



Waterfront Toronto Presents to Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics

Toronto, February 21, 2019 - The Clerk of the Federal Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics invited Waterfront Toronto to present before the committee on February 21, 2019. The Committee is undertaking a study on the privacy implications and potential legal barriers relating to the implementation of digital government services in Canada, in order to make recommendations on how the government could improve its services while also protecting Canadians' privacy and security.

Waterfront Toronto was pleased to share its perspectives on this evolving topic, as well as what it has heard from those with whom it has been consulting in relation to its intelligent community project – Quayside.

Following below are the opening remarks delivered by Meg Davis, Chief Development Officer, and Kristina Verner, Vice President, Innovation, Sustainability and Prosperity. The Parliamentary recording of the presentation can be found [here](#) and a recording of the questions from Committee members and responses by Meg and Kristina, can be viewed [here](#). The Parliamentary transcript can be accessed [here](#).

Opening remarks:

Introductions:

<Meg Davis>

Good afternoon, Bonjour, and thank you for the invitation to speak today. My name is Meg Davis, I am the Chief Development Officer of Waterfront Toronto.

With me is Kristina Verner, Waterfront Toronto's Vice President, Innovation, Sustainability and Prosperity. She has worked in the field of intelligent and smart communities for 20 years.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to share with this Committee background on Waterfront Toronto and our Quayside project, and the roles and responsibilities of Waterfront Toronto and our Innovation and Funding Partner, Sidewalk Labs.

Of particular interest to this committee, we also want to address the policy considerations presented by the Quayside project, and Waterfront Toronto's perspective on those matters.

Let me assure this committee that Waterfront Toronto is approaching the Quayside project with the full force of the fundamental right to privacy, beyond the strict letter of the law.

Waterfront Toronto:

For those of you not familiar with Waterfront Toronto, we were created in 2001 by the Governments of Canada and Ontario, and the City of Toronto.

We were given a mandate to transform 800 hectares of former industrial lands on the shores of Lake Ontario into thriving neighbourhoods that grow our economy and improve quality of life.

I'm proud to say that the revitalization of Toronto's waterfront is the largest urban redevelopment project currently underway in North America, and it is one of the most significant waterfront revitalization efforts ever undertaken in the world.

This unique tri-government model is clearly working. Since Waterfront Toronto's inception, we have helped generate over \$10 billion in new private sector investment and create 26 hectares of new public spaces, including award-winning, iconic parks such as Canada's Sugar Beach and Corktown Common.

This investment has helped create over 14,000 full-time years of employment, 5,000 new residential units, almost 600 affordable housing units, and 1.5 million square feet of commercial office space to date.

Quayside – Innovation and Funding Partner

As members of this Committee are aware, in March 2017, Waterfront Toronto launched an international Request for Proposals seeking an Innovation and Funding Partner to transform part of the waterfront called "Quayside."

This Innovation and Funding Partner would help create a plan for the future neighbourhood and address key priorities, including:

- Fighting climate change by radically reducing energy consumption and household waste
- Offering affordable housing for families and single people alike
- Reducing traffic congestion and improving road safety for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, and;
- Creating jobs and prosperity by serving as a testbed for Canada's cleantech, building materials, and broader innovation-driven sectors.

The goals we set for Quayside are about using innovation and new ideas to deliver a better, more affordable quality of life. Protecting data and privacy are integral to the realization of these goals.

Like you, Waterfront Toronto is committed to ensuring the use of technology to facilitate better services for people, while at the same time, absolutely protecting personal privacy.

After a rigorous competitive selection process, Sidewalk Labs was selected as our Innovation and Funding Partner.

Their sole job at this point in time, is to prepare for our consideration a “Master Innovation and Development Plan” or “MIDP” for Quayside. They are spending up to \$50 million of their own money to prepare this plan. As Kristina will elaborate, the plan will be subject to approval, which is contingent upon protection of privacy as a condition.

Waterfront Toronto has developed a rigorous process to evaluate the MIDP.

