
PORT LANDS PLANNING FRAMEWORK: REVIEW EXERCISE SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction and Purpose:

The Port Lands, at 325 hectares, is an unparalleled regeneration and renewal opportunity in close proximity to Toronto's Downtown. While portions are still actively used for important industrial and port purposes, the lands are generally underutilized. There are areas within the Port Lands anticipated to undergo comprehensive revitalization, while others will be maintained for the foreseeable future for port and industrial purposes that are crucial to the city's operation and prosperity.

The City and Waterfront Toronto are in the final stages of preparing a 50 plus year plan for the Port Lands that will guide regeneration and renewal over the coming decades. A key objective of this planning exercise has been to establish a compelling vision that encapsulate all the principles of good waterfront planning and that best achieves broader city building objectives. This is the City's last frontier of waterfront revitalization.

A small group of industry experts and urban visionaries were invited to participate in a *Review Exercise* of the draft Port Lands Planning Framework to provide expertise and input on aspects of the proposed plan in order to assist the team to formalize the overarching vision for the area. The Panel consisted of Michael Van Valkenburgh, Ken Greenberg, and Larry Beasley.

As part of the Review exercise, the panelist attended a full day session with the project team, including a tour of the Port Lands area, overview and briefing session. The briefing session took the panelists through all components of the Port Lands Planning Framework and related Port Lands and South of Eastern Transportation and Servicing Master Plan, as well as the Villiers Island Precinct Plan. The team also provided additional background context by presenting the existing policy context and emerging directions from other planning initiatives underway in the vicinity of the Port Lands. These included the Gardiner Expressway Environmental Assessment, the Port Lands Flood Protection and Enabling Infrastructure project, the South of Eastern Strategic Direction and development activity in the area, including the development aspirations in the Unilever Precinct for a major office destination.

Panelists were provided with the opportunity to opine on their initial reactions and discuss key aspects. Key points raised and discussed included:

- The proposed urban structure, and in particular the green/open space components, which were generally well received. Panelists identified there were some areas where further improvements could be advanced;
- Concerns with land use restrictions in the Unilever Precinct as solely an office destination;
- The need to better highlight future industrial accommodation, what the team explored to date, and suggestions that the team should look at city-wide, strategic opportunities for industrial uses;

- The need for more of a critical mass to support the public investment, in particular and in to support community infrastructure. Tiered or inclusionary zoning type approach was suggested as needing to be further explored;
- The employment estimates for the Port Lands seemed low given the amount of land under consideration;
- Not getting fixated on creating fixed boundaries with the “places” identified, although there was some discussion between the panellists on this aspect;
- When to provide flexibility to allow for evolution versus when to be prescriptive. Panellists discussed where it may be prudent for prescription (Villiers and McCleary Districts) versus where flexibility may be warranted; and
- Given amount of green space proposed, there is a need to think holistically and proactively about how it gets delivered and maintained and in recognition of challenges elsewhere; and
- Sustainability, climate positive and sun penetration in the winter (for open spaces) were highlighted as important components of previous planning initiatives in the Port Lands that should be carried through in current work.

Port Lands Review Exercise Tour Map



Panelists were provided with copies of the plans and presentations and were provided one week to further review the plans and outline their advice to the team. The project team had identified initial lines of inquiry to validate and/or suggest improvements. A second, half-day session was held with the panelists the following week where they presented their advice and feedback. While panelists were asked to opine on a number of areas of the Framework plan and emerging directions, panelists had the opportunity to broaden the discussion and provide feedback on matters they felt were important to consider. Initial lines of inquiry the project team identified included:

- Consider the vision presented for the Port Lands in the full day session, in conjunction with the other various studies underway and existing policy context, and provide commentary on the following questions:
 - How compelling is the proposed vision?
 - Do you have suggestions for how we can best communicate the vision?
 - Is there anything missing from the work undertaken to date that in your opinion should be addressed?
- Consider the proposed urban structure and public realm plan developed for the area and provide commentary on the following elements:
 - Major public realm structuring elements including the open space system, character defining elements, the proposed street network, and other connections and/or primary view corridors throughout the Port Lands area.
 - The overall parks and open space system including the connection between the naturalized river as a regional amenity, and the proposed major public spaces, local, neighbourhood oriented open spaces within each of the proposed districts and potential privately owned, publicly accessible open spaces.
 - Connections and synergies between the Port Lands public realm and the surrounding context.
- Identification of whether the urban structure, public realm plan and built form approach developed to date will assist in achieving the overall vision for the area and suggestions to improve the urban structure and public realm plan.

