

Status Update - Wider Waterfront Program

Date: November 25, 2025

To: Executive Committee

From: Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report responds to MM24.20 (December 2024), where City Council requested that staff, in collaboration with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and Waterfront Toronto, report back on opportunities to advance wider waterfront initiatives outside of the central waterfront and Designated Waterfront Area, "including City and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority joint projects on the Scarborough and Etobicoke portions of the Lake Ontario Waterfront that could benefit from funding from senior levels of government so as to inform inter-governmental discussions and funding requests, and 2026 budget deliberations."

The waterfront has been of great public interest for a long time. Published in 2000, Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada (Gateway Report) provided the original vision for Toronto's waterfront.

The Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization report that was approved by City Council in 2022 directed staff to actively advance and pursue intergovernmental support for projects in the full 43-kilometer "wider waterfront", extending from Etobicoke Creek in Etobicoke to the Rouge River in Scarborough which for areas needing investment in parks, natural heritage, active transportation and environmental protection and resilience.

As directed, staff have continued intergovernmental dialogue on wider waterfront funding priorities as a part of discussions on the Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization. As noted in EX19.2, all governments continue to be focussed on the need to invest in enabling infrastructure that would advance significant housing opportunities in the central waterfront. The Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization resulted in \$5 million of funding being secured for wider waterfront initiatives in recognition of its alignment with the original vision for city-wide waterfront revitalization. Funding will be used to advance preliminary studies and design necessary to establish shovel ready projects for future capital funding opportunities. Advancing projects to be ready for future federal and provincial funding opportunities is a key priority of the Wider

Waterfront Coordination Table which was established to improve coordination between and across the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and City divisions.

While the needs identified by the Wider Waterfront Coordination Table are large, a substantial set of projects have been completed or are currently underway in Scarborough, the Toronto Island Park, the Western Beaches and Etobicoke. This report outlines progress underway and recommends direction to staff that will further enable implementation.

Specifically, it is recommended that City Council direct staff to undertake a comprehensive waterfront planning exercise for the Etobicoke Waterfront, between the Etobicoke Creek and the Humber River. Staff would undertake this vision/ strategy beginning in 2026 and report back in 2027. This work would be led by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority with support from the Waterfront Secretariat and staff in various divisions including City Planning, Development Review, Parks and Recreation, Transportation Services and Toronto Water.

Overall, the work described in this report will continue to be coordinated through the Wider Waterfront Coordination Table and will be conducted in collaboration with local Councillors and include public and Indigenous engagement. Together, the implementation of ongoing projects and launching the work program as recommended in this report will set the stage for new revitalization opportunities, improved public access and more resilient natural systems along the 43-km waterfront from Etobicoke Creek to the Rouge River.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, the General Manager, Transportation Services and the General Manager Toronto Water to work with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and report back to the Executive Committee in the third quarter of 2027 with a progress update on delivery of the Scarborough Waterfront Project and the Scarborough Bluffs West Comprehensive Environmental Assessment, including funding requirements and a next steps action plan.
2. City Council direct the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, the General Manager, Transportation Services and the General Manager Toronto Water to work with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to advance a planning process for the Etobicoke Waterfront from Etobicoke Creek to the Humber River to identify, prioritize and coordinate potential projects for funding and delivery.
3. City Council direct the City Manager, in consultation with the Director, Waterfront Secretariat and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to continue pursuit of intergovernmental funding opportunities to advance wider waterfront projects.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report recommends undertaking the Etobicoke Waterfront study. Funds are available in the approved 2025-2034 Waterfront Revitalization Initiative Capital Budget.

There are no other financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report.

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

DECISION HISTORY

On December 17 and 18, 2024 City Council adopted MM24.20 - Opportunities to Advance Wider Waterfront Initiatives. This Members Motion requested the Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services, in consultation with Waterfront Toronto, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and the General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation, to report back by the third quarter of 2025 on opportunities to advance wider waterfront initiatives outside of the Central Waterfront and Designated Waterfront Area.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.MM24.20>

On December 17 and 18, 2024 City Council adopted EX19.2 - Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization - Update with amendments. This report provided an update on the progress of the renewed vision for the Next Phase approved in 2022 that directed staff to actively pursue support for waterfront projects in the Western and Eastern Waterfronts with other orders of government. It noted that the wider waterfront projects to be advanced through the \$5 million Next Phase funding envelope will be determined at a later date, if and when funding is secured and that projects will be identified in collaboration with the Wider Waterfront Coordination Table.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX19.2>

On July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022 City Council adopted EX34.10 - Update on the Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization with amendments. This report recognized that while the Designated Waterfront Area has an existing and functional governance model for project delivery, with Waterfront Toronto as the key implementing partner, the Western and Eastern Waterfronts lack this same level of coordination. The report recommended the creation of Wider Waterfront Coordination Table to provide a forum for coordinating projects to boost the impacts of protection and enhancement projects in the Western and Eastern Waterfronts, beyond the capability of project teams working independently of each other.

