LOWER DONTRAIL MASTER PLAN 2019 REFRESH

Welcome to this Public Meeting for the Lower Don Trail Master Plan 2019 Refresh. This is the primary opportunity for the public to engage the team led by the City of Toronto in partnership with Evergreen as the overall project moves forward.

This evening we will introduce the project, present the draft recommendations of the Master Plan Refresh, and discuss next steps.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback on our work to date. Please ask for an Agenda / Comments Sheet from the registration table to record your thoughts. You can leave it at the registration table tonight or send your feedback by e-mail (contact below) by Friday September 27, 2019.

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Project Purpose & Outcome

This Refresh represents the second round of master planning the Lower Don Trail. It follows and updates the 2013 Master Plan, which resulted in a number of successful improvements to the trail and its surroundings.

Reasons for the Refresh include:

A different way of thinking: Since 2013, both of the profile of the Don Valley lands and the public conversation regarding their future have grown and become more sophisticated. There is now a general consensus that the Don Valley should be thought of, and planned for, as a single cohesive park space, rather than a collection of pieces.

Expanded geographic scope: Our study area has been extended northward to the Don River Forks, and includes Crothers Woods, Coxwell Ravine and part of E.T. Seton Park.

A changing planning context: Plans for surroundings areas, such as the Unilever Precinct, have incorporated aspects of the 2013 Plan and can be built upon further.

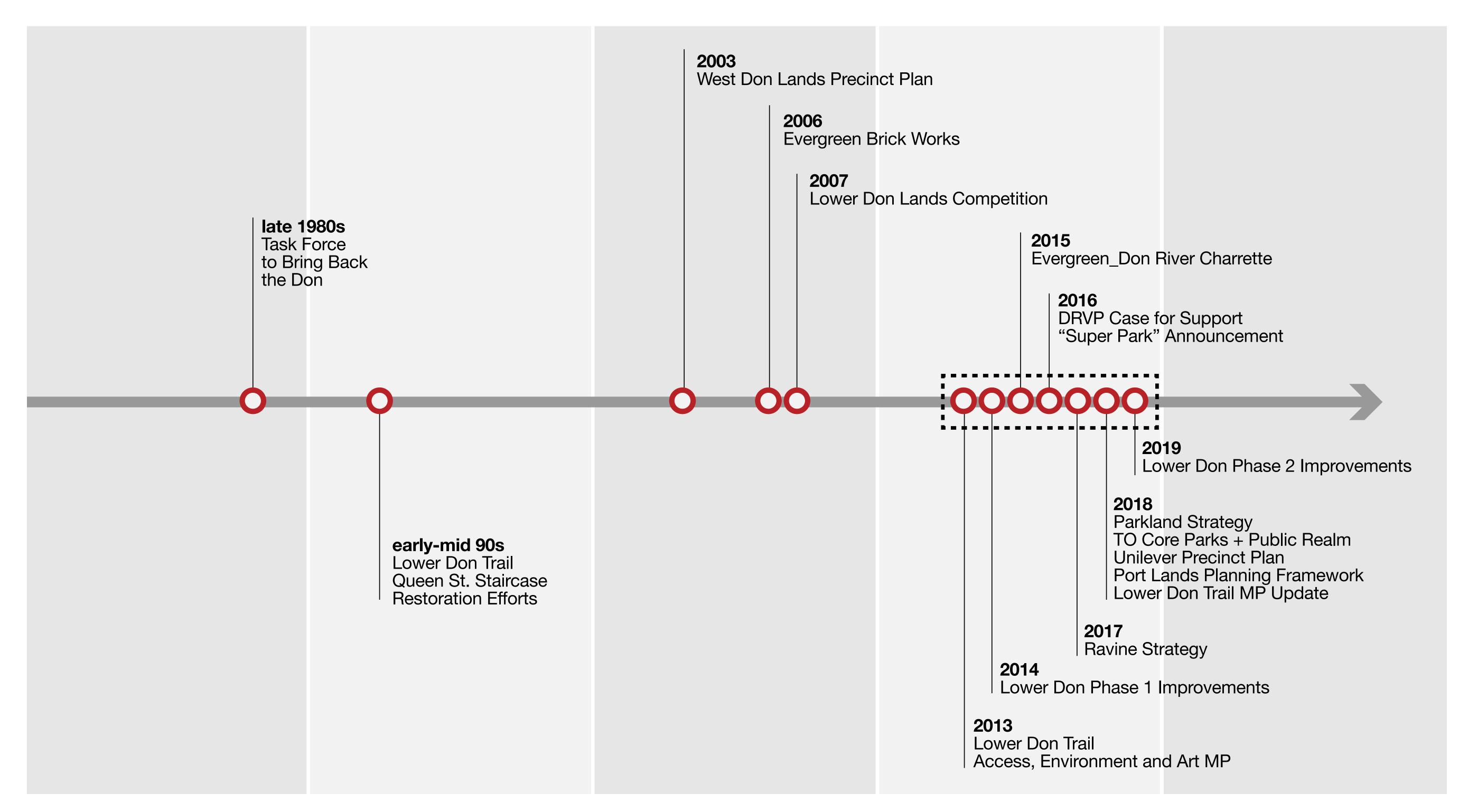
Building on success: The implementation of some elements of the 2013 Master Plan means that new opportunities have been opened for consideration.

Indigenous involvement: Indigenous consultation took place during the preparation of the Master Plan Refresh, and it is hoped that these relationships will grow and influence the detailed design and programming of its recommendations.



Cyclist on Lower Don Trail, with Thorncliffe Park in background.

History & Timeline



This Master Plan Refresh does not start from scratch; it builds upon, and is informed by, numerous projects over the past several decades. These include the 2013 Master Plan, but also subsequent work.

The Master Plan seeks to:

- Confirm previous recommendations not yet implemented.
- Identify new opportunities for connections, public art, and environmental improvements.
- Provide new opportunities for energizing dynamic community support.
- Take advantage of leadership and momentum by the City, Evergreen and other agencies and partners in the Lower Don Valley.



Don Valley River Park Case for Support (2016). Evergreen-commissioned visionary document that built on some aspects of the 2013 Master Plan.





The 2013 Master Plan, a starting point for the Master Plan Refresh.

Opportunities & Constraints

As a geographic feature, the Don Valley has a high profile in Toronto perhaps second only to the waterfront. It has the opportunity to become a truly landmark space, integrating recreation, infrastructure and natural systems.

Opportunities include:

- Rebranding of the valley parks as a single system.
- Adding portal gateways, and spaces to pause, or to approach the river.
- Better connections to neighbourhoods.
- Opening up new park spaces (especially the Snow Drop site).
- Widening portions of the trail, connecting segments, adding spurs.
- Removing, consolidating or redesigning older infrastructure to improve trail connectivity and add natural space.
- New public art installations.
- Indigenous programming.

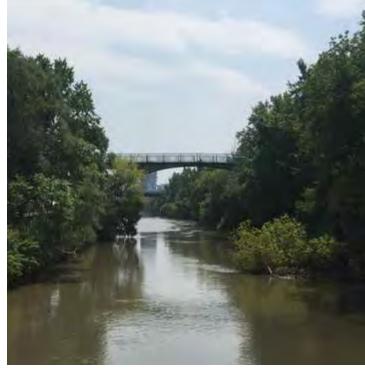
Constraints include:

- The barriers to trail use formed by infrastructure (highways, railways, roads, as well as hydro and gas lines).
- The risk of floods and the need to design all improvements to accommodate flooding.
- Limited opportunities for servicing (e.g. plumbing for public washrooms).
- Steep slopes are barriers for some users.
- The isolation of some parts of the Valley makes them difficult to get to and may pose safety risks.

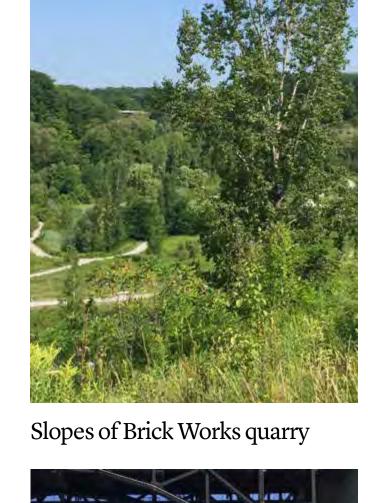


Evergreen Brick Works













from Bayview Multi-Use Trail



The Leaside Viaduct, as seen from the Lower Don Trail



Treatment Plant



Pilot signage on trail



Driveway from Thorncliffe Park down to E.T. Seton Park



Trail underpass under Don Mills Road



Crothers Woods kiosk



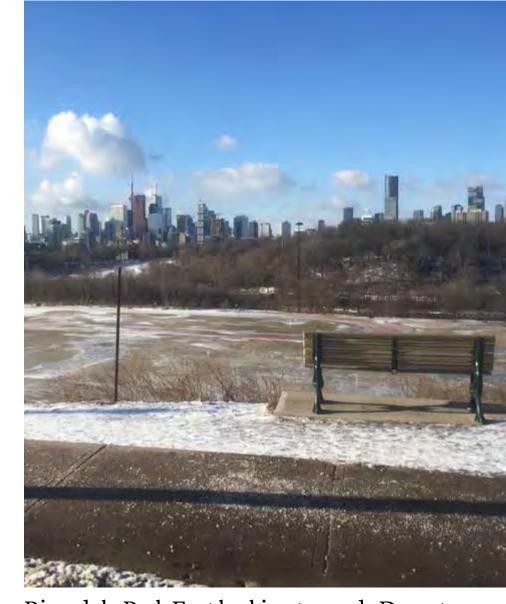
Public art at the Don River Forks



Trail bridge to Crothers Woods



The historic Eastern Avenue Bridge, which must be removed or relocated



Riverdale Park East looking towards Downtown



Lower Don Trail passing beneath Gardiner / DVP ramps

Guiding Principles

The intensification and development of new communities in the Lower Don Valley neighbourhoods will bring tens of thousands of new residents into the core of the city. These new residents will significantly increase the demands put on the Don Valley lands as a place to recreate, commute and travel through.

At its core, the Master Plan Refresh seeks to reconcile this contradiction: how can more people enjoy the benefits of the Don Valley, while simultaneously better protecting and enhancing its natural environment?

Goals + Principles

- To recommend strategies to improve accessibility, visibility, environmental protection, and to consider possibilities for new programming.
- To rehabilitate and make better use of former industrial lands, and to work to overcome the obstacles created by infrastructure.
- To incorporate existing studies and to build on the work of the 2013 Master Plan.
- To stimulate, and contribute to, the ongoing public discussion on improving and raising the status of the Lower Don.

The following series of principles underpin the Master Plan Refresh. They have been adapted from the 2013 Plan.

Participation

Invite opportunities for public participation in future implementation of improvements to the trail system. In particular, continue to engage the Indigenous communities in questions of programming and design.

Accessibility

- Provide safe and easily-visible access to the trail for different levels of mobility.
- Develop clear and consistent wayfinding and interpretive signage, particularly around major trail entry points and nodes.

Connectivity

- Connect major destinations along and adjacent to the trail, while promoting the Don Valley as a destination unto itself.
- Link the trail to existing infrastructure including other trails, bike lanes, streets and transit.
- Integrate the trail into the life of its surrounding neighbourhoods, through signage and public realm improvements.
- Optimize the use of historic infrastructure by removing or re-purposing elements to improve connectivity.

Preservation

• Protect and preserve the most sensitive natural areas.

Recreation and Education

- Enhance safe and responsible interaction with the natural environment, especially with the Don River itself.
- Develop multiple options for movement and recreation routes.
- Explore opportunities for active recreation on appropriate sites.
- Share the story of the Don Valley's natural and human history through public art and other installations.



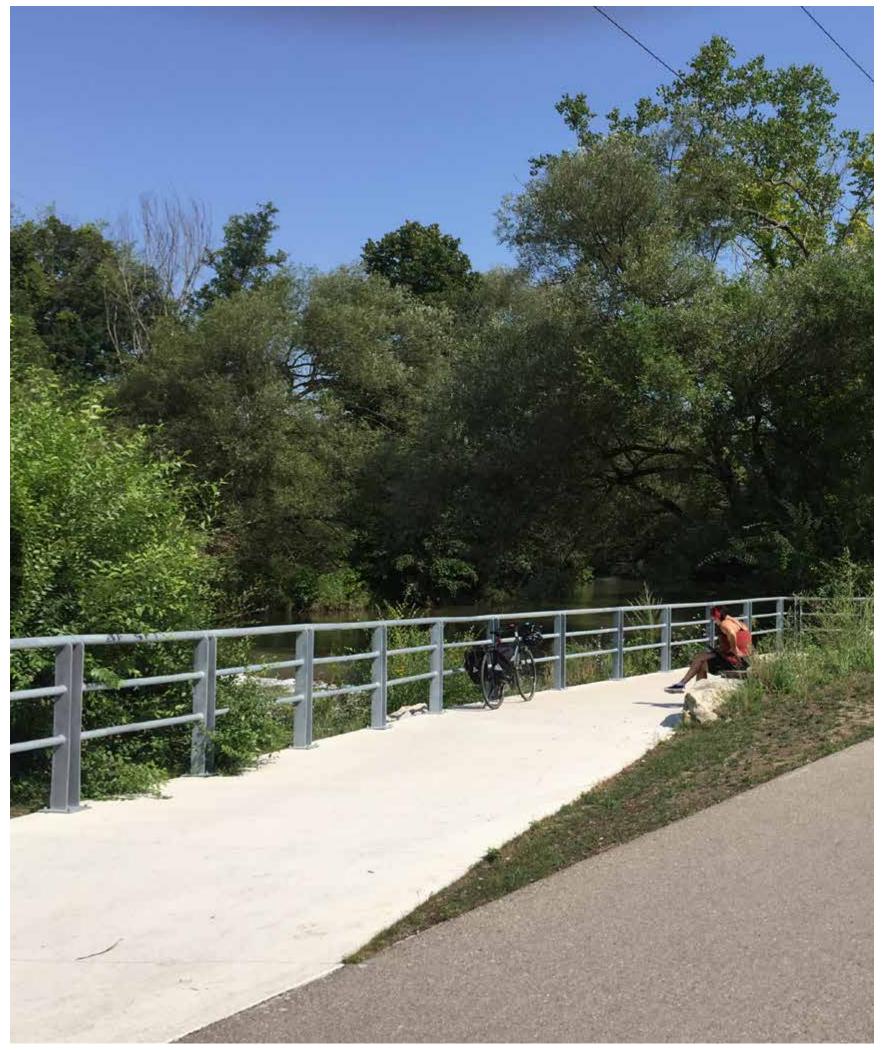
Current trail portal at Thorncliffe Park



VIA train on Bala line, seen from the Lower Don Trail



View across the Lower Don (credit: Vitto Riccio)



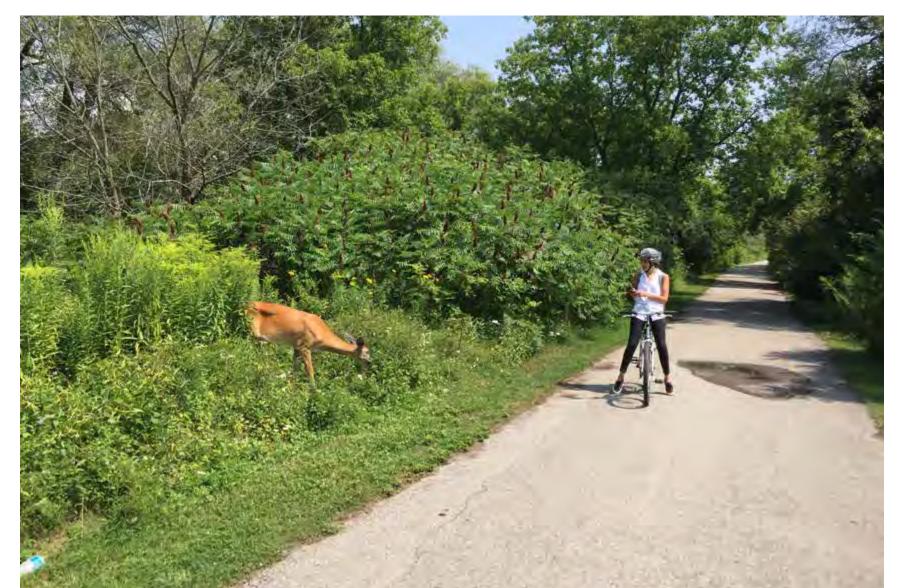
Existing river viewing area north of Pottery Road



Pottery Road crossing

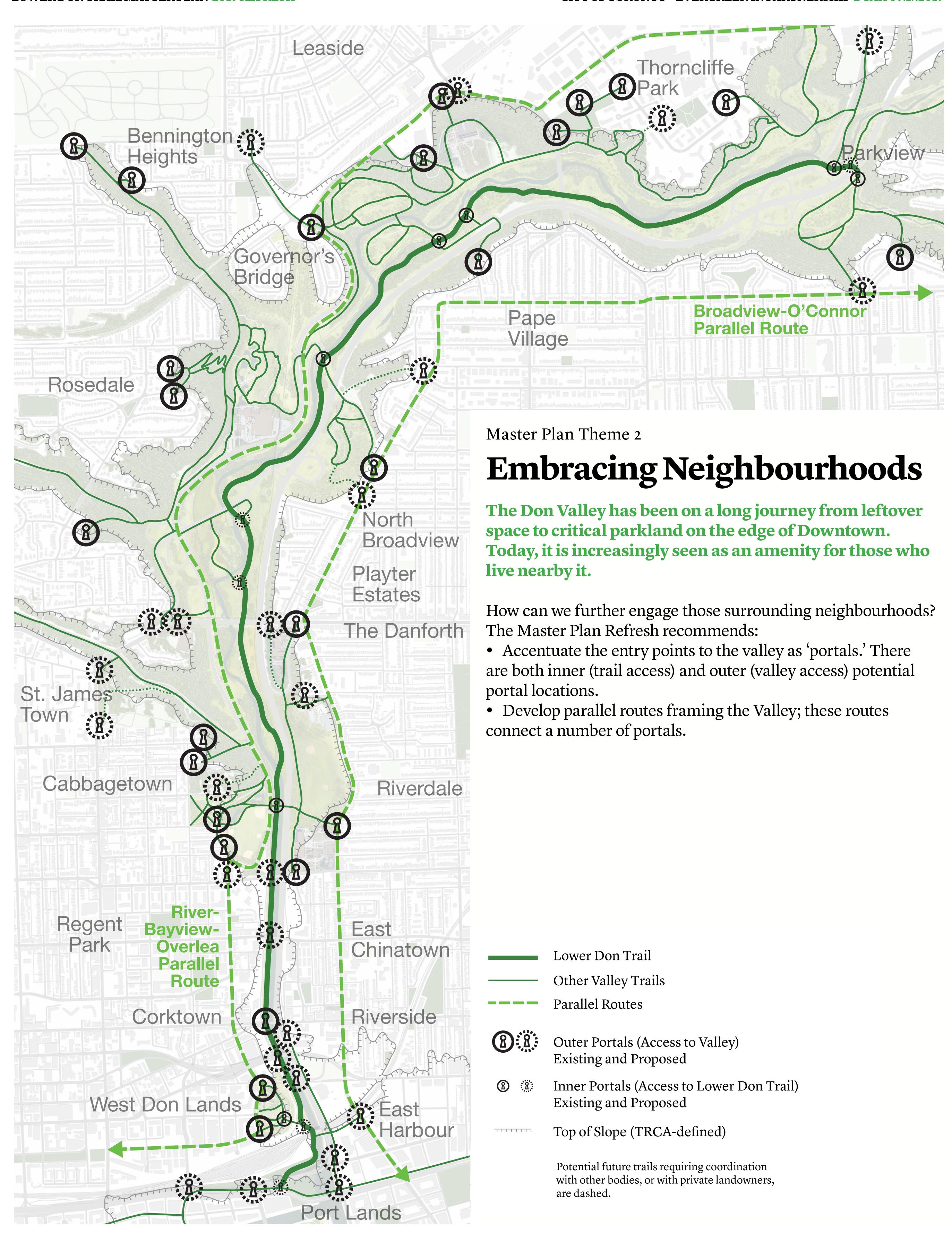


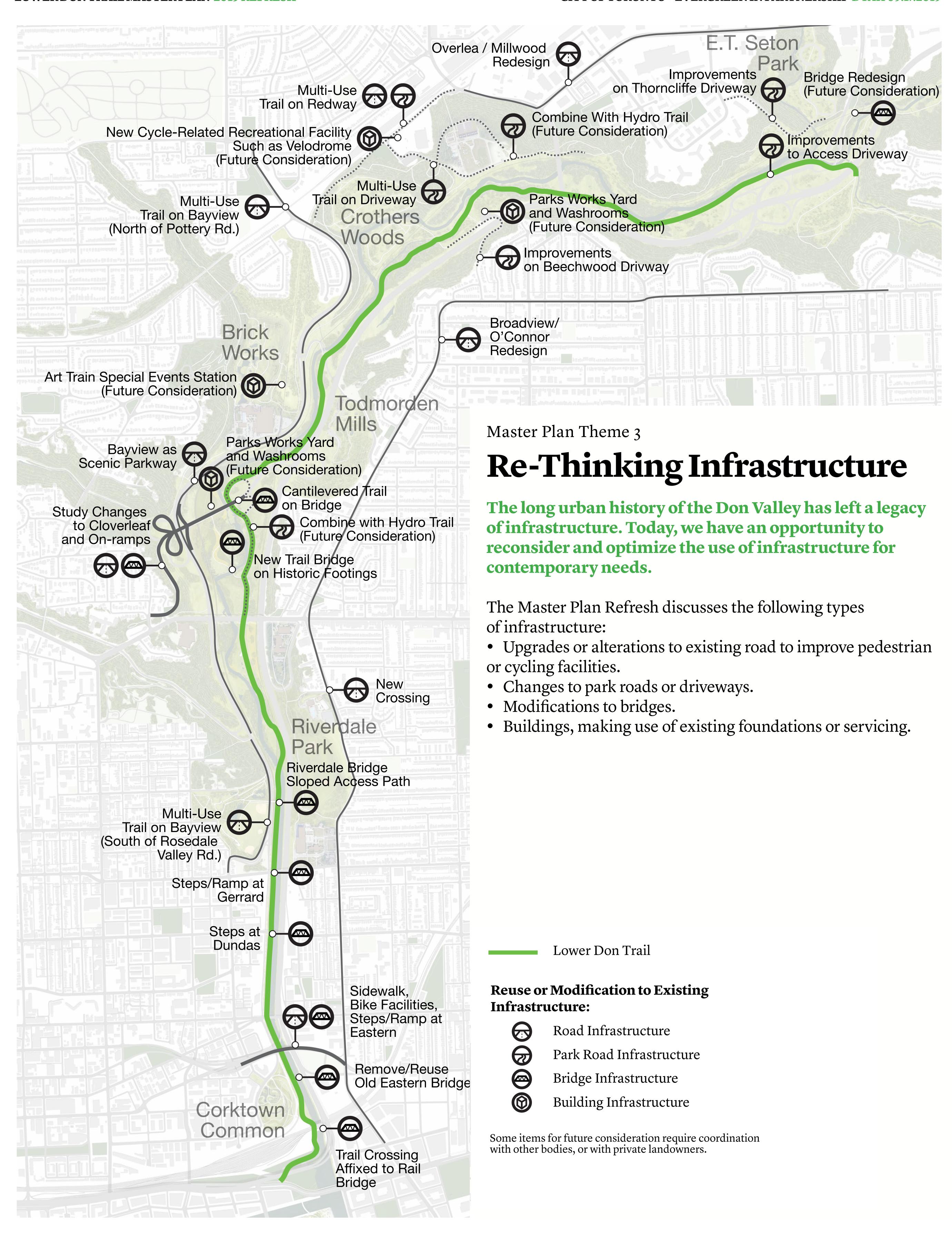
Remains of former zoo in Riverdale Ponds area



Lower Don Trail in the summer







Focus: The Bayview Ramp & Snow Drop Park Area

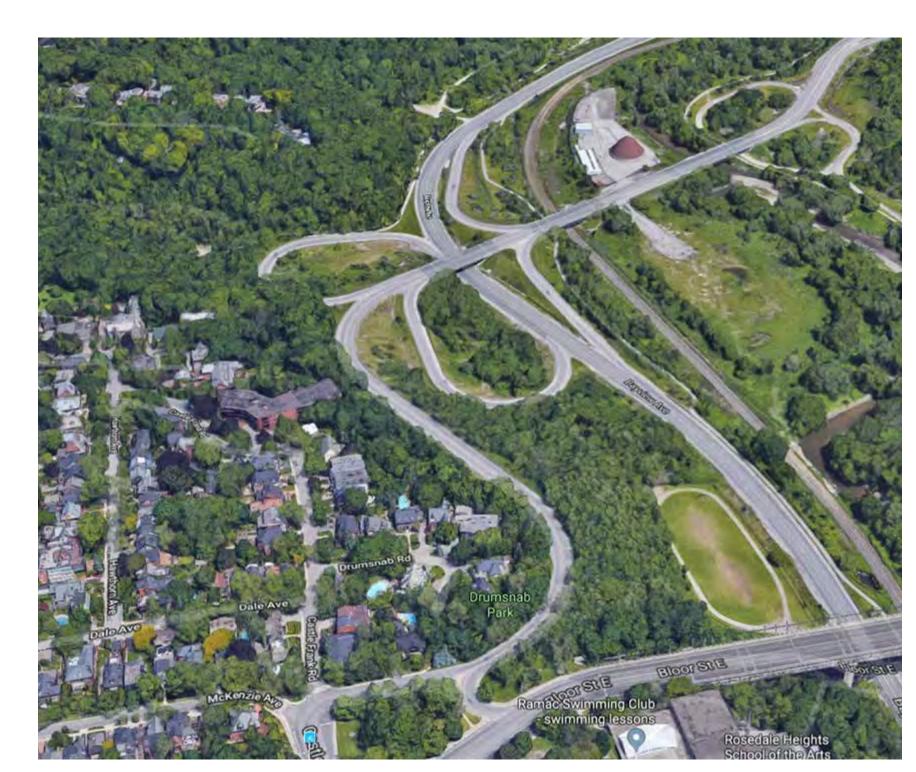


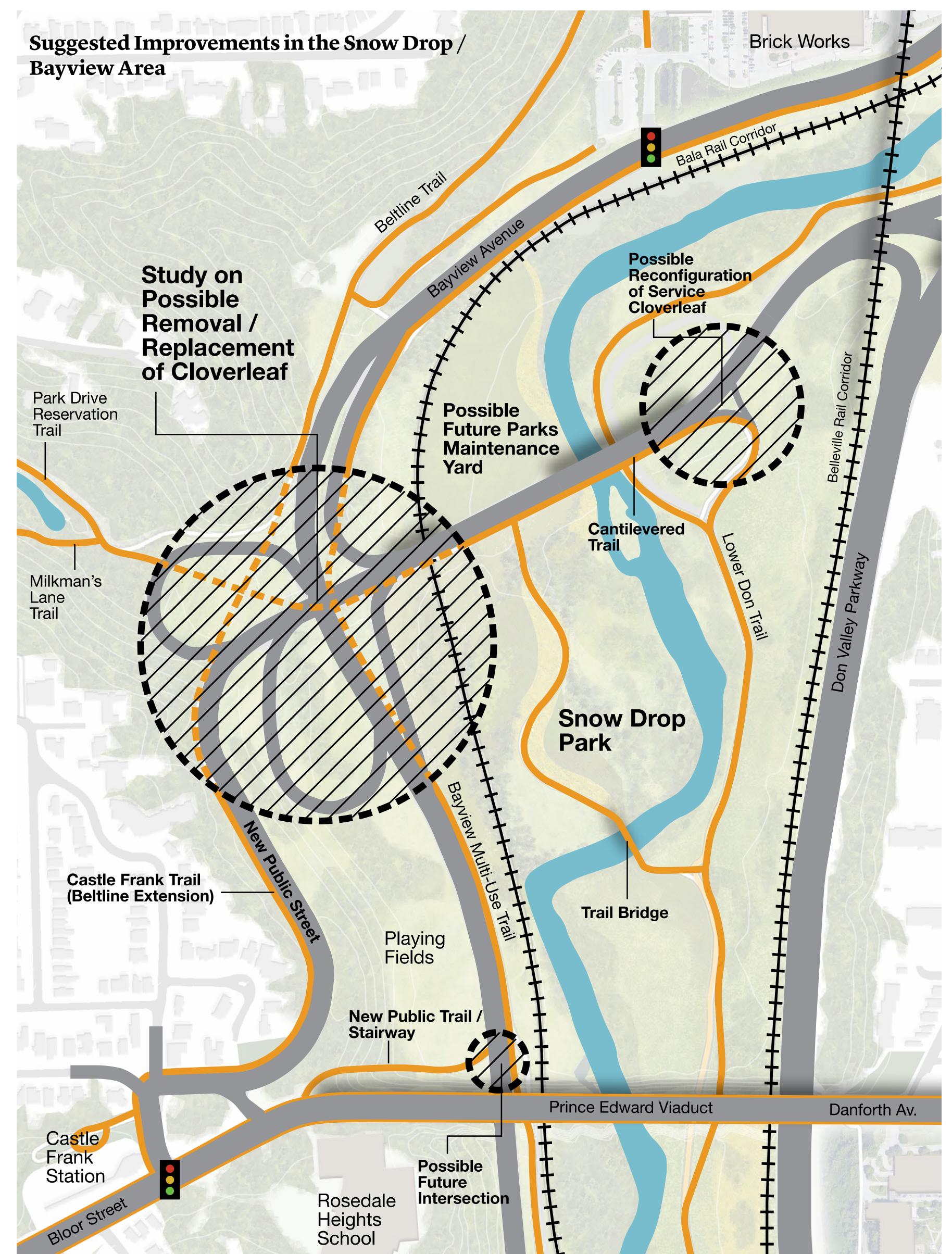


Although compromised today, it holds more potential for positive change than almost any other part of the Valley. In addition to adding new parkland and trails, there is an opportunity to improve the user experience and raise the level of natural conservation.

Trapped in circumstances set in motion during the mid-twentieth century and before—at a time when the Don Valley was seen as having little public value—this area demands comprehensive reconsideration and coordinated implementation of projects.







Focus: More Options for Movement



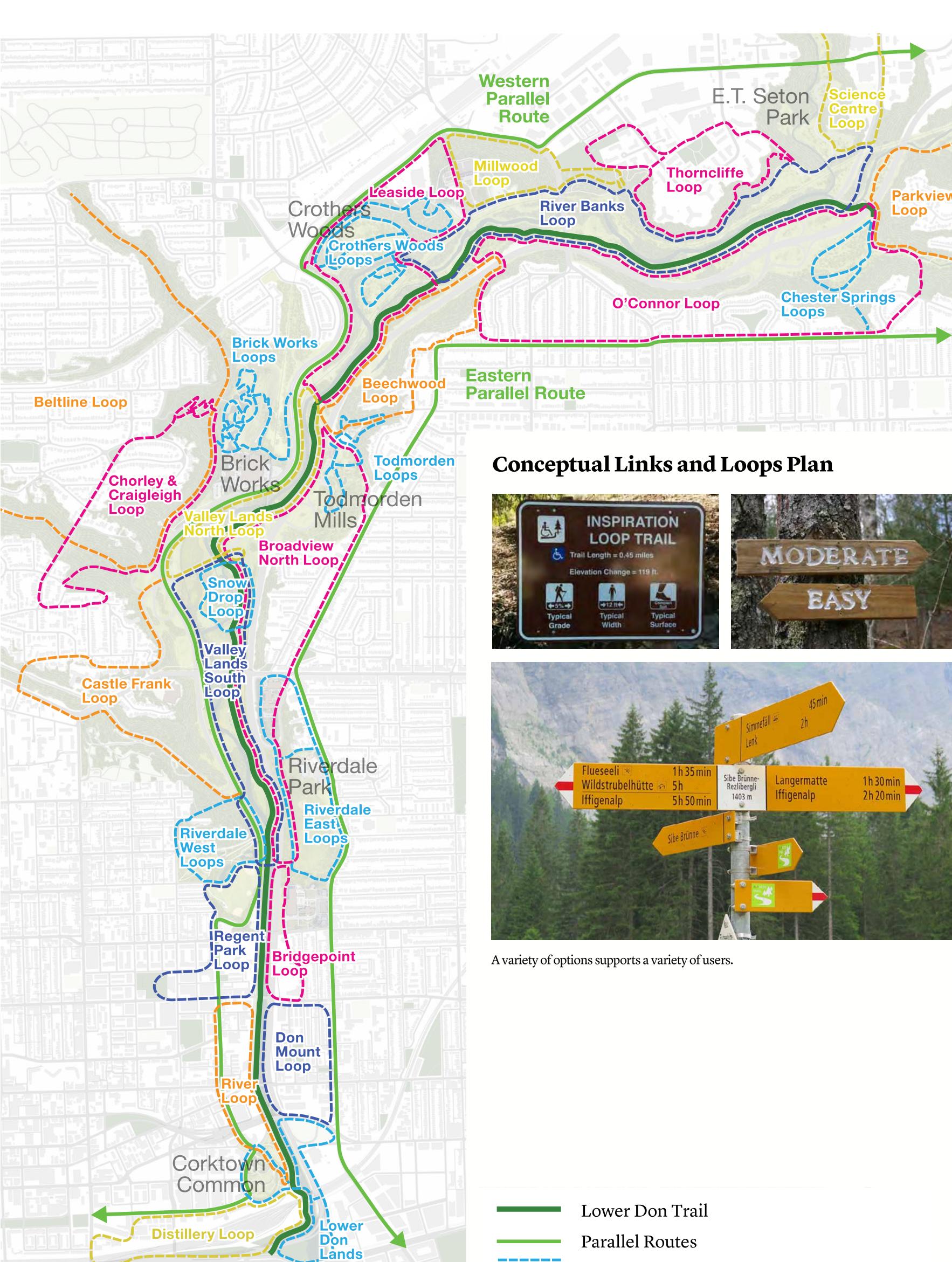




Increasing options for movement is a major highlight of the Master Plan Refresh, as it was for the original 2013 Master Plan.

Building new trail segments, stairways and ramps will add dimension to the valley and allow the public to use it in different ways. In addition to the traditional linear 'through' hiking or cycling experience, users should be able to experience the valley as a series of links and loops.

Rethinking movement along the lines of these shorter, and perhaps more thematic, routes, opens up opportunities for different levels of ability. Loops can be more welcoming to children, the elderly or disabled, or anyone looking to experience the Valley while making a lesser time commitment.



Possible Loop Trails

Loops

Focus: Special Places

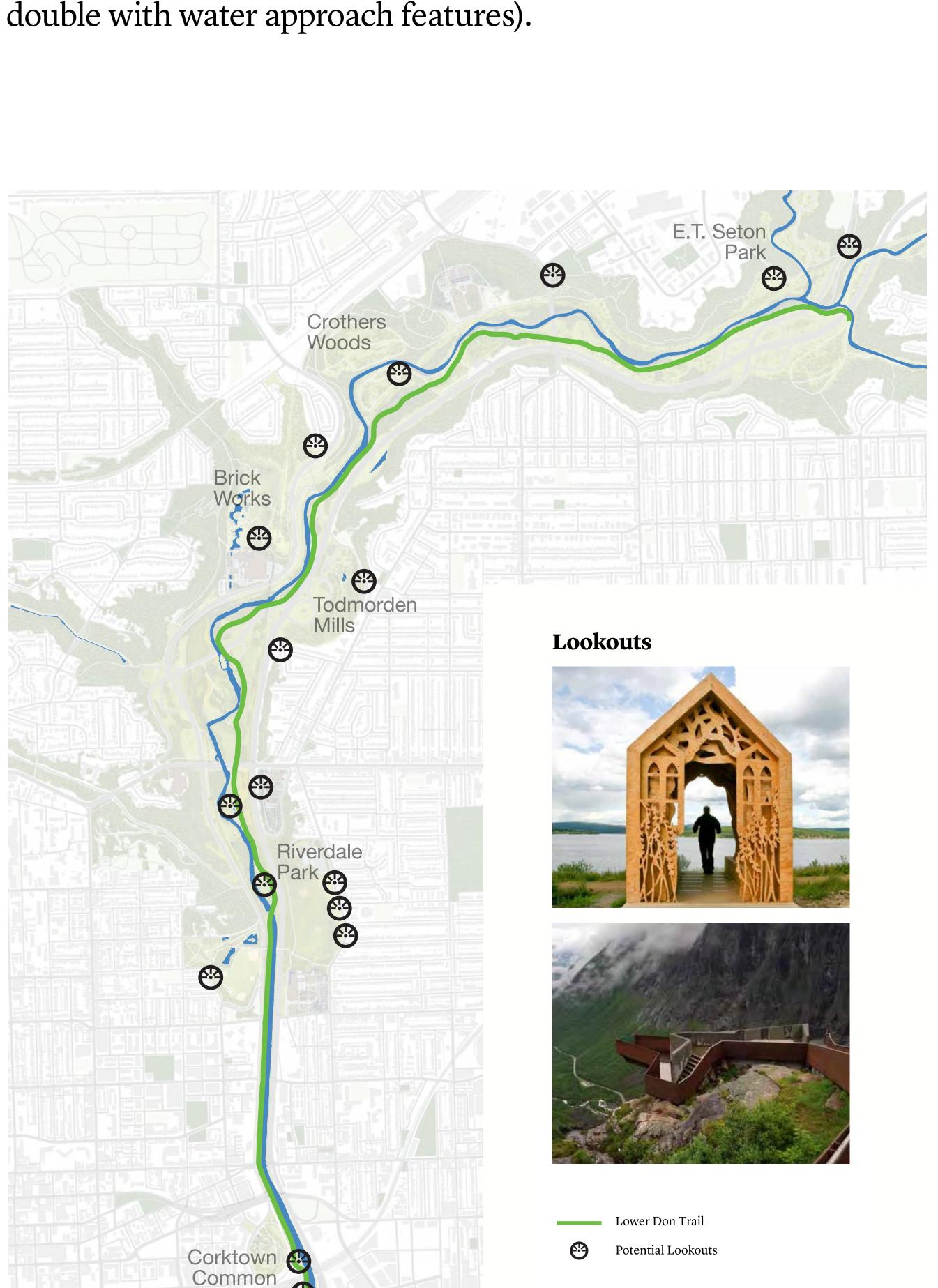
The Master Plan Refresh speaks to the need for a number of new 'special places' within the Don Valley. In some cases, these are intended to create new experiences for trail users, while in others they are intended to improve the existing experience.

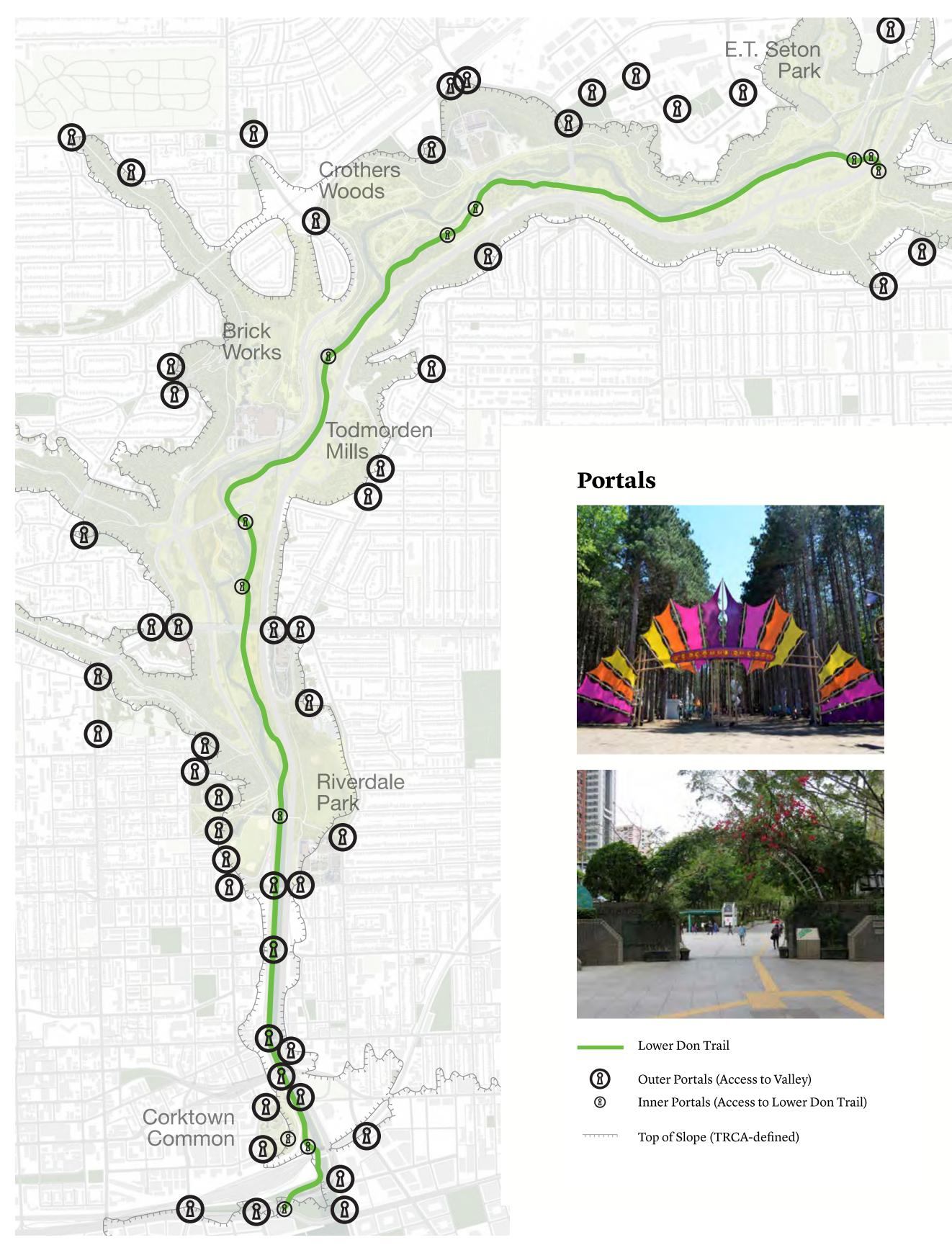
Special places are organized into the following categories:

