



## QUEENS QUAY REVITALIZATION BACKGROUNDER

Queens Quay is one of Toronto's most important streets and public spaces – its position as a window onto the city and as a waterfront boulevard makes it a unique asset to the City of Toronto. As one of Toronto's most important tourist destinations, Queens Quay was not fulfilling its role as an economic driver; it lacked the infrastructure and facilities to make it a truly excellent waterfront street and was not a friendly and safe street for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users. It needed to be a more welcoming, more beautiful and more enjoyable space for visitors – whose spending directly benefits the area's economy.

The revitalization of Queens Quay transformed 1.7 kilometres of Toronto's main waterfront street (from Bay St. to Yo-Yo Ma Lane) into a showpiece waterfront boulevard with improved pedestrian, cycling and transit facilities that will provide local residents, area businesses and the many tourists who visit Toronto with access to the water's edge.

The project is a complete rebuild of the street both above and below ground, where new and upgraded municipal storm and sanitary infrastructure, designed to last a generation, is replacing the old services beneath Queens Quay.

### *Features*

The new Queens Quay features a widened granite pedestrian promenade on the south side alongside a new stretch of Martin Goodman Trail flanked by trees, signature benches and light poles. The TTC streetcar right-of-way in the centre and new bi-directional traffic lanes on the north side with dedicated turning lanes and sophisticated signal timing will keep people moving. New north-side sidewalks and landscaping that extend to the edge of storefronts will now stimulate ground floor retail activity and urban vitality.

### *Design Competition*

In 2006, Waterfront Toronto held an international design competition to find the best possible plan to improve public realm in the central part of Toronto's lakeshore and provide continuous access to the lake. Because Queens Quay runs the length of Toronto's waterfront, giving this boulevard a new life was not only an important part of the design competition but it was critical to Waterfront Toronto's overall revitalization goals as well.

The winning design from West 8 + DTAH proposed turning Queens Quay into a signature boulevard with a linear park along the south side of the street, running the length of Queens Quay. This expanded public realm would be made possible by shifting east-west traffic to the north side of the street. Free of vehicular traffic, the south side of Queens Quay was envisioned as a generous new pedestrian promenade with rows of trees and an extended Martin Goodman Trail, filling in a gap in the Lake Ontario Trail.

### *Environmental Assessment*

While Waterfront Toronto was an advocate of the winning design, it fully supported the

required Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process which had to occur before any work on Queens Quay could begin.

Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto began the Queens Quay Revitalization EA in September 2007 to explore how to transform Queens Quay into an economically vibrant and scenic waterfront drive providing transit priority and a completed Martin Goodman Trail through the central part of the waterfront.

The EA resulted in the recommended alternative: two lanes of east-west traffic on the north side with transit in the centre and an extended Martin Goodman Trail and pedestrian promenade on the south side.

#### *EA Approvals*

On October 1, 2009, Toronto City Council approved the recommendation to revitalize Queens Quay outlined in the Environmental Study Report (ESR) prepared by Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto and subsequently approved by the Ontario Ministry of Environment.

#### *Detailed Design*

From 2010 to 2012, following the completion of the EA, the design team undertook two phases of work:

- Schematic design for the entire project area from Yo-Yo Ma Lane to Parliament Street; and
- Detailed design and construction documents from Yo-Yo Ma Lane to Yonge Street

#### *Public Consultation*

Setting a standard for public engagement, Waterfront Toronto undertook robust and significant outreach with local stakeholders at every stage of this project.

As part of the public consultation process for the EA, Waterfront Toronto held dozens of meetings with individual businesses and landowners, as well as six public meetings. For ten days in August 2006, the two eastbound lanes of Queens Quay were closed and replaced with 2km of lawn, 12,000 red geraniums and an archway composed of 600 bicycles. As part of this event, called Quay to the City, Waterfront Toronto conducted two public opinion surveys and proactively sought input from local residents before and after the event. It also provided an opportunity to “test drive” the new design for Queens Quay, generating useful traffic data that informed the final design. Waterfront Toronto earned a Toronto Urban Design Award Honourable Mention for the Quay to the City in 2007.

