

Ravines x Wedges

Workshop on Metropolitan Landscape for Talent and Welfare

Toronto, April 26th, 2017

Colophon

PARTICIPANTS OF THE WORKSHOP ROUNDTABLE

- . **Chloé Eynard** - business developer at MVRDV architects, Rotterdam
- . **Paul Gerretsen** - executive director at the Deltametropolis Association, Rotterdam
- . **Ellen Greenwood** - green development consultant in Toronto and The Netherlands
- . **Seana Irvine** - chief strategist at the green-city NGO Evergreen
- . **Anne van Leeuwen** - consul general of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- . **Teresa Jingtian Liu** - graduation student of environmental planning at Ryerson University
- . **Liat Margolis** - associate professor of landscape architecture at University of Toronto
- . **Grant Mason** - graduation student of environmental planning at Ryerson University
- . **Merten Nefs** - program manager Metropolitan Landscape at Deltametropolis Association
- . **Ya'el Santopinto** - architect at ERA architects, Toronto
- . **Michelle Sawka** - researcher ecology at Green Infrastructure Ontario (TRCA)
- . **Scott Torrance** - entertainment landscape architect at Forrec
- . **Nathalie de Vries** - partner at MVRDV architects, Rotterdam
- . **Jane Weninger** - landscape architect at City of Toronto
- . **Carolyn Woodland** - senior director of planning, CEO team of the TRCA

Read more:

| [Workshop Toronto](#) |

| [Workshop and Toronto photo album](#) | (Flickr)

| [Blind Spot – metropolitan landscape in the global battle for talent](#) |

| [ULI Electric Cities symposium](#) |

| [Landschap als Vestigingsvoorwaarde](#) | (Dutch)

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**creative
industries
fund NL**



RAVINES X WEDGES

Workshop Metropolitan Landscape

Toronto, April 26th, 2017

Organized in the context of:



Blind Spot

metropolitan landscape in the global battle for talent

Workshop on Metropolitan Landscape for talent and welfare

On April 26th Canadian and Dutch professionals explored the role of green infrastructure in today's urban development: how can it help to attract talent and enhance the health and quality of life of all city dwellers? What can we learn from each other's landscape strategies and ways to finance green infrastructure? The Deltametropolis Association organized the workshop with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, University and City of Toronto and Evergreen. The Dutch consulate general of the Kingdom of the Netherlands facilitated this workshop day and travel expenses were covered by the Creative Industries Fund. We organized the workshop as an afterburner of the ULI Electric Cities symposium.

*'Quality of life is a central part
of making a sustainable and
competitive city.'*

Jennifer Keesmaat, chief planner of the city of Toronto

DO WE GET
THE MOST
OUT OF IT?



Photo by Amsterdam Defense Line

The end of the Canadian dream

– or Richard Florida’s mea culpa

Which highly skilled worker wouldn't like to live in Toronto? The city is high up in many rankings for quality of life, environment and livability. The courteousness and diversity of Canada's largest city are not just a myth (in fact, Torontonians openly lament the demise of the once tolerant Netherlands). There is a striking number of women occupying high-level positions and – at least in spring and summer – the streets and parks breathe the energy of a young city whose golden age is yet to come. Still, not all is well in paradise.

At the ULI symposium, the famous Toronto-based geographer Richard Florida presented his new book on the New Urban Crisis. In the past decades, he has advocated the Rise of the Creative Class and in most large cities in the world this has boosted the revival of the inner cities. In the process, however, the middle-class has begun to disappear and urban centers are becoming too expensive for the schoolteachers and bakers who work there. Former 'social escalator neighborhoods', where new Canadians could arrive and start a career, are rapidly gentrifying. In short, the Canadian dream seems to have ended. 'No wonder', Florida said, 'that against all odds, people elect Rob Ford (former populist mayor of Toronto) and Trump'.

