

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT



Thanks for picking up the TOcore Community Engagement Toolkit. By using this toolkit to give us your advice, you're helping the City develop a visionary, comprehensive plan for Downtown—a once-in-a-generation opportunity! It's a big responsibility and we're grateful you're taking the time to help.

## ABOUT TOcore

You've probably noticed that Downtown is growing. A lot. All this growth has brought plenty of change to Downtown, and, as more growth comes, we need to make sure it's joined by all the things that will make and keep Downtown great for all. That's what TOcore is all about. We'll explain more as you make your way through the next few pages.



## LEARN MORE & CONNECT

This toolkit will give you everything you need to get up to speed and give us your feedback. If you'd like to learn more or stay in touch, there are many ways:



Visit our website  
[www.toronto.ca/tocore](http://www.toronto.ca/tocore)  
 where you can:



Watch and share  
 our video (it's short  
 and fun, promise!)



Take a look at our  
 background reports  
 and materials



Contact our team  
 by emailing:  
**TOcore@toronto.ca**



Find out about  
 upcoming meetings  
 and events



Sign up for text message  
 updates by texting  
**"TOcore"** to **393939**

We won't charge you anything for this text message,  
 but your carrier's standard charges will apply.



Follow us on Twitter:  
**@CityPlanTO**



Connect on social  
 media using hashtags:  
**#DTadvice #TOcore**



Sign up for email  
 updates

TOcore is in its second phase of work, which involves the development of planning policies and infrastructure strategies. There will be consultation throughout the process, so please sign up to stay in touch. Reports from the first "Taking Stock" phase are available at: [toronto.ca/tocore](http://toronto.ca/tocore)

## WHAT'S THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This toolkit is going to get you up to speed, put you in a creative place, and guide you through some fun activities to help you tell us about your story, vision, and advice for Downtown as it's growing up. This feedback will help us develop a **new vision for Downtown**, a blueprint to guide change Downtown for the next 25 years! There are four steps:

Step 1 • Pages 4-6

### GET READY & GET STARTED



Step 2 • Pages 7-12

### TELL US YOUR DOWNTOWN STORY



Step 3 • Pages 13-16

### CREATE A NEW VISION



Step 4 • Page 17

### SUBMIT

## STEP 1: GET READY & GET STARTED

- Set aside some time and bring some people together. You'll need about one hour, but you can take more time if you want!
- Print off a copy of this toolkit (and optionally a copy of the Expansion Pack that provides more information about TOcore's seven "Building Blocks").
- Pull together some writing tools. Pens and paper work fine. If you want to spread out, a blackboard, whiteboard, or some other big surface might be useful.
- Find some space—whatever works for you! It could be a coffee shop, your kitchen table, an office: anywhere you'll feel comfortable.
- Once you're ready, flip through the next few pages to get started.

### EXPANSION PACK

#### Can't get enough?!

Need even more info about TOcore? No problem, we've made a toolkit **Expansion Pack** just for you! The Expansion Pack has even more information that you might find useful when you're thinking about Downtown's future.

Find it under the "Have Your Say" tab of the TOcore website:

[toronto.ca/tocore](http://toronto.ca/tocore)

# DOWNTOWN IS FOR PEOPLE!

It's the City's job to make sure our public spaces, services and policies meet a wide range of needs. So when we think about how to manage growth Downtown, we need to be taking into account the different kinds of people using the city. They're many ages, have different incomes, and have various interests, abilities and stories. Our new vision for Downtown needs to address what we can do to make sure that Downtown is **great for all**.

How do we make sure Downtown is great for all?



# DOWNTOWN'S "BUILDING BLOCKS"

Making a new vision also means thinking about the "Building Blocks" that make up Downtown. Downtown is a vibrant and complex place. It's full of tall buildings, neighbourhood spaces (like libraries and community centres) and many jobs and homes. It's also made up of the *spaces*

*between buildings*, like streets, parks, sidewalks, and squares. Then there are the things we sometimes take for granted, like the pipes that carry our water and wires that bring us power. All of these things work together to make Downtown the place it is today.



