



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #160

Ontario Place: Public Realm Master Plan and West Island Issues Identification Review Excerpt

Wednesday, March 22nd, 2023
Meeting held in-person, hybrid

Present

Waterfront Toronto Design Review Panel

Paul Bedford, Chair
Betsy Williamson, Vice Chair
George Baird
Gina Ford
Matthew Hickey
David Leinster
Janna Levitt
Nina-Marie Lister
Fadi Masoud
Emily Mueller De Celis
Jeff Ranson
Brigitte Shim
Kevin Stelzer
Eric Turcotte

Regrets

Pat Hanson

City of Toronto Design Review Panel

Jim Gough
Jessica Hutcheon
Joe Lobko
Jim Melvin
Gordon Stratford

Representatives

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto
Emilia Floro, City of Toronto

Recording Secretary

Leon Lai

Overview of Review Agenda

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

1. Ontario Place: Public Realm Master Plan + West Island – Issues Identification
2. 153 – 185 Eastern Ave. – Issues Identification

Conflict of Interest:

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest for disclosure. George Baird, Kevin Stelzer, Eric Turcotte, and Emily Mueller De Celis, declared conflicts of interest for Ontario Place, and recused themselves from the review.

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 Ontario Place: Public Realm Master Plan + West Island – Issues Identification

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1134
<i>Project Type:</i>	Public Realm + Building
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Issues Identification
<i>Review Round:</i>	Two
<i>Location:</i>	Ontario Place
<i>Proponent:</i>	Infrastructure Ontario
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	Urban Strategies DSAI Studio TLA MSP LANDInc
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	Colin Wolfe, Senior Planner, City of Toronto Svetlana Lavrentieva, Senior Urban Designer, City of Toronto Ross Burnett, Vice President, Infrastructure Ontario Joe Berridge, Partner, Urban Strategies Inc. Neil Loewen, Senior Associate, Urban Strategies Inc. Gary McCluskie, Principal, DSAI Jeffery Craft, Design Director/ Principal, Studio TLA Shadi E. Gilani, Principal, Studio TLA Tim Nawrocki, Associate Director, MSP
<i>Delegation:</i>	Eric Pitre, Infrastructure Ontario Jordan Erasmus, Infrastructure Ontario Mark Lawson, Therme Group Doaa Elsamanoudy, Therme Group

Mohamed Salaheldin, Therme Group
George Saba, Therme Group
Sara Eng, Urban Strategies
Hakima Hoseini, Studio TLA
Patrick Morello, LANDInc
Paul Stevens, ZAS Architects
Ravneet Gupta, ZAS Architects
Dan Nicholson, City of Toronto
David Stonehouse, City of Toronto
Meg St John, City of Toronto
James Parakh, City of Toronto
Adrian Phillips, City of Toronto
Pina Mallozzi, Waterfront Toronto
Jed Kilbourn, Waterfront Toronto
Ian Ness, Waterfront Toronto
Kristal Tanunagara, Waterfront Toronto
Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto
Corey Bialek, Waterfront Toronto

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Chris Glaisek provided a summary of Waterfront Toronto's mandate to enhance the economic, social, and cultural value of waterfront lands and create an accessible and active waterfront area. Noting that design has played a critical role in that revitalization effort, and that design review plays an important role in service of that mandate, Mr. Glaisek stated that thoughtful design commentary here will allow all of our objectives to work together in improving the waterfront. It is important to keep in mind that many waterfront revitalization projects have been successfully delivered through public private partnerships. Mr. Glaisek noted our goal is to shape each project into part of a beautiful, visually coherent, and sustainable set of neighbourhoods along the waterfront. Today's meeting is a joint-panel review with both Waterfront and City of Toronto Design Review Panel members, which is a testament to the importance of this site.

Colin Wolfe, Senior Community Planner with City of Toronto, began the introduction by noting the City staff on file and provided an update to the City's role and review process. Mr. Wolfe noted that Ontario Place is designated as Other Open Space Areas in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, it is a cultural landscape of provincial significance recognized in the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value, and some key pedestrian views of the existing Ontario Place. Svetlana Lavrentieva, Senior Urban Designer with City of Toronto, noted other key policy guidance: tourism, attractions and entertainment uses are contemplated, public realm and heritage are foundational, buildings to be designed and organized to support the public realm, etc.

