

TORONTO'S GREAT STREET

THE LAKE SHORE BOULEVARD CORRIDOR

The removal of the Gardiner Expressway is major step toward re-connecting the city and neighborhoods of Toronto to the Lakefront. It is a major step toward returning the city to people, to the pedestrian and to civic spaces that citizens are proud of and can relate to in a positive way.

We propose a simple, grand, tree-lined street to replace the Gardiner. Generously sized allees of Oak, Maple and Linden line the new 2.5-mile long street, running from Yonge to Leslie Street. Welcoming and safe pedestrian intersections encourage linkage from the neighborhoods to the Lakefront.

THE TRAFFIC EQUATION: "EXPRESSWAY TO STREET"

Reducing the number of traffic lanes on the existing situation (8 on the Gardiner, plus 6 on Lake Shore Blvd, for a sum of 14, or even 16 with turning and exit lanes) to a sum of 8 street-lanes requires a radical shift in mindset. The new Grand Street is no longer a massive, free-flowing mobility corridor oriented solely to the automobile, but is now a humanized civic street where pedestrians and traffic both work together. The reduction in vehicular capacity is between 35% and 45%, and will obviously need to be accommodated for regionally. This can be achieved by 1) increasing flow off the Don River Parkway at the Bloor Street and Eastern/Richmond exits; 2) improving alternative public transit systems; and 3) spreading the "peak" times. Taking down the Gardiner must be understood as just one movement in the larger symphony of shifting the transportation paradigm of Greater Toronto. Reduced capacity and travel times will be compensated for through the creation of a more pedestrian-friendly, inter-connective, urban civic street that improves the quality of life for residents, enhances property values and allows the city to leverage its biggest asset – the lakefront.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SITUATION TODAY

Mr. Chakrabarti, Daily Commuter (personal car):
 "Driving south along the Don Valley in the morning is frustrating; travel speeds are slow and I feel like all the congestion leads people to drive super aggressively and unsafely."

Ms. Walker, Cyclist:
 "The corridor is definitely more of a barrier than it is an amenity for cyclists. The high levels of congestion and frequent ramps connecting to Lake Shore from the Gardiner and Don Valley make this a place I go out of my way to avoid."

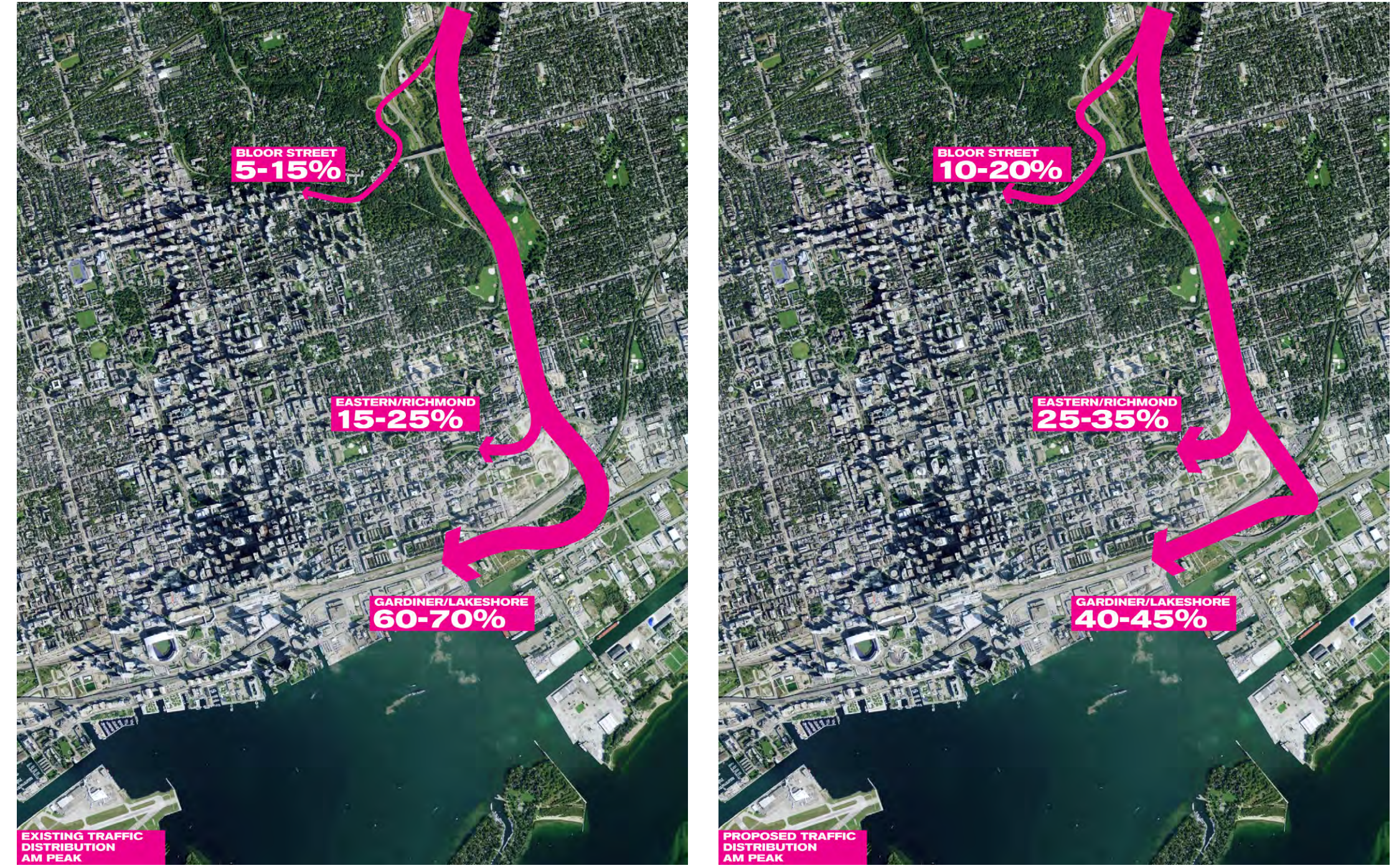
Mr and Mrs. Hu, Residents:
 "The area feels like it has potential to be a great waterfront; the only problems being everything except for the water. We've lived here for 15 years and still have a hard time figuring out how to get down to the Lake safely."

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE PROPOSED NEW GRAND STREET

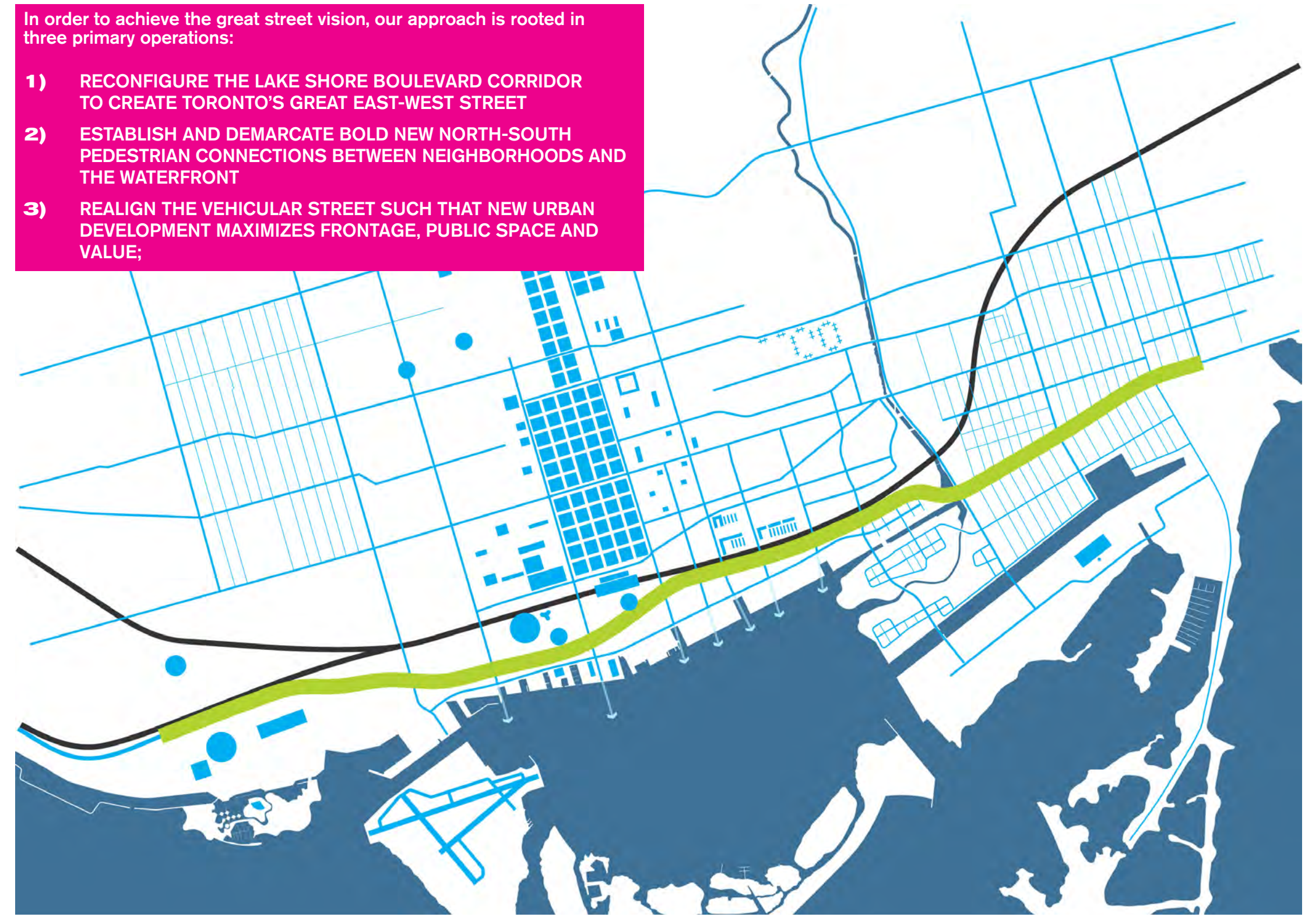
Ms. Moddrell, Daily Commuter (personal car):
 "The trip along Lake Shore Boulevard has certainly become much more enjoyable. My travel time may be a few minutes longer, but the reduced congestion and improved clarity of circulation have made a world of difference."

Mr. and Mrs. Massoud, Cyclists:
 "We don't fear for our lives anymore! The super-wide median with a fully protected bicycle path is a great amenity for cyclists."

