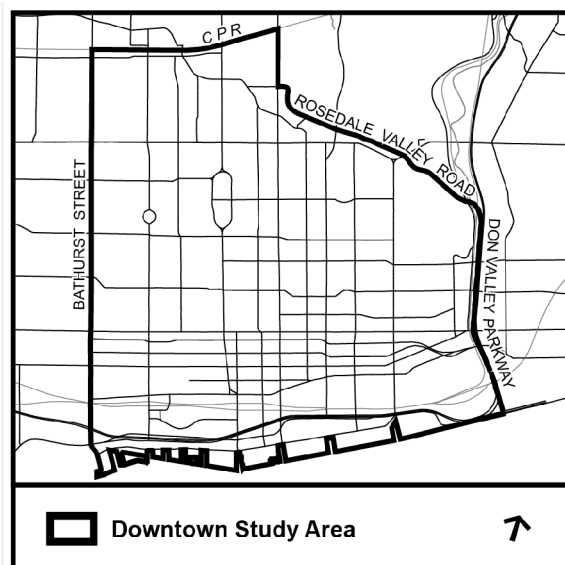


**Comprehensive to the Core: Planning Toronto’s Downtown**

<b>Date:</b>	May 7, 2014
<b>To:</b>	Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District & Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis, City Planning
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward Nos. 20, 27 and 28
<b>Reference Number:</b>	File No. 14 146134 SPS 00 TM

**SUMMARY**

Toronto's Downtown is the growing, multifaceted, and vibrant core of our city. The Downtown drives our economy by accommodating a third of Toronto’s employment (446,800 of the city's 1,331,600 jobs), delivering a quarter of the City’s tax base, and producing half of the export-based GDP. The Downtown is also home to more than 200,000 residents; a population base that is growing at four times the rate of the rest of the city. The continued growth of the Downtown reflects its success in attracting residents seeking liveable and prosperous neighbourhoods. Equally as important is the health and resiliency of office, retail, and other non-residential uses that provide the Downtown with its diverse and mixed character. Combined with millions of annual visitors and major post-secondary institutions, the Downtown’s daytime population swells every weekday to triple its size. While growth brings prosperity and opportunity, it also places pressure on finite infrastructure assets. In certain areas of the Downtown, parks, transit, water, wastewater, the public realm, and community services are significantly challenged and may well be at risk of reaching their limits as growth continues. Maintaining the resilience and liveability of Downtown's neighbourhoods requires us to take a comprehensive approach to future growth and infrastructure delivery to ensure



we are capable of meeting the needs of an evolving population.

This Staff Report provides an overview of the changes that have taken place in the Downtown, as presented in the preparation of a Background Report that provides a high-level environmental scan, and presents the trends and issues in the intensification of Downtown (Attachment 1). In response to recent Council directions, City staff is launching a study entitled **Comprehensive to the Core: Planning Toronto's Downtown** (the Study). The Study will develop an integrated planning framework and infrastructure growth strategy, which will be coordinated by City Planning in partnership with: Toronto Water; Transportation Services; Parks, Forestry and Recreation; Social Development; Economic Development and Culture; Finance and Administration; and Children's Services. Staff from Toronto EMS, Public Health, Toronto Fire, TTC, Metrolinx/GO Transit, Toronto Parking Authority, Toronto Hydro, school boards and community agency partners will also be involved in, and informed by, the work undertaken. A public consultation process will enrich the Study and its recommendations.

The Study will develop a strategy to manage growth and infrastructure in the Downtown in a comprehensive, coordinated, and proactive manner. The study area (see map above) is bounded by Lake Ontario to the south, Bathurst to the west, the rail corridor and Rosedale Valley Road to the north and the Don River to the east. This is the Downtown, as defined by the Official Plan. The primary purpose of the Study will be to provide a framework for growth that enables the long-term liveability and competitiveness of the Downtown by ensuring the City has:

- A clear and defined vision of how the neighbourhoods within the Downtown will continue to grow and evolve;
- The capacity to lead and direct growth in pursuit of this vision in a proactive manner; and
- An improved ability to strategically target infrastructure investment to expediently and efficiently respond to emerging needs resulting from growth and change.

The details of the proposed work program, schedule, and interdivisional structure are presented below, following the summary of the findings from the Background Report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **The City Planning Division recommends that Toronto and East York Community Council:**

1. Receive for information the report (May 7, 2014) from the Director, Community Planning, Toronto and East York District and Director, Strategic Initiatives, Policy and Analysis, entitled "Comprehensive to the Core: Planning Toronto's Downtown".

### **Financial Impact**

This report has no financial impact.

## DECISION HISTORY

At the February 12, 2012 meeting of the Toronto East York Community Council, the following motions were adopted:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tm/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.TE13.16>:

- Options for implementing a Development Permit System (DPS) for Downtown Toronto, to replace Section 37 Agreements, as a mechanism to make sure neighbourhoods experiencing rapid intensification acquire the appropriate resources to shoulder fast-paced growth. Benefits should include, but would not be limited to: affordable, family and rental housing, institutional, cultural and commercial components in projects, funds for public realm improvements (parks, streetscapes, Heritage Conversation districts, transit), and public squares.
- Requested the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with the General Manager of Economic Development and Culture, General Manager of Transportation Services and the Executive Director of Social Development, Finance and Administration, to submit a report to the Toronto and East York Community Council by the third quarter of 2012 to identify, examine measurements, and review remedies for urban planning, economic development, transportation, public infrastructure, community amenity and social planning impacts created by the density intensification from the ongoing development of tall buildings in downtown Toronto, as promoted by the Ministry of Infrastructure in the 2006 provincial policy, "Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe."