Summary of Feedback and Advice

Overall, the panelists were impressed with the work undertaken and felt the underlying plan was a solid foundation. The panelists' feedback and advice focused on a number of thematic areas within two broad categories – areas where the plan's directions could be further clarified or expanded on and insightful and astute observations and new ideas that were not previously considered by the team that should be further explored. The panelists also opined on aspects of other current initiatives in the area for consideration by the team. Each panelist also prepared a written summary of their thoughts and advice to the team. The summaries are appended to this report.

AREAS REQUIRING CLARIFICATION/EXPANSION

- Keating Precinct and Villiers Island Precinct should more clearly read as one precinct in order to increase the critical mass – this can be done by considering the Keating Channel

as a two-sided street. Additional pedestrian bridges would be required for this to be successful.

- Land Use:
 - Plan requires further clarity on fundamental land use allocations.
 - Mixed use is good, but clarity is required about where this is appropriate and what uses are compatible to mix.
- The Hearn and Commissioners Incinerator are signature pieces and two great landmarks. Broadview connecting down to the Hearn is very powerful. Think about the move as a powerful set of landscape moves.
- The landscape, water and industrial character have fused to create a place remarkably different from most of Toronto. There needs to be a planned rationality where landscape and water is deliberately revealed.

OBSERVATIONS AND NEW IDEAS

- Consider mandated requirements to ensure a mix of uses is delivered like the Central Area Plan – to get “highest and best use”, one would need to build a mix.
- Density/Form:
 - Approach from a demand side – how many people are needed on site day and night to sustain community infrastructure (i.e. grocery stores/schools/community centre) and think about what density is required to justify upfront infrastructure costs.
 - Carrying Capacity: Establish if more people could live in the area comfortably.
 - Ensure a sufficient density to support the community services and infrastructure. Port Lands are isolated (a city unto itself) and therefore need more people and more services.
 - Scale: the density/form does not seem commiserate with green context. If the River is a \$1B investment, then density should reflect that investment and be maximized.
- Land use:
 - The demand for mixed-use residential can be frenetic in that residential has the potential to consume everything. There needs to be a balance and protection of social/economic/ ecology.
 - Port Lands is both an important asset (playground) for residents from the broader City and those living and working there. Public investment becomes more defensible when we consider the Port Lands as a city-wide asset.
 - Land use zones may bleed into each other. The plan should accommodate this eventuality.
 - *Known knowns and known unknowns* – operationalize over time and identify the uses you know about and areas of uncertainty. Use precinct planning to your advantage and on an as needed basis and do not overregulate land use.
 - Two dimensions need to be considered and clarified – broader city building objectives and where there is more flexibility. Put in protocols where more flexibility is provided.
 - Think outside the box on land use – be pioneers. Some areas may not be comfortable for a long time (e.g. Polson Quay and South River). Create more of a

