

Supporting a Dynamic Environment



Why supporting the natural environment of the Island is important:

The Island is an ever-changing place. Formed through the deposit of sand from the erosion of the Scarborough Bluffs over centuries, it supports diverse plants and animals within protected, managed, and unmanaged landscapes. The Island works as an important part of several regional and local natural systems, including being part of the migratory bird flyways, providing habitat for many endangered and threatened animals and plants. The natural heritage of the islands includes 6 Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) and 1 Provincially Significant Wetland complex. The Island also serves as an active, vibrant, and open park space for exploration and play by humans that is part of the Core Circle of parks, is a destination waterfront park linked to the City's larger parkland system and is an important contribution to the City's biodiversity connecting to the nearby Don River and Tommy Thompson Park.

Issues to be addressed:

These competing uses and Island activities rarely work in concert with each other. In addition there is a lack of public understanding of how unchecked human behaviour contributes to the degradation and deterioration of the natural environment. This lack of awareness needs to change. Information needs to be the foundation of all decision making and education programs need to be established to become central to the thinking of how spaces within the islands are considered and future uses are determined. Protection of the environment needs to be prioritized and used to inform decision making. Flood mitigation, erosion and changing environmental impacts need to be considered and integrated in the plans to be forward thinking and protect the Islands natural environment for years to come.

What we have heard:

The natural character and perceived wildness of the Island is at the core of why so many visitors treasure this place. They cherish the transformation and sense of escape they experience as they cross the harbour and leave busy urban life behind. Through ongoing engagement, we heard that it is critical to protect the Island's sensitive environment and habitats. Many shared concerns that some areas like beaches, nesting areas, and internal waterways are under pressure from human use and would benefit from increased protection, like establishing "no-go" areas and how ideas for increasing access need to be informed by the health of the environment being impacted. In addition we need to consider restrictions to define areas for non-motorized boating, and establish improved management strategies and public communication about closures (temporary or permanent). We have heard about importance of promoting education and communication through signage and community-led stewardship to learn about the impacts of human activity on the island's ecosystems. Finally, many shared concerns about on-going flooding and erosion impacts specifically impacting the shorelines and beaches and some of the natural areas of the islands.

Ideas + Actions being considered:

The following ideas are based on inputs received through an extensive engagement process during Phase 1, and include inputs from City staff at various divisions, advisory groups, and the public.

1. Promoting stewardship and resilience

- Better engage Island residents and others as champions and partners in the management, activation, and advocacy of the park
- Develop Island Charter to help communicate Island etiquette towards use and behaviour that benefits long term vision for the islands
- Develop a Coordinated Landscape Resource Management Plan
- Identify opportunities to partner with and promote existing and planned City and TRCA restoration initiatives, including ecological enhancements of specific areas and future flood mitigation measures

2. Enhancing protection of the natural environment

- A. Identify "no-go" areas to protect sensitive habitats
- B. Identify opportunities for planned seasonal access and closures to support ecosystem function and health and protect habitats during nesting seasons