The item was adopted in July 11, 2012 by City Council

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.TE17.19>) with a further recommendation that requested:

- City Council direct the Acting Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to bring forward a staff report identifying future implementation options for the Downtown Tall Buildings Vision and Performance Standards, which include, but are not limited to, amendments to the City's Official Plan, Zoning By-law and use of other planning tools.

At the May 7, 2013 meeting of City Council in considering the Parks Plan 2013-2017 the following motion was approved:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PE20.1>

- City Council direct the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, and the City Manager, to identify appropriate City staff and form an interdivisional working group to create a

detailed parkland acquisition strategy and report back to the Parks and Environment Committee by the first quarter of 2014 with recommendations on how to formally streamline the process to deliver tangible and measurable acquisition goals.

This Staff Report responds to these requests through the initiation of a comprehensive study that will develop a planning framework that proactively manages growth in the Downtown and links the provision of infrastructure in a coordinated and strategic manner.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The PPS sets the policy foundation for regulating the development and use of land. The key objectives include: building strong communities; wise use and management of resources; and, protecting public health and safety. City Council's planning decisions are required to be consistent with the PPS.

PPS 2014, effective April 30, 2014, replaces PPS 2005 with policy changes that enhance or clarify previous policies. The PPS 2014 clarifies that municipalities can determine the appropriate locations for required intensification and redevelopment opportunities, and that locally determined intensification targets should be based on local conditions. It further clarifies that municipalities shall establish policies to ensure the orderly progression of development within designated growth areas and the timely provision of the infrastructure and public services facilities required to meet current and projected needs.

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe provides a framework for managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe including: directions for where and how to grow; the provision of infrastructure to support growth; and protecting natural systems and cultivating a culture of conservation. City Council's planning decisions are required to conform, or not conflict, with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Toronto's Downtown is identified as an Urban Growth Centre within the Growth Plan.

Map 2 in the Official Plan (OP) shows the City's Urban Structure, identifying the Downtown as a place for substantial employment and residential intensification. Map 6 shows the boundaries of the Downtown. The OP contains direction that growth will not be spread uniformly across the whole of Downtown, as this area includes established neighbourhoods where little change is desired. Further, policies in the OP, as well as Site and Area Specific policies applicable to the Downtown, speak to the need for adequate infrastructure, amenities and services to support this growth.

Many of these policies are being implemented in a number of the master-planned areas of the Downtown, such as the Central Waterfront, the Railway Lands, the East Bayfront and the West Don Lands. However, significant infill has occurred within the Downtown's mature urban fabric, and the related upgrades to, or construction of new soft and hard

infrastructure have not always taken place concurrent with development. In certain areas of the Downtown, the consequences of infrastructure not keeping pace with growth have been felt by residents, and identified by community planners in various reports to Council. City Planning staff received similar feedback around growth, over-capacity of the existing transportation and transit infrastructure, and risks to quality of life in the Downtown as part of the [\*Feeling Congested\*](#) consultation for the Official Plan 5-Year Review. Similar concerns were raised to City Planning staff during the [\*Condominium Consultation\*](#) which staff will be reporting out on separately to Planning and Growth Management Committee. During that consultation, participants supported the idea of a downtown study focusing on necessary infrastructure improvements.

Correspondingly, there has been a series of recent Council directives (including those noted above) requesting planning studies to address growth and change in the Downtown. In response, City Planning staff is currently working on eight planning studies within the Downtown, including: Downtown East Planning; King-Spadina East Precinct; College Street Built Form; East of Bay Planning; Lower Yonge Precinct; Bathurst Land Use and Built Form; Dupont Street and Spadina Ave. In addition, four Heritage Conservation District studies were initiated in 2013 in the Downtown, and other candidate sites in the Downtown have been prioritized by City Council for immediate study.

Collectively these studies cover only a portion of the 17 square kilometres of land area that fall within the Downtown's boundaries. Acknowledging the growth pressures within the Downtown boundaries, and an emerging disconnect between development and infrastructure investment in certain areas, a new, comprehensive approach is recommended for the Downtown. This comprehensive approach must consider the full range of infrastructure related to water, wastewater, transportation, public realm, community services and parks. Further, this comprehensive approach must examine and update our existing planning framework to ensure future infrastructure investment is directly aligned and keeping pace with growth. The first task of the Study will be to confirm the current and planned infrastructure investments for the Downtown and compare these to current and projected growth. From that review, a clearer sense of the various infrastructure priorities and costs will emerge. The final Downtown planning framework and infrastructure strategies will need to align future growth with emerging infrastructure priorities, supported by criteria to inform priority setting on a city-wide basis.

In response to these issues, and in recognition of the need to implement a more comprehensive planning approach, City Planning commissioned a preliminary Background Report on the state of the Downtown (Attachment 1), which is summarized in this staff report. Entitled "Downtown Toronto: Trends, Issues, Intensification," it documents how the Downtown has grown and changed, and canvasses relevant divisions on the challenges of developing the appropriate infrastructure to ensure that Downtown communities are complete and that the Downtown remains a vital, vibrant, rewarding place to live, work, learn and play.