## Buildings & Neighbourhoods

How will we make sure buildings and neighbourhoods are great places to live, work, play and visit?



## Parks & Public Spaces

How might we improve parks and public spaces as Downtown grows?



## Mobility

How will people walk, cycle, and take transit to travel to and around Downtown?



## Community Facilities

How will we make sure people Downtown have access to many services?



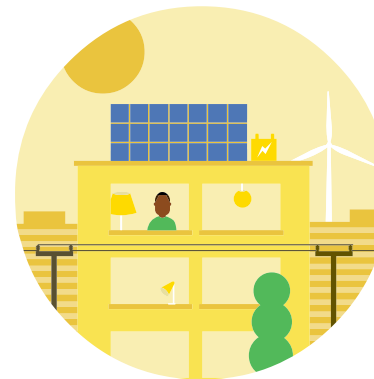
## Economy

What can we do to make sure we have many kinds of jobs Downtown?



## Water

How will our sewers and pipes keep up with all the new growth?



## Energy

How can we plan for an energy-efficient future?

**TIP:** You can learn more and provide feedback about these 7 Building Blocks in the Expansion Pack!

EXPANSION  
PACK

Do you think arts, culture, and affordable housing are important? So does the City. Learn more about aligned city-wide initiatives here:  
[www.toronto.ca/culture](http://www.toronto.ca/culture)  
[www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing](http://www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing)

## STEP 2: TELL US YOUR DOWNTOWN STORY

The next few pages contain stories told by people with different relationships with Downtown. These people are not real—we've invented them based on an analysis of the census and other data. We know everybody has their own Downtown Story and **we want to hear yours.**

### What to do

- Read the stories of the people on the next four pages. Go around your group and give everyone a chance to read at least one. While you're listening, think about:
  - » Something **you can relate to** in the stories
  - » Something about your own Downtown Story that **isn't reflected** in any of the other stories.
- Once you've read them all, each person should share at least **one thing they related to** in the stories and **something about their own Downtown Story** that isn't reflected in the other stories.
- Based on your group's discussion, share **your** Downtown Story. You can either tell a single story for your whole group or a different story for each person in your group—it's up to you! Flip to **page 12** where this toolkit has space for you to share your story.



**Want to see how we came up with these people's stories?**

To learn more, check out the "Downtown Stories" tab at: [toronto.ca/tocore](https://toronto.ca/tocore)

## DOWNTOWN STORIES



## Fernanda

**22 years old • College student  
• Newcomer • Transit user •  
Arts & culture lover**

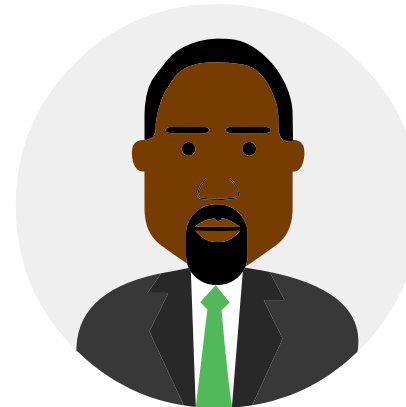
Hi, I'm Fernanda. I came to Toronto from Brazil to study at Humber College. I have an aunt here and hope to stay when I'm done. I live in an apartment near Islington subway station in Etobicoke with two other girls who have become my best friends. At least once a month we go Downtown to a bar or a club – especially when there's a concert that we really want to see since we're big music lovers. I especially love going to music festivals, like the Field Trip music festival at Fort York, which I've been to all three summers that I've been in Toronto. My favourite Downtown neighbourhood is Kensington Market – it's really cool with great and affordable shopping, and I like its diversity and quirkiness. If Downtown is growing as fast as they say it is, I hope that they protect neighbourhoods like Kensington because they help make Toronto unique and special.