- commercial mix and uses that are compatible with heavier industrial (e.g. Granville Island).
 - Dual personalities needs to be engrained – the plan needs to be both a plan for the “present potential” and aspirational for the long-term.
 - Plan for and support interim uses. Interim uses can act as catalysts. The plan and policies should allow for flexibility to allow for more interim uses.
- Seeding and Planning for Succession:
 - Are there uses and activities that are desirable and would want to see happen? Choreograph interim land use to enable the ultimate aspirations for the future.
 - Ask whether there are areas that are suitable or desirable for a particular use and prepare the lands to open up and receive these.
 - Zoning should enable interim/short term uses which prepare the area for uses to come.
 - Aspiration for certain things to happen to reflect the DNA of the area.
 - Establish strategies for proactively choreographing land uses. The East Port area as an example where there are opportunities to choreograph a new direction and target key industries that city wants to grow strategically.
 - Diverse mutually supportive mix and synergies.
 - Sound Studios: with digitization may no longer be necessary therefore look at what they could alternatively be in the future.
 - Consider uses that can morph and transition in the future.
- Overcoming isolation of retail:
 - Differentiate between recreational/signature commerce and day-to-day commerce.
 - Heavy residential results in lack of people in the area during the day. General rule of thumb is that one-third of the total population should be employees.
 - Retail will be in competition with the adjacent Unilever site which will have both a strong retail focus and a significant daytime audience
 - There is a need for synergies and to create a natural energy in the centre. Locate recreational uses and retail along the channel for cafes and places to shop versus within the centre.
- Interface uses:
 - Careful management of the interface between residential and industrial uses and recognize that there can be significant challenges.
- Industrial:
 - The plan seems to reflect what’s happening today and confirming the status quo. Influence trends by accommodating uses that we want to see come to the Port Lands.
 - Use the public land to your advantage and strategically identify key industries the city wants to see growth in, such as green industries.
 - Ensure necessary support services are available to industrial uses/employees. Zoning for industrial areas should also allow for limited retail opportunities i.e coffee shops and service retail.
 - Ensure clarity on where heavy industrial (least compatible uses) are located.
- Urban Structure and Public Realm

- Fine grain of streets: ensure that a fine grain of streets is achievable but avoid locking in today. Stimulate and guide, but do not over prescribe. A demonstration plan could be created today which identifies that the larger network supports a fine-grain and show fine-grain illustratively.
- Consider the cohesiveness of the distinct districts and ensure they feel connected.
- Land use patterns are important, but evolutionary especially considering the 50+ years of the plan and with many land uses remaining in place. Emphasis needs to be put on the public realm, heritage (natural, cultural and built) and infrastructure which will be lasting and provide coherence throughout the area.
- Sustainability
 - Ensure the Port Lands is future proofed and can accommodate infrastructure that supports sustainability and carbon neutrality such as District Energy.
 - Establish Micro climate and that the design considers the benefits of sun/shade within development and in the public realm. Ensure parks have sufficient sunlight in winter months.
 - Propagate a performance standard for sustainable industry.
- Green space
 - Stronger urban design solutions: Green links including Leslie street need stronger more robust design and emphasis. This could be a big move in the eastern end of the Port Lands.
 - Water Ecology: It is a land oriented plan. Integrate water ecology into development (on site, parks etc...)
 - Celebrate the waterways in the Port Lands.
 - Lead with public realm (WT model). Create a greening strategy.
 - Frugality: looks for ways of implementing green space (community groups or school groups to help curate park space fiscally) – high quality spaces for a low cost.
 - Plan naturally (i.e. Tommy Thompson Park) and think about ecological succession. The opportunity to nurture and let nature takes its course rather than how we have traditionally created parks – Jens Jensen and transplanting – and work with ecologists in an informed way. Simple and small gestures could be wonderful in 30 years. “Use a light touch”.
 - Consider early projects which can help establish the landscape of the future. “Tend to the forest” and build awareness, mentoring and advocacy. Engage the public in transformative activities with enormous benefit like taking back a destroyed wetland.
 - Be proactive with the public realm, but at the same deal with the vast size. Think succession not end state.

ADVICE ON OTHER INITIATIVES

- Avoid zones with only one land use (i.e. mono-cultures and single use CBDs) particularly on the Unilever Precinct. The panelist felt very strongly towards the inclusion of residential in the Unilever precinct.
- Villiers Island:
 - Density needs to be looked at. There should be enough density to support two grocery stores (competition and choice).

