



**WATERFRONT**Toronto

**Waterfront Design Review Panel  
Minutes of Meeting #143  
Wednesday, April 21st, 2021**

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**Present**

Paul Bedford, Chair  
Betsy Williamson, Vice Chair  
George Baird  
Peter Busby  
Claude Cormier  
Matthew Hickey  
Janna Levitt  
Nina-Marie Lister  
Fadi Masoud  
Brigitte Shim  
Kevin Stelzer  
Eric Turcotte

**Regrets**

Jeff Ranson  
Pat Hanson

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**Representatives**

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto  
Deanne Mighton, City of Toronto

**Recording Secretary**

Leon Lai

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**WELCOME**

The Chair opened the meeting by providing an overview of the agenda, which included reviews of:

1. West Don Lands Block 20 – Schematic Design
  2. Bentway Bridge Re-design – Schematic Design
  3. Leslie Street Lookout – Schematic Design
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**GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chair asked the Panel to adopt the minutes from the March. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 meeting. The minutes were adopted.

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest. Eric Turcotte declared conflict for **West Don Lands Block 20** and recused himself from the review. Claude Cormier

declared conflicts for **West Don Lands Block 20** and **Leslie Street Lookout**, and recused himself from the review.

The Chair then asked Christopher Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer with Waterfront Toronto, to give an update on last month's projects.

Update on last month's projects:

Mr. Glaisek began by noting that the **Queens Quay East Revitalization** team is working to address the Consensus Comments from March 2021 DRP and studying other options for Yonge Slip in response to comments. The project is anticipated to return to DRP to focus on the slips in the summer before completing 30% design. Mr. Glaisek noted the **Waterfront East LRT Area 1** team is also working to address the Consensus Comments from March 2021, and Waterfront Toronto will hold an integration workshop with West 8, DTAH, and TTC. The project is anticipated to return for Schematic Design review, the time is not yet determined. Mr. Glaisek then noted the upcoming project agenda and waiting list for the month of May, 2021.

Chair's remarks:

The Chair concluded the General Business segment and motioned to go into the project review sessions.

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## PROJECT REVIEWS

### 1.0 West Don Lands Block 20 – Schematic Design

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|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Project ID #:</i>        | 1112  |
| <i>Project Type:</i>        | Building  |
| <i>Review Stage:</i>        | Schematic Design  |
| <i>Review Round:</i>        | Two   |
| <i>Location:</i>            | West Don Lands  |
| <i>Proponent:</i>           | Dream, Kilmer, Tricon   |
| <i>Architect/ Designer:</i> | Henning Larsen Architects, Claude Cormier + Associes, RWDI  |
| <i>Presenter(s):</i>        | Michael Sørensen, Partner, Henning Larsen Architects<br>Christopher Dial, Lead Designer, Henning Larsen Architects<br>Marc Hallé, Senior Associate, Claude Cormier + Associes<br>Brandon Law, Principal, RWDI   |
| <i>Delegation:</i>          | Bori Kang, Henning Larsen Architects<br>Gregory Haley, Henning Larsen Architects<br>John English, Tricon<br>Joyce Lau, Dream<br>Jordan Kemp, Dream<br>Stephen Hasko, Dream<br>Michelle Ackerman, Kilmer Infrastructure<br>David Sit, City of Toronto<br>Megan Rolph, City of Toronto<br>Joseph Luk, City of Toronto<br>Aaron Barter, Waterfront Toronto |

### **1.1 Introduction to the Issues**

David Sit, Manager of Community Planning, City of Toronto, began the introduction by noting As-Of-Right Zoning allowance for the site and that The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing enacted three Minister's Zoning Orders (MZO) at West Don Lands, for Blocks 20, 3/4/7, and 17/26 (Foundry Site). Mr. Sit provided a summary of the project matters secured in the MZO: total project GFA, podium and tower setbacks, tower dimensions and floor plate sizes, bedroom types, and loading types.

Leon Lai, Manager of Waterfront Design Review Panel with Waterfront Toronto, continued the introduction by providing a recap of the project's background and programmatic overview of the proposed design: ground floor contains retail, residential and office lobbies, loading and services, two residential towers, 32m high podium with rooftop amenities, and one underground parking level. Mr. Lai noted the project timeline, existing site context and development context. Mr. Lai noted that the adjacent development Block 8 was last reviewed by the DRP in Jan. 2019 and provided the ground floor design. The project is here for Schematic Design review as part of the Public Land Site Plan Application DRP stream. Mr. Lai summarized the consensus comments from the Dec. 2019 review and noted the areas for Panel consideration: design of the ground floor and public realm, massing of the podium, parking and loading configurations, landscape treatment, building facade design and materiality, community benefits, and the sustainability ambition for the project. Mr. Lai then introduced Jordan Kemp, Director with Dream, to continue the design presentation.

### **1.2 Project Presentation**

Jordan introduced Michael Sørensen, Partner with Henning Larsen Architects, to provide the presentation. Mr. Sørensen began by noting the consensus comments from the previous DRP including human scale and materiality, pedestrian safety, window wall ratio, sensitivity to rail tracks, and a recap of the site and policy context. Mr. Sørensen provided a summary of the existing site edges and the connective strategy for the public realm.

