

Welcome to the Port Lands



Looking west over the river valley under construction as crews place a new pedestrian bridge. In the distance, one of four new bridges connects people travelling along a newly aligned Cherry Street.

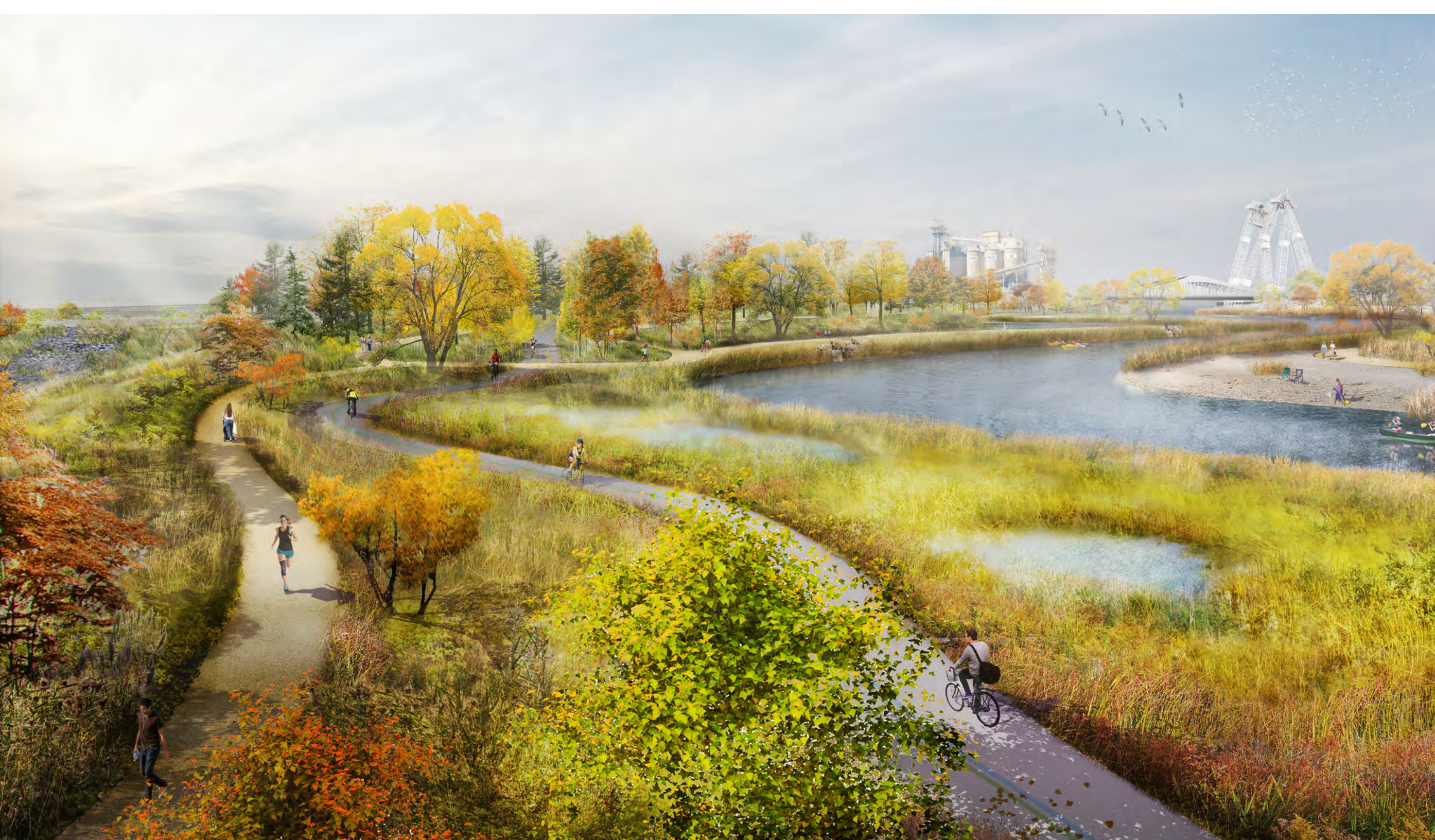
The Port Lands extend southeast of Toronto's downtown core into Lake Ontario and includes over 290 hectares of waterfront land – an area as big as downtown Toronto. It's bounded by the Keating Channel and Lake Shore Boulevard in the north, the Inner Harbour in the west, Ashbridges Bay in the east and Lake Ontario and Tommy Thompson Park in the south.

Toronto's Port Lands is considered one of the largest underdeveloped stretches of downtown waterfront in North America. Until now, it has been impossible to make this industrial area a thriving part of our city because of the risk of flooding.

With funding from three levels of government, Waterfront Toronto is removing the risk of flooding by extending the Don River and in the process creating Villiers Island, a future waterfront community. This project, called Port Lands Flood Protection, creates a natural mouth for the Don River, new roads, bridges, utilities, and public trails – and 29 hectares of new greenspace, wildlife habitats and parkland.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make Toronto more resilient and help its downtown grow sustainably.

What's next? Explore the boards to learn more about consultations for design of a unique play experience and updates to the precinct plan for Villiers Island.



Future view of the Don Valley Trail



Future entrance on Cherry Street to Canoe Cove

Active Projects

What Can You Learn Today?
How Can You Participate?

[Port Lands Flood Protection – Under Construction](#)



Check out the Port Lands 2024 video to learn more

[Play Areas – In Design](#)

Check out the model and boards, then tell us what you think

[Villiers Island community – Planning](#)



Learn about our upcoming public engagement



Sign up for our newsletter so you don't miss a meeting invite

Join us online



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7 Destination Playground



Imagine a new kind of playground on the waterfront serving a million kids a year from all over the city – free of charge and open to everyone. A place people of all ages can visit and spend the whole day.

