

Allen District Plan

## Community Consultation Meeting #1 Meeting Summary

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

6:30pm – 9:30pm

William Lyon Mackenzie Collegiate Institute

20 Tillplain Road

---

### Overview

*On May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 the City of Toronto hosted a Community Consultation meeting with Build Toronto and their consultant team for the Allen District Plan. The purpose of this meeting was to present the district planning process and the draft Allen District Plan, answer questions of clarification and receive feedback on the draft Allen District Plan.*

*Approximately 75 people attended the meeting. Councillor James Pasternak, City of Toronto Staff including planning, policy, transportation, urban design, and Build Toronto and their consultants all took part in the meeting. The meeting agenda is attached as Appendix A.*

*City of Toronto Councillor James Pasternak, Ward 10, welcomed meeting participants, thanked them for attending and encouraged ongoing participation in the process. Following the Councillor's welcome, Doug Stiles, City of Toronto Community Planning, North York District, provided an overview presentation of the City of Toronto planning process. Next, Bill Bryck, President & CEO of Build Toronto, shared a company overview and Build Toronto's involvement in the Allen District. Pino Di Mascio, Partner, Urban Strategies, then provided an overview of the work done to date on the Draft Allen District Plan. Following this, the floor was opened to questions and feedback.*

*This summary was written by Matthew Wheatley and Bianca Wylie of Swerhun Facilitation, a third-party facilitation firm that Build Toronto has retained to provide independent facilitation services. This summary provides a high level overview of the perspectives and advice provided by participants. Each section contains feedback shared verbally at the meeting, as well as a separate section for written comments received.*

*Copies of the presentations provided can be found on the project website at [thealldistrict.ca](http://thealldistrict.ca)*

*This summary was subject to participant review prior to being finalized.*

### Meeting Structure

Following the Councillor's welcome and the overview presentations the meeting was organized around four topics: questions of clarification, feedback on the strengths of the draft Allen District Plan, feedback on the challenges of the draft Allen District Plan, and advice on the identified areas for community input. The sections below organize feedback shared by participants, both during discussions and on their worksheets.

### Summary of Feedback Topics

#### **Strengths of the Allen District Plan:**

Feedback about the strengths of the draft Allen District Plan revolve around: overall support for the development, infrastructure, the road network, parkland and green space, and commercial and residential development.

## Challenges of the Allen District Plan:

Feedback about the challenges of the draft Allen District Plan revolve around: transportation and transit, the consultation process, infrastructure, community services and facilities, affordable housing, pedestrian and cycling Infrastructure, built form and design, parkland, safety and accessibility, construction and noise, and sustainability.

## Advice on the Identified Areas for Community Input

Advice on the areas identified for community input included revolved around: park programming, the acre for community use, green space location, retail suggestions, sustainability approach, public art approach, public plazas approach.

Detailed feedback on each of these three areas of discussion follows.

## Detailed Feedback Summary

### Questions of Clarification

Questions from meeting participants are in **bold**; answers from Councillor Pasternak and the Project Team, including City of Toronto Planning staff and Build Toronto and their consultants, are in *italics*, the author of each response is identified in underlined text.