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

BACKGROUND

Vision for Waterfront Revitalization

In 2022, City Council [supported](#) (EX34.10) a further phase of waterfront revitalization. City Council also directed staff to actively pursue support for waterfront projects in the Western and Eastern Waterfronts with other orders of government, including the potential leveraging of existing and future government funding programs, coordinated through a Wider Waterfront Coordination Table.

Through public consultation undertaken in 2022, there was consensus that waterfront revitalization should advance the needs of the city's wider 43-kilometre waterfront from the Etobicoke Creek to the Rouge River, including the Toronto Island Park. The wider waterfront has significant opportunities to advance natural infrastructure and heritage protection and enhancement, shoreline stabilization, dockwall rehabilitation, Indigenous placekeeping and ceremonial spaces, marine use supportive infrastructure, park improvements and connecting trails.

Planning Foundations

Improvements to the wider waterfront were contemplated by the 1992 Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront Report (Regeneration: Toronto's waterfront and the sustainable city). Led by Commissioner David Crombie the report identified the need for shoreline regeneration in Etobicoke, Scarborough and beyond. This was echoed in the 2000 Waterfront Revitalization Task Force Report (Our Toronto Waterfront). Led by Robert Fung, the report recommended that governments respond to the distinct objectives required for the wider waterfront in Etobicoke and Scarborough “to increase public access to the waterfront, with public trails along the edge of the lake, and to improve the environment.”

The first phase of waterfront revitalization included funding for two specific projects in the wider waterfront – [Port Union Waterfront Park](#) and [Mimico Waterfront Park](#). Both were selected by governments to be a part of the tri-government revitalization effort (through Waterfront Toronto) and were subsequently delivered by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority leveraging their mandate and expertise. They were to be ‘the first’ strategic projects endorsed outside of the central waterfront that would be able to “illustrate the benefits of revitalization to the entire municipality.”

Since the start of tri-government waterfront revitalization, significant investments have been made in the central waterfront to flood protect the Port Lands and create new housing opportunities in neighbourhoods such as East Bayfront. This has been driven by a distinct governance model that involves Waterfront Toronto as a tri-government funded agency and lead delivery agent. The wider waterfront has in contrast relied on a collaborative model between Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and various City divisions and agencies working together on a project-by-project basis.

COMMENTS

Intergovernmental Funding

Along the wider waterfront, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the City have been successful in securing matching funding to date from federal funding streams like the Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund (DMAF), the Great Lakes Protection Initiative and the Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystems Initiative.

The largest funding contribution was secured through DMAF in 2019 in the amount of \$33.8 million to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and \$11 million to Parks and Recreation to improve degraded shorelines and protect parks and trails from shoreline erosion. This program is advancing the repair and upgrade of shorelines at 33 sites across the wider waterfront. Projects are being carried out over a multi-year period and improvements will be complete at all identified sites by 2033. Examples of completed projects include Long Branch, Bluffers Park, Port Union Beach, Prince of Wales Park and Cliff Lumsden Park.

Applications were also made through the 2023 DMAF intake for the Toronto Islands. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and City staff coordinated to develop a submission to undertake phased implementation of flood protection and shoreline improvements over a 10-year period. Unfortunately, the application was not accepted. Programs such as DMAF have now been fully allocated and were oversubscribed with the number of applications (and requested amounts) from across Canada exceeding funding available under the program.

As directed by City Council, City and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority staff continued to seek intergovernmental funding opportunities. Since 2022, there have been limited intergovernmental funding opportunities that are appropriate for wider waterfront projects, as they have focussed on smaller projects or were focussed on very specific priorities such as green buildings.

As noted in EX19.2, City staff put forward wider waterfront opportunities as a part of the discussion on the Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization. \$5 million in funding has been approved as a part of the tri-government funding envelope for the Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization.

While not in the order of magnitude of large capital funding sources, this secured funding will allow advancement of pre-cursory planning and feasibility studies needed to bring projects to a more 'shovel ready' status. Advancing projects to this stage is an important step to be ready to take advantage of any new intergovernmental funding opportunities that may arise, including those outlined in the federal budget. It is recommended that City Council direct the City Manager, in consultation with the Director, Waterfront Secretariat and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to continue pursuit of intergovernmental funding to advance wider waterfront projects.

