



Central Waterfront Backgrounder

Waterfront Toronto is transforming Toronto's central waterfront by creating a bold new look and unified design for the 3.5 km area running from Bathurst Street to Parliament Street. Soon Torontonians will be able to walk from one end of the central waterfront to the other on a continuous water's edge promenade; enjoy spectacular new open spaces that feature breathtaking views of the lake and city skyline; and bicycle or jog along a new section of the popular Martin Goodman Trail.

Central Waterfront Innovative Design

Waterfront Toronto held an innovative design competition in 2006 to select the best plan to convert Toronto's central waterfront into a spectacular public waterfront area. While there had been much development in the area over the past few decades, there was no coherent look or feel and it was difficult to distinguish public space from private space along one of the most heavily used parts of the Toronto shoreline. The objective of the design competition was to connect and build on existing public spaces like the Music Garden and to provide a distinct and recognizable identity for all public spaces along Toronto's revitalized waterfront.

Thirty-eight teams from 15 countries responded to a Request for Qualifications and five teams were short-listed and asked to participate in the competition. The design team of West 8 from Rotterdam and Du Toit Allsopp Hillier (DTAH) from Toronto was selected as the winner of the competition.

The West 8 +DTAH central waterfront design features a continuous water's edge public promenade and boardwalk for the length of the central waterfront, new wavedecks at the foot of major waterfront streets, a series of pedestrian bridges that will link the gaps in the waterside boardwalk, and the transformation of Queens Quay into a pedestrian-friendly grand boulevard with generous green space and a new four-metre section of the Martin Goodman Trail.

Design excellence has been intricately woven into all aspects of the central waterfront design – from the bold new innovative look to the selection of materials, furnishings and public art. Waterfront Toronto has received four distinguished urban design awards for

the central waterfront design including two Toronto Urban Design Awards and two Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Awards.

Wavedecks

A key feature of Waterfront Toronto's central waterfront design is a series of wooden wavedecks inspired by the Canadian cottage experience and the shorelines of Ontario's great lakes. These urban docks provide generous public gathering spaces in areas that previously lacked access to the lake.

The transformation of the central waterfront will include four wavedecks located at Spadina Avenue, Rees, Simcoe and Parliament Streets. Two wavedecks are now complete and open to the public. The Spadina WaveDeck opened in September 2008 to much acclaim and has been honoured with several prestigious design awards. The Simcoe and Rees WaveDecks opened in June 2009 and July 2009 respectively.

Water's Edge Promenade and Footbridges

The central waterfront design is defined by the creation of a continuous water's edge public promenade spanning the entire central waterfront. Today it is not possible to walk from one end of the waterfront to the other. Several sections of the waterfront have been cut-off from the public by development and public space is not recognizable from private space. Waterfront Toronto is addressing this and working to ensure that the entire central waterfront will be publicly accessible for all to enjoy. Implementation of the continuous boardwalk began with the completion of the water's edge promenade expansions at York Quay in 2005 and John Quay in 2006.

Revitalization plans also feature five timber pedestrian footbridges to link the gaps in the new water's edge promenade. The footbridges will be located at Spadina Avenue, the Police Basin, Rees, Simcoe and Peter Streets. Designs for these footbridges are dramatic and will provide users with unique new views of the lake and city skyline. Planning is currently underway for the first of the five footbridges.

Queens Quay Boulevard

Queens Quay Boulevard is Toronto's main waterfront street, yet in its current configuration it acts as a barrier rather than a gateway to the waterfront. Waterfront Toronto plans to transform Queens Quay into a grand pedestrian-friendly boulevard by reducing traffic to two lanes and shifting it to the north side of the streetcar tracks. The south side of the streetcar tracks would be transformed into a beautiful tree-lined linear park featuring a generous new pedestrian promenade and continuous Martin Goodman Trail. After a two-year long environmental assessment process, Waterfront Toronto will present the plan for Queens Quay Blvd to City Council for approval this fall. Construction is expected to begin about one year after the completion of the EA. Waterfront Toronto's goal is to finish construction by 2013.

Phasing

Phase one revitalization of the central waterfront focuses on the area between Bathurst and York Streets and includes the new water's edge promenade and boardwalk, bridges, wavedecks and the transformation of Queens Quay Boulevard.

Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is a key feature of the central waterfront design. The design features the creation of new fish habitat with installation of riverstone shoals, tree logs and embankments providing shelter and increased feeding and forging opportunities. Waterfront Toronto considers restoration of marine ecology integral to creating a living ecosystem in Toronto's inner harbour.

Aquatic Habitat Toronto, which Waterfront Toronto is a partner of, has received two Public Sector Quality Fair Awards for the aquatic habitat restoration work currently happening on Toronto's central waterfront. Aquatic Habitat Toronto provides advice on aquatic habitat work and facilitates the approval process for projects.