

CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Before Toronto was a city, thousands of tributaries and streams formed the Don Watershed, leading to a river that released into Lake Ontario through Ashbridges Bay – the largest wetland in southeast Canada. As Toronto grew, industry transformed the mouth of the Lower Don River into a concrete landscape, terminating the free flow of water to make room for a new port.

Roadways, expressways, and overpasses crossed over the Don, concealing a nature that had once sustained vital aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Floods, sediment and debris resulted from this superimposition of industry and infrastructure, creating an untenable and unsustainable landscape.

Now, as a growing international city, Toronto has an opportunity to transform a place of lost nature into a place of many natures.



WANDERING ECOLOGIES

Wandering Ecologies establishes a new identity for this site, where recreational, living and cultural activities are free to wander and overlap. Urban life and ecology are reciprocal conditions that together can transform Toronto's Lower Don Lands into a new cultural and ecological paradigm.

Lake Ontario landscapes, brilliantly represented by first nation painters and the Group of Seven, are dynamic, fluid and colorful. Inspired by this legacy, WANDERING ECOLOGIES envisions a vibrant park within the city, where multiple rather than singular natures are seen side by side.

Releasing the Don River establishes a new framework to introduce landscapes that reveal the latent beauty of the existing infrastructure and industrial landscape.

We believe there is beauty in the reciprocity of multiple ecologies. Natural, cultural and recreational landscapes, superimposed in this setting, create a new paradigm – a relaxed balance between urban life, industrial heritage and nature.

Diverse identities and destinations in the park are shaped by the overlap and engagement, where seemingly oppositional landscapes, create a park that is distinct. WANDERING ECOLOGIES amplifies the intensely diverse identities of Toronto: a thriving international metropolis and a place of natural beauty.

City and water, infrastructure and ecology, destination and retreat: the essence and potential of Toronto's Lower Don Lands resides in celebrating these multiple ecologies.



EXISTING GREEN VOID



PROPOSED GREENWAY

TORONTO'S LOWER DON LANDS

Innovative Design Competition

Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation

Weiss/Manfredi
 du Toit Allsopp Hillier
 McCormick Rankin Corporation
 Ecoplans Limited
 Golder Associates Ltd.
 Weidinger Structural Engineers
 David Dennis Design
 Evergreen



WANDERING ECOLOGIES

A FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK

Our vision anticipates that this territory will be transformed over time, reflecting adjustments of ownership, evolution of priorities, and availability of funds. WANDERING ECOLOGIES establishes a clear but relaxed framework that can adjust to shifting priorities without sacrificing a clear identity.

Because the Port Lands are owned not by one, but by many groups and agencies, we believe a robust and resilient framework rather than an explicit and overly developed plan, will provide the most agile strategy to transform this critical intersection of the city and water.

This transformation begins with three frameworks:

Naturalize the Lower Don River and establish new ecologies and destinations.

Connect new and existing neighborhoods with a layered network of transit, roads, bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Create sequentially phased new communities that foreground sustainable initiatives and join the larger waterfront community.



1. NATURALIZE THE DON RIVER



2. CONNECT NEIGHBOURHOODS



3. EXTEND A COMMUNITY

The Lower Don Meander

- 1 Natural Embankment
- 2 Debris Collection
- 3 Sediment Fore Bay
- 4 Floating Island
- 5 Terraces
- 6 Lower Don Bridge

The Peninsula

- 7 Essroc Island
- 8 Industrial Heritage Site
- 9 Open Fields
- 10 Picnic Areas
- 11 The Hills

The Outlook

- 12 Pier
- 13 Sandbar Beach

The Marshlands

- 14 Compost / Regenerative Soil
- 15 Environmental Learning Center
- 16 Deep Retention Pond
- 17 Shallow Retention Pond
- 18 Detention Pond
- 19 Extreme Sports (Climbing, Skateboarding, Basketball)

