

An aerial photograph of a riverfront area, likely in Portland, Oregon, showing the Willamette River, bridges, and surrounding urban and natural landscapes. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text "THE PEOPLE'S PLAN" is prominently displayed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on the right side of the image.

# THE PEOPLE'S PLAN

FOR THE  
RIVERFRONT  
RIBBON

# THE PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR THE RIVERFRONT RIBBON

## Prepared for:

Evergreen

## Prepared by:

Emma Abramowicz

Wayne Coutinho

Andy Gavel

Kelly Graham

Neil Loewen

Taylor Marquis

Anthony Smith

*This project is the sixth in a series of partnership studio projects with Evergreen and the Ecological Design Lab at Ryerson University, under the direction of Dr. Nina-Marie Lister.*

**December 2015**

*With special thanks to our mentors Jane Welsh and Brenda Webster, as well as Janet Rosenberg for her continued support of the Ecological Design Lab and graduate studio projects at Ryerson University. We would also like to acknowledge the Master of Landscape Architecture students at the University of Toronto who contributed renderings toward this project.*

*[This page intentionally left blank]*





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 THE PEOPLE’S PLAN ..... 5**
  - 1.1 What is the Riverfront Ribbon? ..... 7
  - 1.2 Toronto’s Ravines ..... 7
  - 1.3 A Natural Haven at the Heart of the City ..... 8
  - 1.4 Studying the Lower Don Valley ..... 9
  - 1.5 Creating a People’s Plan ..... 10
- 2 THEMES OF THE LOWER DON VALLEY ..... 13**
  - 2.1 Access ..... 14
  - 2.2 People ..... 15
  - 2.3 History ..... 16
  - 2.4 Ecology ..... 17
- 3 RIVERFRONT RIBBON INTERVENTIONS ..... 19**
  - 3.1 Public Investment in the Riverfront Ribbon ..... 20
  - 3.2 The Interventions ..... 23
    - 3.2.1 Chester Connection ..... 23
    - 3.2.2 River Xing ..... 25
    - 3.2.3 Snowdrop Park ..... 27
    - 3.2.4 Riverdale Park ..... 31
    - 3.2.5 The Canal District ..... 35
- 4 IGNITING THE PEOPLE’S PLAN ..... 39**
  - 4.1 Governance Structure ..... 40
  - 4.2 Studying the Economics of Public Parks Investment ... 40
  - 4.3 Partners in the Riverfront Ribbon ..... 41
  - 4.4 Mobilizing Support ..... 42
  - 4.5 Getting Started ..... 43
- APPENDICES ..... 45**





## 1. THE PEOPLE'S PLAN

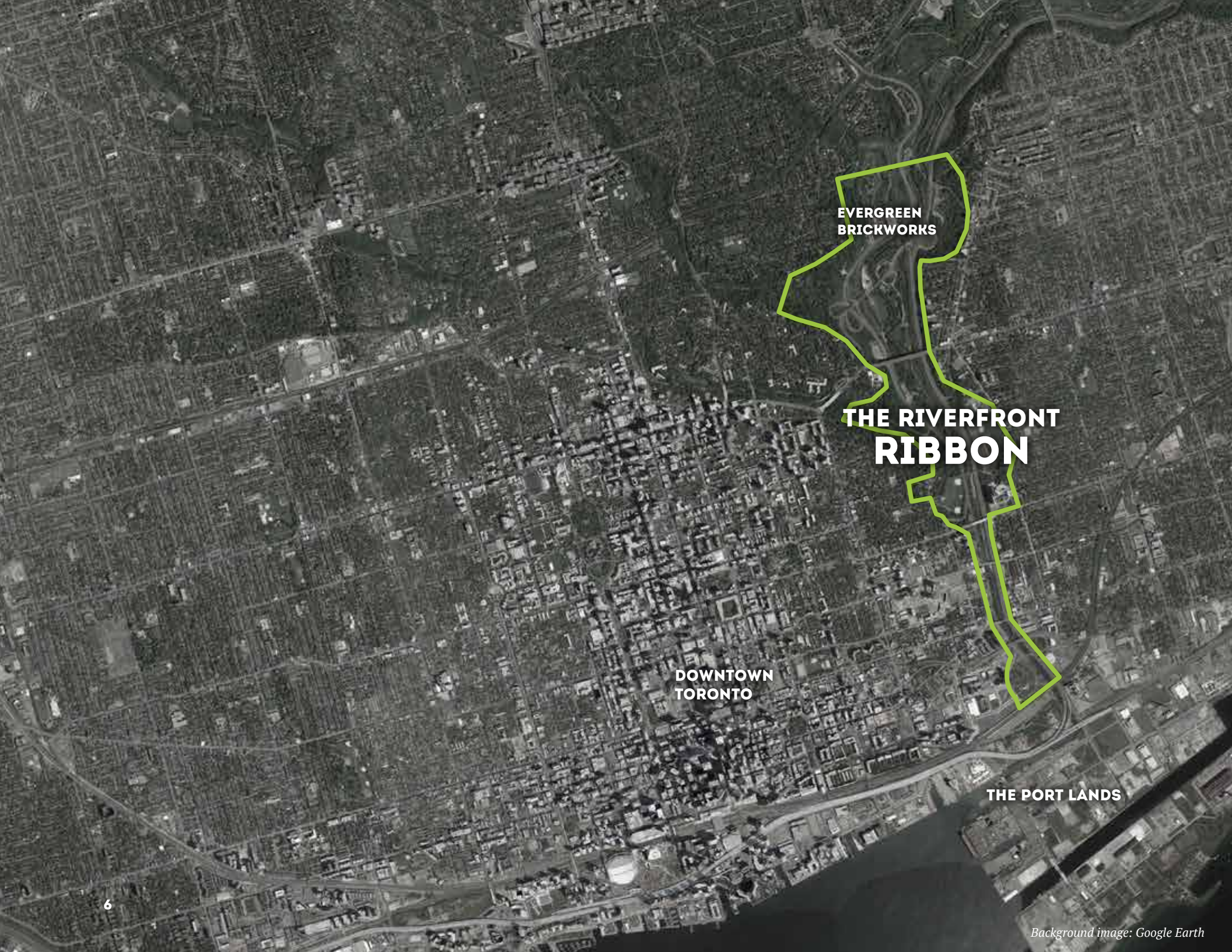
The People's Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon presents a vision for a 500-acre riverfront park on the banks of the Don River. Emerging from Evergreen's Ribbon at the Lower Don campaign, the People's Plan embraces the potential to reconnect Toronto to the Don River Valley.

The People's Plan asks us to imagine audacious design interventions at key locations throughout the Lower Don, developed by leading North American landscape designers. The city is waiting to be drawn into the valley, to embrace it as a shared green landscape for the existing and emerging neighbourhoods that surround it. The interventions in the People's Plan aim to ignite new places, and to connect them seamlessly to each other and to the rest of the city, bridging the roads and railways that have kept the valley fragmented for so long.

The interventions strive to recognize and restore the valley's role as a natural system, and to highlight its rich history of institutions, recreation and industry. In doing so, they aim to build stronger physical and social connections between the city, its people, and the valley.

The People's Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon presents a vision to bring people back to the banks of the Don River, allowing them to find its special places and to make this riverfront park their own, and transforming Toronto's relationship with the river at its heart.





Background image: Google Earth

### 1.1 WHAT IS THE RIVERFRONT RIBBON?

In 2015, Evergreen launched the Ribbon at the Lower Don campaign to mark the beginning of a new visual and physical relinking of the city to the Don Valley. From its strategic location at the Brick Works at the Lower Don’s head, Evergreen has envisioned the Ribbon as both the geographic space spanning the last 5 kilometres of the Don River, and as a metaphorical link between the valley and its diverse neighbouring communities. The People’s Plan builds on this campaign to stimulate the city’s imagination of the Ribbon as Toronto’s new riverfront park, and to inspire both public and political support to activate the unique places along the river’s course.



### 1.2 TORONTO’S RAVINE SYSTEM

Toronto is home to the largest ravine network of any city in the world. “Weaving through the landscape, connecting rivers that flow from the Oak Ridges Moraine to Lake Ontario, these ravines spread like fingers across the city; they are the bones on which the city was built, and the arteries of its future.”<sup>1</sup> They define the city’s topography, its glacial history, ecology and its local cultural and natural geography. For many urban residents, Toronto’s ravines are their primary gateway to the natural world.

The Don Valley occupies a place at the centre of Toronto’s ravine network, and has served throughout history as one of its most travelled corridors. But over time, the city has turned its back on the valley, despite the Lower Don’s potential as a shared green space for its mosaic of diverse surrounding neighbourhoods. A century of industrial history characterized the Lower Don as a dumping ground for refuse, an identity that persists despite renaturalization efforts since the 1980s.



Photo credit: Jason van Bruggen



***“The ravines are to Toronto what canals are to Venice and hills are to San Francisco. They are the heart of the city’s emotional geography, and understanding Toronto requires an understanding of the ravines”***

Robert Fulford, *Accidental City*, 1995



Photo credit: Richard Carmichael

The fragmented governance, planning and management of the ravine system have further produced limited access, a disconnected trail network, and few resources to improve conditions and draw visitors to the Lower Don’s unique pockets and places. Today, the Lower Don Valley lies in the background of the city’s collective consciousness, masking its natural magnificence and immense cultural potential.

### 1.3 A NATURAL HAVEN AT THE HEART OF THE CITY

The Riverfront Ribbon presents an opportunity to embrace the Lower Don Valley as a shared green space within Toronto’s urban core. As Toronto continues to grow and suffers from increasing congestion, this remarkable natural asset has a central role to play for urban residents. Green space in cities has been proven to offer immense benefit to city dwellers<sup>2</sup>, ranging from lower rates in asthma among children to increased life expectancy in seniors<sup>3</sup>. Studies have found that lower-income populations in particular see increased longevity based on their access to green space<sup>4</sup>, which is important given the vast range of income levels among residents of neighbourhoods adjacent to the Lower Don.

The Lower Don Valley can become a natural haven at the heart of the city, providing a wide range of opportunities for physical activity, and even vistas that offer proven mental health benefits in surrounding communities<sup>5</sup>. Increased green space throughout the Riverfront Ribbon has further potential to improve air quality and to offset Toronto’s urban heat island effect<sup>6</sup>. As neighbourhoods spring up around the Lower Don Valley, these benefits are becoming more important than ever. These neighbourhoods are expected to welcome 60-65,000 new residents by 2020<sup>7</sup>, residents who will turn to the Riverfront Ribbon as their collective space for nature and recreation.

### 1.4 STUDYING THE LOWER DON VALLEY

The Lower Don Valley has been a central focus of study in Toronto over the last 20 years. These studies have produced reports, plans and recommendations that each aim to renaturalize and restore the Lower Don watershed, and to reconnect the public to this green landscape. The People’s Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon draws inspiration and recommendations from the selected reports that follow:

**“Bringing Back the Don”** by the Task Force to Bring Back the Don (1991)

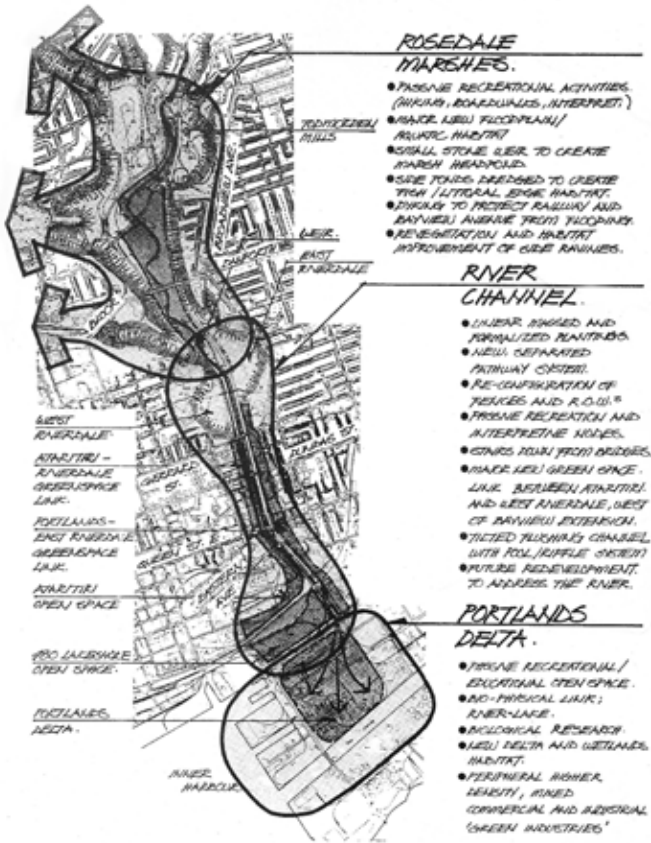
This plan presented a three-part strategy to return the river to an approximation of its original form through renaturalization and regeneration: a) a delta marsh in the Port Lands; b) the restoration of natural water flow in the channelized stretch of the river; and c) a head pond north of the Bloor Street Viaduct.

