

*Local Politics: Influencing the Unmovable
The Case of Downsview Park*

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Abstract

The objective of my research was to understand how the City of Toronto's local politicians influenced – and continue to influence – the Downsview Park development. Downsview Park is “Canada's National Urban Park” and has consistently made media headlines for all of the wrong reasons. After years of inaction, development is currently underway to construct a 1356 unit community of mixed housing, while the rest of the park remains largely vacant with some uses. I focused on understanding the local political influences that have shaped Downsview Park to what we see today.

In order to establish my research objective, I began with a literature review of various secondary research sources. Media articles, video clips, academic journals and government documents were compiled and evaluated. During this process, I attended various public meetings and compiled notes of what was said, and who attended. In addition, my primary research consisted of semi-structured interviews as a means to collect personalized information from key stakeholders. This was done to fill in gaps that I could not fill from my secondary research. The goal of the interviews was to gain an impression of how each stakeholder interacted with one another.

The results of my research revealed that, in theory, the local politicians have limited influence on how Downsview Park is shaped. The federal government (under the umbrella of Crown Corporations Parc Downsview Park and the Canada Lands Company) has the ability to implement and build any development project without going through municipal processes and policies. Local politicians have the ability to delay the process only if the Crown Corporations fail to comply with municipal policies. The interactions of the Federal Government with the local stakeholders has created a noteworthy

relationship; residents, and the Downsview Lands Community Voice Association feel insignificant and polarized because they believe the Federal Government only sees dollars signs.

This suggests that there is a significant disconnect between what local constituents desire and what the Federal Crown Corporations view as being responsible development. This research also provides insight into how neoliberal tendencies in the way Downsview Park operates infiltrate stakeholder interactions and development.



Figure 1: Downsview Park and the stormwater retention pond. Source: Mills, 2013.

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Foreword:

I chose to focus on politics and planning because I have a fondness of following municipal politics and a belief that cities planned intelligently will make the world a better place. When I began to study planning more in-depth, I understood the interrelationship between politics and planning. I became obsessed. My understanding of both subjects has come a long way since September 5, 2012 during the course of my time in FES and through my professional involvements. My interests span from transit to urban design, but the crux of implementing new plans to improve cities and mobility systems comes down to political will, and understanding how to navigate and influence the political system. I chose to study Downsview Park as a result of this.

My major research paper draws on my primary components in my Plan of Study: urban planning, municipal politics, and municipal bureaucracy. Downsview Park is an excellent example of how each of these components interacts where external stakeholders have a major influence on outcomes. My Plan of Study allowed me to pursue my Planning Degree and covered all the necessary topics and literature in order for me to fully understand such a large-scale topic.

This research contributed to a clearer understanding of how local politics influences planning. More specifically, the example of Downsview Park exhibits a more complex political climate because all three levels of government are significantly involved in the planning decisions. By reviewing the literature and conducting primary research, I have developed a thorough understanding of how stakeholder relationships can change as a result of political decisions.

Chapter 1: Introduction

On a very cold December evening in 2012, I was fortunate enough to speak one-on-one with long-term Toronto City Councillor Maria Augimeri about local planning issues in the Downsview community at the Roding Community Centre, in the heart of Ward 9. The goal was to immerse myself in Toronto's city planning dialogue. The conversation did not depart from the subject of Downsview Park and how the development threatens the character of the community and the well being of the residents. The councillor shifted the conversation slightly toward infrastructure as she informed me that many North York wards, and in particular Ward 9, suffer from flooding due to the lack of infrastructure investment by the City. Storm sewers and piping have been in place since the 1950's, the councillor stated. Immediately, my thoughts turned to my basement apartment just around the corner and my head was spinning: What if this happens to me? My possessions, my only assets (my television, my MacBook Pro, the IKEA futon) could be destroyed! With a background in Geography and Geographic Information Systems up my sleeve, I already knew that climate change was transforming the weather into the formidable forces we see today. My mind was made up: the Downsview Park development should only unfold when the infrastructure in the community is significantly upgraded.

I was hooked, and immediately began mauling through the news stories and the plans that were drafted from Parc Downsview Park. A particular article written by *The Toronto Star* journalist San Grewal (2001) caught my attention: "A central park for Toronto: A Green revolution in Downsview will transform old military base into 'Tree City'". The plan encapsulated everything that York University's Planning Program had

professed: sustainable development, integrating nature into the urban surroundings, integrating the development into the existing built environment, promoting multi-modal uses, and building a mix of housing types including rental and units for purchase. Building this park into a large urban area seemed legitimate.

Grewal argued that, “Downsview Park will be larger than Central Park and perhaps even more impressive. And it will one day be as significant to Toronto as Central Park is to New York” (Grewal, 2001). A bold statement goes a long way, and comparing the potential that Downsview has to offer to New York City’s Central Park is something Toronto should consider. The tipping point in my thought process was when I discovered that all three levels of government had a significant influence in the way Downsview Park would be built, and that many residents that live in Downsview are frustrated with the 18 years of consultation, with few tangible results. I had to continue studying this development.

My research is focused on the local political climate surrounding Downsview. I reviewed a range of literature that focused on politics and planning as well as the concepts of neoliberalism and stakeholder theory, and literature that focused specifically on Toronto developments. After establishing a foundational knowledge of politics and planning, I explored primary research surrounding Downsview Park, from media reports to City of Toronto staff reports and council considerations, to Ontario Municipal Board documents. As a result, I was able to create a thorough chronology of what shaped Downsview.

1.1 Research Question

Downsview Park has a complex history that has culminated in an urban mega-project, which has been static in its development for several decades, with incremental progress in building infrastructure and housing. This paper explores the convoluted political history that has made Downsview Park a contested space.

The research attempts to answer the question: How are the existing political interests involved in the Downsview Park lands effecting the development of the proposed project? On a personal level, this research provided me with an understanding of how the political arena shapes our environment, or specifically how Downsview Park's development would affect the surrounding community – an area that I lived in during the bulk of my research, and an area that I have a fondness for because of my friends and former neighbours. Professionally, this research gave me the opportunity to understand how to potentially navigate the political realm as an aspiring professional planner.

1.2 Research Context

Downsview Park is a former military base located in the geographic centre of the Greater Toronto Area. It is approximately 231.5 hectares (572 acres) of land that is comprised of different features: public parkland, different residential neighbourhoods being anticipated for development (Stanley Greene is currently being built), and commercial and recreational uses (Downsview Park, 2014). Many different businesses and organizations operate out of Downsview Park, including the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), the Downsview Merchants Market, and various food

and beverage corporations (*Ibid*). Downsview Park is located in the heart of Ward 9 (Downsview), and is bordered by Keele Street to the west, Sheppard Avenue to the north, Wilson Avenue and other various residential streets to the south, and Dufferin Street/Allan Road to the east. Figure 2 illustrates where Downsview is within the region.



Figure 2: Aerial of Downsview Park. View is looking from the south to north. Source: downsviewpark.ca

All three levels of government in one way or another have heavily influenced Downsview Park over the last several decades. This construct created a very disarrayed progression in development that has been historically inactive. Consequently, this dynamic impacts other actors that have an interest in the park including residents groups, local politicians, and citizens. My research situates itself within this local political context because the magnitude of influence at each level of governments' differs, but the influences have significantly shaped Downsview Park's story and development. As a result, evaluation and analysis of governmental influences is the backdrop against which we can see how Downsview Park is being developed.

1.3 Research Methods

To document the political influences on Downsview Park's development, I conducted primary and secondary research for two years (2013-2014). I began researching Downsview Park before I decided to use the park as a topic for my major research topic because I lived in the area and had both a personal and professional connection to the space. My research used qualitative methods –participant observations (community meetings and living within the community), semi-structured interviews, literature and media document review, observing both City and Community Council meetings, site visits, and photography. This section outlines the various methods used for this research.

1.3.1 Participant Observations

Living within Ward 9, Downsview, was the catalyst that provided me the motivation and passion that was required for me to undertake this research. Downsview Park was just across the street from my apartment. I was able to speak with neighbours, receive community pamphlets regarding any potential changes to the park, and listen to neighbours and residents converse about Downsview, or any other local matters. By immersing myself within the community, I became comfortable with the social environment, and consequently, passionate about the park.

I attended many community meetings that were organized by community members, and the Downsview Lands Community Voice Association (DLCVA). During the first several meetings, before I officially began my research, I had to state my name as an introduction to the group, but never had to specifically say why I was there. These

meetings were beneficial because I was able to forge camaraderie with many members of the community and the DLCVA. When I began my research I attended two “Warehouse Event” community consultations (one took place in December, 2013 and one took place in April, 2014) where approximately 400 community members including DLCVA group members, local politicians, federal government representatives, Canada Lands Company employees, and Canadian Urban Institute facilitators. The purpose of these visits were to observe and gather information on how the community felt about the Downsview Park development proposals put forth by the Canada Lands Company, how involved the community is during these consultations, and how Canada Lands Company structured the meetings in conjunction with the Canadian Urban Institute. I refrained from voicing my personal opinions so as to not become involved in any particular group.

1.3.2 Literature and Media Review

Much of the information I gathered was through documenting specific events throughout the course of Downsview Park’s history. At the beginning of my research, I constructed a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, and documented absolutely every event that took place at Downsview Park – from World Youth Day in 2002, through to when Downsview’s change of leadership occurred on November 29, 2012. I did this because I wanted to be able to recount any event that would have had an influence in the way Downsview Park was being operated, developed, and used by the community and visitors alike. In addition, the chronology was important for me to construct because it provided me with a visual tool that allowed me to identify any specific gaps that I needed to research further.

Additionally, I consulted various academic papers, websites, and published books that discussed local government at length, as well as federal government operations, and the provincial body, The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). All three levels of government play an important role in shaping Downsview Park, so in order to articulate their contribution to the park, I had to consult literature to understand how each of them work independently and together.

1.3.3 Observing Toronto City Council and North York Community Council

A substantive component to the narrative of Downsview Park is the City of Toronto's political discourse surrounding the park's development. Because I am focusing on local political influences, it was essential for me to understand how decisions are made at the municipal level.

I began attending North York Community Council meetings before I formally commenced my research project. A key feature was understanding the relationship between Community Council and City Council. At first, I was confused about why I was seeing Downsview Park items on both agendas, and how items were considered at each council meeting. My initial thought was that I should just show my face at the meetings, learn the language used, and be able to grasp standard council procedures. Afterward, I would be able to comprehend the specific items that dealt with Downsview Park. I found this plan was effective, and therefore I was able to absorb most of the information surrounding the debate of Downsview's future. If I was unable to note all of the detailed information I heard at Council or Community Council, I accessed the City of Toronto archives to find specific details that I required.

