

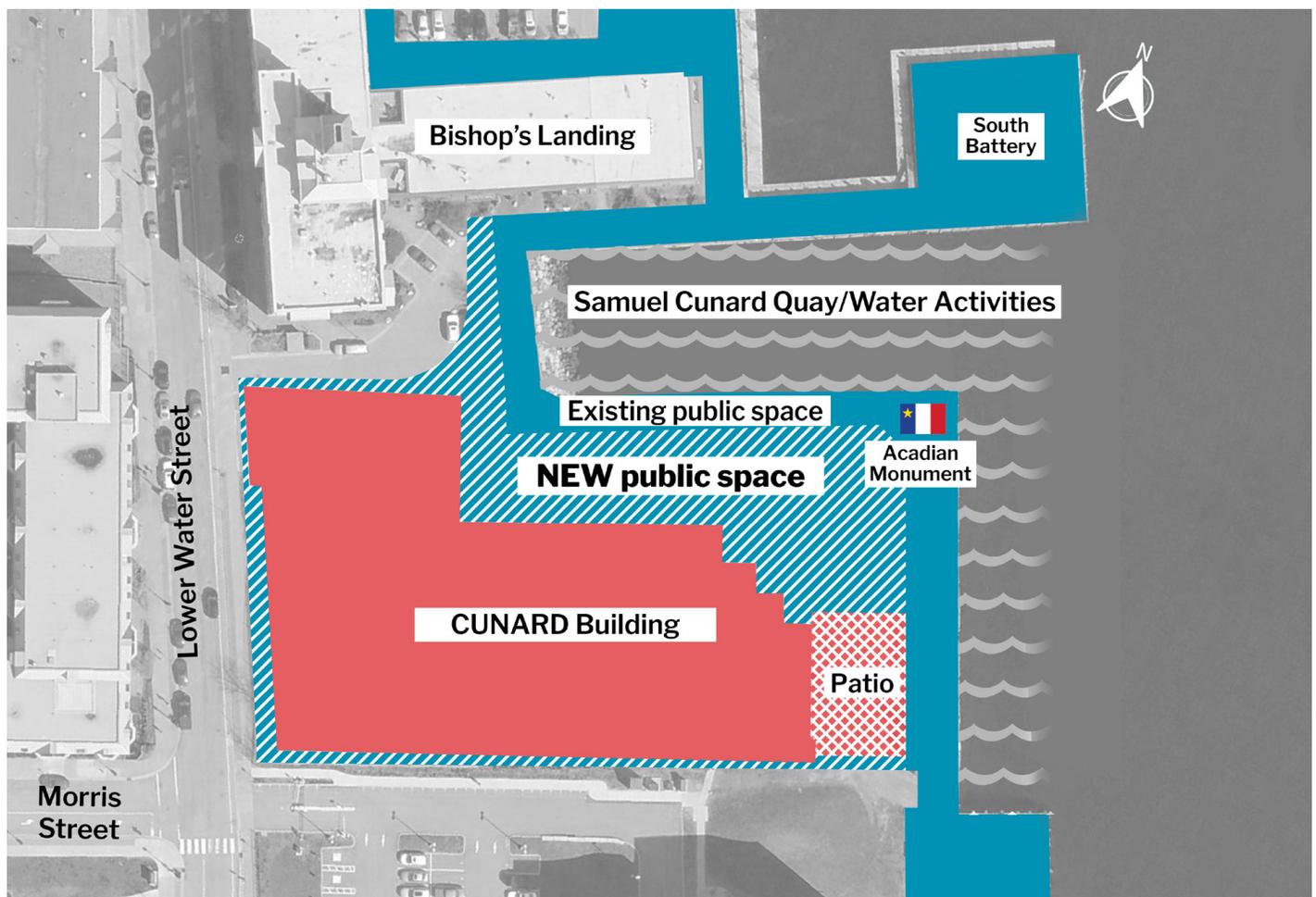
Introduction

Developed in partnership with Southwest Properties, CUNARD will be a high-quality, mixed-use development project that will contribute to a **total of three acres of new and improved public space** on Halifax's southern waterfront, near the intersection of Lower Water Street and Morris Street. Develop Nova Scotia has leased the property to Southwest Properties to enable this development. Completion of the building and public space is scheduled for late 2023 or early 2024.

The building itself will contain 235 rental units, as well as street- and waterfront-level commercial uses. Meanwhile, Develop Nova Scotia is responsible for designing, managing, and operating the significant new public spaces that will surround the building, intended to become high-quality places where locals

and visitors of all ages feel **welcome to come play on the waterfront**. Up to two acres of land, and one acre of water, are being reimaged in partnership with community stakeholders and their detailed feedback.

We know that some people do not feel welcome on the waterfront, or are unable to fully enjoy its offerings. Barriers exist, including a lack of accessibility, unaffordable food and retail options, and insufficient representation in the space. In attempt to understand and remedy these shortcomings, since late 2020 Develop Nova Scotia has been engaging with rightsholders, stakeholders, members of marginalized communities, underrepresented groups, and the general public on the design of the public spaces that will surround the CUNARD development.



CUNARD development and public space context map

Engagement by the numbers

As of January 2022, the CUNARD public space engagement process has included:



13 months of internal, targeted, and general public engagement events



Detailed individual conversations about play, inclusion, and countless other topics with **145** experts, rightsholders, and stakeholders



Pop-up waterfront engagement conversations with **231** people



Ten listening sessions (thematic group conversations; with **52** participants)



Three roundtable sessions (focused discussions; with **21** participants)



Two inspiration sessions (design workshops; with **15** participants)



183 hours of external input gathered



148 pages of notes taken (**55,391** words; see word cloud visualization on the next page)



192 online surveys submitted by the public



750+ unique ideas for the waterfront recorded to date

Guiding principles

Our engagement activities have yielded extensive feedback on CUNARD's future public spaces as well as on the wider Halifax waterfront and beyond. Many comments have been general in nature, not concerned with a specific place on the waterfront but instead acting as guiding principles and general advice about public spaces from those with lived experiences.

This section summarizes this non-place-specific advice, which will guide Develop Nova Scotia's work at CUNARD as well as across the entire waterfront.



- 1 **Water is a sacred thing.** It is a lifeline, and the source of all living things. Water can also bring community together. For the Mi'kmaq, life happened by and on the water, and it still does — water is community. Access to healthy, clean water is critical, not just for the Mi'kmaq but for every person and every living thing.



- 2 **The waterfront must be fully accessible** for people with physical as well as other kinds of disabilities. Develop Nova Scotia should require all events, tenants, contractors, and developers to meet a high standard of accessibility on the waterfront at all times.



- 3 **The waterfront must provide opportunities for everyone to participate.** Unfortunately, many people today feel a discomfort on the waterfront because they don't see people from their own communities using the space. Some say it feels like a place designed for tourists, not locals, and especially not for locals from non-white and non-middle-class communities. Others have told us they can't afford to live, shop, or even buy an ice cream on the waterfront, so clearly this space must not be for them.



