

# 2023 Highlights

**CREATE TO**







1113 - 1117 Dundas Street East Mass Timber Rendering

# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Tasked with managing one of North America’s largest and most valuable real estate portfolios, CreateTO is unlocking the potential of Toronto’s City-owned lands to be activated for the public good.

We’re facing an unparalleled housing crisis, both globally and within our city, and we’re actively working with our City of Toronto partners to find creative and strategic opportunities to champion Toronto City Council’s vision to deliver more housing for the people of Toronto. Urgently building more affordable homes is at the forefront of our work.

But it doesn’t stop there. Housing is just one area of focus at CreateTO. We’re working with the City of Toronto’s 68 Divisions, Agencies and Corporations to provide real estate solutions that align program needs with the City’s real estate assets while also delivering on Council-directed policy priorities, including housing, environmental sustainability, Truth and Reconciliation, economic development, community health and wellbeing, and diversity, equity and inclusion.

We’re also paving the way for a new era in the Port Lands, one of the most significant undeveloped pieces of real estate in North America.

Highlights of our work to advance these initiatives are included in this report, which provides an overview of the past year. We look forward to continuing to work with the public and our partners, inside and outside of City Hall, to build the city we love.



# HOUSING



Housing Now: 2444 Eglinton Avenue East Rendering



72 Amroth Avenue Rendering



640 Lansdowne Avenue Ground Breaking



Housing Now: Bloor-Kipling Rendering

In November 2023, Toronto City Council adopted a new Generational Transformation Housing Strategy that sets a blueprint for strengthening Toronto’s housing system by building more homes faster, accelerating access to housing and establishing a more significant role for government in addressing the housing crisis by increasing public and non-profit ownership of housing.

In collaboration with our City partners, we’re developing a framework to support City Council’s direction to deliver a new target of 65,000 rent-controlled homes, comprising 6,500 rent-geared-to-income, 41,000 affordable rental and 17,500 rent-controlled market homes.

### Housing Now

CreateTO, along with our City partners, celebrated the start of construction on Block One of the Housing Now site at Bloor-Kipling in August 2023. The transit-oriented site will deliver 725 new rental homes, including 218 new affordable rental homes. The site, along with the new Etobicoke Civic Centre, will be serviced by district energy and will be the city’s first near net zero community. We also finalized an MOU with Civic Developments, Windmill Developments and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto to develop the site at 2444 Eglinton Avenue East, which will deliver approximately 918 homes, including 612 rent-geared-to-income, affordable and market rent-controlled co-operative homes, making this one of the largest co-operative housing projects in Ontario. And, the Housing Now project at 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard advanced through the Site Plan process and is on track to start construction in spring 2024.

### Generational Transformation Housing Strategy

Reviewing City-owned sites to identify significant city-building opportunities is a fundamental aspect of CreateTO’s mandate to harness the full potential of the City’s real estate and in 2023, our team undertook portfolio reviews to identify underutilized land assets to support the Generational Transformation Housing Strategy for the urgent delivery of housing. Reviews of the surplus land, Toronto Community Housing Corporation and the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration portfolios identified 92 of these sites for housing opportunities. Due diligence work continues on these sites in collaboration with the Housing Secretariat.

### ModernTO

CreateTO continues to advance properties within the ModernTO portfolio that were identified for short-term redevelopment including 931 Yonge Street, 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street. Together with the City, we submitted a revised development concept for the site at 931 Yonge Street to increase the height from 21 to 32 storeys, which will accommodate more housing and provide an additional 85 homes. We also advanced the market offering process for 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street and will be reporting back to Council in 2024 on a preferred proponent to develop the site.

### Mass Timber Pilot Program

In collaboration with City Planning, the Housing Secretariat, and the City’s Environment & Climate division, CreateTO is leading a sustainable mass timber pilot project to provide an innovative affordable rental housing development with 100 homes on the City-owned site at 1113-1117 Dundas Street West. The pilot focuses on expedited housing delivery, sustainability through the use of low-carbon materials and a climate-action based approach. CreateTO submitted a City-Initiated Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendment in December 2023 for the development of a 10-storey mass timber building and a three-storey low-rise building to the rear of the site. Community consultation is taking place in 2024.

### Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON)

CreateTO in collaboration with the City advanced the Missing Middle Pilot Project that will deliver more diverse housing options in residential neighbourhoods. Our work on the pilot site at 72 Amroth Avenue within the East Danforth community will help to inform how future missing middle developments are approached on publicly and privately-owned sites across the city. Together with City Planning, we initiated grassroots community engagement to connect with neighbours, businesses, and other organizations in the area to build community champions for this important project. In addition to this housing typology approved to be built “as of right,” we’ll also be focused on adding much-needed affordable housing.

### Affordable Housing and Long-term Care at 640 Lansdowne Avenue

A ground breaking for this project, which will bring 57 affordable rental homes and 256 long-term care beds to the Davenport community, creating one dual-purpose building on City-owned land, was held in August 2023. CreateTO led the creation of the conceptual master plan to help guide development of the site, issued the Request for Proposals for a developer and operator of affordable housing services and participated in the lease negotiations with the selected developer, Magellan Community Charities.



# ACTIVATING CITY LAND FOR PROGRAM NEEDS



Toronto Fire Station 143 in the Allen District



Toronto Sign in Nathan Phillips Square

CreateTO works collaboratively with City stakeholders, external partners and community members to cultivate innovative approaches to the City’s real estate that are effective in their design and delivery. Always, our end goal is to create more livable, sustainable and inclusive complete communities.

We partner with 68 City of Toronto Divisions, Agencies, and Corporations to find practical ways to use the City’s real estate more effectively and efficiently. Our projects provide a range of city-building and community benefits including everything from the creation of new affordable housing, to co-locating emergency service facilities in mixed-use buildings, the development of new child care centres, enhancements to public realm and helping to bring City services like community centres, new libraries and long-term care facilities to neighbourhoods across Toronto.

### Supporting City Building and Complete Communities

Built in the early 1970s, the **Scadding Court Community Centre** and **Sanderson Library branch**, located at Dundas and Bathurst streets, is struggling to keep up with growth demands and is facing steep maintenance expenses. CreateTO is working collaboratively with City Planning, Parks Forestry and Recreation, the Toronto Public Library and Scadding Court to redevelop this key intersection and complex of buildings into a complete community with a range of housing options and community services, including an expanded library and recreational uses. This project is a key example of CreateTO’s commitment to enhancing community infrastructure in response to growing needs.

### Upholding Essential Services

Toronto Transit Commission’s (TTC) Line 2 reaches more than 23,000 passengers per hour during morning rush hour and carries over 525,000 customer trips per weekday. Ridership is projected to reach 31,000 riders at peak-hour capacity by 2041. As part of **TTC’s Line 2 Capacity Enhancement Program**, CreateTO secured a City-owned parcel of land to locate vital infrastructure along TTC’s Line 2.

“CreateTO’s Client and Stakeholder group was instrumental in the selection of a City-owned parcel that will house a critical traction-powered substation along TTC’s Line 2 subway. CreateTO ensured that all parties involved were properly consulted and informed, and worked to facilitate the operational management process to successful completion,” Pam Kraft, Head of Property, Planning & Development, Engineering, Construction & Expansion, TTC.



Bloor-Kipling Block One Ground Breaking



Cultural Competence Training for all CreateTO Staff

### Supporting the City of Toronto’s Reconciliation Plan

In 2023, all CreateTO staff completed the Nbisiing Indigenous Cultural Competency Training course as a commitment to being strong allies with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and to be inclusive in our approach towards our work. CreateTO is a partner in the City’s Reconciliation Action Plan Steering Committee, and in 2023, we partnered with, and are continuing to work, with the **City’s Indigenous Affairs Office** to find community space for Indigenous organizations to deliver services, including working with 2 Spirits to identify a parcel of City-owned land for the development of **Toronto’s first emergency shelter for 2SLGBTQ+ Indigenous individuals** fleeing discrimination and violence. Through its consultation process, CreateTO was able to identify a suitable site for 2 Spirits and began the process of transacting the property to the organization at a nominal value. Pending expected funding from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, construction on this project is expected to begin in 2024.

