



63²⁰⁰⁸

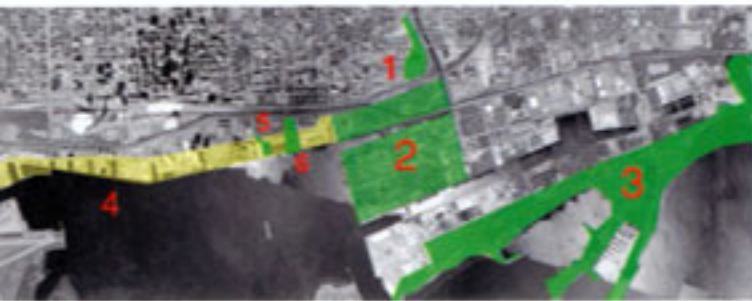
Transformation

BEIJING CITY PLANNING AND OLYMPIC FOREST PARK • AVILES ISLAND OF INNOVATION • SYDNEY HARBOUR LANDSCAPES • TORONTO WATERFRONT • SAN FRANCISCO MISSION BAY • LAS VEGAS URBANISING THE DESERT • SÃO PAULO PARQUE DA JUVENTUDE • BUENOS AIRES NEW PARKS AT THE PORT • CALIFORNIA ORANGE COUNTY PARK • SERIES LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN FINLAND



REDEFINING TORONTO'S WATERFRONT

The following six projects are the first steps in the wholesale redefinition of the city of Toronto's waterfront. Designed as catalysts for urban regeneration, these landscape architecture projects will become the organizing structure for the entire waterfront.

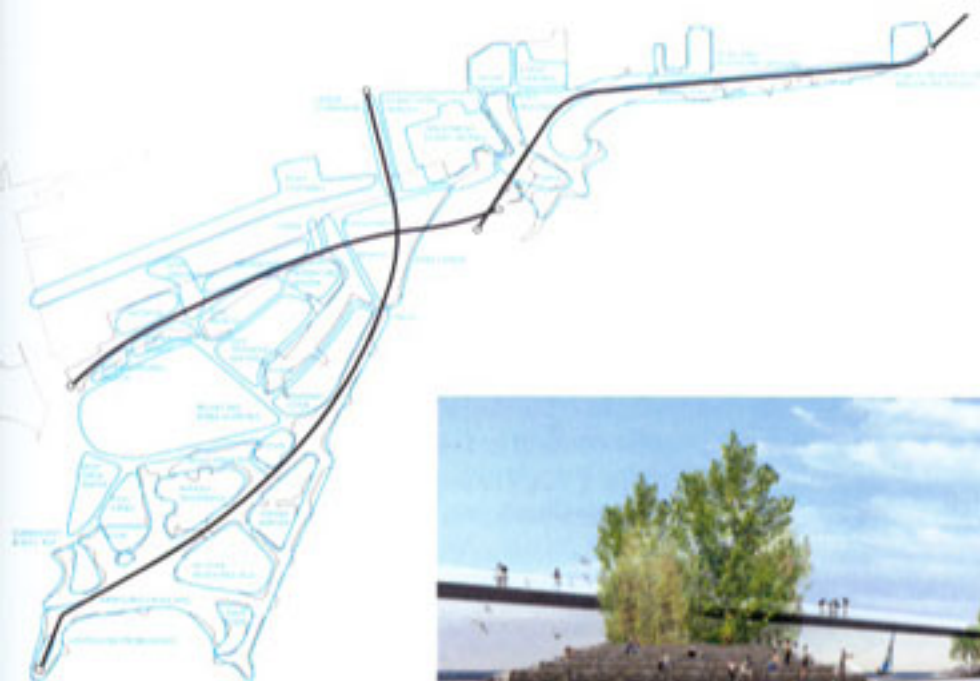


The aerial photograph of downtown Toronto shows the scope of work:
1 Don River Park; 2 Lower Donlands; 3 Lake Ontario Park; 4 Central Waterfront/East Bayfront District; 5 Jarvis Slip Park; 6 Sherbourne Park.

Like many industrial cities throughout the world, the City of Toronto is rediscovering one of its most valuable resources, its water's edge. The Toronto waterfront has continually changed over the last 150 years with large-scale fill and dramatic shoreline expansion to meet increasing demands for land. As a result, the shoreline has been forever altered with the creation of dock walls and vast expanses of concrete and asphalt. As the water's edge pushed further into Lake Ontario, an elevated highway and rail system was constructed along the shore, further distancing the people of Toronto from the water. The downtown city core turned its back on the waterfront allowing it to become a realm defined by industry.

Recently, this relationship has begun to change. The city is reclaiming the water's edge through several initiatives, including recent renovations to the main harbour-front tourist area, and with the completion of the first major waterfront park, the 2.6 hectare HTO urban beach designed by Janet Rosenberg and Associates and Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes. The most notable transformation will be as the result of several large-scale urban landscape projects led by the Waterfront Toronto Corporation. In March 2001, the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and the City of Toronto jointly announced their support for the creation of Waterfront Toronto (formerly Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation) to oversee and lead waterfront renewal. A central component of Waterfront's mandate is a vision of Toronto at the forefront of global cities in the 21st century through the transformation of its waterfront. This will be accomplished through the creation of sustainable new communities that are defined through large parks and public spaces.

