



## Toronto Island Park Master Plan

# Meeting Summary

## Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1 on Feb 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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### Overview

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On Tuesday, February 16th, 2021 the City of Toronto's Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division (PFR) hosted the first Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting for the Toronto Island Park Master Plan. Representatives from sixteen on-island organizations, waterfront organizations, city-wide organizations, Indigenous communities, as well as members of the project team attended and participated in the meeting. From the project team, representatives from the City of Toronto's PFR Division attended along with members of their consultant Design Team (DTAH), Business Strategy Team (FS Strategy), and Engagement Team (Swerhun Inc. and Nbsiing Consulting). See Appendix A - Participant List for all participants.

The purpose of the first meeting was to review and confirm the Draft Community Advisory Committee Terms of Reference, introduce the Master Plan and project team, present and seek feedback on preliminary Drivers for Change, and discuss a vision for the future of Toronto Island Park. The meeting agenda is attached as Appendix B.

The City opened the meeting with a land acknowledgement from Lori Ellis, Senior Project Coordinator. Following the land acknowledgement, Leah Horzempa from Sister Circle Consulting took a moment to share learnings about the historical and spiritual significance of Toronto Islands, including their importance to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and many diverse Indigenous communities. They also spoke about the relationship between Indigenous communities, place, and land, as well as the responsibility of non-Indigenous people to honour and protect this place.

This summary is structured to reflect key topics of discussion, including:

- Key themes
- Detailed summary of feedback
  - Feedback on the Community Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
  - Feedback on the Draft Drivers of Change
  - Ideas for a new vision for Toronto Island Park
- Additional feedback received after the meeting
- Next steps

This summary was written by Swerhun Inc., a third-party facilitation firm retained by the City to help support community engagement for this project. It is not intended to be a verbatim transcript, rather it summarizes key points of discussion shared by participants during the meeting. Swerhun Inc. shared a draft with participants for review before finalizing.

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## Key themes

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These points reflect key themes that emerged throughout the discussion. They are intended to be read along with the more detailed feedback that follows.

**Overall, the work to date is interesting and moving in the right direction**, especially the opportunity to protect the island's ecology and highlight Indigenous history, culture, and placekeeping. Suggested refinements included better reflecting the contributions and value of the existing community and assets on the island and taking a less human-centric worldview.

**The Drivers of Change are on the right track and are a good reflection of issues and opportunities the Master Plan should explore**, especially Access Improvements. Managing the competing interests and needs coming from population growth and changing demographics and use patterns. The role of arts and culture on the island should also be included in the Drivers of Change.

**There are many potential visions for the future of Toronto Island Park**, including an island park that: prioritizes balance, is environmentally sound and sustainable (on every level), is celebrated as a unique, year-round destination, honours Indigenous history and culture, is easier to enjoy and is safe and accessible to all, has diverse programming, and has diverse and affordable food options.

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## Detailed summary feedback

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The following is a summary of the questions, suggestions, and comments shared by participants throughout the meeting:

### Feedback about the Community Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

The City shared an overview of the Community Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference and asked participants to share any questions or suggested refinements. No participants raised any objections to the Terms of Reference. They did say that the advisory group could better reflect the City's diversity since many different communities use Toronto Island Park for festivals and other cultural activities (like the Festival of India and Caribana). It was suggested that the City could reach out to people with disabilities and nearby ESL schools. *PFR's public engagement team and Swerhun Inc. said composing a diverse group is important to the team, too, and said they have reached out to many of the suggested organizations. Some groups have declined to participate, saying this project does not fall within their mandate or align with their current*

*priorities, but the City will continue its efforts. In addition to City outreach, committee members can also help increase the diversity of the Committee by nominating individuals from their organizations that represent equity-deserving communities.*

## Feedback about the Master Plan overall and island character

Community Advisory Committee members said that, generally, the work is on the right track and project team is paying attention to the right things. Some were especially excited about the focus on Indigenous placekeeping and environmental protection. They also shared a few suggestions for how the approach could be strengthened, including:

- **Provide more detail to who is understood to be the users of Toronto Island Park.** The presentation made little to no mention to define the users of Toronto Island. This is important for the team and committee to understand because the demographics define and inform interests and will help to better assess competition/complements.
- **Show more consideration of the existing community.** The presentation made little to no mention of the existing communities on Toronto Island, yet these communities are integral to the park and visitor experience. Visitors to Toronto Island Park often explore both the park and these communities. The island Character assessment and Drivers of Change are a few places where the team could recognize the importance of the existing community.
- **Consider the role of existing amenities and infrastructure.** There are a number of existing buildings and amenities on the island park such as the old fire hall, St. Andrew's Church, the school, the filtration plant, and the team-building obstacle course. Consider how these amenities are integrated into the park design, DTAH said the team will be taking a close look at these amenities and sharing its thoughts on how they connect to the Master Plan in a future meeting. PFR encouraged participants to use its digital mapping tool to identify any other important assets the team should be considering.