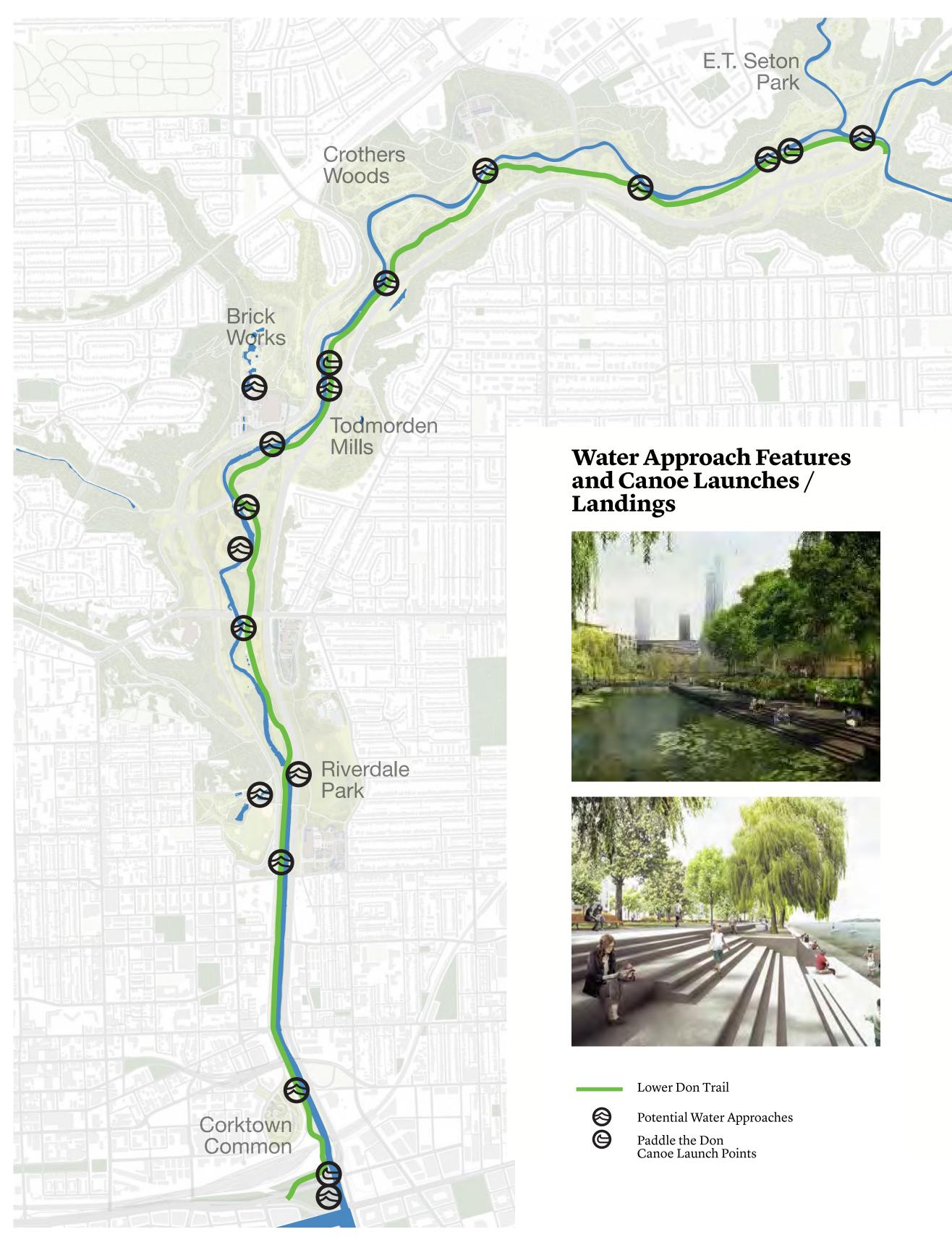
Portals: These features highlight entry points into the Valley or Lower Don Trail. Portals fall into two categories: Outer portals, which connect from the city into the Valley, and inner portals which connect directly to the Lower Don Trail, usually from a different trail.

Lookouts: These places take advantage of views within the Valley or from its slopes. While lookout points do already exist, few are formalized and most do not have seating areas.

Water Approach Features and Canoe Launch / Landing Points: These are places where the Don River (or other ponds or watercourses) can be viewed, or touched. Three designated canoe launch / landing points have also been suggested (designed to double with water approach features).

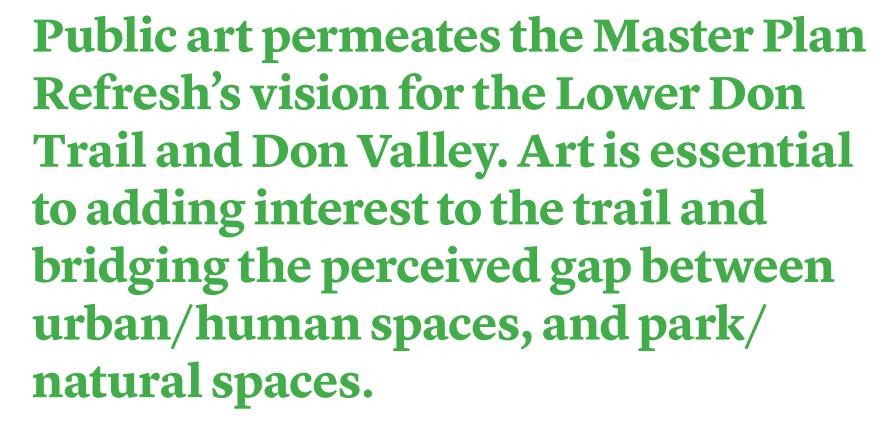






Focus: Public Art





Amongst other topics, public art can explore Indigenous themes, the natural and human history of the valley, and the experiences of the multicultural and varied neighbourhoods that surround it.



Corktown Common









Demonstration: Snow Drop Park

The greatest opportunity for adding new parkland in the Don Valley is 'Snow Drop Park,' a 5 hectare area between the Don River and railway lines. Historically an industrial site, it has most recently been used as a dumping area for snow cleared from the Don Valley Parkway.

Activating Snow Drop Park would require environmental study (and potentially remediation), as well as at least one trail bridge. Because of its isolated nature (for the near future), Snow Drop Park would be ideally suited for secure programming, similar to Olympic Island. This might include concerts, group camping or Indigenous events.

Top: Potential use of Snow Drop Park as a concert site with temporary stage and shelter.

Bottom: Potential ravine educational camp at Snow Drop Park, when closed to the public.



Demonstration: Snow Drop Park_Outdoor Education Opportunities

Illustration of potential facilities in Snow Drop Park. There are numerous opportunities to share the natural and cultural history of Toronto's ravines. An amphitheatre could serve as a classroom for students, while an observation tower could offer a different perspective from above the valley.



Demonstration: Improved Trails

Illustration of potential improvements to the existing trail network through the Valley. Public art, upgraded lighting, enhanced planting and elements to improve safety and reduce conflict between trail users will benefit everyone who visits the park.



Demonstration: Bayview Avenue as Scenic Parkway

Conceptual rendering illustrating Bayview Avenue as a 'scenic parkway.' This reflects the general transformation of the Don Valley from leftover space to unified urban park. Drawing inspiration from the Niagara Parkway, Thousand Islands Parkway or the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway (Ottawa), it could feature a widened multi-use trail, a bioswale barrier, and a more attractive fence along the edge of the railway.



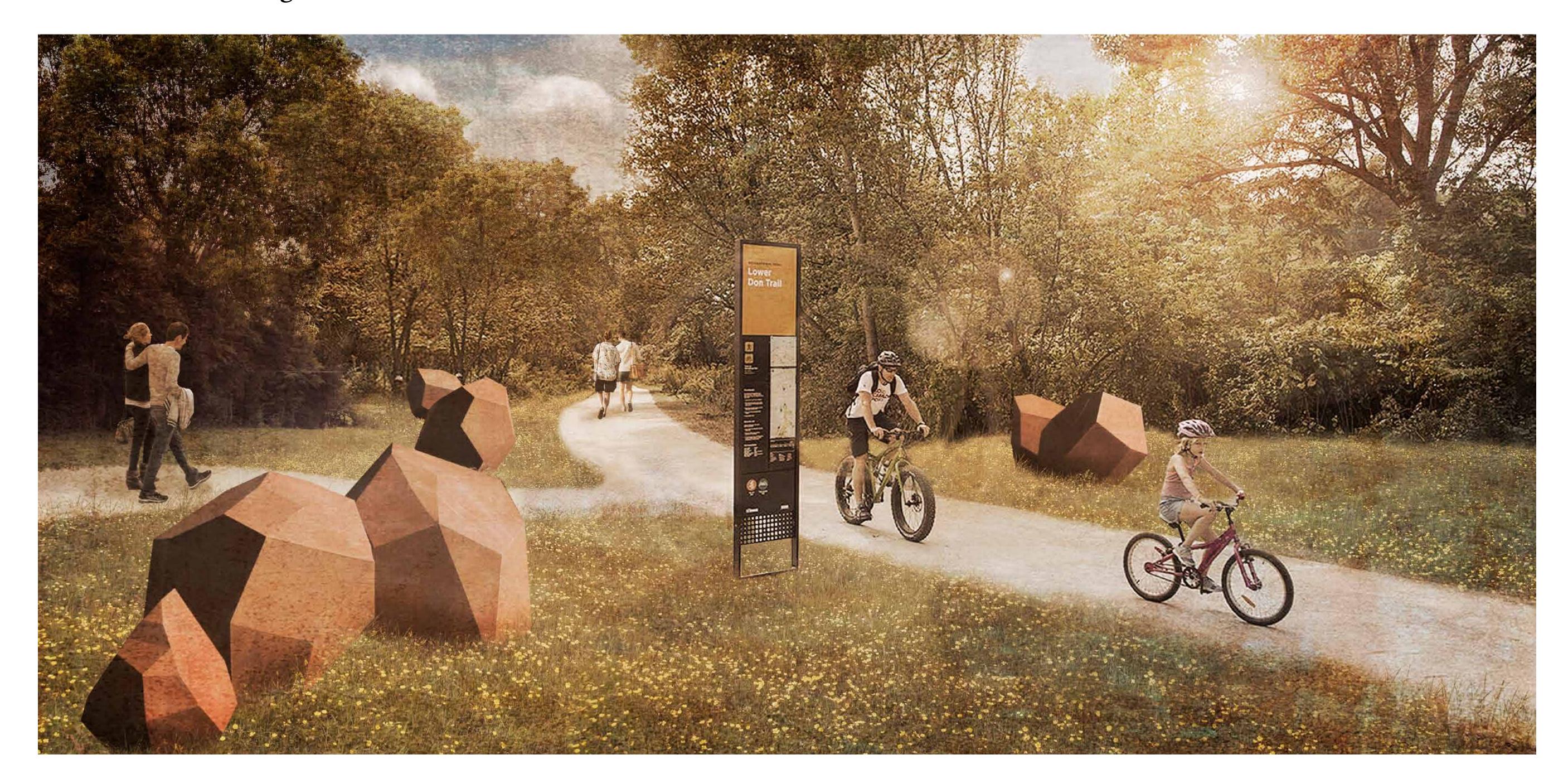
Demonstration: Straightened Trail Bridge (south of Belleville Underpass)

The current trail bridge crosses the Don River at a right angle, restricting visibility and presenting potential safety hazards, especially for cyclists. There is an opportunity to straighten the trail bridge, similar to the way in which the Belleville Underpass was straightened following the 2013 Master Plan.