The Value of Play

As more children than ever play indoors on screens, we’re only now learning the true value of outdoor play. It’s now understood that being out in nature has short- and long-term physical, cognitive and emotional benefits. Just playing outside more as a child may make you more successful as an adult.

With more of us living in cities, the wilderness is moving ever farther from our homes. Many kids feel disconnected from nature and aren’t getting the challenging, unstructured outdoor play they need to thrive because it’s not accessible to them.

Toronto has a vision for a new kind of playground that can compete with screen time for childrens’ attention. It will introduce a generation of kids (and some adults!) to nature by weaving it into a unique play environment. A place where thousands of kids each year will make their own fun and games.

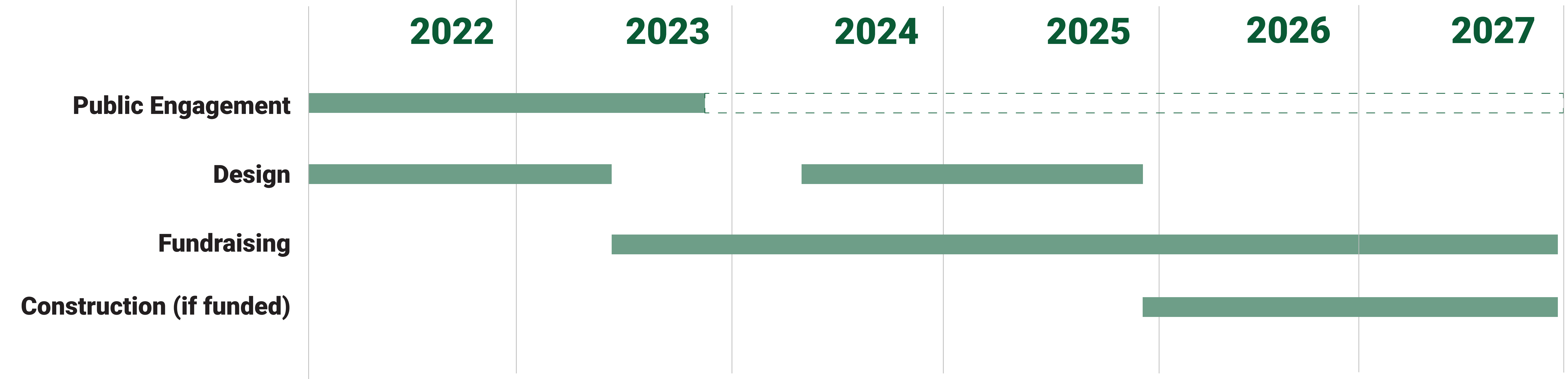
Fundamental Principles

This play area is shaped around three core principles:

- 1. Public and Free** - open to everyone at no cost
- 2. Inclusive and Accessible** - serving people of all backgrounds and abilities
- 3. Safe and Nurturing** - engaging for parents as well as kids

Delivering the Project

While this project is currently unfunded, a philanthropic fundraising campaign is underway. The design team is now looking to better understand public aspirations and concerns for this space and related amenities before detailed design starts.



The Heart of a Riverside Park System

The 3-acre Destination Playground will sit at the heart of a new park along the relocated and restored Don River mouth. The play area will be surrounded by robust park features, including a Central Lawn for concerts and events, a Promontory Point with sweeping views of the harbour and skyline, a Canoe Cove for recreational boating, a picnic and barbequing area, and a 3-kilometer Art Trail that has been funded by a gift from the Lassonde Family Foundation.



Zooming in: 8 Play Gardens

- ① Mighty Moose Adventure Area
- ② Black Bear Campsite
- ③ Harbour Master Marina
- ④ Fireboat Splash Zone
- ⑤ Swing Garden
- ⑥ Learning Centre, Cafe and Terrace Building
- ⑦ Sunrise Garden
- ⑧ Toronto Tower Lookout

Toronto
Inner
Harbour

Central
Lawn

Promontory

Canoe
Cove

Atlas
Crane
Peninsula

Crane
Lawn

New Don River Mouth

Future Centre

Futu
Develop
Parc

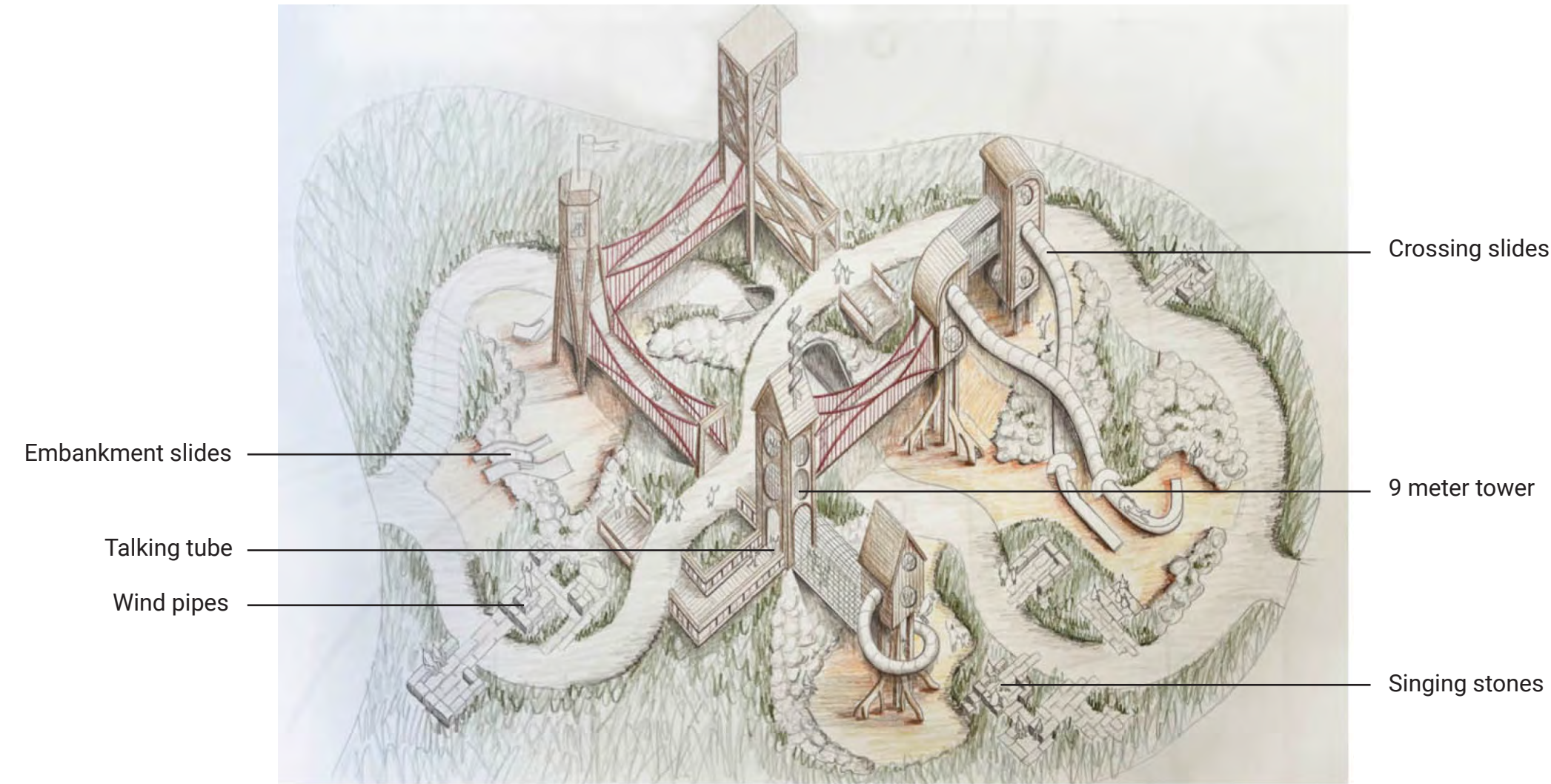
Future Trinity Blvd.

Entry
Plaza

Commis

8 Toronto Tower Lookout

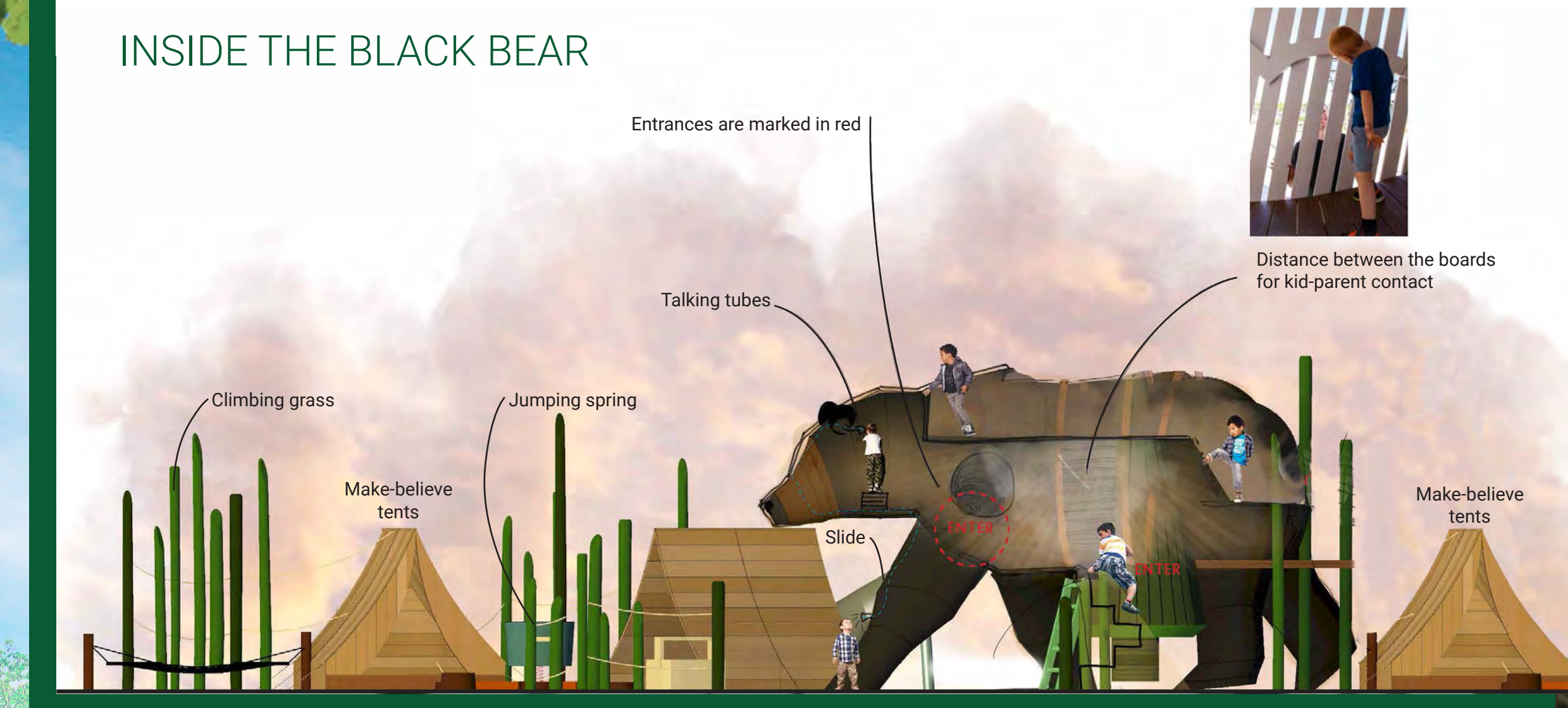
Inspired by the downtown skyline, five wooden climbing towers rise above the tree tops and are linked with a maze of suspension bridges. Inside each tower, children will discover sensory elements and surprising connections. The maze of above air crossings leads to a series of unique stainless steel enclosed crossing slides and a series of open embankment slides designed to accommodate different play levels.



2 Black Bear Campsite

The Black Bear Campsite celebrates Canadians' love of the great outdoors and offers children a narrative experience where they can pretend to camp in the Ontario wilderness. A four-meter tall wooden black bear is visiting the campsite with a slide emerging from his side which lands inside the first of three kid-sized tents for hiding and climbing and a campfire area.

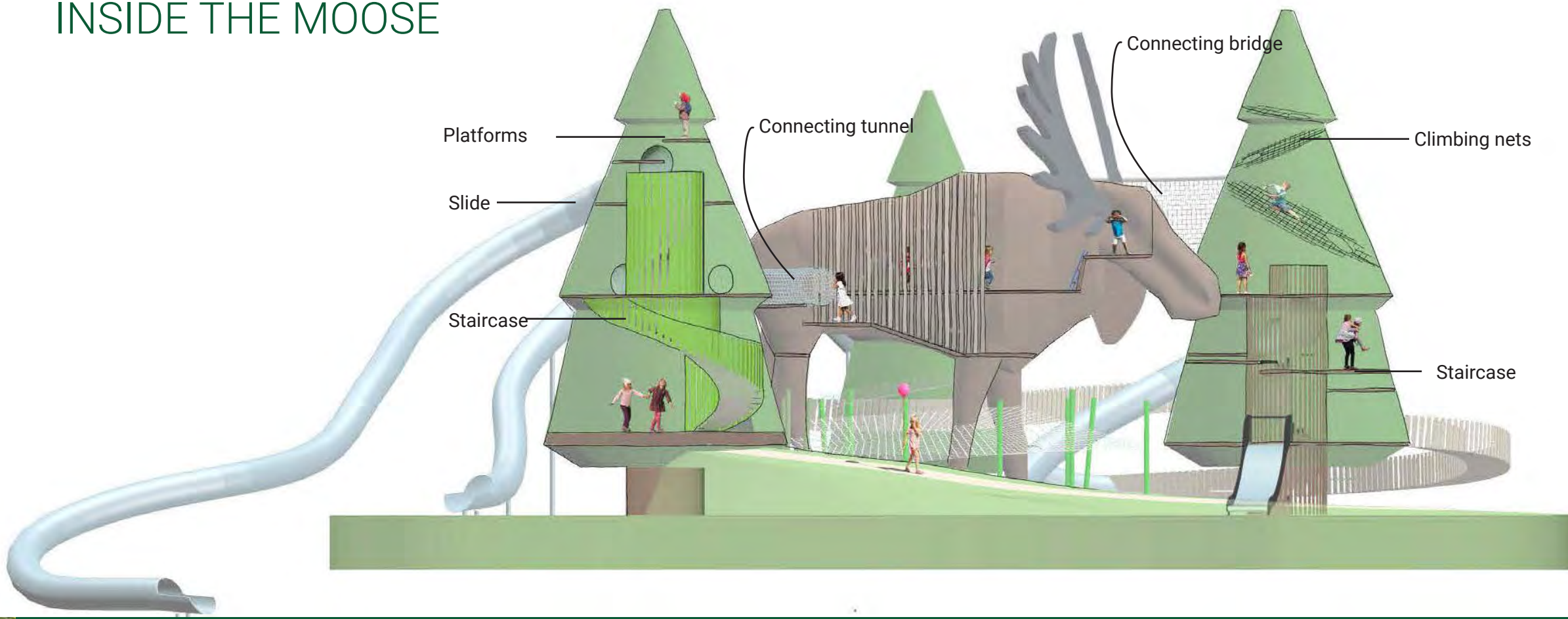
INSIDE THE BLACK BEAR



1 Mighty Moose Adventure Area

The largest of the play zones, this area embodies the spirit of the Canadian wilderness and features a 12-metre tall moose wading in the reeds. This wooden play structure includes climbing nets, a “tree top walk”, and a series of five twisting and turning slides.

INSIDE THE MOOSE



3 Harbour Master Marina

Recreating the customs offices that used to dot the ports along the Great Lakes, this space will inspire story-making around shipping and sailing. Inspired by the Pier 6 building preserved at York and Queens Quay, this play room includes a Marina building offering more tactile, hands on play opportunities that inspire imaginative play.

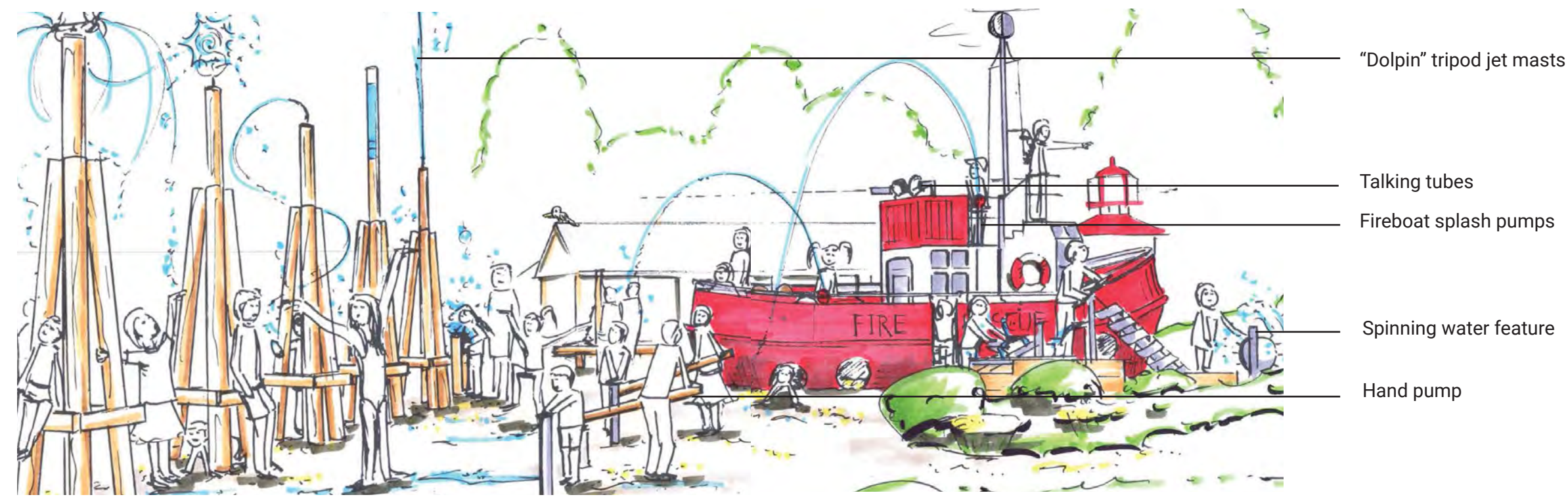


wooden props for make-believe play
talking tubes



4 Fireboat Splash Zone

This play area will feature a replica of the William Lyon MacKenzie fireboat that has patrolled Toronto harbour since 1963. The boat offers a series of pumps that kids can use to spray water down to others in the surrounding sand play area, and pumps that in return spray water up to those in the boat.



5 Swing Garden

The Swing Garden is reminiscent of childhood summers spent swinging from logs and old tires hung from trees. This garden will feature two swing zones nestled into the forest frame. The two set of multi seat swings will include accessible, individual and group basket swings.



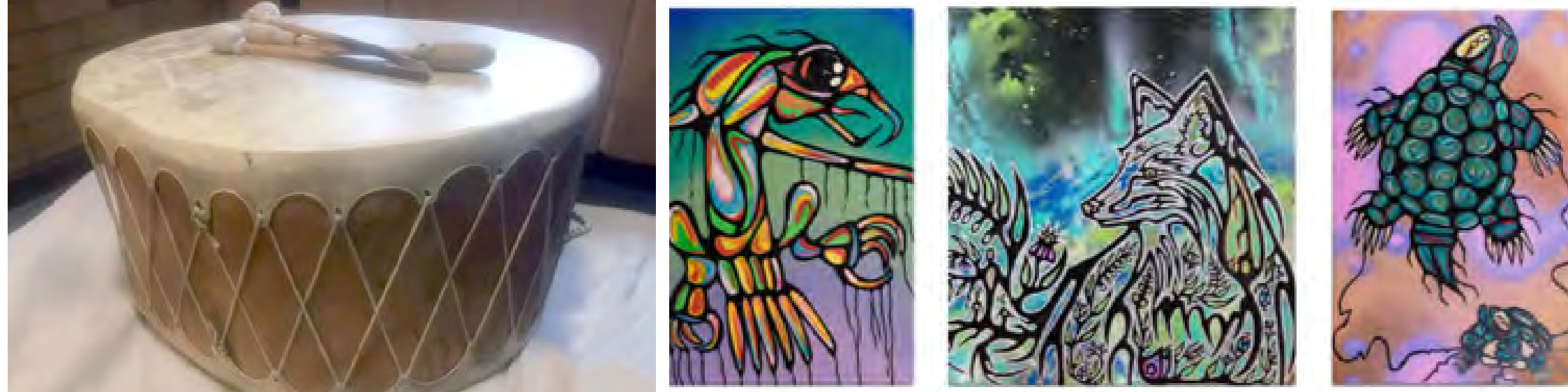
Swing Area 1 (3 swings)

Swing Area 2 (4 swings)

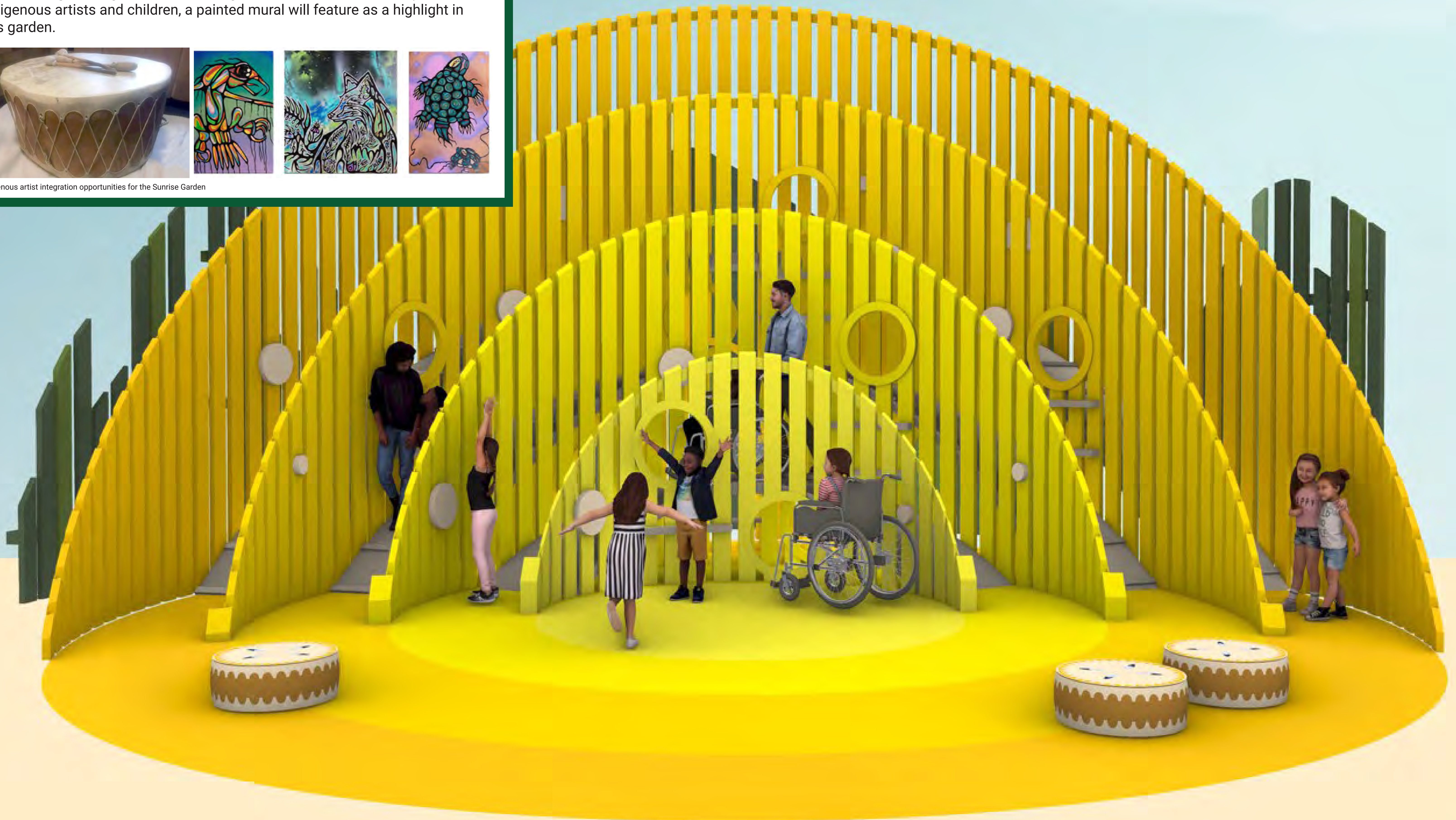


7 Sunrise Garden

The Sunrise Garden celebrates Indigenous storytelling and ceremony. The garden will feature a shining sun structure with interactive drums around an informal gathering circle for teaching and reflection. With the help of Indigenous artists and children, a painted mural will feature as a highlight in this garden.

