Engage Ontario Place

Environmental Assessment *Engagement 4: Project Updates*

November 17, 2023

Ontario

Welcome to Engagement 4 for the Ontario Place Category C Environmental Assessment!

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the Category C Environmental Assessment and share the latest information on the Environmental Study Report (ESR), including what the project team heard during the draft ESR comment period and modifications that have been made to the final ESR and the preferred public realm design.

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Contents

Environmental Assessment Overview

Category C Environmental Assessment

- The Ministry of Infrastructure (MOI) has undertaken the Category C Environmental Assessment (EA) for the redevelopment of the public spaces and parkland (the public realm) at Ontario Place (the Project).
- The Public Work Class EA is an approved process under the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act* that focuses on provincial government realty and infrastructure projects for registered public bodies. The project has been categorized as a Category C undertaking under the Public Work Class EA process.
- The key redevelopment activities encompassed by the Ontario Place Category C EA include:
  - Planning approvals and realty activities
  - Building decommissioning and removal
  - Grading and landscaping
  - Development of parks, trails and open spaces
  - Shoreline repairs and flood mitigation
  - Site access and parking
  - Construction of new buildings, including the new Ontario Science Centre (expanding into the existing Pod complex and Cinesphere), and supporting site infrastructure.

Category C EA Public Realm Study Area

- The *Environmental Assessment Act* governs public sector developments and provides requirements for the environmental assessment process.
- Thus, the Category C EA is only applicable to the government-led activities.
- The Category C EA Study Area is defined as the public realm area where government-led activities will occur.
- Site preparations will occur across the Ontario Place Property Site (excluding Trillium Park).

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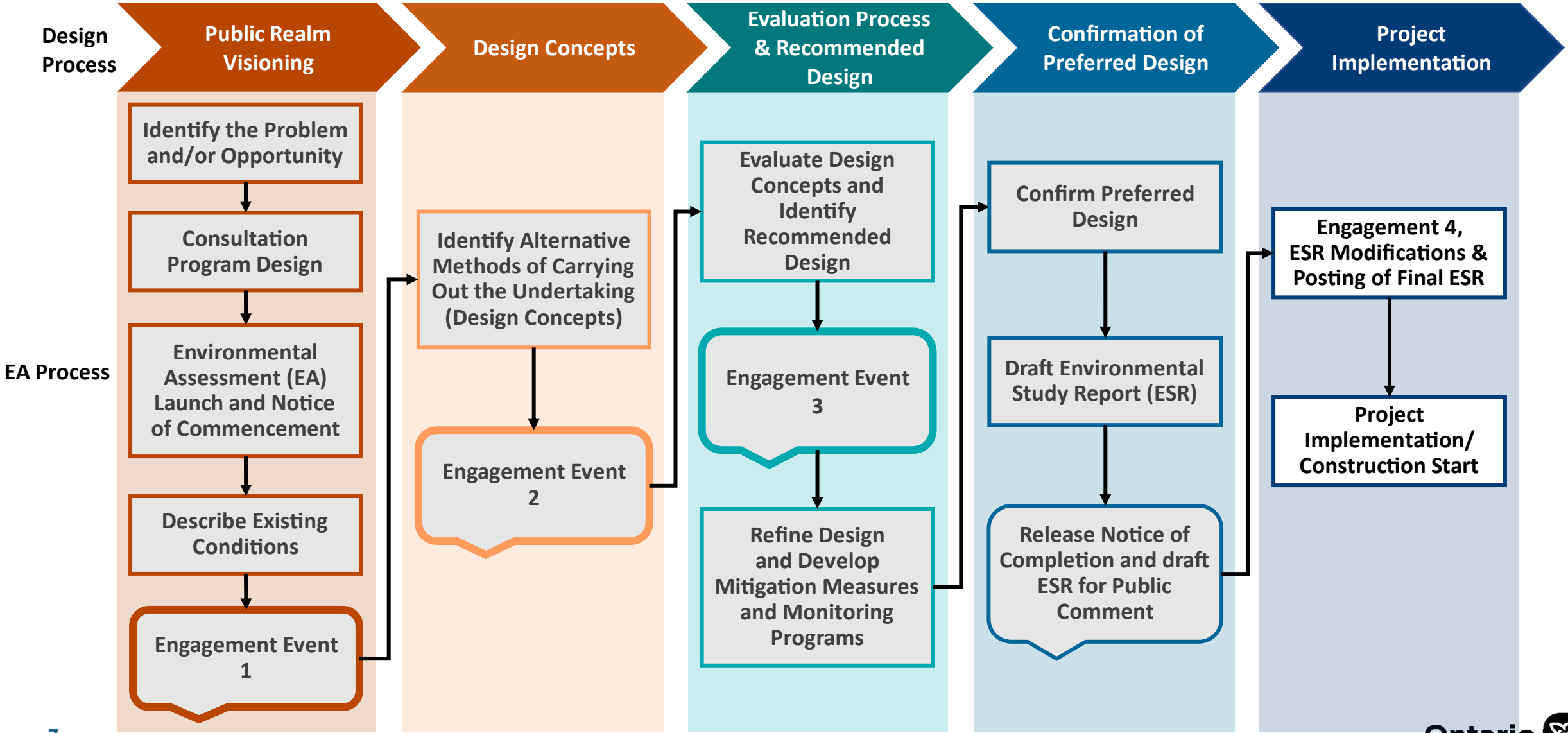
Category C EA Process



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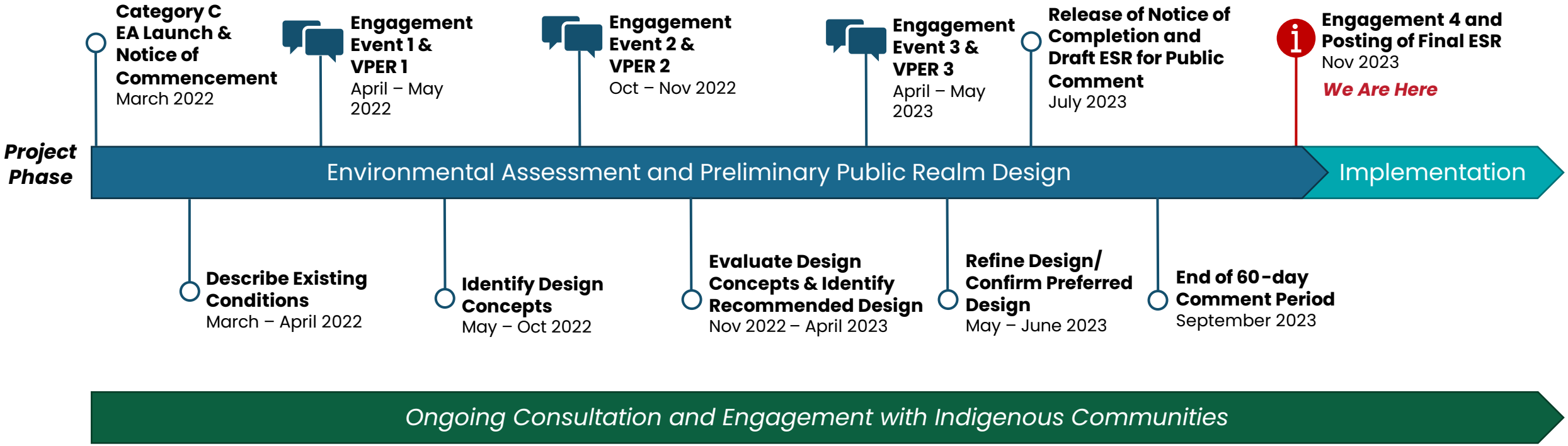
Category C EA Timeline



The Category C EA process, including the full planning and decision-making process and the EA results have been documented in a draft Environmental Study Report (ESR) (available at www.engageontarioplace.ca). The draft ESR has been reviewed and modified, as applicable, based on public comments, with the final version released in Fall of 2023.

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What We Heard

We have been engaging with the public on the design for the public realm and have been incorporating public input in the development of the preferred design.

Event 1

Purpose: to collect input on a vision for the new public realm at Ontario Place.

For more information visit:
engageontarioplace.ca/spring-22/

What we heard:

- Free, unrestricted access
- Year-round flexible spaces
- Natural landscapes
- Open spaces & recreation
- Water activities
- Heritage conservation
- Consistency with Trillium Park
- Complementary commercial uses

Feedback was used to develop design concepts for the public realm.

Event 2

Purpose: to collect feedback on the public realm design concepts.

For more information visit:
engageontarioplace.ca/fall-22/

What we heard:

- General preference for naturalized design concepts
- Favoured design elements, including:
  - Shoreline & water access
  - Green & naturalized space
  - Recreation space
  - Kids play
  - Improved accessibility

Feedback was used to refine the evaluation criteria and identify a recommended design.

Event 3

Purpose: to collect feedback on the recommended design.

For more information visit:
engageontarioplace.ca/virtual/

What we heard:

- General positive response to the design
- Desire for more green space
- Parking and traffic concerns
- Further consider safety and accessibility
- General approval of food & beverage
- Suggestions for detailed design & programming

Feedback was used to refine the design and confirm a preferred design, and to develop mitigation measures.

2022 2023

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Consultation & Engagement with Indigenous Communities

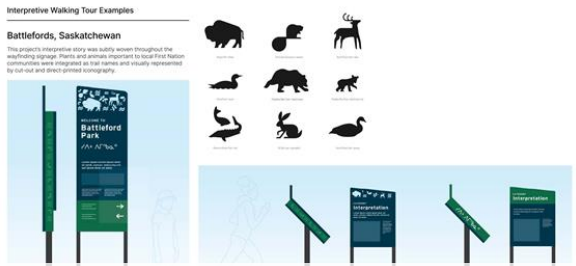
- Indigenous communities have provided feedback on the design throughout the redevelopment project.
- Additionally, Indigenous communities and organizations have contributed to and provided feedback on Indigenous placekeeping concepts and have suggested ways of knowing to be applied and considered by the design team.

Example recommendations for Indigenous placemaking features being considered:

- Incorporate Traditional Knowledge teachings about the natural environment at select locations in the park.
- Include, and focus on, the diversity of Indigenous languages.
- Leave space for the natural environment (water, animals, plants).
- Include gathering space and space for workshops and events.

Indigenous placekeeping concepts and features will be finalized during detailed design.

Plant Identification Plaque. Source: LANDinc



Interpretive Signage. Source: Fathom Studio.

Cultural Pavilion. Source: Mitch Lenet

Example recommendations for Indigenous ways of knowing to be applied and considered:

- Create a planting palette that consists of locally sourced native tree and plant species that are climate resilient.
- Use landforms to create microclimates that increase biodiversity and make event spaces more comfortable year-round.
- Protect and accommodate fish/reptile/amphibian habitat during shoreline repair and redevelopment and create environments that attract pollinators and birds.

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What We Heard on the Draft ESR

The Draft ESR was posted on engageontarioplace.ca and on the Environmental Registry of Ontario in July 2023 for a 60-day public comment period. The following slides include common inquiries that were received (within the scope of the Category C EA) and the Project Team's responses.

Common Inquiries on the Draft ESR

Comment or Question	Response
I am concerned about the negative impacts to trees, Species at Risk, Migratory birds and wildlife habitat. 	The potential environmental impacts, mitigation measures and net environmental effects described in the ESR for the proposed public realm redevelopment took into consideration features such as wildlife and wildlife habitat, Species At Risk, migratory birds and aquatic habitat. Disturbance to natural heritage features will be minimized as much as possible and opportunities to improve existing features or provide net-new wildlife habitat are being explored as part of the ongoing design work. Improvements are being explored for Brigantine Cove that would improve water quality and habitat conditions in this area. Improvements to the shoreline across the East Island will offer opportunities to stabilize and green these edges and improve aquatic habitat conditions. At a minimum, the redevelopment will replace trees removed as a result of construction and will increase the long-term tree canopy on-site. The project team is actively working with partners at the City, stakeholder agencies and Indigenous communities on opportunities to increase the number of trees being preserved. Based on best practices used at Trillium Park, a planting strategy will be developed during detailed design and will ensure that trees of a variety of size, age, and species are planted given the unique site conditions. The planting strategy for the site will be supported by engagement with Indigenous communities to identify native species, which will thrive naturally on site for future generations. These commitments are documented in the Construction and Operations Monitoring Plans, in the draft ESR and will be used to guide the detailed design stage which follows the EA process. Redevelopment activities will ultimately improve wildlife habitat across the Project footprint by increasing the amount and type of vegetation (that is, native vegetation) from existing conditions and including trees and shrubs of varying heights to create diverse vegetative cover used by a diverse range of wildlife species (refer to Section 5.4.1.3 and Section 5.4.1.5 of the draft ESR).

Common Inquiries on the Draft ESR (Continued)

Comment or Question	Response
There should not be an increase in parking, instead more sustainable modes of travel should be encouraged. 	Parking is required to accommodate all modes of travel to the site and to accommodate a range of site visitors from across the province and of all ages and abilities. Within the Ontario Place lands, 1,301 parking spaces are currently provided to serve the existing uses. Redevelopment activities are intended to increase park use and while the parking supply is proposed to double from existing conditions, the proposed parking structure is designed to only accommodate up to 10% of visitors arriving to the site by personal automobile during the peak periods. Most remaining visitors are expected to arrive using sustainable modes of travel, including transit, cycling, and walking. As such, the increase in parking supply is considered modest compared to the expected visitors to the site year-round for the proposed uses. The proposed parking solution is only one part of a multi-modal transportation approach. The proposed redevelopment also identifies potential for significant improvements in active transportation facilities—such as planned expansion and upgrade of pedestrian and cycling facilities along the Martin Goodman Trail, extension of the William G. Davis trail and a new waterfront multi-use pathway—and supports greater integration with the broader transit network, protecting for a mobility hub and last-mile connection to the future Ontario Line station. A number of transportation demand management measures, including shuttle buses, partnership with ridesharing apps, implementing safewalk programs, transit ticket integration, and bike share passes, are also being proposed to reduce dependency on single-occupancy vehicle trips and to encourage sustainable modes of travel to the site. A significant shift to more sustainable modes from existing conditions is anticipated for the Ontario Place redevelopment given that key transit and active transportation improvements are planned for the area.

Common Inquiries on the Draft ESR (Continued)

Comment or Question	Response
Was deciding to relocate the Ontario Science Centre to Ontario Place part of the Category C EA process?	The decision to relocate the Ontario Science Centre (OSC) to Ontario Place is an evaluation of "Alternatives to the Undertaking" or just "Alternatives To" in the Public Work (PW) Class Environmental Assessment (EA) (MOI 2012). "Alternatives to" refers to the different solutions that may be considered to address an identified problem or opportunity. Solutions, for example, could range from "do nothing" (maintaining the current situation), to building a new facility. The PW Class EA framework recognizes that for most Public Work projects, this step occurs as part of another planning or policy decision-making process and thus permits this step to occur outside the EA process. For the OSC, this is the case, and the decision to relocate to Ontario Place was made outside the EA process as part of another Government decision-making process. As per the PW Class EA, any future use of the current OSC is not considered part of the Category C EA process for the public realm lands. This would be taken into consideration depending on the future decision for the current OSC.
Why is the proposed Ontario Science Centre (OSC) smaller than the current facility?	The new OSC at Ontario Place will be a smaller, yet more efficient and more modern facility - leading to efficiencies for maintenance and operations. The current OSC is about 560,000 sq. ft.; however, the permanent exhibition space occupies only 20% of the net floor space. The new OSC at Ontario Place will be approximately 275,000 sq. ft., including an approximately 200,000 sq. ft. new Mainland building and the 75,000 sq. ft. pods and Cinesphere. The planned new facility will have 10,000 sq. ft more of permanent exhibition space than the current facility.

