



WATERFRONTToronto

Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #175

Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Meeting held in-person hybrid at Waterfront Toronto

Present

Paul Bedford, Chair
Betsy Williamson, Vice Chair
Pat Hanson
Matthew Hickey
Emily Mueller De Celis
David Leinster
Janna Levitt
Fadi Masoud
Eric Turcotte

Regrets

Nina-Marie Lister
Pina Petricone
Brigitte Shim
Kevin Stelzer

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 a review of:

1. WELRT 2A: Stage 3 Detailed Design
2. WELRT Yonge Slip: Stage 3 Detailed Design
3. WELRT 2B + 2C: Stage 3 Detailed Design
4. 55 LSBE Block 4: Stage 2 Schematic Design

GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest for disclosure. There was no conflict of interest for any Panel members.

The Chair then asked Waterfront Toronto to give an update on last month's projects.

Design Review Panel Report Back:

Mr. Lai noted that the April 2025 Consensus Comments have been shared with the **McCleary District Precinct Plan** team and a follow-up workshop has been planned to advance the design and respond to DRP comments. Tentatively, the project is scheduled to return to the WDRP in Q3 2025.

Waterfront Toronto Updates:

Mr. Lai provided a construction update on **Port Lands Flood Protection**: Badlands area in River Park North are ready for planting, marker trees have been chosen for the first phase as part of the Indigenous Design elements, Fire Hall 30 interior fit up and heritage conservation is well underway, bike bridges are in place and stone work has completed in River Park South, and water play testing and commissioning is ongoing. Mr. Lai concluded by noting the tentative WDRP agendas for June and July.

Chair's remarks:

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

PROJECT REVIEWS

1.0 WELRT 2A – Stage 3: Detailed Design

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1141
<i>Project Type:</i>	Infrastructure/ Public Realm
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Detailed Design
<i>Review Round:</i>	Three
<i>Location:</i>	Central Waterfront
<i>Proponent:</i>	Waterfront Toronto
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	West 8 DTAH
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	Shelly Long, Team Leader, West 8
<i>Delegation:</i>	Madeleine Ghillany-Lehar, West 8 Adriaan Geuze, West 8 Yvonne Lam, DTAH Ayako Kitta, DTAH Fraser Vanderwel, DTAH



David Moses, Moses Structures
Mark Pirrello, Moffatt Nichol
Jackie Tam, City of Toronto
Joshua Paetkau, City of Toronto
David O'Hara, City of Toronto
Allison Meistrich, City of Toronto
Thomas Rees, City of Toronto
Jane Graham, Shore Plan
Margot Shafran, Waterfront Toronto
Pina Mallozzi, Waterfront Toronto
Katya Zappitelli, Waterfront Toronto
Patrick Meredith-Karam, Waterfront Toronto
Jed Kilbourn, Waterfront Toronto
Corey Bialek, Waterfront Toronto
Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto
Mira Shenker, Waterfront Toronto

1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Margot Shafran, Project Manager with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project by summarizing the various segments of the Waterfront East LRT project and noted the project is led by City of Toronto Transit Expansion in partnership with Waterfront Toronto and the TTC. Ms. Shafran noted the review focus of Queens Quay East 2A is from Bay Street to Street A and Yonge Slip. Ms. Shafran recapped the project objectives, existing conditions of Queens Quay East, Yonge Slip lakefill considerations, existing uses at Yonge Slip, and the existing marine hub. Ms. Shafran noted Yonge Slip is identified as a critical node for the Marine Transport Network in the 2020 Marine Strategy Report. Ms. Shafran recapped the previous WDRP Consensus Comments from March 2021 and Nov. 2024, noted the projects are being reviewed today at Stage 3: Detailed Design, and asked the Panel to consider the following areas: connection between WaveDeck and marine life, overall design cohesion and integration, the green infrastructure, arrival experience, and pedestrian movement. Ms. Shafran then introduced Shelley Long, Team Leader with West 8, to present the design.

