

A logo icon for the project, featuring a blue and green abstract shape on the left that resembles a stylized river or water flow, with a grid of green squares to its right.

Don Mouth Naturalization And Port Lands Flood Protection Project

Public Presentation, Discussion and Open House **Meeting Notes**

May 9, 2009

PUBLIC PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND OPEN HOUSE
Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project
Saturday May 9, 2009

St. Lawrence Hall, 157 King Street East
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

SUMMARY NOTES

The purpose of the meeting was to present and seek feedback on the preliminary concept design for the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project.

153 people signed in at the meeting (including 40 team members), and the following points summarize the feedback received from the public at the meeting:

- Can we create a wildlife corridor along the Don Narrows?
- There is concern about flooding and water quality issues throughout the Don watershed, and integration with projects such as the City of Toronto's Wet Weather Flow Master Plan is a vital component of this project
- Future lake levels need to be considered in regard to operation of wetlands

Please refer to the remainder of this report for more detailed notes.

1.0 Public Open House

The Open House portion of this event opened at 10:00 a.m. Members of the public were invited to sign in and view display boards showing details on the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project and on projects being conducted in the surrounding area by several agencies. Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA), Waterfront Toronto, Michael Van Valkenburgh and Associates (MVVA), Arup, Greenberg Consultants Inc, AECOM, SENES and City of Toronto staff members were on hand to answer questions during the Open House. All participants received the following information as they signed in:

- Participant workbook (including meeting agenda)

The following information was also available to participants:

- Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project Newsletter Volume #7 May 2009

All of the meeting materials listed above are available on the TRCA website at:
http://www.trca.on.ca/don_mouth_naturalization/whats_new

Display boards and laptop slideshows available for viewing during the Open House were:

- Sediment and Debris Management Overview
- Regulatory Flood Model: Existing Conditions
- Regulatory Flood Model: Preferred Alternative
- Landscape Communities
- Regulatory Flood Model (laptop slideshow)
- In addition, 19 boards were available on the Lower Don Lands Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) Infrastructure Master Plan and Keating Channel Precinct Plan from the MVVA team

Copies of the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project poster boards are found in **Appendix A** to these notes.

153 people signed in at this event.

2.0 Welcome and Opening Remarks

Mark Wilson, Chair, Waterfront Toronto, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

Chris Glaisek, Vice President Planning and Design, Waterfront Toronto, introduced the Lower Don Lands Municipal Class EA Infrastructure Master Plan and Keating Channel Precinct Plan portion of the meeting.

Adele Freeman, Director, Watershed Management, TRCA, introduced the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project portion of the meeting.

Nicole Swerhun and **David Dilks** identified themselves as third party facilitators for the Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project and Lower Don Lands Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Infrastructure Master Plan and Keating Channel Precinct Plan portions of the meeting, respectively. They outlined the materials available at the sign-in desk and invited participants to fill out the Participant Workbook with their comments on the materials presented at the meeting.

3.0 Presentation: Lower Don Lands Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Infrastructure Master Plan and Keating Channel Precinct Plan

Michael Van Valkenburgh, MVVA, and **Ken Greenberg**, Greenberg Consultants, Inc. gave a presentation on the Lower Don Lands Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Infrastructure Master Plan and Keating Channel Precinct Plan. Summary notes on this presentation are available at Waterfront Toronto's website at: www.waterfronttoronto.ca.

4.0 Presentation: Don Mouth Naturalization and Port Lands Flood Protection Project

Please see the enclosed presentation in **Appendix B**.

Paul Murray, AECOM, provided background on the project, the steps taken to date, and the development of the conceptual design presented today.

The preliminary preferred alternative presented to the public at the last public meeting in March 2008 was subject to confirmatory studies on hydrology and sediment management; management of contaminated soils and groundwater; and a risk analysis of the shipping lane. The results from these studies confirm this alternative as viable.

Hydrology studies involved models predicting flooding responses under the preferred alternative. A run of the model was presented showing how the river flows would be contained under the Regulatory Flood.

Sediment and debris management will continue to be required with the new alignment of the river mouth to maintain hydraulic conveyance and ecological stability. A sediment trap will be located north of Lakeshore Blvd. to trap sand and debris. Silt and clay will continue downstream, as occurs under current conditions. The design allows for a sediment access shaft, which is potentially required by the City of Toronto for its CSO EA.

Geotechnical and geo-environmental data were collected in 2009 to fill data gaps in understanding management of contaminated soils in the study area for the purposes of naturalization. Waterfront Toronto will also be doing extensive studies of soil management for

the entire Lower Don Lands. Contamination will be managed by over-excavating such soil and the backfilling with clean material. Armouring will also be installed as required.

