



WATERFRONTToronto

**Waterfront Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting #92
Wednesday, May 18th, 2016**

Present:

Paul Bedford, Vice Chair
George Baird
Peter Busby
Claude Cormier
Pat Hanson
Chris Reed
Brigitte Shim
Betsy Williamson

Regrets:

Bruce Kuwabara, Chair
Don Schmitt
Jane Wolff

Recording Secretary:

Rei Tasaka
Tristan Simpson

Designees and Guests:

Christopher Glaisek
Harold Madi

WELCOME

Paul Bedford opened the meeting noting that he has been asked by Bruce Kuwabara to Chair the meeting in his absence. The Vice Chair then provided an overview of the agenda before moving to the General Business portion of the meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Vice Chair shared with the Panel that he was involved in a transit roundtable discussion to gather input from people who have been involved in waterfront transit planning projects. Feedback from this meeting will be added to the transit report that will be submitted to City Council in June. Mr. Bedford noted that a point of contention during the meeting was the market perspective on the importance of transit for future growth. He also expressed concern over the lack of priority being given to the East Bayfront LRT.

Will Fleissig, Waterfront Toronto's CEO, noted that the private sector should be engaged to look at new methods of private contributions to support transit, such as district financing – now is the time for these conversations given that we don't have people living and working in these areas yet. Mr. Fleissig also noted that a PhD analyst has been

retained as part of a consulting contract to map out what could happen over time as a market tool. This information could potentially be used to educate people on the immense growth that is happening on the waterfront.

Mr. Fleissig asked the Panel for their input on a conservancy model for the waterfront and whether they have any examples of precedents. Mr. Busby mentioned the Montreal model where they are undertaking the first ever private sector led proposal in Canada.

Mr. Glaisek mentioned to the Panel that a Waterfront Transit Reset Study is being undertaken to provide high quality transit to integrate waterfront communities and link the waterfront to the broader City and regional transportation network. The East Bayfront LRT has been under discussion including whether there is a need to connect to Union Station.

The Vice Chair then asked if there were any conflicts of interest to declare. No conflicts of interest were identified.

The minutes from the April 13th meeting were moved.

The Vice Chair then invited Mr. Glaisek, Vice President of Planning and Design with Waterfront Toronto, to provide a report on project progress.

REPORT FROM THE V.P. OF PLANNING AND DESIGN

Mr. Glaisek provided an update on project progress noting that the Lower Yonge Precinct Plan Report was reviewed by the Toronto East York Community Council on May 10th and was unanimously passed. The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the second and final phase of the Lower Yonge Precinct planning process. Key features contemplated for the Lower Yonge Precinct include:

- 13 towers;
- Approximately 28,000 new residents and employees;
- New community recreation centre;
- Elementary school;
- Two child care facilities;
- Affordable housing units; modifications to the Gardiner Expressway;
- Tunnel connection under the rail corridor;
- Two new streets, enhanced cycling infrastructure
- Extension of the PATH network.
- The report was reviewed by Toronto East York Community Council on May 10, 2016.

Mr. Glaisek noted that the report will be considered by City Council on June 7th.

Mr. Glaisek also shared a video with the Panel of the Sugar Beach Sugar Shack event held over the weekend of March 12th, which attracted over 10,000 people to the waterfront. People from all over the city, as well as visitors to Toronto, came together to hear live music, get a taste of maple taffy and enjoy the waterfront.

The Vice Chair then moved to the project reviews portion of the meeting.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 Project: Under Gardiner

ID#: 1073

Project Type: Master Plan

Location: Land beneath the Gardiner Expressway between Strachan and Bathurst

Proponent: Waterfront Toronto on behalf of the Matthews Foundation

Architect/Designer: Public Work

Review Stage: Schematic Design

Review Round: Three

Presenter(s): Marc Ryan, Public Work, Ken Greenberg, Greenberg Consultants Inc.