Recreational Valley

- 20 Recreational Fields (Soccer, Ultimate Frisbee, Lacrosse, Field Hockey, Rugby)

Lower Don Square

- 21 Residential Towers / Retail Blocks
- 22 Public Plaza
- 23 Live / Work

Central Port Lands

- 24 Community Gardens
- 25 Playgrounds
- 26 Dog Run
- 27 Promenade
- 28 Commercial Zone
- 29 Future Residential



WANDERING ECOLOGIES

THE LOWER DON MEANDER

NEW NATURES



The naturalization of the Lower Don will transform the area from its post-industrial derelict condition into a vibrant public space.

The release and reconfiguration of the mouth of the Don River introduces a collection of new natures. A relaxed configuration of water and landscape framed by new topographies simultaneously alleviates flooding, simplifies river maintenance and amplifies the latent beauty of the existing infrastructure.

The park's wide array of plant species create a broad spectrum of colors and textures throughout the seasons, providing a dynamic counterpoint to the heroic scale of the site's industrial heritage.



NORVAL MORRISSEAU



AN EARLY MORNING STROLL ALONG THE LOWER DON IN AUTUMN



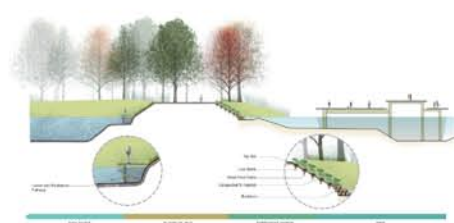
BROWNFIELD RESTORATION STRATEGY



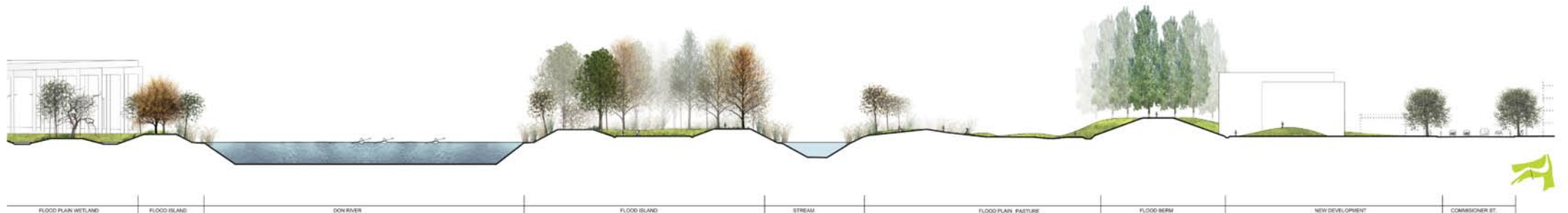
JOGGING AND BIKING THROUGH THE MARSHLANDS IN MAY



