



PIC CORE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

URBAN DESIGN  
GUIDELINES  
2021

# PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines

## Film, Television, and Digital Media Board

### Draft Guidelines Overview

April 4, 2022



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# PIC Core Project Team

The Production, Interactive and Creative (PIC) Core Urban Design Guidelines are the result of extensive hard work and collaboration among a range of stakeholders, landowners and users, and members of the public who care deeply about the future of the Port Lands and the future of film, media and creative industries in the waterfront. In particular, the following people are recognized for their contributions to this important initiative.

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# Uniqueness of the Guidelines

**Although the City of Toronto develops urban design guidelines to address specific building typologies, topics or areas, these Urban Design Guidelines are unique:**

- Light industrial guidelines, which is a first for the City of Toronto
- Guidance on creative cluster development, a first in North America
- Implementing the Port Lands Planning Framework and Port Lands Official Plan Modification, but not directed by master planning or precinct planning, so must be flexible and adaptable, while protecting for a fine-grain urban fabric
- Focus on the interface between the public realm and developments or creative campuses – less focused on what happens inside a secure perimeter.
- Will improve quality of urban environment for workers, visitors and nearby residents in a significant waterfront employment area

# Introduction + Context



WATERFRONTORONTO

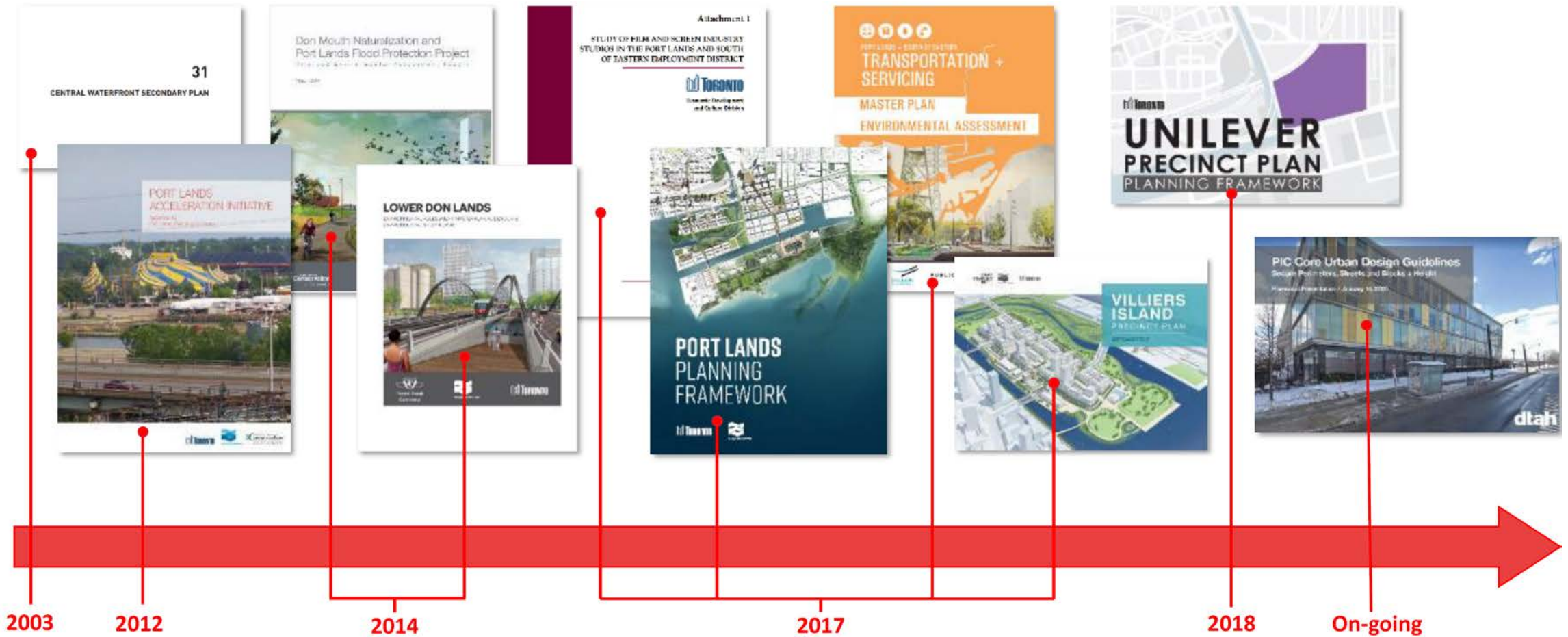
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LURA



# Port Lands Planning



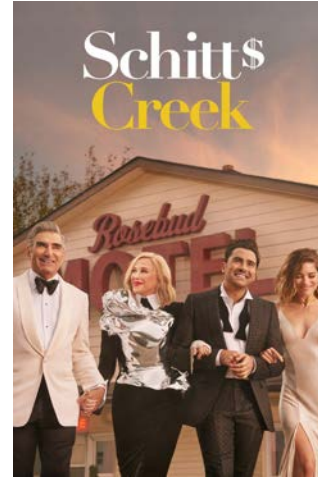
# Port Lands Planning Framework

## 50+ YEAR PLAN

Guidance for the near, medium + longer terms so that we know what to expect tomorrow, but also to provide flexibility for what is yet to come



