



Leslie Street Lookout

Issues Identification

January 27th, 2021

Project Description & Background

Project Description

- The Leslie Slip Lookout will be a new destination in Toronto's Port Lands, located on the Martin Goodman Trail near the entrance to Tommy Thompson Park at 12 Leslie Street.
- The 1.9 acre park will provide opportunities for flexible programming and connect the public to the water's edge with views of the entire length of the Ship Channel.

Project Timeline

- In 2017, Council directed City staff to develop an implementation plan for the Leslie Green Portal.
- In Fall 2020, CreateTO led a design competition to hire a Landscape Architecture team to develop a design and manage construction of the new park.
- Claude Cormier + Associés (CC+A), with gh3 and ARUP, was the successful team selected by a four member jury.
- Estimated construction start in 2022.

Design Team

- Claude Cormier + Associés (CC+A) as the design lead for Landscape
- gh3* as creator of the lookout structure
- Arup as the lead in engineering and construction management.

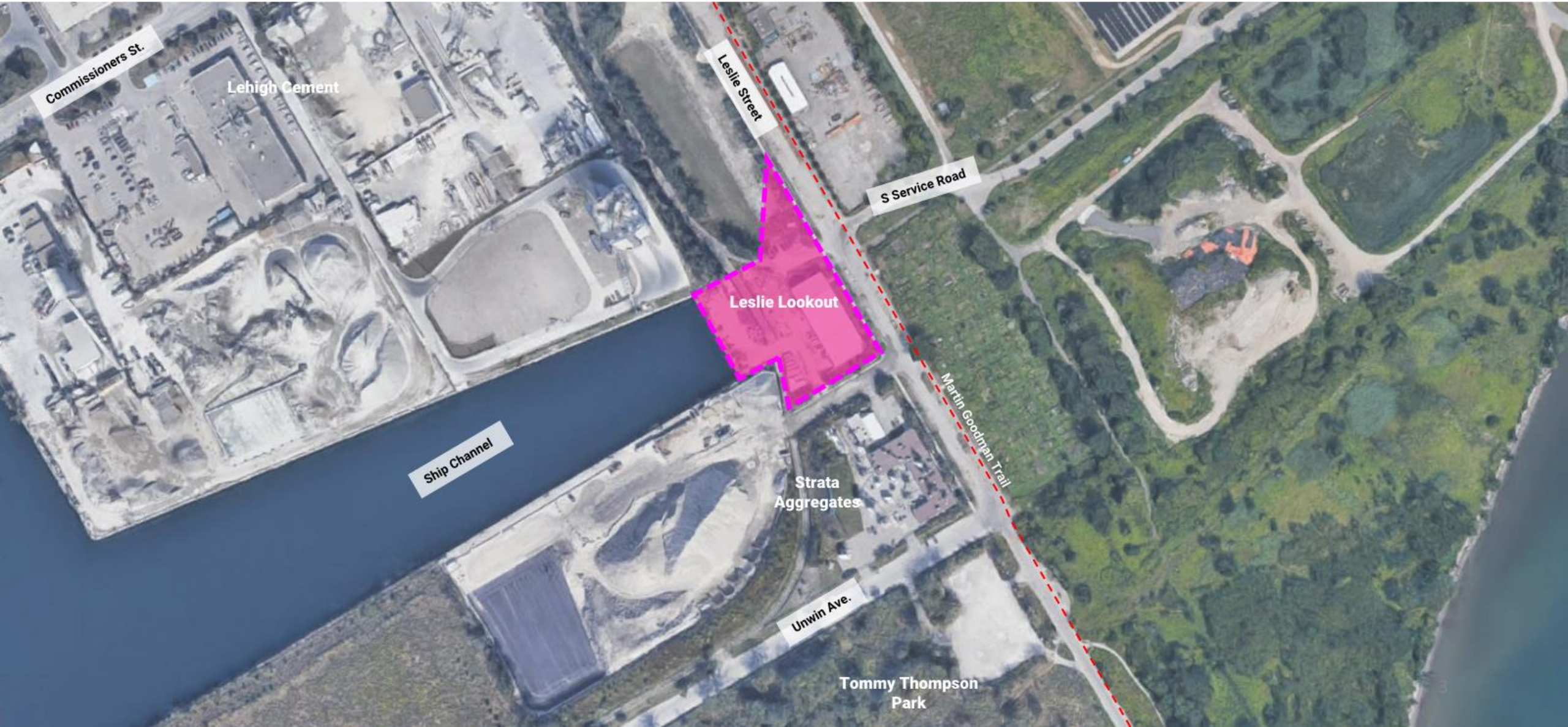
Site Context

Leslie Street Lookout

Proponent: CreateTO

Design Team: Claude Cormier + Associates Inc, gh3*, ARUP

Review Stage: Issues Identification



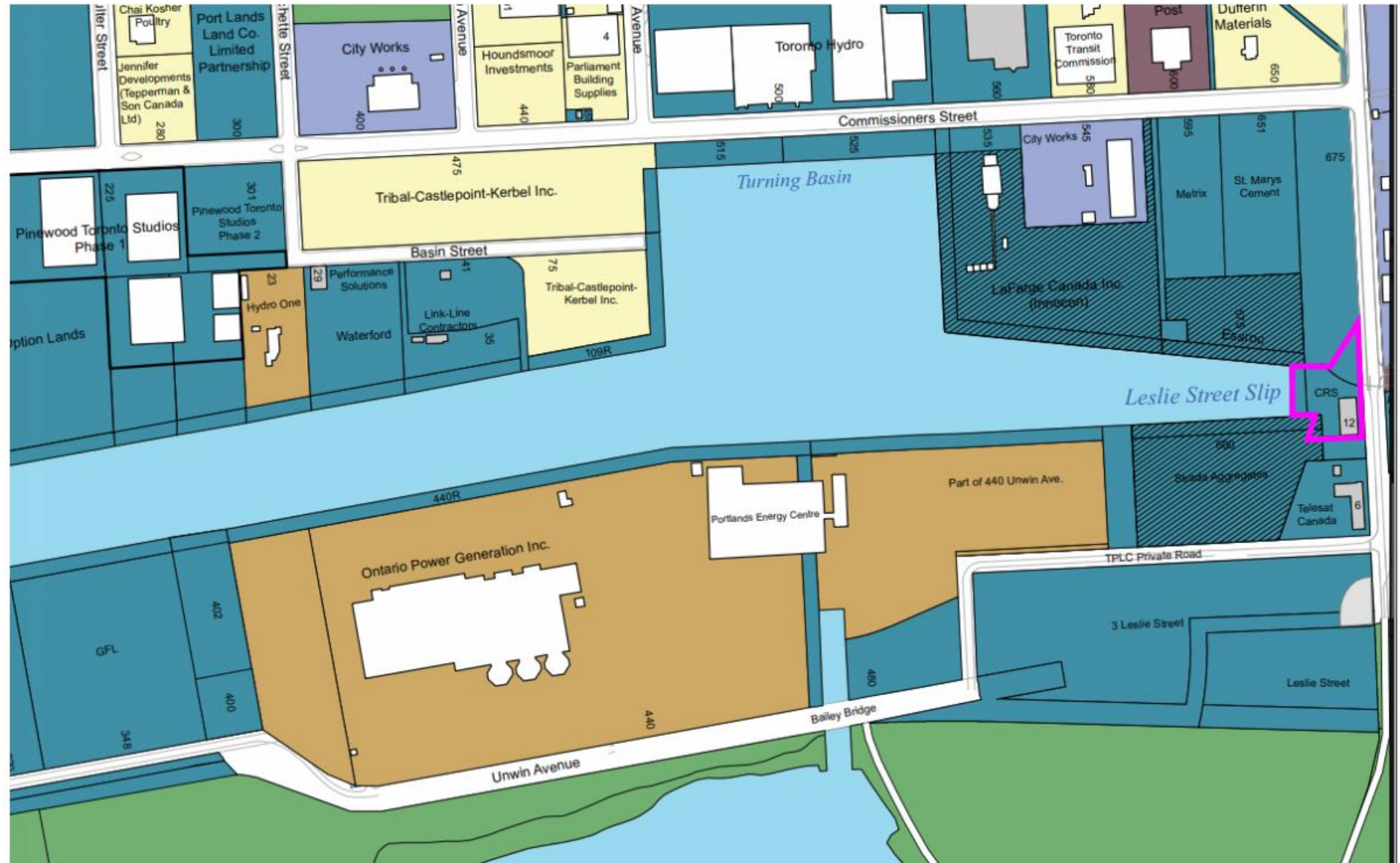
Ownership Policy Context

Leslie Street Lookout

Proponent: CreateTO

Design Team: Claude Cormier + Associes Inc, gh3*, ARUP

Review Stage: Issues Identification



- TPLC
- Municipal
- Provincial
- Land Owned by Others
- Federal
- TPLC Owned Buildings
- Municipal Parkland
- Pinewood Toronto Studios Phase 1
- Long Term Leases to TPA

Port Lands Planning Framework – Land Use Policy Context

Leslie Street Lookout

Proponent: CreateTO

Design Team: Claude Cormier + Associes Inc, gh3*, ARUP

Review Stage: Issues Identification



- Mixed Use Residential*
- Productions, Interactive and Creative (PIC) - Mixed Use**
- Production, Interactive and Creative (PIC) - Core
- Light Industrial and Productions
- Port and Industrial
- Port
- Ports Toronto - Existing Use
- Destination / Catalytic
- Maritime Hub
- Major Public Parks and Open Spaces
- Natural Open Space and Don Greenway
- Water's Edge Promenade
- Future Water's Edge Promenade
- Future Naturalization
- Power

Port Lands Planning Framework – Open Space Policy Context

Leslie Street Lookout

Proponent: CreateTO

Design Team: Claude Cormier + Associates Inc, gh3*, ARUP

Review Stage: Issues Identification



Port Lands Planning Framework – Open Space Policy Context