SECTION THROUGH MARSHLAND AND DON RIVER



SHORELINE RESTORATION



SECTION THROUGH DON RIVER AND ESSROC PENINSULA

WANDERING ECOLOGIES

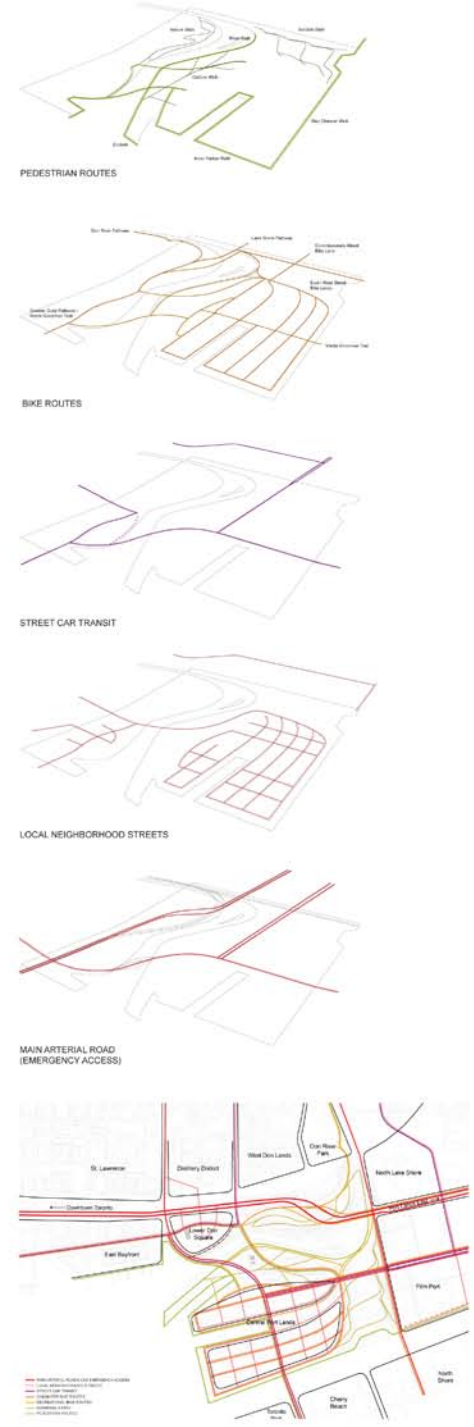
RELEASE THE DON RIVER

NETWORKS AND DESTINATIONS

New and existing neighbourhoods are connected with a layered network of transit, roads, bicycle and pedestrian paths. This new transportation network extends the emerging pattern of growth along the central waterfront and accommodates the naturalized mouth of the Don River.

Walking, cycling and transit paths are strategically located at the water frontage, linking new and existing destinations within a finer grain of streets and paths.

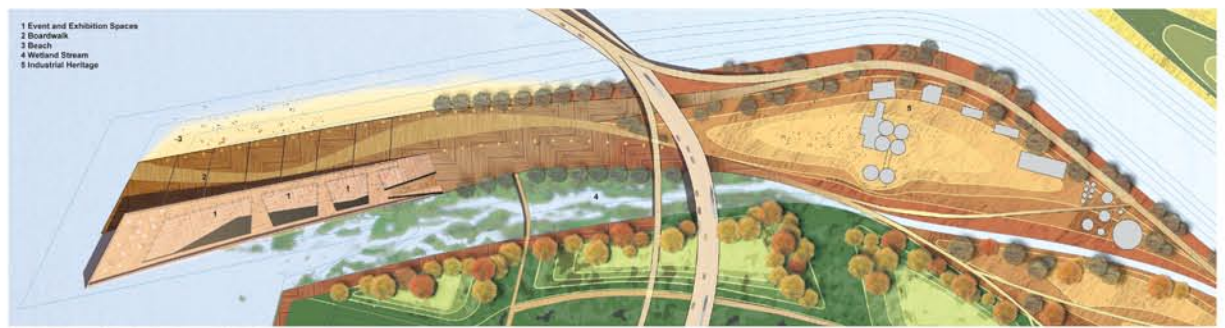
Central to connecting the city and Port Lands, a new landmark bridge links a series of places including the Industrial Heritage Peninsula and The Outlook, with its dramatic views back to the city.