### Advancing Partnership Opportunities

CreateTO, in partnership with the City, is actively working with the **Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation** Steering Committee to explore potential partnerships for a new community cultural and recreation centre. This work is focused on supporting a feasibility study to identify a location for the centre, as well as potential funding opportunities. In consultation with Parks, Forestry and Recreation, CreateTO led a site search of all City-owned properties based on a combination of requirements from the Somali Centre. Using a short list, our team worked with the Somali Centre throughout 2023 to review potential locations for a future facility. We continue to work with the Somali Centre to explore viable sites and funding sources for a community centre in the northwest corner of the city.

### Collaborating with City Divisions, Agencies and the Community

The intersection of Queen Street West and Cowan Avenue is currently home to an important cluster of City-owned facilities and community services, all of which need significant capital investment over the next ten years to maintain current service delivery levels. We’ve been reimagining the future of this area, known as the **Parkdale Hub**, and collaborating with City divisions, agencies, the non-profit sector and the broader community to create spaces that will deliver more effective wide-ranging social, cultural and economic benefits to serve the Parkdale community into the future. This past year, we received re-zoning approval and led a market sounding session to share information to industry organizations and seek interest in the upcoming procurement process for a non-profit affordable rental housing development partner for the project. The Parkdale Hub is planned to deliver 231 housing units, including 76 affordable rental units.



# PORT LANDS



Unwin Avenue Trail



Leslie Lookout Park Under Construction



Villiers Island Rendering



Amazon and Pinewood Announcement

As an active port, a vital part of our city’s economy and home to Toronto’s thriving film studio district, the Port Lands houses a large cluster of industrial uses that build and maintain the broader city.

The Port Lands also represents one of the most significant urban renewal opportunities in the city today. And, as the largest landowner in the Port Lands, CreateTO is not only active in its role as steward and property manager, but is poised to craft a transformative legacy that will set the stage for a new era of innovation in the Port. The area is currently undergoing significant flood protection work that will transform this neighbourhood and unlock major new city-building uses. This initiative will unleash an abundance of new opportunities from affordable housing to vibrant parks, trails, and commercial hubs. We’re committed to ensuring that this distinctive downtown area enriches Toronto’s newest community to the fullest extent possible.

### Pinewood Toronto Studios

In early 2023, CreateTO, on behalf of the City, sold its ownership in Pinewood Toronto Studios, facilitating a transaction that resulted in the UK-based Pinewood Group acquiring full ownership of the studios and strengthening the City’s reputation as one of the most important film studio and media hubs in the country. The transaction, approved by the CreateTO Board, also included a commitment from Pinewood Group to create a significant city-building fund to be invested in improvements on the leased premises. The City initially made this investment to protect the viability of this studio in 2009, and with this sale, CreateTO realized a very significant financial gain on investment.

Later in the year, Pinewood Toronto signed a long-term lease with Amazon MGM Studios for exclusive use of its production facilities, which are located on 20 acres of City-owned land in the Port. The agreement marks Amazon’s first multi-year commitment to Canadian studio space and includes exclusive use of five new state-of-the-art sound stages, accompanying workshops and office accommodation, totaling approximately 160,000 square feet. As the landowner on behalf of the City, this deal further reinforces the commitment CreateTO has made to fostering the growth of this critical industry in the Port Lands.

### Villiers Island

With the soon-to-be-completed flood protection work, the Port will become home to Villiers Island, a new 54-acre sustainable and inclusive waterfront community with new parks, public spaces and more housing, including affordable housing. CreateTO, together with the City of Toronto and Waterfront Toronto, is currently exploring different ways to maximize the delivery of housing and community services in this new waterfront community. Last year, the partner organizations undertook a review of the 2017 Villiers Island Precinct Plan, holding public engagement throughout the summer around how best to add more density and housing to the island. A report on a proposed path forward will be submitted to the City’s Planning and Housing Committee in 2024.

