

Port Lands Flood Protection Project: Update and Next Steps

Date: February 24, 2026

To: Executive Committee

From: Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services

Wards: Toronto-Danforth

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Port Lands Flood Protection project, which reached substantial completion on September 30, 2025. Since the last update to City Council in May of 2023 many important project milestones have been reached. These include:

- Completion and opening of four new bridges (two on Cherry Street over the Keating Channel, one on Cherry Street Bridge over the new Don River and one bridge on Commissioners Street over the new Don River);
- Reconstruction of the new Lake Shore Bridge over the Don River;
- Removal of the old Cherry Street lift bridge over Keating Channel;
- New water, sanitary and stormwater infrastructure along Cherry Street, Commissioners Street and Don Roadway;
- Completion of a Flood Protection Landform underneath the new Don Roadway;
- Completion, flooding and opening of the new Don River valley to Lake Ontario, with associated habitats and public realm;
- Reopening of Commissioners Street, Don Roadway and a fully realigned Cherry Street;
- Completion of Biidaasige Park east of Cherry Street, including Fire Hall 30;
- Naming of former Cherry Street to Ookwemin Street;
- Naming of Ookwemin Minising and Biidaasige Park;
- Installation of key Indigenous design and art elements; and
- The commencement of the sediment removal program in the Keating Channel.

As part of finalizing the project, certain assets, such as the western portion of Biidaasige Park, will be transferred to the City in the first half of 2026. This will occur following installation of final finishes and plantings that can only be done in the spring. Removal of the backlogged sediment in the Keating Channel, needed to maintain flood protection, will also resume in the spring of 2026 under the management of Toronto and

Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). Infrastructure assets that will be completed and handed over to the City in 2026 include:

- The portion of Biidaasige Park west of Cherry Street, which will open to the public in the summer of 2026;
- A reconstructed Lake Shore Boulevard East bridge over the Don River, and expanded right-of-way between the Don Roadway and Carlaw Avenue;
- Storm and sanitary related infrastructure; and
- The Sediment and Debris Management Area, built to an interim condition will function as a key staging and management area for dredging, debris removal and sediment handling.

The report also recommends providing the Director, Real Estate Services, Corporate Real Estate Management with authority to negotiate and enter into nominal leases with the Toronto Port Lands Company and with Waterfront Toronto to enable Ookwemin Minising Phase 1. These authorities were not obtained in October 2025 when Council approved Ookwemin Minising Phase 1. In addition, the report recommends that Council as shareholder direct the Toronto Port Lands Company Board of Directors to authorize the execution of any agreements as may be necessary to accept the temporary placement of excess soils on Toronto Port Lands Company-owned future development blocks. This is a housekeeping matter to finalize the handback of lands, as reported to City Council in 2023.

The full development potential of Ookwemin Minising and the broader Port Lands area requires the annual removal of sediment and debris in the Lower Don River and in the Keating Channel. Given the nature of the sediment removed from the Don River, it must currently be disposed of in an approved Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) located within the Leslie Spit. It is recommended that City staff be authorized to enter into agreements with TRCA and the Toronto Port Authority for an annual sediment and debris management program.

It is also recommended that City staff begin working with TRCA, the Toronto Port Authority and other stakeholders in identifying alternative dredging technologies to ensure that the most cost effective, and environmentally sensitive approaches are being taken. Preliminary work, in support of potential future Environmental Assessment(s) to identify the location for a new CDF is also recommended. Further studies will be brought to City Council as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council authorize the Director, Real Estate Services, to negotiate, enter into, and execute a lease or licence agreement with the Toronto Port Lands Company for nominal consideration to provide the City with access to lands for site investigations, site preparation (including the construction of enabling infrastructure), environmental remediation, interim activation and any other early works related to the Ookwemin

Minising Phase 1, on such terms and conditions satisfactory to the Director, Real Estate Services and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