Implementation Updates

The wider waterfront program continues to focus on the following priority project areas: Scarborough Waterfront, the Eastern Beaches, Toronto Islands, Western Beaches, and Etobicoke Waterfront. Updates and next steps for these project areas are outlined below.

Scarborough Waterfront

Planning processes have been completed or are underway to inform the future vision for much of the Scarborough Waterfront. The Scarborough Waterfront Project (SWP) Individual Environmental Assessment received Ministry approval in 2019. It provides shoreline recommendations for Bluffers Park to East Point Park. The Scarborough Bluffs West Project Environmental Assessment is underway and will identify, evaluate and recommend shoreline solutions from the Eastern Beaches to Bluffers Park. Beyond East Point Park smaller projects have been completed or are underway with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Parks Canada.

The Scarborough Waterfront Project Individual Environmental Assessment received Ministry approval in 2019. To date, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority has received \$4.895 million from the City of Toronto to proceed with detailed design of the Brimley Road South Multi-use Trail and West Segment Shoreline as part of the 2019 City of Toronto Budget process, with an additional \$10.461 million received through the City's capital budget in 2022 and 2023 to advance construction of the Brimley Road South Multi-Use Trail, and \$66 million currently allocated through the City's 2025-2034 capital budget for construction of the West Segment Shoreline including new connections between Bluffer's Park and the waterfront trails to the east. Construction of Brimley Road South Multi-Use trail started in the fall of 2025. The West Segment Shoreline preconstruction work will commence in 2026. Additional funds will be required to initiate detailed design and construction of the future Central and East Segments of the Scarborough Waterfront Project.

The Scarborough Bluffs West Project Environmental Assessment has completed the Terms of Reference phase which was approved in October 2025 by the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks. The Environmental Assessment phase formally commenced in November 2025 and will explore the enhancement and protection of sensitive shoreline and natural areas and opportunities for improved waterfront experience and access between the Eastern Beaches (Silver Birch Avenue) and Bluffer's Park along Lake Ontario. The project will consider opportunities to improve how people access, move through, and experience the waterfront; preserve and enhance the natural environment, including the cultural significance of the Bluffs; and minimize natural hazards and risks to public safety caused by erosion. The Environmental Assessment and its preferred option will then be able to help staff identify capital funding needs and possible opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration.

Additional projects being undertaken in the area include the Bluffers Park Action Plan; Guild Park Trails Feasibility Assessment; Rouge River Watershed Plan Nearshore Condition Case Study; and Rouge Beach Improvements (in partnership with Parks Canada). These projects are being completed with funding from the City, Toronto and

Region Conservation Authority, Canada Water Agency, and Parks Canada. City Council has directed the development of a Bluffer's Park Action Plan that integrates ongoing improvements and identifies additional priority actions for future funding and implementation.

Toronto Island Park

The Toronto Island Park Plan and the Toronto Island Flood and Erosion Conservation Class Environmental Assessment were carried out concurrently. Both outlined approved recommendations for the park and shoreline.

Parks and Recreation collaborated with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority on a federal funding application to the Disaster Mitigation Adaptation Fund which was not successful and subsequently developed a long-term phasing plan through the divisional capital budget. Parks and Recreation have begun advancing detailed design for the Environmental Assessment approved flood mitigation solutions.

City Council approved the Toronto Island Park Plan in July 2024 and Parks and Recreation Division moved immediately into the implementation phase of the Plan. The plan is a 25-year roadmap to protect the Island's ecology and cultural significance, and to re-invest in aging infrastructure while ensuring Toronto Island remains resilient, accessible, and inclusive for future generations. The Plan is the result of 4 years of strategic design and engagement that reached thousands of people and that is mandated to continue through implementation.

The proposed approach of the plan is a 'light touch' implemented over time through priority projects, changes to park operations and programming, continued engagement and approved budgets. The Plan addresses climate pressures, rising visitor demand, Indigenous placekeeping priorities, and improvements to the visitor experience to support a more sustainable and welcoming Island Park. PFR's approved Budget and 10-year Capital Plan includes funding for new Toronto Island capital projects. This budget is separate from the funded projects related to flood protection, Jack Layton Ferry Terminal, Ferry Fleet Replacement, and other investments.

Work initiated in 2025 includes: design and costing for the redevelopment of the three ferry landings on Toronto Island to 30% Design; installation of bike share to Toronto Island Park; access, a coastal assessment, wayfinding and naturalization improvements to Hanlan's Point Beach; establishment of three standing engagement and governance groups to support plan implementation (Hanlan's Point Beach and Island-wide working groups as well as an Indigenous Advisory Circle); and installation of new cellular infrastructure to support operations and visitor experience at Toronto Island Park.

