

A long-term plan for Toronto's western waterfront

About the Project

The Western Beaches Public Realm Plan Update aims to provide an updated vision for Toronto's Western Beaches, addressing evolving conditions and priorities since the 2009 Western Waterfront Master Plan. Key drivers for the update include rising lake levels, shoreline erosion, aging infrastructure, the impacts of COVID-19, the adoption of the Reconciliation Action Plan, and heightened awareness of the historical and cultural significance of the Humber River's mouth.

Why the Plan is Being Updated

Since the 2009 Western Waterfront Master Plan was completed, conditions along the Western Beaches have changed. Some improvements have been advanced, including trail upgrades, boardwalk repairs, park enhancements, naturalization, and public realm investments. Other major initiatives from the 2009 plan remain incomplete or cannot proceed in as expected for the foreseeable future, particularly those tied to large infrastructure projects such as the Waterfront West LRT and the realignment of Lake Shore Boulevard West that remain unfunded.

At the same time, new pressures and priorities have emerged. Rising lake levels, shoreline erosion, aging breakwaters, changing patterns of public use, and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have reinforced the importance of accessible and resilient outdoor spaces. The adoption of the City of Toronto's Reconciliation Action Plan and a growing awareness of the cultural significance of the Humber River mouth have also strengthened the need to centre Indigenous placekeeping and cultural recognition in future planning.

Western Beaches at a Glance

4 km of Waterfront Lands

41 ha of Parkland

5 City Parks

Marilyn Bell Park, Lake Shore Boulevard Parklands, Budapest Park, Sunnyside Park, and Sir Casimir Gzowski Park

3 City Beaches

Sir Casimir Gzowski, Sunnyside, and Budapest Beaches, collectively known as Sunnyside Beach

2 Major Trails

Martin Goodman Trail and Humber River Recreational Trail

1 Bike Park

1 Disc Golf Course

1 Major Outdoor Pool

3 Major Heritage Destinations

Joy Oil Station, Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion, and Palais Royale

3 Waterfront Clubs

Boulevard Club, Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club, and Argonaut Rowing Club

Right: Budapest Park Boardwalk
Below: Western Beaches Study Area



Over 2,500 Voices Contributed to the Engagement Process

The Western Beaches Public Realm Plan was developed through a collaborative and iterative process with multiple City divisions and agencies, existing lease holders and businesses within the study area, residents and other community members, community organizations, Treaty partners and the Indigenous community.

Engagement was a central component of the study, helping to refresh the long-term vision and guiding principles for the Western Beaches, and develop and refine draft ideas and priorities as the Plan evolved.

Refreshing the Vision

- » **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):**
 - » TAC #1 (Intro), April 2025
 - » TAC Focus Groups, May 2025
 - » TAC#2, June 2025
- » **Indigenous Engagement Talking Circles:**
 - » Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC), May 29, 2025, 2 participants
 - » Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), June 12, 2025, 3 participants
- » **Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Workshops**
 - » CAC #1, June 26, 2025, 22 participants
 - » CAC #2, July 3, 2025, 19 participants
- » **Pop-up Events**
 - » Pop-up #1, July 6, 2025, 100 participants
 - » Pop-up #2, July 15, 2025, 60 participants
- » **Online Survey**
 - » July 8-July 27, 2025, 1400 participants

~1,600 Participants

Exploring Options

- » **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):**
 - » TAC #3, October 29, 2025
- » **Indigenous Engagement Talking Circles:**
 - » Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC), November 12, 2025, 5 participants
 - » Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN), November 12, 2025, 2 participants
- » **Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Workshops**
 - » CAC#3, November 19, 2025, 14 participants
- » **Virtual Public Meeting**
 - » Zoom Webinar Platform, November 27, 2025, 76 participants
- » **Online Survey**
 - » November 11-December 3, 2025, 790 participants

~900 Participants

Engagement Inputs



Top: Community Pop-up Events
 Middle: Engagement Feedback
 Bottom: Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

Vision and Guiding Principles

Vision

The Western Beaches will offer a multitude of experiences on land and water, welcoming all users in every season. It will continue to be a beloved and adaptable stretch of Toronto's western shoreline, safe and easy to get to, with a series of parks, paths, naturalized areas, beaches, and waterways that invite people to linger, play, reflect, and move through.

Movement will feel easy and intuitive, comfortable for all modes of active transportation, supported by meaningful connections, universal accessibility, and a strong sense of place. The Western Beaches will be a vibrant and welcoming destination for everyone, animated by spaces for quiet reflection, lively gathering, and active recreation.