## Fred

**75 years old • Retired • Downtown  
• Rents • Aging at home**

Hello, I'm Fred. I'm retired and live on my own in a small co-op apartment in the Bathurst Quay neighbourhood. I've been here ever since my wife died ten years back. I live off a very modest fixed income, made up of my CPP and Old Age Security benefits and some retirement savings, so I have to be careful with my spending. As I've gotten older, I've become less and less mobile and so I walk with a cane. I very much appreciate the way the curb dips at streetcar stops nowadays, but what I'm really looking forward to are the new streetcars. I do like my neighbourhood and how it's evolved over the years – although I can't say I like all those tall towers going up everywhere and all those garish ads that clutter up the city. My biggest hope for Downtown is that it stays a place where seniors like me can live comfortably and affordably and move around more easily.



## Charles

**43 years old • Young, 1st generation  
family • Owns a Midtown condo •  
Enjoys museums & libraries**

Hi, I'm Charles and I live with my wife, our seven year-old daughter, Amy, and our dog Jack, in a two-bedroom plus den condo that we own near Yonge and Davisville. I came to Toronto as a baby from Jamaica. I work Downtown as a Regional Branch Manager for a major bank. Most of the time I take the subway to work, but on days when I have to travel between multiple branches, I'll drive because it's easier travelling around in the Downtown that way, which is sort of unfortunate. Living in a condo means our family spends a lot of time at our local library and in the park down the road. We have a family pass at the ROM, because Amy loves the dinosaurs, and once a year we all go down to the Air Canada Centre to watch a Raptors game. That's what I like about Downtown – always so much to do. I think what it needs, though, is new and innovative ways to integrate community facilities people in high rises need, like schools and libraries, into new developments.



## Marilyn

**44 years old • Disabled • Lives  
Downtown • Owns a house •  
Drives to work**

Hello, I'm Marilyn. I live with my husband in a semi-detached house in Little Italy. Ten years ago I was in a car accident that left me with a permanent disability. Now I get around in a wheelchair. It was very difficult to adjust at first – it turns your world upside down. You don't realize how big a barrier a 3-inch curb can be until you encounter it while in a wheelchair. But over time, I've become familiar with the parts of my neighbourhood that are accessible to me, and I stick to those areas. I work as a Business Analyst in a new office tower in South Core. I drive there every day in a car that's been specially designed so that people like me can drive. Traffic is bad, but being able to drive gives me a bit of freedom, and I'm grateful for it. My hope for Downtown is that it continues to become more and more accessible so that people of all abilities can enjoy all that it has to offer.



## DOWNTOWN STORIES

**John**

**32 years old • Precariously housed • Unemployed • Suffers from chronic illness • Downtown • Worried about gentrification**

I'm John. I'm 32 years old, unemployed and live in a rooming house in Downtown's east end. Despite graduating with a degree in 2005, I could never find work in my field. I worked odd jobs for a long time, as credit card debt piled on top of student debt. For the last four years I've suffered from a debilitating chronic disease that leaves me in constant pain, makes me tired, and affects my mood and memory. Because of it I haven't been able to work in over two years, though I would love to cause I feel restless and, frankly, depressed without something to do all day. Now I rely on government assistance to get by, but with the little they give me for rent, I can't afford anything more than this. People talk about revitalising this part of the city, but I'm worried about what that would mean for people like me. If this building gets sold to a developer and torn down to make way for some condo then I'm out of a home. Then what? I could end up on the streets.