2. City Council authorize the Director, Real Estate Services to negotiate, enter into, and execute agreements, including agreements with Waterfront Toronto and other parties approved by Waterfront Toronto, for nominal consideration, to provide access to lands leased or licensed by the City for site investigations, site preparation (including the construction of enabling infrastructure), environmental remediation, interim activation and any other early works related to the Ookwemin Minising Phase 1, on such terms and conditions satisfactory to the Director, Real Estate Services and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

3. City Council as shareholder direct the Toronto Port Lands Company Board of Directors to authorize the execution on behalf of Toronto Port Lands Company of any agreements as may be necessary to accept the temporary placement of up to 200,000 cubic metres of excess soils on Toronto Port Lands Company-owned future development blocks within the Port Lands Flood Protection Project Area, until such time that the City of Toronto provides further direction to Toronto Port Lands Company regarding the redevelopment of the lands, which will address the removal, disposal and/or relocation of such excess soils, with said agreements to include terms and conditions as the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO deems appropriate and in a form satisfactory to the Chief Legal Counsel, CreateTO.

4. City Council authorize the Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, to negotiate and execute required agreements, in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor, with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Toronto Port Authority for an annual sediment and debris management program, to be subject of future year budget requests.

5. City Council authorize the Director, Waterfront Secretariat in consultation with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to begin advancing pre-planning and feasibility work in support of potential future Environmental Assessment(s) required to locate and develop a new Confined Disposal Facility or suitable alternative to support the sediment management program, subject to future budget requests.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Port Lands Flood Protection project is a large-scale capital initiative which reached substantial completion in 2025.

The operating costs of the assets being transferred in 2026, specifically the portion of Biidaasige Park west of Cherry Street, the rebuilt Lake Shore Boulevard East bridge over the Don River and expanded right-of-way between the Don Roadway and Carlaw Avenue, and storm and sanitary-related infrastructure are included in the 2026 Operating Budgets of Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Toronto Water, respectively. Any additional costs including annualization will be provided for consideration through the 2027 and future budget processes.

The 2026 Waterfront Revitalization Capital Budget includes \$14.7 million for dredging work to remove backlog sediment. Once the backlog is clear, a permanent dredging program will be required to clear annual sediment accumulation. This program is currently being costed by the TRCA, the Toronto Port Authority and the City, but is expected to range between \$12-15 million per year and will be requested through future budget processes. The capital expenses for the acquisition of new equipment, estimated to be \$3 million for two low-mast push tugs that can pass under the new Lake Shore Boulevard bridge over the Don River and \$7 million for three custom bottom dump scows, are expected to be included in the dredging operations charges from Toronto Port Authority.

The costs of Environmental Assessment(s) required to locate and develop a new Confined Disposal Facility or suitable alternative to support the sediment management program are not yet known and will need to be requested through future budget processes, once assessed.

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 October 8 and 9, 2025, City Council directed staff, among other things, to work with Waterfront Toronto and CreateTO to advance implementation of Ookwemin Minising Phase 1.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.EX26.11>

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, including authorization to negotiate and execute any subsequent amendments to the tri-government Contribution Agreement for the Port Lands Flood Protection project.

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

In November 2024, City Council adopted item EX18.3 "Naming the New Island and Park in the Port Lands", which named the new island created by the Port Lands Flood Protection Project "Ookwemin Minising" (Place of the Black Cherry Trees) and the new parkland on both the north and south sides of the new river "Biidaasige Park" (Sunlight Shining Towards Us). These names were lifted up by an Indigenous Advisory Circle, comprising Elders, Knowledge Keepers, language speakers, youth, and community members from broader First Nations, and Metis communities. The report also noted that a new name for the remaining portion of 'Old' Cherry Street between Villiers and Commissioners Streets had been identified and would be reported to the January 14, 2025 meeting of Toronto and East York Community Council. A link to this report and Council decision can be found here:

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.EX18.3>

City Council, at its meeting on May 10, 2023, adopted item EX4.1 - "Port Lands Flood Protection – Update". In addition to providing an overall update on the Port Lands Flood Protection Project, including key milestones going forward to the end of 2024, the report

set out the process for the handover of completed assets and projected operating and maintenance costs. The report also described real estate issues and recommended that City staff be given delegated authority to enter into agreements for land transactions that are required for the operation of assets such as roads. The report also set out a high-level dredging strategy for the Keating Channel and next steps in the revitalization of the Port Lands.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX4.1>

In March 2023, City Council directed City staff to consult with Treaty partners and urban Indigenous communities, and report back to Executive Committee in the first quarter of 2024 with an approach to naming civic assets in the Villiers Island Precinct, including public parks and streets. The Members Motion can be found at this link: Agenda Item History - 2023.MM5.3 (toronto.ca)

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.MM5.3>

On March 21, 2023, Executive Committee adopted with amendments, item EX3.1 - Housing Action Plan 2022-2026- Priorities and Work Plan which includes work related to the Villiers Island Precinct in the Port Lands.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.CC2.1>

On July 19, 2022, City Council provided support in-principle for a further phase of waterfront revitalization, endorsed four interconnected priorities to guide a further phase, and provided direction for City officials to continue intergovernmental dialogue. The staff report summarized project types for the Next Phase of Revitalization in the central waterfront which includes affordable housing, waterfront transit, infrastructure required to support Villiers Island densities and economic development, and port lands infrastructure required to support growth in adjacent areas such as the McCleary District. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.10>

On February 12, 2018, City Council adopted the 2018 Capital and Operating Budgets with amendments. The budget included an update on the City's contribution to Port Lands Flood Protection and authorized the Deputy City Manager - Cluster B (now Port Lands Flood Protection - Update Page 12 of 42 Infrastructure and Development Services) to execute required intergovernmental contribution agreements.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2018.EX31.2>

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-111934.pdf>

On February 15, 2017, City Council adopted the 2017 Capital and Operating Budgets with amendments. This included approval of the Port Lands Flood Protection project budget and City contribution. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2017.EX22.2>

On November 8, 2016, City Council approved Cherry St Stormwater and Lakefilling project and requested Government of Canada and Province of Ontario Funding commitments for Port Lands Flood Protection. The staff report appended the 2016 Due Diligence report. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2016.EX18.3>

COMMENTS

1. Port Lands Flood Protection Project

On September 30, 2025, Waterfront Toronto provided notice that the Port Lands Flood Protection Project had reached the substantial completion milestone. As a result, flood protection can now be provided to the Port Lands area south of Lake Shore Boulevard East to the Ship Channel and west of the Don Roadway to the Inner Harbour. This has been achieved through naturalizing the mouth of the Don River and establishing a natural greenway and adjacent valley wall feature located to the south of the Keating Channel. This work has aimed to restore the form and function of the Don River, and to that end Waterfront Toronto constructed more than 1,000 metres of the new river channel and flood plain, 13 hectares (32 acres) of new coastal wetland, and four hectares (10 acres) of terrestrial habitat.

With the project having reached substantial completion, the naturalized the Don River will provide crucial flood protection and ecological habitat restoration while integrating development, transportation, and servicing infrastructure into a harmonious whole. These efforts will support the rehabilitation of this iconic Toronto watershed and its complex biodiversity from generations of industrial activity that have impacted its physical, chemical, and biological form and functions.

Along with supporting infrastructure and the construction of a new river valley south of the Keating Channel, the program will:

- Improve Toronto's climate resiliency;
- Provide 29 hectares of parkland, wildlife habitat, and natural areas along portions of the northern and southern banks and mouth of the new river valley;
- Provide new and enhanced transportation infrastructure, including four new bridges, a realigned Cherry Street, a refurbished Lake Shore Boulevard East bridge over the Don River, and expanded and improved pedestrian and cycling facilities throughout the project area; and
- Enhance the public realm, restore and refurbish heritage structures, and provide public recreational opportunities within the Port Lands.

