



Consulting in the Smart City: Lessons from Sidewalk Toronto

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2018-19 Blanche and Sandy Van Ginkel Graduate Fellow

July 11, 2019

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Finance & Governance

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 UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO



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Presentation Outline

1. Background and Research Focus
2. Literature
3. Timeline and Methods
4. Key Topic Spotlight: Consultation
5. Preliminary Insights
6. Next Steps

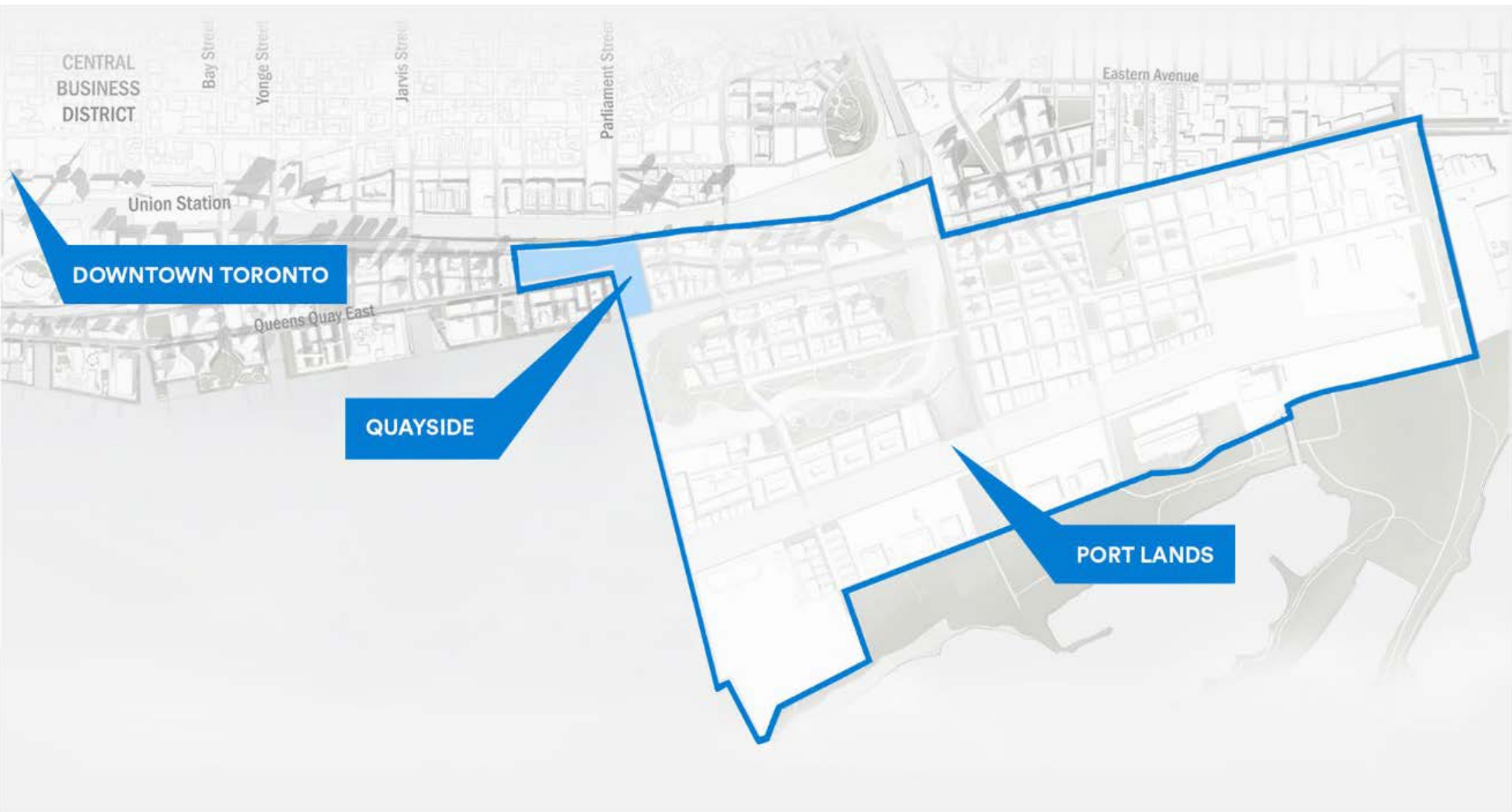


Image: Sidewalk Labs Inc.