Mr. and Mrs. Lee, Residents:
 "The new Lake Shore Boulevard creates a real sense of place. I could never have imagined living around here 10 years ago. The newly designed gateways along the north-south streets make getting down to the water completely intuitive"



- In order to achieve the great street vision, our approach is rooted in three primary operations:
- 1) RECONFIGURE THE LAKE SHORE BOULEVARD CORRIDOR TO CREATE TORONTO'S GREAT EAST-WEST STREET
 - 2) ESTABLISH AND DEMARCAT BOLD NEW NORTH-SOUTH PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE WATERFRONT
 - 3) REALIGN THE VEHICULAR STREET SUCH THAT NEW URBAN DEVELOPMENT MAXIMIZES FRONTAGE, PUBLIC SPACE AND VALUE;

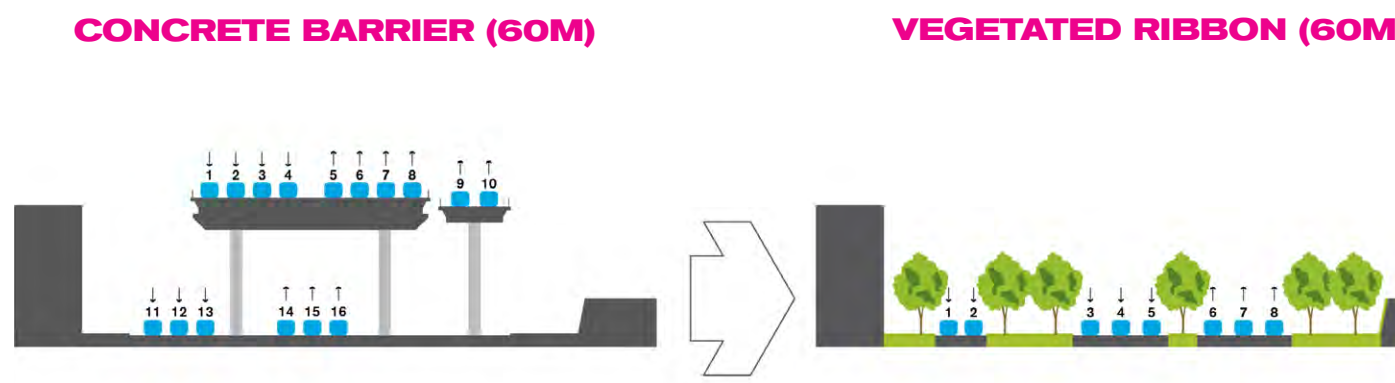


1) THE GREAT STREET

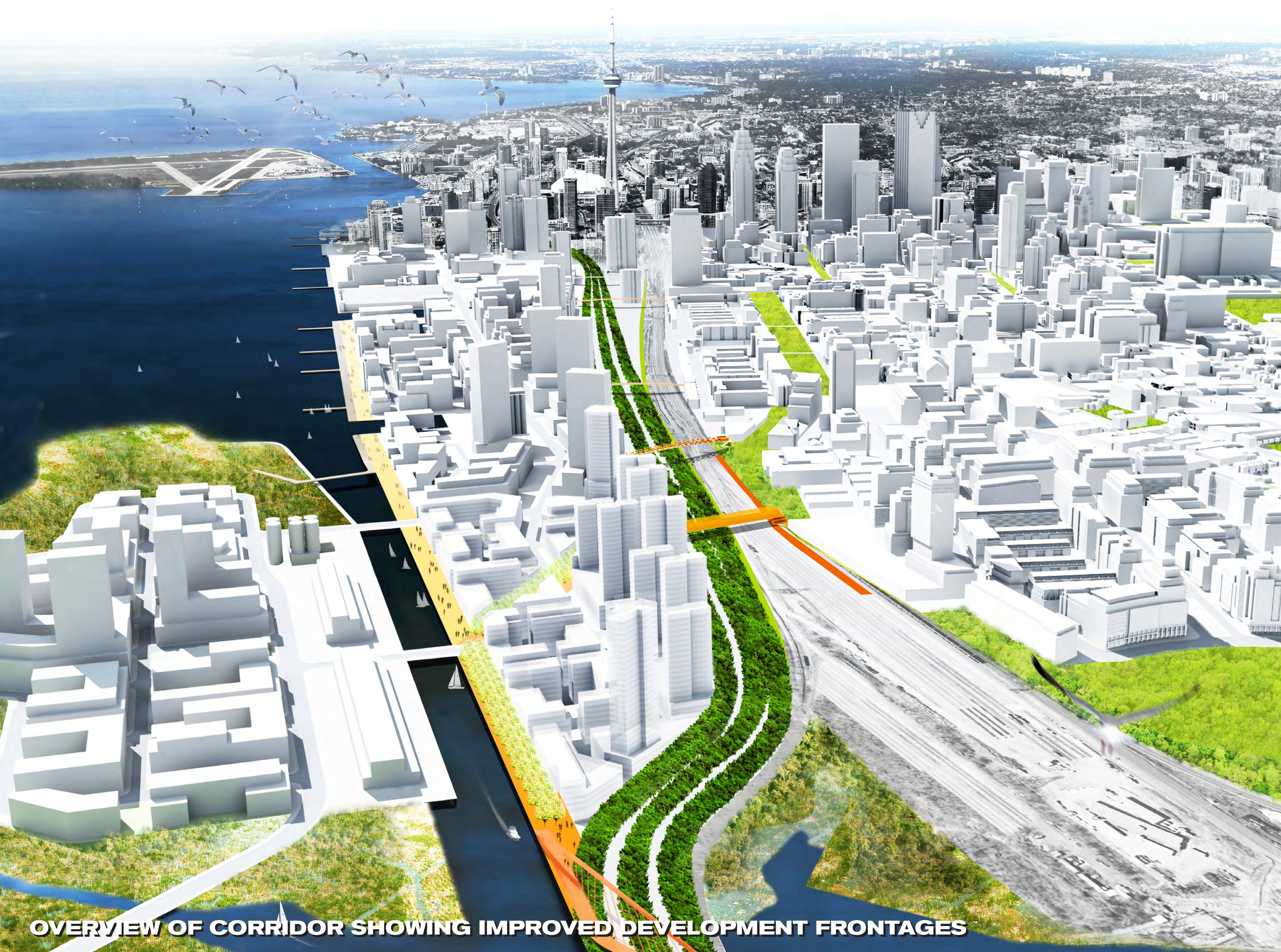
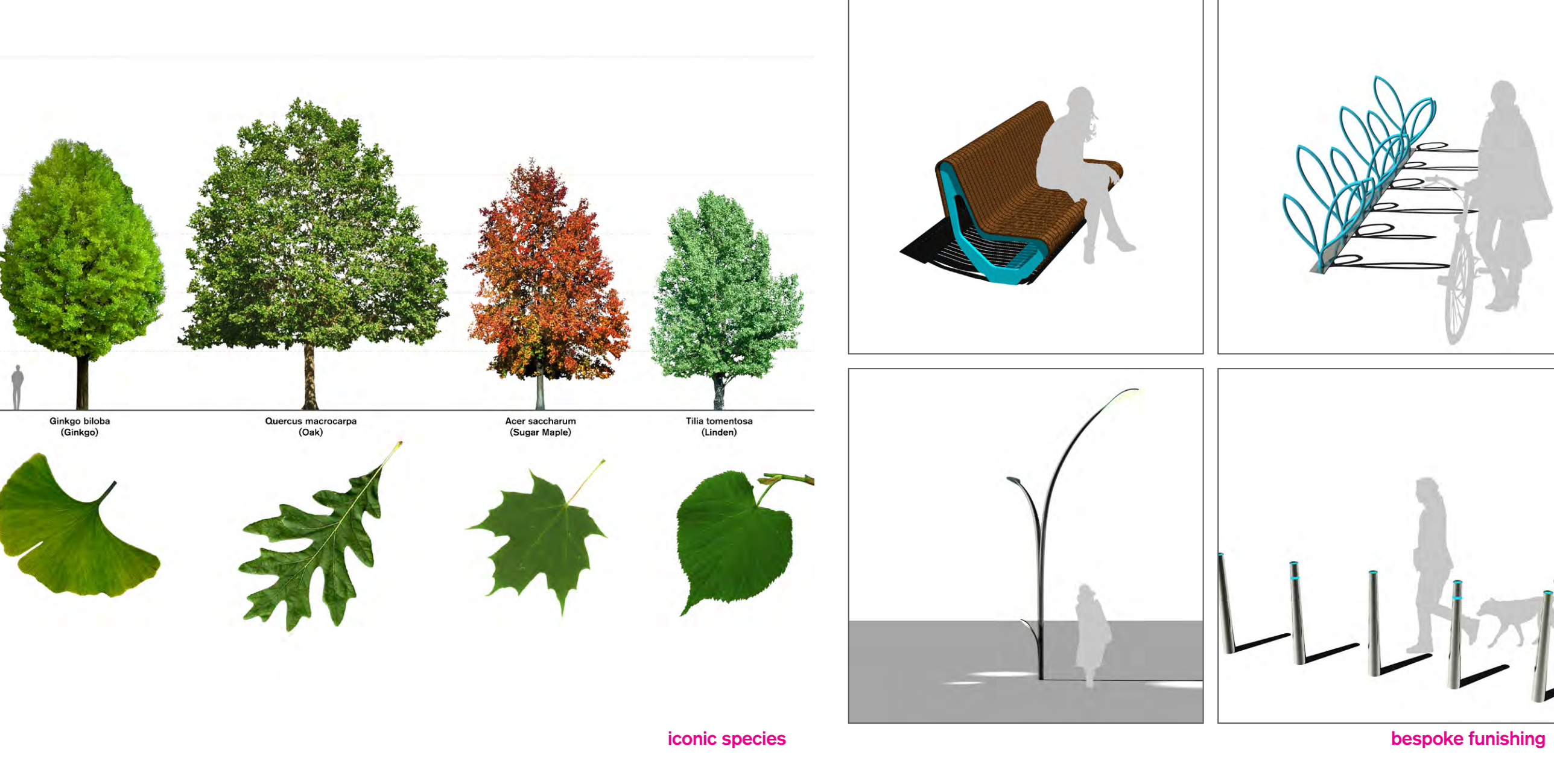
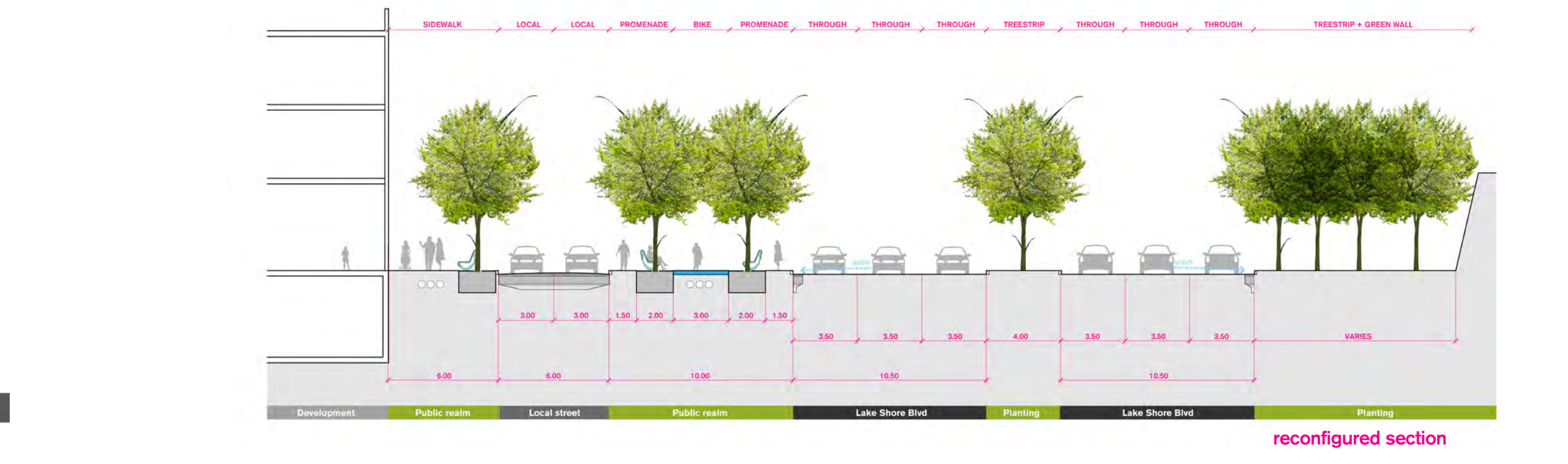
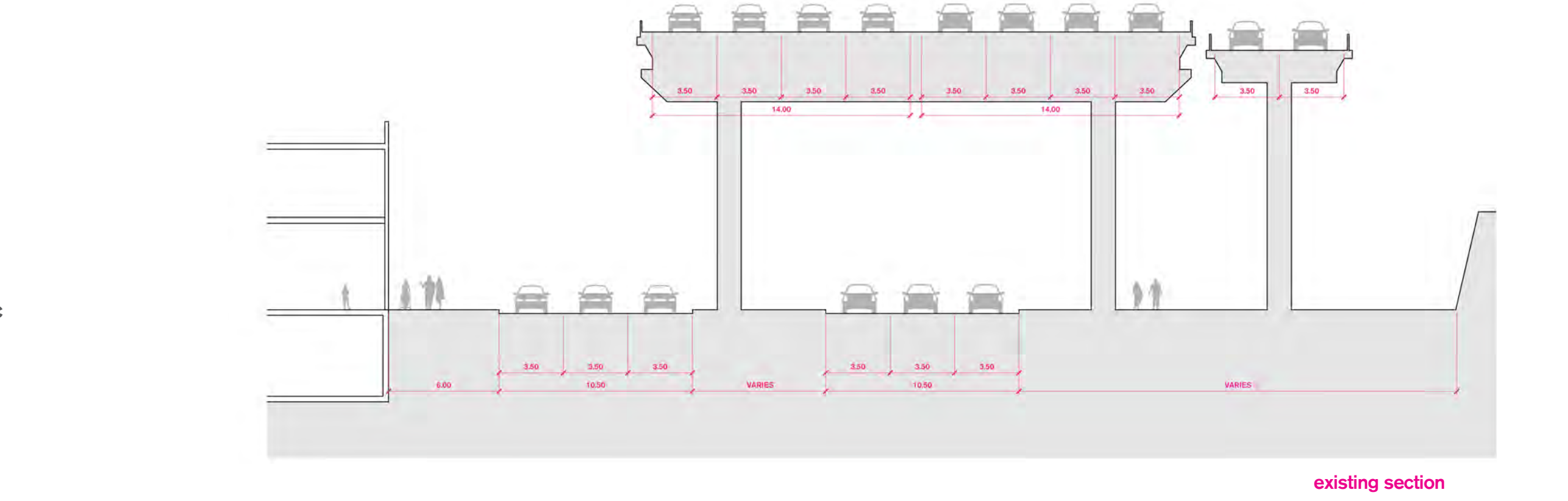
Presently, a typical cross section of the Gardiner Expressway/Lake Shore Boulevard corridor is more than 80% asphalt or concrete surfacing and structure for cars, trucks, and buses, with less than 20% devoted to planting, sidewalks and/or the public realm.