1.2 Project Presentation

Ms. Long began with summarizing the legacy of Queens Quay, the Central Waterfront Masterplan, transformation from west to east, and the extents of the 2A design segment. Ms. Long noted the key advancements in the 60% design that builds on Indigenous engagement of supporting placemaking and ecology, the arrival intersections, transit stops, and the immersive yet distinct character of the streetscape. Ms. Long noted the new maple leaf paver typology, block ends character, unique social character of informal seating, inclusive public gathering of formal seating, midblock clearing, and the overall planting strategy. Ms. Long noted the soil volume, plant maintenance, and the understory plant species.

Ms. Long noted the typical intersection design, wayfinding beacons for accessibility, transit stop design in relation to the intersection and pedestrian crossing, and other

site-wide strategies including lighting, stormwater management, and pick-up/ drop-offs.

1.3 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked for more information on the planting strategy for the area on north side between cars and transit. Ms. Long responded it is a green gutter - a planted bioswale, often in the shadow of the TTC stop that is around 1m wide.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on the soil volume strategy. Ms. Long responded that on the north side, it is a mix of soil cells and extra space to achieve 30 cubic meters; on the south many of the trees don't require soil cells if the volumes are maximized laterally.

One Panel member asked if the walkways drain into the bioswales and if east of Bonnycastle Street is all red granite. Ms. Long noted yes, they drain into the bioswales and it is red granite however that is delivered through the Quayside package.

Another Panel member asked if the team is considering a higher form of edge condition around the planters that can serve as bench and plant protection. Ms. Long noted the intention is to create an edge that is cane detectable and uses taller erratic elements for seating. There is no toe rail around the planters.

One Panel member asked for elaboration on the Indigenous engagement process. Pina Mallozzi, Senior Vice President of Design, responded that the engagement process was run by Minokamik with in-person sessions with Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) to discuss geography. The team received comments on fish habitat, ecology, and planting. The Panel member asked how the design has been affected by the consultation. Ms. Long noted the stones are one element introduced for people to learn about ecology and history, the urban savanna is another where the team interprets the planting metaphorically as a landscape that is managed and stewarded. Ms. Mallozzi noted the team will look at Indigenous owned businesses to supply the plant materials. The Panel member asked if there is any consideration on placement of waste and recycling bins. Ms. Long noted they are located at block-ends, not next to benches, but in higher traffic areas.

Another Panel member asked for more information on plant maintenance. Ms. Shafran noted that the team is collaborating with the green infrastructure subset of City of Toronto Transportation and Services, there has been a series of site visits, and they will be the primary maintenance operators. Parks, Forestry, and Recreation (PFR) will be maintaining the heads of slips, creating a toolkit for the management of work, get feedback and tweak operations as needed. The Panel member asked if the tree pit detail at the head of slip has been advanced. Ms. Long noted the detail is similar to Queens Quay West.

1.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member commented that the design has nice continuity with Queens Quay West and that the separation between cycling and walking is positive. Overall thorough and excellent work.

Another Panel member commended the strong presentation and inspiring vision for Queens Quay East (QQE), supported the relationship with the Don River and the powerful linkage with the new park. The Panel member appreciated the new ecological focus typology and asked the team to continue to advance the long-term maintenance strategy.

One Panel member supported the design, and felt the innovative green gutter is precedent setting.

Another Panel member commended that the double row of trees will give more impact to the street, felt pet is a serious issue that the team needs to address, and is excited to see the project implemented.

One Panel member commended the same team for continuing to work on Queens Quay and that the lessons learned ultimately add to the quality of the public realm, such as the berm along Martin Goodman Trail - a small but innovative gesture. The Panel member felt the two-sided stop for TTC is a game-changer, noted that these are design moves that can only result in a long period of work and support from the City. The Panel member commended the complex aesthetics of the planting and the location of the TTC stops.

Another Panel member appreciated the clarity in the presentation and the planting plan, noted that the rest of the city can respond, learn to embrace this new typology and become a new precedent.

One Panel member asked the team to speak confidently about the Indigenous story behind the design as this is something truly unique to Queens Quay East. Ensure the waste bins are located so they are not randomly placed in the future. The Panel member asked the team to consider adding social infrastructure such as bike repair station.

