

**CHAPTER 8**

**AREAS OF THE PARK**

**PRESERVE AND AMPLIFY THE REMARKABLY UNIQUE SETTINGS**

## 8.0 AREAS OF THE PARK

**Lake Ontario Park has six main areas: the Bar, the Marina Peninsula, the Spit, the Base Lands, the Bay and the Eastern Beaches, each with its own unique attributes, habitats and lake-oriented amenities.**

The specific features and context of each area are outlined in detail in this section. Each area of Lake Ontario Park is defined by the unique geography and character of the existing site. With a very 'light' approach to design in this extraordinary setting, the Master Plan maintains the varied and distinct character and programming opportunities of the six dramatically different park areas.

The definition and programming of these areas are not fixed or final. The design and future character of these areas will continue to develop in response to site opportunities and constraints, public meeting and stakeholder input, agency input, operating and maintenance concerns, and feasibility of implementation.



**areas of the park**  
master plan





# THE BAR, CHERRY BEACH AND NORTH SHORE

AN EXPANSIVE RECREATION AREA AND GREENWAY CONNECTOR  
THAT TIES TOGETHER THE WESTERN END OF THE PARK

## 8.11 THE BAR | KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### AREA DESCRIPTION

With 140 acres of open, underutilized landscape and the distinctive water-oriented activities of Cherry Beach and the North Shore, the Bar is imagined as a transformed remediated landscape, an expansive recreation area and a greenway connector that ties together the western end of park.

Stretching from the Eastern Gap to the Base Lands, the Bar will be one of the most transformed in all of Lake Ontario Park, taking mostly derelict post-industrial lands and creating a new, large-scale remediated landscape. The Bar landscape is envisioned as a diverse mixture of active, passive, and natural areas - defined by beaches and shoreline, and fields and woodlands. This landscape will offer a series of paths and trails, numerous recreational settings and much-improved lakeshore edges and amenities.

With wind, wave and microclimatic conditions that are ideal for small craft sailing, the sheltered shoreline of the Bar has become an extraordinarily unique collection of boating, windsurfing and kite boarding clubs. These users and their water-oriented lifestyles contribute to the defining character of Lake Ontario Park as a site for water recreation and play within a wild urban setting.

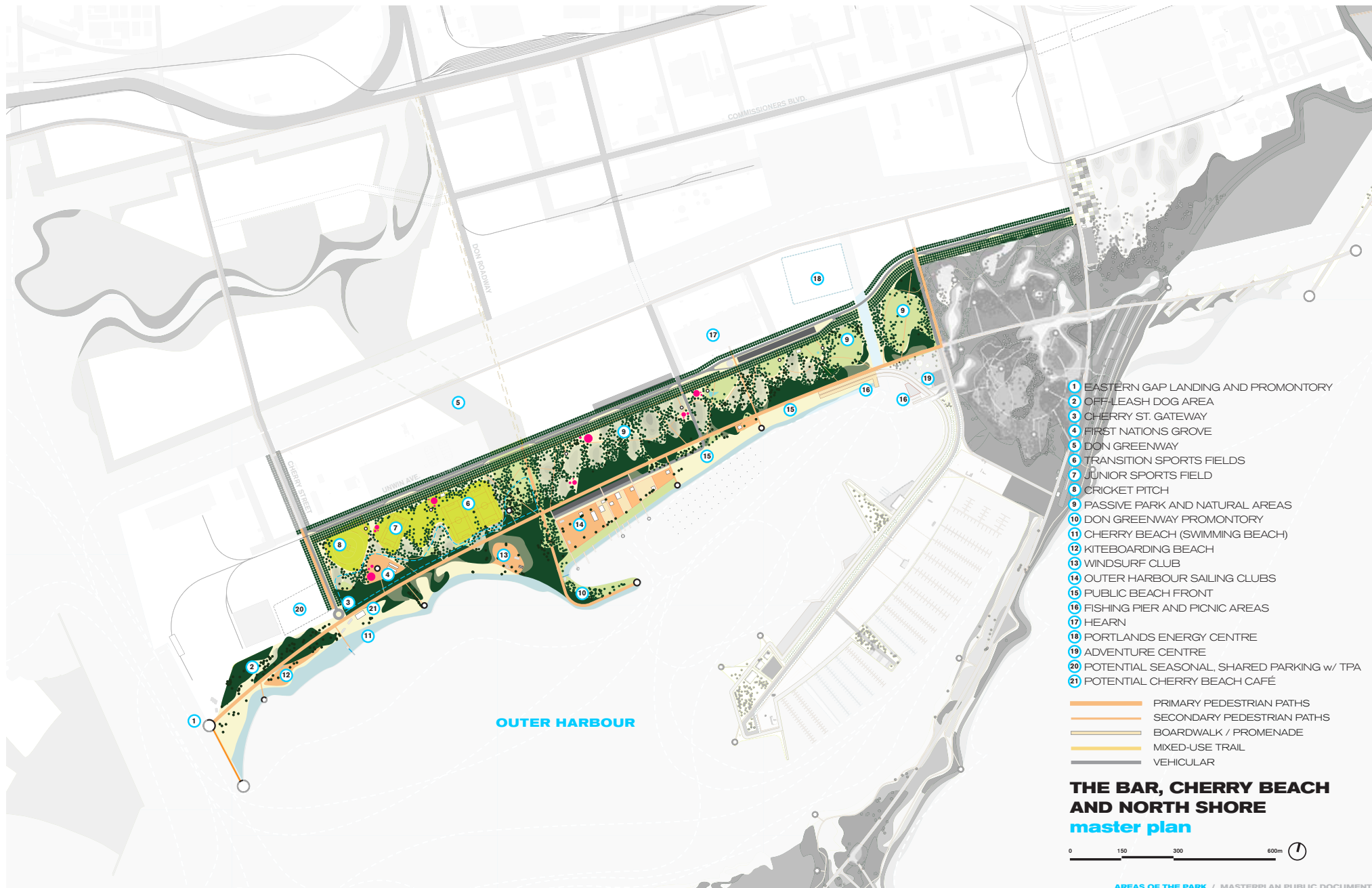
With the exception of two sites for snow dumping and wood chipping, the industrial sites along the Bar have largely been left to develop as a rough, unmanaged thicket landscapes. These historic industrial lands have a legacy of variable environmental conditions that will be addressed in the creation of Lake Ontario Park. The Master Plan's recommendations for the Bar represent a flexible and effective strategy for responding to a range of environmental issues.

### KEY CHALLENGES & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

These challenges, and their respective design responses, will make for the defining character of the Lake Ontario Park project:

- EXISTING AND DISTINCTIVE 'PLACES':** The Bar landscape includes some of the more memorable and cherished existing 'places' within the Lake Ontario Park site: Cherry Beach, the North Shore and Outer Harbour Sailing Clubs. The great qualities and uses of these spaces are worthy of preservation - and offer a defining precedent for the character of the future Bar landscape;
- OPERATIONS OF SAILING CLUBS AND WATERSIDE ACCESS:** Operational continuity (landside and waterside access, parking, security, support facilities and services) of the OHSF is a critical consideration in the implementation of the Bar landscape. Adjustments to the Boat clubs locations have been considered to create the potential for increased public access opportunities at the North Shore (Ref. Appendix, Section 12.5 for additional information). If the relocation negotiations for Hanlan Boat Club do not meet the needs of the club, a place will be found for them on the North Shore.
- SOIL CONDITIONS:** An opportunity exists to address variable environmental conditions with creative environmental management strategies to design a unique landscape setting for recreation, natural areas, and passive parkland.
- NATURAL ASSETS AND ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION:** In addition to the fragile Cottonwood forest and beach/dune plant communities at Cherry Beach, parts of the North Shore have been designated by the City as an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA). In support of creating a 'green connector' between the Don Greenway and the Spit, these sensitive ecological assets will require strategic consideration in detail design.





- 1 EASTERN GAP LANDING AND PROMONTORY
- 2 OFF-LEASH DOG AREA
- 3 CHERRY ST. GATEWAY
- 4 FIRST NATIONS GROVE
- 5 DON GREENWAY
- 6 TRANSITION SPORTS FIELDS
- 7 JUNIOR SPORTS FIELD
- 8 CRICKET PITCH
- 9 PASSIVE PARK AND NATURAL AREAS
- 10 DON GREENWAY PROMONTORY
- 11 CHERRY BEACH (SWIMMING BEACH)
- 12 KITEBOARDING BEACH
- 13 WINDSURF CLUB
- 14 OUTER HARBOUR SAILING CLUBS
- 15 PUBLIC BEACH FRONT
- 16 FISHING PIER AND PICNIC AREAS
- 17 HEARN
- 18 PORTLANDS ENERGY CENTRE
- 19 ADVENTURE CENTRE
- 20 POTENTIAL SEASONAL, SHARED PARKING w/ TPA
- 21 POTENTIAL CHERRY BEACH CAFÉ

- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- BOARDWALK / PROMENADE
- MIXED-USE TRAIL
- VEHICULAR

**THE BAR, CHERRY BEACH  
AND NORTH SHORE**  
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## 8.12 THE BAR | DESIGN OBJECTIVES

### DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Seen as a major focal point in the context of harbour ecology and recreation, the Master Plan has six primary objectives for the future life and landscape of the Bar:

- 1 Build on the historic dynamism of the Fisherman's Island sand bar to promote a landscape that is alive and changing: a durable, resilient framework that is open to new types of wildlife communities and recreational settlements;
- 2 Cultivate the rustic, wooded setting of Cherry Beach through the preservation and restoration of the mature Cottonwood stands and significant beach plant communities;
- 3 Cultivate the distinctive "cottage" setting for water sports and water-oriented recreation at the North Shore;
- 4 Create a flexible distribution of new facilities for multi-purpose recreation, play, education and learning that can adapt to ongoing and future soils investigations, site inventories, environmental assessments and ecologically sensitive areas throughout the Bar;
- 5 Encourage a green 'connection' between the Don Greenway and the Spit by balancing park programs and uses with the preservation (where possible) and creation of natural, passive park areas;
- 6 Develop a flexible circulation framework that connects the disparate 'places' in the Bar while providing a varied range of path treatments for passive, multi- and specialty-purpose use; and
- 7 Promote the design of Unwin Avenue as a park drive and not an arterial road, with the narrowest possible lane widths plus intermittent on-street parallel parking, subject to accommodating the needs of cyclists and other road users;

### NEXT STEPS IN PLANNING THE BAR

The following interim steps are necessary for implementing a new park landscape in The Bar:

- 1 **SOIL AND TREE INVENTORY:** Detailed surveys are needed across the Bar landscape to identify environmental issues, as well as the locations and health of existing canopy species.
- 2 **OHSF LEASE NEGOTIATIONS:** Prior to further detail planning of the North Shore, the OHSF, Design Team, WT and PFR will need to work together to achieve the mutually desired boating and park objectives.
- 3 **UNWIN AVENUE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:** Parallel to the Lake Ontario Park effort, a separate Environmental Assessment will address the planning, design and configuration of Unwin Avenue. The Master Plan proposals for the Bar can adapt to the outcomes of this process.
- 4 **LAND CONSOLIDATION (INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIP) AND RE-ZONING:** Given the complexity of ownership across the Bar site and the need to amend current zoning designations, future planning, design and management of the Bar landscape will require a high degree of interagency partnership.
- 5 **OUTER HARBOUR USER COMMITTEE:** Create an 'Outer Harbour User Committee' to regulate and advise on-the-water use throughout the Outer Harbour, and to ensure that safety and the quality of the recreational boating experience is not compromised with new uses, new users and new landscape conditions. This committee might consist of representatives from all clubs whose members use the waters of the Outer Harbour, as well as the Marina users, the TPA, police, park authorities, and WT.

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A NEW PROMONTORY AND WATERTAXI LANDING AT THE EASTERN GAP



RECREATION FIELDS IN A UNIQUELY 'WILD' SETTING





**VIEW OF THE BAR TRANSECT AND EXTENDED WATERSIDE ACCESS**  
AS A CONTINUOUS, MULTI-PURPOSE TRAIL, THE NEW BAR TRANSECT WILL  
CONNECT THE MANY DIFFERENT LANDSCAPES AND PLACES OF THE BAR

## 8.13 THE BAR | A CREATIVE RESPONSE TO SITE MANAGEMENT

### ADAPTIVE DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SITE MANAGEMENT

The landscape of the Bar is one of expansive recreation and ecology. In response to variable environmental conditions, the primary physical design strategy in the Bar is an adaptive organizational framework of earthwork capping and soil excavation. The result will be a re-formed landscape of shallow hills and hollows - not unlike the historical landscape of Fisherman's Island sand bar. The resulting landscape of undulating hills with meadow and woodland planting will support a variety of natural area types (thicket, mixed woodland, meadow and wetwoods), as well as wind-protected areas for sports, year-round recreation, picnicking, play and exposure to the environment.

This design recommendation is intended to offer an adaptive approach, or outline, for how the Bar landscape might be planned in relation to future soil information and analysis of existing environmental assets. The precise location, size, configuration of the hillforms are not fixed, but rather are adjustable according to future findings on areas identified as environmentally sensitive, areas of mature tree stands and potential 'feature' opportunities such as view corridors, greenway connections and the like.

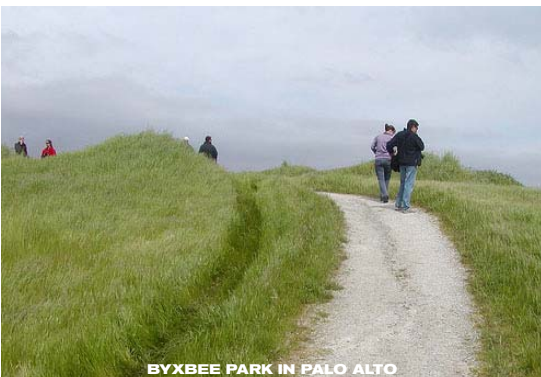
In developing the environmental site management strategy of The Bar, the Master Plan team has researched comparative sites that have been designed and constructed along similar parameters. Crissy Field in San Francisco and Byxbee Park in Palo Alto are two examples of public recreational landscapes constructed with topographic earthwork caps above historic waste sites along

the San Francisco Bay. In both projects, the visible landscape is one of rolling hills covered in native grasses and coastal vegetation - producing distinctive and green public landscapes that are well-suited to the climatic conditions of the sites.

### RESPONSIVENESS TO EXISTING CANOPY

As previously stated, the location and extent and environmental issues will determine the potential for preserving, restoring or regenerating canopy species across the Lake Ontario Park site. Because of the sites industrial past, this challenge is particularly true for the Bar. Future planning and detail design of the Bar will utilize detailed soil and tree inventories to determine those vegetated and canopy areas that are viable for preservation, restoration or enhancement.

As the area of greatest transformation in all of Lake Ontario Park, the Bar is capable of hosting a variety of 'park' and 'natural area' landscapes. Creative environmental management techniques are conceived to produce a mixture of unique landscape 'wilds', or landscapes with the character and feel of a found wilderness: picnic meadows, recreation fields enfolded by native shade canopy, meadows with overlook hillforms, deciduous shrublands and thickets, mixed woodlands and 'wetwoods'. The planting of hundreds of new specimens will certainly be required, but the maturity and presence of existing canopy species will only support the 'wild' character and future plans should build on these existing assets where possible.



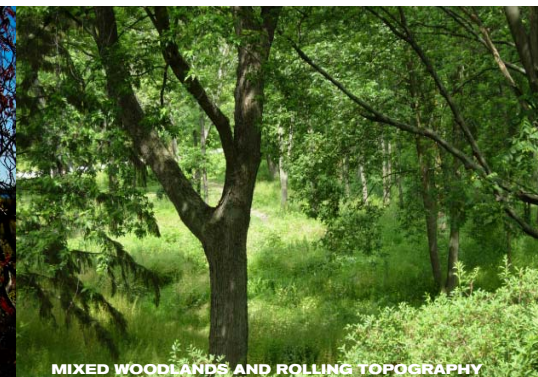
BYXBEE PARK IN PALO ALTO



CRISSY FIELD IN SAN FRANCISCO



THICKET



MIXED WOODLANDS AND ROLLING TOPOGRAPHY

IMPRESSIONS OF THE MIXED VEGETAL CHARACTER OF THE BAR LANDSCAPE ACHIEVED BY PRESERVATION AND REGENERATION



**WINTER RECREATION IN THE BAR**  
THE BAR LANDSCAPE OFFERS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITES  
FOR ACTIVE PLAY IN AN UNUSUAL SETTING THOUGHOUT THE YEAR



# THE MARINA PENINSULA

**PUBLIC WATER ACCESS AND VIEWS ALONG AN ACTIVE RECREATION DECK**

## 8.21 THE MARINA PENINSULA | KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### AREA DESCRIPTION

With dramatic views, an active harbour of diverse water sports and opportunities for increased public access and programming, The Marina Peninsula can be imagined as a major public recreation site.

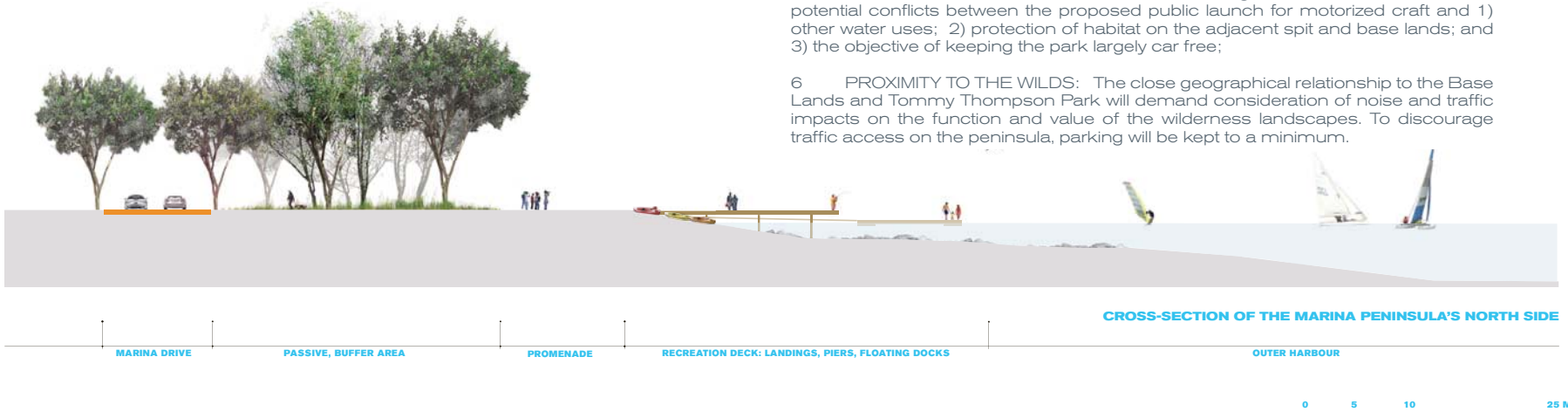
The Marina Peninsula encompasses a 21ha area on a headland that frames the Outer Harbour. With spectacular opportunities for exposure to the Outer Harbour and views back towards the Toronto skyline, the Marina Peninsula is poised to be a distinctive waterfront destination on Lake Ontario.

Currently, the Peninsula is owned and operated by the Toronto Port Authority and presently affords berthing for 656 boats and provides a number of amenities for boaters, including a boat launch, clubhouse, picnic areas and parking. There is documented potential for the Marina to expand further to accommodate 1,200 watercraft. Whether or not the Marina is expanded, there appears to be room on the peninsula for new and signature water-oriented programs and facilities.

