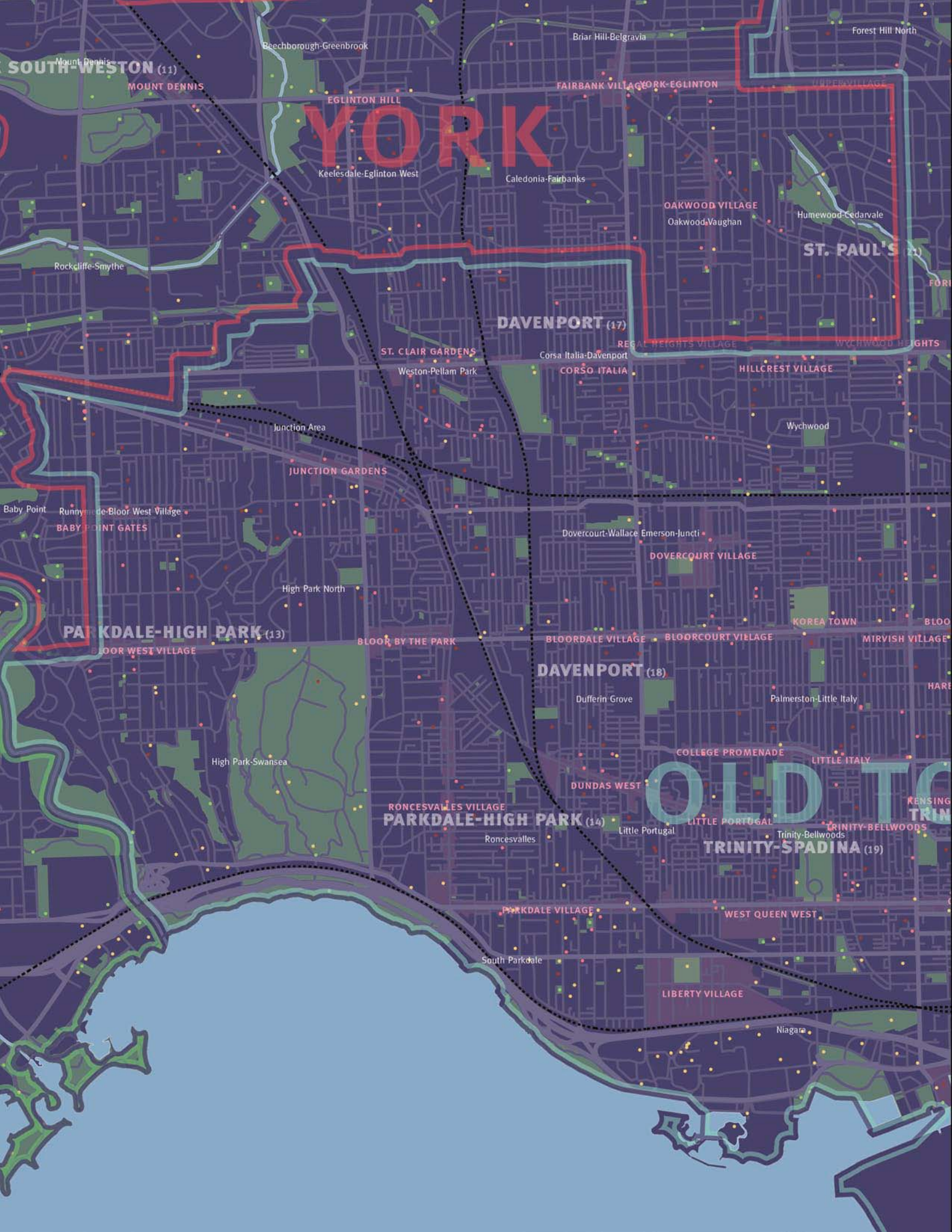


WAYFINDING SYSTEM
STRATEGY (PHASE ONE)
FOR THE CITY OF TORONTO



Toronto 360° Wayfinding Strategy

FINAL REPORT



YORK

OLD TOWN

SOUTH-WESTON (11)
MOUNT DENNIS

Beechborough-Greenbrook

Briar Hill-Belgravia

Forest Hill North

EGLINTON HILL

FAIRBANK VILLAGE YORK-EGLINTON

INTERVILLAGE

Keeleesdale-Eglinton West

Caledonia-Fairbanks

OAKWOOD VILLAGE
Oakwood-Vaughan

Humewood-Cedarvale

ST. PAUL'S (11)

