

MIMICO WATERFRONT LINEAR PARK

Community Newsletter

Spring 2011



▲ Design for the total project illustrating the system of existing and planned boardwalks, waterfront trail and habitat enhancements for the Mimico waterfront.

NEXT PHASE OF WATERFRONT PARK LAUNCHES THIS SUMMER

This July, Toronto and Region Conservation will start construction of the second phase of the Mimico Waterfront Linear Park Project. The construction area will stretch from Humber Bay Park West to Superior Avenue Parkette in Toronto's west end. A series of backwater areas with cantilevered boardwalks will be built, along with a new 500-metre long section of the waterfront trail. Aquatic and terrestrial habitat enhancements will also be part of the project. This work is funded by Waterfront Toronto as part of waterfront revitalization and is expected to be completed by fall 2012.

For the public's safety, access to the construction site will be restricted to authorized personnel only and will remain closed to visitors until construction is completed.

WHAT TO EXPECT WITH CONSTRUCTION

Construction will include:

- Lakefilling from Superior Avenue Parkette toward Humber Bay Park West to create a land base for the new section of the waterfront trail; and
- Shoreline protection work adjacent to Superior Avenue Parkette and along the shoreline to Grand Harbour.

The access road to the construction area will be located at the south end of Superior Avenue Parkette. A chain link perimeter fence and gated access will be installed along the west, north and east sides of the construction access road, and a temporary office trailer stationed in the construction staging area.



▲ A berm was constructed on the west side of Humber Bay Park East to create a sheltered backwater wetland at the mouth of Mimico Creek.

MIMICO CREEK ESTUARY: RECLAIMING ONE OF LAKE ONTARIO'S LOST HABITATS

In an effort to re-establish a unique and critical natural environment on the waterfront, TRCA developed the Mimico Creek Estuary Wetland Project. Located at the mouth of Mimico Creek, the project involved reclaiming historical wetland habitat and improving recreational opportunities.

Before European settlement, an estimated 500 hectares of coastal wetlands were distributed along what is now Toronto's shoreline. The mouth of Mimico Creek was one of these biologically significant areas with the adjacent forested land favoured by many bird species. However, as a result of 150 years of continuous development along the waterfront, 99 per cent of the coastal wetlands have disappeared. Lakefilling and upstream sedimentation have caused most rivers to lose their capacity to regenerate or maintain these ecosystems within a predominantly urban setting.

Until Humber Bay Park was created in the early 1980s, the local geology and coastal processes remained unfavourable to re-developing

an estuary. But when the Mimico Creek's channel was extended on both sides of the mouth to accommodate the construction of the waterfront park, bedload sediments began to accumulate, establishing a braided network of smaller channels off the main channel. Although the resulting estuary was formed by artificial conditions, it essentially follows the same natural forces associated with the development of other river mouth wetlands.

The Mimico Creek Estuary Wetland Creation Project capitalized on these conditions and aimed to restore ecological integrity by fully developing a coastal wetland. The project was developed as part of the fisheries compensation plan for the Mimico Waterfront Linear Park.

The constructed wetland has enhanced the health of the Mimico waterfront by providing fish and wildlife habitat as well as improved opportunities for public recreation. Biological communities are diversifying with higher species richness and abundance, including submerged aquatic vegetation, fish, wildlife and amphibians.

The next time you're walking along the Mimico Creek pedestrian bridge look toward the lake and you will see the new estuary developing into a unique and rare habitat.



▼ ▲ New wetland plantings and structures will support a diversity of terrestrial and aquatic species.



Mimico takes its name from the Mississauga First Nations term *Omimeca*, meaning “The resting place of the Wild Pigeons.”

UPDATED: INVENTORY OF PARK'S NATURAL HERITAGE

Two years on from the opening of Phase 1, TRCA has monitored the changing health of the waterfront park's natural system and found a good survival rate among recent plantings as well as the potential for further restoration.

Conducted in 2009, the latest terrestrial natural heritage inventory sought to assess the impacts of the new park amenity with respect to the vegetation communities and plant/animal species, and to estimate the success of plantings and installed habitat features. Similar surveys took place in 2001 and 2004 of both Phase 1 and 2 areas, and provided essential baseline information for comparing pre- and post-construction conditions.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2010 TERRESTRIAL NATURAL HERITAGE REPORT

- 1.6 hectares of natural cover exist after Phase 1 construction, compared with 0.7 hectares prior to construction;
- 104 flora species occur naturally in the park; and
- Aerial-feeding birds, like the barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), purple martin (*Progne subis*) and threatened chimney swift (*Chaetura pelagica*), take advantage of the area's foraging opportunities in the spring and fall.

NEW PUBLIC SQUARE OPENS VIEWS TO THE WATERFRONT

An expansion to Amos Waites Park has improved public access and enhanced views to the Mimico waterfront. Designed as a community hub for local arts and cultural events, Mimico Square extends from Lake Shore Boulevard West down to the completed Phase 1 section of the Mimico Waterfront Linear Park. Building the space required the demolition of three buildings, an environmental clean-up and extensive landscaping.

Mimico Square was officially opened at a community celebration in June 2010.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Mimico Waterfront Linear Park Project stretches from Humber Bay Park West to Norris Crescent Parkette in Toronto's west end. The goals of the project are to provide residents with safe access to and new views of this section of the Lake Ontario shoreline. Key elements include:

- Creation of a sheltered embayment;
- Installation of a sand dune feature and cobble beaches; and
- Restoration and enhancement of terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

Beginning in July 2006, the first phase of the waterfront park involved the construction of a series of headlands and cobble beaches, a sheltered embayment at Amos Waites Park and a new section of the multi-use waterfront trail. This new waterfront park amenity, which runs from Superior Avenue to Norris Crescent, opened to the public in July 2008. The park is readily accessible by public transit — the TTC operates both streetcar and bus service to and from the area.



▲ View of the Mimico Waterfront Linear Park area, May 2010.

To learn more about the Mimico Waterfront Linear Park Project, visit:
www.trca.on.ca/mimicowaterfrontlinearpark or www.waterfronttoronto.ca

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