### KEY CHALLENGES & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

These challenges, and their respective design responses, will contribute to the creation of new, distinctive and public recreational amenities on the Marina Peninsula:

- PUBLIC ACCESS ALONG SHORELINE:** There is room on the Marina Peninsula for additional programming - particularly on the north side;
- LAND OWNERSHIP & ZONING:** Although portions of the Marina Peninsula are owned by the City, the majority of the site is owned by the Toronto Port Authority (TPA). Consultation and negotiations between these agencies will be critical to the creation of the proposed public amenities on the peninsula;
- RELOCATION OF BOATING & SAILING CLUBS:** In considering potentials for achieving land-use efficiencies as well as the proposed expansion needs of the boat clubs, the Master Plan has made recommendations to relocate two clubs to the Marina Peninsula (TH&SC and Hanlan Boat Club). Reasonable leases and operational continuity (landside and waterside access, parking, security, support facilities and services) of these clubs is a critical consideration in the implementation of The Marina Peninsula landscape. (Ref. Appendix, Section 12.5 for additional information);
- ON-THE-WATER USE:** There is strong Stakeholder concern with respect to potential conflicts between the marina expansion, the relocated public boat launch and the existing on-the-water uses in the Outer Harbour. In the early stages of detail design, the policies governing on-the-water use and the scale of new recreational amenities will require review and consultation between agencies and stakeholders;
- MOTORIZED BOAT-LAUNCH:** There is strong Stakeholder concern about potential conflicts between the proposed public launch for motorized craft and 1) other water uses; 2) protection of habitat on the adjacent spit and base lands; and 3) the objective of keeping the park largely car free;
- PROXIMITY TO THE WILDS:** The close geographical relationship to the Base Lands and Tommy Thompson Park will demand consideration of noise and traffic impacts on the function and value of the wilderness landscapes. To discourage traffic access on the peninsula, parking will be kept to a minimum.



OUTER HARBOUR

- 1 ADVENTURE CENTRE
- 2 HANLAN BOAT CLUB (RELOCATED)
- 3 HARBOUR PROMONTORY
- 4 OUTER HARBOUR PROMENADE & LANDINGS
- 5 OUTER HARBOUR MARINA
- 6 BOAT STAGING AND STORAGE FIELDS
- 7 SHUTTLE BUS TURNAROUND
- 8 PUBLIC BOAT LAUNCH RAMPS (RELOCATED)
- 9 MARINA OR BOAT CLUB EXPANSION
- 10 TORONTO SAILING CLUB (RELOCATED)
- 11 SMALL WATERFRONT CAFÉ
- 12 PUBLIC OUTLOOKS AND FISHING PIERS
- 13 LIMITED ACCESS ROAD
- 14 WETLAND WATERWAY INLET

- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- BOARDWALK / PROMENADE
- MIXED-USE TRAIL
- VEHICULAR

**THE MARINA PENINSULA**  
**master plan**



## 8.22 THE MARINA PENINSULA | DESIGN OBJECTIVES

### DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The Master Plan has six primary objectives for the future life and landscape of the Marina Peninsula:

- 1 Cultivate a soft, buffered relationship to the Base Lands;
- 2 Initiate new water-oriented programming of the peninsula, including a waterfront café;
- 3 Develop a broad range of public access opportunities along the shoreline for boaters, anglers, kite boarders, kayakers and sailors;
- 4 Establish clear connections to the Martin Goodman Trail and the future Unwin Avenue;
- 5 Reduce conflicts between marina expansion and other boating uses; and
- 6 Promote a means for limiting vehicular access on the peninsula to members and visitors of TH&SC, Hanlan Boat Club, the Outer Harbour Marina and the public boat launch, thereby concentrating vehicular traffic along Unwin Avenue.

### NEXT STEPS IN PLANNING THE MARINA PENINSULA

The following interim steps are necessary for implementing a new park landscape in The Marina Peninsula:

- 1 **REZONING:** Portions of the Marina Peninsula will require amendments to the zoning designations to enable the creation of the major amenities proposed in the Master Plan: the relocation of TH&SC and Hanlan Boat Club, the cafe and the Adventure Centre.
- 2 **BOAT CLUB LEASE NEGOTIATIONS:** Prior to further detail planning of the Marina Peninsula, the TH&SC, Hanlan Boat Club, Design Team, WT and TPA will need to work together to achieve the mutually desired boating, park, and TPA objectives. If the negotiations do not meet the needs of the boat clubs, an affordable place will need to be found for them in Lake Ontario Park.
- 3 **MOTORIZED BOAT LAUNCH:** Lake Ontario Park project will support initiatives to study and review alternative locations for Motorized Boat Launch on the Eastern Waterfront. If a suitable alternative location for a public, motorized boat launch facility is not achieved by the time relocation of the existing Ashbridge's Bay facility is required, the terms of use for a Marina Peninsula boat launch will be developed by relevant agencies and stakeholders.
- 4 **OUTER HARBOUR USER COMMITTEE:** Create an 'Outer Harbour User Committee' to regulate and advise on-the-water use throughout the Outer Harbour, and to ensure that safety and the quality of the recreational boating experience is not compromised with new uses, new users and new landscape conditions. This committee might consist of representatives from all clubs whose members use the waters of the Outer Harbour, as well as the Marina users, the TPA, police, park authorities, and WT.

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**VIEW OF THE WATERFRONT PROMENADE**  
THE MARINA PENINSULA OFFERS ACCESS TO A RANGE OF WATERFRONT RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING CANOEING, KAYAKING, SAILING, WATERFRONT PICNICKING, STROLLING, JOGGING, SWIMMING, AND ENJOYING NUMEROUS OUTLOOKS AND VISTAS

## 8.23 THE MARINA PENINSULA | DISTINCTIVE PROGRAM CENTRE

**With spectacular views of the Toronto downtown skyline, deep water and its distinctive recreational context, the Marina Peninsula will become the central venue of water-based activity in Lake Ontario Park.** The protected, deep waters of the Outer Harbour make for exceptional conditions for watersports: windsurfing, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, swimming and fishing. To exploit the great views and recreational potentials, the Master Plan proposes to reinvent the north side of the Marina Peninsula as a public recreation deck: a continuous, waterside promenade from which to participate in or observe the active Outer Harbour.

The Master Plan proposes a number of recreational additions to the landscape of the Marina Peninsula: the Adventure Centre; a small - but signature - summertime café; kayak, canoe and fishing venues; a relocated public boat launch; and new locations for Toronto Hydroplane and Sailing Club and Harlan Boat Club. As stated previously, these new uses and programs will require agency coordination (TPA, PFR and WT), negotiations with the private boating clubs and changes to zoning designations. Strong leadership will be required within the agencies to ensure an appropriate mix and scale of amenities, a reduction in on-the-water-conflicts and Stakeholder support.

Through strategic and diplomatic responses to these challenges, the Marina Peninsula can become an important centre for Lake Ontario Park: an exciting waterside venue to spend an active or leisurely afternoon on the lakefront. The centerpiece of activity and information on Lake Ontario Park will be the Adventure Centre, located at the entrance to the Marina Peninsula, just south of the Bar Transect and west of the Base Lands.

### THE ADVENTURE CENTRE

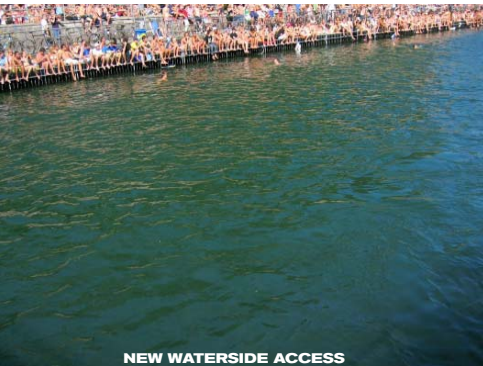
The 'Adventure Centre' is envisioned as a centrally located, signature recreation centre for education, orientation, and waterside play in Lake Ontario Park. As stated in the Site Amenities section, the following programs are recommended for the Adventure Centre:

- Multi-purpose community rooms and meeting spaces;
- Programming focus for PFR daycamps (especially eco-camps);
- Innovative recreational programming: incorporate education with active play;
- Orientation point for guided/self-guided exploration of the park;
- Referral to ABYC, BBCC, BLC and OHSF for sailing, rowing, windsurfing instruction and other programs offered by the clubs in Lake Ontario Park;
- Bike rentals;
- Canoe/kayak rentals and instruction, with a focus on boating safety and etiquette;
- Canoe/kayak public storage and launching; and
- Fishing piers and equipment rentals.

### ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES

- Contemporary design with rugged, rustic materials;
- Small relative to other PFR community/recreation centres: 3,000 - 5,000sf;
- Fireplace as interior focal point (encouraging winter/shoulder season use);
- Sustainable design (basic City requirements laid out in Toronto Green Development Standard);
- Kitchen to support community events;
- Floating/removable docks for canoe and kayak launching (no concrete ramps);
- Dockage for research vessels to support aquatic-oriented interpretive services; and
- Fishing pier nearby at the Circulating Channel to support fishing experiences.

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NEW WATERSIDE ACCESS



FISHING PIERS



ECO-OUTPOSTS



KAYAK LAUNCHES & RENTALS



**FISHING AT THE WATERFRONT ADVENTURE CENTRE**  
THE DEEP OUTER HARBOUR WATER AND SPECTACULAR BACKDROP OF THE TORONTO  
SKYLINE COMBINE TO CREATE AN EXTRAORDINARY SETTING FOR FISHING



# THE SPIT

WILD SUCCESSIONAL LANDSCAPES AND HABITATS

## 8.31 THE SPIT | KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### AREA DESCRIPTION

With its focus on ecological diversity and succession, as well as its radical sense of remoteness and rugged experience, The Spit is a landscape of remarkable wildness.

The Spit, or Tommy Thompson Park, is the largest component of Lake Ontario Park. The site is highly dynamic: evolving from lakefill to a diversely rough and wild landscape. Tommy Thompson Park is a work in progress, with lakefilling, dredge dewatering and grading activities ongoing for up to 60 years. Continued work is currently taking place on the southern half of the site - resulting in a drastically different stages of ecological development on either side of the Spit.

Along its length, Tommy Thompson Park affords spectacular views back to the City and out to the horizon over Lake Ontario. The site, however, is currently accessible to the public only on weekends and holidays. Private vehicles are not permitted within Tommy Thompson Park with the exception of members of the APSC, whose vehicles are permitted within Tommy Thompson Park except during current Park operating hours of 9 – 6 on weekends and holidays. A shuttle bus service is provided to take visitors out on the 5-km long spit.

Tommy Thompson Park has been identified as a globally Important Bird Area and is an important stopover on the Atlantic Flyway. It is also a major stopover for migrating butterflies. It hosts a range of habitats and settings for animal life.

The Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan and subsequent addenda and implementation plans guide a long-term program of enhancement of the trail network, public facilities, and landscapes of Tommy Thompson. TRCA is actively

working to restore and diversify areas of Tommy Thompson Park where filling and grading are complete.

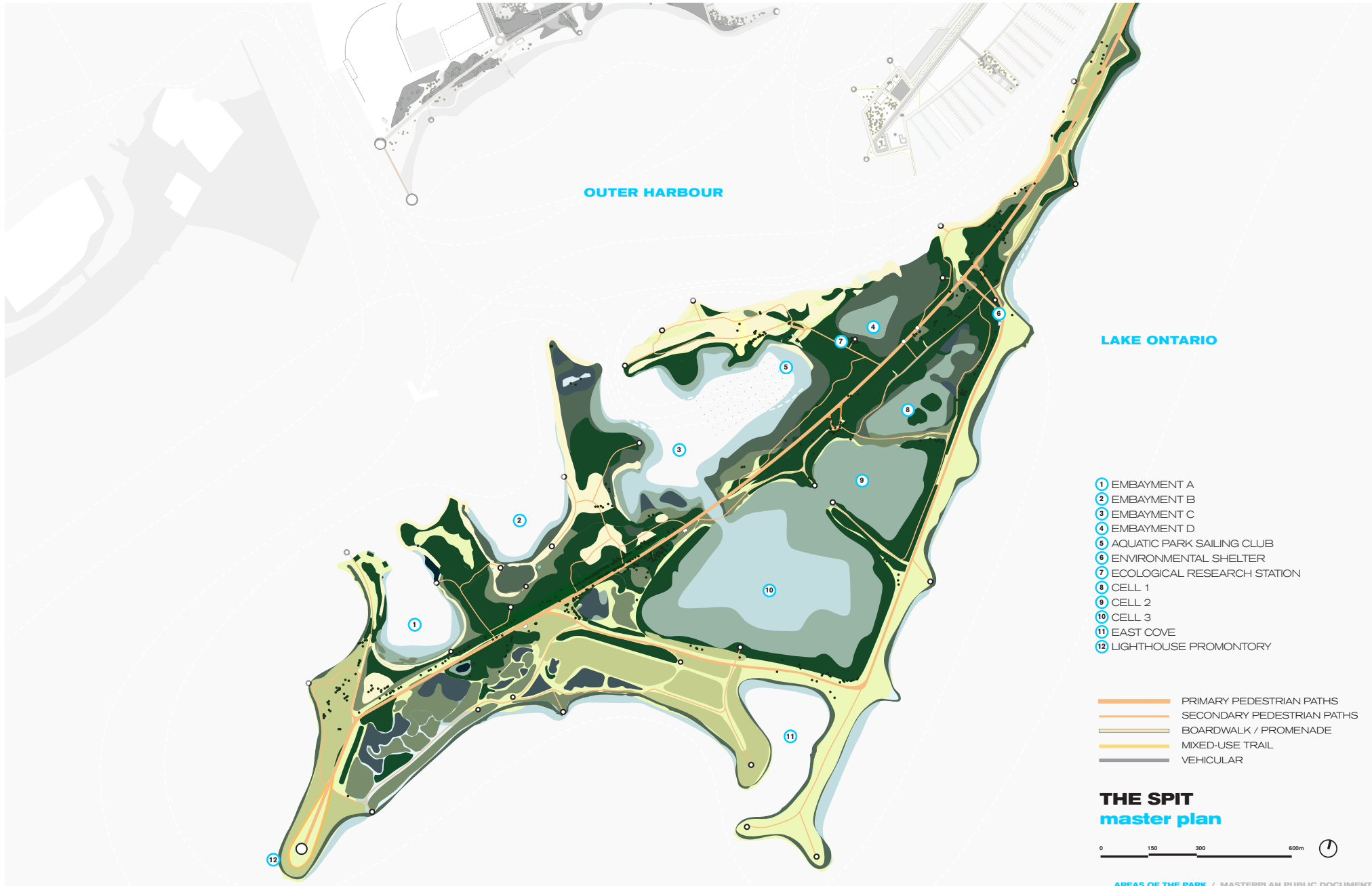
### KEY CHALLENGES AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

These challenges, and their respective design responses, will ensure the cultivation of the extraordinary refuge landscapes of Tommy Thompson Park:

- 1 Relationship of Tommy Thompson Park to the Base Lands;
- 2 Conflicts and coordination of habitat, boating and fishing uses;
- 3 Degree to which human access and amenities are provided; and
- 4 Integration of Tommy Thompson Park trails with Martin Goodman Trail.



0 5 10 25 METERS



OUTER HARBOUR

LAKE ONTARIO

- 1 EMBAYMENT A
- 2 EMBAYMENT B
- 3 EMBAYMENT C
- 4 EMBAYMENT D
- 5 AQUATIC PARK SAILING CLUB
- 6 ENVIRONMENTAL SHELTER
- 7 ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH STATION
- 8 CELL 1
- 9 CELL 2
- 10 CELL 3
- 11 EAST COVE
- 12 LIGHTHOUSE PROMONTORY

- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- BOARDWALK / PROMENADE
- MIXED-USE TRAIL
- VEHICULAR

**THE SPIT**  
master plan



## 8.32 THE SPIT | DESIGN OBJECTIVES

### DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The four primary goals of the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan (prepared by TRCA) are:

- 1 Preserve significant species;
- 2 Protect environmentally significant areas;
- 3 Enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat; and
- 4 Enhance public recreational opportunities.

Although the Lake Ontario Park Master Plan fully promotes the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan as the guiding tool for this unique landscape, the Lake Ontario Park Master Plan offers four primary objectives for the Spit:

- 1 Maintain a continuous, unobstructed connection to the Base Lands;
- 2 Develop a delicate, ecologically sensitive approach to public access and exposure to the unique habitat environments;
- 3 Promote coordination between habitat, boating, and fishing uses; and
- 4 Establish clear connections to the Martin Goodman Trail.

### NEXT STEPS IN PLANNING THE SPIT

The following is a list of current and future steps for continued implementation of the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan:

- 1 TOMMY THOMPSON PARK SITE DESIGN PROJECT
- 2 STRUCTURAL BRIDGE ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN STUDY
- 3 SHORELINE PROTECTION PLAN
- 4 TRAILS IMPLEMENTATION
- 5 TERRESTRIAL NATURAL AREA ENHANCEMENT PLAN
- 6 AQUATIC NATURAL AREA ENHANCEMENT PLAN
- 7 CELL 1 CAPPING SYNOPSIS
- 8 CELL 2 DETAILED DESIGN DRAWINGS







**VIEW OF THE WILDERNESS REFUGE IN TOMMY THOMPSON PARK**  
THE "URBAN WILDERNESS" FOUND IN TTP IS AN EXTRAORDINARY ASSET FOR LAKE ONTARIO PARK, AND THE LARGER TORONTO REGION; OFFERING POTENTIAL FOR HABITAT REJUVINATION AND ENHANCEMENT WHILE PROVIDING UNIQUE OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITES



# THE BASE LANDS

**ACCESSIBLE 'URBAN WILDERNESS' CENTERED AROUND  
DIVERSE WET MEADOWS AND WET WOODS**

## 8.41 THE BASE LANDS | KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### AREA DESCRIPTION

The Base Lands is the most important ecological component of Lake Ontario Park because of its location and size. While most of Lake Ontario Park is long and narrow — all “edge” in ecological terms — the Base Lands is one of the widest and wildest zones. Located at the point which the Spit intersects the landscape of the Bar, the Base Lands represents an essential ecological connector: a broad gateway for terrestrial wildlife migrating to and from the remote habitats of the Spit.

The Base Lands were historically open water. The area was a dump site for fly ash from the Hearn Generating Station and the vast extent of the Base Lands are have a legacy of variable soil conditions and environmental issues. Notwithstanding this legacy, the site has evolved to support a diversity of habitats for wildlife, most notably songbirds.

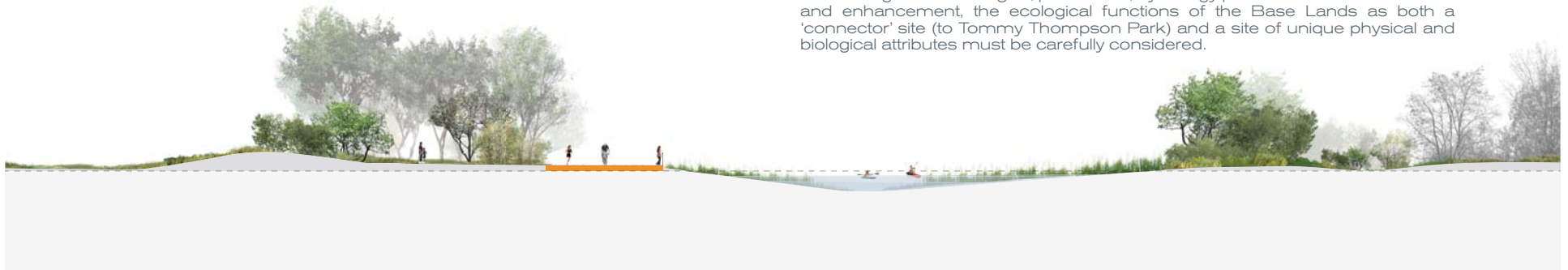
With its central location, vast scale and legacy of wild colonization, the Base Lands offer a unique opportunity for a truly immersive “urban wilderness”.

As with the recommendations for the Bar, the Master Plan’s proposals for the Base Lands are preliminary. Ongoing and future investigations on soil and water quality will determine the feasibility and precise location, scale and mix of the habitats that might be suitable to this critical ecological site.

