

Toronto Island Master Plan

Indigenous Placekeeping

What we heard

Through extensive and thoughtful Indigenous collaboration and engagement we have heard:

- Indigenous practices and values should be considered and have a place in how the island is managed today and into the future—known as the practice of “Placekeeping”.
- Land, water and all living things on the Islands are important and part of Placekeeping
- The living culture and diversity of its treaty and territorial rights-holders, and Toronto’s urban Indigenous communities should be shared and celebrated on this land.
- Create space for ceremony, healing, and cultural uses, to support economic opportunities, as well as space for arts and cultural programming.
- Ideas to reveal an Indigenous place must be respectful, led by Indigenous people, and not tokenize people or culture.
- The Island should be a place of learning and celebrating Canada’s First Peoples, where all visitors to the Island are keenly aware that they are visiting an Indigenous place.



MOOD SKETCH: Avenue of the Islands Gathering Space

Issues to be addressed:

Indigenous history, identity, and living culture are not present on the Island and need to be made more visible so that all visitors know they are visiting an Indigenous place.



Toronto Island Park Master Plan

- Ferry Landing
- Ceremonial Space
- Gathering Space
- Teaching Space
- Ceremonial Fire Space
- Cultural Narrative Trail
- Teaching / Gathering Node
- Interpretive Path (Park/Natural Area)
- Park Circulation Path



Toronto Island Master Plan

Revealing an Indigenous Place



MOOD SKETCH: A Rest Stop on the Cultural Narrative Trail

Cibola and Lakeshore Avenues form the primary circulation route for the Island, extending from Hanlan's Point at the west to Ward's Island at the east. These existing roadways could be transformed into a 5.5km Cultural Narrative Trail, a linked interpretive experience for storytelling and sharing Indigenous cultures. The trail could include small rest areas, moderately-sized gathering spaces, and a central feature space. Each space along the trail would be developed through engagement with Indigenous communities and partners. This interpretive trail would provide visitors with a chance to learn about the living cultures of Indigenous communities, including through signs sharing stories and histories, including Indigenous languages. Opportunities to learn about the diverse ecologies of the islands and Indigenous relationships to the natural world could be shared through native planting and demonstration gardens along the trail. Indigenous artists could also be featured through permanent and temporary site features and art integrated along the trail.

Many Indigenous cultural practices, including ceremonies and community gatherings, require access to natural spaces and the provision of privacy from the public. Through Master Plan engagement discussions, Snake Island was identified as a place of significance by Indigenous communities. It was identified as a place Indigenous communities could freely access and practice ceremony on the Toronto Islands, with the ability to limit access to the area by the general public, when needed. Ceremonial spaces are intended as locations for the sharing of knowledge and culture internally within Indigenous Communities and not the broader public. This location offers opportunities to co-manage the land and facilities to ensure the needs of Indigenous communities related to access, privacy, and land management are considered and met.



MOOD SKETCH: A Ceremonial Space on Snake Island



MOOD SKETCH: A gathering on Olympic Island



MOOD SKETCH: Sunset activation at Gibraltar Point

The Master Plan proposes several flexible community and event spaces to support activities and events meant to be shared with the broader public. This includes improvements to Olympic Island, Centre Landing and Gibraltar Point. These spaces will provide opportunities to share arts and cultural performances as part of a Pow Wow, National Indigenous Peoples Day or other public celebrations and events. The Master Plan also identifies year-round opportunities for Indigenous businesses and artisans to create and sell artwork, crafts and food.

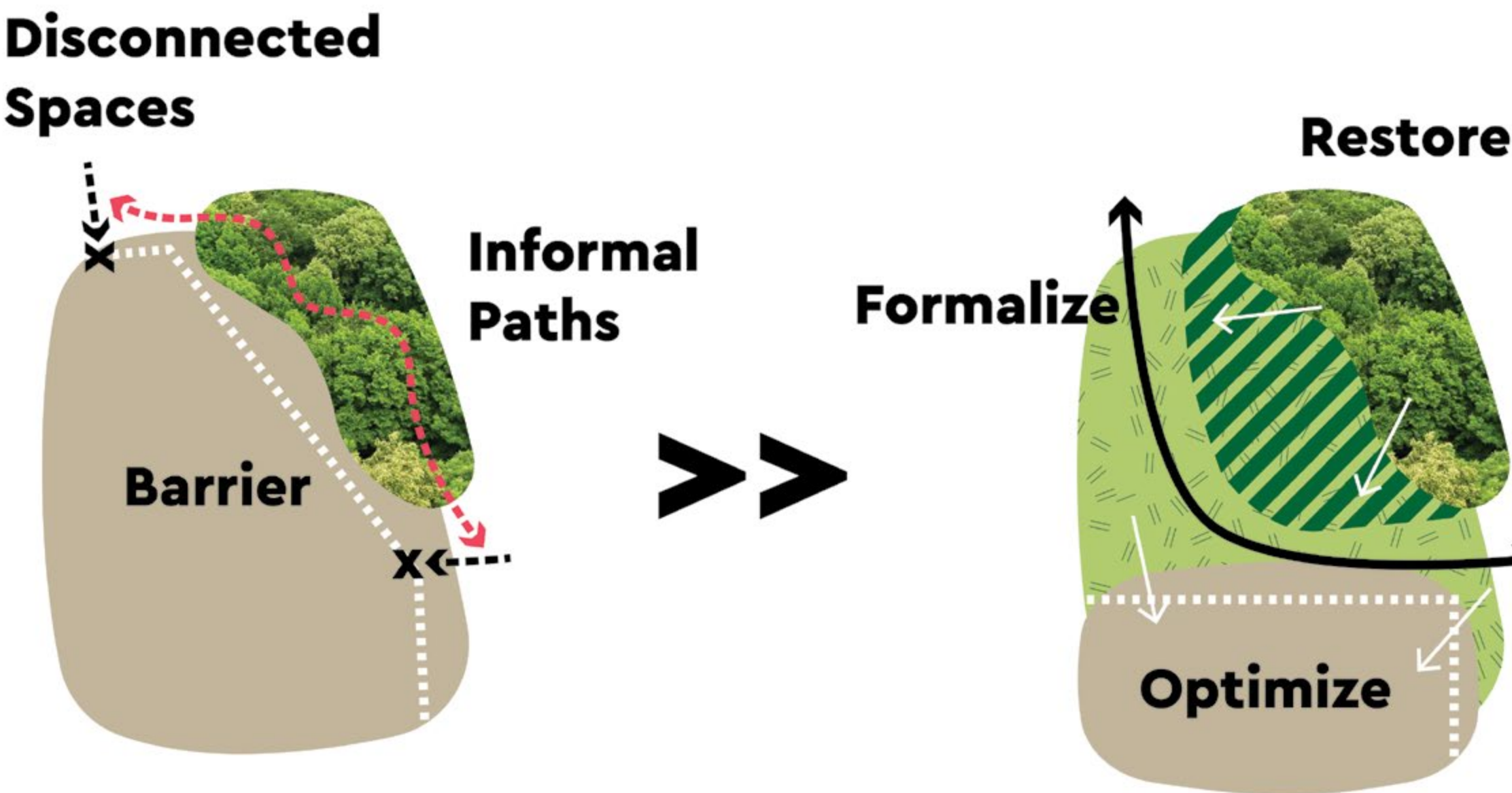
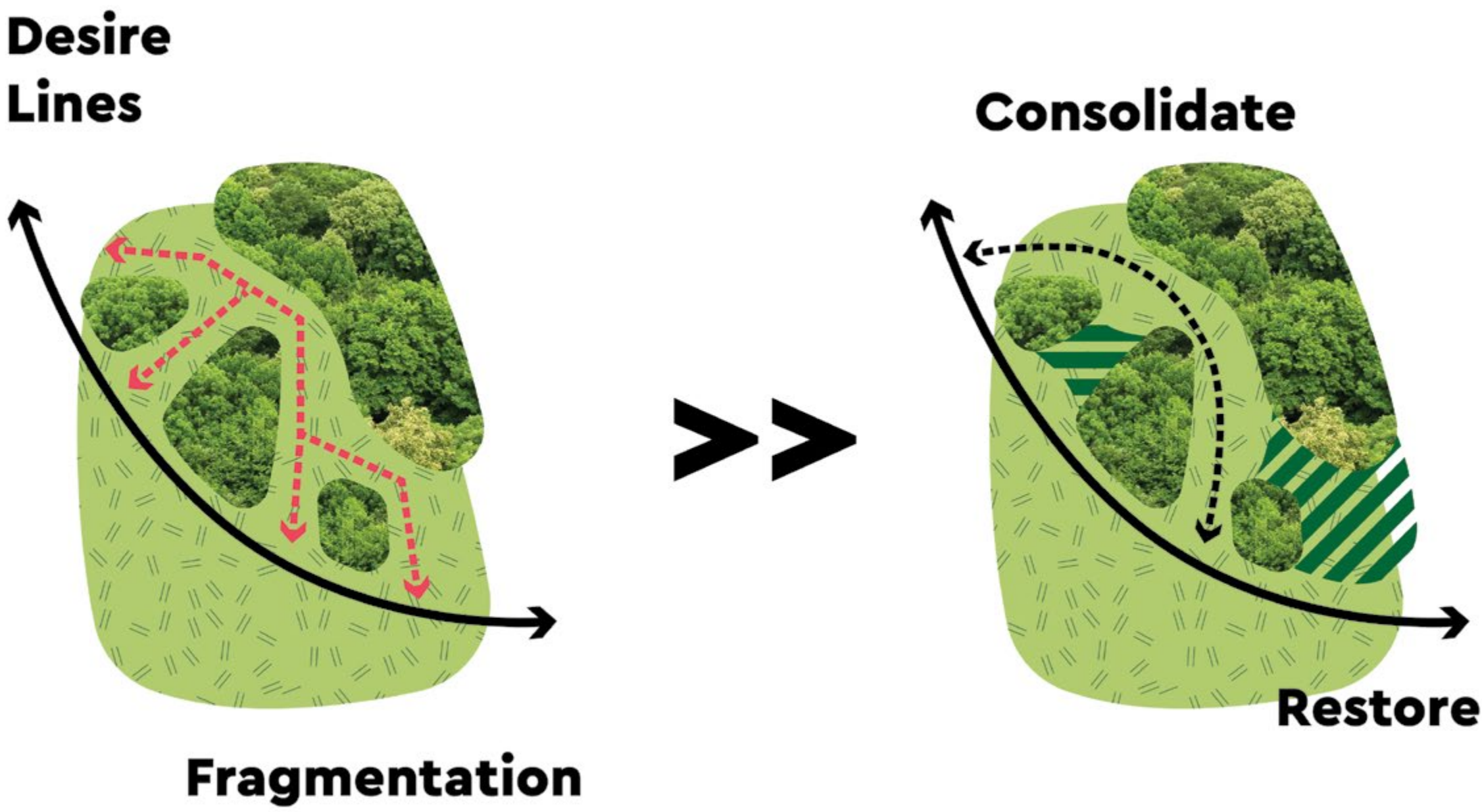
Toronto Island Master Plan

Light-Touch Approach

The Toronto Island Master Plan is committed to the implementation of targeted changes that respond to existing conditions, build on what works, and identify opportunities that will promote nature positive outcomes. Below are some of the strategies being used to realize the plan.