2. Final Asset and Real Estate Transfers

As part of finalizing the project, certain assets, such as the western portion of Biidaasige Park, will be transferred to the City in the first half of 2026 and is intended to be opened to the public shortly thereafter. This schedule is primarily due to the installation of final finishings and planting in the parkland west of Cherry Street that can only be done in the spring.

In addition to the park, other remaining infrastructure assets that will be completed and handed over to the City in the first half of 2026 include:

- A reconstructed Lake Shore Boulevard East bridge over the Don River and expanded right-of-way between the Don Roadway and Carlaw Avenue;
- Storm and sanitary related infrastructure; and

- The Sediment and Debris Management Area, built to an interim condition that will serve as the centre for all required dredging and debris removal activities in the Lower Don area.

Access to Lands

As Port Lands Flood Protection is wound down, lands in Ookwemin Minising that are currently under licence to Waterfront Toronto are to be handed back to TPLC. As reported to City Council in October 2025, the City, CreateTO and Waterfront Toronto have begun working on the Next Phase of revitalization including beginning enabling infrastructure works on Ookwemin Minising on TPLC lands. In October 2025 City Council provided authority to City staff and TPLC to enter into agreements with Waterfront Toronto and others to provide access to City and TPLC land respectively. At the time staff did not request authority to allow Waterfront Toronto to access leased land. As a housekeeping matter it is recommended through this report that City Council provide authority to the Director, Real Estate Services to do so. Similarly, it is recommended that City Council provide authority to the Director, Real Estate Services to enter into a nominal lease or licence agreement with CreateTO. These additional authorities will ensure that staff can enter into agreements that may be required with CreateTO and Waterfront Toronto as CreateTO, Waterfront Toronto and the City plan for the transition from PLFP to the Next Phase as directed by City Council via EX26.11.

CreateTO: Soils Management

As noted in prior City Council reports, the Toronto Port Lands Company was to take on excess soils generated by the Port Lands Flood Protection project. In 2023, City and CreateTO staff reported that up to 200,000 cubic metres of excess soil would need to be temporarily placed on future development blocks in each of the Ookwemin Minising, McCleary District, and South River precincts, and advised that the cost of managing these soils would represent future ‘foundational investments’ to be incurred as development proceeds over time. The management of these soils, to be funded through future development, is required to unlock the full city building potential of the above development blocks.

CreateTO and Waterfront Toronto have confirmed that the final volume of excess soils placed temporarily on future development blocks is approximately 180,000 cubic metres –less than the 200,000 cubic metres previously reported to City Council.

As part of the close-out of the flood protection project, CreateTO and Waterfront Toronto are entering into a ‘Handback Agreement’ to set out the terms and conditions for the return of various CreateTO-owned/managed (on behalf of the Toronto Port Lands Company) properties that have been licensed to Waterfront Toronto since 2018 in support of the flood protection project. That agreement will also codify the volume and location of these excess soils.

To ensure that the agreements can be completed as anticipated since 2023, this report includes a recommendation that City Council as shareholder direct that CreateTO consent to the acceptance of up to approximately 200,000 cubic metres of temporary excess soils on future development blocks within the Port Lands Flood Protection

Project Area; and further, that the soils shall remain in place until such time that the City of Toronto provides further direction to Toronto Port Lands Company on the development of the subject lands which will address their removal, disposal and/or relocation.

