

Western Waterfront Master Plan

Date:	May 15, 2009
To:	Executive Committee
From:	Deputy City Manager Richard Butts
Wards:	13, 14
Reference Number:	P:\2009\ClusterB\wf\ec09003 and ec09003 Att. 1 & ec09003 Att. 2

SUMMARY

This report recommends that the Western Waterfront Master Plan be approved by City Council and used to guide future decisions related to improvements to the public realm within the Western Waterfront over the next twenty years and beyond.

The Master Plan provides an overall vision for improving parkland, beaches, break walls, trails, promenades, roads, bridges, servicing and recreational facilities within the Western Waterfront. The Plan applies to the waterfront area between the Humber River and Exhibition Place and includes Sunnyside Beach and Marilyn Bell Park. It was prepared for the City by a consulting team led by planningAlliance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that City Council:

1. Approve the May 2009 Western Waterfront Master Plan which is to guide future decisions related to improvements to the public realm within this area;
2. Direct the General Manager of Transportation Services to include for consideration in the 2010 Capital Budget for Transportation Services as a new project, \$2.0 million in new capital funding (\$1.0 million in 2010 and \$1.0 million in 2011) in order to initiate in 2010 the environmental assessment for reconfiguration of Lake Shore Boulevard between the Humber River and Exhibition Place;

3. Request the Chief Planner to consider inclusion of the Western Waterfront Master Plan Area within the jurisdiction of the City of Toronto Design Review Panel;
4. Authorize the Waterfront Project Director to issue the Notice of Completion and file the May 2009 Western Waterfront Master Plan in the public record in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment;
5. Direct the Waterfront Project Director to establish an inter-divisional staff committee to coordinate and identify resource requirements for implementation of the Master Plan;
6. Authorize the creation of community advisory committees for major projects within the Western Waterfront to provide advice on future phasing and design;
7. Direct the General Managers of Toronto Water, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Transportation Services, and the Executive Directors of Technical Services and City Planning, to identify new projects that could expedite implementation of the Master Plan in the short term, for consideration as part of the 2010 Capital Budget process;
8. Direct City staff to consult with impacted stakeholders to address operational and other issues when designing road realignments and improvements required to enhance public access to the water's edge; and
9. Authorize and direct appropriate City Officials to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Implementation Points

The Master Plan does not constitute official plan policy under the Planning Act but is a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Master Plan pursuant to the Environmental Assessment Act.

Financial Impact

Funding for some projects referenced in the Master Plan is available under existing City programs in the approved 2009 Capital Budget and Five-Year Capital Forecast for Transportation Services, Technical Services, Toronto Water, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, and City Planning. These projects, with a total value in 2009 of \$2.134 million, are:

- Rehabilitation of Jameson Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard bridges over the Gardiner Expressway
- Beach curtain pilot project at Sunnyside Beach
- War of 1812 Bi-Centennial Trail

- Humber East Trail Improvements- Gardiner to The Queensway
- Boardwalk Repair- Sunnyside Pavilion to Palais Royale
- Interpretive Feature- Humber Historical Trail

In addition, developer contributions under Section 37 of the Planning Act and a private donation are being used in 2009 to construct a new playground at the Joy Station at a cost of \$125,000, and up to \$325,000 in Section 37 funding is available in 2009 for the installation of public art at the Windermere underpass.

The cost in 2010 for Technical Services to continue the rehabilitation of the Jameson and Lake Shore Boulevard bridges over the Gardiner is expected to be in the range of \$3 million. Funding in 2010 for this and other ongoing capital programs of City divisions within the Western Waterfront, and for any possible enhancements to these programs to expedite implementation of the Master Plan along with their capital and operating impacts, will be reviewed by the recommended Inter-divisional Staff Committee for consideration in the 2010 Capital Budget.

Initiation of a new project, the Environmental Assessment for reconfiguration of Lake Shore Boulevard in the Western Waterfront, will cost up to \$2.0 million over two years. It is recommended that a request for new capital funding for this amount be presented for consideration in the 2010 Capital Budget for Transportation Services.