When planning for construction, Waterfront Toronto worked very closely with the Waterfront Business Improvement Area, local residents and neighbourhood associations to understand the concerns and specific needs of residents and businesses. A key request from stakeholders – particularly from local businesses – was to minimize long-term business impacts by staying on schedule and finishing the project by spring 2015 – in time for the Redpath Toronto Waterfront Festival and the Toronto 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games. For this reason, Waterfront

Toronto made a commitment when planning for construction that we would keep to the 2015 schedule despite the complexities of the project.

Waterfront Toronto's engagement with local residents and businesses continued throughout construction. There were a variety of channels through which local stakeholders could give feedback to Waterfront Toronto, including monthly Construction Liaison Committee meetings attended by representatives of condominiums and businesses in the area. Waterfront Toronto also answered questions via our Queens Quay info telephone line, email address, Facebook and Twitter. We distributed weekly construction updates, monthly project updates and progress reports. Waterfront Toronto also required that our Construction Manager employ a full-time Construction Liaison Officer who was available to local residents and businesses 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer questions and resolve issues.

Over the course of this project, Waterfront Toronto held almost 100 public meetings and stakeholder consultation meetings.

Feedback received through these consultations was incorporated into the final design in multiple ways, including:

- A curbside management plan was created together with stakeholders, dictating the location and bylaws for each of the laybys along Queens Quay
- A model of the street was built to help walk stakeholders through the new intersections.
- Changes to the final design based on feedback include:
  - Raised curbs at the end of TTC platforms, as suggested by Canadian National Institute for the Blind
  - Humps in the vehicular ramps up to the TTC right-of-way as a visual cue to help drivers avoid the pedestrian ramps
  - Wider TTC platform than standard
- Extending the crossing time for north-south crossings after monitoring the length of time it took our stakeholders, on average, to walk that distance

### *Construction*

Major construction began in the fall of 2012 and the project was completed on schedule.

The revitalization of Queens Quay is one of the largest, coordinated street reconstruction projects in Toronto. In addition to work Waterfront Toronto undertook for Toronto Water and the TTC, the project also involved coordinating and working with many partner utility companies who took advantage of the opportunity to upgrade their infrastructure within the Queens Quay Revitalization construction zone. They include several telecommunications providers, Enbridge Gas and Toronto Hydro.

Waterfront Toronto has had to manage the many challenges that come with almost all construction adjacent to Toronto Harbour and older areas of the city: particularly unstable soil; high water levels; outdated and inaccurate as-built drawings (the technical drawings of the locations of services and infrastructure underground); buried obstructions; and failing infrastructure, which requires unforeseen work and has the potential to delay the construction schedule unless measures are taken to manage these issues.

To keep this three-year construction project on-schedule overall, schedules for sub-projects were adjusted. This agility involved close collaboration with the City of Toronto and utilities like Toronto Hydro.

### *Budget*

In 2011, before construction started, Waterfront Toronto estimated the Queens Quay revitalization budget at \$93.2 million. Given our experience with waterfront construction, we anticipated that underground issues might present some challenges. The extent of these challenges could not be fully assessed until we broke ground, exposed the unforeseeable obstacles and issues and understood the impact they would have on the budget.

As construction progressed, and once the nature of the underground conditions was fully assessed in late 2013, Waterfront Toronto management informed the Board of Directors and prepared an increased budget for the project. The Board approved a recommended increase to the project budget in February of 2014 to \$128.9 million, to complete the project on time while addressing numerous unforeseeable challenges.

The increased budget for Queens Quay is funded from Waterfront Toronto's long-term plan. The additional funding is being covered by land sale revenues and any recovered costs. Governments are not being asked for any additional funding.

More information about scheduling and budget is available here:

[http://www.waterfronttoronto.ca/about\\_us/accountability/get\\_the\\_facts#QueensQuayBudget](http://www.waterfronttoronto.ca/about_us/accountability/get_the_facts#QueensQuayBudget)