- 4 In fact, **public spaces are sometimes deliberately designed to keep marginalized people away**, so if we want those people to feel welcome, the space must be made relevant for them. (There must be something they'll want to see, use, or do.) The waterfront can and should be a great place to pass the time, to enjoy the day with lots of free things to do, and always with the option of doing (and spending) nothing at all. Unhoused people do look forward to and enjoy the time they spend in welcoming public places.



- 5 **Public spaces must feel distinct from adjacent private developments**, and we must actively invite people into those spaces. Oversurveillance can be a deterrent, while friendly security guards are an asset. For this project to succeed, Develop Nova Scotia staff, security guards, adjacent tenant businesses, and neighbours all need to understand the intent to create a welcoming, inclusive space. In future, it would be helpful if Develop Nova Scotia retained some control over who the tenants are in its waterfront development projects.



6 **The waterfront should be a playful place for people of all ages.** Play is exactly the right tool for supporting inclusivity on the waterfront. It breaks down barriers, builds relationships, relieves stress, and provides a different way of thinking and processing ideas. If needed, difficult stories can be told through play; play can even be a way to heal from trauma. And seniors benefit from fun, lighthearted, playful spaces as much as children do.



7 **Many people — whether refugees, or people with disabilities, or LGBTQ+ people, or homeless youth — are forced to grow up too fast** and have been deprived of a playful childhood. Children with disabilities tend to be even more overprotected than most kids, but it's especially critical that they, too, can feel a sense of adventure and perceived risk.



8 **Cities where fun and play are woven through the entire landscape are well-loved, memorable, and child-friendly.** In fun and playful environments, people will want to talk about their surroundings with strangers, which is one way to build community. One can strive to achieve a high density of fun and interesting experiences by designing the space with lots of “affordances” (i.e. many different ways for it to be used). Not everybody thinks the same way; people with disabilities, people from different cultures, etc. may want to use a space very differently. Play spaces should promote open-ended and self-directed play.



9 **When designing for all ages, it helps to lead with kids.** If you can attract children to a public space, others will follow. Kids are an indicator species, and a network of play spaces on the waterfront has the potential to become a focal point for many childhoods. But designing for children requires an understanding of what they actually want, and an understanding of what's good for them.



10 **In general, people can be trusted to manage their own risk and decide how to interact with a space.** There are some exceptions, e.g. children with autism. Most play areas should therefore be designed to be as safe as necessary, not as safe as possible. Do not segregate play spaces based on age or ability; kids want to play with and learn from other kids, period.



11 **Downtown needs more “backyard” places for people to play and relax.** But one shouldn't have to live or work downtown to feel welcome on the waterfront; it must be a place for all HRM residents.



12 And finally, **spaces all along the waterfront should remain flexible** and adaptable to individual interests, special events, changing seasons, and the widest possible range of users. People from some cultures connect strongly with outdoor spaces, while others can find them uncomfortable or even dangerous. Programmability is key (see “Programming ideas” section on the next page).

Programming ideas

Our conversations about the waterfront have yielded many programming ideas (i.e., events and activities) that could be layered on top of the basic infrastructure in the space. Thanks to the range of perspectives included in our engagement process, many of these programming ideas would be well-suited to inviting new communities, groups, and users to the waterfront.



Community picnics
featuring food & vendors from diverse cultures and communities, including Indigenous chefs and recipes



Loose parts play events
loose parts generally require monitoring, and so may not be suited to everyday use on the waterfront



Cooking lessons and other cross-cultural culinary experiences



Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous celebrations, festivals, ceremonies, and events



Culturally diverse performances by local musicians, dancers, and young people
including Indigenous dancing demonstrations



More affordable food options
(permanent & pop-up) on the waterfront



Dancing on the waterfront,
every day/evening of the week



Opportunities to teach & learn fishing skills, including equipment rentals/loans



Designated sensory-friendly times
at playgrounds and in other areas



Outdoor movies



Education through the landscape
e.g., permanent natural features could illustrate our connection to Mother Earth, with educational programming that builds on the meaningful landscaping of the space



Pop-up markets prioritizing businesses from underrepresented communities



Encourage summer camps
to visit and use the waterfront



Programming aimed at adults and caregivers while their kids are playing



Free equipment loans for people with disabilities
like at The Oval: adaptive bikes, scooters, even sledges or skis



Regular partnerships with the Discovery Centre
e.g. interpretation of the marine environment; Science on the Boardwalk



Free swimming lessons
i.e. opportunities for newcomers and kids from lower-income families to learn potentially life-saving water safety skills



Scavenger hunts



Gardening programs at the garden beds



Skill demonstrations and workshops
e.g. Mi'kmaq canoe-building, basketweaving



Igloo or snow fort building contests



Snowball fights



Kite festivals



Temporary lighting installations



Local music hour (with live or recorded music),
including music from specific cultures



Winter programming with plenty of shelter, places to warm up, warm food options, and free hot chocolate

Specific infrastructure, activities, and tangible changes

In addition to guiding principles and programming ideas (see previous sections), most of the input we have collected concerns **specific pieces of infrastructure, new waterfront activities, and other tangible changes** that people would like to see on the waterfront.

Please note: Spatial and budgetary constraints may prevent the actual development of some or all of these features and activities on the CUNARD site and/or wider Halifax waterfront.



Water-based features & activities

The following sections summarize the **most-requested water-based features & activities**, in decreasing order of request frequency.



Splash pad

Rationale

Provides an opportunity for kids and people of all ages to cool off on a hot day, which is especially valuable for those living in crowded or hot apartments with no access to air conditioning. Not everybody feels comfortable disrobing in public or swimming in the harbour (e.g. due to being immunocompromised, having body dysmorphia, or for religious reasons), but a splash pad designed for all ages and users would help overcome many of these barriers.

Details

- Water jets and other water play features
- Concrete surface but a naturalized look and feel
- Can act as a shower for washing off salty harbour water (if applicable)
- Located away from the water's edge

Inspiration

- Splash pads with faucets and interactive features
- Darling Quarter (Sydney)
- Lonsdale Quay (Vancouver)
- Falkirk Splash Park (Falkirk, Scotland)

Must-Haves

- Accessible by people who use walkers and (non-electric) wheelchairs
- No lifeguards required



Accessible docks & interpretation of marine environment

Rationale

The temporary, floating Sea Bridge provided an on-the-water experience that many — though, it is worth noting, not all — people enjoyed. Looking down at the water from high up on a wharf is mostly unremarkable, but exploring the ocean at sea level can be fascinating, and being able to feel and hear waves underfoot can be a fun and novel experience. The ability to get so close to the harbour is a unique opportunity that should not be wasted. Today, however, due to unwelcoming signage, many people feel like the floating docks on the waterfront today are reserved for vessel owners, despite the unique experience these areas could be providing for non-boaters (e.g., sunbathing, dipping feet in the water, and exploring the marine life on wharf pilings).

