



Bayview Village Association

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SUBMISSION VIA EMAIL

November 30, 2024

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Subject: Bayview Village Association Formal Submission on the ReNew Sheppard Secondary Plan

Backgrounder

The Bayview Village Association (BVA) was formed by residents in 1956 and incorporated in 1957. The BVA is committed to providing feedback on the draft ReNew Sheppard Secondary Plan, which outlines a vision for sustainable growth along Sheppard Avenue East, between Bayview Avenue and Leslie Street.

As part of this plan, BVA emphasizes the importance of balancing growth with community needs and environmental sustainability. We are aware that the planning review for this area has been ongoing since June 26, 2018, when City Council initiated a detailed review of the existing policies within the Sheppard East Subway Corridor Secondary Plan.

Multiple consultations and reviews have been conducted by the city to address density, height limitations, and land use, with a focus on refining planning policies to foster appropriate development for this key corridor.

Despite all that, this 2024 Draft Plan is the first opportunity the community has had to gain insights on what City Planning envisions for the character and proposed development for our community. The recent public presentations were well-attended but so crowded that it was difficult for residents to see the maps on the boards and have meaningful discussions about the content.

The justification for high-density development between Bayview and Leslie is that there are three subway stops on a five-stop subway line which feeds the already over-crowded and delay-plagued Yonge line. The Yonge Line will be extended further north which will reduce capacity further. The Sheppard subway extension is being studied and based Metrolinx's track-record will not be built for decades, if ever. There is no date for relocating the GO station up to the Leslie station which would give an alternative route to downtown Toronto. This is a very weak justification for downtown density here.



Key Macro Issues

1. Developer Accountability

- BVA requests that developers continue to be held responsible for making significant contributions to the area's infrastructure.
- This includes funding public realm improvements, affordable housing initiatives, and community amenities like parks and pedestrian pathways. While we recognize that the Province of Ontario continues to require Cities to reduce development charges, property taxes including the 2024 9.5% increase, alone cannot provide the required infrastructure to support Provincial growth targets.
- Development should not come at the cost of these vital components that maintain and enhance the quality of life for residents.
- The Secondary Plan should reference how it is to be enforced, and cite those mechanisms in the Plan itself (e.g. Official Plan, Zoning bylaws, Provincial Statute, etc.)

2. Sustainable and Managed Growth

- BVA advocates for policies that encourage climate resilience and green infrastructure.
- Low-impact development, such as advanced stormwater management systems and biodiversity-friendly plantings, parks, greenspace, and protecting the ravine system, should be core elements of all new projects.
- The focus should remain on building sustainable communities that reduce environmental impacts while addressing housing and infrastructure needs.
- While the City has developed Green Standards there are gaps in their ability to mitigate climate change impacts and in the City's ability to enforce some standards (e.g. it is currently unable to prevent the clear cutting of mature tree canopies). The ReNew Secondary Plan provides an opportunity to enhance current standards for our community to meet the growing impacts of Climate Change. For example, to require current City Tier 4 Green Standards to be mandatory, rather than aspirational ones, as they are now. In addition, Developers should design their projects whenever possible around mature trees rather than clear-cutting. Minor variances should be allowed to protect mature trees, existing greenspace, parks, and the ravine system.

3. Community-Driven Vision

- Any new development should align with the long-term needs of the community and provide meaningful opportunities for community input. Unfortunately, current development "consultations" are viewed as information meetings with little or no meaningful changes to development plans. City Planning is asked to sit



down with community members following such “consultation meetings to explain what can or cannot be changed and to explore options to meet community needs rather than developing City responses behind closed doors.

- BVA stresses the importance of preserving our natural and green environment including native wildlife. The East Don Parkland is home to a variety of native animals including deer, coyotes, and turtles. There are multiple turtle nesting sites, some very close to existing paved pathways. Current ravine paved pathways are becoming challenging for walkers wanting to enjoy the quiet, natural environment. Walkers include families with small children, dogs on leashes, and people with mobility issues. An increasing number of bicyclists, E-bikes and electric scooters are competing with pedestrians for space, and they often arrive at walkers at a high rate of speed. The city would like to increase access to the East Don Parkland trails for recreation and to encourage commuting by bike. **There is an inherent conflict between protecting the natural environment and increasing access/encouraging commuting through the ravine.**