1.3.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

To gain insight into people's experiences and opinions surrounding Downsview Park's history and development, I interviewed six individuals representing different groups, political levels, or organizations in order to gather different insights and experiences with Downsview's story.

Each time I approached someone requesting an interview, I introduced myself, my research topic and question, and the goal of my interviews. If someone was disinterested, I ceased to ask further for an interview. If someone was interested, I provided him or her with additional information on my research and options for conducting an interview. As per York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies academic regulations, I stipulated that the interview was voluntary, confidential, and anonymous unless the candidate said it was permissible to include their name within the research. I let the individual know that I would record the interview by writing down salient points and using an audio recording device. They were free to stop the interview at any time they wished. Finally, before the interview, I presented the interviewee with a letter to sign that described the nature of their consent.

The timing of each interview ranged from 30 minutes to an hour. I was very lucky that each interviewee was enthusiastic about contributing to my research. I suspect this was because I developed a collegial relationship with each as a result of attending and introducing myself to them at community events and consultations. When the interviews were conducted in-person, I began with casual discussion, and then delved into the interview when I sensed that the interviewee was ready. Some of the interviews I conducted were done over the phone, however, because it was difficult to get together.

Doing this did not pose any issues with the results that I gathered, or the process of asking questions and receiving answers and documenting answers. By keeping the beginning of the conversation casual, I evoked a sense of a casual and calm atmosphere before I became more formal and began going through the list of questions I had prepared.

I thoroughly enjoyed conducting the interviews. I did not feel uncomfortable meeting with either familiar people or people that I did not quite know (such as store owners on Wilson Avenue). Additionally, I had no problem asking people to set aside time for me to interview them. In fact, I wanted to remove any sense of awkwardness that the interviewee might feel towards me, or the process in general by keeping the introductory discussion casual and breaking down any uncomfortable barriers that the interviewee may have had at the time.

A specific limitation that I experienced took place after Councillor Maria Augimeri launched the “Set Downsview Free Campaign” in April, 2014. Before the campaign, I had a relationship with several Canada Lands Company employees, specifically the Director, David Anselmi. After the campaign launch, it was public knowledge that I worked for Councillor Augimeri in a separate capacity, and consequently friction ensued between both parties.¹

The interviews began with basic questions such as the individual’s background and involvement with the park. I would preface my question with what I already knew, and often times the individual would state facts or background history that I was not

¹ In 2014, I was the Planning and Special Assistant to the Chair of the Toronto Transit Commission. Councillor Maria Augimeri was elected to fill this role, and I was hired as the person in charge of the office.

aware of. These background questions were excellent “ice-breakers” and allowed me to fill in any gaps that I identified during the media and literature review component.

After re-stating the topic of the major paper, I asked the interviewee to discuss their involvement with the park over the course of the last decade. It was this question that prompted a lengthy, and often-informative answer.

Reflecting back, I believe these interviews were successful because I was able to fill in gaps that media and other reports were not able to provide. However, I do wish that I was able to interview David Anselmi from the Canada Lands Company. I believe there is some valuable, undisclosed information that I could have used in my analysis of how the local political influences have shaped the development of the park.

1.3.5 Site Visits and Photography

During the bulk of my research, I lived within close proximity to Downsview Park. Before my research commenced, I would take many leisurely strolls through the park where I was able to observe the natural and man-made elements. I attribute my interest in the park’s development partially to my leisurely strolls, because I recognized that this piece of space in the middle of the Greater Toronto Area had to be highly valued financially and culturally.

When my research commenced, I visited the park regularly (once every month) for both leisure and academic purposes. I observed minor transformations to the landscape, and cross-referenced that with news about Downsview Park to see if there was an obvious relationship to the alterations, or if I needed to undertake additional research. I also conducted site visits to see - first hand - the physical infrastructure that had been

built in the park over the course of time. I was able to visit the Downsview Park Merchants Market, the recreational facilities, aerospace facilities, the current Toronto Region Conservation Authority offices, and other spaces. This was beneficial to my research because I knew what uses these facilities had, and was able to incorporate that into my analysis of Downsview's Secondary Plan, as well as how the park could service the community and other visitors.

I did not just visit the park in order to see the various spaces currently in use and the natural elements, but I used these visits as opportunities to take photographs of the abovementioned elements of Downsview Park. Downsview Park is a beautiful space, and is constantly under the threat of transformation, so I documented what currently exists to use in the paper. Some photos in the paper were also taken from various websites as indicated.

1.4 Conclusion

My research is quite straightforward. It documents and evaluates the evolution of development at Downsview Park, while at the same time exploring the local political influences, all within the context of a neoliberal regime of governance.

Chapter two explores the political context by outlining the roles and responsibilities of the three main levels of government in depth, then discusses the role of the municipal bureaucracy and the municipal planner. Chapter three examines the story of Downsview, by first looking at the early history of the lands, and how they developed over time by touching on all of the influences and significant events that have shaped the park's development. Chapter four analyzes the political influences by considering the

main actors involved in Downsview's development narrative. The paper concludes by arguing that local planners and politicians have little influence over the development of federally-owned land, even when that land is as large and significant as Downsview Park.

Chapter 2 The Political Context

Governing institutions play a central role in the distribution of the goods and services that society needs in order to function effectively. Each level of government has specific roles and responsibilities set forth in legislation, which governs how the operations of government function. Evolving cities require government to include divisions composed with experts who can navigate various institutional policies and deliver plans that encompass the necessary bundles of services, growth projections, and all requisite components that enhance social, environmental, and economical outputs. In Canada, each government has different magnitudes of influences over urban environments, and Chapter 2 evaluates each government's roles and responsibilities, as well as bureaucratic operations.

2.1 Government Roles and Responsibilities

Society is a matrix of activity formed through the interaction of individuals and groups conducting daily functions. There are very basic functions that government performs: they keep society safe from external attacks, enforce rules of conduct within society, and settle disputes between members of society. As a result, government is fundamentally defined as “[...] a specialized activity of those individuals and institutions that make and enforce public decisions that are binding upon the whole community” (Dickerson and Flanagan, 2006, 5). Canadian governments aim to provide social order to its jurisdiction, and provide services for its members.

2.2 Federal Government of Canada

Canada's federal government acts as an authority over all policymaking in a broad sense – that is, the government, in principal, follows an agenda-setting model that is geared toward developing new policy that is ultimately interpreted by the federal courts, and implemented as new (or pre-existing, amended) law (Dyck, 2008).² Quite simply, the initiation phase of the process is set-forth by the Prime Minister (P.M.) and Cabinet, who are impressed by a demand by their constituency or the public. As a result, the federal bureaucracy does research, and subsequently, must prepare a memorandum to submit to Cabinet suggesting a course of action (*Ibid*).

The Prime Minister and Cabinet must prioritize the information, whether or not they want to act, and if so, determine the general course of action. If the P.M. and his Cabinet team chose to act, they send a directive to the bureaucracy to work out the details. This is often through inter-departmental committee formation, which then drafts a bill to submit to the House of Commons (Dyck, 2008). The House of Commons debates the bill and, if successful and passed through Senate, the Governor General officially sanctions the bill. The federal bureaucracy responds by developing new procedures to administer the bill. Often times, the federal courts will have to interpret the bill as a result of new legislation put forth; however, this phase is often blended into the process so that the bill is successful (*Ibid*).

Federalism can be defined as a division of powers between central and regional governments such that neither is subordinate to the other (Byck, 2008, 437). The division

² Many policies can be made unilaterally, and do not involve such an elaborate, comprehensive process: the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, the bureaucracy, or the courts can expedite the process so that it can be interpreted by the appropriate parties (Dyck, 2008).

of powers between the levels of government are found in sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution Act, 1867, which gives the federal government specific and distinct responsibilities, separate from those of the provinces. In addition to some Constitutional amendments (old age pensions, unemployment insurance, the ability to amend the constitution unilaterally, and the federal government increasing the provincial jurisdiction over natural resources), the federal government is primarily responsible for equalization payments to the provinces, the ability to collect all taxes from the provinces (with the exception of Quebec), health care, the policing of the Canada Health Act, the Kyoto Protocol, aboriginal affairs, child care and early childhood development through substantial federal support to the provinces, foreign policy and international relations, and national defence (Dickerson and Flanagan, 2006; Dyck, 2008).

A particular area that is missing in the overall responsibilities is that of Canadian cities. The Liberal Paul Martin government of 2003-2006 promised a “new deal for cities” by creating a Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities, and exempted municipalities from paying the GST on their purchases (Dyck, 2008). However, now, more than ever, municipalities are demanding more powers, as well as the right to be directly involved in upper level government discussions dealing with their needs, such as affordable housing, transit, childcare and poverty issues, and public education for immigrant children. One of the Ministry’s challenges is the core-periphery effect³, whereby smaller rural areas were not receiving sufficient funding from the gasoline tax compared to the larger urban centres (*Ibid*).

³ The Core-Periphery problem is that certain municipalities dominate the conversation about receiving more funding (the core) than the periphery, including smaller rural areas and towns (Dickerson and Flanagan, 2006).

Indeed, the percentage of people in Canada living in urban areas is at slightly more than 80% with a diverse population, resulting in different demands from people living in rural areas and urban areas. Rural areas tend to be more conservative, and cities are primarily dominated by Liberal and NDP values, which is said to have been reinforced by the “gun control law” of the 1990’s pushed through by the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien and the creation of the Ministry of State for Infrastructure and Communities (Dyck, 2008). Aside from the core-periphery example, the gun control law was vehemently apposed by rural voters, and supported by urban voters. Rural voters claimed that this would impact their lifestyle of hunting which, by extension, impacted their ability to sell their game for income (*Ibid*). Consequently, cities were viewed as being the favoured choice by the Liberal government.

Canada’s 23rd general election occurred on January 23, 2006. Stephen Harper’s newly minted Conservative Party of Canada defeated Paul Martin’s Liberal minority government to form a minority Conservative government. The victory was unexpected to many because the Conservative’s were not perceived as the popular vote for urban centres or within the Province of Quebec (Clark *et.al*, 2006). The Conservatives ran an extremely strategic campaign by emphasizing a limited set of policies that appealed to voters (*Ibid*). The main piece was The Gomery Commission Report, which shed light on “Liberal government corruption” after Jean Chrétien’s liberal government funnelled millions of dollars into pro-Liberal advertising agencies in Quebec, informing Quebeckers of the good things Ottawa was doing on their behalf (*Ibid*). Consequently, Paul Martin’s Liberals received the brunt of the blame resulting in the Liberal slide among voters and the rise of the Conservative Party.

