

# MAKING WAVES



PRINCIPLES  
FOR BUILDING  
TORONTO'S  
WATERFRONT

CENTRAL WATERFRONT PART II PLAN



# MAKING WAVES: PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING TORONTO'S WATERFRONT

## CENTRAL WATERFRONT PART II PLAN

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"THE WATERFRONT BECOMES SYMBOLIC OF OUR HUMAN LIMITATIONS – AND OF OUR POTENTIAL. IT FUNCTIONS AS BOTH A PHYSICAL AND A PSYCHOLOGICAL FRONTIER. BY REPRESENTING WHAT IS DEEP AND KNOWABLE, IT SUGGESTS BOTH OUR HOPES AND OUR FEARS FOR THE FUTURE. IT IS A SHIMMERING MIRROR WHICH REFLECTS THE SUNLIGHT OF THE DAY AND THE CITY LIGHTS OF THE NIGHT, BREAKING THEM UP INTO MILLIONS OF SPARKLING RAYS, ABSTRACTING AND MAKING POETIC OUR WORK-A-DAY WORLD."

**JOHN RUBIN**

"THE CELLULOID WATERFRONT"







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CENTRAL  
WATERFRONT  
PART II PLAN





SECTION ONE:  
MAKING WAVES

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(ABOVE): THE CENTRAL WATERFRONT – TORONTO’S FRONT PORCH

**TORONTO HAS A DREAM**  
A DREAM OF TRANSFORMING AND RE-ENERGIZING ITS WATERFRONT INTO ONE OF THE GREAT WATERFRONTS OF THE WORLD. A DREAM OF BUILDING A SPECTACULAR GATEWAY TO THIS CITY, THIS PROVINCE AND THIS COUNTRY.

With this report, Toronto begins making waves to build its new waterfront. The Central Waterfront Part II Plan spells out key public priorities, opportunities and an implementation process to ensure results. The Plan focuses on core principles and big public moves, leaving area-specific details to precinct development strategies that will be completed later.

Transforming the waterfront has been a goal of Torontonians for decades. We now have a powerful momentum. In the past two years alone, we have passed some critical milestones:

In November 1999, the City of Toronto released *Our Toronto Waterfront: The Wave of the Future!* The report unveiled a broad vision for renewing Toronto's 46-kilometre waterfront, making it one of the most dynamic waterfront areas in North America. At

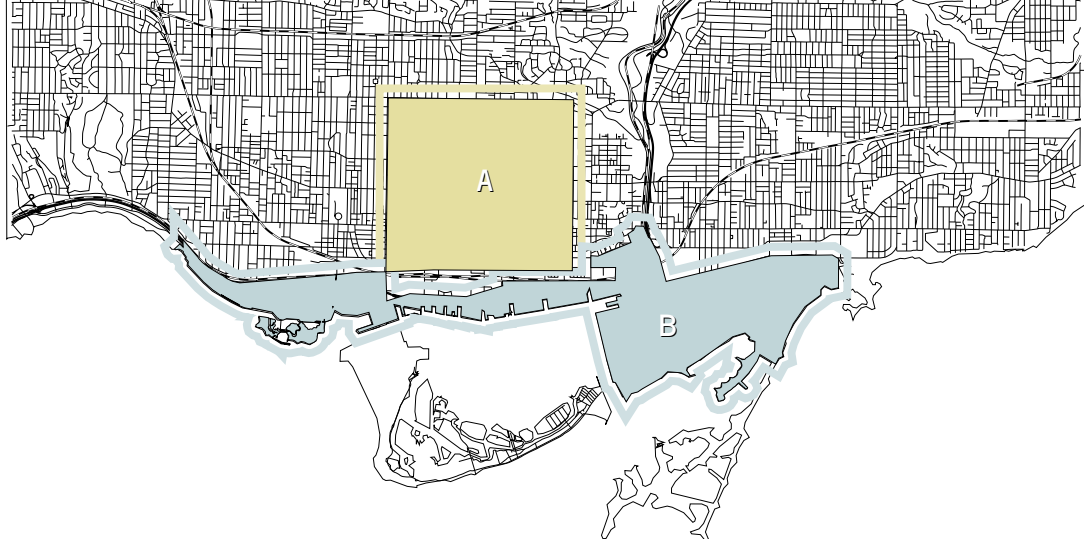
the same time, Prime Minister Chrétien, Premier Harris and Mayor Lastman announced the formation of the Toronto Revitalization Task Force headed by Robert Fung.