Details

- Floating docks and walkways near and over the water
- Glass-bottomed wharves to see into the water
- Chances to touch the water and get close to jellyfish, starfish, and other marine life
- A dedicated dock for non-boaters (including just for hanging out), plus docks reserved for small non-motorized vessels (kayaks, canoes, and stand-up paddleboards)
- Safe area to try out new boating experiences, protected from other marine traffic
- Wharf pilings are a habitat, home to all manner of marine life
- Accessible ramps onto visiting vessels such as Bluenose II as well as other accessible marine experiences (Harbour Islands, kayak rentals, harbour cruises)

Inspiration

- Touch tanks
- Discovery Centre
- Shubie Park accessible kayak launch

Must-Haves

- Accessible slopes and ramps down to floating docks at the water's edge
- Ensure there is always a non-floating route for people who don't enjoy the experience of a floating walkway



Downtown Beach

Rationale

Many people desire a “beach experience”, but Halifax’s closest beaches are too far away, and inaccessible by transit. An opportunity to interact with the harbour would provide a new and unique experience on the waterfront, while connecting people to the marine environment. Water quality testing is essential and should be implemented early to help overcome objections to a larger investment in due course.

Details

- Swimming in the harbour must be safe and protected from boat traffic
- Lifeguards
- Water quality testing signal (light/flag), along with data shared publicly/online

Inspiration

- Woodbine Beach (Toronto)
- Discovery Centre (advice on water quality testing and science education)
- Breakwater Park (Kingston ON)
- HTO Park (Toronto)

Must-Haves

- ✓ Clean, clear water (water quality must be assured with regular/daily testing)
- ✓ Space to play beach games (e.g. catch, or even beach volleyball)
- ✓ Accessibility features (e.g. ramps to the water)
- ✓ Sand for making sandcastles



Fishing opportunities

Rationale

Fishing is an activity that reaches across cultural lines and uniquely animates the water’s edge.

Details

- Benches for sitting while fishing
- Fishing could be an activity well-suited to the helipad?
- Places for spectators to sit and watch

Inspiration

- Tall Ships Quay (Halifax NS)

Must-Haves

- ✓ Safe/designated fishing areas (to avoid problems with fishing hooks)

5



Showers & other harbour swimming features

Rationale

Public showers on the waterfront would be a useful amenity for harbour swimmers, people experiencing homelessness, and visiting boaters. And in addition to safe and simple access to the water's edge, certain other features would significantly enhance the experience of swimming in Halifax Harbour.

Details

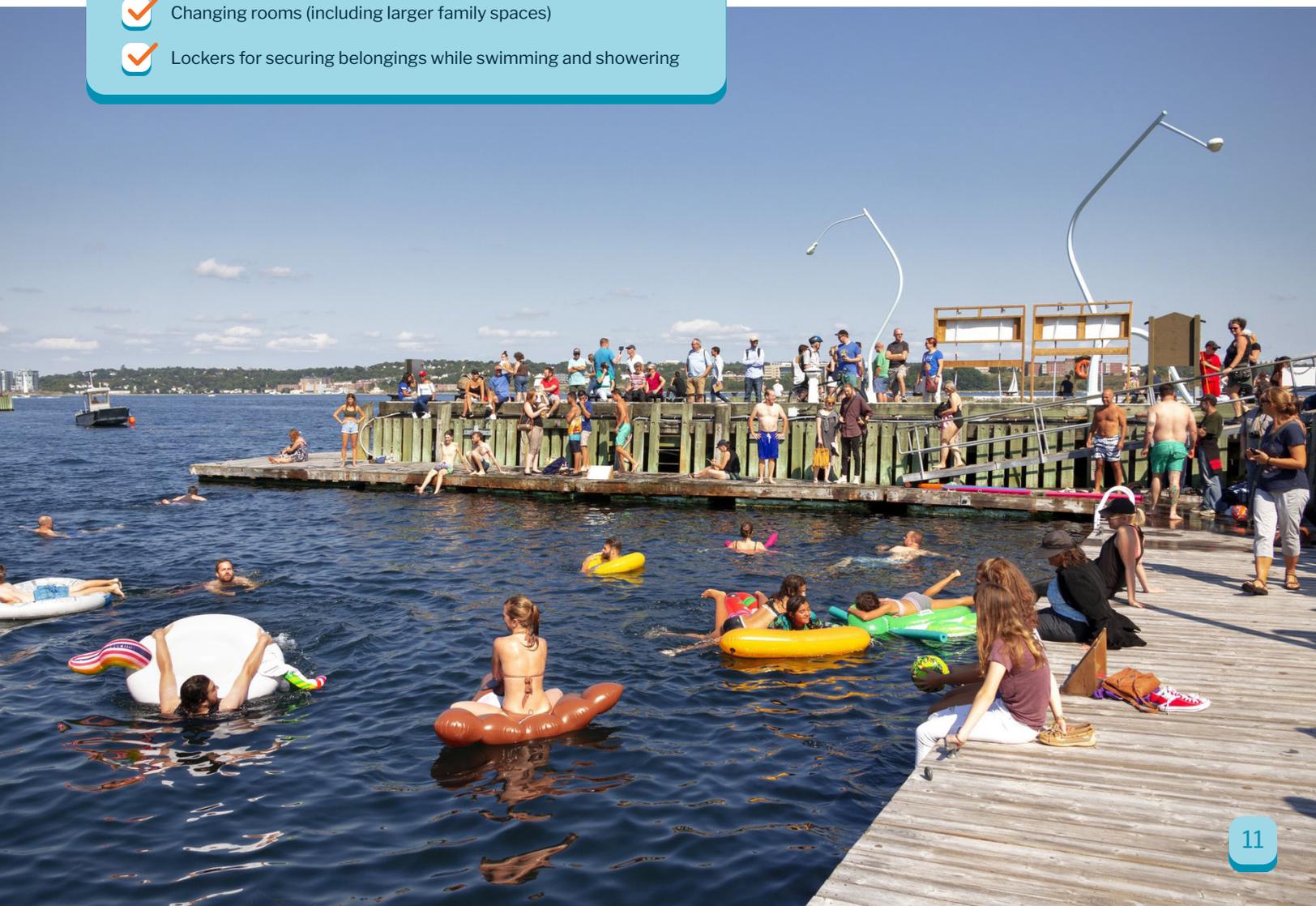
- Jumping platform
- Shallow areas for kids
- Wheelchair access ramp
- Waterslide(s)
- Hot tub
- Sauna
- Lounge chairs
- Shade umbrellas
- Climbing wall out over the water
- Swings out over the water (designed to look like life rings)
- Floating platform for swimming to
- 25-metre lap length

Inspiration

- Touch tanks
- Discovery Centre
- Shubie Park accessible kayak launch

Must-Haves

- Changing rooms (including larger family spaces)
- Lockers for securing belongings while swimming and showering





Land-based features & activities

Representing the bulk of the input we have gathered, the following sections summarize the **most-requested land-based features & activities**, in decreasing order of request frequency.



Public washrooms

Rationale

Convenient public washrooms are a deliberate gesture of welcome and inclusion, allowing all people to remain in a public space longer. Certain disabilities and medical conditions also make convenient access to a washroom essential. Washrooms as part of a business or larger private building are less welcoming and may also be less accessible.

Details

- Generously sized (e.g., for families)
- Located near a play area
- Educational component (in partnership with the Discovery Centre?)
- Do not use a split “half-man/half-woman” symbol if washrooms are gender-neutral
- Outdoor sink(s) for washing hands (especially for wheelchair users), food, etc.