## Feedback about the draft Drivers of Change

As part of its presentation, the City shared and asked for feedback on draft Drivers of Change: underlying challenges or opportunities that are the reasons 'why' that are driving the need for improvements to Toronto Island Park. Community Advisory Committee members asked questions and shared feedback about the draft Drivers of Change:

**Can the Drivers of Change also reflect things that should not change?** For example, people appreciate that the island is car-free community, and that is something many would not want to see changed. *PFR, responded that a Driver of Change can speak to maintaining an existing*

*condition and that the first Driver of Change — “Island Identity and Character” –speaks to reinforcing existing character.*

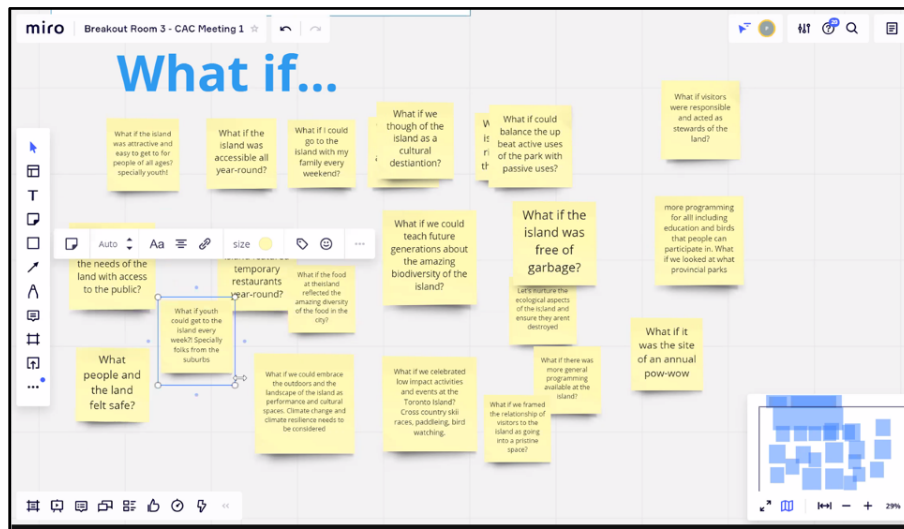
**The Drivers of Change generally sound right, with a few tweaks.** They capture many of the challenges and opportunities the City should be considering in its Master Plan process. Some particularly agreed with an “Access Improvements” Driver of Change and suggested the City emphasize it since the existing ferries are on their last legs and more and more people are looking to visit the island (even in winter). They also said that this Driver of Change should recognize the role that increased water traffic (including traffic from water taxis) can play in limiting access to the island.

Suggested additions and changes to the Drivers of Change included:

- **Focus on managing competing expectations amongst different park users given population growth and changing demographics.** Different park users have different interests, whether these are residents, non-profits, private businesses, and the general public. The city’s growing population means the make-up of users is also changing, including their cultures, expectations, and ages. In some cases, these different interests can compete with one another. The Master Plan should consider how to balance these pressures and competing needs.
- **A less “human-centric” worldview.** The drivers of change are ‘human-centric’ and don’t acknowledge the diverse wildlife populations who have an important role in the Master Plan. The Master Plan team should consider how “ecologically sound” every aspect of Toronto Island Park is, from waste management to infrastructure to the impacts of climate change (flooding, heat, and storms).

## **Ideas for a new vision for Toronto Island Park**

In breakout rooms, participants shared different thoughts on how to finish the sentence “What if Toronto Island Park...” while facilitators documented and grouped feedback using virtual sticky notes.



All of the documented “What if” statements are included in Appendix C. Across all breakout rooms, common themes included:

- **An island park that prioritizes balance**, including balancing new uses and amenities while protecting the island’s character, ecosystem, and carrying capacity; balancing connection to the broader park system while maintaining the secluded feel of the park; and balancing active and passive uses. Participants asked, “What if the island balances the needs of the island with access to the public? What if we could balance the upbeat active uses of the park with passive uses?”
- **An island park that is environmentally sustainable**, where: climate change and climate resilience are considered throughout; all park users understand its ecological importance; people take part in low-impact activities and events, and act as stewards of the island; and where fragile areas are free from people, protected, and have restored biodiversity. Participants asked: “What if Toronto island was free of garbage? What if we could restore the biodiversity of the island? What if parts of the island were free from people?”
- **An island park that is celebrated as a unique destination**, which: families visit as a first choice rather than an afterthought; reflects diverse Indigenous history and character; and people consider similar to a provincial park. Participants asked: “What if Toronto Island Park was a destination not an afterthought? A first choice?”
- **An island park that is a year-round destination**, where: improved winter infrastructure and facilities make the park accessible year-round; people wait ferries in heated waiting huts; and the island park is host to diverse winter activities and amenities, like snowshoeing. Participants asked, “What if Toronto Island was a year-round destination?”

