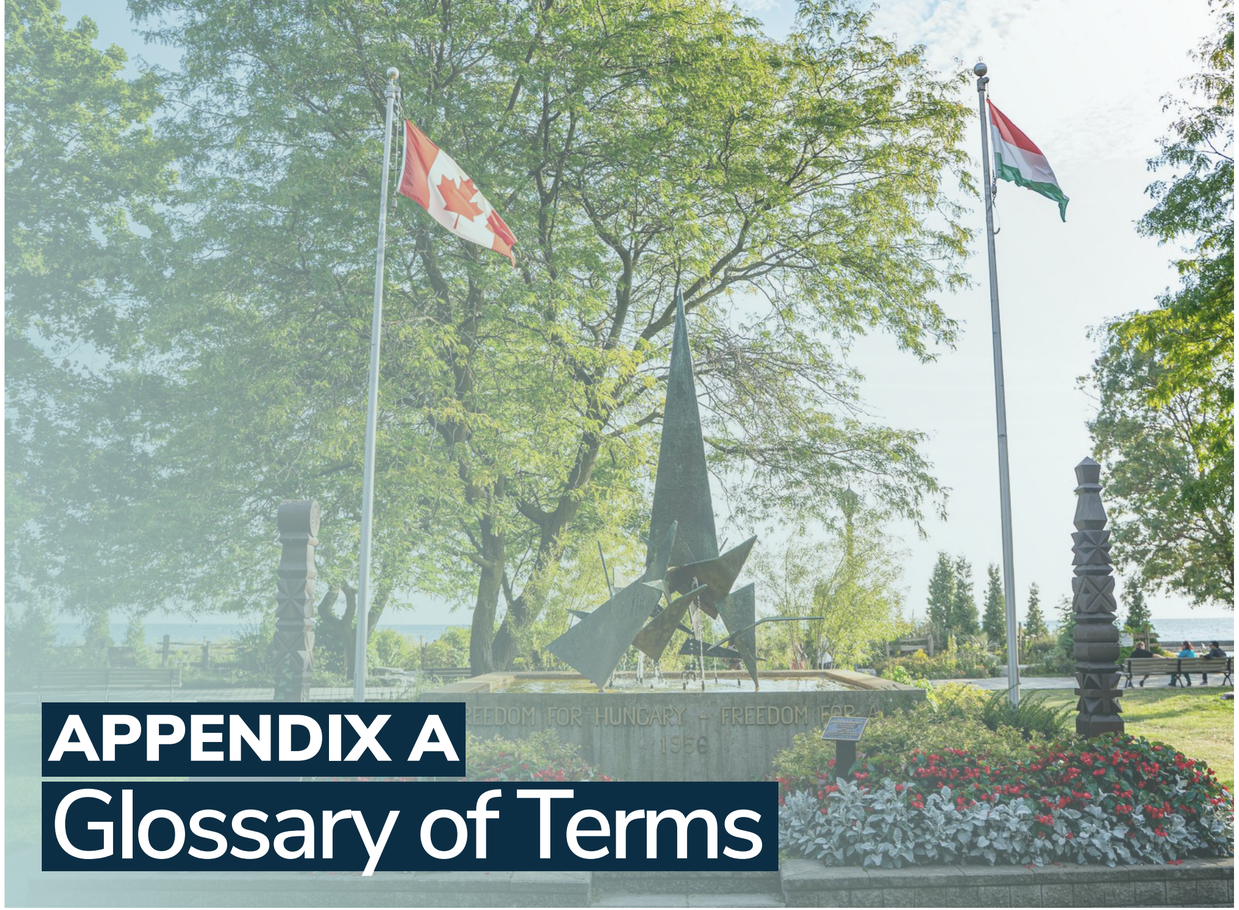


# APPENDIX A
# Glossary of Terms

The Public Realm Plan contains a number of standard words and phrases throughout the document. The following is a list of some of those terms together with an explanation of their meaning, which will help you interpret the Public Realm Plan.

## A

**Accessibility:** Outdoor spaces, routes, amenities, and facilities that are designed to be usable by people of all ages and abilities, including people using mobility devices, strollers, or other supports.

**ActiveTO:** A City of Toronto program that temporarily reallocated road space to support walking, cycling, and active transportation, including along Lake Shore Boulevard West during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**All our relations:** A core Indigenous world view expressing the interconnectedness of humans, animals, plants, water, air, spirit, ancestors, and future generations.

## B

**Big moves** The key directions that organize the Plan's recommendations and guide future planning, design, investment, and decision-making across the Western Beaches.

**Bike Share Toronto** Toronto's public bike share system, which provides short-term bike rentals at stations across the city and supports active transportation connections to and through the Western Beaches.

**Biodiversity** The variety of living species and ecosystems in a place, including plants, animals, birds, insects, aquatic life, and the habitats that support them.

**Black Oak Savannah** A rare ecosystem found in nearby High Park, characterized by Black Oak trees, prairie grasses, and plants shaped in part by long-standing cultural stewardship practices.

**Breakwaters** Coastal defence structures that protect the shoreline from wave action and create calmer water conditions that support recreational uses such as swimming, paddling, and rowing.

**Bridge landings** The areas where bridges meet the ground and connect to paths, streets, parks, or trails. In the Plan, these areas are important arrival points and movement connections.

**Buffer zones** Landscape areas, planting, landforms, or other design elements used to soften edges, reduce conflicts, support habitat, or create separation between different uses.

**Burial mounds** Raised landforms created by Indigenous Peoples for ceremonial or burial purposes. In the broader Western Beaches cultural landscape, known mound sites are associated with nearby High Park.

## C

**Ceremonial water access** Spaces designed to support ceremony, reflection, and respectful engagement with water as a living being.

**Climate resilience** The ability of landscapes, infrastructure, and public spaces to adapt to changing climate conditions, including extreme heat, storms, flooding, erosion, and fluctuating lake levels.

**Cohesive visual language** A consistent approach to materials, signage, furnishings, lighting, and landscape elements that helps different parts of a public space feel connected and easy to understand.

**Combined sewer overflows (CSO)** Events that occur when combined sewers carrying stormwater and wastewater exceed capacity during wet weather and discharge into waterways.

**Cultural Heritage Study** A study that identifies, evaluates, and provides direction for conserving places, landscapes, buildings, or features with cultural heritage value.

**Cultural storytelling** The use of design, interpretation, art, naming, signage, programming, or landscape elements to share the histories, cultures, and meanings connected to a place.

## D

**Drivers of change** The key conditions and pressures that explain why the Plan is being updated, including environmental change, aging infrastructure, shifting public use, and the need to centre Indigenous placekeeping.

## E

**Ecological systems** The relationships between plants, animals, water, soil, climate, and habitat that support environmental health and natural processes.

**Environmental Assessment** A formal planning and approval process used to evaluate the potential environmental, social, technical, and operational effects of certain infrastructure or public works projects.

## F

**Fragmented habitat areas** Natural or semi-natural areas that are separated from one another, making it harder for species to move, feed, nest, or maintain healthy populations.

## G

**Gardiner Expressway** A major elevated expressway that runs north of the Western Beaches and contributes to the transportation corridor separating the waterfront from adjacent neighbourhoods.

**Guiding principles** High-level directions that translate the vision into values and priorities for how the Western Beaches should function, feel, and evolve over time.

## H

**Habitat networks** Connected areas of habitat that allow plants and wildlife to survive, move, reproduce, and adapt over time.

**Habitat networks - aquatic:** Connected in-water and shoreline habitats that support fish, amphibians, aquatic plants, and other species through spawning, shelter, movement, and feeding areas.

**Humber River mouth** The place where the Humber River meets Lake Ontario. It is an ecologically and culturally significant location and is identified in the Plan as a key place for Indigenous presence, storytelling, teaching, and gathering.

## I

**Implementation strategy** The approach for advancing the Plan over time, including phasing, prioritization, further studies, project scoping, budgeting, partnerships, and coordination.

**Inclusivity** An approach to planning and design that seeks to remove barriers and support people of different ages, abilities, cultures, incomes, and experiences.

**Indigenous placekeeping** An approach that supports Indigenous presence, relationships, teachings, ceremonies, stewardship, and cultural expression in the planning, design, operation, and care of a place.

**Indigenous placeknowing** A way of understanding place through Indigenous knowledge, relationships, histories, teachings, and responsibilities to land, water, plants, animals, and future generations.

**Indigenous teaching landscapes** Landscapes designed or cared for in ways that support Indigenous learning, cultural practices, storytelling, stewardship, and relationships with land and water.

**Invasive species** Non-native species that can spread quickly and negatively affect local ecosystems, native plants, habitats, or maintenance conditions.

## J

**Joy Oil Station** A historic former gas station in Sir Casimir Gzowski Park that the Plan identifies as a potential visitor centre and waterfront hub.

## L

**Lake Ontario** One of the Great Lakes and the defining waterbody along the Western Beaches. It has cultural, ecological, recreational, and civic significance.

**Lake Shore Boulevard West** A major east-west roadway running through the Western Beaches corridor, serving regional movement while also creating access and crossing challenges for people walking and cycling.

**Lease holders** Organizations or businesses that occupy or operate facilities on City-owned lands through lease or licence agreements, such as some waterfront clubs and destinations within the study area.

## M

**Managed landscapes** Park and open space areas that are actively maintained, such as mown lawns, ornamental planting beds, paved paths, sports areas, and formal amenity spaces.

