

# Lower Don Lands Framework Plan

Lower Don Lands  
Toronto, Ontario

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WATERFRONToronto

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# Lower Don Lands

# Framework Plan

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# The Purpose of the Framework Plan

This Framework Plan is intended to demonstrate the broader objectives and plan elements for the Lower Don Lands so that multiple more specific studies and approval documents can be completed. The Framework Plan ensures that individual elements within future plans and studies reflect and promote the goals and intentions for the Lower Don Lands as a whole.

The Framework Plan is a document that integrates and guides a number of different planning exercises for the Lower Don Lands, which is the area south of the Main Rail Line between Small Street and the Don Roadway and north of the Ship Channel in the Port Lands.

The Framework Plan for the Lower Don Lands takes the renaturalized Don River as the organizing element for new urban neighbourhoods surrounding a river and an open space system that provides for flood protection, restoration of lost habitat, and the creation of open spaces and parks. The Framework Plan guides the structure of the new districts that integrate neighbourhoods, water's edge green spaces, and connecting infrastructure.

### Addressing Challenges

Although the City has intended the Lower Don Lands to regenerate for many years, redevelopment has been hindered by a number of factors:

#### Flood Risk

The comprehensive solution to flood protection reflected in this Framework Plan will resolve this problem in the context of city building and open space creation.

#### Isolation from the City

The Lower Don Lands need a defining organization of spaces that provide land for redevelopment, land for recreation, and land for ecological purposes. The area is currently perceived as a disconnected island of brownfield lands with poor links to the surrounding city. Impressive public spaces define the character of the proposed Precincts and neighbourhoods, add connections to the surrounding communities, access to the water's edge and valuable park space. The cohesion of the proposed Framework Plan's open space system adds needed value to the development lands and makes them attractive places to live and work.

#### Soil and Groundwater Contamination

There are varying degrees of soil and groundwater contamination across the Lower Don Lands due to landfilling which occurred when there were no environmental standards and subsequent heavy industrial activity. However, the contamination is all of a remediable nature and not markedly worse than other urban brownfield sites in Toronto.

#### Insufficient Infrastructure

The infrastructure in the Lower Don Lands was built to serve the industrial uses that have largely left the area. It is not suitable for a modern urban community. The site currently lacks the diversity of modes of travel (e.g., transit, cycling, pedestrian and private automobile) necessary for sustainable urban living. Furthermore, redevelopment requires a contemporary underground infrastructure system of wastewater collection and water supply that do not add further stress to the existing systems in the Central Waterfront, along with

a modern approach to stormwater management that has an enhanced emphasis on stormwater quality. The infrastructure system needs to be re-planned in a holistic manner that goes beyond the planning of any one individual precinct, and which has a strong interconnection to the broader city transportation, transit and other infrastructure systems.

This Framework Plan looks at the relationship between regeneration or development areas, parks and public space, and natural areas that will result from the creation of the new mouth of the Don River. It articulates a new vision for the Lower Don Lands that remains consistent with the intent of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.

### Facilitating Next Steps

The Framework Plan is a necessary organizing piece to take the next steps necessary for the implementation of the Lower Don Lands proposals.

Council's endorsement of this Framework Plan makes the following immediate steps possible:

#### 1. Filing the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Individual Environmental Assessment to the Minister of Environment for Approval

The Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Individual EA (DMNP EA) aims to arrive at a preferred solution for a naturalized Don Mouth which considers flood protection and naturalization in a coordinated manner. It studied numerous alternatives to arrive at a Preferred Alternative for the new mouth of the Don River - one that accomplished a set of key goals, including striking a balance amongst flood protection, naturalization, and community building.

The DMNP EA then studied the Preferred Alternative in further detail in order to identify potential environmental impacts, and propose measures to avoid or eliminate those impacts, or mitigate them. The Individual EA requires the approval of the Ontario Minister of the Environment.

Redevelopment and revitalization of the Lower Don Lands can only occur once the principal barrier of flood risk is addressed. The DMNP EA proposes a solution that is a comprehensive response to flood protection. That response is also balanced with two other key public objectives: naturalization in the form of new aquatic and terrestrial habitat, and city building – facilitating the redevelopment of adjacent areas as new communities.

#### 2. Amending the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, currently before the Ontario Municipal Board, was adopted by City Council on April 16, 2003. A number of differences exist between the adopted Central Waterfront Secondary Plan and the plans for the Lower Don Lands. These differences are in the location of lands and flood protection measures and infrastructure, but there are

no differences in the principles or intent. The current Secondary Plan shows the Don River in a different location, prohibits development on the 480 Lakeshore lands, shows Commissioners Park as the major public open space, and includes a road network that is not compatible with the Lower Don Lands plans and associated flood protection.

The Lower Don Lands, as described in this document, is an elaboration of the key planning principles of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan and the City's Official Plan. The Secondary Plan contemplated several key "Big Moves" to reintegrate the Central Waterfront back into the city by removing barriers, building a network of spectacular waterfront parks, promoting high environmental quality, and the development of vibrant diverse communities.

The changes that are required to the Secondary Plan come as a result of a refinement of how these principles are applied rather than any fundamental change in approach. The Framework Plan explains the proposed changes in the context of the adopted Secondary Plan, and demonstrates that the changes are fully consistent with the intent of the Secondary Plan and the Official Plan.

Much of this Framework Plan document explains the city-building elements of the Lower Don Lands. It also provides a rationale to support the proposed amendment to the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan to reflect the results of extensive planning, technical studies and stakeholder consultation that have taken place for the Lower Don Lands. Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto, and Toronto Region Conservation Authority have studied the ways that flood protection, naturalization of the Don River mouth and community building could be accomplished in a complementary manner, and the combination of these efforts is reflected in this Framework Plan.

Since the Secondary Plan is still before the Ontario Municipal Board, an amendment to the adopted Secondary Plan is necessary in order to address the above discrepancies between the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan and plans for the Lower Don Lands. The Amendment will be adopted by City Council. The Amendment and any appeals to it will be presented to the Ontario Municipal Board with the request that they be consolidated in the Board's consideration of the Secondary Plan.

### **3. Adopting the Keating Channel Precinct Plan**

The Keating Channel Precinct Plan serves to implement the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan for the Keating Precinct, which is expected to be the first new community in the Lower Don Lands. It sets the guiding design principles for the area-specific Zoning By-Law Amendment, which will also have legal status and enforceability under the Planning Act. The Keating Channel Precinct Plan will furthermore guide the City's consideration of other planning approvals, including land division consent applications, plans of subdivision and site plan approvals.

### **4. Filing the Class EA Master Plan for the Lower Don Lands Infrastructure**

To fulfill the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act for the Lower Don Lands. Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto are required to obtain approval under the Environmental Assessment Act before they can deploy changes to or build new water, wastewater, stormwater, road, cycling trails and transit infrastructure. The Class EA Master Plan looks at alternative transportation, water, wastewater and stormwater systems and examines the environmental impacts of each in order to arrive at a recommended servicing approach for all of the Lower Don Lands. The Master Plan looks at the infrastructure elements in the Keating Channel Precinct (the portion of the Lower Don Lands north of Villiers Street) in greater detail, and completes all of the EA requirements for the infrastructure in this area, to permit implementation in support of development.

The Class EA Master Plan, upon approval, accomplishes the Environmental Assessment Act approvals for the infrastructure in the Keating Channel Precinct, allowing work to proceed as quickly as required to meet the redevelopment goals of these lands.

### **5. Giving the City an Overall Framework in which to Consider Other Ongoing Infrastructure and Planning Initiatives**

The Lower Don Lands will take approximately 30 years to fully implement. In the interim, there will be numerous other City initiatives that may have an impact on this land area. The Framework Plan will be a clear expression of the City's intent for this area.

With Council's endorsement of the Framework Plan, the City of Toronto, in cooperation with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, can take any appropriate actions to protect the right of way for the new river valley and associated open spaces of the Lower Don River from encroachment by development.

All new infrastructure projects will need to be compatible with the intent expressed in this Framework Plan. Any interim land uses by either a public body or a private interest will also have to be consistent with the Framework Plan, and not preclude the ultimate redevelopment of the area as planned. City Planning will use this Framework Plan as the basis for their evaluation of any interim uses.

The Framework Plan will also be used by Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto, Toronto Port Lands Company and Toronto Region Conservation Authority as the basis for business plans for both this project and other projects in the foreseeable future. Detailed business plans will address funding for the river construction, soil management, parkland and infrastructure works, and preparing land for development.

**6. Giving the City and Waterfront Toronto an Area Where a Systemic Approach to Sustainable Development can be pursued consistent with Waterfront Toronto’s Participation in the Clinton Climate Positive Program.**

Sustainable urban living demands that we use the best techniques available to design communities including reducing the trip distances between living, working and other daily activities, reducing the energy demands within buildings by using as much natural lighting, heating and cooling as possible, and leaving options open for new strategies for district heating and cooling. It also requires design approaches to maximize the natural conditions (sunlight, drainage, soil beds, etc.) to sustain the public investment into trees and other elements added to the public realm.

Waterfront Toronto’s goal is to use the Lower Don Lands as a demonstration of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to achieve a “carbon neutral” community. As part of the Climate Positive Development Program, a series of standards and metrics will be developed to measure climate positive outcomes.

**7. Giving the City and Waterfront Toronto an Approved Project to Pursue Funding from Senior Governments and other Private Partners**

The Lower Don Lands will be one of the largest and most complex public infrastructure projects ever undertaken in the City of Toronto. With the pending approvals of both the City and the Province, it will have passed a substantial hurdle in obtaining the primary planning and environmental approvals needed for implementation.

With these approvals in place, the next step is to take this “buildable project” to senior governments and private partners to find the funding needed for detailed design and construction. The “ballpark cost estimate” for the construction of the renaturalized Don River is between \$300 and \$400 million. Additional funds would be required for the deployment of the new system of public infrastructure across the area, taking the overall project costs to over \$650 million.

Although the investment is substantial, a study commissioned by Waterfront Toronto concludes that “by making a land area of approximately 40 hectares in proximity to the downtown core available for dense, transit-friendly mixed use development and providing attractive public open spaces and ecosystem components necessary to support this development, and providing flood protection for an additional 190 hectares of existing housing and employment-generating uses whose future land use is not presently expected to change, the DMNP EA will generate a range of economic benefits.”

The economic benefits from the Lower Don Lands project are substantial, and represent an excellent opportunity to partner with senior governments and the private sector to achieve the following:

- Strong economic multiplier impacts during construction, including more than \$1.5 billion in economic activity and 20,000 full-time construction job years;
- Incremental land value, resulting from:
  - Flood protection and lifting of regulatory use restrictions;
  - Creation of vibrant places to live and work in desirable waterfront locations;
  - Creation of signature, active open spaces that function as regional attractions and amenities for new residents and workers;
  - Mitigation of significant flood and environmental contamination hazards.
- Development that reduces externalities, or hidden costs, of development, including:
  - Reduction in traffic congestion and associated productivity costs;
  - Reduction in municipal service costs associated with dense development in proximity to existing infrastructure and activity;
  - Preservation of greenfield, and possibly agricultural, land in the Greater Toronto Area;
- Enabling of future growth, with associated growth in residents and employment and public revenue from new development.

**8. Forming the Basis for the Keating Channel Precinct Urban Design Guidelines (In Progress)**

The Urban Design Guidelines will support the design principles of the Keating Channel Precinct Plan and are discussed in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan as a precursor of development. The Urban Design Guidelines will articulate a number of built form relationships, such as how to deploy building height to maximize sunlight accessibility, articulate building frontages to manage wind, and plan effectively for parking and desirable building details.

Once endorsed by Council, these Guidelines will be used by City Planning in the review of development applications, and by the Waterfront Design Review Panel to assess proposals.

# Introduction

Major world cities such as Toronto are in transition, needing to reintegrate strategically important post-industrial landscapes while reframing their interactions with the natural environment. The Lower Don Lands proposal is unique among these efforts by virtue of its size, scope, and complexity.



RIVERDALE

CABBAGETOWN

LESLIEVILLE

RÉGENT PARK

RIVERSIDE SOUTH RIVERDALE

CORKTOWN

WEST DON LANDS

PORT LANDS

OLDTOWN

DISTILLERY DISTRICT

KEATING CHANNEL PRECINCT

ST. LAWRENCE

FUTURE PRECINCT(S)

EAST BAYFRONT

LOWER DON LANDS

TORONTO INNER HARBOUR

TORONTO OUTER HARBOUR

LAKE ONTARIO PARK

LAKE ONTARIO

Figure 1  
The Keating Channel Precinct of the Lower Don Lands set within the context of the Port Lands and the Central Waterfront



The proposed redevelopment and revitalization of the Lower Don Lands will transform Toronto's waterfront into an internationally recognized destination that combines sustainable city building practices with major river restoration and naturalization undertakings.

In this proposal, the engine of transformative urbanism is a radical repositioning of natural systems and attendant landscapes, transportation networks, and urban environments. The imperative of sustainable flood control led to relocating the Don River mouth. The renewed recognition of the functional and experiential benefits of river ecology makes it the symbolic and literal centre around which new neighbourhoods can be constructed.

The transformation of the Lower Don Lands builds on the current City planning regime as expressed through the Official Plan and the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan. As the Framework Plan describes, the Lower Don Lands is a reorganization of essential elements, backed by detailed flood modeling (DMNP EA), calculation of servicing requirements (LDL Class EA Master Plan), transportation modeling (LDL Class EA Master Plan), and assumptions about the anticipated mix of uses, population and employment (described later

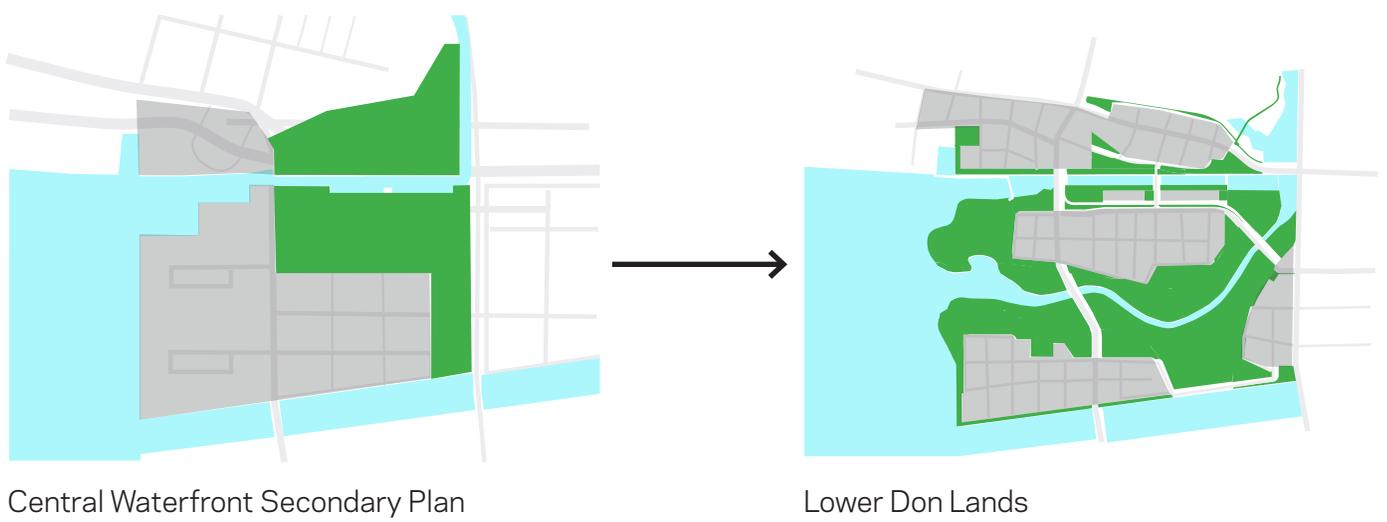
in this document). The reorganization accomplishes the very city building vision for the western Port Lands that was articulated in the four key principles of the Secondary Plan.

