

New Proposals Envision Cherry Street as High-Rise Corridor

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The Keating Channel and surroundings, image via Google Maps



The 3C Waterfront site, image via submission to the City of Toronto



Concept Master Plan for 3C Waterfront, image via submission to the City of Toronto

On either side of the Keating Channel, Toronto's Cherry Street could be remade as the spine of a dense, mixed-use new community. Just north of the Channel, a renewed development application was recently submitted for the 13.5-acre 3C Waterfront site at Lake Shore and Cherry, with ongoing plans for the smaller 309 Cherry site in the Port Lands also advancing—now with greater intensification—a block to the south.

Both proposals build on relatively long-standing plans to redevelop the sites flanking the mouth of the Don River. Immediately north of the Port Lands, the 3C Waterfront community has been in the works since at least 2013, when a concept plan for a 2.4 million ft² mixed-use community was unveiled. Located east of the East Bayfront's construction cranes, the 3C site is located between the Port Lands and the Distillery District, bounded by Lake Shore Boulevard and the Gardiner to the north, and the Keating Channel to the south.

In the closing days of 2016, a new Draft Plan for the subdivision was submitted to the City of Toronto, adding detail to an ongoing submission. Developed by 3C Lake Shore Inc.—a joint venture of Castlepoint Numa, Continental Ventures Realty, and Cityzen Development Group—the community would feature a mix of residential, retail and office uses, along with new public space, all served by a tighter urban street grid.

Untangling the complex meeting of roadways beneath the Gardiner Expressway, Cherry Street is set to be re-aligned, allowing it to serve as a more effective streetcar corridor. Queens Quay East will also be extended through the centre of the site, while a new segment of Trinity Street will be extended south to mark the site's western terminus, introducing a more compact road network. At the same time, the water's edge at the north end of the Keating Channel would be animated by new park space and the so-called 'Promenade Road.' An eventual extension of the future East Bayfront LRT would run along Queens Quay, with future streetcar service along Cherry Street potentially serving an urbanized Port Lands.

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Public Realm Plan for 3C Waterfront, image via submission to the City of Toronto

While development of the community remains at a relatively early stage, the concept master plan depicts three high-rise towers, flanked by a collection of mid-rise buildings. Although a detailed plan outlining the site’s programming—including the exact mix of uses, residential unit count, and building heights—has yet to be revealed, the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan sets out a maximum height of 150 metres for the site, with the tallest buildings clustered along Cherry Street.

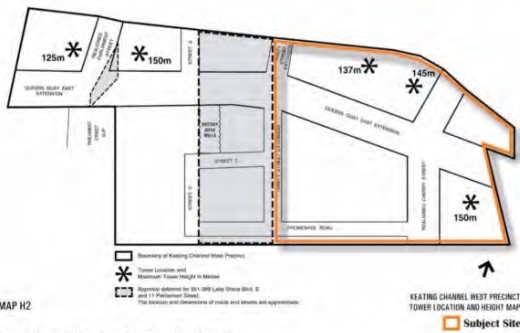


Figure 5: Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, Map H2

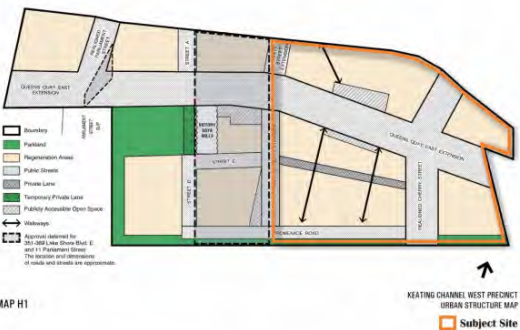
At ground level, the updated plan also gives us some idea of what to expect in terms of public space and street-level programming. Appointed by Montreal’s Claude Cormier + Associés, a public plaza is planned on the north side of Queens Quay, while a series of mid-block pedestrian laneways offer north-south permeability through the site. (As an added touch, the new Cherry Street will be lined with Cherry trees). Led by Foster + Partners, the project’s design team also includes architects Alliance and KPMB, with detailed architectural plans still in the making.

