

TOcore Implementation Strategy: Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan

Date: August 30, 2021

To: Infrastructure and Environment Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation; General Manager, Transportation Services; Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning; Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture

Wards: Ward 10 Spadina-Fort York; Ward 11 University-Rosedale; Ward 13 Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

This report identifies a strategy to continue to advance and plan the implementation of the Downtown Parks and Public Realm (PPR) Plan.

The Downtown PPR Plan was adopted by City Council in May 2018. It was adopted to serve as a vision for the Downtown and to guide implementation and future review of the Downtown Plan. It is one of five infrastructure plans and strategies supporting the Downtown Plan (Official Plan Amendment 406), which came into force on June 5, 2019. The PPR Plan sets out a new way of thinking about the integrated design of parks, streets and other publicly accessible open spaces in an intensifying Downtown, to achieve a bold and lasting legacy for future generations. It establishes a vision and framework for achieving an expanded, improved and connected network of public spaces within the mature urban fabric of Downtown. It was developed through a comprehensive, city-wide three-phase engagement process, which involved the public, stakeholder groups and Indigenous communities. Many of the initiatives recommended in the PPR Plan are already underway in terms of planning, design and implementation. This approach to rolling implementation is essential to enhancing the quality of public spaces in parallel with Downtown's rapid growth.

The implementation of the Downtown PPR Plan is well-positioned to contribute to recommendations #68 and #66 advanced by the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR) on accelerating progress toward a green and less car-dependent city, envisioned as a network of connected complete communities that enhances future access for those least able to access greenspace.

Quality public space is essential to keeping the growing heart of the city an attractive place to live, work, learn, play, visit and invest. Downtown's population is projected to double from nearly 238,000 people in 2016 to a potential population of 475,000 by 2041. Employment in Downtown (together with the "shoulder" areas of South of Eastern

and Liberty Village) has the potential to reach between 850,000 and 915,000 jobs by 2041, up from approximately 500,000 jobs in 2016.

Downtown has one of the lowest parkland provision rates in the city at 5.5 m² per resident (utilizing the 2016 Census) and 1.8 m² per resident and employee compared to a city-wide average of 28 m² per resident and 18 m² per resident and employee. As the population continues to increase, and if no new parkland is added, parkland provision rates will fall even lower. To address this challenge, the City has to improve and optimize existing parks and public spaces and acquire new parks, especially large parks to serve the Downtown.

This report highlights parkland acquisitions, capital projects and other improvements achieved and underway since the launch of the TOcore initiative. The Implementation Strategy for the Downtown PPR Plan supports ongoing integrated planning and design and alignment of capital budgeting for parks, streets and public space initiatives across four City divisions -- Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Transportation Services, Economic Development and Culture, and City Planning -- with the aim of developing complete communities in the core. It sets out priorities for investing in parks, streets and public spaces over the near term (2021-2025) towards achievement of the Downtown Plan's 25-year vision, along with evidence-based methodologies to evaluate new opportunities as they arise. It offers an equity-based and consistent framework for identifying, on a year-over-year basis, where, how, and when to invest in public space. By overlaying and mapping the capital plans of multiple City divisions and agencies, the Implementation Strategy helps identify opportunities to bundle the work of different groups into single initiatives. It also points to opportunities for partnerships with city-building partners, such as major institutions, agencies, boards and commissions, and to continue to achieve new parks and other improvements through development.

This Implementation Strategy focuses equally on the importance of investing in state of good repair for existing infrastructure, and on the provision of new and improved parks, streets and public spaces. Through maximizing the lifecycle and efficiency of existing infrastructure, and by ensuring new investments meet high environmental standards, the Strategy supports city-wide sustainability objectives as articulated in the City's Resiliency Strategy and the TransformTO climate action strategy.

Strategic investments are recommended for consideration in future divisional Capital Budget Plans, and several projects already underway or budgeted are highlighted that will support implementation.

Key projects recommended for advancement on a priority basis in the next five-year period (2021-2025), which would include public and stakeholder engagement as necessary, are:

Core Circle – Undertaking a concept plan for the Core Circle to advance an integrated design for a continuous walking and cycling route connecting the pre-settlement landscape system encircling Downtown. This work would build on study work underway (such as the Toronto Island Park Master Plan and Ravine Strategy) and significant investments soon to proceed (such as new parks in the vicinity of the new Garrison

Crossing) and focus on addressing the remaining gaps. Importantly, it would involve partnerships with Indigenous communities to identify place-keeping and place-making opportunities.

Great Streets – Advancing the design for significant public realm improvements on 5 of the 12 Downtown Great Streets to make them outstanding civic places and connectors. These include permanent cycling infrastructure on Bloor Street, a permanent design for the King Street Transit Priority Corridor, implementation of the future vision set out in the YongeTOMorrow Environmental Assessment (EA), a feasibility study for creating a potential linear park along University Avenue in the future, and implementing streetscape improvements to Front Street West via coordination and partnerships with the development industry.

Shoreline Stitch – Moving forward key next steps in weaving the waterfront back into the fabric of Downtown by continuing to explore opportunities to deck over the Union Station rail corridor for public parkland, and exploring the potential for future phases of the Bentway/Under Gardiner initiative. This would weave together the 3 threads of the Stitch, including Queens Quay, the Bentway and the rail corridor, and enhance access to new parks currently being developed on the waterfront.

Civic Precinct – Undertaking a Civic Precinct public realm and public art master plan to improve connections between the significant public spaces in the precinct, building on forthcoming investments in the Indian Residential School Survivor (IRSS) Legacy Project, the new Courthouse, the return of Old City Hall to public use and the planned Ontario Line subway stations.

Park Districts – Advancing planning in 6 park districts within Downtown to improve their focus for public life and community use by expanding and improving parkland and making connectivity improvements to streets and public spaces. These Park District studies will include the northern portion of the Grange-John Street-Roundhouse Park Park District via the Grange Precinct Plan, the southern portion of the Kensington Market-Alexandra Park Park District via the Bathurst-Dundas Precinct study, the Christie-Bickford Park District, the Civic Precinct mentioned above, the West Rail District and the Garrison Parks-Fort York Park Districts.

This Implementation Strategy will be monitored and updated every five years to reflect the changing needs of the population relative to growth patterns and to direct capital funds in a strategic manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the General Manager, Transportation Services, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture recommend that:

1. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the General Manager, Transportation Services, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to incorporate the priority studies, master plans, detailed streetscape designs and implementation projects contained in Tables 3-6 of this report, in the development of the 10-year Capital Budget and Plan each year as part of the budget process to advance the implementation of the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan.

2. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, the General Manager, Transportation Services and the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to advance opportunities to implement the priority studies, master plans, park improvements, detailed streetscape designs and implementation projects contained in Tables 3-6 of this report through the evaluation of development applications in the Downtown, and adjacent areas as relevant.

3. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the General Manager, Transportation Services, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, working collaboratively with the Director of the Indigenous Affairs Office, in partnership with Indigenous leaders and organizations, and in alignment with the Parks Wayfinding Strategy and TO360, to explore opportunities to celebrate Indigenous cultures and histories through Indigenous placekeeping and placemaking initiatives and through a refresh to the Discovery Walks storytelling program within the priority projects contained in Tables 3-6 of this report.

4. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the General Manager, Transportation Services, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture, in consultation with the City Manager's Office, to pursue partnership and funding opportunities with Federal and Provincial governments to support Rebuild and Recovery efforts in the implementation of the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan.

5. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the General Manager, Transportation Services, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Interim General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to report back in 2024 on an update to the implementation strategy for the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan, and a summary of achievements to date.

6. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to identify opportunities to secure large parks in and adjacent to the Downtown, undertake due diligence and report back as required to advance implementation of these initiatives.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The priority actions recommended within this Implementation Strategy for the Downtown PPR Plan are intended to inform and be considered within the City's 10-year Capital Budget and Plan each year as part of the budget process, and the development application review process.

Near-term investment priorities (2021-2025) have been identified in this report. Some of the priority projects and associated cash flow requirements as well as secured funding sources are included in the 2021-2030 Council Approved Capital Budget and Plan for appropriate City divisions. It reflects divisional readiness in alignment with project timelines and activities as well as capacity to spend and deliver as part of the Implementation Strategy for the Downtown Parks and Public Realm (PPR) Plan.