2.2.1 *The Canada Lands Company*

The Canada Lands Company is a federal agency that manages surplus federal land for sale or lease. Government of Canada properties that are no longer required for federal program purposes are examined utilizing experience in real estate development, property management, and tourism operations (Canada Lands Company, 2015). It is a self-financing Crown corporation which was founded in 1995 and reports to the Parliament of Canada through the Minister of Public Works (*Ibid*).

Canada Lands Company acquires strategic properties from Government of Canada departments and agencies, which must declare them a surplus to their program needs (Canada Lands Company, 2015). Disposal of properties is done in accordance with the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Policy of Management of Real Property, and the Directive on the Sale or Transfer of Surplus Real Property (*Ibid*). These policies were passed as Bills and enacted in December, 2006 (*Ibid*).

Canada Lands attempts to optimize the financial and community value of strategic government properties no longer needed for program purposes. Once the title of properties is transferred to the Canada Lands Company, the company strives to revitalize and reintegrate them into their local communities. The company purchases properties at fair market value. After it acquires property, they begin a consultation process by bringing together municipal officials to introduce them to the company and discuss how community consultations will take place (Canada Lands Company, 2015).

Canada Lands considers the consultation process, and the development of a Master Plan the most unique aspects to their property acquisition process. There are three options in Canada Lands Company's final phase of property development. The first is

that they will undertake full development including constructing the buildings (after servicing has been done) (*Ibid*). Canada Lands will also market and sell the property to builders who will carry out construction consistent with the master plan (*Ibid*). The third option is if investment value to Canada Lands sole shareholder is retained, Canada Lands will manage them on behalf of the company (example, Toronto's CN Tower) (*Ibid*).

The Conservative party rarely focuses on urban issues. Their last election platform in 2011 did not contain a single point directed at urban concerns, such as enhancing the functioning of cities financially, socially, or environmentally (Conservative Party of Canada, 2006). The Liberal platform in the 2011 election was to bring communities together by creating stronger, safer places emphasizing that urban and rural areas must be addressed (Liberal Party of Canada, 2011). The Liberals acknowledged that community services must have the tools in place to perform the services at the highest quality. In addition, the party stated that municipalities and towns “[...] need a stronger partner in the federal government” (*Ibid*, 54). The disbandment of PDP mirrors the Conservative and Liberal party divide on urban issues because the PDP focused on community engagement and enhancing the parks environmental, social, and economic impact for all parties involved; whereas, the Canada Lands Company seeks to sell off government assets to maximise federal government profit.

2.3 Provincial Government of Ontario

The provinces have autonomous powers given to them by the Constitution Act, 1867, with the exception of the territories, which are constitutionally subordinate to the federal government (Dyck, 2008). Each province has a full complement of governmental institutions that are subject to social demands, similar to the federal government.

Political and bureaucratic operations are similar for both the provincial and federal government. A Lieutenant Governor, who is appointed by the Prime Minister, theoretically heads each province. The Lieutenant Governor represents the Queen, and he or she performs ceremonial or social functions that are similar to the Governor General's tasks (Dyck, 2008). The Premier and their Cabinet (the elected officials), set priorities, budgets, determine policy, provide direction (through the bureaucracy) on legislation, and oversee administrative operations. Provincial politicians rely heavily on the bureaucracy to give them advice, guidance, and information in order to move forward with particular initiatives that require drafting regulation that contain the detailed substance of their bill (*Ibid*).

The provinces regulate land use planning across Canada. For example, the Planning Act, Royal Statute of Ontario (RSO) 1990 is a piece of legislation that dictates growth policies, planning frameworks, regulating bodies, and planning divisions throughout Ontario municipal governments (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2015). Under the Planning Act, Ontario issues a Provincial Policy Statement⁴ that clearly

⁴ The Provincial Policy Statement in Ontario is a policy statement related to all land use planning and development matters that are of provincial interest. It recognizes complex inter-relationships among and between environmental, economic, and social factors in land use planning (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2015).

outlines the Province's interest, including farmland, natural resources, the environment, as well as promoting sustainable development supported by public transit and pedestrian oriented development (*Ibid*). Through the Province's legislation, municipalities must make local planning decisions that shape the future of communities and prepare planning documents such as official plans and zoning by-laws that are consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (*Ibid*).

2.3.1 *The Ontario Municipal Board*

The provincial government has a breadth of semi-autonomous institutions that operate under the Province's purview. The Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) is one of these institutions that was created in 1906 as the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board that was charges with hearing applications for, and regulating, intra-provincial railways and street railways within municipalities (Chipman, 2002; Sancton, 2011). It subsequently became the OMB in 1932, which is now a quasi-judicial body that oversees planning decision-making (*Ibid*). In Ontario, there is a minimum requirement for provisions of notice to the public with an opportunity for public comment on applications. Afterward, there is an initial local decision-making process by local elected councils or committees appointed by councils. If the developer or a community group challenges the decision by the municipality, they have the right to appeal to an independent tribunal, which is the OMB (Doumani and Foran, 2012). The OMB shall "have regard to" decisions made by municipal councils in planning matters and "material that was considered by council in making its decisions" (*Ibid*, 33). This means that the OMB does not have to find the Council decision demonstrably unreasonable to arrive at

an opposing decision. The Board carefully considers the decision of council, as well as supplementary materials.

The OMB is a unique body because virtually all decisions at the municipal level, such as new official plans, minor variances, zoning by-laws, and secondary plans, can be appealed. As such, what the municipal council actually did or did not do is of little consequence to the OMB (Sancton, 2011). In other provinces, such as British Columbia, municipalities must gain approval of the Agricultural Land Commission if they wish to authorize development, but apart from that, regional districts elsewhere have remarkable autonomy (*Ibid*).

2.4 Municipal Government of Toronto

The majority of Canadians live in the suburbs, the inner suburbs or the downtown core. Most cities' populations are growing so local government is extremely important to deliver the services that residents need. Since Canada is primarily an urban nation, Canadians confront issues daily such as traffic congestion, ineffective public transit, homelessness, and ageing infrastructure (Sancton, 2011). Municipalities provide essential services to residents within the suburbs and the downtown areas such as public transit, opportunities to access clean drinking water, waste removal, public safety and law and order, and recreation. Local governments also must sustain relationships with neighbouring municipalities and upper-level governments.

Andrew Sancton, a professor of political science at the University of Western Ontario is known as an expert in local government issues and operations. Sancton notes that there is no clear definition of a local government and that historically, municipalities

were never quite considered to have the autonomy of a “government” (see *Canadian Local Government*, Sancton, 2011:3-7). Without getting into much historic detail, Sancton concludes that municipalities do in fact meet the requirements for being governmental entities legally because municipal councils are democratically elected, possess general taxing powers, and are empowered to make laws (Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, s 32).

Statistics Canada defines local government as including municipalities and their associated “autonomous boards, commissions, funds [...] and school boards” (Statistics Canada, 2004). Essentially, local governments in Canada include municipalities and special purpose bodies at the local level. Municipalities have multiple functions, while special-purpose bodies have one distinct function. Those who govern these bodies are democratically elected or appointed by people who are democratically elected (Sancton, 2011). As such, the purpose of the elected decision-makers is to direct the municipalities and the special-purpose bodies (ABCs – Associations, Boards, Committees) responsibly in the interests of the publics that they serve.

All local governments, including ABCs, deliver many services to their jurisdictions in order to promote good living conditions for people. Local governments establish efficiencies through economies and diseconomies of scale by designing systems to provide service for each dwelling unit (Sancton, 2011). This means that citizens are better off being a part of, and supporting, a large group that can pool resources together to perform a specific function. For example, if communities in a city desire beautiful parks in neighbourhoods, it is simply more efficient to have separate organizations that support parks under local government institutions (*Ibid*).

Additionally, local governments provide allocative efficiency by ensuring that the bundle of services and taxes provided by government matches as closely as possible to what it is that the people want (Sancton, 2011). Local governments are excellent at allocating efficiencies because community needs differ throughout municipalities. The capability of local governments to supply different services to different areas means that residents receive different benefits depending on where they live in the city. Sancton uses a compelling example: families might want tax dollars to be spent on having their community pool provide lifeguard services (*Ibid*). The local political process is designed to contrive the most efficient way of delivering the desired services, which is what a local government is designed to do best.

Few citizens have a keen interest in local decisions, as seen in a recent weighted average of only 49.1% voter turnout in Ontario's 2010 municipal elections (AMCTO, 2011). Local governments must provide public participation forums for their residents because, as John Stuart Mill stated, participation is "the chief instrument for the public education of the citizens" (Mill, 1861: 275). A valid assumption could be made that citizens should have a deep interest in the local decisions being made, as these affect their day-to-day lives at a very tangible level. Yet, party politics is almost non-existent at the local level, with the exception of Vancouver, British Columbia. Residents tend to relate more to a specific party than to non-partisan individuals, so they chose to vote for people representing a specific party. In Toronto, municipal elections are non-partisan, which is part of the reason why involvement in local issues is low (Peterson, 1981; Siemiatycki, 2011). Technical and legalistic issues such as urban planning and engineering studies for a mid-rise development often turn citizens away from wanting to get involved compared

to broader policy issues such as health care reform (Peterson, 1981; Sancton, 2011).

Where we see local resident participation increase is when a significant change to the built environment is being proposed that will directly impact them, negatively (Sancton, 2011). Councillors respond to local groups or enraged constituents, as in the case of Downsview Park. Citizen participation ranges from attending community meetings, to showing up at committee and council meetings in protest, or deputing to council.

In some cases, upper levels of government and the private sector cannot implement and operate services effectively and this is where local governments are needed. Local government functions include fire protection, police services, animal control, waste disposal, land-use planning and regulation, building regulation, economic development and tourism, libraries, parks and recreation, licensing of businesses, emergency planning, and social services (Sancton, 2011). The services provided to citizens through municipalities are a direct response to provincial subsidies; by extension, the quality of these services is directly related to the amount of funding that provinces provide to their municipal governments. Municipal governments therefore have “express authority” over matters listed in provincial legislation as being under municipal jurisdiction (Sancton, 2011: 29). In other words, all of the services that municipalities provide are a result of being allowed by provincial legislation.

Ontario municipalities are in a unique situation in terms of providing income and employment assistance under the OntarioWorks program, as well as providing subsidized child care to low-income parents and subsidized housing to people unable to afford market housing (Sancton, 2011). There is extensive provincial supervision and subsidies given to municipalities, but ultimately the funding is never enough as far as

municipalities are concerned (*Ibid*). Ontario’s “Common Sense Revolution” created these unfortunate circumstances, whereby the (then) Premier, Mike Harris (1995-2001) – and his successor – Ernie Eaves (2002-2003), created a political environment that espoused the rhetoric of smaller government intervention by reducing the provincial role in operating the abovementioned services (Boudreau *et.al*, 2009). This created strains on Ontario local governments’ ability to deliver these services effectively.