3. Sediment and Debris Management

History of Dredging in the Keating Channel

Since the late-1700s, sediment deposition in the Toronto Inner Harbour from the Don River has been recognized as a major impediment to maintaining navigable waters. Following the 1914 construction of the Keating Channel to support the creation of the Port Lands industrial area, dredging was carried out by the Toronto Port Authority (formerly the Toronto Harbour Commission) with dredged material disposed in open water in Lake Ontario until 1975 when open water disposal was banned. An environmental assessment was completed in 1983 to establish confined disposal facilities on the Leslie Street Spit, to receive contaminated dredgeate from the Channel. Dredging resumed in 1987 which maintained the Keating Channel at its original design/maintenance depth necessary for navigation and flood conveyance.

In 1991, the City of Toronto, Toronto Port Authority, and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority entered into a tri-lateral agreement which provided equal funding from all three parties for dredging the Keating Channel. However, the annual budget and funding for annual dredging remained static while costs increased year-over-year, resulting in more sediment accumulation each year. Overall costs for dredging are affected by the limited options for disposal and its associated transportation costs. The only approved local disposal site for Keating Channel sediment is the Confined Disposal Facility within the Leslie Street Spit which is owned by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and leased by the Toronto Port Authority.

The Environmental Assessment for the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project, undertaken between 2004 and 2014, identified the need to create a Sediment and Debris Management Area (SDMA), located upstream of a rebuilt Lake Shore Boulevard East bridge over the Don River to:

- Allow flood waters to fit under the bridge; and
- Facilitate ongoing dredging that would be required, including capturing most of the annual sediment load (30,000 to 40,000 cubic metres) upstream of the new naturalized river valley to maintain flood conveyance and to avoid smothering the new vegetated river valley.

In addition to the SDMA, new sediment traps within the Don River were also recommended to intercept and capture sediment before it entered the Keating Channel and the planned new river valley to the south. This required the lengthening of the Lake Shore Boulevard East bridge as well as the deepening of the Don River immediately adjacent to the planned SDMA.

In 2018 the Toronto Port Authority withdrew financial support for dredging activities, citing that they did not have an interest as the Keating Channel was no longer navigable

to large vessels due to the inclusion of new fixed bridges across the Keating Channel as part of Port Lands Flood Protection. Dredging operations have continued since then in a limited manner, until 2024 which is when a comprehensive backlog program was started following council approval.

Backlog Keating Channel Dredging Program

Based on surveys conducted in 2023, it was estimated that there would be between 180,000 to 220,000 cubic metres in-situ of excess sediment that must be removed from the Keating Channel to help achieve the goal of flood protection.

Accordingly, City and TRCA staff, in consultation with Waterfront Toronto, developed a backlog dredging program. Since removal started in the fall of 2024 approximately 60,000 cubic metres of sediment has been removed. These materials have been disposed of in the CDF.

The dredging program and the area around the Keating Channel are complex, and work must ensure that flood protection is maintained and potential risks to adjoining supportive infrastructure are minimized. This includes dock walls lining both the north and south side of the Keating Channel, that are variously owned by the Toronto Port Lands Company, Toronto Port Authority and the City and are now more than 100 years and as such need repair and replacement.

Furthermore, the northern edge is complicated by the presence of supporting footings and bents for the Gardiner Expressway. Although the eastbound and portions of the westbound sections of the expressway are no longer in use and slated for eventual removal once the Gardiner/DVP ramps have been realigned to the north, concerns have been raised by City staff that dredging operations near this area must be sensitive to the state of this asset and among other things enhanced monitoring be put in place.

To address these concerns, the City and CreateTO, working with TRCA, have undertaken a comprehensive dock wall condition assessment and implemented an ongoing monitoring program. Current dredging operations underway by TRCA are restricted to areas of the channel that will not impact the structural stability of the existing dock walls. Eventual expansion of the dredging operation will be required to achieve the minimum depth for flood water conveyance. This will be undertaken at such time that the structural stability of the adjacent dock walls can be assured.