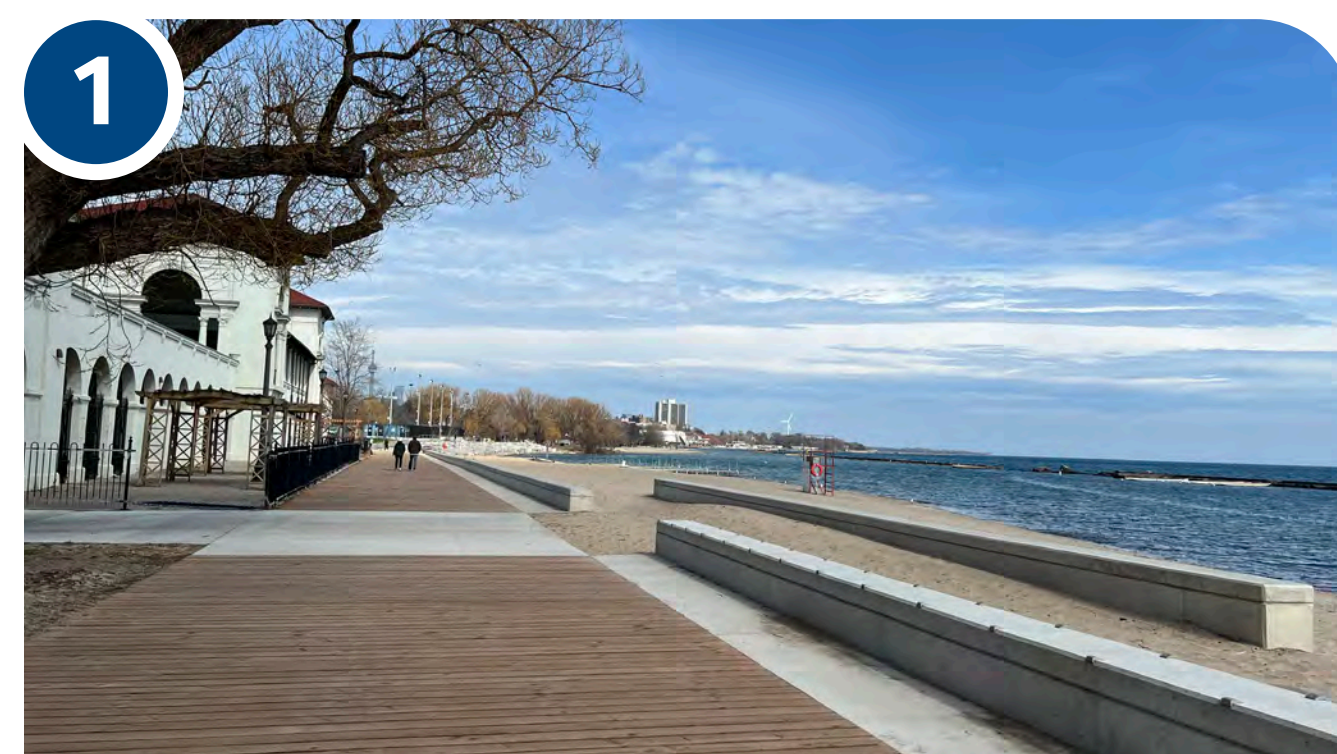
More than just a view, it will offer a true waterfront experience, where people can see, touch, and feel the water, and enjoy clean, swimmable shores alongside inclusive opportunities for water-based recreation.

Grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, it will honour deep relationships with the land and water, celebrate Indigenous presence, and reflect the Western Beaches place within a larger living ecosystem, connected to the lake, river, and surrounding watershed where people, nature, and place are deeply intertwined.

Above all, it will be a sustainable, and resilient landscape where all lives, species, and future generations thrive.

Guiding Principles

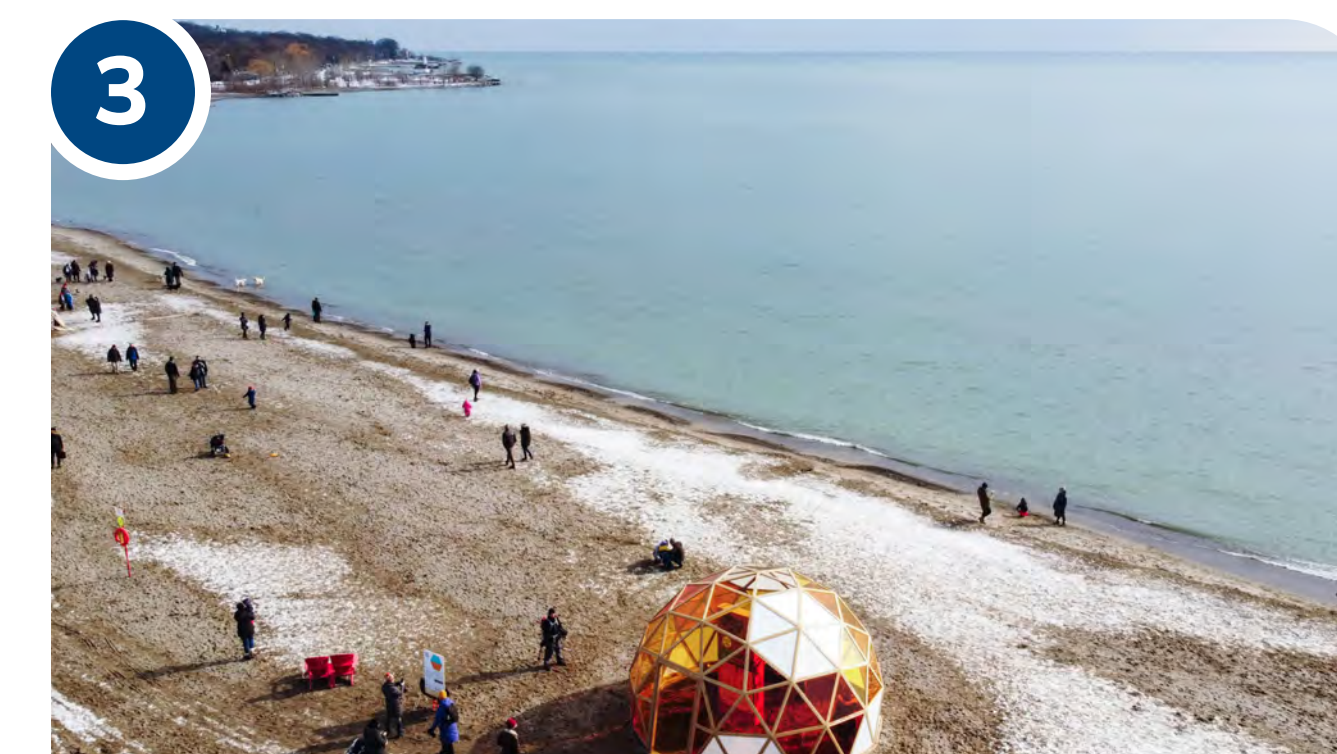
The guiding principles translate this vision into high-level directions for how the Western Beaches should function, feel, and evolve over time. They reflect community priorities and serve as the metrics to guide future decision-making across planning, design, investment, and operations.