Inspiration

- Peggy’s Cove
- Fort Needham Park

Must-Haves

- ✓ Fully accessible
- ✓ Standalone (ideally not connected to a private business or main building)
- ✓ Clean
- ✓ Gender-neutral (i.e., a safer space for non-binary people)
- ✓ Open 24/7



Benches & seating

Rationale

Seating is essential if we want people to linger. Some people cannot stand for long periods, or need to take frequent breaks while walking along the waterfront. Places to lounge and people-watch are also an essential feature of some of the world’s greatest public places.

Details

- Range of options & configurations; mix of individual (for sitting undisturbed) and social (angled toward each other)
- Moveable furniture to create your own spaces (or even an amphitheatre)
- Ledges for perching
- Playful seating (sculptural, moving/rotating, or oversized)
- Breastfeeding spaces (comfortable seats and welcoming signage)
- Places for people-watching

Inspiration

- Buddy benches

Must-Haves

- Comfortable
- Sheltered
- With views of the water and other interesting scenes
- Suitable for older people and people with limited mobility
- Regularly spaced along the entire waterfront



Places to climb (elevation)

Rationale

Kids will instinctively climb, and play at heights is a big part of many games (e.g. “King of the Castle”). Even adults like to experience places from new, elevated perspectives. People who use wheelchairs are accustomed to being “looked down upon”, and may appreciate the ability to look down on others for a change. And teenagers like to perch.

Details

- Make everything climbable (e.g. hide infrastructure behind a climbing wall)
- Colourful
- Ramps
- Long slides
- A range of heights so kids can still challenge themselves as they grow

Inspiration

- Bouldering
- Netting
- The Wave
- Moebius loops
- Obstacle courses
- Needham Park
- Dingle Park

Must-Haves

- Soft landing (spongy surfaces)



Picnic areas

Rationale

Picnics in parks and other public places are a key social meeting place for newcomers and large families. Picnics can help circumvent the high cost of food on the waterfront; not everybody can afford to buy a family meal on the waterfront, but almost everybody would like to enjoy a meal there.

Details

- Height-adjustable?
- Tabletops painted with boardgames
- A large “harvest table” with non-attached seating (completely flexible and customizable for and by large groups)
- A “restaurant patio” feel, but with no expectation of needing to purchase anything
- Places for family gatherings and celebrations
- Food/drink kiosk on helipad with affordable options for sale

Inspiration

- Dingle Park
- Lisbon food/drink kiosks

Must-Haves

- ✓ Picnic tables (lots)
- ✓ Grassy areas and soft organic surfaces for spreading out a blanket (several of these, all along the waterfront)
- ✓ Accessible picnic tables (with no seating or removeable seating); be able to accommodate two or more wheelchair users at each picnic table



Drinking/water fountains

Rationale

Drinking water fountains are a critical necessity of life for elderly people and those with young children, people experiencing homelessness, and those with a disability that makes temperature regulation difficult. They are also useful for people with service animals and pets.

Details

- Pet water fountains
- Regularly spaced along the entire waterfront

Must-Haves

- ✓ Fountains that include bottle-fillers for refilling own containers and misting bottles (especially during COVID, but also to reduce waste)



Shade

Rationale

Protects the elderly and people with disabilities (including sensitivity to light), keeps kids from getting hot and cranky, encourages lingering in public spaces, and mitigates climate change. For Indigenous elders and seniors of all cultures, providing shady places is a sign of respect and a way to honour them.

Details

- Shaded eating areas

Inspiration

- Nathan Green Square

Must-Haves

- Natural shade (i.e. trees)



Naturalistic (play) landscape

Rationale

Nature and natural elements are perfect for stimulating creativity during play, and for reconnecting people with the environment and Mother Earth in the heart of a busy downtown. Many people have asked that playful public spaces on the waterfront provide a strong contrast to their surroundings, including adjacent buildings built from glass and steel. Natural features change with the weather and seasons, helping to keep the environment interesting during repeat visits, and people should also be able to manipulate and change the space themselves. Water (and snow) are the ultimate loose parts.

Details

- Logs, caves, animals, and boulders from the Nova Scotian environment
- Nature-inspired loose parts
- “Sand, water, and somewhere to climb.”
- Water features (streams and bridges)

Inspiration

- Fort Needham Park
- Expo 67 (Oberlander)
- St. Patrick’s Island (Calgary)
- The Wave
- Corktown Common (Toronto)

Must-Haves

- Natural and wilderness imagery and materials that contrast with a largely man-made waterfront
- Opportunities for risk-taking, challenge, and thrill; foster a sense of exploration
- Wheelchair- and stroller-friendly surfacing (i.e., spongy surfaces around the actual play features, not pea gravel, mulch, or sand)
- A sense of mystery, adventure, and discovery
- Built-in shelter



Trees

Rationale

Trees provide opportunities to relax (with shade and shelter), play (climbing, hiding), nourish (fruit and nuts), and educate (with historical and cultural connections). They also offer numerous other beneficial ecosystem services to waterfront visitors and the city as a whole.

Details

- Fruit trees
- Shrubs
- Planted in the ground (not in raised beds/“tree coffins”)
- Located near play and eating areas

Inspiration

- Nathan Green Square

Must-Haves

- ✓ Native species with significance to Indigenous cultures (e.g. elm or ash)



Caregiver seating (slightly removed from play areas)

Rationale

Locating caregiver seating slightly away from the play area encourages creative play and risk-taking, which are valuable aspects of both childhood play and overall child development. Seating intended for caregivers will also enhance their experience of the waterfront.

Details

- Opportunities for adults to socialize, cross-culturally if possible
- Other activities for caregivers (e.g. exercising) while kids are playing
- Cafes/patios located near the playground so caregivers can enjoy a meal/drink while the kids play nearby. Even better, patios that overflow into the play space with no formal edge.

Inspiration

- Fort Needham Park

Must-Haves

- ✓ Opportunities for caregivers to sit, relax, eat/drink, and socialize while kids play
- ✓ Places for adolescents to hang out near (but not with) their parents



10



Quiet corners

Rationale

People with sensory disorders, anxiety, and autism benefit from quiet places where they can escape from the noise and stimulation of traditional play areas. Buskers, amplified music, and loud exhaust fans have all been identified as sources of unwelcome noise and stimulation.

Details

- Conversation nooks/pods
- Safe and quiet “hang-out domes”
- Designated “sensory-friendly” times
- Gentle fountains/water sounds

Must-Haves



Peaceful spaces located away from play areas and other sources of noise, for meditation, ceremonial use, and just resting/relaxing/chilling out

11



Lighting

Rationale

Carefully designed and attractive lighting ensure public places are safer and more welcoming at night and during the winter months, and can also enhance enjoyment of the space by people with autism or sensory disorders. “Home” isn’t always a welcoming place for everyone; lighting helps create safe public spaces at night, where people can spend time into the evening.