- **An island park that honours Indigenous history and culture** that: is visible and integrated throughout the park system; includes places for teaching, medicine gardens, tanning, beading, and pow-wows; highlights Indigenous history at a systems-level through information stations, notice boards, historical landmarks, and wayfinding; and invites visitors to learn the significance of the place they are visiting to Indigenous communities. Participants asked: “What if Indigenous history is visible? What if the island was the site of an annual pow-wow?”
- **An island park that is easier to enjoy and has easily accessible amenities**, such as picnic tables, shade, free items to borrow (such as umbrellas), places to get essential items, signage, clean washrooms, covered areas for (low impact) performances, and more. Participants asked “What if the island had clean washrooms? What if there were things to borrow for the day?”
- **An island park that has diverse programming**, where visitors and residents can both embrace the outdoors and landscape and participate in activities like education about the biodiversity on the Island or cultural activities. Where arts and culture are celebrated through performance space, and the island itself is seen as a cultural landscape. Participants asked, “What if the island had more activities and things to do, not just picnics? What if it had more free activities?”
- **An island park that is safe and easily, equally accessible to all**, including people of all ages and abilities. Young people, especially from Toronto’s suburbs, can visit and access the island park every weekend. There are better ferries and alternatives to ferries. All people feel safe and welcome and the land itself is safe from people. Participants asked: “What if the people and the land felt safe? What if I could go to the island with my family every weekend?”
- **An island park that has diverse and affordable food options**, where the variety of food options reflect the diversity of food in Toronto and where there are pop up restaurants and food year-round. Participants asked, “What if food on Toronto Island Park reflected the diversity of food in the city?”

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## Additional feedback shared after the meeting

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Participants shared additional comments after the meeting (Appendix D – Participant Submissions). Points shared in the post-meeting feedback that wasn’t otherwise shared in the meeting included:

- **Consider the island and waterfront communities as two separate entities.** The Master Plan should separate the island and waterfront communities as two separate groups with distinct

interests and stakes in the Master Plan. Refer to those on the island as “Island Residents” or “Island Community” and recognize this group as being very important to the Master Plan.

- **Acknowledge the interface between Billy Bishop Airport and Toronto Island Park.**

Although the airport is not within the scope of the Master Plan, it should acknowledge the impacts of pollution and noise from the airport on the park, especially since the tripartite agreement that governs the island airport is expiring in 2033. What if the island was free of its airport?

- **Suggested revisions to the Island Character assessment, including:**

- Identify dry meadows as important and unique parts of the environment (these are on both Algonquin and Ward’s Islands).
- Refer to cuts as lagoons, which better reflects that these bodies of water support vegetation, wildlife, and human use.
- Make sure the labels and examples for island edges (natural and built) are accurate and reflect the diverse edges on the island, such as groynes without steel armouring.
- Include lagoons as means of island circulation, Disc Golf as an active use, and the Island Café as an island food option.

- **Revise the Preliminary Guiding Principles and Drivers of Change to adopt a less human-centric worldview.** These should acknowledge the importance of healthy populations of fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, and birds.
- **Reconsider the term “World Class Park,”** since this framing might position the park more as an international destination than an important local park.
- **Include a specific and stated commitment to the arts and cultural sector in the Drivers of Change.** Alongside festivals, events, and other programs, arts and culture play an important role on the island that should be reflected in the Master Plan. Many artists use the island, and improvements to infrastructure will support the creation of new, high-calibre artistic programming that could amplify or complement the City’s goals.
- **Consider identifying space for a dog park.** There is increased demand as more people from Downtown seek a free-range place for pets.
- **The federal lands near the eastern gap and the dock wall could be fixed** and turned into an asset.



- **Prioritize the experience on the island-side docks** to signify that visitors are entering a sacred territory and make sure the park's design is forward-thinking on sustainability.
  - **Avoid over-programming the park** or turning it into a Canada's Wonderland-type place of expensive rides, food, and entertainment. Access to open spaces is a priceless resource that should be protected.
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## Next steps

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The team thanked Community Advisory Committee members and committed to sharing the presentation and a draft summary in the coming weeks. They also said the City would share information about upcoming public engagement once confirmed.

# Appendix A – List of Organizations and Participants

The City invited the following organizations to participate in or to apply to join the Community Advisory Committee.