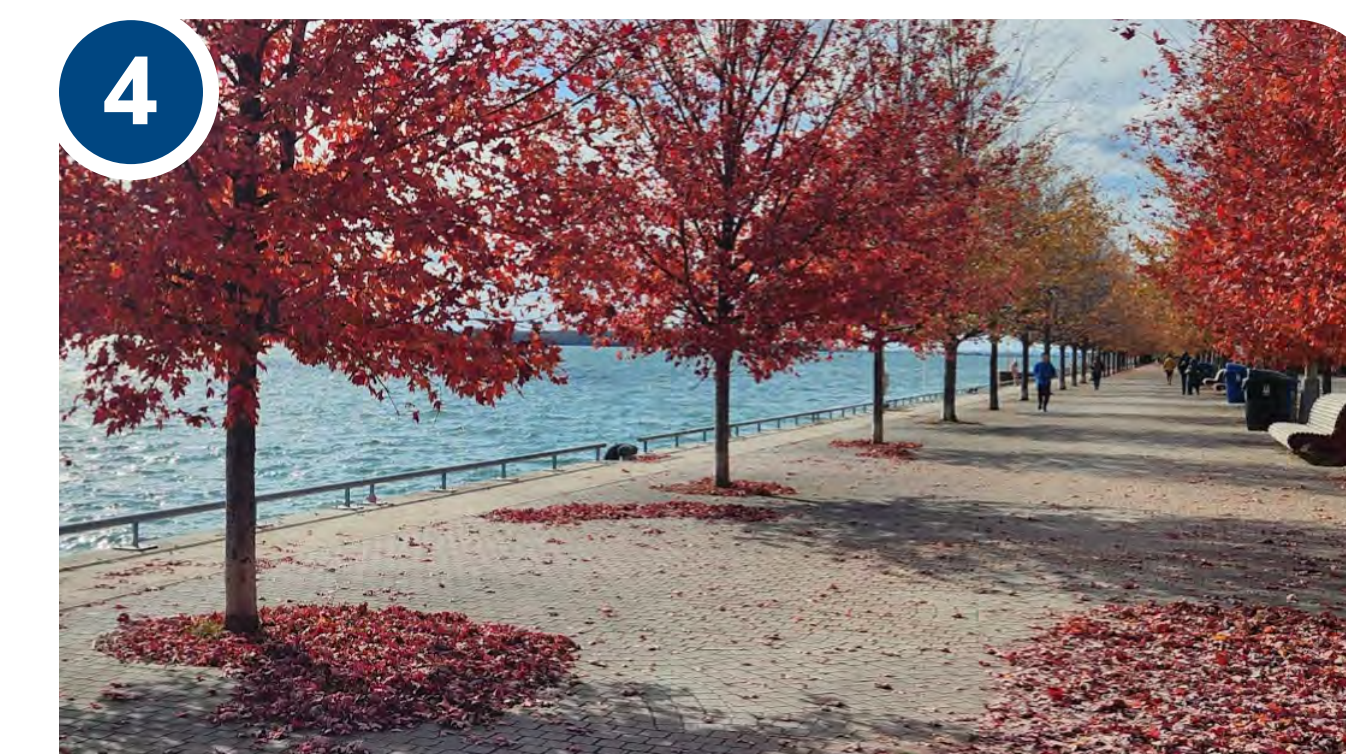
1
Diverse & Inclusive Spaces
Design a range of spaces that support diverse activities, from quiet reflection to active play, for people of all ages and abilities.



2
Indigenous Placekeeping
Celebrate and restore Indigenous presence, values, and teachings through all phases, through naming, art, storytelling, and cultural interpretation, reflecting the teaching of 'All Our Relations'.



3
Year-Round Flexibility
Incorporate flexible programming and infrastructure that embraces all seasons, including Indigenous seasonal calendars.



4
Identity & Character
Strengthen and reveal the distinct identity of the Western Beaches through design that reflects its cultural history, natural character, and diverse communities.



5
Mobility & Connectivity
Improve safety for all road, trail and watercraft users by providing clear, continuous, and universally accessible paths for walking and cycling, along with well-defined water based corridors for rowing, with an emphasis on managing conflicts among various users and enhancing the experience for all.



6
Access to the Western Beaches
Strengthen connections between communities and the waterfront and improve access to the Western Beaches by active transportation, public transit, and water-based modes.



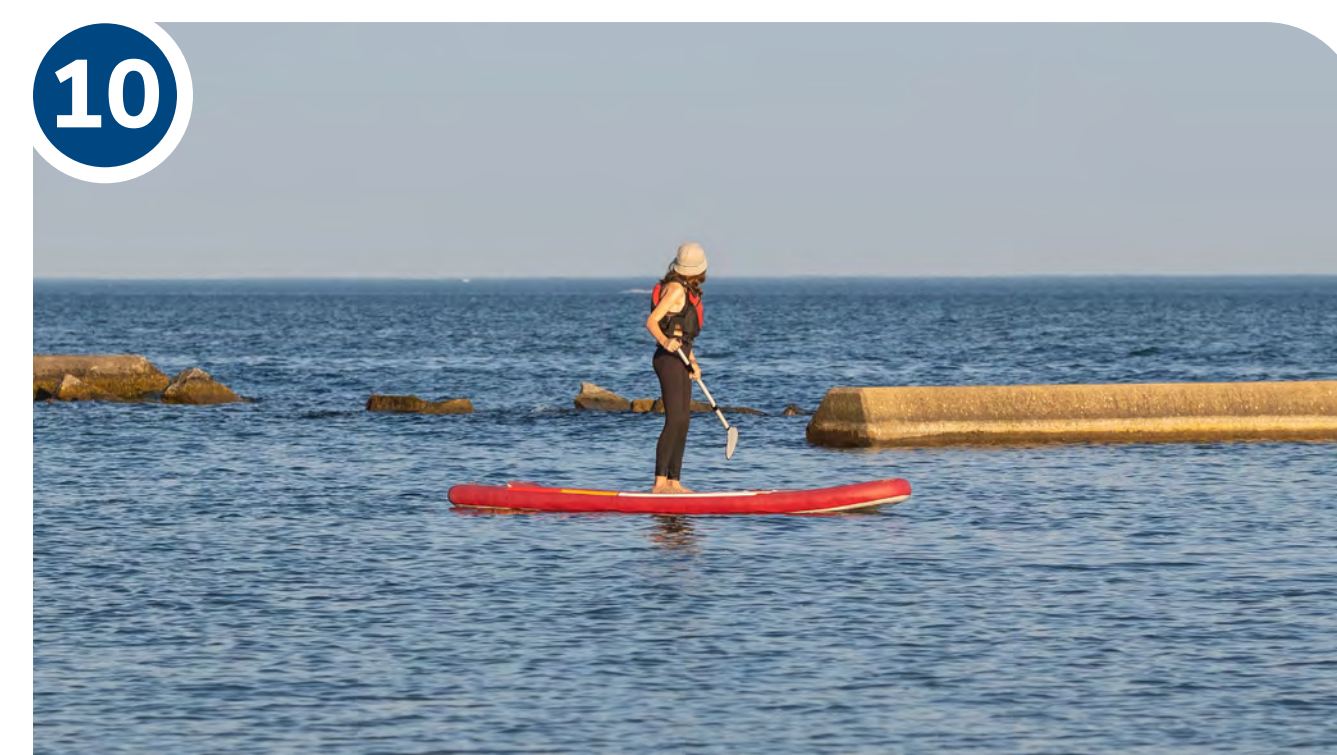
7
Naturalization & Habitat Restoration
Restore shoreline habitats, enhance biodiversity, and protect ecological systems through nature-based solutions and considering Indigenous stewardship.



