PURSUING DESIGN EXCELLENCE:

URBAN DESIGN AS PUBLIC POLICY ON TORONTO'S WATERFRONT, 1999-2010

by

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ABSTRACT

As one of the largest post-industrial redevelopment projects in North America, Toronto's Lake Ontario waterfront is a key site for examining a range of policy tools and regulatory mechanisms that can be used to foster design-sensitive city planning practices. This research asks the question 'How do planning processes affect the quality and execution of urban design?' It uses an amended series of thirteen principles, initially developed by John Punter (2003), to analyze and evaluate the policymaking, implementation efforts and outcomes of the waterfront urban design process. The primary research data was collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews, archival documents and direct observations of the public realm. The research found that after many decades of failed planning efforts, a waterfront-focused bid for the 2008 Olympic Games caused the municipal, provincial and federal governments to contribute $1.5 billion to the waterfront redevelopment effort and establish a triumvirate public-private partnership to lead a comprehensive master planning process. 'Design excellence' was revealed to be a guiding policy aim of the waterfront redevelopment programme. Although the public-private partnership had a limited institutional mandate to deliver on its planning and design objectives, findings show that innovative design-sensitive policy tools and regulatory measures were established outside of the statutory planning framework to achieve design excellence. An urban design peer review panel, design competitions and neighbourhood master planning served to counter a weak and unpredictable jurisdictional context.

PREFACE

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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

My research examines the role that urban design plays within the sphere of planning practice and asks the question 'How do planning processes affect the quality and execution of urban design?' Stemming from a longstanding frustration with the uneven quality of contemporary built form and public space, my research aim is to identify how public and private sector actors can work together more effectively to generate better design outcomes. These tools and methods range from general planning policies and zoning by-laws to urban design guidelines and master plans, but also include more discretionary measures such as design review panels and design competitions. To conduct the research I have employed a case study methodology and focus upon waterfront redevelopment planning on Toronto's waterfront between 1999 and 2010. During this time, efforts to transform the city's Ontario lakefront have been led by a public-private agency of the federal, provincial and municipal governments called the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC). Now renamed Waterfront Toronto, the corporation remains the steward of Toronto's waterfront revitalization programme and the lead master planner of the waterfront.

In this opening chapter I introduce the theoretical and empirical context of my research. To begin, I situate my work within a body of literature called 'urban design as public policy' and outline the research problem I will address. I then argue that the study of urban design policymaking and implementation has received scant research attention in Canada and contend that Toronto's waterfront provides a formidable opportunity to explore the wider issues under investigation. I then offer a brief historical overview of the Toronto waterfront planning and design story and use it as a foundation for my three substantive research questions. I end the chapter with a brief summary of the nine chapters that follow.

Urban Design as Public Policy

I conceptualize urban design as a method of 'placemaking' rather than a purely aesthetic endeavour, in the sense that the *process* of policy-making and decision-making about design is just as crucial as the final design *product*. I also underpin this conceptualization with a normative definition of 'good' urban design that is drawn directly from the postmodern urban design cannon (for example: Lynch 1960; Cullen 1961; Jacobs 1961; Alexander *et al*. 1977; Bentley *et al*. 1985; Jacobs and Appleyard 1987). As I will explain more thoroughly in Chapter 2, this theoretical definition states that successful urban design incorporates both a visual and a social dimension (Jarvis 1980), which, when woven together, generate certain tangible qualities. These include a legible and navigable public realm, a mix of sustainable urban land uses and vibrant public spaces. To borrow a phrase from Bentley *et al*'s seminal text, *Responsive Environments* (1985), 'good' urban design also hinges upon "the idea that the built environment…provide its users with an essentially *democratic* setting, enriching their opportunities by maximizing the degree of *choice* available to them" (p. 9).

By focusing upon the policy tools, regulatory mechanisms and discretionary measures that are typically used during the design process, my research falls neatly into a well-established field of study within urban design called 'urban design as public policy'. This concept emerged during the 1970s following the publication of Jonathan Barnett's eponymous text, *Urban Design as Public Policy* (1974). As Chapter 2 explores in more detail, Barnett used his experience as the head of urban design in the New York City planning department to demonstrate that private sector design could be controlled more effectively through an aggressive combination of comprehensive urban design policies and regulatory mechanisms. In exchange for greater floor area allowances, and other 'bonuses', Barnett's urban design team required developers to approach their individual building projects within the context of a wider urban design plan. Barnett's work precipitated considerable interest among urban policymakers in North American and European cities about how to impact the design of the built environment through the planning process and embed a design ethos within the planning decision-making framework (Lai 1988; Punter 2010).

Subsequent academic case studies, which are more thoroughly discussed in later chapters, have since demonstrated the considerable success that certain cities, including San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, Vancouver and Barcelona, have experienced after adopting similar regulatory and discretionary measures (Lai 1988; Punter 1996; 1999; 2002; 2003; 2003a; Marshall 2001; Rowe 2006). Following New York City's early lead, this "tools approach" (Tiesdell and Adams 2011, p. 11) to urban design as public policy has typically involved a process of give and take between the public and private sectors, in which the local governing authority allows developers to exceed baseline height and density restrictions in exchange for improved design standards and contributions towards public amenity. As Hack and Sagalyn (2011) reflect, "urban design is often portrayed as shaping cities through bold visions of the future. In truth, it is largely devoted to the practical task of acquiring public or collective goods through the process of city building" (p. 258). By way of example, the municipality of Vancouver has demonstrated that building a close relationship with the development community and demanding certain standards can lead to significant public realm improvements. Since the late 1980s, the city's waterfront has been transformed, primarily by a private sector development company, into a dense mixed-use neighbourhood with an array of publically accessible amenities and public spaces. In an effort to replicate this achievement, the municipality expanded this design-led approach to planning decision-making citywide and continues to generate similar successes (Punter 2003).

Research Problem

Envious of cities like Vancouver, an ever-increasing number of planning and design stakeholders have acknowledged the potential economic, social and environmental value of better urban design (Carmona *et al.* 2002; 2002a; Madanipour 2006; Punter 2010; Hack and Sagalyn 2011). For private sector development companies and their financiers, the *producers* of the built environment, urban design can help to stabilize local market conditions, reduce overall risk and improve the marketing potential of their development projects (Madanipour 2006). For those who live and work in cities, the *users* of the built environment, urban design has the potential to both improve how a place functions and enhance its symbolic value, while, for agencies of government, the *regulators* of the built

environment, urban design can be harnessed for competitive advantage (Madanipour 2006) and employed as a “means of economic development” (Gospodini 2002, p. 60).

The constant pressure upon regulators to generate new avenues of investment and create jobs has forced them to find innovative ways to market cities and enhance their global competitiveness (Gospodini 2002; Julier 2005; Knox 2010). In this context, cities can use urban design to “lend traction to capital accumulation” (Knox 2010, p. 5). Yet, regulatory agencies do not only have to exploit urban design to gain economic advantages. Good urban design is also recognized as a sophisticated instrument for managing environmental change, as well as an issue around which stakeholders can participate in the process of developing and implementing a planning and design vision (Madanipour 2006). Notably, as concepts of sustainable development have ascended urban policy agendas, interest in the social and environmental role of urban design has also increased (Beatley 2004; Hester 2008; Newman and Jennings 2008). This has generated a growing preference for compact and walkable neighbourhoods in which shops and services are mixed with residential and employment space and pedestrians and cyclists have priority over vehicles – the very principles that urban designers have long argued create higher quality built environments.

In all of these various contexts, urban design as public policy has a significant role to play as a form of intervention that steers real estate developers towards “*policy-shaped* rather than merely *market-led* outcomes” (Tiesdell and Adams 2011, p. 3). Urban design as public policy is thus a ‘second-order’ design activity (George 1997). It does not involve the direct design of individual buildings or public spaces, but provides the tools and regulatory mechanisms for making decisions about design. “It shapes the design and development process by creating a frame for acts of first-order design,” explain Tiesdell and Adams (2011, p. 2), thereby giving policymakers significant sway over the form and arrangement of the built environment. As a direct result, urban design is invariably a highly contentious component of the planning decision-making process and a site of “seemingly endless conflict” (Punter and Carmona 1997, p. 1) between the regulators, producers and users of the built environment. Urban design is not only a process of negotiation between the private sector developers who propose projects and the public sector planners who assess their applications, it also causes professional conflicts between architects and urban planners and disagreements between professionals and lay people about the nature of

good design. Furthermore, because urban design is frequently a core concern on large-scale development projects, it often leads to emotive political debates that engage local elected officials, community groups and businesses (Punter and Carmona 1997).

Strengthening the urban design dimension of a city's planning system, whether through urban regeneration or other means, is therefore challenging and complex. For all the achievements of cities like New York and Vancouver, many others have failed or attained only mediocre results. As Carmona (1996) argues:

> …urban design, and the development process which makes it possible, is a complex phenomenon and one influenced by far more than mere aspirations or indeed by local authority [municipal] planning policy and guidance. Decisions on design may be constrained by a wide range of often conflicting factors, particular to the circumstances of the locality (p. 180).

Invariably, weak institutional arrangements and political and financial instability dominate the planning and design process. Plans are often delayed or derailed, causing significant urban design shortcuts to be taken (see: Sandercock and Dovey 2002; Dovey 2005; Punter 2007; Bezmez 2008) and, even when urban design is given a core role in the planning decision-making process, it does not necessarily lead to better quality design during implementation. As Punter and Carmona (1997) argue, "overall design quality can be and often is sacrificed to achieve other objectives, particularly the desire for any development or job creation in less economically advantaged areas" (p. 1). Examining the complex web of decisions, policy mechanisms and regulatory tools that, together, embody the process of urban design as public policy remains a crucial task for urban design researchers (Jarivs 1980; Rowley 1994) and is the guiding concern throughout my research project.

A Canadian Case Study of Urban Design as Public Policy

As previously explained, a case study-focused discourse on urban design as public policy emerged after the publication of Barnett's instructive account of planning and urban design in New York City. Since its inception this literature has concentrated upon best practices in

Europe and North America, with a particular focus on cities in the United States (For example: Shirvani 1985; Lai 1988; Scheer and Preiser 1994; Punter 1996; 1999). Less attention has been paid to the regulation of design in Canada and, as Punter argues in his 2003 book, *The Vancouver Achievement,* Canadian urban design as public policy has been "largely ignored" (p. xvi). Punter's claim is supported by Kumar-Agrawal who asserts in his 2002 article, 'Canadian Urban Design Practice: A Review of Urban Design Regulations', that "urban design regulations have not been systematically explored in Canada" (p. 241). Through separate contributions Punter and Kumar-Agrawal have led an effort to close this significant gap in the literature. As stated earlier, Punter's thorough examination of Vancouver's design-led planning system unpacks the various regulatory mechanisms and discretionary measures that were used to instil a culture of urban design within the city's development application approvals process (Punter 2002; 2003; 2003a) and his study has since encouraged numerous other research projects that look at different aspects of the city's unique approach to design-led planning policymaking and regulation (Hutton 2004; Berelowitz 2005; Macdonald 2005; Sandercock 2005; Grant 2009)[1].

Kumar-Agrawal's 2002 research project paints a much broader picture of urban design as public policy across Canada. Using a survey, sent to some 95 municipalities (of which 62 responded), Kumar-Agrawal scrutinizes the extent to which urban design regulations have influenced the planning decision-making process. He found that few Canadian cities had a comprehensive urban design policy and regulation process. Most jurisdictions employed either prescriptive urban design regulations, implemented through zoning by-laws, or, in stark contrast, vague policy statements that did not have the necessary implementation mechanisms to support them. Kumar-Agrawal's study provides a national overview of the state of urban design as public policy in Canada and gives some indication of the significant challenges urban designers face. The research is also limited by its broad focus and leaves open a significant gap for further research; Kumar-Agrawal and Punter's assertions about the paucity of urban design-focused research in Canada remain essentially unchanged. Canadian urban design scholarship still offers academics and practitioners frustratingly few insights into the successes and failures of urban design as public policy. There is a pressing need to mirror the depth and breadth of Punter's

[1] See Chapter 2 (pp. 42-45) for a more detailed account of Vancouver's urban design achievements.

Vancouver research and delve into the particularities of urban design policy and regulation in other large Canadian municipalities.

As Canada's largest and most diverse metropolitan city, Toronto is an obvious candidate for such a study and, as it happens, Punter's aim when he began his Vancouver project was to conduct a comparative study that also examined planning and urban design in Toronto. In the opening pages of *The Vancouver Achievement* he notes that both cities have "an extremely rich vein of city planning documents" that have received "very little academic comment or synthesis of contemporary planning practice at large, and virtually no analysis of the design dimension" (2003, p. 10). Although Punter collected some initial data in Toronto during the late 1990s, the combination of funding and time constraints, as well as the sheer size of the Vancouver case, meant that the comparative portion of the research was never completed and, almost a decade later, his statement about the lack of urban design research on the Toronto case remains generally accurate. An exhaustive review of the contemporary literature uncovered only two scholarly research papers that directly address the urban design policy and implementation aspects of Toronto's planning system[2].

The first of these contributions, also by Kumar-Agrawal (2005), investigates the role that Ontario's provincial-level appeals board, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), plays in the city's design decision-making process. Examining three large-scale projects, Kumar-Agrawal observes that the OMB, which operates like a court, has "extensive jurisdiction" (p. 211) over urban design and notes that individual projects are not assessed against consistent design principles. He questions the method of cross-examination that is used during appeal hearings and argues that this adversarial approach creates a divisive climate that makes discussions about creative design very challenging. The second research contribution, by Paul Hess (2009), scrutinizes a municipal effort to implement a progressive urban design code on some of Toronto's large arterial streets. Hess places the City of Toronto's vision for pedestrian-friendly streets in an institutional context and examines disconnects between policy and final design. He discovers that the city's urban design

[2] While urban design has received little scholarly attention, the history of urban governance and planning in Toronto has, and continues to be, thoroughly researched (see for example: Magnusson, 1983; Frisken, 1993; Sewell, 1993; Todd, 1998; Boudreau, 1999; Williams, 1999; Filion, 1999; 2000; Kipfer and Keil, 2000; Donald, 2002; Keil, 2002; Hanna and Walton-Roberts, 2004; Boudreau, et al, 2009; Moore-Milroy 2010).

department is unable to influence the design of all the street improvement projects in the city due to a lack of funding. Hess concludes that developing policy – albeit strong policy – is not sufficient to bring about a shift in design culture and argues that delivering a vision requires 'joined-up' thinking between different departments within an institution and that, in Toronto, developing clear goals and policies must be "better matched to the day-to-day processes of institutional decision-making" (p. 25).

Why Toronto's Waterfront?

Toronto faces multiple challenges in the realm of urban design as public policy (Kumar-Agrawal 2005; Hess 2009) and has long been criticized for the state of its urban design. Some architecture critics have directly compared Toronto and Vancouver and concluded that Toronto lags far behind when it comes to urban design policymaking and delivery (Warson 2002; Hume 2003; 2003a). The tale of these two cities is demonstrated best by the contrasting appearance of their waterfronts. Over the past thirty years Vancouver and Toronto have engaged in extensive planning efforts to redevelop large tracts of post-industrial waterfront land, but the results are dramatically different. Vancouver's False Creek waterfront, as mentioned earlier, has been comprehensively transformed into a series of accessible mixed-use residential neighbourhoods that are tied together by a popular pedestrian seawall and a lively ribbon of urban parks and public spaces (Punter 2003). In stark contrast, quixotic planning and design visions and piecemeal interventions have characterized redevelopment on Toronto's waterfront. Described as a great "terrain of availability" (Greenberg 1996, p. 195) located within sight of Toronto's vibrant downtown, the waterfront has instead been a site of intense "jurisdictional gridlock" (Eidelman 2011, p. 263) between competing government agencies fighting for control. The waterfront is thus a fragmented place. Lacking long term planning and design strategies, the redevelopment that has occurred over the past thirty years has ranged significantly in quality and approach. Although various buildings and public spaces have been constructed, many of the visual and morphological connections between them are poor and, overall, the waterfront lacks a sense of cohesion.

Yet, it does appear as if the circumstances are changing and the climate for urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront is improving. In 1999, an exceptional agreement

was reached between the municipal, provincial and federal governments to work together on the future of the waterfront. The three levels of government, buoyed by a bid for the 2008 Olympic Games, guaranteed equal financial contributions of $500 million to support the endeavour and, in 2002, created the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC (now called Waterfront Toronto)). As a quasi-autonomous agency, the TWRC was tasked with producing and implementing a 25-year design-led redevelopment vision and plan for the waterfront. Since its creation it has emphasized a policy of design excellence (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2002) and employed numerous urban design tools not seen before in Toronto, including a design review panel, international master planning competitions and extensive public consultation and participation. The corporation has won critical praise and numerous awards for its planning and urban design efforts (Canadian Institute of Planners 2011; The Waterfront Center 2011) and the design initiatives it has committed to imply that the waterfront is emerging as a testing ground for urban design as public policy in Toronto. For this reason I have selected Toronto's waterfront as an appropriate laboratory for furthering the study of urban design as public policy in Canada. With its recent history of "jurisdictional gridlock" (Eidelman 2011, p. 263), Toronto's waterfront has the appearance of a case where design quality has typically been sacrificed for expedient short-term priorities, but where the value of urban design appears, at least in recent years, to have climbed the public policy agenda.

The original scope of this PhD research project was to document the processes and outcomes of urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront between 1970 and 2010, but when I began my research fieldwork I quickly realized that such a time span would limit my ability to explore the subject matter in sufficient detail. Although 1970 marked the approximate start of redevelopment efforts on Toronto's waterfront, it has proven more effective to concentrate on the episode that followed the governments' funding announcement in 1999. The research therefore examines urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront between 1999 until 2010. However, as very few of the large-scale waterfront projects were completed by this point in time, my research necessarily emphasizes urban design *process*. Even so, assessments of the emerging built form are made whenever possible. While the project does not offer a full-scale assessment of urban design policymaking and implementation in Toronto, as I had once imagined it might, the waterfront does provide a focused venue to scrutinize the various components of a design

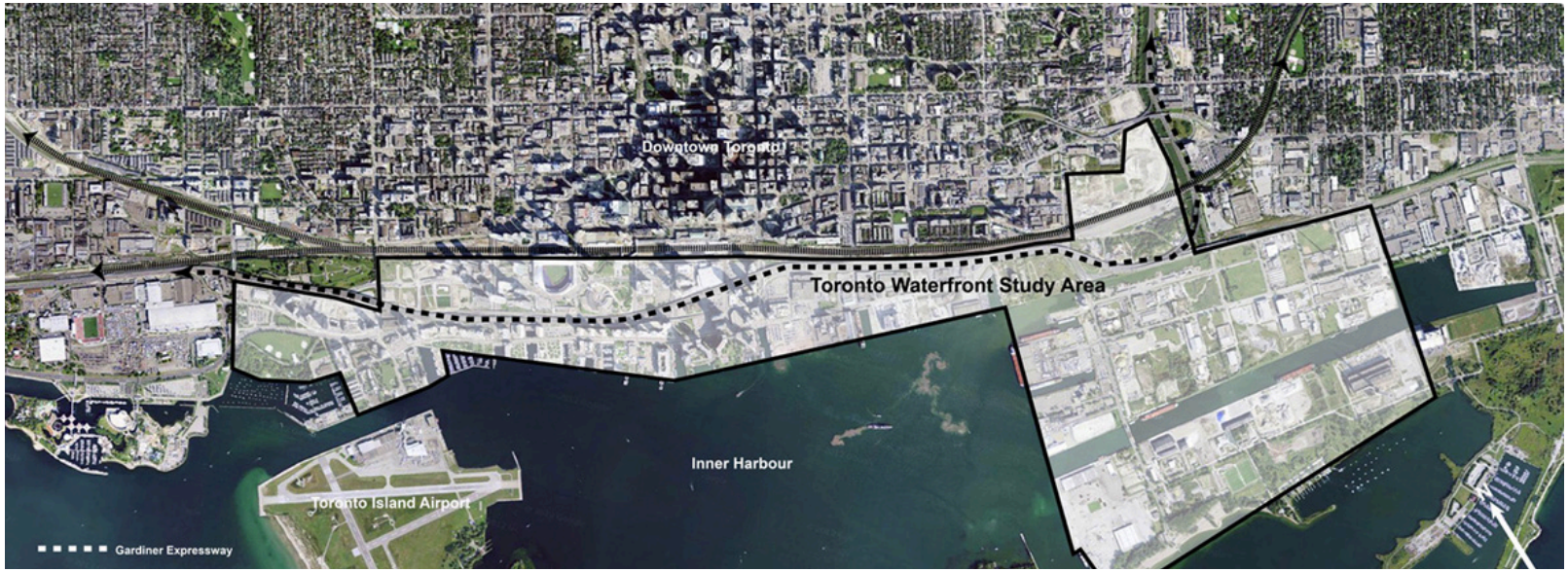
and planning process and is intended to stand as a foundation for later research, by myself or others, on Toronto's urban design story.

Locating Toronto's Waterfront

Toronto's waterfront district covers an area of 800 hectares and contains a mixture of residential and commercial uses, as well as large areas of post-industrial land that are either slated for redevelopment or under construction. It is currently the largest redevelopment venture of its kind in North America and is one of the biggest brownfield projects in the world (Waterfront Toronto 2010). The various levels of government own a large amount of the land on the waterfront; the figure is nearly 80% in some areas (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000). Illustrated in Figures 1.1. and 1.2., on the following two pages the waterfront is a narrow sliver of land, some 5km in length and never more than 1km in width, that is wedged between the southern limit of the city's downtown and Lake Ontario. A railway corridor serving Toronto's Union Station and an elevated highway called the Gardiner Expressway form the boundary between the downtown core and the waterfront, while the body of water forming the southern edge of the district is called the Inner Harbour and affords natural protection from the Toronto Islands. The Don River Valley determines the eastern limit of the downtown waterfront district, while the exhibition grounds at Ontario Place define its western extent.

Figure 1.1. Toronto Waterfront Study Area within Toronto
(Diagram by the author. Base map: Google Maps 2012 (© Google Maps 2012))

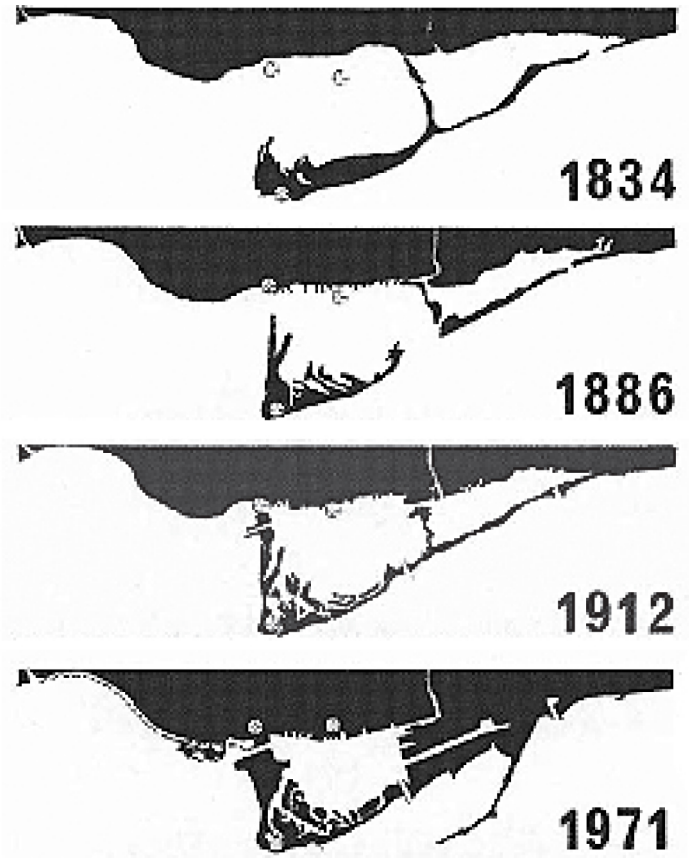
Figure 1.2. Toronto Waterfront Study Area
(Diagram by the author. Base Map: Google Maps 2012 (© Google Maps 2012))



A Brief Planning and Design History of Toronto's Waterfront

The annals of Toronto's troubled waterfront redevelopment have attracted considerable academic attention over the years. One of the principal chroniclers of this history has been Gene Desfor, a York University scholar who has focused on the impacts of large-scale environmental engineering projects and the contestations that have periodically arisen over land ownership (Desfor 1988; Desfor *et al*. 1988; Desfor *et al*. 1989; Desfor 1993). Desfor's most recent contribution to the literature – parts of which are referred to throughout this dissertation – was a 2011 edited book titled *Reshaping Toronto's Waterfront*, co-edited with Jennefer Laidley. It contains some thirteen chapters by various local authors and examines the legacy of unfulfilled plans, missed opportunities and environment controls that have defined the last 100 hundred years of growth, decline and rebirth on the waterfront. As this book and earlier works recount, much of the land on Toronto's waterfront was created by landfill during the 20th century under the auspices the Toronto Harbour Commissioners (THC), a federal agency that was granted authority over the waterfront during the late 19th and early 20th century (Desfor *et al.* 2011). In fact, the entire land area south of the railway corridor was the result of the THC's land filling activities (see: Figure 1.3. overleaf). Soon after it was created, the THC produced its 1912 *Waterfront Plan,* which sought to transform the lakeshore marshes into a major industrial harbour. A huge swathe of land was created, the natural path of the Don River was replaced with a shipping canal, concrete slip heads were added at the termini of the city's north-south streets for docking purposes and the Toronto Island Airport was opened (Desfor 1993; Desfor *et al*. 2011). During the next thirty years Toronto's role as a major North American port began to wane. Most shipping activity shifted to the super-container industry and, as the ships got larger, they could no longer reach Toronto through the St. Lawrence Seaway. As a result, by the 1970s, most of the industrial activities on the waterfront relocated or closed and much of the land became derelict (Laidley 2007).

Figure 1.3. The Changing Geography of Toronto's Waterfront
(Adapted from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006, p. 4, reproduced with kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



Recognizing that the future of the waterfront was shifting away from industry, successive redevelopment plans were generated by various levels of government, as well as private sector landowners (Filion and Sanderson 2011). One of the more ambitious ideas, produced by a consortium of Canadian railway companies, proposed a massive mixed-use office and residential development with a large pyramid acting as its centrepiece (Sewell 1993), while another, by the region's metropolitan planning commission, suggested that the Toronto Island Airport be transformed into a 'futuristic' mixed-use neighbourhood (Filion and Sanderson 2011). None of these visionary plans were ever realized, although one proposal that was made by the federal government did generate a lot of public support. During the 1972 federal election campaign the governing Liberal Party promised to transform 35 hectares of the waterfront into an urban park (Gordon 1994; Filion and Sanderson 2011). While some viewed this proposal as a cynical election 'gift' from the Liberals, the federal government argued that it was a much needed response to a large

mixed-use office and residential development called Harbour Square that was under construction on the water's edge (Desfor *et al*. 1989). The federal government described the Harbour Square development as the first part of a 'ceramic curtain' of high-rise buildings along the lakefront and characterized its efforts to construct a public park as saving the waterfront for the citizens of Toronto (Desfor *et al*. 1989). Despite this assertion, the federal government's motives remained ambiguous because the Harbour Square development was proposed by a developer with close ties to the THC, which itself was a federal agency. The THC had given its support to the development because it saw a "golden opportunity to launch a post-industrial redevelopment strategy and raise badly needed income to subsidize its port and airport operations" (Filion and Sanderson 2011, p. 83). In addition, pro-development councillors at the City of Toronto had approved the project even though it appeared to go against various emerging plans for the waterfront (Filion and Sanderson 2011).

In the five or six years that followed the public park announcement, the federal government achieved very little on the waterfront. Desfor *et al*. (1989) record that the period was marked by "indecision and an apparent lack of direction" (p. 496) and little progress was made with the popular park plan. Following a drawn out cycle of ineffectual discussion between politicians from different levels of government, as well as a poorly organized public participation effort, the federal government decided to create a Crown Corporation to directly oversee its waterfront redevelopment efforts (Gordon 1996). The federal government anticipated that the new semi-independent agency, called Harbourfront Corporation, would act like a private sector developer and carry out the government's mandate more freely and efficiently (Desfor *et al*. 1989). Harbourfront Corporation's first task was to develop a plan and strategy for the waterfront. Released in 1978, the widely popular *Development Framework* proposed a mixed-use residential and retail scheme with various social housing options, acres of open space, programmed recreation areas and a supporting cultural arts programme to attract visitors to the waterfront (Filion and Sanderson 2011). Although the government provided the corporation with $25 million in start up costs, it was expected to fund the remainder of its ambitious programme through private sector land sales and development. Industrial land remediation, infrastructure improvements and the cost of running its successful cultural programmes caused expenditures at Harbourfront Corporation to spiral during the early 1980s (Desfor *et al*.

1989; Gordon 1996). To compensate, the corporation increasingly relied on private sector development projects to cover its operating budget and allowed its development partners to stray from the original urban design framework for the area. Densities increased, the large waterfront park was never realized and the concept of a mixed-use community was replaced with luxury condominiums and high rent commercial office space (Desfor *et al*. 1989).

By the late 1980s the rapidly increasing number of private sector development projects on the waterfront was generating intense public controversy and, as more high-density towers were constructed, it became clear that the federal government's promise to break the 'ceramic curtain' of buildings on the waterfront would not be met. Recognizing that any on-going redevelopment efforts were politically untenable, both the federal government and the City of Toronto placed a moratorium on development and, by 1990, unable to fund its cultural programs and responsibilities for land remediation and infrastructure, the Harbourfront Corporation was formally disbanded (Gordon 1996; Filion and Sanderson 2011)[3]. In its place, the federal government established a blue ribbon commission called the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront to reassess its approach to redevelopment. And Prime Minister Brian Mulroney appointed David Crombie, a widely respected former mayor of Toronto who had gained a reputation as an advocate of "reasonable development" (Laidley 2007, p. 263) during the 1970s, as its commissioner.

In accepting the post, Crombie was keen to heal the wounds made by the Harbourfront Corporation and, in 1992, the commission published a report titled *Regeneration* (Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront 1992). It argued for an environmentally sensitive, yet economically driven, approach to planning and regeneration and gave the city, provincial and federal governments – all of whom remained stakeholders and landowners in the area – renewed motivation to get waterfront redevelopment moving again. With the Commission's work complete, a new Waterfront Trust was established in its place. Crombie stayed on to head the Trust and aimed to move the Royal Commission's vision forward by actively promoting a diversity of uses on the waterfront (Laidley 2007). The Trust was given a seven-year mandate and hosted numerous public meetings and forums to discuss the future of the waterfront. During this period it successfully reinforced

[3] To allow the successful cultural component of Harbourfront Corporation's mandate to continue, the federal government set up Harbourfront Centre in 1991 as a non-profit arts venue (see: Chapter 7, pp. 240).

the environmental message that had emerged from the Royal Commission report and built the foundations for on-going community consultation and participation with local residents (Lehrer and Laidley 2008)[4]. Yet, the Trust had little power to implement the visions and plans it had developed, primarily because, in 1994, much of the land on the waterfront was transferred from the federal THC to the City of Toronto's Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO) (Filion and Sanderson 2011). Almost no development occurred on Toronto's waterfront during the 1990s as a result and progress appeared indefinitely stalled. But, as I have argued in previous paragraphs, 1999 marked the beginning of a renewed redevelopment effort. The chapters that follow will explore how the announcement of a waterfront-focused bid for the 2008 Olympic Games spurred the federal, provincial and municipal governments into action and caused them to resolve, once again, to put the future of Toronto's waterfront back on the political agenda.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this case study of Toronto's waterfront is to examine the dynamics of urban design as public policy between 1999 and 2010. Attention is paid to the formation, mandate and powers of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto and the urban design policies, tools and mechanisms that are being used to redevelop the waterfront and achieve the goal of 'design excellence' espoused by the corporation (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2002). My primary aim is to generate critical insights about the practical realities of urban design policymaking and delivery, while adding a unique 'design' focus to the existing literature on Toronto's waterfront redevelopment history. The research employs a triangulated suite of qualitative research methods, including interviews, archival research and direct observations, to unravel the complex web of decisions, policies and implementation devices that are shaping urban design on Toronto's waterfront. These multiple data sources are interpreted through the theoretical and empirical literature on postmodern urban design and urban design as public policy and, in particular, a theoretical framework composed of thirteen analytical principles revised after Punter's study of urban design in Vancouver (2003; 2007a).

[4] See Laidley (2007) for a detailed account of the Trust's role in Toronto's waterfront redevelopment.

The guiding research question for this project, which I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, has shifted and changed during the course of my PhD journey, yet it has slowly crystallized as I have advanced my understanding of theory and undertaken research in the field. Grounded in my continuing frustration with the quality of design in the built environment and my longstanding interest in the policies, tools and mechanisms of design intervention, this research asks:

- How do planning processes affect the quality and execution of urban design?

This overarching question is supported by three subsidiary questions that focus directly upon the case of Toronto's waterfront. The first two questions are substantive and explore the processes and outcomes of urban design as public policy on the waterfront, while the third question is more reflective:

1. How did urban design evolve as a component of public policy on Toronto's waterfront between 1999 and 2010?

2. To what extent have the urban design objectives for Toronto's waterfront been met during implementation?

3. What lessons can be learned from Toronto's recent waterfront redevelopment history about urban design as public policy?

Dissertation Structure

Eight chapters follow this introduction. In *Chapter 2* I review urban design theory and practice and specifically explore how a collection of 'postmodern' urban design theories emerged during the early 1960s in response to modernism and formed the basic foundations for contemporary urban design practice. In *Chapter 3* I draw directly from John Punter's empirical research on Vancouver and other cities (2003; 2007a) and detail a series of twelve principles that demonstrate what a 'best practice' process of urban design as public policy should encompass. I articulate three major weaknesses with this framework and propose a series of amendments. In *Chapter 4* I explain the methodological

structure of the research and reflect upon the qualitative methods I employed to collect and analyze my research data. My research findings are presented in the remaining chapters. In *Chapter 5* I provide a historical dissection of the decisions and plans that led to the creation of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto and the close alignment that emerged between the public and private sector stakeholders involved in the planning process. In *Chapter 6* I explore the corporation's efforts to plan and design with local people by examining the extent to which the principles enshrined in a master plan were met during implementation. In *Chapter 7* I focus on the efforts to extract 'value' from urban design through the early construction of parks and open spaces in prime locations on the waterfront, as well as the use of international design competitions to attract interest and excitement from local people and investors in the waterfront redevelopment programme. In *Chapter 8* I provide a detailed critique of the Waterfront Design Review Plan, a discretionary peer review board that evaluates all proposed development projects on the waterfront. In the final chapter, I return to the thirteen amended principles of urban design as public policy and offer an evaluation of the corporation's efforts to institutionalize 'design excellence' on the waterfront. In addition, I reflect on the wider theoretical and empirical lessons that might be learned from the case and the avenues that it opens up for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review: Postmodern Urban Design and the Foundations of Urban Design as Public Policy

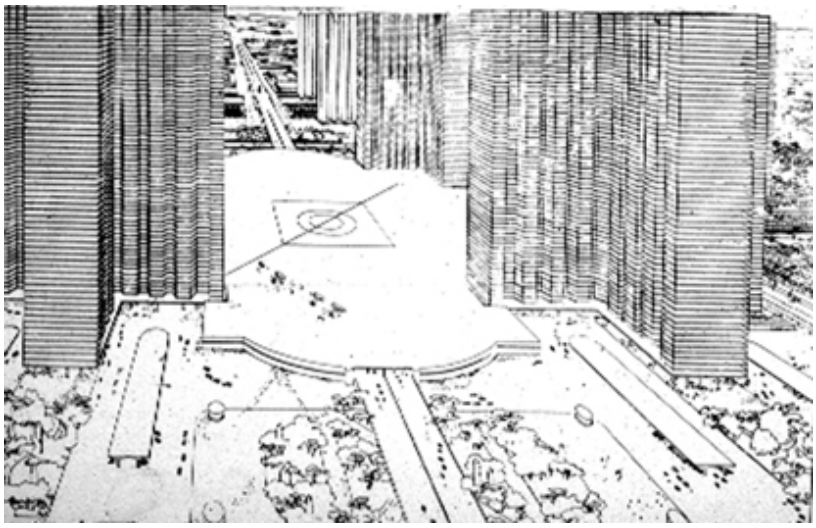
The study of urban design as public policy stems directly from the cannon of urban design theory that emerged in the early 1960s in response to the modernist town planning and architectural formula employed during the post-war years (Ley 1987; Ellin 1999). To analyze and evaluate the design processes that are helping to shape Toronto's waterfront demands a thorough understanding of this theoretical paradigm and the praxis that emerged from it. In this chapter I therefore review this 'postmodern' urban design literature from a historical perspective. To begin, I introduce the most influential thinkers in the field and explore the core ideas they developed in both North America and Europe. I then argue that postmodern urban design theory has developed into a practice-focused discipline founded on various sets of urban design principles. I explore how these principles have come to shape contemporary practice, before offering a critical assessment of their applicability for the continuing development of urban design as a rigorous theoretical and practice-focused discipline.

Postmodern Urban Design

Modernism began as a socio-scientific design movement during the 1930s, but not until the post-war years did it begin to significantly influence city building and design practice. The movement was dominated by the polemical utopian theories of French architect Le Corbusier, who advocated an architectural language that rejected style and ornament and instead embraced new technologies that reflected contemporary modes of industrial production (Le Corbusier 1927). His city planning remedies, outlined in a book titled *The City of To-Morrow* (1929), were equally revolutionary. Le Corbusier signalled his desire to see the outmoded traditional city of narrow streets and modest buildings replaced with a vertical

metropolis of cruciform towers connected by broad highways – the design formula now commonly referred to as 'towers in the park' and illustrated in Figure 2.1. below.

Figure 2.1. Le Corbusier and 'The City of To-Morrow'
(Image from: Le Corbusier 1929, p. 257 (image in the public domain))



A sketch by Le Corbusier illustrating the famous concept known as 'towers in the park'. Gigantic glass towers rise from lush parks, offering light, air and views – all at a high density.

For many architects and planners, modernism's machine-age ideology sat well with the heady sense of optimism, belief in scientific advancement and fast-paced growth that characterized the late 1940s and 1950s. But, in only a very few number of cases was the modernist town planning formula adopted in its entirety. The Indian city of Chandigarh and the capital of Brasil, Brasilia, are perhaps the most enduring examples. Le Corbusier played a central role in the plan for Chandigarh and used the visual metaphor of a human torso as his inspiration. The important government buildings were placed at the 'head' of the city and a long axial parkway, 'the spine', was the location for the city's new business centre: 'the stomach'. The urban designer Jonathan Barnett notes that the broad spacing of the buildings means "a visitor to Chandigarh is more conscious of the landscaping of principal streets than of the generally mediocre buildings" (2011, p. 50). The architects Lucio Costa and Oscar Neimeyer designed Brasilia. Both were heavily influenced by Le Corbusier's theories of the city and produced a plan that had many similarities to both Chandigarh and some of his earlier conceptual ideas. The key urban element of Brasilia is also a central highway and the various districts of the city flow away from it in symmetrical bow-shaped

curves. Both cities, Barnett argues, are fragmented and “leave out some of the essentials of a vital urban area” (2011, p. 51).

In many existing North American and European cities Le Corbusier’s planning and design doctrines were swiftly adopted as a piecemeal solution for inner-city decay and widely accepted as a formidable tool for expeditious urban redevelopment, both by public and private sector developers. Yet, very quickly, cracks began to appear and, by the early 1960s, modernism was subject to widespread criticism for its social disruptiveness and aesthetic failures (Trancik 1986; Relph 1987; Teaford 2000). Numerous examples surfaced of inner-city communities becoming the victims of social engineering experiments that fitted the modernist mould. In the large cities of North America and Europe many dense urban neighbourhoods, often characterized by low-income houses and tenement buildings, were bulldozed and replaced with groups of high-rise towers. The example shown in Figure 2.2. overleaf illustrates the modernist plans for the Moss Park area of Toronto, located about five blocks east of the city’s downtown core. The first plan (Image 1) shows the original street system and tight urban fabric, while the second plan (Image 2) demonstrates how the block system was removed and replaced by a stark modernist form. Three sixteen storey towers were built in the middle of the new green space (Sewell 1993). This particular development still stands, but is currently subject to a design-led regeneration plan led by the local housing authority that aims to reintegrate some of the older street and building typologies and thereby reduce the negative social impacts of the ‘towers in the park’ scheme, especially the lack of housing stock diversity and safety in the public realm.

The core components of these old neighbourhood districts, such as the local pubs and grocery stores, were rarely replicated in the new schemes and the ‘towers in the park’ morphology erased the traditional street network. Far from creating parks, Le Corbusier’s urban design method often resulted in poorly maintained, incoherent and dangerous open spaces – an outcome that Trancik (1986) describes as the phenomenon of ‘lost space’. Residents found it difficult to socialize with their new neighbours and worried about their safety in poorly lit buildings and public walkways (Gold 2007). For a growing number of architects, planners and members of the general public modernism had become, in David Ley’s words, “a blueprint for placelessness, of anonymous, impersonal spaces, massive structures and automobile throughways.” (1987, p. 42-43).

Figure 2.2. Modernist Urban Renewal in Toronto (Before and After)
(Images from: Sewell 1993, p. 152 (Image 1) and p. 153 (Image 2))

Figure 2.2. (Image 1) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a map of the Moss Park neighbourhood in Toronto prior to the demolition of Victorian residential dwellings. Original Source: Sewell, J. (1993). *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modernist Planning.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 152.

Moss Park in Toronto (Before)

Figure 2.2. (Image 2) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a map of Moss Park in Toronto after the demolition of Victorian residential dwellings and the construction of modernist point towers. Original Source: Sewell, J. (1993). *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modernist Planning.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, p. 153.

Moss Park in Toronto (After)

The unpopularity of modernism intensified in the early 1960s and led directly to what Nan Ellin (1999) describes as a "great transformation in…urban design theory" (p. 23). Grounded in thoroughgoing critical analyses of urban renewal and redevelopment projects, this postmodern urban design movement challenged the harsh uniform design doctrines of the

modern project and argued for a return to contextually-sensitive design palettes that respected historical and vernacular styles and took into account community, in all its diverse forms (Ley 1987; Ellin 1999). Contributions to the discourse emerged on both sides of the Atlantic creating what Ellin (1999) terms an “Anglo-American axis” (p. 60). Sharing this view, Bob Jarvis (1980) argues that two traditions of urban design theory evolved in parallel between 1960 and 1980, a ‘visual artistic tradition’ and a ‘social usage tradition’. He explains that:

> The visual artistic tradition speaks in aesthetic, abstract terms. Drawing on their personal experience authors often use familiar words in an unfamiliar way to convey effect. At the other end of the spectrum urban design analysis based on social usage may hardly include any reference to the appearance of a place at all; behavioural matters and their congruence or incongruence with the surroundings predominate (p. 51).

The artistic tradition emerged during the post-war years in the United Kingdom as part of a historic conservation movement. It is noted for the conceptualization of 'townscape' and chiefly the work of architect Gordon Cullen (1961). On the other hand, the social usage tradition stems from the contributions of authors including Jane Jacobs (1961), Kevin Lynch (1960) and Christopher Alexander (1977; 1979). To this list can also be added the work of urban sociologist, William H. Whyte (1980). These seminal works quickly became the foundation of a postmodern urban design cannon and the ideas contained within them continue to have a profound impact upon planning and design scholarship and professional practice (Cuthbert 2007).

The Artistic Tradition

An emphasis on the picturesque and artistic has held a privileged position in the British town planning movement since the turn of the 20th century. This lineage can be traced to the formative work of Raymond Unwin and his 1909 volume *Town Planning in Practice* which, conceptualizing planning as an art, was preoccupied with “street picture, compositional devices and visual effect” (Punter and Carmona 1997, p. 72). Jarvis’ term, the ‘artistic tradition’, directly refers to a series of contributions that appeared in the *Architectural Review*

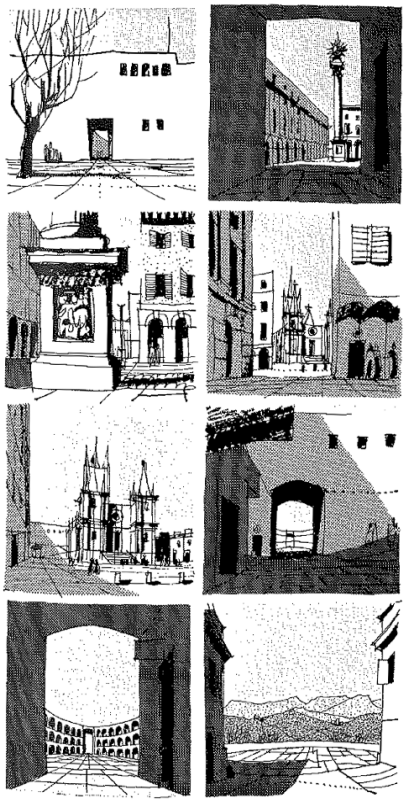
during the 1950s. The contributors, primarily British architects and town planners, formed a 'townscape movement' that reacted to the form and aesthetic of modernism and the impact it was having on the look and feel of British towns and cities (Ellin 1999). The movement's sentiment is summarized well by Iain Nairn who, writing for a special edition of *Architectural Review* in 1955 titled "Outrage", states: "if what is called development is allowed to multiply at the present rate, then by the end of the century Great Britain will consist of isolated oases of preserved monuments in a desert of wire, concrete roads, cosy plots and bungalows" (In: Ellin 1999, p. 61). In this poetic statement, Nairn focuses on the rapid suburbanization of the British Isles. He predicts – rather accurately in hindsight – that the dense and historic patchwork of traditional British urban settlement, with its lofty spires, pastoral village greens and market squares, will be quickly encased by modern suburban extensions dominated by monotonous rows of detached dwellings accessible only by the automobile.

The leading voice of this artistic tradition was the architect Gordon Cullen. His 1961 book *Townscape*, which was also published as *The Concise Townscape* (1961a), was the culmination of the movement's ideas. Like his contemporaries, Cullen was motivated out of a concern for the historical fabric of British towns and cities. He warned against the utilization of modernist urban form principles and functional architectural aesthetics in post-war reconstruction efforts and new town development. Critiquing the Le Corbusier-inspired town planning solutions, he writes, "we have to rid ourselves of the thought that the excitement and drama that we seek can be born automatically out of the scientific research and solutions arrived at by the technical man" (Cullen 1961a, p. 8). He believed in an artistic approach to city design and argues that aesthetic value is found, not through science, but through sight. "It is almost entirely through vision that the environment is apprehended" (p. 8), he writes. In this spirit, *Townscape* is presented as a collection of annotated images. Other than the opening introduction, there is little text. Through a selection of beautiful hand drawn sketches and photographs, Cullen introduces his core concept, 'serial vision' (illustrated in Figure 2.3. overleaf), which he describes from the viewpoint of a pedestrian:

> The human mind reacts to a contrast, to the difference between things, and when two pictures (the street and the courtyard) are in the mind at the same time, a vivid contrast is felt and the town becomes visible in a deeper sense. It comes alive through the drama of juxtaposition. Unless this happens the town will slip past us featureless and inert (p. 9).

What Cullen and the townscape movement emphasize is the relationships between buildings and the spaces that surround them. Key to the townscape philosophy is a holistic view of the city, in which designers focus on public space first and buildings second (Ellin 1999). Buildings, Cullen asserts, should enclose public spaces rather than stand out as the main feature. *Townscape* includes an extensive glossary of urban elements that Cullen recorded through observations of British and continental European towns and cities. Written like a manual, it encourages planners and architects to incorporate the many design principles he prescribes into their work. But the *Townscape* movement was not without its critics. Underlying Cullen's work, argues Jarvis (1980), is an air of elitism. Cullen did not mention public engagement in his book and only entertains his personal vision of urbanism, which he expects professional architects and planners to implement. Furthermore, Alexander Cuthbert (2007) critiques the movement's narrow definition of urban design and, in particular, its "nostalgic fixation on appearances where the perfect model would seem to be the idealized English village located in a beautiful landscaped garden" (p. 184).

Figure 2.3. Cullen's sequence of Serial Vision
(Image from: Cullen 1961a, p. 17, reproduced by permission of Architectural Press)



The Social Usage Tradition

On the other side of the Atlantic, contributors to the social usage tradition shared with Cullen and his contemporaries a desire to move away from modernist planning and architectural solutions and towards more holistic approaches to urban design (Jarvis 1980; Ellin 1999). But the social usage tradition did not share Cullen's preoccupation with aesthetics and treated cities and towns as social settings rather than works of art (Jarvis 1980). For authors in the social usage tradition postmodern urban design was about humanizing the city (Ellin 1999).

Published in 1960, one of the earliest contributions to the social usage tradition was a short, but influential, text by Kevin Lynch titled *The Image of the City*. Lynch was a student of architecture and planning and had studied under Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin West for a short time before undertaking a degree in planning at MIT. After working as a planning practitioner during the early 1950s, Lynch returned to MIT as a member of the planning faculty. In a 1996 compilation of his work, two of his former students, Tridib Banerjee and Michael Southworth, characterize their tutor as a man "fascinated and intrigued by the physical city and the urban experience generally, and by the interaction between physical space and its human use" (p. 4). When Lynch joined the ranks of the planning academy at MIT, the study of 'city design' (as Lynch preferred to call 'urban design') was unpopular. With the ascendency of scientific rationality many saw it as "anachronistic, imprudent, and megalomaniac" (Banerjee and Southworth 1996, p. 4). But as the social problems associated with the design of modernist urban renewal projects persisted, Lynch's work became increasingly relevant. In *The Image of the City* (1960), he introduces a wholly new method for analyzing and understanding the built environment. In sharp contrast to Gordon Cullen's visual approach, Lynch sought out the opinions of local citizens to understand the places where they live. This, Punter and Carmona (1997) argue, was a radical shift in perspective. It was the first time urban design had been evaluated from the standpoint of the user and their multiple experiences. In undertaking his project, Lynch's ultimate goal was to develop a taxonomy for understanding the physical city. He asked a small number of participants in Boston, Jersey City and Los Angeles to create mental maps of their home cities, reasoning, "every citizen has had long associations with some part of his city, and his image is soaked in memories and meanings" (Lynch 1960, p. 1). From these memories and

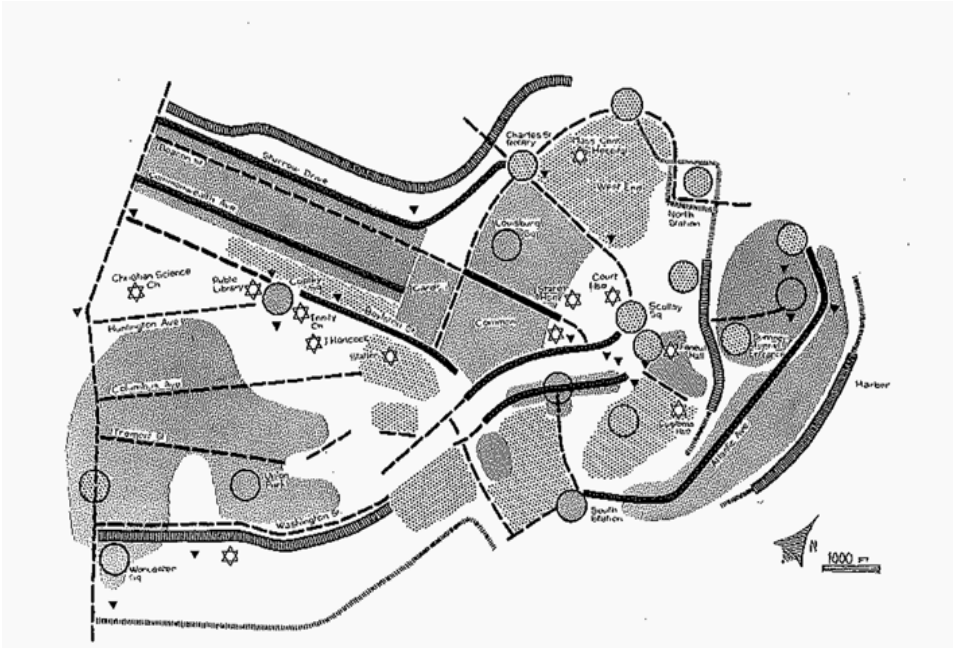
meanings Lynch focuses on the 'legibility' of the city, which he defines as "the ease with which its parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern" (p. 3). It is critical, Lynch argues, to not only understand the city as a thing in itself, but to analyze how the people who live there perceive it.

Lynch distils the evidence collected from his participants to develop a series of six recurrent elements that, together, form an analytical vocabulary of the city. These are: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Lynch defined them so:

> Paths are the channels along which the observer customarily, occasionally or potentially moves…Edges are the linear elements not used or considered as paths by observers. They are the boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity…Districts are the medium-to-large sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters "inside of", and which are recognizable as having some common, identifying character…Nodes are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is travelling…Landmarks are another type of point-reference, but in this case the observer does not enter within them, they are external (p. 47-48).

Through his groundbreaking study, Lynch shows how designers can create 'imageability maps' that combine citizens' perceptions of the legibility of a physical city (see: Figure 2.4. overleaf). Critically, Lynch shifted the focus of urban design away from the artistic to the behavioural. He illustrates that cities are places to be experienced, not only viewed. In his later work, Lynch continued to build on his imageability study and wrote a number of memorable texts. The most comprehensive of these was his final book, *A Theory of Good City Form* (1981), which tied together much of his previous groundbreaking work on people and their environments and introduced a detailed normative theory of the good city, grounded in a series of design dimensions. These are summarized later in comparison to other normative urban design theories in Figure 2.5. (p. 33).

Figure 2.4. Lynch's Imagability Map of Boston
(Image from: Lynch 1960, p. 19, reproduced by permission of MIT Press)



In 1961, and following hard on the heels of Lynch, Jane Jacobs published *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, a book described by *The New York Times* as "perhaps the most influential single work in the history of town planning" (cover). It launched a scathing attack on modernist urban renewal and has topped the urban design student reading list ever since. As a journalist and community activist, Jacobs adopted quite a different tone from Kevin Lynch and argued vehemently against a purely artistic urban design (Punter and Carmona 1997). Jacobs' postmodern urban design rediscovers community and responds to its diversity (Ley 1987). Writing in her capacity as a resident of New York City's Greenwich Village, Jacobs writes about the places she loves: busy sidewalks, the hustle and bustle of city life and people. She argues that planners fail to understand what urban communities are and what they mean to those who live there. Jacobs asserts that a successful and holistic city is one of diversity, complexity and intensity. She bemoans functional modernist town plans as unable to duplicate these qualities and asserts that planners have done their utmost to design out diversity by labelling viable existing communities as slums. Jacobs emphasizes the importance of street-facing dwellings, jumbled mixes of building use and the security provided by an ever-present community of watchful neighbours. Describing the important role sidewalks play in making a neighbourhood feel safe, she writes:

> The sum of...casual, public contact at a local level – most of it fortuitous, most of it associated with errands, all of it metered by the person concerned and not thrust upon him by anyone – is a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighbourhood need (p. 56).

Jacobs' work has been criticized, of course. Writing in his book *Spaces of Hope* (2000), for example, geographer David Harvey argues that in setting out a preferred vision of urban life, "Jacobs was in her own way every bit as utopian as the utopianism she attacked" (p. 164). Although hers' was an organic urbanism, Harvey argues "her version of spatial play contained its own authoritarianism" (p. 164). In particular, the emphasis she places on surveillance as a positive attribute of community could be characterized in a negative light, as both oppressive and demeaning. Indeed, Harvey suggests that the proliferation of 'NIMBYISM' and conservative community groups that protest any change to their neighbourhood all adhere, in some way, to Jacobs' goals.

The social usage tradition continued to develop throughout the late 1960s and the 1970s. The work of sociologist William H. Whyte, in particular, built upon Jacobs' observational studies of inner-city neighbourhoods. Using video, Whyte (1980) carried out systematic studies that observed how people actually appropriated and behaved in different small parks and plazas in New York City, recording the design elements that appeared to be most conducive to successful places – comfortable seating, shade, sunlight and water – many of which appear self-evident today. Whyte's studies were partially funded by the City of New York Planning Department and his findings influenced the city's public space design guidelines. Christopher Alexander, an architect and urban design academic at the University of California, Berkeley, made the last of the major contributions to the social usage tradition. Jarvis (1980) maintains that Alexander expanded the idea of a "behaviourally based urban design" (p. 59) and was the first urban design theorist to argue cogently that the users of the built environment should be directly involved in the design process. Indeed, as Punter and Carmona (1997) explain, Alexander and his research group at Berkeley emphasized the importance of context in their work, "not as a purely visual phenomenon, but as a physical, social and cultural frame for design" (p. 73). Alexander's seminal text *A Pattern Language* was published in 1977. The book was supposed to have been preceded by an introductory

text that established the context, titled *The Timeless Way of Building*, but it was not published until two years later.

Alexander's combined works offer a critical perspective on profit-driven development, an industry he considered responsible for urban form and design at the time. Designers, Alexander argues, should look back to the methods of building construction and design that existed for the thousands of years prior to modernism. His methodology for achieving a 'timeless way of building' is rather more radical than the ideas offered by his contemporaries. Alexander writes passionately that change is found in past ways of building. He wished to resurrect the tradition of self-construction and do away with architects, planners and other design professionals. *A Pattern Language* is essentially a manual for this philosophy. At over 1200 pages, the tome includes some 253 related "patterns" that, together, contribute to a distinctive way of life. The patterns range from the region, to the street, to the way people interact; the dwellings they live in, down to the smallest internal details of a house (Alexander *et al*. 1977). Alexander explains that the patterns should not necessarily be read in order. He argues that the language is a network and, as a result, "there is no one sequence which perfectly captures it" (p. xviii). He asks the reader to read through the book and find the pattern that suits the project he or she is working on. Each individual pattern is illustrated and explained and Alexander draws links between them.

Alexander's philosophical approach and way of understanding the complex interconnected elements that make up the world we live in are insightful. *A Pattern Language* is still an important source within the urban design academy and practice, especially as an inspirational guide. A synthesis of the aesthetic and social is evident yet, unlike Gordon Cullen's work, the patterns are never "preoccupied with matters of external appearance" (Punter and Carmona, 1997, p. 73). As with any attempt at grand synthesis, Alexander's work is not without its critics. Cuthbert (2007) writes that *A Pattern Language* has a tendency to verge on the utopian, in that it demands a reinvention of societal norms. Furthermore, he notes a certain presumptuousness that the patterns have cross-cultural relevance, noting, "I myself have lived in many places round the world and it is an arrogance that the concept of Jungian archetypes can be applied universally to support his thesis" (p. 206).

Postmodern Urban Design Principles

While the artistic and social usage traditions developed contrasting emphases, a common message emerged from the various urban design theories that were produced during the 1960s and 1970s. What Nairn, Cullen, Jacobs, Lynch and their contemporaries shared across the "Anglo-American axis" (Ellin 1999, p. 60) in urban design was an emphatic critique of the modernist design paradigm. The theorists rejected functionalism and the desire among modernist architects and town planners to relentlessly replace old with new. They questioned the rationale behind rationality in city building and wrote passionately about the aesthetic qualities and the social values found in traditional city spaces. In so doing, they distilled a *postmodern* vision of urbanism; one that did not look for a hegemonic fix to all of the city's problems but appreciated, to varying degrees, historic preservation, contextual and restorative design, community participation and the role of social observation in the messy process of designing spaces in the city (Ellin 1999).

With relative swiftness the combined works of postmodern urban design theory became the foundation for an urban design canon. Since the early 1980s, many of the contributors to urban design theory and practice have focused on translating the values contained in the social usage and artistic traditions into normative urban design principles and taxonomies (Punter 1990; Cuthbert 2007). A selection of four of the most enduring sets of principles developed during the 1980s is shown in Figure 2.5. overleaf.

Figure 2.5. Postmodern Urban Design Principles

Kevin Lynch
(summarized from: 1981, p. 118-119)

Design Dimensions

1. Vitality
How the form of settlement relates to the land and the environment.

2. Sense
How the settlement can be differentiated from other places in space and time.

3. Fit
How suitable a place is for the human functions it serves.

4. Access
The ability to reach other people, resources, and services in the settlement.

5. Control
The degree to which the use and access of a place is controlled by those who live there.

6. Efficiency (meta-criterion)
The cost of maintaining a settlement with criteria 1-5.

7. Justice (meta-criterion)
How environmental benefits and costs are distributed.

Jacobs and Appleyard
(summarized from: 1987, p. 115-116)

Goals for Urban Life

1. Liveability
A place for everyone, without nuisance, overcrowding, noise, etc..

2. Identity and Control
A sense of belonging; a place that one feels a part of.

3. Access to opportunity, imagination and joy
A place where one can feel and be different and deepen their human experience.

4. Authenticity and meaning
Understand the city's layout; city design should symbolize its moral foundation.

5. Community and public life
Public participation should be encouraged; exclusion should be eradicated.

6. Urban self-reliance
Cities should aim to operate as a closed environmental unit.

7. An environment for all
Every person should be able to access the city; good urban design must be for poor as well as rich.

The Prince of Wales
(summarize from: 1989, p. 78-97)

Ten Commandments

1. The Place
The land and existing urban and rural fabric must be respected.

2. Hierarchy
Building must be scaled to reflect their importance; individual buildings must have classical design integrity.

3. Scale
Buildings must relate to human proportions, as well as the other buildings around them.

4. Harmony
Buildings must relate to and complement one another.

5. Enclosure
Buildings should form cohesive spaces between them; a well-formed square, a park.

6. Materials
Local building materials and techniques should be used.

7. Decoration
The functionalism of modernism should be replaced by the beauty of ornament.

8. Art
Art should be encouraged in the public realm.

9. Signs and Lights
Signage and lighting should be beautiful and carefully considered.

10. Community
People should be involved in the design of the environment they live in.

Bentley et al
(summarized from:1985, p. 9)

Responsive Environments

1. Permeability
Affects where people might go and where they cannot.

2. Variety
The range of uses available to people.

3. Legibility
How people understand and navigate an environment.

4. Robustness
How different places can be adapted for different uses.

5. Visual Appropriateness
How something relates to its surroundings.

6. Richness
Affects the choice of sensory experiences available to people.

7. Personalization
The ability of people to personalize their own space.

The first two sets of principles, by American authors Kevin Lynch (Design Dimensions) and Allan Jacobs and Donald Appleyard (Goals for Urban Life), are firmly situated in the social usage tradition. In both instances, the authors emphasize the accessibility of space for all members of society and the importance of contextualizing newly built spaces with existing built and natural environments. However, neither offers any direct advice on the architectural aesthetics or the arrangement of buildings and public spaces. In stark contrast, the third set of principles stem directly from the artistic tradition. Developed in the United Kingdom by The Prince of Wales[5], the "Ten Commandments" reaffirm the Townscape Movement's concept of the picturesque in which the hierarchy, order and decoration of buildings and spaces define the public realm. Turning to the fourth set of principles in Figure 2.5. uncovers a cross-fertilization of the core ideas found in the artistic and the social usage traditions. Written by a group of academic-practitioners in the United Kingdom, the 'Responsive Environments' criteria were part of a practical manual specifically produced for students and practitioners embarking upon urban design projects. Values from the visual tradition are evident in the concepts of richness and visual appropriateness, while the social usage tradition is equally represented by the concepts of permeability, variety, legibility and robustness (Punter and Carmona 1997).

Postmodern Urban Design Principles in Practice

Design principles have had a profound impact upon the evolving urban design discipline. They are heavily employed as pedagogical tools in urban design education programmes and are used throughout practice as a foundation for design policy documents. As I will explore more thoroughly in Chapter 3, numerous cities translated postmodern urban design theories and principles into revised zoning ordinances, developed new urban design plans and established urban design control measures. Municipalities and regional authorities began to reassess modernist urban form arrangements and started to encourage street facing buildings and clearly identifiable public spaces, as well as dialogue with local people about the 'feel' of their neighbourhoods (Trancik 1986; Ellin 1999; Punter 2003). This trend was hastened by the evolving role of the public sector in urban redevelopment. The raw memory

[5] The Prince of Wales' interest in urban design was initiated after he made a widely publicized critique of the modernist architectural establishment and, in particular, a proposed extension to the National Gallery in London. He famously described the proposal as a 'monstrous carbuncle on the face of much-loved friend' during a keynote speech at the annual gala of the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1984.

of modernist urban renewal began to shift planning practice away from large-scale development projects. In parallel, broader structural shifts, buoyed by geopolitical events such as the 1973 oil crisis, precipitated the emergence of the neoliberal governance model. This caused a reduction in direct government investment for large public projects and encouraged cities to compete for private sector investment to expand their tax bases. As a result, postmodern urban design theories began to emerge as policy tools that were employed to steer private sector real estate investment toward more sensitive 'policy-shaped' rather than 'market-led' outcomes (Tiesdell and Adams 2011). By the end of the 1980s, notes Punter (2003), "83 percent of US towns and cities had set up some form of design review…In the United States, urban design as public policy had become more or less universal in its principal urban communities" (Punter 2003p. xvii).

Cullen's *Townscape* (1961) philosophy, for example, had a substantial influence on British urban design policy as early as the 1970s and directly inspired a residential design guide for the county of Essex. Published by Essex County Council in 1973, it was the first serious attempt in the United Kingdom to formalize postmodern urban design theory into practical guidelines for property development. The guidelines rejected quantitative standards and heavily engineered modern design solutions in favour of traditional urban form arrangements and architectural treatments that reflected the local East Anglia vernacular (Punter and Carmona 1997). Two decades later, the 'Responsive Environments' criteria were used as the foundation for a series of seven 'Objectives of Urban Design' contained in an influential United Kingdom policy guidance document called, *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice* (DTLR and CABE 1999). Using the language of postmodern urban design theory and amalgamating ideas from the social usage and artistic traditions, the objectives encourage the production of an accessible and diverse public realm, where mixed land uses and navigable streets might provide a public realm that responds to the needs of all local people. Equally, the objectives offer advice about the form and aesthetics of buildings and spaces, characterizing place through a townscape lens in which landmarks, building edges and the organization of landscape features can protect local identity or generate new urban environments with a defined 'sense of place'. *By Design* was part of a turn towards design-sensitive planning policymaking in the UK and played an important role in the Labour government's 'urban renaissance' agenda, which, during the

mid 2000s, led to urban design playing a wider role in planning, regeneration, housing and environmental policy at the national, regional and local level (Punter 2010).

The impact of postmodern urban design principles on North American planning and design practice was equally profound. In the 1970s, Allan Jacobs, the co-author of the second set of principles outlined in Figure 2.5., pioneered a creative urban design policy process in San Francisco, where he served as the city's Director of Planning. In an early synthesis of the emerging artistic and social usage traditions (see: Figure 2.6. below and overleaf), the city's 1971 *Urban Design Plan* analyzed San Francisco's unique urban morphology and built form, including the particular characteristics of various districts. Very quickly it "won acclaim as the first modern planning analysis of any major American municipality to assess comprehensively the urban form and character of the city as a whole" (Lai 1988, p. 334). Through specific design criteria, that would eventually be woven into the city's zoning by-laws, the plan protected views, attempted to replicate the city's delicate urban form wherever possible and mandated that building projects be assessed against urban design criteria (Lai 1988). Furthermore, throughout the plan-making process, the city planners made efforts to integrate public participation and engage local people on issues of place and space (Punter 1999).

Figure 2.6. San Francisco *Urban Design Plan* Contextual Appraisal
(Images from: City of San Francisco 1971, p. 50 (Image 1, below) and p. 24 (Image 2, overleaf))

Figure 2.6. (Image 1) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a sketch that demonstrated how to analyse the public realm (the caption below provides a more detailed description). Original Source: City of San Francisco (1971). *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprhensive Plan of San Francisco.* San Francisco: San Francisco Department of City Planning, p. 50.

The San Francisco Urban Design Plan employs sketching techniques to analyse the existing built form. This drawing of the area around Mount Davidson and Twin Peaks is used to demonstrate the important role that low-rise dwellings play in relation to their environment. In this case, the low-rise buildings stop a large public park being obscured and allow it to be visible from many parts of the city.

Figure 2.6. (cont.) San Francisco *Urban Design Plan* Contextual Appraisal

Figure 2.6. (Image 2) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a map that demonstrated how to analyse the public realm (the caption below provides a more detailed description). Original Source: City of San Francisco (1971). *The Urban Design Plan for the Comprhensive Plan of San Francisco.* San Francisco: San Francisco Department of City Planning, p. 24.

One of numerous maps included in the plan to illustrate the contextual analyses of San Francisco's urban design. This particular map identifies the city's existing street network as a resource to preserve, arguing that its value lies not only in traffic distribution, but also in regulating and organizing the city. A well-defined pattern of streets, the plan argues, helps people to navigate and identify points of interest visually.

New York City and 'Urban Design as Public Policy'

An influential policy-led response to postmodern urban design theories also emerged in New York City during the 1960s and 1970s (Barnett 2011). The mayor of New York, John V. Lindsay, put local planner and architect Jonathan Barnett in charge of a new Urban Design Group in the city planning department. Lindsay asked Barnett to recast how design decisions were made in New York and, in particular, focus upon correcting many of the problems associated with modernist design interventions (Barnett 2011). Among the initiatives introduced by Barnett and his Urban Design Group was a more sensitive approach to urban renewal. Instead of comprehensive demolition and rebuilding, as had been favoured by modernist planners during the 1950s and eloquently critiqued by the then New York resident Jane Jacobs, planners began to work with local community leaders to identify and regenerate infill sites in existing neighbourhoods in need of support (Barnett 1974). As shown in Figure 2.7. overleaf, the Urban Design Group also developed a new special district zoning by-law amendment that encouraged mixed-use buildings and ground level retail on important city streets (Barnett 1974). The amendment was written in direct response to an earlier 1961 zoning by-law provision that had allowed new modernist towers to be surrounded by large areas of open space. Local residents had denounced the original policy for disrupting the existing fabric of local neighbourhoods. Therefore, the Urban Design Group employed new 'build to lines' to help redefine traditional streets and setbacks. A further "corrective for modernism" (Barnett 2011, p. 100) that Barnett and his team successfully introduced was an aggressive historic building and landmark designation agenda. The protection of historic and landmark buildings had garnered considerable public backing in New York during the early 1960s after the monumental Pennsylvania Station was demolished despite years of protest. Although the new policy caused considerable legal wrangling, it did eventually save the Beaux Arts Grand Central Station and many other buildings of historic importance in New York City (Barnett 2011).

Working with his team at the Urban Design Group, Barnett successfully established a widely revered urban design policy framework that encouraged more traditional design standards and sensitive community planning (Lai 1988; Barnett 2011). He has also written extensively on these efforts (Barnett 1974; 1981; 2011) and, in doing so, coined the term 'urban design as public policy'. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this has since been used as a moniker for studies of postmodern urban design practices, including the one addressed in this research

dissertation. In defining the term, Barnett states that “Instead of handing over city design as an ostensibly finished product, from a position outside the decision-making process, designers of cities should seek to write the rules for the significant choices that shape the city, within an institutional framework that can be modified as times, and needs, change” (1974, p. 6). In an authoritative account of the urban design discipline published in 2011 called *City Design: Modernist, Traditional, Green and Systems Perspectives*, Barnett also specifically casts his work in New York during the 1960s and 1970s as part of the traditional city design movement.

Figure 2.7. Urban Design as Public Policy in New York
(Image from: Barnett 1974, p. 54)

Figure 2.7. has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was a section drawing detailing the integration of retail and office uses in one building (the caption below provides a more detailed description). Original Source: Barnett, J. (1974). *Urban Design as Public Policy: Practical Methods for Improving Cities*. New York: Architectural Record, p. 54.

Fifth Avenue Special District Provisions
The City of New York’s Office of Midtown Planning and Development produced this section drawing. The planners were concerned about the changing land uses on Fifth Avenue and, in particular, a shift away from traditional large-scale retail. To avoid non-retailing building forms detracting from the avenue’s sense of place, the planners proposed the first zoning by-law in the United States to encourage mixed use buildings, with retail at ground level to animate the street and offices and residences above. Barnett (1974) noted: “It thus represents a major innovation in land use policy and, if it proves successful, a model for many other cities now trapped with their single-use, eight hour-a-day downtowns” (p. 55).

New Urbanism

Another hugely important channel for postmodern urban design theory, and one that spans the 'Anglo-American axis', has been a movement called New Urbanism. The term applies to the theory and practice of a group of architects, planners and developers who coalesced around an anti-modern vision of urban planning and design in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Katz 1994; Duany 2000). In their founding 'Charter of the New Urbanism' (published in 1993), the New Urbanists outline a series of collective concerns with modern American urbanism, including: central city disinvestment, placelessness and sprawl (Leccese *et al*. 2000). Translating postmodern urban design theories and principles into a practical manifesto – itself containing 27 'principles' – New Urbanism offers an approach to urban design where streets are walkable, buildings types and tenures are mixed and new development is contained within dense neighbourhood units (CNU 2001). The movement also places considerable value on past approaches to urban design, as Anne Vernez Moudon (2000) explains, New Urbanists have sought to "revive practices that had been discarded in post-war suburban development" (p. 38). The principles call for neighbourhoods to be built using traditional urban street grids that allow for greater accessibility and navigability than the cul-de-sac system popularized during the post-war era. Sharing language found in the 'Ten Commandments' proffered by The Prince of Wales, who later became a member of the New Urbanism movement, the principles emphasize the role that buildings can play to define the public realm and generate a sense of hierarchy in urban space. The principles state that taller and denser buildings should be located in the centre of settlements, new buildings should be integrated seamlessly into their surroundings and civic buildings should be given a distinctive form that might reinforce civic pride and democratic values (CNU 2001).

Implementation lies at the core of the New Urbanism philosophy and projects developed by members of the movement can be found across North America and the United Kingdom. Although 'The Charter of New Urbanism' states that architecture should "transcend style" (CNU 2001, p. 1), a postmodern architectural aesthetic also tends to accompany the traditional street layouts created in New Urbanist communities. In the late 1980s, for example, The Prince of Wales commissioned a large-scale model town to be built on land owned by his Duchy of Cornwall estate. Called Poundbury, the town adheres to New

Urbanism principles and recreates the dense urban form and architectural aesthetic found in small English market towns. The building lines of the compact cottages and townhouses at Poundbury give definition to a loose urban grid and all the roads and lanes meet at a central square where a village pub, community hall and grocery shop are located (see: Figure 2.8. below). In North America, the first and probably best-known New Urbanism project is Seaside, Florida. Designed by two of the original members of the Congress for the New Urbanism, Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Seaside is a new community on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. Duany and Plater-Zyberk developed a detailed urban design code and town plan for the project, while multiple architects were involved in the design of individual buildings. Like Poundbury, the urban form and architectural treatment of Seaside is firmly postmodern. Recreating an image of 'small town America,' replete with colourful pitched-roof houses and white picket fences, Seaside has a defined urban centre and a radial gridiron street pattern that allows pedestrian to navigate the town with ease.

Figure 2.8. New Urbanism at Poundbury, United Kingdom
(Photograph by the author)

The pioneering projects at Seaside and Poundbury have been the inspiration for the many hundreds of New Urbanism plans and projects realized during the 1990s and early 2000s. Moreover, New Urbanism has also encouraged the development of other urban design movements, including the 'urban villages' approach that was popularized in the United Kingdom as a tool for urban regeneration during the 2000s using New Urbanism principles (Neal 2003) and the Smart Growth Network that was formed in 1997 as a collaboration between the United States government and a series of non-profit organizations, including the Congress for the New Urbanism (Smart Growth Network 2006). The Smart Growth Network advocates for more compact and mixed-use neighbourhoods and also has a series of 'Smart Growth Principles' that mirror those written by the Congress for the New Urbanism.

The Vancouver Achievement

It is widely accepted that one the most successful examples of postmodern urban design practice and the implementation of postmodern design principles can be found in the contemporary planning and design of Vancouver, Canada (Punter 2003; 2003; Barnett 2011). Vancouver has employed a suite of urban design policies and implementation tools, not dissimilar from those employed by Jonathan Barnett in New York, to transform its post-industrial waterfront and instil a design-sensitive and collaborative planning culture citywide (Seelig and Seelig 1997; Punter 2002; 2003; 2003a; Hutton 2004; Berelowitz 2005; Macdonald 2005; Sandercock 2005; Healey 2006; Grant 2009). The city's former director of planning, Larry Beasley, has stated that Vancouver's 'urban renaissance' was realized when it embarked upon an ambitious downtown redevelopment plan in the late 1980s (Punter 2003). This process was actually initiated by Beasley's predecessor as planning director, Ray Spaxman, who set urban design as public policy in motion during the early 1970s. Spaxman was hired as planning director during a formative episode in Vancouver's political history. Members of a political coalition called The Electors Action Movement (TEAM) were elected to Council in the 1972 municipal elections. Many of these new councillors were left-leaning university academics and they brought a strong reform agenda to City Hall (Ley 1987). It was Walter Hardwick, one of the newly elected councilmen and a former professor of geography at The University of British Columbia (UBC), who successfully advocated for Ray Spaxman as the new planning director.

Punter (2003) explains that Spaxman "brought to Vancouver his extensive experience of neighbourhood planning and public participation in Toronto, and valuable architect-planner experience in England" (p. 28). Spaxman had worked as a planner in Toronto during a period of reform in the 1960s when inner-city residents, including Jane Jacobs, had successfully propelled a new breed of politicians into City Hall with a mandate to protect the character and traditional social integrity of the city's inner city neighbourhoods. This experience, argues Punter (2003), made him "aware of the increasing significance of design" and committed him to "working with people and neighbourhoods" (p. 28). It was during Spaxman's time that the Vancouver Charter was first used to introduce a new type of planning that combined regulatory and discretionary functions. In this context, the concepts of 'neighbourliness' and public engagement became central to the city's planning policy. By the mid-1970s this had led to the innovative development of False Creek South (Ley 1987; 1993): a mixed-use medium density development that combined private and public housing on the city's post-industrial waterfront, just south of the downtown peninsula.

Under Larry Beasley's leadership in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the City selected a second large-scale waterfront development as an inimitable opportunity to continue testing its revolutionary method of city planning – which by this time had come to be known as 'Living First' (Grant 2009). The Living First strategy called for denser residential development in the downtown and, notes Grant, established a role for urban design as a place-making tool. Placemaking was underpinned by the unique discretionary design-and-build process that required the planning department to work closely with developers and engage consistently with the local community on issues relating to planning and design. Furthermore, the strategy introduced an iterative peer-review design process (Punter 2003a).

The large-scale development that emerged on the city's waterfront, referred to as Concord Pacific Place by the developer or False Creek North by the City and local people, was a systematically master planned residential-led mixed-use community with an emphasis on traditional urbanism (Barnett 2011). The planners and architects of False Creek North developed a uniquely postmodern urban design formula that fused a traditional urban street layout with slender modernist towers. As Figure 2.9. overleaf shows, the urban design appears neoclassical. The buildings at False Creek North are arranged around traditional

urban perimeter blocks and, along the waterfront, sweeping crescents of low- and medium-rise townhouses define a public realm that is generously endowed with parks and recreational space. But as Figure 2.9. below also demonstrates, a series of tall and unapologetically modern towers are used to define the corners of each urban block, creating a distinctive aesthetic counterpoint. Commenting on this transformative design model and hinting at the integration of the artistic elements of postmodern urban design theory with modernist concepts of form, Barnett (2011) writes:

> The modern architecture that replaced traditional city design almost everywhere has never evolved large-scale design concepts to take the place of the boulevard, the square, or the axis of symmetry; and no system of modulating facades ever completely replaced the regular repetition of columns. In downtown Vancouver all of these traditional elements are employed in the service of complete modern architecture (p. 107).

Figure 2.9. Fusing the Modern and the Traditional on Vancouver's Waterfront
(Image from: Punter 2003, p. 208)

Figure 2.9. has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an axonometric drawing by Jim Cheng Architects of the Vancouver waterfront masterplan proposal (the caption below provides a more detailed description). Original Source: Punter, J. (2003). *The Vancouver Achievement: Planning and Urban Design*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, p. 208.

Preliminary design concept by James K.M. Cheng Architects for Marina Crescent on Vancouver's False Creek waterfont. The graphic demonstrates the combination of a traditional urban perimeter block arrangement and street-facing townhouses with slender modern towers.

By 2002, Vancouver had amassed 10 national and 16 provincial awards for planning excellence and the City has since received international recognition for its planning and design, including the 2006 New Urbanism Charter Award – an intriguing accomplishment, perhaps, considering the opposing architectural aesthetics of New Urbanism and Vancouver's waterfront. Either way, Vancouver's method of street grid and building design is now commonly called the 'tower-podium model' or the 'Vancouver model' and has been replicated not only across Vancouver's downtown peninsula by other developers but also in other cities around the world, including Toronto and Abu Dhabi. Although its planning system has received some criticism from local architects for its rigid control of creativity (Boddy 2005), it has also become a "place of pilgrimage" for planners and designers seeking inspiration for their own cities (Punter 2002, p. 266). The city's success, Punter argues, is "the result of its sophisticated planning and urban design policies and guidelines, processes and procedures" (p. 267). This is theme that I will return to in the next chapter.

Postmodern Urban Design Theory and Practice and its Discontents

The development of postmodern urban design principles and postmodern design practice remains a healthy pursuit among urban design theorists and practitioners and, as will be discussed in the following chapter, the most recent additions to the literature have focused on sustainable urban design and the ecological relationship between cities and the natural environment. The attention given to postmodern design remedies for the city and lists of 'good urban design' has also been the spotlight for criticism by some urban design scholars and urban commentators. Initially, the theory and practice of postmodern urban design that emerged from the visual and social usages traditions did enjoy "…a period of grace from the critics" (Punter 2003, p. xx), but this was short-lived and over time it has received its fair share of attention.

In a summary of these criticisms, Punter identifies a series of negative themes. These include an extension of David Harvey's (2000) earlier remark about Jane Jacobs, where he identified the possible contribution her observational work has made to a heightened sense of neighbourhood protectionism. Mike Davis (1990), for example, draws a link between postmodern urban design practice with the proliferation of citizen surveillance and the emergence of the fortress city. Others have blamed postmodernism, in part, for the social

exclusion caused by gentrification (Smith and Williams 1986) and the privatization of public space (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee 1998). From a style perspective, Punter explains, postmodern urban design practices have also been blamed for the production of over-designed and repetitive public spaces, in which too much landscaping, furnishing and decoration has led to incoherence and often a sense of 'kitsch' (Relph 1987). In Vancouver, for example, the 'tower-podium model' is increasingly viewed as a tired design solution. The visual power of the traditional-modern fusion of form and aesthetics has been muted by the rampant re-production of the commercially successful model street after street and block after block.

More recently, scholars have also identified the lack of attention afforded to environmental issues in the major contributions to postmodern urban design praxis – a criticism that I specifically address in the next chapter (see: pp. 65-69). Due to its relatively high profile, the New Urbanism movement has also been subject to particular criticism. Susan Fainstein (2000) notes that the "new urbanism is vulnerable to the accusation that its proponents over-sell their product, promoting an unrealistic environmental determinism" (p. 463). The movement, she argues, falls into the same trap as modernism because it mandates a particular physical approach through codes and regulations and offers very little space for diverse opinions and ideas about urban form. From an aesthetic standpoint, New Urbanism has received a barrage of negatives reviews, especially from the architectural community who, for the most part, have remained doggedly attached to modernism. Many have bemoaned the nostalgic pastiche of small town America that New Urbanist communities invariably reproduce (Carmona *et al*. 2010) and leaders of the movement, such as Andreas Duany, are often called upon to refute charges of superficiality.

If that was not enough, the critiques of postmodern urban design practices, including those made against New Urbanism, have recently been aided by a thoroughgoing dissection of postmodern urban design theory by Alexander Cuthbert. Through a series of three books (Cuthbert 2003; 2006; 2011) and an extended journal article (2007), Cuthbert argues that the chief works of urban design have "failed to engage with any substantial theory in the cognate disciplines of economics, social and political science, psychology, geography, or the humanities" (2007, p. 177). This leaves urban design, he contends, as a weak extension of planning and architecture without the necessary theoretical framework for critical self-

reflection. He takes particular aim at postmodern urban design principles and calls for an end to the "repetition of endless taxonomies of various kinds that exhaust the stock of available adjectives to describe urban form" (p. 183). Repeatedly, Cuthbert states that principles and taxonomies have replaced critical thinking and only serve to tweak basic values and repeat particular function and performance qualities, while, at the same time, claiming universal significance. He writes:

> As a collectivity, the result is akin to running on the surface of a sphere, at some point and on a random basis you have to arrive back where you started. It is not that these observations are untrue or uninteresting, simply that they are *trivially correct*, that is, so devoid of content that it is almost impossible to devise any empirical test which would prove them false (2007, p. 183).

Cuthbert argues that the major theoretical works in contemporary urban design possess few common linkages. Each urban design theory offers a separate definition of urban problems and solutions and urban design theorists rarely attempt to synthesize their collective work. Cuthbert suggests that urban design theorists should "recognize where we are and work towards an overall framework that has the capacity both to contextualize and to rationalize urban design theory" (p. 211). He contends that urban design theory consistently fails to consider the historical and social processes that shape cities and argues that it should cease operating independently from urbanization and prescribing, as it often does, particular form, aesthetic and functional values on society. Cuthbert does not believe that urban design should develop its own internal theories to solve its current conceptual deficiencies; rather, he proposes that it be repositioned within social science through the mechanism of spatial political economy. For Cuthbert, understanding urban design through the lens of spatial political economy is critical to urban design's theoretical development, because its "fundamental concern with the *processes* through which social space is produced, reproduced, transformed and exchanged, intersects neatly with how specific *forms* of social space arise" [author's emphasis] (p. 211). He argues that a foundation in spatial political economy would force urban design to emerge from the 'middle ground' between planning and architecture, where it is primarily focused on producing guidelines and regulations. Urban design's true function is found, Cuthbert argues, in "the reproduction of symbolic and other capital from improvements on land, the perpetuation of memory, the representation of

history and its consequences, and the celebration of civilized life in built form" (p. 216) and not through the regulation of building envelopes, setbacks, and other multiple requirements laid out in zoning by-laws.

