

# Maritime Mile

Development and Animation Strategy

24 January 2019



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# **Maritime Mile**

## **BOOK 1: VISION & IDENTITY**

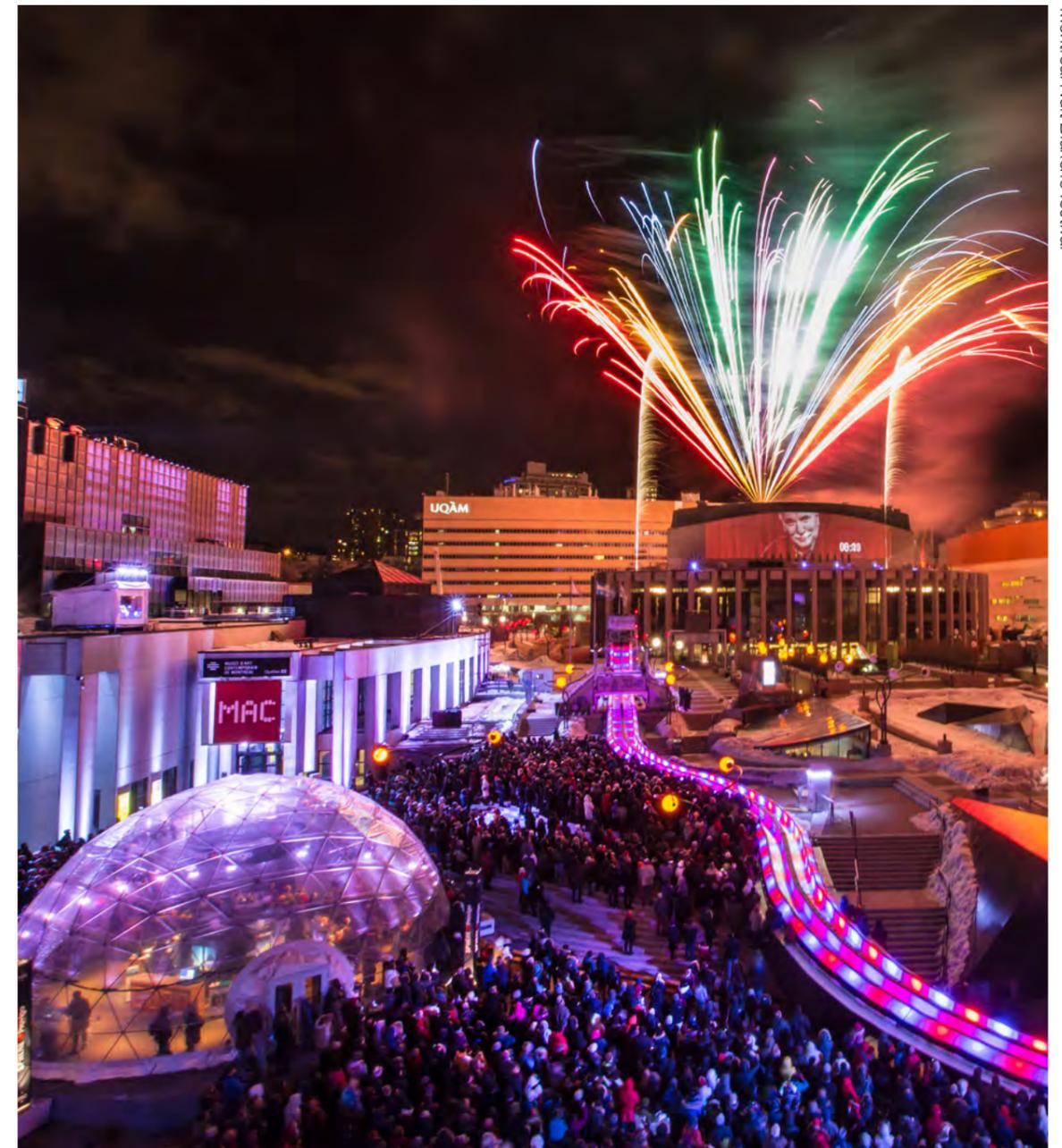
# 1.1 Cultural Placemaking: Background

Originating in the 1960's, placemaking is a term that has become ubiquitous across the built environment industry since the 2000s. Over the past ten years, Futurecity has championed **Cultural Placemaking**. It is based on the belief that culture is essential for unlocking the full potential of urban places, and that culture must be factored in at the very start of new urban planning processes.

In this context, 'culture' is broadly defined, including the traditional arts sector – galleries, museums, theatres and artist-led and participatory projects, but also extends beyond those boundaries to look at the way culture can play a role in public realm design, wayfinding, play, health and wellbeing, employment, education, leisure, heritage, tourism and technology.

Through this approach –and by understanding how these types of initiatives can be a catalyst for other forms of value - culture can generate new value, stories and credibility for urban places, and draw out a story that the public can see cuts across all aspects of a new waterfront leisure destination.

Culture is a powerful force for reflecting a coherent and unified cultural identity. Projects that can come from applying a cultural placemaking approach can include art in the public realm, artist-designed architecture or streetscapes, partnerships with cultural organisations and communities, or the introduction of creative workspaces.



Montreal Nuit Blanche festival

# 1.1 Cultural Placemaking: Opportunity for Belfast

The past decade of investment has catapulted Belfast from a city dealing with long-term uncertainty to a contemporary, metropolitan city with a strong tourism draw akin to that of similar capital cities. In 2018, Lonely Planet named Belfast and the Causeway coast as the best region to visit, and the city is continuing to reinvent itself with a growing foodie culture that is sweeping Northern Ireland. Ambitious, creative approaches define our positive identity of place, and Belfast is on a steep trajectory to grow its leisure and tourism offer through a strategic approach to cultural placemaking.

## **Capital Cities Making Cultural Statements**

Across the world, capital cities are competing with each other to attract the best talent, investment and economy. Cities are being re-invented and re-modeled to become more like urban theatres than the work centers of old. We know that a healthy and vibrant cultural and leisure offer differentiates cities in a positive way, helping to create places where people want to be, are proud of and can achieve their potential. It contributes to a city's uniqueness and diversity. Cultural renaissance is not just a handy spur to tourism; it is also an essential ingredient to attract investment and new people.



Belfast Culture Night 2016

# 1.2 Vision & Identity

## Belfast's Heritage Waterfront Destination

*The Maritime Mile, a place where:  
Water meets Land  
Heritage meets Innovation  
Culture meets Commerce  
Industry meets the World*

### Vision

Maritime Mile is the capital's dynamic historic waterfront destination – harbouring entertainment, cutting edge technology, research & entrepreneurship, based upon a historic origin that represents bold ambition and big ideas.

### Identity

Maritime Mile is the place where the city began, where people dreamed big and led the world in maritime engineering. Today, people come to reflect upon that heritage and use it as inspiration to think big-- bringing cutting edge innovations in science, research, media and technology back to the Mile. Belfast, a city once plagued by its past, is now primed to claim its status as a European capital with the Maritime Mile as its catalyst for this tidal change. The Mile will be a place where generations of dreamers come to make their mark through authentic design, activation and invention that celebrates Belfast's future as well as its maritime heritage.



[Top] RMS Titanic; [Bottom Left] Teenagers at NI Science Park; [Bottom Right] Titanic Belfast



# 1.3 Mapping the Mile Heritage & History

The Maritime Mile already boasts a vast resource of heritage assets, from the very origins of Belfast's Harbour at Clarendon Docks through to SS Nomadic. Further along, the refitted Titanic Hotel (formerly the Drawing Offices and Headquarter Building of Harland & Wolff) sits beside the grand Titanic Belfast, which is Northern Ireland's leading tourist destination. The Slipways draw visitors further north where they can continue on to the Great Light and the restored HMS Caroline, the last survivor of the WWI Battle of Jutland 1916. Thompson Dock, the graving dock that once held the Titanic and many other grand ships and its Pumphouse sit on the edge of the Maritime Mile, poised to come into their own as key heritage destinations as the Maritime Mile continues to grow.

The Maritime Mile vision builds upon the strong heritage of maritime endeavours, as a place where visitors and locals alike can explore, discover and learn about the history of Belfast's harbour and the engineering prowess that put it on the global map. A focussed vision for the Mile ensures that each new initiative explores how this history and heritage can best engage with contemporary audiences.



# 1.3 Mapping the Mile Future Trends

Innovation lies at the heart of the Mile's growth - the district is already a place where world-class production studios sit alongside a cutting edge science park and entertainment and sporting centre. The Mile should be a unifier and amplifier of these activities - bringing each group together to form new cross-discipline collaborations and projects within the public realm that invite interaction and discovery.

## Media & Technology

Emblematic of the media and technology boom that Northern Ireland has built over the past decade, the Titanic Studios, the cornerstone of Titanic Quarter's Media Campus, has been used by leading producers such as Universal, Playtone and HBO. Part of the vision of the Media Campus is to support the growth of the next generation of native producers through ICT and media courses available at the Belfast Metropolitan College.

## Science, Research and Entrepreneurship

Catalyst Inc is Northern Ireland's next generation science park, home to a community of 200 companies and over 3,000 engineers, researchers, entrepreneurs and executives, supports an ecosystem of high-growth-potential knowledge industry companies in Northern Ireland. For Belfast's future engineers and scientists, the Odyssey's award-winning interactive science centre, W5, features more than 250 permanent exhibits and hosts daily demonstrations as well as programmes for school groups.