8
Climate Resilience & Adaptation
Strengthen resilience to climate change by designing landscapes that can adapt to changing conditions.



9
Water Quality
Ensure ongoing improvement of water quality is prioritized through measures that protect public health and support safe recreation, contributing to a clean and healthy waterfront.



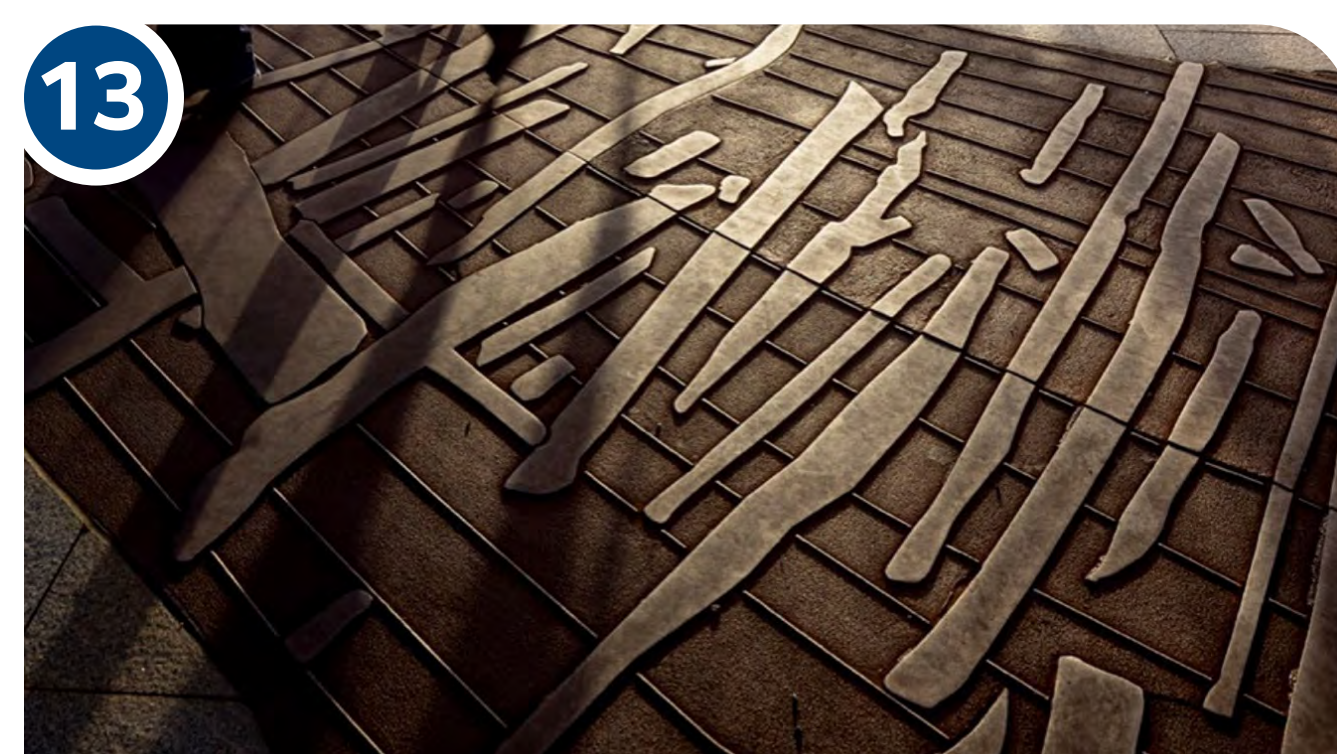
10
Lakefront Access & Recreation
Create immersive lakefront experiences that allow people to safely touch, see, and feel the water, while expanding access to water-based recreation.



11
Gathering & Social Connection
Create welcoming places to gather that encourage social connection, cultural exchange, and celebration that reflect Toronto's diversity.



12
Food and Beverage Diversity
Enhance opportunities for improved hospitality and food experiences by offering diverse, high-quality, and culturally rich food and beverage options that encourage people to linger and return.



13
Cultural Storytelling
Incorporate public art, interpretation, and storytelling that encourages learning about the history of the place and its cultures, including Indigenous, local, and immigrant narratives.

