



REPORT FOR ACTION

Exhibition Place Master Plan – Phase 1 Proposals Report

Date: June 5, 2020

To: Board of Governors of Exhibition Place

From: Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

SUMMARY

Exhibition Place is one of the City's great waterfront assets. It has a long history as a unique, multi-functional gathering place for Toronto's residents, visitors and business communities, home to special events, meetings, exhibitions, conventions, recreation and long-held traditions. A focus of economic activity amid a valuable oasis of open space near the downtown, Exhibition Place nonetheless finds itself disconnected from Lake Ontario, the parks and open space system, and surrounding neighbourhoods.

At the request of City Council, City Planning staff undertook a Master Plan study for Exhibition Place, launched in June 2019 with its first phase concluding in March 2020. This report describes the outcomes from the first phase of the Master Plan exercise, including a Proposals Report comprising a recommended Vision, Guiding Principles, emerging strategies and draft Structure Plan to support and enhance the continued success of Exhibition Place. This report also provides a summary of public and stakeholder engagement activities and feedback received throughout the first phase of the study.

The Phase 1 Proposals Report outlines a vision to re-establish Exhibition Place as Toronto's preeminent gathering place, where visitors from near and far can experience spaces for relaxation, entertainment and exhibition. These spaces will be bound together with a cohesive public realm network both within the site and connecting to the surrounding city. In serving as a gathering place, Exhibition Place will embrace and balance its diverse roles as a centre for innovation, inspiration and economic development, a historic place, and a place of entertainment and recreation, and a green destination.

Among other issues, discussion around parking emerged as a key focus area through Phase 1 public and stakeholder consultation, particularly from major shows and exhibitors. The existing surface parking lots support activity at Exhibition Place and also provide an opportunity through more flexible use for multifunctional, hardscaped plaza spaces that can accommodate a variety of uses while enhancing the public realm. The

adaptability of these spaces would allow Exhibition Place to move nimbly to respond to evolving opportunities.

Another key issue is the improvement of transit service to Exhibition Place, to provide a convenient alternative means of travel to the grounds that enhances the visitor experience. Given the barriers posed by the Gardiner Expressway, rail corridor and Lake Shore Boulevard west, transit will be critical to moving greater numbers of people to and from the site, as well as addressing vehicular traffic and climate change. The Proposals Report promotes leveraging investments in transit service and access, optimization of parking and staging areas, and exploration of alternative transportation technologies to allow for enhanced mobility and public realm improvement opportunities to be realized over the long term.

The proposed strategies will better integrate Exhibition Place with surrounding neighbourhoods, parks and open spaces, and Ontario Place; improve transit accessibility and connectivity to and through the site; conserve and rehabilitate the site's heritage features in accordance with the Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment; and develop a holistic approach to public realm improvements at Exhibition Place to benefit all visitors from Toronto and beyond. These strategies provide a long-term framework to consider future improvement opportunities, including most recently the revitalization of Ontario Place, arise over time. The Provincial government's announcement to revitalize the adjacent Ontario Place brings an opportunity to position Exhibition Place as part of a dynamic lakefront precinct, with improved connectivity and public realm improvements to maximize the use of the grounds. The development of a Master Plan is intended to provide a framework that articulates physical planning priorities to guide future decision-making.

Since this report was first drafted, the world has faced the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and its resulting economic uncertainty. Exhibition Place has seen the cancellation of numerous events at its various venues since mid-March, and staff advise they have proactively initiated discussions with the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild regarding innovative strategies toward reopening the site. In this context, the Master Plan Proposals Report offers a first step toward a physical framework to support economic recovery, guiding the restoration of publicly accessible open spaces, and promoting flexibility and resilience in the use of civic assets. It also proposes a number of "quick start" actions that can be implemented in the short term to enhance mobility and connectivity to Exhibition Place as it begins to restore activity.

The Proposals Report represents the professional advice of City Planning staff following an eight-month study phase that included robust consultation, urban design analysis, planning policy review and development of preliminary ideas for feedback. Should the Board wish to advance the Master Plan through future phases, a series of technical and feasibility studies and further consultation are recommended to test and refine the proposed strategies prior to the completion of a final Master Plan for Exhibition Place.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

City Planning confirms that there are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in the report in the current budget year or in future years.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of May 18, 2017, the Board approved the 2017-2019 Exhibition Place Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan has a Recognition and Public Understanding Goal to reaffirm and enhance the profile of the Exhibition Place cultural mandate and has a Strategy to enhance our archeological understanding of the site through assessment and development of heritage plans.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EP3.8>

At its meeting of September 4, 2015, the Board considered Report No. 20 entitled "Official Plan Amendment for Exhibition Place" and requested that City Council approve an amendment as proposed by the Board.

<https://www.explace.on.ca/files/file/58bdd52eac272/Item-20-Muzik-Official-PlanAmendment.pdf>

At its meeting of February 3, 2016, City Council considered the Board report entitled "Official Plan Amendment for Exhibition Place" and directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to take certain actions.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX11.13>

At its meeting of June 14, 2016, Toronto East York Community Council considered a report from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District on the "Exhibition Place Official Plan Amendment Application - Preliminary Report" and directed certain actions to be taken.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.TE17.62>

At its meeting of July 28, 2016, the Board considered Report No. 8 entitled "Official Plan Amendment - Decision of Toronto East York Community Council" and received for information. https://www.explace.on.ca/files/file/58c6a0594ddb1/Item-8-Official-Plan-AmendmentRequest-Decision_TEYCC.pdf

At its meeting of November 30, 2016, the Exhibition Place Official Plan Amendment Subcommittee of the Toronto East York Community Council held its first meeting and requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director City Planning to take certain actions and report back to the Subcommittee.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.TX1.2>

At its meeting of December 9, 2016, the Board approved of a report for information detailing the actions taken by the City Subcommittee.

