CHRISTOPHER WEIN IN CONVERSATION WITH JENNIFER KEESMAAT: CITY BUILDING IN CANADA IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

March 7, 2017

Welcome Address, by Paul Fogolin, Vice President of the Ontario Retirement Communities Association and President of the Empire Club of Canada

Good afternoon, once again, ladies and gentlemen. From the One King West Hotel in downtown Toronto, welcome to the Empire Club of Canada. For those of you who are just joining us through either our webcast or podcast or live on TV, welcome, to the meeting.

Before our distinguished speakers are introduced today, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our Head Table Guests. I would ask that each of our Head Table Guests rise as their name is called. Typically, we ask the audience to refrain from applauding, but nobody ever listens, so clap as much as you want. It is more fun this way.

HEAD TABLE

Distinguished Guest Speakers:

Ms. Jennifer Keesmaat, Chief City Planner and Executive Director, City of Toronto

Mr. Christopher Wein, President, Great Gulf Residential, Great Gulf Group Limited

Guests:

Mr. Jason Lester, Vice Chair, Development, Dream

Mr. Daniel Marinovic, Chief Development Officer, Dream

Dr. Gordon McIvor, Communications and Public Relations Consultant; Past President, Empire Club of Canada

Ms. Amanda Milborne Ireland, Chief Operating Officer, Milborne Real Estate Inc.

Mr. Hunter Milborne, President, Milborne Real Estate Inc.

Ms. Jane Pepino, Partner, Aird & Berlis LLP

Ms. Antoinette Tummillo, Executive Vice President, Real Estate Management Services, Colliers International; Director, Empire Club of Canada

Once again, my name is Paul Fogolin. In my day job, I am the Vice President of the Ontario Retirement Communities Association and your President for the Empire Club of Canada this season. Ladies and gentlemen, your Head Table.

Former Secretary General to the United Nations Ban Ki-moon had this to say about the future of cities: "Building sustainable cities and a sustainable future will

need open dialogue among all branches of national, regional and local government. It will also need the engagement of all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society." The Secretary General recognized that cities are being built in a significantly different way than they were even a generation ago. Both planners and developers spend more time thinking about macro-issues, such as climate change, traffic congestion and energy conservation. Each of these issues requires enormous amounts of study and thought, if the final product is to be progressive and economically feasible. It often demands more cooperation between cities and the development community.

Well, today, we are tremendously privileged to be joined by two global leaders in the art of modern city-building. One, an award-winning North American developer, and the other, one of the continent's most respected and well-known planners. Together, they will discuss what it takes to build a great city in 2017 and how new approaches to city-building are literally changing the way that urban Canadians live, work and play.

Christopher J. Wein is the President of Great Gulf. He leads the senior executive management team for all residential community, housing and high-rise development initiatives at Great Gulf, including construction and property management. With more than 20 years of senior leadership in the design and development industries, his work focuses on utilizing new technologies; sustainable, eco-friendly building solutions; and engineering ingenuity in the industry. Chris has spoken at industry conferences all around the world—in Shanghai, Dubai, New York, Dallas and all across Canada. Under his leadership, Great Gulf has been recognized as 2016's "Home Builder of the Year" and has received many top community and high-rise development awards.

Jennifer Keesmaat is Chief Planner of the City of Toronto. In this role, Jennifer is committed to creating places where people flourish. Over the past decade, Jennifer has been repeatedly recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) for her innovative work in Canadian municipalities. Most recently, Jennifer was named as one of the most influential people in Toronto by *Toronto Life* magazine and one of the most powerful people in Canada by *Maclean's*. Jennifer is the 2016 recipient of the President's Award of Excellence from the CIP.

Her practice is characterized by an emphasis on collaborations across sectors and on broad engagement with municipal staff, councils, developers and residents' associations.

Finally, I would like to welcome our moderator for today, which will be our Past President, Dr. Gordon McIvor. Gordon McIvor has a wealth of experience in the public real estate world and will lead our conversation today. Will the three of you, please, join me on stage.

Christopher Wein in Conversation with Jennifer Keesmaat

GM: Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome. It is wonderful to have you together again. I say "again" because I do not know if anyone in the room had the chance to see this particular panel on *The Agenda*, with Steve Paikin, a couple of weeks ago. I know the topic he addressed was not specifically about building cities in the 21st century and how it has changed, but I know you certainly got into it during that conversation.

I am going to launch a couple of questions to get the conversation going. Then, I will kind of step back, unless you get quiet, in which case, I will throw in a question. Then, at the end, ladies and gentlemen, we will take questions from the audience. If you do have a question at the end, there is going to be a roving mic. Just put your hand up, and Taylor will bring the mic over to you at the end of our session today. Let us get underway.

