

## Waterfront Toronto/City of Toronto – Lower Yonge Urban Design Guidelines and Transportation Master Plan

### PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2013

6.30-9.00 pm

PawsWay – 245 Queens Quay West

Toronto, ON, M5J 2K9 Canada

### SUMMARY REPORT

*On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 approximately 150 people participated in the first of three public meetings for the Waterfront Toronto/City of Toronto Lower Yonge Urban Design Guidelines and Transportation Master Plan project. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project, and to gather feedback regarding the design and transportation elements within the Lower Yonge precinct and to discuss participants' vision for the area. Following an introduction from Christopher Glaisek, VP Planning and Design, Waterfront Toronto, members of the project team Allison Meistrich, City of Toronto, Planning, Karen Alschuler of Perkins and Will and Trent Lethco of ARUP shared an overview presentation. The remainder of the meeting was both small table discussions and a facilitated full-room plenary to share discussion results.*

*This summary report was written by Bianca Wylie, Ian Malczewski and Magdalena Vokac of Swerhun Facilitation. It summarizes the feedback received at the meeting. It is intended to summarize the key themes discussed and is not intended to be a verbatim transcript. Also, please note Appendix A. Meeting Agenda*

### KEY THEMES FROM FEEDBACK RECEIVED

The following key themes emerged from the discussion. Detailed feedback follows.

- 1. It is important to address the day-to-day impacts of increased density in an area that already suffers from issues related to vehicle congestion and lack of green space.** While the study was welcomed by the attendees, there was clear advice on mitigating the impacts of an increased population on the precinct.
- 2. The development application for 1 Yonge shows towers at a height and density that would have negative impacts on existing sight-lines and the character of the waterfront.** Participants suggested using existing local building to provide a relative height guideline and advocated for this process to create guidelines to develop the character of the neighbourhood.
- 3. Participants liked the five areas of design focus for the Urban Design Guidelines (Ease of Movement, Diversity of Uses, Well-loved Public Spaces, Pedestrian Comfort, and Visually-Interesting Urban Form) and had many suggestions for each category.** Of particular importance was the desire to create a community feeling through public and open spaces, to make it an appealing area for all types of transportation users (walkers, cyclists, drivers), and for the area to be both an enjoyable thoroughway and an exciting destination.

### QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

After the presentation and prior to the discussion there was a facilitated question and answer session.

Questions from participants are in bold, and responses from the project team are in italics.

- How many people are estimated to live in this area in the future?** *The planning process and testing of options we are undertaking will help us better understand the number of people who will live in this area. We have to complete this process first.*

- **Can we have a list of the property owners in the study area?** *Yes. The presentation outlines the four property owners (Pinnacle, LCBO, Loblaws and the City of Toronto). It will be posted on our website following this meeting. Please note that the Toronto Star is not an owner - they are a tenant. Pinnacle owns the building.*
- **There is an indication of stakeholder meetings in this process. Can you tell us who the stakeholders are?** *Yes there is a stakeholder advisory committee which includes representatives from local neighbourhood associations, area residents and businesses. The stakeholder advisory committee members and represented organizations will be posted on our website.*
- **Why is the Redpath Sugar site not included?** *It is part of the area context, but the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan identifies it as an existing use, it is not considered for redevelopment.*
- **Is there still a plan to take down the ramps on the Gardiner?** *This is a City of Toronto Environmental Assessment (EA). The study will be filed for the 30 day public review, within the next week or two. The plans remain in place. There is some funding coming into the picture through the Section 37 funds from developments around it. The plan to shorten the ramp to Simcoe is very much in the City's intent. We're tying that in with the Gardiner process.*
- **How will design guidelines be translated into effective planning control?** *One strategy the City is considering is to take the design guidelines for the precinct, make an area specific amendment to the Secondary Plan and incorporate them into area specific policies. Then applications must meet those policies through their applications for redevelopment.*
- **What's the status on the north-bound ramp at Bay Street?** *Council endorsed the direction to close that ramp to everything but bus traffic. We haven't made that decision yet because we have other studies on the go. There is the intent to make physical improvements to the pedestrian crossing and hope to move on that shortly.*
- **What about transit improvements on Queens Quay East and the potential treatment of the Gardiner? Are there any considerations for improvements on them?** *There is an approved EA (Waterfront Toronto, City of Toronto and TTC) for the East Bayfront Light Rapid Transit line which extends streetcar service east on Queens Quay from Union Station. The East Bayfront LRT is in Waterfront Toronto's plan however it is not fully funded. We are currently working with our government partners on funding for this line.*
- **Will there be future-proofing to protect for the East Bayfront LRT?** *Yes, there is an approved EA and the design for Queens Quay includes the LRT. We are also looking at interim transit options in the meantime until funding is in place.*
- **Does the ferry terminal figure in to this study?** *All existing conditions relevant to the transportation study will be considered.*
- **Does the city have the legal ability to protect underground corridors to accommodate the PATH in the same way the city can create a city street?** *PATH is negotiated through development applications, and in most cases the City owns the right of way. Once the PATH connection is approved, the developer gets a license to occupy that space. There is a PATH Master Plan that shows existing and desired PATH connections.*
- **Do Redpath operations restrict the types of uses that could be considered on the site?** *For evaluating development applications near industrial uses, such as Redpath, there are policies that require noise*