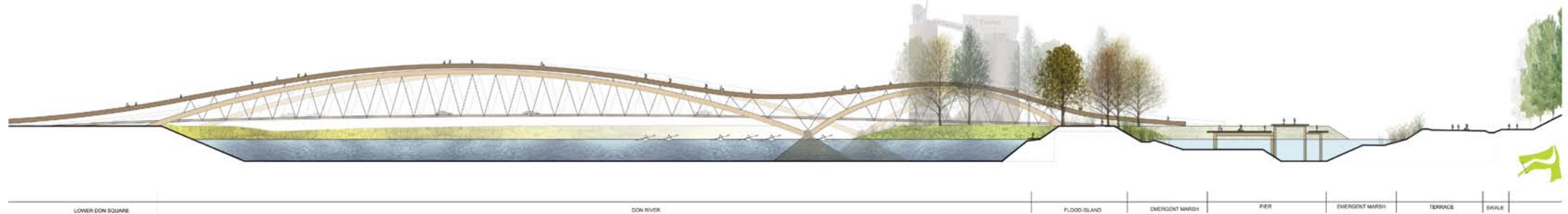
ENJOYING A SUMMER SUNSET AT THE OUTLOOK AND BEACH



RECREATIONAL BOATING AND SUN BATHING AT THE PIER IN JULY



OUTLOOK AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE PENINSULA



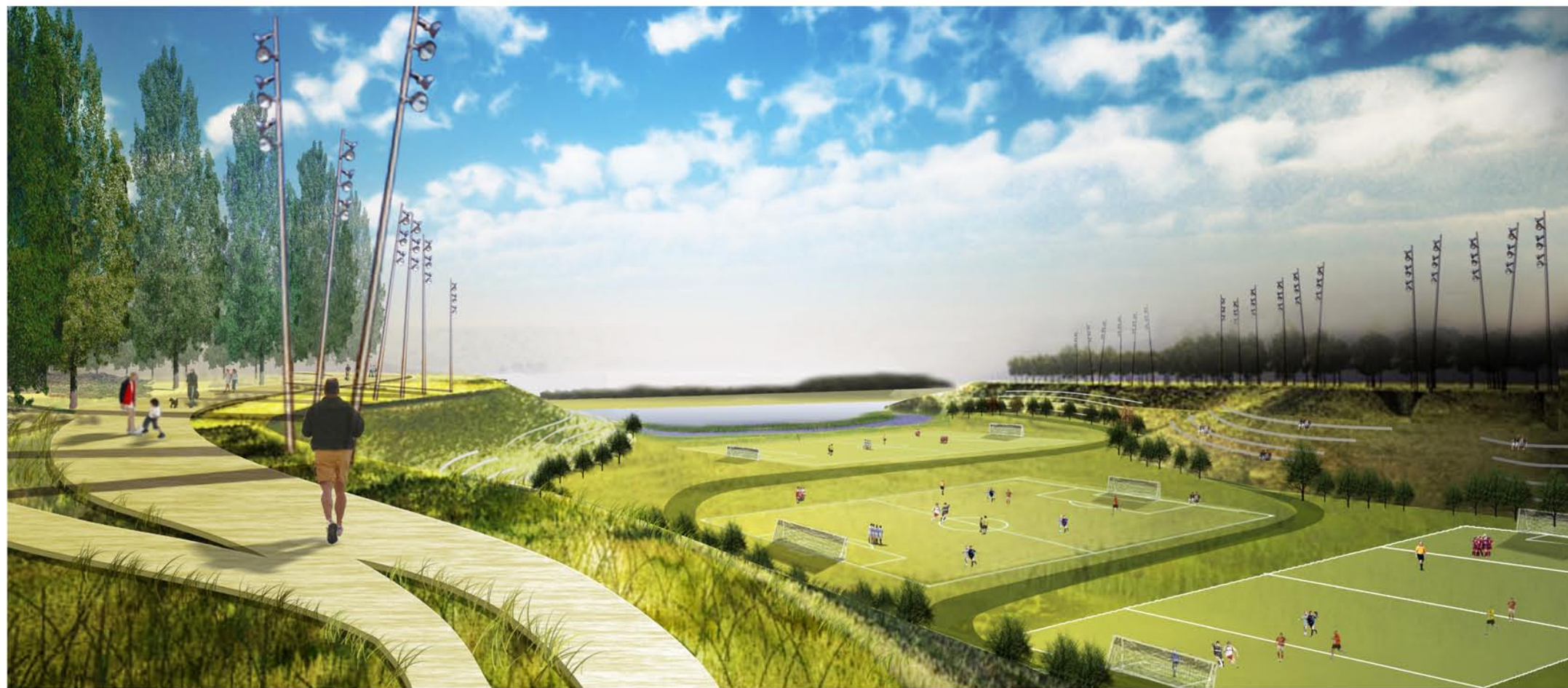
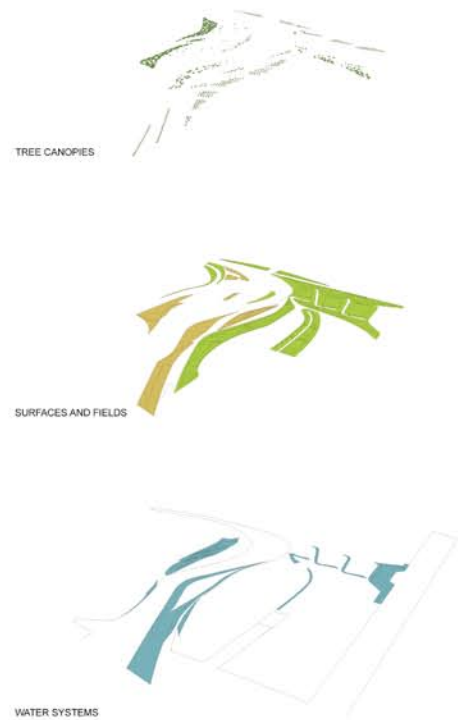
SECTION THROUGH DON RIVER AND ESSROC PENINSULA

