requiring design features that mitigate impacts of significant weather events, e.g. backup power for community and residential buildings and bioswales that can accommodate heavy flooding.

Basement flooding is a concern in the broader area. Some participants said that basement flooding has been an ongoing problem in the area, and this should be dealt with prior to the development of William Baker.

Mobility and Getting Around

Ensure the street network is well integrated with the surrounding community. There were some participants who said that the streets in William Baker should provide easy access for future residents to/from the surrounding area while not increasing traffic congestion on the existing road network.

Pedestrian infrastructure should be safe and well connected. Some participants said the neighbourhood should include sidewalks, paths, and trails that are wide, well maintained and accessible for everyone (especially seniors). They also said pedestrian routes should be well connected to nearby community facilities and amenities, e.g. the new Downsview Park TTC/GO Station.

Connect cycling routes in William Baker to the broader city network. There were participants who said that they would like to see bike lanes, cycle paths, etc. connected to the surrounding city network to make them a viable transportation option for residents.

Ensure transportation studies for the surrounding area taken into consideration. There were suggestions to consider existing transportation studies (e.g. the City of Toronto's Finch West Goods Movement Study) when planning the future road network for William Baker.

Walking distances to Downsview Park Station. In designing a pedestrian and transit friendly neighbourhood, there was a suggestion to reduce the maximum walking distance to the station from 500m to 250m as 500m can be challenging for seniors and people with

disabilities, especially in the winter. There was also a suggestion that all residential units in William Baker be built no more than 750m from the station.

Other mobility suggestions included: installing electric vehicle charging stations; and including Toronto Bike Share stations.

Housing

Provide housing for seniors. Some participants made the point that there's an increasing seniors' population in the area and suggested including a variety of housing options for seniors including: long term care residence, retirement living choices, and palliative care.

Range of opinions and ideas about affordable and supportive housing. There were participants who had questions and some concerns about the types of affordable housing that may be provided in William Baker. They raised concerns about affordable housing, especially social housing, including the potential for substandard construction and increased crime. Other participants said this area and the entire City is in desperate need for more affordable ownership and rental options for families, young adults starting their careers, artists, and people on fixed incomes (e.g. Ontario Disability Support Program). There was also a suggestion to investigate having an independent living centre that would provide housing and support services for people with disabilities.

Concerns about the number of residential units identified in the Downsview Area Secondary Plan. Some participants raised concerns that the number of residential units permitted in the City of Toronto's Secondary Plan (3534) would put undue strain on the areas existing infrastructure, reduce space for community services and facilities, and create a "bedroom community". At least a few participants suggested that Canada Lands consider reducing the number of residential units in the new neighbourhood; increasing the amount of mixed-use development; and providing evidence that the infrastructure will be able to accommodate the amount of development planned for the neighbourhood.

There was a detailed suggestion from one community member to reduce the residential component of the neighbourhood to 2500 units with the following allocations: 625 affordable units for seniors; 625 affordable and long-term care units for people with disabilities and fixed incomes; 625 market rental units; and 625 mid to high end condo units.

Housing for veterans. There was a suggestion to investigate a partnership with Homes for Heroes in order to provide housing for veterans.

Building heights should fit into the surrounding area. Some participants suggested low-rise and medium/mid-rise buildings would fit in well with surrounding built form. Some were not keen to see tall buildings / high-rises in William Baker.

Some concerns about housing between the woodlot and Sheppard Avenue West. Some participants raised concerns that the City's Downsview Area Secondary Plan maps show potential apartment neighbourhood and mixed use development between the woodlot and Sheppard Avenue West, with at least a few participants noting they do not want to see development in this area.

Options for Seniors

Strong support for seniors' facilities and programming in William Baker. There were participants who discussed a growing senior's population in the area and were keen to see this portion of the population included and supported in the future William Baker neighbourhood.

Include amenities and services for seniors. A variety of amenities and services for seniors were suggested including affordable and supportive housing; a seniors centre or hub; regular cultural and physical programs to help keep seniors active and engaged in the community; and medical support services. There was also a suggestion to include an emergency evacuation seniors' centre that could be used for emergency relief in the event of flooding in the area. It was suggested that this evacuation centre should include an indoor playground for grandchildren of seniors using the centre.

Additional long-term care centres will be needed in the near future. A participant who works with seniors noted that several long-term care facilities in the area are closing without being replaced, largely due to the high cost of land.

Community Life

Community centre and recreation facilities. Some participants identified a need for a community centre in the area and said having one close by would provide a significant benefit to future William Baker residents as well as existing residents in the area. Specific recreation activities and facilities were also suggested, including: a fitness/wellness centre with childcare; exercise rooms; playgrounds; indoor pool; splash pad; tennis courts; and benches and other facilities for passive recreation in parks and green spaces. Some participants said there should be a significant focus on providing recreation facilities and programs for both youth and seniors. There was a suggestion to have free public Wi-Fi in community facilities.

Access to food. Many participants said there is limited access to healthy food options in the area. They suggested including a grocery store as well as small locally owned restaurants and cafes that people could walk to. There was also a suggestion to allow for urban farming and a publicly accessible commercial kitchen to help increase access to food.

Medical facilities. Some participants said the area would benefit from having smaller medical facilities to compliment the Humber River Hospital. Specific suggestions included: walk-in clinics; accessible medical services for seniors; doctors and dentist offices; and rehabilitation services (i.e. physiotherapy, occupational therapy, massage, chiropractic care, and nutrition services).

Arts and cultural activities and facilities. There was a suggestion to investigate having an arts hub in the neighbourhood with options for a gallery, workshop space, community theatre, and affordable homes for artists.

Ensure there is adequate childcare and school capacity. There were a few participants who suggested including a daycare facility in the neighbourhood. It was also suggested that school capacity be taken into consideration when planning William Baker noting that several of the nearby schools are already at or near capacity.

Promote safety through design. There were some concerns about crime and the safety of residents in William Baker if road access is opened up to Keele Street. There were suggestions to use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) features to increase safety in the neighbourhood.

Suggested use of community benefit money. There was a suggestion to direct any community benefit money obtained through development to the Downsview United Church on Keele Street and a future community centre. The participant noted that the United Church is a designated heritage building and requires financial support.

A Day in the Life in William Baker

At the June Open House Sessions, the project team asked participants to identify activities they would like to do at different times of the day (morning, afternoon and evening) in the future William Baker Neighbourhood. The activities identified are included below.

Morning:

- Biking;
- Hiking;
- Tai chi;
- Yoga in the park;
- Gardening in a greenhouse / urban farm;
- Having a coffee in a café and/or park; and
- Community workshops.

Afternoon:

- Educational and recreational events (e.g. summer theatre);
- Community gatherings;
- Programs designed for seniors; and
- Lunch break on a green street.

Evening:

- Tea/coffee events at a local café;
- Walks through the woodlot and the park to enjoy nature;
- Community classes (e.g. cooking classes); and
- Outdoor arts activities (e.g. film screenings and music and dance performances).

Next Steps

The feedback received during the first phase of consultation will help inform the next stage of District Plan development, including the creation of Guiding Principles/Key Directions and different conceptual options for the neighbourhood that will illustrate variations in elements such as built form, public realm, and mobility. Canada Lands Company and its consultants will share and seek feedback on these draft options during the second phase of consultation, which is anticipated to occur in late 2019. Once confirmed, notice of the consultation activities will be shared with local elected officials, community organizations, anyone who participated in the first round of consultation, and the public through a variety of mechanisms including, but not limited to, the project website (www.downsviewlands.ca/williamsbaker). Canada Lands looks forward to continuing working with the community on the development of the District Plan for the future William Baker Neighbourhood.

Appendix 1. Overview of Phase 1 Consultation Activities

Open House Sessions

June 2019

On Thursday, June 6th from 4:00 – 8:00 pm and Sunday, June 9th from 12:00 – 4:00 pm Canada Lands hosted two Open House Sessions at the Downsview Hub (70 Canuck Avenue) to introduce the project team, share information, and seek input from the local community to help inform the District Plan for William Baker. The Open House Sessions included a series of display panels with information and questions about six themes related to the future William Baker Neighbourhood, including: the woodlot and greenspace; resilience and sustainability; mobility and getting around; housing; community life; and options for seniors.

During the Open House Sessions, Canada Lands staff and their consultant team shared information, answered questions, and recorded feedback. In addition to the conversations in the Downsview Hub, members of the project team also spoke with a number of people using the park and playground area next to the Hub. Over 100 people participated in the two Open House Sessions.



Pop-Up Consultation Summer 2019

Canada Lands organized three separate Pop-Up events in the Downsview area to engage members of the community who were unaware or unable to attend the June Open House Sessions. The Pop-Up events that took place included:

1. June 23rd at the Downsview Merchant Market;
2. July 1st at Canada Lands' annual Canada Celebrations in Downsview Park; and
3. August 20th at Grandravine Community Centre.

The same information shared at the June Open House Sessions was shared at the Pop-Up events. Approximately 175 people interacted with staff at the three Pop-Up events.



Online Consultation Spring/Summer 2019

Following the June Open House Sessions, the panels and an interactive feedback form were posted to the project website: www.downsviewlands.ca/williambaker. Participants from the Open House Sessions and local community groups were encouraged to review the meeting materials and share feedback through the website and by email. The project website will continue to be updated and Canada Lands looks forward to receiving additional feedback through the website as the process continues.