



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #169

Wednesday, July 24th, 2024

Meeting held in-person hybrid at Waterfront Toronto

Present

Paul Bedford, Chair
Betsy Williamson, Vice Chair
Gina Ford
Pat Hanson
Matthew Hickey
David Leinster
Janna Levitt
Fadi Masoud
Emily Mueller De Celis
Pina Petricone
Brigitte Shim

Regrets

Nina-Marie Lister
Kevin Stelzer
Eric Turcotte

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto

Recording Secretary
Leon Lai

Overview of Review Agenda

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

1. McCleary District Precinct Plan – Stage 2: Preliminary Draft Plan
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GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest for disclosure. No conflict was declared.

The Chair then asked Pina Mallozzi, Senior Vice President of Design, Waterfront Toronto, to give an update on last month's projects.

Design Review Panel Report Back:

Leon Lai, Design Review Panel Manager with Waterfront Toronto, noted that Consensus Comments have been shared with the **Keating Channel Pedestrian Bridge** team and they are continuing to investigate key areas including bridge width, seating/step down areas, and the north landing approach. The team has submitted the Schematic Design package and is expected to return to the WDRP for Stage 2: Schematic Design review in September 2024. Mr. Lai noted **West Don Lands Block 13** is anticipated to return in Fall 2024 to redo Stage 2: Schematic Design review.

Waterfront Toronto Updates:

Mr. Lai noted the **Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC)** members were given a tour of East Bayfront to review and provide feedback on existing designs in the area. This feedback will inform the **Waterfront Accessibility Design Guidelines** and ideally all future WT design choices; the Design Guidelines will be presented to the WDRP as a For Information item later this year.

Mr. Lai noted the float art project **Upcycle** team is hosting a community event to celebrate the project at Harbour Square Park Basin and an invite will be sent to the WDRP. Also, the public art **In Equilibrium** by Ludovic Boney will have an official opening in the Fall of 2024, formal invitation will be shared with the WDRP once details are finalized.

Chris Glaisek, Chief Planning and Designer Officer with Waterfront Toronto, noted that **Port Lands Flood Protection** marked another important milestone in July with the removal of the "west plug", where the new river meets Lake Ontario. Mr. Glaisek noted the construction of the PLFP children's playground continues and the big owl has been installed.

Leon Lai, Design Review Panel manager with Waterfront Toronto, then provided an update on the tentative DRP agendas for July and September 2024.

Chair's remarks:

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

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 McCleary District Precinct Plan – Stage 2: Preliminary Draft Plan

Project ID #: 1141
Project Type: Precinct Plan

<i>Review Stage:</i>	Preliminary Draft Plan
<i>Review Round:</i>	Two
<i>Location:</i>	Port Lands
<i>Proponent:</i>	CreateTO
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	Perkins and Will DTAH Diamond Schmitt
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	Paul Kulig, Principal, Perkins and Will Brent Raymond, Partner, DTAH Steven Bondar, Associate, DSAI
<i>Delegation:</i>	Scott Pennington, CreateTO Anna Iannucci, Perkins and Will Vinaya Mani, Perkins and Will Duncan Bates, Senior Associate, Diamond Schmitt Julie Bogdanowicz, City of Toronto Eric Sehr, City of Toronto Colin Wolfe, City of Toronto Steven Barber, City of Toronto Jed Kilbourn, Waterfront Toronto Corey Bialek, Waterfront Toronto Kristal Tanunagara, Waterfront Toronto Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Scott Pennington, Vice President, Asset Management with CreateTO, introduced the project by noting the overall project vision, future development context, and that the work today focuses on the Phase 1 area. Julie Bogdanowicz, Senior Urban Designer with City of Toronto, noted the fixed elements of the plan that are derived from and consistent with the Port Lands Planning Framework (PLPF) and Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, elements that are flexible including local street character, open space network, density and height, building typology, and PIC uses and commercial activation strategies. Ms. Bogdanowicz noted the Waterfront Secretariat-led Indigenous engagement strategy and CreateTO and City of Toronto Planning-led outreach to other Indigenous organizations or experts, and the feedback so far.

