



**Villiers Island Precinct Plan  
Stakeholder Advisory Committee and  
Land Owners and Users Advisory Committee  
Meeting #2 Summary**

**Wednesday, January 28, 2015  
Waterfront Toronto, Boardroom  
8:00 – 10:30 am**

### **Agenda Review, Opening Remarks and Introduction**

David Dilks, Lura Consulting, welcomed Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) and Land Owners and Users Advisory Committee (LUAC) members and thanked them for attending the meeting. He introduced the facilitation team from Lura Consulting and led a round of introductions of SAC/LUAC members and staff from the City of Toronto, Waterfront Toronto, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) and Urban Strategies Inc. Mr. Dilks noted that the purpose of the meeting was to provide the project team with feedback and guidance from the SAC/LUAC on work completed to date on several key items, including the streets and blocks preferred direction plan, the draft built form strategy and draft public realm concepts. He also encouraged SAC/LUAC members to submit individual comments using the discussion guide and feedback form provided at the meeting.

A copy of the agenda is provided in Appendix A. A list of SAC/LUAC organizations that attended the meeting is included in Appendix B. Questions of clarification posed by SAC/LUAC members and a discussion summary are included in Appendix C, while additional written feedback submitted by SAC/LUAC members after the meeting is included in Appendix D.

### **Project Team Presentations**

Amanda Santo, Waterfront Toronto, provided an update on the process and schedule for development and build out of the Island.

Cassidy Ritz, City of Toronto, provided members with a brief update on the status of an application for a mixed-use development at 309 Cherry St. The application was submitted in March 2012 for an eight-storey podium building with a 26-storey tower and a subsequent phase of development. It was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) in October 2014 by the applicant. A Request for Directions report is anticipated to be brought forward in the near future. The City has reached out to the applicant to discuss the appeal while moving forward with the Villiers Island Precinct Plan.

Presentations by Michel Trocmé, Daniel Comerford and Andrea Friedman of Urban Strategies provided an overview of the Villiers Island Precinct Plan components, including:

- Preferred Direction Plan;
- Draft Built Form Strategy; and
- Preliminary Public Realm Concepts;

Amanda Santo briefly outlined the next steps at the end of the meeting.

## Summary of Facilitated Discussion

After being briefed about each component of the Villiers Island Precinct Plan, SAC/LUAC members were presented with the following discussion questions:

### Streets and Blocks Preferred Direction Plan

*The preferred Direction Plan is based on the feedback received on the previously presented three options.*

1. What are the strengths of the plan?
2. What refinements would you suggest?
3. Looking at the Villiers Street alignment options, which do you prefer? Why?

### Draft Built Form Strategy

The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan policies state that the Port Lands “should generally be developed at medium scale, with some lower elements and higher buildings at appropriate locations.”

1. Would you change any of the taller building locations identified in the plan?
2. How do you like the mix of built form?
3. Looking at the built form principles, do you think the built form and massing approach achieves the principles?

### Draft Public Realm Concepts

1. Which concepts do you particularly like?
2. What refinements would you suggest?
3. What other ideas for the public realm would you like to see explored?

The feedback and advice provided by SAC/LUAC members is summarized below (includes both oral feedback and written comments submitted via comment forms). A more detailed summary of the questions of clarification and discussion is provided in Appendix C.

### Streets and Blocks Preferred Direction Plan and Character Areas

- **Centre St.**
  - Centre St. was viewed as a strength of the plan; comments expressed support for the street as a pedestrian friendly pathway, becoming pedestrian-only over the long-term.
  - Feedback suggested that Centre St. should serve as a focal point for Island residents (e.g., community services, shopping, etc.) and include destination uses at each end (e.g., bandstand, seating, fountains, etc.).
  - One SAC/LUAC member suggested re-naming the street to Villiers St. to highlight its symbolic importance.
  - It was suggested that more north-south street options should be considered to route traffic away from Centre St., increasing the possibility of a pedestrian-only street.
- **Keating Promenade & Villiers St.**
  - Feedback indicated that the Keating Promenade and Villiers St. are well characterized as waterside destinations.
  - Villiers St. was noted as being a unique industrial artifact and one of the most important heritage assets on the Island.
  - Villiers St., Alignment Option 2 was noted by a number of stakeholders as being preferred over Option 1 as it includes more potential for Villiers St. to have a robust physical presence, while creating a sense of place with opportunities for both residents and visitors.

- Consider minimizing vehicular traffic on Villiers St., directing traffic to Cherry [Old or New not specified] and Commissioners streets.
- Consider a cluster of uses along the Keating Promenade to draw people into the area.
- ***New Cherry St. Corridor***
  - Feedback indicated that New Cherry St. has been well characterized and conceived as a gateway onto the Island and broader Port Lands.
  - Consider mixed-use commercial and residential buildings on the west side of the street.
- ***Old Cherry St. Corridor***
  - Consider commercial uses on both sides of the street; the heritage buildings appear to limit commercial development to one side of the street only.
  - Consider increasing the density between Old and New Cherry streets to draw people into the area.
  - Comments from one SAC/LUAC member suggested relocating the proposed commercial uses from New Munitions St. to Old Cherry St., and replacing them with mid-rise residential uses.
- ***Villiers Park Edge***
  - Feedback supported the park edge as a transition between the river and greenway, providing open space, recreational uses and habitat functions.
- ***River Park & Commissioners St.***
  - Comments from one SAC/LUAC member advised against re-locating the heritage building south of Commissioners St. to line up with New Munitions St., as the costs outweigh the benefits.
  - Additional comments from another SAC/LUAC member noted the need to further integrate the heritage building into the precinct plan.
- ***Harbourside***
  - Feedback noted that the success of this character area depends on the proposed catalytic use. Feedback cautioned against catalytic uses that would block views of the city from Promontory Park.
- ***New Munitions St.***
  - Feedback indicated that this street is not well defined; the proposed uses also face competition from similar uses on New Cherry St. and the nearby Film Studio District and Great Gulf development. It may be better suited for residential development.
- ***General Comments***
  - Clarify the vision of the Island's streets and block plan (e.g., what is the combined goal of the character areas?).
  - Ensure the streets and blocks plan reflects the unique character of the island while protecting views of the city.
  - Consider concentrating retail uses and relocating the catalytic use to a centralized area (i.e., Centre St.) to support the development of a prosperous and lively cluster patronized by residents and visitors; several SAC/LUAC members feel that the Island population will not be large enough to support scattered retail uses.
  - Ensure sufficient connectivity between the Island and the mainland to support the vision of the Island as a destination (e.g., additional footbridge, bike paths).
  - Provide more information about transportation routes for truck traffic in relation to the precinct plan.
  - Clarify how heritage features will attract visitors to the island, aside from their contribution to a unique Island identity.
  - Provide information about a parking strategy for the Island.

