

Enhancing Visitor Experience



Why enhancing the visitor experience of the Island is important:

Toronto Island Park offers a visitor experience unlike any other park in the city and is one of the largest parks in Toronto with park features and amenities that have been shaped by the Island's rich natural and cultural heritage. Approximately 1.5 million people visit annually and as many as 20,000 on a busy summer day. The park is also home to a wide variety of services and amenities, activities and destinations that offer many different experiences to many different people. There is something for everyone on the Island to do or you can visit simply to get away. Visitors currently access the Island via the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and can begin to plan their visit through the City's web page where they can gather Island information related to ferry schedules and ticket prices. Toronto Island is fully open in the summer months with reduced service, programs, and amenities through the spring and fall. Currently there is very limited activity on the Island in winter.

Issues to be addressed:

The gateway to Toronto Island is the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal is located on the central waterfront and yet it is not easy to find. In addition information and visitor services at the Terminal are limited. Arrival points on the Island though ferry landings offer little in the way of a welcome or arrival experience and information sharing is limited although there are small information kiosks to be found. The park itself is organized into a collection of activity centres, or hot spots, that lack connection and do not provide a unified park experience. These areas of concentrated activity put increasing pressure on the natural environment and infrastructure of the Island and contribute to the run-down character of certain areas we see in the park today. Since on island information and wayfinding is limited it is difficult to know what to do, where you need to go and how to get there. There are limited businesses offering rentals and food services on the Island. What is available is not always well

placed or accessible and limited in what is offered. Seasonal shut downs limit access to basic services although there are winter washrooms available in some locations. There are many existing Island assets such as buildings and pavilions that have potential for re-use and/or restoration.

What we have heard:

We have heard from visitors that information about the islands is not always accessible and that amenities and services are not consistently available between seasons. We have also heard that the internal waterways and water's edges are not well celebrated and integrated within the park experience. The islands four Blue Flag beaches provide a unique and important Island experience that is enjoyed by many, but can be overcrowded and lack consistent and easy access to supporting services and amenities. We have heard that future improvements need to be grounded in a realistic understanding of the demands and impacts of proposed uses, and that all ideas, activities and programs need to be "right sized" considering suitable locations and compatible uses while prioritizing the health and function of the natural environment to ensure the park thrives for generations to come.

Ideas + Actions being considered:

We have considered the visitor experience from the perspectives of both land and water. In support of a "light-touch" approach we have explored opportunities to enhance existing assets and features on the Island instead of creating new. We have identified areas that will continue to see concentrated activity and proposed improvements or adjustments to support future uses. We have also identified areas where decreased activity should be targeted for restoration of the natural environment and reduced access. We have explored maintaining existing activities and programs that are working well, while identifying opportunities to relocate programming across the Island, enhancing the visitor experience and operations. We have considered new program locations to minimize impacts, adapt and re-use existing structures and focus use in spaces that are already disturbed to limit future impacts on the natural environment.

The following ideas are based on inputs received through an extensive engagement process during Phase 1, and include inputs from City staff at various divisions, advisory groups, and the public.

1. Sharing information to help plan your visit

- Improve communication about how to get places and where to go (map)
- Provide useful and consistent wayfinding signage island-wide
- Expand infrastructure to support on-Island digital access to information
- Create accessible and scalable open spaces at arrival points and distributed throughout the park that can adapt to seasonal fluctuations, and special programming to deliver a consistent visitor experience and help plan your "Day on the Island"
- Provide clearer and friendlier access to information, both online and in-person at the ferries, landing and throughout the park using Island Ambassadors

2. Expanding opportunities for play and exploration for all ages and abilities

- Revitalize and expand existing play spaces across the islands
- Identify opportunities for new non-structured play elements (e.g. hammocks, landform)
- Identify opportunities to enhance existing sports offerings

3. Expanding opportunities for food, rental and retail

- A. Create a destination at Centre Ferry Landing to provide year-round visitor amenities and programming at Centre Island
- B. Create new rental opportunities for bikes, boats and beach equipment distributed throughout the park where people need them
- C. Revitalize ferry landings and gateways to provide a sense of arrival and amenities to address visitor's needs and requirements in peak and off-peak seasons
- D. Create new space at Gibraltar Point to promote Island-wide activity, embrace opportunities near the Lighthouse and Trout Pond and better connect Centre Island with the west side of the park

4. Enhancing uses on water

- A. Promote Long Pond Non-Motorized Zone for safer paddling
- B. Expand locations for new water nodes with integrated short-term storage and rental opportunities for non-motorized watercraft across the islands
- C. Improve safe and universal access to the Cove and Eastern Channel mooring wall
- D. Improve swim experience on all beaches

5. Enhancing uses on land

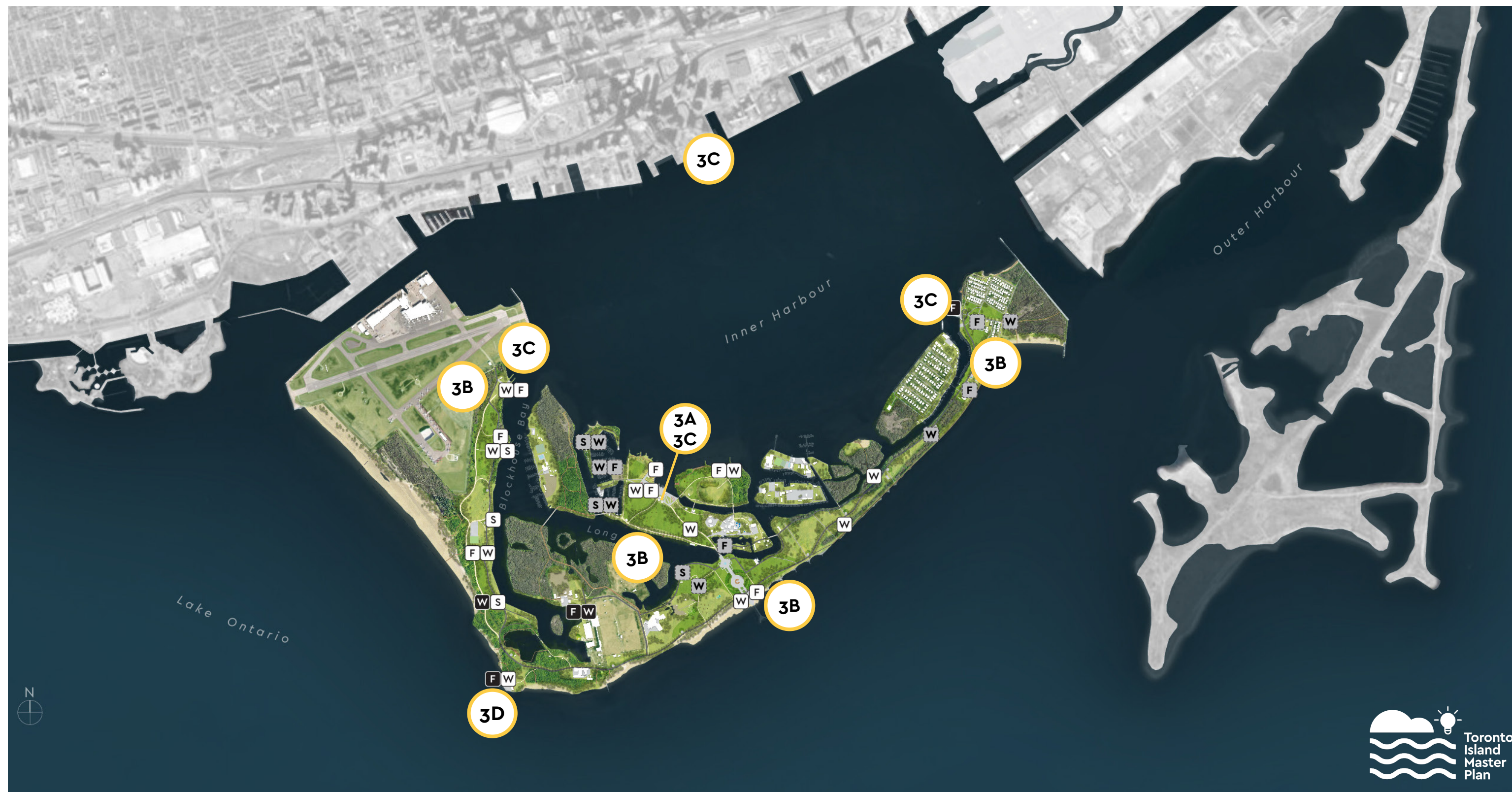
- A. Create dedicated welcoming spaces, or hubs, at all ferry landings to mark arrival, share information, orient visitors, and provide access to key facilities and amenities to start and end visits to the Island
- B. Formalize infrastructure to support event space at Hanlan's Point (e.g. landform, amphitheatre)
- C. Create improved opportunity for overnight experiences along a portion of the Hanlan's Mooring Wall and north of Trout Pond to take advantage of existing facilities nearby
- D. Revitalize Olympic Island to mitigate flooding and restore pavilion and structures to celebrate and enhance views of the city skyline
- E. Expand Hanlan's Beach clothing optional area
- F. Enhance and revitalize existing structures across the islands to create spaces for gatherings of various sizes in all seasons
- G. Identify opportunities for new structures, warming shelters and winterized washrooms associated with new and existing circulation routes and activity hubs to support year-round use of island facilities