- **What is the status of the covenants held by Bombardier?** Bill Bryck - Build Toronto: *Bombardier holds very limited covenants, which solely relate to maximum building heights in the area.*
- **How many lanes will Road A have and how will the bike path running parallel to Road A be made safe?** Pino Di Mascio – Urban Strategies: *The plan calls for 4 lanes, two in each direction. The bike path and pedestrian walk way will be made safe by separating them from Road A in a dedicated greenway.*
- **Does Build Toronto have the authority to intervene in the immediate community surrounding the Allen District where development has stalled and houses are being boarded up?** Bill Bryck: *Build Toronto does not have plans to buy any additional lands and this is not within Build Toronto's mandate. If there are opportunities to assist in other areas for the City of Toronto, Build Toronto may look into this.*
- **In the presentation you mentioned that Allen Road has 3 lanes in each direction but one lane can only be used by transit (buses). Are there plans to add an extra lane to Allen Road for private vehicles?** Pino DiMascio: *No, our assumption is that once the subway is extended all three lanes on Allen Road will be open for private vehicles because the transit right-of-way will no longer be needed. There will be a separate process to determine this and further discussions with TTC are required.*
- **Will the route planned for Street A impact existing residential properties north of Banting Park, i.e. cut through any existing properties?** Pino DiMascio: *No.*
- **Are there any plans for single-detached homes?** Pino DiMascio: *No, the majority of the homes in the neighbourhood area are planned for townhouses with some semi-detached.*
- **Where will the affordable housing be located?** Bill Bryck: *The City of Toronto's policy for the affordable housing is for affordable housing to be spread out throughout the entire area. The affordable housing units will be mixed throughout the development; you won't be able to identify these units from the outside.*

- **Will the low-rise units that back on to Wilson Heights Blvd. have road access to Wilson Heights Blvd?** *Pino DiMascio: Yes, there will be some points of access on to Wilson Heights Blvd.*
- **Does building along Allen Road present a safety issue with airport being located where it is?** *Pino DiMascio: No, there are height restrictions for the area because of the airport that all development must follow to ensure safety.*
- **Councillor Pasternak said the current ramps onto Allen Road will stay, is this correct?** *Pino DiMascio: Yes, the Allen District Plan does not contemplate removing the ramps.*
- **How do the 42,000 new residents referred to in the Secondary Plan compare to existing numbers in the Bathurst Manor area?** *Pino DiMascio: To clarify, the 42,000 new residents and jobs referred to in the City's presentation is the projected number for the entire Downsview Area Secondary Plan. The draft Allen District Plan proposes approximately 3,000 new residential units for the Build Toronto lands with approximately 6,000 new residents.*
- **Can you guarantee that all the water that is going to come off the hard surfaces, even in a really large 500-year storm, will be contained in the stormwater management pond and will not negatively impact the surrounding area?** *Alex Williams – MMM Group: Our plans are based on controlling runoff for 100-year storm events onsite.*
- **Do the stormwater management plans take into account that rainwater at our building (1011 Sheppard Ave W) currently goes into our sump pump and that we've had several instances of flooding?** *Alex Williams: I cannot speak to your individual concern but the analysis of the sewer system does take water flows from the sump into account.*
- **How many affordable housing units does the plan propose; how many will be ownership and how many will be rental?** *Pino DiMascio: The plan proposes a total of 300 affordable units with 150 ownership and 150 rental.*
- **What will the price range be for the affordable units?** *Bill Bryck: We do not know at this time. Price is determined based on a percentage of the average market price for homes in the area when they are brought to market.*
- **Will current residents have a say in the plan for affordable housing, including how many units and how they will impact existing property values?** *Bill Bryck: Affordable housing is a requirement from the City, Build Toronto will follow the City regulations for the number of units and location. Affordable units are generally built to the same exterior standards as other homes in the area. The differences are on the interior, e.g. the types of finishes and appliances.*  
*Councillor Pasternak: The community we live in has five B'nai Brith buildings and social housing buildings that offer hundreds of affordable housing units and our community is also experiencing one of the highest levels of property value growth in the City. I wouldn't draw a connection between affordable housing and decreased property values.*
- **How is this plan dealing with school capacity?** *Bill Bryck: Both the Toronto District and Toronto Catholic District School Boards were consulted on capacity and through the circulation process, report directly to the City of Toronto.*  
*Councillor Pasternak: School capacity has always be an issue for our community, which requires a balance. High enrolment and strong capacity a good thing, what you don't want is low capacity and your local school being at risk of shutting down.*