<https://www.explace.on.ca/files/file/58b608ebe6661/Item-18-Official-PlanSubcommittee.pdf>

At its meeting of July 27, 2017, the Board considered a report for information and moved the following motion: "The Board request City Council to direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to expedite the work being done to facilitate the

official plan amendment for Exhibition Place requested by City Council on February 3 and 4, 2016". <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EP5.5>

At its meeting of October 2, 3 & 4, 2017, City Council considered the Board report and motion and adopted the same which direction was communicated to Board members by the Exhibition Place CEO.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX27.28>

At its meeting of December 11, 2017, the Board approved a motion to request the Chief Executive Officer, Exhibition Place to investigate the status of the official plan amendment, as requested by City Council for the grounds of Exhibition Place, report to the Board with an update in the first quarter of 2018, and invite appropriate City of Toronto staff to the meeting to answer questions.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EP7.25>

At its meeting of May 31, 2018, the Board received an update report on this matter along with the attendance by the Chief Planner and Executive Director for the City of Toronto who responded to questions.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.EP11.1>

At its meeting of April 10, 2019, the Board received an update report and presentation from City Planning on the Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment (CHLA) for Exhibition Place.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EP2.8>

At its meeting of May 14, 2019, City Council considered the report Exhibition Place - Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment and Next Steps for Master Plan and approved of several recommendations.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.TE5.26>

At its meeting of September 19, 2019, the Board received an update report and presentation from City Planning staff on the actions taken to date on the development of the Exhibition Place Master Plan and the directions/consultation that will happen in 2019.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EP6.12>

At its meeting of December 19, 2019, the Board received an update report and presentation from City Planning staff on NEXT PLACE - Exhibition Place Master Plan Strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EP8.1>

At its meeting of February 11, 2020, the Board was presented with an update report detailing the consultation workshop held at the January 20, 2020 Tenant Liaison Committee, and recommended that City Council direct the City Manager and Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure and Development Services to report to the Board on the joint strategy for the development of Ontario Place and Exhibition Place, when appropriate.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EP9.6>

BACKGROUND

For a City-owned asset with the size and diverse functions of Exhibition Place, master planning is essential to provide for the management and use of land and resources. The Board of Governors has developed planning documents in the past to help guide decision-making for the site, including a Program and Development Concept Plan in 1998, a Development Concept Plan in 2004, and most recently a Structure Plan in 2010.

The Master Plan being developed through this study is intended to be a comprehensive, detailed and research-based document, taking into account recent developments in and around the site, investments in transit accessing the site, and the Province's Call for Development at Ontario Place. As future capital projects come forward incrementally, the principles and opportunities identified in the Master Plan will shape the way they can contribute to the overall vision.

Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment (CHLA)

In June 2018, City Planning, in consultation with Exhibition Place, initiated a Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment (CHLA) of the site to appropriately identify and assess its cultural heritage resources, including its cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources. This study was undertaken to evaluate the site's cultural heritage value and to recommend, as appropriate, conservation strategies that will support master planning activities for the future of Exhibition Place.

In the Spring of 2019, City Council adopted the recommendations of the Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment for Exhibition Place. Council further directed staff to utilize the CHLA in the development of the Exhibition Place Master Plan, following a proposed study framework and informed by public consultation.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

All land use decisions in Ontario must be made within the context of the Provincial planning framework. The proposed strategies for Exhibition Place have been developed with due consideration for planning and heritage legislation, Provincial plans and regional transit plans, as well as the City's Official Plan, Secondary Plan and guidelines. The Proposals Report details the policies and guidelines applicable to Exhibition Place and its adjacent areas, including:

Provincial Legislation

Planning Act

Ontario Heritage Act

City of Toronto Act, Section 406

Provincial and Regional Planning Policies

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019)

City of Toronto Planning Framework

Official Plan

Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

Downtown Secondary Plan

Garrison Common North Secondary Plan

Fort York Neighbourhood Secondary Plan

Downtown Parks and Public Realm Strategy

City Planning Staff also considered the vision, goals and objectives of the Exhibition Place Strategic Plan, 2017-2019, along with previous planning exercises for the site, to inform the Master Plan study.

COMMENTS

Establishing a Master Plan for Exhibition Place meets a number of City-building objectives while supporting its core purpose and function in Toronto's trade, tourism and economic development. The purpose of this exercise is to:

- develop a long term vision, to be realized over 20 or more years, providing a high-level planning framework to guide future decision making for the physical development of the site;
- support Exhibition Place's economic benefits to the City;
- introduce public realm improvements to enhance the visitor experience;
- rehabilitate the site's heritage buildings and cultural landscapes to recognize their significance as a key component of the identity of Exhibition Place and Toronto's history;
- leverage external initiatives, especially transit investment that will greatly improve local and regional accessibility and connectivity to the grounds; and
- establish the City's priorities and opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration with the revitalization of Ontario Place.

The intent of the Master Plan is to be used as a guiding document to evaluate emerging initiatives against the overall strategy for the grounds. It can also serve to identify opportunities to leverage capital works with existing investment, for example, integrating on-site public realm improvements with the design of upgraded transit facilities.

Phase 1 Study Process

The first phase of the study was organized into three stages, all of which included robust public and stakeholder engagement as further detailed below:

GATHER (May - June 2019) – Staff commenced the study with an extensive background review, inventory of existing conditions and consideration of current programming and event requirements. The study was launched in the community with Public Open House #1, held at City Hall Council Chambers on June 25, 2019.

