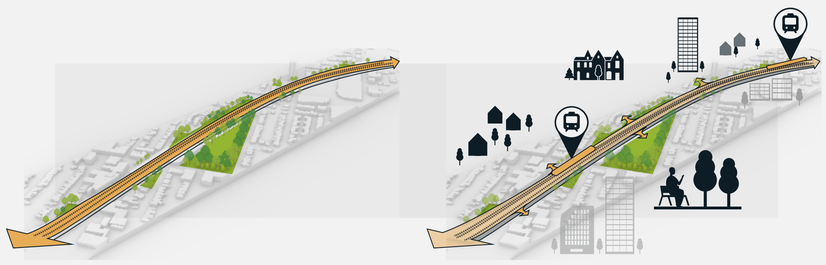
ACTIVITY LINE

A new vision for Toronto's Ontario Line East End Joint Corridor

DESIGN STRATEGY



Adaptable and local

The ACTIVITY LINE design strategy proposes design solutions for the Ontario Line infrastructure that will be built around the existing rail corridor. The overall strategy defines a strong and adaptable framework that establishes a wall treatment in key areas along the corridor. The approach also identifies specific locations that need identity-focused elements and unique programming to better connect with the surrounding local community.

Maintain the "green spine"

The rail line creates pockets of tree-lined open spaces and cul-de-sacs along its length. The irregular geometry and intimate scale of some open spaces has reduced visibility and programmatic value, while other pocket parks are better defined and utilized. This diverse condition requires a context-driven approach, in which different "layers" of design elements are strategically used to connect, conceal, or activate the space around the wall.

Complement the existing and future context

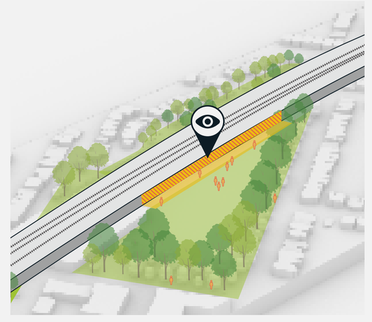
With the rail expansion, some tree canopy will be lost, turning the rail corridor and wall into a more visually prominent element in some areas. The strategy's new railway interface supports adjacent uses by enhancing quiet natural spaces, activating laneways, and animating parks and playscapes.

Wayfind and CONNECT

The strategy establishes a sense of place across the project site through wayfinding and new gateways that highlight the distinctive qualities and cultural stories within each community zone. Using a cohesive material and colour palette and bold identity graphics, the design strategy reconnects the east and west sides of the rail corridor. (Main areas of intervention: bridge underpasses, plazas, large parks)

CONCEAL the visual impacts of the wall

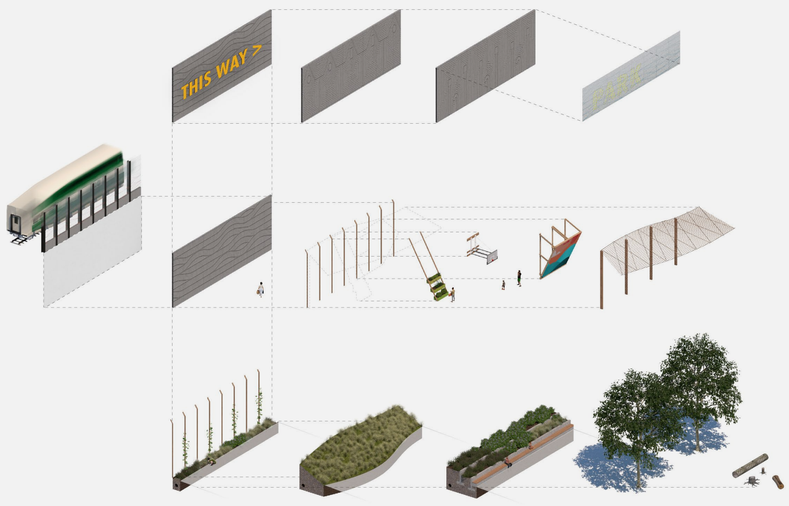
An approach to minimize the visual impacts of the retaining wall mainly by greening the wall particularly in quieter residential areas. This is achieved through various ways of breaking down the large scale of the wall using textured surface treatments, vegetation and landscaping, and other creative wall treatments.



ACTIVATE park spaces in creative ways

Along gathering spaces and high-visibility areas, the new rail interface enlivens underutilized areas through play and art elements, seating, active and passive programming, as well as environmentally-appropriate plantings that provide visual interest year-round. (Main areas of intervention: parkettes/ smaller parks, laneways)

A LAYERED APPROACH



Layer 1 Toolkit: Surface Treatments

- Custom concrete form liners to create texture and reference context
- Artwork to bring colour and create storytelling and a sense of place
- Painted oversized graphics for wayfinding
- Graphic treatment on acrylic sound barrier for bird safety and visual continuity

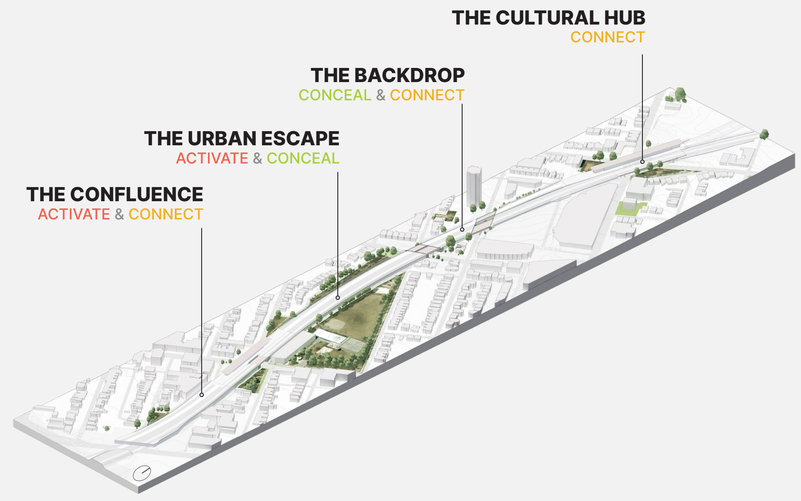
Layer 2 Toolkit: Fins and Interactive Elements

- Wood and expanded metal mesh fins to create visual rhythm, introduce colour and create structures for vines while maintaining access to the wall
- Wood sound barrier fins to mitigate sound
- Vertical support structure for adaptable play, including climbing, basketball, artistic platforms, etc.

Layer 3 Toolkit: Planting Strategy

- Tree stumps and logs to remain, where possible
- New trees wherever space allows
- Terraced planters with native groundcover planting and integrated seating
- Embankments with native groundcover planting at 2:1 slope
- Climbing vines along metal fins, every 2.28m for wall inspection access
- Vertical planter boxes where residents can act as stewards and benefit from community gardening space