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## Organizations that attended CAC Meeting #1

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Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association  
Island Bike Rental  
Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation  
Nishnawbe Homes  
Queen City Yacht Club  
Shadowland Theatre  
Sunshine Seniors Centre  
Toronto Island Canoe Club

Toronto Island Community Association (TICA)  
Toronto Island Disc Golf Course  
Toronto Island Marina  
Toronto Public Space Committee  
Urban Minds  
Waterfront BIA  
Waterfront for All  
West Don Lands Committee

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## Organizations that expressed interest in future CAC meetings

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Artscape  
Cycle Toronto  
Huron-Wendat Nation  
Island Café  
Island Public / Natural Science School  
The Pirate Taxi by Water Taxi Now

Toronto Island / MNCFN Friendship Group  
Toronto Islands Residential Community  
Trust Corp  
Waterfront Montessori Children's Centre  
William Beasley Enterprises Limited

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## Organizations invited to participate or apply to join the CAC

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2-Spirit People of the First Nations  
519 Church  
Across Boundaries  
Aids Committee of Toronto (ACT)  
Algonquin Island Association  
Black Lives Matter - Toronto  
Black Urbanism TO  
Caribbean African Canadian Social Services  
- CAFCAN  
Disabled Sailing Association of Ontario  
ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency  
FoodShare Toronto

Friends of Toronto Island  
Gilbraltar Point Day Nursery  
International Society for Krishna  
Consciousness (ISKCON Toronto) (Festival of India)  
Island Yacht Club  
Jumblies  
Lake Ontario Waterkeeper  
Naadmaagit Ki Group  
National Yacht Club  
Native Canadian Centre

Native Women's Resource Centre of  
Toronto  
Native Youth Sexual Health Network  
Network for the Advancement of Black  
Communities  
Not Another Black Life  
Outer Harbour Sailing Federation  
Passenger and Commercial Vessel  
Association  
Porter Airlines  
Pride Toronto  
Protect Nature TO  
Royal Canadian Yacht Club  
Six Nations of the Grand River  
Sunfish Cut Boat Club  
The ArQuives  
The Riviera  
TICA Youth  
Tiki Taxi  
Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council

Toronto and York Region Métis Council  
Toronto Chinese Business Association  
(Dragon Boat Festival)  
Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre  
Toronto Field Naturalists  
Toronto Harbour Water Taxi  
Toronto Island BBQ & Beer Co.  
Toronto Island SUP  
Toronto Island YMCA  
Toronto Region Board of Trade  
Toronto Seniors Forum  
Toronto Sports Council  
Toronto Women's City Alliance  
Urban Alliance on Race Relations  
Walk Toronto  
Ward's Island Association  
Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre  
York Bay Marine Services  
York Quay Neighborhood Association

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## City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry & Recreation Division

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David O'Hara, Project Manager, Strategic Projects, Parks Development and Capital Projects  
Lori Ellis, Project Officer, Strategic Projects, Parks Development and Capital Projects  
Daniel Fusca, Manager, Public Consultation  
Pablo Muñoz, Senior Public Consultation Coordinator  
Christina Iacovino, Manager, Partnership and Business Services  
Alex Deighan, Policy Development Officer

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## Consultant teams

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### Design team

Victoria Bell, DTAH  
James Roche, DTAH,  
Terence Radford, Trophic Design

### Business Strategy team

Jeff Dover, fsSTRATEGY'

### Engagement team

Bob Goulais, Nbisiing Inc,  
Leah Horzempa, Sister Circle Consulting,  
Khly Lamparero, Swerhun Inc,  
Ian Malczewski, Swerhun Inc,  
Athavarn Srikantharajah, Swerhun Inc,

# Appendix B – Meeting Agenda

## Community Advisory Committee Meeting 1 Toronto Island Master Plan

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

7:00pm–9:00pm • Meeting held virtually



### Proposed agenda

7:00 PM	Welcome, land acknowledgement, agenda review introductions City of Toronto & Swerhun Inc.
7:10	Review of draft CAC Terms of Reference Swerhun Inc. <i>Questions of clarification</i>
7:20	Overview: the Master Plan and drivers of change City of Toronto & DTAH <i>Questions of clarification</i>
7:45	Discussion: draft drivers of change 1. How well do the draft drivers of change reflect the key challenges and opportunities this Master Plan should consider?
8:00	Overview: vision and Preliminary Guiding Principles
8:05	Visioning discussion 1. What if the island was... 2. Do you have any other thoughts or advice to share?
8:45	Report back
8:55	Wrap up and next steps
9:00	Adjourn

### Meeting purpose

To introduce the Master Plan, review the draft CAC Terms of Reference, and present and discuss draft drivers of change (issues and opportunities), vision, and Preliminary Guiding Principles.

### How to share feedback

Please share any post-meeting advice or feedback with Athavarn Srikantharajah, Swerhun Inc.