Photos by Merten Nefs, unless mentioned otherwise



Brainbelt beyond the greenbelt

We need to make the success and quality of the city available to all; otherwise, that same city will eventually come to a standstill. In a market-dominated environment such as Toronto (and increasingly Dutch cities), this is mostly a matter of creating access to jobs and amenities, by excellent bike and transit links, and delivering quality of life to the whole population by developing and protecting the metropolitan landscape. Toronto chief planner Jennifer Keesmaat put it like this: *'Quality of life is a central part of making a sustainable and competitive city. When we take the big step of creating the Raildeck Park in downtown Toronto, how do we make it part of the daily experience of all Torontonians, instead of a playground for the rich?'* Jamie Springer (New York) has 'seen it happen with the famous High Line, where two thirds of the users are now tourists and more needs to be done for the average New Yorker'.

Meanwhile at 70km from central Toronto, the satellite towns of Waterloo and Kitchener form a self-declared 'brainbelt' (famous for the Blackberry Company). Former Mayor Brenda Halloran: 'After Blackberry crashed, we reinvented our city and heritage.' An old tannery became a start-up innovation hub (by Communitech) and there are plans for a digital campus and open data exchange. 'But what will really attract people to the Brainbelt, is the fact that everything is accessible by bike in half an hour, including nature areas, recreational facilities and affordable housing.'



Ravines x Wedges

Toronto and the Dutch Deltametropolis both have the ambition to combine economic success and urban growth with an excellent metropolitan landscape, which is able to attract talent and provide quality of life to all social groups. In Toronto, the ravine system is the main green urban infrastructure that could realize this great ambition. In the dispersed metropolis of The Netherlands, several green-blue wedges are a key factor.

Planning Professor Maarten Hajer kicked off the workshop day at the Earth Rangers ecological reserve, by asking an uncomfortable question: 'Is the smart city – of self-driving cars and energy producing infrastructure - just a futile attempt to revive the modern city concept of the 1920's? Or are we able to come up with a new concept of a livable public space?' In our workshop on 'metropolitan landscape for talent and welfare', 15 Canadian and Dutch experts explored what such a new city could look like in the case of Toronto and the Dutch Deltametropolis, and how to get things done in the short term.

Featured project – The Brickworks

In its scope and complexity the Brickworks is an impressive metropolitan landscape case. The brick factory and quarry were abandoned in the 1980's. Being located in the Don River valley near downtown Toronto, it was an opportunity to create a green infrastructure for both nature and water management, as well as urban use, such as events, education, farmer's market and park. Many people at the workshop roundtable were somehow involved in its development, since the Brickworks are part of the Conservation Plan, the Ravine Strategy and a test site for the NGO Evergreen and several architecture and planning offices as well as universities.

Visit the | [Evergreen Brickworks](#) | website.





Main topics

1. Metropolitan landscape strategy and governance

The Dutch Deltametropolis (DM) and the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) are both complex metropolises to govern, with several municipalities and other government levels. The Netherlands already made the step to decentralize power to metropolitan authorities, for example the Metropolitan Area of Amsterdam, while Ontario still pulls the strings on many topics. For large landscape strategies though, centralization has advantages for Toronto. After Hurricane Hazel (1954) the recently formed TRCA gained a strong mandate over all water and floodplains in Toronto. Unlike the strict silos in Dutch landscape policy, the TRCA takes care of nature protection, water management, drinking water, recreational infrastructure and land restoration projects. Besides being the biggest landowner in the region, it forms an umbrella for several other organizations and integrates landscape advocacy, legislation (the stick!) and resource management. Eighteen municipalities voluntarily participate and fund the TRCA. While its public works rapidly expand, including floodplain protection, trees in new urban developments and creating a regional network of trails, the organization is in need of more funding and awareness among the public. To improve the main landscape structure of Toronto – the ravines – the City of Toronto, TRCA and other parties work together on the Ravine Strategy.