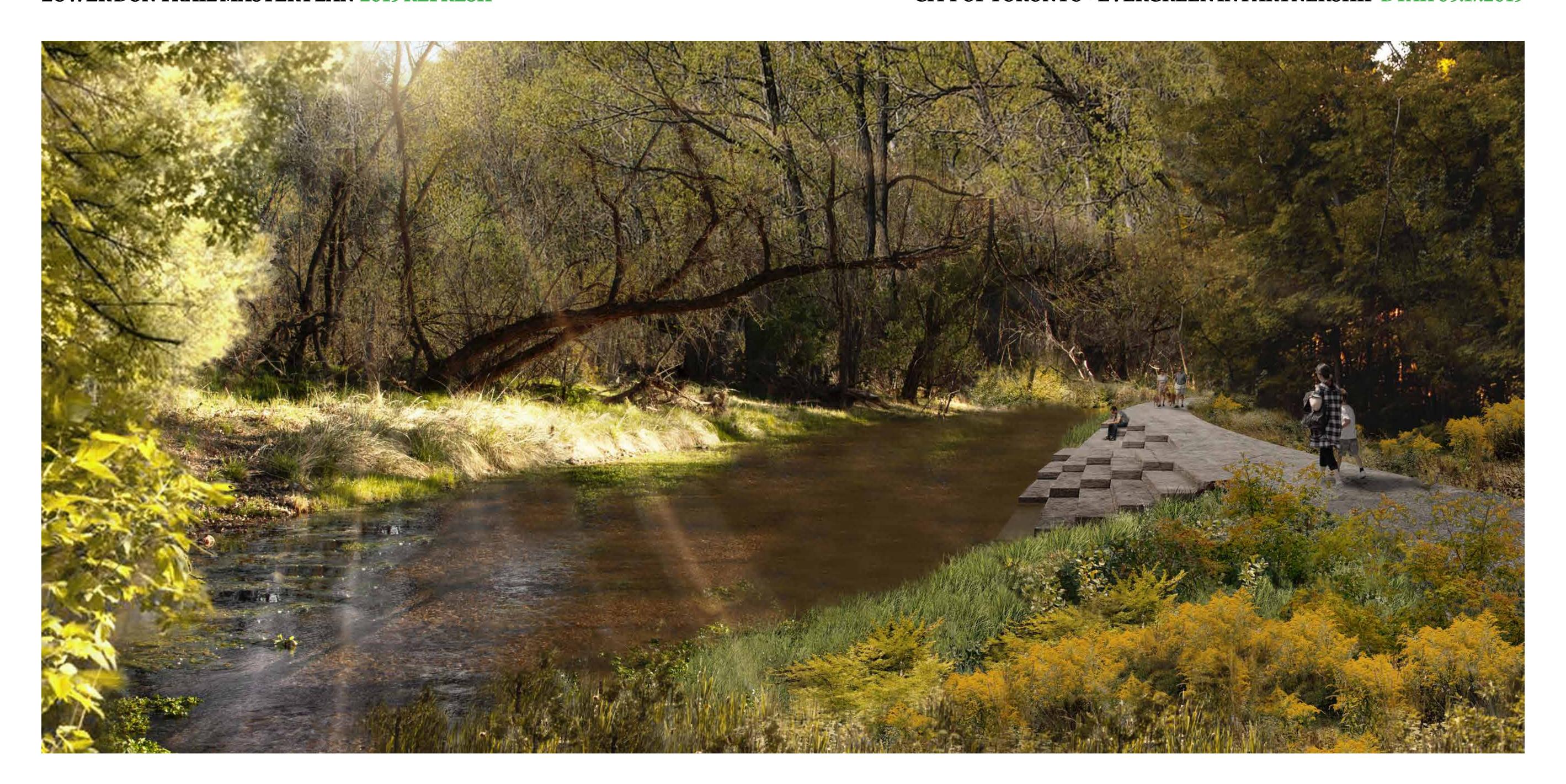
Demonstration: Ravine Portals_Outer

Conceptual rendering of the 'outer portal.' Outer portals are access points to the Don Valley trail system from the city above (in this case, from Thorncliffe Park Drive). Currently a driveway with minimal signage, a relatively simple redesign could elevate the significance of this gateway. Each outer portal will respond to its context but also contain common design elements.



Demonstration: Ravine Portals_Inner

Possible look of an 'inner portal'. Inner portals are access points to the Lower Don Trail, often from other trails. Simpler than outer portals, they should include elements such as with wayfinding signs and landscape features. Some inner portals might also feature public art, seating and/or gathering areas.



Demonstration: Water Approaches

Illustration of a potential water approach feature, where trail users could get close to (or even touch) the river. These spaces should be designed robustly to accommodate flooding. Although suggested locations are included in this report, these would have to be carefully reviewed with consideration given to safety and environmental impact. Several could be combined with formal canoe launch or landing points.



Demonstration: Riverdale Promenade

Rendering of 'Riverdale Promenade,' a high-profile lookout feature along Broadview Avenue. Riverdale Park East is already well known for its panoramic views of the Downtown, but a formal promenade would help to better accommodate visitors. It would have to be carefully designed to leave adequate room for winter tobogganing.

C1.5

E. T. Seton Park

D1.1



A. Recently- Completed (2013-2019)	B. Approved / Under Construction	C. Short Term Proposals (1-5 Years)	D. Medium Term Proposals (5-10 Years)	E. Potential for Future Consideration
A1.1. Cottonwood Flats trails and bird habitat protection.	B1.1. East Don Trail and bridge link across Massey Creek.	C1.1. Redesign of Forks Node (part of East Don Trail project).	D1.1. Coxwell Ravine trails and public washrooms.	E1.1. Stair connection to O'Connor Drive / Coxwell Avenue.
A1.2. Don River lookout platform, north of Pottery Road.	B1.2. Ridge trails from Crothers Woods to E.T. Seton Park.	C1.2. Formalize connection through Cullen Bryant Park.	D1.2. Improve connection from Thorncliffe Park Drive, including beautification, rest stops and connections to adjacent trails.	E1.2. Redesign of Toronto Police Dog Services Building area (including public washrooms, potential new satellite Parks works yard).
A1.3. Crothers Woods kiosk installations.	B1.3. Cottonwood Flats wetland creation.	C1.3. Formalize trail connection up east side of Don Mills Road.	D1.3. Improve connection from Beechwood Drive, including beautification, rest stops, adding public parking facility	E1.3. Consult with private property owner to create link from R.V. Burgess Park to Ridge Trail system across Thorncliffe Park Drive. In the case of infill redevelopment, secure dedication or easement.
A1.4. Relocation and widening of Forks parking lot, separation of bike path.	B1.4. Natural surface trail signage pilot project in Crothers Woods.	C1.4. Convert steps to ramp and construct rest/lookout node at trail junction.	D1.4. Rest area at base of driveway at E.T. Seton Park and kiosk for Ridge trail system.	E1.4. Expand parkland and improve access in Redway Road area, including potential acquisition of new park space. Possible location for major cyclingrelated recreational facility, such as velodrome.
		C1.5. Repair and formalize parks vehicle exit on west side of Don Mills Road.	D1.5. Widening and increase in profile of trail leading to bridge from E.T. Seton Park.	E1.5. Coordinate with private property in proximity to Todmorden Mills to add new trail connection. Potential acquisition of new park space.
	Completed (2013-2019) A1.1. Cottonwood Flats trails and bird habitat protection. A1.2. Don River lookout platform, north of Pottery Road. A1.3. Crothers Woods kiosk installations. A1.4. Relocation and widening of Forks parking lot, separation of	Completed (2013-2019) A1.1. Cottonwood Flats trails and bird habitat protection. A1.2. Don River lookout platform, north of Pottery Road. B1.1. East Don Trail and bridge link across Massey Creek. B1.2. Ridge trails from Crothers Woods to E.T. Seton Park. A1.3. Crothers Woods kiosk installations. B1.4. Natural surface trail signage pilot project in Crothers Woods.	Completed (2013-2019) A1.1. Cottonwood Flats trails and bird habitat protection. A1.2. Don River lookout platform, north of Pottery Road. B1.2. Ridge trails from Crothers Woods to E.T. Seton Park. B1.3. Cottonwood Flats wetland creation. B1.4. Natural surface trail signage pilot project in Crothers Woods. B1.4. Natural surface trail signage pilot project in Crothers Woods. C1.5. Repair and formalize parks vehicle exit on west side of Don Mills	Completed (2013-2019) A1.1. Cottonwood Flats trails and bird habitat protection. A1.2. Don River lookout platform, north of Pottery Road. B1.2. Ridge trails from Crothers Woods to E.T. Seton Park. A1.3. Crothers Woods kiosk installations. B1.3. Cottonwood Flats wetland creation. B1.4. Natural surface trail signage pilot project in Crothers Woods. B1.4. Natural surface trail signage pilot project in Crothers Woods. C1.5. Repair and formalize parks vehicle exit on west side of Don Mills C1.5. Widening and increase in profile of trail leading to bridge from E.T. Se- C1.5. Widening and increase in profile of trail leading to bridge from E.T. Se-