Reducing Fragmentation / Consolidating Informal Paths

The Master Plan advocates for the prioritization of opportunities to reduce fragmentation within the natural areas of the park. Through additional review and assessment of existing worn paths and identifying opportunities to consolidate routes, this approach looks to protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the park and restore disturbed area. By creating larger patches of habitat, more opportunities to improve biodiversity and resilient ecologies can be supported. By taking a more considered (or holistic) approach to design, opportunities to disturb less area and focus access where it will pose the least impact can be realized.

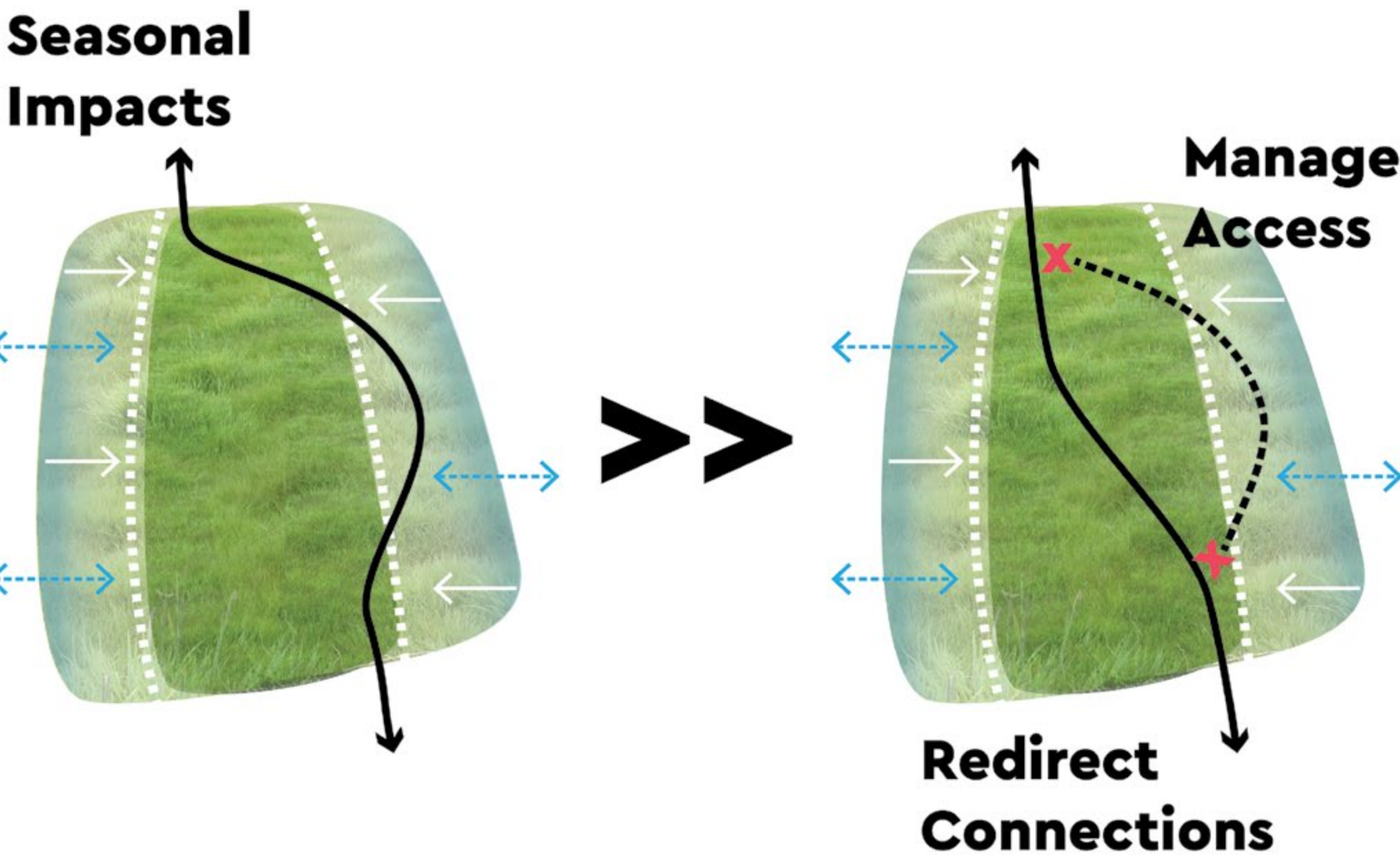
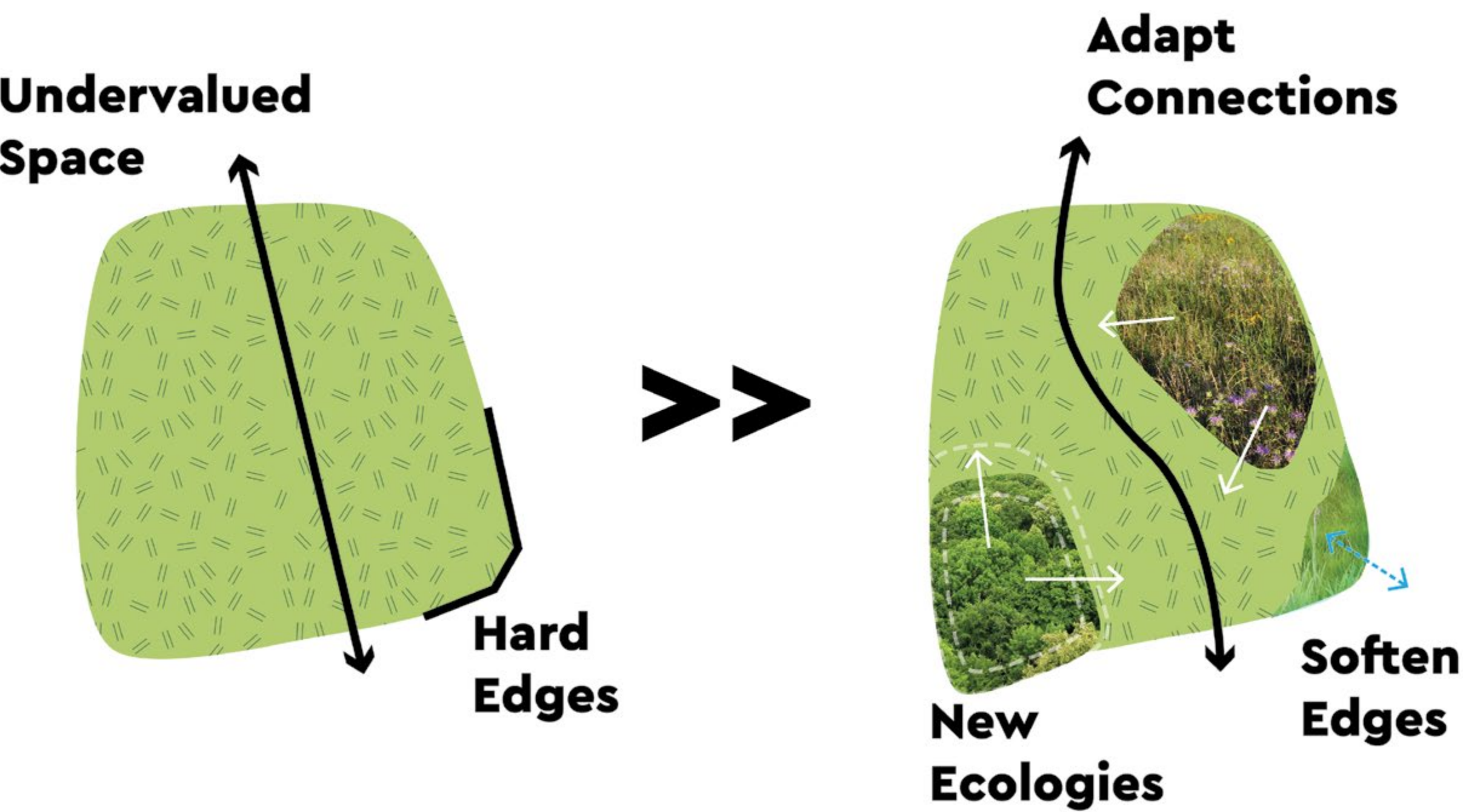


Optimizing Footprints / Reconnecting Spaces

The Master Plan recommends that as high-intensity areas of the park are identified for improvements, existing uses and space needed for activities or programs should be assessed to ensure only the required amount of area is dedicated to that use. This is particularly important for evaluating the needs of operational spaces within the park, such as the Parks Works Yard, that currently is located within a designated ESA. The Master Plan recommends needs assessments for existing spaces be undertaken to identify improvements that will reduce the impact these spaces have on their adjacent natural areas. These could include restoration of disturbed areas, buffer plantings to mitigate future impacts, or new pathways between existing park spaces that avoid disrupting the most sensitive ecological systems.

Softening Edges / Rewilding the Park

The Master Plan identifies opportunities to think differently about the naturalization of park spaces. Through the ongoing review and monitoring of the Park's open spaces, opportunities to replace under-used high-intensity maintenance spaces, like mown lawns, with plantings that promote higher biodiversity and ecological value will be identified. These opportunities also extend to how edges and shorelines are considered. Where aging infrastructure exists and does not positively contribute to the ecological function or activities on the Island, opportunities to remove hard edges and reinstate natural soft shorelines that contribute to aquatic and terrestrial habitat will be considered.



