



October 23, 2019

To: **Stephen Diamond, Chair of the Board of Directors, Waterfront Toronto**
- and -
Board of Directors and CEO, Waterfront Toronto

The Good Jobs for All Coalition represents more than 30 community, labour and environmental groups in the Greater Toronto Area.

With October 31 fast approaching, we are writing to urge you to keep the broader public interest uppermost in mind as you come to some conclusions about doing business with Sidewalk Labs/Google in the Quayside area.

The entire process has proven problematic, beginning with issues raised in the Auditor General's report and the court case launched by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association which takes the view that "The Google-Waterfront Toronto deal is invalid and needs to be reset". In many respects, this venture has been fatally flawed from the outset.

Since then, the critical issues of data collection, surveillance zones, data use and digital governance have raised considerable public alarm. Similarly, there are concerns with the lack of specifics in the MIDP including inadequate commitments to low income housing and other equity matters.

Still other problems have arisen with respect to Sidewalk Labs' motivations and behavior, including the aggressive attempt at a public land grab that dwarfs the original RFP site and a proposal for new administrative bodies that defy public governance and public sector delivery. See attached "Waterfront Development in the Public Interest".

We join with others in calling for full transparency on all waterfront projects, and most immediately, Quayside and any negotiations associated with it. Waterfront Toronto has a responsibility to work with the public and to earn the public's trust in protecting the assets we hold in common.

Yours truly,

Carolyn Egan and *Tam Goossen*

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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 of 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 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. And 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 Toronto's Fair Wage Policy, negotiated Community Benefit Agreements and other labour protections.
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.
5. **Phony investments and innovations.** Sidewalk Lab has no experience with large scale urban development and low income housing. They also 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.