Leon Lai, Design Review Panel Manager with Waterfront Toronto, continued the introduction by noting that today is the second Issues Identification review for Ontario Place, focusing on both the Public Realm Master Plan and the West Island, and provided a recap of the July 2022 joint-review consensus comments. Ms. Lavrentieva then summarized the City of Toronto areas for Panel consideration, including the

location, massing, and design of the proposed entry building, comfort and generosity of the pedestrian connections and public realm, massing of the bridge in relation to existing bridges, massing and footprint of the main Therme building relative to heritage assets, and the Forum's design in relation to open space. Mr. Lai summarized the Waterfront Toronto areas for Panel consideration: distinction between public and private realm, extent of proposed lake filling to create the public realm and EA approval process required, scale of the proposed entrance bridge to West Island, scale and massing of the entry pavilion and main Therme building, key views, heritage landscape elements, accessibility of the public realm, sustainability strategy, and tie-in with the marine strategy. Mr. Lai then asked the proponent team to introduce themselves and present the design presentation.

1.2 Project Presentation

Ross Burnett, Vice President with Infrastructure Ontario (IO), introduced the design by noting IO has oversight of the redevelopment of the Ontario Place on behalf of the Ministry of Infrastructure, and thanked the Panel for hosting the project for review. Mr. Burnett noted Ontario Place has always been more than just a park, but a provincial destination, and the presentation will show the holistic vision that demonstrates how the important site can function as a local amenity, a city-building project, and a provincial destination – it is about balancing the many different uses on the site. Mr. Burnett expressed he looks forward to hearing the Panel's comments and introduced Joe Berridge, Partner with Urban Strategies, to begin the design presentation.

Mr. Berridge noted he has been involved in half a dozen attempts to revitalize these grounds. This design will create a provincial, national, and international destination, and in order to achieve this the project has to go big while balancing the natural environment and respecting the existing buildings and landscapes. Mr. Berridge noted his appreciation for the Cinesphere and “pods”, that they are too far away from the city, and it is important to bring the energy of the city to the site to fulfil the inherent potential those buildings originally presented. Mr. Berridge noted this revitalization requires big and small planning, and if the big is not done the small will not be achieved.

Neil Loewen, Senior Associate with Urban Strategies, continued the presentation by providing a process and engagement update, and recapped the big master plan moves. Mr. Loewen noted the existing topography and built form, Indigenous place-keeping strategy, the extent of flood hazard shorelines, proposed grade change, required regrading and surface improvements, existing tree health, and the preservation of some existing trees with planting of new ones increasing overall canopy. Mr. Loewen noted the new green space created, planting strategy, increase in overall permeable surfaces, the development and re-invigorating of key programs including future science programming, all-season amphitheatre, support amenities for the public realm, new programs, and the different character areas.

Tim Nawrocki, Associate Director with MSP, noted the existing mainland conditions and challenges, the proposed future condition, section at the water's edge, central gateway, east gateway with traffic adjustments, east bridge and causeway changes, and the design for Ontario Plaza. Mr. Nawrocki noted the landscape design will create

a unified space with native plants, increased tree canopy coverage, and large areas will have permeable paving. Mr. Loewen noted it is a place to celebrate throughout the year with boat launches and kayaking areas.

Gary McCluskie, Principal with DSAI, provided the overview for Therme and noted it is a “swimming pool in a greenhouse” with three-storey spaces with estimated fourteen thousand visitors per day. Mr. McCluskie noted the section of the building from entry pavilion, bridge to main building, the program breakdown, and the massing in context. Mr. McCluskie noted the built form design inspirations, plans and sections of the entry pavilion, public experience and access, and the design of the main building with outdoor spaces. Mr. McCluskie noted the sustainability targets are LEED Platinum and Toronto Green Standards Tier 2.