Another Panel member noted Toronto streetscape is notorious for being monotonous and appreciated the design being something unique and different. The Panel member asked the team to push the design of the benches as they can become signature design elements like the WaveDeck, and think of a system that creates a clear separation and protection of the planting beds from pet use – don't underestimate the usefulness of planter protection and find opportunities to raise the perimeter edge where possible.

1.5 Consensus Comments

- Support for the overall design.
- Support for the double row of trees.

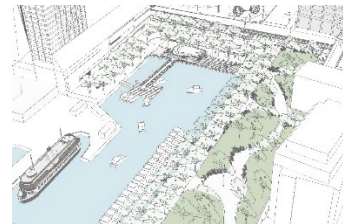
- Support for the location of the TTC stops that are offset from the intersection as this will help avoid overcrowding at the crossings.
- Continue to address the concern of pet use as there are many dogs in the area, consider how the planters can be protected to ensure long term success.
- Excited to see the project become a precedent for street design in the City
- Continue to expand the impact of Indigenous input on the design, be bold and make visible those ideas to help make Queens Quay East unique.

1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Panel voted unanimous Full Support for the project.

2.0 WELRT Yonge Slip – Stage 3: Detailed Design

Project ID #: 1141
Project Type: Public Realm
Review Stage: Detailed Design
Review Round: Three
Location: Queens Quay East
Proponent: Waterfront Toronto
Architect/ Designer: West 8
 DTAH
Presenter(s): Shelley Long, Team Leader, West 8
 Adriaan Geuze, Principal, West 8
Delegation: Madeleine Ghillany-Lehar, West 8
 Adriaan Geuze, West 8
 Yvonne Lam, DTAH
 Ayako Kitta, DTAH
 Fraser Vanderwel, DTAH
 David Moses, Moses Structures
 Mark Pirrello, Moffatt Nichol
 Jackie Tam, City of Toronto
 Joshua Paetkau, City of Toronto
 David O'Hara, City of Toronto
 Allison Meistrich, City of Toronto
 Thomas Rees, City of Toronto
 Jane Graham, Shore Plan
 Margot Shafran, Waterfront Toronto
 Pina Mallozzi, Waterfront Toronto
 Katya Zappitelli, Waterfront Toronto
 Patrick Meredith-Karam, Waterfront Toronto
 Jed Kilbourn, Waterfront Toronto
 Corey Bialek, Waterfront Toronto
 Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto
 Mira Shenker, Waterfront Toronto



2.1 Project Presentation

Adrienne Geuze, Principal with West 8, began the presentation by noting the Central Waterfront Masterplan, the three components of the head-of-slip typology, legacy of Wavedecks, and building on the history at Yonge Slip. Shelley Long, Team Leader with West 8, continued the presentation by noting the importance of Yonge Street, the slip and pier together marking the start of the street, and the future Yonge Slip Park as an opportunity for celebration. Ms. Long noted the adjacent architectural context, urban objects, and the key components of the new slip.

Ms. Long described the design: the arrival, vehicular drop-off and pick-up, pedestrian crossing and public realm, head of slip, shade structure and connections to the water via floating gangway. Ms. Long presented the WaveDeck design evolution and the dialogue with the new shade structure, Ms. Long noted the timber shade structure will advance the design of the WaveDeck with a light, translucent, and efficient structural design. Ms. Long then noted the gangway and slip phasing parameters, a passenger's arrival sequence, 3D views, soil volume, lighting, and key dimensions of the overall plan.

2.2 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked if there is a minimum number of boat and taxi parking. Ms. Long noted there is a mooring zone on the east side, no permanent mooring on the western wall, and more dynamic docking at the floating dock accommodating multiple operators. Mr. Geuze noted there are eight parking spots around the floating dock, the team is interested in movement – a theatre of taxis.

Another Panel member asked for clarification on queuing, if people will wait on the floating dock. Ms. Long noted people cannot wait on the gangway because it is necessary for evacuation, the floating dock will allow a maximum 2min wait, people will be brought down by a lead person from the operating company.

One Panel member felt the tabletop area can be increased. Ms. Long noted the goal is to maximize the tabletop footprint, carefully calibre the size with all the vehicles that have to turn in and can park one bus on the side - it is currently 15m wide. Ms. Long noted a standard crossing is 6m and the team would like to triple that.

