

BACKGROUNDER: PORT LANDS FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECT

The Port Lands: History & Context



Bounded by the Keating Channel/Don River and Lake Shore Boulevard in the north, the Toronto Inner Harbour in the west, Ashbridges Bay in the east and Lake Ontario and Tommy Thompson Park in the south, the Port Lands is a man-made area created by decades of infilling what was once one of the largest wetlands on Lake Ontario. Beginning in the late-1800s, the area was gradually filled in to create more land for industry and shipping. As the natural mouth of the Don River was filled in, the Keating Channel was created to provide an outlet for the Don River watershed into Lake Ontario and a means to convey stormwater.

Today, the Port Lands area sits within the Don River's floodplain, which is defined as the area anticipated to experience flooding in the event of a significant regional storm or 100-year flood. Providing flood protection for the Port Lands was identified as a top priority by all three orders of government when Waterfront Toronto was first established in 2001.

In the last decade, governments across the country have had to contend with weather events that are occurring with more frequency and severity. In particular, floods are happening more often in urban areas and the financial risk to governments to pay for the damages is also increasing.

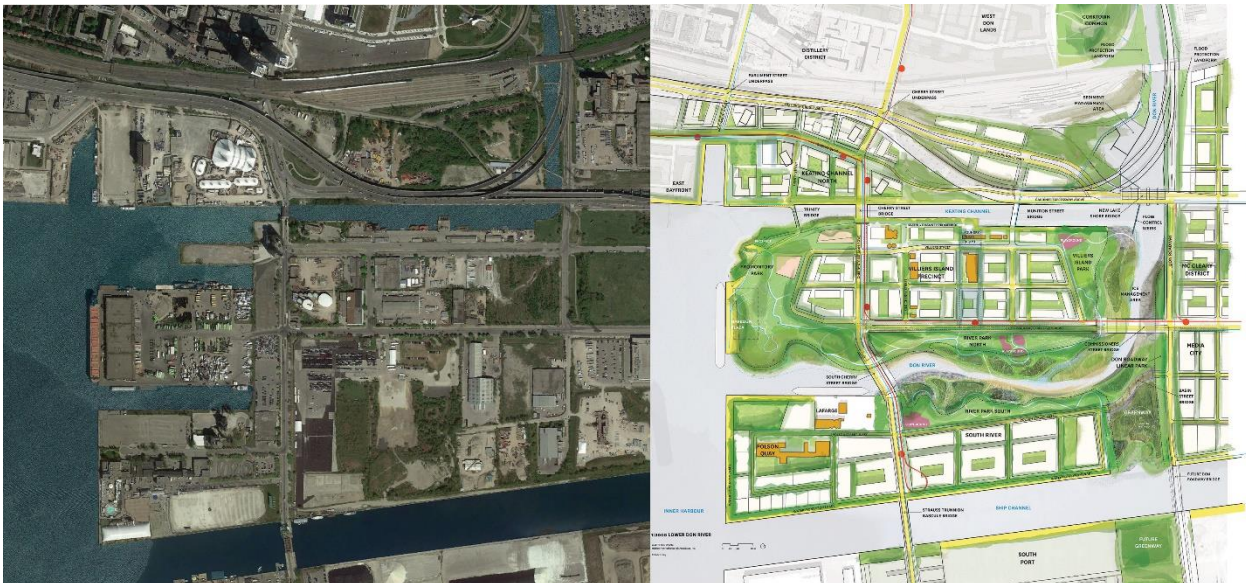
The Need for Flood Protection



Area in blue is current Don River floodplain

Currently, about 290 hectares (715 acres) of southeastern downtown Toronto – including parts of the Port Lands, South Riverdale, Leslieville, and the East Harbour development site – are at risk of flooding from the Don River watershed and cannot be revitalized until they are flood protected. The Port Lands Flood Protection and Enabling Infrastructure Project is a comprehensive solution to flood protection that also addresses the fundamental challenge of transforming the underused and post-industrial Port Lands into a long-term asset that will support Toronto’s continued growth and economic competitiveness.

About Port Lands Flood Protection



Left: Present day aerial view of the Port Lands. Right: Aerial view of the future Port Lands, with the new community of Villiers Island created by the new Don River mouth.

The project will create a new mouth for the Don River in the middle of the Port Lands between the Ship Channel and the Keating Channel. The new river will lay the foundations for a new urban island neighbourhood called Villiers Island, and significant amount of continuous waterfront open space for recreation and leisure. It will also create new habitat for natural species and will re-establish wetlands in the area, which provide social and environmental benefits and naturally moderate the effects of flooding and erosion. Naturalizing the mouth of the Don River provides the necessary flood protection to unlock the development potential of this premier waterfront area.

The project includes the remediation and re-use of approximately 1.5 million cubic metres of contaminated soil, raising the grade across most of the project area by an average of two metres. The project also includes development-enabling infrastructure such as wastewater and storm water systems, water mains, local roads and bridges, and a transit right-of-way.

What does Flood Protection Deliver?

Live

Unlocking the Port Lands for revitalization helps to address the critical need for family and affordable housing. The planned development will feature new sustainable communities next to Toronto's downtown core that are connected by transit and cycling networks.

- An estimated 18,000-25,000 people will live in the Port Lands, after it is fully developed
- 20 per cent of publicly-owned lands in the Port Lands will be reserved for affordable rental housing

A new island community – Villiers Island – will emerge as a result of this project. The aim is to establish Villiers Island as an innovative model for a climate positive community and to demonstrate excellence in sustainable community design. Further, flood protection is vital for the development of the East Harbour commercial development site, which offers significant potential as an employment hub.

Work

- Employment estimates project 25,000 – 30,000 jobs in the fully built-out and revitalized Port Lands
- First Gulf projects more than 50,000 jobs at their planned East Harbour development

Play

- 1,000 metres of new naturalized river
- 29 hectares of naturalized greenspace, including new coastal wetlands (spillway and below the flood line)
- 16 hectares of parkland
- 14 hectares of in-water aquatic habitat
- Five hectares of terrestrial habitat (above the flood line)



Port Lands Flood Protection Due Diligence Report

In October 2016, Waterfront Toronto completed a Due Diligence Report, which provided more information on the project to inform government decision-making on funding. The report provides great certainty on the costs, risks, scheduling and implementation strategy associated with the project.

The 8,000-page report was the result of a comprehensive examination of the project and was based on 15 months of work by over 30 expert consultants and two risk workshops, and was peer-reviewed by two separate organizations. The Due Diligence Report is available on our website:

<http://www.waterfrontoronto.ca/nbe/portal/waterfront/Home/waterfronthome/newsroom/newsarchive/news/2016/october/waterfront+toronto+releases+due+diligence+report+on+port+lands+flood+protection>