

## MEETING SUMMARY

*The York Quay Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) had their fourth meeting on Wednesday, April 6, 2011. The meeting focused on updating the committee on what has happened since the last SAC meeting, as well as presenting and providing feedback on the interim designs proposed for the York Quay revitalization. Discussion focused on the suggested interim design solutions for the site.*

Members of the SAC continued to be very supportive of the overall project and most members liked the proposed interim solution. This summary highlights key points raised, with additional detail beginning on page two.

- 1. Most participants were very supportive of the cloud concept** being considered for the interim design for the site. They highlighted its uniqueness as positive for the site and the city, and felt it would draw attention to the area. This attention would attract visitors and get people familiar with using the site, positively showcase Harbourfront Centre, and also be helpful in raising funds for the permanent site improvements.
- 2. Participants that were less supportive of the proposed cloud concept** wondered whether the cloud was at odds with the open concept vision for the final site. Concerns were expressed about how the cloud may impact views and sightlines to the lake, and block the clear visibility of “street level pedestrian activity” from above adjacent condominiums.
- 3. Participants strongly advised that the functional aspects of the project be well thought through** and addressed, including ensuring that if Waterfront Toronto and Harbourfront Centre move forward with the cloud that it can be easily maintained, durable through all seasons and resistant to vandalism. There was also interest in the surface treatment underneath the cloud (any dust/mess created by the surface treatment should be avoided), and opportunities to beautify/improve the “box-like” access points to the garage should be explored.
- 4. Many participants expressed interest in the temporary tents that are planned on the site**, noting that they should be different than the existing white tents on the west side of Harbourfront Centre. They would like something that is high quality and attractive, and not a flea market.
- 5. There continues to be a strong interest in seeing green spaces (including eco turf) and areas for children** included in the York Quay revitalization (including the temporary uses).

*This Meeting Report was written by Alex McDonough and Nicole Swerhun, members of the SWERHUN facilitation team. It is intended to reflect the key points raised at the meeting, and is not a verbatim transcript. It was subject to the review of participants at the meeting.*

## MEETING DETAILS

### I. **Introductions & Agenda Review**

Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, opened the meeting and reviewed the proposed agenda. This meeting intended to update participants on the changes that have taken place and seek reaction to what is presented. Participants introduced themselves, including representatives from the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), Waterfront Toronto, Harbourfront Centre and the consultant from MVVA. The meeting agenda is included as Attachment 1 and the list of participants as Attachment 2.

### II. **Update Presentation**

#### A. **Construction Update – Chris Barre, Waterfront Toronto**

Chris provided an update on the construction and financing of the site. He reminded participants that the federal government dedicated money in 2003 to move the parking underground and to develop the surface. The funding was originally contingent on completion of the project by March 31, 2011, but has been extended to March 31, 2012.

When Ellis Don was retained as the construction manager for the project, budgets were developed and indicated that the dedicated federal money was not enough to complete the ambitious scope of work that was initially contemplated. The plan designed by MVVA includes the “three landscapes” (Canada Square, the future cultural village and the urban plaza) as well as the underground garage is still going to be carried out. The first step to opening up the site involves construction of the parking garage and there is enough money to complete this component of the project now. There will be an interim temporary treatment for the above-ground portion of the site.

Currently, construction is happening on site and caissons are 2/3 of the way to being drilled. The design team is working as the construction progresses.

#### B. **Surface Plan Update-Laura Solano, MMVA**

Laura introduced the discussion of the interim landscape of the site. The built elements on the surface that will be completed at the same time as the parking garage will include an entry ramp to the garage, elevator towers, stairwells for access to the garage and the re-erection of the Canada pavilion. The circulation on the site will function the same in the interim as it will in the long term. There will be bus, emergency and service access. The design plan for the three landscapes of Canada Square, future cultural village site and the urban plaza are still intact. In the interim, there will be an opportunity to create spaces for temporary tents and activities which were always intended.

The team and Claude Cormier have developed a proposed solution for the site that mitigates between the temporary and long term condition.

#### C. **Interim Treatment-Claude Cormier, Claude Cormier Landscape Architects**

Claude introduced the idea of the “cloud” as being in its early conceptual stage. What is proposed is a temporary installation of blue plastic balls (similar to Christmas tree balls) strung together to form a cloud-like shape hovering above the surface of the site. It would then be

removed in order for the original master plan to be completed when the additional funding is raised.

The inspiration for the proposed design comes from the fog that is sometimes created over Lake Ontario. Since the surface needs to be open for events and activities, the cloud will be an organic shape floating above the space that creates a pedestrian scale for the users of the space, allows for traffic circulation and can be seen in all directions. The colour of the Christmas tree balls would make reference to the sky with appropriate pantone colours chosen (probably 5 different shades of blue). Claude and his team are also developing techniques as they develop this idea. Their vision is to install 28 posts at 10 degree angles to support the cloud, and then connect the posts with horizontal wires in 9 layers (so the cloud will be 5m above the ground and 5m thick). At night, the cloud could be lit with low white light from underneath, so it glows. It could become an iconic element that can be seen from the CN Tower and Simcoe Street.

Claude showed some slides of similar temporary work done by himself and others. The blue tree in Sonoma California (seen below) was designed to disguise the tree against the backdrop of the sky.

#### **D. Ongoing Fundraising-Bill Boyle, Harbourfront Centre**

Bill indicated that Harbourfront Centre is trying to raise the rest of the money for permanent squares on the surface, and for the completion of the original three landscapes. He indicated that the parking lot will help to demonstrate that work is underway and that he thinks Claude's concept for the space will generate a lot of interest and draw attention to the area. It also ties in well with the arts and culture mandate of Harbourfront.

### **III. Feedback on Presentation**

Participants were asked to share their thoughts, questions and suggestions on the proposed interim design. In addition to discussing the "cloud", the conversation also revealed some things that people want to see and don't want to see in the interim design.

Participant thoughts and perspectives are organized here around six key themes. Note that responses from the MVVA consulting team, Claude Cormier, Waterfront Toronto or Harbourfront Centre are indicated in *italics*.

#### **1. Generally, participants liked the cloud concept as an interim design for the site and they highlighted its uniqueness as positive for the site and the city.**

- I love it. The concept of the cloud is good. I like its fragility, it's beauty, the fact that it's unusual – we need this in Toronto.
- I like the cloud as a temporary solution, I thought immediately of Millennium Park in Chicago. For us to have that would be great.
- I think the structure would be very popular so there better be something there for people to do-not just locals, it will be a tourist attraction as well.

**2. Some participants were unclear about the concept and wanted clarification on the need for an interim treatment.**

- I don't understand what problem it was intended to solve. Or why it's making fog permanent when it's a rare occurrence.
- We see clouds all time. I'm not sure of the need for a cloud.

**3. Some participants raised concerns about the execution and functional aspects of the cloud.**

- Maintenance issues are a concern, like keeping it tidy, together, and birds nesting in it.
- Kids will throw things at it and may break it.
- Will it be safe from the wind and elements?
- It looks large.
- Will this cloud be in multiple shades of blue? *Yes and it will not be opaque. All those concerns are things we think about, and have addressed in our other projects. It will be engineered, so it will certainly stand up over time. Birds would be deterred because it moves. There is some ongoing maintenance, like for any public structure. We will be able to have answers to all the questions that have been raised. We are still trying to make this meet a budget but we should be able to get you the answers soon.*

**4. There were some concerns raised about the temporary use of the installation.**

- If the cloud is temporary, why does it only have to be for three years? Could the materials be upgraded so that it becomes more permanent? It would be more cost effective to make it permanent. *The cloud is proposed is being considered by Waterfront Toronto and Harbourfront Centre as a temporary solution only, and while the timeframe for its removal could be flexible, the intent is to ultimately deliver the permanent surface design and uses developed by MVVA. We are considering this temporary installation because we felt compelled to raise the bar as we're waiting for the eventual landscape to occur. We need the area to attract people for interim uses. We want to get people wired to use the space. We partnered with Claude because he has experience dealing with these temporary spaces.*
- I'm confused about what will be on the ground under the cloud. Now there will only be a garage, so will we just have the same parking lot we used to have? Will there be any structures? *No there will be no parking on the surface above the garage. There will however be asphalt to support access by buses and emergency vehicles. In terms of the area the cloud (and for the rest of the site), we've been talking about using a stabilized granular material (not gravel), which is light in colour to provide reflection and it doesn't absorb heat. There will be a distinct graphic to separate spaces.*
- If the design and excavation is simultaneous, might some aesthetic treatment be added to the garage pieces on the ground? *As of now they will be concrete, but we are also looking at upgraded finishes. When Ellis Don started doing the budget for us, we tweaked the garage and made significant design changes to it. The luminous screen will happen later, probably not in this phase.*