**“Forty Steps to a New Don: The Report of the Don Watershed Task Force”** by the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (1994)

In this report, the Don Watershed Task Force presented 40 steps toward the regeneration of the Don Watershed, organized under themes of water and nature conservation, and community involvement and participation.

**“Don River Watershed Plan: Beyond Forty Steps”** by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (2009)

This current guiding framework builds on the principles and objectives of the Forty Steps to a New Don report, presenting 26 steps and several concept sites that would assist in regeneration efforts.



Lower Don Strategy Plan  
*Bringing Back the Don*

Image credit: Hough Stansbury Woodland Ltd.





Bayview Avenue Multi-Use Trail and Art Train  
Lower Don Trail: Access, Environment + Art Master Plan  
Image credit: DTAH

**“Lower Don Trail: Access, Environment + Art Master Plan”** by City of Toronto and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (2013)

The current master plan for the Lower Don Valley recommends strategies to revitalize the Lower Don River valley lands with new access points, trail enhancements, ecological restoration and public art.

The People’s Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon incorporates ideas and strategies from these four reports, but the Plan is not a report in itself. Instead, it acts to synthesize the important research of the last 20 years, and integrates it into a strong and visionary design narrative for the Lower Don Valley.

## 1.5 CREATING A PEOPLE’S PLAN

The People’s Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon was created over the course of Fall 2015. It began as an analysis of the Lower Don, reviewing the story of its development, its ecological role within Toronto’s ravine system, its existing uses and conditions, and the demographics of its adjacent neighbourhoods. Past plans, reports and recommendations were consulted for themes that have persisted over 20 years of studying the Lower Don.

The themes that emerged consistently were: access into and within the valley; planning for the people who would regularly use the space; a rich cultural heritage, and; a vast ecological system in need of restoration. These themes were explored further in contextual presentation boards provided to a design charrette at Evergreen Brick Works, where leading North American landscape designers sought to find creative solutions to the challenges of the Lower Don Valley. The design professionals quickly produced a series of preliminary master plans featuring bold interventions for the Lower Don, each informed by these four contextual themes.

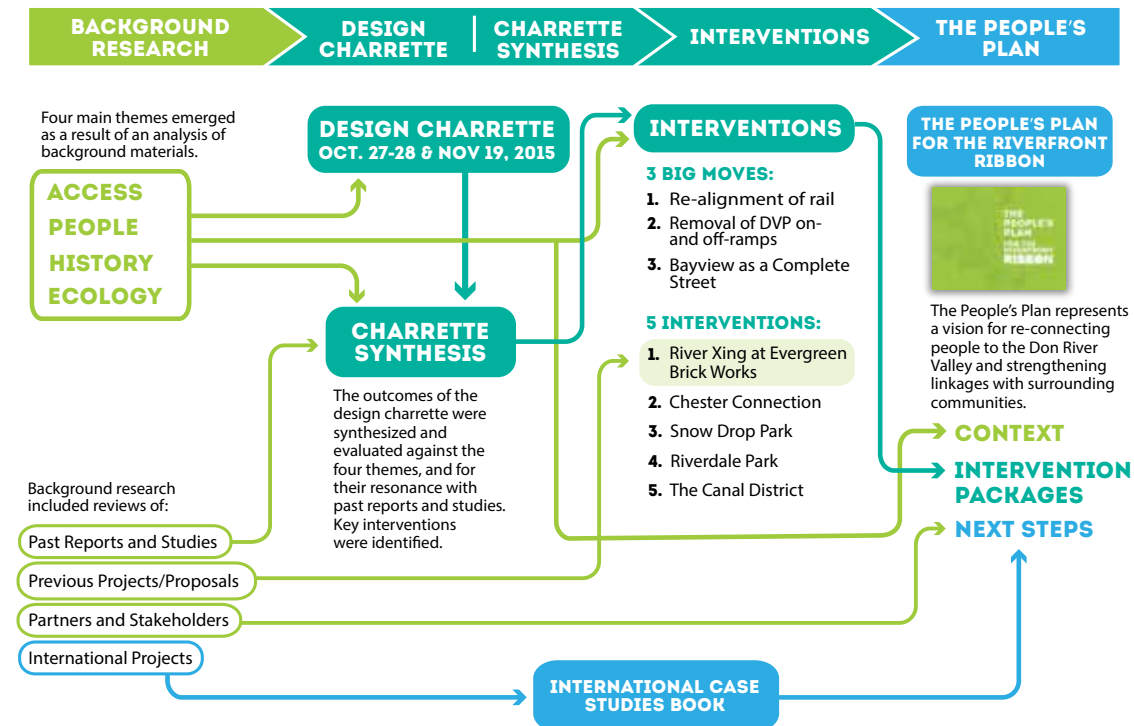
The proposed interventions were then evaluated in the context of the background research - did the proposals resonate with recommendations in past studies?

Did they adequately address the four themes? Four key interventions were selected from the designers’ plans, and shaped further to meet the criteria established throughout the research. A fifth intervention was identified from past Studio work for Evergreen through Ryerson’s Ecological Design Lab; this intervention was chosen due to its relevance within the scope of the charrette and the background research context.

The five chosen interventions occupy a central role in the People’s Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon. The chapters that follow will delve further into the themes that characterize the Lower Don Valley before exploring these five interventions and their potential to ignite the Riverfront Ribbon.



Photo credit: Taylor Marquis







## 2. THEMES OF THE RIVERFRONT RIBBON

The People's Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon presents five interventions into five existing spaces in the Lower Don Valley. The interventions are each positioned to address the valley's prevalent challenges, but also to embrace opportunities to celebrate culture, nature and community. In doing so, they respond to the four core themes of the Lower Don Valley: Access, People, History and Ecology. The framework of these four themes helps to identify whether these current plans for the Riverfront Ribbon, as well as any that may emerge in the future, address one or more identified needs.

The interventions proposed in this People's Plan are unique, and they each reflect these themes in different ways. Some interventions primarily aim to address questions of access, while others focus on ecology. Not all interventions reflect all four of the themes, however they each serve an important function in the activation of the Riverfront Ribbon. The themes, as discussed in this chapter, each centre around questions of the challenges and opportunities that can be addressed through the interventions.

The themes of Access, People, History and Ecology can and should be addressed by future planners of the Ribbon's riverside interventions. This framework will help to shape the final plans for the Ribbon's activation, ensuring that they aim to address important needs in the Lower Don Valley to create a responsive, multifaceted Riverfront Ribbon.







## 2.1 ACCESS

Questions of access in the Lower Don Valley present by far the most significant impediments to the Riverfront Ribbon's development as a recreational destination. In the vast northern section of the Lower Don, major slopes limit easy access into the valley; paths such as Rosedale's 'Milkman's Run' or the east side's Pottery Road present steep challenges even for the most able visitors.

Despite the gentler slopes at the Lower Don's southern end, access is limited by a tangle of infrastructure that makes the valley immensely difficult to cross. The valley's much narrower span here is broken up by interwoven highways, railways, paths, hydro lines, and the Don River, which serves as a barrier itself. The People's Plan asks how its interventions can address such challenges of access and connectivity.

### ADDRESSING CHALLENGES :

**Does this intervention overcome the valley's slope?** The interventions might consider ways to facilitate access into the valley on foot or by bicycle, for people of all ages and abilities.

**Does this intervention bridge the valley's tangle of infrastructure?** The interventions might also bypass the highways, rail lines, rivers and roads that have served as barriers until now.



Photo credit: Emma Abramowicz



Photo credit: Emma Abramowicz

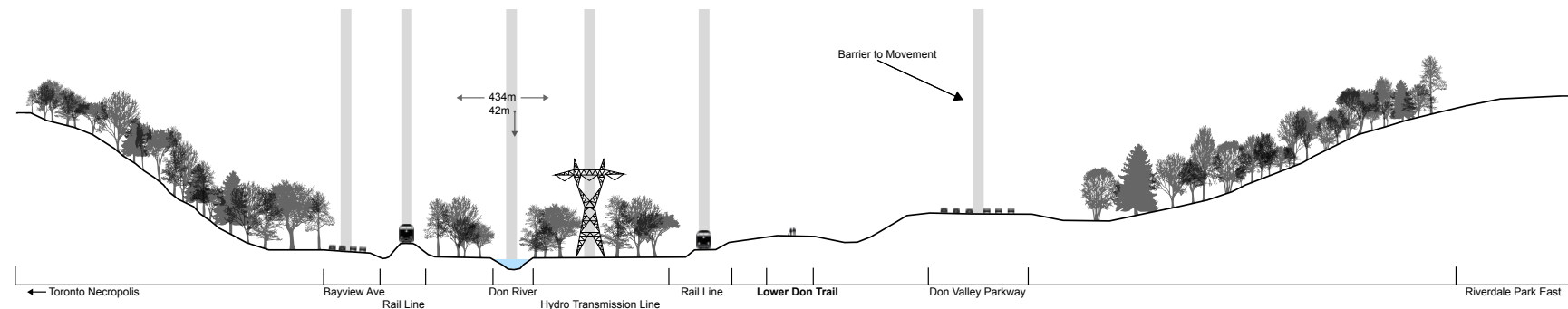


Image credit: Neil Loewen



## 2.2 PEOPLE

The neighbourhoods that surround the Lower Don Valley reveal a mosaic of diversity. Their residents are a reflection of Toronto, captured in a vast range of age groups, income levels, and cultural communities. As new neighbourhoods spring up along the waterfront and in the Port Lands, the activation of the Riverfront Ribbon is more important than ever. It can and should become a collective green space relevant to the diverse groups that will use it. The People's Plan interventions will extend access to all groups of people, and will allow those people to help shape the identity of the Riverfront Ribbon.

### ADDRESSING CHALLENGES :

**Does this intervention increase equitable access to green space?** The interventions should prioritize the location of access routes and green space near denser tower communities, where residents have less private green space of their own.

### EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES :

**Does this intervention integrate appropriate elements for the ages and abilities of neighbouring users?** The interventions might integrate youth-friendly programming or senior-friendly physical planning depending on nearby neighbourhood contexts.

**Does the intervention present opportunities to celebrate a diversity of cultures, and draw diverse groups into its space?** Interventions should allow space for representative public art pieces, partnerships with key groups for culturally relevant recreational programming, and other strategies to build welcoming places for all people.

**Does this intervention feature activities accessible to visitors from a range of socioeconomic groups?** The interventions should integrate relevant and affordable programming, perhaps through partnerships with social enterprises or community organizations.



Photo credit: Emily Jackson & Michael Woods



Photo credit: Emma Abramowicz



Dan Bergeron's 2015 "Faces of Regent Park"

Photo credit: Fauxreel Studios





## 2.3 HISTORY

The Lower Don Valley's rich cultural heritage tells the story of a river developing alongside the city around it. Used by local indigenous groups prior to British settlement, the valley saw its first modern development in 1794 as settlers bridged the valley and built communities along the river. Over much of the last 150 years, industry has characterized the Lower Don, with factories adjacent to the valley's edge, and the river channelized to make further space for them. Only recent decades have seen renaturalization strategies to mitigate a century's worth of pollution.

The Lower Don's parallel history is of institutions, and later, recreation. The Riverdale Isolation Hospital and Don Jail still overlook the river from high on its east bank, and the popular Riverdale Zoo operates as a farm today, tucked away in Riverdale Park West. Still, the Riverfront Ribbon interventions will seek to highlight those elements no longer present in the valley's landscape; a meandering river, baseball games, swimming holes, fishing nooks and skating down the channelized Narrows. There are rich opportunities to highlight these stories in the landscapes of the interventions.

### EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES :

**Does this intervention recall former natural features in its landscape?** The interventions might present opportunities to highlight physical elements of the landscape that have since been lost.

**Does the intervention recall former human uses in its landscape?** The interventions might also offer opportunities to recognize former uses of the space; bridges, buildings, roads and activities can be reflected or commemorated in new landscapes.



Photo credit: City of Toronto Archives



Photo credit: City of Toronto Archives



## 2.3 ECOLOGY

The collective approach to the Lower Don Valley today is largely characterized by efforts toward ecological renaturalization. What was once a natural system has been fragmented by invasive infrastructure, spoiled by industrial pollution, and developed beyond recognition. The People's Plan interventions will aim to restore natural ecological functions within the Lower Don Valley.

### ADDRESSING CHALLENGES :

**Does this intervention help to mitigate flooding?** The interventions could integrate green stormwater infrastructure; land forms or particular plants that might prevent flooding from moving far beyond the river into the park.