- Keating Channel: needs more connectivity and relationship to north Keating (once Gardiner is down).
 - Commissioners and Centre Street: original plan had Commissioners as wavy. Make it less desirable as a short-cut. Redirect traffic to Centre Street and reconfigure Commissioners. Washington Square in New York as an example where the character of 5th Avenue changes.
 - Don't isolate retail along Villiers only: separation between local and other commerce.
 - Maximize number of units that enjoy views.
 - Be more aggressive on the employment/residential split.
 - The built form should respond to the public realm to create unity. The built realm is the unifier.
- **Implementation**
 - Avoid focusing on a predetermined end state and focus on a process of evolution without a fixed plan.
 - Need a clear phasing strategy. Include a public investment plan juxtaposed with a phasing plan.
 - Strategic programming will increase the profile of the site.
 - Consider a competition for the Hearn and interim or start-ups to set a new tone
 - Establish a Conflict Resolution or arbitration organization for resolving development/planning conflicts in the Port Lands. A process should be established to manage conflict – a standing committee of City/residents and industrial and arbitration of conflicts between different types of land uses
 - Project requires a third-party organization to oversee, coordinate and curate the delivery
 - Build a community based stewardship: Building a constituency organization to move this plan forward over the years – political driver to keep the plan relevant
 - **Flexibility**
 - Ensure sufficient flexibility is built into the plan: Pace and direction going forward with be informed by societal norms, economical drivers etc. which are in flux. Assumptions today will inevitably be altered over time.
 - Plan for succession: determine a set of tools to guide development, control lengths of leases and encourage a diversity of uses.

Next Steps

- Panel members to summarize main points and provide written feedback (attached).
- Project team to summarize comments and Integrate feedback into Framework plan

Notes Regarding the Draft Toronto Port Lands Planning Framework

By Larry Beasley – 14 March, 2016

After a day of briefings, a half-day of rich discussion, a total of a day of study of the documentation before and after the discussions, the following are my impressions of the draft Port Lands Planning Framework and the work to date that has generated it. This represents my final written contribution to this review.

Process:

This has been a thorough process with strong technical analysis and significant outreach and public involvement. This puts the planning process in a good place to move forward in such a way that you can explain and defend the Planning Framework. I am impressed by the level of personal knowledge exhibited by the team. Having said that, the current attention to the structure, connections, land use and urban design of the area needs to be paired by equal attention to the institutional and process development that is needed to manage implementation over an extended period.

Planning Framework - Confirmations

There are several things that particularly impress me about this draft Planning Framework.

First, the proposed structural principles for the area and its integration with the city to the north are strong. Of particular strength for the Planning Framework are the following:

- the definition of the north/south street spines and east/west corridor spines; and,
- the vision of urban and natural realms and the contrast of these realms.

Second, the identification of heritage features as an important DNA for the future is sensible and will help to hold on to character as the area transforms.

Third, the underlying commitment to honouring and motivating industry is essential in order to avoid land speculation for other uses. Related to this, it is positive that you are embracing the scale of industry that seems to be drawn to the Port Lands.

Fourth, the transformation scheme for the western area of the Port Lands with the initiative of re-establishing the mouth of the Don River and building neighbourhoods around that is extraordinary. You are rightly protecting that initiative in all you do in the balance of the Port Lands.

Planning Framework – Ideas for Further Consideration

In term of improving the draft Planning Framework, here are several thoughts for your further consideration (in no particular order).

1. Instead of just seeing your Planning Framework as confirming a status quo in the industrial precinct (which is a strong impression I get from the document), I think you should identify opportunities to set off the kind of change you think is best for the area and for the city. There are so many things that could happen positively here in the future so a flexible approach to regulation and governance is necessary but beyond just waiting for something to happen and being flexible to accommodate it, a good plan will also motivate positive change and recommend short-term actions to this end. It will seed a preferred future and choreograph bringing it about. Here are some more detailed thoughts about this.

-There is one area of inquiry that I think needs more attention – from the work done elsewhere in Toronto, it would be prudent to determine where there might be growth potential

in employment sectors, and especially in industrial employment, and to assess if this growth potential might be accommodated as a future use of the Port Lands.

-Identify a key site in the east end of the industrial precinct to seed new, different, more diverse industrial initiatives (maybe sub-area 8?).

-Kick-start the Hearn site's future in a more proactive way – what about a competition about its future in addition to the public realm work now proposed and interim uses now happening.

-Expand dramatically the green link on the east edge of the Port Lands between the city to the north and the park and spit to the south to open up this open space opportunity in a much more significant way to the public – do another major public realm development intervention such as was done on the west edge of the Port Lands.

-Develop and propagate a performance standard for sustainable industry that would place the Port Lands at the top of this performance in the world.

-Develop a phasing strategy for the industrial precincts to manage the proposals that will come in over time. Do a lot of resilience testing of phasing potentials and judge these against the interests of the City. Then propose short-term action to set the direction for phasing.

2. The draft Planning Framework still needs some testing of the uses to insure that there is an organic balance regarding interdependencies of uses to achieve true sustainable proximity, mutually reinforcement, and economic synergies and to manage interface conditions. Here are more detailed thoughts about this.

-I am not convinced that the density of the residential neighbourhoods on the west will support the public and local

commercial infrastructure that they need. This is important here because they are naturally quite isolated.

-I am not convinced that the mix of commercial and housing in the residential neighbourhoods is optimal for sustainable proximity.

-I am not convinced the scale of the residential buildings is commiserate to the extraordinary green amenity context.

-You need careful management of the interface between residential and industrial – an interface transition use such as live-work might be advantageous. Just as importantly, you need to find ways to protect industrial land from speculation and intrusion of higher order uses that can pay more for land – this is one area where flexibility works against your best intentions.

-I am worried that the industrial worker population and the commercial/social supports for these workers has not been systematically calibrated.

-I cannot see that the diverse nature of industrial activity and the interdependencies of industrial sectors have been calibrated.

-There is no mix in the Unilever site and that is a fundamental mistake (we should not be doing giant one-dimensional commercial precincts any more – with or without transit).

3. In looking at the specific designations and conclusions of the proposed Planning Framework, I think the following adjustments might need further consideration.

-The Villiers Island neighbourhood needs to be further refined to include the new residential that will come from the realignment of the Gardner. All this housing should be planned as one neighbourhood unit. The local commercial role of the new Lakeshore Boulevard extension needs to be integrated into the thinking for this neighbourhood. I am not

convinced that the pattern of local commerce that you have set for this neighbourhood will work well. I tend to prefer an identifiable clustered commercial “highstreet” approach that can act as an activity spine for the area, particularly located where natural amenity is not the greatest. Beware the through-traffic potential for this area. Think further about the value of development that you can improve by the appropriate interface of that development with the adjacent amenities – don’t diminish that value with negative externalities.

-The industrial area would benefit from a clarification of the roles of its various precincts with more definition of preferred activities and mixes as well as a public realm intervention strategy to go with that.

-I think there needs to be an audit of the Planning Framework from the perspective of water-based ecology – there is a strong land-based bias in the document now. This would influence uses, intensity of use, public realm treatments and ecological measures.

-Of the three residential neighbourhood transformations that are proposed, the Polson Point/South River neighbourhood seems most difficult. Maybe this area needs a more unusual character for the future than just another residential area. Maybe it can be a commercial live/work area with greater tolerances for the industry nearby. This area needs more thinking.

-The Turning Basin Water Square is a wonderful asset that needs more creative thinking as to how to exploit it for public use without diminishing its industrial functionality – this is not just about urban design, it is also about adjacent uses.

-There needs to be further clarification of the interface of residential and industrial and setting up of a protocol for their co-existence. New residents moving into the area must know and accept their industrial neighbours.

4. The Planning Framework would benefit from a much more articulated implementation framework. Here are some thoughts that you might explore.

- I was surprised that there is not some kind of standing organization of independent local and city interests that has been convened not just to guide this round of planning but to also be a constituency for the Planning Framework as it moves forward to implementation. Because the unfolding of activities in the Port Lands will continue to be fluid, it may be wise to have an ongoing local-grounded organization to guide activities and initiatives. You should recommend a continuing arrangement for public involvement and industrial-interests involvement.

-This would be a great place to implement a program of community amenity contributions to pay for public realm improvements.

-You need a specific public investment plan coordinated with a phasing strategy.

-You may need to put in place an arrangement to arbitrate conflicts between residential and industrial interests as the western area of the Port Lands starts to transform.