Redirecting Connections / Managing Access

The Master Plan identifies opportunities to realign existing pathways that have been historically and more recently been impacted by high lake effect to support year-round access where it's needed. New or re-purposed paths can be identified for seasonal access, where appropriate, and considered as part of a planned and intentional management strategy for the park that prioritizes the restoration and regenerative needs of the ecological systems of the Island over the opportunities for humans. These seasonal routes can also form part of an interpretation approach to educate about, advocate for and protect the natural areas of the Island.

Toronto Island Master Plan

Natural Heritage Areas

Promoting Ecological Integrity

Within the Toronto Islands, there are many diverse and complex systems that support the natural and built components of the islands and waterways. These systems are continuously shaped and changed through human use of the park, but their value, benefits and function for the wildlife and habitat within the park are critical to not only the health (or ecological integrity) of the park but also the city at-large.

The Master Plan seeks to define a framework that prioritizes natural processes, supports conditions that promote the abundance and health of native species, and enhances diversity within natural areas to create more resilient systems for the islands. The plan advocates for the acceptance of the underpinnings of biodiversity, including a joyous embrace of wildness on the islands.



Types of Natural Areas



Environmentally Significant Area (ESA)

The Island contains six Environmentally Significant Areas based on the criteria identified in the City of Toronto's Official Plan. These spaces represent both naturally occurring and constructed ecosystems. The areas are generally maintained and protected but, due to the Island's public character, experience impacts from human activity such as invasive species establishment and habitat degradation. These areas represent significant assets for the local and regional natural heritage systems.

Provincially Significant Wetland Complex (PSW)

The Toronto Islands contain the Toronto Islands Coastal Wetland Complex, which has been evaluated as a Provincially Significant Wetland (PSW). This wetland complex includes 34 features which are geographically separate but hydrologically, ecologically, and functionally connected via Lake Ontario and the water bodies of the island system. Many of the features are also included within the ESAs of Toronto Island.

Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI)

The combined areas of the ESAs and PSW within the Toronto Islands system are also identified as a Candidate Area of Natural and Scientific Interest, Life Science. This area represents the best example of a shoreline ecosystem in this ecoregion of Ontario, and by extension is critical for representation in all of Ontario. Protection of the best representative areas is a recognized strategic approach for biodiversity protection.

Natural Area Management

To support the management of natural areas across the Islands, the Toronto Island Master Plan recommends that a Natural Area Management Strategy is established. This strategy will situate nature, wildlife, and natural processes as a priority in the decision-making framework of the park, from operations to programming.

Using a multi-pronged approach, the strategy will highlight the importance of education, advocacy, and stewardship in supporting the cultural shifts needed to realize the long-term vision of the Master Plan. It will also acknowledge the importance of providing opportunities for public, first-hand experience within nature to share the significance and benefits of these spaces for all living things in the health and well being of the waterfront, city, and region.

Protection of Existing Resources

Where disturbance has been limited, protection is essential to mitigating impacts from human use on the natural environment.

Through ongoing monitoring, environmental sensitivity should be assessed park-wide to confirm compatible uses (including no-go areas). Based on the assessed impacts, design of spaces and programming may need to be relocated or adjusted to ensure protection of existing resources and support of the park's overall ecological health.

Restoration of Impacted Areas

Where natural areas are impacted by human activity but are still contributing to the overall ecological integrity of the park, restoration should be prioritized to reduce fragmentation and restore natural processes.

Initiatives should seek to create environments that support dominance of native species within the natural system. Also, opportunities to engage visitors within the processes and future restoration works should be considered.

Managing Access

Allowing some access into natural areas that support education and opportunities to experience biodiversity and nature first-hand should be considered. Access to highly sensitive spaces should be actively discouraged to protect the Island's ecological integrity.

Clear communication about accessible areas and suitable uses, including seasonal or temporary closures, should support education, advocacy and stewardship throughout the park.

Toronto Island Master Plan

Four-Season Activation



MOOD SKETCH: Winter Pavilion and activation

Celebrating the Winter Island

Toronto Island in the winter is a quieter place. The ferries are less frequent or, if the harbour freezes, do not run at all. The master plan envisions the Island as a natural escape, where pathways, some cleared and others left snow-covered, create opportunities to experience the tranquil peace and quiet, to hear the crisp crunch of snow under foot. Expanded seasonal programs and rentals might include snow shoes or other equipment to help access more remote places. Other improvements might include expanded winterized washrooms, sheltered places to stop and enjoy views within the park and across the chilly lake, and places new and old to grab a snack and warm up after a thrilling adventure through the park.

Winter ferry access could expand to include service Centre Landing, as well as Ward's, to provide opportunities for a winter activity loop from the east end of the Island to Centre Island and take advantage of extended retail and food opportunities along the way. A new Visitor Centre, attractions, such as skating, a winter village, and destination dining at Centre might also provide diverse options to enjoy an Island winter.

Spring Awakening

The Island in spring is a place bursting with new life and excitement for the season to come. Warming days provide great opportunities to explore and discover some of the diverse wildlife of the Island. In support of creating a lasting and healthy home for some of the more sensitive and timid animal residents, it is important to communicate that some areas will need to be closed off or limited at certain times of year.

Opportunities to build on nesting habitat protection practices, like those already used for migratory birds (like the Piping Plover), turtles, and many fish who call the park home—for at least part of the year—coupled with expanded natural area interpretation and education opportunities throughout the park will help contribute to a culture of stewardship.

The Island in spring is also a great place to travel on bicycle or foot to explore the park before the excitement of summer takes hold. The water is a little chilly for extended swims, but paddling through the lagoons can provide some truly unique views before all the plants leaf out.



MOOD SKETCH: Natural area closures for nesting seasons



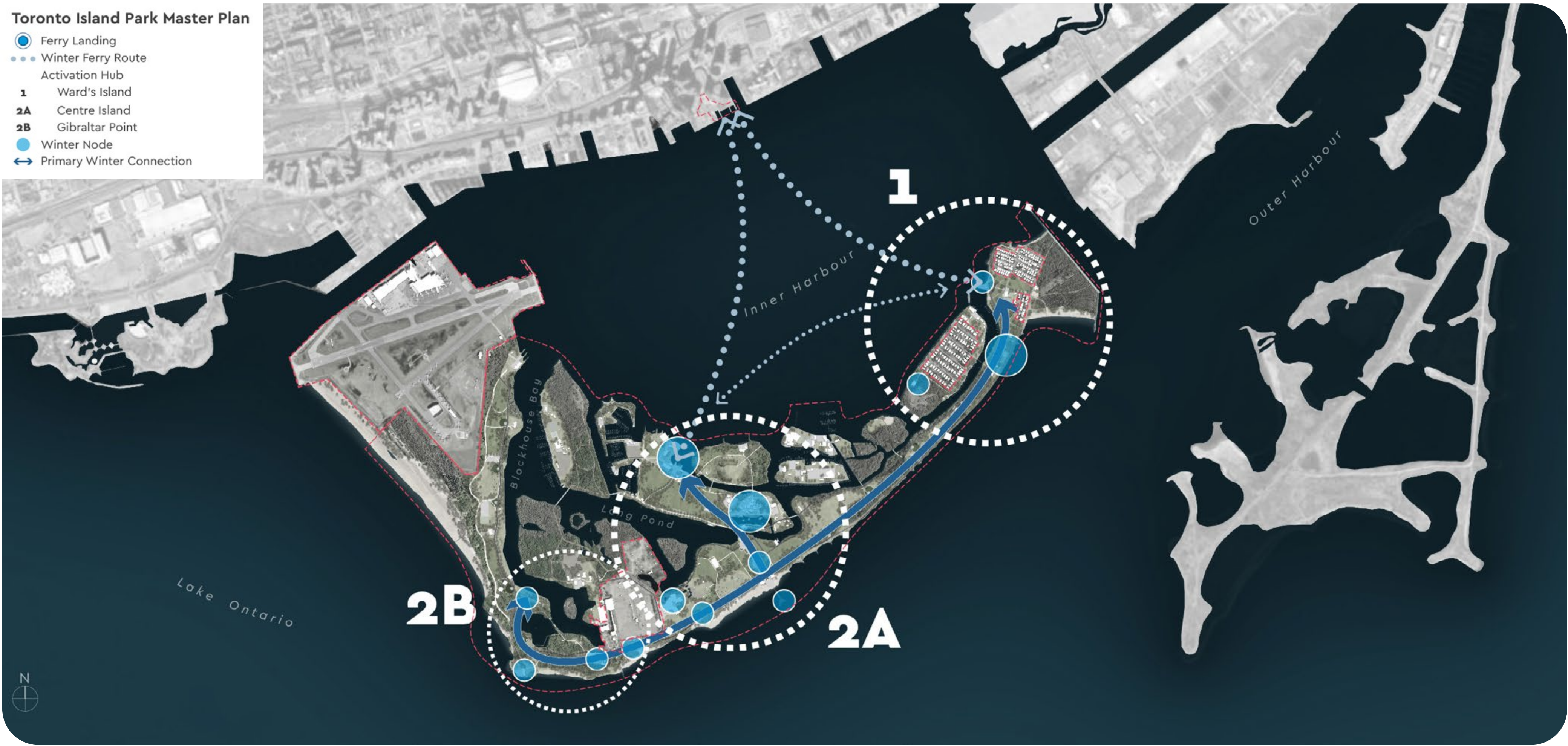
MOOD SKETCH: Autumn within the park

Autumn Opportunities

As the excitement of summer winds down and the season of cozy sweaters and warm soups begins, the Island becomes a kaleidoscope of colour. The trees turn many shades of yellow, orange and red, and if it's still early enough, the water can be warm enough for a wet-footed stroll along the beaches.

Walking and cycling on the Island continue to be fantastic ways to explore in the fall and the opportunity for new shelters and destinations will create places to pause, escape unexpected weather, or enjoy the view as the Island starts to wind down for the season. New or improved pathways within the park can offer glimpses of the changing landscape and new ways to enjoy and experience the diverse nature of the Island.