### **Built Form Strategy**

- Several comments expressed concern that the streets and blocks plan (and related built form) does not include enough density on the Island to justify public investment in infrastructure or support retail and commercial uses.
- Concerns were raised about building heights and their shadow impacts on street level activities and heritage features, suggesting there should be height limitations or cascading/undulating building heights.
- Consideration for relocating proposed residential uses away from existing industrial uses was identified; comments expressed concerns about the compatibility between the two land uses and the potential for conflicts.
- Stakeholders noted that views of the city from Promontory Park should not be impacted or blocked by existing or future uses (e.g., laker storage, catalytic use, tall buildings, etc.).
- Consideration for ensuring that catalytic uses that reinforce each other and concentrate them strategically to generate traffic and vitality on the Island (e.g., rooftop lookout point, swimming pool, marina, MT35) was identified.
- Ensure catalytic uses attract people to the Island all year round; explore uses that integrate the heritage features to connect past and future uses (not just coffee shops, bistros, etc.).
- Maintain heritage buildings where appropriate, but consider adapting them to accommodate new uses if their potential for adaptive re-use is limited (i.e., silos, MT35).
- Some SAC/LUAC members indicated that the MT35 is an asset and could be adapted for public uses (e.g., marine museum, rooftop lookout); other members noted that its heritage value in relation to the surrounding parkland is limited.
- Questions and concerns were raised regarding built form in relation to population targets on the island. Stakeholders want to ensure sufficient population mass to support good retail along Keating Channel and centre street and animate the public spaces.

### **Draft Public Realm Concepts**

- Clarification required for how heritage features (both built and natural) will be activated to draw visitors to the island all year round.
- Consideration for locating businesses with water-based activities (e.g., canoe/kayak rentals) as well as a destination public pool on Villiers St. needed.
- Feedback from a few SAC/LUAC members provided relating to the proposed locations of the elementary school and community centre. Facilities should be concentrated on Centre St. to create a “bustling” activity node; A mixed-use building was also suggested to integrate the school and community centre centrally on Centre St. to share common facilities and encourage children to walk to school (e.g., Market Lane P.S.). Other stakeholders noted that the school is well located to serve the Island and West Don Lands communities.
- Feedback from one SAC/LUAC member suggested replacing the community centre at its proposed location beside the Cherry St. bridge with a different institutional use.
- Confirmation that the dog park is of a sufficient size was noted.

### **Existing Property Owners and Users**

- Include at least one visual (e.g., aerial photo or map) illustrating the spatial relationship between existing properties (including ownership) and envisioned uses on Villiers Island.
- Clarify how existing buildings and operations are reflected in the plan.
- Some stakeholders expressed concern that precinct planning for Villiers Island will impact land uses and stakeholder interests elsewhere in the Port Lands. Concern was also expressed that planning for Villiers Island is not in sync with other plans being developed for the Port Lands.

## Next Meeting

Mr. Dilks thanked SAC/LUAC members for providing feedback and adjourned the meeting at 10:45 am.

**Next SAC/LUAC Meeting:** Spring 2015 – Date to be confirmed.



**Villiers Island Precinct Plan**

**Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) and  
Land Owners and Users Advisory Committee (LUAC) Meeting #2**

Waterfront Toronto, Boardroom

Wednesday, January 28, 2015

8:00 – 10:30 am

**AGENDA**

- 8:00 am**      **Introductions and Update/Recap**  
*David Dilks, Facilitator, Lura Consulting*  
*Amanda Santo, Waterfront Toronto*
- 8:10 am**      **Streets and Blocks Preferred Direction Plan**  
*Presented by Michel Trocmé, Urban Strategies*
- Discussion
- The preferred Direction Plan is based on the feedback received on the previously presented three options.*
1. What are the strengths of the plan?
  2. What refinements would you suggest?
  3. Looking at the Villiers Street alignment options, which do you prefer? Why?
- 8:40 am**      **Draft Built Form Strategy**  
*Presented by Michel Trocmé, Urban Strategies*
- Questions of Clarification
  - Breakouts
    - Tower Locations
    - Tower Heights
    - Base Buildings
  - Breakout Reports and Discussion
- 9:55 am**      **Draft Public Realm Concepts**  
*Presented by Michel Trocmé, Urban Strategies*
- Discussion
1. Which concepts do you particularly like?
  2. What refinements would you suggest?
  3. What other ideas for the public realm would you like to see explored?
- 10:25 am**      **Next Steps**
- 10:30 am**      **Adjourn**

## Appendix B – List of Attendees

### SAC/LUAC Meeting List of Attendees:

- Telesat
- Cinespace
- Cimco Refrigeration
- PortsToronto
- Belleterre REP
- CE Commercial
- Gooderham and Worts Neighbourhood Association (GWNA)
- Lafarge/Johnston Litavski
- Castlepoint
- Toronto Port Lands Company (TPLC)
- Toronto Green Community
- 33 Villiers Street
- West Don Lands Committee (WDLC) / Code Blue/  
Corktown Residents and Business Association (CRBA)
- Toronto Historical Association
- Redpath Sugar
- Holcim (Canada) Inc.
- First Gulf
- Walk Toronto
- City of Toronto Real Estate

## Appendix C – Questions of Clarification and Discussion Summary

A summary of the Q&A and discussion during the SAC/LUAC meeting is provided below. Questions are noted with **Q**, responses are noted by **A**, and comments are noted by **C**. Please note this is not a verbatim summary.

