





**SECTION 2**

# THE BIG PICTURE

The Port Lands, jutting into Lake Ontario, is strategically located in close proximity to downtown Toronto at the convergence of existing and planned transportation systems. It is a significant city-building opportunity.

## 2.1

# EXTERNAL PLACEMAKING FACTORS

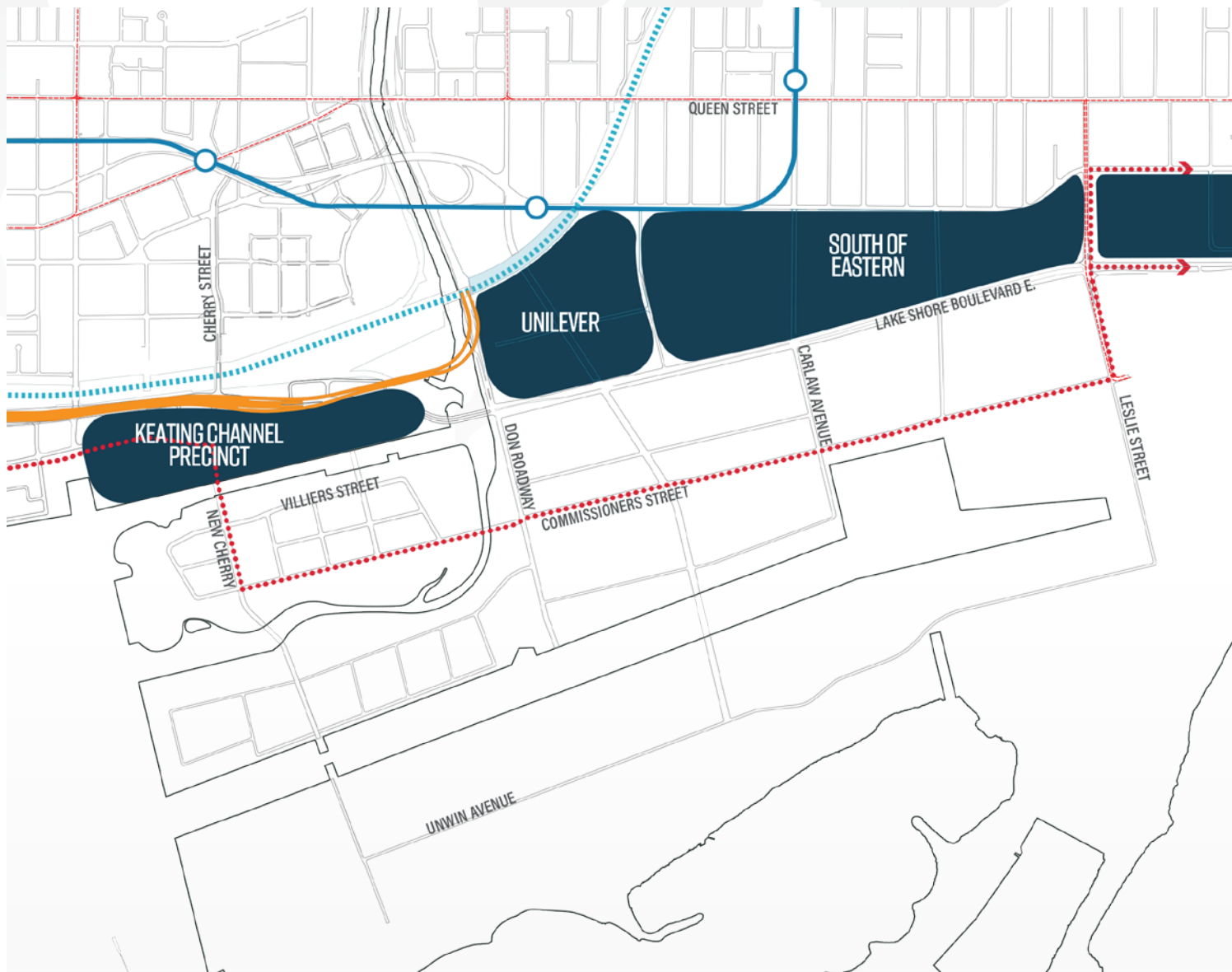
Toronto is transforming and growing like no other city in North America. We are in an exciting time of change with many significant infrastructure and development projects in the works that will advance a progressive city-building agenda. Urban renewal and redevelopment in the Port Lands will, in part, be defined by a number of external factors that inform placemaking in the Port Lands.