Disc golf continues between Centre Island Pier and Ward's Island and the opportunity for a new year-round Visitor Centre, with its rotating exhibitions and views to the open meadow south as well as the destination dining at the Centre Island Ferry Landing could serve to inform visitors that there is always something to do or see at the Island when the summer ends.



Expanding Access

To support a four-season experience, the city will need to expand access to the Island in the winter. The master plan is considering opportunities to provide service to Centre Island and Ward's Island year-round to support not only existing Island activities (including the Island Nature and Science School, Artscape, Toronto Water, and the residents) but also to support new programming and activation that will expand gradually as winterized facilities and year-round ferry service are provided.

Initially, improvements to facilities at Ward's Island should be prioritized to serve the existing ferry service and winter uses. As new ferries are brought into service and Centre Island winter programming is developed, facilities within the central and western areas of Centre Island should be expanded to serve visitors year-round. Four-season programming across the Island will continue to evolve as different improvements are implemented.

Toronto Island Master Plan

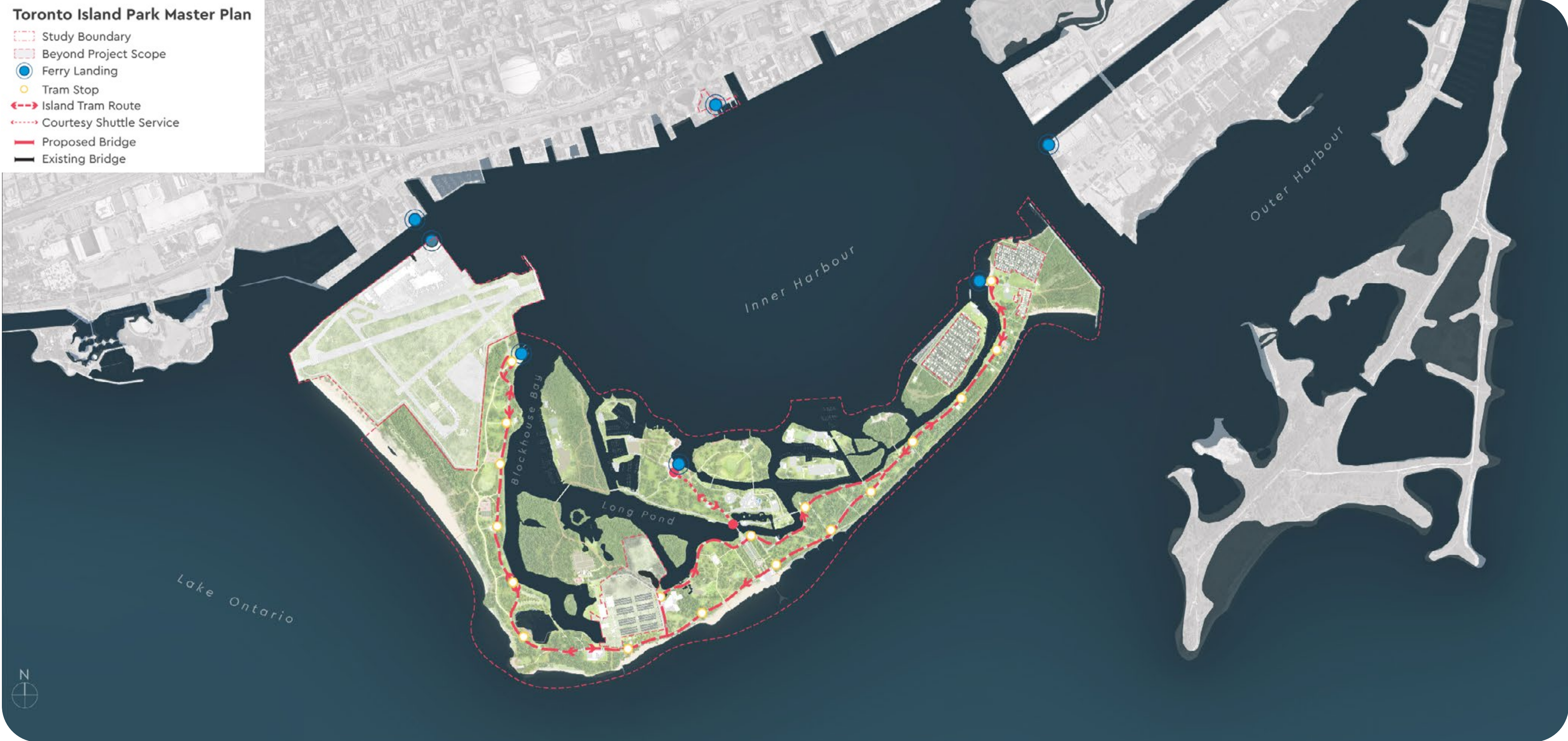
Island Transportation

Moving Around the Island

At 242ha (598 acres) of land area and over 5km long from end to end, the Island is one of the largest parks in Toronto. It includes natural and built features and destinations distributed across the expansive park, providing diverse park experiences for everyone. Visitors to the Island primarily walk or cycle between destinations, with limited accessible transportation options. The current transportation network is not designed to enhance visitor experience and safety throughout the park. Improvements to the on-island transportation represents one of the key opportunities of the Toronto Island Master Plan.

Toronto Island Park Master Plan

- Study Boundary
- Beyond Project Scope
- Ferry Landing
- Tram Stop
- Island Tram Route
- Courtesy Shuttle Service
- Proposed Bridge
- Existing Bridge



Enhancing Accessibility

Accessible options are limited and not consistent across the Island. The master plan has identified opportunities to create a continuous transportation network to connect key destinations from Hanlan's Point to Ward's Island. The service could operate on existing roadways and incorporate elements of the existing Tram Tour attraction to establish a more interactive and educational experience and transportation network for the park. A courtesy shuttle service could connect Centre Landing to the Avenue of the Islands to help visitors of all ages and abilities get to their destinations comfortably and safely. The transportation service would consider year-round service and be designed to suit the size and needs of the Island.

Ways to Move

Active mobility is central to how people experience the Island. However, the long distances between places makes moving through the park challenging. Pathways have to accommodate many different modes of travel, speeds, levels of mobility and experience.

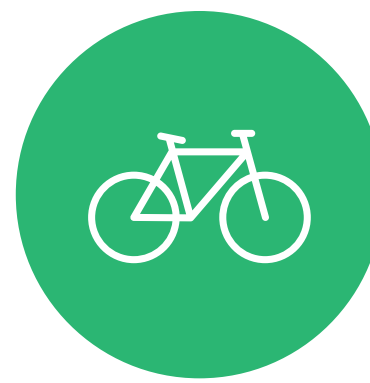
The park will continue to be a place to enjoy a mostly car-free experience. Opportunities to expand rentals throughout the Island will allow more visitors easier access to bikes, tandem bikes and quad cycles that are already available at the Centre Island Pier. The opportunity to introduce other bike types will be considered to make moving people and things across the Island more accessible and reduce the burden of bringing things with you to the Island and taking them home.

New visitor centres at the landings and wayfinding throughout the Island will help visitors plan their journey and decide on the best way to get to their destinations.



WALK

The pedestrian experience is key to leisurely taking in the Island. Pathways enhancements being considered include: new rest stops, water stations, appropriate lighting and wayfinding to make walking in the park more comfortable and predictable so visitors can focus on enjoying the journey.



BIKE

Whether you're bringing your own bike to the Island or renting one once you arrive, cycling is the fastest way to get around the park. To make cycling easier on the Island improvements such as more locking stations, expanded rentals (including short-term options), and new connections will help get you on your way.



CARGO BIKE

Moving things around the Island is particularly challenging unless you have the right equipment. To reduce reliance on fuel-powered vehicles and reduce the number of large carts and wagons on the ferries, opportunities to expand the rental fleet to include cargo bikes will be considered.



TANDEM + QUAD-CYCLES

Touring the Island on tandem bikes and quad-cycles has been a key attraction to the Island for generations. With expanded locations from Hanlan's Point to Ward's Island, not only will this idyllic mode of travel be more accessible, but it will also be easier to use to travel from one end of the park to the other.



ISLAND TRAM

Sometimes walking or biking is not an option for Island visitors. By introducing an "Island-sized" transportation network with stops at key destinations, predictable service, and opportunities to share Island stories along the ride, the Island Tram could be a way to improve the accessibility of the park and provide safe travel.



MOOD SKETCH: Park Pathway Improvements

Promoting Safe Enjoyment for all Visitors

Part of the charm of the Island is the winding roads that carry pedestrians, cyclist and service vehicles. The limited number of vehicles on the Island make for an enjoyable space to learn to bike, wander freely or bee-line to the beach. The master plan considers new opportunities to connect to and explore hidden parts of the park, spread out destinations and improve access to the Island from the mainland so that bottlenecks are minimized and everyone can get to where they want to go safely and easily.

The master plan also considers how servicing and operations on the Island work and will continue to keep the Island working for the long-term. Initiatives such as introducing more small service vehicles and electric-powered vehicles will help reduce conflicts with other park users and minimize the impact on the sensitive environments of the Island. Limiting service vehicle access and deliveries on the Island to quieter hours, reducing speed limits, avoiding peak times, and the potential introduction of a servicing ferry operating from the Port Lands will limit interactions between pedestrians and vehicles on the ferries and throughout the park to leave more of the park roads for park users to share.

www.toronto.ca/IslandMasterPlan

Toronto Island Master Plan

Internal Waterways

History on Water



Canoeing on Toronto Island
(1891, City of Toronto Archives)



Couple rowing in the lagoon
(1908, City of Toronto Archives)



Three women fishing
(1908, City of Toronto Archives)



Open water swimming race
(1914, City of Toronto Archives)



Navigating the Waterways

For generations people have used the waterways of the Island to travel between destinations, fish and gather food, and immerse themselves in nature. Recent park use has shifted away from the connection of the Island to the lagoons, but the master plan looks to revitalize the experience of the waterways by considering the designation of Non-motorized Priority Zones. These areas could create safer spaces for learning to paddle, more areas and different ways to get on and off the water, and serve as significant measures to protect the rich ecological value and biodiversity within the aquatic habitats of the park.