416 572 4365  
[asrikantharajah@swerhun.com](mailto:asrikantharajah@swerhun.com)

The Draft Meeting Summary will include feedback received by **February 23, 2021**.



# Appendix C – 'What-if' Exercise Transcript

- What if the island balances the needs of the island with access to the public?
- What if the people and the land felt safe?
- What if we could balance the upbeat active uses of the park with passive uses
- A destination not an afterthought – a first choice
- What if I could go to the island with my family every weekend
- What if we looked at what provincial parks do?
- Winterize existing facilities, improve infrastructure (washrooms)
- Larger waiting huts \*warmer during winter\*
- Snowshoeing
- More activities and amenities to enjoy in the winter
- What if the island was accessible all year round?
- Indigenous history is visible, evidence of indigenous history (medicine gardens, signage, permanent harbour, indigenous trees, elders, places to sit and teach, tell stories, places for tanning and beading, indigenous grams, pow-wow, places to go for...)
- Have an info station to tell, hear history of place, diversity of wetlands, variety of ecosystems
- Have notifications in Jack Layton terminal, island airport (system wide approach to indigenous recognition) general information about the place, indigenous people. If there's speakers notice boards, system-wide approach to indigenous
- Indigenous people are on the island
- More historical landmarks (particularly indigenous signage)
- What if it was the site of an annual pow-wow
- Clean washrooms
- More activities and things to do not just picnics

- More picnic tables and shade, umbrellas to borrow (rental but free)
- Have more place to get needs throughout the day
- Place to celebrate
- Not a one-day event to celebrate
- Had more free activities
- More creative and diff types of activities (franklin gardens)
- Improved wayfinding (with estimated wait times and walking)
- Things to borrow for the day
- Things to borrow for the day
- What if we could embrace the outdoors and the landscape of the island as performance and cultural spaces.
- What if the island was an open-air museum?
- What if we thought of the island as a cultural destination?
- What if there was more general programming at the island?
- More programming for all including education and birds that the people can participate in.
- Easy to enjoy your day once you get there – more amenities and activities
- More accessible not just ferries
- Ferry is more accessible and easier to get to the other side of the island
- Easier for parents with little ones
- What if the island was more attractive and easier to get to for people of all ages, specifically for youth?
- More wheelchairs, trams to pick up after the brief, more accessibility
- What if youth could get to the island every week (especially from suburbs)
- Climate change and climate resilience needs to be considered

- What if we celebrated low impact activities and events at the Toronto island (cross country skiing, paddling, bird watching)
- What if we could teach future generations about the amazing biodiversity of the island
- Let's nurture the ecological aspects of the island and ensure they aren't destroyed
- What if we framed the relationship of visitors to the island as a going to a pristine space?
- What if we could restore the biodiversity of the island?
- What if the island was free of garbage?
- What if visitors were responsible and acted as stewards of the island
- What if parts of the island were free from people
- More place to get food and variety of food, especially in centre island (good food that's affordable)
- What if the food on the island reflected the diversity of food in the city?

# Appendix D – Participant Submissions

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## Submissions from the Toronto Island Community Association

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### Submission 1

I went back to the beginning slides.

"Pre-Engagement, Who We've Talked to Thus Far"

This Slide lumps together "Island and Waterfront Community"

Please, strongly voice and make changes to isolate and identify Toronto Island Community as a separate entity, a separate community from the Waterfront Community in this slide and then throughout the Slides.

It's not alienation but a separation because we have a different stake in the Island (i.e. The Trust - the lease, our future).

We need to position in the Minds of the Master Planning business people that the Island Residents are more than people that have access to a house in the park and simply Users of the Island like the Waterfront Community.

yes, Waterfront is a community using the island and is the closest neighbours thus far, but we are vastly different and have more at stake & we have greater impact on the Island than the Waterfront Community.

It's part of our BRANDING, our marketing as Major Stakeholders in the Island AND in the Master Plan.

we are not just voices at the Table.

We ARE a fixture on the Island.

Call us 'Island Residents' or 'Island Community' (not "islanders" too much negativity associated) and position us as a separate community, with as much importance and relevance as the amount of categorization, attention and bullet points as the Indigenous Community.



I know the plan is to include more of the Indigenous Community and it needs to show it's doing so. Fair.

However,

the plan FAILS to give current inhabitants of the Island the same attention/concentration and we need to have stronger Awareness, Identification of who we are, how important we are in The Plan.