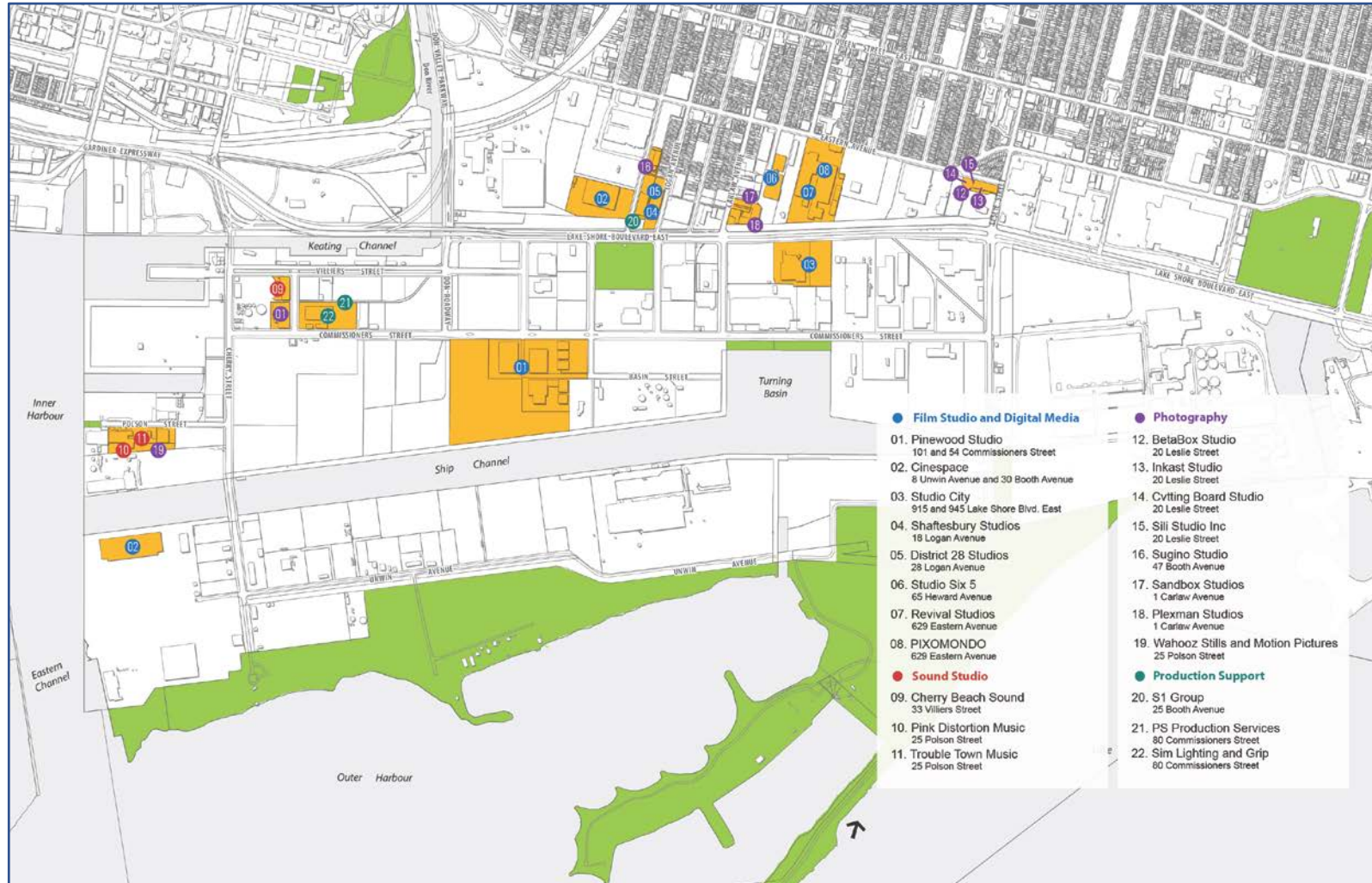
# The Port Lands/South of Eastern is a Place where Film, Television and Music are all focused.



## Toronto Film Production, in 2021:

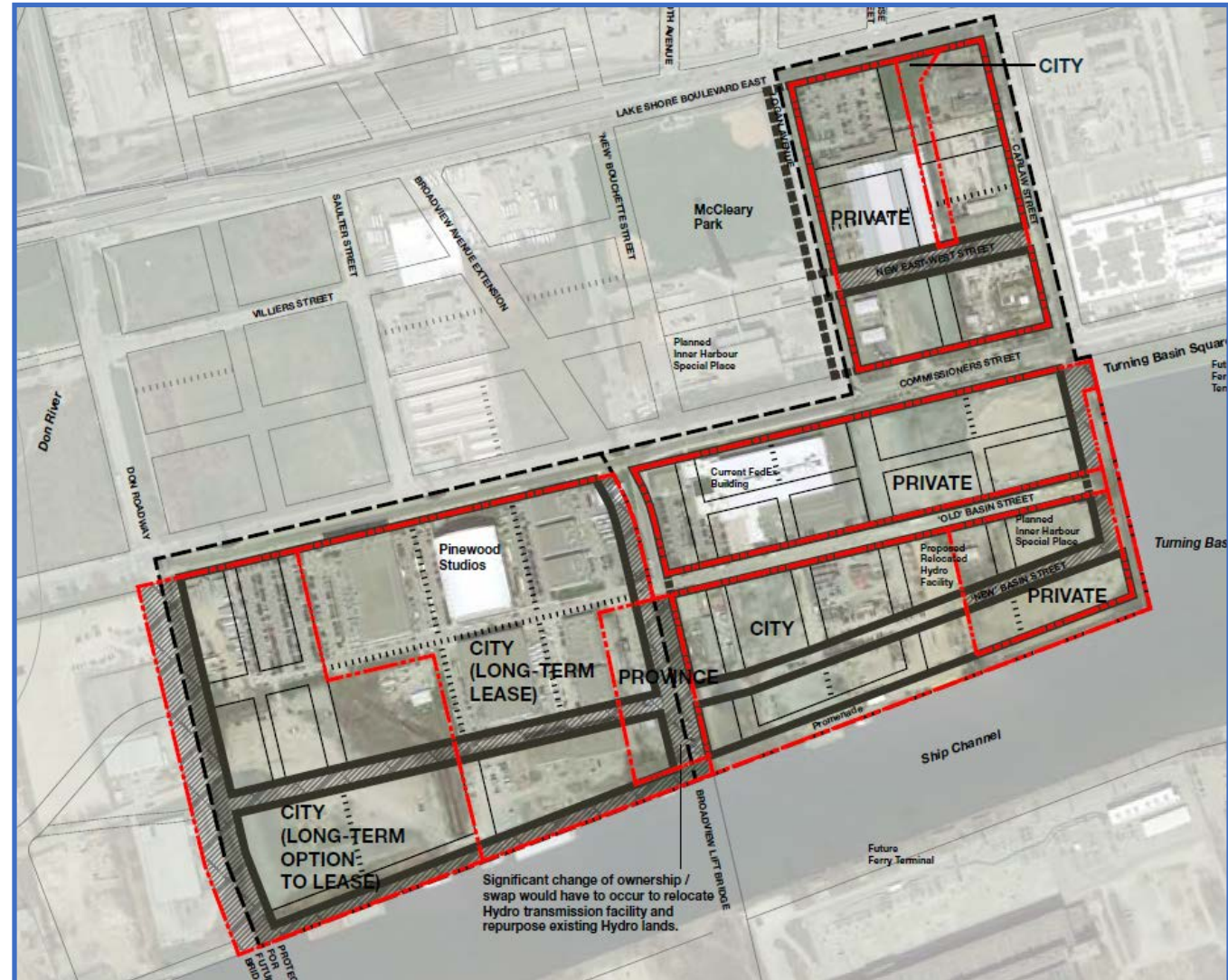
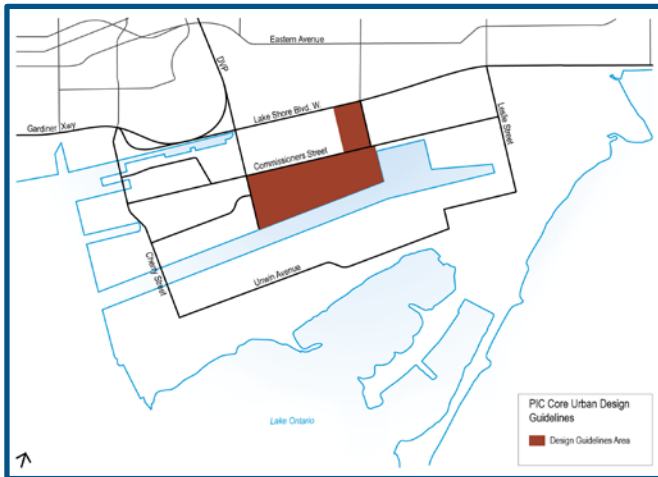
- Contributed over \$2.0 Billion to the Economy
- Employed over 35,000 people
- Welcomed over 1,500 production