### **Gardiner Expressway and the Keating Channel Precinct:**

The rebuilding of the Gardiner Expressway removes the existing on and off ramps east of the Don River, eliminating a significant barrier between the Port Lands and the broader city. The new ramps and configuration of the Gardiner west of the Don River shift the location of the expressway to the north and away from the Keating Channel.

This move supports the city-building potential of the Keating Channel Precinct - a planned mixed-use waterfront community that will evolve as a gateway to a revitalized Port Lands. It will also enable unencumbered access to a future water's edge promenade, and create better conditions for future high-quality open space and pedestrian-friendly environments. The precinct plan for the Keating Channel Precinct lands west of Cherry Street will be revisited as per Council direction in the context of the preferred plan for the Gardiner.

**Figure 6: External Placemaking Factors**



-  Relief Line
-  Smart Track/RER
-  Waterfront Transit Reset
-  Gardiner East
-  External Precincts

### **Higher Order Transit Infrastructure and the Unilever Precinct:**

The City Planning Division has been advancing the development of a City-wide transit network that includes many new higher-order transit corridors. A number of these planned corridors are located within close proximity to the Port Lands. A new transit hub is proposed in the vicinity of the existing GO rail corridor, consisting of a Smart Track/Regional Express Rail stop and a Relief Line subway station. These new higher-order transit lines will not only provide much needed relief to the Yonge Subway line, but will also support the redevelopment of the Unilever Precinct into a major new satellite office destination supported by retail and services in a compact urban form.

The prospect of a major new office destination is an exciting one. It has the potential to attract new, well-paid jobs for Torontonians and enable our economy to flourish. Creating synergies between the Unilever Precinct and the Port Lands is a key consideration in planning and coordinating infrastructure investment between the Port Lands and South of Eastern areas.

### **Waterfront Transit Reset:**

Transit to the Port Lands is vital to achieve the overall vision in this Framework. The Central Waterfront Secondary Plan (CWSP) calls for early implementation of higher order transit in order to encourage transit-oriented travel patterns for new waterfront residents and employees. The Plan identifies a new waterfront transit network across the Central Waterfront from Exhibition Place to the Port Lands.

The planning for waterfront transit to date has largely been undertaken in a piecemeal fashion. As such, the City of Toronto, with the Toronto Transit Commission and Waterfront Toronto, are currently completing a comprehensive review of waterfront transit initiatives from Long Branch in the west to Woodbine Avenue in the east. A key objective of this initiative is to advance an overall vision and plan for a continuous waterfront streetcar line in a dedicated right-of-way in the context of current and emerging transit initiatives in the city. The work advanced as part of the Lower Don Lands Infrastructure EA and the Port Lands and South of Eastern Transportation and Servicing Master Plan is informing this initiative.

It was assumed as part of the Framework process that in time the dedicated transit corridor would be constructed to connect to the Port Lands. Interim measures, such as buses in dedicated lanes and rights-of-way, may be implemented to provide a higher level of transit service into the Port Lands until such a time as streetcar service is extended eastward or southward. The current work being undertaken as part of Waterfront Transit Reset will have substantial benefit for the Port Lands, including the potential for comprehensively funding and constructing a key transit priority route into the Port Lands.

## 2.2

# THE PORT LANDS AT A GLANCE

Revitalization and redevelopment of the Port Lands is one chapter in a much larger story — one that has unfolded over centuries and will continue to evolve for years to come. There have been a series of successive waves of development that have contributed to the legacy present today in the Port Lands.

### Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

The Port Lands area entirely comprises lands that were created in Lake Ontario and Ashbridge's Bay Marsh. The Don River originally emptied into Ashbridge's Bay Marsh before entering the Inner Harbour. Starting in the 1870s, man-made interventions

to the shoreline and marsh began with a series of breakwaters being constructed. The Keating Channel was constructed along the northern edge of the marsh in the late 1890s.