The design of the new Great Street revises this ratio, devoting nearly 60% of the corridor to the public realm and/or planting and green-space. Sidewalks are widened from their typical existing 2-4m dimension to a minimum of 6m, allowing for generous shade tree planting, furnishing and signage. Local traffic is separated to the outside from thru traffic at the center, reducing vehicular speeds adjacent to pedestrian zones. An additional buffer between the public realm on the southern edge adjacent to development and the vehicular corridor is established by the 10m wide "Lake Shore Boulevard Promenade" comprising devoted lanes for bicycles and pedestrians, as well as generous areas for planting and furnishing.

The area adjacent to the rail berm on the northern edge of the Boulevard varies in dimension over the length of the corridor. However, where feasible the berm is retrofitted with a sculptural, modular planting system that creates an iconic green wall running from the Don River, west to Yonge Street. This Green Wall is envisaged as a tall constructed escarpment, with woodland plantings, stormwater terraces and vertical gardens. This strip, in combination with the promenade and the tree-planted median further enhances the overall greening of the Lake Shore Boulevard corridor.



Today, Lake Shore Boulevard is a confusing ensemble of vehicular signage and over-scaled highway elements with few places to stop, sit and rest. The widening of the public realm and introduction of regularized pedestrian crossings will begin to alleviate much of this cacophony. Importantly, the use of bold paving, iconic tree planting, bespoke furnishing, transit shelters, bicycle racks, trash cans, bollards, lighting fixtures and signage will enhance the legibility and amenity of the corridor for social pedestrian uses.



OVERVIEW OF CORRIDOR SHOWING IMPROVED DEVELOPMENT FRONTAGES



AUTUMN AFTERNOON ACTIVITY ALONG LAKE SHORE BLVD. PROMENADE



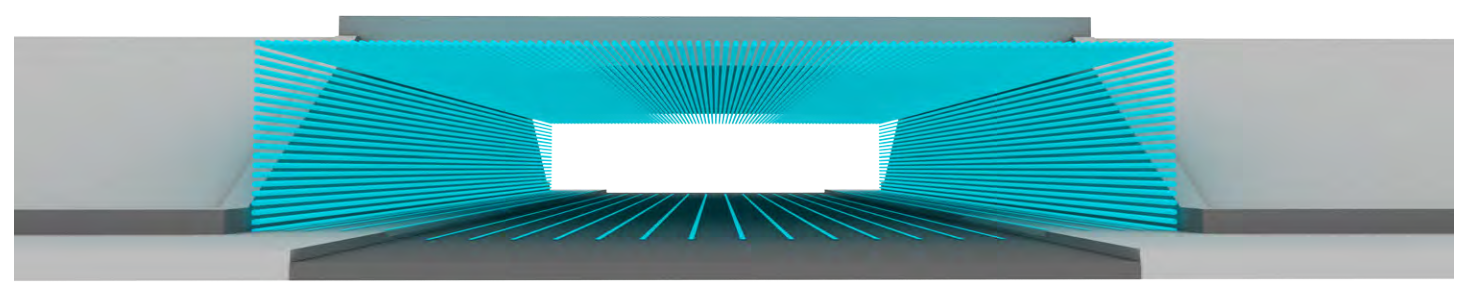
NIGHT VIEW OF RECONFIGURED BLVD. FROM ELEVATED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

2) N-S NEIGHBOURHOOD CONNECTIONS

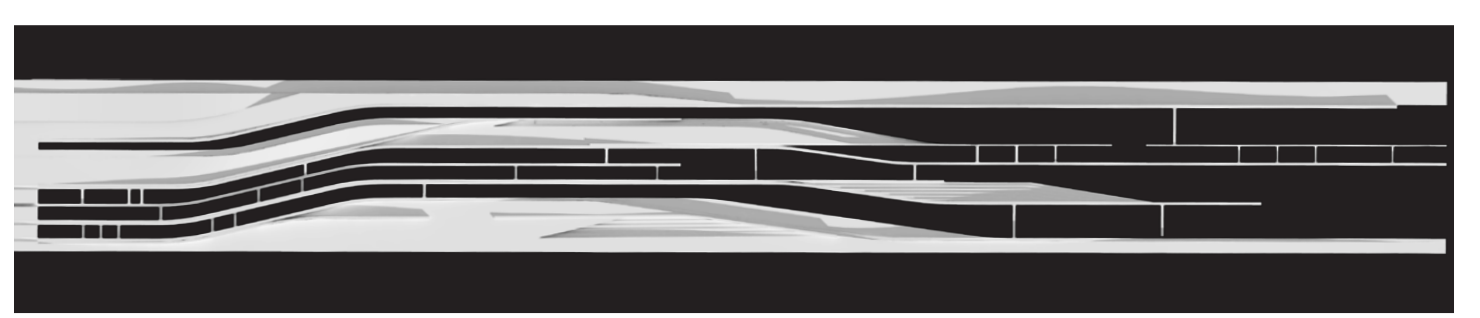
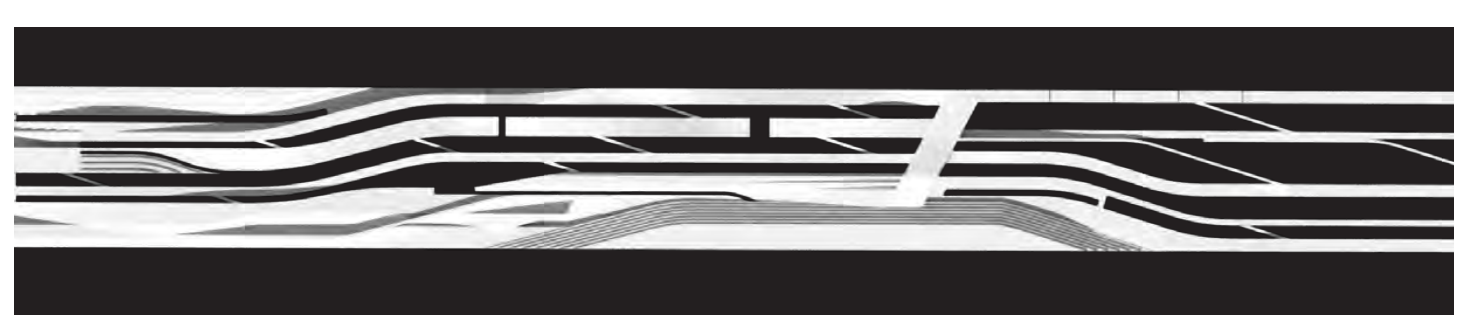
The Gardiner is not the only barrier to pedestrian movement from the north, south to the waterfront; the GO Transit rail berm is an equally significant obstacle to waterfront access because of its limited number of crossings and their diminutive scale. In order to overcome these barriers to movement - both physical and perceptual - clear articulation of existing crossing points is necessary, as well as the introduction of new typologies of crossing.