Leslie Street Lookout

Proponent: CreateTO

Design Team: Claude Cormier + Associates Inc, gh3*, ARUP

Review Stage: Issues Identification

The **Leslie Green Portal** will be a wide, green spine on the east and west sides of Leslie Street and will act as a major pedestrian and cycling gateway to Tommy Thompson Park:

- a) Between Commissioners Street and the Leslie Slip Lookout, the width of park on either side of Leslie Street will be a minimum of 50 metres wide;
- b) Between the Leslie Slip Lookout and Unwin Avenue, the width of the park on the west side of Leslie Street will be a minimum of 50 metres. The width of the existing park on the east side of Leslie Street will be maintained at least at its current width; and
- c) Permitted uses will include agricultural uses subject to meeting environmental and regulatory requirements, park and recreational uses, and cogeneration energy uses associated with the Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant and provided the use is not within a wholly enclosed building and the design complements the Portal. Where rail access into the Port Lands is required to be maintained, the rail sidings will be integrated with the park design. A small retail store or restaurant use may be considered on the west side of Leslie Street subject to demonstrating that the use will complement the overall park function and design.

The **Leslie Slip Lookout** will provide a naturalized plaza and lookout down the Ship Channel at the terminus of the Leslie Street Slip.



Project Approval Stage

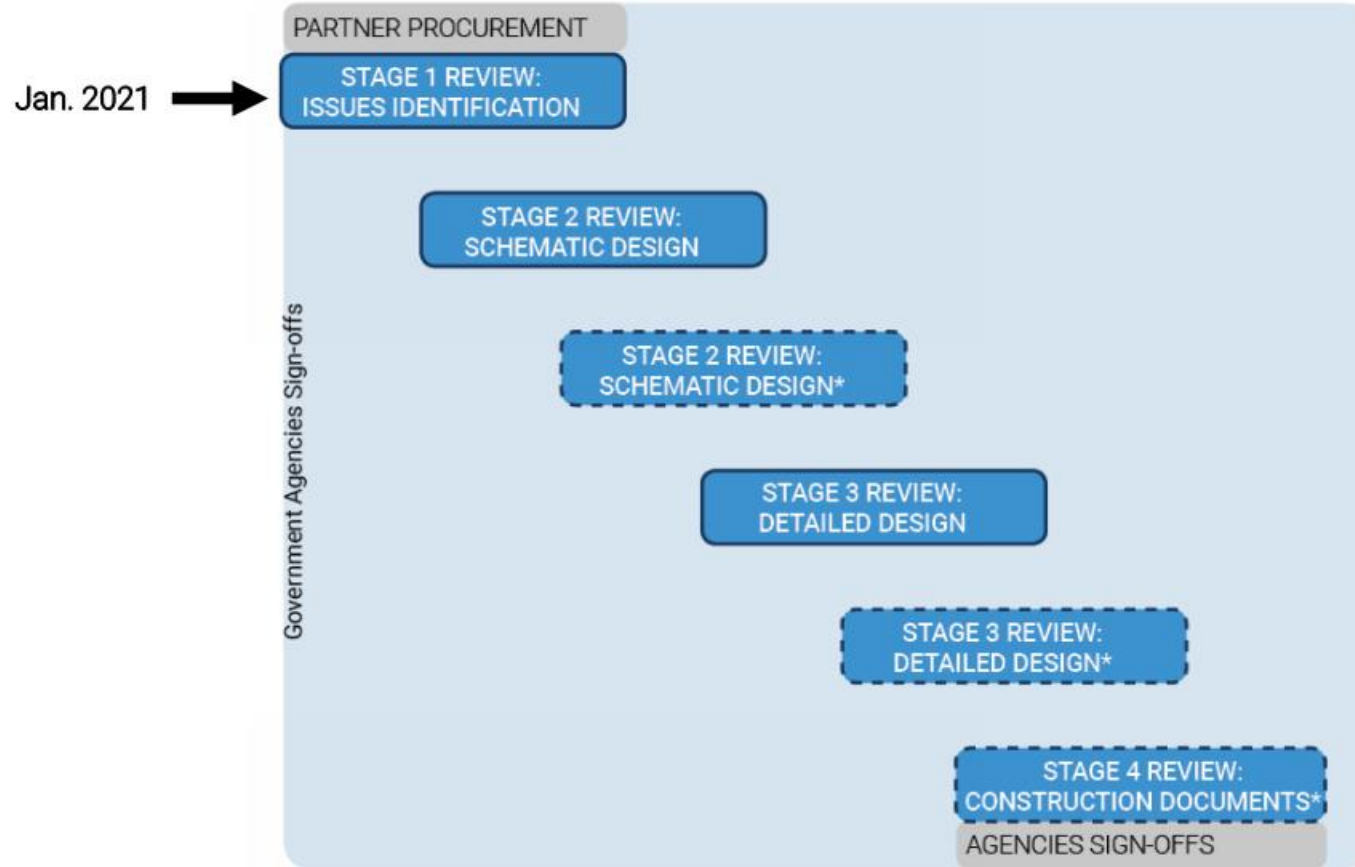
DRP Stream 2: Public land

Leslie Street Lookout

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Review Stage: Issues Identification



Jury Comments

Issues Identification Review Consensus Comments

- The Jury noted the simplicity, openness and flexibility of the spaces will provide opportunities for large gatherings (movie nights, concerts, etc.), yet still provide more intimate settings for small groups and individual park users.
- The Jury could easily envision the park animated with year-round events & activities.
- The Jury appreciated the elegance and timelessness of the design. The proposal embraced the park as the focus of its design. No hidden sightlines and maximized opportunities for lush vegetation.
- The proposal was implementable and raised the fewest concerns for future maintenance & operations. CC+A has a record for executing successful downtown & waterfront parks, and the ability to turn simple objects into art.

