



## Bringing the River and the City Together!

The Don River is one of Toronto's great assets, and a centerpiece of many major revitalization initiatives on the waterfront. Over the last year a lot of work has been underway to consolidate the different studies and projects happening in the area around the mouth of the Don and in the Port Lands, including naturalization and flood protection, parks, infrastructure, transportation and transit links, and community development. One of the lead projects, currently undergoing an Environmental Assessment (EA) process, is the Don Mouth Naturalization and Flood Protection Project (DMNP), which is being led by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and a consultant team led by Gartner Lee Limited (GLL). The goal of this project is to transform derelict brownfields into a naturalized river mouth, to provide protection for up to 230 hectares of land currently at risk to flooding, and to provide a great public amenity.

In early 2007, Waterfront Toronto undertook a Design Competition for the Lower Don Lands to provide a unifying vision for merging the natural and urban fabric into a green, integrated and sustainable community. This newsletter provides an update on the results of the Lower Don Lands Design Competition, how the resulting vision has been integrated into the EA for the DMNP Project, and what's happened with the EA.



## Come Join Us...

..on Saturday, March 29, 2008 to receive an update on the exciting work underway to naturalize the mouth of the Don, provide flood protection, and integrate this incredible asset into the urban fabric of Toronto. The purpose of this public meeting is to present the evaluation of alternatives and the selection of a preliminary preferred alternative to naturalize the Don Mouth, and to hear the public's feedback on the evaluation. The session will also include an update on how the results of the Lower Don Lands Design Competition completed in 2007 have been integrated with the Environmental Assessment.

**Saturday, March 29, 2008**  
**St. Lawrence Hall**  
**157 King Street East, Toronto**  
**10:00 am – 3:00 pm (presentation at 11:00 am)**

## Community Role Has Been Critical

Naturalizing the Don River mouth started as a vision for many people who were passionate about the River and its contribution towards improving the health of Toronto. At public meetings over the last 10-15 years, community members have consistently highlighted this vision, and it's to their great credit that the DMNP is where it is today. Community insights and advice continue to provide critical guidance to our work, both as part of the EA for the DMNP, and other projects in the Port Lands and across the waterfront. Since 2005 there have been several public meetings, workshops, public presentations and site tours related to both the Don Mouth EA and the Lower Don Lands Design Competition. Welcome to all those who are new to this project, and a big thank-you to those who continue to share your enthusiasm, wisdom, and perspectives with us.

### What's Inside

- [EA Update](#)
- [Design Competition Update](#)
- [Next Steps for the Don River](#)



### ■ ■ Linking the Don Mouth EA and the Lower Don Design Competition

In 2007, Waterfront Toronto launched the Lower Don Lands Design Competition, to augment the EA by building in community design elements early in the process. The Design Competition sought to have a unifying vision developed for the many planning activities in the lower Don area, while having a natural river corridor playing a central role to the urban landscape. The City of Toronto, TRCA and the local community all participated in the process.

In May 2007, the team led by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Inc. (MVVA) was chosen as having produced a vision for the Lower Don Lands best meeting the objectives of the Design Competition. Over the last nine months, Waterfront Toronto and the MVVA team has worked closely with TRCA and GLL's EA team to integrate their vision into the EA process, and to refine the urban fabric of the original alternatives identified through the EA.

Subsequent to the confirmation of the preferred alternative for the DMNP EA, Waterfront Toronto and the MVVA Lower Don Lands team will continue to work closely with TRCA and GLL's EA team through a number of parallel processes that will facilitate the planning for servicing and transportation infrastructure, community development, and park design.

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### Objectives of the Lower Don Lands Design Competition

1. Naturalize the Mouth of the Don River
  2. Create a Continuous Riverfront Park System
  3. Provide for Harmonious New Development
  4. Connect Waterfront Neighbourhoods
  5. Prioritize Public Transit
  6. Develop a Gateway into the Port Lands
  7. Humanize Existing Infrastructure
  8. Enhance the Martin Goodman Trail
  9. Expand Opportunities for Interaction with the Water
  10. Promote Sustainable Development
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## Alternatives Considered in the EA

The Terms of Reference (ToR) guiding the DMNP EA identified four potential discharge points for the mouth of the Don River: a single channel to the Inner Harbour (referred to as Alternative 2), 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 the seven project objectives. The new river alignment resulting from the 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).