CHARACTER ZONES



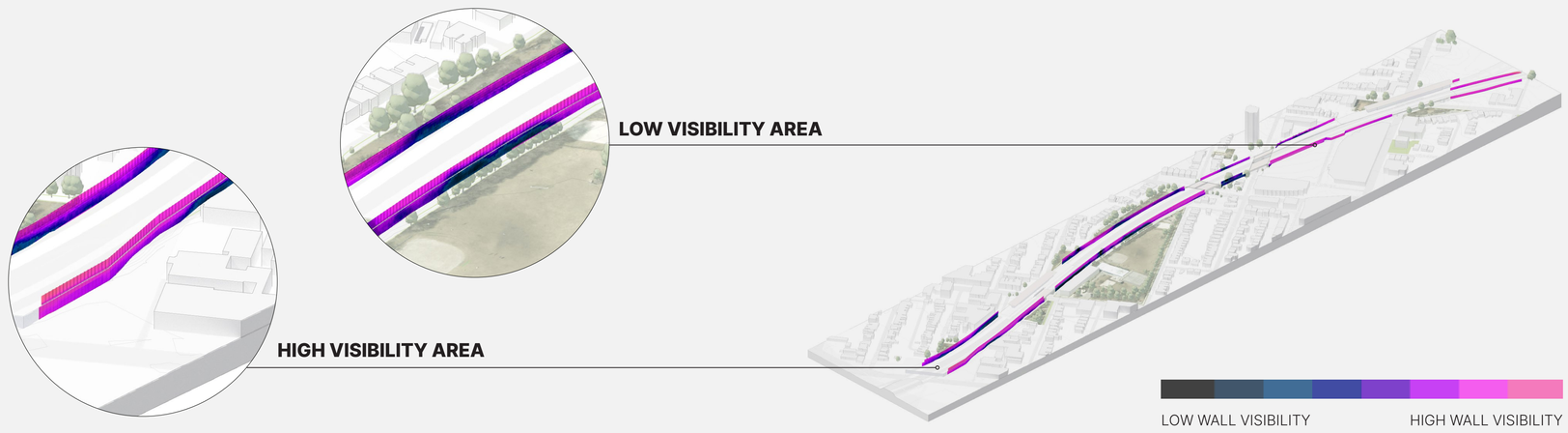
VISUAL IMPACT

The varied conditions along the corridor present a challenge in understanding the full extent of the visual impact of the wall. Through a digital visibility analysis of the future conditions that includes built elements and trees, an informed strategy for the selection of toolkit techniques is used.

Depending on the results of the visibility analysis in each location, different techniques from each layer toolkit are selected and applied. This includes **connecting** spaces through wayfinding, **concealing** the wall, and **activating** surrounding open spaces along it.

For example, an area where the wall has high visibility is an opportunity to **connect** and to implement wayfinding to help people orient and navigate themselves. Based on contextual conditions, these areas may **activate** nearby spaces, while creating a unique identity and visual cues for people as they navigate through different neighborhoods. Low visibility areas where the wall is not easily seen may not require any toolkit techniques for concealing, connecting, or activating.

Visibility is one part of a wider set of contextual conditions, so each location is assessed based on the type of interface (public vs .private), the height of the wall, proximity to residential homes, and potential for future development in the area.



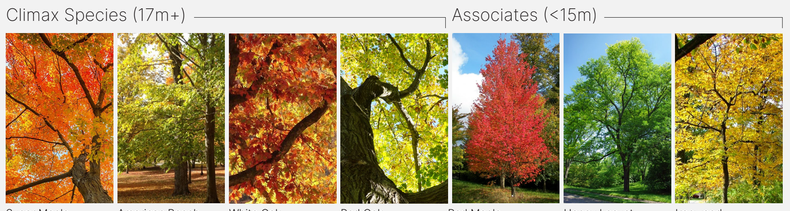
PLANTING STRATEGY

This planting strategy mimics the native forest structure that would have covered this land prior to settlement. Moving from the ground upwards, the planting strategy begins with a healthy forest floor with recycled biomass litter. Although some existing trees and other vegetation will need to be cut down for construction, no biomass should be removed off site. Instead, biomass should be processed as mulch or left in place as nurse logs and stumps for the forest floor.

A groundcover layer comes next, composed of native shade-tolerant and drought-tolerant species adapted to this climate. Forest groundcover species are naturally low-growing due to the limited availability of sunlight, which provides clear sight lines through the forest understory. Next, the understory layer above groundcover consists of slow-growing, shade tolerant trees and shrubs that will be planted at a near-mature size to allow sight-lines through the planting area up to 2m in height. Finally, large canopy trees will be planted wherever possible to anchor the ecological community.

1 CANOPY

Climax Species (17m+) — Associates (<15m)



Sugar Maple *Acer saccharum*
American Beech *Fagus grandifolia*
White Oak *Quercus alba*
Red Oak *Quercus rubra*
Red Maple *Acer rubrum*
Honey Locust *Gleditsia triacanthos*
Ironwood *Ostrya virginiana*

2 UNDERSTORY

Small Trees (5-8m) — Multi-stemmed shrubs (3-4.5m)

Serviceberry *Amelanchier canadensis*
Eastern Red Bud *Cercis canadensis*
Blue Beech *Carpinus caroliniana*
Hoptree *Ptelea trifoliata*
Pagoda dogwood *Cornus alternifolia*
Allegheny Serviceberry *Amelanchier laevis*
Gray Dogwood *Cornus racemosa*
Witchhazel *Hamamelis virginiana*

3 GROUNDCOVER

White Trillium *Trillium grandiflorum*
Woodland Phlox *Phlox divaricata*
Foam Flowers *Tiarella cordifolia*
Bunchberry *Cornus canadensis*
Canada anemone *Anemone canadensis*
Wild Geranium *Geranium maculatum*