Christopher Dial, Lead Designer with Henning Larsen Architects, provided an update on the architectural design, beginning with a recap of the design principles, massing concepts, and program breakdown. The project is part of the Provincial Lands Affordable Housing Program with minimum 30% affordable units. Mr. Dial noted the heights of the towers in context, material concept, palette, elevations, and sections of the overall project. Mr. Dial detailed the podium design, revisions in the massing to provide additional terraces, and the relationship with Tank House Lane. Mr. Dial introduced Marc Hallé, Senior Associate with Claude Cormier + Associates to continue the public realm and landscape design.

Mr. Hallé noted the landscape masterplan and site sections, the raised planters help steer movement on the west, and flushed at-grade planters are located on the east side. Mr. Hallé noted the furniture and terrace greening strategies. Plant species will be specified in the next phase. Mr. Hallé introduced Brandon Law, Principal with RWDI, to present sustainability.

Mr. Law noted the team is investigating geothermal energy with the new ruling on carbon pricing and will provide more certainty at the next review. The team is considering electrification to reduce carbon emission intensity. Mr. Law noted the current ambition is Toronto Green Standards Tier 2 and LEED Gold to maximize carbon reduction.

### **1.3 Panel Questions**

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

One Panel member is concerned with pedestrian safety and asked if a crosswalk connection at Cherry Street is being contemplated by the City. Deanne Mighton, Senior Urban Designer with City of Toronto responded that typically the spacing required for a crossing is greater and will speak with Transportation and Planning to explore this option. The Panel member asked for more information on the impact of wind at the outdoor landscape terraces and if mitigation strategies have been considered. Brandon Law, Principal with RWDI answered that glass barriers are provided to shield noise and wind from the rail corridor, there is some down washing from the towers, so canopies are being contemplated. There are also sheltered areas that are comfortable throughout the year.

Another Panel member asked if the team anticipates people moving east then north from the east end of the pedestrian realm to go to Corktown Common. Mr. Hallé answered the team foresees vehicular traffic there but will not be intense except on moving days and pedestrians have two routes to access Corktown Common. The Panel member asked if the hanging lights are suspended over Tank House Lane and if it is possible to extend this into the TTC Loop area. Mr. Hallé answered the lights are suspended and extension is not realistic because both Toronto Hydro and TTC are quite inflexible.

One Panel member asked if the team has considered combining entries of the underground parking lots between Block 8C and Block 20. Jordan Kemp, Development Director with Dream, noted a coordinated loading access is provided off Block 32.

Another Panel member asked if the crash wall, an important gateway for people coming into the city from the east, has any design. Mr. Sorensen responded that the team would look at exploring design options for the crash wall.

One Panel member asked if plant species have been specified for the landscape areas. Mr. Hallé answered the team has provided general soil volume requirements at this stage and will continue to work towards identifying the species.

Another Panel member asked if the preliminary energy model has been submitted as part of the Site Plan Application and the timing of HVAC system selection. Mr. Law noted the energy model will be provided for the resubmission and the team is hoping to complete “Savings by Design” program in mid to late May and use the exercise as opportunity to explore conservation measures and bring in more niche subject matter experts. Mr. Law noted the team has completed this at Blocks 3/4/7 but hopes to do this earlier for Block 20. The Panel member asked for feasibility of geothermal and VRF, and how will the team model the carbon tax requirements. Mr. Law noted the

team did a deep dive at Block 8 and did not find cost effectiveness. However, the team hopes the equation will be different here based on changes on energy cost and carbon pricing. Mr. Law noted there is also more diversity in energy loads here given the retail requirements which will improve the feasibility of geothermal. The team is very optimistic at this point and noted carbon tax calculations will be an important part of the study next phase.

### 1.3 Panel Comments

Another Panel member commented that the pedestrian safety at the Cherry Street crossing is still a concern and the rail corridor setback or crash wall condition should be carefully evaluated. The Panel member commended the design of the project.

One Panel member asked for further development of the crash wall design to help deter graffiti and consider higher sustainability objectives for the project as they are current inadequate.

Another Panel member noted the west elevation is the primary public façade of the building, the TTC loop area should be improved, and asked the team to consider a working group with the City, TTC, and Distillery District to enhance this condition. The Panel member recommended more domestication of the streetcar public realm where transit and pedestrian uses are fused together – it should be a collaboration effort with Waterfront Toronto and City of Toronto Urban Design – extend the great pedestrian network instead of creating a leftover space.

One Panel member felt the podium massing is large and the white is too jarring, the material palette can be further developed to help visually break up the volume, consider Block 8's materiality strategy and bring more Distillery District "red" to the ground floor. The Panel member felt the podium design is generic and does not relate to the Distillery District, in particular the large glass atriums which are typical downtown Toronto motifs, consider alternative façade strategies for these elements. The Panel member asked the team to consider increasing glazing performance on the south side to improve sound mitigation and energy performance.

Another Panel member commended the project as the site is really challenging and recommended the team to bring the vehicular traffic all the way to the south corner of the building on the east side of the public realm, encourage entrance from along the southern edge and provide more purely pedestrian space.

One Panel member complimented the team for a thoughtful, respectful design, and the visual connection to the Don. The Panel member noted trees are critical for the success of the public realm, ensure there is biodiversity in species, pollination, and shade. Additionally, provide stormwater retention and consider infrastructure and ecological performances.