Colin Wolfe, Senior Community Planner with City of Toronto, noted the sustainability priority areas, the consultant team for the McCleary District Sustainability Plan, and design context including private applications at 685 Lake Shore Boulevard East, 120 Bouchette, and 115 Saulter. Mr. Colin noted other design context including Lake Shore Public Realm, Don Roadway streetscape, Commissioners Street, and the Broadview Avenue extension. Mr. Wolfe noted the project is here for Stage 2: Preliminary Draft Plan review, recapped the previous Stage 1 consensus comments, and noted areas for Panel consideration: the refined street network and characters, the two District Park options, building types in relation to increasing density and liveability, and building massing in terms of uses and protecting for a high-quality public realm.

1.2 Project Presentation

Paul Kulig, Principal with Perkins & Will, began the presentation by noting the project's guiding principles, the big moves of weaving the river delta into the precinct, the area characters of the precinct, and the proposed height envelope. Mr. Kulig noted the landmarks and key views, exploration areas in this presentation including park location and building types, and the two demonstration plan options: Central Park and Podium-Tower, Western Park and Tall-Midrise.

Brent Raymond, Partner with DTAH, summarized the public realm approaches of ecology, culture, and movement, areas of departures and refinements on the PLPF including streets, block sizes, District Park location, open spaces, boundary streets, street characters, flexible street segments, and key frontages. Mr. Raymond noted Indigenous perspectives are embedded in the landscape design and highlighted the key factors to be considered for the District Park. Mr. Raymond noted the PLPF park does not meet the District Park requirements, the proposed two options and their impact on built form, east-west street sections, and the inspiration for the Broadview Plaza POPS. Mr. Raymond noted 'complete streets' and 'green streets' as design direction, scale precedents, and the street network and hierarchy. Mr. Raymond noted the narrowing of rights-of-ways and sectional perspective of each key street.

Steven Bonder, Associate with Diamond & Schmitt, presented the built form by noting that the precinct is being re-examined for increased density and the intensification strategies: block interior infill for flexible use, addition of tall buildings, height peak at landmark towers, varied tower forms, minimizing shadow impact and inboard bedrooms, podium height adjustments, sunlight onto sidewalks, and the removal of residual Phase 2 development sites for new civic spaces. Mr. Bonder noted Broad Ave. is focused on increasing density with an option for tall mid-rises. Mr. Bonder noted scale precedents and summarized the built form analysis on the two park options.

1.3 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked the team to state the big idea for the project. Mr. Raymond noted the team is working within a fixed framework, the big idea is subtle which is making the river come into the neighborhood: the landscape character informs the public spaces while adding density.

Another Panel member asked if there will be design guidelines after the precinct plan. Mr. Glaisek noted Waterfront Toronto creates design guidelines but not sure what the next steps are for this project. The Panel member felt that the tall mid-rises can use more planning and guidelines beyond the precinct plan. Mr. Kulig noted the project scope does not include design guidelines, but the preliminary zoning envelope offers opportunities for more specific instructions on the built form.

Another Panel member asked if the project has an Indigenous consultant and if the team has done any consultation. Ms. Bogdanowicz noted the precinct plan falls under Port Lands Indigenous consultation work so there is no consultant on this team. The Panel member asked why the McCleary Park is not shown in the drawings. Mr. Pennington noted the existing park is in the EA study area related to the future road

alignment, one of the contemplated changes might shift Bouchette over which would impact the shape of the park itself so it is premature for the team to undertake any design work without the EA confirmations. Mr. Pennington noted CreateTO hopes to continue that work with the same design team. The Panel member asked for clarification on the location of the private lots. Ms. Pennington noted all lots west of Saulter are owned by CreateTO, blocks 1-3 are private and some lots on the east fronting the park are public. Mr. Raymond clarified that the Broadview alignment north of Lake Shore has been set but south of Lake Shore has not been set.

One Panel member asked which streets in terms of overall grid are fixed. Mr. Raymond noted Broadview will be confirmed by the EA, Villiers Street is an existing street that continues to Villiers Island, also between two private parcels, the new east-west street would extend through the transfer station through the park, which requires future studies. Mr. Raymond noted Saulter and Villiers both have utilities that cannot be moved easily, and the project requires a utility corridor; the new east-west street also has planned utilities. Mr. Kulig noted that the rights-of-way are straight, but what happens between the buildings can shift.