In March 2000, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force released *Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada*. The report added strategic detail to the original vision as well as a financial and operational plan for steering the renewal, with particular emphasis on the Central Waterfront.

In August 2000, Toronto City Council approved *Our Toronto Waterfront: Building Momentum*, the City's preliminary analysis of the Task Force report, as well as an implementation strategy.

In October 2000, the three governments pledged their financial support to revitalizing Toronto's waterfront.





(THIS PAGE): THE CENTRAL WATERFRONT (B) IS VAST, ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO THE AREA BOUNDED BY BATHURST, SHERBOURNE, BLOOR AND FRONT STREETS (A)

(OPPOSITE PAGE): THE GARDINER EXPRESSWAY ACTS AS A BARRIER BETWEEN THE CITY AND THE WATERFRONT

In March 2001, four priority waterfront projects were announced: extending Front Street from Bathurst Street to Dufferin Street, expanding subway platforms and passenger corridors at Union Station, conducting Phase One of the environmental cleanup of the Port Lands and carrying out an environmental assessment for the restoration of the mouth of the Don River.

In May 2001, City Council approved a governance structure paving the way for the formation of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation. This corporation will steer the waterfront renewal initiative on behalf of the three levels of government.

*The Wave of the Future* set out a bold and ambitious vision. The Task Force and *Building Momentum* reports showed that the vision could work. The tri-level government commitment has demonstrated a will to make it work. And now, *Making Waves: Principles for Building Toronto's Waterfront* will enable it to work.

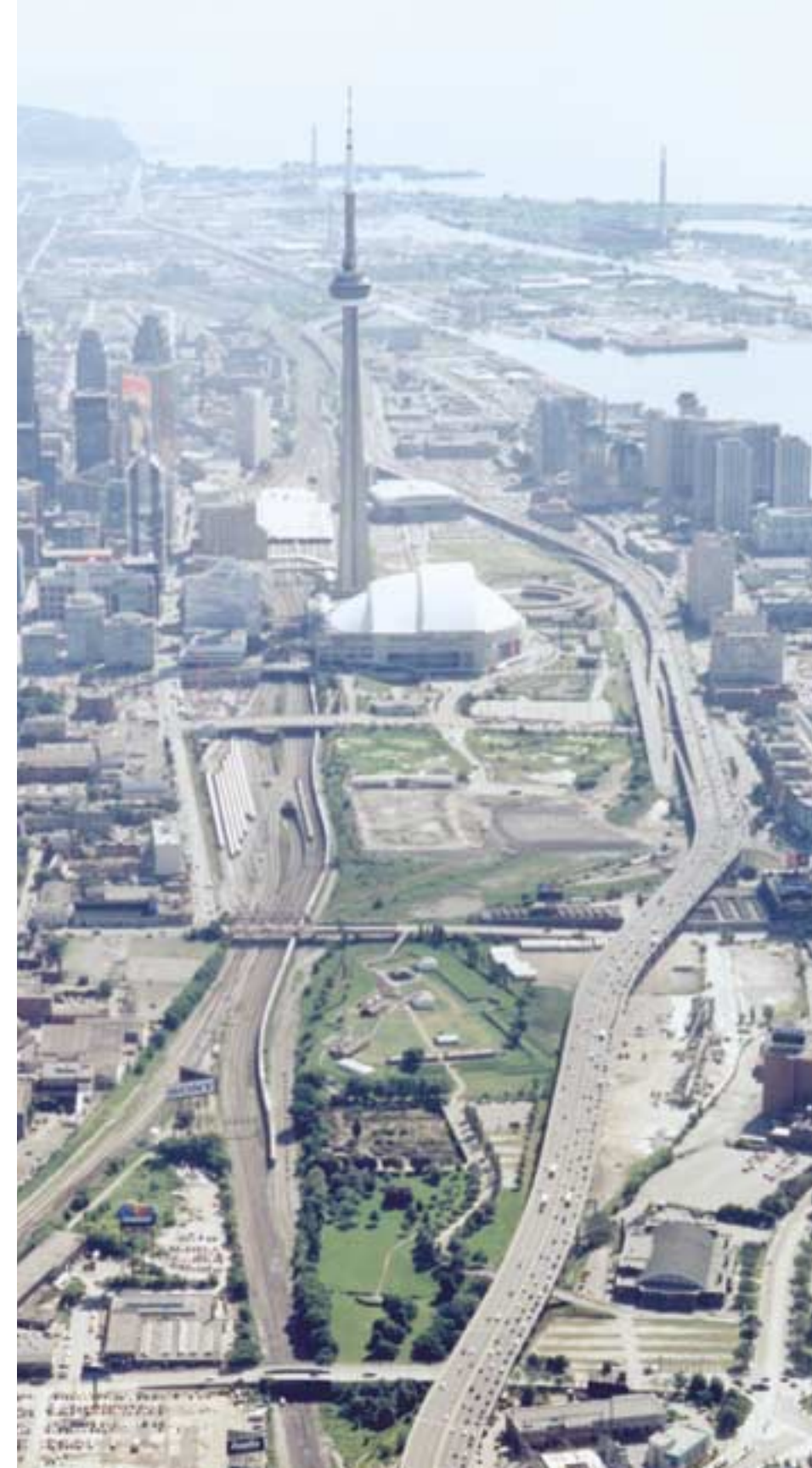
Now is the best possible time to move ahead. Although waterfront neighbourhoods such as Harbourfront and Bathurst/Strachan are well developed, over 800 hectares of strategically located land in the heart of Canada's economic engine – Toronto's Central Waterfront – remain mostly vacant and underutilized. With about 70 per cent of the land already in public hands, an extraordinary opportunity exists to engineer a seamless renewal and position Toronto for the intense urban competition of the new millennium.