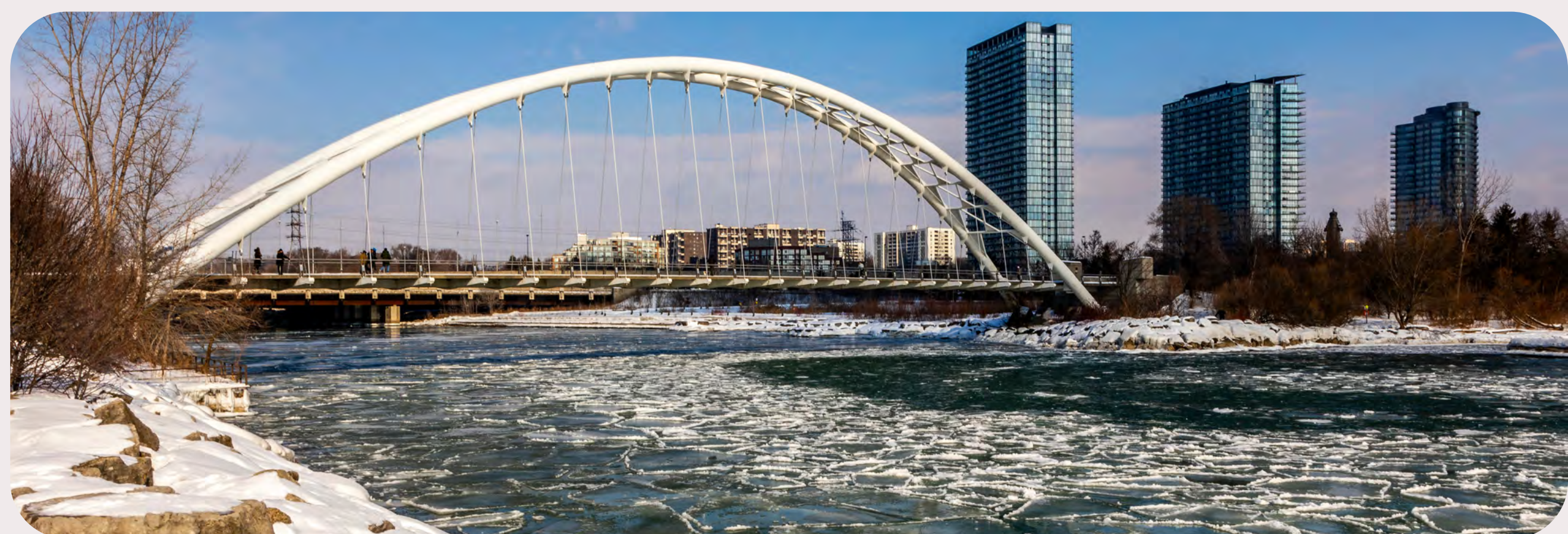
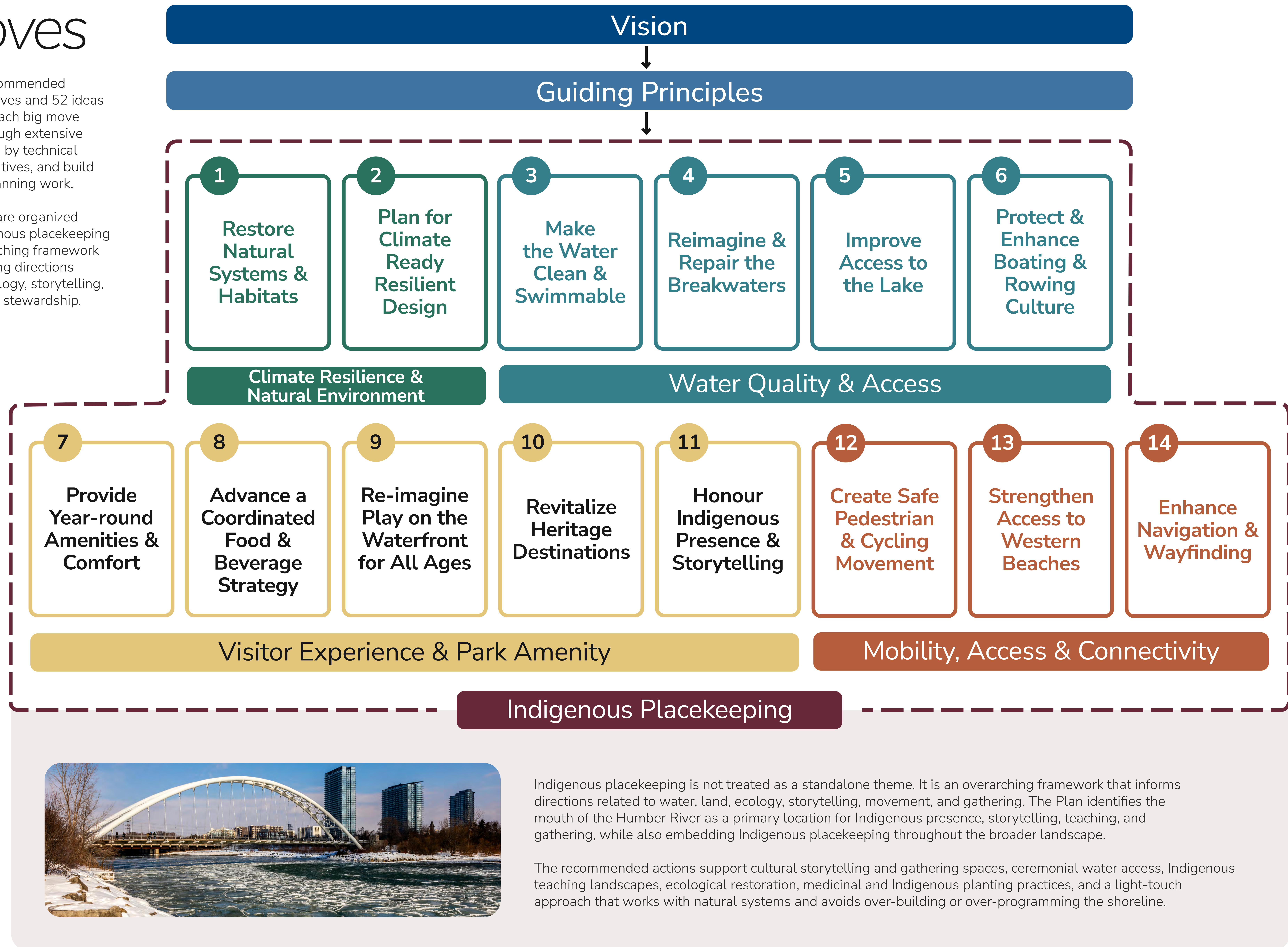


14
Flexibility for the Future
Create a flexible plan with phased implementation to accommodate future growth, evolving community needs, and changing environmental conditions.

Big Moves

The Plan organizes its recommended actions through 14 big moves and 52 ideas with supporting actions. Each big move has been established through extensive engagement, are informed by technical analysis and ongoing initiatives, and build on previous waterfront planning work.

