

WILLIAM BAKER Neighbourhood

# **Phase Three** **Community Feedback Report**

January, 2021

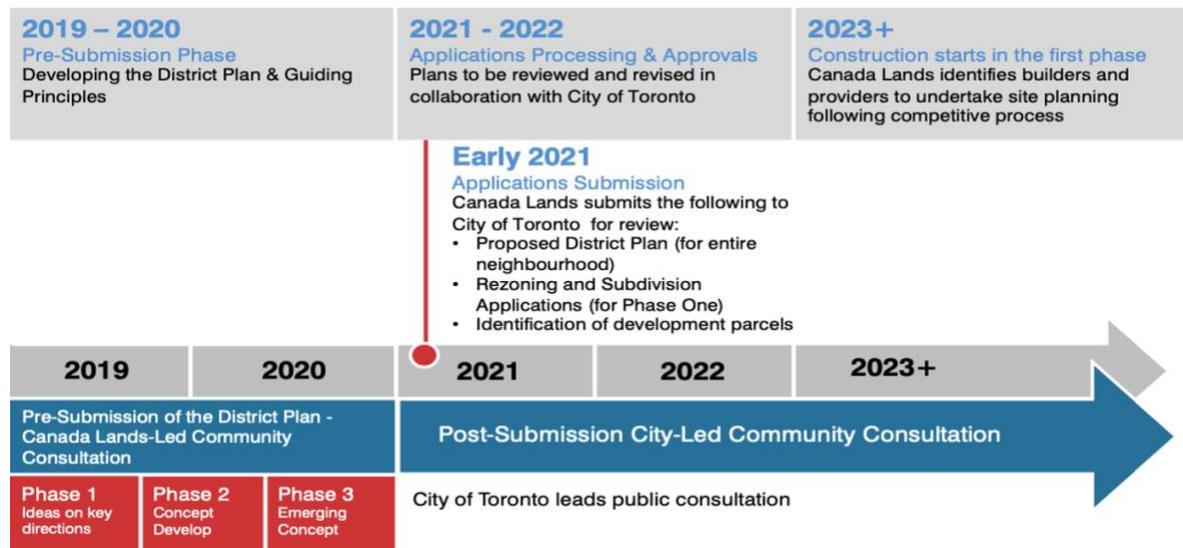
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# Process Recap & Update

## Process Recap

The William Baker Neighbourhood 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. Since that time, Canada Lands Company (Canada Lands) has completed three phases of consultation with the local community and expects to submit their District Plan and development applications to the City of Toronto for review in early 2021. The City of Toronto review process is expected to take approximately two years with construction beginning no early than 2023. Consultation with the local community will continue throughout the City review process. The graphic below provides more detail on the expected timeline, followed by a high-level description of each of the three phases of consultation.



*Pre-Submission, Consultation and Application Process for William Baker*

### Phase Three Consultation Overview (October 2020 – January 2021)

The third and final phase of pre-submission consultation took place from October 2020 until January 2021. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, Canada Lands and its consultant team hosted virtual consultations to present and seek feedback on the preferred Emerging District Plan Land Use Concept for the future neighbourhood. The materials and feedback shared during these virtual presentations, as well as an interactive online feedback form were made available on the project website shortly after the meetings. Additional details on the third phase of consultation are included in the appendix of this report. The materials shared at the meetings and detailed feedback summary reports are available on the project website at [www.williamsbakerneighbourhood.ca](http://www.williamsbakerneighbourhood.ca)

## **Phase Two Consultation Overview** (November 2019 – January 2020)

The second phase of consultation took place in fall 2019 and early 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. Additional detail on the phase two consultation, including the materials shared at the consultation activities and the full Community Feedback Report are available on the project website.

## **Phase One Consultation Overview** (January – August 2019)

The first phase of consultation for the William Baker District Plan included a number of consultation activities where 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 Phase One consultation, including the full Community Feedback Report and materials shared at the consultation activities and the full Community Feedback Report are available on the project website.

## **Overall Observations – Phase Three Consultations**

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These overall observations highlight topics raised consistently throughout Phase Three Consultations; they should be read in concert with the more detailed summary of feedback that follows.

**Interest in the process and future neighbourhood.** Similar to Phases One and Two, several participants expressed interest in the future neighbourhood and said they are keen to see a neighbourhood that can offer new community amenities to existing and future residents.

**Woodlot, Parks and New Pedestrian Bridge.** Continued support for a new pedestrian bridge and protecting the woodlot. Support for the proposed green space in the south connecting the woodlot to the pedestrian bridge. Some concern about the proposed low-rise residential development block between the woodlot and the southwest quadrant of Sheppard Avenue West and the proposed central east-west road. Interest in protecting as many mature trees in the neighbourhood as possible, regardless of whether they are in the woodlot or not.

**Options for seniors.** Some said it was refreshing to hear seniors discussed and thoughtfully integrated into the design of the proposed District Plan. There was also concern from some that what was presented in Canada Lands' proposed District Plan does not align with their vision for a seniors village in William Baker.

**Roads and connectivity.** There was strong advocacy for ensuring safe and comfortable connections throughout the neighbourhood with suggestions to separate uses/users (i.e. sidewalks, bike lanes, and roads) to increase safety and reduce potential conflicts

**Community Services & Facilities.** There was continued interest in seeing the future City of Toronto Downsview community centre located near the William Baker neighbourhood at the southeast corner of Keele and Sheppard.

## **Summary of Feedback**

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Phase three of the consultation process focused on presenting the preferred emerging development concept that will inform development applications for the William Baker District Plan. Canada Lands and its consultation team presented and sought feedback on the emerging concept.

Canada Lands hosted two virtual public sessions to share information and seek feedback about the emerging District Plan concept. Following the sessions, the presentation slides and recordings of the two sessions were made available on the project website. An online feedback form was also made available online following the public sessions until early 2021. Canada Lands also hosted virtual meetings with local organizations. This report integrates feedback shared at the public sessions, meetings with local organizations, and online. Detailed summaries of the feedback shared at the public sessions and meetings with local organizations are available on the project website.

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.

### **Overview of the Emerging Concept Plan**

During the Phase Two Consultations, the project team presented and received feedback on three concept options for the William Baker neighbourhood. Based on the feedback received and ongoing work by Canada Lands and its consultant team, Canada Lands presented a preferred emerging concept which included a hybrid of various components of each concept option presented in Phase Two. The emerging District Plan concept includes:

- Distribution of public open space across the entire neighbourhood.
- Significant preservation and enhancement of the natural heritage elements of the woodlot.
- A mix of housing types (including affordable housing and seniors housing options).
- Locating a strong neighbourhood focus at Keele and Sheppard and close to bus services and other retail.
- A new pedestrian bridge connecting Downsview Park to the William Baker Neighbourhood, including park space at the southern edge of the neighbourhood that connects to the woodlot.

Additionally, the emerging concept plan presented to participants was structured in a way that aims to make the William Baker neighbourhood a place for everyone - a hub of activity created by a mix of people and uses, including seniors. The hub refers to housing, medical uses, shops, restaurants, cafes or community space geared to everyone (including seniors) being integrated as part of the development and within the Neighbourhood Focus.

### **Detailed feedback on the emerging concept option**

Participants provided feedback about different aspects of the preferred emerging concept. The topics participants shared feedback about include: the woodlot, parks and pedestrian bridge; residential land use and built form, transportation and mobility, options for seniors, affordable housing and community services, facilities and retail/commercial uses.

#### **Woodlot, Parks and Pedestrian Bridge**

**Support for protecting the woodlot and green space.** Many participants reiterated their support for protecting and enhancing the woodlot and the natural green space in and around the William Baker neighbourhood. There was a suggestion to consider engaging Indigenous peoples as managers and stewards of the woodlot in order to protect green space with traditional ecological knowledge.

**Support for the pedestrian bridge.** Many participants shared support for enhancing the pedestrian bridge to create an accessible connection between William Baker and Downsview Park.

**Some concern about a residential development block proposed east of the woodlot.** Some participants raised concerns about the proposed low-rise development block between the woodlot, the southwest quadrant of Sheppard Avenue West and the proposed central east-west road. Concerns included encroaching on the woodlot and blocking views of the woodlot from the surrounding area. Some suggested relocating the associated residents units to other areas in the neighbourhood such as the north-east corner, near the Downsview Park TTC/GO Station.

#### **Residential Land Use and Built Form**

**Mixed opinions on height and density.** Some participants shared support for building taller residential buildings along the intersection of Keele and Sheppard. A few participants also suggested that by building more high-rise buildings, Canada Lands could deliver the same density with less infringement on the woodlot. Other participants suggested building low-rise buildings along the Shepard Avenue West street to keep the woodlot visible. One participant was also concerned that the southern portion of the development would be too dense and suggested locating more people in the North East section of the neighbourhood near the TTC/GO station.

## Transportation and Mobility

**Support for mixed mobility options.** There was strong advocacy for safe and comfortable pedestrian connections with a suggestion to separate all pedestrian pathways from bike lanes to avoid conflicts.

**Some concern about road connections.** Some participants raised concerns about the internal east-west road provided by the City's Secondary Plan shown through the William Baker site from Sheppard to Keele, south of the woodlot. Concerns included traffic congestion and pedestrian safety. There were suggestions to remove the road altogether or include crosswalks and low speed limits to mitigate congestion and create a safe pedestrian environment.

### **Interest in seeing connections to the area north of the neighbourhood.**

Representatives from the Duke Heights BIA reiterated their interest in seeing a proposed connection from the northern portion of the William Baker neighbourhood and the lands north of the site. They noted that this road extension is supported in the Keele-Finch study and shared information about how this connection could be conceptually planned.

**Suggestions for parking and internal transit.** Some participants discussed parking and advocated for providing parking for residents, staff and visitors of the William Baker Neighbourhood. A few participants suggested providing adequate transit service for senior service providers within the William Baker neighbourhood.

## Options for Seniors

**Integration and inclusion of seniors.** Some participants said it was refreshing to hear seniors discussed and thoughtfully integrated into the design of the proposed District Plan. Representatives of the York Centre Seniors Steering (YC SSC) said that what was presented does not entirely align with their vision for a seniors village and presented an alternative vision. There were mixed opinions on whether a childcare centre should be built near seniors buildings as some expressed it was important for intergenerational community building, but others thought seniors may be sensitive to noise created by a childcare facility. Some participants also suggested that the project team take a look at the Columbus Centre at Lawrence and Dufferin to see a good example of a seniors vision.

**Accessibility and safety for seniors.** There were some concerns on the accessibility and safety of seniors with the current emerging plan. One participant expressed concern about having private for-profit organizations run seniors facilities and amenities and supported the inclusion of non-profit seniors organizations. It was also suggested that any seniors buildings be built closer to each other and other amenities such as the future community centre to ensure greater senior accessibility, especially during the winter months.

## Affordable Housing

**Some interest in a range of affordable housing options.** A few participants shared appreciation for the range of affordable housing options being considered. There was a suggestion to consider expanding the affordable housing options to include an emergency shelter.

## Community Services, Facilities and Commercial Uses

**Support for City of Toronto Community Centre.** Generally, participants were encouraged by the potential building of a new community centre near the William Baker neighbourhood. There were some suggestions that Canada Lands consider front-end financing for the Community Centre and/or Canada Lands and the City reach out to the private sector to investigate a public-private partnership (P3) to move the process along as quickly as possible.

**Interest in a new elementary school.** There was some interest in a potential a new Catholic elementary school within the William Baker neighbourhood. One participant noted that there is already a Catholic elementary school and suggested the City and school board explore the impacts (positive and negative) of having two elementary schools so close to one another before making a decision.

**Retail and Commercial Uses.** Participants reiterated support for including a variety of retail/commercial uses in the neighbourhood to serve future residents and existing residents in the surrounding area. There was a suggestion to implement a deliberate retail strategy to attract affordable retail to William Baker (e.g. an affordable grocery store).

## Next Steps

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Canada Lands and the project team thanked all participants for their continued participation in the process. Canada Lands expects to submit their District Plan and development applications to the City of Toronto for review in early 2021. The City review process is expected to take approximately two years with ongoing opportunities for community participation and input. The first phase of construction is not expected to begin before 2023. Both the City and Canada Lands will continue to provide updates to the local community, including how to stay involved.

# Appendix 1. Overview of Phase Three Consultation Activities

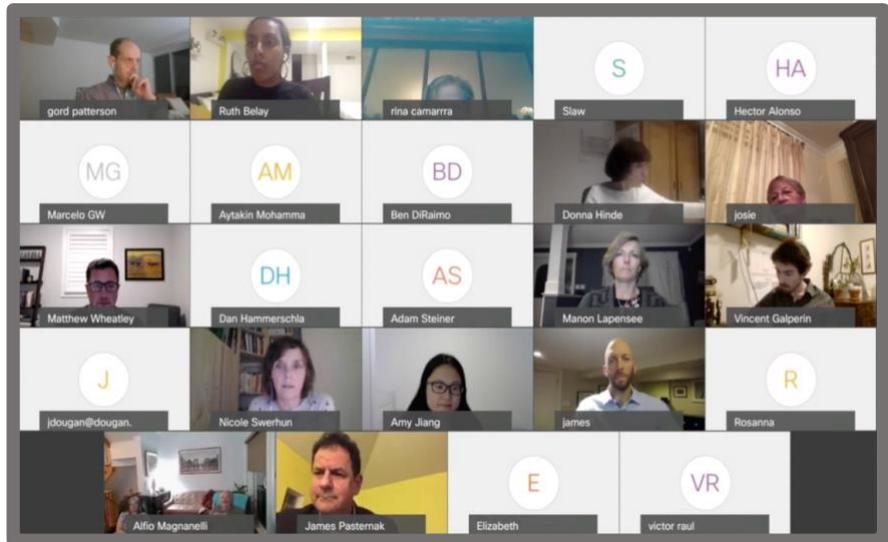
## Virtual Public Sessions

November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020

On Tuesday November 10<sup>th</sup> from 12:00-2:00 pm and 7:00-9:00 pm, Canada Lands hosted two public sessions virtually to present and seek feedback on the preferred Emerging District Plan Land Use Concept for the future neighbourhood. The public sessions included a presentation on the emerging district plan followed by discussion and questions of clarification. During the virtual meeting, Canada Lands and their consultant team shared information, answered questions and recorded feedback received. Participants were able to join online and/or call-in by phone.

Shortly after the public meetings, the project team uploaded the materials including the presentation slides, recordings of the meetings and summaries of the feedback shared at each session. Notice of the meetings were delivered

through a variety of mechanisms, including: by mail to residents and businesses within approximately 1km from the site; email to organizations and individuals that signed up for updates and/or participated in previous consultation activities; advertisements in local newspapers (Metroland & L'Express); on the project website; notice in the Downsview Park Newsletter; and through Canada Lands social media channels.



### **Virtual Stakeholder Meetings**

*November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Duke Heights BIA*

*November 4<sup>th</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 - York Centre Seniors Steering Committee*

*November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Downsview Lands Community Voice Association*

*November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 - Wilson Village BIA*

Prior to the public sessions, Canada Lands and its consultation team hosted virtual meetings with local organizations to present and seek feedback about the preferred Emerging District Plan Land Use Concept. Summaries of the feedback shared at the meetings are available on the project website.

### **Online Feedback Form**

*November 11<sup>th</sup>- January 2021*

Canada Lands and its consultant team created and uploaded an online feedback form as another option for participants to share their feedback with the project team. The online form was made available following the public sessions and included the same questions asked at the virtual public sessions. Participants were encouraged to review the project materials (presentation slides and meeting recordings) also available on the project website prior to submitting feedback.