Another Panel asked if the team has considered designing the entire driveway as a woonerf. Ms. Long noted accessibility is a serious concern, the western waterfront does not have any curb less driveways, so it is important to maintain that predictability on the east side, and granite pavers is not possible due to the turning impact of heavy vehicles.

One Panel member asked for the accessibility strategy for the WaveDeck, such as for wheelchair users and the vision impaired. Ms. Long noted that the existing WaveDecks are 95% accessible except for the steeper parts with railing and seating, the new WaveDeck will have the same markers to guide movement and denote use change – it will be more than 80% accessible.

2.3 Panel Comments

One Panel member commented that the team has done as much as possible, given the complex site and composition of the elements of the waterfront, to accommodate pedestrian movement. 15m is a generous crossing width and feels sufficient in managing traffic flow. The Panel member felt envisioning the Yonge Slip Park site is very helpful in appreciating the design of the slip, and supported the location and design of the shade structure.

Another Panel member noted the project will be a huge magnet for the waterfront, and it is important for the history of the site to be expressed, and that the overall site is organized appropriately. The Panel member did not support the pavilion structure because the design felt heavy and awkward. The WaveDeck loses its conceptual strength when it comes up and becomes a different element.

One Panel felt that the arrival experience is still not enough because the dimensions of the public realm are all somewhat even. The Panel member suggested decluttering is important at the water's edge, moving the shade structure from the cone of vision is good but not sure if it is a better location. The Panel member questioned the angling of the gangway, that it takes away from the simplicity of the promenade. The shade structure is similar to the WaveDeck only in terms of its material, but the language of the design is different – the WaveDeck is one way directional and does not naturally become a two-way system. The Panel member noted there are many examples of this type of structure around the world, the geometry is not unique, and asked the team to consider less is more and develop a design that is more authentic to the waterfront.

Another Panel member felt the general organization of the design is good and continue to consider how the system might accommodate growth in the future. The Panel member appreciated the theatre analogy but felt that the shade structure is foreign to the design, the gangway should read more as a part of the family of WaveDeck. The Panel member appreciated the context of the park, helpful in understanding how the full site would come together. The Panel member commented that the straightforwardness of the pedestrian path is more important and consider expanding the materiality of the tabletop.

One Panel member appreciated the continuation of the master plan vision and encouraged the team to not hold back on the narrative and be bold.

Another Panel member was impressed with the organization of site functionalities, supported the shade structure, and commended the team for continuing to push for a bold vision.

One Panel member appreciated the retrospective presentation, and commented that designing the site in relation to the adjacent park is important as it helps to situate the overall proposal. The Panel member noted the structure is less a pavilion but more a shader, and asked the team to continue to iterate in a way that is less structurally driven but more West 8, streamline the design so the shade comes from the structure itself and not an additional element like the translucent roof panels. The Panel member felt the team resolved the overall slip organization is a very good way.

Another Panel member added that there is general support for the road design and did not feel that the red granite can spill over more to the rest of the road, instead focus on the width of the tabletop as an area that can use more study to determine the best dimension.

2.4 Consensus Comments

- Appreciated the detailed presentation and the team’s responses to the WDRP comments.
- The Panel recognized that the site is very complex and appreciated the simplified approach in bringing flow of people to the slip from both Yonge Street and the water. The Panel supported the overall strategy.
- The shade structure feels heavy and not a natural extension of the WaveDeck’s linear language of structure, consider a more authentic, lighter, simpler design. Further refinements are recommended and consider a “less is more” approach.
- More refinements are recommended on the integration of the gangway, floating dock, and shade structure, with the WaveDeck.
- Pedestrian safety at the crossing is a priority, ensure the size and materiality of the tabletop are fully utilized to indicate a safe connection.
- Continue to build on the accessibility learnings from the existing WaveDecks and ensure the new WaveDeck design will be a positive accessible experience,

2.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Panel voted unanimous Full Support on the landscape design.

The Panel voted Conditional Support on the shade structure, gangway, floating dock, and integration with the deck.