For clarity, the big moves are organized under four themes. Indigenous placekeeping is embedded as an overarching framework across all themes, informing directions related to water, land, ecology, storytelling, movement, gathering, and stewardship.



Demonstration Plan

The demonstration plan illustrates how the recommended actions and ideas of the plan may come together across the Western Beaches. It presents one possible future condition and shows how multiple ideas can be coordinated and layered within specific areas while contributing to an improved parkland system and visitor experience overall.

Five park character zones help demonstrate how the Western Beaches can evolve as a connected waterfront system while still allowing different parts of the landscape to express distinct qualities. The demonstration plan is described as a series of rooms, each with a distinctive park character.

Mouth of the River

Western gateway is shaped by ecological systems, Indigenous placekeeping, the Humber River mouth, restored habitat, naturalized landscapes, ceremonial water access, and quieter forms of recreation and reflection.

Neighbourhood Park

This area of the park is a transition area where natural systems meet everyday parkland and recreational uses, including Joy Oil Station, picnic areas, play, Indigenous placekeeping, and improved movement connections come together.

Beachfront

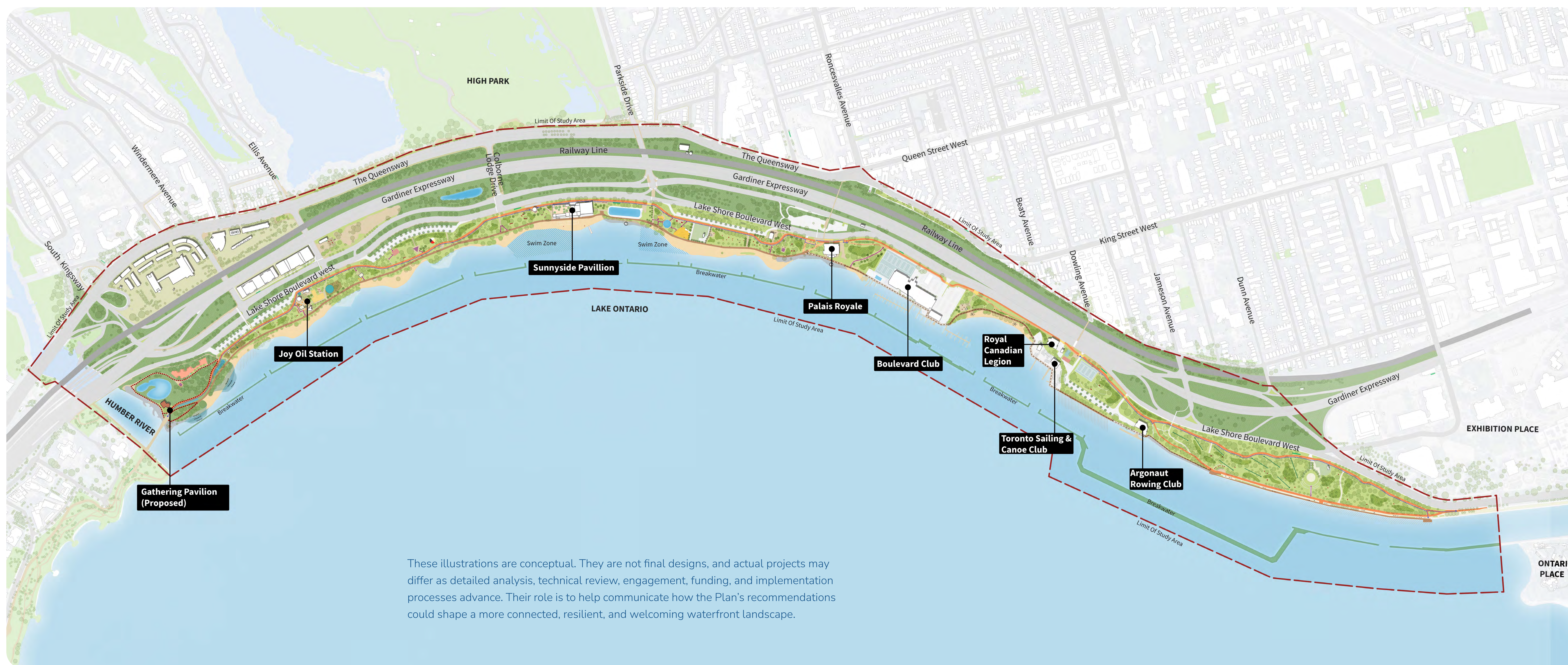
The more active waterfront segment centred on Sunnyside Pavilion, Sunnyside Beach, the boardwalk, family play, beach amenities, food and beverage, and improved pedestrian and cycling movement.

Active Recreation

A area of the park focused on water-based recreation, existing clubs, active use, improved access, continuous pedestrian movement, and opportunities to enhance the beach between the Legion and Boulevard Club.

Passive Recreation

A quieter eastern landscape where open space, lake views, passive recreation, ecological enhancement, and contemplative waterfront experiences are emphasized.



These illustrations are conceptual. They are not final designs, and actual projects may differ as detailed analysis, technical review, engagement, funding, and implementation processes advance. Their role is to help communicate how the Plan's recommendations could shape a more connected, resilient, and welcoming waterfront landscape.

Character Areas

The Mouth of the River represents the western gateway to the Western Beaches, where the landscape is shaped by ecological systems and its proximity to the mouth of the Humber River. Here, natural processes, cultural significance, and visitor experience are closely intertwined.

Neighbourhood Park marks the transition from the Mouth of the River to a more active waterfront condition, where parkland, meets the beaches, and everyday recreational use become more prominent. While the landscape becomes more social and amenity-rich, it continues to maintain a strong connection to the surrounding natural systems.