Jeffery Craft, Design Director and Principal with TLA, presented the vision for the west island public experience. Beginning with the sustainability initiatives, Mr. Craft noted the intent for habitat creation on land and water, the proposed character areas from the gateway entry, promenade plaza, west headland oak point, east headland and southern shore, area around Cinesphere and “pods”, to the wetland innovation zone. Mr. Craft noted the lake filling will help protect the island and the armoured shore will be accessible. Mr. Nawrocki noted the existing conditions and challenges around the Marina, the Forum, Brigantine Cove including flooding, stagnant water, aging heritage architecture, and programming and activation, and then summarized the proposed future condition.

Mr. Loewen concluded the design presentation by noting that most of the work except for Live Nation Amphitheatre, the widened central bridge, and removal of the Administration building, are anticipated to take place in phase 1 within the next 5 years to maximize the benefit of the project.

1.3 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked if alternative forms of parking structures have been considered before determining the need for a large underground parking garage. Mr. Loewen noted the design must accommodate a large number of visitors and not block views, therefore an underground parking structure was selected. The Panel member asked for the quality of the infill soil. Mr. Loewen noted the team is still early in the process but agrees this is an important element to consider preparing the site structurally. The Panel member asked for the width of the Martin Goodman trail here. Mr. Loewen noted the team has been working with the City on various options, the intent is to increase the width of the Martin Goodman Trail here; the overall public realm around Therme will be greater than or equal to 6m in width. The Panel member asked if portions of the terraced Therme outdoor spaces are accessible to the public. Mr. Loewen noted some of them will be used by ticket holders and is discussing with the City on determining the functions of those spaces.

Another Panel member asked if there is a reason to maintain the +83.0 elevation and if there is thinking around using the fill generated by the site for the lake filling. Mr. Loewen noted there is no specific intention to maintain the existing levels of topography, and there is intention to use existing fill but the design is still too early to

have this information. The Panel member asked if the ground elevation of the Therme main building is +83.0. Mr. McCluskie confirmed that is the elevation.

One Panel member asked if there is direct access from the main Therme building to the adjacent public realm. Mr. Loewen responded the intent is to provide some direct access to the public realm from the main building so users do not have to go back to the main entrance in order to access the west island public realm. The specific access points between Therme and the public realm have not been determined, and Mr. Loewen agreed that these are important considerations. The Panel member asked if the interior renderings from Therme reflect a position to purposely keep these views free of trees. Shadi E. Gilani, Principal with TLA, responded the sectional drawings reflect the vision for the landscapes adjacent to Therme and that they are meant to be lush. The Panel member asked for the rationale for the complete tree removal from the west island. Mr. Loewen noted the rationale is due to the grade change for flood protection, construction of new servicing, the terraforming on the west island, and the construction of the Therme building. Mr. Craft noted the team is working with an arborist to evaluate all trees and potentially transplant healthy trees and bring them back, this process will continue when the weather gets warmer. The Panel member asked if the bridge to Exhibition Place will be retained or improved. Mr. Loewen noted Metrolinx is doing a last-mile study on the future of the bridge.

Another Panel member asked for more information on designing for birds. Mr. McCluskie responded the buildings will follow the Toronto design standards. The Panel member asked for the number of mature trees that will be removed on both islands. Mr. Loewen noted there will be 370 mature trees removed on both islands. The Panel member asked if terrestrial and marine ecologists are part of the team. Mr. Loewen noted Morrison Hershfield and SLR Consulting on the team. The Panel member asked for the location of the meadow and what plants are planned for this biotype. Mr. Nawrocki responded the intent is to complement the existing planting at Trillium Park in certain areas, such as on the lower portion of the east island, some portions of the cove where wetland is not possible, and complementing some parts of the west island. Mr. Craft noted there is an understory planting which migrates from the meadows to the green roofs. The Panel member asked if there are public program areas outside the wetland area where you might expect some soft water infiltration. Mr. Craft noted it is only in the prescribed areas. The Panel member asked if the west island will be undertaking an Environmental Assessment (EA) under the Provincial Statute, if it will impact the design, and if there is anything on policy structure that you can share with us. Mr. Loewen noted the west island as a private tenant space is not included as part of an EA, there is no further policy structure or process information as part of this presentation. The Panel member asked for more information on lake fill and its impact on usability of the public realm and improving water quality, such that swimming can become possible in an area that is currently quite polluted. Mr. Craft noted the team is working with marine engineering firms to understand how to create an accessible armored shore, structure of the lake filling, requirements to mitigate the wave action, understand flood elevation levels. The Panel member asked if the team has completed a carbon impact calculation report for the tree removal. Ms. Gilani noted it will be part of this work and the designs will meet Toronto Green Standards. The Panel member asked if there is a plan for winter use. Ms. Gilani noted the western headland will be

