



# Villiers Island & Keating West Public Art Master Plan



WATERFRONToronto

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Cover page: abstract rendering of the site at the new naturalized Don River mouth and valley



# Land Acknowledgement

This public art plan is built upon the understanding and recognition that the land upon which we are undertaking our revitalization is part of the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13. Waterfront Toronto acknowledges that Toronto has historically been a gathering place for many Indigenous people including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Anishnabeg, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is home to many First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples today.

Waterfront Toronto also acknowledges the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples as set out in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, Waterfront Toronto recognizes and protects the desire and rights of Indigenous peoples to own and control their traditional heritage and artistic products and resist appropriation.

Waterfront Toronto is committed to strengthening formal and informal connections with Indigenous communities through public art. To this end, the Public Art Program will follow the processes laid out on p.65 of this document for Indigenous public art commissions.



**The Peacemaker's Canoe**

Jay Havens, 2021

Harbour Square Park Basin, Toronto, Canada

Photo Credit: Joyce Lam

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement

Waterfront Toronto, in partnership with the City of Toronto, is building an inclusive, welcoming and barrier-free waterfront that belongs to everyone. We are committed to creating a workplace where all employees feel they belong, and to ensuring that diverse voices are heard at every step of the revitalization effort.

This Public Art Master Plan aims to remove barriers, through commitment to the following:

- Creating clear, plainspoken, and accessible communications
- Providing artists with support and accommodations, when possible
- Connecting artists and culture workers to a support network of specialized experts
- Establishing different scales of projects to reach artists with varying levels of experience
- Providing capacity building for artists such as residency and mentorship opportunities, when possible, to support learning and growth



**Walking Woman**  
Sean Henry, 2010  
Ekebergparken, Oslo, Norway  
Photo Credit: Rei Tasaka







## Introduction

For two decades, Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto have been working to create a vibrant, connected waterfront that belongs to everyone. From the beginning, public art has been a core component of neighbourhoods, parks, destinations and infrastructure that enriches communities. Public art has a unique capacity to expand perspectives, bring communities together, inspire conversation, and activate space in new and engaging ways.

Building on the City of Toronto's successful [Percent for Public Art Program](#), Waterfront Toronto, in collaboration with the City, has developed a special public art program for each new waterfront precinct. The approach is based on pooling developer contributions for art in order to deliver artworks in curated locations based on the plans for each waterfront neighbourhood. Over the past 15 years, Waterfront Toronto has built a strong record of commissioning permanent artworks that become an integral part of each neighbourhood's identity. The Villiers Island and Keating West Public Art Master Plan is the third precinct-wide public art strategy developed by Waterfront Toronto.

The Villiers Island and Keating West Public Art Master Plan spans two precincts that extend from Parliament Street to Cherry Street, and from the Keating Channel to the new, naturalized mouth of the Don River. It identifies site-relevant themes to guide public art in the two precincts, and identifies key locations for high-impact pieces, as well as locations for more subtle, discoverable artworks. It also describes the processes for oversight of the conceptualization, commissioning, and integration of public art within the precincts' overall development.



### **A-Maze-ing Laughter**

Yue Minjun, 2012

Morton Park, Vancouver, Canada

Photo Credit: Ann Lum



The leading theme behind this plan is Lake Ontario itself, which is named after the Wendat (Huron) word *Ontarí:io*, meaning "great lake," or the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) word *Skanadario*, meaning "beautiful water."<sup>\*</sup> The overarching goal of the Villiers Island and Keating West Public Art Master Plan is to deliver an outstanding collection of pieces that respond to this theme of water and its relationship to the landscape. It also aims to enhance the social, environmental, and economic quality of the waterfront.

This plan is committed to providing exciting opportunities for local, national, and international artists to showcase their work in the public realm. The plan is also committed to increasing Indigenous cultural presence on the waterfront. Throughout the waterfront, the Public Art Program aims to respect, recognize and celebrate the historical and modern-day presence of the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron Wendat and the treaty territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN).

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<sup>\*</sup> Ange Loft, *Toronto Indigenous Context Brief*, p.11

## 2

## Acknowledgments

This plan was developed by Waterfront Toronto and Bespoke Collective in close consultation with the City of Toronto. The City recently released the [Toronto Public Art Strategy 2020-2030](#), which provided important context in the creation of this plan.

Bespoke Collective conducted 28 one-on-one interviews with a range of subject matter experts who bring a breadth of expertise to key aspects of this plan, including emerging practices in contemporary art, environmentalism and sustainability, contextualizing Indigenous relationships, and heritage and neighbourhood character. Thanks to the following participants:

### Waterfront Toronto

#### Christopher Glaisek

Chief Planning and Design Officer

#### Chloë Catán

Former Public Art Program Manager

#### Josh Hilburt

Development Planner

#### Shuraine Otto-Olak

Public Art Coordinator

### The City of Toronto

#### Anthony Kittel

Project Manager

City Planning Division

#### Catherine Dean

Former Public Art Officer

Economic Development and Culture

#### Fredrick Martin

Senior Project Manager, Waterfront

Indigenous Affairs Office

#### Heather Inglis Baron

Waterfront Secretariat

#### Katriina Campitelli

Public Art Officer

Economic Development and Culture

#### Kristina Reinders

Program Manager

City Planning Division

#### Lara Tarlo

Project Manager

City Planning Division

### Local Councillor

#### Paula Fletcher

City Councillor, Ward 14



## Subject Matter Experts

### Ange Loft

Assistant Artistic Director  
Jumblies Theatre

### Brooke Kamin Rapaport

Chief Curator  
Madison Square Park Conservancy

### Cameron Cartiere

Faculty  
Emily Carr University of Art + Design

### Candice Hopkins

Former Chief Curator, Toronto Biennial of Art

### Cara Courage

Head of Tate Exchange

### Emily Henderson

Writer, Inuit Art Foundation, Indigenous Futures

### Ilana Altman

Co-Executive Director, The Bentway

### John Wilson

Co-Chair, West Don Lands Committee

### Kari Cwynar

Former Curator and Senior Cultural Advisor  
Evergreen

### Ken Greenberg

Urban Designer and City Building Advocate

### Logan Macdonald

Artist, curator, writer, educator and activist

### Matthew Hickey

Partner, Two Row Architects

### Max Dean

Artist

### Melanie Kress

Associate Curator, The High Line

### Michael McClelland

Principal and Founder, ERA

### Nico Taylor

Oddside Arts (formerly BSAM Canada)

### Nina Maria Lister

TMU Assistant Professor  
Principal, Plandform

### Philip Cote

Artist, Activist, Ancestral Knowledge Keeper and  
Historian

### Queen Kukoyi

Oddside Arts (formerly BSAM Canada)

### Ryan Rice

Indigenous Public Art Curator and  
Advisor to Waterfront Toronto

### Sarah Spencer

Monument Lab

Special thanks to the Indigenous artists, curators, academics and creative producers who generously made time to support our learning through sharing their advice and expertise. Extra-special thanks are given to the Historian and Ancestral Knowledge Keeper Philip Cote.

Please see the Stakeholder Consultation Synthesis document in the Appendix 3 for further detail on the consultation process and feedback that was shared.

**Wind Sculpture (SG) I**  
Yinka Shonibare, 2018  
Public Art Fund, New York, USA  
Photo Credit: Jason Wyche





# 3

## Policy Context

The Villiers Island and Keating West Public Art Plan is reflective of City of Toronto policy documents. [The City of Toronto Official Plan](#) lays out the policy basis for the City's Percent for Public Art Program, and Policy 3.1.4 states that "a partnership between the public and private sectors is to be nurtured to transform Toronto into a large public art gallery with installations throughout the City".

The waterfront-focused [Central Waterfront Secondary Plan](#) contemplates a unique approach to public art on the waterfront; Policy 14 calls for "a coordinated Central Waterfront public art program for both public and private developments." This objective is being realized through public art master plans developed for each neighbourhood by Waterfront Toronto. These public art plans are fully aligned with the Council-approved precinct plans that are a pre-requisite to any revitalization and are endorsed by the Toronto Public Art Commission prior to implementation.

The [Port Lands Planning Framework](#) emphasizes pooling public art contributions to enable the commissioning of significant artworks in the Port Lands. It also provides a starting point for themes and locations that highlight "the unique and memorable districts, natural areas, waterways, gateways and heritage resources... to provide a dialogue about the Port Lands' past, present and future". Temporary public art is also encouraged, with the requirement that it is to be funded by alternative sources. Building on the Port Lands Planning Framework and the [Official Plan Modification \(OPM\)](#), as well as the Villiers and Keating Precinct Plans, this Master Plan outlines detailed goals and principles for public art in the two precincts. It also identifies priority locations, commissioning process, phasing, and budgetary strategies.

A key mechanism for delivering the Villiers Island and Keating West program is the City of Toronto's Percent for Public Art program. This program, which has commissioned over 250 public art installations across the city in its 30+ years, requires that a percentage of a project's gross construction costs be dedicated to public art projects. Supported by Official Plan policy, this program applies to all significant private sector developments, as well as the redevelopment of City-



**The Ego and the Id**  
Franz West, 2009  
Public Art Fund, New York, USA  
Photo Credit: James Ewing

owned lands and for major municipal capital projects. In the waterfront, all parties are required to dedicate a portion or all of their public art contribution to the Waterfront Toronto public art program to ensure a well-coordinated and well-curated collection is delivered.

This Villiers Island and Keating West Public Art Master Plan applies to both the Keating West and Villiers Island Precinct Plans. In the Keating West Precinct, the majority of lands are privately owned, with the exception of the lands on the east side of Parliament Slip, which are publicly owned by Waterfront Toronto. In the Villiers Island Precinct, the majority of lands are owned by the City of Toronto, with smaller parcels owned privately. Some of those publicly owned lands will be sold for redevelopment, but others form the new Don River Mouth estuary and park system. This Public Art Master Plan provides a unifying vision for all art locations in both precincts, regardless of ownership, and describes how all artworks on publicly-owned land will be implemented. The success of this public art master plan will rely on fostering relationships between public and private partners, with Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto both playing pivotal roles.

For additional policy context, see the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, the Port Lands Planning Framework and the resultant in-force Official Plan Modification (OPM) policies, as well as the [Villiers Island Precinct Plan](#) and the [Keating Channel Precinct Plan](#).

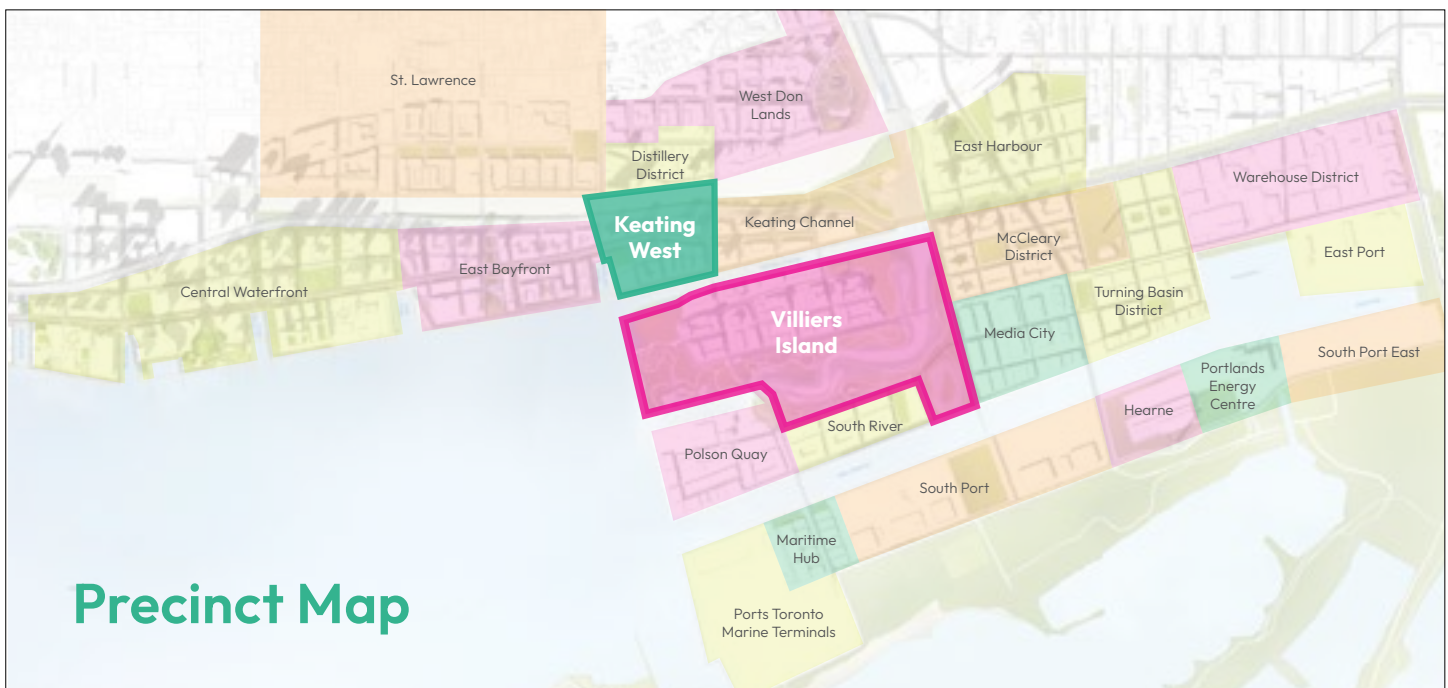


## 4

## Site Context and Background

The Keating Channel and Villiers Island precincts occupy a unique site at the original mouth of the Don River, known as Won.Sco.ton.ach in the language of the Mississaugas of the Credit\*. Once a fertile wetland that supported Indigenous hunting and fishing, the area was later transformed through extensive lakefill to make space for a growing industrial port that by the end of the 20th century had become a brownfield requiring extensive remediation and flood protection. The future revitalization of this entire area is predicated on the Port Lands Flood Protection (PLFP) and Naturalization Project.

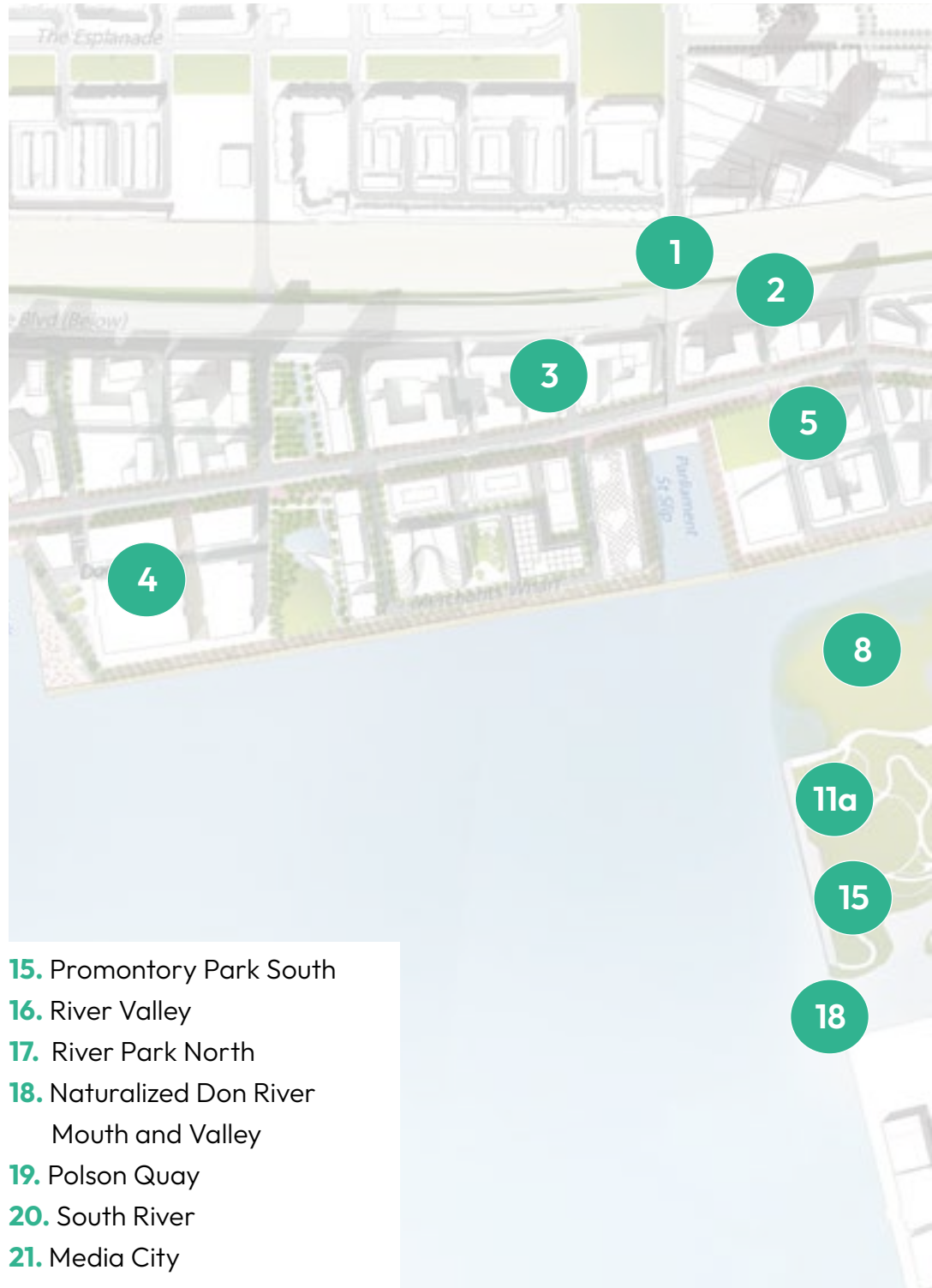
The precinct map below shows the site area covered in this plan. Artworks implemented through this plan will acknowledge and celebrate the many co-existing layers of histories and cultures that make up this site today.



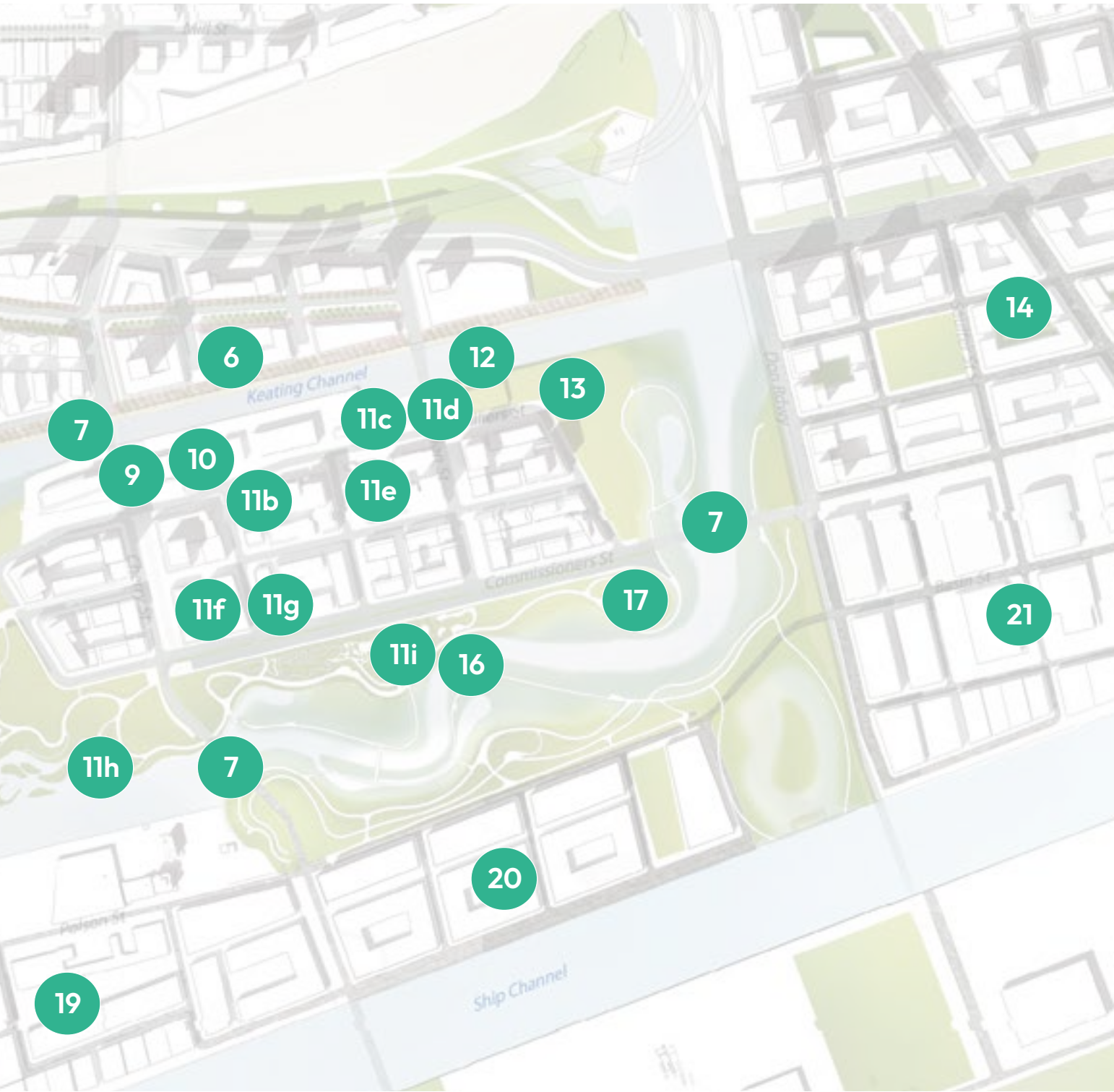
\* Ange Loft, *Toronto Indigenous Context Brief*, p.21

## Site Context Map

1. Gardiner Expressway and Rail Underpasses
2. Lake Shore Boulevard Public Realm
3. Quayside
4. East Bayfront
5. Victory Soya Mills Silos
6. North Keating Promenade
7. New Bridges
8. Promontory Park North
9. South Keating Promenade
10. Essroc Silos
11. Heritage Structures:
  - 11a. Marine Terminal 35 Foundations
  - 11b. Bank of Montreal Building
  - 11c. Toronto Harbour Commission Workshop Office
  - 11d. Toronto Dry Dock Company Building
  - 11e. Queen's City Foundry
  - 11f. Toronto Hydro Substation Building
  - 11g. Dominion Bank Branch
  - 11h. Atlas Crane
  - 11i. Toronto Fire Hall
12. Keating Channel
13. Villiers Park
14. McCleary District



15. Promontory Park South
16. River Valley
17. River Park North
18. Naturalized Don River Mouth and Valley
19. Polson Quay
20. South River
21. Media City





## Port Lands Flood Protection Project (PLFP)

The PLFP project supports Waterfront Toronto's goals of revitalizing communities along the lake, creating new sustainable infrastructure, and providing parks, green spaces, and cultural resources along the waterfront. This complex, ongoing project represents a coordinated and integrated effort which combines flood protection, naturalization and infrastructure development. Key components of the PLFP project include: 1) a new naturalized river valley system; 2) flood protection of over 162 hectares of land; 3) the creation of Villiers Island, a new addition to the harbour's archipelago; 4) preservation of industrial heritage; 5) new alignment and new bridges for Cherry Street; 6) reconstruction of Don Roadway and Commissioners Street; and 7) major infrastructure.

### 18 Naturalized Don River Mouth and Valley

For thousands of years, the mouth of the Don River was a fertile wetland, fishing ground and important gathering place for Indigenous people who lived in the region. In the words of ancestral knowledge keeper Philip Cote, "The rivers that flow into the Lake were used by diverse Indigenous people who gathered on the shoreline ... [following] the trade routes and as a source for traditional medicine."\*

In the early 1900s, Toronto filled in the wetland now known as the Port Lands to make space for a growing industrial port—and redirected the Don River with an unnatural ninety-degree turn down the Keating Channel. In 2017, the three levels of government committed \$1.25 billion funding to naturalize the mouth of the Don River, provide flood protection, and lay the groundwork for new communities upland of the new river valley.

### 15 17 Promontory Park South and River Park North

These parts of the PLFP Project fall within the Villiers Island Precinct and are described in the section ahead.

For more on the PLFP project, see [Due Diligence Report Executive Summary](#).

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\* Oral History told to Bespoke by Indigenous Elder and artist Phil Cote, July 01, 2021



**Bird Blind**

Maya Lin, 2008

Sandy River Delta, Oregon, USA

Photo Credit: Bob Meador

## Villiers Island Precinct

Villiers Island is bounded by the naturalized mouth of the Don River, the inner harbour, and the historic Keating Channel. The area is located in Toronto's Port Lands, to the east of the downtown core.

Villiers Island is planned to evolve from an industrial port into a sustainable island community with parks, open spaces, and public art. It will integrate Indigenous and other diverse cultural experiences along four distinct water's edges.

### 12 9 Keating Channel and South Keating Promenade

The northern shore of Villiers Island will have a wide public promenade running the length of the Keating Channel that will become a locus of urban life, lined with cafes, restaurants, and water-dependent recreational uses. A similar promenade will line the opposite bank of the channel, and the two sides will be connected by pedestrian and vehicular bridges.

### 15 Promontory Park South

Promontory Park South is approximately 5 hectares, defining the landscape to the north of the new river channel. A sloped Event Lawn has been planned to host large concerts and community gatherings. The promontory will provide for ceremonial gathering and fire keeping for Indigenous peoples. The Canoe Cove along the south edge will provide recreational access to the river, and a future Destination Playground will further enliven the park and local neighborhood along the future Trinity Boulevard and new Cherry Street. The Destination Playground will be a major attraction featuring leading edge playground design and nature play for residents and visitors, and for children of all ages. Two significant heritage structures will commemorate the industrial heritage of the Port Lands, the markers that register Marine Terminal 35 Building's (MT35) scale and volume, and the stabilized Atlas Crane, believed to be one of the last of its kind on the Great Lakes. The Promontory opens up to panoramic views of the city and harbour, as well as the southern Cherry Street Bridge and river valley.

### 16 River Valley

The design of the new Don River mouth is rooted in ecological and geomorphic design principles that employ river, wetland, and floodplain forms that naturally occur in similar Lake Ontario estuary systems. The proposed channel form of the river valley meanders in a sweeping channel with outer banks protected by bioengineered elements such as crib walls and root wads, using natural materials to create a resilient riparian landscape. The design includes elements built over a constructed environmental barrier that is designed to be stable under the





**Muamba Grove**

Vanessa da Silva, 2019

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Yorkshire, England

Photo Credit: Galeria Duarte Sequeria

regulatory flood event, and will separate the new river valley from the contaminated soils surrounding. The vegetation communities vary as the valley rises from the river, shifting from marsh to floodplain forest and thicket swamp. Trails weave throughout the valley, providing managed access to the river for recreational activities, as well as connections to the upland parks.

8

**Promontory Park North**

See description in Art Locations.

13

**Villiers Park**

See description in Art Locations.

### 17 River Park North

River Park North is bounded by Commissioners Street to the north, Cherry Street to the west, Don Roadway to the east, and the new river to the south. The area includes passive-use lawns, adventure recreation and nature play areas nestled among wooded hills, two dog off leash areas, a gathering area off the main path, and captivating views of the naturalized river from picnic areas. Fire Hall 30, a heritage structure, is located at the park entry plaza along Commissioners Street. A network of pathways connects down to a pedestrian bridge over the Don River to River Park South. Access to water's edge is provided on both sides of the river through a series of paths that follow alongside the wetland levees. The habitat along the river, as well as the upland parks, are modelled on natural precedents and create vital ecological resources in addition to providing access to nature in the city. Plant communities, gathering spaces for ceremony, as well as access to the water for fishing and canoeing, have been designed in collaboration with Indigenous advisors to respond to priorities expressed by local Indigenous groups.

### 7 New Bridges

Six new signature bridges to Villiers Island are planned, with crossings at Cherry Street North Road, Cherry Street South Bridge, and the Commissioners Street Bridge. Each crossing will have two bridges, one for vehicular traffic and another will provide passage for pedestrians, cyclists and future LRT. The bridges have been designed to serve as graceful, modern landmarks at the gateway to Villiers Island, and crossing the new mouth of the river. The bridges are steel arch structures, with the interior surfaces painted in the colours of the rising and setting sun.

### 10 Essroc Silos

The Essroc silos at 312 Cherry Street were built as part of the Century Coal Company in 1920. They are listed in the City's heritage inventory as significant for both architectural and contextual reasons. They provide a visually prominent landmark on the northeast corner of the inner harbour, marking the entrance to the Keating Channel. The site of the silos may serve as a launch point for some of the water-based cultural activities, art and culture projects proposed for the Keating Channel, as well as an anchor for programming at the proposed Silo Square.

## 11 Heritage Structures

There are 8 Listed heritage resources and one Designated heritage resource on Villiers Island, left from waves of development in the Port Lands. These add an important layer to the area's history. They include the Queen's City Foundry, The Toronto Harbour Commission workshop office and Toronto Dry Dock Company building, the Dominion Bank Branch, The Toronto Hydro Substation building, the Bank of Montreal Building, the Essroc Silos, the Marine Terminal 35 foundations, the Atlas Crane, and the Toronto Fire Hall. See the Villiers Precinct Plan for a full list and description of heritage resources.

For more on the Villiers Island Precinct, see the [Villiers Island Precinct Plan](#).



**Giants**

Gustavo and Otavio Pandolfo (Os Gemeos), 2014  
The Vancouver Biennale, Vancouver, Canada  
Photo Credit: Instagram/@osgemeos



## Keating West Precinct

The Keating West Precinct is situated on the northeast corner of the Toronto inner harbour, alongside the Keating Channel. Currently a transitional neighbourhood, Keating West is traversed by major regional transportation corridors and infrastructure, including the rail corridor, the Gardiner Expressway, Lake Shore Boulevard, and the Keating Channel. As a new gateway into the Port Lands, it is designed to connect existing neighbourhoods with new development and a network of parks, open spaces, and infrastructure.

### 11 6 Keating Channel and North Keating Promenade

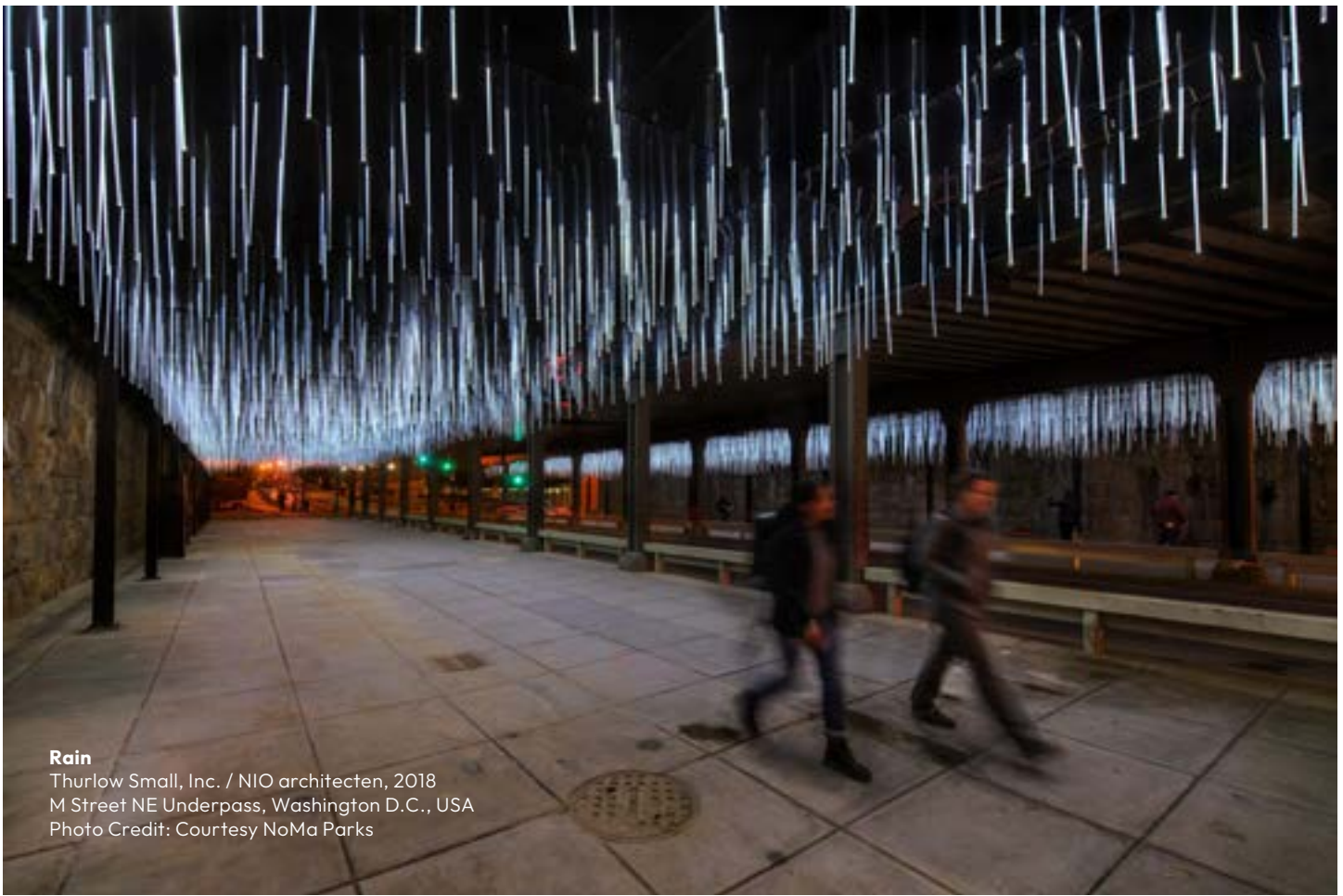
As referenced above, a dominant feature of this precinct is the 1000-meter-long Keating Channel that connects the Don River to Lake Ontario. While not officially listed as a heritage resource, the Keating Channel possesses historic value as the single-most significant element in the transformation of the area. The south shore of the Keating Precinct will have a generous public promenade that is complementary to the one to the south on Villiers Island.

### 5 Victory Soya Mills Silos

Listed on the City Inventory of Heritage Properties, the silos were originally built for the Canadian Breweries' soy processing plant in 1945. While the surrounding plant structures were demolished in 1944, the Victory Soya Mills silos are one of two remaining silos from Toronto's industrial port era and function as a landmark in the Keating West neighbourhood. Their scale and adjacency to planned park developments in Quayside suggest the potential for open space programming along the waterfront.

### 2 Lake Shore Boulevard Public Realm Plan

This Plan provides a cohesive vision for the Lake Shore Boulevard corridor beneath the elevated Gardiner Expressway in this area. The plan includes streetscape and intersection improvements, traffic calming measures, separated cycling and pedestrian trails, and plantings to help treat stormwater run-off from the local streets and the Gardiner Expressway.



#### Rain

Thurlow Small, Inc. / NIO architecten, 2018  
M Street NE Underpass, Washington D.C., USA  
Photo Credit: Courtesy NoMa Parks

### 1 Gardiner Expressway and Rail Underpasses

Improvements to the underpasses at the Union Station Rail Corridor and Gardiner Expressway, which connect north-south downtown streets to the waterfront, are planned for in a series of initiatives, including the WBIA's Waterfront Reconnect initiative, Metrolinx's Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity Study, and other initiatives underway to better connect the north-south corridor. At the rail corridor, both structural and superficial improvements have been proposed to enhance the pedestrian and cycling experience of crossing the barrier to get to the waterfront. Under the Gardiner, improvements such as painted benches and graphics on the Gardiner structure, as well as potential for enhanced lighting and signage, are proposed in the Lake Shore Public Realm and Bentway Corridor Plan, and are being implemented through Waterfront Reconnect with funding from the BIAs and City of Toronto.

In Partnership with the City of Toronto, The Bentway Conservancy is developing the [Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan](#) to outline how the space under the Expressway can better serve the city. The Under Gardiner PRP will provide guidance for spaces under, and adjacent to, the Gardiner Expressway's central elevated section between Dufferin Street and Yonge Street, as well as high-level recommendations for the eastern section between Yonge Street and the Don Valley Parkway.

For more on the Keating West Precinct, see the [Keating Channel Precinct Plan](#).

## 4 East Bayfront

Next to Keating West, the East Bayfront Precinct is part of Toronto's Central Waterfront, bordered by Jarvis Street on the west and Parliament Street on the east, extending from Lake Shore Boulevard to Lake Ontario. East Bayfront was one of the first waterfront precincts to be comprehensively planned by Waterfront Toronto, including the location and configuration of streets, blocks, and open spaces, encompassing publicly and privately owned lands. The community's residential, retail and commercial developments are intertwined with dynamic parks and public spaces, such as Sherbourne Common, Canada's Sugar Beach, and a kilometre-long continuous Water's Edge Promenade and Boardwalk.

East Bayfront was the second precinct to have a comprehensive public art plan adopted by City Council in 2015, which has seen implementation of several pieces already (some of them preceding the plan), including Jill Anholt's *Light Showers* (2011), a large-scale sculpture that celebrates the collection and purification of stormwater; Caitlind Brown, Wayne Garrett and Studio North's *Light Keeper* (2019), which uses light as a sculptural material to project rainbows and a moon clock across Aitken Place Park; as well as *Shoal* (2010) and *Lightning* (2010), a two-part public art commission by the artist collective Troika, located in the Corus Building.

- **East Bayfront Public Art Master Plan**

The East Bayfront Public Art Master Plan conceptualizes public art as a magnet that draws people across the railway corridor, Gardiner Expressway and Lake Shore Boulevard, down to the waterfront. The plan includes “threshold pieces” that animate and engage with these barriers, more intimate “connection” pieces that thread through the neighbourhood from east to west, and a “destination” piece that will act as a landmark attraction at the foot of Sherbourne Street.

For more on the East Bayfront Precinct, see the [East Bayfront Precinct Plan](#) and the [East Bayfront Public Art Master Plan](#).



### 3 Quayside

Stradling the East Bayfront and Keating West Precincts is the development known as Quayside, a 4.9-hectare area of land that extends from Bonnycastle Street on the west to just next to the Victory Soya mills on the east, and from Lake Shore Boulevard south to Queens Quay and the lake.

Quayside is made up of five (5) different development blocks. A key feature of the area will be a new public space created in Parliament Slip. The proposed Parliament Slip concept design features a new boardwalk, public pools, a marine transportation pier, kayak outfitters, and a floating pier with a series of kiosks and restaurants. The project is proposed to be situated between a community centre and a green space called Silo Park.

Currently being developed by Waterfront Toronto, Quayside presents an important opportunity to address some of the growing challenges facing Toronto, including the urgent need for affordable housing and the challenge of climate change. The planned neighbourhood is intended to be dynamic, inclusive, and resilient. The development of Quayside will continue the cultural landscape across the Waterfront with major cultural destinations and public art opportunities activating the public realm.

### 21 Media City

Media City is located between Commissioners Street and the Ship Channel, from the river valley to the future Broadview Avenue extension. This employment district catering to Toronto's creative sector will have a concentration of production-related development around the existing studio complex fronting onto a water's edge promenade along the Ship Channel, with taller buildings along the river valley facing west, back toward Villiers Island and the city. The scenic potential of the adjacent Ship Channel will be maximized by providing active and animated uses, including public art, along the water's edge promenade.

## 19 Polson Quay

South of Villiers Island and the new mouth of the Don River, Polson Quay is currently home to a mix of light and heavy industry, heritage buildings, as well as employment and entertainment uses. In the near-term Polson Quay is planned to expand its range of light industrial employment uses and form an extension of the creative clusters to the east. In the longer-term and following a future Precinct Planning exercise, Polson Quay may evolve into a mixed-use community surrounded by water and parkland, with views to Villiers Island and over the inner harbour to the city.

## 20 South River

South of Villiers Island and east of Polson Quay is South River. Much like Polson Quay, in the near- to medium-terms, this area is envisioned as a location for production, interactive and creative industries housed in multi-storey, adaptable buildings with active uses at street level. Similarly, the district may, over time, evolve into a mixed-use area with residential uses taking advantage of its scenic location adjacent to River Park South, the Don Greenway and the Ship Channel.

## 14 McCleary District

Located to the east of Villiers Island across the new river valley, McCleary District is envisioned as a dense, transit-oriented, mixed-use community. Similar to Villiers Island with midrise base buildings and some tower locations, it will complement the future high-density East Harbour mixed-use district to the north across Lake Shore Boulevard East and the production and creative cluster in Media City across Commissioners Street to the south. This district will be bookended by two significant open spaces – the new river to its west and McCleary Park to its east. A new, centrally located local park will also be introduced to provide a local amenity for residents and workers in the district.



**Liverpool Mountain**  
Ugo Rondinone, 2018  
Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, England  
Photo Credit: Courtesy of Ugo Rondinone



# 5

## Vision, Themes, and Principles

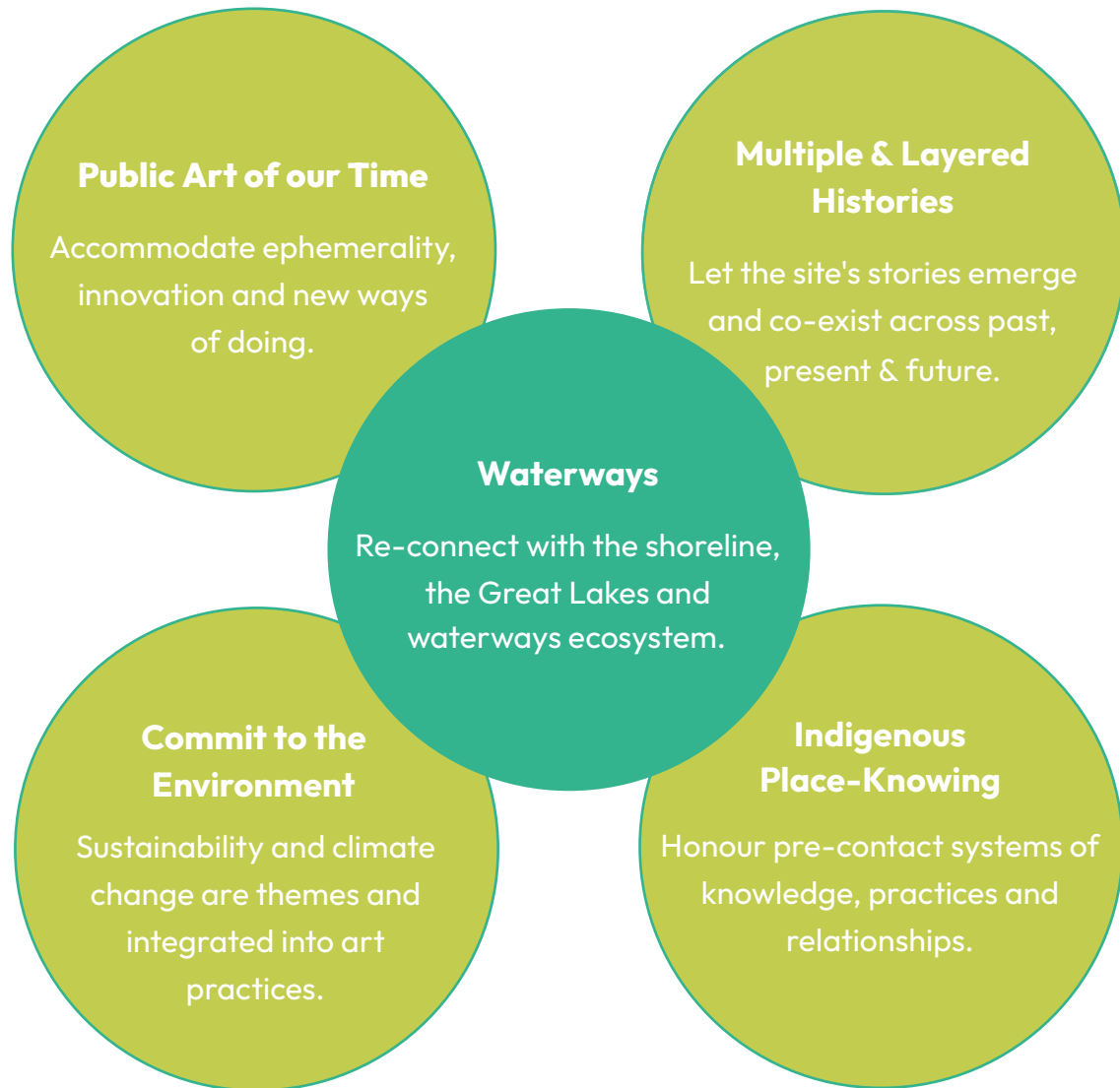
### Vision

The vision of this Public Art Master Plan is to create a vibrant and unified art destination that is inspired by and reflective of the extraordinary nature of the site. The connected system of waterways is rich in layered histories, ecologies, geographies and lived experiences. The public art will act as a catalyst for animating the public realm in new ways through a combination of meaningful permanent and temporary pieces that speak to pressing issues of our time. This vision runs across two precincts, with the Keating Channel at its centre, and will feature a series of outstanding artworks of local, national and international significance.

### Themes

In alignment with the Port Lands Framework, the celebration of water is central to this plan. The site is surrounded by many waterways. The Don River, the Keating Channel, Parliament Slip, Polson Slip, the Ship Channel, and the inner harbour, are all part of a larger connected system, both natural and man-made, that feed into the lake. They bridge the site's past and future histories. Indigenous narratives, the natural environment, sustainability and climate change, and histories and heritage, are important site-specific themes that also intersect with the central theme of water.

The below diagram shows broad potential themes for artwork on the site:



## Principles

The framework for public art in this plan is grounded on the following principles:

### I. Explore Layered Histories

The juncture where the Don River enters the Keating Channel is a charged site marked by arrivals and departures, catastrophes and regeneration, celebration and struggle, settlement and occupation, industrialization, and naturalization. This juncture is at the site's core. Public art commissioned through this plan should enable histories, stories, and new narratives to co-exist. This includes lesser-known and unrecorded pre-settler histories, migrant stories, and tales of displacement, as well as untold futures along Keating West and Villiers Island.



**Artists are interested in the evolution of place, the messier parts of history and the effects of industrialization, as well as the current rebirth of the river.**

Kari Cwynar  
Curator and Cultural Advisor



**There needs to be a co-existence and layering of stories – multiple stories at the same time.**

Candice Hopkins  
Curator





**Monsters for Beauty**

Duane Linklater, 2017

Don River Valley Park, Toronto, Canada

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Evergreen Brick Works

## II. Honour Indigenous Peoples and Practices

As artworks are planned to be sited on the Ancestral territory and crossroads stewarded by the Anishinaabe, the Haudenosaunee, the Huron Wendat and the treaty territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the public art program will acknowledge and respect the ancestral connections among the many Indigenous communities and Nations that have supported the territories on which Keating West and Villiers Island are located. This plan is also committed to advancing Truth and Reconciliation by embedding Indigenous leadership into selection processes, by creating new opportunities for Indigenous artists and by bringing forward Indigenous stories, teachings, and practices.

Public art can strengthen relationships with Toronto's Indigenous communities while also creating a more meaningful sense of place and belonging.

For further references, please see Centennial College's [Land Acknowledgements](#) and Jumblies Theatre's [A Treaty Guide for Torontonians](#).



**Honour the site, recognize the treaties and be specific about the Indigenous context and systems of knowledge.**

Emily Henderson  
Writer



**The historical Indigenous uses of the Toronto area as a meeting point, a site for respectful exchange of culture and language and also a site of displacement, has contributed to forming the city's current pluralistic identity.**

Ange Loft  
Artist





**Ebb and Flow**

Michael Belmore, 2020  
Concord Park Place, Toronto, Canada  
Image Credit: Michael Belmore



### III. Respect the Environment

Climate change — a code red threat to humanity, according to the recent [United Nations report](#) — requires us to think differently. It challenges us to imagine alternative futures. Highlighting the urgency around the loss of biodiversity and ecological collapse, as well as intersectional equity issues related to the unevenly distributed impacts of climate change, is critical. However, just as important is a call-to-action that offers solutions. Public art can help us reckon with the crisis and provoke creative responses, helping us push the boundaries of what can be possible. Climate change can be addressed thematically, and sustainability reinforced by exploring practices, processes, materials, and reuse as important mitigation solutions towards impacts on the natural environment. Villiers Island is intended to become Canada's first climate positive neighbourhood. Sustainable art practices are an important consideration for implementation, materiality, and maintenance.



**The lake's edge is powerful but potentially catastrophic in nature. This is about relationships to earth, water, species and humans. There is a pollution legacy and a narrative that revolves around creation and destruction.**

Nina-Marie Lister  
Professor



**It would be amazing if the principles of sustainability could be implemented within the form of the works, not just the content.**


Kari Cwynar  
Curator and Cultural Advisor

**Careful Infrastructures for Reassembled Lands**

Lisa Hirmer, 2022

Sherbourne Water's Edge Promenade, Toronto, Canada

Photo Credit: Waterfront Toronto



A REMINDER  
THAT YOU TOO  
ARE ATMOSPHERE



**Yininmadyemi Thou Didst Let Fall**  
Tony Albert, 2015  
Hyde Park, Sydney, Australia  
Photo Credit: City of Sydney / Patterson

## IV. Engage with Contemporary Issues

Public art is undergoing a major transformation regarding its role in cities. Today, there is an ongoing dialogue around how it engages with communities, pushes the boundaries of place-making, and activates space. This public art plan anticipates the need for innovation, evolution, and flexibility to adapt to changes in thinking about public art. Artists are invited to thoughtfully address the most relevant issues of our time while considering new forms of public space engagement that still ensure public health and safety.



**Good public art creates thought and attention around the public realm.  
It shows that a city cares.**

Cameron Cartiere  
Professor



**Great public art pierces into the everyday... It takes the temperature of  
a place and reflects it back at you.**

Cara Courage  
Head of Tate Exchange





## V. Promote Diversity and Inclusion

Public art in the Keating West and Villiers Island precincts should reflect the diversity of Toronto's vibrant cultural life and its many communities. It should accommodate multiple viewpoints and voices rather than a singular perspective. Diversity and inclusion will further be considered when it comes to staffing, decision making, themes, artistic representation, and processes that strive to remove systemic barriers.



When looking at artists, learn to cast a wider, more inclusive net, to make sure we are taking into consideration that most Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC) artists can build capacity in areas they don't have expertise in. People taking part in the selection process should also be IBPOC.

Nico Taylor & Queen Kukoyi  
Oddside Arts

## VI. Variety of Artwork

Artworks selected pursuant to this plan are expected to showcase a wide range of typologies and practices. This plan anticipates that the overall selection of public art will include a mix of major permanent works, temporary and ephemeral works, water activations, residencies, mentorships, and community opportunities onsite. It will also promote interdisciplinarity and collaborative working through projects and partnerships. Varying scales for artistic projects and different lifespans for individual artworks can support innovation, experimentation, and new forms of collaboration.



**It's important that there are permanent art works, temporary artworks, time-based art works, a number of different scales can be baked in.**

Melanie Cress  
The Highline



**Be clear about defining the scale of the projects: whether it be emerging, mid-career or established.**

Candice Hopkins  
Curator

## VII. Artistic Excellence

Artworks in Keating West and Villiers Island precincts should strive to achieve the highest quality, and build on local, national, and international best practices. Contextual briefs for each commission will provide clarity of vision, a thoughtful selection process, and access to the public realm design team's knowledge to help deliver works of the highest caliber.



**The best public art can inspire, challenge and provoke.**

Brooke Kamin Rapaport  
Curator



**Nymphaea**

Ange Leccia, 2007

Canal Saint Felix, Nantes, France

Photo Credit: Allarosa Productions





## Art Locations

### Summary

The Port Lands Framework suggests opportunity locations around gateways and bridges; sites or areas with heritage resources or destination and/or catalytic uses; parks and natural areas; and waterways and the port. In alignment with this, artworks in this plan will be sited in prominent locations across the island, connecting waterways and their shorelines to promenades and bridges, parks and plazas. Following the central theme of water, most locations are adjacent to the site's many waterways.

There are fifteen recommended locations/zones for permanent public art works to be funded through pooled contributions from developers in both precincts. These publicly-owned sites include parks, open spaces, promenades, streets, and bridges. They have been selected from areas identified in the Villiers Island Precinct Plan, the Keating Channel Precinct Plan, and the Port Lands Planning Framework. The

identified locations are situated around the site's many waterways, and were chosen for their strong connections to Lake Ontario, for their high visibility and easy access, and their ability to create overall variety and cohesiveness across the area. There are also additional sites that comprise the Art Trail, which include three permanent pieces, as well as several serviced locations for changing installations.

The Keating Channel is the nexus that connects the Keating West and Villiers Island precincts, and is the entryway to the Port Lands. Artwork locations along each side of the channel and into the nearby neighbourhoods speak to the industrial history of the sites and the future local communities of both precincts. This plan addresses artworks on Keating Channel West. Artworks on Keating Channel East will be addressed in a future plan. With a mixture of large anchor sites and smaller community-engaged areas, this plan identifies

locations extending as far north as the rail underpasses to connect the waterfront to the city, and as far east as the future Villiers Park. Sites identified include underpasses, bridges, sites with heritage resources, open public squares, park spaces, and promenades. They will require further consultation with the appropriate city jurisdictions. As of the adoption of this document

some parks have yet to be designed, therefore exact locations within these sites will be determined in conjunction with the designs. Locations in this plan are approximate; any major deviations from planned locations, such as new locations, must go through the Toronto Public Art Commission (TPAC) for approval.



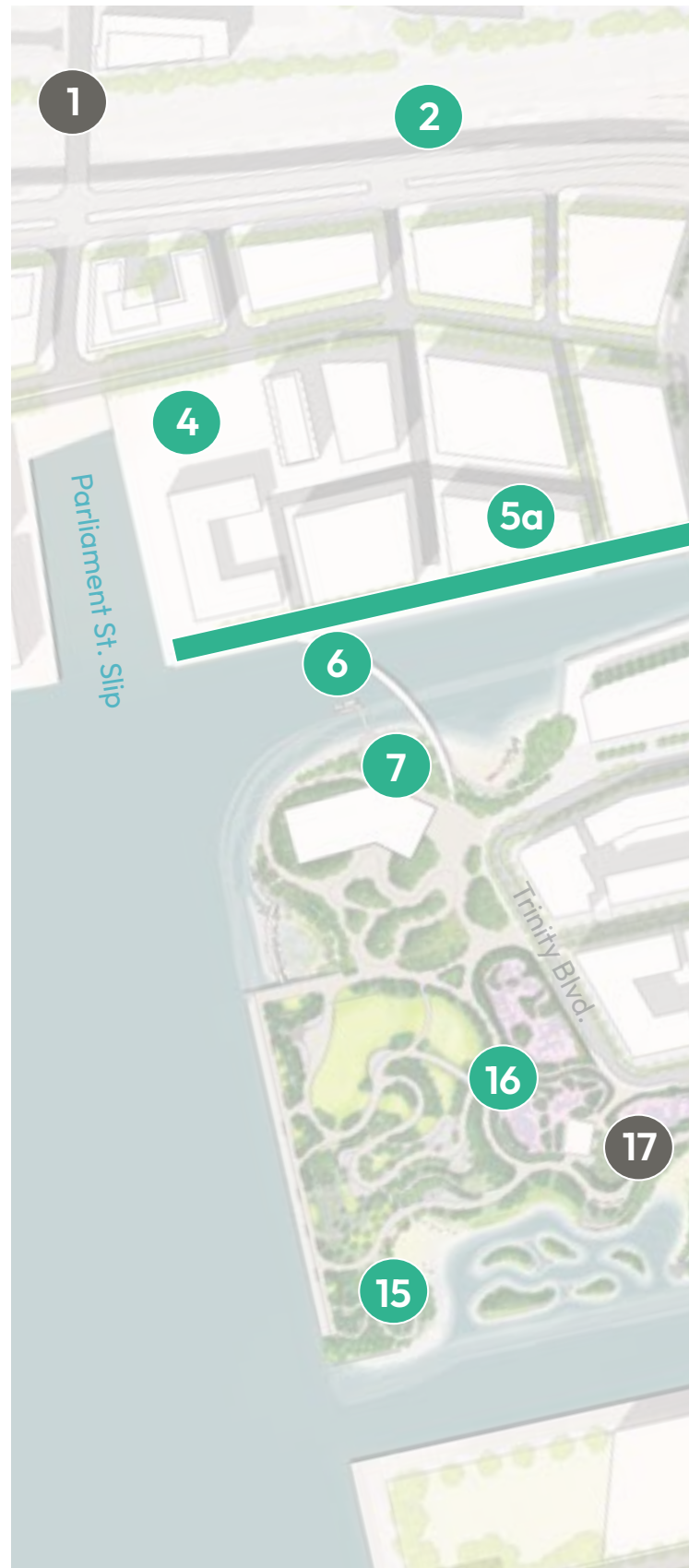
**Turning the World Upside Down Sky Mirror**  
Anish Kapoor, 2006  
Kensington Gardens, London, England  
Photo Credit: Dave Morgan

## Permanent Art Locations

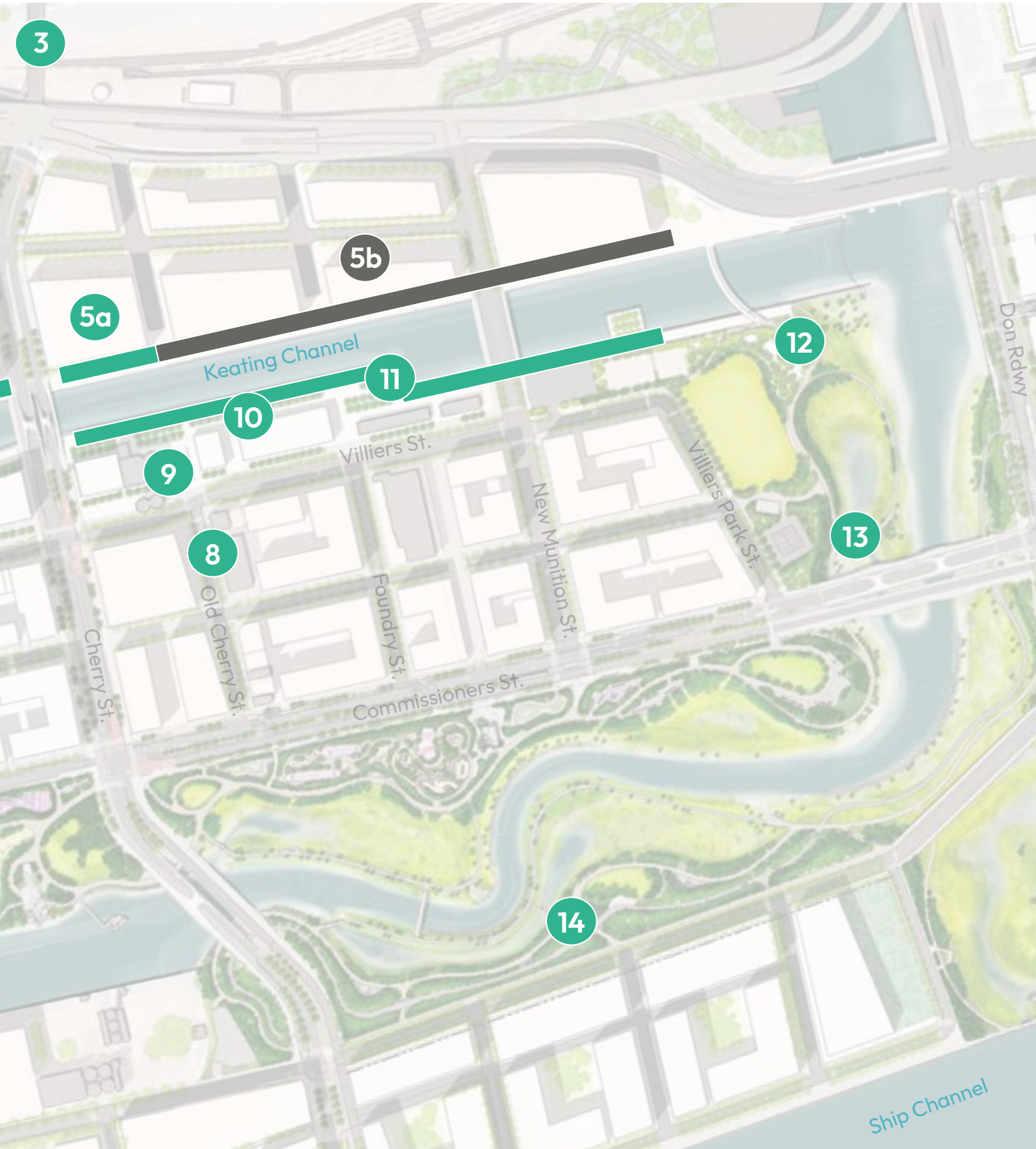
1. Parliament St. Underpass (covered by East Bayfront Public Art Master Plan)
2. Trinity Cycle Pedestrian Underpass
3. Cherry St. Underpass
4. Silo Park\*
- 5a. Keating Channel North Promenade
- 5b. Keating Channel North Promenade (covered by future Keating East Public Art Master Plan)
6. Keating Channel Pedestrian Bridge
7. Promontory Park North\*
8. Old Cherry Street Diagonal Plaza
9. Silo Square
10. Keating Channel South Promenade
11. Marina Square
12. Villiers Park North
13. Villiers Park South
14. River Park South - Retaining Wall and Lawn
15. Promontory Park South - Canoe Cove Overlook
16. Promontory Park South - Promontory Overlook
17. Pavillion with integrated art by Indigenous artist (not funded through this Plan)

\* Parks have yet to be designed, exact location to be determined in conjunction with future park design.

- Permanent Art Locations - with funding covered by this plan
- Permanent Art Locations - with funding not covered by this plan









## Permanent Works

### 3 Cherry St. Underpass

This rail underpass contains pedestrian sidewalks, on-street bike lanes, and one vehicular lane in both directions. A future proposal for a transit portal on the east side may include an additional pedestrian and cycling connection. Like the Parliament Street Underpass, it creates a connection from north to south between the historic Distillery District, the new West Don Lands, and the new waterfront developments in Keating West and Villiers. Its connection to the Cherry Street bridge makes it the primary gateway into the Port Lands. Public art at this location is a continuation of the underpass plan included in the East Bayfront Public Art Master Plan. Waterfront Toronto will work with Transportation Services and Economic Development & Culture, as well as Metrolinx, to scope maintenance and inspection requirements. These will ensure artwork on the underpass does not negatively impact the structure.



#### 4 Silo Park

This future park will become an important public space at the base of the heritage Victory Soya Mills silos and the foot of historic Parliament Street. The park will border an ambitious proposed cultural building on the water's edge, and a proposed active marine hub at Parliament Slip poised to become a world class, public destination for swimming, kayaking, boating, entertainment, and dining. The proposed destination-based nature of this site may be appropriate for a large-scale artwork with an equally iconic quality.

#### 5a Keating Channel North Promenade

The Water's Edge Promenade will link developments on the north side of the Keating Channel, from Parliament Slip to New Munition Street. The promenade continues the linear park that connects much of Toronto's waterfront, giving residents and visitors an uninterrupted walkway along the edge of Lake Ontario. Artworks along the Water's Edge Promenade should consider pedestrian flow and emergency vehicle access. There will be opportunities to explore the length of the space by installing a series of smaller works that create an artistic walkway. Artworks on the promenade could highlight prominent waterway access points such as the bases of north-south connections, bridge terminuses, parks and plazas.

#### 10 Keating Channel South Promenade

Similar scope to the above description for Keating Channel North Promenade.



**Modified Social Bench**  
Jeppe Hein, 2015  
Public Art Fund, New York, USA  
Photo Credit: James Ewing

#### 6 Keating Channel Pedestrian Bridge

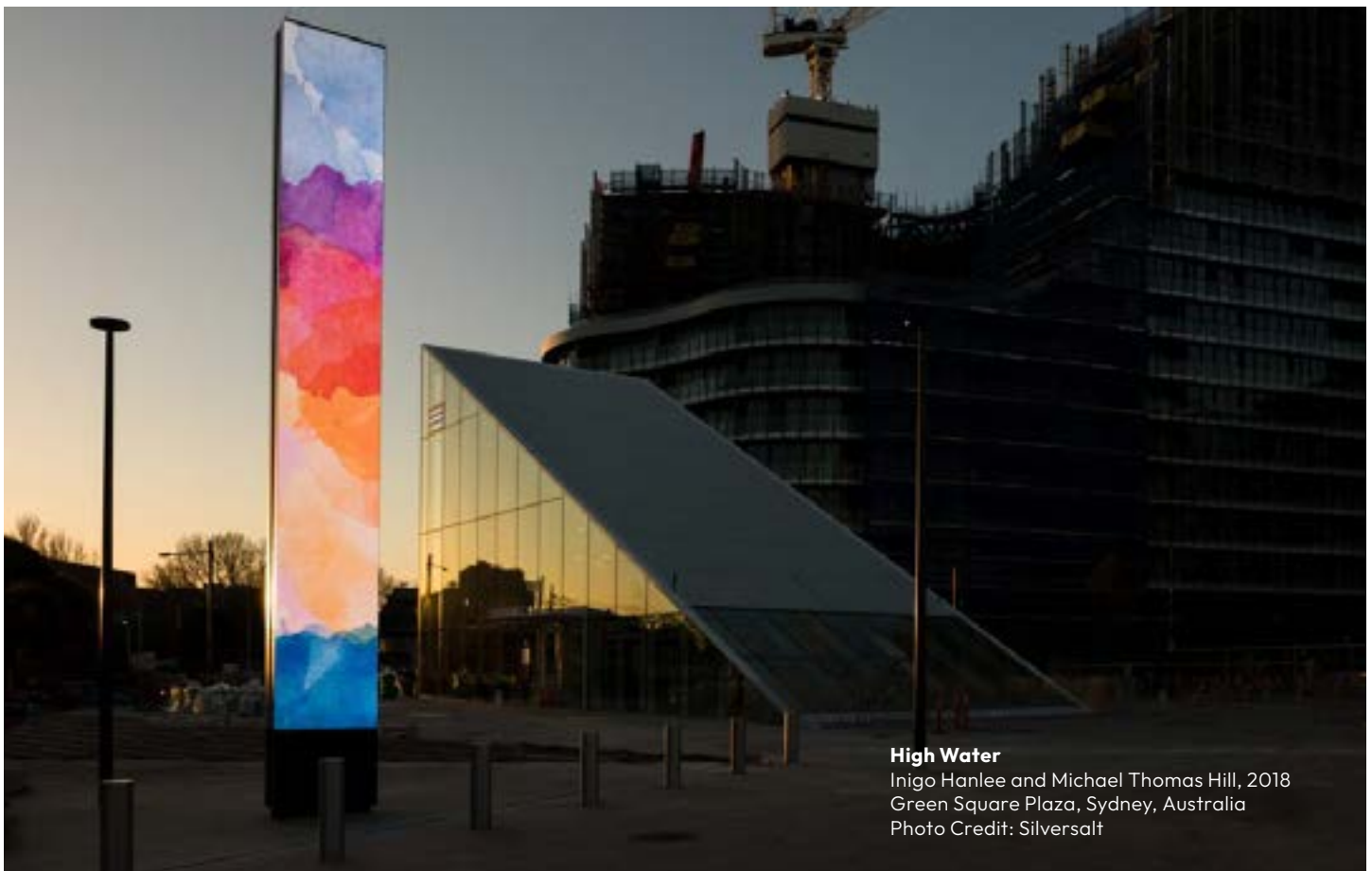
This future bridge would span across the Keating Channel and extend from the Water's Edge Promenade to Promontory Park North. It would be a key connector between the Quayside and Villiers Island neighborhoods. The bridge is a prime location for integrated public artwork, with sweeping views west to the downtown skyline, and its connection to Silo Park and adjacent proposed cultural hub, as well as the Catalytic Use site (a special cultural, civic or educational destination) in Promontory Park North. Artwork similar in scope to the above should be integrated into the early planning stages of the bridge design. This bridge is conditional on funding.

## 7 Promontory Park North

With a high elevation, Promontory Park North will offer breathtaking views of the city skyline and inner harbour. It will be a constantly changing and active public hub through a catalytic use site for special events. The proposed plan will maintain public engagement throughout the winter months by the inclusion of cold-weather park amenities. This park has yet to be designed, therefore the exact location, as well as opportunities and constraints will be determined with the future park design.

## 9 Silo Square

The northern terminus of Old Cherry Street — a lively pedestrian street connecting River Park with the Keating Channel Promenade — Silo Square will be an open public space at the foot of the heritage industrial ESSROC Silos. The square will serve as an entryway to the Keating Promenade and will showcase public artwork installed along that pedestrian route. The silos will have a strong and commanding presence in the space; any public art will need to take that into consideration in its scale and positioning.



**High Water**

Inigo Hanlee and Michael Thomas Hill, 2018  
Green Square Plaza, Sydney, Australia  
Photo Credit: Silversalt





**Please Touch the Art**  
Jeppe Hein 2015  
Public Art Fund, New York, USA  
Photo Credit: James Ewing

## 11 Marina Square

Sitting adjacent to the Keating Promenade, Marina Square will be a water-related gathering space just east of Foundry Street. This hardscape plaza has potential for terraces down to the water level, creating opportunities for the public to access the water and for small-scale boating activities and related programming. Depending on the final design, this space may be subject to flooding during peak lake levels and the water may come up in the plaza space. This unique quality of the site and the opportunity to approach the water should be considered in the artwork.

## 12 13 Villiers Park

This future park will focus on active recreation, featuring sport courts and a multi-use field in its design. It sits in the fork of Keating Channel and the new path of the Don River and borders an elementary school on the west side. Looking east and south, Villiers Park will offer views of the re-naturalized Don River, offering a moment to celebrate this transformational infrastructure. This park will become an important community hub, offering space for recreation and multi-use trails. Public art commissioned here should consider the local and community-based use of the space. This park has yet to be designed, so the exact location(s), as well as opportunities and constraints will be determined with the future park design.





**Untitled Estructura (Red)**  
Carmen Herrera, 2021  
Public Art Fund, New York, USA  
Photo Credit: Courtest of Lisson Gallery

## 8 Old Cherry Street Diagonal Plaza

On the southwest corner of old Cherry Street and Villiers Street, a diagonal plaza will be created by angling mixed-use and employment-related buildings. This plaza will provide street level gathering space and open up views to Silo Square. On the east side of Cherry Street, the old Cherry Street historic buildings will be adaptively reused with commercial and small-scale employment and retail uses at grade. Artwork in this plaza will provide a central connection point on Villiers Island, between the Keating Channel and River Park North.

## 2 Trinity Cycle Pedestrian Underpass

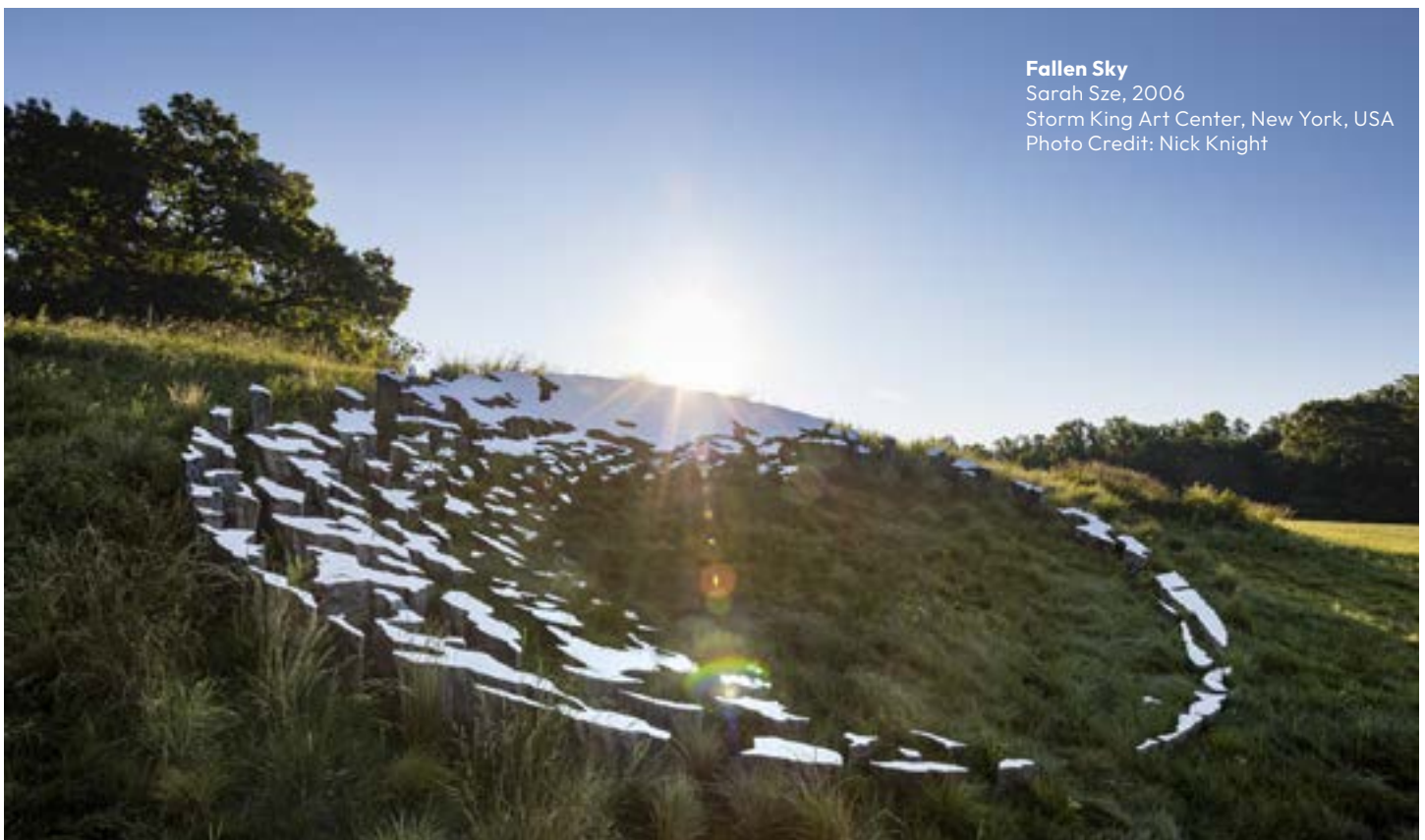
This pedestrian rail underpass will connect the historic Distillery District neighbourhood with the Lake Shore Public Realm trail and brand-new neighbourhoods. It will create a connection from the city to the waterfront, and across a future pedestrian footbridge crossing from the Keating West neighbourhood to Villiers Island. Public art opportunities will be guided by the form of the rail underpass and will likely consider shallow wall-mounted works, lighting interventions, or gateways to the entrance and exit of the structure. This underpass is conditional on funding.

## The Art Trail

A new art trail will weave its way throughout Promontory and River Valley parks, creating a unique, flexible platform for temporary and permanent art. The open-air route will create multiple opportunities for the public to discover and engage with exciting contemporary works by local, national and international artists.

Electrical, water, data, and anchor point infrastructure will be placed along the main paths of the parks and river valley, and will equip the parks to easily receive temporary art of varying mediums. The trail will also have a streamlined permitting system within Parks Forestry & Recreation. The Art Trail will become an exciting platform for public art in Toronto and the first of its kind in our city.

Three permanent artworks will anchor the trail at key locations and will become part of the City's Public Art and Monuments Collection. The fourth will be integrated into a future pavilion, but is not funded through this plan. The temporary Art Trail program will be run as a program funded through philanthropy, either by a third-party manager or a dedicated arts organization. It will feature a broad range of arts programming as well as individual artists. Its continually changing collection will attract repeat visitors, and the quality of the works is expected to create a destination for art.



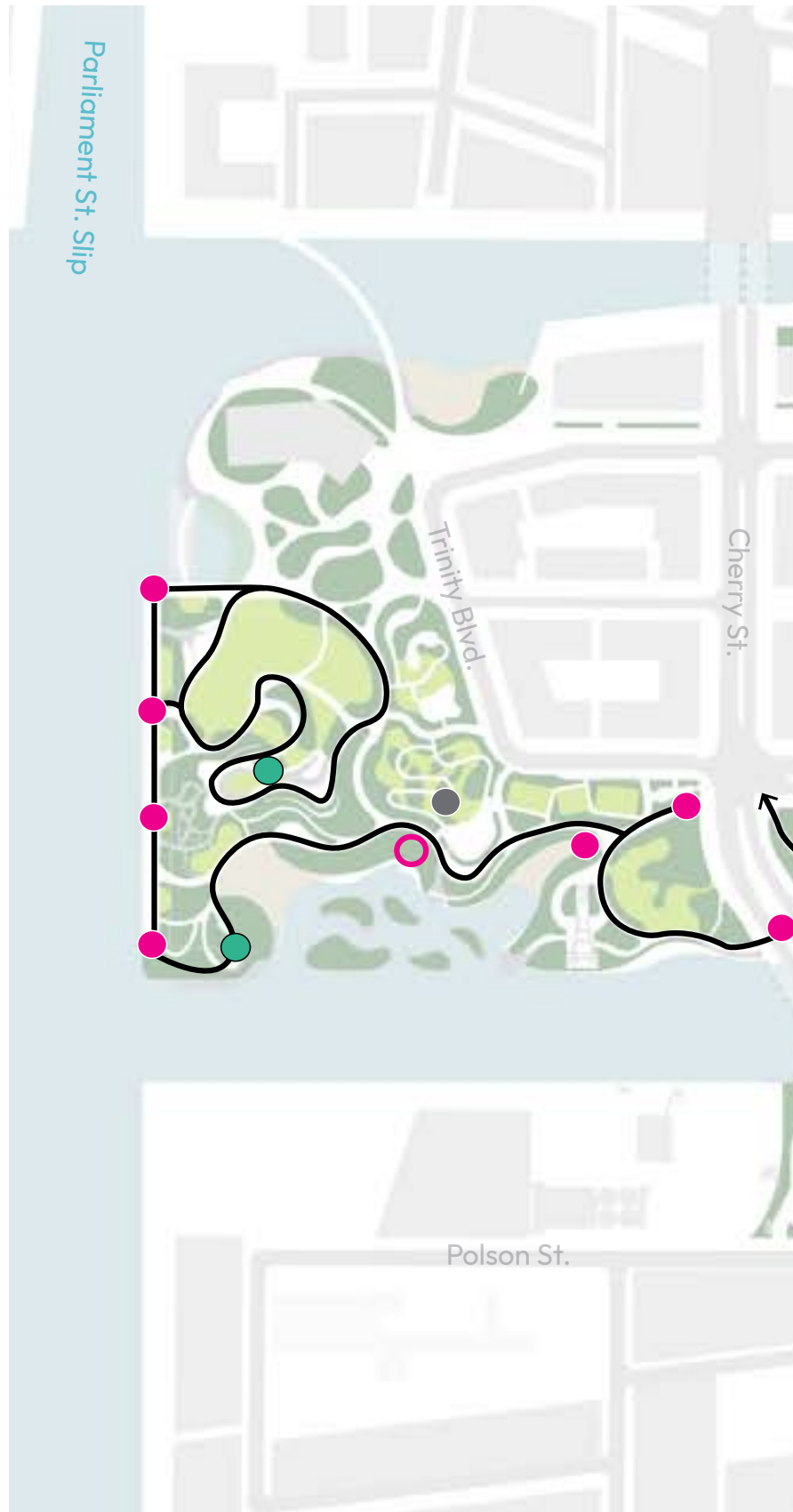
**Fallen Sky**  
Sarah Sze, 2006  
Storm King Art Center, New York, USA  
Photo Credit: Nick Knight

## Art Trail Map

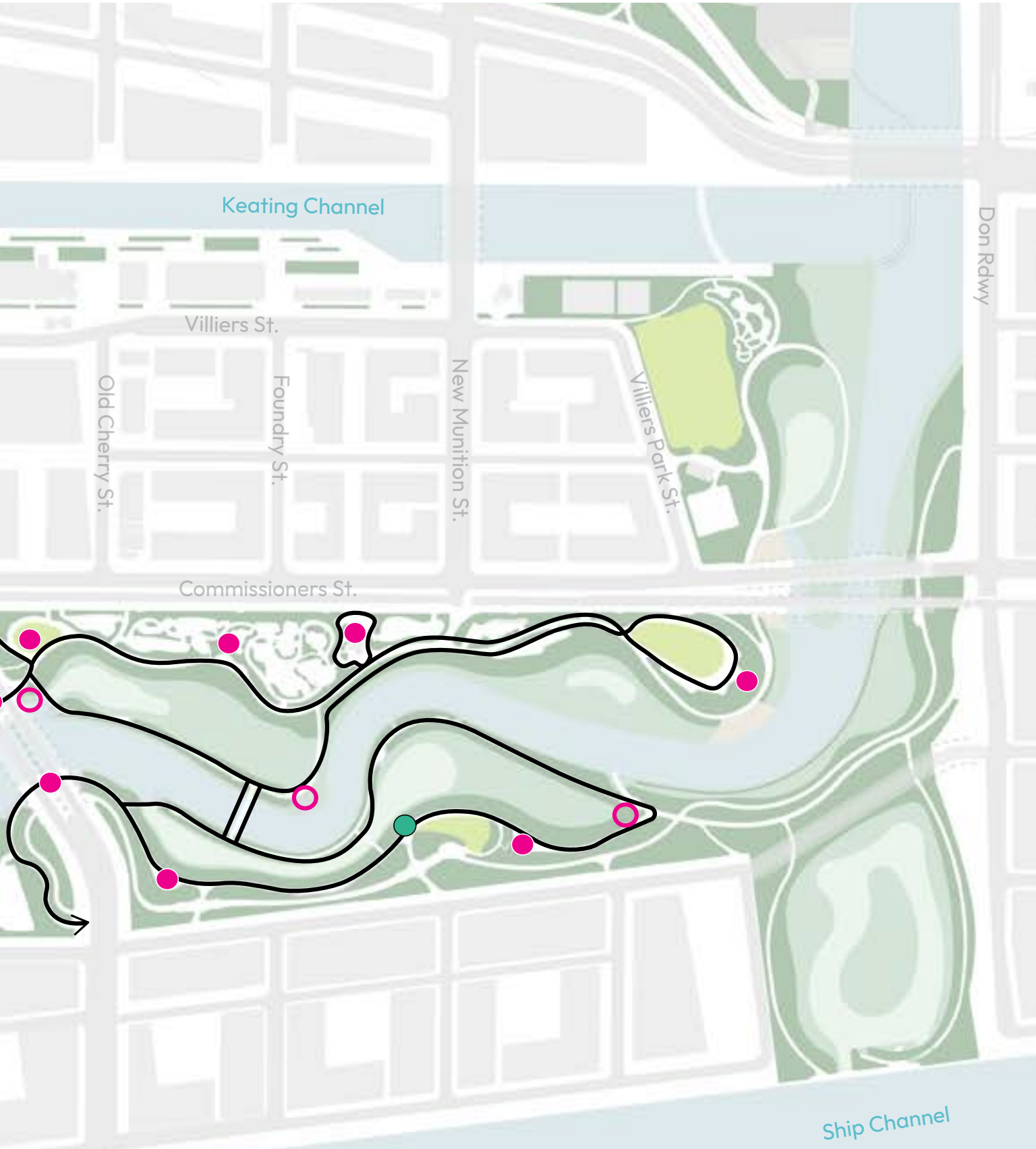
- Permanent Art - Serviced
- Temporary Art - Serviced
- Temporary Art - Not Serviced
- Future Pavilion
- Art Walk

Ephemeral art that does not require infrastructure can occur throughout park and floodplain.

Permanent environmental barrier located 1m below finish grade in Promontory Park South and 1.5m below finish grade in River Valley Park North and South. Any art foundations below the environmental barrier must consider additional environmental restrictions/ approvals.







## Permanent Artwork Sites on the Art Trail

### 15 Promontory Park South - Canoe Cove Overlook

Located at the southwest corner of Villiers Island, Canoe Cove Overlook will be accessed through a secluded forested walkway that surprises visitors with a beautiful view of the cove. The artwork site on the overlook will be viewed from the bridge, the water, and the water's edge on the south side of the river. With views to the Polson Slip and across the inner harbour, this location will offer a spectacular encounter with art and nature. This location may change to a temporary location in the event that either the Esplanade or Picnic Lawn Overlook are deemed more appropriate for permanent art.

### 16 Promontory Park South - Promontory Overlook

The promontory overlook will be a unique site, to which the public can climb through winding pathways, to see sweeping views of the city and inner harbour. Sitting near the centre of this major new waterfront park, it will see lots of pedestrian traffic. The landscape provides three different areas for programming, scattered among the rocky and tree-lined landscape, each with a different elevation and an individual electrical access point. Temporary programming should take into consideration the high use of this site, and the city views. This may change to a temporary location in the event Picnic Lawn Overlook is deemed more appropriate for permanent art.

### 14 River Park South - Retaining Wall and Lawn

This two-part location is connected by the main park path. One part, in front of a retaining wall, is long and slender, with the path on one side and retaining wall of armour stones on the other. The tiered wall doubles as public seating and an amphitheatre. The artwork could be incorporated into the stone wall feature or be situated adjacent to it. Viewers will approach the artwork with a sense of discovery as it would be revealed from the wooded main path, and through openings in the trees from The Lower Don Trail, which runs along the upper level of the stepped retaining wall. The second part to the site is an open lawn adjacent to the main park path. Edged with trees, the lawn slopes gently northwest down from the Lower Don Trail to the main park path. Views from this lawn will look across the river. Outside the high activity of the playgrounds and promontory, this lawn will offer a shady location for informal exercise or small organized fitness classes, as well as a quieter place to enjoy afternoon sun. In the interim, while CBC funds are being collected, this space can be activated with temporary public art.

## Temporary Artwork Sites on the Art Trail

Temporary public art can be a powerful tool to quickly respond to contemporary social issues and reshape how we view our physical and social environments. Temporary activations can engage a greater diversity of artistic voices to shift our relationship to and understanding of the surrounding landscape and shoreline. They also provide artists with a broader range of opportunities and encourage different methods of community and audience engagement.

Temporary projects are not funded through the City's Percent for Public Art Program. Partnerships and philanthropy are therefore essential to the programming of temporary activations and will play an important role in the regular animation of the Art Trail.

Furthermore, as highlighted in the Port Lands Planning Framework, Waterfront Toronto encourages initiatives beyond this Master Plan for precinct-wide programming of land and water through temporary activations and events.





## Temporary Sites with Servicing

The following locations will have electrical, water, and/or data hook ups, as well as tie-down infrastructure. Because each location is geographically unique, they have different servicing combinations.

### River Park North - Picnic Lawn Overlook

The Picnic Lawn Overlook will be an active social and family area, designed for heavy use with picnic tables and barbeques. The primary view of the artwork site is across the open picnic lawn. However, as the overlook will also be visible from the river and the greenway to the south, the dramatic scene of the river mouth and wetlands will become an iconic new view to reintroduce the river to the public. Situated close to the mouth of the Don River, this artwork will serve as an emblem to mark this new geographic landscape.

### Promontory Park South - Esplanade

Similar to the Water's Edge Promenade and the Keating Promenade, the Esplanade follows the water's edge and provides a linear space for the public to stroll and observe the city. The Esplanade will have prominent views across the inner harbour of the city skyline and will be a high-traffic area adjacent to the event lawn of Promontory Park North. Sweeping views leave the site open to the elements, therefore artworks should consider the potential for gusting wind and waves in the colder seasons. There will be seating along the east edge of the esplanade, running parallel to what was the foundation of the burnt down Marine Terminal 35 Building (MT35), where custom pillars will be illuminated at night to indicate the scale and presence of the now-gone industrial facade. The site features four electrical hookups spread across the site, allowing for flexibility to support multiple artworks or events at one time. Tie-downs are provided for anchoring as the site will be finished with unit pavers. This may change to a permanent location in the event that Canoe Cove Overlook is deemed more appropriate for temporary art.



**Big Bling**

Martin Puryear, 2016

Madison Square Park Conservancy, New York, USA

Photo Credit: James Ewing

**Promontory Park South - Entry Plaza**

The Entry Plaza is located at the intersection of Cherry Street and Trinity Boulevard. It is the main entry point and an area for the public to gather. This will be a site for major temporary artwork.

**Promontory Park South - Cobble Beach**

Cobble Beach will be a high-traffic area close to a key entryway to the park off Cherry Street and it may be the first thing many encounter in the park. It provides a unique opportunity that allows the public to dip their toes in Lake Ontario - the only site of its kind in the downtown core that gives access to the lake in this way. The cobblestone beach is designed with changing water levels in mind, and artworks should take this into account. Artworks should leave an open passageway to the water allowing for canoe and kayak launches. The historic Atlas Crane sits nearby and towers overhead, reminding visitors of the industrial history of the site, and the nearby Destination Playground will bring lots of activity to the area.

**River Park North - West Viewing Lawn**

After passing through a narrow opening at Cherry Street and Commissioners Street, park visitors will encounter the West Viewing Lawn — a large flexible space for programming and an excellent location for a temporary artwork with a strong presence. The lawn holds views over the wetlands to the river, where visitors can start to get a sense of the scale of the Don River and the surrounding environment.

**Images on previous page:**

(Left) *Kolonihavehus*, Tom Fruin, 2010, Brooklyn Bridge Park, New York, USA

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Pepper Knit

(Right) *Composition 20*, Naama Tsabar, 2016, The High Line, New York, USA

Photo Credit: Rowa Lee

### River Park North - Gathering Space A

This gathering space is nestled between play areas, providing a space off the main park path where people can gather. The log seating is arranged naturally, creating a unique space for live programming such as performance and educational talks. A break in the trees provides views from the area down over the wetland. Two access points for electrical and water are provided to maintain flexibility amongst the seating.

### River Park North - Fire Hall 30 Plaza

The Fire Hall 30 plaza is a highly visible and accessible site along the future LRT line of

Commissioners Street. The plaza borders the Villiers neighbourhood to the north and River Park to the south, serving as a transitional moment between the two and an entryway to the park. The historic fire hall is a heritage designated building and will house public washrooms accessed on the south side. The open plaza is a flexible space for events and gathering, designed with water, electrical and data hookups at the centre of the site. The interlocked unit-pavers could be lifted and replaced if necessary for anchoring an artwork, with digging restraints of 1.5 metres. However, tie-downs are provided for ease of shorter-term artwork installations.

#### **Intermezzo: Two Girls Wear Fashion Garments on a Palm Tree**

Pablo Bronstein, 2013  
The High Line, New York, USA  
Photo Credit: Liz Ligon







### River Park South - Gathering Space B

The more remote and quiet River Park South contains Gathering Space B, nestled between a wooded area and the wetlands. Log seating creates three pockets within the space, providing the opportunity to consider the site for an artwork with three separate components. Visitors crossing the pedestrian bridge from the north will have sightlines to this space, yet will have to travel to access it, keeping the sense of quiet and discoverability intact.

### River Park South - Gathering Space C

Like Gathering Space B, this site consists of three pockets defined by the log seating installed in the area. Situated further into River Park South, this space is one of the most quiet and secluded areas for temporary art programming and could be suited to works that require a more contemplative

setting and sense of discovery. The seating arrangements in the site make it suitable for live programming such as performance and educational talks.

### River Parks North & South - Cherry St. Bridge North & South

The new Cherry Street Bridge has been designed with integrated electrical and data-based infrastructure to allow for temporary artistic interventions such as lighting and projections on the bridge through HDMI plug-ins. The sleek contemporary design of the bridge sits in contrast to the park around it, poised at the mouth of the Don River where it meets Lake Ontario. The bridge is highly visible and can be viewed from much of the surrounding park area and waterways.

## Temporary Sites without Servicing

The following locations do not have built-in infrastructure as they are located in an area of the new river valley, which is at risk of flooding. Temporary anchoring will have to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### River Park South - Wetland 2

This natural area will be planted with shorter shrubby vegetation and is fairly open. The site sits directly adjacent to the kayak launch, maintaining good visibility to the main path and even sightlines across the river. The artwork should be viewed from the path or afar and it should not encourage the public to enter the wetlands. Artworks situated here cannot harm the surrounding environment and must take into consideration the ecology of the area.

### River Valley – River Get-Down

Stone Feature 5 consists of tiers of armour stones cascading down to the river's edge. The floodplain site will change depending on varying water levels and artworks should take this into consideration. There are unique site lines from the adjacent pathway, the pedestrian bridge that crosses to the south side of the river, and the boardwalk and pathways to the south. The surrounding area is open and has a more wild atmosphere, and sits in a more remote location

#### Ice Receding/Books Reseeding

Basia Irland, 2009

Rio Grande, Albuquerque, USA

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Basia Irland







#### Liberation of the Chinook Wind

Tania Willard, 2018

University of Toronto Mississauga, Mississauga, Canada

Photo Credit: Toni Hafkenscheid

of the park. Artists should consider ephemeral or performative pieces that are not anchored in the floodplain. Art in the floodplain will need to be reviewed by the Toronto Region and Conservation Authority (TRCA).

#### Canoe Cove

This site in canoe cove is a unique area whose primary viewers will be on the water in canoes, kayaks or other small boats. The site sits off the main path and the public would diverge from the path to access the artwork by foot. The long meandering shape sits along a rocky shoreline and provides an opportunity to consider a long artwork or series of artworks that span the length of it, to be viewed as it is passed by in motion. The east end of the site has an accessible trail that leads down to the water itself, however there is not a large accessible area to gather at the shore itself.

#### Fish Gates

Two fish gates located where the wetlands connect to the Don River will prevent invasive carp from entering the wetland water bodies. A wide path will provide access to the gates and the public will be able to walk across aluminum grates to see the water below. The gates will be visible from Cherry Street and the Cherry Street Bridge. The area adjacent to the fish gates is a corner of planted natural landscape and will be immediately encountered when passing from west to east under the bridge. This site affords a great opportunity for artists to explore fish and other local wildlife, and consider an educational approach to programming. This area sits in the floodplain so artists should consider work that is didactic, ephemeral, performative, rather than anchored into the floodplain.





# Implementation

## Administration & Oversight

The success of this plan depends on the participation of all parties, including Waterfront Toronto, private developers, and the City of Toronto. On private development lands, City staff direct developers to contribute a portion of their public art monies to the pooled art program. Developers are encouraged to ensure that their on-site works are in keeping with the vision of the Villiers Island and Keating West Public Art Master Plan. For the public sites, Waterfront Toronto provides administrative oversight including the process for selection of artists and implementation of artworks, in consultation with appropriate City staff from City Planning, Economic, Development and Culture, Parks Forestry and Recreation, and Transportation Services. This includes securing technical input and approvals from relevant City divisions.

Waterfront Toronto is responsible for establishing and managing the partnerships required to fund and implement the art program, securing all City and external agency agreements. All aspects of art competitions, design, fabrication, installation, and coordination will be overseen by Waterfront Toronto in consultation with City of Toronto Economic Development and Culture, City Planning, and other relevant City divisions.

## Commissioning Process

Permanent public art commissions will be open to local, national and international artists, run by the Waterfront Toronto Public Art Program. Consistent with City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto efforts to advance Indigenous placekeeping in the public realm, the inclusion of public art by Indigenous artists will be a prominent feature that will represent, promote and affirm cultural well-being and belonging.

The commissioning process for permanent art will be managed according to the following practices, with additional processes outlined specifically for Indigenous commissions:

- Commissions are selected through competitive open calls and peer-assessed evaluation processes that remain open and transparent and can include: Calls to

Artists, Requests for Qualifications (RFQs), and Requests for Proposals (RFPs);

- Invitational or in very rare circumstances, direct commissions, may be permitted only when funding is provided through private philanthropy or to achieve specific project objectives such as commissions supporting Indigenous artists or other equity-seeking groups, among others. Invitational commissions may also be extended to artists from specific communities or through private philanthropy;
- Calls to artists will range in scope from local to national and international, depending on available resources, project scope, and related criteria. Where possible different scales of projects will be established to reach artists with varying levels of experience;
- Waterfront Toronto is committed to ensuring that the public art program champion equity and inclusion, among both artists and audiences;
- The selection process, evaluation criteria, schedule, budget, technical requirements, art objectives unique to the circumstances, site characteristics, and context are outlined in the calls to artists;
- Peer-assessed selection is recognized as a valid evaluation protocol within municipal public art programs across Canada and is the protocol of choice for Waterfront Toronto's Public Art Program;
- Selection Committees are typically comprised of arts professionals, subject matter experts, and community members. Committee members will represent Toronto's diverse communities. Members of the Selection Committee will receive an honorarium based on Canadian Artists' Representation/Le Front des artistes canadiens (CARFAC) recommendations. Representatives from City of Toronto's Art and Culture Services Public Art program will be invited to participate in the selection process in a non-voting capacity. Representatives from appropriate City divisions such as City Planning, Economic Development and Culture, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, and Transportation Services may also participate in a non-voting capacity based on the parameters of the specific project;
- Selection and advisory committees will be reflective of the diversity of the arts sector, and the population of the City of Toronto. To achieve greater diversity and inclusion within public art programs, it is important that the decision-making process be inclusive of a broad range of diverse voices. Decision-making bodies should have broad, appropriate representation that is reflective of the diversity of the arts sector, as well as the city population in general. This involves continuing to have representation from people of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities, as well as a range of professional expertise related to the arts.