There are a number of unfunded new or emerging priority projects identified in this Implementation Strategy. These unfunded projects need to be further reviewed, scoped, and assessed in terms of their financial impacts and funding requirements within the approved debt affordability framework. This will require longer-term reviews, more strategic capital planning among City divisions, public and stakeholder engagement, and collaborative efforts in exploring inter-governmental funding opportunities, where applicable.

To help pay for the cost of infrastructure required to provide municipal services, the City is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the recently introduced COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020 ("Bill 197") and its impacts on various growth-related funding tools including development charges, community benefits charges, and parkland dedication. These legislative changes may have impacts on the City's ability to collect growth-related revenues to support the delivery of any existing and/or unfunded priority projects and to provide services for growth. The plan is for City staff to bring forward updated by-laws for City Council consideration in Q2 2022.

Where these priority projects align with other divisional priorities, the financial impacts associated with project development and programming, subject to affordability and achievability, will be considered as part of the Operating and Capital Budget submissions for Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City Planning, and Economic Development and Culture in future years.

An inter-divisional Coordinating Working Group has been established to identify inter-dependencies and seek alignment of divisional projects, initiatives, and capital budgets towards achievement of the vision of the Downtown PPR Plan, while also taking on responsibility for ongoing monitoring of outcomes and periodic financial updates to this Implementation Strategy. City divisions will require increased capacity in the areas study development, planning, and divisional capital coordination. Additional funding requirements, if determined necessary, will be presented for City Council consideration in future budget submissions.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT

The Implementation Strategy for the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan has been assessed to understand the impacts on equity-deserving groups, Indigenous peoples and vulnerable residents of Toronto.

Toronto's Downtown contains a network of public spaces that includes parks, squares, streets, laneways, pedestrian promenades and trails, as well as open spaces owned by public institutions and privately-owned publicly accessible spaces (POPS). Referred to collectively as the public realm, these public spaces support equity by setting the stage for daily social interaction and acting as the canvas on which public life occurs. The public realm is the 'commons' of the city and must offer easy and equitable access to quality public spaces for all Torontonians regardless of age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, income, race and ethno-cultural background.

The public realm can tell the story of a place, for example through street names, public art, interpretive features and other local design elements. It has the potential to advance reconciliation by celebrating Indigenous cultures and histories – including those places of Indigenous presence previously unrecognized – and supporting Indigenous cultural and ceremonial practices.

The health benefits of parks and public spaces are well-recognized. The public realm encourages active transportation when designed with a network of cycling and pedestrian routes. Living close to parks and recreation facilities encourages physical activity. Walkability, access to nature and access to community are important contributors to mental health.

Public spaces offer opportunities to improve the sustainability of urban environments. Through inclusion of green infrastructure, the public realm can support improved biodiversity, air quality, energy efficiency, storm water management, enhanced water quality and reduced risks of climate change such as mitigation of flooding and extreme heat.

Never have the benefits of the public realm been clearer as during the COVID-19 public health crisis. The global pandemic has defined parks and public realm spaces as a necessity of urban life, especially in areas of the city where residents may not have access to private outdoor space. It has also enabled a reimagining and adaptation to how public realm space can be used and shared among residents of Toronto.

Access to parks and public realm spaces is not equal across the city, and consequently not all communities are benefitting from these spaces to the same degree. How and where improvements are made to parks and public realm spaces needs to be understood as an environmental justice question that has the potential to close or to widen the equity gap between communities.

Downtown is growing and becoming a more dense urban environment. Improved and expanded public spaces must address the needs of an increasing intensity and diversity of residents, workers, students and visitors. This Implementation Strategy includes criteria that include equity considerations that will assist in making recommendations to City Council in prioritizing public space initiatives on an ongoing basis to address social equity.

DECISION HISTORY

TOcore-related decisions

At its May 2018 meeting, City Council adopted the Downtown Official Plan Amendment (OPA 406), a 25-year vision that sets the direction for the city centre as the cultural, civic, retail and economic heart of Toronto and as a great place to live. The Downtown Plan provides a planning framework for linking growth and infrastructure to achieve complete communities, including policies related to expansion and improvements to parks, public realm and mobility. At that meeting, City Council directed staff within multiple divisions to monitor and report back to Council every five years on the implementation of the Downtown infrastructure strategies and plans to ensure that the infrastructure requirements and priorities contained within them reflect the changing conditions within Downtown over time. Further information can be found here: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG29.4>

At its May 2018 meeting, City Council also adopted the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan, the first of five infrastructure-related strategies supporting implementation of OPA 406. It is helping to ensure that parks and public spaces are planned in an integrated manner with the aim of developing complete communities for the growing population of residents and workers in the core. At that meeting, City Council directed staff, among other matters, to: 1) develop and report back with a Downtown Parks and Public Realm Implementation Strategy, to be updated every five years thereafter, identifying projects to be prioritized within capital budgeting or requiring further study, and alignments with other initiatives, and 2) consider the potential to prioritize the redesign of University Avenue. Further information can be found here: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG29.5>

At its May 2018 meeting, City Council also adopted the Downtown Mobility Strategy, the second of five infrastructure-related strategies supporting implementation of OPA 406. It outlines a series of actions that work together with the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan to align planning for transportation infrastructure with long-term growth: making streets more complete, improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, prioritizing surface transit, and managing motor vehicle traffic and parking. Further information can be found here: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG29.6>

At its May 2018 meeting, City Council also adopted the Downtown Community Services and Facilities Strategy. It outlines directions and actions intended to align service and facility planning with long-term growth in the residential and worker populations. The

Strategy identifies growth-related community space and facility needs and priorities to support infrastructure investment through collaboration and alignment with the strategic and capital plans of City divisions, boards and agencies. There are two growth-related studies underway that support infrastructure investment, the Grange Precinct Study and the Bathurst-Dundas Precinct study, both of which coordinate investments in community services and facilities with parks and public realm improvements.

Further information can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG29.7>

On June 5, 2019, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing issued a Notice of Decision approving OPA 406 (the Downtown Plan) with 224 modifications. The Minister's approval is final and not subject to appeal. At its meeting in July 2019, City Council considered a staff report summarizing the Minister's modifications and providing an assessment of the potential effects of the Decision on planning for growth and infrastructure in the core. It can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.CC9.8>

On March 10, 2021, City Council adopted MM30.14, Co-ordination of Capital Projects on Wellington Street West and Draper Street. The motion directs the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure and Development Services to coordinate the implementation of City-led construction projects in the vicinity of Wellington Street West and Draper Street, including planned cycling infrastructure, the north boulevard of Wellington Street West, water main replacement, the reconstruction of Draper Street and the new park at 456 Wellington Street West. Further information can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM30.14>

On July 14, 2021, City Council adopted MM35.34, Implementing the TOcore Parks and Public Realm Plan in South West Downtown. The motion directs the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, in coordination with the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to advance coordinated planning and implementation of the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan components serving the rapidly-growing neighbourhoods of South West Downtown. Further information can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM35.34>

Other related decisions

At its December 2016 meeting, City Council adopted TransformTO: Climate Action for Healthy, Equitable and Prosperous Toronto. TransformTO identifies a pathway for Toronto to reduce city-wide emissions by 80% by 2050. City Council directed City divisions, agencies and corporations with support from the Chief Corporate Officer, to develop business cases to support the implementation of the TransformTO strategies. Further information can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PE15.1>

At its October 2017 meeting, the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee adopted the Green Streets Technical Guidelines. Green Streets incorporate green infrastructure, such as trees, green walls, and storm water infrastructure to provide ecological and hydrological functions and processes, and to contribute to building climate change

resilience and an improved quality of life in the city. The Guidelines provide guidance, standards, and selection tools for the planning, design, integration and maintenance of a range of green infrastructure by City divisions and private property owners. Further information can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PW24.6>

At its December 17, 2019 meeting, City Council adopted the 10-year public art strategy 2020-2030 to advance actions to support public art in Toronto, to diversify the artists commissioned, distribute the benefits of public art programs, and increase community engagement with public art. It can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX11.5>

At its October 2020 meeting, City Council adopted with amendments a report from the City Manager entitled Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto. It provides a roadmap to recovery from the COVID-19 global pandemic based on recommendations advanced by the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR). The implementation of the Downtown PPR Plan is positioned to contribute to two TORR recommendations: #68 on accelerating progress toward a green and less car-dependent Toronto, which is envisioned as a network of connected complete communities with complete streets – for all uses, all ages, all abilities – and public spaces with quality materials, shade, public art and green space; and #66 on looking for opportunities to enhance future access for those least able to access greenspace.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX17.1>

COMMENTS

The Comments section of this report is organized as follows:

1. Introduction and Background
2. Public Engagement
3. Update on Downtown Growth
4. Parkland Provision and Need
5. Recent Accomplishments
6. Why an Implementation Strategy?
7. Actions: Recommended, Planned and Underway
8. Framework Used to Guide Implementation
9. Staying on Track
10. Conclusion and Next Steps

1. Introduction and Background

TOcore: Planning Downtown (TOcore), which undertook its planning phase from 2014 to 2018, was a comprehensive and integrated look at Toronto's Downtown, its relationship to the city and region around it, and the planning framework governing growth, development and investment in infrastructure. The study area is bounded by Lake Ontario to the South, Bathurst Street to the west, the CP rail corridor and

Rosedale Valley Road to the north and the Don River to the east. In initiating the TOcore study, City Council recognized that development was outpacing the City's capacity to secure the infrastructure necessary to support growth. The TOcore initiative sought to more closely integrate planning for infrastructure with planning for growth in order to maintain liveability in the intensifying core.