flooded in the winter as an ice rink, the multi-purpose trail will allow for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the width of the public realm on the west island, in particular at the bridge. Mr. Craft responded that the width of the public realm varies around the west island with the minimum being 6m. The Panel member asked if the critical views of the “pods” and Cinesphere are legislated views under policy. Mr. Loewen responded that they are listed for cultural heritage significance through the heritage assessment of the site. The Panel member would like the team to provide an update on future of the Japanese Canadian pavilion that currently sits on the west island.

One Panel member asked which agency is doing the work for Ontario Line Station. Mr. Loewen noted it is Metrolinx. The Panel member asked if there is any discussion for an additional pedestrian bridge to improve the east-west connectivity between the two islands. The Panel member suggested redistributing the change rooms on the bridge to another location to lessen the functional demands for the bridge building.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the proposed parking spots and if a transportation study has been completed. Mr. Loewen noted there are 2,700 parking spots and a transportation study has been submitted as part of the development application. The Panel member asked if Therme will be operating public programs on the west island, Mr. Loewen responded no.

One Panel member asked if there are private Therme spaces in the public realm, if the east island Forum space is guaranteed in the proposal, and if there are plans to accommodate different user groups at different times, such as the Regent Park swimming pool. Mr. Loewen noted there will be no private Therme spaces in the public realm, and the Forum is included in the proposal as public space. The Panel member asked if it is possible for the Therme building to be lowered. Mr. McCluskie noted the team can look at that; the landform around the building will provide the function of flood protection.

Another Panel member asked if all three entry gateways to Ontario Place will have the same branding and asked for more information on the recreational pier. Mr. Nawrocki noted the team would like the signage at all three access points to feel like Ontario Place. Mr. Craft noted the pier will be multi-level, located at the deepest point for fishing, swimming, and diving. It will also include spaces for performance, similar to Breakwater Park in Kingston, and the team is working to understand the elevational changes. The Panel member asked if the heritage trail is a cohesive series of moments. Mr. Nawrocki noted that depends on if specific clearings will be created, and the team is working with the Indigenous consultant group. Mr. Morello noted the team has a comprehensive list of Indigenous consultation groups. Mr. Craft noted MCFN is the Indigenous design partner for the west island and the team is receiving direct input from them.

One Panel member asked the team to elaborate on the design partnership process with MCFN and if the team has spoken to any elders especially on water care. Ms. Gilani responded that the team is conducting workshops with MCFN, working towards a

comprehensive approach to the design of the west island, incorporating any cultural overlays, and speaking with knowledge keepers, and looking at the pavilion designs. The Panel member asked for clarification on the wording of “sample” on p.16. Mr. Loewen noted it means a compilation of recommendations from a longer list. The Panel member asked for the specific Indigenous languages being considered as part of the design recommendation. Mr. Morello responded there is design intent to express many Indigenous languages, the communities are going through a ranking exercise. The Panel member asked if there are Indigenous artists involved. Mr. Morello noted there will be Indigenous artists selected once a clear path forward has been identified for the public realm master plan.