Within the next five years, the City of Toronto will witness a rebirth of its abandoned and neglected water's edge. The transformation begins with land acquisition, selective site demolition and large-scale soil remediation and environmental site management. New construction and new projects will initiate a structured redefinition of multiple sites. Changes will include the creation of new ecologies and systems of connectivity; thereby fostering the evolution of social and economic transformation within the new communities. The following six projects are the first steps generated by Waterfront Toronto in the wholesale redefinition of the City of Toronto's waterfront.



Lake Ontario Park: Field Operations propose an organizing framework that will allow for the enhancement of existing sensitive ecologies while addressing issues of soil management. Because the park is mostly edge and water, the structure of the park is framed around three long transects, or primary paths, so called "exterior rooms" and over 400 outposts or outlooks along the water's edge.





Don River Park: The 7.9 hectare park designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates will be the first of a network of parks and public plazas. While ensuring flood protection, the park also provides a large multi-functional green open space.

Lake Ontario Park. With a total land area of 374 hectares, the proposed master plan for Lake Ontario Park outlines what is to be one of the largest urban parks in the world. Located southeast of downtown, the area designated as Lake Ontario Park has seen decades of continued shoreline expansion and augmentation. Its history is one that is common throughout the world and involved the placement of thousands of cubic tonnes of fill, over several decades, with the goal of expanding the port area. The expected increase in the volume of shipping did not occur and the site has evolved into an accidental wilderness and bird habitat. The site is unique, though, in that it is defined mostly by shoreline, approximately 37 kilometers in total length.

The proposed master plan, by Field Operations, puts forward an organizing framework, a system that will allow for the enhancement of existing sensitive ecologies while addressing issues of soil management. The proposal uses various techniques, including the creation of new landscape hill forms, and the construction of a new system of connecting waterbodies and wetlands. The design will negotiate diverse existing and proposed programs including both active and passive recreation, that will accommodate future development planned north of the site. The design connects disparate and isolated parts of the lakeshore edge through the strategic placement of "outposts", the creation of "exterior rooms", and the construction of three primary "transect pathways". With the master plan scheduled for completion in the summer 2008, and phase one construction slated for 2012, Lake Ontario Park will play a major role in the redefinition of Torontonians' relationship to the water's edge.

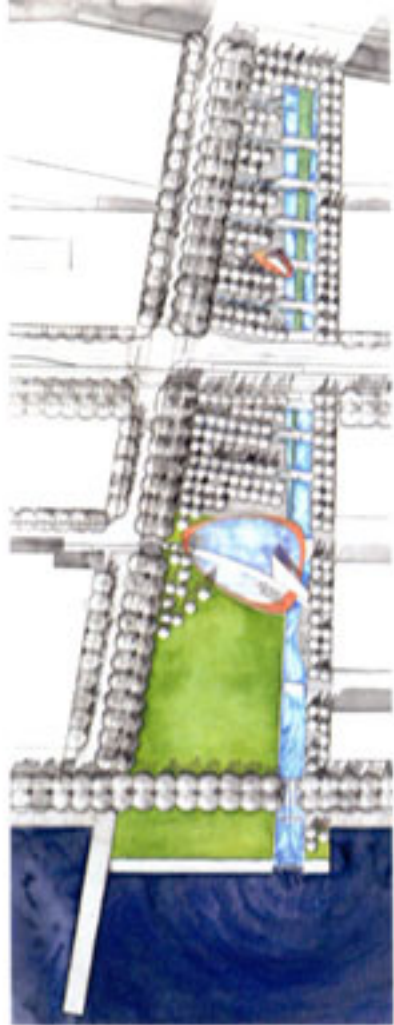
Don River Park, The West Don Lands. Located on top of an engineered landform, the Don River Park designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates will be the cornerstone and defining public open space for the new West Don Lands neighbourhood. The 7.9 hectare park will be the first of a network of parks and public plazas that will structure the new community. The proposed development will be phased with the park construction and partial street layout to be built by 2010, and the planned community incrementally built over the following years. Initially designed to prevent flooding of the downtown area, the landform also

allows for the creation of new views and establishes a new spatial relationship to the downtown. The Don River Park, while ensuring the flood protection function is maintained, also provides a large multi-functional green space that will have a range of year-round recreational opportunities. A system of pathways and trails will integrate the park with the West Don Lands community and adjacent neighbourhoods.

Don River Park will highlight a mix of tree groves, open lawns, diverse plantings, a marshland water feature, and a low land meadow and urban prairie.