*studies, air quality studies, and other types of studies to prevent negative impacts on Redpath as an existing use and on new land uses in the area. These studies are undertaken on a site-specific basis and through the development review process.*

- **We heard there is redevelopment interest for Loblaws, has there been an expression of interest in development for Loblaws?** *There is no development application for the Loblaws property at this time although they are being consulted as a landowner during this process.*
- **Does the Pinnacle proposal impact the precinct plan or does the precinct plan impact Pinnacle's development application?** *Pinnacle is designated a Regeneration Area and a precinct plan is required prior to redevelopment. The precinct plan will inform the evaluation of the application. The landowners are participants in the process.*
- **Redpath is a good neighbour and works with the communities.**

## DETAILED FEEDBACK

Following the overview presentation from the project team, participants discussed the five design themes presented, provided written comments and shared their priority items with the broader room. A summary of this feedback is presented below, organized into six parts:

1. **Ease of Movement**
2. **Diversity of Uses**
3. **Well-Loved Public Spaces**
4. **Pedestrian Comfort**
5. **Visually Interesting Form**
6. **Other Advice for the Project Team**

### 1. Ease of Movement

Feedback on the "Ease of Movement" element of the design is grouped below in the following categories: Walking, Cars and Traffic, Biking, Transit, and Other Advice.

#### Walking

- **Pedestrian comfort, safety and pleasure should be first principle.** The north/south corridor should be made pedestrian friendly, and WalkTO should be involved in the development of the pedestrian design of the precinct.
- **Consider a spoke pattern radiating north from a green hub at the southern border.** Spokes do not need to be straight - curved spokes would create a surprising maze by shortening view lines.
- **Eliminate vertical curbs** so that cyclists, pedestrians with walkers, and wheelchairs can roll up to the sidewalk or down to the road at any point.
- **Include robust way-finding features.** These could include colour-coded path lines (e.g. green line to the green hub; blue line to the water/ice feature; red line to the baseball field, etc.). Path lines reduce the number of signs needed to keep visitors oriented, and can provide tactile guidance for people with limited vision.
- **Consider terminating the PATH at Harbour Street.**
- **Create a pedestrian connection to the St. Lawrence neighbourhood.**

- Consider a walkway along the Redpath property.
- Consider an elevated walkway through the precinct.

### Cars and Traffic

- **There is already considerable existing traffic congestion in the area**; ingress and egress from the existing four Pinnacle towers is difficult – keep this challenge in mind with design options.
- **Address parking challenges in the area**, especially during special events. It is difficult for residents to go home in traffic. Consider adding curb parking to the precinct area.
- **Require car share slots in all new developments.**
- **Some participants expressed a preference for the block dimension pattern of 100m x 112m (25m x 53m)**, which provides laneways midway through the blocks that could be used for business deliveries. These laneways could be designed in a woonerf style which allows for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- **Develop creative travel spaces along Yonge Street** and pay attention to heritage.
- **Create more parking spaces.** Tear down old buildings and build levels of parking zones.
- **Enclose the Gardiner in a glass tunnel to reduce noise and pollution** and to improve the aesthetic view; would decrease requirements on snow removal in the winter.
- **Consider a parking toll** to address the congestion issue and reduce car use in the precinct.

### Location-specific suggestions included:

- **Extend Church St south from the Esplanade to Queens Quay**, similar to what was done on Simcoe St, with a tunnel under the rail lines.
- **Make Harbour a two-way street** and extend it through to Jarvis St, **or add lanes to Harbour to ease congestion.**
- **Consider taking the Gardiner down west and east of Jarvis.** Remove the York and Harbour ramps.
- **Improve access to the Gardiner from Harbour Street to Yonge Street.**

### Biking

- **Bicycle paths should be considered a primary method of movement through the area** and not designed as an afterthought to car traffic. Design for bikes in winter months should also be a consideration.
- **Specific locations for dedicated bike lanes included:** Yonge, Lake Shore, Freeland and the ‘new’ streets, and Lower Jarvis.
- **Install ample and secure bike parking.**

### Transit

- **Many participants emphasized a desire for Waterfront Toronto to advocate that the East Bayfront (LRT) be prioritized and expressed concern that there is no funding for the project.** One suggestion to address the issues is to impose a special development charge to build the LRT.
- **Prioritize the East Bayfront LRT plan** to support the development of this precinct.

- **Extend the Queens Quay streetcar east of Bay** to encourage potential residents to consider living east of Bay, south of Lake Shore East. [The East Bayfront LRT would extend streetcar service east of Bay along Queens Quay.]
- **Include the precinct in plans for the downtown relief line.**
- **Build the transit plan to leverage Union Station as a hub.**

### Other Advice

- **Prioritize a pleasant experience.** Make it a place everyone wants to be.
- **Create quality connections and access to all areas of the precinct and be mindful of good user experience while trying to manage cost-containment pressure.**
- **Be creative with the underpass design;** consider Chicago trains or Underpass Park and add connections under the rail berm.
- **Include support for rental modes of transportation** e.g. Bixi and Segway etc.
- **Improve access and all types of traffic flow from north of Lake Shore to south of Queens Quay.**
- **Develop the ferry service and connections inside Toronto harbour** and support opportunities for potential regional locations such as Niagara (for the casinos) and Rochester.
- **Create ease of movement to encourage visitors to go the Toronto islands** as well as to the waterfront.

## 2. Diversity of Uses

Feedback on the “Diversity of Uses” element of the design is grouped below in the following categories: Parks, Retail, Amenities, Public Space and Public Art, and Other Advice.

### Parks

- **Emphasize parkland with complementary snippets of commercial** (similar to Chicago); the current emphasis is on buildings with snippets of park.
- **Create a large green space in the precinct,** potentially using one of the three land parcels.
- **Create child-friendly parks in the waterfront neighbourhood.**

### Retail

- **Support small and independent business** in the area.
- **Create bars and restaurants with patios;** but include design requirements to mitigate noise and odor issues.
- **Incorporate large format retail with parking above grade** due to high water table; one suggestion was for a hardware store.
- **Include retail in the area,** particularly if the LCBO site is redeveloped.

### Amenities

- **Address the significant need for libraries, schools and daycare in the area.** Consider including these amenities on the ground floor of new developments.

- **Include more residential family units** in new developments.
- **Explore community uses in the upper storeys of retail development.**

### Public Space & Public Art

- **Include public recreation centres.**
- **Design with colour and fun;** suggestions included LED lights and public art to combat the grey concrete feeling of the Gardiner.
- **Include opportunities for public art.** Add more murals similar to the one around Redpath.

### Other Advice

- **Create a range of reasons for people to visit the precinct;** this should not be a singular destination precinct for non-residents. It is important to have mixed use in order to bring vibrancy and create diverse communities.
- **Consider a non-industrial use for Redpath** – one participant felt that industrial use is no longer appropriate.
- **Ensure that affordable housing is available in the precinct.**
- **Ensure a mix of uses that contributes to a high level of activity during the day and evening.**

## 3. Well-Loved Public Spaces

Feedback on the “Well-Loved Public Spaces” element of the design is grouped below in the following categories: Open Space and Green Space.