ANALYZE (July - early October 2019) – The study team undertook a more detailed urban design analysis of the site’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and potentials, which informed the draft Vision and Guiding Principles of the Master Plan. Staff formulated a conceptual strategy to organize the site by program area (“Relax – Entertain – Exhibit”), bound together with “Green DNA” – a network of public realm improvements, green infrastructure and open spaces. This stage concluded with Public Open House #2 held at the Beanfield Centre on October 10, 2019.

EVOLVE (mid-October - March 2020) – Following a review of the input received through public and stakeholder engagement, a draft Structure Plan for the site was developed and presented for further consultation with stakeholder groups. Public Open House #3, displaying the findings and recommended next steps for the Master Plan process, was held at the Beanfield Centre on January 13, 2020. This stage concluded with the preparation of the Phase 1 Proposals Report, found in Attachment 1 to this report.

Engagement

Following the first Public Open House on June 25, 2019, staff coordinated ten 'pop-up' consultation stations throughout the summer and early fall at prominent public spaces, festivals and farmers' markets across the City, including the CNE and a conference at Exhibition Place. The engagement strategy also included the creation of a dedicated project website, social media campaign and online survey. Through each of the Analyze and Evolve stages, staff collected input from the Exhibition Place tenants and stakeholders, a Local Advisory Committee of area residents' and business organizations and a Technical Advisory Committee with representatives from City Divisions and Agencies. In addition, Planning Staff presented its findings to the City’s Planning Review Panel and a joint session of the City and Waterfront Toronto Design Review Panels.

City Planning staff have consulted with Exhibition Place staff at multiple points throughout the first study phase to provide project briefings and gain insight on the current operations of the site, its events, leaseholder needs and venues. Planning staff appeared before the Board of Governors to present progress and findings at each stage, at its September 2019, December 2019 and February 2020 meetings. Exhibition Place staff also facilitated the use of the Beanfield Centre for two public open houses and three meetings with its tenants and clients, including one workshop-style meeting to explore stakeholder concerns regarding parking, access and operations.

The input received throughout the engagement activities is generally summarized as follows:

Exhibition Place Tenants and Operators

- The event experience begins at home - travel to and through the site should be convenient for visitors.
- Significant concern over ensuring enough supply of on-site storage and operations/staging space
- Loss and/or relocation of parking will affect business
- Clarify project timelines - greater certainty about the Master Plan process is needed.

Technical Advisory Committee

- Exhibition Place is an important economic engine
- Reconfiguring parking to introduce open space features could be balanced and/or phased with transit improvements
- Better connections to the broader open space network could be achieved in the short term
- Leverage transportation investment and innovation opportunities
- Ensure accessible design

Local Advisory Committee

- Exhibition Place is a public asset and should feel like an extension of the City's public realm
- Better activation of the space, and more reasons to be there outside of events, are needed
- Highlight the cultural heritage, Indigenous and military stories of the site
- Design excellence is of critical importance; the grounds feel "anti-pedestrian"

City/Waterfront Design Review Panel

- Bolder ideas and a clearer inspirational vision are needed
- Place greater emphasis on heritage
- Prioritize "leading with the landscape"
- Support innovations in sustainability, mobility and adaptation to climate change

Planning Review Panel

- Improve the site's connectivity in all seasons, for all ages and levels of ability
- Improve the aesthetic and physical elements, and highlight the site's heritage and history
- Emphasize year-round access and outdoor winter programming and activities
- Create a complete site with amenities such as a welcome centre, greater access to food, comfort stations, prayer spaces, shelters
- Link on-site recreation to surrounding recreational trails and the water

Public at Large (open houses, pop-up consultations, survey responses)

- Better transit, pedestrian and cycling connections to and from the city
- Desire for more year-round, outdoor events, including arts and culture, concerts, family-friendly and free events
- Enhance appearance of the site - too much paved area, more green/open spaces needed
- Ensure sense of public ownership and access
- More food and beverage options, wayfinding and amenities needed
- Heritage character and buildings are defining features that should be preserved
- Seek better integration with Ontario Place

Input received from all groups has shaped the overall study approach and the specific actions proposed as a result of the Phase 1 work, with key messages summarized in the Proposals Report. A more detailed report on the Phase 1 engagement activities, events and feedback received is included as Attachment 2 to this report.

Vision and Guiding Principles

The following Vision Statement was created and refined through the Phase 1 consultation to guide the overall Master Plan process:

Exhibition Place is Toronto's Gathering Place. Its historic and landmark buildings, landscapes and features provide the foundation for signature events, festivals and activities that bring people together and inspire us. The ongoing evolution of Exhibition Place will build upon this tradition by showcasing innovation and enhancing spaces for all visitors to Relax, Entertain and Exhibit.

As Exhibition Place evolves, its distinct cultural heritage landscapes and continued function as a gathering place will be a foundational component of directing the physical change of Exhibition Place. In serving as a gathering place, Exhibition Place is:

A place of innovation, inspiration and economic development – a centre for premier events, including sporting and cultural events, public celebrations, conferences, trade and consumer shows, and recurring festivals and exhibitions.

A green destination – a unique place within the City that is easily accessible and provides public parkland and a green retreat, with connections to the waterfront open space network.

A historic place – a location of extensive cultural heritage resources, including landscapes, buildings and public art, which are conserved and enhanced to celebrate the City's cultural heritage and historic character.

A place of entertainment – a year-round entertainment hub for Torontonians, tourists and event goers.

A place of recreation – a multi-seasonal destination offering active and passive recreation opportunities for local residents, visitors and the surrounding communities.