Pennsylvania Sedge *Carex pensylvanica*
Northern bedstraw *Galium boreale*
Kelsey's Dogwood *Cornus sericea kelseyii*
Wild Strawberry *Fragaria vesca*

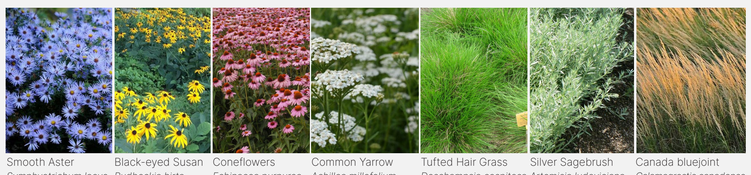
4 FOREST FLOOR

Nurse Stump
Leave stumps where existing trees are removed
Nurse Log
Leave logs on site to facilitate ecological renewal
Mulch
Shred tree bark and wood on site to reuse as mulch

SUNLIGHT HOURS ANALYSIS

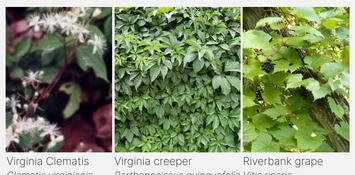
At the forest edge, partial sun conditions allow for a more vibrant palette of native perennials and grasses. These species grow well in dry, part-shade conditions that will be found along the retaining walls and enhance visual interest year-round.

5 FOREST EDGE (URBAN PLANTERS)



Smooth Aster *Symphyotrichum laeve*
Black-eyed Susan *Rudbeckia hirta*
Coneflowers *Echinacea purpurea*
Common Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*
Tufted Hair Grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*
Silver Sagebrush *Artemisia ludoviciana*
Canada bluejoint *Calamagrostis canadense*

6 VINES (FOR TRELLIS OR CANOPY)



Virginia Clematis *Clematis virginiania*
Virginia creeper *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*
Riverbank grape *Vitis riparia*

NATIVE POLLINATORS

Bicoloured Agapostemon Bee *Agapostemon virescens*
Giant Swallowtail Butterfly *Papilio cresphontes*

ZONE 1 THE CONFLUENCE

Eastern Avenue Overpass Bridge to Queen Street East

Zone 1 provides a unique condition that integrates the bustling main street activity of Queen Street and established neighbourhoods, which include affordable housing and supportive services.

This zone consists of several smaller spaces that are key places to **activate**. Playgrounds and parkettes provide space for neighbourhood programming, including safe and vibrant communal areas for horticultural, sport, gathering, passive, and active uses. These spaces will be designed with plants and use of biomass to generally compensate for any loss of existing tree canopy. The strategy advances green infrastructure and biodiversity through strategic planting, while retaining as much of the existing biomass as possible in the form of processed mulch or ready-to-play tree stumps.

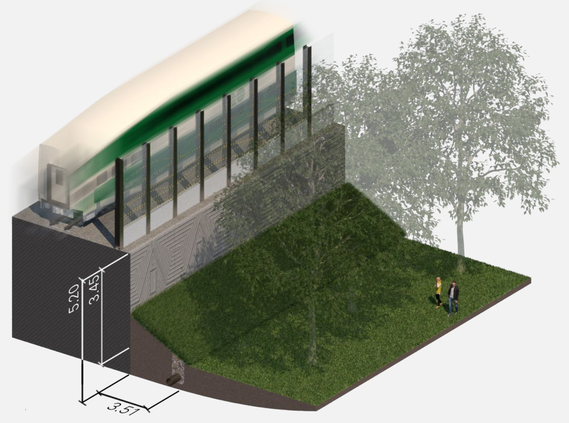
**TYPICAL WALL CONDITION ON ZONE 1,
BY EASTERN AVE**

ZONE 2 THE URBAN ESCAPE

Queen Street Overpass Bridge / Station to Dundas Street

Zone 2 is bound by large parks, each with a unique character. Jimmie Simpson Park is focused on community and active uses, promoting a need to **activate** the space by adding layers of recreational amenity.

In contrast, Bruce MacKey Park is much more secluded and promotes a quiet oasis within the city. Therefore, the use of a **conceal** move helps to reinforce the existing community use of the current open space with added vegetation and landscape attenuation.