### Leslie Lookout Park

With completion of 75 per cent of works, 2023 saw significant progress in the construction of Leslie Lookout Park, which will open to the public in summer 2024. The park, designed by landscape architecture and urban design firm CCxA, recycles an industrial landscape into a new recreation hub located along the Martin Goodman Trail. The 1.9-acre open space will include a public beach, distinguished by forested dunes, and a stunning 360 degree viewing platform. The park was made possible by funding from CreateTO, the City of Toronto and the Government of Canada.

### Unwin Avenue Trail

CreateTO completed a new 400-metre section of Unwin Avenue Trail, which branches off the Martin Goodman Trail and follows Unwin Avenue, in the fall of 2023. The trail improves pedestrian access to Cherry Beach Sports Fields and Cherry Beach, improves pedestrian safety, supports native species for ecological growth, and enhances the beautification of Unwin Avenue. The project received a \$750,000-non-repayable contribution from the Government of Canada, through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario to help reimagine these community spaces by improving infrastructure, while maintaining accessibility standards.

### Port Lands Leasing and Tenant Management

CreateTO actively manages over 50 individual tenancies and we’re highly strategic in our marketing and leasing activity. We’re constantly looking at opportunities to strengthen the economic vitality of the Port Lands and the city as a whole. We work diligently to ensure we achieve full value through our leases and other transactions to support the city-building work of CreateTO and our stakeholders. This is reflected in deals like the Pinewood UK transaction in which we were able to negotiate a significant city-building contribution by the studio owner as part of closing. CreateTO has also achieved a year-over-year revenue increase of more than 10 per cent on new/renewed lease agreements.

### Environmental Stewardship and Infrastructure Delivery

As the largest property owner in the Port Lands, CreateTO has a vital role in ensuring the responsible management of land and infrastructure, now and into the future. In 2023, CreateTO completed the first comprehensive engineering assessment of the 8.7 km of CreateTO and City-owned dockwalls in decades. These dockwalls, which in many areas are more than 100 years old, represent vital shoreline infrastructure supporting the shipping and mooring activity. Following from this study, the agency initiated critical rehabilitation work on the most urgent sections in 2023, including the complete reconstruction of the dockwall immediately adjacent to the future Basin Media Hub studio complex. It is anticipated that this 640-metre section of new dockwall will soon form the first part of the Shipping Channel promenade, providing a major new opportunity for public access to the water’s edge. In addition, CreateTO continued to work with tenants to actively monitor and address environmental risks associated with past and current industrial activity in this area.



# OUR PEOPLE, OUR CULTURE



Nathan Phillips Square

In both the workplace and in our project delivery, CreateTO is committed to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI). Through the creation of a DEI strategy, several DEI initiatives were implemented over the past year, including an implementation plan that prioritizes a series of action items such as improving recruitment diversity through DEI placement programs, internships, diverse hiring sources and new hiring practices, and introducing new training and education initiatives including a new DEI calendar for staff and other learning opportunities.

Our People and Culture team established a new People and Culture Strategy to support building a multi-disciplinary team reinforced by a positive internal culture that inspires people to reach their full potential. This includes performance management, leadership development, career planning, engagement, a seamless staff calendar, rewards and recognition and communication.

# This work represents a snapshot of the projects and activities the CreateTO team was engaged in throughout 2023.

Our purpose as an agency is to build the city we love and progress on these files highlights the value of collaboration with our partners, stakeholders and the community as we work together to reimagine how we can best create a bright future for the city and for the benefit of everyone who lives here.



Bloor-Kipling Ground Breaking




Indigenous Mural at the Future Leslie Lookout Park Site




Future site of Parkdale Hub



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Bloor-Kipling Block One Ground Breaking