2.4.1 The Role of the Municipal Bureaucracy

Municipalities hire experts in each division that it has in order to provide expert advice to Council and supply seamless and efficient services to residents. The relationship between Council and the bureaucracy is relatively straightforward: bureaucrats provide the expert opinion in the form of recommendations, and the Council makes the final decision. Council cannot implement decisions without the guidance, support, and expert recommendations that the bureaucracy provides. Often, Council (at the discretion of the bureaucracy) will decide to contract out work to private companies to complete projects such as large-scale infrastructure repairs, improvements, or assembly.

Municipal bureaucrats tend to specialize in a particular function or division of the organization. They are what Andrew Sancton labels, “functional experts” who enter a particular division – such as City Planning, Finance, or Legal – and continue to work within that division, potentially being reassigned to various roles, increasing with responsibility within the division (2011: 244). Many civil servants in upper levels of government are generalists and move around from one department to another as they

progress through the ranks (*Ibid*). Their education and skills permit transitions between different governmental silos, whereas the municipal bureaucrat is often educated and trained to specialize in a particular field and the municipality is designed to constrict particular specialties within silos.

The recommendations that municipal civil servants provide are typically articulated through each division head. For example, in Toronto's City Planning Division, the Chief Planner often speaks to all of the planning initiatives and changes the division has proposed to Council. Each division head reports to the City Manager, or in the case of Toronto, a Deputy City Manager. This is known as a "strong city-manager system" (Lightbody, 2006; Sancton, 2011). However, division heads also report to the Council as a collective entity, which makes the process more convoluted and politically charged because there could be competing interests within Council, other city divisions, stakeholder groups, and residents of the city.

Civil servants and politicians have to work under the scrutiny of the public, which should make their job much more complex and transparent because bureaucrats and politicians are on the public record. Municipal politicians often experience more scrutiny from the public and from the media because they make the final decision on all municipal matters, which consequently shapes the way the city is developed. In addition, they are the face of the ward they represent, which means that their constituents think of them first when they have any municipal issues that require addressing.

This does not mean that civil servants do not have a significant impact on the way the city is shaped or on decision-makers in shaping the way projects are commenced. Roland Caldwell Harris (known as R.C in Toronto) is one of the most famous civil

servants in Toronto's history for his dynamic presence leading the Public Works commission of the old City, and for spearheading several prominent projects resulting in shaping and growing Toronto in the 1920's and 30's (Keenan, 2013). Harris was able to weave through differing political motives, powerful bureaucrats and present his ideas clearly and concisely to the public, the media and to all interest groups to transform his forward-thinking visions into realities (*Ibid*). Examples like Harris do not occur often. The success of spearheading and shaping a project, seeing it come into fruition, rarely happens the way the civil servants originally advocated and recommended to Council. Ultimately, the role of municipal bureaucrats is to research, gather evidence, and present it to the elected representatives to deliberate, debate, and either implement or amend.

2.4.2 The Municipal Planner

Providing support to different city divisions is not an easy task. Municipal planners can be seen as the backbone to providing a high quality of life for residents because they are constantly drawing on various divisions within municipal bureaucracy to provide data and advice for formulating and compiling plans that shape communities and cities. Once these plans are compiled, political leadership is needed and it's the planner's job to present the plans (or policy) to councillors to galvanize support.

These steps are not as seamless as they may seem. Navigating the rigidity of rules, procedures, different policies, agendas, and goals that various actors (developers, external consultants, resident groups) may have are responsibilities that the planners' have during the planning process (Krumholz and Forester, 1990). However, municipal planners do have an advantage because they can use their physical position and location within the

municipality to access elected officials during the planning process to shape decision-making agendas, use their research and analysis to support other particular projects that elected officials may have, and also to encourage or inform community action (*Ibid*).

Municipal planners face difficulties daily because balancing all components of a plan is very difficult. Having a comprehensive and equitable lens is essential in creating spaces that residents can live, work, and play in. Because planners have an ambiguous mandate, they can use creativity in their work to attempt to provide equitable advice and plans to elected officials (Krumholz and Forester, 1990). The planner is expected to be, “Capable of discovering the answers to factual questions by detailed analysis in a comprehensive framework” (Rabinovitz, 1968, 11). This means that planners must be able to integrate policy, technical and factual data, and balance constituency and political demands.

2.5 Conclusion

Governing institutions influence and shape society’s social, physical, environmental, and economical characteristics through the institutional structures and the expertise that it encompasses. Each level of government has a different magnitude of influence over different jurisdictions; however, each level intersects with the others in various capacities. The province directly influences municipal government through legislative capacities and financial means, and this influence has fundamentally shaped Canada’s cities. The political authorities decide upon the magnitude of service delivery at all levels. The services that are delivered at the local level through local government are a direct result of provincial authority, and this is visible in the planning of our cities.

Canada's political context influences how planning and development is executed and produced at the local level.

Chapter 3 The Story of Downsview

Over the past decade Downsview Park has played host to many large festivals: SARStock, EdgeFest, the papal visit of World Youth Day – attracting visitors as passionate about religion as others are about rock and roll. Among other festivals, this is the identity which Downsview Park has taken with the masses: a tract of land this size is an excellent space to host large events.

Many may view Downsview Park as a barren space, unable to be defined by the identity as “Canada’s National Urban Park.” Downsview has been engulfed in organizational changes with promises to produce a park containing mixed-use housing, mid-rise development, and easy access to alternative modes of transportation – a utopia for urbanists searching for a living experience unique to Toronto. Downsview Park is a space that is much more than human interactions in festival settings. It has a rich history in aerospace, aviation, military roots and a rich political climate that has shaped it into what Toronto residents and tourists see today.

Downsview Park has a history with a complex narrative of disputed development coupled with aerospace and military triumphs. In what follows, the history of Downsview Park is outlined, explaining how the park was created, the introduction of aerospace and air force operations, and the creation of quasi-governmental organizations that control it today.

3.1 Early History: From Indigenous Times to Industrialization

The history of Downsview Park’s land can be traced back well before the establishment of North York. Indigenous settlement is traced throughout the North York

area, in particular parts of the eastern side of the Humber River and around the banks of the Black Creek River (Hart, 1968). These areas appealed to the Huron Indians because of the fertile soils, heavily wooded lands, and the various streams of fresh water spanning vast distances (Ibid). Encampments were set up along the banks of these rivers in 1400-1650 A.D, as evidence of settlement is found in relics such as bones, arrowheads, potsherds, and other artefacts that were left behind and dug up (Ibid).

In the early 1800's, Downsview was growing into a small settler community situating itself around what is now the intersection of Wilson Avenue and Keele Street (Hart, 1968). Downsview derives its name from John Perkins Bull, a farmer who settled in the area around 1842. "Downs View", his farm, located just south of the 401 on Keele Street and Rustic Road, was one of the highest elevations in the city, and the community was named after this (Ibid; DLCVA, 2014). As a result of the influx of settlers, Wilson Avenue and Keele Street gradually became the centre of Downsview and a crossroads for the farming community. In 1830, the Boake family purchased the land that today is Downsview Park (DLCVA, 2014).

William De Havilland purchased 70 acres of farmland along Sheppard Avenue in 1929 to build De Havilland Aircraft of Canada (Ibid). De Havilland established itself as Canada's largest aircraft manufacturer of civilian and government owned aircraft. As it grew, more land was purchased, expanding the original 70 acres of land to include a large aircraft hangar and extended runways (DLCVA, 2014). Between 1936 and 1938, De Havilland added an additional building to its campus, which is now the Downsview Sports Complex (Ibid; Hart, 1968). During the war, more land was acquired to extend runways and to produce and provide more airplanes for World War II.

Between 1948 and 1954, the Department of National Defence expropriated land that De Havilland owned under the War Measures Act to enable the Royal Canadian Air Force to build an air station (Ibid). In 1954, De Havilland sold the rest of its original building and property to the Canadian Federal Government, and relocated a few kilometers to the south near Wilson Avenue (Wencer, 2011; DLCVA 2014). That same year, the Department of National Defence opened the Royal Canadian Air Force Base (AFB) (the main building is the current Downsview Park Merchants Market) (DLCVA, 2014). The base shut down in 1996, “prompting the process of re-purposing much of Downsview, including the original land and primary building first occupied by De Havilland” (Wencer, 2011). The rich history of the De Havilland establishment in Downsview provided a segway for Bombardier Aerospace to move in, purchase De Havilland facilities and establish its head office in De Havilland’s old buildings (DLCVA, 2014).

The abovementioned repurposing of Downsview began when the Airforce Base shut down, prompting a response from the federal government to evaluate different options of land use surrounding the runway that Bombardier currently uses today. As a result of the termination of AFB operations, in 1997 the federal government announced development plans for the site including 1200 residential units, recreational and commercial uses on the parks 130 hectares of land (Queen, 2013)⁵.

⁵ It is important to note that of the 231.5 hectares (520 acres) of Downsview Park, 130 hectares (320 acres) are earmarked for traditional parkland, recreational, commercial and cultural amenities. The remainder is earmarked for development.

3.2 The Creation of Downsview Park

It is not every day that a metropolis has a vast open area in the middle of it, ripe with opportunity to create a positive identity for itself. Yet Downsview Park does not have much in the way of a positive identity, nor has it received any positive publicity for any of the progress it has made over the past twenty years. It has been mired in political turmoil ever since there was an announcement that the open space of land in north Toronto would become a national park. Downsview has been a divisive, ever-changing, often ignored initiative.

3.2.1 Closing of Canadian Forces Base Downsview, Tree City, and Parc Downsview Park

Twenty years ago, in 1994 (then) Prime Minister Jean Chrétien raised the idea in the House of Commons of closing the Canadian Forces Base (CFB Downsview). This move prompted a quick response from the community of Downsview, who then formed the Downsview Lands Community Voice Association (DLCVA) to preserve and enhance Downsview through connecting the community interests to any modifications and future development, including a park (DLCVA, 2014).

In 1999, the federal Ministry of Public Works launched an international design competition to solicit ideas for the park. Bruce Mau, an independent urban designer, collaborated with Rem Koolhaas, a founding partner of the Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), submitted a design titled “Tree City” (See Figure 3). It was chosen as the design that would provide the foundation for Downsview Park’s future (Hume, 2012; Czerniak, 2001). The designers proposed to use Downsview Park as a precedent

setting space, using trees rather than tall buildings as the park's identity. Furthermore, trees were a feasible option for the urban park within the budget available at the time for the park's aesthetic features (OMA Architecture, 2014). The goal of OMA Architecture's plan was to create pathways and clusters of trees in a beautifully landscaped design so that a matrix of circular tree clusters surrounds the pathways and creates view corridors, covering approximately 25% of the site (*Ibid*).