DAVENPORT (17)

ST. CLAIR GARDENS

REGAL HEIGHTS VILLAGE

WYCHWOOD HEIGHTS

Weston-Pellam Park

Corsa Italia-Davenport

CORSO ITALIA

HILLCREST VILLAGE

Junction Area

JUNCTION GARDENS

Wychwood

Baby Point
Runnymede-Bloor West Village
BABY POINT GATES

Dovercourt-Wallace Emerson-Juncti

DOVERCOURT VILLAGE

PARKDALE-HIGH PARK (13)

High Park North

BLOOR BY THE PARK

DAVENPORT (18)

KOREA TOWN

BLOOR

Dufferin Grove

Palmerston-Little Italy

BLOOR WEST VILLAGE

BLOOR BY THE PARK

BLOODALE VILLAGE

BLOORCOURT VILLAGE

MIRVISH VILLAGE

High Park-Swansea

RONCESVALLES VILLAGE

DUNDAS WEST

COLLEGE PROMENADE

LITTLE ITALY

PARKDALE-HIGH PARK (14)

Roncesvalles

Little Portugal

LITTLE PORTUGAL

Trinity-Bellwoods

KENSINGTON

TRINITY-SPADINA (19)

PARKDALE VILLAGE

WEST QUEEN WEST

South Parkdale

LIBERTY VILLAGE

Niagara

The City of Toronto has embarked on a planning process to develop a unified and coherent Wayfinding System. This report documents the processes and outcomes of the strategy phase of the study and will serve to inform the City's decision on whether to carry the project forward into implementation.

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DIALOG

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All images by Steer Davies Gleave unless otherwise stated.

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Introduction

A goal of Toronto's Walking Strategy was the development of a consistent, multi-modal wayfinding system. The need for one has been highlighted in other city and regional studies and is timely in anticipation of the 2015 Pan-Am Games.

The City of Toronto's Walking Strategy (2009), amongst other initiatives, sets out a vision for a more liveable, prosperous and sustainable city. It is a plan to create high quality pedestrian environments and foster a culture of walking in all of Toronto's neighbourhoods.

The creation of a multi-modal wayfinding system is a goal of the City's Walking Strategy which "aims to create an environment where walking is an appealing, convenient, safe and stimulating experience for residents and visitors". The development of a wayfinding system is also timely, as the 2015 Pan-Am Games will attract significant media attention and visitors to Toronto.

The City's long-term goal, to develop and implement a coherent wayfinding system in Toronto, extends across transportation modes and includes state of the art technologies. This goal, of a unified, multi-modal wayfinding system, is shared by city businesses, cultural and sports institutions, residents, commuters and tourists.

The Public Realm Section of the Transportation Services Division commissioned a team of consultants, Steer Davies Gleave and Dialog, to assist the City to develop Phase One of the Wayfinding System Strategy. This phase of the project developed a multi-modal wayfinding framework for Toronto, including design principles, implementation strategy, outline business case, funding sources, and the parameters for a pilot implementation.

If approved, Phase Two will include design development, product prototyping and an

evaluated pilot implementation which will further inform the business case, refine funding opportunities and form the basis of a suite of design guidelines for a city-wide roll out.

Phase Three covers the full implementation of the wayfinding strategy across the city.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report summarizes the outcomes of the Wayfinding System Strategy (Phase One) study, which began in September 2011. The study aimed to establish robust foundations for the development and delivery of a high-quality wayfinding system for Toronto.

The report is structured into 3 sections plus an introduction.

- The introduction describes the study objectives and the policy context.
- Section 1 "Understanding" summarizes the findings from on-site observations, including gaps and opportunities; it incorporates an overview of the challenges of consistent naming, a brief review of international best practices, and the results of stakeholder outreach activities.
- Section 2 "Wayfinding Strategy" describes the design framework, system components, and their possible application to interim pilot areas.
- Section 3 "Delivery" section describes a high-level project plan, budget implications, a summary of the Outline Business Case, and future funding options and opportunities for the City.

