

# EAST HARBOUR ECODISTRICT

TORONTO, CANADA • DECEMBER, 2017



CURRENT EAST HARBOUR SITE SOON TO BE TURNED INTO A VIBRANT ECODISTRICT

## SNAPSHOT

**PROJECT TYPE:** Industrial  
Brownfield Redevelopment

**SITE SIZE:** 60 acres

### ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

- 10 million square feet of new office space
- Over 50,000 new jobs
- 1.7 million square feet of retail, culture, recreation, and entertainment
- 5 major transit lines
- 8.5 acres of open space

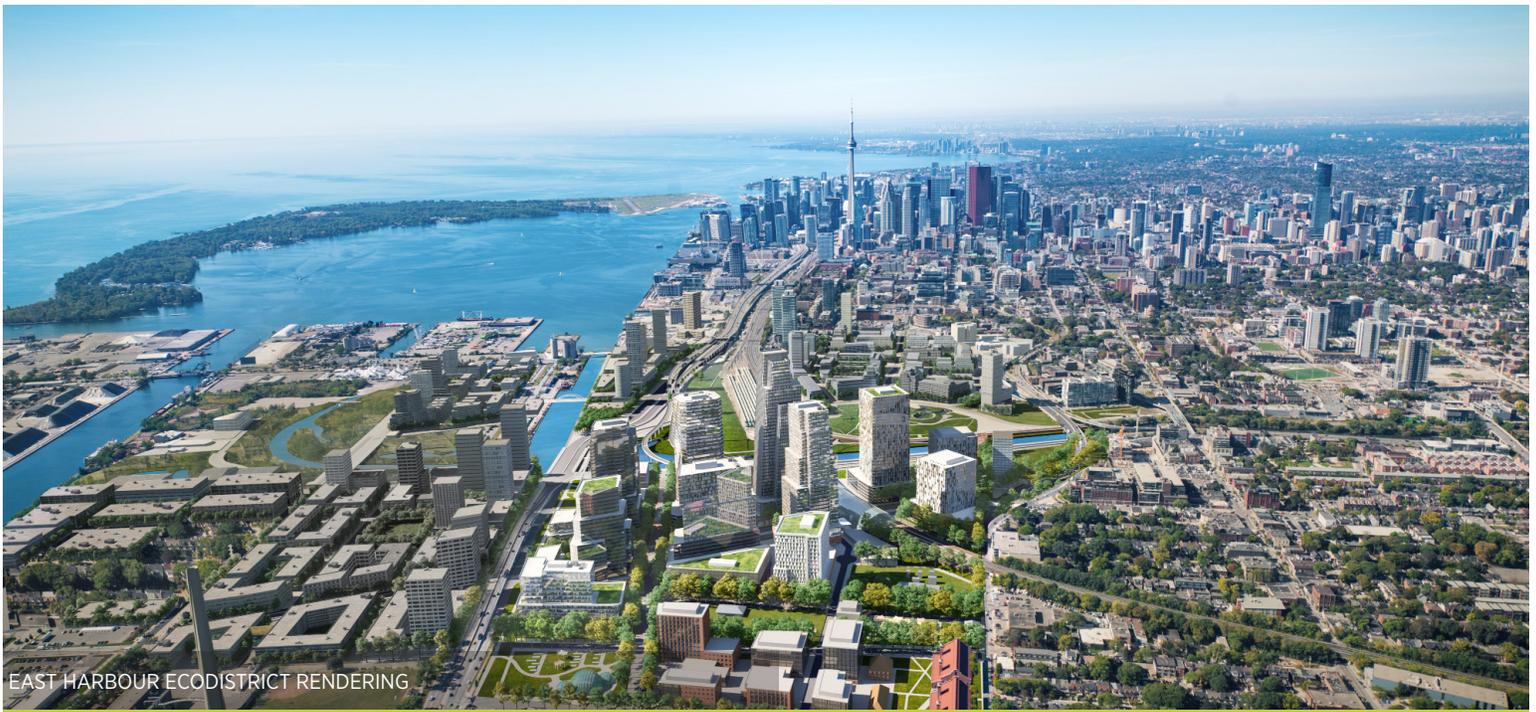
### KEY STAKEHOLDERS:

- First Gulf
- City of Toronto
- Toronto and Region Conservation
- Community (local residents, community groups, BIAs)

## NEIGHBORHOOD OVERVIEW

East Harbour is the most significant city-building opportunity in Toronto, Canada. As one of the largest office nodes in the country, East Harbour will support the continued growth of Toronto as Canada's economic engine. Currently an underutilized but well located site, East Harbour is envisioned to become an extraordinary urban destination that will simultaneously enhance its surrounding setting while reinforcing its global significance.

Former industrial lands will be transformed into a 13 million square foot vibrant, transit-oriented, and dynamic employment district that will accommodate new office uses, a high-quality public realm and open spaces, a pedestrian-oriented street network, and a large multi-modal transit hub. With the population of the greater Toronto area estimated to reach 9.4 million by 2041, Toronto needs a major new employment node in order to maintain a competitive advantage in the global competition for talent. East Harbour will be a development catalyst for critical infrastructure projects in and around the area, and will transform a previously inaccessible site into a world-class centre for art, commerce, and healthy living.



EAST HARBOUR ECODISTRICT RENDERING

There will be a wide range of animation uses to ensure an animated district that is active nights and weekends as well as during working hours, and to support the local office employees. These uses will include retail, food, culture, and entertainment, all fully integrated into the surrounding community. Innovations in technology will be applied to support long-term resilience, and set a new benchmark for the workplace of the future.

In 2015, the East Harbour project team hired sustainability consultants to look at district-scale sustainability initiatives. Given East Harbour's aspirations to become carbon neutral, build resiliency, and advance equity, the EcoDistricts Protocol was in natural alignment. Throughout 2015 and 2016, the East Harbour team led a total of eight stakeholder and community engagement workshops focusing on topics such as community assets, setting the vision, infrastructure, and the master plan.

The official municipal planning process was initiated in October 2015, when an Official Plan Amendment was submitted. In December 2016, development applications for Rezoning and Plan of Subdivision were filed for the lands owned by First Gulf. These applications were informed by numerous discussions with City of Toronto staff, stakeholders, and the public, including a year-long public engagement process with the community to determine how the design could meet their wants and needs. Since the original December 2016 submission, the master plan has undergone a design evolution, and these updated objectives and vision were submitted through a resubmission to the City of Toronto in September 2017. Rezoning on the lands owned by First Gulf is expected to be achieved in 2018.

## ABOUT THE ECODISTRICTS CERTIFIED PROGRAM

EcoDistricts Certified is the standard for community development that makes equity and sustainability fundamental to neighborhoods for all. By embracing the standard, neighborhoods commit to becoming the first certified EcoDistricts in the world. EcoDistricts Certified is the result of seven years of research, pilot projects and the best thinking from international experts. It provides a flexible, holistic, and rigorous "how to" framework for organizing and achieving important public policy, sustainability, and investment goals.

Learn more at:

<https://ecodistricts.org/ecodistricts-certified/>



## PROJECT GOVERNANCE

First Gulf, a market leader that offers development, construction, leasing, finance and property management expertise, is the backbone organization of the East Harbour EcoDistrict. First Gulf plans on operating and managing the EcoDistrict long-term.

First Gulf's responsibilities on this project are broad. As the owner and developer, they deal with anything and everything related to the development. This includes municipal approvals, master planning, leasing, financing, marketing, and community engagement.

First Gulf has the view that community engagement is of utmost importance to the development process. First Gulf wants to ensure the community is engaged and feels as though their needs are being met through this development. The importance they have placed on community engagement can be seen through their unprecedented community engagement effort. First Gulf undertook eight community meetings which they led, rather than being statutory or City led. Community meetings are usually part of the statutory process and are rarely initiated by the developer.



## IMPERATIVES

The Imperatives Commitment is the first step in achieving EcoDistricts certification. The Imperatives Commitment is a rigorous public pledge of action towards Equity, Resilience, and Climate Protection.

### 1. EQUITY

East Harbour is committed to advancing equity throughout the redevelopment project. After attending the 2017 EcoDistricts Summit, the East Harbour team began focusing on organizing key equity stakeholders to flush out the most important components of equity in their project.

### 2. RESILIENCE

The East Harbour redevelopment lands are currently located in a regulatory floodplain. Therefore, in order for redevelopment to occur at East Harbour, critical flood protection infrastructure must be implemented. This flood protection infrastructure is part of the larger Don Mouth Naturalization project which will provide critical flood protection to 240 ha of Toronto's eastern waterfront. This project is being led by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, on behalf of and in cooperation with Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto. The project has been fully approved and funded, and construction is underway.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



SOAP FACTORY PLAZA RENDERING



EDIT: EXPO FOR DESIGN, INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY AT THE SOAP FACTORY



PARTICIPANTS AT EDIT

### 3. CLIMATE PROTECTION

Achieving carbon neutrality has been an aspiration for First Gulf since the inception of the East Harbor project. With the City of Toronto’s aim to be carbon neutral by 2035, East Harbour has committed to align with the municipal government’s goals and become an EcoDistrict achieving carbon neutrality by project completion. It recognizes that there is great opportunity for creating more green space, managing stormwater on site, remediating the site’s soil, and protecting groundwater.



### EARLY WINS

From September 28 – October 8, 2017, First Gulf hosted EDIT: Expo for Design, Innovation & Technology on the East Harbour site. The 10-day expo focused on the UNDP’s Sustainable Development Goals with talks, workshops, and installations that challenged guests to consider how they, too, could make the planet a better place for all people. They built a platform for ideas that could feed the planet sustainably, build more resilient cities, expand education access, and deliver innovative healthcare solutions to all corners of the earth. Through this event, East Harbour was able to bring the community to the property for the first time, creating a sense of place, while introducing them to the themes of sustainability and resiliency which will shape the East Harbour EcoDistrict in the future.

### PROPOSED PROJECTS

The development of East Harbour will occur incrementally over time and capitalize on the enabling infrastructure investments as well as tenant demand. Development is planned to occur on a phased basis, starting with the lands closest to the transit hub where a critical mass can be developed. In addition, a district-wide, below-grade parking, loading and servicing level will be established to limit vehicular traffic at-grade and to allow the public realm to be pedestrian-centric. Once the initial phase is occupied in 2023, future phases of development will be based on market demand. Below are some of the aspects of the East Harbour development that will be implemented throughout the next decade.

## PLACE

### PLAZAS AND CONNECTIONS

Plazas, internal connections, and open spaces will be an integral part of the open space system, providing high-quality and intimate amenity spaces. Plazas are common spaces where people meet and linger, enjoy events, and socialize. Inviting and well-designed, the plaza spaces at East Harbour will enhance amenity and create a sense of place for employees, visitors, and the broader community. Completing the primary open space network, new plazas and mid-block connections are intended to create a secondary open space network that is specific to East Harbour. Within each development block are opportunities to provide a range of indoor or outdoor open spaces, walkways, mid-block connections, and courtyards.



### SOAP FACTORY PLAZA

A centerpiece of East Harbour will be the creation of a new plaza built around the revitalized Soap Factory building. The 2.5-acre plaza is envisioned as a focal point for the district and will be the largest privately owned, publicly accessible space within East Harbour. Given its size, the Soap Factory Plaza offers the potential to accommodate a wide variety of activities and programming, ranging from small, intimate seating areas to larger gathering spaces that can accommodate cultural events, outdoor markets, exhibits, pop-up retail, and concert performances. It will also create a north-south connection from the plaza and its surrounding buildings to the transit hub.

## PROSPERITY

### EMPLOYMENT HUB

The East Harbour EcoDistrict will be a globally significant employment hub that will accommodate downtown Toronto's growth needs, create an innovative working environment, and grow the national economy. As a commercial anchor for eastern downtown and waterfront, the EcoDistrict will attract tens of thousands of jobs and hundreds of new commercial tenants.

By expanding Toronto's core office cluster eastward, East Harbour will create a new critical employment node that can help accommodate the City's anticipated job growth. This new node will be complementary to, but distinct from, the City's downtown Financial District. East Harbour is envisioned as an employment district that will attract tenants of the new economy. This may include the technology, food, film, innovation-based, and creative industries that are seeking larger offices and high quality of amenities and public transit.





## HEALTH + WELLBEING

All of the new buildings in the East Harbour EcoDistrict will be WELL Certified, which advances health and wellbeing in building design. Public spaces throughout the EcoDistrict will have both active and passive recreation to help meet the needs of people of all ages and abilities.

Additionally, much of the new infrastructure will encourage people to be outside. It can be difficult to be outside during the winter months, however the East Harbour project team is developing strategies to provide weather protected spaces. By focusing on orienting structures this way, the project team aims to significantly extend the annual number of days people are outside.



## CONNECTIVITY

### MOBILITY HUB

A cluster of transit service is planned for the East Harbour EcoDistrict, which will ultimately distinguish the district as a place that is highly accessible and interconnected. With the planned transit investments, East Harbour will transform into a well-connected mobility hub, with a similar level of connectivity to Union Station.

At the heart of the development is the planned SmartTrack and Regional Express Rail station, which will provide frequent GO Train services and connect to the local and regional transit network. A Relief Line Subway stop will ultimately be integrated with the transit hub. A proposed streetcar along an extended Broadview Avenue will include a stop at the station, and expand higher-order transit through East Harbour and into the Port Lands. In addition, the planned extension of the Queens Quay Light Rail Train will create a complete streetcar loop through the Port Lands, providing service throughout the area.

These significant transit investments will support the creation of a vibrant and accessible mobility hub at East Harbour. They will provide strong connections to and from downtown and to other places across Toronto and the Region.

### EAST HARBOUR TRANSIT STATION

Designed from the ground up, the East Harbour Transit Station will serve as a key landmark and gateway into the district and the Port Lands with an appropriate and significant presence along Broadview Avenue.



Oriented along an existing rail corridor, the station will be the primary point of arrival for thousands of workers commuting to East Harbour each day. The station will have multiple public access points at grade, which will facilitate convenient access to all destinations within East Harbour and throughout the surrounding community. It will be designed as an integral part of the mixed-use development, including retail and other active uses at grade, providing amenities for transit users and animating adjacent open space with active uses. A planned pedestrian and cycling route will follow the southern edge of the rail corridor, serving as an important city link and a key component of the broader mobility network.

## PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS

Creating a high-quality, safe, accessible, and all seasons pedestrian network is a high priority for the East Harbour EcoDistrict. The proposed pedestrian network allows people to move around the EcoDistrict without the need for a car. In a city like Toronto, which is experiencing rapid growth and significant traffic congestion, encouraging non-vehicular modes of travel is an important objective for the project.

The pedestrian network will include generous sidewalks and high quality public realm, complemented by PATH type connections providing a weather protected option. The PATH connections will be designed and planned at the onset to ensure the pedestrian network is easy to navigate and is integrated with the retail and amenities. Given the direct connection to the East Harbour Mobility Hub, the PATH network will allow people to use transit to conveniently access places in a weather-protected environment within the downtown core that are already linked to the downtown PATH system.

## LIVING INFRASTRUCTURE

### GREEN SPACE NETWORK + WATERFRONT

The redevelopment of East Harbour will significantly enhance the local and regional green space system. New open spaces at East Harbour will expand on and connect to the surrounding park network which runs along the Don River valley and along the waterfront. East Harbour will advance the regeneration of the eastern waterfront by expanding its open space networks, reinforcing connectivity to the waterfront, and reconnecting the area back into the City fabric.

East Harbour will provide for a variety of parks and open spaces. Along the Don River, flood protection and naturalized open spaces will become an integrated part of the 495-acre Don River Valley Park system, linking with the Evergreen Brick Works, Riverdale Park, Riverdale Farm, Todmorden Mills, and Corktown Common.



OPEN SPACE RENDERING FOR ALL SEASONS



OFFICE INTERIOR RENDERING

The Don River Waterfront is envisioned as a softer edge, a place where a more naturalized landscape will be created. The initial landscape vision for this area includes primary shrubs, grasses, and ground vegetation along the wet side of the flood protection berm, as well as a more generous tree planting, and possible walkways or cycling paths along the dry side of the flood protection landform.

New public parks and greenways at East Harbour will also enhance the local park network and benefit the local community. Planned open spaces will establish a continuous green connection from Jimmie Simpson Park south to McCleary Park and down into the Port Lands, ultimately linking to the Hearn and Cherry Beach.

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## RESOURCE REGENERATION

### MITIGATING AND RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The East Harbour EcoDistrict recognizes that climate change must be addressed through a combination of technology, built form, and infrastructure. The East Harbour Master Plan proposes strategies that will reduce the impact on the environment and be responsive to a changing context.

Pursuing EcoDistricts Certification will enable East Harbour to plan, implement, and achieve its sustainability objectives. Through the certification process, the project team will document sustainability initiatives, and identify and set key performance targets. To reach the overarching goal of carbon neutral development, East Harbour will investigate options for district energy.



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## LESSONS LEARNED + CONTINUED CHALLENGES

1. Engaging with the community and stakeholders in the early beginnings of the redevelopment master plan has helped the East Harbour project team ensure that their input made it in directly to the planning process.
2. East Harbour is at the center of the conversation for helping Toronto reach carbon neutrality. Their biggest challenge right now is, how to make this a reality?



PARTICIPANT AT EDIT



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



## NEXT STEPS

1. Beginning the redevelopment of the Soap Factory will help build momentum for East Harbour. (2019 – 2022)
2. Bringing in a partner to help figure out the objectives for a community energy plan. (2018 – 2020)
3. By 2023, East Harbour aims to have achieved initial occupancy of the first complete phase of development, as well as a fully-functional multi-modal transit hub and flood protection.

**“EcoDistricts seamlessly aligns with First Gulf’s vision for East Harbour, a cutting edge sustainable development. First Gulf plans on pushing the envelope when it comes to sustainability, in order to achieve our aspirations of creating a world-class hub for art, commerce, transit, and healthy living within a carbon neutral framework.”**

– DANA ROEBUCK, FIRST GULF

## ABOUT ECODISTRICTS

EcoDistricts is nonprofit that advances a new standard for community development. Through its programs and certification standard, EcoDistricts helps create equitable, sustainable, and resilient **neighborhoods for all**.