WANDERING ECOLOGIES

A NEW OUTLOOK

DIVERSE ECOSYSTEMS

The topographically dynamic site creates diverse environments and multiple ecosystems. Aquatic, wetland, meadow and forest communities are complemented by the more structured landscapes of playing fields and recreational trails. Layered ecologies support planned and spontaneous recreational activities.



SOCCER FINALS AT THE RECREATIONAL VALLEY IN SEPTEMBER



SKIING AND SKATING AT THE PENINSULA IN JANUARY



SECTION THROUGH DIVERSE ECOSYSTEMS



SECTION THROUGH RECREATIONAL VALLEY

WANDERING ECOLOGIES

ESCAPE TO NEW HABITATS

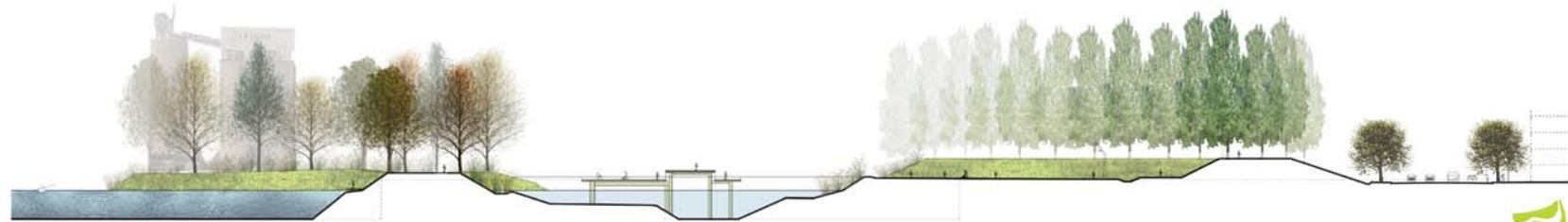


SUMMER EVENTS AT LOWER DON SQUARE

RECAPTURING THE WATERFRONT

The catalytic powers of landscape, architecture and infrastructure together clarify the identity of Toronto's Lower Don Lands. This post-industrial site presents the city of Toronto with a remarkable opportunity to invent a vibrant waterfront destination.

WANDERING ECOLOGIES presents a new paradigm: urban life and ecology are reciprocal conditions that together will transform Toronto's Lower Don Lands.



SECTION THROUGH LAKE MARSH

WANDERING ECOLOGIES

TORONTO'S NEXT DESTINATION