In the final part of a four-part series on planning and development in each of the city’s community planning districts, NRU sat down with North York district staff for a wide-ranging conversation about active projects and initiatives in the district.

Consistently overshadowed by the gleaming condo towers and buzz of activity taking place in the downtown, North York District planners are creating unique and enviable communities in the suburbs. From the redevelopment of Lawrence Heights to preparing for an aerospace campus in Downsview Park, North York planners are striving to create destinations in north Toronto. Critical to these projects are detailed planning frameworks and collaboration across all city departments to ensure these redevelopments exemplify complete communities.

“We are setting in motion a lot of projects that are resulting in new public parks, public squares, new community facilities, new connections in terms of new public roads, new cycling paths and so forth and a lot of this stuff is being implemented as we speak. And what this is doing is creating a much better urban environment,” said North York community planning director Joe Nanos.

Transit enhancements have been critical to spurring development interest in North York. This includes the extension of the TTC Yonge-University-Spadina line to Vaughan. Opened in December 2017, the extension has resulted in three new stations in Toronto, including York University, Finch West and Downsview Park.

“I think there is a lot of misconception about the subway buildings,” said urban design manager Leo Desorcy, in reference to the grand architecture, high cost and lack of development currently surrounding the sites. “But I think the difference is where we are in the city. When the Yonge line was built out, it replaced the streetcar. The city already existed. Most of the places where the university line [extension] opened, there’s nothing there. So the subway building...becomes a landmark for a neighbourhood that doesn’t yet exist.”

The subway extension to Vaughan has also changed the geographical parameters of what is considered “Midtown,” said Nanos.

“Typically, Midtown has been looked at as Yonge and Eglinton, from a Toronto lens. With the subway extending up to Vaughan, when you look at it from a GTA lens, the north part of Toronto is becoming...”
URBANIZING THE SUBURBS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the midtown of the GTA... and that’s part of the success of those areas and why condos are selling so well because people realize they’re connected to the GTA when they’re there,” he noted.

In addition to the secondary plans for York University and Downsview, the city has launched the Keele Finch Plus study, in preparation for the future Finch West LRT.

Staff is also planning for the proposed Yonge subway extension to Richmond Hill with the Yonge Street North planning study. This study will help develop a vision for the future of Yonge Street, between Finch and Steeles avenues, in response to existing and anticipated development pressures. The environmental assessment has been approved for the subway extension and according to North York central section community planning manager Giulio Cescato, the project team is approaching 30 per cent design.

“Obviously the priority for the city is the relief line,” said Cescato. “The subway extension shouldn’t open before the relief line opens. You’d be pushing that [capacity] problem up to Finch because York Region has approved a lot of density from Steeles to 16th Sideroad. If all of those people get onto the subway without the relief line in place, it’s going to be problematic.”

Cescato said calling it the “downtown relief line” was a misnomer because it was never about connectivity in the downtown.

“It was about connecting the 416 suburbs and [improving] their commute... and adding some capacity on the Yonge line also benefits people coming in from Markham, Pickering and Ajax as well because it gives them another opportunity to get downtown that perhaps isn’t a GO train.”

Many of the large-scale redevelopments taking shape in North York are in areas with pre-existing secondary plans. This includes Downsview, York University, Bayview, North York Centre, Don Mills, Yonge-Eglinton, Lawrence Heights and along the Sheppard East subway corridor.

Significant developments underway include Concord Park Place, an old Canadian Tire warehouse that is being redeveloped by Concord Adex into a large-scale condominium and mixed-use development with 5,000 homes for 10,000 residents. Spanning 45-acres, the development, known as Concord Park Place, will include Toronto’s largest community centre, a public library, childcare facility, recreational facilities, an aquatic centre and an eight-acre public park with a skating rink.

North York east section community planning manager John Andreevsky explained there are also blocks that will be saved for future school sites for the Catholic and public school boards.

“When you look at a project like this, you aren’t just laying out the buildings, you are creating a complete community and connections to surrounding areas,” he said.