Another Panel member asked for more information on the team’s approach to mediating the friction between public and private. Mr. Loewen responded there is a delineation between ticketed and non-ticketed areas, as there will be a fence integrated within the landscape that separates the Therme outdoor pool areas from the public realm. The Panel member asked if the entrance to the potential science pavilion is below grade. Mr. Loewen noted the link is below grade which leaves public space on the surface; both Therme and the science pavilion will have entrances that face the plaza. One Panel member asked for the architect for the pavilion. Mr. Loewen noted no architect has been selected; the underground parking lot is being designed by Quadrangle. The Panel member asked why the ticketing building is so large. Mr. McCluskie noted that the building provides more than just ticketing for visitors.

One Panel member asked for the elevation of the building finished floor and the public realm grade, and if water vehicles can sail under the bridges. Mr. Craft noted elevation information can be provided for the Panel, the new bridges will maintain the existing clearance and allow motorized boats to pass under. The Panel member asked if the design team’s position on the public realm is that no area should flood. Mr. Craft noted the island topography must be raised to stay above the rising water level, the team is taking a position that the entire public realm should be designed for resiliency and protected for the 50-year flood.

Another Panel member asked if there is any information on projected greenhouse gas emissions for the project and if there is any energy modelling and water use for Therme. Mr. Loewen noted there is an energy study being performed but there is no detail at this stage.

The Chair then asked the Panel members for comments.

1.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member appreciated the team’s clarity in the presentation. The Panel member noted alternative parking structures can offer an opportunity for more flexible future uses when demand for vehicles shifts, dramatically reduces embedded carbon and cost, and future-proofs against water and flooding, etc. The Panel member felt soil quality for new fill is essential for a robust and healthy tree canopy and plant ecology, and encouraged re-use materials from the existing site for the new construction. It is important to provide great lighting for the public realm and programs such as warming stations for the winter, and a circulation plan that works throughout the year. The Panel

member recommended avoiding any abrupt boundary changes between private and public, and the project is the strongest when there are gradual transitions.

Another Panel member suggested the team secure public access to the islands and make water access safe. The Panel member felt the team has created a calm waterway and a rough edge, and that distinction in landscape will inform the appropriate kind of programming. There is a strong argument for improving east-west connection between the islands and a new bridge should be considered on the west end of the west island connecting to the mainland. The panel member recommended the architectural team continue to consult Indigenous communities to bring more Indigenous qualities to the design. In terms of the planting zones, the Panel member recommended 9-10m of buffer between Therme and the public realm. The Panel member recommended reducing the scale of the corten steel wall and making that elevation more gradual and less harsh. The public realm outside of the west island feels more in tune with the objective of naturalization and recommended the team make the Therme bridge less exposed with a landscape that provides microclimate.

One Panel member noted the feeling of being on an island in the lake is a key contributor to landscape architect Michael Hough's original vision for Ontario Place and encouraged the team to consider this quality carefully as the design advances. On the West Island, the Panel member felt the separation between public and private is too narrow, encouraged the team to enhance the public edge, and ensure the spaces behind the fence also contribute to the experience of the public realm – the whole edge should be conceived as an integrated landscape.

Another Panel member appreciated the development of the Forum and felt that it works well with Trillium Park. The ideas for the playground are very encouraging to keep the spirit of Ontario Place alive. The Panel member suggested scale studies for Forum events, consider more soft landscaping while ensuring access during events. The Panel member recommended thoughtfully deploying the geometric gate structures to all three entrances, in particular at the west entrance. The Panel member noted the Therme bridge feels like a building or a ship and not a bridge, the existing arrival experience to the West Island is gone - it is important to balance the program with the scale of the building. The bridge should be designed as an open structure that creates a feeling of wellbeing when traversing across. The Panel member suggested increasing the overall length of the ecological active shoreline and expressed concerns for the built form and light pollution impact to birds and animation habitats.

One Panel member appreciated the ambition of connecting with nature which is integral to health and wellness benefits. The Panel member felt the public realm has to be made more legible, and asked the team to provide the ecological impact of the project before and after the buildings – it is important to understand the net habitat lost to the islands and propose strategies in response. The Panel member noted new trees do not have the same carbon sequestering volume as old trees, so planting new trees replacing old will still have an overall net loss. The Panel member suggested a hybrid strategy where some trees can remain, provide a cost benefit analysis for the project to understand the impact of the landscape work and verify the need for the tree removal and raising of topography – it is important to conduct evidence-based design.