**Does this intervention help to filter Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) water as it enters the river?** The interventions might use natural elements to clean the city's Combined Sewer Overflow water as it runs off from the Don River's highly urbanized surroundings. This will be a serious step forward in preventing increased pollution and allowing the river to renaturalize.

**Does the intervention reconnect disjointed natural spaces?** The interventions can attempt to connect green space, forming corridors through which wildlife might travel through the valley with minimized pedestrian and vehicle contact.

### EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES :

**Does this intervention embrace the potential for flooding?** The interventions can integrate water features and materials that make the best of this increasingly frequent phenomenon.

**Does the intervention introduce new and returning species into the valley?** In their extension of green spaces, the interventions pose ample opportunity for natural regeneration through new plantings.



The berm at Corktown Common provides flood mitigation features to protect new neighbourhoods in the river's floodplain.

Photo credit: Maryann Thompson Architects



Evergreen Brick Works employs various strategies to embrace its frequent flooding.

Background Image credit: DTAH



Photo credit: Ken Sproule





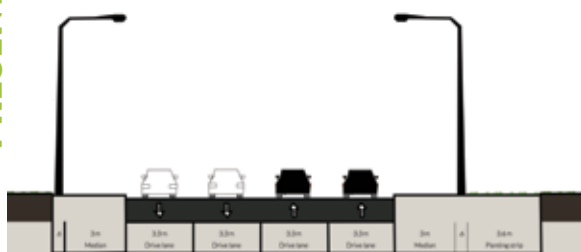
### 3. RIVERFRONT RIBBON INTERVENTIONS

The five interventions presented in this chapter emerge from preliminary master planning of the Riverfront Ribbon, and their context and detail are informed by background research, past studies and projects, and their relevance under the themes framework for the Lower Don Valley.

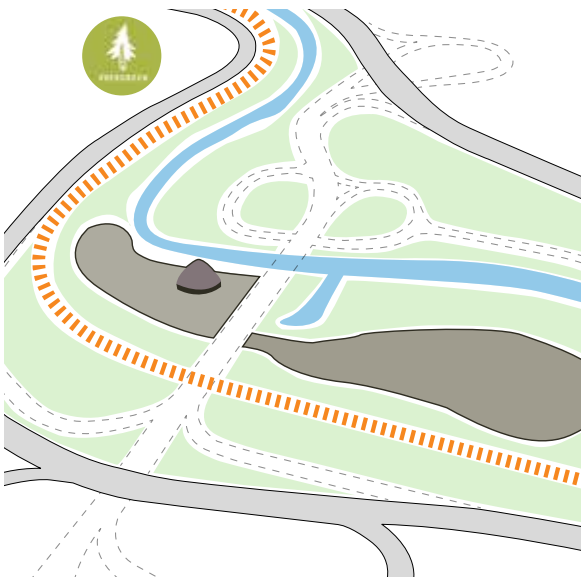
Through these interventions, the People's Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon presents audacious strategies for the activation of this park, but there are three major public investments that will necessarily precede the large-scale reimagination of the Lower Don Valley. The public-sector motivation for these big moves will come from a groundswell in support for these bold interventions, and the big moves in turn will pave the way to create the Riverfront Ribbon at the heart of the city.



PRESENT



FUTURE



### 3.1 PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN THE RIVERFRONT RIBBON

The full activation of the Riverfront Ribbon’s potential will come from **three major public investments**:

- 1. The redevelopment of Bayview Avenue as a pedestrian and cyclist-friendly complete street.**  
*Lead Organization:* The City of Toronto  
*Importance:* Bayview Avenue is a well-placed connection into and within the Riverfront Ribbon, but its current auto-centric approach creates dangerous conditions for cyclists and pedestrians.  
*Progress:* Bayview Avenue’s repaving in 2016 is likely to see elements of a complete street integrated into its design.
- 2. The removal of the Bayview-Bloor connection to the Don Valley Parkway, including all associated cloverleaf intersections.**  
*Lead Organization:* The City of Toronto  
*Importance:* This redundant and excessive infrastructure breaks up expanses of space for parkland, with great potential for recreation and renaturalization.  
*Progress:* There has been little discussion so far on the removal of this highway infrastructure.
- 3. The realignment of all rail lines to east side of the Don River, running parallel to the Don Valley Parkway.**  
*Lead Organization:* Metrolinx (agency of the Province of Ontario)  
*Importance:* The concentration of all barriers along the Don Valley Parkway frees up key space west of the Don River, and provides renewed access to the water’s edge.  
*Progress:* Metrolinx has recently been engaged in preliminary conversations around the realignment of these rail lines.

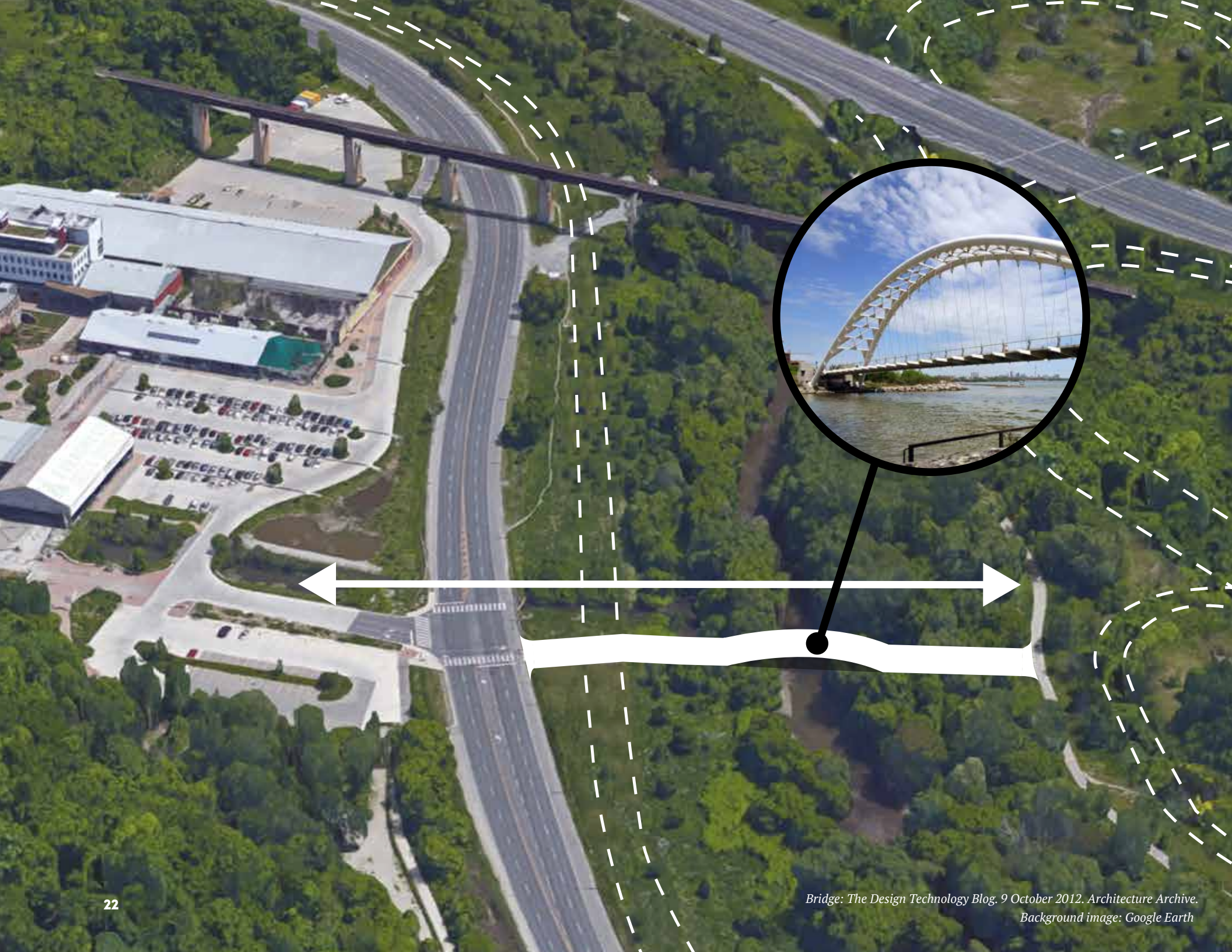
These major projects are all contingent on decisions, funding and action from various levels of government, but the momentum for the launch of the Riverfront Ribbon has never been stronger. Toronto is one of many cities beginning to understand the economic impacts of park improvements around new neighbourhoods. Urban growth creates an increasing demand on the city’s public green spaces, and so proximity to parks can reflect a corresponding rise in property values. Public investment in the Riverfront Ribbon will help create a clean, walkable, beautiful and accessible green space, causing projected development along the waterfront and in the Port Lands to orient itself around this major new park. Increased land values along the riverfront will eventually offset the initial cost of these big moves.

As the communities around the Lower Don mobilize in support of the Riverfront Ribbon, the public sector can be convinced to respond in turn with capital investments. The City of Toronto is already beginning to take note of the high-profile activity around Evergreen’s Ribbon design charrette. Meanwhile, new and longtime Torontonians discover more of the valley’s special places every year, and they become part of the movement for the Ribbon’s activation. The interventions presented in this People’s Plan, some of which are contingent on these big moves, can only serve to fuel the growing momentum and encourage public investment in the Riverfront Ribbon.



Background image: Google Earth





## 2.3 THE INTERVENTIONS

### 3.2.1 RIVER XING

The River Xing intervention proposes to link Evergreen Brick Works across the river to the Lower Don Trail. Extending access from the Brick Works' Bayview Avenue crosswalk out to the river's edge, a landmark river crossing will provide an important linkage between the main path through the Ribbon and its principal destination. With the rail realignment alongside the Don Valley Parkway, pedestrians can remain at grade as a stunning new bridge carries them over the Don River to the trail. This simple step grounds Evergreen Brick Works as the anchor of the key interventions along the riverfront. The connection from Brick Works across the river will also form an important bond to the future Snowdrop Park, facilitating shared and complementary activities at these two important locations.

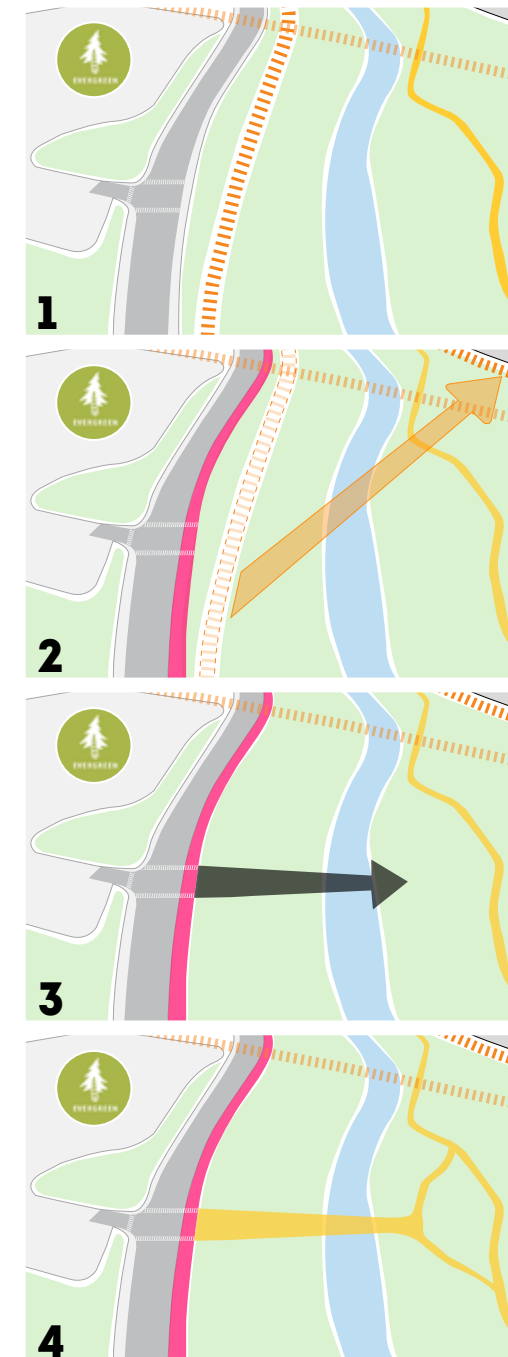
**FIRST STEPS:** Bridging the river is an achievable initial piece to this intervention. The rail line's current location presents the option of a rail crossing at grade, which will facilitate pedestrian and cyclist access from one side of the river to the other.



**ACCESS:** The crossing bridges the Don River, connecting Evergreen Brick Works to Snowdrop Park and the Lower Don Trail.



**ECOLOGY:** The bridge is built to allow animals to pass below it as they travel through the Ribbon at the river's edge. It maintains a continuous green landscape and minimizes wildlife contact with pedestrians or vehicles.