Key Terms

- Framework Agreement - October 2017
- Plan Development Agreement (PDA) – July 2018
- Master Innovation and Development Plan (MIDP) – June 2019

Research Focus

Understand the visioning and planning processes, along with new partnership and governance models proposed for Quayside.

Four objectives:

1. Waterfront Toronto / Sidewalk Labs partnership
2. Approaches from other municipalities
3. Benefits and challenges
4. Worldwide impact

Five potential sticking points in Sidewalk Labs' masterplan for the Toronto waterfront

Waterfront Toronto's initial review found 'a number of exciting ideas' but also several areas of concern

GEOFF ZOCHODNE AND
JAMES McLEOD

Here are three of the biggest questions about the Sidewalk Labs plan for Toronto's waterfront

By Star Staff

The Alphabet of Sidewalk Labs plan for Toronto's waterfront

By [Donovan Vincent](#)

OPINION

Two ways that Sidewalk Labs can help Toronto



MARCUS GEE >
PUBLISHED JUNE 28, 2019

5 takeaways from Sidewalk Labs' smart city master plan

The 1,500-page "Toronto Tomorrow" plan puts a \$1.3 billion price tag on the project with the hopes of catalyzing \$38 billion in investment by 2040.

By [Kristin Musulin](#)

5 key take-aways from Sidewalk Labs' master plan for Quayside and Toronto's waterfront



By [May Warren](#) Staff Reporter

Key Topics

- 1 The rise of tech-lash
- 2 Waterfront Toronto history & mandate
- 3 Process
- 4 Project scope
- 5 Government involvement
- 6 WT/SWL relationship
- 7 Oversight and accountability
- 8 Privatization of planning
- 9 Consultation and communications

“How did we get to this point, when it has become so controversial?”

- Matt Galloway
CBC Metro Morning, June 25 2019

“In some ways, what’s been somewhat tragic about this whole project is to see how its really polarized the whole city. The establishment of the city, the developers of the city, the community of banks and developers are really split into two different sides.”

- David Skok

CBC Metro Morning, June 25 2019

Sidewalk Labs could make Toronto a world leader in urban tech

RICHARD FLORIDA
SPECIAL TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL
PUBLISHED JUNE 24, 2019

THE GOOGLE 'SMART CITY' PLAN: FINANCIAL LANGUAGE OF HI-TECH COLONIALISM



POSTED JULY 2, 2019
BY MARIANA VALVERDE

Cracks in the sidewalk: How will experimental city-building techniques fare in the real world?

Criticism prevalent about Sidewalk Labs' design, function, data privacy, future use and more [JAMES McLEOD](#)

Sidewalk Toronto: And Now People of Toronto, What Say You About Your "Democracy"?



Bianca Wylie [Follow](#)
Jun 23 · 9 min read

LORINC: Sidewalk Labs and the problem of smart city governance

JUNE 25, 2019 | BY JOHN LORINC

A Big Master Plan for Google's Growing Smart City

[LAURA BLISS](#) 12:06 PM ET

Special Report

By [Amanda Roth](#), [Murad Hemmadi](#) and [Zane Schwartz](#) Jun 24, 2019

Key takeaways from Sidewalk Labs' long-awaited innovation plan

Sidewalk Labs says it needs discounted land for its affordable housing plan

By [Emily Mathieu](#) Affordable Housing Reporter
Mon., June 24, 2019 | 5 min. read

Sidewalk Labs' proposed plan for Toronto's waterfront: Everything you need to know

TOM CARDOSO >
STEFANIE MAROTTA >
JEFF GRAY > QUEEN'S PARK REPORTER
JOSH O'KANE > TECHNOLOGY REPORTER
PUBLISHED JUNE 24, 2019

OPINION

In the conversation around Sidewalk Labs, Toronto can – and will – stand its ground

ANNE GOLDEN AND ALAN BROADBENT
CONTRIBUTED TO THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Fear and Loathing in Toronto



Anthony Townsend

Sidewalk Labs project is a public health opportunity

By [Aaron Orkin](#) Opinion

CITY HALL

Critics are calling Sidewalk Labs' proposal to create new oversight agencies a power grab



By [David Rider](#) City Hall Bureau Chief
Sun., June 30, 2019 timer 5 min. read

ROBINSON: How does government fit into smart city plans?