**Amena**

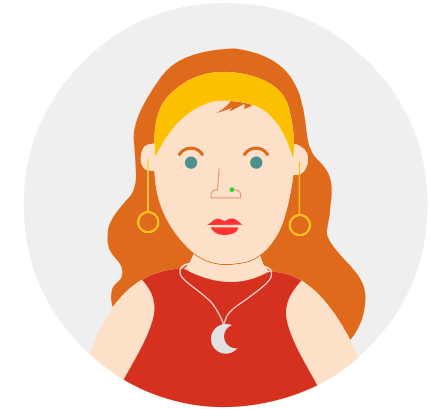
**12 years old • Refugee • Mother is underemployed • Has never been Downtown**

My name is Amena. I came to Canada with my mother and grandmother to escape the fighting back in our country. It was very scary, and I miss my father a lot, who is still back home, but I feel lucky we got away. Now we live in a tall tower near the edge of the city. My mother had a hard time finding a good job. She was a teacher back home, but now she works two jobs - one in a sandwich shop and another in a donut shop. Both are Downtown, and she has to take two buses and a subway to get there. She says it takes one and a half hours each way. She never complains, but I know she misses my father and that it makes her sad not to be doing what she loves. Thankfully my grandmother helps take care of me. I've never been Downtown, but my mother says it's full of tall buildings and lots of exciting things. She says that one day she will take me...

**Fatemeh**

**66 years old • Senior • Grandparent • Walks • Symphony goer • North York**

Fatemeh is my name, and I came to Toronto in the mid-80s from Iran with my husband, Farhoud. Farhoud was a TTC driver for many years, and I did secretarial work at the local elementary school. We're both retired now, and live in the same home where we raised our children in Willowdale. Being retired means we are able to take care of our grandson while our daughter is at work during the day. He loves getting to spend time with his Bibi and Baba, and we love it too! We are both lovers of classical music, and we are TSO subscribers, so we are often Downtown for concerts at Roy Thomson Hall. Usually, we have dinner on King Street before the show. We take the subway down because it is just so much easier than driving and then having to find and pay for a parking spot - too much hassle! To be honest, we don't love going Downtown - too many people - but we do appreciate its cultural richness and hope it continues.

**Ruth**

**25 years old • Recent grad • Bikes to work • Rents • Enjoys nightlife**

Hey, I'm Ruth. I moved to Downtown Toronto from Regina when I was 18 for school. After graduating, I got hired by this great little environmental non-profit that helps people live more sustainably. The pay's not great, but it's respectable - enough that I can live with two of my best friends in a little walk-up near Bloor and Spadina. Usually I walk or bike to my office, but I'll take the streetcar when it's too cold or rainy. On weekends, my friends and I will usually go out to a bar or a club and so great nightlife is really important to me. In the summer, we often hang out under the umbrellas at Sugar Beach. Nothing is better than Downtown Toronto in the summer time, but its affordability definitely concerns me. A lot of people I know are having a hard time finding a place they can afford to rent. We need to make sure Downtown doesn't become only for the rich, but a place where people like me can keep living ...and riding our bikes to work!

## DOWNTOWN STORIES

**Oscar**

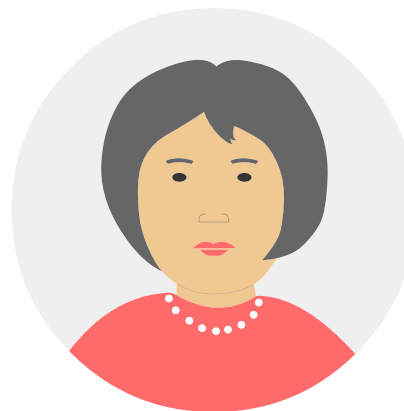
**17 years old • High school student  
• Parents own their own house •  
Lives in the suburbs •  
Sometimes hangs out Downtown**

I'm Oscar. I live with my younger sister and our parents in a house near Weston Road and Jane. My parents came here when they were teenagers from Mexico, and we still mostly speak Spanish at home. They work really hard – my dad as a mechanic and my mom as a bank teller. Money's tight, so I usually work in the summer time doing landscaping with my dad's buddy. Downtown's cool, but I don't get down there a lot, though sometimes I'll go to the Eaton Centre to hang out with my friends. When we do go Downtown, we always take transit cause none of us drives yet. I'm a huge sports fan, so I also go Downtown sometimes with my dad to see a Jays or TFC game. I really wanna take my new girlfriend to see the Jays soon, but I hope she doesn't mind sitting in the nosebleeds! I hope Downtown will always be a fun and safe place for young people like me.

