



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel

Minutes of Meeting #157

Wednesday, October 26th, 2022

Hybrid meeting held in-person

Present

Waterfront Toronto Design Review Panel

Paul Bedford, Chair

Betsy Williamson, Vice Chair

George Baird

Gina Ford

Pat Hanson

Matthew Hickey

David Leinster

Nina-Marie Lister

Fadi Masoud

Emily Mueller De Celis

Jeff Ranson

Kevin Stelzer

Eric Turcotte

Regrets

Janna Levitt

Brigitte Shim

Representatives

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto

Emilia Floro, 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. King / Queen Triangle Public Art – Issues Identification
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GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair asked the Panel to adopt the meeting minutes from last month. The minutes were adopted.

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest for disclosure. Emily Mueller de Celis declared a conflict for **King / Queen Triangle Public Art** and recused herself from the review. Later in the meeting, Matthew Hickey disclosed that he was involved in the selection of Ryan Rice as the curator for selecting the artists for this project but was not involved in the actual selection process and therefore does not have a conflict.

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

Design Review Panel Updates:

Mr. Glaisek began by noting consensus comments from September 2022 WDRP have been shared with the **Legacy Art Project** team. While the project has completed the design review process with a vote of Full Support at Detailed Design, Mr. Glaisek noted the team continues to advance the design while responding to WDRP feedback, such as strengthening the landscape relationship by shifting the locations of the benches, improving the reading by limiting the asphalt to the path, and specifying plants that will bloom throughout the seasons.

Waterfront Toronto Updates:

Mr. Glaisek noted pathway construction and tree planting are continuing at York Street Park, while the production of the animal sculptures has also begun.

Leon Lai, Manager of the Waterfront Design Review Panel, concluded by reviewing the draft WDRP agendas for November 2022, and January 2023.

Chair's remarks:

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

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 King / Queen Triangle Public Art – Issues Identification

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1135
<i>Project Type:</i>	Public Realm
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Issues Identification
<i>Review Round:</i>	One
<i>Location:</i>	West Don Lands
<i>Proponent:</i>	Waterfront Toronto

Architect/ Designer: Amy Malbeuf and Jordan Bennett, Artist
Benjamin Matthews, Public Work

Presenter(s): Chloe Catan, Public Art Manager, Waterfront Toronto
Mireille Bourgeois, Artistic Director/ Art Manager, IOTA Studios
Amy Malbeuf + Jordan Bennett, Artists
Benjamin Matthews, Senior Project Leader, Public Work

Delegation: Alexis Cormier, IOTA Studios
Katie Black, City of Toronto
Shuraine Otto-Olak, Waterfront Toronto
Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto
Corey Bialek, Waterfront Toronto
Ken Dion, Waterfront Toronto

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Chloe Catan, Public Art Manager with Waterfront Toronto, began the introduction by reviewing the project background, the RFP and selection process, and the consideration of modifying the site's landscape to ensure the artwork is fully integrated and to make the area welcoming and accessible. Ms. Catan noted the WDRP will focus on ensuring the landscape design supports and reinforces the artistic conception of the project and creates a strong public space. Ms. Catan noted the existing site context, adjacent streets and public realm, West Don Lands public art master plan, underground infrastructure, and site constraints of the Flood Protection Landform (FPL).

Ms. Catan explained Waterfront Toronto's role as the overall project manager for implementation, the project timeline, and that the project is at the WDRP for Issues Identification review for the landscape only. Ms. Catan noted the areas for Panel for consideration including the landscape strategy, planting approach, material palette, and the project as a successful public realm. Ms. Catan then introduced Mireille Bourgeois, Artistic Director of IOTA Studios, to present the design.

1.2 Project Presentation

Ms. Bourgeois began by noting the team composition, project principles and goals, and introduced artist Jordan Bennett to continue the presentation. Mr. Bennett noted the site speaks to contemporary Indigenous realities, the resilience the communities have displayed in the face of colonization, and the changing realities in this time of climate, political, cultural, and socioeconomic change. Mr. Bennett stated the design is inspired by the site being located along the banks of the Don River, once a natural meander that would have experienced river sediment deposition including debris and storm wrack. Working with Waterfront Toronto, TRCA, City of Toronto, Minokamik, and local community groups, Mr. Bennett noted the artworks range in size and the intent is for the landscape to encourage discovery through movement.

Ben Matthews, Senior Project Leader with Public Work, noted the proposed site plan, existing site constraints, topography of the FPL, and the natural and site specific material palette. The landscape is intended to be permeable, resilient, and low

maintenance. Mr. Matthews noted sculptural benches that highlight the undulations of the upper banks, enhancing overall deposition and movement. Below the FPL, prairie plantings will be augmented on either side of the existing path, and lighting will be provided for the individual sculpture. Mr. Matthews noted the maintenance strategy and that the power of the project comes from the relatability to the objects.

1.3 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked for clarification on the site section and if the pedestrian path peaks at the crest then continues down towards east. Mr. Matthews responded that the path peaks at the crest while sloping down towards planted areas on either side of the path.

Another Panel member asked if there are plans for other landscape paths through the site, aside from the main AODA path. Mr. Matthews noted landscape paths can be exciting, such as a stone or exploratory path. Ms. Catan noted the budget would dictate whether this is possible.

One Panel member asked if the existing path can be modified. Mr. Matthews noted the team has been instructed to leave the path as is below the crest, but have expanded the western path to increase usable paved area. The on-site infrastructure limits the degree of changes that can be made to the path.

Another Panel member asked for the frequency of flooding at the site and whether it would be possible to add plantings below the top of bank line. Chris Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer with Waterfront Toronto, responded that the TRCA's approach to the "wet side" of the FPL is that nothing can be put there other than meadow grasses, similar to Corktown Common. While high flooding is not a frequent occurrence, the regulations strictly protect for it. The Panel member asked for the groups that will be engaged as part of Indigenous consultation. Mr. Bennett noted the team is speaking with Minokamik and the communities that are involved in the project such as local Indigenous groups and West Don Lands committee. The team has allocated time to meet new groups for consultation that have been introduced during the consultation process.

One Panel member noted the basic concept of the art has been established and asked the team for areas in the design that are still flexible to be tweaked through the consultation process. Mr. Bennett noted some areas are fixed and others are up for discussion. Ms. Bourgeois noted this is typical, the general idea will evolve through consultation. Acknowledging that the team are visitors to the site, Mr. Bennett noted Toronto Indigenous groups have already informed the design, and will continue to inform as the artwork advances in detail.

Another Panel member asked for more information on resin-bound paving. Mr. Matthews noted resin-bound paving is a permeable pavement system with a honeycomb structure that gives it a robust surface while sitting on an aggregate base. The material has been used at the Bentway and the Daniels Faculty landscape.

One Panel member asked if the existing landforms will be retained, and if the plan indicates areas on the site that are less visible and accessible making them more intimate. Mr. Matthews noted they are generally retained, the shapes will be manipulated to better respond to the art pieces. Mr. Bennett noted all the art pieces are meant to be visited while some are positioned higher depending on the landscape design. Ms. Bourgeois noted some of the elements like plantings will be designed to enhance safety concerns.

Another Panel member asked if there is data on the volume of walking and cycling traffic along the path, and more information on how the street bike path connects to the existing path. Ms. Catan noted the team will provide more information next time. From visiting the site, the space feels transitory, and people do not spend time in the triangle. Mr. Matthews noted the team is not interested in encouraging cycling through the site, but cyclists are welcomed.

One Panel member asked for the design intent of the retaining walls on the site and if there is any intention to incorporate them into the project as they are visually dominant. Ms. Catan noted there are many requirements around inspection and maintenance of the retaining walls, but it is a good conversation to have with Transportation Services.

Another Panel member asked if the site has been reinforced with riprap. Mr. Glaisek responded the site as is represents the final flood protection treatment, there is no need for additional riprap in this area.

Given the Humane Society building across the street, one Panel member asked if there is a pattern of pets using the area, and more information on the lighting requirements. Alexis Cormier, Project Manager with IOTA Studios, noted they do not have data on animal use, but confirmed lighting will be provided for the art in addition to the lighting that exists on site. Ms. Cormier noted if Transportation Services would like to enhance the site's lighting, that work can be integrated with the project. Ms. Catan noted lighting is important and will raise the question of how the site is currently used during the consultations.

The Chair then asked the Panel members for comments.

1.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member asked the team to clarify the relationship between pedestrian and cyclists to avoid conflicts, and commented the retaining walls are visually dominant elements that should be considered as the design advances.

Another Panel member noted the project is challenging from a landscape constraint perspective and congratulated the team for pushing the boundary on a small site. The Panel member encouraged the landscape to go beyond supporting the art, emphasize persistence, adaptation, and resurgence. The Panel member noted the issue with tall grass is that they have deep roots, consider a palette of wet meadow plants instead. The Panel member noted that natural paths in the landscape might be more experiential than functional, if considered they should support the artistic vision. The

Panel member noted there is an opportunity for a landscape palette that provides dynamism and encouraged the team to select plant species that allow strategic mowing.

One Panel member noted that the principal landscape scope should be finding the perfect locations for the art pieces. The project has the potential to become more than a passthrough, but a destination. The Panel member noted on slide 35 that the boulders, benches, and other elements appear to compete with the reading of the art pieces, and commented that the priority focus for the landscape is to make the art great.

Another Panel member noted he is a big fan of the artists' work and appreciated the project design. The Panel member noted the design should function as a riparian landscape but the aesthetic can be less natural, such as expressing more graphic edges. The Panel member felt the project will become a destination, and suggested the team study the graphic visual quality of the landscape to support the artistic vision.

One Panel member encouraged the team to engage with local service providers, allow community voices to help guide the project, and create an amazing space.

Another Panel member appreciated the wrack line metaphor and noted concerns at the transition moments between project scope and bike path. The Panel member asked the team to consider micro moves such as excavation, landform manipulation, or a large break of the wrack line, to help minimize the difference between the two sides of the site.

One Panel member noted the project is an important milestone for the on-going evolution of Corktown. The project approach integrating all the elements that relate to the river is a powerful design direction. The Panel member noted the existing intersection is very chaotic, the landforms are critical in creating a sense of place and help integrate the artwork with the landscape. The Panel member suggested celebrating the view from the crest line to the river and beyond.

Another Panel member asked the team to consider addressing the needs of cyclists, if any, to ensure there is no conflict with people convening for the art, such as signal for cyclists to slow down. It would be a disappointment if the site becomes a bike route diminishing space for pedestrians.

One Panel member asked the team to further explore the edges of the project and ensure circulation can be maintained without creating AODA issues. The Panel member asked the team to emphasize the sense of place, felt the space can evolve into a plaza and become a significant public realm. The treatment of the retaining wall must be considered if possible because it forms part of the verticality of the space. Lastly, the Panel member asked the team to consider the experience at night.

Another Panel member noted the landscape should be robust to create a sense of place in contrast to the heavy traffic. There are other options for walking or cycling to Corktown from this area, such as the path down to Bayview on the south side of King

Street, the Panel member suggested the team to consider replacing the path with more planted area to provide more space for an intense landscape experience.

1.5 Consensus Comments

General

- Strong support and enthusiasm for the overall project concept.
- Continue to carefully develop the details as the design advances.
- Seek more information from Transportation Services on the existing retaining walls on the north and south end of the site to identify any opportunity for enhancement, such as a mural.
- It is important to envision the site as a destination where visitors might come and discover the art pieces, rather than as a moment on a linear movement system. Consider an element of surprise in the design of the landscape.
- Consult local community groups on the existing uses of the site and ensure they are well integrated into the landscape design to create a successful public realm for the community, i.e. potential pet relief area due to proximity with Humane Society.

Landscape Design

- Consider how the site fits within the larger mobility network of the neighbourhood and ensure the landscape design supports desired uses such as walking and cycling, and that there is no conflict between pedestrians and cyclists.
- Maximize the planting intensity of the small site to create a powerful experience that is a destination and experientially unique enough to be juxtaposed against the intensity of the vehicular traffic of the area.
- Carefully place the art pieces while refining the landscape design to ensure strong integration between the elements and strengthen the reading and appreciation of the project. Consider the height and shapes of the landforms, the density and wildness of the vegetation, key sightlines, and viewpoints.
- Some Panel members felt the existing pathway is not needed, as there are various sidewalks and bike trails nearby, and should be replaced with more planted areas.
- Consider using the landscape to mark the moment where one can see the Don along the crest line of the site to help transition the western side to the eastern flood protected half.
- Suggest referencing the local riparian plant palette along the Don River in the selection of plant species.

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

Ms. Cormier thanked the Panel for the feedback, noted that the RFP criteria was to create plantings that require low to no maintenance, and thus the team proposed a

natural landscape aesthetic with reference to rack line and elements that can be found in the area. Ms. Cormier noted the question of the retaining wall is for Chloe and Waterfront Toronto to investigate.

Ms. Catan thanked the Panel and asked for clarification on the suggestion of removing the paths. One Panel member responded by suggesting to think about the issue of paths with a dissuasive design approach: if there are other well defined paths in the area for walking and cycling, then perhaps the project site should maximize its given area for landscape. Another Panel member suggested the team to review the holistic pedestrian network with Transportation. One Panel member noted that the suggestion is for the path to identify a preference for either walking or cycling.

Mr. Bennett thanked the Panel and noted the retaining walls are on the team's radar.

1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

No vote was taken at Issues Identification.

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.

These Meeting Minutes are formally adopted and approved by Panel on November 30th, 2022.

Signed--

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Paul Bedford, Waterfront Design Review Panel Chair

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Emilia Floro, City of Toronto Urban Design Director

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Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto Chief Planning and Design Officer