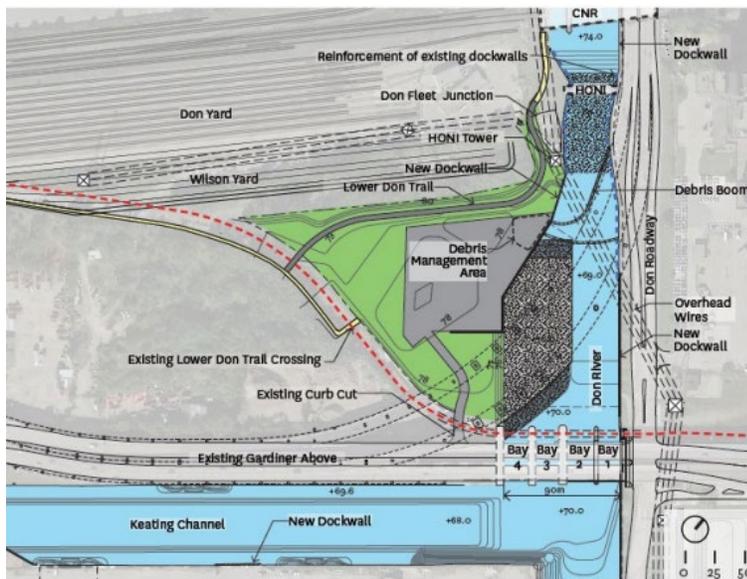
Over the long term, the dock walls in the Keating Channel will be permanently stabilized and reinforced including possibly through future redevelopment opportunities. There may also be an opportunity to undertake this work as part of the planned removal of the Gardiner remnant in 2030-2031 as part of the overall realignment project. This issue will be considered as a part of future reporting by CreateTO and the City for a comprehensive dock wall management program directed by City Council in 2025.

Due to the amount of sediment remaining in the Keating Channel together with an annual, ongoing average sedimentation rate of 30,000 cubic metres, backlog dredging activities will continue for a few years beyond 2026 depending on production and rates of sedimentation. The backlog program was originally estimated to cost \$24 million over

2 years. Of this amount approximately \$18 million was spent over the 2024 and 2025 seasons producing a carryover for the 2026 season of \$6 million. An additional \$7 million was secured for the 2026 dredging through the 2026 budget process. Additional funds will be required as a part of the annual ongoing program under which the removal of excess sediment from the Keating Channel will continue. Required funding will be sought through future budgetary processes.

An Annual Sediment and Debris Management Program is Required

Following the completion of flood protection, annual sediment management and removal operations will shift primarily to the Don River upstream of Lake Shore Boulevard East to the new Interim Sediment and Debris Management Area (SDMA). A rendering of the Interim SDMA is shown in Figure 1.



Depending on conditions, there will remain a need to do localized dredging of the Keating Channel near the new river outlet approximately every two to five years once the backlog has been removed. In addition, work will be required to catch and remove large debris before entering the Inner Harbour. The Toronto Port Authority will be responsible for these costs as part of the proposed annual program.

Figure 1: Interim SDMA

The primary area for dredging was created due to the widening and deepening of the river to accommodate flood levels under the Lake Shore Boulevard East bridge, thus creating a 'sediment trap.' The sediment traps are designed to concentrate sediment deposition in a confined area for more efficient dredging and to reduce sediment reaching the Keating Channel and new river.

As noted in the 2023 report, dredging operations are to be coordinated with work related to the Gardiner Expressway EA and the realignment of the Don Valley Parkway on/off ramps. This includes the completion of the SDMA in phases. As such Waterfront Toronto has constructed the SDMA to an 'interim' condition that will achieve flood protection standards. A graphic of the interim condition is provided in below. Given this area will also act as a staging area for the Gardiner Project, stewardship over these lands will rest with Transportation Services until the Gardiner Project is complete.

Once the Gardiner Project is complete, the SDMA will need to be taken from its interim condition to its final condition. This capital work is currently unfunded. Once completed to its final configuration, the SDMA will have space on the shore for sediment and debris

sorting, equipment and materials handling. The facility will be adjacent to the Lower Don Trail, which will be reinstated after the Gardiner/DVP ramp realignment project has been completed.