Alternatives 2, 3, 4W, 4S and 4WS were then further developed by:

- Determining the extent of the floodplain and other flood protection requirements
- Identifying the location of wetland, aquatic, and open space/terrestrial habitat
- Determining the need to build or relocate bridges and roads
- Identifying the location of sediment, ice, and debris management features and facilities

## DMNP Objectives

1. Naturalize and rehabilitate the mouth of the Don River utilizing an ecosystem based approach
2. Provide flood protection for Spill Zones 1 and 2
3. Maintain the provision for navigation and existing flood protection through sediment, debris and ice management
4. Integrate existing infrastructure functions that could not be reasonably moved or removed
5. Encourage additional compatible recreation, cultural heritage opportunities and public/handicap accessibility
6. 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
7. Design and implement this project in a manner consistent with TWRC's Sustainability Framework and applicable provincial legislation



Alternative  
2



Alternative  
3



Alternative  
4S



Alternative  
4W



Alternative  
4WS



## Evaluating Alternatives

The alternatives for the DMNP EA were evaluated to determine how well each alternative met the seven project objectives. A number of criteria and indicators were developed for each objective to determine which alternatives were most preferred. The table below illustrates how the alternatives “measured up” against each objective to determine an overall preliminary preferred alternative. The results show that Alternative 4WS was most preferred for the following reasons:

- Contains the highest quality of habitat and provides over 50 hectares of naturalized area and recreational space.
- Provides the greater adaptability for flood protection than single and even double discharge alternatives.
- Best meets the intent of the Waterfront Secondary Plan.
- Allows for the greatest reuse of material on site and has the lowest cost for soils management.

## Summary of Alternatives

Objectives	2	3	4W	4S	4WS
Naturalization	Least preferred	Least preferred	Moderately preferred	Moderately preferred	Most preferred
Flood Protection	Least preferred	Least preferred	Most preferred	Most preferred	Most preferred
Operational Management and Constructability	Most preferred	Most preferred	Moderately preferred	Least preferred	Least preferred
Integration with Infrastructure	Most preferred	Most preferred	Least preferred	Least preferred	Moderately preferred
Recreational and Cultural Opportunities	Most preferred	Moderately preferred	Moderately preferred	Least preferred	Most preferred
Coordination with Other Planning Efforts	Moderately preferred	Least preferred	Moderately preferred	Least preferred	Most preferred
Consistency with Waterfront Toronto Sustainability Framework (regarding soils)	Moderately preferred	Most preferred	Least preferred	Most preferred	Most preferred
OVERALL	MODERATELY PREFERRED	MODERATELY PREFERRED	MODERATELY PREFERRED	LEAST PREFERRED	MOST PREFERRED

## What's Next for the Don River Mouth and the Lower Don Lands?

If alternative 4WS is confirmed as the preliminary preferred alternative, the TRCA and Waterfront Toronto teams will commence several confirmatory studies, including more detailed studies of hydrology, sediment management and management of contaminated soils and groundwater and analysis of the impacts to navigation in the Inner Harbour resulting from the proposed promontory.

After the confirmatory studies are complete, including the detailed impact assessment, and consultation with the public (expected in the Fall of 2008) has occurred, a preferred alternative will be identified. Submission of the completed EA is anticipated in early 2009. The earliest date for implementation would be towards the end of 2010. Implementation would need to be phased over a number of years. Further studies, such as soil management plan to be developed by Waterfront Toronto, will also be needed.

For the full evaluation results, please see [http://www.trca.on.ca/don\\_mouth\\_naturalization](http://www.trca.on.ca/don_mouth_naturalization) and/or contact TRCA or Waterfront Toronto

### Comments? Questions? Want more information?

Visit our website at: [http://www.trca.on.ca/don\\_mouth\\_naturalization](http://www.trca.on.ca/don_mouth_naturalization)

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