# 1.3 Mapping the Mile

## When is a Mile more than a Mile

At the core of the Maritime Mile experience is a single nautical mile stretch of the River Lagan, bookended by the Lagan Weir Footbridge and Thompson Dock. Building on this as a wider experience, Barrow Square to Thompson Dock is 4.5 km. The Maritime Mile now goes beyond its core linearity as a site with a number of entry points and an array of routes that allow visitors to dictate their own journeys through the district.

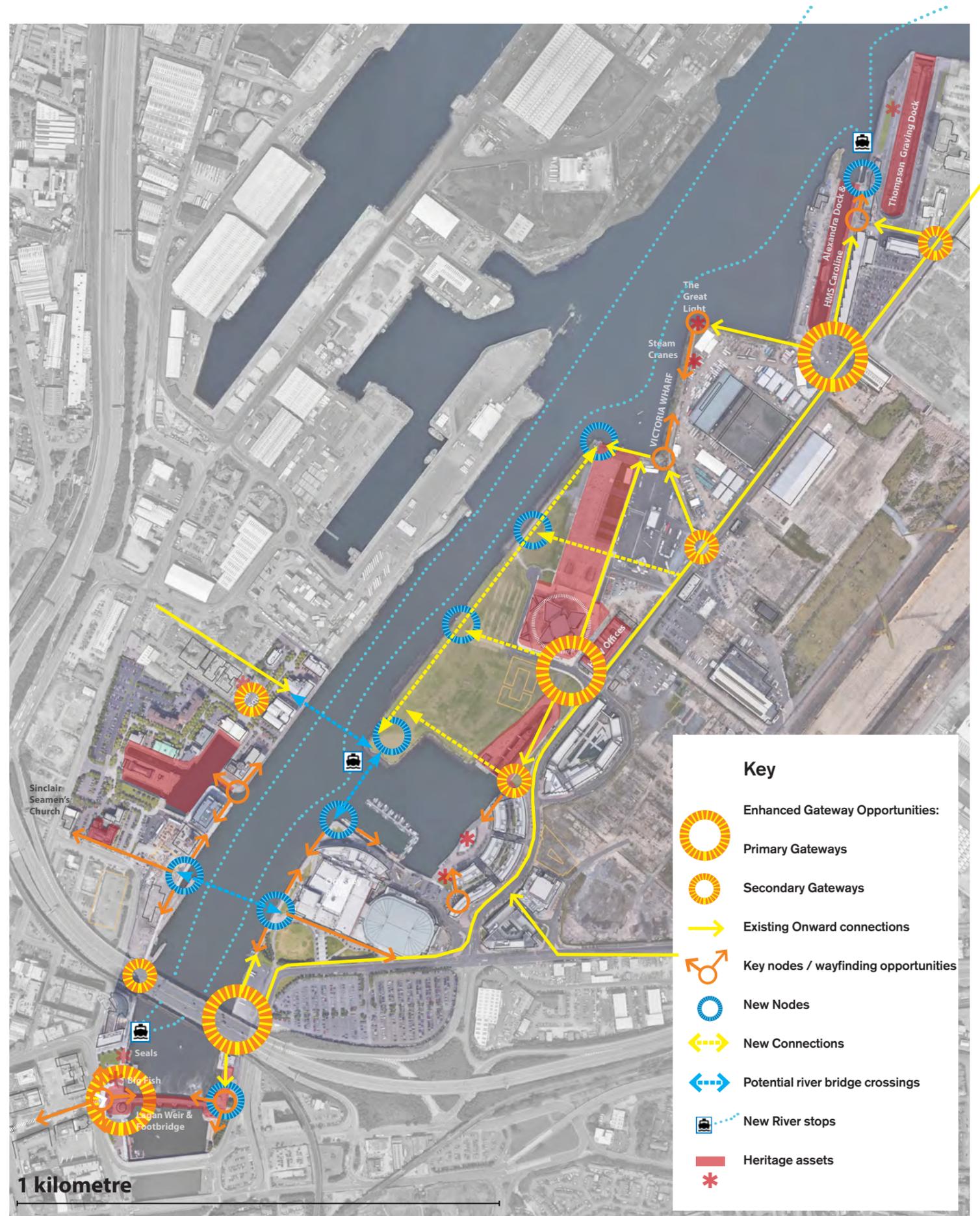
**When a Mile is more than a mile, how do we navigate and own the narrative?** The Mile is more than a mile, and a confident district can own and embrace the wider experience. Therefore, the **linear core** of the river remains the compelling and accessible idea for the Maritime Mile to unify and support the vast array of assets and activities that are in situ and will be delivered as the Mile continues to grow and mature.