Mouth of the River



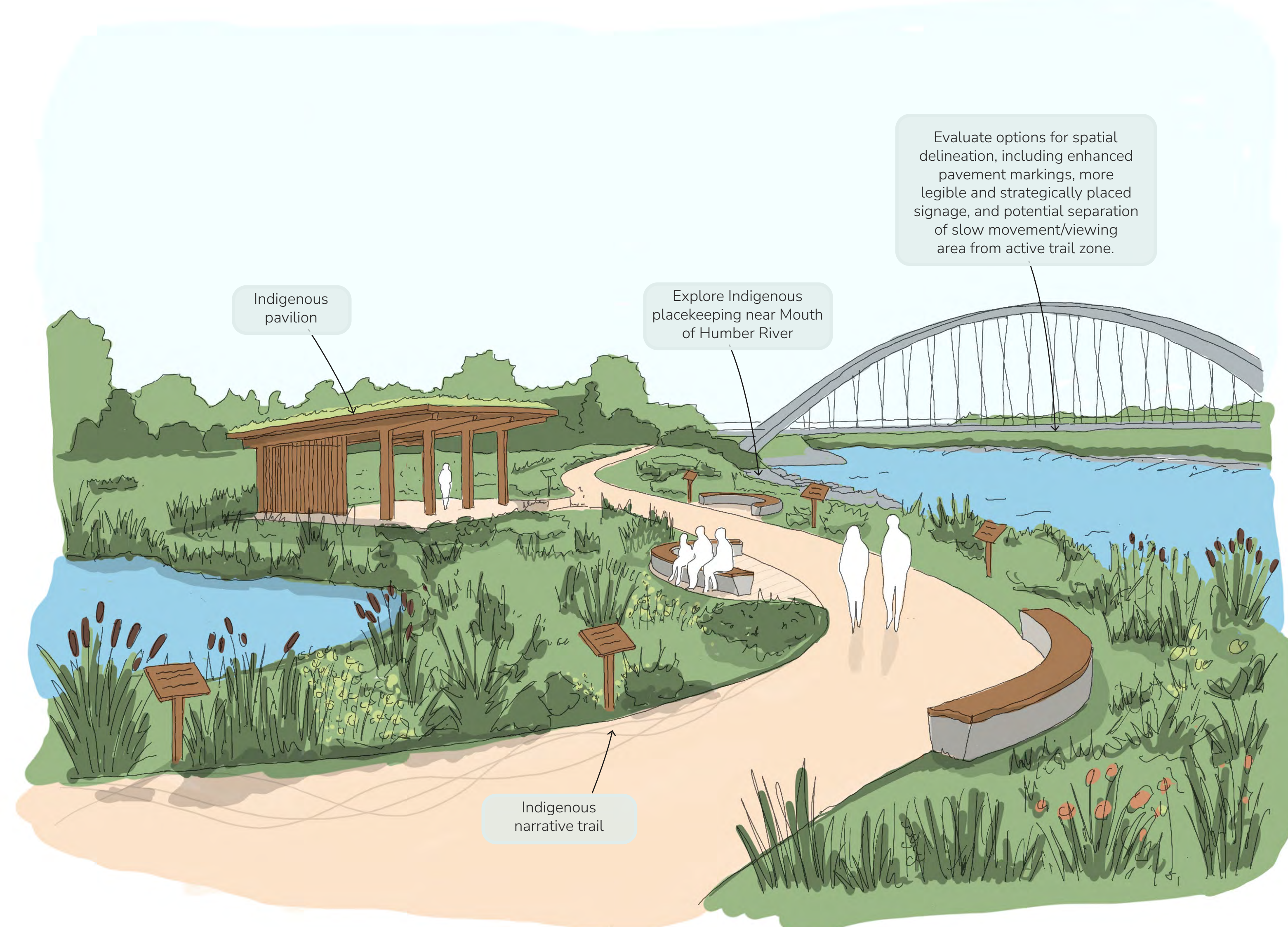
Neighbourhood Park



Legend

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Humber Bay Arch Bridge 2 Gathering Pavilion 3 Indigenous Narrative Trail 4 Natural Play Zone 5 Joy Oil Station 6 Joy Oil Play Areas 7 Sir Casimir Gzowski Picnic Area 8 Medicine Wheel Garden 9 Sunnyside Bike Park | <p>Existing Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Goodman Trail (MGT) Boardwalk Secondary Path <p>Proposed Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MGT - Parallel Pedestrian Path Proposed Secondary Path Proposed Boardwalk Extension / Pedestrian Pathway in Front of Leased Area Proposed Boardwalk Extension in Front of Non-Leased Area <p>Existing Soft Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Lawn Existing Trees Naturalized Areas <p>Proposed Soft Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Naturalized Area With Native Under-story Planting to Support Biodiversity and Expand No-mow Areas Proposed Greening Opportunity Proposed Green Mounds for Noise Buffer | <p>Existing Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beach Washroom (Explore Upgrades) Trellis Picnic Area Water Fountain Food & Beverage Bike Rack Play Area (Explore Upgrades) Bike Share Station <p>Proposed Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike Racks Natural Play Area Outdoor Shower / Foot Wash Washroom Picnic Area Water Fountain BBQ Temporary Food Truck Zone <p>Natural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Ecological Restoration Proposed Shoreline Restoration |
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Concept sketch of the mouth of the Humber River looking south toward the Humber Bay Arch Bridge



Concept sketch of the Joy Oil Station reimagined as a visitor hub along the Martin Goodman Trail