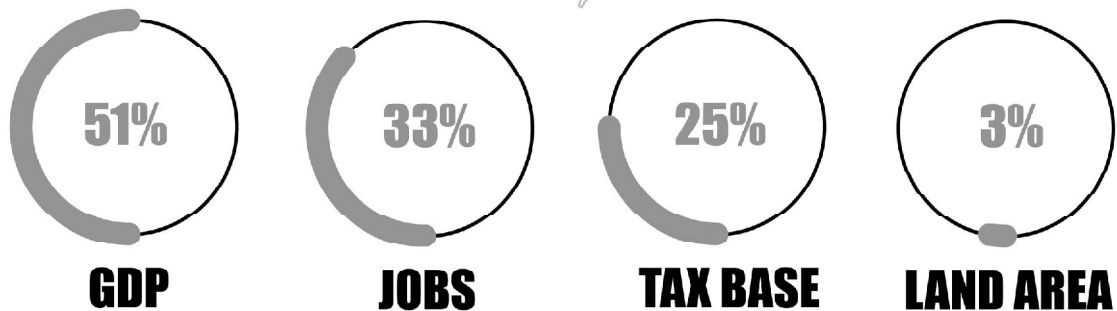
## COMMENTS

### Section 1.0: BACKGROUND REPORT KEY FINDINGS: Trends and Issues in the Intensification of Downtown

#### 1.1 The Value of Downtown

Though comprising only a 17 square kilometre area, or 3% of Toronto's total land area, the Downtown's contributions to the city's vitality and economic strength are substantial. The Downtown is where 1 out of 13 Torontonians lives, and where a third of all jobs in the city are clustered. As an economic engine the Downtown is unparalleled in Canada, contributing over one half of Toronto's export-based GDP, one third of all jobs and one quarter of the City's tax base.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to its economic value, the Downtown plays a crucial role in defining Toronto's identity. As the cultural heart of the city, its historic founding place, and its institutional and civic core, the Downtown delivers an important qualitative and symbolic value to all Toronto residents and visitors. Downtown's evolution has been closely tied to the past success of Toronto and surrounding municipalities, and its future growth will help it continue to deliver external benefits beyond its borders. Ensuring that the Downtown remains a strong, prosperous, and healthy core is critical to preserving the overall sustainability of Toronto at a city-wide level.



<sup>1</sup> Sources: Malone, Given, Parsons, *Sustainable Competitive Advantage and Prosperity: Planning for Employment Uses in Toronto*, October 2012; City of Toronto, *Toronto Employment Survey*, 2012; Toronto Financial District BIA, *Raising the Standard: A Public Realm Strategy for Toronto's Financial District*, 2014.

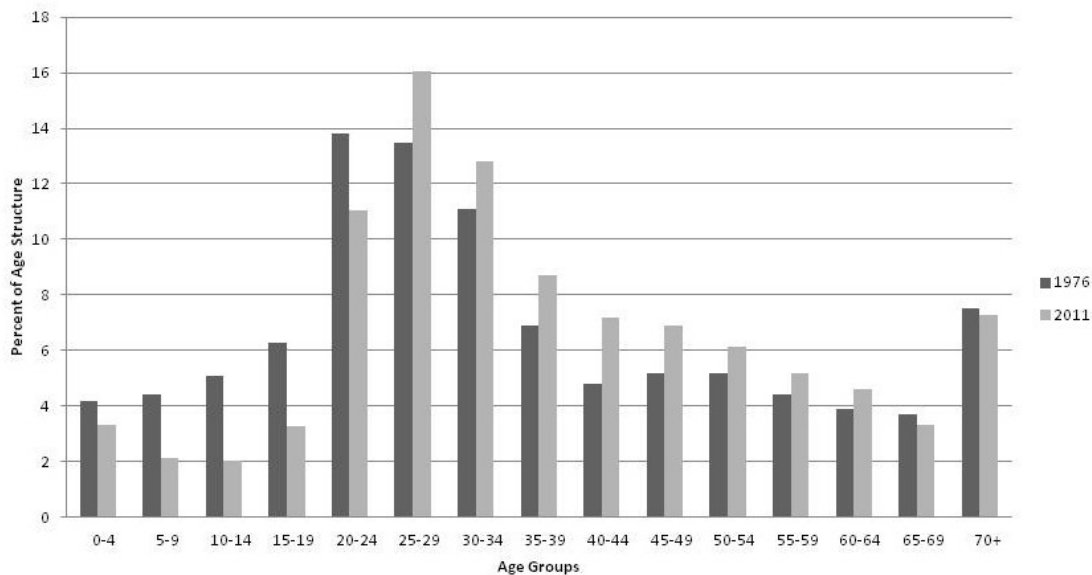
## 1.2 Who is Downtown?

Downtown’s 200,000+ residents are comprised of a diversity of demographics, ethnicities, and socioeconomic levels. Every weekday, the population of the Downtown more than doubles to 550,000+ as workers flow into the core area. Combined with overnight and day visitors (including students and tourists) travelling to its numerous institutions, retail nodes, and cultural and entertainment facilities, Downtown Toronto is a complex and multifaceted environment.

Demographically, Downtown today shows a similar age structure to that of a generation ago, with those aged 20 to 39 years being the dominant demographic group. Whereas in 1976 the baby boomers were moving downtown, today it is their children, the so-called 'echo boomers,' that are flocking to live in the central area of Toronto. After the echo boomers, the baby boomers remain the second largest demographic group today, but seniors are also a growing group having increased by 90% since 1970. Approximately 10,000 families live in the Downtown and a recent increase in births is placing a strain on childcare and other related services. The Downtown is also home to vulnerable population groups facing insecure housing environments, as highlighted in *Housing Opportunities Toronto: An Affordable Housing Action Plan 2010 – 2020* (AH9.1 <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.AH9.1>).

The respective needs of these demographic groups, combined with a growing population and job base, are placing increasing pressure on Downtown's infrastructure, services, and physical spaces.