For a field still working to define itself as an independent discipline, aligned with planning and architecture, but not wedged on ambiguous middle ground, Cuthbert's critique of urban design theory offers an important wake up call for urban design theorists, asking them to think about how urban design might be conceptualized in the future. Yet, in some respects, Cuthbert raises more questions than he answers. He admits that, ultimately, he has offered little proof that viewing urban design through a spatial political economy lens will actually help solve specific problems in the built environment.

Concluding Summary: Postmodern Urban Design as a Positive Force?

In this chapter I have explored the roots of contemporary urban design theory and practice and it serves as a foundation for the focused exploration of urban design regulatory mechanisms and policy tools that follows in Chapter 3. I demonstrated how the ideas of urban design theorists, commentators and practitioners during the 1960s were shaped by the failings of the modernist design movement. The 'postmodern' urban design theories that subsequently emerged recoiled against the hegemony of the modernist design formula and sought a more sensitive and, to use Bentley *et al.*'s (1984) phrase, 'responsive', approach to the design of the built environment. In place of an all-inclusive ideology emerged numerous 'principles' for designing spaces and places that, with various emphases, celebrated traditional street layouts and urban blocks, underscored the importance of streets and public spaces to generate vital and safe neighbourhoods and encouraged the engagement of local people in the design process.

In this chapter I also highlighted some of the criticisms that have been made against the postmodern turn in urban design and, in particular, Cuthbert's (2007) compelling argument that the tendency amongst urban design theorists to offer endless lists of principles and taxonomies of 'good' urban design stifles the creative advancement of the urban design discipline. This inclination is vividly demonstrated by the work of the New Urbanism movement whose postmodern urban design has encouraged a 'reproductionist' architectural

aesthetic. But perhaps the most important lesson that can be drawn from Cuthbert's critical assessment is that postmodern urban design theories and principles lock the discipline in a straightjacket of conformity and conservatism. Even in Vancouver, where a novel fusion of traditionalism and modernism emerged and the layers of urban design regulation and control have led to a successful development model, the design formula has also led to a staid architectural product that certainly 'ticks the boxes' of good urbanism, yet lacks a sense of aesthetic excitement and evolving innovation.

The enduring success of postmodern urban design principles ultimately rests in the clarity they can offer to planners, real estate developers and communities. Urban design principles are relatively simple. They are easy to translate from place to place and the traditional design patterns they encourage tend to be popular with local people. Therefore, it is important to remember that Cuthbert – and some of the other critics mentioned in the preceding paragraphs – ignore the many positive developments associated with postmodern urban design theory. As I illustrated in the various examples from practice, postmodern urban design theories and principles encouraged many cities to adopted 'urban design as public policy'. By the 1990s, design was accepted as a core part of the planning dialogue, especially as issues such as a sense of place, local distinctiveness and, more recently, sustainability, grew in popularity (Punter 2007a). In Punter's estimation, this turn to urban design as public policy has been "enjoyed by a large proportion of urban populations" (2003, p. xxi). He summarizes these contributions as follows:

- a concerted mending of the historic fabric of cities to restore a coherence to urban form
- a reclamation of city streets for pedestrian use, and the creation of new public spaces
- the reconnection of central cities to their waterfronts and their adjacent neighbourhoods – to create more possibilities for walking and cycling for community and leisure
- the restoration of historic districts and the protection and re-use of historic landmarks
- private development that is now more likely to respect the scale, grain and character of the locality and to reinforce its positive rather than its negative qualities (p. xxi).

Moreover, as an area of academic enquiry, urban design has enjoyed a surge of popularity since the 1980s. Planning and design theorist Ann Forsyth (2001) has referred to this as a 'design turn' in planning thought. By way of example, the three planning journals that offer an exclusive urban design focus all began publication within the past twenty years, *Journal of Urban Design* and *Urban Design International* in 1996 and most recently, *Journal of Urbanism* in 2008. These journals have significantly increased the prominence of urban design in the planning academy. Indeed, the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences recorded that prior to 1990 there were only 26 urban design-focused publications in academic journals. In 2006, this number had increased to 407 (Madanipour 2006). To support this surge, a growing number of urban design graduate programs are offered at universities around the world[6].

As I turn to next chapter, I will examine in more depth the specificities of urban design as a tool of public policy. In so doing, I will introduce a framework for analyzing and evaluating urban design processes developed by the British urban design researcher John Punter (2003; 2007a). I will then propose a series of three amendments to the framework that take heed of the critiques of postmodern urban design theory and practice that have been outlined in the preceding pages.

[6] To support the emergence of graduate education in urban design, three urban design readers have recently been released: *Urban Design Reader* (2007), edited by British authors Mathew Carmona and Steve Tiesdell, *The Urban Design Reader* (2007), edited by North American authors Michael Larice and Elizabeth MacDonald and *Companion to Urban Design* (2011) edited by Tridib Banerjee and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris.

CHAPTER 3
Theoretical Framework: Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy

Over the past fifteen years, British urban design researcher John Punter has carried out a succession of in-depth evaluative studies of urban design control and implementation in cities around the world. As part of his research agenda, Punter (2003; 2007a) has refined a series of twelve 'best practice' principles for urban design control and review. The principles advocate what Tiesdell and Adams (2011) have recently termed a 'tools approach' to urban design as public policy. This singles out the various "instruments, mechanisms, tools and actions" (p. 11) that urban design and planning policymakers can employ in practice. In this chapter I argue that Punter's principles provide a rigorous evaluative framework for guiding my analysis of urban design on Toronto's waterfront. In the first half of the chapter I use Punter's research, as well as contributions from other urban design scholars, to introduce and review the principles. Then, I offer a critical assessment of the principles and outline three amendments that deepen and enhance their scope of enquiry. I close the chapter by outlining the definition of 'urban design' that I employ in my scholarship and which guides the research findings presented in the remaining chapters of this dissertation. This definition is informed by a combination of Punter's framework, the literature review provided in Chapter 2 and my personal perceptions of the built environment.

Principles for Progressive Urban Design Review

Punter's principles originate in work by Lai (1988), Scheer (1994) and Blaesser (1994), all of whom highlight the complexities US cities have faced when attempting to instil a culture of discretionary design control into planning systems dominated by prescriptive zoning frameworks and strong private property rights. Their combined research suggests that the development community has voiced numerous complaints concerning new urban design policy measures and design review processes. Delay is a common complaint, as are the

interpretive skills of those reviewing design proposals. Furthermore, and demonstrating the impact of postmodern theories on the urban design process, many architects have "noted the tendency of review to encourage mediocrity, pastiche, mimicry and facadism" (Punter 2003, p. xxvi) and complained that the objectives and principles of various design control systems are obtuse. Based on multiple case studies, academic critics have attempted to address these concerns (Shirvani 1985; Blaesser 1994; Scheer 1994; Bezmez 2008).

Building directly upon this body of work and grouped into four themes – 'Community Vision', 'Design, Planning and Zoning', 'Broad, Substantive Design Principles' and 'Due Process' – Punter's twelve 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design Review' were first used to evaluate Vancouver's approach to city planning and design during the early 2000s (Punter 2002; 2003; 2003a). In his analysis and evaluation of Vancouver, Punter argues that the city's planning system, and, in particular, the embedded design review process "fully measures up to the challenging principles established by those who have most critically scrutinized practice in major American cities," (p. 281) and concludes that Vancouver:

> …demonstrates how it is possible to develop an urban design agenda that is ambitious and corporate, has demonstrable community assent, is fully integrated with planning and zoning, is founded on broad, substantive design principles, and has fair, skilled and efficient processes for adding value, in the broadest sense, to the quality of development (2002, p. 281).

In 2005 Punter used the principles again to evaluate the urban design policymaking process in Sydney, before publishing a more general overview of them in a 2007 *Journal of Urban Design* research paper. In this article Punter stresses that the twelve principles can be used not only to evaluate design review processes, but also to "play a wider role in developing urban design as public policy…to achieve more democratic and effective development management processes" (2007a, p. 170).

Punter envisages that researchers and practitioners might want to use the principles "both as an international framework for assessing existing systems… and as a means of developing better systems of design regulation in the round" (p. 170). The 'Principles for

Progressive Urban Design Review' are shown in Figure 3.1. below. A detailed commentary follows.

Figure 3.1. Principles for Progressive Urban Design Review
(Summarized from: Punter 2007a, p. 171)

Community Vision

1. Committing to a comprehensive and coordinated vision of environmental beauty and design (Brennan's Law) (Lai, 1988, p. 426).
2. Developing and monitoring an urban design plan with community and development industry support and periodic review (Lai, 1988, p. 429).

Design, Planning and Zoning

3. Harnessing the broadest range of actors and instruments (tax, subsidy, land acquisition) to promote better design (Lai, 1988, p. 430-431).
4. Mitigating the exclusionary effects of control strategies and urban design regulation (Lai, 1988, p. 430).
5. Integrating zoning into planning and addressing the limitations of zoning (Lai, 1988, pp. 431-432).

Broad, Substantive Design Principles

6. Maintaining a commitment to urban design that goes well beyond elevations and aesthetics to embrace amenity, accessibility, community, vitality and sustainability (Scheer, 1994, p. 9).
7. Basing guidelines on generic principles and contextual analysis and articulating desired and mandatory outcomes (Blaesser, 1994, p. 50).
8. Not attempting to control all aspects of community design by accommodating organic spontaneity, vitality, innovation, pluralism: not over-prescriptive.

Due Process

9. Identifying clear *a priori* roles for urban design intervention (Lai, 1988, p. 425; Scheer, 1994, pp. 6-7).
10. Establishing proper administrative procedures with written opinions to manage administrative discretion, and with appropriate appeal mechanisms (Lai, 1988, p. 427; Scheer, 1994, pp. 3-4).
11. Implementing an efficient, constructive and effective permitting process (Scheer, 1994, pp. 5-6, 7).
12. Providing appropriate design skills and expertise to support the review process (Scheer, 1994, p. 4-5; Lai, 1988, p. 431).

Community Vision Principles

The aims of the first two principles are, first, to express the importance of a design regulation system that is grounded in a community-supported vision of what constitutes 'good' urban design and, second, to demonstrate how such a vision might evolve in future development forms. The first principle was established by Richard Lai in his 1988 critique of design in the American planning system, *Law in Urban Design and Planning: The Invisible Web.* Derived from a legal challenge of aesthetic design review, the principle is named for Justice W.J Brennan of the United States Supreme Court – the judge who decided the case in question. Justice Brennan concluded that "any authority wishing to impose design review on individuals must demonstrate a community 'commitment' and a 'comprehensive, coordinated effort' to raise design quality as a precondition of regulation" (quoted in Lai, 1988, p. 426 in Punter 2007a, p. 171). Seeing this decision as applicable outside of the United States, Punter (2007a) explains that a demonstration of community 'commitment' requires the local governing body to acquire broad community support for design initiatives that involve the community in the urban design process. A parallel 'comprehensive, coordinated effort' obliges the local governing body to establish a commitment to urban design across all aspects of city policy making, including housing, infrastructure and public parks, *before* developers can be expected to improve the design quality of private real estate projects.

In support of this aim, the second principle outlines the need for a design plan that states the community's vision through actionable policies and guidelines. Punter (2007a) specifies that such a plan must appear realistic to the local development community while also respecting the wishes of local people, although he admits that obtaining the assent of local developers is no small feat and argues that the local governing authority should therefore develop a plan that outlines "realistic assessments of economic return, market demand and appropriate development entitlements (densities) as well as acceptable levels of design regulation" (Punter 2007a, p. 172). Punter notes that few successful examples of such comprehensive design plans exist, but argues that, wherever possible, urban design should be embedded within a city's general plan. He also accepts that design policy might instead be attached to specific design implementation devices, such as a large-scale master plan or a design review system. Whatever the eventuality, Punter contends, the best outcome is for a design plan to evolve as an on-going collaborative effort between the local community of stakeholders and the planning authority. In such a scenario, shared visions and goals can

be continually reassessed and revised over time to reflect local opinion and shifting development pressures (Punter and Carmona 1997).

Punter's call for enhanced collaboration in the design process illustrates a wider trend in planning theory and practice, where increasingly sophisticated public processes are emerging to tackle complex community issues (Healey 2006; Innes and Booher 2010). As the governing authority imagines how a defensible and open public processes for urban design might be developed, Innes and Booher's (2010) recent description of 'collaborative rationality' is particularly instructive:

> A process is collaboratively rational to the extent that all the affected interests jointly engage in face-to-face dialogue, bringing their various perspectives to the table to deliberate on the problems they face together. For the process to be collaboratively rational, all participants must also be fully informed and able to express their views and be listened to, whether they are powerful or not. Techniques must be used to mutually assure the legitimacy, comprehensibility, sincerity, and accuracy of what they say. Nothing can be off the table. They have to seek consensus (p. 6).

Design, Planning and Zoning Principles

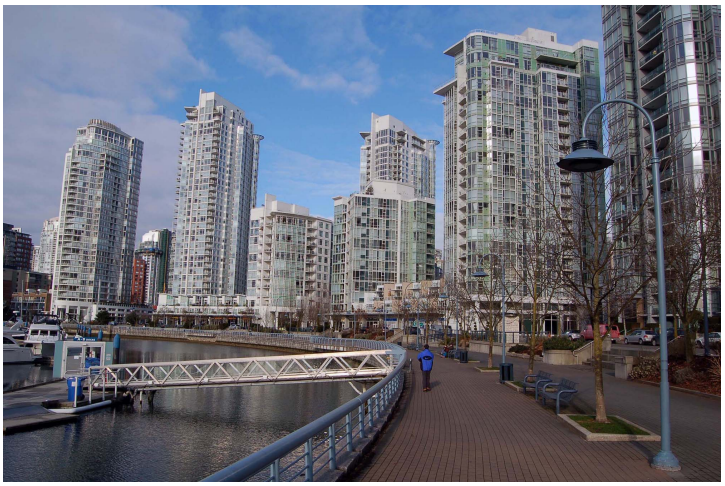
These next three principles examine how urban design might be integrated into an existing planning and zoning system. In particular, they address the potential for "exclusionist tendencies" (Punter 2007a, p. 175) within design-led interventions and consider measures to compensate against them. Principle three outlines the instruments that can be used to promote urban design and embed a design culture within a planning system. Following Lai (1988), Punter explains how financial mechanisms can be used at various levels of government to influence the physical form and social character of a new development. They include: tax levies, fees and planning conditions. Introducing such measures often demands an "interactive relationship with the private sector" (Adams and Tiesdell 2010, p. 188) because planning decisions are invariably negotiated, especially in cities or regions that operate under a discretionary format, as Hack and Sagalyn (2011) drily note:

> Urban design is often portrayed as shaping cities through bold visions of the future. In truth, it is largely devoted to the practical task of acquiring public or collective goods through the process of building cities (p. 258)

A prime example of this is the negotiation process associated with Section 106 of England's *Town and Country Planning Act* (United Kingdom 1990). Section 106 gives local authorities the power to negotiate for certain public benefits with a developer in exchange for planning permission (Fainstein 2008). These public benefits might include public space provisions, social housing or commitments to infrastructure upgrades. Another example is Vancouver's Major Public Facility Benefit Provision, initially used for the city's large-scale waterfront redevelopment projects. Punter (2007a) explains how the City successfully negotiated with developers for substantial public benefits, including schools, park space and a pedestrian seawall (see: Figure 3.2. overleaf). He argues that in any city a successful negotiation process rests upon "the creation of a coherent, consistent and transparent approach to the financing of infrastructure" (p. 176). Without transparency, there is a risk that the financial contributions negotiated by the municipal government might undercut the pursuit of higher design quality if applied to other corporate goals. Even in Vancouver, where the collective benefit of public amenity provision through negotiation is widely accepted, it has proven to be a considerable political challenge to introduce the initiative citywide (Punter, 2003).

Often a city with a successful system of urban design as public policy can become a victim of its own success. Vancouver's experience, which was explored in the preceding chapter, also demonstrates this eventuality. The negotiated public realm improvements have made the central city a desirable place to live and have helped to precipitate an exponential house price increase and notable pockets of gentrification, as wealthy middle class residents return to the inner city (Punter 2003; Hutton 2004). Through this process, the City of Vancouver has taken decisions that, in some instances, have resulted in public funds being directed towards elite cultural and aesthetic projects rather than much-needed affordable housing and social service provision (Punter 2007a).

Figure 3.2. The Sea Wall: Vancouver's Major Public Facility Benefit Provision
(Photographs by the author)

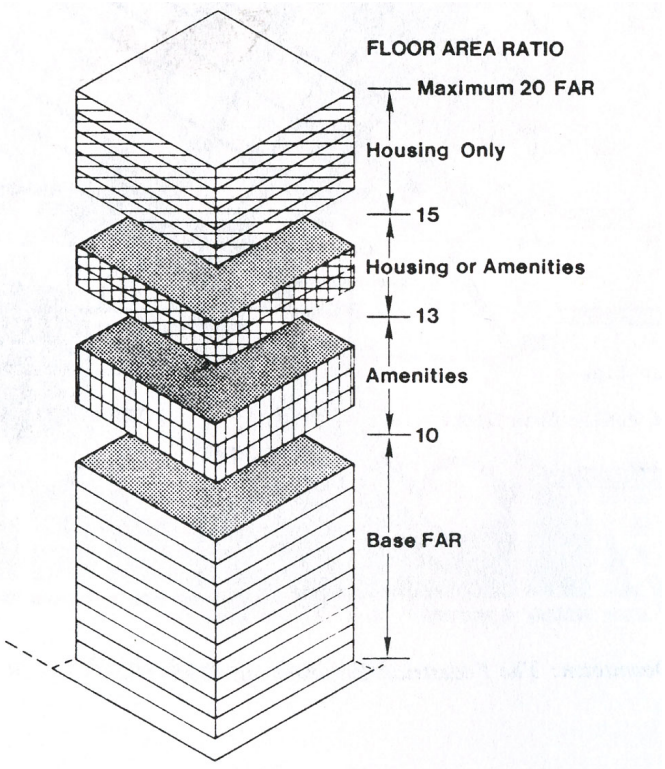


In principle four, Punter reflects on how this exclusion might be challenged. He argues that cities should always act to protect existing low-cost housing or replace it within mixed-use development schemes that adhere to urban design principles, which promote "permeability, accessibility and continuity of the public realm" (p. 177). Punter adds that cities should resist development projects that privilege private amenity space over public space that is accessible to all.

Since its widespread introduction in the early 20th century, zoning has been used as a design control mechanism – although to varying degrees and not always in a positive way. As Barnett (1982) observes, "if you find the skyline of the average American city to be full of unimaginative boxy buildings, the combination of zoning rules and street grid must…bear at

least part of the blame" (p. 65). Punter's fifth principle addresses this popular critique by arguing that, through adaptation, the instrument of zoning can be become more flexible and design-sensitive. The most widely employed zoning mechanism for controlling design is called 'incentive zoning' or a 'zoning bonus' (Barnett 1974; Shirvani 1985; Punter 1999). The primary objective of a bonus system is to generate public goods from private development as a *quid pro quo* (Shirvani 1985). For example, a developer may receive permission for additional site density if a public amenity, such as a park, is provided (Punter 1999). The additional density or floor space that a developer can be granted is usually capped in the city's by-laws (Shirvani 1985). It is important to recognize that if the governing authority fails to establish a maximum density, the bonusing system is open to abuse. An instructive example of this is the 55-storey Washington Mutual Building in Seattle, which "more than doubled in size by virtue of the provision of a sculpted top, hillclimb assist (external escalator), child care facility, retail space, indoor lounge, and outdoor plaza, and a contribution of $2.5m to downtown housing" (Punter 1996, p. 36). The basic parameters of Seattle's zoning bonus standard are shown in Figure 3.3. below.

Figure 3.3. Seattle Bonus Zoning Standard
(Image from: Punter 1999, p. 36, reproduced by kind permission of Liverpool University Press)



While adjustments to rigid zoning mechanisms can be exercised to improve the design sensitivity of a city's planning system, other implementation tools can also be used in conjunction with zoning, or be inserted as a substitute (Punter 2007a). Design codes and master plans increasingly play this role. Master plans act as co-coordinating documents for large-scale development projects and usually include the spatial layout and key design elements of a proposed development, displayed through traditional plans, diagrams and text, as well as three-dimensional visualizations (Tiesdell and Macfarlane 2007; Carmona *et al*. 2010). Design codes tend to support a master plan and allow the governing authority and the developer to reach agreement on the urban design specificities of a design proposal, guaranteeing a smoother and more certain outcome (Evans 2007). As mentioned earlier, both of these tools are heavily employed on New Urbanist projects.

Broad, Substantive Design Principles

Punter's next group of principles address the broad design concerns that underpin and inform a city's urban design process. The first principle suggests that a city should develop a series of thoroughgoing design parameters that impact more than building aesthetics. The list outlined in principle six is similar in scope to the normative postmodern urban design principles introduced earlier in the chapter, but Punter adds that the urban design principles a city adopts should also reflect the growing importance of sustainable development and be modified to embrace issues such as "biodiversity, energy efficiency and pollution" (2007a, p. 182).

While Punter (2007a) argues that a group of generic design principles are an important foundation for a reflective and objective system of urban design assessment, in his seventh principle he explains that, to have a lasting impact, they must be supported by context-specific analyses of the built and natural environments – an approach that is demonstrated well by the example of San Francisco's *Urban Design Plan* (1971) (see: Figure 2.6., p. 36). Building upon Jarvis' (1980) interpretation of the visual and social usage traditions, Punter and Carmona (1997) assert the need for systematic urban design appraisals that encompass the core environmental qualities of a place. Arguing that visual townscape analyses and environmental assessments alone are not sufficient to understand the social

and physical character of a place, they argue that a successful appraisal will incorporate "sociofunctional-ecological aspects of place alongside townscape and landscape concerns" (p. 119). With the aim of most urban design appraisals being to set clear context-specific parameters on which to base subsequent urban design policy, a complete appraisal must project the key visual, social and environmental characteristics of a place and locate areas that might need protection or that have the potential for redevelopment and enhancement (Carmona 1996a). Punter (2007a) argues that the combination of a context-specific design analysis and clear urban design principles should lead to a series of design parameters. These parameters, he adds, should encompass both mandatory controls – "such as height, bulk, build-to and setback lines, open space, daylight and sunlight regulations" (p. 185) – and advisory controls that are more 'suggestive' about future development forms.

Urban design as public policy has consistently been accused of stifling design creativity. As mentioned earlier, these charges were the impetus for the early academic critiques of urban design review processes (Lai 1988; Blaesser 1994; Scheer 1994). Many architects have argued that strong urban design policymaking has generated "safe but bland design solutions that are 'in keeping' with local character, but often demean it" (Punter 2007a, p. 188). In his eighth principle, Punter identifies the process of peer design review as a successful tool for counteracting these concerns. To operate a comprehensive design control process effectively there must be a discretionary means of scrutinizing individual designer's interpretations of a city's design principles and guidelines. Defined as "the process by which private and public development proposals receive independent criticism under the sponsorship of the local government unit" (Scheer 1994, p. 2), a design review is arguably the most important component of a comprehensive design control system (Shirvani 1985). The structure of design review differs from city to city as governing authorities choose between formal and informal processes (Scheer 1994). Whether mandatory or not design review usually involves a panel of experts or local officials who conduct an evaluation of a development proposal against the city's design policy goals and objectives (Carmona 1996a; Kumar and George 2002; Dawson and Higgins 2009). For a design review process to be effective, argues Lai (1988), it must be underpinned by clear design guidelines. This requirement is critical if a city wishes to avoid charges of prejudicial or arbitrary decision-making.

Due Process Principles

The last four principles address the need for due process to implement an effective design control system. In the wider planning literature, numerous studies have shown how powerful interests can dominate and, at times, derail a public planning process (Flyvbjerg 1998; Yiftachel 1998; Dovey 2005). In a seminal case study of Aalborg in Denmark, Bent Flyvbjerg tells the story of the city's transportation planning process in which powerful interests, such as the local bus company and the mayor's office, manipulated information for their own political ends. He discovered that technical information was distorted to serve evolving political and private-sector objectives through continuous bargaining and manoeuvring by the powerful. The experience of Aalborg is germane also for urban design. As Carmona *et al.* (2002) note, "Unfortunately, in a contemporary development climate, commercial pressures often seem to militate against long-term investment in design quality. The problem is compounded because decisions regarding the built environment are often made by those far removed from their impact on the ground" (p. 146). At every stage of the development process, powerful economic forces, elite political values and the internal dynamics of different stakeholder groups all drive urban design and pull it in different directions (Madanipour 2006). Punter (2007a) argues that the four 'Due Process' principles "reflect the resistance of the development industry to…controls and sustained lobbying against them, at both local and national levels, including numerous legal challenges, particularly in administrative zoning-based planning systems" (p. 190).

Principle nine begins by arguing that urban design interventions should be premised on clear and explicit rules. Although processes such as design review are inherently discretionary, the application of guidelines can reduce decision-making inconsistencies. Punter (2007a) explains that guidelines which are "relatively precise…founded upon established principles of urban design…and…carefully related to their context in application" (p. 190) can fulfil this role. Jon Lang (1996) identifies two types of urban design guidance: 'prescriptive' and 'performance'. Prescriptive guidance, he explains, specifies the core characteristics of the end product. In practice, this means the author of the guidelines directly shapes the form of the built environment. In contrast, performance guidelines suggest how the end product might perform, rather than detailing the exact design. When performance guidelines are used, the creative tasks are left to the designers of the various

components of the built environment. Lang recognizes strengths and weaknesses in both, but argues that evaluating the outcome of prescriptive guidelines is much simpler. He is more supportive of performance guidelines because they allow greater individual creativity – even if the outcomes are harder to assess.

In principle ten, Punter (2007a) argues that *a priori* guidelines for intervention must be supported by strong administrative procedures that can compensate for the "absence of precise rules, policies, and design guidelines and the necessary exercise of discretion in decision-making" (p. 191). At an elementary level, he advises that cities record, and make available to the public, all design deliberations and decisions taken by planning staff and committees. He adds that an essential element of a transparent design control and review system must be the right to appeal by aggrieved parties. Any such appeal system, he contends, must be accessible to all, expedient, affordable to use and unintimidating.

In a similar vein, Punter uses his eleventh principle to argue that the integration of urban design into the planning system must "respect the need for efficiency in the permitting/development control processes and not add unduly to the time required for taking decisions" (2007a, p. 191). Long delays are particularly common in cities that operate a design control system in parallel to the permission process. In this context, urban design review is often addressed towards the end of the planning process exposing development applications to "the dangers of expensive re-designs and delays" (p. 191). To avoid such a scenario, Punter argues that cities should begin design negotiations at the pre-application stage and thereby develop an on-going dialogue with the applicant. Furthermore, he suggests that cities should always strive to provide positive design advice to development applicants, rather than simply critiquing proposals. In the long-term, this conciliatory approach can help to forge a respectful relationship between developers and design staff. Acquiring the trust of private developers is an important step for city planning staff and management (Adams and Tiesdell 2010), but at the same time it is critical that public servants do not fall under the control of the development community. Finding the right balance requires formidable skill. This is well illustrated in the example of Larry Beasley who, as co-director of planning for the City of Vancouver (1993-2006), became a strong and successful advocate for public amenities and public process, yet maintained a healthy

relationship with the local development community due to his business-like *modus operandi* (Grant 2009).

In the twelfth and final principle, Punter highlights one of the critical weaknesses an urban design control and review system is likely to face: urban design expertise. If urban design is to be fully integrated into a planning system, it will often require some discretionary decision-making and, for this to be effective, a degree of design expertise within the wider planning administration. It has often been difficult for cities to attract planners with urban design skills, especially as planning scholarship has become aligned with the social sciences, and planning curricula have edged away from design training. But, as mentioned in Chapter 2, there has been a notable resurgence in urban design education and scholarship in the last ten years and a growing number of planner-urban designers have entered the profession (Madanipour 2006). Some urban design authors, notably Cuthbert (2003; 2006; 2007; 2011), remain concerned about the intellectual robustness of urban design education and argue that it is stifled by a commitment to narrow, axiomatic principles. He argues that current urban design education does not equip new practitioners with the skills to comprehend the complex web of political and economic forces that shape cities. Yet, in contrast, Punter (2007a) uses the example of Vancouver to demonstrate that comprehensive urban design skills can and do exist in practice:

> Again Vancouver demonstrates best practice having progressively built up a team of six architect-planners with extensive private sector experience, each capable of conducting very complex design negotiations on major projects, and of reshaping complex zonings and guidelines to improve effectiveness (p. 194).

Another tool that can be used to inject urban design skills and expertise into a planning process is the design competition. Although not featured in Punter's set of principles, urban design competitions are increasingly seen as a way to encourage better design practice and deliver "more place-aware, design-led developments" (Tolson 2011, p. 160). Typically convened for high profile individual buildings or large urban sites, design competitions provide an avenue for sourcing new talent, exploring new ideas and providing a forum for design education (Spreiregen 1979; Nassar 1999; Lehrer 2011). Sitting outside of the traditional policy hierarchy, they can be harnessed by local governing authorities to enhance

design quality within the planning system. In addition to raising design standards, design competitions have also been described as a 'safety net' against mediocrity (Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris 1990) and have been credited for "discovering unrecognized talent, producing new solutions, and bringing attention to or publicizing architecture" (Nassar 1999, p. 24). Although commonly associated with individual building projects or public spaces, design competitions have also been successfully employed in master planning and other urban design endeavours. Lehrer (2011) notes that design competitions are well-suited to complex sites which impact large numbers of people because a jury examines the merits of multiple proposals and, as a result, the process appears more democratic than a standard developer and design team selection process.

Evaluating Urban Design as Public Policy on Toronto's Waterfront

Punter's twelve principles are well suited for the interrogation of urban design on Toronto's waterfront. In his 2003 study, Punter places significant emphasis on Vancouver's approach to large-scale waterfront redevelopment projects and demonstrates the success of a locally relevant urban design vision, implemented through a clear hierarchy of design policies in conjunction with transparent control measures that are subject to on-going evaluation. As I argued at the start of this chapter, Punter's twelve principles provide a benchmark to explore the complexities of urban design as public policy and offer a formidable evaluative structure. Yet, while the framework offers a strong basis for qualitative analysis there are aspects of the principles that could be altered to enhance their overall analytical and evaluative rigor – primarily in light of recent advances in urban design theory and practice.

I propose a series of three interlinked amendments. The first amendment reflects the emergence of ecological urban design and normative principles of sustainable urbanism, which have evolved in both complexity and scope since Punter's work was published in 2003 and 2007. I argue for a deeper ecological underpinning to the urban design criteria included in Punter's principles. The second amendment highlights a potential disjuncture in Punter's framework between his clear support for collaborative, multi-stakeholder decision-making on the one hand and his equally strong commitment to normative urban design principles on the other. I respond to wider critiques of public participation and engagement in urban design decision-making (Grant 2006; Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007) and argue

for a strong framework to understand collaborative design processes. The third amendment considers the skills that public sector actors in the urban design process should acquire to be effective. I support Punter's claim, outlined in his twelfth principle, that specific *design* expertise is invariably needed in city planning bureaucracies, but add that planner-urban designers must also become competent 'market actors' to operate in and effect change within the built environment (Adams and Tiesdell 2010). My justifications for these proposed amendments are outlined in more detail below and a modified series of principles is provided in Figure 3.8. on page 78.

Amendment 1: Ecological Urban Design

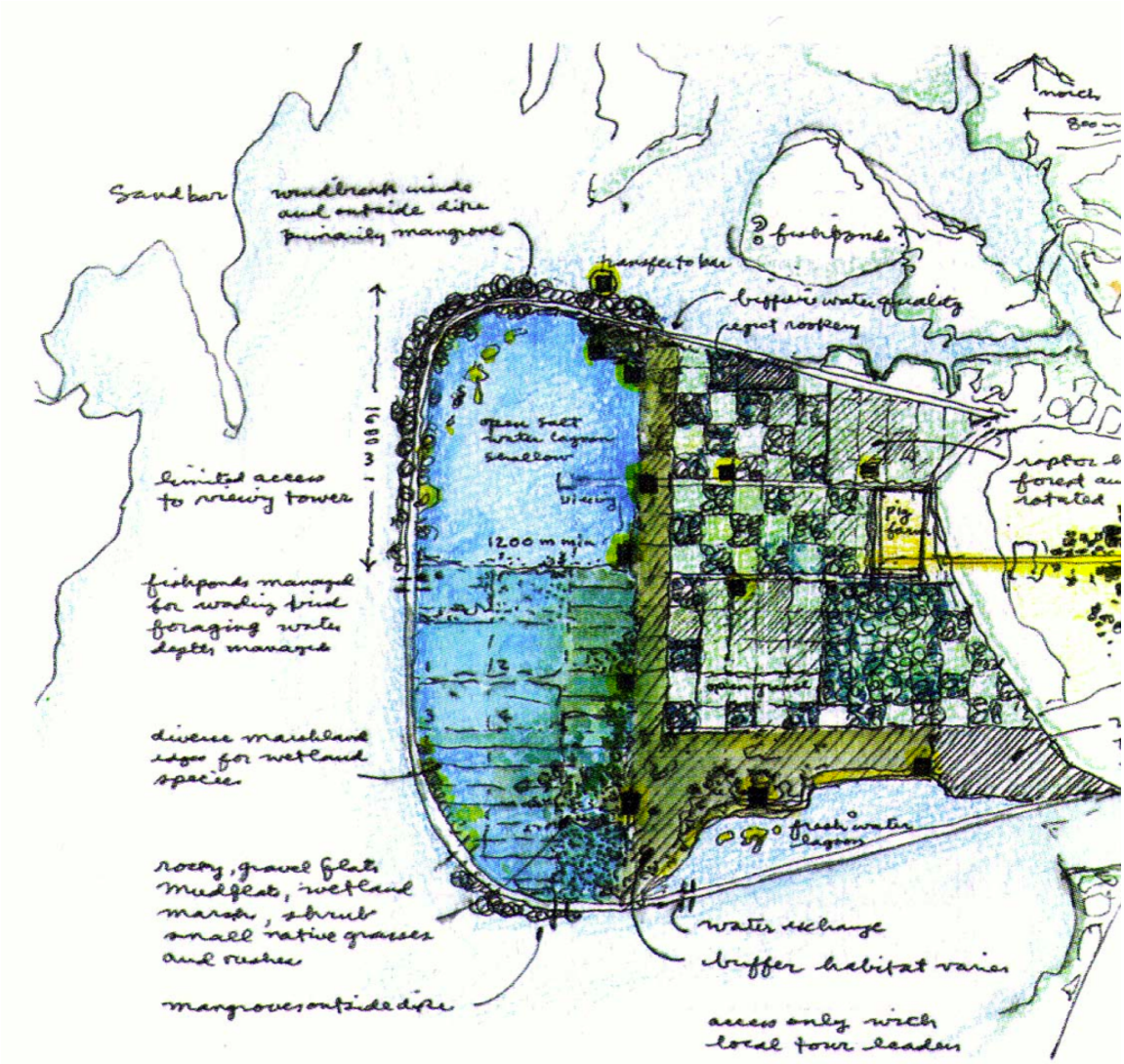
In principle six, Punter outlines "a commitment to urban design that goes well beyond elevations and aesthetics to embrace amenity, accessibility, community, vitality and sustainability (2007a, p. 171). This commitment is derived from Scheer and Preiser's 1994 edited book on design review: *Design Review: Challenging Urban Aesthetic Control.* As stated earlier, the list reflects the general scope of postmodern urban design theory discussed in Chapter 2. However, Punter does also include the concept of 'sustainability' and presses the importance of ecological processes as part of this list. Due to its growing policy relevance, definitions of sustainability and ecology within the realm of urban design theory have evolved and strengthened with time and, as already mentioned, Punter (2007a) recommends that cities adapt their guiding design criteria in response to evolving ideas and practices. While recent theoretical work continues to promote the core components of postmodern principles – a legible public realm, mixed-use development, etc. – many also include sophisticated ecologically sensitive ideas. Most noticeable has been the emphasis placed on green building design and the acceptance of theories that conceptualize human settlements not as impenetrable fortresses, but as constituents in wider ecological systems (Bentley 1990; Farr 2008; Newman and Jennings 2008).

Predating this recent trend, Ian McHarg published *Design with Nature* in 1969. With impressive foresight, he sought to place ecological values at the heart of city building and foster a deeper understanding of the intrinsic relevance of natural processes in urban development. Although *Design with Nature* became one of the theoretical foundations of the landscape architecture discipline, it took until the 1990s for urban design theorists to catch

up. Ian Bentley, the lead author of *Responsive Environments* (1985) – a book that included one of the series of design principles discussed in Chapter 2 (see: Figure 2.5., p. 33) – recognized the shortfalls of his earlier collaborative work. He reflected in a follow-up paper, titled "Ecological Urban Design" (1990), that "urban design has a considerable ecological impact" (p. 69) and proposed that the original criteria be revised so that a balance could be sought "between human desires and their ecological effects" (p. 69). Bentley added the environmental principles of 'energy efficiency', 'resilience', 'cleanliness' and 'wildlife support' to the original core criteria. More recent theoretical works have taken this philosophy further. Randolph Hester (2008) offers a comprehensive set of fifteen design principles grouped around three foundations, which he believes are critical issues of human habitation: "Enabling Form: We Got To Know Our Neighbours…Resilient Form: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Sustainable Happiness…[and]… Impelling Form: Make a City to Touch the People's Hearts" (p. 8-9). Hester envisages a bottom-up process where the realization of his design principles is achieved through small-scale community projects. The work is grounded in a broad normative commitment to deliberative democracy and, while some might characterize his work as utopian, Hester does draw the reader to many small-scale examples of his work in practice over the past thirty years. An extract from Hester's book is shown in Figure 3.4. overleaf.

Although it has been slow to emerge, there has also been a growing awareness of environmental sustainability within the New Urbanism movement. While New Urbanism rejects sprawling suburban development and is committed to traditional, compact and walkable neighbourhoods, it has not necessarily worked from an ecological foundation and, in practice, has often been criticized for urbanizing greenfield land. Douglass Farr attempts to redress this imbalance through his 2008 book *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature*. Structured around the New Urbanist principles of walkable compact development, he proposes additional core values that embody ecological thinking. Farr emphasizes the need for walkable and transit served communities to be "integrated with high-performance buildings and high-performance infrastructure" (p. 42) and, in concert with the ecological theme of urban design theory, he argues for 'biophilia' or human access to nature. The contributions of these various ecological urban design theorists and the principles they propose are listed in Figure 3.5. on page 68.

Figure 3.4. Design for Ecological Democracy
(Image from: Hester 2008, p. 182, reproduced by permission of MIT Press)



Hester notes that one of the biggest challenges urban designers will face is that the spatial requirements for different species are unique. As such, he emphasizes the important of scientific research in combination with local knowledge. The example above is of a wetland environment in Taiwan. It was designed with local villagers in a way that drew upon scientific and local knowledge. The result was an environment that successfully protects local habitats, increases local access and understanding and, in so doing, secures much needed profits from tourism.

Figure 3.5. Ecological Urban Design Principles

Bentley
(summarized from: 1990, p. 69)

Ecological Urban Design (Responsive Environments update)

1. Energy Efficiency
Minimizing the external energy needed to construct and use a place and developing the use of ambient energy.

2. Resilience
Buildings and spaces that can be adapted for different uses over time.

3. Cleanliness
Minimize pollution output and/or make built structures as self-cleaning as possible.

4. Wildlife Support
Increases the number of species variety in urban areas.

5. Permeability
Affects where people might go and where they cannot.

6. Vitality
Encourage people to stay: 'eyes on the street'.

7. Variety
The range of uses available to people.

8. Legibility
How people understand and navigate an environment.

Hester
(summarized from: 2008, p. 8-9)

Foundations for Ecological Democracy

1. Enabling Form
Citizens must learn to connect and interact with one another in the environments they live in. Strong democracy cannot flourish without places for deliberative cooperation.

2. Resilient Form
Fundamental that human habitation is intertwined with nature. This is the only form of urbanity able to sustain community needs through every eventuality – including crisis.

3. Impelling Form
Encouraging civil society. Recognizing the underlying importance of wanting to engage in design for ecological democracy, ultimately: being a good citizen.

Farr
(summarized from: 2008, p. 42-61)

Sustainable Urbanism Defined

1. Defined Center and Edge
Bounded neighbourhoods should play a role in girdling the distance beyond which key social and environmental concerns cannot be shifted.

2. Compactness
Increasing Sustainable Effectiveness by demanding minimum development densities four times higher than current US average.

3. Completeness
Daily and Lifelong Utility. To support robust lifestyle choices, neighbourhoods need to include a wide variety of land uses, building types and dwelling types.

4. Connectedness
Integrating Transportation and Land Use with abundant opportunities for walking, riding and biking.

5. Sustainable Corridors
Implementing transit between communities.

6. Biophilia
Connecting Humans to nature. Interweaving the natural and human worlds through design.

7. High-Performance Buildings
Developing buildings that meet stringent emission and performance targets.

8. Integrated Design
Creating seamless interfaces between built and natural components of the environment.

The trend toward a more ecologically sensitive praxis has not been limited to advances in theory and the New Urbanism movement. In the wider field of practice, interest in more intelligent building and development practices has been supported by sustainability 'ratings' for new buildings, such as the LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design) classification in North America and the BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) in the UK. Recently, both of these assessment tools have been expanded to include classifications for urban design, LEED ND (Neighbourhood Design) and BREEAM Communities (Marantz and Ben-Joseph 2011).

To reflect the increasing complexity and breadth of ecological urban design both in theory and practice, I propose to update and strengthen the ecological content of the urban design principles that Punter outlines in his eighth principle. As a caveat, I would like to draw attention to a small inconsistency between two of Punter's principles. In his first principle, Punter uses Brennan's Law to argue that local community stakeholders should work together to develop "a coordinated vision of environmental beauty" (Punter 2007a, p. 171), yet Punter does not clarify how a community might interpret the term 'beauty'. Taken at face value, 'beauty' tends to imply some form of aesthetic judgment. This highlights a contradiction with Punter's eighth principle, where he states that cities should adopt urban design criteria that go "*well beyond* elevations and aesthetics [my italics]" (1994, p. 9 in Punter, 2007a). As Richard Lai (1988) writes, "the task of appraising the aesthetic merit of art and design – the judgment between the beautiful and the ugly – is a complex and contentious one that environmental designers…should properly approach with trepidation" (p. 264). A decision about environmental beauty is invariably subjective and dependent on personal aesthetic judgment. For this reason, I will simply replace Brennan's phrase 'environmental beauty and design' with the term 'urban design'. This will provide a much stronger continuity with the urban design parameters in Punter's eighth principle.

Amendment 2: Collaborative Decision-Making

In this second amendment I do not argue that Punter omits the important role that communities play in the urban design process. On the contrary, in his second principle he emphasizes that cities must "develop appropriate visioning or participation processes for establishing public aspirations" (p. 195) and states that cities should acquire broad

community support for the urban design plans they produce and continue to monitor them with communities and developers. But as I have previously explained, Punter also argues that urban design theory has reached a "considerable consensus" (2007a, p. 182) on the content of urban design principles and criteria. Furthermore, through his ninth principle, Punter contends that cities should put together precise guidelines based on "established principles of urban design" (2007a, p. 190), supported by local contextual analyses. However, Punter's preference for particular normative urban design principles, expressed in his eighth principle and, indeed, supported by the first of my amendments above, contradicts this otherwise admirable commitment to collaborative processes.

The age-old conflict between participation and expert opinion is not unique to Punter's framework and it remains a complex concern in both urban design theory and practice. Research undertaken in both the United Kingdom and the United States, for example, has demonstrated that a clear divide often exists between lay and professional tastes (Nassar 1998; Carmona *et al*. 2010). Carmona *et al.* (2010) point out that, "for most lay participants, awareness of environmental quality derives from personal experience and the media rather than from formal education" (p. 256). Therefore, acquiring a broad knowledge base that encompasses both expert and local opinion is critical for urban design professionals because, as catalogued in Chapter 2, today's urban design discipline emerged in response to the dramatic failings of public sector-led modernist urban design and planning. Furthermore, the emerging ecological urban design theories, outlined in the previous amendment, take pains to emphasize the role that local people must play in the design of their neighbourhoods (Ellin 2006; Hester 2008). Indeed, methods of collaborative decision-making are central to recent reconceptualizations of urban design, as demonstrated vividly in Hester's criteria (see: Figure 3.5.) and in this cogent summary offered by Newman and Jennings (2008):

> Sustainability rests on the ability of people to participate in decision-making processes and to contribute to the well-being of their communities…This inclusion of a diversity of perspectives increases the resilience of societies, providing a wider range of solutions and responses to challenges and change (p. 156).

The argument that community collaboration should be accepted as a guiding principle for future urban design practice mirrors one of the central tenets of contemporary planning theory, the 'communicative' approach (Forester 1989; Innes 1995; Healey 1997; Innes and Booher 2010). In this respect, the theoretical endeavours of Patsy Healey (1997) are particularly instructive. Healey redefines planning as a process of collaborative governance and argues that to solve planning problems effectively a culture of inter-communicative processes should be cultivated. She suggests that formal governance practices provide the 'hard infrastructure' that is needed to constrain dominant power centres, regulate competition and distribute public goods, but proposes that they be supported by a new 'soft infrastructure' of relation-building. This, she argues, would exist as a space for diverse stakeholders to address collective concerns using their shared social, intellectual and political capital and, in so doing, get to the very heart of local planning problems. What Healey offers is a theory of planning practice that attempts to recognize the fragmented nature of contemporary life, where multiple interests challenge the traditional conception of a shared 'public interest'. She believes that involving a diverse group of stakeholders in a critical and discursive dialogue would be more likely to bring attention to social justice, environmental accountability and cultural distinctiveness.

Healey's conceptualization aligns comfortably with the arguments made by Newman and Jennings (2008), stated above, who contend that the successful implementation of an ecologically sensitive design and planning policy framework demands an "active partnerships within or among the business, government, and civil sectors at the neighbourhood, citywide and bioregional levels" (p. 170). Timothy Beatley makes a similar case in his 2004 book *Native to Nowhere*, where he states that "effective place-building is clearly about democracy and participation" (p. 321). He argues that citizens must be provided with robust forums for participation so they can have their voices heard as part of the decision-making process. Recognizing the need for what Healey terms 'soft infrastructure', Beatley emphasizes the role that social networks and values must play when a city attempts to embed an ecology-focused policy framework into its planning and urban design strategy. Hester's (2008) thesis, reviewed in support of the previous amendment, goes further, contending that citizens should learn to connect and interact with each other through the environments they live in. Strong democracy, he argues, "cannot blossom without the forum for thoughtful and deliberative cooperation" (p. 16).

Turning to practice, the advances made in urban design and planning theory have encouraged a lot of interest in collaborative techniques. This has been hastened by a phenomenon known as the 'charrette', an innovative approach to public engagement and participation initiated by the New Urbanism movement but increasingly used in all manner of design and planning forums. Charrettes aims to bring together a range of local stakeholders for a condensed period of time (typically two or three days) to produce a design in real-time. At a typical event, a professional design team introduces the principles of New Urbanism, gains insight from local people about their particular needs and wants, and then attempts to build consensus around a final project. Yet, while admirable, the charrette process has received sustained criticism for being misleading due to the manner in which it is run. As Grant writes:

> In the *charrette* process, the rhetoric of local control encounters the reality of slick graphics, romantic watercolours, and celebrity designers…Although the participants may see local concerns in the outcomes, an outside observer may also read professional values in the plans…With the wide media interest in photogenic new urbanist communities, we cannot easily separate fashion fad, consumer preferences, expert opinion, and democratic choice (2006, p. 184).

Grant's characterization of the charrette process mirrors a conclusion that Bond and Thompson-Fawcett (2007) reach following an evaluation of a design appraisal charrette in New Zealand. Recognizing that the guiding concepts behind charrette processes actually embody some of the key principles of communicative planning, Bond and Thompson-Fawcett (2007) argue that charrettes, and other design participation exercises, are best evaluated through a normative framework of communicative planning. The authors devised a series of criteria, drawn ostensibly from the work of Healey (1997) and other communicative planning theorists (Forester 1989; Innes 1995), which "enabled the study to focus on the conditions and procedural outcomes that is believed will constitute an effective participatory process" (2007, p. 452).

These criteria are shown in Figure 3.6. overleaf. Using this framework in New Zealand, Bond and Thompson-Fawcett discovered that the procedures of the engagement exercise they witnessed "demonstrate a faith in urban design expertise and New Urbanist principles over and above the broader benefits of achieving inclusive participatory processes" (p. 468). The breadth of Bond and Thompson-Fawcett's (2007) framework provides the necessary clarity for me to amend Punter's principles, increasing their analytical rigor in respect to participation and engagement with communities. Furthermore, the framework begins to address my original concern that a divergence exists in Punter's principles between his commitments to urban design collaboration on the one hand and the precedence he awards to particular urban design criteria on the other. As I have demonstrated, in practice this remains a complex and often conflictual relationship – although the more thoughtful criteria offered by ecological theorists are a positive development. Either way, the conditions that Bond and Thompson-Fawcett (2007) provide will allow me to more rigorously analyze the form and function of urban design participation on Toronto's waterfront and examine the links between local knowledge and expert opinion in urban design processes with greater confidence.

Figure 3.6. An Ethic for Communicative Participation
(Summarized from: Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007, p. 452)

Conditions *for* communicative participatory process

- Provides an equal opportunity of access to the process. That is, it is inclusive and representative.
- Provides equal opportunities to participate in the process:
    - Being open, honest, legitimate, and engendering trust; and
    - Accommodating differences in styles of speech and the capacity to reason.
- Ensures power distortions are minimized through careful listening, interpretation, and facilitation

Outcomes *of* Communicative Participation

- Shared understanding is achieved.
- Social learning occurs:
    - Shared understandings are developed;
    - Collective interest over-rides self-interest; and
    - Conflict is resolved effectively.
- The process engenders a sense of ownership of the outcomes.

Amendment 3: Urban Designers as Market Actors

In his twelfth and final principle, Punter (2007a) explains that attracting urban design expertise is one of the most significant challenges a governing authority faces when trying to deliver an integrated approach to urban design as public policy. Other urban design researchers share this assessment. For example, when reporting in 1997, England's Urban Design Task Force[7] concluded that the lack of urban design skills among professional planners and architects was a major barrier to achieving the 'urban renaissance' they envisaged (Carmona *et al*. 2010). Yet, in recent years, this trend appears to be changing as more and more students embark upon urban design studies at the graduate level and design competitions become increasingly popular as a design delivery tool (Lehrer 2011; Tolson 2011).

I argue in this final amendment to Punter's principles, that, in addition to core urban design skills, public sector urban designers should also acquire a keen sense of the local economy and, in particular, the operation of property markets. This supports the many instances throughout the twelve principles where Punter emphasizes the important role that financial and legal mechanisms play in enabling and enforcing urban design objectives. For example, in his second principle, Punter argues that an urban design plan should be a realistic proposition within the context of the local economy, while in his second group of principles, "Design, Planning and Zoning", he explains how obligations for public realm improvements and bonusing might be utilized by the governing authority to institutionalize design into the planning system. The amendment is equally important because of the commonly held belief among urban designers that public goods can increase the value of property development projects (Carmona *et al*. 2002; Hack and Sagalyn 2011). The example of Vancouver's seawall (see: Figure 3.2) demonstrates quite clearly the "search for *reciprocity* and *mutuality*" (Hack and Sagalyn 2011, p. 259 (their italics)) that can occur between the public and private sector during the planning decision-making process, as the former strives for amenity contributions for the public good and the latter clambers for increased sale values.

[7] The New Labour government set up the Urban Design Task Force soon after the 1997 UK General Election. It was charged with identifying how England could achieve an 'urban renaissance' through improved urban design practice. The Task Force was chaired by world-renowned architect Lord Richard Rogers and published its findings in the 1999 report: *Towards an Urban Renaissance.*

The substance of this third amendment is founded in Adams and Tiesdell's paper "Planners as Market Actors: Rethinking State-Market Relations in Land and Property" (2010). After stating that the built environment is constructed and funded primarily by the private sector, the authors argue that public sector planners – into which group we shall add public sector urban designers – are very often detached from the operation of property markets. In Adams and Tiesdell's estimation, this situation causes many public sector planners to merely accept or perpetuate current market conditions. For this reason, they argue that a truly effective planner should develop a deep understanding of how property markets operate, as well as acquire the skills to influence decisions that property developers make. Adams and Tiesdell propose that planners be recast as "market actors" (2010, p. 188) and contend that such a reconceptualization will give planners the tools to "frame and re-frame land and property markets" (p. 189).

The authors ground their proposal in an emerging view of economics that classifies markets as being 'socially constructed'. Drawing connections between sociology and economy, this radical perspective places the classical language of the free market under scrutiny. Terms such as supply and demand, efficiency and competition are questioned and, instead, the social and power-laden character of the marketplace is emphasized (Smith *et al*. 2006). The financial transactions that ordinarily take place in markets are therefore re-imagined as social transactions that are vulnerable to dominant power structures. Adams and Tiesdell argue that, in this context, "it becomes fallacious to place planning and the market in a dichotomous relationship" (2010, p. 194). In fact, the authors contend, public sector planners are actually *already* market actors. The many regulatory tools at their disposal provide them with formidable power to shape and reshape local conditions, as well as stimulate particular areas of the economy.

Urban designers, as we know, can exercise their regulatory power through financial and legal tools, including: bonusing, public amenity agreements, master plans, design codes and competitions. Such tools can bring certainty and structure to a local property market because they allow the development community to ascertain where investment might be directed in the future and how risk-laden a long-term financial decision might be (Madanipour 2006). For this reason, urban designers should be highly attuned to the positive and negative impacts of the various regulatory tools placed at their disposal. Not

only must they recognize the important enabling role these tools can play in the delivery of higher quality urban design outcomes, they must also know when and how to employ them. Ultimately, any regulatory power that public sector urban designers enjoy should exist to protect the public interest against the worst excesses of private sector-led property development. It is critical that urban designers, and planners, not only *become* market actors but also realize that they *already are* market actors engaged in the "framing and reframing of local land and property markets" (Adams and Tiesdell 2010, p. 198). They must, therefore, act accordingly. And, to help planners 'act accordingly', the authors (2010) propose three areas where their capacities as market actors might be enhanced, these are: market-rich information and knowledge, market-relevant skills and market-rooted networks (see: Figure 3.7. overleaf).

My third amendment to Punter's principles integrates these three capacities. The concept of 'planners as market actors' is particularly relevant to current urban development practices, not only in Toronto but also in other cities around the world, where the complexities and powers of context-specific property markets impact the role that planners and urban designers can play in the shaping of the public realm (Madanipour 2006; Cuthbert 2007). As well, the lines between public and private sector project management have become blurred because large-scale development schemes are increasingly 'co-produced' (Tiesdell and Adams 2011). By recognizing that the market is socially constructed, this conceptualization attempts – at least in part – to address Alexander Cuthbert's (2007) wider critique of the urban design discipline, outlined in Chapter 2, that, as a field of praxis, urban design fails to grasp the myriad socio-economic processes that actually shape cities. Adams and Tiesdell's (2010) capacities enhance the skills benchmark that Punter sets out in his final principle and provide me with additional arguments to examine private and public-private development projects.

Figure 3.7. Capacities for Acting in the Market
(Summarized from: Adams and Tiesdell 2010, pp. 198-203)

Market-Rich Information and Knowledge
Rich qualitative knowledge of the local market can be as important for planners as robust statistics:

- Planners should obtain information on local land and property markets. Better market information enables planners to understand more clearly how 'windows of development opportunity' open and close unevenly between places and, where possible, to take advantage of this information.
- Planners should better understand the motives and behaviours of private-sector implementation agents, in order to recognize which landowners, developers, and investors are most likely to share policy agendas, and which are likely to be more hostile.

Market Related Skills
As effective market actors, planners need more than a shallow awareness of development economics. To challenge the *status quo* they must have strong negotiation skills:

- Skills in negotiation are particularly important as planning authorities increasingly extract more and more financial benefits from developers.
- Planners should not engage in "win-lose" negotiation, but practice collaborative (or integrative) negotiation in which planning action helps transform market potential, rather than simply dividing up the spoils in a different way.

Market-Rooted Networks
As urban development often occurs in partnership with the private sector, planners need to work successfully with a multiplicity of actors:

- Planners should aim to build capacity with private sector actors. This requires greater trust, mutual respect, and a willingness to work together in partnership to achieve mutually beneficial and desirable outcomes.
- To improve practice, planners should aim to break down hostile barriers between the private and public sector through mutual learning and improved communication.

An Amended Framework for Evaluating Urban Design as Public Policy

The three amendments proposed in the preceding paragraphs have been integrated into a revised version of Punter's twelve principles. These thirteen principles are illustrated in Figure 3.8. overleaf and have been named "Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy". Although Punter calls the original twelve "Principles for Progressive Design Review", he also states that the principles could be used to evaluate all aspects of an urban design process (2007a); my recasting reflects this wider applicability.

Figure 3.8. Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy
(Amended from: Punter 2007a, p. 171)

Community Collaboration and Visioning

1. Providing the conditions for all members of the community to be involved in the process of developing and committing to a coordinated vision of urban design (Revised from Brennan's Law) (Lai 1988, p. 426; Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007, p. 452).
2. Developing and monitoring urban design plans (both citywide and for specific sites) that are supported by the community (Lai 1988, p. 429).
3. Establishing a collaborative process for the periodic review of urban design plans in which design conflicts are resolved through mutual learning (Lai 1988, p. 429; Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007, p. 452; Adams and Tiesdell 2010, pp. 198-203).

Broad and Substantive Ecological Design Principles

4. Basing urban design guidelines on generic (ecological) urban design principles that are developed in conjunction with the community and supported by contextual analysis (Blaesser 1994, p. 50; Hester 2008).
5. Using a collaborative process to explore how ecological urban design principles, such as amenity, accessibility, community, vitality, energy efficiency and resilient form, might be mutually beneficial to all local stakeholders (Bentley 1990, p. 69; Scheer 1994, p. 9; Hester 2008, p. 9).
6. Articulating desired and mandatory urban design outcomes in the design review process (Blaesser 1994, p. 50), while allowing spontaneity, vitality, innovation and pluralism to flourish.

Planning and Zoning Frameworks

7. Integrating zoning into planning and addressing the limitations of zoning (Lai 1988, p. 431-432).
8. Harnessing the broadest range of actors and instruments (tax, subsidy, land acquisition, design competitions, etc.) to promote better design (Lai 1988, p. 430-431; Tolson 2011, pp. 159-161)
9. Mitigating the exclusionary effects of control strategies and urban design regulation (Lai 1988, p. 430).

Due Process

10. Identify clear *a priori* rules and guidelines for urban design intervention to avoid arbitrary discretionary decision-making (Lai 1988, p. 425; Scheer 1994, pp. 6-7).
11. Establishing proper administrative procedures with written opinions to manage discretion and implementing an efficient, constructive and effective permitting process that is supported by an appropriate appeal mechanism (Lai 1988, p. 427; Scheer 1994, pp. 3-4).

Appropriate Skills and Expertise

12. Providing appropriate design skills and expertise to support the urban design policymaking and review process (Lai 1988, p. 431; Scheer 1994, pp. 4-5).
13. Equipping planning and urban design staff with knowledge of the local property market and advancing their skills in collaborative negotiation to build capacity with public and private sector actors (Adams and Tiesdell 2010, pp. 198-203).

Concluding Summary: A Guiding Definition of Urban Design

In this chapter I introduced, discussed and critiqued a series of 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design Review' that were developed by the British urban designer John Punter. The principles crystallize and summarize the wider 'urban design as public policy' dialogue, which, from the 1960s onwards, emerged as part of the postmodern urban design discipline. For Punter, the principles provided an evaluative platform for his case studies of US West Coast Cities (1999), Vancouver (2003) and Sydney (2005). My amended 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy', which were introduced in the second half of the chapter, build upon Punter's earlier work and will likewise be used to analyze and evaluate an urban design process, this time on Toronto's waterfront. I will refer to the amended principles at various points in the upcoming results chapters and will return to them specifically during the concluding chapter, when I present a thoroughgoing evaluation of the waterfront urban design process and answer the project research questions.

As a platform for the forthcoming case study chapters and considering some of the theoretical criticisms that have been laid at urban design's door in this and the last chapter (Cuthbert 2003; 2006; Madanipour 2006; 2007; 2011), I would also like to end this theoretical framework with a brief definition of urban design. I see urban design interwoven as both a process and product. In this sense, and to borrow Tiesdell and Adam's (2011) phrase, I hold to a 'policy tools' definition of urban design and believe that a carefully devised combination of public policy and associated implementation devices (process) can be harnessed to bring about a better quality public realm (product).

But what is a 'better public realm'? Like most urban designers, my perception of what physical components make a better quality public realm is a normative one, informed by lived experience as much as theory. When imagining a successful product of the urban design process, I share the viewpoint of many postmodern urban design theorists who were inspired by the ideas expressed by Cullen (1961), Jacobs (1961) and Lynch (1960). Finding value in both the artistic and social traditions of urban design, I believe in creating a legible and navigable public realm that encompasses a traditional urban grid, mixed use buildings and vibrant public spaces, but jumbled with the components of cities I admire, such as the block patterns of Barcelona, the public seawall in Vancouver and the building typologies of Amsterdam. Yet, in equal measure I remain sceptical of the conservative aesthetic

tendencies that are often shackled to postmodern urbanism. Traditional urban design principles do not have to result in the direct reproduction of historical aesthetic styles. As tastes shift and change, postmodern urban design principles should be used as a framework to explore innovative and contemporary design ideas. In this context, for example, I am inspired by theories and practices that push the boundaries of urban design into the ecological dimension and that challenge us to think about the products of urban design in the context of the natural environment and its future sustainability. To this overarching conceptualization, I must also add a cautionary note. When understood as an interwoven process and product, urban design immediately becomes a dynamic phenomenon, which, as Cuthbert (2007) argues, is shaped as much by social, economic, political and natural processes as it is by professional urban designers. Therefore, it is important to expand the idea of urban design as a *process* beyond the straightjacket of 'policy tools' and see it as relational entity that engages a spectrum of stakeholders (Healey 1997). While I might currently define the products of the urban design process through a combination of my lived experience, postmodern urban design theories and emerging ecological theses, I believe it is crucial to remain open to the shifting definitions that will inevitably evolve as new knowledge is created and shared.

In the next chapter I describe the research methods that were used to collect and analyze the data for this research project. From here, the dissertation moves to the research findings and I use the theoretical framework described in this chapter to analyze the history of waterfront revitalization and the specificities of urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront.

CHAPTER 4

Research Methodology: The Case of Toronto's Waterfront

The purpose and objectives for this study generated a series of research questions, outlined in Chapter 1, that seek to penetrate the processes and outcomes of urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront. From the outset, I decided that a qualitative methodology was the most suitable vehicle for this endeavour. Qualitative research "locates the observer in the world" (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, p. 4) and challenges the researcher to interpret what he or she sees, reads and hears. By seeking to understand the meaning of the subject at hand, the qualitative researcher focuses on a small number of cases in their natural setting and recognizes the importance of piecing together multiple perspectives and experiences from verbal, textual and visual sources (Creswell 1998; Winchester 2005; Denzin and Lincoln 2008). Translating this into an actionable framework, the qualitative approach I adopted provides the necessary methodological foundation and analytical rigour to delve into the complex web of political decisions, governance institutions, actors, planning policies and design practices on the waterfront, as well as the physical *on-the-ground* results of implementation.

In this chapter I provide a defence of my chosen qualitative research strategy and offer a reflective account of the data collection methods and analytical tools used. I begin with a critical introduction to the case study method and outline the reasons why the single case study approach was chosen as the appropriate strategy. This leads to a detailed commentary on the three primary data collection procedures I employed in the field: interviews, archives and documents, as well as visual observations. I end the chapter with a description of the analytical tools I used to interpret the data collected, before offering a series of reflections on the tactics exercised throughout my research journey to ensure the investigation was both ethically sound and valid.

Research Strategy

Qualitative research can be approached in a variety of ways, including ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology (Creswell 1998). However, I have selected the case study method as the most suitable for investigating urban design policymaking and implementation on Toronto's waterfront. Its specific orientation towards phenomena occurring in a geographically contained area made it a natural choice. Rooted in the qualitative tradition, case studies allow for the judicious interpretation of real-life situations (Yin 2003) and provide a framework in which to situate the personalities of actors involved in the urban design process, as well as the roles of institutions operating in Toronto, within the delineated context of the waterfront[8].

The Role of the Case Study Method in Urban Design Research

Since the early 1960s, one of the chief contributions of the urban design discipline has been various normative design principles and typologies developed by theorists, empirical researchers and practitioners (Cuthbert 2007). This important, yet controversial, trend was more thoroughly examined in Chapter 2, but it is necessary to reiterate that urban designers have primarily concerned themselves with imagining better ways of *doing* urban design, often in response to modern architecture and rational-comprehensive planning practice (See for example: Jacobs 1961; Lynch 1981; Bentley *et al*. 1985; Hester 2008). Empirically grounded investigations of urban design processes and, in particular, studies such as my own, which attempt to uncover the array of institutional, political and cultural forces that impact the design of cities, have been less prevalent. Of course, there are notable exceptions. As Chapters 2 and 3 explored in some detail, the examination of 'urban design as public policy', initiated by Jonathan Barnett (1974) and advanced by authors including Richard Lai (1988) and John Punter (1999; 2003; 2005; 2007a), has concentrated on the various institutional mechanisms, policy tools and discretionary measures used by city planners to enhance the role of urban design within the planning system. It is within this tradition that I am situating my own work.

[8] The geographic boundaries of the Toronto waterfront case are shown in Figure 1.2. (See Chapter 1, p. 12)

From a methodological perspective, researchers of urban design as public policy have relied on case studies to help them piece together the intricacies of context-specific urban design practices. Yin (2003) tells us that the case study "tries to illuminate a *decision* or set of decisions; why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result" (p. 12). The method can be employed to either singular or multiple situations, and, in some disciplines, notably political science, the distinction is often referred to as the difference between single and comparative cases. According to Yin (2003) the number of units under investigation does not alter the aim of the case study method because "every type of design will include the desire to analyze contextual conditions in relation to the case" (p. 46). For urban designers motivated to examine the politics, policymaking and institutional dynamics that generate space in the city, the case study method has proven to be a valuable vehicle for uncovering the complexities of both site-specific and citywide approaches to urban design.

While my own case of Toronto's waterfront is singular, researchers in the urban design as public policy tradition have employed both single and multiple case studies to investigate the dynamics of urban design processes. In *Urban Design Downtown: Poetics and Politics of Form* (1998), for example, Loukaitous-Sideris and Banerjee use multiple case studies in three Californian cities – Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego – to explore the changing definition of public space in North American downtowns. Combining a series of interviews with planners, designers and developers, a review of policies and plans, as well as observations of current conditions, the authors uncovered a pervasive culture of 'deal-making' on development projects. As a result, new public spaces, which had historically been supplied by government, were increasingly being provided by the private sector. Noting the complicity of planners and urban designers in this practice, the authors made the case that contemporary public spaces were specifically targeted to elites, generating a polarization between the old downtowns of the cities in their study and the new, corporate, downtowns.

Punter's *Design Guidelines in American Cities* (1999) details the urban design policymaking and review processes in the West Coast cities of Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Irvine and San Diego, and *The Vancouver Achievement* (2003), as I have mentioned in previous chapters, presents a comprehensive overview of the institutions, personalities and

procedures that brought about design-led planning in Vancouver. Both studies employed the case study method. Like Loukaitous-Sideris and Banerjee (1998), Punter draws together personal accounts, documents and observations to build his data-rich cases. As Chapter 2 more thoroughly recounts, Punter harnesses the case study method in his Vancouver project to demonstrate how the historical chronology of urban design and planning decision-making in Vancouver led to the evolution of a design-sensitive planning system created in cooperation with citizens, design professionals and the development community.

Focusing on the design aspects of three large-scale waterfront redevelopment projects in Melbourne, Dovey (2005) likewise works in the case study tradition. Utilizing a mixture of interviews, documents and observations, the author develops a critical perspective on neoliberal redevelopment practice. Spanning twenty years, the case studies demonstrate the extent to which public-spirited urban design practices can be overshadowed by powerful public-private partnerships and fantastical architectural imagery. Reaching similar conclusions, but focused on an altogether different context, Moore-Milroy's 2009 book, *Thinking Planning and Urbanism*, uses a case study to explore the complex story of Dundas Square in Toronto. In keeping with the methodological approach of delving deep into a given situation, Moore-Milroy called on a variety of sources, textual verbal and visual, to probe the politics of planning and urban design. Constructing the case as a chronology, she unravels a planning and design process dominated by influential corporate interests in which the new public space that emerged at the heart of the city's downtown was the first in Toronto that could be used to house commercial gated events. These case studies examine urban design as public policy in different contexts and from contrasting theoretical angles, but they all exhibit the value of what Denzin and Lincoln have termed "quilt making" (2008, p. 5). In other words, each one demonstrates how contextual data from a variety of sources can be stitched together and used to tell the story of an urban design process.

A Case Against Cases?

By helping the reader to comprehend the complex realities of practice, the function of the case study method may appear immediately worthwhile to those already committed to qualitative inquiry. But, this approach has long been stigmatized for its apparent failure to offer scientific generalizations (Stake 1995; Flyvbjerg 2001; Yin 2003; Flyvbjerg 2011).

Preferring to use scientific deduction to make general assertions about large population samples, many quantitative researchers dismiss the case study method. The quantitative tradition tends to question the validity of case study data because of the emphasis it places on uniqueness (Stake 1995) and argue that in-depth, detail-orientated studies produce unproductive forms of knowledge (Flyvbjerg 2001). Many qualitative researchers roundly dispute this assertion.

Yin (2003), for example, argues that although case studies are unsuitable for making statistical generalizations they can be used to expand and improve upon theoretical propositions. The Danish planning theorist Bent Flyvbjerg, whose in-depth case study of a transportation planning exercise in Aalborg uncovered the pervasiveness of power and special interests in the planning process (1998), offers a similar defence of the case study method. In his 2001 book, *Making Social Science Matter*, he characterizes the suggestion that "one cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case" (p. 66) as a core misunderstanding of the method. Flyvbjerg directly challenges the belief that formal generalization is always the most valuable source of knowledge, arguing that it is only one of many ways that people acquire information; transferability and 'the force of the example' are wrongly underestimated, he asserts. Likewise, Stake (1995) argues that the purpose of a case is to maximize knowledge, not to offer a sample. The first obligation of the case study researcher, he states, should be to emphasize particularization. A case should be valued for what it is and what it accomplishes, rather than how it is different from other cases.

Defining the Case of Toronto's Waterfront

Stake (1995) argues that two types of case study exist, *intrinsic* cases and *instrumental* cases. A case is intrinsic when the researcher focuses on the particulars of a specific case, rather than on a general problem. In these instances, the case is not chosen because the object of study is given. An instrumental case, on the other hand, is specifically employed to offer insights into a more general problem and can be chosen by the researcher. When selecting an instrumental case, Flyvbjerg (2001) argues that the researcher should avoid typical cases because they tend to lack rich information. He argues that atypical, or extreme, examples should be sought instead. In these instances, more actors are involved and the institutional mechanisms are more varied. In other words, they have the potential to yield

richer information. Flyvbjerg (2011) calls these 'critical cases' because they have "strategic importance in relation to the general problem" (p. 307) and are more likely to confirm or refute particular propositions or hypotheses.

Falling neatly into the second of Stake's categories and exhibiting a series of unique atypical properties, Toronto's waterfront can be defined as an instrumental, critical case. It is instrumental, rather than intrinsic, because my research explores the general problem of integrating urban design as public policy into planning systems. In this theoretical context, Toronto's waterfront was selected as a critical case to examine this wider problem because, at 800 hectares, the redevelopment effort is currently the largest venture of its kind in North America and one of the biggest brownfield redevelopment projects in the world (Waterfront Toronto 2010). Moreover, the redevelopment is unique in Canada. As explained in Chapter 1, attempts to revitalize Toronto's waterfront have been fraught with political and jurisdictional difficulties for decades, often complicated by shifting institutional arrangements and opposing urban design agendas (Desfor and Laidley 2011). But the latest redevelopment effort, beginning in 1999, saw the creation of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC), a quasi-autonomous agency of government charged with implementing a redevelopment plan that would be sensitive to urban design. Considering that the TWRC has since won awards for its waterfront planning efforts (Canadian Institute of Planners 2011; The Waterfront Center 2011) and has implemented numerous design initiatives never before seen in Toronto, including a design review panel and international design competitions, the waterfront stands out as an atypical instrumental case of critical value with the potential to uncover a mine of rich qualitative information.

Data Collection Procedures

One of the most attractive features of the case study method is the freedom it gives researchers to call on multiple data sources (Merriam 1988). The question of what counts as a valid data source within the case study tradition remains an open one; a comprehensive list would be both extensive and fluid. However, it is generally accepted that some combination of documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations and physical artefacts are often part of the mix (Yin 2003). In the urban design case studies mentioned earlier, we saw a range of these tools employed, most notably

documents, archives, interviews and direct observations (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee 1998; Punter 1999; Punter 2003; Dovey 2005; Moore-Milroy 2009). Stake (1995) describes the process of selecting data sources well when he writes that "the researcher should have a connoisseur's appetite for the best persons, places and occasions. "'Best' usually means those that best help us understand the case" (p. 56). In my case, I thought that the 'best' data sources for the study of urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront were interviews, archival data and documents and direct observations. Interviews provided the personal accounts of the Toronto waterfront story, while documents and archival data helped me piece together the iterative design and planning processes. To support these sources, I also employed direct observations to address the outcomes of the urban design process – although to a lesser extent, as the waterfront remains under construction.

I collected the data for this study over a period of three years, between 2009 and 2011. Initially, I undertook an informal round of document and archival data collection during the spring and summer of 2009, when I spent nine months living in the field reading for my PhD Comprehensive Examination and familiarizing myself with the political and planning culture of Toronto. A year and half later, between February and April 2011, I returned to Toronto to complete the formal portion of my fieldwork. During this intensive visit, I conducted the bulk of my interviews, collected the majority of my document and archival data and completed my direct observations. I made a final supplemental field study visit in December 2011 to 'tie up loose ends' and collect additional data sources. My experience employing each of the data collection tools is explained below, with a particular emphasis on interviewing.

Interviews

From qualitative interviews the researcher is able to access the unique observations of others. Discussions with real people about real events offer a window into history and can oftentimes "rescue events that would otherwise be lost" (Weiss 1994, p. 2). In-depth interviews, in particular, provide a forum to listen; a place where the researcher can interpret experiences (Warren 2001). To effectively tackle my research questions, I wanted to compile multiple descriptions of the waterfront design experience and develop a textured understanding of the complexities of urban design policymaking and implementation. Considering, as well, the scope of the Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public

Policy amended from Punter's work (2007a) and outlined in Chapter 3, it was clear that I would need to enlist a cross-section of research participants to understand how urban design policy had been implemented on Toronto's waterfront between 1999 and 2010.

Before travelling to Toronto in February 2011 to begin the formal component of my fieldwork, I set about deciding who my core interview informants would be. As my primary objective was to speak to those with an intimate knowledge of the waterfront urban design process, I compiled this preliminary list using non-probability sampling. Rather than selecting a random sample of the population, non-probability sampling purposively targets individuals who can offer unique insights on a subject because of a position they hold or expertise they have (Denscombe 2003). My familiarity with Toronto's waterfront story, developed through previous field visits, secondary literature and online sources, meant I could generate a list of core informants with relative ease. In fact, the process was so efficient and the dynamics of waterfront planning so varied and complex, I quickly compiled a list of some seventy names. Recognizing that a leaner roster would undoubtedly lead to richer and more focused data, I developed a series of nine categories to refine the number and range of potential research participants, as shown in Figure 4.1. below and overleaf.

Figure 4.1. Informant Categories

- **City of Toronto**
  Current and retired planning and urban design staff.
- **Waterfront Toronto (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation)**
  Current and retired board members, executives and staff.
- **Developers**
  With projects built, under construction and proposed on the waterfront.
- **Designers**
  Architects, landscape architects and urban designers working on waterfront.
- **Politicians**
  Current and former councillors, mayors, provincial and federal members of parliament and political staff.
- **Community Representatives and the Voluntary Sector**
  Current and former community leaders, neighbourhood association members, non-government organization officials and staff.

Figure 4.1. (cont.) Informant Categories

- **Media**
  Current and former reporters, columnists and bloggers at local and national newspapers and magazines.

- **Academic Researchers**
  Current and emeritus faculty at University of Toronto, York University, Ryerson University.

- **Personal Contacts**
  Local contacts with familiarly and interest in waterfront planning issues (although not direct involvement).

By reading biographical information on the potential participants identified, I was able to detect two core informants in each category. I then used the process commonly known as snowball sampling (Weiss 1994; Berg 2001) to further refine the list. This meant that I asked each of the core informants to recommend additional interview subjects. Most of the time, the core informants and, later, the additional research participants suggested the names of individuals I had identified in my initial categorized list – although some new names were proposed. This iterative process of identification and interview helped me to build a comprehensive cross-section of research participants (see: Figure 4.2. overleaf). On reflection, the combination of a categorized list and the snowball sampling method also helped me to focus very clearly on who it was I needed to interview, and why.

As the categories clearly demonstrate and the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 attests, urban design is not an isolated practice. Inherently political and bridging multiple professions, it necessarily involves planners, architects, landscape architects and the development community, but also impacts the local political process. Neighbourhood associations, not-for-profit organizations, councillors and mayors are often intimately involved in urban design decisions too, especially in the case of large-scale development projects such as Toronto's waterfront. With this in mind, I estimated that a cross-section of approximately 30 to 35 interviews would be required to piece together the story of urban design on Toronto's waterfront. By this stage, I assumed that new participants would start to recommend informants that had already been interviewed and the data would begin to become repetitive. Qualitative researchers refer to this as the 'saturation point' (Merriam 1988; Johnson 2001). While in the field, however, I quickly recognized that the complexity of the Toronto waterfront story meant I needed to hear from more voices. Thus, in reality, it

was necessary to complete altogether 53 interviews before saturation was reached and a reasonable cross-section of participants had been interviewed.

Figure 4.2. Interview Participants

Category	Face-to-Face	Telephone	Informal
City of Toronto	11	1	
Waterfront Toronto	6		2
Developers	2		
Designers	12	1	
Politicians	2		
Community Representatives and the Voluntary Sector	4		
Media	1		
Academic Researchers	5		2
Personal Contact			3
Totals	**44**	**2**	**7**

I conducted the majority of my interviews as formal face-to-face discussions, although I had to complete a small number of formal telephone interviews and informal conversations[9]. During all of the formal face-to-face and telephone interviews I used a semi-structured, or semi-standardized, format. This permitted me to ask a series of predetermined questions, but also allowed the research participants to expand upon certain themes or go in new directions as the interviews progressed (Berg 2001; Denscombe 2003). I therefore developed a generic interview schedule that addressed the substantive themes of my central research questions (see: Appendix 1), although I always intended it to be a fluid document that would evolve over the course of the fieldwork. Using Berg's (1998) terminology, each individual schedule included a number of "essential questions" (p. 66) that were specifically designed to collect information pertaining to the central research questions, especially on the components of urban design policy and the planning decision-making practices that guided development. I began all of the interviews with a series of what Berg calls "throw-away questions" (p. 66) to build rapport with the research participants and also collect helpful demographic data. For example, I asked the interview subjects to explain their

[9] These informal conversations were limited to academic colleagues with an interest in the waterfront and personal contacts working in the design and planning industry in Toronto. While not formally recorded, the conversations were invaluable for improving my familiarity with the waterfront and its planning and design history. I also had two informal conversations with public relations staff at the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto who acted as 'gatekeepers' to the organization. Again, these interviews were not formally recorded, although the relationships that I established led directly to interviews with senior executives at the organization.

professional background, current position and awareness of the term urban design. To guarantee maximum richness in the data the individual schedules were also dominated by flexible "probing questions" (Berg 1998, p. 67). In all cases, I tailored the schedules to the expertise and background of the research participants, although frequently my informants would give answers to a question that would cause new themes to emerge and, therefore, lead me to generate new probes.

Without exception, the formal face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and informal conversations lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. I always conducted the face-to-face interviews at a location selected by the participant. This meant that I would travel to the participant's place of work, although in a small number of cases the participants chose to be interviewed at a coffee shop or restaurant. In three instances, I also organized secondary follow-up interviews because the research participant in question had played, or was continuing to play, a significant role in the design and planning on Toronto's waterfront and it was impossible to cover all the necessary themes during the first face-to-face session. Of the 53 people I interviewed, 36 were male and 17 were female; all were white-collar professionals. A significant number of the participants also held, or had held, powerful and influential positions in both the public and private sectors. Due to research ethics restrictions, I cannot divulge the names of my research participants[10], however, for illustrative purposes I can disclose that, among the study participants, were: two former mayors of the City of Toronto, a former federal cabinet minister, a former chief planner of Toronto, a political confidant of a past Canadian prime minster, senior private-sector financiers and executives, as well as numerous design professionals who had designed significant buildings and public spaces in Canada. The qualitative research literature refers to these types of respondents as 'elite'. Interviewing elites often creates unique challenges for the researcher, so it is important to briefly reflect in more depth upon this facet of my interview data collection.

Elites are defined as "individuals who occupy the top echelons of society…[and]…have more knowledge, money, and status and assume a higher position than others in the population" (Odendahl and Shaw 2001, p. 299). In the qualitative research literature, a distinction is also often made between 'philanthropic elites', those who have substantial

[10] Appendix 3 contains a list of the interviews conducted. It includes the job titles of the interview subjects and the time and date of each interview.

family wealth, ‘political elites’, those who play a significant role in the policymaking process, and ‘organizational elites’, those who hold an influential position in a public or private sector organization (Delaney 2007). Before I began my fieldwork, I was aware that many of the individuals I hoped to interview fell into one or more of these categories. To plan effectively for the interviews, a review of the small, but informative, literature on elite interviewing was therefore necessary. Probably the first thing the elite interviewer should consider is access. Elites frequently have daily schedules that are timetabled minute-by-minute. Therefore, any research interview request must have maximum impact. It is crucial to craft a tailored letter of introduction that demonstrates both the validity of the research and the expertise that a participant might bring to the project (Aberbach and Rockman 2002; Delaney 2007). My own generic introductory letter, shown in Appendix 2, succinctly describes my PhD research agenda, while leaving space for more specific details to be added on the particular individual and why they were selected. I formatted all of these letters of introduction on University of British Columbia stationary, affixed my signature and attached them to an email message. The literature suggests that this method tends to improve the chances of being taken seriously by an elite informant. A personal letter or simple email message is invariably less effective (Aberbach and Rockman 2002; Delaney 2007).

To guarantee securing an elite interview it is also important to be “politely persistent” (Aberbach and Rockman 2002, p. 673), but professional. In some cases, this would mean speaking first with a public relations official who acted as a ‘gatekeeper’ to the elite interview subject or their organization. I used these meetings to demonstrate that my research project was fully supported by the University of British Columbia and subject to rigorous ethical guidelines (described in later paragraphs). In addition, I used these encounters to promote or, in effect, ‘sell’ my research. If the gatekeepers went away excited by my project and confident about my professionalism, I ventured that my chances of gaining access would likely increase. Often the elites I wished to interview had executive assistants who also acted as gatekeepers. Using much the same strategy, I made a special effort to exhibit my professionalism by building rapport and appearing flexible. I was acutely aware that the elite individual’s decision to take part in the research would be influenced by their executive assistant’s impression of me. Finally, I turned to social media as a way to gain initial access to potential participants. This method proved particularly effective for reaching former politicians, whose email and phone details were often impossible to acquire. Using a

combination of these polite but persistent strategies, I successfully secured face-to-face interviews with all the elite participants I approached. While securing an interview with an elite is a challenge in its own right, there are equally important factors to consider during and after the interview. An elite interview is likely to be a one-off opportunity, so it is important to get it right. Delaney (2007) suggests that one of the most common afflictions experienced by elite interviewees is a version of 'Stockholm syndrome'. For those who study hostage situations, Stockholm syndrome is the psychological condition experienced by hostages who, after a period in captivity, begin to identify or defend the motives of their captor. For qualitative researchers undertaking elite interviews a similar form of seduction can occur. It is relatively easy to be enticed by wealth, success or celebrity and tempting to imagine oneself in the elite's position of power. Therefore, it is crucial not to lose objectivity (Delaney 2007).