The TOcore study resulted in OPA 406, in full force and effect as of June 5, 2019. OPA 406 puts in place an updated policy framework for Toronto's fast-growing Downtown. Also referred to as the Downtown Plan, it provides a blueprint to manage growth, sustain liveability, achieve complete communities and provide space for the economy to grow.

The Downtown Plan is linked to five strategies that identify the infrastructure necessary to support a projected doubling of the resident and worker population in the core over the next 25 years. One of these infrastructure strategies is the Downtown Parks and Public Realm (PPR) Plan, adopted by Council on May 22, 2018. It establishes a vision and framework for achieving an expanded, improved and connected network of public spaces within the mature and dense urban fabric of downtown. Quality public space is essential to keeping the growing heart of the city an attractive place to live, work, learn, play, visit and invest.

The Downtown PPR Plan sets out a new way of thinking about the integrated design of parks, streets and other publicly accessible open spaces in an intensifying Downtown, to achieve a bold and lasting legacy for future generations. It is based on *Five Transformative Ideas*, a set of integrated spatial transformations that build on the assets of all areas in and adjacent to the core to guide how the parks and public realm network will be expanded, improved and connected.

The *Five Transformative Ideas* are an organizing framework for the plan and include:

- *The Core Circle*: Re-imagining the ravines, bluffs, waterfront and islands encircling the Downtown as an immersive landscape system that celebrates Indigenous cultures and histories and is connected by a continuous walking and cycling route;
- *Great Streets*: Enhancing the unique characteristics of Downtown's 12 most emblematic streets and making them outstanding civic places and connectors;
- *Shoreline Stitch*: Weaving the waterfront back into the fabric of Downtown through improved connections both north-south across transportation corridors and east-west between Fort York and the Don River;
- *Park Districts*: Strengthening Downtown's distinct districts with parks at their hearts by expanding, improving and connecting neighbourhood parks, open spaces and streets to create a focus for everyday community life;
- *Local Places*: Re-imagining smaller local public spaces -- such as church yards, school yards, cemeteries, hydro corridors and institutional open spaces -- to better support public life and mobility.

The Downtown PPR Plan covers an area slightly larger than the Downtown, inclusive of the Garrison Creek watershed, Toronto Islands, a portion of the Port Lands and the eastern edges of the Don Valley that form part of the Core Circle. The PPR Plan also links to initiatives west, north and east of the core -- such as Exhibition Place Master

Plan, West Toronto Railpath, Green Line, Lower Don Trail Improvements, the Port Lands Planning Framework and the city-wide Cycling Network Plan -- integrating Downtown into the expanding, city-wide mobility and public space network.

Upon adoption of OPA 406, City Council directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning (CP) along with the General Managers of both Transportation Services (TS) and Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) to jointly develop and report back with an implementation strategy for the PPR Plan that is aligned with divisional capital budgets and that identifies initiatives for advancement on a priority basis. The collaboration of Economic Development and Culture's work with Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and their streetscape and public realm improvements has been integrated into the implementation strategy presented in this report.

The Implementation Strategy for the Downtown PPR Plan will support the implementation of 'Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto' by contributing to the implementation of two key recommendations advanced in the report of the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild:

- Recommendation #66 -- Look for opportunities to enhance future access for those least able to access greenspace.
- Recommendation #68 -- Build upon initiatives put in place during COVID-19 to accelerate progress toward a modern, green and less car-dependent Toronto, which is a network of connected complete communities, and includes a more extensive, integrated public transit system supporting complete streets – for all uses, all ages, all abilities – and public spaces with quality materials, shade, public art and green space.

2. Public Engagement

City Planning and its divisional partners undertook comprehensive public engagement, stakeholder consultation and Indigenous engagement processes for TOcore, including in the development of the Downtown PPR Plan. Staff employed a diverse range of tools and techniques aimed at reaching the full range of people from across Toronto who live, work, learn, play, visit and invest Downtown.

Summaries of input received at all phases of engagement activities are available at www.toronto.ca/tocore. The Downtown Public Space Public Life Study can be found at https://www.toronto.ca/ext/digital_comm/pdfs/city-planning/2018-10-15-downtown-parks-public-realm-plan-public-space-public-life-study.pdf.

Engagement with the public on the various projects, studies and initiatives outlined in this report will continue as matters move from vision through to implementation.

3. Update on Downtown Growth

Downtown's population is projected to double from nearly 238,000 people in 2016 to a potential population of 475,000 by 2041. Downtown is Canada's largest employment cluster with roughly 500,000 jobs (2016), relying on Union Station and GO Transit, the

subway system and the surface transit network to provide access to a city-wide and regional workforce. By 2041, Downtown, together with the "shoulder" areas of South of Eastern and Liberty Village, has the potential to reach between 850,000 and 915,000 jobs.

Current estimates (at December 31, 2019) indicate roughly 270,000 residents and close to 570,000 jobs in Downtown. These 2019 estimates do not include daily visitors, such as students, shoppers and tourists, which can cause the number of people present in the Downtown (pre-pandemic) to swell to over a million on a daily basis.

Forecasted population growth will mean even more people will be living and working in high-density, vertical communities. This in turn will result in more people needing to use public parks and publicly-accessible open space to maintain their physical and mental health and well-being. It will also place an increase in demand on existing parks and open spaces, driving the need to provide additional parks and open spaces in all areas of the Downtown.

It will be important to continue to monitor the changes the Downtown is experiencing, including COVID-19 impacts, to help ensure that the infrastructure requirements and priorities identified in TOcore reflect the changing conditions over time, and to support recovery strategies. The TOcore Monitoring Framework referenced in the Monitoring Framework section of this report (Section 8.2) intends to enable staff to keep track of progress in implementing the policies and achieving the long-term goals of the Downtown Plan and determine whether infrastructure investment is keeping pace with growth. The goal is to develop a framework that will be institutionalized across the corporation and linked to capital planning and programming.

The City is currently planning for growth to 2051, with the Our Plan Toronto webpage providing information and an opportunity for the public to comment on where growth should go, and what is needed to support healthy, complete communities that are thriving and inclusive: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/official-plan-review/>.

4. Parkland Provision and Need

Downtown has one of the lowest parkland provision rates in the city at 5.5 m² per resident (utilizing the 2016 Census) and 1.8 m² per resident and employee compared to a city-wide average of 28 m² per resident and 18 m² per resident and employee respectively. As the population continues to increase, and if no new parkland is added, parkland provision rates will fall even lower. Attachment 1, drawn from the 2019 Parkland Strategy, presents a map showing parkland provision in the future if no new parks are added.

To maintain current parkland provision levels in 2032, the City would need to acquire 165 ha (397 acres) of new parkland in the Downtown Study Area. Given the current development patterns and available sites in the Downtown, it is recognised that this number is not achievable. However, it underscores the significant deficiency in parkland

and the importance of identifying and advancing opportunities for expanding parkland in the Downtown.

As growth continues in the Downtown, these issues will intensify due to increasing land values and scarcity of undeveloped lands. The response, in a complex built-up environment like the Downtown, requires creative approaches to maintaining an adequate supply of parkland that provides the full range of park experiences enjoyed elsewhere in Toronto. It requires expansion of the parkland system to parallel growth as part of the development review process. It also requires the City to continue to actively acquire new parks and re-imagine public spaces to secure future parks, including the measures described in the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan.

