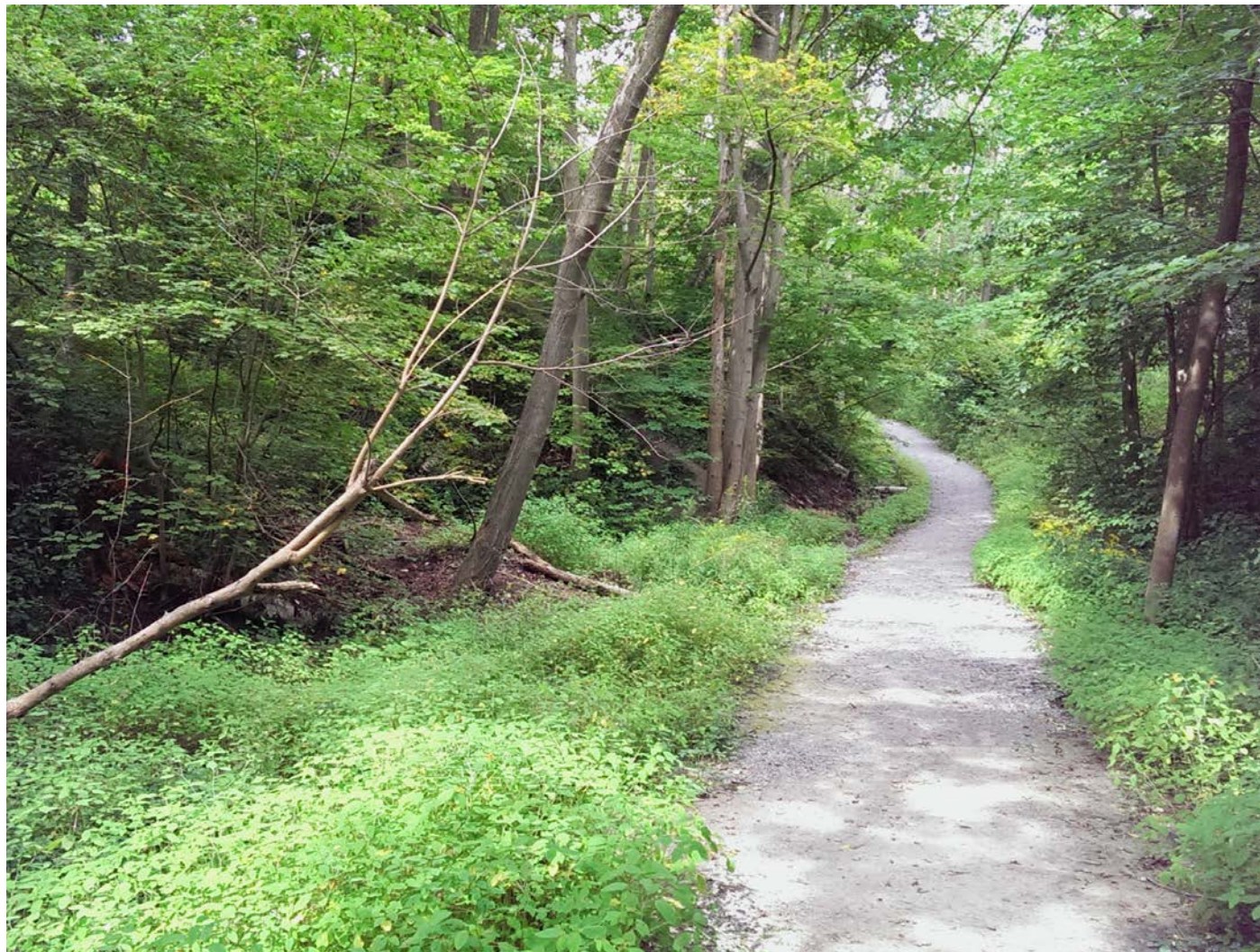


EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

As part of the analysis phase of the preparation of this master plan, a thorough review of existing site conditions, as they relate to current and potential future trails within the site, was conducted. The 36 hectare park and gardens is home to a variety of walking trails and paths, with associated fencing, signage, and access points. These trails traverse a property rich in biodiversity, containing an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA), and several sensitive plant communities. The conditions on site serve as both opportunities and constraints for future works within the park, and inform the recommendations proposed.



The switchback trail from the parking area to the construction access route

For the purpose of providing context to site observations, references will be made to the Guild Park and Gardens' four management areas, established by the Guild Resource Group.

These areas include the:



West Trail Area



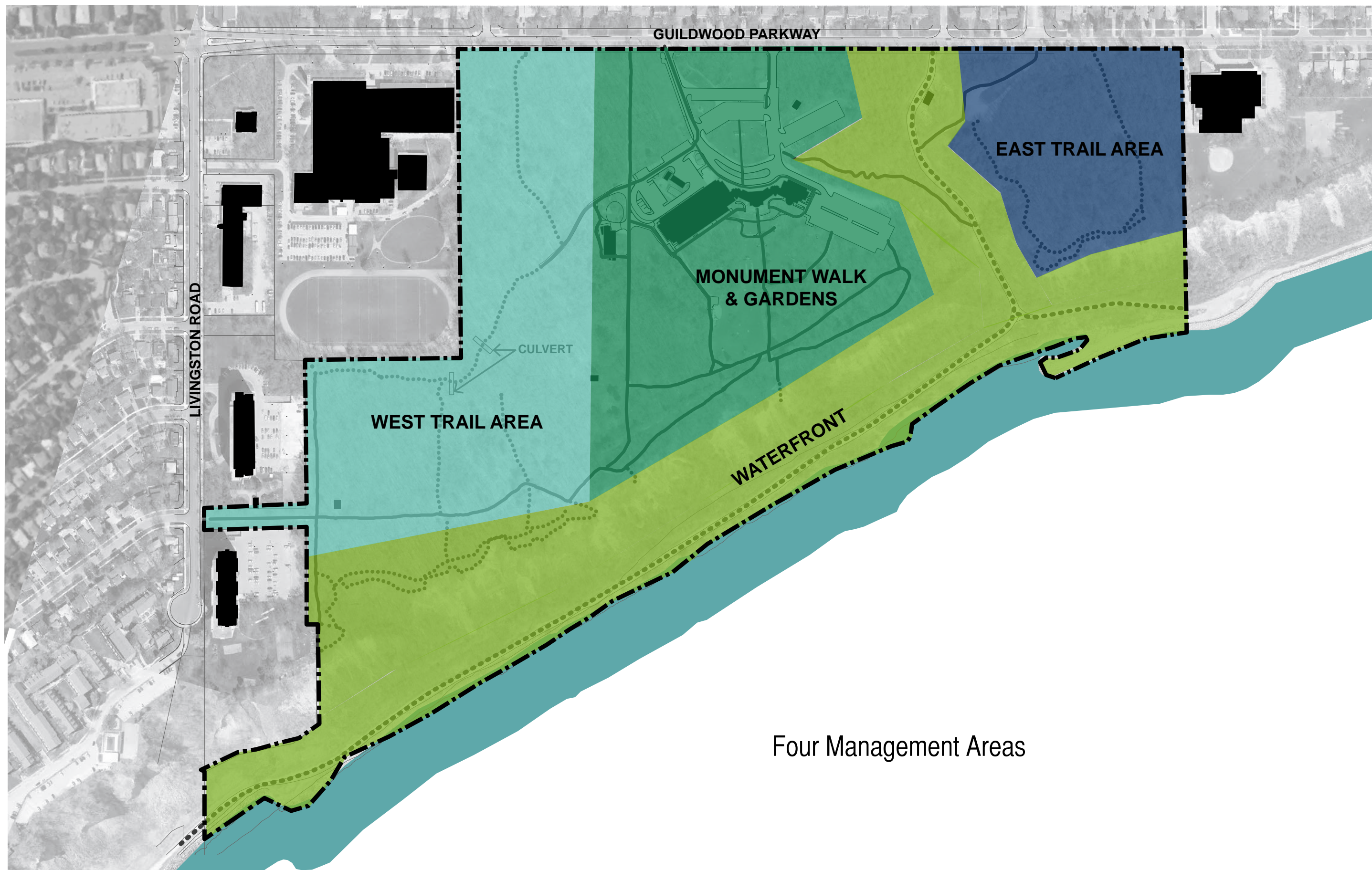
Monument Walk & Gardens



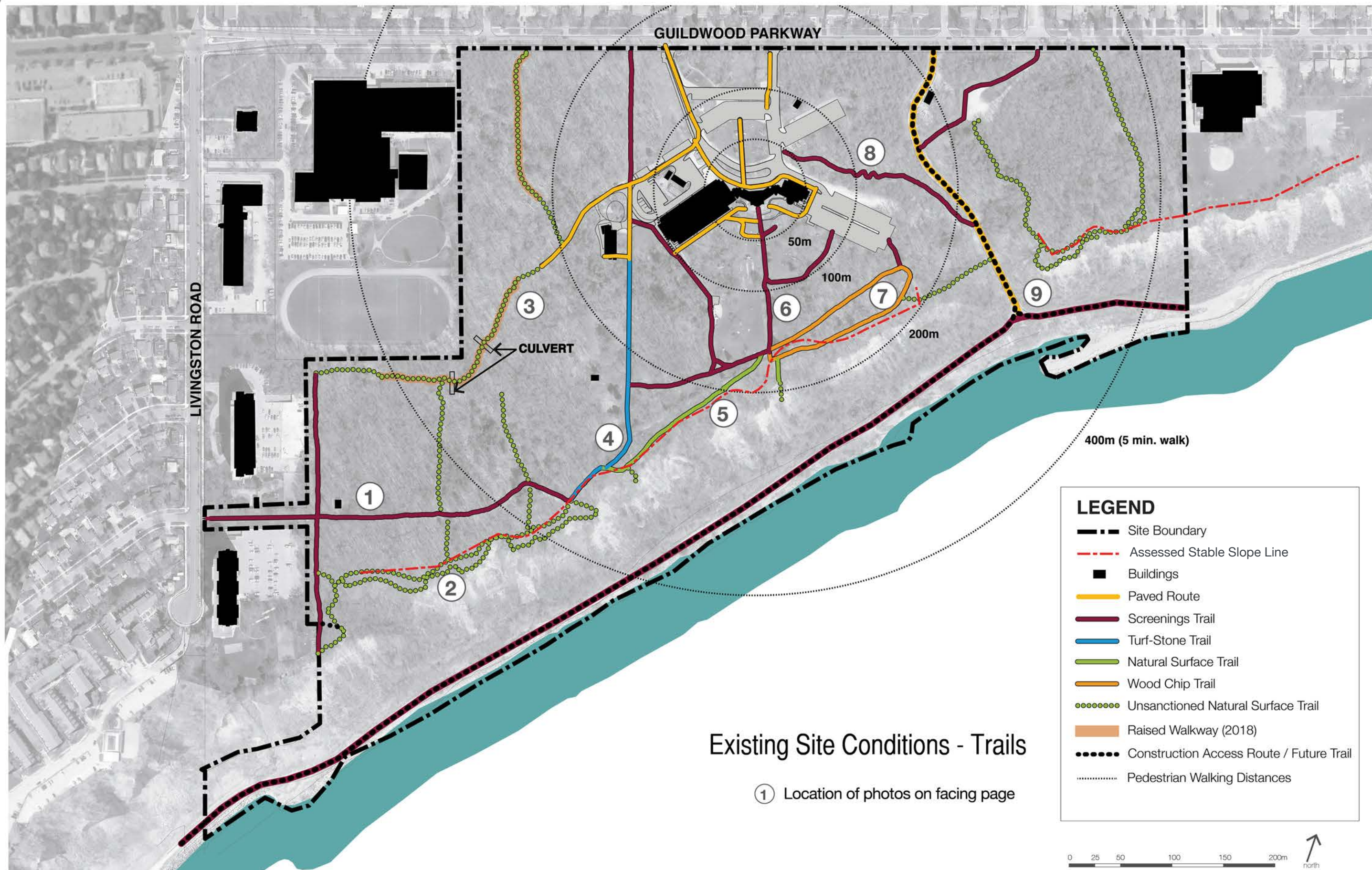
Waterfront



East Trail Area



Four Management Areas



Existing Site Conditions : Trails

The existing trails network within the 36 hectare Guild Park and Gardens is a primary attraction to the site. The site currently contains several sanctioned trails, or trails that are actively maintained, and unsanctioned trails, trails that have been worn into the landscape by repeated use, but which are not maintained.

