

PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday, October 10th 2013

6.30-9.00 pm

Metro Hall – Room 308/309

Toronto, ON, M5V 3C6 Canada

SUMMARY REPORT

On October 10, 2013 approximately 130 people participated in the second of a series of public meetings for the Lower Yonge Urban Design Guidelines and Transportation Master Plan/Precinct Planning project. The purpose of the meeting was to present the draft design guidelines and preferred transportation master plan option and to gather feedback on these draft designs. Following an introduction from Christopher Glaisek, VP Development 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 a facilitated full-room plenary, with fifteen minutes allocated to one-on-one discussion with the project team at the close of the meeting.

This summary report was written by Bianca Wylie, Ian Malczewski and Janet Tsang 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. Many participants were supportive of the draft design guidelines, particularly how they addressed issues around building height raised at the first meeting.** While participants were still concerned about the potential for these guidelines to be challenged on an application-by-application basis at the Ontario Municipal Board, they were also happy to know that they were being developed to be enforceable.
- 2. Participants liked the amount of open and green space proposed.**
- 3. Traffic issues are a persistent concern in the area. The traffic situation is bad for residents today, especially before and after Air Canada Centre events.** Ideas from the project team for reducing congestion especially after events would be highly appreciated and there was a concern that new development could add to existing traffic was raised.
- 4. Creating successful ground-floor retail in the precinct is both important and difficult.** Factors to consider to increase the chance of successful retail include: sunlight, space between buildings, continuous frontage, parking, building design and best practices from other successful areas of the City.

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.

- Would the City have the power to force landowners whose project you've shown to conform to these guidelines if they're approved?** *Yes, the intent of the Precinct Plan is to be enforceable.*

- **What's happening to traffic when it comes from Simcoe and comes on to Yonge Street? It's a difficult trip.** *With the reconfiguration of the grid, the traffic is dispersed. The new ramp will touch down at Simcoe, disperse traffic into the City before Yonge Street, and there will be fewer vehicles moving through the area. If we can get a Lake Shore connection at Yonge, we're lessening the burden of the movement, too. Traffic model shows that as traffic dissipates, we can help people make a turn on to Yonge and get into Yonge. The volumes moved at an acceptable level. We can share a presentation with intersection-by-intersection detail for those who are interested.*
- **Regarding the LCBO heritage building? Will it be touched or will it stay?** *The office building and warehouse are heritage listed. This means that these buildings are on the city's heritage inventory. Heritage designation provides stronger protection. We are currently looking at balancing the heritage value of these buildings with the need for good urban planning guidelines. Any recommendations will consider the heritage element in that context.*
- **In your presentation drawings, Harbour Street would cut through the back of the LCBO building. Has that been considered?** *Yes, we're recommending that Harbour Street extend through the area which would impact the warehouse building – not the office building.*
- **How are 2 lanes of traffic going to fix things when there are events, the traffic is already extremely problematic in the area?** *One of the things that we looked at was how many people are actually driving. 37% of the people living in the site drive to commute. The rest use transit etc. That's why the network needs to be designed for all types of performance. The numbers tell us we can have a 2 lane configuration to Bay Street, looking at peak hour travel conditions. To address the events traffic issue, many cities have special traffic management plans, including ideas to operate the streets differently to allow traffic out. Most of the time these events occur during off-peak conditions, this allows for a separate approach to be used.*
- **How much of the land is in public ownership?** *The LCBO is publicly owned as is the TPLC rail spurs. Infrastructure Ontario has contemplated selling off that land to private ownership.*
- **When private landowners don't conform to the Official Plan, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) tends to interfere with public planning.** *Every landowner has the right to appeal to the OMB. As part of this process, we are trying to have the Precinct Plan endorsed by Council and an approved Zoning By-law, which would be jointly implemented with the landowners. We are consulting with the private landowners as part of this process. There is always a possibility that we could end up at the OMB, but we hope to avoid that by working together.*
- **Why did you designate 15% of the land as green space?** *15% comes from a by-law that allows the City to acquire parkland. There are other opportunities for open space that we'd look to achieve through the plan. The City considers 15% adequate to secure a large park, however it can be a challenge to accommodate 15% in one location.*
- **The City of Toronto has tall building guidelines. In this presentation, the towers proposed are further apart than in the tall buildings guidelines. What's the rationale behind that? Using the guidelines would allow for more towers than shown in this plan.** *We referred to a lot of sources, including the Tall Buildings Guidelines as part of our work. While our Urban Design Guidelines refer to the Tall Buildings Guidelines, we must also consider many other principles as well.. We believe there's a different planning regime on the waterfront. It's more about finding appropriate locations for taller and lower towers, finding a coherent urban form, rather than focusing on a specific distance between them. We have a large enough parcel of land to be flexible here. As such, our guidelines allow for additional ideas to come to the table. For example, because we're on the waterfront, there's a need*

for porosity, letting people through, etc. If you were involved in the East Bayfront Precinct Plan, it uses a different set of principles specific to that area. One of our mandates was to make sure we didn't re-create the wall of condos on the waterfront.

- **Could you create an isometric / perspective model from the waterfront that includes the west and east to show connectivity?** Though that would be useful, it does not fall within the scope of this project.
- **When you're dealing with park space, what happens after 2 pm? How does that impact other areas? What is the heat factor from the sun due to reflected light from the buildings?** *We've done extensive sun and shadow studies to try and locate open spaces in the best possible location. We looked to see if we could find places that would be sunny even during the afternoon in December.*
- **In your presentation, you show a plan to extend Harbour to Jarvis, breaking up land and eliminating potential open space. What are you giving up in order to make the road?** *When we're dealing with the division of land, there's a requirement for a parkland dedication. So you're concentrating development by putting in a road. But, these are very large blocks, and you do want connections. When you're looking at these types of large parcels, you'd look at breaking them.*
- **Transportation alternatives 2 and 4 showed variations on a PATH connection. Would you consider a more extensive PATH connection, given that it works best at King and Bay, where there are different routes? Otherwise, it's more of a corridor than a network.** *Yes, that could be considered.*
- **In the portion of the presentation from the City, there was a percentage of 25% commercial space shown? Does that include mixed use? Ground level retail? And can ground level retail be required in this plan?** *Yes it's included, and yes ground level retail can be encouraged.*
- **How is sunlight impacted for existing residents? (Either for Pinnacle or elsewhere)** *There could be further sunlight studies as part of our review; we don't have it for all implications. As we take this study further, we could review impacts on surrounding residences. That would come later.*
- **What is the current fate of the Queens Quay East streetcar project?** *We have an approved EA for the Queens Quay East LRT and preliminary designs (30% engineering for below grade tunnel, loop and 60% for surface). We don't have all the funding. We're working closely with our government partners on ways to finance the project and are optimistic that the funding will come through. Some money for that is potentially coming from the new development application by-law.*
- **Regarding the slide with the view of the city that included landowner proposals from Centre Island Docks. Is that missing the 1 York / 90 Harbour proposals? It gives a one-sided peak. But there are more towers going in there, they are 62 and 66 storeys, they're under construction. Thank you for that, we will check.**

DETAILED FEEDBACK

Following the overview presentation from the project team, participants were asked:

1. **What do you like about the proposed guidelines and the preferred transportation option (Alternative 4)?**
2. **Where do you see challenges with the guidelines and the preferred transportation option (Alternative 4)? How would you address these challenges?**
3. **Any other advice?**

The following section is a summary of the comments from the room. Additional written feedback was shared with the project team via worksheets and email. Any written feedback that is not listed here can be found in the written feedback summary section.

1. Things Participants Liked about the Proposed Guidelines and the Preferred Transportation Option (Alternative #4)

Feedback on the Draft Design Guidelines

- **The concerns raised during the first public meeting in May about building heights have been addressed with these draft guidelines.** Many participants were grateful for the work done by the project team to ensure this core issue was addressed. In addition, participants liked the idea of buildings decreasing in height from north to south, keeping the tallest buildings away from the lake. The team should also consider using height on the east-west streets to maximize the end of day sunlight. Participants were happy to see that the guidelines do not propose a “wall of condos” on the waterfront.
- **Buildings should have as few storeys as possible, but in order for the plan to be credible and achieve buy-in from the development community, the heights have to be somewhat taller than desired.** Several participants said the towers were still too tall: one participant suggested a range of 6-10 storeys rather than 18, others suggested ranges of 30-50 storeys. However, one participant said they liked the taller towers as they would increase the land value and increase the number of amenities in the area.
- **Participants liked the open space proposed.** Some participants suggested that any opportunities to remove a road border from the green space should be considered. Another participant suggested that open space opportunities should also be considered on podiums such as the second or third storey, not only at street level.
- **Within the park space, consider the following when planning the park design:**
 - Ensure the park is within walking distance for families;
 - Include playground equipment for children;
 - Consider an all-season park with water features for the summer;
 - Don't fill the green space with too much “stuff”, leave some open space to help balance the chaos of the Harbourfront activities and afford more “green” versus “open” space. One participant raised the example of the Round House Park which had a “bucolic” charm before it became an expansion to the Convention Centre and was filled with vents and other elements. Do not repeat this with a new opportunity for a park.
 - Develop a pedestrian bridge over Harbour Street to connect the two sides of the park;
 - Don't split the park into small pieces; this is not conducive to outdoor sports;
 - Look to Paris for examples of good open space for pedestrians located in the middle of a busy area.
- **When thinking about the location of the park, consider the following:**
 - Ensure active use along the edges of the park(s);
 - Identify opportunities for additional open space atop podiums, on private rooftops if possible – while a challenge for liability maintenance it does expand the amount of park space available.
 - Consider new plans for green space at Yonge & Queens Quay (opposite Captain John's) along the waterfront in front of the Pier 27 condos.
- **The focus on connectivity is great, especially pedestrian connectivity.** Participants really liked the ideas to better connect the old and new neighbourhoods.

- **The two different sizes of base buildings and podiums are the right idea for the area.**
- **The solar envelope proposed is a good approach.** All efforts to keep the sunshine as plentiful as possible are thinking in the right direction. One participant noted that at 30 storeys, the 1 Yonge development would not have a negative impact on the current Pinnacle condo residents.

Feedback on the Preferred Transportation Option

- **There was broad support for many elements of the preferred transportation option (Alternative 4).** Support for the idea of the Church/Cooper connection, the new street and the connectivity approach in general was particularly strong.
- **Several participants said they really liked the Church/Cooper idea, one participant called the tunnel idea “fantastic”.**
- **Participants liked the “Human-centric” approach as put forward by ARUP.**
- **Consider keeping the Gardiner so it can be changed into a Highline type project in New York City.**
- **There was strong support for special configurations to manage traffic before and after events at the Air Canada Centre.** One specific suggestion was to make Harbour a one-way street after special events, or to use adjusted traffic light timings. One participant noted it was very difficult to reach the parking lot at 18 Harbour after the events.
- **Regarding Harbour Street, a few key points were raised:**
 - The extension is a great idea, especially that it has a pedestrian and cyclist focus;
 - An extension to Lower Sherbourne was raised as another beneficial option.
- **Regarding Church Street, a few key points were raised:**
 - Strong support for the extension to Cooper Street;
 - Alternative four is the best option for pedestrians and cyclists;
 - This update will be expensive but it is much needed.

2. Challenges about the Proposed Guidelines and the Preferred Transportation Option (Alternative #4) and Ideas to Address them

Feedback on the Draft Design Guidelines

- **Set the height guidelines to be lower than they are as the Ontario Municipal Board will always allow extra height on applications.**
- **It’s a challenge to support and attract good ground-level retail, look to the amount of space between buildings, light and other examples of success for indications on how to manage this.** Some of the suggestions to address this included:
 - Reduce the lanes on Harbour Street to two or three lanes so it has a pedestrian feel and is a more attractive place for people to walk and shop.
 - Buildings that are closer together can help support successful retail or commercial space, it’s extremely challenging to sell all the space all the time, there are many places you can go where they’re empty. Design the retail space so it will be leased or used.
 - Look to Queen Street and College Street for examples of successful retail.
 - Queens Quay Boulevard had a piecemeal plan of implementation initially - Spadina to Bay and Spadina to Bathurst were ghost towns. But if you go down now, they’re all filled. In fact, there’s a shortage. It takes time to get the development correct.
 - Every developer will want an exemption, it’s a different tax rate and it’s possible they’ll try to find an excuse not to do it.
 - Parking in front of the commercial areas can be a challenge, commercial areas that fail don’t have contiguous frontage.

- **While the amount of green space proposed is good, it would be ideal to have some of it not bounded by motor vehicle traffic.**
- **The guidelines should include something special or unique as a landmark to identify the foot of Yonge and the significance of the street in Toronto's history.**
- **Support buildings that have a character reflective of the waterfront.** Many designs for new buildings can be bland.

Feedback on the Preferred Transportation Option

- **The preferred alternative is too automobile focused; consider a reduction in lanes and widening the sidewalks.** Harbour could be reduced from four to three lanes or down to two lanes, widen the sidewalks and add a dedicated bike lane. With four lanes, the street will become a throughway.
- **It would be ideal to have separated bike lanes rather than sharrows.** Any additional considerations that would support cycling in the area should be considered, bike lanes are important and they are safer for both cyclists and drivers.
- **It's a challenge to create connections between the precinct and the PATH.** Developing connections that will support people getting to Union Station would be helpful, and any aesthetic improvements on the tunnels should be considered.
- **Traffic issues with the preferred option will require a traffic plan to address the consequences of limited turning lanes.**
- **Regarding the idea of a new off-ramp to Yonge,** traffic from the east end (especially given the growth in the area) will mix with downtown traffic. Several participants were concerned about the negative impact of this element of the plan.
- **Any additional development will increase the difficulty of getting on the Gardiner or the Don Valley Parkway,** ways to mitigate this issue should be considered.
- **The southern exit from Harbour to Queens Quay should remain.** It enables access to Loblaws and the LCBO.

Additional Written Feedback

1. Streets and Open Space

- The proposed shapes of the new blocks look good, great to see "normal-sized" blocks.
- Given the proximity of small streets to major streets, keep safety top of mind in design.
- Include a bike lane for at least one north/south street under the Gardiner (ie: Cooper or Jarvis)
- Create a cycling option on Harbour west of Yonge.
- Focus on a strong connection to Union Station.
- Very exciting to see how this precinct will develop with the addition of a new street.

2. Setbacks and Ground Floor Animation

- Make mixed retail mandatory throughout the precinct, not just at street corners.
- The ground floor "feel" of the precinct should not be too paved.
- A raised green trench would be helpful to protect the trees and shrubs on the street.
- Consider ways to connect activities from the interior of the building to connect with the street and street activities.
- Create a minimum of a 5-6 metre sidewalk along all the streets, 3 metres is too narrow.

- The podium lower floors should have higher ceilings, this helps make the commercial real estate more attractive.

3. Base Buildings and Stepbacks

- Like the size of the buildings and stepbacks, especially that they enable more air and sun.
- Podiums should be a maximum of four to six storeys, not eight to ten storeys.
- Stepbacks should be 5-6 metres.

4. Tower Heights and Floor Plates

- Add some commercial buildings to the north side of the precinct.
- Locate the commercial buildings close to the Gardiner, and the residential along Queens Quay.
- Create a variance with the tower heights so the precinct does not end up feeling like other tall, glass condo clusters.

5. Urban Form and View Studies

- Ensure the plan respects the heritage buildings and the area's history.
- Suggest a mix of materials to ensure diversity in the design, not just glass or concrete. Consider the use of natural materials such as stone, brick and wood, as is used in the Distillery District.
- Consider adding artistic lighting under the Gardiner.

6. Transportation

- Remove the eastern portion of the Gardiner.
- Create a simplified small-scale transportation system (buses, shuttle buses) within the neighbourhood for children and seniors.
- Expand the PATH system as fully as possible.
- Another option for a bus enhancement would be to have a route that connects Pinnacle, Lower Yonge, Cherry Street, the Distillery District and the Church underpass. An alternate would be Parliament to Cherry Street, along Queens Quay to Union.

7. Other Advice

- Consider the negative impact of construction and noise for existing residents. Make and communicate the plans to ensure everyone knows what is happening when, and how negative impacts are being minimized.
- Make sure the new buildings going up do not block the views for those who are already residents of the area; this is an unfair impact on the existing owners who are going to suffer a reduction in property values.
- Define how affordable housing fits into the precinct plan.
- Consider the implementation of a toll to enter the downtown core to help offset the traffic congestion issues. In cities like London and Paris this has created a safer, less congested downtown which is more amenable to cyclists.

- In the next presentation, address the issue of any smell/odor from the Redpath factory for new residents.
- There are families moving into the area, a school should be built in the neighbourhood.
- Include a map on the table handouts and create a QR code so participants can download the presentation immediately.
- Create a Master Plan for the water front; the planning should not be done in a piecemeal fashion.

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 third public meeting to be held in early 2014.



**Lower Yonge Public Meeting #2:
Urban Design Guidelines & Transportation Master Plan EA**

Thursday, October 10, 2013

6:30– 9:00 pm, Room 308/309 Metro Hall

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

8:00 Urban Design Guidelines & Transportation Master Plan Feedback

1. What do you like about the proposed guidelines and the preferred transportation option (Alternative 4)?
2. Where do you see challenges with the guidelines and the preferred transportation option (Alternative 4)? How would you address these challenges?
3. Any other advice?

8:45 Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Please complete a feedback sheet and feel free to speak directly with team members.

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 by Thursday, October 24, 2013.

FEEDBACK SHEET – Urban Design Guidelines/Transportation Master Plan

Draft Proposed Guidelines	Your Feedback on the proposed approach
<p>Streets and Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on proposed streets and blocks • Comments on open space proposed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What should the character of the park(s) be ○ Good examples from other places in the city? • Comments on Harbour Street 	
<p>Setbacks & Ground Floor Animation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideas to activate the setbacks? • Good examples from other places in the City? 	
<p>Base Buildings & Stepbacks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on two different sizes of base buildings/podiums 	
<p>Tower Heights & Floorplates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on organization of towers (e.g., towers at major N/S streets; stepping down to lake etc.) 	
<p>Urban Form and View Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on variety of building types proposed 	

<p>Transportation Master Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on the preferred option (Alternative 4) which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New Street (north/south) ○ Cooper Street connection ○ 2-way Harbour Street extended to Jarvis ○ Eliminates “S” curve ○ New Gardiner off-ramp to Yonge ○ Remove Gardiner off-ramp to Jarvis ○ Remove Bay Street on-ramp 	
<p>Other?</p> <p>Do you have any other advice for the project team as we move forward with the development of the Precinct Plan and implementation tools for development?</p>	

Please hand in your feedback sheet 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 by Thursday, October 24, 2013.