## CHESTER CONNECTION

### CHESTER HILL BRIDGE

### TRESTLE BRIDGE



24

Image credit: Nicholas Gosselin

Background image: Google Earth

## 3.2.2 CHESTER CONNECTION

Consisting of two pedestrian bridges and an added pathway, Chester Connection provides a much-needed solution to the issue of access from the Lower Don Valley's east side. The Don Valley Parkway runs along the east edge of the ravine, serving as a barrier to cyclist and pedestrians attempting to access the Lower Don Trail. An opportunity to bridge this barrier is presented at the existing Chester Hill Lookout. From this high point at the valley's edge, a new path will descend from the lookout point and bridge over the Don Valley Parkway. The bridge opens a gateway to Snowdrop Park and the Lower Don Trail, but also connects visitors to the end of the trestle bridge, no longer used for rail traffic. The Chester Connection includes a pedestrianization of the trestle bridge, providing residents of east-end neighbourhoods a car-free route across the bridge to the Brick Works. The Chester Connection bridges dramatically increase access into the valley, but also open up unprecedented panoramic vistas of the Riverfront Ribbon.

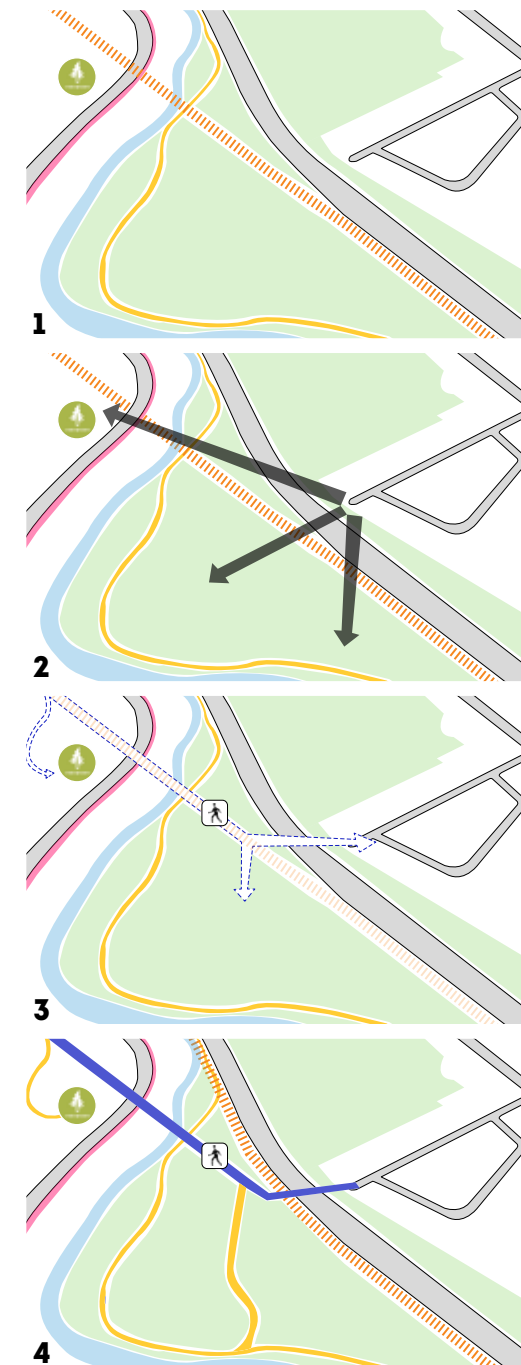
**FIRST STEP:** The construction of a bridge over the Don Valley Parkway is the most important piece of this intervention.



**ACCESS:** All elements emphasize a gradual, sloping descent into the valley. A switchback path from the Chester Hill Lookout curves and slopes to connect with the trestle bridge, connecting visitors to the upper Quarry Garden at the Brick Works. The connection allows visitors to bypass the Don Valley Parkway.



**HISTORY:** The abandoned trestle bridge's adaptation as a pedestrian link integrates the Don's significant industrial rail history into the park's modern design.



25





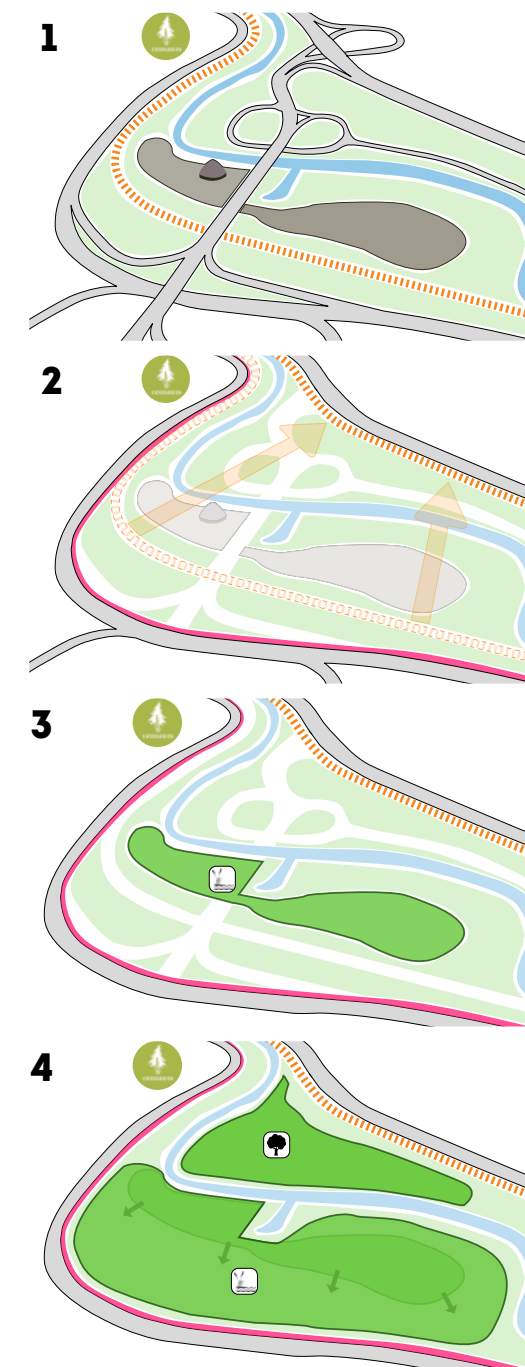
Image credit: Jordan Duke

### 3.2.3 SNOWDROP PARK

Sitting at the widest expanse of space in the Lower Don Valley, the Snowdrop Park intervention is a potential catalyst for all other projects along the riverfront. Currently the site is fragmented by infrastructural uses. An elevated off-ramp passing between the Don Valley Parkway and Bayview Avenue divides the site, while its attached cloverleaves consume much of the rest of the space. Public investment in Snowdrop Park will unlock a trove of land to be renaturalized and embraced as parkland. With the roadways and cloverleaves removed, and the rail realigned alongside the Don Valley Parkway, this intervention will reunify the vast tract of land featuring forested slopes, grassy meadows, and the meandering Don River.

Much of this land will be nurtured back to its past role as a wetland. With proper maintenance, the wetlands will act as a sponge, soaking up excess floodwaters of the temperamental Don River. Higher ground will be developed as recreational park space for visitors to stroll, picnic, barbecue, or spend time in the sun.

Open meadows might feature a pavilion for outdoor concerts, while forested trails will offer an escape from the city up above. Here will be created Toronto's premier park: a riverfront destination where families might launch canoes and kayaks in the summer, or come to skate on an icy pond in the winter, recalling a history of skating in the valley. Children might take ecotours through the marsh grasses, learning about the flora and fauna of their collective natural riverfront backyard.







Barrier-free Pathways



Ecological Restoration

**FIRST STEPS:** While the Don Valley Parkway off-ramp and cloverleafs remain in place, the establishment of walking trails through the forested areas of the site will showcase the beauty and potential for Snowdrop Park. Planters along the off-ramp and cloverleafs will hint at the site's impending reimagination for nature and recreation.



**ACCESS:** The removal of highway infrastructure opens up expansive space on both sides of the river for major parkland.



**HISTORY:** A pond at the park's southern end recalls historic Sandy Point Swimming Hole, and brings winter skating back into the Lower Don's landscape.



**ECOLOGY:** Plantings along the river and throughout the park soak in floodwaters, while smaller streams braided into the river divert high water levels away from recreational park space. The removal of highway infrastructure reconnects green spaces for plants and animals, and makes space for the introduction of new and returning species.



