

Sidewalk, Waterfront Toronto agree to 12-acre footprint for Quayside

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TORONTO — Sidewalk Labs and Waterfront Toronto have reached agreements on project scope and footprint and other components of Sidewalk’s proposed development for the east Toronto waterfront.

The agreement for the Quayside community represents a significant scaling back of the plan Sidewalk’s released in June that proposed development of 190 acres.

Sidewalk, a division of Alphabet and sister company to Google, will now develop the original 12 acres as proposed by the parties in the original 2017 contract awarded to Sidewalk with further projects contingent on the success of Quayside.

It was announced Oct. 31 by Waterfront Toronto that its staff will proceed with the formal evaluation of Sidewalk’s updated Master Innovation and Development Plan and further public consultation.

The chair of Waterfront Toronto’s board of directors Stephen Diamond wrote in an open letter, “Let me be clear: this is not a done deal. There is still much work to do before a final decision.”

Quayside is zoned for 3.3 million square feet of development. Sidewalk is proposing to build a dozen mixed-use buildings with a total housing capacity of 5,000 residents.

Under the agreement, Sidewalk Labs agreed that all personal information will be stored in Canada, and it has eliminated its Urban Data Trust proposal.

For vertical development, Sidewalk Labs has confirmed that it will partner with one or more real estate developers, rather than act as “lead developer” as originally proposed. Waterfront Toronto would lead a competitive public procurement process.

Two other contentious issues outside of the proposal were also reconciled, said the Waterfront Toronto release.

Waterfront Toronto will receive fair market value for the Quayside lands at the time of sale. The current appraisal is approximately \$590 million.

The statement said Waterfront Toronto will make investments to support project priorities such as affordable housing and climate change.

Sidewalk has also acknowledged that Waterfront Toronto does not have jurisdiction over the approval of capital funding for public transit, the Waterfront Toronto statement said.

Sidewalk now says that instead of creating an IDEA district, it will work with Waterfront Toronto to create an Innovation Plan to advance any regulatory changes required to achieve innovation goals for the project.

In August the Carpenters’ District Council of Ontario (CDCO) wrote to Waterfront Toronto in support of the proposal for mass timber construction at the site, with CDCO president Mike Yorke noting project timelines could be shortened by 35 per cent and that construction of a mass timber factory could “jump-start a sustainable timber industry in Ontario.”

An October letter of support from the **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario** indicated, “The plan’s exciting innovations range from smart-city infrastructure and the Waterfront LRT to adopting cutting-edge construction and infrastructure technologies and materials for residential, commercial and institutional uses, including Canadian ‘tall wood.’

“In our view, this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity.”

Diamond said a decision on whether to move forward with the Sidewalk master plan will be made by March 31, 2020 by Waterfront Toronto’s board.