

(RE)DISCOVERING TORONTO'S WATERFRONT: INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY IN A POST-INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE

© Geordie Gordon, 2014

Master of Planning in Urban Development
Ryerson University

The transition of waterfront land use from industrial to post-industrial is a global phenomenon. There are several forces that are driving this change, including the advancement of shipping technology and the relocation of industrial processes to areas with greater availability of land. In place of industrial uses, many cities have already undertaken or are in the process of undertaking waterfront redevelopment. As a result of past industrial use there often exists a significant amount of transportation infrastructure, such as urban expressways, that now serve to isolate the city from the redeveloped waterfront. This paper first establishes the context for waterfront redevelopment and reviews the evolution of waterfront redevelopment both in theory and in practice. It then examines the impact of infrastructure urban forms by utilizing the work of Kevin Lynch as a tool for analysis. Several case precedents – Seattle, Boston, and San Francisco - are used to examine the course of action that other North American cities have pursued to mitigate the impact of infrastructure forms as they relate to the process of waterfront redevelopment and how they may influence the way Toronto deals with its waterfront infrastructure. The debate surrounding the future of the eastern section of the Gardiner Expressway is presented and considered within the context of the forces that are shaping the redevelopment of waterfronts around the globe.

Key words: post-industrial waterfront, urban morphology, urban expressway, Toronto, Boston, San Francisco, Seattle.