

Attachment 5: COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Table 1: Toronto-York Region Labour Council Session

Date	April 15, 2024
No of. Participants	17
Format	Virtual
Description	The City of Toronto held a session with the Toronto-York Region Labour Council.
Key Feedback	<p>Attendees acknowledged the importance of public services and institutions in supporting a vibrant economy. The session spoke to a need for strong regulations to offset the race to the bottom dynamics in certain sectors, the need for social inclusion in the workforce including training and availability of childcare, and the need to defend employment lands for current and future use.</p> <p>Attendees saw value in more deliberately integrating housing policies, planning, and economic development actions to address the balance needed to build more housing and have space available for major employment uses. They noted that there is an opportunity for a more intentional industrial strategy to develop supply chains and products that achieve broader City objectives.</p>

Table 2: Creative Industries Session

Date	April 24, 2024
No of. Participants	108
Format	Virtual
Description	The City of Toronto held a session with Toronto's creative industries. The session focused on soliciting on the ground feedback that will support the creative industries and expand on existing sector specific initiatives including XOTO, Music Industry Strategy, Visitor Economy Strategic Directions Report, and Level Up: Toronto Esports Strategy.
Key Feedback	<p>Key feedback generated through this session was around the strengths of and challenges that face Toronto's creative industries today and what they hope to see in the next 10 years. Feedback indicated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toronto has a 'density' of skills, spaces and equipment that together has created an ecosystem to allow for creative industries to thrive.• Existing sector specific strategies have been well received, noting that players in the creative industries would like to see more of them be developed to enhance the level of support that the City provides to the industry.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant challenges that were raised were focused on the threat of the loss of space, lack of affordable housing and the decline in transit investment.
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Table 3: Youthful Cities Session

Date	May 1-2, 2024
No of. Participants	70
Format	In-Person
Description	The Urban Work Summit Toronto held on May 1 and 2, 2024, engaging 70 young people aged between 16 and 29 years from the Toronto area. This summit was hosted by Youthful Cities and Tamarack Institute, in partnership with the City of Toronto, to inform youth about challenges related to the future of work and city living. The aim was to enable them to come up with ideas which can be transformed into local impact initiatives fostering positive social change.
Key Feedback	<p>The top three issues affecting the local economy, based on 38 responses and 50 upvotes were: affordability and housing crisis; employment challenges; and rising cost of living and inflation. The top three themes around actions the City can take, based on 27 unique responses and 44 upvotes, were: affordable housing and financial support; job creation and skills development; and support for small businesses and inclusive opportunities.</p> <p>In addition to taking actions to address these areas, attendees highlighted that there are opportunities to support local businesses and reduce commute times, address economic disparities, and distribute resources where they are needed, and continue to support newcomers as they come to Toronto. They recommended considering a youth committee to advise on job creation, creating more affordable housing for youth, and more budget transparency.</p>

Table 4: Scarborough Business Roundtable Session

Date	May 13, 2024
No of. Participants	21
Format	In-Person
Description	The City of Toronto hosted breakout sessions with Scarborough businesses from a range of sectors including manufacturing and Business Improvement Areas (BIAs).
Key Feedback	Businesses across breakout sessions highlighted that Scarborough benefits from its prime location and transportation mobility with connection to the 401, incoming transit investments

	<p>and improvement, availability of ample parking, and strong access to talented and diverse employees.</p> <p>Businesses noted that employment conversions and increased development could lead to the permanent displacement of local serving businesses, that some city-wide programs like CaféTO are not suited to Scarborough's built environment, and that pathways to employment in Scarborough can be challenging including connecting talent to major employers like those in the manufacturing sector.</p> <p>Looking to the future, Scarborough businesses had several suggestions to address these challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for policies and tools to protect employment lands. • Develop and advocate for protections for small businesses that may be permanently displaced from development activity. • Better utilize employment areas / zones by targeting specific industries. • Develop residential zones that minimize conflicts with nearby industries. • Support efforts to develop more affordable housing. • Expand cultural and event infrastructure. • Revamp the BIA model for Scarborough. • Support small businesses through in-person networking events, developing programs that support retail plazas, and simplify program administration.
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Table 5: Community Wealth Building Session