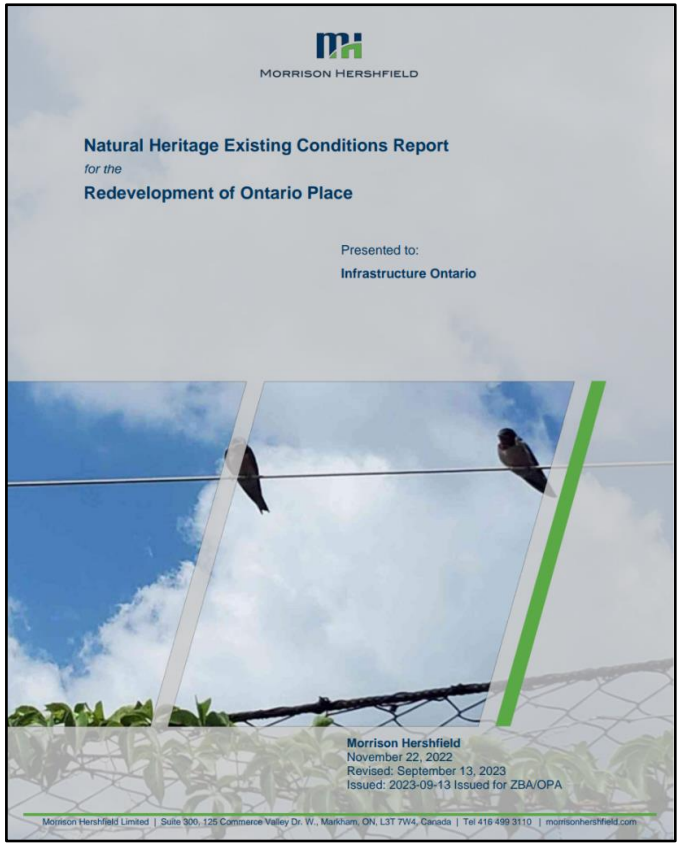
Common Inquiries on the Draft ESR (Continued)

Comment or Question	Response
Recommendations for materiality, lighting, seating, programming and operations.	Specific materiality of surfaces will be determined during detailed design however the preferred conceptual design (see Section 5.1 of the draft ESR) already increases the amount of permeable surfaces from existing conditions. Lighting, seating, park operations and programming (i.e., festivals and events) will be determined during detailed design and comments will be considered at that time.
Increase green space and permeable surfaces. 	The preferred design proposes to increase vegetation from existing conditions. And includes increased green space within Brigantine Cove, the Forum, and on the Mainland, replacing much of the currently paved services with pervious material. Refer to Section 5.1 of the draft ESR for the full preferred design for the public realm.
Ensure opportunities for recreation and other activities. 	The preferred design includes flexible space within the Forum and on the Mainland that provides for a range of activities. A children's play zone is proposed in Brigantine Cove to provide play opportunities for a range of children's age groups. The preferred design also includes continuous multi-use trails throughout the site for walking, running, bicycling, and roller-skating with improved connections to Exhibition Place and the existing Martin Goodman Trail. Refer to Section 5.1 of the draft ESR for the full preferred design for the public realm. Recreation and activities will be provided for all seasons.

Modifications to the Draft ESR

Changes to the Draft ESR

- Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is no longer provincially Threatened and has now been designated as a species of Special Concern, which has been updated in the final ESR.
- The Natural Heritage Impact Study/Existing Conditions Report (Morrison Hershfield, 2023) has been updated and appended to the final ESR. Any relevant changes have been reflected in the text of the final ESR.
- The Traffic Impact Assessment (LEA Consulting 2023) has been updated to include considerations for the Ontario Science Centre. Relevant findings not previously included in the draft ESR have been added to the final ESR.
- A summary of comments received during the draft ESR comment period have been included with responses and where the comment was addressed in the final ESR, where applicable.
- Changes to text as a result of applicable comments received from Indigenous communities, stakeholders and the public.
- A cover letter has been provided at the beginning of the final ESR to summarize changes that were made to the draft ESR.



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Refinements to the Preferred Design

Refinements to the preferred (conceptual) design provided in the draft ESR that are being considered for the final ESR are as follows:

1. Moving the Indigenous Cultural Pavilion from the Marina to the proposed boathouse in Brigantine Cove as a placekeeping feature that could be used year-round for gathering and Indigenous community events.
2. Splitting the South Berm to connect the Forum to the Water's Edge with an at-grade path to improve views and connection to the water. An accessible pedestrian bridge will connect the two sides of the berm above the at-grade pathway.

The design is still conceptual and subject to further refinement through the approval process and detail design.

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Refinements to the Preferred Design (Continued)

3. Identification of potential locations within the public realm where bicycle parking will be provided: in the Forum, within the transit hub, in the plaza around the new Ontario Science Centre main building, and in the underground parking structure.
4. The existing maintenance and administration buildings will be demolished at a future date, as shown in the draft ESR; however, a new maintenance building may be constructed within the existing footprint, anticipated to be 1-2 storeys in size, taking up a smaller portion of the existing building's footprint.

The design is still conceptual and subject to further refinement through detail design.

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Preferred Public Realm Design Presented in the Final ESR

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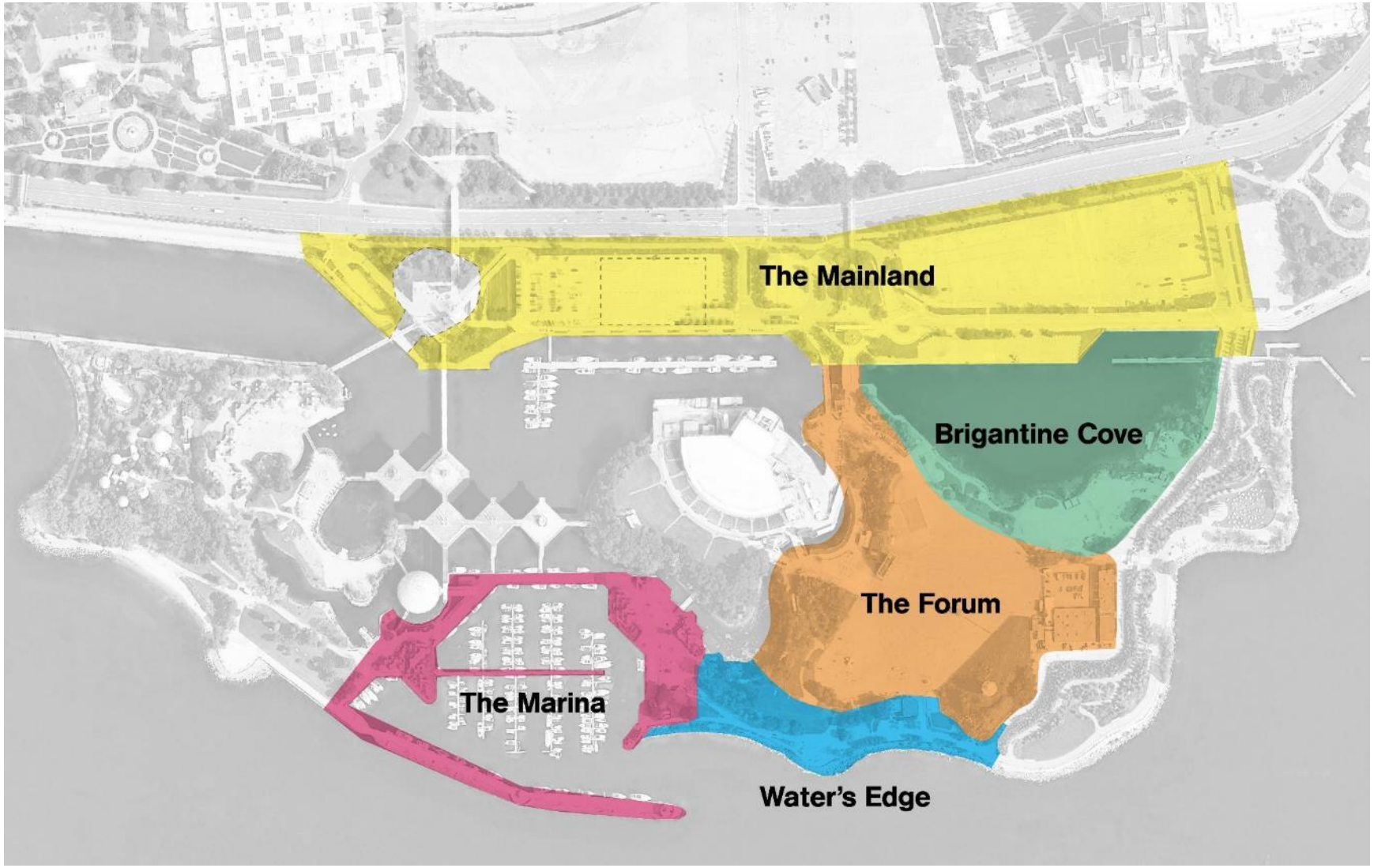
The Zones

To help navigate the site and facilitate thorough evaluation through the EA process, the Ontario Place public realm was divided into 5 zones.



