



WATERFRONTToronto

**Waterfront Design Review Panel
Minutes of Meeting #135
Wednesday, June. 24th, 2020**

Present

Betsy Williamson, Acting Chair
George Baird
Peter Busby
Pat Hanson
Janna Levitt
Nina-Marie Lister
Fadi Masoud
Jeff Ranson
Brigitte Shim
Kevin Stelzer
Eric Turcotte
Jim Gough (City of Toronto DRP)
Michael Leckman (City of Toronto DRP)

Regrets

Claude Cormier
Brigitte Shim
Paul Bedford

Representatives

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto
Lorna Day, City of Toronto
Deanne Mighton, City of Toronto

Recording Secretary

Leon Lai

WELCOME

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

1. Toronto PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines – Issues Identification
 2. 11 Bay – Issues Identification
 3. 43 Parliament/ 281 Front St. TR3 Data Centre – Schematic Design
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GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair asked the Panel to adopt the minutes from the May. 27th, 2020 meeting. The minutes were adopted.

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest. Eric Turcotte declared conflicts for Toronto PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines, 11 Bay, 43 Parliament/ 281 Front Street TR3 Data Centre and recused himself for the session.

The Chair then asked Christopher Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer with Waterfront Toronto, to give an update on last month's projects.

Update on last month's projects:

Mr. Glaisek began the update by noting that **55 Lake Shore Boulevard East** has received the consensus comments from their review last month. The comments on the public realm was powerful, Waterfront Toronto and the City are working with the proponent to address public realm, landscape, and heritage comments. It is not anticipated for the project to return to DRP.

WT Project News:

Mr. Glaisek provided a construction update on **Port Lands Flood Protection Bridges** with photos from the virtual site visit in May 2020. The bridges are partly built in Amsterdam and will be coming in by boat from Nova Scotia. The team is checking for smoothness of the forms. Mr. Glaisek noted **Bonnycastle Street** reconstruction has been completed and that the **Lake Shore Pilot Project** at the north frontage of the Monde building will begin in July 2020.

Mr. Glaisek concluded by providing an update on next month's DRP agenda.

Chair's remarks:

The Chair then concluded the General Business segment and motioned to go into the project review sessions.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 Toronto PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines – Issues Identification

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1115
<i>Project Type:</i>	Master Plan
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Issues Identification
<i>Review Round:</i>	One
<i>Location:</i>	Port Lands
<i>Proponent:</i>	City of Toronto
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	DTAH
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	Anthony Kittel, City of Toronto; Joe Lobko, DTAH; Deanne Mighton, City of Toronto
<i>Delegation:</i>	Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto; Caroline Kim, Waterfront Toronto; Emma Loewen, Waterfront Toronto; Anthony Kittel, City of Toronto; Deanne Mighton, City of Toronto;

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Anthony Kittel, Community Planner with the City of Toronto, began the introduction by noting that the Urban Design Guidelines (UDG) work started in 2018 and is expected to complete in 2021. Mr. Kittel noted the proposal will be a comprehensive public document to guide built form, streets, and public spaces. Mr. Kittel noted the Port Lands Planning Framework context, the definition of the Production, Interactive, and Creative (PIC) Core, and detailed scope and result of the UDG. Mr. Kittel provided areas for Panel consideration, including flexibility to accommodate diversity of building types, guidelines that advance resiliency and future-proofing, implementation, and other design excellence considerations. Mr. Kittel then introduced Joe Lobko, Partner with DTAH, to continue the presentation.

1.2 Project Presentation

Mr. Lobko began the presentation by noting the districts, quadrants, existing site elements, edges, other site features, and reference to the Port Lands Planning Framework. Mr. Lobko noted the Port Lands Official Plan Modifications Requirements, ownerships of the precinct, and notable existing buildings. For the public realm vision, Mr. Lobko noted the focus on the edges, a new kind of water's edge promenade, and provided the detailed guidelines for the frontages including Don River, Shipping Channel, Water's Edge Promenade, Turning Basin, Commissioners, Logan/ McCleary, Lake Shore, and Carlaw. Mr. Lobko noted there are many edges with little depth – the precinct is a “threshold” site.

Mr. Lobko noted the build out scenarios and provided more information on the active frontages policy, ground floor activation strategy, active uses, place identity, and quick starts. Mr. Lobko noted the requirement and objectives for secured perimeters, minimum heights from the Port Lands Official Plan, and building typologies including low scale, mid-scale, and taller mid-scale employment buildings. Mr. Lobko introduced Deanne Mighton, Senior Urban Designer with the City of Toronto, to continue the presentation.

