

Toronto Island Park Master Plan

Date: June 20, 2024

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto Island Park (the Island) is a 242 hectare (598 acre) public park formally established in 1956 and recognized as a sacred and significant place known by Indigenous communities as Mnissing ("on the islands") since long before colonial record. Toronto Island Park is comprised of 15 discrete islands and internal waterways, providing a habitat for a diversity of flora and fauna, a natural recreational amenity for millions of annual visitors, and a home to over 600 Island residents.

This staff report summarizes, and seeks Council's endorsement of, the Toronto Island Master Plan (TIMP), see Attachment 1 and 2, which was developed as a long-needed response to the complex needs and significant challenges facing the Island. These challenges include the increasing effects of climate change, population and tourism growth placing pressure on Toronto Island Park's amenities and natural environment, associated maintenance and state of good repair needs of aging infrastructure, and a desire to enhance access and the overall visitor experience of the Island. The TIMP is a generational opportunity to establish a vision for what this treasured place can become with strategic investments, and chart a sustainable, celebratory, and equitable future for Toronto Island, its visitors, and its residents.

The TIMP is the result of a three-year long collaboration and engagement with and between Indigenous rights holders, urban Indigenous communities, Island residents, Toronto's 2SLGBTQ+ communities, intergovernmental partners, advocacy organizations, vendors, businesses, and city residents and visitors. City staff heard stories and came to appreciate how special and personal this space is for so many and how invested the public is in sustaining its charm, meaning and environments for the future. Improvements to Toronto Island Park should be carefully considered to balance multiple overlapping objectives. These include a "light touch" approach that prioritizes the ecological integrity of the Island, a "play and explore" visitor experience that continues from the mainland to the islands and back, and a focus on equity that "honours and celebrates" the deep Indigenous significance of the Islands, their rich 2SLGBTQ+ history, and the contemporary diversity of the Islands' communities' stories.

This staff report describes how the TIMP's strategic enhancements, program ideas, and overall vision will advance. The recommendations will provide City staff and partners the authority and direction needed to implement the TIMP over the next twenty-five years. The improvements proposed for Toronto Island Park include better access, information sharing and getting around, protecting the environment, visitor experience, interpretation, storytelling and programming, capital, and operational opportunities that will collectively transform the overall Island experience. Action is already underway on these improvements including enhancing the visitor experience at the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal, flood and erosion works, restoring Hanlan's Point beach and celebrating its 2SLGBTQ+ significance, procuring two new higher-capacity electric ferries in the near-term, and undertaking a review of the business opportunities for current and potential vendors and concession operators.

Funding has been included in Parks, Forestry & Recreation's 2024-2033 Capital Budget and Plan to ensure progressive implementation of the TIMP. In the near term (see Attachment 3), there are several critical projects that should be achieved to further enhance the visitor experience and protect the Island's ecosystem and infrastructure from flood risks. Over the long term, implementation will proceed incrementally as funding and opportunities arise, and as detailed design processes advance. Further engagement with Indigenous partners, Island stakeholders, and the public will be included in all projects as they proceed. Implementation will also require coordination with other projects and initiatives across the Central Waterfront, including the ongoing Marine Use Strategy and the Port Lands revitalization. Finally, opportunities to secure intergovernmental investment via grants and collaborations will be explored to accelerate implementation where feasible.

Staff recommend advising Council on implementation progress with reports every five years over the course of the twenty-five-year horizon of the TIMP.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council adopt the Toronto Island Master Plan in Attachment 1 to the report (June 18, 2024) from the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation as the general direction in which improvements to Toronto Island shall be undertaken over the next 25 years and to coordinate with other Divisions and agencies and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and intergovernmental partners as required to implement the Toronto Island Master Plan.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with other Divisions and agencies as needed, to advance the implementation of priorities identified in Attachment 3 to the report (June 18, 2024) from the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation as part of future Capital and Operating budget processes through studies, cost estimates, and/or detailed design

exercises as needed, subject to the capital planning and prioritization process for infrastructure planning and investment.

3. City Council request the Government of Canada and Government of Ontario to continue to fund and support the implementation of the improvements outlined in the Toronto Island Master Plan, as described in Attachments 1 and 3 to the report (June 18, 2024) from the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

4. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, to continue to engage with Indigenous communities, in particular the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, on the implementation of the Toronto Island Master Plan, and with a focus on components related to the Reconciliation Action Plan and as described within the Plan.

5. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in consultation with other appropriate divisions and Hanlan's Point Beach Working Group, to continue to advance implementation of priorities and initiatives relating to Hanlan's Point Area and Beach endorsed by Council through 2023.MM6.22, 2023.MM7.15, and 2024.MM16.25 as part of the implementation of the Toronto Island Master Plan.

6. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to establish through future Capital and Operating budget processes a dedicated capital-funded position to coordinate Toronto Island Master Plan implementation initiatives, physical improvements to the visitor experience and related community engagement, including oversight of working groups to ensure a coordinated approach to Island improvements.

7. City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back to City Council by Q2 2029 with a progress report on the implementation of the Toronto Island Master Plan and recommendations 1-6 above.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The Toronto Island Master Plan provides a vision for the City grounded in principles that aim to achieve a successful and healthy future for this significant and signature place. A founding principle of the Master Plan is that the Park's future must be diverse, sustainable, resilient, inclusive, and equitable.

The Master Plan will facilitate investment and improvements that support Indigenous communities, equity-deserving groups, and vulnerable residents of Toronto's collective experience of Toronto Island. The Plan's six goals include specific direction elevating the significance of the Island and its continued use to Indigenous communities. The goals also emphasize the history and priorities of 2SLGBTQ+ communities on the Island as well as additional recommendations related to equity and belonging.

The Master Plan recommendations and priority actions will inform the evolution of Toronto Island Park with relevant equity considerations that reflect the needs of Indigenous, Black, Queer, and equity-deserving communities disproportionately impacted by structural barriers related to access, affordability, security, and opportunity

as well as structural racism and homophobia. The Master Plan has and will continue to provide opportunities for engagement with community members and stakeholders including Indigenous, Black, Queer, and equity-deserving communities, racialized populations, and low-income communities.

Through its interdivisional and participatory approach, the Master Plan will advance a number of the City of Toronto's equity strategies and commitments including the Reconciliation Action Plan, the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, the Toronto Community Benefit's Framework, the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Toronto Seniors Strategy, and the Economic Development and Culture Divisional Strategy, along with forthcoming strategies including the City's new Culture Plan, to be completed in 2024.

The health benefits of parks and public spaces are well-recognized. The public realm encourages active transportation when designed with a network of cycling and pedestrian routes. Living close to parks and recreation facilities encourages physical activity. Walkability, access to nature and access to community are important contributors to mental health. Public spaces offer opportunities to improve the sustainability of urban environments. Through inclusion of green infrastructure, the public realm can support improved biodiversity, air quality, energy efficiency, storm water management, enhanced water quality and reduced risks of climate change such as mitigation of flooding and extreme heat.

Never have the benefits of the public realm been clearer as during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The global pandemic has defined parks and public realm spaces as a necessity of urban life, especially in areas of the city where residents may not have access to private outdoor space. It has also enabled a reimagining and adaptation to how public realm space can be used and shared among residents of Toronto.

Access to parks and public realm spaces is not equal across the city, and consequently not all communities are benefitting from these spaces to the same degree. How and where improvements are made to parks and public realm spaces needs to be understood as an environmental justice question that has the potential to close or to widen the equity gap between communities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no direct financial implications from the approval of the recommendations in this report.

The 2024-2033 Capital Budget and Plan for Parks, Forestry and Recreation includes an investment of approximately \$141.949 million (M) for initiatives related to the Toronto Island Park, Ferry Terminal, and Ferry Fleet Replacement, with \$29.800 M for state of good repair (SOGR) related work and \$112.149 M for service improvement (SI) as identified in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of Investment Over the 10-Year Capital Plan in Millions

Project	Investment by Category		Total Investment
	State of Good Repair	Service Improvement	
Toronto Island Park	\$26.425*	\$24.238	\$50.663
Ferry Terminal	\$3.375	\$2.473	\$5.848
Ferry Fleet Replacement		\$85.438	\$85.438
Total	\$29.800	\$112.149	\$141.949

*Includes \$5.576 M for Shoreline & Flooding Mitigation Measures

For Toronto Island Park, there is \$50.663 M identified over the ten-year capital plan. Of that total, \$26.425 M is allocated to state of good repair works, including \$5.576 M for shoreline and flooding mitigation measures and \$20.849 M for rehabilitation of various trails and buildings on Centre Island, Olympic Island, Ward’s Island and Hanlan’s Point. These SOGR projects are primarily funded by debt, with a portion of shoreline and flooding mitigation measure works jointly funded by the Federal Government through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF).

