



**WATERFRONT**Toronto

## Waterfront Design Review Panel (WDRP) Minutes of Meeting #177

Wednesday, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Meeting held in-person hybrid at Waterfront Toronto

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### **Present**

Paul Bedford, Chair  
Emily Mueller De Celis  
Pat Hanson  
Fadi Masoud  
Pina Petricone  
Kevin Stelzer  
Eric Turcotte  
Betsy Williamson

### **Regrets**

Janna Levitt  
Matthew Hickey  
David Leinster  
Nina-Marie Lister  
Brigitte Shim

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### **Representatives**

Chris Glaisek, Waterfront Toronto  
Nasim Adab, City of Toronto, on behalf of Emilia  
Floro

### **Recording Secretary**

Leon Lai, Waterfront Toronto

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## OVERVIEW OF REVIEW AGENDA

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

1. Ookwemin Minising  
Enabling Infrastructure and Streetscape – Stage 1: Issues Identification 2  
Density and Massing – Stage 2: Preliminary Draft Plan
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## GENERAL BUSINESS

The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest for disclosure. No conflict of interest was declared.

### Chair's remarks:

The Chair noted that since this is a special meeting, the regular WDRP report back and Waterfront Toronto updates will be provided at the Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025 meeting.

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 2 Density and Massing – Stage 2: Preliminary Draft Plan

<i>Project ID #:</i>	1141	
<i>Project Type:</i>	Public Realm and Master Plan	
<i>Review Stage:</i>	Issues Identification 2 Preliminary Draft Plan	
<i>Review Round:</i>	One Two	
<i>Location:</i>	Ookwemin Minising	
<i>Proponent:</i>	Waterfront Toronto	
<i>Architect/ Designer:</i>	SLA Trophic Design Allies and Morrison Transsolar GHD Monumental	
<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 Sara Udow, Principal, Monumental Trina Moyan, Indigenous Engagement Lead, Monumental Alfredo Caraballo, 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

## 1.1 Introduction to the Issues

Pina Mallozzi, Senior Vice President of Design with Waterfront Toronto, introduced the project by noting the project background, timeline, project site area, and the official plan project vision. Ms. Mallozzi noted that Indigenous engagement will inform the integration of Indigenous teachings throughout the island alongside high environmental performance goals. Mr. Mallozzi noted the RFP design principles, surrounding site context, adjacent river and parks, street designs, the private development blocks at 309 Cherry Street, and the 2017 Villiers Island Precinct Plan. Ms. Mallozzi noted the 2024 Rezoning and Official Plan Amendment, the 2024 demonstration plan, BBTCa guidance on maximum obstacle heights, and summarized the scope of work for public realm and massing. Ms. Mallozzi noted the vision for early activation at BPN, and that the project is being presented at two WDRP stages: Enabling Infrastructure and Streetscape is here for Stage 1: Issues Identification 2, and Density and Massing is here for Stage 2: Preliminary Draft Plan.

Ms. Mallozzi noted the previous WDRP Consensus Comments, and the areas for Panel consideration including the density increase shown in the demonstration plan, overall built form strategies, and the integration of massing with landscape in delivering the streetscape vision and sustainability objectives. Ms. Mallozzi then introduced Jessica Jenkins, Project Director with GHD, to kick off the design presentation.

## 1.2 Project Presentation

Ms. Jenkins, began the presentation by introducing the team and the status of the design work. Ms. Trina Mayon, Indigenous Engagement Lead with Monumental, noted the on-going engagement work, the learnings which include meaningful connections to water, integration of nature throughout, organic streets, and a diversity of public

spaces. Rasmus Astrup, Urban Design Principal with SLA, continued the public realm presentation by noting the concepts of leading with landscape, landscape-led layers of design, living legacy, and the four characters of the demonstration plan. Terrence Radford, Landscape Architect & Indigenous Design Lead with Trophic Design, noted the sandbar trail concept, OM legacy corridor, and Indigenous place-keeping opportunities on Villiers Street. Mr. Astrup noted the Silo Square design, sun studies, planting principles, mixing of habitat and planting species, and soil strategies.