Further information on the project process, expanded reports, presentations on existing conditions and a summary of international best practices and stakeholder outreach is included in the Toronto 360 Wayfinding Strategy report appendices.

Please visit our website (<http://www.toronto.ca/transportation/walking/wayfinding.htm>) if you would like access to further information.

What is wayfinding?

A wayfinding system enables people to orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place.

Kevin Lynch is widely regarded as the originator of the term wayfinding. His book *The Image of the City* (MIT Press 1960), established the core principles of legibility for an urban context. He argued that, as people navigate places, they understand their surroundings in consistent and predictable ways, forming “mental maps” with five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks.

Contemporary wayfinding systems have built on the principles set out in Lynch’s book to develop information hierarchies that support the creation of mental mapping and legible places.

City wayfinding relates to the built and the natural environment and makes streets, neighbourhoods, and the city more “legible”, helping people to find their way. Wayfinding is more than signs—it includes names, maps, new media, and elements of the public realm such as lighting, street furniture and public art. Many cities such as London, New York, Bogota and Vancouver have recently developed wayfinding strategies in response to significant transportation challenges and/or major events such as the Olympics. The successful implementation of a unified wayfinding system will deliver significant, proven benefits to residents, businesses, and tourists.

WHY NOW?

Toronto’s BIAs (Business Improvement Areas), cultural institutions, sports venues and tourism community have long advocated the need for a city-wide wayfinding system. The need for wayfinding is also highlighted in the City’s Walking Strategy and a recent review of the PATH system (underground walking/shopping path system). The growth in visitor numbers, and the 2015 PanAm Games make this a timely opportunity to take the initial steps towards delivery of this goal.

A SYSTEM FOR TORONTO

Toronto faces many of the challenges of other metropolitan cities, balancing the need to provide efficient multi-modal transportation choice with the requirements for a liveable city, with public space that residents and visitors can enjoy.

The tourism experience can be enhanced if visitors can easily find their way to key destinations or are able to join local residents in exploring Toronto’s unique neighbourhoods. A unified wayfinding system adds to the vibrancy of the city’s streetscape and also helps build and foster the city’s unique identity.

Multiple formal and informal attempts to provide wayfinding information can be found around the city, in particular around downtown and tourist attractions, yet a consistent and comprehensive system remains a far-reaching aspiration.

The Toronto Wayfinding System Strategy vision was to develop common wayfinding principles that would encourage walking in Toronto, taking account of the needs of Toronto’s stakeholders, and to support the future implementation of a family of wayfinding components. The system should spiral outwards to enable project partners to adopt these principles for their own schemes—utilizing naming, hierarchies, colour coding, look & feel and other conventions to make the system theirs.

The long-term vision is to provide the city with a consistent wayfinding system but also to influence the city’s urban design to support intuitive wayfinding and facilitate natural movement.

Objectives

Wayfinding is more than connecting A to B, it encompasses all urban behaviour, from orientation to identification to exploration to discovery. Its benefits are wide reaching for visitors, residents and businesses covering public health, economy and the street environment.



IDENTIFY AND CONNECT PLACES

While it is relatively easy to know where you are in Toronto, the challenge lies in understanding how the city's places connect—conceptually, at first and then by foot, cycling, public transportation or car.

REDUCE RELIANCE ON THE CAR/ PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Reducing reliance on a single mode of transportation not only encourages better use of networks but also gives people the opportunity to react to disruptions and re-plan the journey.

STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH

More people walking means more local business. More people on the streets makes neighbourhoods safer, more vibrant and attractive.

ENCOURAGE EXPLORATION, WANDERING & DISCOVERY

It's not only visitors who benefit from wayfinding. Locals are also provided with tools to rediscover the city and to 'get lost' in the knowledge that they will find their way back.

BUILD CONFIDENCE AND TRUST TO WALK

Physical and psychological barriers and a frequent overestimation of walk distances/times have been identified as some of the main deterrents for walking.

Directional policy & related projects

The need for a unified wayfinding system for Toronto has been highlighted in various studies and related projects. The solution needs to adhere to existing policy, in particular those related to walking and street furniture.

