



**WATERFRONT**Toronto

## Waterfront Design Review Panel Minutes of Meeting #176

Wednesday, July 30, 2025

Meeting held in-person hybrid at Waterfront Toronto

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### **Present**

Paul Bedford, Chair  
Betsy Williamson, Vice Chair  
Emily Mueller De Celis  
David Leinster  
Nina-Marie Lister  
Fadi Masoud  
Kevin Stelzer  
Eric Turcotte

### **Regrets**

Pat Hanson  
Matthew Hickey  
Janna Levitt  
Pina Petricone  
Brigitte Shim

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### **Representatives**

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto  
Emilia Floro, City of Toronto

### **Recording Secretary**

Leon Lai

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## Overview of Review Agenda

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

1. Ookwemin Minimising Enabling Infrastructure and Streetscape – Stage 1: Issues Identification
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## GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest for disclosure. Emily Mueller De Celis declared conflict for **Ookwemin Minising** due to her firm's ongoing work for an adjacent site and recused herself from the review.

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

### Design Review Panel Report Back:

Mr. Lai noted that consensus comments from May 2025 have been shared with the **Waterfront East LRT 2A, Yonge Slip, 2B and 2C** team. Mr. Lai noted a draft of the 60% design set has been shared with the City to address City comments and identify areas to be further refined to address DRP feedback. Follow-up workshops have been held on Yonge Slip, 2B and 2C, and a return date to WDRP will be determined as detailed design progresses.

Mr. Lai noted the May 2025 consensus comments from **55 Lake Shore Boulevard East Block 4** have been shared with the proponent team and they are revising the ground floor to respond to DRP comments. A follow-up meeting with City and Waterfront Toronto will be scheduled and a formal resubmission of Site Plan is expected later this summer.

### Waterfront Toronto Updates:

Mr. Lai noted that the largest park in a generation, **Biidaasige Park**, has opened on City of Toronto's new island through the **Port Lands Flood Protection** project. The park is opening in two phases, approximately 50 acres of parkland is opened today, with an additional 10 acres set to open in 2026, along with the first-in-Canada Lassonde Art Trail. Mr. Lai noted photos of the opened park, the July 18<sup>th</sup> media event with several Federal MPs, City Councillors and Waterfront Toronto Board members, as well as Mayor Chow taking media interviews from a kayak on the new river.


Chris Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer with Waterfront Toronto, added the opening day was an incredible turnout filled with excitement, it felt like a very diverse set of experiences all happening in the same location – all of which have been facilitated and planned with the help of MVVA. More plantings will be planted in the near future, and Waterfront Toronto will have another public event to celebrate the opening of the next phase. Mr. Glaisek noted everyone pitched in, it was a huge team effort and a very hopeful moment for the city.

### Chair's remarks:

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

## PROJECT REVIEWS

## 1.0 Ookwemin Minising Enabling Infrastructure and Streetscape – Stage 1: Issues Identification

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1141	
<i>Project Type:</i>	Public Realm	
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Issues Identification	
<i>Review Round:</i>	One	
<i>Location:</i>	Ookwemin Minising	
<i>Proponent:</i>	Waterfront Toronto	
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	GHD	
	Monumental	
	Trophic Design	
	SLA	
	Allies and Morrison	
	Transsolar	
<i>Presenter(s):</i>	Jessica Jenkins, Project Director, GHD	
	Rasmus Astrup, Landscape Architect & Urban Design	
	Principal, SLA	
	Terrence Radford, Landscape Architect & Indigenous Design	
	Lead, Trophic Design	
	Trina Moyan, Indigenous Engagement Lead, Monumental	
	Alfredo Carabello, Architecture Lead, Allies and Morrison	
	Krista Palen, Sustainability Lead, Transsolar	
<i>Delegation:</i>	Scott Torrance, GHD	
	Graham Sheffield-Grevstad, GHD	
	Nicoline Madsen, SLA	
	Karolina Potoczniak, SLA	
	Silvia Asuni, Allies and Morrison	
	James Miller, Trophic Design	
	Sheila Boudreau, Spruce Lab	
	Eric Sehr, City of Toronto	
	Nigel Tahair, City of Toronto	
	Nasim Adab, City of Toronto	
	Julie Bogdanowicz, City of Toronto	
	Kaari Kitawi, City of Toronto	
	Anthony Kittel, City of Toronto	
	May Wan, City of Toronto	
	Monika Nasterska, City of Toronto	
	Fred Martin, City of Toronto	
	Danny Brown, City of Toronto	
	Mike Collins, City of Toronto	
	Avery Carr, City of Toronto	
	Will Nixon, City of Toronto	
	Georgia Kuich, City of Toronto	
	Kendra Barkman, CreateTO	
	Bryan Bowen, CreateTO	
	Sarah Corey, CreateTO	
	Jocelyn Hirtes, Waterfront Toronto	
	Pina Mallozzi, Waterfront Toronto	