## Submission 2

- 1) Slides 17 to 20 are missing dry meadows as important and unique parts of the natural environment. The Algonquin meadow and parts of the Ward's dry meadow are both ESAs in part because of this fact and the vegetation found here.
- 2) Slide 18 and elsewhere -- I heartily dislike the term "internal cuts". This terminology sounds like it was dreamed up by an engineer. These are lagoons – bodies of water that support vegetation, wildlife and human use -- and should be titled as such.
- 3) Slide 23 – the numbering is off here vis a vis the pictures. Pic #1 is surely a lakeside beach. Pic #2 is armouring on the bay side.
- 4) Slide #24 – many of the groynes in the lake do not have steel armouring and should be added. And actually, a better example of sheet piling can be found on the north side of Algonquin.
- 5) Slide #30 – Island circulation – should also add the lagoons as (increasingly popular) ways of circulating on the island.
- 6) Slide #31 Active Use – there's lots that should be added here – I suggest Disc Golf and paddling be added
- 7) Slide #34 – Island food – should add the Island Café, which does better than the other places for preparing diverse food.
- 8) Slide #47 – These goals or objectives – I am not sure which they are as they are not labelled (!) – are totally human-centric. I have told them this, but they seem unable to acknowledge the importance of healthy populations of fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals and birds. This is also absent in the Drivers of Change slides (slides #42 to 44).

9) Slide 42 Says "Since time immemorial, the Island has been a place of escape, respite, and healing." Where's the acknowledgment of people living here???? I cannot help but feel the island community is getting short shrift here.

### Submission 3

Thank you, this was a great start and certainly addressing the challenges facing the Park and coming up with a new vision are complex. here are a few thoughts:

Under why a MP Plan is needed, there is reference to environmental impacts, this is not enough it should include to address the impacts of climate change.. Same under drivers of change should include Climate Change, the uses of the Park, the ecosystems of the Park, flood risk so many things are driving change related to climate change. With the heat of summer and increased flood risk and storms,, there is more demand for access to clean water, the wildlife on the island is changing, the plants and tree species are being impacted.

There is increasing demand for a dog park as more and more people downtown seek a free range place for pets. The MP plan needs to address who owns the federal lands near the eastern gap and fixing the dock wall. These can be turned into an assets.

We need an attitude shift of users, the Park is not just there to serve them, the park is us, how can they make minimal environmental footprint.

Also, I do not like the term World Class park, it seems that you want the Toronto Island Park to rate against other Parks on a world scale - that may be good for tourism but is likely not the best approach for the most important Park for the local community.

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### Submission from Toronto Island Disc Golf Course

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One feeling that I had from all of the comments didn't come to me to the end, but felt significant. The coalescence of many of the points we heard today spoke to the desire to provide a sense of sacrosanct space when coming to the island. It seems like a focus should really be placed on the ferry experience and the docks on the island side to signify that you are entering a sacred territory. This could help how many see the island and their idea of respect for the land, history and sacredness of this space. I think this will help us to achieve greater sustainability and can directly engage users on their concepts of consumption, waste, and impact on the land and this hallowed ground. It seems like when speaking to "specific points" for makers that were discussed, is that it should be a gate check coming into the island and this should be direct and confront users.

The design itself should also be forward thinking on sustainability and be designed to communicate the efforts taken to think about making the island sustainable and what principles and efforts were put in place to reduce impact and waste. I think this intentional design plus confronting users with the sacred history, present and future of the island is key in how we engage this planning process.

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## Submission from the Bathurst Quay Neighbourhood Association

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With regards to feedback – I really love the idea of using the Indigenous Placekeeping approach and highlighting the past history and culture of the Toronto Islands. Not sure the average person is aware of any of that history. It could also set the Toronto Islands apart from all the other parks in the city. The moccasins and bent trees in Trillium park are a wonderful and unique part of that park. If the Islands could really highlight and focus on their indigenous history – would be something very special.

My other comment is in regard to what someone said in the breakout session I was in. They seemed really focussed on the need to have more activities – something I found a bit confusing as there is a lot to do on the Islands. Think the pandemic has shown is that one of the most important things is for people to have access to outdoor space in nature for basic simple activities like walking, cycling, swimming, running, paddling, just sitting outside, etc. Would hope that the Islands will not get turned into a Canada's Wonderland type of place of expensive rides, food and entertainment. The access to open spaces, beaches and swimming is a priceless resource to have so close to the downtown core.

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## Submission from Urban Minds

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One of our advisors suggested that Indigenous youth's voices be also included in the community engagement process. Unfortunately, Urban Minds currently doesn't have a strong relationship with Indigenous youth in Toronto, so I would suggest reaching out to another group/individual that would be more representative of the community.

I know that you already have Indigenous engagement leads working on this project, so if this has already been considered, feel free to disregard this comment!

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## Submission from Waterfront for All

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Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the CAC. Here are a couple of points I made in the meeting which, I hope will find their way to the minutes.