2. Financing large landscape projects

We discussed three ways of financing landscapes in the Netherlands: crowd funded land trusts such as Natuurmonumenten, provincial landscape development programs such as Next Landscape Brabant, and using large transitions (clean energy, climate adaptation etc) to create new attractive landscapes (Hart van Holland). Because of the recent decentralization of landscape policy, the Netherlands suddenly feels the need to involve the private sector in the funding of projects. But how? Evergreen, an NGO for green cities founded in

1990, has involved private companies and stakeholders in the Brickworks, raising an initial CAN\$50 million to transform the open mine pit into a showcase for environmental development. The organization is entrepreneurial and does not depend on grants.

Evergreen has a long-term lease of the complex, owned by TRCA. Half of the yearly budget of the Brickworks (CAN\$14 million in total) is covered by revenues from events (there are many weddings) and consultancy fees, the other half comes from fundraising. The farmers market does not provide much revenue, but attracts a broad public, which then spends money on food and helps to advertise the place. Seana Irvine's advice: be savvy and opportunistic, show results (680.000 pounds of food, 70.000 entertained children), spend effort to make things simple, have a good neighbor policy, involve private donors in the plan from the beginning (for added value, not the heavy infrastructure), be part of design workshops/competitions and system level projects (We are City, Move the GTHA). Carolyn Woodland mentions the difficulty of spending government money on 'soft projects'. Ellen Greenwood tells about the Parks and Trees Foundation, which locally crowdfunds park projects in partnership with the city, and recently even on private land.

3. Organizing access and programming of green infrastructure

We discussed a few Dutch pilot projects that deal with the accessibility of the metropolitan landscape, such as the Landscape Gateway – a transit station with a different identity and recreational facilities (bike rental, coffee with a view). The challenge there is to get the branding right and integrate the station design with the surrounding landscape. There is an ambition to make the cycling infrastructure in the Metropolitan Region Rotterdam The Hague both fast (e-bike) and meaningful, connecting not only homes to jobs, but also passing through green and heritage areas. Research shows that people will take a detour if the route is more appealing. In practice, the policy silos make this a difficult exercise. By performing a cost-benefit analysis that also includes public health, air quality and the recreation industry, this might change. Adapting the trail design to different sections of the network is necessary.

A group research project at Ryerson University has explored the connectivity of communities to the ravine system in Toronto. Teresa Liu and Grant Mason



presented maps and calculations, which enabled them to predict the recreational use of the ravines and identify the trailheads that are now underperforming (missing links). Furthermore, they looked into sightlines, options of elevated paths to respect the ecology below, community gardens, hydro power corridors, wildlife connections and forgotten spaces at the edges of city and ravine. Carolyn Woodland reminded us that it's crucial to set priorities to maintain a good balance between human use and ecology, now that people are 'moving back to the ravines'

4. Designing green infrastructure for talent and welfare

The relationship of communities with the green infrastructure of the ravines is a main theme in the work of Liat Margolis and her students at University of Toronto, who participated in an exchange program with TU Delft). The postwar towers near the ravines originally had the quality of le Corbusier's Ville Radieuse, today they have a new Canadian population and deteriorated public space. Ya'el Santopinto, who works on this topic at ERA architects, explains: 'Because of social problems and private ownership of the housing estates, fences were raised, blocking the access to the ravine. Informal trails exist, but are regarded as unsafe and disturb the ecology.' Liat's group experimented with different design tools, including Dutch housing redevelopment concepts, to redefine the public space around the towers and create gradients of public-private and inside-outside. The extensive car park around the blocks (2,5 parking spaces per housing unit!) can partly be used to make green and water surfaces.

Nathalie de Vries showed how there is also hope for a new and sustainable type of suburb, in the Oosterwold plan near Almere. With affordable prices and high flexibility, one could call it the new Dutch dream. The need for initiative, creativity and the mix with agriculture, however, make it into an area for pioneers rather than mainstream suburbanites. The man-made character of the Dutch landscape is also celebrated in the project of Park21, a metropolitan park in the Haarlemmermeer polder, a former lake. The public-private funding is, as always, a challenge. Scott Torrance showed how the entertainment infrastructure in the design is combined with ecological areas and rural estates. Park21 (in progress) is also the site of the Landscape Triennial 2017.



Deltametropolis

Dutch agglomeration of ca. 10 million inhabitants

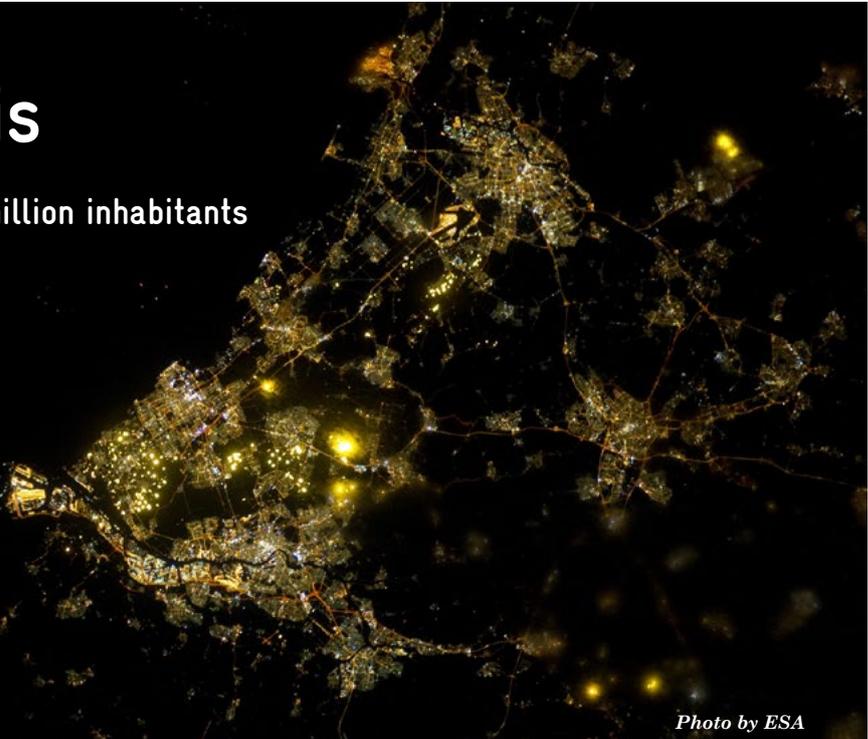