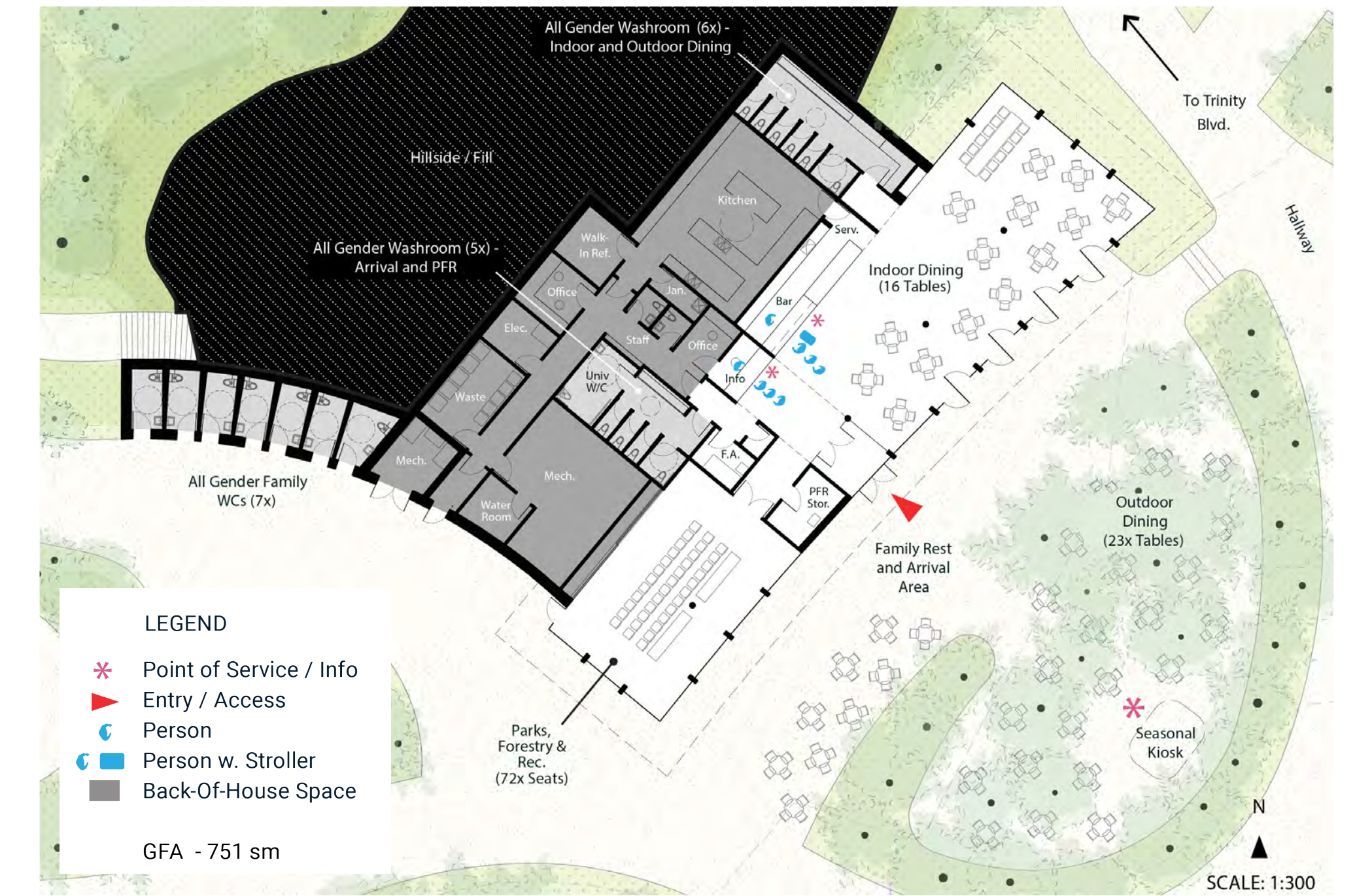


Indigenous artist integration opportunities for the Sunrise Garden



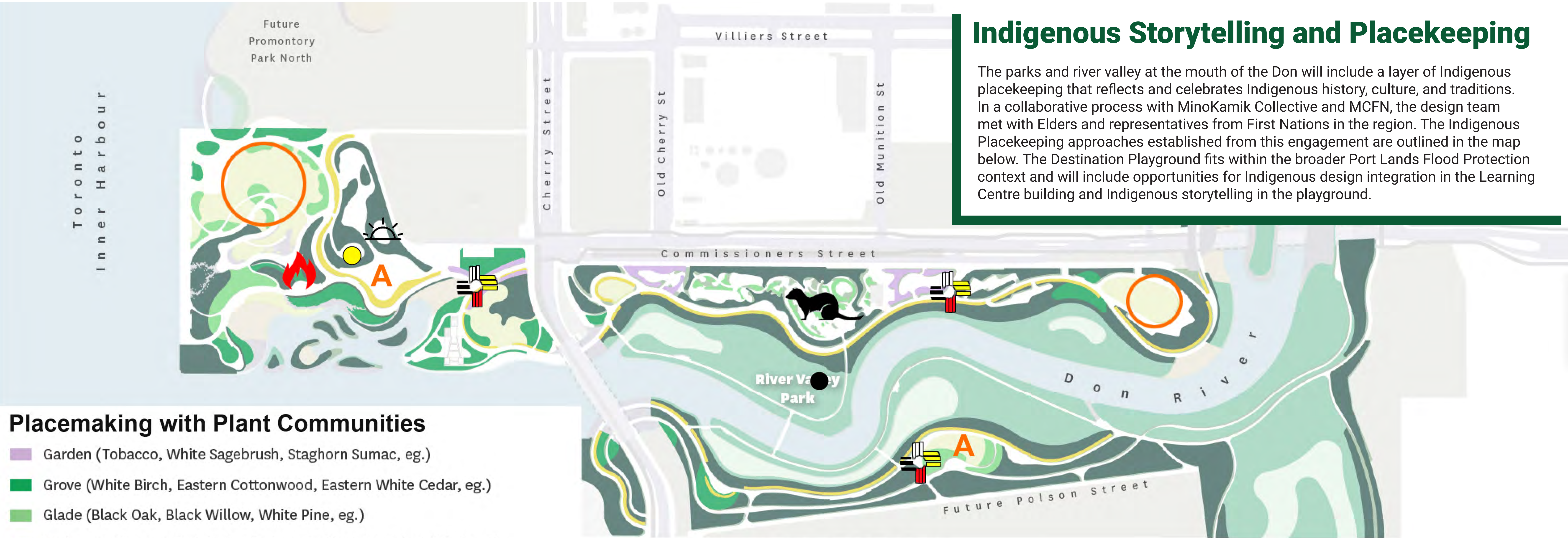
6 Learning Centre, Cafe and Terrace

The Learning Centre, Café and Terrace is located at the center of the Destination Playground. The Learning Centre is a dedicated multi-purpose space for children and community programming; the Café and Terrace is a full-service food and beverage facility. Visitors can enjoy panoramic views of the Canoe Cove and the city from the roof terrace. With a timber structure and low-carbon materials, the building will comply with the Canada Green Building Standard.