But it was in 1912 that the transformation of the marsh got underway in earnest with the Toronto Harbour Commissioners' plan to create a massive new industrial district with waterfront parks. The lake-filling to create most of the Port Lands and the initial Ship Channel and Turning Basin began in 1916 and was complete by the 1920s. Cousins Quay was created through additional lake-filling activities in the 1930s. Initially, the Port Lands was envisioned to be a gateway to shipping for Toronto, but

### The Port Lands: An Evolving Shoreline



Toronto Shoreline 1886



Toronto Shoreline 1920s



Toronto Shoreline 1960



Toronto Shoreline Today



Toronto Shoreline 2025

Toronto never gained a stronghold on this industry like other Canadian cities.

### Mid 1900s

Starting in the 1950s, a second wave of development began with three important events - construction of the Leslie Spit, construction of iconic civic infrastructure and the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Since initial work began on the Spit, dredged material from the Keating Channel and Outer Harbour and surplus fill from development sites within Toronto have contributed to further expansion of the Spit.

In the early 1950s, construction began on iconic civic infrastructure with

the Hearn Generating Station and associated hydro-electric infrastructure, as well as the Commissioners Incinerator. These buildings ushered in an era of the Port Lands providing important civic uses to serve the broader city.

The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in the late 1950s brought with it a renewed hope that Toronto could become a port city. A new marine terminal was constructed on Cousins Quay, and there was a further expansion of the Ship Channel with the excavation and construction of the Leslie Street Slip. Once again, these aspirations for the industrial district waned and the Port Lands entered an era of little change in the 1980s and 1990s.



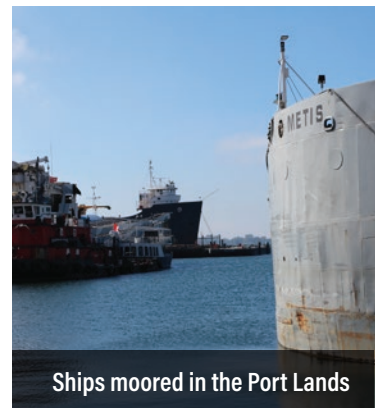
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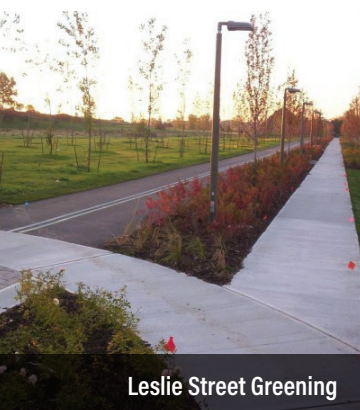
Pinewood Toronto Studios