### ❖ Streets and Blocks Preferred Direction Plan

**C. Centre St. is a real strength. It's pedestrian friendly; in 20 years maybe it could be a pedestrian-only street. At the ward boundary consultations, people wondered why ward boundaries are drawn through the middle of main streets. Main streets are perceived as the centre of a community rather than the edge. I can see Centre St. bringing the Villiers Island community together.**

**C. My concern is that it is difficult to discuss the streets and blocks plan without discussing massing and built form at the same time – my understanding is that they are intimately related. The streets and block plan, which is really a block perimeter, will create a situation that will preclude certain building types. The fundamental issue between the streets and blocks plan and density and building type relates to the vision for the island – will it be comparable to the St. Lawrence Market or East Bayfront neighbourhoods? The geography around the island contributes to a unique, iconic place. Ironically, larger block plans with a central place like the one presented here make it difficult to accommodate density. I agree that Centre St. should gravitate toward being a pedestrian only street; there is a lot of arterial support along the perimeter. If there were more north-south street options, there wouldn't be a need for a main street for vehicular traffic. Also, island views of the city should not be obstructed by future development.**

**Q. Does the topography of Promontory Park drop off or rise up? My understanding is that it will be used for laker storage during the winter and may impact views of the city and Harbourfront from the park.**

**A.** The concept of Promontory Park has been part of the thinking for Villiers Island for many years. Our understanding is that you will be able to see over the lakers from the top of the park. We are carrying forward the notion of a hill in that location for further study during future stages of the project.

**C. Existing owners find it difficult to understand how they fit in among the proposed changes and uses in the Precinct Plan. My suggestion as you go forward is to have at least one aerial photo or map with an overlay to illustrate the relationship between old and new. For example, our property (Lafarge) is on the south side of the precinct, adjacent to a site recommended for a tall building up to 30-storeys. What is the distance between our property to the proposed building? Is that a good relationship? It's difficult to understand without that base information.**

**A.** Thank you, yes we will do that at the next meeting.

**Q. Why are the proposed retail uses spread out across the island instead of being concentrated in one area?**

**A.** There is some uncertainty with respect to market uptake for retail in the area, and as such, the retail strategy to date for the precinct ensures that most or all frontages facing onto Villiers, Commissioners and Centre streets can accommodate retail, cultural or other animated uses.

**A.** There is a strong retail corridor along Villiers St. because of what we are trying to achieve through the Keating Promenade. Retail clusters were also grouped near transit nodes.

**Q. What is the intended use of the Western Dock?**

**A.** Ports Toronto representative advised that the plan for the Western Dock is not primarily as a storage site for lakers during the winter – laker fleets are much smaller than they used to be, while the lakers themselves are twice as big as they were historically. There is not much opportunity for industrial use along the Western Dock. Any lakers would be layed up further south within the Port Lands. The Western Dock will mostly be utilized by tall ships, military craft and maybe some smaller vessels. We are willing to work with the community to understand what they want there and to connect the population to the water.

**Q. What is the water depth around the island?**

**A.** Ports Toronto representative noted that the water depth at the Western Dock will be maintained at 8.2 m, the international standard for seaway depth. The depth of the river elsewhere around the island will be at the discretion of the TRCA; the Keating Channel will be dredged regularly for flood protection purposes.

**Q. You outlined heritage buildings in the presentation, but there are also existing buildings currently being used by businesses. Many of those building owners are not interested in selling as the plan is implemented. Are you incorporating existing buildings into this plan?**

**A.** There are three private landowners on the site – 33 Villiers St. (Cherry Beach Sound) 309 Cherry St. (Castlepoint) and 39 Commissioners (Toronto Fire Association). The rest of the land is owned by the City/TPLC and Waterfront Toronto. There are existing buildings/uses on publicly-owned properties, primarily with short-term leases. We are looking at the island comprehensively; the buildings that are definitely staying in the long-term are the heritage buildings and the private land owners if they desire. They are being used as a departure point for the precinct plan, but looking at the full build out of the island over time, this is what is envisioned.

**A.** The broader Port Lands includes the Film Studio District, east of the island, where we have identified land for film and other types of businesses in the Port Lands Planning Framework Land Use Direction. Existing businesses could be relocated into that area over time.

**C. I am not confident that the island population will be large enough to support scattered retail uses. If I were opening a store on the island, I would want retail to be concentrated in one place to support traffic. I would also want the catalytic attraction to be located close to the central retail space to encourage a lively retail population among visitors. I agree the catalytic use could become a view blocker if people also have to look around the Western Dock. Concentrate retail uses on Centre St. with the catalytic use nearby so the area becomes a prosperous cluster.**

**A.** We did look at Centre St. as a prime retail core; we thought there was a great opportunity for that because of the woonerf concept being applied. However, because Centre St. is envisioned as an intimate pedestrian-oriented residential street, it was decided that it is not an ideal location for the retail concentration we are trying to achieve around the Keating Promenade and transit nodes. We are cognizant that the population may not be able to support this level of retail initially. Ground floor uses, as in the West Don Lands and East Bayfront developments, are being reserved for possible conversion to retail space. We are also going to be looking at cultural and other types of uses to animate the frontages. We can revisit the location of the catalytic use; this was the preferred location based on previous feedback, but we can look at it again. The proposed transportation network and blocks and streets plan are conducive to Centre St. as a woonerf and shutting down on occasion for pedestrian-only events.

**Q. What's the grade from the western most street to the water's edge? Does it flow down quite steeply to enable a lookout point from the roof of the catalytic use?**

**A.** There was an initial grading plan developed as part of the Don Mouth Environmental Assessment. I don't recall what the new grade will be, but the new Cherry St. will be raised up about 3 m from the existing grade. As you move west toward Promontory Park, the grade begins to slope down. It is possible through design to have a building with lookouts; it's something we can take a look at.

