



**WATERFRONT**Toronto

**Waterfront Design Review Panel  
Minutes of Meeting #116  
Wednesday, October 24, 2018**

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**Present**

Paul Bedford, Chair  
Betsy Williamson, Vice Chair  
George Baird  
Peter Busby  
Claude Cormier  
Fadi Masoud  
Janna Levitt  
Nina-Marie Lister (conflict of interest)  
Jeff Ranson  
Brigitte Shim

**Regrets**

Pat Hanson (conflict of interest)  
Eric Turcotte (conflict of interest)

**Recording Secretaries**

Tristan Simpson  
Rei Tasaka

**Representatives**

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto

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**WELCOME**

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

1. Quayside Buildings – Issues Identification
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**GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest. Nina-Marie Lister declared a conflict for the Quayside project and recused herself for the review.

The Chair then introduced Chris Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer with Waterfront Toronto, to provide a report. Mr. Glaisek noted that on October 9<sup>th</sup> the winning designs were announced for the York and Rees Park Design Competition. “Love Park” by Claude Cormier et Associés has been selected for York Street Park and “Rees Ridge” by wHY Architecture and Brook McIlroy has been selected for Rees Street Park. Mr. Glaisek also provided an update on the Queens Quay tree replacement. Mr. Glaisek explained that 154 of the 227 trees planted will be replaced. Mr. Glaisek explained that after a year of detailed investigation, it was determined that the causes

were, anthracnose (fungal disease), high salt levels in the soil, harsh winter conditions and vandalism.

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## **PROJECT REVIEWS**

### **1.0 Quayside Buildings – Issues Identification**

*Project Type:* Building

*Location:* Quayside

*Proponent:* Sidewalk Labs

*Architect/Designer:* Michael Green Architecture (proto-model)

*Review Stage:* Issues Identification

*Review Round:* One

*Presenter(s):* Karim Khalifa, Sidewalk Labs

*ID#:* 1100

#### **1.1 Introduction to the Issues**

Rei Tasaka, Design Project Manager with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project by noting that Quayside falls within both the East Bayfront and Keating Channel precinct boundaries. Ms. Tasaka noted that the current allowable as-of-right gross square feet is 3.2 million. Ms. Tasaka explained that the public realm and mobility pillars presented to the Panel in September and today the buildings pillar will be presented. Ms. Tasaka raised some areas for the Panel to consider, including the success of key strategies in creating more adaptable, affordable and sustainable buildings, appropriateness of the approach to building innovation components and feedback on the proto-model design. Ms. Tasaka then introduced Karim Khalifa, Director of Buildings Innovation with Sidewalk Labs, to give the presentation.

#### **1.2 Project Presentation**

Mr. Khalifa began by noting that a number of consultants have been engaged as subject matter experts to provide guidance and feedback on the project, such as Michael Green for tall wood building design and Blackwell for structural. The objectives for the buildings are adaptability, affordability, sustainability and design excellence. Mr. Khalifa explained that the site is planned as a timber neighbourhood. Some of the challenges of mass timber include, construction being limited to 30-storeys, the building code requires an amendment for anything over 6-storeys, supply chains will need to grow to support larger-scale construction and savings may not be realized at the scale and timeframe envisioned for Quayside. Mr. Khalifa walked through some innovative ideas contemplated for the site, such as building the modular cores of buildings off-site, factory plaster installation, mist fire blankets, and DC power.

#### **1.3 Panel Questions**

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

One Panel member asked if they are committed to lower than usual profit projections for this project. Mr. Khalifa replied that Sidewalk Labs has not defined their role as a

developer adding that they aren't working on how to transact the land but rather attempting to drive down the cost of construction.

Another Panel member asked about the sustainability goals and performance targets. Mr. Khalifa replied that the goal is to meet Toronto Green Standards Tier 3 which is on par with Passive House design. The Panel member asked how the team came to the decision to target Tier 3 rather than Tier 4. Mr. Khalifa replied that achieving Tier 4 is an ambitious goal especially for high-rise development.

One Panel member asked whether the parameters and goals for sourcing the timber have been defined. Mr. Khalifa replied that they have learned a lot and they opened the Mass Timber event to all Canadian sources to learn what's the best opportunity to grow the Canadian business. The Panel member asked whether Canadian sourcing or lowering greenhouse gas emissions is more important. Mr. Khalifa replied that lowering greenhouse gas emissions is more important. The Panel member also asked how much exposed timber there will be versus plaster. Mr. Khalifa explained that 50% exposed timber is the optimal amount for biophilic design.

