

William Baker Neighbourhood

## **Site Walk with the Downsview Lands Community Voice Association (DLCVA) & North York Community Preservation Panel (NYCPP)**

Wednesday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – 5:30 – 7:30 pm

### **Participants**

Downsview Lands Community Voice Association (Linda Gargaro, Rita Delcasale-Cimini, Josie Casciato, Donald Diprospero, Marlene DiPasquale, Rosanna Laboni, Patrick O'Neill)

North York Community Preservation Panel (Rosanna Laboni, Alex Grenzebach)  
Councillor James Pasternak and Staff (Councillor Pasternak, Hector Alonso, Usama Butt)

City of Toronto, City Planning (Ben DiRaimo)

Canada Lands Company, (James Cox)

The Planning Partnership, Land Use Planning Consultant to Canada Lands (Ron Palmer, Bruce Hall)

Dougan & Associates, Ecological Consultant to Canada Lands (Heather Schibli)

Swerhun Inc., Engagement Consultant to Canada Lands (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.*

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### **DISCUSSION SUMMARY**

On Wednesday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Canada Lands hosted a site walk in the future William Baker neighbourhood with members of the DLCVA & NYCPP to discuss and answer questions about core elements of the proposed District plan and development applications submitted by Canada Lands to the City of Toronto for review. Members of Canada Lands' consultant team, City Planning staff, Councillor Pasternak and members of his staff also joined and participated in the walk. The feedback and questions asked by participating members of the DLCVA and NYCPP are summarized below.

Responses and comments provided by Canada Lands, its consultant team, the City and Councillor are included in *italics*.

The majority of discussion focussed on the protection and removal of trees and the proposed locations and types of park spaces. Participants and the team also discussed the proposed locations of other features of the District Plan, including Street A and B, and residential blocks.

## 1. Discussion related to the woodlot and trees

Participants asked questions and shared concerns, including:

- the removal of large mature trees to accommodate the proposed development. Some participants said that they have reviewed the District Plan documents and are concerned with the number of red markers shown, which they understand identify trees that are planned to be removed.
- Damage to and loss of trees during construction.

Responses from the project team, summarized below, related to: the difference between invasive and native species of trees; different approaches / options for tree management; and protection of trees during construction.

### Invasive and native species:

- *Currently, the District Plan area includes a number of native and invasive species (both large and small). We see a great opportunity to remove invasive species and replace them with native species to prevent the decline and protect the health of the woodlot. Some of the existing invasive species include: Norway Maple, Common Buckthorn, Black Locust, Siberian Elm, and Dog-Strangling Vine (which is prevalent and difficult to remove).*
- *Trembling Aspen is one of the native species that we want to protect and enhance.*

### Tree Management:

- *There are generally three approaches that can and will be used for tree management in areas where development is proposed. These include: **1. Protection** - significant trees are identified, left where they are, and integrated into the development; **2. Relocation** – trees are removed and replanted somewhere else on the site; and **3. Replacement** – if a significant tree cannot be left in its original location and/or relocated, a replacement tree is planted somewhere else on the site.*
- *Not every red mark in the plan represents a tree that will be removed. These red marks identify trees that are located within a proposed development area and will need to be further examined to determine whether it can be integrated into that development area.*

### Protection during construction:

- *Prior to construction, development/building partners will be required to install barriers around protected trees / areas of vegetation. Typically, during construction arborists will do regular inspections to ensure the barriers are in place. If the barriers are not adequate, developers are notified and usually required to fix them within 24-hours or a report is submitted to the City for enforcement.*

## 2. Discussion about Parks

The majority of participant comments about the proposed parks related to differences between the layout of parks shown in the Secondary Plan (i.e., all parks being adjacent to the woodlot), and the proposed locations shown in the District Plan (i.e., parks distributed across the neighbourhood with some park land adjacent to the woodlot and some park land in the south and north of the District Plan area).

Concerns shared about the proposed parkland distribution in the District Plan, included:

- Development proposed in blocks 2, 4, 5, and 14 adjacent to the woodlot. Development in block 4 is particularly concerning because it will block views of the woodlot.
- Negatively impacting the woodlot and wildlife by breaking up the park space and woodlot.
- Concern about illegal activity in parks and the woodlot (e.g., use of fireworks).

Comments and responses from the project team, summarized below, related to the different types of park space that are proposed and the reasons for their different locations.