Two new types of water nodes have been identified within the internal waterways for consideration. Rental nodes provide locations for park visitors to hire watercraft to explore the Island from the water. Landing nodes provide opportunities for paddlers to dock for short periods so they can explore the park on land. Water nodes may include constructed docks or soft shores and tie-off points.

Developing robust wayfinding signage for the waterways and landings is also critical to enhancing the visitor experience of the park. Signs along the waterways will communicate distance to destinations and other nodes and identify Non-motorized Priority Zones. At landings, signs and maps will help situate and direct visitors to new and different areas of the park.



MOOD SKETCH: Paddling within the lagoons

Enhancing Safety

Safety on water is a complex issue across Toronto's waterfront. While the city seeks to encourage residents to enjoy the water's edge in diverse ways, it is also critical that everyone is safe while on the water. The master plan looks to create areas that will support learning and exploring without exposing visitors to unpredictable water conditions or high volume marine navigation channels.

By considering non-motorized vessel prioritization within sections of the lagoons, paddlers could be able to develop their skills without having to dodge higher speed watercraft. Operationally, these zones could concentrate use within the park and lead to decreased demand on Parks staff and First Responders who are regularly called to rescue wayward paddlers from deep or choppy open waters.

Protecting the Island's Ecology

The internal lagoons have always provided critical habitat and ecological value for the Island and Toronto's waterfront. In support of protecting and enhancing some of these ecosystems, the Non-motorized Priority Zones could also include some of the more sensitive aquatic areas of the park and spaces that have been identified as possible locations for expanding or creating new habitats, such as Trout Pond or within the Snake Island ESA.

The consideration for reducing motorized vessel traffic in the designated areas may cut down on the negative impacts of water churning, wave action, and reduce the sound impacts on these sensitive ecologies. Many of the Non-motorized Priority Zone areas are also shallow which can pose dangers for larger vessels traveling through and makes them ideal locations to prioritize canoes, kayaks and paddle boards.

Toronto Island Master Plan

Getting To The Island

Extending the Experience

One of the most memorable aspects of visiting Toronto Island Park is the trip across the Harbour by boat. To support the recommendations of the Master Plan, travel to the islands needs to be accessible (both physically and financially), should demonstrate a commitment to sustainability, and should create an opportunity to extend the education, advocacy, and stewardship practices from the park to the mainland.

The journey to the Island should be considered as an opportunity to share the significance of the park as a unique space in the history, culture and ecology of Toronto and the larger region, including the significance of the land and water to the First Peoples of this territory and it's ongoing importance.



Types of Travel



Ferry

Planning and design to replace the city's ferry fleet with all electric vessels is already under way. These new vessels will address current challenges with capacity, reliability and promote a more sustainable way of getting to and from the islands. A new green ferry fleet will bring opportunities to explore expanding access year-round to key landings within Toronto Island Park.



Water Taxi

The existing water taxi service allows visitors to travel from several locations across the harbourfront to designated landings on the islands. Water taxis are a critical piece of the waterfront transportation network and provide the opportunity to expand waterfront transportation to further integrate within future initiatives being considered in the Marine Use Strategy.



Personal Watercraft

For those privileged with owning their own boats, Toronto Island Park can offer a unique escape to moor for a day or longer at public and private slips. Additional mooring points along existing dock walls are being considered to expand opportunities and provide access for a variety of price points and amenities for people to bring their own boats to the Island.



Servicing Ferry

Getting service vehicles on and off the islands are critical to the operations of the park and businesses, and for servicing the residences of Toronto Island. This master plan builds on the Marine Use Strategy to explore opportunities for relocating servicing activities away from Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and creating dedicated routes to improve access and safety on the ferries.



Pedestrian Bridge or Tunnel

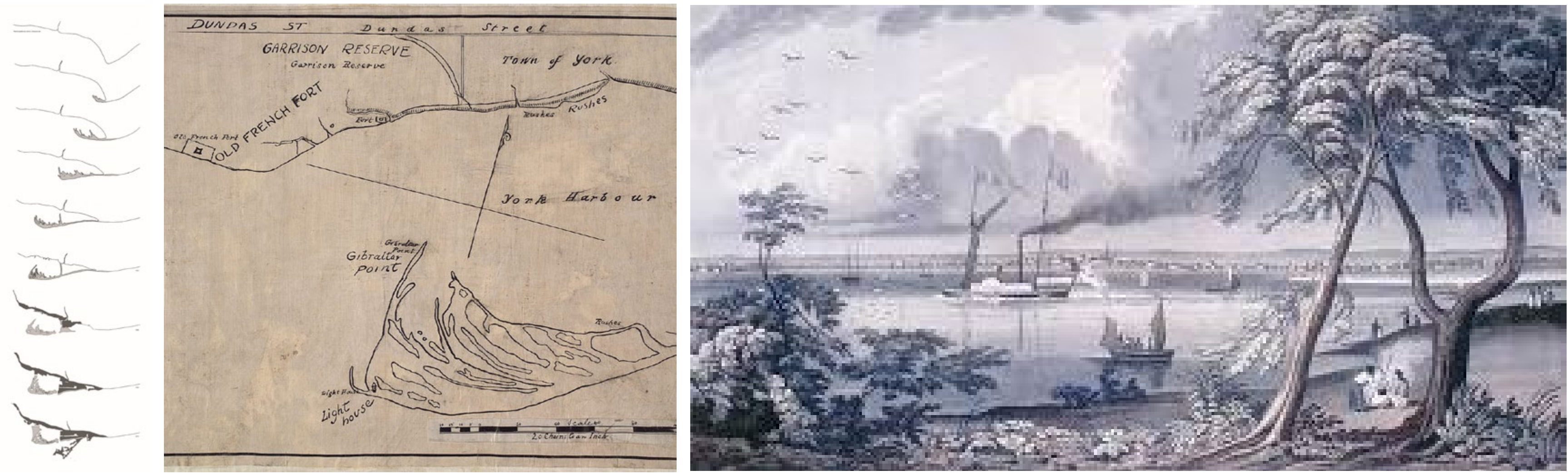
Though our engagement process we have received lots of interest and feedback about a pedestrian bridge or tunnel to make getting to the island more accessible. Some people shared ideas in support of this while others were strongly opposed. Additionally, both the port and airport lands are not included within the Master Plan study area.

While this Master Plan does not exclude the potential of future bridge and tunnel connections between the city and the Island, the reality of an operational airport and shipping port at both ends of the park require the recommendations of this study prioritize approaches that maintain both areas and existing operations.

Any future exploration of these ideas would need to be guided by the principles established in this Master Plan framework and would be led as a separate study related to a particular proposal to confirm feasibility, suitability and costs.

Toronto Island Master Plan

Cultural Heritage + Interpretation



Images of Toronto Island formation and condition prior to settlement (City of Toronto Archives)

Pre-Settlement Formation and Use

Settler accounts, records and investigations of the formation of the islands theorize that a long spit was created by the gradual deposition of sand and gravel eroded from the Scarborough Bluffs over thousands of years. The form of the sand spit shifted with currents, winds and forces of nature and has only stabilized as a result of recent interventions along the Toronto shoreline east of the islands and reinforcement of the edges of the individual islands. The shallow sandy shoals extending beyond the islands created treacherous conditions for early mariners, but the protected harbour behind the sand spit made the site ideal for settlement and strategically advantageous for military uses, but before all that it was a place of meeting, healing and ceremony for countless generations of indigenous peoples in this territory.

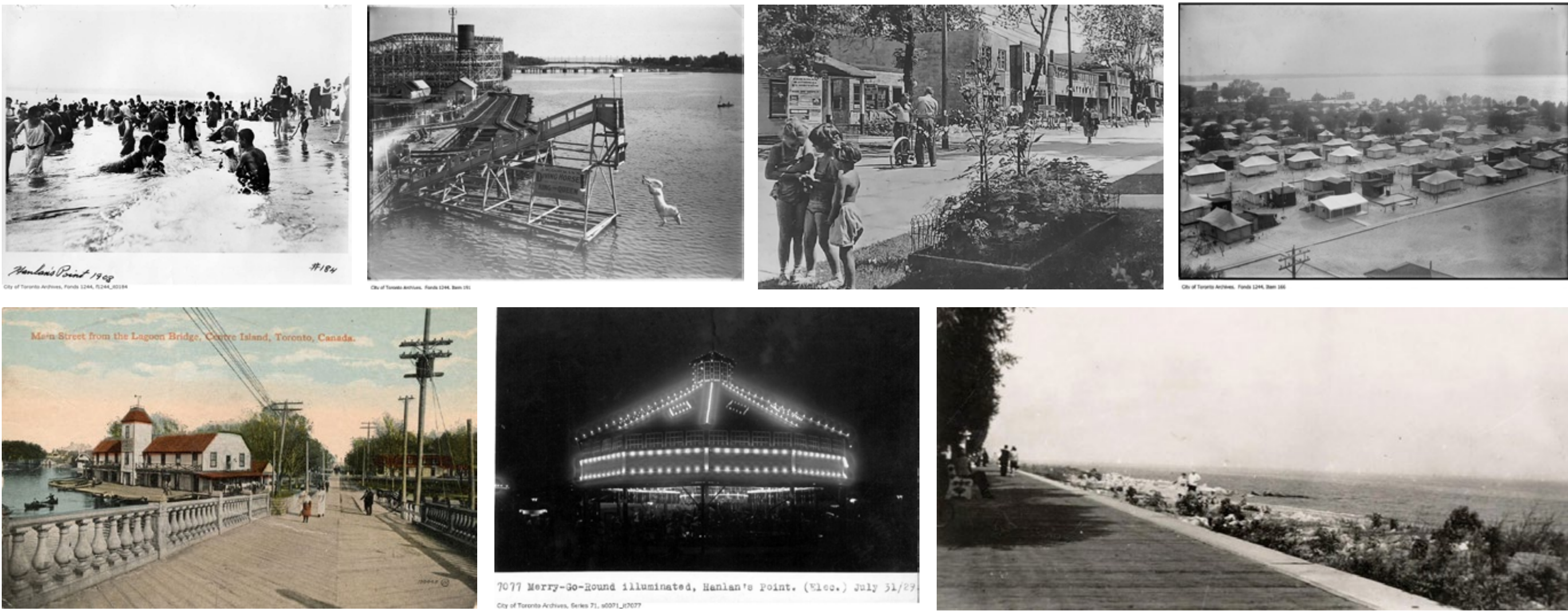
"...a long sandbank, called the 'island,' though, in fact, no island, but a very narrow promontory, about three miles in length... At the extremity is a light-house, and a few stunted trees and underwood. This marsh, intersected by inlets and covered with reeds..."
- Anna Jameson (circa 1835)