Alfredo Caraballo, Architecture Lead with Allies and Morrison, presented massing and built form by noting the approved 2024 demonstration plan, building typologies, different approaches to increasing density, and a site analysis. Mr. Caraballo noted three approaches to density increase, and a hybrid approach that blends the strategies. Mr. Caraballo noted the hybrid approach proposes a 31% increase in density while respecting the height cap. Mr. Caraballo noted the different frontages: Biidaasige Naturefront, Keating Channel, and Centre Street Commons. Mr. Caraballo noted ground floor activation strategy, tower locations and heights, the landmark sites, the Keating Channel Promenade, Silo Square, Marina Plaza, Villiers Street, Centre Street Commons, Ookwemin Street, and the midblock connection of Foundry Lane. For each block, Mr. Caraballo noted the “Open Block” massing strategy: density concentration in the centre of the block, each block must contain different building typologies, and each frontage must have gaps between the buildings. Mr. Caraballo noted the hierarchy of building frontages creating a family of urban blocks, the master plan is a flexible and robust framework that guides key massing moves, responding to the environment of sun requirements and wind comfort.

Krista Palen, Sustainability Lead with Transsolar, presented sustainability and microclimate including sun access, wind exposure, human comfort, and seasonal impact. Ms. Palen concluded by noting the sustainability KPIs,

### 1.3 Panel Questions

One Panel member asked for clarification on the “open block” concept. Mr. Caraballo responded that the concept questions the typology of tower on podium, taking the basic block and opening it up, instead of a podium the towers land at grade with gaps. This increases legibility and “grain” providing light into the courtyard and onto the public realm. There are also more corner units. The Panel member noted there seems to be a 1-storey podium throughout. Mr. Caraballo responded that yes, it is a storey that connects all the buildings together. The Panel member asks if the built form is responding to any specific datums. Mr. Caraballo noted the team is skeptical of datums and are trying to create flexibility.

Another Panel member asks if there are any mid-block connections other than Foundry Street, and the strategy on servicing and loading. Mr. Caraballo responded that the courtyards are not publicly accessible, and the team generally feels that midblock connections are not required with the small scale of the blocks, requiring only a minute or so to walk across – instead critical mass in built form is important. With the heritage presence on Foundry Street, a midblock connection is introduced there. Mr. Astrup added that the blocks are small and don’t feel midblock connections are generally needed to create porosity. The Panel member noted there is density with variety of

built form, but how much flexibility is there for future developments – what is the threshold of flexibility without losing the essence and integrity of the master plan, and how many City policies will need to be reconsidered to permit this. Mr. Caraballo noted in their experience, flexibility is a must because the only certainty is that change will happen in the future when development finally occurs, so the team wants to establish a set of clear guidelines and then the district will turn out fine. Also, SLA's work will help guarantee the vision come to life. Mr. Astrup noted the team is working with City and will try to implement their future policies here.

One Panel member asked for more information on translating this design into City policy. Nasim Adab, Program Manager, Urban Design with City of Toronto, responded that the City sees policy and by-laws as a tool not an obstacle to ensure flexibility, there is zoning in place which provides flexibility without being too prescriptive, leaving room for different approaches down the road. Chris Glaisek, Chief Planning and Design Officer, noted the zoning would accommodate the various scenarios possible. The Panel member asked for more information on the low-rise buildings. Mr. Caraballo responded they are triplexes, the team is interested in high density with diversity of choice, the district can provide that flexibility over time, these buildings will also allow more sunlight penetration into the central courtyard. Mr. Astrup added the architecture is strategically placed to work with the public realm.