This evaluation will use subject matter experts and a due diligence panel, and it will seek public input on the MIDP through consultations. The plan will be reviewed by all levels of government, and Waterfront Toronto’s board of directors. If approved, any MIDP proposals will be subject to all usual federal and provincial regulations, and municipal planning approvals.

To be clear, if the MIDP proposed by Sidewalk Labs does not deliver on these priorities, in a manner that is in the public interest, then the proposed plan will not be approved by Waterfront Toronto and will not be implemented.

Protection of Data Governance & Privacy:

I would now like to turn the microphone over to Kristina Verner to discuss our approach to the protection of privacy.

<Kristina Verner>

Thank you, Meg. I know that protection of privacy is top of mind for every member of this Committee, as it is for Waterfront Toronto and the public we serve, and I appreciate this opportunity.

As Meg just stated, any individual component selected for implementation at Quayside will be subject to all applicable laws from all levels of government.

This of course includes Canada’s privacy laws.

While Canada’s privacy laws relative to the rest of the world have proven remarkably effective, we recognize that technology is changing all the time which requires Canadian privacy law to evolve.

As a result, I want the Committee to know that Waterfront Toronto is approaching the Quayside project with an expectation of the protection of the fundamental right of privacy, well beyond the strict letter of the law. We know that if this project is going to proceed, it must reflect Canadian values on privacy.

We are guided in this effort by expert committees and advisors, all three levels of government, and continuous, ongoing public consultation.

To this end, Waterfront Toronto has established the Digital Strategy Advisory Panel (DSAP), to guide Waterfront Toronto on how best to incorporate data privacy, digital systems, and the safe and ethical use of new technologies and ensure digital inclusion in the next phase of waterfront revitalization, starting with the Quayside project.

The panel is led by Dr. Michael Geist, the Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-Commerce Law at the University of Ottawa, and a Senior Fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation. I understand that Dr. Geist appeared recently before this Committee.

We are also working closely with Chantal Bernier who spent nearly 6 years leading the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada as Interim Privacy Commissioner and as Assistant Commissioner. She now serves as the National Practice Leader, Privacy and Cybersecurity at Dentons.

Chantal is here with us today.

We also regularly seek insight from former three-term Ontario Privacy Commissioner, Ann Cavoukian.

Waterfront Toronto's Commitment to Privacy

I would like to specifically outline some of the commitments that Waterfront Toronto has made to protect privacy.

One: In addition to all existing legislative and regulatory requirements, we are committed to the principles of "Privacy By Design." A plan for Quayside would only be approved if it adheres to these principles.

Two: With respect to the protection of personal information, there will be no preferential treatment to any Alphabet company, including Google, regarding linking to, sharing or use of personal data.

Three: Data cannot be used for advertising purposes without express positive consent.

Four: Any personal information will be de-identified at source, unless express consent is knowingly and explicitly given for a specific purpose.

Five: Minimization of data collection, so that only the data needed and identified for a limited and specified purpose would be collected.

Six: Our commitment is that data collected for the Quayside project will be stored in Canada.

Sidewalk Labs has already committed to abiding by all of these key requirements.

We agree with what Ann Cavoukian has often said, we are looking to create a smart city of privacy on Toronto's waterfront, and we are firmly committed to working with our government stakeholders to ensure that this is precisely what is delivered.

At this point I'll turn it back over to Meg.

<Meg Davis>

Public Engagement:

Over the past year, we have conducted broad public engagement to help inform and shape the MIDP to be proposed by Sidewalk Labs for our consideration. Thousands of people have participated in our consultation process to date, and we intend to hear from thousands more before we finish.

We expect to receive the first draft of the MIDP soon. It will be made available for public input. Only after that public consultation will Waterfront Toronto begin the evaluation process.

Waterfront Toronto will continue to work with federal, provincial and municipal policy-makers to ensure the public is well-served.

Technology, and its impact on cities, raises questions that are being debated around the world. Quayside is an excellent opportunity for Canada to get these answers.

Thank you for your invitation to present today. We look forward to your questions.

Thank you, Merci.

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