3.0 WELRT 2B + 2C – Stage 3: Detailed Design

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1141
<i>Project Type:</i>	Public Realm
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Detailed Design
<i>Review Round:</i>	Three
<i>Location:</i>	Queens Quay East
<i>Proponent:</i>	Waterfront Toronto
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	Public Work
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	Adam Nicklin, Principal, Public Work
<i>Delegation:</i>	Mary Hicks, Public Work Asuka Kono, Public Work Iain Davidson, Stantec Kenneth Poon, Stantec Jackie Tam, City of Toronto Allison Meistrich, City of Toronto Thomas Rees, City of Toronto



Pina Mallozzi, Waterfront Toronto
Mira Shenker, Waterfront Toronto
Corey Bialek, Waterfront Toronto
Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto

3.1 Introduction to the Issues

Margot Shafran, Project Manager with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project by summarizing the various segments of the Waterfront East LRT project and noted the project is led by City of Toronto Transit Expansion in partnership with Waterfront Toronto and the TTC. Ms. Shafran noted the review focus of Waterfront East LRT Segment 3 (2B and 2C) from Cherry Street North to Cherry Street South, Commissioners Street, and the LRT Loop. Ms. Shafran noted the existing conditions of the project site, recapped the previous WDRP Consensus Comments, and noted that the project is here for Stage 3: Detailed Design review. Ms. Shafran noted the areas for Panel consideration: streetscape in connecting adjacent neighborhoods, green infrastructure and planting strategy, ecological performance, transportation, and place-making. Ms. Shafran then introduced Adam Nicklin, Principal with Public Work, to present the design.

2 Project Presentation

Mr. Nicklin began the presentation by summarizing the key design components of the project and the intent to deliver transit while growing the neighborhoods. Mr. Nicklin presented the design of the underpass for the existing and new Metrolinx portals that enhances the public realm experience with timber finishes and public art opportunities. Mr. Nicklin noted the existing topography of Cherry Plaza and the new plaza would provide additional capacity to buffer against localized flooding, and the design is a performative landscape that becomes a precursor to the re-naturalized river districts. Mr. Nicklin noted the plaza is designed to be floodable, and described the park components, programs, and place-knowing and storytelling opportunities.

Mr. Nicklin provided an update on the green track design by noting the basis for a hybrid green track design, and the team is interested in maximizing vegetation while providing drivable surface. At Commissioners Street, Mr. Nicklin noted the updated streetscape design and details that demonstrate a stronger connection to the adjacent Biidaasige Park.

3.3 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked how does the flooding of the underpass impact wood structure and finishes. Mr. Nicklin noted there is an emergency pump to prevent the underpass from flooding.

Another Panel member asked for more information on the bike lanes south of the underpass. Mr. Nicklin responded the bike lanes are already bidirectional south of the underpass, and the design proposes to extend that up to Mill Street. The Panel member asked how the TTC stops work adjacent to the bioswales. Mr. Nicklin noted the bioswale stops and there would be a platform for access.

One Panel member asked if water permeate through the substrate at the plaza into the ground. Mr. Nicklin noted there is a holding tank then water is directed back into the system. The Panel member asked if the plaza is accessible to pets and children. Mr. Nicklin noted a lot of it is navigable, but there are some areas that are more ecologically lush therefore they can't be walked through.

Another Panel member asked if it is possible to combine the two underpasses as one opening. Mr. Nicklin noted that is not possible structurally with the rail on top, the public art is intended to create porosity like a veil that creates a more complex open space. The Panel member asked if there are any precedents for the hybrid green track. Mr. Nicklin responded that it is similar to many parking lots, the sedum grows back after use.

One Panel member asked for more information on the feasibility of using wood structure and cladding at the underpass, if Metrolinx approves this from a combustibility perspective. Mr. Nicklin responded that based on the team's current understanding the wood is possible.

Another Panel asked for more information on the maintenance responsibilities at the plaza. Mr. Nicklin noted currently TTC maintains the site due to the streetcar loop, and the team is discussing with PFR for the future. Ms. Shafran added that Transit Expansion is facilitating this conversation.