**Marker trees** Trees shaped or recognized through Indigenous knowledge systems as markers for routes, places, stories, or relationships to land and water.

**Martin Goodman Trail (MGT)** A multi-use paved waterfront trail that runs east-west through the Western Beaches and forms part of Toronto's broader waterfront trail network. It supports walking, cycling, commuting, and recreation.

**Medicinal planting** Planting that includes species with cultural, healing, ceremonial, or ecological significance, often developed with Indigenous partners where Indigenous knowledge is involved.

**Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN)** The current Treaty Partners for Treaty 13 lands, which include the Western Beaches. MCFN was engaged directly through the Plan process.

**Mobility network** The connected system of streets, trails, paths, bridges, crossings, transit routes, and water-based routes that allow people to move to, from, and through the Western Beaches.

**Mobile Food Vendor:** A licensed, movable food premise (such as a food truck, trailer, or cart) that prepares and/or sells food and beverages to the public from a vehicle or other portable unit.

**Multi-modal trail network** A connected network of trails and paths that supports different ways of moving, including walking, cycling, rolling, and other forms of active transportation.

## N

**Narrative trail** A route that connects places, stories, interpretation, and landscape experiences, allowing people to move through the site while learning about its cultural, ecological, and historical significance.

**Native plant habitats** Planting areas made up of species that are native to the region and support local biodiversity, pollinators, birds, and ecological resilience.

**Natural systems** The interconnected systems of land, water, plants, animals, soils, and climate that shape ecological function and environmental health.

**Naturalization** The process of introducing or restoring more natural landscape conditions, such as native planting, meadow areas, wetland shelves, soft shoreline edges, and reduced mowing.

**Nature play** Play that uses natural materials, landforms, planting, water, logs, boulders, and sensory elements to encourage exploration, imagination, and learning through the landscape.

## P

**Parallel pedestrian path** A walking route that runs near the Martin Goodman Trail to provide a pedestrian-only alternative that is protected from faster cycling movement along MGT and reduce conflicts.

**Public access** The ability for members of the public to reach, enter, use, see, or experience parks, trails, shorelines, beaches, facilities, and water-based spaces.

**Public realm** Publicly accessible outdoor spaces, including parks, trails, streets, sidewalks, beaches, plazas, waterfront edges, and other shared civic spaces.

## Q

**The Queensway** A major east-west street north of the Western Beaches that forms part of the broader transportation corridor separating the waterfront from adjacent neighbourhoods.

## R

**Recommendations** The proposed projects, actions, design directions, and further studies identified in the Plan to help achieve the vision and Big Moves.

**Recreation - active** Physical or programmed activities such as cycling, swimming, rowing, paddling, fitness, sports, play, and other energetic uses.

**Recreation - passive** Lower-intensity activities such as walking, sitting, picnicking, sunbathing, birdwatching, quiet reflection, and enjoying views of the water.

**Recreation - water-based** A range of activities including swimming, paddling, rowing, canoeing, and sailing.

**Resilience** The ability of a place, system, or community to prepare for, withstand, adapt to, and recover from changing conditions and disruptions.

**Riparian zones** Vegetated areas along rivers, streams, or shorelines that help stabilize banks, filter runoff, support habitat, and connect land and water systems.

## S

**Seasonal water fluctuations** Changes in lake or river water levels over different seasons or years, which can affect shoreline access, erosion, habitat, and public use.

**Secondary paths** Smaller pedestrian routes that complement primary trails and help connect people to destinations such as the boardwalk, beaches, facilities, and amenities.

**Sensory water experience** A designed opportunity to engage with water through sound, touch, sight, movement, reflection, or proximity, beyond simply viewing the lake.

**Shoreline - hard** Engineered shoreline conditions such as vertical retaining walls, dockwalls, and other hard edges that typically provide limited direct access or habitat value.

**Shoreline - soft** Shoreline conditions such as sandy beaches, vegetated edges, and localized habitat areas that support more direct interaction with water and ecological function.

**Shoreline access** Physical or visual opportunities for people to reach, approach, overlook, touch, or otherwise experience the water's edge.

**Shoreline erosion** The wearing away of shoreline land or materials by waves, storms, water level changes, ice, wind, or other natural and human-influenced processes.

**Shoreline protection** Measures used to reduce erosion and wave impacts, including vertical retaining walls, revetments, armourstone edges, dockwalls, and breakwaters.

**Snowmelt runoff** Water created when snow and ice melt and flow over land or paved surfaces, often carrying salt, sediment, and pollutants into stormwater systems or waterways.

**Supportive amenities** Features that make public spaces more comfortable and usable, such as seating, shade, washrooms, drinking fountains, bike parking, lighting, showers, foot wash stations, and wayfinding.

## T

**Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** A committee of City divisions, agencies, and project partners that provided technical input and reviewed the Plan at key milestones.

**Thermal comfort** How comfortable people feel outdoors in relation to sun, shade, wind, humidity, temperature, and surrounding materials. It is important for year-round public space design.

**Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)** A conservation authority that works with municipalities and partners on watershed management, flood risk, erosion, shoreline, habitat, and environmental protection.

**Toronto Carrying Place** A historic land and water route linking Lake Ontario to the upper Great Lakes through the Humber River system. It has long-standing Indigenous travel, trade, diplomatic, and cultural significance.

**Toronto Harbour Commission (THC)**
The agency established in 1911 to guide shoreline and harbour development in Toronto, including major lakefilling works that shaped the modern Western Beaches.

**Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)**
A City of Toronto agency that provides public transit services to approximately 1.7 million daily commuters in Toronto and from surrounding municipalities.

**Treaty 13** An 1805 treaty agreement between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

**Treaty Partners** The Indigenous Nation or Nations that hold treaty rights and responsibilities in a particular area. For Treaty 13 lands, this refers to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

**Treaty Lands and Territory** Lands and waters covered by treaty relationships and agreements, including the rights, responsibilities, and ongoing relationships connected to those places.

**Tree canopy** The layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that provides shade, habitat, cooling, stormwater benefits, and visual character.

## U

**Urban-adapted species** Plants or animals that are able to live in urban conditions, such as parks, shorelines, streets, and managed landscapes.

## V

**Vision statement** The aspirational statement that describes the desired future for the Western Beaches and guides planning, design, and decision-making.

**Visitor amenities** Facilities and features that support public use and comfort, such as washrooms, seating, shade, drinking fountains, food and beverage areas, bike parking, showers, and signage.

**Visual coherence** A sense of consistency and clarity in the appearance of a place, created through coordinated design of materials, signs, furnishings, lighting, planting, and public realm elements.

## W

**Water quality** The condition of water in relation to public health, ecological function, recreation, and environmental safety.

**Water quality advisories** Public notices that indicate when water conditions may not be suitable for swimming or other recreational contact, often due to bacteria or pollution levels.

**Water retention** The ability of landscapes or infrastructure to hold, slow, absorb, or filter water before it enters storm sewers, rivers, or Lake Ontario.

**Waterfront West LRT** A long-term transit concept intended to improve transit service along Toronto's western waterfront. Several 2009 WWMP initiatives depended on this project, which has not received a funding commitment.

**Watershed** An area of land where water drains into a common river, lake, or other waterbody. The Humber River watershed influences water quality and ecological conditions at the Western Beaches.

**Wayfinding** Signs, maps, markers, paths, visual cues, and information systems that help people understand where they are, where they are going, and how to move through a place.







# APPENDIX B
# The History of the Place



*The Western Beaches has a long history from Indigenous cultural landscapes, to early colonial trading posts, to recreation, and waterfront transformation.*

## B.1 The History of the Place

### *B.2.1 Indigenous History of the Western Beaches*

Lake Ontario has long served as a sustaining and sacred body of water, supporting fishing, travel, ceremony, and trade. Indigenous connection to Lake Ontario dates back at least 12,000 years. The Western Beaches and surrounding areas, including High Park and the Humber River, contains sacred sites and cultural landmarks that reflect the heritage of the many Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded the land and waters since time immemorial.

High Park includes known mound sites, historic marker trees used for navigation, and the Black Oak Savannah, an ecosystem shaped in part by long-standing cultural stewardship practices, as well as the Humber River estuary at Cobechenonk which is, Teiaiagon. Nearby areas such as Magwood Park further illustrate the cultural and ecological relationships that have shaped this region for generations.

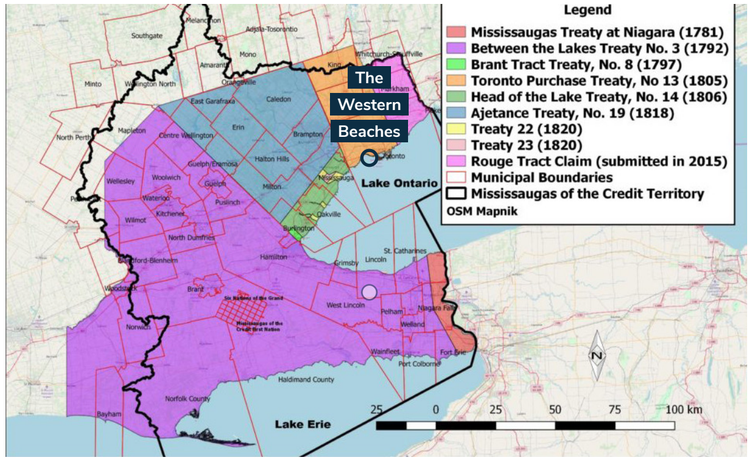
The mouth of the Humber River and the adjacent shoreline served as a key starting point for the Toronto Carrying Place Trail, a major travel, trade, and diplomatic route linking Lake Ontario to the upper Great Lakes. It was a critical overland route for portaging canoes and goods between Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe. The route supported relationships among the Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabeg, and other Nations for thousands of years. The Humber is now recognized as the only ***Canadian Heritage River*** in the Greater Toronto Area, and is one of 40 rivers across Canada names for cultural importance.