Naturalized walking trails are found in both the West Trail Area and the East Trail Area. The Monument Walk and Gardens Area contains more formalized pathways, and the waterfront is traversed by a construction access route.

The trails fall into one of five surface treatment types:

- Screenings;
- Woodchip;
- Natural surface;
- Turf-stone; and,
- Asphalt.

The conditions of the trails vary, but the unsanctioned trails exhibit the highest degree of degradation, in part due to ongoing erosion of the bluffs.



1 Main screenings trail



2 Informal natural surface trails along the top of bluffs



3 Formal natural surface trail through lowlands



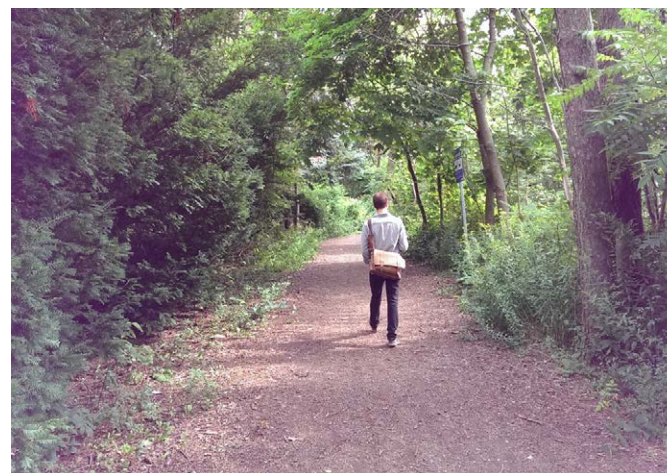
4 Turf-stone maintenance route



5 Formal natural surface trail south of the gardens



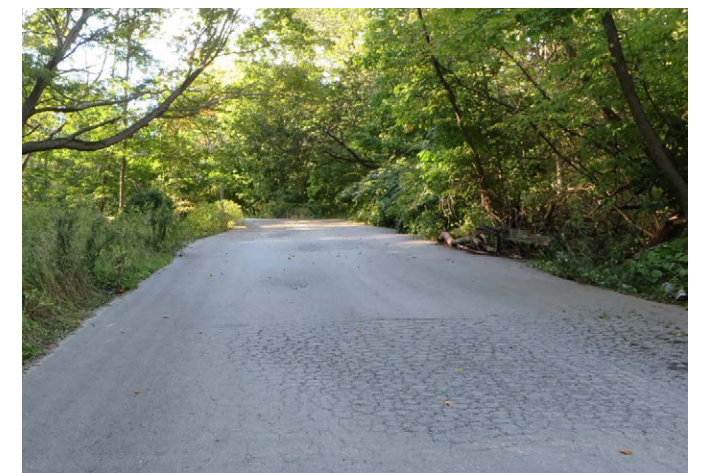
6 Screenings path through the gardens



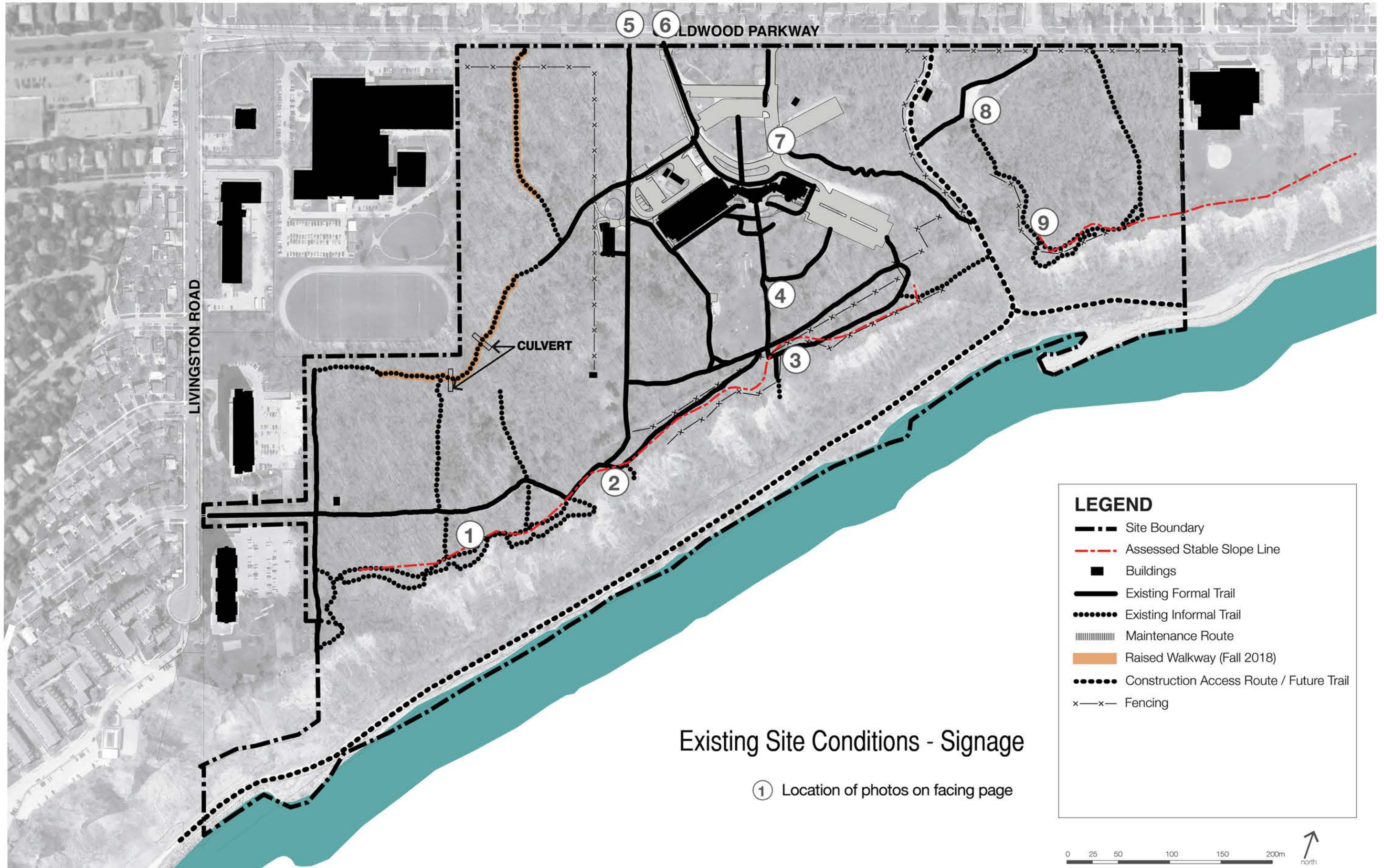
7 Woodchip trail



8 Screenings switchback trail between parking area and construction access route



9 Asphalt construction access route to waterfront



Existing Site Conditions : Signage

The existing signage located throughout the Guild Park and Gardens provides safety information, however, it offers little in the way of wayfinding.

The primary entrance to the site and the entrance to the East Trail Area parking area are marked with the City of Toronto standard park signage. Once within the property there is one site map provided by the Guild Inn Estate which addresses the Guild Inn Estate facility.

The majority of the signage within the property are City of Toronto standard safety signage. These signs address several issues, including:

- Unstable bluffs;
- Trespassing;
- Dog-, bicycle-, and sports-free areas;
- Poisonous plants;
- Pathway closures; and,
- Steep slopes.

In some instances a lack of vegetation maintenance has lead to the obstruction of safety signage. The effectiveness of the current signage strategy is limited, especially regarding discouraging access to the bluff edge.

The City is in the process of confirming a city-wide consolidated wayfinding and signage strategy for parks and trails. As a result, changes to the signage in this site should await the completion of this strategy, in order to avoid redundancy in signage updates.



1 Typical bluff edge warning signage



2 Bluff edge warning signage obscured by overgrown vegetation



3 Warning signage ineffective at eliminating unsafe access to the bluff edge



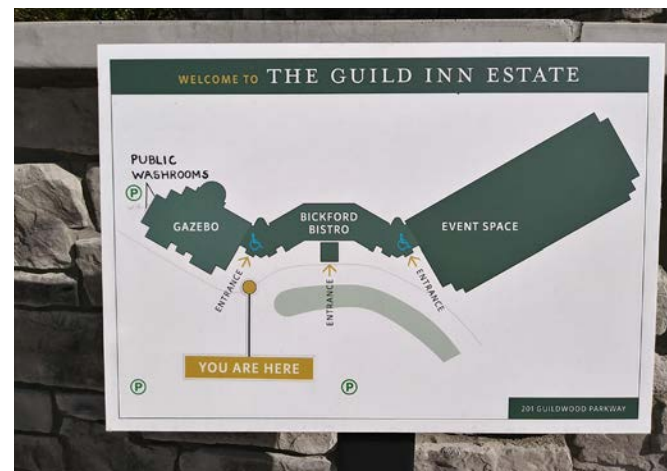
4 Typical instructional signage



5 Poisonous plant hazard signage



6 Primary entrance signage



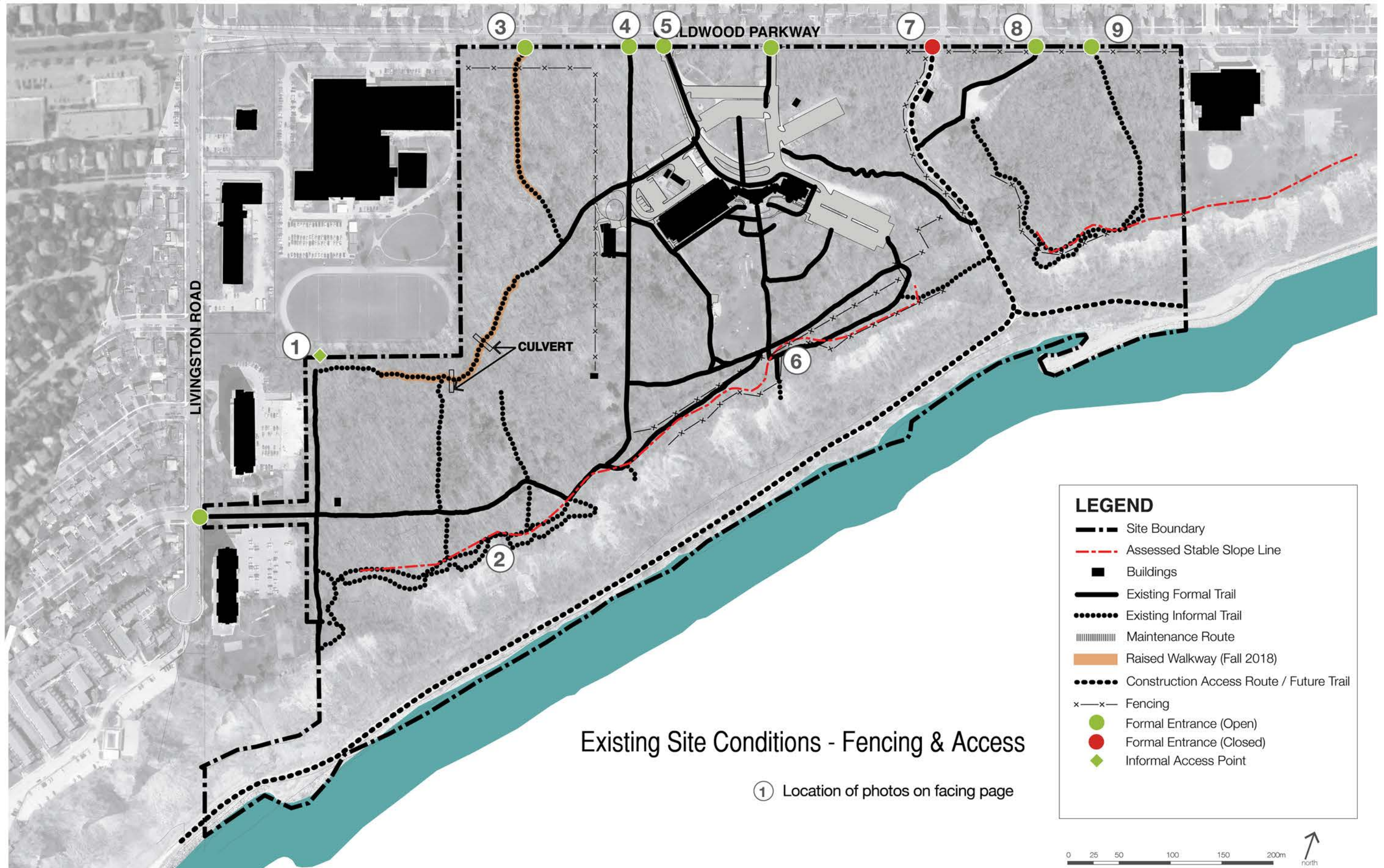
7 Wayfinding signage



8 Washout danger signage



9 Steep slope warning signage



Existing Site Conditions : Fencing and Access

The site is surrounded and bisected by fencing, which is punctured in several locations to provide access points. The perimeter fencing, along the west, north, and east property lines, is standard chain link. The top of bluff is identified with a wooden post and wire cable fence. There are also sections of chain link fencing located along the western side of the construction access route and long the southern edge of the Monument Walk and Gardens area. These fence segments restrict movement within the site.

The primary entrance to the site is located along Guildwood Parkway. The entrance is identified with decorative stone columns and a park sign. Additional entrances along Guildwood Parkway, into the wooded areas, are simply gaps or gates in the chain link fencing.

Entry onto the construction access route is controlled by a chain link gate. This gate is often closed and locked, restricting access to the road to the trail from the East Trail Area parking lot, and the switchback trail. Some visitors scale the fence to bypass the locked gate, which poses a safety risk.

The site has one informal entrance point, a gap in the chain link fence along the southern property line of the neighbouring Sir Wilfrid Laurier Collegiate Institute.



1 Informal access point in fence of adjacent school



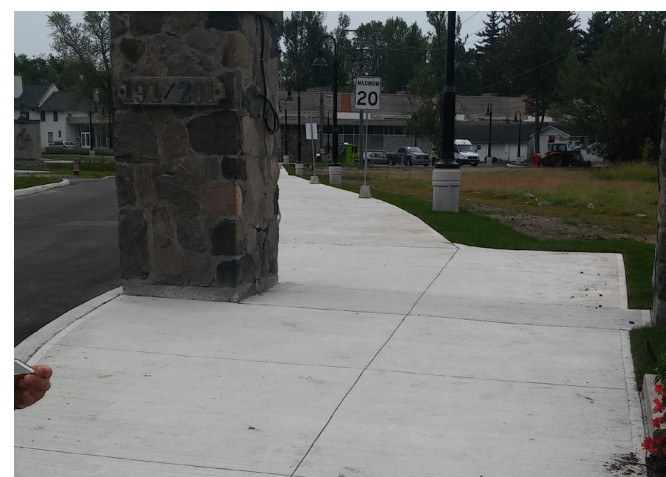
2 Undermined fence posts resulting from ongoing bluff erosion



3 Uninspired entrance to wooded area trail



4 Entrance to wooded area trail off Guildwood Parkway



5 Primary entrance to the Guild Park and Gardens



6 Damaged fencing along the top of bluffs



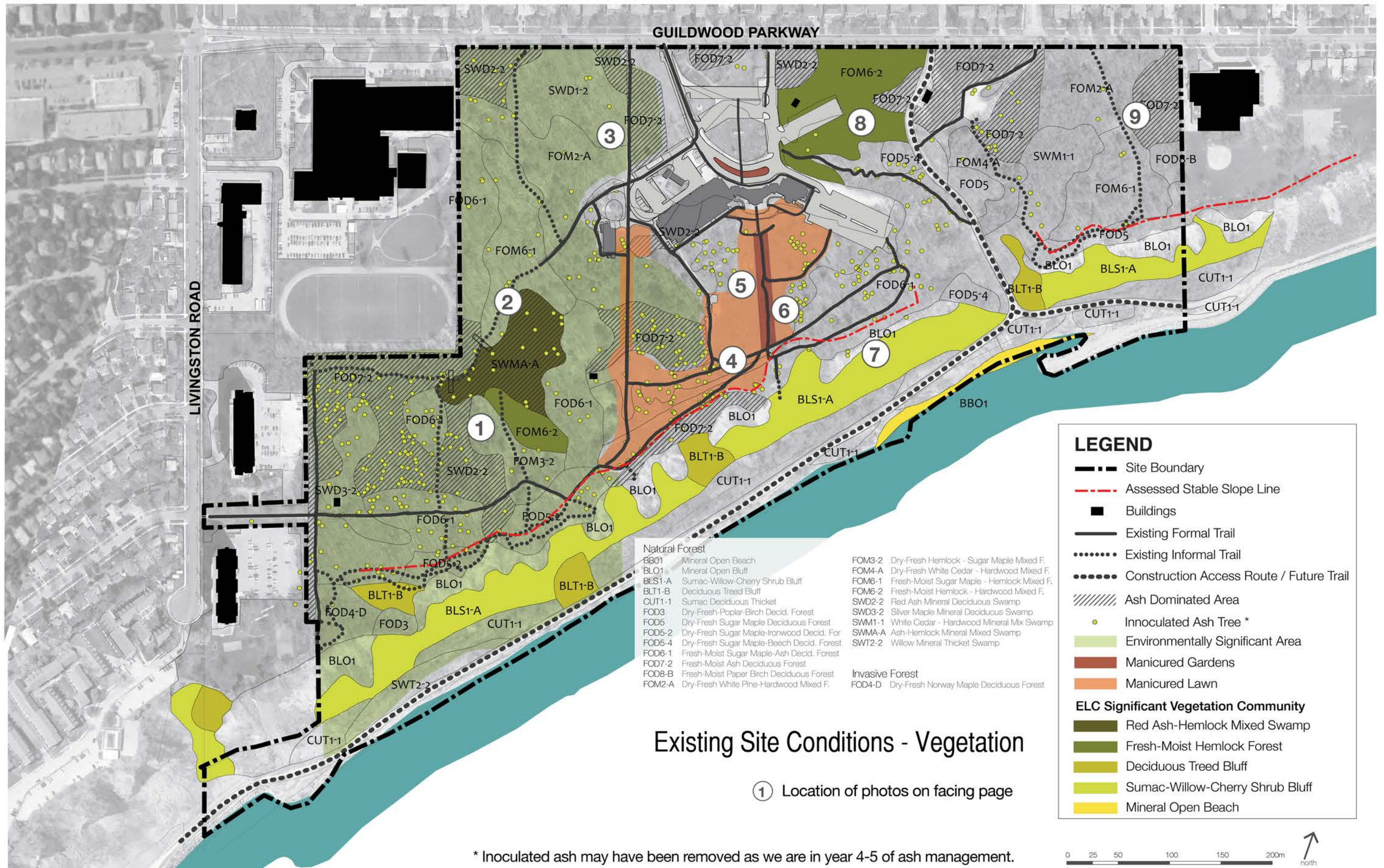
7 Construction access route gate. Gate is typically locked but visitors have climbed the fence for access