Sherbourne Park, East Bayfront. The 1.5 hectare Sherbourne Park is the larger of the two parks in the new East Bayfront precinct that are slated for completion in 2010. Structured upon an abstraction of an iconic Canadian lake's edge landscape, the park, designed by Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg of Vancouver, is based on the simple concept of woods, water (a composition of stormwater collection) and open green, that will operate as the gathering place for city-wide events. The design is inherently





Sherbourne Park: Phillips Farevaag Smallerberg based their design of the 1.5 hectare park on the simple concept of woods, water and open green. The water features use collected stormwater. The open space will serve as the gathering place for city-wide events.

flexible, responding to the need to create both a local neighbourhood park for the future mixed-use development, while also creating a park that will serve as a destination for the greater city of Toronto. Sherbourne Park will be adaptive and able to evolve; it is designed to allow for constant transformation. An iconic pavilion sited beside the open lawn allows the park to be programmed for large civic events. With the incremental completion of the adjacent mixed-use development, which will include restaurants and cafés, the edges of the park will be activated and blurred. The park will become a catalyst for the immediate transformation of the once industrial neighbourhood and will, in turn, be transformed over time through the growth of the new community.

"Sugar Beach", East Bayfront. The Sugar Beach Jarvis Slip Open Space will be located approximately 200 meters west of Sherbourne Park.



Designed by Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes, this is the second urban beach proposed for the downtown area of Toronto. Inspired by the HTO urban beach park, Toronto's Cumberland Park designed by Martha Schwartz and Ken Smith, and by the rich industrial heritage of the adjacent sugar refinery, the design successfully adopts some of the most enduring elements from Toronto's emerging waterfront landscape – beaches, trees and water. Located at the base of Jarvis Street, the proposed design is composed of three organizing spaces: an urban beach with brightly animated umbrellas; a water's edge promenade and thoroughfare; and a multi-functional event plaza space.

With an area of approximately one hectare, the design is the next step in establishing a waterfront beach system, a design language for the re-organization and re-interpretation of the relationship of the people of Toronto to the water's edge.

Sugar Beach: Claude Cormier Architectes Paysagistes propose three organizing spaces: an urban beach with brightly animated umbrellas; a water's edge promenade and thoroughfare; and a multi-functional event plaza space.



Central Waterfront: The 18 meter wide promenade at the water's edge by West 8 and du Toit Allsopp Hillier include a wooden boardwalk, a paved pedestrian walkway, and a continuous double row of large canopy trees.

Central Waterfront and East Bayfront Promenade. The organizing agent connecting the open spaces of the future East Bayfront community and Toronto's central waterfront is a proposed 18 meter wide promenade at the water's edge, including a four kilometer long wooden boardwalk, paved pedestrian walkway, and a continuous double row of large canopy trees. A series of sculpted undulating bridges will extend the wooden promenade across a series of slips, providing continuous public access along the edge of the lake. This project, by West 8 and du Toit Allsopp Hillier, is the first element in redefining the central waterfront's relationship to the water's edge. In addition to the proposed promenade, vehicular traffic along the adjacent roadway is to be shifted to the north side of existing streetcar tracks, creating a thickened pedestrian realm on the south side. This shift in the typical street section will transform the existing roadway into an iconic boulevard, establishing a new identity



Lower Don Lands: The strategic transformation of the mouth of the Don River allows for the presence of the river to be reasserted along the waterfront.



along the central waterfront. The design proposal is minimal in its elements, yet will provide a bold re-structuring system with a new vocabulary for development along the water's edge.

Lower Don Lands. The Lower Don Lands, comprising of approximately 40 hectares of industrial lands and brownfields, will be re-imagined into a sustainable "green" precinct where the city and river meet to create a new dynamic landscape. Taking cues from the river's morphology, the design by Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates with Ken Greenberg, will involve the dramatic re-configuring of the existing river's edge, removal of huge areas of land in the Portland area, and the creation of a naturalized river's mouth and floodplain. This transformation will act as a catalyst, allowing the creation of a new ecological network and habitat extending south and connecting the Don Valley with the future Lake Ontario Park. The new structured landscape will establish new spatial opportunities, fostering the creation of new passive and active recreation, the growth of new communities and neighbourhoods, and the seeds for economic and social development. The design introduces new bridges, roadways and trail systems to provide new access, connections and linkages to existing and future communities. Through the strategic transformation of the mouth of the Don River, the presence of the river will be re-asserted along the water's edge.

The number of Toronto's proposed waterfront projects and the ambitious timeframe for the implementation of the designs is impressive. Equally notable are the high calibre international design firms that will have a role in transforming Toronto's waterfront. What is even more significant, yet somewhat understated, is that the very core of Waterfront Toronto's mandate involves the creation of structured open spaces and connective streetscapes and promenades as a means to structure all proceeding development.

Furthermore, the projects, some concurrent and some consecutive, are envisioned holistically rather than piecemeal or in isolation. There is a unique opportunity for landscape architecture to become the organizing structure for the entire waterfront. This approach will provide a framework and the defining elements that will act as a catalyst for the transformation of Toronto's waterfront.



Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates with Ken Greenberg are using cues from the river's morphology for the design of the Lower Don Lands. This involves the creation of a naturalized river mouth and floodplain.