

CITY OF TORONTO DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

MINUTES: MEETING 6 – September 18, 2024

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Wednesday, September 18, 2024, at 12:30 pm.

Members of the Design Review Panel

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

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

Meg Graham (Co-Chair): Principal – superkül

Dima Cook: Director – EVOQ Architecture

Ralph Giannone: Principal – Giannone Petricone Associates

Jim Gough: Independent Consultant, Transportation Engineering

Jessica Hutcheon: Principal – Janet Rosenberg & Studio

Olivia Keung: Associate – Moriyama Teshima | Architects

Paul Kulig: Principal – Perkins & Will

Joe Lobko: Partner – Joe Lobko Architect Inc.

Anna Madeira: Principal – BDP Quadrangle

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

Juhee Oh: Director, Climate Strategy – Choice Properties

Heather Rolleston: Principal, Design Director – BDP Quadrangle

Eladia Smoke: Principal Architect – Smoke Architecture

Sibylle von Knobloch: Principal – NAK Design Group

Design Review Panel Coordinator

Lee Ann Bobrowski: Urban Design, City Planning Division

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Panel confirmed minutes of their previous meeting, which was held on July 17, 2024, by email.

MEETING 6 INDEX

- i. 100 Borough Drive (1st Review)
- ii. Consolidated Mid-Rise Building Design Guidelines (1st Review)

100 BOROUGH DRIVE

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW	First Review
APPLICATION	OPA and ZBA
DEVELOPER	The Rosdev Group, Dov Capital Corporation

PRESENTATIONS:

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

DESIGN TEAM Henry Burstyn, Arcadis IBI Group;
David McKay, MHBC

VOTE Non-support: unanimous



REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Gordon Stratford

PANELISTS Dima Cook, Ralph Giannone, Jim Gough, Olivia Keung, Joe Lobko, Anna Madeira, Jim Melvin, Heather Rolleston, Eladia Smoke

CONFLICTS None

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. Public realm network and built form impact, including shadows on Albert Campbell Square
2. Tower heights, building types and transition in relation to OurSC Study
3. Heritage and SRT commemoration

Summary of Project's Key Points

The following Panel member discussion points were highlighted in the verbal meeting summary by the Chair:

Since 2007 the Panel has witnessed Scarborough Centre's efforts to evolve from a suburban setting to a vibrant urban centre. Projects close to iconic Scarborough Civic Centre (and its adjacent civic amenities) are of particular importance to this evolution and need to be design exemplars for future development. The proposed 100 Borough Drive development requests considerable density, but in return does not yet contribute an exemplary design

fitting to its location. Panel members have identified that the proposed design needs to be improved, with the following highlighting some of their key comments:

- City's "Suggested Design Alternative"
 - Panel members noted that the "Suggested Design Alternative" includes a design strategy that is a valid alternative deserving serious attention by the proponent. The strategy includes suggestions that can positively contribute to Response to Context, Site Plan, Public Realm, Built Form and Landscape.

- Response to Context
 - The proposed design needs to contribute to, and in turn benefit from, what the surrounding existing and future context offers.
 - Response to South, East and North Context:
 - Civic Centre and Parkland (south and east) + Parkland along Triton Road (north):
 - Follow the City team's "Suggested Design Alternative" which proposes:
 - A clear and engaging connection with the existing Civic Centre to the east, and existing/future green spaces to the south and southeast.
 - A beneficial POPS green space connection with future parkland north of Triton Road.
 - Existing Bell Building / Civic Centre Context:
 - The Bell Building's pinwheel stepped built form takes cues from the Civic Centre's expression, and the new development in its own way should also acknowledge this context.

- Site Plan
 - The proposed design's vehicle-first central north-south axis offers an opportunity to create a vibrant pedestrian-first green amenity for both residents and the broader community.
 - Reduce/shift vehicular footprint (drop-off zones, drive lanes, parking/service access, etc.) in favour of a linear green POPS from Triton Road to the proposed south park.
 - Rework the south end of the site to create a clear view to the south park and parkland beyond.
 - Place amenities at ground level to activate linear POPS.
 - With public transit nearby consider a parking reduction on site.

- Public Realm + Landscape
 - Panel members commented that a site-wide comprehensive landscape and public realm design strategy is needed, to create an exemplary place-of-choice community.

- Built Form
 - Panel members expressed a need for further work on proposed built form, including the following:
 - Alter proposed built form to ensure that shadow impacts on surrounding public realm is minimized.
 - Remove connection bridge between Buildings C and E to provide an open view to parkland to the south.

Panel Commentary

Overall Design Concept and Placemaking

- Strong appreciation was noted for the effort and thoughtfulness of everyone involved. Multiple panelists acknowledged the great potential for the site and the development. The immense opportunity to create something amazing was highlighted, and the team was encouraged to do so.
- Given the importance of the project and the grand scale for a development, a panelist queried what this place will be for future families. They advised that further work is needed regarding the storyline, sense of place and character of the development because at present, the proposal seems like an exercise in finding space for 2,000+ units rather than creating a community of 2,000+ units.
- Lessons learned from the previous intensification of the Entertainment District were highlighted, with respect to the creation of an entire neighbourhood that is not as liveable as it should be because of insufficient park and public amenity.
 - o In reference to conversations about there being a lot of park space in the area off-site, a panelist cautioned that there is not enough in consideration of the densities being proposed in Scarborough Centre.
 - o They expressed concern that there is an unbelievable amount of supply, and the idea of one floor of density is truly insignificant when viewing the entire neighbourhood.
 - o Given the height and density proposed on the subject site, the panelist advised further study and reiterated the importance of making an amazing place to live with a big vision of an amazing public realm.
- Caution was reiterated that the development must be made a liveable community, otherwise it will be a vertical suburb. A panelist expressed that the proposal is functional, which is not a bad thing, but that amenity really is the key issue with the incredible amount of density proposed.
- The great importance of public space at grade was emphasized. A panelist advised that it is far more important than interior amenity space, and that having more interior amenity spaces does not compensate for insufficient outdoor amenity, parks, and POPS.

City's "Suggested Design Alternative"

- Multiple panelists expressed support for the City staff team's "Suggested Design Alternative" (slide 17).
 - o One panelist highlighted the great significance of the slide in terms of the evolution of work for the applicant and staff teams involved. They strongly recommended the City's design alternative as a potential way forward.
 - They suspected that it will not modify the proposed density much but will significantly augment a potentially great development with a great sense of space.
 - o Another panelist agreed with the design intent of the alternative, specifically that it is a little more friendly, with lower-scaled development towards the park face and along the park boundaries.

Site Context

- Further study was recommended regarding the proposal's relationship to the existing context; a panelist cautioned that the drawings show a site plan floating on a white page.
 - o They queried what the streets and public spaces will feel like as they connect into the blocks, and what is around the adjacencies of the site.
- Concern was noted that there is a lack of sensitivity at the southeast corner of Block B at the turnaround, to the adjacency of the existing quasi-suburban condominium (50 Brian Harrison Way), as a kind of flank of a parking lot.
 - o The proponent was encouraged to try to win at all the little spaces.
- In reference to Scarborough and the Albert Campbell Square area, a panelist advocated for sunlight access and believed that the 7-hours-free of shadow is sacred, and must be met.
 - o They expressed that even if it is only a couple of hours of difference, it is worth it because the area is plagued with its own shadow on the ice rink.
 - o Moreover, they welcomed any measures to make the area more habitable, as it is very windy with minimal wind protection.

Site Plan and Open Space

- In reference to the parking and loading proposed on the north-south condo road, a panelist suggested locating this all on Street A, if possible, to then turn the north-south condo road into a green space.
 - o They noted that it could be a place where pedestrians are very welcome, and where vehicles are also welcome, but feels like a green realm rather than a vehicular realm.
 - o They opined that it is inevitable that the Board of Education property to the southeast will become a major park; the suggested green space would connect parks to the north and south in a very strong way.
 - o They highlighted the at-grade amenity proposed at the south end in the City's "Suggested Design Alternative" as critical, rather than the narrow break in the wall of a townhouse row, as currently proposed.
 - o They reiterated that it is important for the development to offer this gesture to contribute to a community-wide public realm, and that a north-south connection or POPS walkway will be the link that makes this a pedestrian-friendly community over time.
- The importance of providing a green space at the terminus was highlighted as a key placemaking move, and to maintain the original heart as well as intent of the secondary plan study.
 - o Caution was noted that the development is too inward looking, and there is too much fixation on the symmetrical road system which was intended to celebrate a big park at its end, but as proposed, is a dead-end loop with a small, angled aperture to the park.
 - o It was noted that if the disposition of towers were to adjust, the road network need not be symmetrical.
- The importance of visibility to the proposed park and connectivity, were highlighted. A panelist recommended a clear view down the condo road and a less-pinched gateway to the proposed park.

- They encouraged green-space connections so that the life of the remaining wood lot can be part of the perceptual reality and introduction to the entryway into the new development.
 - They encouraged integrating the natural amenities that continue to exist on the site into the experience of future residents.
 - They reiterated the profound impact of creating interconnected green spaces and habitat zones to support organisms.
- The park-to-park “dumbbell” connection between the condo road, central drop-off, and the future park addition was identified as a great opportunity to be the big move of the proposal. A panelist advised that this should be the most amazing space for future residents as well as the surrounding neighbourhood.
 - Further study was advised regarding future dog residents and accommodations for them. It was cautioned that they will put pressure on the sustainability of the open spaces currently available.

Turning Circle Drop-Off

- Numerous panelists expressed strong concern with the drop-off and noted that the turning circle is a missed opportunity in terms of thinking of a grand, cohesive space in the middle of the development that is usable for residents, rather than a place to pass through.
 - The suggestion was made to relocate the drop-off underground, to minimize the amount of space allocated to cars at the surface.
 - Caution was noted that built form is proposed on virtually all of the site, and people need space as well.
 - Concern was expressed that the drop-off is not a place of gathering, and not a place of joy given the functions of the space including loading, and parking ramps.
 - A public garden was suggested instead, that could provide pedestrian connections between the north and the south.
 - It was advised that the roundabout should be reconsidered completely in terms of its expression.
- Concern was noted that there is a great deal of paved area in the middle of the south block. The proponent was encouraged to find ways to minimize this, to make a great space and grand gesture leading to the park.

Northern POPS and Commemoration of the SRT

- The opportunity to provide a POPS along Triton Road was highlighted and supported by numerous panelists.
 - One suggested squaring off the north end of Block A, to create a small space that is completely wrapped in retail to support it.
 - Another reiterated the importance of this suggestion given that, at present, the discussion of locating a POPS on the condo road is not being realized at all, and there is not sufficient space for people on the ground plane.
- In reference to commemoration, a panelist highlighted the importance of understanding what is significant, to then understand what to commemorate, beyond formal expression. They advised that the SRT speaks to old transit and interconnectivity. If its commemoration is a serious intent from the City, the panelist recommended looking at how it can be viewed without isolation.

- They suggested that perhaps through art or other open spaces where it used to run, that it can become a way to connect multiple sites, to become a line throughout the whole development rather than something isolated on the subject site.
- The opportunity to reuse the precast Us and Vs that supported the defunct system, was suggested as a way to commemorate the SRT.
 - A panelist referenced the City's idea of a High Line, and encouraged the team to consider the reuse of some of those elements, or a new use.
 - Another panelist suggested removing the overhead component of the concrete structures and allowing their width to define the width of the POPS.

Ground Floor Uses

- Further study was advised regarding porosity at the ground floor plane as it relates to navigation through the superblocks to building and unit entrances. A panelist advised that a lot of effort has been focused on big, grand lobbies, of which there are few, while there are many different typologies used in the buildings.
 - They wondered if there could be different ways for residents to experience the entry into the building, as well as people walking by on the street. The panelist added that this would create different levels of interest along the streetscape, and variety of uses around the building base.
 - Smaller passageways and secondary entrances were highlighted for consideration.
- Further study was advised regarding the intimate relationships at grade, which sincerely need to be looked at. Concern was expressed for the proposed retail tucked behind a lobby on Triton as it will fail.
 - A panelist advised that perhaps it should be an amenity space instead, as retail success may be difficult in this location.
- A reconsideration of retail was suggested; a panelist identified the opportunity to integrate more amenity at the intersection between Street A and the recommended the north-south greenway.
 - A coffee shop, or bakery at the heart of the place was suggested, in consideration of the large number of future residents.
- Concern was noted that there is a sense of privatization; a panelist appreciated that it is not intended, but respectfully cautioned the proponent team that it comes across this way, especially south of Street A.

Streetscapes and Public Realm

- In reference to the pedestrian experience, closer sectional studies at a finer grain were suggested to demonstrate if a great public realm has been provided, or if further design development is needed to do so.
 - A panelist referenced the presentation where the walkways were described as wide and tree-lined but cautioned that this is not evident in the site plan, which appears as if it has been overtaken by vehicles.
- Further study was recommended with respect to safety and more street activation. A panelist expressed concern that the residential program will not provide the kind of activation intended, and particularly at certain times of the day.

- They expressed that they would not feel safe walking down the streets alone at night as a woman, as currently designed.
 - They advised that further effort is needed to activate them, to define what the heart of the development is, and how people will move through the activation.
- The history of the place was noted, and the use of “geometric landscape” was highlighted in terms of what has been employed as design devices in the area; a panelist wondered if there were ways to tag into this to give the edges of the site more character.
 - They noted that although it will be created internal to the site, Street A will contend with Triton Road, Borough Drive, and the southern edge, all of which have very different characters.

Built Form

- Additional study was recommended with respect to built form and the shadow impact on Albert Campbell Square. A panelist noted that they did not have any issues with the tower heights proposed, and appreciated the generous 50-metre tower separations, but advised that these should not be prioritized over the shadow impact on Albert Campbell Square, which is a very well-used open space.
 - They wondered if some of the tower separations could be reduced to 25 metres in favour of increasing the 7-hours-straight of sunlight on the square, if there was extra room on the site.
- In reference to the tower heights and transitions, and in consideration of the master plan studies and the secondary plan, a panelist advised that they did not see a big reason to go from low to high across the site, in any direction.
 - They acknowledged that there had been much discussion about the ups and downs of heights, pertaining to a skyline rather than a tent pole, but noted that they were not really worried about this.
- Another panelist advised that they would dispense the height a bit differently. They noted their appreciation for peaks and valleys, and suggested that perhaps Building D could be taller, and then go back down to make a signature building on the north side of the park.
- In reference to the architectural expression, a panelist noted that the design shows parallels but differences between all the towers, realizing the design intentions as stated. They advised that openness and views in the air have been readily considered, but perhaps these are missing at grade.
 - The proponent was encouraged to apply those same principles at grade.
- In reference to the podium heights along Borough Drive, a panelist advised that those around Borough could be increased substantially without significant impact to the quality of the street networks, nor shadow impacts on the parks to the south.
 - They added that rather than having uniformity in the podiums on the street, that variation could provide more housing while alleviating the tower heights, in consideration of density and providing more housing on site while reducing building heights.
- In reference to the connection bridge, a panelist strongly advised that it should absolutely be removed. They expressed concern that it is counter-productive, and that it works against the north-south connectivity for pedestrians as well as against the existence of nature and habitat.

Commemoration of the Bell Building

- Multiple panelists highlighted the importance of the relationship between the existing Bell Building and the Scarborough Civic Centre. The proponent was encouraged to look beyond its aesthetics, to the way the Bell Building impacts movement around the site, and the successful dialogue it creates with the Civic Centre, to build on this through commemoration.
- A panelist expressed that in addition to the formal architecture, the relationship to the Civic Centre, particularly at the corner of Brian Harrison Way and the roundabout, struck them most. They suggested that perhaps this is where the commemoration could occur.
 - o Further study of architecture that is more welcoming, more open, and that can geometrically express some conversation, was suggested to help carve out space at this important gateway onto the site.
 - o The carving out of the Bell Building to echo the curves of the Civic Centre was highlighted; the panelist noted that there is an opportunity to create an open space at grade where a conversation can occur between the architecture of the proposed and the architecture of the Bell Building.
 - They added that retaining that old context is a way of commemorating and expressing the building.
 - They reiterated further study regarding the important aspects of the Bell Building, to better understand why it is being commemorated, to then include those components in the site.
- The roofscapes of the existing Bell Building were highlighted as one of its most interesting aspects. A panelist wondered if the proposal could commemorate or take cues from this and start to carve up the rooftop amenities into more roofscapes.
 - o They expressed that the Bell Building's incredible terraces were likely very cutting edge in their day, and seem to incorporate ideas of health and wellness with respect to an office building.

Sustainability

- In reference to embodied carbon and the demolition of the existing Bell Building, a panelist advised that the proponent has not adequately demonstrated that some of it could not be retained. If that is not possible, they recommended starting from this point of acknowledgement and giving back either through enhanced sustainability targets, or an enhanced pedestrian realm.
 - o The panelist calculated that the 6-storey office building has roughly 20,000 tons of embodied carbon, and noted that they were not arguing for the retention of the building.
- In consideration of the transit-rich neighbourhood, a panelist recommended getting a lot more aggressive on the amount of parking provided, as a sustainability strategy. They advised that further work to provide a better pedestrian realm will allow for more aggressive parking counts.

CONSOLIDATED MID-RISE BUILDING DESIGN GUIDELINES

CITY OF TORONTO - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL MINUTES

DESIGN REVIEW First Review

APPLICATION City Study

PRESENTATIONS:

CITY STAFF Rong Yu and Alexis Ouwendyk,
Urban Design

VOTE None



REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

CHAIR Gordon Stratford

PANELISTS Meg Graham, Dima Cook, Ralph Giannone, Jim Gough, Olivia Keung, Joe Lobko, Jim Melvin, Heather Rolleston, Eladia Smoke

CONFLICTS None

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. Do the key updates in the consolidated Mid-Rise Guidelines meet the objectives of encouraging mid-rise developments that are more economical to build and more environmentally sustainable?
2. Do you have any suggestions on loading, servicing, and parking for small scale mid-rise buildings?

Summary of Project's Key Points

The following Panel member discussion points were highlighted in the verbal meeting summary by the Chair:

The Panel thanks the City team for their efforts to date on this design guidelines initiative. It is essential for the future success of Toronto that this initiative fully grasps the challenges impeding, and opportunities that could enable, the design and development of the mid-rise typology. The submission presented to the Panel does not currently achieve this, with further work needed (including the following areas):

- Response to Context
 - o Panel members observed that work to date appears to be largely planning, and urban design focused. Without broader perspective input the goal of creating useful

guidelines will fail. To avoid this the Panel encourages the City team to involve the following:

- Stakeholder Context
 - Engage the full range of stakeholders now; in particular, those who are experienced in the design, engineering, and development of this building type.
 - Hold public workshops to help inform guidelines.
 - Continue close engagement and ongoing stakeholder feedback throughout the initiative.
 - Precedents Context
 - Look to other municipalities for helpful precedent processes (City of Hamilton noted). Panel members note that there are better precedents than shown in submission (Stewart Street east of Bathurst noted for good mid-rise precedents).
 - Existing Guidelines/Standards Context
 - Examples to follow (and work with rather than against) include TGS, EHON, CMHC, and others.
- Site Plan
- Panel members expressed concern regarding proposed setbacks that make buildability more difficult. Take this into consideration in combination with Built Form input below.
- Built Form:
- Concern was expressed regarding proposed sculpting of built form (through setbacks, step-backs, etc.) making mid-rise buildings cost-prohibitive for developers. Some of the recommendations included:
 - Enable... Do Not Restrict
 - Provide guidelines that enable designers and developers room for creativity and cost effectiveness.
 - Simplify
 - Consider built form from the inside out, making form simpler and more easily buildable (citing cantilevers and structural transfers as expensive solutions to avoid).
 - Adaptable
 - Include adaptation of existing buildings in your scope.
- Also...
- The Panel is extremely interested in this essential initiative and would be more than happy to collaborate further with the City team regarding the above.

Panel Commentary

General Approach and Mid-Rise Building Typology

- Numerous panelists cautioned that the mid-rise building is an already-challenged typology for developers to deliver. The importance of flexibility and allowing room to maneuver was highlighted, to be able to encourage this type of building.
 - A panelist advised that it is incumbent upon us to make sure that we can continue to build this scale, as it is much loved and a relatable size to most people.

- Another expressed concern that the approach looks through a purely planning and urban design lens which will get tripped up in the implementation.
 - They cautioned that if the document is debated, or does not end up being well used, it will be back to the drawing board.
- Multiple panelists suggested a guidelines structure that is less prescriptive and includes more incentives.
 - One highlighted TGS as a very successful piece of policy, and noted that a few of its requirements are absolute, and others are optional.
 - Another recommended making the document super straightforward and very easy to understand, while also including helpful tools and references to existing sets of information, to assist designers in making sustainable buildings.
 - The panelist suggested that perhaps some framework of rewards could be included, if applicants itemize which tools have been utilized in their proposal.
- Caution was reiterated that the tone of the guidelines sounds prescriptive. A panelist suggested further work to ensure it is within the guidelines lens.
 - They expressed concern that if the document is read as prescriptive, all the teams involved downstream will look at it literally when judging a project.
- In pursuit of the development of more economical and sustainable buildings, concern was noted that the guidelines appear to be at odds, or not aligned with other City priorities. A panelist advised that the proposed updates do not reflect the realities of market conditions, including construction and cost; restrictive guidelines and approval processes only exacerbate this condition.
 - They recommended looking holistically at how these guidelines impact other important initiatives like building more housing quickly (EHON) and increasing sustainability targets (TGS), as well as impacts on cost and therefore affordability.
- Concern was noted that there is no direction given to addition; the work assumes demolition. In consideration of sustainability, a panelist advised that adaptive reuse should be included in the scope, to acknowledge that there are some buildings worth preserving, and to provide direction on how to add to those sites appropriately.
 - They recommended specific study of predominant typologies in the city, such as the two-storey building typology that defines every main street, no matter the neighbourhood.
- Appreciation was noted for the index and formatting of the document with respect to similar City guidelines and standards. A panelist thought this was a good thing, and also, suggested including more graphics like the sun and shade diagrams.

Precedents

- Appreciation was conveyed for the staff's effort to incorporate examples in the work, but concern was expressed for the precedents put forth, and further study was recommended.
 - One panelist did not agree that the typologies presented are what should be targeted in the long run. They advised that those buildings were not economical, nor great places to live because their layouts were challenged in having to accommodate the step-backs in the guidelines.
 - Another panelist candidly advised that the precedents included pale by comparison for the most part, to those presented approximately 20 years ago in the previous

mid-rise guidelines work.

- A panelist offered precedent examples of the best and the worst.
 - They highlighted Stewart Street as their favourite mid-rise street in the city.
 - They cautioned that Freed Development's building by Saucier + Perrotte Architects at 629 King West is the worst example, as the 14-storey building goes straight up and destroyed the street.
 - The city of Berlin was also flagged, in relation to its mid-rise buildings.

Section 1.0 - Site Context

- A panelist advised that there is something to be unlocked regarding the guidelines being more in tune with the character area studies, as the mid-rise building typology can lead to very bespoke solutions. They recommended providing more room to maneuver in the guidelines and having the character area govern over some of the decisions, as there may be some areas within the city where there is a better solution particular to it.
 - The rezoning of Downsview was highlighted, specifically the exceptions made with the right-of-way distances and heights, to provide more European-scaled-and-feeling streets.
- In reference to the context of main streets and avenues, a panelist encouraged the City to conduct a study of the existing main streets to understand their character and what aspects of it should be preserved. They advised that there is an existing typology of two-storey buildings with retail on the bottom and one or two windows on top, which defines Toronto's main streets.
 - They cautioned that these mid-rise development projects are often challenged when there is a direction or requirement to conserve a lot of the existing main street, and there is no overarching City understanding of what is, or is not, important.
 - In consideration of removing obstacles and clarifying the vision for development work, the panelist advised that it is important for the City to come with a clear direction.
 - They cautioned that the guidelines are currently designed in a vacuum that does not consider the existing character of the streets. They recommended further study to understand the future of the streets and how they will deal with existing buildings.
- In reference to separation distances related to uses, such as distances between office use and residential use, a panelist advised that they did not support them.
 - They noted that they did not see too many instances in the work presented but still encouraged further thinking about this.
 - They added that society is encouraging the adaptive reuse of buildings, and as such, there is no guarantee that an office building may continue on as an office building.
- A panelist expressed that they did not understand the sliding scale (in reference to 1.3 Site Typology Analysis). Moreover, they questioned the viability of the mid-rise typology as it relates to 45-metre ROWs, where high-rises would more likely be pursued given the width.
 - They cautioned that this seems against the logic of the implementation side and reiterated that designers need all the tools possible to try to convince clients to deliver mid-rise buildings.

Section 2.0 – Site Organization

- Numerous panelists strongly advised and advocated for solutions to waste collection policy, particularly smaller garbage trucks. The City was strongly encouraged to consider them, as it is easier to adapt a truck to the city, rather than adapting the city to a truck.
 - o Garbage truck sizes from Barcelona and Amsterdam were highlighted as precedents; support was noted for more sustainable, more European, more compact, and more liveable collection vehicles.
 - o More street pick up, and more frequent pick up were suggested as well.
- Caution was noted that for small mid-rise buildings, Type G Loading can be next to impossible to achieve, particularly when the City requires it to be enclosed within the building.
- In reference to parking and loading, a panelist advised that it has been presented quite logically, if the standards are going to remain the same.

Section 3.0 – Mid-Rise Building Design

- In reference to variations in Street Wall Height (3.2.2), a panelist expressed that they were not sure that it always applied. They advised that in some circumstances, such as European cities, there is beauty and calmness in repetition.
- In reference to 3.2.3 (Street Proportion and Pedestrian Perception Step-Back) and wider ROWs, a panelist did not think that bigger setbacks were preferable. Rather, they recommended more of a sense of enclosure to reinforce to drivers that they should slow down, if a mid-rise building typology is proposed on a 45-metre ROW.
- Another panelist echoed that a 9-metre setback is way too much; it is not useful, and not practical.
- Multiple panelists appreciated the removal of angular planes, as great progress, and a step in the right direction.
 - o One advised that the rear angular plane was a highly problematic policy and was very literally enforced in some cases. They noted that moving away from this as a tool to define built form is very welcome and could help unlock sites that are currently too shallow for a reasonable floor plate.
- In reference to aligning with the structural grid, a panelist advised that step-backs are not of the same scale as a steel or timber structural grid. They urged the City to revisit this, as the assumption made is incorrect.
 - o They added that if the City is firm on the step-backs policy, it should be aware of the implications to construction and the added floor-to-floor heights needed to accommodate the structural transfers.
- In reference to slide 43 (3.3.1 Rear Transition to Buildings) a panelist advised that side step-backs should not be automatic because they complicate mass timber structure systems, and in some cases make upper floors too narrow to be viable. The panelist added that they also require exit stair shafts to be set in from the ends, which often result in inefficient floor layouts, and therefore impact cost as well as liveability.

- Furthermore, it was cautioned that stepping back in two directions, at corner sites, complicates the structural layout, particularly in framed systems such as mass timber and structural steel, which then encourages concrete buildings.
 - The panelist advised that concrete and tower crane may be cost prohibitive for small mid-rise buildings.
- In reference to the proposed setback from parks, a panelist noted that it may be a nice urban design consideration in theory but flagged that the challenge will be if applicants say no to it.
 - They cautioned that if it is not being used, and immediately becomes a difficult document to navigate, then it will defeat the purpose of it.
- In reference to upper step-backs, a panelist expressed that it is hard to understate the importance of eliminating them, as this will unlock more opportunities to use mass timber and other prefabricated systems. They advised that this has the potential to reduce cost and therefore improve affordability, as well as provide a compact building form that reduces embodied carbon.
 - The panelist recommended eliminating as many structural transfers as possible, which is conducive to improved building performance, and will help meet Passive House standards.
 - They advised that this would also make it easier to meet CMHC financing requirements, which may be the tipping point to make projects financially viable for more developers.
- A panelist advised that any kind of step-back with mass timber construction is very difficult and in some cases near impossible to deliver; they advocated for less step-backs and less cantilevers to encourage this method of construction.
 - They cautioned that some components of the document do not align with sustainable building practices, particularly the provision of two-floored cantilevered volumes as it results in an inefficient envelope.
- In reference to the additional upper step-back requirement at the point of 11 storeys, a panelist echoed considerations to not be afraid of height. They added that there is such a public perception that it is a problem but there are other ways for the building to make the ground plane liveable beyond addressing height.
 - They highlighted the importance of the upper levels within the scope of the mid-rise height range, because building codes have been altered to allow mass timber up to 18 storeys. They encouraged careful efforts to ensure that the 11-18th storeys are not disincentivized, as they are needed to deliver more housing.
 - The panelist highlighted the City of Vancouver's incentives to allow additional storeys on applicable mass timber buildings as an indication that there are other ways to achieve liveable mid-rise buildings.
- Strong concern was noted for 3.4.3 Side Street Setbacks; multiple panelists advised that the small setback to align with adjacent residential properties just adds complexity for little, to no benefit.
 - It was cautioned that the small setback complicates the building structure, design, unit layout, and architecture, unnecessarily.
- In reference to building façades and performance, a panelist advised that there should be mention of the cardinal directions as well as orientation to the sun.