**A.** We will be revisiting the grades on the island as part of the flood protection work and the detailed design of Promontory Park.

**C. I am happy to see plans for Villiers St. as a grand place. Villiers St. is a unique industrial artefact because of its grand dimension. Something should be made of the street considering it will share its name with the island. It's arguably one of the most important heritage assets on the island. To treat it as a perimeter road is a missed opportunity. It should have a remarkable physical presence. I'm more interested in Option Two as it includes more opportunity for Villiers St. to have a robust physical presence.**

**C. I was worried about the distance between Villiers St. and the edge of the Keating Channel in terms of making it a successful place for people to go, but I am drawn to the second option presented because it creates a sense of place. The width of the street and the sidewalk in the first option are too wide and not intimate enough.**

**A.** It was noted that the intent of the wide street and sidewalk in the first option would also serve as a spill out area in front of buildings (e.g., Front St. in the West Don Lands development).

**Q. What kind of traffic flow are you expecting on Villiers St.? It doesn't really go anywhere; I'm guessing it would be used mostly by local traffic? Why does it need to be so wide?**

**A.** Yes, Villiers St. will be used primarily as a local street. There is one lane for both cars and bicycles on either side of the street.

#### ❖ Built Form Strategy

**Q. You referred to Villiers Island as a destination and the high-rise buildings as a gateway. I'd like to know what destination they are a gateway to. The high-rise buildings on Commissioners St. look like a wall. If your intention is to create a place that is inviting, I'd like to know who it is inviting to. Building on the comment about the scattered retail, the island will not be a destination for people who don't live and work there. Centre St. will be a shadowed alley, not the promenade that you think people will want to walk up and down on. Who is the target of this plan? You assume that people will come from outside a certain radius, but it's no different than Queens Quay or the Beaches – you can't get anywhere. Instead of all these high rises, why isn't there more cascading development with height limitations? You also mentioned that you will be protecting heritage sites and buildings; one of those sites is essentially encroached on all sides by high-rise buildings – it doesn't do the heritage feature any service. I've been working in the area for 30 years; I don't go to Harbourfront because it's difficult to get there. I don't think people are going to come to the Island other than the assumed transit users and cyclists. Also, the celebrated silos are ugly – people will ask why they were maintained.**

**A.** Villiers Island will be an incredible destination in Toronto. From an industrial perspective, as things are naturalized, the Keating Promenade will provide one of the only channel experiences in the city. Feedback received during previous design phases of this project support the Keating Channel as an attractive feature. Promontory Park will be appealing because of the open space near the water; it will be heavily landscaped to make it even more appealing. There are a whole host of reasons that make this

an attractive plan. In terms of gateways – based on the overall distribution of density on the island, we want to make sure we are locating built form in the right areas and strategically using the higher densities along New Cherry St. to maximize proximity to transit and emphasize a gateway onto the island. The silos are one of many focal points; I can understand why you may think they are not attractive given their current context. As the industrial context is transformed and contrasted against newer development, the silos will take on a different charm.

**C. We have significant concerns about the plan as it currently does not reflect the level of density required to support major public infrastructure investments, including public transit. We would encourage you to revisit this.**

**Q. What is the imagined residential and commercial population for the island?**

**A.** The plan reflects a residential population of approximately 6,000 to 8,000 people (or 4,500 units) and about 2,750 jobs across office, catalytic and retail uses. The proposed density and built form are very similar to the West Don Lands development which has been quite successful and shares many of the same development constraints as Villiers Island.

**Q. Are you also proposing the same land use mix as the West Don Lands, but with a stronger residential mix?**

**A.** Yes, we are. We are studying an 80/20 split, but given what is happening outside the Port Lands we may consider increasing the residential and decreasing the non-residential mix. That said we still want a strong non-residential mix on the Island to ensure a true mixed-use development. Studies show that true mixed-use, mixed-income, mixed built form communities are successful.

**Q. The south side of the Ship Channel is expected to stay industrial for the next 40 to 100 years to support Toronto's economic development. We're moving aggregates, cement, sugar, salt, steel, glass, etc. You obviously don't want transport trucks passing through on New Cherry St. Will there be a plan in place for truck traffic before development happens?**

**A.** Yes – the Port Lands Planning Framework and Transportation Servicing Master Plan is seeking to establish dedicated and reliable truck routes. We are cognizant about the amount of truck traffic moving through the area while trying to create a new residential community.

**C. I also have some concerns about the density proposed for the precinct; because it will be an island and closed off to a degree, there is a need to rethink the amount of density needed to support commercial and other uses in the community. One point in particular is Old Cherry St., it seems that the presence of heritage buildings on the street precludes the potential for commercial uses on both sides of the street. Consider increasing the density between Old Cherry St. and New Cherry St. to draw people into the area.**

**C. The two tallest buildings are located directly opposite an existing industrial use (i.e., Lafarge). Do you have confidence that there is compatibility for a new residential use with the existing industrial use? Has there been any consideration of the effects that may arise from introducing residential uses? Is that the right place – I suggest it's not – for new residential units directly opposite an industrial use which will continue.**

**A.** A noise and emissions study is being conducted for the entire Port Lands. We recognize that a number of industrial uses will continue during the course of this plan; we want to ensure there is a positive relationship. We are cognizant of the proximity of the proposed residential uses near the

Lafarge site. We are confident the uses can be compatible, but will evaluate mitigation options based on the study outcomes.

C. Yes, but when the most density is being proposed adjacent to a major industrial use, one has to question whether this is the right way to do it.

A. The East Bayfront development beside Redpath Sugar provides an example where this was made possible..

C. New condominium owners have expectations that don't include industrial uses in their viewshed. Lafarge will be significantly impacted by the expectations of new residents.