During my fieldwork, I interviewed elites that I had only ever seen on television or read about in the newspaper. I also interviewed a number of nationally and internationally respected design professionals and met with organizational elites of significant financial wealth and influence. In one memorable case, for example, I conducted an interview in a sumptuous boardroom atop Toronto's tallest office building, a space that afforded panoramic views of Toronto and, indeed, much of Southern Ontario – a far cry from my modest PhD office! I was acutely aware that my one-to-one conversations with these elites were unique experiences and had the potential to be seductive, thus I was careful to follow Delaney's (2007) advice. He urges the elite interviewer to keep a healthy distance from the interview experience and to treat the data in the same way as data from non-elite interviews. Whatever the background or status of a research participant, he argues, all worldviews must hold equal significance. In addition, Delaney notes that the more elite interviewing experience the researcher has, the better. Being familiar with the format means it is less easy to be drawn in by power or celebrity. In this respect, I was lucky to have completed elite interviews on numerous research projects in the past; I was relatively aware of what to expect and how to react.

A further issue that qualitative researchers are advised to consider is the role that elites assume during research interviews. From his extensive experience, Delaney (2007) observes that elite subjects often act as spokespeople for their organization or political party

during a research interview and tend to stick to promoting the association they represent. I discovered that probing questions were the most effective tools for combating this problem. For example, when research participants told me about important decisions they had made, I would ask them to step back and explain *how* the decision was made and *who* was involved. More often than not, this would cause them to recount the event in more detail. In actuality 'regurgitating the party line' proved to be only a minor problem during my fieldwork. My elite research participants were remarkably candid during the interviews I conducted. In fact, a bigger problem I encountered was data reliability. Many of my elite research participants had a remarkable capacity to 're-write' history, claiming responsibility for good decision and blaming bad decision on others. This important discovery merely reaffirmed my earlier decision to collect data from verbal, textual and visual sources.

Documents and Archival Records

Documents and archival records can perform a number of critical functions in case study research. At the very start of a research project they can be used as a reference point for selecting core informants and for initiating the process of snowball sampling. During the interview process they can also be employed for simple tasks, such as verifying facts, figures, dates and times. But their most important function is corroborating and augmenting evidence from other sources (Yin 2003). In this respect, a document or archival record can offer the researcher more detailed insights into a particular event or open up fresh lines of enquiry about a subject discussed during an interview (Yin 2003). For the purposes of my study, numerous textual and visual sources were sought, including official records, policy documentation, master plans, architectural drawings and press clippings. While these sources were a crucial tool for cross-referencing, I also relied on them to understand the legal parameters of urban development in Toronto, explore the intricacies of government waterfront planning policy and visualize the urban design concepts and plans for the waterfront.

Before I began my data collection I was acutely aware that a large quantity of data would be amassed in the field. Adopting the same strategy that I used to select my interview research participants, I developed a series of categories to guide the data collection (see: Figure 4.3. overleaf). By the end of my formal fieldwork trips I had collected over 300 textual and visual

sources. Keeping these various documents and archival records organized and accessible for analysis was critical. In this respect, the computer software program EndNote X3 proved to be an essential bibliographical aid. Initially, I inputted the categories shown earlier in Figure 4.2. into EndNote X3. Then, as I collected the data, I recorded the bibliographical data of each document or archival source into the program. This process generated an invaluable library platform that was, and is, both highly accessible and simple to cross-reference.

Figure 4.3. Documents and Archival Records Categories/Example Sources

Government of Canada
- *Final Report*, Royal Commission on the Future of Toronto's Waterfront, 2002

Government of Ontario
- *Planning Act*, 1990
- *City of Toronto Act*, 2006
- *Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act*, 2002
-

City of Toronto
- Minutes of City Council (1999-2010, as appropriate)
- Planning Files and Archives (waterfront development applications, as appropriate)
- Staff Reports and Memoranda (as appropriate)
- *Our Toronto Waterfront: The Wave of the Future*, 1999
- *Toronto Official Plan*, 2002
- *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, 2001

Waterfront Toronto (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation and iterations)
- Annual Reports (2002-2010)
- *Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada*, 2000
- *Our Waterfront: Gateway to a New Canada*, 2002
- Minutes of Waterfront Design Review Panel (2005-2010)
- Community Meeting Minutes and Reports (2002-2010)
- *Toronto's Downtown Waterfront Strategic Plan*, 2010
- Architectural Drawings and Urban Design Plans (produced by consultants, as appropriate)

Community Reports and Publications
- Correspondence from Community Groups to Waterfront Toronto and City of Toronto
- *Obstacles and Opportunities: Realizing the Potential of the West Don Lands: Final Workshop Report*, 1999

Media Sources
- *The Globe and Mail* (articles pertaining to waterfront, as appropriate)
- *Toronto Star* (articles pertaining to waterfront, as appropriate)

Academic Sources
- Journal articles
- University working papers

It proved relatively easy to source the documents and archival records I required during my fieldwork. As my study focused on the period between 1999 and 2010, much of the textual and visual data I needed could be obtained on-line. Government sources, such as legal statutes, planning policy and staff reports, were almost always available on public websites and, if they were not, could be found at the City of Toronto Urban Affairs Library or in the collection and archives at The University of Toronto's Robarts Library. I was also able to view development application files at the City of Toronto planning department. These files are not posted online and their content, which includes email correspondence and internal memoranda, cannot be copied. I therefore took copious notes.

In addition to these government sources, the vast majority of the textual and visual data I collected came from the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, the organization charged with redevelopment on the waterfront. As a public-private corporation set up jointly by the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has a legal mandate to be open, transparent and accountable in all its operations (Ontario 2002). In this respect, as Chapter 6 will, in part, demonstrate, it has been remarkably consistent. From my perspective as a qualitative researcher, this corporate commitment proved enormously helpful. The TWRC/Waterfront Toronto makes almost all of its publications available online. I was able to download reports, plans and documents as and when I needed them, including many of the architectural drawings and urban design plans completed by consultants working on TWRC/Waterfront Toronto development sites. If I required a document or archive that was not posted on the website, I was able to request it directly from staff at the organization. I never encountered any problems with data access.

I had always assumed that official publications, such as the reports and plans detailed above, would be a dominant component of my data collection and analysis. What I had not anticipated was the crucial role that newspaper articles would play. While conducting my fieldwork, I discovered that my research participants occasionally provided contrasting accounts of the same decision-making process and placed the timings of key events in different months, or even years. As I mentioned earlier, some elite interview participants also enhanced their own role in a particular process. Furthermore, in a few examples, more than one individual claimed personal responsibility for the same important decision. Newspaper

articles were thus an invaluable resource to corroborate the stories and narratives collected through my interviews, especially as I worked to construct an accurate chronology of waterfront planning and design events. Not only that, journalistic sources provided a window into various waterfront redevelopment milestone. For decades, journalists have taken an active interest in the tri-government photo opportunities, plan launches and public participation events that periodically take place on Toronto's waterfront. From their reporting, I was able to paint a vivid picture of these events, while also collecting direct quotes from key actors who were present on the day. All the press clippings that I used were sourced from the online database, LexisNexis. This resource stores a digital copy of almost every newspaper article published around the globe in the last thirty years. Using the website's advanced search engine, I generated a chronological catalogue of articles concerning redevelopment, planning and urban design on Toronto's waterfront between 1999 and 2010. These were primarily sourced from *The Globe and Mail* and the local *Toronto Star* and, as with the documents and archival records I collected, were catalogued using EndNote X3.

Direct Observation

While the primary goal of this research project is to delve into the processes of urban design policymaking, decision-making and implementation on Toronto's waterfront, it is also concerned with the outcomes of implementation. As stated at the beginning of the chapter, such an investigation must include *on-the-ground* observations of the public realm. While interviews and documents and archival records offer a wealth of data, direct observations allow visual interpretations of the case to be made (Yin 2003; Kearns 2005). For urban designers, direct observations allow for the look of the built environment and the feel of the public realm to be recorded. Direct observations were completed systematically across the entire case study area. Particular attention was paid to the East Bayfront site because the partial design outcomes of this Waterfront Toronto project are assessed in Chapter 6. To gain the strongest possible impression of urban design on the waterfront, I completed most of my direct observations on foot. I devoted an entire week of my primary fieldwork visit, during March 2011, to walk every street and pathway on the waterfront, recording my direct observations through a combination of photographs and note taking.

While I assembled a wealth of photographic and textual information on my walks around the waterfront, I did encounter a few problems that need to be addressed. First of all, I completed the majority of my fieldwork in the winter months when the weather was cold and often snowy. Therefore, I realized it would be necessary to repeat the direct observations process again during the summer months so I could gain a more complete picture of seasonal variation. Regrettably, a combination of financial and time restrictions prevented me from returning to the field during the warmer part of the year. Thankfully, one of my personal contacts in Toronto agreed to complete this process on my behalf. To guide his work, I provided a detailed list of requirements and an annotated site map. Retracing my steps around the waterfront during late August 2011, he compiled an extensive bank of photographs.

The second challenge I faced was the sheer size of Toronto's waterfront. I recognized that conducting direct observations at street-level alone would limit the effectiveness of my analysis. To develop a clearer sense of the strategic master planning objectives, such as building massing and the relationships between buildings and open spaces, I also completed direct observations 'from above'. To do this, I used a combination of publically available digital satellite images and a series of photographs taken from the observation deck of the CN Tower, which rises approximately 1,700 feet above the waterfront district and conveniently provides panoramic views of the waterfront lands.

Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis of qualitative case study data is not an exact science and in projects such as this one, where there is a significant amount of verbal, textual and visual data to decode, the task is one of "rigorous empirical thinking…sufficient presentation of evidence and careful consideration of alternative interpretations" (Yin 2003, p. 127). However, there are analytical tools available that can greatly improve the process of organization and categorization. The main tool I employed was content analysis. This quasi-quantitative method condenses and systematizes transcribed information and prepares it for comparison and interpretation (Berg 2001; Yin 2003). To support this analysis, I also employed my own normative sense of good urban design, define in Chapters 2 and 3, to comment, critique and reflect on the quality of the emerging built form and public realm.

Content Analysis

Content analysis can be used on various sources of information, including all of those employed in my fieldwork. It provides direct access to the words and phrases contained in the interviews recorded, documents and archival records collected and the observations made. From analysis, common themes can be extrapolated from the data (Berg 2001). To undertake content analysis requires a series of codes to be developed. These allow for key phrases, ideas or themes to be identified. The data are then sorted so the frequency or regularity of various information streams, and the context in which they appear, can be examined (Cope 2005).

When developing a system of coding for content analysis, it is critical to highlight the difference between *manifest* and *latent* messages in the data (Berg 2001; Cope 2005) Manifest content is that which is obvious and on the surface (Cope 2005), while latent content is more subtle and interpretative, what Berg (1998) calls "the symbolism underlying the physical data" (p. 308). In the context of Toronto's waterfront, an example of manifest and latent messaging would be the difference between identifying the 'Central Waterfront Secondary Plan' (the official City of Toronto plan for the waterfront) as a manifest code, and 'performance-based urban design policymaking' (a design-sensitive approach to plan writing) as a latent code. Blending both manifest and latent messages allows for the initial identification of key themes in the data (manifest), and the subsequent discovery of subtler undercurrents (latent).

I predetermined a series of manifest codes for the study of urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront from two sources. First, the thirteen amended Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy discussed in Chapter 3. And second, key events in the history of planning and urban design on Toronto's waterfront, as detailed in Chapter 1. These theoretical and historical boundaries helped me to develop a series of latent codes as I scanned and analyzed my interview transcripts and other data sources. At the same time, I also employed an iterative categorization process. As I coded the data it quickly became apparent that the process was generating a very large number of both manifest and latent codes. To avoid this list becoming unwieldy, I organized the various codes into categories. For example, all of the manifest and latent codes referring to actions by the municipal

government were categorized in a group called 'City of Toronto' while all of the codes referring to the operation and management of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto were categorized under the heading 'Waterfront Toronto – administration and jurisdiction', and so on and so forth. An excerpt from my book of codes is shown in Figure 4.4. below.

Figure 4.4. Excerpt of Codes for Analysis

This figure is for illustrative purposes. It does not include all of the groups and codes employed for the research. The groups and code that are shown were selected randomly. For the purpose of clarity, latent codes appear in *italics*.

City of Toronto
Bedford – City of Toronto chief planner
Council – Political Support for Urban Design
Greenberg – Urban Design Champion
Mayor Miller – Urban Design Advocacy
Plan Docs – Official Plan
Plan Docs – Making Waves Secondary Plan
Urban Design Dept. –Urban Design Power
Urban Design Dept. – Responsibilities

East Bayfront
Corus – Design Critiques and Appraisals
Corus Building – Jack Diamond
East Bayfront Precinct Plan
East Bayfront Subdivision Plan
Koetter versus Diamond
Planning and Zoning Approvals
George Brown College – planning process
Sugar Beach

Waterfront Toronto:
Administration and Jurisdiction
Campbell – Waterfront Toronto CEO
Fung – First TWRC Chair
Institutional Design
Mandate
Learning from other Waterfronts
Efficiency
TEDCO relationship
Tri-government agreement

Waterfront Urban Design Review Panel
Accountability
Appointment
Architectural Style versus Urban Design
Discussion Style
Guiding Principles
Impetus
Membership Composition
Vested Interest

Numerous computer software programs exist to help the qualitative researcher code and interpret data. The process I have described above and illustrated in Figure 4.4. was completed on a platform called *HyperResearch*. By linking the researcher's codes directly to the data source, *HyperResearch* allows the instances of each code to be viewed in real time and compiled into user-friendly text documents. For example, I was able to create a document called 'Central Waterfront Secondary Plan' and it would automatically sort all the recorded instances of this code and place it into a printable file. The empirical data that I collected through the coding process was used throughout my analysis and became the foundation for the core arguments and narratives that emerge in the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Urban Design Assessment

Case studies rely primarily on textual and verbal sources to develop narratives and storylines (Yin 2003). As I have already hinted, this creates a unique challenge for urban design because the primary focus of the discipline is often the physical elements of the public realm. Undoubtedly, the case study is a formidable resource for understanding the process of urban design, but it is all too easy for the products of the urban design process – the new places and spaces of the city – to be ignored. While I had predicted in my earlier PhD Research Prospectus that an equal balance would be sought between the two, the reality of conducting the fieldwork and beginning the analysis led to a shift in focus and more emphasis was ultimately placed upon the urban design processes shaping the revitalization of the waterfront. The prevailing reason for this was simple: the revitalization programme remains in its infancy. As the following chapters will demonstrate, many of the building projects and public spaces have only recently been completed or still remain under construction. As a result, it is often the case that a new park or square will sit adjacent to a vacant land parcel or *visa versa*. In such circumstances, it is premature to conduct a thoroughgoing assessment. However, where appropriate, I have tried to integrate critical assessments of the various spaces, places and buildings that are the subject of my discussions. While I am aware of the limitations of this approach, it has allowed me to conduct some basic analyses of the urban design products on the waterfront.

Finding an effective method to conduct these analyses also proved challenging. While content analysis is ideally suited for categorizing and examining the political, financial and decision-making aspects of urban design, it is not so well equipped for assessing the physical attributes of a space or place. Unfortunately, the qualitative case study research literature offers relatively few clues on how to effectively analyze direct observations – especially those that do not involve the actions of individuals (Denscombe 2003; Yin 2003). For this reason, I turned instead to the postmodern urban design literature discussed in Chapter 2 and 3 and used alternative methods of assessment. I decided the simplest way to conduct the analyses I required was to visually scan each plan and compare it to the direct observations completed in the field, but I was concerned that, without any analytical parameters, this basic 'compare and contrast' method would be too subjective. In an effort to guide the process, I compiled a comprehensive checklist of urban design characteristics, or

what might be called an 'observational protocol' (Creswell 2003). This list, shown in Figure 4.5. below, was informed by my own normative sense of good urban design practice, generated from my knowledge of the literature and my experiences working within the profession[11].

Figure 4.5. Checklist of Urban Design Characteristics

- Streetscape treatment.
- Transition between public, semi-public and private space.
- Solid-to-void ratios and aperture.
- Building massing and height.
- Arrangement of public highways, sidewalks and private access streets.
- Transitions between public, semi-public and private space.
- Hard and soft landscaping treatments.
- Location of and amount of public amenity provision.
- Accessibility, permeability and legibility of spaces.
- Integration of green (if present) and other service infrastructure.
- Material choices for buildings and public space.
- Architectural styling and form.
- Relationships with surrounding context.
- Treatment of historical buildings, spaces.
- Viewlines and sightlines.
- Building orientation, sunlight/daylight, climate, microclimate, prevailing winds.

Validity of Research Findings

In a qualitative study, where data is collected and then interpreted, researchers must be able to prove to themselves, as well as to the research participants and the readers of the project, that their findings are, to the best of their knowledge, accurate (Creswell 2003). When reviewing documents and archival records, for example, it is crucial to remember that a written source does not always offer a literal account of an event (Yin 2003). As I have already identified and discussed at some length above, the same applies to interviews, especially those with elite members of society (Olds 2001). In this respect, the greatest challenge I faced during my data collection and analysis was the potential for bias or inaccuracies to occur. A number of validation tools are available to combat these possible weaknesses. Creswell (2003) argues that the researcher should use a combination of validation tools to both "assess the accuracy of findings as well as convince readers of their

[11] Please refer to Chapters 2 and 3 for a rigorous defence of the principles I use to define 'good' urban design in my scholarship.

accuracy" (p. 191). Drawing from Creswell's example, I employed two validation strategies: triangulation and prolonged time in the field.

The process of triangulation involves drawing from different data sources and accounting for the fact that each individual data collection method has its own flaws (Patton 1999). By deciding to collect data from multiple sources, I embedded a process of triangulation into my research from the very start and relied on it throughout my analysis to cross reference the data and piece together the outcomes of different events and decisions. To further enhance the validity of my data, I purposely spent an extended period of time in the field. While I have previously described the various visits I made to the field, it is important to note that these trips gave me the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the Toronto waterfront case and the characters involved in the planning and urban design process. The visits also allowed me to speak with as many research participants as possible, collect the necessary amount of documents and archival records and conduct my direct observations effectively. Adopting this strategy meant that I could better convey details about the site in question and the people involved (Creswell 2003).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines for research are designed to protect human subjects (Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association 1994). As face-to-face interviews were a crucial component of the data collection for this project, it was subject to an ethical review by The University of British Columbia. In early December 2010 the research was granted full approval by the University's Office of Research Ethics for one calendar year. In November 2011, this approval was extended for a further year to allow the final fieldwork episode to be completed in December 2011.

Following the ethical guidelines set out by The University of British Columbia, each potential research participant was sent a letter of introduction and a written consent form by email to invite them to participate. The letter of introduction, which I have previously discussed, is provided in Appendix 2, while a copy of the written consent form can be found in Appendix 4. Although my study of urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront posed minimal risk to human subjects, I was aware that my research participants might knowingly or

unknowingly divulge sensitive information that could jeopardize an urban development project, or perhaps a planning decision. Therefore, the introductory letter and consent form provided each research participant with detailed information on the nature of the project and the scope of the interview and allowed the research participant to withdraw from the study at anytime. The form also stated that the individual's identity would be kept confidential unless they provided written consent to the contrary. Furthermore, the participants were told that a title would be assigned to them that described their role, but did not reveal their identity – for example, 'senior urban designer' or 'politician', etc.. Before each interview began, the research participant was asked to read the consent form and affix their signature. All of the interview subjects agreed to the terms of the consent form and signed it. For the purposes of clarity, each interview subject was assigned a reference code. These appear throughout the dissertation and are described in Appendix 3.

I did not offer my interview participants the chance to review their transcripts in full, as some qualitative researchers propose (Creswell 2003). While providing an additional means of data verification, the vetting of interview transcripts by participants can also undermine the original data, should interviewees feel they have been inarticulate or wish to alter their responses. Dunn (2005) recommends that informants be sent "summaries or interpretations of the interview rather than transcripts" (p. 99). The participants, he argues, "are much more interested in the interpretation of their words and the outcomes" (ibid.). At the completion of the project, each participant will be provided with a short 1,000 word summary of the research.

Concluding Summary

In this chapter I outlined the research strategy, data collection tools and analytical procedures that I used to investigate urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront. I demonstrated the benefits of employing the case study method to 'dig deep' into the complex world of politics, planning, design and development in Toronto and stressed the connection between my own research methods and those used in the field of urban design as public policy. I also illustrated the importance of using multiple data collection tools, in this instance face-to-face interviewing, documents and archival records and direct observations, to construct a valid and defensible qualitative research project. In so doing, I underscored

the importance of containing the scope of inquiry within the theoretical boundaries of urban design as public policy and, in particular, the thirteen amended principles introduced in Chapter 3. I achieved this through the careful categorization of data, the use of semi-structured interviews and the reliance on content analysis and supporting observational analyses to interpret the data. I also spoke to the limitations that were encountered during the data collection and analysis, especially those surrounding interview elites – who proved to be a core component of my research.

Ultimately, my experience of completing the fieldwork and data analysis for this project was a deeply personal one. Not only did I learn a great deal about the nature of qualitative inquiry and its applicability to the study of urban design as public policy, I also challenged my own assumptions about the process and implementation of urban design. The following chapters are the results of this leaning process. Together they contain my own interpretative narrative on the critical case of Toronto's waterfront and demonstrate the crucial role that "quilt making" (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, p. 5) can bring to the study of waterfront urban design practice.

CHAPTER 5

Establishing the Conditions for a Design Sensitive Practice

Since the early 1970s, the history of redevelopment planning and urban design on Toronto's waterfront has been dominated by political quarrels among various agencies of government about landownership and planning control (Desfor *et al*. 1989; Gordon 1996; Gordon 1997; Laidley 2007; Filion and Sanderson 2011). As explored in the introductory chapter, this unproductive climate meant that many of the longer-term plans for the waterfront, such as a proposal by the federal government to build a large public park on the water's edge, were never realized (Filion and Sanderson 2011). Financial pressures instead led to shorter-term solutions that ignored the master planning proposals for the waterfront and, during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, much of the land that was owned or controlled by the federal government was sold to private developers. Typically, the buildings and public spaces that were constructed by the private sector during this period failed to respond positively to the existing public realm and were widely disliked (Desfor *et al*. 1989). Subsequently, a moratorium on further redevelopment was issued in the late 1980s and a blue ribbon commission was established to rethink the future of the waterfront (Laidley 2007). Led by David Crombie, a former mayor of Toronto, the 'Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront' released a wide-ranging report in 1992. Although well received, few efforts were made to carry out any of the proposals it contained and by the close of the decade little progress had been made (Laidley 2007). But during the decade that followed there was a shift in emphasis. By the mid-2000s a redevelopment agency had been jointly established by the federal, provincial and municipal governments called the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (later Waterfront Toronto) and efforts to 'revitalize' the waterfront appeared to be heading in a more positive direction.

In this chapter I examine why and how this transformation occurred. Focusing on a seven-year period between 1999 and 2006, I explore the various political decisions, funding commitments and planning documents that led to the creation of the triumvirate Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC) and the publication of an innovative

waterfront planning policy framework. Initially, I show how a series of key relationships forged between high-level government officials and influential private sector actors led to an urban design vision for the waterfront that privileged the economic value of urban design. I then explore how this narrow conceptualization became increasingly sophisticated as the new corporation began to implement the waterfront redevelopment programme. In doing so, I also focus on the limitations of the TWRC governance model and explain how these motivated the corporation to find new ways to influence planning and design on the waterfront. As a foundation for the focused research chapters that follow, I conclude the chapter by considering the extent to which the "conditions for a design-sensitive planning practice" (Punter 2002, p. 267) emerged on Toronto's waterfront between 1999 and 2006.

The Olympic Catalyst

The genesis of the TWRC can be traced to a failed bid for the 2008 Olympic Games that was co-chaired by former Toronto mayor David Crombie. As Chapter 1 explored, Crombie had a significant influence on the dialogue about Toronto's waterfront during the late 1980s and 1990s. First as commissioner of the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront and then as founding chair of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, the organization created in response to the Royal Commission's final report. As co-chair of the Olympic-bid, Crombie led an effort to connect the proposal to waterfront regeneration. Speaking in 1998, he stated, "This is about city building for me...It's not the only thing about the Olympics bid, but the part that drew me to it is the facility for city building" (quoted in Armstrong 1998, p. A8). This sentiment caused some press commentators to conclude that the Olympic bid was less about sports and more about leveraging ambitious civic improvement goals (Barber 1998). Conversely, others reflected on the success of Expo '86 in Vancouver and noted the formidable impact it had on the city. "Expo '86 provided a catalyst, drawing Ottawa into building the Canadian pavilion as a pier into the Burrard Inlet, and the province into developing False Creek. The 2008 Olympics would provide the same binding force in Toronto..." (Thorsell 2000, p. A17). The connection between the Olympic bid and Toronto's waterfront proved irresistible to political leaders, many of whom saw it as an opportunity to boost the city's international exposure (Lehrer and Laidley 2008; Laidley 2011). As Eidelman (2011) notes, "The prospect of holding a high profile international event

along the city's shoreline is said to have injected all three levels of government with an unparalleled sense of urgency" (p. 268).

Creating A Task Force for the Waterfront

The energy of the Olympic bid brought the federal, provincial and municipal governments together in November 1999. In the first of what would become many triumvirate photo opportunities staged on the lakefront, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, Ontario Premier Mike Harris and Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman enthusiastically endorsed a City of Toronto report titled *Our Toronto Waterfront: The Wave of the Future!* (City of Toronto 1999) and announced the creation of a Waterfront Redevelopment Task Force (Rusk 1999). The Task Force was charged with refining the City's vision for the waterfront and reporting to City Council on how much it would cost and how it could be implemented through a public-private partnership (Lehrer and Laidley 2008). Robert Fung, a successful businessman and close friend of both the prime minister and the federal finance minister, Paul Martin, was appointed as chair of the Task Force (TWRC 5 2011).

In remarks to the assembled press, the three political leaders expressed their shared excitement about the potential of the waterfront. In particular, they stressed the economic benefits of redevelopment and remarked on the competitive-edge that might be achieved over other cities if a revitalized waterfront was to one day unfold. Premier Harris stated that "U.S. cities, such as Baltimore, New York and Cleveland, have reaped the benefits from the redevelopment of their waterfronts...a well-executed plan, based on the city's vision,...[will]...help Toronto achieve the goal of getting the most out of the lands beside the lake" (quoted in Rusk 1999, p. A11). Although the Olympic bid had brought the three governments together on the lakefront, the politicians were very keen to stress that the redevelopment of Toronto's waterfront was definitely going forward, Olympics or not (Moloney and DeMara 1999).

Our Toronto Waterfront: The Wave of the Future!

Opening with a 'Disneyesque' tone, *Our Toronto Waterfront* (City of Toronto 1999) proclaimed the waterfront as "The Place Where Magic Begins" and declared that "Great cities dream great dreams. Great waterfronts make dreams come true" (p.1). The City of Toronto emphasized the need for investment from the provincial government and the private sector to realize their ambitious vision. In support of this call, the report set out eight principles for renewal that were predicated on an integrated urban design and planning vision for the waterfront – a lesson City planners had drawn from observations of cities in Europe and North America where vacant industrial waterfront land had been successfully transformed into vibrant neighbourhoods and destinations. Among the eight principles I have identified four core themes. These are summarized in Figure 5.1. below.

Figure 5.1. Core Themes identified in *The Wave of the Future!*
(Summarized from: City of Toronto 1999)

1. Environment
An environmentally sensitive approach to waterfront renewal that restores wildlife habitats, improves the health of Lake Ontario, supports the removal of an elevated highway and encourages improvements to public transportation on the waterfront.

2. Urban Design and Planning
An emphasis on high quality urban design that demands the skills of leading architects and designers and includes a commitment to a "ribbon of green" (p. 11) on the waterfront, linkages across the city, the promotion of mixed-use developments, housing for all needs, and the preservation of historical buildings.

3. Economy
An economically viable renewal strategy that encourages job growth, especially in "internationally-competitive imagination industries" (p. 17), and an "Aggressive Tourist Strategy" (p. 21).

4. Public Engagement
A recognition that "the waterfront belongs to the people of Toronto" (p. 7) and a subsequent commitment to public engagement and consultation that introduces a series of topic-based advisory groups.

Written as a 'call to action', *The Wave of the Future!* advanced broad urban design goals but offered only elemental insights into the possible spatial distribution of waterfront renewal projects and the specific urban form. Although the document listed a series of environmental, transportation and urban design projects, it offered little supporting information. Included among the projects was the restoration of the mouth of the Don River,

removing/relocating the Gardiner expressway, improving Union Station, developing public spaces and major cultural buildings on the Central Waterfront and transforming the underdeveloped Port Lands district into a mixed-use hub for leading film, 'imagination' and environmental industries. In contrast, the role envisaged for the public-private partnership was clearly defined. The City affirmed that the renewal of Toronto's waterfront should not solely be a government undertaking and recognized that the private sector would undoubtedly be one of the biggest benefactors of waterfront renewal. *The Wave of the Future!* sketched out a partnership that would employ planning and urban design to harness economic development and increase Toronto's global competitive edge:

> Strategic public investment in cleaning up contaminated sites and improving public spaces, primes the pump and creates new opportunities for investment. It creates a 'virtuous cycle' in which new business generates more property taxes, more property taxes lead to better public facilities, better public facilities attract more investment and more investment creates more jobs. We need the private sector to kick-start this cycle with their investment and expertise (p. 7).

Curiously, the Olympic bid itself, although the catalyst that had brought the three governments together, received scant attention. Towards the beginning of the report, a potential waterfront-orientated Olympic Games was acknowledged but was quickly rendered insignificant in the face of the wider challenge of renewing the waterfront as a public space. Oliver (2008) notes that both the City's chief planner Paul Bedford and the co-chair of the Olympic bid, David Crombie, emphasized that the report was the result of a longer-term planning project. Yet, from a political perspective, the Olympic connection was unavoidable (Oliver 2008). Ending with the proposal to form an intergovernmental task force as the crucial 'next step', the report also outlined the foundations for a future development management strategy. Recognizing the complexity of land ownership and regulation on the waterfront, it emphasized the need for the three governments to unify around a shared vision and avoid repeating the "jurisdictional gridlock" (City of Toronto 1999, p. 27) that had plagued previous waterfront endeavours. The report provided a prescient definition of the corporation that would emerge two years later. It envisaged a government-owned corporation with a transparent governance structure, a series of core responsibilities and the powers to manage the coordination of the public lands on the waterfront.

Robert Fung and the Task Force Players

At first glance, the choice of Robert Fung as chair of the Waterfront Redevelopment Task Force appears unusual. A former executive of the Task Force reflects that Fung's background "...had absolutely nothing to do with architecture, urban design, or anything like that" (TWRC 3 2011). Rather, he was a corporate financier and investment expert; a 'Bay Street guy' who had played a significant role in Canadian oil and gas, mining, and mergers and acquisitions since the mid-1970s. Along the way, Fung had also forged strong ties with the leadership of the governing Liberal Party of Canada (TWRC 3 2011). In an interview with Fung, conducted sometime after the Task Force had reported, *The Globe and Mail*'s Toronto Bureau Chief, Jennifer Lewington (2002), observed that:

> Fung bristles at queries about his personal ties to Finance Minister Paul Martin, a friend from their days as college roommates, and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. The two top Liberals attended the wedding of Fung's son Mark, a former staffer in the Prime Minster's Office. In 1986, the elder Fung brought Chretien into Gordon Capital for a four-year stint before his return to politics. Later, the Liberals drew fire in 1995 for selecting Fung's firm to handle the privatization of Petro-Canada" (p. 12).

The rationale for appointing a businessman to devise a strategy for waterfront redevelopment without any background in planning or urban design becomes clearer when understood in the context of the political climate. Elected on conservative platforms, the Ontario premier, Mike Harris, and Toronto's mayor, Mel Lastman, were sympathetic to neoliberal policies and aggressively moulded Toronto as a pro-business competitive global city (Kipfer and Keil 2002). This ideological position demonstrably affected the tone of the *Wave of the Future!* report, which, by promoting closer ties between the public and private sectors, had set the foundation for a corporate waterfront renewal. In addition, the race for the Olympics, branded 'TO-Bid', evolved as a private-sector endeavour, supported, rather than led, by government (Laidley 2011). Although former Toronto mayor, David Crombie, remained co-chair, TO-bid's chief executive was John Bitove, Jr., a successful Toronto businessman and former part-owner of the city's basketball franchise, The Toronto Raptors (Vincent 1999).

Bringing Robert Fung on as chair provided a powerful link between the public and private sector, as one of his close advisors at the time admits: "I think the big thing about it was that he had the ability to walk into each of their offices [prime minster, premier and mayor], which made a huge difference at Queen's Park, a huge difference in Ottawa, and to some extent, the City" (TWRC 8 2011). Furthermore, with his successful career in Canadian business, Fung viewed the corporate direction envisioned by the three politicians, and the associated Olympic bid, with sympathetic eyes. Commenting on his suitability for the position, the advisor reflects:

> With the background he had, which was not urban design, he came to this thing with a clean slate. I think this was the secret of the whole thing. There were no hang-ups, there were no memories and there was no baggage. He was not an urban designer. He just came clean. What he brought to the table was that he knew Canada well and he knew the world well because he travelled. He travels the world on a continual basis on global business. He had the confidence of the prime minister, he had the confidence of the premier and he had the confidence of the mayor (TWRC 8 2011).

Fung was given just a few months to construct his Task Force and produce a costed blueprint for the redevelopment scheme (Rusk 1999). Acknowledging his own shortcomings in planning and urban design management, he sought the advice of developers with whom he had worked on past financial deals (TWRC 8 2011). Among these was Paul Reichmann of Olympia and York, the Toronto development company that planned and built Canary Wharf in London during the 1980s. With Reichmann's advice, Fung assembled a formidable team. "In a short period of time," his former close advisor recalls, "Fung found out who the real global players were in urban design" (TWRC 8 2011).

Fung appointed Antony Coombes as one of his co-executive directors[12]. Coombes was a senior planner and urban designer who had considerable large-scale project management experience. He had served as chief planner for the Toronto Central Area during the mid-1970s, before going to work for Paul Reichmann at Olympia and York as vice president of development. In this role, Coombes oversaw the design, planning and development of

[12] The other co-executive director was Gordon Thompson, a fellow financier and investment banker (Toronto Waterfront Redevelopment Task Force 2000).

Canary Wharf and the World Financial Center in New York (Neptis Foundation 2009). Supporting Coombes were a group of like-minded urban designers with similar exposure to high-profile master planned projects, including: Joe Berridge of the Toronto-based firm Urban Strategies, Michael Kirkland of The Kirkland Partnership, also based in Toronto, and Fred Koetter of New York urban design firm Koetter Kim. Also involved in an advisory capacity was Professor Joan Busquets, the planner and urban designer who had overseen the redevelopment of Barcelona's waterfront during the build-up to the 1992 Olympic Games (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000). Members of the urban design team that Fung had created was excited about the opportunity and freedom they had been given, as one Task Force member reflects, "the big advantage of [Fung] was that he did not know what he couldn't do so, therefore, he basically had us all shooting for the stars. It was great!" (TWRC 7 2011).

Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada

In late March 2000, just three months after the tri-government announcement, Fung called a press conference on the observation deck of the CN Tower to present the Task Force vision (Lewington 2000). Titled *Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada* (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000), but known colloquially as 'the Fung report', it outlined a combined urban design vision and sophisticated strategic management plan for the redevelopment of the waterfront. As one of the Task Force urban designers explains, "The aim of...[the Fung report]...was to form, not only the plan, with some flexibilities, but also the mechanism for getting it done" (TWRC 5 2011). Like *The Wave of the Future!*, the report adopted a promotional tone and situated Toronto within a group of 'elite world cities' acting as economic gateways for their respective countries and competing for economic dominance (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000). In this heady pursuit, it singled-out Toronto's waterfront as a spatial enabler: an untapped resource where the future economic viability of the city could be won or lost. "Toronto alone," the report intoned, "...has been virtually inert compared to its sister cities, who are inevitably its competitors" (p. 14), "Visitors from other great cities are shocked by our failure to realize the value of this asset" (p. 14). Capitalizing upon the City's earlier report and the critical mass generated by the 2008 Olympic bid, the Fung report offered up a three-part interdependent plan, comprising: (1) development (2) operation and (3) finance.

The urban design vision and objectives were explored in the report's lengthy development concept, which outlined the need for an integrated approach to renewal. Recalling what he saw as the report's design-focused message, a senior Task Force executive was keen to explain that "It was never intended to be a real estate play...none of us ever attempted this to be a major real estate development. It was a real estate development, but we were using real estate development to get somewhere" (TWRC 8 2011). Augmenting the broad vision sketched out in *The Wave of the Future!*, but not straying too far from the main ideas, it identified six development initiatives which are summarized in Figure 5.2. below and overleaf.

Figure 5.2. Six Major Development Initiatives
(Summarized from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000, pp. 28-40)

1. Building a Waterfront for Public Enjoyment
Producing a '...place to play, work and live" by developing mixed-use communities that will accommodate 100,000 new residents and 25,000 new jobs, creating a 'green border'' along the water's edge that includes parks, boulevards, piers and promenades, reserving over 180 hectares of land as park space, especially in the Outer Harbour and coordinating development through master planning and other regulatory measures so that a coherent public realm is realized and an appropriate scale and character is achieved.

2. Accommodating Business, Employment and New Economy
Recognizing that '...competition for the entrepreneurs and workers of the new economy is fierce and will only increase', by extending *The Wave of the Future* report's call for a high-tech industrial cluster in the Port Lands and creating a new 'Convergence Centre' district, that would '...help Toronto more fully realize opportunities for interaction between the new media and the new high-technology and knowledge-based economy'.

3. Development Comprehensive Transportation Networks
Achieving an '...integrated and comprehensive system of streets and public transportation' by reconfiguring the waterfront's street system to account for major highway removal (see Development Initiative 5), transforming existing waterfront streets into 'traversable urban boulevards', supporting the potential expansion of Toronto's streetcar network into new waterfront projects, encouraging cycle usage through design and supporting the expansion of the city's rapid transportation infrastructure through improvements to Union Station.

4. Providing a Clean Environment
Encompassing strategies to address the environmental challenges of waterfront redevelopment into future plans by supporting existing initiatives to improve the water quality of the Don River and the Inner Harbour, remediating contaminated soils on former industrial lands to facilitate redevelopment, mitigating the potential for flooding through environmental engineering measures, including the construction of a berm and strongly supporting the Waterfront Regeneration Trust's and TO-Bid's efforts to re-naturalize the mouth of the Don River.

Figure 5.2. (cont.) Six Major Development Initiatives

5. Reconfiguring and Integrating the Gardiner Expressway Corridor
Defining the removal of the Gardiner Expressway as a primary objective for the future of the waterfront, both "practically and symbolically" and supporting this objective by establishing that removal would be cost effective, demonstrating that it could be achieved without causing major disruption to existing transportation networks and offering a redistribution solution and ground-level redesign that "removes its sterilizing influence, eliminates the debilitating effect of the overhead structure, allows attractive new neighbourhoods, improves access to the core, provides important new waterfront streets and unifies, rather than divides, Toronto with its waterfront".

6. Creating a Waterfront for the 2008 Olympic Games
Amplifying the modicum of support offered by the City of Toronto for the 2008 Olympic Bid in the *Wave of the Future!* report by supporting the infrastructure needs of the Games on the waterfront, including a proposal for an Athlete's Village and multiple stadia, arguing that the Olympics would "provide a powerful additional impetus for revitalization efforts and a definitive timeline" and addressing the role Olympic stadia, and other sports facilities, could play in the waterfront's post-Olympic future.

For Robert Fung, the most important idea contained within these six development initiatives was the role of the New Economy. He envisioned the waterfront as a catalyst for improving Canada's standing in the global marketplace, defining it as *the* place for innovative business growth in Toronto. Influenced by his official and unofficial government connections, Fung concluded that Canada had an acute need to diversify its trade portfolio by increasing its global reach and reducing its reliance on cross-border commerce with the United States (TWRC 8 2011). As a senior Task Force executive explains, "the opportunity on the waterfront was a project that was big enough, and could have been sophisticated enough, to actually reposition the city of Toronto and reposition Canada in the global economy. That was what was behind this whole thing" (TWRC 8 2011).

For the urban designers working on the Task Force report, the six development initiatives also allowed for a comprehensive waterfront design vision to be generated. As one of the principal urban design authors explains, "It was essentially bringing the city to the water and recognizing that urbanizing the waterfront was the correct response to the Toronto situation" (TORONTO 8 2011). The design team, he reflects, had many discussions about whether the waterfront should be turned into a large Chicago-style lakefront public park. Rejecting this approach, the team instead proposed that the city's streets be extended to a water's edge promenade, a design objective that was well-supported by the proposed removal of the Gardiner Expressway. The overall logic, the urban designer contends, was clear:

> This is a bleak place in February. You want to bring the warmth of the city as close as you can to the water...So, the idea was to clearly make all the streets come down to the water's edge and, when they came down to the water's edge, to make them terminate with something that was interesting. A place or a building or a space...That was the key idea (TORONTO 8 2011).

What emerged was a neighbourhood-scaled environment and, as the illustration in Figure 5.3. on page 117 demonstrates, the plan envisaged an almost seamless integration of the waterfront with the existing urban form of Toronto. The plan was not about making a grand architectural statement. Instead, it aimed to 'stitch' the city and the waterfront together using traditional urban blocks and pedestrian-scaled streets and spaces. For implementation purposes, the development concept also outlined how individual projects could be distributed and configured along the waterfront. Six major precincts were identified: The Central Harbour, The Port Lands, The Mouth of the Don River, The West Don Lands, Garrison Common and Exhibition District[13]. Four of these precincts remain the primary focus of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto today and will be referred to at different stages throughout following chapters, these are: The Central Harbour, The Port Lands, The Mouth of the Don River and The West Don Lands. The six precincts were imagined together through a conceptual master plan (see: Figure 5.3. overleaf). Distilling the urban design vision for the waterfront in plan form, the master plan's fundamental principle was:

> ...to elaborate and enhance the public realm, through transformation of the Gardiner corridor, the creation of networks of public space and parks, or developing streets to the water that arrive at extraordinary waterfront plazas, of creating a public water edge from Leslie Street to Jameson Avenue, and enlivening the whole waterfront with new mixed-use residence and work environments (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000, p. 41).

[13] Additional sites further out from the central core along the east and west lakefront were also identified for development, but discussed in less detail.

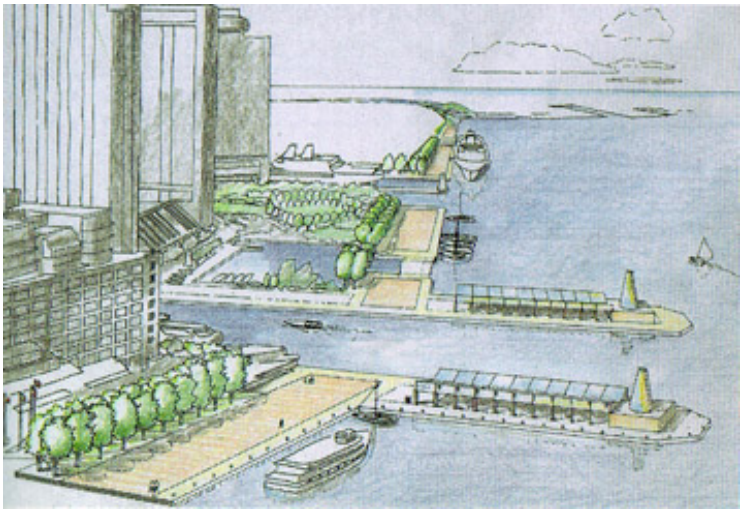
Figure 5.3. The Central Waterfront Development Concept
(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000, pp. 43-44, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

The development concept for the Central Waterfront proposed an integrated urban design response. Notably, the master plan imagined a continuation of the urban grid to the waterfront and the creation of various waterfront neighbourhoods.

Of the precincts that went on to form the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's portfolio, the first addressed in the report was The Central Harbour, located directly south of the downtown core. Noting that the western portion of the precinct, between Yonge Street and Bathurst Street, was largely built out, the Task Force identified a need to combat the perception that the existing public spaces felt privatized – a persistent complaint that had arisen after the Harbour Square towers were completed in the 1970s (see: Chapter 1, p. 13-17). Targeting the area for public realm upgrades, the proposed urban design strategy envisaged a series of plazas constructed at the termination of the major North-South streets on the lakefront that would be connected by a new public boardwalk. The pedestrian experience would be further enhanced, they argued, by a series of piers and lighthouses to increase accessibility to the water and define the public realm after dark (see: Figure 5.4. overleaf). In contrast to the western section of the Central Harbour precinct, the eastern section, known as the East Bayfront, was largely vacant and controlled by various public and private landowners. The

Task Force considered that it had the potential to become a significant mixed-use development.

Figure 5.4. Central Harbour Precinct Enhancements
(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000, p. 45, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



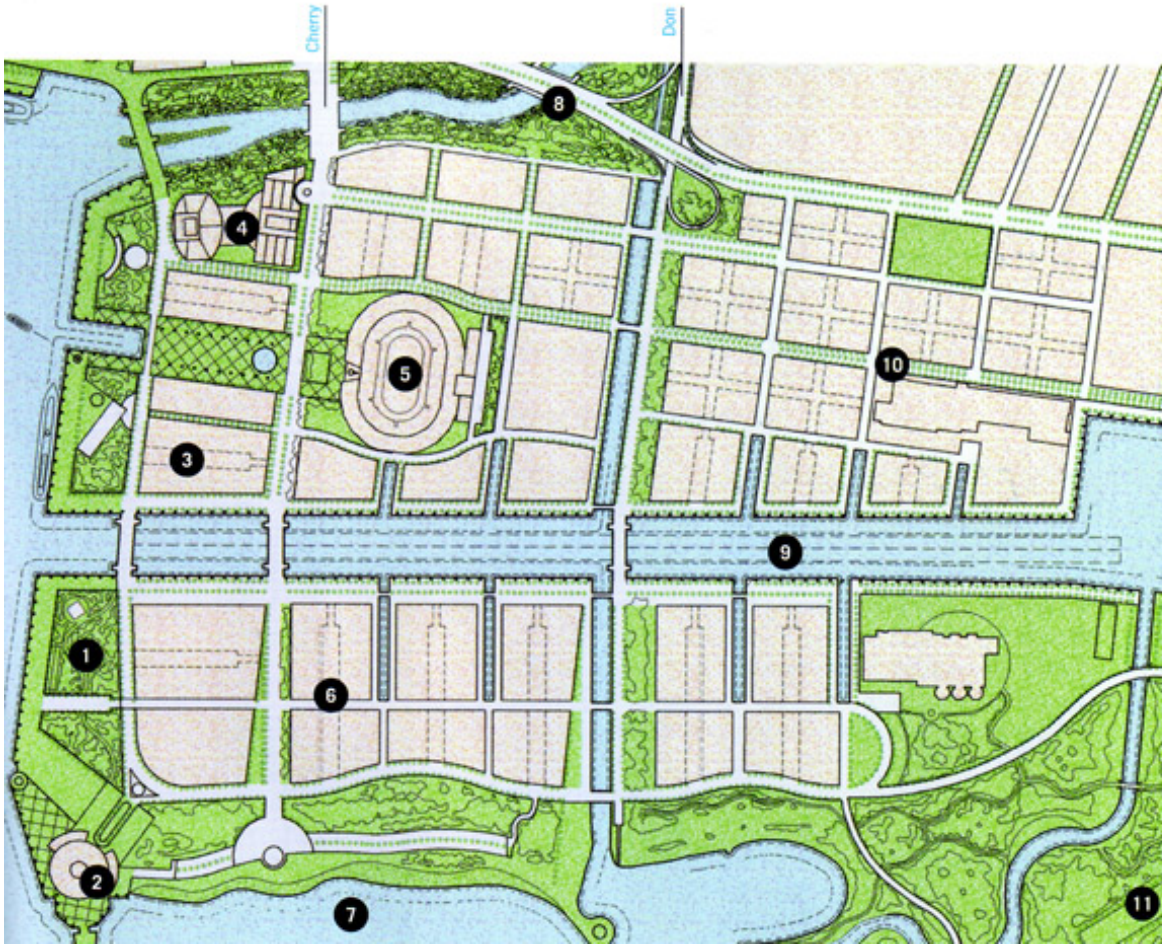
Conceptual sketch of waterfront promenade and piers

The second precinct was the Port Lands (see: Figure 5.5. overleaf). Located to the southeast of the downtown core, surrounded on three edges by water and containing over 400 hectares of largely vacant land, the Port Lands was singled out as perhaps the biggest redevelopment opportunity on the waterfront. In the report's development initiatives, it had already been identified as the primary location for Fung's proposed New Economy hub, the 'Convergence Centre'. In the detailed strategy for the precinct, the Task Force also designated it as one of the primary locations for Olympic infrastructure, including the Olympic stadium, Athlete's Village and, eventually, a mixed-use urban neighbourhood. The urban design strategy for The Port Lands called for a dense urban quarter surrounded by the proposed 'green border'. The Task Force imagined that:

> Open space areas along the water's edge and the new waterfront boulevard will provide a public access to the water. Cherry Street will be the Port Land's 'Main Street', providing a pedestrian friendly street of shopping and services for this new quarter of the City (p. 49).

Figure 5.5. The Port Lands Precinct Urban Design Concept

(Images from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000, pp. 47 (Image 1) and 49 (Images 2 and 3, all reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto))

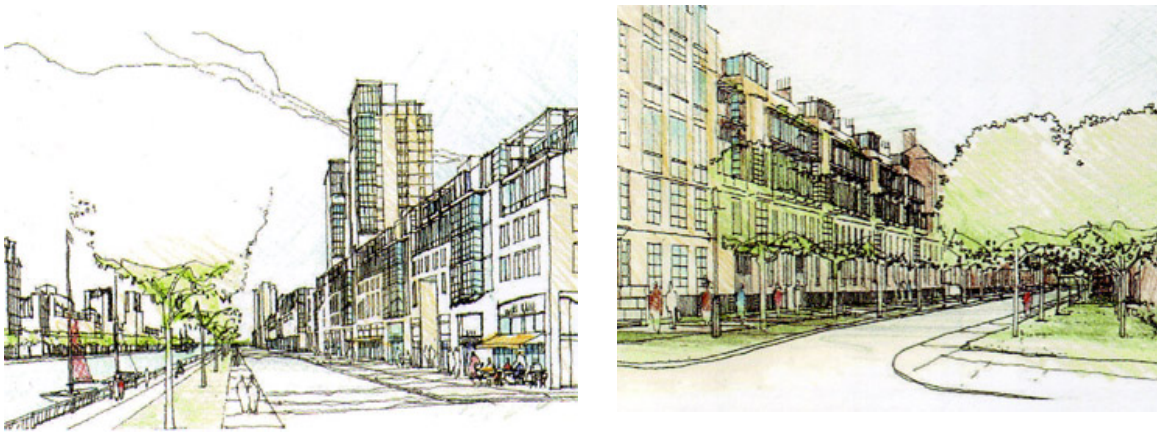


Conceptual Plan of the Port Lands Precinct
(not to scale)

Key:

1. Waterfront parks
2. Landmark site
3. East Harbour District
4. Olympic Aquatic Centre
5. Olympic Stadium
6. Cherry Beach District
7. Outer Harbour
8. New Lakeshore Bridge
9. Grand Channel
10. Convergence Centre
11. Lake Ontario Park

Figure 5.5. (cont.) The Port Lands Precinct Urban Design Concept



The proposed precinct master plan and streetscapes for the Port Lands reinforce the broader urban design concept illustrated in the waterfront master plan (see: Figure 5.3.). The images suggest that the precinct will be a walkable neighbourhood defined by an urban grid structure and perimeter building blocks. Even the Olympic infrastructure, shown in the master plan on the previous page, is purposefully woven into the wider urban fabric. The substantial stadium sits within the grid structure and is defined, not by itself, but by a linear public plaza reminiscent of a classical amphitheatre. At street level, the public realm is reinforced by taller buildings located at strategic corners and by ground floor retail on the principal waterfront boulevard.

The third and fourth precincts were those adjacent to the Don River: to the south, the Mouth of the Don River precinct and immediately to the north, The West Don Lands precinct. Re-naturalizing the mouth of the Don River had been a long-standing goal of both local community groups and the Waterfront Regeneration Trust. It was also highlighted as a key project in the City's *Wave of the Future!* report. The Task Force called for the existing canal to be removed, the river to be re-naturalized and the proposed 'green border' to be extended along the river. The urban design strategy also identified the new river mouth as an entrance point to the Port Lands and envisaged a series of signature bridges that could link Cherry Street to the waterfront and become the location for prime gateway buildings.

At the time of the Task Force's creation, the West Don Lands precinct had already been purchased by the Ontario provincial government and proposed as a site for mixed-use urban redevelopment (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000). Located adjacent to an established residential community, it had also been subject to a remarkably thorough community-initiated planning workshop organized by the West Don Lands Committee (West Don Lands Committee 1999). This community group and, in particular, its leadership have

since played a formidable role in shaping Toronto's waterfront (TWRC 8 2011). Their endeavours, as well as the roles of other community stakeholders, are addressed in a dedicated section of Chapter 6 (see: pages 167 – 183). At this point it is important to recognize that the West Don Lands Committee's workshop influenced the Task Force's urban design strategy for the provincial land. As a member of the Committee explains, "We organized a three-day planning workshop...and the timing was quite spectacular, because our workshop actually took place a month after Bob Fung was appointed, so our timing couldn't have been better" (CIVIL 5 2011). Citing the committee's work, the Fung report outlined a medium-rise urban design strategy that could incorporate 5,000 residential units, including townhouses facing a central open space and a small amount of supporting commercial development along an arterial boulevard.

Standing high above the waterfront at the CN Tower press conference, Fung asserted, "I believe the Task Force's most important recommendation is for these governments to set up this Toronto Waterfront Redevelopment Corporation. Doing this will be an acid test of their commitment" (quoted in DeMara 2000, no page number). This principal recommendation was detailed in the report's operational concept. Criticizing previous attempts to implement a comprehensive revitalization strategy and management plan for the Toronto waterfront, the Task Force argued that a workable strategy had never been enacted. The report therefore called for a private sector-like corporation endowed with a series of government powers to enable private sector development. The ability to operate within a streamlined and simplified planning system and have the capacity to raise finances independently were the Task Force's primary requests. These they supported with a bold financial concept. Using a detailed financial model, the Fung report estimated that the infrastructure costs for the entire project, including the removal of the Gardiner Expressway, stood at $5.2 billion, while the cost of associated private development projects would come in at $7 billion. This generated a combined total of $12.2 billion to implement the entire vision. Proposing that the public sector cover the infrastructure component, the report outlined a number of methods that the three governments could use to generate the required revenues, including: road tolling, a downtown parking surcharge, a waterfront casino and land sales/leases.

Considering the narrowly defined corporate membership of the Task Force and the support that the City of Toronto had provided in *The Wave of the Future!* for public-private initiatives,

the proposals contained in the operational and financial concept plans were hardly surprising. Indeed, a number of the Task Force urban designers had enjoyed earlier successes with powerful independent development corporations, especially Anthony Coombes, the Task Force Co-Executive Director, who, as already mentioned, had played a pivotal role in the urban design management of Canary Wharf in London and the World Financial Center in New York (TWRC 5 2011). Fung was persuaded by their experiences, as a senior Waterfront Toronto official reflects: "Bob Fung looked around and said the model that seemed to work was to create a separate agency, keep it out of the hands of government, fund it, give it a mandate and let it do its job" (TWRC 7 2011). Through his recent research on the political forces that shaped the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, Gabriel Eidelman (2011) contends that the authors of the Fung report failed to complete sufficient studies of the waterfront redevelopment examples cited in the report's operational concept. Not helped by the short timeframe reserved for completing the report, the authors relied too heavily on the previous experiences of Task Force members, especially Antony Coombes. Furthermore, the conciseness of the operational concept meant that the report offered no insight into the adaptability of the case study examples for Toronto's waterfront. Eidelman argues that this omission raised important and ultimately unanswered questions about public accountability, democratic process and the project's political legitimacy.

Making the Case for a Waterfront Redevelopment Corporation

The concerns highlighted in Eidelman's research were raised when the Fung report was published. The proposed governance model attracted much more scrutiny than the urban design proposals themselves and sceptics in the press and the political establishment voiced their concerns about the power of an independent redevelopment corporation. Writing in the *Toronto Star*, business columnist David Crane (2000) questioned the proposed corporation's ability to be transparent and accountable to Torontonians when in control of so much public money. Jack Layton, then a Toronto city councillor for the Don River ward was reported to have stated: "I want this to be the people's corporation, not a corporation of three or four guys who've dealt with lots of money all their lives and know how to move pieces around on a Monopoly board" (quoted in DeMara 2000, no page number). Likewise, one of the founding members of a neighbourhood association local to the Toronto waterfront reflects:

> My, there were a lot of people who said one big huge all-powerful agency can bulldoze and push people around and won't listen to us: it's not the way we do things. And, I have to say, I had a lot of sympathy for that point of view...we don't like superstar politicians in this country...So there was a suspicion of unappealable arbitrary power I think" (CIVIL 2 2011).

On the other hand, the Fung report's core recommendation also garnered powerful support, both in the press and from City of Toronto planning officials. A former senior planning manager at the City of Toronto recalls that the report "spelled out some refreshing new ideas and approaches to rethinking the waterfront" (TORONTO 8 2011). According to him, the idea of a Toronto Waterfront Redevelopment Corporation "was welcomed…basically it was positive because it proved to everyone: look, you've got to be on the same page, all levels of government, you are all in this together" (TORONTO 8 2011). He also notes that Fung's personality played a critical part in making the case for joint action by the three governments. "I gave him full marks for being gutsy in a leadership position and speaking out and putting the waterfront in a different context" (TORONTO 8 2011).

Writing in *The Globe and Mail*, David Gordon (2000) who, as a planning academic, had published research on waterfront redevelopment efforts in both New York and Toronto, supported Fung's assertion that the most important proposition in the Task Force report was the operational concept and its call for an independent corporation. He thought that "...the key financial strategy is not big cash grants, but granting the agency the power to borrow money, lease assets, and recover revenue from tolls and taxes" (p. A17). Gordon argued that the new waterfront corporation should have the power to hire the best employees possible and not be required to rely on government staff seconded from other government agencies or departments. Following these contrasting responses at the time of the report's release, Fung and other Task Force executives embarked on a busy promotional drive to sell their urban design vision and waterfront redevelopment strategy to the general public, politicians and the private sector. During the spring and summer of 2000, they conducted a number of press interviews, speeches and public open houses. Fung addressed multiple interest groups, including a joint forum of the Canadian Urban Institute and the Toronto Board of Trade (Lewington 2000a) and a high-profile public lecture at Toronto's Winter Garden Theatre (Barber 2000). The forums reinforced the role that urban design would play as a tool to attract new employers and, as a result, the professional employees who might

work for them and live on the waterfront. The new precinct neighbourhoods were cast as exciting, vibrant enclaves replete with premium commercial services all within close proximity to the city's corporate downtown core. At each of the events, Fung characterized the redevelopment of Toronto's waterfront as an economic necessity and placed considerable emphasis on his somewhat vague vision of a 'Convergence District' as the seed of Toronto's growth in the New Economy landscape (Barber 2000; Lewington 2000a).

In June 2000 Fung also led a series of four public open houses (DeMara 2000) and called upon Torontonians to comment on the final document. "People will be able to come and hear what's in the plan, talk to us and tell us what they think", he said (quoted in DeMara 2000, no page number). A *Toronto Star* press report on one of the open houses states that it was well attended and generated lively discussion (Palmer 2000). The reporter who covered the event, Karen Palmer, noted that the environmentalists praised the urban design and sustainability goals of the report, but warned of the need for the plans to be followed through in the development stages. She also quoted the comments of one popular speaker who criticized the report's overall vision, and recorded Fung's response:

> The crowd gathered for public hearings on Robert Fung's plan responded with cheers and sustained applause when one women said that a watery backyard borrowing bits from Barcelona, Sydney, Amsterdam, Portland, New York and San Francisco isn't enough for Canada's most multicultural city. 'I don't see anything about this plan that is really unique to Toronto' she told Fung...Fung assured the standing-room only crowd of about 200 that there is room within the revitalization plans for details that particularly reflect Toronto. 'That's where you come in,' the financier told the audience. 'You have to be the inspiration for this' (no page number).

The issue that split opinion the most at the public forum and generated some additional press coverage was the proposal to dismantle the Gardiner Expressway. A number of attendees were concerned about the potential for traffic distribution on local roads once the expressway was removed. This anxiety was vociferously argued by a consortium of automobile commuting advocacy groups in a *Toronto Star* opinion article (Gilbert *et al*. 2000). Offended by the lack of consultation carried out before the report's publication, the

authors claimed that motorists were widely opposed to the proposed demolition and challenged the argument made for removing the Gardiner Expressway:

> The task force...seems to ignore the real reason the Gardiner Expressway was built and that was to expedite commuter traffic while reducing traffic flow through local neighbourhoods. In fact, the task force study goes the opposite way, proposing that traffic be dispersed on local streets while abruptly ending the Gardiner without a reasonable connection to the Don Valley Parkway (no page number).

As well as going to the public, the Task Force intensified government lobbying during the summer of 2000. Drawing on his powerful ties with Ottawa and exploiting what had become an increasingly close relationship with the Ontario premier, Fung pressured the government leaders to validate their public support for waterfront regeneration through a financial commitment (Lewington 2002). In so doing, a senior Task Force executive explains, Fung was also extremely keen to ensure the waterfront did not become a kicking ball for the tri-government leaders:

> He had a private deal with each of them that he would be there as long as they did not criticize each other on this particular project publicly. He wanted this to be the first project between the three governments where they actually worked together and never criticized each other publicly. And you will see it has been so, none of the governments have ever criticized each other about this project publicly....and that was a deal he had then, a personal deal with Chrétien, Harris and Mel Lastman (TWRC 8 2011).

Our Toronto Waterfront: Building Momentum

The Task Force received their first official endorsement in July 2000, when Toronto City Council voted 53-1 to approve an in-house staff report titled *Our Toronto Waterfront: Building Momentum* (City of Toronto 2000). Through a detailed analysis and evaluation, this report supported the Task Force's waterfront urban design vision and redevelopment strategy, albeit with some important reservations (City of Toronto 2000a). Mayor Mel

Lastman used the city's 2008 Olympic bid to urge Council to support the planners' conclusions, stating, "They [the bid committee] want to say to the IOC [International Olympic Committee] that Council is in favour in principle of the waterfront and we want you to put us on the shortlist" (quoted in Rusk 2000, p. A16). Recognizing the work done by Fung and his Task Force to formulate their strategy upon the foundations laid out in the City's *Wave of the Future!* report, *Building Momentum* supported the Task Force's commitment to make the waterfront a nexus for Toronto's global economy. The report spelled out a few adjustments, but in principle endorsed the Task Force's aim to use the public realm and real estate development to attract innovative New Economy investors and subsequent jobs (City of Toronto 2000a).

With respect to the Task Force's development concept, *Building Momentum*'s conclusions were generally favourable and stressed the many consistencies between the Task Force's urban design objectives and the City's emerging *Official Plan* (City of Toronto 2002). Although the controversial proposal to remove the Gardiner Expressway was characterized as a bold idea, it too was supported. The City suggested that the Task Force and the City conduct further comprehensive impact analyses of the highway and transportation reconfiguration proposals. *Building Momentum* also proposed that City planners begin work on an expedited secondary plan process for the Central Waterfront that would align with the time constraints demanded by the Olympic Bid and build upon community feedback from the forums held in June 2000 (City of Toronto 2000a). One notable request was for a more thorough affordable housing delivery agenda. The City welcomed the Task Force's target of 25% affordable rental, but suggested that further planning efforts should include a more emphatic and wide-ranging policy. The report stated that the Task Force's proposal to construct 'affordable rental housing' on the waterfront should be extended to include a greater mix of affordable housing, including "low-end condos, market rental, and assisted rental" (2000a, p. 17). To ensure this occurred the report further stated: "the Toronto waterfront development governing body should be mandated to include a mix of housing types and affordability into its developments" (p. 18).

The Task Force's supporting financial concept was also evaluated extensively. The report concluded that it was generally sound and could be achieved through the various financial measures proposed, including road tolling and the possible development of a casino.

However, concerned about risk and liability, City staff took pains to emphasize that a financial commitment from the provincial and federal governments was imperative if the overall project was to have long-term viability. The City could not go it alone. Furthermore, more detail on the powers of the proposed corporation would be required before the City could fully assess the level of risk it could acceptably incur. Finally, City staff turned their attention to the Task Force's proposal for an independent, business-like corporation. They revealed a number of important reservations and fundamental questions about the Task Force's vision and strategy. As aforementioned, Fung had stated during the launch of the Task Force report that he saw the operational concept and its call for an independent corporation as his key recommendation. *Building Momentum* questioned this proposed devolution of powers and asked: "What responsibility lies with the municipality and what responsibility lies with the new waterfront development governing body?" (p. 80). Not finding a satisfactory answer in the Task Force's operational concept, City staff recommended that additional work commence between the three governments to establish whether a corporate-style management body was the correct choice for Toronto. In this endeavour, the *Building Momentum* report stressed the need for a 'made in Toronto' model that would address the following five principles:

1. The waterfront governing body must be accountable to government.
2. The financial terms must provide sufficient protection for the City.
3. There must be a mechanism for public input.
4. The structure and process of the governing body must enable private investment.
5. It must have the ability to implement decisions quickly (p. 80).

Although the City of Toronto did not offer complete support for the corporation Fung envisaged, the Council vote gave politicians and City staff the green light to commence detailed discussions with the province and the federal governments about the scope of a waterfront governance body. It also gave planning staff the blessing they needed to begin work on a new secondary plan for the Central Waterfront. It was time, declared Paul Bedford, the City's chief planner, for the three governments to seize the moment. "I would suggest an absolute immediate commitment by all three levels of government for Toronto's waterfront concept...in the form of money – cold hard cash – that says for once and for all

we are dead serious about grabbing this window of opportunity" (quoted in Lewington 2000b, p. A24).

$1.5 Billion for Waterfront Revitalization

As early as June 2000 the provincial and federal leaders had also offered their own tentative support for the Task Force's vision and strategy through a ceremonial exchange of letters. Although the letters did not outline any financial support for the Task Force's plans, they did spell out a commitment to keep the project moving forward (Byers and Greenwood 2000; City of Toronto 2000a). By October discussions between the three governments had moved sufficiently forward for a pledge of $1.5 billion to be announced (City of Toronto 2001). The amount was to be divided equally between the three governments, each of whom would bring $500 million to the table. This, the governments hoped, would send a clear signal to the International Olympic Committee that Toronto was serious about being a host city (Reguly 2000). The amount pledged by the three governments was far short of what Fung and the Task Force had envisaged. They had estimated that a public sector commitment of at least $5 billion was required to see the entire vision through to completion (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000). Fung also revealed his growing anxiety that the money appeared to be directed only towards those projects connected to the Olympic bid, rather than the comprehensive vision and strategy for the waterfront. Writing in *The Globe and Mail*, business reporter Eric Reguly (2000) identified two additional flaws with the pledge. First, he noted that the City of Toronto's contribution was an in-lieu land and service guarantee, rather than a cash sum. This reduced, he claimed, the actual contribution to only $1 billion. Second, Reguly (2000) worried that this remaining sum could not be directed to waterfront redevelopment projects until a governance body was set up, a move the three governments had yet to formally make.

Fung's concern about the nature of the tri-government funding pledge was confirmed early the next year when more specific details about its initial distribution were released. On March 6th, 2001, the Toronto mayor, Mel Lastman, deputy Ontario premier, Jim Flaherty, and the federal transport minister, David Collenette, announced at a joint press conference that the first $300 million of their shared contribution would be specifically used to fund four Olympic bid priority projects (Immen 2001). These were: extending Front Street, expanding

platforms and passenger corridors at the Union Subway Station, completing the first phase of environmental remediation on the Port Lands and carrying out an environmental assessment of the Don River mouth proposal (City of Toronto 2001). David Collenette explained to the press that an interim committee of bureaucrats would direct the four projects and a formal redevelopment corporation would be established later in the year (Immen 2001). Christopher Hume, the *Toronto Star*'s architecture critic, remarked that the initial funding proposal fell well short of the original intentions. He argued that the point of the original $1.5 billion had been to provide enough capital to get a comprehensive waterfront revitalization strategy moving, but instead the distribution of funds had been politically motivated and unevenly dispersed (Hume 2001).

Formation of Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

In late April 2001, Toronto's City Council approved the formation of an interim Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (City of Toronto 2001a). Three months later, on July 4th, 2001, the three governments nominated Robert Fung as its first chair (Rusk 2001). This nomination was formally endorsed by Toronto's City Council on July 25th, 2001 (City of Toronto 2001b), remarkably only two weeks after Toronto lost out to Beijing in its bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games (Lewington 2001). The three governments had thus kept their promise to support the waterfront's redevelopment, regardless of the Olympic bid's fate. The corporation went on to receive its official mandate on November 1st, 2001 when the Ontario finance minister signed Articles of Incorporation that legally created the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC) under the *Business Corporations Act* (Ontario 2002). It took a further year, until December 2002, for the Province of Ontario to pass specific enabling legislation for the corporation, the *Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act 2002* (Eidelman 2011). However, the 2001 Articles of Incorporation gave Fung the power to formally set up an organization, hire a staff and begin work on a business strategy (Hume 2001).

While Fung had achieved his goal of establishing a dedicated organization to implement the Task Force's vision, it was not the independent corporation he had championed. Ultimately, while happy to endorse the Task Force's urban design vision for the waterfront, the three governments found themselves unable to relinquish total control to an independent body

(Oliver 2008). As demonstrated in Chapter 1, the three governments had shared a long and conflictual history on the Toronto waterfront. In particular, the ownership of land and water, as well as jurisdiction over it, had always been complicated (Eidelman 2011). The City of Toronto calculated that as many as twenty-one pieces of legislation from various levels of government affected Toronto's waterfront (2000a). Additionally, there remained a patchwork of public and private sector land ownership (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000). With this history came a legacy of fragmented development agendas, as one senior City of Toronto planning manager tried to explain:

> It took like, I don't know, four years to sort out the powers of this corporation because the federal government had an interest because of the Island Airport and the Port. The provincial government owned the current generating station and Ontario Hydro was mucking around, so there was some property there. Then there was the City itself, there was both City land and there was also TEDCO land[14]. Then there was Harbourfront Corporation, as a little player on its own. So, it is actually quite arcane, the whole thing (TORONTO 4 2011).

Gabriel Eidelman offers a detailed critique of the TWRC governance model and the powers it was awarded in his 2011 book chapter, "Jurisdictional Gridlock and the Genesis of Waterfront Toronto". He argues that the *Toronto Revitalization Corporation Act 2002* did not specifically award the TWRC the necessary powers to implement the mandate handed to it by the three governments. The Act clearly stated that the TWRC would:

> ...implement a plan that enhances the economic, social and cultural value of the land in the designated waterfront area and creates an accessible and active waterfront for living, working and recreation, and to do so in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner" (Ontario 2002, sec. 3.1.1.).

Eidelman (2011) explains that the Act also expressly forbid the TWRC from behaving as an agent of any government. This meant the corporation could not make decisions about land

[14] TEDCO (Toronto Economic Development Corporation) was a City of Toronto corporation that controlled large sections of the City-owned waterfront land. TEDCO played a very high-profile role in the development of the East Bayfront lands. This is explored extensively in Chapter 6.

and financing, including mortgaging, buying land, or borrowing money, without the permission of all three governments. Creating a corporation with reduced power and more government oversight than envisaged in the Fung report, the Act's stipulations limited the financial and administrative actions of the TWRC. As Eidelman writes:

> From a fiscal perspective, the agency is funded via contribution agreements negotiated by the three levels of government on a project-by-project basis, leaving the TWRC financially vulnerable to bureaucratic delays (p. 278).

Senior officials at Waterfront Toronto share Eidelman's conclusion. "It's handicapped by its bureaucratic cumbersome nature...", recalls one, "...if it was much more streamlined, a hell of a lot more could get done" (TORONTO 8 2011). Another senior figure frustratingly recalls:

> We got the money, but we never got any authority. We still don't have any. The only authority we have is moral and financial…So, the land was never controlled by us, but in our enabling legislation we are identified as the master developer, so one would think we should have been the master developer (TWRC 3 2011).

The decision to limit the corporation's powers was ultimately a political one, based on past jurisdictional experiences. The powers which the Task Force had requested were not dissimilar from those held by the Toronto Harbour Commission (Oliver 2008), the federal corporation that had wielded considerable power over the Toronto Port for much of the twentieth century (Sanderson and Filion 2011). Politically, the three levels of government could not create such an organization (Oliver 2008). A senior politician at the City of Toronto who was involved in defining some of the TWRC's legal powers concurs with Oliver's conclusions and offers a similar, yet contrasting justification:

> They wanted just to be given the money to do it and I don't think that is very accountable...I get very nervous when things are too arms length…The argument in favour of it is, 'well, they are less…susceptible to the politics of the day'. Underlying it is that mistrust of municipal government. They wanted to keep control because they didn't think the City of Toronto was capable of doing it (POLITICAL 2 2011).

A Planning Framework for Toronto's Waterfront

To coincide with the formation of the TWRC in October 2001, the City of Toronto released its *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (2001). Titled *Making Waves: Principles for Building Toronto's Waterfront*, the plan tied together the planning work conducted in the *Wave of the Future!* (City of Toronto 1999) report, the Fung report (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000) and the City's *Building Momentum* (2000a) document. As a core component of Toronto's official plan hierarchy, *The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* also provided the legal basis for waterfront redevelopment.

Key Influences on the Making Waves Secondary Plan

Planning in Toronto is governed by the Province of Ontario's *Planning Act* (1990), which stipulates that all Ontario municipalities have to prepare an Official Plan[15] and accompanying Zoning By-law to regulate the development of land. The Act states that an Official Plan must contain the goals, objectives and policies for future physical change in the municipality and outline the anticipated social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposals (Ontario 1990, sec. 16). Although not explicitly called for in the Act, larger municipalities also tend to prepare Part II Official Plans, or secondary plans, to accompany the primary Official Plan. These offer more detailed planning principles for specific geographical areas within the municipality, such as the waterfront, where major development or physical changes are anticipated.

The format of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was quite different from previous secondary plans produced by City of Toronto planners. To fulfil the objectives of the *Official Plan*, secondary plans had traditionally prescribed very detailed land use regulations and invariably included planning and urban design stipulations for each land parcel in the designated secondary plan area. A City of Toronto senior planner recalls how the City determined that, to facilitate redevelopment efforts, a visionary performance-based document would be the more appropriate response for the waterfront. As he explains: "It is a secondary plan, but it was a neat kind of secondary plan because it had no land use

[15] Since 2006, the *City of Toronto Act* (Ontario, 2006) has provided additional planning powers to the municipality. The impact of the 2006 Act is discussed in later chapters.

proposals, no density numbers, no heights. It was all policies and it was all performance related" (TORONTO 8 2011).

The City's fresh approach to the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was influenced by a number of factors, both political and planning policy-related. From a political perspective, one City of Toronto planning manager recalls, the City "didn't want to tie down the [new] corporation in terms of very specific regulations" (TORONTO 4 2011). Another saw a principles-based document as a sensible instrument to encourage "consensus and agreement from a variety of politicians that are left, right, centre, as well as developers, property owners, everybody" (TORONTO 8 2011). Experiences from the concurrent City of Toronto *Official Plan* (2002) process also played a significant part in influencing the style of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. Previous City of Toronto official plans had been large and cumbersome documents. "They had density numbers in them; they had height limits with specific policies galore" (TORONTO 8 2011). In essence, a former senior planning manager at the City recalls, they were like zoning by-laws. Bedford did not believe that such a detailed regulating plan was the appropriate choice for the large and diverse amalgamated city[16]. Instead, he proposed that a performance-based, visionary policy plan be composed that challenged existing approaches to development and proposed new ideas for the city. A senior planning manager who worked for Bedford during this period recalls that "Paul Bedford grabbed the opportunity and began a new official plan process...that helped start discussions on the sort of planning principles that had maybe not been applied in the past in the suburbs" (TORONTO 4 2011).

Published in 2002, the new *Toronto Official Plan* (City of Toronto 2002) was indeed a concise and visionary statement that presented bold strategic aims for the city but stayed away from detailed land-use designations. Among other things, it championed urban design and recognized the positive role it could play in city building. Using language that reflected the message of previous waterfront visions, it asserted that, "Great cities are judged by the look and quality of their squares, parks, streets, and public spaces and the buildings which frame and define them" (City of Toronto 2002, p. 34). The principles contained in the plan, the senior planning manager notes, "were more design-led. They were more urban than

[16] The City of Toronto was amalgamated with surrounding municipalities in 1998. The Official Plan process that led to the 2002 *Official Plan* was the first for the new amalgamated City of Toronto.

suburban, so the emphasis was on streetscape, on walking, on pedestrians, on cycling, on transit, on more high density development, that kind of stuff" (TORONTO 4 2011). A senior urban design manager at the City of Toronto crucially reflects that although the *Toronto Official Plan* was not an urban design policy statement as such, it became an extremely helpful foundation on which to build future urban design guidelines and design-led secondary plans (TORONTO 12 2011).

Central Waterfront Secondary Plan: Principles for Building Toronto's Waterfront

Not only did the message contained in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (City of Toronto 2001) differ from previous City of Toronto secondary plans, it also had a radically new look and feel. Traditionally, secondary plans were laid out as numbered reports. Presented in black and white, they listed policies for the area in conjunction with a series of simple interpretive maps. The *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, on the other hand, was a glossy and colourful document complete with photography, visionary plans and three-dimensional visualizations. In much the same way as the Fung report, the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was more like a marketing brochure for the waterfront than a municipal regulatory document. The familiar language of urban competition had been transported into the plan's opening statements. Moreover, it made little attempt to alter the urban design vision and strategy tendered by Fung and the Task Force:

> ...an extraordinary opportunity exists to engineer a seamless renewal and position Toronto for the intense urban competition of the new millennium. The Central Waterfront can become a focal point for realizing many of our civic aspirations: new economic growth and jobs; diverse and dynamic new communities for people of all means, ages and abilities; prominent cultural institutions; green, clean and interesting public spaces; and special places to have fun and create new memories (City of Toronto 2001, p. 6).

The plan was driven by four 'Core Principles'. These condensed the six development initiatives identified in the Fung report (see: Figure 5.2.) and outlined the 'Big Moves' that were needed on the waterfront, along with the policies to achieve them (City of Toronto 2001). The 'Big Moves' made reference to specific streets and sites along the waterfront and

used visualization tools to demonstrate how they might be achieved. The goal was to show the depth of the public sector's commitment and to assure the private sector that the waterfront was a safe, and even formidable, investment opportunity. A summary of the plan's Core Principles is provided in Figure 5.6. below and oveleaf.

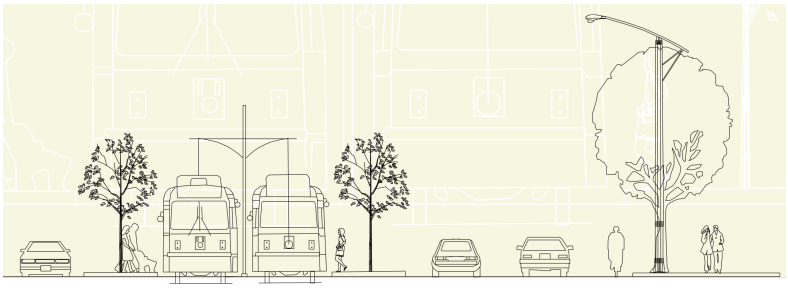
Figure 5.6. Central Waterfront Plan Core Principles

(Summarized from: City of Toronto 2001, pp. 23-47, all images reproduced with the permission of the City of Toronto)

1. Removing Barriers/Making Connections

Bringing Toronto to the waterfront by removing barriers and reconnecting "the city with Lake Ontario and the lake with the city" (p. 24). Six 'Big Moves' proposed:

- (A1) Redesigning the Gardiner corridor and removing elevated expressway when improvements to other networks completed;
- (A2) Extending and improving the existing public transportation network;
- (A3) Reimagining Lake Shore Boulevard as a generously landscaped boulevard;
- (A4) Creating a scenic Waterfront Drive along Queen's Quay;
- (A5) Completing the Waterfront Trail that along Lake Ontario; and
- (A6) Enforcing the unique identity of historic corridors on the waterfront.



Proposed section of Queen's Quay as a Waterfront Drive for Cars, Pedestrians and Streetcars

2. Building a Network of Spectacular Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces

Recognizing the importance of public spaces on the waterfront and promoting it as a destination for local people, tourists and businesses alike. Ten 'Big Moves' proposed, including:

- (B7) Reserving the Water's Edge for public use;
- (B10) Crating a new waterfront park at East Bayfront;
- (B11) Creating a scenic greenway through the Port Lands to link existing parks; and,
- (B13) Transforming the existing Port Lands Ship Canal into a powerful focus point;

The Port Lands Ship Canal and Scenic Greenway

Park at East Bayfront

Figure 5.6. (cont.) Central Waterfront Plan Core Principles

3. Promoting a Clean and Green Environments

Aiming to achieve a "high level of environmental health in the Central Waterfront" (p. 40) and creating sustainable waterfront communities. Three 'Big Moves' proposed:

- (C17) Promoting sustainable modes of transportation;
- (C18) Constructing a flood protection berm to protect the West Don Lands; and,
- (C19) Renaturalizing the Mouth of the Don River.

Renaturalizing the Mouth of the Don River

4. Creating Dynamic and Diverse New Communities

Creating communities that will one day be "acclaimed for their high degree of social, economic, natural and environmental health and cultural vibrancy" (p. 44). Four 'Big Moves' proposed:

- (D20) Opening up the Port Lands for redevelopment to support the New Economy;
- (D21) Redevelop the West Don Lands into a mix-used community;
- (D22) Transform the East Bayfront into a prominent waterfront community;
- (D23) Expand Exhibition Place into a dynamic destination that includes housing and employment space.

All of the Fung report's major urban design messages were carried over into the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. The importance of design excellence was reiterated and the Task Force's vision of an urban waterfront of sustainable, mixed-use neighbourhoods along a publically accessible green edge was comprehensively endorsed. The removal of the Gardiner Expressway, arguably the ultimate 'Big Move', was tentatively supported and, furthermore, the City embraced Fung's personal goal to create a Convergence Centre for the New Economy in the Port Lands. However, they did not spell this out as a stand-alone

principle, preferring instead to integrate it into the fourth Core Principle, 'Creating Dynamic and Diverse New Communities'.

The *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was first and foremost a performance-based visionary plan that aimed to enable high quality development rather than regulate it parcel by parcel. Thus, like the Fung report before it, it offered no specific development proposals or supporting zoning by-laws. Instead, it outlined a new planning and urban design implementation strategy that was to be carried out by the City of Toronto in partnership with the newly created TWRC. Adopting the Task Force's term 'precincts' to identify areas of opportunity on the waterfront (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000), the City envisioned a series of strategic 'precinct plans' that would sit below the secondary plan. Essentially detailed master plans, they were entirely new to the City of Toronto hierarchy of plans. Their proposed content was outlined as follows:

> The precinct development strategies will deal with street and block patterns and building heights, urban design, community services and facilities including schools and local parks, and a strategy for achieving affordable housing targets in the Central Waterfront. The precinct development strategies will also address business relocation requirements and financing options (City of Toronto 2001, p. 21)[17].

Reflecting the sentiment of the tri-government agreement and clearly marking the boundaries between the City and the corporation, the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* stated that the City remained the approving planning authority on the waterfront, while the new corporation would be responsible for producing a business plan that reflected the planning and design vision of the secondary plan. But as a nod to the Fung report's unrealized desire for full control of the waterfront (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000), the plan proposed a form of simplified planning control to implement the waterfront precinct plans. It was inspired by Section 7.2. of the Ontario *Planning Act* (1990), which had been amended in 1995 to allow municipalities to introduce a Development Permit System. The Development Permit System gave Ontario municipalities the option to collapse

[17] Precinct plans have gone on to play a formidable role in the planning and urban design of the Toronto waterfront. In close consultation with both local communities and the City of Toronto, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has developed a series of precinct plans for the Central Waterfront. In 2011, these plans are at various stages of implementation. The role of precinct plans, and in particular the composition and implementation of the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005), is the primary focus of Chapter 6.

the zoning and site planning aspects of a development application into one streamlined entity. In June of 2001, the Province of Ontario included the Central Waterfront in a pilot scheme that aimed to test the effectiveness of the Development Permit System (City of Toronto 2005). In response, the City rushed to accommodate the proposal in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, where it was described as a groundbreaking performance-based tool:

> The Development Permit System offers a more flexible approach to zoning by allowing a broader range of uses, incentives or alternative requirements if certain performance standards can be satisfied.
>
> While providing flexibility in land use, the Development Permit System also allows certainty in matters relating to broader city building objectives. This is well suited to the Central Waterfront, where innovation and creativity will be required to transform large tracts of underutilized lands while ensuring the public objectives are met (2001, p. 49).

The effectiveness of the Development Permit System on the Central Waterfront was evaluated by the City of Toronto soon after the publication of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.* Noting that the City of Toronto had a more advanced planning system than many smaller Ontario municipalities, City planning staff determined that "many of the approaches inherent in a Development Permit System, such as flexibility of development standards and urban design-based standards, are already implemented by Toronto in its current practices under current legislation" (2005, p. 4). Additionally, planners were concerned that the Development Permit System regulation prohibited the use of Sec. 37 of the *Planning Act* (Ontario 1990), which allows Ontario municipalities to negotiate for community benefits in exchange for variances to the *Official Plan* and the zoning by-law. In their final evaluation, City of Toronto planners concluded that the Development Permit System brought few meaningful benefits to the existing planning process (City of Toronto 2005) and, as such, it has never been implemented (TORONTO 10 2011).