Ms. Mighton provided the core implementation focus of the Toronto Green Standards, noting three areas of challenges: stormwater, greening, and energy use. Ms. Mighton noted it is an opportunity to define a new standard for the future with a focus on additional resilience strategies, wood frame structures, and work with employers and property owners to promote sustainable commuting options dependent on supporting infrastructure.

1.3 Panel Questions

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

One Panel member asked for clarification on the letter to the Panel sent by Pinewood Studios. Mr. Kittel answered Pinewood Studios is a key owner and part of the advisory committee, City of Toronto has been working with them on the UDG as well as their latest update on their masterplan – they are firmly involved in the process and want to make certain that the Panel acknowledges their masterplan. Mr. Lobko added they would like the value and specialness of their property recognized by the Panel and noted their masterplan differs in the scale of the buildings.

Another Panel member asked how secured perimeter is being addressed or challenged in the UDG and how studios are encouraged to invest in better architecture. Mr. Lobko answered Pinewood is anticipating a completely public ground floor program and innovative strategies in dealing with the requirement of secured perimeter – they continue to emphasize that confidential aspects can be accommodated in the upper levels of their buildings and connected with bridges.

One Panel member asked for the status of the existing and future infrastructure. Mr. Kittel answered the size is serviced and has planned upgrades including major road upgrades.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on biodiversity as it is only mentioned in the overall intent but not part of the guiding principles. Ms Mighton responded the strategies are still under development with the environment group at City of Toronto, intended to come forward and be a part of the guidelines in the future.

One Panel member asked for clarification on the needs for secured perimeter and if they are required only for the film studios. Mr. Kittel noted there are many programs that require secured perimeter, including film studios, infrastructure, or TTC facilities.

Another Panel member asked if mixed-use is planned for this site as suggested by the precedent images. Mr. Lobko answered there is no residential use, the precedent buildings suggest the scale of buildings that are anticipated for this district, such as the low rise typology.

One Panel member asked for clarification on back of house, service, and parking requirements, and explain the core challenges of implementing the Toronto Green Standards for the district. Ms. Mighton answered there are guidelines for servicing, consolidated access using local streets, reduced number of curb cuts, etc. However, it is an employment area so some flexibility has to be provided. The challenges of TGS

include stormwater management as the water is contaminated so no infiltration is permitted, and tree canopy coverage not being met.

Another Panel member asked if the small parcel on the channel is designated public and if it can stay in public control to be developed as a park or some other public feature. Ms. Mighton noted the team has contemplated public use along the water's edge promenade and having tree canopy go in with a significant amount. The question of ownership will have to be confirmed by CreateTO.

1.4 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for comments.

One Panel member commented that it is important to ensure the perception of the precinct being film friendly is seriously considered as film business requires secured perimeter. The Panel member felt the proposed guidelines seem reasonable. The Panel member noted that attitudes are constantly changing regarding the secured ground floor of the studios and suggested the team to build in parameters that allow for evolved views on access in the future. The current proposal can use more articulating on this aspect.

Another Panel member noted the guidelines should return to address the security perimeter issue more thoroughly and from an urbanism perspective. The Panel member recommended that the UDG include detailed guidelines on architectural typologies.

One Panel member appreciated the clear and exciting presentation that identifies public assets of the precinct. The Panel member commended the study of the open space and prioritizing urban design upfront in addition to private development interests.

Another Panel member noted it is a challenge to balance public realm connectivity and private building sites. The Panel member suggested that adaptability and porosity are key tenants of the resilience concept, they should be articulated as part of the UDG and be protected. The language of the pilot projects seems outdated, the Panel member is unsure if demonstration for green infrastructure is needed as they have already been proven and firmly confirmed to work. The Panel member recommended to update the wording moving forward. The Panel member suggested biodiversity be highlighted in terms of sustainability in addition to technical targets.

One Panel member appreciated the presentation and directness of the questions that point to a direction of creativity, innovation, and radical thinking. The Panel member recommended the team to establish the goals in this manner early so the City can continue to lead with the needs of the district and return to the Panel in a position of equity.

Another Panel member commended the vision and supported the UDG for setting standards around built-form that continues to build on the experience of the existing precinct. The Panel member recommended marrying more naturalized landscapes with simple built form to create a unique precinct, and noted that many industrial sites

require secured perimeter, not only film studios but transit and other servicing facilities.