The Central Waterfront can become a focal point for realizing many of our civic aspirations: new economic growth and jobs; diverse and dynamic new communities for people of all means, ages, and abilities; prominent cultural institutions; green, clean and interesting public spaces; and special places to have fun and create new memories.

*Making Waves: Principles for Building Toronto's Waterfront* is the proposed Part II Plan for the Central Waterfront, the City of Toronto's legal framework for making it happen. After it has been discussed by the public and considered for approval by City Council, the Plan will become the basis for guiding change in the Central Waterfront. Once the permanent Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation is operational, the City will work with the Corporation, stakeholders and the public to shape specific development strategies for each of the precincts in the Central Waterfront.

The Plan is organized around four core principles that will steer the renewal of the Central Waterfront. This will be a multidecade effort. The core principles will be valuable touchstones for ensuring that as development takes place over the years, it remains faithful to the original vision.

For each principle, the Plan sets out the "Big Moves" – 23 in all – that will make waves, signalling a deliberate change in direction for Toronto's waterfront. The Plan also establishes the policy framework within which the "Big Moves" will happen.



## THE CASE FOR REDESIGNING THE GARDINER CORRIDOR

This wave of activity, once realized, will bring enormous benefits to the City of Toronto and the entire Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Over 40,000 new housing units can create homes for more than 68,000 people. Commercial development of over 900,000 square metres can generate some 35,000 jobs. New waterfront transportation and tourism infrastructure and activities will strengthen the city's appeal not only to residents, but to people from across Canada and around the world.

The redesign of the Gardiner Expressway corridor and replacement of its capacity with a modified road network is one of the most important ingredients in revitalizing the Central Waterfront. It will allow the city to be reunited with the lake, promote strong pedestrian corridors between downtown and the water, and accelerate the transformation of an underutilized part of Toronto into a vibrant mixed-use waterfront district.

The reconstruction of a new Gardiner corridor is an enormous undertaking. It will require the completion of the Front Street Extension and improvements to the Richmond/Adelaide ramps to provide enhanced access to downtown, major upgrades to GO Transit/TTC services including Union Station, and measures to ensure continuous east-west access along the Gardiner corridor on Lake Shore Boulevard throughout reconstruction. Before the removal of the elevated expressway, funding for these transportation improvements must be in place and the work substantially completed.





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(1A + 1B) BARCELONA WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION (2A) SAN FRANCISCO'S FERRY TERMINAL WITH EMBARCADERO FREEWAY (2B) FERRY TERMINAL AFTER REMOVAL OF FREEWAY (3) CHICAGO'S REVITALIZED WATERFRONT (4) LONDON'S CANARY WHARF (5) BATTERY PARK CITY, NEW YORK (6) NEW HUDSON RIVER PIER, NEW YORK

1) A NATIONAL INITIATIVE

As Canada's largest city, Toronto acts as a gateway to the nation for commerce, culture and tourism. It ranks with other international cities that represent their country to the world and help define its identity. In today's global economy, the same cities are competing with each other to attract investment, sources of employment and tourism dollars.