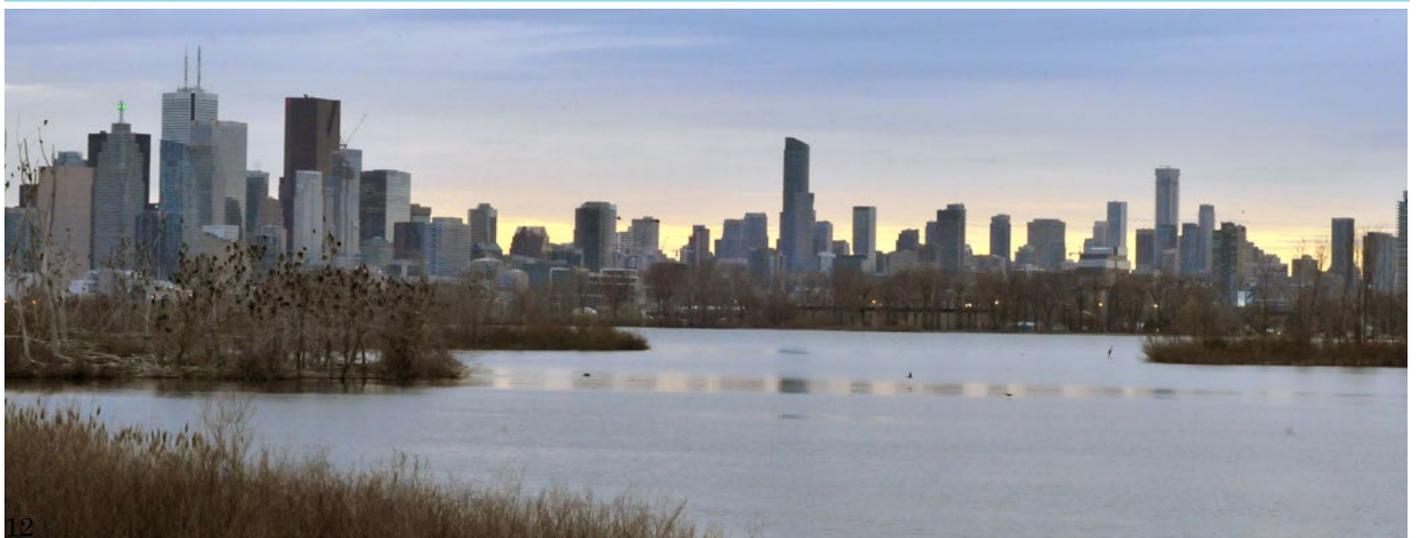
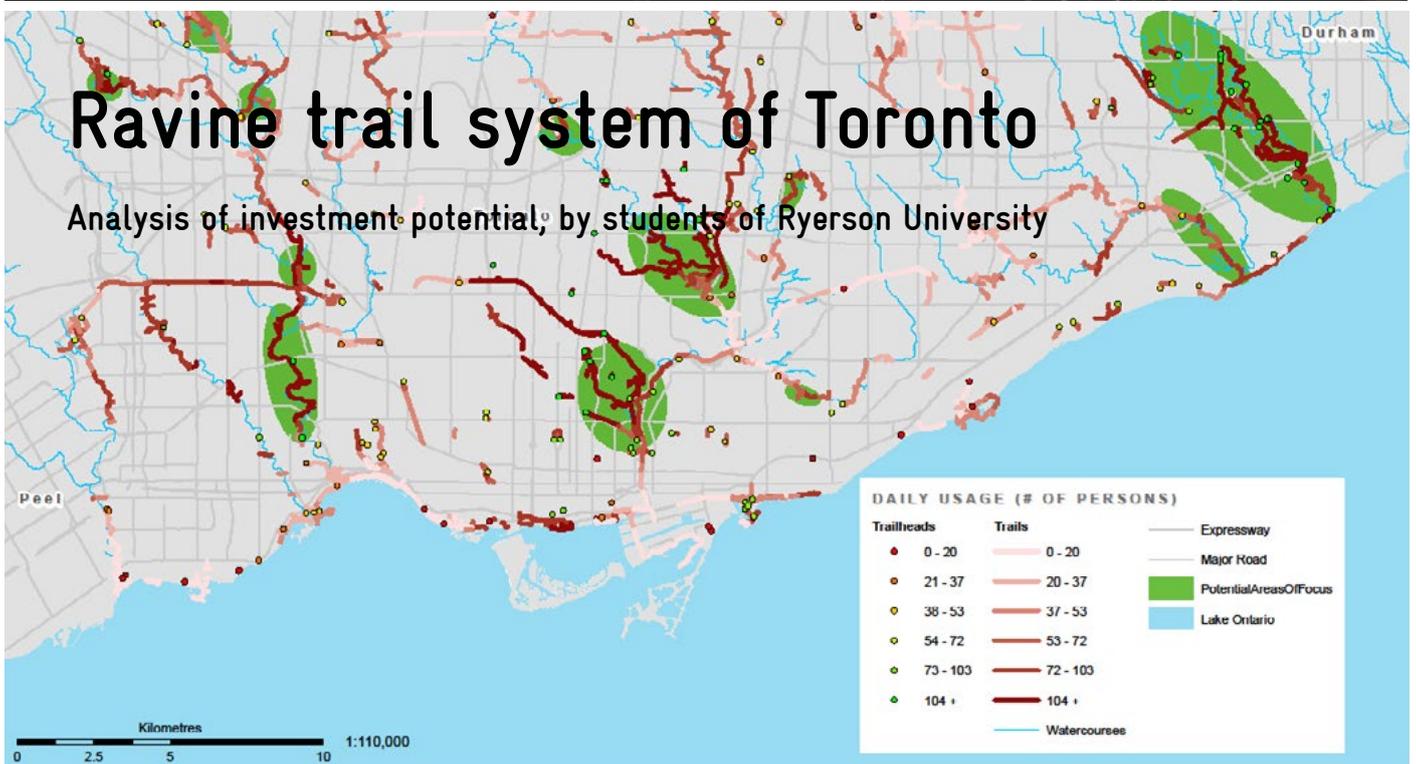