### Open Public Space (squares)

- **Prioritize open public space;** public space creates and nurtures community.
- **Extend Harbour St and expand on the “open space feel”.** Specific elements suggested to achieve this included: wide sidewalks, big trees, benches for people to sit on, outdoor coffee shops and cafes.
- **Set corners back at block intersections to create space for pedestrians.** Specific design moves to achieve this would include: wider sidewalks with benches, fountains, sculptures, and miniature squares (like the European piazzas).
- **Create a celebrated space at the beginning of Yonge and Queens Quay,** use a creative terminus treatment. Emphasize the Yonge St node at bottom of the precinct.
- **Tailor the public space elements to address users of all types and speeds** (e.g. pedestrians, runners, bikers). The City of Vancouver’s waterfront has created great public spaces that separate individuals moving at different paces.
- **Incorporate neighbourhood-oriented public leisure space into the development.**
- **Add a boardwalk to create an inviting leisure space at the waterfront and include space for parking.** In Mississauga, a boardwalk in front of a strip of pubs/stores which encourages people to sit and stay at a patio (in the Port Credit area). Another participant suggested that the boardwalk/water’s edge promenade will be continued all the way to Parliament Street.
- **Create a heritage Redpath museum.**

- **Add free WiFi in the public spaces** to support more social networking and community building.
- **Open up the mid-part of the Toronto Star site to create a view corridor consisting of a large park and or promenade** bordered on the east and west by lower-rise buildings.

### Green Space

- **Maximize local green space in the area.** This could include a local square, mid-block spaces, and pocket parks.
- **Incorporate a dog run.**
- **Build a second pavilion on the waterfront.**
- **Create a central park recreational area.**
- **Use creative landscaping** and ensure it is well-maintained.

## 4. Pedestrian Comfort

Feedback on the “Pedestrian Comfort” element of the design is grouped below in the following categories: Safety, Sunlight and Public Realm.

### Safety

- **Priority for safe movement in the precinct should be given to pedestrians,** with the following prioritization for the remainder of transportation modes: bikes, public transit, and cars.
- **Use known traffic-calming and pedestrian safety design for the streets.** This includes: streets intersections that slow traffic down; separating traffic from pedestrians by having curb parking, wide sidewalks, big planters with trees shrubs along the curb, minimum traffic lights but having four way stops.
- **Widen pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, and streets.**
- **Maximize street lighting** and improve light conditions in the area, the Gardiner is especially poorly-lit.
- **Improve walking conditions along Yonge St from Front St to Queens Quay;** currently it is not pedestrian-friendly.

### Sunlight

- **Protect sunlight via the use of built form guidelines.**
- **Ensure that there is adequate shade,** awnings provide good coverage from the elements and are a pleasant aesthetic design move.

### Public Realm

- **Plant trees, and plant them in appropriate tree beds** so the trees will be healthy and survive. Make pedestrian pathways greener with more trees and flowers
- **Create greener spaces between buildings.**
- **Design the railway lands and the Gardiner for all-season use;** use shaping, natural windbreak and other designs to create a natural PATH-like system.
- **Include rest-stops and benches with a back for comfort.**

## 5. Visually Interesting Urban Form

Feedback on the “Visually Interesting Urban Form” element of the design is grouped below in the following categories: Height & Density, Architecture, Environmental Concerns, and Other Advice.

### Height & Density

- **Consider relative height of existing buildings and adjacent blocks and use them as local references.** 10 Queens Quay and 10 Yonge Street are examples of local references, the proposed heights in the Lower Yonge proposals on the Toronto Star site are more than double these buildings.
- **Incorporate smooth contours from existing waterfront to the city to the east in new buildings.** Participants expressed concerns that tall towers make achieving these contours difficult. There is concern that proposed plans for Toronto Star site show too many tall buildings and that the buildings are too close together, with a suggestion that buildings should be at least 65 metres apart.
- **Create firm height limits for new buildings in the precinct.** The Corus building was raised as a good precedent here.
- **There is a concern about seeing a wall of very tall buildings side by side lining the north side of Queens Quay.** Step up building heights moving from south to north and from east to west.
- **Create frequent breaks in the walls for views of (and access to) the lake.**
- **There is concern that the new Pinnacle development (on the Toronto Star site) will deprive the Pinnacle Centre towers (at Bay and Yonge) of sunlight from sunrise to 11:30 am,** as per the Sun/Shadow Study. Some units may not get 3 hours sunlight during day-time.
- **Design buildings to mitigate impact on existing traffic and use patterns in the precinct.** Do not overwhelm this part of the waterfront.
- **Include midrise development in the precinct.**
- Small blocks are best. The waterfront should not be the width of a street but the width of blocks, consider creating a 4-block park to counter the scale of development.