Specific ReNew Secondary Plan Issues

4. **Plain Language Request:** The plan should use plain language where possible. A glossary is recommended to define technical jargon like "fine-grained" retail uses or "compact built form" to make the document clearer for both developers and the public.
5. **Functionality of major intersections and highway on-off ramps.** The Bayview/Sheppard intersection, Leslie/Sheppard intersection, and access to Highway 401 are of critical importance to our neighbourhood -for drivers, deliveries, garbage pickup, police/fire/ambulance, etc. There are no other North-South streets between Bayview and Leslie. Current traffic congestion along Bayview and Leslie is causing delays, backups on the 401, and dangerous driver behavior. The need for functional traffic flow and volumes at these intersections must be explicitly recognized and prioritized in the ReNew Sheppard Plan. Volume and flow of traffic should not be at the caprice of developers. The ReNew Sheppard plan should also recognize that Sheppard Avenue is an alternate route for traffic bypassing Highway 401 due to problems.
6. **Transportation Report.** Residents express concerns about the exclusion of the community as stakeholders in the transportation planning process, which instead focuses on entities such as the TTC and Bikeshare Toronto. The East Don River and proximity to highways, identified as "problems" in the report, are seen by residents as valuable assets providing natural respite and connectivity. Additionally, proposed bikeways raise questions about winter maintenance, lighting, safety, and financial responsibility.
7. **Provincial Policy and Intensification.** The provincial directive for intensification around transit stations has left little leverage for the city to negotiate with developers. The BVA recommends exploring setbacks and other strategies to preserve pedestrian-friendly and green street designs.
8. **Fire Risk.** The BVA has identified concerns with water distribution systems under fire scenarios. Currently, five locations cannot provide the minimum water flow (80 L/s), including Eunice, Clarinda, Denrock, Foxwarren, and Kenaston Gardens. Future conditions under fire scenarios show additional areas, such as Burbank, Citation, and



Ravenscroft, facing similar issues. The community calls for a proactive infrastructure upgrade plan addressing these risks, rather than placing the onus solely on developers.

9. **Climate Mitigation Measures:** The plan should explicitly call for climate change mitigation strategies, such as reducing heat gains through shading, beyond current City Green Standards. Developers should incorporate climate-resilient design features into their plans for open areas, with more greenery across the entire plan area, not just in the limited "Green Character Areas" identified in the plan. The city should recognize the value provided by single family homes with green space and trees -for absorption of rainwater, cleaning the air and counteracting the heat produced by massive concrete developments along Sheppard Avenue.
10. **Incorporating Resilience.** BVA members note the existing green spaces, parks, and vegetation in the area, which are being removed rather than added under the current plan. The association stresses that any plan should enhance, not diminish, these features, as they are integral to the community's identity and environmental sustainability.
11. **Public Realm and Parks:** There is ambiguity between the terms "Potential Future Park (Conceptual Location)" and "New Park Priority Area." These should be better defined. Additionally, multi-use trails should not be counted as parkland. Parkland should serve multiple recreational functions, such as playgrounds and picnic areas. How does the city envision expanding existing parks such as Maureen Park and Ambrose Parkette? Will homes be expropriated? Can they be expanded to any meaningful size relative to future number of residents?
12. **Map Adjustments:** Key public spaces such as North York General Hospital's parkette, the multi-use ravine trail near Leslie and Sheppard, and the cycling network on Map 7 should be accurately reflected and named on corresponding maps like Map 5.
13. **Bikeways.** Bikes are allowed on all city streets. What is the purpose of designating something a 'bikeway'? Is specific infrastructure being proposed? If yes, what are the impacts to snow clearing and street parking? This needs to be clarified.
14. **Community Clarity on Planning Terminology.** The revised ReNew Sheppard Secondary Plan includes terms such as "fine-grained retail" and other undefined references that are not immediately clear to community stakeholders. These phrases, while meaningful within urban planning discourse, are perceived as jargon by residents. This language creates a barrier to understanding and meaningful participation. BVA recommends including a comprehensive glossary of terms within the Plan, alongside clearer definitions in plain language throughout the document. By doing so, community stakeholders will better grasp the implications of the Plan's proposals and their impact on the neighborhood's character and future development.
15. **Issues with Community Consultation.** Community members find that consultation events relying on poster boards and sticky notes are insufficient for meaningful dialogue. The locations were too small and overcrowded, making it challenging to fully understand the extent of the plan. Better communication strategies are necessary to ensure residents can engage effectively.



16. **Availability of Critical Reports.** The BVA members and Bayview Village residents emphasize that critical supporting documents, such as the Transportation Planning Study Final Report and the Servicing Capacity Assessment, were only made available in November—well after the community consultations concluded. This delayed release of key documents undermines informed community participation and meaningful feedback.
17. **Assurance of Adherence to the Plan.** Community stakeholders have expressed concerns regarding adherence to Secondary Plans, citing examples of deviations granted for height and density variances in the current Sheppard East Subway Corridor Secondary Plan. To build trust, the City must enforce adherence to the ReNew Sheppard Secondary Plan through binding mechanisms such as zoning by-laws and provincial statutes. The plan should also provide clarity on enforcement strategies and consequences for non-compliance by developers, planning consultants, etc., ensuring that the approved vision for the community is realized in practice.
18. **Previous Secondary Plans.** Members reference the lack of adherence to previous secondary plans, many of which were deemed "outdated" shortly after implementation. This has eroded trust and confidence in the current process. The community urges the city to prioritize actionable and enforceable plans over aspirational goals.
19. **Hopes and Dreams.** While the vision for a walkable, bikeable community with retail and employment opportunities is admirable, BVA members highlight that these aspirations fall short of constituting a concrete, actionable plan. Residents request a detailed and realistic implementation strategy.

Concerns specific to Bayview Village Community Members

20. **2901 Bayview Avenue and 630 Sheppard Avenue East (Bayview Village Mall):** Under Section 11 (Site and Area Specific Policies, Page 25), the Plan states that "Proposed expansions of the existing shopping centre are to be massed primarily to the south of the existing commercial buildings." This implies potential redevelopment of sheltered/underground parking. However, it is unclear what is defined as "commercial buildings" in this context, as the existing structures are primarily retail. Clarification is needed.
21. **640 Sheppard Avenue East ("Three Sisters" Rental Buildings Site at Hawkesbury):** On Page 26, the Plan encourages "a broad range of non-residential uses... to allow for access to local job opportunities, retail, and services." While this promotes economic activity, clarity is needed on how this affects existing residential use and the site's historical identity as a rental community. Additionally, the plan mentions bikeways along Hawkesbury and Bayview Mews but lacks details on how these streets, especially narrow Hawkesbury, will accommodate increased traffic from the Bayview Village Mall redevelopment and proposed bike lanes.
22. **Rezoning of Whittaker South of Elkhorn and Ambrose Road (West Side):** The proposal to rezone from "Neighbourhoods" to "Mixed Use" raises concerns about preserving the character of single-family homes while accommodating higher densities. This also brings questions about the potential for shadowing impacts and the need for careful evaluation of the rezoning impact.
23. **Sheppard/Ambrose and Ambrose/Eunice intersections:** This is a high-traffic route into the medical building at 1100 Sheppard Avenue East. It is also the main route out of their streets for residents on Eunice Road, Marcelline Crescent,



and Clarinda Drive. After a car accident on Sheppard, cars pull off Sheppard and onto that tiny section of Ambrose between Sheppard and Eunice. As well, there is a steep uphill grade here from Sheppard Avenue going north. Cars without snow tires have difficulty here during the winter after it snows. This should not be designated a bikeway.

24. **Proposed New Street Connecting Elkhorn to Lockton Court Cul-de-Sac:** A new east-west street is proposed connecting Elkhorn to Lockton Court. This raises community concerns regarding increased traffic and disruption to existing residential layouts.
25. **Bessarion Rezoning to Mixed Use:** Rezoning of areas like Bessarion to "Mixed Use" is seen as a potential departure from maintaining traditional neighbourhood characteristics. While this may provide new development opportunities, it is unclear how it will address shadowing impacts or align with existing community goals.
26. **Hawksbury and Bayview Mews:** Designating Hawksbury and Bayview Mews as bikeways requires significant infrastructure changes to manage both increased vehicular traffic and bike safety. Hawksbury's current width and anticipated traffic from the Bayview Mall redevelopment further complicate this proposal.
27. **Blue Ridge Road Zoning Changes:** There is concern about zoning changes along Blue Ridge Road close to Sheppard Avenue East, which may alter the character of this residential area. Residents stress the need for clear communication and community engagement before implementing such changes.
28. **Spencer Healy's Study and Blue Ridge Road Changes:** Specific concerns were raised regarding proposed zoning adjustments near Blue Ridge Road, especially as the Plan modifies parts of the Bayview Village community close to Sheppard Avenue. These changes have caused apprehension about maintaining the area's unique character and quality of life.

The Bayview Village Association urges City Planning to address these concerns with transparency and engage directly with community stakeholders to mitigate potential negative impacts.

Concluding Remarks on BVA Formal Submission | Request for City of Toronto Support

BVA formally requests the City of Toronto's support to ensure the Secondary Plan enforces obligations for developers to prioritize sustainable, community-oriented growth.

The Bayview Village Association emphasizes the importance of plain and understandable language and guidelines in the plan to make it accessible and actionable for both the public and stakeholders. Prior to finalizing the ReNew Sheppard Secondary Plan, the BVA requests an opportunity to hear from Planning staff on their reaction to our comments and to explore opportunities to both clarify items in the Plan and add appropriate wording to ensure both City and Community objectives can be met.



Bayview Village Association
Incorporated 1957 by Residents

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If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at (416) 500-1230 or via email at maga@bayviewvillage.org.

With kind regards,

Victoria L. Joly

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Additional Comments and Concerns