Photo by ESA

Ravine trail system of Toronto

Analysis of investment potential, by students of Ryerson University



PROJECTS & INITIATIVES on green infrastructure

(click on titles for project websites)



Image by Evergreen Brickworks

| Landscape Triennial 2017 |

The role of the metropolitan landscape for attractive and competitive cities will also be one of the main themes of this event.

The event discusses The Next Landscape as:

- Daily living environment
- Innovation space
- Location factor in the battle for talent
- Multi-disciplinary design challenge

Among many other events, there will be:

- an International Meetup with speakers and participants from various metropolitan parts of the world, who have a strategic view on the metropolitan landscape;
- a CEO diner with world class businesses and public leadership;
- book presentations, lectures, expert meetings, excursions and artist interventions.



This year's Landscape Triennial will take place in PARK21, a monumental farm area in the dynamic region of Haarlemmermeer, near the city of Amsterdam and Schiphol Airport. Toronto-based planning firm Forrec drew up the masterplan of the area.

Read more about the program of the Triennial on the website.



| The Living City |

The Living City Foundation is the fundraising and charitable arm of Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA). Key programs funded include: outdoor education, habitat restoration, ecological monitoring, community engagement, trail development, recreational park development and other key environmental projects.



| Ravine Strategy |

Toronto's ravine system, with its rivers, dramatic geography and forests, defines the city's landscape. and makes up 17 per cent of Toronto's area. The Ravine Strategy, created by various stakeholders, will take into account the network of various related plans/strategies, regulations and bylaws and contain a vision for the ravine system and a set of principles to guide planning and policy. It will also identify stewardship opportunities and priorities for investment.



| Sugar Beach |

Near the sugar port terminal of Toronto there is a new urban beach. The difference in scale between the beach seats and parasols and the large ships at only 50m distance is dramatic. And when a ship is unloaded, the whole area literally smells like sugar. The adjacent waterfront was recently revitalized by a Dutch promenade design (West8). Traditionally, Toronto's beaches are located more to the east, such as Woodbine beach. The proximity made Sugar Beach an instant success.



| Building with Nature in the City |

BwN in the city is a design and engineering collaboration that provides solutions for climate-adaptive cities, enhancing flood risk management. Cities can make adaptive preparations such as natural embankments and breakwaters, areas of land that can be submerged. A concrete example is the River as Tidal Park Rotterdam.



| Landscape Gateways |

In 2012 the Province of Noord-Holland and the Deltametropolis Association developed a concept of transit stations that give access to landscape areas, such as the coast, dunes, agricultural and forest areas. Here one transfers to a bike, canoe or even a horse. At the moment, DS landscape architects and PS City are bringing this idea into practice, near the city of Haarlem.



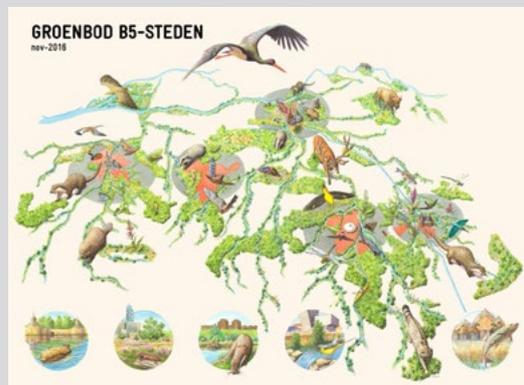
| Leslie Street Spit - Tommy Thompson Park |