JUNE 26, 2019 | BY PAMELA ROBINSON

MIDP: the Data Governance Proposal



Sean McDonald
Jun 26 · 18 min read

Sidewalk Labs wants to create a new transportation authority



By [Ben Spurr](#) Transportation Reporter
Tues., June 25, 2019 timer 4 min. read

OPINION

Sidewalk Labs' Toronto project plan offers a thousand details, but ignores basic questions



ALEX BOZIKOVIC > ARCHITECTURE CRITIC
PUBLISHED JUNE 24, 2019
UPDATED JUNE 25, 2019



By [Donovan Vincent](#) Housing Reporter
Mon., June 24, 2019 | 9 min. read

Three key literatures:

Smart cities

Campbell, 2012; Townsend, 2013; Kramers et al, 2014; Jackson, 2009; Hollands, 2008 & 2015; Vanolo, 2014 & 2016; Zuboff, 2018

The entrepreneurial city

Brenner, 2004; Peck and Tickell; 2002 Harvey, 1989; Jessop, 1997; Keil, 2002; Florida, 2002; Peck, 2005 & 2014

Public-private partnerships

Siemiatycki, 2015; Cruz and Sarmiento, 2017; Dameria and Benevolo, 2015; Alizadeh, 2017; Eidelman, 2011; Bunce, 2011; Desfor and Laidley, 2011

“Take the debate about smart cities from a universal, prescriptive—maybe even idealistic—level to the local, descriptive, and pragmatic level.”

- Meijer, A.J., Gil-Garcia, J.R., and Rodriguez Bolivar, M.P. , 2015, p. 653



Image: Heatherwick Studio / Sidewalk Labs Inc.