**As the river was the catalyst for the city's growth at the peak of the docklands, so too will it serve in this role once again and unite both sides of its banks under a single vision for growth and celebration of the heritage and the future.**



# 1.3 Mapping the Mile Key Connections

The Maritime Mile will provide a connected and continuous waterfront experience for Belfast. Bridging both sides of the River Lagan, access to the Mile will be announced through the creation of **clear gateways** and wayfinding opportunities that will compliment and enhance existing transport nodes. New terrestrial **pathways** will connect existing heritage assets and attractions and allow greater interactions with the waters edge. An integrated network of pedestrian and cycle links will ensure good connectivity with the city centre and beyond. The introduction of new water stops will activate the waters edge whilst future bridge connections will reconnect people across the river.



# 1.3 Mapping the Mile Links in the Chain

The Maritime Mile is not a linear trail, but a set of interlocking 'links' where each character area - the commercial City Quay, the historic Titanic Quarter and the high-tech Innovation Quay - overlap and interact. The strength of the Maritime Mile is the sum of its parts - working together to form a vibrant and varied waterfront destination.

## **CQ (The City Quays)**

*where the City meets its Quays*

an exciting public realm offer for commercial residents and visitors bringing Clarendon, Sailortown and The Odyssey to life as the Harbour's night-time offer

## **TQ (Titanic Quarter)**

*the historic heart of the Maritime Mile*

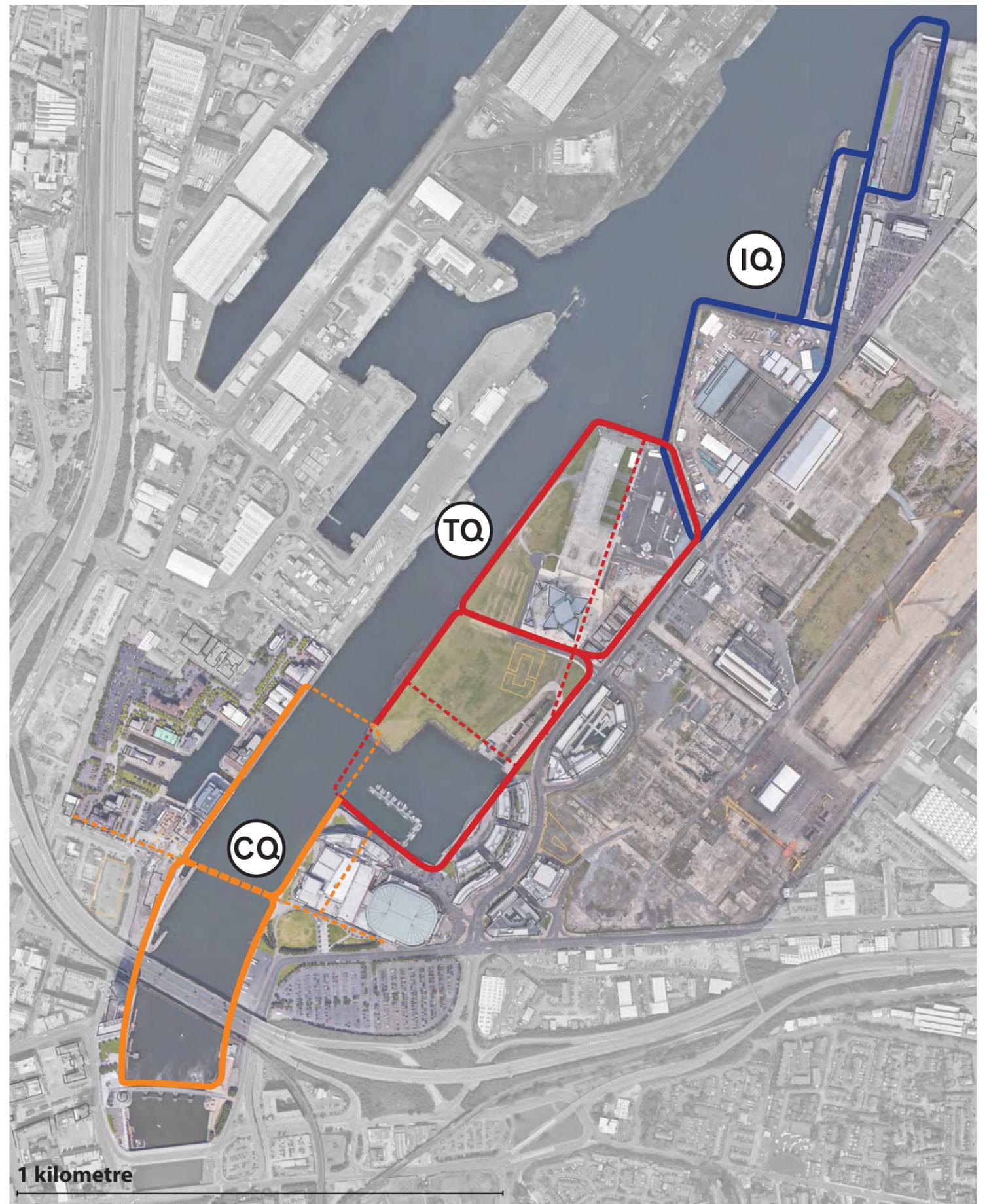
the history and heritage neighbourhood - drawing visitors to Titanic Belfast, SS Nomadic, Titanic Hotel/H&W Drawing Offices and historic slipways

## **IQ (Innovation Quay)**

*where the future of innovation is created*

a place of innovation - where the latest technology and research discoveries from the Titanic Studios and NI Science Park sit within the footprint of Belfast's great shipbuilding industrial heritage

The Links in the Chain framework is flexible, and as the Mile develops and further waterfront developments are delivered, so too should new Links in the Chain be added to ensure a joined up approach to waterfront regeneration. The stakeholder team should work with incoming developers to ensure new proposals support the development of this heritage waterfront, buy into the vision of the Mile and recognise the power of the collective destination brand.



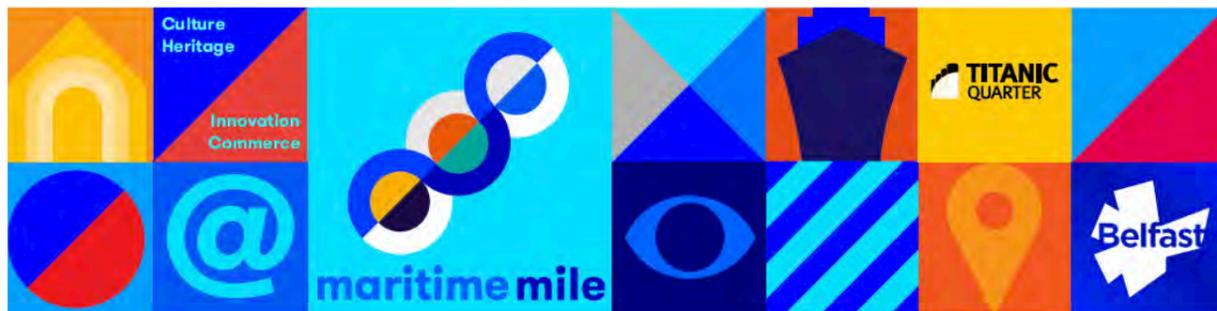
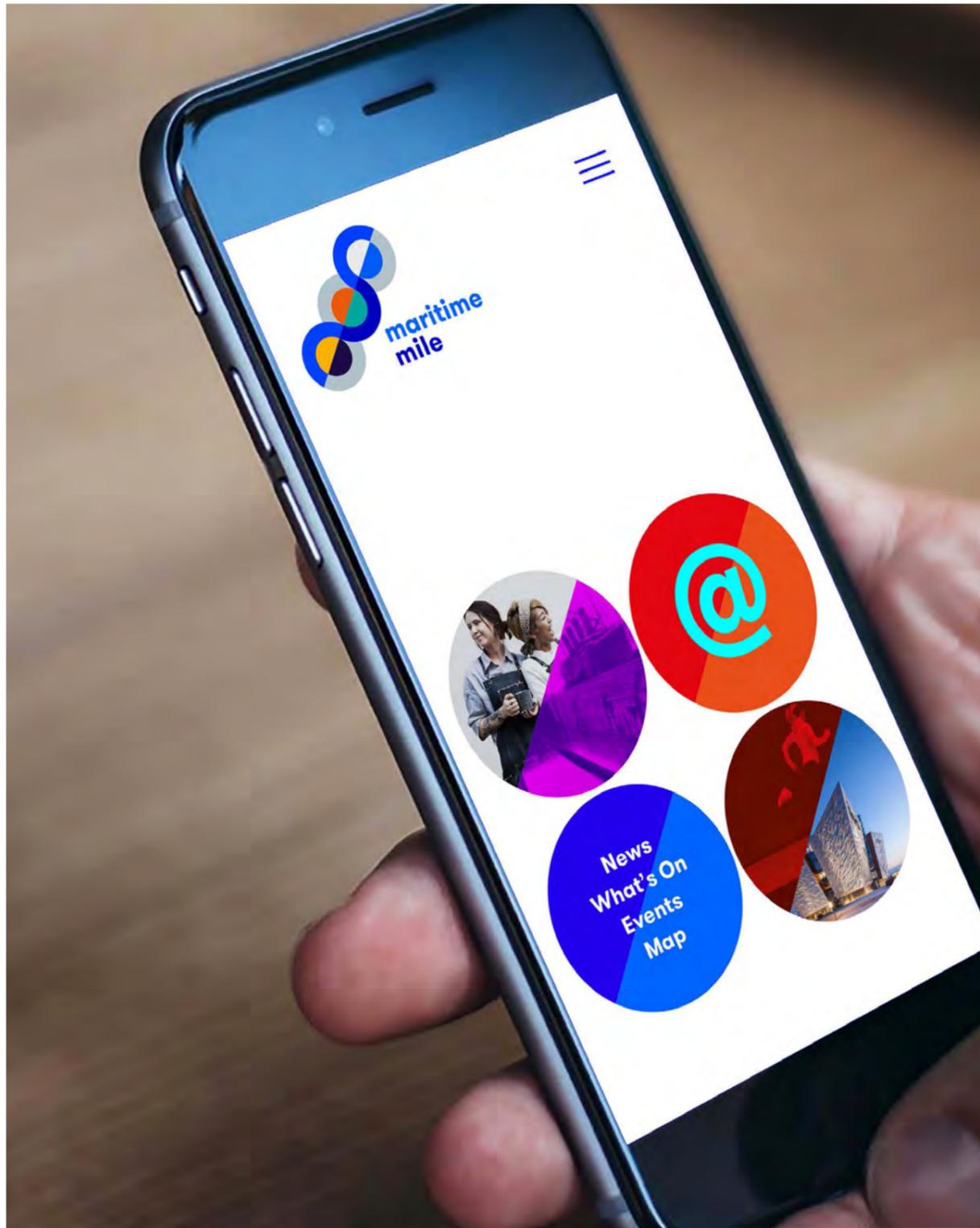
# 1.4 Branding the Mile

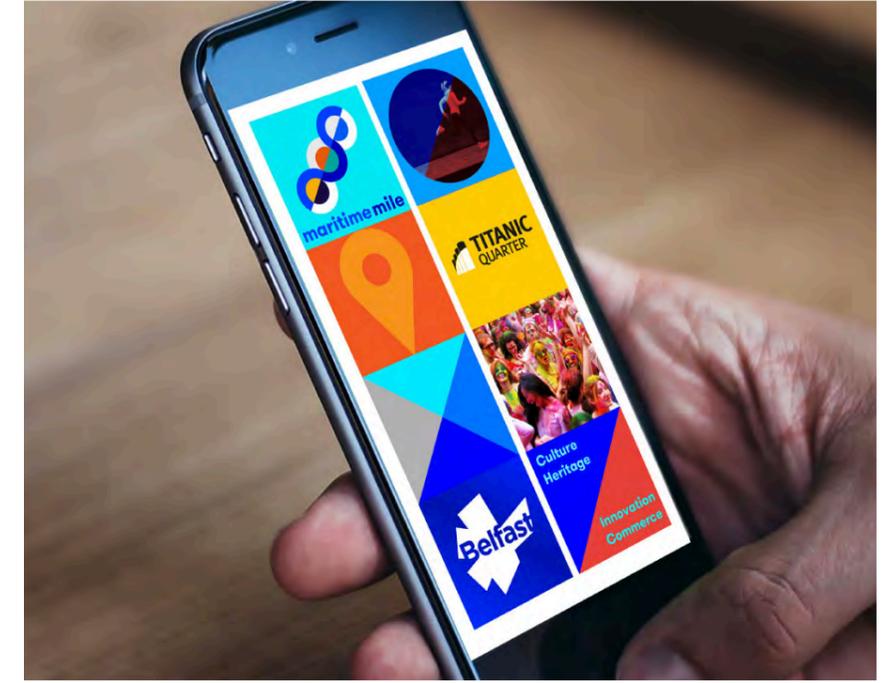
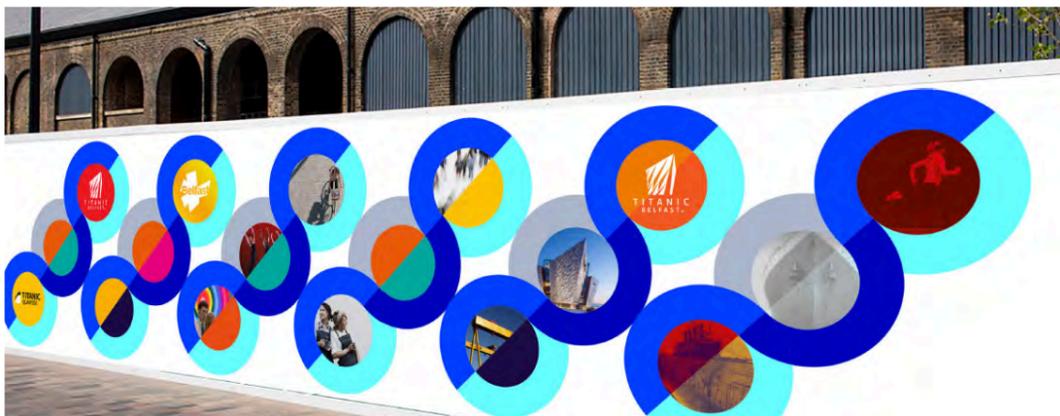
Designed by Hat-trick Design, the Maritime Mile logo, comprised of three connected roundels, form the 'links in the chain' of CQ, TQ and IQ. The angle of the logo relates to the geographical map of the site and the angle at which the River Lagan runs along the map. The colour scheme is adaptable, and can flex and adapt to suit different areas and applications as an 'umbrella' brand that will sit alongside the existing destination and place brands of the locale.

The Maritime Tiles take the graphic shapes and bold colour schemes from maritime signalling flags to form a range of bespoke "icons" creating a vibrant visual language that can play out across a range of scales - from digital comms to hoardings. The Maritime Mile logo becomes one of these tiles, integrating within the system.

Both the Maritime Mile logo and the Maritime Flags form part of the visual language of the site and can be embedded into paving treatments or integrated into the designs of street furniture, bins and other public realm elements.







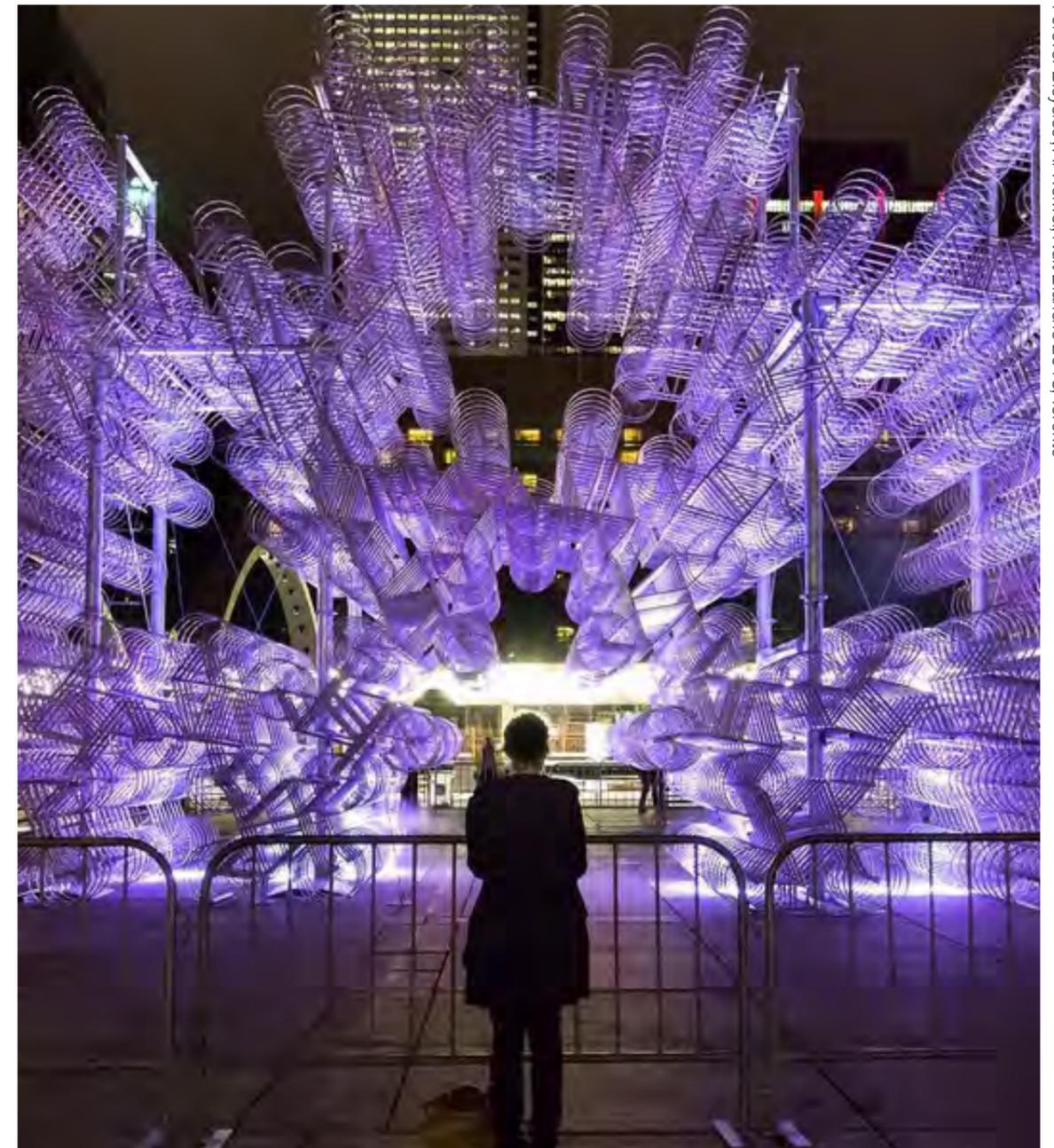
# 1.5 Cultural Placemaking Themes & Principles

The Cultural Placemaking Themes and Principles together form a framework to ensure a clear, compelling and inclusive narrative and character for the Maritime Mile.