A. The built form and heights being proposed are quite adaptable. They can be modified if necessary.

**C. It seems to me that the shadow drawings are misleading. Almost any arrangement of built form will have the same effect with respect to the east, west, south and even the north side of the island. In terms of the height and location of buildings, shadows will be cast on Centre St. and if they aren't in the middle of the island, they will impact the Keating Channel. It's a matter of geometry.**

A. The shadow drawings that were presented are only one of many factors that were used to justify the locations of higher buildings. There is a push and pull involved to balance other objectives (i.e., density, viability, etc.). The built form is in line with examples from Europe; it may be difficult to imagine just by looking at the crude massing images.

A. The community emphasized in previous consultations that Centre St. should be a woonerf and pedestrian-oriented street. This informs the type of built form that would frame the street.

**C. It is important to ensure there is a critical mass of residents to support a lively environment given that it is an island. On the other hand too much density is uncomfortable. It may surprise industrial users to know that those of us who aren't involved in industrial operations are fascinated by them. The issue for condo developers or owners is about noise and air quality rather than the view. People like to watch the sugar boats arriving at Redpath, etc. People who buy a condo in this neighbourhood should know that they are buying into a semi-industrial active port. The concern is not necessarily the view, but whether the investigations indicate air or noise issues can be mitigated, if there are any.**

A. The City is retaining a consultant to complete an air and noise quality study for the entire Port Lands. We want to find out if it is highly unreasonable to pursue mitigation, and where it would be reasonable for source/receptor mitigation.

**C. I'm happy to see consideration given to maintain the built and natural heritage on the island. However, if this is going to be a destination location and open for use by non-residents – what active uses will draw people to the island? The heritage uses are being used as a selling point to potential residents.**

A. We agree that there is a need to draw people to the island. The re-naturalized Don River will be a major draw for people interested in passive recreational opportunities. There will also be two catalytic uses to draw people, one a civic level catalytic use near Promontory Park and the second a community level catalytic use based on the Essroc silos at the corner of New Cherry St. and Villiers St. The locations may change once the catalytic use is defined. The Keating Promenade is another draw to the island; it is the only place in the city that offers a channel experience with cafés and restaurants.

**Q. Will there still be a docking facility?**

A. I believe we are looking into accommodating that as well. Cherry Bridge will be a fixed bridge, but will be able to accommodate boats up to a certain height.

A. Another thing to think about in terms of the island is that the redevelopment will itself be an attraction. C. Ritz noted that in a visit to Hafencity, Hamburg in Germany, which was the focus of a similar effort to redevelop a former port and industrial area, local officials were surprised that the

redevelopment in and of itself became a destination for people. It was the fact that this area had become a new thriving community that was appealing.

**A.** A local example is Corktown Common – the adjacent community is not heavily populated yet, but people come in droves to experience the park.

**C. I understand that this exercise had to be broken down into specific areas and we're here to talk about Villiers Island, but I am concerned that a lot of decisions with impacts to other land uses and interests in the port area are being made prematurely (e.g., separating transportation infrastructure for truck traffic). There needs to be a more inclusive, coordinated approach between all parties.**

**A.** We agree – we are looking at the Port Lands holistically. Waterfront Toronto, City of Toronto and TRCA are working collaboratively on a framework plan, transportation servicing master plan and precinct plans. All these different pieces are working in dovetail with each other. We are conducting consultations in more manageable pieces based on feedback we received when we brought all the different elements together for consultation at the same time – it was too overwhelming. We are trying to ensure that what we are working on does not impact other plans (e.g., Don Mouth Naturalization, Gardiner East EA, etc.). We are cognizant of the big picture.

**A.** I am not confident that at a stakeholder level the individual interests of landowners in the broader Port Lands are being addressed because this process is so segmented.

**A.** There is a broader Port Lands Planning Framework in development through which we have gone out and consulted on a number of times. It would be impractical for us to do this level of detailed planning across the entire Port Lands at the same time. To clarify, we were directed to undertake precinct planning concurrently with a broader vision for the Port Lands. There will be more opportunities for consultation as part of the broader Port Lands Planning Framework process in the near future.

**C.** While I understand that, decisions will be made well in advance of work on other precincts. One process can't be out so far in front of the rest, especially when there are so many different interests to consider.

#### ❖ Draft Public Realm Concepts

**C. There are two things that emphasize the centrifugal force behind the overall plan which I feel is a mistake. The location of the school and community centre at opposite ends of the island is a concern. The maximum population of the island will be 8000 people; you need to establish a busy, bustling centre instead of spreading everything across the island. I think you are wasting the opportunity to make Centre St. a lively and interesting place if all of the things that generate traffic and vitality are spread out away from it. We also need to be thinking more about entertainment facilities that attract people (e.g., Sunnyside Pool). Use catalytic uses that reinforce each other rather than them spreading out (e.g., pool on the roof).**

**A.** The community services and facilities are being looked at from the perspective of the entire Port Lands based on projected population and employment needs. As part of that exercise, we have identified a need for a school and community centre, but they are intended to serve other areas in the Port Lands as well, not just Villiers Island. We would like to put a pool on the Island and are studying the possibility. We like this location for the school because of its proximity to the park and potential park amenities; there are a number of other reasons we chose that location for the school but we have not finalized the details with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). We will take your comments into consideration.

**A.** It is important to look at where people will want to be versus where we are locating community services. Your point does merit further discussion.

**C. I understand there is also an elementary school proposed at the foot of Parliament St. Have you considered the larger context when choosing a location for the school?**

**A.** Yes, current and proposed schools were taken into consideration.

**C. I think encouraging people to use the Keating Promenade will be a challenge. One idea would be to concentrate uses there. Tiered seating at the water's edge might not be enough of a draw. There should also be some consideration for sun shelter during the summer months. Also, think about how to incorporate cafés and licensed uses that can take advantage of sunlight.**

**Q. Has the precinct plan for Villiers Island been looked at in terms of flight paths from the Island Airport?**

**A.** We have taken a look at the height restrictions. They decrease south of Commissioners St.

**A.** We can only address in the context of existing operations and requirements. Proposed future traffic and type of aircraft is being addressed through the Island Airport EA.

**A.** With respect to the EA underway; Waterfront Toronto has been feeding our plans into the assessment process. Once that EA is done, Waterfront Toronto will continue to work with an eye to what is being planned here.