Although the City has had successes acquiring small and moderate-sized parks, large parks, defined as parks greater than 3 ha (7.4 acres) in size, play a vital role in a park network. Yet the Downtown has relatively few large parks compared to other neighbourhoods in the city.

The need for larger park spaces to serve the Downtown is particularly acute given how they provide for greater cumulative use, accommodate a broader diversity of amenities and functions and offer higher recreational and civic benefits. Larger parks are important to the provision of new recreation facilities (e.g. sports fields, sports courts, splash pads) that are recommended in the City's Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan and undersupplied across the Downtown. As the regional centre for transit and public events, larger parks Downtown can accommodate large civic gatherings of regional and national importance.

The need for larger parks to serve and support the Downtown requires creative solutions for parkland delivery. The City will continue to consider city-owned lands and explore opportunities to repurpose these lands. It will also be important to secure large parks within the remaining large development sites in and around Downtown.

5. Recent Accomplishments

Since TOcore was initiated in 2014, several public space improvement investments and plans supporting the emerging future vision for the Downtown have been undertaken. Table 1 below sets out some key examples of initiatives completed by various divisions. Attachment 2 provides a map of these initiatives. A list of significant projects that are underway or recommended priority projects is included in Tables 3-6.

Table 1: Completed Projects (2015-2021)

Transformative Idea	Initiative
Core Circle	Ramsden Park Revitalization
	Lower Don Trail Improvements - Phase 1 (including new Pottery Road Bridge)
	Bayview Avenue Multi-use Trail (Rosedale Valley Road to Pottery Road)

Transformative Idea	Initiative
	Garrison Crossing: Pedestrian bridges, South Stanley Park Extension and 10 Ordnance Park
	Green Line Implementation Strategy complete, Geary Ave Park expansion and Macpherson Ave Park underway
Great Streets	Bloor Street: BIA Parkettes and Streetscape Improvements (Spadina Avenue to Bathurst Street), Bloor Street West Bikeway (Avenue Road to Shaw Street)
	Queen Street: Queen Street West BIA Parkettes (Spadina Avenue to Bathurst Street)
	University Avenue: Median Park State of Good Repair Assessment
	King Street Transit Priority Corridor
	YongeTOmorrow EA
	Lower Yonge Precinct Plan
	College-Carlton-Gerrard: Gerrard Street Bikeway Upgrades
	College-Carlton-Gerrard: The Doctors' Parkette
	Front Street: Feasibility Study -- Bathurst Street to Spadina Avenue
	Front Street: Union Station Plaza (Sir John A. MacDonald Plaza)
Shoreline Stitch	Planning for decking over rail corridor
	CIBC Plaza (POPS over rail corridor)
	Love Park (Competition and Detailed Design Complete)
	Rees Street Park (Competition Complete)
	Fleet Street Closure (Bathurst Street to Iannuzzi Street)
	Bentway Phase 1
	Cycling infrastructure improvements along Harbour Street Bikeway from Bay Street to York Street
Park Districts	David Crombie Park (Concept Design)
	Bathurst Quay (Partially Complete)
	Grange Park improvements

Transformative Idea	Initiative
	Coronation Park - Heritage Park Improvements
	Queen's Park Revitalization
	College Park Revitalization
	Berczy Park Revitalization
	St. James Park Revitalization
	James Canning Gardens improvements
	Bellevue Square Park Revitalization

In addition to the above public space improvement investments and plans in the core, significant accomplishments have been made in securing new parks through development, City-initiated acquisitions and transfers. Since 2015, the City has secured over 40 new parks totalling over 9 hectares. Table 2 below lists future parks over 500 m², secured in the Downtown. The map in Attachment 3 shows the location of these future parks within the study area.

Table 2: New Parks Secured Through Development and Acquisitions

Location	Size
Alexandra Park Revitalization	2 parks, totalling 6,397 m ²
28 Bathurst Street*	9,500 m ²
605 Bloor Street W Mirvish Village*	1,200 m ²
125 The Esplanade (South Market Park)	1,100 m ²
400 Front Street West	1,608 m ²
440 Front Street West	2 parks, totalling 1,295 m ²
33 Gerrard Street West	785 m ²
60 Howard Street	1,300 m ²
539 King Street West	686 m ²
55 Lake Shore Boulevard East (Lower Yonge)	10,049 m ²
10 Ordnance Street*	15,000 m ²
245 Queen Street East	1,400 m ²

Location	Size
318 Queens Quay W (Rees Street Park)	9,600 m2
96 Queens Quay W (Love Park)	7,440 m2
170 Queens Wharf Road (Mouth of the Creek Park)	3,300 m2
229 Richmond Street West	2,245 m2
543 Richmond Street W	550 m2
565 Sherbourne Street	608 m2
234 Simcoe Street	1,000 m2
105 Spadina Avenue	1,000 m2
666 Spadina Avenue	603 m2
2 Tecumseth Street*	1,493 m2
15 Wellesley Street E	3,800 m2
25 Wellesley Street West, Dr. Lillian McGregor Park	6,000 m2
475 Yonge Street	908 m2
27 Yorkville Avenue	693 m2

* Parks on the immediate periphery of Downtown

6. Why an Implementation Strategy?

This Implementation Strategy is focused on delivering tangible outcomes towards the vision of the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan within the core's mature urban fabric. These include expanding parkland, improving parks and their utility, improving equity in access to parks, promoting public life, expanding the tree canopy, creating new connections, expanding and improving the cycling network, and improving pedestrian safety. In order to do that, a shared playbook among the four divisions having responsibility for public space is required to find the mechanisms for alignment in planning, capital budgeting, design and implementation. This strategy is also implemented through development approval and partnerships with institutions.

Within the structure of the City of Toronto, responsibility for public space runs across four divisions. Recognizing that the public does not distinguish between these divisional lines of responsibility, this requires a deliberate process of collaboration and alignment of the following functions on an ongoing basis:

- Parks, Forestry and Recreation is responsible for parks and the facilities within them, horticulture and forestry programs (including street trees), parks and recreation planning and environmental initiatives.
- Transportation Services has responsibility for the right-of-way and undertakes maintenance, as well as capital project and operational improvements that support mobility and public realm infrastructure including roads, bridges, sidewalks, and boulevards within the city. It also is responsible for the StreetARToronto program.
- Economic Development and Culture works collaboratively with business improvement areas (BIAs) to support planning for the public realm, streetscape improvements and capital project implementation. The division is also responsible for Toronto's Public Art and Monuments Collection, including the commission of new works. In addition, this division manages several public spaces associated with museums, such as the gardens at Spadina House and Campbell House.
- City Planning, as the steward of the Official Plan, recommends to City Council the policy framework for parks, public realm and mobility, undertakes detailed area-based planning and urban design studies, implements public art programs and in some cases allocates funding towards key civic design improvements, and coordinates development approvals with these activities

The purpose is to establish a rolling implementation strategy for the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan – to be monitored regularly and updated every five years – that identifies studies, initiatives and project alignments to be advanced by the lead division(s), in consultation with other divisions and agencies, on a priority basis to improve the quality, quantity and connectivity of public spaces in support of population and employment growth. This Implementation Strategy will be iterative allowing it to evolve and be opportunistic as new ideas emerge.

The objectives of the Downtown PPR Implementation Strategy are to:

- Establish a prioritization framework for parks and public realm projects in the Downtown;
- Identify priority parks and public realm projects that require feasibility studies or master plans;
- Outline aligned initiatives (City-led, development-related, or led by other city-building partners such as major institutions, agencies, boards and commissions) that support and advance the parks and public realm actions identified in the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan;
- Highlight capital works and projects, both recently completed and currently underway, that advance the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan;
- Recommend parks and public realm priorities for consideration in future divisional capital plans and budgets;
- Advance implementation through development approval; and
- Establish an inter-divisional monitoring and reporting framework to be used to demonstrate to Council and the public how investments in parks and the public realm are addressing growth and the changing conditions within Downtown over time.