Another Panel member noted many of the KPIs are confined to the public realm, asked if the public realm can help individual buildings with stormwater management, and if more information can be provided on how the public realm can assist these high-performance buildings. Mr. Astrup responded that there is a building in Copenhagen with public realm designed by SLA where the two components share water, however that took 10 years.

One Panel member asked how contingent the design guidelines and regulatory frameworks are for the specified built forms, and if the overall guidelines would provide nuances such as the management of downdrafts of wind and materiality. Mr. Caraballo responded that the debate on guidelines versus flexibility is the heart of the work, the team has both good and bad experiences of being too open or prescriptive. If the guidelines are too prescriptive, they may have to be loosened in order to be well applied – this is something we will discuss with Waterfront Toronto to find the balance and identify aspects that are non-negotiable vs aspects that are for the developers and architects to determine. Mr. Caraballo noted that the team understands that master planning is defining the rules of the game, but playing the game is very different. The Panel member asked if there will be more specific typological guidelines on housing and retail types. Mr. Glaisek responded that is not in the scope of work. Ms. Adab responded that securing affordable housing is important but that will come at the stage of individual applications. Mr. Caraballo noted the design is agnostic to housing type, but the master plan does specify character of spaces, grain of streets, and depth of retail spaces.

Another Panel member asked what the proposed density has increased from the 2024 plan. Mr. Caraballo noted it is a 31% increase.

One Panel member asked for the rationale for Centre Street being more residential. Mr. Caraballo responded that the team did a benchmark for the total amount of retail that can be sustained in the master plan, it is between 3 to 5.5% of the total GFA – here we are showing 3.5%. Keating Channel will be a destination and Centre Street is where children will ride their bikes, so it is meant to be quieter. Mr. Astrup added residential is the best approach for Centre Street as Keating will be much more intense, something that cannot be replicated at Centre Street. The team is thinking about David Cromby park where many trees can be planted which will also enhance real estate value.

#### 1.4 Panel Comments

One Panel member noted that it is important for the project to distinguish itself visually from the rest of the city, and felt that the massing so far does not quite meet the unique ambition of the island. While the physical model is well differentiated with colors, the Panel member felt that the at-grade experience does not achieve the ambition. The Panel member added that continuity in massing is not necessarily bad, noting that the precedents show quite a degree of consistency in datum such as Hamburg, however the proposed plan does not show any consistency in datum and questioned whether the mix and lack of consistency is helping to distinguish the project. The Panel member felt that midblock connections are an opportunity to achieve the Noll Plan level of porosity shown by the design team, it is a disappointment that the open blocks do not allow public access – this is a big issue that should be carefully considered.

Another Panel member thanked the team and congratulated Waterfront Toronto for the project. The Panel member felt the street grid is still very dominant, there are some deviations being introduced such as Foundry Lane and the facades along Commissioners Street, but there should be more opportunities to dissolve the grid such as midblock connections. The Panel member appreciated the intention of bringing life onto the main streets, and suggested more guidelines that would help break down the grid. The Panel member was encouraged by the work of Transsolar, and supported that the public realm can be successful from the proposed level of solar exposure and shade.

One Panel member appreciated the holistic vision, noted there is a responsibility to achieve design excellence when the lands here are under public ownership. The Panel member felt that while zoning and design guidelines are good, great design requires stewardship from Waterfront Toronto, CreateTO, and the City, by hiring great teams. The Panel member supported the blending of massing with the context, supported the vision for Keating Channel, and recommended more playfulness and diversity in massing to help break down the edge.

Another Panel member appreciated the presentation, models, and overall attention to detail – very entertaining to absorb an immense amount of information. The Panel member noted that there is a sensitive balance between zoning and flexibility – if someone less skilled were to arrange the volumes, the result might be less compelling. The Panel member appreciated the landmark elements and its heterogeneity, suggested that more prescriptiveness would benefit the plan. The Panel member

commended the sensitive micro-climate analysis, suggested the inclusion of minimal renewable energy generation as a target for certain blocks. The public realm is the connective tissue that can help reduce energy demand on the individual blocks.

One Panel member appreciated AAM's response on character, encouraged the team to pursue and unpack the characteristics at different scales, such as develop both "coarse" grain design and finer grain design guidelines, and apply that same rigor from built form to housing typologies. The Panel member felt the idea of identity should be debated because the current design feels like a tapestry that could be applied anywhere in Toronto, and encouraged the team to make the design more like a custom fitted shirt that is super tailored to the site and its context of water – consider how the spirit of water can dissipate through the blocks such as an overlapping of grids. The Panel member supported the openness from the hyper grid but felt that it should be evolved.

Another Panel member supported the density increase of 30%, commended the concept of the sandbar trail, and overall overlay of master plan, landscape, and Indigenous thinking. The Panel member encouraged the team to push the built form to be able to lock in a variety of scales in open spaces, such that if a Nolli Plan is drawn for the ground floor it would look much more porous instead of a typical Toronto neighborhood – it is a great study to test whether something truly different is being created. The Panel member felt Ookwemin Street should be more pedestrianized as a north-south street that connects the park to Keating Channel. Generally, the Panel member felt that there should be amplification of all the public realm and pedestrian aspects of the project to create finger grain and distinguish areas from vehicles.

## 1.5 Consensus Comments

### Massing and Density

- Commended the great work and excellent presentation.
- Support for the overall strategy in increasing density by 30% while achieving the objectives of the precinct.
- Inspired by the diversity and porosity of public realm in the Nolli plan, the master plan is strongly recommended to follow this spirit in creating a special identity and experience that is different than the rest of the city – bring a sense of discovery and surprise to the built form and public realm that is distinct to the island.
- Supported the concept of the "Open Block" in bringing a diversity of scale and uses to each parcel, however, consider more penetration at-grade with midblock connections to create a finer grain public realm. Some Panel members felt that this is a feature that will help give OM a distinct character that is different than other neighbourhoods in Toronto.
- The challenge is to translate this plan into effective policy to achieve the innovative outcome while allowing development flexibility. The City is encouraged to enshrine these goals and aspirations through regulatory framework.
- Ensure the design of the private sites will work with the public land blocks to support the master plan.

## Public Realm

- Overall the reading of the grid is still very strong, do more to dissolve the grid.
- The streets have addressed many of the previous comments and advanced from the 2017 plan, continue to develop the pedestrian character, and identify where pedestrians are prioritized over cars.
- Commended the work on microclimate; provide more information on sun and wind studies along the Keating Channel.
- Support for the concept of the Sandbar Trail.

### 1.6 Vote of Support/Non-Support

The Panel voted Conditional Support for the project.

Mr. Caraballo responded that it is worth questioning the nature of specialness of the district, and whether it should be continuous or discontinuous from the rest of the city, and if this condition is experienced from within or seen from the outside. It is clear from the comments that the Panel would like to see more of the Foundry Lane quality, the challenge is how to make this happen without taking away from the functionalities of the plan. Mr. Caraballo noted the team is skeptical about aspects of regulation and there is a strong intention to strive for diversity from a philosophical point of view. On the other hand, it is possible to imagine that a singular material can create specialness for the district, i.e. brick for all buildings, instead of applying formal guidelines on the massing we employ materials. Mr. Caraballo noted that what will make the district special is the in-person experience, and the team will take more time to respond.

Mr. Astrup noted the experience of Kings Cross as a neighborhood is walking through it as there are many unique elements happening at-grade. Mr. Glaisek added that the team is very innovative, Waterfront Toronto will continue to work with them to push for “more of everything” as one Panel member put it. Ms. Adab added that the City is interested in continuing the conversation with the team on midblock connections, that architectural excellence is important, thermal guidelines are meant to enhance the public realm experience, and housing typology guidelines will come down the road.

## CLOSING

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

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These Meeting Minutes were formally adopted and approved by the Panel on Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

*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*