**Q. Has the catalytic use been ruled out as an entertainment venue (e.g., concert hall)? Also, how will you dredge the Keating Channel if the Cherry St. pedestrian bridge will be a fixed bridge?**

**A.** The catalytic use has not been defined yet; we are open to suggestions for the catalyst. As for dredging, TRCA is exploring a pilot project using a new technology (hydrocyclone) north of Lake Shore Boulevard East which would not require a lift bridge in the channel.

**C. What is the heritage building near the Western Dock (building MT35) – there has been little mention of it until today? Also, I would like to reiterate an earlier request for data on shipping traffic in the Port Lands. If there is any doubt about how different uses get mixed and can be compatible, Granville Island, Vancouver provides a great example of how disparate uses have worked well together.**

**A.** MT35 is a new addition to the plan; it was identified as a heritage building in 2004 and impacts to the building were captured as part of the Don Mouth Naturalization plan. We are working with a heritage consultant to study whether part of the building can be maintained in the Promontory Park design.

**A.** The building was listed in 2004, and because it is listed there is a process we have to follow to identify an appropriate conservation strategy. We are also mindful of the need to balance the implementation of other deliverables (e.g., Promontory Park, Don Mouth Naturalization Project ([DMNP]) with the conservation strategy. Retention of the building will not compromise the DMNP EA and as such the south portion of the building will be removed to accommodate the new river mouth.

**Q.** What was the building used for?

**A.** It is a large single-storey warehouse structure designed to accommodate cargo. It was constructed when the St. Lawrence Seaway was opened, and when shipping was expected to play a larger role in freight transport in Toronto. It is one of the last marine terminals. It is currently being use by Green for Life (GFL) as recycling facility.

**A.** We can request to get the shipping data information to you. Is your concern about the Western Dock?

**C.** Yes.

**A.** Our premise is that the Western Dock will be maintained for a Redpath boat during the winter; PortsToronto plans to consult with the community about visiting ships during the summer time.

**C. I would like to emphasize that many people have expressed the need for opportunities to swim or lounge near the new waterfront edges. Also consider uses that would appeal to people during different seasons (e.g., informal restaurants during the winter, etc.).**

**C. I am concerned about how heritage aspects will be adaptively re-used to be able to draw people to the island all year round. There is a unique opportunity to create a museum that interprets the City's marine or industrial history while drawing people into the park area. If you are calling these heritage features, what's the heritage to be seen? I do agree the school should be located more centrally as well.**

**C. I think the school is well located to serve both the island and West Don Lands communities and near active open space. What ultimately will be the Keating Promenade can't be supported in the early years because the requisite population density won't be there. The buildings along the Keating Promenade will have a number of lives and serve different purposes before becoming established cafés and restaurants as envisioned. I'm not worried about the Keating Promenade; it will rectify itself over time. A strength of the plan is that it provides flexibility for evolution over the long-term. I do think the catalytic use is conceptually wrong; it's intent is to be iconic, which means it will be above grade and blocking views to the city and is then in the wrong location. But I am interested in the existing building and think it also has the possibility of multiple lives. I am most concerned about the economy of the overall island as that is what will enable the implementation of this plan.**

**C. Dogs and children are always a hot topic. The dog run needs to be an adequate size. Corktown Common provides a contemporary relevant example.**

**C. It's amazing how few restaurants are on the Toronto waterfront. The patio of the Keating Channel Bar and Grill is one of the best places to sit; it provides some imagination of what is to come.**

## Appendix D – Additional Written Feedback

Comments and feedback submitted by SAC/LUAC members after the meeting are included below.

Gooderham and Worts Neighbourhood Association, West Don Lands Committee and CodeBlueTO:

### 1. What are the strengths of the plan?

- i. Compact community with a strong central spine.
- ii. Gorgeous open spaces that make the most of the unique location and the possibilities offered by it.
- iii. Existing heritage buildings to make it interesting and different from all the other new precincts across the city.
- iv. Footbridge connection to Trinity St. is a great incentive to not use cars. Could be another one farther east, at the mid-point between the two traffic bridges. This would support the large building block on the northern promenade which could be both a local amenity and a destination for non-islanders.

### 2. What refinements would you suggest?

- i. Centre St. must be allowed to reach its potential.

Centre St. will not work, at least in the early years, if action isn't concentrated there. It has to be a fun place to stroll along from day one. All retail should be directed to Centre St. until demand is sufficient that new starts have to locate in other places; quiet uses like dentists, doctors, lawyers, etc. could be on the more residential feeder streets. The central street will die if it is dark and deserted at night. There could be a small entertainment location, perhaps a branch plant for TIFF and/or Bloor Hot Docs, in a space flexible enough to be used for community gathering, concerts, etc.

The school need not be in a freestanding building. There are three schools on the Esplanade between Parliament and Jarvis, all in mixed-use buildings. If the school were at the mid-point of the central street, in the same building as a community centre, as is Market Lane PS, it could share the gym and would discourage parents from driving kids. This pedestrian traffic could be a gift to retail along the street. Affordable housing should be close to the school.

Health facilities are foot traffic generators so a family health clinic could share the school-rec centre building. See comment under Built Form.

Each end of the street could be a destination in itself and not allowed to be just an intersection. The peripheral road shouldn't have heavy traffic and be made very easy to cross with a beautiful plaza with shade trees, fountains, lots of seating, to make use of the view and as a transition to the more naturalised quality of Promontory and Villiers Parks. This would be a nice place to wait for transit. Maybe put in a small bandstand for weekend concerts and community events. Good place for fireworks.

This street could be a first for Toronto, with the chance to become something like the Cours Mirabeau in Aix-en-Provence except that that serves a larger population and a lot of tourists. Until that kind of visitor traffic materialises here, in fact in order to make it happen, the street needs all the support it can get.