- **How will the increased vehicle traffic at the intersection of Allen Road and Sheppard Ave be dealt with?** *Peter Hillier – MMM Group: This plan includes the development of a road network that will divert traffic away from the intersection of Allen Road and Sheppard Ave through neighbouring streets in the Allen District. The future volume at Allen Road and Sheppard Ave is anticipated to be roughly the same as it is now.*
- **Will the four new intersections proposed along Allen Road south of Sheppard Ave alter the configuration of the ramps onto Allen Road?** *Pino DiMascio: No.*
- **What will the future speed limit be for Allen Road around the four new intersections proposed?** *Pino DiMascio: We do not know at this time.*
- **What is the anticipated size of the townhouses?** *Pino DiMascio: Approximately 1200 – 2000 square feet.*
- **Are there plans to put parking under Banting Park?** *Bill Bryck: No, the City does not allow parking underneath City parks.*

## Feedback on the Strengths of the Draft Allen District Plan

### Overall support for the development

- Happy to see the lands finally being used and developed.
- Development will improve the public realm and the overall area.
- Development will result in increased revenue generation for the City of Toronto.

### Infrastructure

- Increased population will bring improvements to hard and soft services in the area.
- Happy to see planned improvements to the sewer and stormwater management system.

### Road Network

- Like the proposed changes to Allen Road and that will make it more like an urban street and less like a highway.

### Parkland and Green Space

- Happy to see the incorporation of landscaping and increased parkland.
- It's good to see that a new park is being planned for the area.

### Commercial Development

- Glad to see commercial development is part of the plan, this is something the area really needs.
- Really like the idea of including a grocery store in the development.

## Feedback on the Challenges of the Draft Allen District Plan

### Transportation and Transit

#### Traffic Congestion

- Concern that existing traffic congestion and gridlock will increase as a result of this plan.
- The expansion of Transit Road should be accelerated and completed prior to the development of the Allen District.

- This plan will likely divert more traffic onto Wilson Heights Blvd, which is already very congested.
- Allen Road should remain a highway. It needs to provide a direct and quick north south route through the area. Don't want to see traffic slowed down on Allen Road by new street lights.

#### Street A

- Ensure there is proper separation between Street A and the greenway to guarantee the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Clarify the proposed route for Street A, including if / how it will connect to Wilson Avenue to the south.

#### Transit

- Adding density to this area will put more stress on the existing subway service, which is already congested.
- Would like to see plans for transit (buses) within the proposed development to help get people to the Downsview Subway Station and move people in and out of the area.

#### Parking

- Implement on-street parking restrictions during peak hours to reduce congestion.
- Introduce car share parking spots at the Downsview Subway Station.

#### **Infrastructure**

- The Almore sewer repairs need to be completed before any development occurs; drainage is a large existing problem and a major concern.
- The infrastructure assessment should incorporate a larger geographic area, beyond the boundaries of the Allen District.

#### **Community Services and Facilities**

- There will be a need for additional schools. Current schools are already at capacity and use portables to accommodate existing students.

#### **Affordable Housing & Property Values**

- Concern that the proposed residential development will devalue existing single-detached homes in the area

#### **Pedestrian and Cycling Infrastructure**

- Create more east west connections for bikes and pedestrians, similar to the greenway that runs north and south.

#### **Built Form & Design**

- Concern that the tall buildings around Banting Park will block sunlight and cast shadows.
- Select only reputable developers to ensure high quality development is produced.

#### **Parkland**

- Locate the new park in the centre of the Build Toronto lands as opposed to the southern edge. Putting the park in the centre will make it more a part of the community and will reduce the distance residents have to travel to access it.

### **Safety and Accessibility**

- Explain how safety will be maintained, e.g. use of lighting in residential areas and parks and traffic calming measures on residential streets.
- Concern that the Allen Road and Sheppard Ave intersection will be less safe.
- All development should be made to support people with accessibility challenges, including the residential styles chosen.
- Ensure services are provided seniors and people with disabilities.
- Ensure there is sufficient EMS and police support for the area.

### **Construction & Noise**

- Ensure appropriate noise by-laws are put in place and enforced.