Another Panel member asked how the team plans to bridge from innovative ideas to reliable marketable products. Mr. Khalifa replied that they plan to pilot these innovative ideas. The plaster system has been in use for a long time but has not been used for this specific purpose. There are approximately 40 buildings out there today that use DC power that they have been studying. Mr. Khalifa added that if they feel that a technology is not ready, then it likely won't be applied to the first building.

One Panel member asked what they mean by radical mixed-use. Mr. Khalifa replied that they believe that one building with loft ceiling heights can host different types of tenants. Mr. Khalifa added that the intent is to have the buildings fluctuate to serve the community needs over time. The Panel member also noted that the Ontario Building Code only permits six-storey timber buildings and asked whether they have studied this. Mr. Khalifa replied that there is a timber buildings conference happening in Toronto that tours all of the existing timber buildings. Mr. Khalifa added that they are also looking outside this region such as Austria for precedents.

Another Panel member asked how the DC power interface works with radical mixed used such as a coffee shop that requires higher voltage. Mr. Khalifa replied that if higher power demand is required then some devices might need to have AC power such as a commercial kitchen.

One Panel member asked why the affordable housing and buildings pillars are separate studies. Mr. Khalifa explained that the teams have taken deep dives into each pillar individually and they're now at the stage where they are coming together to see how everything is synergizing.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the underground delivery system. Mr. Khalifa explained that it would be delivery of freight conveyed underground along with trash removal. The Panel member also asked for the breakdown of commercial and

residential for the site. Mr. Khalifa replied that they imagine it to be approximately 60% residential, 80% would be the maximum.

One Panel member asked that given the number of municipal and provincial restrictions, at what point will the plug need to be pulled on certain innovations and what will be prioritized. Mr. Khalifa explained that things like DC power is something that will happen but there are other items that will fall off the wish list. Mr. Khalifa added that they are making those decisions this month.

Another Panel member asked if they plan to build out the maximum GFA and given the height limitations whether the site will need to be rezoned in order to achieve the maximum density. Mr. Khalifa explained that 30 storeys or below will achieve the same densities. Mr. Khalifa added that they are in keeping with the general spirit of the precinct plans.

#### **1.4 Panel Comments**

The Chair then asked the Panel for comments.

One Panel member expressed interest in understanding how the broader buildings will align with smaller lots at the next meeting. The Panel member noted that the entire Panel is supportive of mass timber, however, the buildings still need to demonstrate design excellence.

Another Panel member noted that the presentation was appreciated. The Panel member noted that the issue of mass timber is really a partnership between the factory and designer. The Panel member added that if this could bring agency to a growing industry, it could be a huge win overall with lots of economic benefits. The Panel member also liked the idea of building a low-rise prototype. Having something physical and tangible that people can look at goes a long way to demonstrate intentions in for larger built form.

One Panel member noted that everything shown so far appears to be boxy and asked the team to consider integrating inflections into the architecture. The Panel member noted that in terms of environmental performance, TGS Tier 3 is a notable goal to pursue. The Panel member felt that more information is required on the mechanical HVAC system concept, the energy level systems and the envelope performance. The Panel member noted that the idea of flexibility is really important including the prototypes of suite designs, how the wall system can be moved over time and plumbing flexibility.

Another Panel member noted that having this front and centre site on the waterfront is a real opportunity to showcase this idea of a neighbourhood that gets scaled up and shows a completely different way of building on the waterfront. The Panel member added that this is about recasting the conversation to explain that it's not just about timber for timber sake but its about a bigger picture.

One Panel member expressed interest in seeing real massing with a building envelope proposal and how it meets the ground indoor and outdoors.

Another Panel member struggled with credibility of a proposal of this scale given the many hurdles. The Panel member added that the team needs to prove these ideas in depth in a way that they can be assessed.

### **1.5 Consensus Comments**

The Chair then summarized the Panel comments on which there was full agreement.

- Overall the Panel felt that the presentation was full of great ideas but was short on specifics.
- Get something built on site as a showcase for what's to come.
- Toronto is facing an affordable housing crisis – this is an opportunity to push the boundaries with the number of affordable units proposed on this site
- Very supportive of a home-grown mass timber industry. Figure out the requirements to make this happen.
- In terms of site planning, be bold and consider coming up with an entirely new land use to accommodate radical mixed-use.
- Energy performance and sustainability need to demonstrate that this project is pushing the envelope
- There needs to be more integration with all of the pillars, particularly the affordable housing and development pillars.
- Ensure that the architecture is of high quality and stands out.
- More clarity is needed on how all these ideas are going to be integrated and pulled together into one overarching vision for the site.

### **1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support**

No vote was taken as the project was reviewed at the Issues Identification stage.

### **CLOSING**

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