Waterfront Toronto is currently in the process of designing the final condition to the 60% milestone, with the intention of completing the design once the Gardiner Project has been completed to account for potential changes to the local area context. Construction would then proceed after and will be subject to further future reporting once the design is complete and potential funding sources identified. Once the SDMA is brought into its final condition, stewardship is anticipated to be transferred from Transportation Services to Parks & Recreation.

Operations: TRCA Management of an Annual Dredging Program

The backlog dredging program has provided the template for the establishment of the proposed long-term dredging program. Given their crucial role and history in the maintenance of flood protection and monitoring activities, TRCA have the necessary expertise to continue managing dredging operations that are intended to maintain flood water conveyance.

It is proposed annual dredging operations continue to be delivered by the Toronto Port Authority through an agreement with TRCA that would be modeled on the agreement for the backlog program. The Toronto Port Authority has the advantage of previously providing these operations on behalf of the City with experienced crews and established operational procedures. They also currently hold exclusive access to the CDF on the Leslie Spit, where the dredged sediment is to be disposed of. Given their experience with marine equipment, the Toronto Port Authority, in consultation with TRCA and Waterfront Toronto would also be tasked with procuring the custom dredging equipment required for long term operations out from the SDMA. The costs would be built into the necessary delivery agreements for the program. It is recommended that City Council authorize staff to negotiate and execute these agreements in the coming months so that it can be in place in time for the 2027 dredging season.

Proposed Operations: Mechanical Dredging

As noted in the 2023 update to City Council, marine based mechanical dredging is currently the most efficient method of dredging from both a cost and operational perspective. It requires less handling of materials is effective and efficient for removing hard-packed, compacted, debris-laden sediments in shallow, confined, and environmentally sensitive areas. It also has fewer operational risks than its alternative method, hydraulic dredging, which with its supporting pipelines and booster pumps potentially presents marine traffic obstructions.

The permanent annual dredging program is currently being costed by the Toronto Port Authority with support from TRCA and the City, but is expected to range between \$12-15 million per year, based on rates of production and sedimentation. Capital expenses required for the acquisition of new equipment are estimated to be \$3 million for two low-mast push tugs that can pass under the new Lake Shore Boulevard bridge over the Don

River and \$7 million for three custom bottom dump scows. As noted earlier, costs will be reported on through the annual budget process.

Potential Future Operations: Alternative Technologies

Although mechanical dredging is currently viewed as the most effective form of operation, alternative technologies may become available in the medium to long term. Furthermore, due to height limitations, dredging the area under the Lake Shore Bridge over the Don River is challenging and cannot be done by way of mechanical dredging. City staff will continue to work with TRCA, the Toronto Port Authority and Waterfront Toronto to identify and assess any potential new alternative methods for dredging and sediment management operations. This would be an ongoing exercise, including investigation of potential pilot project opportunities.

Confined Disposal Facility - CDF

The remaining capacity of the CDF is approximately 1,500,000 cubic metres based on 2025 surveys. Depending on annual deposition rates, there is approximately 25-35 years of capacity remaining in the CDF. Locating and construction a new CDF is a complex undertaking. It is estimated the necessary pre-planning, Environmental Assessments, engineering, technical review, governmental approvals and construction could take up to 20 years to complete. Identification of a suitable CDF site will also allow for long-term planning of waterfront assets and prevent conflict of future land use. It is recommended that staff begin the initial steps to identify a new location for the CDF.

Given the complexity of the process to establish a new CDF, it is recommended that preliminary activities in support of potential future Environmental Assessments be undertaken. This work may include sediment sampling and testing, assessing the regulatory and approval framework, and reviewing alternative options to scope the precursory technical studies and an environmental assessment.