Character Areas

Active Recreation

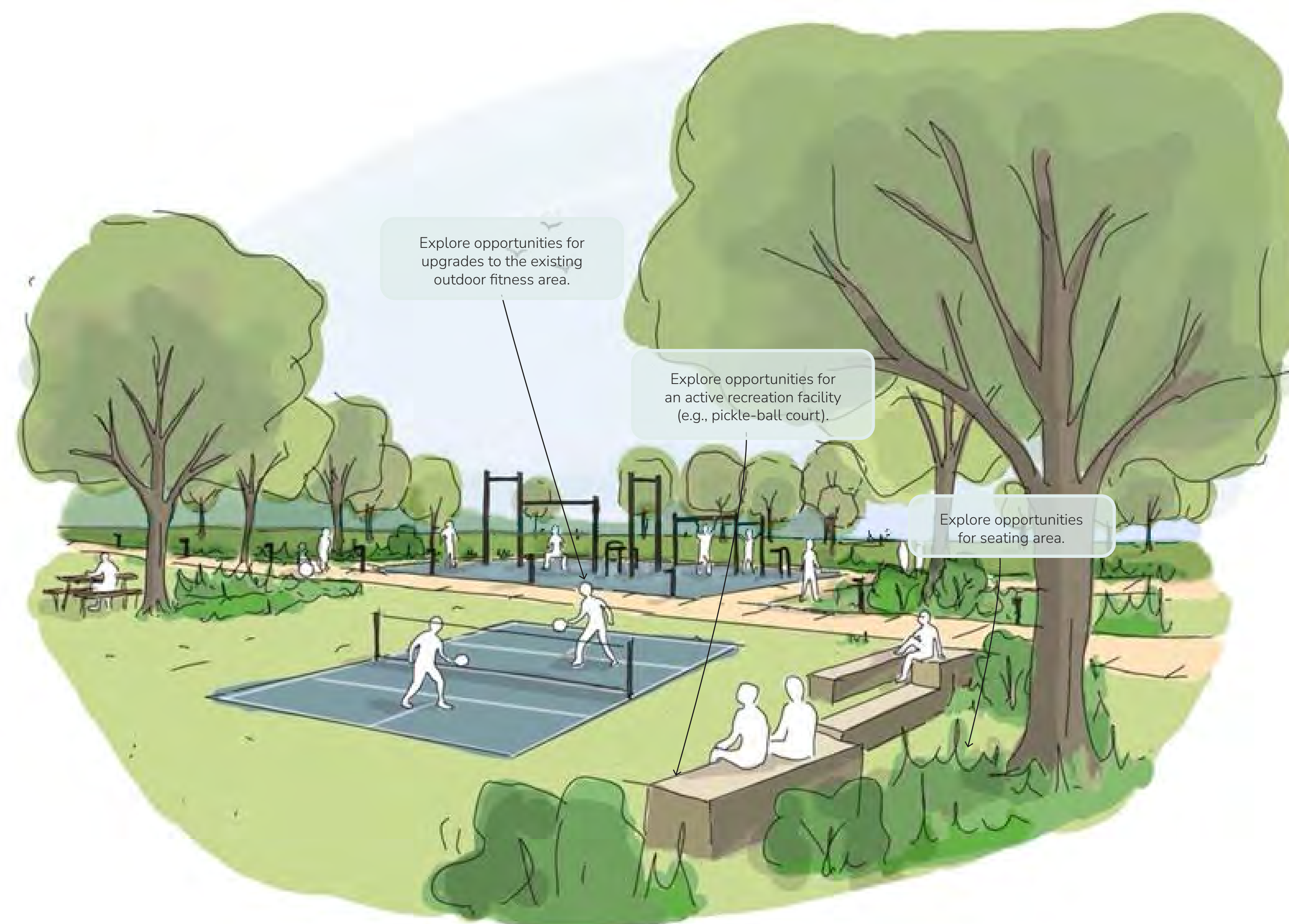
The Active Recreation character area brings together active park uses, water-based recreation, and continuous waterfront movement. As the Plan moves east, this segment becomes a more energetic part of the Western Beaches, while still offering quieter moments along the shoreline. This area supports a mix of experiences, from contemplative beach use and informal gathering to fitness, court sports, boating, rowing, and movement along the waterfront. Consideration is given to the extension of the boardwalk here to reinforce a more continuous waterfront experience and improving public access along the lake.



Legend

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 Contemplative Beach 15 Active Hub 16 The Lookout | <p>Existing Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Goodman Trail (MGT) Boardwalk Secondary Path <p>Proposed Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MGT - Parallel Pedestrian Path Proposed Secondary Path Proposed Boardwalk Extension / Pedestrian Pathway in Front of Leased Area Proposed Boardwalk Extension in Front of Non-Leased Area <p>Existing Soft Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Lawn Existing Trees Naturalized Areas <p>Proposed Soft Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Naturalized Area With Native Under-story Planting to Support Biodiversity and Expand No-mow Areas Proposed Greening Opportunity Proposed Green Mounds for Noise Buffer | <p>Existing Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beach Washroom (Explore Upgrades) Trellis Picnic Area Water Fountain Food & Beverage Bike Rack Play Area (Explore Upgrades) Bike Share Station <p>Proposed Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike Racks Natural Play Area Outdoor Shower / Foot Wash Washroom Picnic Area Water Fountain BBQ Temporary Food Truck Zone <p>Natural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Ecological Restoration Proposed Shoreline Restoration |
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Concept sketch of the active hub looking south



Character Areas

Passive Recreation

At the eastern end of the study area, the park character shifts toward a quieter and more contemplative waterfront landscape. This segment supports passive recreation, ecological restoration, and slower movement, offering a calmer counterpoint to the more active destinations to the west. The existing disc golf course area is naturalized through meadow planting and ecological restoration, strengthening habitat value and creating a softer parkland condition. This quieter landscape also supports Indigenous placekeeping through opportunities for public art, storytelling, gathering, and reflection that align with the character of this part of the waterfront.



Legend

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 No-Mow Meadow 18 Gathering Node 19 Viewing Deck | <p>Existing Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Martin Goodman Trail (MGT) Boardwalk Secondary Path <p>Proposed Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MGT - Parallel Pedestrian Path Proposed Secondary Path Proposed Boardwalk Extension / Pedestrian Pathway in Front of Leased Area Proposed Boardwalk Extension in Front of Non-Leased Area <p>Existing Soft Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Lawn Existing Trees Naturalized Areas <p>Proposed Soft Landscaping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Naturalized Area With Native Under-story Planting to Support Biodiversity and Expand No-mow Areas Proposed Greening Opportunity Proposed Green Mounds for Noise Buffer | <p>Existing Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beach Washroom (Explore Upgrades) Trellis Picnic Area Water Fountain Food & Beverage Bike Rack Play Area (Explore Upgrades) Bike Share Station <p>Proposed Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bike Racks Natural Play Area Outdoor Shower / Foot Wash Washroom Picnic Area Water Fountain BBQ Temporary Food Truck Zone <p>Natural Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Ecological Restoration Proposed Shoreline Restoration |
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Concept sketch of the no-mow meadow areas