- The artwork selection will be managed by Waterfront Toronto's Public Art Program Manager and will ensure a fair and open process;
- Selection Committees will use the criteria set out in the calls or project scope to evaluate artists' proposals. This will ensure that artists are evaluated through a fair process;
- Members of Selection Committees must sign Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality forms prior to evaluation meetings;
- A Technical Advisory Committee will be convened for permanent commissions, the specific composition of which will depend on project conditions and siting, but which may include Waterfront Toronto staff, Ports Toronto staff, TRCA staff, and City staff from Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City Planning, the design team, and an Indigenous Public Art Curator. This committee will provide technical information on the site as well as feedback on artist proposals;
- Efforts will be made to make artist open calls accessible, plainspoken, and clear, avoiding technical language as much as possible. Ideally, open calls will be supported by artist briefing sessions.





## Commissions Specific to Indigenous Artists

Waterfront Toronto recognizes the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination and to “freely pursue their own economic, social and cultural development” without discrimination, as set out in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, we recognize and protect the desire and rights of Indigenous peoples to own and control their traditional heritage and artistic products, and actively challenge and resist cultural appropriation. To these ends, when Waterfront Toronto is conducting outreach with Indigenous artists, an open call and/or by invitation process will be used that follows the following protocols:

- Commissions are selected through competitive, curatorial and/or invitational peer-assessed evaluation processes that remain open and transparent and can include: Requests for Qualifications (RFQs); Requests for Proposals (RFPs); and invitational, or from a prequalified roster. Commissioning methods will be implemented in ways that are appropriate to the project type and scope;
- Invitational calls involve a shortlist of artists selected based on past work and invited to develop proposals from a project brief provided. Indigenous Selection Committees will be responsible for proposing shortlists and selecting winning concepts. Artists will be appropriately compensated for the development of their proposals;
- Indigenous commissions will include optional self-identification processes in artist calls and public engagement initiatives;
- Where possible, an Indigenous curator or administrator will be engaged to co-lead Indigenous art commissions and work collaboratively with the Waterfront Toronto Public Art program;
- Indigenous commissions will be selected by Indigenous Selection Committees, which will be coordinated by an Indigenous Public Art Curator, if included, and Waterfront Toronto.



**Qualifications for Indigenous artists are a huge barrier – this is your biggest barrier – use partnerships within established networks.**

Candice Hopkins  
Curator



**Pehonan**  
Tiffany Shaw-Collinge, 2018  
Δα-ο (INIW) River Lot 11∞  
Indigenous Art Park, Edmonton, Canada  
Photo Credit: Courtesy of Tiffany Shaw-Collinge

## Partnerships

This plan leverages the long-standing collaboration between Waterfront Toronto and the City of Toronto, with different mechanisms for funding according to land ownership and zoning. Funds for this Master Plan are generated by public art contributions paid by developers on both public and private parcels of land within these precincts. Waterfront Toronto will work with City Planning and private developers in the precincts to ensure Community Benefits Contribution (CBC) agreements and funds are drafted and collected according to the objectives and opportunities set out by this public art plan.

In addition to CBC funds for permanent artworks, there is major potential for philanthropic support and third-party programming partnerships, in particular for the Art Trail. As per Council motion EC31.24, two permanent pieces in the Art Trail will be funded and commissioned by the Lassonde Art Trail Foundation. One permanent artwork in the Art Trail will be funded through CBC funds, and commissioned by Waterfront Toronto. The fourth permanent artwork indicated on the Art Trail will be integrated into a proposed future pavilion, a project that will be funded through philanthropic support.

The successful development and implementation of the Villiers Island and Keating West Public Art Master Plan requires building on the strength of existing City of Toronto public art policies, as well as fostering potential new relationships between public, private, and philanthropic partners.

## Budget & Funding

Funding for the public art program in Keating West and Villiers Precincts will come from the public art contributions negotiated from development parcels within the precincts. Section 3.1.4 of the City's Official Plan states that "the creation of public art that reflects our cultural diversity and history will be promoted by "encouraging public art initiatives on properties under the jurisdiction of the City, its agencies, boards and commissions" and "encouraging the inclusion of public art in all significant private sector developments across the City".

This plan will be funded through the CBCs By-law, with both monetary and in-kind contributions. For more information on the CBCs By-law, visit [Section 37 Community Benefits Charge](#). In-kind public art contributions, with all associated agreements to secure said contributions to be registered on title, are permitted to be considered as part of the CBC negotiations. Their commensurate monetary value may be deducted from the total CBC amount owed, and secured by agreement to be registered on title. Such in-kind contributions will be required to follow this master plan's siting and thematic guidelines to the satisfaction of the City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto Public Art divisions.

City Planning, with support from Waterfront Toronto, will secure CBCs on developments and redevelopments that are at least five storeys in height and that add at least ten residential units. A list of exemptions is available on the above mentioned webpage. For public lands, including lands owned by Waterfront Toronto and CreateTO, the public art contributions will be negotiated through the development agreement process, following the City of Toronto's One Percent for Public Art process, and aligning with Official Plan policies.

Section 3.1.4 of the Official Plan also recommends "dedicating one percent of the capital budget of all major municipal buildings and structures to public art"\* . This contribution will also be encouraged in capital projects across the two precincts. In addition to the Port Lands bridges, in future phases there is potential revenue from City and Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) work on the LRT to Villiers Island.

Using the funding model recommended in the One Percent for Public Art Guidelines, Waterfront Toronto has calculated that as of 2022 the contributions for the Public Art Master Plan budget (see Appendix 2) will total an estimated \$21.6M over a twenty-year period of development. The City and Waterfront Toronto will endeavor use the new CBC mechanism to secure implementation funding for this plan through site specific community benefits negotiations.

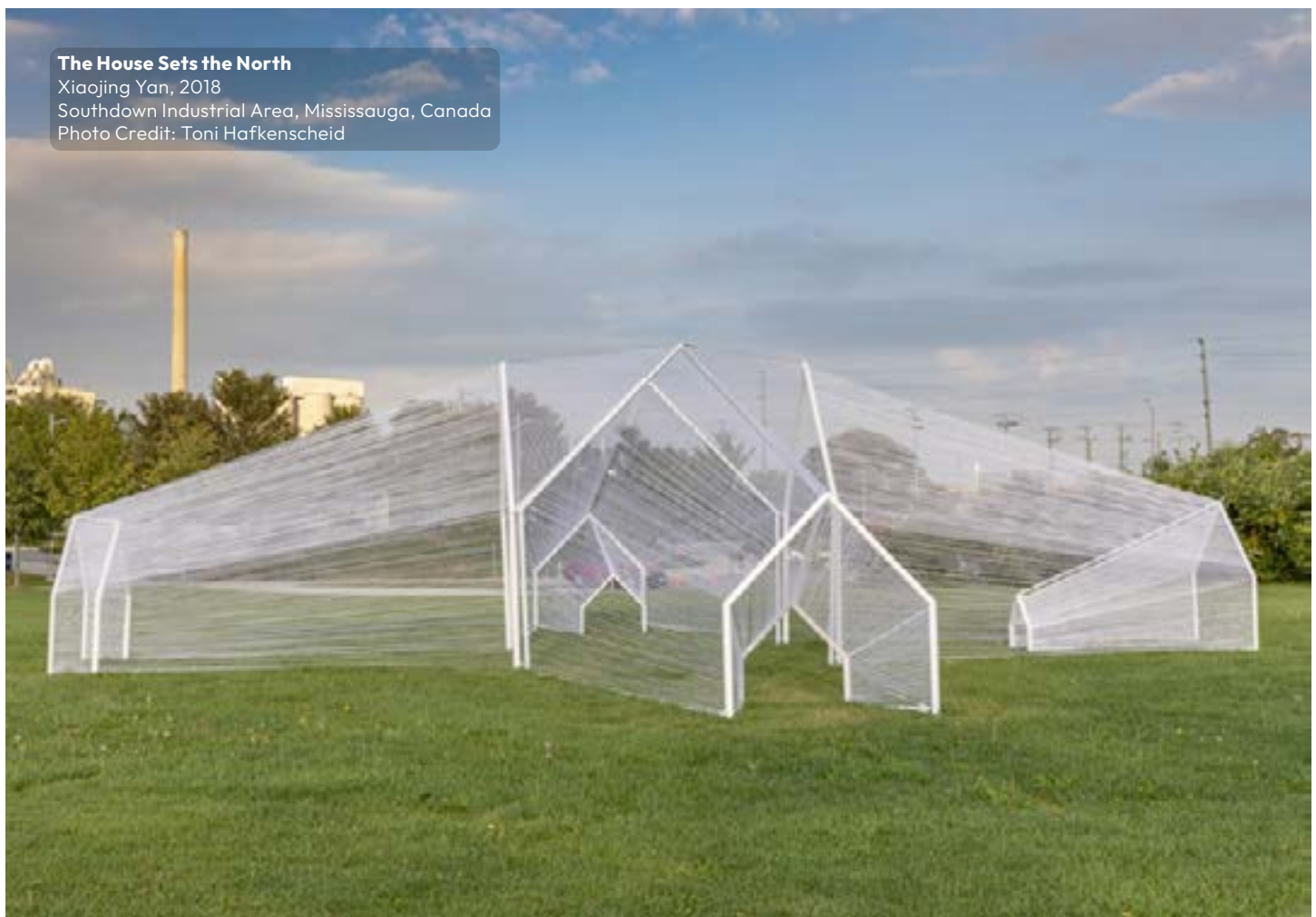
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\* <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-99620.pdf>



In keeping with the City's [Public Art and Monuments Donation Policy](#), project budgets will be calculated to include maintenance costs equal to 10% of a project's construction cost, which is provided to the City for lifecycle maintenance of the artworks.

Funds received through CBCs can only be used towards capital public art projects, as well as permanent infrastructure for temporary public art. Therefore, any temporary art programmed in accordance with this Public Art Master Plan will require other revenue sources whether through third party presenters, donorship and philanthropy, or corporate sponsorship.



## Phasing

A high-level phasing plan has been established to help guide the implementation of this public art master plan in step with how sites are generally anticipated to develop within the Villiers Island and Keating West precincts and as funding becomes available. Based on anticipated site readiness projections and preliminary construction timelines, a notional short, medium and long-term phasing strategy is provided below.

Artists should be commissioned as early as possible in the process to integrate artworks into the design and construction of public realm spaces, or for integrated artworks such as the pedestrian bridge.

In the medium and long-term phases, there is potential for funding related to large-scale public works and infrastructure projects.

### Near Term

- Keating Channel Pedestrian Bridge
- River Park North – Picnic Lawn Overlook
- Promontory Park South – Canoe Cove Overlook
- River Park South – Retaining Wall and Lawn

### Long Term

- Promontory Park North
- Silo Square
- Marina Square
- Villiers Park North
- Villiers Park South
- Trinity Cycle Underpass

### Medium Term

- Cherry Street Underpass
- Silo Park
- Keating Channel South Promenade (multiple pieces)
- Old Cherry Street Diagonal Plaza
- Keating Channel North Promenade (multiple pieces)

## Conservation & Maintenance

Permanent public artworks commissioned by Waterfront Toronto through this Plan will be conveyed to the City of Toronto Public Art and Monuments Collection. As such, staff from Economic Development and Culture will be consulted at key points in project development, where maintenance concerns can be addressed. Issues of longevity in materials, technology, processes, structure, and aesthetics will be considered as part of the commissioning process. In line with the City's Public Art and Monument Donations Policy and deed of gift process, Waterfront Toronto will give the City of Toronto a cash sum equal to 10% of each artwork construction budget with the conveyance of each artwork, to be held in the Public Art Maintenance fund and used towards future and ongoing maintenance and conservation of the artworks. Permanent artwork in the art trail commissioned by the Lassonde Art Trail Foundation will follow a similar handover process to Waterfront Toronto's process.

On occasion the City of Toronto receives offers of donated artwork or monuments and is asked to seek public sites for these artworks. Waterfront Toronto recognizes this, and if a site that is proposed falls within the organization's jurisdiction in the Keating Channel West and Villiers Precincts, the organization will work with the City of Toronto to consider the artwork in question and the feasibility of installing it within the precincts in accordance with the City's Public Art and Monument Donations Policy. It is also understood that there is no obligation on the part of Waterfront Toronto to accept artwork proposed to be donated to the City of Toronto onto a site within the Designated Waterfront Area.

Waterfront Toronto also recognizes that temporary public art, does not fall under the purview of the City's Public Art and Monuments Collection or the Parks Forestry and Recreation Department, and therefore its maintenance will not be responsibility of the City. Should temporary artworks require maintenance it will be the responsibility of the party commissioning and installing the projects, and a budget for this should be retained by the partner. Temporary artwork will be maintained by the entity that commissions it.



## Interpretation & Accessibility

Didactic information related to the artworks and the themes they address can be cohesively brought together through an interpretation plan and the development of storytelling tools such as public art maps, didactic panels, labels, audio tours, downloadable QR code-based information, as well as heritage markers. These interpretive tactics can enhance the visitor experience, deepen understanding, celebrate the extraordinary revitalization process, make stronger connections to the water, and make artworks more welcoming for the public to explore. In addition to providing visitors with general orientation information, an interpretive layer can make public art more accessible and share links to the past. Content themes may include: Indigenous contexts and connections to the water, explanations of the surrounding built environment, personal reflections on the water, as well as a spotlight on points of interest related to the naturalization process. A narrative around all of the artworks positioned as a free outdoor exhibition can help to create a holistic experience and make this area a beloved destination for locals and tourists alike. Didactic information on permanent artworks will be funded through the Waterfront Toronto Public Art Program.

Efforts should be made to use a plainspoken, welcoming tone of voice as much as possible when it comes to external communications with artists, visitors, and community groups. This aligns with Waterfront Toronto's commitment to create "a waterfront for everyone." While the selected sites are already wheelchair accessible, additional steps can be taken to make the public art program accessible that include: multiple languages, large print captions and the use of a range of different media (such as audio tours). AODA compliance in the design of any interpretation or outgoing communications must also be considered.

## Approval Process

This document will first be sent to the Toronto Public Art Commission (TPAC) for approval, after which it will go to City Council for approval.

**Lines (57° 59' N, 7° 16' W)**

Pekka Niittyvirta & Timo Aho, 2018

Taigh Chearsabhagh Museum & Arts Centre, Lochmaddy, Scotland

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Pekka Niittyvirta









**WATERFRONT**Toronto