# Existing Screen-based and Creative Clusters





# PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines – Study Area





# Production, Interactive and Creative (PIC) Urban Design Guidelines - Overview

## IDENTITY

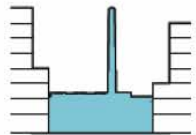


Buildings Will Respond To Surrounding Context And Character Defining Features

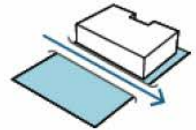


Wide, naturalized, landscaped setbacks required adjacent to key streets

## LEGIBILITY

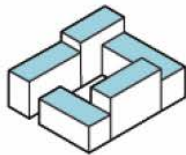


Buildings heights and placement will preserve, create and accentuate views

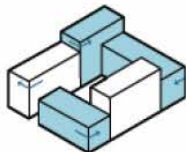


Building placement will permit the extension of the public street network

## DIVERSITY

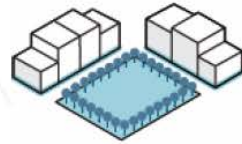


Diversity through different building heights and height shifts

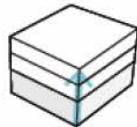


Diversity through strong, repeating vertical articulation and facade designs

## ADAPTABILITY

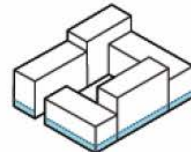


Urban street-edge relationships with buildings framing the public realm



Minimum building heights and floor to floor ceiling heights for non-residential on key frontages

## ACTIVITY



Activate with high ground floor ceiling heights and a wealth of details

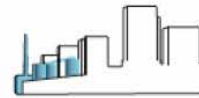


Ground-level facades should be 70% transparent

## SKYLINE TOPOGRAPHY



Buildings will contribute to the creation of a distinct and dynamic skyline



New buildings will not detract from or dominate the port lands existing skyline

## The Project

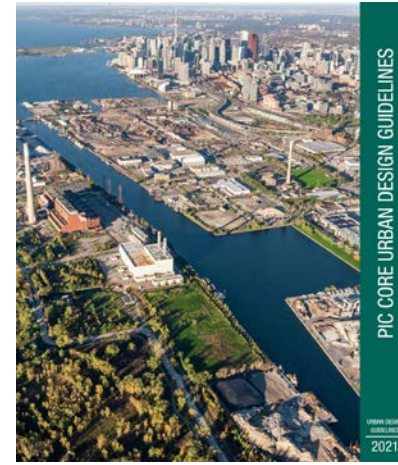
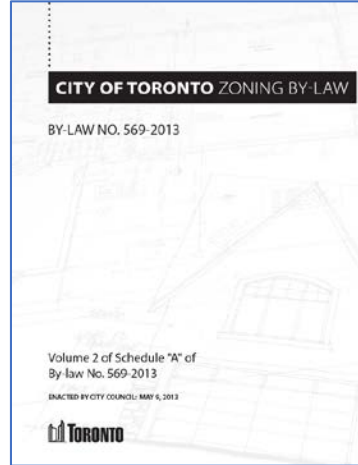
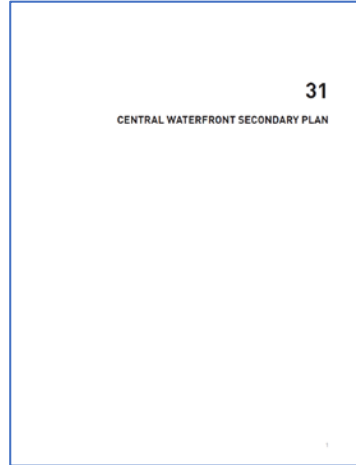
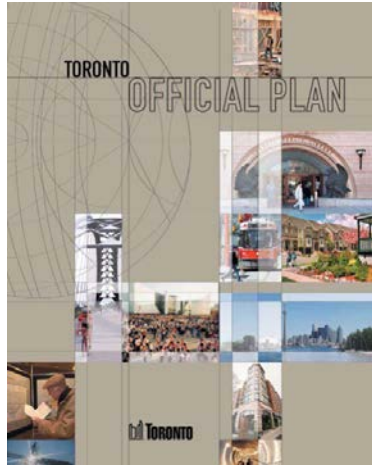
The PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines will further expand on the urban design and built form direction of the Planning Framework.

## The Result

The Urban Design Guidelines are:

- meant to provide **flexibility** based upon use and site-specific conditions
- provide robust and **consistent direction** on how the Port Lands will evolve over time
- applied at various stages of the development review process and will also inform Context Plans
- developed concurrently with, and will be informed by, a **PIC Core Zoning By-law**

# PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines Implementation



Will inform

Master  
Plans

Development  
Proposals

Public  
Realm  
Detailed  
Design

Public Art  
Plans

# PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines



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# Guiding Principles



Figure 1.12: North Shore Studios, Vancouver, BC.

 **Good Neighbour**



Figure 1.13: A net zero carbon building. Centennial College Mass Timber Building, Toronto.

 **Design Excellence**



Figure 1.16: Waterfront Innovation Centre, East Bayfront, Toronto.

 **Innovative Employment Opportunities**



Figure 1.17: Don River Valley bridge, Port Lands, Toronto.

 **Corridors to the Water**



Figure 1.14: Universal Studios, Los Angeles, USA.

 **Placemaking**



Figure 1.15: BikeShare station, Toronto.

 **Connectivity**



Figure 1.18: Basin Media Hub Proposal, Port Lands, Toronto.

