

**PLANNING:** Some residents at meeting surprised by proposed changes to development

# Cornell considers lake, expanded business area

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STAFF WRITER

The developer of Cornell, a vast pedestrian-friendly community in east Markham, wants to improve the plan for a future business district with a boardwalk and a 20-acre artificial lake.

Larry Law, president of the Law Development Group, floated the idea of the lake at an open house this week. He

actually combined stormwater management ponds along Cornell's southern edge, south of Hwy. 7 and at the foot of Cornell's commercial corridor.

In front of colour sketches of the area, Law called the lake a place people can look down at during afternoon tea or an evening glass of wine.

People at the open house, however, seemed to surprise Law by showing

concern that spaces for larger retailers were included in an architect's sketch as "anchors" for the commercial district.

Cornell, east of Ninth Line and stretching from a planned Hwy. 407 extension to north of 16th Avenue, has been billed as a collection of "friendly neighbourhoods" that may one day house about 35,000 residents.

Its "new urbanist" pedigree — famous U.S. architect Andres Duany was its lead planner — was reflected in small-scale neighbourhood shopping areas and a main street as a traditional core. One man said introducing large retailers into such a community is directly contrary to new urbanism.

But Law told the critics to keep their minds open. The larger stores can be surrounded by smaller stores and designed to complement the area, he said.

"That's our challenge here, how to get the big thing and the small thing working together."

Law also added that "Having the main street only with one thing is not enough to make it economically successful."

Cornell needs some kind of commercial concentration that will guarantee its residents won't go elsewhere to shop, agreed Markham Regional Councillor



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEN

Sandy Marshall just moved into her new home in Cornell and walks her Boston Terriers Molly and Spanky with construction still moving along behind her.

Gord Landon

Law said main street shopping will remain the number one feature of the community. "The lifestyle (of Cornell) has not changed at all," he said.

To extend the business district further south, the Law Development Group will have to approach the town to change Cornell's secondary plan schedule, a process much like an Official Plan amendment.

The lake, perhaps taking up 23 or 24 acres, would likely be six feet deep along its north side

and one foot deep on the south, said Jeffrey King, project engineer for Marshall Macklin Monaghan. In contrast, Milne Pond, the town's largest surface body of water, covers about 60 acres.

Glenn De Bearemaeker, chairperson of Save the Rouge Valley Systems, argued such a lake at Cornell would still be a stormwater pond, its water containing pollutants collected from sewers and streets.

But Law said it will be big and deep enough to look like a lake.

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