Another Panel member asked for the anticipated frequency of buses running on the green tracks because Spadina does not actually have buses. Patrick Meredith-Karam, Senior Transportation Manager with Waterfront Toronto, explained that at Spadina the centre poles prevent the buses from driving on the tracks, but here the poles are located off to the side and it is our responsibility to meet the design requirements that allow buses to run on the track. The Panel member asked for the height of the berms. Mr. Nicklin noted they are not very high.

3.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member suggested to split the presentation up into two parts next time since it is a lot of information. The Panel member noted the underpass will be very dirty and polluted, and a protection coat will be required to keep graffiti off, so the finishes will not look this good in the long term. The Panel member commented the different furniture components in the plaza, both manufactured and found elements of reused wood and steel, are showing conflicting design messages and language, consider being more rigorous with the language, refine and distil the elements. The Panel member felt that the flooding is the most important concept for the plaza and the design language should support that.

Another Panel member agreed with splitting the presentation into two parts. The Panel member noted the project is a story about water so the rails and wood are not necessary, and found that the random nature elements ominous – the languages of nature and found elements should not be mixed this way. The Panel member felt the space under the heritage building is a possible place for habitation therefore creating

challenges for two groups of citizens and suggested to bring the building down to grade to better allow the patina to be seen. The Panel member noted that at Brickworks, the flood water brought a lot of junk and debris, and that the team should consider carefully how flood water will impact the plaza. The Panel member commented that there is a lack of clarity in where users can go and when as there are many in-between spaces, further develop the design to help guide the public on how to use the space.

One Panel member appreciated the natural and industrial heritage overlay and the reuse of materials on site. The Panel member felt this type of public spaces are constantly assaulted by pets and people, recommended a stronger separation between ecology and humans and pets, ensure nature is protected. The Panel member appreciated the green track and commended the Commissioners Street design.

Another Panel member appreciated the green track for transforming the track into a piece of green infrastructure and appreciated the extension of the park into Commissioners Street. The Panel member cautioned the team on using topography in tight spaces, that it shouldn't be a motif but a larger gesture, consider using planting to achieve the same result. The Panel member questioned the use of sedum and that it would only grow back when there is no foot traffic. The Panel member admired the Cherry Plaza concept but sceptical of the execution as all the ecology is quite fragile situated between the rail and road, there will be a lot of salt spray, pet use, so buffer is needed for the ecology to thrive. The Panel member noted that the marsh at Corktown, despite being inside a park, is giving PFR a hard time maintaining it and managing the debris from flooding so it is really important to buffer the edges of the marsh at the plaza. While the High Line is a good example, it is extremely well funded and maintained – it looks good due to its operational structure. The Panel member encouraged the team to consider the practical issues of use, so the plaza does not become a public safety issue.

One Panel member appreciated the reflection on the history of the site and the integration of that story into the design. The Panel member felt that visitors will learn to not walk into the pond, and the team should engage with community groups to help maintain the landscape – if the marsh is well designed people will learn to appreciate the space and not throw garbage in it. The Panel member encouraged the team to go even further with water and use this opportunity to reimagine a new type of transit stop along Cherry Street.

Another Panel member commented that blending infrastructure with transit can be quite messy, it requires a new level of urban literacy from users. There seems to be two sides: delineate versus more blending – this project offers the city new ways to think about this tension. The Panel member felt that the edge of the park along Commissioners Street should be celebrated and encouraged the team to continue to be bold with the streetscape design.

One Panel member noted that flood water will carry a lot of debris and toxins into the plaza, the team should consider how this will impact the landscape and plaza.

Another Panel member felt that a little bit of berm is acceptable as long as it is done well. The Panel member questioned the concept of the different found and natural

elements at Cherry Plaza and felt that it is too chaotic for the site, also consider the plaza layout with respect to the ground floor uses of the adjacent building.

3.5 Consensus Comments

- Suggestion to split the presentation into two parts due to the amount of content
- Strong support for the overall design vision and green track.
- Support for the concept of bringing the story of water and ecology to the Plaza but there are design concerns that should be addressed by the team:
 - Appreciated the concept of salvage and reuse of existing site elements, but some Panel members felt there are too many components and the language of deployment should be simplified.
 - Safety concerns around access and circulation as there are many unclear boundaries around the planted and marsh areas – consider how user behaviour can be better guided to ensure long term safety and success of the plaza.
 - Flood water brings debris and chemicals - consider how this will affect the ecology, plaza design, and user experience.
 - Operations and maintenance, and unique requirements that pertain to this design
- The underpass areas get very polluted and dirty, provide more information and strategies on how mass timber will be impacted under these conditions. Some Panel members felt that the material is not appropriate for this environment.