Details

- Lighting installations (artistic; not always the same)
- Colourful
- Pleasant

Inspiration

- Evergreen Festival

Must-Haves



Lighting for safety



Colourful

Rationale

The waterfront is an often quite monochromatic place, especially in the colder months. Colour offers an opportunity to add interest and fun, and meaningful colourful schemes can help to invite new users into the space.

Details

- Meaningful colour schemes (Mi'kmaq, Afrocentric, Acadian flag, NS tartan, etc.)
- Chalkboards and graffiti walls so people can add their own colour and designs, and make their mark on the space

Inspiration

- Toshiko MacAdam's colourful web structures

Must-Haves

-  Bright and vibrant



Fire pits, BBQs, or a community oven

Rationale

Not everybody can afford to buy food from vendors on the waterfront; while this may have an exclusionary effect, we have also learned that in some cases people do prefer to bring their own food, and would even like to cook it on-site if possible. Cooking facilities would also add interesting smells to the waterfront, provide opportunities to socialize cross-culturally, and create new programming possibilities relating to food. A bonfire area would also support Mi'kmaq and Indigenous events.

Details

- Buy something at the market, then cook it with friends and family on the waterfront
- Showcase food from diverse cultures and communities
- Outdoor sink for washing hands and produce

Inspiration

- Song and story circles (with Indigenous elders)
- Coin-operated BBQs in Australia

Must-Haves

-  Safe, designated location(s) for fires and cooking



Outdoor performance venues

Rationale

Opportunities for culturally diverse performances (with minimal barriers to entry, both physical and otherwise) will invite new communities of users to the waterfront, and allow them to see themselves represented in the space.

In a more general sense, many teenagers like to “perform”, to be on display and see and be seen, and then later sit back on the sidelines and watch. To ensure teenagers feel included in the space, this behaviour should therefore be accommodated as well.

Details

- Stage potentially located at north edge of helipad, supported with seating and food/drink kiosk
- Elevated stage or seating to improve sightlines for performances, including raised platforms for wheelchair users

Inspiration

- Street performers
- Toronto Music Garden (Toronto ON)
- Halifax Busker Festival

Must-Haves

- ✓ Culturally diverse performances, ranging from classical musicians and Shakespeare by the Sea, to youth performances by African Nova Scotians, newcomers, and people from other underrepresented communities



Musical play features

Rationale

Playgrounds can and should be about more than just physical play. High-quality musical play features will enhance a play area’s sense of place, while providing opportunities for those with sensory disabilities and disorders to participate in the space as well — a “musical playground”.

Details

- Kid-friendly interactive and tactile toys for experimenting with sound
- Represent cultural diversity through the range of musical instruments provided

Inspiration

- Fundy Discovery Site playground (Truro NS)

Must-Haves

- ✓ High-quality tonal and rhythmic play features (xylophones, drums, steel pans)
- ✓ Sensory-friendly noisemakers that create non-intrusive or meditative sounds (chimes, fountain, gong)



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More hammocks

Rationale

Nearly everybody loves the hammocks and wishes there were more of them, in more locations along the waterfront and indeed also across the wider city. Brightly coloured hammocks embody open-ended play, including elements of challenge and risk, while also evoking Halifax's maritime heritage. They are also appreciated by people experiencing homelessness as a welcome daytime escape from the shelter environment.

Details

- Bright colours
- Hammocks for kids

- A safe, comfortable place to take a nap on the waterfront

Inspiration

- Halifax waterfront



17

Hills and topography

Rationale

A hilly, undulating landscape is automatically playful (and encourages games like “King of the Hill”), and encourages people to walk/roll up and down.

Details

- Opportunities for new perspectives
- Play at heights

Inspiration

- The Wave
- Corktown Common (Toronto)

Must-Haves

- Elevated seating areas and views



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Decorative fountain

Rationale

A multi-purpose feature that can enhance the sensory landscape while serving as a design focal point (and potentially a play feature; see also splash pad item).

Details

- Colourful lighting at night
- Ability to throw in coins

Inspiration

- Berczy Park (Toronto, ON)

Must-Haves

- Seating nearby



Shelter from weather extremes

Rationale

Shelter is both climate change mitigation and a way to extend the use of the waterfront (for play and other purposes) into seasons and conditions when it might otherwise be uncomfortable. Even in more moderate conditions, people with certain medical conditions (e.g. Down syndrome) can have difficulty regulating their body temperature, and shelter can mitigate this.

Details

- Natural and man-made windbreaks

Inspiration

- People who go to the beach in the winter
- The Wave
- Warming stations with activities in each one (e.g. Winnipeg)

Must-Haves

- ✓ Shelter from sun, heat, rain, snow, wind, and cold
- ✓ Passive shelter but also a range of “active” options for warming up and cooling down (e.g., air conditioning, misting stations, propane heaters)



Art installations

Rationale

Uniqueness is a key contributor to place value, and unique and local-themed art installations will add real personality to the waterfront while welcoming underrepresented communities into the space.

Details

- Art installation on the “mound” [Morris Street extension]?
- Acknowledge Mi’kmaq, Indigenous, and Nova Scotian history
- Artistic “breadcrumbs” along the waterfront (leading to AGNS)
- Work with artists to add small but significant details to the public realm
- Murals; painted patterns on the ground
- Abstract designs to encourage creative thinking

Inspiration

- Maud Lewis
- Wellington waterfront (New Zealand)

Must-Haves

- ✓ Public art that is climbable and/or interactive
- ✓ Permanent Mi’kmaq artworks on the waterfront (e.g. sculpture, carvings, beadwork, basketry, and other motifs)



Gardens and green spaces

Rationale

Public garden areas are a rarity in downtown; even the actual Halifax Public Gardens are at the edge of the downtown core. Plants can soothe people’s nerves and anxiety, and additional green space and garden beds would provide downtown residents a place to grow their own food, as well as interesting new sensory experiences (especially smells, but also natural soundscapes and vistas).

Details

- Fragrant plants (including sweetgrass and other significant and medicinal plants)

Inspiration

- Halifax Public Gardens

Must-Haves

- More green spaces on the waterfront
- Garden beds or plots for building residents



Multipurpose sports court

Rationale

Many sports and games are strongly associated with particular cultures and communities. New opportunities to play a familiar sport on the waterfront could therefore help to invite a wider range of users to visit and make use of the space.

Details

- High-quality finish (e.g. glass backboards for basketball nets)
- Colourful courts and lines (an opportunity to introduce local flavour)
- Some but not all lines painted on the court (encourages spontaneity & creativity)

Inspiration

- North Preston Community Centre Basketball Court

Must-Haves

- A variety of balls and nets stored and available nearby (basketball, soccer, volleyball, tennis, squash, ball hockey, pickleball)
- One or more basketball hoops (for 3-versus-3)



Dancing

Rationale

Dancing is a universal activity across cultures, and also increasingly popular with young people.

Details

- Semi-enclosed dancing area (somewhat separated from people walking around or people eating)

Inspiration

- Halifax waterfront

Must-Haves

- Comfortable dance surface (ideally made of wood, but smoother than the boardwalk)
- Places for spectators to sit and people-watch



Exploratory Play

Rationale

Most happy play memories are outdoors and unsupervised, with the freedom to explore and take chances.