The Lawrence Heights Revitalization Project, located south of Yorkdale Shopping Centre, is about the transformation of a 100-acre site into a vibrant mixed-income community. Over 1,208

CONTINUED PAGE 8

Below left: Map showing significant non-residential development in North York District between July 2016 and June 2018.

Below: Map showing significant residential development in North York District between July 2016 and June 2018.

SOURCE FOR ALL: CITY OF TORONTO
URBANIZING THE SUBURBS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Toronto Community Housing units will be replaced, and over 4,000 new private market units will be built, along with new parks, retail space, public art and roads connecting Lawrence Heights to the surrounding community.

In Downsview, Centennial College is planning to open a campus in January 2019 for aerospace and aviation. The historic de Havilland of Canada building is being repurposed for the new campus, which will create 138,000 square feet of instruction space large enough to include a hangar for commercial jets. North York west section community planning manager Al Rezoski explained the campus will be complemented by a mix of residential housing in the Stanley Greene neighbourhood, mixed-use developments in the Allen district and greenspace in Downsview Park and the William Baker neighbourhood.

Although the focus in Toronto is almost always in the downtown, North York planners say it is the work being done in the 416 suburbs that will become the focus as the GTA continues to grow out.

“The whole planning profession focuses on an urban downtown condition and it prejudices it—the downtown is desirable, the suburbs are not,” added Cescato. “But there is no successful downtown without a successful suburb and... our work here...contributes to the urbanity of downtown and the urbanity of suburbs as well.”

Rendering of the York University subway station, located in the heart of the York University campus. This station is intended to remove the existing bus service currently circulating through the campus, and to provide pedestrian access for existing and future facilities and developments on the campus.

ARCHITECT: FOSTER ASSOCIATE ARCHITECTS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: MTW

Top-10 Residential Development Proposals

NORTH YORK DISTRICT, JULY 2016 – JUNE 2018

1. 844 Don Mills Road—Proposal to redevelop the site into 18 blocks consisting of office buildings (including the retention of the Celestica headquarters), commercial and retail space, 4,974 residential units within a range of building types including tall buildings, mid-rise buildings and low-rise town houses, land for a community centre, new public streets, parks and open spaces. A total of 85,645 m² of non-residential gross floor area is proposed.

2. 770 & 805 Don Mills Road—Proposal consists of two development sites, each consisting of three residential towers, with heights ranging from 22 to 52 storeys, above two six-storey base buildings with commercial and community space. A total of 2,377 residential units are proposed.

3. 325, 314-317 Bogert Avenue & 306-308 Poyntz Avenue—Proposal for six residential towers, two blocks of townhouses, a public park, and a public street. The demolition of seven of 10 existing rental buildings is also proposed. The proposal includes a total of 1,617 units—retention of 148 rental units in their existing form and the demolition and replacement of 269 rental units. A three-storey addition is proposed above the retained rental building.

4. 3401 Dufferin Street (Yorkdale Shopping Centre)—Proposal for a long-term mixed-use plan that includes three conceptual block master plan options comprising a range of retail, office, hotel and residential uses and an internal private street network. Among the three options 738 to 1,496 residential units are proposed.

5. 815-845 Eglinton Avenue East, 215 Laird Drive—Proposal for seven buildings with 1,435 units, in a mid-rise and tall building forms, a network of public and private streets, a new public park, publicly-accessible open space, retail and community space.

6. 2450 Victory Park Avenue—Proposal to redevelop the site with four mixed-use buildings ranging in height from 11 to 44 stores, with 1,247 residential units and ground-floor retail space. A new on-site public park and two new private streets are also proposed and the existing seven-storey office building would be demolished.

7. 2901 Bayview Avenue & 630 Sheppard Avenue East (Bayview Village)—Proposal for the north site includes one 19-storey, mixed-use building, two six-storey mixed-use buildings and a retail addition to the existing Bayview Village Shopping Centre (372 dwelling units). Proposal for the south site includes a mixed-use building with two towers (33 and 28 storeys), 760 dwelling units and a five-storey parking structure.