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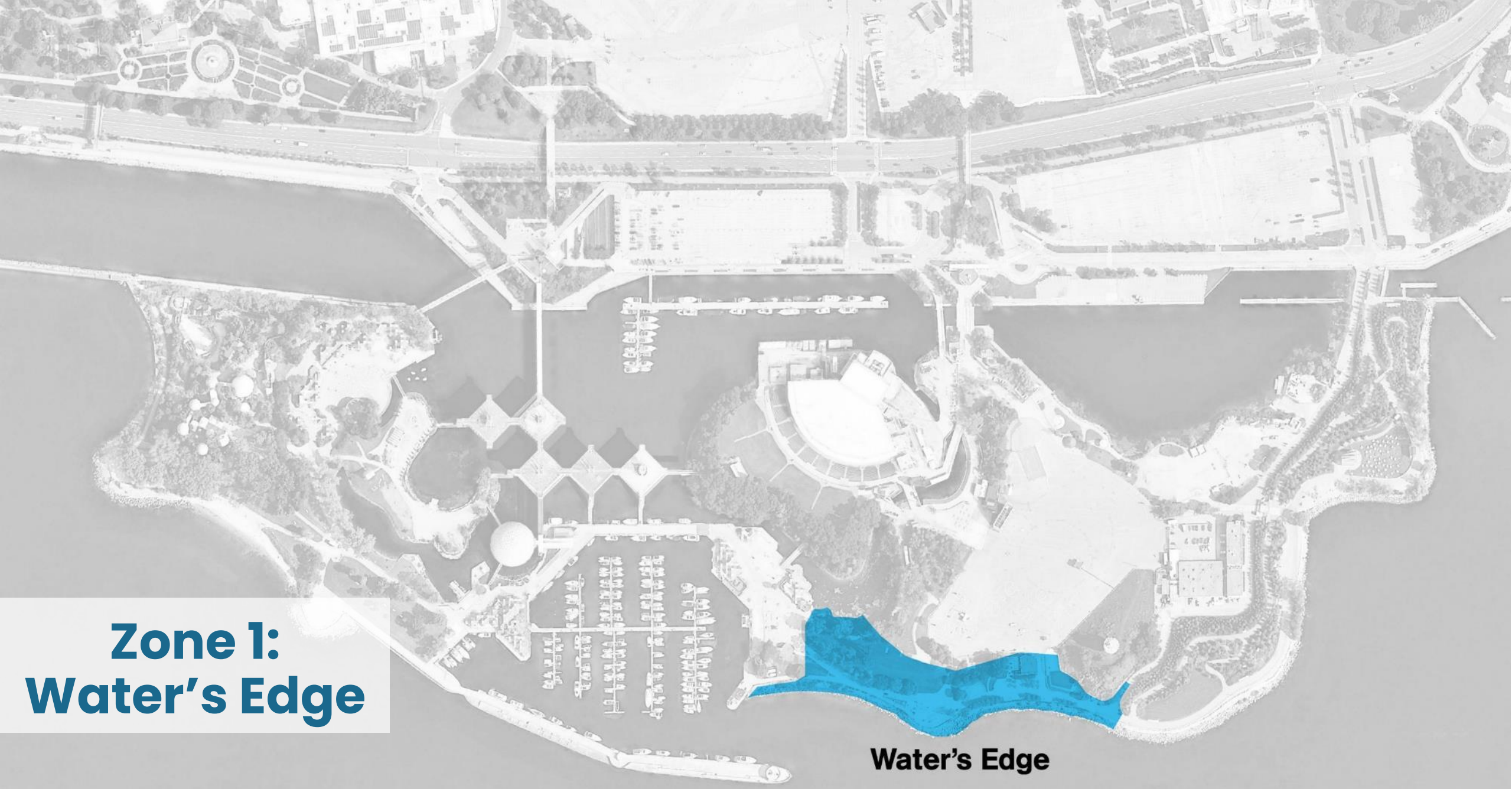
Zone 1: Water's Edge



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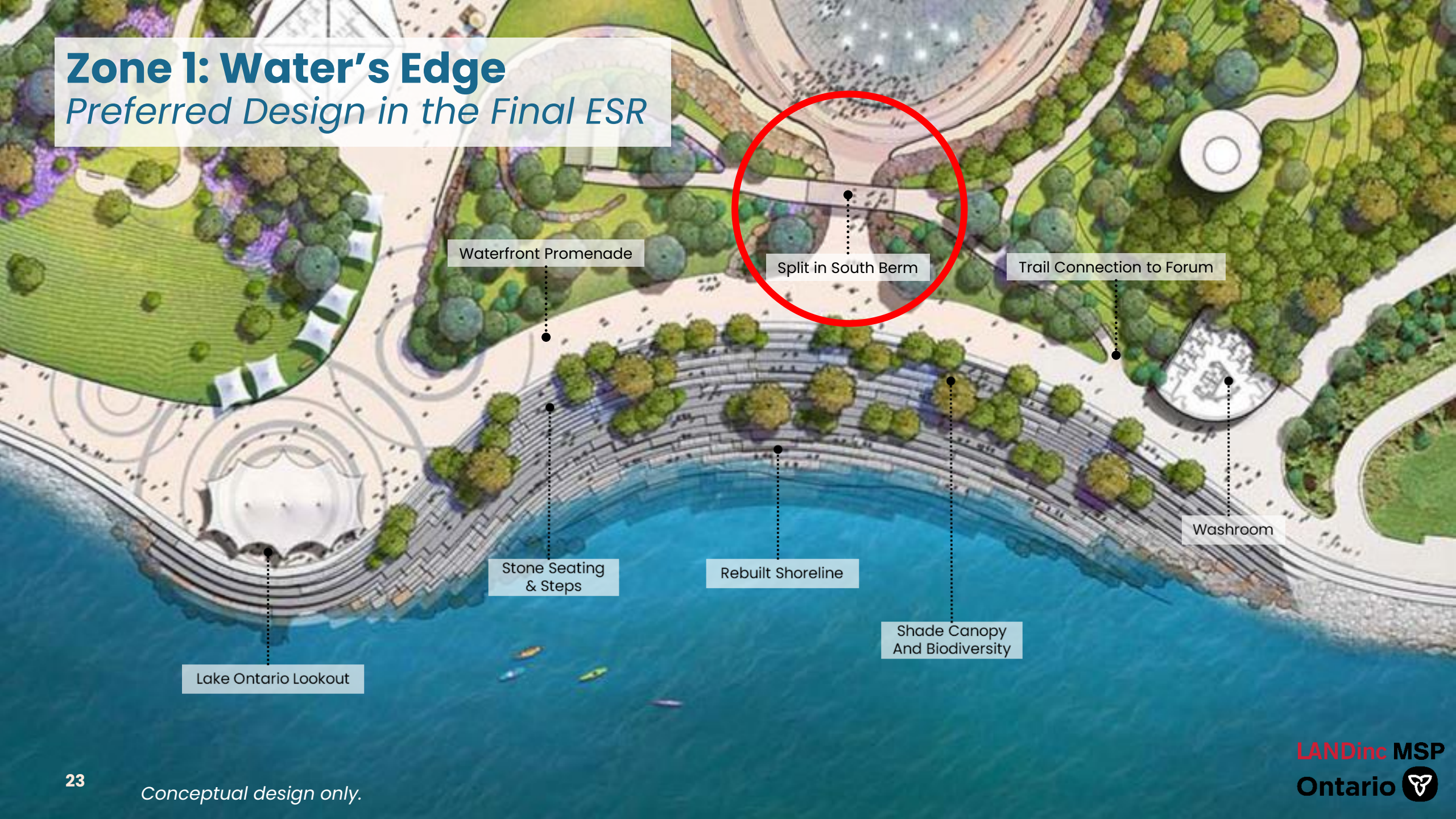
Zone 1: Water's Edge
Preferred Design in the Final ESR



Conceptual design only.

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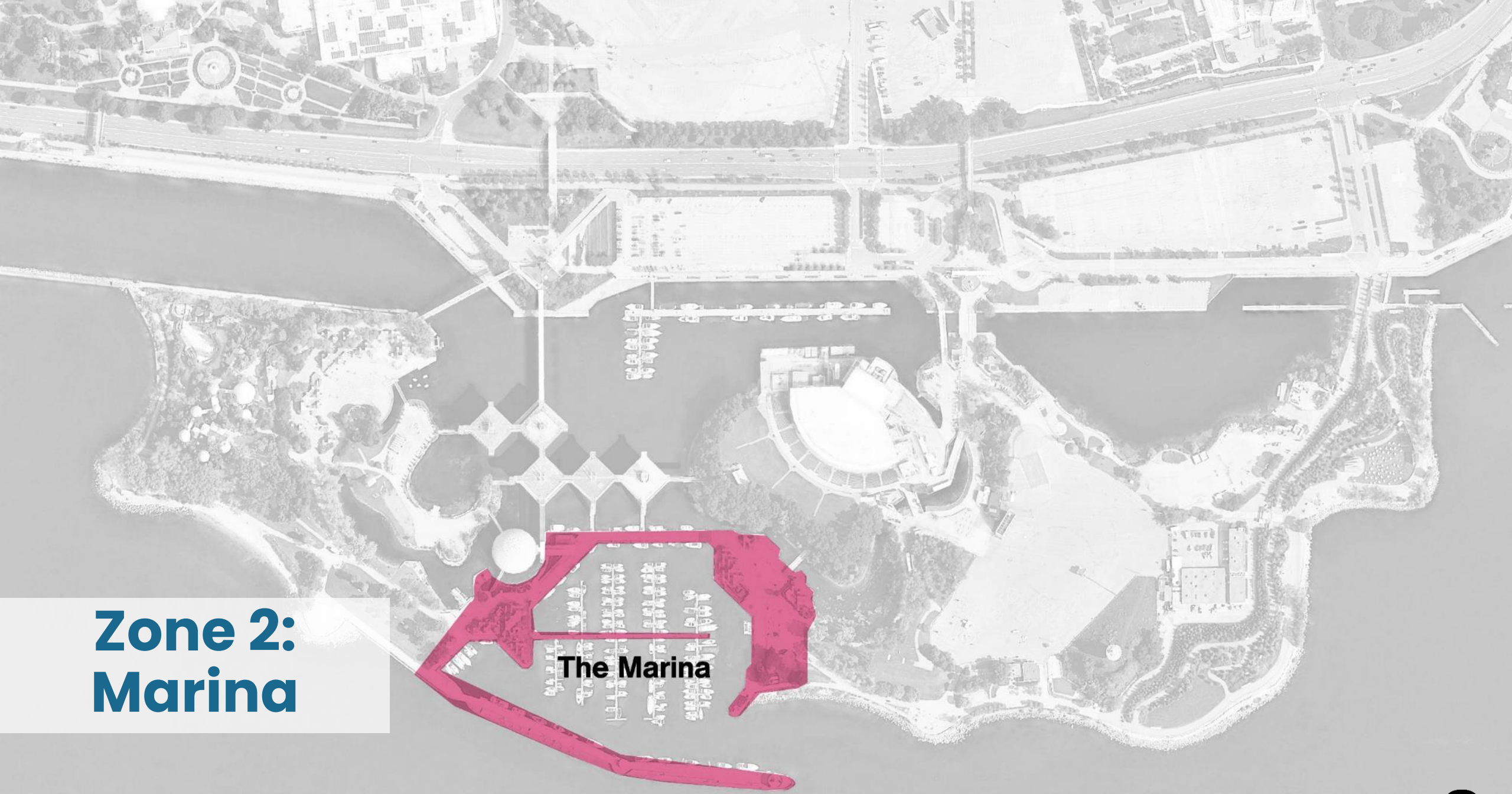
Zone 2: Marina



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Zone 2: Marina

Preferred Design in the Final ESR

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Zone 3: Brigantine Cove

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Zone 3: Brigantine Cove

Preferred Design in the Final ESR

Conceptual design only.

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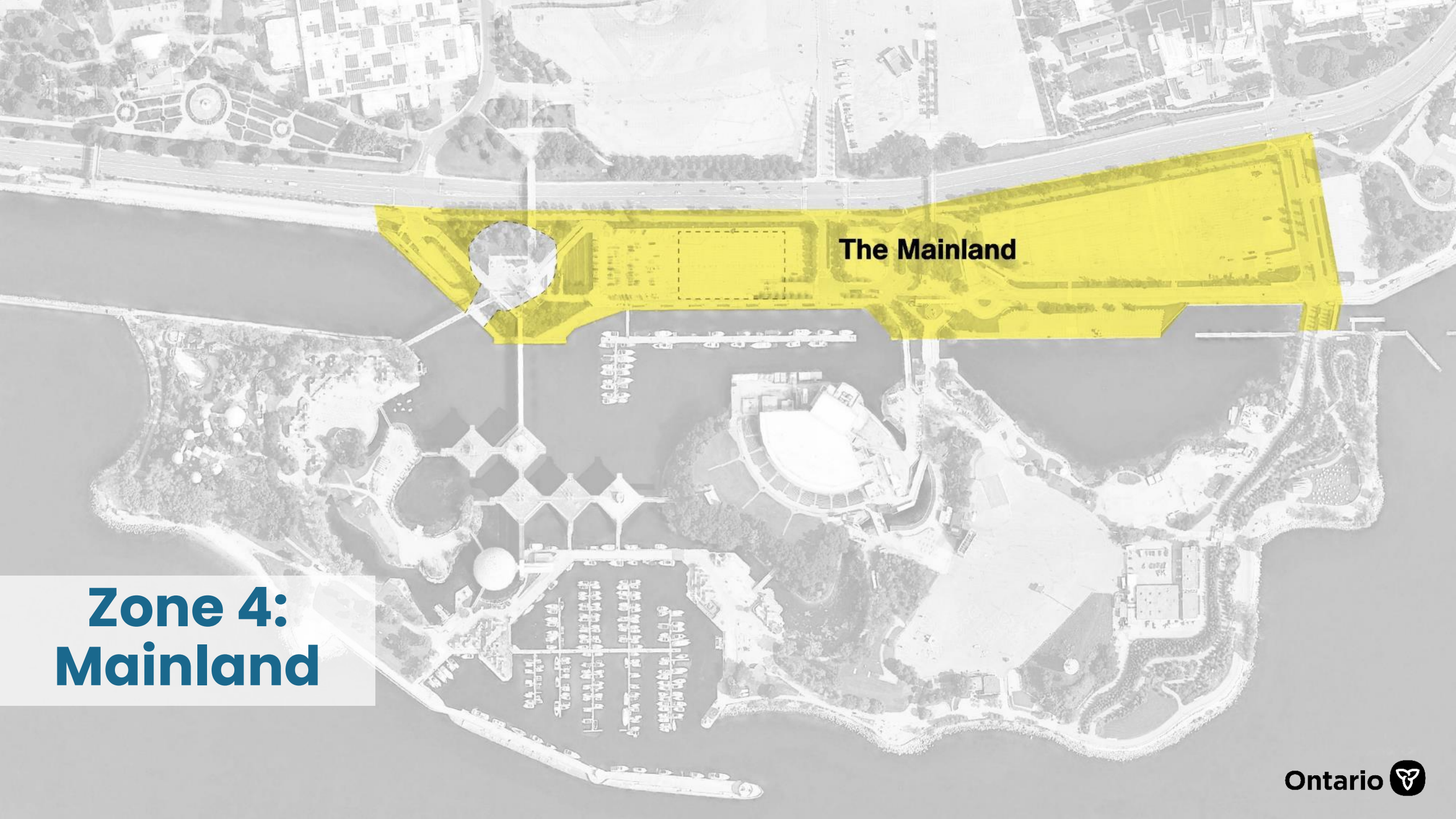