Together, these connections highlight that while the modern shoreline is largely constructed, the broader landscape reflects enduring relationships between Indigenous communities and the land and water.

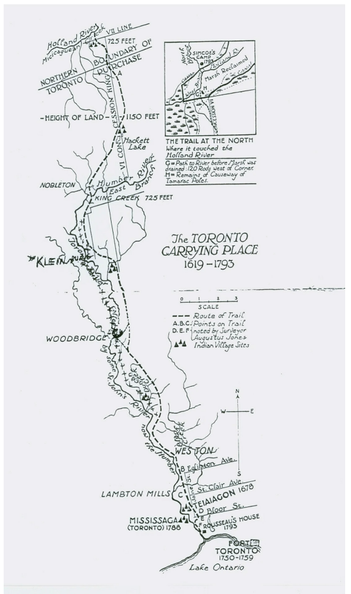
**INDIGENOUS TERMINOLOGY**

- **Mound sites:** In High Park, fifty seven earthwork mounds built by the Erie/ Neutral and Iroquois for honouring and burying their dead have been identified.
- **Marker trees:** Trees shaped or recognized through Indigenous knowledge systems as markers for routes, places, stories, or relationships to land and water.
- **Black Oak Savannah:** A rare ecosystem found in nearby High Park, characterized by Black Oak trees, prairie grasses, and plants shaped in part by long-standing cultural stewardship practices.
- **Cobechenonk:** The Anishnaabe name for the Humber River, meaning *"leave the canoes and go back"*, as the river marked the beginning of the Toronto Carrying Place.
- **Teiaiagon:** A 17th century village built by the Five Nations Haudenosaunee on the east bank of the Humber River, meaning *"crosses the stream"*.
- **Magwood Park:** An 8.7 hectare park located on the east bank of the Humber River, south of Dundas Street. Magwood Park is located at the intersection of the Iroquois Lake trail and the Toronto Carrying Place trail.
- **Toronto Carrying Place Trail:** An Indigenous trail that led from the mouth of the Humber River on Lake Ontario to the Holland River near Lake Simcoe.

The Western Beaches lie within the traditional territory of many Nations, including the Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabeg, and form part of the Treaty 13 lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, who are the current Treaty partners.




MCFN Treaty Lands and Territory



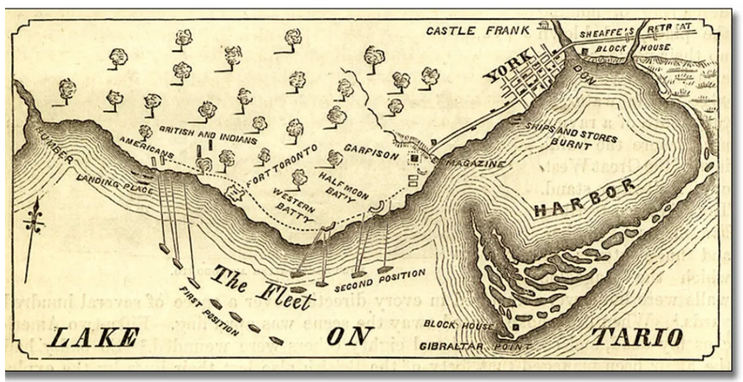

The Toronto Carrying Place Trail 1619-1793



## B.2.2 *Post-Contact and Early Colonial History*

European records of the area begin in the early seventeenth century, when Étienne Brûlé traveled through the region in 1615 with Wendat guides along the Toronto Carrying Place. By the early 1700s, the French had established a small trading post at the mouth of the Humber River to intercept furs moving from the north and west across Lake Ontario. The Carrying Place continued to be an important corridor throughout this period, used by Indigenous Nations and European traders alike.

Following the British victory over the French at the Plains of Abraham in 1759, the Humber River and the surrounding shoreline remained strategically significant. In 1793, the location was selected for the establishment of the Town of York, in part because of its connection to the Carrying Place and access to routes inland. Portions of the shoreline near today's Marilyn Bell Park have also been identified as areas associated with military landings of American forces connected to the War of 1812, further underscoring the area's importance during the early colonization period.




Historic Map of the Battle of York (War of 1812)



Etienne Brule at the mouth of the Humber River. Painting by F.S. Challenger, 1956

## B.2.3 *Nineteenth-Century Settlement and Early Recreation*

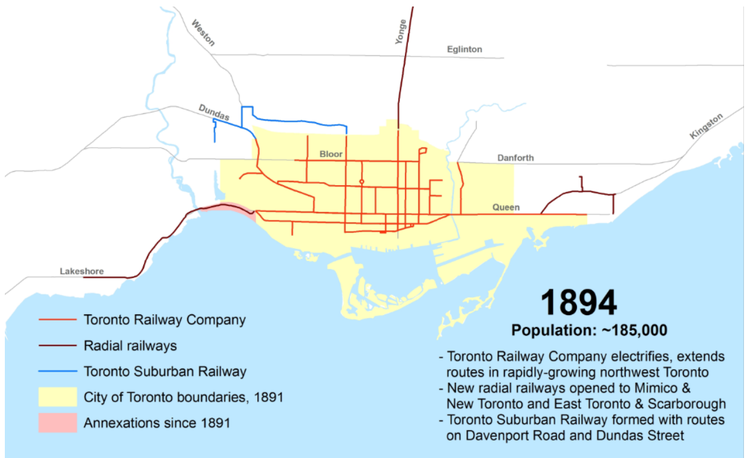
The nineteenth century marked the beginning of more formal settlement and recreation along Toronto's western waterfront.

In 1836, architect and City Surveyor John Howard purchased a 67-hectare property north of the lake shore, establishing what would later become High Park. Howard also built Sunnyside Villa near today's Queensway, giving the future beach its name. Upon his death in 1890, the land was deeded to the City, permanently shaping the area's public realm.

As transportation infrastructure expanded, the western waterfront grew increasingly popular as a leisure destination. Lake shore Road was extended and improved through the mid-1800s, and the Great Western Railway was constructed along the shoreline in the 1850s, making the area more accessible to visitors. In 1878, John Duck's Hotel and Pleasure Gardens opened at the mouth of the Humber River, offering lakeside entertainment and marking the emergence of the area as a resort-style destination.

By the late nineteenth century, the expansion of streetcar service by the Toronto Railway Company strengthened access to the waterfront. The streetcar line along Queen Street West was progressively extended westward, reaching Roncesvalles Avenue in the 1880s, and by 1893, service continued as far as Mimico Creek to meet growing demand for direct access to beaches, dining, and bathing facilities.

Throughout this period, the Humber River continued to serve as an important corridor for fishing, milling, and traveling, reinforcing the area's role as both a recreational landscape and a gateway between the lake shore and surrounding communities.




Toronto's Streetcar Network in 1894



## B.2.4 *Early Twentieth-Century Waterfront Transformation*

The early twentieth century brought significant transformation to Toronto's western waterfront. In 1911, the Toronto Harbour Commission (THC) was established to guide shoreline development. Between 1914 and 1922, THC undertook major lake filling operations, creating over 100 hectares of new land, establishing the modern alignment of the Western Beaches.

As part of this work, THC constructed The Marginal Boulevard on the alignment of today's westbound lanes of Lake Shore Boulevard West, and in 1921 completed a new five-metre-wide wooden boardwalk along Lake Ontario. The boardwalk quickly became a major public destination, hosting events such as the well-known Easter Parade.

In 1922, the Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion opened, followed by Sunnyside Pool (now the Gus Ryder Pool) in 1923, which at the time, was one of the largest outdoor pools in the world. These amenities helped anchor the growing Sunnyside Amusement Park, Which throughout the 1920s and 1930s featured rides, dance halls, concessions, and lakeside entertainment. The district became one of Toronto's most popular summer destinations, shaping the recreational identity of the Western Beaches for decades.



Easter Parade (1924)



Sunnyside Bathing Station (1924)





Wading Pool (1936), and Sunnyside Amusement Park (1926)





Sunnyside Beach (1927), Sunnyside Station (Opened 1910)



Swimming Tank (1929)



## B.2.5 *Mid-Century Change and Expressway Construction*

By the mid-twentieth century, changing transportation priorities led to major alterations along the western waterfront. Following decades of popularity, Sunnyside Amusement Park declined after the Second World War and was demolished in 1955 following several fires on the site and to accommodate new road infrastructure

Construction of the Gardiner Expressway proceeded through the 1950s, and by 1959 the new elevated expressway and associated ramps significantly reconfigured the shoreline and surrounding road network. During this period, the Roncesvalles Avenue bridge over the rail corridor was removed, and Lake Shore Road and The Marginal Boulevard were reconstructed into the eastbound and westbound lanes of Lake Shore Boulevard West that exist today.

Streetcar tracks were removed from Lake Shore Boulevard West between Roncesvalles Avenue and the Humber River, and in 1957 service was shifted to a new reserved right of- way in the median of The Queensway. Together, these mid-century works established the transportation corridor that continues to separate the waterfront from adjacent neighbourhoods, reshaping public access and the character of the Western Beaches.