Joe Cressy, Waterfront Toronto  
Kristina Verner, Waterfront Toronto  
Renee Gomes, Waterfront Toronto  
Jed Kilbourn, Waterfront Toronto  
Aaron Barter, Waterfront Toronto  
Corey Bialek, Waterfront Toronto  
Josh Hilburt, Waterfront Toronto  
Rei Tasaka, Waterfront Toronto  
Patrick Meredith-Karim, Waterfront Toronto  
Mira Shenker, Waterfront Toronto

## 1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Chris Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project by noting the project background, anticipated timeline of work, project site, and the project vision from the 2024 Official Plan. Mr. Glaisek noted Indigenous engagement will inform the integration of Indigenous teachings throughout the island alongside high environmental performance goals, recapped the RFP design principles, and introduced the project teams. Mr. Glaisek noted the surrounding public realm and development context, street sections, the rezoning massing of 309 Cherry Street/ 65 Ookwemin Street, and the planning context from the 2017 Villiers Island Precinct Plan.

Mr. Glaisek noted the 2024 Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment changes in density and massing, the Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport guidance on maximum heights, and the scope of work for the public realm. Mr. Glaisek noted the scope of the early activation site work to create temporary programmable space on the two western development sites in conjunction with Biidaasige Park North (BPN) to accommodate large-scale events, and that Allies and Morrison Architects have been tasked to undertake massing work to add density. Mr. Glaisek noted the project is here for Stage 1: Issues Identification review, the previous WDRP comments from April 2024, and areas for Panel consideration including the overall process of Indigenous engagement, the development of a successful streetscape plan, approach to increasing density, and whether the public realm and massing support the sustainability objectives.

## 1.2 Project Presentation

Jessica Jenkins, Project Director with GHD, began the introduction by noting the design approach and introduced Trina Moyan, Indigenous Engagement Lead with Monumental, to present Indigenous engagement and public engagement. Ms. Moyan noted the concept of “we braid knowledge” and that the team is an interdisciplinary taskforce where the design is co-led and managed with the Indigenous consultant. Ms. Moyan noted the launch of the engagement at Biidaasige Park, alignment with the City’s Reconciliation Action Plan, the engagement principles, and the Phase 1 approach.

Rasmus Astrup, Landscape Architect & Urban Design Principal with SLA, and Terrence Radford, Landscape Architect & Indigenous Design Lead with Trophic Design, co-presented the vision. They noted the site carries the wisdom and legacy of Indigenous presence, the existing structures and vegetation, and the balance between industrial

and natural systems. They noted the principles for designing habitat, connecting the city with nature and water, and that the streets should be designed with unique characters to perform like urban spaces, bring communities together, and support biodiversity. Mr. Astrup presented the public realm characters of Keating Channel Promenade, Villiers Street, Biidaasige Naturefront, and Centre Street “Commons” – each public realm has a unique approach to nature, Indigenous placekeeping, and creating spaces for community and gathering.

Alfredo Caraballo, Architecture Lead with Allies and Morrison, recapped the 2024 approved zoning, the BBTCA height map, and the importance of microclimate considerations. Mr. Caraballo noted a quantitative analysis of building typologies, the concept of the “open block” – a group of buildings with gaps in-between, a human scale ground floor, and framing public spaces. Mr. Caraballo noted ideas of where the additional density can be located and noted eye-level street perspective sketches.

Krista Palen, Sustainability Lead with Transsolar, presented the sustainability objectives & nature-based approach. Ms. Palen noted the key performance indications across design themes: climate resilience and microclimate, biodiversity, and community. Ms. Palen concluded the presentation by noting the reuse, recycling and upcycling of existing material strategies.

### 1.3 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked how the massing framework can support small storefronts for liveable streets that offer a variety of retail experiences. Mr. Carabello responded that the intention is to concentrate deeper units along Villiers Street and elsewhere the units are less deep to suggest different types of retail like bakery. Mr. Carabello noted lessons from Kings Cross show that a strong client team can help create the right mix of retail tenants – testing and curating from the developer side is important. Mr. Rasmus responded that active frontages happen in select areas.

Another Panel member noted one of the reasons why David Crombie Park works is because the ground floor units are designed to have their kitchen windows face the street, and asked if there are blocks where there will be some residential at-grade. Mr. Rasmus responded that David Crombie Park was an explosion of very bold ideas, such as residential above the school and also facing the park, and noted that there will be some streets with at-grade residential. Mr. Carabello added that along the Commons the active frontages don’t have to be just retail but can also be residential front doors where people can deliver mail.

