

KIDS HELP CREATE  
DON RIVER PARK



# KIDS HELP CREATE DON RIVER PARK



**T**his report was prepared for the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation by Lura Consulting. It represents the voices of the teachers, students, mentors and principals of the schools that participated in the "Kids Help Create Don River Park!" project.

If you have any questions or comments please contact:

**Tanya Bevington**

Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation  
20 Bay Street, Suite 1310  
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2N8  
Phone: 416-214-1344  
Fax: 416-214-4591  
tbevington@towaterfront.ca

OR

**Susan Hall or Liz Nield**

Lura Consulting  
107 Church Street, Suite 400  
Toronto, Ontario M5C 2G5  
Phone: 416-410-3888  
Fax: 416-536-3453  
shall@lura.ca



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## Acknowledgements

"Kids Help Create Don River Park!" would not have been possible without the efforts of the following organizations:

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation for recognizing the importance of consulting with local children about the park design and for providing guidance and direction throughout the project.

Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates and Urban Strategies for incorporating the students' ideas in the design of Don River Park and for helping to ensure that the workshops and mural event were a success.

Thanks to the over 300 students, teachers, volunteers and principals from Downtown Alternative, Market Lane Public School, St. Paul's Catholic School, St. Michael Catholic School, and Nelson Mandela Public School for sharing your ideas and participating in this important park design process.



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ACT 1

## About this Project



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## What is the Don River Park?

**D**on River Park is a new multi-use community park being designed in the West Don Lands in the City of Toronto. The Park will be just over 18 acres; that's the same size as about 12 regulation size soccer fields!



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## Where is Don River Park?

**D**on River Park will be located near the mouth of the Don River in the West Don Lands. The West Don Lands is a new neighbourhood being built at the eastern edge of Toronto's downtown. It is the area that runs from Parliament Street in the west to the Don River in the east and from King Street south down to the rail corridor. The West Don Lands will be a neighbourhood with many homes, stores, restaurants, as well as a recreation centre, an elementary school, with streetcars, buses and bike paths to make it easy for people to get downtown and around the neighbourhood.

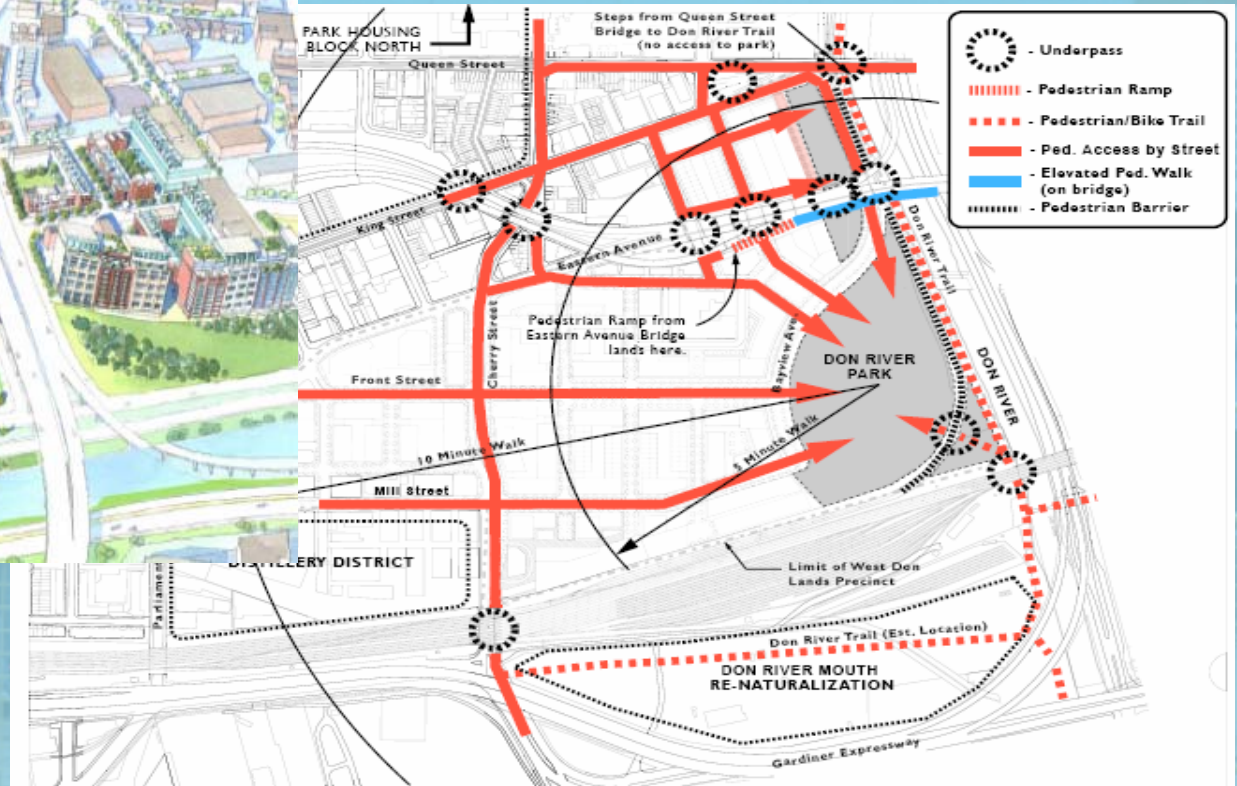
On the next page you can see a picture that shows where the Don River Park will be within the West Don Lands neighbourhood. You can also see how easy it is to get to the park from the local area and downtown.

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West Don Lands Concept

## Ways to Get to Don River Park





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## Who is designing and building the Park?

**T**he Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation is responsible for creating and building the Don River Park. The TWRC is working to transform parts of Toronto's waterfront along Lake Ontario into places where people can live, work and play.



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## What used to happen in the Don River Park area?

Over two centuries ago the city of Toronto did not exist! It was a much smaller place called the Town of York and at that time the West Don Lands were natural wetlands and marshes that surrounded the Don River.

By the 1800s, many people had moved to the Town of York to live and work in the area and the City of Toronto was officially born. The wetlands and marshes surrounding the Don River were filled in so industries and factories could be built to supply the people of Toronto with coal, textiles, and furniture.



Over 2 Centuries Ago



Mid 1800's to Mid 1900's



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## What used to happen in the Don River Park area?

As time passed, these industries from the 1800s closed but the buildings were left standing. As we have learned more about the environment, we found out that some of these industries had contaminated the soil and made it unhealthy.

This means that the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation must clean up the soil before starting to build a new community or create a new natural area for families to use.



The Site Today



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## Tell me about "Kids Help Create Don River Park!"

**P**arks are very important places for people of all ages, especially for kids! Parks provide all sorts of opportunities to play, learn, hang out with friends and family, and to spend time outdoors.

What do you like about parks?

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"Kids Help Create Don River Park!" was a project to give kids a chance to tell the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation what their favourite park activities are and what they want to see in their community's new park, before it was designed.



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Tell me about "Kids Help Create Don River Park!"



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## What Schools Helped to Create the Don River Park?

**F**ive schools took part in this project:

- ◆ Downtown Alternative
- ◆ Market Lane Public School
- ◆ St. Paul's Catholic School
- ◆ St. Michael Catholic School
- ◆ Nelson Mandela Public School

In total, about 300 kids in grades 4, 5 and 6 shared their ideas about the future Park!



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## What Did the Kids Do?

**D**uring a workshop at each of the schools, kids learned about the history of the park and some of the features the new park would contain. After the presentation, the students worked in teams of four to design a section of the mural that included the activities they would like to do in the park. Each team was given a different season to consider.

In the second part of the project, students gathered together to design a mural by painting their ideas on the boards outside of the park construction site.



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ACT 2

## The Workshops





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## What Did The Kids Say?

Overall the kids asked for a safe and secure park to play and hang out in during the four seasons!

- Fall
- Winter
- Spring
- Summer

The kids had all kinds of creative and interesting ideas about the types of activities they wanted in the park for every season. Check out the following pages to see how they would like to use the park in each season.



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## Fall

- Campfire
- Pumpkin contest, pumpkin field
- Slides
- Scarecrow
- Dog area
- Climbing trees
- Picnic tables
- Leaves to play in
- Fall Thanksgiving festival
- Apple picking



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## Winter

- Snack bar
- Tobogganing hills
- Area for snowball fights
- Skating rink with lights
- Skate rental place
- Area to play in snow
- Hot chocolate
- Skiing
- Christmas tree



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Spring

- Nature trail
- Splash park
- Flowers/garden
- Swimming
- Soccer, Football, Skateboarding
- BMX bike riding
- Ponds
- Places to climb
- Trees - tree planting, tree swings





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## Fun for All Seasons

- Bumper cars
- Jacuzzi
- Colouring corner
- Hay rides
- Sitting under trees
- Adventure areas with a maze
- Tours of the park (guided and by yourself/ orienteering with maps)
- A dog friendly park (leash-free and on-leash areas)
- Disco



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## Grande Finale -- The Mural Event

On October 10, 2006, 106 students from Downtown Alternative, Market Lane Public School, St. Michael Catholic School, and Nelson Mandela Public School painted their mural designs at the park site (on Cherry Street near Mill Street).

*"I wanted to say thank you for the opportunity to work with you. The students had an excellent time and are now excited to show their family members the wall."*

*Jennifer Edwards, Teacher at St. Michael Catholic School*



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## Next Steps

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation values the input of the students who participated in this project and have considered their ideas in the Don River Park design. Detailed plans for the park are now being prepared and construction is expected to start in 2008.

We would like to thank the teachers, students, volunteers and principals from the Downtown Alternative, Market Lane Public School, St. Paul's Catholic School, St. Michael Catholic School, and Nelson Mandela Public School donating your time and contributing your ideas to this exciting and important project.

We encourage you to go see the "Kids Help Create Don River Park" mural at the corner of Cherry and Mill Street by the Distillery District.





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Stay Tuned...

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation is planning to open the Don River Park in the summer of 2008. We hope to see you there!

To find out more about the Park and how the construction is coming along; check out the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation website at [www.towaterfront.ca](http://www.towaterfront.ca).