One Panel member is concerned with secured perimeter as it relates to scale. If the perimeter is small it has less impact, however if the perimeter is large and continuous it can significantly disrupt the urban context. The Panel member recommended the team to decide, while being realistic, that maybe not all frontages should be animated but priority be given to frontages along key routes. The Panel member asked to consider the importance of retail, the frequency in frontages and floor plate depths to create continuous concentration. The Panel member suggested that the sustainability solutions should focus on district scale strategies and not at the building level, such as low carbon district systems, storm water management to support biodiversity, mobility and transportation.

1.5 Consensus Comments

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

General

- Appreciated the presentation and speaking to the promise of a film district that is friendly to the public with many opportunities to engage.
- Encouraged the City to not give too much away too early, continue to define the potentials of the site and consider the details now instead of letting the requirements of the future developments drive the urban planning of the district.
- Design excellence should be the first and foremost requirement, at the same time the Panel is optimistic for midrise and taller buildings.
- It is important to encourage all team partners to see and understand the promise and value of the area.

Public Realm

- Ensure this district is well connected with the rest of the city and various modes of mobility infrastructures are considered in addition to the film industry vehicles. Facilitate bringing in public transit to alleviate vehicular use.
- Leverage the site characteristics of the district so the urban design experience will feel unique to other neighbourhoods in Toronto.
- Develop a robust public realm including parkettes, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure – all elements that will create a strong public realm able to compliment the uses behind the secured perimeters while supporting movement to the waterfront.
- Ensure movement in the district is not dominated and controlled by vehicular traffic and surface parking lots.

Landscape Interface

- DRP has reviewed many proposals for buildings in secured areas and to date, the public interface of those projects have not evolved. Public realm and landscape are often low priority. It is recommended to consider the ecology of the site and the district now to avoid relegating landscape and plantings to only

- small areas outside of the secured zone – ensure the urban design is well integrated with the buildings.
- Conduct a secured perimeter typology exercise, focus on exploring the variety of options available and create an exemplary strategy to deal with public interface opportunities at secured thresholds. Explore opportunities to make the secured perimeters more porous or less visible and obtrusive.

The Chair then asked if the proponent would like to provide a brief response.

Mr. Kittel noted the team will ensure the work will continue to be innovative and achievable. Mr. Lobko thanked the Panel for their comments.

1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Chair then asked for a vote of Full Support, Conditional Support or Non-support for the project.

No vote was taken as the project was presented for Issues Identification.

2.0 11 Bay Street – Issues Identification

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1116
<i>Project Type:</i>	Building
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Issues Identification
<i>Review Round:</i>	One
<i>Location:</i>	Central Waterfront
<i>Proponent:</i>	QuadReal
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	Hariri Pontarini;
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	Melanie Hare, Urban Strategies; David Pontarini, Hariri Pontarini Architects; Luka Matutinovic, Purpose Building
<i>Delegation:</i>	James Roche, DTAH; Victoria Bell, DTAH; Alex Heath, Urban Strategies; Greg Dunn, Adamson Associates; Pina Mallozzi, Waterfront Toronto; Caroline Kim, Waterfront Toronto; Nader Kadri, City of Toronto; Deanne Mighton, City of Toronto; Toby Wu, QuadReal; Aaron Knight, QuadReal; Nader Qawasmi, CreateTO; Robert Sedore, Barney Rivers;

2.1 Introduction to the Issues

Nader Kadri, Community Planner with the City of Toronto, began the introduction by noting the site context, anticipated project timeline, and the project background. The site is a long-term lease for 11 Bay Street for commercial uses: office, conference space, and retail. The lease is an opportunity to leverage the City owned asset to partially fund the redevelopment of the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal, and include obligations for design excellence, sustainability, and connectivity along with ground floor activation. Mr. Kadri detailed the objectives of design excellence, policy context from the Official Plan, Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, and the Zoning By-law. Mr. Kadri then introduced Pina Mallozzi, Vice President of Design with Waterfront Toronto, to continue the presentation.

Ms. Mallozzi noted the existing site context, adjacent major design project context including Queens Quay Public Realm, Jack Layton Ferry Terminal, Transit Reset, and Lower Yonge Public Realm streets. Ms. Mallozzi noted this is the first DRP for the project under Stream 2 Public Land, and provided the areas for Panel consideration: built-form complementing the vision established for the emerging area public realm, ground floor animation, connected public realm, addressing site context, and critical built-form moves that will support the City's sustainability objectives. Ms. Mallozzi then introduced Lorna Day, Director of Urban Design at the City of Toronto.

