



# **Pedestrian Streets Policy & Guidelines**

**Presentation to Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee**

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# Project Overview

# The Challenge

There is growing demand to convert existing roads into pedestrian-only spaces, **but** staff have no clear policy, standards, or implementation strategy to determine where, how, and by whom this should be done.

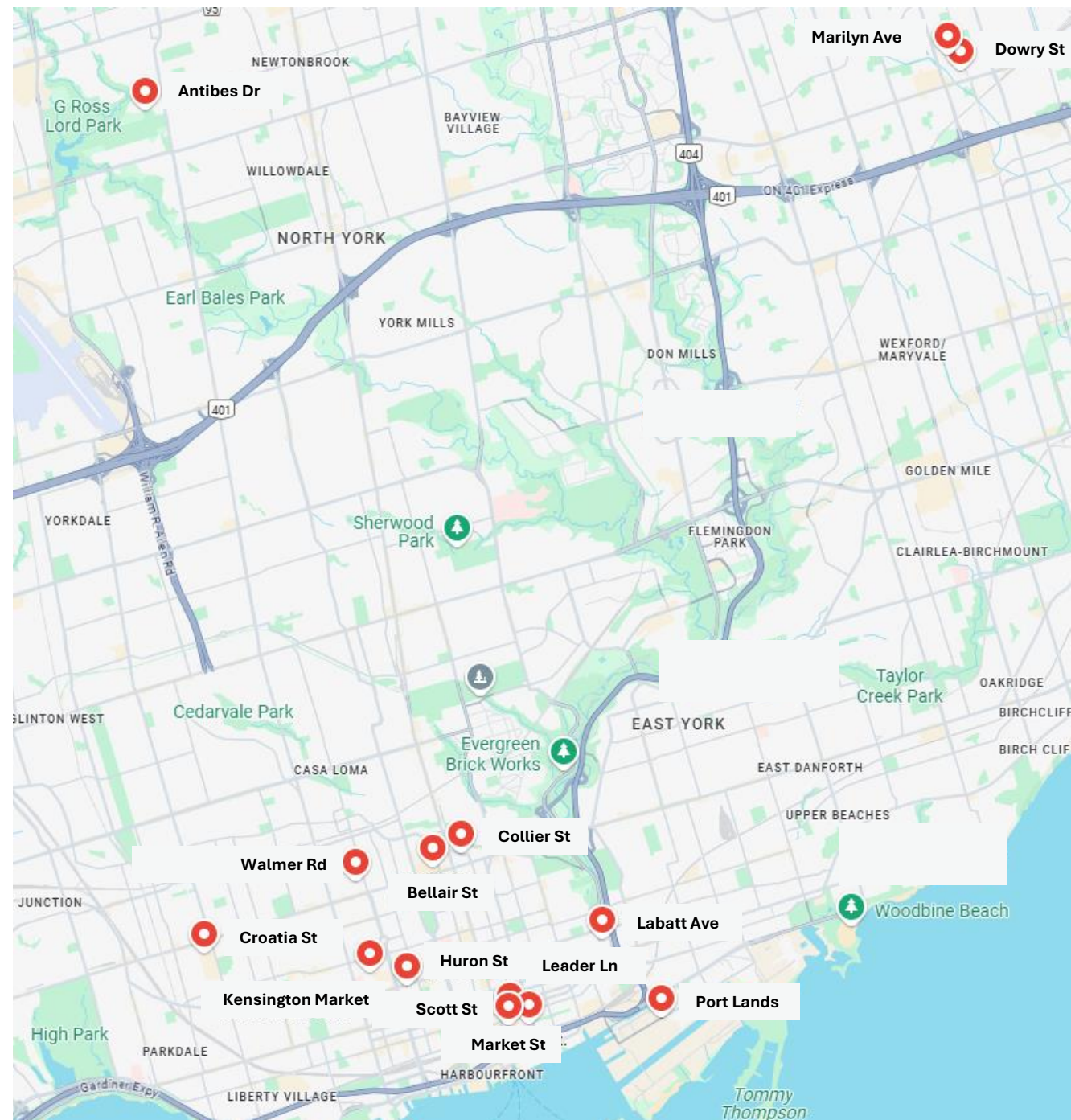


**Pedestrianization opportunities and requests arise across the city from a variety of sources and for a variety of reasons.**

**This map identifies some locations which are either currently pedestrianized on a seasonal basis or in various stages of evaluation and consideration in response to external requests.**

*Street (ward)*

- **Marilyn Ave (22)**
- **Dowry St (22)**
- **Port Lands (14)**
- **Labatt Ave (13)**
- **Market St (13)**
- **Scott St (13)**
- **Leader Ln (13)**
- **Walmer Rd (11)**
- **Collier St (11)**
- **Kensington Market (11)**
- **Huron St (11)**
- **Bellair St (11)**
- **Croatia St (9)**
- **Antibes Ave (6)**



# Reasons to Pedestrianize

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Create **accessible** places for passive or active uses (public space)

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Support local **businesses** and business districts (placemaking)

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Enhance the **pedestrian network** (new walkways)

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Improve traffic **safety** on local streets (traffic management)

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# Policy Alignment

## Existing City Policies & Guidelines

- Official Plan
- TMC, Chapters 743 and 886
- Toronto Walking Strategy
- TransformTO Net Zero Strategy
- Complete Streets Guidelines
- Vibrant Streets Guidelines
- Vision Zero Road Safety Plan
- On-Street Bikeway Design Guidelines
- Toronto Accessibility Design Guidelines
- Neighbourhood Greenways Guide
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

## Policy Objectives

- Creating safe, attractive, high-quality public spaces that foster social interaction  
Promote walkability and reduce auto dependence
- Boost local economies
- Enhance safety and accessibility for pedestrians in the public realm
- Create public spaces that serve diverse users and uses

# Goal & Objectives



## The Goal

The City has a clear policy framework for responding to requests and opportunities to enhance pedestrian experience, safety, and comfort on streets.

## Objectives

1. Establish guidelines to determine if full pedestrianization of a particular street is feasible and desirable, or whether alternative design solutions are more appropriate
2. Create an operational strategy to define key tasks, roles, and responsibilities for planning, implementation and management of pedestrianized streets

# Policy Needed



## Seasonal street closure

## Permanent street closures

- Public plaza
- Pedestrian pathway
- Activated laneway



# Other Solutions



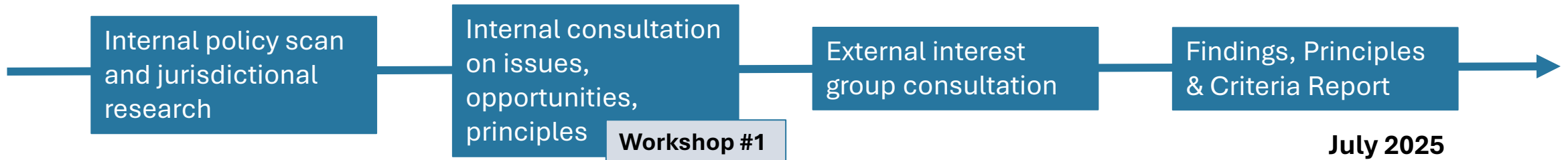
- Street Event
- Curbside parklets
- Traffic management Closure



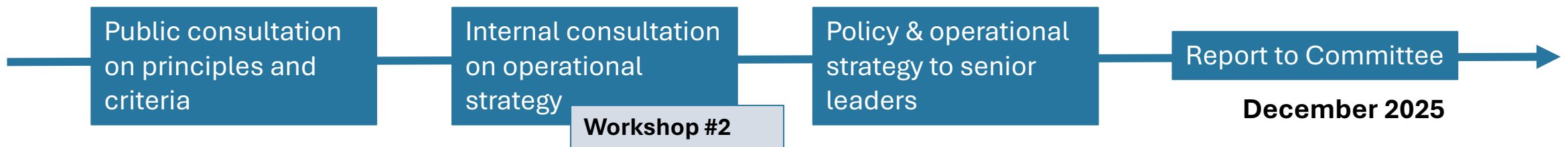
- Shared Street
- Complete Street
- Sidewalk Expansions

# Project Timeline

## Phase 1 – Decision Making Framework | Q1 - Q2 2025



## Phase 2 - Operational Strategy | Q2 2025 - Q1 2026



# Lessons Learned From Other Cities

# Montreal

## Pedestrian and Shared Streets Program



- 25 streets pedestrianized from 2020-2025
- 3-5 projects selected annually
- \$12M funding for 2025–2027
- Successful seasonal streets are made permanent
- Only commercial streets pedestrianized, generally for one block (40-80m)