Zone 4: Mainland

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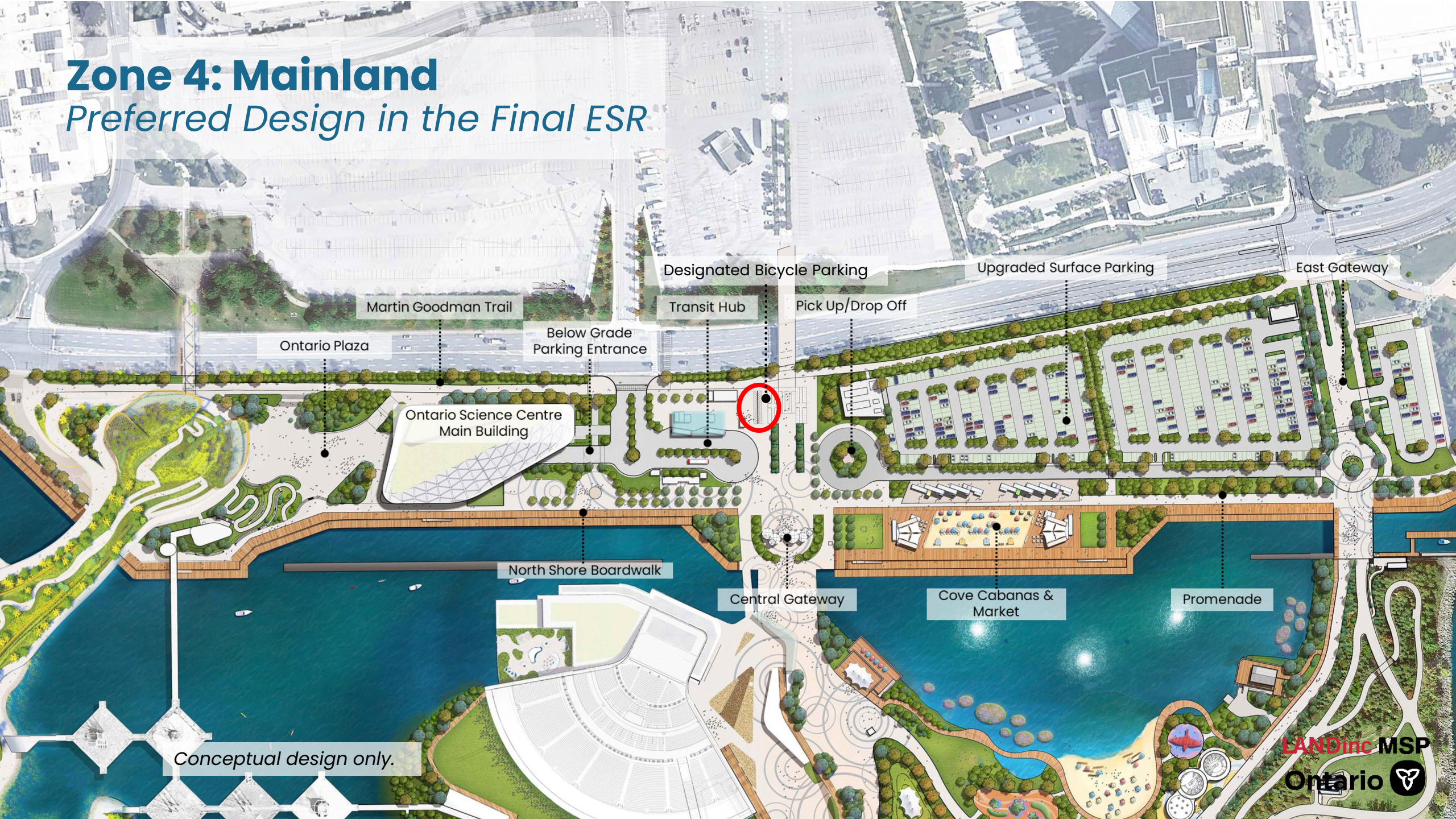
Zone 4: Mainland

Preferred Design in the Final ESR



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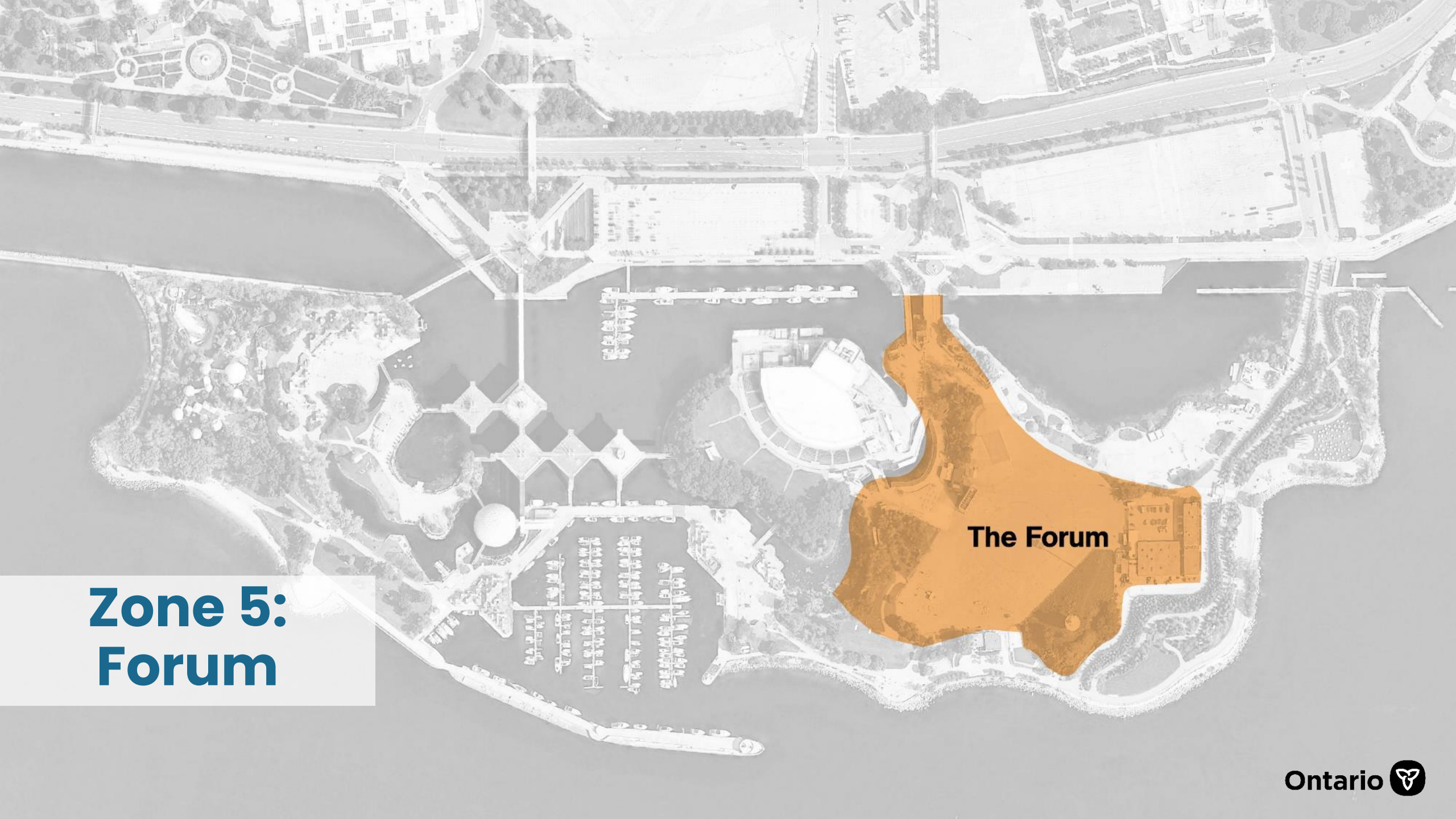

Zone 5: Forum

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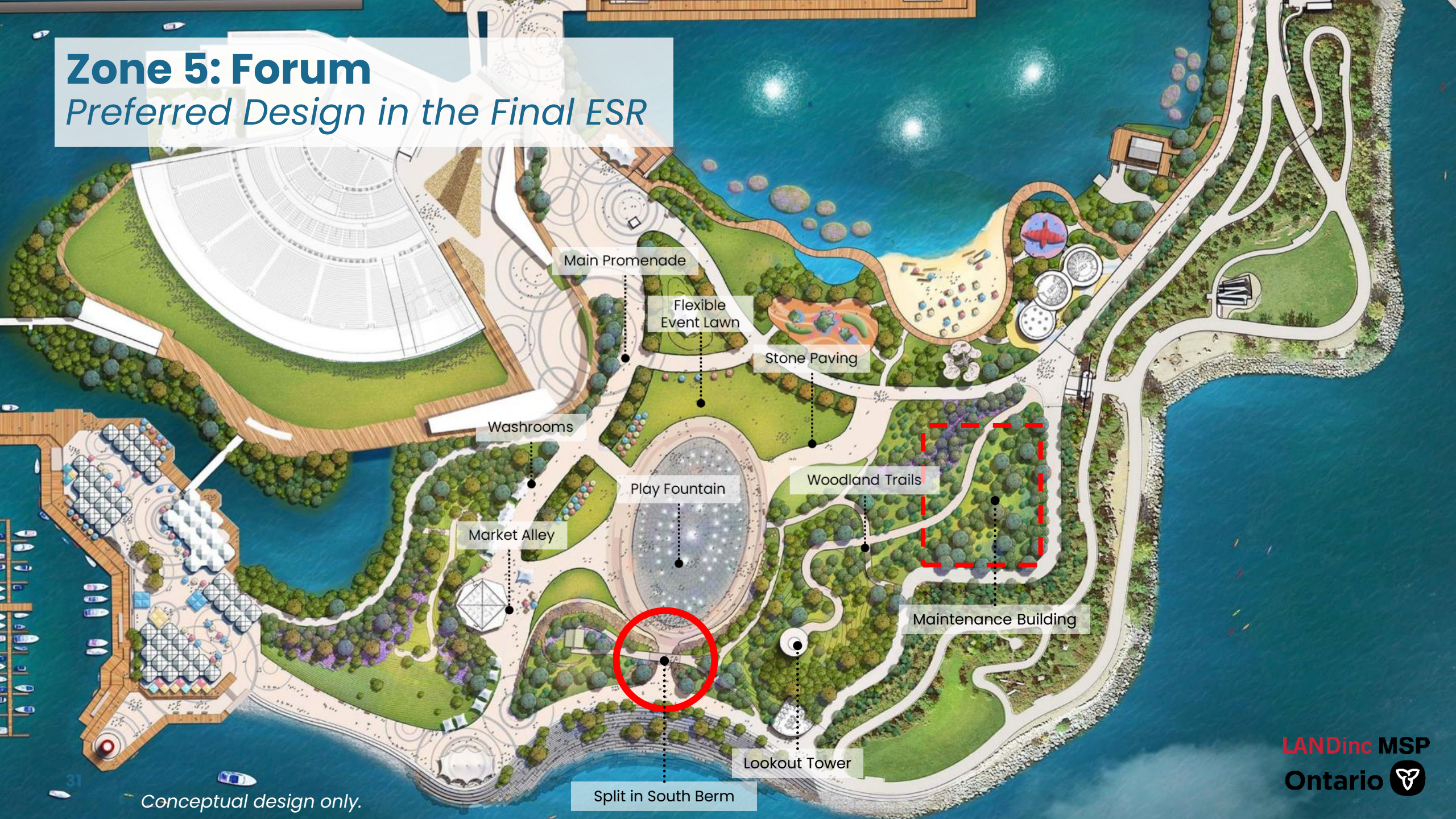
Zone 5: Forum