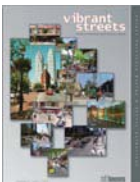
Toronto Walking Strategy

is an overarching policy that envisions a walkable Toronto, where streets, parks and neighbourhoods are accessible, secure, vibrant and enjoyable, encouraging people to walk more often.



Vibrant Streets: Toronto's Coordinated Street Furniture Program (2010)

is Toronto's coordinated street furniture design and policy guideline. One of the main objectives of the Vibrant Streets Policy is to harmonize the design, form, scale, materials and placement of street furniture to contribute to accessibility, safety, and beauty of public spaces in Toronto.



A policy review identified the objectives and strategies that underpin current wayfinding-related initiatives in Toronto.

Around a dozen policy and planning documents were reviewed and can be aggregated into a hierarchy of two categories:

Directional policy: provides guiding policy direction for wayfinding and includes:

- Walking Strategy
- City of Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (2004)
- Identification and Directional Road Signage Policy
- City of Toronto Official Plan

Related Projects: includes relevant projects, studies, and policy with specific wayfinding and signage strategies. The review included:

- Cultural Institutions in the Public Realm
- PATH Master Plan (2011)
- INFOTOGO Pillars
- Metrolinx (GO Transit) Static Signage Catalogue

There is also a wealth of related bylaws and guidelines that determine the placement of street furnishing elements such as TTC Technical Guidelines for Placement of Transit Stops, the Streetscape Manual, and related zoning by-laws.

TORONTO WALKING STRATEGY

The Walking Strategy is supported by a number of other policies such as the Official Plan, the Toronto Pedestrian Charter, International Charter for Walking, and other guidelines and programs, such as the Vibrant Streets policy.

The walkable Toronto concept builds on a number of policies and documents that support walkable communities and the creation of urban environments that support increased pedestrian activity.

Objectives of the Walking Strategy of particular relevance to the development of the Wayfinding Strategy include:

- To support and nurture a culture of walking throughout the city;
- For all city sidewalks and walkways to be clear, accessible and easy to navigate;
- For public and private city building projects to provide opportunities to create a high-quality walking environment;
- To make walking easy and enjoyable through provision of tools for navigating the city on foot, such as signage and maps;
- To coordinate pedestrian-focused projects and initiatives across city divisions and agencies;
- To transform areas poorly designed for walking, neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood, into places where people want to walk.

VIBRANT STREETS

The Vibrant Streets program focuses on harmonizing the design and placement of street amenities to reduce clutter, beautify city streets and give Toronto an identifiable streetscape, and to work concurrently with improvements to other elements in the public right-of-way, such as tree planting, decorative paving, pedestrian clearways, parking, and street signs.

The policies relevant to the Toronto Wayfinding Strategy filter down from three main aspirations described in the Vibrant Streets vision:

- A cohesive and exceptional design quality;
- Function in terms of safety, accessibility and placement; and
- Aesthetically appealing, functional, safe, and an accessible public realm.

To achieve these aspirations, the overarching and more supportive policies reported seven key-themes that are largely consistent throughout the directional policies. These were to:

- Implement a family of beautiful, functional, technologically flexible, durable and coordinated furniture for the streets of Toronto;
- Promote ease of pedestrian movement and accessibility through the placement and design of furniture;
- Generate a fiscally responsible street furniture program;

- Establish a program for ongoing maintenance and renewal;
- Achieve attractive streetscapes through a high standard of civic design;
- Enhance the safety of city streets; and
- Promote and enhance Toronto's identity.

These themes were cross-checked with the main policies to inform the vision and principles of the Toronto Wayfinding System.

There were four main themes that emerged from the review process:

- Functionality and coordinated street furniture;
- Ease of pedestrian movement and accessibility;
- Attractive design; and
- Safety and security.

The Toronto Wayfinding System Strategy should seek adherence with these strategies and tailor objectives to city, district, and site level.

City of Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines (2004) is an overarching policy that envisions a walkable Toronto, where streets, parks and neighbourhoods are accessible.

Identification and Directional Road Signage Policy establishes identification signage (neighbourhoods and communities) and directional destination signage (major attractions).

City of Toronto Official Plan Streets will be designed to perform their diverse roles, balancing the spatial needs of existing and future users within the right-of-way. This includes pedestrians, people with mobility aids, transit, bicycles, automobiles, utilities and landscaping.

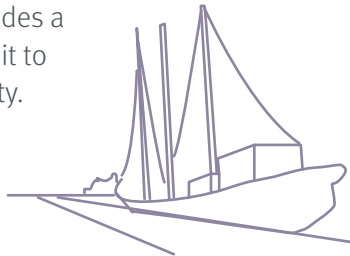


1.1 Building a mental map of the city

Many things make Toronto special. The city has many distinctive features that not only engage people’s attention but also help with orientation and navigation. These features form the basis for the development of a mental map of the city.*

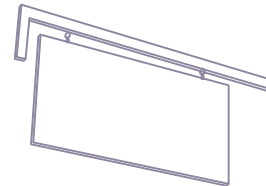
LAKE ONTARIO LAKESHORE / WATERFRONT

As with many coastal cities, Lake Ontario provides a clearly defined limit to one edge of the city.



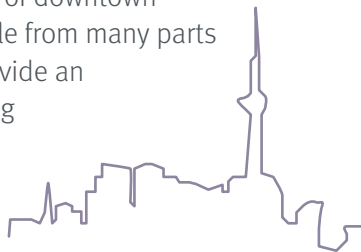
CITY OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

Many of the city’s neighbourhoods have strong cultural identities adding diversity to the urban landscape. Identity is expressed through a combination of retail signing, street names, architecture, and institutional or informal graphics.



DOWNTOWN HIGHRISES

The concentration of downtown highrises are visible from many parts of the city and provide an intuitive wayfinding point of reference.



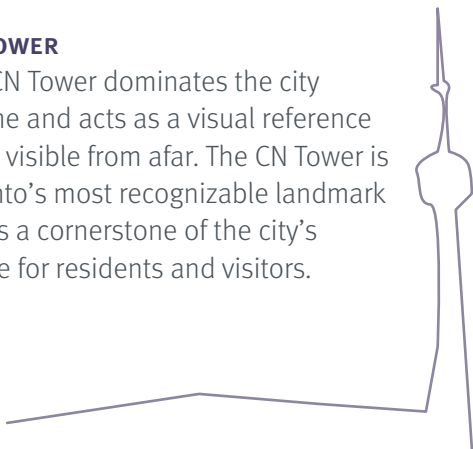
CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Many of Toronto’s cultural institutions have statement/flagship buildings that act as local or citywide landmarks.



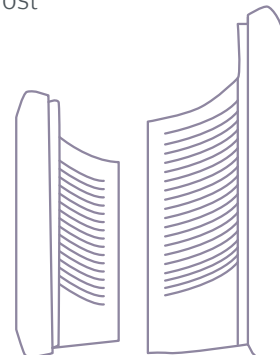
CN TOWER

The CN Tower dominates the city skyline and acts as a visual reference point visible from afar. The CN Tower is Toronto’s most recognizable landmark and is a cornerstone of the city’s image for residents and visitors.



CIVIC BUILDINGS

City Hall’s architecture stands out as one of Toronto’s most recognizable features although it is not visible from a distance. Nathan Phillips Square, in front of City Hall is a civic space and a popular recreational destination for residents.



*** Mental maps:**
We all build maps in our heads to navigate city streets, how we do so depends on a host of factors. The more we travel a particular route, the clearer it becomes in our mind’s eye. A successful pedestrian wayfinding system should recognize this and find ways to help everyone build a stronger, more coherent mental map.

1.2 Understanding Toronto

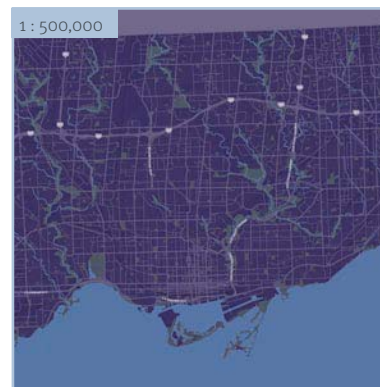
A city is not only understood through the urban landscape but also through words. Official names often juxtapose with common, learned or historical ones. Building agreement on naming requires a clear city-wide policy that forms the basis for engagement and debate at a local level.