Early Park and Recreation Grounds

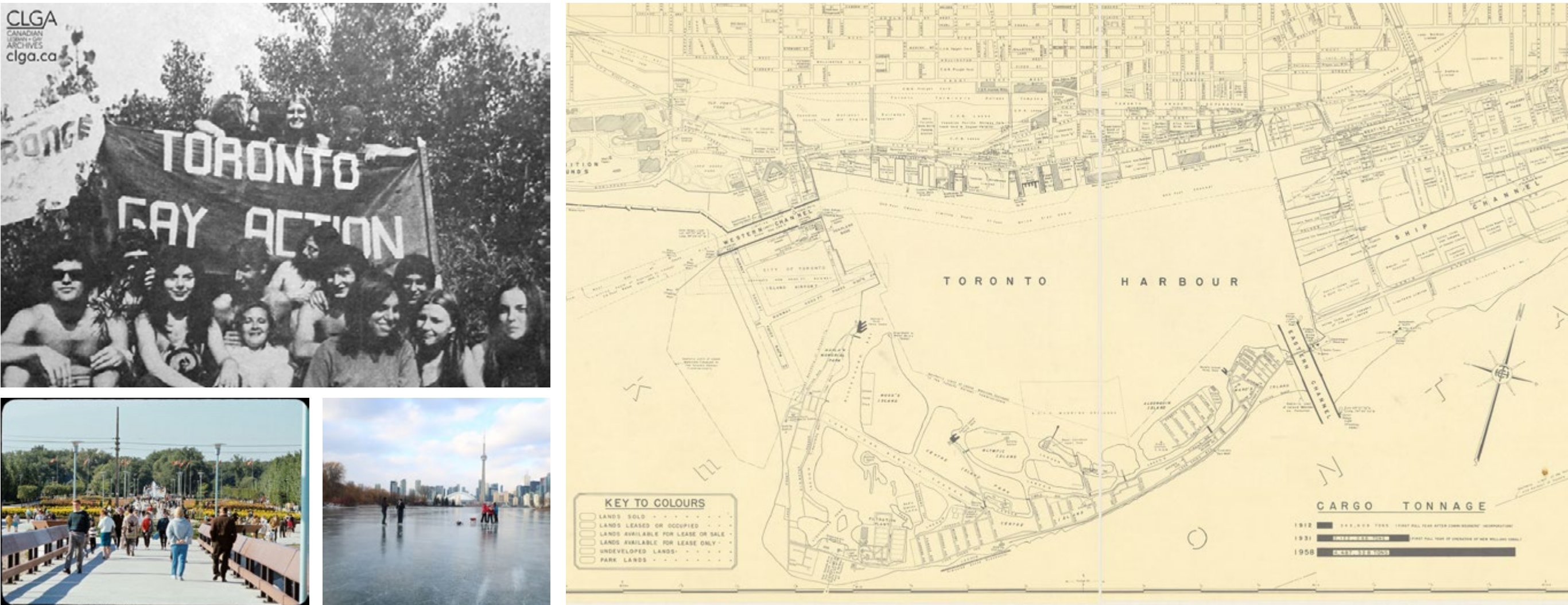
Following the establishment of York (modern-day Toronto), the Island served as a refuge from the growing city. As interest grew, private enterprises moved to the islands and sand spits eventually culminating in the establishment of permanent structures and year-round attractions. When a storm in 1858 severed the land connection at the east end of the spit, the Eastern Channel was formed and has been maintained ever since, resulting in the need to travel by boat to reach the Island.

The Island has been home to amusement parks, pleasure grounds, hotels, theatres, a stadium and various boating and special interest clubs to support the recreation, sporting and leisure pursuits of Toronto's residents. During this period, it included a convalescent home for sick children, and public baths supporting public health for the burgeoning city. The Island also became home to one of Toronto's first water treatment plants providing safe drinking water and many other benefits since.

Finally, following the relaxation of restrictions on year-round residency on the Island, a bona fide town emerged from the various tent and cottage communities that had established through generations of people flocking to the idyllic shores.



Images of Toronto Island from 1908 to 1960 (City of Toronto Archives and Toronto Public Library)



Images of Toronto Island and the 1959 Conditions Plan for the Waterfront and Port (City of Toronto Archives and CLGA)

Recent Park Life

Following decisions by Metro Parks in the 1950s and 1960s to convert the Island from a community back into a public park, the character of the Island changed drastically. Homes were cleared from large sections of the islands, some moved to the eastern end of the Island with portions of these vibrant communities eventually being preserved through legal injunctions and finally the establishment of a land trust to manage the remaining homes at Ward's and Algonquin Islands.

With such dramatic changes, many areas of the Island took on entirely new character and functions for those visiting the park. A new modernist park landscape was developed from Centre Island Ferry Dock to the south shores of Centre Island. Centreville Amusement Park and Far Enough Farm were added to replace the former attractions at Hanlan's Point that were cleared to make way for the airport. Pavilions, gardens, and expansive lawns with trees replaced streets and houses. Beaches were returned to public use, shorelines were reinforced, and new islands were created to support the vision for a waterfront park like no other.

Since the initial redevelopment, improvements have occurred incrementally and to support specific needs. Some changes, such as the designation of part of Hanlan's Beach as clothing optional, were carried out to protect informal activities. With Hanlan's, this change ensured the space remain a sanctuary for the LGBTQ2S+ community and a beach destination for visitors from near and far.

Emerging Themes

In addition to an ongoing commitment to co-developing and revealing the Indigenous significance of the islands and the surrounding waters, the master plan team has identified the following interpretive themes to share the diverse stories of the park as a natural refuge, military outpost, public preserve, recreational grounds, bustling community and public park that provides all residents of Toronto with an escape from urban life.



Interpretive Strategy Process

The master plan is developing a strategy for sharing the stories of the Island. The strategy will identify what stories should be told, how, when and where.



www.toronto.ca/IslandMasterPlan

Toronto Island Master Plan

Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment

What is a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment?

The City of Toronto uses Cultural Heritage Resource Assessments (CHRA) to document an area's history through research and community engagement to ensure that cultural heritage resources are appropriately identified, understood and conserved. The CHRA for the Toronto Island Park is being completed as part of the Master Plan process and it will inform several aspects of the Master Plan document.

CHRA Study Area

The study area is the entire Toronto Island Park including Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, Island Water Treatment Plant, and the residential areas.



Study Process

The CHRA process for Toronto Island Park includes the following:

Site Review and Documentation

During the CHRA, the study team visited the TIP several times to review and photograph buildings, structures and landscapes. Based on the fieldwork, an inventory of these physical features was generated. The inventory was also used to track dates of construction, architects and existing heritage protection mechanisms.

Historical Research

Research into the history of Toronto Island Park was completed during the initial stage of the CHRA. It provides the context from which significance of places emerges and can be understood. It also helps relate these places to one another in order to inform the identification of cultural heritage resources.

Community Engagement

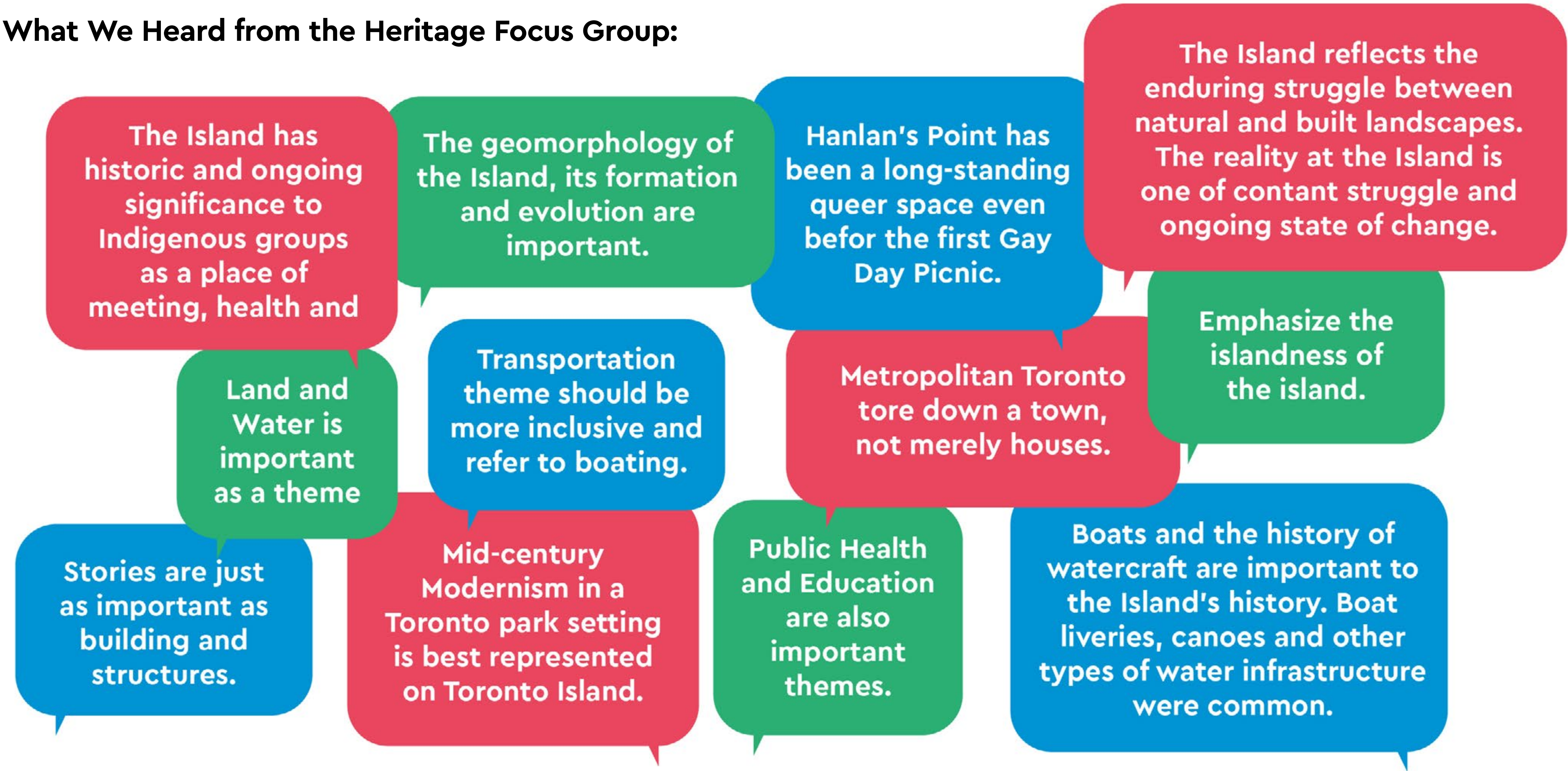
The CHRA included two meetings with a Heritage Focus Group (HFG) as a way for community members to inform the study.