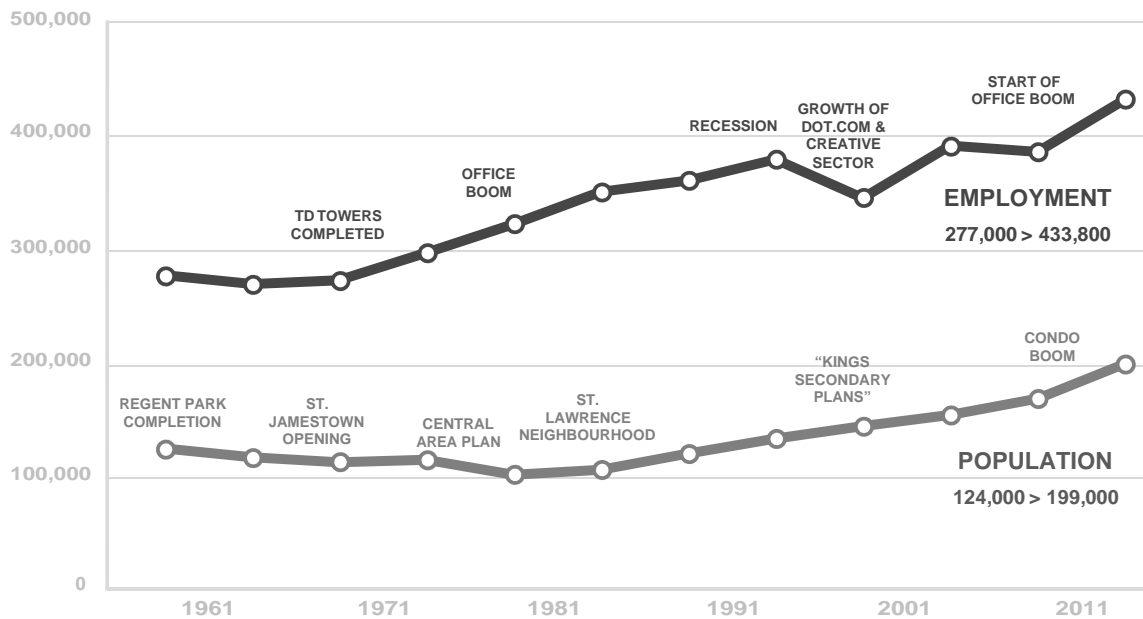
### **DOWNTOWN** AGE STRUCTURE 1976 AND 2011



### 1.3 Growth in the Downtown

The population of the Downtown has doubled since the introduction of the Central Area Plan in 1976. The rate of growth in the Downtown was 18% between 2006 and 2011, almost four times the city-wide growth rate. There has been a parallel, although more variable, growth in employment in the Downtown, as 125,000+ jobs were added between 1976 and 2011. More recently, employment growth has accelerated, and a notable 43,500 office jobs were added between 2006 and 2011.

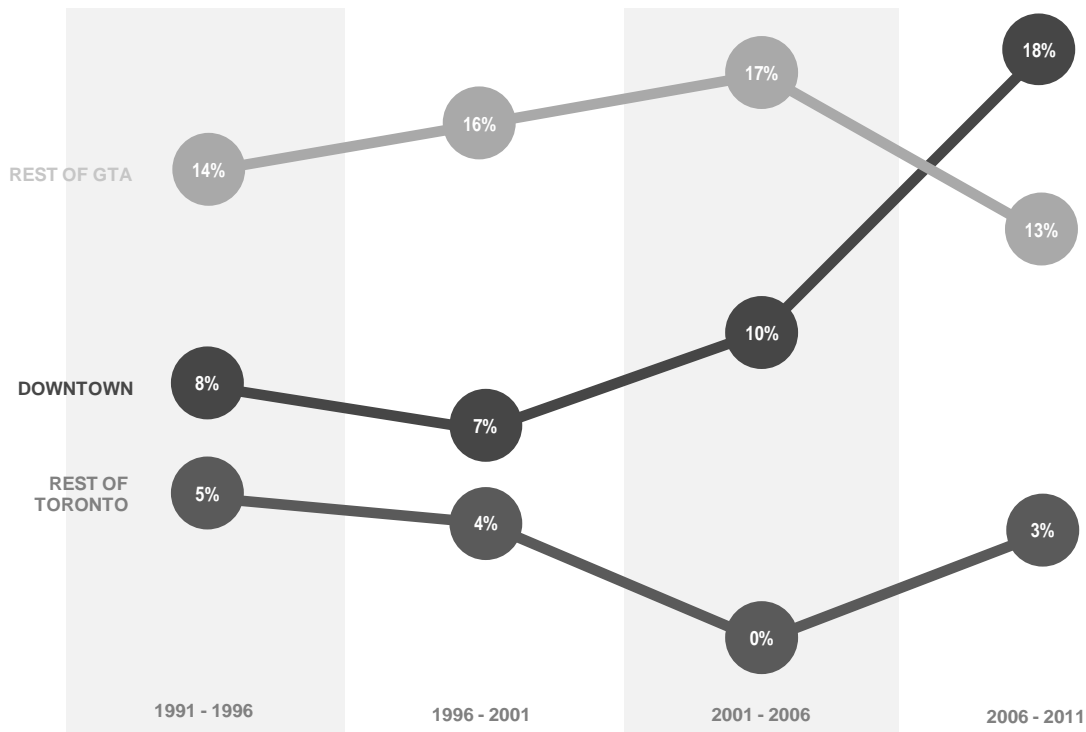
#### DOWNTOWN GROWTH 1956 TO 2011



The recent surge in condominium development in the Downtown has led its rate of population growth, for the first time, to surpass that of the combined growth rate of GTA municipalities outside of Toronto. New housing demand from echo boomers is diminishing long-established suburban growth trends, and beginning to reshape the urban structure of the GTA.



## POPULATION GROWTH RATE



Notably, this new growth is not occurring evenly throughout the Downtown. While some districts grew dramatically (i.e. King-Spadina, +86% / Waterfront West, +105%), others were more stagnant or even declined in population (i.e. Moss Park, -7%, Cabbagetown, +1%).

City Planning monitors Toronto's residential development through the planning process to better forecast future growth trends. The annual bulletin "How Does the City Grow?" discusses how and where the city has been growing and points to development anticipated in the near future. From January 1, 2003 to October 28, 2013, the Division received applications for 118,000 residential units in the Downtown. 22% of these have been completed and 13% are currently under construction. With an additional 31,500 units approved, but not yet under construction, and many more units likely to be approved over the course of 2014, there is significant growth potential already permitted through the existing Downtown planning framework. Non-residential applications are similarly positioned with 653,000 square metres of floor area approved but not yet constructed over this time period, an area approximately equivalent to two and a half times that of First Canadian Place.

### 1.4 Infrastructure Investment

Although the City has invested in the Downtown over the past decade in support of this growth, an initial scan undertaken as part of the attached Background Report indicates that there is an underlying and increasing infrastructure challenge facing the area. As recent patterns of population, residential, office, and condominium development appear

set to continue, important questions are being raised about the Downtown's capacity to support the current scale of development, and whether we are building neighbourhoods that are livable and economically viable for the future.

As the oldest and most intensely developed part of the city, the Downtown has a full range of hard and soft infrastructure in place making it a prime candidate for further development as articulated in Provincial and City policy. However, this infrastructure requires constant maintenance, occasional full renewal and, in recent years, extension into major regeneration areas such as the Railway Lands, the East Bayfront and the West Don Lands. Considering the amount of development that has taken place, it is not surprising that the infrastructure that has supported this growth is under increasing pressure.

The City has mechanisms at its disposal to plan for improvements to infrastructure. However, concerns are rising that development is outpacing the ability of these mechanisms to make the necessary improvements. Through the preparation of 10-year capital budgets, various City Divisions plan for medium-term improvements and initiate plans for long-term major capital works. Similar budget exercises on the part of agencies such as the TTC, Toronto Hydro, Toronto Public Library Board, the School Boards and others are premised on the long-term growth prospects articulated in the Official Plan. The City also employs tools such as the Development Charges By-law and the Alternative Parkland Dedication By-law to raise funds to provide for and enhance important municipal infrastructure.

Moving forward, there is a need to renew our approach as a City to infrastructure planning and investment to ensure our future neighbourhoods are both complete and resilient. As a first step in this process, a detailed assessment of required enhancements to a range of Downtown infrastructure must be undertaken, addressing issues of:

- Accessibility to the Downtown and enhanced mobility within it – pedestrian and cycling networks, surface transit and curbside management
- 'Breathing space' – the quality of the public realm and open spaces, whether they be City parks, publicly accessible private open space, or public rights-of-way
- Foundational services – such as roads, water, wastewater, hydro
- Emergency services – Fire, EMS
- Quality of life features found in neighbourhoods – recreation, community services, social services, childcare, libraries and schools.

## **1.5 Liveability in the Downtown**

Toronto's Downtown is a dynamic social space characterized by a significant intensity of urban activities in a fine-grained, mixed-use environment. Few other cities in North America offer the same degree of liveability and diversity within their central areas. This liveability has been achieved, in part, through the City's successful balancing of the Downtown's characteristics over time: creating synergy between residents and workers,

balancing the growth of high-rise communities with protection of older stable neighbourhoods, ensuring the draw of regional destinations is complemented with local amenities for residents, and protecting heritage assets within new developments.

A growing city is a healthy city, and the ability of Downtown's neighbourhoods to consistently increase in size for nearly four decades is a remarkable achievement. A prosperous and resilient economy has allowed Downtown's office sector to quickly recover from recessions, adding quality employment opportunities that attract Canada's most talented workers. Growth has also brought vibrancy to Downtown's streets and public places, allowed retail and culture to thrive, and positioned our waterfront to become a truly world-class destination.

Growth, however, must be supported by planning that is deliberate, contextually sensitive, and closely aligned with supporting infrastructure investments. As identified within the Background Report, over the past decade growth has been occurring at the upper range of previous population projections, and in certain areas it has exceeded established planning frameworks. Preliminary research indicates an increasing risk that the infrastructure investment required to support recent growth may be lagging behind need, and that this has the potential to challenge liveability in the Downtown.

Recognizing that Toronto's Downtown is at a critical moment in its trajectory, the Background Report raises important questions about growth: what is the right pace, where is it appropriate, and how should the supporting infrastructure unfold? Answering these questions requires us, as a City, to take a detailed look at the current state of the Downtown, analyze its needs and deficiencies from a broad and interdivisional perspective, and establish a clear vision for growth that ensures that we can continue to deliver an envied quality of life in the years ahead.

## **Section 2.0: COMPREHENSIVE TO THE CORE: A STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT IN THE DOWNTOWN**

### **2.1 Study Purpose**

The purpose of **Comprehensive to the Core: Planning Toronto's Downtown** study (the Study) is to develop a planning framework that proactively manages growth and links the provision of infrastructure in a coordinated and strategic manner. This study will include two major streams of work: a planning framework review and a comprehensive infrastructure growth strategy. The overall purpose of the Study is to safeguard the long-term liveability and economic health of the Downtown for all of its users. To achieve this objective, growth must be managed and balanced against infrastructure investment. A strong planning framework will help us find the equilibrium between competing land uses, achieve densities that are context appropriate, and continue to grow both our population and job base in a sustainable manner. By planning for people, we can shape this growth potential towards the creation of complete communities that are inclusive of all socio-economic groups through their housing, amenities, and community services.

Healthy communities need access to schools, child care, recreation facilities, parks, libraries, and human services – assets that are currently undersupplied in some Downtown neighbourhoods. Investments in surface transit, cycling routes, and pedestrian environments can help us achieve abundant access to and within the Downtown, giving people the freedom to move locally and beyond. Finally, the Study will seek to add resilience to our most essential – but less visible – infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, hydro and emergency services.