Western Beaches

The Waterfront Secretariat, Parks & Recreation, Transportation Services, and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority are currently undertaking a study of the Western Beaches Public Realm Plan that updates the 2009 Western Waterfront Master Plan. The public realm plan will address evolving conditions and priorities including rising lake levels, shoreline erosion, aging infrastructure, the adoption of the Reconciliation Action

Plan, and heightened awareness of the historical and cultural significance of the Humber River's mouth.

Public, stakeholder and Indigenous consultation is underway and includes consultation activities in Fall 2025, with final recommendations and a public realm plan anticipated early 2026.

Concurrently, the City has also engaged Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and consultants to review and assess the Western Beaches breakwater, shoreline hazards and water quality issues. An update was provided to City Council in October 2025.

Reports on both the Western Beaches Public Realm Plan and the Breakwater Assessment will be brought to City Council in the first half of 2026. This will inform next steps to advancing comprehensive shoreline strategies in coordination with other governments.

Etobicoke Waterfront

There is currently no overarching plan to guide investment opportunities across the Etobicoke waterfront from Etobicoke Creek to the Humber River. It is recommended that City Council direct staff to undertake an interdivisional waterfront planning process that builds upon the Windows on the Lake initiative which identified fourteen parks and two undeveloped road right of ways that could be leveraged alongside future development sites to improve access to and across the Etobicoke shoreline. The recommended report back timeline for this work is the third quarter of 2027. This study can be undertaken with funds from the \$5 million allocated to wider waterfront initiatives in the 2026 Waterfront Revitalization Initiative Capital Budget.

As the extent of public land ownership in this area is limited, the planning process should identify strategies to improve access and connectivity by leveraging future development sites, existing road rights-of-way, and local streets to enhance the public realm and create a connected and accessible waterfront. It should also consider opportunities to address private encroachments, improve marine access for paddlers, and explore potential for water-based transportation such as water taxis, seabus connections, and designated paddling routes. Coordination with the citywide dockwall asset management strategy and alignment with planned state-of-good-repair and capital programs across Parks and Recreation, Transportation Services, Toronto Water, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority will be essential to maximize potential opportunities.

Although the Etobicoke waterfront presents unique challenges due to significant private ownership, its relatively flat topography offers opportunities to improve access from local streets, parks and other city-owned lands. An overarching plan would enable the City and its partners to strategically identify and prioritise projects that enhance waterfront resiliency, ecological health, connectivity, recreation, and the public realm.

The Etobicoke planning process would be informed by and leverage the past work already completed in this area by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the

City including Watershed Plans for the Etobicoke Creek, and Humber River, Shoreline Erosion Risk Management Program (including completed projects at Long Branch, Miles Road End Parkette, Prince of Wales Park and Cliff Lumsden Park and expanded parkland at Miles Road End Parkette), the Mimico-by-the-Lake Secondary Plan and Mimico 20/20 Urban Design Guidelines, the Motel Strip Secondary Plan and Humber Bay Shores Urban Design Guidelines, the forthcoming Community Planning Lake Shore Boulevard West Study, and the preliminary review of Windows on the Lake completed by City Planning and Parks and Recreation.

The Wider Waterfront Coordination Table

As directed by City Council, the work noted above is guided by a Wider Waterfront Coordination Table which was established in 2022 to improve "coordinated governance and consolidated project delivery." Participating agencies and divisions include the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Waterfront Secretariat, Transportation Services, Toronto Water, Corporate Real Estate Management, Urban Forestry and Parks & Recreation, designates from the City Manager's Office and Deputy City Manager's Office - Infrastructure Services were also included.

The Wider Waterfront Coordination Table continues to share information, coordinate across projects and identify priority projects requiring intergovernmental funding. Across the wider waterfront there are several approved large-scale projects with unmet funding needs. The Wider Waterfront Coordination Table is focused on prioritization and coordination of divisional and agency resources based on risks and existing capital programs. Table members also determined that limited staff resources provided a barrier to advancing funding and delivery strategies across the waterfront.

The table will continue to meet to further advance implementation, delivery strategies and position projects for new funding opportunities.

Next Steps

Subject to approvals from City Council, staff will initiate work on an Etobicoke Waterfront planning initiative.

As noted by the Table, given the size of some projects including those resulting from large Environmental Assessments, further investment will be needed to revitalize Toronto's Wider Waterfront. In coordination with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, City staff will continue to monitor other funding opportunities including grants and funding applications from other governments (e.g., Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund).

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Map of Toronto's Wider Waterfront

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