The Release of The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan and its Reception

Releasing the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* in October 2001 to coincide with the formation of the TWRC did not occur without some last minute political wrangling. The fate of the Gardiner Expressway, an issue that had proved controversial at the Task Force public forums earlier in the year, had begun to make Mayor Lastman uneasy (Monsebraaten 2001). City of Toronto planners concurred with the Task Force's design assessment that removing the Gardiner was critical to the viability of the overall vision for the waterfront (James 2001), but the mayor pressured planners to reconsider the proposal and delayed an earlier release of the plan (James 2001). A City of Toronto planning manager for the waterfront recalls the discussion that occurred:

> It had a policy in it about the Gardiner Expressway [the secondary plan]. The wording of it went back and forth between the mayor's office and the planning department, I don't know, ten times, because we wanted to say that the Gardiner should come down. The political powers did not think we should be saying that and so there's some funny wording in about the barrier being abolished, or sort of minimized (TORONTO 4 2011).

Speaking to the press, Paul Bedford strongly defended the planning department's position. "Bedford says his 'professional opinion' is that it should come down and that opinion won't change," explained Royson James, a *Toronto Star* political commentator, "…all he can do is advise City Council. Politicians make the decisions" (2001, p. B01). Bedford eventually won the day and the connectivity problems posed by the Gardiner Expressway were included in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (see: Figure 5.6. on page 135), but the Fung report's bold proposal to remove the Expressway was given only conditional support in one of the City's 'Big Moves':

> The Gardiner Expressway is a major physical barrier that cuts off the city from the waterfront. To ensure the success of the redesigned Gardiner corridor, funding for major improvements to the road system and GO Transit/TTC services including Union Station must be in place. These improvements will have to be substantially completed before the removal of the elevated expressway... (City of Toronto 2001, p. 25).

Like the Task Force report before it, the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was well received by the press. A *Toronto Star* editorial exclaimed that, "City planners did get it right. Their report...lays a solid foundation for the creation of a waterfront that will be open, accessible and inviting to all residents" (2001, A26). Crucially, the editorial concluded, that the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan "*reaffirms the important principle that Toronto Council have authority over planning decisions" (Editorial 2001, A26). Planning and urban design professions also applauded the secondary plan. In May 2002, the Canadian Institute of Planners presented the City of Toronto with its 'Award of Excellence' for the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* citing its innovation, potential and presentation (Canadian Institute of Planners 2011). Later that year, in November, the international Waterfront Center bestowed their prestigious '2002 Excellence on the Waterfront Award' upon the City (The Waterfront Center 2011).

After a period of consultation and review the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was eventually adopted by Toronto's City Council in April 2003 (City of Toronto 2003). Reflecting upon the process that had brought about plan, Lehrer and Laidley (2008) argue that the City of Toronto only undertook the mandatory consultation requirements set out in Ontario's *Planning Act*. Much like the Task Force public forums convened after the publication of the Fung report, the public's input had, in fact, been minimal. As a community leader with a long history of involvement in waterfront consultation recalls, "we were presented with a draft plan. It was written. It was done. You could comment on it, but really: how much was going to be changed?" (CIVIL 2 2011). Using Sherry Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969), Lehrer and Laidley characterize the consultation efforts as 'tokenistic' and argue that the City chose to sell the Task Force's ambitious scheme to the community rather than directly involve members of the public in its creation (2008). In a 2011 book chapter, Laidley goes further and argues that the publication of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* caused the lines between the private sector Task Force and the public planning process for the waterfront to blur. This occurred, she argues, because many of the same authors worked on the Fung report and the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, meaning that the content was, in effect, translated from document to document (Laidley 2011). Laidley's thesis is firmly supported by the recollections of senior Task Force designers and a senior planning manager at the City of Toronto, all three of whom worked on the report. The planning manager openly admits that, "I saw an opportunity to take those ideas and

translate them into principles" (TORONTO 8 2011), while one of the Task Force urban designers dogmatically asserts that the City of Toronto "...produced a Secondary Plan that accorded with the book" (TWRC 5 2011). "It was a communal effort to put that thing together," (DESIGN 10 2011) remembers the other Task Force urban designer.

Beginning the Process of Waterfront Planning and Management

With a planning framework in place and a development corporation created, the work of revitalizing Toronto's waterfront could finally begin. The TWRC quickly produced a comprehensive *Development Plan and Business Strategy* (2002), which laid out a five-year implementation plan. This reiterated the familiar themes of global competition, the New Economy and the pursuit of design excellence. It also outlined the projects that would be tackled in the first five years, including: producing precinct plans based on the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* for all areas of the waterfront, beginning the first phase of construction on the East Bayfront precinct, implementing Fung's vision of a 'Convergence Centre' in the Port Lands and undertaking the four short term infrastructure projects that had been singled out by the three governments in their initial $300 million funding allowance. The noticeable omission from the list of priority projects was the Gardiner Expressway. This proposal had been relegated to the middle of the document and, following the lead of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan,* was reserved for further study.

In November 2002, the new corporation embarked upon an initial series of eight public meetings to solicit general feedback on the waterfront planning and design vision contained in their *Development Plan and Business Strategy* (2002). The meetings were designed to cover several topics addressed by the strategy, including economic and social issues, the environment, parks, urban design and transportation (Lewington 2002a). But, contrary to expectations, the meetings were dominated by discussions about a recently tabled proposal by a local Toronto businessman to develop a fixed link bridge to the Toronto Island Airport, located on the western edge of the Central Waterfront district (see: Figure 1.2., p. 12). Reporting on one of these meetings, Steven Theobold of the *Toronto Star* noted that "the majority of the 200 or so city residents who attended the meeting at Harbourfront Community Centre came with only objective: stop any expansion of the island airport" (Theobold 2002, p. A01). With some frustration, the City's chief planner, Paul Bedford,

explained to the audience that the airport was not part of the waterfront redevelopment plan. But, even when the meeting was split into 25 breakout groups, the issue continued to dominate the conversation. By the end of the meeting, TWRC chair Robert Fung admitted that, although not part of the corporation's mandate, the Toronto Island Airport was undeniably of immediate concern to local residents (Theobold 2002).

As the fixed link to the airport became a potent local issue, it was clear that the TWRC needed to state its position on the proposal. Fung surprised and angered many of those opposed to it coming out in support (James 2002). His personal enthusiasm for the airport was defined by his vision for Toronto, which, as this chapter has explored, cast the waterfront as Canada's premier international gateway. However, the wider corporate decision is made clearer when understood in the context of an ensuing $1 billion legal challenge launched in September 2001 by the Toronto Port Authority against the City of Toronto. The Port Authority claimed that the City of Toronto had illegally acquired over 400 hectares of land controlled by the former Toronto Harbour Commission in the early 1990s. It was prepared to drop the lawsuit if City Council approved the fixed link to the airport (James 2002; Monsebraaten 2002). Any obstruction by another government agency would delay the work of the fledgling corporation. The City of Toronto Council eventually voted to approve a settlement with the Toronto Port Authority and approve the fixed link to the airport on November 27th, 2002 (City of Toronto 2002a).

Toronto's 'Waterfront Mayor'

The Toronto Island Airport issue did not end with the vote at Council. Over the following year, it evolved into one of the central platforms of Councillor David Miller's 2003 campaign for the Toronto mayoralty. While Miller strongly supported the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (City of Toronto 2001), he viewed the airport expansion as a symbol of the city going in the wrong direction. On November 10th 2003, he won the mayoral election handily; a victory that was heavily influenced by his relentless opposition of the fixed link (Lewington 2003). As *The Globe and Mail*'s William Thorsell commented, it had become a populist position:

> Nothing aggravates Torontonians more than the brutal state of their connection to Lake Ontario. They're angry about it. They're humiliated by it. They feel revengeful over it. Only David Miller among the leading candidates came out against the expansion of a business commuter airport smack dab on the lovely islands in the bay - just across from the burgeoning condo neighbourhoods perched along the freeways (2003, p. A15).

After only a few weeks in office, on December 3rd, 2002, Miller took the issue of the Toronto Island Airport back to a special sitting of the City of Toronto Council. Here he sought its endorsement of a resolution that requested the federal government, and thereby its agency the Toronto Port Authority, to remove the provision for a fixed link to the airport from the previous legal agreement. The ruling passed successfully by 30 to 14 votes (City of Toronto 2003a). While this crucial vote concluded the discussion about the fixed link, it had piqued Miller's interest in the waterfront and its redevelopment. Angered by the corporation's decision to support the airport's expansion plans, Miller began to direct significant attention towards the operation of the TWRC. As a firmly centre-left politician he was wary of the corporation's detachment from the City of Toronto. One senior City Hall insider reflects how the mayor's office perceived that the arm's length corporation was set up by a centre-right administration – with whom Robert Fung had been close – that mistrusted municipal governance (POLITICAL 2 2011). Indeed, Miller took particular aim at the TWRC's board of directors. Writing in *The Globe and Mail* he criticized what he saw as the stalled implementation of the City's *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. Although not offering any particular evidence for his claims, he questioned the composition of the corporation's board of directors, stating:

> Several of the corporation's directors have inherent conflicts because the represent interests with their own waterfront agendas – power plants, theme parks, construction opportunities. These people should be replaced by visionary urban thinkers – people such as architect Jack Diamond, planner Ken Greenberg, thought-provoking Jane Jacobs or former mayor David Crombie (2002 p. A21).

Miller's interest in the redevelopment of Toronto's waterfront continued throughout his two terms as mayor and, as will continue to be explored, his antagonism towards the TWRC's governance structure would remain.

Limitations of the TWRC Governance Model

In March 2003, the task of running the TWRC and delivering on its ambitious redevelopment agenda was placed in the hands of a real estate executive called John Campbell. Campbell was recommended for the post of president and CEO by TWRC board chair Robert Fung and, like Fung, he had a private sector background (TWRC 8 2011). Although trained as a civil engineer, Campbell had spent the major part of his career in real estate and, immediately before his appointment at the TWRC, had managed a number of large-scale commercial real estate projects in downtown Toronto as president of Brookfield Ventures Ltd. Leading the TWRC from a planning vision into the early stages of implementation was going to be a formidable challenge, even for a seasoned real estate operative like John Campbell. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the three governments had pledged contributions of $500 million each towards the waterfront's redevelopment in October 2000. But at the time of Campbell's appointment in March 2003, very little of that money had actually been transferred. When the corporation did receive funding from the three governments, it came in the form of 'contribution agreements' paid on a project-by-project basis. This meant that the TWRC had to apply each year for specific sources of money to fund individual development projects (Mercer Delta Consulting 2004). While this method allowed the governments to stay attuned to the spending priorities of the TWRC, it also caused short-term political priorities to dominate the corporation's decision-making process and, as a result, created cash flow problems in its early years of operation.

This situation was compounded by the loss of the 2008 Olympic bid in July 2001, which had inevitably dampened the enthusiasm of the governments to deliver on their shared promise (Filion and Sanderson 2011). Another crucial factor at play was the changing political environment. As mentioned above, in 2002 the leadership of the City of Toronto government had shifted. Mayor Mel Lastman, a right-leaning politician who had helped to set up the TWRC, was replaced by the more critical administration of Mayor David Miller. Then, a year later, the leadership at the provincial level also changed. The right-leaning Progressive

Conservative government of Premier Mike Harris, also one of the original partners of the earlier tri-government agreement, was replaced by a centre-left Liberal government led by Dalton McGuinty. Not long after he arrived at the corporation, Campbell had approached the Progressive Conservative government and requested that the scope of the new corporation's enabling legislation be renegotiated so that the TWRC could be more financially independent and less reliant on staggered contributions from the various levels of government. But, according to a corporation executive, a promise made by Mike Harris' provincial government in early 2003 to increase the corporation's control over financial matters at the end of its first year of operation was not honoured by the incoming Liberal government (TWRC 7 2011).

In the TWRC executive's view, the unpredictable nature of election cycles at the three levels of governments meant the TWRC faced the challenge of trying to fund the implementation of their long-term vision for the waterfront while justifying their funding requests on the basis of short-term implementation successes (TWRC 7 2011). By early 2004 the cash flow problems facing the TWRC reached a point of no return. Only $35 million of the pledged $1.5 billion had actually been transferred to the corporation (Filion and Sanderson 2011) and, furthermore, a number of the governments' future funding commitments were directed towards projects related to the waterfront in only a tangential sense and which were not under the purview of the corporation, such as a heavy rail connection from downtown Toronto to the city's Pearson International Airport and upgrades to subway platforms at the nearby Union Station. This lack of stable government funding forced the TWRC to reveal in March 2004 that it was nearly bankrupt. The announcement was widely reported in the local and national press and the blame was directed at the three governments, in particular, their insistence to approve each individual project before releasing funds (Gillespie 2004; Lewington 2004). In response, the federal government provided a small bridging payment of $5.5 million in March 2004 that allowed the corporation to continue paying its staff (Lewington 2004a) and then, after considerable lobbying and additional negative press reports, the triumvirate eventually committed a further $334 million in late July 2004. This injection provided the corporation with the medium-term stability it required.

The corporation's renewed financial stability did not end the growing criticisms of its governance structure. Mayor Miller continued to offer assessments of the TWRC's ability to

operate effectively and, as the funding crisis intensified during the summer of 2004, he reiterated his earlier concerns about the composition of the TWRC board of directors. Miller's solution was that politicians should be allowed to serve as board members (Gillespie 2004), a condition expressly prohibited in the corporation's enabling legislation because of concerns about overt politicization (Ontario 2002). More specifically, he argued that the waterfront's redevelopment should be more clearly identified as a municipal project, a position motivated by the heavy handling of the fixed link fiasco by the federally controlled Toronto Port Authority. In November 2004, Royson James of the *Toronto Star* reported that Miller had gone a step further and proposed that he would like to sit on the corporation's board of directors as the City of Toronto's representative.

Governance and Financing Review

The combination of Mayor Miller's public calls for changes at the TWRC and the fragility of the corporation's funding model highlighted just how vulnerable the corporation was to the short-term political priorities of the three governments. Realizing that a longer-term solution was needed, the board of directors commissioned an independent review of its governance structure and financing model (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005). Produced by management consulting firm Mercer Delta and published in October 2004, the review identified a disconnect between the original vision for the TWRC as an 'empowered development corporation' and the actual reality of its day-to-day operations. Recasting the corporation as a 'coordinating agency', Mercer Delta concluded that the TWRC did not have "sufficient power to compel alignment among stakeholder efforts and/or advance the development of the waterfront" (Mercer Delta Consulting 2004, p. 3). The review attributed this to a lack of political will on the part of the three governments, a lack of collaboration between stakeholders – especially other government agencies – and an inadequate supply of capital. Yet the review also accepted that the TWRC, as a special purpose corporation, walked a thin-line between independence and public accountability. Mercer Delta suggested that, while the concept of a fully 'empowered corporation' was theoretically sound, the conditions for such a model appeared to be untenable on Toronto's waterfront. The report deduced that one of the biggest roadblocks to change was the unwillingness of the three governments to cede control of land they already held on the waterfront. Although in some parts of the waterfront over 80% of the land was owned by the public sector (Toronto

Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000), it was controlled by different government agencies, such as: the provincial Ontario Realty Corporation, the municipal Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO) and the federal Toronto Port Authority (TPA). As separate organizations with widely differing mandates, there was little appetite on the part of the three governments to consolidate their individual holdings through the tripartite corporation. Furthermore, the City of Toronto was not prepared to grant planning powers to an independent entity in fears that this would undermine its citywide planning decision-making powers (City of Toronto 2000a). The review argued for some version of the 'empowered corporation' model tailored to the Toronto waterfront context.

Mercer Delta (2004) proposed that the TWRC be given the power to "direct the use of lands on the waterfront in accordance with the comprehensive plan and timelines whether or not ownership of the land is actually transferred to the corporation" (p. 5). To guarantee the smooth implementation of specific development projects under this model, the report suggested that a series of 'memorandums of understanding' be drawn up between government agencies to "ensure alignment and commitment to the comprehensive plan for waterfront revitalization" (p. 5). One of the key recommendations was that the corporation be permitted to mortgage lands owned by the three governments and have the right to establish subsidiary companies, thus spreading the corporation's financial risk – the very powers the Task Force had sought four years before and described earlier in the chapter (Eidelman 2011). Mercer Delta argued that such a move would minimize further government contributions because the profits from early development project could be reinvested in TWRC operations. In the management consultant's estimation the success of an empowered development corporation ultimately hinged on an improved working relationship between the three governments and the TWRC. Using evidence from other waterfront cities, the review argued that the three governments had to stop acting independently and agree to work together. One possible way of doing this, it suggested, was to allow elected officials to sit on the corporation's board of directors, as proposed by Mayor Miller. But Mercer Delta only gave lukewarm support for the idea, noting "there is concern about the potential politicization of the Board through the appointment of elected officials to the Board, as suggested by the City, even though it is recognized that the City's support is critical to success" (2004, p. 20).

When the Mercer Delta review was released by the TWRC in late October 2004 it received a mixed response. At City Hall, Mayor Miller greeted it with enthusiasm. He talked animatedly about giving the corporation more power to implement the shared planning and design vision for the waterfront, while at the same time, improving the conditions for public oversight through the appointment of politicians to the board of directors. “It’s time to act” (quoted in Lewington 2004b, p. A14), he said. The reception of the review by the provincial and federal governments was less steadfast. Reporting for *The Globe and Mail,* municipal affairs correspondent Jennifer Lewington (2004b) noted that both governments remained wary of appointing politicians to the TWRC board and the federal government, in particular, did not look favourably upon ceding of additional financial powers to the corporation.

Partial Implementation of the Governance and Financing Review

The only permanent change that was made to the corporation’s primary legislation was an amendment to allow the mayor of Toronto to sit on the board of directors (Eidelman 2011), a surprising decision considering both the cautious language Mercer Delta had used to describe the proposal and the lack of support it received from the provincial and federal governments. Although the TWRC was never awarded any of the enhanced financial powers it sought, Mercer Delta’s suggestion that a series of memoranda of understanding be drawn up to clarify the corporation’s role as the lead developer of the waterfront was heeded. While negotiations were protracted, the first memorandum was signed with the TWRC by the Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the Ontario Realty Corporation in September 2005 and transferred responsibility for the West Don Lands to the corporation (Ontario 2005). A second memorandum followed in February 2006 as an agreement between the City of Toronto, its economic development agency, TEDCO, and the TWRC with respect to landownership at East Bayfront and the Port Lands. This transferred most, but not all, of the land held by TEDCO to the TWRC (City of Toronto 2006).

In what was widely seen as a step forward, the memoranda “confirmed the TWRC’s role as the lead planning and coordinating body responsible for waterfront lands” (Eidelman 2011, p. 278) and vastly improved the corporation’s ability to operate on the waterfront, facilitating, in the words of the TWRC’s *Annual Report 2006/07*, “a more streamlined and focused approach as…lands are prepared for development” (2007, p. 2). Yet, as will be explored in

both Chapters 6 and 8, the agreement reached in the East Bayfront memorandum was to be severely tested in the years that followed. As noted above, the 2006 agreement had meant that TEDCO retained ownership over a small land parcel in the East Bayfront (City of Toronto 2006). In what would become a major frustration for the TWRC, TEDCO's independent proposal for this particular site was directly at odds with the corporation's wider vision for the East Bayfront precinct. This conflict, which actually began in 2005, before the memorandum was even signed, meant that a bitter and destabilizing relationship evolved between the two agencies. As Chapter 8 explains, the climate of distrust between TEDCO and the TWRC led to a series of mediocre design decisions being made; decision that have impacted the wider revitalization of the waterfront and, in particular, the planning of the East Bayfront precinct.

Shifting Leadership at the TWRC

At their September 2005 Council meeting, the City of Toronto endorsed the provincial government's proposed amendment to the TWRC's enabling legislation, allowing elected officials to sit on the corporation's board of directors (City of Toronto 2005a). As a result, Mayor David Miller was able to attend his first TWRC board meeting in October 2005 (Hume 2005), initially as a non-voting member and then, after the legislation completed its journey through the Ontario legislature in December 2005, as a full voting member (Ontario 2002). The amendment to the *Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act 2002* also allowed the provincial government, but not the federal government, to appoint an elected official to the TWRC board of directors (Ontario 2002). However, they declined to do so citing on-going conflict of interest concerns (TWRC 7 2011). Reflecting on Miller's appointment to the board, a senior TWRC executive notes that his high profile was always going to be a double-edge sword for the corporation. While his passion and advocacy for the waterfront had its benefits, the challenge presented by his undue level of influence – in comparison to other board members – meant the corporation was always sensitive to the charge that he might become a 'super director' (TWRC 7 2011). As will unfold in the stories told in the remaining chapters, there were times where the divide between political influence and due process were indeed severely tested. Indeed, the on-going conflict between TEDCO and the TWRC mentioned earlier is one such example. But, as will also become clear in the chapters that

follow, there were tangible benefits to having a powerful advocate for the corporation's waterfront planning and design vision at the very heart of the decision-making process.

Mayor Miller's election to the TWRC board of directors in late 2005 also marked the beginning of a transition for Robert Fung, who had been chair of both the original Task Force, and then the corporation, since 1999. Since the time of the Toronto Island Airport fiasco in 2002, when then-Councillor Miller had first become interested in the waterfront's redevelopment, Miller and Fung had tended to view the political and jurisdictional issues impacting the TWRC very differently. Miller had vehemently opposed the fixed link bridge to the airport, an issue that helped propel him to the mayoralty, while Fung had supported it. Moreover, before he joined the board, Miller often criticized the corporation and argued that the City of Toronto should play a far greater role in the waterfront redevelopment process. In contrast, since the earliest days of the Task Force, Fung had been convinced that the corporation should be completely independent from government and have its own planning decision-making powers. Ultimately, as a senior TWRC executive with close ties to Robert Fung reports, "Miller and Fung never saw eye-to-eye…Miller wanted to come on the board and Fung did not want Miller on the board" (TWRC 8 2011). Fung's term as chair expired in May 2006 and was not renewed. The decision was both personal and political. Simply put, Miller and Fung did not get along (Lu and Gillespie 2006, p. B02). Furthermore, as a senior TWRC executive remarked, changes in government tend to lead to changing political appointments (TWRC 7 2011). Yet, while the political realities of the day made it impossible for him to continue as chair, Fung had played a significant, at times singlehanded, role in shaping the revitalization program. While he had initially been viewed as a surprising choice – a successful Bay Street financier with ties to the prime minister but no planning or design experience – he did leave a positive and lasting legacy behind.

Implementing 'Design Excellence'

Implementing the long-term plan for the waterfront and maintaining the commitment to urban design excellence spelled out in the various redevelopment visions that preceded the corporation was evidently going to be an uphill battle. The failure of the three governments to commit to all of the governance reforms outlined in the Mercer Delta review demonstrated that the TWRC needed to find other ways to ensure that their planning and design goals

could be implemented. Looking back, a senior TWRC executive drily notes, “What we have done…we have done in spite of the governance model” (TWRC 7 2011). Although the 2002 enabling legislation did not furnish the corporation with the planning decision-making power many had hoped for, the two memoranda of understanding that followed did define the corporation as the ‘lead master planner’ of the waterfront lands. This designation was also supported by an earlier endorsement of the corporation by the City of Toronto Council, which stated: “The TWRC is the delivery vehicle for waterfront revitalization. All revitalization initiatives will be conducted under its auspices and entities charged with implementing specific waterfront projects will do so under service or delivery agreements with TWRC” (City of Toronto 2004, p. 3). Yet, even these documents, as previously noted, left some room for ambiguity with respect to landownership.

To make progress with the waterfront redevelopment program ‘despite the governance model’ and maintain their commitment to design excellence, the TWRC began to focus on discretionary planning and urban design tools that it could control independently. ‘Design excellence’ had been embedded in the vision for Toronto’s waterfront since the formation of the Task Force in 1999, but as I have discussed, urban design tended to be narrowly defined and was primarily focused on economic development, often to the detriment of social concerns and environment imperatives. It is not entirely clear what initiated the TWRC’s subtle change in approach, yet a key turning point appears to be a trip that Robert Fung and John Campbell made to Sweden in August 2004 as part of a delegation organized by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Sponsored by the federal government, the weeklong ‘Community Energy Planning Mission’ incorporated a series of policy seminars by the Swedish government and fieldtrips to sustainable housing developments, ‘ecovillages’ and renewable energy projects (Federation of Canadian Municipalities 2004). The mission had a major impact on the way Fung and Campbell conceptualized the future of Toronto’s waterfront and, as John Campbell explains, they both returned with a desire to intertwine sustainability and design excellence and make it the guiding force behind the corporation’s implementation efforts:

> As you learn about what it is you are doing, these kinds of things crept into the core mandate. So, how do you build communities? How do you build a city where people can live and work throughout their whole life span whether they are rich or poor? Part of it is about the vision of the future and how do you prepare today to get there. Sustainability and design excellence – quality of life, quality of place – all these things have come together over the years" (TWRC 7 2011).

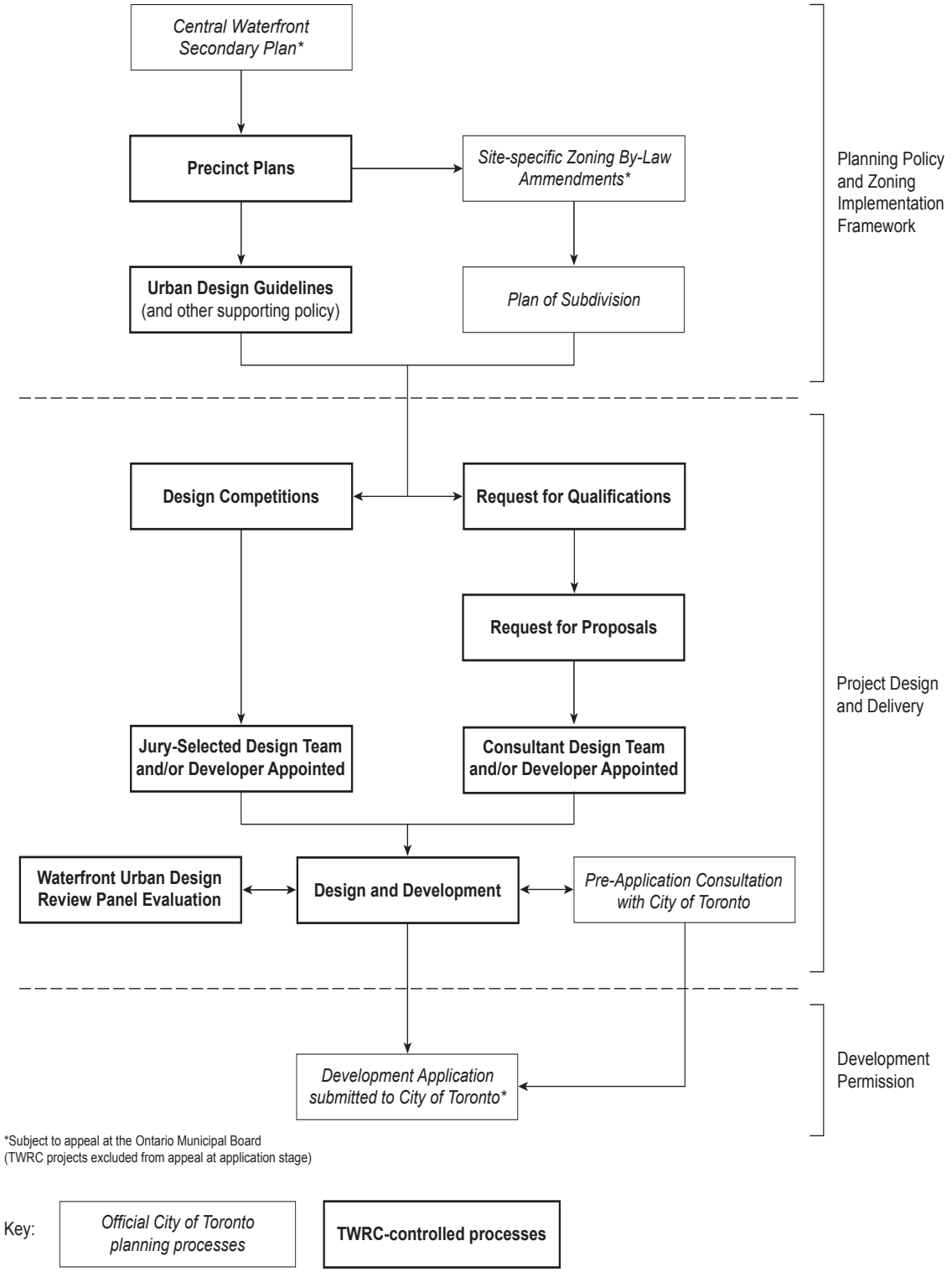
New Design-Sensitive Tools

Among the policies and tools that were introduced by the corporation to control design were the precinct plans – which had already been set out in the City of Toronto's *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (2001) – design competitions for new parks and public spaces and an urban design peer review board to assess all planning and design proposals on the waterfront. In addition, the corporation committed to an enhanced public consultation and participation process. From 2003 onwards, the TWRC began to introduce these new instruments, but what is interesting about them is that they do not have any statutory power within the Ontario planning system. This includes the precinct plans, which, although imagined as a tertiary component of the City of Toronto *Official Plan* (2002), are not recognized in the *Planning Act* and are therefore effectively unenforceable (Ontario 1990). As will be more fully explained in the next chapter, the City of Toronto has manoeuvred around this limitation by designating various land parcels on the waterfront as special districts within the City of Toronto *Zoning By-Law* (City of Toronto 2010) and then using the TWRC precinct plans as the basis for the site specific zoning by-law amendments required for each of the special districts. This has created a bridge between the urban design components proposed in the precinct plans and the legally binding rules required for the creation of a zoning by-law amendment, as shown in Figure 5.7. on page 154.

What has made the other supporting design implementation tools effective is the TWRC's power to select the design consultants contracted to deliver the planning documents and architectural drawings, as well as the developers chosen to build each of the waterfront projects. This power exist because the vast majority of land on Toronto's waterfront remains in government hands and is thus under the purview of the TWRC (Ontario 2005; City of Toronto 2006). Any private developer or external design consultant selected to participate in

the TWRC's precinct planning efforts must apply through a rigorous 'Request for Qualification (RFQ)' and 'Request for Proposal (RFP)' process and except to participate in extensive public consultation before applying for planning permission from the City of Toronto. While on certain projects, typically parks and open spaces, the TWRC convenes a design competition to select the design team. All of the corporation's design competitions are guided by rigorous briefing documents that spell out the corporation's planning vision and urban design principles and also involve a required public engagement component. Moreover, the TWRC's development proposal documents and their design competition briefs also state that every waterfront project must, in addition to passing through the standard City of Toronto planning application process, be subject to an evaluation by the corporation's Waterfront Design Review Panel (Waterfront Toronto 2008). This non-binding stipulation is also contained in the zoning by-law amendments for the waterfront (City of Toronto 2006a). Figure 5.7. (overleaf) illustrates the 'layering' of the TWRC's new design control measures with the extant planning mechanisms operated by the City of Toronto; a detailed assessment of each of the various tools follows in the remaining chapters of this dissertation.

Figure 5.7. Layered Control of Planning and Design on Toronto's waterfront
(Diagram by the author)

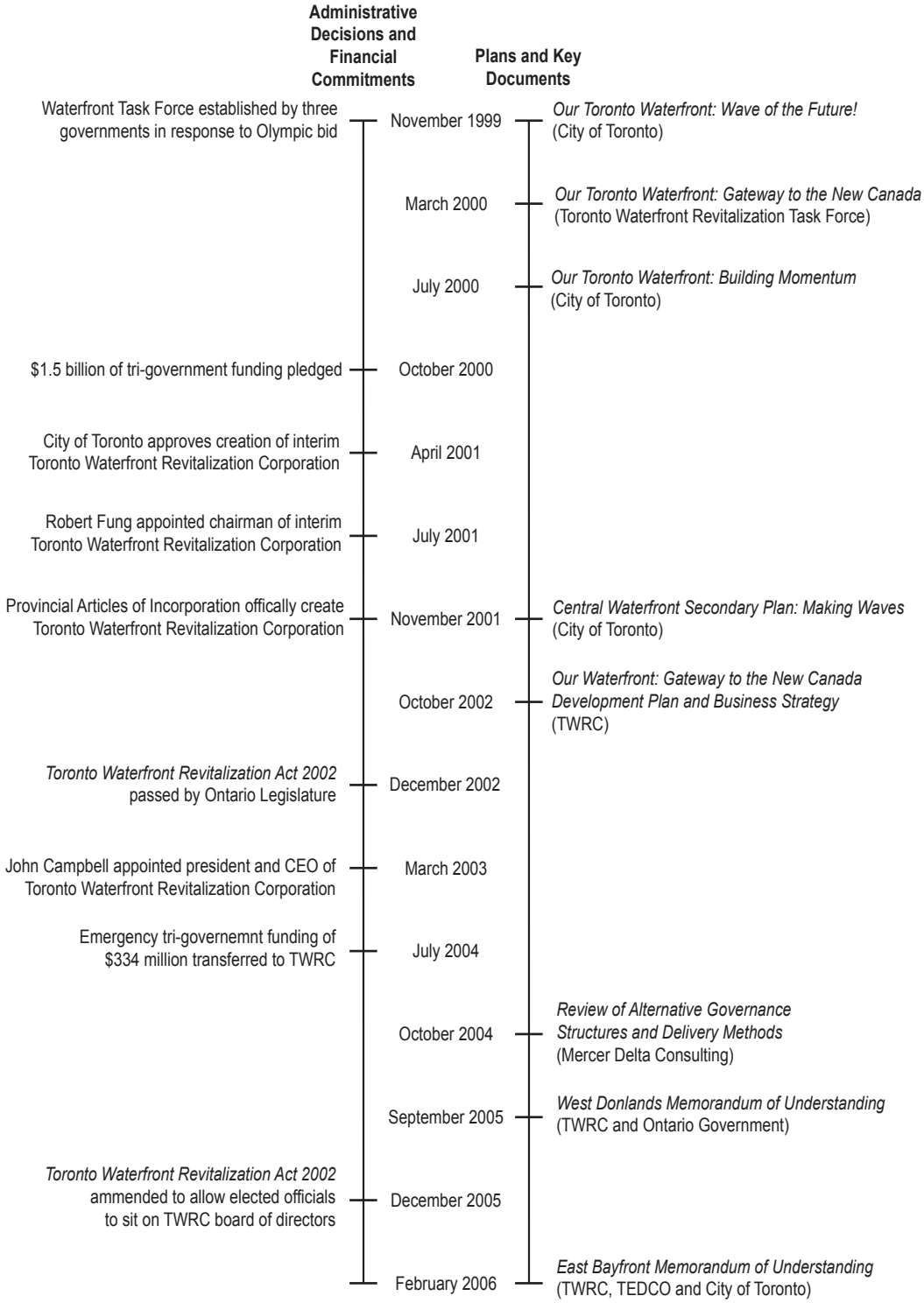


Concluding Summary: Conditions for Design Sensitive Planning?

In this chapter I explored how the current phase of planning and redevelopment on Toronto's waterfront gained traction between 1999 and 2006. I described how the bid for the 2008 Olympic Games in 1999 caused the three levels of government – federal, provincial and municipal – to agree on a shared future for the waterfront. Tracking key administrative decisions and planning documents, I explained how this coalescence resulted in the following chronological outcomes: the formation of a private sector-led Task Force to examine possible design scenarios and management options for the waterfront, a tri-government funding commitment of $1.5 billion for waterfront redevelopment, the production of various design-led planning visions crystallized in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (City of Toronto 2001), and the creation of the TWRC to oversee the redevelopment programme (see: Figure 5.8. overleaf). Since 2002, the TWRC has begun the processes of implementation. But, as I addressed in the second half of the chapter, the TWRC's leadership of the waterfront redevelopment programme has been beset by governance problems. Therefore, I ended the chapter by considering how the corporation has found ways to work around its structural impediments and, in Figure 5.7., illustrated the various discretionary urban design tools it employs to uphold its commitment to design excellence and play a core strategic role in the wider waterfront planning and redevelopment process.

The period 1999 to 2006 resulted in a major turnaround from the conflict ridden decades that preceded it. While the bid for the Olympic Games ultimately failed, the idea proved instrumental. It convinced the three levels of governments to not only commit to an urban design vision and planning framework for the waterfront but to also provide political and financial support to a dedicated corporation that would act as master planner and lead developer of the waterfront lands. In what amounted to a relatively short period of time in the Toronto waterfront redevelopment story, there was remarkable alignment between the various plans and decisions that were made by and between the public and private sector actors involved in the process. This is clearly demonstrated on Figure 5.8. overleaf.

Figure 5.8. Timeline of Decisions and Plans, Toronto's Waterfront (1999–2006)
(Diagram by the author)



For the most part, the three governments and the Task Force agreed upon the nature of the vision and plan for the waterfront, something that had rarely occurred before. Considering the waterfront had been mired by inaction and languished under the jurisdiction of multiple public and private sector bodies for decades, the formation of the TWRC as a dedicated advocate for the waterfront was a step in the right direction. Although Robert Fung might not have procured the all-powerful corporation he had wanted, he was successful in getting the three governments to sign up to a shared vision for the waterfront and secured a considerable sum of public money to implement the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*.

In the sixth principle outlined in the 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy' (see: Figure 3.8., p. 78) I stated that an urban design plan should articulate 'desired and mandatory urban design outcomes in the design process, while allowing spontaneity, vitality, innovation and pluralism to flourish'. The award-winning *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* successfully met this standard and represented a positive redefinition of the City of Toronto's basic planning philosophy. The planning framework was concerned about the quality of place. Emphasizing many of the principles of post-modern urban design explored in Chapter 2 (see: Figure 2.5., p. 33), it imagined a neighbourhood-scaled environment and focused on providing enhanced pedestrian accessibility to the lake. These objectives were enforced by the proposal to remove the elevated Gardiner Expressway and the decision to transform the entire water's edge into a ribbon of public green space. Yet, although the sheer size of the waterfront area meant the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was a bold and ambitious document, the core ideas it contained were relatively conservative. The goal was not to furnish the waterfront with grand architectural statements, as seen on numerous post-industrial waterfronts around the world, but to use traditional street patterns to eradicate existing vehicular barriers and create a seamless extension of downtown Toronto to the lakefront. Moreover, the plan did not only offer an urban design-led vision for reintegrating the city with its waterfront, it also proposed a long-term strategy for implementing the vision. As chief planner, Paul Bedford had engineered an important shift in the City's approach to waterfront planning and regulation, emphasizing performance-driven planning policies in place of rigid regulatory controls. The plan did not offer design regulations for every street, space and building on the waterfront. Instead the content was broadly stated. But, as a statutory instrument, it was still the regulatory plan for the

waterfront and thus the legal framework for the more specific precinct plans that would follow.

Contrary to the urban design principles contained in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, the strategic *definition* of urban design employed by politicians, Task Force executives and City planners was quite narrowly defined. Never conceptualizing urban design as a socially progressive or environmentally grounded practice, the waterfront vision was welded to a notion of urban competitiveness in which the waterfront's urban design represented an opportunity to cement Toronto's status as a 'world city' (Lehrer and Laidley 2008). The portfolio of visions and plans released between 1999 and 2002 privileged the economic value of urban design (Madanipour 2006) and promoted sites for New Economy jobs, 'exciting' new neighbourhoods and 'spectacular' waterfront public spaces. The same visions and plans were noticeably silent on many important social considerations such as: urban poverty, social housing and the negative impacts of gentrification (Lehrer and Laidley 2008). Moreover, the language found in the visions produced by the private sector sounded very similar, often identical, to those produced by the public sector. In this sense, the fact that communication with the general public was kept to a minimum suggested that the process, while fast and efficient, was not open (Laidley 2007). Although a high quality planning and design document had been produced, the process failed to meet the standards for inclusive collaboration and participation outlined in the 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy'. There was little attempt by the Task Force to involve local people 'in the process of developing and committing to a coordinating vision of urban design' as stated in the first principle. Indeed, the public open houses for the Fung report and the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* were only conducted *after* the documents had been written and resulted in little change in the overall contextualization and definition of urban design or indeed, the visionary plans for the various waterfront precincts.

As the implementation phase began in late 2002 and early 2003, the outlook for Toronto's waterfront was mixed. A radically new type of urban design plan and strategy had been adopted. The combination of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* and the TWRC's mandate to implement the plan represented the basic "conditions for a design-sensitive planning practice" (Punter 2002, p. 267). Yet, considering the lack of meaningful public participation during the plan-making phase and the narrowly defined conceptualization of

urban design itself, the practice stood on unsteady ground. Important questions remained about the impact of the blurred relationship between public and private sector actors and the subsequent ability of the corporation to act in the public interest. In addition, after almost going bankrupt in 2004 and unable to make its own financial decisions, it was unclear whether the new TWRC could remain a viable administrative body in the long-term. These concerns were lessened when the three governments' transferred funds to the TWRC soon after the bankruptcy announcement in 2004 and, even more so, when the two memoranda of understanding for the West Don Lands (in late 2005) and the East Bayfront (in early 2006) asserted the corporation's role as the 'lead master planner' of the waterfront lands. Yet, regardless of these developments, the TWRC continues to be unable to raise capital independently and has to rely on contribution agreements from the three governments in the context of an ever-changing political environment.

In the closing pages of this chapter I argued that it was this deficit in financial and political power that led the TWRC's management to find new and innovative ways to assert its strategic role in the waterfront planning and design process and move forward with its goal of achieving design excellence on Toronto's waterfront. Written in the context of the political and administrative forces described in this chapter, the following three chapters thematically examine the particularities of the new 'layer' of tools and mechanisms introduced by the TWRC in the mid-2000s. I will argue that these instruments have become the core components of a design sensitive approach to waterfront planning in Toronto. In Chapter 6, I analyze how the corporation's approach to precinct planning resulted in a fundamental shift towards widespread public consultation and engagement on the waterfront. Then, in Chapter 7, I look more specifically at the TWRC's commitment to design excellence, focusing on the role of international design competitions as a way to generate both public and commercial interest in the waterfront planning and design vision. Finally, in Chapter 8, I examine the corporation's urban design review panel and consider how effective it has been at offering urban design advice to the corporation, its development partners and the City of Toronto and improving the design quality of waterfront buildings and open spaces.

CHAPTER 6

Building a Constituency for Revitalization: The East Bayfront Precinct Plan

A coordinating design framework is commonly employed to guide large-scale design-led redevelopment efforts. Invariably called a 'master plan', this implementation document, or series of documents, translates broad urban design policies into site-specific spatial plans with companion design objectives (see: Carmona 1996a; Bell 2005; Giddings and Hopwood 2006; Tiesdell and Macfarlane 2007; Carmona *et al*. 2010). In Chapter 3 I explained that master plans are often used in conjunction with, or as a substitute to, a city's existing zoning by-law (Punter 2007a). And, in stark contrast to the heavily legalistic format of zoning, master plans typically rely on a combination of drawings, text and three-dimensional visualizations to convey the planning vision for an area or site. In addition, master planning processes have become popular venues for testing new and innovative public participation strategies, most notably the 'charrette' technique (Grant 2006). As I also argued in Chapter 3, embedding the aspirations of the local community into the planning and design vision for a city or neighbourhood is increasingly considered to be a crucial component of any successful design-led planning process (Punter 2007a).

Neither design-led master planning processes nor emerging public participation efforts have escaped criticism. Master plans are increasingly employed as marketing tools to generate investment interest in large-scale redevelopment projects (Bell 2005) and, as a result, are frequently dominated by 'flashy' three-dimensional plans and graphics that have the potential to detract from their community planning aspects (Giddings and Hopwood 2006). Moreover, urban designers and other creative professionals have long protested that an excess of planning and design guidance can stifle the creativity of the individual designer (Lang 2005; Carmona 2009). Similar charges have been made against design participation endeavours and the divide between lay and professional taste is often considerable (Nassar 1998; Carmona *et al*. 2010). Numerous charrette processes have also been criticized for placing too much faith in professionally accepted design principles over local community concerns (Grant 2006; Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007).

In this chapter I examine the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's efforts to master plan Toronto's waterfront in conjunction with local residents and other waterfront stakeholders. Concentrating on the series of precinct plans produced under the auspices of the City of Toronto's 2001 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, I scrutinize the general public's involvement in the planning and design process and assess their impact on the finished plan and emerging built form. I begin the chapter with an introduction of the waterfront precinct planning process and the corporation's efforts to engage the public in their revitalizations aims. During the second half of the chapter, I turn my attention to the specific case of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's 2005 *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*. Here, I offer a detailed account of the planning and design processes that led to the finished document and explore the effectiveness of the various tools used to implement it. To conclude the chapter, I asses the extent to which feedback from the general public and other stakeholders has influenced the on-going planning process, as well as the form and orientation of the buildings and public spaces that have been built or are under construction in the East Bayfront precinct.

The Toronto Waterfront Precinct Plans

The City of Toronto's 2001 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was a wholly new type of plan for Toronto and the first to offer only strategic planning and design advice rather than detailed regulatory requirements. As recounted in Chapter 5, there were a number of reasons why the new secondary plan was introduced with a series of supporting precinct plans. From a strategic perspective, the City of Toronto was keen to give the TWRC some degree of freedom over the specific design decisions that needed to be taken as their redevelopment efforts got underway. Equally, the City's chief planner had, for a long time, wanted to improve the look and feel of the municipality's planning policy documents, by making them less cumbersome and more interpretative. A senior urban designer at the TWRC believes that the decision was actually made for simple and very practical reasons. "There was a kind of Canadian pragmatism," he explains, "…it is a huge waterfront, it is over 2000 acres, you can't master plan that all at once" (TWRC 3 2011). As a result, he argues, the waterfront was sub-divided into a series of tertiary precincts or manageable "bite-sized chunks" (TWRC 3 2011) that sat below the broadly focused secondary plan. As Chapter 5 explains, these precinct plans do not carry any statutory weight and therefore lie in a grey

area between the official secondary plan and the zoning by-law. For this reason, the City of Toronto planning department was confident to give the TWRC full authority to lead the master planning effort and produce the precinct plans with oversight.

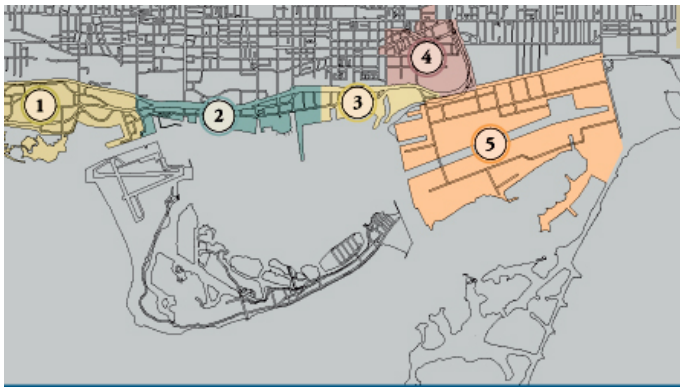
Planners and urban designers from the City of Toronto have actually remained closely involved throughout the various processes and, as one of the TWRC's senior executives notes, an unofficial partnership now exists. City planning staff play an active role in the many meetings relating to the plans as well as the corporation's extensive public engagement agenda. So far the City of Toronto Council has enthusiastically endorsed all of the completed plans (TWRC 7 2011). Furthermore, due to the requirements of Ontario's *Environmental Assessment Act* (1990), the TWRC and the City of Toronto are required to complete Municipal Class Environmental Assessments for all of the various precincts, because the master planning proposals include alterations to the existing public infrastructure, including roads, sewers and water courses (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006a). On all these assessment documents, the TWRC works as a co-proponent with the City of Toronto through their Waterfront Secretariat office (Waterfront Toronto 2012)[18].

The precinct plan concept first appeared in the 2001 planning vision produced by Robert Fung's Task Force. In this document, analyzed in Chapter 5, the waterfront was divided into six distinct precincts. In the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* that quickly followed – written in large part by the same consultants that produced the Task Force report – the number of precincts was consolidated to five, as shown in Figure 6.1. overleaf.

[18] The Waterfront Secretariat is an office within the City of Toronto bureaucracy charged with overseeing the municipality's participation in the waterfront revitalization programme (Waterfront Toronto 2012). Similar secretariats exist at the provincial and federal levels and their primary function is to monitor the corporation's annual budget and uphold the interests of the government in question. As the waterfront is located within the City of Toronto's planning approval jurisdiction it inevitably plays a more significant role day-to-day.

6.1. Central Waterfront Precincts

(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003, p. 12, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

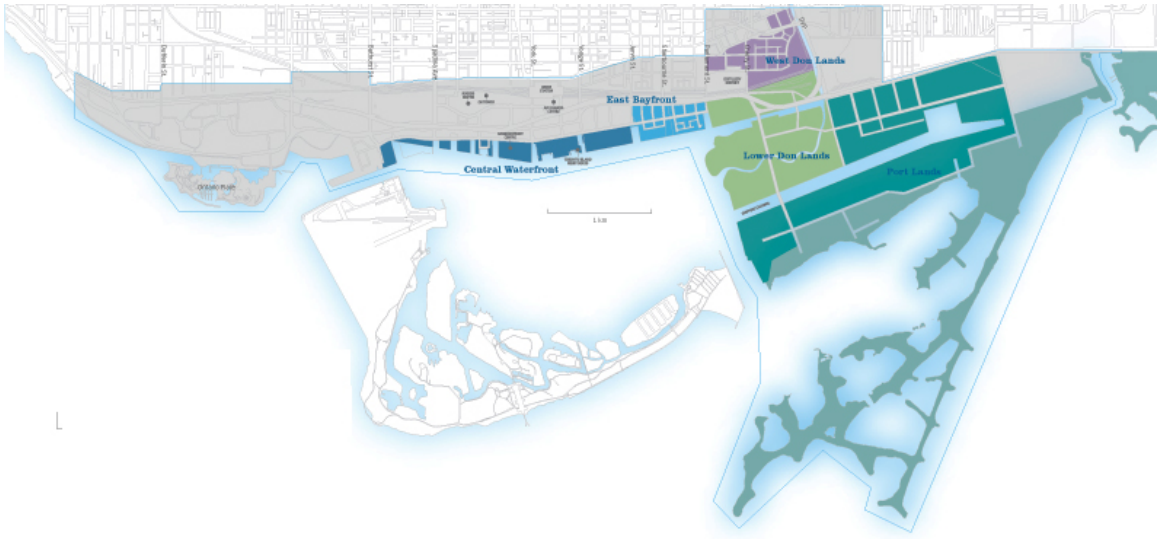


Five Waterfront Precincts:

1. Exhibition Place and Ontario Place
2. Central Area
3. East Bayfront
4. West Don Lands
5. Port Lands

When the TWRC-led process got properly underway in the mid-2000s, the precincts were subtly altered once again. Since it contained by far the greatest amount of underdeveloped and government-controlled land, more emphasis was placed on the eastern waterfront. As Figure 6.2. overleaf illustrates, the boundaries of the East Bayfront and West Don Lands precincts were left unchanged, but the largest of the original precincts, the 400-hectare Port Lands, was further subdivided. A 125-hectare parcel in the north of the precinct was renamed the Lower Don Lands, while the remaining southern and eastern sections continued to be known as the Port Lands (Waterfront Toronto 2012a). At the far western edge of the downtown waterfront, the area previously designated as 'Precinct 1' in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (see: Figure 6.1. above) was no longer defined as a stand-alone precinct and the corporation instead initiated a series of smaller-scale public realm improvement projects. These included an upgrade to the lakefront promenade and the Martin Goodman bike trail at Ontario Place, which opened in 2009 (Waterfront Toronto 2009). In the Central Waterfront precinct, there was also an emphasis on improvements to the public realm rather than larger scale redevelopment master planning because most of the land had been developed during the 1970s and 1980s (see: Chapter 1, pp. 13-17). As Chapter 8 will explore in more detail, the corporation convened a design competition for the area in 2006 and the winning design team subsequently produced a public realm master plan that focuses on the lakefront promenade and the treatment of Queens Quay, which is the primary vehicular thoroughfare on the waterfront (Waterfront Toronto 2010a).

Figure 6.2. Current Precincts on Toronto's Waterfront
(Image from: Waterfront Toronto 2010b, p. 15, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



Since 2001, the TWRC has overseen the production of three precinct plans by external design consultants as well as the design competition master plan for the Central Waterfront. The first precinct plan focused on the West Don Lands and included an accompanying environmental assessment (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005b; 2005c), the City of Toronto Council endorsed both of these documents on May 17th 2005 (City of Toronto 2005b). That same year, on December 5th 2005, Council also endorsed the precinct plan and environmental assessment for the East Bayfront (City of Toronto 2005c). The most recent precinct plan sent for Council approval covers the northern quadrant of the Lower Don Lands, now called Keating Channel. This precinct plan, which, as Chapter 7 examines, was part of a further design competition, was unanimously endorsed by the City of Toronto Council in July 2010 (City of Toronto 2010a).

Although the three completed precinct plans were produced by different design consultants, they share a common urban design language and incorporate many of the principles imagined in both Fung's Task Force report and the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.* Each one focuses on a defined area of the waterfront and offers detailed guidance on the arrangement of the streets, blocks, building heights, public spaces and other components of the built environment. They all emphasize how mixed-use development might encourage

diversity and variety and highlight how strong relationships between buildings and public spaces, especially at ground level, can generate a sense of place and belonging. Furthermore, the three plans aim to demonstrate that early decisions about building height and massing, as well as the orientation of public spaces, can improve the challenging connections between new precincts and existing Toronto neighbourhoods. As will be examined later in the chapter, the planning and design processes that led to the completed precinct plans also involved a considerable amount of public participation and the TWRC employed a variety of engagement techniques with a cross section of waterfront stakeholders. At the time of writing this dissertation, many of these consultation processes are on-going because the three precincts are still at various stages of design and construction.

Protecting the Precinct Plan Principles

The implementation devices that support the waterfront precinct plans were introduced in the previous chapter and are illustrated in Figure 5.7. (p. 154), but it is important to reiterate that precinct plans do not have legal status within Toronto's planning policy hierarchy. In contrast to the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, which is an integral 'Part II' component of the statutory *Official Plan* (City of Toronto 2002), precinct plans are only a supporting layer of policy designed to elaborate upon the broad goals of the secondary plan. To account for this, the City of Toronto always imagined that the precinct plans would form a bridge between official planning policy for the waterfront and the zoning by-laws amendments that would follow (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a). When amendments to the zoning by-laws are written, all of the familiar language and accessible illustrations of the precinct plans are meant to be translated into strict legal requirements and exacting schematic diagrams. Theoretically, this means that the precinct plans do in fact have a considerable role to play in shaping the built environment, since all the planning principles and design components of the plans – the street layouts, building height, public space provisions, etc. – will be codified into a skeletal legal framework with full statutory provisions. Moreover, the precinct plans and zoning by-law amendments are further supported by official 'plan of subdivision' documents that set out the specific orientation of roads and building configurations within each of the land parcels located in the precinct, as well as more discretionary urban design guidelines and business plans. The corporation also

stipulates in its Request for Qualification (RFQ) and Request for Proposal (RFP) documents, which it issues to prospective development partners, the extent to which they must adhere to the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto planning and design objectives. The impact of all of these various instruments on the waterfront master planning process will be explored throughout this chapter.

Ensuring that the detailed master planning proposals contained within the precinct plans are protected by a strong regulatory framework remains an important consideration for both the corporation and the City of Toronto. For the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, achieving the implementation of the precinct planning objectives is a crucial part of their design excellence mandate and thus their on-going credibility as lead master planner of the waterfront. For the City of Toronto, the primary goal is to protect the waterfront planning and design vision from the notoriously litigious nature of Toronto's development application process (TORONTO 2 2011). Ontario is unique within Canada for having a very powerful planning appeals process through which developers and aggrieved third parties have the right to appeal municipal land use decisions at a quasi-tribunal body called the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). As a final arbiter in the planning decision-making process, the OMB has a "significant and lasting impact on the physical fabric and visual quality of cities in Ontario" (Kumar-Agrawal 2005, p. 211) as well as a strong influence on the way planning decisions are made in Toronto. The board is judicial in nature and, as Chipman (2002) points out, has "…the trappings of a court, with adversarial hearings, the formal determination of parties, the application of rules of procedure, and rules of evidence, the examination and cross-examination of witnesses and the issuance of legally enforceable orders" (p. 20). This means that the core participants of the appeals process are typically lawyers who, unlike planners, are frequently less attuned to the nuances of the municipality's planning and design policies (Kumar-Agrawal 2005). While the development community tends to appreciate the finality of Ontario's appeals process, planners, the media and the general public tend to view the OMB more negatively. Kumar-Agrawal (2005) notes the OMB has been widely criticized for being pro-developer and too costly for regular citizens to engage with effectively. Furthermore, the OMB receives very little direction from the provincial legislature because the province's *Planning Act* is primarily a procedural statute and does not dictate the content of municipal planning policy, nor has the provincial government historically chosen to issue much in the way of comprehensive provincial-wide planning and design policy. The OMB has therefore

tended to develop *ad hoc* policies and general principles of its own, drawn from a combination of relevant policy statements, past experiences and precedent cases (Chipman 2002). For this reason as a senior urban designer at the City of Toronto told me, "…the more of the vision [for the waterfront] that can be codified in the zoning by-law the better off we are" (TORONTO 2 2011).

Yet, to some extent, Toronto's waterfront is shielded from the OMB appeals process. As a government agency, the TWRC and its development partners are forbidden from launching appeals against City of Toronto planning decisions. This basic stipulation has a formidable impact on the role that the OMB might otherwise play in the waterfront planning process because so much of the land on Toronto's waterfront is in public hands. Indeed, the Toronto Waterfront Task Force (2000) calculated that the various levels of government control 80% of the Port Lands, 40% of the East Bayfront and close to 100% of the West Don Lands. But other private landowners and aggrieved stakeholders can appeal the official planning policy and zoning by-laws for the waterfront. A former City of Toronto planning manager explains that a significant number of appeals were launched against the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* and the various zoning by-law amendments that have been created as a result of the precinct plans. These appeals are slowly being settled at the board on a case-by-case basis to avoid the overall waterfront redevelopment process becoming indefinitely stalled (TORONTO 6 2011).

Public Consultation and Participation on Toronto's Waterfront

As part of Chapter 5, I catalogued the formative period of plan-making and political decision-making that occurred between 1999 and 2006 on Toronto's waterfront and culminated in the formation of the TWRC and the publication of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. During this time, commitments to public participation and engagement were mixed and, as I concluded, public consultation often occurred after strategic decisions had been made. The public participation and engagement processes that were initiated thus had a negligible impact on the shape and scope of the waterfront planning and design agenda. As the corporation began its work, concerns rightfully remained about its ability to act in the public interest (Eidelman 2011; Laidley 2011). At the time my research was conducted, almost a decade later, the situation appears to be very different. A former City of Toronto planning

manager notes that the corporation is now widely considered to be a "master at public consultation" (TORONTO 8 2011) and argues that Waterfront Toronto far exceeds its legislative mandate to engage local people in the waterfront revitalization programme. "Right from the initial phases, before anything is done," he states, "…there are pens put to paper right through the whole process. They are very, very good at that and people really appreciate it. All the residents and the business community feel very positive about it" (TORONTO 8 2011). Political scientist Gabriel Eidelman (2011) reaches a similar conclusion. He makes clear that the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's current public participation philosophy and practice is "a far cry from the closed-door elite only approaches" that were the hallmark of the Task Force era (p. 280).

There are numerous reasons why this transformation occurred. To begin with, the corporation produced many of the planning policy documents and regulatory frameworks that were needed to support the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (TORONTO 4 2011). The TWRC was obliged to conduct formal rounds of public consultation on all of the policy documents and regulatory instruments in the pipeline, including the various municipal class environmental assessments, zoning by-law amendments and the tandem precinct plans. Quite simply, a considerable amount of consultation had to be completed because the waterfront revitalization project covered a large area and impacted multiple adjacent neighbourhoods. Yet, the TWRC chose to go much further and deeper in their efforts to involve local residents and stakeholders than is traditionally the norm in Toronto. One political operative notes that this merely came down to available resources because the TWRC has a much larger budget to conduct public consultation than does the city (POLITICAL 2 2011). Nevertheless, it is also argued that the corporation has consciously tried to build a broad constituency of support for its waterfront planning and design vision for reasons of political expediency. As Eidelman (2011) contends, "without backing from the local community, and the political will that comes with such support, the TWRC may not be able to convince government partners to extend its funding beyond 2014, the provisional end date approved in its long-term business plan" (p. 280). This conclusion also mirrors the arguments made at the close of the previous chapter, where I asserted that the TWRC has taken concerted steps to find measures outside of the traditional decision-making hierarchy to affirm its power and influence over waterfront planning and design (see: Figure 5.7., p. 154).

Building Early Relationships

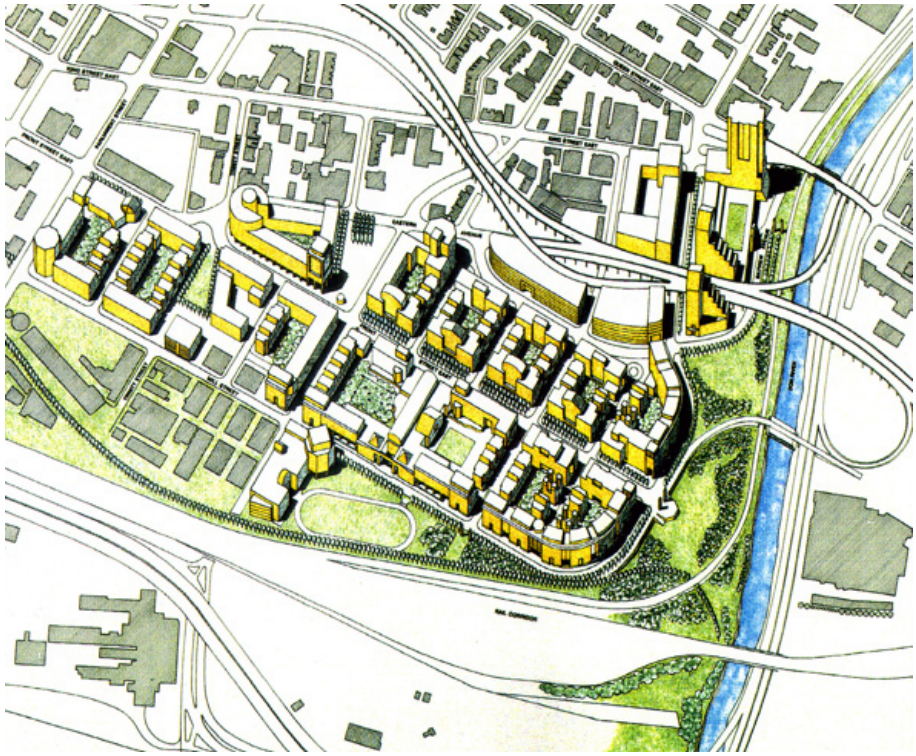
It is hard to pinpoint whether power and political expediency were the core motivations behind the TWRC's enlivened commitment to public consultation, but the origins of the transformation can be accurately traced to a key relationship that developed in the early 2000s between Robert Fung and Cindy Wilkey, a local community activist[19]. Wilkey, a long-term resident of the Corktown district that lies directly adjacent to the West Don Lands precinct, was a founding member of the West Don Lands Committee. The committee was formed in 1997 as an agglomeration of local neighbourhood associations and stakeholder groups to protest the construction of a horse racing facility on the long-derelict West Don Lands site (West Don Lands Committee 1999). Since it was expropriated in the late 1980s, this former industrial site had been subject to various unrealized redevelopment initiatives. The most significant of these was a provincially backed City of Toronto housing project called Ataratiri in 1988 (City of Toronto Housing Department 1990), shown in Figure 6.3. overleaf. Due to an economic slump, the proposal was never built. But, the plan envisaged a mixed income medium density residential community for approximately 14,000 residents (Frisken 2007) that was not unlike the nearby St. Lawrence Neighbourhood. After a few years of inaction, and to the surprise of many local residents, the provincial government decided to sell the land for a quick profit in the late 1990s. "It was a public call," says a member of the West Don Lands Committee, "…but the community wasn't involved. We were shocked, just horrified, by the idea that the province would contemplate selling this very strategic piece of land to a horse racing consortium. That galvanized the community completely" (CIVIL 5 2011).

Although the West Don Lands Committee began as a protest group, it quickly transformed from a reactive into a proactive organization. In 1999 it successfully applied for a federal grant from Human Resources Canada to conduct a community-led planning workshop (West Don Lands Committee 1999). The aim of this event was to demonstrate that potential existed for a more thoughtful alternative development strategy that could satisfy the needs of all stakeholders, including the provincial government. Moreover, the workshop coincided

[19] Cindy Wilkey's early leadership in the realm of waterfront public participation was briefly discussed in Chapter 5, pp. 120-121.

with the emerging bid for the 2008 Olympic Games, which proposed that a media village be located on a portion of the West Don Lands site (Oliver 2008). As the committee member quoted in the previous paragraph notes, “Our view was that it [the land] could be used to enhance the surrounding communities. It could build on its strategic location close to the financial district, its excellent public transport links and proximity to the waterfront. All of which were being ignored” (CIVIL 5 2011).

Figure 6.3. Ataratiri Master Plan for the West Don Lands
(Image from: City of Toronto Housing Department 1990, p. 4, reproduced with the permission of the City of Toronto)



Developed by Toronto-based urban designer Michael Kirkland, the master plan for Ataratiri introduced the concept of an extended perimeter grid bounded by a large public space overlooking the Don River. The master plan also incorporated a central boulevard that emphasized the site’s connection to the existing city grid and used a formal terrace to define the grand public space, thus giving the master plan a neo-classical flavour.

The West Don Lands Committee held their three-day planning workshop in mid-November 1999. Professor Joan Busquets, the former head of urban planning for Barcelona and the man credited for leading that city’s contemporary urban renaissance during the 1992 Olympic Games, gave the opening keynote address. He spoke of the need to focus on the quality of urban life when undertaking large-scale redevelopment projects and emphasized

that Toronto should plan its waterfront for what would be needed *after* the proposed Olympic Games and then see how the proposed Olympic infrastructure requirements might be slotted into that longer-term vision (West Don Lands Committee 1999). On the first full day of the workshop over 125 people from diverse backgrounds worked together to identify the key opportunities and obstacles facing the West Don Lands and attempted to build consensus around a series of development and design principles. The key obstacles identified by the community stakeholders related to flood protection from the nearby Don River and the development viability of such a large parcel of land. The workshop participants agreed that these obstacles could be overcome if "the Province, as owner of the land, would at least initiate planning for the future use of the lands and invest in the necessary infrastructure and site preparation" (West Don Lands Committee 1999, p. 12). Among the principles and strategies for future development agreed by the participants was a desire to weave the West Don Lands site into existing communities and create a 24-hr mixed use and a pedestrian-scaled community with significant amounts of public open space (West Don Lands Committee 1999). During the remaining two days of the workshop, three ten-person multi-disciplinary design teams attempted to transform the community's ideas into sample development concepts. All of the teams produced variations on a dense mixed-use residential neighbourhood with ample public space provision. The results are shown in Figure 6.4. below and overleaf. To keep the ideas of the workshop alive, the West Don Lands Committee published an illustrated summary booklet. This was later presented to the City of Toronto's Planning and Transportation Committee, where it was endorsed as a model for similar future planning exercises in the city (City of Toronto 2000b).

Figure 6.4. West Don Lands Workshop Design Proposals

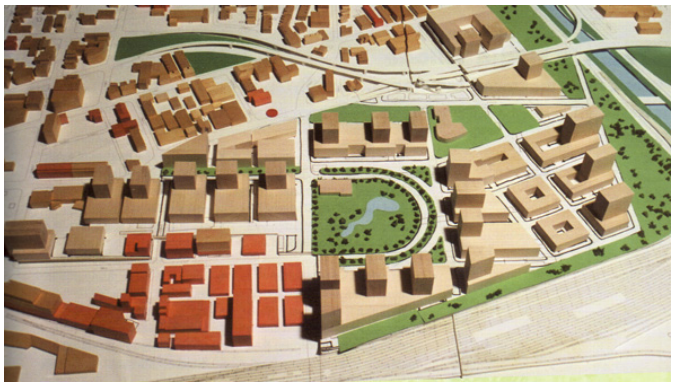
(West Don Lands Committee 1999, p. 17 (Image 1), p. 18 (Image 2, overleaf) and p. 21 (Image 3, overleaf), all reproduced with kind permission of the West Don Lands Committee)

Team 1: Residential Biased

- 80/85% Residential
- 15/20% Commercial

Similar to the Ataratiri scheme (see: Figure 6.3.), Team 1's proposal incorporated a regimented street grid and a formal boulevard that lead to a large public park bounded by a formal terrace.

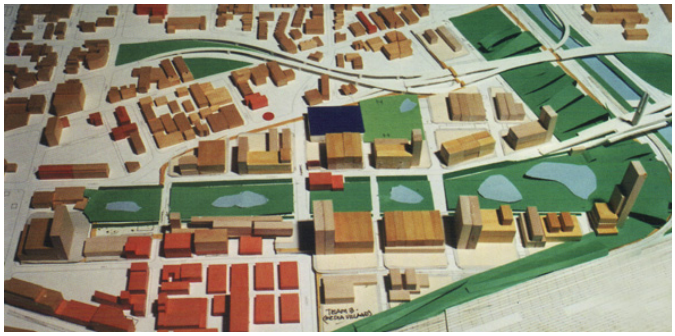
Figure 6.4. (cont.) West Don Lands Workshop Design Proposals



Team 2: Mixed

- 50% Residential
- 50% Commercial

In contrast to Team 1, the second team proposed a diagonal grid system and distributed the public space around the site. This left only a small flood protection zone and noise buffer between the Don River and the rail tracks, but created a large central park as a defining landscape element.



Team 3 Media Village

- Meets Olympic bid requirements

Team 3 used public space, rather than an urban grid, to emphasize the axial connection to the existing city grid. In doing so, the proposal purposefully extended the wide lineal public space in the adjacent St Lawrence Neighbourhood out to the river.

Among the attendees at the three-day workshop was Robert Fung, who had been appointed chair of the Toronto Waterfront Redevelopment Task Force only a few weeks before (Rusk 1999). As Chapter 5 discussed, Fung's appointment had initially come as quite a surprise because he lacked any planning and design experience. A fellow member of the Task Force remembers that Fung was acutely aware of the experience-gap he faced and the rising perception in the press that he was just another 'Bay Street guy' who would approach the waterfront revitalization project in narrow economic terms (TWRC 8 2011). Like the press, many West Don Lands Committee members were also initially sceptical of his appointment. However, they were encouraged by his decision to attend and actively participate in their three-day workshop (CIVIL 5 2011). For Fung, the experience of observing the West Don Land Committee and taking part in their workshop became an important milestone during his leadership of the Toronto waterfront revitalization effort. As a senior Task Force executive recalls, the West Don Lands Committee members were genuinely shocked that Fung wanted to spend time in the neighbourhood and learn about the issues they were facing. He told me that meeting local people and learning about their aspirations for the waterfront altered Fung's ideas about how to lead the revitalization program (TWRC 8 2011). "That is

when the light went on in his head," the executive remarked, "Fung realized he couldn't rely on the political guys to do this. He could rely on these people" (TORONTO 8 2011). Another senior Task Force executive credits Fung for using his encounter with the West Don Land Committee to "pull together a value system" (TWRC 3 2011) that would undergird the TWRC when it was created a few years later. In a sense, Fung gave the evolving TWRC a reason to exist, by saying: "this is why this organization has carriage on the waterfront because it understands what the public wants" (TWRC 3 2011). Yet Fung's ability to envisage how public consultation could be leveraged on the waterfront was only half of the story. Of equal importance was the leadership exhibited by Wilkey and others within the local activist community. The impressive work they had already undertaken demonstrated to Fung that a positive relationship could be forged between the general public and the corporation in the future. One of the TWRC executives appointed to the new interim corporation in 2001, describes what he and other new employees encountered:

> When we arrived…we were faced with this well organized, sane, intelligent group of people who, not only had a neighbourhood association, but also had an association of associations! They were terribly well organized. It was great because we would deal with them as we started the public consultation process…They had done design charrettes on their own. They had Joan Busquets in from Barcelona to be their judge. I mean, this was amazing. On their own hook they had done this. They didn't wait for the City [of Toronto], they did it themselves…To us [the corporation], what a Godsend! Initially, I said they were a 'formal foe' but they're not. They're a great ally because we work with them, in the community...I think the public consultation process made me learn: you can have great input. You can also say 'no' to people if it doesn't fit the vision, as long as you hear them out and say 'no, because…', people will accept it. If they have been part of the process, they'll accept the outcome, even if the outcome does not always say what they want (TWRC 7 2011).

Cognizant of the powerful role that the initial Task Force and the evolving corporation might one day have on the waterfront, the leaders of the West Don Lands Committee also realized that they had to demonstrate their credibility as potential partners in the revitalization process early on. One member of the West Don Lands Committee admits that the timing of

the three-day planning workshop a few weeks after Fung was appointed "couldn't have been better" (CIVIL 5 2011) and using similar language to the newly appointed executive quoted above outlines how the committee attempted to position itself as a formidable participant in the waterfront revitalization process:

> …we [the West Don Lands Committee] demonstrated that, as members of the public who had informed themselves and committed themselves to this work, we had something to add. We were valuable allies and valuable sources of information about our communities, and it was important for them [the corporation] to actually develop a relationship with us…Not to satisfy us, but…they needed our buy in. These are immensely complex projects and what you don't want is a local community opposed to them, right? (CIVIL 5 2011).

Due to an expedited schedule, the Task Force was unable to implement a thoroughgoing public consultation process in time to inform their initial urban design vision and strategic management report, which was released in March 2000. Instead, as discussed in Chapter 5, the Task Force held a series of public presentations to explain the vision and plan and solicit feedback. The Task Force did pay homage to the planning work that the community had conducted and there was some consistency between the planning and design proposals contained within the workshop booklet and the Task Force's report (see: Chapter 5, pp. 132-141 and Figure 6.5. below and overleaf).

Figure 6.5. West Don Lands Urban Design Concept

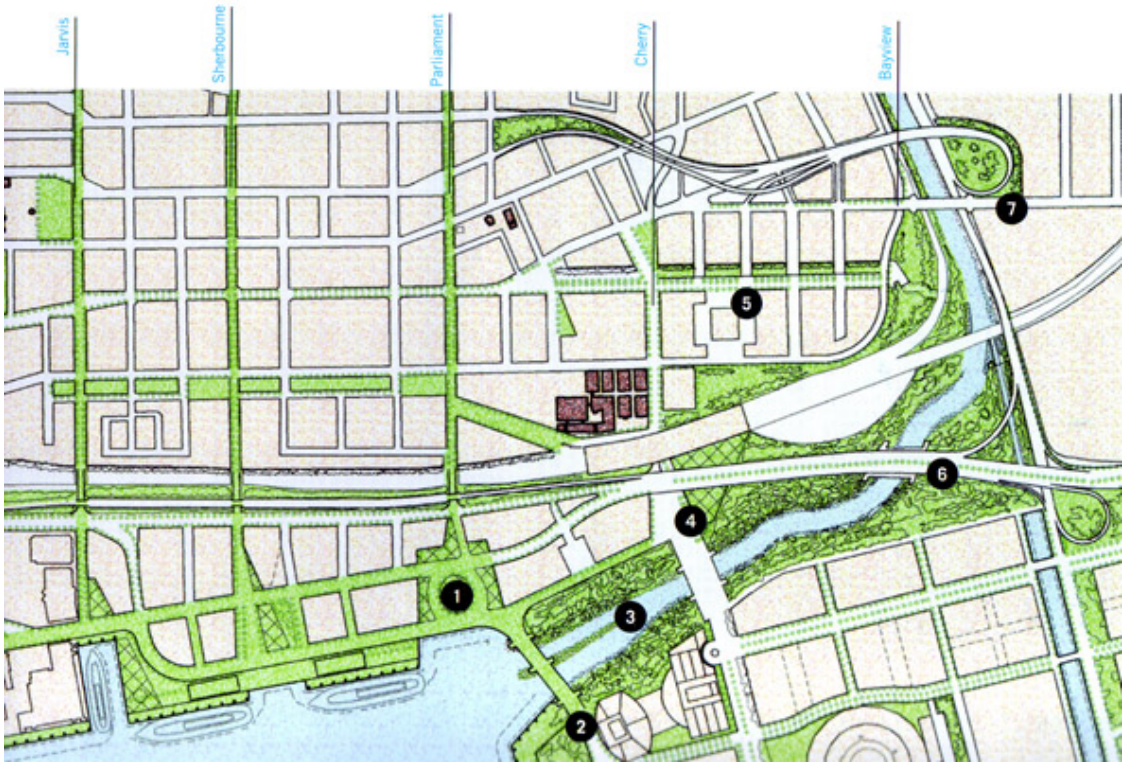
(Image overleaf from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000, p. 51, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

The Task Force's conceptual master plan for the West Don Lands incorporated elements from both the Ataratiri plan, as well as the committee's planning workshop. Michael Kirkland, the lead author of the Ataratiri plan, was also the lead urban designer for the Task Force. Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that the two plans have much in common. The plan also mirrored the somewhat similar proposal developed by Team 1 at the 1999 workshop and, in a more general sense, incorporated many of the urban design principles that the West Don Lands Committee hoped to see in the future, including the seamless integration of the new scheme with the existing city fabric, the incorporation of ample public space and the creation of a pedestrian-scaled environment.

Key:

1. Parliament Plaza
2. New Waterfront Boulevard
3. Mouth of the Don
4. Olympic Gateway Plaza
5. West Don Lands District
6. Lakeshore Boulevard
7. Eastern Avenue connection

Figure 6.5. (cont.) West Don Lands Urban Design Concept



Towards a Public Consultation and Participation Strategy

Like any new corporate entity, the TWRC's first order of business was to produce a business plan and development strategy. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the corporation published such a document in late 2002. It expanded the planning and design vision set out in the Task Force's 2000 report and offered further information on the TWRC's corporate and administrative management structures, as well as its projected financial health. In addition, the business plan and development strategy outlined the corporation's anticipated approach to public consultation, in the form of a written statement and sixteen-page appendix. This appendix remains the official public consultation strategy for the waterfront (see: Waterfront Toronto 2012b). Demonstrating the links that Fung had drawn between the corporation's commitment to public consultation on the one hand and the ability of the TWRC to successfully fulfil its ambitious mandate on the other, the opening paragraph of the consultation strategy states that "[t]he Corporation is committed to effective two-way communications with members of the public…[and] recognizes that public consultation is an

integral part of the revitalization of Toronto's Waterfront" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2002a, p. 4). Moreover, the corporation identified the 'unprecedented' work that community stakeholder groups, such as the West Don Lands Committee, had already completed and recognized that any future consultation efforts by the corporation would be built upon this "existing body of community knowledge" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2002a, p. 4). The core component of the consultation and participation strategy was a series of nine implementation objectives (see: Figure 6.6. below) that explained how public engagement would be used to further the TWRC's revitalization goals. In summary, the objectives describe the corporation's desire to use public consultation as a method to "Build constituency, trust and support for the Corporation" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2002a, p. 4) and, in so doing, generate a positive dialogue between those who might disagree about the future of the waterfront. To achieve this, the corporation aimed to create a productive environment for participation that straddled the divide between expert and lay people, while also generating a forum for resolving conflicts and encouraging community leaders to emerge.

Figure 6.6. Public Consultation and Participation Strategy Objectives
(Summarized from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2002a, pp. 4-5)

1. Mobilize interest in waterfront revitalization, encourage stakeholder participation, increase awareness of the Corporation's vision and mandate and reinforce the Corporation's key values of transparency and accountability.
2. Build constituency, trust and support for the Corporation, its vision of the waterfront, its business plan and its individual projects among three levels of government, its elected officials, non-governmental and community sectors and special interest groups by sharing accurate information in a timely way.
3. Meet the public consultation requirements of all the regulatory regimes in which the Corporation operates. This will include the federal and provincial environmental assessment processes and the municipal land use policy approval process.
4. Ensure productive public participation in decision-making by facilitating the input of creative ideas and knowledge – both expert and experiential – that will strength the information on which waterfront revitalization decisions are based.
5. Provide an opportunity for the Corporation to test its vision, ideas, strategies and projects as it formulates its business plan and development scenarios.
6. Build bridges between individuals and groups who have different opinions regarding waterfront revitalization by hearing from different networks of partners, stakeholders, citizens and communities and providing opportunities to learn from each other and resolve any conflicts.
7. Provide a comprehensive record of the results of citizen involvement in a manner that can be of direct use in decision-making.
8. Enable the corporation to clearly demonstrate how public input was used.
9. Build capacity by enabling the creation of social capital, the emergence of leaders and, through collective action, help communities to attract financial, human and technical resources that may continue long after the activities of the Corporation are complete.

Implementing an Iterative Dialogue

In the latter half of the consultation and participation strategy, the TWRC outlined the types of tools that would be employed to meet the nine core objectives. What the strategy document envisaged, and what has since become one of the corporation's central philosophies, was an iterative relationship between open forum public meetings and stakeholder roundtables. While the West Don Lands Committee and other community organizations liked this general concept, they also had many questions about the practical application of the two interlinked tools. The strategy document failed, in their view, to explain which organizations were considered to be waterfront 'stakeholders' and what planning and development projects the stakeholder roundtable committee would be involved in. At an early TWRC public meeting in the summer of 2003, one of the West Don Lands Committee members recalls asking the corporation's new president and CEO, John Campbell, to specifically explain the role that stakeholders would play in the forthcoming precinct planning process for the West Don Lands. She remembers that Campbell admitted that the corporation had yet to determine their specific role in the wider participatory process (CIVIL 5 2011).

Keen to share their thoughts on the collective benefits that might emerge from an integrated project-based stakeholder engagement process, the West Don Lands Committee pre-empted the corporation's efforts by sending Campbell a letter that offered a series of detailed ideas on the possible scope of the consultation and participatory strategy, as well as some advice on how an alternate process might work (Wilkey 2003). The letter, which was signed by the West Don Lands Committee chair, Cindy Wilkey, began by outlining the committee's strong support for the TWRC's precinct planning process and the excitement it was generating in the community. It also noted that a successful process had to find ways to avoid 'tokenistic' public meetings. Pushing beyond the TWRC's unspecified commitment to a stakeholder roundtable group, Wilkey argued that a more effective way to avoid tokenism was to establish a focused stakeholder advisory committee for every waterfront precinct. The letter suggested that each committee might "…include representatives with demonstrated expertise, commitment, and where possible, accountability to an existing community stakeholder" (Wilkey 2003, p. 1). Wilkey's letter further argued that the advisory committees should be convened at the earliest stages to allow the community's local

knowledge to be integrated into the design process. Ultimately, the letter stated that the precinct advisory committees should generate an iterative relationship at the heart of the corporation's broader public consultation efforts. Wilkey ended by reiterating that the West Don Lands Committee would be eager to take part in any such groups assembled for the West Don Lands, East Bayfront and the Port Lands.

To a remarkable degree, Wilkey's letter influenced the format used by the TWRC for public consultation and participation. As a senior urban designer at the corporation reflects, "the residents…became a very effective and very thoughtful civic group…I think their interest in large measure shaped our whole approach to precinct planning" (TWRC 3 2011). Embarking on a consultation process for both the West Don Lands and the East Bayfront precinct plans during 2003 and 2004, the TWRC hired a locally-based professional public consultation firm called Lura Consulting to run a series of public meetings and precinct-focused stakeholder roundtables in conjunction with the urban design firms selected to produce the precinct plans (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2004). The process adopted by the corporation mirrored that which Wilkey had imagined and the iterative relationship between public meetings and stakeholder roundtables she proposed is well described in the following quote by a senior TWRC executive:

> We have an initial public meeting, 200/300 people, and then a stakeholder meeting of maybe 12 to 18 people. That's when you roll your sleeves up: 'okay, this is what we learnt at the public meeting, what about this?'. It is a working session with the designer in charge of the plan. Then there is another public meeting. Present the results, get more input, another stakeholder meeting…There is probably three or four paired meeting that you would do (TWRC 7 2011).