## **2.2 Study Building Blocks**

Within the two streams of work for this study, there are a series of fundamental *building blocks* that will support more comprehensive planning for Toronto's Downtown. The planning framework review will recognize the diverse roles of Toronto's core, functioning as the economic engine of the city and GTA, supporting the healthy and growing institutional sectors (hospitals, universities and colleges), and being home to the fastest growing neighbourhoods within the city. This diversity has been, and will continue to be the strength of Toronto's Downtown and ensuring we continue to strike a balance between these uses will be an important challenge for the Study.

The Downtown is subject to a wealth of plans, including the Official Plan, 8 Secondary Plans, 53 Site and Area Specific Policies, 28 city-wide or district-specific Urban Design Guidelines, and several Heritage Conservation Districts (HCDs). In addition to these plans, Toronto's Downtown has benefited from the excellent work of several Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), which have their own plans. The current planning framework speaks to the need to: enhance parkland and the public realm; improve surface transit; augment commercial office and landmark buildings in the Financial District; strengthen community services; upgrade infrastructure; and support growth overall, but limiting it to certain designated growth areas. In practice, however, the ability to achieve those outcomes has been challenging. The Study will review how best to update and coordinate these many planning documents to enable the City to be more proactive and directive in linking policy to implementation. It will enable the City to take a bold step towards linking the planning framework with infrastructure growth strategies thereby securing a strong and vibrant future for the Downtown.

The updated planning framework will be matched by a comprehensive and interdivisional infrastructure strategy to be developed through the course of the work program. This strategy will help to ensure that future growth in the Downtown occurs in tandem with the necessary infrastructure investments by guiding decisions on location, prioritization, and target service levels.

The infrastructure *building blocks* that will be reviewed through the Study include:

- Water infrastructure: watermains, sewers and stormwater management.
- Transportation: surface transit, cycling, walking and curbside management.
- Parks and Public Realm: public realm, pedestrian networks, parkland (acquisition, improvement and partnerships) and open space (such as privately owned and publicly accessible space or POPS).

- Community Services and Facilities: child care, recreation, multi and human services, libraries and schools.

The Study will inform the work underway in the areas of Emergency Services, Fire and Hydro. It will also be informed by and benefit from the work being undertaken at a city-wide level on initiatives such as: Feeling Congested, the Congestion Management Plan, Children's Services Plan, Relief Line, the East Gardiner EA., the Complete Streets initiative, as well as many others. Similarly, several locally based studies will serve to inform the Study, such as the Heritage Conservation District efforts and numerous parks improvements under way.

### **A. Transportation**

A key strength of Toronto's Downtown is that it acts as the transportation hub for the GTA where many transportation routes converge, most notably the regional GO Transit system and the local TTC transit system. Downtown is the largest centre of economic activity and more than 250,000 people travel into the Downtown each morning on public transit from across the City and the rest of the GTA. The Official Plan has long recognized that the continued success of the Downtown cannot be accommodated just by increasing road capacity for automobiles. Over the past few decades, one of the most notable achievements made in the Downtown has been the shift in travel mode split. An increasing percentage of people are now choosing to walk to work within the Downtown, and there is an increasing percentage of people travelling to the Downtown from the rest of the City and the GTA using the TTC and the regional GO Rail network, with transit accounting for two out of every three trips into the Downtown in 2006.

Currently there are many transportation studies and initiatives ongoing that are examining these longer-term transit infrastructure planning needs, such as Feeling Congested, the transportation policy review of the City's Official Plan 5-Year Review, the City's Relief Line Assessment Study, and Metrolinx's Yonge Relief Network Study. While the Downtown Study will not examine the long-term rapid transit needs in the core, it will be informed by this parallel work and contribute to resolving issues of congestion by focusing more closely on the local transportation experience of moving people and goods within the Downtown to support its growth, ensure its long-term economic vitality, and improve people's quality of life. The Study will focus primarily on proposing surface transit improvements within the Downtown, enhancing the pedestrian network and public realm experience, creating a viable and connected cycling network, and improving goods movement through a curbside and street space management program for delivery vehicles, loading, and parking. The Study recognizes that at its core, the quality of life in the Downtown begins primarily with the design of its streets, which represent more than 25% of the land area, and are the largest amount of city-owned public space. To make a successful Downtown, we need great streets that move people, but that are also safe, comfortable, interesting and beautiful public spaces.

## **B. Parks and Public Realm**

The public realm covers a significant part of the urban environment, including streets, laneways, public parks and open space, privately owned public open space (e.g. plazas, forecourts, landscaped setbacks, etc.) and publicly accessible concourses and walkways. Collectively, these spaces are of great importance to the liveability and experience of the city. They are not just a means for commuting from one place to another, but can and should be desirable destinations in their own right. The importance of the public realm is amplified for Downtown residents who are living in small housing units. The Official Plan articulates a vision for a vibrant and attractive Downtown, rich with pedestrian and open space amenities that can be used and enjoyed by residents, workers, and visitors alike. Downtown should have a public realm that can effectively serve different users, activities and priorities over the changing seasons, and support economic prosperity through festivals, events and tourism. The public realm must invite people to move, meet, gather, sit, rest, stay and play.

Securing new parks and open space in the most highly competitive and costly land market in the region is a significant challenge. To date, the City has successfully secured parks and open spaces in the areas that have been master planned, most notably the Waterfront, Railway Lands and the West Don Lands. The provision of quality parks and open spaces is a critical and necessary resource for supporting continued growth within the Downtown. Efforts have also been made in areas outside of the Waterfront to expand existing parks, establish POPS and improve the quality and performance of our existing parks. However, in areas where growth has occurred as infill outside of master-planned developments, the City may be lagging behind on providing parks and open space in relation to increased population and employment. Through this study, a strategic review of the current park system within and linking to the Downtown will be undertaken. An acquisition strategy will be developed that may serve as a pilot for other mature urban areas within the City where securing parkland is also difficult. Reviewing the park system in tandem with the development of a public realm plan and pedestrian network will build the necessary synergies to create places for people to move, stay and recreate.

