

# West Don Lands Committee

PW 11.1.9.

Citizens for the Old Town /  
Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

Corktown Residents & Business  
Association

Distillery Historic District

Dixon Hall

Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation

Friends of Corktown Common

Goederham & Worts Neighbourhood  
Association

Queen East Business Association  
QUEBA

Little Trinity Anglican Church

St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA

St. Lawrence Neighbourhood  
Association

Task Force to Bring Back the Don

March 1, 2016

Members of Toronto City Council,

**Re. PW 11.1 – Gardiner Expressway-Lake Shore Blvd East Reconfiguration**

The West Don Lands Committee endorses the Hybrid 3 option for configuration of the Gardiner and Lake Shore alignments east of Cherry Street. It is our view that only Hybrid 3 is an adequate resolution of the five goals of the Environmental Assessment.

1. Revitalize the Waterfront
2. Reconnect the City with the Lake
3. Balance Modes of Travel
4. Achieve Sustainability
5. Create Value

Furthermore, the goals of the environmental assessment will not be achieved until the public realm deficiencies are addressed, corrected and funded. In selecting the Hybrid option last June, Council recognized that retaining the existing elevated structure between Cherry and Jarvis streets creates a huge urban design challenge. Council should recognize today that an integral component to selecting Hybrid 3 as the preferred alternative is a commitment to funding the improvements to safety, active transportation and improved aesthetics west of Cherry St. in the 2017 Capital Budget process.

The West Don Lands Committee has worked as a coalition of community and business groups in this area since 1997. We have played a positive role in planning the West Don Lands and East Bayfront communities that are now rising. We support Waterfront Toronto's proven approach to city-building through commitments to sustainability, public engagement, the public realm and great design – an approach supported by all three levels of government.

We commend the work of city staff in the Waterfront Secretariat and Transportation Services for tackling an extremely challenging problem – rebuilding an elevated expressway through a core regeneration area – and finding the Hybrid 3 solution that may satisfy the Environmental Assessment criteria – and may effectively pass a camel through the Eye of a Needle.

The North Keating precinct that the Gardiner passes through is critical in many ways:

- The North Keating precinct is the gateway to the Port Lands where Toronto anticipates decades of sustained growth,
- It is the place where the city meets the Mouth of the Don River, which is to be naturalized and flood protected to become the centrepiece of the Eastern Waterfront,
- This is where the momentum of city-building must be maintained through to Villiers Island, the First Gulf/Unilever development and the Film District.

This is not a place where the city can afford to undermine its great expectations and compromise its great investments with a substandard or mediocre solution to the Gardiner – Lake Shore problem.

We have seen Toronto realize its potential with the Pan-Am Athletes' Village, the Corus building and George Brown College on the lake. None of this was done by taking the low-cost option and settling for mediocrity and expediency. To maintain the great competitive advantages that Toronto is gaining, Council must recommit to the goals of this project and select Hybrid 3.

In comparing the options, Hybrid 1 simply underachieves all the project goals, a conclusion that Council recognized last June when you asked staff to find a better solution. As compared to Hybrid 2, Hybrid 3 improves development parcels by separating them from the expressway; Hybrid 3 frees the public realm on both sides of the Keating Channel, the branch of the Don Mouth that will become the hub of the whole district; as compared to Hybrid 2, Hybrid 3 has the least negative impact on the naturalization of the Don River Mouth, minimizes road run-off to protect water quality, and makes sediment management easier – a long-term flood protection benefit. Toronto needs to protect the value of the assets it is creating in the Keating, First Gulf and Port Lands. These assets can repay the city with greater land values when sold, but more importantly with high quality new precincts that will keep Toronto a leading world city for generations.

This is an opportunity for Council to resolve the Gardiner problem in a way that will best secure Toronto's future. We ask you to select Hybrid 3, and further, we ask you to make the funding commitment for public realm improvements an integral component of the Gardiner project.

Thank you.

Yours truly,



John Wilson  
Co-Chair, West Don Lands Committee