

BBIA HOSTS OPEN HOUSE WITH CITY PLANNERS FOR BARRHAVEN

The Barrhaven BIA was pleased to host an Open House for area businesses with South-end City Planners; Dana Collings, Dhaneshwar Neermul and Colin White at the Walter Baker Centre on March 27, 2008. All come from the former City of Nepean and Mr. White was there to officially open the Walter Baker Centre in 1979!

Barrhaven Towncentre

Planners reported that the Towncentre area focus is on commercial and high-density development over a 25 year period. Post-amalgamation, City planners revisited the Towncentre Community Design Plan with a new focus on LRT and the extension of the Southwest Transitway. While the Southwest Transitway extension is to be completed to Chapman Mills Drive, the LRT link into Barrhaven via the much needed Strandherd-Armstrong Bridge was cancelled following the last municipal election. Moreover, the four new transit options presented by City staff to Council last month offer nothing for east-west transit in Barrhaven until 2031! Despite this huge set-back for Barrhaven transit, the planners assure us that this land is being protected for that use. The meeting of the end of rapid transit corridor with the end of the s-w transitway would make for a unique environment and provide much vibrancy to our future downtown. In the meantime, Councillor Harder reported that she is working on having the VIA rail track used for travel to and from the east end of Ottawa during peak times. This would make a convenient link with the southwest transitway at Fallowfield Station.

This pedestrian-oriented, grid-patterned downtown plan is markedly different from the garden-patterned residential areas in our community and promotes transit use. Streets are based on an urban model with wider blocks and public streets. Planners reported that Minto, the primary landowner in the Barrhaven Towncentre CDP, has already discussed filing the plans to get the ball rolling. While the servicing is not yet done in the southern part of the BTCDP, Minto and the City are ready to move ahead with this as soon as market pressure intensifies. One exciting and rare feature will be the mixed use zoning of the high-density units closest to the core. Owners will be able to run a retail or service-based business at the street level,

while upper units will be residential. Also included in the plan for Barrhaven's future downtown is a huge public meeting facility including a wide mix of uses; recreational, police, and cultural. Parklands will be abundant as public meeting spots around the densely-developed core. Eventually, as market demand increases, the large parking lots in the current box store-based Marketplace Mall will see an infill of new stores once the transitway is completed, thereby increasing the density. (See attached map of the mall with undeveloped units in grey.)

Official and Secondary Plan Amendments and Rezoning Applications

The planners warn of the danger of rezoning of land to accommodate box-store growth outside of the currently designated areas. This, of course, provides a shorter-term gain for land developers but requires an Official Plan amendment. These types of precedent-setting changes put our Prestige Business Park Lands at great risk. We do not want this land wasted on ill-planned residential or misplaced retail-commercial development. These lands are intended for the development of a sustainable, high-value employment-based business park. It is a prime location, being the southern gateway to the City of Ottawa, and has great access to the 416/417/401 highways. The development of a large employment base in our community will bring in new daytime consumers, new residents and offer existing residents an opportunity to live where they work. This is very important to the future vibrancy and success of the retail-commercial sector in our community!

For additional information or to find out about future meetings, please direct your inquiries to Andrea Steenbakkers at execdirector@barrhavenbia.ca or 613-825-8242. Visit us online at www.barrhavenbia.ca!