Sunnyside, 1955



## B.2.6 *The Making of the Modern Western Beaches*

By the mid-twentieth century, the Western Beaches had largely assumed their present-day shoreline form, shaped by early twentieth-century landfilling, shoreline protection works, and the establishment of recreational amenities and waterfront clubs. In the decades that followed, change along the Western Beaches was driven less by major physical expansion and more by evolving transportation priorities, planning initiatives, and shifting patterns of public use.

From the 1960s onward, the Western Beaches increasingly functioned as both a regional recreational destination and a critical east–west movement corridor along Toronto's waterfront. Beaches, trails, rowing and sailing activities, and large public gatherings continued to define the area's identity, while the presence of Lake Shore Boulevard West, the Gardiner Expressway, and the CNR Corridor maintained a physical and perceptual divide between the waterfront and adjacent neighbourhoods, shaping how people access, move through, and experience the area.

An important feature of the modern Western Beaches is the MGT. Opened in 1984, the MGT established a continuous east to west multi-use route along Toronto's waterfront. It connects the Western Beaches to the broader waterfront trail network, linking parks, beaches, and destinations and supporting both daily commuting and recreation. Over time, the MGT has been expanded and upgraded, reflecting growing demand for safe and comfortable walking and cycling along the lake.



The Humber Bay Arch Bridge Under Construction (Early 1990s)

Late twentieth-century planning efforts also introduced investments to improve continuity and movement along the waterfront. Completed in the mid-1990s, the Humber Bay Arch Bridge established a continuous, grade-separated pedestrian and cycling connection across the mouth of the Humber River, strengthening the Western Beaches as a linked public realm and reinforcing its function within Toronto's regional waterfront trail network. The bridge's design also responds to the Indigenous history of the site. Its arch and concrete abutments mark the gateway to the historic Toronto Carrying Place Trail, while its steel superstructure incorporates an abstract Thunderbird form and snake and turtle motifs referencing the area's cultural and natural histories. The bridge represents an early example of Indigenous-inspired design being integrated into Toronto's waterfront infrastructure.

During this period, adjacent areas also experienced significant change. The development of the Humber Bay Shores community in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries introduced a new residential population immediately west of the Humber River, increasing daily use of Western Beaches and placing greater emphasis on safe crossings, access points, and connections between the waterfront and surrounding neighbourhoods.

During this period, long-term transit planning initiatives, including early studies for a potential Western Waterfront transit corridor, also began to shape thinking about future mobility along the lake shore, further reflecting the growing importance of the Western Beaches within the city's broader mobility network.

Throughout the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the City undertook incremental improvements to enhance public use and safety, including pedestrian and cycling upgrades at key crossings along Lake Shore Boulevard West, trail enhancements, and ongoing maintenance of shoreline and breakwaters infrastructure. The Western Beaches have also served as a flexible and highly visible public landscape during periods of intensified city-wide use. During the 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games, the western waterfront functioned as an important movement corridor connecting venues and supporting increased recreational and visitor activity.

More recently, environmental and social conditions have continued to shape how the Western Beaches are used and experienced. Periods of record-high lake levels have intensified shoreline erosion and placed pressure on aging infrastructure and park assets. During the COVID-19 pandemic, initiatives such as ActiveTO temporarily reallocated road space along Lake Shore Boulevard West to support walking and cycling, revealing strong demand for waterfront access.

Together, these layers of planning and infrastructure investment have shaped the modern Western Beaches as a connected waterfront landscape that supports recreation and mobility.



# APPENDIX C
# Inventory & Analysis

*The inventory and analysis for the Plan was developed through an integrated methodology combining on-site investigation, desktop review, and iterative mapping. These inputs were synthesized into a series of layered existing conditions maps, establishing a shared baseline to support public and Indigenous engagement, identify opportunities and constraints, and inform subsequent phases of the Plan.*

## C.1 Methodology and Approach

The Phase 1 inventory and analysis process included a full-site collaborative walkshop with City staff and subsequent consultant-led site visits to document existing physical, and experiential conditions across the Western Beaches.

Field observations were supplemented by a comprehensive review of City-provided background materials, including the 2009 Western Waterfront Master Plan (WWMP), City of Toronto Council progress reports, Public Life Study findings, Social Pinpoint feedback, State of Good Repair documentation, Western Beaches Mobility and Access Report, Toronto Water and Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) technical studies, and geographic information system (GIS) datasets.

These inputs were synthesized into a series of layered existing conditions maps addressing mobility, recreation, indigeneity, natural environment and shoreline, as well as visitor experience, establishing a shared baseline to support public and Indigenous engagement, identify opportunities and constraints, and inform subsequent phases of the Public Realm Plan Update.



# C.2 Existing Conditions and Analysis

The Western Beaches function as a continuous linear waterfront park system extending from the mouth of the Humber River to the eastern end of Marilyn Bell Park. Spanning over four kilometres and approximately 120 hectares, the area is characterized by a mix of active and passive recreation, varied soft and hard shoreline conditions, and a heavily used multi-use trail network, with the MGT serving as the primary east–west spine. The waterfront also provides one of Toronto's longest unobstructed views of Lake Ontario.

The study area includes a series of connected parks and key recreational destinations, including Marilyn Bell Park, Lake Shore Boulevard Parklands, Budapest Park, Sunnyside Park, and Sir Casimir Gzowski Park. It also features important historic sites such as Joy Station, Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion, and Palais Royale, and is home to several private recreational clubs, including the Boulevard Club, the Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club, and the Argonaut Rowing Club.

The landscape includes large open park spaces and important ecological features, while also being shaped by major infrastructure barriers such as Lake Shore Boulevard West, the Gardiner Expressway, and adjacent CNR Corridor.

Overall, the site demonstrates strong foundational assets, including continuous waterfront access, established parkland, regional connectivity, and a landscape shaped by long-standing Indigenous relationships to land and water.

At the same time, it presents key challenges related to user conflicts, uneven distribution of amenities, limited public access to the water, fragmented ecological and spatial systems, and the limited visibility and integration of Indigenous presence and placekeeping within the existing public realm.

The following sections examine these conditions in greater detail through five thematic lenses:

- natural environment and shoreline,
- recreation and reflection,
- indigeneity,
- mobility, and
- visitor experience.

Each theme synthesizes mapping, site observations, and background data to identify key patterns, constraints, and gaps that inform the next phase of the Public Realm Plan Update.

**Five Thematic Areas**



**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SHORELINE**



**RECREATION AND REFLECTION**



**INDIGENEITY**



**MOBILITY**



**VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

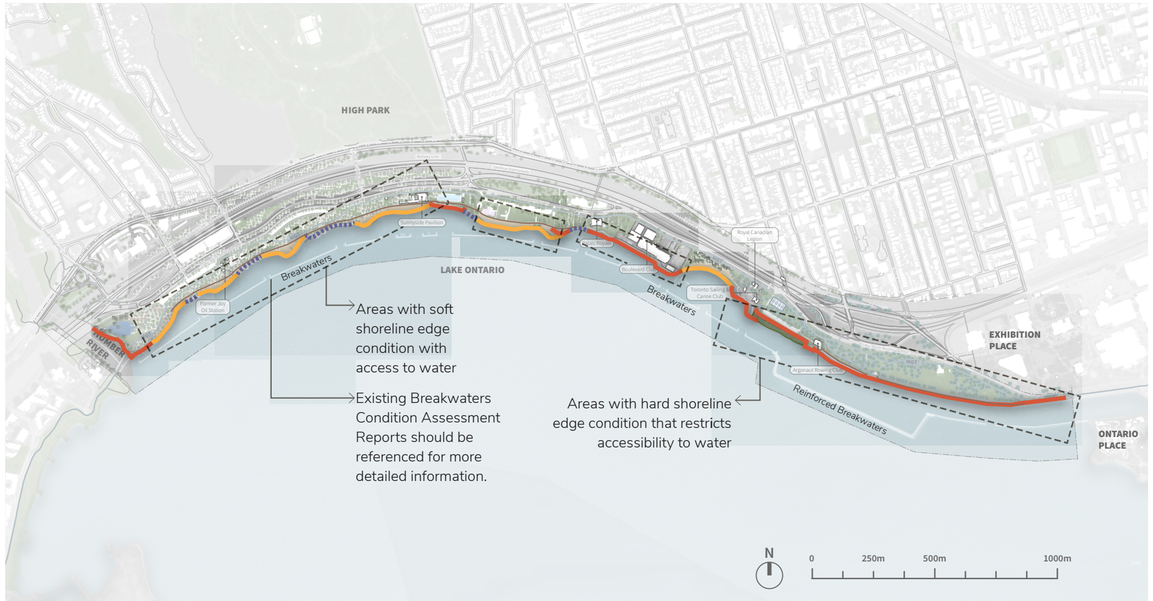
## C.2.1 *Natural Environment and Shoreline*

The Western Beaches are part of a broader lakefront and riverine system shaped by the interaction of land and water, where shoreline processes, habitat systems, and public use are closely interconnected. As identified through the site analysis and inventory, the natural environment includes a mix of managed parkland, localized naturalized areas, and regionally significant ecological features.

The natural environment includes the Humber River mouth and its associated riparian and wetland habitats, as well as smaller interventions such as the butterfly garden and vegetated shoreline segments. While these systems contribute important ecological value and support biodiversity, they are often fragmented and disconnected from one another, resulting in a landscape where high-value natural features exist but are not fully integrated across the waterfront.

Shoreline conditions reflect a combination of engineered and naturalized edges rather than a single continuous condition. A range of stabilization approaches are present, including vertical retaining walls, revetments, armourstone edges, and dockwalls, alongside softer shoreline areas such as sandy beaches, vegetated edges, and localized habitat enhancements. Offshore breakwaters, extending approximately 4 kilometres along the waterfront, play a critical role in protecting the shoreline from wave action and creating calmer water conditions that support recreational uses such as swimming, paddling, and rowing.

However, many of these structures are over 100 years old and were originally designed with a significantly shorter lifespan. While they remain functional, recent assessments indicate that several segments are in declining condition, with localized areas at higher risk of failure within the short term, reinforcing the need for coordinated rehabilitation and long-term management strategies.




**Map 4:** Existing shoreline edge conditions

Soft shoreline conditions are limited and occur primarily at Sunnyside Beach, Budapest Park, and the Humber River mouth, where more naturalized systems support public access, direct interaction with the water, and ecological processes. The Humber River mouth in particular functions as a high-value ecological zone, supporting wetland and riparian habitats as well as aquatic environments for fish and amphibians. Elsewhere, hard and semi-hard edge conditions dominate, often limiting habitat continuity and opportunities for informal access, while reinforcing a more controlled and engineered relationship between land and water.

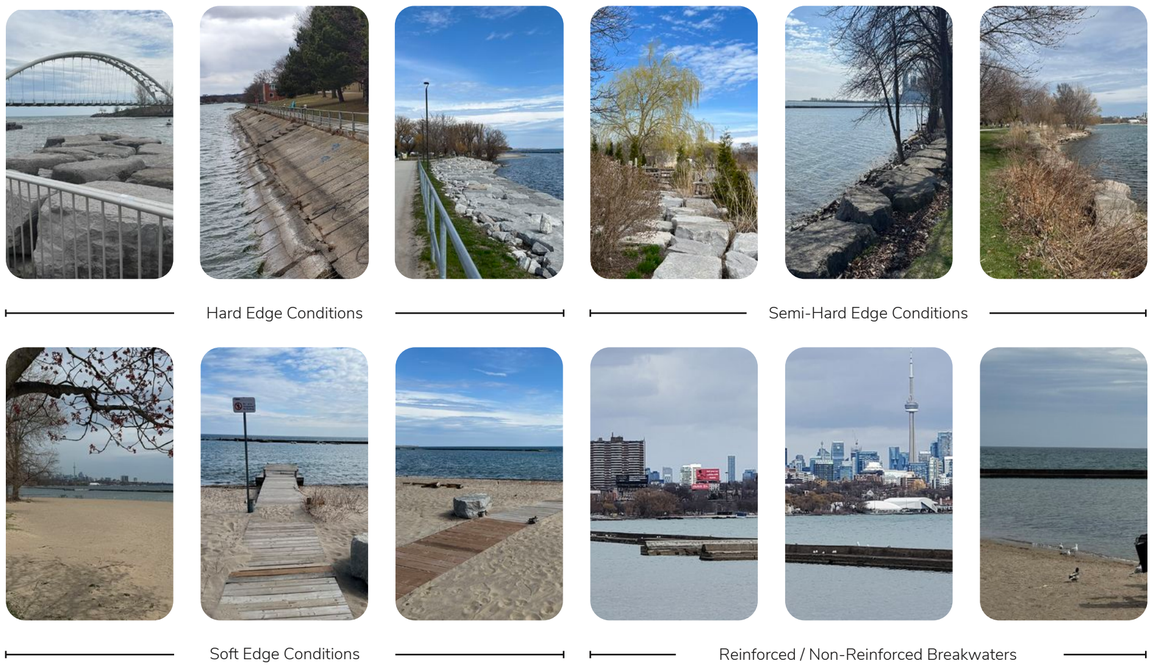
Across the broader parkland, existing habitats are characterized by a mix of mown lawns, ornamental plantings, and scattered tree canopy, with localized naturalized areas along the shoreline and within buffer zones. While these landscapes support a range of urban-adapted species, including waterfowl and small mammals, ecological systems remain fragmented and heavily managed. Invasive species such as Phragmites are present in disturbed shoreline areas, and waterfowl congregation zones contribute to turf degradation and ongoing maintenance pressures. At the same time, areas such as the Humber River corridor and connections to High Park's Black Oak Savannah represent important ecological anchors with the potential to support broader habitat connectivity.

Overall, the analysis identifies a landscape where natural systems are shaped by a combination of historic shoreline infrastructure, ongoing management practices, and localized ecological enhancements. While significant investment in water quality and stormwater infrastructure led by Toronto Water and supported by TRCA has improved conditions along the waterfront, the findings highlight opportunities to better connect and expand natural systems across the site. This includes strengthening habitat continuity between the Humber River corridor and the broader shoreline, expanding soft shoreline treatments where feasible, increasing native planting and canopy cover, and aligning ecological restoration efforts with shoreline protection and infrastructure requirements to support a more resilient and integrated waterfront landscape.