# New York City

## NYC Plaza Program



- 94 plazas in total - 46 have been reconstructed
- Defined "pedestrian plaza" as a third right-of-way type, enabling unique standards and a new regulatory framework
- City typically receives 5-10 applications per year
- \$30 million program funded by Department of Transportation
- Four supporting programs for plaza partners

# Lessons Learned

1. Successful examples used a program-based approach with dedicated funds, resources, and defined staff roles
2. Strong external partnerships and collaboration for maintenance and programming
3. Extensive community consultation and engagement during planning and pilot phases
4. Phased implementation and temporary pilots to test and refine concepts before making permanent changes

# Accessibility Lessons Learned

## Planning & Consultation

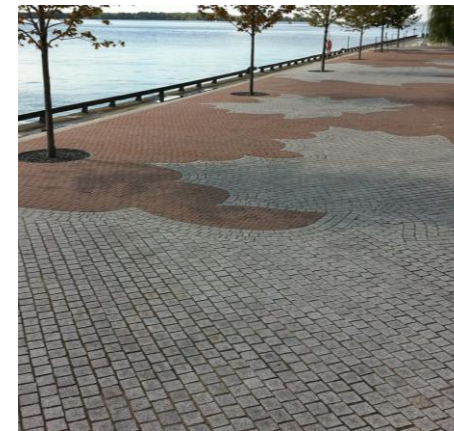
- Require consultation and site visits with people living with disabilities during site selection and design processes

## Design & Programming

- Incorporate universally accessible furniture (and placement)
- Use durable and even surface materials
- Maintain minimum 2.1m clearway
- Provide ramps at regular intervals for mobility device access
- Use visual and tactile detectable elements

## Site Access

- Relocate accessible parking spaces if impacted
- Include accessible ramps at entry points
- Include accessible pick-up and drop-off zones



# Emerging Directions

# Key Questions

## Phase 1



### Why?

Define desired outcomes of pedestrianizing a street



### Where?

Establish transparent evaluation criteria



### How?

Confirm consistent approach for planning, implementation and maintenance



### Who?

Define implementation and maintenance roles and responsibilities

# Principles



**Safety &  
Accessibility**



**Site Access**



**Project Alignment**



**Stewardship &  
Maintenance**



**Vibrancy**



**Equity**



**Community  
Support**

# Decision Making Framework

\*for discussion purposes

## **Feasibility Requirements (must have for all)**

- Maintenance plan and standards
- Alignment with capital program
- Property access is maintained or diverted
- Access for property loading, waste collection, and other servicing is maintained or diverted
- Safe egress point for vehicles
- Fire and emergency services access is maintained or diverted
- Utilities are accessible for scheduled and emergency maintenance, or relocated

# Decision Making Framework

\*for discussion purposes

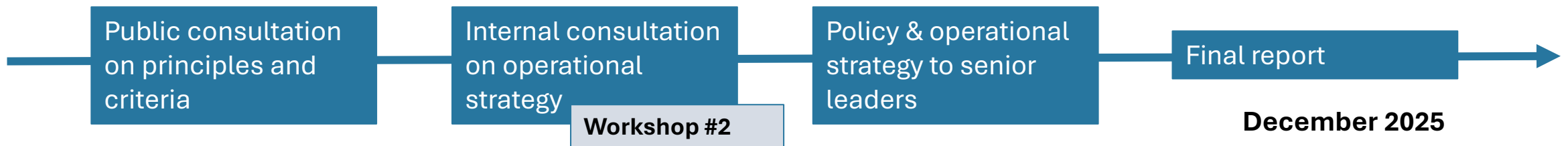
## Considerations (applied based on the desired outcomes)

- Traffic Management and Pedestrian Network Improvements
  - Existing traffic, pedestrian, and cyclist volumes warrant intervention
  - Proximity to homes, schools, daycares, etc that may benefit from pedestrianization
  - Community support
- Public Space Improvements and Economic Development
  - Manageable traffic and parking impact
  - BIA and Councillor support
  - Active commercial frontages
  - Pedestrian volumes
  - Programming partner
  - Stewardship plan

# Next Steps

1. Refine the decision-making framework, incorporating input from staff and other key interest groups, and circulate for feedback
2. Re-engage relevant staff on operational strategy this summer
3. Coordinate with ongoing updates to Development Infrastructure Policy & Standards, Streetscape Manual, and other related initiatives

## Phase 2 - Operational Strategy | Q2 2025 - Q1 2026





# Questions?