Many existing public realm assets, such as streets, sidewalks, parks and open space were not planned or designed to anticipate the current, let alone future, intensity of population growth and development taking place within the Downtown. Furthermore, due to the incremental nature of future growth, the Downtown will need to rely on private partnerships (e.g. BIAs and developers) and a number of complementary strategies to improve and expand the public realm. The primary goal is to create a public realm network, comprised of high quality, safe and well-programmed parks, open spaces, pedestrian-friendly streets and active uses at-grade. The Study will develop a comprehensive Parks and Public Realm strategy that will endeavour to be innovative while ensuring an enriched and enhanced environment for public life and an improved visitor experience.

### **C. Community Services and Facilities (CS&F)**

The current inventory and function of CS&F in the Downtown is impacted by a range of factors including density, rapid growth, employment and transit accessibility. Historically, the Core was home to a number of community service agencies which provided services at both the local and regional levels. The development of a CS&F strategy will focus on the local agencies that serve both the residents and workers in Toronto's Core.

The vertical nature of Downtown's buildings requires the City to prioritize investment in public spaces, indoor and outdoor facilities. These public spaces provide the opportunities for residents and workers to build a sense of community. While the provision of amenity space internal to buildings is critical to enhance individual household's experiences within their building, connection within their neighbourhood is equally important. The residential growth that has taken place in the Downtown has occurred in areas that in some cases have benefited from new CS&F infrastructure (e.g. Regent Park), as well as in areas where new infrastructure investments have not yet occurred (e.g. King-Spadina). Investments in CS&F infrastructure is challenging owing to land costs, limited and competitive availability of sites, and the need for improved facilities planning to respond to growth and change.

The sectors that the Study will focus on are those the City plays a major role in supporting, either as the service provider (directly and indirectly through our agencies and boards), or through secondary support mechanisms (e.g. grants). These sectors include: child care, library, recreation and multi-service centres (Association of Community Centres and others), and human services. In addition to these sectors, the Study will coordinate the development of the CS&F strategy in conjunction with Toronto's school boards and potential third-party partners, such as the United Way.

### **D. Water**

The water infrastructure in the Downtown benefited from the capacity that was gained through the deindustrialization of a number of areas such as King-Parliament and King-Spadina, as well as the former Massey Ferguson Lands (Liberty Village). With the significant growth that has taken place in the Downtown, the ability of the current water infrastructure to serve future growth requires a comprehensive analysis and review. The challenges facing water infrastructure have been further exacerbated by the magnitude of development applications that have been proposed in the Downtown. Serving a building of 20 to 30 storeys is significantly different than one that is greater than 50 or even 70 storeys in height.

The Study will focus on assessing the potential constraints, identifying the strategic actions and developing implementation plans and strategies for the sewers, watermains and storm water management system to keep pace with growth in the Downtown. This review will be an essential building block for the Study and will serve to inform how growth should be managed in the Downtown.

## **E. Emergency Services and Fire**

The capital plans of Toronto Fire and EMS continue to address the need for infrastructure improvements in the Downtown, including the provision of a joint Fire and EMS station built on Queens Quay and the future construction of an EMS multi-function station in the Port Lands. Enhancements being considered by both divisions extend beyond the traditional facility response to growth and include improved communication and business software, dynamic staging of vehicles to address increasing congestion, improved equipment to address the higher towers in the Downtown.

Staff from Toronto Fire and EMS will be part of the City staff team, with a focus on shared information and coordinated planning. Through this collaboration, Toronto Fire and EMS will be able to further refine their plans to address future long-term growth of Downtown's various neighbourhoods and effectively allocate resources accordingly.

## **F. Public Health**

The way our city is built influences health and contributes to diseases such as type 2 diabetes, heart and lung disease, and stroke, which are among the top 10 causes of death in Toronto. As outlined in the 2011 report from Toronto Public Health, *Healthy Toronto by Design* (2011), the factors that determine the health of people include: the natural environment, built form, transportation, housing, neighbourhood characteristics, income and employment, education, food security and access to health services.

Built environments that are walkable and safe for cycling encourage physical activity which is important to maintain health. They also provide additional benefits such as easy access to retail and community services, and opportunities for social interactions that are essential to good mental health. Parks also play a role in reducing risk factors for chronic disease and improving mental health. Integrating parks and green space in neighbourhood design provides places for social interaction and encourage walking. Green space improves air quality, reduces the urban heat island effect and can provide shade. Space for urban agriculture, gardens and food markets in neighbourhoods supports local food infrastructure and access to fresh, nutritious food.

Features of the physical, service, and social neighbourhood play an important role in shaping health. Community safety, availability of affordable housing and transportation, and access to community and health services, are also needed to ensure healthy neighbourhoods. This is especially important for vulnerable members of our society who are at higher risk of poor health. The comprehensive approach being undertaken for the Study will touch on a number of the factors that will serve to improve the health of the Downtown for residents, workers and students. Staff in Public Health will be involved in this work as the Study moves forward.

## **F. Hydro**

The surge in new buildings in the Downtown over the last few years has resulted in increased demands for electricity capacity for the Downtown, particularly in terms of



peak demand. A study on Future Weather undertaken by the Energy and Environment Division indicated an increase in days with higher temperatures resulting in more electricity demand during peak periods. The Downtown electricity supply is provided by the Leaside and Manby Transformer stations with additional peak demand supply provided by the Portlands Energy Centre.