We propose that each of the underpasses at Jarvis, Sherbourne, Parliament and Cherry are retrofitted with an architectural sleeve that announces the presence of the public access point; illuminates its volume; and demarcates that particular entry to the Waterfront District. These media sleeves are part of a larger streetscape strategy that extends the paving and furnishing of the Lake Shore Boulevard north into the existing neighborhoods of the City. Paired with a distinct planting regime and a unique urban floor, these north-south thoroughfares are recognized as the gateways from the neighborhoods to the Waterfront.

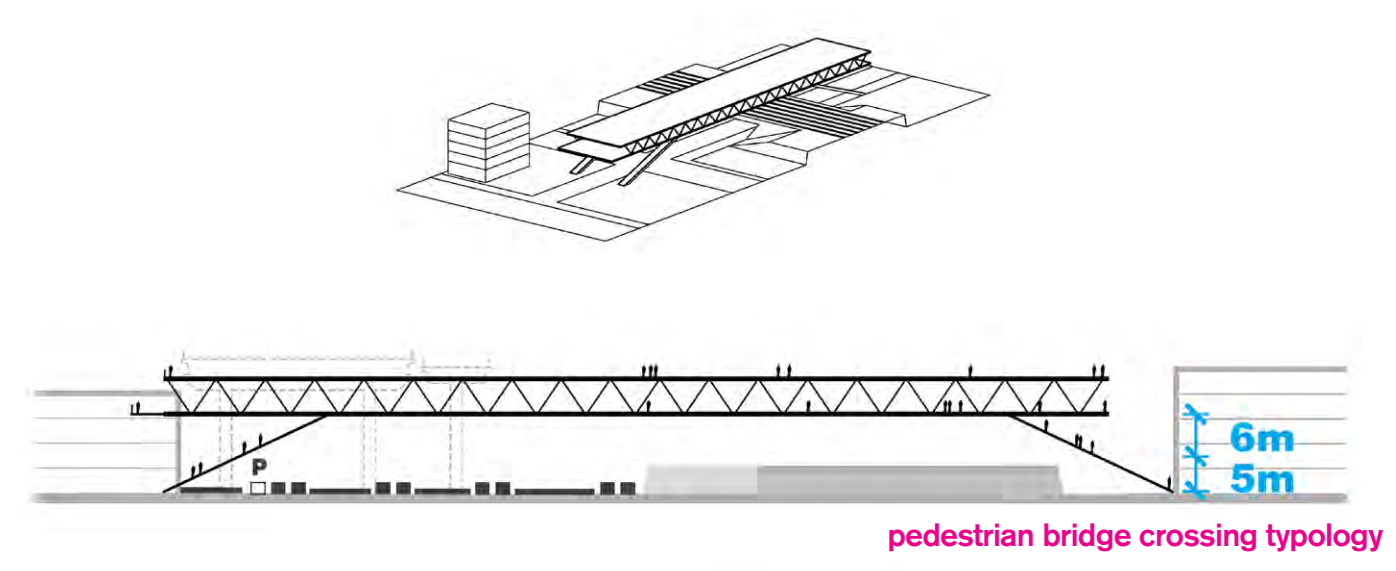
In addition to the existing crossing points, we also propose the introduction of three new typologies of crossing at strategic points along the length of the corridor. These crossings take the form of architectural objects and include large-scale signage; iconic pedestrian bridges; and at Cherry Street, a new 21st century Ponte Vecchio - a fully programmed mixed-use cultural building that links the Distillery District directly with the Lower Don Lands development.



