

# **THE TAYLOR MASSEY PROJECT**

**Celebrating and Protecting Taylor Massey Creek**

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October 4, 2005

Submission to:       The Planning and Transportation Committee  
City of Toronto  
PDF via e-mail

Re:    **Warden Corridor Land Use Planning Study / File No: 03 035238 ESC 35 TM**

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Dear Councillors Filion, Stintz, Jenkins, Milczyn, Minnan-Wong, Moscoe, Ootes, and Thompson,

A    Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity of providing our comments on this important redevelopment project. We wish to acknowledge the successful transition of the City's utilization of the web over the last few years, as demonstrated in this exercise, as a means of providing documents for public review, and thank you for this important investment in public participation.

We also wish to extend our sincere appreciation to City staff, and especially to Ruth Lambe, for their expertise, availability, and receptiveness during the whole of this planning exercise, and for the manner and scope of the consultations held with the public.

The combination of information-sharing, public meetings, and excellent staff are three cornerstones of informed public participation, and we wish you well in now responding to all concerns and recommendations.

## B Background

The Taylor Massey Project, initiated within Friends of the Don East in 2003 but which became an independent organization in November of 2004, seeks to engage local residents in the enjoyment, protection, and restoration of Taylor Massey Creek and its watershed. As described on our website, at [www.TheTMP.org](http://www.TheTMP.org), our objects are:

- To increase community awareness of the watercourse, particularly by seeking to establish or align with existing community organizations as Reach Stewardship Groups;
- To restore the natural heritage of Creek valley-lands as well as to improve the water quality and aquatic habitats of the Creek, especially through the City of Toronto's Wet Weather Flow Master Plan; and,
- To ensure the creation of the Taylor Massey Trail along the whole of the Creek, with sections of trail in a greenbelt to be established in the Warden Hydro Corridor.

As an organization primarily focused on valley lands, we generally leave comments on table-land re-development proposals to local community organizations, such as, in this case, the Warden Woods Neighbourhood Association and the Santa Monica Birchmount Neighbourhood Association. These local organizations are much better placed than we are to comment on densities, land use, traffic, community facilities, and other neighbourhood issues.

As a result, our few comments and suggestions about this development will focus on its relationship to Warden Woods, the dominant natural feature in the area of the proposed development, as per the aerial photo enclosed as the last page of this submission, and the need to provide for its long-term protection.

## C Comments and Recommendations

Through no fault of City staff, we feel the focus of the planning and review process has been inappropriately limited, in fact almost exclusively so, to the footprint of the development.

While stormwater run-off, shadow, noise, natural heritage improvements, and some trail issues timidly venture beyond the development's footprint, we believe the review has been too restrictive in scope and context, ignoring the long-term health and vitality of the most significant local natural feature: Warden Woods Park.

In fact, we were shocked to discover that the terms of reference for the review of this development precluded the submission of any comments by either City Forestry or the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority on the potential overall impact of the development on Warden Woods.

In contrast to the City's current desire to comment on the construction of the new York Region sewer, the restriction of the planning focus with respect to Warden Woods Park is unacceptably limiting and selective, as if a line down the middle of Warden Avenue presented a barrier through which no negative impacts might escape.

On a strategic level, while the redevelopment plans call for increased trails from Warden Avenue into Warden Woods Park, there is no assessment of the health of the Park, no management plan to maintain it as one of the best natural heritage areas in the City, and no real plans or budgets to connect the existing trail through the Park to other trails, such as either the vision of a 16-kilometre trail in the watershed, as detailed under the \$1,000,000 plan for the Taylor Massey Trail on our website, or to the City's own plans for the Bicycle Network.

On a more detailed level, the emphasis on shadow, for example, has not been complemented with a rigorous assessment of the impact of increased night-light from local residences, ranging from low to mid-rise and 20 story buildings, where once there were one-story industrial and commercial facilities with little night-light. We are greatly concerned that increased night lights and the presence of multi-unit towers over 9 stories will have more significant impact on both the local wildlife and on birds, as well as public enjoyment of the Woods, than shadow.

We are also concerned about if and how increased visits to the Park from an increased local pollution, possibly through the proposed improved trails coming from Warden, as well as the potential for increased litter without a management plan and an increased maintenance budget, might impact the Park.

As you will see from the aerial photograph on the last page of this submission, Warden Woods Park is adjacent to and larger than the whole area to be developed, and yet its ecological integrity and the potential impact of the development on the Park has been virtually ignored.

In contract to this restricted focus, we respectfully offer the following set of suggestions as the basis for a motion at the meeting of the Committee:

**In order to anticipate and mitigate some of the impacts of the pending re-development of the Warden Corridor on the health and vitality of Warden Woods Park, and in order to protect and maintain the Woods as one of the best natural heritage areas in the City, we direct the following actions:**

1. That Parks, Forestry, & Recreation work toward the designation of Warden Woods Park as a natural heritage preserve, similar to the Charles Sauriol Conservation Preserve;
2. That City Forestry take the lead in the development of a master plan for Warden Woods Park as a special area of natural heritage conservation and regeneration, in a manner similar to the report commissioned by Forestry entitled Restoration Priorities for Taylor Creek Park;
3. That no further trails, bridges, or any infrastructure other than as may be required under Wet Weather Flow or for the installation of interpretive and directional signage be placed in Warden Woods, and that access from the east side of the subway line to the existing paved path be restricted to one trail;
4. That Forestry work with local community organizations, such as The Taylor Massey Project, who are currently producing a Warden Woods Ecological Inventory, to ascertain community interests in local restoration efforts; and,
5. That Parks, Forestry, & Recreation work with Transportation to ensure both the inclusion of the existing path within Warden Woods as part of a 16-kilometre Taylor Massey Trail and the establishment of core cycle-commuter routes to serve as sections of the City's Bicycle Network providing alternate routes around Warden Woods Park.

In conclusion, we thank you again for the opportunity of offering our comments. We hope that you will find them constructive, and that you will find the means to broaden the scope of the City's interest in the proposed development to an envelope that includes Warden Woods Park, an irreplaceable asset that should be maintained as an oasis of natural heritage for all and protected for the future.

Sincerely,

*Andrew McCammon*  
Chair

cc Selected local Councillors, City staff, and The Task Force to Bring Back the Don TRCA and the Don Watershed Regeneration Council  
Santa Monica-Bichmount Neighbourhood Association  
Warden Woods Neighbourhood Association

D Aerial Photo of the area, showing Warden Woods Park