7. Actions: Recommended, Planned and Underway

Tables 3-6 below describe the status of Actions from the Downtown PPR Plan. The tables outline the current stage of the project and whether or not the Action is "Underway", "Recommended", or "Planned" (meaning it is in the Capital Budget and Plan, but has not started yet). A full description of the stage-gates used in Tables 3-6 (Study/Analysis, Design, or Implement) is provided in Section 7.2 of this report. Funding status is described as either Funded, Partially Funded or Not Funded. The Funding Status refers only to the current stage of work, and not future stages. All of the Actions have been assessed using the prioritization framework described in Section 7.3 below.

The projects are categorized according to the Five Transformative Ideas and they include both short-term (2021-2025) and medium-term (2026-2030) priorities. These timelines apply to the target completion of the Action. The Implementation Strategy is a living document that will be updated on a regular basis to reflect the next phase(s) of work, through a stage-gate process. It will also reflect the changing needs of the population relative to growth patterns and to direct capital funds in a strategic manner.

Table 3 Core Circle

Core Circle Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Core Circle Concept Plan and Gap Analysis	PFR, TS (CP, EDC)	Study/Analysis	Recommended	X		Not Funded
Toronto Island Master Plan	PFR	Study/Analysis	Underway	X		Funded
New Parks at Garrison Crossing, including 10 Ordnance, South Stanley Park extension and Gore Park	PFR	Design	Planned	X		Funded
Mouth of the Creek Park construction	PFR	Implement	Planned	X		Funded
Glen Road Pedestrian Bridge and Tunnel	TS	Design	Underway	X		Funded
Lower Don Trail Improvements and Access	PFR, TS	Implement	Underway	X		Funded
Rosedale Valley Road Multi-Use Trail Upgrade	TS	Design	Underway	X		Funded

Core Circle Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Explore opportunities to improve pedestrian and cycling connections to Bayview Avenue at Wellesley Park	PFR, TS, TRCA	Study/ Analysis	Underway	X		Partially Funded

Table 4 - Great Streets

Great Streets Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Bayview Avenue: Temporary pedestrian and cycling improvements (Rosedale Valley Road to Mill Street) through ActiveTO Accelerated Cycling Network	TS	Pilot Implement/ Analysis	Underway	X		Funded
Bayview Avenue: Develop a vision for the bridges at Bloor Street, Gerrard Street, Dundas Street and Queen Street and other industrial infrastructure and integrate into the streetscape of Bayview Avenue	TS, CP	Study/ Analysis	Recom- mended		X	Not Funded
Bloor Street: construction of permanent raised cycle tracks (Avenue Road to Spadina Avenue)	TS	Implement	Underway	X		Funded
Bloor Street: Installation of temporary cycle tracks (Avenue Road to Sherbourne Street) through ActiveTO Accelerated Cycling Network	TS	Pilot Imple- ment/ Analysis	Underway	X		Funded
Bloor Street: Implement permanent cycling infrastructure and public realm enhancements east of Avenue - Church Street to Parliament Avenue	TS,BIA	Design	Underway	X		Funded

Great Streets Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
College-Carleton Corridor: (College Street -Bathurst Street to Spadina Avenue) explore opportunity for re-balancing the right-of-way to increase pedestrian space, improve cycling facilities and improve public transit and transit stops	TS, TTC	Design	Underway	X		Funded
College-Carleton Corridor: (Carleton Street) explore opportunity for re-balancing the right-of-way to increase pedestrian space, improve cycling facilities and improve public transit and transit stops	TS, TTC	Study/ Analysis	Recommended		X	Not Funded
Front Street: Establish a heritage walking route along Front Street	CP, HT	Study/ Analysis	Recommended		X	Not Funded
Front Street West: Coordinate development between York and Bathurst to implement Front Street streetscape improvements	CP, TS	Implement	Underway	X		
Jarvis Street: explore opportunities through development to improve and expand the pedestrian realm and to provide space and conditions that can support the growth of healthy shade trees on both sides of the street	CP, PFR, TS	Study/ Analysis	Recommended		X	Not Funded
King Street: Undertake detailed design to implement permanent streetscape improvements for the transit priority corridor	TS, TTC, CP	Design	Planned	X		Partially Funded
University Avenue: Explore opportunity for reconfiguration to create a linear park and permanent cycling infrastructure through a Sub-surface Technical Feasibility Study	CP, TS, PFR, TW	Study/ Analysis	Underway	X		Funded

Great Streets Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Yonge Street: Temporary Complete Street Improvements (Bloor Street to Davisville Avenue) through ActiveTO Accelerated Cycling Network	TS	Pilot Implement/ Analysis	Underway	X		Funded
Yonge Street: Implement future vision as approved in yongeTOMorrow Environmental Assessment (Queen Street to College Street/Carlton Street)	TS	Design	Planned	X		Partially Funded
Parliament Street (Bloor Street to Wellesley Street): Secure identified setbacks to achieve pedestrian clearway and enhance tree planting (secured through development)	CP	Design and Implement	Underway	X	X	Funded
Parliament Street: Secure identified parkland on Parliament Street south (Front Street to waterfront)	PFR	Study/ Analysis	Underway	X	X	Not Funded
Parliament Street: In coordination with actions for the Shoreline Stitch, improve the pedestrian experience from First Parliament site to the waterfront and create a significant public space where Parliament Street meets the shoreline	CP, WT	Study/ Analysis	Recommended	X	X	Not Funded
Queen Street: Coordinate initiatives such as Old City Hall Revitalization and Ontario Line Station design to support a continuous green frontage on the north side of Queen Street between Old City Hall and Campbell House	CP	Study/ Analysis	Recommended	X		Not Funded
Queens Quay: Extend Central Waterfront Master Plan for Queens Quay eastward to the East Bayfront and Lower Don Lands communities	CP, WT, TS	Study/ Analysis	Recommended	X		TBD

Great Streets Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Spadina Avenue/Road: Explore opportunity for re-balancing Spadina Avenue/Road right-of-ways to increase space for pedestrians and cyclists (north of Bloor Street)	TS	Study/Analysis	Recommended		X	Not Funded

University Avenue

In May 2018, City Council directed staff to consider the potential to prioritize the redesign of University Avenue through the implementation strategy for the Downtown PPR Plan. The 'University Avenue Sub-surface Technical Feasibility Study' has commenced and is a first step towards determining the feasibility and impacts of reconfiguring University Avenue to maximise parkland potential within the existing right-of-way. The study is a preliminary comparative analysis of the impact of below-grade conditions on potential conceptual alignments for University Avenue.

Table 5 - Shoreline Stitch Actions

Shoreline Stitch Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Improve Pedestrian Realm on Front Street (Feasibility study)	TS, CP	Study/Analysis	Underway	X		Funded
Continue advancing planning for decking over the rail corridor	PFR, CP	Study/Analysis	Underway	X	X	TBD
Lake Shore Boulevard East Public Realm Improvements (Jarvis Street to Logan Avenue)	WT, TS	Implement	Underway	X		Funded
Explore Advancing Future Phases of The Bentway and Under Gardiner	CP, PFR, TS	Study/Analysis	Recommended	X		Not Funded
96 Queens Quay W (Love Park)	PFR, WT	Implement	Underway	X		Funded
318 Queens Quay W (Rees Street Park)	PFR, WT	Design	Underway	X		Funded

Parkland over Rail Corridor

In Fall 2016, Toronto City Council endorsed a proposal for a new major park in Downtown Toronto, to be built over the rail corridor between Bathurst Street and Blue Jays Way. Known as "Rail Deck Park", the project is meant to transform the unused air space into Toronto's next great gathering space for recreation, culture, and celebration.

Since that time, through development, an additional deck park over the rail corridor from Blue Jays Way to John Street (known as Union Park) has been proposed.

These deck parks represent a bold and creative solution to the challenges of city-building. Innovative deck structures – essentially giant bridges across the rail corridor – will provide the foundation to support all elements of a vibrant and dynamic urban park, while allowing for continued rail operations below.

While the final park size and configuration has yet to be determined, these deck parks will play a critical role, as part of the Shoreline Stitch, in providing additional parkland and improving connections to the broader park system, both north-south and east-west. They also present one of the few opportunities to secure larger parks to serve Downtown's growing population.