Toronto's waterfront represents an exceptional national resource, the most valuable undeveloped land in Canada. A renewed Central Waterfront will become Toronto's international postcard image and reaffirm our reputation as one of the most livable cities in the world. A revitalized Central Waterfront will raise the bar for city building and set a new standard for quality and excellence in the new millennium.

Many capital cities in Europe, in the United States and elsewhere have recognized the importance of reinvesting in their cities and have launched ambitious renewal programs involving major public investment in new transportation infrastructure, cultural institutions and public amenity areas. Most of these projects have been

concentrated in waterfront areas which, like Toronto's, contain large tracts of former industrial and railway operations with a high percentage of publicly owned land. These are ideal conditions for generating the necessary synergies and excitement, providing an environment conducive to achieving innovation and distinction and setting the tone for the kind of image these cities wish to project.

Barcelona, Spain, for example, has achieved world prominence by using the 1992 Olympic Games as a catalyst to transform former derelict lands into a stunning waterfront, including a reconfigured expressway system, active public promenades, a new beach and residential neighbourhoods. San Francisco, following the 1989 earthquake that destroyed part of the Embarcadero Freeway, decided to remove the expressway in its entirety and replaced the elevated structure with an 11-kilometre waterfront boulevard. Hundreds of projects are attributed in whole or in part to the freeway's removal. They, in turn, have led to a rebirth of San Francisco's waterfront district.

Chicago, a lakefront city with a waterfront the same length as Toronto's, has developed a comprehensive park system from one end to the other adorned by quality places of interest, museums and other cultural institutions. This transformation has been accomplished with extensive participation of the federal government and the private sector.

The experiences of these cities and other world cities such as London, Sydney and New York have demonstrated the tremendous contribution waterfront revitalization can make toward the economic recovery of cities. Projects of this magnitude, done successfully, can literally refocus and renew an entire urban area.

Most of these cities were faced with similar if not more daunting challenges and obstacles as our city. Toronto can learn from the experience of these cities and fashion a made-in-Toronto product. Toronto's waterfront history can become tomorrow's opportunity.

Waterfront renewal can become the vehicle for demonstrating to the international community Canada's capacity for leadership in architecture, urban design, community development, environmental awareness, technology, culture and the arts, all of which play a part in the creation of a convergence economy. The success of this highly visible project can make a significant contribution to positioning Canada as a country of the future ready to meet the complex challenges of the new century. Waterfront renewal is an unprecedented national initiative.

TORONTO'S WATERFRONT HISTORY CAN BECOME TOMORROW'S OPPORTUNITY



# A SUCCESSFUL TORONTO MEANS A SUCCESSFUL ONTARIO

## 2) A PROVINCIAL OPPORTUNITY

As Ontario's capital city, Toronto and its waterfront play a unique role in the life of the province. Ontario's longest street, Yonge Street, has its origins on Toronto's waterfront. This symbolic and functional link between Ontario and its capital city should be celebrated as a source of pride for all Ontarians. The possibilities for building on this link are endless.

Tourism is one of the largest and most important industries in the economy of our city and province. Visitors to Toronto are attracted by the health and vibrancy of our neighbourhoods, the city's urban appeal, the strength of our financial district, leading medical sector and notable cultural and educational institutions, all centrally located in a relatively compact area supported by good transportation infrastructure.

While much has been achieved, Toronto's waterfront offers a striking location to showcase progressive cultural and tourist institutions that break the mould with originality, quality and astonishment. The introduction of such facilities will inspire renewal efforts as well as provide economic spinoffs and enrichment for all citizens.

The Province's leadership on this initiative will help Toronto achieve its potential for a magnificent capital city waterfront. A successful Toronto means a successful Ontario.

In addition to concrete economic benefits, renewing the Central Waterfront will also generate less tangible but equally significant benefits by contributing greatly to the sustainability of the region in which we are located. As we enter the first years of the new millennium, we find ourselves at the crossroads of serious growth challenges. If the GTA is to thrive, it has to grow smarter, not just larger – better, not just bigger.

