

Public Consultation Round 4

Summary Report

August 8, 2012

From August 8th to 17th, 2012, Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority held the fourth and final round of public consultation for this phase of the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative. The consultation consisted of a public meeting on August 8th, 2012 followed by an online comment period via the project website, concluding on August 17th 2012. During this round of the consultation, feedback was sought on the updated findings and draft recommendations. 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.

The Summary Report is comprised of the following:

Part 1.

Summary of Feedback Received at Public Meeting

August 8th, 2012

Over 200 people attended the public consultation meeting held on August 8th at the Toronto Reference Library – Bram & Bluma Appel Salon. Feedback at the meeting focused on the following themes: River Configuration, Naturalization and Parks; Funding, Financing and Business Case Projections; Transit, Existing Uses and Transformational Uses; and, Process Moving Forward. The summary from the August 8th meeting compiles feedback from the plenary discussion as well as the 20 Table Discussion Guides, 18 Individual Discussion Guides, and 18 other submissions received by email and mail following the meeting.

Part 2.

Summary of Feedback Received Online

August 8th – 17th, 2012

In addition to the Public Meeting held on August 8th, Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto used an interactive online engagement tool (IdeaScale) as part of the fourth round of public consultation for the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative. The project website – www.portlandsconsultation.ca – offered members of the public and interested stakeholders the opportunity to submit feedback, vote on the comments of others, and/or add comments to previously posted submissions. Online engagement was open from August 8 to 17, 2012. During this time, 10 people participated using IdeaScale, providing 20 submissions, 8 comments on others' submissions, and 10 votes on the various submissions.

Detailed Feedback (see separate file - Attachment)

A full record of written feedback provided in Table Discussion Guides, Individual Discussion Guides and other submissions is provided in attachments to this report. To view the full record of feedback provided online, see IdeaScale at www.portlandsconsultation.ca.

Summary of Feedback Received at Public Meeting

At the consultation meeting on August 8th, participants were asked the following focus question: *What refinements, if any, would you make to the updated findings and draft recommendations for the... (i) Port Lands (as a whole); (ii) Lower Don Lands/River Configuration; (iii) Business Case; (iv) Next Steps.*

The key themes that emerged in response to these focus questions are listed below, with a full record of all feedback in the attachments to this report.

RIVER CONFIGURATION, NATURALIZATION AND PARKS

- **There was a general appreciation that the new iteration of 4WS realigned had improved greatly from the iteration presented in the previous round of consultation.** Some noted that many elements of earlier plans were present in the new iteration. Others felt that the new iteration was comparable with that presented in the 2010 Don Mouth Naturalization Plan, but with the added benefit of having a business plan to back it up. Some participants still felt that the original vision was superior to the realigned 4WS.
- **There was concern that the phasing of flood protection and naturalization – and particularly that river mouth naturalization will not occur until phase three – meant that the most significant and important part of the naturalization will not happen well into the future or may be postponed indefinitely.**
- **Some felt that the implementation of naturalization should be separated from the planning and implementation of development in the Port Lands.** It was felt that naturalization could commence quickly because the planning work has already been done, whereas more work remained to be done on the business case – separating the two would allow implementation to proceed on naturalization while the business case undergoes further analysis.
- **There was a range of opinion on the extent to which the “table top” park land running alongside the river should be naturalized.** Some felt that the park land should be made as natural as possible to encourage wildlife habitat. Others felt that this level of naturalization might interfere with the use of the parks by people. Between these two views, it was suggested that the park land could take cues from the Brickworks, where the use of boardwalks cutting across marshes allowed for the interaction of people with naturalized space.

FUNDING, FINANCING AND BUSINESS CASE PROJECTIONS

- **A number of participants felt that while public-private partnerships may reduce the need for public funding/financing, they may also diminish public control over development.** Some felt that a higher level of public funding/financing was needed in order to ensure the development of public assets (e.g. naturalization, sustainability, affordable housing) in the Port Lands under a public-private partnership. Another option for maintaining public control would be to maintain public ownership of land and extract value through long-term leases for co-ops, co-housing, and residential and commercial rental.
- **There was discussion on the appropriate level and scope of development charges/fees.** Some felt that rather than applying a special development charge/fee City-wide, it should be applied to areas surrounding the Don Watershed, as these are the areas that would most directly benefit from naturalization and flood protection. Others felt that development charges/fees should be applied prudently, as the greater the number/level of development charges/fees, the less developers would pay for land, ultimately leading to less revenues available for funding/financing infrastructure.
- **There was some concern that the cost and demand projections presented in the business case may need refinement.** It was noted that the cost projection may have to be revised to take into account the construction of cultural and civic institutions (e.g. schools, community centres) and more fully account for soil remediation. It was suggested that the demand projection for residential development should be revised as it seemed low, and that with the proper timing of residential development, revenues could be increased.