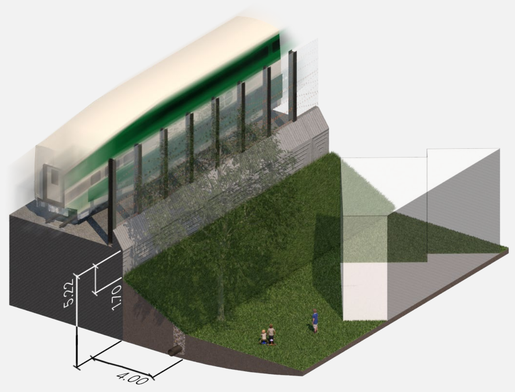
TYPICAL WALL CONDITION ON ZONE 2, BY THE BASEBALL DIAMOND AT JIMMIE SIMPSON PARK

ZONE 3 THE BACKDROP

Dundas St. to proposed Gerrard Station Platform

Zone 3 is heavily influenced by the interface between the rail corridor and residential areas. The predominant design strategy is to **conceal** and to mitigate visual and acoustic impacts. Components used to achieve this include embankments, terraced landscapes, and owner-maintained vertical planting boxes. This strategy may require communal stewardship throughout this section of the corridor.

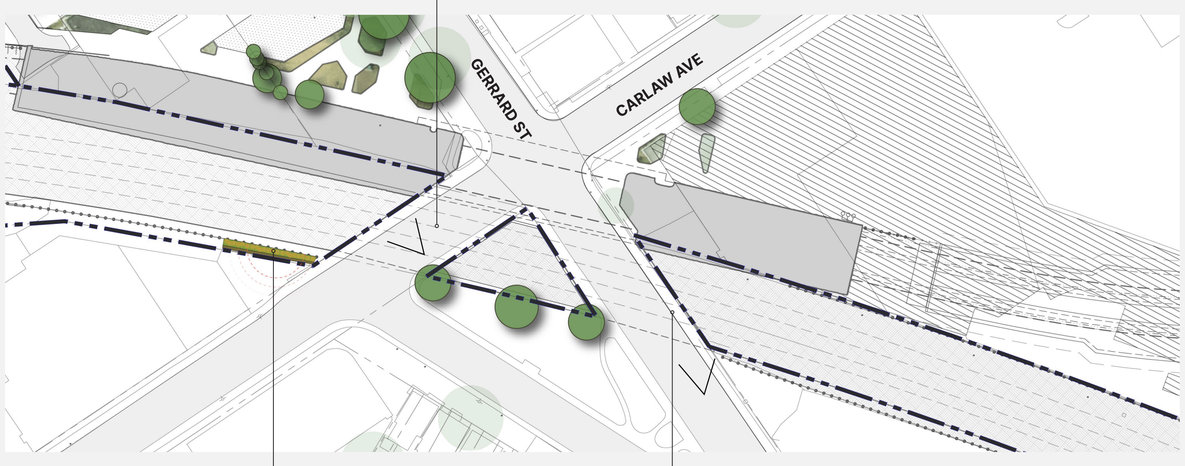
Zone 3 will also include design strategies that include **connect** features at key linkages across the corridor. Lighting and wayfinding will be instrumental in creating an inclusive and safe connection under the rail line.



TYPICAL WALL CONDITION ON ZONE 3, BY A PRIVATE PROPERTY AT LOGAN AVE AND DUNDAS ST

ZONE 4 THE CULTURAL HUB

Gerrard Station to Pape Avenue



Zone 4 contains and connects to several established cultural communities, including East China Town, the Real Jerk, and Little India. This area will also have a new transit station that will boost its traffic. It is imperative that interventions solidify cultural identities, so that this area can continue to grow as a cultural hub, rather than replace it with transit infrastructure character.

The dominant move here is to **connect**, not only to provide wayfinding for transit users, but to tie the site to its history and solidify a sense of place. This will be achieved through commissioned public artwork implemented with longevity, legible signage, and integrated lighting.

There is a potential opportunity to **activate** a small area along Carlaw Ave that currently functions as a parking lot. By providing terraced planting and seating, it becomes a gathering area, which anchors the intersection as a node while the planting mitigates some of the visual impact of the overpass pillars.

TYPICAL CONDITION ON ZONE 4, BY CARLAW AVE