Delegation: Lauren Abrahams, Public Work, Adam Nicklin, Public Work

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Pina Mallozzi, Director of Design with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project by noting that this is the team's first time presenting the Schematic Design. Ms. Mallozzi proceeded to summarize some of the Panel's key comments from the March meeting which includes; embedding the goal of removing barriers and making connections throughout the project, more focus on the design of one room, the relationship of space under the Gardiner to the adjacent spaces, and the need for more clarity on how the management entity will interface with the design. Ms. Mallozzi explained that components of Phase One have been outlined to include the Strachan Gate Timber Pier, the Bridge over Fort York Blvd., the Iconic Skating Experience, and the Event Dock and Plaza Landscape. Ms. Mallozzi raised a number of issues for Panel consideration including:

- Is the Phase One scope appropriate?
- What are your thoughts on the Shingle Beach/Shoreline Plaza and surface treatment ideas?
- What are your thoughts on the detailed design of the Strachan Gate Timber Pier?
- What are your thoughts on the movement sequence and experience of the bridge?
- What are your thoughts on the configuration of the reduced scope of the skating trail?
- Is the language of the materials and finishes appropriate for the space?

Ms. Mallozzi then introduced Marc Ryan, principal and co-founder of Public Work to give the presentation.

1.2 Project Presentation

Mr. Ryan began by explaining to the Panel that the focus since the last meeting has been about defining a Phase One which fits within the project budget. In doing this, the design team was able to establish a handful of priorities to focus on for Phase One. Mr. Ryan explained that one of these components is the trail connection which will be completed from Strachan Avenue to Spadina Avenue. Another component is the Strachan Gate Timber Pier which is a double terraced stage. The steps will become a seating element

and gathering place with the intention of being developed as fully accessible. Mr. Ryan explained that underneath the upper terrace, there is potential storage for events and program support. The third component, the Bridge, is imagined as a suspended bridge supported by the columns of the Gardiner. Mr. Ryan explained that due to the tight landing, a switchback is necessary. The bridge will have an edge suitable for sitting and a lighting component on the cables. The fourth element is the Iconic Skating Trail. This item is very important to be established in Phase One as it has garnered a lot excitement from the public. This item has the potential for an extension in future phases. The design team is also anticipating the need for structures such as the pavilion at Bent 91 in future phases. The last element is the extra layer of programming support infrastructure which includes additional seating, pebble swings, rigging etc.

1.3 Panel Questions

One of the Panel members asked about the budget for the bridge. Mr. Ryan replied that the budget is \$5 million for the entire structure, with the timber seating as an upgrade feature. The Panel member then asked if the skate park was part of Phase One. Mr. Ryan replied that it is not technically part of Phase One noting that the 800 Fleet Street property is being coordinated with the City.

The Panel member also asked about the timeline. Mr. Ryan replied that the ambition is to have it open Summer 2017. The design team is moving into Design Development and intends to release tenders in the Fall and will be procuring a construction manager in the next month. Ms. Mallozzi pointed out that the team does not have access to the site until the Gardiner rehabilitation work is complete. Mr. Ryan added that they are looking at coordinating work that can be completed off-site.

Another Panel member asked how the Environmental Assessment (EA) factors into the project. Mr. Ryan explained that the EA is for the bridge component. This was a full Schedule "C" EA and planning solutions have been completed and in April, the bridge was recommended as a result. Mr. Ryan noted that the EA will be filed in August. The Panel member also asked about the size of the pavilion and whether they have an architect. Mr. Ryan replied that the pavilion will be approximately 2,300 square feet and at the moment they do not have an architect as it is not part of Phase One.

One of the Panel members asked what will be there in July 2017. Mr. Ryan replied that the team hopes to have as many components as possible open on the opening day.

Another Panel member asked if all four components are included in the \$25 million. Mr. Ryan replied that all four components are accounted for in the \$25 million budget. The Panel member also asked if building under an existing structure adds to the complexity of getting things approved. Mr. Ryan replied that the land is owned by the city and the team is working closely with city staff to get the necessary authorizations approved.