Ken Greenberg – March 14, 2016

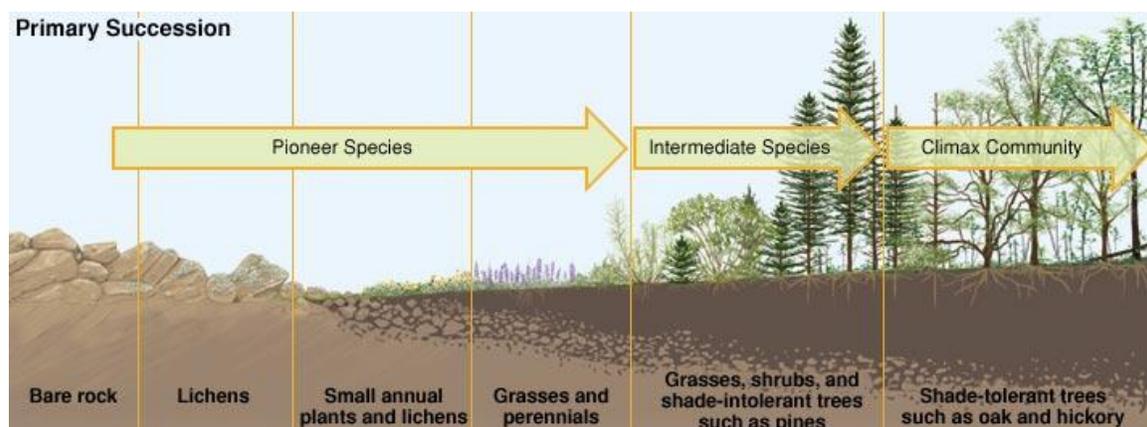
The Port Lands demand a different planning approach

A great deal of excellent work has been done to prepare for this next stage, but before “locking in” a Framework Plan it is worth re-considering what makes this vast area special and why it may require a somewhat different approach:

- ❖ Massive change anticipated on a scale comparable to Downtown Toronto
- ❖ 1000 acres, 50 year horizon
- ❖ Unfolding, precise destination unknown, pace and direction shaped by larger forces, social, economic, demographic, technological, all in interactive flux
- ❖ Current assumptions re use will inevitably be altered as all of these play out
- ❖ Yet some things we can rely on more – public realm and infrastructure – to give coherence and direction
- ❖ Look back to a comparable area of the city like the Central Waterfront and Railway Lands in 1966, 50 years ago! Multiple phases of colonization and appropriation as conditions altered
- ❖ Learning from those experiences to plan in a different way
- ❖ **A plan which doesn't focus only on a predetermined end state with phases to get there but on a process of evolution without a fixed destination**

PLANNING FOR “SUCCESSION” – DIALECTIC BETWEEN 2 INTERCONNECTED IDEAS

Guiding evolving Land Use...