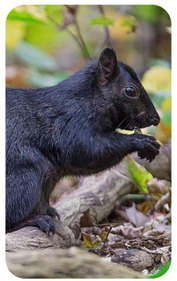


NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SHORELINE

Shoreline Edge Conditions



Fauna and Flora



Squirrels



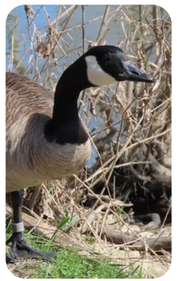
Raccoons



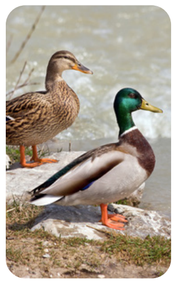
Coyotes



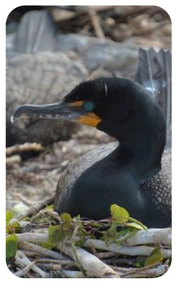
Gulls



Geese



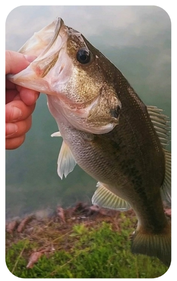
Mallards



Cormorants



Willow Trees



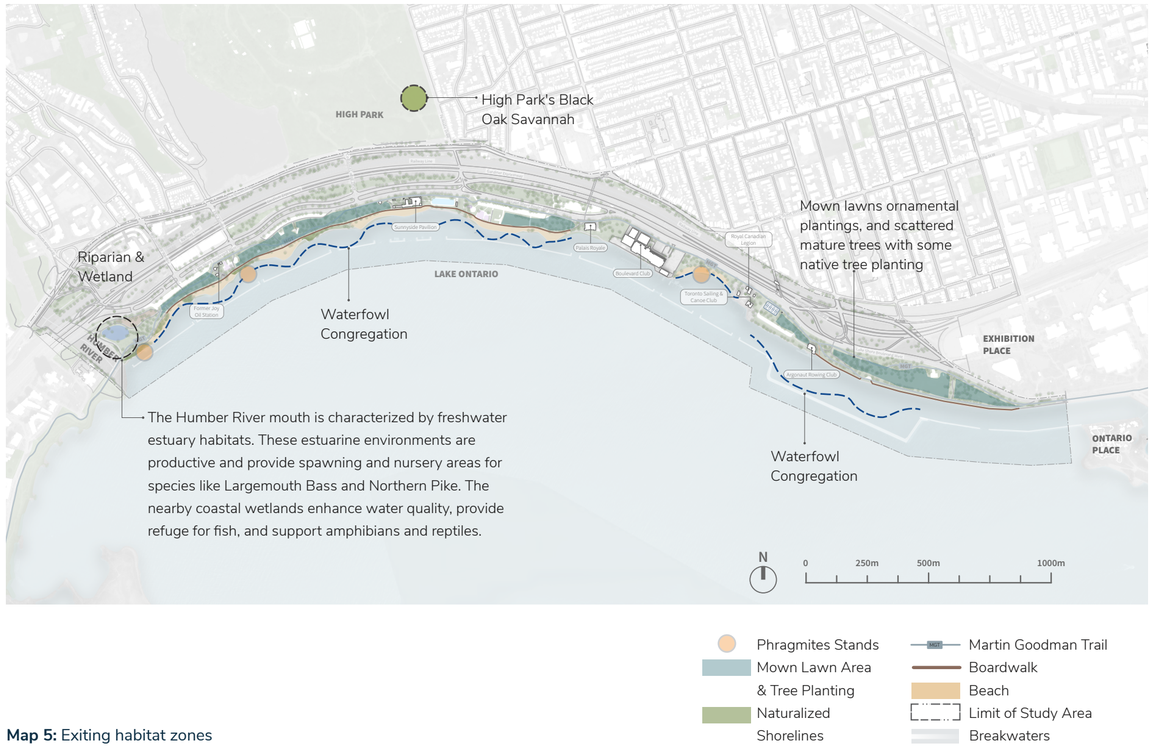
Largemouth Bass



Northern Pike








**Map 5:** Exiting habitat zones

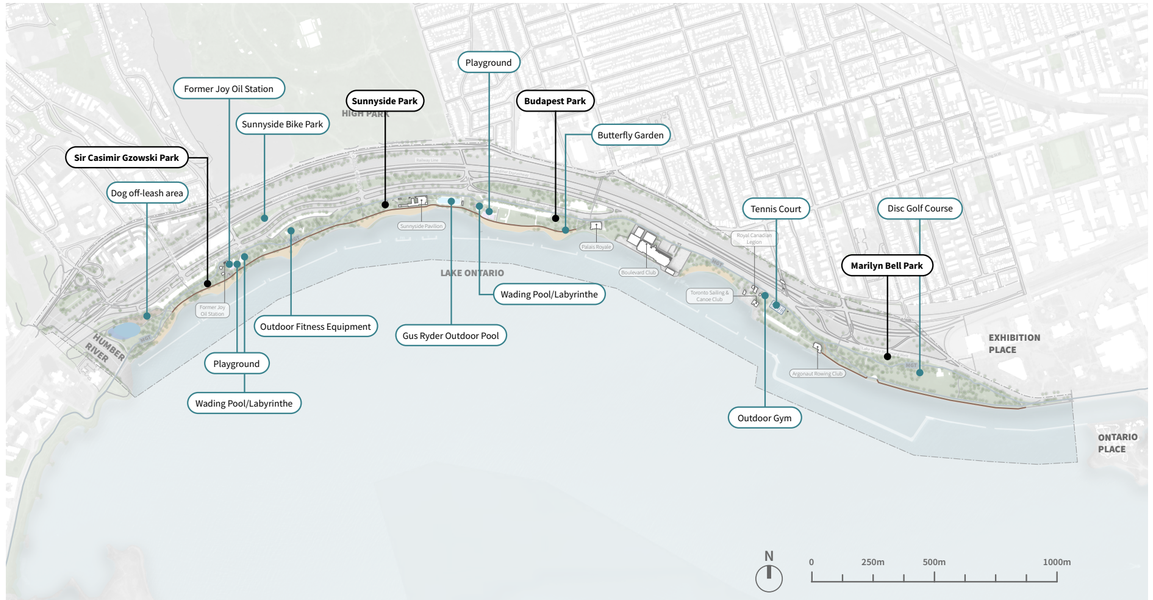
## C.2.2 *Recreation and Reflection*

The Western Beaches support a wide range of active and passive recreational experiences, functioning as one of Toronto's most extensive linear waterfront park systems. As identified through the site analysis and inventory, the landscape accommodates a mix of programmed destinations such as playgrounds, outdoor fitness areas, swimming facilities, tennis courts, dog parks, and picnic areas, alongside large areas of open, flexible parkland.

These amenities are generally clustered within parks such as Sunnyside Park and Sir Casimir Gzowski Park, where higher concentrations of activity and social use are supported by existing infrastructure. However, recreational amenities, shade, and supporting elements such as seating and gathering spaces are unevenly distributed across the study area.

Active recreation and social gathering spaces are more concentrated in the western portions of the site, while the eastern areas, including portions of Marilyn Bell Park, are characterized by expansive open lawns, fewer programmed elements, and more passive uses. While these spaces provide flexibility and support informal recreation, they offer limited shade and comfort, particularly during peak summer conditions, reinforcing the need for a more balanced distribution of amenities across the waterfront.






**Map 6:** Existing parks and programmed spaces

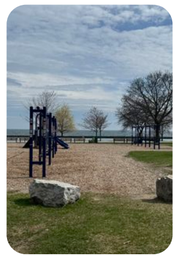
Key Parks and Programming



Sir Casimir Gzowski Dog Park



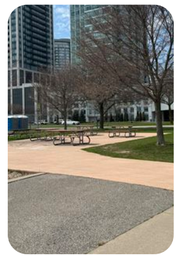
Sunnyside Park



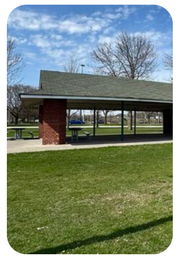
Sir Casimir Gzowski Playground



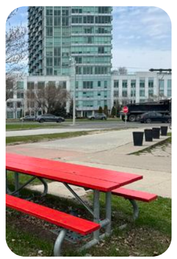
Sir Casimir Gzowski Labyrinthe



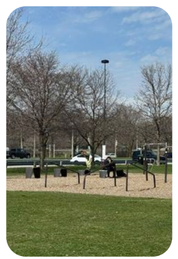
Dedicated seating / picnic area



Sir Casimir Gzowski Park / Trellis



Bespoke Picnic area next to Joy Oil Station



Sir Casimir Gzowski Park / Outdoor Gym area



Seating area / Benches along the Boardwalk



Open lawn area



Seatwall adjacent to Sunnyside Pavilion

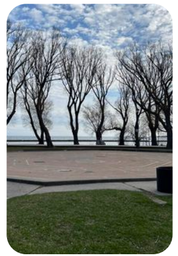


Budapest Park





Key Parks and Programming continued



Budapest Park Labyrinth



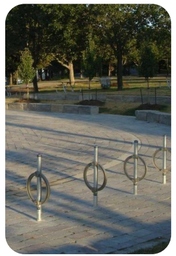
Budapest Park Playground



Butterfly Garden



Marilyn Bell Park Tennis Court



Marilyn Bell Park seating area



Marilyn Bell Park Disc Golf Course

While the study area benefits from a generally consistent level of tree canopy coverage, there are clear opportunities to enhance coverage along high-use trails, beaches, and gathering areas. Tree canopy is estimated to cover approximately 10 percent of the study area and is distributed unevenly, with denser clusters located within established park areas such as Sir Casimir Gzowski Park and along riparian zones, including the Humber River, while large open lawn areas and active recreation zones remain more exposed.

Land cover patterns further reinforce this condition, with expansive open lawns and paved surfaces dominating several segments of the waterfront, particularly in areas with higher user activity. The canopy includes a mix of native and non-native species, contributing to the overall character and biodiversity of the waterfront. This uneven distribution creates varying micro-climatic conditions across the site, where shaded areas provide greater comfort and habitat value, while unshaded zones are more susceptible to heat and glare, particularly during peak summer periods.

| YEAR PLANTED | PROJECT NAME | QUANTITY OF TREES |
|---|---|---|
| 2022 | Budapest Park | 13 |
| 2022 | Sir Casimir Gzowski Park | 29 |
| 2023 | Marilyn Bell Park | 92 |
| 2024 | Lake Shore Boulevard West - Traffic Islands | 4 |
| 2024 | Lake Shore Boulevard West - Median | 87 |
| 2024 | Lake Shore Boulevard West - Humber River to Parkside Drive (center median) | 51 |
| 2026 (Tentative) | Sunnyside Bike Park | ~50 |

Recent tree planting initiatives have begun to address some of these gaps; however, future efforts would benefit from a more coordinated approach that aligns canopy expansion with patterns of use, ecological function, and long-term resilience. The inventory also highlights opportunities to focus planting efforts in open areas, particularly in eastern segments and along high-use trails and gathering spaces.

This creates opportunities to strategically integrate shade with seating, circulation routes, and programmed spaces, enhancing both active and passive use. A more intentional approach to canopy distribution can strengthen habitat value, support seasonal interest and visual character, improve environmental performance, and contribute to a more comfortable and diverse public realm that accommodates both social activity and quiet reflection.

The table to the left illustrates the trees planted by the City between 2022 and the present, as well as those planned for 2026.



Dominant Tree Genus Species



*Quercus rubra*
Red Oak



*Acer rubrum*
Red Maple



*Ulmus americana*
American Elm



*Fraxinus americana*
White Ash



*Celtis occidentalis*
Hackberry



*Salix nigra*
Black Willow



*Pinus strobus*
Eastern White Pine



**17 DOMINANT TREE GENUS SPECIES**
Total approximate number of trees in the study area is: 1913 trees.

There are approximately 70 different tree species found within the study area, including important native species like Oaks, Maples, Ash, and Pines as well as non-native and ornamental species such as Honey Locust and Kentucky Coffee tree.

Based on GIS analysis, the dominant land covers include roads (15.79%), which occupy the largest proportion of land area, followed by bare surfaces (12.20%)—primarily open hardscape areas such as plazas, paved paths, and unshaded spaces. Tree canopy coverage accounts for 9.83% of the study area, while grass surfaces make up 5.49%, typically concentrated in passive recreation zones and park lawns. Shrub areas represent 2.63%, often found along buffer zones and shoreline edges. Water features within the study area, specifically the Humber River segment, occupy 1.42%, while buildings account for 1.83% of land cover, largely consisting of clubhouses, park facilities, and utility structures. An additional 13.56% is categorized as ‘Other’, capturing transitional or miscellaneous land cover types. Notably, the study area is heavily defined by its adjacency to Lake Ontario, which represents 37.63% of the total area but is outside the land cover total.

Beaches and water recreation are defining elements of the Western Beaches, supporting a range of activities including swimming, paddling, canoeing, and sailing. As identified through the site analysis and inventory, public water recreation is supported by a limited number of facilities, including Sunnyside Beach, the Gus Ryder Outdoor Pool, and paddling access points such as the Sunnyside Paddling Club. However, access to the water remains uneven across the study area. While Sunnyside Beach functions as the primary active beach area, supporting swimming and seasonal use, it is subject to water quality advisories and operational constraints, which limit consistent access.

Beyond these locations, a significant portion of the shoreline is occupied by private or semi-private clubs, including the Boulevard Club, Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club, and Argonaut Rowing Club. These facilities contribute to water-based recreation along the waterfront but primarily serve members and limit broader public access to the lake. As a result, publicly accessible entry points for activities such as paddling and direct water contact are limited and discontinuous.

