2011 – 2012 Fall

CP 411 Urban Renewal Theory and Practice – Waterfront Toronto Revitalization Project Term Paper

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The location of Toronto (Canada) - in North America;
A brief history of Toronto

Like most major cities around the world, Toronto is located beside a major body of water. Throughout history, cities have been founded at the intersections of transportation routes, or at points where goods needed to shift from one mode of transportation to another. For centuries, water – oceans, lakes and rivers – has provided an important means of transport.

Toronto’s location on Lake Ontario, the first Great Lake from the St. Lawrence River, has been instrumental over the course of the city’s history. Long before Europeans came to the area, Toronto was home to Aboriginal Peoples who utilized Toronto as the start of a shortcut from the lower to upper Great Lakes.

Picture shows Waterfront Toronto in 1938;

(www.waterfronttoronto.ca)
The Historical Overlay of Waterfront Toronto

Pictures shows Waterfront Toronto respectively 1858, 1910 and 1930;

(waterfronttoronto.ca)
General Information about Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Project

The revitalization of Toronto’s waterfront is the largest urban redevelopment project currently underway in North America, and it is one of the largest waterfront revitalization efforts ever undertaken in the world.

On a world scale, Toronto’s waterfront revitalization is almost unequalled in size. It’s larger than Lower Manhattan and four times the size of Monaco. The total area being redeveloped is 800 hectares (1,977 acres)

The project is a very large infrastructure project and one of the largest waterfront redevelopment initiatives in the world. However, it is not just the sheer scale of the project that makes it unique. Waterfront Toronto is delivering a leading edge city-building model that seeks to place Toronto at the forefront of global cities in the 21st century.

Actors and Funding of The Project

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation established on November 1, 2001, by The Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto created Waterfront Toronto to oversee and lead the renewal of Toronto’s waterfront. Waterfront Toronto was expected to take 25 years to complete, it will create approximately 40,000 new residences and 40,000 new jobs.

Waterfront Toronto is a corporation funded by three levels of government. These government bodies have provided seed capital for a 25-year mandate to transform 800 hectares of brownfield lands on Toronto’s waterfront into beautiful, accessible, sustainable mixed-use communities and dynamic public spaces. A strong, expert and engaged 12-member Board of Directors, appointed by the three levels of government, oversees the strategic direction.

Brief information about the three governments;

- **Toronto Waterfront Project Secretariat**: Toronto's Waterfront Project Secretariat leads and directs the City's participation in the revitalization of Toronto's waterfront. The Secretariat monitors and advises City Council on the business performance and fiscal
requirements of Waterfront Toronto, ensures cross-divisional collaboration in the planning and delivery of waterfront initiatives in compliance with Council objectives and provides strategic direction on the management of municipal assets in the designated waterfront area. It also ensures that the City's regulations are respected and its interests represented in all decision-making on the project, including tri-government negotiations.

- **Ministry of Infrastructure in Ontario:** The Inter-Governmental and Economic Infrastructure Branch, part of the Ministry of Infrastructure, is working with federal and municipal partners along with Waterfront Toronto to meet the challenge of moving forward with the design and implementation of a bold new waterfront plan. The Municipal Infrastructure Branch is dedicated to building consensus among waterfront stakeholders, representing and advancing the Province of Ontario's interests and developing recommendations to Cabinet on proposed waterfront investment priorities.

- **Department of Finance Canada – Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Initiative:** The purpose of the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Initiative is to revitalize the Toronto waterfront through investments in both traditional city-building infrastructure, such as local transportation and sewers, and more contemporary urban development, including parks, green spaces, recreation facilities and the redevelopment of underutilized post-industrial areas.

The cost of revitalization of Toronto’s waterfront was originally estimated (in 2001) at $17 billion, of which $4.3 billion would be funded from the public sector and remaining $12.7 billion from the private sector. Due to escalation in construction costs, the cost of revitalization is now estimated to be $34 billion. Additional public sector funding was expected to be provided through public-private partnerships consistent with the Corporation’s mandate. Such partnerships require Waterfront Toronto to identify either a separate revenue stream and/or a separate project or service. The first of this type of partnership was completed in 2010/11 through the introduction of intelligent communities.

**The Investments to Date (31th March 2011)**

Investment in revitalization on Toronto's Waterfront is already delivering significant economic value. Since inception to March 31, 2011 Waterfront Toronto and its three government partners invested $769.5 million in projects that have unlocked $10 billion of potential private sector investment and created new public spaces, municipal infrastructure and tourism amenities.
• $219.6 million in municipal infrastructure, utilities and flood protection primarily in East Bayfront and West Don Lands. By building this infrastructure, 26 hectares of land is serviced and unlocked for development.

• $113.6 million in land acquisition to assemble development blocks for future private sector investment.

• $161 million to create and/or improve 17 parks or public spaces including building Canada’s Sugar Beach, Sherbourne Common, the water’s edge promenade, wavedecks, sports fields, revitalized trails and waterfront parks in Scarborough and Etobicoke.

• $230.1 million for development approvals, master planning, and environmental approvals which has unlocked $10 billion in potential private sector investment in waterfront revitalization.

• $45.2 million has been invested in corporate overhead during the past 10 year, which is 4.7 percent of total spending to date. The majority of this has gone to salaries, rent and IT expense. Just over $4 million has gone towards consulting services.

• In addition to the $769.5 million, a further $195.4 million of waterfront revitalization funding has been utilized for government directed investments including $130 million for Go Transit expansion and $25 million for the Union Pearson rail link, and $9.3 million for waterfront secretariats staff salary costs (Federal and City) and other City staff resources.

The Primary Goals of The Project

A primary objective of waterfront revitalization is to leverage the infrastructure project to deliver key economic and social benefits that enable Toronto to compete aggressively with other top tier global cities for investment, jobs and people. To do this, Waterfront Toronto reach the primary goals of it that brings together the most innovative approaches to sustainable development, excellence in urban design, economic development, fiscal sustainability, real estate development, and advanced technology infrastructure.
Classification by Area

If we want to classify the projects by location, there are 5 parts:

- Central Waterfront
- East Bayfront
- West Don Lands
- Lower Don Lands
- Port Lands

(waterfronttoronto.ca)
In central waterfront area there are 12 projects which 3 of them are completed from inception to date March 2011.

- The completed projects are Spadina Wave Deck, Rees Wave Deck and Simcoe Wavedeck which can be seen by green dots above map.

**Spadina Wave Deck:** Construction began in Fall 2007. It was built in less than 10 months and officially opened in September 2008. As the first wavedeck to open along Toronto’s waterfront, the Spadina WaveDeck is an important symbol for waterfront revitalization. Located at the foot of Spadina Avenue, the 630 square-metre wooden wavedeck transformed a narrow sidewalk into a new waterside gathering place. It created more public space along one of the most heavily used parts of the Toronto shoreline and helped connect two key waterfront amenities, the Music Garden and HTO Park.

**The Rees WaveDeck:** The Rees WaveDeck was completed and opened to the public in July 2009. Located just west of Rees Street on the south side of Queens Quay, the 480 square-metre wavedeck is a uniquely Canadian structure made of yellow glulam cedar and ipe wood.
Simcoe Wave Deck: Construction began in October 2008 and the wavedeck opened in June 2009. The City of Toronto is the owner of the Simcoe WaveDeck and the City Parks Department provides maintenance and operation of the public space.

- The projects; Portland Slip, Queens Quay Boulevard, York Quay Revitalization and Waters Edge Promenade are under development now.
- The future projects are 5 footbridges that are currently not funded. Construction will begin when the appropriate funding is in place.
East Bay Front:

- 3 projects are completed in the East Bay Front area which are; Canada’s Sugar Beach, Corus Quay and Sherbourne Common.

*Canada’s Sugar Beach:* only nine months of construction, Canada's Sugar Beach opened to the public in July 2010. Located at the foot of Lower Jarvis Street adjacent to the Redpath Sugar Factory, the 8500 square metre (2 acre) park is the first public space visitors see as they travel along Queens Quay from the central waterfront. The park’s brightly coloured pink beach umbrellas and iconic candy-striped rock outcroppings welcome visitors to the new waterfront neighbourhood of East Bayfront.