Qualitative Methods

1. Discourse Analysis
2. Interviews
3. Participant Observation

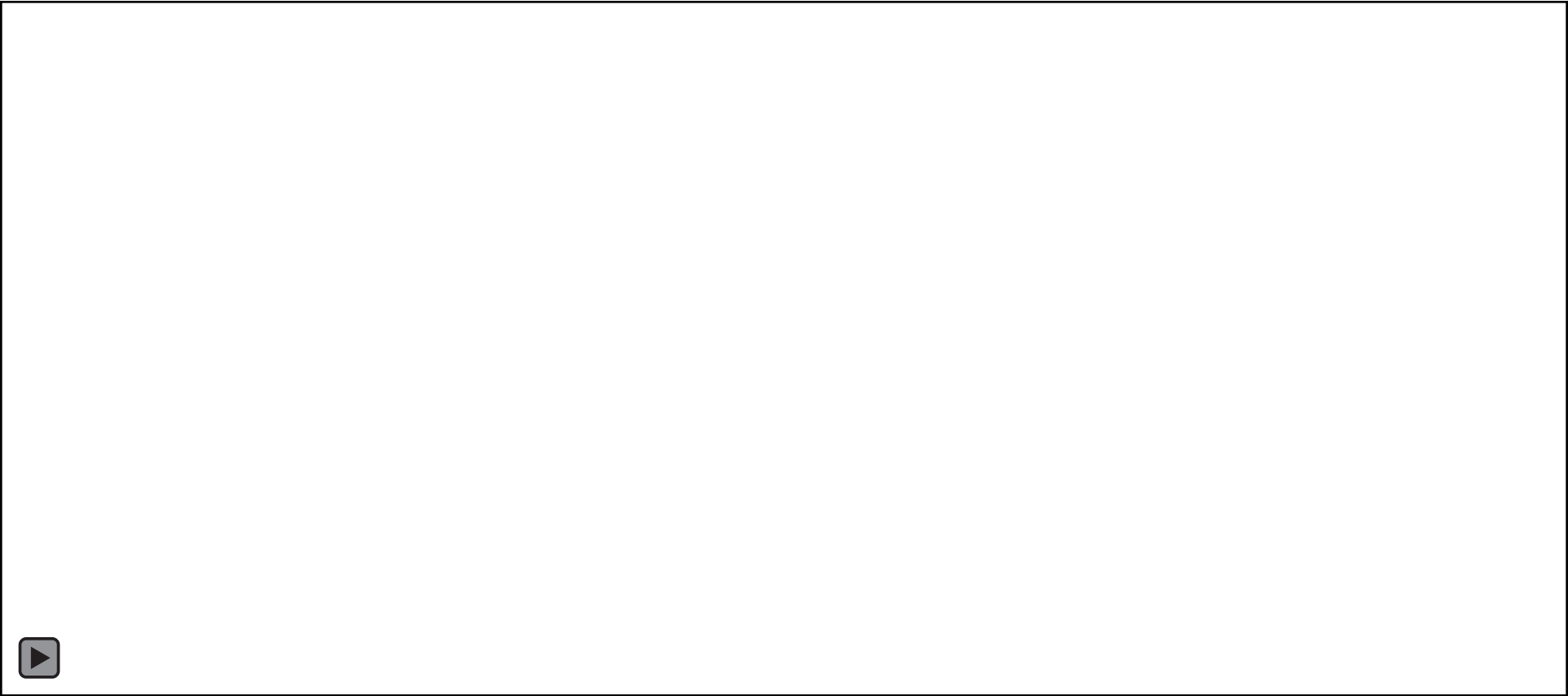
Timeline

Fieldwork: January 2020

Anticipated Waterfront Toronto Board decision.

Writing and Editing: Winter/Spring 2019/20

Quayside Timeline



Consultation & Communications

Guiding Framework:

1. Consultation is vital to creating successful smart cities
2. Private partners are necessary to achieving smart city developments
3. Consultation is a governance issue and requires accountability

Consultation & Communications

1. Consultation is vital to creating successful smart cities.

- There are "big benefits to doing it your own way" (Townsend, 2013: 236)
- Co-create policies to reflect unique needs and characteristics (Meijer et al., 2015; Vanolo, 2014)
- Resisting neoliberal goals of the smart city (Shelton et al., 2015)
- "Smart city building is still city-building" (Spicer & Goodman, 2018)

Shelton, T., Zook, M., and Wiig, A. (2014). "The 'actually existing smart city'." *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 8(1): 13 – 25.

Townsend, A. (2013). *Smart Cities: Big Data, Civic Hackers and the Quest for a New Utopia*. WW Norton.

Meijer, A.J., Gil-Garcia, J.R., and Rodriguez Bolivar, M.P. (2015). "Smart City Research: Contextual Conditions, Governance Models, and Public Value Assessment." *Social Science Computer Review*, 34(6): 647-656.

Spicer, Z. & Goodman, N. (2018). "Winning the smart cities challenge with equity, inclusion." *Policy Options*.

Vanolo, A. (2014). "Smartmentality: The Smart City as Disciplinary Strategy." *Urban Studies*, 51: 883 – 898.

Consultation & Communications

2. Private partners are necessary to achieving smart city developments.

- PPPs are central to 21st century municipal governance (Siemiatycki, 2015; Iossa & Martimort, 2015)
- High capital and operating costs of smart cities (Cruz & Sarmiento, 2017)
- New risks mean new models are needed (Dameria and Benevolo, 2015; Cruz & Sarmiento, 2017)

Cruz, O.V. and Sarmiento, M. J. (2017). "Reforming traditional PPP models to cope with the challenges of smart cities." *Competition and Regulation in Network Industries*, 18(1-2): 94 - 114.

Dameria, R.P. and Benevolo, C. (2015). "Governing Smart Cities: An Empirical Analysis." *Social Science Computer Review*, 34(6): 693 – 707.

Iossa, E., & Martimort, D. (2015) "The simple microeconomics of public-private partnerships." *Journal of Public Economic Theory*, 17(1): 4-48.

Siemiatycki, M. (2015). "Public-Private Partnerships in Canada: Reflections on twenty years of practice." *Canadian Public Administration*, 58(3): 343-362.