Other beach segments, including areas west of Sir Casimir Gzowski Park and near Budapest Park, are more naturalized and less programmed. These areas are often used for sitting, sunbathing, gathering points and passive recreation. However, they generally lack defined access points, supporting infrastructure, and appropriate shoreline conditions for comfortable and accessible use. In addition, portions of the eastern waterfront are characterized by hard-edged conditions which further restrict direct interaction with the water.

Overall, the findings highlight a disconnect between the length of the shoreline and the availability of consistent public access. This presents opportunities to improve continuity of access, enhance shoreline usability, and support a broader range of water-based activities. Future considerations include introducing additional access points, improving connections between existing facilities, and balancing recreational use with ecological function and operational requirements along the waterfront edge.







Images of different beach conditions along Western Beaches








**Map 7:** Existing waterfront facilities and beaches

## C.2.3 *Indigeneity*

The Western Beaches are situated within a broader Indigenous cultural landscape shaped by long-standing relationships between land, water, and movement. The inventory confirms the area's proximity to significant Indigenous sites and systems, including the Humber River as a historic travel and trade route, the Carrying Place Trail, and connections to High Park's burial mounds, marker trees, and rare ecological communities such as the Black Oak Savannah.

These elements reflect deep Indigenous presence and stewardship that predate the contemporary park system and continue to inform the cultural meaning of the landscape. Insights from the Indigenous Talking Circle further reinforce the importance of understanding the Western Beaches as a living system, where water, land, and all living beings are interconnected. Water is understood as a central and living entity, not simply a recreational or visual feature, and should be respected, protected, and experienced as part of the landscape. The findings also emphasize the need for spaces that support gathering, ceremony, teaching, and intergenerational exchange, as well as the importance of allowing ecological systems to function with minimal intervention, rather than being overly programmed or controlled.

Despite this significance, Indigenous presence within the Western Beaches public realm remains limited and not visible. Existing interpretive elements and Indigenous public art are largely concentrated near the Humber River corridor, with minimal presence across the broader waterfront.

As a result, the current landscape does not adequately reflect Indigenous histories, knowledge systems, or ongoing relationships to the land and water. The findings also caution against symbolic or isolated gestures, emphasizing that cultural representation should be embedded through meaningful processes, relationships, and spatial strategies rather than applied as surface-level interventions.

The analysis highlights a clear opportunity to move toward a more integrated approach to Indigenous placekeeping. This includes embedding Indigenous knowledge, cultural practices, languages, and relationships to water, land, and seasonal cycles into the structure and experience of the landscape. Opportunities include creating spaces for ceremony and gathering, supporting habitat restoration and native planting strategies, recognizing lost and existing water systems, and designing for intergenerational use and learning. The findings establish a strong foundation for continued collaboration with Indigenous partners, supporting design approaches that are place-based, culturally grounded, and responsive to Indigenous worldviews, and that contribute meaningfully to reconciliation through the evolution of the Western Beaches public realm.



## C.2.4 Mobility

The Western Beaches function as a critical east–west movement corridor within Toronto's waterfront trail network, supporting high volumes of pedestrians, people cycling, and recreational users.

The MGT is a multi-use trail that serves as the primary spine through the study area. The MGT being a shared multi-use trail supports a range of uses and trip purposes and speeds (e.g. recreational, commute). As a result, potential conflicts between different users arise along the constrained segments, such as adjacent to private club frontages, near major park nodes, and at key north–south access points.

North–south connectivity between the waterfront and surrounding neighbourhoods is constrained by the transportation corridor formed by Lake Shore Boulevard West, Gardiner Expressway, the CNR Corridor, and the Queensway which create physical and visual barriers, as well as challenging grade changes in certain locations. Due to these constraints, access to the Western Beaches is generally provided by underpasses, signalized crossings and bridges. These factors contribute to longer travel times and reduce the overall comfort and legibility of access routes to the waterfront.

There is planned work to replace Dowling, Dunn, and Dufferin bridges installing active transportation facilities, and realigning Dowling bridge as a more direct and short connection to the Western Beaches. As per the underpasses, there is the Council-endorsed redesign project for Parkside Drive, which includes an on-street bi-directional multi-use trail, designated turning lanes at intersections, new bus stops and intersection safety improvements at Bloor Street West and Lake Shore Boulevard West. When implemented, these planned projects will improve north-south connectivity and enhance walking and cycling to the Western Beaches.

The cycling network benefits from the continuity of the MGT and proximity to city-wide routes. The MGT connects to the broader trail system through Humber Bay Shores Park and Humber River Recreational trails to the west, Lower Don trail to the east, and High Park trail to the north. The north-south cycling connections are typically located 500m apart. There are eight well distributed Bike Share Toronto stations along the Western Beaches, supporting cycling trips. There are opportunities to enhance supplementary cycling-related amenities along the park, such as repair stations, water fountains, secure bike parking, and dedicated rest areas.

While most of the study area falls within a reasonable walking distance of transit stops, there are opportunities to upgrade existing crossings accessibility and wayfinding between the Western Beaches and transit hubs. These recommendations would improve navigating transit options to get to and from the Western Beaches beyond the bus service along Lake Shore Boulevard West, such as by taking streetcar on the Queensway and Roncesvalles Avenue, subway on Bloor Street West, and GO train at Exhibition Place and Bloor and Dundas.

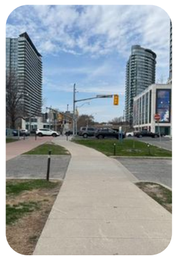
Vehicular access and surface parking occupy substantial portions of the waterfront edge, interrupting park continuity and waterfront access. Therefore, recommendations for driveways and parking access are needed to improve pedestrian and cycling safety and experience.

Overall, the mobility analysis highlights the importance of the existing trail network, access constraints and planned projects anticipated to contribute to addressing them. The findings point to opportunities to improve walkways within parkland, improve safety and experience along the MGT, and wayfinding to nearby parks and transit hubs.




**Map 8:** Existing Mobility Network (pedestrian, cycling, vehicular)

North-South Connections



Windermere Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard West intersection



Ellis Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard West intersection



Colborne Lodge Drive and Lake Shore Boulevard West intersection



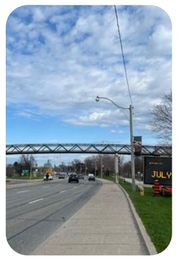
Parkside Drive and Lake Shore Boulevard West intersection



Roncesvalles pedestrian bridge and MGT



Dowling Avenue pedestrian bridge and Lake Shore Boulevard West intersection



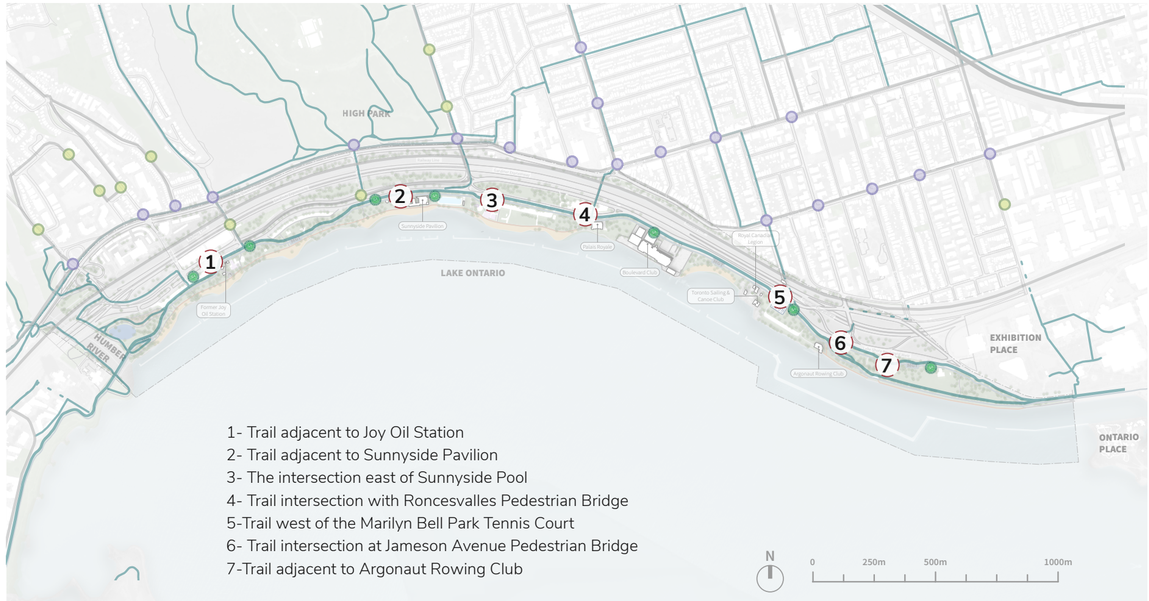
Jameson Avenue Pedestrian bridge and MGT.



Dufferin Street and Lake Shore Boulevard West intersection

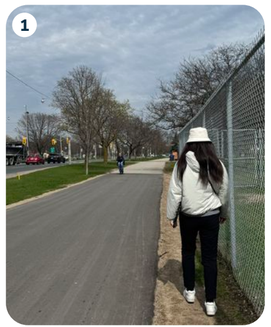




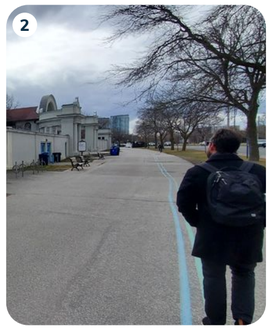



**Map 9:** Key Areas of Conflict

Key Areas of Conflict Among Pedestrians and People Cycling



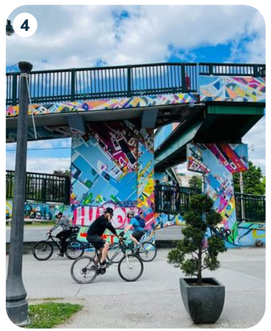

The multi-use trail adjacent to the Joy Oil Station lacks pavement markings (centre lines), leading to potential conflicts between people walking and cycling in different directions. The image shows an adjacent desire path, indicating that a parallel walkway to this trail segment would be beneficial




Although the multi-use trail is widened at this location, there is a lack of clear delineation between the multi-use trail and the pedestrian path.