Exhibition Place is a significant cultural heritage landscape that forms part of Toronto's Central Waterfront. As such, Guiding Principles for the Master Plan have been informed by the CHLA recommendations and are rooted in the four core principles established in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, which are reflected below. As Exhibition Place evolves, the City will, through public actions and in the process of considering development-related actions, ensure the following principles are used to guide decision making:

Removing Barriers/ Making Connections/ Prioritizing Transit

- Prioritize public transit as the primary means to most efficiently move the greatest number of people to and from Exhibition Place
- Enhance and promote pedestrian and cycling connections to adjacent communities, within, and through the site
- Further promote modal shift, parking consolidation, and opportunities for placemaking by accommodating and promoting emerging mobility solutions

- Improve linkages to Ontario Place through enhanced transit service and/or alternative modes of transportation

Building a Network of Spectacular Waterfront Parks & Public Spaces

- Contribute to the waterfront open space network by connecting and enhancing the public realm and maximizing green open space within Exhibition Place and its surroundings, and through improved linkages to Ontario Place
- Create a better relationship with the rest of the city

Promoting a Clean & Green Environment

- Build in resilience (through sustainability initiatives, low impact development practices, and optimized surface parking treatments)
- Maximize efficiency of site operations

Creating Dynamic & Diverse New Places

- Celebrate and conserve the cultural heritage of Exhibition Place
- Complement built form with programming and open space, reinstating the historical, balanced relationship between building and landscape
- Continue to develop and display an extensive public art collection

Openness and Transparency/Responsiveness to the Broader Community and Stakeholders

- Engage with the community and stakeholders throughout the Master Plan process and implementation

The Guiding Principles were previously to the Board of Governors at its meetings of September 19, 2019 and February 11, 2020. Further background, rationale and illustration of these principles is provided in the Proposals Report.

EMERGING MASTER PLAN STRATEGIES

Conceptual Strategy

With a range of character and functions over 192 acres, the Proposals Report recommends a strategy to organize the Exhibition Place grounds according to their prevalent program areas. Each of these zones - Relax, Entertain and Exhibit –would be treated with a distinct public realm approach, generally summarized as follows:

- The **Relax** Zone, in the west end of the site, features the greatest concentration of heritage buildings and landscapes. The focus is on passive recreational opportunities and improved connections to Marilyn Bell Park and South Parkdale.
- The **Entertain** Zone, in the central area, is the key opportunity area for creating and enhancing gathering places, multipurpose public plazas and north-south connections linking between the Exhibition GO/TTC/Ontario Line transit hub and Ontario Place, and the neighbourhood to the north.

- The **Exhibit** Zone, in the east end, reinforces the formal axis of Princes' Boulevard with new development and public realm improvements to support exhibition and trade functions. Enhanced linkages to Coronation Park, Gore Park and Fort York/Bentway provide connectivity to the surrounding green space network.

These program areas are bound together with a conceptual "Green DNA" – a network of public realm improvements, green infrastructure and open spaces – and grounded in the recommendations of the CHLA to restore and enhance the site's cultural heritage landscapes.

When City Council, at its meeting of May 14 and 15, 2019, directed staff to undertake a Master Plan for Exhibition Place, it adopted a study framework consisting of the eight inter-related elements discussed below. The preliminary study of these elements has informed the overall analysis, recommended strategies, and development of a draft Structure Plan for the site, as described below:

Heritage and Archaeology

As directed by Council, the Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment has served as a foundational document to guide the Exhibition Place Master Plan study. Its focus is on conserving the cultural heritage value and heritage attributes of the site; and managing future change in accordance with the Official Plan and the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Understanding and rehabilitating the cultural heritage attributes of the grounds and buildings are key to enhancing the character and sense of place at Exhibition Place, and to guiding future development and improvements to contribute to its identity and ongoing success.

The CHLA concluded that Exhibition Place survives as a valued, provincially significant cultural heritage landscape that incorporates a rich layering of designed areas that have gradually changed and coalesced over time to create a unique complex located in Ontario's capital city, and which has organically evolved in relation to its strategic location on the Lake Ontario shoreline.

The CHLA found that some of the site's elements, and the connections between them, have been lost in places or their quality degraded. However, a carefully planned management framework for the site can improve these deficiencies by applying rehabilitation treatments that seek to achieve continuity across the site and create strong relationships between the site's distinct internal areas and heritage attributes. Such an approach will ensure that this provincially significant cultural heritage landscape is conserved and reinvigorated as an evolving and important waterfront asset in the City of Toronto.

The Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment includes a comprehensive series of recommended conservation strategies, rehabilitation principles and protective mechanisms to support and enhance the integrity of Exhibition Place as it manages future change. These recommendations include both site-wide and place-specific actions, many of which have been considered and integrated into the proposed Vision,

Guiding Principles, Conceptual Strategy and draft Structure Plan developed through Phase 1 of the study.

Public Realm and Open Space

Over 70% of the site area of Exhibition Place is unbuilt area. This includes a variety of valuable landscaped areas as identified in the CHLA, as well as areas that are currently occupied by surface parking. As a result, there is great potential to create a strong open space network, including flexible spaces that can accommodate staging, storage and operational needs of future events. In order to achieve this balance, the following recommendations and design directions, informed by the CHLA, should be considered.

- Extend and create new public spaces to rehabilitate degraded open areas.
- Establish a coherent approach to street furniture within the Study Area.
- Integrate a landscape planting and maintenance plan.
- Create a consistent, widened landscape edge along the northern perimeter of the Exhibition Place grounds where feasible.
- Create a continuous Lakeview Promenade along the southern edge of the site to re-establish a visual connection to Lake Ontario
- Develop and enhance meeting places throughout the site to improve navigation and connectivity.
- Maintain Princes' Boulevard as a key organizing element of the site, which functions as a primary axis and entrance at the Princes' Gates.
- Consolidate and optimize parking in order to restore the original intended purpose of landscaped open spaces.
- Maximize open space where possible by softening landscape and seamlessly integrating these areas with pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
- Explore the use of pavement materials such as permeable surfaces to create and extend flexible open spaces that accommodate parking as well as a variety of active uses.
- Discourage the use of large signage and fences. Signage, storage locations and fences should not detract from the essential and original qualities of identified heritage buildings and landscape features.
- Coordinate the public realm network to encourage synergy and connectivity between Exhibition Place and Ontario Place, as a cohesive destination precinct.

The development of a holistic approach to the public realm network at Exhibition Place allows for individual elements to be implemented over the long term as opportunities for capital projects arise.

Connections

Though Exhibition Place is located close to Toronto's downtown, it remains quite disconnected from surrounding areas. This condition results in lack of easy access, long walking distances, physical barriers and isolation of the site, primarily due to the Gardiner Expressway and the rail corridor to the north and Lake Shore Boulevard West to the south, among other factors. While certain outdoor events need to be contained

on-site, opportunities to expand the permeability of the grounds to enhance year-round access for the general public should be explored.

There are opportunities to remove and/or mitigate the negative impact of such barriers through enhancement of open spaces, meeting places and existing important connections such as Princes' Boulevard. The Proposals Report also identifies potential new connections, entry points and bridges, as well as opportunities to improve existing connections both within the site and to the surrounding areas. The improvement and expansion of connections and open space should maintain and enhance important views and vistas, as identified in the Official Plan and CLHA study.

The following design directions and recommendations, consistent with the CHLA, should be considered in order to achieve the objectives of the Guiding Principles.

- Connect Exhibition Place visually and physically to Lake Ontario, the waterfront, Ontario Place, Coronation Park and surrounding area, by:
 - Enhancing existing east-west and north-south connections, and creating a strong link to Ontario Place, in particular through the addition of a “park link” bridge over Lake Shore Boulevard West.
 - Expanding the TTC/GO transit hub on the north side and creating a strong gateway to the site, including additional connections to Liberty Village.
 - Creating a new entry point by extending the Bentway to the west.
 - Enhancing the west gateway, creating a better pedestrian crossing and connection to Marilyn Bell Park.
 - Providing new pedestrian connections to Parkdale.
 - Enhancing the Princes' Gates approach from the east, creating visual and physical connections between the site and an enhanced Gore Park.
- Restore underutilized and discontinuous physical connections such as promenades, pathways and circulation routes along the site perimeter and between buildings.
- Maintain views or vistas between new and existing buildings, groups of buildings and the rest of the site as part of any new development.
- Explore the use of special pavement treatment, wherever feasible, that not only enhances the physical and visual aspect of important connections, but also has the potential to create or extend flexible spaces for events.
- Provide high-quality landscaped pathways along the perimeters of open spaces and building edges, integrated into a larger site-wide network of green connections.
- Provide high-quality landscaped pathways along primary axes and desire lines as they emerge, keeping in mind operational requirements for large, uninterrupted open spaces.
- Provide one or more grade separated connections from the Exhibition Station transit hub to Ontario Place that are operable during large site-wide events such as the CNE. The purpose of such a connection is to facilitate active transportation, and connect to destinations in between as appropriate, while considering potential heritage and operational impacts.

Mobility and Parking

Access to the site for all modes of transportation is generally constrained by barriers including the Gardiner Expressway, the Lakeshore West rail corridor, and Lake Shore Boulevard West. Given these constraints, transit will be critical to moving greater numbers of people to and from the site, and may lead to reduced personal vehicle use and visitor parking demand. Several important transit investments are planned for Exhibition Place, including the TTC 30% design for a streetcar connection between Dufferin Loop and Exhibition Loop, Metrolinx improvements to Exhibition GO station as part of the GO Expansion project, and the Province's Ontario Line, which is in preliminary planning stages. Ferry service to connect to the waterfront south of Exhibition Place is also included in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.

The focus of the mobility strategy is to improve pedestrian conditions within and connecting to Exhibition Place and Ontario Place. A key component of this is also creating excellent connections to the existing and future transit station, given planned physical and service improvements. The objective for vehicular access to the site is to better design, organize, and manage the flow of automobiles and related parking and servicing functions. This includes consideration for continued developments in ride sharing services, pickup and drop-off functions, and most importantly, accessibility needs.

Exhibition Place has a long history of piloting and driving innovation in green energy, transportation as well as other fields. This legacy can be built upon by introducing and expanding innovations on site. Ideas for this innovation zone could include displaying, testing, and piloting emerging new transportation technologies and approaches that support the City's goals for improved mobility.

The following mobility directions and recommendations should be considered to achieve the objectives of the guiding principles:

- Build upon and promote transit as a primary means of access to the site.
- Develop the Exhibition Station transit hub as the main interchange location on the site, supported by improved pedestrian connections across the rail corridor, Manitoba Drive, and the LRT right-of-way.
- Enhance the existing pedestrian and cycling networks on and to the site, and close gaps where they exist.
- Study the potential role of ferries in providing increased transportation service to Exhibition Place and Ontario Place, including connections to Downtown and Billy Bishop Airport.
- Study, consolidate, and implement a coordinated site-wide Transportation Demand Management strategy, with emphasis on peak demand and site egress.
- Establish a Transportation Innovation Zone at Exhibition Place, in coordination with Transportation Services and the Board of Governors.
- Utilize innovative technology to facilitate last mile connectivity, parking and traffic management, sustainability, and other objectives.
- Add a park bridge over Lake Shore Boulevard West connecting to Ontario Place.

While the Proposals Report identifies existing vehicle parking areas that can be converted to flexible open space, it is acknowledged that parking spaces should not be removed until it can be demonstrated that they can be accommodated elsewhere on the site, or that the demand for parking has decreased overall because more people are arriving by transit, walking, cycling, or taxi/rideshare. At the same time, to fulfill the objectives of heritage conservation, discouraging private auto use and improving the public realm between buildings, City Planning does not recommend the creation of net additional parking spaces above the current supply at Exhibition Place and the anticipated supply to meet the needs of the hotel's second phase and the expanded convention centre.

Operations

In addition to improving mobility to and through Exhibition Place for visitors, it is important to maintain functionality of the site to support back-of-house operations, loading/unloading, storage and other activities associated with the staging of major shows, events and attractions. Regular pedestrian and vehicular access routes and the availability of specific service areas are also sometimes disrupted by large events, necessitating a degree of flexibility and redundancy. Currently, best efforts are made to manage these activities through the staggering of event timing and implementation of intricate load-in/load-out schedules.

Extensive spaces dedicated to loading and servicing can also impact the functional and aesthetic quality of the public realm adjacent to these areas. The objectives of rehabilitating the relationship of buildings to the landscape and achieving an improved public realm network must be balanced with these operational requirements. The Master Plan can promote a more optimal use of the land at Exhibition Place by considering the following actions:

- Consolidate servicing and delivery routes as well as access to buildings and events, and explore alternative distribution methods that may minimize space demands and improve placemaking opportunities.
- Improve current infrastructure and controlled access for trucks and other vehicles to ensure efficient set-up and tear-down during events, while maximizing unobstructed use of public open spaces.
- Discourage through traffic on-site and explore opportunities for improved pedestrian conditions and safety, while maintaining servicing and operational access for large events, tenants, leaseholders, and visitors.
- Review surface parking requirements periodically, and in consultation with Exhibition Place staff, for opportunities to consolidate and/or relocate spaces within the site in order to facilitate qualitative public realm improvements and promote flexibility of use.

Built Form

The purpose of the Master Plan is not to recommend new buildings or programming, but to identify the most appropriate places on the grounds where development could be located. While the majority of the site – approximately 70% of the land area – is unbuilt, it does not necessarily mean that the remaining open spaces are suitable for new

development. Due to the unique role, function and heritage attributes of Exhibition Place, opportunities for new buildings on the site must be very carefully considered.

The CHLA study identified different types of important open spaces and cultural heritage landscapes that need to be maintained, enhanced and in some instances expanded to rehabilitate the strong relationships between the site's distinct open spaces and heritage attributes. The historic pattern of open space and relationships of buildings to the landscape are key defining elements of Exhibition Place. Certain views and vistas along primary axes, towards the lake, and towards different sides of existing buildings, should be kept unobstructed. Another important consideration is the existing and potential archeological sites as identified in the CHLA, which are not appropriate for future development. Finally, the operational need to preserve flexible open spaces that can accommodate a variety of programming, staging, storage, parking and gathering places limits the space available to introduce new built form.

Certain sites within Exhibition Place could be considered appropriate for potential future development, provided they address the CHLA recommendations and urban design performance standards. For instance, two sites have already been identified to accommodate the option for Phase 2 of Hotel X, and the expansion of the Enercare Centre, located on the south and north sides of Princes' Boulevard, respectively.

Two other unbuilt areas exist that could potentially accommodate new buildings or structures: Lot 854 to the west of Manitoba Drive; and Lot 856 to the north of the Raptors' Training Facility and Medieval Times. While the accommodation of current operation uses would need to be considered, these sites would not pose any obstruction to important views and vistas, are not identified as existing or potential archeological sites and do not impact the view towards heritage buildings. This study is not recommending any particular building or use for these sites, however, any potential future development should follow certain design and built form directions. In particular, new development should:

- Complement the scale and character of the site's cultural heritage landscape resources through the use of a variety of design tools such as setbacks and stepbacks, which may exceed the City's minimum site and urban design standards.
- Reflect the multi-sided quality of pavilion buildings, and improve the relationships between existing buildings, groups of buildings and the site as a whole.
- Respect the historic, balanced relationship between buildings and landscape.
- Be low-scale with substantial massing to complement the existing pavilion-type buildings on site, and include weather protection.
- Promote flexible and adaptable interior spaces within new buildings to accommodate a wide range of events and users.
- Demonstrate design excellence and be fully integrated into the public realm and parkland network.
- Consider contextually appropriate and harmonious character, materiality and colour in the design of new buildings and structures, encouraging active frontages and avoiding blank walls where feasible.

The operational implications of potential removal of existing parking or flexible open space in these locations will need to be considered in any future plans for redevelopment.

Resilience

Exhibition Place has an opportunity to foster resilience and adapt to climate change by incorporating mobility networks, flood control, planting strategies and open space design within functioning natural systems.

As noted above, it is acknowledged that the existing parking lots are valued spaces that accommodate major event staging, swing space, storage and vehicle parking for patrons and exhibitors. However, expansive paved areas do not allow for the effective absorption of rainwater, leading to overland flooding. The development of a multi-modal transportation plan for the site can lead to reduced demand for paved vehicular spaces and open up opportunities for alternative paving materials to support environmental resiliency. The Proposals Report promotes the following considerations:

- Continue to implement and build on the success of the Exhibition Place GreenSmart Program to reduce environmental impact and champion the use of emerging green technologies, including:
 - Minimum LEED Silver certification for new buildings;
 - Energy conservation and self-sufficiency targets;
 - LED technology for indoor and outdoor lighting;
 - Continued evolution of sustainable waste management, recycling and disposal;
 - Ongoing implementation of urban reforestation project toward a City-wide target of 40% canopy tree cover; and
 - Incorporating the harvesting and reuse of rainwater in all new construction.
- Capitalize on development opportunities and/or consider a phased approach to update dedicated paved parking areas with a goal to meet or exceed City of Toronto Design Guidelines for 'Greening' Surface Parking Lots, where appropriate and as funding permits.
- Incorporate Low Impact Development practices, such as bioswales, permeable pavement and rain gardens in capital works projects and new development.
- Include green roofs in new construction, and expanded to existing buildings where feasible.
- Promote urban agriculture and food security.