- They added that the east-west conditions have low sun angles, and large solar gains can be created from those façades; the south façade accepts solar gains, but control is needed during the summer; and the north façade needs to be treated in a different way because of diffuse light.
- They also noted that the cardinal directions create different viability for vegetation.
- In reference to the amount of glazing, a panelist wondered if the mid-rise work could rely on TGS, including its upcoming requirements for energy and embodied carbon.
 - They noted that if TGS will prescribe a minimum amount of glazing, perhaps these guidelines do not need to add a minimum on top of this.
- In reference to the building length of the mid-rise development, a panelist expressed that this is quite relevant but has not been discussed. They cautioned that it is very difficult to make really long buildings work well, and recommended further study of this.

Section 4.0 – The Pedestrian Realm

- A panelist expressed concern that the greater clearway dimension is moving in the wrong direction (in reference to 4.1 Minimum Sidewalk Zones). They cautioned that 6-metre-wide sidewalks or more, will be squeezing sites that are already very difficult to develop.
 - Moreover, the panelist cautioned that larger sidewalks and pedestrian clearway dimensions do not always work; tuning these dimensions is important.
 - They added that these spaces should not be big enough for a vehicle to drive on.
 - They cautioned that if large sidewalks are provided, cyclists as well as new modes of transportation will start using them as well.
- Alternatively, another panelist expressed that the 6-metre-wide sidewalks are great, but flagged that the building depth on 30-metre-deep lots will be challenged once front yard setbacks are included.
 - They added that if any upper step-backs are included, those upper floors likely will not work.
 - They cautioned that the resultant 19.5-metre-building depth will make the ground floor difficult due to loading and the ramp; not much will be left.
- Further study of urban design policy to encourage great retail, was recommended. A panelist advised that 6-metre sidewalks are good and allow for patios but cautioned that ideally retail has a minimum 40' depth. They noted that this can be a challenge in mid-rise buildings as the residential requirements come first in setting the location of the core and structure.
- In reference to 4.2 Streetscape, a panelist recommended that urban design should focus on guidelines that make the public realm and sidewalks beautiful. Further study of how the building touches the ground, was strongly advised.
 - They recommended focusing on high-quality architecture and façades that make the retail viable as well as welcoming. Additionally, a signage strategy for retail was advised.
 - They advised that exhaust shafts should be located away from the public realm whenever possible.
 - They advised that gas meters should be positioned in discrete locations, and screened or recessed. Moreover, the panelist flagged challenges with utility companies and recommended that Urban Design staff work with them to update

their policies as well as standards in this regard.

Next Steps

- A panelist wondered what the plan is for a follow up in consideration of the December 2024 reporting deadline. They queried the next steps, and if reactions from the industry will continue to be monitored to allow the process to be more dynamic. Furthermore, they wondered if pilot projects and feedback loops were planned to continue to inform the process.
- Densification initiatives by the City of Hamilton were highlighted, in which architectural firms were paid an honorarium to run test designs on them. A panelist noted that the firms provided specific feedback and recommendations to simplify the approach. They suggested that a similar exercise could be a way for the City of Toronto to address simplicity issues in the guidelines.
- Prior to the completion of the report, a panelist strongly recommended a workshop with panelists. They suggested that members of the DRP could present representative mid-rise projects, along with issues related to the developments and recommendations for policy, to help inform the evolution of the guidelines.