As the emblematic public space for the island, why not call it Villiers St.? The street along the northern edge could be called Keating Blvd.

ii. Keating channel edge

Businesses relating to water activity could be encouraged to locate along Keating Blvd; i.e. small boat and canoe rental; the large parcel at mid-point could be a pool (rather than putting it in the rec centre on Villiers/Centre St.); not any old neighbourhood pool but one that attracts people from far and wide, like Sunnyside, with decent inexpensive food (do you know Brioche Doree on King West?), playground, lounge areas. The pool and lounge areas could be on the upper story for the view, perhaps enclosed with removable or retractable glass panelling for year-round use. There's a walkway at York University, designed I think by Diamond Schmitt, which is open in summer, glass panelled in winter. Other entertainment and food services could be on the main floor.

iii. Rethink catalyst use

Toronto already has an opera house, symphony hall, AGO, ROM, TIFF, all easily accessible. I don't see anyone wanting to invest in a major entertainment facility until the island is already established both as a community and a destination. In addition, like others at the meeting, I think it strange to locate such a use where it would block harbour views and do nothing to animate internal public spaces. Any tenant/owner/impresario would probably want a lot of parking too, not what we want there even if feasible flood-wise.

Why not make boaters the catalyst by making the most of MT 35 and Promontory Park? Put in a marina, if the port authority will give its gracious consent. This could be both public use and for a club. MT 35 is a gift. We weren't told much about it yesterday but it could be considered as a base for service to the marina? Winter storage of small boats? Boating supplies? Marine history museum? Skate park or gorgeous garden on the roof? I presume the grade there will enable people on Trinity Blvd to look over it to the harbour view.

### 3. Built form

Keep heritage buildings for adaptive reuse where possible – but don't fetishize silos. If there's nothing that can be done with them, why let them stand in the way of something more productive?

I know of a building in the Beau-Grenelle district of Paris which is the base podium of a very tall office tower. Along the street frontage there's a public library, a café, a drop-in for social service access and a couple of shops. An attractive and welcoming entrance at the mid-point leads to the interior and upper floors which house a community centre with gym, tennis courts, etc. It could easily also contain a school. The school could have outdoor space on the green roof of the building.

It seems that almost universally, a five or six-storey streetscape makes for the most comfortable and attractive environment whatever the height of the towers set back mid-block. What is forbidding and unpleasant, not to mention windy and shaded, is a street edge that's much more than six storeys. Where there are mid-rise buildings, i.e. 10 – 12, they should incorporate a couple of set backs at 5 and 10 storeys. This would also create nice terraces for family-sized apartments.

Toronto Green Community:

**On the Positive:**

The strengths of the plan are to provide a strong purpose for the key districts/areas outlined in the plan. Every place needs a purpose, and the “character area” approach to the plan is helpful.

**Keating Promenade and Villiers Street** are very well characterized as a destination, a location for a vibrant riverside “scene”. Toronto has limited opportunities elsewhere, due to flood hazard regulations.

**New Cherry Street’s** character as a main gateway to the precinct and the Port Lands is also well-conceived. That this is a commercial street for the precinct is built into its location. Buildings on the west side should be mixed-use, commercial and residential.

**Villiers Park** is in a great location to fit well with the river and the greenway linkage. Outdoor recreation, the school and wildlife habitat compatibility are keys here.

**River Park** is defined by the river flowing through it and by the single-sided street, Commissioners. Making it the densely built-out residential street on the north side helps to populate the precinct with the density it will need to be animated. There is a risk that the precinct, somewhat isolated as it is by location, will not be populated enough to be vibrant. So densities must in general be on the high side.

I have a concern that moving the heritage building in the park on the south side of Commissioners will be too costly for the benefit of having it line up with “new” Munitions Street. Moving the building has the scent of a “boondoggle”. As the only building in the parkland south of Commissioners, it will stand out fine.

**Mixed Reviews:**

**Centre Street** as a pedestrian district also makes sense, as it links together areas of changing character, from Harbourside, through the Cherrys to Villiers Park. In contrast to Villiers Street, Centre Street should be a neighbourhood focal point, and should not be planned to compete with Villiers. It is a place for community-directed activities, elder housing, neighbourhood centres and places of business – small eating places, local shops, etc. The risk is to try for too much overlap between Villiers and Centre. Centre will start low-key in any case (due to the delayed build-out of some of its eastern blocks) and may remain more low-key than Villiers indefinitely.

Centre Street should be the location of the Community Centre, centrally located where it can attract both children/families from the school and nearby residences and workers from the offices for programming. (If it has been located to also serve North Keating, remember that there is also Y at Cherry and Front and other “community” facilities along Cherry in the West Don Lands.)

**Harbourside** depends greatly for its character upon the “catalytic” use that comes there. I think that it is a mistake to place the Community Centre here beside the Cherry Street bridge. That prime location should be held for another institutional use, like the George Brown Health Sciences Centre in East Bayfront, which animates that area – a precinct that is becoming be a mix of residential and commercial/institutional. Harbourside could add to that waterfront trope.

## Areas of Concern:

**New Munitions Street** was not well defined, and I wonder if it will attract the higher, denser, commercial development you plan there. As an isolated, two-block commercial district, competing with New Cherry Street, as well as Great Gulf district to the northeast and Film District to the east, I have great concern that it has legs. It looks to me like primarily a mid-rise residential street.

**Old Cherry Street** appears desolate. I would argue for it to inherit the commercial density of Munitions Street in your plan, and probably a bit of added chemistry. Alongside New Cherry Street, this would reinforce the commercial character and create enough critical mass to make a satellite employment district. The existence of heritage buildings should not “sterilize” the east side of Old Cherry. Both sides should be commercial or mixed-use and have enough density to stand with New Cherry and the commercial/institutional elements of Harbourside to give critical mass and gravitas to the district anchored by New Cherry Street.

**The Marine Terminal** – this has far less heritage value than the asset of the water’s edge and promontory. Its contribution to the precinct is limited – it is a very large, unremarkable warehouse. It is a great candidate for interpretive recognition along the dock, not a visual barrier to the city, which it would certainly become if it were retained with any integrity.

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## Toronto Teleport:

MT35 Terminal – get rid of it. I know the historical people might think it has value, but there is a lot of other historic stuff being retained in the plan for this small island already, and it’s location would really makes for much nicer parkland.