### KEY CHALLENGES & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

These challenges, and their respective design responses, will help to ensure the Base Lands’ continued environmental importance:

- 1 SOIL CONDITIONS:** There is a critical need for soil characterization, risk assessment and targeted environmental site management of the Base Lands. Strategic responses to environmental issues will help to ensure a continued ecological legacy;
- 2 INCREASE IN PUBLIC PRESENCE:** As the Port Lands transform into a new urban community and as Lake Ontario Park is realized as a signature park in Toronto, there will be a strong public interest in experiencing the Base Lands. To support this increased presence and interest while protecting ecological integrity, it will be critical to provide designated pathways for public interpretation. In provincial and national parks, the most recognized response to providing a means for taking people through nature with minimum impact to ecological integrity is the creation and use of boardwalks;
- 3 STAKEHOLDER INVESTMENT:** There is strong Stakeholder will to maintain the Base Lands as an ‘urban wilderness’. Future analysis, planning and design will need to include continued consultation with the invested Stakeholder parties; and
- 4 HABITAT FRAGMENTATION:** Current hydrology in the Base Lands is interrupted by piles of rubble and a fractured topography resulting from the haphazard placement of unwanted fill. Because of this, conditions for wetland establishment in the Base Lands are limited. In developing future environmental site management strategies, public trails, hydrology plans and habitat restoration and enhancement, the ecological functions of the Base Lands as both a ‘connector’ site (to Tommy Thompson Park) and a site of unique physical and biological attributes must be carefully considered.



UPLAND FOREST

TRANSECT

WETLAND WATERWAY

RIDGE AND THROUGH FORREST

0 5 10 25 METERS



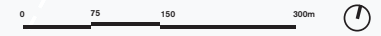
OUTER HARBOUR

LAKE ONTARIO

- ① WETLAND WATERWAY PORTAGE
- ② WETLAND WATERWAY
- ③ PRIMARY TRAIL (BOARDWALK)
- ④ FOOT PATHS
- ⑤ RIDGE & TROUGH FOREST
- ⑥ MARSH & OPEN WATER
- ⑦ UPLAND FOREST
- ⑧ SWAMP FOREST
- ⑨ TOMMY THOMPSON PARK GATEWAY
- ⑩ WOODLAND BUFFER
- ⑪ ADVENTURE CENTRE

- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS

**THE BASE LANDS**  
**master plan**



## 8.42 THE BASE LANDS | DESIGN OBJECTIVES

### DESIGN OBJECTIVES

Although many of the recommendations are contingent on the results of future site investigations and stakeholder review, the Lake Ontario Park Master Plan outlines ten primary objectives for the Base Lands:

- 1 Preserve significant species;
- 2 Protect environmentally significant areas;
- 3 Enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat;
- 4 Preserve and enhance the existing character of an 'urban wilderness';
- 5 Develop a creative, time-based approach to environmental site management that respects the natural values and function of the Base Lands;
- 6 Establish a network of paths, boardwalks and transects that controls and organizes access to the Base Lands;
- 7 Promote the slow, delicate introduction of public access paths, seasonal trails and the enhancement of habitats by phasing these initiatives over time and in coordination with ecological and stakeholder review;
- 8 Expand the Base Lands interior footprint through the realignment of Unwin Avenue (feasibility tbd);
- 9 Establish connectivity to the Don Greenway and Ravines via the passive landscapes of The Bar; and

- 10 Study a means for enabling canoe and kayak access between Ashbridge's Bay and the Outer Harbour through the creation of a discontinuous "wetland waterway" that might also be used for nature viewing and habitat enhancement.

### NEXT STEPS IN PLANNING THE BASE LANDS

The following interim steps are necessary for future decision-making in the Base Lands:

- 1 **SOIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY:** Detailed surveys are needed across the Base Lands to identify the extent and make-up of the soil, as well as the location and health of existing canopy species.
- 2 **UNWIN AVENUE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:** Parallel to the Lake Ontario Park effort, a separate Environmental Assessment will address the planning, design and configuration of Unwin Avenue. The Master Plan currently recommends increasing the Base Land footprint to the north with a realigned Unwin Avenue.
- 3 **STAKEHOLDER REVIEW:** Continued consultation and review of environmental data and planning proposals with relevant stakeholders are necessary for the success of new master plan proposals for the Base Lands.





**AN URBAN WILDERNESS**  
IN PROMOTING THE SLOW, DELICATE INTRODUCTION OF TRAILS  
AND HABITAT ENHANCEMENTS, THE MASTER PLAN HOPES TO CULTIVATE  
THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF 'WILDERNESS' IN THE BASE LANDS

## 8.43 THE BASE LANDS | A CREATIVE RESPONSE TO SITE MANAGEMENT

### ADAPTIVE DESIGN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SITE MANAGEMENT

The Base Lands' legacy of lakefill and subsequent ecological succession, combined with the strong public will to preserve its 'wilderness' character, creates a challenging conflict with regard to the management of its soils. Although the specific make-up and geographical extent of various soil conditions in the Base Lands needs to be identified, it is clear that extensive environmental site management will be necessary - creating a question as to the level of human intervention in managing and cultivating wild nature and high-value ecologies in the Base Lands.

In developing a flexible plan for the Base Lands site, the Master Plan team has coordinated with TRCA and lead ecologists in the Great Lakes Region. Through ecological research and consultation, the Master Plan team understands that the habitat value of the Base Lands would be greatly enhanced by the creation of conditions in which large, well-configured wetlands, wet meadows and wet woods can flourish. This notion is consistent with TRCA recommendations that the most ecologically appropriate habitat types for the Base Lands are wet meadow, woodland thicket and swamp. The rationale for targeting these types of habitats is based upon the existing physiographic and hydrological conditions, as well as the potential high-value ecological function of the Base Lands.

One of the Master Plan's proposals for environmental site management in the Base Lands is the excavation of targeted soil conditions. The excavation sites would be re-created as a series of lowland hollows, or wetland waterbodies - stretching approximately from Ashbridge's Bay to the Outer Harbour - that will provide aquatic habitat as well as an educational and passive recreation resource for public experience. The precise location, size, configuration of this 'wetland waterway', as well as its overall feasibility will be determined through further environmental and stakeholder review.

### THE WETLAND WATERWAY

The wetland waterway is envisioned as 1) a creative means for handling environmental issues, 2) a means for enhancing aquatic and terrestrial habitat (wet meadows and swamp), and 3) a means for canoe and kayak access between Ashbridge's Bay and the Outer Harbour. The character of the waterway is envisioned much like Theissen's Channel in Point Pelee Park - a man-made and actively managed waterway that is a primary means for navigating the park.

Pending future environmental assessments, the primary characteristics of the wetland waterway are proposed as follows:

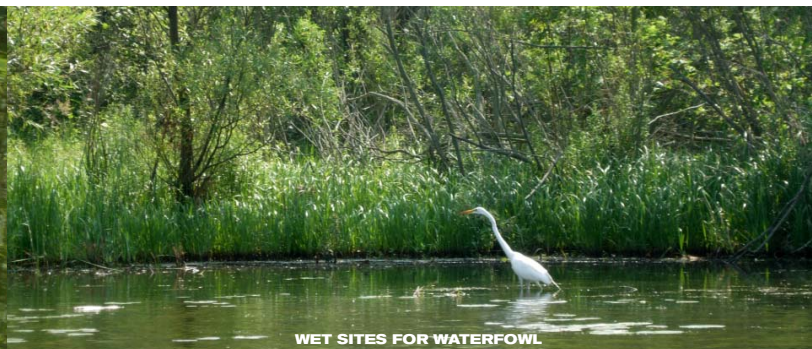
- It will be a shallow, non-linear waterway achieved through a series of wetland water bodies;
- It is envisioned as plant-lined and open-water wetland and marsh;
- The location and scale of water bodies will be dependent on existing environmental issues and areas of ecological significance;
- Land bridges (portages) will define the east and west ends of the waterway, will limit craft access;
- The waterway will provide a canoe/kayak interpretive route for guided tours; and
- Planning and implementation of the waterway will respect the objective of enhancement of habitats by careful phasing over time and in coordination with ecological and stakeholder review.

Should the wetland waterway prove not to be feasible in the long run, the Master Plan ensures that unique opportunities for canoeing and kayaking are provided independently within the Bay and the Outer Harbour.

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INCREASED WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES



WET SITES FOR WATERFOWL



KAYAKING IN THEISSEN'S CHANNEL, AT POINT PELEE





123

**IMPRESSION OF A WETLAND INTERPRETIVE ROUTE**  
ALTHOUGH FEASIBILITY STUDIES ARE NECESSARY, THE POTENTIAL FOR A  
'WETLAND WATERWAY' WILL OFFER KAYAKERS AND CANOERS A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE  
BAY AND THE OUTER HARBOUR AND ENHANCE AQUATIC AND TERRESTRIAL HABITAT



# THE BAY

**THE BRIDGE, THE BREAKWATER, THE WETLAND, ASHBRIDGE'S BAY PARK  
AND THE BOAT CLUBS**

## 8.51 THE BAY | KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### AREA DESCRIPTION

Ashbridge's Bay and Ashbridge's Bay Park are popular destinations for sailing, picnicking, strolling, running, cycling, sunbathing, volleyball and large gatherings. Ashbridge's Bay Park offers parking, trails and lookouts, several pavilions and a baseball diamond. A full-service restaurant is located on the north side of the park. The area where the beach intersects Ashbridge's Bay is a popular area for beach volleyball. The park is also the site of fireworks displays. The Martin Goodman Trail provides access to the site by bicycle and rollerblade and the Boardwalk exists as the major eastward pedestrian link.

Unfortunately, water quality within Coatsworth Cut is poor as a result of 2.5 combined sewer outfalls that discharge into the basin. Toronto Water is well underway with an Environmental Assessment for the creation of a wetland in Ashbridge's Bay that is designed to treat the urban stormwater currently entering Coatsworth Cut. The timeline of the Environmental Assessment is flexible enough to coordinate with the final proposals in the Lake Ontario Park Master Plan.

The proposals for Ashbridge's Bay present some significant opportunities for enhancement, both in terms of function and character. The proposed relocation of the boating clubs and the public boat launch to other sites creates opportunities to address fundamental water quality and sediment deposition issues while improving the overall function of the park. In detail design and implementation, however, every effort will be made to maintain, restore and enhance the park-like character and tree canopy in the Ashbridge's Bay Park area.

The Master Plan views Ashbridge's Bay and Ashbridge's Park as the program hub of Lake Ontario Park. Several new iconic, signature park features are proposed for the combined landscape of 'the Bay', including a new east-west bridge connection, a 20-hectare wetland filter, the potential to accommodate a protected 1200m long watercourse and a reconfigured day-sailing area that includes a relocated Balmy Beach Canoe Club, the Navy League and the ABYC junior sailing program.

The bridge and wetland will be dramatic, highly visible features that will transform Ashbridge's Bay into a signature landscape of Toronto. Crossing the 600m bridge will be an experience of extraordinary exposure to the lake, while offering expansive views of downtown and the active landscapes of Ashbridge's Bay Park, The Eastern Beaches and the Outer Harbour.

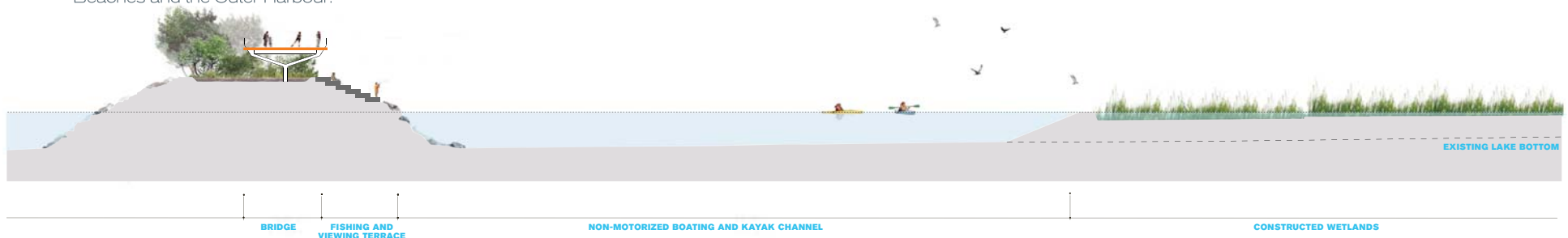
The armouring revetments of the new bridge will also enable the creation of a calm, non-motorized watercourse and a large scale, protected habitat wetland to the north.

### KEY CHALLENGES & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

1 **RELOCATION OF BOATING & SAILING CLUBS:** In considering potentials for achieving water quality improvements, as well as the proposed expansion needs of the boat clubs, the Master Plan has made recommendations to relocate the boating clubs within the Bay, as well as one club to the Marina Peninsula (TH&SC). The locations and configurations of the clubs is not fixed. The most efficient and effective locations and configurations will be finalized at an early stage of detail design. In addition, reasonable leases and operational continuity (landside and waterside access, parking, security, support facilities and services) of these clubs is a critical consideration in the implementation of the Bay landscape. (Ref. Appendix, Section 12.6 for additional information). If the Marina Peninsula negotiations do not meet the needs of TH&SC, an affordable place will need to be found for them in Lake Ontario Park;

2 **AGENCY COORDINATION:** Continued collaboration between PFR, TW and WT will be necessary to ensure that the implementation timelines and functional requirements are coordinated for both water treatment and park objectives; and

3 **PROTECTED 1200m X 90m WATERCOURSE:** One of the great by-products of the proposed east-west connector bridge, is the creation of clean, calm and open water for canoes, kayaks and non-motorized small watercraft. There is strong stakeholder interest to increase this calm water area to accommodate a straight canoe & kayak training course of 1200m x 90m (shown in the blue dashed area in the plan). In the detail design and Environmental Assessment processes for the 'Bay' elements, alternative configurations for the bridge, breakwaters and watercourse will be evaluated and compared for environmental impacts, overall performance, cost, design quality and usefulness as a training site.





- 1 BAR TRANSECT OUTLOOK
- 2 ASHBRIDGE'S BAY INLET
- 3 ABYC SAILING SCHOOL AND DINGHY AREA
- 4 NAVY LEAGUE (RELOCATED)
- 5 ASHBRIDGE'S BAY YACHT CLUB
- 6 FUEL DOCK (RELOCATED)
- 7 BALMY BEACH CANOE CLUB (RELOCATED)
- 8 POTENTIAL CANOE/KAYAK TRAINING COURSE (1200m X 90m)
- 9 BRIDGE AND BREAKWATER
- 10 PICNIC PROMONTORY
- 11 WATER TREATMENT WETLAND
- 12 ENTRY DRIVE AND PARKING
- 13 PICNIC AND WATER PLAY AREA
- 14 NEW BEACHES FORMED BY DEPOSITION
- 15 PUBLIC KAYAK AND CANOE LAUNCH
- 16 RESTAURANT / CONCESSIONS
- 17 PICNIC SHELTER
- 18 CHANGEROOM / WASHROOM
- 19 WOODBINE BEACH (SWIMMING BEACH)
- 20 BEACH VOLLEYBALL
- 21 REGRADED EVENT LAWN / YOUTH SOCCER
- 22 SKATEBOARD PARK
- 23 SPORT FIELDS
- 24 SURFACE PARKING
- 25 PAVILION / BANDSTAND
- 26 BEACHES LIONS CLUB BUILDING (RELOCATED)

- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- BOARDWALK / PROMENADE
- MIXED-USE TRAIL
- VEHICULAR

**ASHBRIDGE'S BAY**  
**master plan**



## 8.52 THE BAY | DESIGN OBJECTIVES

### DESIGN OBJECTIVES

In addition to the promotion of this large scale public waterscape that cleans and activates the lake, the Master Plan has four primary recommendations for the Bay:

- 1 Promote the potential for recaptured bay and marsh - a reinvention of the historic 'Ashbridge's Bay marsh';
- 2 Promote the potential for relocating boat clubs in clean, protected waters;
- 3 Establish east-west connection from the Base Lands to Ashbridge's Bay Park; and
- 4 Establish water quality improvements as a park design driver (accessible filtration systems, treatment wetlands, Dunkers Flow systems).

### NEXT STEPS IN PLANNING THE BAY

The following interim steps are necessary for implementing a new park landscape in the Bay:

- 1 **DESIGNATED WATERFRONT AREA:** The easterly limit (Designated Waterfront Area) for Lake Ontario Park is currently at Coxwell Avenue. As a result, improvements in portions of Ashbridge's Bay Park will be funded by the City of Toronto and subject to the availability of funds under its capital program.
- 2 **BOAT CLUB LEASE NEGOTIATIONS:** Prior to further detail planning of the Bay, the boat clubs, Design Team, WT, PFR and TPA will need to work together to achieve the mutually desired boating, park, and TPA objectives. If the negotiations do not meet the demands of the boat clubs, there will be an affordable place for them in Lake Ontario Park.
- 3 **COSTING & FINANCIAL ANALYSIS:** As the Lake Ontario Park Master Plan moves towards implementation, strong leadership combined with intelligent cost saving designs - to achieve maximum effect for minimum means - will be necessary to ensure the financial feasibility of the Master Plan elements. This is particularly true for the Bridge and Breakwater. The Master Plan team maintains that the Bay Bridge is the primary physical and symbolic link for Lake Ontario Park - and all efforts should be directed towards facilitating its implementation.





**VIEW OF THE BAY BRIDGE, PROTECTED WATERCOURSE AND WETLANDS**  
THE BRIDGE, PROTECTED WATERCOURSE AND WETLANDS ACT AS THE PHYSICAL AND  
SYMBOLIC LINK IN UNIFYING THE VAST LAKE ONTARIO PARK SITE





# THE EASTERN BEACHES

REFRESHED BEACHES, RENOVATED GARDENS AND NEW JETTIES FOR BEACH CREATION

## 8.61 THE EASTERN BEACHES | KEY CONSIDERATIONS

### AREA DESCRIPTION

With refreshed parks and a cultivated “beaches” character with new waterfront features including three new recreation piers and an extended boardwalk to RC Harris, the Eastern Beaches will continue to be a signature leisure destination for Torontonians. One of Toronto’s most-loved places, the Eastern Beaches span approximately 2.5 kilometres along the water’s edge tying the R.C. Harris Filtration Plant in the east to Ashbridge’s Bay Park. The wood boardwalk is a defining element of the Eastern Beaches, offering a wide pathway for strolling and jogging.

The beaches landscape is punctuated by the Balmy Beach Club, the historic Leuty Lifesaving Station, concessions and groves of large willows. The beaches are strongly linked to adjacent Kew Gardens and Pantry Park, both of which provide a range of recreational opportunities. The Martin Goodman Trail spans the length of the area as an element separate from the boardwalk. Some people have suggested that both the trail and the boardwalk are underscaled for the heavy use this area gets in summer. Others believe the beaches would benefit from a reduction in programming, particularly connected with the annual jazz festival.