The future electricity needs for the central area of Toronto, including the Downtown, are the subject of a study currently being undertaken by the Ontario Power Authority, Toronto Hydro, Hydro One and the Independent Electricity System Operator. The *Central Toronto Integrated Regional Resource Plan* will forecast expected growth in electricity demand for the next 25 years based on City of Toronto population and employment projections, development applications in the pipeline, potential electrification of transportation, and conservation programs. The Study will address peak demand, capacity, reliability and security (resiliency in face of major events, such as storms) and investigate the costs and benefits of conservation, transmission and distribution options, and distributed generation, including renewables. Consultation with stakeholders, including the City, and the general public will be part of the process. The final report will recommend integrated options and is expected to be completed by the end of 2014.

There is a need to concentrate on better conservation and distributed generation, including renewables, to meet projected electricity demands in a manner that is less disruptive from an infrastructure standpoint. This is critical to supporting growth and ensuring the economic vitality of the Downtown. A review of the conservation and distributed generation opportunities will be undertaken by a working group consisting of staff from City Planning, Environment and Energy, Economic Development and Toronto Hydro. This review and the results of the *Central Toronto Integrated Regional Resource Plan* will inform the Study.

### **2.3 Work Program**

The work program for the Study will be coordinated within three general phases namely: Phase 1 – Taking Stock; Phase 2 – Planning & Analysis; and Phase 3 – Final Plans and Implementation.

#### **Phase 1 - Taking Stock (2014 – Spring 2015)**

An existing conditions review will be undertaken, including: an inventory / assessment of the existing infrastructure; review of the current development pipeline and existing growth projections; land use patterns; urban character and built form; and identification of emerging infrastructure priorities. Each building block would tailor its review accordingly.

#### **Phase 2 - Planning and Analysis (2015 – Spring 2016)**

This phase would see the development of draft plans, networks, and facility requirements to respond to the future growth and anticipated direction of change in Toronto's

Downtown. Opportunities to undertake "quick starts" to showcase future planned infrastructure initiatives will also be identified during this phase of the study.

### **Phase 3: Final Plans and Implementation Strategies (2016 – Winter 2017)**

The work in this phase will focus on refining the draft plans prepared in Phase 2. An implementation strategy would be prepared that would consider priority investments, partnership strategies, and planning policy requirements that would support infrastructure provision and set-out a clear framework for future development within the Downtown. This will be accompanied by a costing for infrastructure improvements.

#### **2.4 Interdivisional Structure**

Comprehensive to the Core: Planning Toronto's Downtown Study will rely on a strong, cooperative and coordinated interdivisional work program. Each area will inform and enrich the others. Staff teams will be set-up to support this work; a Technical Advisory Committee will be established as well as a senior staff table. As noted previously, the Study will involve the active participation of a number of divisions who will lead and support the work program as required, they include: Toronto Water, Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Social Development, Economic Development and Culture, Finance and Administration, and Children's Services. Staff in Public Health, Toronto EMS and Fire will also be included in this work. The overall study will be coordinated by the City Planning Division.

#### **2.5 Consultation**

Due to the continuous studies, initiatives, and development review processes occurring in the Downtown, community consultation is an ongoing experience for its residents, land owners, business organizations, and other stakeholders. For example, City Planning recently completed a consultation process for condominium residents in the Downtown and the Centres. This process included two rounds of public workshops and two surveys. Consultation has also been undertaken through Feeling Congested, the Richmond Adelaide Cycle Track Study, the Downtown Traffic Operations Study, the Relief Line, the Gardiner East EA and Urban Design Study, Strong Neighbourhoods initiative, Children's Services review, the eight planning studies currently underway or recently completed, the four current HCD studies underway, and the almost weekly meetings related to ongoing development applications.

The consultation process for Comprehensive to the Core will need to consider the current "consultation fatigue" of residents, as well as the population structure of the residents and workers in the Downtown. Traditional evening meetings do not always appeal to a number of population groups; least of all the younger echo boomers who comprise a significant proportion of the Downtown population. As a first step, consultation will focus on bringing together select key stakeholders for a focus group discussion. This will enable City staff to confirm the challenges and opportunities identified through previous consultations. Pop-up consultations will also be used in key gathering places, such as the PATH system, in order to create a widespread awareness of the process. In addition, we will be exploring opportunities for online consultation through the use of interactive,

web-based tools, including an ideation tool that will allow residents to share ideas. Online consultation will be a key element of the overall strategy to solicit feedback from individuals who may not normally participate in traditional meetings, including the growing echo boomer cohort. A Youth Engagement Strategy will also be piloted as part of this project.

As the work proceeds and emerging ideas, plans and priorities unfold, consultation will include Open Houses in a trade show format allowing interested stakeholders to speak directly with the many staff specialists that will be involved in the study. Workshops will also be considered in addition to further focus group sessions. Partnerships with the BIAs, the development industry, community agencies and other non-resident stakeholders will also be explored.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

The rapid rate of growth being experienced in Toronto's Downtown is anticipated to continue in the years ahead. The City has been largely successful in managing growth in the core over the past few decades. But the scan of trends outlined in this Staff Report suggests that the pace of development in the Downtown may soon overwhelm the capacity of finite infrastructure assets. *Comprehensive to the Core: Planning Toronto's Downtown* will examine the state of the City's planning framework and infrastructure delivery in the core. It will make recommendations to Council on a planning framework and infrastructure growth strategy that will maintain the liveability of Downtown's neighbourhoods while promoting the competitiveness of the core as a place to live, work, learn and play.

### **CONTACT**

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment 1:** Background Report: "Downtown Toronto: Trends, Issues, Intensification"