Areas for Panel Consideration Waterfront Toronto

Design concept

- Does the design concept meet the goals of the Port Lands Planning Framework?
- Does the design concept support the evolving character of Leslie Street and the greater Port Lands?

Environmental strategy

- Does the design push the performance of the park as green infrastructure?
- Does the design advance Waterfront Toronto's goals for sustainable landscapes?

Areas for Panel Consideration

City of Toronto

Location, Access & Wayfinding

- Does the design concept adequately address and mitigate its industrial adjacency?
- Does the design provide for appropriate access and wayfinding?

Indigenous Consultation

- Does the design process adequately incorporate the objective for indigenous consultation & placemaking?

Phasing & Maintenance

- Does the design allow opportunities for phasing?
- Is the design mindful of the City's maintenance and operation constraints?

LESLIE SLIP LOOKOUT

TORONTO

CLAUDE CORMIER + ASSOCIÉS INC

gh3*

ARUP

WHO WE ARE + WHAT WE DO

The design team for Leslie Slip Lookout is a three-way 'pas-de-trois' anchored by Claude Cormier + Associés as the design lead for Landscape, gh3* as creator of the lookout structure, and Arup as the lead in engineering and construction management.

CLAUDE CORMIER + ASSOCIÉS INC



Sugar Beach, Toronto

Established in 1995, Claude Cormier + Associés is a firm of 14 professionals who approach landscape architecture from a rigorous conceptual position with solid technical know-how. Recipient of over 100 awards, the urban landscape is their cause. It is complex, constraint-ridden, with the nearly impossible task of pleasing everybody. The firm's response to these challenges is to invent a fresh place-based response that strives to elevate the public experience and transform civic life by designing public spaces that are visceral, authentic, generous, and sustainable.

The firm takes landscape very seriously, and accepts projects that involve serious landscapes. Claude Cormier + Associés prioritizes projects that require a critical position to integrate a multidisciplinary team into a coherent and unified direction. A design attitude of less 'landscaping' and more landscape 'synthesizing' is used to solve complex problems that address functionality while going beyond to create places that are universally meaningful yet specific to everyone.



Claude Cormier
Principal
Landscape Architect



Marc Hallé
Associate, Senior
Landscape Architect



Cloë Cousineau
Intermediate
Landscape Designer



Carlos Portillo
Junior
Landscape Designer

gh3



Borden Park,
Edmonton

With a modernist's eye to order and beauty, and an environmentalist's awareness of sustainability and long-term thinking, gh3* brings specialized expertise in architecture, landscape, urban design and ecology to the design team. A firm of 20 architects and landscape architects, gh3* offers a complete range of architecture, urban design and landscape architecture services to academic, institutional, and public and private sector clients in Canada.

Founded in 2006, gh3* has been recognized as one of Canada's most innovative integrated practices; having been awarded over 40 design awards, including 14 national design awards and five Governor General's Awards, as well as acclaim from Fast Company Magazine in 2020 as one of the most innovative architecture firms in the world. A belief in an integrated, holistic approach to design and sustainability is central to the gh3* philosophy. Concerns for the environment stand at the centre of the firm's approach—sustainability is not dealt with separately, but as part of the concert of architectural design. Design solutions prioritize life quality, health, safety and an inclusive environment for all as the firm works to promote innovation and new technological advances that aide and propel the local community forward.



Pat Hanson
Principal
Architect



Ramond Chow
Principal
Architect

ARUP



+Pool, New York City

Arup is a global consulting, design, and engineering firm that is the creative force at the heart of many of the world's most prominent projects in the built environment. Working in over 140 countries, Arup has more than 14,000 planners, designers, engineers and consultants delivering innovative projects across the world. Great design comes from a commitment to quality, creativity and multidisciplinary collaboration. Arup's reputation for design excellence is evidence of their abiding belief in all three. Their employee-owned structure promotes ongoing investment in joint research to yield better outcomes for clients and partners. Arup's culture looks a lot like the future: globally-connected, locally-focused and radically innovative.



Chales Ormsby
Lead Engineer
Civil + Sustainability



Matt Humphries
Lead Engineer
Structural



Andrew Cushing
Lead Engineer
Geotechnical



Svetan Veliov
Lead Engineer
Electrical



Nikolic Mladin
Lead Engineer
Mechanical



Alexander Hucal
Lead Engineer
Construction Mngmt

A SANDBAR IN THE PORT LANDS

The proposed Leslie Slip Lookout is located at the east end of the Ship Channel that transects the industrial terrain of the Port Lands. Before earth filling of the Ashbridges Bay marsh began over a century ago, the landscape was very different than it is today. The site of the Leslie Slip Lookout is situated on what used to be a shifting sandbar barrier beach, inspiring a vision to create a new public space that can re-establish some of the qualities from this lost landscape that appeal to the human scale and senses.



