

GREEN CONNECTIONS

Hello friends,

A few weeks ago, we shared the news about the *Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant Landform Project* with you: a new green connection towards the east.

Now, the exciting major part of the green connection is well underway at the mouth of the Don River.

Our vision, first expressed in the mid-'90s, that all lands south of the ship channel be zoned Parkland, was further amplified 10 years ago with our *Parkland in the Port Lands* proposal (below) which reiterated that The Spit and Baselands be connected by major green spaces through to the Don River.

Parkland in the Port Lands

May 31, 2012



"PARKLAND IN THE PORT LANDS": This map has been prepared using the Port Lands Acceleration Initiative mapping in order to illustrate the parkland imperative for all lands south of the Ship Channel.

Friends of the Spit



As you've no doubt seen, or at least experienced based on the amount of traffic disruption and trail closures at the least, major works are underway by Waterfront Toronto at the Port Lands. They have begun to transform the mouth of the Don River into the first stage of the green lands which will ultimately connect the Don River Valley to The Spit.

The Plan below, provided by Waterfront Toronto, illustrates the new configuration for the mouth of the Don, and shows the resulting green space.

The Port Lands



In mid-September, we had the good fortune to be taken on a tour, by Waterfront Toronto staff, of the works at the mouth of the Don River. Just to say that these works are major is an understatement! This is environmental planning and engineering at a scale we have not seen before.

The benefit to The Spit and to its visitors and inhabitants is that this is the beginning of what we hope one day will be a full pedestrian and natural connection to the west and north for humans and animals. The nature of The Spit will benefit, as will all Torontonians and Park users.

Here are some selected photos, with brief notes, that only begin to illustrate the scope and complexity.



Photo 1

Looking west, at the north end of the new river bed (just south of the Keating Channel). The heavy stone base raises the riverbed elevation, and is intended to break-up ice formations as they come down the river.



Photo 2
Standing in the river bed, looking north at the new Commissioners Street bridge



Photo 3
Photo 4



Photos 3 and 4 illustrate the river bank preparations



Photo 5
Looking west (roughly) at the new pedestrian bridge across the new river bed



Photo 6
Looking West, at Polson Slip, at what will be the new mouth of the Don, to the Atlas Crane. The crane is being retained as an historic artifact, a reminder of the area's industrial heritage. The foundation base "wraps/shields" are new, to discourage climbers.



Photo 7

This photo shows some of the new planting material, placed, being watered, and being protected from marauding geese! We were told that over a million plants will be planted!

During the course of the excavation, new plant material was noticed, growing at the excavation. An investigation determined that these were plants from a century-old seed stock uncovered in the course of the work. A representative of the TRCA has picked up the story and has let us know the following:

Last year during excavation work at the Port Lands, historical soil was daylighted and to everyone's surprise and delight this material sprouted plants! Hardstem bulrush and broadleaf cattail grew up in the exposed soil after having been buried under 7 meters of dirt for about 100 years. Most of the plants have been temporarily relocated to Tommy Thompson Park where they were transplanted into the restored Cell 2 wetland and are thriving. When construction of the wetlands are complete in the new Don River mouth, the plants will be moved back to the Port Lands where we hope they will continue to flourish.

All in all, from the plants, and their connection to The Spit, through the Greening of the Port Lands, this is a good news story.

This is just an overview. As well as the information elsewhere on the Waterfront Toronto website, you might also enjoy exploring the interactive map on the Waterfront Toronto website: [Interactive Project Map - Waterfront Toronto \(portlandsto.ca\)](https://www.portlandsto.ca/interactive-project-map) It works best on a computer (rather than a phone).

Cheers,

Friends of the Spit.