There are many factors that have an impact on the naming of a city's areas and places, including urban form, parks, natural systems and paths, administrative and neighbourhood boundaries, business improvement areas, historic districts, destination areas, existing signage systems, and transportation systems. To build an understanding of Toronto's naming conventions the project team compiled and plotted multiple geographic datasets in a Geographical Information System (GIS). Map data was supplied by the City of Toronto (open map), Metrolinx and Tourism Toronto. The baseline data collated included:

- Parks and open spaces
- Administrative/neighbourhoods
- Business Improvement Areas
- Heritage Conservation Districts
- Destinations and Attractions
- Commuter Rail
- Built form
- Transit stops and railroads

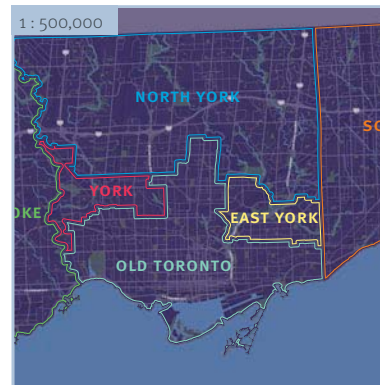
The following images show some of the naming conventions embedded in the different databases and their geographic distribution. In general, districts get smaller as they get closer to the downtown area and vice versa.

The definition and relevance to users of names and boundaries at a local level requires detailed engagement with local communities.



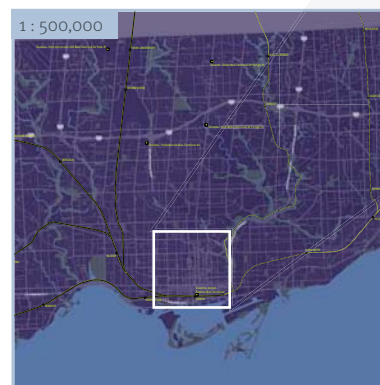
LAKESHORE, HIGHWAYS AND WATER FEATURES

The lakeshore edge, highways 401, 404 (DVP) and the Gardiner Expressway frame a distinct, high level organization of the city. Water features, such as rivers and creeks, are less distinct on the city map but provide clearly defined edges on the ground.



FORMER MUNICIPALITIES

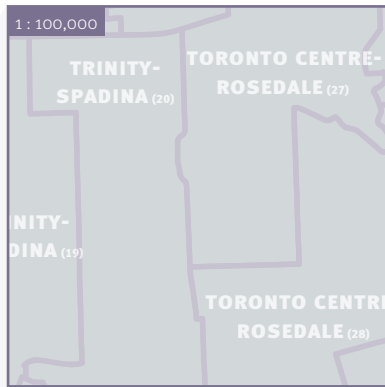
Pre-amalgamation municipality names contribute to the complex mix of heritage naming across the city. Some of these names, such as Etobicoke, remain in common usage while others have faded into obscurity.



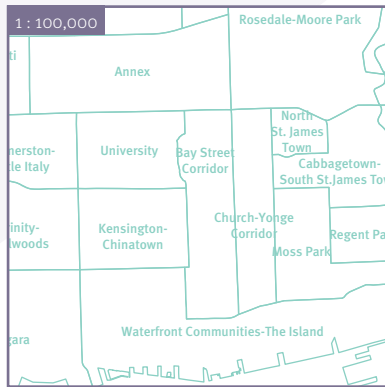
TRANSIT AND RAILROADS

Commuter transit links spread across Toronto, the GTA and beyond, and are often represented on area maps.

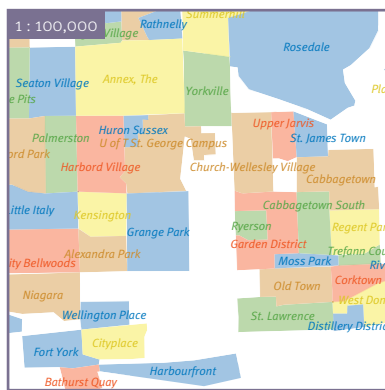
At ground level, transit infrastructure and lines often create barriers to movement with few permeable pedestrian links.