1851
MAP OF THE TOWNSHIP OF YORK BY J.D. BROWNE



1913
SANDY SHORELINE OF FISHERMAN'S ISLAND BY ARTHUR GOSS

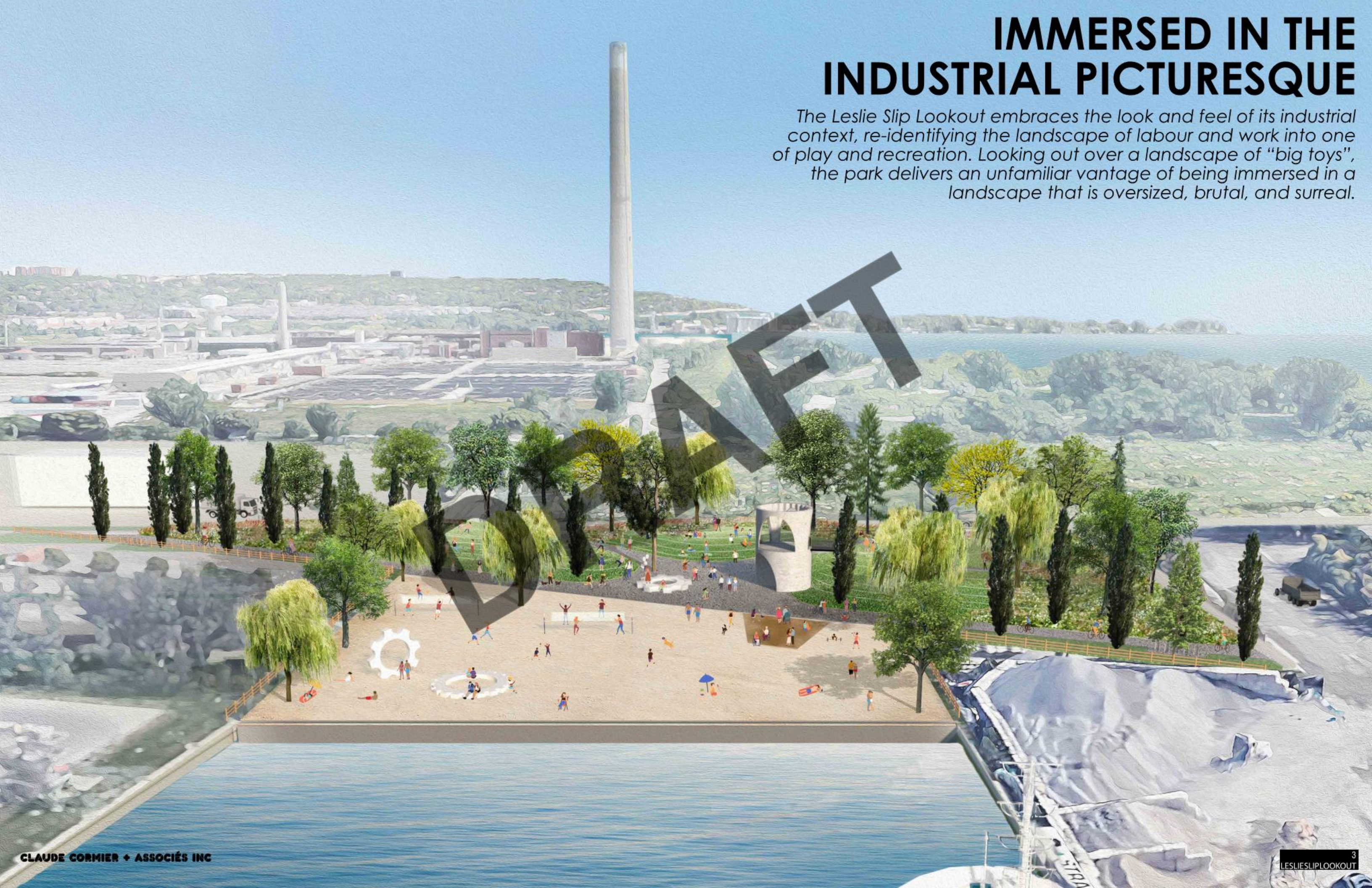


1949
FISHERMAN'S ISLAND BAR BEFORE BACKFILLING
CLAUDE CORMIER + ASSOCIÉS INC



IMMERSED IN THE INDUSTRIAL PICTURESQUE

The Leslie Slip Lookout embraces the look and feel of its industrial context, re-identifying the landscape of labour and work into one of play and recreation. Looking out over a landscape of “big toys”, the park delivers an unfamiliar vantage of being immersed in a landscape that is oversized, brutal, and surreal.



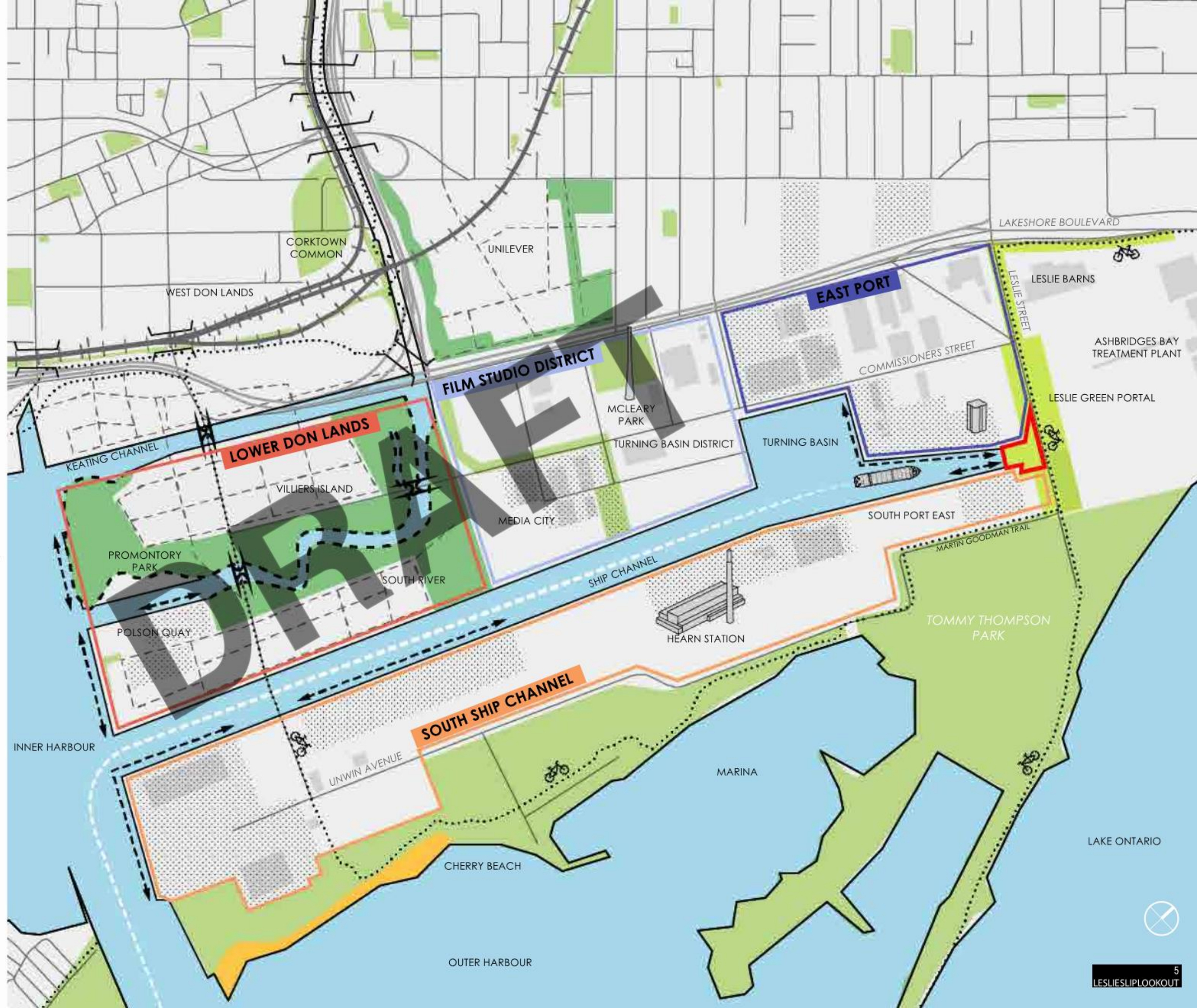


ANOTHER DESTINATION ON TORONTO'S WATERFRONT BEACHSCAPE

Toronto is a city of beaches. The Leslie Slip Lookout proposes a new beach on the water's edge, distinguished by sand and green dunes that mimic the neighbouring aggregate stockpiles and silos of grit, counterintuitively creating a destination of pleasure and delight in what would appear to be an impossible setting.

FAR AWAY + IN THE MIDDLE OF EVERYWHERE

The Leslie Slip Lookout is close to downtown and Toronto's east end neighbourhoods, yet is a world on its own, a park on the margins. Positioned on the Martin Goodman Trail and in the shadow of iconic Port Lands giants like the Hearn Power Station and the district's cement factories, the Leslie Slip Lookout is a front row experience of a landscape normally off limits to most citizens. Close to the accidental nature on the Leslie Spit, and the new estuary neighbourhood on Villiers Island at the mouth of the Don River, the curious combination of the site's contextual anomalies reinforces the peculiar specificity of the Leslie Slip Lookout.



LESLIE SLIP LOOKOUT AS THE THRESHOLD OF TWO LANDSCAPE TYPOLOGIES



PUBLIC INTIMACY IN AN UNLIKELY SETTING

The Leslie Slip Lookout is designed to create surprising comfort in a relatively inhospitable condition. Topography and vegetation shield noise and dust, with the space pivoted towards the southwest to optimize sunlight and warmth. Sub-spaces in the park are subtly defined by topography, surface materials, and vegetation, allowing individuals to be alone with their thoughts, as well as couples and small groups to be bear to each other without getting in each other's way. At the same time, these sub-spaces are designed to work as a singular unified commons capable of accommodating large civic gatherings.



YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND. LA TERRE VUE DU CIEL, TOURISTES SUR UNE PLAGE DE FUERTEVENTURA, 2000, P. 208



AN INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE RECYCLED INTO A DESTINATION OF RESPITE + RECREATION

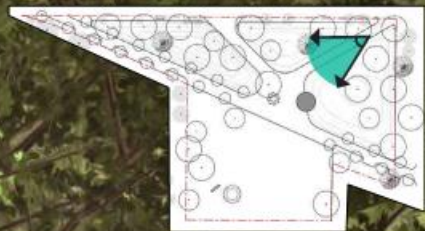
SUN

SHADE

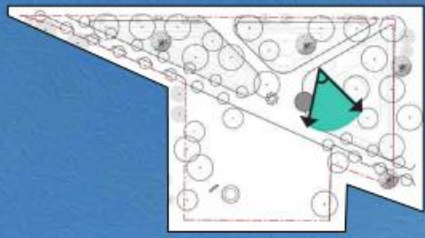


The Leslie Slip Lookout adapts the language of the district's stockpiles and utilitarian infrastructure, using vegetation and programming to transform these elements into a park.

The ying and the yang of the plan are separated by a diagonal path that divides the beach from the green dunes. Additional pathways from Leslie Street converge at a gathering hub which slopes towards the threshold of the beach. From the park's edges, visitors are guided by sight lines towards the silo-esque lookout structure, from where the eye is pivoted towards the sand and Ship Channel beyond. At this point the transition into the park is complete, from 'terrain vague' to 'terrain vue'.



DRAFT



THE PORTLANDS PALETTE REPURPOSED FOR PLEASURE

This site is a jewel, but not one that needs a precious palette of materials to shine. Leslie Slip Lookout take its material cue from the surrounding heavy industrial context, upholding a straightforward material aesthetic that is durable and will not impose onerous demands for long term maintenance.



DIRECT BURY CONCRETE LIGHT POSTS



UNIVERSAL ACCESS WOOD DECK



TREE PITS WITH LESLIE SPIT WEATHERED BRICK RUBBLE



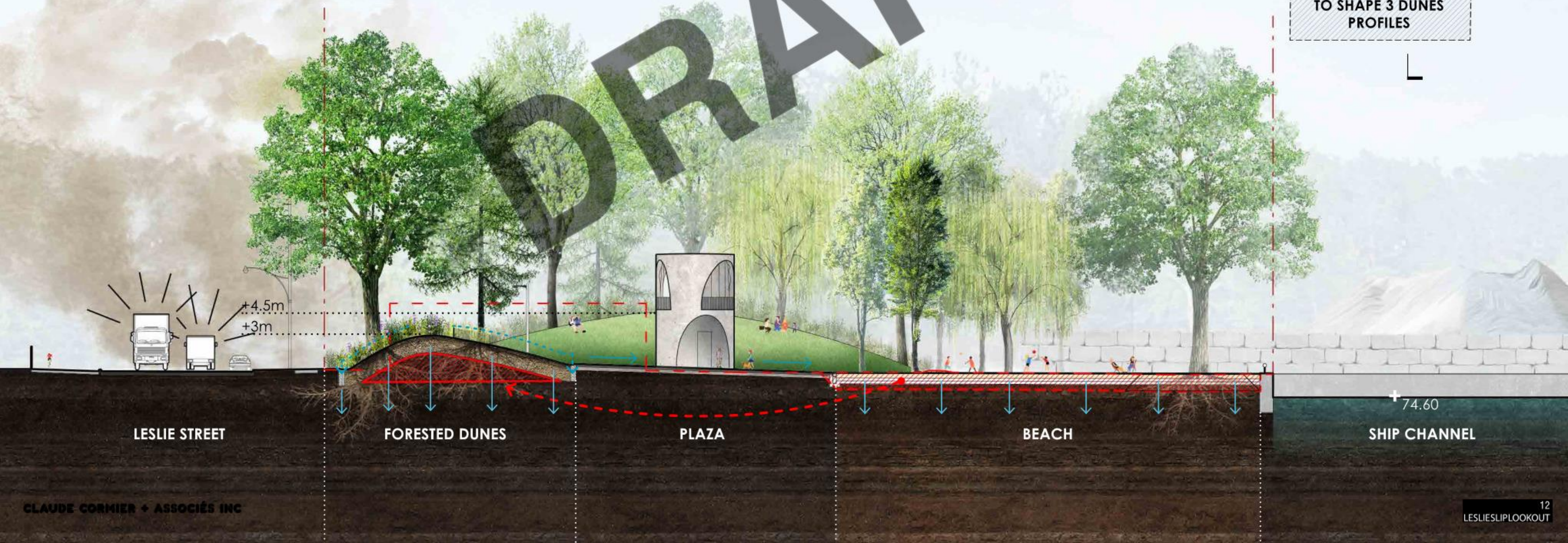
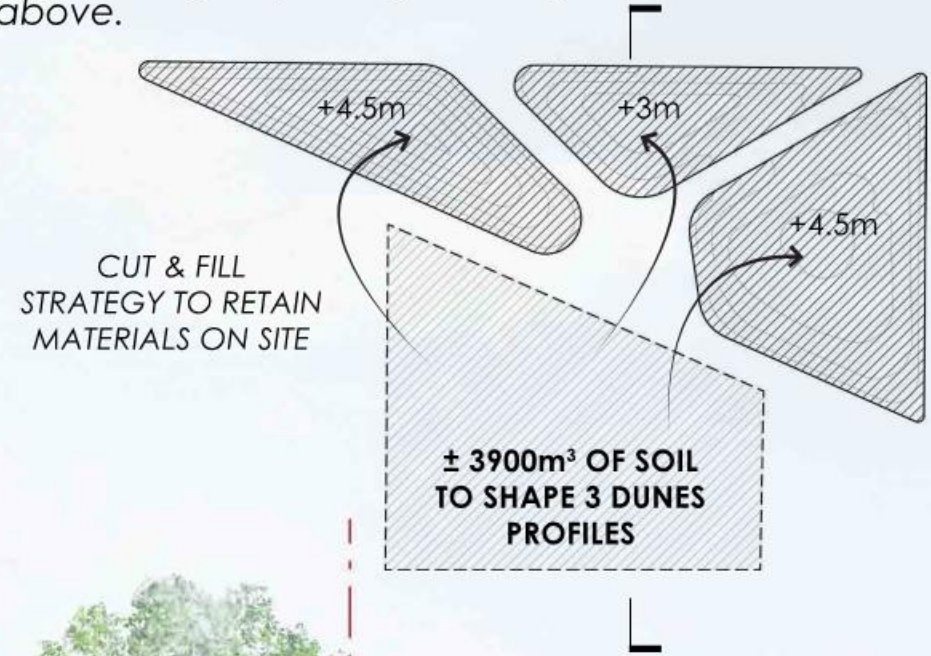
CUT + FILL : LOCAL REMEDIATION FOR LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

The beach and green dune topography provide a cut and fill opportunity to retain existing contaminated soils on site, capped with a 1.5m thick softscape cover. This strategy minimizes removals of contaminated fill from the site as well as the volume of new fill needed to build up the park's topography. The upper layer of this clean cap will be planted with herbaceous planting of native species. Larger trees with aggressive roots - particularly poplars and willows - will penetrate beyond this cap to ameliorate retained site soils below.

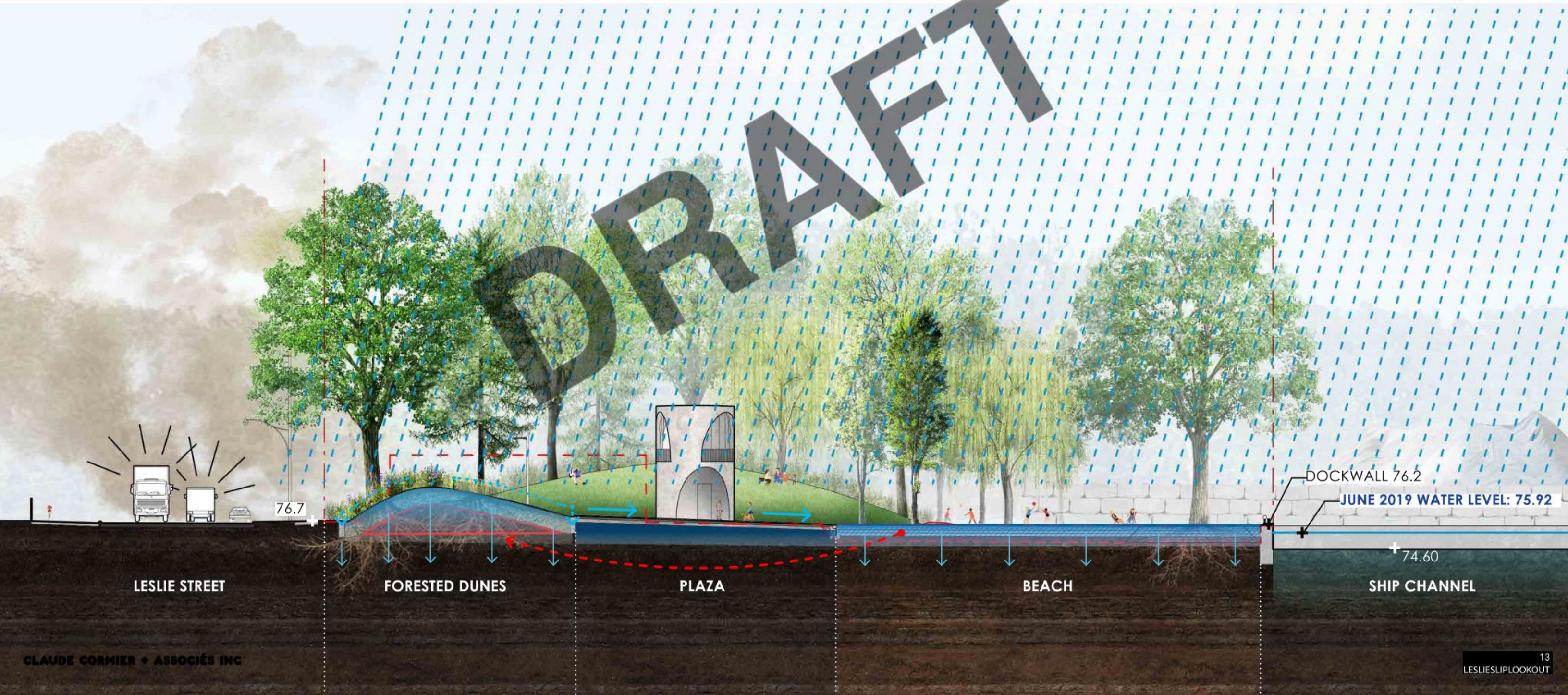
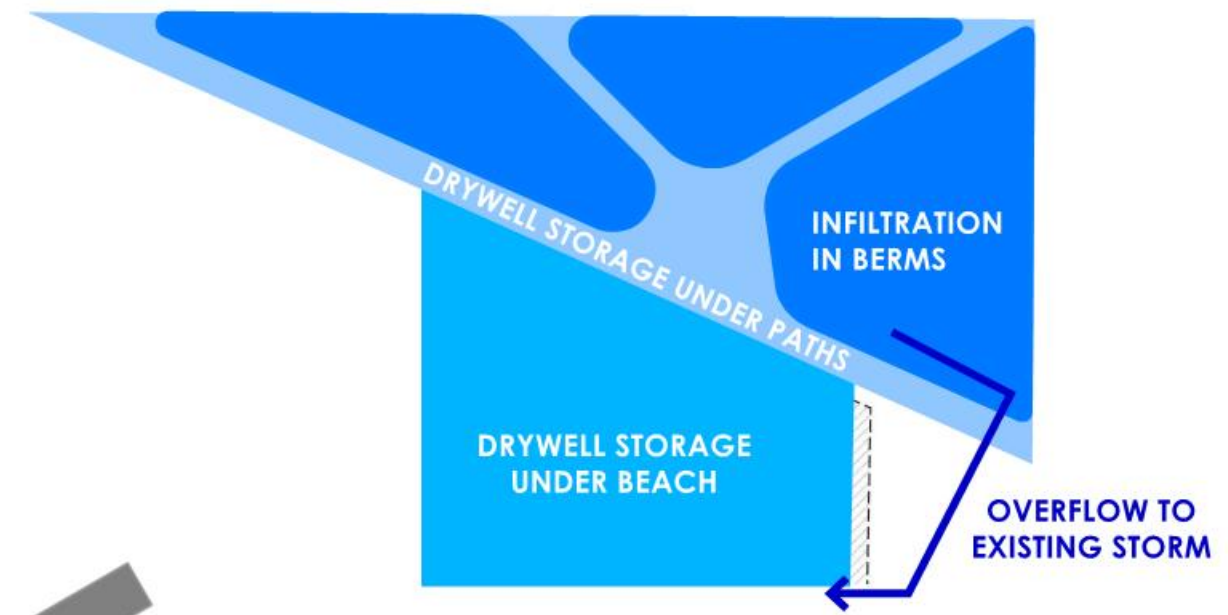
A low-tech and timeless approach to drainage gives priority to site permeability through the use of dry swales and the sponge properties of the beach, minimizing reliance on hard civil infrastructure and reducing the volume of water discharged to sewers from the site.

The park expression that results from this cut and fill strategy elevates visitors to have a clear vantage of the Ship Channel and the Toronto skyline beyond. In addition to giving privilege sunset views, these forested mounds create a buffer to shield the grit and noise of the working industrial port, while at the same time amplifying a surprisingly playful immersion within a heavy industrial milieu. These vertical gestures in the park reach their climax at the park lookout, providing wayfinding at the ground level and prospect from the perched mirador above.

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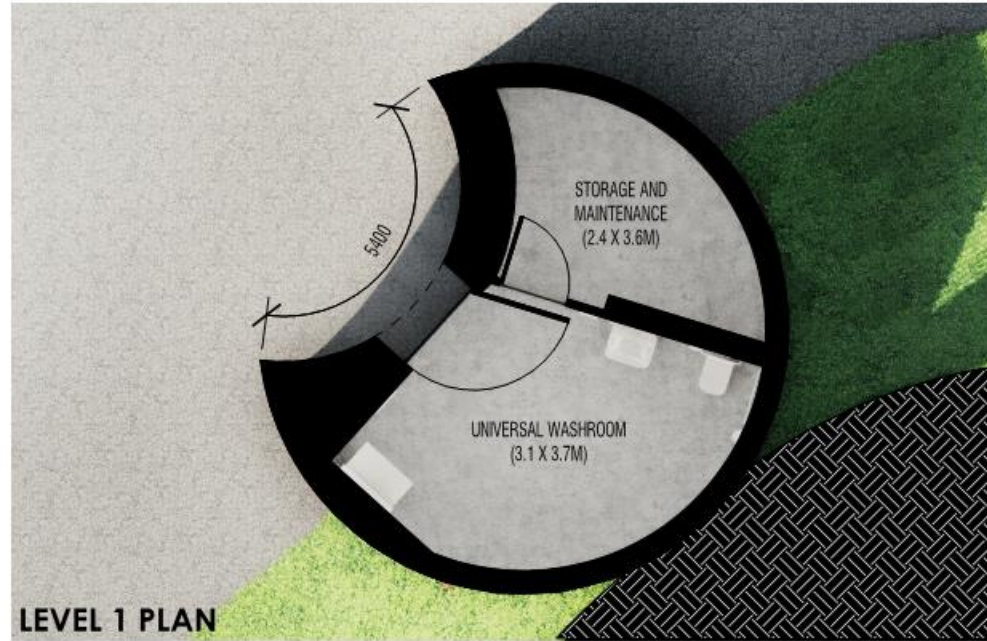
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT + SOIL RECHARGE STRATEGY



THE LOOKOUT AT THE LESLIE SLIP


Positioned at the side of the central gathering hub is a 10 metre tall cylindrical concrete structure that offers an accessible washroom and a space for park operations at the ground level, along with a perched lookout to experience the 360 degree view of the Port Lands panorama from the roof.

The ground level arched entryway is carved from this miniature silo, providing a visual cue leading to the interior. This arch has a shifted counterpart on the second floor that compels the gaze to turn towards the beach and the view of the Ship Channel.




PLANTING: A WHITE NOISE CANOPY THAT CLEANS THE SOIL

COLUMNAR POPLAR
Populus nigra



EASTERN COTTONWOOD
Populus deltoides



GOLDEN WEeping WILLOW
Salix alba 'Tristis'



EASTERN WHITE PINE
Pinus strobus




COMMON YARROW
Achillea millefolium



MILKWEED
Asclepias



WHITE-WOOD ASTER
Aster divaricatus



SMOOTH ASTER
Aster laevis



LARGE-LEAVED ASTER
Aster macrophyllus



ARROW-LEAVED ASTER
Aster urophyllus

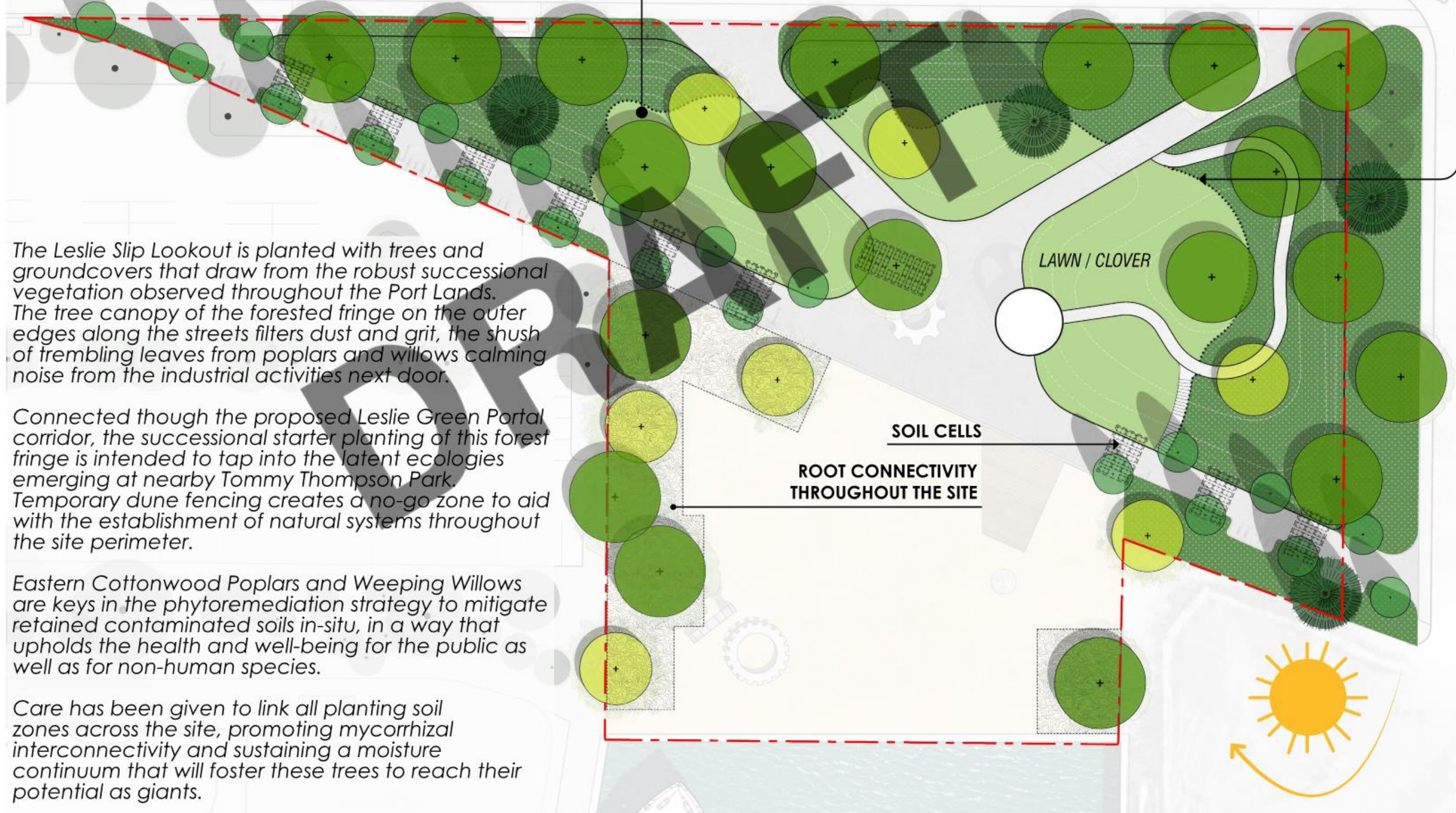


HAREBELL
Campanula rotundifolia

INDIGENOUS HERBACEOUS GROUNDCOVER



WOODEN DUNE FENCE
temporary for planting establishment



The Leslie Slip Lookout is planted with trees and groundcovers that draw from the robust successional vegetation observed throughout the Port Lands. The tree canopy of the forested fringe on the outer edges along the streets filters dust and grit, the shush of trembling leaves from poplars and willows calming noise from the industrial activities next door.

Connected though the proposed Leslie Green Portal corridor, the successional starter planting of this forest fringe is intended to tap into the latent ecologies emerging at nearby Tommy Thompson Park. Temporary dune fencing creates a no-go zone to aid with the establishment of natural systems throughout the site perimeter.

Eastern Cottonwood Poplars and Weeping Willows are keys in the phytoremediation strategy to mitigate retained contaminated soils in-situ, in a way that upholds the health and well-being for the public as well as for non-human species.

Care has been given to link all planting soil zones across the site, promoting mycorrhizal interconnectivity and sustaining a moisture continuum that will foster these trees to reach their potential as giants.

YEAR ROUND PROGRAM : THINGS TO DO BEYOND THE VIEW

outdoor movies / volleyball / foodtrucks / cruising / bicycling / resting / contemplating / playing / watching industrial activities / birdwatching / art fairs / pop-up events / small music festivals / sunset picnics /...



PICNIK ELECTRONIC, MONTREAL



A Place to be Quiet or Loud

Located at a distance away from the mainstream city, the Leslie Slip Lookout is positioned to become a get-away for quiet contemplation, while also providing a great place to make a lot of noise. The park is designed with an open-ended flexibility that can comfortably accommodate solitary visitors, couples and small groups, while providing an amphitheatre venue for larger meetups and medium-sized gatherings that range from festival film screenings to specialized music events like Montreal's Piknic Électronique and IglooFest.

Platform Gears

In the spirit of found objects and the industrial history that characterize the Port Lands and the Leslie Spit, oversized precast concrete gear-shaped platforms are integrated throughout the space to provide artful seating, a place to perch, climb, or lie down.

Public Art

As a destination for art, the Leslie Slip Lookout also has ample space to host rotating large scale installations in a manner similar to Socrates Sculpture Park in NYC, or previous temporary art installations on the Toronto Waterfront such as the giant Rubber Duck sculpture at HTO Park in 2017, or the SOS (Safety Orange Swimmers) installation near Harbour Square Park in 2019 that brought attention to the global refugee crisis.