STRUCTURE PLAN

The review, consideration and balancing of the study elements listed above, through background research and extensive consultation, informed the development of a draft Structure Plan for Exhibition Place. The draft Structure Plan builds upon the 2010 Structure Plan developed by Exhibition Place staff while accounting for new influencing factors such as the Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment, the growth of adjacent neighbourhoods, the revitalization of Ontario Place, and future transit investment.

The draft Structure Plan proposes a cohesive physical strategy for the entire grounds to achieve:

- New and existing gateways and meeting places, including an expanded transit hub and potential park bridge over Lake Shore Boulevard West linking to Ontario Place;
- Primary corridors for moving people to and through the site;
- Existing surface parking areas to be improved as flexible open spaces that can accommodate programming, parking, staging and operations;
- Future development sites to expand the Enercare Centre and Hotel X (Phase 2)
- Other appropriate areas for future development which may include above-grade parking;
- Potential pedestrianization of selected road segments;
- A multi-use promenade encircling the perimeter of the grounds; and
- Potential shuttle routes to improve last-mile accessibility through the site.

The draft Structure Plan brings together the potential opportunities that were identified through the analysis related to improved movement, views, access points and gateways, and public realm enhancement, and illustrates a preliminary strategy to advance these objectives. It is intended to form the basis for future review, analysis and testing of the proposed Master Plan strategies.

Through the consultation and analysis undertaken in this first phase of the study, certain objectives for supporting the unique role and function of Exhibition Place have emerged for ongoing consideration. As the study progresses through future phases, actions promoted in the Master Plan should:

- Protect and enhance major exhibition and trade shows, including back-of-house, loading and parking needs;
- Conserve heritage buildings and landscapes;
- Maintain the green, park-like setting of the west end of the site;
- Improve transit connections;
- Improve active transportation to and through the site, including connections to Ontario Place;
- Accommodate expansion of the Enercare Centre and Hotel X;
- Maintain major open space for the CNE and other special events; and
- Coordinate planning with the revitalization of Ontario Place.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY PHASES

The Proposals Report describes a vision for the future of Exhibition Place and outlines a proposed approach, including potential strategies and actions identified through the first phase of the Exhibition Place Master Plan study. Further technical study and analysis will be required to test the feasibility, impact and timing of these ideas in the development of a final Master Plan, and should be guided and informed by the CHLA. The strategies and principles for the conservation and rehabilitation of this provincially significant cultural heritage landscape are foundational to the master planning of the site.

Studies recommended for future phases of the Master Plan development, subject to funding approval, include:

- Multi-Modal Transportation Strategy
- Operations and Logistics Study
- Economic Impact/Opportunities Study
- Heritage Conservation Plan
- Stormwater/Wastewater Management Study
- Food Building Feasibility Study

Further detail on the proposed scope and parameters for these studies is provided in Attachment 3 to this report.

REQUEST FOR OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT

In 2015, the Board of Governors requested that the City initiate an Official Plan Amendment with respect to granting long-term leases, greater than 21 years, on lands designated *Parks and Open Space Areas*. The City's Official Plan Policy 4.3.8 prohibits the sale or disposal of City-owned lands in *Parks and Open Space Areas*. Upon consultation with Legal staff, City Planning staff are of the view that due to recent changes to the Municipal Code, an area-wide Official Plan Amendment is no longer required for this purpose.

The Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 213, governs the sale and disposal of City lands. Prior to 2017, any lease of 21 years or longer was considered a sale of lands. In determining whether a lease was 21 years or longer, the City would include the term of any previous leases of the same lands. For example, if a property had been leased for 15 years, a proposed lease extension or new lease for a term of 10 years would be considered a sale, since the cumulative total of the terms would be 25 years. This would require an Official Plan Amendment if the property was designated *Parks and Open Space Areas*.

In 2017, Chapter 213 was amended such that a lease is considered a sale only when the unexpired term of the existing lease (including any rights of renewal or extension), together with the new lease term, exceeds 21 years. For example, if an existing lease on a property designated *Parks and Open Space Areas* were in its 20th year, the unexpired portion of the existing term would be 1 year. A new lease or lease extension of up to 20 years would be permissible without requiring an Official Plan Amendment, because the unexpired existing term (1 year) plus the proposed new term (20 years) does not exceed 21 years. Any options to further renew or extend the lease must be included in calculating the term such that in the above example, a proposed new term of 20 years, plus an option to renew for 10 more years, would require an Official Plan Amendment.

It is anticipated that relatively few new or existing tenants on *Parks and Open Space Areas* at Exhibition Place will request leases or lease extensions where the unexpired term, including any renewal or extension rights, exceeds 21 years. City Planning staff are of the opinion that in such instances, the Official Plan Amendment process offers the opportunity to undertake applicable review and consultation to determine whether

each proposed long-term lease is appropriate. Therefore, given new Municipal Code regulations, the need for an area-wide Official Plan Amendment to permit such leases has diminished and is not recommended at this time.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACTS

Work on Phase 1 of the Exhibition Place Master Plan study was substantially complete in March 2020, prior to the widespread impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic and its effects on the life and economy of the City. At Exhibition Place, concern for public health and safety has led to the cancellation of dozens of conferences, public events and trade shows, as well as the temporary closure of on-site entertainment, sports and special event venues since mid-March. The ongoing economic uncertainty has undoubtedly challenged the ability of the grounds to serve as a gathering place in this traditional sense, and it is acknowledged that future phases of the Master Plan work will need to address this new reality.

At the time of writing, the timeline for reinstating large gatherings and events, both public and private remains unclear. It can be anticipated that the COVID-19 crisis is likely to have impacts on traffic patterns, public transit use, access to and attendance at venues, restaurants and events in the near term. The assumptions used in Phase 1 of the study will need to be reviewed and re-assessed as the long-term impacts of widespread economic closure are better understood.

However, the need for public access to a coherent and interconnected open space network that supports walking, cycling and outdoor activity has become more essential than ever. The grounds at Exhibition Place can contribute to this network through improved connectivity with surrounding neighbourhoods, area parks and green spaces, Ontario Place and the broader waterfront trail system.

“QUICK START” INITIATIVES

While the Master Plan would identify major transformational projects for long-term implementation, the City can undertake certain initiatives to improve the public realm and connectivity in and around Exhibition Place. The Proposals Report recommends several “quick start” interventions that can be completed in the near term to provide these connections, promote pedestrian movement to and through the site and support Exhibition Place in its recovery. These include:

- A pedestrian path to the west of the Food Building, connecting to the Exhibition GO/TTC transit hub;
- A landscaped link through the southern parking lot providing an enhanced pedestrian path to and from Ontario Place;
- The implementation of a Transportation Innovation Zone to trial innovations such as passenger and goods transport technologies, smart and flexible street infrastructure, and alternative hardscaped surface treatments;
- Landscaped treatments to the East Gateway (Princes’ Gates) to facilitate connections to Gore Park and Coronation Park; and
- Enhancements to the space under the Gardiner to expand public access where feasible.

CONCLUSION

Exhibition Place is a cherished City asset and cultural heritage resource that provides unique opportunities for recreation, entertainment, economic development and tourism – a gathering place for Torontonians and visitors alike. The establishment of a Master Plan for Exhibition Place would provide an overall vision, guiding principles and planning framework to guide physical change and usage of the grounds to ensure its continued success.

City Planning staff have concluded Phase 1 of the Master Plan study with a Proposals Report outlining findings, emerging strategies and a draft Structure Plan. The outcomes of this first phase are presented to the Board for its information, to be considered in the development of a joint strategy with Ontario Place. Future phases of the Master Plan work will be initiated by Exhibition Place Board of Governors, subject to Council approval, will be informed by more detailed technical analysis of the preliminary findings, a re-assessment of base assumptions that may have changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as ongoing public and stakeholder engagement and consultation with the Board of Governors.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Exhibition Place Master Plan Phase 1 Proposals Report

Attachment 2: Engagement Report

Attachment 3: Recommendations for Future Studies

Attachment 1: Exhibition Place Master Plan Phase 1 Proposals Report

Attachment 2: Engagement Report

Attachment 3: Recommendations for Future Studies

The following provides further detail on studies recommended for future phases of the Exhibition Place Master Plan development:

Multi-modal Transportation Strategy – to undertake a holistic review and assessment of current and future transportation demands including personal vehicle use, transit, pedestrian and cycling connectivity, parking, and surge crowds associated with major events; to recommend strategies to encourage transit use, discourage travel by personal vehicle, and optimize parking on the grounds; and to recommend a phasing strategy to identify preconditions for the consolidation and/or relocation of surface parking areas, and potential future reduction of parking spaces should parking demand decrease.

Operations and Logistics Study – to review the loading, operations, site circulation, and logistics associated with long-term tenants and major event staging throughout the year, in ongoing consultation with tenants and operators to gain a thorough understanding of current needs and identify practical opportunities to consolidate, relocate, and/or optimize site operations to create opportunities for public realm improvements.

The two studies noted above will need to be closely coordinated, together with the additional recommended studies listed below. Further, the confirmation of a plan for the revitalization of Ontario Place and confirmation of the location of the Ontario Line station, together with concept level design/demand forecast, are prerequisites for the transportation studies. Until these two factors are known, it will be challenging to make definitive recommendations to improve multi-modal accessibility to Exhibition Place.

Economic Impact/Opportunities Study – to review and confirm the economic impact of the current activities, events and attractions at Exhibition Place, and undertake a cost/benefit analysis of implementing heritage, parks and public realm strategies articulated in the draft Structure Plan. Such analysis will consider the impact and opportunities for existing tenants and recommend priorities for future investment.

Heritage Conservation Plan – as recommended by the Cultural Heritage Landscape Assessment, to support the conservation of the site as a significant cultural heritage landscape. It is recommended that this study be undertaken concurrently with other ongoing Master Plan studies to consolidate public and stakeholder consultation costs.

Interpretation Plan – the CHLA also recommended the development of an Interpretation Plan to communicate the site's rich, layered history and using innovative approaches for historical interpretation for residents and visitors alike.

Landscape Planting and Maintenance Plan – A landscape planting and maintenance plan is recommended to establish a clear approach to plant health and end-of-life replacements, and to provide direction on intensity of use and appropriate spacing of uses to allow recovery periods for lawns and plantings.

Stormwater/Wastewater Management Study – to assess existing conditions and efficiency of current water infrastructure servicing the site, and recommend strategies for improving stormwater infiltration and reducing overland flow and flooding.

Food Building Feasibility Study – to develop and evaluate a coordinated approach with the City, Exhibition Place and stakeholders, TTC, and Metrolinx examining options for the potential future re-use of the Food Building in connection with transit investment, while maintaining its intended function for food service, innovation and promotion of urban agriculture.