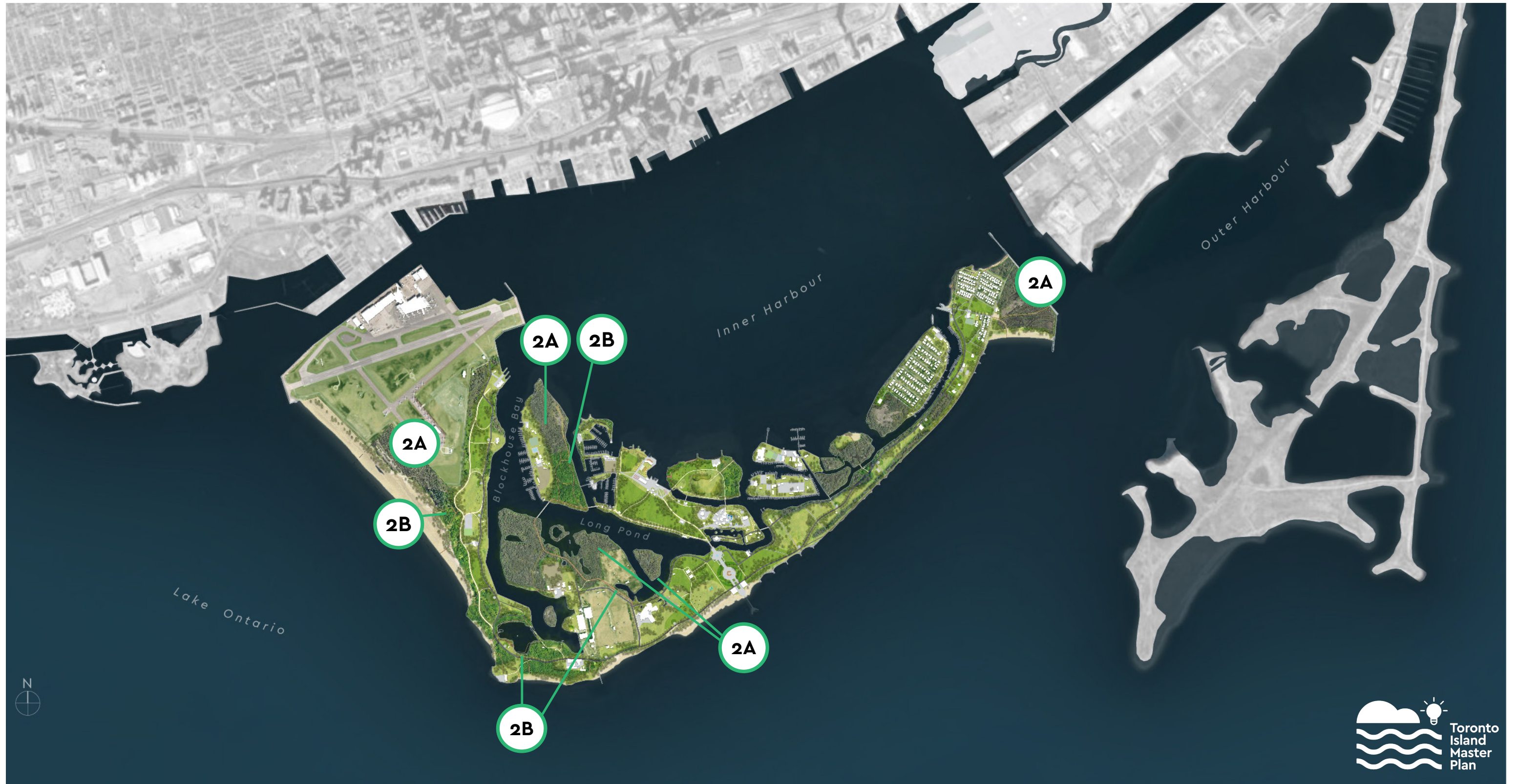
3. Improving access to natural heritage

- A. Create Lagoon Loop pathway connection to provide controlled access and integrate undervalued natural areas of the park and support Long Pond Non-Motorized Zone through use of bridges as physical barriers to large watercraft
- B. Develop Trout Pond Boardwalk to communicate and advocate for the value of diverse habitats both on land and water

4. Sharing the importance of the Island's natural history

- Investigate and communicate ecological integrity of the Islands through comprehensive and on-going natural heritage and ecological assessments
- A. Curate programs and teaching about importance, function, and management of significant areas specific to Toronto (ESAs), as well as provincially significant areas (ANSIs and PSWs) with PFR staff and external partners as part of a larger curated approach
- B. Develop interpretive elements to share information about habitat and ecosystems on the Island that are area- and habitat-specific promoting protection





MAP ENV-01: Supporting a Dynamic Environment - Protection

IDEAS & ACTIONS:

- 2. Enhancing protection of the natural environment
 - A. Identify "no-go" areas to protect sensitive habitats
 - B. Identify opportunities for planned seasonal access and closures to support ecosystem function and health and protect habitats during nesting seasons



MAP ENV-02: Supporting a Dynamic Environment - Access

IDEAS & ACTIONS:

3. Improving access to natural heritage

- A. Create Lagoon Loop pathway connection to provide controlled access and integrate undervalued natural areas of the park and support Long Pond Non-Motorized Zone through use of bridges as physical barriers to large watercraft

- B. Develop Trout Pond Boardwalk to communicate and advocate for the value of diverse habitats both on land and water
- 4. Sharing the importance of the Island's natural history
 - A. Curate programs and teaching about importance, function, and management of significant areas specific to Toronto (ESAs), as well as provincially

significant areas (ANSIs and PSWs) with PFR staff and external partners as part of a larger curated approach

- B. Develop interpretive elements to share information about habitat and ecosystems on the Island that are area- and habitat-specific promoting protection