## 5. The redesign of temporary tents used on site.

- I have no problem with the tents, but make them more aesthetically pleasing to look at.
- Make the new tents different from the white ones. *We're redoing the structures out there now, to make them more attractive from above and on the street.*
- My fellow condo owners dislike seasonal tents. We like them on west side of Harbourfront, so we don't have to look at them. We want to see them purposed as cultural village rather than flea market. *We don't want to create a flea market either. We want a high quality interim space that is usable until we get to the final stage.*
- Look at the wooden huts they use at Christmas markets in Munich as good design examples.
- The cloud is a good idea to hide the seasonal tents.

## 6. An interest in seeing vegetation, park uses and points of interest for children.

- I hope there will be green areas and hoping for some benches.
- Is there any potential for a parkette for children and families to use?
- What is going on underneath the cloud is what's going to draw people, like a clear open space for sun.
- Are there going to be activities for kids to do? *Not really, that depends on programming.*
- Is the children's playground coming back? One participant indicated they are trying to relocate it to Harbour Square Park by the ferry docks.
- Is vegetation part of the interim plan? If not, then I support the idea that there needs to be something temporary. *We can't put plants in at this stage because it's too temporary.*
- Will there be water features? *Yes, in the finished plan, but it's too expensive for the interim, fountains are very complicated.*
- There needs to be areas that provide shade for people. *The biggest demand we hear at Harbourfront is for shade. The cloud has seasonality to it – the sun angles will change the patterns. As snow falls it will look different. People will come several times a year at different times of the day.*

## 7. Other

- What is the status of Queen's Quay Blvd. in relation to this project? *The funding issues for the two projects don't connect. There will be trees along Queen's Quay, so there will be a linear park in front of this site. The trees that exist at the water will remain.*
- Condo sightlines will be impaired by this, residents value open access to activity there.
- How much will this cloud cost? *It's too early to tell. We're hoping the cost will be in low hundreds.*
- One participant suggested that Microsoft could sponsor the cloud.

## IV. Next Steps

By June of next year (2012), the garage is scheduled to be completed. Until then, the garage will continue to be built. The next SAC meeting will be in the Fall of this year, possibly September 2011, when functional concerns about the cloud can be addressed.

Waterfront Toronto will email a link to the presentation and will post it on their website.

## ATTACHMENT 1: Meeting Agenda

### YORK QUAY REVITALIZATION

STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING 4

6:00 – 8:00 pm

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

Waterfront Toronto, 20 Bay Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor

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### PROPOSED AGENDA

**6:00 pm**      **INTRODUCTIONS & AGENDA REVIEW**

Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator

**6:05**            **UPDATE PRESENTATION**

- Construction Update** - Chris Barre , Waterfront Toronto
- Surface Plan Update** - Laura Solano, MVVA
- Interim Treatment** - Claude Cormier, Claude Cormier Landscape Architects
- Ongoing Fundraising** - Bill Boyle, Harbourfront Centre

*Questions of clarification?*

**7:00**            **FACILITATED DISCUSSION**

**7:50**            **WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS**

Waterfront Toronto

*Next Stakeholder Advisory Meeting planned for Fall 2011*

**8:00**            **ADJOURN**

## ATTACHMENT 2: Meeting Participants

### **Advisory Committee Members**

Alan Pearson, 211 Queen's Quay

Kathi Bonner, Brookfield Properties (Queens Quay Terminal)

Cindi Vanden Heuvel, Mariposa Cruise Lines

Braz Menezes, Resident

Sandra Taylor, The Riviera

Ritu Gupta, Waterclub Condominium Club (8 York Street, 208&218 Queens Quay West)

Michelle Ramsay-Borg, York Quay Neighbourhood Association

### **Waterfront Toronto, Harbourfront Centre**

Claude Cormier, Claude Cormier Landscape Architects

Bill Boyle, Harbourfront Centre

Helder Melo, Harbourfront Centre

Laura Solano, MVVA

Chris Barre, Waterfront Toronto

JD Reeves, Waterfront Toronto

Bruce Sudds, Waterfront Toronto

### **Facilitation**

Nicole Swerhun, SWERHUN | Facilitation & Decision Support

Alex McDonough, SWERHUN | Facilitation & Decision Support

### **City of Toronto**

City of Toronto Planning