Other new projects identified in the implementation plan of the Western Waterfront Master Plan will require new capital funding from the City, private sector or other sources. Staff is recommending that any new projects be identified and assessed by the Inter-divisional Staff Committee recommended in this report and submitted for consideration as new projects in the 2010 Capital Budget process.

A preliminary estimate (in 2009 dollars) prepared by the study consultants of the capital cost for full implementation of the Master Plan is:

Phase 1 (1-5 years) -	\$23.5 million
Phase 2 (6-20 years) -	\$196.9 million
Phase 3 (20+ years) -	<u>\$42.0 million</u>
Total	\$262.4 million

The cost of Phase 3 would increase in the range of \$70 million if deflector islands at the Humber River are constructed.

These preliminary cost estimates are based on a concept plan level of analysis and the consultants' experience with similar projects. A contingency of 30% for land-based projects and 40% for in-lake projects is included. Cost escalation would further increase the costs beyond 2009 dollars, depending on when the projects are implemented.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

On September 25, 26 and 27, 2006, Council adopted a framework for developing the Western Waterfront Master Plan and Toronto Beaches Plan. Council requested that the Master Plan be available prior to further permanent investments being made in the area, and that it include analysis of realigning Lake Shore Boulevard to create more green spaces and options for pedestrian, cycling and parking access in the Western Waterfront. www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060925/cofa.pdf

On September 10, 2008, the Planning and Growth Management Committee requested that the staff report on the Western Waterfront Master Plan address the feasibility of “decking/bridging” the Gardiner Expressway west of Exhibition Place (and explore the possibility of creating development opportunities on these deck/bridges for financing the project), merging and/or downsizing the east and westbound lanes of Lake Shore Boulevard west of Jameson to expand the open space along the Western Waterfront, and, increase permanent pedestrian access between neighbourhoods and the waterfront. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pg/decisions/2008-09-10-pg18-dd.pdf>

On February 23, 24 and 25, 2009, Council approved the action plan for the Toronto Beaches Plan and a three-year pilot project at Sunnyside Beach to enclose an in-lake swimming area starting in the 2009 swimming season. www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/decisions/2009-02-23-cc31-dd.htm
www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-18572.pdf

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Western Waterfront Area is approximately 120 hectares and 4 kilometres in length. It is bounded by the Humber River on the west, the CN Rail/Gardiner Expressway corridor on the north, Exhibition Place on the east and Lake Ontario on the south. Most of the Western Waterfront Area lies outside the jurisdiction of Waterfront Toronto except for the area near Marilyn Bell Park east of Dowling Avenue.

The Western Waterfront is a significant waterfront asset that offers one of the City’s longest unobstructed views of Lake Ontario. It has over 40 hectares of parkland, two trails (Martin Goodman and Humber River) and three beaches (Sunnyside, Budapest and Gzowski) jointly known as the Western Beaches. It is home to a number of recreational clubs, including the Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club, the Argonaut Rowing Club and the Boulevard Club. Several significant facilities from the early 20th century include Sunnyside Pavilion, Gus Ryder Pool, Boulevard Club, Royal Canadian Legion, Joy Oil Gas Station and Palais Royale. A break wall in Lake Ontario extends across the area and includes a new 600-metre multi-sport watercourse adjacent to Marilyn Bell Park.

In October, 2007, the City retained a multi-disciplinary consulting team led by planningAlliance, a planning/urban design firm, to prepare the Master Plan. The eight

sub-consultants have expertise in park design and recreation, landscape planning, ecology, environmental assessments, road design, coastal engineering, heritage/archaeology and public art.

The study steering committee was comprised of the heads of the Waterfront Secretariat, Technical Services, Toronto Water, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and City Planning. An inter-agency work group included representatives of these divisions as well as Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and Toronto Transit Commission (TTC).

A strong civic engagement strategy was a pre-requisite of the Master Plan. A Community Advisory Group that acted as a 'sounding board' for public stakeholders included representatives of resident associations, lessees and landowners, pedestrian and cycling communities, natural heritage and cultural interests and youth. Four meetings of the Community Advisory Group and five public open houses/meetings were held during the preparation of the Master Plan. Numerous other smaller meetings and discussions were held with individual stakeholders and interested members of the public. The December 9, 2008, public open house fulfilled the requirement for a mandatory public meeting for Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class EA.

The Western Waterfront Master Plan has been coordinated with the Waterfront West LRT EA. The TTC is expected to present a preferred LRT alignment in 2009.

Highlights of the Master Plan

The Master Plan provides an overall vision for parkland, beaches, break walls, trails, promenades, roads, bridges, servicing and recreational facilities within the Western Waterfront. The objectives of the Plan are to create a beautiful public realm, enhance public access to and along the water's edge, provide for a range of compatible land uses, enhance, celebrate and interpret the area's heritage and beautify Lake Shore Boulevard.

The Plan is to be implemented in three phases: short (1-5 years), medium (5-20 years) and long-term initiatives (20+ years). The short-term projects focus on more readily achievable and affordable initiatives. Medium and long term projects are more expensive and may require further study prior to implementation.

The concept plan and implementation plan of the Master Plan are included in Attachments 1 and 2 to this report. A copy of the entire Master Plan and its annexes can be obtained at <http://www.toronto.ca/waterfront/index.htm>

Improved Beaches

Beaches would be expanded and enhanced as a priority as the Plan recognizes the lake and beach as the major recreational attractions of the Western Waterfront.

A beach curtain is being installed in 2009 at Sunnyside as a 3-year pilot project. If the pilot is successful, the enclosed swimming area would be expanded in size to 12 hectares by reconstructing the existing break wall and filling in gaps west from Sunnyside to the Humber River. The reconstructed break wall would also stabilize the shoreline and enhance the protected flat water for non-motorized boaters. If needed, deflector islands could be built in the long term at the mouth of the Humber River to improve water quality and provide recreational use and habitat creation.

Other beach water quality issues are addressed in the Toronto Beaches Plan.
www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/cc/decisions/2009-02-23-cc31-dd.htm
www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-18572.pdf

Re-Configuration of Lake Shore Boulevard

The Master Plan proposes that Lake Shore Boulevard be shifted north between Ellis Avenue and Dunn Avenue over the medium term. This would create nine hectares of new waterfront parkland, provide better and shorter north-south pedestrian connections to the waterfront and more room for Martin Goodman Trail. East of Dowling Avenue, the eastbound lanes of Lake Shore Boulevard would be relocated to the north side of the Gardiner, which adds 2.5 hectares of usable parkland to Marilyn Bell Park. The Master Plan proposes that an environmental assessment be initiated in the short term to address the re-alignment as well as potential narrowing of Lake Shore Boulevard within the Western Waterfront.

Better Pedestrian/Cycling Connections

North-south pedestrian/cycling connections would be improved in the short term by closing Colborne Lodge Drive and Dowling Avenue to private vehicular traffic and improving the Gardiner/rail underpasses at Windermere, Ellis and Parkside. With the re-alignment of Lake Shore Boulevard, the Jameson bridge over the Gardiner would become a pedestrian bridge to create an attractive new entrance to Marilyn Bell Park. Over the long term, the existing pedestrian bridge at Roncesvalles would be rebuilt and a new pedestrian bridge would be built at Wilson Park Road.

Two new traffic signals would be added on Lakeshore Boulevard: at Dowling Avenue; and at the Boulevard Club/Palais Royale. The new Dowling signal would be done in the short term while the Boulevard Club signal would await realignment of Lake Shore Boulevard. Pedestrian crossings at the six existing signalized intersections would also be improved.

Three major east-west pedestrian/cycling connections would be provided: an improved Martin Goodman Trail; a new Promenade; and a rebuilt and realigned Boardwalk. Martin Goodman Trail would run along the south side of Lake Shore Boulevard and be designed for higher-speed users. The new Promenade would be located south of it for lower-speed users. A continuous public Boardwalk would extend along the water's edge. The Promenade and Boardwalk would be linked by a network of paths.

Three Recreation Hubs

Three major recreation hubs are proposed: at the relocated Joy Oil Station; Sunnyside Pavilion; and Dowling Avenue. Moderate expansion of facilities and concessions in these areas would be allowed. Local recreation facilities would be expanded to serve the adjacent neighbourhoods of Swansea, High Park and Parkdale. Public parking lots would generally be relocated to the north side of Lake Shore Boulevard to free up additional parkland south of Lake Shore Boulevard. The new recreation hub at Dowling would provide a boat launch for canoes and kayaks.

Environmental Assessment Approvals

The Western Waterfront Master Plan completes Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment for water, wastewater and storm water services; roads and bridges; and, the shoreline by means of a Class EA Master Plan. Phase 1 of the Class EA process identifies the problem or opportunity, while Phase 2 identifies alternative solutions and establishes a preferred solution.

The Master Plan will fulfill the requirements for projects which are minor in nature (Schedule A) or include improvements and minor expansions to existing facilities (Schedule B). For projects that include the construction of new facilities or major expansions to existing facilities (Schedule C), Phases 3 and 4 of the Class EA process will need to be completed. Phase 3 of the Class EA process identifies alternative design concepts while Phase 4 is the preparation of an environmental study report. A list of the proposed projects and their EA status is included in Attachment 2.

The draft Master Plan was circulated on April 17, 2009, to the Ontario Ministries of the Environment, Transportation, Natural Resources and Culture; the Federal Departments of Fisheries and Oceans and Environment Canada; Waterfront Toronto; Toronto Port Authority; and, First Nations. No comments have been received in response to the circulation.

COMMENTS

Beaches

Creation of an enclosed swimming area at the Western Beaches by reconstructing and filling gaps in the existing break wall is consistent with the City's new Beaches Plan which seeks to make the City's swimming beaches safer, cleaner and more usable. It is also consistent with Official Plan policies which support the limiting of lake fill.

The enclosed swimming area would be designed to allow passage inside the break wall by flat water boaters. The Master Plan focuses on improving the existing break wall due to the relatively low cost (\$57 million) and the imminent need for its repair. The potential

to lengthen the Western Beaches Watercourse by construction of a new break wall further out in the Lake is also maintained. Resolution of outstanding ownership, maintenance and funding responsibilities related to the break wall with the federal and provincial governments will be required in order to reconstruct the break wall in the short to medium term as proposed in the Master Plan. City staff has initiated discussions with the other orders of government.

Lake Shore Boulevard

Shifting of Lake Shore Boulevard northward in the east end of the study area will implement the “big move” identified in the Central Waterfront Plan of expanding Marilyn Bell Park by reconfiguring adjacent roads. The concept for this road re-alignment would be refined during Phases 3 and 4 of the EA and the design process. Decking over the Gardiner and creating development opportunities over it was not considered feasible due to the cost, the intrusion of private development into the public realm and the visual impact on surrounding open spaces.

Narrowing of Lake Shore Boulevard was raised by Planning and Growth Management Committee and by the public during the Master Plan process. As a result, the undertaking of Phases 3 and 4 of an EA for Lake Shore Boulevard that considers both re-alignment and narrowing of the roadway is proposed as a short term initiative by the Master Plan. The potential to change the character of Lake Shore Boulevard by narrowing it (e.g. from 6 to 4 lanes) will require more comprehensive analysis than required for road re-alignment alone. It is anticipated that extensive traffic modelling as well as urban design, costing, phasing and constructability analysis will be needed. The role of improved transit may also need to be considered. Staff is recommending that the Lake Shore Boulevard Reconfiguration EA for the Western Waterfront start in 2010 and be included as a new project in the capital program for Transportation Services to be considered as part of the 2010 Capital Budget process.

Pedestrian/Cycling Connections

The creation of a continuous public promenade along the water’s edge as proposed in the Master Plan implements the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, which includes the portion of the Western Waterfront generally east of Jameson Avenue. No specific time line is included in the Plan, but it is anticipated that negotiations would occur with lessees of City lands (Boulevard Club, Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club, Argonaut Club) upon the expiry of their leases or earlier if the opportunity arises.

Similarly, the Boulevard Club, Palais Royale and Legion will be affected by plans for Lake Shore Boulevard, Martin Goodman Trail, the Promenade and other initiatives. It is expected that these changes will be implemented in stages over several years and will require further design analysis to meet public objectives while mitigating impacts. City staff will consult with all impacted stakeholders to address operational and other issues when designing road realignments and improvements to enhance public access to the water’s edge.

Waterfront West LRT

The Waterfront West Light Rail Transit (LRT) EA is addressing a series of alignment options which would locate the LRT either north of the Gardiner/rail corridor or along Lake Shore Boulevard. Although the Master Plan can accommodate these various options, a Lake Shore Boulevard alignment would provide the best transit access to the waterfront parks and attractions in the Western Waterfront. The Lake Shore alignment, however, would create a “pinch point” at the Legion building near Dowling Avenue that would require further analysis. Its connection to the existing LRT line on The Queensway via Colborne Lodge Drive or its eventual continuation west along Lake Shore Boulevard across the Humber River is consistent with the Master Plan objectives.

Construction of a new LRT ramp and bridge structure from Lake Shore Boulevard near the Boulevard Club across the Gardiner and rail corridor to existing transit facilities at Roncesvalles is incompatible with the vision of the Master Plan to create an open, unobstructed waterfront. If a LRT alignment north of the Gardiner to Roncesvalles is pursued, it should cross at Dowling Avenue or further east to reduce its impact on the Western Waterfront.

Next Steps

Implementation of the proposed projects in the Master Plan will be essential to realize the plan’s vision. It is recommended that an inter-divisional staff committee be established to coordinate the work program for implementation of the Master Plan. The group would identify priorities, shared opportunities, divisional responsibilities, phasing and resource requirements to be addressed in future budget processes.

A number of questions and issues raised by the public during the consultation process will need to be explored in greater detail during the design and implementation phases. It is recommended that community advisory committees be created for major projects within the Western Waterfront to continue civic engagement and provide advice on the implementation of the Plan, including future phasing and design.

Much of the Western Waterfront lies outside of the mandated area of the Waterfront Toronto which has a design review panel to promote design excellence within the public realm. As a result, it is proposed that the Western Waterfront Area be considered for inclusion under the jurisdiction of the City of Toronto design review panel.

Conclusions

The Western Waterfront Master Plan provides an overall vision for improving parkland, beaches, break walls, trails, promenades, roads, bridges, servicing and recreational facilities within the Western Waterfront. The Plan applies to the waterfront area between the Humber River and Exhibition Place that includes Sunnyside Beach and Marilyn Bell Park.

It is a coherent plan that knits together all of the elements of the public realm within the Western Waterfront. The implementation strategy starts with small incremental, low cost changes in the short term and progresses to more ambitious but costly projects over the long term. An important innovation of the Plan is to embed a Class EA Master Plan for municipal infrastructure within an urban design document.

The Plan recognizes the tension that exists between the role of the Western Waterfront as an important waterfront park space and as a transportation corridor. Its vision capitalizes on the lake and beach as the greatest assets of the area. It identifies the need to change the location and character of Lake Shore Boulevard as a fundamental step toward expanding and improving the waterfront parklands.

This report has been reviewed and endorsed by Transportation Services, Technical Services, City Planning, Toronto Water, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, TTC and TRCA.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1- Concept Plan
Attachment 2- Implementation Plan