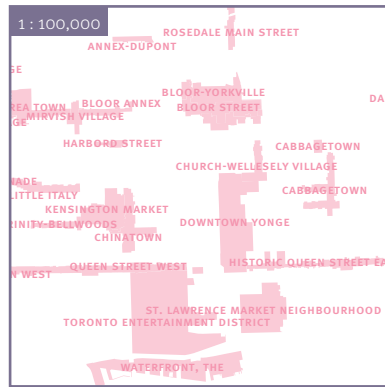
WARDS
Ward boundaries form a significant part of much of the City's cartography. However, from a wayfinding perspective, these boundaries have limited meaning on the ground.



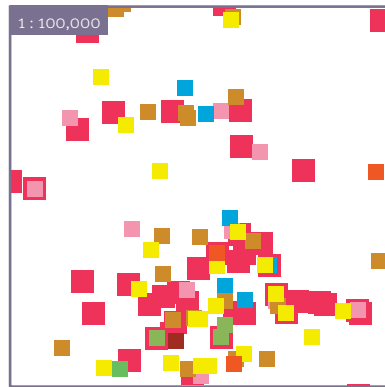
NEIGHBOURHOOD
Although Toronto is known by its variety of neighbourhoods, some being clearly noticeable in the urban landscape, their exact boundaries remain a matter for discussion. The image shows neighbourhood limits included in the City's open database.



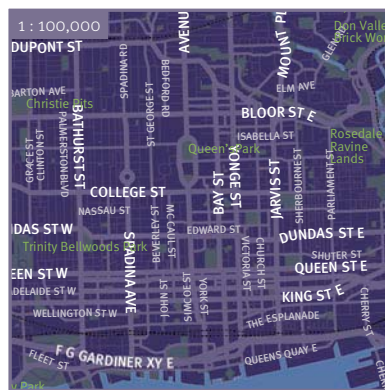
PEOPLE'S NEIGHBOURHOODS*
The Toronto Star activity demonstrated that people conceive of a neighbourhood as a place to live with neighbourhoods often being defined on-street by important roads that act as natural edges.



BIAS
The exact boundaries of Business Improvement Areas change according to their active members. BIA brands are increasingly visible on-street and on marketing materials. While strong branding helps raise BIA visibility, it can also serve to diminish the profile of surrounding, non-BIA areas.