Inspiration

- The Wave
- Fort Needham Park

Must-Haves

- As safe as necessary, not as safe as possible



Play on your way

Rationale

The CUNARD site should be just one of many playful experiences along the waterfront (and across the wider downtown and city). It's okay — in fact, it's desirable — to get away from “designated play areas”.

Must-Haves

- Explicit cues that this is a place where it's okay to play



Representation in the space

Rationale

An important part of feeling welcome and included in a space is seeing yourself (and people like you) using that space. People have told us that the waterfront doesn't reflect them, there's nobody there that looks like them, their cultures or languages or histories or struggles or achievements are not in evidence anywhere. It is important to purposefully carve out space for specific communities if you want them to feel welcome and comfortable. And a culturally healthy community, one with a real sense of identity and pride, has innumerable benefits for all its members.

Details

- Artwork by (and depicting) people from a wide variety of backgrounds
- Historical connections to diverse cultures and communities across Nova Scotia, including the Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotians, and Acadians
- Businesses and commercial tenants from diverse cultures and communities
- Culturally significant colours, patterns, symbols, names, and festivals
- A permanent Mi'kmaq presence (artworks, 1752 Treaty Truckhouse with authentic crafts for sale and barter, etc.) on the waterfront
- Food from diverse cultures and communities
- Flags, languages, and other meaningful symbols
- Public spaces that reflect, interpret, and commemorate African Nova Scotian culture (including history and historical figures)
- Connect the waterfront to other heritage sites and historical places (e.g. Africville, Harbour Islands, Peace and Friendship Park, Shubenacadie River, Turtle Grove)
- Invitations in the space: "Try doing ___ here" or "Want to open a business here? Call ___" or "Hold your next event here, free!"

Inspiration

- Statues and monuments
- Show window mannequins with visible disabilities
- Carcross Commons (Yukon)
- Confederation Park (Calgary)
- Wellington waterfront (New Zealand)

Must-Haves

- ✓ Imagery (including marketing materials) that doesn't just show white & able-bodied people accessing the waterfront
- ✓ The entire waterfront must reflect Mi'kmaq culture, with new installations and structures (medicine wheel motif, treaties, "You are in Mi'kma'ki" signage).
- ✓ Land acknowledgement plaque
- ✓ A designated place for ceremonies by the Mi'kmaq and all the Indigenous people living here (smudging, pipe ceremonies, drumming, sunrise and moon ceremonies), with a natural/soft surface (e.g. grass, not concrete), trees, signs about etiquette, no requirement to seek permission, etc.



Strolling

Rationale

Walking and strolling is a popular form of exercise for older people and those with more limited mobility. Many people also like to jog along the waterfront.

Details

- Smooth surfaces with no tripping hazards

Inspiration

- Nordic walking

Must-Haves

- ✓ A guaranteed safe and accessible pathway along the entire waterfront, with sufficient width, no barriers, minimal grade changes, and a tactile and other navigation cues so blind people can navigate the waterfront from end-to-end.
- ✓ A variety of interesting walking routes (ideally loops) with varying lengths
- ✓ Provide an alternative to the wooden boardwalk surface, which is usually smooth enough when newly installed but gets bumpier (and therefore less accessible) with time. Casters on wheelchairs/walkers can get stuck; some people may be prone to stumbling, or can become sore after traveling longer distances on the boardwalk.



Boardgames

Rationale

Even if you can't use some of the larger play features of the space, boardgames can help ensure there is something for you to do.

Details

- Painted tabletops for chess and checkers
- Equipment loans (e.g. chess sets)

Inspiration

- Cribbage boards
- Minigolf
- Bocce
- Waltes
- Extra-large boardgame equipment (connect-4, Jenga, chess)



A non-standard playground that offers something for everyone

Rationale

Most playgrounds are the same year-round, and the same as each other, with pre-fabricated play structures contributing to the homogenization of public space in many cities. This discourages people from feeling a sense of ownership over a space, and kids also quickly become bored and start misusing the playground in order to keep it interesting. (Also, neighbourhood playgrounds also don't always include accessible play features, but a "regional playground" on the waterfront definitely should.)

Details

- The playground should accommodate disabled parents who want to play with their children
- Incorporate Mi'kmaq artwork
- Adequate space between features so people using wheelchairs can turn, park, and maneuver
- Physics toys (pulleys, pumps, cranes, dams)
- A portion of the playground should be enclosed to keep very young children from scattering in all directions. This will safely foster a sense of exploration for pre-schoolers, while making the playground more useful for daycare providers.
- Shaped like a lobster, lobster trap, or fishing boat?

Inspiration

- Some people have also expressed interest in "nostalgic" playground features from their childhoods (e.g. merry-go-rounds)
- While fairly standard in their equipment, the Isleville and Westmount playgrounds offer multiple "zones", water, open fields, and lots of choice
- Fundy Discovery Site playground (Truro NS)
- Toshiko MacAdam's colourful web structures

Must-Haves

- ✓ Usable by older kids and teenagers, who get a bad rap but often want to hang out near (if not with) their families, younger siblings, etc.
- ✓ Something fun for everybody to do, regardless of interest, cultural background, disability, etc.
- ✓ Designed for unconventional bodies and plus-sized people
- ✓ Accessible and navigable with a mobility aid, visual impairment, or other sensory disability or sensory processing disorders; go beyond "just ramps"



Signage

Rationale

Not everybody communicates the same way, and on any given day there are many people visiting Halifax’s waterfront for the first time. Carefully designed signage can be an important way to communicate that a space is welcoming and inclusive.

Details

- Colourful
- Emphasize inclusion (“gender-neutral washrooms this way; sensory-friendly space that way; breastfeeding space”)
- Identify risks (to assist parents of children with autism)
- Non-gendered pictograms

Must-Haves

- ✓ Welcoming tone
- ✓ Multi-lingual
- ✓ Visual icons (not just words)
- ✓ Large print, raised type, and/or braille
- ✓ Simple instructions in plain English to help people with learning disabilities



Designed for all seasons

Rationale

With a changing climate, more people living downtown, and Develop Nova Scotia’s ambition to grow year-round visitation on the waterfront, public spaces should be designed to be used during every month of the year.

Details

- Features that change with the seasons and remain interesting (e.g. trees that flower or change colour; splash pad that converts into skating rink; climbing hill that can be used for sledding)
- Snow mountains and other ways to play with snow (“the ultimate loose part”)
- Lighting installations
- Warm food for sale
- Shovels, sled rentals, and other toys to facilitate playing with snow
- Indoor public spaces

Inspiration

- The Forks (Winnipeg, MB)
- “Crokicurl”

Must-Haves

- ✓ Appropriate shelter (see other entry)



Balancing

Rationale

Part of playing at heights, learning to balance is one of the key aspects of risky play (along with speed, dangerous elements such as water, rough and tumble, getting lost, and using tools), which is important for children’s cognitive development. Children should be allowed to take age-appropriate risks, which teaches them how to use their bodies and safely navigate their environments, and which therefore can help to avoid more serious injuries in the longer term.

Details

- Walls for balancing on and walking along.