Obviously, I think everybody in the room probably has a base understanding of how planning, municipal planning, has changed since Baron Haussmann did his grand redesign for Paris well over a century ago. I am not sure everybody in the room would have a really great understanding of how city planning has changed in a generation other than the very obvious IT elements and the fact that we are more conscious about environmental factors today. These are the basic things that we all read in the media, but I shall ask you as an opening sort of volley to describe what constitutes the major changes in the past generation to the way that we are building cities in Canada and around the world today. Jennifer, do you want to start us off?

JK: Sure, that is a massive question. That is like a doctorate thesis. It is answerable, and for a very simple reason: You can capture the transition in planning in two key characters in 21st century city building, and that is Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs. Robert Moses was about big, sweeping revitalization plans, about big gestures, massive infrastructure investments. Of course, he ruled New York in the '60s, and his nemesis was Jane Jacobs who, in fact, responded very negatively. At first, she was a fan because he was focused on revitalization as opposed to the suburbs, but Jane Jacobs introduced the idea of, really, place, that there is something interesting and unique in the granularity that emerges when people and diversity are prioritized in place-making, and she brought that principle to city-building.

I really think those two key ideas in juxtaposition—and I would actually argue that the central values of those two philosophies—are still bumping up against each other in cities around the world, including

in our own, where we continue to struggle with both. One focuses on planning around the car, and the other focuses on planning around people. One focuses on large infrastructure, the other focuses on a much smaller fine-grain understanding of the city. I think that really captures the two big ideas in city-building that are playing out in our generation and that are really in a deep fundamental conflict.

CW: I would concur with Jennifer. I think the challenge we have, coming at it from a developer's perspective, is the world moves too fast these days. What I mean by that has mainly to do with politics. Between communication technology and politics, we are now basically the sound-bite generation, and every politician—not to pick on any politicians that are in the room—needs to make their mark fast. You need to do something that is extremely almost populist in nature.

The challenge is that cities do not build fast. If you look at the great cities of the world, most of them are, in many cases, well over 500 years old. We look at the great capitals of Europe, et cetera, and we think these are wonderful cities. We love Paris, and we love Rome and so on. Why cannot Toronto be that way? Well, 500 years ago, 300 years ago, even 100 years ago, the politicians were trying to do things that would leave great legacies and that would be generational moves.

I think today, everybody is trying to do something that will get them through the next three years, in the next four-year term. I am not blaming the mayor or city council. I am saying that this is happening all over the place. It is happening at a federal level. It is happening at a provincial level. We are seeing it play out right now in the United States of America with Donald-the-Populist-Trump. It is a real challenge because you do not put in infrastructure, subway systems and plan education programs, hospitals, communities in four years. You do not get a sense of place in a four-year term. You have to do that over 25 years and over 30 years and so on.

The other thing that is of major concern is, I think, that we are going to have a lot more change in the next 25 years than we had in the last 25 years. The last 25 years and, really, the last 50 years were dominated—and Jennifer mentioned it—by the automobile. The change is going to happen in transportation, and the change is going to happen with the sharing economy. That individuals own cars and believe that a two-car garage is the sort of Canadian dream, I think, is changing absolutely at light speed. I think what is going to happen over the next 25 years and what our challenge is—in terms of both private industry and public policy—is to figure out where cities are going, and, more importantly, where the demographics are

headed and what is happening with even the way the family unit comes together. I think that is what we should be looking at as opposed to focusing too much on the past.

JK: I will pick up on that because I think that you have hit the nail on the head. One of the intentions that we have in planning is that we are actually trying to look into the very long-term planning infrastructure for 20, 30, 40, 100 years when change is happening so quickly. How do you do that? Apparently, most of the jobs that our children are going to have do not even exist yet, so how can we even begin to think about what work spaces are going to look like and where people are going to live? It presents a fundamental challenge. Then, when you overlay that with the political pressure to do something now, it then creates, I think, a hotbed of risk.

CW: Absolutely.

JK: I think the only response to that can be to go back to our timeless principles of good planning and good design, principles that have stood the test of time and ensure that all of our decision-making continues to be rooted in those timeless principles of great place-making which, no surprise, Jane Jacobs actually articulated very well.

I will give you a really specific example because people say to me all the time, "Oh, are you planning for autonomous vehicles? Autonomous vehicles are going to transform our city." And I think this is just an incredible misunderstanding as to how technologies and tools work in a city because technologies and tools are an overlay. Cars do not change the city. Autonomous vehicles do not change the city. Our planning policies need to come first, and autonomous vehicles need to then *fit* within our vision of the kind of city that we are trying to create. You have probably heard it, people saying, "Autonomous vehicles are going to result in more sprawl." Well, only if we decide to plan for more sprawl. Only if that is how we decide to plan for more cars, then absolutely they will ruin our cities much like we have ruined many of our North American cities by planning highways and freeways and for the car today.

The inverse is if we say, "Wait a minute, what is the vision that we have of our city?" We know we want our cities to be green and sustainable. We know that the *best* way to do that is to make them walkable, to ensure that the first choice for getting to work or recreation is, in fact, to walk or to take a short cycling trip or to take transit. If we stick with those principles, then we begin to see autonomous vehicles as something that can overlay and contribute to that vision.

The biggest opportunity I see is that it means we will need a lot less parking.

CW: Absolutely.

JK: Because we will not be parking cars for 98% of the time, those cars will continue to function.

CW: Can you give me relief on all my parking for the current ten towers that I have under development? The interesting thing is we are quite obsessed with transportation, and we are obsessed with how technology has changed transportation, but we are actually missing the big change in technology because it really is not the transportation idea.

Why is transportation such a big deal, and why have we always obsessed over transportation? Because for the last 100 years, for the last 300 years, we have had to transport ourselves to get to work. We have had to transport ourselves to educate. We have had to transport ourselves to get healthcare. We have had to transport ourselves to play, to live, et cetera. What technology has unlocked is not the idea of autonomous cars. That is just more of a nice-to-have; it is a symptom. What technology has really unlocked is it allows all of us to do anything we want at any time we want, anywhere we want. That is truly what is going to revolutionize the cities.

We are seeing it already. As a private developer, we are seeing that the needs of office have changed dramatically. The needs of education have changed dramatically. I sit on one of the hospital boards—North York. I have to give a shout-out because they are in the audience. The needs of hospitals and healthcare is changing. Now, we have homecare. You do not go to the hospital; the hospital comes to you. You do not go to school; the school comes to you. You do not go to work; you sit in Starbucks, and you work from there. That is where we really have to think about the big changes in planning.

The big changes in planning is that people are going to be able to accomplish more, do more and have much broader, more fulfilling lives in a much smaller radius. What does that do? That means more people are going to come together. That is why cities are expanding quickly. That is why densities are growing because people now can actually live within two or three city blocks, and they can accomplish anything they want. The amazing thing is that they all want to live together. Technology has brought us more together than apart. That is why there is this massive migration in the world. It is happening all over the world where cities are getting bigger and stronger, and the rural areas are getting weaker and less populated. That is going to continue to trend that way.

I think obsessing over things like autonomous vehicles and so on is actually wrong. It is sort of looking at the shiny penny. What we really need to think about is how we design cities and how we design

buildings and how we have buildings interact with one another where people can accomplish really a multitude of tasks and where they truly multitask. We have to build buildings that allow for multitasking.

One of the challenges we have with current planning principles and more so current approval process is that we are still very stuck on, "An office kind of has to look like this," and, "A school kind of has to look like this," and "A residential building has to look like this." And they all have different parking ratios, and they all have different rules and regulations, and we try not to mix too many of them together because we do not really like that because it is tough for us to get our heads around. I think that is where great leaps and bounds can be made because we talk sometimes buzz words in the planning world, in the architectural world and development world: Mixed use, mixed use, mixed use. We really do not understand. We are at the very early stages of what true mixed-use development will look like. That is the future of our city and other cities. That is really understand how we are going to allow people the flexibility to do *whatever* they want to do within a very small footprint as opposed to still this idea: Go there to work; go there to shop; go there to eat, et cetera.

GM: Everybody in this room probably understands that there is a great advantage to the private sector and government having a common vision and respecting the priorities of the other side.

I once had the honour of sitting next to Jane Pepino at lunch, and she will remember, as I do, that there was a period where we were taking Jack Layton to the OMB every week in the private sector because he was trying to stop every development. Clearly, that was a period in our history, our city's history, where the private sector and the city did not have a shared vision in any way. Some people would submit that is still out there very much. My question to you both is how important is your relationship and how important is it to find common ground so that you could actually work together and you have a proper motive?

CW: Yes, I think it is incredibly important. We pride ourselves on trying to avoid the OMB process as much as possible. Great Gulf considers themselves a city builder. We operate in 22 cities across North America, and we believe that we have to partner with the cities. We need to partner with the administration. We need to partner with the politicians. We need to work together to build a better city. Working as adversaries makes no sense. I think the idea that everything is a fight is sort of an old-fashioned idea. I am not advocating that we should get rid of the OMB or the idea that that body should not exist because you always need adjudication, and you need to be able to resolve

problems, but, I think that as a private business person and as a developer, I can make the conscious choice and the conscious effort amongst myself and my staff to say let us work on compromise; let us work on the overall net benefits.

I think that the real solution of working with the city is it is less about lawyering-up or figuring out how you are going to get into a fight, and it is more about having a better understanding of how your development, your building, your master plan community can have a net benefit for the overall city of Toronto or whatever community you are working in. If we can demonstrate that net benefit and demonstrate that we are doing things that will help with city-building—I have never found the City nor Jennifer, personally, to be difficult to work with. Where I think the difficulty comes is sometimes it is an issue of translation. If I am business, business, business, and she is planning, planning, planning, and we are talking a different language, then you can start to get into a head-butting situation. I do believe that we, as developers, need to think more about how we build the city. By the way, it also makes us more profitable. I honestly believe by compromising and by working together and by not fighting constantly, we actually make more money. I think it is a win-win.

JK: I will give a couple of pieces to respond to that. The relationship is essential. When I started in this job, I did a little road show. I had a PowerPoint presentation that I did, and I talked about a shared vision for the city and our shared interests. I think that any time you begin with shared interests in a conversation, you can get to a great outcome. I had a negotiation last week with a developer who is working on a very big project. We really disagreed as to how to deliver this project. At one moment in the conversation, I stopped and said, "Let us hold back. What are we trying to achieve here? We *both* want an *exceptional* project that is going to be precedent-setting and is going to redefine the city." We both went back to—that is right—"Let us remember what we both want out of this."

How you get there is always tricky. It is always tricky because you are negotiating a whole variety of different interests that are very real. In my first year as Chief Planner, I started spending so much time talking about that shared interest: I talked about a spectacular public realm; I talked about high-quality urban design; I talked about stable employment and thriving employment; I talked about places where people had housing options and housing choices. You can rent in a high-quality rental, and you can own in a variety of different housing types. The reason I did that was to, in fact, identify and begin as our starting place our shared interest and our vision. If you are having a con-

versation about something very detailed on a project, and you do not know what you both want out of it, you are going to be very unhappy and very stuck.

I would say that I agree with most of what you have said, and I would put you in this category, Chris, which is, as a city builder, and you have said that outright many times yourselves. This breaks down, of course, when you do not have a shared vision, when you have a developer who is not a city builder and who actually does not really care about the future of the city, but just cares about making a profit. We have some of those, too. Those are the ones that, of course, hate us the most because we have a fundamentally different vision of what we are trying to do.

I was on a panel last weekend. There was a developer who said, "This is ridiculous. We need more housing in the city. You should just put two extra storeys on everything," to which I said, "Okay, and if that shadows a school park, is that okay?" Those are actually the kinds of things we think about in creating a livable city. We are actually trying to mitigate the amount that we shadow parks, particularly, a school park during lunchtime. We want the sun to be on that park. We want to ensure that we are not compromising a short-term objective for a very long-term objective in part because we do not think we need to be shadowing school parks. There are tons of areas where we need

development in this city where we do not yet have it. That is kind of our moderating role on the other side of the fence; it is protecting that longer-term interest against a very short-term interest.

When we are collaborating, and I would say we have many, many great developers in the city, and the evidence of that is all around you in the city, we, in fact, see ourselves as collaborators and as city builders. I think the old model was to see ourselves as regulators.

CW: Correct.

KJ: You have come to us; you tell us what you want to do, and we are going to say yes, no, yes, no. That was that Jack Layton era that you were talking about. Part of what I have been seeking to introduce with my team over the past five years is the idea that we are partners; we are collaborators; we are city builders, we are forward thinking. I am very proud to say that 96% of the recommendations for development applications that we bring forward to city council as a recommendation are approved by city council. That is 96%. Those are not appealed at the OMB. There is this big narrative, and it is a little bit that the OMB is the boogey man in the room; there is this big narrative that the OMB is planning the city. For development applications—and there are two pots here—one is proactive planning policy, and that is a whole other baby. But when it

comes to development applications, 96% of the recommendations coming forward by city planning are supported, and 4% of those applications are actually going on and being appealed at the Ontario Municipal Board. I think that is a reflection of this big shift that has happened where there are many developers, some of whom are new to this city, like Westbank, who are literally sitting down in their very first meeting and are saying, "We are not interested in going to the OMB; we want to work with you. We want to collaborate to do great city building."

CW: Absolutely. I think the challenge—just to challenge our thoughts—is, yes, we all want to get there and, yes, that is the direction we need to head, but one of the things is similar to what I, as a developer, said about politics and city administration, and this is not directed at you, Jennifer, but it is just in general how we put our cities together: We have become very departmentalized in the way our governments work and especially with respect to our municipal governments. What ends up happening is you have a lot of special interest groups within the municipality. Parks has a very special interest. Transportation has a very special interest. Even the development planners have a special interest. What ends up happening is you get too many people around the table that really only care about their piece of the pie, and no one can kind of adjudicate that global good. I am not saying that OMB, necessarily, is a venue for it, but I think in order to progress—because part of this conversation is about how can we make the city better and how can we improve our cities in the 21st century—we need to start thinking about, administratively, how we judge what is in the net benefit. We need to start thinking about how we do not get into this situation: I sit in too many meetings at City Hall where I literally have the conversation where half the room—and they all work for City Hall—says, "Chris, this is great; we love the development," and the other half of the room says, "Yes, but from my perspective, which is very narrow, because I am only worried about traffic, I do not actually like the development. I do not think you should do it. I do not think we should have this mixed use come in or whatever," because there is this one little interest that is a key thing.

I am not picking on transportation because at every meeting it changes, but I think that is where I do not think it is an immediate fix. I think that we have to look at and think about how we measure projects and how we have this level of compromise. Sometimes we have to compromise on transportation. Sometimes we have to compromise on parks. Sometimes we have to compromise on uses, on heritage.

Heritage is a big issue in the city right now. Most of the cities we operate in around the world or

around North America have better heritage and laxer rules. They are able to figure out that we do not have to protect everything. We have to protect the stuff that is actually significantly important, and there is other stuff where the benefit of the city is greater than protecting just an old warehouse that has no historical value but just happens to be old. As my parents—who used to be in the antique business—would say, "Just because it is old, does not mean it is an antique." This is true. Not everything old is worth saving.

JK: I want to pick up on this idea because I think what you are talking about is a microcosm of exactly what I have been talking about in terms of this notion of a shared vision. You have that exact same dynamic at the city where you need city departments to have that same shared vision. I will agree with you that we are far from where we need to be, but I do think we are making really big strides.

I will give you an example. On Saturday morning, I was on a panel with my colleagues, Barbara Gray, who is the new General Manager of Transportation Services; and Janie Romoff, who is the GM of Parks, Forestry and Recreation; and Mike Williams, who is the Head of Economic Development at the City. We were all on a panel together. This is new. This did not happen ten years ago. This is very new. City planning is leading a process called TOcore. TOcore is about planning the downtown in a comprehensive way and creating that shared vision for the downtown. Importantly, it is about water infrastructure; it is about ensuring that, with our colleagues, we are on the same page; it is about urban trees and street trees; and it is about creating a secondary plan for the downtown that brings together all of the different interests under the banner of one vision for the kind of livable downtown that we want to create. We have 128 policy proposals that are in draft form today. What is so interesting about that project is that it has been fundamentally interdisciplinary.

A weird thing happened. We have been at this for about three years. A weird thing happened on the panel, which was, as my colleague in Transportation Services, Barbara Gray, was speaking, I was nodding and saying, "Yes, that is exactly it; that is exactly what we need to do." She was talking about complete streets and recognizing that driving downtown will be slow because we want to move people in the best way possible, which means we need to focus on better sidewalks, better transit and better cycling infrastructure. Of course, I was nodding my head yes because this has been in our official plan for ten years now, but it is something we frequently fight with Transportation Services about when they are trying to widen the streets, and we are trying to widen the sidewalks. Here

we were on the panel; I was nodding about the shared vision, the shared interests.

Same with Janie Romoff. Rail Deck Park is an outcome of the planning process of TOcore, and, interestingly, it was led by city planning, but it is parks planning, which is something that Parks does. In fact, this was planning at the edge, pushing the conversation. Now, Parks could not be more excited about Rail Deck Park. There is now a real culture shift, I would argue, in Parks about being proactive about identifying lands to acquire in our really high-density areas for new park space. That is emerging out of one specific, very tangible process. I do not disagree. I think we have a very long way to go, and these culture changes do take a long time, but we have a series of very strategic exercises underway that are all about recognizing the city in its complexity because that is really what this is about. These projects are a lot more complex than they ever were before.

CW: Absolutely. Rail Deck Park—love the topic. Let us talk about it really briefly. I am a big supporter, and I hope it goes through. The challenge we still have is that I cannot be building towers downtown and be a big supporter of Rail Deck Park and be told every time I go in for an application, "Oh, yes, but we would really like a pocket park of 2,000 feet on your development site." You do not get both. You do not get both in New York; you do not get both anywhere else. You want Central Park?

JK: You do get both in New York.

CW: No, no, no, you do not.

JK: You have got a ton of pocket parks in New York.

CW: You do not. You do not.

JK: I am going to get the data on that for you.

CW: You do not. You do not.

JK: You do not just have Madison Park.

CW: No, Madison Park is not a pocket park. Bryant Park is not a pocket park. You have very strategically designed parks, but this idea—and Parks is all over it these days—that every site that is over 25,000 feet, you have to dedicate, you should…they do not want the money anymore. I am fine to give them the money. Give you the money; do something for the benefit of the whole city. Putting a 2,500- or 3,000-foot park on the base of every high-rise is not for the benefit of the city. That is for—I do not know what that is for. Similar to the public art policy.

JK: Can I just—?

CW: No, just a sec.

JK: Just before you go to public art, just on that piece, the asking for a pocket park on every site is an outcome of not having a larger vision of where the parks are going to go.

CW: Of course, but now we have a bit of a vision. We have

got to catch up.

JK: Not a bit of a vision. We are creating a public parks and public realm master plan as part of TOcore, the anchor of which is Rail Deck Park, so this is where you have to have that bigger vision in order to drive the specific decision. In the absence of that bigger vision, for every single project that comes forward, you are right, staff are saying, "We should get a park; we should get a park." Now, it is under development right now, but we will have that larger parks and public realm master plan, so when a specific application comes forward, we can say, "Okay, this is how this site fits into the vision of the larger network." And, when you are buying a site, you can look in advance and say, "Okay, the city has identified this as being a key part of the infrastructure."

CW: Absolutely. Then, you have to overlay that with transportation and others because the other thing, too, is if you are going to create Rail Deck Park, then create ways that people can connect to that park. This is, again, where we have this disjointed vision at times. I am not blaming anyone; I am just suggesting that we have to come together more because there is no point in building a major central park over a rail yard and then not thinking about how the city is going to access that park. That is the other problem you get into: Well, we are building on the east side of the city, and our residents are never going to make it over Rail Deck Park because there is no easy way to get there, and they are not going to drive because there is no parking and so on and so forth. That is really just for the King West area and it does not benefit me. Then, you overlay that with—

JK: They will take the Relief Line; they will take SmartTrack.

CW: It is not built yet. Then, you overlay that with the politicians saying, "My ward—I care about this," and, for that ward, they say, "I care about that." I am not suggesting that our city is broken, by any stretch. I think our city is getting better all the time, and I think you are part of making the city better. You know I am a big supporter, but I think two things need to change: One, the *faster* we can pull people together and have *grander* visions, the better. And, two, at the same time, while you are putting together the grand visions, we need to somehow have an interim period where we say we have a vision, where we say we know where we are headed. It takes several years to put together something like TOcore.

Do not keep asking for the pocket parks at the same time because you cannot wait until well until the new policy comes. We need to have transitions. This is why you get pushback, and this is why the private sector does fight back at times, because they are trying

to figure out whether they are funding transit, or they are funding parks or art. They are thinking, "What is it that we are doing? We are willing to fund. We want the city to be better, but we cannot be death by a thousand cuts." I think that is where we want to be careful.

The same is true for public art. I have mentioned this many times that the issue is not the cash. I am more than thrilled to have public art, but, instead of putting up mediocre art on every street corner that is in front of a new condo tower being built, why do not we all contribute to a grander vision and create a *true* sense of place, and create something spectacular that is a place like the Nasher Sculpture Center or the entire arts district they did in downtown Dallas? Dallas is *way* behind the city in Toronto as far as progressive thinking and city-building goes, but they have got an amazing deck park, and they have got an amazing public arts complex next to that deck park. It is because they took a whole bunch of money and consolidated it together instead of death by a thousand cuts.

GM: I just want to lob one controversial question toward you: I think that when you go to Main St., and you talk to people and visitors who are not in the industry, who are not in the real estate business and who do not work for the City of Toronto, many would say we do a pretty darned good job in Toronto with parks, and we have some lovely neighbourhoods. Everybody talks about the richness of our neighbourhoods. The criticism about Toronto, though, that you hear from let us say the illusionary Mr. and Mrs. Smith, has got more to do with architecture. When you talk to people about the architecture of the new buildings going up, the word 'boring' comes forward a lot. They get excited about the Marilyn Munroe in Mississauga, which everybody talks about, because that is original, but, in Toronto, we really do not have a lot of buildings that look totally different and unique to any other buildings. Is that something that you would agree with that we still have work to do on, or is that a perception which is unmerited?

CW: I think there is a bit of both. I think there is definitely merit; I think it is more of a quantity thing: For the volume of development, the amount of development activity we have in this city, which is unprecedented in North America—really, for the last decade, we have had an unbelievable amount of development—the amount of architecturally striking buildings is relatively few and far between. Why is that? It is easy to criticize, but what we really should be doing is looking at what is causing that issue. I think there is a couple of things. One is even though we have this dramatically large development industry, and we have so much volume, our economics are still very low. We forget that on a global perspective, we are one of the cheapest cit-

ies, of the top 40 global cities, and there is not a ton of money to put into the construction of these buildings. In New York, when you have buildings that are going up that are $3,000, $4,000, $5,000, $7,000 per square foot, and the average buildings in Toronto are $500, $600, $700 a square foot, there is only so much you can spend on architecture.

The second issue we have is, even if you do bring in the world-class architects, we do struggle a little bit with the trade industry. It is no offense to them; it is that these buildings are very difficult to build. We are doing a Moshe Safdie building down at the waterfront, Monde. We think it is a gorgeous building. The economics are very tough on it, but, more importantly, the trades are struggling to understand his level of detail. We do not necessarily have the local trade base that can handle some of these very architecturally complex items.

Lastly, we also deal with an extremely difficult climate. We are building very tall buildings in this climate, and some of the stuff you see are in warmer cities, Asian cities and so on, where they do not have to deal with some of the dramatic hot and cold temperature swings that we deal with. There is a lot that goes into Canadian development. I think I am always annoyed when people come to a great city—I think it is the best city in the world, Toronto, and I travel everywhere—and then start picking apart our architecture, because I think there are some beautiful buildings here.

GM: Jennifer, what is your take?

JK: I would say that there is nothing more, and maybe I am just a true-blue Torontonian, but there is nothing more offensive or less appealing to me than a city where all the buildings are competing with each other. You think of Dubai: Not only is it painful to look at on a postcard, but it is a terrible experience at the street level. One of the things that we have done really well—and one of our urban designers is on the international Council for Tall Buildings precisely because we have done it very well—is we figured out how, and we learned a lot from Vancouver, buildings should hit the ground because we know how buildings hit the ground is a really important part of everyday life.

CW: Absolutely.

JK: When you have a lot of tall buildings, it is a worst-case scenario if they are all very, very distinct because then they are competing with each other, and it is actually too intense. It is too difficult to absorb in a complex, urban environment. We are very concerned with having high-quality buildings, buildings that are of their time, buildings that are green, and, ideally, buildings that are beautiful. I would actually make innovation the last word, from an architectural perspective.

The last thing you want is a city of buildings that are screaming at you. We do have a lot of background buildings, and I do not think that is a bad thing. I think our buildings are getting better and better and better as they are in every city.

If you look at New York, New York has a lot of disastrously ugly buildings. If you go with a critical eye and walk around Manhattan, it is absolutely shocking how much really frightening architecture there is in New York City. It is everywhere. And, it does not matter because New York is about the street. It is all about the street. It is all about the lived experience. We are concerned about ensuring on landmark sites—the waterfront is a good place where you have views and vistas on landmark sites. We want landmark buildings, but, on background sites, we want background buildings. It is important to keep that straight, or you do end up with something that is quite overwhelming, I think, in the urban environment. The quality actually comes first. I think the big conversation we need to be having is it is about quality, and it is about sustainability because we are starting to fall behind in terms of how green our buildings are in the city.

Questions & Answers

Q: You talked about the waterfront development. I am just curious how you feel about what is there for us as people living in the city and how it has developed? Do you think that is a landmark place? Are you proud of what we have got down there as a city planner?

JK: Sure. Waterfront Toronto was created in response to the mistakes of the ‘60s and ’70s. Waterfront Toronto was all about a recognition by Mayor Crombie and others that the waterfront needed to be a special place, a regional destination, a people-place that was in neighbourhoods and that has 24/7 activity and yet continues to respect the industrial port, the extent to which it still exists. I think we are just on the cusp of beginning to see and realize the future of the waterfront and the waterfront’s potential. Waterfront Toronto is focused on creating some pretty spectacular public spaces as a way to incent further private sector investment in the waterfront, but we have not yet seen the vastness of what the waterfront can be. I think that we are getting there.

The work that Dream has done on the West Don Lands is a brilliant example of place-making and city-building. It is going to need to mature. It is in its infancy. It will get better and better and better as

it gets denser and as people start to make their mark and to give it some really distinct character, but I think we have the bones in our Port Land Planning Framework and in the work that is being undertaken now for Unilever and the work that is happening not only in the West Don Lands proper where the Athletes' Village was, but the work that is now beginning to emerge on the sites adjacent to it and how that will link to this Distillery District.