A further \$24.238 M is identified for service improvement projects in Toronto Island Park over the same period. This includes \$23.213 M for the Toronto Island Park Master Plan Implementation over 2024-2033. This funding is cash-flowed for implementation activities to span continuously over the ten years of the capital plan in the form of multiple discrete projects. The funding source for these works consists of Section 42 Cash-in-lieu (CIL) of Parkland Dedication Reserve Funds from both local and city-wide accounts. There is an additional \$1.025 M in service improvement funding identified for various improvements to Hanlan’s Point and Franklin Children's Garden Wetland Restoration over 2024-2025, with funding from Section 42 CIL of Parkland Dedication Reserve Funds.

PFR’s 10-Year Capital Plan also includes \$5.848 M for the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal, with \$3.375 M in Debt funding for state of good repair works, and \$2.473 M from debt and Section 42 CIL Reserve funds to advance near-term improvements to the terminal and the electronic ferry ticketing system.

For replacement of the ferry fleet and related infrastructure improvements, the 2024-2033 Capital Plan includes \$85.438 M over the next three years, funded from a combination of sources, including debt, development charges (XR2114) and the Ferry Replacement Reserve Fund (XQ1206).

The 2024 Operating Budget for Parks, Forestry and Recreation identifies an annual operating cost of approximately \$5.280M for the Toronto Island Park offset by approximately \$0.340 M in annual revenue (excluding ferry expenses/operations), which applies to the years 2024-2026. For the years 2027-2033, an estimated 3% annual inflation is assumed for both expenses and revenue resulting in an estimated annual operating cost of \$6.680 M by 2033 estimated to be offset by approximately \$0.415 M in revenue. These above amounts do not include any operating impacts related to future projects that may be advanced as a result of the approval of the Toronto Island Park Master Plan. Projects implemented as an outcome of the adoption of the Master Plan

will be included in future year budget approvals; implemented projects may result in additional operating costs and revenue.

The full implementation of the Toronto Island Master Plan, including Near-Term Priorities, will require further capital and operational planning and collaboration among City Divisions and other partners including further public, stakeholder, and working group engagement as well as exploring opportunities for intergovernmental funding. Where projects align with other divisional priorities, the appropriate City Divisions will include these projects, as well as associated operating impacts, in future budget processes, subject to the capital planning and prioritization process for infrastructure planning and investment.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on March 20, 2024, City Council adopted MM16.25 - Authorization to Release Section 42 Funds to Amend the 2024-2033 Capital Budget and Plan for Parks, Forestry and Recreation to Advance Hanlan's Beach Priority Initiatives in Ward 10, creating various service improvement capital projects that advance the implementation of new sensitive ecosystem protective fencing, bike parking and minor trail access improvements at Hanlan's Point beach.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.MM16.25>

At its meeting on June 15, 2023, City Council adopted MM7.15 - Critical Measures to Restore Ecology and Preserve the History and Culture of Hanlan's Point Beach and Surrounding Area, directing staff to expand the clothing optional beach and undertake site improvements and enhancements at Hanlan's Point beach to improvement safety and commemorate and recognize the significance of this space to the 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM7.15>

At its meeting on May 10, 2023, City Council adopted MM6.22 - Recognizing the Importance of Queer History and the Ongoing Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (2SLGBTQ+) Community Presence at Hanlan's Point Beach and Surrounding Area directing staff to engage with and incorporate feedback from the community advocacy group Friends of Hanlan's about the Queer history of Hanlan's Point Beach and surrounding areas, with the support of The 519 Community Centre and Pride Toronto where appropriate.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM6.22>

At its meeting on July 19, 2022, City Council adopted EX34.10 - Update on the Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization, endorsing four interconnected priorities to guide the next phase of waterfront revitalization and directing staff to undertake further engagement with Indigenous rights holders and urban Indigenous communities on advancing the City of Toronto Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032 in relation to the implementation of the next phase of waterfront revitalization.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.10>

At its meeting on July 19, 2022, City Council adopted MM47.111 - Protecting and Promoting biodiversity on Toronto Island, directing staff to consider ways to maximize the protection and promotion of the natural biodiversity on Toronto Island and provide recommendations and updates within the ongoing Toronto Island Park Master Plan through engagement with the public.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.MM47.111>