Another Panel member suggested the team to investigate the south façade and provide more design ideas as it is a highly visible gateway into the city for people coming in via train.

One Panel member recommended to provide energy modelling, outputs from the “Savings by Design” program at the next review, including alternative solutions for reducing energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, and impact of carbon pricing.

### **1.5 Consensus Comments**

The Chair then summarized the Panel comments on which there was full agreement.

#### General

- Commended the team for developing a well-considered design on a challenging site.
- Overall massing and landscape approaches are positive.
- City to provide feedback on pedestrian crossing safety from Cherry Street to the site.

#### Building

- Building façade materiality requires further explorations, consider bringing more Distillery District “red” to the base of the building, i.e. extending the palette from the towers to grade to support the character of the neighbourhood while creating a unique identity for the project.
- The large, glazed atrium spaces on the ground floor do not feel appropriate to the Distillery District, consider finer-grain facade alternatives to provide transparency and openness that are in keeping with the characteristics of the neighbourhood.
- The location of the parking entrance interrupts the public realm pedestrian experience, consider further enhancement by rethinking the location of the parking entrance to provide a complete pedestrian clearway across the site.
- As an important visual gateway into the city from the east, provide design opportunities for the crash wall, consider the design, façade materiality, public art opportunities.
- The TTC Loop is an important gateway to the project, consider working with TTC and the City to enhance the TTC Loop as an extension of the public realm.
- Wind impact are concerns for terraces and roof top amenity areas, conduct studies, and provide further mitigation strategies to ensure comfort.

#### Sustainability

- Current sustainability targets can be improved, consider targeting and integrating higher energy performance targets into the business plan at this stage of the project.
- Provide energy modelling and outputs from the “Savings by Design” program at the next review, i.e. review of alternative solutions for reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of carbon pricing.

### **1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support**

The Panel unanimously voted Conditional Support for the project.

The Chair then asked if the proponent would like to provide a brief response.

Mr. Sørensen thanked the Panel for great comments and noted the team will address the issues at the next phase of design.

## **2.0 Bentway Bridge Re-design – Schematic Design**

*Project ID #:* 1070  
*Project Type:* Public Realm  
*Review Stage:* Schematic Design  
*Review Round:* Two  
*Location:* Central Waterfront (Fort York)  
*Proponent:* Waterfront Toronto  
*Architect/ Designer:* Public Work  
*Presenter(s):* Marc Ryan, Principal, Public Work  
*Delegation:* Adam Nicklin, Public Work  
Virginia Fernandez, Public Work  
Margaret Goodfellow, The Bentway  
Ilana Altman, The Bentway  
David Carey, The Bentway  
Heather Inglis Baron, City of Toronto  
Riad Rahman, City of Toronto  
Cassidy Ritz, City of Toronto  
Melanie Morris, Waterfront Toronto  
Aaron Barter, Waterfront Toronto  
Pina Mallozzi, Waterfront Toronto  
David Kusturin, Waterfront Toronto

### **2.1 Introduction to the Issues**

Melanie Morris, Project Manager with Waterfront Toronto, began the introduction by noting the project partners, rationale for the re-design, project history, current scope, and the DRP history. Mr. Morris noted the key objectives, design requirements from the design brief, and the existing project site. Mr. Morris noted the site in relation to Bentway Phase 1, the east and west landing conditions, and that the project is here today for Schematic Design review. Ms. Morris summarized the areas for Panel consideration: the design response to the project requirements, design integration between the bridge, landform, and Bentway Phase 1, and the ecological performance of the landscape design. Ms. Morris introduce Marc Ryan, Principal with Public Work, to continue the design presentation.

### **2.2 Project Presentation**

Mr. Ryan began the presentation by noting the greater network of public realm connections at the site, the function of the bridge as a connective “heart” of the Bentway, the cultural landscape for future Bentway projects, and a recap of the previous suspended strategy. Mr. Ryan noted the new grounded design places a renewed emphasis on placemaking and programming, working with the Gardiner structure, and creating a telescopic experience. The design embraces the robust found condition of the structure, supporting the public realm, and returns to the concept of the corridor. Mr. Ryan noted the east landing area is an interesting threshold next to the condos and is an introductory moment for Fort York. Mr. Ryan noted the ascending

experience is hyper Gardiner, where the landing is opposite: fluid landscape recalling the shoreline. The bridge is a series of elevated rooms expanding the visitor's perspective with every room and decelerating through the transition of materials from concrete to timber. The landform encourages a meandering path, bringing users down to the community activation zone, creating a buffer from the street and a sense of enclosure. Mr. Ryan noted the plaza mirrors the Strachan amphitheatre design with exposed timber and movable furniture: a textured, fluid landscape.

### **2.3 Panel Questions**

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

One Panel member asked for the clarification on the original need for this project. Pina Mallozzi, Vice President of Design with Waterfront Toronto, noted that Waterfront Toronto completed an Environmental Assessment looking at various options to stitch together the east and west side, it was determined that the bridge was the most promising option. Mr. Ryan responded continuity with the east side is important for the Bentway as it strives to be a corridor across the waterfront, with coherence and a strong identity.