Preferred Design in the Final ESR



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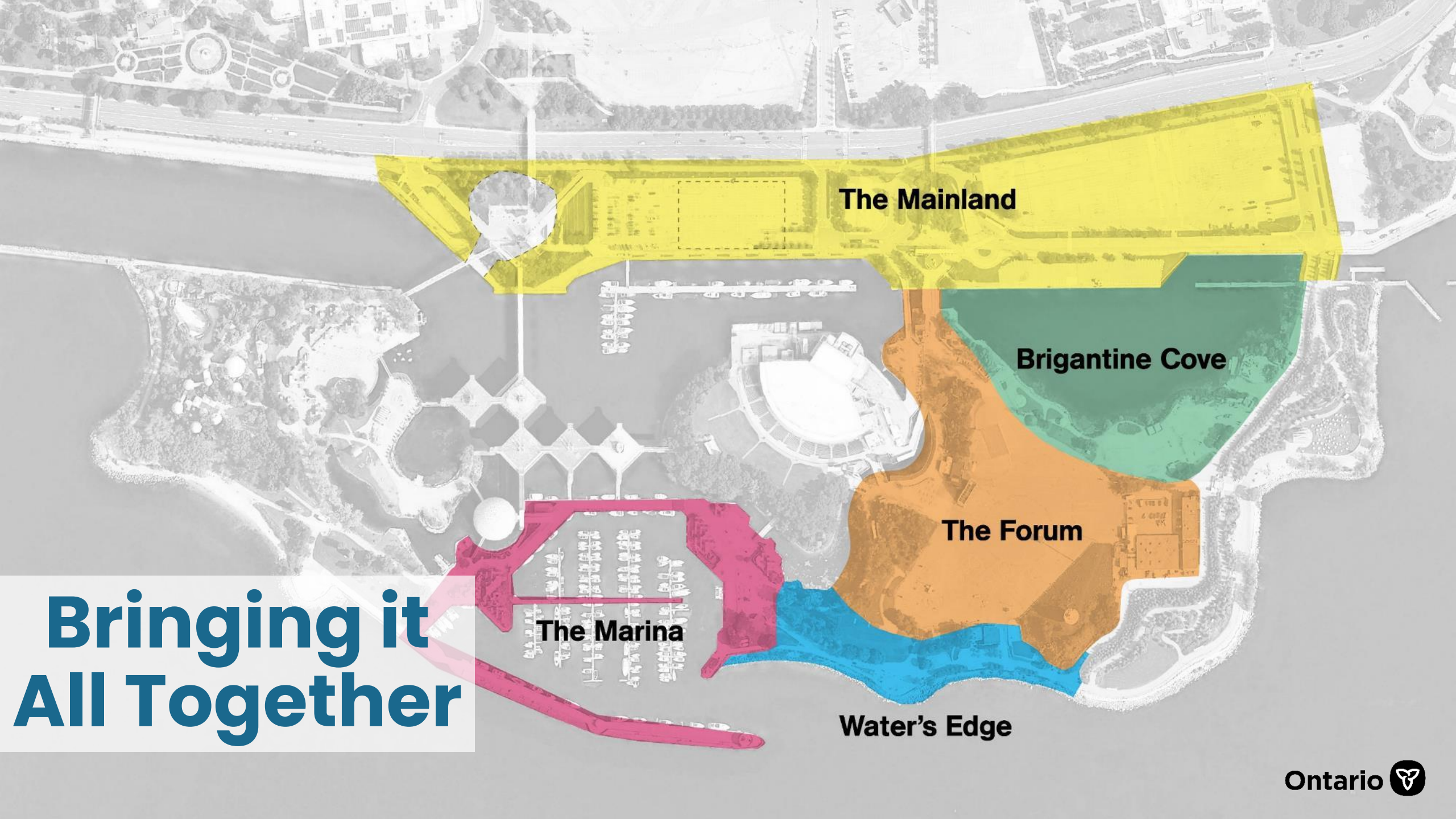

Bringing it All Together

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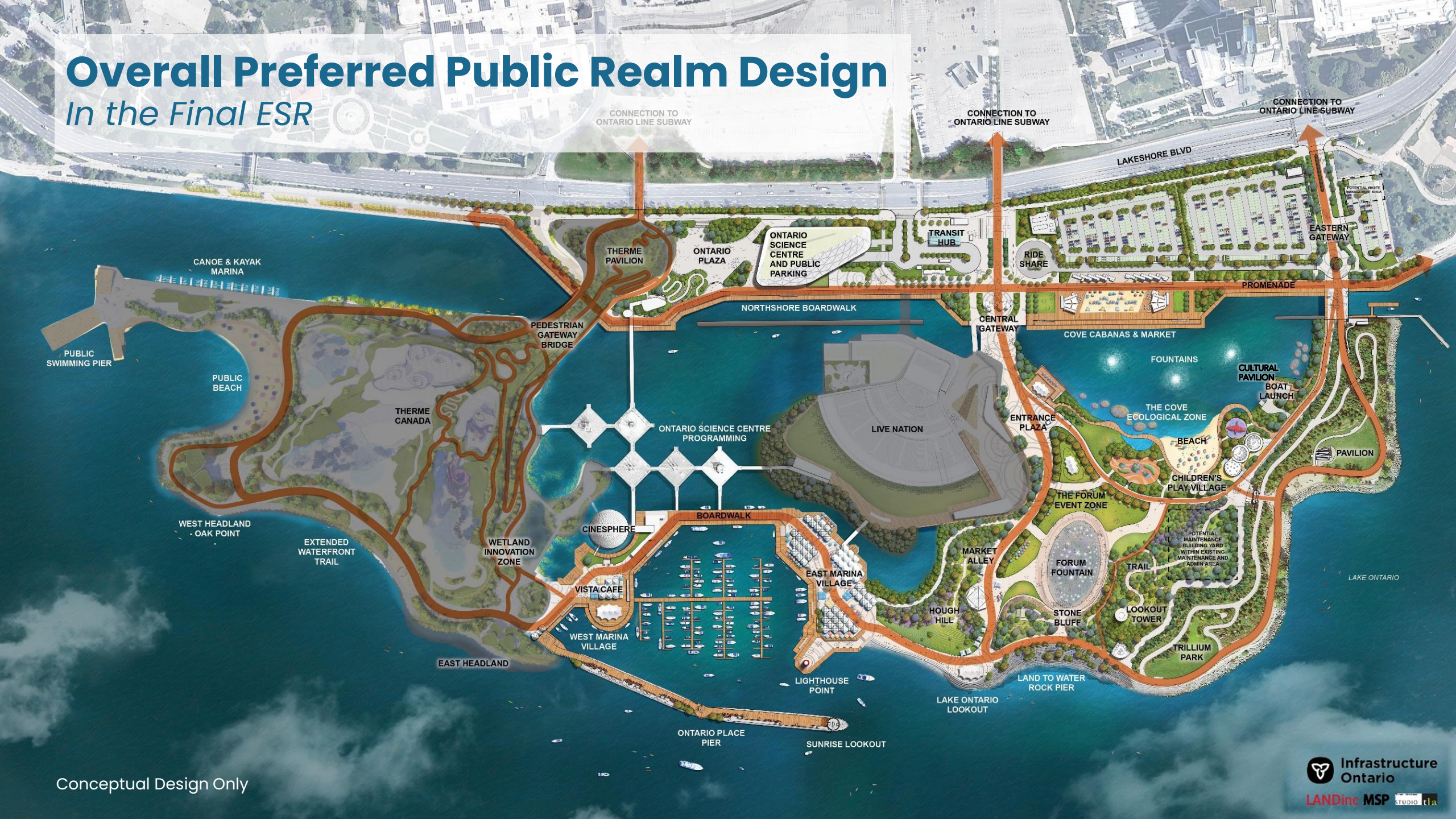
Overall Preferred Public Realm Design