Ms. Day further noted the Mayor's Urban Design Initiative as an important City consideration: "City Council request the Board of CreateTO to work with the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO in order to employ open and international design competitions for major and transformational projects in which it is the lead developer." Ms. Day noted the site is a prominent piece of city-owned land which is a key to the future of the waterfront and the surrounding area, all parties agree that Design Excellence is essential in every facet of the design. Subject to the Mayor's Urban Design Initiative for city-owned land, staff and the applicant are exploring various pathways to achieve Design Excellence, with alternatives such as scoped design competition or prequalified partner call, peer review together with limited design competition, and extended involvement of the Waterfront Toronto Design Review Panel. Ms. Day asked the Panel to consider the alternative options in the context of Toronto's post COVID economic rebuild and recovery strategy.

2.2 Project Presentation

Melanie Hare, Partner with Urban Strategies, began the presentation by noting she is joined by CreateTO, QuadReal, Barney Rivers, and Hariri Pontarini. Ms. Hare provided a high-level breakdown of the proposal's program: conference facilities, retail and food hall, office space, and extension of the PATH network. Ms. Hare noted the six big conceptual strategies for the building massing, QuadReal's corporate sustainability commitments, and the underperforming qualities of the site today. Ms. Hare noted the project supports the City and Waterfront Toronto's policy directions, responding to the landmark site, skyline, and accommodates complex program requirements. Ms. Hare further noted the vertically integrated mix of uses, amenities, active uses at grade to animate the public realm, multiple connections to grade with extending the PATH network to Jack Layton Ferry Terminal. Ms. Hare then introduced David Pontarini, Partner at Hariri Pontarini Architects, to continue the presentation.

Mr. Pontarini noted the podium plugs directly into the city fabric and transit at three levels, interests in exploring and responding to pedestrian flow at the foot of Bay Street, and stitch together multiple public realm initiatives. Mr. Pontarini noted the team is interested in creating consolidated access to establish pedestrian focused "frontages", contributing to the public realm on four sides.

Luka Matutinovic, Principal with Purpose Building, noted the sustainability vision including zero carbon, Toronto Green Standards tier 2, LEED v4 Platinum, WELL v2 Silver, and low-embodied carbon construction. Mr. Matutinovic concluded the design is performance driven.

2.3 Panel Questions

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

One Panel member asked if the project would follow Waterfront Toronto's DRP stream of review stages. Mr. Glaisek responded yes but the project is not led by Waterfront Toronto and there is not the same level of contractual control. The Panel member asked if the upper level bridge will replace the existing connection to the hotel. Mr. Pontarini noted that the bridge will be constructed outside the existing hotel.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the procurement policy for the architect, the establishment of the height and density of the project, and if the amount of contribution to the future Jack Layton Ferry Terminal is sufficient to initiate the project. Ms. Hare noted that Hariri Pontarini Architects and Adamson Associates are retained to test the programmatic requirements of the site over the last eighteen months, a selection made by QuadReal and Barney River. The Chair added the City is looking for Panel comments on how the City will engage the public stream process for this project. Mr. Kadri noted that the height and density are not determined, the applicant will have to submit a rezoning application. In terms of financing for the Ferry Terminal, Mr. Kadri noted the City is trying to determine the final contribution amount and is unsure that the amount secured through the lease will be enough to start the project.

Another Panel member asked for more information on strategies to lower embodied carbon use. Mr. Matutinovic noted the project is in its early days of development, the team is looking at low carbon concrete, steel, and the procurement process.

One Panel member asked for the rationale for imposing a transition plan for zero carbon when it is something that can be planned at the conception of the project, if the team is assembling TEDI values, and using effective spandrels. Mr. Matutinovic noted the façade will be triple glazed, the team is exploring enhanced thermal bridging strategies, and is starting to get to the limits of heat recovery and air tightness of the design. Mr. Matutinovic noted the team is constrained in terms of roof area for heat pump, the starting point for resilience is the TGS checklist with a focus on cooling, pedestrian comfort, and incorporating some of the early moves of the podium.

2.4 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for comments.