### Architecture

- **Include a mix of innovative architecture styles throughout the precinct,** and feature a variety of styles to avoid a bland and uniform design. It’s important to have aesthetically pleasing buildings to enhance neighbourhood.
- **Create a building that would have architectural ‘landmark status’.**
- **Provide good relationships between the buildings and the streets;** create ease of access to the neighbourhood and retail, as well as other amenities.
- **Include a mix of design elements in the architecture.** Particular suggestions included: skinny/narrow buildings, viewing platforms, avoid excess use of concrete.

### Environmental Concerns

- **Architecture should be sustainable and dramatic.** Suggestions to achieve this included green roofs, solar, wind power, and renovation of older buildings.

- **Ensure bird-friendly buildings;** this is an important flyway for migrating species.

## 6. Other Advice for the Project Team

- **Continue to address concerns that the Lower Yonge precinct study is jeopardized by the in-process development application for 1 Yonge.** There is also concern that all outcomes of this process can be overruled by the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).
- **Maintain existing sight lines,** such as those that face towards the CN Tower, and the sight lines from the lake back towards the City.
- **Consider relocating Loblaws to their former site at the corner of Bathurst and Lake Shore.** Make better use of the empty building.
- **Continue to share information about the process** timeline to address resident concerns about when the process will finish.

## Next Steps

Bianca Wylie thanked participants for attending, and asked that they send any additional written feedback via email. She confirmed that the report would be posted on the website and encouraged attendees to join the second public meeting to be held in July 2013. **[This meeting will now be held in September 2013.]**



**Lower Yonge Public Meeting #1:  
Urban Design Guidelines & Transportation Master Plan EA**

Wednesday, May 22, 2013

6:30– 9:00 pm, PawsWay, 245 Queens Quay West

**AGENDA**

**6:30 Introductions & Agenda Review**

Bianca Wylie, Facilitator, Swerhun Facilitation and Decision Support

**6:40 Welcome & Project Overview**

Chris Glaisek, VP Planning and Design, Waterfront Toronto

**6:50 Overview Presentations**

6:50 Precinct Plan Process - Allison Meistrich (City of Toronto – Planning)

7:05 Urban Design Guidelines & Transportation Master Plan - Karen Alschuler  
(Perkins + Will) & Trent Lethco (ARUP)

7:45 Questions of Clarification & Discussion

**8:00 Discussion and Report Back**

1. Overall aspirations
2. Urban design
3. Transportation

**8:55 Wrap-Up and Next Steps**

**9:00 Adjourn**

*Please hand in your worksheet at the Registration Table on your way out.*

*The presentation and worksheet will also be available online at*

*<http://www.waterfrontoronto.ca/loweryonge>*

*If you have additional feedback, please send to [info@waterfrontoronto.ca](mailto:info@waterfrontoronto.ca) by Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup> 2013.*

# WORKSHEET – Urban Design Guidelines/Transportation Master Plan

Draft Proposed Principles and Goals	List goals or aspirations for the neighbourhood and transportation network (where applicable) in each of these areas. Why are they important?
<p><b>Ease of Movement</b> (e.g., getting to/from the precinct is easy; multiple ways to move through; enhanced north-south connections to downtown and the waterfront)</p>	
<p><b>Diversity of Uses</b> (e.g., variety of residential, work, retail and entertainment uses at all times of day and within walking distance)</p>	
<p><b>Well-loved Public Places</b> (e.g., active public places for denser areas; network of inviting and active streets and pedestrian routes/bikeways)</p>	
<p><b>Pedestrian Comfort</b> (e.g., sunny places for people to sit and gather; wind protected outdoor places during all parts of the year)</p>	
<p><b>Visually Interesting Urban Form</b> (e.g., different types of buildings; view corridors and tower forms that maximize views and minimize negative impact on public space)</p>	
<p><b>Other?</b></p>	