Inspiration

- Fort Needham Park



Swings

Rationale

Swings provide a momentary thrill and can offer elevation and new perspectives.

Details

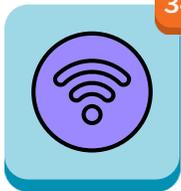
- Family- or patio-style swings
- Out over the water?
- Swings usable by people in wheelchairs

Inspiration

- “Whisper Glide” wheelchair-compatible swings



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Wifi, electricity, and phone charging ports

Rationale

Wifi is a basic necessity for people experiencing homelessness, as well as an important feature for encouraging people of all ages to linger in public spaces. Electricity is also a prerequisite for many types of waterfront programming.

Details

- Phone charging ports could be located in light poles, and in permanent seating and table fixtures

Must-Haves

- Solar-powered

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Access to the waterfront

Rationale

Many people who would otherwise like to access the waterfront are confounded by barriers at the point of access.

Details

- Animate the Morris Street extension to attract people from Water Street to the boardwalk

Must-Haves

- Pick-up/drop-off locations for shuttle buses and vans, with adjacent flat gathering areas where up to 50 people can congregate, especially during events

Online public survey

To date, **192 survey submissions** have been received. Some were collected at in-person pop-up engagement events on the Halifax waterfront, while others were submitted online in response to social media posts, email blasts, and sharing through inclusive engagement participants' networks. The majority (84%) of surveys originated in the Halifax/Dartmouth urban area (including surveys collected in person from people visiting the waterfront); the remainder were submitted from rural Nova Scotian communities (12%) or out-of-province (4%).

In line with project objectives, survey questions focused on ways to make the waterfront more welcoming or inclusive; 34% of respondents indicated that they had felt excluded or unwelcome on the waterfront or another public space, and many shared specific advice on how to improve the public's access to outdoor play in Halifax. While the feedback gathered through online public surveys has broadly aligned with the inclusive engagement feedback summarized elsewhere in this document, some themes from the online public surveys are summarized here:

Features of a successful “play space”:

- Active recreational opportunities (e.g. jogging, dancing, cycling)
- Affordable food and drink available
- Ample seating
- Easily accessible
- Good access to the site, and proximity to other interesting destinations
- Interesting views (e.g., watching boats, people, and sunsets)
- Natural, open-ended playgrounds
- Places to play sports and games
- Proximity to nature, including flowers, native plants, and animals
- Proximity to water, including sand, splash pads, beaches, and swimming
- Shade, trees, shelter, and greenery

Play features and activities currently missing (or in short supply) in Halifax:

- Swings for all ages
- Basketball, beach volleyball, and pickleball courts
- Climbing structures / risky play
- Exercise playgrounds
- Fire pits/BBQs
- Iconic & non-standard playgrounds
- Outdoor skating
- Outdoor spaces in which to create art
- Outdoor spaces in which to relax
- Outdoor swimming
- Shady green spaces
- Trampolines
- Water slides & diving boards
- Ziplines

Inclusion features:

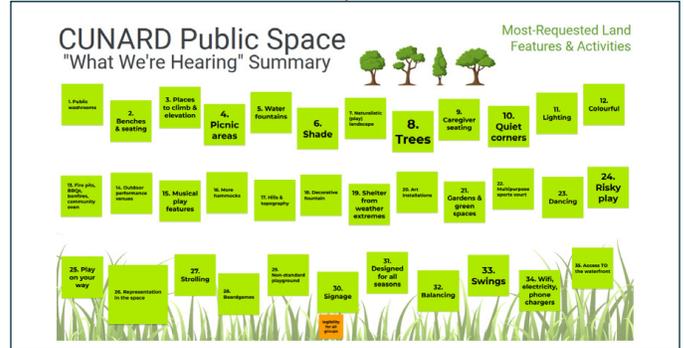
- Consider the needs of people at all stages of life (from babies and young parents to grandparents/seniors)
- Cultural monuments (but not necessarily statues)
- Designated dog and no-dog spaces
- Opportunities for children with disabilities to experience heights
- Physical and sensory accessibility (including washrooms, ramps)
- Places for organic conversation and creative interactions between strangers
- Quieter, slower, and more intimate spaces (i.e., spaces for neurodiversity and solitude)

Inspiration Sessions

To date, Develop Nova Scotia has hosted two **"Inspiration Sessions,"** collaborative design exercises intended to locate high-priority public space features and amenities (as outlined in the previous pages of this document) within the available spaces on and around the CUNARD site.

Participants in each Inspiration Session divided into two break-out groups. Each group in turn discussed their preferences and priorities, and then prepared 2–3 graphics to communicate their intentions. The final pages of this report document each break-out group's thought processes (water features & activities / land features & activities) and refined concepts.

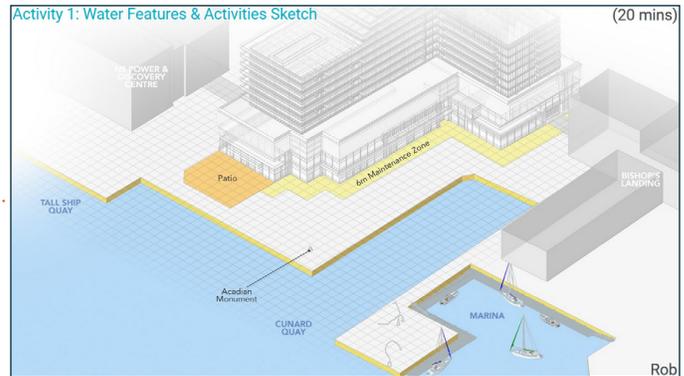
Each break-out group was equipped with sample imagery (based on feedback collected to date) and an isometric site base diagram.