3.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Panel voted Full Support for streetscape design and overall vision.

The Panel voted Conditional Support for Cherry Street Plaza and the underpass design.

4.0 55 Lakeshore Boulevard East Block 4 – Stage 2: Schematic Design

Project ID #: 1075
Project Type: Building
Review Stage: Schematic Design
Review Round: Two
Location: Lower Yonge
Proponent: Menkes
Architect/ Designer: ArchitectsAlliance
O2 Planning & Design
Presenter(s): Bharti Vithal, Associate, architectsAlliance
Nick Onody, Principal, O2 Planning & Design
Delegation: Shaylyn Costello, City of Toronto
Joseph Luk, City of Toronto
Nasim Adab, City of Toronto
Corey Bialek, Waterfront Toronto
Rei Tasaka, Waterfront Toronto
Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto



4.1 Introduction to the Issues

Shaylyn Costello, Community Planner with City of Toronto, introduced the project by noting the existing context of the site, the lower Yonge neighbourhood, adjacent developments, the project history, the built towers at Block 1 and 2, and the temporary park. Ms. Costello noted that since the project received a minor variance for a new site layout with all three towers located on the southern block, the project is repeating Schematic Design. Ms. Costello noted the Committee of Adjustment approved the new massing with lower tower heights for all three towers on Oct 23, 2024.

Ms. Costello noted planning context including Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, Lower Yonge Precinct Plan, Public Art Plan, and Lake Shore Public Realm. Specifically, Ms. Costello noted the existing streetscape conditions along Downes Street and Cooper Street. Ms. Costello recapped the previous May 2020 Consensus Comments and summarized the areas for Panel consideration including accessibility of the public realm, connection to existing public realm, landscape design, lower building design and materiality.

4.2 Project Presentation

Bharti Vithal, Associate with architectsAlliance, began the presentation by noting the previous massing and the proposed massing with all three towers located on the south block. Ms. Vithal described the new parti, how the new massing responds to the ground floor public realm, and the proposed path connection and at-grade crossings. Ms. Vithal noted the programs and the building material concepts.

Nick Onody, Principal with O2 Planning and Design, presented the public realm site context, design concept of the “gorge”, landscape zones, vegetation strategies for the courtyard spaces, and seating typologies. Mr. Onody noted the character of the spaces, material concepts, and concluded with renderings of the public realm.

4.3 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked why the mews has bollards blocking the turnaround and if the red arrows in the circulation diagram indicate crossing. Mr. Onody responded the bollards are not supposed to be there on the plan and the team can look at putting true crossings.

Another Panel member asked if shadow and reflection studies have been completed. Ms. Onody noted there is ample amount of sunlight to achieve the level of plant life.

One Panel member asked if the school area at grade requires fencing and how tall are the planters in the courtyard area. Mr. Onody noted dense plant material creates a barrier around the school ground and drop-off area, and because most of the play areas are located inside the building this should be a sufficient strategy. Mr. Onody responded that that planters are anywhere from 600mm to 900mm in the courtyard and the curb heights are typical. The Panel member asked if the public realm between Freeland Street and the pickup and drop-off area can be closed for school use. Mr. Onody noted in theory it can be restricted for school use only.

Another Panel member asked if the ground floor residential amenities can be relocated away from facing the courtyards as they detract from public character, and if there is any way to reconfigure the vehicular turnaround area so it does not create a barrier from the mews to the courtyards. Ms. Vithal noted the turnaround area is located to minimize interference with the school, it will only be for residential pickup and drop-offs. The current amenity areas are required to meet the project requirements.

One Panel member asked how the landscape along Lakeshore meets the school. Mr. Onody noted as there is no principal entrance on the north elevation, the planting is maximized, and this area can potentially become an educational planting area for student use.