8 Entrance to East Trail Area parking area



9 Unlocked gate to access East Trail Area from sidewalk



Existing Site Conditions : Vegetation

The site contains several areas of important natural woodlands and manicured landscapes. Both the West Trail Area and East Trail Area have ecologically significant features, with the West Trail Area designated as an Environmentally Significant Area. Both areas fall within the transition life zone between the Southern Great Lake-St. Lawrence Forest Systems (TRCA, 2005). They are characterized by Boreal forest coniferous tree species, including white pine, eastern hemlock, and white cedar, and deciduous tree species, including sugar or red maples, basswood, and birch (OMNR, 2012b).

The property also contains several Ecological Land Classification (ELC) Significant Vegetation Communities, located in the wooded areas, along the bluff slopes, and the waterfront (refer to map for more detail). The existing ash trees are being managed for Emerald Ash Borer, and many have been inoculated against the pest. Despite this, removals have been, and will continue to be, required to ensure the safety of visitors.

In addition to natural vegetation, the property also has a large manicured landscape, located around the Guild Inn Estate. The manicured landscape includes both formal lawn areas and gardens. The gardens are a special attraction to the site, and feature elaborate perennial planting in and around cultural heritage artifacts.

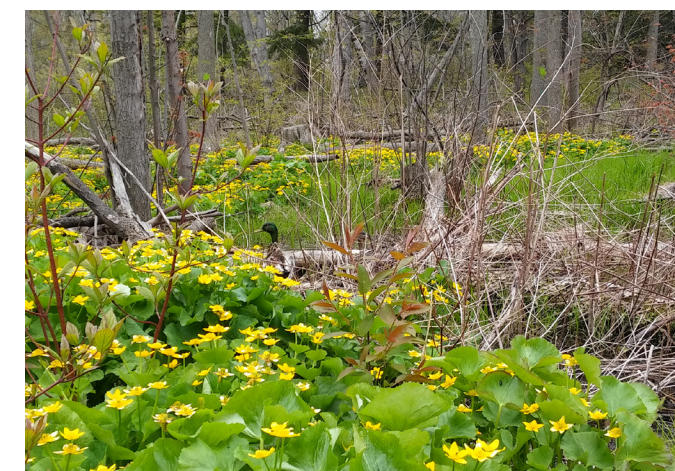
Future trail work should be conducted in such a way as to minimize disturbance to these unique and valuable natural and horticultural features.



1 Wooded area, hardwood forest



2 Moist swamp area



3 Spring flowers



4 Live ash trees inoculated against Emerald Ash Borer



5 Feature manicured gardens



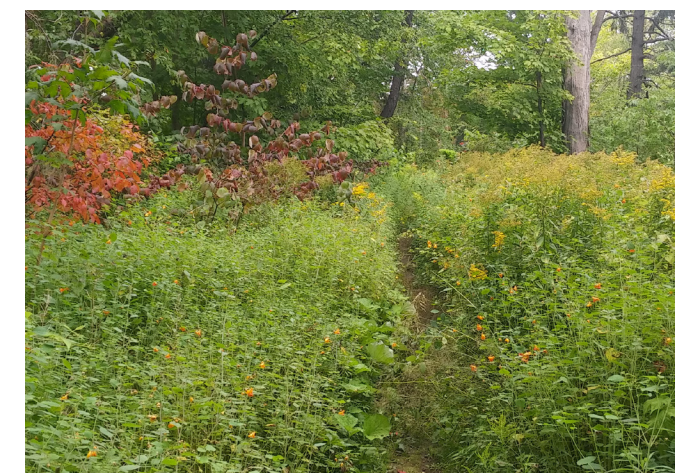
6 Manicured lawn in the cultural heritage area



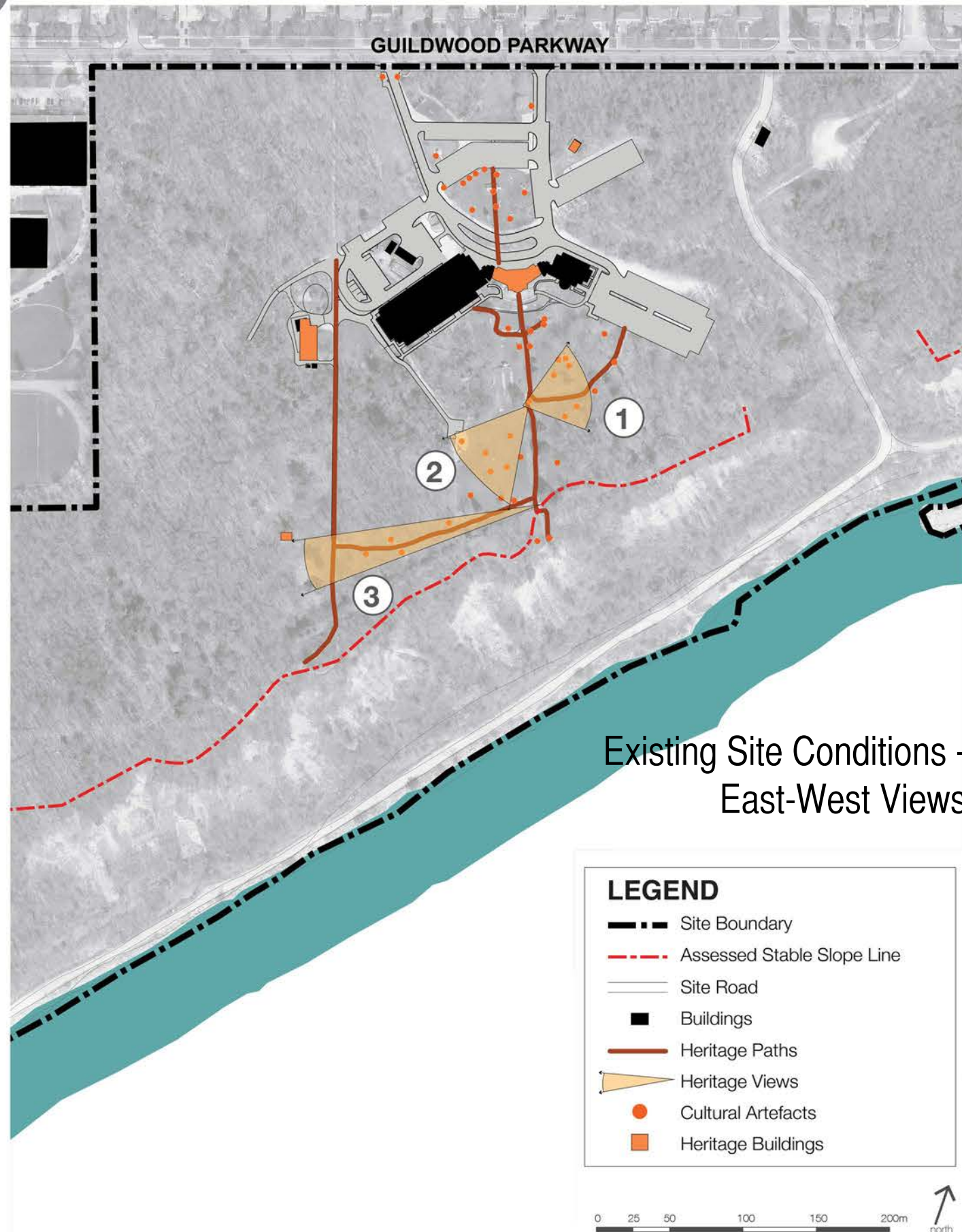
7 Bluff vegetation



8 Fresh-Moist Hemlock hardwood forest



9 East trail area vegetation



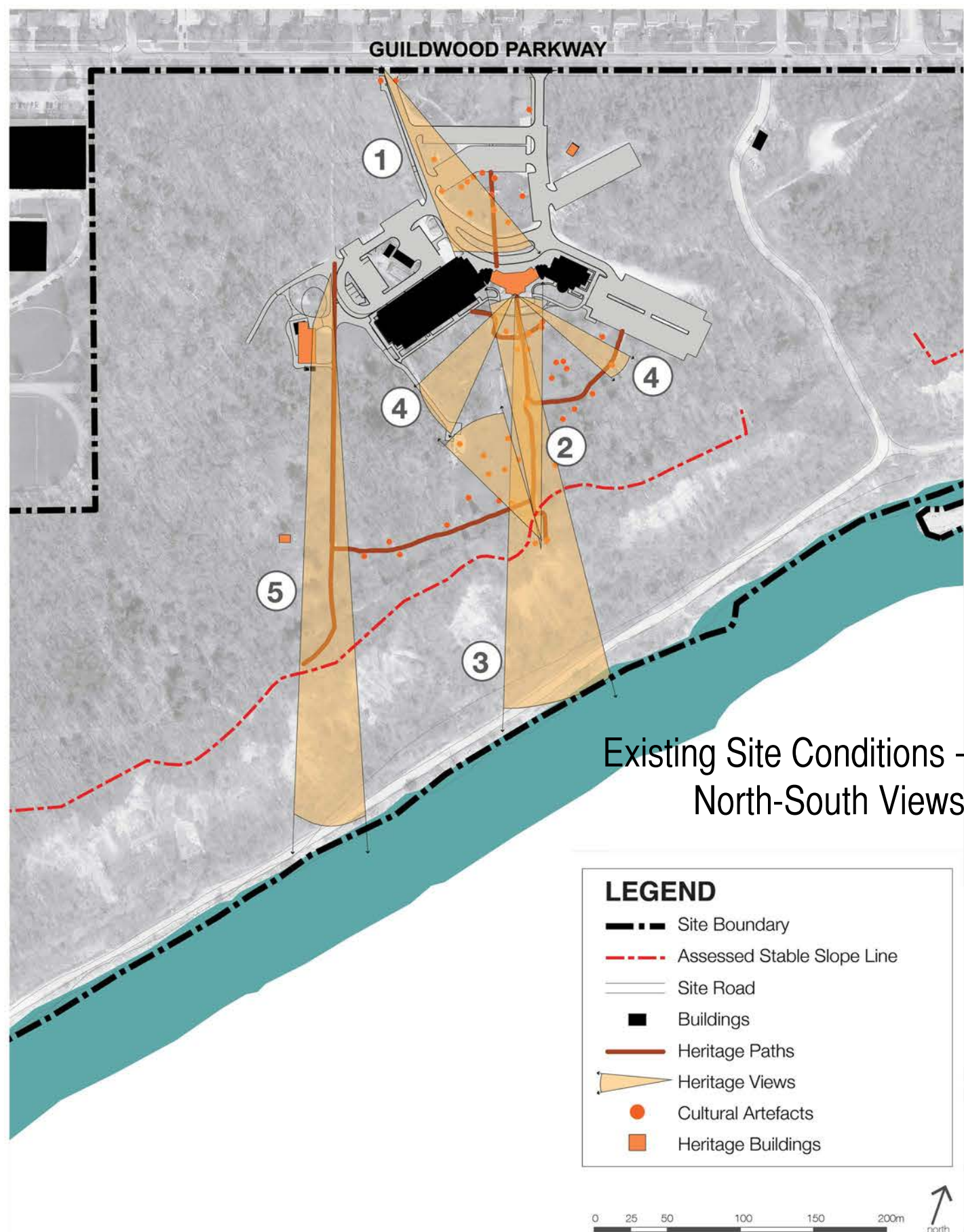
Existing Site Conditions : Views

The key **east-west** views at Guild Park & Gardens are:

1. The view east from the fountain (which is placed on the north/south path between Bickford House and the south entrance to the property) across the landscaped open space with the sculpture collection in the southeast garden.
2. The view west to the Greek Theatre from the main north/south pathway (extending from and to the south terrace of the Bickford House to the south entrance to the property).
3. The view west to the Osterhaut Cabin from the south entrance to the property.