1) I think the Drivers of Change are well summarized. Under Aging Infrastructure and Accessibility, the most urgent item are the aging island ferries. The winter ferry Ongiara breaks down every winter and has to go in for repairs (it is now currently in break-down). The summer ferries while historically attractive, have peeling paint and leaks from lack of upkeep. Passenger lines in the summer snake around for blocks. In the winter, with only one ferry running and growing demand, there are sometimes two hour waits on sunny days.

2) What if the Island?... **was free of its airport.**

If this Island MP plan is a long term one for the future, we have to note the noxious presence of the adjacent BBTCA airport and the fact that 2033 is only 12 years from now, much like you note on your map other significant neighbouring landmarks.

If this is to be an “oasis” as you term it, how can it be adjacent to the most polluting and noisy presence in the city. I realize that it is not your mandate to plan for the airport lands and the decision over the future of the airport is not part of the MP exercise. It will happen at a higher political level. But we need to go on the record to say that Island airport’s presence is a very noxious one and detracts from the enjoyment of everything the Island Master Plan stands for.

As the representative for Waterfront for All and member of the board, I have submitted to the board a positions that we should take based on your initial terms of reference and presentation. I am sure it will evolve as we discuss the MP over the next 18 months.

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## Submission from Toronto Island Marina

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Thank you for the follow up, the meeting was managed very well and flowed through the agenda.

I just wanted to write to offer a brief summary of my overarching thoughts at this stage so they are synthesised.

Though there is a drive to make the island more accessible with larger ferries etc there is a limit to what it can handle before its use causes harm to the natural environment. Any future development needs to be balanced with protections that will allow it to remain a place for plants and animals to thrive. This could be done with environmental exclusion zones and naturalizing some areas that have been developed already to balance new built structure or

road/pathways. Though accessibility is important for all to enjoy, naturalizing some trails and pathways could help make it a more sustainable environment while keeping areas accessible.

Creating a sense of identity for the island that reflects those that came before us is also crucial to honor what it was and who it served. This being the plants, animals and birds, along with the aboriginals that called it home. Educational installations will be crucial to this.

Continuing to update aged infrastructure will help make the island more welcoming for visitors. Allowing more variety from commercial operators would help make the islands better reflect the city we live in. Because the island has such a seasonal flux in usage, creating more temporary operations like food trucks or other mobile businesses means it can have less environmental impact while offering more of what people would enjoy.

Thank you very much and I look forward to the next meeting.

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## Submission from Artscape

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Thanks again for the presentation the other day and thanks again for allowing for additional feedback into the process.

I'm very enthusiastic about a number of the change drivers you've identified in the report, especially as they relate to island infrastructure and accessibility, as well as Indigenous place-making.

Related to this, I'd like to emphasize the important role of arts and culture to the island and to highlight it as a key part of the Island's Community Character.

While I feel the plan as articulated thus far has recognized a role for Island programming – festivals, events and the like – as an artist, arts-administrator, and advocate for grassroots, community-engaged arts, I feel it important that we should include in any planning document a specific and stated commitment to the arts and cultural sector and acknowledge it as part of our change drivers.

Many residents of Toronto island are engaged in professional or “second-mile” careers as artists, creatives and creators many of these folks also are studio users/tenants at Artscape Gibraltar Point. In addition our self-directed and thematic artist residency programmes attract nearly 700 artists, writers, composers and thinkers to the Toronto Island. The significant growth of these programs has necessitated greater amenities/resource development on the part of Artscape. Investments in infrastructure and the aforementioned accessibility pieces detailed in the draft document will significantly benefit Artscape Gibraltar Point and support the creation

of new, high-calibre artistic programming which could be developed and leveraged in partnership with the City of Toronto to amplify or complement planning goals.

I'm hoping we'll be able to discuss further in this process other ways in which Artscape Gibraltar Point and the Arts and Cultural sector can be further engaged in the planning process and in realizing its goals and outcomes.

# Appendix E – Draft Drivers of Change

A ‘Driver of Change’ is an underlying challenge or opportunity that is driving the need for improvements to the Toronto Island Park. They are the reasons ‘why’ the Master Plan will be developed and will form the foundation of the Plan. The following are the draft Drivers of Change as of March 22<sup>nd</sup>:

## **Island Identity and Character**

Since time immemorial, the Island has been a place of escape, respite, and healing. It is also a place for family and friends that supports a wide range of diverse users (the Indigenous community, families, newcomers, LGBTQ2S+) and experiences (hiking, biking, picnicking, days at the amusement park, lazy afternoons at the beach). It is important that the Island Master Plan creates opportunities to tell the story of the Island while reinforcing its existing character as a waterfront destination park that is safe and welcoming for all.