The HFG consisted of community members who are particularly knowledgeable about the local history of the Island, including residents. They helped develop a collective understanding of how the park evolved over time, and helped identify buildings, structures and landscapes that are important to the park's history and identity.

Identifying Cultural Heritage Resources

The CHRA uses criteria in the Ontario Heritage Act to identify cultural heritage resources. The criteria relate to design or physical value, historical or associative value, and contextual value. Community input is vital to understanding the social and community value of properties within the study area.

What We Heard from the Heritage Focus Group:



What are the outcomes of the CHRA?

Buildings, structures and landscapes identified as cultural heritage resources will be presented in the CHRA as a list and on a map. The CHRA will inform the Toronto Island Park Master Plan by ensuring these resources are conserved, and remain integral to the future of the park. The CHRA will be included as an appendix to the Master Plan.

The CHRA may also be used by the City of Toronto's Heritage Planning division to inform decisions about resources to include on the city's heritage register.

The CHRA will also make recommendations for:

- the best tools to conserve identified cultural heritage resources,
- additional heritage reports such as conservation plans, adaptive reuse studies and cultural heritage landscape studies.

At the conclusion of the project, the Heritage Planning division will prepare a Staff Report that includes a summary of the CHRA which will be presented to the Toronto Preservation Board.

Find out more and get involved:



www.toronto.ca/IslandMasterPlan

Toronto Island Master Plan

Signage and Wayfinding



Background

The Master Plan includes a wayfinding strategy for Toronto Island Park. The purpose of the wayfinding strategy is to help park visitors to learn more about what the Island has to offer, where they can go, and how to get there.

The Toronto Island Park Wayfinding Strategy builds on the City's Parks & Trails Wayfinding Strategy (coordinated with the City's TO360 Wayfinding Strategy), which established the look, feel, style, and content standards for the signs.

Through the Master Plan, the strategy will identify the wayfinding needs for various locations throughout the park. It will establish a consistent approach to locating signs and identify appropriate sign types for each location type based on the city-wide strategy. The Master Plan strategy will be grounded in clear goals and identify a phased approach to facilitate effective implementation across the Island.

Goals

Wayfinding for Toronto Island Park will:

- Help people get oriented and find their way around the Park
- Encourage exploration
- Serve a wide range of people
- Reduce visual clutter
- Give the Islands a more consistent visual language and identity
- Be flexible and updateable as the Islands and Park amenities change

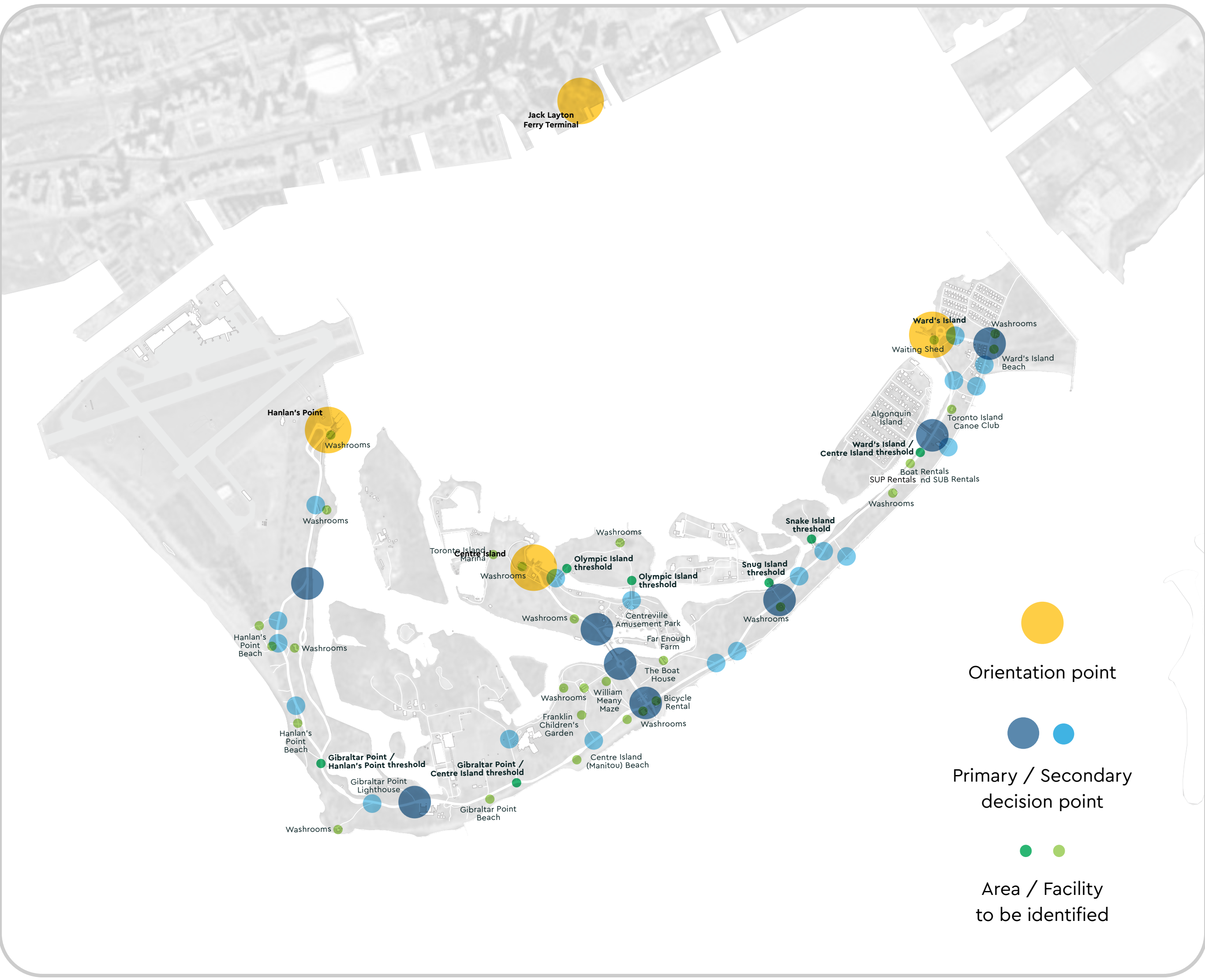
Sign features

A typical wayfinding sign on the Islands will include the following features:

- 1 Park and area names
- 2 Directions & distances
- 3 Park map
- 4 Interpretive content
- 5 Park rules & etiquette
- 6 Emergency information

Wayfinding needs

We have identified the following places on the Islands where people require wayfinding information. This will help us to determine where signs should be located. Signs will be chosen from the palette of sign types shown below. The type of sign and the information being shared varies based on what people will need at each location:



Sign types

The Toronto Island Park Wayfinding Strategy will use the sign types that have been developed for the citywide Parks & Trails Wayfinding Strategy. These signs have been designed for durability, flexibility and legibility, and will be consistent with park signage across the waterfront. Signs will be adapted for use in ecologically sensitive areas, for water approaches, and for other unique needs on the Islands.



Designing a New Map

As a part of the Toronto Island Park Wayfinding Strategy, the City prepared a Draft Island-Wide Wayfinding Map, which was installed temporarily in four locations for people to see in-person and to comment on. You can find them at the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal, Ward's Island Dock, Centre Island Dock and just south of the Hanlan's Island Dock. The draft map was based on standards from City's Parks & Trails Wayfinding Strategy, and strives to be accessible and easy to use.

What we heard

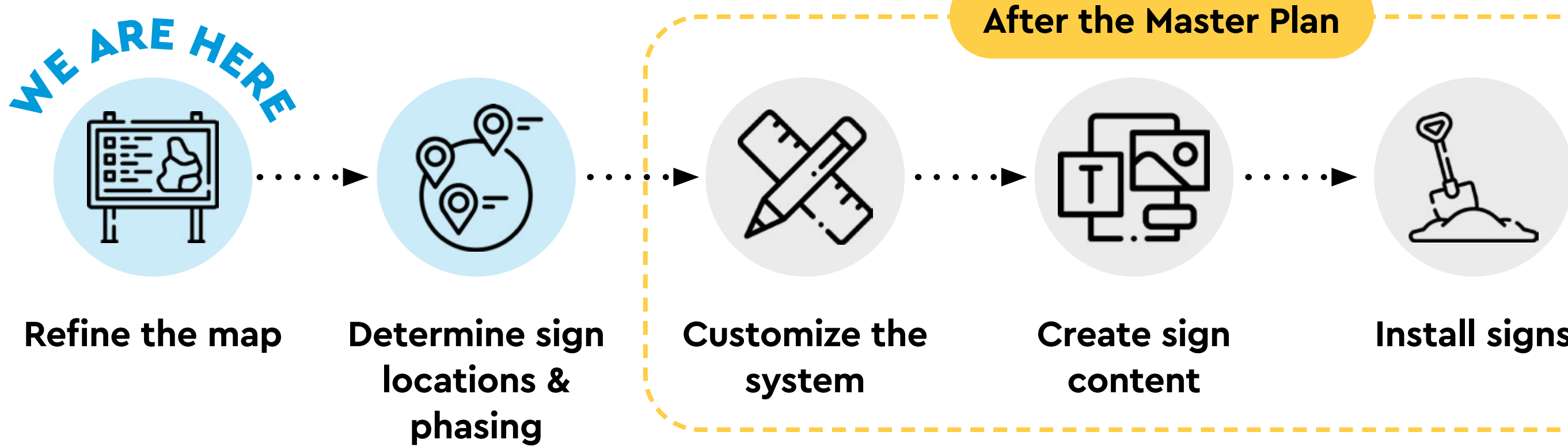
The City shared the Draft Map for public comment via an online survey in March 2022. Respondents felt that the map is generally accurate, and suggested that other information should be included on the map:

- Season-specific services, operating times
- Access restrictions, environmental features
- Clearer terminology and icons

What's next

Through Fall 2022, the Island-Wide Map will be revised based on the feedback we received. We will also determine where signs should be located, and which ones should be installed first.