Figure 6.7. on page 180 outlines the format described and, although this particular example illustrates the participation process for the West Don Lands precinct, it has become the blueprint for all of the corporation's subsequent consultation efforts. In every case, public meetings are open to anybody who wishes to attend, whether they live locally or not. In contrast, membership of the stakeholder committees is limited to invited representatives from interested or affected organizations. In the case of the West Don Lands precinct planning process, for example, this included neighbourhood associations, local businesses,

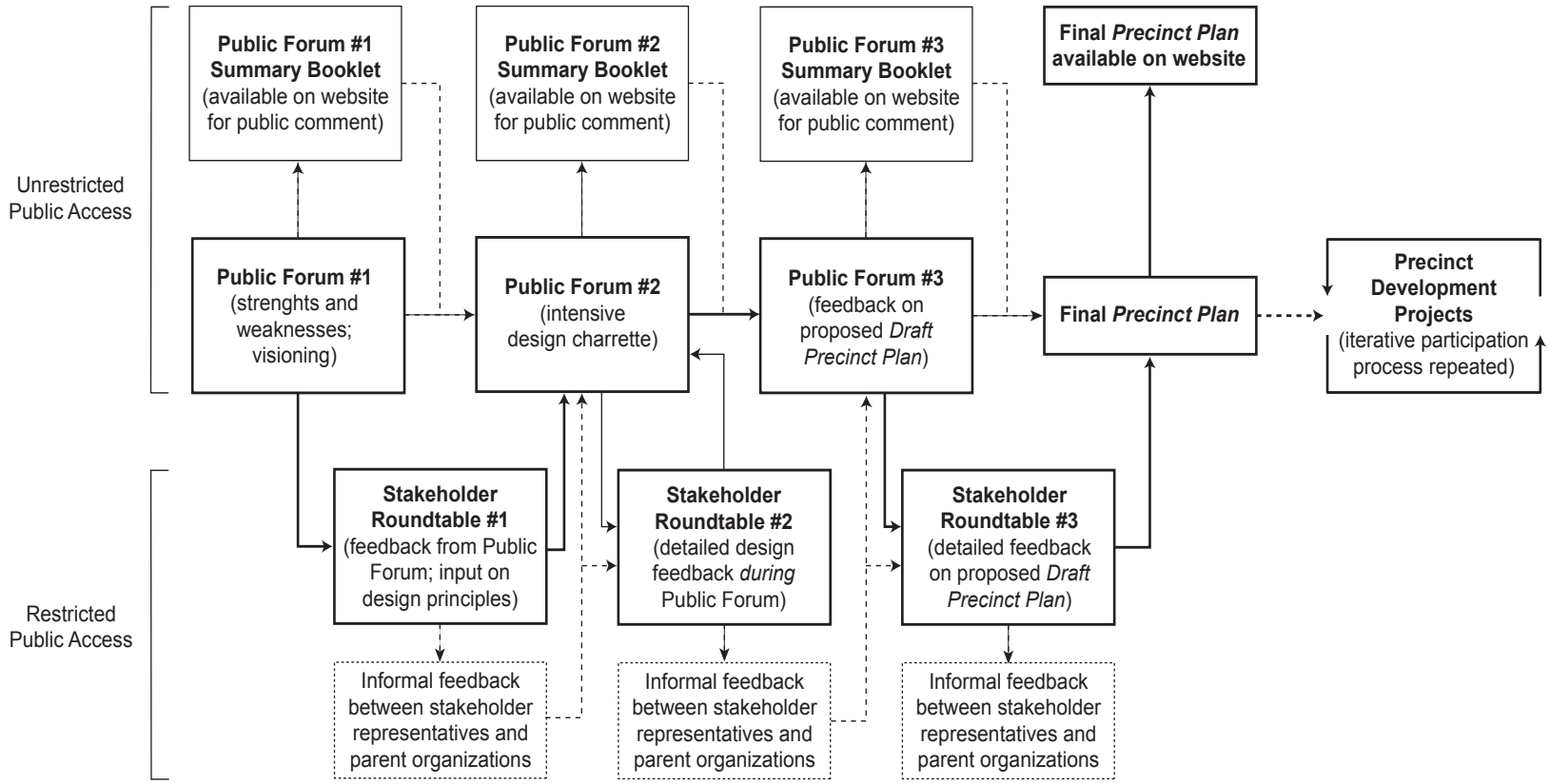
landowners and government partners (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005c). The results of the public meetings are always uploaded to the TWRC's website so that additional comments can be added by members of the public before the next meeting. Conversely, the proceedings of the stakeholder committees are kept confidential and the attending stakeholders are relied upon to relay any relevant information to their parent organizations. A level of confidentially is maintained because propriety financial information and confidential land deals are invariably discussed. It should also be noted that the TWRC had not only limited this format of consultation to the precinct planning process. The same iterative participatory framework is used throughout the detailed stages of design and construction, as well as on those projects that sit outside the boundaries of the various precincts (see: Figure 6.7. overleaf). I will return to examine the specific mechanics, typical discussions and outcomes of the corporation's consultation and engagement process through the lens of the East Bayfront during the second half of this chapter.

Leading with Public Consultation and Participation on Toronto's Waterfront

Since the first precinct planning processes for the West Don Lands and East Bayfront were held in 2003 and 2004, the TWRC's commitment to public consultation and participation has moved from strength to strength. The summary report from the West Don Lands public consultation documents that between 100 and 200 people attended each of the four public forums (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2004), while the summary reports on the East Bayfront precinct planning process record that between 200 and 250 people attended the four public meetings (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003a; 2003b; 2004a; 2005d). In 2008, the public forums that were convened to discuss the master planning proposals for Queens Quay Boulevard[20], were equally well attended and attracted between 230 and 200 local residents (Waterfront Toronto 2008b; 2008c). Most recently, a three-day series of public forums on the revitalization of the Port Lands precinct, held in March 2012, was attended by over 500 people (Lura Consulting and SWERHUN 2012). The corporation's various public meetings continue to be run by Lura Consulting, in conjunction with Nicole Swerhun[21].

[20] A detailed account of the Queens Quay planning and design process is included in Chapter 7.
[21] Swerhun originally used to lead the events at Lura Consulting but has since set up her own, eponymous, company.

Figure 6.7. Typical Consultation and Participation Process
(Diagram by the author)



The project-focused stakeholder roundtables that Wilkey envisaged have proven to be equally successful. Now formally referred to as Stakeholder Advisory Committees, or 'SACs', they have been established for almost all of the corporation's projects and continue to provide on-going advice, feedback and guidance during the planning and design process (Waterfront Toronto 2012b). The corporation aims to include a diverse range of interests on each SAC and typically includes representatives from local neighbourhood associations, business improvement associations, condominium associations, local businesses, landowners and advocacy groups, such as cycling coalitions or historical societies. For the corporation, the SACs act as a critical sounding board for new and, at times, controversial ideas and provide an important two-way link between the community and the corporation (Waterfront Toronto 2012b). A senior corporation executive admits that the SAC process is certainly an expensive and time-consuming exercise, but almost always improves the outcome of a project (TWRC 7 2011). Reflecting on the West Don Lands precinct planning process, for example, he notes that:

> …the stakeholder meeting provided great input to us. They represented the community so that when we went to the public meeting with the latest version [of the precinct plan], we also had the opinion of the leaders of that community saying 'we participated in that and we had input'...So it actually worked really, really well (TWRC 7 2011).

In addition to face-to-face consultation, the corporation has also worked hard to project a sophisticated public image in the media and online. In May 2007, the corporation conducted a rebranding exercise that saw its rather clunky full name, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation, changed to the pithier 'Waterfront Toronto'. At the same time, it also introduced a sleek new logo formed of three interlocking waves. The rebranding was timed to coincide with the corporation's transition from planning to implementation and aimed to reignite citywide interest in their work (Waterfront Toronto 2007). Furthermore, the corporation operates a very accessible and comprehensive website (see: www.waterfrontoronto.ca). Navigation of the website is relatively effortless and almost every document the corporation has produced, from precinct plans to meeting minutes, can be downloaded from the site free of charge. The website also incorporates an impressive amount of regularly updated images and video, allowing users to monitor the progress of waterfront development projects. In addition, the corporation publishes a monthly newsletter.

This provides local residents with updates on the corporation's activities, as well as information on forthcoming public meetings and summaries of previous public events. The newsletter is sent out via email every month to those who have signed up to receive it. Alternatively, it can be downloaded from the website or picked up by hand from the corporation's office (CIVIL 2 2011).

Criticisms of Waterfront Toronto's Public Consultation Efforts

In the corporation's *07/08 Annual Report*, John Campbell reiterated Robert Fung's conviction that any waterfront revitalization effort hinged on collaboration with local residents and stakeholders, noting, "One can't undertake such an enormous project without public support…We need the community as our partner and champion. Otherwise, revitalization won't be successful" (quoted in Waterfront Toronto 2008a, p. 6). The annual report also included remarks from two leaders in the local community. Impressed by the corporation's on-going efforts, Cindy Wilkey exclaimed that Waterfront Toronto "sets the gold standard for community consultation" (quoted in Waterfront Toronto 2008a, p. 6), while Dennis Findlay, the chair of the Waterfront Action Group noted that the corporation "make a concerted effort to reach out and share project information before decisions are made" (quoted in Waterfront Toronto 2008a, p. 6). Through my own interviews with local waterfront residents, I collected similar positive feedback. The head of one local neighbourhood association, for example, stated that she had "never seen any consultation process so detailed" (CIVIL 4 2011), while another local activist noted that the corporation's approach had always been "communication rich" (CIVIL 5 2011).

Criticisms of Waterfront Toronto's public consultation and participation process have also been made. For example, Lehrer and Laidley (2008) identify the case of Toronto's waterfront as a new form of 'mega-project' that uses the neoliberal language of interurban competition to focus on benefits for particular groups in society, rather than benefits for all. The authors support this assertion with the example of Waterfront Toronto's public forums and stakeholder meetings. Although these meetings are well attended by members of the public, they fail, in the authors' estimation, to engage a diversity of local residents, especially those living in poorer districts of Toronto. This criticism is shared by Gabriel Eidelman (2011) who also argues that residents from nearby low-income neighbourhoods have been

"underrepresented" (p. 280) in the corporation's many public forums. Although these authors and commentators point to worrying pitfalls in Waterfront Toronto's ability to reach out to a diversity of publics, the scope of their research is narrowly defined. The authors' analysis does not appear to question the actualities of the public participation processes run by Waterfront Toronto, nor the extent to which the processes have influenced development outcomes. These shortfalls, as well as the specificities of the corporation's approach to precinct planning and public consultation and participation, are the subject of the following section of the chapter.

Planning the East Bayfront

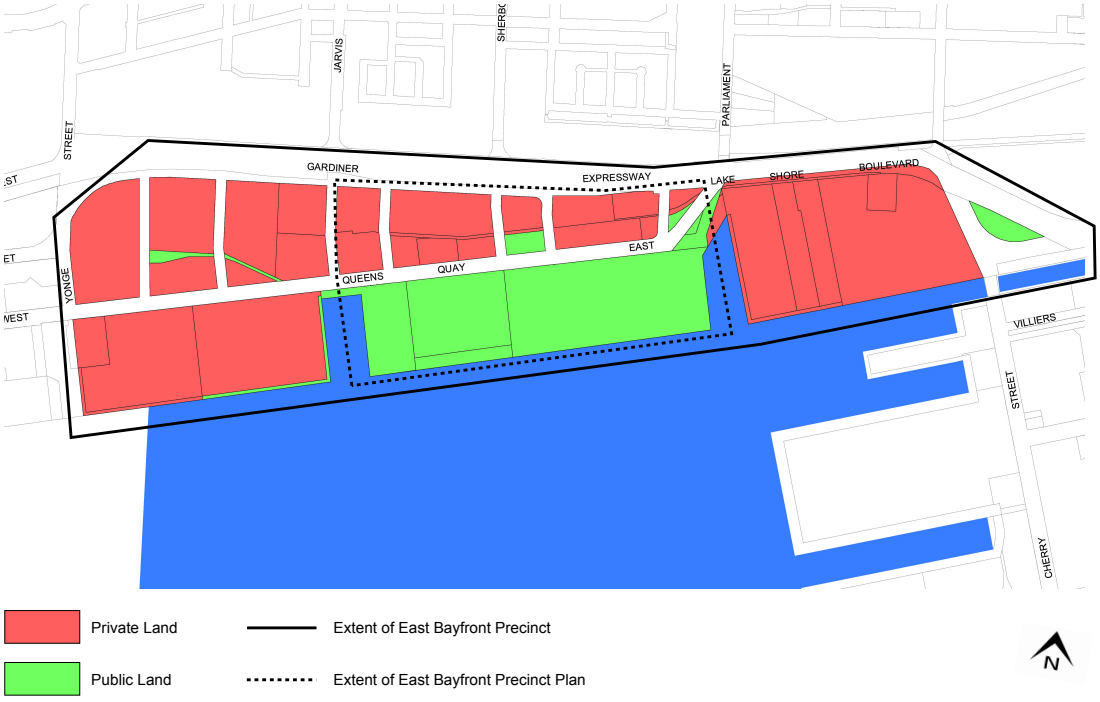
The TWRC initiated the planning and design process for the East Bayfront in 2003 (Waterfront Toronto 2012c) and, as stated earlier, Toronto City Council endorsed the precinct plan in December 2005 (City of Toronto 2005c). All the planning and design work was undertaken by the Boston-based urban design consultancy Koetter Kim and Associates, who were selected as the master planner in August 2003 through an open tender (Hume 2003b). At an event held by the corporation on August 23rd, 2003 to introduce the winning design team, Fred Koetter spoke of his desire to a develop a flexible master plan that would respond to changing uses over time (Hume 2003b). He also noted that a significant component of the precinct would be set aside for various public spaces and emphasized that the key to a successful master plan was a transparent planning process. Getting the process right, Koetter stated, improved the chances of creating a great place (Hume 2003b).

The location of the East Bayfront precinct is shown in Figure 6.8. (overleaf). Covering an area of 23 hectares, the precinct extends from Lower Jarvis Street in the west to Parliament Street in the east. On its northern edge the precinct is bounded by Lakeshore Boulevard and the Gardiner Expressway while, to the south, the site extends all the way to the lake. Figure 6.8. illustrates that only the central 15-hectare portion of the East Bayfront precinct was subject to the precinct planning process. Segments to the east were excluded because redevelopment in these areas required the completion of complex infrastructure projects for which the corporation did not have funding at the time, including the proposed

renaturalization of the Don River[22] (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a). The extent of the precinct planning area was also narrowed on the western edge due to on-going land negotiations with various private developers, as well as appeals that had been lodged against the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* by the adjacent factory owned by Redpath Sugar. Strategically, the TWRC chose to focus the precinct planning process on lands that were primarily controlled by the three governments, the extent of these is also shown in Figure 6.8. As Chapter 5 discussed, the mandate handed to the TWRC in the 2002 *Act of Incorporation* gave them much greater power to influence development on publically owned land.

Figure 6.8. East Bayfront Precinct

(Image edited from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006a, p. 32, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



The East Bayfront lands were created as part of the Toronto Harbour Commission (THC) waterfront landfilling policy explained in Chapter 1 (pp. 13-17). In 1952, the East Bayfront became the final part of the waterfront to be land filled and transformed into a working port. However, its time as an industrial area was short-lived and like much of the rest of the

[22] This section of the precinct has since become the Keating Channel Precinct (see: Figure 6.2.).

waterfront it quickly became underutilized. When the East Bayfront precinct planning process was initiated in 2003, few active land uses remained. Those that did exist included car dealerships, distribution centres and recreational sport tents primarily located on privately owned land north of Queens Quay (see: Figure 6.8. on the previous page). South of Queens Quay, the government holdings were nearly derelict and there was no public access to the water's edge.

Planning East Bayfront with Local Residents and Stakeholders

The planning process for the East Bayfront began three months after Koetter Kim and Associates were hired as the precinct design team (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a). As mentioned previously, the TWRC had appointed Lura Consulting to lead all of their public engagement efforts and the East Bayfront consultation process was the first to start. It followed the iterative format outlined in Figure 6.7., albeit with the addition of one extra public meeting/stakeholder advisory committee feedback loop[23]. Therefore, between October 2003 and April 2004, the TWRC held four bi-monthly public forums and four bi-monthly SAC meetings. Further iterative public forums and SAC meetings have been convened on an on-going basis since 2004 for all the supporting documents and implementation tools, such as the zoning by-law amendment (City of Toronto 2006a) and the urban design guidelines (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007), as well as for all of the major infrastructure projects, including Sherbourne Common and Sugar Beach. On a less frequent basis the corporation also holds general public forums and SAC meetings to communicate the progress of the implementation process and solicit community feedback on changes that have arisen (TWRC 6 2011).

The four public forums for the East Bayfront were advertised in three local community newspapers and invitations were distributed to the 1,700 individuals and organizations listed in the TWRC's email database (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003a). As previously mentioned, between 200 and 250 people attended each of the public meetings and after each forum Lura Consulting produced a summary booklet that outlined the principal topics of discussion and the next steps that would be taken in the master planning

[23] The parallel consultation process for the West Don Lands began in December 2003 and lasted until May 2004 (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2004).

process. A range of people attended the public meetings. The majority were members of local neighbourhood associations, but also in attendance were numerous people from local government (City planners, etc.) the Toronto design community (professional architects and urban designers), local advocacy groups (environment, heritage, cycling, etc..) and graduate students.

In contrast, the corporation has an informal policy not to take minutes at its SAC meetings. Therefore, no record exists for those that were conducted during the East Bayfront precinct planning process (TWRC 6 2011). A series of conversations with stakeholders who attended the East Bayfront SACs suggest they followed the format outlined in Figure 6.7. One community representative notes, for example, that the stakeholders worked "…very closely with the designers as the precinct plans were drawn up" (CIVIL 2 2011) and remembers that the SAC discussions would typically involve a detailed follow up discussion on the more technical matters that participants had raised at the public forums.

Public Forum 1: Setting the Context and Learning from Local People

The goal of the first public forum, held on the evening of October 7th 2003, was threefold: (1) introduce the design team to local residents; (2) outline the scope of the participatory planning and design process; and, (3) invite the community to share their local knowledge about the East Bayfront. The TWRC was particularly keen to hear local residents' thoughts on the potential opportunities the site presented, as well as any concerns they had about the scope of the master planning process (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003a). The meeting began with a series of opening remarks from the corporation's president and CEO, John Campbell, an overview of the agenda by Lura Consulting's chief facilitator, Nicole Swerhun, and a short presentation on the TWRC's wider precinct planning process by Joe Berridge, the corporation's East Bayfront project manager and partner of Toronto-based planning consultancy, Urban Strategies. Berridge then introduced Fred Koetter, the head of Koetter Kim and Associates' master planning and design team and Greg Smallenberg, from Vancouver-based landscape architecture consultancy Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg, who had been selected as the East Bayfront parks and public space consultant. After Koetter and Smallenberg had given a short synopsis of their professional experience and the conceptual ideas they had for the East Bayfront, a group of local

residents shared some brief thoughts on the cultural context of the project. For the remainder of the session, the forum participants worked both individually and in groups to answer three broad questions about the issues they felt might impact the precinct plan, as well as the local knowledge they believed should be incorporated into the on-going design process (see: Figure 6.9. below). The participants' answers were then written on coloured cards and arranged into themes on a series of boards by the forum facilitators.

Figure 6.9. Participants at East Bayfront Public Forum 1
(Images from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003a, p. 6, all reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

The three forum questions participants addressed:

1. Thinking about the East Bayfront area, what would you say are the 3-5 most pressing issues that need to be addressed through the precinct planning process?
2. For each of the issues you've identified, what opportunities do you see to address the issue in the East Bayfront Precinct Plan? What other opportunities are there for the precinct?
3. What local information or data do you have that the East Bayfront precinct planning team should consider?

To a remarkable extent, the feedback from participants at the first forum was positive. One of the primary design suggestions was for the master plan to project a strong and harmonizing design vision that would simultaneously avoid stifling the variety and creativity of the buildings to be built in the precinct. Conversely, one participant hoped that traditional building materials would be encouraged and noted that concrete, steel and glass walls should be "banished" (quoted in Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003a, p. 8). Some participants also raised concerns about how the new waterfront public spaces would be designed, considering Toronto's harsh winter climate. As a result, there were a number of ideas about shielding public space from the wind and adapting it for different summer and winter uses. Many of the participants also emphasized the important role that sustainable

design and green buildings could play in the planning and design process. It was suggested that the design team try and discover ways to reuse stormwater in the precinct, require developers to produce high performance buildings with integral green roof technology and discourage excessive parking provisions in new buildings (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003a).

Accessibility was also an emotive subject during the forum. Mirroring the conclusions made by the City of Toronto and the TWRC in earlier planning studies[24], some participants vocalized the need for critical improvements to the north-south connections between the downtown and the lake, as well as the pressing need for continuity along the fragmented lakefront promenade. A considerable number of participants also commented on the accessibility of the waterfront via public transportation and bicycle. It was strongly suggested that bus connections be improved and that cycling and walking be prioritized (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003a). The participants also commented on the evolving planning process. Some raised concerns about the viability of the precinct plan and the capacity the corporation had to enforce the principles it would contain, considering the limited status of the plan in the official planning hierarchy. Another participant emphasized the need to keep the precinct planning process moving quickly to ensure that the enthusiasm it had already generated was kept alive. A number of participants also noted that steps should be taken to involve members of the local community who could not attend the forums. Finally, numerous comments were made about the supply and affordability of housing in the new precinct. It was argued that a minimum percentage of affordable housing should be established early in the planning process and that the design team should incorporate opportunities for a range of housing types that would cater to a diversity of community needs. The public forum closed with the announcement that the design team would use the community's feedback, as well as a further discussion with the SAC on some of the detailed points raised, to develop a series of preliminary design concepts for the next public forum.

[24] Improving the north-south connections between downtown Toronto and the waterfront was established as one of the four core principles for the waterfront in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (see: Figure 5.6., p. 135).

Public Forum 2: Considering Three Design Options

The second public forum was held on the evening of December 1st, 2003. Building on the broad contextual discussions that occurred during the first forum, the aim was to solicit feedback on a series of 'big picture' master plan design concepts and introduce the parallel environmental assessment process. The forum was broken into two parts, beginning with a two-hour open house and ending with a more structured two-and-a-half hour working session. At the open house, attendees were invited to comment on a series of visual displays that outlined some initial design principles for the site. Members of the design team were available to answer any questions and there was an opportunity for the community members to write down their feedback. The visual displays covered numerous topics, from the design of parks and open space to affordable housing and community facilities. The majority of the feedback related to transportation (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b). Numerous comments were made about the current state of public transportation in the area and the desperate need for an extended streetcar line along Queens Quay to integrate the emerging precinct with the rest of the waterfront and the downtown core. It was also suggested that the authors of the new precinct plan should take the City of Toronto's existing bike plan into consideration when reconfiguring the layout of existing streets, especially Queens Quay. By way of example, one attendee also noted that the public forums for the East Bayfront, all of which were being held in the nearby Distillery District, were difficult to access by bus or streetcar (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b).

At the design workshop that followed Fred Koetter and Greg Smallenberg introduced three conceptual master plan options to the participants and explained that each option had grown out of the feedback received during the first forum. Responding to the community's desire to see the East Bayfront precinct better connected to the rest of Toronto, the designers noted how the design options used various morphological arrangements to emphasize the north-south connections between the city and lake. They also explained that the design options employed a variety of building typologies and open space configurations to encourage mixed-use development and future adaptability, thus responding to the community's hope that a diverse and sustainable neighbourhood would emerge in the future. Furthermore, the designers pointed out that the mixed-use buildings in the design concepts had been

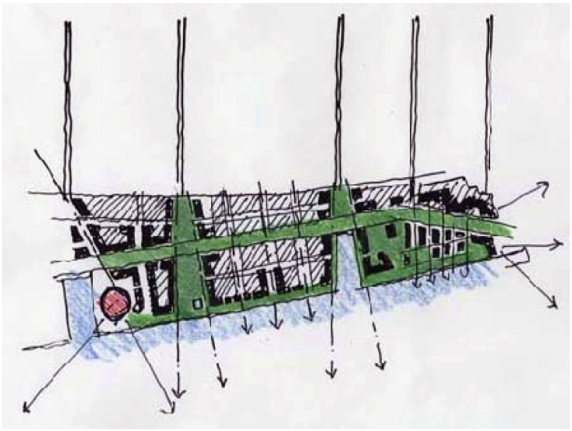
arranged to accommodate multiple housing tenures. While all three design concepts shared these common themes, the designers also highlighted some variations between them. The location and scale of the precinct open spaces differed, as did the alignment of Queens Quay and the proposed LRT line. Moreover, the massing and arrangement of buildings varied between the concepts (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b).

After the presentation, the forum participants worked in small groups to evaluate the three design concepts. The forum facilitators asked the groups to think about the elements of the master plans they were comfortable with, the elements they would consider changing and any additional design elements they felt should be included. Nicole Swerhun, the chief facilitator, then mediated a discussion between the design team and the participants (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b). In summary, the participants were comfortable with many of the broad design ideas contained within the three design concepts. The emphasis on improving north-south connections between the lake and the downtown in all of the options was particularly well received, although some participants suggested that these connections could be strengthened even more to encourage local mobility between adjacent neighbourhoods (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b). The participants were also impressed by the design team's commitment to providing a mix of housing options, as well as a mix of land uses. One local resident did express concern that affordable housing options in nearby neighbourhoods had been lost after reselling and suggested that the corporation consider the role that co-operative housing might play (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b). Many of the participants were also receptive to the transportation proposals and praised the design team for making public transit a priority through the centre of the precinct.

The participants' response to the height and configuration of the buildings in the various design concepts was much more mixed. As a group, they found it difficult to agree on whether tall buildings were appropriate or not. One participant commented that tall buildings create an "inhumane character at ground level and tunnel effects" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b, p. 8), while another retorted that "Tall buildings are wonderful! We are North Americans not Europeans!" (p. 8). In contrast, there were unanimous concerns raised about the treatment of the water's edge in the three design options, perhaps because the plans were so conceptual and the potential for waterfront

public space so emotive. Some participants were frustrated by the apparent failure of the design ideas to address the precinct's relationship to existing uses on the water, while others were concerned about the types of spaces that would be created on the water's edge and the extent to which they would respond to local wildlife habitats (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b). As part of their discussions, the small groups also commented on the three proposals specifically (see: Figure 6.10. below and overleaf). In this exercise, the participants strongly indicated their preference for Options 1 and 3, which were preferred over the more fragmented Option 2. Notably, the participants strongly approved of the north-south relationships achieved in Option 1 and the sheltered spaces created in Option 3. However, all of the proposals were critiqued for lacking a robust response to the water's edge (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b).

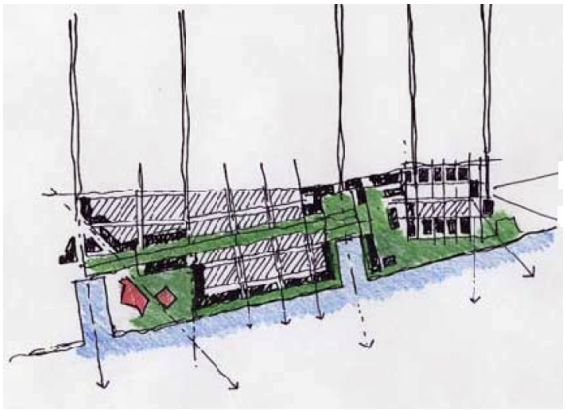
Figure 6.10. Three Design Concepts for the East Bayfront
(Images from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003b, p. 1, all reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



Option 1

What the participants' liked:
- The widening of corridors.
- Very strong north-south connections.
- Green space connection between Sherbourne and Parliament.
- Green space at the east end of East Bayfront.
- Transition to mouth of the Don River.

What the participants' would change:
- Vehicular access to water's edge.
- Improved variation of condition at water's edge.
- North-south connections, but not the 'cone-effect' of the master plan.

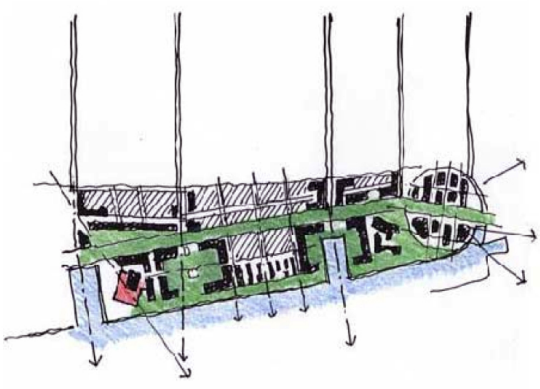


Option 2

What the participants' liked:
- (No positive comments)

What the participants' would change:
- Park land configuration.
- Green space transition to Don River.
- Improved variation of conditions at the water's edge.

Figure 6.10. (cont.) Three Design Concepts for the East Bayfront



Option 3

What the participants' liked:

- Urban relationship to Don River.
- Elevated view of the west from the park at the east side of the site.
- The 'split level' waterfront.
- Green space at the foot of Sherbourne, has potential to become local 'common'.

What the participants' would change:

- Green space transition at the Don River
- Two u-shaped buildings at the water's edge.
- Improved variation of conditions at the water's edge.
- Mitigate wind tunnel effects caused by street edges.

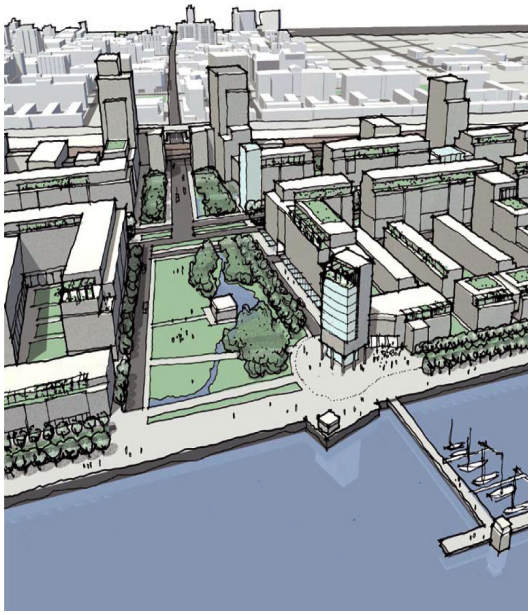
Public Forum 3: Evaluating the Draft Conceptual Design

The final public forum during the design and development phase was held in early March 2004, with the purpose of seeking feedback from local residents on the final conceptual master plan. Since the December public forum, the design team had produced a series of computer-generated visualizations and a large-scale physical model to facilitate the forum discussions. These are shown in Figure 6.11. overleaf. The forum began with a presentation by Fred Koetter and Greg Smallenberg and, as before, they outlined how the design team had responded to the feedback from the previous public forums and they explained how it had been translated into a series of core urban design concepts. As Figure 6.11. illustrates, there was a clear continuity between the preferred conceptual design options at the previous meeting and the master plan proposals. The design team had emphasized two previously well-received 'big ideas'. First, the dramatic emphasis of the north-south streets using perpendicular open spaces and, second, the upgrade of Queens Quay from a wide vehicular thoroughfare into a multi-use tree-lined boulevard (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2004a). Following the design team's presentation, the facilitation team divided the forum participants into four groups. Working with a facilitator and a member of the design team, the groups were asked to react to the design proposals and comment on some

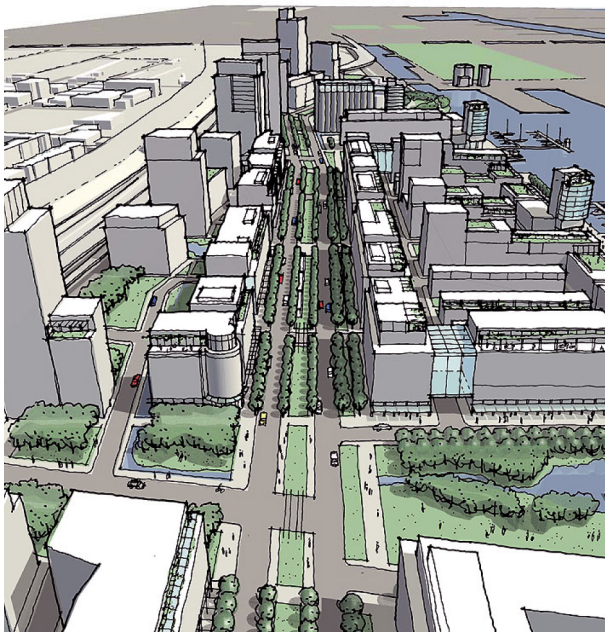
of the specific elements that had troubled participants at previous sessions, including the water's edge, the scale and massing of the buildings, open space, sustainability and all-weather usage (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2004a).

Using the format employed at the preceding public forum, Lura Consulting summarized the participants' feedback by highlighting which elements of the master plan were liked, which generated mixed feelings and which could be improved. Overall, the response to the master plan was good. "Most of the participants were happy to see how far the design had come since December," the summary booklet recorded, "…and noted their appreciation for the process" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2004a, p. 5). However, many of the specific design elements generated mixed feedback. While some participants liked the newly imagined formal promenade on the water's edge, others worried that it created a hard urban edge.

Figure 6.11. East Bayfront Draft Design and Concept
(Images from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2004a, p. 2 (Image 1) and p. 3 (Images 2 and 3, overleaf), all reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



Computer-generated three-dimensional visualization of proposed Sherbourne Park



Computer-generated three-dimensional visualization of proposed boulevard improvements to Queens Quay.

Figure 6.11. (cont.) East Bayfront Draft Design and Concept

Physical model of the East Bayfront precinct master plan design concept

Generally speaking, the participants responded well to the provision of multiple public parks and plazas in the precinct, although some participants worried about the width and scale of Queens Quay. A majority of participants praised the designers for incorporating a range of all-weather parks and open space and for designating the foot of Jarvis Street as a principle public space and attraction. But, as had occurred at the previous public forum, the participants remained quite divided on the subject of building scale and density and rekindled the debate about whether tall buildings were appropriate close to the water's edge. This discussion was dissipated somewhat by a general enthusiasm for the idea of stepping the heights of buildings away from the lake. Ultimately, the most stinging criticisms were reserved for the community aspects of the precinct plan. As before, concerns were raised about housing provision. Numerous participants felt the design team still needed to provide better evidence about the future affordability of housing in the precinct and how a diversity of people might be attracted to live there. In this respect, one participant noted that the master plan appeared to over emphasize condominium living and, as a result, might fail to attract families. It was recommended that the design team research new communities that have successfully attracted a diverse range of residents.

Public Forum 4: Reviewing the Draft Precinct Plan

Following the third public forum in early March 2004, the Koetter Kim-led design team spent just under a year producing a draft precinct plan. It was presented on February 3rd, 2005 at the fourth and final public forum, which was attended by over 250 people (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005d). The aim of the forum was to solicit a closing round of feedback on the draft plan, with the aim of identifying any serious outstanding concerns before the plan was submitted for consideration by the City of Toronto Council and the subsequent zoning by-law amendment process was initiated (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005d). Using the same familiar format, the forum began with a series of opening presentations by TWRC staff and an explanation of the meeting format by the chief facilitator. The floor was then handed to Fred Koetter who gave a detailed presentation on the draft precinct plan. As the precinct plan had been generally well received at the previous forum, the basic components, or 'big moves', were little changed. Koetter explained that the design team had used the participants' focused feedback to refine the plan rather than redraft it. He also noted that three major concerns had stood out during the last public forum and had thus been addressed by the design team. These were: (1) the design and configuration of Queens Quay; (2) the accessibility and all-year-round usability of the water's edge promenade; and, (3) the articulation and function of the new public space at the foot of Jarvis Street (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005d).

After Koetter had finished his presentation, the facilitator organized the forum participants into small working groups and asked them to identify what they felt were the most important features of the draft precinct plan and to highlight any outstanding concerns. A visual summary of the many features that the participants felt were important is shown in Figure 6.12. overleaf. In general, the participants' endorsed the core principles of the precinct plan. Notably, the design team's detailed responses to the water's edge promenade and the public spaces at the foot of Jarvis Street were particularly well received. The summary report also identified two major outstanding issues that were raised by several participants: (1) the plan included insufficient green space and (2) many of the buildings were 'too high'. Following a facilitated feedback session, John Campbell, the TWRC's president and CEO, closed the public forum by thanking the participants for their involvement in the two-year precinct planning process. He explained that the feedback from the final forum would be

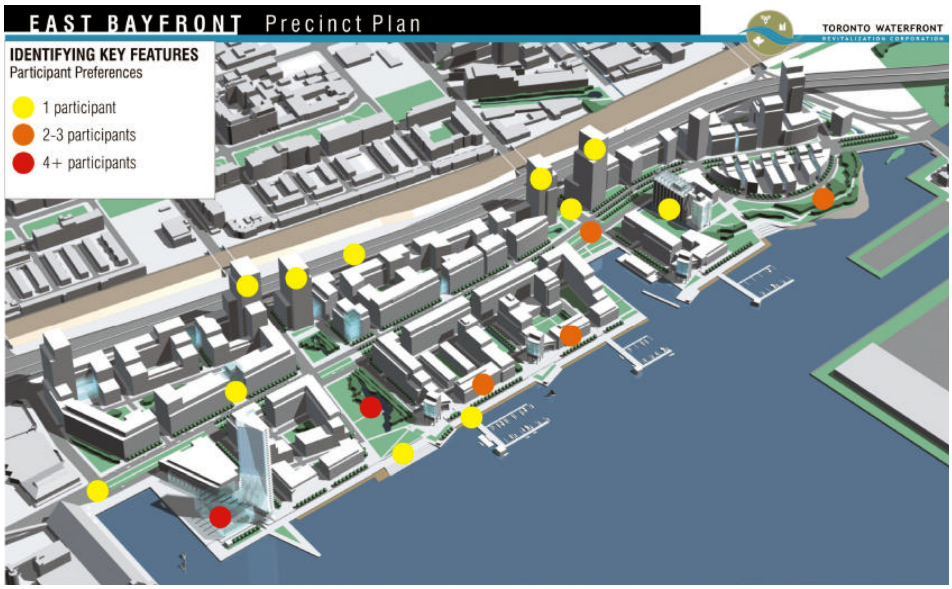
integrated into the plan and noted that the final stage of the process would be to submit the precinct plan to the City of Toronto for review and comment.

Figure 6.12. Rendering of Draft Precinct Plan with Public Feedback

(Image and summary extracted from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005d, p. 4, all reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

Most commonly identified "Important Features":

- Sherbourne Park
- Foot of Jarvis as destination, cultural facility or public building
- Water's edge accessibility, year-round access to water, two-tier promenade
- General pedestrian accessibility and integration of cars, bikes and people
- Green space
- Transit and LRT access to precinct
- All-weather pedestrian frontages



The East Bayfront Precinct Plan

Running to fifty pages, the final *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* was a comprehensive and detailed master plan that included a mixture of text, plans, three-dimensional graphics, watercolours and photographs to convey the vision for the area's transformation (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a). Described by the *Toronto Star's* architecture critic, Christopher Hume, as a "triumph of urbane planning" (2005a, p. B03), the essence of the plan clearly reflected the discussions that had taken place at the four public forums and, as illustrated in Figure 6.13. overleaf, the community's core aspirations were translated into a series of nine guiding principles. Speaking to the press during the Fall of 2002, the vice-

president of the nearby Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association and member of the TWRC's East Bayfront SAC, noted that the three-year planning process had included an "unprecedented level of openness to community concerns and wishes" (quoted in James 2005, p. B02). The community and design team's shared wish to reinforce the north-south connections between the city and the waterfront remained the binding agent of the plan and, as had first been proposed at the third public forum, the design team had employed a series of diagonal sightlines and waterfront public spaces to emphasize the connection of the north-south streets to the waterfront. In the finished plan, the design team had also emphasized the crucial role that the water's edge promenade and Queens Quay would play as pedestrian places, a suggestion that participants had made numerous times during the four public forums. The interface with the lake would be car-free and continuously animated at street level by ground floor retail. And, to increase its versatility, the promenade would also be tiered, creating a protected zone for walking by the water and a more flexible space for outdoor seating and restaurants behind. Similarly, the design team had undertaken a considerable amount of detailed design work to ensure that Queens Quay would become an inviting boulevard that could be shared by pedestrians, cyclists, streetcars and vehicles.

Figure 6.13. Comparison of Public Feedback and Precinct Plan Principles
(Summarized and adapted from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a, p. 9 (column 1) and p. 18 (column 2))

Precinct Plan Feedback Summary:	Precinct Plan Principles:
Design a generous and publicly accessible water's edge public space.	Create a publicly accessible, vibrant and magnificent water's edge promenade throughout East Bayfront.
Open up distinct views and vistas to the water	Strengthen visual connections to the water from the city, including St. Lawrence, The Distillery District and West Don Lands to the north.
Build lots of accessible, people friendly green space that can be used year round.	Terminate the major north-south streets at a series of special public spaces
Create strong connections with other parts of the city	Create an overall mid-rise built form that steps down to the water's edge and only permits taller buildings along the Gardiner/Lakeshore corridor to frame major points of entry to East Bayfront.
Incorporate sustainability at all stages of planning, design and development	Create a new district that serves as a model of environmental responsibility, energy efficiency, sustainable design and liveability with an urban setting, i.e. a compelling alternative to suburban living.

Figure 6.13. (cont.) Comparison of Public Feedback and Plan Principles

Precinct Plan Feedback Summary:	Precinct Plan Principles:
Ensure a diverse housing mix that accommodates families as well as singles.	Support a wide variety of uses and allow for flexibility of uses across the site, including an appropriate balance of both employment and residential uses.
Ground the plan in a strong vision for a dynamic, vibrant community that is relevant for all of Toronto.	Encourage active, publicly-engaging ground floor uses along Queens Quay boulevard and the water's edge promenade.
Make transit easily accessible and include cycling and pedestrian routes.	Ensure that streets and public spaces are designed to encourage and support pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.
	Establish Queens Quay as an active, beautiful east-west urban boulevard that provides for pedestrian amenity, commuter bike lanes, and mass transit, thereby creating the "main street" for East Bayfront.

In the final plan (see: Figure 6.14. overleaf) the design team also addressed the concerns that many participants had raised about building height. One of the plan's principles stated that taller buildings would be limited to strategic locations along the northern perimeter of the precinct and, as a general rule, all buildings would step down towards the lake. Furthermore, the design team removed a tall diagonal building proposed at the foot of Jarvis Street from the plan, thereby alleviating the possibility of any excessively tall building on the water's edge. The precinct plan also spoke in some detail about the more policy-orientated concerns that forum participants had raised. In particular, the precinct plan laid out detailed aspirations with respect to affordable housing and the community's desire that the waterfront be a place for a diverse and mixed community. As a minimum the TWRC hoped to allocate 20% (1250) of the 6300 proposed units on site as affordable and an additional 5% (315) for social housing. In addition, the precinct plan outlined the corporation's aim to work with the three levels of government to establish a Waterfront Housing Trust to deliver and manage their affordable housing program (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a).

Figure 6.14. Final East Bayfront Master Plan
(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a, p. 19, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

The East Bayfront master plan (not to scale) uses building lines and public spaces to emphasize the termination of the north-south streets on the water's edge. A simple perimeter block pattern is employed across the site and the overall plan reflects many of the simple design ideas contained in the earlier planning documents for the waterfront, in particular the Task Force's original vision for a waterfront of compact urban neighbourhoods that connect the city to the water.

An Alternative Precinct Plan?

In October 2005, as the TWRC and Koetter Kim prepared to submit the completed precinct plan to the City of Toronto for review, a dispute over land ownership between the TWRC and TEDCO – the City of Toronto development agency mentioned in the last chapter – surfaced and threatened to derail the entire precinct planning process (Diebel 2005). Most of the undeveloped public land in the East Bayfront precinct were owned by the City of Toronto and controlled by TEDCO for the purposes of future economic development (City of Toronto 2006). But, as Chapter 5 discussed, following the formation of the TWRC in 2002 and after intense lobbying by the new corporation (Mercer Delta Consulting 2004), the City of Toronto decided to transfer the TEDCO-controlled land to the TWRC. Therefore, as the TWRC

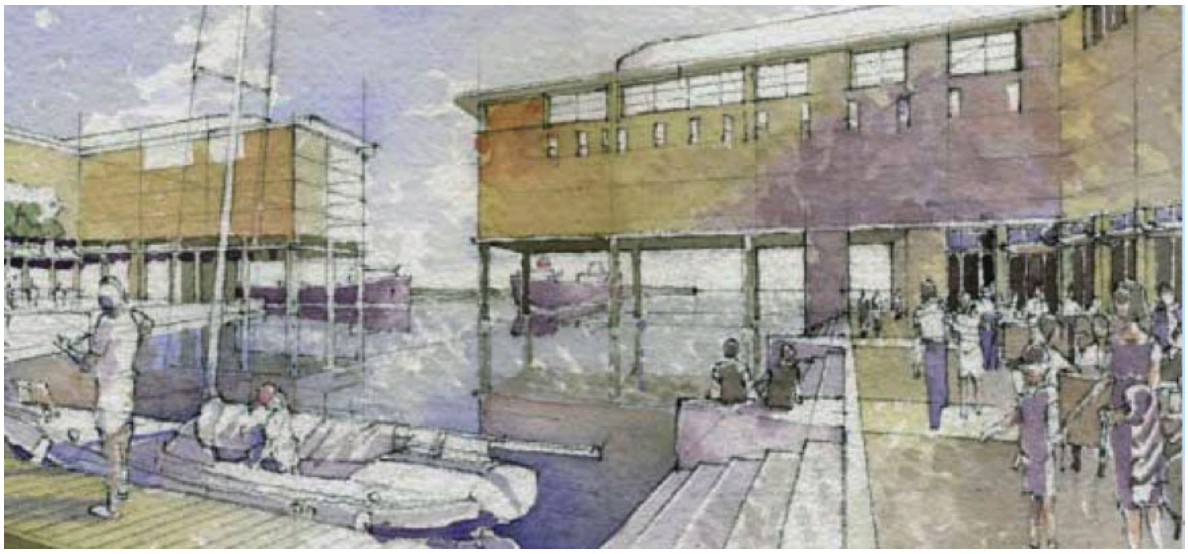
initiated the East Bayfront precinct planning effort in 2003, the City of Toronto set a parallel land negotiation process between the two agencies in motion. As stated in Chapter 5, the three public bodies eventually signed a memorandum of understanding in 2006 that saw the TWRC assume control of the majority of the East Bayfront (City of Toronto 2006). Yet, as the precinct planning process was coming to a close in late 2005, the City of Toronto and the two agencies were still negotiating the terms of this agreement (City of Toronto 2006) and the climate remained politically toxic (Hume 2005b).

TEDCO executives were frustrated that the TWRC had begun the East Bayfront precinct planning process before the land negotiations with the City of Toronto had been completed. Therefore, as the nominal landowner of the Queen Elizabeth Docklands property, which made up the vast majority of the public lands in the East Bayfront precinct (see: Figure 6.8.), the agency decided to hire its own consultants to advise on the future of the site (Diebel 2005). This decision, while divisive, was made more controversial by TEDCO's decision to appoint Jack Diamond from Toronto-based architectural practice Diamond + Schmidt as the lead designer because, in the Spring of 2003, the TWRC had also chosen Diamond as one of the four finalist in the open tendering process to produce the East Bayfront precinct plan (Diebel 2005).

Working for TEDCO during 2004, and without any connection to the TWRC's public forums and SACs, Diamond produced an alternative master plan for the precinct. The proposal built upon earlier conceptual master planning work that he had produced during a previous waterfront 'design ideas' charrette in 2002[25]. Offering a markedly different solution to the one Fred Koetter was developing, Diamond imagined a much denser urban from that knitted together a succession of perimeter courtyards mounted on raised podiums to accommodate a mix of uses (see: Figure 6.15. overleaf). Rather than incorporating a large public park at the centre of the precinct, Diamond proposed a series of smaller and intimate spaces throughout the site and a much narrower public promenade that would bring the building line closer to the water's edge. One architect who worked on the master plan told me that Diamond's core objective was to simultaneously create a neighbourhood scale, while offering protection from Toronto's harsh winter weather – something that, in Diamond's estimation, the Koetter Kim precinct plan failed to do (DESIGN 6 2011).

[25] In conjunction with the City of the Toronto, the TWRC held an exploratory design charrette called the Toronto Waterfront Design Initiative (TWDI) during the Fall of 2002. This event is discussed more fully in Chapter 7 (pp. 233-235).

Figure 6.15. Diamond + Schmidt Alternative East Bayfront Master Plan
(City of Toronto 2002c, p. 9, reproduced with the permission of the City of Toronto)



In the Fall of 2005, aggrieved by the minor role they had played in the East Bayfront precinct planning process, TEDCO lobbied Mayor David Miller to consider the agency's alternative master plan before the close of the precinct planning process. Miller, whose successful mayoral campaign had been co-chaired by Jack Diamond (Diebel 2005; Hume 2005b), was receptive to some of the criticisms that TEDCO raised and, as a recently appointed non-voting member of the TWRC board of directors[26], asked the TWRC to examine the alternative plan at their October 2005 meeting (Diebel 2005a). Explaining the mayor's unusual request to the press, his special advisor, Leslie Woo, stated that, while "The TWRC has been through a very expensive process to develop its precinct plan…[TEDCO]…felt outside of the process. They are the landowner, but maybe they weren't the first to step up to the mike and make their case known. The mayor wants to give them that opportunity" (quoted in Diebel 2005, p. A06). In a further press interview, this time with Christopher Hume of the *Toronto Star*, Woo stated: "He's not saying that TEDCO's right or wrong, he's saying let's look at it and discuss it. It's about fairness of process" (quoted in Hume 2005b, p. B02). Miller's position on the TEDCO proposal, and in particular his insistence that TEDCO's late involvement was about fairness, caused considerable outrage in both the press and among the many community members who had invested significant time in the TWRC's precinct planning process with Koetter Kim. At the *Toronto Star*, Christopher Hume (2005b) accused

[26] Miller was appointed as a non-voting member of the TWRC in October 2005 and became a full voting member in December 2005 (See Chapter 5, pp. 148-150).

Miller of meddling in the waterfront planning process and suggested that he should work with the corporation, not against it. Hume went on to argue that the TWRC had been created precisely to ensure fairness in the waterfront redevelopment process and stated that "Rather than have 20-plus agencies fighting for supremacy on the Toronto waterfront, the idea was to form one over-arching body with authority over docklands regeneration" (p. B02). Commenting on the forthcoming board meeting, Hume wrote, "Both Diamond and Koetter have been summoned to the next TWRC board meeting on Oct. 27 to present their plans. Only one of those two should have been invited" (p. B02). John Campbell, the TWRC's president and CEO, was also quoted in the *Toronto Star*. Speaking to reporter Linda Diebel, he said "We've gone through a great lengthy public debate…our plan will either be approved or we will be back at square one" (quoted in Diebel 2005, p. A06). Other, unnamed, officials were less diplomatic. One close source, quoted off the record by Diebel, stated "I've never seen anything like it...The whole thing was quite bizarre and incredible. You had one public agency spending taxpayer's money and working behind the scenes to compete with another government agency. Who is protecting the public interest?" (Diebel 2005p. A06).

For the many local people who had participated in forums and SACs between 2003 and 2005, the last minute addition of the TEDCO proposal into the precinct planning conversation was egregious. Julie Beddoes, speaking on behalf of the nearby Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association, explained to Royson James of the *Toronto Star* that abandoning the Koetter Kim plan would betray local people and constitute a "breach of trust" (quoted in James 2005, p. B02). Thinking back to what happened during the Fall of 2005, another community representative reflects on how angry the community was that TEDCO disregarded the precinct planning process. "Why a city agency would do this," she states, "I have no idea" (CIVIL 2 2011). The same representative went on to say that:

> Both the chair of [another neighbourhood association] and I had written very strong letters to the board giving our reasons for supporting the precinct plan. You know, this has been a process of consultation, this is a total breach of faith with the community who has drawn up these plans and why would any of us take part in this if any landowner, quite arbitrarily, can hire their own planner….I mean, why do we go through this process? We could be watching movies, or whatever! (CIVIL 2 2011).

In a striking example of the support and goodwill that the TWRC and Koetter Kim had established with local people, it was reported that over 300 people attended the TWRC board meeting on October 27th, 2005 (Diebel 2005a). The meeting itself was tense and politically charged. Angered by the mayor's insistence that the TWRC's *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* be directly compared to TEDCO's alternative master plan, Robert Fung, the board chair, began the meeting by outlining the thorough public process that had led to the final plan and hinted at the damage that would be inflicted on the corporation's public image if the City of Toronto Council chose to support the TEDCO alternative (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005e). The minutes record Fung stating that "if City Council's decision is not in favour of the Corporation's submitted plan, whatever the plan is, there will be a serious undermining of the Corporation funded by the three levels of Government specifically set up to lead the revitalization of the Toronto waterfront; and that could be fatal" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005e, p. 2). He also noted that leaders from the local community groups that had been involved in the precinct planning process had approached the TWRC and strongly urged the corporation not to stray from a plan that so many people had worked so hard to produce (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005e). During the remainder of the session, the two design teams outlined their alternate proposals. Jack Diamond and TEDCO were first to present and outlined the intimately scaled vision and master plan described in previous paragraphs and illustrated in Figure 6.15. After Diamond had presented, Fred Koetter detailed the TWRC's precinct plan. Outlining the various master plan components, introduced earlier in this chapter, he showed how the plan knitted into the broader planning policy for the waterfront, as well as the local community's aspirations for the area. Following the two presentations, the board members discussed the relative merits of the two proposals and offered some very general feedback on both schemes. The board also voiced strong support for the comments that Robert Fung made at the start of the meeting and the minutes duly recorded that:

> The Board members reiterated the Chair's view that the Corporation's precinct plan was developed with a great deal of public input and engagement, whereas the TEDCO plan was prepared largely without public consultation. It was also observed that the TEDCO plan had not had to stand up to public scrutiny, as has the Corporation's plan. It was further noted that adopting the TEDCO plan would break faith with the public and question the transparency of the Corporation as well as the

> public consultation process (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005e, p. 11).

The board voted 7-1 in favour of sending the Koetter Kim precinct plan to the City of Toronto for consideration (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005e) and, two months later, on December 5th 2005, it received the approval it needed from the City of Toronto Council (City of Toronto 2005c). While the TWRC had ultimately won the precinct plan battle, it had not done so without unnecessary contention. The conflict with TEDCO proved how vulnerable the TWRC remained to the jurisdictional anxieties of other government agencies and the whims of powerful politicians. But, the experience also demonstrated the importance of their policy of extensive public consultation and participation. The often-repeated comments about 'betrayal' voiced by community leaders vividly portrays the extent to which the community had assumed shared ownership of the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* and considered it as much their plan as the corporations'. The *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* also received critical acclaim, winning a 2005 Charter Award from the Congress for New Urbanism, the Boston Society of Architects' 2005 Millo Von Moltke Award for Urban Design and, in 2006, a Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Regional Honour (Waterfront Toronto 2012d).

From Plan to Prescriptions

When the City of Toronto Council endorsed the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* on December 5th, 2005, they also instructed City staff to begin the process of preparing an amended zoning by-law for the East Bayfront (City of Toronto 2005c). As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the zoning by-law amendment was strictly intended to codify all the various built form components of the precinct plan, including the size and location of public space, the distribution of roads and other public rights of way, as well as the configuration and heights of buildings. The amendment was due to formalize the broader planning goals contained in the precinct plan, in particular the provision of affordable housing and the funding of public amenities (City of Toronto 2006b). Under the existing zoning by-law, the East Bayfront lands were zoned exclusively for industrial use and, therefore, entirely revised designations were required to satisfy the mixed use and public space aspirations of both the precinct plan and its parent plan, the 2002 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, which, as

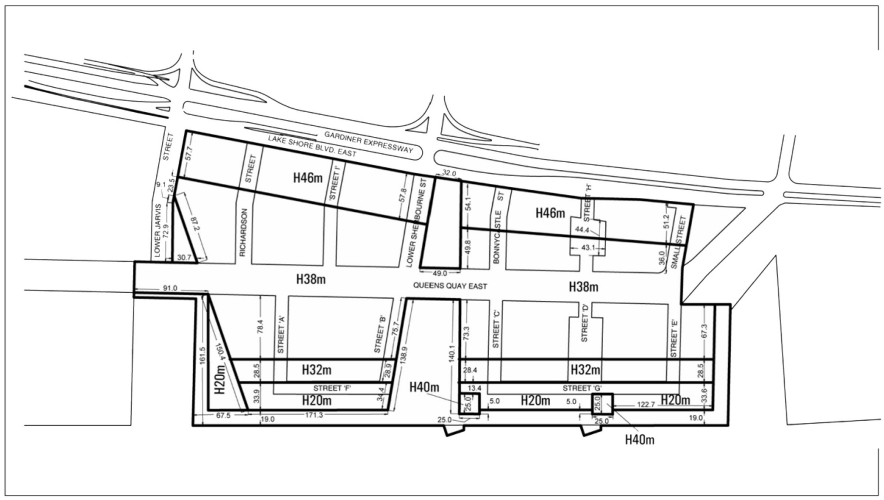
shown in Chapter 5, set out the City of Toronto's official land use policies for the waterfront (City of Toronto 2006b). Since all the planning and urban design principles for the East Bayfront had been agreed upon in advance through the precinct planning process, the City of Toronto planning department was able to produce the amended by-law in less than a year. Moreover, the process demanded only minimal public participation because no substantive changes to the planning vision and design principles were anticipated. Nevertheless, the TWRC did continue to employ the iterative public consultation format they had adopted during the precinct planning process and hosted two public forums and SACs in 2006 to both inform local residents and stakeholders about the implementation process and demonstrate that efforts were being made to faithfully translate all of the precinct planning policies into a legally binding zoning framework (City of Toronto 2006b).

The amendment (By Law No. 1049-2006) was enacted by the City of Toronto Council on September 27th, 2006 (City of Toronto 2006a). All of the developable land parcels in the precinct were zoned 'CR' (commercial-residential), while all of the proposed public spaces, such as Sherbourne Park, the Jarvis Slip and the waterfront promenade, were zoned 'G' (public open space). To achieve the street level vibrancy imagined in the precinct plan, the by-law also banned residential units at ground level and stipulated that all ground floor uses within CR zones had to be animated with commercial units. Through a series of strict set backs and maximum height rules, the by-law also determined the scale of the perimeter blocks proposed in the precinct plan and confirmed the community's wish to see any new buildings in the precinct step down to the lake (see: Figure 6.16. overleaf). Pre-empting negotiations with developers about height and density increases in exchange for community benefits, as permitted by Section 37 of the Ontario Planning Act[27], the by-law used the provisions of the statute to stipulate a list of requirements that developers would have to fulfil in exchange for the heights and densities permitted by the by-law. Notably, the by-law requested that developers provide either a contribution of $69.86 per square metre of gross residential floor area towards local infrastructure improvements or complete such improvements on behalf of the City of Toronto. Meeting the community's aspiration that affordable housing be a core component of the East Bayfront precinct, the by-law further required that at least 20% of the dwelling units constructed on each land parcel be maintained as affordable rental units for no less than 25 years or gave developer's the

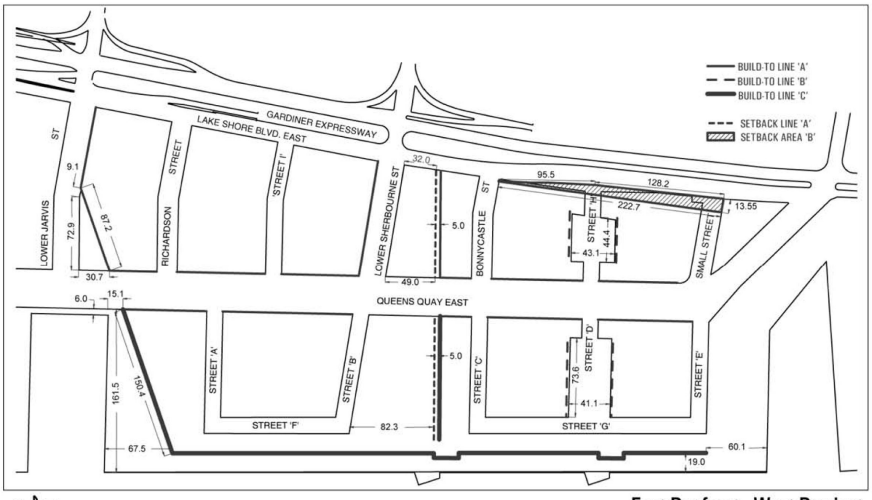
[27] Section 37 of the 1990 Ontario *Planning Act* authorizes municipalities to allow height and density increases above and beyond the zoning by-law, in exchange for financial contributions or direct community benefits.

option to make an *in lieu* payment to the City of Toronto for affordable housing. Moreover, the by-law stated that all development applications within the East Bayfront precinct area must be presented to the corporation's Waterfront Design Review Panel for a design evaluation (see: Chapter 8) and that all buildings and structures should meet the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver sustainability target (City of Toronto 2006a).

Figure 6.16. Sample Requirements of the East Bayfront Zoning By-Law
(Images from: City of Toronto 2006a, p. 18 (Images 1), p. 23 (Images 2), all reproduced with the permission of the City of Toronto)



TORONTO City Planning Division
East Bayfront - West Precinct
Map B: Maximum Heights Plan



TORONTO City Planning Division
East Bayfront - West Precinct
Map 4: Build-To/Setback Plan

East Bayfront West-Precinct Urban Design Guidelines

By spelling out very specific requirements and forbidding certain activities, zoning by-laws can often end up being cumbersome planning and design tools and, as explained in Chapters 2 and 3, zoning itself has a tendency to generate a regimented and unimaginative urban form (Barnett 1982). In the case of the East Bayfront, the combination of set backs, building heights and other technical restrictions actually did much to reproduce the positive urban design moves contained within the precinct plan, but the translation of the vision and principles into legalistic language and strict two-dimensional diagrams also sucked some of the creative spirit out of the original plan, as vividly demonstrated in Figure 6.16. on the previous page. Cognizant of this, the City of Toronto Council requested that their City planning staff, in conjunction with the TWRC, produce parallel urban design guidelines for the East Bayfront (City of Toronto 2005c). The guidelines were intended to provide both the Waterfront Design Review Panel (discussed in Chapter 8) and city planning staff with a tool to evaluate site planning applications in the precinct, as well as to help developers decode the principles contained within the precinct plan through various precedents and examples (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007). Two local urban design firms, Urban Strategies and The Kirkland Partnership, Inc., prepared the *East Bayfront West-Precinct Urban Design Guidelines*[28] during 2006. Both firms had a long-standing working relationship with the TWRC and the City of Toronto and were heavily involved in the strategic urban design decision-making for the waterfront that took place between 1999 and 2002, including the Task Force's report and the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. The guidelines were released in February 2007.

Urban design guidelines can vary in style and approach. As discussed in Chapter 3, Lang (1996) identifies two distinct types of urban design guideline: 'prescriptive', which specifically detail how the end product will appear and 'performance', which suggest various ways in which the end produce might perform. Arguably, the zoning-by law amendment for the East Bayfront is a prescriptive guideline because it codifies many of the performance-based urban design principles contained within the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* – although only in the broadest sense. In contrast, the partnering urban design guidelines fit the performance

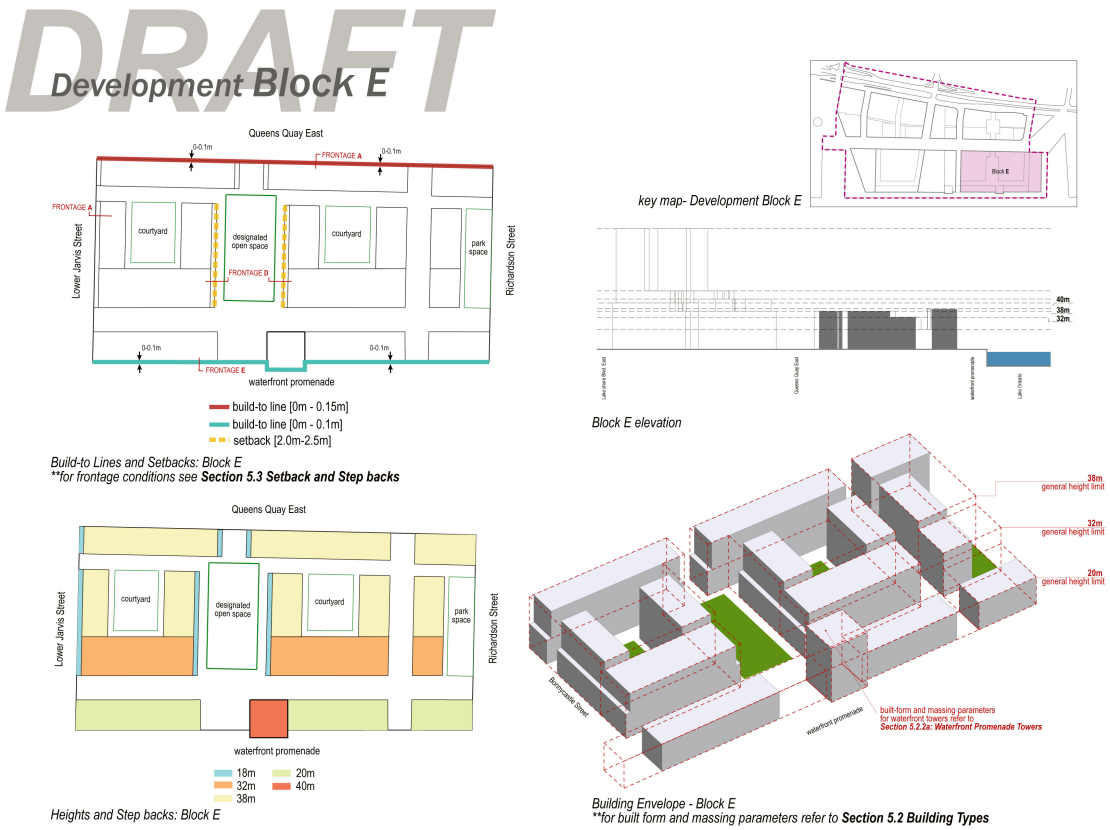
[28] Like the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*, the *Urban Design Guidelines* refer only to the western half of the East Bayfront precinct (see: Figure 6.8.).

mould by offering an additional layer of discretionary design advice. Yet, it is not immediately clear that the *East Bayfront West-Precinct Urban Design Guidelines* offer anything that might not otherwise be found in the extensive goals, principles and objectives of the Koetter Kim precinct plan and, moreover, at 75 pages, the document is a challenging reference tool for the Waterfront Design Review Panel, who examine multiple projects from various waterfront precincts at each of their monthly meetings. Aside from a series of informative diagrams that visualize some of the core messages in the zoning by-law amendment (see: Figure 6.17. below and overleaf), the bulk of the information contained within the guidelines is repetitious and merely reiterates the proposed morphological structure of the precinct, the relationships between the public spaces, including the water's edge promenade, and the mixed-use land parcels. One important addition is the inclusion of various 'best practice' precedent images from contemporary development projects in both North America and Western Europe to illustrate how the plan's various urban design components might be approached.

Figure 6.17. East Bayfront West-Precinct Urban Design Guidelines
(Images from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007, p. 32 (Images 1) p. 66 (Image 2, overleaf), all reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

Figure 3.4 - East Bayfront mid-block connections and open spaces. Note: Shaded areas suggest potential areas for the north and south mid-block connections and open spaces, but do not illustrate their precise location and size.

Figure 6.17. (cont.) East Bayfront West-Precinct Urban Design Guidelines



An extract from the *East Bayfront West-Precinct Design Guidelines* demonstrating how the requirements of the amended zoning by-law for the East Bayfront might perform. Although this diagram is shown for illustrative purposes only, it should be noted that the guidelines are no longer in draft format as denoted on the above illustration. At the time this project was completed the document had not been updated on the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto website.

From Planning and Design to Real Estate Development

The publication of the *East Bayfront West-Precinct Design Guidelines* in 2007 marked the completion of the five-year long planning and design process for the East Bayfront precinct and, with the vision and principles in place, the project transitioned into a real estate development project. At the TWRC, principal responsibility for implementation shifted from the corporation's planning and urban design staff to Andrew Gray, who was appointed in 2006 as the TWRC's vice-president of development for the East Bayfront, (TWRC 6 2011). Gray's first task was to produce a business and implementation plan that would detail the commercial strategy needed to realize the planning and design objectives of the *East*

Bayfront Precinct Plan. It was submitted to the City of Toronto for review in June 2006 and approved, with no revisions, by the City of Toronto Council at the end of July (City of Toronto 2006c). The primary objective of the *East Bayfront Business and Implementation Plan* was to set out the proposed phasing of the development and explain how the public and private sectors would deliver the anticipated $2.5 billion project on the publically-held land (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006c). The phasing strategy for these land parcels, outlined in Figure 6.18. below and overleaf, emerged as part of the TWRC's wider 'leading with landscape' policy – the origins and outcomes of which are discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter. Briefly, the corporation's aim was to use early investments in parks and open spaces as a catalyst for commercial development, thereby increasing the value of adjacent land. By completing Sherbourne Common, the water's edge promenade, the park overlooking Jarvis Slip, and other infrastructure projects within the East Bayfront during the first phase of development, the TWRC hoped to both add significant value to the land parcels scheduled for development during phase two and encourage those controlling the privately held land to undertake redevelopment more quickly (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006c).

Figure 6.18. East Bayfront Phasing Map
(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006c, p. 28, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

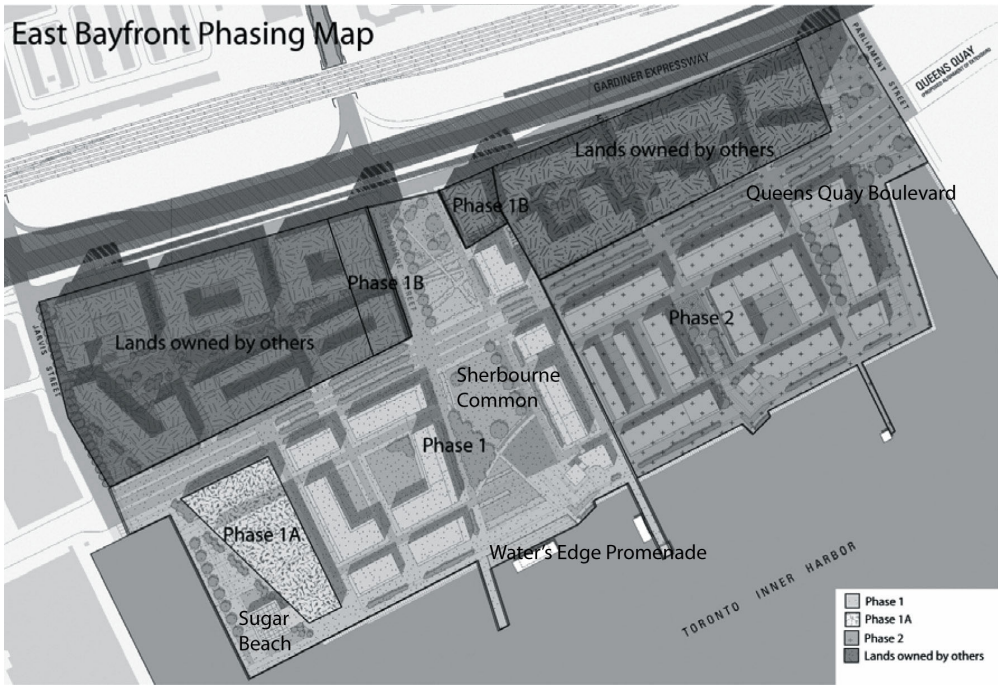


Figure 6.18. (cont.) East Bayfront Phasing Map

Phase 1
In addition to the various parks and open spaces scheduled for Phase 1, the business and implementation plan also anticipated the construction of the first residential component adjacent to Sherbourne Park (1 million square feet with 70,000 square feet of ground floor retail) and the completion of Phase 1A, a commercial office project (100,00 square feet with approximately 60,000 square feet reserved for cultural, retail or institutional usage).

Phase 2
Anticipated to include 1,100 housing units (of which 225 would be affordable), as well as 150,000 square feet of animated ground floor retail and 300,000 square feet of employment space.

In addition to the phasing strategy, the most important policy that was detailed in the business and implementation plan was the process for selecting private developers to undertake development on the various land parcels in the precinct. As explained in Chapter 5, the TWRC was given very few tangible design and planning powers when it was established in 2002, but the corporation's enabling legislation did give it the responsibility to select the private sector developers for all of the publically owned land parcels on the waterfront. Therefore, as argued in Chapter 5, the TWRC requires its developer partners to both commit to their design excellence mandate and accept more scrutiny than might be found in a standard site planning application process through various supplementary tools and measures, including attending the Waterfront Design Review Panel (see: Figure 5.7., p. 154). To establish this approach the TWRC issues a comprehensive 'Request for Qualification' (RFQ) document for each of the publically controlled land parcels in the waterfront precincts. In 2008, the TWRC (by now called Waterfront Toronto) released two RFQs for the East Bayfront: one for the eastern portion of Phase 1B, since named Parkside, and another for the entire Phase 2 site, since named Bayside (Waterfront Toronto 2008; 2008d). Both documents run to nearly 60 pages and outline the extensive public processes the led to the proposal calls, the detailed submission requirements and the corporation's expectations (Waterfront Toronto 2008; 2008d).

By way of example, thirteen development teams responded to the Bayside RFQ in May 2008 (Waterfront Toronto 2009a). An internal Waterfront Toronto steering committee assessed the various applications and asked four teams to respond to a more detailed Request for Proposal (RFP). Due to the financial crisis of 2008-2009, the four teams were given until November 2009 to answer the request and, after the proposals were eventually received in early December 2009, the Steering Committee interviewed each team, held a

confidential consultation meeting with the East Bayfront SAC and then decided on a winning team. The criteria for selection were based not only on the team's ability to respond to the design and planning vision for the site, but also on whether they had both sufficient real estate experience and adequate financial capacity to deliver a complex mixed use project. The Steering Committee eventually selected the large American firm Hines as their Bayside development partner (Waterfront Toronto 2009a), albeit not without some controversy. Towards the end of the process, remembers a member of the Steering Committee, only Hines and one other team were considered to be strong candidates for the contract (DESIGN 10 2011). The competing bid was made up of local developers and designers. Cityzen, a Toronto-based developer with considerable experience in the local condominium market, headed the partnership, in conjunction with the renowned architect Bruce Kuwabara of Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects (KPMB). Kuwabara also chairs the TWRC's Waterfront Design Review Panel (see: Chapter 8) and therefore had a longstanding relationship with the corporation and a keen sense of the East Bayfront precinct planning process. In contrast, Hines' experience was primarily in United States real estate markets and the developer had appointed the internationally renowned American architect Cesar Peli as their architect and urban designer. Therefore, the member of the Steering Committee notes, "it was one of these things where one bid was all about the stars of Toronto…and the other bid was all about the stars, serious stars, from the States" (DESIGN 10 2011). When the Hines bid eventually won, he recalls, the local team was very unhappy with the decision. However, the TWRC was able to point to the involvement of the SAC to demonstrate that a transparent and fair process had been conducted. "[Local] people were able to say 'we sat in the room'. They saw all of the materials [other than the financial figures] and they concluded that the best bid won" (DESIGN 10 2011).

In a similar but less controversial process, also completed during December 2009, the team chosen for the smaller Parkside project was Great Gulf Homes, a condominium developer with considerable local experience (Waterfront Toronto 2012e). As well as demonstrating commercial viability, the selected development partner had chosen to work with a renowned international design team that included the award winning Boston-based architect Moshe Safdie (Waterfront Toronto 2009a; 2012e). After the selection processes for Parkside and Bayside were completed, confidential development agreements were then signed and, as a

senior development manager at the TWRC explains, the agreements formalized the commitment to the agreed planning and design vision outlined during the RFQ/RFP process:

> We have a development agreement with every developer and it says what they can and can't do and one of the things they can't do is 'blow up', without our permission, some of the principles that are in place. It also requires them…to go through our design review panel process, it requires them to build to LEED Gold…There's a legal relationship created between Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto as landowner and the developer and so there are financial securities. It is like any transaction and that's how you protect for the vision in the long run. Hopefully we picked the right partners (TWRC 6 2011).

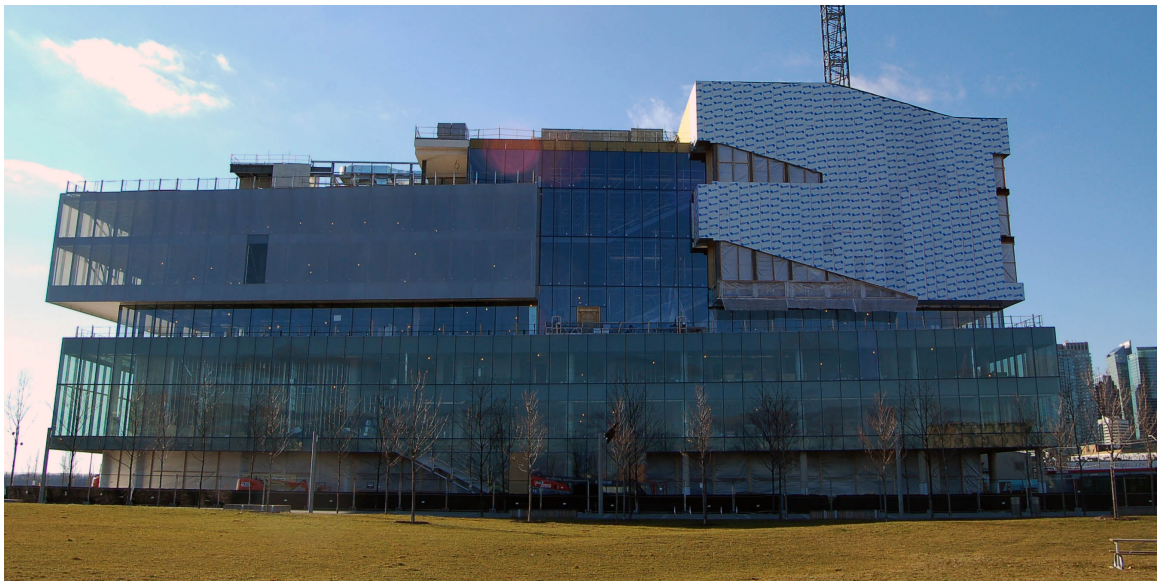
Building the East Bayfront

The East Bayfront precinct is currently under construction and, although the timescale is heavily dependent on local market conditions, Waterfront Toronto's development team anticipates that Phases 1 and 2 will be completed during the early 2020s (TWRC 6 2011). At the time of writing this analysis in May 2012, various elements of Phase 1 have been built and occupied, while the private developers awarded the contracts for Parkside (Phase 1B) and Bayside (Phase 2) have begun detailed site planning processes and, in the case of Parkside, pre-construction condominium sales (TWRC 6 2011). In contrast to Bayside and Parkside, the two initial Phase 1 projects – a large-floor plan office building for an entertainment company (Phase 1A) and a higher education college satellite campus (the site located in Phase 1 on the western edge of Sherbourne Common) – have been undertaken by public sector agencies. Neither project was anticipated in the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*, where the land parcels were zoned for mixed commercial-residential development (CR) and, therefore, additional amendments to the zoning by-law were required during the subdivision and site planning approval processes to allow for both an exclusively commercial structure and an institutional building. For reasons that are more fully explored in Chapter 8, the commercial office building, funded and constructed by TEDCO, proved particularly controversial, because the design ignored one of the core urban design components of the master plan: the proposed diagonal building line adjacent to the Jarvis Slip that sought to open up views to the lake and emphasize the termination of the north-south streets on the

waterfront. The building, dubbed 'Project Symphony' during its design and development, was eventually approved by City Council in 2008 (City of Toronto 2009), albeit not without a lengthy and, at times, highly emotive planning and design process (see: Chapter 8). Constructed during 2009, the building was officially occupied in September 2010 by a local media firm called Corus Entertainment and has since been known eponymously as the 'Corus Building' (Waterfront Toronto 2010c).

The surprise decision to locate a higher education campus in the East Bayfront precinct was announced in July 2008 by Waterfront Toronto, the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto and representatives of the partner institution, George Brown College (Waterfront Toronto 2008e). Once again, the proposal offered a starkly different solution to the mixed-use commercial/residential zoning designation envisaged in the precinct plan. In the corporation's view it brought a formidable anchor to the waterfront. At the time of the announcement, Mark Wilson, the chair of Waterfront Toronto's board of directors, noted that: "George Brown students will help create a vibrant lakeshore community. East Bayfront will come alive with the student population living, working and socializing during the day, and in the evenings all year round" (quoted in Waterfront Toronto 2008e, p. 1). The building, illustrated in Figure 6.19. overleaf, will house the college's health sciences department and is currently under construction. It is due to open in September 2012 (Waterfront Toronto 2012f). Although deviating from the land use and urban form envisaged for the site in the precinct plan – the plan proposed a perimeter residential block with a central courtyard – the building does respond positively to a number of the plan's more general planning and urban design principles and was well received by local community representatives (CIVIL 5 2011) and the Waterfront Design Review Panel (Waterfront Toronto 2009b). As the precinct plan intended, the building steps down to the water's edge from eight to five storeys and, furthermore, the design respects the requirement set out in the precinct plan that all ground floor areas should be animated with commercial uses; the ground floor of the east elevation (overlooking Sherbourne Common) and the ground floor of the south elevation (on the water's edge promenade) are fully open to the public and will, when the building opens, incorporate coffee shops and other commercial services. The building is also set to achieve LEED Gold status, thereby meeting Waterfront Toronto's minimum standard for waterfront projects (Waterfront Toronto 2011) and exceeding the early commitment to LEED Silver status established in the zoning by-law amendment for the East Bayfront precinct.

Figure 6.19. George Brown College (East Elevation, December 2011)
(Photograph by the author)



George Brown College's waterfront campus occupies a 0.83 hectare site facing the waterfront and adjacent to Sherbourne Common (the central park space in the East Bayfront precinct, designed by Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg (see: Chapter 7). The building was designed in joint partnership by Toronto architects Kuwabara Payne Mckenna Blumberg (KPMB) and the Toronto office of international design and engineering firm, Stantec (Waterfront Toronto 2012f). A smaller second phase is planned for the land parcel immediately to the north of the building illustrated, although this is subject to the success of on-going fundraising initiatives (George Brown College 2012).

In addition to the Corus Building and the George Brown College campus, Waterfront Toronto has also overseen the completion of the various parks and open spaces envisaged in the precinct plan, specifically Sherbourne Common, Sugar Beach (the name given to the park adjacent to the Jarvis Slip), and the water's edge promenade. As Chapter 7 will explore in more detail, the construction of waterfront parks and open spaces was an important component of the corporation's wider policy of implementing parks and open space early on in the development process to encourage commercial development and residential sales, as well as to increase the value of adjacent land parcels. The corporation also used design competitions to attract international firms to the waterfront. Sugar Beach, which opened in 2010, was the result of a focused design competition, while the water's edge promenade was part of a wider design competition convened in 2007 for the entire spine of the Central Waterfront promenade and Queens Quay, including the East Bayfront. It was also opened in 2010. The process and outcomes of both design competitions are discussed in Chapter 8. In contrast, the precinct's signature park, Sherbourne Common, was designed by the

aforementioned landscape architecture firm Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg. As mentioned earlier, this Vancouver-based firm worked with Koetter Kim to produce the precinct plan. The design process for Sherbourne Common, and in particular, the park's journey through the Waterfront Design Review Panel is described in Chapter 8.

Without question, the construction of two non-residential buildings on the water's edge during Phase 1 certainly altered the urban design character imagined in the precinct plan and, therefore, the subsequent relationships that have been created between the new public spaces and the buildings constructed in the precinct. Yet, as Figure 6.20. overleaf illustrates, significant elements of the plan were also realized. The Corus Building and, when it is completed, George Brown College, have active water's edge frontages that open onto the newly constructed promenade. Furthermore, a boardwalk is scheduled for construction in the near future. This will create the two-tier space imagined in the precinct plan (illustrated in Figure 6.20. overleaf), while also mirroring the arrangement of the water's edge promenade at other points along the Central Waterfront (Waterfront Toronto 2010a). Notably, the additional dual-level terrace proposed in the precinct plan has not been realized, although, as mentioned above, George Brown College will incorporate an active ground floor, providing seating areas, places for student study and access to commercial services located in the building. In the case of the Corus Building, the active ground floor was resolved less successfully. As Chapter 8 discusses in more depth, TEDCO and their tenant, Corus Entertainment, wished to reserve the majority of the ground floor for those who worked in the building. However, some effort was made to activate the edge between the building elevation and the promenade. For example, the design team incorporated a series of sliding glass doors on the western elevation of the building that provide opportunities for concerts or other media events to take place and, in 2011, a coffee shop opened on the southeast corner of the building. Even so, the building's waterfront elevation does remain somewhat private.

Figure 6.20. East Bayfront Phase 1 (Proposed and Constructed)

(Images from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a, p. 26 (Image 1), reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto. Photograph on this page by the author. Photograph overleaf by Daniel Pearce)

East Bayfront Precinct Plan visualization of the Waterfront Precinct (looking east)

December 2011 photograph of the waterfront promenade (looking east)

Figure 6.20. (cont.) East Bayfront Phase 1 (Proposed and Constructed)

A coffee shop and attached patio at the Corus Building, enliven
the water's edge promenade, as imagined during the precinct planning process.

Master planning the East Bayfront Precinct: An Assessment

At this point in the construction process, it is premature to judge, in detail, the 'urban design' relationships achieved between the Corus Building, George Building College and the water's edge promenade or, for that matter, the overall success of the East Bayfront precinct as a planned neighbourhood. Such an assessment must wait until George Brown College opens in September 2012 and the large residential components of the master plan, scheduled for Phase 2, are built over the next decade. That being said, it is possible to examine some of the reasons why the form and arrangement of the development projects completed so far have diverted from the vision and principles contained within the precinct plan and, in so doing, analyze the precinct plan's role as a coordinating urban design plan. Such an interrogation is pertinent because the original intentions of Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto, outlined towards the beginning of the chapter, had been to facilitate a seamless translation of the precinct plan into the zoning by-law amendment and, thereby, a definitive set of rules for development. Yet, as described in the preceding paragraphs, the reality has been quite different. While the zoning by-law amendment and its accompanying urban design guidelines faithfully reproduced the vision and principles that emerged from the public planning process during 2003-2005, many of the core ideas have been subtly

reshaped and, in some instances, substantially changed since negotiations with public and private sector partners have commenced. Considering this outcome, it is equally important to determine whether those involved in Waterfront Toronto's consultation and participation processes have been satisfied with the buildings and public spaces that have been constructed in the precinct to date and, crucial to this understanding, whether the lengthy consultation and participation process conducted by Waterfront Toronto was considered to be a valid exercise by local community stakeholders.

The Reality of Real Estate Development

It is clear from the themes discussed in this chapter that the authors of the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* went to considerable lengths to develop a plan that responded to local community concerns and codify the vision and principles into both a zoning by-law and supporting urban design guidelines. In this respect, the precinct plan did what many urban design theorists think a master plan should do: it provided a sense of security for Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto and the community stakeholders about how the area might one day look and feel, while, at the same time, allowing for the creative ideas of the designers contracted to deliver the individual buildings and public spaces to flourish within the boundaries defined by the plan. As one of the urban designers who helped to produce the plan told me, the precinct plan was translated into "…a very simple by-law that said everything that needed to be said completely and firmly and said no more, leaving the rest to the skills of the building architect" (TWRC 5 2011). But he laments that this successful formula was almost immediately undermined when the architectural team selected by TEDCO to deliver the Corus Building chose to all but ignore the vision and principles of the plan. Reflecting back, the urban designer states that the corporation should have said: "Here's the plot, here's the rules" (TWRC 5 2011). By choosing not to do so, he argues, the plan was compromised.

As discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 8, the corporation's lack of assertiveness during the Corus design process, was heightened by the fact that the designated site was the only publically-owned land parcel in the precinct not controlled by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto (City of Toronto 2006). Furthermore, TEDCO, as the landowner, had retained Jack Diamond to deliver the building – the very same architect whose rival master plan for the East

Bayfront had caused the aforementioned political fight at the corporation's board of directors meeting in late 2005 (Diebel 2005a). Although Waterfront Toronto was able to demand some changes through its design review process (see: Chapter 8), the overall vision for the building never responded very positively to the precinct plan (see: Figure 8.4., p. 294). Ultimately, for the reasons described above, the circumstances that engulfed the design and construction of the Corus Building were unique. The likelihood that anything similar would unfold on the other publically controlled land parcels in the precinct, all of which were placed in Waterfront Toronto's hands by the 2006 memorandum of understanding between the corporation, TEDCO and the City of Toronto, was slim.

In the case of George Brown College, which, like Corus, was also a significant deviation from the plan, the circumstances have been entirely different. As the landowner, Waterfront Toronto welcomed the proposal and the thousands of students it would bring to the precinct (Waterfront Toronto 2008e). Moreover, Bruce Kuwabara – a firm supporter of the precinct plan and its mission – heads the architectural team selected to deliver the building. As previously described, on all of the other forthcoming development projects in the precinct, such as Parkside and Bayside, the corporation is insisting through detailed legal agreements that its development partners respect the precinct plan and the zoning by-law amendment, as well as attend their Waterfront Design Review Panel. Nevertheless, the experience of the Corus Building proved to Waterfront Toronto and their urban design team that master plans are fragile instruments, regardless of the additional safeguards that are put in place to protect them. Reflecting on the decision to create a precinct plan for the East Bayfront, one of the corporation's senior urban designers notes that:

> I think in some ways they have been too malleable and have allowed things to happen that should not have been allowed to happen. In other ways I think they have protected a lot of the fundamental things that were important…If we had not had them at all we would have done all of this through a plan of subdivision process which would have given us a typical Toronto subdivision...I believe. So, the precinct plan definitely elevated it to a higher level than it would have been otherwise. My disappointment is that the precinct plan wasn't always able to prevail against certain forces that wacked things out of it that shouldn't have been wacked out (TWRC 3 2011).

Ultimately, states the corporation's urban designer, master planning is by its very nature temporal and predicting the future is hard (TWRC 3 2011). Indeed, the evidence from this case demonstrates that, however well a master planning process is conceived, politics and market forces will undoubtedly cause priorities to shift and conditions to change with time. Moreover, such unforeseen outcomes can have both positive and negative connotations. For example, Waterfront Toronto could not have anticipated that provincial funding would be made available to construct a college campus on the waterfront, nor, in stark contrast, could it have predicted that a rival government agency planned to construct a large-floor plate office building in the precinct and disregard the public planning process as it did so. The reality, reflects a senior Waterfront Toronto executive, is that an agency "cannot plan in 2003/2004 for a fifteen-year development and not expect change…every building is going to have minor variances as part of the site planning application process, it's guaranteed…But, the principles will be maintained" (TWRC 3 2011). For Waterfront Toronto's development team, their day-to-day tasks always involve juggling the precinct plan with the on-going construction programme and, as one senior development manager notes, the capacity of the corporation and their development partners to faithfully reproduce the vision and principles contained within the plan inevitably ends up as a negotiation about financial feasibility (TWRC 3 2011). Many of the principles contained within the plan have to be subtly rethought on a parcel-by-parcel basis in an effort to make the emerging projects viable and, therefore, profitable. This situation could have been avoided, the development manager argues, if representatives from the development community had been involved in the corporation's consultation and participation process and had the chance to comment thoroughly on the proposed configuration of the blocks reserved for residential sales and commercial leasing (TWRC 3 2011).

Maintaining Trust with Local Community Stakeholders

As the vision and urban design principles for the East Bayfront are slowly adapted to suit market conditions during the on-going phases of implementation, Waterfront Toronto undoubtedly runs some risk of alienating those who attended the iterative public meetings and SACs conducted between 2003 and 2005. Indeed, by the time the corporation began to finalize the precinct plan in 2005, many of those who had been involved in the planning and design process had acquired a sense of ownership of the plan and the goals that it

espoused for the East Bayfront. As previously described, this reaction was demonstrated vividly when TEDCO unveiled their rival master plan to the corporation's board of directors in 2005. The overriding sentiment of those who observed the tense board meeting was that to ignore the original precinct plan would constitute a breach of trust. As it transpired, the board of directors wholeheartedly agreed with the community's response and, as aforementioned, the plan that emerged from the public process was left untouched.

Ever since, Waterfront Toronto has been mindful that the precinct plan was the product of a collaborative process and that a delicate trust exists between the corporation and surrounding local communities. As one of the urban designers who helped to produce the precinct plan admits, "it is a really, really tricky problem because in order to get community consensus you have to agree on something and this thing is not static…it ultimately depends upon trust and continuity and those kinds of things" (TWRC 5 2011). The principal means that Waterfront Toronto has used to build and maintain trust with surrounding community groups and local stakeholders has been through the on-going use of public forums and SACs, both in the East Bayfront and other precinct on the waterfront. As described towards the beginning of the chapter, the corporation continues to utilize the iterative framework of public forums and SACs that was employed during the West Don Lands and East Bayfront precinct planning processes, thereby creating a continuous feedback loop on all new building projects and public realm improvements that are proposed. The consultation and participation process does become less intensive when the major planning work is completed (TWRC 3 2011). Unless a major new initiative is proposed in the precinct, formal public forums are only convened annually. All of the corporation's development partners attend the forum and the general public is given the opportunity to comment on the previous year's progress and the expectations for the following year. The supporting SACs meeting are held rather more regularly and address more detailed issues about each of the various land parcels and associated public realm improvements.

At the time of writing this analysis, for example, the East Bayfront SAC is intensely involved in the subdivision and site application process for the Bayside project, led by Waterfront Toronto's development partner Hines, and continues to have a strong voice in the decision-making process. One of the more recent discussions, explains a SAC community representative, has concerned the issue of vehicular access to the water's edge (CIVIL 2

2011). As described earlier in this chapter, the community strongly opposed a waterfront street during the 2003-2005 precinct plan public forums. A community representative told me that "People insisted they wanted a big wide promenade and no traffic on the water's edge. It was very important," (CIVIL 2 2011). Yet, in the emerging subdivision and site plan application process for Bayside, Waterfront Toronto and Hines proposed the reintroduction of a waterfront street (Bousfields Inc. 2011). A fellow community representative refers to the incident as 'an education' for the corporation's new development manager:

> He was fairly new. He had come from the private sector. He was not really used to dealing with the community. I think he still didn't know what to make of us and so he was completely taken by surprise when we went 'What! What are you talking about?' This was an example of where they hadn't really consulted us…They'd just kind of gone along with it. Fortunately…they did come to us with an update before it was too late (CIVIL 5 2011).

As a result of the discussion with the SAC, Waterfront Toronto and Hines have begun to engineer a compromise that proposes a shared space for pedestrians and vehicles, referred to by the Dutch term, 'wohnurf' (see: Figure 6.21. overleaf). The community representatives remain unsure about it and a deliberative process between the SAC and the corporation is on-going. As the community member quoted above states, "I don't know what's going to happen with it….if there were cars, if there was access, if it was really controlled….it is hard to keep up with…because we keep having to reorient our thoughts" (CIVIL 5 2011). But she also admits that Waterfront Toronto's role in the waterfront revitalization process is complicated and dynamic. By going above and beyond the limits of a typical public consultation process and genuinely involving the general public, the corporation opens itself up to greater scrutiny and, therefore, if it is to remain legitimate, the process has to be carefully navigated:

> It is hard for them….The toss up between running a company and building real estate, which is quite legitimate, and how much one engages the community….The good thing about engaging the community is, of course, the information you get, the information the community takes back and then the by-in to the plan. However, this is also one of the bad things

because, once a community has bought into the plan, well, in their mind, it is the plan. If you change a detail, there is going to be some members of the community who don't like the change (CIVIL 5 2011).

Figure 6.21. Proposed Waterfront Right of Way (Wohnurf)
(Waterfront Toronto. 2011o, p. 18, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

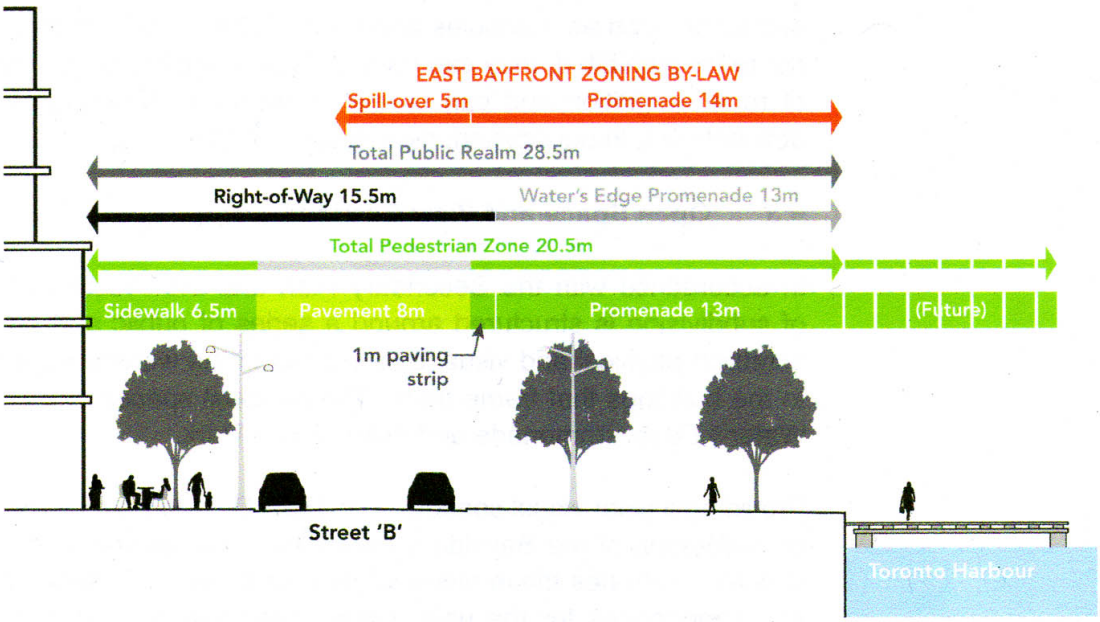


Figure 8 Proposed Water Street Cross Sections

This diagram, extracted from the draft planning proposals for the Bayside land parcel, demonstrates the proposed alteration to the precinct plan and zoning by-law. By introducing a waterfront street and sidewalk, the 'wohnurf' concepts requires almost doubling the amount of space between the building façade and the water's edge and thereby significantly alters the character of the space imagined in the precinct plan.

Concluding Summary: A Constituency for Revitalization

In this chapter I examined the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's approach to public consultation and participation through the lens of the corporation's precinct planning process. In the first half of the chapter I traced the origins of 'precinct planning' and identified it as a master planning tool devised to guarantee that the planning and urban design vision agreed for each waterfront precinct would be faithfully executed during implementation. Although carrying no statutory weight, the precinct plans have emerged as powerful planning and design instruments. Meeting the seventh principle in the 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy' outlined in my theoretical framework (see: Chapter 3), the City of

Toronto and the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has generated a successful model of 'integrating zoning into planning and addressing the limitations of zoning' by translating the design and planning principles contained in the precinct plans into a legally binding zoning by-law amendment upon completion.

The chapter also identified the formidable role that was carved out for local communities and stakeholders in the plan-making process. I described how a group of engaged local community leaders built a working relationship with the new corporation and played a central role in designing the iterative public consultation and participation method that was later adopted for all waterfront public engagement activities. The TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has since transformed this process into a dynamic tool that involves many hundreds of local people and stakeholders in the planning of the waterfront each year, through large public meetings, stakeholder committees and, more recently, the internet. In contrast to the lacklustre public dialogue achieved by the earlier Task Force (see: Chapter 5), the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has met many of the conditions for collaborative decision making outlined in the 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy'. By establishing an iterative dialogue with local people and stakeholders the corporation has, to a large extent, provided 'the conditions for all members of the community to be involved in the process of developing and committing to a coordinated vision of urban design' (Principle 1). Moreover, it has managed to establish 'a collaborative process for the periodic review of urban design plans' (Principle 3) by continuing to consult local community groups and stakeholders on the master plans and building projects as they change and evolve.

In the second half of the chapter I placed a focused lens on the East Bayfront precinct and examined the corporation's approach to master planning and public consultation in greater detail. I specifically evaluated the corporation's efforts to engage local people in the plan-making process and implement the vision and principles contained within the adopted plan. This analysis showed that an impressive dialogue was achieved between the professional designers and lay people involved in the iterative series of public forums and SACs and, when the plan was completed, a strong sense of shared ownership emerged. While this was a positive outcome, I also found that the security of the supporting zoning by-law amendment was not sufficient to fully protect the vision and principles contained with the plan from short-term political priorities and shifting market conditions. I ended the chapter by

detailing a series of subtle and significant changes made to the form and arrangement of the buildings and public spaces constructed in the East Bayfront precinct. Using the example of the 'wohnurf' I demonstrated that these political and financially motivated changes remain a constant reminder of the fragility of the original plan and the precious trust that had been built between the corporation and local communities.

The most impressive outcome of the many policies and processes described in this chapter has been the deep relationship forged between the local community associations and the corporation. As one of the authors of the precinct plan reflects, this outcome has been hugely beneficial for the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's revitalization ambitions: "I have to hand it to them," he states, "…because the easiest thing for a community group to do is just settle on the 'no'. They didn't. And, I think the credibility that the corporation had in really talking to these people, not merely making platitudes, paid off enormously when the hard things came" (DESIGN 10 2011). Quite often representatives of the local community associations will go before Council to support the corporation's aims and objectives for the waterfront (CIVIL 2 2011). In this sense, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto appears to have gone a considerable way to achieving one of the core objectives it set out in its 2002 *Public Consultation and Participation Strategy*, to "Build constituency, trust and support for the corporation…by sharing accurate information in a timely way" (p. 4).

By creating a working relationship with local communities the corporation has done much more than simply 'consult' local people about the future of the waterfront. It has created a forum for expert and experiential ideas to come together and for bridges to be built between various opinions on the future of the waterfront's revitalization (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2002a); a process described as 'mutual learning' in Punter's amended principles (Principle 3). Yet the impressive relationship that has formed between the local community associations and Waterfront Toronto is dynamic and delicate. When the precinct planning process for the East Bayfront was conducted between 2003-2005 there were very few residents or business that were located in the precinct itself. But, as implementation has begun, this situation is inevitably changing. Involving the people who will start to live in the East Bayfront, and other waterfront precincts, creates a new scenario. No longer will those people attending public forums and SACs be mere observers living close by, instead they will be members of the community, living and working at the heart of the

waterfront with truly vested interests in its future. Making sure these people, business and institutions have a voice to play in the future of the waterfront and its revival remains one of the corporation's biggest challenges.

CHAPTER 7

Parks and Open Spaces: Design Excellence on the Waterfront

The redevelopment aims that Fung's Task Force established for Toronto's waterfront were ambitious. Not only was the sheer size of the waterfront daunting, so was the scope of the planning and design vision. As I discussed in Chapter 5, the Task Force's core objective was to transform Toronto's waterfront into an international gateway for Canada. I argued that one of the key ways to achieve this was to strive for 'design excellence' and, in particular, create a series of high quality public spaces on the water's edge. As the section titled 'Excellence and Beauty' in the 2000 Fung report stated: "A coherent landscape of public places and plazas can be designed and made over time, in accordance with a guiding Master Plan, and through innovative regulatory mechanisms" (p. 30).

In this chapter I examine some of the 'innovative regulatory mechanisms' employed by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto to achieve this aim of design excellence, with a particular focus on design competitions and their employment as a tool to attract internationally renowned designers to the waterfront. I begin by outlining the significance of parks and open space in the waterfront redevelopment programme and analyze the urban design policy framework that was established by the corporation to lead the public realm improvement process. I then use the case of the Central Waterfront Innovative Design Competition to explore the challenges of implementing an ambitious planning and design agenda. Particular focus is placed on the apparent disconnect between the well-orchestrated competition process and an ongoing delay that has beset the comprehensive implementation of the winning design proposal. I argue that the process adopted by the corporation was undoubtedly an innovative regulatory solution but was also negatively affected by a lack of political will and subsequent financial constraints. At the end of the chapter, I argue that the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's emphasis on parks and open spaces has transformed the waterfront into a laboratory for exploratory landscape architecture and urban design practice and I contend that the corporation's design competition model provides a rigorous framework for encouraging excellence in design.

Waterfront Parks and Open Spaces

Parks and open spaces have helped to frame the dialogue on Toronto's waterfront revitalization for decades. As mentioned in Chapter 1, a disagreement between the City of Toronto and the federal government during the early 1970s about a proposed 100-acre waterfront park kick-started the fractured planning and design processes that would eventually lead to the formation of the TWRC some twenty-five years later. During this period, the federal government broke a number of promises it had made to the City of Toronto and the waterfront park project was never realized. In its place, a large number of poor quality high-rise residential condominiums were constructed. Many of them designed in the brutalist style. Criticisms of the poorly conceived towers continues to this day because the buildings limit public access to the waterfront and obstruct views of the lake (Desfor *et al*. 1989; Frisken 1993; Gordon 1997). The controversy surrounding these events and, in particular, the loss of the large public park meant that open space became a central concern in the planning and design studies commissioned on the waterfront during the 1990s and early 2000s, including the final report of David Crombie's Royal Commission on the Future of Toronto's Waterfront in 1992 and the proposals made by the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force in 2000. A firm legislative commitment to creating new parks and open space followed in the City's 2002 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, in which "Building a Network of Spectacular Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces" (p. 23) was accepted as one of four core planning principles and became one of the key considerations in the TWRC's subsequent precinct planning process, described in the previous chapter.

The Value of Parks and Open Space

From the time of its formation in 2002, the TWRC recognized that delivering parks and open space was to be a major part of its implementation mandate. Therefore, in the corporation's first annual report, published in 2003, clear links were drawn between the public realm, design excellence and economic development:

> Great cities are defined by the quality of their parks and public spaces. The prominence given to parks and public spaces in the TWRC's plans for the Central Waterfront, leaves little question, [sic] that they will play a key role in how the world perceives this city. There will be continuous public space along or near the water's edge from one end of the Central Waterfront to the other. Parks and public spaces figure prominently in the first phase of implementation (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003, p. 15).

At a more practical level, the TWRC also recognized that their approach to public realm design and the implementation of waterfront parks and open spaces was to be driven primarily by the local real estate market. The public realm was also viewed as a popular political issue and discussions with TWRC staff and City of Toronto planners confirm that the two authorities informally agreed upon a policy that would see the expedited design and construction of parks and open space. From an economic standpoint, this was considered to be a way to 'set the bar' for the private development projects that would follow. As a senior TWRC executive observed, "If we want great design from our developers, we have to build great public realm" (TWRC 7 2011). Furthermore, he explains, "if the corporation builds great public realm, we are going to got more value for the land next door", adding, "Do it now, do it well, get value for it" (TWRC 7 2011). These assertions reflect a growing recognition among developers and researchers that good urban design and high quality public spaces can lead to increased commercial value (CABE 2001; 2002; Carmona *et al*. 2002a; CABE 2004; Hack and Sagalyn 2011). For example, a series of case studies conducted in the United Kingdom have drawn direct links between urban design excellence and increased economic value. As the research concluded: "Better quality urban design can inspire physical and social regeneration by generating confidence, thereby attracting further development and raising property prices" (Carmona *et al*. 2002a, p. 77). The research also found that in situations similar to Toronto's waterfront, where the public sector works in partnership with private developers, opportunities for delivering higher quality urban design solutions increase.

Yet, the TWRC's decision to lead their implementation efforts with visible improvements to the waterfront public realm was also a marketing exercise. Unlike most redevelopment projects, where potential purchasers have to rely on plans and drawings to visualize their

new neighbourhood, those choosing to invest on Toronto's waterfront would already know what the area was going to look like (see: Figure 7.1. below and overleaf). "You are not selling an artists rendition, you are selling the whole concept behind the Toronto waterfront" (TWRC 8 2011), as a former member of the TWRC board of directors remarked. Ultimately, the strategy of leading with parks and open space was to gain a wider political objective: public perception. The senior TWRC executive quoted above explains that all of the corporation's implementation efforts remain acutely time sensitive. For too long, he argues, the waterfront had proven to be a repository for ambitious planning and design visions, a place for imagining but not for actually doing. If the corporation could not demonstrate to Torontonians that implementation was actually happening it was doomed to failure:

> Our view was that 'we don't have five years to do studies and the public doesn't have the patience,' especially after Mr. Crombie had just finished his report and it didn't materialize into anything concrete. When our company was announced, do you think the public would have had five years of patience? No. So you better do something quick. So lets do the public realm first (TWRC 7 2011).

Figure 7.1. Implementing the Public Realm First at East Bayfront
Photograph 1 by Daniel Pearce. Photographs 2 and 3, overleaf, by the author

Figure 7.1. (cont.) Implementing the Public Realm First at East Bayfront

The design of the 1.5-hectare Sherbourne Common was led by Greg Smallenberg of Vancouver-based landscape architecture firm, Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg and completed in September 2010. The new public space will act as the central anchor of the East Bayfront precinct. As these images demonstrate, it is currently surrounded by derelict industrial land awaiting redevelopment and, as Chapter 6 explored, a higher education college will eventually bound the park on its western edge and a large residential/commercial development on its eastern boundary. Sherbourne Common opens to the lake on its southern edge (Waterfront Toronto 2010d). The design review process for Sherbourne Common is discussed in some detail in Chapter 8.

Toronto Waterfront Design Initiative

One of the earliest indications of the TWRC's commitment to design excellence and parks and open space was a high profile design charrette called the Toronto Waterfront Design Initiative (TWDI), which the corporation jointly organized with the City of Toronto and held in the Fall of 2002. The primary goal of the event was to explore innovative ideas about the implementation of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* with contributions from internationally renowned designers. In particular, the TWRC and the City of Toronto were keen to use the TWDI to stimulate debate about the forthcoming precinct planning process. A steering committee comprised of senior TWRC and City of Toronto staff selected six architect-led teams with a "reputation and experience in designing waterfronts and communities worldwide" (City of Toronto 2002c, p. 4). Of the six teams selected, two were led by Toronto-based Canadian architects, Jack Diamond and Ken Greenberg; two were from the United States, Urban Design Associates/Solomon E.T.C and Fred Koetter; and, two were led by European architects, Antoine Grumbach and Erik van Egeraat (City of Toronto 2002c). Each team was provided with a copy of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* and the Task Force's 2000 report and was then assigned a different segment of the waterfront to 're-imagine'. Jack Diamond's team worked on the East Bayfront, while Ken Greenberg and his team focused on the mouth of the Don River. The other four teams worked on various parts of the Port Lands (City of Toronto 2002c).

Following a public lecture that was attended by over 400 people, the teams worked intensively for two days to produce a series of design proposals. This so-called 'charrette' ended with a presentation gala attended by 350 invited guests. Among those who attended were Christopher Hume and Lisa Rochon, the architecture critics at the *Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail* respectively. Hume (2002b) was particularly taken by Eric van Egaraat's proposal for the Port Lands, which attempted to integrate nature and the city by restoring parts of the engineered mouth of the Don River and preserving some of the Port Land's industrial buildings for adaptive reuse. Overall, the most important conclusion Hume reached about the six proposals was the emphasis they had all placed on the waterfront as a predominately urban environment. Commenting on Jack Diamond's scheme for the East Bayfront, for example, he noted: "For him the waterfront is not a place to picnic but to inhabit" (2002b, p. B4). In her column Lisa Rochon was equally enthusiastic about the six

schemes that were presented, reflecting that the teams "presented not only an enlightened, occasionally painful, critique of the master plan but also dozens of images that provide us with the first compelling reasons to transform the waterfront" (2002, p. R7).

While the TWDI was only an exploratory exercise that aimed to reignite interest in the waterfront and boost the credibility of the corporation, its impact on the emerging approach to waterfront parks and open space was surprisingly far-reaching. In a summary report of the event, the desire to realize design excellence through the public realm was constantly emphasized and, over the coming years, a number of the team's conceptual design proposals made their way into the TWRC's background planning documentation. This included the rediscovery of an earlier idea, first outlined in Fung's task force report, which sought to improve the connections between the downtown core and the lakefront by capitalizing on Toronto's north-south street geometry. Sharing this ideal, the teams taking part in the TWDI all agreed that the terminations of the major north-south streets on the water's edge should be recast as important nodal points and used to connect future public spaces along the water's edge (City of Toronto 2002c). As will be explored in the following paragraphs, this design concept later became a core principle of the corporation's *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003c) and the foundation for a design competition proposal call in 2006 (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006).

The TWDI also gave the TWRC an opportunity to act on its long-standing aim to transform Toronto's waterfront into a forum for international talent and investment (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000). By inviting world-class designers, the TWRC and the City of Toronto were able to employ the TWDI as a benchmark for the future. Furthermore, and whether coincidental or not, the TWDI also turned out to be a very worthwhile opportunity for many of the designers who took part. Fred Koetter would later be hired to develop the precinct plan for the East Bayfront precinct (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005a), Urban Design Associates were commissioned to produce the precinct plan for the West Don Lands (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005c) and Ken Greenberg ended up being part of the winning team chosen to master plan the Lower Don Lands and the re-naturalization of the Don River (Waterfront Toronto 2010e). The TWDI was also the beginning of Toronto architect Jack Diamond's longstanding, and at times controversial,

involvement in the TWRC's waterfront planning efforts – an episode of which was discussed in the previous chapter. As part of his TWDI proposal, Diamond argued that any development on the waterfront should generate a city-water relationship based on "immediacy and intimacy" (quoted in City of Toronto 2002c, p. 6). This concept was founded on his strongly held belief that Toronto's harsh winter climate demanded a design solution that would protect public spaces from the winter winds on the waterfront. "Consider 'water courts'," Diamond suggested, "…where buildings could be built over the water to help shield the public water's edge from winter winds" (quoted in City of Toronto 2002c, p. 6). However, his vision was quite at odds with the proposal for a long green spine of waterfront open space proposed in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* and supported by the TWRC as well as Paul Bedford, the City's chief planner.

A few months after the TWDI, and with the support of a group of fellow architects, Diamond took his concerns about the design and configuration of waterfront public spaces to the December 2002 meeting of the City of Toronto Planning and Transportation Committee, which was voting on whether to forward the draft *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* to City Council for final approval. In light of his deputation, the Committee voted instead to send the plan back to the city planning department for review (City of Toronto 2002b). Speaking to the press soon after this meeting, Paul Bedford explained that he was open to building consensus and working with the architects, but was keen to express that "the general public is rock solid on one principle. They want a continuous open band of green along the edge of the waterfront" (quoted in Gillespie 2003, p. B01). As recorded in Chapter 5, the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was adopted by Council in April 2003 (City of Toronto 2003) and although subject to a few minor alterations, did not include the large-scale realignment of waterfront public spaces that Diamond envisaged (Gillespie 2003a).

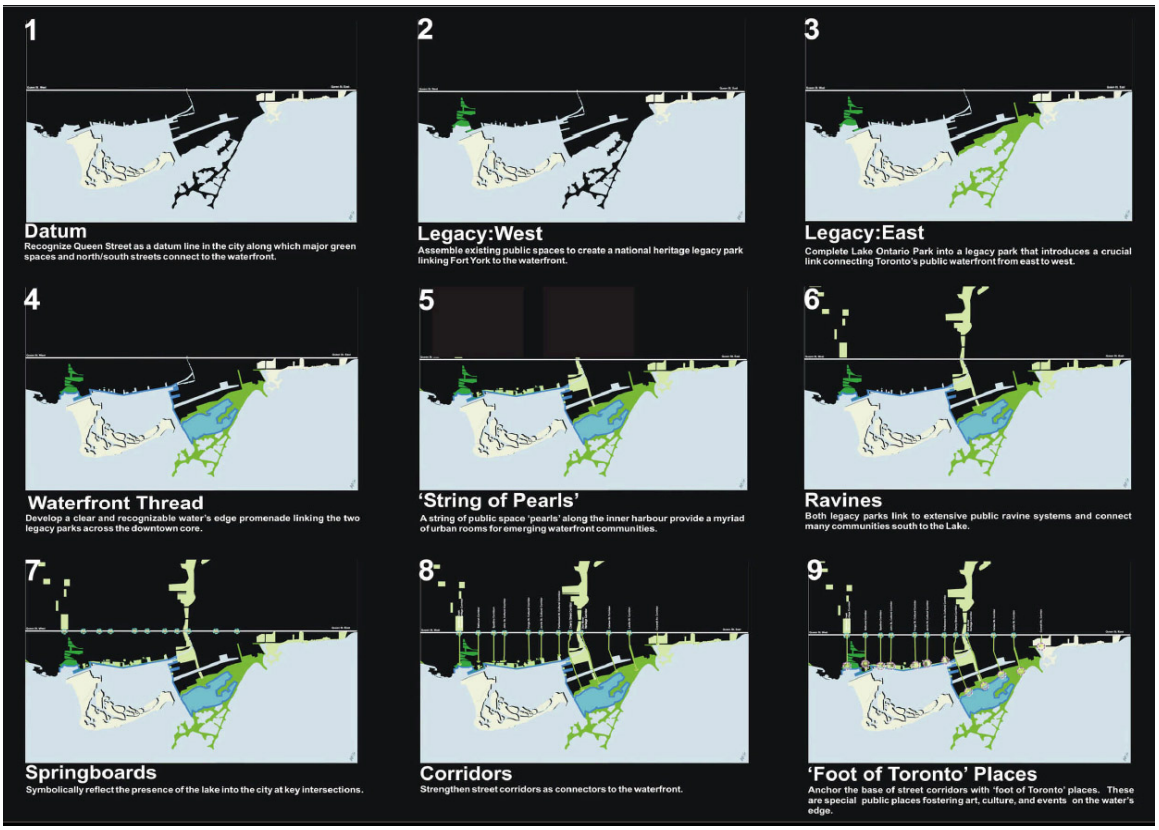
Central Waterfront Public Space Framework

Released in early 2003, the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* was one of the first documents produced by the corporation that was specifically oriented towards implementation. Building upon the more broadly focused visioning exercises that had preceded it, such as the 2000 Task Force report and the TWDI, the goal of the public space framework was to establish the waterfront public realm as the foundation for revitalization. In

particular, the corporation aimed to offer “a more detailed understanding of the nature, character and relationships of public spaces, new and proposed, along the central waterfront” (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003c, p. 1). Building on the Fung report, the framework identified projects that could be started quickly, as well as those that had a longer timeframe, thus ensuring all of the waterfront parks and open spaces could be integrated with one another (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003). The framework was founded on ten general principles that spelled out a consistent implementation strategy and which were also tied to the TWRC’s wider objective of world-class design excellence. These contextualized by a series of nine diagrammatic ‘relationships’ that highlighted the existing, but poorly defined, links between the city and the waterfront (see: Figure 7.2. below) and proposed ways in which the waterfront and the city might be woven together more successfully, thereby capitalizing on familiar spaces and places in the city and using them as a catalyst for revitalization.

Figure 7.2. A Series of Key Relationships

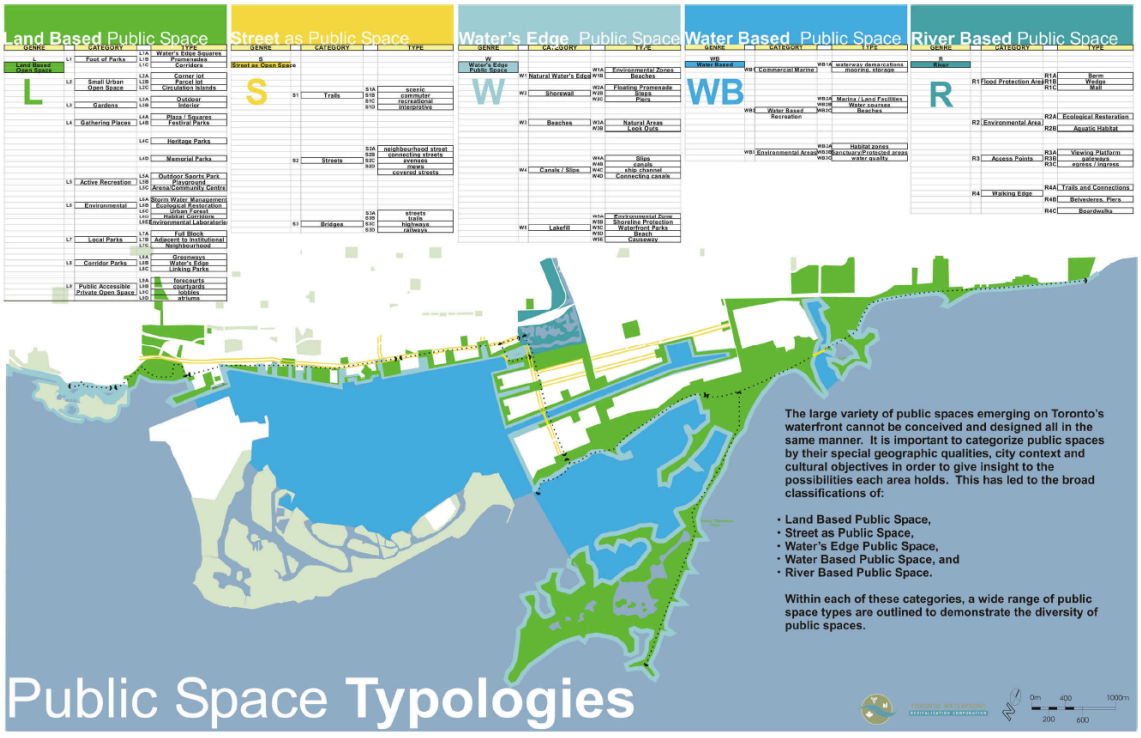
(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003c, p. 4, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



The identification of the nine city-water relationships shown in Figure 7.2. led to a typology of waterfront public spaces (see: Figure 7.3. below). The framework stressed that, while a consistent parks and open space implementation framework was necessary, the sheer size of the waterfront area meant that it was important not to conceive of all the waterfront public spaces in the same way. To demonstrate this diversity, five distinct categories were identified: land based public spaces, streets as public space, water's edge public spaces, water based public spaces and river based public spaces. And then, within these five categories, an extensive typology of different public spaces was established. By way of example, 'land based public spaces' included water edge squares, memorials and playgrounds, 'water based public spaces' included watercourse, beaches and marinas and 'water's edge public spaces' included the former industrial canals, waterways and slips. In all, as noted on the current Waterfront Toronto website, the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* identified over 90 different waterfront parks and open spaces (Waterfront Toronto 2012g).

Figure 7.3. Public Space Typologies

(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003c, p. 6, reproduced with the kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



The *Waterfront Public Space Framework* ended with a series of twenty detailed design implementation strategies. These ranged from area-wide proposals, like the waterfront street termination concept explored in the TWDI, rebranded the 'Foot of Toronto Places', to more detailed public realm master planning for the different precincts, including the East Bayfront and the Port Lands. While it is not possible to analyze each of these many proposals case-by-case, it is important to note that many of the general and specific ideas contained in the public space framework have directly influenced the scope of the precinct plans and master planning projects that followed. I will therefore return to the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* at various intervals during the remainder of this chapter.

Harbourfront Central Master Plan

In a rather ironic demonstration of the TWRC's poorly defined role in the planning and design of the Toronto waterfront that was outlined in Chapter 5, the first government-sponsored public realm project to be implemented on the waterfront after it was established was neither funded nor directly controlled by the corporation. In June 2003, the very same month that the TWRC published their *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework*, the federal government announced that it would assign $25 million to the revitalization of the public spaces around Harbourfront Centre (Lewington 2003a), a performing and visual arts venue located on a 10-acre water's edge site immediately south of Queens Quay between York Quay and John Quay[29]. Although at the geographic heart of Toronto's waterfront, the Centre, and the land surrounding it, was never part of the TWRC's original revitalization mandate. Even so, the $25 million assigned to the project did come from the federal government's original $500 million commitment to the TWRC (Hume 2003c). Speaking to the press at the time of the Harbourfront funding announcement, the corporation's president and CEO, John Campbell, admitted surprise but was supportive of the proposal, recognizing that the benefit of undertaking a visible public realm project was a good first step towards the corporation's wider implementation goals. "Initially Harbourfront was not part of the envelope," he said, "But it's an idea that makes sense. What's the point of revitalizing the waterfront without including Harbourfront?" (Hume 2003c, p. F01).

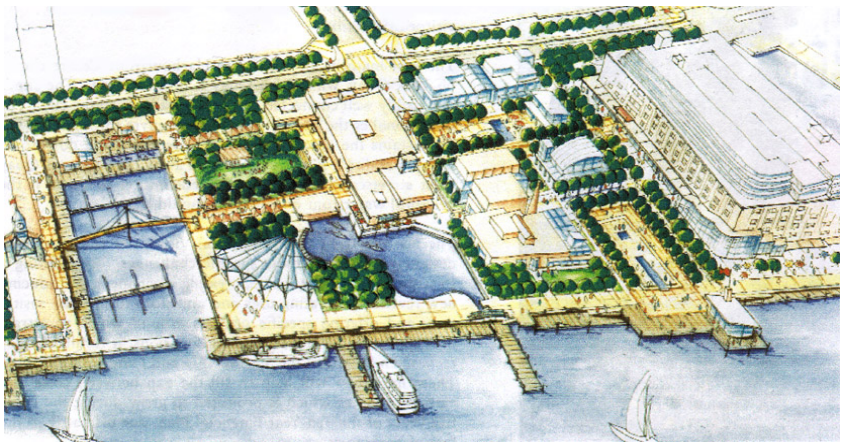
[29] Harbourfront Centre was originally known as Harbourfront Corporation, the federal agency created in 1972 to deliver the large waterfront public park. The controversy surrounding the residential towers that were built in lieu of the park caused the federal government to re-establish Harbourfront Corporation as a not-for-profit organization in 1991 and rebrand it 'Harbourfront Centre'. Ever since it has operated as a forum for "exploring new and bold frontiers in the arts and creative expression" (Harbourfront Centre 2012, p. 1).

Campbell was right to be optimistic. Certainly, the federal government's decision to allow the arts centre management team to lead the project was perplexing, considering the three governments had established the TWRC for that very reason. But, Harbourfront Centre actually worked closely with the TWRC on their emerging plans and had retained the respected Toronto-based urban designer Ken Greenberg a few years previously, in 2000, to develop a public realm master plan (Greenberg 2000). As one of the designers chosen to participate in the 2002 TWDI, Greenberg had a keen sense of the TWRC's planning and urban design priorities and, moreover, had maintained a professional interest in the waterfront for many years, both in his earlier role as the founding urban design director at the City of Toronto (1977-1987) and, later, as the author of research papers on the waterfront's redevelopment history (Greenberg and Sicheri 1990; Greenberg 1996; 2011). Between 1987 and 2000, Greenberg was also a partner at Urban Strategies (DESIGN 5 2011), the consultancy responsible for producing the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003c). As a result, there was considerable personal and professional overlap on the project and, as it transpired, Urban Strategies incorporated Greenberg's schematic master plan for the Harbourfront Centre into the public space framework as one of the twenty detailed design implementation strategies (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003c).

Greenberg's master plan began by singling out the Harbourfront Centre as a core waterfront asset, emphasizing its unique arts function and its enviable position on the water's edge. All things considered, Greenberg wrote, "one would expect the highest level of amenity and design focus" (Harbourfront Centre 2000, p. 23) to already exist. Yet the site analysis pinpointed what any casual observer would also conclude: the physical characteristics of the surrounding public realm failed to support the Harbourfront Centre's essential civic function. Therefore, the aim of the master plan was very simple; match the calibre of the site to the calibre of the institution. Furthermore, Greenberg stressed, an upfront investment in the public realm was a risk worth taking. It was, he argued, a chance to "ride the wave of interest in the waterfront" (Harbourfront Centre 2000, p. 23) and guarantee corporate donations to the Harbourfront Centre's arts programme well into the future. To improve the Centre's lack of a strong physical identity, Greenberg spelled out his two foremost design objectives. First, he noted that the existing 3.5-acre parking lot dominated the site and should be relocated underground. Second, he concluded that the Harbourfront Centre's

relationship with the water required a reassessment. The waterfront promenade, for example, came to a dead end when it reached the Harbourfront Centre site. To achieve these objectives, Greenberg outlined four urban design proposals. The first of these 'Big Moves', as he called them, focused on the parking lot. In its place, Greenberg envisaged a new interwoven public realm anchored by three distinct public spaces: an urban square, a waterfront square and an international market street. Working as an ensemble, the new spaces would emphasize the entrance to the Harbourfront Centre complex and establish the Centre's lineal relationship with the water, while also capitalizing on the site's proximity to other local commercial uses. The second 'Big Move' was linked to the first and called for a series of floating boardwalks, viewing docks and piers to extend and improve the existing waterfront promenade. The key element would be a wooden boardwalk that Greenberg hoped to extend over the lake. This would increase the surface area of the promenade and allow pedestrians to get much closer to the water. The two remaining objectives were aimed at improving the internal functionality of the Harbourfront Centre site. First, by constructing a permanent water's edge home for an existing nautical centre currently housed in temporary sheds and, second, by linking the new public spaces and boardwalks to Queens Quay with a central spine promenade. This link, Greenberg argued, would dramatically improve circulation within the site, while emphasizing the north-south linkages between the downtown core and the waterfront. These proposals are illustrated in Figure 7.4. below.

Figure 7.4. Harbourfront Centre Master Plan Proposals
(Harbourfront Centre 2000, p. 24, reproduced by kind permission of Harbourfront Centre)



A perspective view of Greenberg's master plan of the Harbourfront Centre site, which demonstrates the creation of a series of interwoven and diverse public spaces, including a new wooden boardwalk and series of piers to draw people to the water's edge.

Greenberg's master plan proposals were unveiled on August 13th, 2003 by a consortium of Harbourfront Centre and TWRC officials. At this event, John Campbell, the TWRC president and CEO, was keen to stress that the new parks and open spaces would be truly public. "It's really important that people understand," he stated, "...this is public space, not a parkette attached to some condo" (quoted in Hume 2003d, p. B03). Greenberg also spoke at the launch and offered some insights into the urban design philosophy he had adopted, observing that, on a site with such potential, the designer is often tempted to "tart everything up" (quoted in Hume 2003d, p. B03). On the contrary, he explained that the solution to a successful public realm scheme often lay in simplicity, clarity and coherence, and it was this philosophy that drove the Harbourfront proposal. Commenting on the scheme in the *Toronto Star*, the paper's architecture critic, Christopher Hume, was encouraged by what he saw. He was taken by the scheme's elegance and, indeed, the simplicity that Greenberg had sought. Furthermore, he was excited by the potential it had to precipitate further, greatly needed, improvements on the waterfront.

With the federal government's money in place, work began fast and, by June 2003, just less than two years later, the first phase of the scheme was completed (see: Figure 7.5. overleaf). Christopher Hume's assessment of the finished project was as glowing as his evaluation of the master plan proposals two years before. In a 2005 *Toronto Star* report titled "A Few Bold Steps for Toronto the Timid", Hume reflected on the scheme's elegance, noting that Greenberg had undoubtedly produced a simple and coherent design, but in doing so, had also managed to create something beautiful. "Certainly the new promenade is nothing fancy," he argued:

> ...therein lies much of its appeal. It's paved with basic stone blocks. They reach to the edge of Lake Ontario, where a wooden boardwalk now goes out five metres over the water. The wood and stone are separated by a granite bench that provides a place to sit and watch the passing parade of people and boats (Hume 2005c, p. B01).

Figure 7.5. Public Realm Improvements at Harbourfront Centre
(Photographs by the author)

The new water's edge promenade and boardwalk at Queens Quay Terminal, completed in 2005. A palette of simple materials is employed to produce a coherent and elegant scheme that provides various organic spaces for people to use in their own personal way.

One of the new wooden piers, opposite Queens Quay Terminal, which functions as a docking station for lake pleasure cruisers as well as a new public space that encourages a closer relationship between people and the lake.

Central Waterfront Innovative Design Competition

The success of the waterfront promenade and public spaces at Harbourfront Centre dampened an undercurrent of scepticism in the press regarding the ability of the three governments to realize their ambitious waterfront revitalization plans. Yet, although the TWRC played a visible role in the implementation of the *Harbourfront Centre Master Plan* (Harbourfront Centre 2000), it had ultimately been the project of another government agency and, as such, the corporation's leadership with respect to public realm implementation had yet to be fully tested. What the corporation needed was its own project; something it could lead and control, but that might also continue to spark public interest in the waterfront revitalization. In November 2005 the TWRC therefore announced that its board of directors had approved the formation of an international design competition for the Central Waterfront (Lewington 2005, p. A15) with the hope that it would lead to the creation of a new 'signature' for the Central Waterfront (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006).

A Unique Design Competition Format?

Design competitions vary in style and scope, although there are three typical approaches: ideas or 'concept' competitions, project or 'implementation' competitions and competitive design charrettes (Alexander and Witzling 1990; Lehrer 2011). Ideas and project competitions can either be conducted independently or in tandem, although the ideas component always comes first. The purpose of an ideas competition is to generate a discussion about the competition site and encourage innovative design proposals (Lehrer 2011). Ideas competitions are often employed on complex large-scale urban design projects where many outstanding issues, such as land ownership, have yet to be fully determined and immediate implementation is not a concern. As Alexander and Witzling (1990) explain, conceptual ideas competitions help the sponsor to explore problems, mobilize their resources and enhance design awareness within the community. In contrast, project competitions focus on short- or medium-term implementation and funding is typically set aside to see the project through from the conceptual idea to a built scheme. As a result, the process is quite similar to the standard practice of hiring an architect or designer to complete a proposal. The difference, of course, is that multiple proposals are generated and the chances of innovation are increased. In both ideas and project competitions a jury of design

experts usually makes the final decision. As an alternative, competitive design charrettes represent a more democratic design competition model (Lehrer 2011). Multiple design teams work on the same site, before turning to various aspects of a single design in conjunction with stakeholders from the local community. Rather than a professional design jury determining the winning design, the stakeholders make a collaborative decision together (Kelbaugh 2011).

The format of the design competition for the Central Waterfront emerged as a hybrid of the three models outlined above. A senior urban designer at the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto told me that the competition had a unique aim (TWRC 3 2011). Rather than focusing on a singular land parcel, building, or public space, the competition area was woven along the entire central waterfront spine, from Bathurst Street to Parliament Street (see: Figure 7.6. overleaf), where some of the land was already developed and some was not.

The rationale for the competition was influenced by TWRC concerns about the possible fragmentation of the waterfront by the precinct planning process. Queens Quay, for example, the waterfront's primary thoroughfare, passed through a number of waterfront precincts and could, they worried, end up as an incoherent space subject to various design responses in each of the discrete precinct plans. The aim of the competition was to "…knit everything together as one cohesive urban fabric that would create something on a great civic scale" (TWRC 3 2011) and the corporation wanted the competition entrants to develop a conceptual idea, as well as an implementable project. And, as will be explored in following paragraphs, they also wanted the design team to work collaboratively with local stakeholders on the competition entries (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006).

Figure 7.6. Central Waterfront Design Competition Area

(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006, pp. 5-6, reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

Another crucial difference between the corporation's competition process, and more standard design competitions, was the style and scope of the briefing document issued to the design teams. Instead of a theoretical abstract written to encourage thinking 'outside of the box', as is often issued for a design competition (Eley 1990), the brief given to the competition entrants was very comprehensive and set out, over some fifty pages, the corporation's planning goals for the area as well as a detailed master planning framework (TWRC 3 2011). The TWRC's vice president of planning and urban design had devised this approach in his previous role as a senior executive at the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation in New York City, where he authored the *Innovative Design Study* that eventually led to the selection of Daniel Libeskind as master planner of the World Trade Center site (Lower Manhattan Development Corporation 2002). The thinking behind the competition strategy, both in New York and later on Toronto's waterfront, was simple. Although innovative conceptual ideas were sought, considerable planning work and supporting public consultation had already been conducted and there was little desire to entirely 'reinvent the wheel'. By providing a clear design context and well-defined parameters, the corporation could expect the design teams to act more efficiently and creatively to solve the problems that had already been identified (TWRC 3 2011).

The Innovative Design Competition Process

In February 2006 the TWRC released a detailed Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the competition. It invited interested design teams, composed of architects, landscape architects or both, to submit outline proposals for the Central Waterfront (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006d). A total of 38 multidisciplinary teams from fifteen different countries made submissions and five were asked to participate. Each team was provided with the *Toronto Central Waterfront Innovative Design Competition Brief* (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006) and invited to tour the waterfront before beginning work on their submissions (Hume 2006). The teams selected were:

- Foster and Partners (UK) and Atelier Deiseitl (Germany)
- Stan Allen Architects and Sarah Whiting and Ron Witte Architects (USA)
- Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects (USA) and Martinez Lapena-Torres (Spain)
- West 8 (The Netherlands) and du Toit Allsopp Hillier (Canada)

- Snøhetta (Norway), Sasaki Associates, nARCHITECTS, Weisz + Yoes Architecture, H3, Balmori Associates, Halcrow Yolles HPA (USA)

Building upon the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* and the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework*, the competition brief outlined the overarching goal of the competition. The teams were asked to devise a "consistent design signature – a 'brand' – for the Central Waterfront, in both architectural and functional terms" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006, p. 5) and, much like Greenberg had proposed in his *Harbourfront Centre Master Plan*, the TWRC was keen to see a simple yet innovative response that might "overcome the existing visual noise and create a sense of interconnectedness and identity" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006, p. 5). While this broad goal called for the production of a public realm master plan for the entire stretch of Queens Quay and the waterfront promenade, a distance of some three kilometres, the brief also asked the design teams to develop specific proposals for the eight 'heads of slips' that form the termini of the major north-south streets on the waterfront (see: Figure 7.7. below).

Figure 7.7. Previous Condition of the Spadina Slip Head
(Image from: Waterfront Toronto 2007h, p. 38, reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

Before the start of the design competition, the slip heads were almost unrecognizable elements of the waterfront public realm. This one, at the foot of Spadina Street, was fenced off by a standard highway crash barrier.

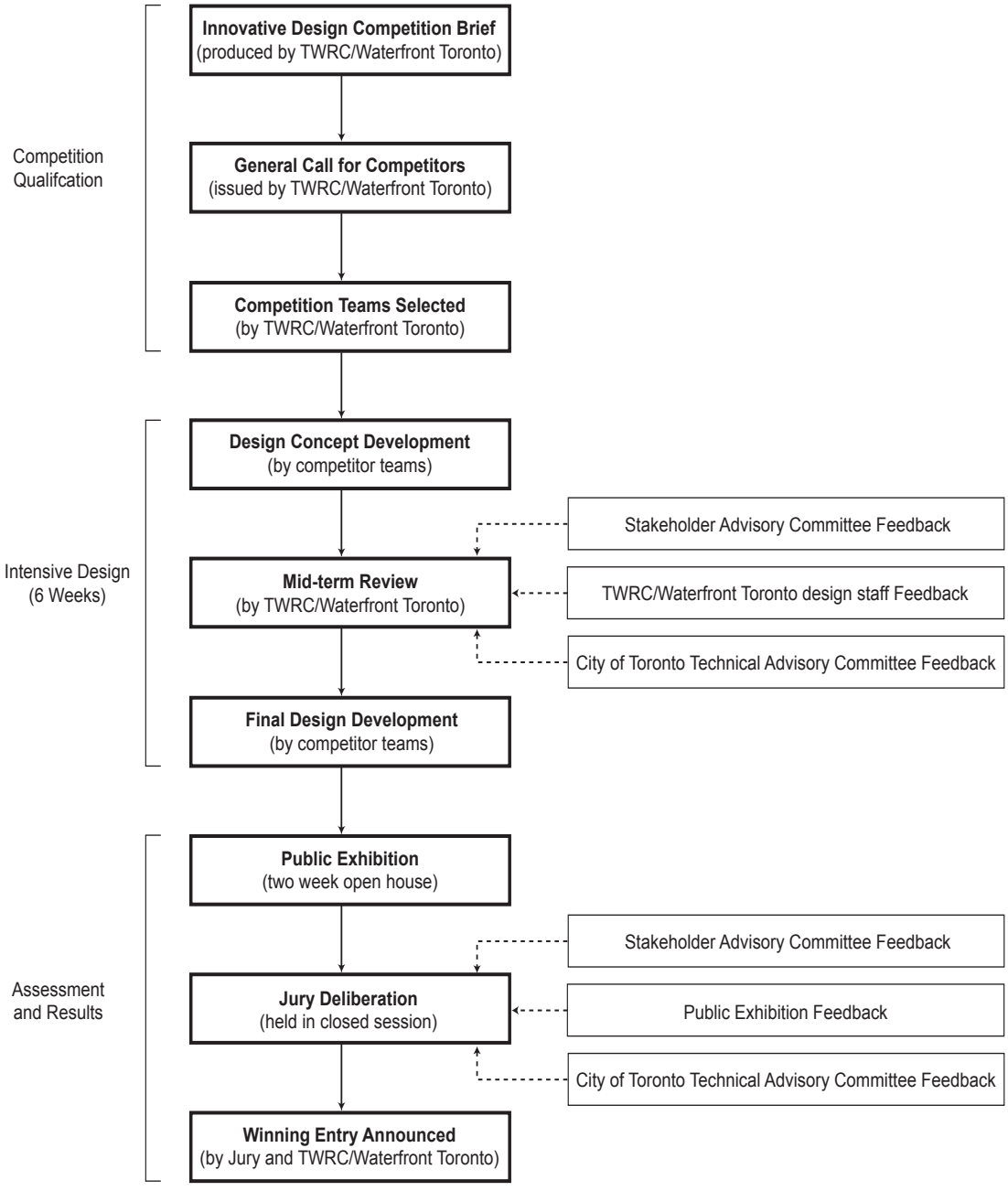
As previously mentioned, this design concept was established in the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* as the 'Foot of Toronto' proposal. It aimed to transform the existing intersections into new public spaces that might one day "serve as the 'glue' that joins the water's edge with the city street grid" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006, p. 7). The slip heads were given a front-and-centre position in the design competition because the TWRC had decided to set aside $20 million for the immediate implementation of this part of the brief after the conclusion of the competition (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006).

In addition to outlining an urban design framework for the Central Waterfront, the design competition brief also explained the decision-making process that would be used to choose the winning proposal. Like the overall philosophy of the competition, the method of selection differed slightly from the processes commonly used in design competitions where a jury of experts selects the winning team independently (see: Figure 7.8. overleaf). In keeping with the corporation's wider public consultation and participation aims outlined in Chapter 6, and mirroring, to some extent, the concept of a competitive charrette (Kelbaugh 2011), The aim was to make the Central Waterfront Design Competition selection process more transparent. Therefore, although an independent jury of experts would ultimately choose the winning team, their selection process was directly informed by stakeholder consultations and public presentations. "It was not a case of 'pick the nicest design from an architect'," explains a senior urban design at the corporation, "It was a case of 'you, as design professionals and planning professionals, should be understanding of what it is the community wants and help them to select a plan that achieves their goals'" (TWRC 3 2011).

With this in mind, the TWRC formed a Central Waterfront Stakeholder Committee, similar to those described in Chapter 6, to help "consolidate the many different voices with an interest in the waterfront" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006, p. 30) and invited representatives from a cross-section of organizations to take part, including local community associations, businesses, advocacy groups and other government partners. The stakeholder group was involved from the very start and their ideas helped to shape the competition brief as well as the latter stages of the decision-making process (TWRC 3 2011). To support the committee of stakeholders and the design jury on technical matters, a City of Toronto advisory team was also convened. Their particular task was to offer counsel on the technical

and regulatory challenges that might be encountered (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006).

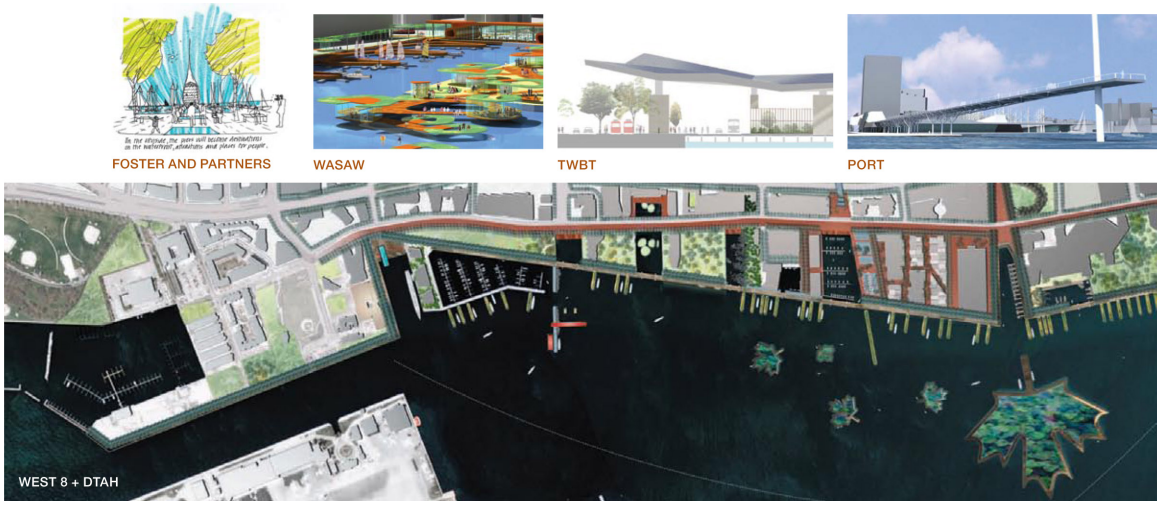
Figure 7.8. Innovative Design Competition Process
(Diagram by the author)



The jury itself was comprised of six design experts from diverse disciplines. Local Toronto architect Brigitte Shim was appointed as the chair and was supported by: Montreal-based landscape architect Claude Cormier, urban designer Ken Greenberg, New York architect Lise Anne Couture, Canadian film maker Atom Egoyan and Bruce Mau, a Toronto-based artist. A senior urban design at the corporation reflects that the kaleidoscope of talent on the jury was intentional. “I like to get more than just architects on these things because otherwise the architects just talk about architecture to each other,” he explains, “As soon as you bring in a Bruce Mau, or similar designer, it shifts the conversation a little bit” (TWRC 2 2011).

The five design teams were given a six-week window during April and May 2006 to produce their Central Waterfront design proposals. Halfway through they had to present their ideas for a mid-term review and solicit feedback from the stakeholder committee, the City of Toronto advisory team and TWRC design staff. These are shown in Figure 7.9. overleaf. Following the competition deadline, on May 11th 2006, the five proposals were presented at a two-week public exhibition at the BCE Place atrium in Toronto’s financial district, before the jury met to make its final decision (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006). The public exhibition became a pivotal part of the design competition process. First, it provided local people who were not directly involved in the stakeholder consultation process a chance to play a role. Second, it gave the corporation an opportunity to showcase the steps it was making towards implementation and demonstrate its commitment to both design excellence and community engagement. From the perspective of the *Toronto Star*’s architecture critic, Christopher Hume, it was a great success. “Judging from the crowds that showed up daily at BCE Place, where architectural models were on exhibit as well as drawings, this competition has succeed in generating some genuine excitement,” he wrote, “God knows this sense of engagement will take some getting used to” (2006a, p. B04). To coincide with the public exhibition, the *Toronto Star* also conducted an online poll, which asked attendees to vote on their favourite of the five submissions. Over 5,000 readers took part (Hume 2006a).

Figure 7.9. The Five Competition Entries
(Image from: Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006b, reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



The five submissions, shown in Figure 7.9. above, ranged in approach and quality. The team led by Lord Foster, for example, proposed emphasizing the eight slip heads with a series of piers and iconic teardrop-shaped pavilions (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006e), an approach, remarked Christopher Hume (2006a), that was promptly dubbed 'Dubai lite'. Another entry, this time by the group of US architects Stan Allen, Sarah Whiting and Ron Witte, also imagined a series of pavilions on the water's edge. This time they were constructed from glass and termed 'cultural buoys' (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006e). One reader taking part in the online survey conducted by the *Toronto Star* observed about the US entry: "there is something slightly odd about the scheme, it's as if it was designed during an acid flashback" (quoted in Hume 2006a, p. B04).

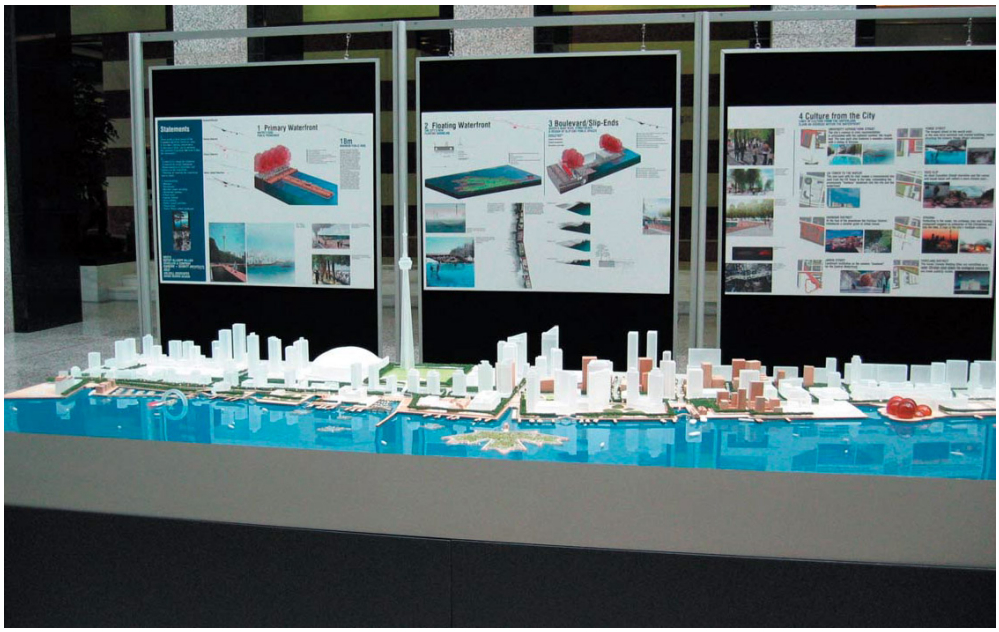
In their official report, released on May 30th, 2006, the Jury reflected on the feedback they had received from the Central Waterfront Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the team of technicians from the City of Toronto, as well as the overwhelming responses from the general public during the exhibition (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006e). Complimenting all of the teams for producing "a remarkable amount of exemplary work" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006e, p. 3), the jury explained that they had looked for a design solution that demonstrated boldness and vision, but could also be realized in the near future. With unanimity, the jury voted for the scheme proposed by Dutch landscape architecture firm West 8 in collaboration with Toronto-based architects duToit

Allsopp Hillier (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006e). While this decision was based on the jury's internal deliberations, it also reflected the sentiment of the public meetings and the stakeholder committee. Albeit a crude sample, the West 8 scheme had garnered the most votes in the *Toronto Star's* online poll with 31% support (Hume 2006a). Furthermore, as a member of one of the local neighbourhood associations involved in the Central Waterfront Stakeholder Committee remembers, "we chose the company...the one that won we liked. They had sort of a European sensibility. It introduced something completely new to Toronto" (CIVIL 4 2011).

The Winning Entry

The jury congratulated the West 8-led team for producing a proposal that was both exciting and unifying. In their assessment, the jury noted that the design ably addressed the core goals of the competition by "alleviating the current pinch points at the heads of the slips while simultaneously creating a continuous public promenade along the south side of Queens Quay Boulevard" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006e, p. 7). Although not explicitly described as such in the jury report, the 'European sensibility' recognized by the community association representative likely stemmed from the team's simple and consistent approach to the public realm and its focus on civic scale over architectural frivolity. In this respect, the team's physical model appeared to help (see: Figure 7.10. overleaf). While each team was asked to include a model as part of their submission, West 8's grabbed the attention of the public exhibition attendees. One of the landscape architects on the winning team reflects that this was due to its depiction of the entire waterfront and the links that were subsequently drawn between the various design elements. In contrast, the other four teams only employed physical models to emphasize their slip head interventions. The West 8-led team used their model to demonstrate how the poor relationship between the downtown core and the waterfront could be reconciled through consistent improvements to the public realm along the entire lakefront (DESIGN 8 2011). The team also shared the TWRC's long-held view that the waterfront public realm was represented by a series of loose and unrelated episodic elements. Comparing their proposal to the other submissions, the same landscape architect reflects that "rather than doing different things all the way along, which many of the other proposals did, ours was really about binding" (DESIGN 8 2011).

Figure 7.10. Public Exhibition at BCE Place
(Image from: Waterfront Toronto 2006, p. 75, reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



The West 8-led submission on display at BCE Place during May 2006. The team constructed a large model of the entire waterfront spine to demonstrate the consistency between their various design interventions.

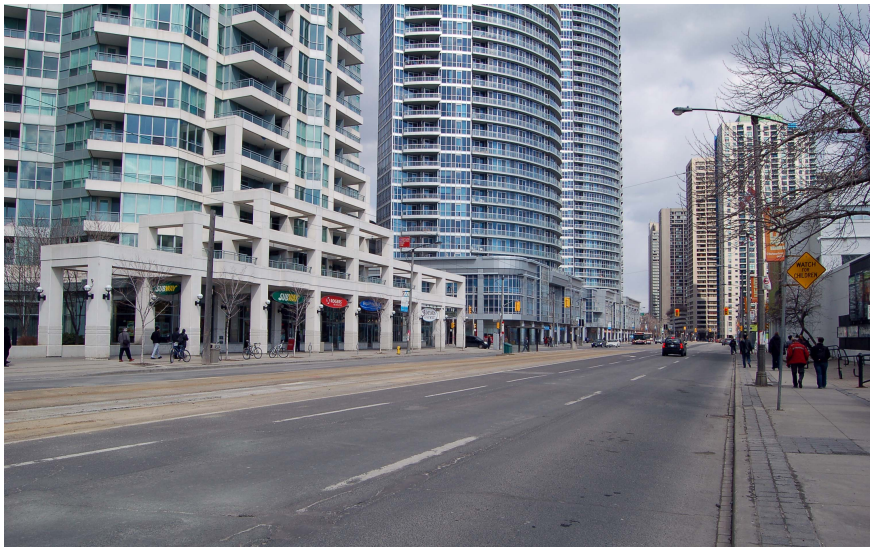
The waterfront's primary thoroughfare, Queens Quay, was widely viewed as an embarrassment at the time of the competition. Vehicles and a heavily engineered streetcar line dominated the street and, as a result, the pedestrian experience was poor. There was little protection from fast moving traffic, complicated intersections and a lack of trees and other planting. As West 8's draft master plan for the Central Waterfront (Waterfront Toronto 2010a) – which expanded upon the winning design proposal – gloomily concluded: "Aesthetically, Queens Quay fails to provide the kind of atmosphere conducive to economic vitality, ground floor retail activity, and urban vibrancy" (p. 7). The winning team's detailed proposal imagined a very different kind of environment. An "iconic boulevard that Toronto never had" (Waterfront Toronto 2010a, p. 3) or, as a senior TWRC executive puts it, "Toronto's Las Ramblas!" (TWRC 7 2011). To engineer the street's facelift, the West 8-led team proposed a series of simple yet dramatic design moves: remove two lanes of traffic, transform the surface under the streetcar lines into a carpet of grass, continue the Martin Goodman Trail[30] along Queens Quay, widen the sidewalk and plant a dense glade of trees

[30] The Martin Goodman Trail is part of a longer Toronto lakefront bike trail, the central waterfront section of which is yet to be completed.

to demarcate the pedestrian from the vehicular realm (see: Figure 7.11. below and overleaf). Together, the master plan stated, “the street profile is reconfigured to balance the relationship between pedestrians and cars, while highlighting the importance of public transit and cycling” (Waterfront Toronto 2010a, p. 3).

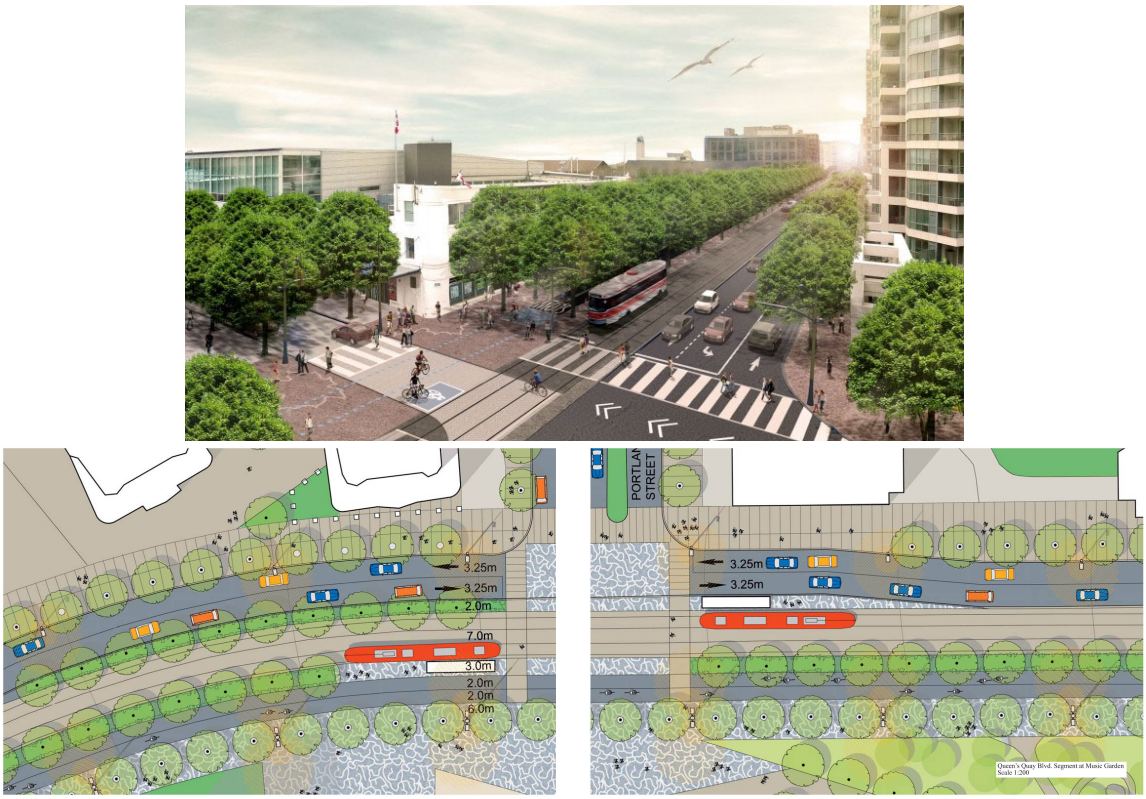
The jury was particularly impressed by the winning team’s proposal for Queens Quay because, unlike the other four competition entries, it did not suggest moving the existing streetcar line (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006e). Furthermore, the relationship imagined between Queens Quay, the slips heads and a new waterfront promenade appeared seamless (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006e). At the eight spit heads, the team proposed a series of sculptural wooden decks, quickly coined the ‘wave decks’, to act as anchoring public spaces. Each one was envisaged slightly differently, but they remained part of a consistent fabric that connected the north-south termini streets at the slips with both Queens Quay and the water’s edge. A supporting lineal waterfront promenade neatly repeated many of the landscape and street furniture elements that Ken Greenberg had incorporated into his public realm scheme for the Harbourfront Centre and also echoed the proposed materiality of Queens Quay and the wave decks.

Figure 7.11. Queens Quay Before and After (Proposed)
(Photograph by the author. Other images from: Waterfront Toronto 2006, p. 39 (Image 2, overleaf) and Waterfront Toronto 2012h, p. 2 (Image 3, overleaf), all reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



The existing street experience on Queens Quay, dominated by a wide, featureless boulevard that has a poorly defined relationship between automobiles, streetcars and pedestrians.

Figure 7.11. (cont.) Queens Quay Before and After (Proposed)

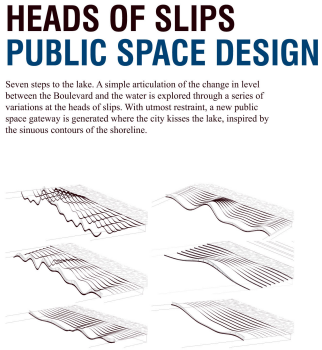


A perspective view (top) and detailed plan (bottom) of the West 8-led teams proposed public realm, which uses a combination of hard and soft landscaping elements to transform the barren street into a lush multi-use boulevard.

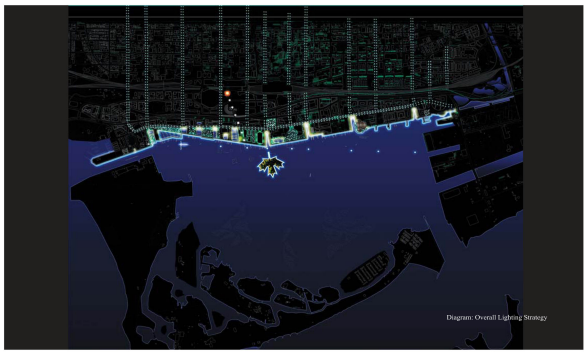
The West 8-led team also extended Greenberg's idea of using a floating water's edge boardwalk to expand the width of the promenade, while adding a double-sided wooden bench to weave the promenade and the boardwalk together (see: Figure 7.12. overleaf). While the jury's enthusiasm for the two core elements of the West 8-led scheme was unstinting, they were much less enamoured by some of the supporting ideas proposed. The jury took particular aim at a series of 'kitschy' public art components, including a floating maple leaf boardwalk, a statue of Lord Simcoe atop a wooden pillar dubbed 'Simcoe on a Stick' and a group of water-based Chinese dragons, and strongly advised the TWRC and their winning design team to keep to the simple ideas that worked.

Figure 7.12. Key Elements of The Central Waterfront Master Plan

(Images from: Waterfront Toronto 2006, p. 43 (Image 1), p. 26 (Image 2), p. 65 (Image 3), all reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



An early visualization of one of the proposed 'wave decks', which were to become part of a series of tactile public art elements evoking water and play.



The Maple Leaf Boardwalk, which the Jury thought was a distraction

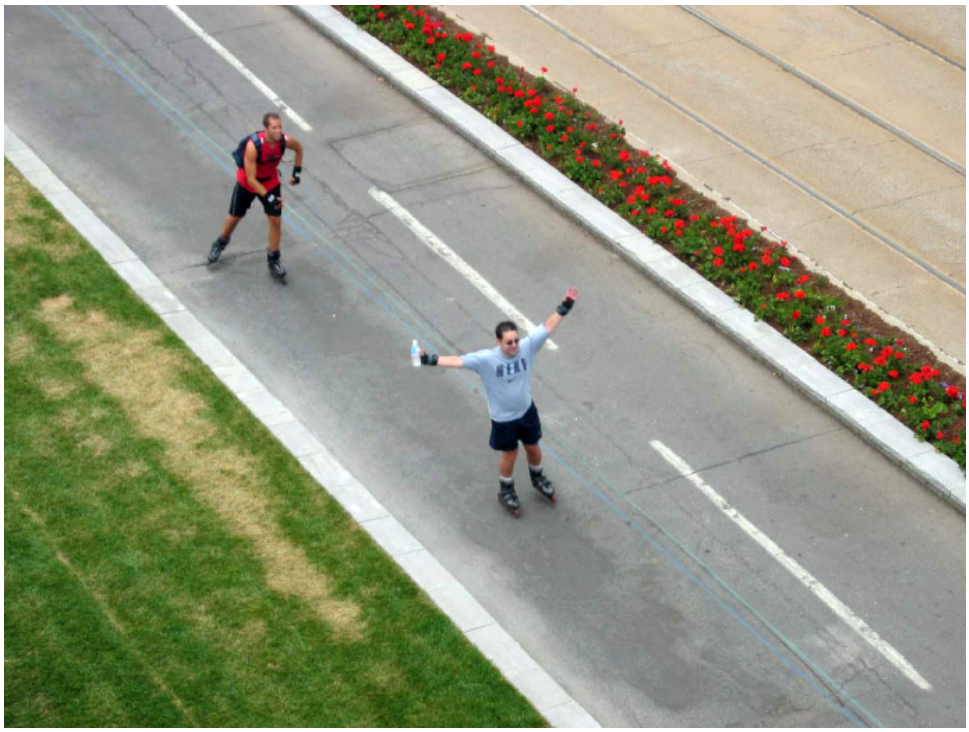
The image above shows the water-based Chinese Dragons, one of the public art elements the jury felt detracted from the overall aims of the scheme.

Keen to capitalize on the momentum of the design competition and, in particular, the success of the well-attended public exhibitions, the TWRC arranged a summer event to showcase the winning design submission. Conscious that removing two lanes of vehicular traffic might be politically contentious, the corporation aimed to alleviate some of the fears waterfront residents held about the scheme and demonstrate how the radical design solution – for Toronto at least – might one-day look and feel (DESIGN 8 2011). For ten days in the middle of August 2006, only a few months after the design competition had ended, the TWRC received permission from the City of Toronto to close down a stretch of Queens Quay and construct a 'mock up' of the proposal (see: Figure 7.13. below and overleaf). This included the installation of a one-kilometre lawn, a temporary extension of the Martin Goodman Trail and a lineal flowerbed containing 12,000 geraniums (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006b).

Figure 7.13. Quay to the City
(Images from: Waterfront Toronto 2007h, p. 24 (Image 1), p. 25 (Image 2), all reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

Mayor David Miller exiting the streetcar on Queens Quay during Quay to the City

Figure 7.13. (cont.) Quay to the City



Roller Bladers using the temporary Martin Goodman Trail along Queens Quay

Mayor David Miller, who by this time was a member of the TWRC board of directors, took a leading role in delivering the summer project on time and on budget. For him it was a chance to demonstrate how far along the road to implementation the corporation had travelled since he had joined the board. Furthermore, as the *Toronto Star* reported, the event might never have gotten off the ground had the mayor not made it his personal project. “Waterfront agency officials say that, without pressure from his office, the necessary approvals would have taken months, even years, not weeks. As it was, some permits didn’t arrive until hours before work started” (Toronto Star 2006, p. A04), the paper noted. The response to the event was generally very positive. The *Toronto Star’s* Christopher Hume, whose commentary on the waterfront is both respected and eagerly awaited by the corporation, was impressed by what he saw. Quay to the City, he reflected, was an opportunity to show what was possible; a chance to see what a difference design could make in a city so often weighed down by “timidity, inertia and lack of leadership” (Hume 2006b, p. A03).

In many respects, Christopher Hume's fears about delays have come true and have plagued the implementation of the winning design proposal. Six years on, at the time of writing this analysis in early 2012, only a very small percentage of the overall vision has actually been realized. One positive outcome has been the construction of three of the wave decks. As the competition brief outlined, the TWRC apportioned $20 million towards the implementation of initial public realm improvements at the eight slip heads (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006). Subsequently, the first wave deck, at Spadina Slip, was completed in September 2008 and then two more followed in June 2009 and July 2009 at Simcoe Slip and Rees Slip respectively (Waterfront Toronto 2012i). Further wave decks, a senior TWRC designer explains, are planned for the remaining slips as and when funding permits (TWRC 3 2011). The wave decks (illustrated in Figure 7.14. overleaf), have proven to be a major success and have won numerous awards, including an Award of Excellence in the 2009 City of Toronto Urban Design Awards (City of Toronto 2009a) and a 2009 Honour Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects (American Society of Landscape Architects 2009) for the Spadina Wave Deck and an Award of Excellence in the 2009 Ontario Builders Awards (Waterfront Toronto 2012d) for the Simcoe Wave Deck.

Writing soon after the unveiling of the Spadina Wave Deck in September 2008, *The Globe and Mail*'s architecture critic, Lisa Rochon (2008), offered a lukewarm assessment of the design, questioning the contextual link between their anamorphous form and the natural language of Lake Ontario's shoreline, as well as the somewhat clunky relationship between the existing public realm and the new decks – arguably an unfair accusation considering West 8's future master planning proposals for Queens Quay and the waterfront promenade. Nevertheless, she did recognize the high standard of construction, admitting that it went above and beyond many other public infrastructure projects in Toronto. As a result, she concluded, "West 8 has set a new standard for public amenity in a city hardened to the pleasures of sitting, walking and thinking about nothing at all" (2008, p. M3). It would appear that the Toronto public has taken a natural liking to the wave decks too. No definitive survey data exists to support this assertion, but one only has to observe any of the three completed decks on a sunny day to witness children playing amongst the sculptural pits and troughs or adults using them as a new place to sit and rest their feet.

Figure 7.14. The completed Wave Decks
(Photographs by the author)

Rees Wave Deck

Simcoe Wave Deck

In addition to the three wave decks and Ken Greenberg's earlier improvements to the Harbourfront Centre, only two other significant waterfront public spaces have been completed on the Central Waterfront. One was a long-awaited City of Toronto project in-between the Spadina and Rees wave decks called HTO Park. Like the improvements to Harbourfront Centre, it was also outside of the TWRC's remit and, therefore, its planning and design preceded West 8's winning competition entry. Designed by Canadian landscape architects Janet Rosenberg and Claude Cormier, and opened in 2007, the park features a series of knolls and an artificial 'urban beach', the core elements of which are a series of static yellow umbrellas and movable Muskoka chairs. Like the wave decks, HTO Park has also been well received, winning numerous design awards and positive praise in the local press (Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes 2007; Hume 2007). As of mid-2012, the only other aspect of the winning design competition submission to be completed is the first phase of the waterfront public promenade in the East Bayfront precinct. Opened in 2010, it links the new Sherbourne Common to Sugar Beach, a second artificial beach designed by Claude Cormier and the result of a more recent design competition organized by the corporation that is discussed in later paragraphs (Waterfront Toronto 2007a).

Implementation Inertia

Overshadowing the successful implementation of these new punctuated additions to the waterfront public realm is the lack of progress made on Queens Quay. The street remains as it was at the time of the design competition and, as one community member laments, the excitement surrounding the 2006 Quay to the City event has become a distance memory (CIVIL 4 2011). In September 2007, the corporation, by this time rebranded Waterfront Toronto, initiated a Municipal Class Environment Assessment (EA) for Queens Quay. The EA process was informed by a series of thoroughgoing public consultation meetings and on-going dialogue with the still active Central Waterfront Stakeholder Committee. It was also supported by a companion EA produced by the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) that related specifically to the required alterations to the existing streetcar line on Queens Quay (Waterfront Toronto 2009c). The report's recommendations supported, in principle, the winning submission's original proposal for the transformation of Queens Quay into a multi-use boulevard. Extensive traffic studies demonstrated the feasibility of reducing the number of traffic lanes on Queens Quay from four to two and showed that any future traffic capacity

could be accommodated comfortably. As such, the EA supported the proposed widening of the pedestrian sidewalk, the introduction of a dedicated bike lane and the new landscaping additions (Waterfront Toronto 2009c).

John Gerrestsen, the Ontario Minister of the Environment, formally approved the conclusions of the environmental assessment process on April 19th, 2010. This provided Waterfront Toronto and the West 8-led team with the legal assurance to begin implementation (Waterfront Toronto 2012j), but since the announcement the execution of the project has been indefinitely stalled. For Waterfront Toronto the implementation of the public realm improvements on the Central Waterfront has become a sorry reminder of the 2004 debate over the corporation's governance and funding model, discussed in the Chapter 5. Without the ability to raise capital independently, Waterfront Toronto has been unable to secure sufficient funds to proceed with such a large-scale infrastructure project. A senior Waterfront Toronto executive argues that, while the corporation does have enough capital to complete a small section of the project, it makes more financial sense to conduct as much of the invasive construction work as possible in one go, thereby improving operational economies of scale and minimizing disruption to local residents (TWRC 7 2011). Therefore, the corporation concluded that the first phase of construction must include the entire length of Queens Quay from Spadina Street to Bay Street (see: Figure 7.7.). The Waterfront Toronto executive went on to tell me that the corporation does have other sources of funding that, theoretically, could be reallocated to the project. But, as of March 2011, these 'pots of money' remain locked in government contribution agreements for other waterfront planning and design initiatives (TWRC 7 2011)[31].

Where next for Innovative Design Competitions?