Consultation & Communications

3. Consultation is a governance issue and requires accountability.

- The public sphere (Habermas, 1989)
- Citizen collaboration with state and non-state actors (Newman, 2005)
- Canada's Open Government Action Plan
- Central to a healthy democracy

Consultation & Communications

1. Context
2. Resources
3. Shifting Roles
4. Education
5. Discussion Topics



1. Context

"The planning work contemplated by the Framework Agreement that will result in the MIDP will be developed with **robust consultation based on questions, concerns and ideas generated from open and transparent public engagement that has been the high standard of all of Waterfront Toronto's work to date.**"

Framework Agreement Summary, November 2017

2. Resources

"This incremental planning process was designed to recognize the complexity of the endeavor, the **necessity of extensive stakeholder and community engagement, and the need to incorporate feedback as the plan takes shape.**"

Framework Agreement Summary, November 2017

Consultation Timeline

Based on MIDP, WT documentation, interviews, and observations.

Date	Activity	Leadership
Nov 2017	Town Hall Meeting	Sidewalk Labs
Feb 2018	Public Engagement Plan Released	Sidewalk Labs
Feb 2018	Fellows Program Announced	Sidewalk Labs
Mar 2018	Roundtable #1	Sidewalk Labs
Apr 2018	Digital Strategy Advisory Panel created	Waterfront Toronto
Apr 2018	Residents Reference Panel launched	Sidewalk Labs
May 2018	Advisory Working Groups formed	Sidewalk Labs
May 2018	Roundtable #2	Sidewalk Labs
Jun 2018	307 Opens, 307 Opens, Public Talks & Drop-ins	Sidewalk Labs
Aug 2018	Roundtable #3	Sidewalk Labs
Sept 2018	Design Jams	Joint
Oct 2018	Quayside Stakeholder Advisory Committee launch	Waterfront Toronto
Oct 2018	Sidewalk Labs Advisory Council launch	Sidewalk Labs
Nov 2018	CivicLabs launch	Waterfront Toronto

Consultation Timeline

Based on MIDP, WT documentation, interviews, and observations.

Date	Activity	Leadership
Dec 2018	Roundtable #4	Sidewalk Labs
Feb 2019	Co-design Charrette	Sidewalk Labs
Apr 2019	QuaysideTO.ca launch	Waterfront Toronto
May 2019	Digital Neighbourhoods & Digital Literacy event	Waterfront Toronto
Jul 2019	Public Consultations on Sidewalk Labs' Proposal for Quayside – Phase 1	Waterfront Toronto
Fall 2019	Public Consultations on Sidewalk Labs' Proposal for Quayside – Phase 2	Waterfront Toronto
Fall 2019	City-led consultation on digital governance framework	City of Toronto
Spring 2020	City-led consultation on MIDP	City of Toronto

* Sidewalk Labs held additional small group and one-on-one meetings, and workshops

Consultation Timeline

- 21,000 people engaged in-person
- 280,000 online views of live-streamed events or videos
- Over 11,000 visitors to 307
- Over 100 hours co-designing with communities

Do these numbers constitute “meaningful” engagement?

Evaluating Consultation

- The process makes clear:
 - Purpose & timeline
 - Key issues
 - Decision-making process
- Sufficient time
- Number and diversity of participants
- Clear information
- Knowledge and power sharing
- Feedback impacts outcomes
- Process is legitimate
- Knowledge of participants is valued

3. Shifting Roles

Phase 1: Collaboration co-branding and communications begins

COMMENTARY

OPINION

‘The neighbourhood of the future starts with your ideas’

By Daniel L. Doctoroff
Will Fleissig

Wed., Nov. 1, 2017 | 4 min. read

October 2017 Framework Agreement (released 2018)

- “Jointly coordinate”
- Community outreach = WT responsibility

Feb 2018 Engagement Plan

- Co-signed
- “Sidewalk Toronto is a **joint effort by Waterfront Toronto and Sidewalk Labs** to create a new kind of mixed-use, complete community on Toronto’s waterfront.”