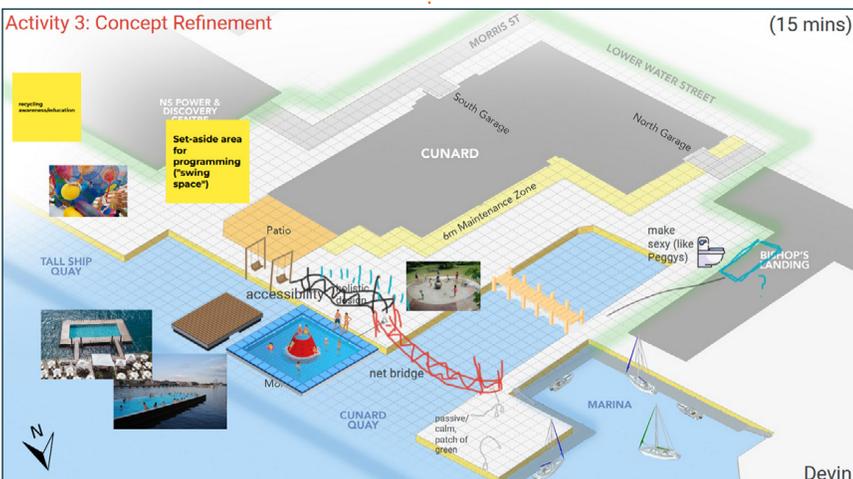
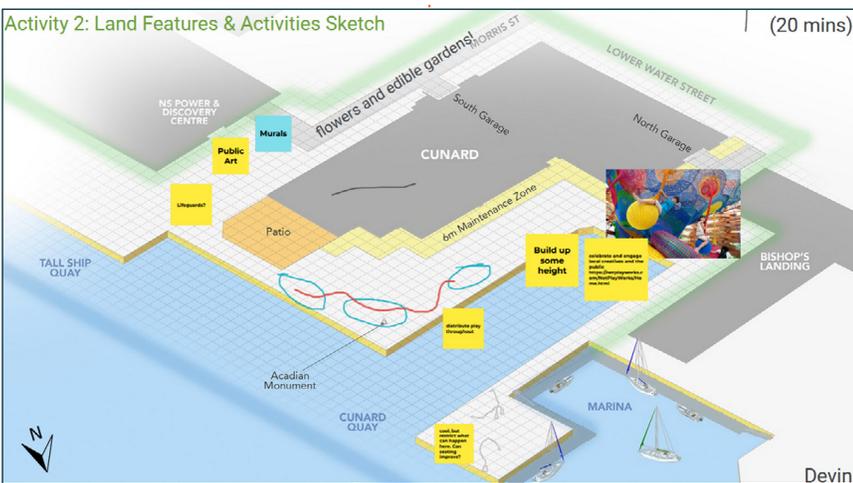
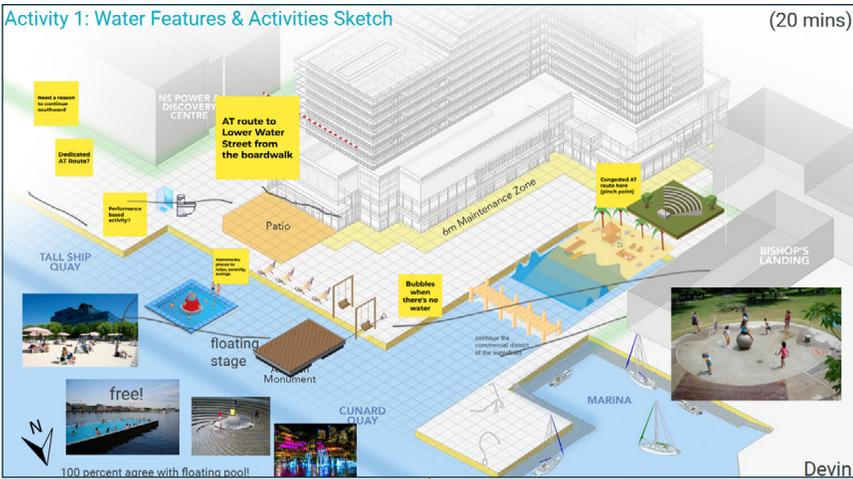


Graphical "What We're Hearing" summaries shared with Inspiration Session participants to guide thinking



Sample images and empty base diagram



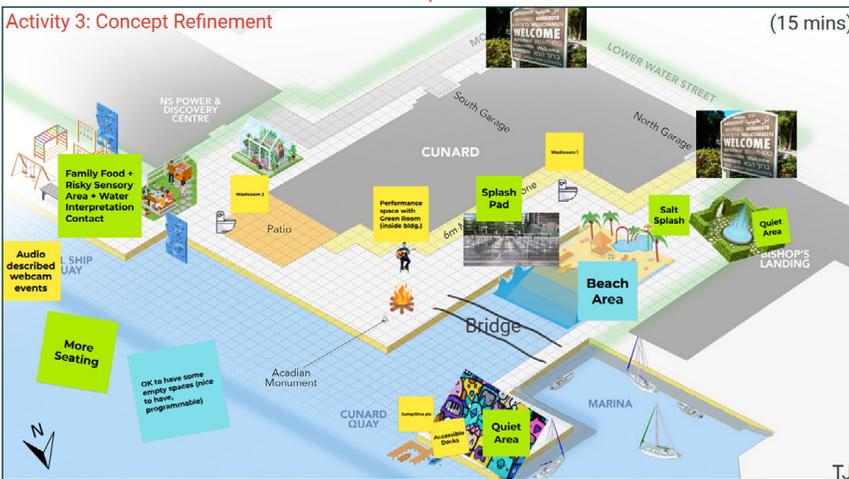
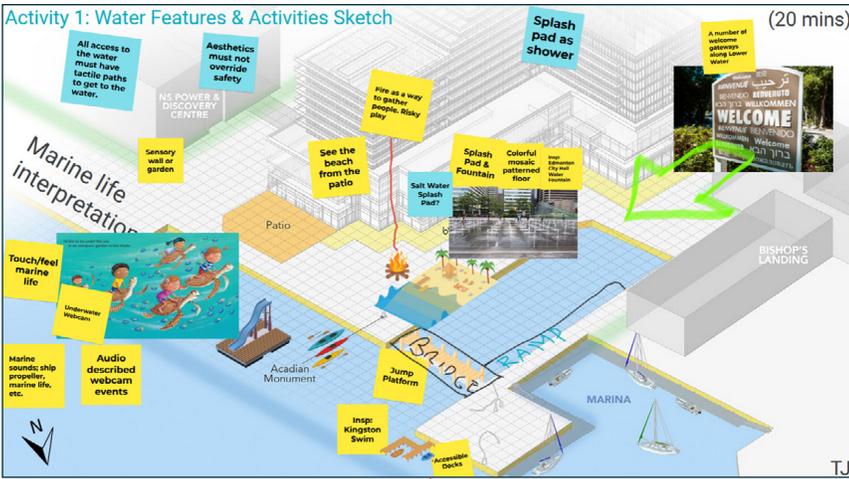


Inspiration Session #2

Group 1

Key features of this concept

- Ways to draw people to and through the site
- Free activities including swimming (floating swimming pool)
- High-quality public washrooms
- Performance venue
- Shortcut across “basin”
- Active transportation connections to Lower Water Street
- Play opportunities throughout the site
- Local artists and creativity on display
- More and improved seating
- Flowers and edible landscaping
- Environmental awareness and education
- Flexible/programmable spaces
- Areas dedicated to relaxation



Inspiration Session #2

Group 2

Key features of this concept

- Tactile and accessible navigation features
- Safety over aesthetics
- Splash pad (salt water?)
- Good access between site and Lower Water Street
- Accessible marine infrastructure
- Jumping platform
- Accessible programming (e.g. for people who are blind, deaf, etc.), plus a sensory garden
- Playgrounds for varying abilities
- Clean public washrooms
- Dedicated quiet area
- Climbing opportunities
- More seating
- Empty, programmable spaces and performance venues

What's Next?

At Develop Nova Scotia, we never stop talking with people about the waterfront. Many of our stakeholders have recommended follow-up actions and additional engagement, which we continue to pursue. The contents of this report will be used by our design team at Fathom Studio to guide the preparation of one or more preliminary design concepts for CUNARD's public spaces. These concepts will be shared with stakeholders and the public for their additional feedback.

We intend CUNARD to be a different kind of public space, and we will continue to engage on its design and programming in the years to come. For project updates, please visit developns.ca/projects/cunard. You can contact the project team anytime by emailing cunard@developns.ca.





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