Toronto Hydro Service Centre



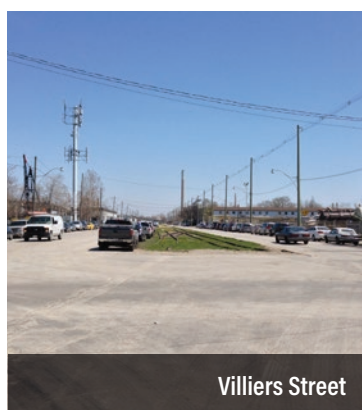
Ships moored in the Port Lands



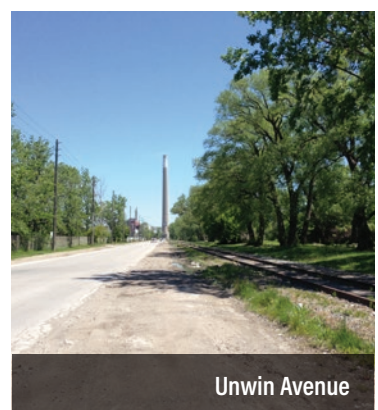
Leslie Street Greening



Cherry Street

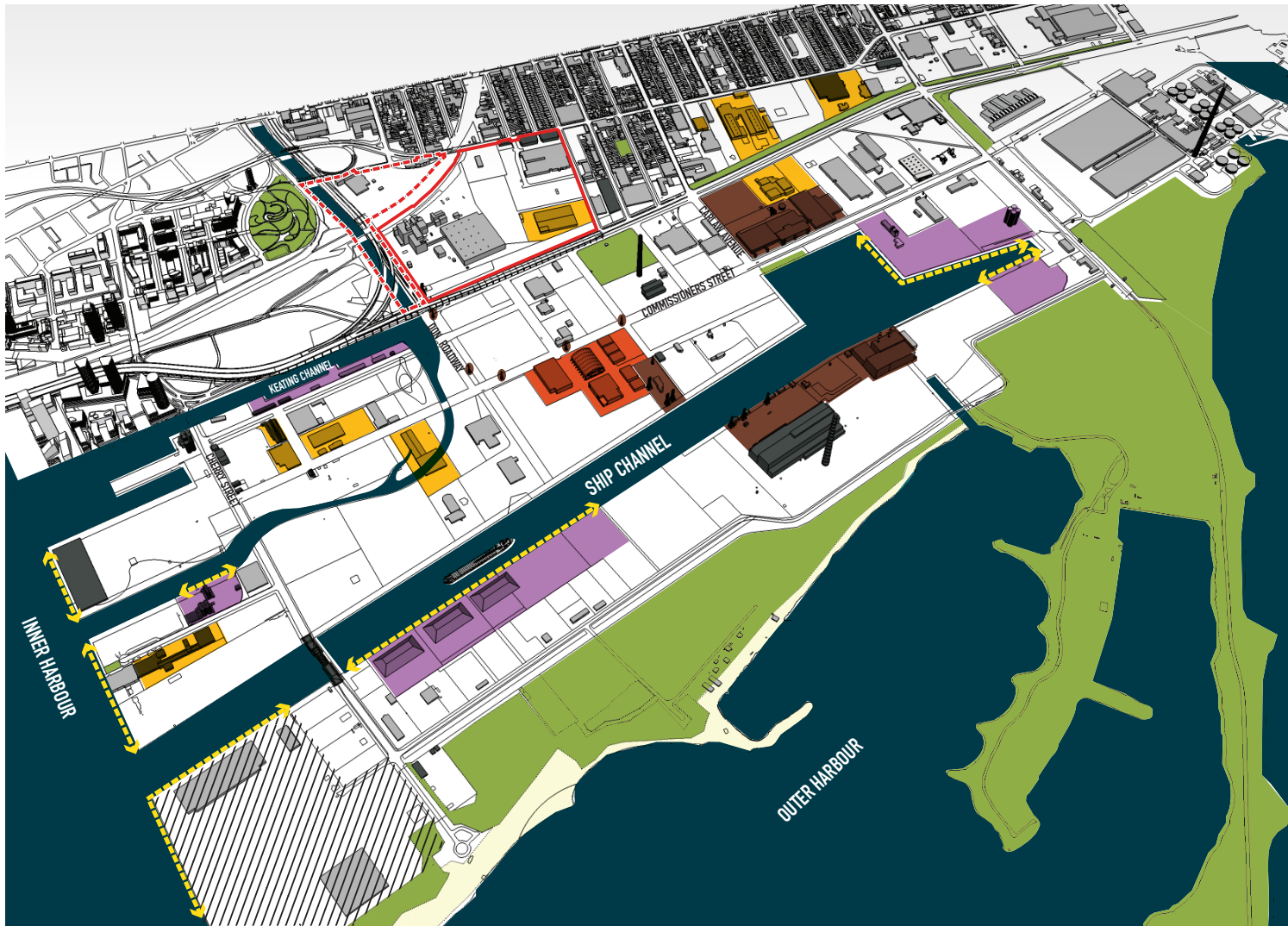












Villiers Street



Unwin Avenue

**Figure 7: The Port Lands at a Glance**



- |   |                                 |   |                                     |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
|  | Heritage Buildings + Structures |  | Hydro Infrastructure                |
|  | Active Port Uses                |  | Pinewood Secure Perimeter           |
|  | Ports Toronto                   |  | Film + Film Related                 |
|  | Active Port Edge                |  | Existing Parks + Open Spaces        |
|  | Unilever Precinct               |  | Unilever Precinct Area of Influence |