March 2018 Roundtables Begin

- Co-branding

June 2018 Public Engagement Plan Update

- Co-signed, co-branded
- "we plan to release a draft Master Innovation and Development Plan"



20 Bay Street, Suite 1310
Toronto, ON M5J 2N8, Canada

sidewalktoronto.ca
#sidewalkto

July 2018 PDA FAQs

- "led by Waterfront Toronto with support from Sidewalk Labs"

July 2018 PDA

- “A robust stakeholder engagement strategy that demonstrates Waterfront Toronto and Sidewalk Labs’ **joint vision**”
- “co-creation and collaboration”
- “jointly coordinate”
- “jointly approve”



Image: Lorinc, Feb 20 2018, *Spacing*

Responsibilities Comparison

Based on MIDP, WT documentation, interviews, and observations.

Date	Activity	PDA Vision	Result
Nov 2017	Town Hall Meeting		SL
Feb 2018	Public Engagement Plan Released	Joint	SL
Feb 2018	Fellows Program Announced		SL
Mar 2018	Roundtable #1	WT	SL
Apr 2018	Digital Strategy Advisory Panel created		WT
Apr 2018	Residents Reference Panel launched	SL	SL
May 2018	Advisory Working Groups formed	SL	SL
May 2018	Roundtable #2	WT	SL
Jun 2018	307 Opens, Public Talks and Drop-ins begin	SL	SL
Aug 2018	Roundtable #3	WT	SL
Sept 2018	Design Jams	WT	Joint
Oct 2018	Quayside Stakeholder Advisory Committee launch		SL
Oct 2018	Sidewalk Labs Advisory Council launch		SL
Nov 2018	CivicLabs launch	WT	WT

Responsibilities Comparison

Based on MIDP, WT documentation, interviews, and observations.

Date	Activity	PDA Vision	Result
Dec 2018	Roundtable #4	WT	SL
Feb 2019	Co-design Charrette		SL
Apr 2019	QuaysideTO.ca launch		WT
May 2019	Digital Neighbourhoods & Digital Literacy event		WT
Jul 2019	Public Consultations on Sidewalk Labs' Proposal for Quayside – Phase 1		WT
Fall 2019	Public Consultations on Sidewalk Labs' Proposal for Quayside – Phase 2		WT
Fall 2019	City-led consultation on digital governance framework		CoT
Spring 2020	City-led consultation on MIDP		CoT
--	Neighbourhood Meetings	WT	SL
--	Social Media	Joint	SL
--	Pop Ups (listed in PDA, never completed)	WT	--

Phase 2: Increased Separation

Advisory Committees (October 2018)

- Quayside Stakeholder Advisory Committee (WT)
- Sidewalk Labs Advisory Committee (SL)

Roundtable #4 (December 2018)

- No co-branding, no use of “Sidewalk Toronto”
- **Summary report introduction:** “Waterfront Toronto selected Sidewalk Labs through a competitive process”
 - **Vs. Roundtables #1-#3 (March - August 2018):** “Sidewalk Toronto is a joint effort by Waterfront Toronto and Sidewalk Labs”

Dec 2018 Waterfront Toronto releases draft MIDP evaluation approach

- No reference to “Sidewalk Toronto”

April 2019 QuaysideTO.ca

- Waterfront Toronto owned and branded
- No reference to “Sidewalk Toronto”
- “Waterfront Toronto will receive” MIDP

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[Q](#) [Quayside Map](#) [📍](#) [Menu](#) [☰](#)



Phase 3: MIDP Review: Legacy of Confusion

June 2019 Letter from Stephen Diamond

- “Waterfront Toronto did not co-create the MIDP”

June 2019 Waterfront Toronto Note to Reader

- No references to “Sidewalk Toronto”
- “The roles of the two organizations then separated”

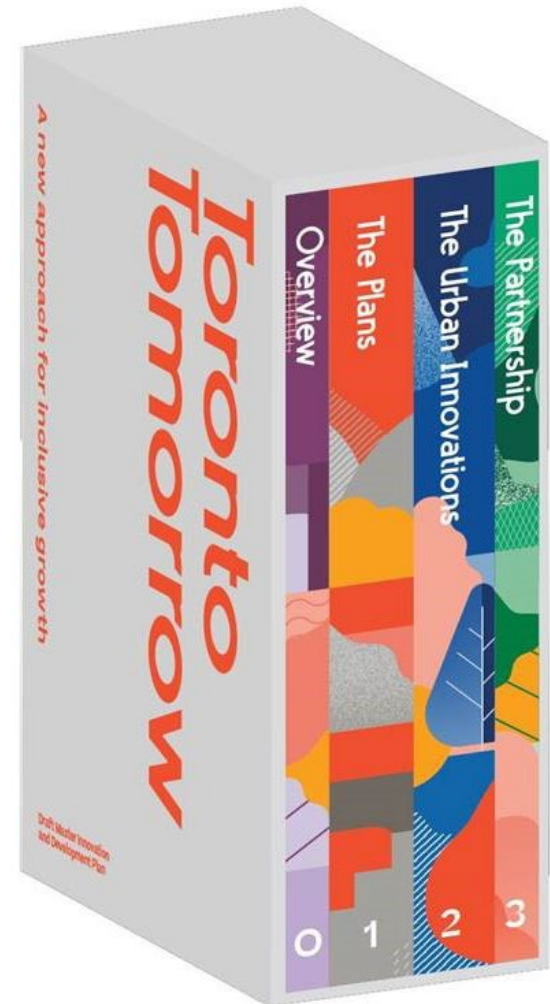


Image: Sidewalk Labs

Complication: Government Involvement

Who is responsible? Who is accountable?

- Lack of municipal, provincial, or federal smart city policies (though a federal data strategy is underway)
- Lack of City involvement in agreements
- Significant lobbying by Sidewalk Labs at with municipal, provincial, and federal governments
- No City-led consultations prior to 2020
- MIDP conflicts with City plans

4. Education

I WANT TO
KNOW MORE
ABOUT

"We said literally from the first day that if we couldn't create an approach that would earn people's trust, there was no way that this thing would ever get approved."