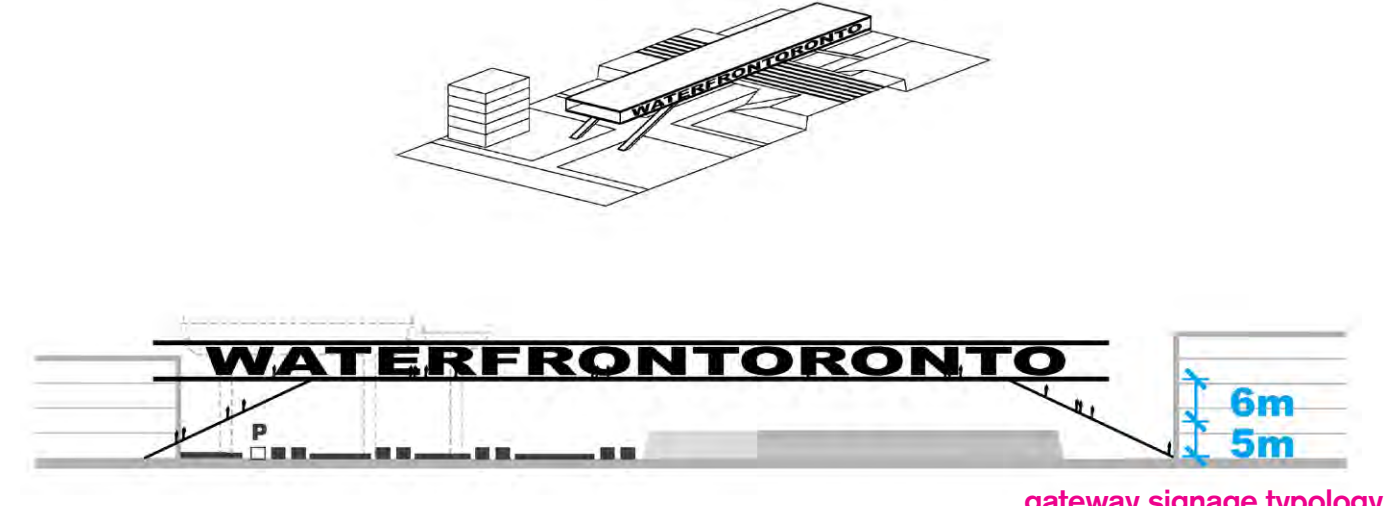
underpass media sleeves



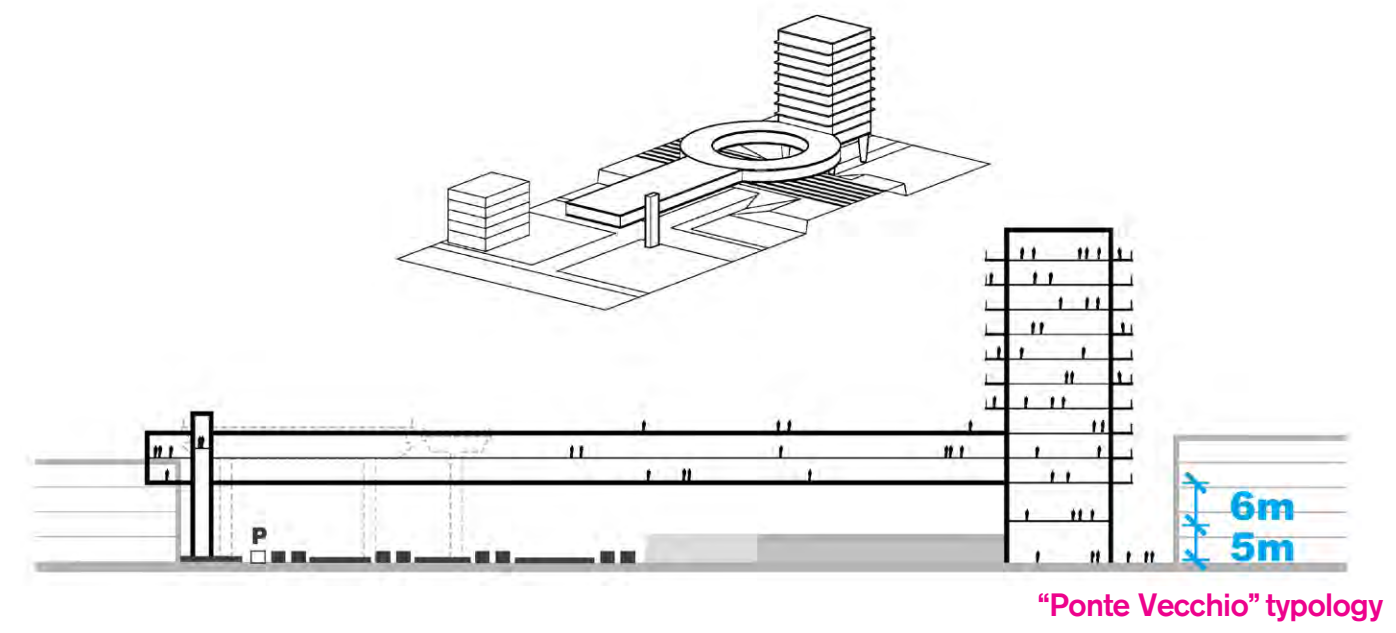
sculpted vegetal rail berm escarpment



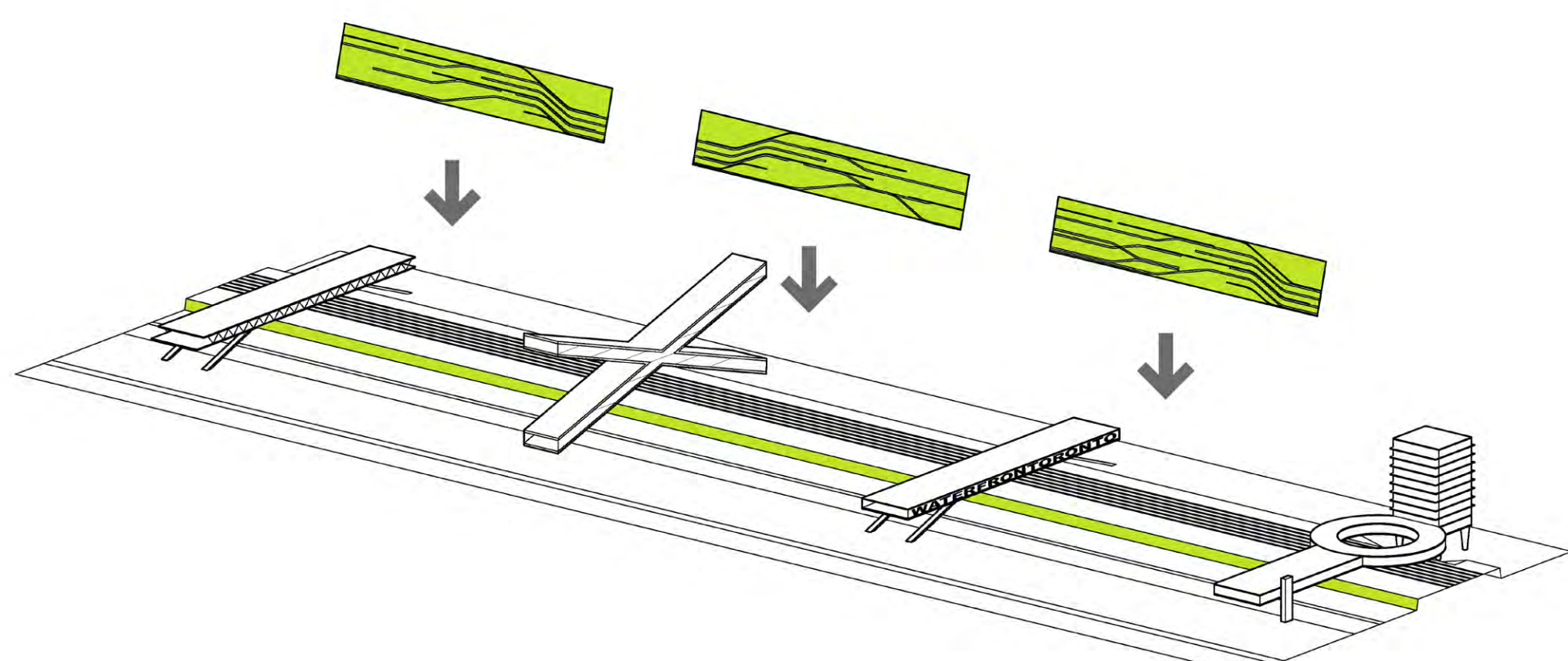
pedestrian bridge crossing typology



gateway signage typology



"Ponte Vecchio" typology

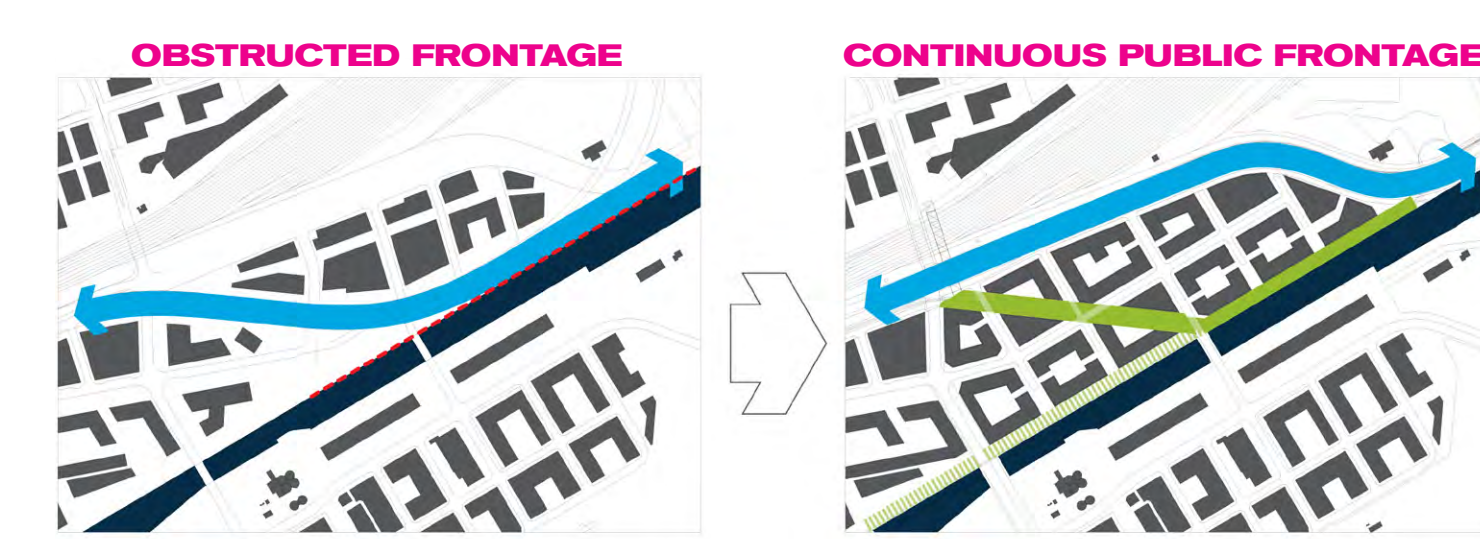


corridor composition - structures + walls

3) REALIGNMENT + ENHANCED FRONTAGE

While generally the alignment of the proposed Lake Shore Boulevard follows that of the existing Gardiner Expressway, the one location where it has been modified significantly improves the overall development opportunity of the adjacent blocks. Rather than allowing the corridor to cut directly through the development of the Keating Channel Precinct - cutting off development from the water and isolating the portion adjacent to the rail yards - we shift the Lake Shore Boulevard corridor to the northern edge of the precinct adjacent to the line of the rail berm.

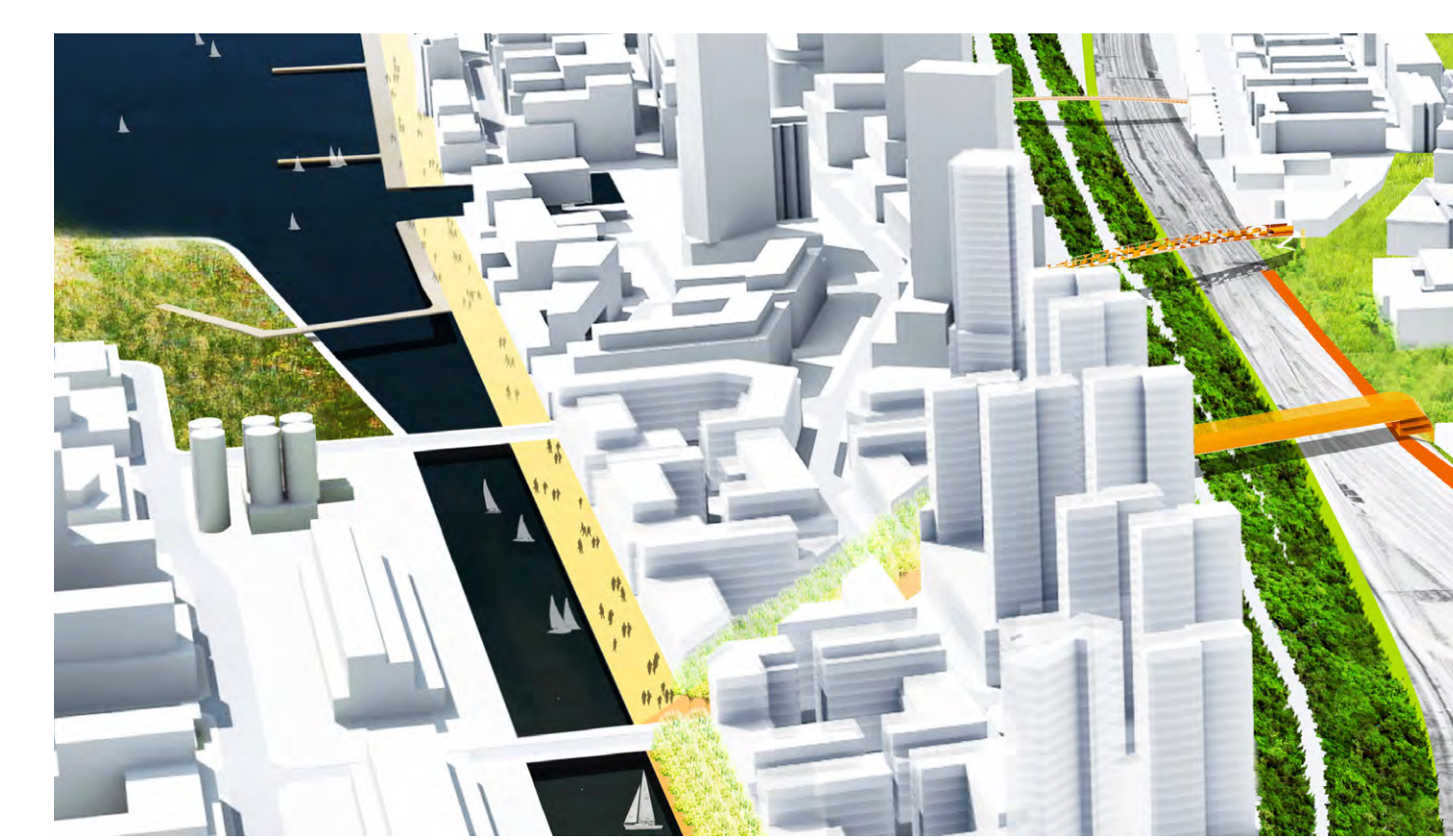
This move has two significant results: The first is that the two transportation corridors (rail and vehicular) are aligned and bundled, lessening their impact on adjacent development parcels. The second is that Keating Channel precinct is no longer cut in half by a major vehicular artery, and the entire length of the precinct has frontage on the Keating Channel rather than only 50% allowing for the 18m minimum public right of way to be continued from Downtown all the way to mouth of the Don River. This move dramatically improves the overall development potential of the precinct, and consolidates the buildings into a coherent series of blocks.