The key **north-south** views at Guild Park & Gardens are:

1. The arrival sequence and views from the north entrance gates to the north façade of the Bickford House, which encompasses the public sculpture in-between.
2. The views to and from the south terrace of the Bickford House and the south entrance to the property at the edge of the Scarborough Bluffs, along and adjoining the north/south path.
3. The views to the lake from the south terrace of the Bickford House, along the main north-south path.
4. The views to and from the south terrace of the Bickford House, southwest and southeast between the house and the sculpture collections, including the Circle of Columns, which are set in landscaped open space with trees.
5. The view south from the west entry to the property (west of the main entrance gates) to the Scarborough Bluffs and Lake Ontario that takes in Clark Centre for the Arts on the west side of the pathway.



The view to the lake:



EXISTING - Primary view and path to lake - today. View to the lake is partially obstructed by plant material.

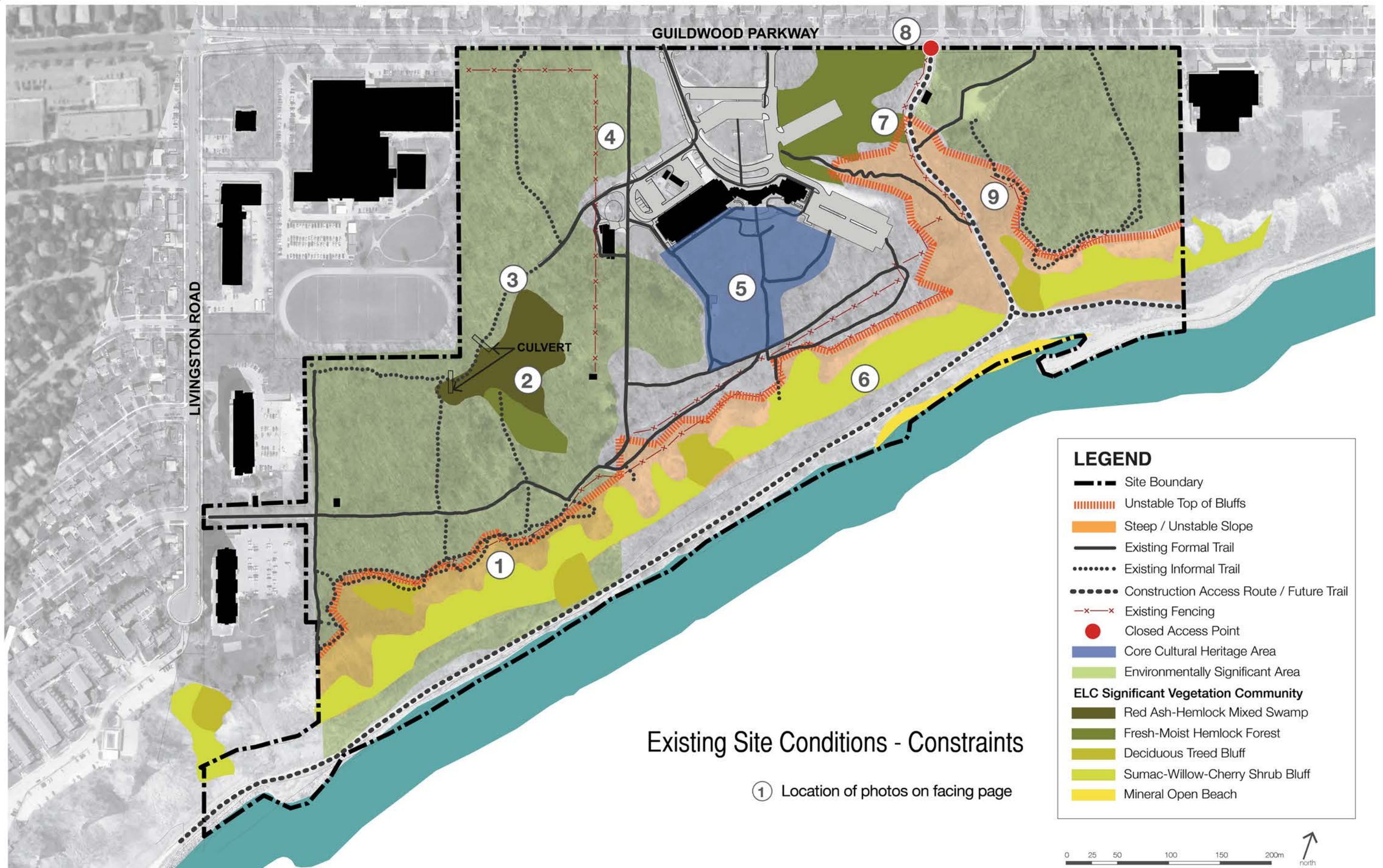
The arrival sequence:



EXISTING - View from main entrance gate to Guild Inn building - today. Entry sequence of estate landscape structure has been compromised.



PRECEDENT - Evidence suggests that during the period when it was an estate landscape, the experience of arrival at the Guild Inn site would have been heightened through design. Similar to other lake front estates of the period, such as the Smye estate in Oakville (shown above), the approach would have been characterized by a curving entrance drive through sculpted lawns along which trees and lower plantings would have been strategically placed to offer glimpses, hide, and then reveal the house as one approached. The intent of such a picturesque front lawn was to amplify and dramatize the experience of arriving at the house.



Existing Site Conditions : Constraints

As a result of the site analysis and public consultation process, constraints were identified that will affect future trail works. The primary site constraints include:

1. Unstable and eroding top of bluff edge;
2. Environmentally significant and sensitive vegetation areas;
3. Moist or swampy areas;
4. Ongoing Emerald Ash Borer impacts and maintenance;
5. Core cultural heritage area and artifacts;
6. Steep and unstable bluff slopes;
7. Existing fencing;
8. Closed access points; and,
9. Steep slopes along the construction access route.



1 Unstable and eroding top of bluff edge



2 Environmentally significant and sensitive vegetation areas



3 Moist or swamp areas



4 Ongoing Emerald Ash Borer impacts and maintenance



5 Core cultural heritage area and artifacts



6 Steep and unstable bluff slopes



7 Existing fencing



8 Closed access points



9 Steep slopes along the construction access route