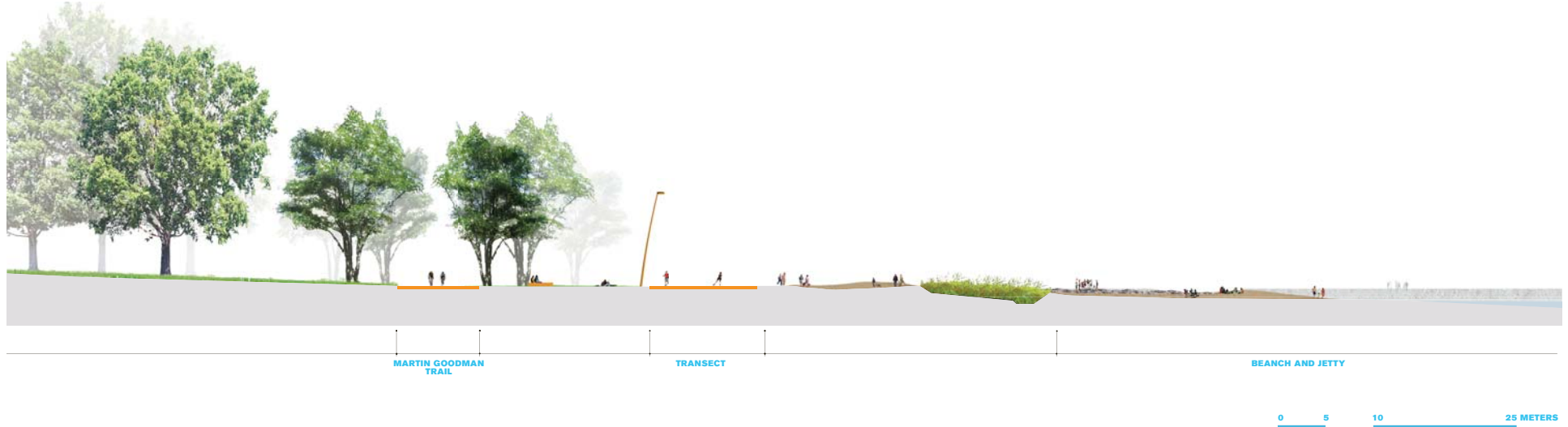
Compared with beach parks in many cities, the Eastern Beaches have relatively few concessions. Most visitors eat, drink and shop on Queen Street East.

Although almost no formal parking is provided along the Eastern Beaches, the adjacent road network provides on-street parking. The area is well served by public transit.

### KEY CHALLENGES & DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

These challenges, and their respective design responses, will help to ensure the Eastern Beaches’ continued success:

1 EXISTING CHARACTER: The Eastern Beaches are generally regarded as a place that functions well. The Design Team understands that there is strong Stakeholder will to maintain the current character and level of use in the Beach. Although the Master Plan is simply recommending minor improvements to upgrade tired facilities, improve circulation and the overall quality of the landscape to ‘refresh’ the park, Stakeholder consultation and support are necessary considerations.

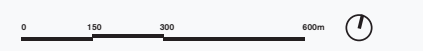




- 1 BEACH TRANSECT BOARDWALK
- 2 HARRIS PIER
- 3 POTENTIAL BLUFF TRANSECT CONNECTION
- 4 SILVER BIRCH RECREATION PIER
- 5 GLEN MANOR RECREATION PIER
- 6 BALMY BEACH CLUB
- 7 MARTIN GOODMAN TRAIL
- 8 OFF-LEASH DOG AREA
- 9 FLOWERING MEADOW (NUTRIENT TRAPS)
- 10 KEW-BALMY BEACH (SWIMMING BEACH)
- 11 KEW GARDENS
- 12 KEW WILLIAMS HOUSE
- 13 W.D. YOUNG MEMORIAL DRINKING FOUNTAIN
- 14 BEACHES LIBRARY
- 15 RUNNING TRACK & MULTI-USE FIELD
- 16 LEUTY AVENUE LIFESAVING STATION
- 17 KEW BEACH WASHROOMS
- 18 KEW BEACH TENNIS CLUB
- 19 ICE RINK
- 20 LAWN BOWLING COURTS
- 21 WASHROOMS
- 22 LIFEGUARD STATION
- 23 PLAYGROUND
- 24 PICNIC LAWN
- 25 SUMMERVILLE OLYMPIC POOL
- 26 WOODBINE BEACH (SWIMMING BEACH)
- 27 BEACH VOLLEYBALL
- 28 BOARDWALK

- PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN PATHS
- BOARDWALK / PROMENADE
- MIXED-USE TRAIL
- VEHICULAR

**THE EASTERN BEACHES**  
**master plan**



## 8.62 THE EASTERN BEACHES | DESIGN OBJECTIVES

### DESIGN OBJECTIVES

The principal recommendations for the Eastern Beaches are to promote a significant upgrade to existing facilities, paths, gardens, play equipment and general amenities:

- 1 Renovate the existing Boardwalk and the Martin Goodman for increased ease of multi-use access;
- 2 Create an increased width of the beach via a combination of constructed jetties and natural processes of deposition;
- 3 Create public piers on jetties to become major gathering places, locus of new programs;
- 4 Establish a physical connection to the bluffs;
- 5 Promote the refreshment and investment in a variety of new park amenities including lighting and seating; and
- 6 Promote the development of young canopy trees in parks throughout the Eastern Beaches to ensure that the green canopy remains in perpetuity.

### NEXT STEPS IN PLANNING THE EASTERN BEACHES

The following interim steps are necessary prior to any improvements to the park landscape in The Eastern Beaches:

- 1 **DESIGNATED WATERFRONT AREA:** The easterly limit (Designated Waterfront Area) for Lake Ontario Park is currently at Coxwell Avenue. As a result, improvements in the Eastern Beaches will be funded by the City of Toronto and subject to the availability of funds under its capital program.
- 2 **STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION:** Prior to further planning of the Eastern Beaches, the Design Team, WT, and PFR will need to consult with the district Councillor, local residents and Stakeholders.





**VIEW OF THE 'REFRESHED' EASTERN BEACHES & BOARDWALK**  
THE MASTER PLAN VALUES THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE EASTERN BEACHES AND  
SIMPLY PROMOTES THE RENOVATION OF ITS AMENITIES TO PRESERVE ITS UNIQUE AND  
CHERISHED CHARACTER IN PERPETUITY



**CHAPTER 9**  
**OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE**  
**CREATE A REALISTIC AND SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE**

## 9.1 PARK MAINTENANCE SUMMARY

**As a radical, new and different park for Toronto, Lake Ontario Park is anticipated to attract large numbers of visitors and be subject to high levels of use throughout an extended seasonal period.** Notwithstanding the fact that the Master plan promotes the use of high quality, durable materials in the construction of the park, the intensity of use will act as a stressor on the park landscape that will need to be addressed through the implementation of an effective and comprehensive maintenance program. The maintenance program will need to be developed to respond to the diversity of landscape types that comprise Lake Ontario Park as well as the myriad of programs that will enliven the park. Although much of the park will be comprised of wild, natural landscapes, it should not be perceived that these areas will not require maintenance and management. In actuality these landscapes may require a more intensive degree of management in the early stages of succession than traditional pastoral landscapes to facilitate the establishment of new plantings and catalyze succession. The maintenance program will need to be developed in consideration of both specific short-term and routine maintenance requirements and long-term management needs.

### MAINTENANCE FACILITY

Given its size, the diversity of its landscape and intensity of programming, Lake Ontario Park will require a dedicated central maintenance facility to house the equipment and materials necessary to maintain the park landscape and to serve as a base of operations for park maintenance personnel. Although Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff will ultimately determine precise facility needs, specifications and location, the following preliminary recommendations have been provided for consideration in the future planning process.

In consideration of the configuration and length of Lake Ontario Park, it is desirable to locate the maintenance facility so that it is situated centrally, near the half-way point between the east and west limits of the park. The site should be easily accessible off of the existing arterial road grid to minimize the need to move supplies and service vehicles through the park to access the facility in order to avoid fragmenting the park. The facility should be located so that it is accessible by public transit and proximate to cycling routes with the objective of providing staff with alternative transportation options. The facility itself should be designed with a view to integrating the building and compound discretely into the landscape. The architecture of the building should be integrated with and complementary to the image and character of other buildings and structures within the park. The facility should be designed with consideration given to its relationship with adjacent natural heritage features and habitats and their functions. The facility should be designed to accommodate parks maintenance and administrative staff, vehicles, equipment and supplies within a secure compound that is located away from primary activity areas and adjacent residential communities.

### MANAGEMENT INTENSITY

Lake Ontario Park will be comprised of a mosaic of landscape types knitted together to accommodate a broad spectrum of recreational, social, practical and ecological objectives.

Each of these landscape types will be subject to different stresses and will be required to support varying programmatic objectives at different times throughout the year. In order to ensure that each landscape type functions as intended over the long term, differing management regimes will be required to be applied to each landscape type.

Management regimes can vary from the intensive and frequent to limited and periodic, contingent on anticipated intensity of use, seasonal demand and desired ecological function and evolutionary outcome within the overall park landscape. The distinct landscape types that comprise Lake Ontario Park include:

- Beach
- Passive Parkland
- Hardscape
- Active Recreational Parkland
- Naturalized Area
- Managed Wetland (Stormwater)
- Managed Wetland (Habitat)
- Co-managed Area
- Areas managed in accordance with the approved Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan

A description of the characteristics that define each landscape type, the programmatic and environmental objectives of each landscape type, and the broad management considerations associated with each landscape type is provided in the following section. The schematic location of each management area within the overall context of Lake Ontario Park is illustrated in the plan to the left.





**Legend**

- BEACH
- PASSIVE PARKLAND
- ACTIVE RECREATION PARKLAND
- NATURALIZED AREA
- MANAGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH TTPMP
- MANAGED WETLAND (HABITAT)
- MANAGED WETLAND (STORMWATER)
- HARDSCAPE
- CO-MANAGED AREA

**park maintenance master plan**



## 9.2 PARK MAINTENANCE | LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS

### BEACH

Beach areas are situated at various locations along the extent of the Lake Ontario Park shoreline. Beach areas are, with the exception of Cherry Beach/Clarke Beach, sustained by the accumulation of sediments conveyed along the Lake Ontario shoreline as a product of naturally occurring littoral drift patterns. In contrast, with the extension of Tommy Thompson Park, Cherry Beach/Clarke Beach is no longer nourished with naturally deposited sand and as a result, fine sands are being lost and the beach is gradually transforming into a cobble/shingle beach. Beach areas support a range of uses including swimming, sun-bathing, beach volleyball, jogging and other water associated recreational activities. Use of beach areas is largely confined to the summer months, although beach areas are utilized for more passive recreational activities during the spring and fall seasons when weather is favourable. Beach areas can be subjected to heavy use during the summer season and support a number of special events. Routine maintenance is required to ensure that beach areas are clean is a necessity to ensure public safety. Periodic grooming of beach areas and nourishment of receding beaches is desirable to sustain their continued use.

### HARDSCAPE

Hardscape areas include the transects, plazas, jetties, parking areas and roads. Generally, hardscape areas are designed to accommodate a range of park uses including the movement of maintenance vehicles. Hardscape areas are intended to be resilient and therefore will be constructed using high quality, durable materials. Winter snow removal is recommended for a portion of the parking areas within the site as well as along the main transects and within the major plaza/event spaces to promote four season park use.

### ACTIVE RECREATIONAL PARKLAND

Active sportsfields will require frequent maintenance in response to an anticipated intensive level of use. Active recreational parkland includes soccer fields, baseball diamonds and other sportsfields. It is anticipated that the senior soccer fields will typically be constructed with supporting irrigation and sub-drainage infrastructure to enhance their durability. Notwithstanding, a protocol of routine maintenance and repair will be necessary to ensure that active landscapes are able to safely accommodate the desired level of programming and intensity of use. Consideration should be given to restricting access to natural turf fields during the early spring and fall to mitigate damage during periods when field surfaces and turf are most vulnerable.

### NATURALIZED AREAS

Naturalized areas are typically proposed to evolve into woodland, wooded wetland and habitat areas. Naturalized areas will be established utilizing seedling plantings of native trees and shrubs typically installed in prepared soils with landscape fabric and mulch to mitigate weed growth, and rodent protection. Natural areas are intended to evolve into managed native communities over time. Management intensity for these areas will be highest immediately after planting and will recede once the plantings become established and the landscape is sufficiently established and directed toward the desired successional outcome. In the context of Lake Ontario Park, mitigation of colonization of the landscape by invasive, non-native species will need to be a key focus in the early stages of the management process.



### **PASSIVE PARKLAND**

Passive parkland is intended to accommodate informal play, picnicking and other passive pursuits. Generally, passive parkland areas are comprised of maintained turf with canopy trees. The routine maintenance protocol for these areas will need to consider demands for use and resultant impacts on the landscape.

### **MANAGED WETLAND (STORMWATER)**

Within Lake Ontario Park, a number of wetlands are proposed to function as stormwater management facilities to enhance water quality. These range from large wetlands such as the proposed stormwater quality enhancement wetland proposed adjacent the Ashbridge's Bay Treatment Plant to smaller pocket wetlands intended to treat runoff from the proposed parking lot areas, dogs-off-leash areas and adjacent roads. It is important to note that these wetlands are not specifically designed to support habitat and as a result of their function, will require routine maintenance as well as periodic large scale cleaning out to remove accumulated sediment and other elements that are present in urban run-off.

### **MANAGED WETLAND (HABITAT)**

Wetlands to enhance habitat diversity are proposed throughout Lake Ontario Park. These wetlands will range in form from open water wetlands to emergent communities to forested swamps contingent in habitat objectives. The variability in the form of these wetlands dictates that management requirements may vary for each landscape type contingent in habitat targets, lake level influences and other factors. In addition, management activities will need to be staged to avoid seasonal habitat sensitivities.

### **CO-MANAGED AREAS**

These areas are subject to management by leases, such as boat clubs, in accordance with the requirements of the City of Toronto and the conditions of the lease.

### **AREAS MANAGED IN ACCORDANCE WITH TTP MASTER PLAN**

The landscapes associated with Tommy Thompson Park will be managed by the TRCA in accordance with the recommendations set out in the approved Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan.





**CHAPTER 10**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**ONGOING AND FUTURE PLANNING FOR LAKE ONTARIO PARK**

## 10.1 IMPLEMENTATION | KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The Master Plan offers a flexible organizational framework that can adapt and adjust to future soil investigations, tree inventories and changing public desires for the park. Because of the long industrial history of these lands and legacy of environmental issues, it will take many years to complete the revitalization process. Phased implementation is a necessary approach because it divides this large project into manageable pieces, each of which fit into the overall Master Plan. The completion of smaller components will allow for environmental management where necessary, while parts of the existing parkland can continue to be accessible to the public.

In anticipation of the many site challenges and the long implementation time frame, the following list identifies critical steps for ensuring the continued physical development of the park according to the Master Plan goals and objectives:

### 1 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE MANAGEMENT

Environmental Site Management will be required for lands within the Lake Ontario Park site where environmental issues exceed provincial standards for park use. The Master Plan was developed in recognition of the variable soil conditions and environmental issues in some areas of the site. Nevertheless, further investigations and assessments will be required to confirm more precisely the extent and severity of environmental conditions in the Bar and Base Lands areas. Once these assessments are done, more detailed Environmental Site Management strategies must then be developed that meet provincial and municipal policy requirements and are consistent with the objectives of the Master Plan. This process may require the temporary enclosure of sites of concern until such time that Environmental Site Management can be implemented to achieve the requirements of the Ministry of the Environment and Toronto Public Health.

### 2 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENTS (ESAs)

For areas within the Lake Ontario Park site that are proposed to undergo significant transformation, Environmental Site Assessments may be required in order to confirm (or rule out) environmental issues that could pose a constraint to redevelopment.

### 3 PHASING OUT OF EXISTING USES

Within the Lake Ontario Park site there are areas that are presently actively used for various purposes. Examples include the wood chipping yard and snow dump that are located on Unwin Avenue, as well as some temporary parking facilities located in the Bar. In time, in order to fully realize the build out of Lake Ontario Park, it will be necessary to relocate these existing uses. Both the wood chipping yard and snow dump are important operational facilities for the City of Toronto. A separate process is underway to ensure that permanent sites for these facilities are found in accordance with the recommendations arriving out of the Port Lands Consolidation Study process.

### 4 REQUIREMENTS FOR REZONING

Presently, the land use zoning designations for some of the areas within the Lake Ontario Park site reflect the patterns and types of past industrial uses and the undeveloped nature of lands within the vicinity of the Port Lands. The Lake Ontario Park Master Plan sets out a vision for the remaking of the landscape that incorporates a range of new uses that in some cases are not compatible with the existing zoning designations. This was not unforeseen, and the implications have been evaluated by City of Toronto staff as a component of the master planning process. Where proposed uses are determined to be incompatible with existing zoning designation, rezoning of properties will be required to facilitate the implementation of the Master Plan.

### 5 FINANCIAL MOMENTUM

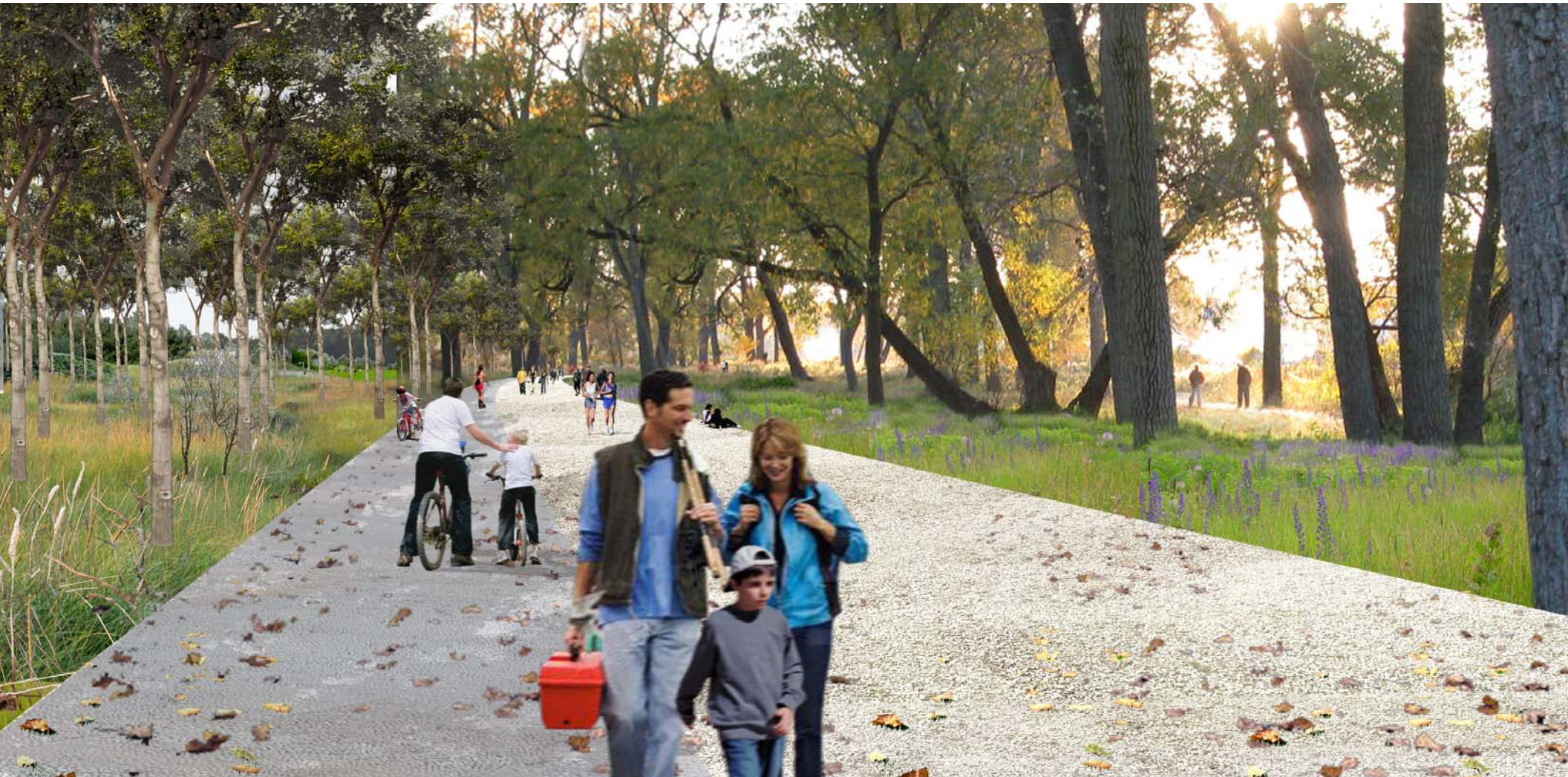
Not unlike many of the world's great urban parks, the long-term implementation of Lake Ontario Park will require a considerable amount of financial investment over time. It will be important to establish momentum in the early stages of the project to catalyze this investment. This can be done in part by structuring the phasing of implementation to encompass a progressive sequencing of financially realistic projects. The phasing of implementation should also consider the need to implement revenue generating components in the initial phases of build-out. This approach should be implemented with realistic expectations and not with the assumption that revenue generation will significantly offset operation and maintenance costs, but rather, that it will contribute to the long-term financial sustainability of Lake Ontario Park in conjunction with other committed long-term funding sources.