### Late 1900s to the present

With the Port Lands and other areas along the Central Waterfront being largely seen as underutilized in the 1990s, plans started to be developed to transform the waterfront with mixed recreational, cultural, commercial and residential uses and to reconnect the Don River with the Outer Harbour. In 1990, the Royal Commission of the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (the Crombie Commission) issued its Watershed Interim Report, which recommended green industries and parkland be established in the Port Lands. Shortly thereafter, a plan by the Task Force to Bring Back the Don was issued, the centerpiece of which was the re-naturalization and reconnection of the Don River.

Further planning work ensued through the 1990s and early 2000s with a number of plans being developed for the Port Lands and broader waterfront. The most notable was the Making Waves Plan in 2001, adopted as the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan by City Council in 2003, which emphasized transforming and re-energizing the entire waterfront into one of the great waterfronts of the world through a series of “big moves”. This Plan ushered in a wave of more

detailed planning for the Central Waterfront, including the Port Lands.

Planning for the naturalized river valley began in 2004 with the preparation of a terms of reference associated with the Don Mouth Naturalization of the Port Lands Flood Protection Project Environmental Assessment (DMNP EA). The 2007 International Design Competition for the Lower Don Lands produced a bold and compelling concept for the Lower Don Lands with the re-naturalized river as a central feature. The DMNP EA for the naturalized river valley and associated flood protection infrastructure was completed and approved in 2015.

Equally important in the evolution of the Port Lands was the development of production studio infrastructure in the area. The most notable was the Film Port development, now Pinewood Toronto Studios, which opened in 2008. This significant studio complex, along with other studios and related support services in the Port Lands, contribute to the city’s impressive inventory of production space and the ever-growing creative sector that enable the city to compete with other global cities for productions.



Cherry Beach Sports Fields



McCleary Park

## 2.3

# DEFINING FACTORS

There are a number of key defining factors that informed and guided the development of this Framework.

The Port Lands is **part of a larger regeneration effort** (Figure 9) along Toronto's waterfront. Its transformation will build on more than a decade of waterfront planning and renewal. While the Port Lands is a large, underutilized resource in our city, it is not a blank slate. It is telling that in 2016 there were 5,500 people working in the Port Lands. The Port Lands' regeneration needs to infuse new uses and activity, while celebrating active industry, for its next incarnation as a distinct and memorable city district.

The Port Lands is situated at the **convergence of a hard urban edge and a wilderness reprieve** (Figure 10). To the north is the city edge of Toronto and to the south is the natural landscape of Tommy Thomson Park, Lake Ontario and the Toronto Islands. The Port Lands transformation will bridge the divide between the urban and natural landscapes, and restore the Port Lands geological roots as the mouth of the Don River.

Active ribbons of **waterways** (Figure 11) will move throughout the Port Lands. The naturalized mouth of the Don, Keating Channel, Inner Harbour and the Ship Channel offer unique and diverse waterside opportunities within the Port Lands - an experience not afforded elsewhere in the city.