The Panel member recommended gradient ecologies in the landscape because pure types of ecosystems is not best practice for this site.

Another Panel member thanked the team for putting great effort into the work, appreciated the Province for stepping in and the private sector meeting the call for revitalization. The Panel member expressed that Ontario Place is a place to demonstrate best practice, and is encouraged by the combination of landscape elements on the east island and the public realm master plan. The Panel member asked the team to provide more illustrations on how the Forum can accommodate different uses and appreciated the occupiable armour stones. The Panel member asked the team to consider comfort, shade, sense of arrival, for the Therme entry and main building, not just iconic architecture. While appreciating the expansion of the public realm, the Panel member felt the western public gateway has been compromised because it feels like a bridge for Therme and not for the public. The buildings are too large and present a backside to Lake Shore acting like a barrier to the waterfront. The Panel member asked the team to consider alternative strategies in creating a more welcoming public experience, such as separating private and public access to two bridges. The Panel member noted the scale discrepancy between private and public remain large, and there are key elements where the architecture is getting in the way of publicness. First, the scale of the entry pavilion is too large, bulky, and fortress-like. Second, the building is not integrated with nature or landscape, consider a landscape strategy liked that employed at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden Visitor Centre by Weiss Mandredi, an inhabitable landscape building, to help the building feel part of the natural environment. The Panel member appreciated the balance of recreational park and entertainment needs.

One Panel member asked the team to provide building elevations from Lake Shore, and section drawings from Exhibition Place to the islands, to assess scale of the project. The Panel member recommended the team reassess the program of the bridge and redeploy it elsewhere to let the bridge be a bridge, not a building. This is especially important because this bridge will set a scale precedent for future bridges. The Panel member noted a shift in scale, that the “pods” are now more delicate in the context of the very large structure, and suggested pushing the Therme building down into the site to reduce their scale relative to the “pods” and Cinesphere and not undermine the existing heritage values. The Panel member recommended more landscape buffer around Therme and Live Nation, and provide more details in the east-west sections to understand relationship between built-form and the public realm – the issue of scale should be wrestled to the ground. The Marina currently feels like a leftover element of the master plan and should be further developed. The Panel member asked the team to provide a detailed circulation plan, more information on the role of the Forum for public gatherings and large events, consider a new bridge between the islands to improve east-west movement, and questioned the appropriateness of planting Palm trees in the Therme building as there may be better species that are native and more representative of Ontario. The Panel member asked the team to provide clarification on the maintenance responsibilities of the project.

Another Panel member appreciated the reduction of surface parking and the widening of the public realm to improve pedestrian experience. Noting a lack of big public gesture on the east island, the Panel member felt that in contrast Therme feels like a

fortress and that the people in the public realm there will have a strange experience with no porosity through the site. The Panel member encouraged the team to establish a direct connection from the site to the Ontario Line station and strongly supported increasing the total tree canopy coverage. The Panel member is skeptical of the vehicular mode split percentage and asked the team to provide more information and identify a parking strategy that considers parking duration, capacity, and impact on overall project design.

One Panel member noted that building on an island creates many natural challenges. The Panel member is concerned with the openness of the site to the public and felt that since the entrance pavilion is primarily a transit hub, an underground tunnel should be considered like Porter Airport. The Panel member felt the building should take a position on water and identify strategies for water collection, water movement, etc. The Panel member asked for more information on window cleaning such as an expansive glass structure, impact of light pollution, heat island effect on the public realm, and if there are opportunities for reusing the building heat elsewhere. The Panel member is concerned that the final building will have many mullions and not be as transparent as currently rendered – not aware that “greenhouse” buildings of this type are still being constructed. The Panel member recommended lowering the building to a more appropriate height and integrate ecology into the design. The Panel member appreciated the landscape initiatives on the east island, suggested further developing the geometric gateway structures so they are more strategic in form and use while embodying the qualities of the original vision of Ontario Place.

Another Panel member encouraged the team to step back and consider how the project will make a better city with a more civic lens and aspirational spirit. The Panel member noted the current issues are resilience, environmental performance, and climate change, and asked the team to create a design, especially on the west island, that responds to those challenges. It can be the Crystal Palace of today if it is forward-looking and positive, and that all Ontarians can relate to and find pride in. The Panel member recommended to right size the buildings, integrate the building with landscape, mitigate energy consumption instead of using more, and seek sustainability objectives beyond LEED that are appropriate for the project. The Panel member urged the team to be forensic and identify the essential elements which might result in a less monumental massing and landscape at the end, and create a far more nuanced public realm. The Panel member emphasized the need for the project to have a civic vision for where the City is heading in the future.

One Panel member felt the presentation is missing an emotional perspective to help understand why this project is meaningful. With that said, revitalization is good and the Panel member recognized the important opportunity to evolve a World Heritage significant landscape. The Panel member felt the work feels bounded in process and form, there is insufficient evidence that demonstrates that the activation of private use will benefit the public realm. The Panel member felt this project should demonstrate the approach of leading with landscape. While appreciating the thinking around resiliency, innovation around wetland, and creating more continuity in the public realm, the Panel member expressed concern with the grading strategy and asked the team to provide section drawings showing existing and proposed grading.

Another Panel member encouraged the team to understand the meaning of the word “Ontario”, continue to consult with MCFN, and suggested urban Indigenous communities be included in the consultation process. The Panel member asked the team to provide clear information on the outcomes of the consultation process and how the design has evolved based on those comments, continue to lead with the idea of place-keeping and leave Ontario Place in a better condition than prior to revitalization. The Panel member asked the team to provide ecological impact information to MCFN as consultation continues to advance.

One Panel member noted reducing carbon emission is the primary focus, a one-of-a-kind building like this is difficult to set targets for and suggested the team to study similar buildings around the world to evaluate the carbon emission within its peer group. This is very important for the future zero-carbon objectives for both Toronto and Ontario. The Panel member suggested the team study the Ontario energy mix and outline a zero-carbon aspiration. Moreover, the Panel member recommended the team to establish performance targets for embodied carbon emission for the project, and utilize innovative and low carbon materials to meet that target.

1.5 Consensus Comments

General

- Appreciated the clear and detailed presentation.
- Emphasized the need for the project to provide a clearer integration experience of the public vs. private realm and the value of the cultural heritage landscape.
- Adapt a civic vision that reflects contemporary practice, where private program can be better balanced with public program and embrace the current environmental challenges.
- Encouraged the Proponent to consider the overall environmental impact of the proposal and identify an innovative strategy addressing climate change, sustainability, and resilient design.
- Overall concern with the dominant scale and massing of Entry Pavilion, Therme bridge and main building, and their impacts on the existing buildings and cultural heritage landscape.
- Provide a detailed circulation plan for pedestrians between the East and West Islands and the Martin Goodman Trail.
- Provide more information on Indigenous engagement process and design integration. Identified the need for more consultation with Indigenous populations, including urban Indigenous communities. Reflect on Indigenous place-keeping principles and better integrate into proposed design.
- Reflect on the meaning of the word “Ontario” - Iroquois word meaning sparkling water to provide inspiration for the buildings to have a conversation with water. Make reference to indigenous natural building materials and language, i.e. longhouse vs greenhouse, avoid use of Corten steel, etc.
- Encouraged the Proponent to address the proposed Science Centre use in a more fulsome way at this stage of development, and continue to explore future partnership with Science Centre, ROM, or other cultural institutions.