Also in 1999, the federal government created a quasi-governmental body called Parc Downsview Park (PDP). PDP was created to replace the Canada Lands Company's responsibility of the park, which subsequently did not last long. PDP's mandate was to oversee the implementation of Tree City, financing, and operation of Downsview Park (D.Soknacki, personal communication, Nov 6, 2014; Downsview Park, 2014)⁶. PDP also attempted to be transparent with the broader community, meaning that on a quarterly basis, it released reports on financing and any progress that they had made (*Ibid*). The PDP was also active in creating plans to improve and enhance the park's design and implementation, including a 25-year Downsview Park Sustainable Community Development Plan. Local resident, Rosana Iobanna of the Downsview Lands Community Voice Association (DLCVA) noted that there was support for the PDP's transparency and community activism, saying that, "The PDP sent out quarterly reports on the financials [...] and also hosted public meetings around the same time (R. Iobonna, personal communication, Nov 8, 2014). These reports were well positioned and poised to build up Downsview's physical transformation.

⁶ Canada Lands Company had brief oversight of Downsview Park from the time Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced the sale of Downsview CFB, and the implementation of PDP.

PDP was also mandated to be self-financing, putting 102 hectares of space dedicated to opportunities that provided a revenue stream to finance construction, development, and management of the park (PDP Annual Report, 2006). In addition, the PDP's plan was to have less than 20% of the land available for sale for residential development. Each parcel that would be developed would be subject to the Sustainable Development Guidelines (*Ibid*). These plans, which were made under the leadership of David Soknacki, had such significant support from the City of Toronto planning division that most of them were implemented into the amended Downsview Secondary Plan (R. Iobonna, personal communication, Nov 8, 2014; D. Sokacki, personal communication, Nov 6, 2014; City of Toronto, 2010).



Figure 3: "Tree City" design. Source: www.canadianarchitect.com/news/what-s-up-downsview1000144020/?&er=NA

As suggested in the Tree City plan, The Toronto Aerospace Museum and Campus, gymnasiums, ice hockey pads, rock climbing and go-kart facilities are housed in

“Hanger 1 and 2” (former De Havilland buildings) (Downsview Park, 2014, Scallan, 2013; Hume, 2013). Additional features are the Promenade Zone, which surrounds the storm water retention pond (“lake”).

During the period when Tree City was submitted in 1999, the federal government created the quasi-governmental organization called Parc Downsview Park (PDP). Jean Chretien promised Toronto its own “Central Park”, and Tree City reflected this promised vision. However, the federal government was not able to fund the estimated 140 million dollars required to begin building out the plan (OMA, 2000; Grewal, 2010). Tree City was unaffordable after numerous months of preparing to integrate the vision into the park, so Toronto City Council began to debate how to fund the development (Grewal, 2010). It was estimated that 20,000 residents and workers would work and live in the area, significantly reducing the amount of park space and subdividing the lands into five distinct neighbourhoods: Stanley Greene (which is under construction as of May, 2014), William Baker, The Sheppard Neighbourhood, The Chesswood Neighbourhood, and The Allen Neighbourhood (*Ibid*). PDP’s mandate was to transform the “former Canadian Forces Base in Toronto into “a unique urban recreation green space for the enjoyment of future generations on a self financing basis” (House of Commons Auditor General Report, 2001; PDP Corporate Plan Summary, 2011:3).

It was PDP that submitted the plan, on behalf of the federal government for the five neighbourhoods. The plan significantly changed the idea of a “central park” within Toronto as San Grewal reported in 2001. Grewal investigated PDP’s ambitions to integrate the natural beauty of a large park – similar in size and geographic location of Central Park within Manhattan, New York – within the surrounding neighbourhoods and

Toronto as a whole. Tony Genco, the former Community Affairs Director for Downsview Park said that the park would be a cultural centre for the city, and would break down barriers (Grewal, 2001). He added that in the past, he remembered when he would drive around an empty parcel of land and often wondered what was inside, as did others (*Ibid*). Keeping consistent with the tree city plan, thousands of trees were planted, the hangars previously used by De Havilland were retrofitted into sports complexes, and plans to develop 10,000 units of housing – which the community was in favour of – were set to commence (Scallan, 2013; Hume, 2013).

Tree City was not fully implemented, however. Some of the components of the plan are visible at Downsview Park, but there are significant reasons why the full plan was not rolled-out. David Soknacki noted that, “The urban design proposals ‘tree city’ among others, was stalled due to aligning the PDP’s thinking and actions congruent to the political will at the federal level” (D. Soknacki, personal communication, Nov 6, 2014). In addition, establishing PDP’s Board of Directors, understanding the financials and debt that the PDP (and subsequently, Canada Lands) would take to support the park, and the organizational framework that the park operates under were all symptoms of Downsview Park’s immobility (*Ibid*). In other words, the federal government had to completely overhaul parts of its administration in order to align its operations with Toronto’s policies.

Former Mayor of Toronto, John Sewell, was not in favour of the plan to create an urban park to begin with. Sewell was in favour of urbanization, claiming the open space was “ripe” for it (Scallan, 2013). He claimed that the federal Liberal government jumped on the “urban park” bandwagon without any financial plan moving forward – citing

irresponsibility and government ineptness (*Ibid*). Sewell’s apprehension with the Liberal government’s plan for Downsview is a result of the area being undeveloped for almost two decades. However, the new self-financing scheme focusing on selling land for development changed his mind, along with the DLCVA’s.

3.2.2 Downsview Secondary Plan

The original Downsview Secondary Plan was adopted in July of 1998 in consultation with the federal government, Canada Lands Company, various community members, and the DLCVA (City of Toronto, 1998). The main revisions to the Secondary Plan were to amend existing land-uses with the intent of constructing sports and entertainment facilities, commercial uses, restaurants to serve park patrons only, implement the Downsview Urban Design study, apply institutional designation to the military lands, and apply residential designation to surrounding city-owned lands (south-east corner of Allen and Sheppard Avenue – which is now the Downsview subway station) (*Ibid*). Many micro suggestions are embedded in the revised Secondary Plan that use open-ended language. For example, the Plan suggests that a “financial plan be constructed to support the development for the Secondary Plan area” (*Ibid*). Many of these suggestions were addressed in the latest 2010 plan.

Downsview Park’s Secondary Plan was amended with the cooperation of the city bureaucracies and PDP in 2010. This Secondary Plan forms Part 7 of Chapter 6 of the City of Toronto Official Plan, which was completed in its entirety and presented to the North York Community Council on February 17, 2010.

The Official Plan is about setting the context and vision for the City of Toronto. Toronto's Official Plan is grounded on four main principles: diversity and opportunity; beauty; connectivity; leadership and stewardship (City of Toronto Official Plan, 2010). Embedded in these principles is a drive to create vibrant, healthy, and complete communities. City of Toronto staff is bound to this vision, and all of the recommendations and reports put before Council conform to this. As such, one can presume that the decisions that do not conform to staff recommendations are for alternative reasons – political, or representing the wishes of the community that the councillor represents.

The existing Downsview Secondary Plan was approved by City Council in 1999 with two amendments to the plan for lands at the southwest and southeast corners of the Allen Road and Sheppard Avenue West intersections. These were both approved in 2001 (Downsview Area Secondary Plan Review, 2010). This review was prompted by major changes in the area, including:

- The approval of the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension north through the Secondary Plan area to the City of Vaughan;
- GO Transit committed to constructing a new station on the CN rail line south of Sheppard Avenue West which will be combined with the new subway station;
- PDP updated the development concept for their lands, a key component was to increase development opportunities on the lands near the new subway/GO station; and

- The new City of Toronto Official Plan provides a policy framework for structuring growth around strong integrated transportation and land use policies (*Ibid*).

The original secondary plan – Clause No. 28 – was considered on July 30, 1998. During this time, Toronto’s ward boundary system was dissimilar to the contemporary structure. As per Figure 4, the wards that encompassed the Downsview Secondary Plan were Ward 6, North York Humber (councillor Judy Sgro and George Mammolitti), ward 7 Black Creek (Maria Augimeri and Peter li Preti), and ward 8 North York Spadina (councillor Howard Moscoe and Mike Feldman). The ward composition was given two councillors because when the six former cities amalgamated to form the mega-city of Toronto (which was North America’s first mega city), the City decided to elect two councillors per ward for the first term. The elections were held similar to what happens currently; however, the two candidates who received the most votes were both elected.

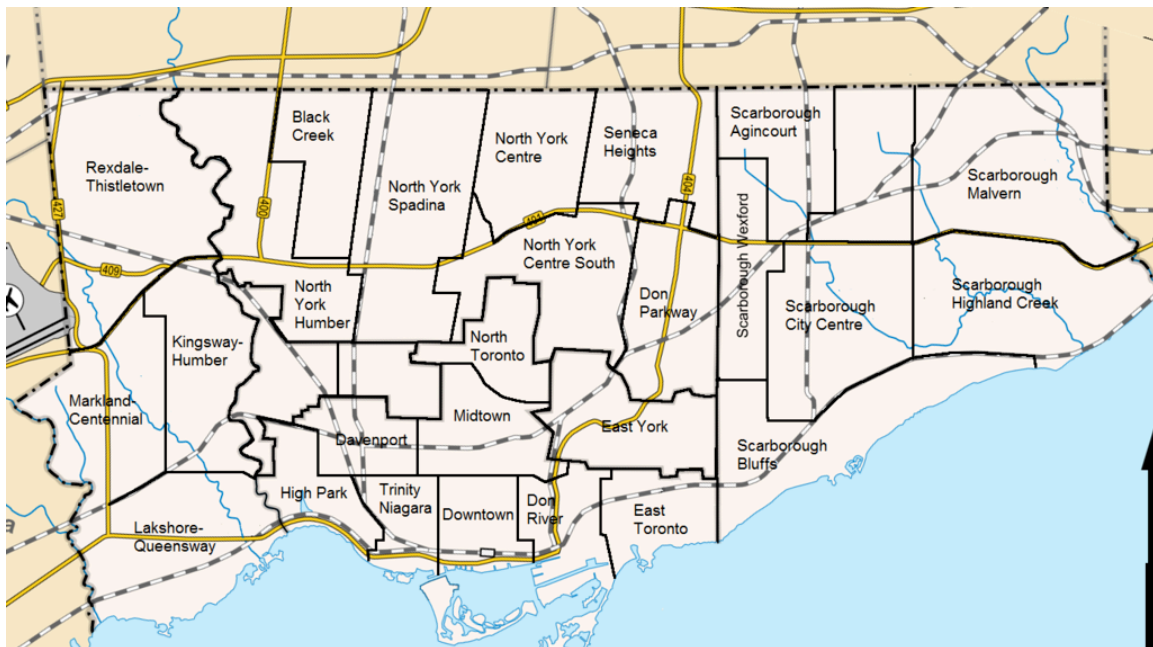


Figure 4: Electoral Wards in 1998. Source: Stanwick, 1997.

At the municipal level, politics have been influencing the Downsview Park development for more than a decade. David Socknaki stipulated that the federal government has the right not to adhere to the municipal processes in developing Downsview Park. However, the federal government chose to in order to understand the community needs and adhere to them. In addition, the federal government wanted to establish a relationship with the City of Toronto (D. Socknaki, personal communication, November 5, 2014). As a result, the PDP and subsequently the Canada Lands Company have been submitting plans to the City of Toronto every time each organization had a plan to develop or rejuvenate the park.

The process begins by going through the development application procedure in the City of Toronto, whereby the City Planning Division (coupled with Economic Development, Toronto Building, Public Works, Transportation Services and the Toronto Transit Commission) evaluate each application and determine the impact that it will have on the community, the environment, and all other aspects that impact the functioning of the city. Once all of the required divisions process the development application, the Community Council reviews the staff report. PDP submitted many different applications for zoning by-law amendments for the Stanley Greene neighbourhood (first neighbourhood currently under development) and had input in the Downsview Secondary Plan, which subsequently went through the entire development application process, but was appealed by PDP to the OMB as a result of Council's refusal to implement the Secondary Plan (Ontario Municipal Board, 2011).

For a decade (2000-2010), former councillor Howard Moscoe had been a proponent of PDP's development. Moscoe claimed that Augimeri considered the

development an “extreme” election issue and predicted that as a result, the development would be brought before the OMB (Grewal, 2010). Moscoe has been critical of the glacial pace of development in the park, saying the park could have been developed quicker if the federal government put money into it, but understands that the government wants to generate profit from it by from selling space to large corporations while land development remains relatively inactive (*Ibid*).

Moscoe blames the local political contention on Augimeri, councillor Anthony Perruzza (Ward 8), and former councillor Mike Feldman (Ward 10). Citing election issues and pet projects as a barrier and cause of the stagnation of development, he says that if these barriers were removed, it would have unlocked a roadblock for development to take place (*Ibid*). A lack of interest in building an actual park and an interest in development worried Augimeri, Perruzza and Feldman. The most vocal of the three has been Councillor Augimeri, whose ward encompasses the majority of Downsview Park. With PDP’s plans in place, Augimeri made a motion to defer the Downsview Secondary Plan at Toronto City Council in February, and March of 2010 (City of Toronto, 2010). Augimeri put these motions forward because of the community’s distaste for PDP’s plans, specifically the Stanley Greene neighbourhood. This development conforms with the Downsview Secondary Plan with a density allowance of 1356 units, and a mix of single family and mid-rise development with significant open space within 46.7 acres (PDP Corporate Summary, 2010). The delay in development was due to the deferrals that Augimeri kept placing on the Secondary Plan at the North York Community Council, with majority support.

During his tenure as Chair of PDP from 2007-2013, David Soknacki was feeling pressure from both municipal and federal levels of government making his job complicated (D. Soknacki, personal communication, Nov 6, 2014). The balancing act of catering to the federal government's lack of financial and planning support for PDP, and the lack of local support kept development at a standstill. The back and forth dialogue and public statements by politicians, stakeholder groups, and (quasi) governmental organizations has created a stagnant development. Worried local politicians, voicing their concerns for constituents' best interests did not seem to obstruct the plans put forward by PDP.

3.2.3 PDP Abolished, Canada Lands Company Take-over

The financing plan for Tree City and PDP's Secondary Plan was unfortunately stalled, and subsequently dissolved as Rona Ambrose (the former Conservative federal Minister of Public Works), disbanded PDP in December of 2012, its Board of Directors, and all of the development plans, including the 10,000 residential units on 85 hectares of land (MacDonald, 2012). PDP's Board of Directors and executives worked for over ten years on developing a comprehensive plan including residential, cultural, and recreational components that the Canada Lands Company was not in favour of (PDP Corporate Summary, 2011; Hume, 2013).

The Canada Lands Company is the current quasi-governmental body that governs, and operates Downsview Park, and plans its future development. The change in management modified the mandate for the park. Before the PDP was disbanded, the mandate was to create a sustainable park for recreation and settlement, and to find non-

taxpayer ways to pay for the operations of the park. On the other hand, Canada Lands Company's mandate is to deliver the best economic return from the sale of government property (Canada Lands Company, 2014; MacDonald, 2012; Hume, 2013).

Canada Lands Company installed potted plants that mark an entrance into the park near the intersection of Keele Street and Sheppard Avenue. An amphitheatre was built into the Promenade Zone that overlooks the lake acting as a focal feature for pedestrians and others passing through the Downsview area as well as a gathering space for smaller festivals such as the Canada Day celebrations every July 1 (See Figure 5).



Figure 5: PDP's vision for Downsview Park. Source: www.downsviewpark.ca

These transformations are important because they represent the result of a tumultuous history of political back-and-forth and consultation. Community members and local representatives have stated that these features (the lake, potted plants, and the

amphitheatre) have little effect on integrating the park into the community. In addition, these features are not entirely what was promised to the community. For example, the potted plants being used as an entrance feature were not what Canada Lands Company had initially planned (see Figure 3) (R. Iobonna, personal communication, November 8, 2014). Canada Lands originally held consultations whereby both the community and Canada Lands agreed that there would be a grand entrance constructed, utilizing potted planters and other features. However, as Figure 6 shows, the result is a far cry from the grand entrance promised to the community by Canada Lands Company (*Ibid*).

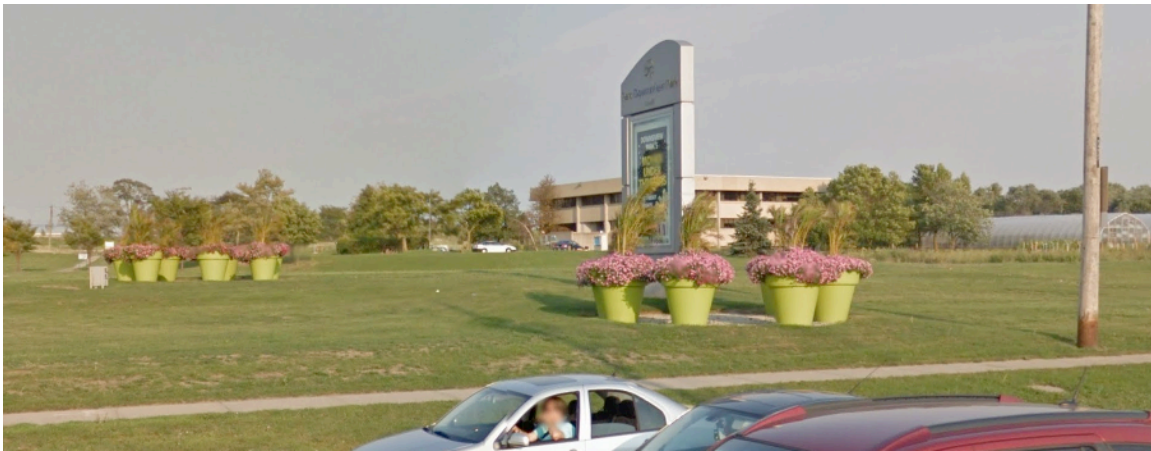


Figure 6: Downsview Park entrance as seen from Keele Street facing east, near Keele and Sheppard Avenue intersection. Photo: Matthew M. Boscariol on October 10, 2014.

This change of focus modified the way Downsview Park operated and altered the public perception of the park's operations completely (R. Iobonna, personal communication, November 8 2014). The community and the Downsview Lands Community Voice Association (DLCVA) worked with the PDP on a daily basis because the PDP engaged the community and were transparent with their plans and finances. This generated a healthy working relationship between all parties (*Ibid*; MacDonald, 2012).

The issue of the park is not as straightforward as changing and developing the park as many parties see it. David Socknacki, noted, “the Board of PDP was sitting on the issue of federal paramountcy [*sic*]. At law, PDP and Canada Lands was a federal entity. The provincial legislation and City of Toronto policy did not run on that land” (D. Socknacki, personal communication, November 6, 2014). Because of PDP and Canada Lands’ willingness to work with Toronto, this relationship with municipal politicians created the delay in development of the park because PDP and Canada Lands were confirming with Toronto’s municipal policy on behalf of the federal government.

3.2.4 “Set Downsview Free” Campaign

Canada Lands Company has not worked with the community like PDP had in the past, and this produced resentment from the community (R. Iobonna, personal communication, Nov 8, 2014). More recently, Councillor Maria Augimeri launched a campaign to “Set Downsview Free” in response to confidential information she received that indicated Canada Lands Company was taking steps to re-open the Downsview Secondary Plan⁷. *The Toronto Star* obtained the information through a freedom-of-information request, noting that deputy minister of public works, Michelle d’Auray, outlined a “fundamental difference” between the mandate of Canada Lands and the Crown (formerly PDP) which was that the Canada Lands Company was willing to modify approved plans against the communities’ wishes in order to generate more revenue. Recently, d’Auray stated that, “consistent with our mandate [...] (we) may be

⁷ During personal interview sessions. I inquired with both Councillor Maria Augimeri and David Socknaki about the specifics of the source of information. Both would not specify where it came from, stating that they would not break promises.

inclined to expand the disposal of some or all of the property [...] or propose commercially oriented use of property” (Alamenciak, 2014). This statement was made because Canada Lands had been exploring options to generate more revenue.

During the “Set Downsview Free” campaign, Councillor Augimeri stated that Canada Lands were taking measures to reopen the Secondary Plan to increase densities (*Ibid*). She was joined by former PDP Chair, David Soknacki, who expressed his concerns that the Plan risks being reopened, but takes a very nuanced approach by stating that he is proud of the Secondary Plan, which encompasses much of PDP’s plan for the park (*Ibid*; Davidson, 2013). Councillor Augimeri voiced concerns about the density, stating that of the 10, 000 housing units, about 1500 have been sold as part of the Stanley Greene community, and even if Ottawa does not hand over control of the park, she would like to see the remaining five communities – and 8500 units – halted (Hui, 2014).

Soknacki disagreed with this statement, citing PDP’s self-financing structure – which Canada Lands Company relies on – as crucial to the future success of Downsview Park (*Ibid*). In a recent interview with the DLCVA, Soknacki stated that there was an advantage to Councillor Augimeri’s campaign: that there would be increased sensitivity to local issues and greater transparency. Conversely, he argued that if the City of Toronto were to gain control, the credibility would be lost due to the possibility of another “makeover”, and the high cost of putting a new administrative structure and financing mechanisms in place (DLCVA, personal communication, 2014).

A noteworthy act in the “Set Downsview Free” campaign that the Councillor is doing is collecting signatures that oppose the development. Augimeri plans to submit the petition to the federal government in 2015 to show that there is a collective voice saying

no to additional housing on the park. This petition is calculated because in 2015 there is a federal election, so the future Member of Parliament (MP) will have clearer direction on what his or her constituents desire. It is also designed to galvanize a grassroots voice of Downsview at the federal level, because the current MP is in favour of the development and constituents are fully opposed to 30, 000 more residents in the area (M. Augimeri, personal communication, June 28, 2014).

3.2.5 What is Happening Today

Downsview is undergoing its first phase of development at the Stanley Greene neighbourhood location. Stanley Greene is located in the southwest corner of the park, bordering Keele Street to the west, and Cuffley Drive to the southwest. With PDP's former plan in place for the development of the park, Councillor Augimeri made a motion to defer the Downsview Secondary Plan at Toronto City Council in February, and March of 2010 (City of Toronto, 2010). The proposed development conformed to the Downsview Secondary Plan with a density allowance of 1356 units, and a mix of single family and mid-rise development with significant open space within 46.7 acres (PDP Corporate Summary, 2010).

Mattamy Homes and Urbancorp began preparation for developing the first residential neighbourhood in the park at the Stanley Greene location in 2013. The commencement of Stanley Greene development can be said to be a substantial step forward for the Canada Lands Company and the federal government as the areas within the park that are planned for development have been sitting vacant.

Councillor Augimeri's "Set Downsview Free" campaign remains active to this day. The federal election is approaching in 2015, and no announcements have been made to alter the trajectory to submit residents' signatures to the federal candidates for M.P. for the York Centre letting them know that their future constituents are opposed to more development in Downsview Park.

3.3 Conclusion

The deputy minister, Michelle d'Auray, stated that the Canada Lands Company potentially would have to consider disposing of some of the park consistent with its mandate (selling land and generating profit) or propose commercial uses. These actions have the potential to open up the Secondary Plan once again, which is entirely against the wishes of the local councillor and the community. It would, however, be difficult to get approval from Toronto city planners because the densities, design, and utility services in Downsview Park have a limit that the current Secondary Plan addresses (City of Toronto, 2010). According to Soknacki, the federal government could modify the area to meet their wishes, but that would be completely counterproductive to what has happened over the past decade (D. Soknacki, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

Chapter 4 Piecing the Story of Downsview Together

There is no doubt that there are many different components to the Downsview Park development that make it extremely contested. Significant events over the past two decades have added to the public perception of Downsview being a static, unmoveable disappointment for a community longing for a park. Quasi-governmental organizational change, the creation of a Secondary Plan that lacks local political support, campaigns that do not promote cooperation and solidarity amongst levels of government, and misleading projects that were not implemented by the quasi-governmental organization – all this created consternation within the local community.

Ultimately, Downsview Park is a federally-owned piece of land that presents complications in terms of the handling of land in urban settings, adhering to municipal building by-laws and regulations, because due to constitutional status, federal lands lie outside municipal jurisdiction (Ircha and Young, 2013). The problem is that some federal agencies and departments may adhere to local municipal policy and legislation at their discretion. This chapter analyses perennial issues with developing federal property in municipalities, and then examines the decisions and modifications within Downsview's history and how they have effected Downsview Park's development.

4.1 Perennial Issues of Federal Land in Municipalities

Federally owned properties are not unique within municipalities. Ports, airports, military bases, and empty parcels of land have various ramifications on municipalities, including the politics of inter-governmental relations. Indeed, there are both positive and

negative ramifications to federally owned properties in municipalities, and Downsview Park exhibits many of these implications.

Ircha and Young's (2006) article outlines benefits that federal properties bring to municipal governments and residents. The authors stipulate that federal properties normally house public servants, whose salaries are normally higher than the average private sector worker. As a result, their contribution to the local economy through purchasing goods and services from surrounding businesses benefits municipalities (Ircha and Young, 2006). Additionally, local businesses supply goods and services to federal properties, which sustains the local economy. All of these transactions are sources of provincial and municipal funds. Municipal governments benefit from the tax base provided by residential and commercial developments on federal lands (*Ibid*).

A program that the federal government uses to subsidize municipalities is PILTs (payments in lieu of taxes), which are meant to compensate municipalities for the services they provide to properties (Ircha and Young, 2006). Municipal services such as fire protection, utility servicing, policing, snow removal, waste management, and so on, are subsidized through the PILTs. However, municipalities claim that PILTs do not amount to the full cost of services provided. Also, according to the Ontario Municipal Assessment Corporation, there is a considerable gap between PILTs and the amount of property taxes that would otherwise be paid (Adam, 2010; Ircha and Young, 2006).

Federal-municipal relations struggle with local policies. For example zoning by-laws, planning policy, and building by-laws do not have any effect within federal properties due to their constitutional status (Ircha and Young, 2006). This poses risks for development of properties in urban settings, especially if federal governments are

unwilling to work with municipalities and adhere to the enacted municipal planning policies.

This also raises the question: is the federal government willing to spend the money necessary to maintain its properties and to invest in them? This question also links to the level of municipal utility services that provide adequate sewer, electrical, and hydro services to federal properties. These services are essential in order for the federal government to maintain and develop its properties (Ircha and Young, 2006). In order for the federal government to develop the properties at Downsview for example, municipal services need to increase because they are not adequate as is.

4.2 Political Forces at Play

Over the last twenty years, all three levels of government have been, and continue to be, involved in shaping Downsview. This creates clear difficulty in maintaining steady goals and objectives because political influence is never stable; political parties, goals, and ideologies constantly change due to a change in leadership within the same political party, or due to a new political party being elected. Downsview has seen political parties, P.M.s, premiers, and ministers change. What has remained stable over Downsview's history is the local councillor, Maria Augimeri, whose ward encompasses most of the Downsview lands. Throughout Downsview's history, there have been significant alterations in power and governance that can be linked to changing political leadership in the upper-levels of government.

Jean Chrétien's Liberal government announced the closure of CFB Downsview in 1994, and during the federal Liberal government's tenure, the Canada Lands Company

was created. The Liberal government's objective in creating the Canada Lands Company was to create an arms length real estate division that would maintain constant communication with government organizations and ministries to ensure that there would be clear and mutual understanding of government priorities and constraints selling off property that no longer suits federal ministerial programs (Canada Lands Special Examination Report, 2006). The Liberal government also required Canada Lands to ensure that it demonstrated to its stakeholders that, "its projects and developments enhance value and meet stakeholders expectations" (*Ibid*, 12). Interestingly enough, the primary stakeholders in each and every Canada Lands transaction are the Ministry of Public Works that the company is acting on behalf of, and the Parliament of Canada. This policy has remained consistent up to present day (Canada Lands Company, 2015).

The formation of PDP in 1999 indicated that the federal government was serious about developing the land because the corporation was formed to design, develop and maintain Downsview Park. The federal government knew that it would not be able to begin development until the full transaction of the 572 acres of land was complete and transferred to PDP. The development of the park did would not commence until 2006 – when full ownership of the land was finally given to PDP (Downsview Park, 2014). The Liberal government formed the Board of Directors that was composed of members consistent with its own party politics (National Post, 2007). Prior to development, the Liberal government spearheaded the international design competition, which was another central indicator of PDP's plan to develop the park. Tree City's winning entry had a goal of centralizing the development of the park on natural elements which was favoured by the community (R. Iobonna, personal communication, November 8, 2014). The design

also was consistent with PDP's vision of transforming the park into an internationally renowned sustainable urban community (Downsview Park, 2014).

At the same time as the creation of PDP and the announcement of the international design competition, the provincial Conservatives were carrying out their "Common Sense Revolution". Municipalities in Ontario felt the financial impact immediately as a result of provincial portfolios being downloaded to municipal jurisdiction. In Toronto, the City inherited new responsibilities as well as the added task of merging municipal administrations, policies, by-laws, and departments into a new mega-city government (Keil *et.al*, 2002).

The impact of the Common Sense Revolution certainly had an effect on how Ontario municipalities viewed their growth. Urban sprawl has been an ineffective use of land and resources that requires an extensive use of municipal services, strains infrastructure, and creates a car-dependent low quality of life, which ultimately requires increases in municipal taxes (Slack, 2002). In contrast, compact urban form provides a critical competitive advantage to cities because of its effect on both the cost of infrastructure and the quality of life enjoyed by residents (*Ibid*). Absent from the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* under the *Places to Grow Act* - which was created in 2005 and implemented in 2006 under Dalton McGuinty's provincial Liberal government - the Tree City plan was geared toward a compact urban form development rolled out in phases (OMA Design, 2000; Government of Ontario, 2015).

At the local level, Councillor Augimeri opposed the reopening of Downsview's Secondary Plan around the time of PDP's formation and Tree City's design. Her opposition was not helping PDP's efforts to establish a working relationship between her

and her Council colleagues (D. Soknacki, personal communication, Nov 6, 2014). North York Councillors, mainly Augimeri, have been extremely vocal throughout the park's history stressing that by developing other land uses within the park, the federal government is going against the wishes of the community. Directly blaming former P.M. Jean Chrétien, Augimeri stated, "The original promise of Prime Minister Chrétien was to build a park; he didn't say build apartments" (Grewal, 2010). She continues to claim that the residents have been lied to and refuses to seek common ground with the Canada Lands Company. She argues that it is not her job as a local councillor to help the federal government create funding and other mechanisms for its 15-year plan (*Ibid*).

David Soknacki argues, on the other hand, that the rhetoric of "the federal government promised us a park" is not reflective of reality. Councillors who claim that this is what was promised are misleading the public, and he consistently asked them to prove that this promise was actually made (D. Soknacki, personal communication, Nov 6, 2014). PDP and the City of Toronto divisions⁸ attended to each stage of the Secondary Plan review together, absent of local council support (*Ibid*). When the *Places to Grow Act* was approved in 2005 and enacted in 2006 at the Provincial level, it ensured that the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* would be implemented (Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006). The Downsview Secondary Plan review process had to take this new provincial policy into consideration while drafting the Plan.

Downsview is incorporated into the "growth area" of Toronto, and the Growth Plan

⁸ City of Toronto Divisions and ABC's that were involved in the Downsview Secondary Plan: Economic Development and Culture, City Planning, Transportation Services, City Legal, Toronto Water, Engineering and Construction Services, Parks Forestry and Recreation, Toronto Fire, Toronto Building, Solid Waste Management, the Toronto Transit Commission.

considers Downsview to be an *urban growth centre* where intensification of residential and employment areas should occur (Emphasis in original, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006). The Plan specifically states that the revitalization of these centres is particularly important, and that, “Communities will need to grow at *transit-supportive* densities, with transit-oriented street configurations. *Compact urban form* and *intensification* efforts go hand-in-hand with more transit” (Emphasis in Original, *Ibid*: 12).

In an interview compiled by the DLCVA for the 2014 municipal election, the first question posed was: “Do you oppose the 2010 Downsview Secondary Plan (13 signatories, 7 neighbourhoods, 10,000 condos, over 10-15 years?)” Councillor Augimeri responded by totally opposing the plan, citing heavy increases in traffic, public works infrastructure strains, and a lack of community services as her primary concern (DLCVA, 2014). Municipally, the consistent pattern of referring reports back to staff is either a way to procure additional information that helps Council make a more informed decision, or it is a strategy to delay a decision for as long as possible (D. Soknacki, personal communication, Nov 6, 2014; M. Augimeri, personal communication, June 28, 2014). In the case of Downsview Park, the strategy to delay a decision on the Secondary Plan worked to a certain extent.

Consequently, PDP appealed to the OMB because PDP had support from the majority of the surrounding community for the proposed plans that conformed to the City’s Official Plan and provincial legislation (City of Toronto, 2010; D. Soknacki,

personal communication, Nov 6, 2014)⁹. With the OMB's approval, the Secondary Plan allowed PDP (in 2011-2012) and Canada Lands Company to move forward with all of the district development plans and supplementary elements in the plan (Downsview Area Secondary Plan, 2010; Stanley Greene District Plan, 2011).

Local politicians, especially Councillor Augimeri, found it difficult to work against the Secondary Plan's approval at the Provincial level. With the support of the City divisions, the PDP, surrounding community, and the OMB, the Plan was moving forward. Councillor Augimeri and her colleague's can no longer defer or request additional information pertaining to the Plan in its entirety; however, they are able to question and request additional information on the district plans, for example, the Stanley Greene District Plan.

In 2012, the PDP's disbandment occurred shortly after P.M. Stephen Harper's re-election. Canada Lands Company took over at a time when the Conservative Party of Canada was targeting the financial stability of the country, during the worst global economic recession since the 1930's (Conservative Party of Canada, 2011). One of the primary goals, from a list of five, was to eliminate the deficit by 2014-2015 through controlling spending and cutting waste by establishing an ongoing review of government spending by cutting low-priority and ineffective programs (*Ibid*). One of Canada Lands' primary goals of selling off Ministry assets that are no longer effective for revenue

⁹ PDP appealed to the OMB (OPA 111) under subsection 22(7) of the Planning Act as a result of City Council's refusal to enact the proposed amendment to the Official Plan for the implementation of the Downsview Secondary Plan (Ontario Municipal Board, 2011). The major changes that occurred in the area (subway extension and GO implementation, PDP development plans, and the new Official Plan) prompted the review of the original Secondary Plan, which was then subsequently brought before the OMB as a result of deferring the process.

generation directly corresponds with the Conservative Party's election mandate.

Consequently, it is of no surprise that Stephen Harper's re-elected Conservative majority government eliminated PDP and gave Downsview Park oversight to the Canada Lands Company.

4.2.1 Politics of Downsview from 2014-Present

After 2012 and the Canada Lands Company's takeover of Downsview, all of the pieces were in place for the development of the park to continue. The Secondary Plan had been passed as municipal policy with the support of the OMB and the City of Toronto bureaucracy, and the Canada Lands Company had completed its organizational structure and Board composition in order to provide seamless oversight of the operations of the Park and its development (Canada Lands Company, 2015; D. Soknacki, personal communication, Nov 6, 2014). In addition, Canada Lands Company had solidified Mattamy Homes as the builder for the Stanley Greene neighbourhood.

With the development of Stanley Greene underway, Councillor Augimeri's "Set Downsview Free" campaign is the only political opposition to Downsview's development. The federal government has claimed that the councillor is spreading misinformation about Canada Lands Company's desire to re-open the Downsview Secondary Plan, and selling the park to developers (Jeffords, 2014). But Augimeri positioned Downsview Park as her main 2014 municipal election issue. Her campaign galvanized support from residents as proven with her victory. By taking a grassroots approach she is voicing the disapproval of the community to the federal government.

Political tactics used at Council during the draft of the Downsview Secondary Plan did not work. In Ontario, the Province dictates all planning matters at the end of the day, and local politics have yet to undermine the OMB's power (Sancton, 2011; Doumani and Foran, 2012). After years of referring reports and draft policies back to staff for more information at the City level, PDP finally submitted the Plan to the OMB. At the Board, the expert planner, Paul Lowes, notes that in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement and the *Growth Plan*, there was a need to "look within" to accommodate new growth, and that the Secondary Plan did just that, translating into approximately 38,000 residents and workers (Ontario Municipal Board, 2011). Ultimately, the Board sided with Mr. Lowes affirmations and stated that, "Mr. Lowes provided a complete and cogent analysis of the planning merits of OPA 111" (*Ibid*, 7). As a result, the Board concluded that OPA 111 is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, conforms to the *Growth Plan*, and represents good planning in the public interest (*Ibid*).

4.3 Conclusion

The OMB approval demonstrates what the Province is capable of, despite the local political goals and objectives. The Province has the ability to undermine the wishes of municipal Council. In the case of Downsview Park, Council's political tactics of referring proposals back for further study. This is not a tactic that takes municipalities off-guard, and most are prepared for applicants to go to the OMB. The federal government's involvement and autonomy in Downsview makes this case unique because there was little chance of victory for the municipal councillors opposed to the park's development.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

Toronto offers a very interesting look at local politics and planning issues due to its sheer size and the amount of development taking place that is shaping its future built form and natural landscape. Downsview Park provides a unique perspective on how Toronto city politics shape a development that they have little control over.

I designed my research question based on the preliminary research that I conducted focusing on the discourse concerning the main actors, and their interests in Downsview. I developed a chronology of significant milestones that have shaped the park, and through this I was able to notice that the local political influences had a significant effect on the public perception of how Downsview Park was being operated and developed. As I continued my primary research, it became clear that several main assumptions I had made at the onset were false. Specifically, these were that PDP and Canada Lands Company were working closely with local politicians to implement the plan to begin the development at Downsview. Since most developments have to comply with local policy in Official Plans, another assumption was that the Crown Corporations had to comply with city policies before development begins. These assumptions were false.

My research revealed that PDP, and subsequently the Canada Lands Company, have almost complete autonomy in Toronto. Toronto's local politicians have the ability to delay the process only if the Crown decides to work with the City. The example of Downsview Park revealed that with political will, the local

councillors were able to delay implementing the Secondary Plan and the development process for a significant period of time.

The intent of my research was to understand how local politics influences development. At the outset, my objective was to evaluate the public discourse related to all of the actors involved to understand a range of different opinions and experiences. Upon reading virtually every published article about Downsview, I realized that I had to meet with some of the influential people and groups to get more information about their position on the development, as well as any additional information that the public has no access to. My findings support my suspicion that my participants would not disclose specific information to me for my report. Clearly, there is further research to be done related to the political influences but this requires filing for Freedom of Information (FOI).

The story of Downsview provides emerging municipal city planning professionals, and established municipal city planners, a detailed look at how complex multi-governmental cooperation can be when dealing with planning and developing land. The planner's role is to provide the best advice to the politicians so that the politicians can make decisions based on these expert recommendations. Planners create recommendations by working with various actors to come up with plans that best suit a community and assemble the plan in a comprehensive way.

In the case of Downsview, planners submitted a plan that covered all of the needs of the community, the City of Toronto divisions involved, and the PDP. Notwithstanding this, Community Council and City Council continuously requested more information from the various City divisions by referring reports back to staff

for additional consideration. This delayed the plan from being approved and ultimately modified the plan in terms of density and urban design (see City of Toronto Community Council and City Council links in the references).

These realities are normal in a planning environment. The implication for planning is that community support of a Plan can change rather quickly when politics becomes the central element, even when the Secondary Plan had previous support from the majority of actors involved, including the City divisions, the community and the PDP. By delaying the implementation of the Secondary Plan, local residents and the DLCVA began to oppose the Plan entirely because they lost trust in the federal government's ability to develop the park. More trust was lost when the Conservative Party announced the disassembly of PDP and Canada Lands takeover of Downsview Park's operations and development.

For municipal planners, the shifts of power can substantially affect the outcome of a plan. Though the OMB approved the Secondary Plan, the change in federal management from PDP to Canada Lands Company ignited Councillor Augimeri to begin a community-wide campaign to "Save Downsview Park." The campaign prompted the community to strengthen their voice against further development in Downsview Park, which became Councillor Augimeri's main election issue during the 2014 municipal election. This campaign has shed light on the issues surrounding Canada Lands Company's mandate of generating maximum revenue for the federal government, and Councillor Augimeri's insistence of Canada Lands Company reopening the Downsview Secondary Plan.

As a result of political turmoil, Downsview Park has not developed into the space that residents were expecting. This research attests that all three levels of government do not always work cohesively, and that municipal planning policies can be disregarded. The research clearly demonstrates that Toronto Councillors involved in Downsview's development deliberately delayed development at the Park by using Council mechanisms of referring reports to staff to request new information. In similar situations to Downsview Park's development, all actors involved can expect delays due to reconfiguring administrative operations (potentially at all government levels), the potential for changing organizational and political cultures, goals and objectives, as well as changes in community receptiveness to plans. Ultimately, municipal councillors and planners limited power and influence when it comes to the development of federal property. Despite the size, scope, location, and importance of the Downsview Park site to local community and to Toronto as a whole, the power to determine its future remains in the hands of the federal government.

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Appendix A: List of Participants

1. Maria Augimeri – City of Toronto Councillor, Ward 9 Downsview
2. David Soknacki – former City of Toronto Councillor, former Chair of Parc Downsview Park
3. Rosana Iobonna – Resident of Downsview, Downsview Lands Community Voice Association Secretary
4. Rita Del Casale – Resident of Downsview, Downsview Lands Community Voice Association Treasurer
5. Retail business owner (Wilson Ave) Nov 1 2014 (Anonymous)
6. Restaurant business owner (Wilson Ave) Nov 2, 2014 (Anonymous)

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