## **Advice on the Identified “Areas for Community Input”**

### **Park Programming**

Participants suggested several park uses they would like to see considered for the new park, including:

- Soccer and football fields;
- Tennis courts;
- Area for Frisbee;
- Running track;
- Dog park;
- Outdoor exercise equipment; and
- Swimming pool.

Participants also discussed safety, noting the importance of providing good lighting in the new park and improving / increasing lighting in Banting Park. One participant suggested adopting New Urbanism standards for lighting, i.e. installing 15-foot instead of 30-foot light standards.

### **Acre of Community Use**

Suggestions for the acre of community use included:

- A library with programming and space for both children and adults; and
- A community centre / space with programming for seniors and families and space for meetings and performances.

Participants also said that the acre of community use should help to promote a sense of community by providing amenities that respond to the needs of the people living in the area.

### **Green Space Location**

Participants provided a number of suggestions for the green space location, size and the amenities they would like to see built-in, including:

- Increase the amount of green space by including additional parkettes, especially in the higher density areas;

### **Retail Suggestions**

Participants suggested a number of retail uses they feel the area needs, including:

- Grocery stores / supermarkets
- Pharmacies
- Small cafes and restaurants with outdoor patios
- Stores that sell fresh food (e.g. fruits and vegetables)
- Small business – “the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker”.
- Doctor’s offices / walk-in clinics;
- Banks;
- Upscale retail on Wilson Heights Blvd. (e.g. Starbucks);

Participants recommended not be including big box stores in the plan.

Participants suggested incorporating a mini-indoor mall in the commercial area.

### **Sustainability Approach**

Suggestions on the sustainability approach included:

- Buildings should be LEED certified;
- Make the entire community walkable.

### **Public Art Approach**

Participants said the public art should be designed to be useful, e.g. play structures for children and / or recreational uses for all ages.

## **Written Feedback**

Participants also provided feedback and advice by filling out feedback forms provided at the meeting and sending feedback by email after the meeting. Much of the written feedback reinforced the comments shared verbally during the meeting. Additional comments shared in writing are summarized below.

## **Strengths of the Draft Allen District Plan**

### **Overall support for the development**

- This will make the area more attractive and help to revitalize the area.
- The overall planned distribution of density is good.
- Pleasantly surprised by the broad depth and span of the plan presented with due consideration given to issues relating to sewer and servicing infrastructure improvements and the appropriate mix of housing that includes type, tenure and affordability, along with parklands, restaurants, shopping and coffee houses.

### **Road Network**

- Like that Wilson Heights Blvd. will remain a secondary road for neighbourhood residents.
- Glad to hear the ramps from Wilson Heights Blvd. on to Allen Road will remain.

### **Parkland and Green Space**

- Good to see a pedestrian and cycling link (greenway) between Banting Park and the future park.

## **Residential Areas**

- Both the apartment area and the low-rise neighbourhood area along Wilson Heights Blvd. are well conceived.
- Good to see plans for affordable housing; there is a need for general affordability, not just for people with low-incomes.

## **Challenges of the Draft Allen District Plan**

### **Transportation and Transit**

#### Traffic Congestion

- The east/west streets in the Neighbourhood Area should not extend into the existing Clanton Park neighbourhood.
- Improve access to the 401 for the volume of southbound traffic coming from Dufferin and Bathurst streets, respectively. This will help with the additional traffic flow anticipated from this development into the Allen District from the 401.

#### Transit

- Increase the transit ramp from Allen Road from one lane to two.

#### Parking

- Concern that there won't be adequate parking for transit users.
- Concerns about losing parking to the south at Wilson Station, which combined with losing parking at Downsview Station and restrictions at Yorkdale could mean little to no commuter parking on the Spadina/University side all the way up from Eglinton West Station. People from our and other "in-between" neighbourhoods are unlikely to drive far north to park and travel south again. We would like more granular information as to the timelines placed against the TTC expansion and / or for the area currently hosting the Downsview Station parking to be last to be developed and for a percentage of the designated commuter parking spaces to be either retained or replaced in the mixed-use portion of the development.