Maximum building heights as indicated in the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, image via submission to the City



A preliminary (circa 2014) vision for the 3C Waterfront site, image via 3C Lake Shore Inc.

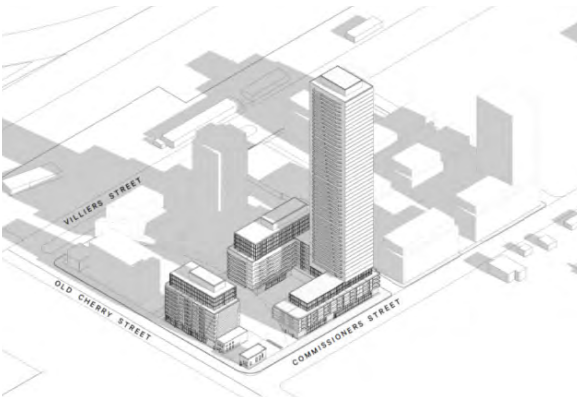
Immediately west of the 3C site, plans are taking shape for the neighbouring Victory Soya Mills Silo site. Formerly owned by 3C development partner Castlepoint Numa, the 5.3-acre property at 351-369 Lake Shore is now being developed by Great Gulf and Dream (formerly known as Dundee Realty). A redevelopment plan for that proposal for the property has not yet been tabled, but the developers have already indicated that the silo itself will be retained as part of a mixed-use development. Further west, the 333 Lake Shore site that fronts the Parliament Street Slip is owned by Waterfront Toronto. Much of that property (below, left) will apparently be redeveloped as a public park, extending a continuous green space from the Keating Channel promenade.



Site context, showing Victory SMS site (shaded), and 333 Lake Shore, image via submission to the City of Toronto

South of the Keating Channel, meanwhile, the site at 309 Cherry was also recently subject to a renewed development application by Castlepoint Numa. Calling for a 52-storey tower and an 11-storey building at the south end of the site, fronting Commissioners Street, the 1,013-unit residential project would introduce a dramatic height peak to the future Port Lands neighbourhood dubbed ‘Villiers Island.’

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Massing context for new 309 Cherry Street application, image via submission to the City of Toronto



A vision for the area set out in the Villiers Island Precinct Plan, image via WatA vision for the area set out in the Villiers Island Precinct Plan, image via Waterfront Toronto



An early rendering of the 52-storey tower, image via submission to the City of Toronto

The existing low-rise commercial buildings at the southwest end of the site would be maintained, with a POPS planned mid-block. A new private east-west road would bisect the currently industrial block, the north half of which—likewise owned by Castlepoint Numa—is also slated for redevelopment.

Although the redevelopment builds on residential plans for the site that date back to at least 2008, a number of significant planning obstacles remain before large-scale residential development occurs in the Port Lands proper, south of the Keating Channel. Notwithstanding the proposed 52-storey height—which strongly exceeds the general parameters set out in the Villiers Island Precinct Plan (below)—development on this site is contingent on flood protection at the mouth of the Don River.

Predicated on the \$1 billion Port Lands Flood Protection (PLFP) initiative at the mouth of the Don and along the Keating Channel, a redevelopment of the site—and the surrounding lands—remains some way off. As such, the rather ambitiously scaled Svn Architects + Planners-designed concept may have been proposed predominantly for rezoning purposes, with a finalized plan for the site likely to look quite different.

In the Port Lands, the Essroq Quay Lake Filling and Naturalization project—which forms part of the larger PLFP initiative—will create new wetlands and green spaces, while opening the existing lands to redevelopment, and allowing for the re-alignment of Cherry Street. In total, the PLFP will see some 715 acres of land protected, paving the way for the urbanization of the Port Lands. Redevelopment of Villiers Island will also require large-scale soil remediation, as the area has long been dominated by industrial and quasi-industrial uses.

We will keep you updated as more information becomes available, and the future of Toronto's Port Lands and Lower Don Lands continues to take shape. In the meantime, you can learn more via our dataBase files, linked below. Want to share your thoughts? Leave a comment on this page, or add your voice to any of the ongoing conversations in our associated Forum threads.