## **Indigenous Placekeeping**

The Island is an important Indigenous place, and has been for millennia. For the Michi Saagiig, it was simply known as Mnisiing, meaning “on the islands.” Later, they were collectively known as Aionwatha or Hiawatha’s Island. It was long considered a place of healing and ceremony for Indigenous people. But this rich history and living culture is not reflected in Toronto Island Park as it exists today. The Master Plan process provides an opportunity to restore the Toronto Islands as an Indigenous place through storytelling and ceremony and by incorporating Indigenous approaches to land stewardship and placekeeping.

## **Visitor Experience and Programming**

Currently, programming on the Island occurs mainly during the summer months, limiting opportunities for all-seasons enjoyment of the park. There is also limited information and no centralized location for promoting and informing Island users about available programming, either for planning purposes online or once people get to the Island. Expanding programming opportunities is impacted by the difficulties vendors experience accessing the island and a complicated permitting process that is not tailored to specific conditions on the Island or to event size. In addition, existing lease agreements limit opportunities to expand food and beverage options.

## **Access Improvements**

Reaching the island is difficult in all seasons, from both a transportation and equity perspective. This is especially true during the winter months and for people with low-incomes or who live far from downtown. This can present a significant barrier to many people accessing the island. Circulation and getting around the island itself and reaching its many points of interest and destinations is also challenging since on Island transportation options are limited.

## **Ineffective Wayfinding and Information-Sharing**

Finding your way around the Island's 330 Hectares of parkland is difficult because wayfinding and signage throughout the park is limited and not well coordinated. In addition, there is no way for park users to access comprehensive information about programming, ferry schedules, flooding, beach conditions, etc. This can be further complicated by intermittent cell service or WIFI on much of the island.

## **Inefficient Park Operations**

Delivery of efficient and effective park operations on the Island are challenged by the lack of a system-wide approach and coordination between different City divisions overseeing various park management activities and functions. This can make event management especially difficult for third-party events and permit holders.

## **Aging Island Facilities and Infrastructure**

Most facilities on the Island, including but not limited to ferry docks, washrooms, and concession buildings, were built decades ago and many are in a deteriorating state. The lack of winterization of facilities also limits opportunities for winter use of the Island.

## **Outdated Island Amenities**

The Island's amenities include its beaches, internal waterways, amusement park, bike and canoe, kayak and paddleboard rentals, sporting facilities, and food and beverage options are a major part of the park's draw in the summertime, but not all of them are created equal. Some, like the Island's tennis courts, are significantly underutilized, while others, like the food and beverage options, lack diversity and are not meeting the needs of existing users.

## **'Taxed' Island Environment**

Toronto Island is essentially a sandbar and has always been subject and vulnerable to the whims of Mother Nature. It is a dynamic environment that is constantly changing. The recent high lake effect has led to flooding and erosion, which has significantly impacted Torontonians' ability to



use and enjoy the Island and further degradation from these impacts needs to be mitigated. Park users are not aware of their impacts on the Island's sensitive ecosystems, such as sand dunes and forested areas. The Island Master Plan should address these impacts and ensure that Island users understand their role as stewards of this important park.

### **Lake Access Impacts**

One of the defining features of the Island is the access it provides to water and the views across Lake Ontario or towards the city skyline. Recent flooding and erosion (especially in the last five years) has resulted in significant impacts to the beaches and natural and engineered shorelines of the Island. This has limited beach access, boardwalks and other shoreline areas across the Islands, limiting park users' ability to enjoy them.

### **Population Growth**

The population of downtown Toronto is growing at a pace that far exceeds the rate of growth for the city as a whole, with 10,000 residents added each year. According to the City's new TOcore Downtown Secondary Plan, downtown could nearly double in size by 2041, to reach a population of 475,000. TOcore and City's Parkland Strategy have also identified that downtown Toronto is highly parkland deficient and have further linked population growth with increased demand and use of parks. As Toronto and its downtown grow, the park system needs to expand with it.

### **New Trends in Demographics and Park Use**

Further, changing demographics and most recently the global pandemic are giving rise to new trends and use patterns that can also be seen to be influencing the Toronto Islands. These changes and trends need to be better understood to inform decisions around improving island services and experiences. Toronto's park system will need to expand and improve as the city grows to ensure that parkland is accessible, functional, connected, and resilient as is addressing new trends for services and amenities.

### **The Island as a Place for Arts and Culture**

For many years, the Island has inspired artists, writers, composers, musicians, photographers and creative people from all walks of life. Today, it is home to a rich artist community complete with recording studios, artists residency programs and outdoor galleries, and it continues to serve as a backdrop and inspiration for creative people from around Toronto and beyond. The Master Plan presents an opportunity to celebrate and support the arts and culture community to continue to be a source of inspiration and contribute to the Island's unique character and identity.