

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 6 – June 23, 2022

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday June 23, 2022 at 12:30pm.

Members of the Design Review Panel

*Members
Present*

Gordon Stratford (Co-Chair): Principal – G C Stratford – Architect ✓

Michael Leckman (Co-Chair): Principal – Diamond Schmitt Architects ✓ †

Meg Graham (Co-Chair): Principal – superkül

Margaret Briegmann: Associate – BA Group

Dima Cook: Director – EVOQ Architecture

George Dark: Partner Emeritus/Senior Consultant – Urban Strategies

Ralph Giannone: Principal – Giannone Petricone Associates

Jim Gough: Independent Consultant, Transportation Engineering

Jessica Hutcheon: Principal – Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Olivia Keung: Architect – Moriyama & Teshima Architects

Paul Kulig: Principal – Perkins & Will ✓

Joe Lobko: Partner – DTAH

Anna Madeira: Principal – BDP Quadrangle

Jim Melvin: Principal Emeritus/Advisor – PMA; Owner – Realm Works ✓

Juhee Oh: Director, Sustainability & Energy – WSP ✓

Heather Rolleston: Principal, Design Director – BDP Quadrangle

Eladia Smoke: Principal Architect – Smoke Architecture

Sibylle von Knobloch: Principal – NAK Design Group

†Chair of 1st Session

Design Review Panel Coordinator

Meredith Vaga: Urban Design, City Planning Division

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting which was held on May 5, 2022 by email.

MEETING 6 INDEX

- i. OurSC Study (3rd Review)

OURSC STUDY

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

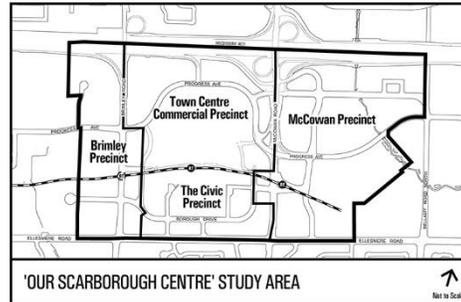
DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW Third Review

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Kelly Dynes, Community Planning;
Sasha Terry, Urban Design

DESIGN TEAM DTAH & Gladki Planning
Associates



VOTE No vote

Introduction

City staff outlined the project history, existing and future context, and planning framework. Staff are seeking the Panel's advice on the following key issues:

1. Design and Extent of Parkland
2. Parkland Sunlight Strategy
3. Sustainability Strategy

Chair's Summary of Key Points

Progress on this study has continued in a very good direction and this document works well, not only for its content but also for the ways in which the communication is compelling on the key issues: on street sections, on sunlight, on the open space network, on connectivity, on active transportation, on setbacks, on landscape identity, and last but not least, on putting forward the idea of 30 m tower separations. High-quality content matched with strong communication means that this study will connect and make a difference.

Panel is urging the proponent to continue this good work with some further improvements. In particular, considering more transition with respect to the extreme height peaks near open space. Consider more plazas in the office areas around the existing and proposed new office areas. Consider more guidance around the edges of the mall so that it isn't a neutral experience, but it actually is actively urban. Also consider more guidance to the developer on how to achieve the sustainability targets and, considering that the challenging targets for Toronto Green Standard Version 4, that there is a pathway to achieve them, because we know that they're difficult to achieve.

There were comments from Panel about the power of the landscape as being the thing that this study will be largely remembered for: that is, the extent of the green space, and the power of that green space to create both a sense of place and the identity for Scarborough Centre. So, making sure that all the good work already done to convey the forest and forest floor analogy is matched with more specificity where possible – acknowledging that it's a high-level study and future landscape design will occur – but if there's some way to anchor it with identity and purpose it will

give one more layer of strength to the landscape strategy. The excellent street sections which convey the public realm very well would be much improved with seasonality.

Panel was interested in more precision in the metrics for open space and parkland, and ways to be more precise about how the metrics compare between this study and the reference examples, to make sure that these are precise comparisons.

At the most granular level, Panel suggested taking these extraordinarily compelling streetscape sections and see how they would apply to the area around the mall, because the number of double-sided streets where some of these compelling sections apply might not be as many as the more difficult spaces around the mall. Additional attention is also required on Brimley and McCowan, because these streets are starved of landscape and would benefit from more attention.

And finally, Panel suggested a call to arms about sustainability, to ensure that both the reach and the goal are as high as possible. Considering how far out in time this project will be developed, and how we've seen radical change in guidelines and ambitions in the last 5 years, the study should anticipate that progress will continue and the study should make it clear that the highest possible bar in sustainability is being considered.

Panel Commentary

The Panel thanked the project team for their presentations and commended both the consultant and the City on the enormous undertaking represented by the study. Many Panel members felt that there had been many improvements to the study since the last review, and noted appreciation for the proposed Green Loop and streetscape strategy, as well as the graphic materials included in the briefing package.

The Panelists noted appreciation for the work done on the sustainability and resiliency strategy, but advised much more work was required to ensure that any future development would be net zero. Various members advised developing a district energy plan as early in the process as possible.

Moving forward the Panel advised further consideration of the amount of density and height peaks, the sustainability strategy and the streetscape conditions, including around the mall edges. The Panel looked forward to seeing the study progress.

Districts & Character Areas

- A member noted appreciation for the different districts as well as the names tied to different uses. This member felt this was a good evolution for the study.
- A member pointed out that the centre of the master plan is an area that has character because it has the Civic Centre, Library and park across the street.
 - o This member advised looking for ways this can get carried to all the other parts of the master plan, such that it is not just well-planted but that each district has a definite character and focus that people go to.
- A member questioned where the schools and community centres are/would be, and advised mapping them out.
 - o This member felt that given that these are places where people go they should be used as the nodes to start from.
- A member felt that the a robust, in depth character study for the future character of the area should be pursued to ensure the success of the master plan. This member felt that the character areas was one of the major strengths of the proposal and was one of the elements that stood the best chance of controlling the outcome of the plan.

Green Loops

- A member noted that the Green Loop had received accolades at the last session and has come even further since then.
- A member appreciated that the Green Loop had green boulevards as well as green open space areas on both sides of the street on at least two sides of the loop.
 - o This member suggested trying to ensure all four sides of the loop had a portion with green on both sides of the street.
- A member suggested looking at the proposed Eglinton Green Line, running east of Yonge along Eglinton. This member commented that that proposed was equally elegantly presented, looked at the spaces from different seasons, and also served to define different characters and zones along the line that had a story behind them.
 - o Another member noted that the articulated vision for the streets in this study were developing very robust green corridors that function as natural green ecosystems, whereas at Yonge and Eglinton the Green Line is attempting to retrofit that back onto street that are a bit "mean".

Streetscape

- A member commented that they were glad to see the pedestrian clearway dimensions as well as noted appreciation for the careful study of these aspects.
 - o This member pointed out that there are streets that are too wide, such as in the Yonge-Sheppard area.
- A member thought the parks in plan versus in sections were really compelling and showed detailed resolutions in terms of active transportation, stormwater management etc.
 - o However, this member additionally noted that all the sections present as pieces of the street, but in plan there are very few places with a two sided street, so many will only be applied for a block.
 - As an example, the member pointed out that on Progress Ave the condition varies considerably and is almost never a two-sided condition.
 - The member further noted that there were a few places that had two-sided conditions on Brimley and McCowan. The member noted these were "mean streets" feeding cars onto the 401 and wondered how to further invest in these streets.

POPS & Mall Edges

- A member thought that the POPS surrounding the mall was still feeling a "little suburban" and suggested that the plan could get closer to the mall and engage more with it.
 - o This member acknowledged that the future of the mall is unknown, but regardless advised against leaving an apron of plazas around it. Instead they suggested looking at developing a variety of conditions rather than leaving a degree of open space to create more urban conditions around the mall.
- Another member commented that as the plan starts to urbanize around the mall, ideally the mall should begin to exude more urbanism.
 - o This member noted that they have seen other mall projects where the street is brought much closer to the edge of the mall so the mall edges stop being that of a "giant box" and instead become edges of a street. This member felt that further work to achieve this may help overcome some of the vestiges of the "suburban worm streets" still in the plan.

Overarching Landscape Strategy

- A member commented that the landscape will have to make up for a lot of development decisions that may not be the best built form solution for the area.

- This member advised further developing the landscape quality across the master plan to ensure the landscape doesn't become generic.
- A member commented that the building typologies will change and evolve, but more work needs to be done relative to the landscape to ensure a great strategy is in place for it at the outset.
- Commenting on the parkland sunlight strategy, a member noted that it would be "fantastic" if these targets could be achieved.

Park Space

- Looking at the provision of park space, a member questioned whether using the 20% or other metric was the correct approach.
 - This member didn't think there was a singular way to get to the answer, but felt that the study was not counting complimentary open spaces and school yards etc.
 - The member noted that while the comparisons to the other centres were valuable, these comparisons should also include the natural heritage system, parks, schools, and other open spaces.
- A member wondered whether Progress Ave should be a park or should it start to attract more development and enclose more with the parks becoming more discrete pieces on the corridor.
- Looking at the last district to the east with the highest amount of density east of McCowan, a member noted that there were a lot of two sided streets and an incredible amount of density proposed to be concentrated in the area with few sites of relief.
 - This member suggested bringing more parks to this district to help alleviate this condition.

Setbacks at Grade

- A member noted support for the setbacks at grade, including the 3-3.3m setbacks found in the more typical conditions.

Built Form & Height Peaks

- A member was pleased to see the 30m tower separation distances and felt that it was justified given that a different model was being proposed in the Centre with a lot of height.
 - Various members hoped that this would be part of the guidelines.
- Looking at the height peaks near the ravine adjacent to the East Highland Creek, a member noted that while they appreciated there were some approvals in place there they thought there would be quite a bit of shadow impact on the northern part of the Highland Creek open space which needed to be addressed.
- At the location with predicted and planned office space and the larger peak associated with transit, a member commented that in some of the axonometric views the area looked "very dense".
 - This member advised caution regarding this amount of office space and associated 20% bonusing.
 - The member additionally suggested introducing more plazas into this zone to alleviate some of the density as well as provide a place for people who are working in the area to enjoy lunch in an open space.
- Looking at the "worst case scenario" of continuous towers and podia, a member advised that the landscape will need to play a very important and outsized role in the character of the master plan to ensure the plan is successful in revitalizing the Scarborough Centre.

Sustainability Strategy

- A member thought that on the whole this was a very strong study and a great document that promotes sustainability and resiliency; however, this member noted that it only approached these goals in terms of energy targets.
 - The member advised further consideration of how various inspirations are integrating all aspect of the planning.
 - That being said, this member thought that the last page of the presentation materials had integrated this aspect into the proposed execution.
 - Moving forward, this member hoping that the future design guidelines would make it easier for the developers to pick up on all the thoughts and the sustainability planning/analysis that has already been done.
 - The member wondered how much time and support was being provided to the developer of the Oxford Master Plan to be able to integrate the study, given that it appeared that the two exercises were happening simultaneously.
- A member applauded the study team for the targets that had been set around the energy component, particularly with respect to the TGS Tier 4, TransformTO, and resiliency as a target and wondered whether these targets would be possible with a district energy system for all the proposed tall developments.
 - This member emphasized that these targets will be an enormous undertaking to achieve as compared to what the current "best in class" new residential commercial development is presently able to achieve.
 - This member noted that these good targets will require a change in how our city will be built in the future, to ensure they are achieved.
- With respect to the City of Toronto's 2040 emission policy for existing buildings, a member pointed out that there is a new 2040 target on zero carbon.
 - This member cautioned the study team that in the next 18 years all buildings within the master plan will be expected to become zero carbon in their operation.
 - The member advised that it was incredibly important not to just look at energy efficiency, but to also ensure that retrofits of the buildings will not be required to further reduce carbon demand as soon as they are built.
 - This may mean that the district energy system and its capabilities will need to be established very early in the stages to inform how each individual block will be developed, to protect against having to retrofit a newly constructed building.
- Looking at the idea of a 15 minute neighbourhood, one member commented, that in broad terms of the housing typologies and the other ingredients needed to establish these types of communities, the study appeared to largely point towards the area becoming a sustainable community.
 - This member additionally commented that they have seen this concept evolve into "10 minute neighbourhoods" in recent documents.
- Another member strongly advised that the sustainability strategy needed to be as ambitious as possible.