Another Panel member asked for more information on the neighbourhood demographics and culture. Within the Waterfront Secondary Plan and PLPF, Mr. Wolfe noted there is significant housing presence in the plan with a mix of unit types, the other big idea is a PIC (Production, Interactive, Creative) support area for all the film and institutional uses – there is a requirement for 25% PIC uses per block and the team is looking to refine this policy while understanding there are existing uses along Commissioners Street.

One Panel member noted this is a fill site, asked if there is any soil condition information and how this will impact the design. Mr. Raymond responded that there is a civil engineer as part of the team, despite the high-water table and that the site was a marsh, the team is confident that the green streetscape and landscape features like bioswales can be successfully introduced.

Another Panel member asked the team to explain why some streets are called blue and green while others also have bioswales. Mr. Raymond noted the Port Lands Framework Plan calls out those east-west streets to have blue and green infrastructure, but since then we have identified more opportunities to introduce blue and green infrastructure on all the streets; those east-west streets have a wide right-of-way and include cycling infrastructure.

One Panel member asked if the two east-west streets require transportation and if they can be closed entirely to cars to connect the two parks. The Panel member asked why there is dedicated cycling on the outside streets and mixed on the inside. Mr. Raymond noted there are two ways to provide safe cycling: dedicated bike lanes or slowing everything down – the team is interested in the second approach.

Another Panel member asked if the team looked at diagonal pedestrian connections to the park. Mr. Raymond responded that the study shows notional connections, but the team can certainly include east-west connections in addition to the identified north-south ones.

One Panel member asked for clarification on the cone shown in the shadow diagram. Mr. Kulig noted it is a typical approach by City of Toronto to ensure no new net shadow between four hours, the team has modelled the void in the envelope to protect for sunlight exposure, this means the buildings south of the park are lower in option 1, and the heights shown in the built form reflect this general approach – the team is interested to discuss the trade-offs in this approach. The Panel member asked if gross floor area is recouped through infilling where the rights-of-way have been reduced. Mr. Kulig responded yes.

1.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member appreciated the layers and complexities of the project, commented that the public does not see the division between the two phases of work so it is important for the team to present big ideas across the full site. The Panel member recommended bringing on an Indigenous consultant early and appreciated the idea of the park touching the river – if this is the big idea then the park will provide you with that important frontage. The Panel member felt it is important to define the east-west street to the parks that does not rely on the outside streets such as Lake Shore and Commissioners. Broadview is important as a retail street, ensure the plan will tie together private and public land, create vitality and a distinct character – this is a critical segment of Broadview. The Panel member noted there is potential for flexible spaces that support PIC uses, continue to develop a new typology that only exists here that will greatly contribute to the city. The Panel member asked the City to consider extending the Phase 1 boundary to include the east side of Broadview to allow more of the design vision to come through.

Another Panel member appreciated the clear presentation and supported the strategy of infilling inner block spaces to support adjacent PIC uses but cautioned against making this condition universal across the district. The Panel member noted there needs to be more thinking on midblock connections for pedestrians and was compelled by the idea of bridging across Broadview by providing crossing porosity. The Panel member encouraged the team to not think of Broadview as only a linear retail street like Bloor Street, consider integrating retail loops with adjacent blocks.

One Panel member felt that the roads, buildings, and parks, have been developed in isolation, and don't see them coming together to create something better than what we have seen in Toronto – it is certainly slightly better but the project needs a stronger disruptor. The Panel member appreciated the detailed presentation but felt the plan is not very exciting. The Panel member noted the vitality will not be created by the private developments.

Another Panel member was encouraged by how the team has evolved the PLPF but is not yet confident with the park location, and recommended the team to provide more information on topography, grading, soil conditions, hydrology, to ensure they will perform. The Panel member advocated for a new network of pedestrian connections that will shape the public realm, and asked the team to further integrate the road designs with parks. Furthermore, the role of the blue and green streets needs to be more front and centre.

One Panel member appreciated the presentation, asked for the three pillars of ecology, culture, and mobility, to show more through the plan as they are important and exciting drivers. The Panel member noted the precedents all show a visual character, but they are not program specific, i.e. what is the spill space that works with a ground floor program and how do people occupy the streets as an experience? The Panel member cautioned that many of the precedents cater to the same audience and encouraged the team to take advantage of the topography at the western park option and leverage it as an opportunity to create character.

Another Panel member felt the western park is the better location in relation to the river and linking the two parks, encouraged the team to look more closely the flood protection landform to verify whether sightlines between park and river can actually be established. The Panel member felt the central park option might make the district too insular.

One Panel member referenced Corktown Common and asked the team to consider how the park can be designed without a visual connection to the river. The Panel member noted that dedicated cycling infrastructure is important for safety, and supported the green and blue street designs – continue to develop how the inflections and pocket public realm spaces are codified for success through the development process.

Another Panel member supported the hiring of an Indigenous consultant, commented that the midblock connections should go corner to corner and allow people to walk through to key destinations. The Panel member asked the team to clarify the Indigenous strategies, and if the team isn't sure then please work to develop them, consider working with Waterfront Toronto to do the consultation work – find ways to streamline this work. The Panel member suggested to focus on Indigenous world view and planning to inform the precinct plan.

One Panel member felt there is a gap between the aspiration and the design itself, and that the work shown stops short to include the design qualifications that would be baked into the plan: midblock connections, park relationship, Broadview Plaza, etc. The Panel member felt it is important to see how those areas relate to the built form, understand their effectiveness, i.e. showing the experience of the midblock connections. The Panel member felt all the right elements are there, but the full vision needs to be further articulated.

1.5 Consensus Comments

General

- Appreciated the comprehensive presentation and the development of the blue and green street concepts.
- Supported the narrowing of the rights-of-ways while maintaining a generous public realm.
- This neighbourhood is unique, where the river meets the lake, consider the significance of the river in the planning and the design of the public realm.

- Some Panel members felt that while the plan so far is good, more development is needed to push the envelope of the planning and public realm strategies - don't feel constrained by the planning framework – focus on specifically how the public realm network and built form respond to the unique site context and history of the site. Continue to develop the big idea that will energize and propel the development of this site for years to come.
- Some Panel members felt that there is still a sense of sameness in the planning and encouraged more diversity, integration of culture, ecology, and mobility.
- Consider bringing an Indigenous consultant on board early in the design process, work with them to identify design opportunities that can be interwoven into the neighbourhood.

Public Realm

- Supported the western park option that creates a relationship with the river.
- Supported a strong east-west link connecting the River, Broadview, and McCleary Park.
- Develop public realm concepts that maximize the opportunities at the angular open spaces along Broadview Ave. – these spaces will further make this precinct plan unique.
- The north-south connections are critical, ensure they are attractive, green, and generous.
- Develop a network of midblock connections that are designed 'inside out', consider the experience of the pedestrian such as desire paths and connecting destinations.
- Consider developing more of the precinct plan to relate to the river, such as expanding the public realm into the northwest corner block in place of a tall tower development to extend the interface between the park and the river, and creatively distribute the density elsewhere.

Built Form

- Appreciated the work on trying to define a new building typology that mix PIC uses with commercial and residential. Some Panel member encouraged specificity when deploying these typologies so there is variety in the precinct.
- Broadview is anticipated to become a significant main street, develop a strong retail strategy that takes advantage of its wide right-of-way, linearity, and other possible east-west connections bringing retail into the streets.

1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Panel unanimously voted Conditional Support.

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

Mr. Kulig thanked the Panel for the fruitful discussions and look forward to coming back for the third review. Eric Sehr, Project Manager Waterfront With City of Toronto, noted the City is bringing a framework for Indigenous consultation to City Council and the work will inform the McCleary District Precinct Plan.

CLOSING

There being no further business, the Chair then adjourned the public session of the meeting.

These Meeting Minutes are formally adopted and approved by Panel on September 25th, 2024.

These Meeting Minutes have been signed by Paul Bedford, Waterfront Design Review Panel Chair, Emilia Floro, City of Toronto Urban Design Director, and Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto Chief Planning and Design Officer. Waterfront Toronto has on record a copy of this document with their DocuSign signatures.