After the Master Plan is complete, the City will begin preparations to install the new wayfinding system in phases.



Toronto Island Master Plan

Business Plan

Why is the City undertaking a Business Plan?

The business plan will ensure the Island is appropriately served with commercial offerings that match user expectations and improve park experiences for all. The business plan is completed as a part of the Toronto Island Park Master Plan and in alignment with the Master Plan's guiding principles.

The Business Plan reviewed commercial operations as they are today, identified gaps and new opportunities, and puts in place a plan to deliver refreshed and tailored commercial offerings for the island.

The final plan lays the groundwork for taking an intentional approach to contract management and the tendering of opportunities on the island. When done right, commercial offerings on the island improve park experiences while protecting the Island's unique character and natural environment.

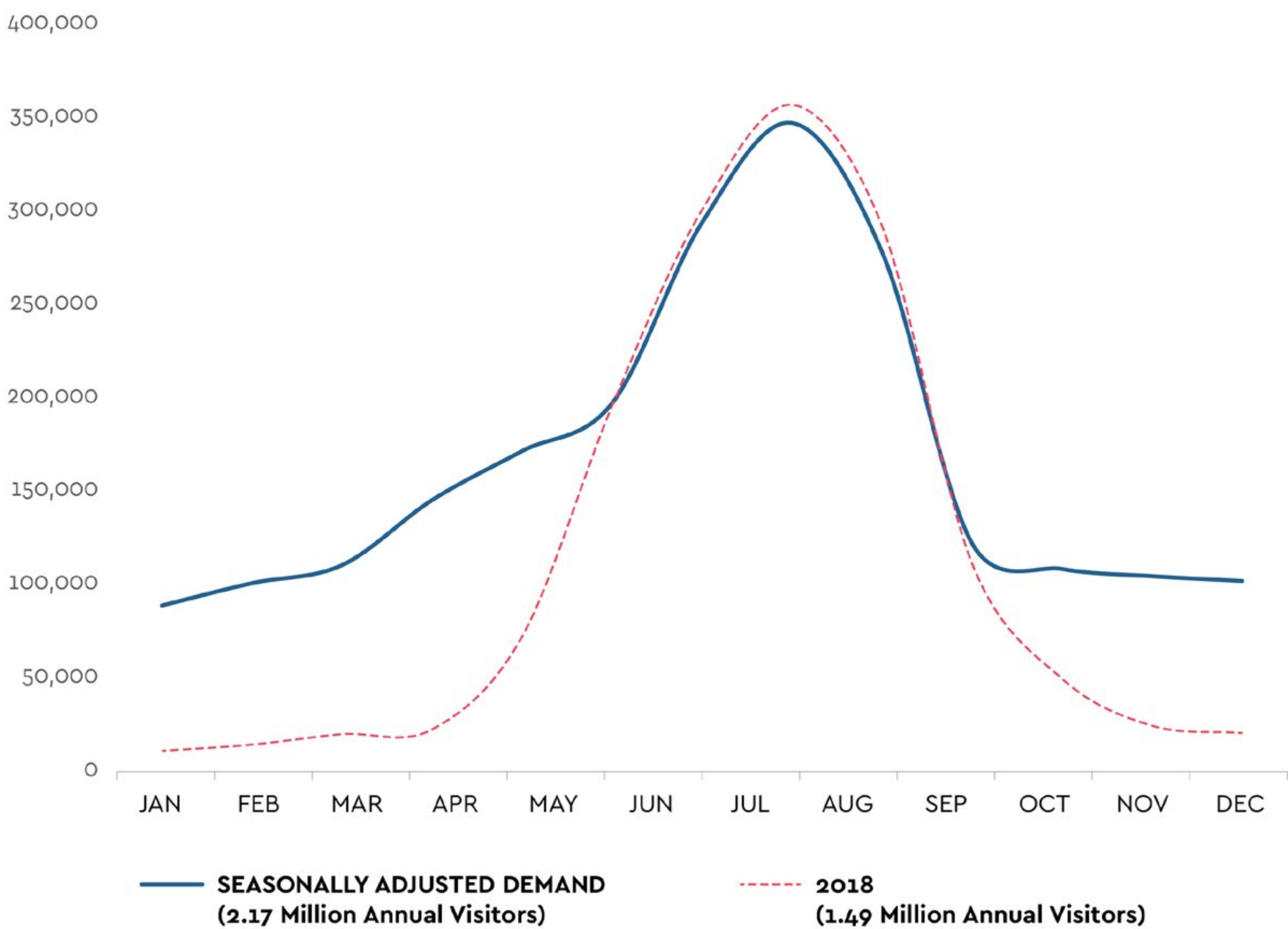
Objectives:

1. Complete a comprehensive understanding of the existing value of business opportunities within the Park including the Jack Layton Ferry Terminal and the waterfront context;
2. Identify opportunities to improve the overall experience for visitors to the Park;
3. Gather information and evidence for decision making related to operations and service delivery options, informing future marketing/tendering of these options;
4. Present an achievable (sustainable, fiscally responsible, etc.) plan to advance these opportunities; and,
5. Integrate the Business Plan recommendations with the Toronto Island Master Plan process, identifying key milestones and coordination of related work.

Park Visitation

Island visitors can be categorized into four main visitor groups: residents of Toronto's waterfront communities, visitors from other areas of Toronto, residents of other GTA municipalities and tourists. Projections shown in the adjacent chart incorporate historical tourism data from Destination Toronto and Statistics Canada and assume that tourist visitation to Toronto will continue to increase at similar rates over the next 10–15 years. The Consulting Team has also assumed that in the future there will be a greater degree of tourist awareness of Toronto's waterfront and its parks and natural areas, and a larger percentage of tourists will want to visit the Island than has been observed in the past.

In addition, these projections assume there will be improved access to the park delivered through key recommendations of the Master Plan as well as future investments in TTC and GO Transit infrastructure. With improved ferry capacity, an expanded network of water transportation options and increased connectivity to onshore transit, traveling to the Island will become much more convenient for a greater number of people.



Business Plan Initiatives

| | Revealing and Indigenous Place | Elevating Equity and Belonging | Enhancing Visitor Experience | Supporting a Dynamic Environment | Improving Access and Connection |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Centre Landing Marketplace | ○ | ● | ● | ● | |
| Diverse Food Options | ○ | ● | ● | ● | |
| Destination Restaurant | | | ● | | |
| Multi-Node Rental Program | | | ● | | ● |
| New Event Strategy/Simplified Permitting | | ● | ● | | ● |
| Hanlan's Festival Space | | | ● | | |
| Island Overnight | | ● | ● | | ● |
| Olympic Island Revitalization | ○ | | ● | | |
| Gibraltar Point Hub | ● | | ● | | |
| Networked Rentals | | | ● | | ● |
| Develop a Mobile App | | ● | ● | | ● |
| Accessible Tram Service | | ● | ● | | |
| Island Branded Merchandise Sales | | | | ● | |
| Indigenous Tourism Opportunities | ● | ● | ● | | |
| Preserve Centreville | | | ● | | |

○ Partially Aligns with Master Plan ● Fully Aligns with Master Plan

- As a general initiative of the Business Plan, enhancing park amenities across the Island is intended to ensure an enjoyable visit and extending the average length of stay, these improvements could include:
- expanding capacity, locations and quality of the restrooms;
 - enhanced physical accessibility to improve equitable access to the Island;
 - expanded bike and pedestrian pathways in congested areas;
 - enhanced visitor information and wayfinding;
 - providing more diverse and expanded food options;
 - reusing existing buildings and structures (e.g. concession pavilions) prior to considering the development of new spaces;
 - enhancing short-term docking and servicing for personal watercraft; and
 - improving ferry service for visitors and commercial vehicles, including: opportunities to allow visitors to book specific ferry crossings; addressing ferry service scheduling to support events, especially evening events; alternate ferry access locations to Jack Layton Ferry Terminal (e.g. Ontario Place, the Port Lands); and a dedicated ferry for servicing operations that relocates vehicle transport to the Port Lands instead of Jack Layton Ferry Terminal.
- Specific Initiatives from the Business Plan also align and support the objectives of the Master Plan, including:
- Centre Landing Marketplace**, providing food and retail services. The market would provide an opportunity for small business entrepreneurs to operate in a world class park. The marketplace would include a program for Indigenous entrepreneurs.
 - Increased food options**, celebrating the diversity of the City and the elimination of master food contracts. One option is a destination restaurant with views of the skyline.
 - Use of events to drive visitation in off peak periods. The **event strategy** would benefit from a simplification of the permitting process.
 - A permanent **festival space on Hanlan's Point** to host "island-sized" events and festivals.
 - Explore opportunities for **Island Overnight** experiences supported through partner program offerings, including accommodations to allow for the most efficient use of space and reduce barriers for visitors.
 - Restoration of the pavilion on Olympic Island** to support diversified food offerings and a revitalized gathering space developed as part of the Master Plan as programming space available for rent.
 - Creation of a **networked rental program** with multiple pick up and drop off nodes providing expanded cycling options on the Island, non-motorized watercraft, beach rentals etc.
 - Develop a mobile app** that includes commercial elements such as mobile order pay for food service and rentals, ferry bookings, etc. The app could also have trip planning information (wayfinding, event schedules, etc.).
 - Provide accessible transportation options, such as an **accessible tram service**.
 - Capitalize on re-naturalization and ecological efforts to enhance the Island's natural image and brand to **support merchandise sales**.
 - Work with members of the Indigenous community to implement **Indigenous tourism opportunities** on the Island.
 - Preserve Centreville** and its nostalgic connection to the Island for many residents.