

EP9.6 Appendix B

Appendix 'B'

Exhibition Place Master Plan Consultation Summary Tenant/Client Stakeholder Meeting #3

On Monday January 20, 2020, from 10:00am – 12:00pm, Board Members Councillor Jim Karygiannis and Howard Lichtman co-hosted a special meeting of the Exhibition Place Tenant Liaison Committee at Beanfield Centre.

Exhibition Place staff sent an invitation via email to tenants and clients on January 8, 2020. On January 17, 2020, a reminder email was sent along with a meeting agenda and background information package prepared by City staff.

Approximately 20 people attended the session, including representatives from numerous organizations and operations staff that use and/or manage the Exhibition Place grounds. Several Board Members and Exhibition Place senior staff were also in attendance. The meeting included representatives from the following:

- BILD - Home Shows
- Canadian National Exhibition
- Royal Agricultural Winter Fair
- Honda Indy
- Horse Palace
- Hotel X
- Informa Canada (One of A Kind Show)
- Liberty Group
- Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment
- Medieval Times
- Queen Elizabeth Theatre
- Toronto Event Centre
- Toronto International Boat Show
- City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation

After an introduction and welcome from Councillor Karygiannis, City Planning staff gave a brief overview presentation of the background and progress on the emerging Master Plan strategy. Following the presentation, City staff facilitated roundtable discussions with smaller groups of attendees, to receive feedback focused on the following questions:

- *How does your operation use space at Exhibition Place?*
- *Tell us about your parking needs and challenges.*
- *The Master Plan is intended to articulate a long-term vision. What should we be taking into account with respect to phasing?*
- *Do you have any concerns with any of the other proposed plan elements or guiding principles (not related to parking/staging)?*
- *What do you think should be the priorities for the physical development or improvement of Exhibition Place?*

The table discussions concluded with a report back to the larger group. Below is a summary of what was raised:

Parking, Site Access, and Mobility

- The key driver for any changes and a common goal for Exhibition Place and its tenants should be improving the visitor experience from the moment they arrive on the grounds.
- Visitor parking was raised as a longstanding issue. Major show operators frequently hear complaints from visitors that they are not able to find parking near the show, causing them to question returning in the future – some are seeing lower attendance because of this. Venues are affected when parking lots are taken out of use to stage major events.
- The study should recognize that there is a baseline of the population, particularly those who come from outside Toronto or may be making large purchases at trade shows, who will continue to come by car regardless of transit availability.
- Getting people in and out of the site was raised as a longstanding issue. Vehicular access points are constrained, leading to line-ups and traffic both within the site and outside. Pedestrian traffic is congested at the TTC Loop and underground tunnel at the GO station before and after major festivals and sporting events.
- The pedestrian experience could be improved by better identifying pedestrian access points to make them more visible, and providing more covered walkways within the site with connections to all buildings.
- Shuttles and moving walkways could help pedestrians cover long distances across the site. Accessibility is increasingly important with an aging population. Suggestion to have a shuttle service around the perimeter of the grounds so as not to conflict with existing traffic.
- The efficiency of getting cars in and out of parking lots needs to be improved, to help people get on and off the site more quickly. Consider designating pick-up and drop-off areas for taxis and ride sharing services to keep traffic flow moving.
- Major events like the CNE and Honda Indy close off access to the site, limiting parking for on-site businesses.

Operations & Staging

- Consider designating exhibitor parking/staging areas to leave other parking areas open for visitors.
- The design of Festival Plaza or other hardscaped open spaces must remain sufficiently open to allow for wide truck movements, which could be constrained by the addition of streetlights and planting. Similarly, paving stones must be adequately weight-bearing to stand up to heavy loads and usage, including midway rides.
- City Parks, Forestry & Recreation, who maintains the open spaces on the grounds, has a maintenance yard on-site that is being relocated further east from its current space under the Gardiner, and continue to be "squeezed out".

- Consideration should be given to the aesthetics of the site at the entry points, and the visual impact of locating storage and "back of house" operations at these gateways.
- Storage and back-of-house needs also occupy spaces off-site, including space on the north side of the rail tracks.

Phasing

- Many in attendance felt that the Master Plan should prioritize the correction of existing issues before undertaking new projects.
- Attention should be paid first to improving the quality of the site design, directional signage and wayfinding, pedestrian lighting, and sheltered areas.
- The Master Plan should not assume a transit-only scenario, and should address issues around vehicular access together with transit improvements. Parking spaces should not be removed or reduced until transit improvements are in place.
- The construction schedule for any transformation project will need to address the operations of the tenants on-site.
- More clarity is needed around the timing of potential infrastructure improvements to allow for responsive business planning.

Green Space Connectivity

- Increased green space and passive recreation could be satisfied by strengthening connections to the adjacent waterfront parkland at Coronation Park and Marilyn Bell Park.
- The plan should be strategic about where open space is set aside for passive recreation and community use. Bandshell Park could be improved and better utilized to accommodate festivals and events.

Business Development

- Question whether Exhibition Place has a business plan measuring gains, assessing who is attending events, and projecting attendance if site access is improved.
- The Exhibition Place Business Plan should support the tenants' plans. Shows and events bring significant revenue and economic spin-off benefits to the City.
- The expense associated with mounting shows and events at Exhibition Place was cited as a disincentive to attracting new business.