The Lower Don Lands planning effort has engaged several planning processes in parallel as well as enacted a considerable effort in the coordination with concurrent plans adjacent to the study area, including:

- **Stakeholder consultations with a broad range of City agencies.** Many meetings with public agencies were held during the course of the development of the DMNP EA, the Framework Plan, and the Keating Channel Precinct Plan, including meetings with City departments and the Toronto Portlands Company (formerly TEDCO).
- **Stakeholder consultations with private landowners.** Several meetings were held with private landowners over the course of the DMNP EA and the planning studies.



**Figure 2**  
 Overview of the Keating Channel  
 Precinct and Promontory Park.



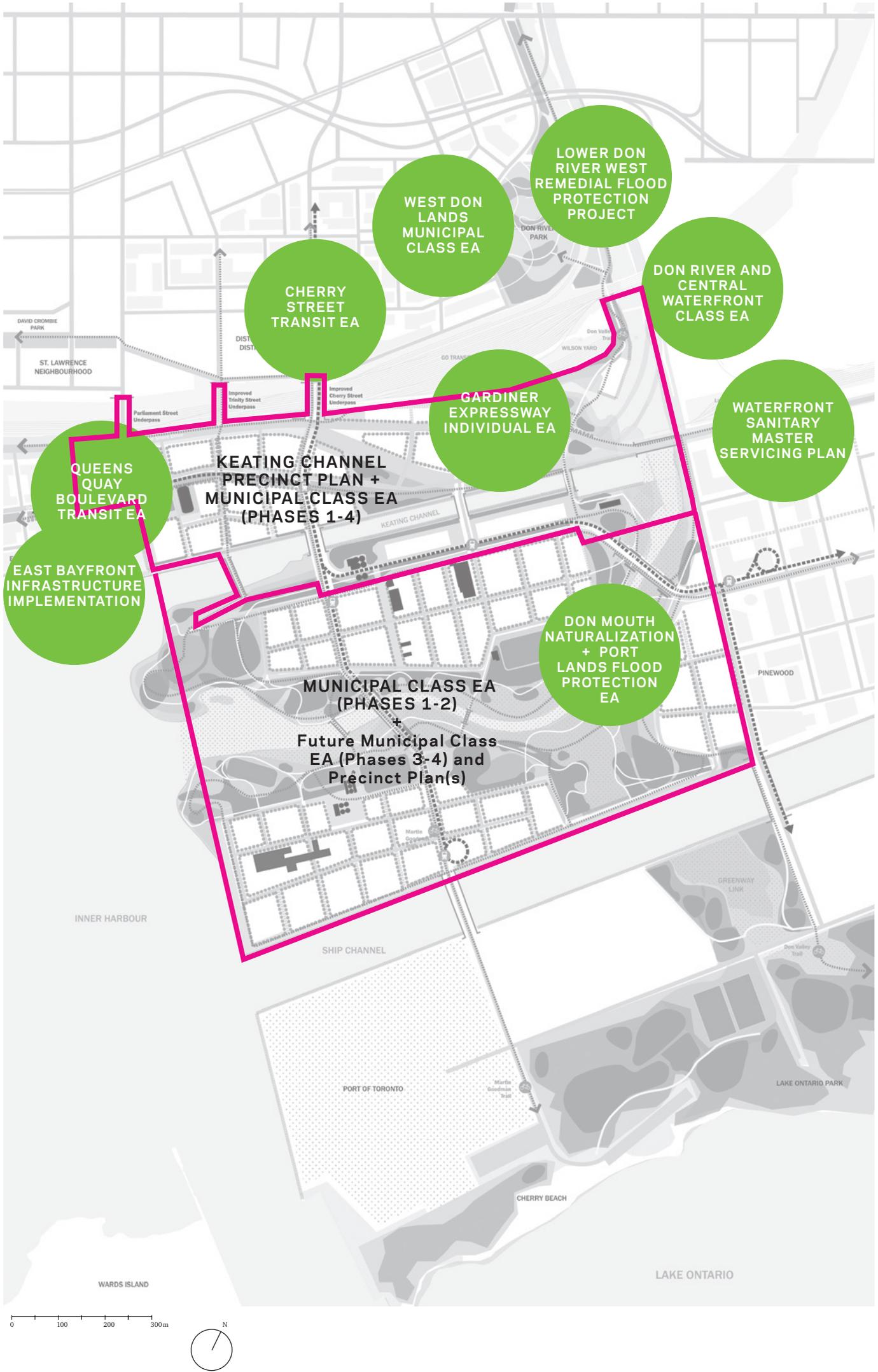
Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

Lower Don Lands

**Figure 3**  
 Reorganization of Central Waterfront  
 Secondary Plan elements in the Lower  
 Don Lands

**Figure 4**  
*Lower Don Lands Framework Planning Context*  
 Illustrating the relationship of the Lower Don Lands to planning initiatives of surrounding projects.

- **Stakeholder consultations with a broad range of Community Liaison Groups**, including many public meetings that were held over the course of the development of the DMNP EA, the Framework Plan, the Keating Channel Precinct Plan, and the Municipal Class EA.
- **Integration of planning work conducted by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) for the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Individual EA (DMNP EA)**  
 Ensuring that the plans for community building meet the regulatory requirements for flood protection under the new channel configuration and that development of mixed uses and open space are compatible with the naturalization strategies.
- **Keating Channel Precinct Plan**, elaborates on the details of the Secondary Plan and the Framework Plan to describe the uses, built form, open space, community facilities and infrastructure inter-relationships.
- **Municipal Class EA Phase 1+2** for the entire Lower Don Lands extents reviews alternative solutions for providing new infrastructure systems to the entire Lower Don Lands
- **Municipal Class EA Phase 3+4** for the Keating Channel Precinct area assesses alternatives for infrastructure design in the Keating Channel Precinct, and proposes measures to eliminate or mitigate environmental effects of infrastructure construction and operation
- **Lower Don River West Remedial Flood Protection Project**, although this project provides the essential flood protection works for the lands north of the rail embankment, there are lands within the Lower Don Lands that also benefit from these works. It also facilitates the creation of a significant public open space on the west side of the Don River which is linked to the Port Lands and Central Waterfront through this Framework Plan.
- **Zoning By-Law Amendment for the Keating Channel Precinct** area translates the policies of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan into clear use and built form regulations for the first lands to be developed in the Keating Channel Precinct.
- **Coordination with the Cherry Street Transit EA**, which detailed the deployment of a streetcar line in a dedicated transit right of way along Cherry Street to the rail embankment. This Framework Plan and the Class EA Master Plan show the continuation of that transit facility south into the Port Lands.
- **Coordination with the Queens Quay Boulevard Transit EA**, which detailed the development of a streetcar line in a dedicated transit right of way from Union Station to East Bayfront. This Framework Plan and the Class EA Master Plan show the continuation of that transit facility further east to the Keating Channel neighbourhood and south into the Port Lands.
- **Coordination with the West Don Lands Municipal Class EA**, which detailed the engineering underway to provide servicing to the West Don Lands. This Framework Plan and the Class EA Master Plan show the interconnections and relationships with that infrastructure.
- **Coordination with the East Bayfront Infrastructure Implementation**, which detailed engineering underway to provide servicing to East Bayfront. This Framework Plan and the Class EA Master Plan show the interconnections and relationships with that infrastructure.
- **Coordination with the Gardiner Expressway and Lake Shore Boulevard Reconfiguration, Environmental Assessment and Integrated Urban Design Study**. The Framework Plan was developed on the assumption of the Gardiner Expressway remaining as an elevated expressway. However, it contemplates further study of options for the Gardiner, including a dismantling of the elevated structure. While it does specify key infrastructure and connections that must be maintained should the Gardiner be brought to an at-grade facility, it is also flexible enough to accommodate various alternatives.
- **Coordination with the Don River and Central Waterfront Class EA Study**, currently underway to assess alternatives to provide improved management of wastewater and stormwater along the Don River and Central Waterfront. This Framework Plan and the Class EA Master Plan are intended to be compatible with a number of alternatives coming out of the study of the trunk sewers and combined sewer system.
- **Coordination with the Waterfront Sanitary Master Servicing Plan**, currently being undertaken by the City of Toronto to develop a comprehensive plan for servicing the existing and future developments along the waterfront. The Master Plan will provide recommendations for the existing sanitary sewer system in regards to adequacy, capacity constraints, upgrades, and modifications. The study area is from Bathurst Street in the west to Leslie Street in the east, and from the lake in the south to King Street in the north.



# History of the Lower Don Lands

The Lower Don Lands area is entirely comprised of lands that were reclaimed from Lake Ontario and Ashbridge's Bay Marsh. The Don River originally emptied into Ashbridge's Bay before entering the Inner Harbour.

Starting in the 1870s, a breakwater was built to divert the Don River from the harbour and confine sediment deposits to Ashbridge's Bay. A subsequent breakwater was constructed roughly along the current Cherry Street corridor, and an attempt was made to create a new edge to the Harbour to the west of the Don River.



Figure 5  
*Shipping Activity at the Mouth of the  
Keating Channel*



**Figure 6**  
Keating Channel Dockwall Construction,  
1910s



**Figure 7**  
Boats along the Keating Channel  
City of Toronto Archive



**Figure 8**  
Gardiner Expressway Construction  
1960s  
Looking north from the east side of the  
Don River at Lakeshore Boulevard East.

## Development of the Waterfront

The water's edge became separated from the rest of Toronto by the construction of the Grand Trunk Railroad, creating significant issues for access from inland Toronto to the wharves at the water's edge. The lands along the waterfront began to change as new cribbing and landfilling dramatically altered the shoreline and added land, forming an irregular waterfront. More land creation for the construction of rail lines and industrial lands came about through the containment of the Don River in a 5 kilometre long linear channel.

1909: The Railway Commissioners approve a plan to create an elevated railway viaduct across the eastern edge of the Inner Harbour. This marks the beginning of the significant physical segregation of the Lower Don lands and specifically the Keating Channel Precinct lands that we see today. The original scheme contemplates more subways (i.e. access tunnels) under the rail embankment, but post World War I financial constraints force the railways to construct a less ambitious series of connections.

1911: The Toronto Harbour Commission is formed to undertake a number of improvements, including creating new lands for harbour and industrial purposes.

1912: The Harbour Commission's plan calls for the transformation of Ashbridge's Bay Marsh into a massive new industrial district with waterfront parks and summer homes. By reclaiming land using 8.23 million cubic metres of dredged fill from the Inner Harbour, a new "bulkhead line" is established 305 metres south of the existing shoreline, demarcating a new northern boundary of the harbour. Queens Quay is planned as the principal east-west road 152 metres north of the bulkhead line.

1914: The mouth of the Don River is redirected to its current alignment into the concrete-lined Keating Channel and the filling of the surrounding wetlands begins.

1918: Fleet Street (now Lakeshore Boulevard) is planned as a 26 metre wide artery to move goods across and not necessarily from the waterfront.

1927: The underpass at Parliament Street is completed.

1929: The underpass at Cherry Street is completed.

### **Industrial Legacy**

As the planning for the Keating Channel Precinct has advanced further than for the rest of the Lower Don Lands, with the development of a Precinct Plan and a coordinating Environmental Study Report, heritage elements along the Keating Channel are incorporated into the form and function of the Precinct's infrastructure. Two structures in particular, the Victory Soya Mills Silos and the ESSROC silos, are features in the public realm development to celebrate the industrial legacy of Toronto's waterfront. Given that the silos that once dotted the waterfront have all but disappeared, these historic resources are given high priority by their association with the Precinct's infrastructure and public space development.

While not officially listed as a heritage resource, the Keating Channel marine walls are being treated in this plan as possessing historic value as they constitute a material and textual quality that would be unlikely to be afforded by any new construction. Moreover, this Channel represents the most significant single historic element in the transformation of the Ashbridges' Bay Marsh into the industrial Port Lands.

### **Torontonians' Responses: Towards a Revitalized Waterfront**

Through almost three decades of perseverance by the citizens of Toronto, the City, State and Province have taken note of the value of the Toronto waterfront, making commitments that have enabled the work done to date on the naturalization of the Don River and the establishment of the neighborhoods at the water's edge.

1980s: The citizens of Toronto, led by the Task Force to Bring Back the Don, begin to call for a new vision for the mouth of the Don in the midst of a revitalized Port Lands and waterfront.

1990: The Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (the Crombie Commission) issues its Watershed Interim Report, which recommends green industries and parkland be established on the existing East Bayfront and Port Industrial Areas.

1991: A plan by the Task Force to Bring Back the Don illustrates this concept, with a naturalized Don River as the centrepiece of the concept.

1999: The three levels of government assemble the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force. The Task Force recognizes the imperative of creating major new neighbourhoods on waterfront lands that would be reconnected to the city from a physical, social and economic point of view. They therefore recommend the creation of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (now known as Waterfront Toronto) to carry out this vision.

# Overview of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan provides the framework to guide the renewal and revitalization of Toronto's waterfront over a 30 year planning horizon.



Figure 9  
Overview of the Existing Toronto Waterfront

#### Figure 10

*Summary of Lower Don Lands Modifications to the elements of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan*  
The Lower Don Lands plan changes locations of where development can occur and does not change the amount of development from what is expressed in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.

\* Note: the total areas for both columns do not add up to the same total, because the Lower Don Lands involves the creation of new land through lakefilling.

The Secondary Plan is built on four key principles:

#### **Creating Dynamic and Diverse New Communities**

Creating new waterfront communities that accommodate living and working in a mixed-use neighbourhood setting and contribute to a high degree of social, economic, natural and environmental health and cultural vibrancy.

#### **Promoting a Clean and Green Environment**

Utilizing environmental strategies that provide for safe, healthy and sustainable waterfront communities.

#### **Removing Barriers/Making Connections**

Reconnecting the waterfront with the city fabric by removing barriers and facilitating new connections is essential to realizing the potential of the city's waterfront.

#### **Building a Network of Spectacular Waterfront Parks**

Improving the public realm with new parks and plazas within a natural setting is critical in transforming the waterfront into a major world-class destination. Parks in the Central Waterfront will be diverse, well maintained, animated and safe, accommodating a full range of recreational experiences from areas for active play, enjoyment of sports and entertainment to areas for quiet solitude and relaxation.

The Secondary Plan envisions that the Port Lands will be cleaned up and opened to a range of urban development opportunities which will eventually be transformed into a "number of new urban districts set amid the hustle and bustle of Toronto's port activities."

The Secondary Plan anticipated major new compact and mixed-use neighbourhoods in the Port Lands at a "medium scale, with some lower elements and higher buildings at appropriate locations." A balance of live and work opportunities, including a mix of housing types, densities and tenures will contribute to vibrant new waterfront communities. New development will be located, massed and organized to protect views, frame and support the adjacent public realm and provide for comfortable microclimates. Special treatment will be given to development sites along the water's edge and public promenade to create animated publicly accessible buildings and open spaces which meet high standards of design excellence.

The Framework Plan continues to contemplate a medium scale of development in the Port Lands. However, in order to expand the amount of land used for flood protection and naturalization purposes, the plan now anticipates a cluster of higher buildings in the area north of the Keating Channel. This is an area where more intense development is reasonably located, because it is well separated from existing neighbourhoods, it can be designed to be well served by transit, and the siting of tall buildings in this area will protect critical views of the waterfront and the downtown.

The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan does not have explicit population and employment targets, or targets for a total building envelope. Nevertheless, during the development of the Secondary Plan, the City developed a series of assumptions about the ultimate mix of uses in order to support background studies of transportation and infrastructure. These background assumptions were used as a starting point for the design of the Lower Don Lands, and the anticipated mix of uses is described later in this document.

The Lower Don Lands is an additional "Big Move" that will define the Central Waterfront in a manner fully contemplated by the Secondary Plan. Its transformative character will add to the health, vitality and sustainability of the City. Although the Lower Don Lands is consistent with the intent of the plans, there are a number of instances where amendments are required to reflect the outcomes of extensive planning and technical studies that have been advanced for the Lower Don Lands.

Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

Lower Don Lands

Park and Open Space Area

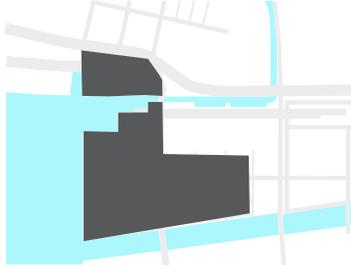


**100** Acres\*  
(40.5 Hectares)

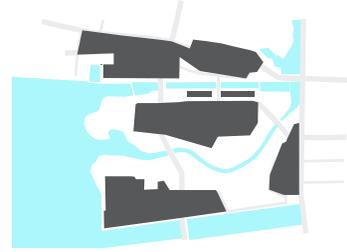


**120** Acres\*  
(48.6 Hectares)

Community Development Area



**155** Acres  
(62.7 Hectares)



**150** Acres  
(60.7 Hectares)

Water Area

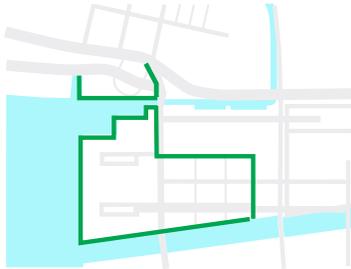


**25** Acres  
(10.1 Hectares)



**40** Acres  
(16.2 Hectares)

Development Fronting on Open Space/Park

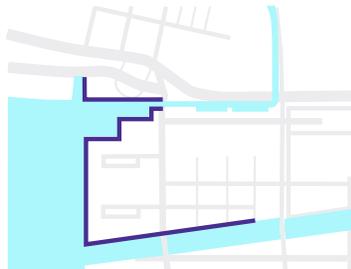


**4400**  
Linear Metres



**5200**  
Linear Metres

Waterfront Development



**3050**  
Linear Metres



**5200**  
Linear Metres

# A New Lower Don Lands Planning Framework

An amendment to the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan is proposed to facilitate the transformation of the Lower Don Lands into a sustainable urban community which employs an integrated landscape-based methodology of city building that has the potential to become a model for cities around the world.

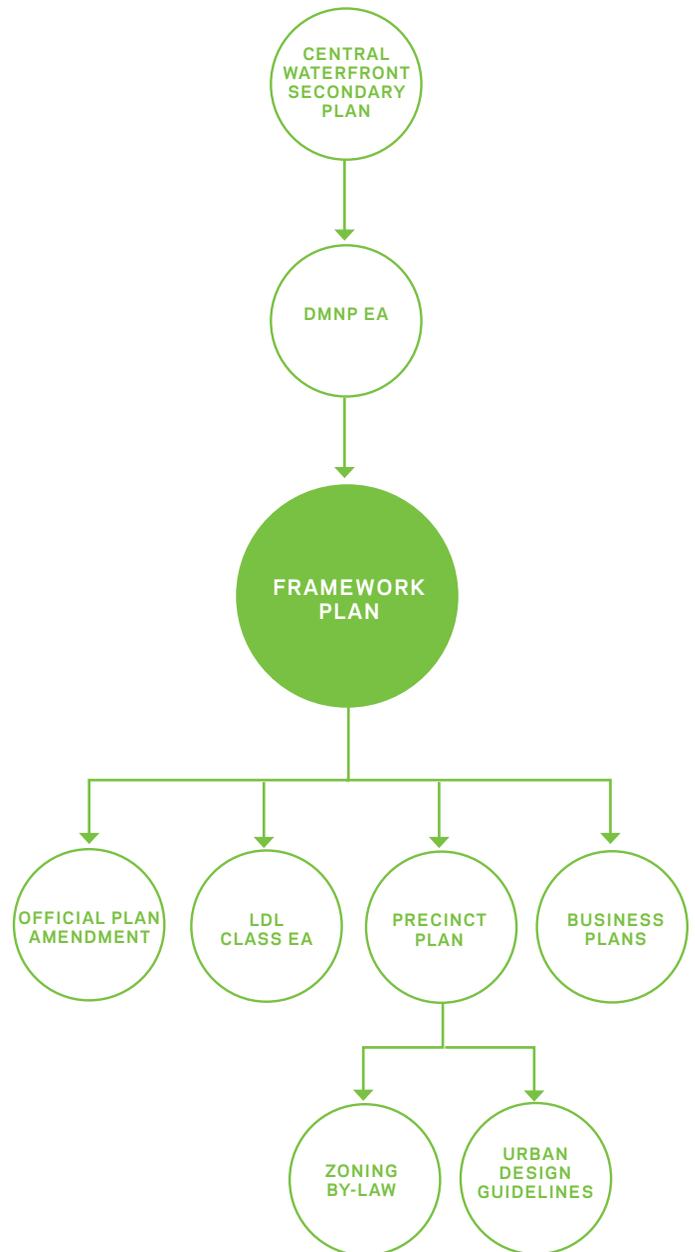
## Framework Planning

Naturalizing the mouth of the river has the broadest possible effect on the urban development of the Lower Don Lands, adding kilometres of parkfront and waterfront property and a sustainable “urban estuary” of great richness and complexity on multiple levels: spatial, ecological, functional, economic, and social. With the decision to shift pre-established boundaries, the proposed plan dramatically increases the possibilities for new relationships amongst city, river, and lake, as contemplated in the Secondary Plan. The Keating Channel will remain as an open waterway accessible to small watercraft that can clear the fixed bridge structures. It will remain an industrial heritage artifact and focal point for the development that surrounds it.

While the Secondary Plan established clear identities for the West Don Lands and East Bayfront, the policies related to the Port Lands and the Don River had intentionally been left vague since further planning had yet to occur. By amending the Secondary Plan, the Lower Don Lands will be afforded the same level of definition as the other Precincts in the Central Waterfront.

The redevelopment and revitalization of the Lower Don Lands will transform the City’s waterfront into a significant waterfront destination which combines sustainable city building with the restoration and naturalization of the Don River. The Lower Don Lands comprise a new urban district within the Port Lands and will be developed into a number of diverse mixed-use communities focused around the renaturalized Don River and the historic Keating Channel. Vibrant waterfront communities will be developed with a balance of live, work and recreational opportunities which reduce automobile dependency and encourage sustainable transportation choices, such as walking, cycling and public transit. An expansive and interconnected system of public parks and open spaces, pedestrian and multi-use trails, and accessible public transit network, weaves together the waterfront communities with a healthy, natural heritage system. The Lower Don Lands and renaturalized Don River will provide a gateway to Port Lands and reconnect the City to the waterfront.

The Lower Don Lands Framework Plan unites the goals of introducing urban development, native ecologies, and public infrastructure to this former industrial site in order to transform it into a vibrant new community for Toronto. The bold new park at the centre of the scheme consolidates the program of naturalized river mouth, floodway, recreational park, and neighbourhood icon into a single and complex central landscape that supports and becomes the generator of new urban life.



**Figure 11**  
The Framework Plan is a document that integrates a number of different planning exercises for the Lower Don Lands.

# Consistency with Provincial and City Planning Policy

Land use planning in Ontario is carried out within a framework established by the Province of Ontario through the Planning Act and the Provincial Policy Statement 2005 (PPS), as well as policy initiatives such as the 2006 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH).



Figure 12  
Lower Don Lands Public Meeting #2,  
December 2008



**Figure 13 (Above)**

*The Lower Don Lands in Relation to the Greater Toronto Area*  
 Planning for the Lower Don Lands supports the creation of “complete communities” which are intended to meet a person’s needs for daily living throughout their lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing including affordable housing, schools, retail, and community infrastructure and convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, non-motorized travel.

**The Provincial Policy Statement of 2005**

The Lower Don Lands provides a unique opportunity for the development of new compact, mixed-use communities within an underutilized industrial area of the city, reinforcing the orderly progression of the city’s urban fabric. Many factors contribute to this exceptional chance to realize the City of Toronto’s and the Province’s policy goals on a number of levels including: the size of the Lower Don Lands site, the extent of anticipated revitalization, the amount of land under public ownership, and the nature of the Federal Provincial and Municipal partnership supporting Waterfront Toronto’s work.

The revitalization and intensification of these lands is consistent with a number of Provincial and City policies that link the reuse of underutilized lands with the orderly management of urban growth, sustainability and economic vitality. Land use planning in Ontario is carried out within a framework established by the Province of Ontario through the Planning Act and the Provincial Policy Statement 2005 (PPS), as well as policy initiatives such as the 2006 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH).

The PPS presents a policy framework for building strong, livable, and healthy communities through efficient land use and development patterns. The policies direct growth and regeneration in existing urban areas and, in particular, to brownfield sites that may include former industrial lands that are underutilized, derelict or vacant. New development should accommodate opportunities for intensification in areas that are well served by transit. Redevelopment should also support compact urban form, a range and blend of residential, employment, commercial, recreational and open space uses, as well as densities which allow for the efficient use of land,



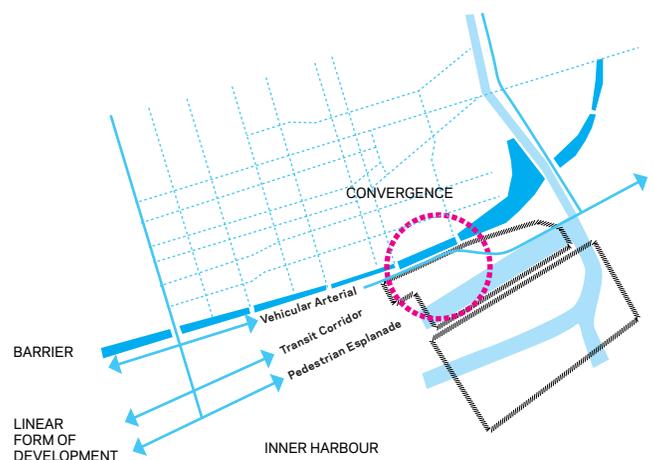
energy, existing and planned infrastructure and public service facilities.

The revitalization and intensification of the Lower Don Lands is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement and, in particular, it accomplishes Provincial policy objectives as stated in the PPS that link the reuse of underutilized lands with the orderly management of urban growth, sustainability and economic vitality. Other PPS policies, such as flood protection and the preservation of cultural heritage, are also addressed through the Lower Don Lands framework.

### The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe

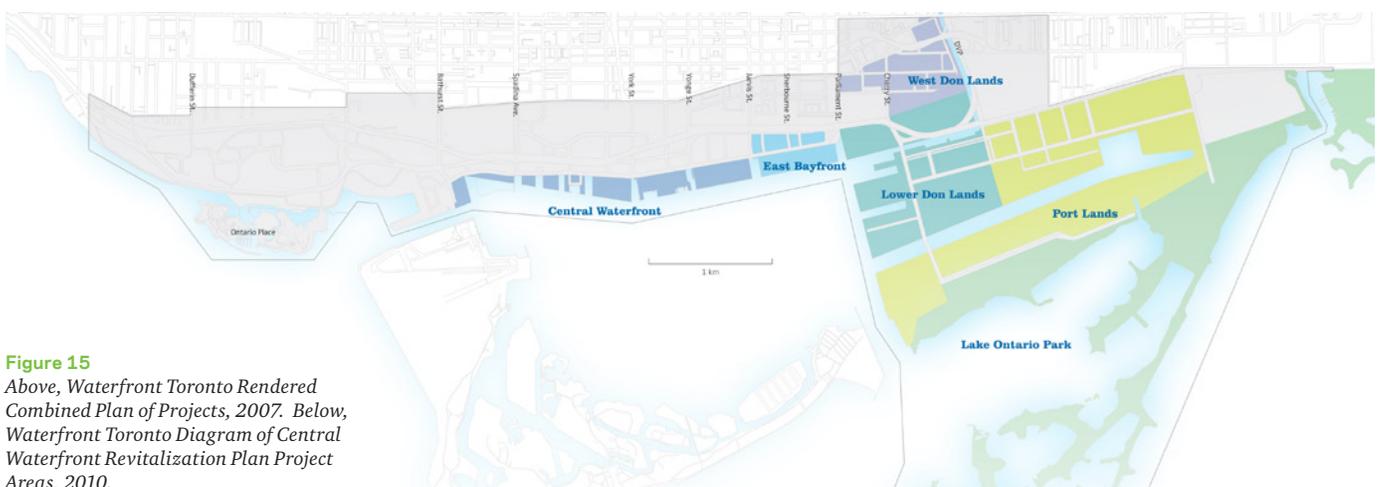
The 2006 Growth Plan for the GGH provides the Province's framework for managing growth and development across the GGH to create and maintain healthy, safe and thriving communities, and guide infrastructure planning and strategic investment decisions to support and accommodate forecasted population and economic growth to 2031. Municipalities use growth forecasts provided in the Plan as a basis for planning and managing urban growth. The Growth Plan anticipates that, from 2001 to 2031, the City of Toronto will have to accommodate an additional 490,000 residents, 330,000 new households and 200,000 jobs.

The Growth Plan supports the creation of "complete communities" which are intended to meet a person's needs for daily living throughout their lifetime by providing convenient access to an appropriate mix of jobs, a full range of housing including affordable housing, schools, retail, and community infrastructure and convenient access to public transportation and options for safe, non-motorized travel.



**Figure 14**

One of the core principles of the Central Waterfront Plan is the removal of barriers to forge new connections to the waterfront. To provide a gateway to the Port Lands, the Keating Channel Precinct has been designed to contend with the convergence of barriers formed by the rail embankment, the Gardiner Expressway, and Lakeshore Boulevard.



**Figure 15**  
 Above, Waterfront Toronto Rendered Combined Plan of Projects, 2007. Below, Waterfront Toronto Diagram of Central Waterfront Revitalization Plan Project Areas, 2010.

As specified in the Growth Plan, a significant portion of new growth is to be achieved through intensification of minimum densities in existing built-up areas that have the potential to be well served by transit in order to reduce outward urban expansion and better utilize existing and planned infrastructure. The Growth Plan envisions the intensification of existing built-up areas where the increase in uses such as urban growth centres, intensification corridors, major transit stations, and the redevelopment of brownfield sites and greyfields can be supported.

The Plan recognizes that compact urban form and intensification efforts go hand-in-hand with improved transit and infrastructure to support growth. The Growth Plan outlines that intensification areas should be planned and designed to:

- Attract a significant portion of population and employment growth
- Provide a diverse and compatible mix of land uses

- to support vibrant neighbourhoods
- Provide high quality open spaces with urban design standards that create attractive and vibrant places
- Support transit, walking and cycling for everyday activities
- Achieve higher densities than surrounding areas
- Achieve an appropriate transition of built form to adjacent uses

The revitalization of the Lower Don Lands as a new mixed use community is a model of urban intensification with an excellent mix of employment and population in vibrant neighbourhoods organized around high quality open spaces. The Framework for redeveloping the Lower Don Lands is very supportive of attractive alternatives to private automobile use including transit, cycling and walking. The unique location on the waterfront with a robust multi-modal transportation system allows higher densities that transition well to adjacent areas.

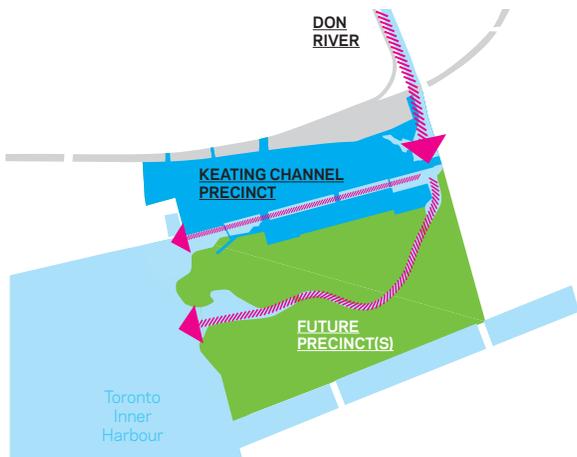


### **The City of Toronto Official Plan**

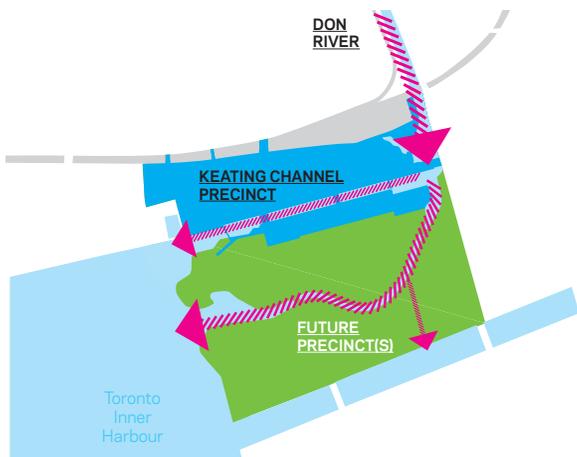
The City's Official Plan (2003) provides a planning framework to accommodate and direct the City's anticipated growth of 537,000 residents and 544,000 jobs by 2031. The plan integrates land use planning and transportation infrastructure by directing growth to areas best served by higher order transit, while protecting and reinforcing stable residential neighbourhoods. Areas best suited to accommodate more intensive growth and development are the city's centres, avenues, employment districts, the Downtown, and Central Waterfront, which includes the Lower Don Lands. The renewal and reurbanization of the Central Waterfront is integral for promoting the health and vitality of the Downtown by providing new opportunities for the development of more intensive mixed-use neighbourhoods to accommodate housing and employment and provide well designed connections to the city's core.

The Official Plan designates the Lower Don Lands predominately as Regeneration Areas. Regeneration Areas are intended to provide a broad mix of commercial, residential, light industrial, parks and open spaces, and institutional uses in order to revitalize underutilized or largely vacant areas of the city. Regeneration Areas provide unique opportunities to attract investment and accommodate new growth while reintegrating these areas with the city. The Official Plan puts a high priority on quality built form as the principal means to ensure that more intensive uses fit within the existing urban framework and do not deteriorate stable neighbourhoods.

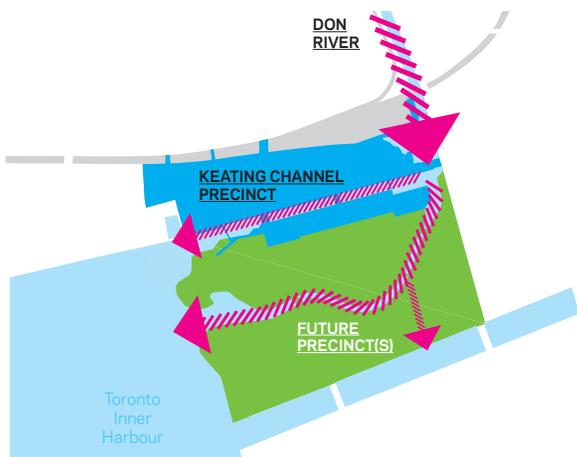
The Official Plan provides guidance for building new neighbourhoods to ensure they function as healthy and livable communities that are compatible with and reinforce the surrounding fabric of the city. New neighbourhoods should provide a community focal point within walking distance of all residents, a fine grain of interconnected streets, a mix of uses and building types, and high quality parks, open spaces, and community services that meet the needs of the city's residents, workers and visitors. The plan supports intensification through street-oriented, grade-related or mid-rise building types that define and support comfortable streets and open spaces, and by directing taller buildings to appropriate locations within the city. The Official Plan promotes the protection and recognition of cultural heritage elements, including both built heritage and archaeological resources. Official Plan Amendment 66 (currently under appeal) will add additional policies to the Official Plan to support the City's implementation of enhanced sustainable design and performance in new development through the Toronto Green Standard. The Official Plan also seeks to promote a mature approach to mobility in Toronto by giving advantage in the planning of rights of way to multiple modes of travel, including transit, cycling and walking, so that there are attractive alternatives to private automobile use.



2 year flood



100 year flood



regulatory event

**Figure 16**  
Predicted Flood Conveyance Under Different Storm Events

The Keating Channel's role in providing flood protection to the entire Lower Don Lands development area increases with the severity of the storm event as per the studies and modeling associated with the DMNP EA.

### The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan was adopted in April 2003, with four core principles in mind:

1. Removing Barriers/Making Connections
2. Building a Network of Spectacular Waterfront Parks and Public Spaces
3. Promoting a Clean and Green Environment
4. Creating Dynamic and Diverse New Communities

To address these four principles, the Secondary Plan has 51 policies and a series of illustrative maps to articulate the City's land use ambitions for the Central Waterfront. While most policies have some bearing upon the Lower Don Lands, there are a few that are particularly relevant, including:

- The Central Waterfront will showcase successful redevelopment of brownfield sites into sustainable residential and employment areas
- New waterfront communities will offer opportunities to live and work close together
- New development will be located, organized and massed to protect view corridors, frame and support the adjacent public realm and discourage privatization of public spaces
- Waterfront streets are to be places with distinct identities and act as lively urban connections that balance auto and non-auto needs
- New streets will be designed to reinforce visual connections between the city and the water
- New streetcars will be operating in exclusive right-of-ways on existing and proposed streets to ensure efficient transit management
- Parks and plazas will be centres of public activity
- Public community, cultural and entertainment facilities will form part of the waterfront park system
- Schools and other community services and facilities will be integral components of new waterfront communities
- A mix of housing types, densities and tenures will accommodate a broad range of household sizes, composition, ages and incomes
- The provision of 20 percent of all units as affordable rental housing and a further 5% as low-end-of-market housing
- Railway underpasses will be transformed into more pedestrian friendly corridors
- Excellence in the design of public and private buildings
- Provisions for the reconfiguration of the Gardiner

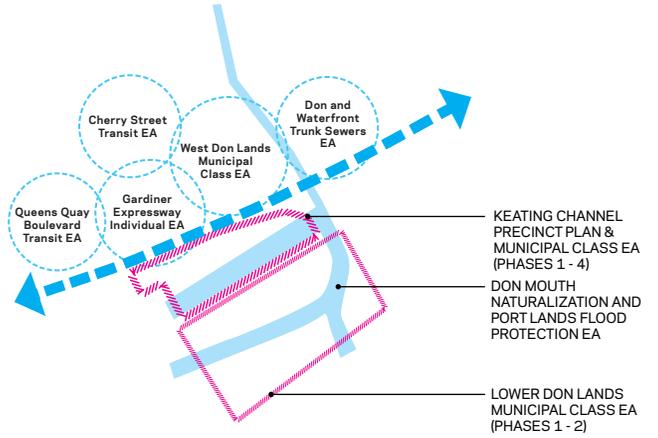
**Don Mouth Naturalization and Flood Protection EA (DMNP EA), an Integrated Planning Process**

Naturalizing the mouth of the Don River and providing flood protection to the Port Lands were identified as top priorities for all three levels of government when they first announced the establishment of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (now Waterfront Toronto) in 2001. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is leading the DMNP EA. The goal of the DMNP EA is to establish and sustain the form, features, and functions of a natural river mouth within the context of a revitalized urban environment while providing flood protection up to the Regulatory Flood.

The objectives of the DMNP EA are to:

- Naturalize and rehabilitate the mouth of the Don River by utilizing an ecosystem based approach
- Provide flood protection for Spill Zones 1 and 2
- Maintain the provision for navigation and existing flood protection through sediment, debris and ice management
- Integrate existing infrastructure functions that could not be reasonably moved or removed (including road, rails, utilities, trails, and power)
- Encourage additional compatible recreation, cultural heritage opportunities and public/handicap accessibility
- Contribute to the revitalization and sustainability of the waterfront and coordinate with and inform other planning and development efforts and associated certain and foreseeable infrastructure
- Design and implement this project in a manner consistent with Waterfront Toronto’s Sustainability Framework and applicable Provincial legislation

As part of the EA process, several alternative river alignments and outlets were evaluated against the project objectives. The technically preferred alignment involved the creation of a new mouth of the river in the central Port Lands which outlets into the Inner Harbour. As the DMNP EA progressed, it became apparent that lands within the Keating Channel Precinct area are required to provide flood relief and sediment management facilities at the eastern end of the Precinct. The lands necessary for flood protection have been integrated within both the DMNP EA, the Lower Don Lands Framework Plan and Keating Channel Precinct Plan design processes and continue to be examined as work progresses. Lands in the western portion of the Keating Channel Precinct are not required to support any specific functions for the river project and, as such, planning for other land uses can proceed independently in this area.



**Figure 17**  
*Coordination of Current Projects*  
 The Lower Don Lands is located at the nexus of seven active environmental assessments.

# Supporting the Key Principles of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

Although the Lower Don Lands is consistent with the intent of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, revisions are required to embed the additional detail resulting from the extensive planning and technical studies that have been advanced for the Lower Don Lands.

## Creating Dynamic and Diverse New Communities

The Lower Don Lands proposal envisions the sequential development of an integrated set of neighbourhoods with a range of block patterns and building typologies on sites formed by the river and the harbour. This development pattern will create exciting new kinds of places to live, work, play, and explore. The city, parkland, and estuary will feature the preservation of key historic artifacts. The preservation of these elements contributes to unique neighbourhood identities, each with the complete DNA of a vibrant city: a mix of life-cycle housing, commercial, cultural, and work spaces, public realms, parkland, and access to water.

The new vision for the area in the proposed amendment combines neighbourhood development with landscape and naturalization creation to a level of unprecedented integrated city building. This synthetic approach to planning supports the overarching sustainability goals for the project. The Lower Don Lands project was announced as one of among 16 founding projects of the Climate Positive Development Program, a Clinton Climate Initiative program that will support the development of large-scale urban projects that demonstrate cities can grow in ways that reduce the amount of onsite CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to below zero and showcase sustainability, transit, live/work opportunities and urban density. The vision for the Lower Don Lands is representative of the aspirations of the City of Toronto, Waterfront Toronto, TRCA, and the hundreds of stakeholders who have participated in the numerous intertwining planning processes that relate to this area.

Detailed plans for various areas in the Lower Don Lands are being developed through Precinct Plans, a process that is described in the Secondary Plan. The first Precinct in the Lower Don Lands is the Keating Channel Precinct. Waterfront Toronto commissioned the Keating Channel Precinct Plan concurrently with this Framework Plan. One or more additional Precinct Plans will be completed in the future for the lands adjacent to the new Don River mouth.

The combined Lower Don Lands neighbourhood is intended to have the characteristics of many other successful Toronto neighbourhoods including a broad range of building types, mixed uses, tenures, amenities and employment opportunities. While benefiting from the unique features of the river and the Keating Channel, the Lower Don Lands is also close to adjacent neighbourhoods and Downtown. Furthermore, it will be well served by transit, pedestrian, cycling and auto connections to the rest of the city.

Similar to East Bayfront and the Central Waterfront, the Lower Don Lands will have relatively compact blocks that are within short walking distance of both the water's edge and transit facilities. The precinct(s) around the new river will have the added benefit of their proximity to a major park space and naturalized areas (such as wetlands). This means that



**Figure 18**  
*Transportation Connections*



**Figure 19**  
*Employment*



**Figure 20**  
*Retail*

**Figure 21**

**Traffic Zone Map**

Illustrating the zones used in traffic modeling in the City of Toronto. These numbered zones are referenced in the tables on the facing page.



the Lower Don lands will offer a greater diversity of open space experiences than one finds in surrounding neighbourhoods.

Certain portions of the Lower Don Lands, particularly the lands north of the Keating Channel, will be more densely developed than surrounding areas. The rail embankment, the Gardiner Expressway and the Don River separate the Keating Channel Precinct from adjacent neighbourhoods. This means that higher development density and building heights in this area will not detract the character of neighbouring communities. The Keating Channel Precinct area is very close to Downtown and it will be well-served by transit, pedestrian and cycling facilities. The Class EA Master Plan demonstrates that the area's transportation system can support this level of development density.

The anticipated amount of employment in the Lower Don Lands development will be higher than in surrounding neighbourhoods. This mix of uses is intended to promote a close relationship between where people work and live. The Framework Plan contemplates a strong proportion of employment at levels that are comparable to those in Liberty Village. This is consistent with the growth structure contemplated in Section 2.2.2 of the City's Official Plan, which not only directs growth to the Lower Don Lands, but also promotes mixed used development in order to increase opportunities for living close to work, and walking and cycling for local trips. This employment focus is also consistent with the Official Plan's inclusion of the Central Waterfront in the employment centre of the Downtown.

The diversity of use in the Lower Don Lands is only one aspect of sustainability contemplated for the area. Waterfront Toronto and the City are continuing to study mechanisms for substantial improvements in stormwater quality, and reduced carbon impact of development through advanced high performance building design, district energy and additional carbon-reduction measures.

Figures 21-24 illustrate the assumptions made by the City during the development of the Secondary Plan for the population and employment in the Lower Don Lands. As stated earlier, these are background assumptions as the Secondary Plan does not have specific population or employment targets.

The Lower Don Lands Framework Plan tables represent the low and high estimates developed by Waterfront Toronto for the Lower Don lands. The population estimates developed by Waterfront Toronto are generally in the same range as those estimated by the City. The significant difference is in the employment assumptions.

These estimates were prepared prior to the decision to propose a Port Lands Sports Centre south of Commissioners Street. The inclusion of the Sports Centre in the Lower Don Lands means that the development estimates in that general vicinity will be reduced. Because the Secondary Plan does not have explicit targets, the options are to reduce the overall anticipated population and employment for the Lower Don Lands or, conversely, assume that this development will be redeployed either in the balance of the Lower Don Lands, or more broadly across the Port Lands as a whole.

#### **The Keating Channel Precinct and 480 Lakeshore Lands**

The portion of the neighbourhood proposed for the City and Provincially-owned lands between the elevated Gardiner Expressway and the rail corridor embankment to the north (the 480 Lakeshore lands) is a change from the adopted Secondary Plan. The Secondary Plan conceptually illustrates the naturalized mouth of the Don River through the 480 Lakeshore lands and, as a result, the lands were not anticipated for urban development. While the preferred reconfiguration of the Don River mouth maintains the principles of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan with respect to river naturalization, flood protection, and ecological restoration, it does necessitate the reconfiguration of new communities, the transportation and transit network, and the parks and open space system within the Lower Don Lands. As a result, the 480 Lakeshore lands provide for new redevelopment opportunities within the Lower Don Lands, which did not previously exist, nor were anticipated.

The perceived barriers to the redevelopment of these lands (i.e., rail yard, elevated Gardiner, traffic, noise, and soil remediation) are capable of being adequately mitigated. Recent existing and planned developments along the rail corridor in Toronto, such as the Railway Lands and the West Don Lands, demonstrate the feasibility of accommodating new development adjacent to the rail corridor.

The 480 Lakeshore lands are located in close proximity to the downtown and represent an important opportunity for intensification and redevelopment of underutilized and derelict industrial lands within the Central Waterfront. The lands will be easily accessible through an improved road network and public transit system. The 480 Lakeshore lands provide an opportunity to accommodate a diverse range and mix of land uses, particularly with a greater focus on retail and employment uses given the site's location and accessibility of the area.

SECONDARY PLAN AND EMPLOYMENT ASSUMPTIONS								
Traffic Zones	Commercial GFA	No. of Employees by Job Type				Total No. of Employees	Residential Units	No. of Residents (1.6/unit)
		General Office/ Clerical	Man./Trade	Prof.	Retail/Sales			
5020	9,290	100	0	26	54	180	2,711	4,338
5021	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5022	42,890	961	249	69	52	1,330	4,290	6,864
5023	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5024	39,798	891	231	64	48	1,235	3,980	6,368
479	14,297	320	83	23	17	444	1,430	2,288
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106,275</b>	<b>2,272</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>3,189</b>	<b>12,411</b>	<b>19,858</b>

Note: Number of employees is based on the following rates:  
 Gen. Office and Professional: 1/25 m<sup>2</sup>, Manufacturing/Trade: 1/43 m<sup>2</sup>, Retail/Sales: 1/116 m<sup>2</sup>

LOWER DON LANDS FRAMEWORK PLAN - LOW ESTIMATE								
Traffic Zones	Commercial GFA	No. of Employees by Job Type				Total No. of Employees	Residential Units	No. of Residents (1.6/unit)
		General Office/ Clerical	Man./Trade	Prof.	Retail/Sales			
5020	85,000	2,042	0	528	110	3,040	3,140	5,020
5021	83,000	2,265	0	603	90	2,960	1,560	2,500
5022	29,760	745	193	54	43	1,035	3,227	5,163
5023	25,800	541	140	39	67	787	3,206	5,130
5024	28,000	721	187	52	34	994	1,669	2,670
479	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>251,560</b>	<b>6,314</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>1,276</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>8,816</b>	<b>12,802</b>	<b>20,483</b>

Note: Development for Zone 479 is included in Zone 5023  
 Number of retail employees is based on a rate of 1/116 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Number of non-retail employees generated based on trying to achieve a 0.55 population to employment ratio; some credit was then taken for Port Lands Employment  
 Non-retail employee distribution based on the City's distribution  
 For LDL Zone 5021, non-retail employment distribution is based on the City's Zone 5020  
 For LDL Zone 5023, non-retail employment distribution is based on the City's Zone 479  
 The commercial GFA will increase slightly for Zones 5022 to 5024 due to the presence of Manufacturing/Trade; this will result in approximately 2500 to 4000 m<sup>2</sup> more area.

LOWER DON LANDS FRAMEWORK PLAN - HIGH ESTIMATE								
Traffic Zones	Commercial GFA	No. of Employees by Job Type				Total No. of Employees	Residential Units	No. of Residents (1.6/unit)
		General Office/ Clerical	Man./Trade	Prof.	Retail/Sales			
5020	105,000	2,942	0	660	138	3,740	3,672	5,915
5021	92,000	2,458	0	710	112	3,280	1,560	2,500
5022	37,200	932	241	67	53	1,293	3,227	5,163
5023	37,500	834	216	60	84	1,194	3,206	5,129
5024	30,000	751	195	54	43	1,043	1,669	2,670
479	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>301,700</b>	<b>7,917</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>1,551</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>10,550</b>	<b>13,334</b>	<b>21,377</b>

Notes: same as above

Figure 22-24  
 Central Waterfront Secondary Plan  
 and Lower Don Lands Population/  
 Employment Projections

### Figure 25

*Lower Don Lands Neighbourhood Plan*  
Illustrating general locations of community amenities. The Keating Channel Precinct has been developed to a higher level of detail than the rest of the Lower Don Lands, which will be subject to further analysis and review.

The concurrent Keating Channel Precinct Plan process has demonstrated that development can be appropriately accommodated through a fine grain of streets and development blocks which provide connectivity to the waterfront and surrounding open space network, including the Gardiner Colonnade and waterfront promenade along the Keating Channel. The site may accommodate suitable built forms, land uses and setbacks along the Gardiner Expressway and rail corridor to support development and provide appropriate transitions.

Work done for the DMNP EA shows that soil contamination within the 480 Lakeshore lands is an issue, but it is generally comparable to other industrial sites in the Port Lands and the City. Technologies and risk management approaches (such as in-situ soil treatment, encapsulation/barriers, or removal and ex-situ treatment) are available to appropriately mitigate the contamination to support redevelopment of the lands. The appropriate mechanism for soil and groundwater management needs to be addressed closer to the time of development through detailed feasibility and remediation plans prepared in support of a specific development application.

The study team considered a preliminary analysis of the feasibility of meeting noise criteria in the lands north of Lake Shore Boulevard East. The team considered future traffic volumes on the Gardiner Expressway, the Don Valley Parkway Ramps, a potential reconfigured Lake Shore Boulevard East and the adjacent rail corridor. It was concluded that the control of sound levels within the indoor living areas of the proposed residential blocks is feasible and does not pose a constraint to development, provided typical recommended noise control measures are implemented. This demonstrated the feasibility in the context of existing conditions. The Individual EA for the Gardiner will do additional work on this issue related to any alternative conditions. Development in this proximity to rail facilities and the elevated Gardiner Expressway already exists across the rail corridors in the City of Toronto, most notably closer to the Air Canada Centre and in the former Railway Lands around the Rogers Centre. The City of Toronto already requires individual development applications to be supported by detailed noise studies that recommend noise mitigation measures that are specific to the architectural form of the development proposal.

The Lower Don Lands area, west of the Don Roadway and south of the Keating Channel, houses a small number of existing industrial uses. The local uses will gradually change as the mixed-use Community evolves. As Policy P42 of the Secondary Plan contemplates, existing business will remain until redevelopment occurs. The Precinct Plan(s) for the lands adjacent to the Don River will address existing businesses in more detail, and their Performance Standards and relocation strategies, as referred to in Policy P42.

The lands immediately east of the Don Roadway will be used for the Pinewood studios project. This is an appropriate intervening land use in light of the heavier industrial uses that will remain in the eastern portion of the Port Lands in the medium to long term.

### Conclusion

The general urban framework contemplated by the Lower Don Lands Plan and Official Plan Amendment does not preclude any alternatives from the Environmental Assessment that is currently exploring options for the future of the Gardiner-Lakeshore corridor. In fact, the proposed amendment is consistent with the intent to place some future version of the Gardiner Lakeshore corridor in the context of an enhanced urban fabric for the 480 Lakeshore lands.

Figures 21-24 demonstrate that the proposed amendment provides an area for new development that is capable of providing a comparable population and employment as was provided in the adopted Secondary Plan, even if less land is available for development. Despite containing less overall development land, the land that remains is redeployed in a manner that is more substantially related to protecting magnificent view corridors and framing the adjacent public realm. The proposed amendment significantly increases the amount of development area which has direct frontage on water and public parks and open spaces, better integrating new development with the public realm to create lively and attractive parks and open spaces. The resulting pattern of development blocks has a more organic relationship to open spaces than the large rectilinear blocks of disaggregated development lands and open space in the Secondary Plan. The shifting of the river's mouth also allows urban development to form stronger links to the existing and emerging new neighbourhoods in East Bayfront, the West Don Lands, and Pinewood studios development.



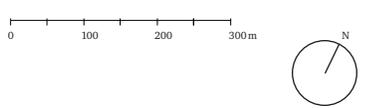
**LEGEND**

- |   |                      |   |                    |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------|---|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|
|  | wooded prospect      |  | Lrt stop           |  | non-motorized public boat launch |
|  | passive use lawn     |  | bicycle trail      |  | small boating                    |
|  | multi-use recreation |  | school             |  | party boats                      |
|  | esplanade            |  | daycare            |  | party boats                      |
|  | playground           |  | cultural uses      |  | party boats                      |
|  | public garden        |  | library            |  | court sports                     |
|  | event space          |  | special commercial |   |                                  |
|  | water access         |  | community centre   |   |                                  |
|  | heritage structure   |  | sports centre      |   |                                  |

**Figure 26**

*Transit Plan*

Illustrating the LRT and its relationship to the communities. A circle is drawn around each transit stop, indicating the areas that are within a 5 minute walk to the stop. The modal split in the Lower Don Lands privileges active transportation and transit. The Keating Channel Precinct has been developed to a higher level of detail than the rest of the Lower Don Lands, which will be subject to further analysis and review.



- LEGEND**
-  LRT Stop
  -  Transit Line
  -  Retail

**Figure 27**

**Habitat Plan**

The Keating Channel Precinct has been developed to a higher level of detail than the rest of the Lower Don Lands, which will be subject to further analysis and review.

## Promoting a Clean and Green Environment

Historically, groups such as TRCA and the Task Force to Bring Back the Don have promoted the idea of a naturalized Don Mouth and emphasized the need for a comprehensive solution to manage flooding in the lower reaches of the Don River. These efforts are fully supported by the City of Toronto, and they are reflected in the City's Official Plan and the Secondary Plan.

The Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Individual EA aims to arrive at a preferred solution for a naturalized Don Mouth which considers flood protection and naturalization in a coordinated manner. The innovative design competition for the Lower Don Lands took this one step further by directing teams to consider flood protection and naturalization, as well as urban systems, in a holistic way. The current plans for the Lower Don Lands carefully consider the interplay of all of these elements and strive to generate successful urban and natural ecologies that are more functional and experientially exciting than if each had been considered separately.

### Flood Protection

The lower portions of the Don River floodplain from the crossing at Queen Street south to its outlet were identified by the TRCA in its 1980 Watershed Planning initiative as the number one priority location requiring flood protection within TRCA's jurisdiction. This ranking was based upon an assessment of the extent of area flooded under the Regulatory Flood and the risk to life and property that it represented. Recent work done for TRCA indicates that the potential flood damage in the Port Lands and South Riverdale areas in the Regulatory Flood event could be in the hundreds of millions of dollars if no remedial action is taken. TRCA and the City have consistently maintained that a comprehensive solution is required to eliminate the flood risk in the Lower Don, rather than a site by site management of the issue. This approach is also consistent with the requirements of the Provincial processes related to the treatment of Special Policy Areas which recognizes and recommends an assessment of remedial works to remove or reduce flood risks within these defined areas.

TRCA has been delegated the responsibility for floodplain management within its area of jurisdiction by the Province of Ontario. This includes the Don River Watershed. Recent flood modeling completed for the Lower Don Lands shows that the majority of the Lower Don Lands located both north and south of the Keating Channel are located within the floodplain. Much of the land north of the Keating Channel in the East Bayfront (East) Area will be removed from the floodplain upon completion of the Flood Protection Landform within the West Don Lands. Lands south of the Keating Channel and a portion of the lands north of the Keating Channel will be removed from the floodplain upon implementation of the DMNP EA Preferred Alternative.

Currently, portions of the Lower Don Lands are located within a provincially approved Special Policy Area (SPA) in the former City of Toronto Official Plan (Policy 2.68). The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) 2005 recognizes the importance of protecting the public's health and safety, and to that end generally does not permit development and site alteration within areas where flooding from rivers, streams or small inland lakes would cause a danger to the public or damage to property. The PPS 2005 also recognizes that in exceptional circumstances the social and economic viability of some communities that have historically existed in floodplains requires a reduction in the provincial floodplain standards. In these exceptional situations, the Province may permit limited development and site alteration to occur in areas prone to flooding by approving a Special Policy Area (SPA), as was done for portions of the Lower Don Lands many years ago. Currently, the portions of the Lower Don Lands within the SPA are subject to more flexible development policies, and the portions of the Lower Don Lands that are within the floodplain and not within the SPA are subject to the stringent floodplain standards, and new development is limited.

The PPS 2005 has also clarified that the designation of a Special Policy Area, and any change or modification to the site specific policies or boundaries applying to a Special Policy Area, must be approved by the Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Natural Resources prior to the approval authority approving such changes or modifications. As such, the requested Official Plan Amendment for the Lower Don Lands must be approved by the Ministers. An Official Plan Amendment will be required to remove the Special Policy Area from the lands north and south of the Keating Channel and west of the Don Roadway. The timing of that further amendment is under discussion with the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Natural Resources, who must also approve that amendment. The timing of future development is linked to the implementation schedule for the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection EA.

### Naturalization

Naturalization of the Don Mouth is not a new idea, but rather embraces the concept initiated in 1991 when the City of Toronto established the Task Force to Bring Back the Don. In 1991 the Task Force in their document *Bringing Back the Don* examined several concepts for restoring some of the river mouth functions lost when the river was straightened and Ashbridge's Bay marsh was filled in. The Task Force's objectives for improving the Don Mouth included enhancing the river mouth, creating aquatic habitat, improving terrestrial habitats, encouraging appropriate uses of the valley, improving access to the valley and coordinating planning policy for the valley. Flood protection was identified in this early document as part of river mouth enhancement.

The report and the groundswell of public interest behind the lower Don River soon led to the formation of the Don Watershed Regeneration Task Force, later to



**LEGEND**

- Terrestrial Habitat - Open Space** (Parkland, Upland)
- Terrestrial Habitat - Valley Slope Transitions** (Upland Forest, Treed Swamp)
- Wetland Habitat - Levee System** (Thicket Swamp, Meadow Marsh)

- Wetland Habitat - Lake Connected Wetlands** (Emergent Marsh, Submergent Marsh, Meadow Marsh)
- Wetland Habitat - Seepage Wetlands** (Treed Swamp, Thicket Swamp, Meadow Marsh)
- Aquatic Habitat**
- Top-of-Bank Line**

become the Don Watershed Regeneration Council. Their report, *Forty Steps to a New Don* (Don Watershed Task Force 1994) continued this call for naturalization of the Don Mouth, as did ensuing report cards which serve as a call to action (Don Watershed Regeneration Council 1997, 2000 and 2003). Since that time, a number of others have embraced this idea of a naturalized Don Mouth and incorporated the opportunity into planning activities for the Central Waterfront, the West Don Lands, and the Port Lands, ensconcing this notion firmly into plans for the waterfront with the adoption of the policies that exist today in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.

### **Integrating Flood Protection and Naturalization Initiatives: DMNP EA**

TRCA and Waterfront Toronto are in the final stages of the DMNP EA. The purpose of this EA is to transform the existing mouth of the Don River, including the Keating Channel, into a healthier, more naturalized river outlet to the lake while, at the same time, removing the risk of flooding to 230 hectares of urban land to the east and south of the river, as shown in Figure 28.

The DMNP EA continues the two agencies' efforts to find a comprehensive solution to flooding in the Lower Don. The Lower Don River West Remedial Flood Protection Project (LDRW Project) Class EA was completed in 2005. The implementation of the LDRW plan, which is currently underway, will remove the remaining 210 hectares of land in the eastern portion of Downtown Toronto from risk of flooding. Key elements of the LDRW Project include the creation of a Flood Protection Landform along the west side of the Don River which will eliminate flooding into Downtown Toronto through the West Don Lands (under construction), and the widening of the elevated railway bridge to accommodate the additional floodwaters that would have flowed to the west of the river (completed in 2007).

The DMNP EA studied the ways that flood protection can coexist with naturalization. The evaluation of alternatives in the EA concluded that the configuration of the Don River shown in the proposed amendment had a substantially greater capacity for providing both flood protection and new habitat.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) that guides the DMNP EA identified four alternative potential discharge points for the mouth of the Don River: a single channel to the Inner Harbour (referred to as Alternative 2) that corresponded to the configuration of the river shown in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan; a single channel to the Ship Channel (Alternative 3); a primary channel to the Inner Harbour with a spillway to the Ship Channel (Alternative 4W); and a primary channel to the Ship Channel with a spillway to the Inner Harbour (Alternative 4S).

Four other discharge points were considered, but these were deemed unable to meet the project goal and at least one of the seven project objectives. The new river alignment resulting from the Lower Don Lands Innovative Design Competition was refined, integrated into the DMNP EA, and identified as Alternative 4WS (a primary channel

to the Inner Harbour with spillways to the Ship Channel and Inner Harbour) since it was a variation on both Alternatives 4W and 4S.

The five alternatives for the DMNP EA were evaluated in the Individual Environmental Assessment Process by a consultant team led by AECOM (formerly Gartner Lee Limited) which was hired by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to assess how well each alternative met the project goals and objectives. A number of criteria and indicators were developed for each objective to determine which alternatives were most preferred. The results show that Alternative 4WS which is the configuration shown in the proposed Official Plan Amendment was most preferred for the following reasons:

- It contains the highest quality of habitat and provides considerable naturalized area and recreational space;
- It provides greater adaptability for flood protection than single and even double discharge alternatives;
- It best meets the intent of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan;
- It will allow for the greatest reuse of material on site and has the lowest cost for soils management;
- Creating a beautiful, natural and accessible river mouth in an area with such heavy infrastructure usage was a serious limitation of the original proposed river mouth location;
- The original proposed location of the river mouth produced significant technical issues with regards to creating efficient road and transit networks for the new precincts, particularly at the Cherry Street and Lakeshore Boulevard intersection and Keating Channel Crossing; and,
- The original proposed location of the river would have been costlier for the management of contaminated soils and groundwater.

Alternatives that focus on containing the Regulatory Flood simply by increasing grades within the Port Lands to raise future development above the extent of flooding from the Don would simply result in deeper flows upstream within the channel, potentially undermining efforts to eliminate flooding through the West Don Lands, resulting in the overtopping of the elevated railway, and increasing the level of flood risk to the south Riverdale community.

### **Unifying Flood Protection, Naturalization, and Urban Systems: Design Competition**

Waterfront Toronto, in cooperation with TRCA and the City of Toronto, launched an Innovative Design Competition in February 2007 to invite design ideas for the Lower Don Lands. The goal of the Innovative Design Competition was to produce a unifying and inspiring concept for this long-neglected area that could provide common ground for the DMNP EA, precinct level plans and several transportation initiatives such as the Queens Quay Boulevard Extension. Twenty-nine design teams from 13 countries submitted proposals for the competition. Five were short-listed and four ultimately made full submissions. The MVVA team's winning design proposed a unique reorganization of the land uses in order to take the river out of its constricted site between the railway and Lakeshore Boulevard, and releasing it into a more organic path that is consistent with other segments of the river. This would unleash the new river mouth from the constraints of the extensive transportation and utility infrastructure, and limited recreation/habitat enhancement potential that was imposed on the naturalized river mouth given the tentative location shown in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan. The concept proposed retaining the Keating Channel as an industrial heritage artifact that still performed a flood relief role, and creating a new main river channel and a relief spillway through the realigned Don Greenway that would function during normal river levels as well as for huge storm events.

Waterfront Toronto appointed a jury to select the winning design. The jury felt the big, bold moves expressed in the design by the MVVA team impressively integrated the natural and wild elements of the river's mouth and the Lower Don Lands with urban place making, creating a spectacular and compelling vision for the area.

### **The Adopted Secondary Plan versus the Preferred Alternative**

Policies and maps within the Secondary Plan reflect the very preliminary alternatives for naturalization of the Mouth of the Don available in 2003. This includes a new river mouth located north of the Keating Channel, a linear Don Greenway located west of the Don Roadway and south of the Keating Channel, and a linear east-west oriented "Commissioners Park" located south of the Keating Channel and east of the Inner Harbour. The configuration in the adopted Secondary Plan provided naturalization opportunities, but did not attend to the quality of urban spaces or linkages between various recreational systems. The site would have been complex to develop as a natural area due to the amount of infrastructure, as well as soil contamination issues and likely conflicts with private land ownership. In addition, the interface between Commissioners Park and the Don River that was contemplated in the Secondary Plan and the Commissioners Park Master Plan would require changes to the transition grading, changes to the channel edge conditions, and limitations on potential land use within this zone to address the need to provide for flood conveyance



**Figure 28**  
*DMNP EA Spill Zone Map*  
Illustrating the areas that are currently at risk of flooding under the Regulatory Event.

through a significant portion of Commissioners Park, also affecting park master plan implementation.

The alignment illustrated in the adopted Secondary Plan was tested as one of the DMNP EA alternatives, but it was clearly not the preferred alternative for a number of key reasons. Creating a beautiful, natural and accessible river mouth in an area with such heavy infrastructure use was a serious challenge for the original proposed river mouth location. The actual proposed location of the river mouth produced significant technical issues in order to accommodate the engineering requirements for efficient road and transit networks for the new precincts, such as the Cherry Street - Lakeshore Boulevard East intersection and the Keating Channel crossing.

The initial Design Competition concept has been refined considerably with the integration of technical information from the DMNP EA, and with public input obtained at numerous points during the development of the DMNP EA, the Keating Channel Precinct Plan, Lower Don Lands Class Environmental Assessment Master Plan and the Don Greenway studies. The advantages of the new proposed river configuration (which serves as the basis of the proposed Official Plan Amendment) include:

- Allowing the mouth of the Don River to become fully visible from other points along the Toronto Harbour
- Reasserting the presence of the river in the city and allowing it to become a symbol of the Lower Don Lands as a whole.
- Proposing river configuration provides significant new areas for riverine wetlands, fish and wildlife habitats and woodlots.
- Creating a significant new wetland south of the main river channel, while still facilitating a significant open space connection to Lake

Ontario Park by combining the Don Greenway, shown in the adopted Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, with the flood protection spillway.

- Working in tandem with the flood protection underway as part of the Lower Don River West Remedial Flood Protection Project (LDRW) through a recognition that a combination of cut and fill is required to contain the Regulatory Flood within a new valley system.
- Creating a highly desirable setting for new urban development, reinforced by stronger links to the existing and emerging new neighbourhoods north of the tracks, as well as associated development elsewhere along the Don River.

Naturalizing the mouth of the Don River not only creates a richer site ecology, but also has powerful positive impacts on the urban form of the Lower Don Lands, adding kilometres of parkfront and waterfront property and a sustainable “urban estuary” of great richness and complexity on multiple and mutually reinforcing levels: spatial ecological, functional, economic, and social.

Ultimately, with the implementation of the DMNP EA, the flood remedial works will confine the floodplain to the river valley. The Ministers of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Natural Resources are being consulted and will be requested to approve the removal of the SPA designation through a subsequent Official Plan Amendment process.

The Secondary Plan was approved as a vision in advance of detailed flood protection, community and infrastructure studies for the Lower Don Lands. The Secondary Plan fully contemplated the concepts of naturalizing the mouth of the Don River, and developing a comprehensive flood protection solution for the area surrounding the mouth of the Don River. The preferred alternative outlined in the DMNP EA does not conform precisely with the geographic location of the realigned mouth of the Don River tentatively shown in the Secondary Plan. With the studies that are now complete, the proposed changes to the plan allow the full realization of what was intended, providing a much more functional flood protection solution and better opportunities for sustainable naturalization than could have been possible in any alternative built in the location tentatively identified in the 2003 Secondary Plan. This new alignment for the river requires a modification of the network of infrastructure and lands available for revitalization lands shown in the 2003 Secondary Plan.

## Removing Barriers and Making New Connections

The success of any new waterfront community is linked to the quality and quantity of connections to the surrounding city for various modes of travel. This includes pedestrian, cycling, transit and automobile use. Recognizing that the site is a critical link between

city and harbour, the Lower Don Lands plan provides multiple connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods, existing and proposed, and to the harbour on all sides. To better weave this large new neighbourhood into the existing fabric of Toronto, as well as the proposed urban development of the Lower Don Lands, a fully integrated streets and blocks network is proposed. The plan builds upon the collective learning that has occurred in the Toronto waterfront, including recognizing the importance of north-south connections linking into the city fabric, and the importance of the slip heads as public space and points of arrival.

The Lower Don Lands are at the nexus of several major connecting points. Today, the area has fewer transportation and infrastructure connections than other comparably-sized areas of the city. The area needs to be “wired” to the surrounding city neighbourhoods to be successful. The Secondary Plan proposed a number of new and enhanced connections back to the city and through the site. The Lower Don Lands plan, as reflected in the proposed Official Plan Amendment provides all of those proposed connections, and adds one additional north-south connection across the Keating Channel as an extension of Munition Street.

A multi-modal transportation system is required to adequately serve a sustainable mixed-use environment like the Lower Don Lands. Appropriate scaling and dispersal of multiple connections creates a responsible balance with the aim of reducing car dependence, limits parking availability to avoid oversupply, provides efficient public transport, prioritizes pedestrian movement over car movement at points of conflict, improves environmental performance of the public right-of-way, and focuses on the movement of people and goods; not just the movement of traffic.

### Extended Light Rail Transit (LRT) Routes

The introduction of new LRT routes provides a clear armature for transit-oriented development. The anticipated stops are fully integrated with a strategy of retail focus, public squares, and pedestrian routes. The LRT is extended east along Queens Quay from its current planned interim terminus at Parliament Street. It will also enter the site from the north via Cherry Street. At the intersection of Commissioners Street/Villiers Street, one branch will turn east to service the Keating neighbourhoods before continuing over a new bridge across the new river alignment into Pinewood studios. Another branch of the LRT will continue south along Cherry Street terminating north of the Ship Channel. In the future, this southbound branch could be extended further towards Unwin Avenue to service Lake Ontario Park, Cherry Beach and adjacent areas.

### Queens Quay Extension

Building on the Queens Quay reconfiguration proposal for the Central Waterfront, and consistent with the Secondary Plan, Queens Quay would be extended to Cherry Street

as a wide boulevard. Beyond Cherry Street, Queens Quay will continue as a narrow local street primarily to serve the Keating Channel North neighbourhood.

The proposed design preserves the continuity of the Harbour Promenade Boardwalk framing the harbour, reinforcing the role of Queens Quay as a waterfront “Main Street,” and enhancing the experience of the denticulated harbour front of quays and slips by keeping heavier traffic inboard and providing more intimate edges and green spaces on the water.

### Lakeshore Boulevard

Lakeshore Boulevard East, (east of Cherry Street), will be realigned toward the north, bisecting the 480 Lakeshore lands. The implementation of this concept will be contingent on the outcome of the Gardiner-Lakeshore EA study. The realignment of the Lakeshore Boulevard East provides a spine for the development blocks within the 480 Lakeshore lands. The Secondary Plan indicates that Lakeshore Boulevard will be transformed into an urban avenue through the Central Waterfront to accommodate its function as an arterial road. Building upon this vision, the new Lakeshore Boulevard will be generously landscaped, will maximize the opportunities for pedestrian crossings through frequent intersections with streets connecting into the downtown core and will provide ample room for commuter cycling and pedestrians. The 480 Lakeshore lands will accommodate street-related development on both sides of Lakeshore Boulevard East to create an attractive and pedestrian-oriented urban avenue.

### Cherry Street

Cherry Street will be the main access to the heart of the Lower Don Lands. It will be a high quality street environment that is activated and enlivened by a varied mix of uses along its edges. The central roadway is flanked on both sides by sidewalks, on-street cycle lanes, short-stay parking, and tree allées. A layering of different user groups will maximize the life of the street as a boulevard throughout the day and the different seasons. As a central roadway, Cherry Street must provide a comfortable pedestrian environment by being both open to the sun and sheltered from cold prevailing winter winds. A generous sidewalk is provided, with ample space for walking, sitting, and meeting other people. Automobile traffic will be deliberately slowed by generous crossings and changes in surface treatment, while the parallel transit ROW will be designed to provide unimpeded, fast, efficient, and reliable service.

Connection to the north will be improved by widening the existing tunnel under the rail lines. As part of the improved rail crossing, Cherry Street will be lowered and widened, and retail space will be added at the tunnel.

As Cherry Street moves south through the Lower Don Lands, its alignment is moved slightly west. This alternative alignment was tested in the LDL Class EA Master Plan process and is preferred for the following reasons:



Figure 29  
Queens Quay



Figure 30  
Cherry Street Bridge



Figure 31  
Don Valley Trail



Figure 32  
Boating on the Keating Channel

**Figure 33**

*Crossings Plan*

Illustrating the location of portals/underpasses, Don River bridges, Keating Channel bridges, and flood conveyance crossings. The Keating Channel Precinct has been developed to a higher level of detail than the rest of the Lower Don Lands, which will be subject to further analysis and review.

- Cherry Street can have a rational cross section at Lakeshore Boulevard without the need for different directions of travel to “weave” through Gardiner columns.
- It increases the space between the Lakeshore Boulevard East/Cherry Street intersection and the Queens Quay/Cherry Street intersection, providing more efficient traffic operations and logical block widths;
- The increase in spacing also provides increased distance between the intersection and the harbour edge. This allows the essential space required for the LRT to approach the site, turn south, and then rise to cross a higher bridge over the Keating Channel, which is required for flood protection reasons.
- The new alignment avoids trying to shoe-horn transit, cycling, road and pedestrian requirements between the Essroc Silos and the heritage buildings on the east side of Cherry Street. This pinch point at Cherry Street and Villiers Street would have necessitated compromising on the quantity and quality of space provided for one or more modes of travel.
- This alignment minimizes the number of Gardiner columns that need to be modified if the Gardiner stays elevated.
- This also allows an effective staging strategy of keeping the existing Cherry Street bridge in operation until the new bridge is available, ensuring continued access to the Port Lands through this crucial gateway.

#### **Commissioners Street / Villiers Street**

Commissioners Street has been realigned to the north along the existing Villiers Street to provide space for the relocated river. It acts as a central organizing spine for the Lower Don Lands. The new Commissioners/Villiers Street alignment was tested through the Class EA Master Plan. The existing Commissioners Street alignment would have encroached on the upland areas adjacent to the new river, becoming a barrier between the adjacent communities and the recreation spaces that are part of the river park system. The new alignment in the amendment directs traffic and transit to the Keating Channel area to activate that space and provides transit service to neighbourhoods both north and south of the Keating Channel. Finally, the new alignment takes advantage of the existing wide public right of way along Villiers Street and avoids the need for any private property takings.

#### **Basin Street Extension**

The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan proposed the westerly extension of Basin Street over to Cherry Street which provides additional network redundancy in the southern portion of the site. This extension is included in the new plan, but the amendment adjusts the location of the road south and adjacent to the Ship Channel so that it does not bisect the new Don Greenway.

#### **Munition Street**

The traffic analysis to support the Class EA Master Plan demonstrated the benefit of an additional connection within the Lower Don Lands to connect areas south of the Keating Channel to Lakeshore Boulevard. The logical place for this new connection is somewhere between Cherry Street and the Don Roadway, to divide this large expanse and create new connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists as well. Munition Street becomes the best option for a new connection and is given a new alignment, extending the existing Munition Street (that currently only goes from Commissioners Street to Villiers Street) so that it continues north, crosses the Keating Channel, and connects to Lakeshore Boulevard East.

#### **Pedestrian and Bike Trails**

As Toronto’s premier bike trail, the Martin Goodman Trail will travel through the Lower Don Lands, connecting the city to the Port Lands, Lake Ontario, and the Don Valley and Lakeshore East trails beyond. Building on the already existing network of bike and pedestrian trails, new pedestrian trails will approach from the east, along the north side of Lakeshore Boulevard and across the Don River, and from the north along Parliament, Trinity, and Cherry Streets.

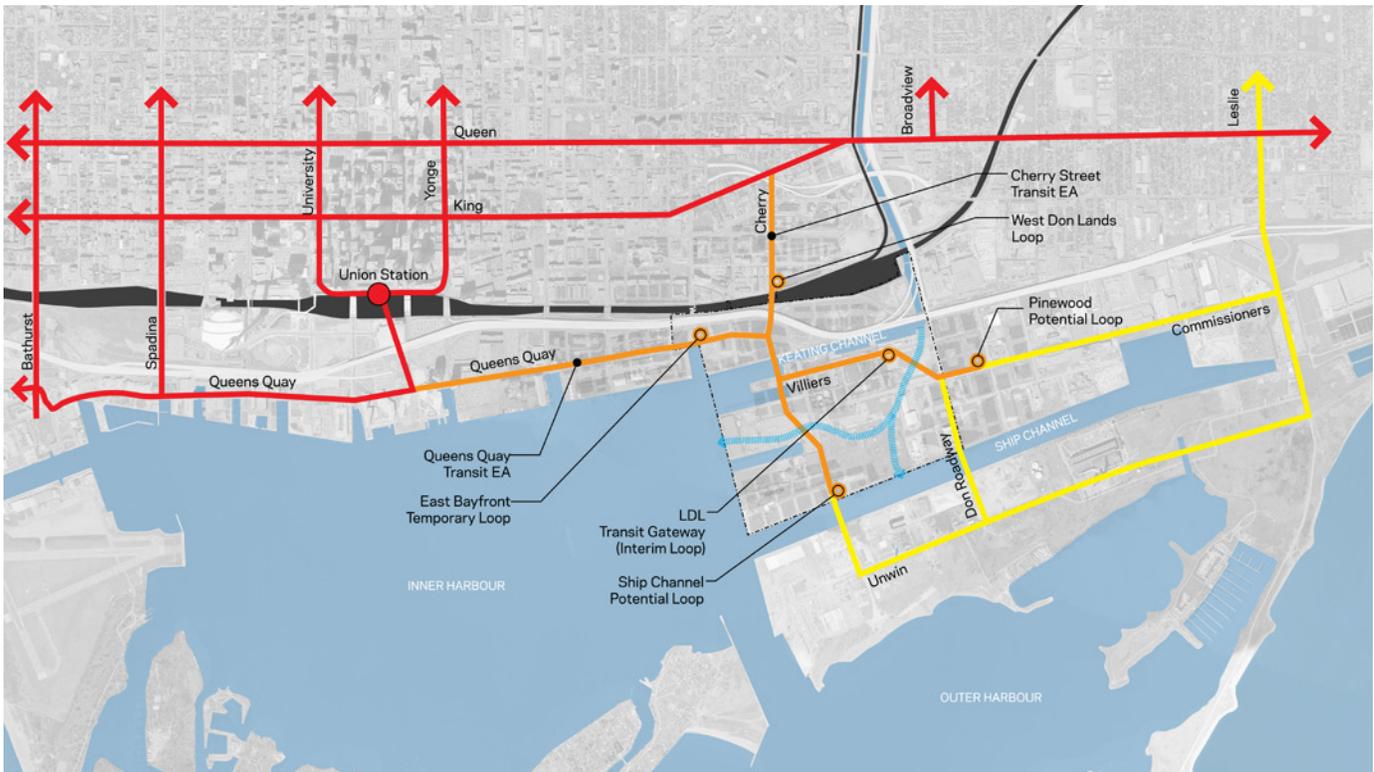
#### **Marine Use**

The City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto have been encouraging the relocation of industries with maritime requirements to the eastern portion of the Ship Channel. This amendment would impact two maritime industries. The configuration of the Don River in the adopted Secondary Plan would likely have impacted at least one of these maritime industries. Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto will continue to work with these maritime industries to determine their relocation to more suitable locations in the Port Lands ensuring land use compatibility with new and emerging waterfront communities.



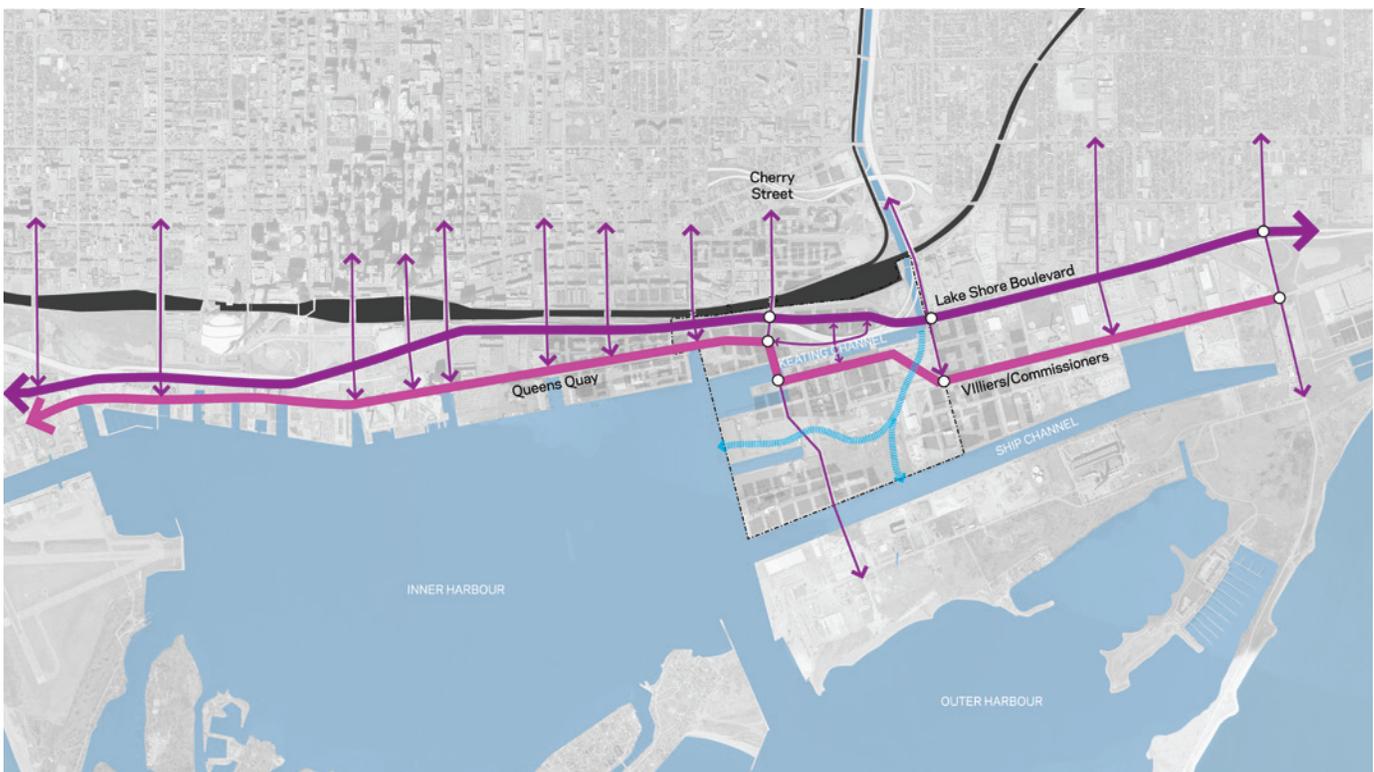
**LEGEND**

- Keating Channel Bridges
- River Bridges
- Portals
- Flood Conveyance Crossings



**OPEN THE PORT LANDS WITH TRANSIT**

- Existing Subway/LRT
- Future LRT
- Potential Future LRT



**BALANCE E-W AND N-S ROADWAY CONNECTIONS**

- ↔ N-S Road Connections
- Minor Waterfront Road (E-W)
- Major Waterfront Road (E-W)

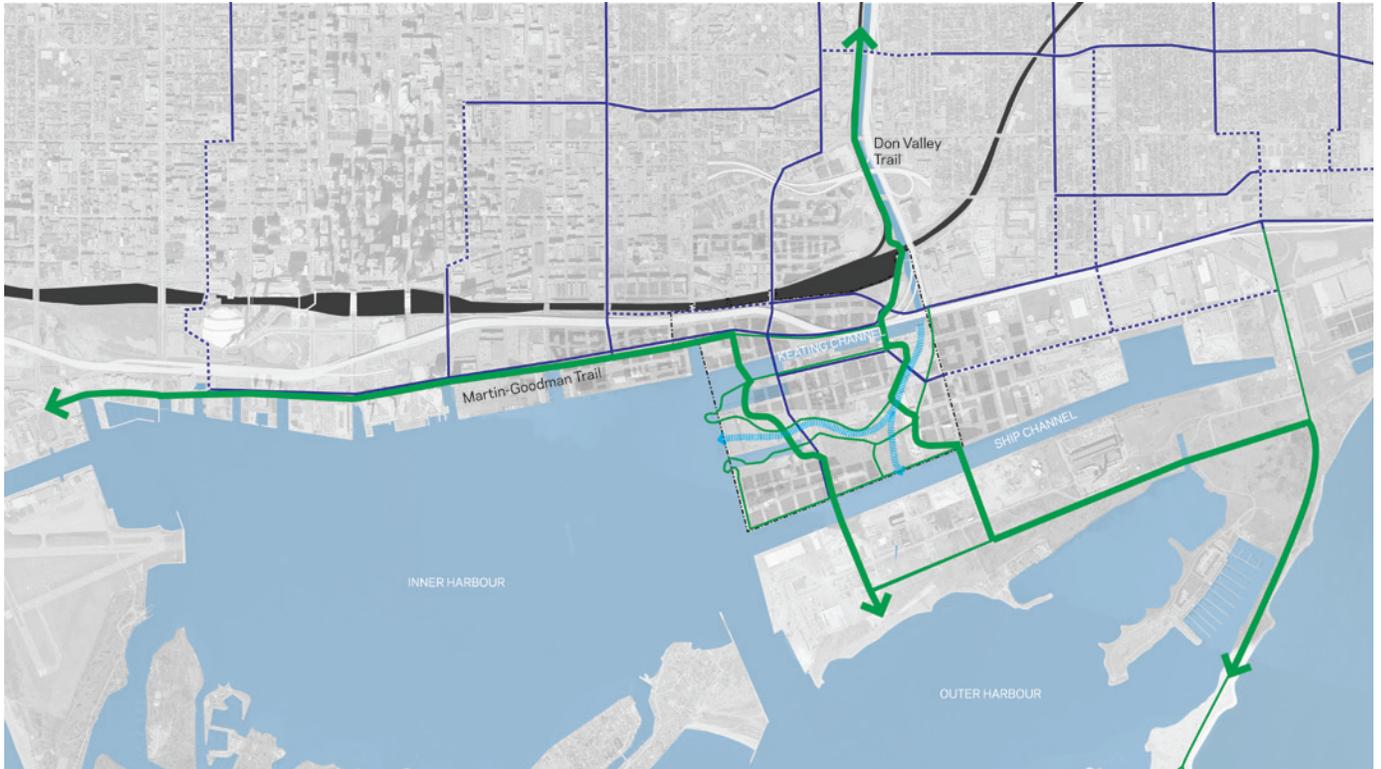
**Figure 34-37**

*Connections*

The 310 acre Lower Don Lands is a keystone site for connecting the downtown to the entire Port Lands—1000 acres of brownfield sites eligible for regeneration. For decades, the Lower Don Lands sat as under-utilized land because of the significant barriers and infrastructural challenges inherent to the site: an elevated rail berm and highway, existing bridge configuration and types, river sediment and debris management facilities, contaminated soils and a high water table relative to grade.