In the Final ESR



Conceptual Design Only

Infrastructure Ontario

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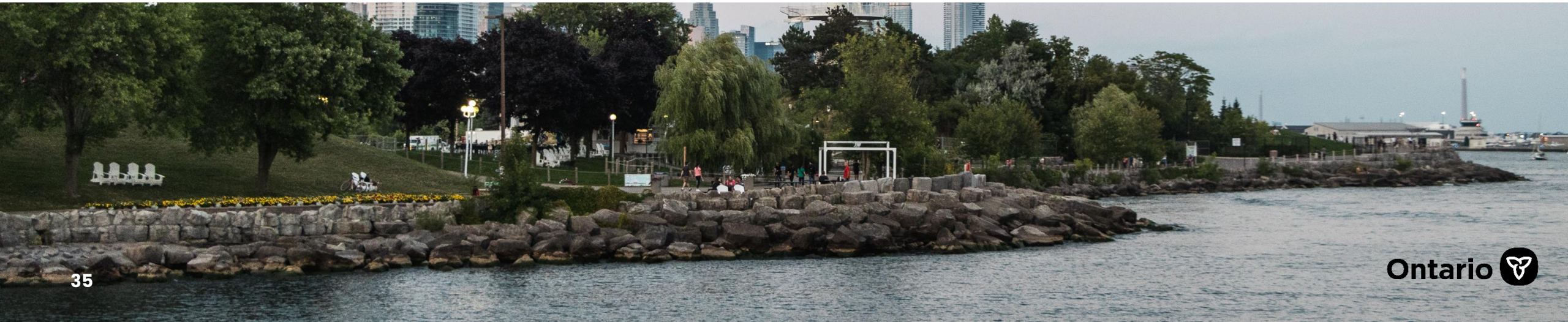
Potential Impacts, Mitigations Measures and Monitoring Plans

Key Potential Impacts

- Potential impacts from the public realm redevelopment were identified through results of the following activities:
  - Project-specific desktop studies and field investigations
  - Applicable regulatory requirements
  - Consultation with Indigenous communities, key stakeholders, review agencies, and the public
  - Professional experience of the assessment team
- Key potential impacts include:
  - Change in the physical environment
  - Change in vegetation on the Project footprint
  - Alteration of the shoreline
  - Change in wildlife and habitat
  - Change in aquatic life and habitat
  - Threats to habitat of Species at Risk
  - Disruption of cultural heritage resources
  - Increase in traffic
  - Disruption in site use during construction



Key Mitigation Measures

- There is an extensive list of mitigation measures described in *Section 5.4* of the draft ESR. Details on mitigation measures will be further refined during detailed design.
- Some of the key mitigation measures identified to eliminate, reduce, or control the public realm redevelopment's potential impacts include:

Potential Impact	Key Mitigation Measures
Design (landscape design) and construction activities will change the physical environment	• Implement recommendations from the Ontario Place Existing Shoreline Conditions Report (Shoreplan 2022). • Ensure grading across the Project footprint meet or exceed the 100-year flood requirements.
Detailed design (siting of infrastructure) and construction activities (vegetation clearing) will change vegetation on the Project footprint	• Implement grading design to permit maximum retention of existing resources. • Prepare and implement a landscape planting plan to mitigate potential impacts resulting from tree removal. • For every tree removed, trees that are native to the area will later be planted across the site, with a replacement ratio of up to 6:1 for trees over 30cm in diameter
Alteration of shoreline (e.g., shoreline protection, flood mitigation)	Implement recommendations from the Existing Shoreline Conditions Report, including: • Rehabilitating shoreline areas to ensure they are stable and will continue to function. • Continue monitoring movement of the breakwater.

Key Mitigation Measures (Continued)

Potential Impact	Key Mitigation Measures
Change in wildlife and wildlife habitat	• Limit heavy equipment use and storage to the project area and to hard surfaces (asphalt, concrete) where possible. • All vegetation and tree removal and/or clearing operations must be completed outside of the breeding bird active nesting season. • Avoid impacts to migratory birds and nesting turtles. • Removal of trees that provide potential bat maternity roost must not occur during the active bat season.
Change in aquatic species and related habitat	• Minimize duration of in-water work to the extent possible. • Ensure in-water work areas are isolated. • Ensure structural design and placement allows fish passage or does not further impair fish passage. • Restore bed and banks of Lake Ontario to their original contour and gradient; however, if the original gradient cannot be restored due to instability, a stable gradient that does not obstruct fish passage must be restored.
Threats to habitat of Species at Risk	• Apply appropriate setbacks from known habitats. • Avoid impacts on Species at Risk. • A daily pre-construction search of the machinery and the work area shall be implemented to identify the presence of Species at Risk.

Key Mitigation Measures (Continued)

Potential Impact	Key Mitigation Measures
Disruption of cultural heritage resources	• Review and follow guidance outlined in the approved Strategic Conservation Plan. • Engage applicable and appropriate stakeholders, communities, and/or individuals that have an interest in the cultural heritage value of the property. • Complete HIA for all proposed activities that may impact the heritage attributes or cultural heritage value of the property.
Increase in traffic	• Travel demand management and increased transit opportunities by offsetting the number of single-occupancy vehicles arriving to the site. • Opportunities for increased modes of travel (cycling and pedestrian) with improved connections to Exhibition Place, Martin Goodman Trail and transit with onsite mobility or transit hub. • Provide additional bicycle parking. • Provide electric vehicle parking spaces.
Disruption in site use during construction	• Notify site users (e.g., local recreation or interest groups) of upcoming construction schedule. • Post construction signs on approach trails and roadways to ensure awareness of construction activities taking place. • Allow space for safe crossing of trails that need to be closed.

Net Environmental Effects

- Net environmental effects are the residual impacts of an undertaking, which are likely to remain following the implementation of mitigation measures.
- Potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed undertaking are well understood and readily mitigated with typical and project specific measures (examples included in slides 36-38).
- With effective implementation of such mitigation measures, residual environmental impacts are not anticipated to be significant.

See the full list of potential impacts, proposed mitigation measures and net environmental effects in Section 5.4 of the Final Environmental Study Report – available through the Documents library at www.engageontarioplace.ca.

Monitoring Plans

- The reason for monitoring is to determine whether a particular potential impact has occurred, whether mitigation measures were appropriate and responsive, and whether unanticipated impacts have occurred.
- Monitoring will occur throughout and after construction, to confirm compliance with mitigation measures and to monitor net environmental effects.
- During project implementation the following specific environmental management and monitoring plans are proposed to be developed:

  - Landscape Plan
  - Tree Protection Plan
  - Naturalization Plan
  - Vegetation Management Plan
  - Traffic Management Plan

  - Stormwater Management Plan (Study)
  - Soil and Erosion Plan
  - Soil and Groundwater Management Plan
  - Spill Response Plan
  - Contamination Discovery Plan

Next Steps

Next Steps

- The 60-day comment period for the draft Environmental Study Report (ESR) ended on September 2, 2023.

- Since then, the Project Team has been reviewing and implementing comments received on the draft ESR, as applicable.
- The **Final ESR** has been posted on engageontarioplace.ca.

- Now that the Final ESR has been released, the project can proceed to implementation (detailed design and construction).
- During detailed design, the Project Team will continue to refine the proposed mitigation measures.

- The Project Team will continue to work with the Indigenous communities for determining placekeeping opportunities to be incorporated into the detailed design.