Indigenous Storytelling and Placekeeping

The parks and river valley at the mouth of the Don will include a layer of Indigenous placekeeping that reflects and celebrates Indigenous history, culture, and traditions. In a collaborative process with MinoKamik Collective and MCFN, the design team met with Elders and representatives from First Nations in the region. The Indigenous Placekeeping approaches established from this engagement are outlined in the map below. The Destination Playground fits within the broader Port Lands Flood Protection context and will include opportunities for Indigenous design integration in the Learning Centre building and Indigenous storytelling in the playground.



Placemaking with Plant Communities

- Garden (Tobacco, White Sagebrush, Staghorn Sumac, eg.)
- Grove (White Birch, Eastern Cottonwood, Eastern White Cedar, eg.)
- Glade (Black Oak, Black Willow, White Pine, eg.)
- Hedgerow (Eastern Red Cedar, Eastern Redbud, St. John's Wart, eg.)
- Mixed Forest (Tulip Poplar, Yellow Birch, Balck Walnut, eg.)
- Wetland (Swamp Milkweed, Sweet Grass, Prarie Cordgrass, eg.)

Selected plants have medicinal and cultural significance for First Nation communities, and are integrated throughout the landscape

Potential Indigenous Design Site Features

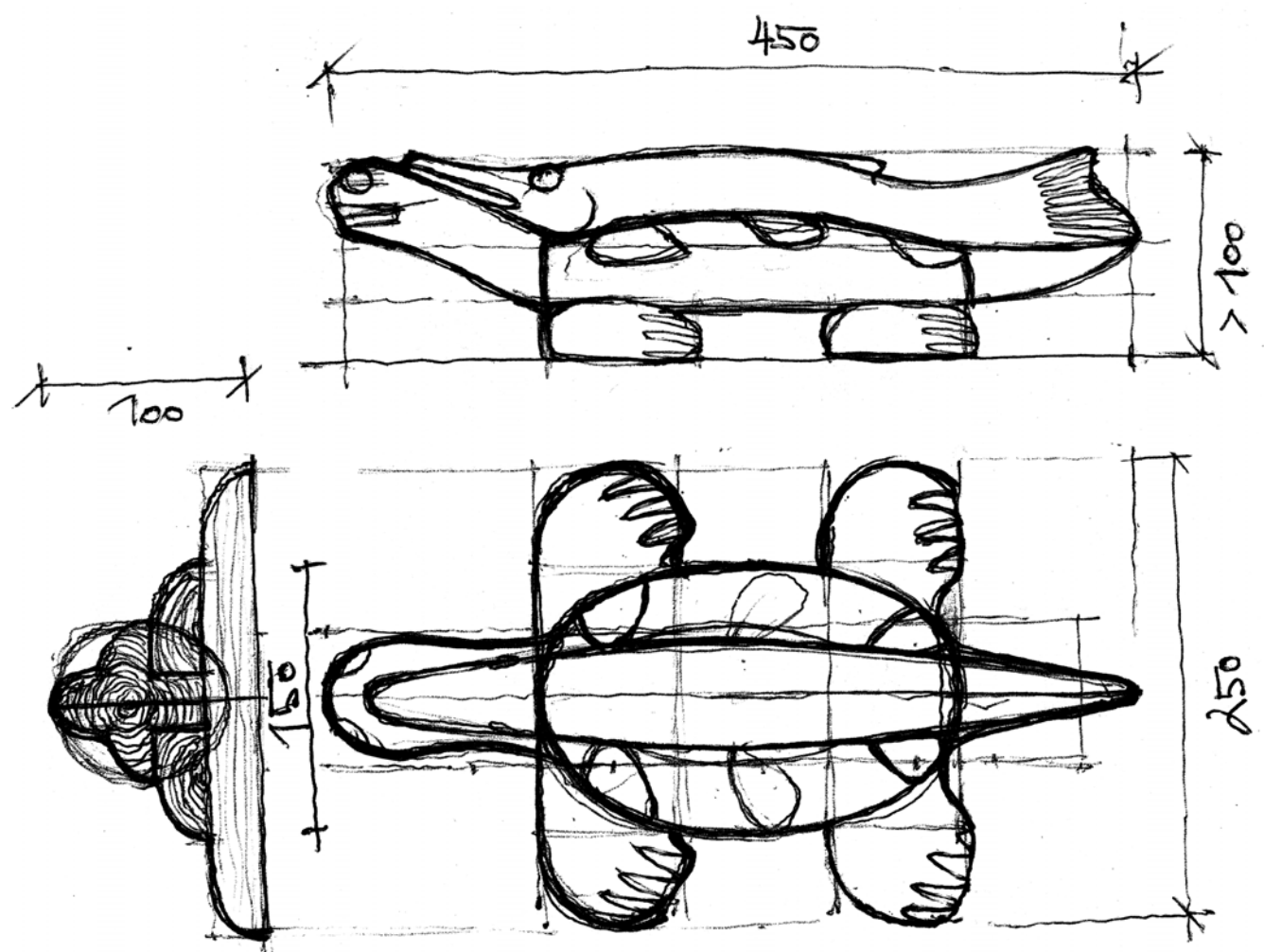
- directional compass
- fire holder/ ceremony space
- cultural markers (Location TBD)
- Interpretive Signage (Location TBD)
- Indigenous Storytelling in the Playground
- pow wow location
- Indigenous public art
- clan totems in play area
- Sunrise Garden



Fire Holder at Trillium Park, Toronto



The Spirit Garden, Brook McLlory Architects and Ryan Gorrie, Thunder Bay



Turtle and Fish Clan Sculpture



Niimaamaa ("my mother") sculpture by KC Adams, Jaimie Isaac and Val Vint, located at The Forks