#### Safety

- Address safety issues created by cars travelling at very high speeds from Allen Road and off the ramps at Wilson Heights Blvd.
- Add traffic lights and reduce speed limits on Wilson Heights Blvd to facilitate left turns and increase safety.

### **Process**

- Clarify, with examples, if developers will be able to go to the Ontario Municipal Board to appeal / modify parts of the Allen District Plan once finalized.
- Feel that we have no influence on this plan.

### **Community Services and Facilities**

- There is a need for a community centre in the area.

### **Affordable Housing & Property Values**

- Townhouses and affordable housing should be further reviewed with existing residents, specifically Balmoral homeowners. Balmoral homeowners should have a say in the plan for affordable housing, including their final location.

### **Built Form & Design**

- The plan should include some single-detached homes.
- The layout of the townhomes will reduce the beauty of the neighbourhood.

### **Parkland**

- The area will lose existing greenspace that currently exists on the vacant land.

### **Sustainability**

- Explain any plans to minimize energy consumption in the district, e.g. lighting, promoting active transportation, etc.

### **Construction & Noise**

- Long-term construction will negatively impact existing residents.

## **Advice on the Identified “Areas for Community Input”**

### **Park Programming**

Participants suggested several park uses they would like to see considered for the new park, including:

- Basketball courts;
- Kid friendly areas;
- Skating rink; and
- Summer day camps.

### **Public Plazas Approach**

Participants said they would like to see the public plaza including:

- Space for community events, e.g. farmers’ markets

### **Green Space Location**

Participants provided a number of suggestions for the green space location, size and the amenities they would like to see built-in, including:

- Walking and cycling paths
- A bush area for local fauna
- Speed bumps on roads near the park

### **Sustainability Approach**

Suggestions on the sustainability approach included:

- Provide public education on the use of green areas.

### **Public Art Approach**

Participants said the public art should:

- Be representative of the existing community by reflecting its heritage.

Include meaningful sculptures with native flavour and multiculturalism

## Next Steps

Councillor Pasternak and the Project Team thanked meeting participants for their participation and feedback. The Project Team asked participants to send any additional feedback within a week and committed to sharing a draft meeting summary with all participants for their review prior to finalizing the meeting summary. The Project Team also encouraged participants to sign up to the project website at [www.thealldistrict.ca](http://www.thealldistrict.ca) to receive updates on the project's progress and to receive notification of the next public meeting, anticipated for the end of 2016/early 2017.

## Appendix A – Meeting Agenda

### Local Advisory Committee Meeting 1 Agenda

- 6:30 pm**                      **Introductions & Agenda Review**  
Doug Stiles, *Community Planning, North York District, City of Toronto*  
Bianca Wylie, *Facilitator, Swerhun Facilitation*
- 6:40**                              **Welcome**  
*Councillor James Pasternak, Ward 10, City of Toronto*
- 6:45**                              **Presentation/Participant Briefing**  
District Plan Process – *Doug Stiles, Community Planning, North York District, City of Toronto*  
Project Overview and Engagement Process - *Bill Bryck, President & CEO, Build Toronto*  
Technical Plan Review - *Pino Di Mascio, Partner, Urban Strategies*
- Questions of Clarification
- 7:45**                              **Small Table Discussion**  
Discussion Questions:
1. Do you have any advice or comments on the presentation materials?
  2. What are the strengths of the draft Allen District Plan?
  3. What are the challenges you see with the draft Allen District Plan?
  4. What advice do you have regarding the identified “areas of community input” in the plan?
    - Park programming
    - Acre of community use
    - Public art approach
    - Public plazas approach
    - Green space location
    - Retail suggestions
    - Sustainability approach
- Do you have any other advice or comments?
- 8:20**                              **Full-Room Facilitated Report Back**
- 9:25**                              **Wrap up and Next Steps**
- 9:30**                              **Adjournment**