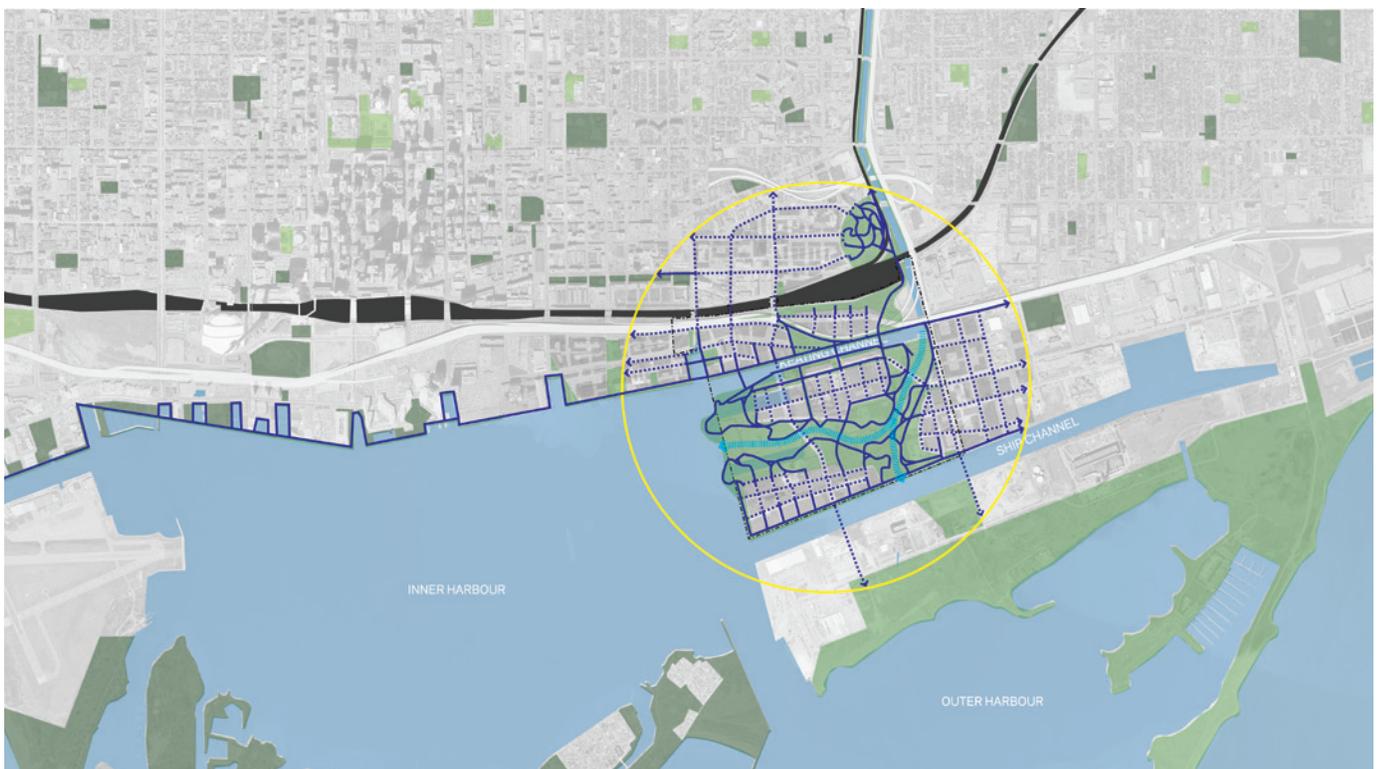
**Conclusion**

The framework planning process and a concurrent Class EA Master Plan process have refined the exact location of road alignments identified in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan. The proposed new configuration of roads, transit, and pedestrian and cycling routes contains all of the elements shown in the adopted Secondary Plan. The road and transit network has been shaped to frame the new proposed Don River alignment and surrounding parks and naturalization, and to ensure that the location of transportation elements do not adversely affect the quality of parks and open spaces. The DMNP EA planning process has set the hydraulic conveyance and sediment management clearance standards for all bridges. The DMNP EA process has also recommended



**CREATE A BIKEWAY NEXUS**

- Major Recreational Trail
- Minor Recreational Route
- Commuter Route
- - - Potential Commuter Route



**ENABLE AN EXTENSIVE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK**

- Dedicated Pedestrian or Multiuse Pathways
- - - Sidewalk Pedestrian Connections

that underground servicing be preinstalled during river valley construction in order to minimize disturbance to natural areas and to reduce the risk of re-exposing soil and/or groundwater contaminants during routine infrastructure maintenance.

The proposed amendment to the Secondary Plan reflects the preferred roadway alignments from the Class EA Master Plan, which includes the realignment of Queens Quay East, Lakeshore Boulevard East, Cherry Street, and Villiers Street/Commissioners Street; the extension of Basin Street to Cherry Street; and the introduction of a new road crossing the Keating Channel from Lakeshore Boulevard East to Villiers Street.

**Figure 38**

*Open Space Plan*

Illustrating the types of open spaces as well as their relationship to major transit and recreational routes. The Keating Channel Precinct has been developed to a higher level of detail than the rest of the Lower Don Lands, which will be subject to further analysis and review.

## Building a Network of Spectacular Parks and Public Spaces

The Lower Don Lands provide an integrated approach to parks and open space, linking new neighbourhoods and the larger network of the Don River and proposed Lake Ontario Park on the Outer Harbour. Although the Secondary Plan's Commissioners Park is no longer proposed, it has been replaced with a significant system of public places that provide for a variety of active play, sports, entertainment, solitude and relaxation within an expanded riverine system.

### Toronto Urban Landscape Typologies

Two dominant types of urban landscapes are typical in Toronto. One type is the traditional bounded urban park that hosts a multitude of opportunities for civic recreation. The urban park is shaped by the city and tends to have a regular edge derived from the urban grid. This type of urban landscape is what the original concept for Commissioners Park may have represented.

The second kind of landscape has an irregular urban edge generated from a natural condition – for instance the island parks, or the parks upstream along the ravines of the Don River and the Humber River, such as Riverdale Park, and the Humber River park system. Given these two distinct typologies, and the City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto's objectives in creating an iconic riverfront neighbourhood, it seems apparent that the new riverfront park, the new mouth of the Don, and the urban development of the Lower Don Lands, should take their initial formal cues from river morphology.

### Scale, Connectivity, and Program

The continuous riverfront and lakefront park system connects the Upper Don Watershed with the Inner Harbour, its islands, and beyond. This connectivity occurs at the infrastructural, the recreational, and the ecological level, tying the park system to other initiatives underway. The river and lakefront park system performs a number of functions simultaneously, providing, in addition to flood protection and habitat restoration and connectivity, a number of key recreational opportunities:

- A large, new naturalized area at the mouth of the Don River that is in scale with the parks of the larger Toronto metropolitan area and the harbour, only a few minutes from the dense downtown area.
- A dramatic promontory park projects into the Inner Harbour. This is a substantial and striking addition to Toronto's waterfront, on par with waterfront parks in other great cities.
- Increased public access to the river and the waterfront.
- Generous and well-equipped areas for recreation.
- Amenities for a series of unique neighbourhood settings.

This landscape will be teeming with activity: active sports fields, informal pick-up games, kite-flying on the promontory overlooking the Inner Harbour, jogging and in-line skating on the trails, bird watching, strolling, and contemplation along the more secluded paths. This diverse program of activities exceeds the open space capabilities of what was contemplated in the approved Secondary Plan, and provides opportunity for a much broader constituency of the City's citizens.

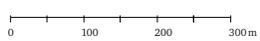
Within each adjacent neighbourhood area, there will be multiple opportunities for social interaction on broad tree-lined sidewalks, in cafés, in the squares, and during games on the play fields that are tucked in throughout the park.

The development of new recreational facilities is contemplated in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan. A Port Lands sports centre is proposed within the Lower Don Lands. A site for this facility near Don Roadway and Commissioners Street is indicated in the Lower Don Lands Framework Plan.

The opportunity for water-based recreation is equally extensive. There will be a combination of active, commercial uses along the hard shores and more contemplative uses along our newly created soft shores. Through the creation of sustainable new shorelines and marine related uses that harmoniously coexist with the natural processes of the Don River and Lake Ontario, the new neighbourhood will become a destination where the water's edge is a safe and enjoyable place to wade, fish, swim and play.

There is a significant commitment to bringing the water's edge to the public realm, enriching both the water-based and land-based users' experience. The proposed riverine water depths facilitate kayaking, canoeing, and other human-powered craft in a protected environment.

The Secondary Plan concentrated virtually all of the parks and open space elements into Commissioners Park on the Keating Channel at the northeast corner of the Lower Don Lands. The proposed amendment to the Secondary Plan would promote a comparably sized park and open space system that flows through and provides amenity to the entire area, in tandem with a host of naturalization and flood protection benefits. The promontory extending into the Inner Harbour will be a spectacular landscape element adding form, definition and prominence. The result is a more attractive and dramatic system of open spaces that will serve a much broader constituency of residents of Toronto.



**LEGEND**

- Esplanade
- Pedestrian Path
- Woodland
- Bicycle Path
- Passive Use Lawn
- Open Space
- Multiuse Recreation (Active)



**Figure 39**

*Don River Parkland*

Illustrating the extensive parkland associated with the new Don River as it flows through the Lower Don Lands and into Lake Ontario



**Figure 40**  
*Existing and Planned Parks and Open Space*

**LEGEND**

- Existing Parks**
- Planned Parks**
- Other Existing Open Space (including plazas and school grounds)**

# Taking the Project to Implementation

The completion of the DMNP EA and the first planning studies for the Lower Don Lands is a significant milestone in moving the Lower Don Lands towards implementation. The numerous interconnected technical issues necessitated a wide-ranging study that took into account flood risk, infrastructure and community development. The process also included extensive community consultation on both the DMNP EA and the various planning studies.



**Figure 41**  
*Keating Channel Precinct and Parliament Slip*

The approval of the Framework Plan, the Official Plan Amendment, the Keating Channel Precinct (west portion) Zoning By-law Amendment, and the Lower Don Lands Class Environmental Assessment Master Plan in tandem with the Province's approval of the DMNP Environmental Assessment will mean that the most crucial approvals for the Lower Don Lands are in place.

### **Funding**

The next step is for Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto and TRCA to work in partnership to secure the funding for the next steps of the Lower Don Lands. With numerous planning and environmental approvals, this project will be an attractive candidate for funding through infrastructure programs and partnerships with the private sector.

The Lower Don Lands is not just about building new infrastructure and communities; however, it is also about removing flood risk and environmental liability for a large area of land along the waterfront.

Public funding will be required to kick-start the project in this regard. The public investment will be realized over time with revenues through waterfront land, property taxes and development charges. There is substantial employment creation through the building of the Lower Don Lands that will yield a variety of income and sales taxes to the Federal and Provincial governments. With evidence of public sector investment, private investment will follow, as has been demonstrated across the Central Waterfront.

### **Securing the Land**

Waterfront Toronto, the City of Toronto, and TRCA would, subject to funding, work to secure the lands required for the river and public infrastructure over the next few years.

A large proportion of the land in the Lower Don Lands is already in public ownership. Other parcels of land may be acquired, preferably through market acquisition.

The City's Economic Development division in cooperation with Waterfront Toronto and the Toronto Port Lands Company will encourage business activities to relocate to suitable locations in other areas of the city. Uses that require dockwall access will be encouraged to relocate to the eastern portion of the Port Lands, where marine-related industrial uses are clustering.

In addition, City Planning will take appropriate steps to ensure that any interim uses of the land do not preclude the development of the river in the long run, and that they will be compatible with the new community concepts in the Framework Plan.

### **Phasing**

The construction of the renaturalized Don River mouth and its associated system of open spaces and parks will have priority. Developing a solution to the flood risk is of paramount importance. Constructing the new river mouth and other portions of the open space system is the comprehensive response to the flood risk. As the ultimate use of the spillway system is open space, it makes sense to build the parks and open space and any infrastructure that must cross the river corridor in tandem with the river construction.

Early construction will include excavation and filling/grading, management of surplus and contaminated soils, lake filling for the promontory parks, and the relocation or reconstruction of municipal infrastructure and utilities. Constructing utilities that would go beneath the river and the new bridges for the road crossing "in the dry" will save time and money, and not interfere with habitat restoration efforts.

To start these early phases of the work, the confirmatory soil and groundwater remediation planning, along with preliminary engineering design and landscape design, should commence as soon as possible in anticipation of planning and environmental approvals. This additional level of design is required to confirm the costing for business planning purposes, and to work out the details of construction phasing. The detailed design work is also the basis for additional environmental permits and City approvals that are required. The completion of this design and permit work will give assurance that once funding for construction is secured, construction can begin promptly.

The target date for the completion of detailed design and the securing of funding is four to five years. Construction of the new river alignment and the new mouth should take approximately five years, provided sufficient funding is in place. Longer-term monitoring and adaptive management will ensure the success of the flood protection works and the new habitat installations.

Pending the confirmatory environmental remediation studies, remediation of some sites could begin as early as 2012. Although a variety of remediation techniques will be used, some techniques are more economical if they proceed slowly over longer periods. Beginning this work early will simplify the construction process later.

With the adoption of the Zoning By-Law Amendment for the Keating Channel Precinct lands west of Cherry Street and the removal of the flood risk with the completion of the West Don Lands Flood Protection Land Form, early development can occur in advance of the completion of the Don River.

As soon as the flood protection works are in place, the development of the balance of the lands in the Lower Don Lands can proceed. Waterfront Toronto, in consultation with the City of Toronto, and TRCA, will identify the appropriate time to commence detailed Precinct Planning and completion of the Class EA process for the infrastructure in the lands immediately north and south of the new river.

The pace of development of the surrounding precincts is dependent on market conditions, demand for residential and employment lands, and the amount of other waterfront lands that are available for redevelopment. This is a vast area, and the ultimate community size of approximately 12,000 housing units and up to 27,870 square metres (300,000 square feet) of employment space is expected to develop in increments over the next 25 years.

# Conclusion

The adoption of the Framework Plan and the proposed Amendment to the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan will facilitate the simultaneous achievement of a number of strategic planning goals in a way which contributes to the creation of a unique new area of the city.

The combined efforts for flood protection and naturalization of the Don River along with the creation of a vital new mixed-use urban setting well served by transit and significant new parkland shown in this Framework Plan will enable the revitalization of the Lower Don Lands to better implement and achieve the established principles of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.

The proposed Official Plan Amendment complements and enhances a number of “Big Moves” required to define the Central Waterfront. The proposed amendment to the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan reflects the detailed technical studies and more fully articulates the principles and policies of the Secondary Plan to establish a clear vision for the Lower Don Lands. The amendment to the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan is fully consistent with the policy framework of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan and the City’s Official Plan. This is a substantial and dramatic initiative for city building in Toronto, adding environmental, social and economic value to the area and the surrounding City.