TRANSIT, EXISTING USES AND TRANSFORMATIONAL USES

- **While it was noted that plans for the early provision of transit to the Port Lands seemed improved from the last round of consultation, participants felt that a greater level of detail was needed in a number of areas, including:** the level of service provided by BRT and transition to LRT; the relationship between the new demand projections and phasing of transit implementation; and how Port Lands transit would be integrated into the surrounding transit system.
- **There were also a number of suggestions on transit, including:** that the securing of transit ROW's should be a top priority; that transit planning/provision should be coordinated with transit plans for East Bayfront and West Don Lands; that BRT will be inadequate and LRT should be implemented instead; and that there should be a greater number of north-south transit connections.
- **While many participants accepted the need to retain industrial uses within the Port Lands, there was some concern that the integration and compatibility between these existing uses and new residential and commercial uses needs further consideration.** Also, some participants felt that the City and Waterfront Toronto should take an active role in helping existing industrial uses find and relocate to suitable alternate sites.
- **There was interest in receiving further information on transformational uses** particularly around the extent to which these uses will rely on private sector funding/financing and if there are any federal funds available (with Vancouver's convention centre cited as an example). A number of participants felt that these transformational uses should not rely on private sector funding/financing.
- **A number of participants felt that the naturalization of the river mouth was itself a transformational initiative.**

PROCESS MOVING FORWARD

- **Participants re-emphasized the importance of establishing an overall framework for the Port Lands as a whole.** It was felt that this framework should be in place prior to the precinct planning phase so that these plans would not "forget" or interfere with the location of things like transit routes and park space.
- **The importance of continued public consultation as the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative moves into the precinct planning phase was underscored by participants.** In particular, participants were interested in providing input on parks, building height, density and public realm design.
- **There was interest in seeing the leadership role of Waterfront Toronto in the development of the Port Lands and the waterfront as a whole reconfirmed.** It was felt that reconfirming Waterfront Toronto in this role would mean that all three levels of government are still committed to the waterfront and that no one level would be able to overturn a decision following an election.
- **There was a desire to see master planning work for the area south of the ship channel – particularly for green space connections between the Spit and the Baselands – commenced as early as possible, and to ensure that the Leslie Greenway remains a priority.**

Online participants were asked to view presentation slides prepared by the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative Project Team in advance of providing online feedback on the project website. A video of the presentation made at the August 8th public meeting was also available for viewing. The same discussion question used at the public meeting was provided to help guide the online feedback: *What refinements, if any, would you make to the updated findings and draft recommendations for the... (i) Port Lands (as a whole); (ii) Lower Don Lands/River Configuration; (iii) Business Case; (iv) Next Steps.*

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

KEY FEEDBACK THEMES

- Several participants felt that the **Port Lands Acceleration Initiative is in need of a compelling and overarching vision**. Participants used words like exciting, attractive, natural, spontaneous, entertaining, and sustainable to describe their overall vision for the area. Participants also encouraged the Project Team to focus on making the Port Lands a **world class tourism destination**.
- A handful of participants noted that **the water is the key feature of the Port Lands and encouraged the Project Team to use it as a central focus of future planning/design initiatives**. It was noted that Toronto is a port city and future planning should encourage recreational opportunities, tourism, business and industry along the shipping channel.
- Several participants expressed support for a **public transit system connection to downtown Toronto** from the Port Lands, noting that buses are not sufficient and that an **LRT or BRT system would be more appropriate**.
- A few participants indicated that **more green space is needed in the Port Lands**. It was suggested that the green space should be regularly maintained and include urban gardening and farming opportunities.
- A few participants emphasized the need for the Port Lands to be **pedestrian oriented with walkable and bikeable communities served by good public transit**.
- A participant suggested that the main street in the **Port Lands should include a dedicated mixed use civic square**, providing a place to socialize, experience Toronto's culture, shop, start a sustainable business venture, and participate in various entertainment activities (e.g. museum, aquarium, centre for the arts).
- One participant encouraged the Port Lands to become a **designated sustainable development zone, which requires all buildings to meet LEED certification**.
- Another participant expressed concerns regarding **potential effects of wind direction and lake surge** on the proposed Port Lands design and related infrastructure.

NEXT STEPS

A report on the recommended directions for the entire Port Lands will be considered by the City's Executive Committee on September 10th, and by City Council on October 2nd and 3rd. This report will also include all of the studies undertaken as part of the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative.