

2025
2028

Development Review Strategic Plan



Shaping the Future of Toronto - Today!



Photo Credit: Jimmy Wisdom Way Mural, © Destination Toronto, 2021



Photo Credit: Indigenous Community at Toronto Pride Parade © Destination Toronto, 2020

Land & Ancestral Acknowledgment

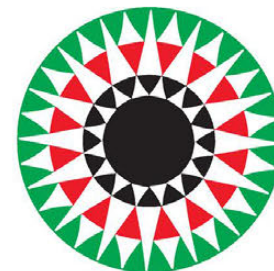
Land Acknowledgement for Toronto

We acknowledge that our work takes place on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



African Ancestral Acknowledgement

The City of Toronto acknowledges all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past – and people of African descent who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.



Development Review Strategic Plan



Vision

Shaping the future of Toronto – *today!* We shape development in Toronto for current and future generations to thrive.



Mission

We advance world-class city-building by delivering a development review service that is innovative, collaborative, customer focused, transparent and efficient.



Values

- Collaboration & Partnership
- Continuous Learning & Improvement
- Customer Service
- Diversity, Equity, Reconciliation & Inclusion
- Leadership, Innovation & Creativity
- Transparency & Accountability



Strategic Priorities



**Invest in People
& Partnerships**



**Streamline
Processes**



**Modernize Tools
& Technology**



**Strengthen Transparency
& Accountability**

A note from the

Executive Director



When I stepped into this role in April 2024, I knew that launching a new division was about both building an organizational structure and a new culture for the City of Toronto’s development review service. Today, I’m proud to introduce the Development Review Division’s inaugural strategic plan: a roadmap based on the principles of people-centred urban growth, creativity and innovation to support the development of complete communities across Toronto where **everyone** can thrive.

In recent years, the City of Toronto has faced an unprecedented housing crisis and market uncertainty that have impacted affordability and quality of life for Torontonians. These challenges require unprecedented solutions. Now a year old, the Development Review Division is a direct response to the urgency of this moment. The Division itself is an innovation – a team of more than 400 staff from across the City of Toronto – working in an integrated way to ensure that we are able to accelerate the development of the most urgently needed housing. This multidisciplinary approach is a quiet but radical shift, because we know that the challenges facing us are not siloed, so our solutions shouldn’t be either.

In one year, we’re already seeing what’s possible. We’ve significantly reduced application review times across major application types, we’re setting new standards for customer service with industry partners, and introducing critically needed tools and technologies that empower staff and help optimize the work they do.

This plan is a commitment to walk toward Toronto’s most complex, intractable issues - not away from them. We are setting a new standard for the development review service grounded in responsiveness, transparency and a commitment to social equity.

And we’re just getting started. The work ahead is ambitious because when we address systemic challenges, we must do so at the root. Development review is as much about speed as it is quality and people-centeredness, whether it’s with our partners at the City, the Province, the Federal Government, the development industry or community. Together, we’ll achieve the best outcomes through a culture of creative problem solving, mutual respect, empathy and kindness.

We’re setting new standards on not just what we do, but how we do it, and shaping the future of Toronto – *today*.



Valesa Faria
Executive Director

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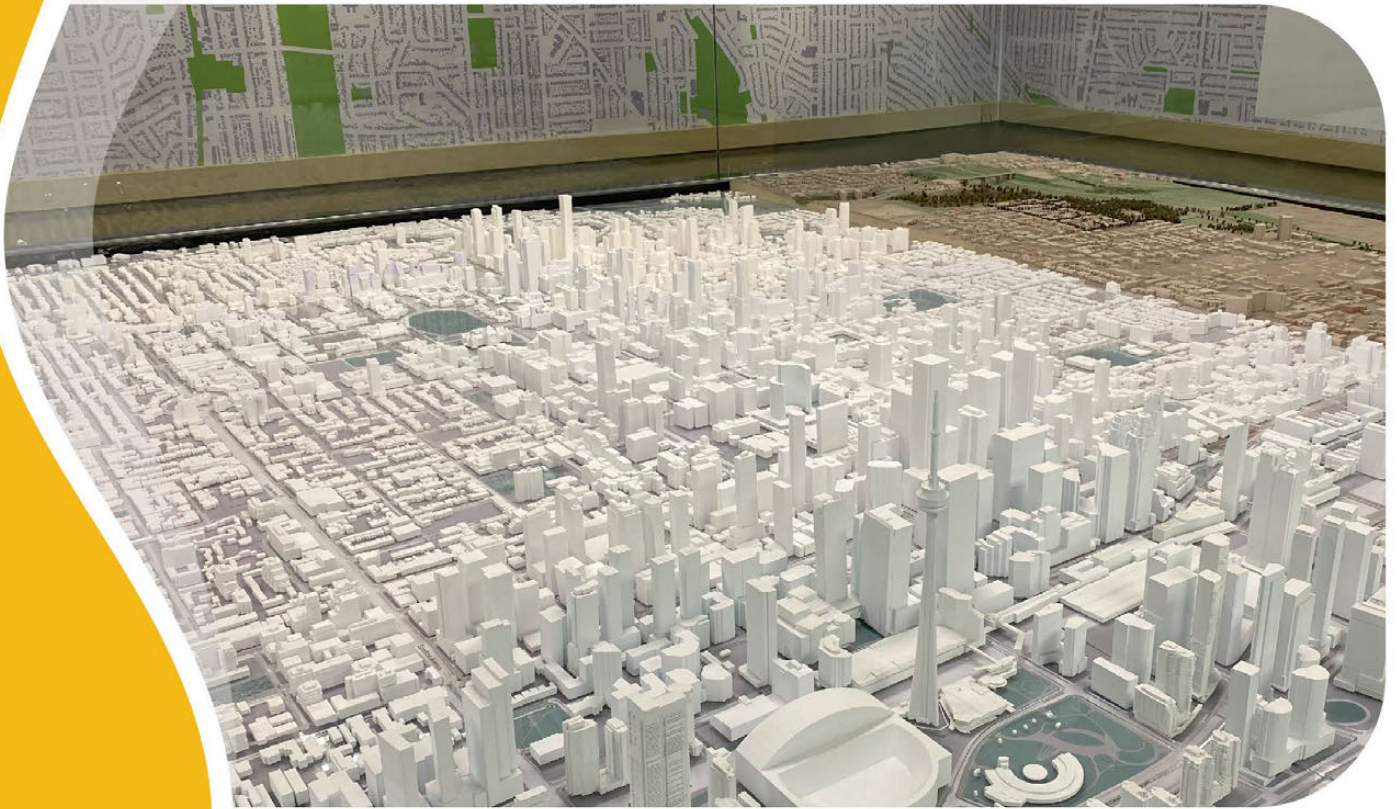


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How to Read

This Plan



This strategic plan is a roadmap for the Development Review Division. It is an articulation of who we are, our shared values, our vision for the future of Toronto and our mission to enable high-quality development across the city. As a new division, this plan establishes a clear foundation – setting out four strategic priorities grounded in our vision, mission and values, to guide our work over the next three years. Each priority is supported by high-level actions that chart a path for transformation and help us deliver on our commitments to the public, our partners and each other.

2 Context



How Development Application Decisions Are Made



Who We Are



The newly formed Development Review Division, established in 2024, brings together key teams to deliver a modern, coordinated and effective development approval process. Our team includes:



Community Planning

Leads the review of development applications and localized planning projects to ensure they support good planning, contribute to complete communities and advance the goals of the City's Official Plan and all other applicable policies, standards and guidelines, and legislation.



Engineering Review

Leads the review of plans and reports submitted in support of development applications to ensure compliance with all applicable legislation, policies, standards and criteria, and guidelines. Through the development review process, Engineering Review also secures transportation and servicing infrastructure necessary to support growth.



Priority Development Review Stream

Provides project management leadership and collaborates with both staff and applicants to proactively manage issues and expedite the review of affordable housing and other priority projects. Priorities will evolve to meet Toronto's most pressing needs.



Strategy & Client Relations

Leads quality assurance and strategic partnerships by facilitating communication and collaboration across subject matter expert teams, including partner divisions, elected officials and external clients. The focus is to ensure high-quality customer service and continuous improvement of the City's development review service.



Development Process & Technology

Leads the development, implementation and refinement of divisional standard operating procedures and tools and technology to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and policy alignment with Provincial legislation as well as City policies and standards.



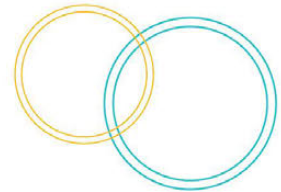
Executive Director's Office

Leads divisional policy, procurement, budget, change management and communications. It also supports workforce planning, issues management, stakeholder engagement and key strategic initiatives.



What We're Proud Of

In our first year, we brought together a team of 400 multidisciplinary expert staff and started building a “one team” culture. We reduced application review times, set new standards for customer service and began strengthening the development review system through the implementation of several process improvements. And we're just getting started.



Progress

- In 2024, 46,000+ residential units were approved through Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments
- Since July 2023, review times for new applications have decreased by an average of 80% (across major application types compared to the previous five-year average)
- Affordable housing development applications are being reviewed more expeditiously
- Plan of Condominium process has been modernized improving efficiency and reducing costs
- New file-sharing system facilitates collaboration
- Applicants are experiencing an improved level of service

Toronto is
projected to
grow by
35%



to **4.2 million**
people
by 2051



Development in Toronto

- Toronto processes more development applications than any other Canadian city
- Toronto receives 450+ new development applications and 1,200+ resubmissions every year
- Successful proposals include:
 - a technical review by staff
 - consultation with external partners
 - engagement with applicants and residents



The expedited process and partnership with the City of Toronto enabled us to accelerate the creation of deeply affordable and supportive housing for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health challenges. This is a model for what can be achieved when government and community organizations collaborate effectively.”

Bryan Keshen,
Chief Executive Officer, Reena



2024 Development Review

- Delivers more affordable homes within complete communities, faster
- Streamlines internal processes and the overall development review service
- Expedites application reviews
- Improves consistency and transparency of application reviews
- Enhances service delivery for applicants

Challenges We Face

The progress we have achieved in our first year is strong, but only just the start. There remains more work to do because the stakes are high. Toronto's development sector currently faces considerable challenges, with cascading impacts on the city as a whole. The local real estate market has slowed. Development costs for new projects are high, and an increasing number of approved projects are being cancelled or delayed because they are no longer financially viable. Broader economic uncertainty has clouded the outlook for buyers, renters and investors.

Toronto's much-heralded livability is under threat, amidst rising inequality, rampant homelessness, more visible signs of mental health and addiction in the community, and challenges for middle income residents to find an affordable place to live. A growing number of Toronto residents are leaving the city for a new home elsewhere.

In this context, municipalities are under greater pressure than ever to accelerate development approvals, streamline review processes and bring down costs. The Province of Ontario has introduced extensive changes to its legislative and policy frameworks aimed at achieving these goals.



A tall, modern building with a wavy, tiered facade, likely a residential or commercial structure. The building is dark-colored with many windows. In the foreground, there is a field of purple flowers, possibly Salvia, which are in focus. The background shows a clear sky and some other buildings in the distance.

We also face our own internal challenges. There is a backlog of applications built up over time that need to be addressed by the City and applicants. Over the past year, accelerated approval timelines were achieved through bespoke processes that require the introduction of new systems and technologies to be made sustainable over the long-term. Frequent provincial legislative and policy changes require interpretation, ongoing staff training, and continuous process and systems changes to implement. Broadly, there have been significant shifts in expectations for public sector service delivery to be modernized and increasingly responsive. And like much of the work in the public sector, there continues to be escalating challenges in balancing competing interests that sometimes cannot be reconciled.

Taken together, our challenge is to speed up the approval process and lower the cost for applicants and ourselves, while raising the bar on city-building outcomes and continuing to navigate rapidly evolving provincial frameworks.

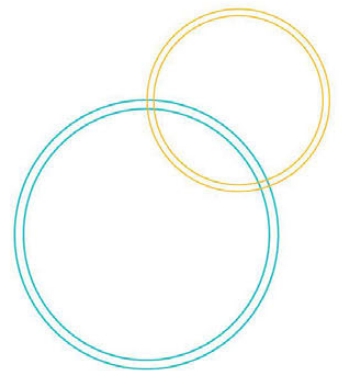


The Road Ahead

With challenges come opportunities. The development review service has never been more important to Toronto's city-building mission and mandate. Meeting the needs of the moment demands transformational change to achieve the City's strategic objectives for a prosperous, sustainable, equitable city where everyone can thrive. We have the opportunity to redesign how development review is delivered to improve the process for staff, applicants and the public.

Our strategic plan sets clear priorities to get there: investing in people and partnerships, streamlining processes, modernizing our tools and technology, and strengthening transparency and accountability.

We are building a division that is proactive, responsive and committed to continuous improvement, in order to deliver high-quality, high-impact development projects that serve all residents and visitors to the city.





A Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Review

Our Division is committed to creating and practicing a human rights-based approach to development review. This means ensuring development decisions are guided not only by technical compliance but also by principles of equity, reconciliation, inclusion and non-discrimination.

This approach aligns with and supports the City of Toronto's Corporate Strategic Plan and its other policies and strategies including the Official Plan, HousingTO 2020–2030 Action Plan, Reconciliation Action Plan, the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, Culture Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto, and the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy. It considers whether proposed developments support people-centred urban growth - prioritizing the creation of complete inclusive, and resilient communities that meet the needs of current and future residents.

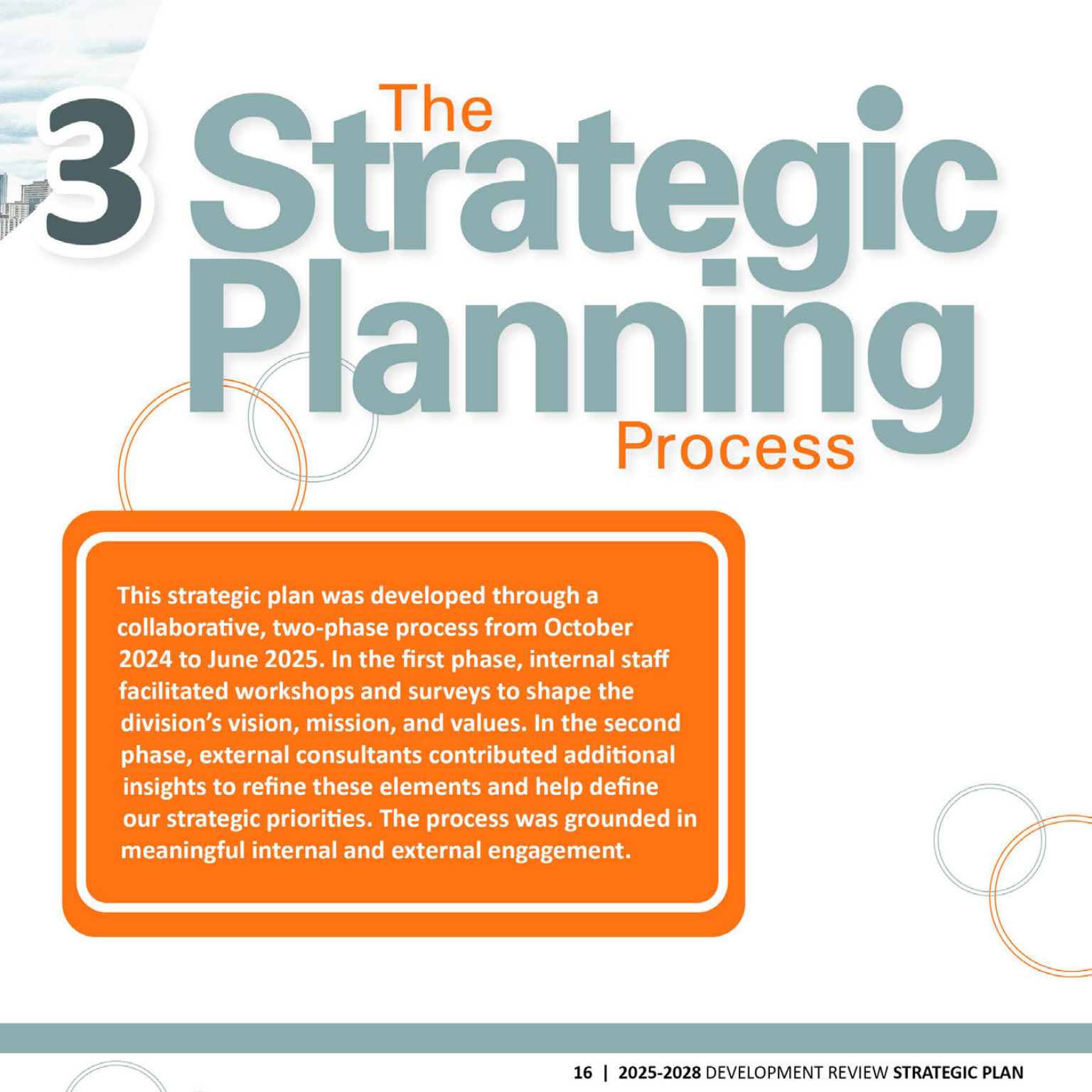
A human rights-based approach also emphasizes meaningful community participation, particularly from Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities. It promotes transparent decision-making and shared accountability for outcomes. It requires consideration of who has access to housing, mobility, services and public spaces, whose voices are heard in shaping the built environment, and whether the built environment is reinforcing or reducing social inequities.

By embedding human rights as a foundation for people-centred, fair and inclusive urban growth, this approach strengthens our existing development review framework and contributes to a more equitable Toronto for all.





Photo Credit: East Side of Don River Valley © Destination Toronto, 2022



3 The Strategic Planning Process

This strategic plan was developed through a collaborative, two-phase process from October 2024 to June 2025. In the first phase, internal staff facilitated workshops and surveys to shape the division's vision, mission, and values. In the second phase, external consultants contributed additional insights to refine these elements and help define our strategic priorities. The process was grounded in meaningful internal and external engagement.

Who and How We Engaged



Developing the Vision, Mission, & Values

October 2024 - February 2025

- 11 in-person staff workshops
- 2 workshops with Development Review Senior Leadership Team
- 5 virtual staff workshops
- 2 surveys



Developing the Strategic Priorities and Actions:

March 2025 - June 2025

- Almost 300 staff across 5 geographic districts
- 2 workshops with Development Review Senior Leadership Team
- Virtual all-staff workshop
- 13 interviews with internal and external subject matter experts and partners
- Jurisdictional review
- Staff survey

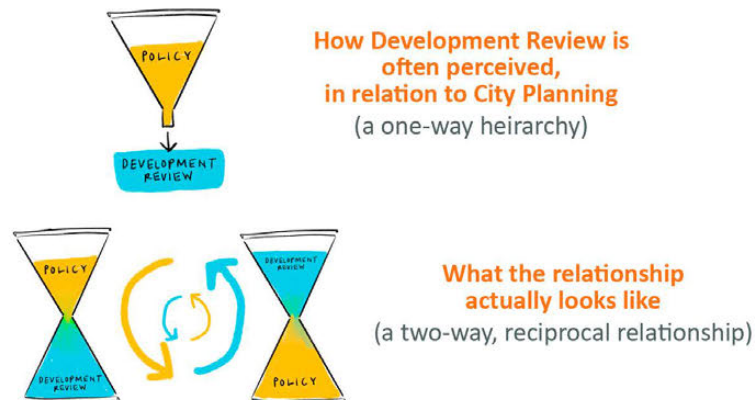




What We Learned

On the Division's Identity: Through conversations with Development Review leaders, staff, City partners and external partners, we heard:

- the Division plays a critical role in advancing Toronto's city-building goals by delivering an efficient, effective and thoughtful development review service.
- the Division must act as a cohesive, service-oriented and accountable organization, with a strong public-interest focus.
- there is a need to foster a culture that is enabling, collaborative and transparent – one that continues to uphold operational and professional excellence while acting with urgency to address the housing crisis.
- the Division has a distinct identity as it brings together multidisciplinary professionals for the first time in a single division, including community planners, engineers, transportation planners, project managers, process improvement and policy experts, administrative and support staff.
- it is important to clearly define the Division's identity – particularly in relation to the City Planning Division and within the broader city-building ecosystem.





Some interviewees noted that Development Review is often perceived as the “implementation arm” in contrast to City Planning’s role as the “policy arm.” However, many emphasized that this framing could undervalue the critical judgment and expertise Development Review brings to city-building. Instead, they described a more reciprocal, integrated relationship, one where Development Review is an equal partner in an iterative process, with on-the-ground implementation insights shaping policy decisions, and planning directions informing review practices.





Our Priorities Moving Forward



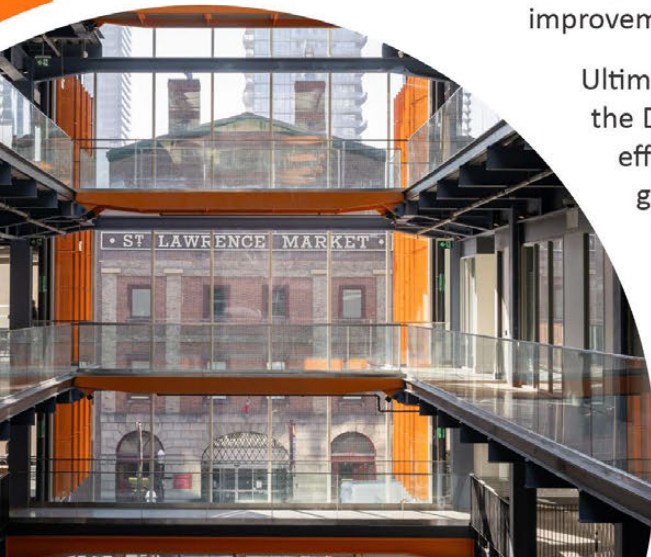
Staff at all levels and across the division emphasized:

- the desire for smoother, more efficient processes.
- the need for a more collaborative work environment, within the Division and with City and external partners.
- the need for modernized tools that support their daily responsibilities. Key priorities included reducing time-consuming manual tasks, improving cross-divisional coordination and being empowered to make decisions and see the tangible and positive impact of their work.

External Partners, including applicants and non-profit and private development industry representatives:

- shared a desire for a faster, more predictable and transparent process, with consistent feedback, clear decision-making and designated points of contact.
- noted that while progress has been made, especially on priority files, there is a need to systemize and sustain improvements.

Ultimately, the consultations affirmed the mandate of the Development Review Division – to deliver projects effectively and efficiently, while realizing city-building goals. To do so, we heard a clear case for the Division to prioritize **investing in people and partnerships, streamlining processes, modernizing tools and technology, and strengthening transparency and accountability** – within the Division, with our partners and the public. These strategic priorities are strongly supported by staff within the Division.





“ In an ideal day...

I am able to collaborate with internal staff and external applicants to come to creative solutions for their proposals with clear benefits for the public.

- City Staff, Engineer



I am able to end the day with visible project progress and updated tracking systems.

- City Staff, Planner

I am able to collaborate smoothly with internal teams through clear communication.

**- City Staff,
Administrative Support**

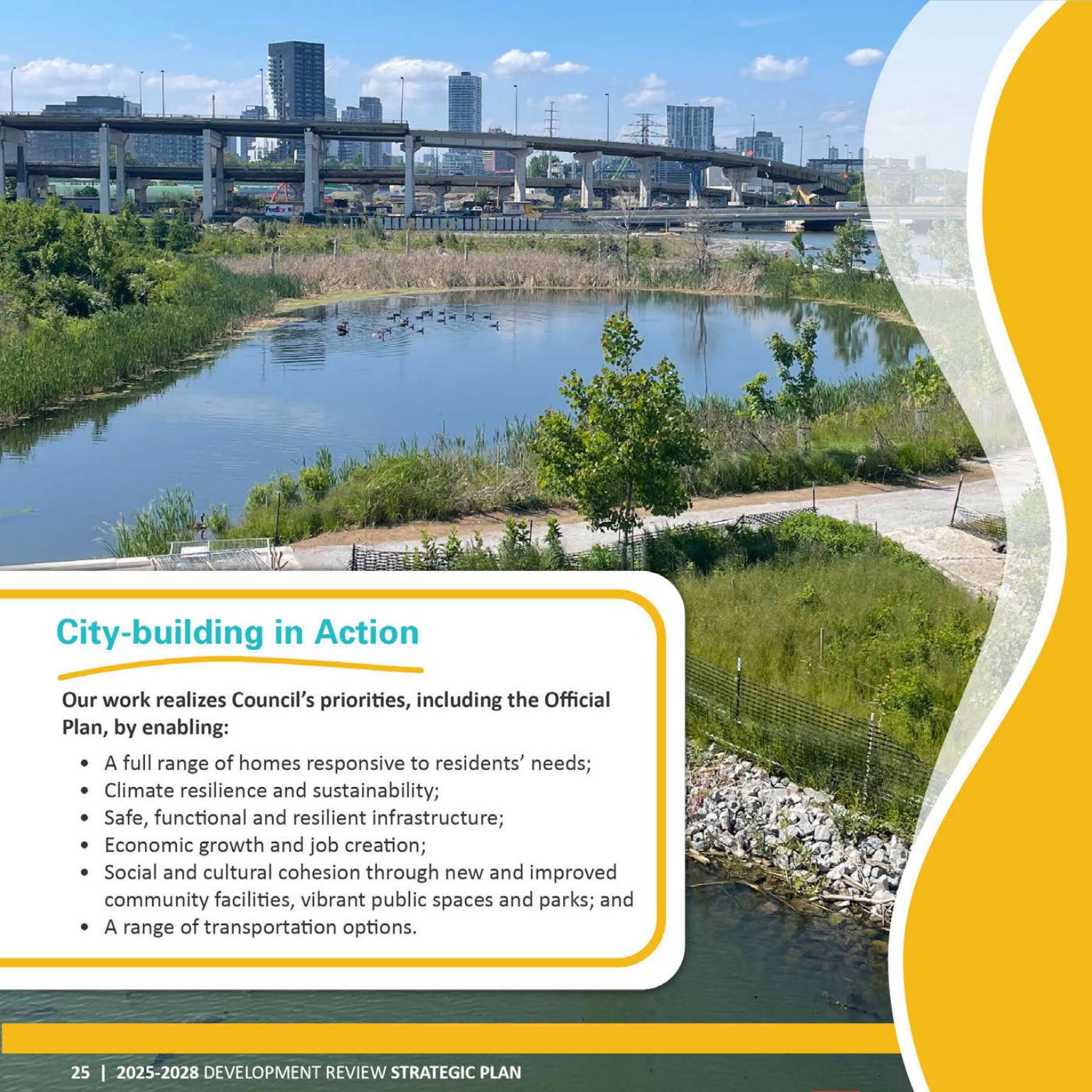
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4 Vision Mission Values



Our vision statement represents what we strive to achieve. Our mission statement describes what we do as a multidisciplinary but cohesive team. Our values highlight our core principles and identify what is important to us. Taken together, our vision, mission and values position us to provide a world-class development review service today and into the future.





City-building in Action

Our work realizes Council's priorities, including the Official Plan, by enabling:

- A full range of homes responsive to residents' needs;
- Climate resilience and sustainability;
- Safe, functional and resilient infrastructure;
- Economic growth and job creation;
- Social and cultural cohesion through new and improved community facilities, vibrant public spaces and parks; and
- A range of transportation options.



our vision

Shaping the Future of Toronto - Today!

We shape development in Toronto for
current and future generations to thrive.



our mission

We advance world-class city-building by delivering
a development review service that is innovative,
collaborative, customer focused, transparent and efficient.



our values

**Collaboration & Partnership | Continuous Learning & Improvement
Customer Service | Diversity, Equity, Reconciliation, & Inclusion
Leadership, Innovation, & Creativity | Transparency & Accountability**

our values



COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP

We bring together diverse perspectives, expertise and objectives to drive the best possible city-building outcomes.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING & IMPROVEMENT

We embrace and encourage career-long learning, mentoring and knowledge that is responsive to the ever-changing environment.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

We are committed to working with both internal and external clients to deliver a respectful, timely, responsive, transparent, and solution-oriented service.





DIVERSITY, EQUITY, RECONCILIATION, & INCLUSION

We are committed to fostering a culture of respect that embraces diversity, advances equity and reconciliation, and ensures inclusion and accessibility for all.

LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION, & CREATIVITY

As leaders, we foster innovation, creativity and professional excellence by empowering our multi-disciplinary team to pursue new practices and technology to address complex problems.



TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

We inspire trust by carrying out our work with transparency and integrity, using data and evidence, and ensuring clear, consistent and compelling communication with all internal and external clients.

5 Strategic Priorities

The four strategic priorities in Development Review's inaugural strategic plan are naturally interconnected. Our ability to deliver tangible results requires us to have an empowered staff, an engaged public and connected partners both within and beyond the City. Each priority feeds and supports the others, and the successful delivery of each one will allow us to make accelerated progress towards achieving our Vision.



**1. Invest in People
& Partnerships**



**2. Streamline
Processes**



**3. Modernize Tools
& Technology**



**4. Strengthen
Transparency
& Accountability**



In September 2024, BILD released the third edition of its Greater Toronto Area Municipal Benchmarking Study identifying Toronto as “best in class” for its Application Support Materials, which provide guidance on how to meet application requirements.

In March 2025, the Canadian Home Builders’ Association released the third edition of its National Municipal Benchmarking Study, which identified Toronto as “best in class” for its Application Support Materials.

Photo Credit: Toronto Skyline © Destination Toronto, 2021



Strategic Priority 1

Invest in People & Partnerships

We will invest in our team and build strong, reciprocal relationships across the City and with our external partners.

As a newly formed division, our ability to realize our ambitious mission depends on building internal capacity, aligning with partners, and centring equity and reconciliation in everything we do. Strengthening our relationships – within our Division, across government, with Indigenous Rights-holders and with applicants – will deepen our collective capacity to address complex challenges and deliver city-building outcomes that reflect the needs of all Torontonians. Investing in people and partnerships lays the foundation for a culture that is collaborative, innovative, accountable and responsive.





Key Actions

1.1 Strengthen internal alignment and capacity, which could include an enhanced issues resolution model and increased opportunities to build more efficient and effective shared processes.

1.2 Continue to invest in capacity building including enhanced onboarding, expanded training and mentorship initiatives.

1.3 Co-create and foster a values-driven organizational culture by embedding our strategic priorities and values into day-to-day activities, shared practices and leadership.

1.4 Enhance collaboration with applicants and industry, starting with a customer service charter that defines two-way expectations for respectful, proactive problem-solving throughout the review process.

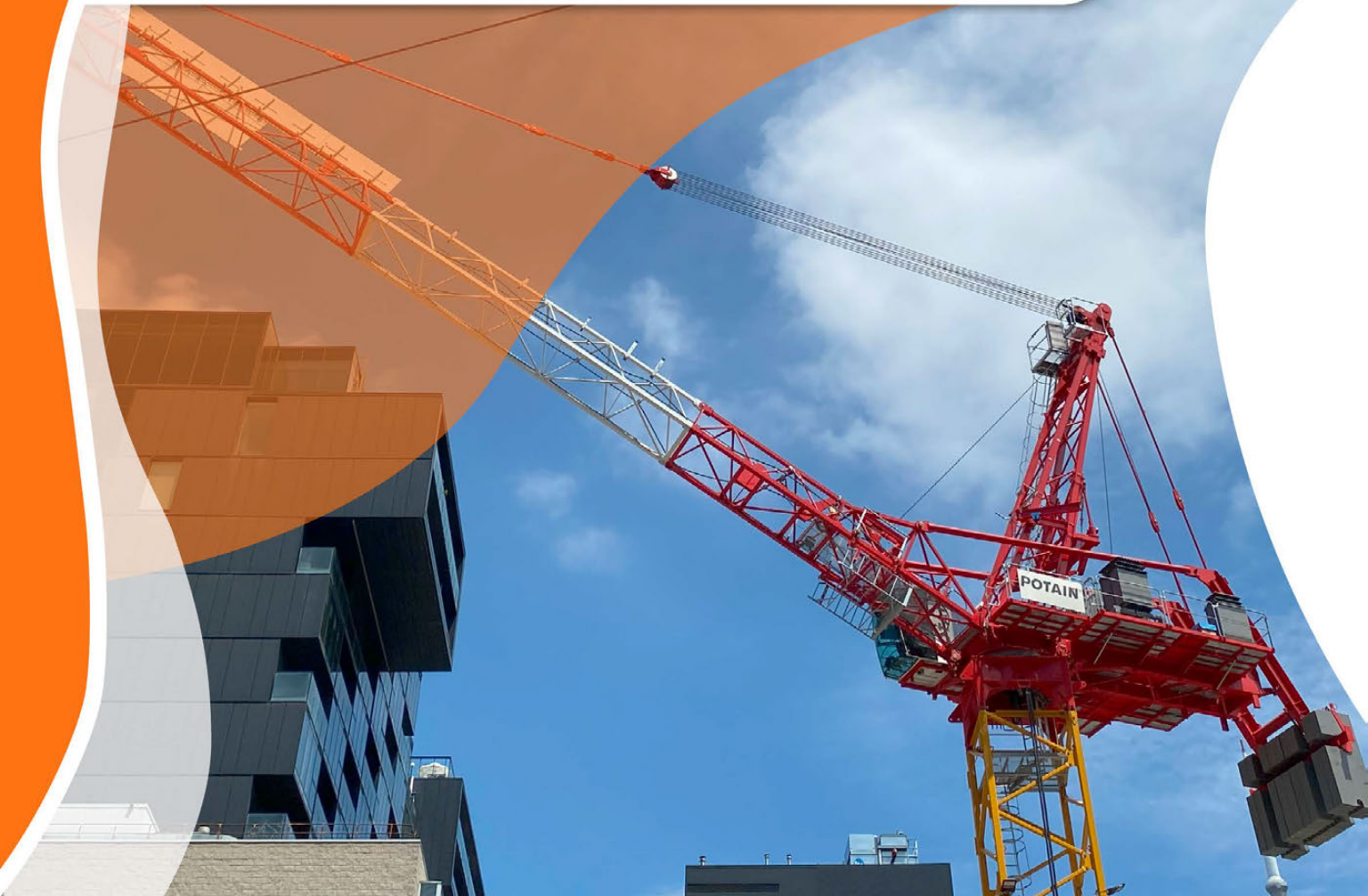
1.5 Advance Reconciliation and Equity with Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities by establishing a dedicated Equity and Reconciliation function within Development Review and taking tangible action to advance the City's commitment to diversity, equity and reconciliation.

1.6 Work with Rights-holder First Nations to explore best practices and preferences for engagement in the development review process.

1.7 Improve cross-government relationships and coordination across the City and with provincial and federal partners to continue to unlock housing supply and build complete communities.

"The recently formed Development Review Division has significantly improved the approval timeline of affordable housing projects by proactively identifying and addressing pinch points before they arrive on my desk. Before, St. Clare's was draining capacity in an uphill struggle to deliver housing. Now, we are being supported as valued partners, which means our staff can remain focused on our operations."

Andrea Adams
Executive Director, St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society





“Our recent experiences with the new Development Review Division show that they have been implementing a solutions-based approach by assembling the various stakeholders and facilitating a collaborative conversation. This has led to positive outcomes in a timely and efficient manner. The continued use of this approach will be key to assisting in the alleviation of the current housing crisis in Toronto. We, as a company, look forward to working with City staff using this new, more collaborative approach, which will serve to shorten the development approval process and get sites truly shovel ready.”

Jude Tersigni
**Senior Vice President, Planning & Development,
Menkes Developments**

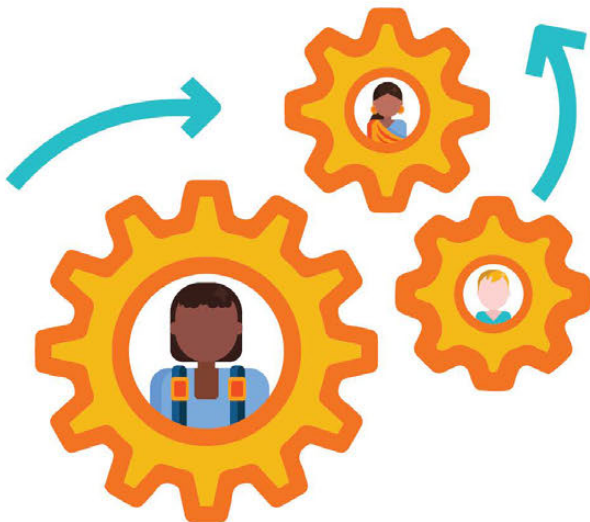


Strategic Priority 2

Streamline Processes

We are committed to shaping a more efficient and effective development review system that delivers improved outcomes for all Torontonians.

A consistent and predictable development review service builds trust with applicants, staff and the public. By addressing inefficiencies and clarifying our process, we can improve coordination, reduce delays, deliver more consistent and transparent outcomes and move forward with greater confidence, clarity and purpose. This work will help ensure that the development review service is easier to navigate, more efficient to operate and better aligned with the City's priorities.





Key Actions

- 2.1 Develop a human rights-based approach to the review process** to support staff and applicants in prioritizing applications with high community benefits that deliver more affordable, inclusive and equitable city-building outcomes for residents, especially those from Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities.
- 2.2 Enable economic growth** by developing a new service to expedite the review of applications that support economic growth and job creation.
- 2.3 Standardize review processes** by implementing standard operating procedures for each application type to support clear, consistent and effective reviews.
- 2.4 Improve application tracking and analytics** as part of a commitment to quality assurance that includes monitoring application progress, proactive issues resolution and collaborative problem-solving.
- 2.5 Strengthen staff coordination on applications** in order to adapt to and address priorities while maintaining predictability and minimizing backlogs.



“

Neighbours Community Homes is working with the Development Review Division on ... projects and we have found the division to be very effective at streamlining the development approval process and improving collaboration with the City. The division's efforts have resulted in much faster response and approval, and this is essential for us as a non-profit housing developer in terms of reducing complexity and time and inflation risk to our projects. Neighbours Community Homes plans to advance at least two more new development projects ... in 2025, and Development Review's continued effectiveness is going to be critical to our success.”

Gautam Mukherjee
Chief Executive Officer, Neighbours Community Homes



DUNN
AVENUE

"As a community builder and developer active in Toronto for over 90 years, Tridel has witnessed many changes and improvements to the development review process. With the creation of the Development Review Division... application processing has significantly improved, enhancing customer service and reducing red tape. Despite the division being relatively new, we've already seen critical projects—both affordable and market housing—progress much faster. We're optimistic that this momentum will extend to all projects, continuing to drive efficiency and growth."

Mike Mestyan
Vice President, Development Planning



Strategic Priority 3

Modernize Tools & Technology

We will work with our partners across the City of Toronto to design and implement the tools we need to support better workflows and foster greater public trust in how development decisions are made.

We believe that the tools we use should match the scale, urgency and complexity of the work we do. In this fast-paced development environment, modern digital tools and systems are essential to delivering services that are responsive, transparent, consistent and coordinated. Our clients expect a service that reflects this. By investing in modernizing our tools and technologies, we will help staff work more efficiently, improve collaboration across divisions and make it easier for applicants and the public to navigate the development process, helping to build a more accountable development review system.





Key Actions

3.1 Improve access to information by building a user-friendly web page that provides easy navigation to key tools such as the Application Information Centre, the Development Guide and the Application Submission Tool, as well as a digital dashboard that reports on divisional performance.

3.2 Partner with Technology Services Division to upgrade core systems that support efficient workflows, performance management and coordination.

3.3 Leverage digital tools, including exploring the role of artificial intelligence, to improve efficiency and customer service and to enable staff to focus more on outcomes.

3.4 Provide staff training, resources and tools to ensure more consistent and timely interpretation and application of regulatory frameworks.



Strategic Priority 4

Strengthen Transparency & Accountability

We will collect data and evidence to establish clear, consistent and compelling communication with internal and external clients, ensuring transparency and accountability.

As a public-facing division, we have a responsibility to clearly communicate how decisions are made, track and share our progress, and create space for meaningful input from the people and communities we serve. By setting targets, tracking our performance, sharing our progress and being responsive to public feedback, we can showcase how we are able to achieve broader city-building goals.



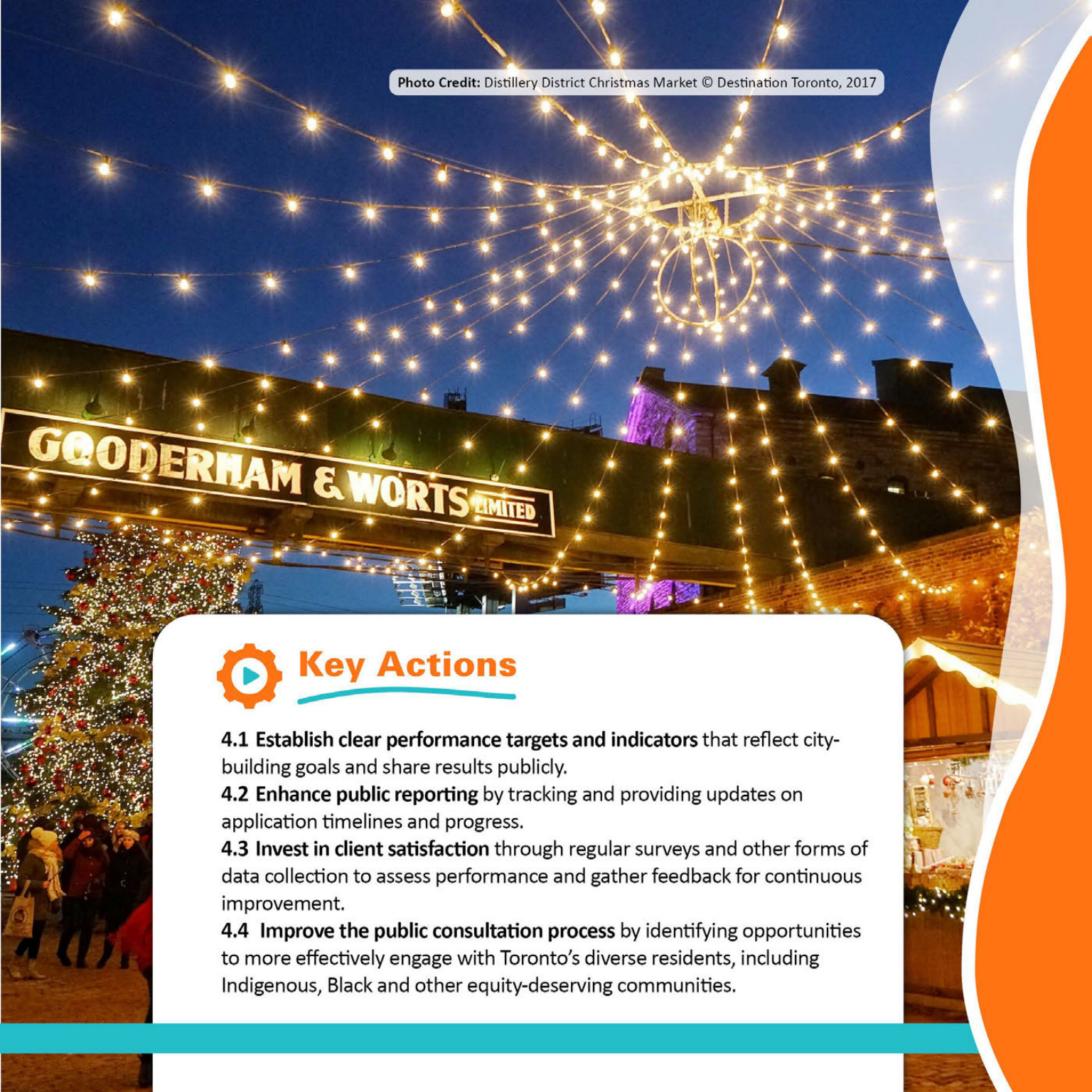


Photo Credit: Distillery District Christmas Market © Destination Toronto, 2017



Key Actions

- 4.1 Establish clear performance targets and indicators** that reflect city-building goals and share results publicly.
- 4.2 Enhance public reporting** by tracking and providing updates on application timelines and progress.
- 4.3 Invest in client satisfaction** through regular surveys and other forms of data collection to assess performance and gather feedback for continuous improvement.
- 4.4 Improve the public consultation process** by identifying opportunities to more effectively engage with Toronto's diverse residents, including Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities.

6 What Success Looks Like

By 2028, success will be measured not only by what we deliver — but how we deliver it. As a division, we strive to deliver a world-class development review service that is efficient, transparent and equitable — grounded in a people-centred approach, consistent processes, modern tools, and a culture of accountability. We are committed to enabling the delivery of complete communities that are inclusive, livable, and responsive to the diverse needs of all Torontonians.



Photo Credit: Western Toronto Skyline at Dusk © Destination Toronto, 2018



Strategic Priority 1

Invest in People & Partnerships

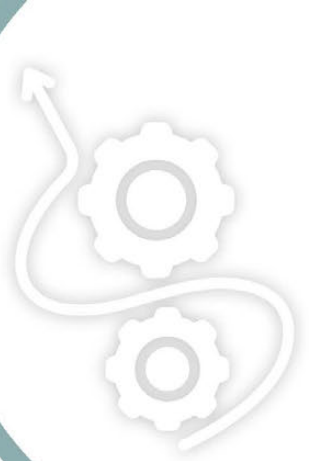
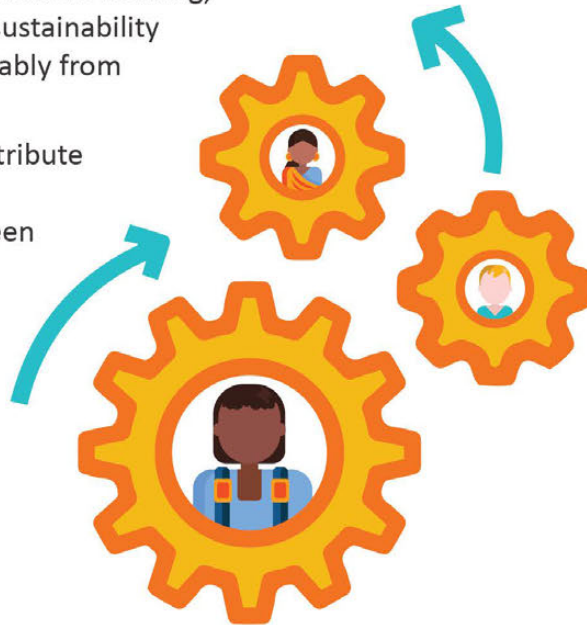
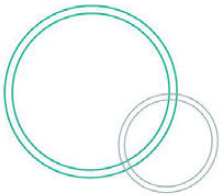
- All new staff receive comprehensive onboarding, with mentorship, career development and continuous training embedded across the Division.
- Our organizational culture visibly reflects our core values, with leaders and staff integrating them into daily decision-making and service delivery.
- Staff, applicants, and community members understand what to expect — and experience greater consistency in how applications are reviewed and decisions are made.
- Staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to lead change and bring forward innovative ideas.
- A consistent internal issues resolution model improves coordination and reduces effort and duplication across teams.
- A Customer Service Charter is co-created with industry and actively used to guide respectful, solution-oriented engagement.
- A dedicated Equity and Reconciliation team leads initiatives that embed reconciliation and equity across all Divisional work.
- Collaborative protocols with Indigenous Rights-holders are co-developed and integrated into review processes.
- Cross-divisional and intergovernmental partnerships support faster approvals and improved outcomes resulting in complete communities.



Strategic Priority 2

Streamline Processes

- Standard operating procedures are implemented and continuously improved for all application types.
- A human rights-based approach to development review is applied consistently, resulting in more equitable, inclusive, and people-centred development outcomes.
- A new expedited stream for economic development applications is operational and driving timely approvals that support economic growth, innovation, and job creation.
- Interdisciplinary staff teams collaborate earlier and more effectively, minimizing delays and enhancing outcomes.
- Priority projects — including affordable housing, community infrastructure, and sustainability initiatives — move more predictably from concept to construction.
- More projects meaningfully contribute to complete communities, with integrated housing, mobility, green space, amenities, and services.

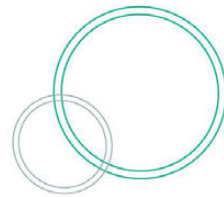




Strategic Priority 3

Modernize Tools & Technology

- Staff use integrated digital tools and AI-supported systems to reduce manual tasks and focus on high-value work.
- Dashboards and data tools support performance tracking, decision-making, and public transparency.
- Core digital systems are modernized in collaboration with Technology Services, improving consistency and service delivery.
- Staff are well-trained on new platforms and provincial regulatory changes, reducing errors and interpretation gaps.



Strategic Priority 4

Strengthen Transparency & Accountability

- Key performance indicators tied to housing delivery, equity, and city-building outcomes are regularly tracked, published, and reviewed.
- Applicants and the public can access timely updates on application status, milestones, and timelines online.
- Regular client and partner satisfaction surveys inform service improvements and drive innovation.
- Public engagement is more inclusive and equitable, with strengthened outreach to Indigenous, Black, and other equity-deserving communities.
- Staff learning, experimentation, and feedback are embedded in operations, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.



“

In an ideal day...

I work with subject matter experts and get their perspectives, work on understanding root problems so that solutions can be developed. Get buy-in on city-wide approaches. Provide space for people to be trained and learn. Spark curiosity in all of these discussions and when working with other staff members

- City Staff, Program Support

”

Photo Credit: Caribana Caribbean Carnival © Destination Toronto, 2018



7 Next Steps

This strategic plan will be shared with staff, City divisions, applicants and partners – to build shared understanding, strengthen alignment and foster a consistent, service-oriented and collaborative culture. Building on this strategic plan, the Development Review Division will develop a clear implementation roadmap, including specific actions, timelines and key performance indicators to support each strategic priority. This next phase is about turning strategy into action – ensuring the Division is equipped to deliver meaningful, measurable outcomes that support housing, equity and broader city-building goals across Toronto.

8 Acknowledgements



Photo Credit: Graffiti Alley © Destination Toronto, 2020

Acknowledgements

The process of developing the plan modeled the spirit of collaboration we want to embody in all aspects of our work. A huge thank you to our Development Review colleagues and leadership, other City staff and leadership, and industry partners for working closely with us to bring this plan to life. Your participation in interviews, surveys and workshops helped shape this strategic plan.

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External Interviewees

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