Years of dumping construction waste from Toronto's rising skyline into Lake Ontario by accident created a valuable habitat for birds and plants, a peninsula that extends 5km. Today, it is still a dumpsite during weekdays and at night and in the weekend, it is open for bikers and hikers. The noise of the millions of birds is impressive, as is the sunset skyline of Toronto seen from this location. The new materials are arranged in such a way to create new wetland areas. Cyclists, hikers and bird watchers of all ages frequently use the trails.



| Corktown Common |

A new 7.3 hectare park in the West Don Lands, Corktown Common is situated on former industrial lands, transformed an underutilized brownfield into a community meeting place. It is already the heart of an emerging new community of well-designed apartment buildings near the Distillery district, a hotspot for the art scene and restaurants. Nearby, industrial buildings have been transformed into movie studios.



| Next Landscape Brabant |

The province of Noord-Brabant aims to develop its landscape into a national park and world-class science park at the same time. To increase quality of life and competitiveness five midsize cities simultaneously launched a landscape investment plan, beyond their municipal borders.



| Almere Oosterwold |

Oosterwold is a new development of 4.300 hectares east from Almere. It can accommodate 15.000 new dwellings, while maintaining the rural, green and farming characteristics. MVRDV drew up a flexible structure, rather than a masterplan, which gives buyers the opportunity to realize the living and working environments of their dreams, as opposed to the highly urban and planned west of the country.



| Dutch Trails |

The cycling network of the Rotterdam The Hague region (Zuid-Holland) is now divided into utilitary and recreational trails. Integrating both in one highly attractive and coherent system may bring several benefits: more bike commutes resulting in better health and air quality, as well as an increase in the recreation economy in connected heritage locations. Challenges are to solve missing links, improve the mental map and design a network that is both united and diverse in its trail sections.



| Toronto Island Cycling Circuit |

One of the most popular trips in Toronto is the Island Cycling Circuit. One takes a ferry to one of the three islands and returns by any of the three. On the islands there is one remaining village of wooden cottages; the owners refused to vacate the island in the 19xx's and negotiated a 99 year lease. A board walk leads to another island with large parks (and barbecue sites) and an artist in resident camp. The most western island operates a small airport for domestic aircraft, which one can almost touch from the ferry when they land. Because of the skyline, visible through the vegetation, one still feels close to Toronto.



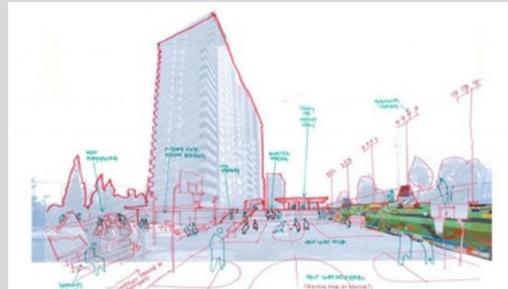
| Natuurmonumenten |

This Dutch association has crowdfunded over 350 conservation areas since 1905, when Jac. P. Thijsse saved a lake near Amsterdam from becoming a dump site. After a long period of niche members (nature fanatics), the organization has focused recently on urban communities, youngsters and children who are eager to have outdoor experiences in weekends and vacations. Natuurmonumenten has 9 visitor centres.



| Large Landscape Transitions |

Hart van Holland, around the city of Leiden, asked design firms Posad and Fabric to demonstrate how this region can provide for its own sustainable energy, using only its own land area. This is possible, when large changes are made in the landscape. The region aims to have an open and continuous debate on these changes among all the involved municipalities, and on how to divide and compensate for the high costs and benefits.



| Tower renewal partnership |

This nonprofit works to preserve and enhance mid-century apartment tower neighbourhoods through research, advocacy and demonstration. The goal is to transform these towers and their surrounding neighbourhoods into more sustainable, resilient and healthy places, fully integrated into their growing cities. In a way, these projects bring back the visionary quality of the modernist buildings in its natural surroundings, while addressing one of the most urgent challenges of Toronto: affordable housing.