Another Panel member asked for the age of students at the school and their pattern of movement. Mr. Onody responded they are JK to grade 9, and ideally they are walking along the municipal streets because there are safe crossings.

4.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member felt the general project is much more improved with the new massing and it makes sense to move the residential towers away from the school. The Panel member recommended adding a tabletop crossing at the mews to facilitate a safe crossing for students. The Panel member supported retaining of the heritage bridge across the mews but did not support the bridge connecting to Pinnacle over Freeland Street, and recommended instead create a great at-grade connection as part of the public realm. The Panel member felt the glass facade at grade is an outdated approach, consider using brick for the lower floors, with some punched windows, to create a distinct character that can relate to the heritage building. The Panel member felt the tall vertical lines are conflicting with the intimate scale of the courtyards and encouraged the team to make a friendlier facade for the public realm.

Another Panel member commended the compelling garden concepts and commented that the private amenity spaces at-grade are adding a privatization of public space, consider relocating those programs, and if necessary, negotiate with the City to relieve those requirements. The Panel member recommended the team to study the connection between driveway and east courtyard, consider reducing the size of the driveway so there can be a stronger connection to the mews for pedestrian movement.

One Panel member appreciated the increased porosity of the public realm and breaking down of the podium massing, and commended the powerful imagery of the “gorge” as a concept. The Panel member suggested to carefully translate the concept into design, in particular focus on working with the limited amount of sunlight as a defining microclimate condition, consider more intimacy in the planting strategy: thicker trees, greener walk. There is currently a disconnect between the vision and the plant palette, continue to develop a bold design.

Another Panel member noted currently the placement of trees is used as a separator in the public realm as a result of programmatic blocking, consider starting instead with a full landscape, and subtract where only needed for program, to create a uniquely densely planted public realm to engage the very tall towers.

One Panel member felt that the path connection attached to the south side of the mews should have a different architectural expression to the facade itself. The Panel member supported the idea of a tabletop crossing, the laneway currently feels like a back ally and the team should consider making it less austere, such as a more interesting facade treatment or lighting.

Another Panel member asked the team to think of the sequence of open spaces as a connection network, trees should be employed as a space maker as opposed to programmatic boundary, and the courtyards should not be read as simply circulation pass throughs. The Panel member encouraged the team to imagine how students can walk down to the park through the courtyards and improve the design to amplify that experience.

One Panel member asked the team to consider a grove of trees along the mews and how the landscape can be inhabited by students, such as filling the courtyards with more vegetation. The Panel member felt the buildings have a very corporate character and rethink the facade design.

4.5 Consensus Comments

Public Realm

- General support for the landscape narrative of the “gorge”. However there are opportunities to further strengthen the design:
 - currently it feels as though the trees are used to separate programs, consider the opposite: landscaping and vegetation as occupiable space and hardscape pockets are cut out only where needed. Shift vegetation from a separator of programs to a field where users can occupy.
 - Increase vegetation where possible to make courtyards feel more lush

- Consider a tabletop crossing on the west side of the mews to prioritize pedestrian movement.
- Minimize area required for the pick-up/ drop-off.
- Consider the design of the public realm with respect to the school and student use:
 - Facilitate the daily arrival sequence of students, from the school to the park
 - The use of the public realm as a learning opportunity for the school
 - More trees where possible, in particular along the mews.
 - The ground floor facades feel austere and dark, consider adding more interest and fun to capture the imagination of students of playing and attending school between these towers

Built Form

- Appreciated the new tower massing
- The architectural design feels very corporate with large reflective glass panels right down to grade, consider using brick for the lower podium facades and further distinguish the podium from the towers.
- The elevated Path connection to 1 Yonge is not supported. Strong encouragement to remove the bridge and develop a strong at-grade connection instead.

4.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Panel voted Full support for landscape vision.

The Panel voted Conditional Support for the architectural treatment.

CLOSING

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

These Meeting Minutes are formally adopted and approved by Panel on July 30th, 2025.

These Meeting Minutes have been signed by Paul Bedford, Waterfront Design Review Panel Chair, and Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto Chief Planning and Design Officer. Waterfront Toronto has on record a copy of this document with their DocuSign signatures.