Then there is the waterfront planning right along Keating Channel. I think that we are going to see. It is really work that we are all setting up for today, but we have not yet seen the vastness of the opportunity and the greatness of what is going to be on our waterfront. I think it is yet to come.

CW: Yes, I would concur on one point and disagree on another. With respect to the future of the waterfront, I think it has got an extremely bright future. I think that, actually, there are some positives that a lot of the Keating Channel, which were partners with Dream on the Silos site has not been developed yet because I think there are great things that can happen.

We are thrilled about what we are doing with Monde and Waterfront Toronto. I think one of the challenges that happens, though, is we all know that the Queen's Quay extension and that transit line is kind of stuck in limbo, and we need to figure out how

that is all going to work. There is a lot of retail plan for that area with Hines in office that cannot really work without the transit.

Then, when you talk about the public spaces, I like the dedication of the public spaces, but I do not like the timing of the public spaces. By the time we finished Monde, Sherbourne Common will be probably nine years old—seven to nine years old—and we will be opening a brand-new building with 580 units, so there will be about 1,000 residents. Tridel will be opening a couple of buildings with another 1,000 residents. Those 2,000 residents will be welcoming into their brand-new parks that our project opens right onto, that are seven to ten years old, and that infrastructure and the fountains and so on will already need to be replaced.

I think sometimes with this sort of master planning in city-building, we get ahead of ourselves, because, for that design, we have not built the buildings yet. We have not populated the buildings yet. We do not know who is living in Waterfront Toronto yet. Let us get the residents in and living in those spaces. I am totally supportive that we have Sherbourne Common as a placeholder, but let us design the park based on what those residents want and based on what the future of that community looks like, and let us not pour money into infrastructure such that by the time it is actually

fully utilized, by the time the first child goes and runs around, is already almost a decade old. I think sometimes we get our timings wrong. I do believe a lot of that is political in nature.

Again, I would not suggest, necessarily, it is Jennifer's responsibility, and I think it is always great to do ribbon cuttings on parks and ribbon cuttings on public spaces. It is a great photo op. If you are in power, it is a great photo op for when you are in power, but if you do it too prematurely, you are really just wasting everybody's money, and you are ultimately not making the city a better place. I think we do need to work more collaboratively on the timing.

Similarly, with the transit, we, as the private sector, there is over 20 million square feet of GFA in Waterfront Toronto and beyond. The Keating Channel is not part of Waterfront Toronto, but it is still part of the district. With 20 million square feet of development rights we, as a development community, should figure out how we can work with the city to make sure that transit line comes through because it is in all our best interest to get that Queen's Quay extension.

JK: Yes, the transit piece is not in limbo; it is continuing underway.

CW: The funding, I meant, is in limbo.

JK: It was not started. The funding is definitely a big, scary black hole, but we are proceeding with optimism on the planning side.

CW: Yes.

GM: Well, you guys are great together. I saw you on TVO. As I said, I can sense a little bit of a partnership maybe forming, and you can take this on the road, educate people around the world on what makes a great city.

Thank you very much. I am going to pass it back to the President and, again, thank you so much for being with us today. That was a great panel.

PF: Thanks, once again. As Gordon says, you guys do very well together, and it was good to see some healthy disagreement at the end there. It started as a lovefest, and then we got into some healthy debate. Thank you so much. It is my pleasure to invite Mr. Hunter Milborne up at this time to offer the official thank you.

Note of Appreciation, by Mr. Hunter Milborne, President, Milborne Real Estate Inc.

Thank you. I do not know about you, but I think that was one of the most fascinating, provocative, insightful conversations that I have ever heard. My job is to be short and sweet. I want to thank Jennifer and Chris for taking their time to give us a lot of insights into the future of our city. Thanks very much.

Concluding Remarks, by Paul Fogolin

Thank you, Hunter. I will pick up on that short and sweet theme. Just a few more thank yous before we let everybody go for the afternoon. Again, as a not-for-profit club, we simply could not host these lunches without the support of our sponsors, so a generous thank you to the Milborne Group as our event sponsor, our supporting sponsor, Dream, and our VIP sponsor, Aird & Berlis LLP. A round of applause.

Please, join us again soon. Our next event will be—and there was a lot of talk of transportation today—the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Steven Del Duca, on March 20th, here at One King West. That should be a very exciting lunch as well.

Thank you very much for your attendance today, and I hope you enjoyed your time. We will see you next time.