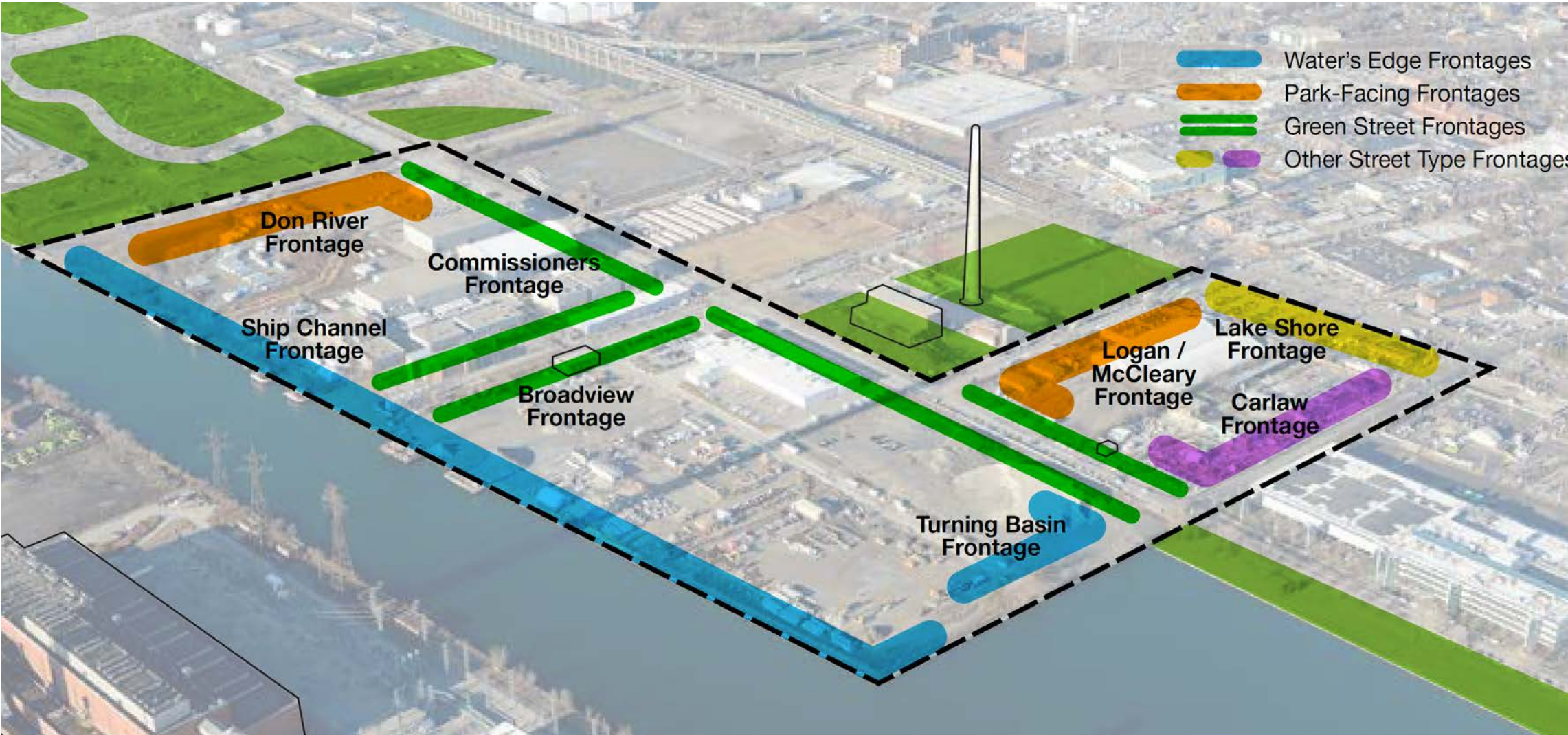
 **Film-Friendly Districts**



Figure 1.19: Sky Studios Net Zero Carbon Film Studio, Elstree, UK.

 **Future Forward**

# Character Frontages



# Creative Industry Focus



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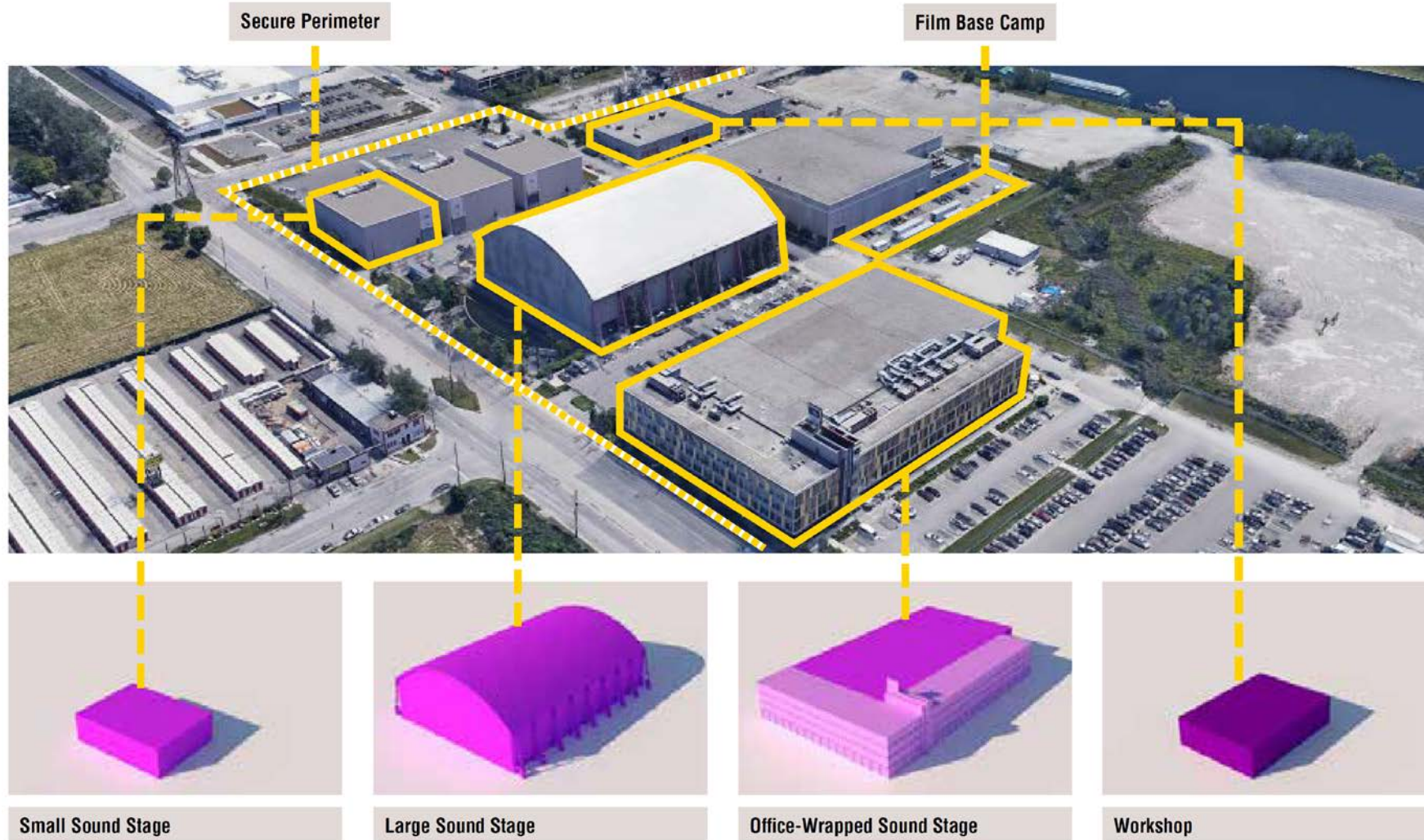


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# Guidance on Creative Industry Developments



# Creative Campus Elements - Precedents

## Post-Production Facilities



Sunset Las Palmas Studio Post-Production, LA, USA

## Communications & Broadcasting Facilities



ChumCity Building, Queen Street West, Toronto

## Offices & Production Support



Echelon Studios Offices, Hollywood, USA



Corus Building, East Bayfront, Toronto

# Film-Friendly Streets



- Film-friendly street elements may include:
  - a. Electricity connections, including power-drops;
  - b. Water connections, where possible;
  - c. Removable street furniture and amenities on the shooting side of the street; and
  - d. Other features as innovations in the film industry evolve
- Flexible spaces for the staging of production vehicles
- A curbside management strategy for:
  - commercial vehicles
  - pickup/ drop-off areas
  - accessible loading zones,
  - courier delivery zones,
  - temporary film trailer parking
  - coach parking zones

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# Integrated Design at the Master Plan Scale



1. Urban Canopy & Biodiversity
2. Net Zero Carbon
3. Stormwater Management
4. On-site Parking
5. Secure Perimeter Approach
6. Access and Circulation

East Bayfront Master Plan, south of Queens Quay East, Toronto

# Secure Perimeter Approach



Figure 6.18: Filmpark Babelsberg, Callgari Halle, Babelsberg (Berlin).