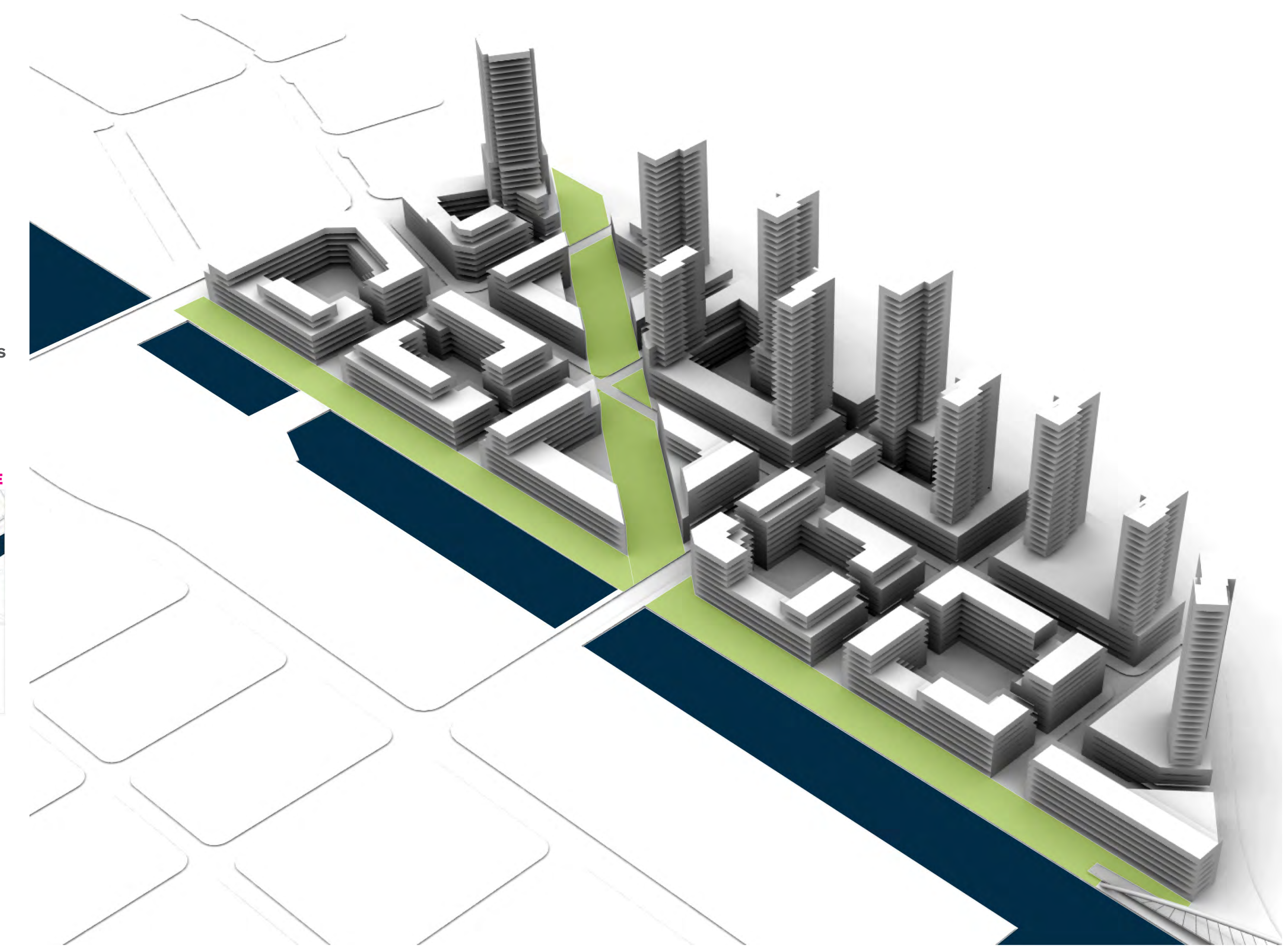
OBSTRUCTED FRONTAGE

CONTINUOUS PUBLIC FRONTAGE

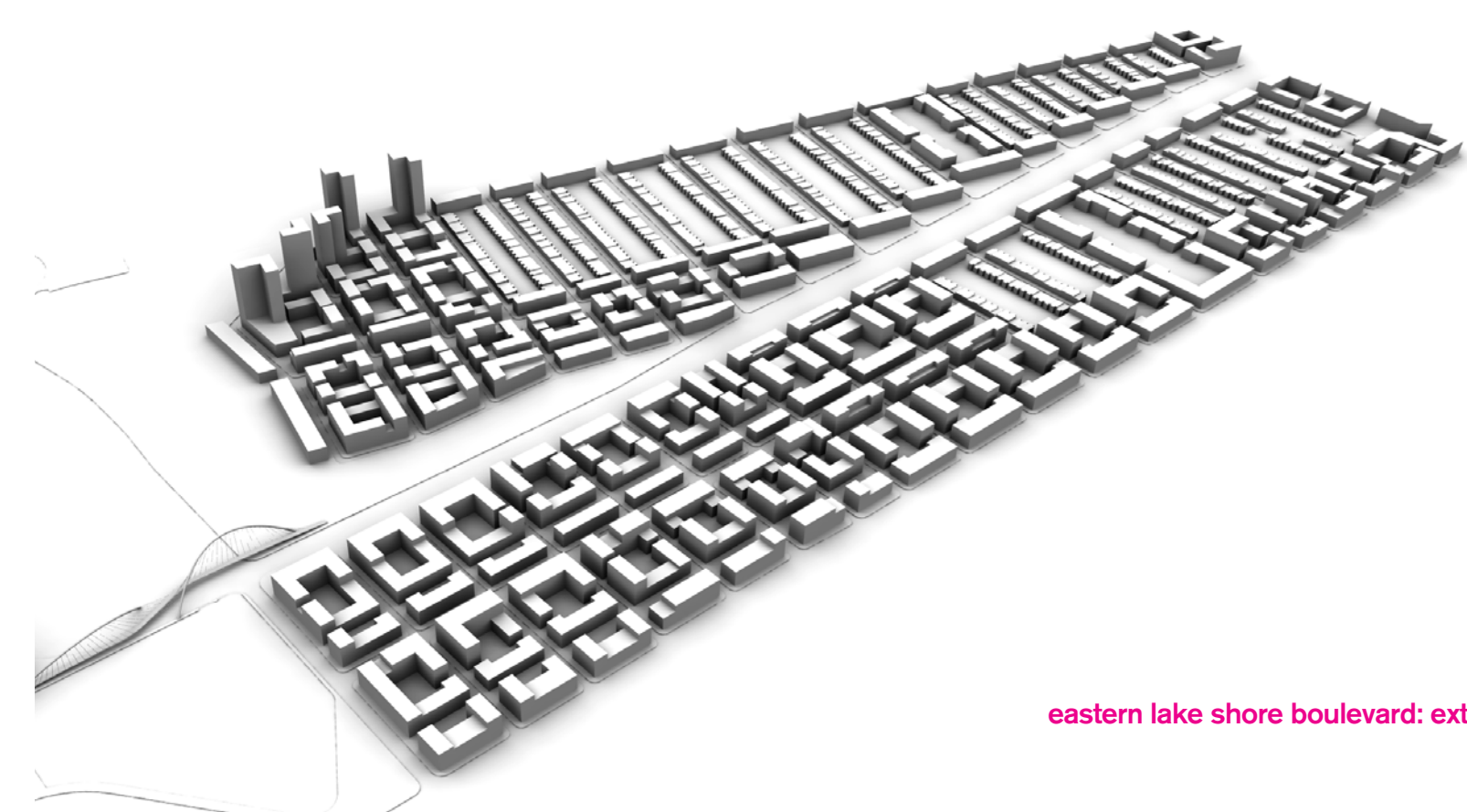
In addition to the reconfiguration at the Keating Precinct, the overall diminishing of the Lake Shore Boulevard Corridor allows for adjacent development to occur without fear of adverse impact from an adjacent urban expressway. In essence, the corridor is shifted from being a detriment to development, to enhancing its potential and overall quality - a new green threshold to the waterfront. To the east of the Don Valley Parkway, this reconfiguration results in the possibility of extending the existing neighborhood block structure to the north south across Lake Shore Boulevard, potentially all the way to the Port Land's ship channel.