The stretch east of Sunnyside Pool intersects with vehicle entrances, multiple pedestrian pathways, and parking lot access. The area lacks clearly delineated pedestrian paths and signage, presenting an opportunity to better coordinate the different users and reduce potential conflicts.

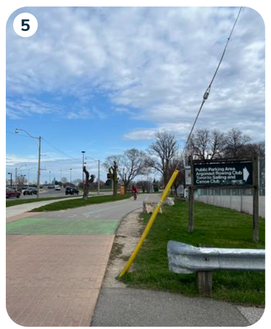



At the Roncesvalles Bridge connection, a busy junction. The lack of pavement markings indicating pedestrian crossings, waiting areas and path of travel creates conflicts among people moving along the MGT and people crossing or joining the trail. Moreover, during events at Palais Royale, more pedestrians cross from the parking lot across the street, adding to the congestion in this area.

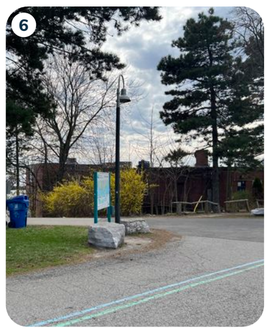




Key Areas of Conflict Among Pedestrians and People Cycling continued




Just west of the Marilyn Bell Park Tennis Court, the pedestrian clearway established along the stretch beside The Boulevard Club is discontinued at this location, making it challenging for pedestrians to have a dedicated path. This often leads to conflicts with people cycling along the trail.




At this intersection, while there is informational signage encouraging pedestrians to stop and read, there is a noticeable lack of signage to alert cyclists and pedestrians to exercise caution where the trail connects with pedestrian pathways.




The multi-use trail at this location is not wide enough, representing a constraint for people walking and cycling to share the space, and leading to frequent informal use of the adjacent lawn as an alternative walking route. There is a lack of a dedicated, accessible pedestrian path.

## C.2.5 *Visitor Experience*

Western Beaches offer a powerful and recognizable waterfront setting shaped by the relationship between the land and water. It is a significant public asset, providing one of the city's longest unobstructed views of Lake Ontario. The area includes over 40 hectares of parkland, two major trail connections, the MGT and the Humber River Recreational Trail, and three primary beaches, Sunnyside, Budapest, and Sir Casimir Gzowski, collectively forming the Western Beaches. The sequence of parks, beaches, and trail systems supports a range of social and recreational activities, from everyday use to seasonal events and gatherings, contributing to the area's role as an important public destination within the city. However, the public realm currently lacks a cohesive approach that unifies the parks, beaches, and trail system into a legible and memorable experience.

The experience of the shoreline, including sandy beaches, boardwalk edges, and different landforms conditions, further contributes to the identity of the waterfront and shapes how people engage with the lake. At the same time, the public realm lacks a cohesive approach that unifies these amenities into a clear and legible overall experience. While individual parks and destinations have recognizable character, the transitions between them are less defined, and the overall waterfront experience reads as a series of distinct segments rather than a continuous and connected place.

Wayfinding and signage are present at key nodes but vary widely in type, content, and visual language, limiting clarity for visitors navigating between neighbourhood connections, parks, beaches, and destinations. As identified through the inventory, signage assets are concentrated at primary park entrances and nodes, but gaps remain in directional clarity and consistency, particularly for users approaching from north–south connections. Interpretive signage related to Indigenous history, ecology, and cultural heritage is limited and unevenly distributed, with known examples primarily located near the Humber River corridor, resulting in missed opportunities to communicate the Western Beaches' layered stories.

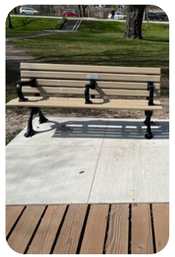



**Map 10:** Key Visitor Amenities Hub

## Key Visitor Amenities



Muskoka Chairs



Benches



Picnic Table



Bespoke Picnic Table / Bench



Food Kiosk



Shade Structure / Trellis



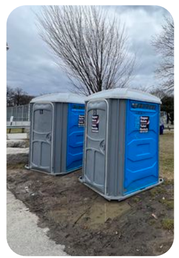
Drinking Fountain



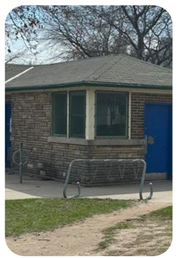
Bike Racks



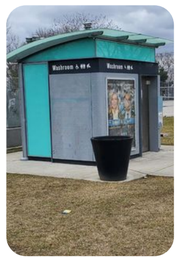
Bike Share Station



Portable Washrooms



Washroom



Paid Washroom





Public art and commemorative elements contribute to local character but function primarily as isolated installations rather than components of a coordinated narrative across the waterfront. Site furnishings, lighting, and amenities reflect incremental upgrades over time, leading to inconsistencies in materials, styles, and levels of comfort. In several locations, amenities are clustered around major destinations, while long stretches of the waterfront remain under-served, reinforcing disparities in the visitor experience.

The distribution of amenities further shapes how the waterfront is used and experienced. Areas with a higher concentration of seating, shade structures, and gathering spaces support longer stays and social activity, while more limited areas function primarily as movement corridors. This uneven distribution influences comfort, dwell time, and the overall quality of the visitor experience, highlighting opportunities to provide a more consistent and coordinated approach to amenity provision across the site.

## Public Art




Indigenous interpretive signage



Lion Monument



Sir Casimir Gzowski Memorial




Tenth Anniversary of Hungarian Uprising 1956



The Roncesvalles pedestrian bridge mural

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

The analysis highlights that visitor experience is shaped by patterns of use, social interaction, and relationships to the water.

Surface materials across the site further contribute to a fragmented sense of place. The mix of asphalt, concrete, wood decking, and interlock lacks a clear hierarchy or continuity, particularly at transitions between pedestrian and cycling routes, park entrances, and shoreline edges. These inconsistencies affect accessibility, wayfinding, and overall visual coherence.

Beyond physical elements, the Western Beaches support a wide range of activities, including social gathering, recreation, and seasonal events, contributing to their role as a well-used and valued public destination. These patterns of use present an opportunity to further strengthen and celebrate the waterfront experience by enhancing access to the lake and supporting meaningful interaction with the water. Building on existing amenities, and strategically expanding and addressing gaps, can enrich the overall user experience and public realm, while supporting a safe, accessible, natural, and diverse experience across the Western Beaches.

Overall, the analysis identifies a strong opportunity to establish a unified visitor experience for the Western Beaches. A coordinated approach that strengthens legibility, reinforces gateways and landmarks, integrates storytelling and public art, and applies a consistent palette of materials and furnishings would support a more intuitive, inclusive, and distinctive waterfront experience while respecting the varied character of individual park spaces.





# C.3 Analysis Conclusion

Taken together, the five thematic lenses reveal the Western Beaches as a highly valued and complex waterfront landscape shaped by the interplay of land, water, movement, and public life. The site benefits from strong foundational assets, including continuous waterfront access, a well-used regional trail network, established parkland, and significant ecological and cultural systems rooted in long-standing Indigenous relationships to place.

Across all themes, a consistent pattern emerges in which strong individual components exist but are not fully connected or expressed as part of an integrated system. Ecological areas, recreational amenities, mobility networks, cultural narratives, and public spaces each contribute to the identity of the Western Beaches, yet they often function independently rather than as part of a coordinated and legible whole.

These findings highlight a clear opportunity to move toward a more integrated and systems-based approach in the Public Realm Plan Update. This includes strengthening connections between ecological systems, improving continuity of shoreline access, enhancing comfort and usability through a more balanced distribution of amenities, supporting safe and efficient movement across all modes, and embedding Indigenous knowledge and placekeeping throughout the landscape.

By building on existing assets and addressing these gaps in a coordinated manner, the Western Beaches can evolve into a more connected, resilient, and inclusive waterfront that supports a diverse range of experiences while reinforcing its role as a defining public space within the city.

These findings also informed the identification of the five Park Character Areas presented in this Plan (refer to Section 6.2), which translate the thematic analysis into distinct spatial conditions and place-based directions across the Western Beaches study area. Together, the Character Areas organize the waterfront into recognizable landscape zones, each defined by a unique combination of landscape typologies, opportunities, constraints, and user experiences shaped by the five thematic lenses. While each Character Area possesses a distinct identity and role within the broader corridor, they collectively reinforce the need for a connected and coordinated public realm approach.

These findings highlight a clear opportunity to move toward a more integrated and systems-based approach in the Public Realm Plan Update. This includes strengthening connections between ecological systems, improving continuity of shoreline access, enhancing comfort and usability through a more balanced distribution of amenities, supporting safe and efficient movement across all modes, and embedding Indigenous knowledge and placekeeping throughout the landscape.

TORONTO