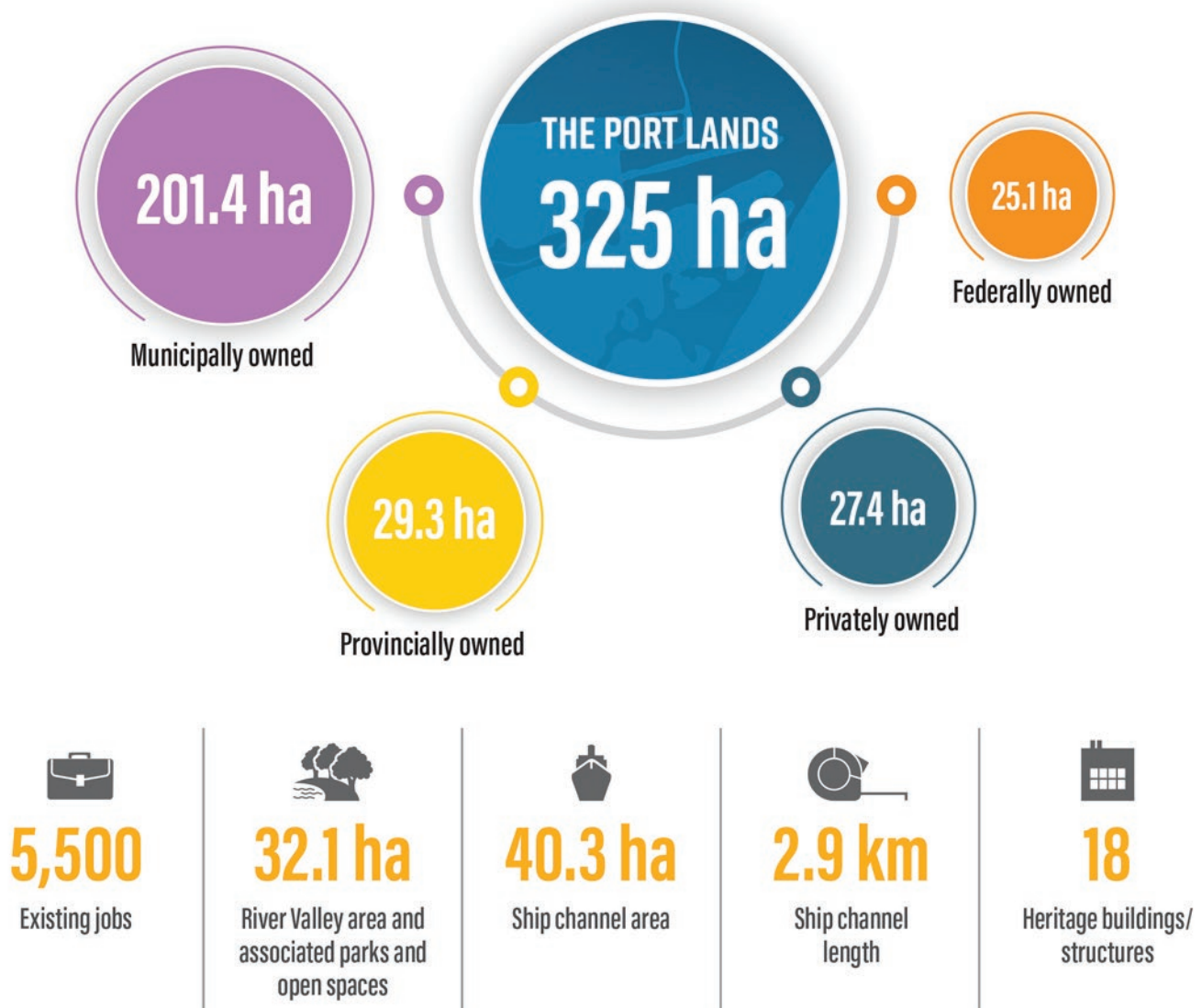
The Port Lands is situated on the fringe of **regional and urban mobility routes** (Figure 12), including the Gardiner Expressway, Don Valley Parkway and Martin Goodman Trail. New higher order transit stations and the waterfront streetcar will add to the area's complement of mobility routes. Within the Port Lands, a series of new vehicular, pedestrian, cycling, and transit routes are possible that build upon and improve the area's existing infrastructure and connect to the regional and urban mobility routes. There is also the opportunity to take advantage of the Port Lands waterways for ferry and boat access as a new movement corridor to and from Toronto's downtown.

The Port Lands' rich and diverse **history** (Figure 13) as the shipping gateway and industrial hub for Toronto is foundational and character defining. The adaptive reuse and integration of the Port Lands' various heritage resources will contribute to the City's growth and evolution, and help define what is unique and distinctive about the Port Lands.

Lastly, the Port Lands has a confluence of **active port** and shipping activities that serve the city, substantial hydro

infrastructure that **powers** downtown Toronto, and it is home to numerous **film production studios** (Figure 14) and other media industries. Maintaining and supporting these industries has been an important consideration in the planning for the Port Lands. New development will need to occur in a harmonious way to ensure the continued economic growth of the Port Lands and viability of existing Port and Industrial uses that will remain, while also allowing for continued revitalization of the waterfront.

Figure 8: Port Lands Key Statistics



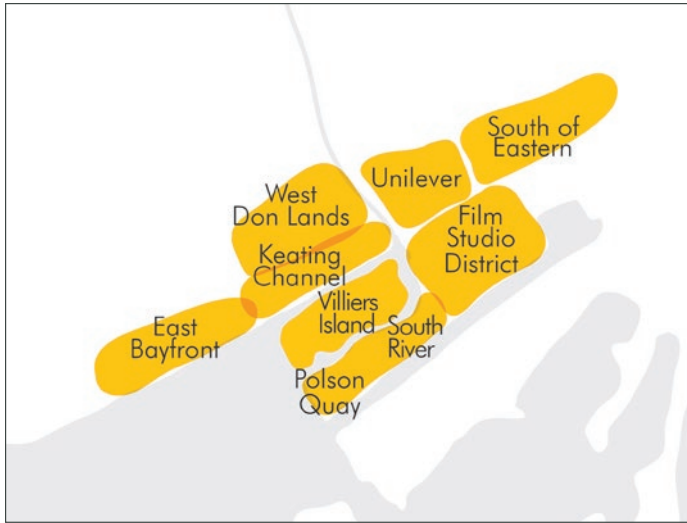


Figure 9: Part of a Large Regeneration Effort



Figure 10: Where Urban Meets Natural



Figure 11: The New Mouth of the Don and the Ship Channel

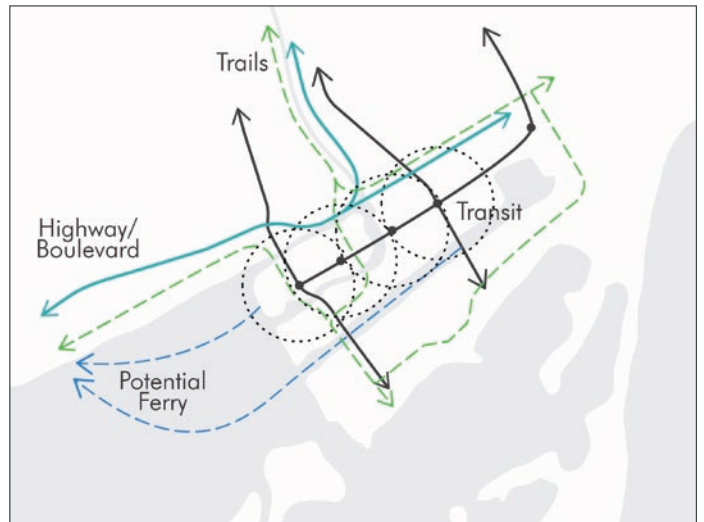


Figure 12: Key Mobility Routes



Figure 13: Character Defining Heritage Resources



Figure 14: Port, Power and Production

### Land Ownership

Figure 15 shows the land ownership in the Port Lands. The largest landowner in the Port Lands is the City of Toronto through the Toronto Port Lands Company. Some of the City-owned lands in Polson Quay, the Film Studio District and East Port are subject to long-term leases. The remaining

municipally owned lands are either on short-term leases or are vacant lands.

The second largest landowners are the Province of Ontario and the Federal Government. There are also a number of privately held parcels scattered throughout. Waterfront Toronto owns two parcels in Villiers Island.

Figure 15: Land Ownership

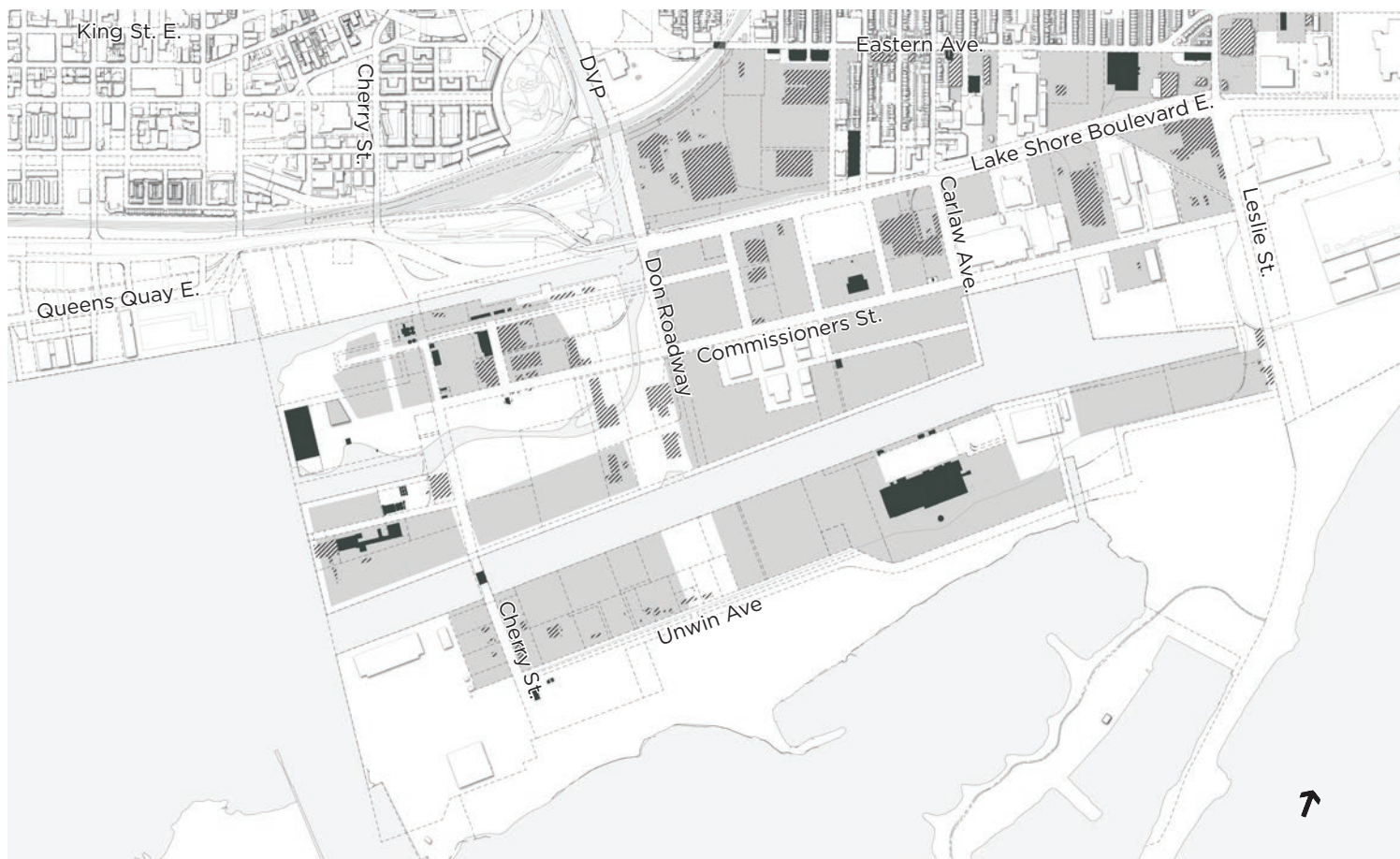


## Regeneration and Renewal Potential

Figure 16 identifies sites with buildings anticipated to remain in the long-term and sites assumed to have redevelopment or renewal potential, providing a starting point for areas where revitalization or infill development to foster employment growth may occur.

To provide additional context, sites with redevelopment potential are also identified in the South of Eastern area. This area, and how it will evolve over the coming decades, will help shape development in the Port Lands. It is desirable to create synergies between the two areas.

**Figure 16: Regeneration and Renewal Potential**



- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Heritage Structures/Buildings      |  Sites with Redevelopment or Adaptive Re-use Potential |
|  Buildings Assumed to Remain        |  Rail Corridors  |
|  Buildings Assumed to be Demolished |  Property Boundaries                                   |