At its meeting on May 11, 2022, City Council adopted GL30.8 - Allocation of Enwave Easement Revenue for the Enhancement of the Toronto Island Park directing revenue derived from the granting of permanent easement rights to Enwave Energy Corporation towards the implementation of projects identified in the Toronto Islands Master Plan.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.GL30.8>

At its meeting on October 1, 2021, City Council adopted IE24.7 - TOcore Implementation Strategy - Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan, directing staff to advance the Toronto Island Park Master Plan and explore opportunities to celebrate Indigenous cultures and histories through Indigenous placekeeping and placemaking initiatives.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2021.IE24.7>

City Council, at its meeting on October 27, 2020, adopted GL16.10 - Toronto Island Marina - Lease Extension, authorizing an extension of the existing lease with 1569483 Ontario Incorporated, operating as Toronto Island Marina.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2020.GL16.10>

At its meeting on October 19, 2019, City Council adopted IE8.5 - Update on Flood Mitigation and Damage Repair for Toronto's Waterfront and Toronto Island Park which included a preliminary assessment of the 2019 high lake effect along the waterfront and Toronto Island Park.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.IE8.5>

COMMENTS

1. Background and Context

The area now known as the Toronto Islands was formed by millennia of a hydrogeologic process known as sedimentary deposition whereby sand and other material from the Scarborough Bluffs was carried by wind and wave to Toronto's Inner Harbour area. Initially, the Islands were a sand spit connected to the mainland at what is now Cherry Beach and changed shape dynamically in response to currents, weather, and other natural forces. The current relatively stable Island formation was created as a result of a storm in 1858 which severed the spit from the mainland at what is now Cherry Beach. The severed area, known as the Eastern Gap, facilitated easier access to Toronto's Inner Harbour and its Port Lands and has been maintained by regular dredging.

Prior to the current use of the Toronto Islands as a Park, the sand-spit and its sheltered harbour and internal waterways were home to fish, wildlife, and plant life, providing for generations of Indigenous peoples. It was a meeting place and a place for healing. It is a place that connected the people to Creation and the Spirit World, as well as to the land and the water. The Island's significance to Indigenous peoples continues today.

Following European colonization, the Islands served as a recreational refuge from the growing settlement of Toronto. Amusement parks, fairgrounds, hotels, stadiums, and other sports and leisure pursuits were developed alongside evolving seasonal and residential communities and some of the city's first public health infrastructure including a convalescent home for sick children and a water treatment plant. Billy Bishop Toronto Centre Airport (BBTCA) opened in 1939.

Following the relaxation of rules around year-round residency, the residential community expanded from the various tent and cottage communities that had established themselves over the years. In the 1950s and 1960s, Metropolitan Toronto Council established the Toronto Island Park, relocated existing communities to Ward's and Algonquin Islands and developed Centreville Amusement Park and Far Enough Farm. Throughout the twentieth century, in the context of changes elsewhere on the Island, persecution, struggle and celebration, Hanlan's Point has remained a distinct gathering place for the city's Queer community.

As a result of this long and varied history, the Toronto Island Park has significance to many different communities. Through the Master Plan process, the project team heard that preserving and enhancing the Island's diverse character is critically important, particularly in the context of the challenges and increasing pressures facing the Park.

The Need for a Plan

A confluence of long-held aspirations, ongoing needs, and recent challenges motivates the development of a Master Plan. As Toronto continues to grow, so do the pressures and demands on its park system. The need for a Master Plan arises, in part, from the consideration of the demand for more efficient travel to and from the island, increased passenger pressures on an aging fleet of ferry vessels and the need to improve the embarkation experience at both the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and Island Landing Areas. Growth pressures are also impacting the park spaces, services, amenities, and the natural environment and habitat areas within the park, its shorelines, and internal waterways. More broadly, the Island also has a rich history and cultural significance to Indigenous communities, residents, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities that needs to be shared and celebrated.

Beyond addressing these long-term trends, the Master Plan's inception was driven by the 2017 and 2019 high water levels in Lake Ontario exacerbated by climate change. These events flooded Toronto Island Park, eroding shorelines, damaging public infrastructure, and causing hardship for Island residents and visitors alike. More recently, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of high quality and accessible public spaces. The Master Plan recognizes the need to establish a roadmap to support Toronto Island's resilience and to protect its ecological integrity and significance as part of a larger ecosystem as well as its ability to serve the city, its

residents, and visitors as a place of refuge and recreation for generations to come. Existing and future improvements to the park need to ensure the sustainability and health of the park and its natural spaces and ecosystems and be thoughtfully balanced with ongoing investment and improvements in customer service, programming, park amenities considering the importance of the visitor experience.