6. Sharing all the Island stories

- Enhance online information and storytelling
- Expand Wayfinding island-wide
- Curate Narrative Trail and loops / lookouts
- Identify and share history and cultural heritage of the entire Island
- Establish strategy for Cultural markers and flags in alignment with City policy

7. Celebrating the role of art in placemaking

- Identify opportunities to partner with existing Island establishments to deliver programming and enhance existing offerings
- Explore opportunities to deliver seasonal, year-round, and permanent installations
- Identify opportunities for installations, projects, and programs at varying scales to suit sites, expertise, and capacities of partners



MAP EXP-01: Enhancing Visitor Experience - Food, Rental, Retail




IDEAS & ACTIONS:

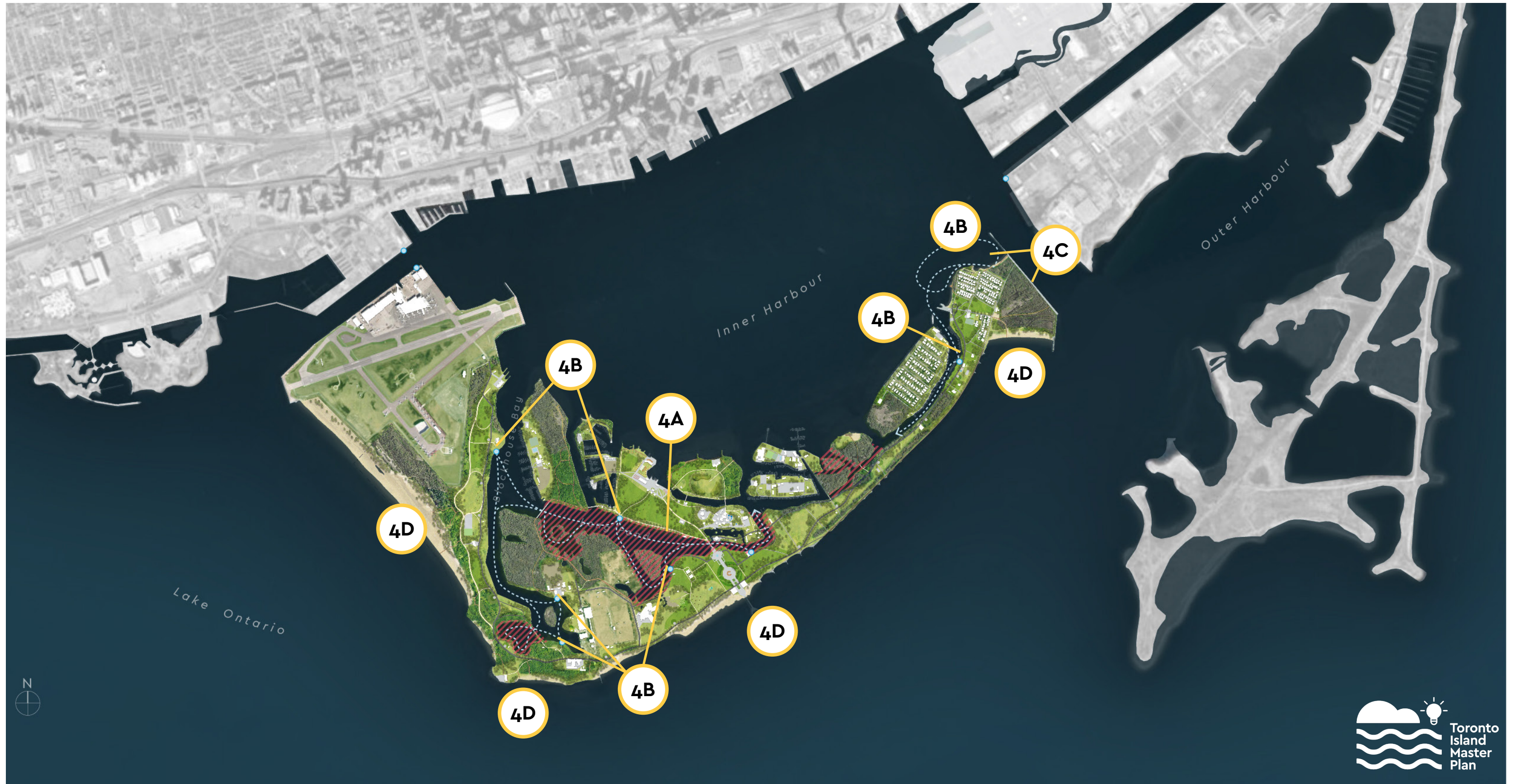
3. Expanding opportunities for food, rental and retail
 - A. Create a destination at Centre Ferry Landing to provide year-round visitor amenities and programming at Centre Island
 - B. Create new rental opportunities for bikes, boats and beach equipment distributed throughout the park

- C. Revitalize ferry landings and gateways
- D. Create a new space at Gibraltar Point to promote Island-wide activity, embrace opportunities near the Lighthouse and Trout Pond and better connect the park

SYMBOLS:

(F) Food; (W) Washroom; (S) Showers

-  Existing to Remain
-  Existing to be Enhanced
-  New



MAP EXP-02: Enhancing Visitor Experience - Water-based Uses