The on-going implementation challenges faced by Waterfront Toronto have not dampened the corporation's enthusiasm for design competitions, nor the philosophy of implementing public realm projects early on in the revitalization process. As mentioned a few paragraphs ago, Waterfront Toronto convened an innovative design competition in 2007 for a new public square at the Jarvis Slip in the East Bayfront precinct. Although the competition was much

[31] The financing for upgrading Queens Quay Boulevard was eventually secured from the three governments in July 2012. The construction work, which begins in the Fall of 2012, will also coincide with track upgrades to the streetcar line (Waterfront Toronto 2012k).

smaller in scope and scale than the earlier competition for the Central Waterfront the same format was adopted. A jury of design experts made the final decision, but not before a public exhibition was convened and deliberations were conducted with the East Bayfront Stakeholder Advisory Committee as well as a technical advisory team from the City of Toronto (Waterfront Toronto 2007a). Following an internal pre-selection process, three multidisciplinary design teams were invited to take part in the competition. The winning entry, by Montreal-based landscape architect Claude Cormier, proposed an urban beach. Mimicking his earlier HTO beach design, Cormier imagined that the new beach would be an important addition to "the amber necklace of Toronto's lakefront beachscape" (Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes 2008, p. 4). For the most part, the jury supported Cormier's concept. They particularly appreciated how the proposed space interacted with the adjacent Redpath sugar factory and created a place to view the functions of the factory (Waterfront Toronto 2007a). Following the completion of a refined design proposal and a series of evaluations by the Waterfront Design Review Panel, the beach was approved and constructed in 2009 and 2010. It opened in August 2010 (Waterfront Toronto 2012l). The beach is illustrated in Figure 7.15. below.

Figure 7.15. Canada's Sugar Beach, Summer 2011
Photograph by Daniel Pearce

Identifiable because of its collection of bright pink umbrellas, Sugar Beach has been generally well received by the press. Lisa Rochon (2010) at *The Globe and Mail* praised the simple design elements – umbrellas, chairs, rocks, sand, trees – for creating a tactile sense of colour and texture. While Mark Schatzker (2010), also from *The Globe and Mail* praised the quality of material achieved by Claude Cormier and his design team.

In the same year, the TWRC also launched the *Toronto's Lower Don Lands Innovative Design Competition*, which, like the Central Waterfront competition, was at a larger scale. Chris Glaisek and his team once again produced a near 50-page competition brief that detailed the planning goals for the area, as well as a more specific master planning framework (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007a). The brief called upon the competition entrants to imagine ways to renaturalize the mouth of the Don River, a long-term aim of both the corporation and the City of Toronto, and create the conditions for a new waterfront neighbourhood (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007a). Twenty-nine firms from thirteen countries submitted competition entries and four teams were asked to produce more detailed proposals (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007b). As with the corporation's previous innovative design competition, a public exhibition was held at BCE Place in downtown Toronto and a stakeholder group was convened to offer community feedback throughout the eight-week process (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007b). A jury of five design professionals, led by Toronto architect Bruce Kuwabara, chair of the corporation's Waterfront Design Review Panel, reviewed the five submissions and community feedback at the end of May 2007. The winning entry was a scheme called 'Port Land Estuary' produced by a joint team lead by American landscape architect Michael Van Valkenberg and Toronto-based urban designer Ken Greenberg (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007b). An extract from this submission is shown in Figure 7.16. overleaf.

The jury praised the scheme for what it saw as a series of "big, bold moves...[that]...impressively integrated the natural and wild elements of the river and the Lower Don Lands with urban placemaking" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007b, p. 5). Since the conclusion of the Lower Don Land's innovative design competition, Michael Van Valkenberg's design team has completed a precinct plan for the area surrounding the Keating Channel (Waterfront Toronto 2010e). A draft version of the plan was published in May 2010 and was approved by the City of Toronto in July 2010 (City of Toronto 2010a).

Figure 7.16. Port Land Estuary, winning submission
(Image from: Waterfront Toronto 2007i, p. 3, reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

A visualization showing how the re-naturalized Don River Mouth might look in the future. Van Valkenberg and his design team imagine that the surrounding public realm will have an informal character and might one day become one of Toronto large public parks: an escape within the city.

A Laboratory for Landscape Urbanism

Whether intentionally or not, the corporation's public realm projects have also become synonymous with a popular new design movement called 'Landscape Urbanism' (Waldheim 2006; Livesey 2009). Spearheaded by Charles Waldheim, the former head of landscape architecture at The University of Toronto, and now at the Graduate School of Design (GSD) at Harvard University, the movement imagines a hybrid merger of landscape and urbanism, a "disciplinary realignment...in which landscape replaces architecture as the basic building block of contemporary urbanism" (Waldheim 2006, p. 11). The movement is characterized by its focus on ecology and the reassessment it makes of urban design in the context of natural systems (Corner 2006; Lister 2010). For so-called 'Landscape Urbanists', brownfield sites, such as those on Toronto's waterfront, are inviting laboratories for their practice

because they represent a chance to remediate and reclaim through ecologically sensitive processes (Lister 2010). Charles Waldheim's longstanding connection to Toronto, together with the corporation's selection of landscape architect-led teams during the innovative design competition processes, has caused some in the trade press to describe the city's waterfront as a "hot bed" for the movement (Livesey 2009, p. 3).

The philosophy behind West 8's practice, discussed in this chapter, has been associated with Landscape Urbanism (Waldheim 2006a) and writers in the movement have also focused their attention on the corporation's plan to renaturalize the mouth of the Don River (Lister 2010). Charles Waldheim also sat on the 2007 jury that chose Michael Van Valkenberg's scheme for the Lower Don Lands, described above (see: Figure 7.15.). Yet, while a great deal of excited rhetoric surrounds the Landscape Urbanism movement – two well-publicized books have recently been published, *The Landscape Urbanism Reader* (Waldheim 2006) and *Ecological Urbanism* (Mostafavi and Doherty 2010) – the movement remains in its infancy and precious few Landscape Urbanism projects have been fully completed, including those on Toronto's waterfront. Furthermore, a decision taken by writers and practitioners in the movement to misrepresent the wider urban design profession as overly concerned with form and blinkered to multiscalar and multilayered concerns (Shane 2006; Lister 2010) has generated unnecessary friction between leading thinkers in the architecture, landscape architecture and urban design disciplines, the majority of whom seek generally similar goals.

This fractious debate is also bubbling under the surface on Toronto's waterfront. Some architecture and urban design teams working on Waterfront Toronto projects have confidentially accused the corporation's urban design staff of being 'disciples' to the Landscape Urbanism philosophies proffered by their consultants and of ignoring creative design ideas that do not fit with the movement's mould. Furthermore, one of the senior urban designers that played a central role in the production of the Task Force's Fung Report (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force 2000) and the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (City of Toronto 2001) criticizes the dominant role awarded to landscape architects more generally in the most recent stages of implementation. Referring to the current trend as akin to a "fashion industry" (TWRC 5 2011), he argues that the corporation's shift towards parks and open space has diminished some of the broader urban design principles for the

various waterfront precincts and, in particular, the historical urban form relationships between the city and the waterfront (TWRC 5 2011). In contrast, the corporation held a symposium in May 2007 at the Royal Ontario Museum where they used the term 'Leading with Landscape' to describe the increasingly positive relationship emerging on the waterfront between 'revitalization' and 'landscape architecture' (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007g). Reflecting on the emerging role being carved out for landscape architecture on Toronto's waterfront, the *Toronto Star*'s architecture critic, Christopher Hume, has drawn comparisons between recent iconic architectural projects in the city and the public spaces emerging on the lakefront. "Though most of the attention here has been lavished on projects like Frank Gehry's redo of the Art Gallery of Ontario and Daniel Libeskind's addition to the Royal Ontario Museum," he writes, "...the truth is that their works are instantly familiar. By contrast, the landscape never repeats itself; every park is unique. With cities needing renewal more than new buildings, this is good news" (Hume 2006c, p. B01).

Hume is not alone in his praise for the corporation's landscape-driven philosophy. Placing the phenomenon in the wider context of a North American urban landscaping renaissance, Hume's counterpart at *The Globe and Mail*, Lisa Rochon, singles out Toronto's waterfront as a laboratory for innovative public realm design, arguing that "nowhere is there a city more welcoming of new landscape design these days than Toronto" (Rochon 2007, p. R12). While a general commitment to design excellence always underpinned the background planning and design work of the Task Force and then the corporation, the idea that landscape architects, and indeed 'landscape' in a more general sense, might become the driving force behind implementation was not necessarily anticipated. A senior designer at the corporation argues now that their involvement is no longer viewed as an accident, because:

> ...they think about landscape and planning as one thing...Urban design is being shaped by landscape architects, not by architects. So I think the relative importance of architects in shaping the bigger scale of cities is actually diminishing, despite the fact we have this growing adoration with star architecture. I think collectively people are starting to realize architects are about a 'building' and the landscape architect is really about 'the stuff that pulls all the buildings together' (TWRC 3 2011).

Concluding Summary: Commitments to Design Excellence

In this chapter I explored how parks and open space have emerged as one of the key components of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's commitment to design excellence. I began the chapter by explaining how the corporation has translated the core *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* principle of 'building a network of spectacular waterfront parks and public spaces' into a design-led implementation agenda and I demonstrated how the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto uses the public financing it receives to undertake public realm improvements and construct new parks and open spaces on the water's edge before selling adjacent land parcels to residential and commercial developers. I showed how this implementation agenda, and the specific commitment to design excellence that emerged, were influenced by a series of key events and documents. First, an exploratory design charrette called the Toronto Waterfront Design Initiative that was jointly convened in 2002 by the City of Toronto planning department and the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto. Second, a 2003 document that was produced by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto called the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* and which offered a comprehensive contextual analysis of existing public parks and open spaces on the waterfront. And third, a popular public realm upgrade to the Harbourfront Centre site on the Central Waterfront that opened in 2005. I argued that these various initiatives influenced the evolution of a thoroughgoing design competition process run by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto that has engaged local people, resulted in design awards for the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto and enlivened interest in landscape architecture on the waterfront, but has also been beset by implementation delays.

The successes of the corporation's 'innovative design competition' model are due in part to the integrated series of planning documents that support them. Meeting the conditions of Punter's fourth amended principle in the list of 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy' (see: Figure 3.8, p. 78), the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* provides a detailed contextual analysis of the waterfront and thus a formidable foundation for the urban design principles that are contained in the competition briefing materials and other tendering documents. These ensure that all of the previously completed planning and design strategies for the waterfront remain decisive components of the creative design process. To some extent, this policy-laden approach constrains the creative freedom of the design teams who take part in the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's innovative design competitions, but it does

not appear to stifle innovation. In both the Central Waterfront competition, and the more recent competition for the Lower Don Lands, the corporation attracted numerous world-class architects, landscape architects and urban designers to take part and they have won awards for their work on the waterfront.

Where the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's innovative design competition model really excels is in the selection of winning teams. Mirroring the participatory design processes described in Chapter 6, the corporation's design competition method successfully meets the basic conditions of community collaboration established in Punter's amended principles. Whereas previous research has rightly criticized design competition processes for being undemocratic, the combination of stakeholder meetings and large public exhibitions on Toronto's waterfront provides, at least to some extent, 'the conditions for all members of the community to be involved in the process of developing and committing to a coordinated vision of urban design' (Principle 1). In the model adopted by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto recognition is given to both the general public and the design jury in the selection process. Although the process is not entirely democratic – a jury still makes the final decision and there is no open vote – the general public do have multiple opportunities to assess and critique the competition entries. Furthermore, the jury, whose professional judgment is still considered crucial to legitimize the rigour of the competition, is obliged to take the public's feedback into account when making their decision. This reduces the likelihood that designers will aim to please the individual jury members – a problem that has damaged design competition processes in the past (Banerjee and Loukaitou-Sideris 1990). Reflecting on the role of local residents during the design of the wave decks, for example, a landscape architect on the West 8-led team notes that the local community "really helped us understand what programmatic things they would like to see more of; the kinds of activities they imagined and the moods they imagined" (DESIGN 8 2011). The particular emphasis upon parks and opens spaces on Toronto's waterfront has also influenced the type of design professionals involved in the redevelopment process. In the age-old battle between the professions, it is often 'star architects' who garner the most attention and invariably take the credit for large-scale design-led projects (Ponzini and Nastasi 2011). On Toronto's waterfront this phenomenon has been reversed. In the corporation's two innovative design competitions, the multi-disciplinary juries chose teams composed of landscape architects and urban designers, often over stiff competition from world-renowned architect-led

submissions. Capitalizing on the emerging connection to the 'Landscape Urbanism' movement remains a formidable opportunity for the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto and an important avenue for reinforcing the waterfront's status as a centre for design excellence.

But achieving design excellence on Toronto's waterfront using innovative regulatory measures continues to be undermined by political and financial events. Although outside of the corporation's control, these have delayed the process of implementation and reduced the positive impact of the participatory competition processes. As I discussed, the winning Central Waterfront innovative design competition entry has been beset by implementation delays and the success of the community demonstration event, Quay to the City, held in 2006, has slowly faded with time. Considering the corporation's aspiration to harness improvements to the public realm through the value of urban design and use them as a tool to attract private development capital, these implementation failures set a dangerous precedent. The political will needed to fully realize the ambitious improvements to Queens Quay has yet to be forthcoming and will undoubtedly lead some investors, large and small, to question whether the public sector's commitment to Toronto's waterfront is any more than skin deep. But, while funding Waterfront Toronto's large-scale public realm projects along the Central Waterfront has been challenging, the corporation has been much more successful with smaller, discrete interventions where only a minor funding commitment is required. Although a component of the wider Central Waterfront innovative design competition, the wave decks were quickly delivered on a tight budget, while Sugar Beach, the small urban beach mentioned towards the end of the chapter and Sherbourne Common, the park at the centre of the East Bayfront precinct, were fully completed in less than three years; evidence, perhaps, that Waterfront Toronto might consider placing a greater emphasis on smaller scale public realm interventions, rather than large-scale projects, to harness the successful design competition process it has developed and navigate the wider structural impediments it faces.

CHAPTER 8
Peer Evaluation: The Proceedings of the Toronto Waterfront Design Review Panel

Design review is a discretionary measure employed within the planning process to generate better design outcomes and instil a culture of design excellence (Lai 1988; Punter 2003a; Dawson and Higgins 2009). As explored in Chapter 3, design review panels are usually composed of a group of professional experts or local officials and, in many instances, have proven to be an effective method for encouraging private and public developers to improve their design standards and better meet the local governing authority's vision and objectives for an area. At the same time, and as a result of their quasi-independent status, many design review panels also informally monitor the governing authority's planning and design policy framework and ensure that it does not unduly stifle the creativity of the presenting design teams (Carmona 1996a; Kumar and George 2002; Punter 2003a; Dawson and Higgins 2009). But, as Punter (2003a) summarizes in his case study examination of the Urban Design Panel in Vancouver, various design review panels have been criticized for failing to adhere to clear guiding principles and allowing vague and arbitrary debates to ensue. Furthermore, architects and other design professionals often complain that design review processes do indeed stifle their creative freedom and unduly inhibit their rights to self-expression (Costonis 1989; Mandelker 1993; Scheer 1994).

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the Waterfront Design Review Panel that was established by the TWRC in 2005. I begin by examining how and why the panel was founded and explore the successes and challenges it faced in its initial years of operation. In doing so, I pay particular attention to a lengthy review of a high profile building project in 2007-2008 that caused many of the aforementioned criticisms of design review processes to be made against the panel. I then look at how the panel adapted to these critiques and changed its approach to review in light of this significant event. The chapter ends with an assessment of the panel's overall effectiveness, as well as some thoughts on the difficulties

it might encounter in the future.

Establishment of the Toronto Waterfront Design Review Panel

Over the past thirty years design review panels had become an increasingly popular tool for monitoring urban and building design (Punter 2003a). When the Waterfront Design Review Panel was first proposed by the TWRC in March 2005 (Lewington 2005a) it was an entirely new concept for Toronto. At the time there were only three design review panels operating in Canada: one in the City of Niagara Falls, another in Ottawa, under the purview of the National Capital Commission (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f), and a third in Vancouver[32]. The Vancouver panel is the most renowned design review operation in Canada. Set up in 1973, this influential body has been credited for "refining design quality, setting high standards, and creating a culture of 'peer review'" (Punter 2003a, p. 133) within Vancouver's wider design-led planning system.

The TWRC announced that its new Waterfront Design Review Panel would be charged with upholding the corporation's commitment to design excellence by providing professional and objective advice on all projects located within the Designated Waterfront Area (Ontario 2002). Its remit would include not only buildings, but also site plans, parks, streets and public art (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f). The TWRC appointed respected Toronto architect Bruce Kuwabara as the inaugural panel chair and, following the model used by the Vancouver Urban Design Panel, sought a diverse group of general members, who could bring a balance of architectural expertise and supporting professional skills. Working with Bruce Kuwabara, the corporation and the City of Toronto planning department agreed on ten applicants (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f). The initial terms of reference for the panel stated that six panel members had to be accredited by the Royal Architecture Institute of Canada, two had to be accredited by the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, one had to be accredited by the Ontario Professional Planners Association and one had to be a registered engineer (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f). To ensure that the planning authority witnesses the proceedings of the panel, the terms of reference further stated that the City of

[32] A year later the City of Toronto established a pilot design review panel in 2006 to review a limited number of high priority public and private projects in the central city. Adopting much the same format as the Waterfront Design Review Panel, it became a permanent advisory body in 2009 (City of Toronto 2012).

Toronto's director of urban design should be present at panel meetings, but as a non-voting and silent member; the panel's proceedings are also observed by the TWRC's vice-president of planning and design, who acts as the corporation's official representative (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f). All of the positions on the new panel are unpaid and the members are appointed for three years. A senior designer at the corporation reflects that, when composing the panel, the TWRC was conscious that they needed to quickly establish the panel's credibility and, as such, care was taken to get the personality balance right during the panel member selection process (TWRC 3 2011). The corporation was eager to put together a team of professional experts that not only demonstrated individual creativity and had an international reputation, but could also work well in a group setting and respect the ethos of the TWRC's planning and design mandate (TWRC 3 2011).

The panel was formally appointed in June 2005 (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005) and the first monthly meeting was held on July 19th, 2005 (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005g). The terms of reference for the panel stated that all meetings would be open to the public and the monthly meeting minutes made available on the TWRC's website (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f). Further, the corporation expects a quorum of at least five panel members to attend each meeting, although it was always hoped that a majority would be present at every session (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005i). Due to the statutory limitations of the Ontario planning system (see: Figure 5.7., p. 154), the waterfront panel is advisory only. But, the City of Toronto does expect any applicant applying for development permission on the waterfront to attend the TWRC's panel and includes this stipulation in the zoning by-law amendments for the various waterfront precincts (City of Toronto 2006a). On the other hand, these by-law amendments do not require developers to adhere to the panel's advice. As a result, The Waterfront Design Review Panel is officially independent of the City of Toronto's official site plan approval and development application process (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f) and is instead part of a suite of non-mandatory design implementation tools operated by the TWRC that is situated in-between the City of Toronto's official planning policy hierarchy and its development application process. Subsequently, all of the panel's recommendations are made directly to the corporation and "in no way replace the City of Toronto's regulatory approvals process" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization

Corporation 2005f, p. 1). Considering these limited parameters, the TWRC's vice president of planning and design, Chris Glaisek, notes that the panel tends to "influence decisions more through moral suasion than legal authority" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005g, p. 4).

Defining the Panel's Protocol

As the Waterfront Design Review Panel was a 'first of its kind' in Toronto, both the inaugural panel members and the TWRC design staff had only limited design review experience. Sharing a keenness to replicate the successes of the Urban Design Panel in Vancouver, the panel chair and the corporation decided to invite then-chair of the Vancouver panel, architect Bruce Hayden, to attend the first three review panel meetings and offer advice and feedback on their proposed procedures. Held during the Fall of 2005, these initial meetings became, in effect, an extended design review workshop. The panel members used the opportunity to both debate the purpose of design review and elaborate upon the basic operating procedures laid out in the panel terms of reference (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f).

At the first meeting Hayden told the new panel members that, regardless of the different regulatory context in Toronto, Vancouver's long-tested design review procedures were easily transferable. He took particular pains to stress that, when reviewing a project, the waterfront panel should aim to focus on the concerns they have with the proposal and avoid prescribing design solutions. In a similar vein, he emphasized that it was important for the panel to "acknowledge decisions that have already been made and strive for excellence in the next phase, rather than trying to undo previously-approved steps" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005g, p. 4). At the second meeting, in September 2005, Hayden offered more specific details on how the Vancouver panel conducts its review discussions and highlighted the need for the waterfront panel members to stay focused on a series of core urban design themes and avoid repeating, or reasserting in their own words, comments made by other panel members during the meeting (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005h). With these various rules explained, Hayden then observed the new panel conduct a moot review of a proposed building to be located on Mill Street in the West Don Lands precinct. Reflecting on this experience, a former panel member remembers that

it did not go very smoothly. “He [Bruce Hayden] said to us ‘no, no, no, you are doing it all wrong! You must go around the table. You can’t ask members to speak arbitrarily, otherwise they will talk too much and voice too many of their own opinions’” (DESIGN 1 2011). Another panel member recalls that Hayden felt the panel’s moot discussion focused too heavily on architectural style and failed to engage with the language of urban design (TWRC 5 2011).

Reacting to Hayden’s advice, the panel members and the TWRC representatives decided to begin each monthly meeting for the first six months with a discussion on the procedures of the design review panel (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006f). During this time, they settled a number of outstanding issues and refined how the panel would operate in the future. One important outcome of these debates was a conversation held at the panel’s third meeting about discussion style. Some members continued to advocate the informal back-and-forth approach that Hayden had advised against, while others felt that a more formal and structured arrangement was indeed appropriate (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005i). The entire panel agreed that a strictly person-by-person format would lead to undue repetition. To compensate for this, one panel member suggested that each presentation should begin with an introduction by a representative of the corporation. This could be used to explain the wider planning and design context for the project and also give the corporation a chance to outline the key items that they wanted feedback on. The panel decided to go forward with this approach, agreeing that it would provide them sufficient direction during their discussions (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005i).

Another issue that the panel debated concerned the type of feedback they should provide to the presenting teams. The TWRC offered very little formal guidance with respect to when projects should be brought before the panel for review and how many times they might be recalled for subsequent reviews. The terms of reference merely stated that: “Generally, the panel will operate by consensus. If consensus is not reached, majority and minority reports will be issued” (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f, p. 2). At their second meeting, Bruce Hayden had strongly advised the panel to follow the example of Vancouver and vote at the end of each project review. This way, he explained, the proponent would leave with a clear sense of the panel’s concerns. The waterfront panel members saw it differently and decided that an up or down vote would detract from their role as an advisory

board, but they did agree that each project should be reviewed at least three times at various stages of design and development (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005h; Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006g). Finally, the TWRC made clear in the panel terms of reference that each project should be reviewed against the planning and design objectives contained within the existing suite of policies and guidelines for the waterfront, including the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* and the precinct plans (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005f). Therefore, to emphasize this, TWRC president and CEO, John Campbell, reminded the panel that they must "feel comfortable working with the plans already underway, as the goal is not to re-open discussion but to move the projects forward in a positive and productive way" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005g, p. 6).

The Proceedings of the Waterfront Design Review Panel

The proceedings of the Waterfront Design Review have been shaped by two distinct episodes. The first lasted from July 2005 to January 2007 when, in a rather stark demonstration of the TWRC's 'leading with landscape' policy, the newly-created panel spent two years reviewing only strategic master plans and proposals for new parks and public spaces, causing one panel member to quip that it had become the "Waterfront Landscape Design Review Panel" (DESIGN 7 2011). The second episode began in February 2007 when the panel was asked to review a building proposal for the first time. Initially called Project Symphony, then First Waterfront Place and eventually Corus Quay, the building was a project of the Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO) and was politically and emotionally charged from the very start. The design team was called before the panel on eight separate occasions and, for numerous reasons to be explored more fully below, the ensuing proceedings were dominated by fractious debates between the project's principal architect and the review panel. These eventually led to a series of substantive changes in the way the review panel both interacts with development proponents and conducts its design review discussions.

Stepping back to its first eighteen months of operation the panel did not attract the same level of attention. Reviewing relatively uncontested planning and landscape proposals and finalizing the outstanding procedural issues mentioned above, it quickly settled into a

standard monthly format that would remain unchanged until the height of the Project Symphony fiasco in late 2007. Before each meeting the panel members were sent a black binder containing a set of 8.5" x 11" colour drawings for the purposes of familiarization. All of the monthly meetings were led by the panel chair, who would start by asking the TWRC president and CEO to provide a general summary of the corporation's activity over the previous month, followed by a more detailed update from the vice president of planning and design on the TWRC's current projects. Then, after a short question period, the chair would initiate the first review.

During its first two years of operation the panel usually saw between three or four projects per meeting. The majority of these were reviewed in open meetings where members of the public could also be present. Very occasionally, if a project was financially or politically sensitive, an in-camera session was convened. Each review began with a summary by the TWRC's vice president of planning and design, who would outline the project objectives and the issues the corporation hoped to receive feedback on. This introduction was followed by a more detailed graphic presentation by the project proponent and then, in most cases, the chair would invite the panel members to ask clarification questions. When the panel was satisfied that its questions had been answered, the chair would invite the proponent to listen to more general comments from the panel. Following the format that Hayden had earlier proposed, and some panel members have resisted for being too repetitious, each panel member was given the chance to comment on the proposal individually. In conclusion, the chair would offer a closing summary of the panel's comments, adding his own reflections if he thought something important had been missed.

Between July 2005 and February 2007, when the first building project was eventually reviewed, the panel commented on 33 proposals. Nineteen of these were parks and open spaces. These were not, it should be noted, nineteen separate parks and open spaces; rather, many projects came before the panel on more than one occasion. In addition, the panel also reviewed various components of the precinct planning documentation for the East Bayfront and the West Don Lands, as well as some of the corporation's broader strategic planning policies, including their 2005 *Sustainability Framework*. The focus upon strategic planning and parks and open spaces meant that the panel's early commentary often concentrated on broad urban design themes, in particular the relationships being forged

between newly proposed and existing components of the public realm. The panel tended to be impressed by projects that achieved consistency. In this respect, drawings and illustrations that incorporated unique or innovative solutions, but also respected the core urban design principles for the waterfront and the precinct were widely praised. Furthermore, panel members were drawn to proposals that employed minimal design moves, but achieved continuity through well-placed street furniture and landscaping elements. Often the panel would question proponents on the viability of their proposal against accepted City of Toronto engineering standards for servicing and maintenance, although only in a very general sense. In his closing summaries, the panel chair would generally draw all the preceding comments together. Frequently, this list would outline the extent to which the panel was satisfied with the project and explain where additional work was required. When a panel member did highlight design inconsistencies, or the panel was unconvinced by the goals of a proposal, the proponents were usually asked to produce additional drawings for their next visit. In some instances, especially during the first year of meetings, panel members would occasionally propose alternative design solutions. For example, some members would suggest the use of specific materials over others or voice their own opinions on the placement of particular design elements in the public realm. When schooling the panel, Hayden had advised against this type of evaluation because of its potential to lead to arbitrary discussions about architectural style that might obfuscate the evaluation mandate of a peer review process.

Reviewing Project Symphony

When the Project Symphony proposal was announced in late 2006, the working relationship between the TEDCO and the TWRC was already fairly strained. The TWRC had signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2006 with the City of Toronto and TEDCO that crystallized the TWRC's status as lead master planner of the waterfront. This crucial agreement transferred lands controlled by TEDCO in the East Bayfront and the Port Lands to the TWRC, but the MOU also stipulated that a small number of development parcels would remain in TEDCO's hands to allow some outstanding business deals to be completed (City of Toronto 2006). One such site was located just east of the Jarvis Slip in the East Bayfront precinct and had been reserved for a large media complex, dubbed 'Project Symphony'. In early 2007, with the deal almost complete, TEDCO brought the proposal

forward to the TWRC for design review, hoping to begin construction in June of that year (Hume 2007a).

As a competing government agency, TEDCO had never enthusiastically supported the TWRC's waterfront revitalization vision. As Chapter 6 recounts, TEDCO had attempted to circumvent the East Bayfront precinct planning process in 2005 by inviting Toronto architect Jack Diamond to develop a competing master plan for the area (Diebel 2005). The proposal was publically supported by the newest member of the TWRC board of directors at the time, Mayor David Miller, whose successful mayoral campaign Jack Diamond had co-chaired (Diebel 2005; Hume 2005b). At a highly charged meeting of the TWRC's board of directors held in October 2005, the board, without Miller's support, successfully quashed Diamond's proposal and moved ahead with the existing precinct plan, developed by New York firm, Koetter Kim (Diebel 2005a). Although losing this first battle, TEDCO retained Jack Diamond, and his firm Diamond + Schmidt, to produce the design for Project Symphony. With the media complex set to bring over 1,000 creative industry jobs to the waterfront in under a year, TEDCO once again secured the political backing of Mayor David Miller (Hume 2007b) – ostensibly because the project fitted with his administration's decision to make 'creativity' a central part of their wider employment agenda (City of Toronto 2008). Furthermore, it appeared that the size and scope of the project would, in all likelihood, necessitate some significant alterations to the East Bayfront precinct plan with respect to height, setback and massing (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007c). Consequently, before the Waterfront Design Review Panel had even had a chance to review the Project Symphony proposal, the process had been politicized: the first building proposed on the waterfront was to depart from the publicaly sanctioned planning framework, and, once again, architect Jack Diamond, with Mayor David Miller's blessing, was leading the fight.

Regardless of the brewing political animosity between TEDCO and the TWRC, the Waterfront Design Review Panel viewed Project Symphony through a design lens and saw the upcoming review as a crucial opportunity to cement their status as the leading authority on Toronto's waterfront design. The panel had long argued that the first building to be built on the revitalized waterfront should be subject to a rigorous evaluation and meet the highest architectural and urban design standards (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006f). Unlike the many planning strategies and public realm proposals the panel had

reviewed in 2005 and 2006 – all of which had been initiated by the TWRC – Project Symphony was not located on land controlled by the corporation. Therefore, the panel's capacity to demand these exacting design standards was more limited. Nevertheless, the TWRC was committed to making a $12.5 million contribution towards the Project Symphony project and had agreed through written correspondence with TEDCO that this money would be conditional upon the building meeting the LEED Gold level of sustainability and complying with the Waterfront Design Review Panel's recommendations (TWRC 3 2011). In addition, the zoning by-law amendment for the East Bayfront stated that all building proponents had to attend the panel, although there was no official stipulation that their advice had to be observed (City of Toronto 2006a). As a result, there was a general concern, voiced in the press, that TEDCO could simply ignore the panel's advice and carry on with the project regardless – especially as the dominant political aspiration was to bring jobs to the waterfront (Hume 2007a). Ultimately, a lack of clarity overshadowed the beginning of the review process.

Panel Proceedings on Project Symphony

TEDCO brought Project Symphony before the Waterfront Design Review Panel for the first time on February 14th, 2007 (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007d). David Dow, the presenting architect for Diamond + Schmidt, explained to the panel that the design proposal was still in the preliminary stages of development and that both the client and the architectural team eagerly awaited the panel's feedback. He also stated that, due to on-going negotiations, he was unable to share the name of the future occupant with the panel, but could reveal that the tenant was a local media company that aimed to incorporate a mixture of offices, television and radio studios and production facilities into the building (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007d). Addressing these programming needs, Dow outlined a medium-rise commercial office proposal built over a large rectilinear floorplate. He noted that the programming constraints meant it was not possible for the building to directly conform with the diagonal building line established in the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* and the corresponding zoning by-law for the area (City of Toronto 2006a). He explained that Project Symphony would incorporate a covered colonnade on a raised plinth to 'animate' the lakefront. The colonnade was also planned to jut out towards the edge of the Jarvis Slip creating a waterfront 'gateway' (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

2007d). In addition, Dow illustrated that the building would be finished with a continuous glass curtain wall, giving it a stark modernist character (Diamond and Schmitt Architects Inc. 2007).

During the evaluation that followed, the Waterfront Design Review Panel identified a litany of problems with Diamond + Schmidt's proposal (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007d). The panel members were troubled by the building's relationship to the East Bayfront precinct and, in particular, the integration of the ground floor with the surrounding public realm. Although they recognized, with some regret, that Project Symphony's unique function would necessitate the loss of the proposed diagonal building line adjacent to the Jarvis Slip, they were unconvinced that the building edge engaged with the public space proposed in West 8's competition master plan[33]. With respect to the lakefront elevation, the panel focused their criticism on the colonnade. One panel member noted that similar covered spaces in Toronto had failed to work and advised the design team to seek other solutions, while the entire panel agreed that the idea of extending the raised plinth to the waterfront promenade should be readdressed. It was argued that this response set a dangerous precedent for future development in the precinct and would create an unpleasant visual and physical barrier. A similar criticism was made about the building's east elevation, where the design team had proposed a large loading bay and vehicular access point. Again, the panel queried the sensitivity of creating such a long blank frontage and asked Dow to consider the impact it might have upon both the pedestrian experience and the viability of adjacent development sites. Extracts from the presentation materials are shown in Figure 8.1. overleaf.

[33] While the guiding master plan for the East Bayfront is the 2005 *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*, the *Central Waterfront Master plan*, produced by Dutch landscape architecture firm West 8 following the 2007 Central Waterfront Innovative Design Competition, provides detailed landscape design for the entire length of Queens Quay Boulevard and the water's edge promenade and therefore overlays the schematic proposals contained in the precinct plan (see: Chapter 8).

Figure 8.1. Project Symphony Presentation Materials, Feb. 14th, 2007
(Images from: Waterfront Toronto 2007j, p. 9 (Image 1) and p. 18 (Image 2))

Figure 8.1. (Image 1) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an architectural site plan of the proposed Project Symphony building on Toronto's waterfront (the caption below provides a more detailed description). Original Source: Waterfront Toronto (2007j). *Symphony Project (Presentation to Waterfront Design Review Panel, February 14th, 2007)*. Toronto: Waterfront Toronto, p. 9.

Initial site plan of Project Symphony shown in relation to the Jarvis Slip and adjacent land parcels. The red triangle denotes the intended diagonal building line proposed in the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* by Koetter Kim.

Figure 8.1. (Image 2) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an architectural elevation of the proposed Project Symphony building on Toronto's waterfront (the caption below provides a more detailed description). Original Source: Waterfront Toronto (2007j). *Symphony Project (Presentation to Waterfront Design Review Panel, February 14th, 2007)*. Toronto: Waterfront Toronto, p. 18.

Initial southern (front) elevation of Project Symphony that demonstrates the projection of the building into the public realm on the east and west elevations, as well as the covered colonnade facing the water's edge promenade.

Turning their attention to the building facade, the panel questioned whether it was appropriate to wrap the entire structure in a glass curtain wall. Concerned that such an uninterrupted treatment would emphasize the building's commercial function and give it the appearance of being a 'big glass box', the panel suggested that Diamond + Schmidt consider ways to improve the massing and articulation. The chair ended the review by reminding Dow that the panel wanted the first building on the waterfront to achieve a spectacular standard of architectural design. Project Symphony, he concluded, did not yet "create a 'signature' on the waterfront commensurate with the site" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007d, p. 10). He therefore requested that the design team consult with a sub-committee of the Waterfront Design Review Panel[34], before the next review, to address the long list of outstanding design issues.

Hoping to keep to their expedited design and development timetable, the Project Symphony design team returned to the Waterfront Design Review Panel five weeks later, on March 21st 2007 (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007e). This time, Diamond + Schmidt principal Jack Diamond took the lead presenting role. He noted that a series of changes had been made in response to the February meeting and the subsequent discussions with the design review sub-committee. The most substantial modification was the creation of two parallel north-south building masses connected by a central atrium. This, Diamond explained, was intended to reduce the perceived bulk of the building. As a result, the covered waterfront colonnade was no longer included and the building did not project into the public realm on its east and west flanks. Diamond also explained that an at-grade studio and two retail spaces would occupy the ground floor. He went on to inform the panel that the design team had more thoroughly addressed the building's relationship with the public realm adjacent to the Jarvis Slip and now proposed an amphitheatre shielded by a canopy on the building's west elevation, as well as a 'media tower' that would incorporate a large LCD screen and the tenant's satellite communications equipment. Extracts from the presentation materials are shown in Figure 8.2. overleaf.

[34] The formation of a sub-committee was not a standard procedure for the Waterfront Design Review Panel. The chair decided to establish the committee due to the exceptional concerns that were raised about Project Symphony. A small group of review panel members therefore met for an informal discussion in-between the first and second reviews with the design team; no official minutes were taken.

Figure 8.2. Project Symphony Presentation Materials, March 21st, 2007
(Image from: Waterfront Toronto 2007b, p. 3)

Figure 8.2. has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an architectural rendering of the proposed Project Symphony building on Toronto's waterfront (the caption below provides a more detailed description). Original Source: Waterfront Toronto (2007b). *TEDCO-Corus Building (Presentation by Bruce Kuwabara to Waterfront Toronto Board of Directors, December 7th, 2007)*. Toronto: Waterfront Toronto, p. 3.

Revised visualization of Project Symphony illustrating the introduction of two distinct buildings elements joined together by a central atrium, as well as the new 'media tower' located on the edge of Jarvis Slip.

As the review was about to begin, the chair recognized that a tense atmosphere was developing and reminded the panel members to "think in terms of finding a process for moving forward" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007e, p. 5). What ensued was an extended, and at times bitter question session and evaluation period. Initially, the panel responded well to the introduction of two 'pier buildings' joined by a central atrium, although some panel members were unconvinced that it actually reduced the building's bulk. When Diamond explained that public access to the central atrium was unlikely to be granted once the building was occupied, this criticism intensified. One panel member stated, for example, that it would create an "entirely private 'glass fortress'" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007e, p. 5). This comment once again led the panel into a protracted discussion about Project Symphony's relationship to the surrounding public realm and the importance of animating the ground floor. The introduction of retail and open studio spaces on the west side of the building was positively received, but the panel was unimpressed by the treatment of the other three building edges – all of which were dominated by administrative offices and, on the north elevation, by large loading bays. The

panel unanimously agreed that the north façade, in particular, “should be more inviting and pedestrian-friendly” (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007e, p. 5). Diamond’s proposed media tower was also widely disliked and a number of panel members argued that it contradicted the intent of the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*, which sought to open up views to the water along Jarvis Slip. Furthermore, the panel continued to disapprove of the architectural treatment that Diamond + Schmidt had adopted and argued that the glass curtain wall failed to create a relationship between the building and the lake.

The panel’s greatest concern centred upon how Project Symphony responded to the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*. The combination of the building’s size and location meant that many of the north-south and east-west connections imagined in the precinct plan had been compromised. Some panel members were very concerned that the project might have a detrimental impact on future development sites and thus the validity of the precinct planning process. This criticism, which had already been raised at the previous meeting, led to a considerable breakdown in the dialogue between the panel and the proponent. The chair informed the panel that it was not appropriate for them to question the basic form and position of the building at this stage of the review. A number of panel members countered that it was part of their mandate to ensure that the TWRC’s wider planning objectives were followed. As one member was recorded as saying: “if someone wants to build on the waterfront the rules developed through the precinct plan should be followed” (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007e, p. 8). Frustrated by the unclear messages he was receiving from the panel, Diamond also joined in the heated conversation. He argued that the advice of the sub-committee was at odds with the current concerns of the panel and complained that it was unfair to assume that he could not deliver a high quality building on the waterfront.

Bringing the fraught discussion to a close, the chair reiterated the panel’s shared belief that the first building on the waterfront should “spark the public’s imagination” (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007e, p. 9) and, repeating what had been said at the previous month’s meeting, stated that a more compelling design was needed. In particular, he implored upon Diamond and his design team to consider how they might find a way to harmonize Project Symphony and the spirit of the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*. It was also agreed that the panel members would hold a more general discussion with the TWRC

design staff about how they should respond to projects that deviate from the agreed planning framework for the waterfront. With this in mind, the panel determined that they could not yet offer support for Project Symphony and, rather vaguely, the chair then asked that the design team "do its best to respond to the feedback" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007e, p. 8) and return to the panel the following month. At Diamond's suggestion it was also agreed to end the sub-committee meetings because, in his opinion, they had only muddled the design review process.

As the Waterfront Design Review Panel meetings were open to the public, the outcome of the March 2007 meeting quickly made its way to the press. In an open comment to the *Toronto Star* newspaper, panel chair Bruce Kuwabara voiced his concerns about the evolving design of the building and the panel's shared desire for architectural excellence on the waterfront (Hume 2007a; 2007b). Reacting to Kuwabara's remarks, Mayor David Miller responded that the panel should be more careful about how it raised issues in public and, in a statement recorded by the *Toronto Star*'s architecture critic, Christopher Hume, he argued that:

> The head of the panel is like a judge…Architects aren't always practiced judges and they need to understand the importance of that process having some integrity. That's the issue I'm concerned about, because if the process doesn't work and this is the first shot at it, it's going to undermine our efforts to have design review and raise the standards of design across the city. This one on the waterfront has to succeed, and part of that is ensuring impartiality and not pre-judging the issues before there's full and complete discussion (quoted in Hume 2007b, p. E03)

The observations made to the press by both the panel chair and the mayor only served to intensify the animosity between the design review panel and the proponent's design team in the run up to the April 2007 meeting. As one panel member reflects, both groups wanted to come out of the process with their professional reputations intact; a lot was therefore riding on the outcome of the panel meeting (DESIGN 7 2011). Project Symphony thus returned to the Waterfront Design Review Panel in front of a full public gallery on April 11th 2007, where it was scheduled as the only agenda item (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007f). In his opening remarks, Chris Glaisek, the TWRC vice president of planning and

design, explained that TEDCO and Diamond + Schmidt had worked closely with the corporation to reconcile many of the outstanding differences between the Project Symphony proposal and the principles of the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*. In particular, he noted that the two development corporations had agreed on a revised site plan that created a more generous public space between the Jarvis Slip and the west elevation of Project Symphony. With this in mind, Glaisek asked the panel to consider whether the building now met, 'in principle', the corporation's standards for design excellence. Following his remarks, Jack Diamond presented the latest design iteration of Project Symphony. In addition to the alterations made to the Jarvis Slip, he noted that the design team had sought to address the panel's concerns with respect to the bulk of the building. Specifically, the two building wings had been reconfigured in an asymmetrical arrangement to break up the massing of the waterfront elevation. The tenant had also agreed to allow public access into a portion of the central atrium, providing a route to the building's underground parking garage. Diamond also explained that the various loading docks for the building had been consolidated and the proposed 'media tower' had been transformed into a sculptural lighthouse. A reporter from the *National Post* newspaper recorded that Diamond ended his presentation by testily remarking to the panel, "No applause?" (quoted in Kuitenbrouwer 2007, p. 1).

A number of the changes Diamond and his team proposed were well received during the ensuing review. Generally speaking, the panel was satisfied with the new asymmetrical north elevation and agreed that it successfully reduced the bulkiness of the building. They also supported the continuing emphasis on ground floor retail, as well as the improved relationship forged between Project Symphony and the Jarvis Slip public space. Furthermore, the panel was pleased to see the consolidation of the loading bays. They were less impressed with the building's accessibility. During the question period, one panel member asked Diamond to clarify how the building was accessed. He explained that the main entrance would primarily serve vehicles and, therefore, the design emphasized access from the parking garage to the central atrium. Numerous panel members disagreed with this strategy, arguing that it favoured the car and ignored how pedestrians and cyclists might approach the building. It was therefore suggested that the design team consider making the other ground floor access points more visible. Diamond countered that, although the design was still preliminary, he was not inclined to make the ground floor entrances a prominent feature of the overall design.

Examining the building's broader relationship with the public realm, the panel expressed their shared concern that Project Symphony was still situated on a raised plinth which, as had been noted at the first review, damaged the visual connection between the building's north elevation and the water's edge. The panel also advised Diamond to remove the proposed 'lighthouse' adjacent to the Jarvis Slip and make a concerted effort to improve the canopy overlooking the future public space (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007f). Predictably, the atmosphere of the meeting degraded when the panel turned to the architectural treatment of the building. Reiterating what had been said at the previous two review panel meetings, panel member Siamak Hariri pointedly attacked the credibility of the design by stating: "Do you want to see something special on this site, or is this just another site? Do you want something that we might consider would have magic; that would take our breath away? Or, dare we say it, that the world might notice?" (quoted in Kuitenbrouwer 2007, p. 1). Ignoring the advice that Bruce Hayden had previously given to the panel, Hariri then began to outline a dramatically different design solution, proposing that Project Symphony be repositioned and cantilever over the lake. Hariri's comments angered Diamond and, as Peter Kuitenbrouwer of the *National Post* reported, he returned to the presenting podium to rebuke the panel member's suggestion:

> We could not be more diametrically opposed. You do not take a shape and cram a use into it. The idea to get something cantilevered: that speaks to me of provincial insecurity. I couldn't disagree with you more, Siamak. You do your buildings your way, I'll do my buildings my way, and we'll see in history which ones last the test of time (quoted in Kuitenbrouwer 2007, p. 1).

Although the heated review had tested the patience of both the panel and the presenting team, the panel did ultimately agree to support Project Symphony in principle (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007f). The chair emphasized to the design team that they still needed to "push a bit further to create a building which reflects its context on the waterfront" (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2007f, p. 5) and concluded the session by requesting they return with more detailed design proposals before a final approval could be granted. Thanking the panel for their comments, Diamond reiterated that he took exception to the panel's opinion that Project Symphony should be bold and iconic.

Project Symphony returned to the panel for its fourth evaluation on June 13th, 2007 (Waterfront Toronto 2007c). As the illustrations in Figure 8.3. below and overleaf demonstrate, Diamond + Schmidt had developed the graphical presentation of the project significantly and could better present a detailed picture of the scheme. The consequent review was less acrimonious and the panel agreed that the design had improved slightly since the last meeting (Waterfront Toronto 2007c). But they still remained very sceptical of the building's architectural treatment and its relationship to the East Bayfront precinct – both of which were relatively unchanged, in spite of their advice. The panel's detailed criticism continued to focus on the interface between the building and the surrounding public realm. Also, the panel was keen to see the design team provide clearer evidence of how Project Symphony would interact with West 8's emerging master plan for the waterfront promenade.

Figure 8.3. Project Symphony Presentation Materials, June 13th, 2007
(Images from: Waterfront Toronto 2007k, p. 22 (Image 1) and p. 18 (Image 2, overleaf))

Figure 8.3. (Image 1) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an architectural elevation of the proposed Project Symphony building on Toronto's waterfront (the caption below provides a more detailed description). Original Source: Waterfront Toronto (2007k). *TEDCO - CORUS (Presentation to Waterfront Design Review Panel, June 13th, 2007)*. Toronto: Waterfront Toronto, p. 22.

These improved graphics demonstrate the core principles that underpinned the revised Project Symphony proposal. The top image illustrates the asymmetry on the south elevation, which the panel agreed helped to break up the impact of the singular façade treatment. On the other hand, the image overleaf shows the extent to which the large loading bay doors on the eastern elevation negatively impact the adjacent streetscape.

A visual comparison between these illustrations and those shown in Figure 8.1. and 8.2. also reveal the extent to which the overall bulk and facade treatment of Project Symphony changed very little, despite the panel's advice.

Figure 8.3. (cont.) Project Symphony Presentation Materials, June 13th, 2007

Figure 8.3. (Image 2) has been removed due to copyright restrictions. It was an architectural elevation of the proposed Project Symphony building on Toronto's waterfront (the caption on the previous page provides a more detailed description). Original Source: Waterfront Toronto (2007k). *TEDCO - CORUS (Presentation to Waterfront Design Review Panel, June 13th, 2007)*. Toronto: Waterfront Toronto, p. 18.

Similar issues were raised when the building, now renamed First Waterfront Place, came before the panel for a fifth time on November 14th, 2007 (Waterfront Toronto 2007d). The panel members persisted with their strong objections to the multiple loading bays on the east elevation, all of which remained unaltered despite the detrimental impact they would likely have upon adjacent development sites. The panel also reemphasized their concerns about the building's relationship to the surrounding public realm and questioned the design team's decision to situate a ground floor coffee shop on the southeast corner of the building, rather than overlooking the proposed public space at Jarvis Slip. Furthermore, the panel was unimpressed that the previously public space located in the building's central atrium had been expropriated for conferencing and staff meetings (Waterfront Toronto 2007d). Yet again, the panel reserved their most visceral criticisms for the architectural treatment of the building. In fact, many members of the panel felt that, rather than improve, the proposed building had been compromised since the last panel meeting.

The panel pointedly questioned the loss of the recessed 8th floor of the building, the removal of a proposed sculpture in the central atrium and the decision to use tinted concrete rather than granite on the external ground floor pillars. David Dow, the presenting architect,

explained that cost constraints had precipitated all of these changes. In response, the panel argued that many of the building's best features had been 'value engineered out' and the result was a "mundane, flat and boxy form" (Waterfront Toronto 2007d, p. 8). As one panel member cuttingly observed, the building belonged on a site overlooking Ontario's 401 highway, rather than the waterfront.

Approval of Project Symphony/First Waterfront Place

On November 30th, 2007, following almost a year of acrimonious back and forth, as well as considerable intransigence on the part of TEDCO's design team, the review panel chair forwarded a memorandum to the Waterfront Toronto board of directors detailing the panel's concerns with the state of the proposal (Waterfront Toronto 2007b). He explained that the design of First Waterfront Place had been dramatically altered between the review panel meeting in June 2007 and the most recent meeting on November 14th, 2007 and, for this reason, the Waterfront Design Review Panel could no longer support the conditional approval it had granted TEDCO in April 2007 (Waterfront Toronto 2007b). At a special public meeting of the Waterfront Toronto board of directors, held on December 7th 2007, the corporation unanimously endorsed the concern's raised by the Waterfront Design Review Panel and passed a motion to withhold Waterfront Toronto's remaining funding commitment of $9 million for First Waterfront Place until "the Board is satisfied that appropriate design changes have been incorporated" (Waterfront Toronto 2007e, p. 2). An initial amount of $3.5 million was forward to TEDCO as a gesture of goodwill. Recognizing the increasingly political nature of the project, the board also compelled the panel chair to complete the review and approve the scheme as soon as possible – if necessary by convening their own special meeting.

With political pressure mounting, the Waterfront Design Review Panel eventually granted conditional approval for First Waterfront Place just over a month later on January 21st 2008 (Waterfront Toronto 2008f). The architectural treatment of the building remained little changed, although the panel did accept that crucial improvements had been made, including the reinstatement of the 8th floor. Yet it was clear that the panel was never going to be fully satisfied with the overall design strategy, nor the design team with the panel's advice. Indeed, the panel's tepid approval was clearly recorded in the meeting minutes:

> The Chair asked how the Panel would like to conclude its review. One Panel member stated that they were satisfied that the current design had addressed the Panel's concerns, noting that they were willing to approve the project at this point. Another Panel member agreed that the proponent had responded to many of the Panel's specific concerns, but questioned whether it was a great building and where the spirit was. They added that there is still room for improvement, even given the tight timing, noting that great architecture is formed under great pressure (Waterfront Toronto 2008f, p. 5).

As many panel members felt there were still significant issues to address, it was agreed that the panel's approval and the TWRC's remaining financing would be subject to an array of conditions (Waterfront Toronto 2008f). Foremost was an unusual request that the design review process continue through the construction drawing phase. This stipulation stemmed from on-going concerns about the quality of architectural details, materials and other fine-grain components, all of which appeared to be under threat from funding restrictions. Corus Entertainment, the media company that would be taking over the lease of the new building, had also employed a new design firm, Quadrangle Architects, to complete the detailed interior design work. Therefore, the panel wanted to monitor how the evolving design for the interior spaces would relate to both the exterior fabric and the surrounding public realm (Waterfront Toronto 2008f). First Waterfront Place subsequently returned for two further clarification review sessions in February and July 2008 (Waterfront Toronto 2008g; Waterfront Toronto 2008h) and the building, eventually named Corus Quay, was built during 2009 and 2010; it officially opened in September 2010 (Waterfront Toronto 2010c).

Reflections on the Design Review Process

The design review process for Project Symphony/First Waterfront Place ended with mixed results. On the one hand the panel "contributed a lot to the finished product of the building and forced the designer and the applicant…into doing a better job, particularly on the ground floor layout" (TORONTO 6 2011). Many of the panel's concerns were addressed, including the configuration of the Jarvis Slip public space and the overall massing of the building. Furthermore, the design team removed some of the building's more controversial architectural elements, such as the media tower/lighthouse and the waterfront colonnade.

Nevertheless, the panel was never able to support Diamond + Schmidt's architectural philosophy, nor could they fully reconcile with the significant variances that had been forced upon the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*, including the poor relationship the building generated with Jarvis Slip and the negative impact the eastern loading docks had on the streetscape (see: Figure 8.4. overleaf). As a senior urban designer at Waterfront Toronto concedes: "there were never intended to be blocks that big in East Bayfront and the footprint of that building is just enormous" (TWRC 3 2011). In the end, the panel's capacity to bring any real force to bear on the recalcitrant architectural team was severely limited by Waterfront Toronto's lack of legal authority over the TEDCO-controlled land parcel that had been reserved for the project in the MOU (City of Toronto 2006). If the relationship between the two government agencies had been healthier and if TEDCO had shared Waterfront Toronto's vision for the waterfront the result might have been different. As it was, too much bad blood had built up since the disagreement over the master planning of East Bayfront and a state of mutual distrust and stasis had persisted.

Yet the panel's authority was also impacted by the fact that Project Symphony had become politicized during the review process – a situation that was amplified by Mayor David Miller's enthusiastic support for the project and his parallel role on the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto board of directors. In May 2007, the City of Toronto Council, led by Miller, had approved a loan to TEDCO of $132 million to complete the project and, at the same time, offered Corus Entertainment a significant twenty-year tax relief benefit if they moved to the waterfront site (City of Toronto 2007). At the *Toronto Star*, Christopher Hume described this as a 'sweetheart deal' and accused the City of Toronto of approving a mediocre project in a rush to attract jobs (Hume 2007c). In a similar vein, the senior Waterfront Toronto urban designer provides a revealing series of reflections on the politics that were woven throughout the design review process of Project Symphony:

> …there could have been other ways to accommodate that user and that type of development more sensitively in the context of the Precinct Plan, but there was not a whole lot of political desire to do that because the political desire was to achieve a certain set of objectives in a certain limited period of time, using a certain number of players who had very fixed ideas about what they wanted. There was not a willingness to try and engage in changing it (TWRC 3 2011).

Figure 8.4. Images of the completed Corus Building
(Photographs by the author)

Yet, while both the attitude of the design team and the politics surrounding the review of Project Symphony/First Waterfront Place made the Waterfront Design Review Panel's job very difficult, it was equally evident that the panel failed to operate effectively under pressure and did not live up to the procedural objectives it had set itself. One panel member remembers that the process was "kind of theatre," but admitted that it was "a theatre that nobody really won" (DESIGN 7 2011). Another reflects that many panel members failed to focus on the correct issues during the evaluation and made the mistake of turning the review into a pure architectural critique (DESIGN 1 2011). When this occurred, she explains, the discussion usually became unpleasant:

> It became a situation of architects against architects, ego against ego. All these very high profile Toronto architects…It was a tough thing because Jack Diamond has been an architect working in the industry for years. He is now kind of a grandfather of the architectural industry in Canada. He is very highly respected and has done some beautiful buildings. He is not used to this process of other people coming in and telling him what to do with his work (DESIGN 1 2011).

One of the architects working on Diamond's team insisted that "it was a classic case of them all wanting to design the building" (DESIGN 6 2011). The panel, he argues, acted more like an 'aesthetic police' than an objective advisory board and, moreover, their critical commentary was frequently inconsistent. Therefore, the design team would often leave the panel meetings confused about how to satisfy the multifarious concerns that had been raised (DESIGN 6 2011). A member of the public who attended all of the Project Symphony panel sessions also noticed this problem:

> I must say I had a lot of sympathy for Jack Diamond and his staff because the design review panel is large and not all of them attend every meeting. They [the design team] would go to the meeting one month and be told 'do this, do that, do the other' and then the next meeting they might meet a complete different group of people who would tell them completely opposite things. I think it was a very frustrating process. Not that they've put up a particularly beautiful building but it was a very, I thought, a very frustrating process (CIVIL 2 2011).

New By-Law for Waterfront Review Panel

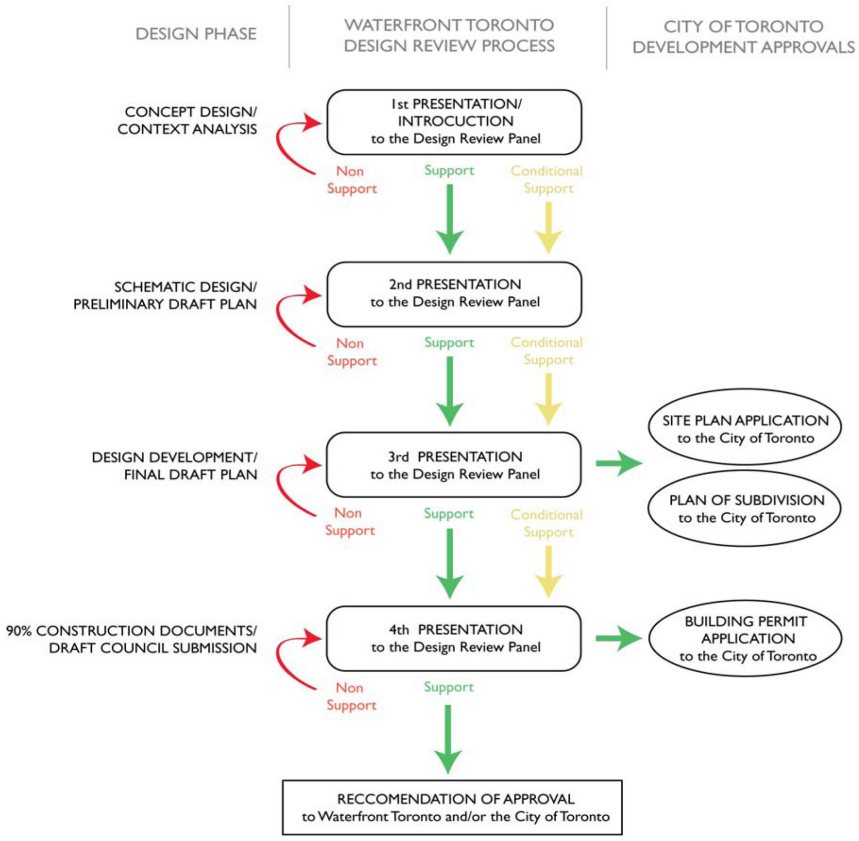
Recognizing that the Waterfront Design Review Panel could be much more effective, the corporation's design team worked with the panel to develop a new set of comprehensive procedural guidelines during late 2007 (Waterfront Toronto 2007d). These were adopted in the form of a new by-law at the beginning of the panel's January 2008 meeting (Waterfront Toronto 2008f) and, in contrast to the earlier three-page terms of reference, the new *Waterfront Design Review Panel By-Laws, Policies, and Procedures* offered more precise details on how the panel should function. Many of the original conditions remained intact: the panel members would still receive a set of drawings and other presentation materials prior to the meeting and, before each project presentation, the TWRC's vice president of planning and design would explain the corporation's aims and objectives relating to the proposal. Reiterating an earlier principle, the new by-law also requested that the panel conduct its reviews within the agreed planning and design framework for the waterfront, but it added that the panel must notify the corporation if they disagreed with particular policies and regulations and was also explicit that the panel must not hold up the progress of an individual project if broader strategic concerns remained unresolved. Recognizing that serious mistakes had been made with respect to Project Symphony, one of the corporation's senior urban designers notes that: "It had started off being very much like a kind of architectural school review…so we tightened it up a bit. We tried to stop it becoming an architectural discourse between the designer and the design critics" (TWRC 3 2011).

A further modification contained within the new by-law was a much clearer statement on how many times a project could be reviewed by the panel. The original terms of reference gave no direction on this, although, as aforementioned, the panel did informally agree at an early meeting to review each design proposal at least three times (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2005g). To improve clarity and avoid some of the inconsistencies experienced on Project Symphony, which came before the panel a total of eight times, the new by-law incorporated a phased review structure. This required all projects, whether buildings, public open spaces or planning strategies, to receive a minimum of four reviews. The four phases were staggered and purposefully included an early conceptual review to allow the panel an opportunity to "focus on the quality and appropriateness of the main design intent, or 'the big idea' of the project" (Waterfront Toronto 2008i, p. 6), before the

production of more detailed designs (see: Figure 8.5. overleaf).

The most important and, indeed, most controversial component of the phased review process was the introduction of voting. As previously discussed, the panel had initially decided not to vote at the end of each review, but following the confusion surrounding Project Symphony the corporation insisted that the panel reconsider. The TWRC argued that voting on whether to support a project or not was essential if the panel wished to avoid the accusation of proffering contradictory advice. As a senior TWRC urban designer explains, "it was, I think, very necessary to force the panel members to actually make a clear statement: do they like it? Do they not? Before we had the voting we had all sorts of discussion all over the place" (TWRC 3 2011). During the discussions leading up to the introduction of the new by-law, the panel remained very resistant to the proposal. At the December 2007 panel meeting, Chris Glaisek, the TWRC's vice president of planning and design, urged the panel to vote for the first time on the last project up for review that day, the initial plans for a public space called Sherbourne Park (Waterfront Toronto 2007f). He informed the panel that the new by-law was already written and would take effect at the next meeting, so it was sensible for them to practice the new format. The minutes further recorded that he "reminded the Panel that…a more decisive statement to the design team early on might have avoided the lengthy and difficult review process experienced on Project Symphony" (Waterfront Toronto 2007f, p. 6). The panel duly voted, producing a verdict of 'non support' for the Sherbourne Park schematic designs proposal. With this vote, the design team was asked to produce a new proposal (Waterfront Toronto 2007f). At their following meeting, on January 21st 2008, the panel also voted for the first time on Project Symphony/First Waterfront Place. As previously discussed, the project was given conditional approval at that session; the verdict in this instance was unanimous (Waterfront Toronto 2008f).

Figure 8.5. Phrased Review Process for the Waterfront Design Review Panel
(Image from: Waterfront Toronto 2008i, p. 8, reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



Panel Procedures After the By-Law Amendments

The corporation's vice president of planning and design, Chris Glaisek, argues that the introduction of clearer procedural guidelines and voting, has improved the clarity of the Waterfront Design Review Panel's advice. He asserts "…there is an amazing amount of agreement between the panel members all the time. They argue about different specifics but, since we have started voting, very often the vote is unanimous one way or the other" (Glaisek 2011, interview). A qualitative reading of the meeting minutes released before and after the introduction of the new by-law indicates that the quality of the panel's discussions improved as a result of the various operational changes. The decision to consider a specific set of issues at each phase of the review process helped the panel to focus their discussions and avoid offering 'design solutions' during the course of their evaluations.

Moreover, the knowledge that each review would conclude with a vote appeared to help the panel to be more consistent. The result was that the chair's final summaries were much more direct and less ambiguous than before. To better understand these improvements, I will now turn to the case of Sherbourne Common, which, as mentioned earlier, was the first project to be subject to a vote in December 2007 (Waterfront Toronto 2007f).

Reviewing Sherbourne Common

As part of the precinct planning process for East Bayfront, which was addressed in Chapter 6, Waterfront Toronto reserved a 1.47-hectare parcel of land at the heart of the district for development as a public park. Recognized, also, as a core component of the corporation's 'leading with landscape' policy, the public space was envisioned to be a catalyst for redevelopment in the East Bayfront precinct and a key gathering place on the wider waterfront (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2006b). Since the park was a Waterfront Toronto-led public realm project, the context of the decision-making process was different to that which surrounded Project Symphony. This time, the corporation had direct control over the land, the budget and the design team and, as a result, the atmosphere was much less politically charged. That being said, the effectiveness and impartiality of the review process was to be tested in other ways because the head of the design team for Sherbourne Common – Greg Smallenberg from Vancouver-based firm Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg (PFS) – also happened to be a voting member of the review panel. There were also similarities between the two projects[35]. While the Corus Building was the first architectural project in the East Bayfront precinct, Sherbourne Common was the first public space. Therefore, both projects were major additions to the new master planned precinct and precedents for future development.

Sherbourne Common came before the Waterfront Design Review Panel a total of five times during 2007 and 2008 and, as noted earlier, the panel voted unanimously in favour of a non-support motion when the initial design proposal was presented for its second review on December 12th, 2007 (Waterfront Toronto 2007f). The criticisms that precipitated this vote were raised at both the December meeting and the preceding review on October 10th, 2007.

[35] According to the terms of the *Waterfront Design Review Panel By-Laws, Policies, and Procedures* Smallenberg was barred from taking part in the review, although he was permitted to present.

At this first presentation, Smallenberg explained that the design team had developed their conceptual vision for Sherbourne Park within the context of the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan*, as well as the wider 'green tissue' of parks and public spaces along the waterfront. He emphasized how the design capitalized on the lineal relationships and sightlines between the city and the water, mirroring the 'Foot of Toronto' vision set out in the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework* (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2003c). Conceptualizing the park as a 'green slip', the design aimed to symbolically connect the park to the nearby Jarvis and Parliament slips and accent the public edge of the waterfront. The park itself, Smallenberg told the panel, would embody "beauty, detail, play, serenity and life" (Waterfront Toronto 2007g, p. 3) and, although segmented into two sections by Queens Quay, it was designed to feel like one continuous space. He also explained that the design team had visualized Sherbourne Park as two episodes of the same space. The northern portion of the park would have a neighbourhood sense of place, while the larger southern section was intended as a grand civic destination. To convey these broad principles, Smallenberg and his team presented two alternative conceptual schemes. As illustrated in the first two images in Figure 8.6. (p. 304), the first proposal, called 'The Crib and Fill', envisaged a series of different sized outdoor rooms and aimed to encourage a diversity of activities. While the second proposal, termed 'The Pier', tried to renew the historical path of Sherbourne Street to the water's edge by creating a jetty for mooring and summer theatre performances. Both incorporated a mixture of hard and soft landscaping elements and included a distinctive rolling lawn. In the review that followed, the panel flagged a number of problems with Smallenberg's proposal. They were sceptical of the overall vision for the park and asserted that a 'smorgasbord' of conflicting elements had obscured the big idea of a 'green slip'. The panel was also unconvinced that a successful relationship had been achieved between the two episodes of the park on either side of Queens Quay. Furthermore, the panel questioned the integration of a series of water features among the park's many other landscape elements and recommended that the design team think about how water might be incorporated more comprehensively into the scheme.

At the second review, in December 2007, Smallenberg explained that he had taken heed of the panel's advice. A much larger rolling lawn now emphasized the previously well-received concept of the 'green slip' and the various elements of the park had been grouped together and arranged more simply. Smallenberg once again presented a series of design options,

although this time the three proposals he shared had a more common language. Each incorporated a strong north-south promenade on the western edge and a pier to underscore the historical path of Sherbourne Street. The design team had also decided to consolidate the park's playful elements on the eastern edges and, therefore, a new linear strip had emerged. Smallenberg explained that this new edge would be dominated by a series of pavilions designed by Toronto architect Steven Teeple and multiple public art installations by Vancouver-based artist Jill Anholt. When it was time for the panel's feedback, their comments mirrored the criticisms of the last review. With the exception of the pavilions, which the panel agreed brought a "…touch of international architecture onto the site" (Waterfront Toronto 2007f, p. 5), the 'green slip' proposal was attacked on numerous fronts. The panel remained in agreement that Smallenberg's big idea was still obscured by too many superfluous objects. One panel member noted that "…the scheme miniaturized everything on the waterfront" (Waterfront Toronto 2007f, p. 5), while another devastatingly stated that the eastern edge of the park appeared to resemble a "miniature golf course" (Waterfront Toronto 2007f, p. 5).

The panel also felt that the rolling lawn was an overt representation of a wave and that, furthermore, it was inappropriate for large public gatherings. The panel did react well to the emphasis placed on water throughout the park, but they agreed that the design team could push this idea further. For example, one panel member urged Smallenberg to make "the idea of water and purification even larger, noting that it could act as a 'science experiment' at a big scale and could be very iconic" (Waterfront Toronto 2007f, p. 5). After the panel voted unanimously not to support the design in its current state, the chair asked for the design team to find ways to consolidate their ideas and continue to improve the park's relationship with the water and Queens Quay.

Figure 8.6. Progressive Design Concepts for Sherbourne Park

(Images from: Waterfront Toronto 2007l, p. 56 (Image 1) and p. 61 (Image 2); 2007m, p. 5 (Images 3, 4, and 5), all reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)

The initial 'Crib and Fill' proposal (presented October 2007) emphasizing multiple outdoor rooms.

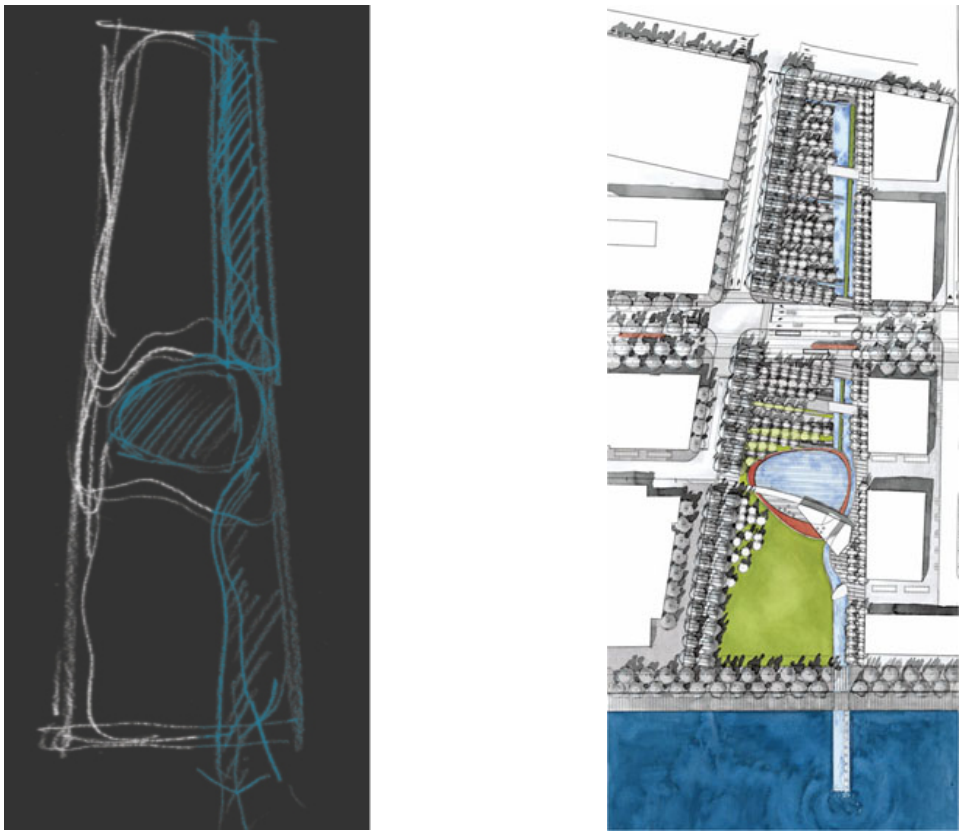
The initial 'Pier' proposal (presented October 2007) stressing the continuation of Sherbourne Street to the water's edge.

The three 'Green Slip' variations (presented December 2007), placed the multiple public art and architectural elements of the park on the eastern edge and used a rolling lawn to define the primary public gathering space. The review panel criticized it for resembling a 'miniature golf course' and parodying the wider waterfront district (Waterfront Toronto 2007f).

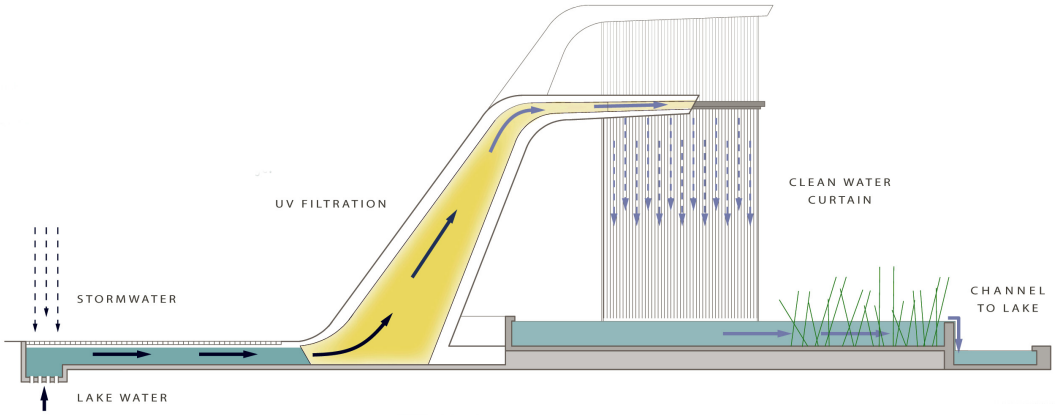
When he returned to face his design review panel colleagues for a third time on February 13th, 2008, Smallenberg admitted that he had been initially disappointed by the panel's unanimous request for a revised design concept. But he went on to explain that after a period of reflection the design team had been able to use the panel's constructive feedback to great effect and produce what he believed was a much improved proposal (Waterfront Toronto 2008g). The most important change Smallenberg made was to simplify the overall design concept. Gone were the multiple layers of design elements and in their place were three interconnected big moves, 'the Woods', 'the Water' and 'the Green'. The transformation of the design for Sherbourne Park is well illustrated in Figure 8.8. overleaf and the impact of the panel's recommendations, especially their call for a more cohesive design language, is unmistakable.

Following the panel's advice, the design team reassessed how water could be integrated into the scheme and, in particular, considered how it might become a more tactile component of the park, as one panel member had proposed. The result was an open storm water system that weaved through the park to the lake, but also opened out in the centre of the park to form a summer pool/winter ice rink. The relationship between the landscape design and public art was also greatly improved. Accepting the panel's criticism that the various public art components detracted from the spirit of the space, artist Jill Anholt proposed a majestic series of cantilevered sculptural gantries that would simultaneously act as waterfront purification devices for the stormwater passing through the open stream. The vision behind these structures spoke to the corporation's wider sustainability goals and aspired to "reconnect everyday life to the natural world…and…engage people directly, revealing the connection of the park and its visitors to the environment at large" (Phillips Farevaag Smallenberg 2008a, p. 19). The basic mechanics of the water filtration system are shown in Figure 8.8. as well. Smallenberg also accepted the panel's advice with respect to the rolling grass and replaced it with a traditional uncontoured lawn. The last major alteration the design team made was to consolidate the various pavilions into one larger pavilion adjacent to the summer pool/winter ice rink. However, the architectural treatment of the pavilion remained unchanged because the panel had reacted well to the architect's initial ideas.

Figure 8.7. Revised Design for Sherbourne Park (Fl'eau)
(Waterfront Toronto 2008l, p. 1 (Image 1), p. 4 (Image 2) and p. 22 (Image 4); Waterfront Toronto 2008m, p. 19 (Image 3), all reproduced by kind permission of Waterfront Toronto)



The revised design concept (left) and park master plan (right) demonstrate the simpler and more consistent design moves that Smallenberg and his team proposed: the woods, the water and the green.



Jill Anholt's revised public art proposal (above), which she reduced from a mixture elements into a series of dramatic gantries that act, not only as public sculptures, but also serve as integrated water filtration devices.

The panel was impressed by the response to their critical comments and, in particular, the design team's capacity to utilize the panel's feedback constructively and produce a design that still embodied the team's own design creativity. As the minutes recorded, "The Panel generally agreed that the proposal was dramatically more powerful" (Waterfront Toronto 2008g, p. 5). Although the panel highlighted some minor outstanding issues, it unanimously approved the project moving forward from the design and development phase. Sherbourne Park did return to the Waterfront Design Review Panel on another two occasions, in May 2008 and September 2008 (Waterfront Toronto 2008j; Waterfront Toronto 2008k). These review sessions focused on the more technical aspects of the design and few changes were made to the concept and its core components. Sherbourne Park was constructed during 2009-2010 and fully opened to the public in July 2011. After a public naming contest, it was officially named 'Sherbourne Common' to emphasize that it belonged to the people of Canada (Waterfront Toronto 2010d). In 2009, Stephen Teeple's pavilion received an Award of Merit in the 2009 Canadian Architect Awards of Excellence, making it the first building commissioned by Waterfront Toronto to win a design award (Waterfront Toronto 2009d).

Concluding Summary: The Fragility of Design Review

In this chapter I examined the role of the Waterfront Design Review Panel in Toronto's waterfront planning and design process. I began by exploring why the panel was established and outlined how the administrative design of the panel was largely based on a successful design review panel in Vancouver, albeit without the same statutory powers. Then, I analyzed how the Waterfront Design Review Panel operates through the lens of two opposing case studies, Project Symphony/The Corus Building and Sherbourne Common. In its short life the Waterfront Design Review Panel has evolved substantially and has reconciled many of the early shortcomings experienced during the Project Symphony review process. Demonstrating the need for 'clear *a priori* rules and guidelines for urban design intervention' (Principle 10), set out in the Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy (see: Figure 3.8., p. 78), the Project Symphony review laid bare many administrative failings and directly precipitated the more rigorous guidelines adopted in early 2008. Yet, more broadly, it also demonstrated the fragility of design review and the unpredictable impact that politics, personality and ego can have upon a peer evaluation process. Creative design has an intensely personal dimension, especially when designers have their projects

publically scrutinized by their professional equals.

In marked contrast, the journey of Sherbourne Park through the Waterfront Design Review Panel gives a clear demonstration of the positive role that a constructive peer review design process can play. In the case of Sherbourne Park, the possibility of a break down in the review process was particularly acute since the head of the design team, Greg Smallenberg, also happened to be a member of the Waterfront Design Review Panel and, furthermore, the criticism he received from his panel colleagues was both intense and far reaching. But, the outcome was positive. A superior park was constructed and both the proponent and the panel were able to recognize the role of the review process in getting from an initially mediocre concept to a formidable final design. Without question, much of the credit for this transformation must be afforded to Smallenberg and his design team, who listened carefully to the panel's criticism and found merit in their advice. But, the successful outcome of the Sherbourne Park review process also validates the more rigorous guidelines contained in the new by-law, especially the controversial introduction of voting which, although initially resisted by the panel members, helped to focus discussion, make their advice more powerful and reduce 'arbitrary decision making', as warned against in principle ten of Punter's amended 'Principles for Progressive Urban Design as Public Policy'. The panel chair and the individual panel members learnt a lot from their experience reviewing Project Symphony. This is summarized well by one of the corporation's senior urban designers, who notes:

> I think there are many people who have gone through [the design review process] who will tell you that the process was positive, including Greg Smallenberg who got beaten up by his first Sherbourne Park design because the design review panel hated it. He will admit that he ended up coming up with something much better as a result of being beaten up…They pushed someone who was very talented to do something better than he was doing. I didn't disagree with what they were saying; all the criticism was right on. I was very worried about the project, actually, and Greg turned it all around and now we have something quite powerful (TWRC 3 2011).

The Waterfront Design Review Panel has emerged as a central component of the design-led planning framework for Toronto's waterfront and exceeds the condition of the twelfth

principle in Punter's amended list by injecting a considerable amount of 'design skills and expertise' into the waterfront planning process. To some extent this is due to the panel's soft power, or 'moral suasion', which is bolstered by the calibre and reputation of both the chair and the other panel members: "If the commentary is powerful and it's right, then it is influential" (DESIGN 1 2011), explains one former panel member. Designers who are called up for review often feel obligated to present their best work, not wanting to be embarrassed in front of their colleagues and competitors, the former panel member argues. This, he states, has transformed the review process into a genuine "peer review" (DESIGN 1 2011). But the real power of the Waterfront Design Review Panel lies in the mechanisms put in place to compensate for its lack of regulatory authority. The vast majority of land within the Designated Waterfront Area is directly controlled by Waterfront Toronto because they are recognized as the sole delivery vehicle for waterfront revitalization, initially in the *Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act* (Ontario 2002) and then more emphatically in the two MOUs with the Province of Ontario (2005) and the City of Toronto (2006) (see: Chapter 5, p. 148-149). Crucially, this designation gives Waterfront Toronto the power to select which designers and developers can operate in the Designated Waterfront Area, either through design competitions or more standard proposal calls (see: Figure 5.7., p. 154). In both instances the corporation generates legal agreements with the chosen consultants that require the designers to adhere to the extant planning framework for the waterfront and attend the Waterfront Design Review Panel *before* any attempt is made to apply for planning permission from the City of Toronto. This means the panel operates like a 'fail-safe mechanism'. Consequently, the Waterfront Design Review Panel's power goes much further than its advisory mandate suggests. In spite of this, the story of Project Symphony also demonstrates the fragility of an advisory body. When a project is not part of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's portfolio the conditions for a successful review process are drastically reduced. Even though the TWRC used its funding contribution for Project Symphony as a 'bargaining chip' to encourage better design, the political pressure exerted on the panel was ultimately too strong and the final design was compromised.

While it has moved into a more steady rhythm, the Waterfront Design Review Panel continues to face new challenges. The most alarming is conflict of interest. The panel by-law clearly states that a panel member most recuse himself or herself from a review if they have *a priori* involvement in a proposal being evaluated (Waterfront Toronto 2008i). The number

of times that panel members have to routinely identify such a conflict of interest and actually recuse themselves from a review is high and therefore a genuine cause for concern. By way of example, Bruce Kuwabara, the panel chair, is the lead architect for George Brown College, a large institutional project currently under construction in the East Bayfront precinct. Panel member Claude Cormier was responsible for the Sugar Beach public space completed in 2010 on the edge of the Jarvis Slip. Panel member Peter Clewes is the architect responsible for a large-scale waterfront residential project currently under construction at the foot of Yonge Street and, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, the lead designer of Sherbourne Common was Greg Smallenberg, who is a current member of the panel and also a consultant on many other Waterfront Toronto projects. There is no evidence to suggest that any panel members have acted in bad faith, nor is there any cause to believe that any of them would do so, but the very fact that so many panel members are directly involved in some of the most high profile waterfront projects leads to legitimate questions about the dynamics of the panel and their ability to offer consistent advice in the future. Ultimately, this remains an issue for Waterfront Toronto to address as the panel continues to evolve and mature as a component of the waterfront planning and design framework.

CHAPTER 9
Conclusion: Assessing Urban Design as Public Policy on Toronto's Waterfront

My goal in conducting this research project was to delve into the maze of decisions, policies and regulatory mechanisms that shape the built environment. Frustrated by the uneven quality of design in contemporary real estate development practice, I asked the question 'How do planning processes affect the quality and execution of urban design?' My aim was to move beyond the perception that urban design is a purely aesthetic endeavour and join a body of literature called 'urban design as public policy' that, in my estimation, more accurately defines urban design as an interwoven *process* of policy- and decision-making that ultimately leads to an urban design *product*. To examine these themes, I selected the case of Toronto's waterfront and attended to the most recent period of redevelopment planning and design practice, between 1999 and 2010. During this time, efforts to transform the city's ailing Ontario lakefront have been led by a quasi-independent agency established by the federal, provincial and municipal governments and called the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC). At the time of writing this dissertation, the agency, now renamed Waterfront Toronto, remains the steward of Toronto's waterfront revitalization programme and the lead master planner of the waterfront.

While this single case does not supply a complete answer to the general question I have posed, it has provided a focused lens through which to dissect the apparatus of urban design in one Canadian city and offers a distinct contribution to the urban design as public policy field of research. I presented the case study across four substantive chapters. In Chapter 5 I identified the key planning documents, institutional structures and political commitments that paved the way for a design-sensitive planning framework to emerge on the waterfront. I placed particular emphasis on the institutional challenges that the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has faced and the steps that it has taken to maintain a long-term commitment to urban design excellence while also navigating the shifting political priorities of its three parent governments. In the remaining substantive chapters, I focused upon three urban design mechanisms employed by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto to instil a culture of

design-led planning practice and achieve its goal of 'design excellence'. I separately addressed: the role of public consultation and participation in the waterfront precinct planning processes (Chapter 6); the processes used to encourage high quality public realm design on the waterfront (Chapter 7); and, the role of peer design review in the planning and design decision-making process (Chapter 8). When I began my research journey, it had not been my intention to approach the case in this thematic manner. I had imagined that the entire dissertation would be presented chronologically, but as I became immersed in my fieldwork and data analysis I discovered these three interlinked themes formed the foundation of the waterfront's increasingly progressive, although imperfect, design-led planning process. I had also initially hoped to present a balanced evaluation of the processes *and* outcomes of urban design as public policy on Toronto's waterfront using postmodern urban design theory and the literature on urban design as public policy as my foundation. But, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, only a small proportion of the waterfront master plan was constructed at the time I wrote this research project and, therefore, I was unable to comprehensively assess the outcomes of urban design practice. The analysis is therefore weighted towards the processes of urban design. However, wherever possible I have evaluated the results of implementation through the lens of postmodern urban design theory.

Returning to the Research Questions

My research was guided by three substantive research questions. By returning to answer them directly, I offer a synthesis of my case-based findings. Afterwards, I reflect on my guiding research question and outline the contributions of my research to the field of urban design as public policy. I end the chapter by assessing the limitations of my research and consider the avenues that exist for further study.

Research Question 1

- How did urban design evolve as a component of public policy on Toronto's waterfront between 1999 and 2010?