The TIMP's geographic scope (see Attachment 1) does not include any recommendations or direction for Island areas that are not formally part of Toronto Island Park. These areas include the two residential communities on Ward's and Algonquin Islands managed by the Toronto Islands Residential Community Trust Corporation, the Island Water Treatment Plant (IWTP) and associated radio towers on IWTP property, and the Billy Bishop Toronto Centre Airport (BBTCA). However, the Plan does consider how these spaces interface with and contribute to the future of the park. The proposed five-year progress reports will allow the Master Plan to adapt to further changes on these surrounding lands and communities.

2. Policy Framework

The Master Plan is informed and guided by several of the City's land use and strategic policy framework. The Toronto Official Plan designates Toronto Island as Parkland, except for the residential portions of Algonquin and Ward's Islands, as part of the "Green Space System" on Map 2, Urban Structure. Large portions of the Toronto Islands are designated Natural Heritage System on Map 9 and on Maps 12A (Environmentally Significant Areas) and 12B (Provincially Significant Wetlands and Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest), portions of the Island Park are identified as Environmentally Significant Areas and Provincially Significant Wetlands. On Map 18 (Land Use), the Islands are generally designated "Parks" or "Natural Areas" with the exception of the Island Water Treatment Plant being designated as "Other Open Space Area" and the residential portions of Algonquin and Ward's Islands as "Neighbourhoods". Taken together, these designations and their constituent policies reinforce the vision of the Toronto Islands as primarily a natural and recreational public space that must be conserved and enhanced for public use.

The TIMP is also aligned with, and helps advance, Corporate strategies such as the Marine Use Strategy, the Reconciliation Action Plan, TOcore, and TransformTO. The TIMP (see Attachment 1) provides further detail regarding the Corporate, Parks, Forestry and Recreation strategic policies that shape the plan's vision and recommendations.

3. Engagement and Process

Engagement

The Master Plan is the result of a three-years-long collaboration between City staff, public stakeholders like the Island residents and businesses, and Indigenous Rights Holders, First Nations and urban Indigenous communities. To develop the plan, the City hosted more than 30 workshops, meetings, focus groups, and interviews; collaborated closely with First Nations and local Indigenous communities; and engaged more than

20,000 Torontonians both online and in-person to develop the vision and big ideas for the future of Toronto Island.

The engagement program was undertaken in three key phases:

Phase One ran from January to April 2021, beginning with an Opening Ceremony that was held with the Indigenous Communities including knowledge sharing from elders, song, dance, and a fire ceremony to ensure that in keeping with the Reconciliation Action Plan, the project started in a good way. During this phase, the vision, values, and guiding principles for the Master Plan were developed and shared back with the public and Indigenous Rights Holders, First Nations, and urban Indigenous communities.

Phase Two unfolded between May 2021 and April 2022 and involved exploring and iterating the big ideas and developing the goals and actions needed to achieve the vision established in Phase One. A demonstration plan was also created to help illustrate and communicate the ideas in the context of the different areas of the park. Phase Three was undertaken between May 2022 and April 2024. During this phase, the Six Goals of the Plan were finalized, the recommendations and actions were fleshed out, the demonstration plan was refined, and the draft master plan was developed.

During each phase, the project team met with Indigenous Rights Holders and communities, project advisory groups, and the public including Island residents and businesses. Feedback from each discussion was considered both independently and in aggregate to better understand the needs of specific groups. This feedback was used to inform the Six Goals and recommendations for the project. Third Party Public served as third-party facilitators for public engagement activities, while Nbiising Consulting helped to guide conversations with Indigenous Rights Holders, Indigenous communities and Indigenous advocacy groups and service organizations. Key message summaries and records for each phase of the engagement were compiled and shared with the public to support a transparent, iterative, and accountable process.

During the engagement program, a Hanlan's Point Working Group was also convened to address the concerns of the Queer community regarding the safety, sustainability, and significance of Hanlan's Point Beach. An additional Island Working Group will be established to address Island-wide related priorities and improvements.

A summary of the public engagement process can be found in Attachment 2 – Engagement Summary.

Process

In addition to the multi-pronged public engagement and Indigenous co-development process, the TIMP was developed in a coordinated way in parallel with several studies:

- the Toronto Island Flood and Erosion Mitigation Environmental Assessment;
- the Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment; and
- the Toronto Island Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment.

These parallel studies were undertaken to inform and accelerate the implementation of the TIMP and allow the City and its partners to ensure coordination.

The Toronto Island Park Flood and Erosion Mitigation – Environmental Assessment (EA), is being developed by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) in partnership with the City and builds on studies initiated in the wake of the flooding events in 2017 and 2019. The EA will enable the replacement of temporary measures installed in 2017 and 2019, such as naturalized berms and sumps, and other emergency works initiated in 2020, to be formalized and integrated with the preferred flood mitigation alternatives. The implementation of the Master Plan will be coordinated with the preferred options of the EA (as the baseline) to guide future work to prevent and mitigate future flood events that could compromise the Island Park’s natural environment and public infrastructure.

The Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment was developed by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in partnership with the City. The Stage 1 assessment will inform future work such as priority recommendations arising out of the Flood Mitigation EA and help to determine where Stage 2 assessments are needed.

The Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) was developed by Common Bond Collective, sub-consultants to DTAH who are the Landscape Architectural Consulting leads for the Master Plan, including review by City Planning (Heritage and Archaeology). The CHRA research is coordinated with the Master Plan and includes recommendations to protect Island built-form assets and complete additional area-specific heritage studies to inform the development of an interpretive strategy for the Island which would illustrate its Indigenous significance and recent history.

These documents are in the process of being finalized in coordination of the Toronto Island Master Plan.

4. Toronto Island Master Plan

The TIMP is a long-term road map that outlines a vision, establishes goals and makes recommendations to guide investment, decision-making and improvements in the Park over the next 25 years and beyond.

The TIMP is primarily focused on the areas of the Park, and the related passenger experience in accessing the island through the ferries and Jack Layton Ferry Terminal. However, the recommendations and ideas contained within the document also inform ongoing decision-making related to areas within and adjacent to the park such as Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, the Island Water Treatment Plant site, the inner harbour, Central Waterfront and the Port Lands, and consider the shipping and ports activities within the eastern gap.

The Master Plan is more than a capital improvement plan. It includes recommendations to enhance protection, restore natural areas and habitats, expand and improve programming, as well as recommendations for operational and capital project improvements. The plan identifies ongoing and near-term or priority improvements but may be adapted over time to address changing needs.

The Toronto Island Master Plan is oriented to achieving the following six goals:

- Revealing an Indigenous Place;
- Supporting the Natural Environment;
- Improving Access and Connection;
- Enhancing the Visitor Experience;
- Elevating Equity and Belonging; and
- Celebrating 2SLGBTQ+ Significance.

Each goal is realized through a series of strategies and recommendations that are unique to that goal. The strategies provide direction towards achieving each goal and include descriptions, objectives and over 100 recommendations that map out the specific actions required to implement the plan over time considering near, mid and long-term horizons. To review near-term priorities included in the plan, See Attachment 3 – Near-Term Priorities.

The Vision - Toronto Island Tomorrow

The Toronto Island Master Plan will shape the future of Toronto Island – by building on today’s successes and striving to enhance the experience and joy the Island brings for all ages and abilities. The plan takes a light-touch approach to enhance existing park features and attractions and will offer new and expanded opportunities for Island experiences. These offerings will appeal to and represent the diversity of the city while respecting the integrity and character of all the island park spaces considering the importance of the land, the water, and all living things over time.

This twenty-five-year investment will ensure Toronto Island will remain a place where the protection of nature and the importance of community are prioritized. Dynamic and sensitive natural environments of beaches, wetlands, lagoons, forests, and shorelines will be enriched and restored through stewardship, education, and management.

Visitors will come to understand the Indigenous significance of the Island. The plan will ensure the Island continues to be a place that honours the sovereignty of the land, water and sky as living beings, sharing the Indigenous significance of the territory through dedicated spaces for ceremony and the integration of place-keeping and interpretation into Island spaces and wayfinding elements.

Visitors will have improved access to the Island through the modernization of the aging fleet of ferries and improvements to the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal. These improvements include signage, seating, shade, and digital customer service enhancements such as better ticketing systems and a streamlined webpage experience with better communication and information sharing oriented towards a four-season experience. The Master Plan prioritizes accessible spaces, connections and transportation that invite all to come and explore. It will expand and improve Island transportation and mobility systems and services with new higher-capacity electric ferries, on-Island transportation, and expanded bike rentals. The future Island will also include enhancements to flood protection, the ferry landings and park amenities like

washrooms, concession stands, and trails in addition to new programs and support for appropriately scaled Island events and festivals.