Figure 6.19: Culver Studio Parking Structure Perimeter Wall Treatment, Culver City, USA.

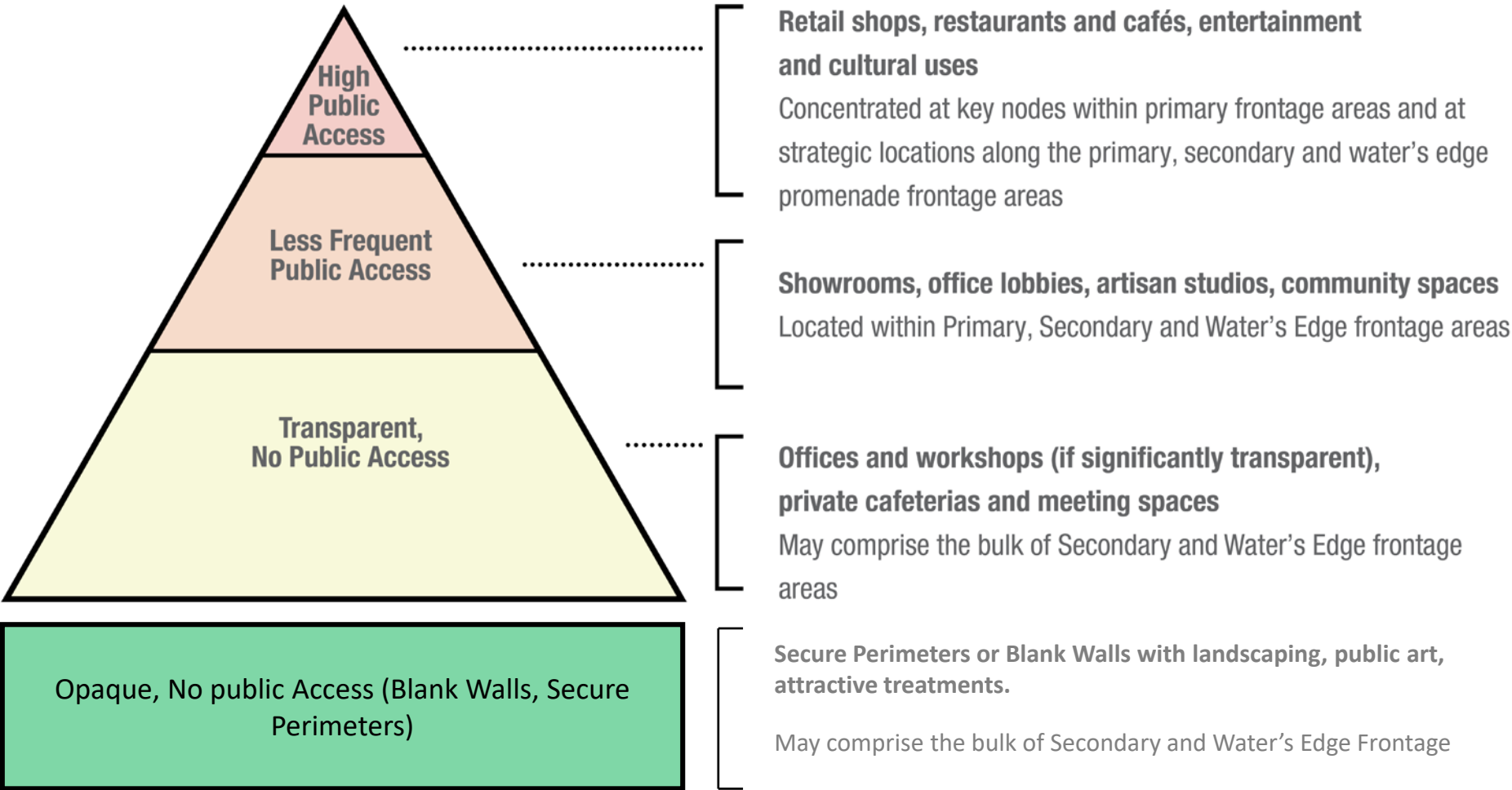


Figure 6.20: Cinespace Elevated skybridge anchored by perimeter buildings, with recessed gateway

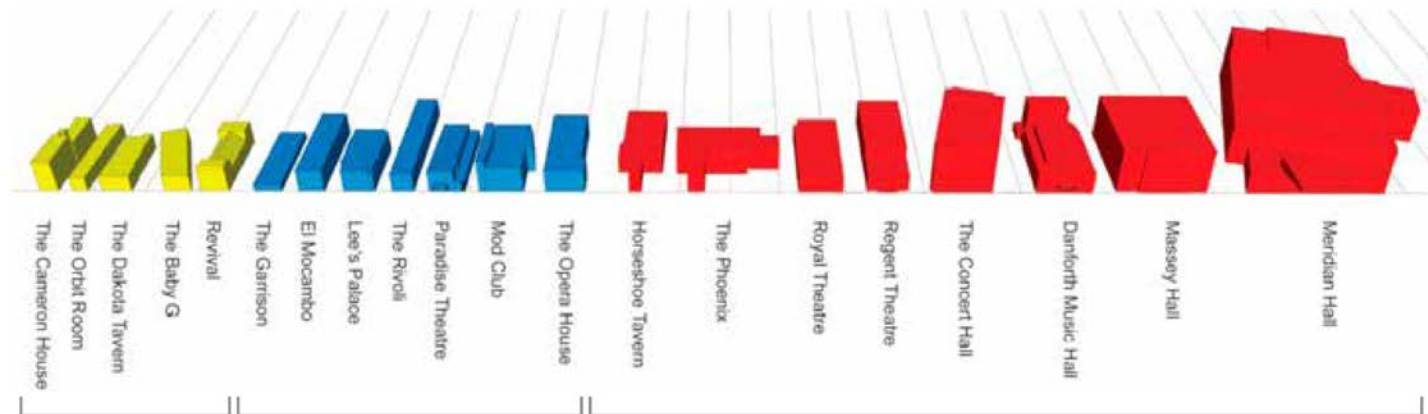


Figure 6.21: Wall & Secure Perimeter Facades.

# Hierarchy of Activation Uses



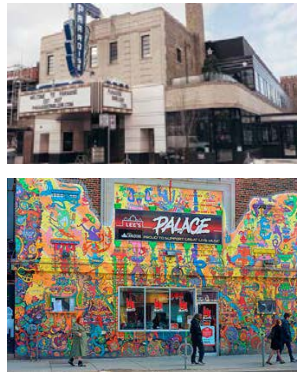
# Guidelines for Entertainment Venues



Small Venues



Medium Venues



Large Venues



"Without Prejudice"  
For discussion purposes only

# PIC Core Urban Design Guidelines

## Comments + City Suggestions



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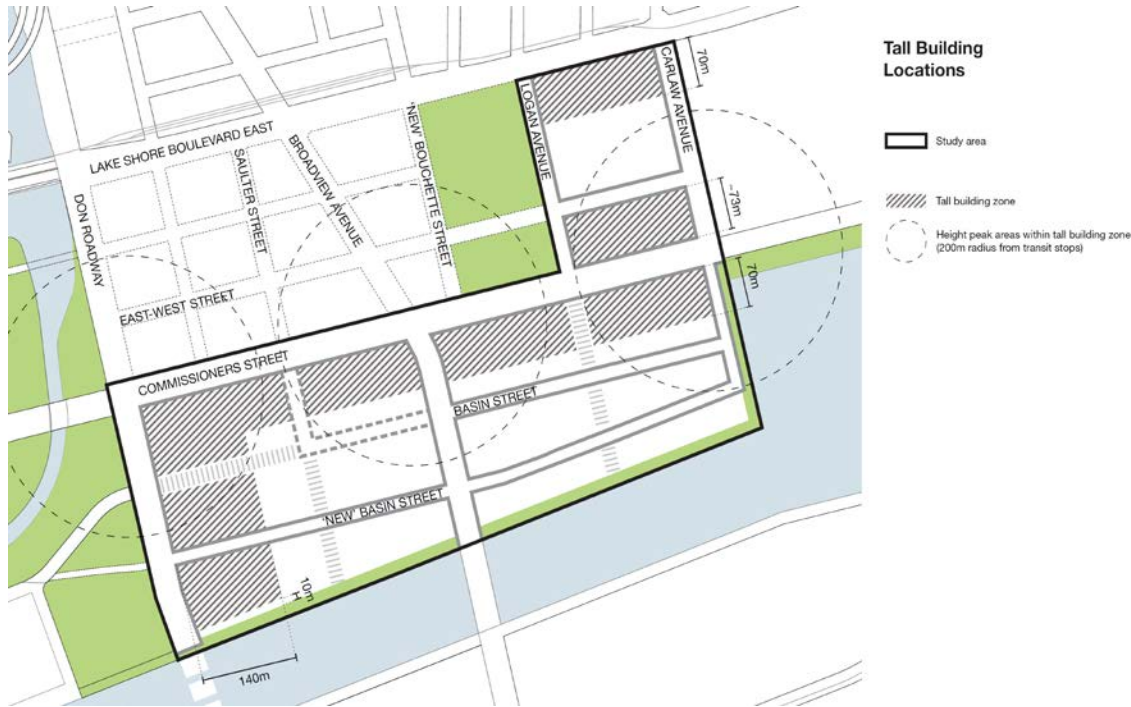




# Tall Building Zones

## Comments:

- More specific details for tall building locations and heights is desired.



## City Suggestion

**2.2 Character Frontages: Don River Frontage.** Critical elements of the Don Roadway frontage include: **mid-scale built form** with active frontage along the Don Roadway. **Some Tall building elements** may be **are** permissible in strategically-determined locations that have been identified in the **Pinewood Studios Master Plan.**

**7.2. Built Form Typologies: Taller Employment Buildings.** PIC Core is not intended to be a tall building district... When permitted, **taller employment buildings must be limited to tall building zones, as identified in Figure 7.16 – Conceptual Height Strategy** (p. 81).

- The height map is being further refined to provide guidance on the tall building height strategy

# Tall Buildings in PIC Core



Artscape Daniels Launchpad, Toronto



The Well, Toronto



The Edison (15-storey mass timber building), Milwaukee



Manitoba Hydro Building, Winnipeg

# Streetwall Heights

## Comments

- Please clarify how the maximum building heights of 30 metres and 42 metres will be applied to creative campuses.

## City Suggestion

**7.3.2.** The **streetwall of** new **mid-scale and base** buildings facing Commissioners Street, Don Roadway Extension, Broadview Avenue Extension, Lake Shore Boulevard East, and the water's edge promenade should be a minimum **streetwall height** of 3 storeys (12 metres) in height and have a **maximum streetwall height of 42 metres** (p. 83).

**7.3.3** New **mid-scale or base** buildings facing Basin Street, New Basin Street and local streets should have a minimum **streetwall height of** 3 storeys (12 metres) ~~in height~~ and have a **maximum streetwall height of 20 metres.**

**7.3.4 (new)** New mid-scale or base buildings that are within a tall building zone (reference map) should have a minimum streetwall height of 3 storeys (12 metres) and have a maximum streetwall height of 30 metres, except if streetwall height is specified in 7.3.2.

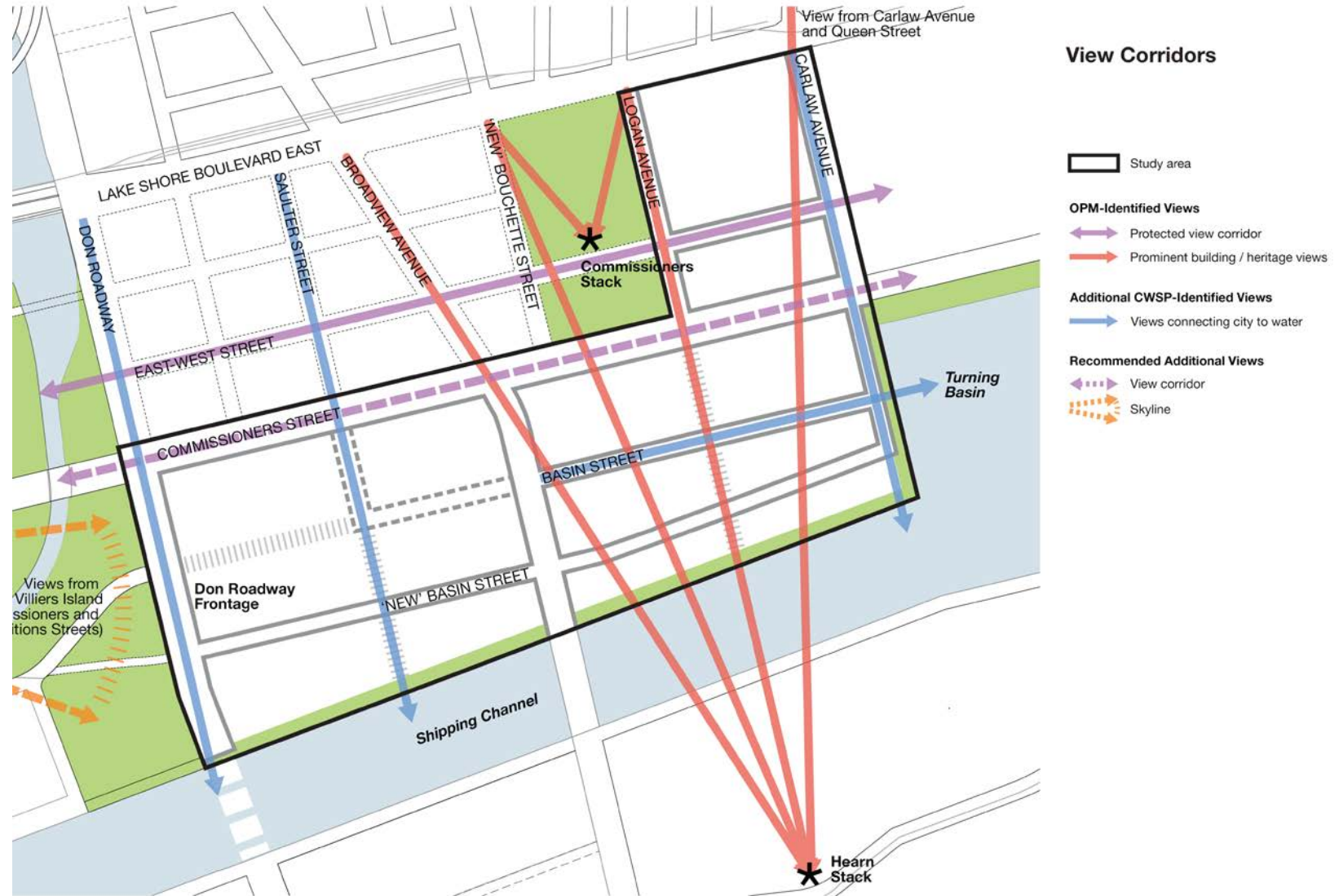
# Views and Vistas

## Comments:

- Clarification is needed on the rationale for the new views and vistas identified in Figure 2.32, and their relationship to the views identified in Figure 63 of the PLPF/OPM.

## City Suggestion

- Section 2.5 will be updated to separate statutory and non-statutory views
- OPM reference for statutory views
- Clarify the rationale and consideration for non-statutory views – framing view corridors to the water, framing the views from Villiers Island, as a core principle of the CWSP



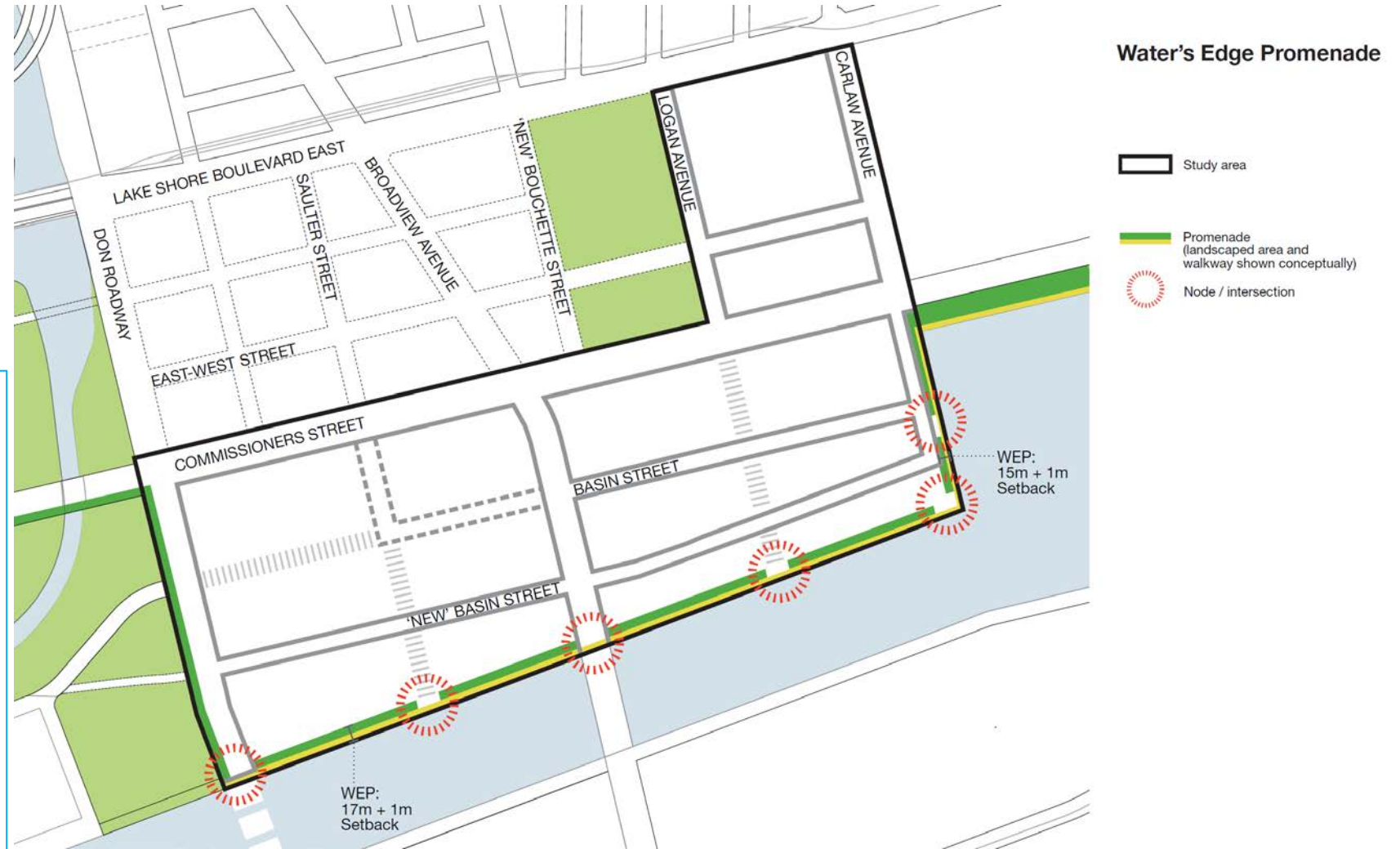
# Streets and Blocks

## Comments:

- The local street network on the drawings is prescriptive and provide flexibility needed for PIC Core uses.
- How are blocks being measured?
- Location of mid-block connections too prescriptive

## City Suggestion

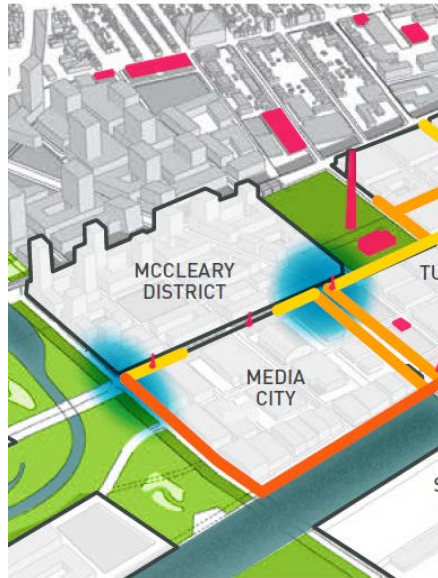
- The streets and blocks diagram is for demonstration only
- The street and block base has been updated to remove all streets except the priority future local streets (Saulter, Logan, Basin)
- The measurement of the blocks should be from public or private roads, or laneways, including within a secure perimeter.



# Activation Frontages

## Comments:

- Clarification is needed on the definition of the frontages, the 7-metre frontage range, as well as viable activation uses along the Water's Edge Promenade/Don Roadway Activation Frontage



## City Clarification

- The 7 metre (22 feet) retail frontage at nodes was recommended by TATE, based upon the type and scale of retail that can be expected.
- Longer frontages (>7 metres) may be viable and appropriate if there is a defined need (larger entertainment venues, retail or service).

**7.4.2** Activation uses will be street-related and feature a variety of narrow frontages in order to create an engaging pedestrian experience. **Retail and service frontages should be in the range of 7 metres within the activation nodes. A combination of 7 metre frontages** and larger activation use frontages can be provided **on the various activation frontages.** in limited circumstances (p. 87).

**7.4.3 (New)** **An activation strategy should be developed to demonstrate how activation uses can be accommodated within a development, including additional activation locations.**

# Urban Rooms, POPS + Water's Edge Promenade

## Comment:

- Clarification is needed on the definition of an “urban room” in relation to a POPS

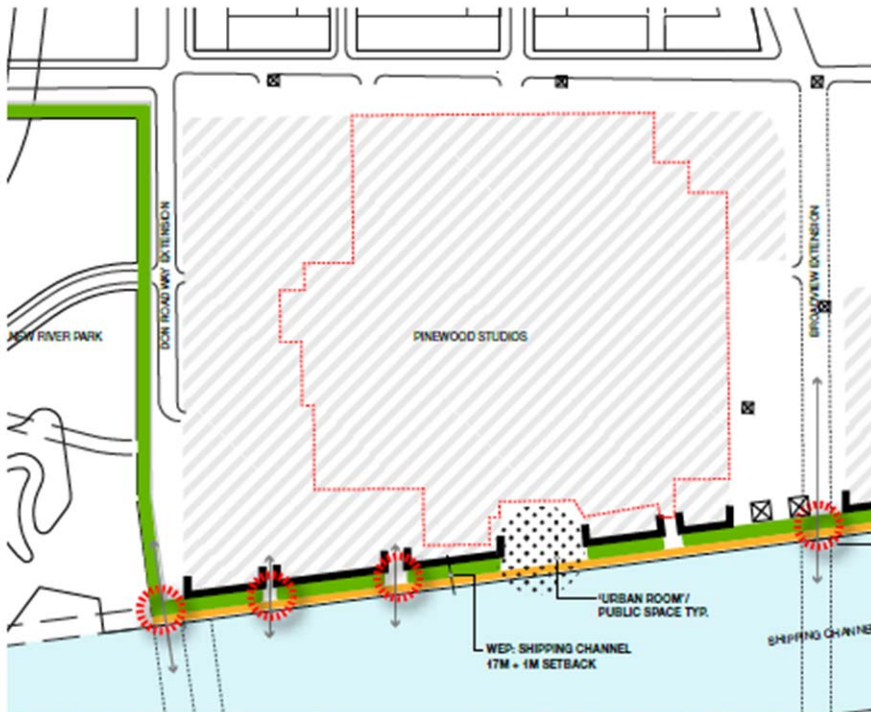


Figure 3.8: Conceptual plan of the water's edge promenade, showing important nodes along the route.

## City Suggestion

- “urban rooms” are larger areas on the water’s edge promenade that allow for various activities.
- Urban rooms are included within the public realm design and do not include any POPS although POPS may abut the urban room (which is public park land and the 1 m setback.)
- Instead of “urban rooms”, which is a term used by Waterfront Toronto, the City team has proposed replacing the term with “activity areas”.
- The definition is within the bulleted list of 3.1.15.

# Secure Perimeters

## Comments:

- Need further clarification about how secure perimeters will be defined.

## City Suggestion

- The secure perimeter guidelines will be updated to provide direction a secure perimeter strategy, including specific elements. The guidelines are to address urban design for specific secure perimeter elements.
- **6.6.2 (New) Where a secure perimeter can not be avoided for security or operational needs, a secure perimeter strategy should be developed that includes the following secure perimeter elements, if appropriate:**
  - Walls, fences or opaque visual barriers;
  - Landscaping and urban canopy;
  - Above-grade secure perimeter pedestrian connections;
  - Buildings; and
  - Gateways and access points.



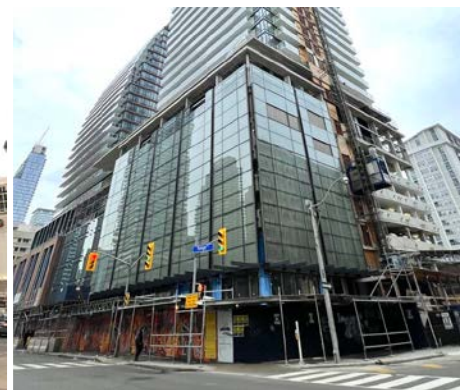
# Above Grade Parking

## Comment:

- Concern that office wrapping around above-grade parking and the locating of parking structures at the side/and or rear of buildings away from the street edge is challenging to achieve in all cases.
- The UDG should consistently articulate that concealing parking is an appropriate, as done in Section 2.2

## City Suggestion:

5.7.18 Parking structures, **either stand-alone or incorporated into a mid-scale or base building**, should be subtle in appearance and screen the structure through creative architectural design and landscaping.



# Public Art

## Comment:

- Clarification is needed on whether the numbered locations in Fig. 2 are intended to note general areas or the specific locations. If the former is true, Guideline 2.6.1 should be updated to reflect this.
- Is the intention to pool the Percent for Public Art Program funds and use to fund public art projects in public spaces

## City Clarification:

- The PIC Core Public Art Plan is focused on the Public Realm, not private or long-term lease lands and will confirm public art locations.
- Landowners/Leasees would be responsible for a Public Art Master Plan for the long-term lease or private sites, but that is a separate process.
- To be discussed with CreateTO and Waterfront Toronto – Public Art Plan lead
- The intent is to pool public art funds for installations within the public realm, although the details of the percentage of public art funds (private/public) will need to be determined through the development of a site-specific public art plan.

# Next Steps

## March - June 2022

- Updating PIC Core UDG, based on comments
- Individual landowners/users meetings
- Ongoing Indigenous Engagement
- LUAC & SAC meetings
- Virtual Open House (mid-May)
- TEYCC (June 29, 2022) – Update Report + zoning by-laws

## June 2022 – March 2023

- Ongoing consultation with the landowners and the Film Industry
- Ongoing Indigenous Engagement
- Revised Final Draft Guidelines
- TEYCC (March 2023) – Final Report – Urban Design Guidelines



Pixar Studios (San Francisco)



NFTS (Beaconsfield, UK)

# Comments + Discussion