Date	May 21, 2024
No of. Participants	12
Format	In-Person
Description	The City of Toronto held a session on community wealth building to identify how the City of Toronto can support emerging practices that enhance local ownership and wealth generation in neighbourhoods throughout Toronto.
Key Feedback	<p>Participants highlighted that, despite these strengths, there are still barriers to community wealth building. These include moving from frameworks and policy to implementation, a mismatched talent pool wherein individuals are not connected to prosperous careers, access to capital for initiatives like community land trusts, and protecting employment opportunities in employment lands.</p> <p>Attendees recommended that community wealth building be central to the Action Plan, that investment needs to be equitably</p>

	delivered across the city, that community organizations play a key role in advancing community wealth building work, and that the City should explore levers available to support community wealth building initiatives.
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Table 6: CivicAction Emerging Leaders Network (ELN) Session

Date	June 3, 2024
No of. Participants	24
Format	In-Person
Description	The City of Toronto, in partnership with Deloitte and Civic Action, held a joint session with the ELN.
Key Feedback	<p>Three key themes emerged from the ELN: Affordability and Access, Collaboration and Partnership, and Future Work Experience.</p> <p>The ELN proposed a number of actions that the City could take to lead and partner on to affect each of these areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance transit affordability and availability. • Expand transit with long-term planning. • Prioritize affordable housing through regulatory changes. • Develop more cultural, art, and entertainment facilities in non-downtown centres. • Improve pedestrian friendly infrastructure including the availability of public washrooms. • Promote and ensure fair compensation. • Increase green spaces and repurpose office spaces for recreational or childcare purposes.

Table 7: HR Leaders Session

Date	June 3, 2024
No of. Participants	24
Format	In-Person
Description	The City of Toronto, in partnership with Deloitte, held a session with HR leaders in Toronto around the state of talent attraction and retention as well as exploring how to build an attractive downtown and city centre to enhance the long-term viability of the city.
Key Feedback	<p>In conversation with HR leaders, there were three themes: transit and commuting; people-centric approach to addressing priorities; and collaboration and engagement. HR leaders recommended that, by focusing on these three areas, Toronto could support businesses in attracting and retaining talent.</p> <p>The actions HR leaders proposed the City to take included:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement between transit service providers and employers and explore partnerships that make it easier to travel downtown and to city centres. • After work events and activities, such as festivals or public markets, would encourage employee participation. • Placemaking and safety – enhancing cleanliness, beautification and implementing safety measures in downtown and the city centres would make them more attractive places to work. • Learning and experience sharing to connect employers and communities together to address common challenges including transportation and the usage of space in downtown and city centres.
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Table 8: North York Business Roundtable Session

Date	June 12, 2024
No of. Participants	28
Format	In-Person
Description	The City of Toronto hosted breakout sessions with North York businesses from a range of sectors including small businesses, major employers, and BIAs.
Key Feedback	<p>Participants discussed the key strengths and challenges that face industries in North York.</p> <p>Some strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity and accessibility to the downtown and highways that contribute to business success. • Availability of highly skilled and educated labour force that can serve the geography. <p>Some challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High office vacancy rate. • Aging infrastructure which is impacting the ability to support festivals and events. • Mismatch between existing workforce and the type of manufacturing jobs available in the geography.

Table 9: Etobicoke Business Roundtable Session

Date	June 25, 2024
No of. Participants	40
Format	In-Person

Description	The City of Toronto hosted breakout sessions with Etobicoke businesses from a range of sectors including small businesses, major employers, and BIAs.
Key Feedback	<p>Businesses highlighted that Etobicoke benefits from its prime location and transportation mobility with highway access and proximity to the airport. It is a great destination for film considering it has available lands for studios and ideal neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Etobicoke has large employment areas which participants highlighted should be preserved. Businesses and employers noted that the area is no longer competitive compared to other regional jurisdictions (Guelph, Oshawa or Whitby) which offer hydro benefits; it was also noted that transportation and congestion are a huge problem both for workforce development and goods movement, in addition to an aging infrastructure, approval timelines for major projects, and a lack of direction on where the broader business community stands amongst its priorities.</p> <p>Looking to the future, Etobicoke businesses and employers had a number of suggestions to address these challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of more affordable housing. • Improve the availability of community resources and centres. • Be strategic and target sectors and businesses to support. • Celebrate employment areas. • Protect employment areas and ensure that residential projects approved near employment areas are aware of neighbouring manufacturing or industrial operations. • Protect goods movement in major employment corridors. • Apply an economic impact lens to issues coming through the city to understand how decisions impact the economy more broadly. • Make available more accessible information regarding permitting and City processes.

Table 10: Indigenous Economic Roundtable Session

Date	July 3, 2024
No of. Participants	15
Format	In-Person
Description	The City of Toronto held a session with Indigenous businesses, associations, and leaders. Session attendees focused on five key areas: procurement, the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ICIE), gaps and barriers, and opportunities and good practices.

Key Feedback	<p>Attendees highlighted that procurement can be an important tool in supporting Indigenous business owners and recommended simplifying rules to incentivize more Indigenous procured business. On the ICIE, attendees noted that the City can do more to support retail and lease space for small retail business owners and called for greater collaboration and communal opportunities to manage the ICIE moving forward.</p> <p>Attendees highlighted a number of gaps and barriers, including navigating opportunities for Indigenous business owners at the City; timing of contracts that may require access to short-term funding they do not have; greater support for Indigenous retailers in high-visibility areas; enhancing Indigenous networking opportunities; and shifting from reconciliation to actionable efforts of economic reconciliation.</p> <p>Finally, attendees highlighted several opportunities building on Toronto's progress, including creating a directory of Indigenous businesses; enhancing outreach efforts to groups that have yet to respond; expanding Indigenous spaces in tourism building on the success of the Toronto Sign; exploring urban reserves; and the creation of Indigenous-specific procurement strategy and an Indigenous Economic Development Strategy.</p>
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Table 11: Accessibility Roundtable Session

Date	July 11, 2024
No of. Participants	18
Format	In-Person
Description	AccessNow, in collaboration with the City of Toronto, organized a roundtable to provide critical feedback and new ideas to support the integration of a disability and accessibility perspective into the Action Plan for Toronto's Economy.
Key Feedback	<p>This session included disability advocates, business leaders, accessibility experts, and city officials. It convened people with lived experience of disability to provide informed insights for the Action Plan based on experiences of the disability community.</p> <p>The session began with an overview of the current state of accessibility and disability inclusion in Toronto, which highlighted lack of representation; inadequate infrastructure; insufficient housing options; barriers to employment; exclusion from public procurement; inaccessible public services; and limited participation in community planning. The session also emphasized the economic impact of those with disabilities including highlighting that lowering barriers to the workforce for</p>

	<p>those with disabilities could boost Toronto's GDP by up to \$50 billion, improve consumer spending, and enhance productivity.</p> <p>The roundtable raised a number of key themes, issues, and ideas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving accessible housing units by incentivizing developers to include accessible units in new projects. • Collaborating with private landlords to increase the availability of accessible units. • Conducting transportation audits to identify accessibility barriers to those with disabilities using public transit. • Implementing real-time accessibility information systems. • Creating guidelines and training materials for procurement officers. • Simplifying RFP processes and providing support services for disability-led businesses. • Developing and offering educational programs / workshops to help small businesses become more accessible. • Promoting accessible tourism including promoting Toronto as an accessible tourism destination. • Developing initiatives to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. • Promoting inclusive hiring, promotion, and retention practices. • Promoting the adoption of universal design principles in all construction projects. • Enhancing wayfinding solutions in public spaces to improve navigation. • Ensuring accessibility is integrated into all urban planning and development initiatives. • Developing a long-term vision for an inclusive Toronto that prioritizes the needs of people with disabilities.
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Table 12: Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas Session

Date	July 23, 2024
No. of Participants	76
Format	Virtual
Description	The City of Toronto held a session with the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, which represents Toronto's 84 BIAs.
Key Feedback	Participants were given the opportunity to highlight some of the challenges that small businesses within the BIAs face, as well as their priorities.

	<p>Some challenges indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing costs of rent, supplies, interest rates, impacting the business bottom line and viability. • Staffing issues, difficulty finding skilled trades and suitable employees. • Increased inflation and change in consumer preferences that impact sales and marketing. <p>Some priorities indicated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to more parking and bank loans. • Improved access to skilled trades to support employment. • Maintaining a similar level of revenue, given economic challenges. • Debt management for their business.
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