One of the Panel members asked if the Gardiner has been rehabilitated for this portion of the project. Mr. Ryan noted that it is underway now just west of Fort York Boulevard. Grascan Construction will be off the site in October and the project team will be on-site in November. The Panel member also asked if the skating rink will be artificial. Mr. Ryan

replied that it will be artificial using a CO₂ system rather than the glycol system, which is more sustainable than other cooling systems. The Panel member also asked about the process in terms of funding for programming. Ken Greenberg replied that the team has hired Lord Cultural Resources to come up with a plan for programming. Mr. Greenberg also noted that a “Think Tank” was held involving cultural leaders and the team is also working with Artscape, a not-for-profit urban development organization.

Another Panel member asked who is organizing the programs for the space. Mr. Greenberg noted that as the design progresses, the place will host a range of activities: one is simple daily use such as trails, secondly, a middle-range program or seasonal use such as performing arts and financing and thirdly, signature events with producers with their own funding. The design will provide base infrastructure such as rigging and power to allow these activities to happen.

Another Panel member asked about the lighting strategy with regards to safety. Mr. Ryan replied that the trail will be lit at night. The design team is working with a lighting designer from New York to develop a lighting strategy. The team will also be using paint to bring more warmth to the space.

One of the Panel members asked to describe the sectional relationship between the trail and whether the transition to the plaza is flush. Mr. Ryan replied that yes the bike trails are multi use and flush to the adjacent features. Mr. Ryan also explained that the bridge is bike accessible with a width of 9.5 meters at its widest and 4.2 meters at its narrowest.

1.4 Panel Comments

The Vice Chair asked the Panel for their comments.

A Panel member appreciated the development of the Strachan Gate design, noting that it is pivotal and the team should concentrate on this. There are concerns with the schedule. If tender is early September there is only 12 weeks between now and tender. In the two Panel meetings before then, the Panel member is interested in seeing larger plans, more views and the “seasonality” of the project. The Panel member noted that while the lighting proposal is important, the details (i.e. - handrails along the bridge) is equally as important and the drawings must translate their confidence in their details and communicate this. The concept of rigging seems ambitious but a full proposal is required to fully assess it. The Panel member also wanted to know what happens under the bridge. There should be a more specific proposal around the steps. The Panel member suggested open lattice would be nice. The Panel member concluded that in the upcoming months, they are expecting more details and larger drawings.

Another Panel member noted that this is a large, exciting project and offered support to make this possible. The Panel member suggested that there should be a diagram that shows what is private vs. public, as the public conceives everything as “public” while there are nuances to the boundaries. The territories to the north and south need to be clarified to understand connectivity beyond the study area. The Panel member thought that the bridge concept is exciting, and it is part of the public realm. The High Line in New York City gets crowded, and so will the bridge. Therefore the details for the height of railings

need to be carefully considered. The lighting requires clarification. The Panel member was supportive of the skating trail. They noted Gorky Park, in Moscow Russia, as a very active and a true gathering place, and suggested that the team look at other global models that are successful. The Panel member appreciated the graphic desire for the area, and noted the challenge is how it can graphically measure the territories through the bents.

Another Panel member noted that this is a very complex project, both regulatory and physically. They noted that there is however, something to thread through the project and suggested the need of continuity and clarity while creating “episodes” along the way. The Panel member thought that currently there are a lot of “episodes” and the project is weighted towards them. The Panel member noted that the bridge and gateway is good but there is a need to find a design language that is drawn from the same elements. Some of the questions raised were: What are the most essential elements that will help communicate a strong and clear message? What happens if Phase 2 never comes? Is the project about the material? Is it through lighting and painting? Is there a simple strategy like planting? The Panel member suggested that there should be a focus on continuity and clarity that would provide the project a “simple” strength.

Another Panel member congratulated the team for a great project, noting support that the two, robust wooden constructions. The Panel member noted that the team should present in at the next meeting, a version of these structures which complies with the Ontario Building Code. The Panel member also noted that the individual elements of the project should share the same vocabulary.

Another Panel member noted that the project is tremendously ambitious and shared some scepticism about the schedule and cost. For example 2.5 million dollars for a skating rink seems slim. The Panel needs to see a real costing and gantt chart schedule. The Panel member noted that having a structural engineer and architect on board is critical, as the project components are similar. The Panel member wished to see the project make more of the “brand”, noting that the project requires an identity. The Panel member also noted that there must be washrooms constructed in Phase One. The Panel member also noted that the under croft under the stairs cannot be open, otherwise people will inhabit the space. They noted that there must be proper sun studies on site to understand where people can sit. The Panel member also noted that it is important for the team to identify items that are of lowest priority, as it is uncertain that all of them can be done.

Another Panel member noted that they are in favour of what they currently see and the general feel of the project. The Panel member is concerned that the schedule has become the worst enemy in the design process as it is evident in the presentation that the designers are trying to respond to everyone’s questions while defining and developing the design. This does not allow time to “step back” and “edit” which is critical in developing a strong concept. The Panel member noted that the current time and budget is not enough to be able to develop and edit a design of this scale. The Panel member then mentioned The High Line, where one will have multiple experiences moving from one connection to another without knowing it. The success may lend itself to the balance of the highly textured areas versus. more nuanced textures. The Panel member noted that the painting and graphic strategy presented is not strong enough. The team must take on something that is simpler and stronger to create a brand. The Panel member mentioned that 2017

will be full of other projects for Canada's 150th celebrations and wondered if moving the opening to the following year to finesse the work was possible. The project is one of the biggest projects in Toronto and it is worth spending more time "getting it right".

Another Panel member noted that the project could still meet its 2017 opening, and if not, there needs to be decisions around time to refine the design. The Panel member noted that while they insisted on the continuous palette since the first review, the material palette is still lacking continuity and identity. There are too many paving materials, given that there are paving materials on the ground and wooden structures above, it is critical that the team works with materials that is already there, for example, Fort York's CorTen and existing pavers. The Panel member liked the suspended bridge and suggested that since the bents are very strong, perhaps the other gate should also be suspended. The Panel member mentioned Public Work's design of the water's edge promenade and the WaveDecks, noting that there is a high degree of material palette that is continuous, without a large difference between Queens Quay sidewalk and the WaveDecks. The High Line is another example that has one continuous paving type and P:UG should be even more discreet in terms of materiality. The Panel member stressed that there needs to be a process of editing to create continuity before moving forward. The Panel member was against painting the bents as it feels cheap and expedient.

One Panel member noted that there is a case for Waterfront Toronto to negotiate with the City to lead the designs for City parcels adjacent to the project area as it is most logical.

1.5 Summary of the Panel's Key Issues

The Vice Chair then summarized the comments by the Panel noting that there is a lot of fascination and interest in the project:

- Provide more detailed information on Phase One to demonstrate that it can be delivered at a high level of quality within the current budget and timeframe.
- Ensure that enough of the project can be completed and open on July 1st 2017 to inspire and capture people's imagination for more.
- Establish in advance what component of the project is the lowest priority so it can be easily cut in the event that the current scope exceeds the budget.
- The amount of detail provided on the Strachan Gate and the Fort York Bridge was not sufficient to fully evaluate the design – particularly the rigging, the steps, the handrails, and building code compliance.
- The individual components need a more powerful continuous element to tie the site together and expand the project in the future without losing its identity.
- Land ownership needs to be clearly mapped to understand private lands vs. public realm and north south connections beyond the project.
- Detailed costing schedule needs to be shared
- The palette of both material/landscape elements and signage/wayfinding/graphics needs to be simplified.
- A sun/shadow study is needed to assess the viability of different treatments/uses proposed in each area.
- Washrooms must be provided if this is to be successful as a destination when it opens.

- Present the project using the detailed design drawing set, rather than precedents and diagrams, at the next Panel review.

I.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Vice Chair then asked for a vote of Support, Conditional Support or Non-support for the project. The Panel voted Conditional Support of the project.

CLOSING

There being no further business, the Vice Chair then adjourned the meeting.
