

## **Exhibition Place Master Plan**

### **Public Meeting - Open House #2**

#### Meeting Summary

On October 10, 2019, from 6:00pm to 8:30pm, City Planning staff held a Public Meeting (Open House #2) at the Beanfield Centre - Exhibition Place, 105 Princes' Boulevard, Room 201ABC. The purpose of the meeting was to seek feedback from the public on the draft vision, guiding principles and emerging ideas for the Exhibition Place Master Plan. 75 people signed in at the meeting.

The meeting was an open house, with information display panels and staff available to answer questions. City Staff gave a presentation at 7:00pm, followed by an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

The following is a summary of what was heard and discussed during the question and answer session, as well as written comments received, grouped by theme:

#### ***Transparency***

- A concern was raised about the guiding principle regarding 'transparency', noting the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place would provide greater transparency for decision making if a local community member was on the board. Staff noted that the objective of the Master Plan is not to recommend changes to the composition of the Board of Governors. The guiding principle regarding transparency is in recognition of the Master Plan process.
- The development process on the Exhibition Place grounds, and public involvement in the decision to locate and build a hotel (Hotel X) in particular, could have been more transparent.

#### ***Functional / Operational Needs***

- Regarding the Master Plan idea to extend the Bentway onto the Exhibition Place grounds, consideration needs to be given to the existing users of this space, including storage areas under the Gardiner Expressway for the Royal Winter Fair and other events, the mounted police unit, and loading and unloading of animals along Manitoba Drive. Existing operational needs must be considered as part of future plan development.

#### ***Use of Buildings and Site***

- The use of the Better Living Centre as a winter respite centre is not appropriate on the Exhibition Place grounds.
- Better use should be made of the Bandshell and surrounding grounds, as it was perceived to sit empty for much of the year. More concerts and events like a rib fest should be hosted, with lower ticket prices, to better utilize the space.
- Hosting the Air Show is noisy for area residents.

- Renting facilities at Exhibition Place is too expensive, leading many potential users to other locations.
- Clarification was sought on where future buildings were going to be located. Staff noted that the purpose of the Master Plan is not to confirm future buildings, but rather to identify locations where future buildings would be most appropriately located, should they be contemplated at a future date. Three sites were identified, including the area to the west of the Enercare Centre, the area west of the Stanley Barracks, and the area north of the Press Building.
- Features and activities formerly found on the Exhibition Place grounds, such as a carousel, rollercoaster and gondola, should be permanently brought back to the site to provide year-round activities.
- The City should explore tenants that provide greater amenity to the grounds, and appeal to younger populations, such as pop-up shops, beer/food halls, bars and cafes. A suggestion was made to utilize the "relax" area for Turkish baths.
- A concern was raised that a casino was being considered for the site. Staff confirmed that the Master Plan does not contemplate a casino, nor does the planning being undertaken at Ontario Place.
- Options to better utilize BMO Field, outside of sporting events, should be explored.
- More public bathrooms are needed on site.

### ***Site Greening***

- Additional parkland was viewed as needed, including restoring the community baseball diamond which was once on the site.
- A "minimum green space" target should be considered as part of the development of the Master Plan.
- Implementation of green infrastructure is a great idea; and the Master Plan should also consider biodiversity.
- Preserving and enhancing green space should be the first priority for the site.

### ***Transportation, Transit and Parking***

- The large amount of surface parking needs to be addressed/reduced, including providing parking in more efficient ways (e.g. underground). Reducing surface parking should be a high priority. Staff noted that it is an objective of the Master Plan to address parking, but that it must be balanced with the many needs of the site, including hosting events and staging areas. Staff noted that redevelopment of parking areas may be considered as part of future phasing and implementation items, and will be dependent on a number of factors including funding and the priority of the Board of Governors.

- The elevated walkway running north-south through the center of the site was not ideal as it could break up the site.
- A year-round traffic management plan needs to be considered, and needs to look at a broader area to consider impacts from adjacent areas, including extensive development occurring in Liberty Village. Staff noted that accommodating people and events on the site in the future will be increasingly dependent on the provision of transit.
- Exhibition Place should not provide opportunities for vehicular through-traffic, and should focus on pedestrian and cycling connections.
- Dedicated transportation to Exhibition Place should be provided in order to prevent spill-over into adjacent neighbourhoods, thereby increasing support of expanding the use of Exhibition Place and offering year-round events.
- New options for first-mile last-mile connections on the site, such as shuttles, are desirable.

### ***Broader Connections & Adjacent Neighbourhoods***

- Opportunities to enhance additional connections for pedestrians and cyclists to neighbourhoods north of Exhibition Place including Parkdale and Liberty Village should be explored.
- Providing greater connections to the lake, and a location where people can access and enter the water for recreational opportunities, is desired.
- Safety of surrounding areas should be considered, with increased traffic and usage of Exhibition Place.

### ***Keep it Public***

- A concern was raised that Exhibition Place was slowly being privatized, including the privatization of parkland. Keeping the grounds public was seen as critical.
- Long-term lease arrangements have slowly undermined the Exhibition Place grounds as a public asset.
- Questions and comments about lease agreements, the process to lease buildings, and how leases are negotiated, emerged as a key concern, including comments regarding placing moratoriums on long-term leases.

### ***Coordination and Best Practices***

- Coordination of planning efforts with Ontario Place was seen as critically important. It was viewed that the entire area should be planned as a full precinct.

- Harbourfront Centre should be used as a local example and best practice for Exhibition Place, which removed surface parking and provided it underground, while animating the public realm.

### ***Cultural Heritage***

- There was concern expressed about existing heritage features on the site, including the disappearance of the flag pole at the Scadding Cabin, and the need to better care for existing heritage resources such as the Carillon Tower. It was noted that the Carillon bells are currently undergoing repair.
- Concerns were raised about the agreements struck between Hotel X and the use/repair of the Stanley Barracks, including leasing agreements. It was noted that more information was required to fully answer questions raised concerning the leasing and future use of the Stanley Barracks.
- It would be great to include the indigenous community within the project. A potential option for the site could be to cede a building to indigenous communities for their use, given the extensive indigenous history of the site.
- There should be more cultural activities at heritage sites.

### ***Consultation***

- Consultation should extend to the many users of the site that travel from the 905 suburbs.

### ***Implementation***

- It was welcomed that the emerging Master Plan was aspirational, however the city's ability to implement the plan will be critical, including investing money into the site as a public asset, and not solely as a revenue generator.

The following is a summary of comments collected on the information display panels which asked people to provide comments on the draft vision statement and guiding principles:

### ***Removing Barriers / Making Connections / Prioritizing Transit***

*Enhance and promote pedestrian & cycling connections to adjacent communities, within, and through the site*

What do you think about this guiding principle?

- Consider safety on Martin Goodman Trail
- Consider safe bike parking for large events
- Proposed elevated pathway will take people off the street (i.e. off the site), whereas we want to animate the street and the site

*Connect to the adjacent communities and create a better relationship to the rest of the City*

What do you think about this guiding principle?

- Consider a large capacity ferry to connect with the Harbourfront / Queens Quay

*Prioritize public transit as the primary means to most efficiently move the greatest number of people to and from Exhibition Place*

What do you think about this guiding principle?

- Consider water transportation
- Consider transportation to/from the south side of Exhibition Place site. Ontario Place should also be considered

### ***Promoting a Clean and Green Environment***

*Maximize efficiency of site operations*

What do you think of this guiding principle?

- Consider removing parking lots on Gore Park and returning that parkland to the community

### ***Creating Dynamic & Diverse new Community***

*Continue to develop an extensive public art collection*

What do you think of this guiding principle?

- Public art should remain on public land and not land lease to private entities

### ***Building a Network of Spectacular Waterfront Parks & Public Spaces***

*Create a continuous green network by enhancing the public realm and maximizing green open space*

What do you think of this guiding principle?

- Don't build the raised path through the site, it will divide the site similar to how Lake Shore Boulevard and the Gardiner Expressway do
- Consider creating a community garden
- Part of the parking solution is to put some of the parking underground

### ***Openness and Transparency/Responsiveness to the Broader Community and Stakeholders***

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

What do you think of this guiding principle?

- Spaces for the community to build and participate – not only create for the community but with the community.

### ***Open Panel Questions***

What do you think about the vision statement?

- Consider addressing safety for people who use the area 24/7. Park spaces are not very welcoming after dark – consider public space lighting solutions that brighten when people congregate and are utilizing the space.

Did we miss anything critical?

- Consider pedestrianizing internal roads unless an event is going on (e.g. The CNE). Good services need to be provided
- Consider creating a bike lane throughout the entire site and connect to the existing network
- There is no apparent world class sustainable attraction / anchor.
- Make better use of the Bandshell for events and concerts – it's currently underutilized.

*This is a summary of the meeting and not intended to be a verbatim transcript. Please report any errors or omissions to Brad Sunderland, Senior Planner, SIPA, City Planning [Brad.Sunderland@Toronto.ca](mailto:Brad.Sunderland@Toronto.ca), (416) 392-0878*