It’s a small island and it seemed a lot of work was put into the parkland, the Keating Promenade, and the centre street, all with the intent to make it really a beautiful place to live, work and visit. It seemed like almost too much was trying to go on with no real goal of what it was trying to be. I think overall restrictions on the non-central roadways to promote less vehicular traffic, more foot traffic and keep through traffic out of residential areas is a great way to go. We likely all need to learn to live a bit more like that anyway. I’d try to keep vehicle traffic to a minimum on Villiers street as well, going with Cherry and Commissioners for the bulk of traffic in the area.

Parking did not come up, but are there plans for parking or is the intent to try to push people toward public transit of using the bike and walking paths.

Visitor to the island wise, a lot of the people who would come down to visit and use this area will come for the recreational side of it – biking, rollerblading and walking. I know that Tommy Thompson park and the Leslie spit beside our business here is a very popular area, especially evenings and weekends in the summer. All the way up to the beaches in Ashbridges Bay. If Villiers Island was connected via bike paths, I definitely think that would make up a lot of the visitor traffic in the summer – people out to enjoy the waterfront.

At any rate – it looks like a very interesting plan. I thought the studies and thoughts put into sun and shadow were interesting and well done. Good foresight and planning. Overall, from the plan it looked like an interesting place to live, right near the downtown core.

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Toronto Historical Association:

**1. What are the strengths of the plan?**

Appreciate that the vision and layout allows for organic growth over time and that there are no immutable issues other than the retention of specific designated/heritage features, the majority of which seem to be well integrated into the overall concept. Whether this can be kept as the project moves along will be the concern of the T.H.A.

**2. What refinements would you suggest?**

At this point it is difficult to suggest any significant changes in a specific way, though there are some concerns, from a preservation and heritage standpoint, that are noted on specific areas of the design and to which T.H.A. will address further in this response.

**3. Looking at the Villiers Street alignment options, which do you prefer? Why?**

If the concept is, as outlined, that the Villiers Island area be a 'destination point' rather than just a neighbourhood, then areas that are people friendly and invite 'lingering' and use over time should be the preference. They will not negatively impact those permanent residents and invite interaction. I would suggest, then, that the second option, with its more open boulevard would invite more use and offer, particularly in the summer, more opportunity for both local and visitor enjoyment.

**4. With respect to the building heights covered in the questions regarding Base, Mid-rise and Taller structures and the preferred heights:**

It is not in the domain of expertise for the T.H.A. to comment on the general development parameters or dynamics of the potential designs. Our concern is over the protection/preservation of the identified natural and built heritage and the cultural reflection the area would maintain. These, we would not like to see overshadowed or dominated by new construction or blunted by adjacent designs that do not reflect the preserved structures so that there is a 'fit' of old and new.

That being said, it would, perhaps, be useful to consider alternative placement for some, at least, of the tall structures so that the plan reflects a more dynamic/organic flow in parallel with the proposed natural features. Less chessboard placement or simple linear alignments along transit corridors. While it is understood that density at certain points is preferred to boost usage, a plan that would see some flow or undulation in the height of the buildings that reflects the topography as delineated in the concept drawings might offer a more aesthetic appearance to the area without diminishing sight lines and shadow matters.

**5. Which concepts do you particularly like? What refinements would you suggest? What other ideas for the public realm would you like to see explored?**

Obviously, from a heritage point of view, the creative adaptive reuse of the existing heritage features and buildings is welcomed. We would hope that the planning in specific reuse look beyond the

placement of 'artists' enclaves or retail establishments [ coffee shops, bistros, etc, ] in the 'storefronts' and allow for a wider variety of appropriate uses that may reflect the specific history of the area and the buildings themselves. This is needed to differentiate the area from just another rebuild and to help anchor the area in its past as a place that connects previous life to the present use and future development.

Of particular concern was the lack of specificity regarding MT35 which appeared on all concepts in a somewhat amorphous state as opposed to the other designated buildings on the designs. This structure would appear to be a welcome entity in the development of a 'destination' or catalyst for use. Its presence could eliminate/replace the larger 'catalytic use' facility shown on the western natural feature. As it was understood, the idea was to raise the western section of the island to allow for a promontory allowing for views of the harbour and waterfront. This could be accomplished by using the roof area of MT35 or, with a cosmetic overbuild on the structure, depending on engineering issues.

It was indicated at the meeting that the Western Dock would remain in use as a commercial point for some time with ships using it for winter docking, or as a location for visiting tall ships or other significant visiting craft to have a berth. T.H.A. puts forth the idea that the City of Toronto look into using the MT35 in conjunction with this ship use by re-establishing the Marine Museum which formerly existed in the Stanley Barracks on the Exhibition Grounds and subsequently on the Harbourfront at "The Pier". The large and significant collection is currently, sadly in storage or scattered about the city warehouses and could, properly displayed and referenced be a significant tourist draw to the area and used to explain the context of the ships using the Western Dock and harbour. There is an obvious synergy here that preserves the building, enhances the dock use, invites the public to explore and brings tourism to the shops and commercial areas of the locale. This also ties in nicely with the suggested use of the Keating Channel area.

On a related matter, the T.H.A. is also concerned about the old Fire Hall shown on the island plan. This appears to be an orphaned structure that has not been included in the design of the new dimensions, but, seemingly, left as if no idea for use was contemplated.

The site calls for an 'off-leash' area beside this Fire Hall. It would be unfortunate if this structure was limited in its new role to that of a public washroom. The police service maintains a museum at their headquarters, would the fire department see a museum in this structure or, perhaps a commercial entity might develop this as a fire/rescue themed restaurant with the heritage elements of the building and appropriate artifacts/decor preserved. This is only one suggestion.

As to the natural features that exist and those proposals to reclaim the Don River mouth and outflow, the T.H.A fully supports the work of the Conservation Authority and the natural heritage groups [ Bring Back the Don, et al ] who have long championed the river's restoration and proper respect for its importance to the city.