- *In addition to the protected woodlot area, the District Plan area will include both active and passive park uses.*
- *The passive park space, what is being referred to as the ecological park, will be located adjacent to the woodlot and is meant to act as a buffer to protect and enhance the woodlot. This will include a trail system through the woodlot that will allow people to experience the woodlot without damaging the woodlot.*
- *The active park spaces, proposed in blocks 6 and 25 in the south and north of the neighbourhood, will likely include a variety of active uses (e.g. playgrounds, splash pads, space for sports, etc. and other active uses). These spaces are purposely proposed to be located away from the woodlot in an effort to keep active uses separate and protect the woodlot. Councillor Pasternak (who is also the Vice Chair of the City's Infrastructure and Environment Committee) said that the City is learning that active park uses cannot be located in parks that are close to residential areas.*
- *The development proposed in blocks 2, 4, 5, and 14 are not within the woodlot and can act as buffers to help protect the woodlot. Studies have shown that mid and high-rise developments have less impact on environmentally sensitive areas because it is less likely that people living around these areas will do things that damage the area (e.g., throw grass clippings, extend their yards, and/or allow their pets into the area).*
- *The use of fireworks in parks and/or the woodlot is illegal and is an issue of enforcement for the police.*

### 3. Discussion about proposed Street A & Street B

#### Street A

- Members of the DLCVA, NYCPP and the project team discussed the proposed location of Street A, including where it is proposed to enter from Keele Street and the path it will follow to connect to Sheppard Ave W. *Street A is proposed to enter from Keele Street between blocks 1 and 2 then curve north-east, remaining south of the woodlot, before turning directly east connecting with Sheppard Ave W between blocks 3 and 5 (see appendix A for further detail on the proposed path of Street A in the Site Walk Map and the District Plan Built Form Concept).*
- Members of the DLCVA shared concern about Street A being used as a shortcut between Sheppard and Keele and asked if it would be possible to design it as two one-way streets, instead of a through street. *The City said that Transportation Services is reviewing the proposed plan for Street A and at this point no one has proposed an alternative for Street A. The project team said that a significant community is being created and part of this process is ensuring there is proper access for emergency services. Providing this access requires connected streets, not cul-de-sacs.*
- Members of DLCVA asked if the intersection of Street A and Keele will have a stoplight. *The City said a decision on this has not yet been made but it is likely that it will include a stoplight.*

#### Street B

- Is Street B proposed to run along the same location as the existing fence? *No, Street B will be further north.*

### 4. Discussion about the number and location of residential units

Members of the DLVCA shared a few comments and questions, including:

- How many units will there be in buildings shown in blocks 14 and 15 (area east of Keele Street and south of Street B)? *We anticipate these will be mid-rise buildings, but we don't know the exact number of units yet. This will be determined later in the process.*
- Why not stick with the 3550 units described in the Secondary Plan instead of proposing approximately 3985 units? *It's now 2021 and we need to respond to a growing city and the need for housing. We are working from the density provisions provided by the City's Secondary Plan and are not proposing any increase.*
- Locate more density / residential units in the north-east corner near transit and away from the woodlot.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The project team and Councillor thanked members of the DLCVA and NYCPP for attending the walk and said it was great to be able to see everyone in person. The project team committed to sharing a draft summary of the discussion with participants. There was discussion and agreement to have a follow-up site walk, likely in the fall.

## Appendix A – District Plan Maps

### Site Walk Map

# William Baker Woodlot - Ecological Management Plan

*A clear, actionable, ecologically-focused plan to ensure the resiliency of the William Baker woodlot through its transition into the heart of the future William Baker neighbourhood, and well into the future.*

*The EMP's Guiding Principles are to*

**PROTECT**

**ENHANCE**

**INTEGRATE**

**EDUCATE**



## AREAS OF INTEREST

- 1 Development Areas – Integrate trees
- 2 Former Backyards – Expand canopy and restore understory
- 3 Former Roadway – Integrate trail, expand canopy
- 4 North Edge – Smooth 'sawtooths', add buffer
- 5 Sumac fringe – Remove invasives, diversify cover
- 6 Park Block 24 – Expand & diversify canopy
- 7 Woodlot Block 8 – Restore understory, manage invasives
- 8 "Ecological Park" – Enhance woodland cover & ecological functions (edge succession, forest interior)

### Legend

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Site                       | Streets                                |
| Natural Heritage – Woodlot | High Rise Residential (13+ storeys)    |
| Public Open Space/Parks    | Mid Rise Residential (5-12 storeys)    |
| Mixed Use                  | Low Rise Residential (up to 4 storeys) |

*This aerial shows housing that was removed in 2014; a concrete barrier wall was also removed along Keele Street at that time.*

Canada Lands Company  
Société immobilière du Canada

**DOUGAN & ASSOCIATES**  
ECOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS

# District Plan Built Form Concept