*Image credit: Dayne Roy-Caldwell*



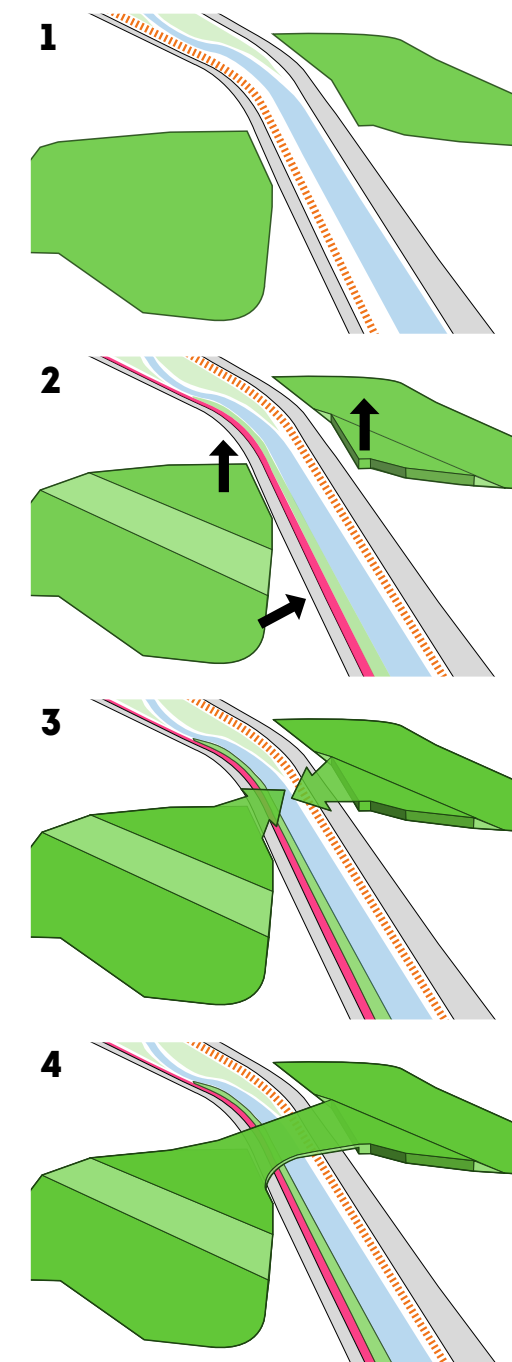


Image credit: Andy Gavel

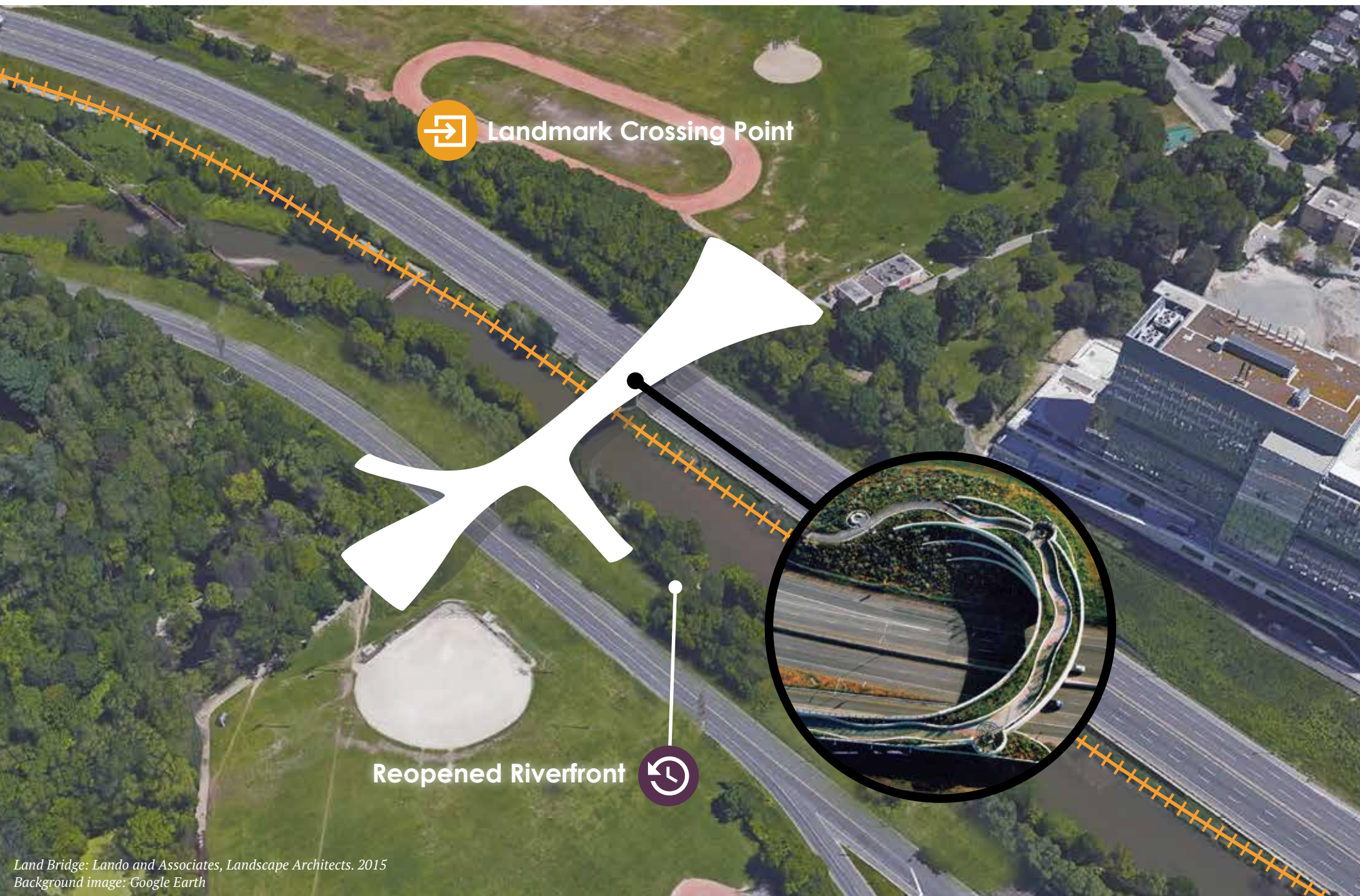
### 3.2.4 RIVERDALE PARK

Riverdale Park has played a valuable recreational role in the Lower Don Valley since its establishment in the 1880s. Today, Riverdale Parks East and West still fulfill this role, but are divided by rail lines, highways and the channelized Don River. The parks are cut off from each other, and from the river's edge that was once their central focal point.

In this intervention, the two parks become one, connected by a soaring planted land bridge. This rolling green space will provide universally accessible passage to the Lower Don Trail, with its sloping ramps replacing the existing stairs. The high points of the park's east side offer a breathtaking vantage point over the valley and to Toronto's dynamic skyline. Meanwhile, the park will reach out once again to the water's edge at the river's west side, as Bayview Avenue becomes a park drive, easily crossed to reach the green space that extends to the river. The rail line's relocation will remove the remaining barrier to this side of the river, and will unlock space for the activation and programming of this riverfront park.







**FIRST STEPS:** The conversion of Bayview Avenue to a pedestrian-friendly complete street can begin with the removal of its adjacent fences, connecting Riverdale Park West to what will eventually become a park drive and promenade. Prior to the rail realignment, an at-grade rail crossing can be installed to allow visitors to move freely from the park to the Lower Don Trail.



**ACCESS:** Riverdale Park West's green extension repurposes the former rail corridor and embraces Bayview Avenue as a park drive. The land bridge bypasses the Don Valley Parkway before branching out and sloping downward to join Riverdale Park West at the water's edge.



**PEOPLE:** The land bridge's slope provides an accessible path from Bridgepoint Health to the Lower Don Trail for visitors of all abilities. Meanwhile, the western park's extension creates new recreational space that will be programmed with help from the diverse neighbouring communities in St. James Town, Cabbagetown and Regent Park.



**HISTORY:** Riverdale Park West's extension to the water's edge recalls the historic Riverdale Park, divided then only by the meandering river that drew visitors to the park's centre. The curving land bridge symbolically reconnects the two staggered green spaces.



**ECOLOGY:** New plantings and green stormwater infrastructure along the former rail corridor soak in excess floodwaters and filter groundwater as it returns to the river. The extension of green space by the river's edge allows for the introduction of new and returning species, and the greening of the riverside corridor provides a continuous landscape for wildlife migration.



Image credit: Dayne Roy-Caldwell

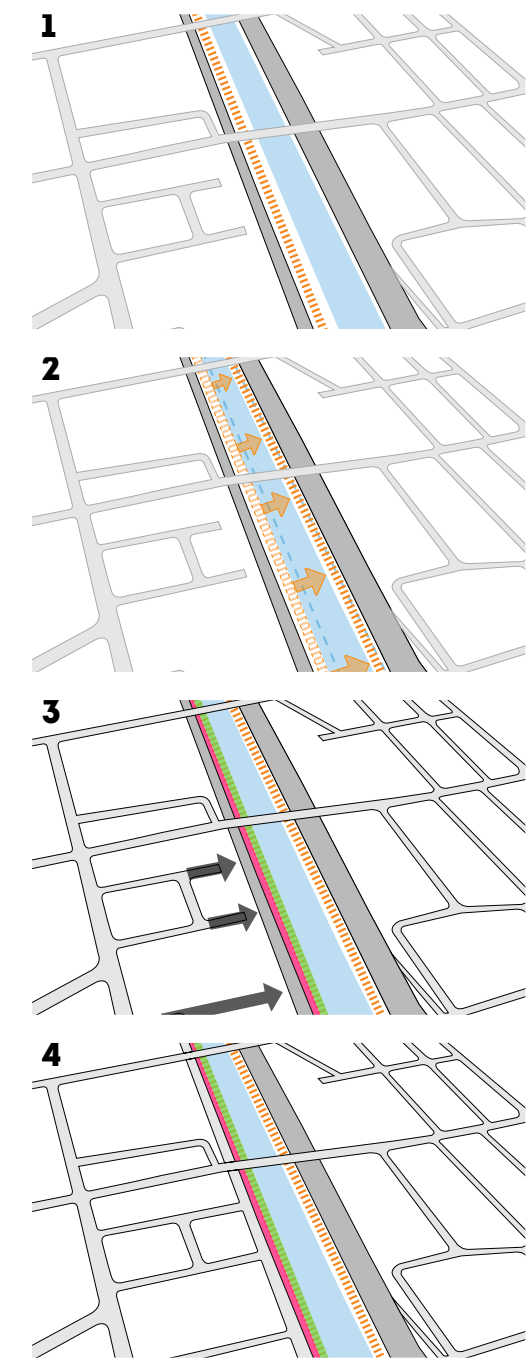




### 3.2.5 THE CANAL DISTRICT


Stretching from Queen to Gerrard Street along the west side of the Don River, the area often referred to as “The Narrows” is an assortment of industrial uses, auto dealerships, and infrastructure. The intervention at this site envisions an intensified urban landscape that turns to face the river. With the rail realignment at the river’s east side, a swath of land is opened up for public use. The western street grid will be extended from Regent Park and Corktown to meet Bayview Avenue, reconnecting these neighbourhoods to the river.

With these important steps in place, the ground work will be laid for the Canal District’s development. Once an unpleasant industrial hangover, this channelized section of the Don will rival riverfront walks in Chicago and Amsterdam. This is where the city will reach out to embrace the river; a canal-side promenade will draw visitors to the river’s edge, and ecological flood mitigation strategies will bring working spaces and retail to the riverside. Social enterprises and cultural groups will participate in programming these locations, maintaining appropriate and affordable draws to the Canal for residents of the adjacent neighbourhoods.










 Reconnecting Historic Streets


 Social Enterprise Space

**FIRST STEPS:** Local social enterprises can be engaged to set up temporary weekend markets along the east side of the Lower Don Trail, showcasing the potential for vibrant riverside activity along the Canal. Tree plantings and increased walkability along Bayview Avenue will increase the aesthetic value of this strip of land, encouraging development that takes the place of the auto dealerships.

 **ACCESS:** The Bayview Avenue promenade is intersected by streets extending eastward from Regent Park and Corktown, and crosswalks allow visitors to bypass Bayview Avenue to access the Lower Don Trail and the river's edge.

 **PEOPLE:** The Canal District's programming is led in part by social enterprises and cultural groups from the adjacent Regent Park. Their involvement ensures the Canal District's reflection of its diverse cultural communities, and maintains commercial activity that reflects the range of incomes in this neighbourhood. The linear riverside park provides much-needed access to green space for tower neighbourhood residents in Regent Park and the new Waterfront Communities.

 **HISTORY:** The reconnection of Oak, Cornwall, Mark and Labatt Streets to Bayview Avenue recalls historic neighbourhoods that extended eastward to the riverside roadway.

 **ECOLOGY:** New plantings and green stormwater infrastructure along the former rail corridor soak in excess floodwaters and filter groundwater as it returns to the river. The establishment of an urbanized green corridor between Bayview Avenue and the Don River builds into a continuous landscape for wildlife migration through the valley.





## 4. IGNITING THE PEOPLE'S PLAN

The People's Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon presents the future of Toronto's Don River Valley, a 500-acre riverfront park to serve the current neighbours and dynamic communities growing up around the Lower Don. Until now, Evergreen has driven the momentum around the valley's reimagination, drawing from its experience establishing the Brick Works as a world-class model for ecological regeneration, interactive programming and adaptive reuse. As the vision for the Riverfront Ribbon grows, Evergreen will maintain its leadership of this impressive campaign, but it will also need to embrace new partnerships and strategies to successfully see this project through to the Ribbon's activation.

**The implementation of the People's Plan and its proposed interventions will be achieved through the following actions:**

1. Establish a governance structure for the Riverfront Ribbon.
2. Conduct economic impact studies to provide justification for public investment in the Ribbon.
3. Develop partnerships with funding allies, key stewards and community ambassadors.
4. Mobilize broad public and political support for the Ribbon's activation.
5. Get started on first steps to activate the Riverfront Ribbon.





## 4.1 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Evergreen, the City of Toronto, and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) are the three stakeholders identified in the Ribbon campaign documentation, and their leadership is essential to implementation. Together, they can effectively oversee the Riverfront Ribbon's development, but their roles and responsibilities will need to be more clearly defined. The public-private partnership is a model that has been successfully used in the creation of numerous parks. A new special-purpose agency, one similar to the existing Waterfront Toronto, could be created to lead the development of the Riverfront Ribbon.

Such a governance structure would address many of the challenges that Evergreen currently faces in activating the Ribbon, for instance the instability of project funding, or the ethics of having private investment direct the use of public space. It will also coordinate the various pieces of public investment required. Increased public sector leadership will improve transparency, provide stability, and demonstrate a clear commitment to the public interest. The agency for the Riverfront Ribbon will be well positioned to lead the Ribbon's activation through the following four steps.

## 4.2 STUDYING THE ECONOMICS OF PUBLIC PARKS INVESTMENT

The full activation of the Riverfront Ribbon requires public-sector support and investment, and the justification for this support can be found in the calculation of the economic impacts of such investment. The Ribbon's activation will increase the value of the developable lands around this riverfront park, which in turn will yield greater property tax returns. There is further value to be found in the competitive edge Toronto will gain from the extension of its vibrant waterfront culture up the banks of the Don River.

The agency for the Riverfront Ribbon should invest in the following studies to encourage public-sector support for its activation:

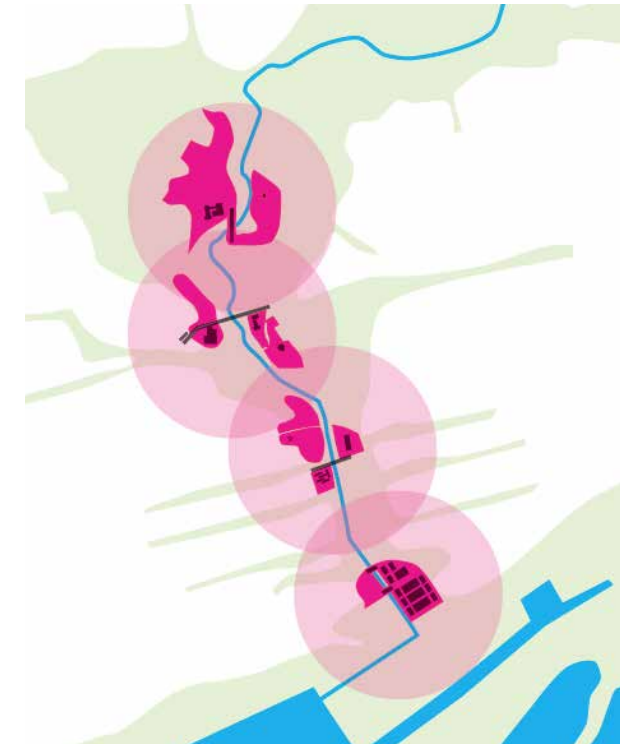
1. Investigate how the impending development around the Lower Don Valley can be leveraged to justify public investment in the Riverfront Ribbon.
2. Explore how natural flood mitigation features along the riverbank can address floodplain concerns and increase developable land overlooking the river.