Table 6 - Park Districts

Park District Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Bathurst Quay-Coronation Park-Ontario Place (BCO): Waterfront promenade, structural rehabilitation of dockwall and Eireen Quay streetscape complete. New Waterfront Plaza, rehabilitation and transformation of Canada Malting Company building and silos underway	CP, PFR	Design	Underway	X		Funded
Bay Cloverhill Loop: Dr. Lillian McGregor Park, a new park at 25 Wellesley Street West and improvements to Breadalbane Streetscape to the south. Yonge Street Linear Parks Improvements (including George Hislop Park, Norman Jewison Park and Alexander Street Parkette)	PFR, TS	Implement	Underway	X		Funded
Cabbagetown-Riverdale: Improvements to Sumach Street and Sackville Street for people cycling	TS	Study/ Analysis	Underway	X		Funded

Park District Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Civic Precinct: Undertake Civic Precinct Public Realm and Public Art Master Plan to enhance the public realm, improve permeability and expand and connect the existing public spaces. Study the feasibility of closing the City Hall parkade entrance on the south side of Queen Street	CP, TS, TPA, PFR	Study/ Analysis	Recommended	X		Not Funded
The Garden District: Moss Park and John Innes Community Recreation Centre redevelopment	PFR	Design	Planned	X		Funded
The Garden District: George Street Revitalization from Dundas Street to Gerrard Street, supporting a connection from Moss Park to Allan Gardens and the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.	TS,SS LTC, SSHA, IAO, CS	Implement	Underway	X	X	TBD
The Garden District: Streetscape enhancements for Pembroke Street to be considered during upcoming local road resurfacing; consider improvements to George Street from Shuter Street to Dundas Street East.	TS	Design	Recommended	X	X	Not Funded
The Grange-John Street - Roundhouse Park: John Street Cultural Corridor	TS, BIA	Implement	Underway	X		Funded
The Grange-John Street - Roundhouse Park (GJR): Grange Precinct Plan with a community service focus and a parks and public realm focus. Parks and Public Realm Strategy will examine opportunities to improve laneways, streets, pedestrian and cycling connections, accessibility, place-making, and safety for all users	Create TO, CREM, CP, PFR, TS	Study/ Analysis	Planned	X		Funded

Park District Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
Kensington Market-Alexandra Park (KMAP): Alexandra Park parkland redesign and state of good repair improvements	PFR, TS	Implement	Underway	X		Funded
KMAP (southern portion): Bathurst-Dundas Precinct study to coordinate investments in community services and facilities with parks and public realm improvements.	CREM, SDFA, PFR, TS, EDC, SSHA	Study/ Analysis	Planned	X		Not Funded
KMAP (northern portion): Undertake a Park District Plan to enhance and improve connections, make better use of small, underutilized spaces, including parkettes and improve landscaped edges. Plan should also recommend opportunities to experiment with pilot projects and public space activations	PFR, TS	Study/ Analysis	Recom- mended		X	Not Funded
Old Town-St.Lawrence-Distillery: Revitalization of David Crombie Park and improvements to The Esplanade	PFR, TS	Design	Underway	X		Funded
The Pits' Christie-Bickford Park District Study: Undertake a program and design review of Christie Pits, The Bickford Centre, and Bickford Park as a system, providing a broad range of programs and experiences. Include a Public Life study that will examine how to improve park edges, access points and connections. A park circuit using the three spaces should be examined to promote active movement through the spaces. This Park District Study should be integrated with the Core Circle Concept Plan and Gap Analysis	PFR, TS	Study/ Analysis	Recom- mended	X		Not Funded

Park District Actions	Lead	Stage-gate	Status	2021-2025	2026-2030	Funding
St. James Town: Partner with TCHC to revitalize the central open space at 200 Wellesley Street East, revitalize Ontario Street for pedestrians and cyclists and advance the Market Place Pilot Project	PFR, TS, SDFA, TCHC	Design	Underway	X		Funded
St. James Town: Revitalization of St. James Town West Park and construction of a new parkette on Howard Street	PFR	Design	Underway	X		Funded
West Rail District: Revitalize St. Andrew's Playground	PFR	Implement	Underway	X		Funded
West Rail District: Coordinate Capital Projects on Wellington Street West and Draper Street as per MM30.14.	TS, CP, PFR	Design	Recommended	X		Partially Funded
The Garrison Parks-Fort York and West Rail District: Advance design work to improve and enhance the utility of the parks within these districts, including, but not limited to Victoria Memorial Square Park, Clarence Square, Stanley Park, Ordnance Triangle Park and Gore Park as per MM35.34.	PFR, CP	Design	Recommended	X		Partially Funded

Local Places

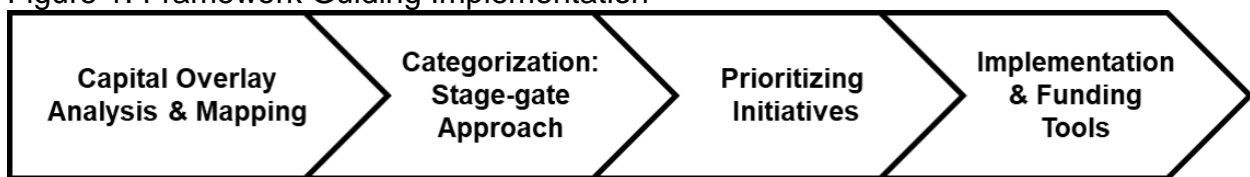
There are many smaller, under-utilized and sometimes overlooked spaces embedded within the fabric of Downtown neighbourhoods that offer opportunities to improve the public realm and supplement the parks and open space system. Because of their small scale, these spaces can be responsive to local needs. These spaces include privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS), parkettes, laneways, church yards, school yards, cemeteries, hydro corridors and institutional open spaces. There is untapped potential in these Local Places that can be harnessed to contribute to a vibrant and connected public realm. Some of these spaces are not under the ownership of the City and require collaboration and partnerships that are context-specific, others can be achieved incrementally through development approval as well as through local neighbourhood improvement projects.

8. Framework Used to Guide Implementation

The ideas presented in the Downtown PPR Plan range from ambitious and highly complex, to straight-forward and small-scale. Initiatives related to the more ambitious ideas may take considerable time to bring to fruition, whereas many of the smaller initiatives could be implemented within a five-year timeframe or less. Many of the complex initiatives are made up of a series of smaller projects, making a long-term strategy to sustain momentum a critical requirement for the full realization of the vision. Coordination and alignment across divisions will be a critical factor for success.

This section summarizes the framework staff have used to develop this Implementation Strategy and will continue to use to align efforts across divisions on an ongoing basis. The framework is shown in Figure 1 and explained in the paragraphs that follow.

Figure 1: Framework Guiding Implementation



8.1 Capital Overlay Analysis and Mapping

Capital overlay analysis is the starting point for implementing the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan. This approach involves understanding the infrastructure needs and overlaying and mapping the capital plans of multiple City divisions and agencies and from there searching for opportunities to bundle the work of different groups into a single initiative. Aligning initiatives from the early stages of project conception through to implementation ensures a coordinated and efficient approach to delivery. What is essential is seeking alignment early and throughout four phases of work: 1) planning, 2) study / analysis, 3) design and 4) build (more on this in sub-section 8.2 below).

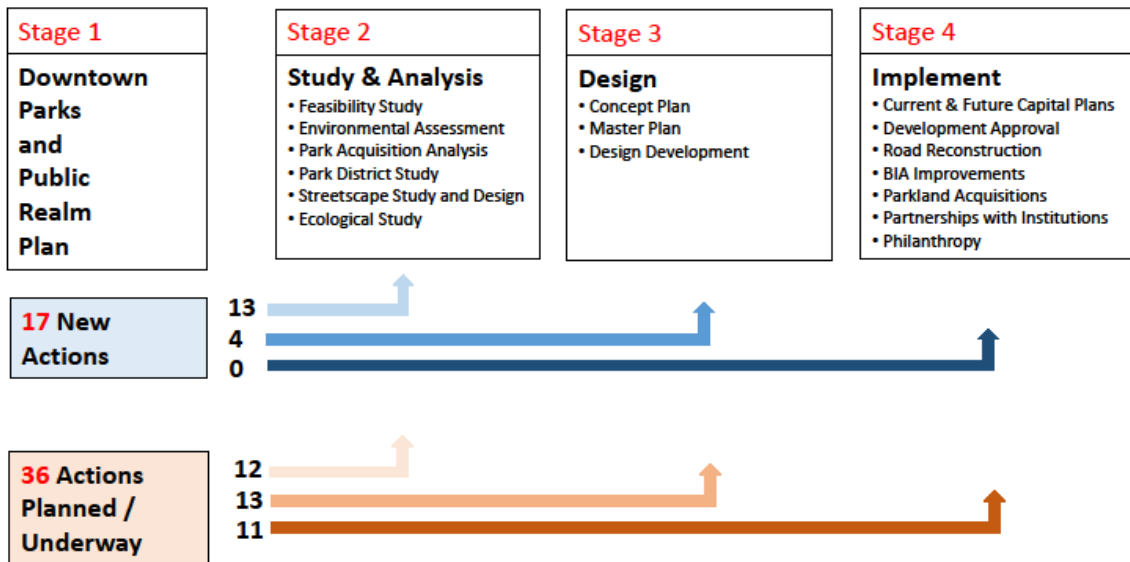
In developing this Implementation Strategy, staff created integrated GIS-based map layers for both parks and public realm to support data visualization and analysis. These map layers included: existing and planned parks, parkland opportunity sites, planned park improvements, privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS), the Transportation Services 5-year capital works program, existing and planned cycling routes, public realm projects, and planned right-of-way projects.