Keating precinct detail



revised Keating channel precinct massing



eastern Lake Shore Boulevard: extend neighborhoods to the water



ICONIC UNDERPASS AT RAIL BERM



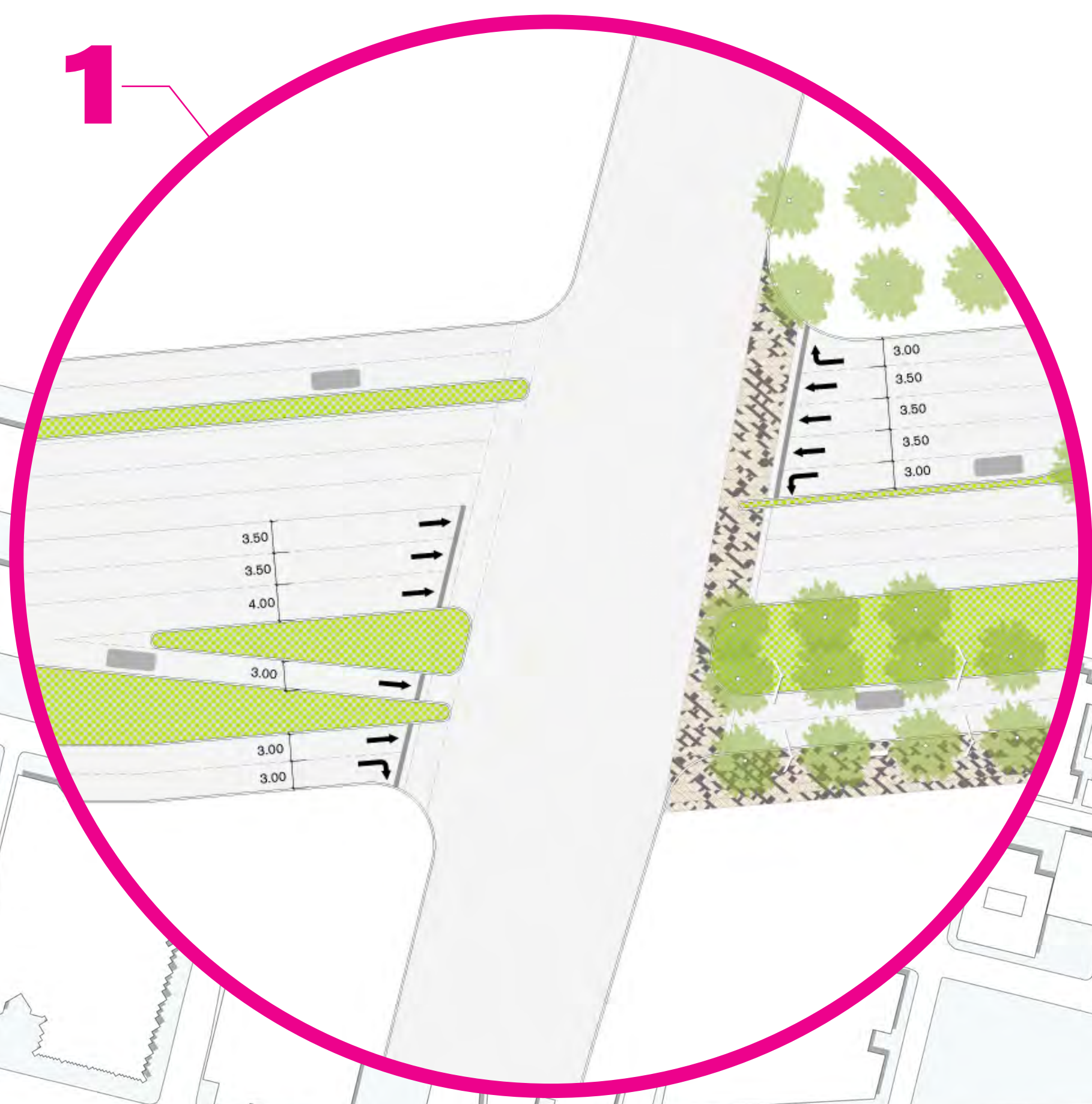
WINTER ACTIVITY ALONG LOCAL STREETS



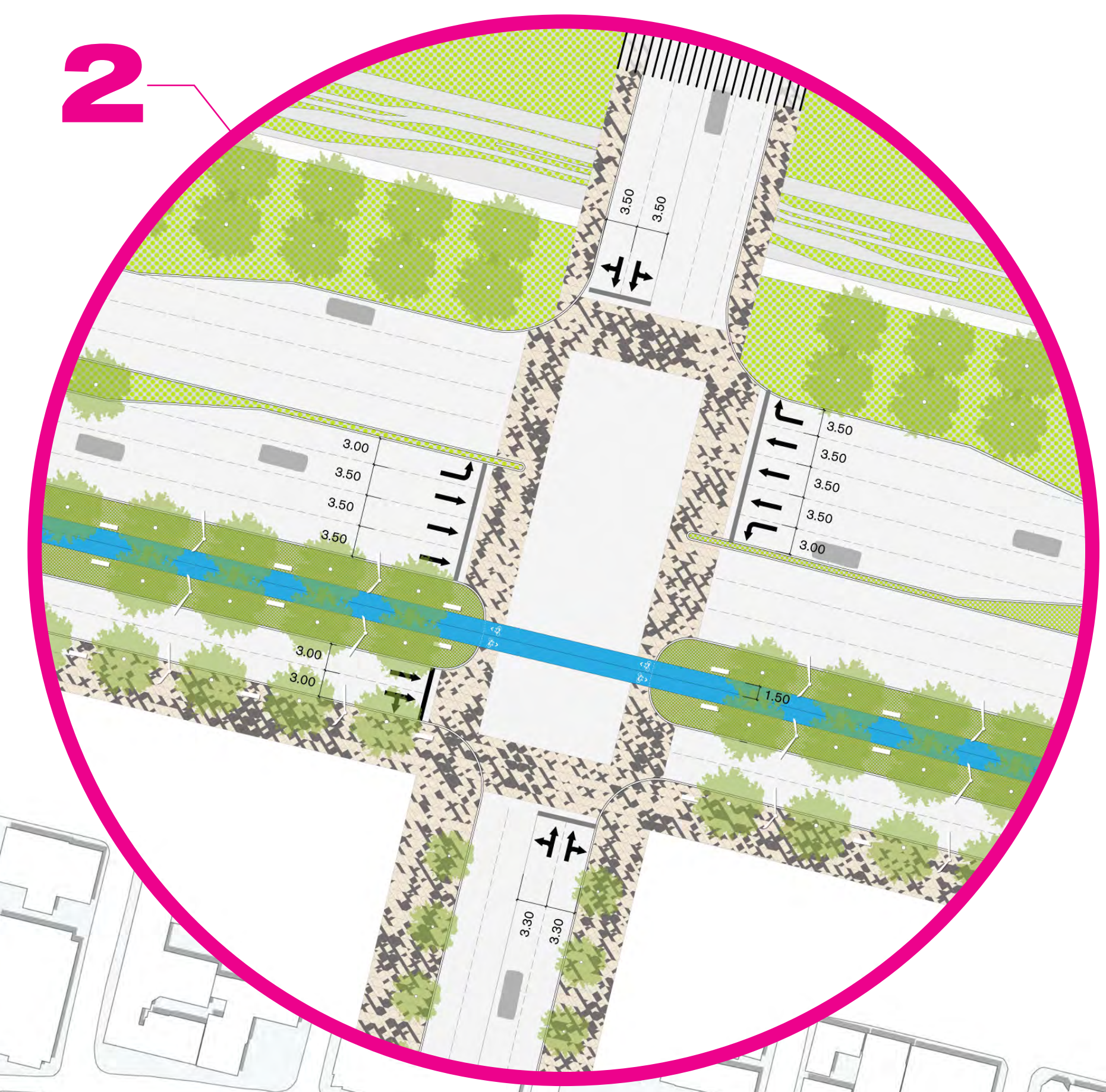
SCULPTED VEGETAL RAIL BERM AND STORMWATER ESCARPMENT



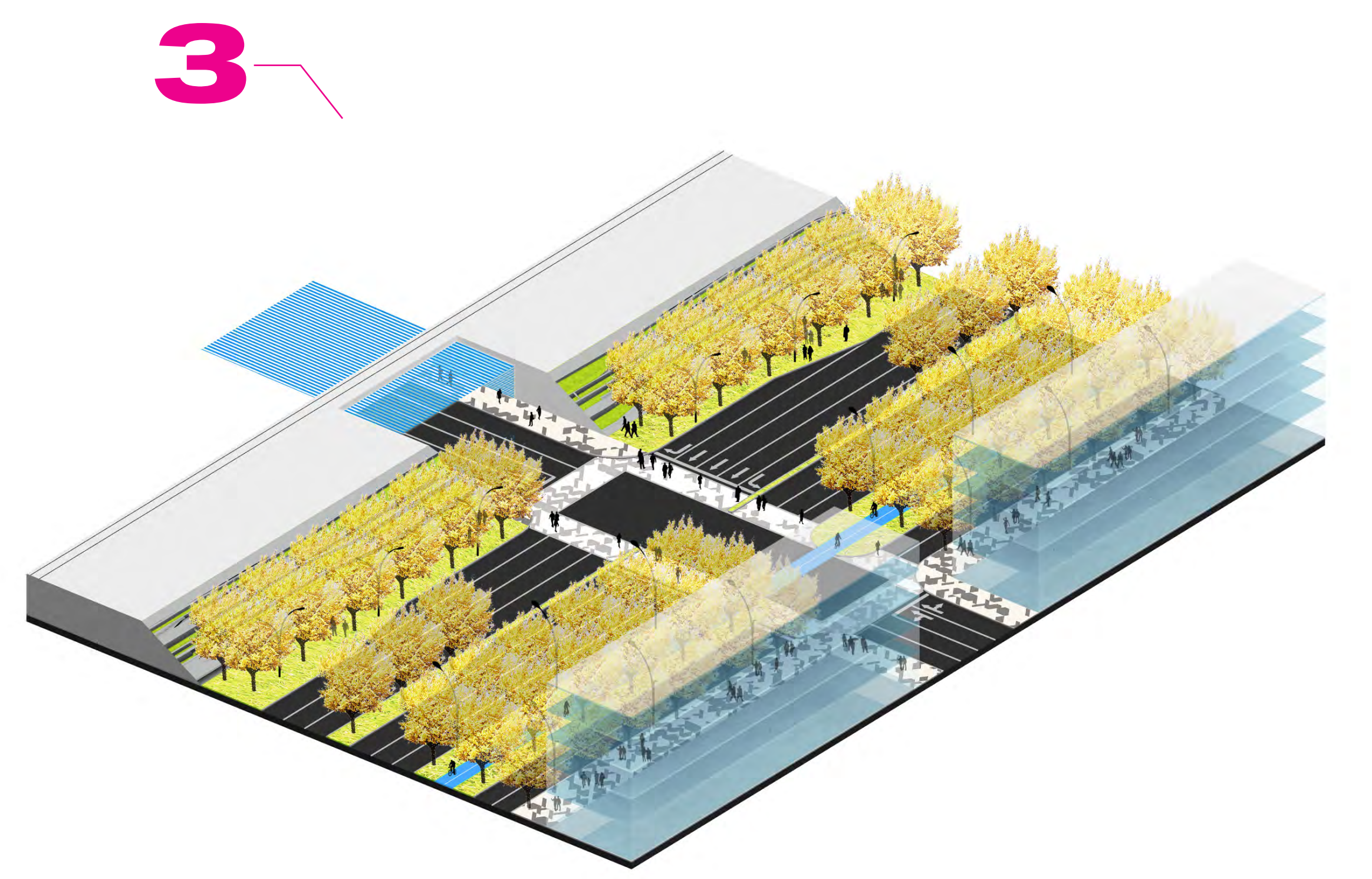
EXPANDED PUBLIC FRONTAGE ALONG KEATING CHANNEL



BAY STREET INTERSECTION (GRADE TO ELEVATED CONNECTION)



SHERBOURNE STREET INTERSECTION (TYPICAL WESTERN INTERSECTION)



