

## What is a Community Development Plan?

A Community Development Plan is a community-centred process that enhances typical land use planning by engaging diverse residents, community groups, organizations, and other partners to identify principles, priorities and subsequent actions that can advance equity and build stronger communities. A Community Development Plan is built on resident and community assets. It recognizes that neighbourhoods have community leaders with capacity, local resident networks, non-profit organizations, local business and institutional partners that have filled in the structural gaps to services and supports for decades. A Community Development Plan works in collaboration with community assets, expertise, and experience to identify existing and future needs and challenges that can be addressed through a combination of City supports and external partnerships.

By design a Community Development Plan accompanies and complements a Secondary Plan, creating an opportunity to use social and economic investment tools to address historically rooted inequities and build on the wealth of community assets and resilience to sustain, preserve, and promote the prosperity of communities. The Secondary Plan and the Community Development Plan share goals and include aligned areas of focus. For instance, both the Secondary Plan and Community Development Plan may speak to the climate crisis with the Secondary Plan focused on land use interventions and the Community Development Plan focused on complimentary social and economic development interventions. While the Secondary Plan, once approved by City Council provides guidelines for new development, the Community Development Plan continues to evolve through ongoing partnership and discussion between diverse internal and external stakeholders including City divisions, residents, local businesses and artists, and broader community stakeholders.

Community Development Plans create opportunities to leverage new City-led supports and policy levers developed during the lifespan of the Community Development Plan while also being responsive to changing neighbourhood contexts and needs. Lessons from COVID-19 and previous Social Development Plans have highlighted the need for a "living" plan that grows and responds to community feedback, emerging challenges, unexpected shocks, as well as opportunities created through new policy change and creation.

As a model, Community Development Plans responds to contexts, opportunities, and triggers. To follow is a brief overview of some of the conditions under which a Community Development Plan process should be initiated:

<b>Table 1: Conditions for Community Development Plan Model Initiation</b>	
<b>New Neighborhood-wide Transit and/or Development Investment</b>	New large-scale investments in transit and/or intensification of development opportunities signal the need for a Community Development Plan that acts as a guide for resident groups, local businesses, and not-for-profit organizations, businesses and institutions through the process of neighbourhood change. Neighborhood Improvement Areas and other identified neighborhoods with comparable demographic profiles require intentional engagement and social and economic investments during periods of significant transformation.
<b>Initiation of Equity-Driven Land Use Plan Process</b>	The initiation of a Land Use Plan in contexts that require complimentary reconciliation and equity-focused investments provide an opportunity for a Community Development Plan. In instances where City Planning opts to advance an equity-driven Land Use Plan, a cross-divisional and collaborative Community Development Plan process can be designed to address the unique needs of the neighborhood and context.
<b>Neighborhood Profile</b>	Neighborhood Improvement Areas and neighborhoods of focus are priorities for Community Development Plan processes. Lessons learned from the Toronto Strong Neighborhoods Strategy and other evidence-based reconciliation and equity strategies highlight the need for a comprehensive plan for focused investments found in a Community Development Plan.
<b>Commitments to City Service Collaboration and staff Resources</b>	Deep inter-divisional collaboration between City services and additional resources for staffing and engagement are fundamental to the design and ongoing implementation of a of Community Development Plan.

**Community Development Plan Key Features**

Learnings from the Jane and Finch Initiative and Update Downsview Community Development Plan process have helped the City of Toronto identify the key and defining features of the Community Development Plan model. These key features distinguish the Community Development Plan from other plans and will be a standing component of Community Development Plans in the future. The key features are as follows:

<b>Table 2: Community Development Plan Defining Features</b>	
<b>Truth and Reconciliation, Confronting Anti-Black Racism, and advancing supports for equity-deserving groups and vulnerable populations</b>	Community Development Plans provide strong alignment with policies advancing Indigenous Reconciliation, focused on Confronting Anti-Black Racism and strategies focused on advancing supports for equity-deserving and vulnerable populations. These alignments will seek to ensure that Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving groups are prioritized across all Plan focus areas and actions.
<b>Cross-Divisional Collaboration</b>	Cross-divisional teams and policy development collaboration co-led by Social Development, Finance and Administration, Economic Development and Culture, City Planning and other relevant divisions will be a standing feature of Community Development Plans. Cross-divisional collaboration will ensure that Community Development Plans and Secondary Plans development processes are aligned from inception to completion.
<b>Policy Alignment &amp; Integrated Policy Design</b>	Community Development Plans create opportunities to leverage and harmonize existing and emerging City-led policies, strategies, and programs for neighborhoods of focus. This can involve the co-design Plan focus areas and actions that benefit from ongoing and new initiatives led by diverse divisions across the City. This new way of working also creates the opportunity for diverse divisions to co-lead the creation of tailored policy interventions that meet the needs of neighborhoods of focus.
<b>Neighborhood Partnership and Engagement</b>	Deep engagement and community partnerships will define the Community Development Plan process. The development of a Community Development Plan requires fully resourced community partnerships that support in-depth engagement with a diverse cross-section of community residents, local businesses, local artists, and not for profit organizations and service agencies.