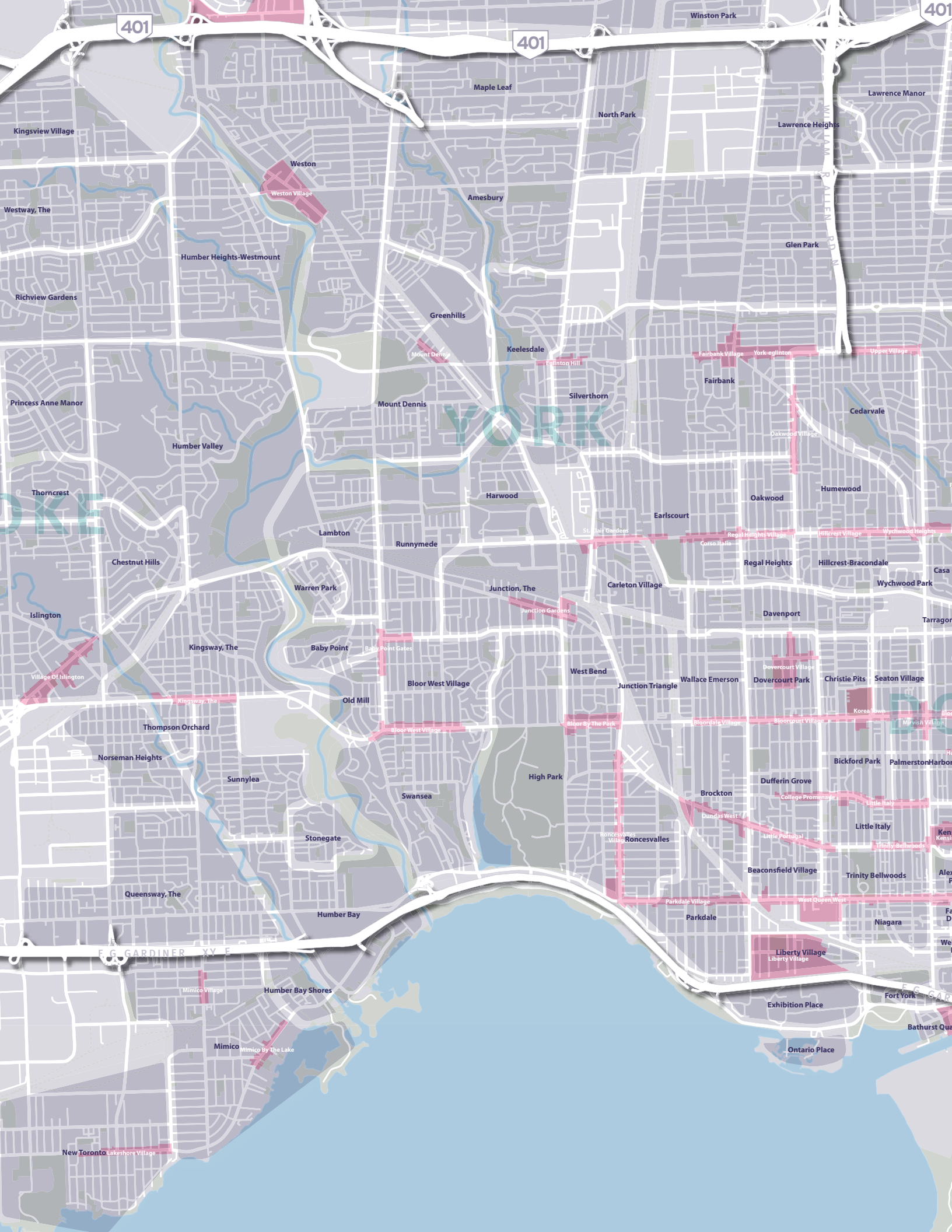
ATTRACTIONS
Current databases list a broad mix of private and public places of interest. These are often organized in categories with attractions mainly concentrated in the downtown area and along major corridors and highways.



STREET AND PARK NAMES
Street names are the most unequivocal way to name and find a specific point. Databases adhere to an established hierarchy—from major arterials to local roads. Park names also provide a useful naming resource, although with a less well defined hierarchy.

*** Mapping neighbourhoods,** as seen by the community, is a project led by the Toronto Star that highlights the overlap between official and common names. It also demonstrates an opportunity to match boundaries and names via active public participation. Adoption of consistent naming is one of the cornerstones of a successful wayfinding system.





401

401

401

Winston Park

Lawrence Manor

Kingsview Village

Maple Leaf

North Park

Lawrence Heights

Westway, The

Weston

Amesbury

Humber Heights-Westmount

Glen Park

Richview Gardens

Greenhills

Keele

Fairbank Village

Upper Village

Princess Anne Manor

Mount Dennis

Silverthorn

Cedarvale

Humber Valley

Harwood

YORK

Oakwood Village

Thorncrest

Lambton

Runnymede

Earlscourt

Humewood

Chestnut Hills

Warren Park

Junction, The

Carleton Village

Regal Heights

Hillcrest Village

Islington

Kingsway, The

Baby Point

Junction Gardens

Davenport

Tarragon

Village Of Islington

Thompson Orchard

Bloor West Village

West Bend

Junction Triangle

Wallace Emerson

Dovercourt Village

Christie Pits

Norseman Heights

Sunnylea

Old Mill

Bloor By The Park

Bloods Falls Village

Bloorcourt Village

Korea Town

Mirvis Village

Queensway, The

Stonegate

Swansea

High Park

Brockton

Dufferin Grove

College Promenade

Little Italy

GARDINER EXPRESSWAY

Humber Bay

Roncesvalles

Beaconsfield Village

Trinity Bellwoods

Alexander Park

Mimico Village

Humber Bay Shores

Mimico

Mimico By The Lake

Parkdale Village

Parkdale

West Queen West

Liberty Village

Liberty Village

Ontario Place

New Toronto

Lakeshore Village

Exhibition Place

Fort York

Bathurst Quay