The Infrastructure Coordination Unit (ICU) within the City plays an important role in ensuring coordination between City divisions and with other organizations that develop and operate utilities and infrastructure. The work of the ICU is visualized through T.O.InView, an inter-active map of planned construction projects. Staff have and will continue to find opportunities to align many of the PPR Plan initiatives with projects that are already underway; currently in the planning process; or have capital work planned at the proposed location.

8.2 Categorization: A Stage-Gate Approach to Advancing Work

Complex projects need to be advanced in steps via a series of approval stages. This 'stage-gate' process provides the appropriate decision-making bodies with specific points for review, consideration and adoption of next steps. A stage-gate describes a point in a project at which progress in development can be examined and important changes or decisions can be made related to scope, design, resourcing and timing. At each stage, decisions may also be made to put a project on hold or in some cases to not advance. Figure 2 illustrates these stages that lead from planning through to implementation.

Figure 2: Stage Gates and Actions



Stage 1 – Planning

This stage of work is complete for the Downtown, carried out through the TOcore project resulting in City Council adoption of the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan.

Stage 2 – Study & Analysis

Some of the actions presented in the Downtown PPR Plan are articulated as concepts. Many range in complexity and will require more detailed review and analysis. These categories are described below.

- Feasibility Studies or Environmental Assessments will be undertaken when changes to infrastructure are being contemplated to better understand the extent and impact of possible changes.
- Parkland Acquisition Analysis will be conducted when a potential parkland site has been identified. Staff will assess the site based on set of criteria including parkland suitability, cost, equity, and other factors and will determine the best tool for acquiring the site. This may include dedication, purchase, or transfer.

- Park District Studies will take into account the existing parks and public realm context in an area, and will recommend opportunities for park improvements, acquisitions or expansions. The studies will include a detailed implementation strategy specific to the Park District.
- Streetscape Studies will evaluate existing conditions and policy contexts along key roadway segments identified as Great Streets or segments within Park Districts. These studies will explore site-specific constraints and opportunities, and deliver design solutions to improve streetscapes, with particular focus on accessibility, resiliency and safety.
- Ecological Studies will provide deeper understanding of the health and history of local ecological systems. These studies will ensure a balanced approach to managing these vital natural systems, promoting and preserving ecological integrity while also creating new opportunities for access and interpretation.

Stage 3 – Design

Following the Study and Analysis stage, the design of an initiative can commence. The design process will vary in scope and engagement depending on the type of project. The final phase of the design process typically includes a set of tender-ready drawings.

Stage 4 – Build

Following the confirmation of detailed design, tender documents and approvals, projects can proceed to construction. There are a number of ways the projects in this Strategy can be implemented dependent on the complexity of the project, timing, and implementation priority. These include the state of good repair (SOGR) programs, stand-alone projects, and projects delivered through development as part of the site plan process and Section 37/42 obligations where parks and public realm are added or enhanced through the redevelopment of a site.

Where possible, projects are bundled together to minimize construction disruptions to a particular area. Sometimes, it may also be possible to design the parkland and the right-of-way together to achieve a seamless public realm.

8.3 Prioritizing Initiatives

The Downtown PPR Plan's Five Transformative Ideas identify dozens of initiatives with different timelines, many requiring sequencing and staging to effectively deliver and unlock their full potential. To address this, the Implementation Strategy has developed criteria to prioritize projects, applying a strategic and equity lens and rationale for advancing different initiatives at various points along the 25-year timeframe of the Plan.

Setting the priorities of these initiatives is important for several reasons. It enables both financial and staff resources to be allocated over a period of time, ensuring the demand on these resources is realistic and achievable. Aligning the implementation of the PPR Plan initiatives with existing capital plans and initiatives underway so as to bundle projects where possible, projected growth patterns and current parkland deficiencies

ensures investments in the quality and extent of public spaces are focused where the current and projected need is highest.

8.3.1 Method for Prioritizing Parkland Acquisitions and Improvements

The city-wide Parkland Strategy, adopted by City Council in November 2019, is a 20-year plan that guides long-term planning for new parks and for expansion and improved access to existing parks. It aids decision-making and prioritization of investment in parkland across the city. The Parkland Strategy identifies most of the Downtown geography as a Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Area. This was identified based on parkland per person provision rates in a given area, along with one or more of three additional criteria: 1) low existing parkland supply, 2) estimates of population growth, and 3) percentage of low-income residents.

To supplement the Parkland Strategy, staff developed the following Downtown-specific criteria to prioritize both parkland acquisitions and parkland improvements within the framework of the Downtown PPR Plan. The analysis, applying the following criteria, established prioritization of the Park Districts as well as projects within the districts:

- *Parkland Provision 2033*: Median projected parkland provision rates of dissemination blocks within the boundaries of a park district, based on the 2018 development pipeline.
- *Equity*: Score is calculated from a weighted median that takes into account populations of equity-deserving groups and Indigenous populations including: Children (0 to 12), seniors (60+), Indigenous, Black, other racialized populations and recent immigrants (2011+) and Low Income (LIM-AT) by dissemination area. A higher equity score indicates a greater presence of equity-seeking groups and Indigenous populations.
- *Planned Parks*: Park Districts that contained a future City Council-approved park were given a higher score than those that did not contain a planned park.
- *Green Land Cover*: Percent of area within a Park District that has tree canopy, shrub or bare earth.
- *Park Condition*: The percent of parks within the Park District needing improvements based on visual survey of park conditions and a workshop with Park supervisors.
- *Walkability Gaps*: Areas that are not served by a Park within a 500m walkable distance.

The prioritization frameworks for acquisitions and for improvements use two different scoring schemes, drawing differently from the above criteria. Different scoring schemes are necessary in part because the objectives and challenges of parkland acquisitions are different from those of parkland improvements. Recommended parkland improvements supplement planned projects already in the PFR 10-year Capital Budget and Plan. Investing in existing parks is just as important as securing new parks.

8.3.2 Method for Prioritizing Public Realm Improvements and Network Connections within the Right-of-Way

Public realm improvements and network connections are primarily those identified within the right-of-way and are programmed through the Transportation Services Division. The Transportation Services capital program provides opportunities for advancing the long-term vision and transformative ideas of the Downtown PPR Plan. The method for prioritizing projects is heavily influenced by existing capital plans and initiatives underway, particularly for short-term priorities (2021 to 2025). In the mid to long-term horizon, there is greater opportunity for new or emerging projects to influence the scope and prioritization of capital programming, balanced with other transportation priorities across the city.

The SOGR program, primarily based on the condition and age of the infrastructure, forms the largest portion of the capital program. As one of the main channels for project delivery, the SOGR program plays a significant role in the prioritization of projects, as other programs seek to bundle initiatives with upcoming road work. For programs such as Cycling and Green Infrastructure, there are more SOGR projects of interest than is possible for the delivery teams to bundle with, so each program has its own prioritization process to determine which projects can be installed in any given year.

Wherever aligned initiatives are considered in Transportation Services' capital program prioritization, projects within the Downtown PPR Plan will be considered and where possible included.

Moving forward, Transportation Services is working towards a more consistent and quantitative process for the overall capital program to improve project-level prioritization with a holistic set of criteria derived from the Transportation Services strategic objectives: safety, healthy communities, quality service, access for everyone, and resilient solutions.