A navigation risk assessment was conducted and it was determined that the promontories do not significantly impact maneuverability within the Inner Harbour; aids to navigation are likely to be required; sediment and debris should be managed upstream to minimize navigation impacts; and modified currents do not pose an increased risk to navigation interests.

Naturalized areas were described as a mix of aquatic, wetland and upland communities. Water levels in the majority of wetlands, including the Greenway wetland, will be dictated by lake levels rather than from discharge from the river. Seepage wetlands are also contemplated above the anticipated range of regular lake and river flood levels. These unique wetlands would simulate groundwater seep wetlands found in our jurisdiction and are anticipated to be fed by green-roof run-off from future development in the adjacent tablelands. It is important to note that the EA will allow for the accommodation of these flows at the "end-of-pipe" from the adjacent table lands, but will not be involved with how the delivery of water will occur from the greenroofs to the end-of-pipe: that will be addressed through the Lower Don Lands Master Servicing EA and River Precinct Planning processes. Vegetation will need to be resistant to flooding from the Don River, and following very large flood events, it is anticipated that maintenance will be required to address the resulting disturbance.

A list of animal target species has not yet been developed, but could include varieties of songbirds, frogs, voles, bass and sunfish as well as minks, northern pike, and walleye.

Naturalization opportunities within the low-flow channel of the Don Narrows are being examined, but any viable alterations to the channel cannot increase the frequency of flooding onto the adjacent Don Valley Parkway, Bala Subdivision railway tracks and Bayview Avenue.

The integration of this project with the Lower Don Lands Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Infrastructure Master Plan was discussed. This project will define the bridge clearance requirements for flooding and small watercraft access. It is also anticipated that utility crossings will be preinstalled through utility conduits under the river at the time that the river valley is being constructed to avoid having to disturb the river after-the-fact to install or maintain servicing.

Feedback on the Presentation

Questions and comments are noted below in italics, followed by the response from the project team.

Q1. *I think this is a wonderful, complicated plan that highlights the role of nature in the City. One notable species that would symbolize the connection between the lake and wildlife would be to be able to see deer in this area. Regarding the Don Narrows, the river is naturally silting on the east side here. This could allow a wildlife corridor. Can we help to create this linkage?*

The Don Narrows must be able to convey flood levels, and this is a constraint on what can be done, as is the infrastructure in the area. We know that coyotes do move through this area. We

will look into whether deer will be able to do so and what opportunities there are for deer movement through here.

Q2. Will the flood control here be the only control for flooding in the Don? What about conditions in the upper reaches of the river?

The entire Don watershed faces challenges. For instance, the Don Valley Parkway floods regularly, as does lower Bayview Avenue. While this project will not solve these issues, the City of Toronto's Wet Weather Flow Master Plan will impact flooding of the Don by managing stormwater before it enters the river.

Q3. What will happen if man-made or natural causes result in lake levels rising more than one to two metres? How will this impact the design?

Long term modeling under climate change scenarios predict that lake levels will decline rather than increase. The hydraulic models that we are using do allow us to look at some variation in lake level.

Q4. Regarding the tunnel required in the debris management area – if this cannot be done for debris storage, how does this affect the project?

The City's Wet Weather Flow Master Plan will address combined sewer overflow by collecting it before it enters the Harbour. One option is for collection at this site, so space has been made to accommodate this option. Long term sediment management is needed, but currently much of the debris collected is clean, and in the form of tree trunks and logs. This debris is currently used in various ecological projects, and may also be chopped for use as mulch. Clean sediment can be used in landfill. Currently, Toronto Port Authority is collecting debris and sediment and it is stored as necessary. This is considered to be normal operations of the river and will continue long-term for any alignment of the river.

Q5. Water quality must be the first priority. Wet Weather Flow is meant to address this, but is it being given top priority? Financial commitments need to be made. What about upstream work on water quality issues?

The wetlands created by this project will have a small impact on water quality but you are correct that this issue cannot be dealt with at the mouth of the river. The City of Toronto and the 905 municipalities and regions are working on this issue. Wet Weather Flow and the CSO EA are a very high priority for the City.

Q6. Are the big pipes proposed for areas upstream an issue affecting water quality here?

Wet Weather Flow is a plan to deal with run-off and snowmelt from upstream as well as within the City. Bill Snodgrass of Toronto's Water & Wastewater Services is here and will be available for further questions during the Open House portion of today's meeting that follows these presentations.

Please see **Appendix C** to these notes for comments submitted after the meeting.

5.0 Closing Remarks

Chris Glaisek thanked participants for attending the presentations and encouraged them to look at the displays and ask questions of the consultants available for the Open House portion of the meeting, to follow.

Notes prepared by:
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