One Panel member noted the selection of the architects appears to be completed and perhaps it is best to focus on developing the peer review process. The Panel member noted the condos and hotel in the area represent a very poor period of urban design of Toronto, they ignore the ground plane and is a catastrophe. With this context in mind, the Panel member expressed support for most of the proposal but strongly objected the pedestrian connection elevated on Bay Street. The street is being improved so it is feasible and good to cross on Queens Quay. Referencing the greater Path network, a new east-west connection seems unnecessary and worsens pedestrian flow to the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal against the extension of the side of the hotel. The Panel member noted pedestrian bridges obstruct the horizon, if the Queens Quay connection is to be rebuilt, consider lifting it higher so the view underneath on the street is enhanced and allow it to remain as a local connection between the hotel and the convention facilities.

The Panel member noted the Path network should terminate at 10/20 Bay Street and pedestrians can use the ground plane to access Queens Quay and the Ferry Terminal.

One Panel member appreciated the advancement of the sustainability design and green infrastructure for the project. The Panel noted Waterfront Toronto has invested significantly on bringing pedestrians at grade, and questioned the need to bring people into tunnels and bridges. The Panel member noted engagement with the future Ferry Terminal is critical and if the time for an opened design process for public land has passed, it is recommended for the City to invest heavily on a peer adjudication process.

Another Panel member noted public realm success will mark the project and leverage the sustainability vision to create a building that is distinguished and innovative. It is also important to not replicate the urban design failures of the past.

One Panel member appreciated the sustainability leadership and asked the team to consolidate the access at grade to improve the pedestrian experience. The Panel member asked the team to address how the public realm and landscape can address and improve the porosity of the long blocks when the project returns. It is important to create a sense of density for the pedestrian on the ground plane, such as opportunities for more spillage and refuge.

Another Panel member noted the presentation is focused on logistics, on the other hand, competitions typically helps articulate a vision or idea. Since the idea shown here is sustainability, the Panel member recommended to use that as the main objective of the design. The Panel member agreed on the previous comments on elevated bridges.

One Panel member noted the site has a very small footprint so little ground floor space can be dedicated for animation and pedestrians. Since this is reality, the Panel member recommended more innovative strategies, such as attractive small retail or finer grain spaces, such as the Commerce Court lobby, to improve animation and draw visitors into the lobby.

Another Panel member recommended the team to set more ambitious sustainability targets to set the tone of the project and produce the parameters where it is a financial success to not burn fossil fuels. If these parameters can be brought to the client early on, creating a balance in terms of finance and sustainability, then elements such as boilers and transition plan can be taken off the spreadsheet early in the development of the project. The Panel member encouraged the team to consider new low TEDI approaches to create an integrated strategy.

One Panel member commended the project for starting with a high sustainability objective and noted few projects in Toronto have reached this level. On a small site, structural imperatives take over very quickly and can leave the public realm experience as secondary, the Panel member suggested a similar public contribution to 30 Bay as an offer back to the City. The Panel member noted the public realm needs more contribution, offered ideas for the team to consider including building façade to respond to the future Ferry Terminal, manipulating the podium massing for public good, lifting the lobbies, liberating the ground plane with reduced loading, or bring

some of the adjacent landscape or park characteristics into the site. The Panel encouraged the team to bring together a ground floor ensemble that can connect and disrupt the public realm for the better.

Another Panel member noted there is very high demand for the pedestrian environment and agreed with the previous comments on elevated bridge connections.

2.5 Consensus Comments

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

General

- Appreciated the presentation and opportunity to comment on the big picture at an early stage.
- Commended the sustainability vision and objectives for the project.
- As a landmark site, the Panel supported additional height and density.
- The proposed use and the general arrangement of the building parti were supported.
- It is important to ensure the mandate of the process for publicly owned land, independent from the current peer review with the DRP and with City staff, is brought forth and can be tied to the project. Encouraged the Proponent to continue to work with the City on next steps to ensure there will be independent, new, ideas for the building married with the existing design work.
- A design competition is the first and best way to move forward with an independent public process for publicly owned land. However, as the proponent undertook an alternate approach, it was conceded that an independent design competition for the entire site may not be feasible at this time. As an alternative to a design competition, the Panel discussed other options including an empowered and project specific peer review process where the peer review committee has the ability to mandate design excellence - OR - A design partnership that can be developed through a limited competition or pre-qualification process, with focus on the building podium and its integration with a tower that has a strong vision for sustainability.
- At the next DRP, present the public process that is being pursued and present the project via the revised design concept. The functional structural and programmatic presentation was informative but not the basis of a successful idea for a prominent publicly owned site at the Waterfront.