### 6 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is a key consideration of current park planning. With respect to Lake Ontario Park, this means protecting the capital investment in park infrastructure with sufficient funding to ensure that appropriate ongoing maintenance can be provided. In addition, developing sustainable park structures, amenities and infrastructure can often mean higher initial capital costs. These are offset over time by reduced maintenance costs.

### 7 STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Effective stakeholder and public consultation will be a vital part of the implementation of Lake Ontario Park. The engagement and support of the public will help provide support for implementation over time. Stakeholder consultation during implementation will be needed to ensure that the needs of existing users are understood and addressed in the planning process.



**PRIORITIZING CONNECTIVITY**  
THE EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRANSECTS IS AN ACHIEVABLE  
AND COMPELLING MEANS TO GENERATE BROAD-BASED ENTHUSIASM AND  
PROVIDE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION THROUGH THE SITE

## 10.2 IMPLEMENTATION | PHASING

**The large scale and complexity of the Lake Ontario Park project and challenges presented by historic and existing uses and site conditions dictates that the implementation of the park will take time.** It will likely be 15 to 25 years before Lake Ontario Park is fully realized, and the planning processes over this period will need to address the challenges outlined in section 10.1, including Environmental Assessment, phasing out of existing uses, rezoning, sustainability, capital and operations funding, and public and stakeholder consultation processes.

Due to its great complexity, Lake Ontario Park will need to be developed in phases or planned stages of growth that 1) target clear design principles, 2) expand on existing facilities, resources and character and, 3) capitalize on the availability of funds, to maximize the exposure and legibility of the park.

It is crucial to note, however, that incremental, staged growth does not mean that implementation and detailed planning should happen in an ad-hoc or piecemeal fashion. For the long-term success of Lake Ontario Park, it is crucial that early stages of development are founded on clear design principles while simultaneously building excitement for what is yet to come. The momentum for investing in later stages of park development will depend on public and stakeholder appraisal of the initial phases of implementation of the Master Plan.

The Master Plan sets out a strategic and intelligent framework to guide the growth of the park, with public and stakeholder consultation supporting all future planning and design efforts. Although the Master Plan offers a guiding outline for the Park's development (right), it is important to note that a detailed phasing plan will need to be developed in consideration of long-term capital budget parameters, recognizing the near and long-term availability of funds. Lake Ontario Park is a unique landscape, both in terms of its features and character as well as the type of efforts, cooperation and leadership that will be required from the various public agencies to move the implementation process forward. What the Master Plan phasing scenario provides is a structure for:

- creating early enthusiasm to propel the implementation process;
- establishing principal connections necessary to link disparate parcels and provide access across the site;
- enhancing the site through Environmental Site Management of its primary 'places';
- shaping a more defined and beautiful identity for the park;
- respecting the highly valued existing places in the park; and
- enabling appropriate timelines for consulting with the Public and Stakeholders on the detailed aspects of the park components and addressing the requirements of the planning and regulatory approvals process.

### ORGANIZATION OF PHASES

The phasing plan identifies a set of initial targets to guide growth and development of the park, with a lens towards upholding the primary organizational and design principles of the Master Plan. Three phases are proposed, with the first phase being implemented as early as 2011. This proposed framework will be subject to ongoing evaluation, review and coordination with Waterfront Toronto's and Parks Forestry and Recreation's capital plans.

### PHASE 1: PRIORITIZE CONNECTIVITY & REFRESH THE BEACHES

The first phase identifies an achievable and compelling beginning for the Park: providing a bold and clear means of access and circulation across the western end of the site that links new park areas to the existing 'wilds' of Tommy Thompson Park and the established parks east of Ashbridge's Bay including the Eastern Beaches.

In addition, Phase 1 will include a 'refreshment' of features in need of renovation and renewal at Cherry Beach and the Eastern Beaches. This refreshment of lighting, seating, boardwalks and other amenities will also enable these remarkable places to become coordinated with the overall identity of Lake Ontario Park.

### PHASE 2: BUILD THE NEW ROOMS

The second phase will establish a strong definition of landscape 'rooms' within Lake Ontario Park, allowing at the same time for the establishment of contiguous canopy cover and creation of a network of natural areas. These large 'rooms' will create many varied settings for active recreation (the western part of the Bar), passive exploration (the Base Lands), new water-oriented programming (the Marina Peninsula) and the realization of a distinctive performance venue in Woodbine Park.

### PHASE 3: DEFINE NEW AND EXISTING OUTPOSTS

At 925 acres, Lake Ontario Park will accommodate as much as 400 outposts. These new and existing features, amenities and landscapes will be distinctive: some enhancement to existing places, some marked with iconic elements, some meant to be 'found' as points of remote refuge. The overall presence and design of the outposts is intended to shape the identity and beauty of the park as a landscape of unique, otherworldly settings in an urban context.



## CONCEPTUAL PHASING

### PHASE 1

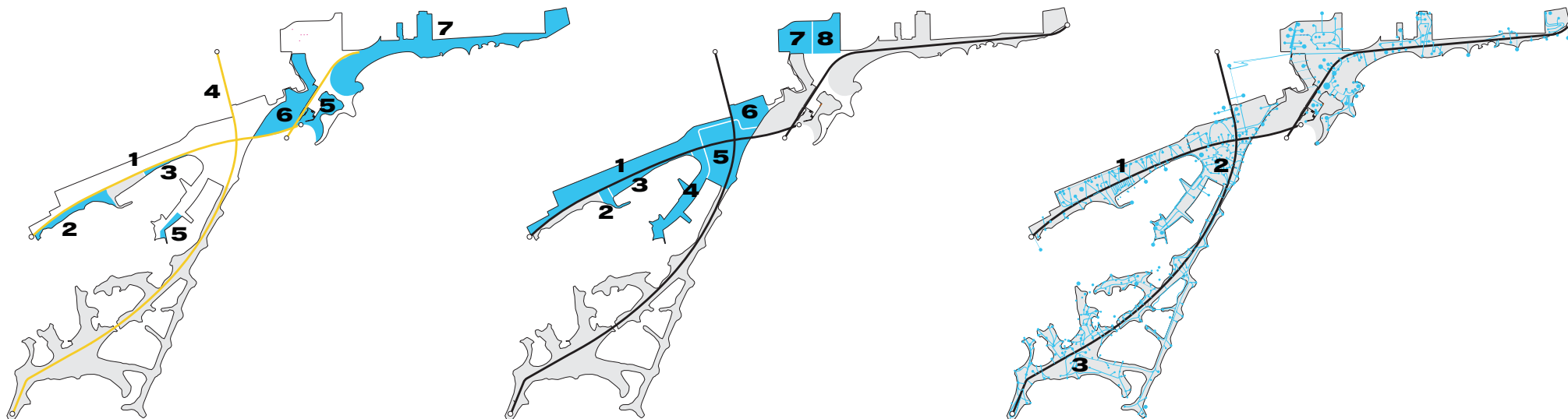
PRIORITIZE CONNECTIVITY & REFRESH THE BEACHES

### PHASE 2

BUILD THE NEW ROOMS

### PHASE 3

DEFINE NEW & EXISTING OUTPOSTS



1. TRANSECTS: EASTERN GAP TO WOODBINE BEACH
2. CHERRY BEACH IMPROVEMENTS
3. NEW BEACHES AT NORTH SHORE
4. LESLIE STREET GREENING (BY OTHERS)
5. RELOCATED AND RENOVATED BOAT CLUBS
6. THE BAY WETLAND (WITH TORONTO WATER)
7. EASTERN BEACHES IMPROVEMENTS

1. THE BAR
2. DON GREENWAY PROMONTORY
3. THE NORTHSHORE BOAT CLUBS
4. THE MARINA PENINSULA
5. THE BASELANDS
6. SAND FILTER GARDEN (BY OTHERS)
7. PUMPHOUSE PARK (BY OTHERS)
8. PERFORMANCE ROOM AT WOODBINE PARK

1. NEW OUTPOSTS AND TRAILS IN THE BAR
2. NEW SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING ELEMENTS IN THE BASELANDS
3. SIGNAGE AND OUTLOOKS IN TTP

**CONCEPTUAL PHASING SEQUENCE OF PRIMARY PARK PRINCIPLES**  
 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAKE ONTARIO PARK WILL HAPPEN OVER MANY YEARS.  
 IT IS CRUCIAL THAT SEQUENCING BE STEADY, INTELLIGENT AND FLEXIBLE  
 SO THAT CLEAR DESIGN QUALITIES AND PRINCIPLES ARE UPHELD.

## 10.3 IMPLEMENTATION | FINANCE

### FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The implementation and maintenance of Lake Ontario Park Master Plan will require the long-term commitment of significant capital and operating funds. The scale and complexity of the Park demands that a financial strategy be implemented that is founded on the following premises:

- The realization of the Lake Ontario Park vision will require strategic capital investments to facilitate the implementation of key components of the Master Plan that will be targeted for their ability to generate excitement, build momentum and enhance public perception of the project site as a destination waterfront park;
- Continued maintenance of Lake Ontario Park will require sustainable funding that will benefit from a balance of public funds with potential revenue generating uses and private sector investment opportunities that are compatible with the park; and
- Park construction and maintenance investments must be undertaken with a clear understanding of the implications of variable environmental conditions and requirements for Environmental Site Management.

### CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

Establishing Lake Ontario Park as a world-class, landmark park and defining destination for Toronto will require sizable investments in site preparation, park construction, facilities and infrastructure. In the short-term, capital investments should be made with a view towards:

- Implementing the fundamental components of the Master Plan that enhance connectivity and unify the park;
- Creating distinctive landscapes that provide a glimpse of what is yet to come and generate excitement to catalyze future phases of implementation; and
- Setting the stage for future implementation by addressing practical considerations related to site access, servicing, existing uses and Environmental Site Management.

Over the long-term it is essential that consistent funding be committed on a cyclical basis to ensure that the implementation process proceeds progressively - without significant gaps - to ensure that momentum is not lost. In all phases of long-term implementation, consideration should be given to the integration of revenue generating amenities in order to allow for continual reinvestment in implementation and maintenance.

Long-term sequencing of implementation will need to consider the various technical investigations, environmental studies and approvals processes that will need to precede the actual park construction. These too will require a commitment of significant funding as well as substantial amounts of time.

The long-term phasing of implementation should be defined with an emphasis on realizing fundamental Master Plan objectives while capitalizing on windows of opportunity presented by project partners including Toronto Water, Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation, the Toronto Port Authority and TRCA. It is important to note that, with respect to the proposed changes to boating clubs, cost neutrality is required for their commitment to the proposals. The Lake Ontario Park budget will include costs for relocating boat clubs, however, upgrades and general improvements will be at the cost and discretion of the individual clubs.

### OPERATING EXPENSES

It is reasonable to assume that operations and maintenance costs for Lake Ontario Park will exceed the norm for typical Toronto parks. A key factor that impacts waterfront park maintenance is the high rate of visitation. Waterfront parks attract a very large number of people and so the operating expenses are higher. Notwithstanding, specific component areas of the park were designed with the intent of minimizing requirements for long-term maintenance. These naturalized areas will require considerable short-term management until they become well established and self-sustaining. As the naturalized landscapes evolve, they will require less intensive maintenance, however, they will not be entirely maintenance free. Other areas within the park will require more intensive maintenance, including the more intensively used and programmed areas of the park. It must also be recognized that maintenance requirements will vary based on temporal factors, including seasonal change and the timing and frequency of special event programming. Lake Ontario Park is being promoted as a four season park and therefore requirements for winter maintenance to facilitate appropriate public access need to be considered.

At full build-out, it is reasonable to assume that annual operating costs to maintain Lake Ontario Park will range between \$15,000 and \$30,000 per acre<sup>1</sup>. These operating cost estimates do not take into account requirements for maintenance of Environmental Site Management initiatives. The estimates include the costs associated with management administration, equipment, operations and maintenance. These operational cost estimates will need to be refined to address the sequencing of implementation.

### OPERATING INCOME

In consideration of the scarcity of funds for Toronto's park operations and maintenance, it is important that the implementation strategy for Lake Ontario Park be generated with a view towards maximizing revenue generation from on-site facilities. Commercial ventures that will contribute to the financial sustainability of the park should be, where appropriate and desirable, integrated into the distinct phases of implementation. It is unrealistic to expect revenues from on-site sources to generate sufficient income to offset annual operating expenses given the size and complexity of the park. Revenue from cafés, concessions and other commercial ventures and events, however, will contribute to the ability to implement the long-term maintenance regime necessary to establish Lake Ontario Park as one of Toronto's - and indeed the world's - great parks. To this end, the Master Plan recommends the creation of revenue generating facilities at Cherry Beach (PFR), the Adventure Centre (PFR) and the Marina Peninsula (TPA).

<sup>1</sup> This estimate averages operating cost per acre over time and will vary at different stages of development, and in different areas of the park.

## 10.4 IMPLEMENTATION | ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Notwithstanding, the complexity of the project and the myriad of approvals required, there are a number of partners that have been involved in the development of the master plan as well as specific components of the Phase 1 scope that have assisted in moving the process forward. These partners include:

### **WATERFRONToronto (WT):**

WATERFRONToronto will play a principal role in the implementation process by collecting and collating important technical inventory information, coordinating efforts to gather essential technical information related to environmental issues, sediment transport, wave climate and infrastructure. In addition, WT will oversee and administer the future design development and approvals process as well as coordinating the integration of the Lake Ontario Park planning process with those of other WT administered initiatives within the Port Lands, the Lower Don and the Central Waterfront. WT will coordinate the involvement and efforts of partners and stakeholders and will maintain a firm focus on realizing the long-term implementation of Lake Ontario Park.

### **Toronto Waterfront Secretariat (TWS):**

As the coordinator of the renewal of Toronto's waterfront, the TWS will play a vital role as an intergovernmental liaison. It will be the role of TWS to ensure that the Lake Ontario Park design and implementation processes are integrated within the full spectrum of other transportation, infrastructure and development planning initiatives on lands in the vicinity of the Lake Ontario Park site.

### **Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR):**

Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation is the primary owner and operator of a significant portion of the Lake Ontario Park site. Consequently, PFR is envisioned as a primary partner in the design development, implementation, operation and maintenance of Lake Ontario Park. With its long standing experience related to the design and management of Toronto's existing waterfront parks, PFR is well positioned to be a key contributor. In addition, with recent experience gleaned through the implementation of the Transitional Sports Fields project, PFR can provide invaluable advice related to Environmental Site Management within publicly accessible park sites. The Forestry Division will be relied upon to provide guidance to ensure that impacts on existing vegetation are minimized throughout the implementation process, with the objective of enhancing the overall extent of canopy cover within Lake Ontario Park.

### **Toronto Water:**

Toronto Water played an important role in the process of generating the Draft Master Plan, having undertaken the EA to address water quality impairment issues within Coatsworth Cut. Toronto Water is also a key partner in the ongoing preparation of plans to redevelop Pumphouse Park, an integral component of Lake Ontario Park. Toronto Water is also responsible for the planning and implementation of improvements to the Ashbridge's Bay Treatment Plant, including both landscape and infrastructural improvements. In moving forward

with the implementation process, Toronto Water is envisioned to be an active and important participant with its commitment to integrate the proposed Ashbridge's Bay/Coatsworth Cut stormwater treatment wetland into the Phase 1 work program and supporting long-term initiatives proposed to be located on Toronto Water managed lands.

### **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA):**

With its extensive body of knowledge and experience related to the development of Ashbridge's Bay and Tommy Thompson Park and the long-term management of Tommy Thompson Park and the Base Lands, the TRCA is regarded as an important partner in the process of implementing the Master Plan. Through previous work done on the Coatsworth Cut Deflector Arm EA and the Toronto Waterfront Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy (TWAHRS), the TRCA possesses a comprehensive understanding of the processes that have shaped the Lake Ontario shoreline as well as the potential for the enhancement of the aquatic habitat along the lakefront. As such, the TRCA will play a pivotal role in the process of securing the regulatory approvals necessary to facilitate implementation. In addition, through a parallel process, the TRCA will be implementing initiatives to enhance habitat, interpretation, and passive recreation within Tommy Thompson Park.

### **Toronto Economic Development Corporation (TEDCO)**

As the owner of lands immediately adjacent to, as well as those that are proposed to be integrated within Lake Ontario Park, TEDCO will be an active participant in the implementation process. A creative partnership with TEDCO will be essential to the successful implementation of several components of the Master Plan.

### **Toronto Port Authority (TPA)**

As the owner of the marina peninsula and operator of the Outer Harbour Marina, the participation of the Toronto Port Authority will be of key importance to realize the implementation of strategic components of the Master Plan. In the initial stages of implementation, enhancements to the marina peninsula will be necessary to accommodate the TH&SC, in later stages improvements will see the remaking of the marina peninsula to create an exciting destination and focal point within Lake Ontario Park.

The challenges of implementing the Lake Ontario Park Master Plan can be overcome with the cooperative support of the various partners that have a stake in the implementation of the project and the collective desire to realize the vision set out in Lake Ontario Park Master Plan.



**CHAPTER 11**  
**CONCLUSION**  
**TORONTO'S NEXT GREAT PARK**

# 11.1 LAKE ONTARIO PARK

## A 'BIG NATURE' PARKLAND FOR TORONTO

**Lake Ontario Park is already today an amazing reserve of public parkland, amenity and urban wilderness.** Its huge scale offers an extraordinary resource for people who are interested in large-scale recreation activities - strolling, jogging, cycling, rollerblading, picnicking, dog walking, swimming, kayaking, windsurfing, kiteboarding, sailing, fishing and the like. The site's uniquely rustic and expansive wilderness character is a magnificent resource for people who are interested in immersing themselves into large-scale urban 'wilds' - whether for hiking, bird watching, private refuge, reflection, plant and wildlife identification, ecological research and education. These combined qualities - unique recreational activities in a 'big nature' setting - lay the grounds for creating one of the world's most distinctive urban waterfront parks.

The Lake Ontario Park Master Plan amplifies these qualities to provide for higher intensity and variety of uses. New connective transects, multi-use trails and increased access points to the lake's edge will expand the exciting range of experiences possible at the waterfront. Artful gateways, educational outposts and designated points of refuge will shape a more defined and beautiful identity for the Park as a whole. The intelligent management and enhancement of the amazingly distinct natural resources will propel the legacy of Toronto's waterfront as a model for innovative open space planning and design.

Lake Ontario Park will be as a major focal point in the context of Toronto harbour tourism and recreation. Together with the other major harbour destinations - Central Waterfront, Queen's Quay, Don River Park and Toronto Island Park - Lake Ontario Park will further transform Toronto's harbour as a world-class place of social recreation, ecological stewardship and cultural amenity.