Before;                After;  
(waterfronttoronto.ca)

*Corus Quay:* It has officially opened on September 28 - 2010, Corus Entertainment officially opened its new Canadian headquarters on the waterfront next to Canada's Sugar Beach. Called "North America's most advanced broadcast facility," Corus consolidated its
Toronto-based operations from 11 district locations including 24 television services, three Toronto radio stations and over 1,100 employees into one facility.

*Sherbourne Common:* The south side officially opened on September 24, 2010. The north side of the park officially opened on July 26, 2011. Sherbourne Common is a stunning waterfront park that has transformed a former industrial area into much needed public greenspace on the lake. **Park operations were supplied by** City of Toronto - Parks, Forestry and Recreation Department.

*Before;*          *After;*

- The other projects in the area are under development which are; Queens Quay Boulevard, George Brown College, Water’s Edge Promenade East, and Bay Side Development.
West Don Lands:

- There are no completed projects in this area, all the projects are under development and those are; Toronto Community Housing Development, Underpass Park, River City Development, Don River Park and Flood Protection Landform.

Lower Don Lands:

- There are only 2 future projects in this area of the project and they are; Keating Channel Precinct and Mouth of the Don River.
*Keating Channel Precinct:* The precinct plan for the area consists of 25 blocks that will feature a variety of built-forms and architecture that support a diversity of experience and uses. It will feature parks and promenades along its edge, water access for boats, plus it will have amenities such as shops and canal-side cafés.

The Keating Channel, a man-made 1,100-metres long by 36-metres wide channel, anchors the neighbourhood to the north and south and provides a unique waterfront setting.

Under the plan the Keating Channel neighbourhood will contain approximately 4,000 residential units.

*(Keating Channel Plan 2010 – Toronto, Ontario)*

*Mouth of the Don River:* The environmental assessment process for the mouth of the Don River is being led by Toronto and Region Conservation on behalf of Waterfront Toronto. Naturalizing the mouth of the Don River and providing flood protection to the Port Lands were identified as top priorities for all three levels of government when they first establishment Waterfront Toronto.
There are 3 completed projects as can be seen as green dots above map in the area Port Land which are;

*Port Lands Greenings:* Leslie Street Greening, Phase One completed in 2007, Phase two completed in July 2010. In April 2005, Waterfront Toronto along with the three orders of government announced a $10.5 million investment and plans for greening the Port Lands and improving public access to the area’s lakefront. This project includes work to improve the key gateways in the area such as Unwin Avenue, Leslie, Cherry and Commissioners streets, all of which are the major corridors that connect the city with the Port Lands and the primary routes that lead to a future Lake Ontario Park.
**Cherry Beach Sports Field:** In September 2008, Waterfront Toronto officially opened the Cherry Beach Sports Fields. Waterfront Toronto worked in partnership with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Port Lands Company (formerly TEDCO) to build these two state-of-the-art, highly durable regulation sized fields to help serve new and existing residents of Toronto and the GTA while reclaiming underutilized land.

**Cherry Beach:** Landscape improvements and restoration to one of Toronto’s most popular beaches completed in 2004.

![Before](waterfrontoronto.ca)  ![After](waterfrontoronto.ca)

- There are 2 projects that are under developed in the area. These projects are; Pilot Soil Recycling Facility and Tommy Thompson Park.

**The Critique of The Project**

Waterfront Toronto’s vision is to work with community and public and private sector partners to create waterfront parks, public spaces, cultural institutions, and diverse and sustainable commercial and residential communities. Therefore it is a really big project can be seen from its scale and scope. It is a mega project that mega project in its definition; large-scale capital investment on a single purpose, particularly in the case of infrastructure project such as transportation networks and power facilities, that were historically undertaken in the provision of public goods. Waterfront Toronto Revitalization Project completely fits on it. In contrast to the modernist project of ‘progress,’ where the public benefit was celebrated as an expression of democratic objectives, it now has moved toward a much more competitive
environment where public benefits are provided in order to attract those who are most
desired. So that, a major shift appears to be from a more collectiveto a more individualized
form of public benefits in Waterfront Toronto Revitalization to be from a more collective to a
more individualized form of public benefits. However, as in most mega projects around the
world recently, it is inevitable that most fails to adequately address socioeconomic inequality
and inclusive participation, perpetuating socioeconomic divisions instead, mega projects now
acts vital role in shaping cities, cities’ economies and circulation in social structure itself.

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