Elevated Bridge

- Rejected the elevated bridge across Bay street. It is important to not repeat the mistakes made during a period of poor urban design in Toronto history.
- While there was no consensus on the proposed rebuilt bridge over Queens Quay at this review, some Panel members rejected the bridge and felt the rebuilt connection will infringe on the public realm work by Waterfront Toronto which prioritizes at grade movement to the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal. One Panel member asked to consider alternative strategies to reduce the visual hindrance from street level and obfuscation with the Queens Quay public realm, i.e. the bridge rebuilt as a local link between the two buildings positioned at a height higher than the existing bridge.

Public Realm

- Rejected the current ground floor design, consider other strategies to further enhance the site's public realm, i.e. lifting elements of the lobby, sculpting the podium massing, etc.
- Consider new, bold, visionary, and inclusive ideas to address the site and project – avoid “sameness” in the treatment of the ground floor and public realm.
- Design excellence at grade is critical and must be achieved. The podium design needs to be addressed in the peer review/ design input process and demonstrate how the building becomes part of the public realm.
- Provide new strategies for the building base that will ensure a connected public realm, signify the termination of Bay street as a great promenade, and welcome the public to the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal.

The Chair then asked if the proponent would like to provide a brief response.

Ms. Hare noted there is a lot to consider moving forward, the team remains committed in working with Waterfront Toronto and City of Toronto on delivering design excellence. Mr. Pontarini noted the feedback has been valuable, will help deliver sketch diagrams on activating the podium and creating an animated public realm.

2.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Chair then asked for a vote of Full Support, Conditional Support or Non-support for the project.

No vote was taken as the project was presented for Issues Identification.

3.0 43 Parliament/ 281 Front St. TR3 Data Centre – Schematic Design

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1113
<i>Project Type:</i>	Building
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Schematic Design
<i>Review Round:</i>	Two
<i>Location:</i>	West Don Lands
<i>Proponent:</i>	Equinix
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	WZMH
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	Nicola Casciato, Principal, WZMH; Mladen Nikolic, ARUP; Mitchell Chan, Studio F Minus
<i>Delegation:</i>	Maryam Madsen, WZMH; Trip Guinan, Equinix; Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto; James DiPaolo, Urban Strategies; Megan Rolph, City of Toronto; Deanne Mighton, City of Toronto

3.1 Introduction to the Issues

Josh Hilburt, Development Planner with Waterfront Toronto, began the introduction by recapping the project background, program, and development timeline. Mr. Hilburt noted the existing site context, previous DRP comments, and that today's review is Stage Two Schematic Design. Mr. Hilburt noted that the building height has changed since the last review and the areas for Panel consideration: ground floor frontage

animation along Front and Parliament, revised building massing and exterior façade materiality, public art, and the public realm. Mr. Hilburt then introduced Nicola Casciato, Principal with WZMH, to continue with the design presentation.

3.2 Project Presentation

Mr. Casciato began the presentation by recapping previous Panel comments, design approach with a focus of integrating the building as part of the urban fabric and provided an update on the exterior materiality of the building. Mr. Casciato noted the façade is composed with solids and voids with the west façade as a backdrop for the future park and anticipating the future east street.

Mr. Casciato noted TR3 is an evolution of the first design, decidedly modern, matching the height of the TR2 with a strong form on top to conceal the mechanical equipment. The team is pleased with the building anchoring the corner as a gateway building. Mr. Casciato noted the public realm design is inclusive of the driveway addressing condition of the future street and provided the site plan with updated tree and bench configurations.

Mitchell Chan, Principal at Studio F Minus, provided details on the digital art installation at the ground floor. Mladen Nikolic, Associate with ARUP, provided an update on the sustainability objectives and design strategies.

3.3 Panel Questions

The Chair then asked the Panel for questions of clarification.

One Panel member asked if the entrance is through TR2 and clarification on the bench location. Mr. Casciato answered the entrance of TR3 is shared with the existing entrance from TR2, the benches are located inside the property line. The Panel member asked if each of the public art “window” is a different diorama. Mr. Chan noted all the “windows” are the same but through the transmission of light they are activated and made unique.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on fan powered air flow since the mechanical load is very high and the building uses a lot of energy. Mr. Nikolic noted the team has eliminated any element that can possibly obstruct air flow.

One Panel member asked if the façade material reflectivity has been studied. Mr. Casciato noted the team is studying the reflectivity of the material, it is not very polished to mitigate against strong reflections.

Another Panel member asked if more trees can be planted as the plan looks sparse. Mr. Casciato noted that double row is not possible but increasing the density might be an option.

3.4 Panel Comments

The Chair then asked the Panel for comments.

One panel member asked to consider lowering the power use effectiveness to further improve the project's Toronto Green Standards compliance.

Another Panel member commended the project, encouraged more nature to be integrated in the public realm and focus on material impact. The Panel member encouraged the team to further reduce embodied carbon in the structure of the building, consider sustainable sourcing and green infrastructure elements that can be applied to the project.

Another Panel member noted that the ground floor animation strategy through digital art is still one dimensional, analogous to street elevation artwork. The Panel member encouraged the team to further push the architectural detailing such as the expression of the roof and fenestration details to elevate the architectural qualities of the project in anchoring the site.

The Panel member appreciated the thoughtful and comprehensive presentation. One Panel member noted the public realm landscape design can be further improved to draw a stronger relationship with the future park.

Another Panel member encouraged the team to further leverage the reflectivity of the façade as a design strategy, such as coordinating it with the artwork for greater visual impact. The Panel member asked the team to consider further connecting to the future park by continuing more of the landscape over at the corner of the site.

One Panel member felt TR3's roof currently has a disconnected relationship with the base expressions, that TR2's overall design has a more synergistic approach. The Panel member felt the roof is too high in comparison to the base and draws too much attention when it should be considered more as a background building. The Panel member encouraged the team to consider mixed-use at the base, such as a strip of retail. The Chair added that the team has expressed the project cannot accommodate this due to security reasons.

Another Panel member felt the continuous glassiness on the ground floor façade is overwhelming and tiresome for this important corner site. The Panel member felt that not only can the trees be spaced closer, they should also be moved closer to the curb as a powerful strategy to modulate the atmosphere of the entire street. Unless there are subsurface conditions that prevent this from happening, the trees should be moved. The Panel member suggested to pull out the bottom edge of the roof, bringing it closer to the top line of the vertical mass so the building will feel less disengaged. The Panel member felt the lack of program that helps animate the street is a serious concern as data centres begin to become more typological and frequent part of the city fabric. The Panel member recognized that the opportunity for this project to address that issue has passed but noted that City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto should encourage more mixed-uses for this type of sites. In medium to long term, a site like this should no longer be mono-functional. The Panel member noted that even film studios in the Port Lands precinct are hinting at the importance of an opened ground plane and public use despite the on-going need for security.

3.5 Consensus Comments

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

Building

- The revised design is less dynamic than the earlier iteration, encouraged the team to reference the previous design and achieve a more cohesive massing relative to the ground floor.
- Consider refining the reading of the roof siding seams and the cladding joint lines between the floors on the facade to be less pronounced. This will help support the massing reading as a sculpted and chiselled form.
- Ensure the copper cladding has a nuanced reading under different lighting conditions, consider bringing back a balanced level of reflectivity.
- Consider a physical mock-up to test the quality of the material under realistic lighting and understand the natural weathering effect of copper.
- Embrace the natural connection between the future park and the building, focus on creating a façade that will leverage this relationship.

Landscape

- Consider introducing more design variability in the benches, such as planters creating pockets of green space that will help the project relate to the future park across the street.
- Consider incorporating increased tree planting and use of surface materials in the design of the landscape.
- Ensure the public realm is designed to allow the plants to thrive, such as providing adequate soil depth for the trees.

Sustainability

- Continue to push and go beyond sustainable compliance objectives for this site, such as providing more information on the sustainable sourcing of materials and their embodied carbon.

Public Art

- Appreciated the information on the public art proposal.
- While the public art is interested in expressing the history and stories of the site through the lens of an art installation, ensure the relationship in the dialogue goes beyond colonial history - to before history - and truly flesh out the story as it pertains to the site.

The Chair then asked if the proponent would like to provide a brief response.

Mr. Casiato noted the roof profile is designed to collect water and the team will continue to investigate based on Panel comments.

3.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Chair then asked for a vote of Full Support, Conditional Support or Non-support for the project.

The Panel voted unanimously for Full Support.

CLOSING

There being no further business, the Chair then adjourned the public session of the meeting after a vote to go into a brief in-camera session.