1. Crothers-Coxwell

Draft List of Projects

					velodrome.
			C1.5. Repair and formalize parks vehicle exit on west side of Don Mills Road.	D1.5. Widening and increase in profile of trail leading to bridge from E.T. Seton Park.	E1.5. Coordinate with private property in proximity to Todmorden Mills to add new trail connection. Potential acquisition of new park space.
			C1.6. Crothers Woods trailhead and wetland enhancement at Pottery Road.	D1.6. Upgrade stair connection from Redway Road and improve linkages into Crothers / Ridge trail system.	E1.6. Consider future redesign of bridge and trail connection to E.T. Seton Park to improve flow and raise trail profile.
				D1.7. Extension of Bayview multi-use trail to Moore Avenue (as required by the Cycling Network Plan).	
				D1.8. Trail extension beyond end of Redway Road, linking Millwood Road and Bayview Avenue, as well as boulevard and cycling upgrades along Redway Road.	
				D1.9. Replacement of parking lot with programming, such as bike park, playing fields or urban agriculture.	
2. The Mills Pottery Road to Viaduct	A2.1. Pottery Road trail bridge.	B2.1. Mud Creek Inlet reconstruction and boardwalk feature.	C2.1. Formalize linkage trail and upgrade stairway to meet accessible standards from Pottery Road slope to Todmorden Mills.	D2.1. Remediation and opening of Snow Drop Park (subject to study).	E2.1. Potential normalization of Bayview Avenue / Don Valley Parkway ramp cloverleaf as an intersection. Naturalization and relocation of trails.
	A2.2. Bayview Avenue multi-use trail (Pottery Road to Rosedale Valley Road segment).		C2.2. New trail on slope at west side of Bayview Avenue, from Pottery Road to Don Valley Brick Works.	D2.2. New bridge to Snow Drop Park.	E2.2. New trail on the west side of Castle Frank ramp and conversion of ramp to public street.
	A2.3. Chorley Park to Beltline Trail connection.		C2.3. Redesign and reconstruction of Governor's Monument lookout.	D2.3. Conversion of salt dome site to satellite Parks works yard (alternate / additional to potential yard at Toronto Police Dog Services Building area).	E2.3. Enhancement of Bayview Avenue as scenic street (as designated in the Streetscape Manual).
	A2.4. Don Valley Brick Works wayfinding/interpretive signage program.		C2.4. Beautification of fence around salt dome site, with potential use as canvas to promote Snow Drop Park.	D2.4. Cantilevered trails on south side of Bayview on-ramp east of salt dome site (and later west of salt dome site, following potential reconstruction of Bayview cloverleaf).	E2.4. Consult with private property owners to create link from Broadview Avenue to Todmorden Mills trail. In the case of infill redevelopment, secure dedication or easement.
	A2.5. Don Valley Brick Works trail improvements.		C2.5. Natural surface trail improvements at Chorley Park adjacent to new switchback trail.	D2.5. Public or shared use of Cityowned school playing fields.	E2.5. Study approaches to more strongly discourage use of informal trails around Don Valley Brick Works north slope.
	A2.6. Don Valley Brick Works patio reconstruction.			D2.6. New stair linkage to valley (to provide public access to playing fields) and potential crosswalk over Bayview Avenue.	E2.6. Art train special events station and trail linkage.
				D2.7. Closure of unmaintained trail to Rosedale Valley Road north side (retention of open space beside station). To be replaced with Rekei Parkette linkage.	
3. Riverdale Viaduct to Gerrard	A3.1. New Belleville underpass.	B3.1. Riverdale Bridge Access Sloped Path.	C3.1. Riverdale Park Promenade (to eventually form part of larger Broadview Avenue streetscape Improvements).	D3.1. Extension of Bayview Avenue multi-use trail to River Street, including linkages to Winchester Street (Riverdale Farm ponds area), Riverdale Footbridge and Spruce Street.	E3.1. Investigate valley-side public trail and promenade at CALC (subject to discussion with TDSB).
	A3.2. Improvement to Rosedale Valley Road-Bayview Avenue intersection.		C3.2. Formalized trail connection at Montcrest Boulevard.	D3.2. New stairway or sloped trail link between Bloor/Parliament intersection and Rosedale Valley Road trail at Rekei Parkette.	E3.2. Investigate daytime public linkage through St. James Cemetery to Rosedale Valley Road trail.
	A3.3. Bayview Avenue multi-use trail (Pottery Road to Rosedale Valley Road segment).		C3.3. Pedestrian crossing over Broadview Avenue at Montcrest Boulevard / Hogarth Avenue.		E3.3. Investigate daytime public trail linkage through Necropolis Cemetery to Bayview Avenue (following extension of Bayview Avenue multi-use trail).
	A3.4. Upgrades to Riverdale Park East sports facilities.		C3.4. Chester Springs ecological enhancements and lookout.		
	A3.5. Riverdale Park East wetland expansion.		C3.5. Formalize trail through Wellesley Park and upgrade stairway to meet accessible standards.		
			C3.6. Realignment of trail bridge across river, with potential viewing platform.		
			C3.7. Restoration of Riverdale Farm Ponds / remnants of former Zoo with new historic interpretation.		
			C3.8. Remove debris collecting around rail bridge just north of Lower Don Trail bridge.		
4. The Narrows		B4.1. Dundas Street stairs. B4.2. Trail corridor widening and		D4.1. Gerrard Street stairs or ramp.	
Gerrard to Queen		replacement of chain link fence.			
5. East Harbour	A5.1. Bala underpass painting.	B5.1. Removal of Enbridge utility bridge.	C5.1. Removal of Hydro utility bridge (to be reincorporated with East Harbour transit hub).	D ₅ .1. Reconstruction of Gardiner Expressway, creation of wetlands at Keating Channel (including rerouting of trail).	E5.1. Trail on east side of Don River north of Eastern Avenue, linking to East Don Roadway.
Queen to Lake Shore Blvd.			C5.2. Conservation and relocation of old Eastern Avenue bridge.	D ₅ .2. Normalization of intersections and reconfiguration of Eastern Avenue ramp.	
				D5.3. Addition of pedestrian and cycle facilities on Eastern Avenue flyover (as required in Unilever Secondary Plan).	
				D5.4. Eastern Avenue flyover stairs or ramp to trail (in connection with pedestrian or cycle facilities). D5.5. New pedestrian/cycle bridge	
				adjacent to railway bridge (as required in Unilever Secondary Plan).	
				D5.6. Trail on east side of Don River south of Eastern Avenue (as required in Unilever Precinct Secondary Plan).	
6. Non-Site- Specific / Multiple Sites	A6.1. Temporary public art installations / performances.	B6.1. Ongoing temporary public art installations / performances.	C6.1. Expanded temporary public art installations / performances (see map for potential sites).	D6.1. Development of gateway portal features (inner and outer portals). See map for sites.	E6.1. Undertake comprehensive review of streets adjacent to, or connecting with, valley trail system to identify potential cycling or pedestrian improvements.
OICS	A6.2. Lower Don wayfinding system (pilot program).	B6.2. Standardized wayfinding system.	C6.2. Increase level of maintenance in Don Valley, work to better overcome	D6.2. Development of lookout / gathering area features (see map for	E6.2. Consider vertical realignment of portions of Lower Don Trail to prevent

operational challenges.

A6.3. Spot trail repairs.

resurfacing.

B6.3. Trail widening and

D6.3. Development of water approach features (see map for potential sites), subject to safety considerations.

D6.4. Formal canoe launch / landing

/ approach features (see map for potential sites).

sites on Don River for Paddle the Don.

potential sites).

Legend

Individual Projects Existing / Proposed

Outer Portals (Acces to Valley) Inner Portals (Access to Lower Don Trail)

Lookouts / Rest Areas Water Approach Points Canoe Launch Points

Rotating Public Art Sites

1/1

portions of Lower Don Trail to prevent mud and silt build-up in the spring.

E6.3. Investigate combining the trail with Hydro access roads wherever

E6.4. Western parallel route (Overlea Boulevard / Millwood Road / River

improvements to Bayview Avenue and

E6.5. Eastern parallel route (O'Connor Drive / Broadview Avenue) streetscape

improvements, when road in scheduled

possible to avoid redundancy and

increase naturalization.

reconstruction. In addition to

Redway Road.

for reconstruction.

Possible combination with river lookout / approach features (see map for when road in scheduled for