The combined result of these enhancements is a faster, more comfortable trip to and from the mainland, broader food and beverage offerings on the Island itself, more ways to get around and experience an array of programming for all kinds of visitors, all while balancing and conserving the natural splendour of the Islands. Implementation of this vision includes a range of big and small actions addressing each of the goals, that will be rolled-out incremental and thoughtfully over time as priority projects are established and budgets approved. This will allow for coordination with other projects and help to ensure sensitivity and deference to the importance of the Island's ecological integrity and cultural significance. While these investments will seek to sustain the qualities that make the Island distinct and protect the varied ecosystems, the Plan aims to greatly enhance the visitor experience getting to the Island, on the Island and in all seasons.

Priority Projects and Initiatives

Of the over 100 recommendations described in the Master Plan, 20 are either prioritized, underway, or will begin soon as catalysts to spark future changes for the Island. Not all projects are funded. Some priority projects and initiatives have approved funding and already begun including initiatives towards improving the visitor experience, to study the impacts of climate change and minimizing future flood risk and highlighting the Island's Indigenous significance.

The TIMP recognizes that access to the Island is critically important to the visitor experience. Various recommendations within the plan speak to improving the ticketing, landing, and return experience including enhancements at the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and the Islands-side landings that will be implemented incrementally over time.

In the near term, there is a concerted effort to improve the four-season experience for Island visitors including their return visit. Enhancements to the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and the ticket purchase process are underway with a focus on increasing, passenger access through the terminal, better access to information and comfort. These enhancements also include wayfinding and signage improvements to help people plan and navigate their visit as well as staffing improvements to address ticketing and queuing challenges. Travel to and from the Island will be further enhanced by the delivery of two new electric ferry vessels, with greater passenger capacity, modern designs, and a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. And once on the Island, near-term improvements to amenities like washrooms, food and beverage offerings, and on-Island transportation opportunities are anticipated.

Finally, honouring the City's recently adopted Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a strategic priority of Parks, Forestry and Recreation. The Master Plan prioritizes the designation of space at Snake Island as Indigenous ceremonial space and the creation of a 5-kilometre-long cultural narrative trail along the existing Lakeshore-Cibola spine. The trail will tell the Island's Indigenous historical and contemporary story and create opportunities for public art and cultural activations. On Snake Island and elsewhere, traditional Indigenous knowledge will be integrated into the park's management and

programming and Indigenous naming protocols will be advanced for identified Island spaces. A summary of near-term priorities are as follows:

- 2 electric ferries - eventual full fleet and in coordination with Marine Use Strategy implementation
- Enhanced visitor experience and amenities at ferry terminal, landings & Island-wide (to support four season access)
- Island-wide wayfinding signage
- Diverse food, beverage and rental offerings
- Indigenous ceremony and gathering spaces
- Management plans in-place to protect the ESAs and wetlands
- 5 km cultural narrative trail to share all Island stories
- Significance of Hanlan's Beach recognized & protected through cultural markers (e.g. the Rainbow Road), signage, and other enhancements
- Flood mitigation measures implemented (protecting 23 ha)
- 3.5 km of shoreline improvements
- An on-Island transportation system
- A 'Welcome Centre' at Centre Island

5. Implementing the Toronto Island Park Master Plan

General Implementation Approach

The Master Plan should be understood as a roadmap for change over the next twenty-five years. The projects/initiatives and process improvements described in the TIMP will be brought forward incrementally, over time as priorities are established, staff resources and funding sources are identified, budgets are approved, and further dialogue and study is undertaken to understand the changing context. In practical terms, this means City staff will work collaboratively with other Divisions and partners to refine the scope and technical feasibility of Master Plan recommendations, identify funding sources and strategies, assess the outcome of priority and/or near-term actions, iterate as needed based on ongoing dialogue, policy improvements, and investments, and continue to report back to Council on a regular basis to ensure transparency and accountability. The recommended cycle of five-year report backs also allow for efficient course corrections and the incorporation of new ideas so that the Plan remains relevant, responsive, and flexible. Implementation will also require continuing to engage with Island specific working groups including public stakeholders, Island residents, and building upon the relationship fostered with Indigenous Rights Holders and communities throughout the development of the Master Plan.

There are two types of recommendations described in the Master Plan. The first are Project/Initiatives which will deliver specific, tangible outcomes or objectives within the Island Park and may include renovations of existing facilities and park amenities or built-work improvements. These project/initiatives will be delivered on different timelines according to priority, complexity, impact assessment and requirements for coordination with other work. They are also contingent on the availability of funding are likely

improvements that are highly visible and will directly enhance the visitor experience considering the trip to the island and back.

The second type are Process Improvements which are intended to adapt existing procedures, practices, and protocols to align with the vision of the TIMP. They include new or enhanced approaches to modernize service delivery and programs on the island and will also take time to be realized since they are also contingent on the availability of funding and resources and need to take into consideration the coordination required with other island programs and initiatives, and the staff resources and training needed for implementation. Process Improvements will also look to prioritize protection of the natural environment through conservation of habitat and improved management practices that protect for and promote biodiversity within throughout the park.

Early Success and Progress

In addition to and in alignment with the near-term priorities described above, Parks, Forestry and Recreation continues to deliver park improvements with the vision of the TIMP in mind. Some recommendations, though still in draft, have driven early work in partnership with advisory groups, partners, and agencies.

Over the summer of 2023, in response to safety and environmental concerns and the desire to protect and formally embed Queer culture and historical significance at Hanlan's Point, Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff worked with TRCA to complete dune restoration works at the south-end of Hanlan's beach and make other improvements to Hanlan's Point area including expanding the clothing optional beach area, new signage, cultural markers (flags), and fencing to help manage beach access and pedestrian circulation. Council directed staff to establish a Hanlan's working group to advise on future projects being considered for the area.

PFR continues to work with the TRCA to monitor the dune restoration project and near shore reef at the south-end of Hanlan's Beach as well as assess impacts, feasibility, and requirements to extend this treatment further northward.

Another strategic action that is ongoing is the advancement of investments in flood mitigation infrastructure on the Island. City staff have partnered with TRCA on the Toronto Island Park Flood and Erosion Mitigation Project, a Class Environmental Assessment with the goal of developing long-term flood and erosion mitigation measures to protect Toronto Island Park from the impacts of flooding and shoreline erosion. The "Notice of Project Approval" - the final step in the approvals process needed to advance construction - is anticipated in late Summer 2024.

In anticipation of the approval of the Flood and Erosion Mitigation Environmental Assessment, City and TRCA staff have been coordinating the work through the development of the Master Plan to ensure alignment with the preferred options and recommendations of the Class EA. Staff are also proactively seeking funding to support and advance this critical near-term priority and will continue to ensure coordination of the work through the completion of the Class EA.

PFR has also recently committed staff to initiate a visitor experience review with a focus on the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and is working with Elder Duke Redbird, as one example of how to introduce Indigenous programming on the Island. This work is ongoing and will be supported in Phase One of the Master Plan Implementation funding approved by Council earlier this year.

6. Conclusion

The dynamic, sand-swept, and natural landscapes of Toronto Island have restorative effects that captivate everyone who goes there. Its varied landscapes create spaces for recreation and escape in contrast to the park's attractions which evoke nature's playground and opportunities for adventure. Toronto Island Park is a special place in the hearts of many Torontonians, carries particular significance for the city's Queer community, is a sacred space for many Indigenous communities, is home to hundreds of Island residents, and is a destination for millions of annual visitors. The adoption of the Master Plan will establish a roadmap for investment and improvements that protect, enhance, and celebrate this one-of-a-kind place for generations to come.

The recommendations contained within the TIMP and summarized in this report are the result of three years of diligent and collaborative work among City staff and its partners: Indigenous communities, Island residents, businesses, and interest groups, 2SLGBTQ+ communities, intergovernmental partners, and Torontonians from across the city. The recommended project and process improvements are realistic, feasible, implementable, and impactful for both the Island's natural environment and its over one million annual visitors and residents. Recommendations in this Plan will be adapted over time as priorities are established, budgets are approved, and the detailed plans are coordinated to ensure alignment with the Master Plan Vision and other Island improvements. As one of the jewels on Toronto's Waterfront, it is imperative that investment in this park is made to ensure it continues to thrive as a one-of-a-kind place and experience for generations to come.

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ATTACHMENTS

1. Toronto Island Park Master Plan - Full Report
2. Toronto Island Master Plan - Engagement Summary
3. Toronto Island Park Master Plan Implementation - Priorities
4. Toronto Island Park - Natural Heritage Background Report