8. 3450 Dufferin Street—Proposal for a mixed-use development consisting of a 37-storey hotel/residential building, 33-storey residential building connected to a six-storey residential building, a 29-storey residential building, two-storey townhouses, new public streets and a public park. A total of 255 hotel rooms, 1,044 residential units and 16,926 m² of non-residential gross floor area are proposed.

9. 110 - 120 Broadway Avenue—Proposal for 28-storey and 35-storey towers connected by six-storey base building. The proposed development would consist of 822 residential units, including 121 rental replacement units, new on-site public parks and mid-block walkway.

10. 4 & 6 Tippett Road—Proposal phased development comprises a 16-storey residential building with 265 units and a 16-storey, mixed-use building with 382 residential units. A new on-site public park and private street.

CONTINUED PAGE 9
Our law firm specializes in planning law, including an active participation with applications for official plan amendments, zoning by-law amendments, site plan approval, registrations of plans of subdivision, severances and minor variances. This has included the processing of applications through the Municipal, Regional and Provincial process and The Local Planning Appeals Tribunal Process.

Intermediate Planner Position
Available Immediately

Minimum 5 Years experience required

We are seeking an individual that is knowledgeable and/or has an understanding of the process in processing applications for minor variances, severances, rezonings and official plan amendments. You will be involved in corresponding directly with clients, consultants and municipal planning staff.

Please send your resume in confidence to postmaster@nrupublishing.com

---

Top-10 Non-Residential Development Proposals

NORTH YORK DISTRICT, JULY 2016 – JUNE 2018

1. 3401 Dufferin Street [Yorkdale Shopping Centre]—Proposal includes three conceptual block master plan options comprising of a range of retail, office, hotel and residential uses and an internal private street network. Among the three options 160,066 m² to 298,061 m² of non-residential gross floor area is proposed.

2. 844 Don Mills Road—Proposal to redevelop the site into 18 blocks consisting of office buildings including the retention of the Celestica headquarters, commercial and retail space, 4,974 residential units within a range of building types including tall buildings, mid-rise buildings and low-rise town houses, land for a community centre, new public streets, parks and open spaces. A total of 85,545 m² of non-residential gross floor area is proposed.

3. 900 York Mills Road—Proposal for two residential mixed-use buildings with proposed heights of 32 and 26 storeys with a total of 564 residential units, and a new eight-storey mid-rise office building. A rear addition to an existing 21-storey hotel, including a new 10-storey hotel, new ballroom and expanded conference centre. A total of 78,495 m² of non-residential gross floor area is proposed.

4. 3125 Steeles Avenue East—Proposed master plan for the site includes the development of eight new buildings with 47,021 m² of additional gross floor area.

5. 3621 Dufferin Street—Proposal for a 10-storey mixed-use development incorporating 166 residential units, 3,467 m² of retail, 5,691 m² of office, and 23,560 m² of self-storage, as well as new public streets and a public park.

6. 755 Caledonia Road—Proposal for the development of four buildings, 28,011 m², with two self-service public storage buildings, one car wash facility and an ancillary building for the self-storage operation.

7. 901 Lawrence Avenue West—Proposal for a new four-storey, 25,780 m², joint venture facility consisting of a separate high school and a community facility.

8. 1750 Finch Avenue East [Seneca College Newnham Campus]—Proposal for a five-storey, 25,579 m² academic and administrative building.

9. 200 Fairbank Avenue—Proposal to construct a 24,121 m² self-storage facility.

10. 3450 Dufferin Street—Proposal for a mixed-use development consisting of a 37-storey hotel/residential building, 33-storey residential building connected to a six-storey residential building, 29-storey residential building, two-storey townhouses, new public streets and an on-site public park. A total of 255 hotel rooms, 1,044 residential units and 16,926 m² of non-residential gross floor area are proposed.

With the greatest of sadness, we must share the heartbreaking news of the passing of our very dear friend and colleague Michael Stewart after a courageous battle with cancer.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his husband Jack, his parents, family and friends.

A memorial service in celebration of Michael’s life will be held on Friday, November 9th at 2:00pm at St. James Cathedral Centre – Snell Hall.

If desired, donations in memory of Michael may be made to the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation.

---

In Memoriam: Michael Stewart