Another Panel member asked for the constraints on the east side, why does the project switch from landform to bridge. Mr. Ryan noted there are space and column constraints from the existing Gardiner structure, the east area is also a condo POPS conveyed for this project. Mr. Ryan noted the street and sidewalk will be enhanced as part of the east bridge landing so the area will feel like a plaza, and that the clearance and heights make the landform not possible.

One Panel member noted the stainless-steel railing on the ramp and bridge, and asked if an infill material is required to meet code requirements. Mr. Ryan answered that the design is proposed to have a galvanized steel frame with some sort of grate infill, and a stainless-steel handrail pinned.

Another Panel member asked if there is a narrative behind the bridge room designs and materiality. Mr. Ryan noted the design is inspired to work with the found conditions and local vernacular materials: a warmer use of concrete and steel from the Gardiner structure, Corten steel is a nod to Fort York to reinforce coherence, and timber is part of the Bentway language serving as a counter to the concrete.

One Panel member asked if the concrete is cast-in-place or precast. Mr. Ryan noted there is an economic subtext, especially moving from the hanging design to this one, the team will know more as the design processes. Mr. Ryan noted the team is interested in relating to the existing Gardiner columns, such as the recess details, and create a beautiful echo of the structure in the details.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the MTO green color. Mr. Ryan answered the team accepts the color as the official color of the Gardiner and is interested in embracing it as a vernacular element into the lexicon of the Bentway. The Panel member asked if the steel bridge room provides a view into Fort York. Mr. Ryan noted the bridge room frames views to the block houses, and on the south side is positioned in line at the water. It is possible to also provide a framed view in the timber

room but would like to maintain openness in the steel room. Mr. Ryan noted this part of the bridge is high enough to provide these views. The Panel member asked if there should be a need for an immediate way to get down from the bridge, as an option for the abled people to leave the bridge quickly. Mr. Ryan noted the previous bridge had both options, there is room on the east end for a vertical access and the team can do it in an economic way. On the landform side, the team's vision is that everyone takes the same path.

One Panel member noted the suspended bridge had a different level of efficiency of moving and crossing, the current proposal by comparison is more park and bridge. The Panel member noted it is difficult for cyclists to bike through with pedestrians, wheelchair users will require a lot of strength to ascend the long ramp, and asked if the team has completed circulation analysis with different modes of movement and how they impact both parts of the design. Mr. Ryan noted the design is a hybridized typology, fusing park, and bridge, like the rest of Bentway. The previous design was a longer structure and ramp, Mr. Ryan believes the landing side is a very enjoyable experience with slope no more than 5%. There is no analysis at this time but the team understands the bridge as a slow, shared zone so intense cycling will be discouraged by way of dismounting and decelerating. The idea is to integrate all modes of movement instead of keeping them separate as there is no dominant user group here. Mr. Ryan noted there is a language of paint and signage which will indicate the pace of the Bentway, help slow down movements and provide accessibility for all.

## **2.4 Panel Comments**

One Panel member asked if the green is real grass. Mr. Ryan noted the landscape will use live staking of red dodger rose wood, like at the Daniels Faculty landscape. The inner slopes are softscape and outer slopes are intended to be inaccessible. The Panel member appreciated the team's resilience at tackling this complex project on a challenging site, felt the revised design is better than the previous iteration. The Panel member appreciated the borrowing of aesthetic from the Gardiner, the use of MTO green, and the placemaking strategy with the landform. Consider simplifying materiality to concrete and wood, and Corten steel does not seem to belong as it is much more closely associated with Fort York. Black locust wood is a material for the wood. The Panel member noted more efficient vertical access points are helpful and will not deter from the design. The resilient planting strategy is supported.

Another Panel member appreciated the simplicity of the project and the use of the MTO green color. The Panel member recommended that yellow cedar and Corten steel be replaced with more sustainable materials to support the objectives of the waterfront, appreciated the social and ecological enhancing qualities of the project, such as the planting selection that are robust and resilient. The Panel member noted there are many projects in North America with similar ideas of shared bridges for different modes of movement, such as Maya Lin's Confluence Project, Memorial Park Land Bridge in Houston - consider referencing their strategies. It is important to amplify those planting strategies forward in a way that is performative.

One Panel member commended the team for a nimble design, appreciated the design of the upper gallery rooms as they are theoretical and enhance the overall experience. The Panel member recommended bringing some of this uniqueness to the east side to

tie the bridge with the rest of the project, consider further developing the east point of termination to enhance the sense of arrival, The Panel member supported the use of colors to tie all aspects of the project together and appreciated the didactic experience created by the upper gallery at the west landing.

Another Panel member appreciated the telescopic cathedral experience and encouraged the team to continue to enhance that aspect of the design. The Panel member appreciated the west landing design and the juxtaposition with the bents – a combination of landscape, landform, and infrastructure. The Panel member recommended that the rooms be designed as mini plazas that generate interest all along the path, consider design opportunities under the bridge as well, such as lighting, color, art. The Panel member noted it is interesting to think of these spaces as hybrids, convolution of a miniature version of the Gardiner.