A Venue for Street Art + Street Food

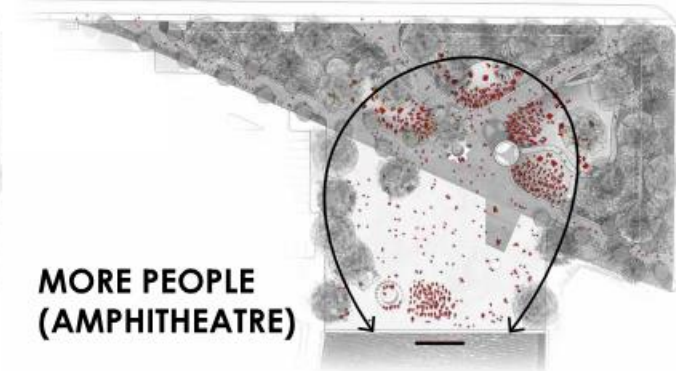
A street art program could also be curated to transform the hard materials in and around the park into expressive surfaces of beauty and meaning. The asphalt paving, gear-shaped platforms, and even the giant silos on the neighbouring site could double as canvases to refresh the experience of the park on potentially an annual for bi-yearly basis. This is also an ideal site for food trucks, with hook-up services to be built into the park.



ARTIST GUIDO VAN HELTEN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIAN TOWN OF COONALPYN. PHOTO BY NAT TRAEGER

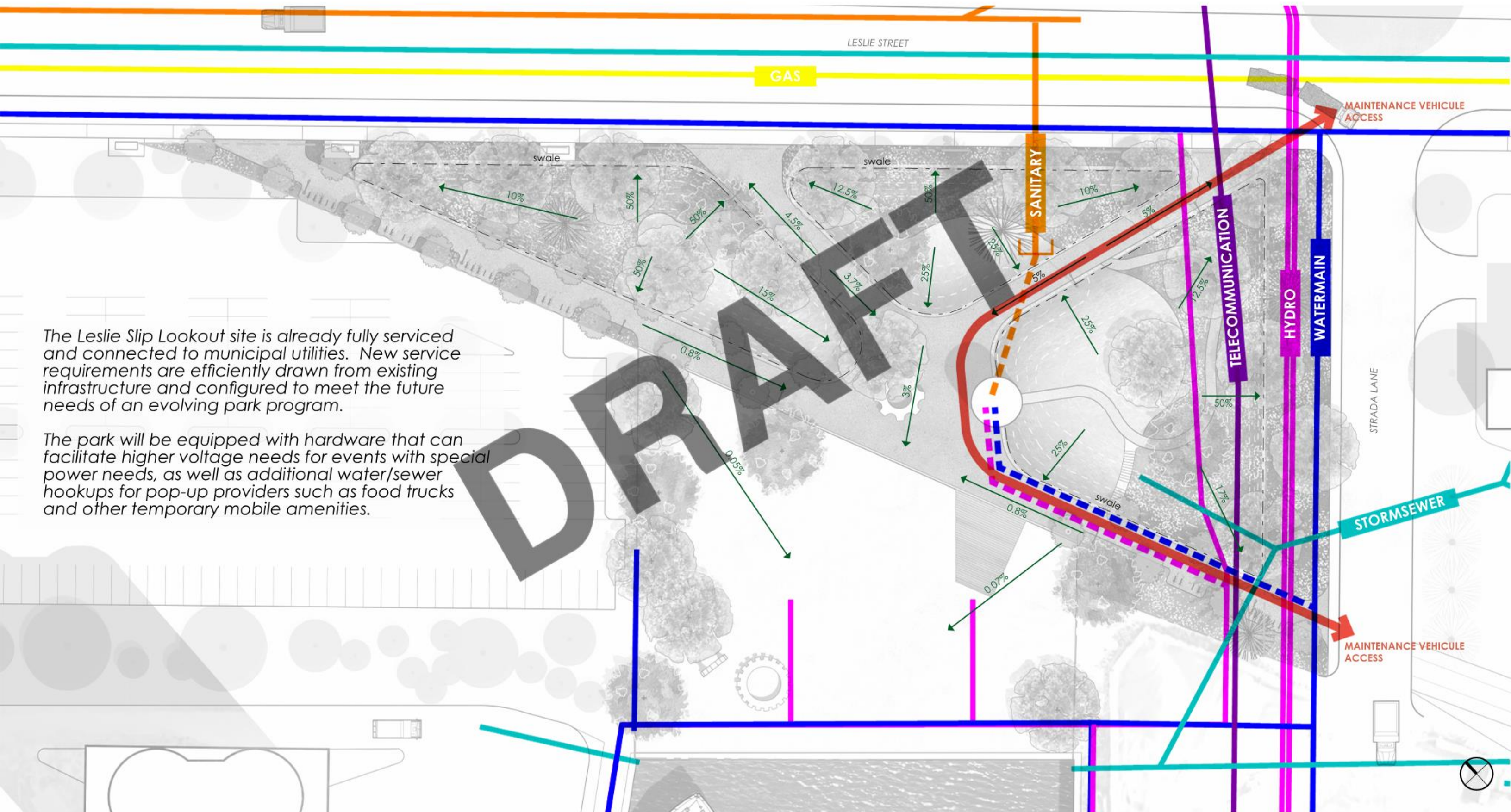


FEW PEOPLE



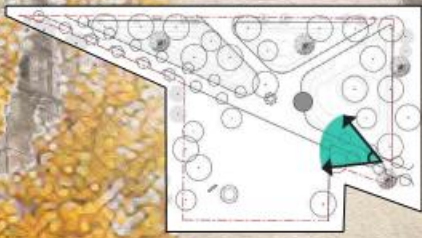
MORE PEOPLE (AMPHITHEATRE)

PLUGGING INTO EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

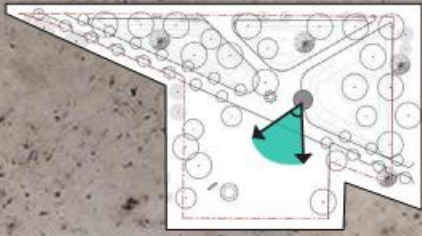


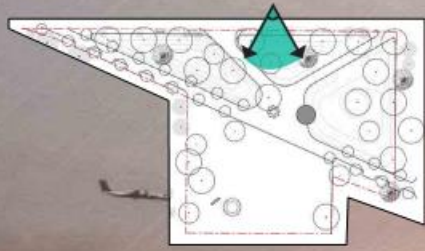
The Leslie Slip Lookout site is already fully serviced and connected to municipal utilities. New service requirements are efficiently drawn from existing infrastructure and configured to meet the future needs of an evolving park program.

The park will be equipped with hardware that can facilitate higher voltage needs for events with special power needs, as well as additional water/sewer hookups for pop-up providers such as food trucks and other temporary mobile amenities.



DRAFT





ANOTHER BEACH ?

For those who may say 'déjà vu' to another beach on the working port, Sugar Beach and HTO have shown that this is a Toronto typology which endures, from its universal appeal to straightforward upkeep. It is also a fitting response to the geography of the site that preceded the formation of the Port Lands.

The balance of open spaces proposed for the Leslie Slip Lookout creates a place for all tastes: a west-facing beach profiting from those late afternoon golden hours of a summer outing; perched mounds to picnic or cuddle in the shade of trees, looking out over the beach crowd below; and a hierarchy of paths that invite brief stopovers for bike day trippers, and small adventures for kids. A place of comfort and surprising vitality, the allure of the Leslie Slip Lookout will plant this far-off site into the public imagination as a distinct landmark within one of the Toronto's most curious landscapes.