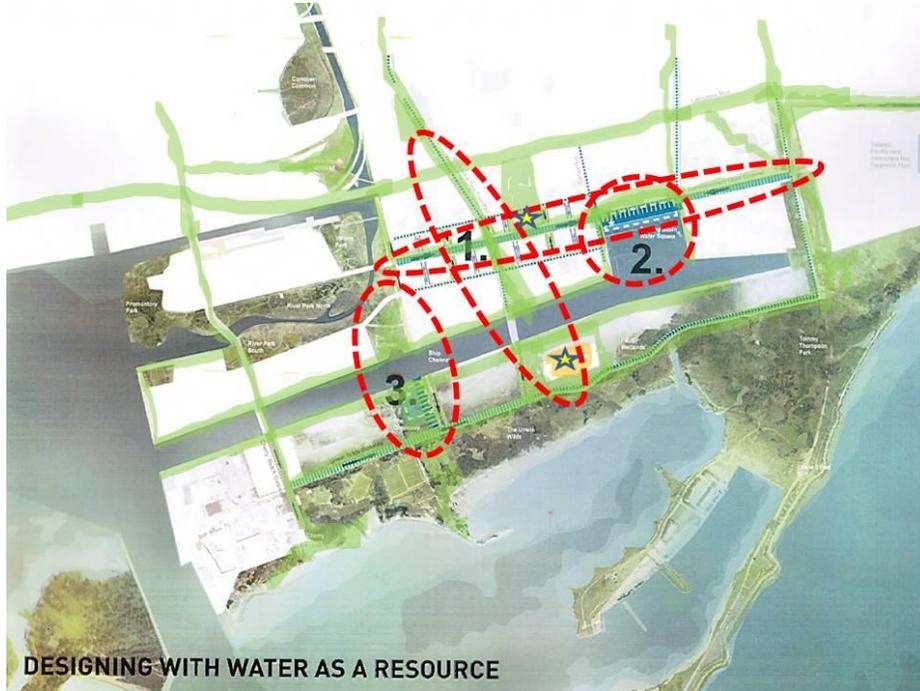


- **Guiding pioneering uses, intermediate uses, ‘climax’ uses all in play simultaneously, different speeds in different areas**
- **Layered time frames from imminent to long range**
 - Temporary uses inevitable – creatively direct this process
 - Some legacy uses, some new ones
 - TNT, Cirque, Pub on Keating Channel, Boat clubs, driving range, artists studios, festivals like Luminato, art installations as examples of pioneering uses
 - Strategic Seeding of such provisional uses in key locations
- **Curation requiring judgement over time as things evolve not a one-time prescription**
 - Control length of leases and licenses for intermediate and short term uses
 - Allow for diverse mutually supportive mix and synergies
 - Don’t get hung up on overly precise compartmentalization of land-use; allow for overlaps, ‘bleeds’ and interactions – e.g. the Broadview Corridor
 - Surface parking lots as a pioneer species laid out for conversion
 - Even parking structures likely to be redundant with automated vehicles, design for conversion to other uses
 - Caution re hard wiring e.g. sound stages could end up being used for something entirely different
- **Growing the market(s) – economically, socially and culturally as value accrues**
 - One thing leads to another as opportunities occur
 - Fostering sequences and clusters as they emerge
 - Avoid large monocultures (Unilever a major mistake - Who is building single use CBD’s at this point?)
 - Example of Railway Lands/ South of Union Station: Office space draws Res; Res draws Office; both draw retail, education, recreation, services, culture in unexpected combinations, or even in a shorter time period East Bayfront
- **Requires a new kind of regulatory regime and dynamic monitoring with feedback loops**
- **Learning from the Kings**
 - “Sieve” for a DNA reflecting the core policy values adopted by WT and the City
 - Allowing good uses
 - Preventing bad ones
- **Some ‘fixes’ while large areas evolve**
 - Form-based guidance re relative scales and densities
 - Attention to micro-climate – sun/shade/wind conditions for public spaces
 - Fine grain, desire lines as a principle but precise patterns tbd over time
- **Stimulating, guiding change but not falsely and prematurely over prescribing; tailor specificity of framework to suit circumstances and opportunity**

...while leading with Public Realm



- **Building on WT's tradition of "Leading with Public Realm (and infrastructure)"**
 - Use public spaces, active transportation and innovative transit to open up the lands
 - Continue tradition of competitions in strategic locations
 - Create powerful, imageable, place-forming foci like Queens Quay, wave decks, Sugar Beach, Sherbourne Common, Corktown Common etc.
- **Greening throughout the lands enabling the public to get to know and appropriate the area**
- **Use to emphasize the n-s e-w 'Corridors' that have been identified**
 - An armature of public space creating value and giving direction to future moves
 - On this armature and places of special quality and value
- **Set the stage for transition from more transitory uses to more permanent ones**
- **DESIGNING WITH WATER MAY BE THE KEY UNIFYING MOVE**
 - Commissioners
 - Ship Channel
 - Turning Basin
 - Spillway
- **CELEBRATE THE HEARN** even with temporary landscape anticipating future uses!
- and the **INCINERATOR/MCCLEARY PARK**



- **But here because of the extended time frame also allow for “succession” in the landscape**
 - Pioneering, temporary, introducing the site, solidifying, expanding
 - Trail networks – Martin Goodman Trail in 1980, now 36 years later...and Don Valley (also examples of succession)
- **Connect to the BIG NETWORKS converging on the site**
 - East/West along the shoreline; North/South up the Don Valley
 - Embrace and incorporate the Gardiner project!
 - Cross boundaries with adjacent areas e.g. Unilever, South Riverdale, the Beach and Ashbridge’s Bay, Tommy Thompson Park
- **Programing as well as place making and welcoming hosting larger city population – example Sugar Shack**
- **Open to but not depend on big opportunities like EXPO**

Michael Van Valkenburgh – March 14, 2016

Toronto Port Lands – Critical Landscape Issues moving forward:

(1) CREATE ORDER/LOGIC FROM CONDITIONS

Waterfront Toronto and the city of Toronto have embarked on a city building project of enviable scale and urban impact. As a starting point, the physical structure of the Port Lands district is already winning from a landscape perspective: with 1/3 water, 1/3 landscape, and 1/3 developable land, the Port Lands offers more open space than you could ever hope to find in an urban environment. However, on the ground, this unbelievable ratio comes with limitations due to the lack of flexibility in the site's physical structure. That structure, including available open space, is the product of a series of prior decisions based on the requirements and processes of the Port Land's original industrial operations. Furthermore, this structure is far from any model intended for urban/cultural/social use, so the question is: how do you create cohesion and continuity when integrating a new program and scale of activity across such a large area that lacks malleability?

There are two approaches here: you can either work with the inherited order, or overlay a new order. The first approach works with the logic that exists on the ground. This is what we did at the Lower Don, and it's what made our proposal so successful there. Unlike the other contestants, we didn't fight the structure of the site but instead allowed it to inform the structure of the new landscape. This approach does, however, create many design challenges in negotiating the new program within predefined site parameters. The second approach looks for ways to break down the existing structure and overlay a new framework. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. In addition to ensuring a cohesiveness within the district, it is equally necessary to stitch the Port Lands into its context; the city to the north and west, as well as the landscape and lake to the south.

How do you find order, and stitch together a cohesive site whose physical layout is fixed, but whose program and performance requirements are continually changing?

(2) SCALE: FRUGALITY IN DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION/INSTALLATION

There is a remarkable area of landscape to be planted within the Port Lands district. The scale of this landscape is particularly impressive when considered in comparison to the developable land within the district. As a result of its scale, the project demands a frugal approach to landscape design and installation. While there may be moments of focus for greater investment in landscape within the district, the budget will never afford high expense across the board. At the same time, the project will fail if it does not succeed in creating a space of high quality. The challenge here for designers is how to make high quality spaces for a low cost?

The cost issue must be addressed through the design as well as during the installation and construction planning. The same landscape can have a significantly different price tag depending on the scale and type of material selected for planting, the labor involved, and schedule of work. Cost savings in plant size ultimately creates a landscape that requires a significant growing in period, but this strategy can be very effective and often makes sense on projects of this scale that require a long time for full build out. When you look at Corktown Common you have to remember that this is a landscape that has been growing-in for the last four years. We were limited in budget for the construction of the project, but had the advantage that the site would sit for a number of years while the surrounding city grew up to meet it. Expectations must be set in advance for this approach, anticipating the condition on day one, and the time required for the landscape to establish.

These are fundamental questions that must be addressed in the design process: How do you design high quality spaces at a low cost? and how do you build this project?

(3) LONG-TERM ECONOMICS: MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Finally, and maybe most importantly, there is the question of the long-term life and trajectory of the project. Landscape requires continuous investment to sustain the maintenance and management practices necessary for its upkeep. This continuous management requires both the identification of an entity responsible for the site's management, as well as an economic strategy to provide the necessary revenue to support maintenance activities. I have seen this done a few different ways. At Corktown Common we were exceptionally lucky to arrive at an agreement with the city parks department to transfer over to them the responsibility for the park's long-term management once construction was completed. In another example, at Brooklyn Bridge Park, the design team was tasked with creating a strategy to ensure the park would be economically self-sustainable. The solution here involved the precise and strategic insertion of revenue-generating programs and development within the site boundary. For a district the scale of the Port Lands, the management and economic sustainability of the project will almost necessarily require a public-private partnership. Perhaps the best and most appropriate example of this is the Battery Park City Authority. The Authority, which we have worked with on a number of projects, is a public-benefit corporation, ultimately responsible for the development and maintenance of the 37 hectare site in Lower Manhattan. Revenue collected from developers and development sites within Battery Park City fund the operations of the Authority to manage and maintain the public spaces within the district. Waterfront Toronto must determine early on, in collaboration with the city, what the model will be for the economic sustainability of the project.

Does the Port Lands require a specific designation to allow for tax collection and redirection within the confines of the district, to support its maintenance operations? Who/What party is responsible for the long-term site management? What is the economic structure of the district? What level of maintenance and management should be expected, and how will this impact the quality of the landscape and urban spaces?