One Panel member noted the railing is an important design element as it provides a key reading, ensure transparency while meeting code, consider creating mock-ups to test the design. At the east plaza, the Panel member encouraged more treatments to enhance the experience of a termination point. The current design reminded the Panel member of the Frank Gehry ramp at the AGO – bringing the inside out. Corten steel is not a suitable material, while wood is a right aesthetic identity for the Bentway, consider the bridge as a mini Gardiner weaving into a wood abutment and transitions to the ground. The wood, receiving the bridge, is a threshold of intersection much stronger than the separate readings of the three rooms. A reconfiguration, not a capitulation for the project, as it is still very much part of the language of the project. The Panel member noted the project is an indicator of metropolitan life, a didactic tool, and that the reconceptualizing, typically more painful, has been fruitful for the design.

Another Panel member commended the project for beautiful uses of materials as infrastructure.

One Panel member is compelled by the architectural design and asked the team to provide a lighting strategy at the next review. The Panel member recommended a more direct expression of the materials and details to strengthen the rationale and supported the addition of direct access points on and off the bridge.

Another Panel member supported the simplification of the room materials, embrace the “matter of fact” quality of the project and elevate materials like in phase one.

One Panel member is pleased that the need for shortcut access points are resonated in the commentary, and noted that the rooms are already spatially different, simplifying the materials would help articulate the spatial reading of the rooms. The Panel member asked the team to carefully consider the less exposed areas of the landscape when it comes to the plant selection.

Another Panel member is unconvinced that the language and color of the Gardiner Expressway should be used for this project. The Panel member asked if the team plans to slow down bikers and stopping points will be provided for wheelchair users to give breaks. The Panel member felt the bridge design requires further development to address the different modes of movement. Noting lighting should be considered at the

next phase of design, the Panel member felt that multiple points of access should be added for pedestrian safety especially at night. With all these factors in mind, the Panel member recommended the team to re-think whether the long ramp is the right approach for the design. At the bridge on the east side, the Panel member felt it does not read like a cheeky mini Gardiner as it feels very fragmented, consider more solidity on the east side borrowing from the language of the landform and reduce spaces under the bridge. The Panel member noted the materials should reflect how they are used and that the different materials do not add to the project. Consider how the proposed columns can be differentiated from the Gardiner bents and not copy the same language. The Panel member asked the team to re-think the bridge design, structural expressions, and develop the rooms more ambitiously with a reduced material palette.

## 2.5 Consensus Comments

The Chair then summarized the Panel comments on which there was full agreement.

### General

- Appreciated the complex design and the team's resilience in re-designing.
- Supportive of the iconic and unique experience of "bridge as park".
- Supportive of the overall landscape and planting strategy.
- The "big idea" that unifies the project can be further articulated and developed in the material palette and design of the elements.
- The shared path design creates potential user conflicts, ensure the design can accommodate various modes of movement including opportunities to pause at the key lookout points. Carefully consider the impact of bicycle movement and how it can incorporate cues to work with other modes of movement, such as slowing down, stopping, dismounting, etc.
- The uninterrupted length of the elevated experience is a pedestrian safety and access concern, consider adding more vertical access points, such as switchback stairs at either ends, to provide more efficient and immediate options for users to get on and off the bridge.
- Not supportive of the new columns that mimic the Gardiner bents, consider alternatives.
- Provide a lighting strategy at the next review.

### Bridge (Rooms)

- Supportive of moments of slowing down along the bridge to take in views of the site, ensure these spaces are well integrated and provided throughout the experience.
- Consider simplification of the design and material palette to enhance the project's reading and consistency with Bentway phase 1:
  - Consider fewer materials to allow the rooms to be visually cohesive and consistent while spatially different from another.
  - Consider maximizing the use of wood and concrete as primary materials to reinforce the Bentway identity.
  - Corten steel is closely associated with the Fort York Visitor Center, consider removing this material from the palette.

- With a simplified material palette, consider a simpler design as well, i.e. fewer rooms.
- Supportive of the didactic experiences, continue to develop strategies and details for framing views and history of the site.

Bridge (East)

- While the iconography of the east half of the project as a “small Gardiner” is appreciated given the context, the design should have a stronger and more unique identity that will allow the structure to stand alone and read independently from the Gardiner structure.
- Support the use of the MTO green color on the bridge, however, further develop the form and detailing of the bridge to ensure a unique identity as part of Bentway, i.e. railing, handrail, etc.
- Further develop the east landing plaza to create a strong arrival experience.

**2.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support**

The Panel voted Conditional Support for the project (11 votes for Conditional Support, 1 vote for Non-Support).

The Chair then asked if the proponent would like to provide a brief response.

Mr. Ryan thanked the Panel for helpful and broad comments, appreciated the careful review and actionable suggestions. The ambition of the Bentway is unique, interested in a culture of diversity and pluralism, and the team saw the Gardiner as an element that ties the various parts of the design together. Mr. Ryan thanked the support from the Bentway conservancy.

**3.0 Leslie Street Lookout – Schematic Design**

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|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Project ID #:</i>        | 1121  |
| <i>Project Type:</i>        | Park  |
| <i>Review Stage:</i>        | Schematic Design  |
| <i>Review Round:</i>        | Two   |
| <i>Location:</i>            | Port Lands  |
| <i>Proponent:</i>           | CreateTO  |
| <i>Architect/ Designer:</i> | Claude Cormier Assos; gh3*; ARUP  |
| <i>Presenter(s):</i>        | Marc Hallé, Senior Associate, Claude Cormier + Associes<br>Vanessa Abram, Architectural Designer, gh3*  |
| <i>Delegation:</i>          | Carlos Portillo, Claude Cormier + Associes<br>Jennifer Tharp, CreateTO<br>Hon Lu, CreateTO<br>Marc Kramer, City of Toronto<br>Anthony Kittel, City of Toronto<br>Netami Stuart, Waterfront Toronto<br>Aaron Barter, Waterfront Toronto<br>Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto<br>Jed Kilbourn, Waterfront Toronto<br>Pina Mallozzi, Waterfront Toronto |

### **3.1 Introduction to the Issues**

Netami Stuart, Senior Project Manager with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project by noting the planning context including ownership, Port Lands Planning Framework, land use, open space, and key views. Netami Stuart introduced Jennifer Tharp, Development Manager with CreateTO, to provide an update on the project background. Ms. Tharp noted the team began public and Indigenous community engagement, and the project will proceed to detailed design later this year. Anticipated construction is 2022-2023. Mr. Tharp noted the design scope has been updated, including the lookout structure location and program, boardwalk, tree species and afforestation zone, lighting, microclimate and comfort, and furniture.

Ms. Stuart continued to provide the site context including adjacent industrial programs and the new Entrance Pavilion for Tommy Thompson Park, which will contain the nearest washroom facilities for the users of this park. Ms. Stuart noted the project is here for Schematic Design review, recapped the consensus comments from the January 2021 review, and the areas for Panel consideration: access and safety, amenities and future strategies for different groups of users, industrial character of the project, material palette, approach to afforestation, and other landscape treatments in terms of ecological and infrastructural performance. Ms. Stuart then introduced Marc Hallé, Senior Associate with Claude Cormier + Associes, to continue the presentation.

### **3.2 Project Presentation**

Mr. Hallé began by recapping the previous consensus comments and design intentions of the project. Mr. Hallé noted the context, including Leslie Slip, adjacent developments, and the existing site conditions. Mr. Hallé noted the design changes, recycled foundation strategy, improved bicycle infrastructure, scale comparison with Sugar Beach, and the proposed lifting of the dock wall to sit safety above average lake level. Mr. Hallé introduced Vanessa Abrams, Designer with gh3\*, to present the updates to the lookout structure.

Ms. Abrams noted the location of the lookout tower has been revised and the washroom program has been removed. The nearest washrooms will be located at the Tommy Thompson Park Entrance Pavilion, 150m south of the site. The design of the tower continues to reference the industrial past of the site.

Mr. Hallé detailed the cut and fill strategy to minimize excavation and transfer of dirty soils offsite, water management strategy, infiltration infrastructure, grading strategy, and the planting strategies. Specifically, the urban afforestation strategy draws from the characteristics of Tommy Thompson Park. Mr. Hallé noted the juxtaposition between natural and urban marked by the diagonal through the park. The urban side has indigenous plant species and a poplar alley along the diagonal. Mr. Hallé noted the team will work with a landscape ecologist on the afforestation strategy, planting in a dense pattern intended to be a naturalized condition. The two sides working together will create an interesting experience.

### **3.3 Panel Questions**

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

One Panel member asked for the visual and planting difference between afforestation and succession. Mr. Hallé noted that the two look very similar except afforestation will allow eliminating the early phases of succession, start planting higher level trees from the beginning and do not have to wait for the first and second waves to go to the third. The Panel member asked why water access is not possible at this site. Jennifer Tharp, Development Manager with CreateTO, noted the channel is an active industrial port so there are safety concerns. It might be possible in the future but currently the port is very busy.

Another Panel member asked if soft water access can be provided such as edges that will ameliorate the project's relationship with water. Mr. Hallé answered that it is not in the budget or scope. The project scope does not include the consideration of a soft edge as it is important to maintain the dock wall and not provide water access from land to respect the various stakeholders in the area.

One Panel member is concerned with the timing of the public consultation meetings and asked how the team will incorporate comments from these meetings into the design. Mr. Hallé noted the team is revising the design based on comments already, including the fire pit, the afforestation area, picnic table, and mounds.

Another Panel member asked if the team considered a more accessible boardwalk network for the park, such as wrapping the entire beach. Mr. Hallé noted that the team did not want to make the beach feel too much like a sandbox with a continuous boardwalk perimeter, however other materials can be explored. The Panel member asked for clarification on the artifact construction, and if the team considered using authentic pieces of artifices from the area. Mr. Hallé noted the construction details have not yet been developed and will explore finding real objects in the next phase.

One Panel member noted sewage outflows located on the north side of the turning basin and if they have been remediated as there are concerns with the water quality and the sewage's proximity to the park. Hon Lu, Director with CreateTO, noted the city is working on larger initiatives that will disconnect these stormwater elements but some of these existing outfalls are still active.

Another Panel member asked for the rationale on the boardwalk design - if it is designed to contain sand along those edges. Mr. Hallé answered that the boardwalks are designed to provide accessibility needs.