## 4.3 PARTNERS IN THE RIVERFRONT RIBBON

The activation of the Riverfront Ribbon will not occur solely through the efforts of Evergreen, the City of Toronto and the TRCA. The responsibility and privilege to develop, program and care for the Ribbon must be shared with partners around the Lower Don and throughout the rest of the city. The People's Plan will take root largely through the actions of local stakeholders who subscribe to these grand visions for the Riverfront Ribbon.

The agency for the Riverfront Ribbon should reach out to partner with the following groups of people:

- **Funding Allies:** These will be partners that share similar ideals, visions and mandates for raising support. Funding allies such as organizations like Park People can broadly garner philanthropic support for interventions along the Riverfront Ribbon, using their established fundraising networks and credibility.
- **Stewards in the Lower Don Valley:** These partners will be found at existing destinations in the valley; they might be the Friends of Riverdale Farm, or the staff at Todmorden Mills. Their sense of local ownership positions them well to help care for the Riverfront Ribbon, in planting trees and gardens, protecting the river, maintaining nature trails, and facilitating programs.



Potential stewards with broad influence are strategically located throughout the length of the Lower Don Valley.  
Image credit: Evergreen Ribbon Charrette - Group 2



- **Community Ambassadors:** Ambassadors will be found within local community organizations in the neighbourhoods surrounding the Lower Don. They will become local champions of the Riverfront Ribbon, working with the stewards to mobilize support for the Ribbon’s activation. As the Riverfront Ribbon develops, the ambassadors will engage neighbourhood groups to participate and assert their collective ownership of this riverfront park. Groups such as the South Riverdale Community Health Centre might facilitate public art installations, plant community gardens, or initiate relevant programming for local residents.

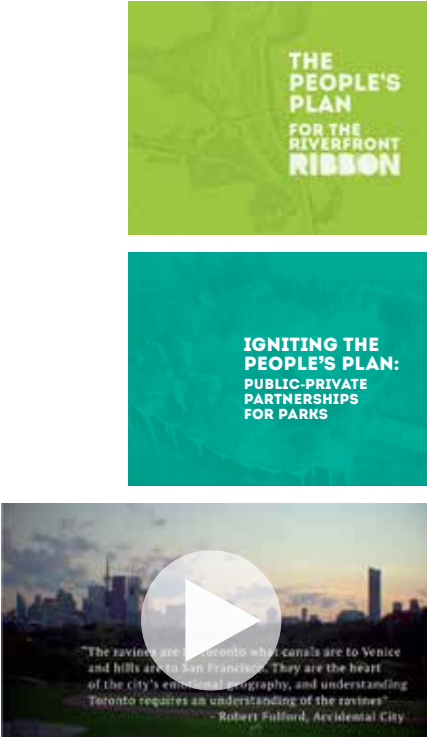
Appendix C of this People’s Plan features a comprehensive list of potential community partners in the activation of the Riverfront Ribbon. These groups and others can be approached as allies in the Riverfront Ribbon’s development.

### 4.4 MOBILIZING SUPPORT

The activation of the Riverfront Ribbon will involve a massive campaign to mobilize political and financial support for the major public investments and key interventions. This push will build upon Evergreen’s ongoing Ribbon at the Lower Don campaign to engage community members, inspire politicians, and encourage private collaboration to fund Toronto’s riverfront park at the heart of the city.

This inspiration and mobilization will emerge as stakeholders begin to see what’s possible for this space. The agency for the Riverfront Ribbon should use the preliminary master plans for this expansive park to engage stakeholders with a greater vision. This engagement can begin with this People’s Plan, as well as the associated film developed to highlight challenges of access in the Lower Don Valley. The bold solutions presented serve to identify manageable, site-specific actions that together will fulfill the greater vision for the Riverfront Ribbon.

The agency should also consult international models for public-private parks partnerships to develop a funding program that will best serve the Ribbon. An accompanying piece to this People’s Plan highlights 32 international parks partnerships that are relevant to the Riverfront Ribbon’s context.



### 4.5 GETTING STARTED

The activation of the Riverfront Ribbon can begin today. The key interventions in this People’s Plan are each accompanied by achievable first steps, actions that can showcase to visitors, community members, donors and politicians the full extent of the Ribbon’s possibility. These first steps can be staggered to build momentum for the Riverfront Ribbon, igniting and fuelling a passion for this shared green space along the banks of the Don River.

The Riverfront Ribbon will be a tapestry of history; woven of nature, culture, roads, and rails. This is the time to capitalize on the energy, passion and creativity that has been present in Evergreen’s initial campaign, in the renowned designers’ preliminary master plans, and now in a bold new People’s Plan for the Riverfront Ribbon. Toronto is ready to move beyond imagination, to act on its grand vision for the Lower Don Valley; the moment to ignite the Riverfront Ribbon has arrived.



Photo credit: Peter Power





## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A THEMES FRAMEWORK FOR RIVERFRONT RIBBON INTERVENTIONS**

**APPENDIX B ANALYTICAL MAPPING**

**APPENDIX C COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR POTENTIAL COLLABORATION**

**APPENDIX D LIST OF REFERENCES**



**APPENDIX A - THEMES FRAMEWORK FOR RIVERFRONT RIBBON INTERVENTIONS**

**CHESTER CONNECTION**

	ACCESS	PEOPLE	HISTORY	ECOLOGY
ADDRESSES SLOPE?	YES			
BRIDGES BARRIERS?	YES			
INCREASES EQUITY OF ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE?		NO		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE AGES AND ABILITIES?		NO		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE CULTURAL COMMUNITIES?		NO		
ACCESSIBLE TO A RANGE OF INCOME LEVELS?		NO		
RECALLS HISTORIC NATURAL LANDSCAPES?			NO	
RECALLS HISTORIC HUMAN USES?			YES	
MITIGATES FLOODING?				NO
FILTERS CSO WATER?				NO
RECONNECTS GREEN CORRIDORS?				NO
EMBRACES FLOODING?				NO
INTRODUCES SPECIES?				NO
EVALUATION	YES	NO	YES	NO

**SNOWDROP PARK**

	ACCESS	PEOPLE	HISTORY	ECOLOGY
ADDRESSES SLOPE?	NO			
BRIDGES BARRIERS?	YES			
INCREASES EQUITY OF ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE?		NO		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE AGES AND ABILITIES?		NO		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE CULTURAL COMMUNITIES?		NO		
ACCESSIBLE TO A RANGE OF INCOME LEVELS?		NO		
RECALLS HISTORIC NATURAL LANDSCAPES?			YES	
RECALLS HISTORIC HUMAN USES?			YES	
MITIGATES FLOODING?				YES
FILTERS CSO WATER?				YES
RECONNECTS GREEN CORRIDORS?				YES
EMBRACES FLOODING?				YES
INTRODUCES SPECIES?				YES
EVALUATION	YES	NO	YES	YES



RIVER XING

	ACCESS	PEOPLE	HISTORY	ECOLOGY
ADDRESSES SLOPE?	NO			
BRIDGES BARRIERS?	YES			
INCREASES EQUITY OF ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE?		NO		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE AGES AND ABILITIES?		NO		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE CULTURAL COMMUNITIES?		NO		
ACCESSIBLE TO A RANGE OF INCOME LEVELS?		NO		
RECALLS HISTORIC NATURAL LANDSCAPES?			NO	
RECALLS HISTORIC HUMAN USES?			NO	
MITIGATES FLOODING?				NO
FILTERS CSO WATER?				NO
RECONNECTS GREEN CORRIDORS?				YES
EMBRACES FLOODING?				NO
INTRODUCES SPECIES?				NO
EVALUATION	YES	NO	NO	YES

RIVERDALE PARK

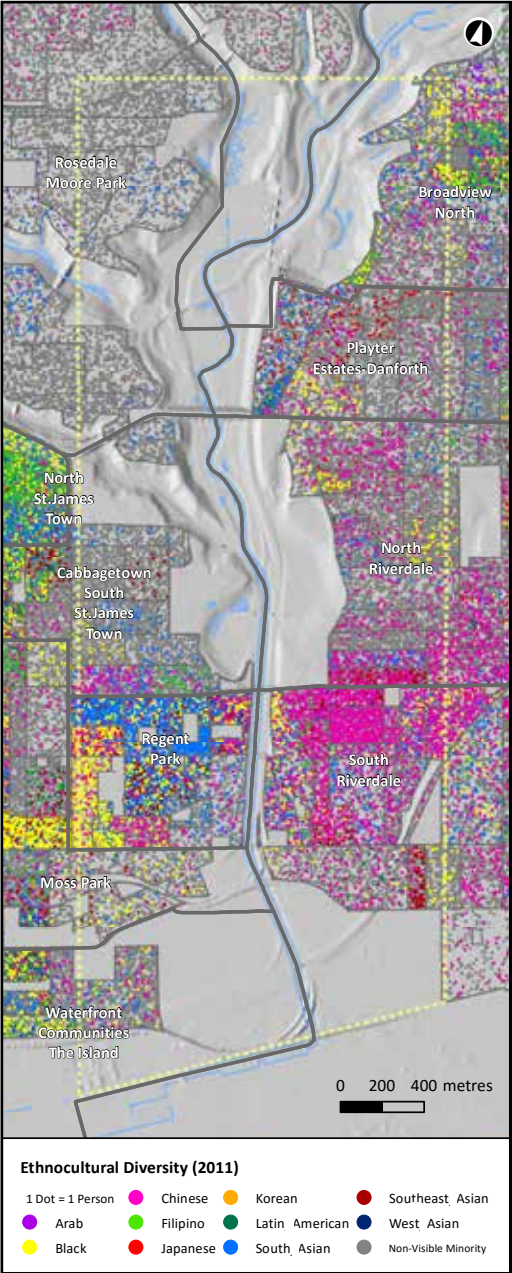
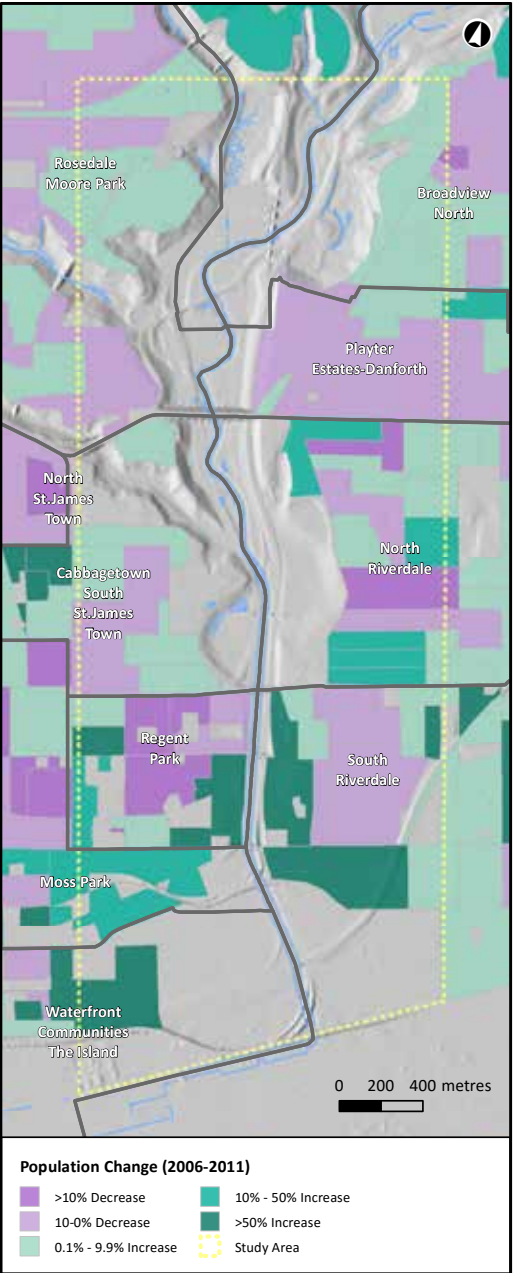
	ACCESS	PEOPLE	HISTORY	ECOLOGY
ADDRESSES SLOPE?	YES			
BRIDGES BARRIERS?	YES			
INCREASES EQUITY OF ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE?		NO		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE AGES AND ABILITIES?		YES		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE CULTURAL COMMUNITIES?		YES		
ACCESSIBLE TO A RANGE OF INCOME LEVELS?		NO		
RECALLS HISTORIC NATURAL LANDSCAPES?			YES	
RECALLS HISTORIC HUMAN USES?			NO	
MITIGATES FLOODING?				YES
FILTERS CSO WATER?				YES
RECONNECTS GREEN CORRIDORS?				YES
EMBRACES FLOODING?				YES
INTRODUCES SPECIES?				YES
EVALUATION	YES	YES	YES	YES



CANAL DISTRICT

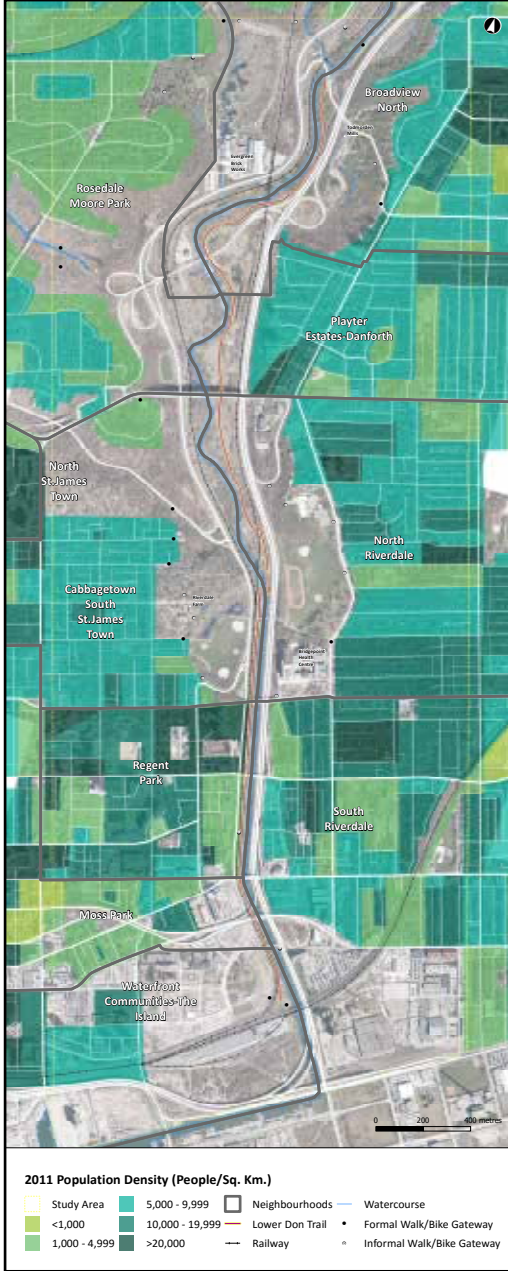
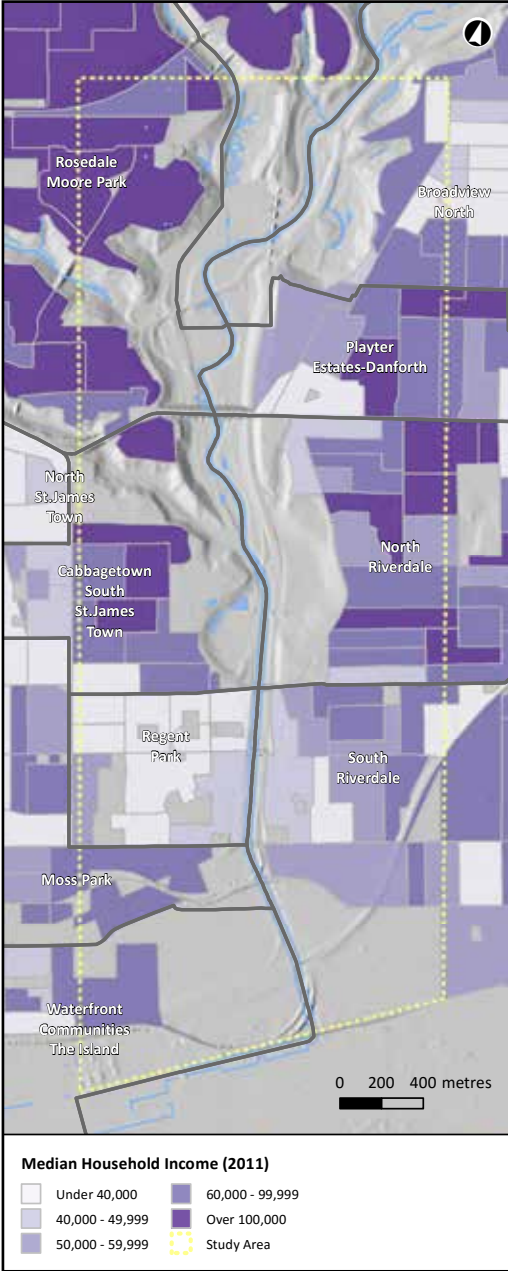
	ACCESS	PEOPLE	HISTORY	ECOLOGY
ADDRESSES SLOPE?	NO			
BRIDGES BARRIERS?	YES			
INCREASES EQUITY OF ACCESS TO GREEN SPACE?		YES		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE AGES AND ABILITIES?		YES		
RELEVANT TO DIVERSE CULTURAL COMMUNITIES?		YES		
ACCESSIBLE TO A RANGE OF INCOME LEVELS?		YES		
RECALLS HISTORIC NATURAL LANDSCAPES?			NO	
RECALLS HISTORIC HUMAN USES?			YES	
MITIGATES FLOODING?				YES
FILTERS CSO WATER?				YES
RECONNECTS GREEN CORRIDORS?				YES
EMBRACES FLOODING?				NO
INTRODUCES SPECIES?				NO
EVALUATION	YES	YES	YES	YES

APPENDIX B - ANALYTICAL MAPPING  
NEIGHBOURHOOD MAPS





NEIGHBOURHOOD MAPS



NEIGHBOURHOOD MAPS



Access to Green Space



Recent and Projected Population Change



ECOLOGY AND HISTORIC WATERCOURSE MAP



APPENDIX C  
COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR POTENTIAL COLLABORATION

The following list of community groups, associations and municipal volunteer programs offers potential resources for the supporting the Riverfront Ribbon by increasing access, connectivity, communication and a sense of ownership with the people. These groups have been identified for their current and potential roles to provide complementary services and identify ambassadors, stewards and funding allies. Initiatives that align with City’s and/or community group’s programs for health, recreational and leisure programming, environmental benefits, and public art installations should be pursued.

The various groups have been identified on the supporting map and can be classified or organized in a number of ways to create intimate support teams, keeping in mind that a groups may play several roles and functions such as:

- Who is local to each intervention and who is active in the area?
- What are their needs and requirements from a Riverfront park for their constituents?
- What supporting role they play as ambassadors, collaborators, and stewards at either a local level or across the Riverfront Ribbon park?
- What broader complementary mandates do they share that can be leveraged?
- How can they attract philanthropists to assist with fundraising activities?

As a next step the Riverfront Ribbon Team could conduct a study to identify potential leads and collaborators that would support the vision of the People’s Plan. Evergreen’s Volunteers<sup>1</sup> could provide initial training and mentorship of candidate stewards & ambassadors.

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATIONS (BIAs)  
BY LOCATION ... WEST OF THE DON RIVER (FROM NORTH TO SOUTH)

**Rosedale Main Street BIA**  
Created in 2000, Rosedale Main Street Business Improvement Area comprises Yonge Street from Woodlawn Avenue (north) to Crescent Road (south). A newly restored and renovated historic North Toronto Station is the centrepiece of the community. Festivals include the annual Cavalcade of Lights and the Rosedale Art Fair. [www.rosedalemainstreet.ca](http://www.rosedalemainstreet.ca)

**Mooredale House Community Centre & The Rosedale-Moore Park Association (RMPA)**  
The RMPA and Mooredale House is home to the city’s longest running neighbourhood fair, Mayfair (since 1946), a fully licensed preschool (since 1952), summer and March Break camps (since 1968), Mooredale Concerts (since 1986), and a host of other popular recreational programs and community events for participants of all ages. [www.mooredale.com](http://www.mooredale.com)



#### **St. James Town Community Corner (SJTCC)**

The St. James Town Community Corner was recently established in 2011 and services the densest population in Canada with offices, meeting spaces, program rooms and community kitchen dedicated to local initiatives and services to benefit the neighborhood. This collaboration between residents, public and private funders and service providers is a unique St. James Town community success story. [www.stjamestown.org](http://www.stjamestown.org)

#### **Silayan Filipino Community Centre (SCC)**

SCC is committed to providing culturally and linguistically appropriate information and referral services to new immigrants, youth, seniors and other members from the St. James Town, Cabbagetown, Regent Park and related communities from the Greater Toronto Area. <http://silayancommunitycentre.blogspot.com>

#### **Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services**

Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services is a multi-service agency located in the heart of east downtown Toronto, offers services for 85 years. It has supportive programs & services to a diverse range of community members living in downtown east Toronto, including Regent Park, Moss Park, Cabbagetown, St. James Town and surrounding neighbourhoods, as well as to homeless men and women and people searching for employment from across the city. A fundraising campaign has underway to build a new youth centre for young people in Regent Park. [www.dixonhall.org](http://www.dixonhall.org)

#### **Cabbagetown Youth Centre (CYC)**

The Cabbagetown Youth Centre (CYC) was founded in 1972 and provides a complete range of recreational, social and educational & skill development programs for ages ranging from newborns to seniors, while maintaining a specific focus on at-risk children and youth. CYC's mandate is to provide barrier-free access to a full range of programs otherwise not available to some of the most marginalized and high-need children, youth and families through the support and creation of sustainable programming to respond to gaps in services and combat risk factors. CYC has expanded and established three satellite sites in the heart of St. James Town, and also operates programs at Rose Avenue Public School and Winchester Public School. [www.cabbagetownyouth.ca/](http://www.cabbagetownyouth.ca/)

#### **Cabbagetown BIA**

Cabbagetown is known as “a small town in the heart of a big city” with the BIA was established in 1982. Annual events include the Forsythia Festival in May and the Festival of the Arts in September. [www.oldercabbagetown.com](http://www.oldercabbagetown.com)

#### **Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre (CCAC)**

The CCAC provides children from across the city with professional, one-on-one music lessons they would otherwise not be able to afford. In addition to the musical programs, the CCAC offers group art lessons, and a month-long summer camp held in July. [www.cabbagetownarts.org](http://www.cabbagetownarts.org)

#### **Riverdale Farm & the Riverdale Farm Stewardship Group (RFGS)**

This City of Toronto board established following the Save the Riverdale Farm campaign in 2013. The RFGS is responsible for maintaining a stable funding base for the farm and ensuring regular service provision through this funding. The RFGS is a heritage farm in the urban core, and is an educational hub and destination for tourists and residents from across the city. <http://www.stlawrencemarketbia.ca/index.php/toronto-news/1077-city-of-toronto-welcomes-new-citizen-members-to-riverdale-farm-stewardship-group>

#### **Regent Park Aquatic Centre (RPAC)**

RPAC is the newest development in the Toronto/East York District. This stand alone aquatic facility is located in the heart of Regent Park. This location is a community centre where programs are free. [www1.toronto.ca/parks/prd/facilities/complex/2012/](http://www1.toronto.ca/parks/prd/facilities/complex/2012/)

#### **Regent Park Community Health Centre (RPCHC)**

RPCHC was established in 1973. It is a non-profit, community-based organization dedicated to improving the health of Regent Park area residents and the community as a whole, by providing high quality, integrated primary health care services, health promotion services and community capacity building. Our priority is to reduce the health inequities experienced by low-income, immigrant & refugee, non-status and marginally-housed and homeless populations. [www.regentparkchc.org](http://www.regentparkchc.org)

#### **Regent Park South Community Centre South**

A new facility is under construction and expected to be completed in the winter of 2015. It will provide services and amenities for arts, fitness & wellness, community/social programs, and recreational facilities. [www1.toronto.ca/parks/prd/facilities/complex/180/index.htm](http://www1.toronto.ca/parks/prd/facilities/complex/180/index.htm)

#### **Corktown Common Residents and BIA (CRBA)**

The CRBA is a not-for-profit and non-commercial volunteer neighbourhood organization, which follows the latest developments in Corktown on a wide range of topics. It serves as a liaison between Corktown and many relevant organizations and is an inclusive organization open to all local residents and businesses. The CRBA is active in meeting its growing community needs for parks, recreation, leisure and live arts festivals. <http://corktown.ca/>



## **BY LOCATION ... EAST OF THE DON RIVER (FROM NORTH TO SOUTH)**

### **The Todmorden Mills Heritage Site & The Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve**

This is a charitable organization run by volunteers. They “conduct plantings, weed control, garbage cleanups and trail improvements. Members give guided walks throughout the year, and visitors are encouraged to contribute their wildlife sightings to [their] monitoring scheme”. <http://www.hopscotch.ca/tmwp/preserve/index.html>

