

# Laird in Focus Planning Study – Planners in Public Spaces (PIPS) Summary 2016

## STUDY OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Laird in Focus Study is to develop a planning framework to guide future development for the Laird Focus Area that also includes the Mixed Use Areas along the west side of Laird Drive. The intent of the study is to refine and build upon the existing and recent planning initiatives undertaken in the area and develop a vision and planning framework for a complete community which supports both the Mixed Use Areas and Employment Areas designations within the study area. The planning framework, in conjunction with a public realm and open space framework, and built form plan, will be integrated with a multi-modal transportation system, a servicing strategy, and policies and/or strategic initiatives to serve the area.

## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The purpose of Planners in Public Spaces (PIPS) is to bring City Planners to the people, providing opportunities for the public to engage with City Planners, one-on-one, on issues that affect the City and to discuss specific concerns about development and policy in the City.

PIPS provides opportunities to engage with the people of Toronto by going to where people are in order to increase residents' access to planners, reach people who don't attend our traditional public consultations, and advance the public's understanding of planning with the intention of increasing future citizen participation in the planning process.

Public engagement at publicly accessible locations was crucial to gaining feedback from users of the area and provided important input to the study and informed the study process. City Planning led three PIPS events (on August 18<sup>th</sup>, August 24<sup>th</sup>, and September 15<sup>th</sup>). These events were held at the Leaside Library (165 McRae Drive) and First Capital Centre (85 Laird Drive).

At each of the engagement events, City Planning staff asked users of the area for feedback on the study process, land use, public places, transportation, built form, and promoted the website and future engagement opportunities. **Approximately 101 people participated in the three PIPS events.**



Figure 1 – Photos of Engagement

## FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The following feedback was provided by participants during the PIPS events.



### General Observations

- Expressed appreciation for the PIPS events and were excited for the start of the study.
- Concerned about the intensity of development, height of buildings and vehicular traffic associated with development.
- Concerned with existing vehicular traffic, road safety and infrastructure constraints.
- Would like to see more public engagement in the community.

### Land Use and Development

- Need to find the right process to manage development to create full transparency.
- Understand growth in the area is anticipated; however, concerned with the intensity and big box development currently proposed.

- Employees in the area expressed a need to protect existing employment uses.

### **Community Services and Facilities**

- Schools in the area are at capacity and that more schools should be provided.

### **Public Realm**

- Need for more green space and open space in the community.

### **Built Form**

- Preference for a mid rise built form.
- Concerns about tall buildings due to shadow and transition to lower scale neighbourhoods.
- Would like to see mixed use development that would preserve the community feel of the area.

### **Transportation**

- Concerned with area wide traffic, specifically with vehicular traffic infiltration, speed, noise, and congestion.
- Concerned that new development will result in more vehicular congestion.
- Participants offered some solutions to manage traffic constraints, such as turning restrictions, red-light cameras, and potential round-about.
- Need to consider area specific parking requirements and commuter parking.
- Interest in dedicated cycling infrastructure.
- Need to continue to pursue the Redway Road Extension.

### **Other Feedback**

- Need to consider wildlife in the area.
- Consider the opportunity for elevated parks in the area.
- Organize walking tours and virtual town hall meetings.