Dan Doctoroff quoted in Bendix, June 27 2019, *Business Insider*

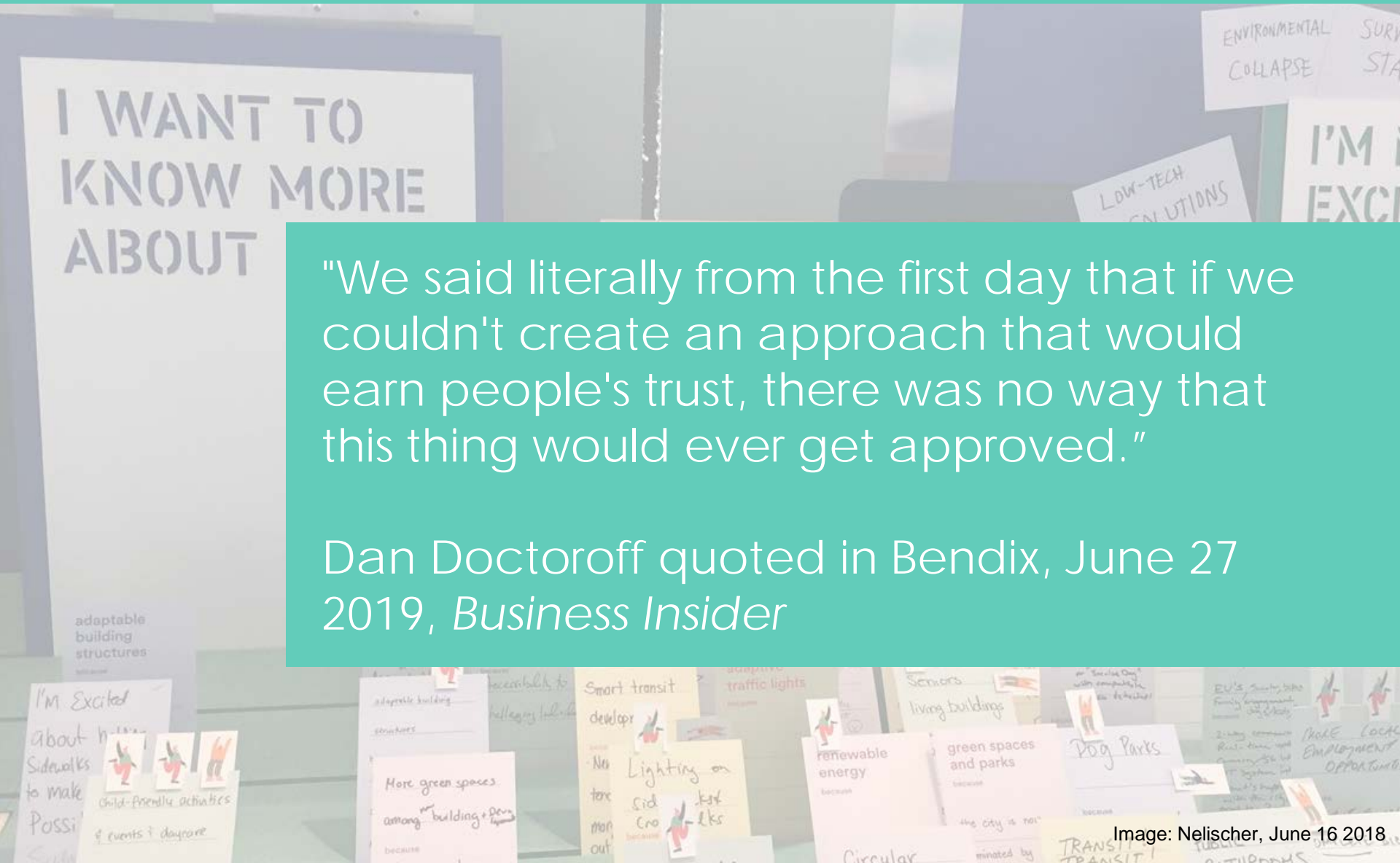


Image: Nelischer, June 16 2018

5. Discussion Topics

“We are exploring **virtually every aspect** of how the city works and how Toronto residents think it could work better.” (June 2018 Engagement Plan Update)

What was on the table for discussion?

MIDP Consultation Summary:

- Categories of feedback: Mobility, Public Realm, Buildings and Housing, Sustainability, and Digital Innovation
- Missing from these highlights are key questions of
 - Governance
 - Scale
 - Privatization

“A re-invention of the city [...] a complete re-tooling of the social and governmental infrastructure of the city.”

– Andrejevic and O’Connor, 2008

Key Questions

Governance

- Role of private sector in policy-making
- Lack of established data governance policies
- Responsibility for acting in the public interest
- Approvals and responsibilities of various levels of government
- Newly proposed governance structures

Scale

- Quayside vs. larger “scale up” to Villiers West and beyond
- Waterfront land ownership / jurisdiction

Privatization

- Potential sale or lease of public lands
- Procurement policies
- Use of public funds to support private development
- Private company as lead developer

"The way to create cities that everyone can traverse without fear of surveillance and exploitation is to democratize the development and control of smart city technology."
(Ben Green, author of *The Smart Enough City*)

Waterfront Toronto's Response:

- "What do we value?" - Michael Geist, Digital Strategy Advisory Panel Chair, at Waterfront Toronto's Digital Neighbourhoods & Digital Literacy Public Event, May 22, 2019
- Note to Reader

Summary of Observations

Context

- Waterfront Toronto's consultation reputation
- Public trust in Waterfront Toronto

Resources

- Extensive time, effort, and funds
- High participation levels, but what about other measures?

Shifting Roles

- Collaboration to separation
- Legacy of confusion
- Questions of accountability

Education

- Withheld or unclear information

Discussion Topics

- Key questions missing

Preliminary Insights

- 1 A publicly accountable governing body should lead discussions of key issues prior to the release of a Request for Proposals.
- 2 Public bodies and private partners should maintain separate communications channels.
- 3 The public body should determine the terms of the consultation.
- 4 Recognize the value a private partner receives from access to the public through consultations.

Next Steps

Participant Observation

- Waterfront Toronto public consultation: Phase 1 (July), Phase 2 (fall)
- Future Sidewalk Labs events?
- Other related events as they arise

Interviews and discourse analysis continues.

Research phase ends: Early 2020 (anticipated timing of Waterfront Toronto Board decision)

thank you.