By reinvesting in the Central Waterfront, the City of Toronto can lead by example. Instead of consuming precious farm and recreational land in the outer suburbs, we can renew in a concentrated way in the core of the city. This wave of activity, based on the wise and efficient use of urban land, will serve as a model for smart growth across the GTA. This will not only benefit our generation, but generations to come. Waterfront renewal is an outstanding provincial opportunity.



(ABOVE): TORONTO OFFERS A WEALTH OF EXPERIENCES TO ITS CITIZENS AND VISITORS



(BELOW): CITY BUILDING CAPACITY AT THE EDGE OF DOWNTOWN



### 3) A TORONTO IMPERATIVE

The benefits that will ripple out from a revitalized Central Waterfront will extend beyond its boundaries and will wash across the whole of the city. The magnitude of this initiative, the prominence of the Central Waterfront as Toronto's front porch and the variety of land use activities that will be attracted to this extraordinary setting will have a profound influence on our city's prosperity, standard of living and, ultimately, our quality of life. The Central Waterfront is crucial to our city's future and wealth creation for all citizens.

One of the realities of the 21st century is that cities will live and die on the strength of the quality of life they offer to the people who already live there and to the legion of knowledge workers who can locate themselves and their businesses anywhere in the world. Nowhere is this quality of life more important than in the downtown core.

Our city is unique in that it already has a vibrant downtown and is currently experiencing an urban renaissance with unprecedented residential development. However, downtown is also vulnerable to external forces and needs ongoing care and attention to maintain its vitality. Renewing the waterfront will reinvigorate downtown Toronto, create new neighbourhoods, attract employment and investment in the arts and culture, and boost the city's reputation as a place to be.

We are extremely fortunate that choices are still open to us and that the renewal process can be directed in a carefully coordinated and comprehensive manner. Revitalization of this scale and magnitude will take time. It must be done right. It has to be managed, resourced and developed as an entity with the full support and participation of the City, its citizens and other government partners.

Now is clearly the time for Toronto to realize its long-standing dream. Collectively, we have an opportunity to promote our culture for city building, marketing the nation's largest city region at its best. Renewing the waterfront offers our city a chance to discover new ways of achieving its objectives, using the focused energy of the revitalization corporation, the entrepreneurial skills of the private sector, the creativity of our citizens and the prospects of new technology to unlock the fabulous potential of the Central Waterfront.

But windows of opportunity open and close quickly. To stand still is to be left behind in an increasingly competitive world economy. Waterfront renewal is a Toronto imperative.

It is time to make waves!



A CHRONOLOGY

**JULY 1999**  
Urban Development Services releases *Unlocking Toronto's Port Lands – Directions for the Future*. The report provides an assessment of the challenges and opportunities for the Port Lands and recognizes the need to coordinate political, investment and planning decisions to revitalize the area.

**NOVEMBER 3, 1999**  
Mayor Lastman releases the vision document, *Our Toronto Waterfront: The Wave of the Future!*

On the same day, Prime Minister Chrétien, Premier Harris and Mayor Lastman announce the formation of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force headed by Robert Fung.

**MARCH 20, 2000**  
Release of the Task Force report, *Our Toronto Waterfront: Gateway to the New Canada*.

**AUGUST 28, 2000**  
City Council approves the staff report, *Our Toronto Waterfront: Building Momentum*. The report contains the City's preliminary analysis of the Task Force report and recommends an implementation strategy for revitalization.

**OCTOBER 3, 2000**  
City Council places an Interim Control By-law on key lands between Strachan Avenue and the Don Roadway to protect future options for a publicly accessible waterfront and a reconfigured transportation network.

**OCTOBER 20, 2000**  
Prime Minister Chrétien, Premier Harris and Mayor Lastman announce their commitment to Toronto's waterfront and pledge \$1.5 billion to kick-start the initiative.

**FEBRUARY 2001**  
The City of Toronto and the federal and provincial governments approve \$6.3 million in technical studies as part of the \$1.5 billion commitment.

**MARCH 5, 2001**  
Federal Transport Minister Collenette, Ontario Finance Minister Flaherty and Toronto Mayor Lastman pledge approximately \$300 million for priority public projects.

**MAY 2, 2001**  
City Council approves the first four revitalization projects in Toronto's Central Waterfront.

**MAY 31, 2001**  
City Council approves the creation of a Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation, in principle, to initiate a process of renewal with the governments of Ontario and Canada.



STEPS TOWARD TORONTO'S  
WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION