

Public Consultation Round 2

Summary Report

May 3, 2012

From March 31st – April 15th, 2012, Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority held the second round of public consultation for the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative. The consultation started on March 31st, 2012 with an Open House at the Design Exchange, where key findings and preliminary options were shared. Following the Open House, public comments and input were sought at two identical Feedback Workshops on April 3rd and 4th and online. This report is a high level summary of the feedback received. It was written by the independent facilitation team for the project (Lura Consulting and SWERHUN). This summary was available for participant review prior to being finalized.

Part 1.

Summary of Feedback Received at Consultation Meetings

March 31 and April 3-4, 2012

More than 500 people participated at the three consultation meetings held on March 31, April 3 and 4. Discussion at the Feedback Workshops focused on three topic areas: Flood Protection, Naturalization and Green Space; Economics, Markets and Finance; and Development Planning and Phasing. The summary from these meetings compiles feedback from the plenary discussions at the meetings as well as the 28 Table Discussion Guides, 23 Individual Discussion Guides, and 35 other submissions received by email and mail.

Part 2.

Summary of Feedback Received Online

March 31 - April 15, 2012

Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto utilized an interactive online engagement tool (IdeaScale) as part of the second round of public consultation for the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative. The IdeaScale online engagement tool – accessed at www.portlandsconsultation.ca – allowed members of the public and interested stakeholders to submit feedback, vote on others' feedback and comments, and/or add additional comments to previously posted submissions. The IdeaScale engagement portal was open during Round 2 of the consultation process from March 31 to April 15, 2012. During this time, 101 people participated using IdeaScale, providing 53 submissions, 10 comments on others' submissions, and 369 votes on the various submissions.

Part 3.

Detailed Feedback (see separate file)

Full record of written feedback provided in Table Discussion Guides, Individual Discussion Guides and other submissions. For a full record of feedback provided online, see IdeaScale at www.portlandsconsultation.ca.

Summary of Feedback Received at Consultation Meetings

At the Feedback Workshops on April 3 and 4, participants were asked three focus questions for each of the three topic areas. These focus questions were: What do you like about the directions emerging? What, if anything, concerns you and why? What refinements, if any, would you like to see explored? The key themes that emerged in response to these focus questions for each of the three topic areas are listed below, with a full record of all feedback following in Part 3 of this report.

Flood Protection, Naturalization and Green Space

1. **Participants liked that a form of 4WS remained as the preferred Don Mouth option. Some felt that the realigned 4WS seemed reasonable and validated the work that had been done. There were others who expressed concern that the realigned 4WS compromises on the original version too much** (for example, there was concern that the realigned option will not allow for a large marsh at the river mouth).
2. **There was significant concern about the loss of green space in the Lower Don Lands.** There was also concern about the loss of land for naturalization and the elimination of the promontories in the realigned 4WS. Some also emphasized the importance of maintaining public access to the water's edge, whether that be through parks or through creating new connections to neighbourhoods north of Lake Shore.
3. **Participants generally liked the idea of phasing of flood protection,** though there was some concern that the completion of all phases won't occur for many years, if ever.

Economics, Markets and Finance

1. **Many participants liked that the economic challenges of developing the Port Lands had been made public in a comprehensive and easy to understand format, however there was concern that there is still a big gap between costs and revenues.** Participants liked the idea of phasing as a way to potentially help deal with the gap.
2. **Several participants said that all levels of government have a responsibility to financially contribute to the revitalization of the Port Lands.** It was suggested that demonstrating the benefits/returns associated with the investment of public funds in the Port Lands could help make the case for government funding.
3. **There was a range of opinion on the role of developers in paying for infrastructure** – some felt that developers can't pay for all necessary infrastructure while others felt that developers should be required to pay for all infrastructure.
4. **There was a concern about funding for transit and the ability to implement transit,** especially given that transit has been identified as a requirement to support development in the Port Lands.
5. **Many participants expressed concern about big box/mall/suburban-style retail** and felt that this type of development was unsuitable for the Port Lands.

Development Planning and Phasing

- 1. Participants like the idea of phasing development as long as phasing is a part of a clear overall plan.** A number of suggested refinements were made regarding phasing, including examining phasing the original plan, phasing transit at the same time as development, and increasing the amount of naturalization in earlier phases.
- 2. A number of people raised concern that there doesn't seem to be a vision for the Port Lands as a whole.** For example, will the Port Lands reflect Toronto's "sense of city" or will it be a cookie-cutter development that can go anywhere in the world? Will housing be affordable for a broad range of incomes? Will development be primarily high density or low density? Will there be public access to the water's edge? What will development mean for existing uses in the Port Lands?
- 3. There was concern that any future plans for the Port Lands could again change.** It was suggested by several participants that plans be "locked in" to prevent revisiting.



April 3 Public Meeting at St. Lawrence Hall



April 4 Public Meeting at the Westin Hotel

Summary of Feedback Received Online

Online participants were asked to view presentations and materials prepared by the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative Project Team – which includes Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority – on three main topics: Flood Protection, Naturalization and Green Space; Economics, Markets and Finance; and Development Planning and Phasing. Participants were then able to provide comments and feedback using IdeaScale. Three focus questions were provided to help guide the online feedback: What do you like about the directions emerging? What, if anything, concerns you and why? What refinements, if any, would you like to see explored?

The key themes that emerged through the IdeaScale submissions and comments are listed below, with a full record of all feedback available at <https://portlandsconsultation.ideascale.com/a/panel.do>.

1. **Most participants were supportive of the original plan for the naturalization of the mouth of the Don River (4WS).** Participants felt that the existing plan provides sound flood protection and naturalization, ample green space, and accessible recreation areas that, if implemented, would act as catalysts for development in the area.
2. **Most participants expressed support for significant green space in the Port Lands.** Participants were concerned that the new plan for the Port Lands would prioritize residential/commercial development over previous plans for naturalized areas and public green space. Many participants were concerned that **accelerated development would compromise their vision for the Port Lands**, and cited other waterfront redevelopment projects – including Sugar Beach, Sherbourne Park and the water’s edge promenade – that are more in line with their vision of future public and green space in the Port Lands.
3. Many participants expressed support for **safe and navigable bike lanes**, connecting to the Waterfront Trail, as well as **walkable neighbourhoods**.
4. A number of participants would like to see a **more fleshed out financial and business plan for the Port Lands**. Some participants recommended that all levels of government examine an investment strategy for the area and consider allowing Waterfront Toronto to explore alternative financing mechanisms to fund priority redevelopment projects. Participants would also like to see a **detailed cost comparison of the original 4WS plan and the realigned 4WS plan**.
5. Several participants expressed opposition toward **to the development of “big box” stores and/or malls** in the Port Lands.
6. A few participants noted that adequate **public transit** is needed to access the Port Lands.

NEXT STEPS

The work that has been presented as part of Round 2 of public consultation is not final and more work remains to be done. A wide range of opinion and insight has been shared and the Project Team will reflect on these comments and address them as the remaining work is completed. The third round of public consultation will occur in May 2012 and will present the final recommendations and path forward for the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative.