

5.4 Introduce or Expand Ground Floor Retail

Context

Retail is largely absent from apartment neighbourhoods. A small number of apartment buildings include small retail spaces that provide tuck-shops on the ground floor. However, they operate under certain constraints. Access is generally only permitted through the apartment building lobby, with no direct external entrance to the store. Store signage and visibility is often restricted, and shopkeepers are typically prohibited from displaying goods outdoors. For example, vegetable stands commonly found in front of neighbourhood corner stores elsewhere, are not permitted.

Solution

The ground floors of apartment towers provide an opportunity to introduce new commercial enterprises and expand existing tuck shops so they can provide a broader variety of goods and services to serve the needs of the neighbourhood.

Through an addition to the base of an apartment tower, existing or new commercial initiatives could also operate at a larger scale. Such local commercial operations could allow more options for entrepreneurs, local employment, and convenience for the neighbourhood community as a whole.

Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Supportive

While the Official Plan provides little discussion specifically about the outdoor sale of goods, the Plan promotes the animation of public spaces and the localization of shopping. Additions to apartment buildings are contemplated by the Plan in apartment neighbourhoods subject to criteria, including “providing ground floor uses that enhance the safety, amenity and animation of adjacent streets and open spaces” (Section 4.2 Policy 2g).

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

The introduction or expansion of commercial space, as well as the outdoor display of goods, is currently prohibited under apartment neighbourhood zoning by-laws. A minor variance or zoning by-law amendment would be required.

Other considerations

A proposal for greater retail activity would likely require site plan approval and building permits, and would be subject to municipal business licensing, as well as existing health and safety regulations.

Commercial waste collection would need to be accommodated.





Images:

Opposite: Ground floor café in apartment block, Berlin, Germany, 2009

Top, left: Ground floor shops in apartment block, Berlin, Germany, 2006

Top, right: New ground floor shop addition to apartment building, Berlin, Germany, 2006

Middle, left: Ground floor shops and services, Crescent Town, Toronto, 2006

Middle, right: Ground floor shops, Moscow, Russia, 2006

Bottom, left: Ground floor shopping arcade at base of apartment block, Stockholm, Sweden, 2011

Bottom, right: Storefront addition to apartment tower, Toronto, 2012

Theme 6: Education and Learning

How do education and learning affect health?

There is a strong relationship between education, health and economic development. Education has an impact on health by:

- **Influencing income, employment and working conditions** – A good education increases the chances that an individual will do work that provides greater control in decision-making, has increased job security, higher income and safe and non-hazardous working conditions (TPH, 2011).
- **Increasing healthy behaviour** – Individuals with higher levels of education have greater access to, and understanding of, information regarding healthy behaviour. They also have the ability to optimize their use of available health services (Davey-Smith et al., 1998).
- **Producing Social and Economic Spin-offs** – Investments in education are associated with higher graduation rates, greater employment earnings, better health outcomes, reduced reliance on social assistance, lower crime rates, greater government revenues and lower government expenditures (Lynch, 2004). Evidence indicates that children who participate in high-quality early childhood education and care programs experience a range of short and long-term health and educational benefits as well (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2008).

The Opportunity in Apartment Neighbourhoods

Apartment neighbourhoods tend to be home to large communities of children, youth and young adults. They are also communities that accommodate people new to the city and who are seeking to make improvements to their life and that of their families. In these ways, the City's apartment neighbourhoods are places where education – both formal and informal – is a valuable good.

The following strategies can be used to further access to education in apartment neighbourhoods:

6.1 Introduce Youth Extra-Curricular and Education Programs

6.2 Introduce Newcomer Settlement Support and Adult Education Programs

6.3 Introduce Preschool and Family Resource Services

6.1 Introduce extra-curricular and education for children and youth

Context

Apartment neighbourhoods were generally not designed to include spaces for extra-curricular and educational programs for youth, such as dance, music, art or tutoring and homework groups. While many of these services are offered in surrounding communities, the lack of existing space, as well as the zoning restrictions prohibiting institutional and commercial uses, limits these activities in apartment neighbourhoods.

Solution

Space in the ground floors of apartment buildings is often well-suited for conversion to multi-purpose rooms that could accommodate extra-curricular and educational activities. Space for these uses could also be incorporated into building additions, and new mixed-use infill buildings.



Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Supportive

These solutions would generally be supported by current Official Plan policies.

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

Use or programming of multi-purpose rooms for extra-curricular and education is permitted generally. However conversion and leasing of multipurpose spaces for separate use, such as to a not for profit group, may require a minor variance or amendment. Current zoning by-laws would likely not permit private classes offered as a commercial service. A zoning by-law amendment would likely be required.

Images:

Top: New playing field in apartment neighbourhood, Copenhagen, Denmark (Kvarterløft 2007)

Opposite, left: Idea Store, community services and resource centre, addition to tower block, London, UK, 2006

Opposite, right: Community resource centre interior, London, UK, 2006

Bottom: Wellesley Library and Community Centre, St. Jamestown, Toronto, 2011

6.2 Introduce Newcomer Settlement Support and Adult Education Programs

Context

Home to large communities of new Canadians, access to newcomer support services and adult skill training is critical in apartment neighbourhoods. Newcomer support and adult career centres can connect residents with education programs across the city, as well as offer specific courses to improve skills. Locating such services in apartment neighbourhoods provides these services where there is an identified need.

Solution

English as a Second Language (ESL) training, newcomer settlement services and other adult skills training could be located in the base of existing apartment towers, in additions to buildings, or as a part of new mixed-use infill development.

Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Supportive

These solutions would generally be supported by current Official Plan policies.

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

As an institutional use, an educational service would likely be a prohibited use under current zoning by-laws. Existing zoning by-laws restrict the construction of new buildings, due to limits on setbacks and floor areas. Introducing such uses in apartment neighbourhoods would likely require a zoning by-law amendment.



6.3 Introduce Preschool and Family Resource Services

Context

Apartment neighbourhoods are home to disproportionately large numbers of youth and new parents compared to other neighbourhoods in the city. [TNRGGH 2010]. Daycares can be found in some apartment neighbourhoods, but they are not widespread. Less common still are centres providing parenting education and support. Such centres, including Ontario's Early Years Centres, can offer early learning and literacy, parenting programs and workshops, as well as health information, referrals and outreach activities.

Solution

An Early Education Centre could be located in the base of an existing apartment tower, in an addition to the base of a tower, or as a part of new mixed-use infill development.

Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Supportive

These solutions would generally be supported by current Official Plan policies.

Zoning by-laws: Supportive

The use of an apartment tower site for community parenting education is generally a permitted land use under current zoning by-laws. Earlier reforms to apartment zoning, through the 1970s and 1980s made childcare generally a permitted use within apartment towers across Toronto.



Images:

Top: Children's toys and activities mobile container, run by local community, within apartment neighbourhood, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2009

Bottom, left: Childcare facility addition to apartment tower, Toronto, 2012

Bottom, right: Children and youth centre, Delft, Netherlands, 2009

Theme 7: Food Security

How does food security affect health?

A nutritious diet and adequate food supply are central for good health. Food security means having the physical, social and economic ability to access sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs and food preferences that allow for an active and healthy life (FAO, 2003).

In Canada, food insecurity is more prevalent in urban areas compared to rural areas (Health Canada, 2011). In Toronto, 10.8% of households reported moderate or severe food insecurity (TPH, 2011). Poor access to healthy foods has been associated with:

- **The Design of the Built Environment** - Many people living in Toronto's inner suburbs find it difficult to access healthy foods because of distance, physical barriers such as highways, lack of access to public transit, as well as poverty (Martin Prosperity Institute, 2010). Many of the apartment neighbourhoods in Toronto are located in areas considered "food deserts" with little options for healthy and affordable food within walking distance.
- **Poor Physical and Mental Health** – Individuals who experience food insecurity have a greater chance of developing multiple chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, food allergies, and major depression and distress (Vozoris & Tarasuk, 2003). Poor nutrition in childhood has also been associated with a range of behavioural, emotional and academic problems (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010).
- **Increased Use of Health Services** - Food insecurity has a negative impact on health services because individuals with nutritional deficiencies tend to be less resistant to infections, recover more slowly, have more diseases, longer hospital stays, and incur higher health care costs (Che & Chen, 2001).
- **Vulnerable Populations** – Food insecurity is higher in households: with children led by female lone parents; with lower incomes; receiving social assistance, worker's compensation, or employment insurance; with low levels of education; of Aboriginals and recent immigrants; and in which the dwelling was not owned (Health Canada, 2011).

The Opportunity in Apartment Neighbourhoods

Apartment neighbourhoods have the potential to provide opportunities to foster a healthy food culture. Communities in apartment neighbourhoods, much like other well established city neighbourhoods, have the potential for creating a healthy food culture through informal gatherings, community kitchens, community gardens, fresh food shops, cafes and restaurants and local knowledge transfer. These activities can produce a variety of health and social benefits:

- They can make fresh and healthy foods more accessible to people in apartment neighbourhoods;
- They provide jobs and economic opportunities for members of the community;
- They can make culturally appropriate foods more readily accessible; and
- They can build social cohesion by giving people places to interact socially.

However, at present, there are a number of challenges that are preventing these opportunities and limiting these activities:

- There are few places set aside for outdoor events and community gatherings despite the substantial amount of open space that is typical of apartment neighbourhoods. The current zoning by-laws do not permit the sale of food in apartment neighbourhoods with the exception of small convenience stores.
- While a small percentage of Apartment Towers contain tuck shops, these stores, like convenience stores elsewhere, do not sell the volume of produce needed to maintain affordable prices, or are not well equipped to carry fresh food items. As a result less healthy pre-packaged food is a more affordable, accessible, option.

The following solutions examine options in fostering healthy food culture in apartment neighbourhoods throughout Toronto.

7.1 Provide facilities for collective cooking

7.2 Introduce Outdoor Fresh Food Markets

7.3 Expand or Introduce Green Grocers

7.4 Introduce Community Gardens / Urban Agriculture

7.1 Provide facilities for collective cooking

Context

The social networks of apartment neighbourhood communities can be a source of mutual support, and an aid in developing a healthy food culture. Living in close proximity, food preparation (and enjoyment) can be shared among neighbours. While opportunities for collective cooking, such as barbecues, picnics, and backyard dinner parties, exist elsewhere in the city, they are generally rare in apartment neighbourhoods.

Solution

The large outdoor grounds of apartment neighbourhoods provide several opportunities for collective cooking, including barbecues, pizza ovens and tandoori ovens. Paired with banquet tables and other seating, these outdoor features could facilitate regular community events and meals.

The provision of an indoor community kitchen could accommodate year round collective cooking, facilitating cooking groups and cooking classes. A commercial grade kitchen could allow residents to run catering companies and other food-related commercial enterprises.

Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Supportive

These solutions would generally be supported by current Official Plan policies.

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

Minor modifications to landscaping to allow outdoor cooking would generally be permitted. Current zoning by-laws would likely prohibit construction of larger structures, such as covered cooking areas or ovens, especially if the structure is enclosed.

Other considerations

Business licensing and health and safety regulations would have to be addressed for food preparation and storage if food was being prepared for sale.





Image:

Opposite: Community kitchen, Toronto, courtesy of Recipe for Community

Top: New Community Kitchen, public cooking demonstration and community festival, East Scarborough Storefront, 2012. Courtesy of Paul Dowsett, Sustainable T.O.

7.2 Introduce Outdoor Fresh Food Markets

Context

Local outdoor markets, specializing in fresh food, are common features of many local communities, villages and neighbourhoods throughout Toronto. Furthermore, a resurgence of fresh food trucks and delivery, such as those by Toronto's Food Share organization, provides home delivered seasonal local fresh food. Today these activities are largely absent from apartment neighbourhoods.

Solution

Apartment neighbourhoods contain large surface parking lots which may be converted to accommodate fresh food markets on a monthly, weekly, or daily basis. Similarly, existing surface parking could accommodate food trucks for scheduled visits.

By providing seating, shade, and access to a ground floor washroom within the apartment building, food sales in parking lots could provide access to fresh food and create an enlivened market atmosphere at the base of existing towers. To further support the market, small auxiliary structures providing storage and additional infrastructures may be considered.



Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Supportive

These solutions would generally be supported by current Official Plan policies.

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

Current zoning would not permit commercial activities such as fresh outdoor food markets. If vendor stalls were limited in size (such as removable tables) they likely would not be subject to zoning. However any auxiliary building added to a parking lot to support food sales would likely violate provisions typical of apartment neighbourhood zoning.

Other considerations

A fresh food market would require business licenses and would be subject to other regulations, such as those as relating to health and safety.

Commercial waste collection would need to be accommodated.

The logistics of a market would need to be managed by property owners, particularly the temporary loss of parking spaces. Community partners could help in management planning and organization.



Images:

Opposite: Fresh food kiosk in apartment neighbourhood, Halle Neustadt, Germany, 2006

Top left: Fresh food market, Tower Hamlets, London, UK, 2006

Top left: Fresh food market, Stockholm, Sweden, 2011

Bottom left: Outdoor fresh food market, St. Jamestown, Toronto, courtesy of TRO

Bottom right: Swiss Cottage farmers' market in apartment neighbourhood, London, UK, 2009

7.3 Expand or Introduce Green Grocers

Context

Access to fresh produce through local green grocers or grocery stores as is common in Toronto's older neighbourhoods and newer tower communities such as City Place, Regent Park or Liberty Village.

In contrast, older tower apartment neighbourhoods lack convenient, walkable access to fresh food shops, largely due to current zoning by-laws prohibiting commercial activity in these neighbourhoods.

The bulk of apartment neighbourhoods are served by malls or plazas located beyond comfortable walking distance on roads that are often intimidating to pedestrians. [Hess 2011]. As many residents walk or take transit as their primary means of travel, this condition presents a daily barrier to accessing to healthy and fresh food.

Solution

A fresh food shop or grocer could be introduced in the base of existing buildings, an existing tuck shop could be expanded, or a new standalone building could be constructed as part of a new mixed-use housing development (See Housing).

Paired with outdoor food stands and seating, fresh food shops could also contribute to social exchange and community vibrancy.

Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Neutral

The Toronto Official Plan would support small-scale local services and commercial activity in apartment neighbourhoods. A larger scale store may not be supported.

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

Existing zoning by-laws would most likely not permit a proposal for a retail store such as a green grocer. A grocery store use may not be permitted in most apartment neighbourhood by-laws. The associated parking requirements and any new building footprint would also not be permitted currently.

Other considerations

A new green grocer would be subject to the building code, and other relevant health, business and safety regulations.

If a new structure is proposed, the project could be subject to site plan approval to address landscaping, access and specifics of the building.

Commercial waste collection would need to be accommodated.



Images:

Top and bottom left: New grocery store at base of apartment block with outdoor vending, Moscow, Russia, 2006
Bottom, right: Green grocer at base of tower block, London, UK, 2006

7.4 Introduce Community Gardens / Urban Agriculture

Context

Small-scale urban agriculture has been found to increase social capital as well as provide a yield of healthy food for the local community. Gardening, both for food and pleasure, is practiced in neighbourhoods throughout this city. However, apartment neighbourhoods provide few opportunities for gardening or allotments for planting vegetables.

Solution

The tower in the park format of apartment neighbourhoods provides opportunities for small-scale urban agriculture using small-scale community gardens and allotments.

Several apartment neighbourhoods in Toronto are already engaging in small-scale projects. These efforts could be expanded through the provision of auxiliary garden sheds to allow for tool storage, infrastructure for irrigation, local markets to sell yields, and a more robust network of community organizations to facilitate partnerships within the neighbourhood and beyond.

Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Neutral

The Toronto Official Plan has little discussion on small scale local food production. It does recognize the importance of ensuring “adequate amounts of safe, nutritious, culturally acceptable food are available to all (page 1-4)”. It also recognizes the importance of preserving high quality farmland as part of re-urbanizing to accommodate regional growth, and addressing food scarcity when upgrading neighbourhoods (pages 2-2, 2-22).

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

While small scale food production would not be affected by zoning, the provision of new structures for food production and the sale of produce on site is likely be prohibited by current zoning bylaws.

Other considerations

Site plan approval may be needed to address issues such as drainage and grading. Community organization and neighbourhood partnerships would also be central to an agriculture program. Other considerations include security, waste, logistics and coordination with property owners, residents and partners



Images:

Top: Greenhouse addition at base of apartment block, Göteborg, Sweden (Gårdstens Bostäde 2007)

Bottom left: Community garden in apartment neighbourhood, London, UK, 2006

Bottom right: Community garden at East Scarborough Storefront, Toronto, 2012

Theme 8: Community Health

What is the role of Health Services and Promotion in Neighbourhoods?

Health services, particularly those intended to maintain and promote health, prevent disease, restore function and contribute to health. Community health services improve health by:

- **Improving access to health care services**
- Access to health services can affect health as much as the quality of those services. Although Canada has a publicly funded health care system, there are physical, geographic and socio-cultural barriers that can prevent all members of the community from making use of those services (Butler-Jones, 2008).
- **Improving access to a full range of services that impact health** - Many Canadians with low to moderate incomes have limited, or no access, to health services such as eye care, dentistry, mental health counselling and prescription drugs which are not typically covered by Canada's health care system (TPH, 2011).
- **Improving access to health promotion and disease prevention activities** – Community health programs include programs directed at preventing disease and promoting health. These programs, which are provided primarily by public health units, are directed at encouraging healthy lifestyle choices, promoting policies and environments that foster health, reducing infectious diseases with vaccinations, and preventing outbreaks of food-borne and vector-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus (TPH, 2011).
- **Providing Multi-Purpose Public Spaces** – The health of the community can be improved by providing multi-purpose public spaces that encourage physical activity, recreation and socializing in public spaces that are designed for a variety of purposes. The United Way's Vertical Poverty report found that residents in apartment neighbourhoods want to “see health or other services for adults available in the building common rooms”. At the top of this list were programs directed at health, well-being and exercise (United Way, 2011).

The Opportunity in Apartment Neighbourhoods

Because of their physical size and population base, apartment neighbourhoods could accommodate a range of services, programs and facilities related to fitness, nutrition, health services and health education. Currently, however apartment neighbourhoods are serviced with health services that are located at the periphery or outside of apartment neighbourhoods. This is, in part, the legacy of land use patterns dating from the years when apartment neighbourhoods were first developed. As a result, residents must generally travel outside their neighbourhoods to seek routine medical and health advice and treatment.

If community health services were re-located inside apartment neighbourhoods, they would become more accessible to residents and could foster closer relationship between service providers and the community.

While all solutions discussed in this report relate to community health, the following solutions particularly examine the opportunities for the delivery of health care and preventative health services.

8.1 Promote Public Health Education

8.2 Provide Multi-Purpose Health Services Clinics

8.3 Provide Programs and Facilities for Physical Fitness

8.1 Promote Public Health Education

Context

The large communities in apartment neighbourhoods could benefit from access to health education services offered by Toronto Public Health, including children and youth, the elderly, and newcomers. Currently these services are not operating widely within apartment neighbourhoods.

Solution

Space in the ground floors of apartment sites could be well-suited for rotating public health education programs for targeted demographic groups in a given community, such as youth, new parents, or the elderly. Health education could also be provided through outdoor venue space or in facilities located in new additions to apartment buildings or in new mixed-use infill buildings.



Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Supportive

These solutions would generally be supported by current Official Plan policies.

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

The delivery of public health education program could be permitted within a multi-purpose room in an apartment neighbourhood. The zoning would have to be addressed if the public health education program became a permanent use of space and required a building permit to renovate a space inside an apartment building.

8.2 Provide Multi-Purpose Health Services Clinics

Context

Key to the high quality provision of health care is accessibility, both in terms of the convenient location of services, and removal of cultural barriers to services, such as translators, in providing care for new Canadians.

Currently, the full range of health services is often dispersed beyond apartment neighbourhoods. The associated cost and travel time may be a barrier to accessing care.

Solution

Many apartment neighbourhoods contain the population density and diversity to justify a multi-purpose health clinic. With the aim of increasing accessibility, locating a clinic within an apartment neighbourhood would provide services within walking-distance to these communities, reducing the cost and nuisance of car travel or transit to seek care.

A multi-purpose clinic may include several primary care providers (family doctors), as well as a rotating series of clinics with specialists addressing health themes relevant to the neighbourhood demographics, such as women's health, geriatric and paediatric care, or diabetes.

Medical care could be tied to preventative health measures such as dietary and nutrition services, as well as providing culturally specific health education relevant to new Canadians and diverse resident groups.

Such a clinic could be incorporated into the base of an existing apartment tower, as a new stand-alone building, or as a part of new mixed-use infill development.

Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Neutral

The Toronto Official Plan does include provision for community services within apartment neighbourhoods, but is not specific about provision of health service offices.

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

A medical clinic is not a use permitted under the zoning by-laws of most apartment neighbourhoods. A zoning by-law amendment would, in that case, be required.

Other considerations

Medical offices would be subject to professional and licensing requirements. Consideration about building access, signage and parking would also have to be accounted for, and could trigger the need for site plan approval.

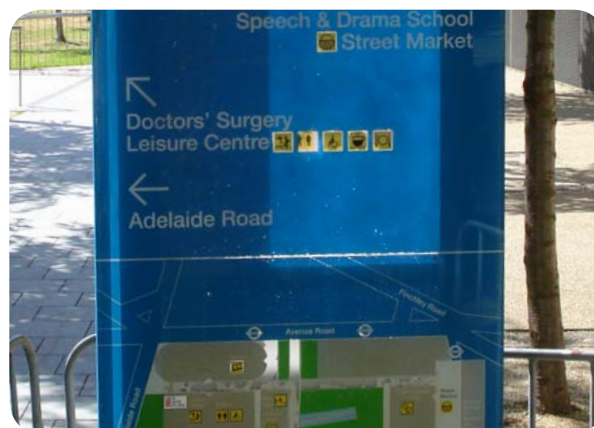


Image:

Opposite: Healthy eating workshop, Toronto, courtesy of Recipe for Community

Top: Wayfinding to health services within apartment neighbourhood, London, UK, 2009

8.3 Provide Programs and Facilities for Physical Fitness

Context

Residents of apartment neighbourhoods often have limited access to affordable physical recreation facilities. When originally built, apartment towers often provided a series of fitness amenities such as tennis courts and pools. Today however, many of the original facilities have fallen into various states of disrepair, with many permanently closed. Furthermore, amenities that do exist often do not address the needs of the current resident community, particularly children, youth, new Canadians and the elderly.

Solution

The tower in the park configuration is highly amenable to the introduction of facilities for physical fitness. In addition to playgrounds, playing terrains and sports courts, outdoor areas could also provide community fitness equipment and fitness areas for the elderly.

Interventions discussed in other chapters of this report could also provide opportunities for physical fitness, such as improved paths to existing recreational trails (see Natural Environment), and community recreational facilities (see Transportation). Indoor fitness areas for yoga, dance (see Education and Learning), and elderly fitness, among other activities, can be incorporated into existing buildings, as well as in new structures.

Making it Happen

The following describes the extent to which the current planning framework in apartment neighbourhoods would be supportive, limiting, or neutral, should a community or building owner propose solutions such as these at a particular site.

Official Plan: Supportive

These solutions would generally be supported by current Official Plan policies.

Zoning by-laws: Limiting

Bylaws for apartment sites generally allow for dance and exercise studios as part of resident amenity spaces, but prohibit using those spaces as commercial businesses or to serve residents of nearby buildings. Changes to the landscaping of buildings to accommodate new fitness amenities may also violate by-law provisions for hard and soft landscape surfaces as well as limits on the gross floor area. The addition of a new fitness structure could violate coverage and setback requirements. Each of these situations could require a minor variance or zoning by-law amendment.



Image:

Top: New basketball court in apartment neighbourhood, Toronto, courtesy of Recipe for Community Appendices (Bellow): Apartment neighbourhood as healthy and active communities, Drawing by William MacIvor, ERA Architects

Health Strategies Summary Chart

Solutions	Official Plan	Zoning By-law	Other Considerations
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Theme 1: Natural Environment

1.1	Improve microclimate and outdoor comfort	Supportive	Limiting	Site Plan Approval
1.2	Provide access to green space, parks and natural areas	Supportive	Neutral	TRCA approval, right of way / access over private property and TRCA managed lands
1.3	Reduce negative impacts to air and water quality	Supportive	Supportive	Financing, and capital expenditure

Theme 2: Built Environment

2.1	Improve opportunities for gathering	Supportive	Neutral	Site Plan Approval, financing, stewardship, design issues
2.2	Improve sense of security and lighting	Supportive	Supportive	Coordination with neighboring property owners
2.3	Reduce hazards such as traffic blind spots	Supportive	Limiting	Financing, stewardship, design issues, and insurance
2.4	Animate spaces	Supportive	Limiting	Financing, stewardship, waste collection, urban design guidelines

Theme 3: Transportation

3.1	Remove physical barriers to active transportation	Supportive	Neutral	Coordination with neighboring property owners
3.2	Integrate transit stations with apartment towers	Supportive	Neutral	Costs, Coordination with neighboring property owners, public investment
3.3	Improve cycling networks and infrastructure	Supportive	Neutral	Right of ways/access issues, public and private investment, coordination with Parks Dept, TRCA, as well as liability
3.4	Improved Access to Carshare Program	Supportive	Limiting	Site Plan Approval
3.5	Reduce parking requirements to allow conversion to community uses	Supportive	Neutral	Planning new community uses

Theme 4: Housing

4.1	Provide amenities to support diverse households in high-rise living	Supportive	Limiting	Investment and additional ongoing costs, min. cost downloading to tenants, site plan
4.2	Adapt units for growing families and changing households	Supportive	Limiting	Protect affordability
4.3	Build resident social capital through organizations and associations	Supportive	Supportive	Partnerships with groups outside neighborhoods, support to develop resident/landlord dialogue
4.4	Expand housing choice, new tenure options	Limiting	Supportive	Protecting overall affordability
4.5	Expand housing choice, infill housing	Neutral	Limiting	Financial incentives, approvals, design standards, community support

Solutions	Official Plan	Zoning By-law	Other Considerations
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Theme 5: Employment, Income and Opportunities

5.1	Introduce outdoor vending in apartment open space	Supportive	Limiting	Site Plan Approval. Business licensing and health inspection, waste, parking and signage
5.2	Allow for home-based businesses	Neutral	Limiting	Business licensing, building security, parking and signage
5.3	Incubate Local Enterprise	Neutral	Limiting	Business licensing and health and safety
5.4	Introduce or Expand Ground Floor Retail	Neutral	Limiting	Access, signage and parking, licensing, building permit approvals waste management

Theme 6: Education and Learning

6.1	Introduce extra-curricular and education for children and youth	Supportive	Limiting	Building permits, health and safety, cost, rent levels
6.2	Introduce Newcomer settlement support and adult education programs	Neutral	Limiting	Access, signage and parking, as well as building permit approvals, cost, rent levels
6.3	Introduce preschool and family resource services	Neutral	Supportive	Access, signage and parking, building permit approvals, license for daycare operation, cost, rent levels

Theme 7: Food Security

7.1	Provide facilities for collective cooking	Supportive	Limiting	Building Permit. Business and Health permits/licensing
7.2	Introduce outdoor fresh food markets	Neutral	Limiting	Cost, business and health permits/licensing; cooperation with property owners
7.3	Expand or introduce green grocers	Neutral	Limiting	Site plan approval; Business and Health permits/licensing
7.4	Introduce community gardens / urban agriculture	Neutral	Limiting	Community organization, Neighborhood partnerships, Security, Waste

Theme 8: Community Health

8.1	Promote public health education	Supportive	Limiting	Costs, building access, signage and parking, as well as building permit approvals
8.2	Provide multi-purpose health services clinics	Neutral	Limiting	Costs, site plan approval and building permit, professional licensing, access signage and parking
8.3	Provide programs and facilities for physical fitness	Supportive	Limiting	Costs, site plan approval and building permit, partnerships

Section 3: Conclusion

3.0 Recommendations, Opportunities and Next Steps



Section 3: Conclusion

Recommendations, Opportunities and Next Steps

This report presents a strategic direction for achieving healthier apartment neighbourhoods and a series of specific strategies and design opportunities to inform investment into these communities moving forward. Realizing these opportunities requires the combination of enabling policies, and means of supporting individual and coordinated private, non-profit and public sectors investment towards these ends.

As with all areas of the city, Toronto's apartment neighbourhoods are complex and diverse. There is no panacea for achieving the opportunities outlined in this report. Rather, progress will be made through a series of incremental and related strategies for the short and long terms.

This report does however identify the relationship between the urban planning framework and proposed solutions, specifically with respect to the City's Official Plan and Zoning By-Law. While many policies are enabling, particularly those of the Official Plan, there are many regulatory barriers, both in the City's Zoning By-law and other municipal regulations. Identifying and removing the barriers in the urban planning framework is a first and crucial step in enabling the strategic direction outlined in this report.

In addition, the strategies outlined in this report recommend engaging in entrepreneurial, social enterprise and institutional ventures in areas of the city where these activities have formerly not flourished. Key to enabling and ensuring the success of these ventures is creating a clear framework with all stakeholders for engagement, and building skills, knowledge and capacity to kickstart ventures and ensure their success.

The following are recommendations and opportunities for moving forward:

Opportunities for building capacity and removing barriers:

- Remove identified regulatory and policy barriers and establish an enabling urban planning framework for the strategies outlined in this report as part of the Official Plan Review and Comprehensive Zoning process currently underway;
- Create a clear framework for engaging in the strategies outlined in this report through reducing the number of approval processes to which small initiatives are subject, such as streamlining licensing, allowing for small projects to proceed with as-of-right zoning permissions, and so on;
- Establish opportunities for partnerships, education and demonstrations to kickstart and create capacity for key stakeholders, from resident entrepreneurs and social innovators to land governors (landlords, building managers, public housing providers and other property stakeholders) to engage in the initiatives identified in this report;
- Create incentives and other levers to encourage and support private, non-profit and public sector investment in the strategies and opportunities outlined in this report.

Recommendations and Next Steps:

1. Support changes to the Toronto Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning By-law and related municipal regulations to allow for broader use permissions and fewer restrictions and other changes in regulations to enable economic and community development in apartment communities;
2. Review the status of the Comprehensive Zoning By-law and changes applicable to properties in apartment communities (currently underway), when appropriate;
3. Review the status of the Toronto Official Plan review as it relates to apartment communities (currently underway), when appropriate;
4. Explore the concept of local organizations centred around key stakeholders in apartment communities, such as the proposed Apartment Improvement Areas (modelled after the BIAs), and the applicability of that and other models of engaging with key stakeholders to achieve healthy apartment communities;
5. Develop a workplan and identify resources needed to implement demonstration and education projects to bring the strategies outlined in this report to appropriate apartment communities;
6. Explore incentives which could direct growth, both economic and physical, to appropriate apartment communities in apartment communities, guided by the health, income and walkability mapping in this report.

Incrementally engaging in the initiatives outlined in this report will aid in fostering and enabling a more healthy and prosperous Toronto.

These changes won't happen over night, and won't have an immediate effect on individual health outcomes. Removing barriers and building capacity alone won't revitalize apartment neighbourhoods. A concerted effort by all stakeholders is required to implement positive changes in apartment communities across the City.

Yet removing the regulatory barriers to investment and economic development that exist in some apartment neighbourhoods will aid in unleashing the potential of individuals and the private and non-profit sectors in investing in these neighbourhoods. Through both expanded economic and social vitality, as well as patterns of built form and land use, apartment neighbourhoods can move toward becoming more "complete" and healthy places.

Achieving many of the strategies outlined in this report are relatively straightforward. Others are more complicated. Together, they will help to inform the evolution of these dynamic, diverse and vibrant communities throughout Toronto in the decades to come. As policies are strengthened and capacity builds, the number, sophistication and efficacy of initiatives can grow over time. It's time to get started.

Appendices

Appendix A: Visualizations: Toward Healthy Apartment Neighbourhoods

Appendix B: Mapping Apartment Neighbourhoods and Health Indicators



Appendix A: Visualizations: Toward Healthy Apartment Neighbourhoods

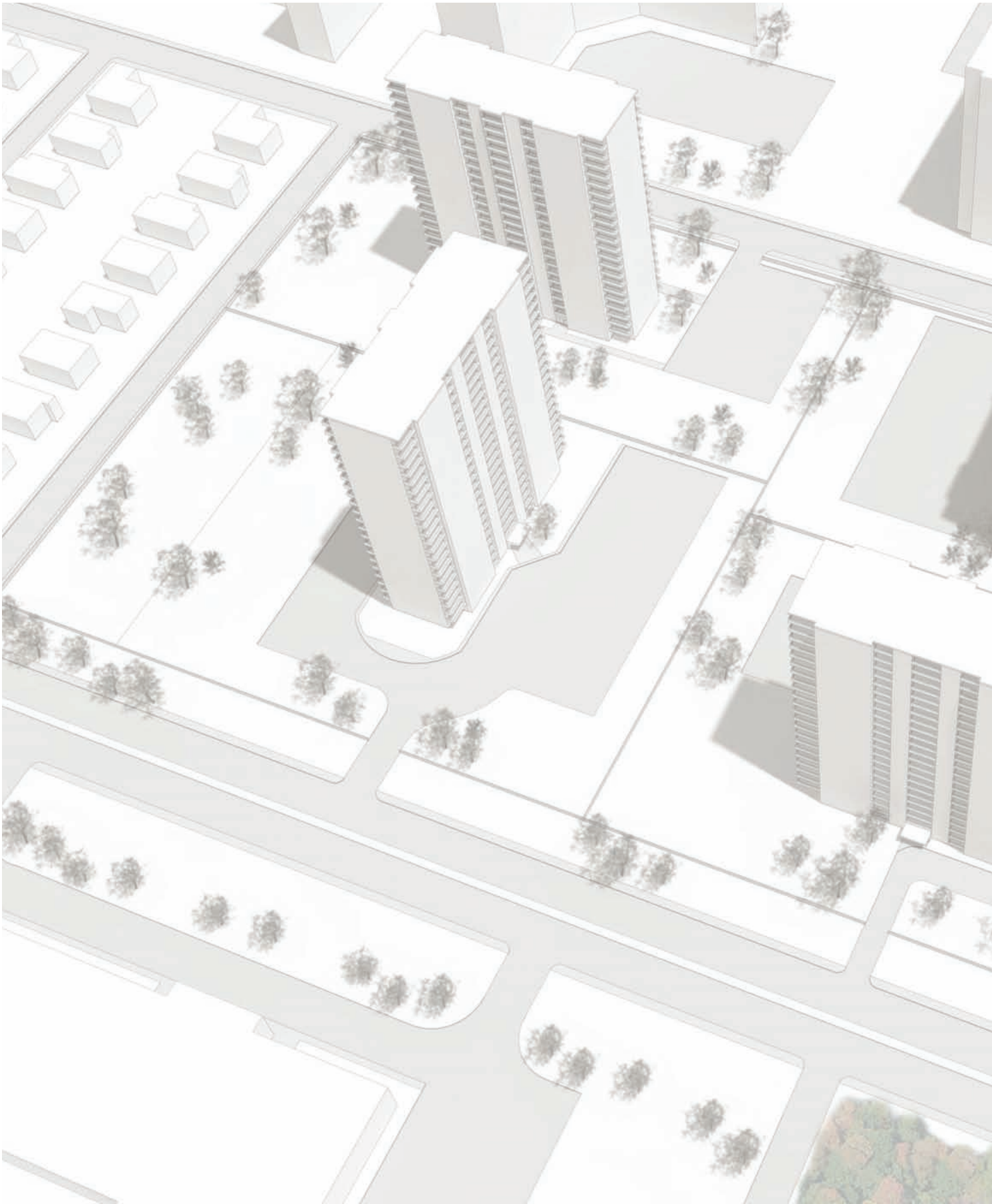
The following diagrams outline the use of various strategies outlined in this report to form more healthy and well-served communities

Diagram 1: Existing Condition

Diagram 2: Small Scale Scenario

Diagram 3: Intermediate Scale Scenario

Diagram 4: Larger Scale Scenario



Toward Healthy Apartment Neighbourhoods

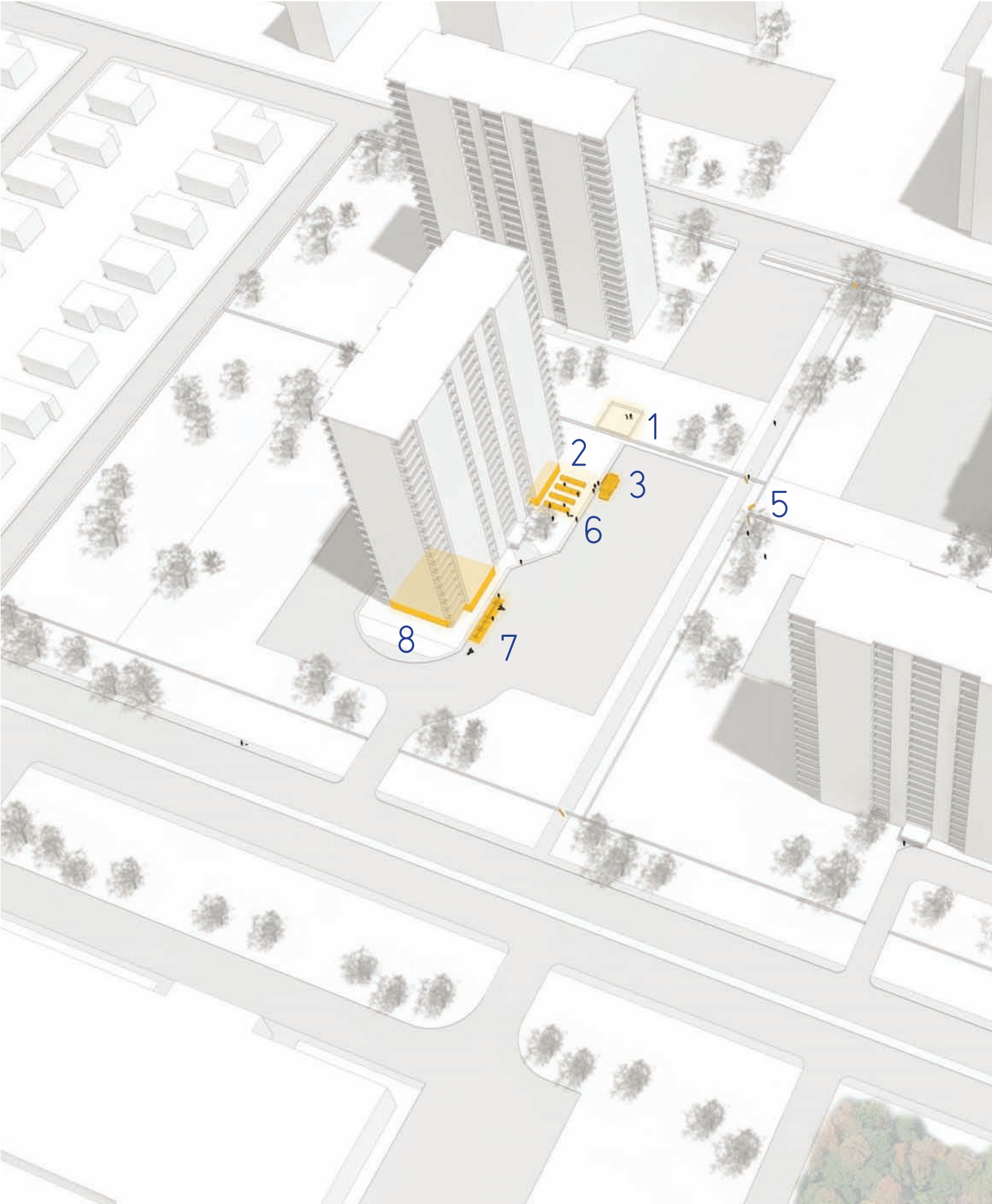
Existing

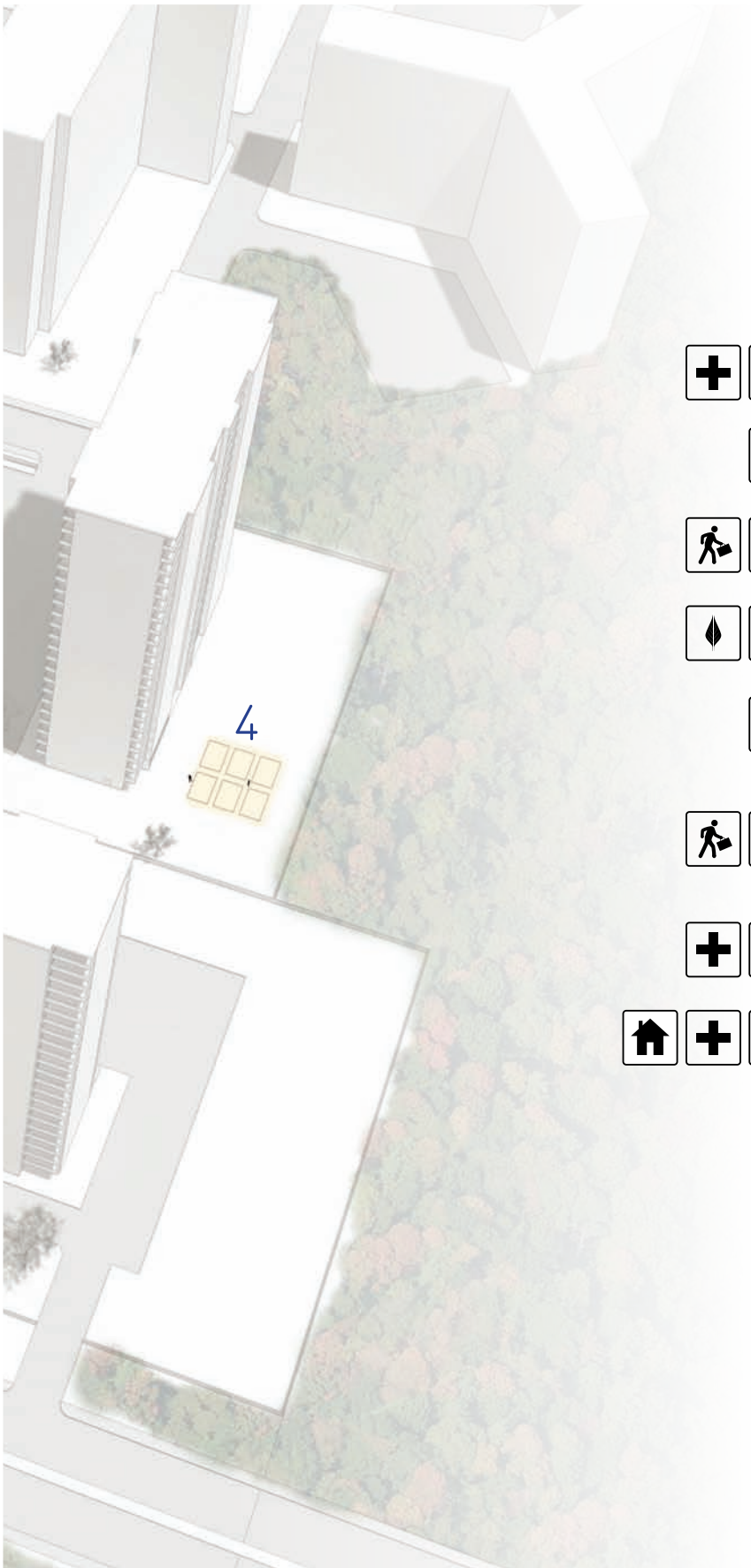
Typical Apartment Neighbourhood in Toronto

The following diagrams outline the use of strategies outlined in this report. Strategies are accumulated on the site in combinations that produce smaller scale, intermediate scale and larger scale scenarios on the site. Together, these strategies enable apartment neighbourhoods and their surroundings to emerge as more healthy places and complete communities.

Health themes related to the strategies explored in this report are as follows:

- 
-  1 Natural Environment
 -  2 Built Environment
 -  3 Transportation
 -  4 Housing
 -  5 Income and Employment
 -  6 Education and Learning
 -  7 Food Security
 -  8 Health Services





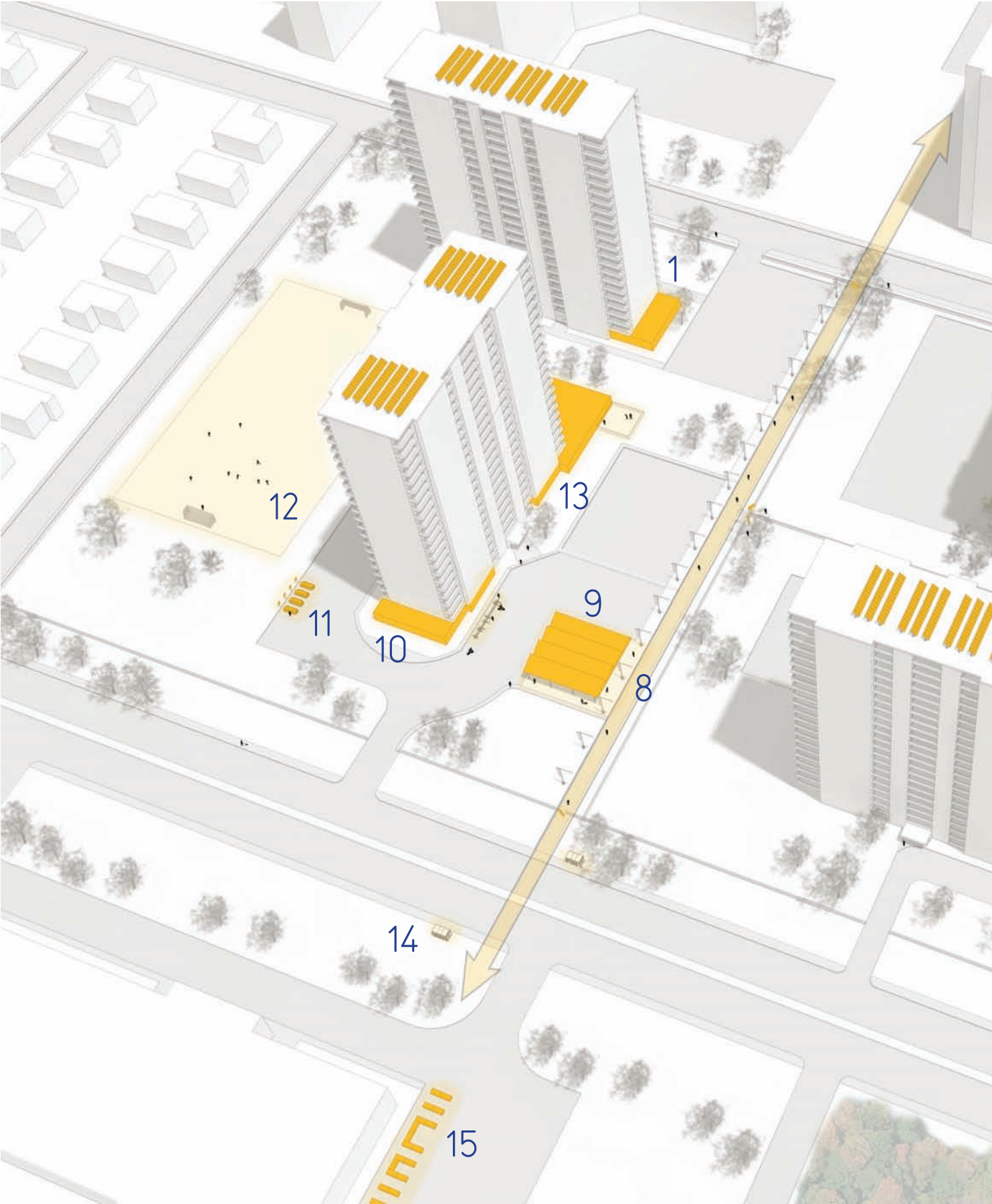


Toward Healthy Apartment
Neighbourhoods

Small Scale

Interior renovations and temporary
outdoor uses on individual properties

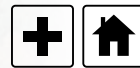
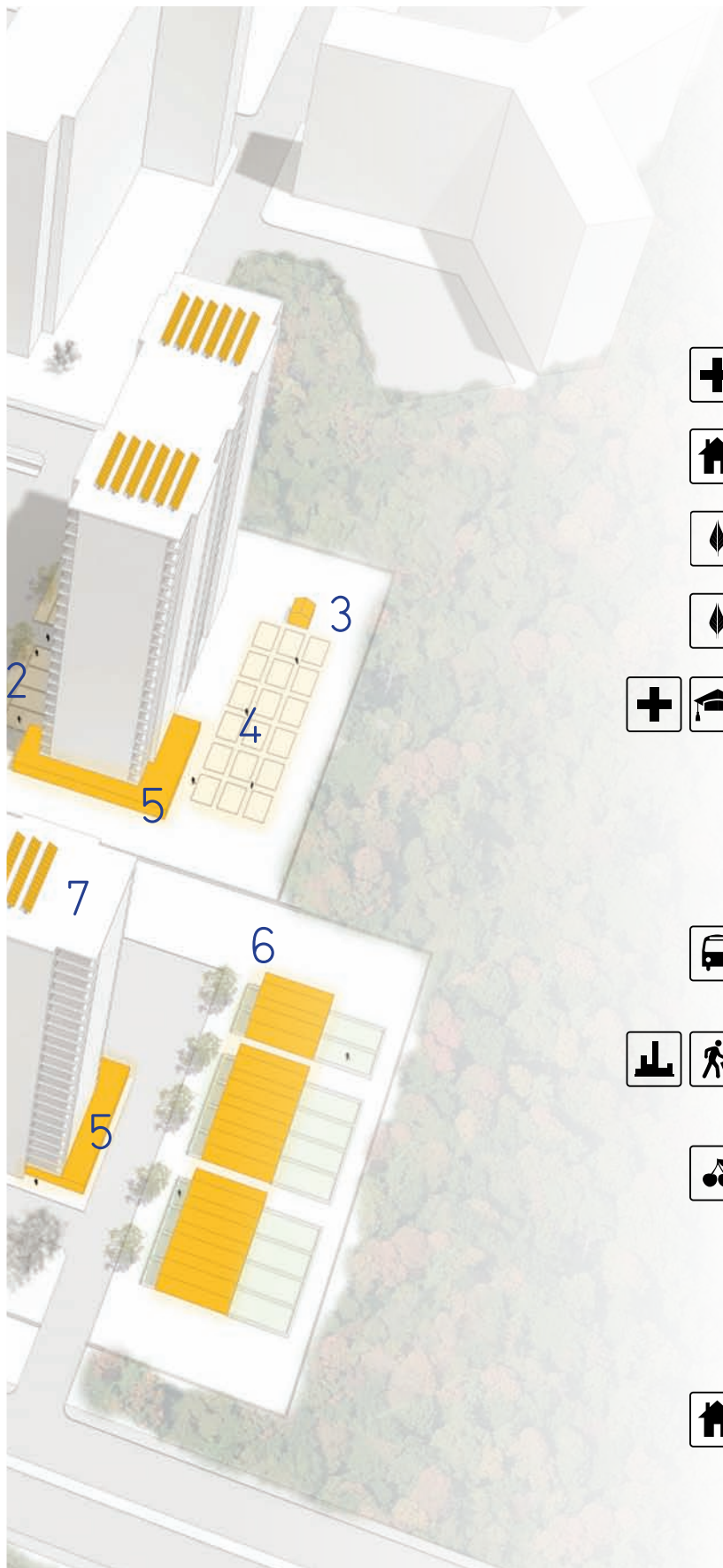
-  1 Children's play area in open space
-  2 Daycare space in ground floor
-  3 Temporary food trucks
-  4 Allotment / small scale community gardens
-  5 Gates in fences for connections, new path to Ravine, and to connect to TTC
-  6 Weekly farmer's / vendor's market in parking lot or open space
-  7 Bike parking in parking lot
-  8 Multi-purpose space on ground floor for:
 - _visiting community agencies
 - _tenant meetings
 - _etc



Toward Healthy Apartment Neighbourhoods

Intermediate Scale

Small mixed-use infill structures and landscape upgrades connecting adjacent tower properties



1

Children's play area in open space



2

Ground floor terrace gardens



3

Composting auxiliary building



4

Enlarged allotments / community gardens



5

Podium infill community space



6

Row of lowrise housing



7

PV / Solar water heating on roof



8

Path and lighting network with plantings through multiple properties



9

Permanent gathering space / market space converted from parking lot



10

Podium infill green grocer



11

Carshare



12

Playing field



13

Expanded daycare centre



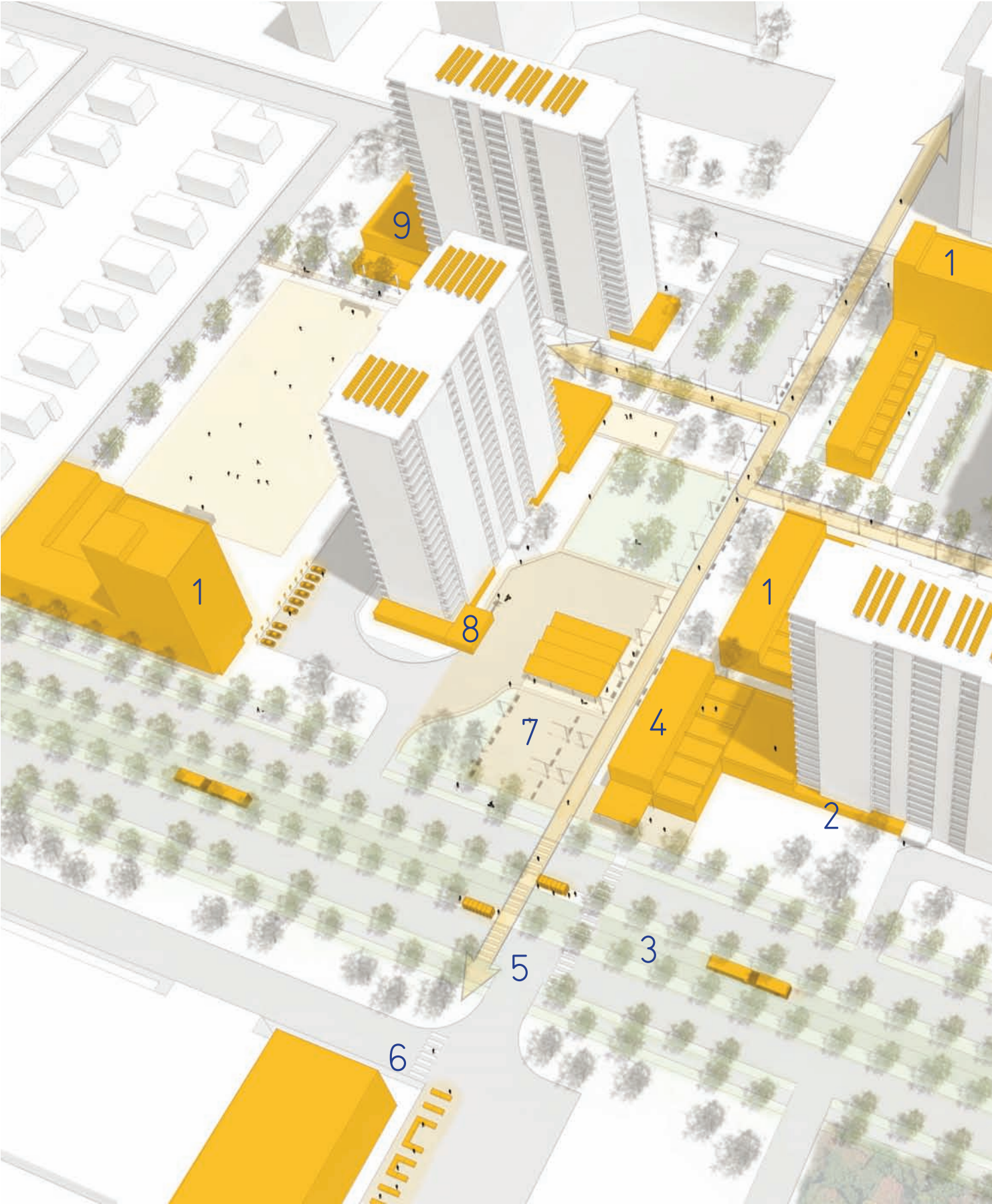
14

Improved seating and shelter at bus stop



15











Weekend market / fair on school grounds



Toward Healthy Apartment Neighbourhoods

Larger Scale

Larger mixed-use infill structures, landscape and public space upgrades leading to neighbourhood scale revitalization

- 
-  1 Series of mixed-use infill buildings framing open space network
 -  2 Retail in podiums
 -  3 Bus Rapid Transit
 -  4 Canopy and retail / kiosks at TTC stop
 -  5 Connections / crossings to school
 -  6 Public access to school library
 -  7 Expanded hardscape public realm / plaza
 -  8 Bike storage
 -  9 Medical centre podium infill

Appendix B: Mapping Apartment Neighbourhoods and Health Indicators

The following series of maps outlines the location of apartment neighbourhoods in Toronto with various urban systems and geographically based health indicators

Map 1: Post-War Apartment Tower Distribution Across Toronto + Urban Transportation Systems

Map 2: Post-War Apartment Towers + Investment Areas Identified in Toronto's Official Plan

Map 3: Post-War Apartment Towers and Areas of Low-Income Across Toronto

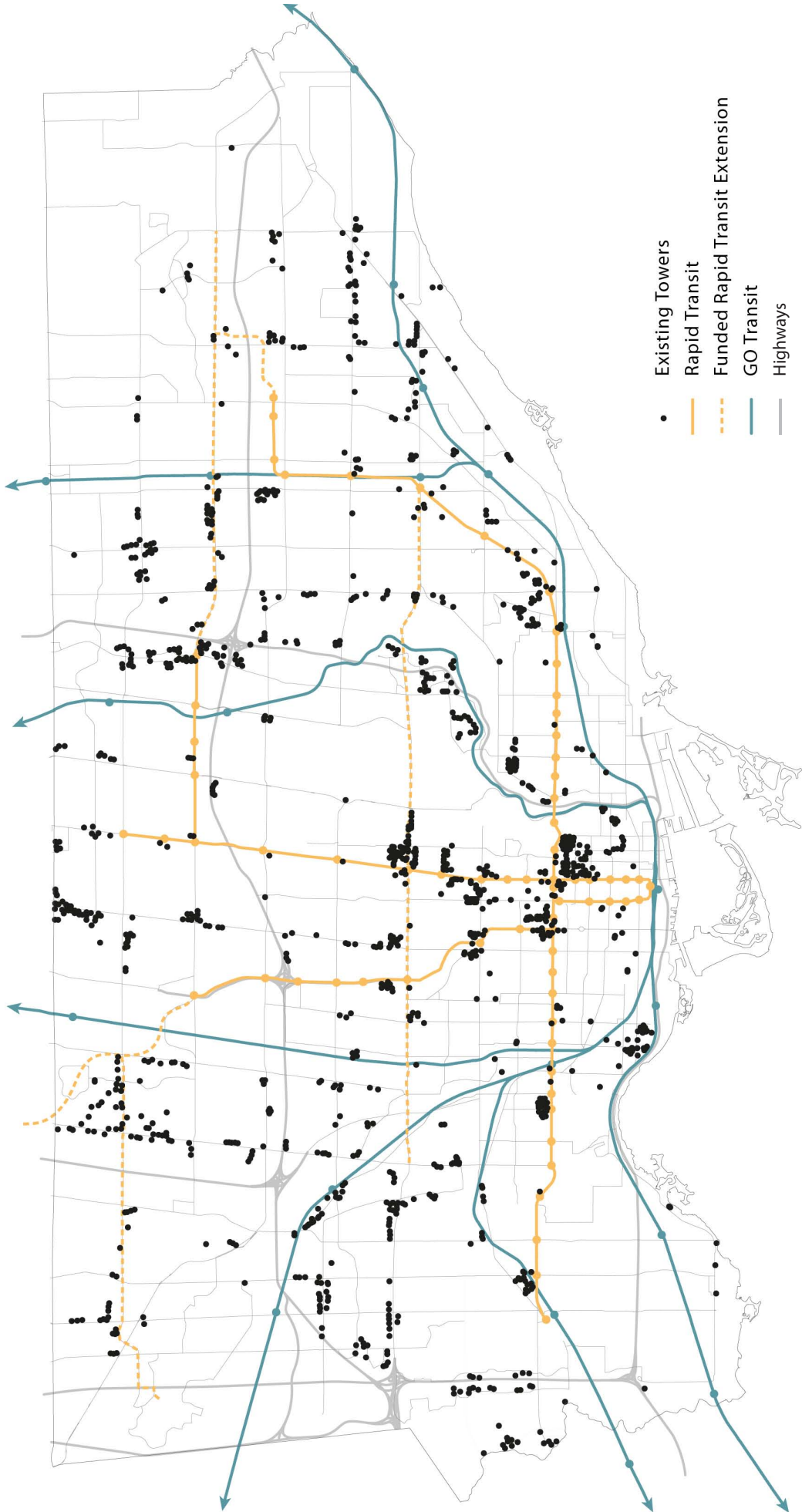
Map 4: Post-War Apartment Towers + Areas of Growing Wealth, Growing Poverty, and Priority Investment Neighbourhoods

Map 5: Post-War Apartment Towers + Areas of High Incidence of Diabetes Across Toronto

Map 6: Post-War Apartment Towers + Areas of High Poverty and Low Walkability Across Toronto

Map 7: Post-War Apartment Towers + Toronto's Park Systems and Natural Conservation Areas

Post-War Apartment Tower Distribution Across Toronto + Urban Transportation Systems

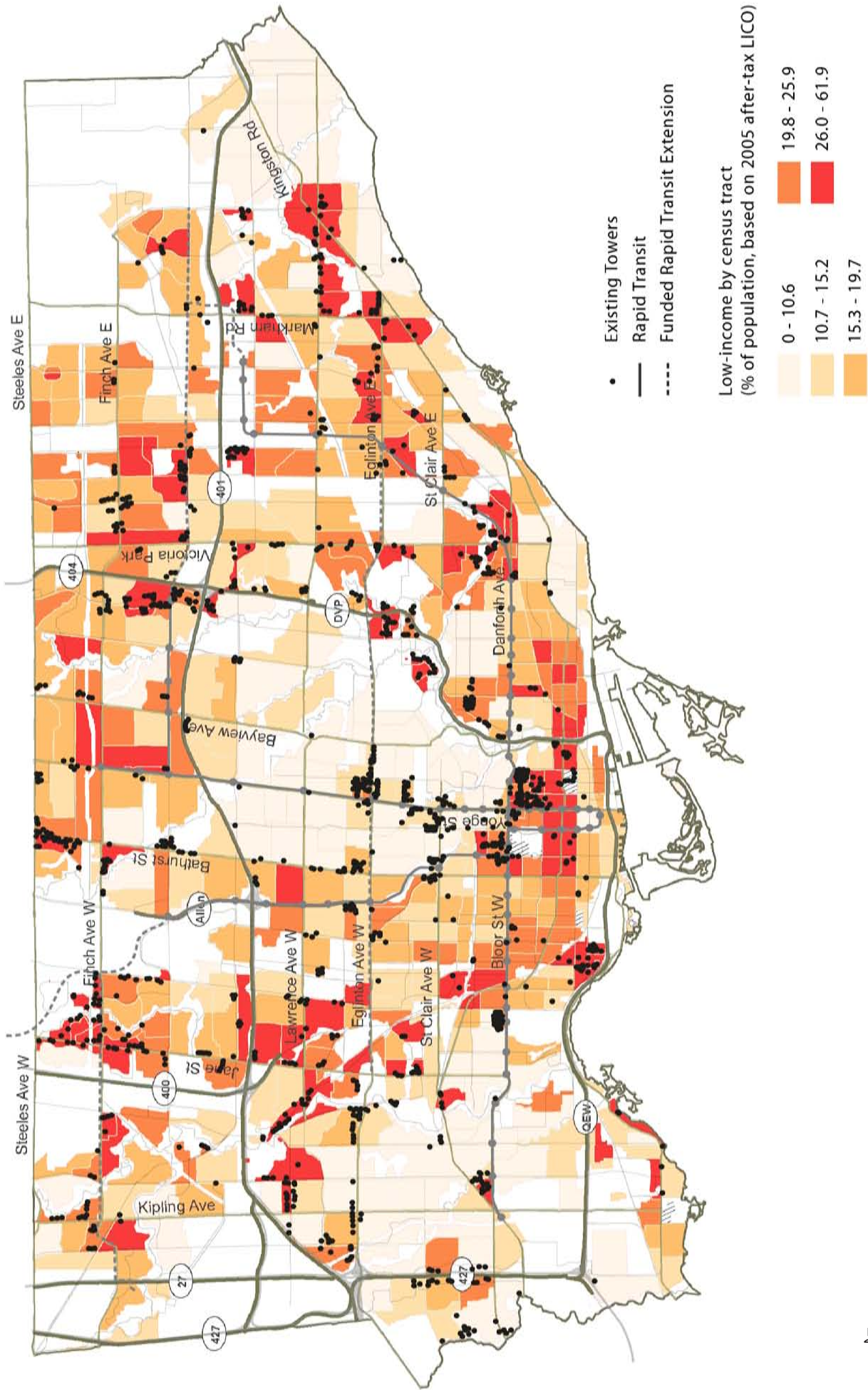


Post-War Apartment Towers + Investment Areas Identified in Toronto's Official Plan

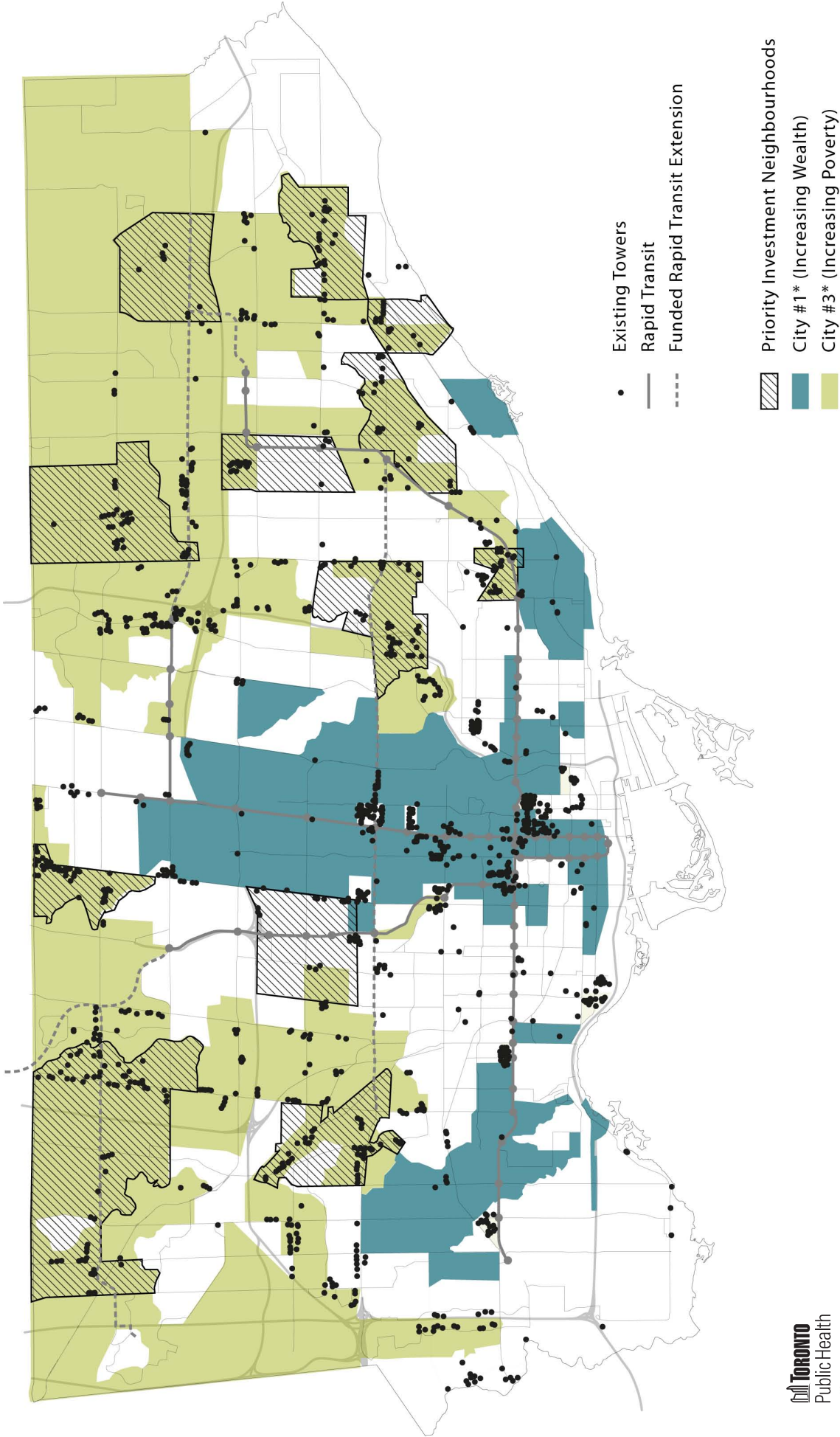


While many apartment neighbourhoods are located in areas of the city in which policies direct growth and investment, the majority are located in areas in which little or no growth is promoted through policy

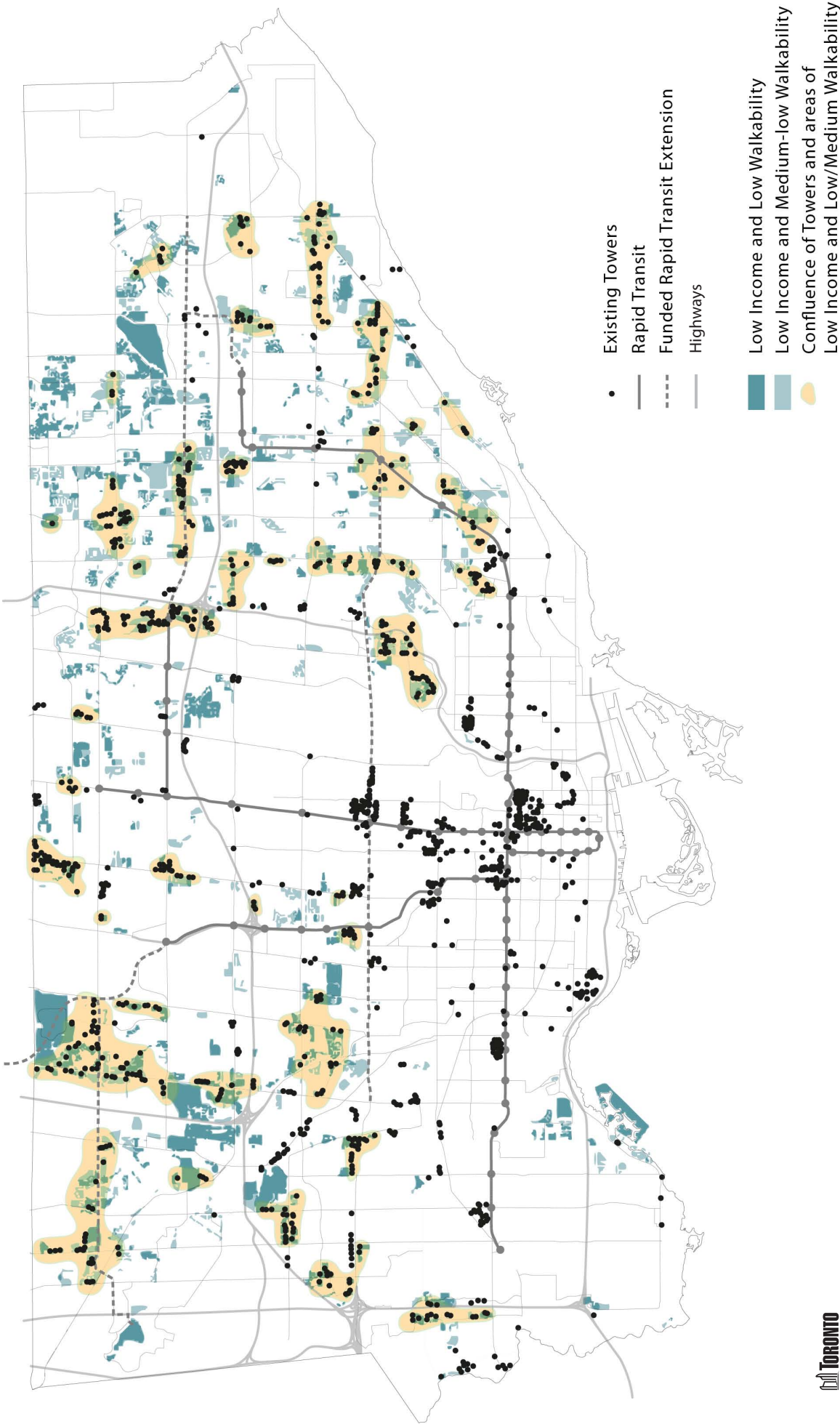
Post-War Apartment Towers and Areas of Low-Income Across Toronto



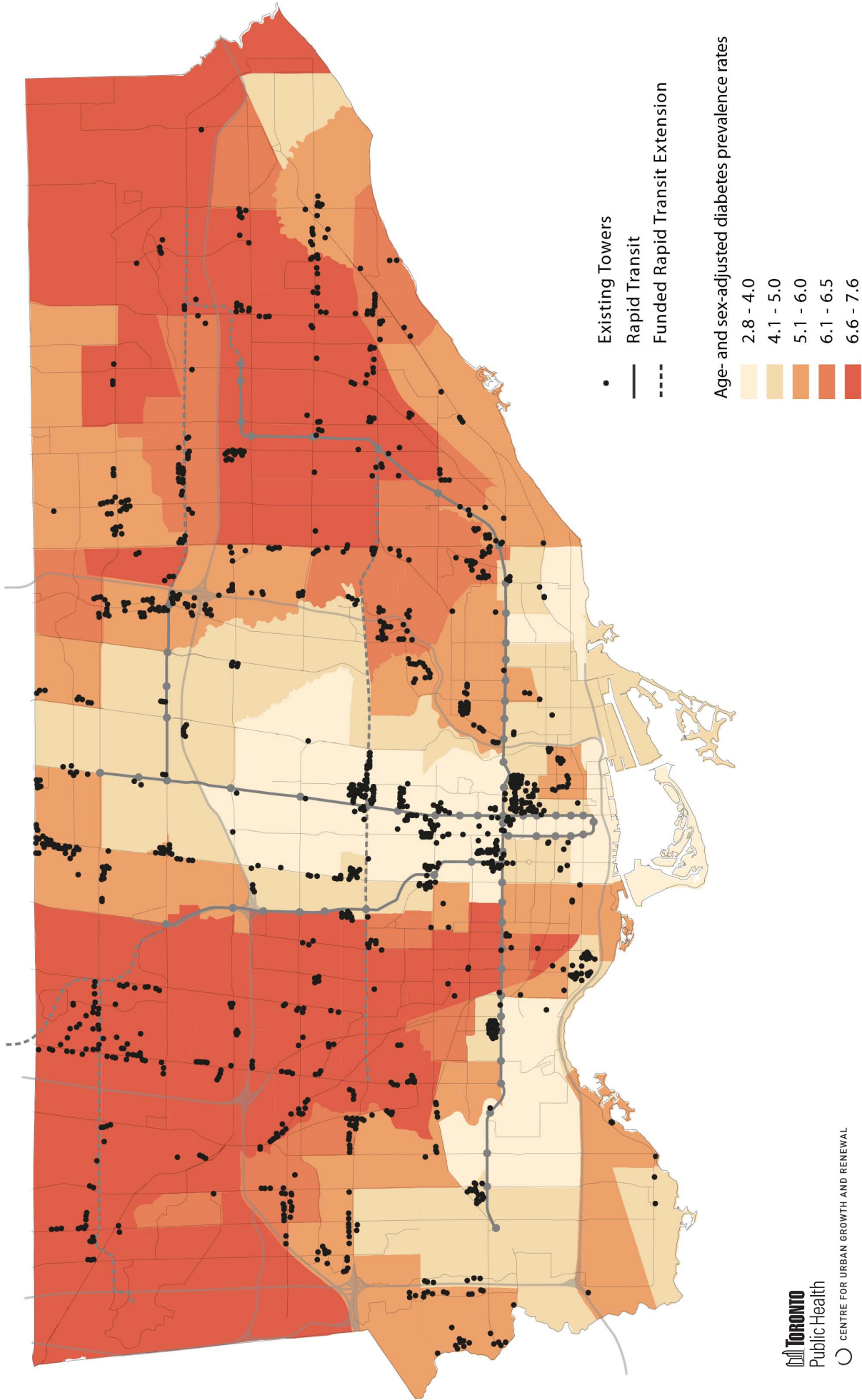
Post-War Apartment Towers + Areas of Growing Wealth, Growing Poverty, and Priority Investment Neighbourhoods



Apartment neighbourhoods are located throughout the city. However, the majority are located in areas of increasing poverty, as well as areas identified as priority investment neighbourhoods. Income data from *The three cities within Toronto* (Hulchanski 2010)

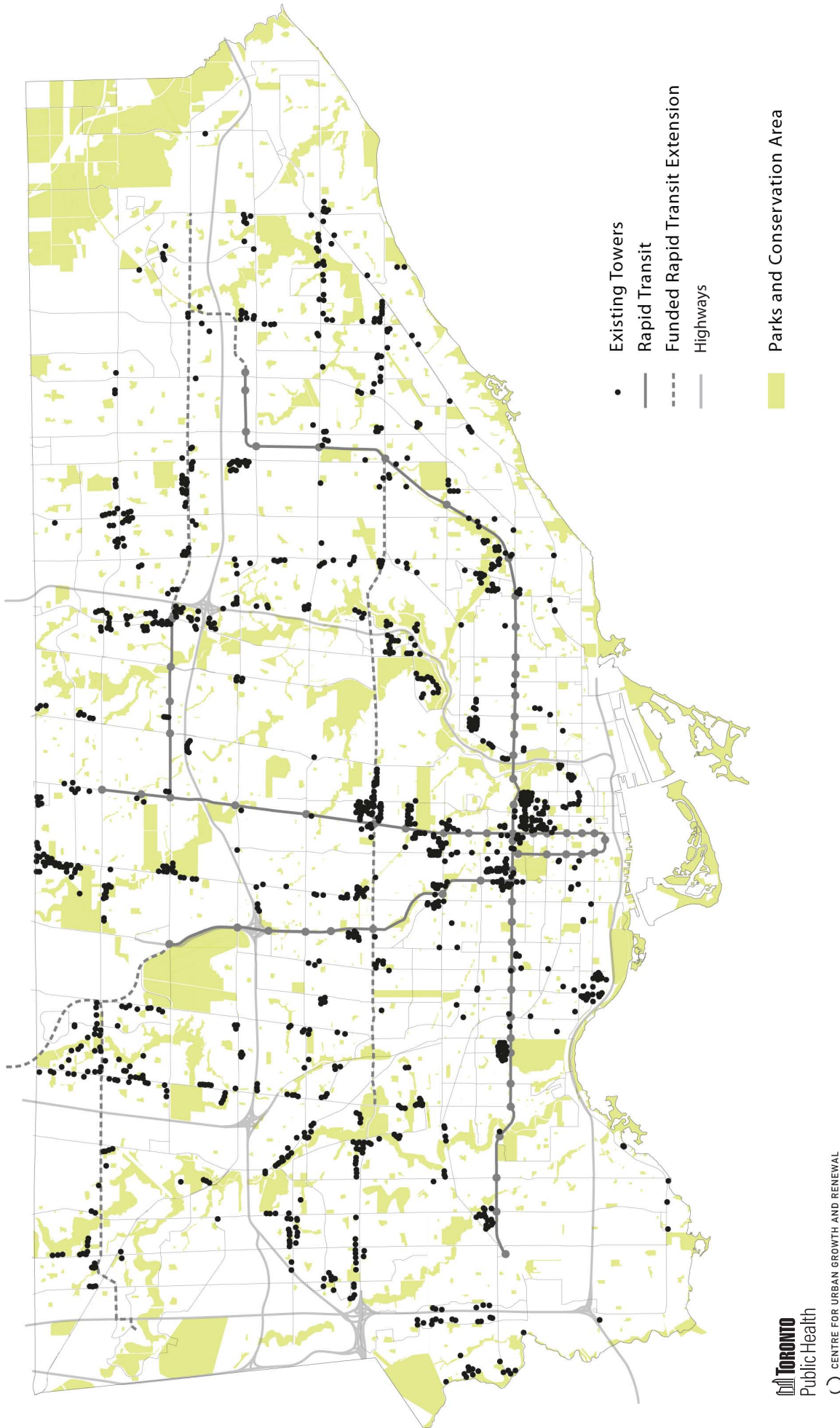


Post-War Apartment Towers + Areas of High Incidence of Diabetes Across Toronto



Diabetes base map data: Neighbourhood Environments and Resources for Healthy Living — A Focus on Diabetes in Toronto (ICES 2007)

Post-War Apartment Towers + Toronto's Park Systems and Natural Conservation Areas



Apartment neighbourhoods are located adjacent to many parks and natural conservation areas. Today, access is often limited as a result of fences and other obstacles, yet this proximity provides large potential for community health

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