**NEW TRAILS AND WATERSIDE ACCESS**



**WINTER RECREATION IN THE BAR**



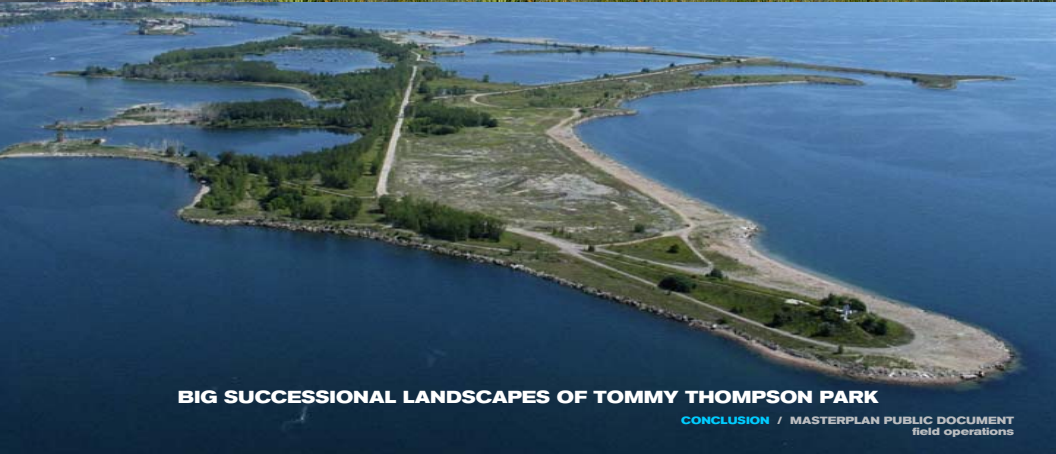
**URBAN WILDERNESS OF THE BASELANDS**



**THE BAY BRIDGE, PROTECTED WATERCOURSE AND FILTRATION WETLAND**



**WILDERNESS REFUGE IN TOMMY THOMPSON PARK**



**BIG SUCCESSIONAL LANDSCAPES OF TOMMY THOMPSON PARK**





# APPENDIX

## **SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES**

- 12.1 SUMMARY
- 12.2 STORM WATER MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
- 12.3 PARK LIGHTING GUIDELINES

## **DESIGN ELEMENTS**

- 12.4 AMPHITHEATER / PERFORMANCE ROOM

## **BOAT CLUBS**

- 12.5 OUTER HARBOUR SAILING FEDERATION
- 12.6 ASHBRIDGE'S BAY BOAT CLUBS

## **BACKGROUND SITE ANALYSIS**

- 12.7 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
- 12.8 EXISTING VEGETATION TYPES
- 12.9 ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS
- 12.10 RESIDENT BIRDS AND HABITATS
- 12.11 OTHER WILDLIFE AND HABITATS
- 12.12 WILDLIFE SPECIES INVENTORY
- 12.13 RESOURCES



## 12.1 SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES

### SUMMARY

Lake Ontario Park will be a defining park of the 21st Century. The Park celebrates life, wilderness, diverse forms of recreation and play, ecological restoration and innovative measures for transforming industrial lands into signature, world-class parklands. Indeed, Lake Ontario Park can be a model for design and sustainable management practices for future parks in the city and the world.

As a model park for the city, Lake Ontario Park should push innovative and sustainable practices for the following park operations:

- **Energy strategies**  
Given its large scale and remote conditions, future planning and design at Lake Ontario Park should incorporate measures that reduce the overall energy consumption throughout the park. Whether through energy saving - or producing (solar) - fixtures and elements, Lake Ontario Park can set a new standard for energy savings in parks.
- **Stormwater Management**  
Appendix Section 12.2 outlines some principles and elements that can serve as a guide for intelligent and innovative stormwater planning.
- **Waste Management**  
Given its size, the diversity of its landscape and intensity of programming, Lake Ontario Park will undoubtedly generate large amounts of waste. It will be critical to consider the potential for on-site composting of natural waste, and the creation of a general maintenance facility that can process, store and effectively distribute the composted material.



# 12.2 STORM WATER MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- Water is a primary resource and feature on this site that should be engaged to support exceptional range of sustainable, natural areas and vegetal landscapes.
- Soil improvements and richer plantings in new areas of the park will create more absorbent landscapes. These measures will help to both diversify conditions for habitat and safely adapt the park to new uses.
- Because the implementation of the park will be phased over time, decentralization of facilities will be the major principle of storm water management at Lake Ontario Park. The storm water system should work in concert with the hydrologic environment in order to avoid the typical approach of collecting, conveying and discharging.
- Storm water management design should improve water quality through nutrient uptake and reduced sediment discharge into the lake. Vegetated filters, buffer strips and other measures should be used to clean storm water prior to release.
- In areas where program is concentrated, soft technologies that hold and direct water, rather than drain it quickly, should be used to cultivate new plantings that shape distinctive program settings.
- Landscape design at all levels and in all areas, including the passive lawn areas should be water-efficient and fertilizer free.

- Bioretention techniques should be applied in the lowlands to encourage ground water recharge. The use of storm sewers should be avoided.
- Storm water system enhancements should be designed with aesthetic and educational benefits in mind in addition to engineering parameters.

## STORM WATER DESIGN ELEMENTS

Storm water design must account for the broad range of drainage areas in the park plan, including soil caps, roadways and parking lots, aquatic environments and enhanced wetland, meadows and woodland areas, each of which affects flow differently and requires unique methods of control. The storm water management design for Lake Ontario Park should assess and draw from the following set of "best practice" techniques:

- Hydrologic source controls
  - Porous pavements and low runoff surfaces
  - Vegetation
  - Phyto-enhanced buffers
  - Infiltration systems
- Conveyance systems
  - Water quality swales
  - Filter strips
  - Bioretention cells
- Attenuation systems
  - Pocket wetlands
  - Retention systems
  - Permanent 'waterways' with habitat-oriented design in basins



POCKET WETLANDS



POROUS PAVING FOR PARKING AREAS

## 12.3 PARK LIGHTING GUIDELINES

### PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- An unusual lighting vocabulary specific to Lake Ontario Park should distinguish the site from its context and other Toronto parks and help to shape the 'rustic', rugged and remote character that defines much of the Master Plan design.
- Large areas of Lake Ontario Park should remain dark. Although athletic program areas and major circulation routes (transects) used at night should be sufficiently lit, the skies atop Lake Ontario Park should remain predominately dark in order to preserve habitat quality in natural areas. Glare controls on major program area fixtures will protect surrounding areas where darkness is desired.
- Lighting should aid safety and way-finding by providing orientation clues and illuminating nighttime activities. Gateways, defined by landscape and architectural elements, might double as light markers that express the perimeter and access points. Distinctive lighting along the transects will reinforce the idea of the transects as the primary 'connectors' of the site.
- Concealed light sources for pedestrian and bicycle circulation, with the aiming angle shifted away from the field of vision and directed to the landscape edges, are recommended based on the same rationale. Pathways would be highlighted with low-height lighting elements that are environmentally reactive (sensor-controlled) or passive (reflectors), depending on their location and anticipated use.
- A distinctive lighting scheme for Unwin Avenue should enhance the sense of threshold and difference between this park 'drive' and ordinary city streets. Several credible studies suggest that directing light away from the center of the road and to the sides, increases the overall field of vision. A more efficient lighting solution that calls for less light and less contrast might be explored with the Toronto Transportation Services.
- Lighting can continually refresh expectations as new areas undergo change and are opened to the public. Lighting design is inherently linked to temporality. In keeping with the phasing plan, the Lake Ontario Park's lighting design should build over time, emphasizing the site's evolution.
- Lighting design should explore ways in which Lake Ontario Park might produce its own energy. Solar-powered fixtures, energy-efficient light sources (high brightness LEDs, for example) and networks of sensor controls that respond to motion, occupation, and dawn and dusk should be incorporated as fully as possible to demonstrate a commitment to conservation and sustainability.
- Lighting in Lake Ontario Park should follow the 'Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines' adopted by City Council in January 2006.

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LARGE AREAS SHOULD REMAIN DARK



LIGHTING SHOULD BE CONCENTRATED AT MAJOR PROGRAM AREAS & FOR MAJOR EVENTS

## 12.4 CULTURAL FACILITIES | PERFORMANCE AMPHITHEATRE

**Lake Ontario Park is a radically unique waterfront park. Its landscapes are richly different and range from the traditional park spaces along the Eastern Beaches to the raw wilds of the Bar and Base Lands. The cultural arts and programming within the park should be equally distinctive and diverse. Most importantly the cultural programming should help sharply define the park's character.**

Designated performance spaces, replete with servicing potential, parking and transit access, are quintessential amenities for park events and programming. Recognizing Lake Ontario Park as a great resource for public events on the Waterfront, the City of Toronto is seeking to create an iconic amphitheater for waterfront performances and events. The amphitheater of no smaller than 4000 seats, 2000 of which should be covered seating. The requirements for such an amphitheater site would include adequate back stage facilities, event parking (approximately 400-500 spaces) and servicing. Although there is adequate lake frontage to site an amphitheater within Lake Ontario Park, it is critical that such a specific program amenity corresponds with the character of the park landscape in which it is located.

### DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

In review of the compatibility of an amphitheater and potential locations within the park, the design team identified Woodbine Park as the optimal location. In its current form, the Woodbine Park Amphitheater is staggeringly under-utilized. A review of the permit records for the facility indicates that the Amphitheater the existing facility has a utilization rate of about 27% during the peak summer weekend period (Thursday to Sunday – Beginning of May to end of September)

and a total utilization rate of just over 15% for the entire summer period. Of the summer events on record, few are performance events. It is also notable that the facility is not used for the major events like the Beaches Jazz Festival or Beachfest.

The Design Team recommends renovating the existing facility to function as the dedicated and iconic LOP performance facility - and to reprogram the facility accordingly. New and beautiful earthwork, seating and stage facility venue could remake the site as a bold and highly visible performance space. Because of its proximity to transit and adequate parking facilities and large scale, the Woodbine Park site offers the precise spatial and servicing requirements for a potential signature performance venue in Lake Ontario Park.

### AN ICONIC & FLEXIBLE VENUE

As an alternative to a permanently designated performance venue in Lake Ontario Park the Design Team researched precedents for floating performance facilities. Lakefront and Riverfront cities throughout the world are utilizing water-based, mobile venues as a means to vary the drama of event settings as well as support the performance needs of multiple sites. As parks and open spaces have performance demands that are not often sufficient to fill a full summer calendar, mobile facilities offer an opportunity to fulfill city-wide needs with often dramatically varied locations. A few iconic examples of floating performance venues are referenced below. Flexible amenities of this kind should be encouraged in a park landscape as unique as Lake Ontario Park, enabling the landscapes to be used and experienced in a multitude of ways.



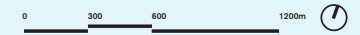
PRECEDENTS FOR FLOATING PERFORMANCE VENUES



This study is preliminary and is on-going. Operational and financial feasibility, as well as site suitability needs to be further tested.

# amphitheater

## draft master plan



# 12.5 THE OUTER HARBOUR BOAT CLUBS

## AREA DESCRIPTION

**The Outer Harbour is a hub of marine activity.** The unique qualities of sheltered waters and predictable wind conditions make the Outer Harbour a unique resource favoured by sailors, boaters, windsurfers, kite boarders, rowers and other water sports enthusiasts. The Outer Harbour is currently home to the Outer Harbour Sailing Federation, the Outer Harbour Marina (operated by the Toronto Port Authority) and the Aquatic Park Sailing Club. The Outer Harbour is used almost daily for sailing and rowing lessons, regattas and recreational boating and water sports of all types. The OHSF leases currently extend to the water's edge.

## PLANNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Create new points of public access along the North Shore. To avoid potential conflicts (during periods of high activity) and to ensure that the ownership, maintenance and insurance of the docks and ramps remain the responsibility of the North Shore Clubs, the public's access to the North Shore will be seasonal and/or limited during the peak boating season of March to November.
- 2 Create opportunities for optimizing water access in a way that best accommodates the specific programs of the various boat clubs;
- 3 Establish a consistent and clear organization of the North Shore Boat Clubs, while preserving the distinctive, atmospheric character of water sports and recreation in a "cottage" setting;
- 4 Future designs for the boat clubs should ensure that the boat clubs maintain their own docks; and
- 5 When re-located or altered, the boating clubs must be able to continue to operate throughout the planning and construction process.

- 6 Create an 'Outer Harbour User Committee' to regulate and advise on-the-water use throughout the Outer Harbour, and to ensure that safety and the quality of the recreational boating experience is not compromised with new uses, new users and new landscape conditions.

## FACILITY DESCRIPTION

CLUB	CURRENT	AREA
Water Rats:	117,326 ft <sup>2</sup>	(10,900 m <sup>2</sup> )
Hanlan Boat Club:	36,000 ft <sup>2</sup>	(156' X 230')
Mooredale:	22,540 ft <sup>2</sup>	(98' X 230')
Jamestown:	22,660 ft <sup>2</sup>	(103' X 220')
Westwood:	30,030 ft <sup>2</sup>	(136.5' X 220')
OHCC:	60,720 ft <sup>2</sup>	(276' X 220')
TMCC:	42,370 ft <sup>2</sup>	(190' X 223')
GWNDC:	2,200 ft <sup>2</sup>	
TWC:	3,462 ft <sup>2</sup>	

## NOTES

- 1 The areas are approximate, as the shoreline changes.
- 2 The boundary between OHCC and TMCC switches in summer and winter. The area above is during summer, during the winter the configuration changes for storage of boats and the space used by TMCC extends to about 250 feet in width.
- 3 All the clubs require an increased area of 10-20% for future expansion, as they are presently operating at close to full capacity. In the detailed planning, every effort will be made to accommodate this space need.

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\* RELOCATIONS OF THESE CLUBS REQUIRES LEASE NEGOTIATIONS WITH TORONTO PORT AUTHORITY.



# 12.6 ASHBRIDGE'S BAY BOAT CLUBS

## AREA DESCRIPTION

**Ashbridge's Bay provides sheltered water suitable for docking small craft and is home to the Balmy Beach Canoe Club, Navy League, Toronto Hydroplane and Sailing Club, Ashbridge's Bay Yacht Club and a public boat launch.**

Relocating the boating clubs and motorized boat launch to alternative sites affords opportunities to address fundamental water quality and sediment deposition issues while improving the function of Ashbridge's Bay Park.

Continued discussion and consultation with Ashbridge's Bay Yacht Club, Balmy Beach Canoe Club, Navy League and Toronto Hydroplane and Sailing Club is necessary to confirm the appropriate scale, location, features access conditions for their new boat club facilities.

## PLANNING OBJECTIVES

- 1 Identify opportunities for expanded day-sailing and protected non-motorized boating areas in Ashbridge's Bay;
- 2 In detail design, Waterfront Toronto, Toronto Water and the Design Team will collaborate with the Ashbridge's Bay Boat Clubs to ensure that their facility requirements are maintained and/or expanded in their future configurations; and
- 3 When re-located or altered, the boating clubs must be able to continue to operate throughout the planning and construction process.

## FACILITY DESCRIPTION

CLUB	CURRENT AREA
Ashbridge's Bay Yacht Club:	338,062 ft <sup>2</sup>
Dry Sail Area:	14,110 ft <sup>2</sup> (165 ft shoreline)
Dinghy Area:	6,000 ft <sup>2</sup> (265 ft shoreline)
Sailing School:	10,500 ft <sup>2</sup> (175 ft shoreline)
Storage:	Minimum 400 Boats
Additional Shoreline Features:	Adequate heavy crane shoreline access;
Beaches Lions Club /BBCC	17,254 ft <sup>2</sup>
Navy League:	26,457 ft <sup>2</sup>
Toronto Hydroplane and Sailing Club:	109,210 ft <sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 The areas are approximate.
- 2 The Master Plan configurations and locations for the Boat Clubs are not fixed or final. Rather, the plans are illustrations of a potential reorganization of the various clubs in order to support the park objectives and meet the facility and expansion needs of the clubs. The most efficient and effective locations and configurations will be finalised at an early stage of detail design. In addition, issues and requirements will be designed and resolved with greater precision to ensure that the performance, quality, use and security needs are sufficiently maintained and/or enhanced.





## 12.7 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Much of the land at Lake Ontario Park has been reclaimed from Lake Ontario by historic infilling, resulting in variable environmental conditions across the park site. The reclaimed land was subsequently used for a variety of industrial activities. Not surprisingly, past studies at Lake Ontario Park indicate that the quality of the soils and groundwater is affected - in some areas - by residues from both the lakefill and from industrial activities that occurred prior to modern pollution controls.

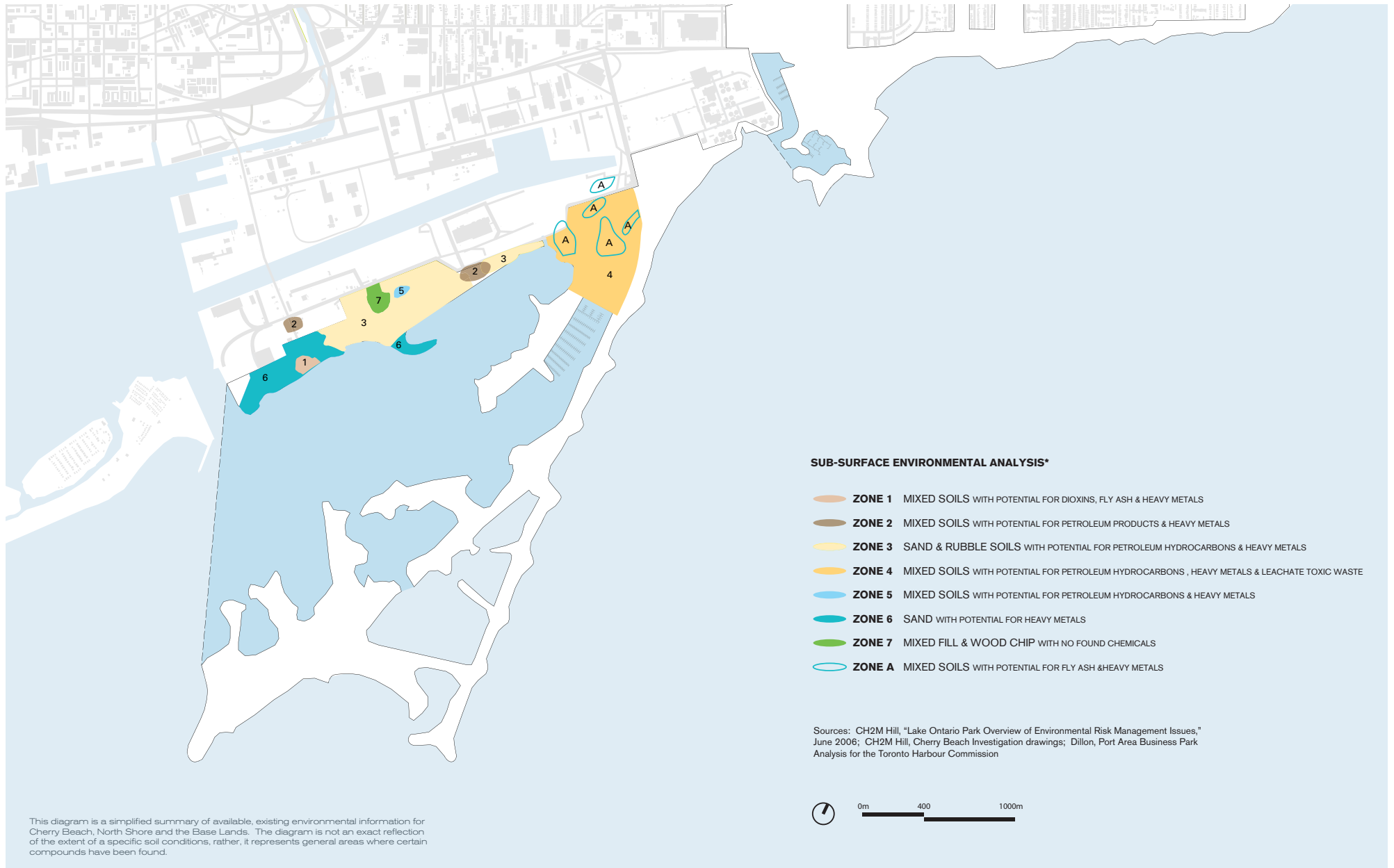
Although past industrial activity and historic infill materials have created environmental issues in parts of the Bar and the Baselands, the risks to public health from typical recreational uses of the park are expected to be very low or minimal. The revitalization of Lake Ontario Park is an opportunity to investigate and address historic environmental issues where necessary. Environmental site management plans will be developed and implemented in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Toronto Public Health and Health Canada. By addressing the outstanding environmental conditions we are dealing with a long standing barrier to waterfront revitalization and are committed to taking immediate action if problems are identified.

Because of the long industrial history of these lands, it will take many years to complete the revitalization process. The Master Plan offers flexible strategies and an organizational framework that can adapt and adjust to future soil investigations, tree inventories and changing public desires for the park. Phasing is the preferred approach because it divides this large project into manageable pieces, each of which fit into the overall Master Plan. The completion of smaller components will allow for environmental management where necessary, while parts of the existing parkland can continue to be accessible to the public.

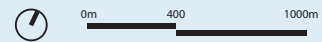
As the environmental management is completed, information will be available in the record of site condition (RSC) for each project. An RSC is a document that shows a property has been properly assessed according to a MOE regulated process, and shown to meet the soil, sediment and groundwater standards appropriate for the use of the property. RSCs are posted on the Environmental Site Registry available through the Ministry of the Environment's website and will also be made available via Waterfront Toronto's website.

The diagram at right is a simplified summary of available, existing environmental information for Cherry Beach, North Shore and the Base Lands. The diagram is not an exact reflection of the extent of a specific soil conditions, rather, it represents general areas where certain compounds have been found.

For more information, refer to the 'Lake Ontario Park Environmental Management Backgrounder' on Waterfront Toronto's website: [www.waterfronttoronto.com](http://www.waterfronttoronto.com).



This diagram is a simplified summary of available, existing environmental information for Cherry Beach, North Shore and the Base Lands. The diagram is not an exact reflection of the extent of a specific soil conditions, rather, it represents general areas where certain compounds have been found.



## 12.8 ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

The Lake Ontario Park site includes two types of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs), one designated by the City of Toronto and another designated by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. (The City of Toronto defined its Environmentally Significant Areas in 1992. These ESAs are being updated and the boundaries reviewed in 2006.)

City ESAs are areas of land or water within the natural heritage system that are particularly sensitive and require additional protection to preserve their environmentally significant qualities. They are defined as areas with any one or more of the following characteristics:

- habitats for vulnerable, rare, threatened or endangered plant and/or animal species and communities that are vulnerable, threatened or endangered within the city or the Greater Toronto Area; or
- rare, high quality or unusual landforms created by geomorphological processes within the city or the Greater Toronto Area; or
- habitats or communities of flora and fauna that are of a large size or have an unusually high diversity of otherwise commonly encountered biological communities and associated plants and animals; or
- areas where an ecological function contributes appreciably to the healthy maintenance of a natural ecosystem beyond its boundaries, such as serving as a wildlife migratory stopover or concentration point, or serving as a water storage or recharge area.

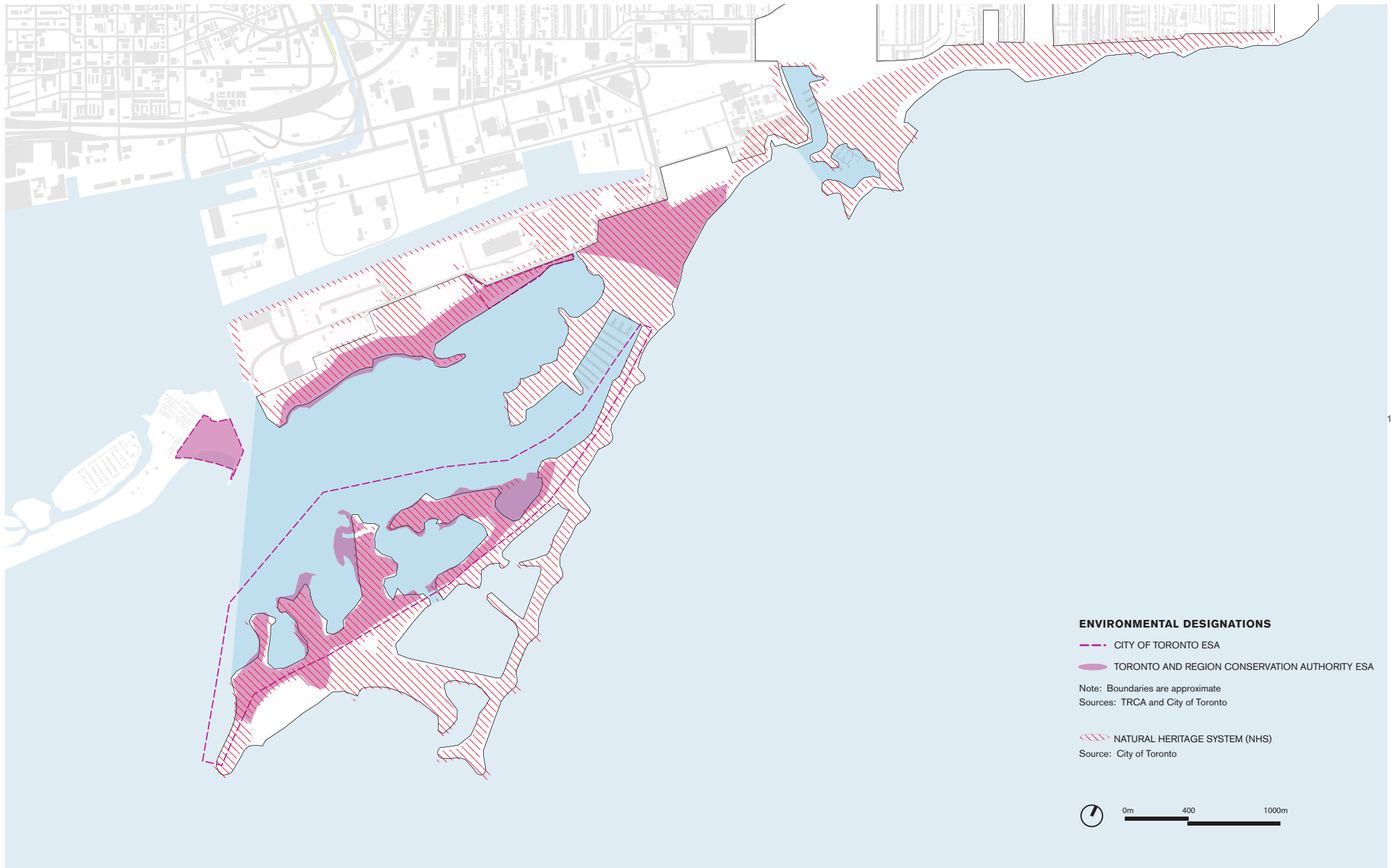
Development is prohibited on lands within the natural heritage system that exhibit any of these characteristics. Activities are limited to those that are compatible with the preservation of the natural features and ecological functions attributed to the areas. An impact study is required for any proposed undertaking in those areas not already the subject of an environmental assessment under the Environmental Assessment Act.

The City of Toronto has also defined a natural heritage system that includes parts of Lake Ontario Park. In the City of Toronto Official Plan, the City Policy states that, "All proposed development in or near the natural heritage system will be evaluated to assess the development's impacts on the natural heritage system and identify measures to mitigate negative impact on and/or improve the natural heritage system, taking into account the consequences for:

- terrestrial natural habitat features and functions including wetlands and wildlife habitat;
- known watercourses and hydrologic functions and features;
- significant physical features and land forms;
- riparian zones or buffer areas and functions;
- vegetation communities and species of concern; and
- significant aquatic features and functions including the shoreline of Lake Ontario."

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) has also historically delineated Environmentally Significant Areas. Although the TRCA ESA program is not currently active, the ESA designation historically required an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) to be conducted if site alteration is proposed within an ESA. Under the TRCA program, the EIS would be required to demonstrate that proposed development would not impair the features and functions in the respective ESA.

Boundaries of a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW) and Provincially Significant Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI) fall approximately 300m to the west of the Lake Ontario Park site on Ward's Island (as well as throughout the rest of the islands). Provincial policy states that development within 120m of a PSW is only permitted if it can be shown that the development will have no negative impact on the features and functions for which it has been identified. Since the Lake Ontario Park site is well east of the adjacent lands of the PSW, there is no trigger for an Environmental Impact Study of the potential impacts of the Lake Ontario Park. The area of adjacent lands for the ANSI is recommended at 50m, and the Lake Ontario Park is well east of this area.



**ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGNATIONS**

- CITY OF TORONTO ESA
- TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY ESA

Note: Boundaries are approximate  
 Sources: TRCA and City of Toronto

- /// NATURAL HERITAGE SYSTEM (NHS)
- Source: City of Toronto



## 12.9 EXISTING VEGETATION TYPES

### CHERRY BEACH TO ASHBRIDGE'S BAY

Vegetation in the western half of Lake Ontario Park mainly consists of early to mid-successional thickets, fields and open groves of pioneer tree species (mainly cottonwood), with shrubby wetland pockets. A later-stage successional forest community is found at Cherry Beach. Most of the lakefront soils are composed of fill. Cultural meadows and upland thickets are likely in the range of 30 years old, and more mature treed upland plant communities are approximately 50 years old. Forests are mainly composed of fast-growing tree species.

The vegetation in uplands is very diverse in terms of species and structure. However, these upland communities are dominated largely by non-native plant species. Even in areas dominated by cottonwood (a native species), the understory is almost completely dominated by weedy exotics. Cottonwood forests are considered rare in the Toronto Lake Ontario Watershed, but the understory would benefit from extensive restoration to re-establish higher quality vegetation. Volunteer groups have initiated some restoration by planting native shrubs such as hop-tree and ninebark.

Wetland pockets have a higher proportion of native species than upland vegetation types. The dominant species in most areas are the natives red-osier dogwood and sandbar willow, with many native rushes, sedges and herbaceous species in the understory. Many of these species are considered locally rare in the most urbanized areas of the Toronto Lake Ontario Watershed. These communities are considered of higher quality than cultural communities, because of their primarily native composition. However, the native species that inhabit these areas are some of the most adaptable wetland species, found in a large variety of wetland environments; this is likely because the wetlands are of relatively recent origin, probably arising in wet pockets formed on compacted areas of fill. A snow dump along Unwin Avenue may have contributed to the formation of some wetlands in the area.

Undisturbed portions of sand beaches, which are confined particularly to the extreme upper edge of the exposed beach on Tommy Thompson Park and along Cherry Beach, support a high percentage of native species relative to the rest of the upland communities, with many being locally rare in the Toronto Lake Ontario Watershed. The lower parts of beaches where people congregate are generally devoid of vegetation.

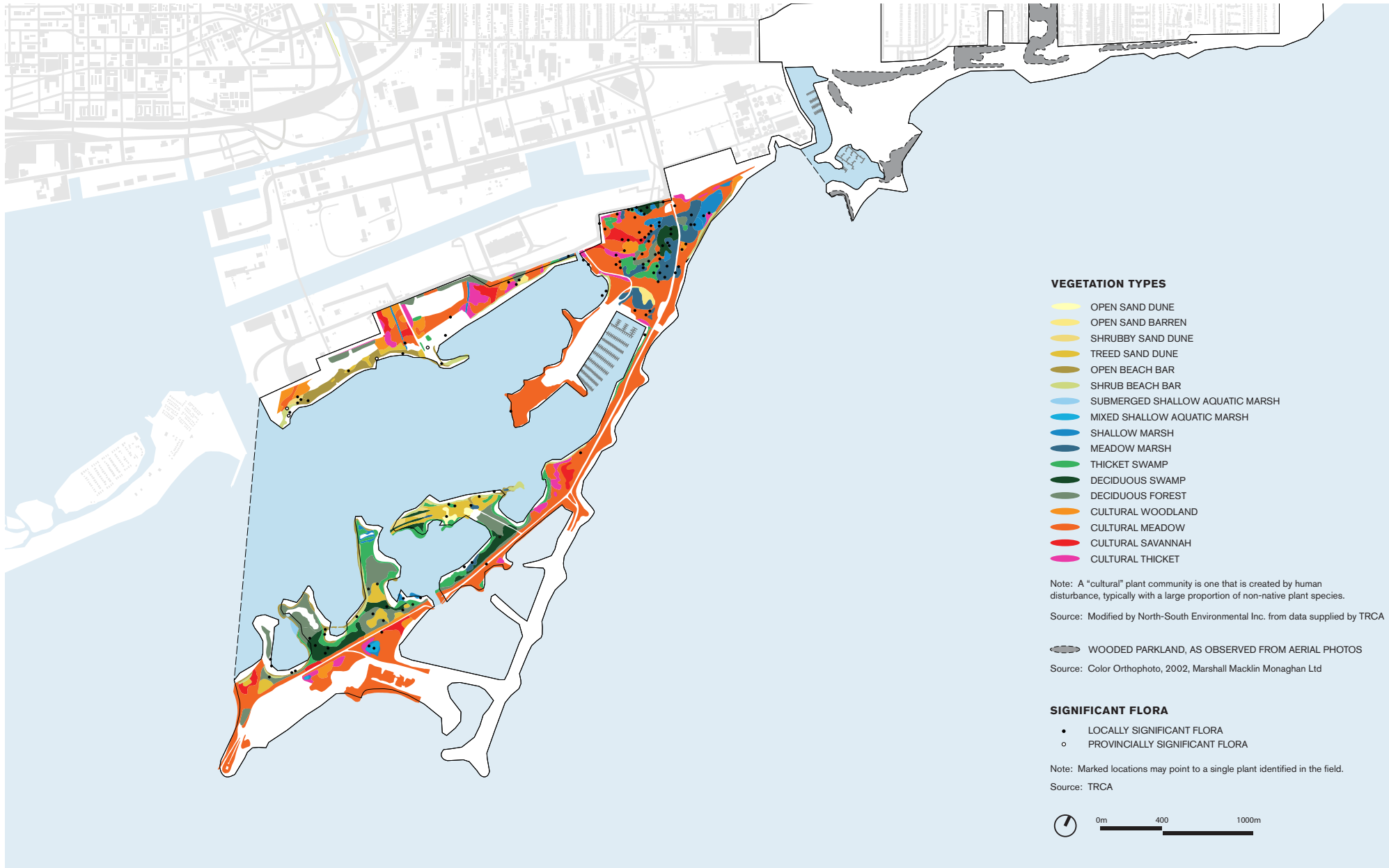
The North Shore and Base Lands support little significant beach vegetation because there are few areas of exposed sand. The shoreline in these areas is primarily composed of rubble and cobbles, with few habitats for significant plant species. However, a few species that are locally rare in the Toronto Lake Ontario watershed have begun to colonize sandy areas next to the shore, for example, baltic rush.

Tommy Thompson Park provides the best example of rapid colonization of new habitat by a range of plant species on the Toronto waterfront. Botanical studies of Tommy Thompson Park vegetation, conducted in the mid-1970s, showed 152 plant species had colonized the area since its construction. More than half of these species were non-native. At present, there are more than 400 plant species recorded from Tommy Thompson Park, and the native component has continued to increase. The high diversity has likely resulted from topographic variation in the habitat and the close proximity to the lake, which provides a continuous source of new plant species.

### ASHBRIDGE'S BAY TO R.C. HARRIS FILTRATION PLANT

East of Ashbridge's Bay, the vegetation in existing parks — Ashbridge's Bay Park, Kew Gardens and areas of Woodbine Park — consists of mature trees (largely non-native species such as norway maple and manitoba maple) with lawn underneath and no shrub layer. The beaches east of Tommy Thompson Park track the original shoreline, but they are highly disturbed by human activity. The Eastern Beaches are generally devoid of vegetation except in one small area south of Kew Gardens. A small area has been fenced off for a dog run and sandbar willow has begun to colonize the sand, again demonstrating the capability of the local vegetation types to establish quickly and spontaneously. Wooded zones in the eastern portion of the site (indicated at right) were drawn based on high resolution aerial photographs rather than ground surveys.





## 12.10 RESIDENT BIRDS AND HABITATS

**Lake Ontario Park is considered to be part of the western portion of the Atlantic flyway, also known as the Great Lakes flyway.** Radar information indicates that millions of birds likely fly around the western end of Lake Ontario during migration, in order to avoid crossing the lake.

Tommy Thompson Park is a known and significant area for migrant birds, and is considered a global Important Bird Area (IBA) because of its concentration of breeding colonial waterbirds. The Tommy Thompson Park Important Bird Area was designated because of its high concentration of breeding colonial waterbirds, as well as because of its congregations of migrants. Over 302 species have been identified at Tommy Thompson Park, 60 of which are breeding species.

### COLONIAL WATERBIRDS

The diagram at right shows the areas of Lake Ontario Park that support major waterbird colonies, including great egrets, black-crowned night-herons, caspian terns, common terns, ring-billed gulls and double-crested cormorants.

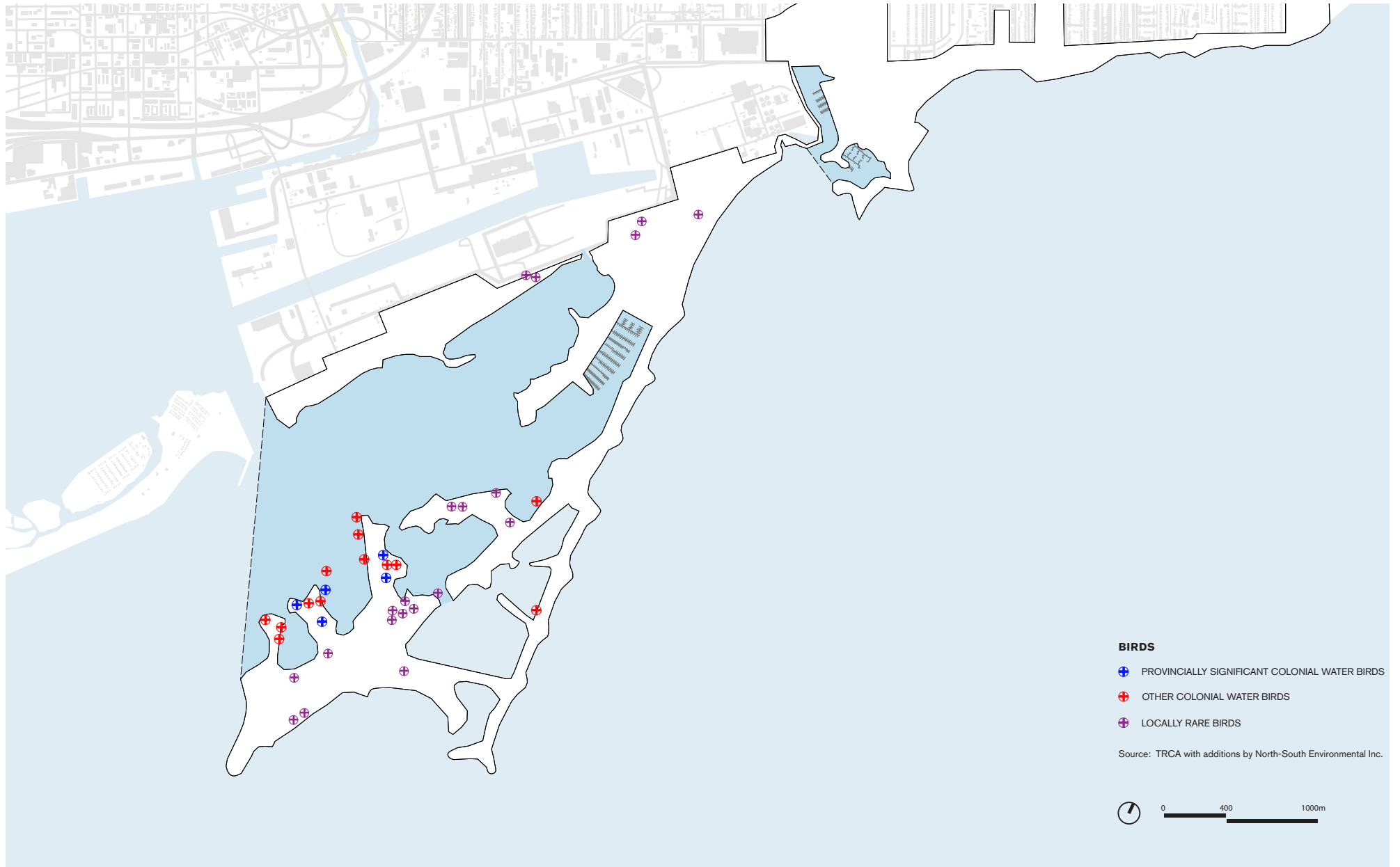
The breeding population of black-crowned night herons is estimated to have reached as high as 30% of the Canadian breeding population in some years. This colony has been recorded as the largest in Ontario. The breeding population of ring-billed gulls in Tommy Thompson Park is estimated to be approximately 6% to 8% of the global population. The provincially significant great egrets and caspian terns nest in much smaller numbers.

Increasing Double-crested cormorant populations have raised concerns in many areas of the Great Lakes, including Tommy Thompson Park. Cormorants began nesting in Tommy Thompson Park in 1990. Their colony increased to 7,241 nests in 2007. The very large number of cormorants has resulted in the loss of a significant amount of tree cover at Tommy Thompson Park, and there are concerns about the effects on the many other species of plants and animals that live there or stop-over to rest and feed during migration. The need for management of the Double-crested cormorants populations will need to be considered, to ensure the coexistence of a healthy, thriving cormorant colony with the maintenance of the other qualities and values of Tommy Thompson Park.

### BREEDING SONGBIRDS

The population of breeding songbirds on the Lake Ontario Park is also diverse, with 18 being considered significant in the urbanized portion of the Toronto Lake Ontario Watershed because their habitat is rare in urban landscapes, and because they are relatively intolerant of habitat surrounded by urban development. None of these species is considered rare in the province or in the geographic site region. The most common breeding species include generalists such as American robin, but also birds more specific to thicket habitats such as yellow warbler and cedar waxwing. Willow flycatcher, a species significant in urbanized parts of the watershed because it is dependent on shrubby wetland habitat, is found in wet pockets throughout the park site on the Base Lands and in Tommy Thompson Park. American woodcock can be seen displaying in open habitats in Tommy Thompson Park and on the Base Lands, as well as along the eastern part of the North Shore. Blue-gray gnatcatcher, an open woods bird species found mainly in the southern parts of Ontario, is considered a probable breeding species in several areas within the Lake Ontario Park on the North Shore and in Tommy Thompson Park.

Manicured parks with mature trees in the Lake Ontario Park site provide very little habitat for breeding birds or any other wildlife, as there is almost no structural diversity to support nest sites, and very few forage plant species. The only bird species present in Kew Gardens, for example, was red-eyed vireo, a ubiquitous bird in dense forest habitat that is also commonly found in urban parks and gardens. Similarly, beach habitat in well-used areas supports no breeding bird species, because of the extreme disturbance on the beach. Killdeer were breeding in the fenced-off portion of the beach south of Kew Gardens.



## 12.1.1 OTHER WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

### REPTILES

Most reptile species noted within the Lake Ontario Park site are common in open and partially wooded habitats in other parts of Ontario, but are considered significant in urban habitat by TRCA. One species, Eastern milksnake, is considered provincially significant as it appears to be in decline, and the reason for the decline is not clearly understood. Eastern milksnake has been noted only at Tommy Thompson Park. Eastern gartersnake is the most common species of snake in the Lake Ontario Park. It has been noted in Tommy Thompson Park, on the Base Lands and at Ashbridge's Bay. Like most snake species, this species needs to move below the frost line in winter. These snakes congregate deep in the rubble on the shorelines within the Park during the cold months, emerging to bask in the early spring. Dekay's brownsnake has also been observed in Tommy Thompson Park.

Painted turtles are found in sheltered bays along the Toronto waterfront in Tommy Thompson Park, particularly in areas where woody debris provides basking sites. Map turtle, a nationally and provincially significant Species at Risk (Special Concern), has also been noted near Tommy Thompson Park. Turtle species need undisturbed sandy upland sites close to water to lay eggs, and are vulnerable to disturbance.

### AMPHIBIANS

The only amphibians noted in the Lake Ontario Park are American toad and leopard frog, both of which are dependent on protected pools of standing water in the spring for breeding sites. Breeding sites are rare in the LOP site, even though relatively large areas of standing water persist on the Base Lands until early in the summer. Leopard frog and American toad breeding congregations are confined to one or two individuals calling in early spring from these pools. It is possible that the pools are not deep enough to persist until late enough in the spring to ensure the tadpoles can transform to adults, or that poor soil and groundwater conditions are affecting the tadpoles. Leopard frogs are more common in pools within Tommy Thompson Park. Toads are also present in the newly created wetland cells in Tommy Thompson Park, and it is likely that these will become important breeding habitat for amphibians along the waterfront.

### MAMMALS

There have been few studies on the smallest and most diverse group of mammals potentially present on the Lake Ontario Park site: namely shrews and mice. However, signs of rodents such as meadow vole, for example, are present. It is likely that urban mammals such as raccoons and skunks are abundant. Coyotes and foxes are predators seen occasionally in Tommy Thompson Park, and likely roam throughout the area. Coyotes have been known to den in Tommy Thompson Park.

The only mammal species found on the Base Lands and North Shore that are considered significant in the urbanized areas of the Toronto Lake Ontario Watershed are meadow vole (noted on the North Shore) and cottontail rabbit. Most of these are wetland dependent, with requirements for water bodies that contain obligate aquatic plants, invertebrates and vertebrates. All wetland species are found in Tommy Thompson Park, as there is only very limited habitat for them on the Base Lands and North Shore.

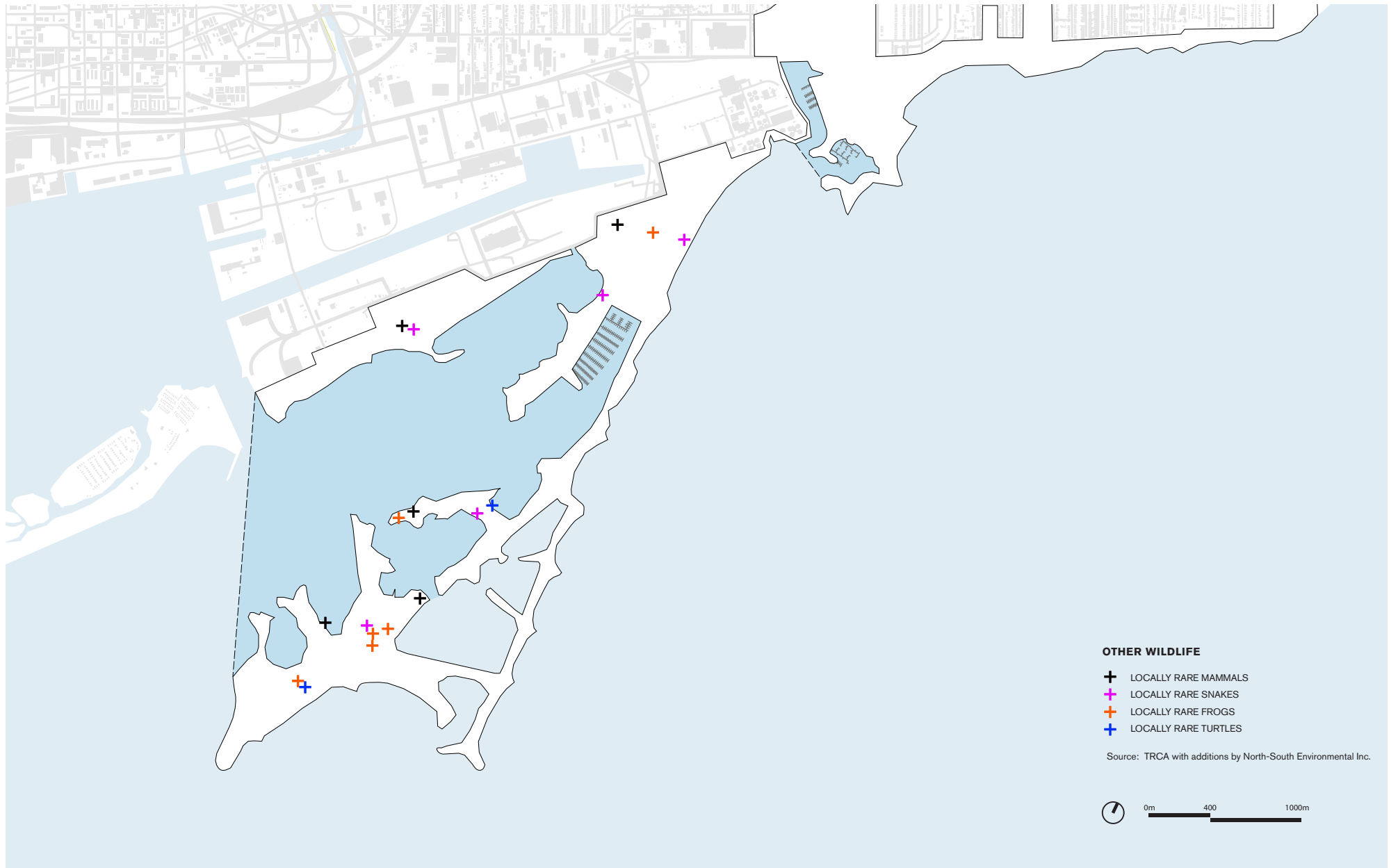
### FISH

Fifty species of fish have been collected along the Toronto waterfront. However, there is little feeding or cover habitat for fish close to shore. The waterfront is composed of many substrate types (cobble, sand, boulder and fill) but aquatic vegetation, as well as structural elements are lacking. Other types of habitat that are critical for diversity, such as reefs and escarpments, river mouths and weedy bays are lacking. Most of the shoreline has been engineered. There is only one small creek that would provide spawning habitat for many small fish species. Some bays are sheltered, and would be possible candidates for restoration of aquatic vegetation. Considerable restoration has been proposed for the Toronto waterfront by TRCA. This includes restoration of aquatic vegetation, placement of shoals and enrichment of habitat within other structures. Several undesirable species (such as common carp) inhabit the area. This species, which disturb sediments and dislodge rooted plants, presents a particular challenge to the process of re-establishing aquatic and emergent vegetation communities.

Many of the fish species in the study area are known to be found in a variety of habitats including both open coast areas and more sheltered embayments. These species include alewife, white sucker, common carp, emerald shiner, spottail shiner and rainbow smelt. These species make up the majority of the community composition in the study area, likely because they do not have highly specific habitat requirements.

Fish species that prefer open coast areas in the study area include three-spine stickleback, brown trout, rainbow trout, lake trout, smallmouth bass and American eel.

Fish species that prefer sheltered embayments, coastal wetlands and estuaries include rock bass, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed, freshwater drum, yellow perch, gizzard shad, bluntnose minnow, brown bullhead and northern pike.



## 12.12 WILDLIFE SPECIES INVENTORY

At right is a visual inventory of some of the major wildlife species that currently inhabit the Lake Ontario Park site. Habitat enhancements would be designed to support these communities and increase diversity of native habitat to bring back some species that may have been displaced by change on the waterfront.

**MAMMALS**



BEAVER



COTTONTAIL RABBIT



COYOTE



EASTERN CHIPMUNK



MUSKRAT



OPOSSUM



RACCOON



RED FOX



RED SQUIRREL



SHREW



SKUNK



WHITE - FOOTED MOUSE

**FISH**



ALEWIFE



BLUNTNOSE MINNOW



BROWN BULLHEAD



COMMON CARP



COMMON SHINER



EMERALD SHINER



GIZZARD SHAD



PUMPKINSEED



RAINBOW SMELT



ROCK BASS



SPOTTAIL SHINER



YELLOW PERCH



WHITE SUCKER

**BIRDS**



CANADA WARBLER



CASPIAN TERN



COMMON LOON



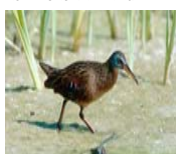
GOLDEN - CROWNED KINGLET



HERMIT THRUSH



RUBY - CROWNED KINGLET



VIRGINIA RAIL



WHITE - THROATED SPARROW



YELLOW - RUMPED WARBLER

**REPTILES**



NORTHERN WATERSNAKE



DEKAY'S BROWNSNAKE



EASTERN GARTERSNAKE



NORTHERN RING NECK



NORTHERN MAP TURTLE



MIDLAND PAINTED TURTLE



BLANDING'S TURTLE



COMMON SNAPPING TURTLE

**AMPHIBIANS**



AMERICAN TOAD



GREEN FROG



NORTHERN LEOPARD FROG

Sources: Tommy Thompson Park Public Urban Wilderness Habitat Creation and Enhancement Projects 1995-2000; Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Toronto Waterfront Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy

## 12.13 RESOURCES

The Master Plan team reviewed the following documents and drawings throughout the planning process:

### **MATERIAL IN DIGITAL PROJECT LIBRARY**

TWRC Central Waterfront Public Space Framework

TWRC Marine Strategy Study

TWRC Marine Strategy Resource Guide

TWRC Marine Use Strategy

TWRC RFP for Environmental Assessment Study for Port Lands Core Infrastructure Corridor, 2006

TWRC Commissioner's Park concept plan

TWRC LOP and adjacent property map

Consultant presentation on archaeology of the Commissioners Park site

Outer Harbour Sailing Federation Report on Recreational Boating Uses

PFR Seniors' Recreation Strategy

PFR Recreation Facilities Report

PFR Toronto Islands history (compilation of web articles)

PFR Lake Ontario Park History and Heritage, 2006 draft

TRCA Tommy Thompson Park entrance drawings

TRCA Tommy Thompson Park Urban Wilderness Habitat Creation and Enhancement Projects 1995 – 2000

TRCA Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan, 1989

TRCA Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Addendum, 1992

TRCA Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Design Project, 2002

TRCA Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Implementation Project, Trails Master Plan, 2006

TRCA Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Implementation Project, Aquatic Habitat Plan, 2006

TRCA Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Implementation Project, Terrestrial Plan, 2006

TRCA Baseland Remediation Report to Parks Canada, 2006

Tommy Thompson Park Advisory Committee, Terms of Reference, 2006

TRCA Environmentally Significant Areas criteria and descriptions, 1993

TRCA Integrated Shoreline Management Plan, 1996

TRCA Aerial photography of TTP, 2001-2005

TRCA Aquatic Habitat Restoration Strategy (also available online at [http://www.trca.on.ca/water\\_protection/strategies/lakeontario/waterfront](http://www.trca.on.ca/water_protection/strategies/lakeontario/waterfront))

TRCA TTP bird checklist

City of Toronto, Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, amendment text and Open Space Plan

City of Toronto, Culture Plan for the Creative City, 2003

City, TEDCO, TWRC MOU regarding development in the Port Lands, Jan 2006

Toronto Sports Council Sport Framework

Snow Disposal Feasibility Study/ EA

Interim Sports Fields project description and current draft of site plan

Unwin Avenue Alignment studies

Minutes of LOP Agency Partners Meetings in 2004

PFR operating and capital budgets, 2006

City of Toronto operating budget background, March 2006

Hanlan Boat Club letter to the mayor and facility sketch

Memo from Karen Pitre on Transitional Sports Fields, June 9, 2006

City wide 1999 Colour Ortho resampled at 2.5m pixel with AutoCAD base drawing of site

AutoCAD topo file prepared by MMM

Mappings from the Central Waterfront Public Space Framework (digital EPS/AI format)



### **HARDCOPY IN PROJECT LIBRARY**

City of Toronto Green Development Standard, "Bird-friendly Development Guidelines", March 2007.

PFR Status matrix for park concessions and leases within LOP planning area

Ashbridge's Bay Anthology of Writings, edited by George Fairfield, 1998

TRCA Moving Toward the Living City: Strategic Plan Summary, February 2006  
Outer Harbour Marina brochure, Toronto Port Authority

Toronto Cycling Map, 2005

Don Mouth Naturalization Project, Rationale for Consideration of Alternatives, TRCA, 2006

Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan Implementation Project,  
Requirements Under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, TRCA, 2006

TWRC project summary sheets on transit and road improvements, April 2006

### **ONLINE DOCUMENTS**

Port Lands Implementation Strategy, Proposed Final Draft 7.0. TWRC, April 2006

<http://www.towaterfront.ca/dbdocs/44526f58322e6.pdf>

TWRC Sustainability Framework  
[www.towaterfront.ca](http://www.towaterfront.ca), under the "sustainability" tab

Parks, Forestry and Recreation Strategic Plan 'Our Common Grounds'  
<http://www.toronto.ca/parks/commongrounds.htm>

Don River Naturalization Project – Background EA information and draft Terms of Reference  
[http://www.trca.on.ca/water\\_protection/don\\_mouth/default.asp?load=flood\\_protection](http://www.trca.on.ca/water_protection/don_mouth/default.asp?load=flood_protection)

Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant Landscape Master Plan  
[http://www.toronto.ca/water/wastewater\\_treatment/treatment\\_plants/ashbridges/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/water/wastewater_treatment/treatment_plants/ashbridges/index.htm)  
[http://www.toronto.ca/water/wastewater\\_treatment/treatment\\_plants/ashbridges/pdf/ashbridges\\_bay\\_site\\_design\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.toronto.ca/water/wastewater_treatment/treatment_plants/ashbridges/pdf/ashbridges_bay_site_design_final_report.pdf)

Coatsworth Cut Sewershed Study  
[http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/coatsworth\\_cut\\_sewershed/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/coatsworth_cut_sewershed/index.htm)

Drawings of potential Coatsworth Cut Deflector or others by Shore Plan Engineering  
[http://www.trca.on.ca/water\\_protection/default.asp?load=ashbridge](http://www.trca.on.ca/water_protection/default.asp?load=ashbridge)  
Laura Stephenson at TRCA can provide more info.

Transit and transportation information  
<http://www.toronto.ca/ttc/>  
<http://www.toronto.ca/transportation/index.htm>

Port Lands land ownership map  
[http://www.tedco.ca/PDF/Port\\_LandsOwnershipMap.pdf](http://www.tedco.ca/PDF/Port_LandsOwnershipMap.pdf)

Local and city-wide demographic information  
<http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/resources.asp>  
[http://www.toronto.ca/toronto\\_overview/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/toronto_overview/index.htm)  
[http://www.toronto.ca/economic\\_profile/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/economic_profile/index.htm)  
<http://www.statcan.ca/start.html>

Background land use planning and policy documents  
<http://www.toronto.ca/torontoplan/index.htm>  
<http://www.toronto.ca/waterfront/index.htm>  
[http://www.toronto.ca/waterfront/waterfront\\_part2.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/waterfront/waterfront_part2.htm)

Master plan for West Donlands  
<http://www.towaterfront.ca/thirdnavloader.php?first=3e9112548cd89&second=3e9ba9dc309fc&third=3fd773c147df1>

Master plan for East Bayfront  
<http://www.towaterfront.ca/thirdnavloader.php?first=3e9112548cd89&second=3e9ba9dc309fc&third=3fd0b221b0dbd>

Information on TEDCO holdings / planning and development projects  
<http://www.tedco.ca/about.html>  
[http://www.tedco.ca/realestate\\_Port\\_Lands\\_map.html](http://www.tedco.ca/realestate_Port_Lands_map.html)  
[http://www.tedco.ca/PDF/Port\\_LandsOwnershipMap.pdf](http://www.tedco.ca/PDF/Port_LandsOwnershipMap.pdf)

Information about EXPO 2015 pre-bid work  
<http://www.tedco.ca/2015expo.html>  
<http://www.expo2015torontoconsults.ca/>

Toronto Port Authority Land Use Plan  
[http://www.torontoport.com/PortAuthority/Corporate\\_reports\\_content.asp?id=75](http://www.torontoport.com/PortAuthority/Corporate_reports_content.asp?id=75)

Port Lands Energy Centre  
This is a proposal for a new power plant across the street from LOP. Highly controversial, but the province (who has jurisdiction) is pushing it ahead.  
<http://www.PortLandsenergycentre.com/>



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