The current phase of redevelopment on Toronto's waterfront can be traced to the $1.5 billion funding commitment made by the three levels of government – federal, provincial, municipal – in 2000. The shared political will that emerged between the three governments at the time was tied directly to Toronto's waterfront-focused bid for the 2008 Olympic Games. Public financing would be used to build the required Olympic infrastructure and, at the same time, act as a stimulant for broader redevelopment efforts to be undertaken in conjunction with the private sector. Cast as an Olympic legacy project, the aim was to transform Toronto's waterfront into a world-class destination and a centre for the New Economy. While the Olympic Games bid was unsuccessful, the three governments remained committed to the wider waterfront redevelopment programme and, in 2001, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto was created to lead the effort.

In this political and administrative context, the emergence of urban design as a component of public policy on Toronto's waterfront was a direct response to the goal of creating a 'world-class' destination on the lakefront. The foundational planning documents for the waterfront cast the redevelopment area as the 'Gateway to Canada' and excellence in urban design was pinpointed as a principal aspiration. The key documents that established this framework were the Fung report, published in 2000 by the private sector-led Toronto Waterfront Redevelopment Task Force, and the City of Toronto's *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, which followed a year later. As Chapter 5 explored in some detail, the Fung report imagined a vibrant series of neighbourhood 'precincts' on the waterfront that would one day become the homes and workplaces of New Economy employers and employees. Notably, the concept of a 'world-class' destination was not to be achieved through the development of spectacular architectural projects, a common approach in many other post-industrial cities, but by using traditional streets and blocks to reconnect Toronto's downtown core to the water's edge. The statutory urban design policy framework that emerged in the 2001 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* reinforced this neighbourhood-focused approach and crystallized the wider New Economy theme. It offered a comprehensive design analysis

of the waterfront and a series of core design-based redevelopment principles, but it did not attempt to regulate the form and organization of the waterfront's streets and spaces. Instead, the concept of neighbourhood 'precincts' on the waterfront was formalized into a tertiary layer of unofficial precinct plans that established a master plan for each new neighbourhood. While not official components of the City of Toronto plan hierarchy, the precinct plans have been translated into official zoning by-laws and remain influential design policy documents that have expanded and refined the urban design principles for Toronto's waterfront. A detailed chronology of the key initiatives and planning documents introduced on the waterfront between 1999 and 2010 and their influence upon the evolution of urban design as public policy is provided in Appendix 5.

Research Question 2

To what extent have the urban design objectives for Toronto's waterfront been met during implementation?

The urban design objectives that underpin the current phase of waterfront redevelopment on Toronto's waterfront were established in the City of Toronto's 2002 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* as a series of four core principles (see: Figure 5.6., p. 135). The principles combine generic urban design objectives relating to urban form, accessibility and sustainability, with project-specific goals for the waterfront. The extent to which the four principles have been addressed over the past eleven years is considered below.

Principle 1: Removing Barriers/Making Connections

Removing the physical barriers that exist between the waterfront and the rest of Toronto is one of the biggest unfulfilled design objectives on Toronto's waterfront. Through the on-going efforts of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto there is a real possibility that the waterfront can be transformed into a series of liveable neighbourhood precincts connected by innovative public open spaces. Yet, unless the substantial barriers created by the elevated Gardiner Expressway and the elevated rail corridor that serves Toronto's Union Station are addressed simultaneously, the success of the remaining planning and urban design objectives will be jeopardized. It is impossible to overstate just how poor the pedestrian

connection between the downtown core and the waterfront is. The two districts, though only about 500 metres apart, feel entirely disconnected. After leaving the downtown core, pedestrians have to navigate through underground tunnels, walk alongside fast moving highways and cross numerous streets before reaching the lakefront. Furthermore, many of the existing buildings that have been built in-between the waterfront and downtown Toronto exceed 100 metres in height and have created challenging wind tunnels that only serve to reinforce the negative pedestrian experience.

During the early 2000s, when the Task Force was established and the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* was published, there was enough political support from the three levels of government to include the redesign of the Gardiner Expressway in the vision for the waterfront. But spiralling cost estimates and successful lobbying by car commuting advocates slowly eroded this political support. By the time the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto was fully operational, addressing the physical barriers between downtown Toronto and the waterfront was no longer a dominant part of the waterfront redevelopment conversation. Save for a major political shift, neither the Gardiner Expressway nor the railway corridor is likely to be redesigned in the short- to medium-term. The current thrust of the federal, provincial and municipal governments is towards budgets cuts and austerity, not large-scale infrastructure investments. Considering this scenario, more thought needs to be put into imagining innovative design solutions that can achieve the required connectivity at low cost and maximum impact. Similar challenges are faced in the realm of public transportation. Although a streetcar line serves as the central spine of the waterfront (Queens Quay), plans to extend it into the East Bayfront precinct remain stalled. Once again, the importance of connecting the waterfront to the rest of Toronto remains a significant concern. Local communities rightfully fear that, without the streetcar line, the marketability of residential units in the new precinct will be significantly reduced.

Principle 2: Building a Network of Spectacular Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces

The TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has invested a significant portion of its original public funding commitment in parks and open space and has used design competitions to attract some of the very best landscape architects and urban designers. As a result, a network of excellent and award winning public realm improvements are emerging all along Toronto's waterfront.

The sculptural wave decks, with their unique anamorphous forms, are the centrepiece of the corporation's growing collection of innovative public spaces; the quirky 'urban beaches' created at HTO and Sugar Beach are also remarkably successful and swarm with people on hot summer days. Acting like punctuations along the water's edge, the wave decks and urban beaches are woven together by a new water's edge promenade that will extend along the entire waterfront as funding allows. Furthermore, a number of larger-scale urban parks have been built or are planned in each of the waterfront precincts, including Sherbourne Common in the East Bayfront and the ambitious urban marshland planned for the Lower Don Lands.

However, the implementation of parks and open space on Toronto's waterfront has not been trouble free. While a consistent level of quality has been achieved, a large percentage of the overall waterfront public realm vision has yet to be realized. The clearest example of this is the Central Waterfront master plan that emerged from the innovative design competition in 2006. Although the corporation has funded and built the wave decks and the water's edge promenade – two of the master plan's core components – large parts of the overall vision remain unrealized. So far, the biggest failure has been getting the three levels of government, and in particular the City of Toronto, to commit to the boulevard improvements along Queens Quay – the binding element of the master plan. When transformed into a shared corridor for cars, bicycles, pedestrians and the streetcar, Queens Quay will tie the various waterfront precincts together. In this design context, the wave decks are imagined as foundational sculptural features that will draw people from the boulevard to the water's edge and frame existing north-south view corridors. Although David Miller, the city's former mayor, championed the plan supported by local residents and successfully channelled it through a comprehensive environmental assessment in 2009, it has been delayed due to funding and political constraints. When Rob Ford[36], the city's current mayor, was elected in November 2010 it was feared that construction would be indefinitely stalled and the sophisticated public realm master plan and the layered design proposals would never be fully achieved. Ford ran on a populist electoral platform that promised to cut local municipal spending by 'stopping the gravy train' and halting Mayor Miller's proposed investments in streetcars and bike lanes and thereby 'ending the war on the car'. However, just as the dissertation was being completed, in July 2012, a large part of the funding for Queens Quay

[36] Mayor Rob Ford came to power in November 2010 while I was conducting the research for this dissertation. Therefore, his role in the waterfront redevelopment process has not featured in my analysis.

was actually allocated. With the environmental assessment completed, construction will begin on the western phase (from Spadina Street to Bay Street) in Fall 2012 (Waterfront Toronto 2012k). Whether funding can be secured for the eastern phase, which runs into the East Bayfront precinct, remains to be seen.

Principle 3: Promoting a Clean and Green Environment

The *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* established three project-specific goals with respect to this third core principle. First, was to provide sustainable transportation on the waterfront. As already stated in previous paragraphs, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto is committed to providing extended streetcar routes on the waterfront, but continued funding delays and a lack of political will mean implementation remains stalled. The second goal was to construct a flood protection 'berm' on the edge of the Don River that would protect the proposed West Don Lands precinct from flooding. While the West Don Lands was not a focus of my research, it should be noted that construction of the berm began in 2007 and is due to be completed in late 2012 (Waterfront Toronto 2012m). Once finished, the area will no longer be designated a flood risk and the City of Toronto will be able to zone the land for residential land use, while the corporation can begin the process of implementing the 2005 *West Don Lands Precinct Plan* (Waterfront Toronto 2012m). The final goal contained in the third principle was to renaturalize the Mouth of the Don River. While this massive ecological infrastructure project has yet to be completed, it remains a very real goal. The Lower Don Lands Innovative Design Competition, which was held in 2007, generated a series of formidable design proposals. The winning entry by American landscape architect Michael Van Valkenberg imagined a large marshland park on either side of the renaturalized river mouth surrounded by a series of urban neighbourhoods. The TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, in conjunction with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), submitted a full environmental assessment of the design proposal to the provincial government in December 2010 (Waterfront Toronto 2012n). Full-scale public consultation using the corporation's usual iterative participation model is currently underway (Lura Consulting and SWERHUN 2012).

Principle 4: Creating Dynamic and Diverse New Communities

In stating this ambitious goal, the City of Toronto hoped to advance the development of mixed-use waterfront neighbourhoods that would eventually incorporate a combination of residential and commercial land uses. In addition, the 2002 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* emphasized the need to attract 'New Economy' jobs to Toronto's waterfront – a proposal that had been a major part of Fung's Task Force report of 1999. So far, the more specific urban design proposals that have emerged during the waterfront precinct planning processes have specified the type of community-focused development envisaged in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. To animate the public realm, for example, ground floor retail is encouraged on all new building projects, while medium- to high-density residential has emerged as the dominant land use designation and is scheduled to include a mixture of affordable, social and market housing.

Although the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has successfully implemented numerous public parks and open spaces on the waterfront, the construction of residential and commercial buildings has moved at a much slower pace. Moreover, some of the land use designations imagined in the precinct plans have begun to shift and change during implementation. The Corus Building and George Brown College in the East Bayfront precinct are the most vivid examples of this. Both land parcels were planned for mixed-use residential buildings, yet they now house a commercial office building (Corus) and an institutional facility (George Brown College). The shift away from the master planning principles was caused by short-term investment opportunities and political priorities that had arisen. Therefore, while the design-focused spirit of the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* has been translated into the focused precinct plans that have followed, it is currently impossible to state whether the waterfront redevelopment programme has generated 'dynamic and diverse communities'. Continued focused study is needed to ascertain whether the planning and urban design goals contained in the waterfront precinct plans will be endangered by future land use needs, market conditions and political priorities. In this respect, the Waterfront Design Review Panel has a critical oversight role to play. As the challenging review process for the Corus Building demonstrated (see: Chapter 8), ensuring that the broader planning and design principles are upheld over the longer term, even though individual building proposals may on occasion challenge the wider objectives, is of crucial importance.

The TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has achieved a great deal more in the past eleven years than previous efforts to plan and redevelop Toronto's waterfront, but it has yet to achieve the objectives that were set in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. Some of the most ambitious elements remain unfulfilled. The limited accessibility of the waterfront from the downtown core, in particular, greatly detracts from other successes in the individual waterfront precincts. Yet at this relatively early stage in the process, it is premature to offer a comprehensive design assessment of the overall implementation. My preceding reflections on the four core principles do illustrate that the corporation has achieved a lot in the realm of parks and open space and its commitment to master planning, but as it transitions from being a primarily plan-making organization into one intently focused on implementation, the corporation faces an uphill battle to maintain continued political support and generate the necessary funds to implement the various components of its ambitious waterfront vision. The corporation's funding model remains its greatest limitation. Although the three governments made a shared pledge of $1.5 billion towards the waterfront redevelopment effort in 1999, a large amount of public money has been directed towards projects favoured by politicians at the time rather than the corporation's planning and design programme. Furthermore, as a public entity, the TWRC/Waterfront is specifically barred from raising funds independently. Such an institutional design limitation means the corporation has to rely on transfers from any or all of the three levels of government. This greatly limits the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's ability to act efficiently in the waterfront real estate market because the relative commitment of the federal, provincial and municipal governments to the long-term waterfront redevelopment programme rest precariously on the outcome of three separate election cycles and thereby the actions of politicians who hold public office at the time.

Research Question 3

What lessons can be learned from Toronto's waterfront redevelopment history about urban design as public policy?

To answer this final research question, I return to the thirteen principles for progressive urban design as public policy outlined in Chapter 3. Amended from previous studies by John Punter (2003; 2007a), the principles provide a platform to examine the range of actors

involved in the design process, the sophistication of the plans and policies implemented on the waterfront and the administrative mechanisms created to support design through the planning process. Following the format that Punter employed in the concluding chapter of his 2003 Vancouver planning and design study, I use the principles to summarize the strengths and the weakness of urban design practice on Toronto's waterfront.

Community Collaboration and Urban Design Visioning Principles

Three interlinked principles relate to the theme of community collaboration and urban design visioning (see: Figure 9.1. below and overleaf). Foremost is the need for any urban design vision or urban design plan/series of plans to be created in conjunction with the community and local stakeholders. However, the type of process used to engage communities and local stakeholders is also crucial. The knowledge base informing an urban design vision or plan should draw upon local knowledge as well as expert opinion and the consultation exercises conducted should provide consistency, equal access and a forum for future relationship building.

Figure 9.1. Community Collaboration and Urban Design Visioning Principles

1. *Providing the conditions for all members of the community to be involved in the process of developing and committing to a coordinated vision of urban design (Brennan's Law*).

Achievements:

- Corporate commitment to public consultation and participation through *Public Consultation and Participation Strategy* (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation 2002a).
- Implementation of an innovative iterative public consultation and participation process on all plan-making processes and construction projects.
- Accessible and well-attended public meetings.

Future Challenges:

- Delivery of the design vision and aspirations agreed between the public and the corporation.
- Encouraging a more diverse cross section of people to take part in the waterfront public consultation and participation process, especially new waterfront residents.
- Recognizing that the priorities of new waterfront residents might shift and change.

2. *Developing and monitoring urban design plans (both citywide and for specific sites) that are supported by the community.*

Achievements:

- Local communities have assumed ownership of precinct plans, as well as the urban design vision for the waterfront.

Future Challenges:

- Maintain the trust achieved between local communities and the corporation as implementation proceeds.

Figure 9.1. (cont.) Community Collaboration and Urban Design Visioning Principles

3. *Establishing a collaborative process for the periodic review of urban design plans in which design conflicts are resolved through mutual learning.*

Achievements:

- Iterative public meetings and SACs during plan-making processes have created a strong feedback loop between communities and the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto.
- Design consultants respond positively and proactively to suggestions and ideas made by public meeting attendees.
- Annual report back meetings and on-going SACs meetings allow the general public to be engaged throughout all phases of planning and implementation.

Future Challenges:

- Lack of clarity in the SAC process needs to be addressed.
- Maintaining the 'high bar' set on initial plans and projects.

The scope and quality of the community consultation and participation strategy conducted by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, especially in relation to the design of the built environment, is one of its most significant achievements. Yet, early actions did not presuppose such an outcome. Between 1999 and 2002, when the Toronto Waterfront Redevelopment Task Force completed the 'Fung report' (2000) and the City of Toronto published the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* (2001), there was little evidence that intensive public engagement was particularly high on the agenda of either the Task Force or the three levels of government. While a standard round of statutory consultation was conducted by the City of Toronto for the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, the Task Force merely 'showcased' the planning and design principles contained in its foundational Fung report at a series of public meetings conducted after the document had been published. A shift in direction occurred in late 2002 when the newly created TWRC published a *Public Consultation and Participation Strategy* as part of its first business and development plan. The central aim of this strategy was to base all future planning and design efforts on the waterfront, in particular the forthcoming precinct plans, on local community knowledge and, moreover, to use consultation with local communities to build a sense of trust between the new corporation and its neighbours. Evidence suggests that many of the steps taken by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto towards meeting these challenging goals have been met.

Beginning with the first public meetings for the West Don Lands and East Bayfront precinct plans in 2003, the corporation has conducted consultation on all master planning projects and has also made a concerted effort to consult the public about individual building projects and public spaces, as well as all (on-going) phases of construction. To increase accessibility, the corporation's public meetings are held on weekday evenings and are well attended. Central to the success of this thoroughgoing approach, has been the corporation's innovative model of public engagement (see: Figure 6.7., p. 180). By interweaving large public meetings with smaller stakeholder advisory committees (SACs), the corporation has created the conditions for an iterative dialogue to evolve with local communities, a process that theorists contend can help a planning and design process move beyond mere consultation and enter into the realm of partnership.

In direct contrast to the 'top down' approach adopted during the production of the earlier Fung report, the first public meeting during a precinct planning process begins with a broader discussion of the participants' ideas, desires and concerns about the site in question. Design principles and master planning options are not presented until later meetings, by which time the design teams have had an opportunity to respond to the local knowledge of the participants. Further feedback is collected at the interim SAC meetings, which are held *in camera* with representatives from local neighbourhood associations, as well as local businesses and institutions located in or in close proximity to the precinct. The primary aim of the SAC meetings is to have focused and detailed discussions about specific design and planning proposals in preparation for the next public meeting. Although no minutes are released from the SACs, a thorough summary booklet of each public meeting is produced and hard copies are made available. In addition, the summary documents for most of the public meetings conducted by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto since 2003 are readily available on the corporation's website.

These written summaries clearly demonstrate the strength and validity of the iterative engagement processes adopted by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto and, in particular, the level of collaboration that occurs between design experts and lay people. In contrast to previous research on design collaboration events, which has found expert opinion to dominate and obfuscate the decision-making process (Grant 2006; Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007), the format adopted by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto emphasizes

reciprocity. At the start of each meeting, the corporation's design consultants outline how the evolving design has changed since the last public meeting and then, as a starting point for the next round of discussion, seek feedback on the new material they have produced. The same process is repeated at each meeting until a final precinct plan is produced. Further SACs and annual public meetings are then held to solicit feedback on the scope of supporting planning documentation, such as zoning by-law amendments, and the various building projects that are underway. In addition, public meetings and SACs meeting are also held in conjunction with the corporation's innovative design competitions, providing members of local communities and stakeholders with a further avenue to get involved in the waterfront revitalization programme.

Together, the corporation's thorough and methodological engagement processes have generated a 'sense of ownership' by the local community over the waterfront precinct plans and, indeed, the corporation's broader urban design vision for the waterfront. The most vivid demonstration of this occurs when the waterfront planning and design vision is challenged by local political leaders. By way of example, and as a catalogued in Chapter 6, the mere suggestion in 2005 by then-mayor of Toronto, David Miller, that the TWRC board of directors consider the merits of an alternative master plan for the East Bayfront was met with outrage from local community leaders. But this sense of ownership is not only revealed in times of crisis. During my research fieldwork the local community leaders I interviewed invariably defined their relationship with the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto as a collaborative and trusting partnership. This is due to the emphasis placed on continuing consultation. By engaging local communities during all the various stages of planning and implementation, either through SACs or annual public meetings, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto is able share the financial and administrative realities of real estate development with local people. Furthermore, it can solicit feedback quickly and efficiently when a change is proposed to the original plan. In this respect, the SACs have played a particularly instructive role. In both the East Bayfront and the West Don Lands precincts many SACs members have been involved since the initial public meetings and have a long-term understanding of the planning and implementation challenges the corporation faces.

Yet the approach to public consultation and participation adopted on Toronto's waterfront is not without flaws. Earlier research projects have pointed to the corporation's failure to

engage a true cross-section of people in the waterfront revitalization programme and, in particular, those residents who live in underprivileged neighbourhoods close to the downtown core and the waterfront. Although the corporation's public events are still widely advertised in the local press and online, engaging with people who do not live in the neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to the waterfront and, in particular, those who are less economically mobile, does remain a significant challenge and one that the corporation needs to address. But, the greatest failure has been the lack of engagement with people who have recently moved to the waterfront. As already mentioned, the membership of many of the waterfront SACs has not changed significantly since the start of the precinct planning processes for the East Bayfront and the West Don Lands. While the relationship building that has occurred should be applauded and viewed as a model for future practices in Toronto and elsewhere, the narrowly defined composition of the SACs is problematic. Almost all of the community representation on the SACs is drawn from adjacent neighbourhoods and the representatives tend to be white retired professionals. Now that new residents, many of whom are younger, have begun to move to the waterfront, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto should redouble its efforts to engage with a wider cross section of residents who live or work on the waterfront and to do so through more democratic means. In this respect, the corporation must also recognize that the design and planning priorities of people living on the waterfront, as opposed to those living near it, might well be shaped by different considerations, especially if they have invested in waterfront real estate.

A further concern relates to the structure of the SACs. While the iterative feedback loop that exists between open public meetings and smaller invitation-only stakeholder meetings is an effective model for gathering a combination of general and focused feedback, the transparency of the SAC process is troubling. As stated earlier, no minutes are taken at these *in-camera* meetings and, therefore, little can be known about the nature of the discussions that take place. The corporation claims that sensitive financial data relating to land deals and real estate markets is often discussed and, therefore, it would place the corporation at a competitive disadvantage if minutes were published. Yet the lack of an official record severely limits the openness of the SAC process and, unnecessarily obfuscates an otherwise formidable instrument in the public consultation and participation process employed on Toronto's waterfront.

Broad and Substantive Ecological Design Principles

The following three principles address how design is defined and interwoven into a policy and implementation framework (see: Figure 9.2. below and overleaf). For urban design to be a successful component of a planning process it must be articulated through unambiguous principles that transcend aesthetic preferences. To achieve this, urban design must be defined and understood through a process of mutual learning between design experts and lay people. Emphasis should be placed upon the long-term relationships that exist between design and the local physical environment and a combination of local knowledge and thoroughgoing contextual analyses should be integral to plan making. Yet, urban design should also be a flexible component of the wider planning process. Rigid prescriptions and definitions ought to be avoided. Successful urban design as public policy should provide a long-term and community-supported vision for the future, but also create the conditions for creativity and design innovation to flourish.

Figure 9.2. Broad and Substantive Ecological Design Principles

4. *Basing urban design guidelines on generic (ecological) urban design principles that are developed in conjunction with the community and supported by contextual analysis.*

Achievements:

- Corporate commitment to 'design excellence'.
- Established urban design principles underpin waterfront revitalization programme.
- Thorough public realm analysis of waterfront produced to support the precinct planning process.
- Local communities have played a role in production of all planning and urban design documents for the waterfront since 2003.

Future Challenges:

- Scope for ecology to be more fully integrated into waterfront planning and design mission.

5. *Using a collaborative process to explore how ecological urban design principles, such as amenity, accessibility, community, vitality, energy efficiency and resilient form, might be mutually beneficial to all local stakeholders.*

Achievements:

- Sophisticated discussion about design; improved as more public process has occurred.
  Sustainable revitalization program defined during the precinct planning processes.

Future Challenges:

- Engagement with local communities about ecological urban design.
- Realizing transformative ecological commitments (the Don River).

Figure 9.2. (cont.) Broad and Substantive Ecological Design Principles

6. *Articulating desired and mandatory urban design outcomes in the design process, while allowing spontaneity, vitality, innovation and pluralism to flourish.*

Achievements:	Future Challenges:
• Emphasis on controlling baseline urban design outcomes rather than mandating particular architectural treatments. • Design excellence and innovation undergirded by innovative design competitions.	• None

Since the publication of the City of Toronto's *Wave of the Future!* report in 1999 and the formation of Fung's Task Force, urban design has played a defining role in the visioning and plan making process for the waterfront. As stated earlier in the chapter, 'design excellence' was established as a statutory goal for the waterfront in the City of Toronto's 2002 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. It is cast in broad aspirational terms and loosely emphasizes public space, compact development and amenity provision. The *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* also contained the series of four core principles explored in relation to Research Question 2. These formalized many of the ideas contained in the earlier Fung report and offered a substantive foundation for design-led planning. The principles integrate both general urban design objectives and context-specific proposals and place very little emphasis on aesthetics, architectural treatment and materiality. Instead, they draw from the secondary plan's thorough contextual analysis and emphasize the need for extensive public open space, improved connections between the waterfront and the city's downtown core, the creation of compact mixed-use neighbourhoods and the protection of the waterfront's natural environment. Soon after it was created in 2002, the TWRC also commissioned a further contextual design analysis of the waterfront to support the precinct plan principles. Named the *Central Waterfront Public Space Framework,* it offered a sophisticated evaluation of the waterfront public realm, detailed the core morphological relationships on the waterfront and outlined a comprehensive typology of existing buildings and public spaces (see: Figures 7.2 and 7.3., p. 236 and 237). The layered, thoroughgoing spatial analysis conducted throughout the plan making process made clear the social and physical characteristics of place and, moreover, both the design principles contained in the secondary plan and the analysis conducted in the public space framework have clear roots in post-modern urban design theory, especially in their commitments to connectivity, mixed use and compact neighbourhood forms.

The core principles contained in the City of Toronto's *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* and the supporting contextual analyses were used as a foundational design framework for the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's precinct plans, their supporting urban design guidelines and the extensive briefing documents that are employed by the corporation during their innovative design competitions. By way of example, the competition brief for the 2006 Central Waterfront Innovative Design Competition heralded the importance of using urban design to reconnect the city with the lake using a traditional urban grid and asked the competition entrants to conceptualize the waterfront as an interconnected public space. In a similar vein, one of the primary design principles of the 2005 *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* was the creation of north-south connections between the precinct and surrounding neighbourhoods. This principle was executed by combining new public spaces and building forms to create conical view corridors of the lake (see: Figure 6.14., p. 199). Nonetheless, the core urban design principles for Toronto's waterfront were not developed in collaboration with local communities and stakeholders. As highlighted in earlier paragraphs, the public was consulted on the scope and ideas contained within the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* but were not equal partners in the plan making process. Perhaps as a result, the commitment to design excellence espoused by the three governments and the Task Force throughout the early waterfront planning documents was focused upon enhancing economic performance and propelling Toronto up the world city rankings. Although the secondary plan's core design principles certainly framed the future waterfront as a place for the people of Toronto, the underlying thrust of this commitment was narrowly defined and focused on achieving elite economic status for the city.

The employment of urban design as a tool to "lend traction to capital accumulation" (Knox 2010, p. 5) has been commonly identified in the literature. Numerous case studies demonstrate that city regulators are invariably under constant pressure to generate new avenues of investment. When this occurs, the benefits that better urban design affords to local communities is typically overrun by wider concerns about global competitiveness. Yet, on Toronto's waterfront an important shift did occur as the planning and implementation process gathered pace. The introduction of the TWRC's *Public Consultation and Participation Strategy* in 2002 expanded the definition and role of urban design on the waterfront. The strategy created a reliable forum for local communities to get involved in an on-going conversation with the corporation and its design experts. As a result, the

effectiveness of the corporation's strategy not only created the partnership between local communities and the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto described in earlier paragraphs, it also generated the conditions for a dialogue to emerge about the principles of urban design being employed on the waterfront. The summary booklets for the East Bayfront precinct planning process, for example, demonstrate that the community engaged in a sophisticated discussion that extended well beyond reactionary commentary and musings about the future aesthetic of the waterfront (see: Figure 6.13., p. 197). The clearest message that emerged from the four East Bayfront public meetings was the need for the precinct design principles to achieve harmony, but avoid stifling architectural creativity. Local community representatives also encouraged the corporation's design consultants to think carefully about the relationships forged between buildings, public spaces and the water's edge and, in this respect, the issue of winter microclimates was often raised. Furthermore, meeting participants pressured the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto to demonstrate how affordable housing and sustainable infrastructure would be integrated into the precinct. The result was an emphatic statement on affordable housing in the later zoning by-law amendment.

Urban design is well defined on Toronto's waterfront and clearly articulated through a combination of contextual analysis, local community knowledge and urban design theory. The broad principles-based vision for the waterfront district, contained with the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, provides a thorough, but not overly prescriptive, framework for the corresponding precinct plans and their supporting urban design guidelines[37]. And the precinct plans themselves offer detailed design principles and objectives – skeletal block layouts, density targets, public space configuration, etc. The emphasis rests on the relationships between built form and open space, rather than on architectural treatments, materials palettes and landscape details. There is considerable scope for design innovation and spontaneity to occur during the planning and design process and for individual building architects and landscape architects to make their mark. Moreover, as part of its longstanding commitment to design excellence, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has actively chosen to cast the waterfront as a laboratory for design creativity through its innovative design competition process. Design competitions have long been employed as an alternate means to encourage design innovation and on Toronto's waterfront the results are positive. Although the corporation requires all entrants in its design competitions to adhere to the principles and

[37] See Appendix 6 for a detailed breakdown of the design content of the various waterfront planning documents.

objectives for the waterfront, the various competitions have generated award winning public spaces and planning proposals.

Recent advances in urban design theory have emphasized the need for an expansion in the breadth and depth of guiding design principles. In the past, urban design theory has focused on the qualities and aesthetics of urban space for human usage, while more recent theories conceptualize urban design through an ecological lens. So far, ecological urban design principles have not undergirded the planning and urban design documents on Toronto's waterfront. Rather, the guiding principles contained in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* and the corresponding precinct plans have demonstrated a commitment to the types of sustainable urban forms that post-modern urban design theorists and practitioners have long advocated for, such as dense urban form, walkable neighbourhoods and integrated transportation. But sustainable infrastructure has begun to emerge as a core consideration for the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto. Informed by community aspirations, for example, the *East Bayfront Precinct Plan* and its supporting zoning by-law amendment contain commitments to high performance buildings and green roofs and, when the precinct is completed, the corporation hopes to have met the standard of LEED ND Gold. As the implementation of the precinct plan is only partly completed it remains to be seen if these commitments can be fully realized[38]. More ecologically grounded urban design principles have emerged during the most recent waterfront precinct planning process, which focuses on the Lower Don Lands and the Port Lands. Stemming from a long-standing commitment to improve the ecological condition of the Don River mouth – a restorative proposal that predates the formation of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto – the vision for the Lower Don Lands imagines the comprehensive renaturalization of the Don River mouth (see: Figure 7.16., p. 265) and the creation of a large marshland park on its banks. This proposal is now part of the 'Landscape Urbanism' master plan developed by Michael Van Valkenberg, but implementation remains a very long-term goal that is subject to considerable public and private investment, much of which has yet to be committed.

[38] It should be noted that sustainability targets and infrastructure were not a major focus of my research project. Reference should therefore be made to the work of other authors who have specifically focused on this topic on Toronto's waterfront, in particular Susannah Bunce's study of sustainability in the West Don Lands precinct (2007).

Planning and Zoning Frameworks Principles

Three principles focus on the structure of the planning and zoning framework employed by the governing authority to control urban design (see: Figure 9.3. below). A successful design-led planning process should fully integrate planning and urban design policy into the existing zoning and building control framework and emphasis should be placed upon mechanisms that guarantee better design outcomes. These can range from encouraging a wide range of design actors to become involved in the planning and design process, to introducing financial incentives and other discretionary measures that encourage higher standards of design. Yet equal consideration should also be given to the potential exclusionary effects of design-led planning, in particular housing affordability and access to public open space, as well as the ways in which social goods can be protected throughout the real estate development process.

Figure 9.3. Planning and Zoning Frameworks Principles

7. *Integrating zoning into planning and addressing the limitations of zoning.*

Achievements:
- Precinct plans design principles translated into zoning by-law amendments.
- Zoning by-law amendments supported by urban design guidelines.

Future Challenges:
- Ensuring that the various mechanisms employed to protect the spirit of the precinct plans are adhered to.

8. *Harnessing the broadest range of actors and instruments (tax, subsidy, land acquisition, design competitions, etc.) to promote better design.*

Achievements:
- Channelling tri-government financial contributions towards public realm improvements.
- Employing design competitions across the waterfront to encourage high design standard.

Future Challenges:
- Ensuring that the promised tri-government commitment ($1.5bn) continues to flow to the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto through contribution agreements.

9. *Mitigating the exclusionary effects of control strategies and urban design regulation.*

Achievements:
- Investment in parks and open space.
- Commitments to affordable/social housing.
- Mandated contributions towards waterfront infrastructure, affordable housing in zoning by-law amendments and reaffirmed in developer agreements.

Future Challenges:
- Ensuring that the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto and private developers meet the affordable and social housing targets for the waterfront.

The most important design-led planning documents on Toronto's waterfront are the corporation's precinct plans. Unique to the waterfront, the plans were specifically created to support the revitalization effort. They divide the large waterfront district into a series of focused redevelopment areas and translate the broad policies and principles contained in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* into actionable master plans. Moreover, the precinct plans have garnered considerable public support because they were created through the sophisticated public consultation process described earlier. But, in strictly legal terms, the precinct plans are unenforceable and carry no statutory weight in Ontario's official hierarchy of development plans. As a result, regulatory mechanisms are employed to ensure that the urban design principles contained within the precinct plans are followed during implementation.

An important lesson that can be drawn from the case of Toronto's waterfront is that, after the completion of each precinct planning process, the City of Toronto works with the corporation to translate the precinct master planning principles into parallel zoning by-laws that dictate the street layouts, public space configurations, height controls, density limits, and, as described in later paragraphs, mandatory contributions for affordable housing and public infrastructure that developers are expected to meet. The translation of a precinct plan into a zoning by-law amendment effectively transforms it into a statutory instrument. As urban designers have found in other jurisdictions, the heavily legalistic language and technical two-dimensional diagrams of zoning remove much of the spirit of design principles (see: Figure 6.16., p. 206) To account for this on Toronto's waterfront, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto creates supporting urban design guidelines that offer detailed advice on possible design solutions. In a clear example of what Lang (1996) calls a 'performance guideline', the design guidelines for the East Bayfront precinct suggest how the zoning by-law might be interpreted and proposes various block configurations for each of the land parcels in the precinct. Moreover, the guidelines demonstrate the success of various alternative solutions through an extensive bank of precedent images (see: Figure 6.17., p. 208).

While the precinct plans and the parallel zoning by-law amendments represent the core of the design-led planning framework for the waterfront, the appropriation of public money to the redevelopment programme has also played a crucial role in the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's efforts to promote better design through the planning and redevelopment process.

As mentioned in connection to Research Question 2, one theme that reappears throughout Toronto's troubled waterfront redevelopment history has been a lack of consistent investment by the public sector. This changed significantly in November 1999 when the three levels of government promised to make a shared commitment of $1.5 billion towards future redevelopment efforts and established the groundwork for the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto. In effect, this money became a one-time public subsidy, although the governments' commitment was not paid to the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto in full and the corporation continues to receive staggered project-specific contributions.

A large proportion of the public money that has made its way to the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto is channelled towards promoting better design on the waterfront and, in particular, the construction of public parks and open space early in the redevelopment process. A strategy the corporation calls 'leading with landscape'. The motivation for this approach is twofold. First, the corporation's senior management team hopes that investing public money in well-designed parks and open spaces will enhance the value of adjacent undeveloped land parcels and demonstrate to private sector developers that the waterfront is a formidable investment opportunity. Second, by making focused investments in the publically accessible areas of the waterfront, the corporation can demonstrate to both Toronto residents and politicians at all levels of government, where and how public money is being spent. The principal tool used by the corporation to achieve these ambitious objectives is the design competition. Conducted for various public spaces and area master plans on the waterfront, the competitions attract a wealth of international design talent and have led to visible improvements in the public realm, such as the award-winning 'wave decks' by Dutch firm West 8 (see: Figure: 7.13., p. 257) and the quirky public space at Sugar Beach in the East Bayfront precinct, designed by Montreal-based landscape architect Claude Cormier (see: Figure 7.15., p. 263). Furthermore, the design competitions typically receive considerable local publicity and have reinforced the corporation's commitment to design excellence because high profile architects and designers have participated. From the qualitative analysis conducted in this research project it is less clear whether the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has been able to raise the value of undeveloped land parcels on the waterfront as a direct result of 'leading with landscape'. This analysis remains a topic for further quantitative inquiry.

In addition to appropriating public financing towards public realm improvements directly, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, in conjunction with the City of Toronto planning department, uses Section 37 of the Ontario *Planning Act* to mandate specific contributions from developers towards local infrastructure improvements on all waterfront projects. For example, and as Chapter 6 detailed, the zoning by-law amendment for the East Bayfront precinct states that the generous residential density and height allowances contained within the precinct plan and the zoning by-law amendment are offered in exchange for a public infrastructure improvement fee of $69.86 per square metre. Section 37 is also used to protect the affordable and social housing targets established during the precinct planning process. In response to clear community support for long-term affordable housing provision in the East Bayfront precinct, for example, the 2006 zoning by-law amendment translated the precinct plan target of 20% affordable rental housing and 5% social housing into a statutory requirement on all developable residential land parcels.

The affordable housing, social housing and amenity contribution targets that were set during the precinct planning process have been translated into a statutory regulatory instrument by the City of Toronto. Yet, it remains to be seen whether the corporation's development partners, other private landowners on the waterfront and the City of Toronto will be able to deliver on these targets. The detailed agreements that are signed between the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto and their development partners are therefore crucial. As will be explained more fully in later paragraphs, the developer agreements reaffirm the targets that have been set in the precinct plans and the zoning by-law amendments and require the developers to respond in kind. However, they are yet to be tested and, moreover, the developer agreements only relate to publically held land parcels, where the corporation has considerable administrative power. Ensuring that the same targets are met on lands controlled by private developers – albeit a much smaller percentage of the overall developable land on the waterfront – will involve further negotiations and result in amendment challenges to the zoning by-law. In addition, it is unclear whether the corporation's development partners will opt to build and maintain affordable units themselves for 25 years or transfer this responsibility to the City of Toronto via *in lieu* payments. If the latter occurs, affordable housing could be constructed off-site, away from the waterfront, on land owned by the City of Toronto's local housing authority. While favourable conditions have been established, further research must be conducted when the

waterfront precincts are fully developed and occupied to determine the success of the affordable housing, social housing and amenity provision targets contained in the zoning by-law amendment.

Due Process Principles

The following two principles attend to the mechanisms that exist in the planning decision-making process to protect the design aspirations and principles contained in the planning and design policy framework (see: Figure 9.4. below). For urban design as public policy to prosper, the local governing authority should ensure that the planning and design process is both transparent and fair and, most importantly, strong enough to avoid arbitrary decisions that divert from the policy framework.

Figure 9.4. Due Process Principles

10. *Identify clear a priori rules and guidelines for urban design intervention to avoid arbitrary discretionary decision-making.*

Achievements:	Future Challenges:
• Level of urban design control exceeds that traditionally found in Toronto. • Proceedings of the Waterfront Design Review Panel are underpinned by the urban design objectives contained in the hierarchy of waterfront plans and guidance.	• Ensuring the Waterfront Design Review Panel conducts discussions about design within the bounds of the waterfront planning and urban design policy framework.

11. *Establishing proper administrative procedures with written opinions to manage discretion and implementing an efficient, constructive and effective permitting process that is supported by an appropriate appeal mechanism.*

Achievements:	Future Challenges:
• The Waterfront Design Review Panel must assess all waterfront development applications before planning approvals can be sought. • City of Toronto's urban design director sits as a non-voting member on the Waterfront Design Review Panel. • Success of the Waterfront Design Review Panel has led to a (non mandatory) review panel being formed by the City of Toronto.	• Mitigating political intervention in the planning and design process.

At the start of the current episode of redevelopment planning on Toronto's waterfront one of the key requests made by Fung's Task Force was for the new corporation to be given the power to make planning application decisions, allowing it to protect the emerging planning and design vision for the waterfront from alternate or 'watered-down' proposals by developers during the implementation process. Unprepared to relinquish such powers to an independent public corporation, the City of Toronto has remained the granting authority on the waterfront and the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has been cast as the 'lead master planner' with responsibility for delivering the planning and design vision and business strategy. To ensure that urban design, and the commitment to design excellence enshrined in the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, remain core considerations in the site plan approval and planning application process, the precinct zoning by-law amendments stipulate that the corporation's Waterfront Design Review Panel must review and comment upon all development proposals. As reported in Chapter 8, the Waterfront Design Review Panel was formed in 2005 and is composed of professional design experts who volunteer their time to assess all the planning and design proposals for the waterfront against the design objectives for the various precincts. In addition to the panel members, the City of Toronto's director of urban design also attends the review sessions as a non-voting member and, therefore, the panel's commentary is fed back into the urban design reports that accompany the site plan approval and planning permissions that are issued by the City of Toronto.

Just like the waterfront precinct plans, the Waterfront Design Review Panel is not recognized as a statutory instrument by the Ontario *Planning Act*. Therefore, it is limited to offering advice and, as a result, while the precinct by-law amendments state that all applications for site plan approval must attend the panel for review and comment, they do not state that the panel's advice must be followed. The panel has nevertheless emerged as a formidable authority on waterfront design and offers an added layer of sophistication to the planning decision-making process. Its panel members are well respected and the panel proceedings generate sustained interest from the press, especially when high profile projects come before it. That being said, soon after it was established the panel was fairly criticized for lapsing into arbitrary debates about architectural style rather than focusing on issue of urban design and, furthermore, for failing to provide clear advice to presenting designers. These criticisms were addressed in 2008 with the introduction of a revised manual of procedures that, among other things, required the panel members to vote on the

proposals under review. Crucially, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has also taken steps to reaffirm the review requirements set out in the zoning by-law amendments. All of the corporation's land development partners must enter into a legal agreement that, in addition to other conditions, obligates them to attend a staggered review by the Waterfront Design Review Panel before they submit an application to the City of Toronto for site plan approval.

The example of the Waterfront Design Review Panel demonstrates that upholding the connections established between the statutory planning instruments on the waterfront (the *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*, the zoning by-law amendments, etc..) and the non-mandatory tools and mechanisms that support them (the waterfront precinct plans, design review panel, etc..) is crucial to the success of design control on Toronto's waterfront. The measures that have been taken so far heighten the role that urban design plays in the planning decision-making process but, at the same time, only circumvent the regulatory failings of the extant planning system, rather than address them directly. As a result, design control on the waterfront rests on the relationship that exists between the City of Toronto, as the planning approval authority, and the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, as master planner. At present, the two organizations work well together and the planning and design vision for the waterfront is a shared one. Since the time of the Task Force, the City of Toronto has assisted in the production of all the planning documents and regulatory instruments for the waterfront and, therefore, the proposals contained in the Task Force's 2000 Fung report and the City of Toronto's 2001 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* are tightly aligned. All of the waterfront precinct plans have also been fully endorsed by the City of Toronto Council and all applications for site plan approval receive an enormous amount of scrutiny through the design review process and the corporation's SACs before they are finally assessed by the City of Toronto. But the relationship between the City of Toronto and the TWRC/Waterfront is also a fragile one and the non-mandatory elements of the waterfront planning and design armoury, such as the Waterfront Design Review Panel, are not immune from short-term political interference. The case of the Corus Building design review, for example, vividly demonstrates the weaknesses in the corporation's design authority and the power of local political leaders to override the precinct planning and design objectives when in pursuit of populist political objectives.

Finally, it is important to note that not all of the factors relating to 'due process' in the waterfront planning and design process emerged as significant parts of my research agenda and, therefore, two significant avenues for future research remain. The first of these relates to site plan approval and planning permissions. While I focused my research energies upon the design-sensitive policies and mechanisms established by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, there is a need to more closely examine the City of Toronto's planning approval process and, in particular, the impact of evaluations by the Waterfront Design Review Panel. Second of all, my research did not investigate the process for appealing planning decisions. To some extent the waterfront is immune from this process because public institutions, such as the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, are barred from launching appeals in Ontario. As a result, the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) – the quasi-judicial body that hears all planning appeals in Ontario – features much less in the planning process on the waterfront than is ordinarily the case in Toronto or other Ontario jurisdictions. Even so, the extent of its impact, both in the past and into the future, demands further scrutiny.

Appropriate Skills and Expertise Principles

The final two principles explore urban design skills and expertise (see: Figure 9.5. below and overleaf). Creating a design-led planning system requires an appreciation of design and the role that it can play as a tool of public policy. Design must be valued as a core planning skill and, therefore, planning practitioners should be equipped with urban design knowledge that draws on both theory and practice. Yet, understanding urban design is not sufficient. To effect change in the development process, planners and designers must also be competent market actors. Skills in negotiation and collaboration are paramount and, furthermore, expertise in the operation of the local property market is essential.

Figure 9.5. Appropriate Skills and Expertise Principles

12. *Providing appropriate design skills and expertise to support the urban design policymaking and review process.*

Achievements:

- Dedicated urban design staff at the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto.
- Waterfront Design Review Panel established to evaluate all design and planning proposals on the waterfront.

Future Challenges:

- Ensuring that conflicts of interest do not emerge during the design review process.

Figure 9.5. (cont.) Appropriate Skills and Expertise Principles

13. Equipping planning and urban design staff with knowledge of the local property market and advancing their skills in collaborative negotiation to build capacity with public and private sector actors.

Achievements:	Future Challenges:
• SACs allow private and public actors to discuss planning, design and development in a collaborative forum, reducing the conditions for conflict.	• Ensuring that a positive dialogue between public and private sector actors continues throughout all the various phases of implementation and construction.

The integration of urban design skills and real estate expertise into the planning and design process on Toronto's waterfront is both impressive and far-reaching. This achievement can be traced to the years of the Task Force, when Robert Fung, a successful businessman but design novice, sought the skills of private sector design experts to produce his vision and management plan in 2000. Fung selected a team of urban designers with a combination of local and international master planning experience. Yet, this group was also chosen because they understood large-scale redevelopment and the role that urban design plays in the wider planning and real estate process. They were not just planners and designers, but 'market actors'. It was during this period that the concept of precinct planning emerged, as well as the emphasis on 'design excellence' that eventually became a core policy objective in the City of Toronto's 2001 *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. Although many of the original urban designers have moved on to other projects, the emphasis on interwoven urban design and real estate skills at the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto remains strong. Notably, the corporation's planning and urban design division is headed by Chris Glaisek, an urban designer with formidable management experience from his former role at the World Trade Center site in New York City. In his current position at the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, Glaisek has championed the role of urban design in the planning and development process in various ways, including establishing the corporation's design competition process and professionalizing the Waterfront Design Review Panel through the introduction of voting and other procedural changes (see: Figure 8.5., p. 298). Moreover, Glaisek has also been instrumental in defining the corporation's commitment to 'leading with landscape' and advocating the emerging role that the waterfront plays as a forum for the Landscape Urbanism movement. Urban design is also valued as a core skill within the City of Toronto planning bureaucracy and while I have tended to focus on the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto during this research project, the City of Toronto also has a dedicated team of professional

urban designers who comment on major development proposals during the site plan approval process, including those on the waterfront. Furthermore, the City's former planning chief, Paul Bedford, was instrumental in the secondary plan process for the waterfront and successfully pushed for the introduction of broad performance-based urban design objectives rather than a strictly regulatory framework.

The most formidable source of design expertise on the waterfront is the Waterfront Design Review Panel. As mentioned earlier, the panel is comprised of design professionals who evaluate and comment on all the planning and development proposals on the waterfront. It is not only limited to assessing building proposals, but also comments on public parks, open space and master planning documents. By including the City of Toronto's urban design director in the peer review process, albeit as a non-voting member, the corporation is able to sustain a continuous dialogue with the City of Toronto urban design team. Yet, some significant criticisms remain about the composition of the Waterfront Design Review Panel. One particular concern is that a number of the panel's high profile members have also been awarded design contracts on the waterfront. While the hiring processes for these contracts have been entirely fair and transparent and the members in question always excuse themselves from a panel discussion when a conflict of interest occurs, the situation necessarily casts the Waterfront Design Review Panel as an 'elite club'.

In addition to the emphasis placed on hiring urban design staff with comprehensive market experience, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has also placed a high premium on creating relationships between actors in the public and private sectors through its public consultation. The SACs, in particular, have created a forum for local communities and stakeholder representatives to share and discuss ideas about the planning and implementation process. Local community representatives are able to hear first-hand from the corporation's development partners and learn about the risks and challenges they face as market actors. Equally, the corporation's development partners are able to better understand the history and context of the planning and design framework they must operate within. The result is that a genuinely trusting relationship between the corporation, its development partners and local communities has emerged. The challenge for the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto is to ensure that this mutual respect lasts throughout the on-going phases of implementation and construction.

Research Contributions and Limitations

When I began this research project I set about to answer the following research question: 'How do planning processes affect the quality and execution of urban design?' In pursuit of an answer I employed the case study method and explored the role of urban design in the planning and redevelopment of Toronto's waterfront. This allowed me to delve into the actions of multiple actors, explore the language of policies and regulations and reflect upon the outcomes of interwoven decision-making processes. As a result, the conclusions that I have drawn from the case, and presented in this final chapter, are intimately tied to the specificities and intricacies of planning and designing the waterfront. But the case also offers wider contributions to the study of urban design as public policy. As Chapter 4 discussed, quantitative researchers have roundly disputed the suggestion that a singular case study might be used in such a way. They argue that generalizable themes cannot be drawn from a case study because detail-orientated studies tend to generate knowledge that is too narrowly defined (Stake 1995; Yin 2003). However, this presumption is disputed and challenged by numerous qualitative case study researchers who counter that, while not statistically generalizable, case studies provide transferable and forcible examples that can inform extant practices in different settings and may suggest new hypotheses (Flyvbjerg 2001). Recognizing that the example of Toronto's waterfront demonstrates that planning processes can indeed have a profound affect on the quality and execution of urban design, I offer the following contributions to the study of urban design as public policy:

Design excellence demands 'Design Champions'

The conclusions I have drawn from this project reaffirm the findings of other researchers in the field of urban design as public policy, who have found that urban design is typically a controversial component of the wider planning process and invariably a site of tension and incompatibility between regulatory agencies, real estate developers and local citizens (Punter and Carmona 1997; Madanipour 2006). Research in the field of planning and urban design has long shown that short term political agendas, financial instability and weak institutions impact the pursuit of long-term design goals and limit the role that design conscious actors can play in the planning process (Sandercock and Dovey 2002; Dovey

2005; Punter 2007; Bezmez 2008). These common themes are germane to the case of Toronto's waterfront and I have highlighted the many instances where the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's efforts to foster a design-led planning process have been marred by periods of institutional uncertainty, short-term politicking, implementation inertia and a general unwillingness to radically transform the regulatory planning framework for the waterfront. But, a desire to achieve design excellence on the waterfront has survived throughout the waterfront redevelopment programme because of particular 'design champions'. The case of Toronto's waterfront demonstrates that the leadership, persistence and actions of specific *producers, users* and *regulators* of the built environment can play a crucial part in a design-led redevelopment vision. The 'design champions' of Toronto's waterfront have been mentioned at regular intervals throughout the preceding case study narrative. Their particular roles are summarized below.

First is Robert Fung, one of the key *producers* of the waterfront. Fung's leadership as head of the original Task Force (1999-2001) and then as the corporation's first chair (2001-2006) shaped the organizational structure of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto and established urban design as a core part of the waterfront planning and redevelopment programme. As a successful businessman, Fung initially understood urban design as an economic development tool. As I have mentioned, the emphasis of his Task Force's report in 1999 was to use design excellence to attract investors to the waterfront. But not long after the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto was created in 2001 and he was appointed as its first chair, Fung's understanding of urban design and the role it could play on Toronto's waterfront began to expand. By the time he left the corporation in 2006, he had employed a team of people at the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto who approach the waterfront, not only as a real estate project (which it is), but also as an exercise in design-led planning that is grounded in collaboration with local people and relies upon various innovative implementation tools.

The reason for this transformation in Fung's thinking can be traced to his exposure to the *users* of the built environment and, in particular, the interaction he had with key members of the West Don Lands Committee at a community-initiated planning workshop in late 1999. Even though it took some time for the Task Force and the subsequent corporation to move beyond merely 'selling' their vision of the waterfront at large public meetings, Fung deserves credit for recognizing that local communities had something unique to offer and for ensuring

that public engagement was enshrined in the corporation's first business plan in 2002. Yet, it was largely the communities themselves that ensured Fung's commitment to consultation and local participation has been upheld over the past eleven years. A core group of West Don Lands Committee members successfully lobbied the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto in 2003 to adopt the iterative model of public participation that is used during all of the corporation's public engagement processes. This deeply participatory process has allowed the dialogue about urban design on Toronto's waterfront to rise above the narrow economic definition initially imagined by Fung and the Task Force. And, as a direct result, social and environmental concerns, such as affordable housing and transportation, are now core components of a more sophisticated and mutually beneficial urban design conversation.

Turning to the *regulators* of the built environment, the leadership of the City of Toronto's former chief planner, Paul Bedford, did much to define the role that urban design would play as a component of public policy on Toronto's waterfront. During the early 2000s, it was Bedford who orchestrated the transition from a heavily regulatory planning framework to the visionary principles-based *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan* that undergirds the waterfront redevelopment process. In leading the effort to produce such a plan, Bedford hoped to give the newly formed corporation the flexibility to determine the specificities of the waterfront's urban design through the precinct planning process. From a political standpoint, Bedford also recognized that a broadly stated vision without narrow prescriptions and other conditions would be more acceptable to the politicians at all three levels of government.

To a large extent political leaders have chosen not to play a particularly visible role in the waterfront redevelopment process. The one exception was David Miller, the mayor of Toronto between 2003 and 2010. His role as a political *regulator* of the built environment has been a central part of the current episode of waterfront planning and design. The controversial proposal to create a fixed link to the Toronto Islands Airport and his opposition to it helped him to win the Toronto mayoralty in 2003. Although at times he was critical of the speed of the redevelopment programme, Miller successfully convinced the provincial government to change the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's founding legislation and allow him to become a member of the corporation's board of directors. In this role Miller became a self-appointed 'champion' of the waterfront and gave lots of publicity to some of the more progressive urban design proposals the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto proposed, including the

successful Quay to the City event in August 2007 that showcased the winning design proposals for the Central Waterfront (see: Figure 7.14., p. 260). Nevertheless, Miller's involvement in the waterfront planning and design process was never straightforward and at times his involvement in long-term decision-making on the corporation's board of directors was blighted by short-term political considerations. The design review process for the Corus Building, for example, pitched the corporation's urban design and master planning goals against the mayor's desire to see a big employer move to the waterfront expeditiously.

Urban design plans must be integrated with implementation devices

Restating an earlier remark made by one of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto's senior executives, urban design policymaking and implementation on Toronto's waterfront occurs "in spite of the [corporation's] governance model" (TWRC 7 2011). The case exhibits what Tiesdell and Adams (2011) describe as a 'tools approach' to urban design as public policy. The TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has employed a sophisticated combination of instruments and mechanisms – the precinct plans, design competitions and the Waterfront Design Review Panel – in response to the institutional and financial limits that have placed upon its operations. These tools are 'second order' design activities (George 1997). Rather than being directly responsible for the design of individual buildings and public spaces, urban design is employed as a means to an end and, on Toronto's waterfront, urban design has created a design sensitive decision environment that acts as a bridge between the regulatory planning framework and the detailed design processes that shape the products of the built environment. In this respect, the second order tools employed by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto have created the conditions for the first order design acts that follow. This has led to important shifts in the way design is practiced. Skilled urban designers, architects and landscape architects have been attracted to work on the waterfront and the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has won numerous awards for the quality of the planning and design documents it has published and the public parks and open spaces it has commissioned. The case demonstrates that steps that can be taken by a governing institution to improve urban design standards even when the wider decision making environment is compromised by political and financial constraints.

Collaboration legitimizes the urban design process

The TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has successfully trodden a fine line between being the public steward of the waterfront on the one hand and a real estate developer on the other. Therefore, the case demonstrates how urban design can emerge as a central part of a more sophisticated conversation about the future of space and place. The design story on Toronto's waterfront and has been characterized by moments of political courage and leadership, far reaching aspirations and policies and a sense of shared commitment between the producers, uses and regulators of the built environment. When taken at face value, the corporation has the appearance of a 'corporate' organization. Its founding chair was a billionaire businessman and its current CEO a real estate developer. Moreover, the corporation has a formidable communications department that publishes glossy and professional marketing materials branding the waterfront as Toronto's 'new blue edge' (Waterfront Toronto 2011a). Yet, the corporation has not lost sight of its public mission. It has successful broken down the barriers that typically exist between the public and private sectors and has allowed urban design to be driven as much by policy imperatives as by market conditions. This outcome has been determined by the iterative relationships that have been built with local people and other waterfront stakeholders through the corporation's public consultation and engagement processes. Although suffocating under the weight of short-term politicking, the long-term vision for the waterfront and the second order urban design tools that have been created to support it have been validated by the sense of shared partnership developed with local people. This positive outcome offers an important contribution to wider understandings of collaborative decision-making and its role in urban design practice. The mutual trust that has emerged between institutional actors and the general public mirrors theoretical aspirations for a 'soft infrastructure' of relationship-building in planning practice, that allows diverse participants to discuss planning concerns at a level beyond the elementary (Healey 2006) and to share in the decision-making process with dominant agents (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007), in this case urban design and real estate development experts.

In the introductory chapter of this research dissertation I noted that few studies of urban design policymaking and practice have been conducted in either Toronto or Canada. By focusing on 'design' in the context of Toronto's waterfront redevelopment story, my research makes a significant contribution to the study of Canadian urban design while also adding a new dimension to the existing literature on Toronto's waterfront. I hope that the narrative I have presented will be of particular value to Canadian urban design policymakers and practitioners struggling to implement more sophisticated design control measures in local or regional bureaucracies. In multiple ways the case shows that making urban design a priority in the planning decision making process is not a simple task and requires commitments from both the public and private sector. But, if the political will is there, tools like a design competition or an urban design review panel can boost the dialogue about urban design and lead to noticeable improvements in the production of buildings and spaces – the success of the wave decks on the Central Waterfront, which emerged from a highly publicized competition process, are perhaps the clearest example of this. Moreover, the case demonstrated that, if the governing authority is willing, local people can play a positive and crucial role in the planning and design process. The transformation of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto from an initially blinkered organization to a more open corporation should be consequential to those Canadian policymakers and practitioners working in redevelopment projects that have a public-private component. Engaging with local people has made for a positive decision making environment and, as a result, a more sophisticated urban design conversation and implementation agenda has evolved.

As I have drawn conclusions on the various design tools and mechanisms employed by the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto, I have also begun to question how these interwoven elements of the planning and design process compare to urban design as public policy efforts in other cities. With this in mind, one of the next steps in my urban design research journey will be to move towards comparative urban design case studies. The most obvious candidate for this endeavour is a direct comparison between the waterfront redevelopment processes in Vancouver and Toronto. Although such a study would require additional data collection in Vancouver, it would also build on Punter's earlier case study (2002; 2003; 2003a). As my own research project employs a similar theoretical framework, the comparison might offer

some illuminating results with respect to differing planning and design cultures in two Canadian cities. I also believe that instructive results could be gained through discrete comparative assessments of the design tools examined in this project. Comparing, for example, the Waterfront Design Review Panel or the corporation's unique design competition process to mechanisms in other cities and jurisdictions would be a necessary next step. This type of comparative research would lead to contrasting perspectives on the effectiveness of design processes run by quasi-independent organizations (such as the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto) and those administered by an official governing authority (such as a municipality).

Outstanding Questions

In earlier sections of this concluding chapter, I identified some of the key limitations of my research and highlighted specific instances where these gaps could be filled, including the need to return to the case of Toronto's waterfront in the future and assess more thoroughly the design outcomes of the redevelopment process. But foremost among these limitations is the lack of attention I paid to the planning approval process and the design actions of the City of Toronto planning department with respect to the waterfront redevelopment programme. As the shift towards implementation occurs and the number of site planning and development applications increase, there is scope to delve deeper into the City of Toronto's planning and design decision-making processes.

First of all, important questions remain about the role of the Waterfront Design Review Panel's evaluations in the official approval process. For example, to what extent does the City of Toronto heed the panel's advice during the site plan approval and permissions process? And, is the advice of the Waterfront Design Review Panel consistent with the advice of the City of Toronto's urban designers? Second, as residential real estate development projects begin to be implemented in the East Bayfront and other waterfront precincts, further research needs to be conducted on the reliability of the affordable and social housing targets that have been established. For example, to what extent have affordable and social housing units been built in the waterfront precincts themselves? And, have developers chosen to make *in lieu* payments to the City of Toronto rather than construct and maintain affordable and social housing units themselves? Third, the role of

Ontario's planning appeals process deserves further attention. While the waterfront has been somewhat immune from the proceedings of the OMB, previous research has shown it to have a negative impact upon urban design in other parts of Toronto (Kumar-Agrawal 2005). As privately held land begins to be developed in the East Bayfront precinct and other waterfront precincts, the potential impact of the OMB appeals process needs examination. Fourth, the successful public consultation and participation process on Toronto's waterfront simply deserves further and more focused study.

Methodologically, I employed a combination of semi-structured interviews, documents and direct observations to address the research questions posed in this project. This led to revealing findings about the relationships developed between local community groups and the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto. Nevertheless, my interviews were limited to a small and passionate group of community representatives, who are almost all retired professionals and have long played a formidable role in Waterfront Toronto stakeholder meetings. Continuing to record the input of these dedicated members of the public through face-to-face interviews will be an invaluable component of any on-going research strategy, but their reflections alone do not tell the whole story of Waterfront Toronto's public participation strategy. A core methodological objective for future research should be to reach out more broadly to members of the general public who have taken part in the corporation's planning and design exercises, live in neighbourhoods close to the waterfront but have not participated, or have recently moved to the waterfront. To do this would suggest the inclusion of focus groups as a data collection tool. Rather than relying on comparisons between interview transcripts, focus groups would allow for the observation, in real time, of the differences of opinion that exist between focus group participants on the nature of Waterfront Toronto's public participation exercises. Furthermore, the communicative nature of focus groups enables participants to react and respond to the responses of other participants, generating data that might not emerge from individual interviews.

While this research project is necessarily brought to a close, the story of planning and designing Toronto's waterfront continues. At times I have found Toronto's waterfront to be a large and unwieldy case and I am sure that I share the anxieties of fellow qualitative researchers when I admit that strands of the story might be missing. Many of my fears were abated by the robustness of the theoretical framework that I was able to employ during my

research endeavours. The “aspirational principles” (Punter 2007a, p. 198) developed by John Punter to guide his 2003 study of Vancouver proved a formidable analytical tool in my own work. They helped me to maintain a steady focus upon the specific design tools and mechanisms used on the waterfront and to reflect on their effectiveness. Yet, before beginning my fieldwork, and as I outlined in Chapter 3, I sensed that Punter’s principles might be improved in light of advances in planning and urban design theory, especially in the realm of ecology, decision-making and state-market relations.

The amalgamation of these additional theoretical ideas into an amended series of thirteen principles shaped the course of my research fieldwork and analysis in crucial ways. In particular, they allowed me to add a social dimension to my studies. The principles exposed me to the personalities, actions and agency of various actors in the waterfront planning and design process and gave me a strong foundation upon which to build an evaluation of the corporation’s innovative approach to public consultation and participation. This assessment ultimately led to one of the more salient conclusions drawn from the study, as noted in earlier paragraphs. No theoretical framework is static, however, and as I analyzed my fieldwork data I discovered that the principles limited my ability to interrogate the question of power in the planning and design process and, in a similar vein, the organizational dynamics of institutions and their impact on the way design decisions are made over time. This limitation therefore generates an important avenue for future theoretical study and provides an iterative opportunity to enhance the rigour of Punter’s original twelve principles once again.

* * *

Ultimately the pursuit of ‘design excellence’ on Toronto’s waterfront has been imperfect. While I have celebrated the successful elements of the design-led waterfront redevelopment story, I have also highlighted the many poor decisions and mistakes that have been made along the way. The impediments of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto governance model loom large over the ambitious waterfront redevelopment programme and electoral politics at the municipal, provincial and federal level continue to impact the corporation’s efforts to deliver on its public mandate. The case of Toronto’s waterfront cannot be reliably cast as an exemplar of design-led planning practice, but in time it might. Significant progress has been

made towards the corporation's goal of design excellence. Based on the evidence I have presented, my own predictions for the future of Toronto's waterfront are positive. Although struggling with its governance limitations, the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto has momentum. It has demonstrated that through innovative urban design processes and award winning urban design products progress on the waterfront is possible. And, above all, it has built a constituency of local people who both support and champion its efforts. Nevertheless, questions remain: Will the Gardiner Expressway be torn down and the connection between downtown Toronto and the waterfront restored? Will the ambitious master plan for the Port Lands and the re-naturalization of the Don River be achieved? Will Toronto's waterfront become a public room for all Torontonians? Researchers must continue to ask questions such as these and interrogate the redevelopment programme as it moves steadily forward. Undoubtedly many more challenges will arise, but the drive and ambition of the TWRC/Waterfront Toronto is palpable and I believe the long-awaited renaissance of Toronto's waterfront is finally within grasp.

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APPENDIX 1
Sample Interview Schedule

PhD Research: Urban Design and the Toronto Waterfront

Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Participant Name: Organization:

Position in Organization:

Interview Type: Date: Time:

Location: Reference Code:

Project Research Questions:

Primary Question:

How, and to what extent, can the quality of urban design by improved through the planning process?

Substantive Questions:

4. *How did urban design evolve as a component of public policy on Toronto's waterfront between 1999 and 2010?*

5. *To what extent have the urban design objectives for Toronto's waterfront been met during implementation?*

6. *What lessons can be learned from Toronto's waterfront development history about urban design processes and implementation?*

Role and Background of the Participant:

1. Would you describe yourself as an urban designer?
    a. If yes, please outline your professional background?
    b. If no, could you describe how your professional work is related to urban design?

2. What is/was your job title (job titles)?
    a. How long have you been involved in the [NAME OF PROJECT] project?
    b. When did you first become involved in the [NAME OF PROJECT] project?

3. Please describe in more detail your role in the organization you work for?
    a. How much of your time is/was spent on tasks related to urban design?
    b. What are/were your specific tasks and duties?

History of Planning and Urban Design on the Toronto Waterfront

4. Have you had previous experience working on the Toronto Waterfront (before working on the [NAME OF PROJECT] project)?

5. How would you describe the existing urban environment on the Toronto waterfront?
    a. From a design perspective, what do you think have been the greatest successes and failures in waterfront redevelopment in Toronto?

6. Which stakeholders (government, private, etc.) do you think have most influenced the design of the waterfront?
    a. To what extent do you think the design of the Toronto waterfront has been a politicized process?
    b. Do you perceive the current phase of urban regeneration on the Toronto waterfront as being any different to earlier phases of development?

Urban Design Policymaking

7. To what extent did a "vision" of urban design exist for the area in which the [NAME OF PROJECT] site is located?
    a. How was the urban design vision for the area developed (City of Toronto, Developer, etc.)?
    b. To what extent were local stakeholders (including members of the local community) involved in the process of determining an urban design vision for the area?
    c. What urban design principles, if any, influenced this vision?
    d. Were issues of sustainability or green design influential in any visions developed for the area?

8. To what extent has City of Toronto urban design policy influenced the design of the [NAME OF PROJECT] site?
    a. Did an urban design plan (or part of a wider urban design plan) exist for the [NAME OF PROJECT] site?
    b. Did the City have clear design objectives for the [NAME OF PROJECT] site?
    c. Does the City set mandatory or advisory design policy for large-scale development?
    d. At what point in the development process for [NAME OF PROJECT] was urban design first discussed between the [NAME OF PROJECT]?

9. To what extent did the City of Toronto encourage high quality urban design at the [NAME OF PROJECT] site?
    a. Are there any particular planning mechanisms that the City of Toronto uses to encourage urban design (tax subsidy, etc.)?
    b. In your opinion, to what extent does urban design have political support in Toronto and on the waterfront?

c. Have you witnessed a shift in the City's approach to urban design through the duration of the [NAME OF PROJECT] project?

Urban Design Implementation

10. Through what tools and mechanisms is urban design policy typically expressed in Toronto?
    a. To what extent are urban design requirements expressed through zoning?
    b. What urban design documentation was [NAME OF PROJECT] asked to produce for its development application?
    c. Does the city make any planning decisions on a discretionary basis?
    d. To what extent have City of Toronto planning and urban design staff stayed involved in [NAME OF PROJECT] after development permits were awarded?

11. Does the City of Toronto negotiate for any public amenities (or other planning gain) on large-scale developments?
    a. What public amenities have been secured at [NAME OF PROJECT]?

12. To what extent have the master plan (if existing) and the urban design objectives for the [NAME OF PROJECT] changed or evolved during the development process?
    a. If some changes have occurred, what factors have influenced these changes?

13. If you have knowledge of it, how does the City of Toronto's new design review board operate?
    a. To what extent can local politicians influence urban design decisions made by this design review board?
    b. To what extent do you believe the City of Toronto allows architectural design freedom on large-scale development projects?
    c. To what extent did it influence urban design at [NAME OF PROJECT]?

14. To what extent did Ontario's planning appeals board, the OMB, influence the planning and design process at [NAME OF PROJECT]?

Reflections on Urban Design Process and Implementation

15. Did the City of Toronto and [NAME OF FIRM/ORGANIZATION] work well together on the issue of urban design?
    a. Overall, how would you rate the efficiency of the development process in Toronto?
    b. To what extent do you think urban design expertise is valued within the planning department at the City of Toronto?
    c. To what extent is urban design important to the City of Toronto in the design of the waterfront?
    d. To what extent did the city and the developer agree on urban design?
    e. On reflection, how successful is the urban design of [NAME OF PROJECT]?

APPENDIX 2
Sample Letter of Introduction

[OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA LETTERHEAD]

[REF]

[DATE]

[NAME]
[COMPANY/ORGANIZATION]
[ADDRESS 1]
[ADDRESS 2]
[POSTCODE]

Dear [TITLE AND SURNAME],

Re: Invitation to Reflect on Toronto's Waterfront Development (Ph.D. Project)

My name is James White and I am a PhD candidate in Planning at The University of British Columbia (UBC). My research is focused upon the processes and outcomes of urban design policymaking and implementation on the Toronto waterfront. I am currently undertaking my fieldwork and I am contacting you because your [work on/advocacy for] with [organization] provides an important vantage point for understanding the evolution of the development area.

During my fieldwork, I hope to conduct interviews with a range of participants who have been involved in the design and planning of the waterfront. These interviews will be combined with an analysis of planning and design documents and a physical examination of the built environment. I anticipate that this research might be of interest to policymakers and urban designers in Toronto, as well as urban design and planning scholars.

I hope you will consider a short, one-hour interview. This will consist of a conversation where you may reflect upon your experiences. I will contact you by email or telephone within two weeks to follow up on this invitation. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me via email at xxxxx@xxxxx, or by telephone at: xxx-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you very much. I really look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

[SIGNATURE]

JAMES T. WHITE BSc (Hons), MA (Urban Design)
PhD (Planning) Candidate, The University of British Columbia

APPENDIX 3
Coded List of Interview Subjects and Interviews

City of Toronto Government Representatives

TORONTO 1

Junior staffer involved in the City of Toronto Urban Design Review Panel.

- Interview: 11:00am, February 22nd, 2011.

TORONTO 2

Senior-level urban designer involved in waterfront planning and design.

- Interview: 3:00pm, February 29th, 2011.

TORONTO 3

Mid-level urban designer involved in the City of Toronto Urban Design Panel.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 3rd, 2011.

TORONTO 4

Former planning manager involved in waterfront planning and design.

- Interview: 3:00pm, March 7th, 2011

TORONTO 5

Former senior-level planner involved in waterfront planning and design.

- Interview: 11:00am, March 9th, 2011.

TORONTO 6

Former mid-level planning project manager involved in waterfront planning and design.

- Interview: 2:30pm, March 9th, 2011 (by telephone).

TORONTO 7

Senior-level planning manager with responsibilities for waterfront planning and design.

- Interview: 11:00am, March 14th, 2011.

TORONTO 8

Former planning director and current member of Waterfront Design Review Panel.

- Interview 1: 11:00am March 16th, 2011.
- Interview 2: 11:00am March 23rd, 2011.

TORONTO 9

Senior-level urban designer involved in waterfront planning and design.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 16h, 2011.

TORONTO 10

Mid-level planning project manager involved in waterfront planning and design.

- Interview: 9.30am, March 17th, 2011.

TORONTO 11

Senior-level planning manager with responsibilities for waterfront planning and design.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 23rd, 2011.

TORONTO 12

Senior-level urban designer with citywide responsibilities for urban design.

- Interview: 4.30pm, March 28th, 2011.

TWRC/Waterfront Toronto Representatives

TWRC 1

Mid-level communications manager

- Interview: 2:00pm, February 18th 2011.

TWRC 2

Mid-level communications manager

- Interview: 2:00pm, February 18th, 2011 (with TWRC 1)

TWRC 3

Senior executive and urban designer

- Interview 1: 9.30am, March 18th, 2011
- Interview 2: 10:00am, April 1st, 2011

TWRC 4

Senior-level director with responsibilities for communications.

- Interview: 9:00am, March 23rd, 2011.

TWRC 5

Former senior executive and urban designer.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 28th, 2011.

TWRC 6

Senior executive with project management responsibilities.

- Interview: 11:00am, April 1st, 2011.

TWRC 7

Senior executive with managerial responsibilities.

- Interview: 1:00pm, April 1st, 2011.

TWRC 8

Former senior executive with managerial responsibilities.

- Interview: 3:00pm, April 1st, 2011.

Private Sector Real Estate Developers

DEVELOPER 1

Senior-level executive with responsibility for a large waterfront construction project.

- Interview: 1:00pm, March 2nd, 2011.

Design Professionals

DESIGN 1

Partner at a Toronto-based urban design and planning firm.

- Interview: 11:00am, February 17th, 2011.

DESIGN 2

Principal at a Toronto-based urban design and architecture firm and a former member of the Waterfront Design Review Panel.

- Interview: 3.30pm, March 2nd, 2011.

DESIGN 3

Senior associate at a Toronto-based urban design and architecture firm and a designer on numerous Toronto waterfront projects.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 4th, 2011.

DESIGN 4

Senior executive at Toronto-based design and engineering firm.

- Interview: 2:30pm, March 11th, 2011.

DESIGN 5

Principal at a Toronto-based urban design firm and a former senior urban designer at the City of Toronto.

- Interview: 10:00am, March 21st, 2011.

DESIGN 6

Principal at a Toronto-based architecture firm and a lead designer on a Toronto waterfront project.

- Interview: 11:00am, March 22nd, 2011.

DESIGN 7

Principal at a Toronto-based architecture firm, member of the Waterfront Design Review Panel and a lead designer on a Toronto waterfront project.

- Interview: 5:00pm, March 22nd, 2011.

DESIGN 8

Studio director at a Toronto-based landscape architecture firm and a senior landscape architecture on a Toronto waterfront project.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 25th, 2011.

DESIGN 9

Principal of a Toronto-based architecture firm and a member of the Waterfront Design Review Panel.

- Interview: 11:00am, March 29th, 2011.

DESIGN 10

Partner at a Toronto-based urban design and planning firm, a former advisor to the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation and a lead planner on numerous Toronto waterfront projects.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 29th, 2011.

DESIGN 11

Partner at a Toronto-based architecture firm and a lead designer on a Toronto waterfront project.

- Interview: 11:00am, March 30th, 2011.

DESIGN 12

Principal at a Toronto-based architecture and engineering firm and a lead designer on a Toronto waterfront project.

- Interview: 1:00pm, March 31st, 2011.

DESIGN 13

Principal at a Toronto-based architecture and engineering firm and a lead designer on a Toronto waterfront project.

- Interview: 1:00pm, March 31st, 2011 (with DESIGN 11).

DESIGN 14

Principal at a Toronto-based landscape architecture firm and a lead designer on a Toronto waterfront project.

- Interview: 12:00pm, April 7th, 2011 (by telephone)

DESIGN 15

Former senior designer and project manager at a Rotterdam-based landscape architecture firm and a design team member on a Toronto waterfront project.

- Interview: 12:00pm, April 8th, 2011.

Media Professionals

MEDIA 1

Architecture critic and reporter at a national newspaper.

- Interview: 11:00am, March 15th, 2011.

Political Representatives

POLICITAL 1

Former City of Toronto politician with interest in the waterfront.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 30th, 2011.

POLICITAL 2

Former City of Toronto senior political advisor with waterfront responsibilities.

- Interview: 11:00am, April 4th, 2011.

Civil Society Representatives

CIVIL 1

Social and environmental activist with longstanding interest in Toronto's waterfront.

- Interview: 4:00pm, February 18th, 2011.

CIVIL 2

Leader in neighbourhood association adjacent to Toronto's waterfront.

- Interview: 2:00pm, March 14th, 2011.

CIVIL 3

Urban Design Activist

- Interview: 10:00am, March 19th, 2011.

CIVIL 4

Leader in neighbourhood association adjacent to Toronto's waterfront.

- Interview: 11:00am, March 28th, 2011.

CIVIL 5

Leader in neighbourhood association adjacent to Toronto's waterfront.

- Interview: 11:00am, April 4th, 2011.

Other Interview Subjects

I also conducted conversations with three personal contacts in Toronto and seven professional academic contacts at local Toronto universities.

APPENDIX 4

Written Consent Form

[OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA LETTERHEAD]

Interview Consent Form

PhD Dissertation Research Project: An Evaluative Study of Urban Design as Public Policy on Toronto's Waterfront, 1999-2010

Principal Investigator:
Dr Maged Senbel, Assistant Professor
School of Community & Regional Planning
The University of British Columbia

Co-Investigator:
James T. White, PhD Candidate
School of Community & Regional Planning
The University of British Columbia

Purpose:
The purpose of this research is to investigate urban design policymaking and urban design implementation on the Toronto waterfront. The research methodology is a qualitative case study. It will include the collection of three sources of data: written documents, direct observations and participant interviews. You are being asked to participate in the research because of your knowledge and/or active involvement in the development of the Toronto waterfront. This study is being completed in partial fulfilment of the co-instructor's PhD dissertation. The dissertation is a public document that will be available at the UBC Library upon its completion.

Study Procedures:
If you choose to participate in this study, the co-investigator will interview you for approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The interview will comprise a conversation led by the co-investigator. With your permission the interview will be recorded as a digital audio file to accurately record the responses you give. The interview recording will be transcribed, coded and analyzed by the Co-Instructor. A computer software programme designed for the analysis of qualitative data will support this process. You will be sent a summary of the interview proceeding and a copy of the final research project.

Confidentiality:
The data collected for this research will be published as a doctoral dissertation and may be used in future publications related to the research. As a study participant you may choose not to be identified by name in any publication. The recording and transcript of your interview will be coded with an identification number such that only the researcher can identify the responses belonging to you. If you chose to allow your name to be used in the dissertation, and any future publications derived from this data, you will have an opportunity to review any quote or paraphrase attributed to you before publication.

Participation Risks:
No harm is expected as a result of your participation in this study. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions, you can inform the interviewer. Every effort will be made to protect the identity of interview subjects who do not wish to be identified by name. In these instances, when quotes are used in the dissertation they will ascribed to "an urban designer at the City", etc.. However, it may not be possible to completely protect your identity, if, for example, a quote is ascribed as: "a senior urban designer for the Toronto waterfront" and there are only two people holding such a position.

Participation Benefits:
The benefit of participating in this study is that the research findings may identify opportunities for improving urban design outcomes through policy and implementation. The research will help you to share your opinions on the topic of urban design on the Toronto waterfront.

Remuneration/Compensation:
There will be no payment or remuneration for helping with this study.

Contact for information about this study:
If you have any questions or would like further information about this study, please contact the co-investigator, James T. White, at xxx xxx-xxxx, or by email at: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

Contact for information about the rights of research subjects:
If you have any concerns or questions about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598.

Consent:
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records and indicates your consent to participate in this study.

_____

Subject Signature Date

_____

Print Name

APPENDIX 5
Key Initiatives and Policy Documents (1999–2010)

Date	Initiatives/Policy Documents	Influence(s) on Urban Design as Public Policy
1998	Bid for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games.	• Waterfront chosen as the key location for Olympic infrastructure (stadia, village, etc.). • Bid legacy is defined as a city building and waterfront revitalization effort.
Nov. 1999	*Our Toronto Waterfront: The Wave of the Future!* released by the City of Toronto.	• Emphasizes an integrated planning and design vision for the waterfront with the Olympic Games as a stepping-stone. • Anticipates a joint role for the public and private sectors in the revitalization process. • Proposes the creation of an intergovernmental task force to initiate the waterfront redevelopment programme.
Nov. 1999	Toronto Waterfront Redevelopment Task Force established.	• Robert Fung is appointed chair of the Task Force. • Task Force is charged with producing a design vision for the waterfront and a plan for delivery. • Fung appoints a skilled team of urban designers with local and international experience to produce Task Force report.
Nov. 1999	West Don Lands Committee three-day design workshop.	• Demonstrated the local community's seriousness about the waterfront redevelopment to the new Task Force. • Set the foundation for later public consultation and participation efforts on the waterfront.
March 2000	*Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada* published by the Task Force (the 'Fung report').	• Reemphasizes City of Toronto's *Wave of the Future!* planning and urban design vision.

March 2000 (cont.)	*Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada* published by the Task Force (the 'Fung report').	• Recommends that any redevelopment programme must be led by an independent corporation with full planning powers. • Recommends a series of tax levies to generate necessary income for project (including a casino and road tolling).
June 2000	$1.5 billion pledge by the three levels of government towards waterfront redevelopment.	• Capital to be used to begin implementation of Fung report vision. • Initial contribution ($300 million) to go towards Olympic infrastructure upgrades.
October 2001	*Central Waterfront Secondary Plan 'Making Waves: Principles for Building Toronto's Waterfront'* published by the City of Toronto.	• Legal (statutory) basis for revitalization efforts. • Design-led plan presented as a series of performance-based principles. • Concept of waterfront precincts and supporting precinct master plans introduced.
Nov. 2001	Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC) created.	• Fung appointed as chair of new corporation. • Corporation tasked with implementing vision and principles contained in *Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*. • Corporation only given limited authority to lead revitalization efforts. Notably, power to grant planning permission excluded.
October 2002	Toronto Waterfront Design Initiative (TWDI) convened by the City of Toronto and the TWRC.	• Emphasized commitment to design excellence. • Brought international design talent to the waterfront.
October 2002	*Public Consultation and Participation Strategy* published by the TWRC.	• Influenced by previous community planning efforts conducted by the West Don Lands Committee. • Formalized the TWRC's goal to build trust with local people and establish a constituency of support for the waterfront revitalization programme.
March 2003	John Campbell appointed as TWRC president and CEO.	• Experienced real estate operative. • Previously oversaw numerous large-scale development projects in Toronto before TWRC appointment.
June 2003	*Central Waterfront Public Space Master Plan* released by TWRC.	• Established waterfront public realm as the foundation for revitalization.

June 2003 (cont.)		• Provided thorough contextual analysis to underpin future precinct planning exercises.
August 2003	Planning and design processes for the East Bayfront precinct and the West Don Lands precinct initiated.	• First full-scale public engagement efforts conducted by the TWRC. • First design-led master planning efforts conducted by the TWRC. • Established the process of iterative public meetings and stakeholder advisory committees now used on all waterfront planning, design and development projects.
July 2004	$344 million transferred to TWRC from the three governments.	• Contribution agreement that allowed TWRC to continue operations and begin implementation.
August 2004	Trip made by John Campbell and Robert Fung to view sustainable urban development in Sweden.	• Demonstrated the value of urban design and design excellence to Campbell and Fung.
March 2005	Waterfront Design Review Panel established.	• Established to uphold TWRC's commitment to design excellence. • Copied the peer review model employed in Vancouver, Canada. • All projects proposed on the waterfront required to attend the panel for critical review.
April 2005	Chris Glaisek appointed as TWRC vice president of planning and design.	• Experienced urban design manager. • Previously worked as urban design manager at the World Trade Center site in New York City.
October 2005	Central Waterfront Innovative Design Competition initiated.	• Required competition entrants to operate within a strict urban design policy framework. • Incorporated public consultation and participation. • Awarded to Dutch urban design and landscape architecture firm, West 8.
October 2005	Alternative master plan for the East Bayfront precinct proposed by TEDCO.	• Discussion of alternative proposal at TWRC board meeting supported by Mayor David Miller. • TEDCO proposal voted down by TWRC board, but the event demonstrated the fragility of the corporation's power and potential for politicization.

Dec. 2005	Mayor David Miller joins TWRC board of directors.	• Brought support and publicity to the waterfront revitalization programme. • Added political edge to the TWRC's mandate.
May 2006	Robert Fung leaves post as TWRC chair.	• Fung played a formidable role in establishing the planning and urban design vision for the waterfront, as well as the corporation's management structure. • Relationship with Mayor Miller had become poor.
August 2006	Quay to the City design showcase event on the Central Waterfront.	• Innovative education tool to demonstrate the possible look and feel of the new waterfront.
February 2006	Memorandum of Understanding signed between TWRC, TEDCO and the City of Toronto regarding land ownership in the East Bayfront precinct.	• Established the TWRC as 'lead master planner' of the waterfront (a similar agreement was also reached with the provincial government with respect to the West Don Lands in September 2005).
February 2007	Lower Don Lands Innovative Design Competition initiated.	• Built upon success of Central Waterfront competition process. • The winning entry by Michael Van Valkenberg established Toronto's waterfront as a laboratory for the Landscape Urbanism design movement.
January 2008	*Waterfront Design Review Panel By-Laws, Policies, and Procedures* published by TWRC.	• Established clearer guidelines for conducting design review with the aim of avoiding arbitrary decision-making. • Written in direct response to the failure of the design review process during the evaluation of a building in the East Bayfront precinct (Corus).
March 2008	TWRC becomes Waterfront Toronto.	• Improved marketing strategy initiated.
Sept. 2008	Spadina Wave Deck opens.	• TWRC's first public realm project. • Won awards for design quality and received public support.
Sept. 2010	Corus Building officially opens.	• First major building constructed as part of the revitalization programme.