One Panel member asked for clarification on the ownership of the parcels and the split between public and private sites. Mr. Rasmus noted there is more influence on public lands but will also work with the private blocks. Chris Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer with Waterfront Toronto, added that other than 309 Cherry, the rest of the parcels are publicly owned.

Another Panel member asked if the private developer has seen this work. Emilia Floro, Director of Urban Design with City of Toronto, responded that the development application was at the OTL and the development team is listening in today.

## 1.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member thanked the team for setting the stage in a collective way with many collaborating disciplines, felt confident that great work will be shown in October. The Panel member commented that midblock connections are critical and encouraged the team to create a sense of intimacy in the streets as the design is advanced.

Another Panel commended the passionate presentation. The Panel member noted that at the last DRP meeting one Panel member made a plea to the McCleary team to integrate the design narratives, here the presentation conveys a lens with which an integrated vision is demonstrated, and the result is a unique message. The Panel member appreciated the references to the historic river mouth, black cherry trees that are ubiquitous and natural in our ecosystem, and encouraged the team to fully implement these. The Panel member supported the asymmetry in the street designs, the opening up of the podium massing and the consideration of how the buildings meet the ground plane.

One Panel member commended the rich and deep presentation, felt that this project is a strong continuation of waterfront tradition of leading by nature and landscape. The Panel member felt the narratives are engaging and meaningful, supported the different characters of place which can create something atypical, quirky, and unique. With many publicly owned parcels, the Panel member felt the vision can be meaningfully implemented. The Panel member encouraged the team to challenge standards around ground floor loading by considering placemaking and putting people first, use this opportunity to create a great sense of place.

Another Panel member appreciated both the grid and grain of the plan. The Panel member noted language is critical as it shapes first our perspective and then the practice, and commended the team for framing an integrated vision that puts context into the systems approach. The Panel member encouraged the team to expand on the language around nourishing, such as biodiversity for all forms of habitats including animals, and recognize that while streets are connections for humans they are also barriers for other animals. The Panel member noted “manmade” is a colonial and patriarchal term, try to be more inclusive in the language. The Panel member asked the team to consider how the project can help pick up the beautiful knowledge bundle and extending into the great urban system, and also provide more information on soil at the next review.

One Panel member strongly supported the overall approach and commended the critical centering of Indigenous knowledge and place-keeping as foundational drivers of urban form. As enabling infrastructure, this approach should manifest through tangible spatial and physical interventions. The Panel member encouraged the team to continue to advance a design methodology that actively challenges and dissolves the colonial urban grid, so that streets, interstitial open spaces, mid-block connections, courtyards, and both public and private realms can be conceived as a continuous and interconnected web of shared public realm, one that is green, resilient, and urbane. Building frontages, entrances, thresholds, can ideally open onto multiple orientations promoting porosity and fluidity between front and back, public and private. The Panel

member commented that innovative and sustainable urban design must respond to the microclimatic conditions of the waterfront. Solar access, prevailing winds, and year-round thermal comfort should inform the orientation, shaping, and programming of streets and public spaces. These climatic considerations – when thoughtfully integrated – can help sculpt a more adaptive, comfortable, and vibrant public realm that serves both people and ecosystems.

Another Panel member asked the team to consider the addition of another metric to be measured in the design: renewable energy generation and integrate this into the microclimatic analysis.

## 1.5 Consensus Comments

### General

- Support for the overall project and design approach.
- Commended the team for delivering an integrated, thoughtful, and creative design that respects the Indigenous heritage of the site.
- Continue to be bold and push the envelope as the design advances.
- Continue to consider all species both land and marine life, and the recovery of their natural habitat.
- Think long-term on sustainability and consider renewable energy generation on the island.
- Encouraged the private development blocks to listen and support the greater plan.

### Public Realm

- Strong support for the four distinct streetscape characters, in particular the different scales of spaces and the more intimate street characters.
- Support for the prioritization of pedestrian movement in the design of the public realm as this will help create a unique sense of place for the entire neighbourhood.
- Appreciated the design's sensitivity around microclimate and pedestrian comfort.
- Provide more information on soil and underground infrastructure as related to the streetscape design at the next review.

### Massing

- Strong support for the massing concept of the “open block”. The porosity, mix of spaces, built-form, density, and considerations around microclimate conditions are appreciated.
- Ensure the increased level of density and the distribution will still support the principles of the streetscape vision.

## 1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

No vote was taken as the project was reviewed at Stage 1: Issues Identification.

## CLOSING

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

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These Meeting Minutes are formally adopted and approved by Panel on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 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.*