PARLIAMENT STREET INTERSECTION AND CROSSING

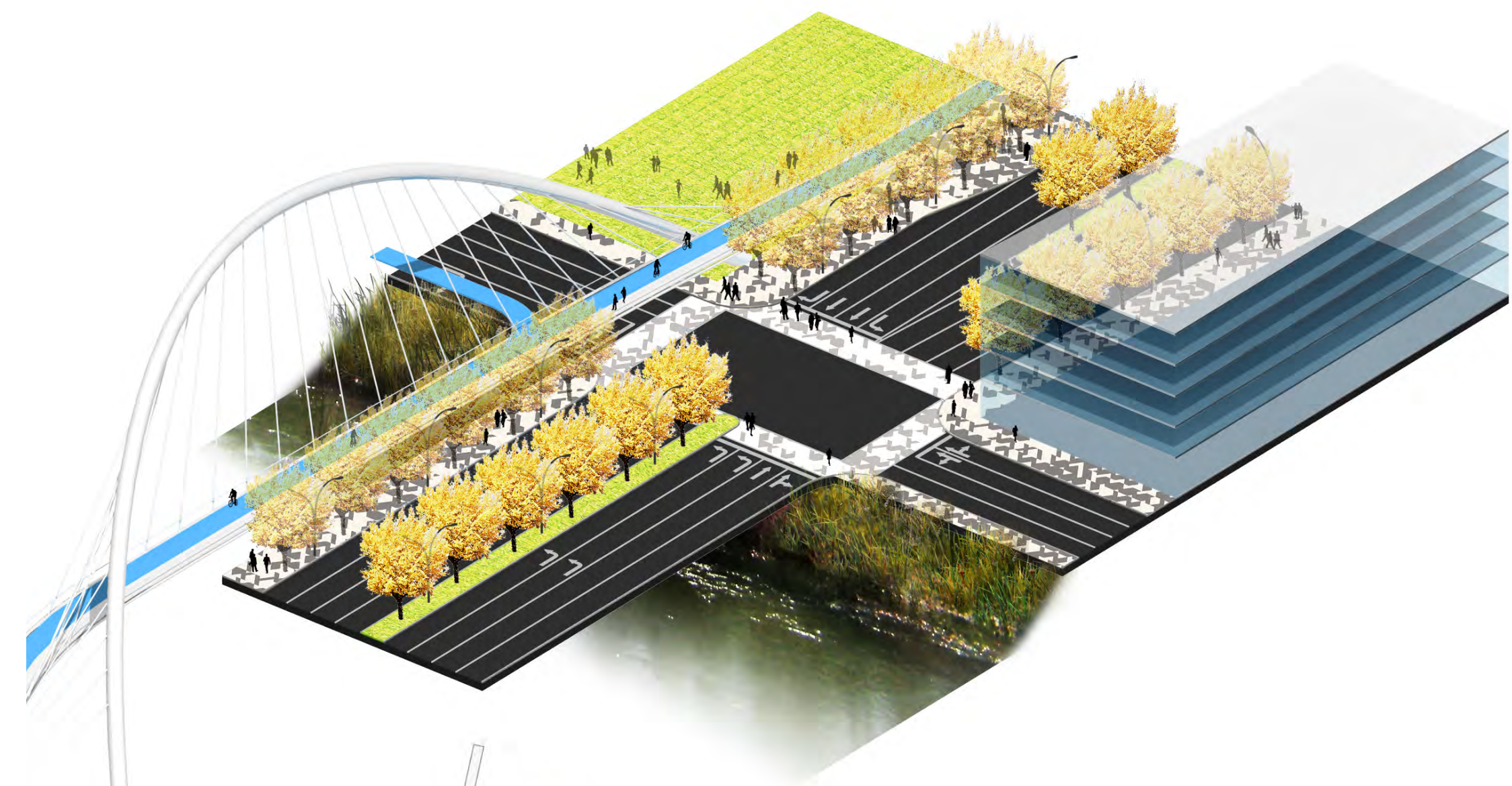


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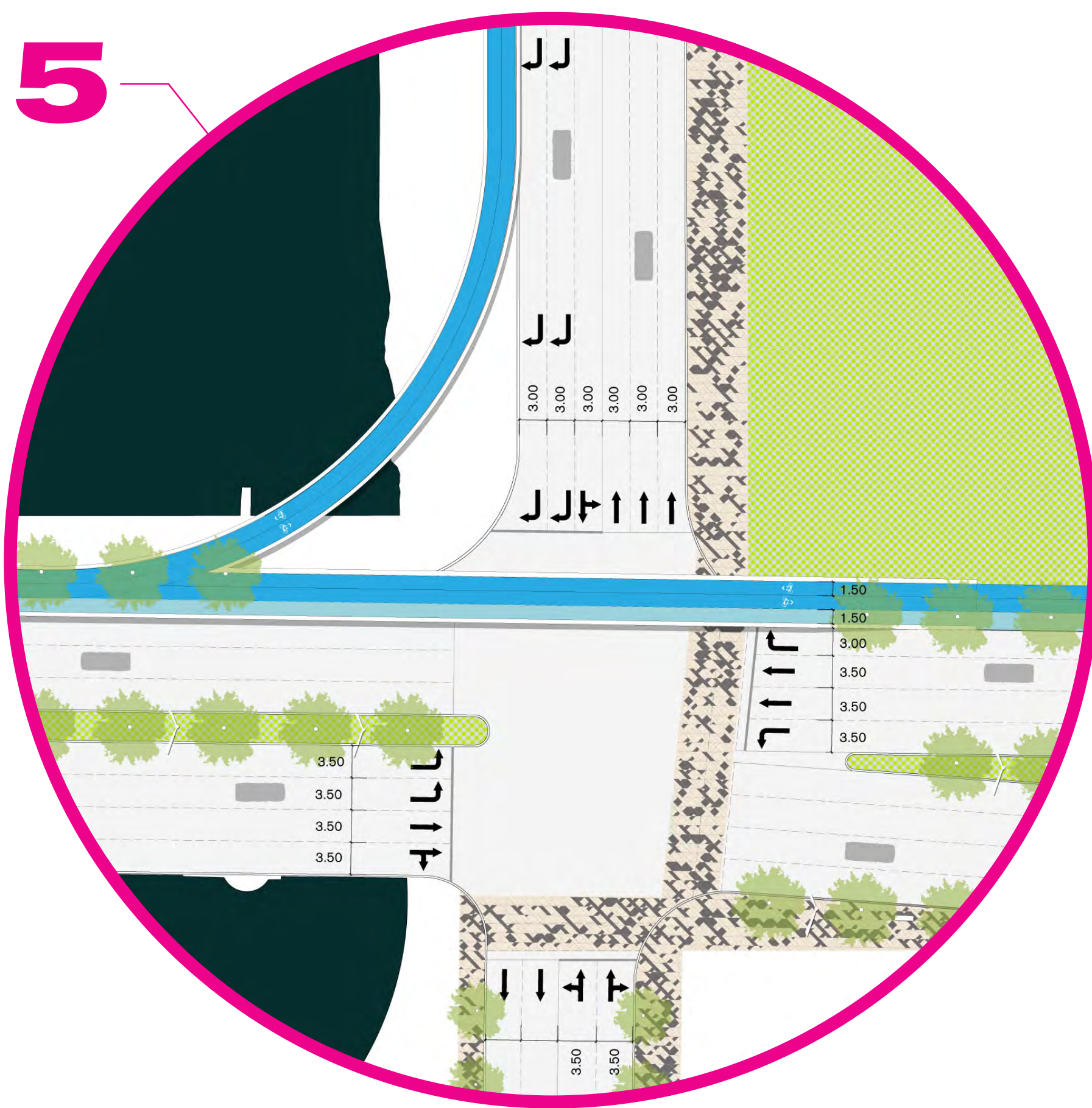
PROMONTORY PARK

4



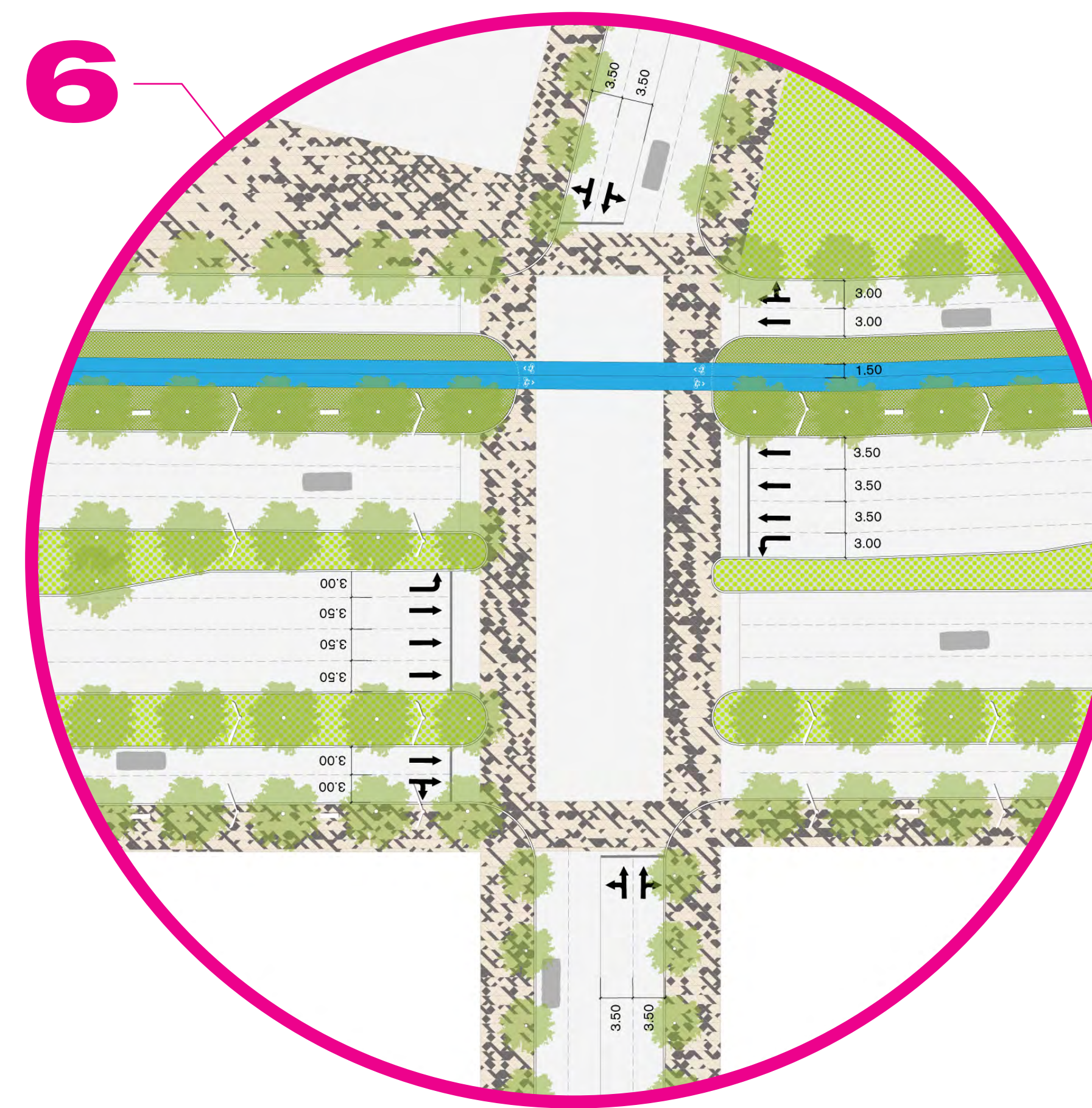
DON VALLEY PARKWAY INTERSECTION

5



DON VALLEY PARKWAY - LAKE SHORE BOULEVARD INTERSECTION

6



CARLAW AVENUE INTERSECTION (TYPICAL EASTERN INTERSECTION)



4-5

6

DON RIVER PARK

BOAT PARK

DON VALLEY PARKWAY

EASTERN AVE

LAKE SHORE BLVD

LOGAN AVE

CARLAW AVE

LESLIE ST

COMMISSIONERS ST