

You're invited to a Good Jobs For All Coalition forum:



Update on Google's plan for our waterfront ... and what it means for the future of our city.

Tuesday, October 1, 2019

at 25 Cecil St (Steelworkers Hall)

Time: 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. (Doors open at 5 pm)

Light refreshments available.

Over the summer Sidewalk Labs issued a massive 1500 page proposal to build its vision of a so-called 'smart city' on hundreds of acres (equivalent to a 0.85km square) on our eastern waterfront.

Negotiations are taking place right now to determine how and if this project will move forward after the October 31 negotiation deadline.

This is not just another waterfront development. It is a Google Sidewalk Lab vision of development. Google is owned by Alphabet one of the largest Big Data multinationals in the world, capitalized to the tune of ½ Trillion dollars.

Their plan envisions a very particular future for development in Toronto – and is to some extent, a pilot for urban development that will happen around the world. No wonder the decisions about Sidewalk Lab are being watched and reported on across the globe.

The decisions could be fateful. At risk are good jobs, public ownership of land, housing policy, transportation, and public governance. It also marks a watershed moment in the surveillance of the public by for-profit companies. And it may drain resources from other important city projects. (See reverse for more background.)

The forum is designed as an update and discussion session with short presentations, Q & A's and group discussions.

Get informed and join the discussion.



Waterfront Development in the Public Interest?

The Good Jobs for All Coalition represents over 30 community, labour and environmental groups in the Greater Toronto Area. Given our focus on healthy communities, a sustainable economy, strong public services, equity and decent work for all, the Coalition held a forum in December 2018 on Google's Sidewalk Lab bid. We continue to report on developments at our monthly meetings.

Why are we so concerned? We want to ensure the interests of the public and working people are given priority in our planning for waterfront development and innovations. As Waterfront Toronto begins a review specific to the Google affiliate's proposal, we want to support member organizations speaking out about the risks to privacy protections, low-income housing commitments and the environment. Here are some other risks:

1. **A Public Land Grab.** Any proposal must abide by the original Quayside Request for Proposals. This is a 12 acre 'experiment' not a massive 200 acre development project that cherry-picks prize public real estate. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has filed a court challenge over the legality of even considering Sidewalk Lab's expansionist land grab. Who let the dogs out!?
2. **A Power Grab.** There is a great risk of a 'privatopia' of private and profit-driven governance, a virtual 4th level of government, accountable to no one. We see this in the suggestion of a private authority for transit and potentially other services like health care. Public services, public sector jobs and public governance must prevail. There must be no concessions on the bylaws and regulations set by our democratic public institutions.
3. **Precarious Work.** Private development of smart city concepts and private control of technology can undermine job security and rights through subcontracting, short term contracts, etc. We need government accountability and oversight of labour protections including Toronto's Fair Wage Policy and negotiated Community Benefit Agreements.
4. **"Surveillance City".** It's a real risk given Google's interest in the profits that will come from mining the data provided by extensive surveillance of the public. It runs the risk of exclusion including the risk of being used as a form of criminalization, targeting members of marginalized communities in particular.
5. **Phony investments and innovations.** Sidewalk Lab has no experience with large scale urban development and low income and equity in housing. They are proposing affordable housing targets well below the public need and they expect to offload some costs to the public purse through future corporate tax concessions, even though public dollars are already funding the hugely expensive Quayside environmental cleanup.
6. **Sidewalk Lab's proposal threatens to divert resources and attention** from underserved neighbourhoods, undermining our equity and anti-poverty agenda.

The Sidewalk Lab proposal poses questions and issues that impact not only the Waterfront but the whole city and in particular the workers and communities of Toronto.

The risks are huge. All eyes should be on this proposal.