IDEAS & ACTIONS:

4. Enhancing uses on water

 - A. Promote Long Pond Non-Motorized Zone for safer paddling
 - B. Expand locations for new water nodes with integrated short-term storage and rental opportunities for non-motorized watercraft across the islands
- C. Improve safe and universal access to the Cove and Eastern Channel mooring wall
 - D. Improve swim experience on all beaches



MAP EXP-03: Enhancing Visitor Experience - Land-based Uses

IDEAS & ACTIONS:

5. Enhancing uses on land

- A. Create dedicated welcoming spaces, or hubs, at all ferry landings to mark arrival, share information, orient visitors, and provide access to key facilities and amenities to start and end visits to the Island
- B. Formalize infrastructure to support event space at Hanlan's Point (e.g. landform, amphitheatre)

- C. Create improved opportunity for overnight experiences along a portion of the Hanlan's Mooring Wall and north of Trout Pond to take advantage of existing facilities nearby
- D. Revitalize Olympic Island to mitigate flooding and restore pavilion and structures to celebrate and enhance views of the city skyline

- E. Expand Hanlan's Beach clothing optional area
- F. Enhance and revitalize existing structures across the islands to create spaces for gatherings of various sizes in all seasons
- G. Identify opportunities for new structures, warming shelters and winterized washrooms associated with new and existing circulation routes and activity hubs to support year-round use of island facilities