One Panel member noted Tommy Thompson park is more rustic than the Corktown Common image reference and asked the team to clarify the ambition with afforestation and the sloped landscaping strategy. Mr. Hallé answered that the slopes provide viewing areas for both the water and back to the city, the long-term result of the afforestation will be similar to the Corktown reference, but the process is quite different. Over the first five years, the afforestation landscape will likely look messier as the forest is getting established, but then tronger plantings will begin to dominate and overtime arrive at a very similar expression. Mr. Hallé noted it will not be monoculture in terms of plant species and will experiment to create a climate resilient forest. The soil is a key component for the success of this. The Panel member asked for clarification on the washroom program. Ms. Tharp noted Parks has suggested that it is

more effective to use the facilities at the Tommy Thompson Park Entrance Pavilion so the program has been removed. The Panel member noted that the washroom facilities there will not be enough and long lines will be generated, if the team supports having washroom on site then it is recommended to advocate for it.

Another Panel member asked for the width of the boardwalks. Mr. Hallé responded it is 3m. The Panel member noted there is a lot of traffic at the supply shop on the eastern side of Cherry Bridge so there will likely be high demand for water access at the park.

One Panel member asked if any study on the implication of odour from Ashbridges Bay Water Treatment Plant has been completed, and if the park use will be affected. Ms. Tharp noted a general odour study was done as part of the Port Lands Planning Framework. Anthony Kittel, Project Manager with City of Toronto, noted that the air quality and odour work done focused on sensitive use areas such as mixed-use residential communities, but will need to confirm whether the study included this site.

### **3.4 Panel Comments**

One Panel member complimented the team for the delivery of a simple and elegant project, appreciated strategies that are consistent to the industrial character of the site, and providing clear linkages between urban and natural. The Panel member appreciated the afforestation strategy, noting it is a great monitoring site for research as many species will be planted, unlike mono-species planting done by forestry companies. The Panel member noted thinning and maintenance will be required so Parks operations should be integrated in the design process. The use of Elm Tree is appreciated. The site will experience cultural and demographic change after the completion of the river valley work, the Panel member recommended the team to futureproof the design by exploring how the site's edges, including the water's edge, can be used in the future.

Another Panel member noted the project is located at an idiosyncratic location for a park, which makes the design challenging from the start. The Panel member commended the concept of using the design to mark the edge where the urban meets nature. The Panel member is excited to see the experimentation with afforestation as a demonstration site, and recommended the team to further articulate the visual and experiential difference between afforestation and successional landscape. The Panel member suggested more dune fences, and consider how water access can be integrated in the future, such as people arriving to the beach by water. The picnic tables look generic, consider alternatives to reinforce the vision of the beer garden tables. The Panel member noted Sugar Beach is well used in the winter, Trillium Park fire pit has a long waiting list, and suggested the creation of a second fire pit area to meet demand. Lastly, the Panel member asked the team to investigate whether odour from the Ashbridges Bay Water Treatment Plant will be an issue.

One Panel member asked the team to consider the timing of the consultation meetings, the invited parties, and integration of Indigenous voices that have histories of this site. The Panel member encouraged CreateTO to push consultations to the forefront of the competition and design process to ensure the voices are heard.

Another Panel member thanked the project for bringing innovation and safety to the site. The Panel member suggested to refine the boardwalk design to provide special accommodation at the termination points as people will desire to walk at the edges. Consider other materials to enhance the use of the edge and stay away from a sandbox. The Panel member is supportive of the lighting strategy, ensure low level lighting is integrated to provide a safe level of use. The Panel member suggested to make the artifacts more authentic to celebrate the history of the site, consider bringing something that directly relates to the Port Lands rather than prefabricated custom furniture.

One Panel member appreciated the connective quality of the project, tying existing conditions together at a pioneering site for the city. The Panel member viewed the boardwalk as a long seating area, a very important feature for the project. Provide high and low water level in the section drawing to show impact to the beach area. The Panel member noted that the pioneering design will project a different future for the shipping channel and recommended that the design acknowledges future uses positively. The Panel member felt the timeline of this project can be better aligned with the much bigger Port Lands Flood Protection. The Panel member recommended that Indigenous Consultation should be included as part of the competition brief, not added near the end of the design process – it should be embedded in the brief and help shape the objectives and direction of the park from the beginning.

Another Panel member noted the design shows a gradual transformation into a sand dune language and suggested to embrace that idea since they make great beer gardens. The Panel member noted one of the key characteristics of Leslie Spit is informal use, consider unsanctioned fire pits in the park. Furthermore, sand dunes can help unlock this less formal, messier, language for the design. The Panel member is supportive of dissolving the formality of the edges with unorthodox design elements and additional seating. The Panel member noted that the Tommy Thompson Entrance Pavilion used rough concrete to deter graffiti, provide a strategy to deter graffiti at the next review.

While the screening of the industrial context at the beach is appreciated, one Panel member felt the vegetation areas on either side of the beach are not wide enough to provide the required level of visual buffer, consider bringing the boardwalks inward to allow for more substantial buffers. The Panel member noted that if washroom is no longer being contemplated at the lookout tower, consider making the arch cut-out on the lower floor smaller than the upper openings so the symbolism of the lookout tower at the top is read more strongly.

Another Panel member commended the design and suggested to specify high SCM content in the precast or cast-in-place concrete to ensure a lower carbon output.

### **3.5 Consensus Comments**

The Chair then summarized the Panel comments on which there was full agreement.

#### **General**

- Supportive of the overall project concept and excited to see the delivery of the project.

- Appreciated the project’s sensitivity to the unique site and surrounding context.
- Design for Day 1 but also consider long term success, ensure the park can accommodate users far into the future once the Port Lands are fully developed.
- The nearby Tommy Thompson Entrance Pavilion washroom facilities are not enough for this area, consider bringing back the washroom program as part of this project if at all feasible.
- Provide more information on the rising lake water level at the site and demonstrate how the design is futureproofed for extreme conditions.
- Important to respect history and meaningfully integrate Indigenous consultations into the design process.
- Sewer outfall in the channel is a long-term issue that should be addressed by the City. Demand for access to the water will continue to grow as the area becomes more popular, it is recommended that the City and CreateTO to take on the question of water access now.
- With the project’s proximity to Ashbridges Bay Water Treatment Plant, consider odour mitigation strategies if required.

#### Design

- Supportive of the intent to accelerate plant growth with a mix of species.
- Important to capture the industrial characteristics of the site and the adjacent Leslie Spit, consider strategies that will encourage more informal and unsanctioned uses of fire pits.
- Ensure overall park and beach experiences are inclusive and accessible.
- Recommend widening the boardwalks to provide adequate space for circulation and wheelchair use. At the terminus of the boardwalks, consider creating an accessible viewing area to provide access right at the water’s edge.
- Consider moving the boardwalks further in from the property lines to provide a wider vegetation buffer on either side of the beach.
- Consider reaching out to Toronto Port Authority for artifacts that can be used in the project to add a sense of authenticity, rather than newly created ones.
- Consider providing more seating options. Given the success of the other urban beaches and how people gravitate towards seating in the beach, consider locating seating elements in the sand.
- Supportive of the low-level lighting strategy for the park. Ensure the park is safe at night.

### **3.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support**

The Panel voted Conditional Support for the project.

The Chair then asked if the proponent would like to provide a brief response.

Mr. Hallé appreciated the comment on “looseness” and noted this might be a chance for the team to explore that idea since the project is very different from working in an urban setting.

### **4.0 Waterfront Toronto 5-Year Strategy Plan – For Information**

*Project ID #:* 1124

*Project Type:* Waterfront Toronto Corporate Report  
*Review Stage:* For Information  
*Review Round:* -  
*Location:* -  
*Presenter:* Waterfront Toronto  
*Architect/ Designer:* -  
*Presenter(s):* Lisa Taylor, Chief Financial Officer, Waterfront Toronto  
*Delegation:* -

#### **4.1 Project Presentation**

Lisa Taylor, Chief Financial Officer with Waterfront Toronto, began the presentation by noting the strategic priorities including city-building, innovation and job creation, the public good, and financial sustainability. Ms. Taylor recapped the public art initiatives including a new major artwork at East Bayfront, Indigenous Public Art curator to help commission two pieces, and a new floating artwork at Harbour Square Park. Ms. Taylor detailed the public good, jobs and innovations, and city building initiatives. Ms. Taylor noted that now more than ever, Waterfront Toronto's commitment to continuous improvement is delivering public value and financial sustainability. In addition, Ms. Taylor noted the signature projects including Destination Playground, Jack Layton Ferry Terminal, Waterfront Walk, Landmark Institution, and summarized the performance measures for the strategic plan.

#### **4.2 Panel Question**

One Panel member asked for the anticipated start date for the philanthropy fundraising for the signature projects, and if there will be more projects in the future. Ms. Taylor responded that Waterfront Toronto is building a case for support for shared public spaces, these projects can benefit from philanthropy, but we are not limited by these four as they are just the first ones.

Another Panel member asked if the parking lot site at the foot of Yonge Street is part of the strategic plan. Ms. Taylor responded it is not part of the 5-year plan. Ideally that site can be completed as part of the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal fundraising when it comes to fruition. Ms. Taylor noted the plan is updated every year and Waterfront Toronto reviews the latest pipeline of projects.

One Panel member asked if there are any distinguishing features between private and corporate fundraising. Ms. Taylor noted Waterfront Toronto's approach is focused on philanthropic, high net worth, individuals, as there might be potential conflicts with corporate giving. The Panel member asked if there are any details on recognition of the givers. Ms. Taylor noted the team is exploring different strategies, one option is City of Toronto's gift giving naming strategy since ultimately many of these projects will be owned by the City. The team is working with the City to coordinate these details.

Another Panel member encouraged Waterfront Toronto to continue its history of holding design competitions for public sites and initiate the process for the Yonge slip parking lot site. The Panel member noted the site currently is a missing link, lagging behind adjacent transit and private developments which is not beneficial. Consider looking at the timeline and ensure preliminary work is there to allow the required

design to take place so the park can open in time and continue to support Waterfront Toronto's objective of leading with landscape. The Panel member suggested to refine Waterfront Toronto's Land Acknowledgement statement and add details on water to further address First Nations and Indigenous context in the waterfront.

One Panel member noted that Waterfront Toronto pioneered testing pilot projects and asked if there is an opportunity for the parking lot at Yonge to hold public art, seasonal or popup programming and installations, to generate interest for this space before fully released. The interim use will put the site on the public's radar and demonstrate value to the area. Ms. Taylor answered that Waterfront Toronto is looking at interim uses. The parking lot at Yonge generates a lot of profit through parking but the team is exploring interim activation opportunities.

### **CLOSING**

There being no further business, the Chair then adjourned the public session of the meeting after a vote to go into a brief in-camera session.