### **WoodGreen Community Services**

WoodGreen is one of the largest social service agencies in Toronto. A founding United Way of Toronto member agency, WoodGreen has grown to span 36 locations and serves 37,000 people each year. WoodGreen helps people find safe, affordable housing, seniors live independently, internationally-trained professionals enter the job market, parents access childcare, children and youth access after-school programs, newcomers settle into Canadian life, homeless and marginalized people get off the streets and youth find meaningful employment and training. [www.woodgreen.org](http://www.woodgreen.org)

### **Bridgepoint Active Healthcare**

Bridgepoint is one of the most visible landmarks in the Don Valley. They offer services to over 5,500 patients from the Riverdale community and across the GTA, supporting them and their families living with complex health conditions. They have a commitment to get them back to their active lives, with a campus designed to creating public access. [www.bridgepointhealth.ca](http://www.bridgepointhealth.ca)

### **South Riverdale Community Health Centre**

Programs include community engagement and environmental health. People within our service boundaries who are experiencing difficulties accessing conventional medical, social and community services due to low literacy or income levels; housing, family or drug use problems; gender, race, culture or mental health issues. Priority clients include new immigrants and the Chinese community; young children, their parents and caregivers; women and seniors; people without health insurance; clients who are homeless and/or are coping with drug and mental health issues. SRCHC also operates Bike and Walk Ward 30, formerly known as the South East Toronto Bicycle User Group (SET BUG). A group of cyclists who advocate for bicycle lanes, traffic calming and good relationships among pedestrians, bicycles and cars. <http://www.srchc.ca/>

### **Riverside District BIA**

Dubbed the SOHO of Toronto by the New York Post, Riverside has made a commitment to art and design, which is evident by the mural depicting a flowing river and the life it supports, to the public art installations by Eldon Garnet, and its annual signature event, the Riverdale Art Walk, which takes place each spring and showcases the work of local artists. <http://www.riverside-to.com/>

### **Leslieville BIA**

The area has grown and even changed a little but is still host to many fantastic green spaces including many fun off-leash dog parks, some of the finest dining in the city and unique shops along the busy Queen Street strip. Leslieville is becoming known for energetic nightlife with the addition of a few interesting spots to visit. <http://leslievillebia.com/>

### **Project ‘21 (a Proposed Commercial & Residential Development)**

A proposed redevelopment of the former Unilever Site southeast of the Don River at 21 Don Roadway. First Gulf acquired the 28.5-acre property in 2012 with plans to repurpose the existing 225,000 square foot factory building for office uses and lease out the large warehouse as a first step of a large-scale redevelopment. The developer is actively engaging the community and set up a comprehensive Stakeholders Committee to understand the needs of residents, businesses and visitors to the area in order to create opportunities for the surrounding community as part of the redevelopment. <http://urbantoronto.ca/database/projects/21-don-roadway>

## **NOT-FOR-PROFIT GROUPS: EDUCATIONAL TOURS NOT COMMUNITY SPECIFIC**

### **Lost River Walks**

The Toronto Green Community started Lost River Walks to help us discover the fascinating world of the watershed beneath our feet. The objective of Lost River Walks is to encourage understanding of the city as a part of nature rather than apart from it, and to appreciate and cherish our heritage. [www.lostrivers.ca](http://www.lostrivers.ca)

### **Paddle the Don**

Once a year, Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) provides a unique opportunity for people to paddle the Don River. Paddle the Don is all about having fun, enjoying nature, and celebrating the Don River watershed, but also provides a time for reflection on all the benefits we derive from the natural environment - air, water, resources, recreation, and spiritual renewal - that are integral to the health and function of the city and the surrounding region. [www.paddledhedon.ca](http://www.paddledhedon.ca)

### **Parks People**

Park People was formed early in 2011 to represent a community based initiative for Toronto parks. Park People mobilize like-minded citizens who care about parks to address the challenges now and work cooperatively together to make our parks the best they can possibly be. Park People works in partnership with communities, park staff and private enterprise. [www.parkpeople.ca](http://www.parkpeople.ca)



**TorontoHiking**

A website resource that provides complete hiking and walking resources, from trail maps, photos, GPS logs, resting spots, points of interest, facilities/amenities, and video tutorials. The aim of torontohiking.com is the promotion of hiking and walking everywhere in the great outdoors and more specifically along the many trails which include Toronto. <http://www.torontohiking.com/tohi/the-don-river-valley.html>

**Toronto Foundation – The Pan Am Path**

Toronto Foundation is the Legacy Partner for the Pan Am Path ([www.panampath.org](http://www.panampath.org)), and is a city building initiative. Established in 1981, the Toronto Foundation is one of 191 Community Foundations in Canada. With more than 500 active Funds, including Endowments and assets under administration of more than \$400 million, the Toronto Foundation is one of Canada’s largest charitable foundations. <https://torontofoundation.ca/fund/pan-am-path-legacy-fund>

**CITY OF TORONTO - MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**Beautiful Streets Program**

Public Realm Section - Beautiful Streets programs actively bring together residents’ vision, community volunteers, contributions from organizations and businesses and City expertise to enhance and renew public spaces in Toronto’s neighbourhoods and streets. <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=cbf4a84c9f6e1410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

**Live Green: Toronto Grants and Volunteers**

Since 2008, the Live Green Toronto Community Grant program has provided partial funding support to community groups who develop and initiate Toronto-based projects that benefit the natural environment, reduce greenhouse gas and smog-causing emissions, and help neighbourhoods adapt to changes caused by climate change. <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=393847232bee7410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>  
Volunteers of Live Green Toronto share information about the City’s environmental programs and services with the public at events across Toronto each year. <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=822a99fa45dd5410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

**3Rs Ambassador Volunteer Program**

The primary goal of this program is to promote the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) and to help keep waste from going to landfill. By having a 3Rs Ambassador in your building you can expect to see many positive outcomes. <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=1850d187c3b02410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=822a99fa45dd5410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

**StreetARToronto (StART)**

A pro-active program that aims to develop, support, promote and increase awareness of street art and its indispensable role in adding beauty and character to neighbourhoods across Toronto, while counteracting graffiti vandalism and its harmful effect on communities. Includes a Partnership Program & funding for projects that are aligned with broader neighbourhood revitalization efforts and target areas of graffiti vandalism. <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=bebb4074781e1410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

---

1. Evergreen Volunteers are an established team of thousands of volunteers essential to helping deliver Evergreen’s program and mission. They will be instrumental in supporting the collaboration, training and mentorship of identified community groups, stewards and ambassadors. <http://www.evergreen.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>



# IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY GROUPS & BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATIONS (BIAs)

- Community Groups
- C1 (two locations)

Cabbagetown Youth Centre
- H1

Regent Park Community Health Centre
- H2

Bridgepoint Active Healthcare
- C2

Cabbagetown Community Arts Centre
- C3

Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services
- ★

Evergreen Brick Works
- ★

Regent Park Aquatic Centre
- C4

Regent Park South Community Ctr
- ★

Riverdale Farm
- C5

Silayan Filipino Community Centre
- C6

South Riverdale Community Health Centre
- C7

St James Town Community Corner
- ★

Todmorden Mills Heritage Site - City of Toronto Historic Sites
- C8

WoodGreen Community Services
- C9

Woodgreen Community Services

- BIAs
- 📍

Rosedale Main St. BIA
- 📍

Cabbagetown BIA
- 📍

BIA & Community Group
- 📍

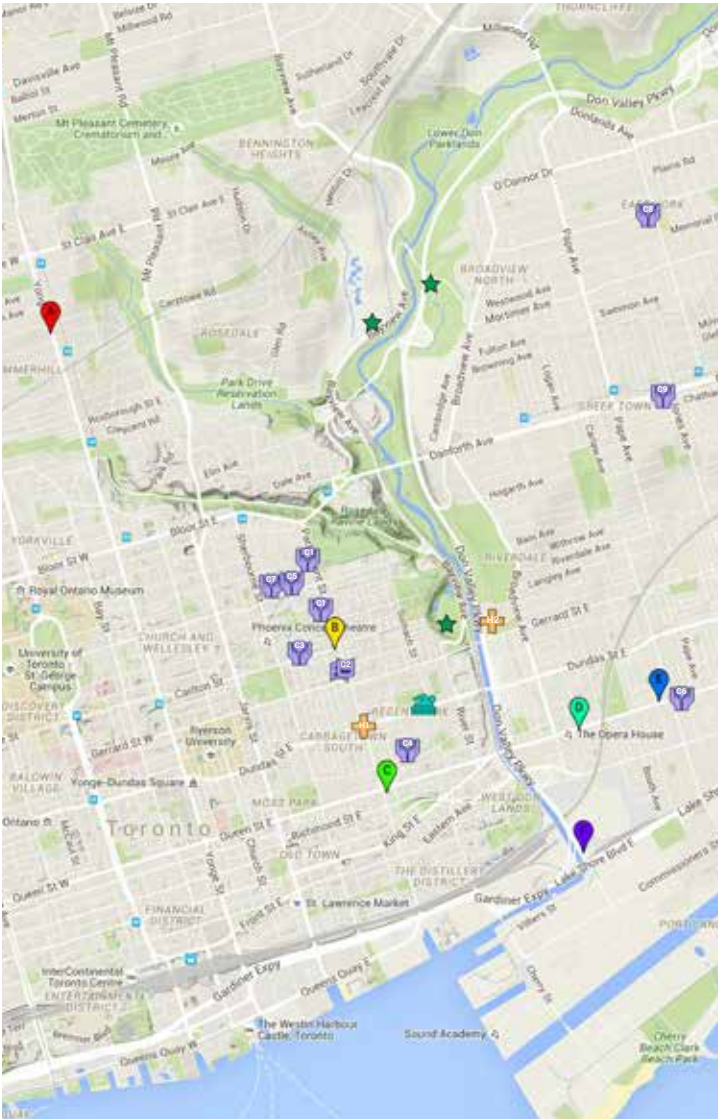
Corktown Residents and Business Association (CRBA)
- 📍

Riverside District BIA
- 📍

Leslieville BIA
- 📍

Future BIA & Community Group
- 📍

Project 21 - Unilever Redevelopment



Source: Google Maps. Not to Scale. For Reference Purposes Only

# APPENDIX D - LIST OF REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Lister, NM. (2015). Terms of Reference, PL 8109 Graduate Studio, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University

<sup>2</sup> Toronto Public Health. (2015). Green City: Why nature matters to health – An Evidence Review. Toronto, Ontario.

<sup>3</sup> Takano, T., Nakamura, K., & Watanabe, M. (2002). Urban residential environments and senior citizens’ longevity in megacity areas: The importance of walkable green spaces. Journal of epidemiology and community health, 56(12), 913-918.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, R., & Popham, F. (2008). Effect of exposure to natural environment on health inequalities: an observational population study. The Lancet, 372(9650), 1655–1660.

<sup>5</sup> Frumkin, H. (2001). Beyond toxicity: human health and the natural environment. American journal of preventive medicine, 20(3), 234-240.

<sup>6</sup> Tzoulas, K., Korpela, K., Venn, S., Yli-Pelkonen, V., Kaźmierczak, A., Niemela, J., & James, P. (2007). Promoting ecosystem and human health in urban areas using green infrastructure: a literature review. Landscape and urban planning, 81(3), 167-178.

<sup>7</sup> DTAH. (2005). West Don Lands Precinct Plan. Retrieved from: <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/y?vgnextoid=03994f058377f310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=90777c6a9967f310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>; City of Toronto Planning Division. (2014b). Port Lands Planning Framework: Land Use Direction. Toronto, ON: Canada.

City of Toronto (2015) City Planning: Toronto Ravine Strategy; Environmentally Significant Areas; Toronto Green Standard.

## Map Data Sources

### Census data:

Statistics Canada (2006). 2006 Canadian Census of Population. Using CHASS (distributor) <http://dc1.chass.utoronto.ca/census/>.

Statistics Canada (2011). 2011 Canadian Census of Population. Using CHASS (distributor) <http://dc1.chass.utoronto.ca/census/>.

### Neighbourhoods, Roads, and Parks shapefiles:

City of Toronto (2015) Toronto Open Data Catalogue. Retrieved from <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=1a66e03bb8d1e310VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

### Other:

City of Toronto (2013). City of Toronto Orthophotos. Retrieved from Ryerson University Library GMDC <https://library.cf.ryerson.ca/madar/geospatial/libdata/action2b.cfm?ResourceID=56260>

City of Toronto (2015). Don Watershed Development Pipeline, Q2 2015. Used with permission.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (2009). Digital Elevation Model (DEM) - Provincial Tiled Dataset Ontario. Retrieved from Scholars GeoPortal <http://geo2.scholarsportal.info/>

Statistics Canada (2011). 2011 Census - Boundary files. Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/geo/bound-limit/bound-limit-2011-eng.cfm>



# THE PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR THE RIVERFRONT RIBBON

*Background photo credit: Anthony Smith*