In addition to undertaking the preliminary work required for the establishment of a new CDF (or equivalent sediment disposal facility), City staff in consultation with staff from TRCA and Waterfront Toronto will examine alternative approaches to sediment disposal. Provided contaminant levels are low enough not to present any environmental risks, there may be an alternative to disposal. Any alternative uses for sediment, including using it for other projects, would be subject to further due diligence. These matters will be brought forward to City Council as required in future reports.

4. Conclusion

The Port Lands Flood Protection Project represents a bold city-building initiative that will facilitate the redevelopment of the new island of Ookwemin Minising and the broader Port Lands area. In addition to the future new housing and a vibrant mix of uses, the project will provide Torontonians with 40 hectares (100 acres) of new parkland, wildlife habitat, and natural areas along portions of the new river valleys' northern and southern banks and mouth.

An enhanced public realm including expanded pedestrian and cycling facilities, and other recreational opportunities are now available. With the planned completion, handover and opening of the portion of Biidaasige Park west of Cherry Street by the summer of 2026, these opportunities will be expanded upon. This work will require the ongoing coordination of construction and real estate transfers between Waterfront Toronto, the City and CreateTO throughout the first half of 2026.

To ensure flood protection is maintained regular maintenance in the form of annual removal of accumulated sediment both in the Lower Don River and the Keating Channel is required. The annual dredging program will be reported on through the budget process and City staff will also engage with Provincial officials to discuss potential revenue sources for dredging as sediment accumulation is a regional issue. Given the nature of the sediment removed from the Don River, it must be disposed of in an approved Confined Disposal Facility (CDF) currently located within the Leslie Spit. It is estimated that at current rates of disposal, the CDF only has a remaining capacity of 25-35 years. As such preliminary work should begin to identify the location for a new CDF along with the process for obtaining approval from the appropriate federal and provincial ministries and agencies. City staff in consultation with staff from TRCA and Waterfront Toronto will also examine alternative approaches to sediment disposal should contamination levels prove to be low enough not to present any environmental risks.

CONTACT

Jason Thorne, MCIP, RPP Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning
416-392-8772
Jason.thorne@toronto.ca

David Stonehouse, Director, Waterfront Secretariat, City Planning
416-392-8113
david.stonehouse@toronto.ca

Christian Giles, Waterfront Secretariat, City Planning
416-543-733
christian.giles@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jag Sharma
Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services

ATTACHMENTS

1. List of Port Lands Flood Protection Project Milestones
2. Port Lands Flood Protection Project Pictures 2025, 2026

ATTACHMENT 1: Port Lands Flood Protection Project Milestones

Year	Milestone
2017-2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale construction commencement
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Cherry Street Lakefill, a separate project but first phase of the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of the transit and vehicular bridges over the Keating Channel
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of the transit and vehicular bridges over the Keating Channel
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the river valley construction • Installation of the Cherry South bridge and Commissioners Street bridge • Partial opening of the realigned Cherry Street south roadway and bridge
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The central valley plantings and habitats • Ice management area south of Villiers Street • Backlog dredging preplanning begins
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The completion of flood protection in the Port Lands • The completion and opening to traffic of four new bridges (two at Cherry Street North over the Keating Channel, Cherry Street Bridge South and Commissioners Street Bridge) • Opening the realigned Cherry Street north roadway and bridge from Lake Shore Boulevard south to Commissioners Street • New water, sanitary and stormwater infrastructure along with expanded cycling and pedestrian infrastructure along Cherry Street and Commissioners Street • The commencement of the backlog sediment removal program in the Keating Channel
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of Biidaasige Park (including Fire Hall 30) • Completion of Cherry Street South, Commissioners Street and Don Roadway, including Flood Protection Landform • Completion of Lake Shore Boulevard Bridge • Completion of hydraulic conveyance through SDMA • Completion and opening of the new river valley to Lake Ontario • Substantial completion of Port Lands Flood Protection Project reached September 30, 2025