Public Realm Master Plan

- Appreciated the work done so far on the Public Realm master plan.
- Strong support for the overall public realm master plan concepts for the East Island, including the renewed Forum, children’s play area, and opening the “eastern gap” for paddlers along Lake Shore Boulevard. Look forward to seeing more details at the next review.
- The Forum feels a little barren with a lot of hardscaping, ensure the area can accommodate a range of active uses while providing the appropriate ecological framework and amenities for passive gathering and other uses.
- Provide more information on the restoration strategy of the Cinesphere, Pods, and Marina.
- Provide more information on the marine strategy and a dock for water taxis

Therme Built Forms

- Concerned with the scale, height, footprint, and massing of the Therme built forms, including the main building, entrance pavilion, and bridge, with respect to their relationship to the proposed public realm and the existing Ontario Place heritage attributes:
 - The main Therme building feels oversized for the West Island, overwhelming the proposed public realm and the existing heritage attributes, including the “pods” and cinesphere, identify opportunities to reduce overall scale, i.e. reducing the size of buildings, pushing the main building further into the ground,
 - provide substantial setbacks from the proposed building to the public realm and “pods” and Cinesphere, and wider landscape buffer to soften the impact of the building.
 - The main Therme building feels fortress-like, provide strategies to introduce porosity and further integrate the architecture with the public realm, consider providing a consistent and wider landscape buffer between the building and the publicly accessible space, and create more gradual transitions from public to private.
 - The proposed bridge feels more like a building than a bridge, obscuring public views to the heritage “pods” and Cinesphere, consider strategies to reduce the scale of the bridge building, or removing the building program from the bridge, and create a more open bridge experience.
 - The proposed entry pavilion overwhelms the main side of the site, detracts from the sense of public access and Ontario Place being a public place, explore opportunities to reduce the scale of the building and consider using landscape to soften the scale impact.
- Consider an interior plant palette that is more reflective of Ontario’s diverse climate and tree species and promotes ecological health for occupants.

Therme Public Realm

- Appreciated the expanded public realm area around Therme with additional public programming including kayaking, swimming pier, etc.
- As this work is contingent on lake-filling, provide more information on the environmental impacts and the environmental assessment process associated with lake filling

- Provide strategies to more closely integrate the public realm with the private uses of the site and dissolve the threshold between them.

Site Connectivity and Parking

- Ensure a robust connection from future Ontario Line station to the site, provide more information and work with the City to identify a strategy for maximizing transit connectivity with the future Ontario subway line and Go Transit station
- Pursue an integrated and sustainable long-term parking strategy with Exhibition Place that would leverage all existing surface parking.
- Reflect on the lessons learned from the Rogers Centre (Skydome) to maximize transit links and minimize parking.
- Appreciating there will be high demand for parking, provide clarification on the parking demand calculations for the site.
- Futureproof the garage structure so it can be adapted for other uses if future parking demand declines.
- Consider strategies for improving the east-west connectivity between the two islands, and consider an additional bridge to the mainland at the far west end.
- Supplement the large site section drawings with more detailed section drawings of important moments and circulation.

Sustainability

- Consider ways to retain more of the existing trees and reducing the ecological impact of tree removal, the net ecological loss of removing mature trees from the West Island will not be compensated by the proposed new trees
- Provide more information on the net loss and gain of ecological habitat throughout the development including proposed tree removal/planting, and lake filling.
- The team is encouraged to go beyond LEED and explore higher and more innovative sustainability objectives.
- Concerned with the environmental and embodied carbon impact of the proposed underground parking garage.
- The Therme building is a large greenhouse that has a substantial ecological, energy, and carbon footprint, consider the longevity and performance of the steel and glass structure, identify strategies to reduce the long-term environmental impact of the building,
- Identify strategies to re-use materials and artifacts in the new design.

1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

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

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

Mr. Berridge thank you for the summary and appreciated the fine direction, time, and seriousness. Mr. Berridge noted the team will return to the Panel in the future, currently in the middle of serious discussions with the City, and is confident that the team will address the common themes raised.

The Chair noted that the Design Review Panel's role is advisory, not regulatory. The City is the regulatory body and their review process will determine the end result for this project.

Mr. Loewen provided a clarification on the motor-split – 10% of visitors will drive their own vehicles and park, which is different from mode-split which accounts for passengers arriving by rideshare, so the number will be higher than 10%. The entry pavilion design for Science Centre is very conceptual, we have received your feedback which will inform the design moving forward.

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.