The **Themes** are 'what' ideas are being explored. They are the unifying strategic objectives for the Maritime Mile and its stakeholders, giving focus to the target outcomes for all activity within the Mile.

The **Principles** are the 'how' to do the Themes. They are the call to action, outlining how the Themes should be explored through architecture, landscape, infrastructure, retail and community, the arts and a range of other areas.

Using the Themes and Principles as guideposts when making decisions about new projects will ensure the Maritime Mile is a place with a clear 'cultural DNA' that is visible, interconnected and compelling. A place for discovery and new experiences, telling the story of Belfast and its harbor in exciting and thought-provoking ways. The Themes and Principles enable the stakeholders - as collaborators and as creators - to engage with and appreciate the role of a creative and cultural approach to design and programming.



Forever Bicycles, Ai Weiwei, Nuit Blanche 2013, Toronto

# Themes



Heritage Alive



Health & Wellbeing



Nature & Ecology



Technology & Innovation



Community



Curiosity & Investigation

# Principles



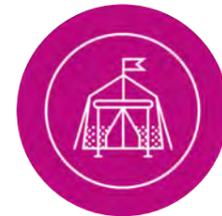
Unlock the River



Do 'BIG'



Materiality & Design



Temporary Contemporary



Creative Enterprise



Connectivity

# Themes



## Heritage Alive

Complement the physical heritage of the docklands (Titanic Belfast, CC Nomadic, HMS Caroline) with the social history of the docklands workers - leverage the stories of the communities that developed and thrived along the harbour.



## Health & Wellbeing

Support physical and mental health and wellbeing through playful public-realm interventions, new fitness and leisure spaces and community/commercial initiatives to support healthy lifestyle choices including a variety of healthy eating options.



## Nature & Ecology

The Harbour has a rich and varied natural history culminating in a post-industrial landscape primed for biodiverse and ecologically rich recolonisation - select flora and fauna that will complement the existing local ecology while supporting local species in and around the site. Public realm interventions will reconnect people with nature, inviting the public up close to the wildlife and educating them on Belfast's unique ecology.



## Technology & Innovation

Create a 'constantly connected,' playable district that pioneers digital culture, promoted through exciting, interactive digital sculpture, projections, app-based AR moments, 'smart' kiosks and shelters and embedded digital artworks. Use the digital assets to showcase the 'hidden' activities of the Science Park and the Studios in playful ways.



## Community

Make the Mile about and for locals, inviting them to input at key moments in the development to give them agency within the growth of this newly unlocked environment. Engage local artists for smaller-scale interventions, involve the community in design competitions and invite local groups to activate the site with installations and performances.



## Curiosity & Investigation

Make any event, installation and project an opportunity for visitors to discover, explore and learn something new about the area. Unlock key maritime histories and the story of Belfast's docklands. Use the Mile as a platform for experiential learning projects and partnerships with local educational institutions.

# Principles



## Unlock the River

Open up the river to programming and events, draw in audiences to riverside festivals, and create a liquid high street with a diverse F&B offer, creative retail, studios and residences to activate the water edge.



## Do 'BIG'

The Belfast Harbour was a place of taking risks, of big innovations on a massive scale. The Martime Mile will be a place of big scales – events, festivals, museums – where producers can be bold, brave and take risks.



## Materiality & Design

Use the rich palette of shapes, textures, colours and materials of the shipbuilding and docklands heritage to inform the designs of the built environment from paving, seating, lighting and artworks to create a 'kit of parts' that enables stakeholders to deliver a varied but coherent aesthetic as part of the Mile.



## Temporary Contemporary

Expand temporary programming opportunities with interactive projects, events, performances and pop-ups to enliven underutilised spaces and the 'spaces in between' buildings.



## Creative Enterprise

Support new creative businesses and initiatives on an interim and permanent basis to elevate Belfast's independent craftspeople, visual artists, film and TV production companies, craft food entrepreneurs and other cultural organisations and businesses. Work with local education providers and skill and training trusts to support the next generation of Belfast's makers and producers and give them platforms throughout the site to test and grow their ideas.



## Connectivity

Use artists and communities within wayfinding projects to reflect Belfast's unique identity and character. Create digital/'gamified' trails and feature thematic routes around fitness, heritage, waterside leisure. Expand the wee tram to make travelling the Mile more accessible to those with mobility limitations.