8.3.3 Urban Forestry

The 2018 Tree Canopy Study allows City staff to work with reliable data to adjust program activities that reflect the changing nature of the urban forest and evolving management issues. For example, land cover classification data is being used to develop strategic actions to help improve equitable canopy cover and increase tree canopy on both public and private lands. Urban Forestry is also working with other City divisions to provide data and analysis to support the prioritization of strategic actions for initiatives such as the Downtown PPR Plan, as part of TOcore. Urban Forestry will bring a staff report to City Council by the end of 2021 with an update on how the recent Tree Canopy Study data is being used to support evidence-based decisions for service planning and program delivery.

8.4 Making it Happen: Implementation and Funding Tools

Bringing the Downtown PPR Plan to fruition will involve using a number of different implementation and funding tools available to the City. Some of them are opportunity-based, such as those implemented through development approval while others such as

road reconstructions and park improvements are implemented through capital plans. While each mechanism is described separately, identifying opportunities to bundle projects should be considered at all stages of the implementation process:

- *Current and Future Capital Plan* – Identifying alignments in the current Capital Plan presents the most efficient delivery process. Many of the initiatives in the Downtown PPR Plan can be delivered through modifications to planned capital projects such as road reconstructions or BIA improvements, provided the enhanced scope is confirmed and added as part of the design process.
- *BIA Improvements* – The City's Streetscape Master Plan Program, as part of the EDC's 10-year Capital Budget and Plan, provides eligible BIAs with one-time funding to acquire consulting services to create comprehensive streetscape plans that guide future improvements. BIA streetscape master plans help identify a long-term vision for streetscape improvements that can be implemented with support from the BIA Capital Cost-Share Program and other funding sources. Improvements can include pavement, lighting, trees, street furniture and sidewalks.
- *Park Improvements* – PF&R has a capital program comprising SOGR and stand-alone projects. The prioritization criteria developed for this Implementation Strategy helps guide investment to where it is needed the most. These investments can range from renewal of aging amenities and adding an outdoor recreation facility to fulfill a need identified in the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan, to revitalizing an entire park to make it more suitable to local community needs. It is also about thinking about parks as part of a larger open space and recreation system and creating park district plans where necessary.
- *Parkland Acquisitions* – The acquisition of new parkland can be achieved in several ways. These include: 1) purchase of privately-owned lands or lands owned by other levels of government, 2) parkland secured on-site or off-site via Section 42 and Section 51 of the *Planning Act* through the development application process, 3) transfer of City-owned property from another division to PF&R, and 4) negotiating leases at nominal or shared-use agreements with Agencies, Boards and Commissions and other public partners (e.g. Toronto Community Housing, etc.).
- *Development Approval* – As Downtown sites are redeveloped, opportunities arise to improve and enhance the public realm. Examples of these types of improvements are evident throughout the Downtown and include enhancements to streetscapes, requirements for setback and improved sidewalk space, developer-delivered park acquisitions and park improvements, creation of privately owned publicly-accessible spaces (POPS) to add to the public realm network, and the installation of public art. Leveraging development approval will continue to be an important tool for implementing the Parks and Public Realm Plan.

- *Partnerships with Institutions* – Downtown is home to a number of major civic, cultural, educational, and medical institutions that own and maintain large portions of public or publicly-accessible lands. This includes University of Toronto, Ryerson University, OCAD University, Queen's Park, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Royal Ontario Museum, as well as major hospitals, public school boards and places of worship. By negotiating shared access to institutional lands, the City can help expand and connect the parks and open space system for residents to use and enjoy.
- *Philanthropy* – Toronto has been fortunate to enjoy a long history of philanthropic support for parks and public realm initiatives. Donations, whether in the form of land, cash, or other resources, continue to contribute to the successful implementation and ongoing operations of many of the city's well-loved public spaces. These contributions supplement, but do not substitute more regular and stable resources such as development charges and parkland dedication.

9. Staying on Track

9.1 Operationalizing the strategy on an annual basis

This Implementation Strategy was jointly developed by four divisions – Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, City Planning and Economic Development and Culture. It is intended to be a living document that allows for rolling implementation of the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan on a year-over-year basis. To support this work, the four divisions have:

- Signed a project charter to frame a shared work program and process among staff and to commit to providing strategic leadership in a horizontal manner; and
- Developed a governance structure that establishes: a) an inter-divisional Coordinating Working Group that will identify inter-dependencies and seek alignment of divisional projects, initiatives and capital budgets towards achievement of the vision of the Downtown PPR Plan, while also taking on responsibility for ongoing monitoring of and periodic updates to this Implementation Strategy; and b) a Directors Table and a division-heads Steering Committee for decision-making and alignment of actions and investment recommendations advancing to City Council.

9.2 Monitoring framework

The in-force Downtown Plan (Policy 14.2) requires that the implementation of the Downtown infrastructure strategies and plans be monitored to ensure that the infrastructure requirements and priorities contained within them reflect the changing conditions within Downtown over time.

As part of the 'transition to implementation' phase of TOcore, an inter-divisional staff working group has developed a draft implementation monitoring framework for OPA 406 together with its five supporting infrastructure plans and strategies that will enable staff to keep track of progress in implementing the policies and achieving the long-term goals

of the Downtown Plan, determine whether infrastructure investment is keeping pace with growth, and report periodically to Council, stakeholders and the public. The goal is to develop a framework that will be institutionalized across the organization and linked to capital planning and programming. Given that the Downtown Plan came into force in mid-2019, it is anticipated that the first five-year monitoring report will be released by 2024.

Monitoring of the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan, along with the Implementation Strategy recommended in this report, will be monitored and reported out on as part of this overall TOcore monitoring exercise. The following is a preliminary set of indicators that are to be tested for feasibility:

- Expanding parks -- park provision rates and changes over time (as the various sub-areas of Downtown continue to grow); park supply (hectares of total space within 500 metres); # of new or secured parks
- Improving parks -- number of parks improved; capital investment in park upgrades
- Improving equity in access to parks -- percentage population and demographic segments that are within walking distance (500 metres) of a park
- Promoting public life -- periodic public space / public life studies to measure improvements to the quality of public spaces
- Expanding the tree canopy -- percentage of tree cover
- Creating new connections -- square metres of Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (POPS) secured
- Increasing Active Transportation -- percentage by mode (walking, cycling, transit); number of pedestrians at key intersections; cyclists per hour, by facility; Bike Share ridership
- Improving safety -- number and rate of collisions resulting in fatalities or serious injuries

10. Conclusion and Next Steps

The Implementation Strategy for the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan sets out priorities for investing in parks and public spaces over the near term (2021-2025) towards achievement of the plan's 25-year vision, along with evidence-based methodologies across four divisions to evaluate new opportunities as they arise. Projects included in this Implementation Strategy may be accelerated or deferred for other reasons, such as availability of land, resources, or as a result of decisions of City Council. The City's annual Budget and Capital Plan process will offer the opportunity to reflect these changes. It is anticipated that staff will report on progress and challenges in implementing this strategy in 2024, at which time an updated Implementation Strategy will be recommended.

In terms of next steps, the inter-divisional Coordinating Working Group will continue to convene periodically to:

- identify inter-dependencies and seek alignment of divisional projects, initiatives and capital budgets towards rolling implementation of the vision of the Downtown PPR Plan on an ongoing basis using the methodologies outlined in this report;
- support divisional staff to advance the development of business cases and/or terms of reference for priority projects advancing to capital budgeting or procurement;
- support the divisions in seeking increased capacity in the areas of study development, planning and divisional capital coordination for consideration in the 2022 Capital and Operating Budget submissions;
- recommend projects that may be candidates for funding partnerships with other levels of government and with philanthropic interests;
- pursue partnership opportunities with Indigenous leaders and organizations to carry out the Implementation Strategy;
- consult with the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee to understand opportunities and challenges in the elimination of barriers faced by people with disabilities related to mobility and participation in public life;
- work with the Infrastructure Coordination Unit to expand the TO INview mapping tool to include capital projects of Parks, Forestry and Recreation, as well as studies that are part of stage-gates to allow for early coordination in planning, study/analysis and design; and
- undertake monitoring of and periodic updates to this Implementation Strategy.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Parkland Provision in 2033 with No New Parks Added

Attachment 2: Downtown Completed Projects Since 2015

Attachment 3: Downtown New & Future Parks Secured Through Development and Acquisitions Since 2015

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