**Cindy**

**23 years old • Single mother •  
First Nations • Living in a shelter**

Hi, I'm Cindy. I came to Toronto a year ago with my little girl to give her a better life. It hasn't been easy. I don't have much money, and finding a place to live that I can afford has been really hard. For a while, we were living on the streets... Thankfully, the amazing people at Native Child and Family Services found us a spot at the Red Door Shelter, which takes in families. Eventually, I hope to move into a place like the new affordable housing for First Nations people in the Pan Am Athletes' Village. I think it's amazing that the City is creating affordable housing options in such a beautiful new community, and hope to see more of that. Things are looking up for me, but I know there are a lot of people out there who aren't as lucky. We need to make sure that, as our Downtown grows, nobody gets left behind.

**Lily**

**64 years old • Immigrant •  
Lives in Markham •  
Sometimes drives Downtown •  
Wants better transit options**

I'm Lily, and I came to Toronto from Hong Kong with my husband and our son, Edwin in 1982. We were lucky at the time to find a place in a nice little Downtown co-op in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood. Eventually, as our family's income grew, we were able to buy a house in Markham, where there are many other Cantonese-speaking people. My husband and I didn't go Downtown much until Edwin moved into a waterfront condo three years ago to be closer to his job in one of those big office towers that just went up near Union Station. We have to drive down to visit him since he refuses to get a car and says the transit isn't good enough for him to come to us very often. Now I see him once a month if I'm lucky! Actually, we're thinking about moving back Downtown into a condo to be closer to him, but I will miss all the friends I've made at our local church here. I'd like to see better transit service between the 905 and Downtown.

**Sajith**

**57 years old • Immigrant •  
Owns in Rexdale • Drives a taxi •  
Concerned about congestion**

I am Sajith, and my wife and I came here many years ago now from Sri Lanka. We own a house near Albion Road and Finch, where we live with our son, who is in university, as well as our eldest daughter and her husband, who live in the basement apartment. I have an Engineering degree from back home, but my credentials were never recognized here so eventually I settled on driving a taxi. It's a tough job – the money isn't great, and over the years the traffic Downtown has gotten much worse, but I like the flexibility it provides. My wife works Downtown as a nurse and usually gets a ride with me. Once a summer, it is our tradition to take the whole family down to Centre Island for a big picnic. The lines are getting long but we love feeling far away from the city, and yet still being able to see the CN Tower poking up through the trees. It's quite special. I would like to see more investment in our parks and public spaces; they are for everyone to enjoy!

## DOWNTOWN STORIES

**Jo**

**18 years old • Trans youth •  
Previously homeless • Downtown**

Hi, my name is Jo. I'm a trans woman. When I was sixteen, I was kicked out of my parents' house and lived on the streets for almost two years. It was tough, and no one would hire me for work as I transitioned. Recently, I found a home in the new transitional housing program for the LGBTQ2S community at Spratt House in the Annex, and for the first time in a long time I feel good about my future. The facility is really important in a society where trans people and others in the LGBTQ2S community still experience high levels of violence and harassment. So are organizations like the 519, which provides a lot of support for the community. I've been back in school now for a few months, and I'm proud to say I'm killing it! I was surprised at how much support I've been getting there, but it's pretty awesome. I'm especially proud of the new gender-neutral washroom that I advocated for and that will be opening soon! As Downtown grows, let's make sure we keep providing the social supports people need to thrive.

**Peter**

**58 years old • Toronto-born •  
Owns a house • Takes transit to  
work Downtown • Enjoys the arts  
scene Downtown**

I'm Peter. My wife and I were both born in Toronto, and we currently live in a house in Forest Hill. We have two kids – a daughter, who lives Downtown with her boyfriend, and a son, who moved back home with us after he graduated from McGill recently. We have two cars; one that my son uses almost exclusively (the kid refuses to take transit!), and the other that my wife and I share. She drives to her job in North York Centre, and I take the subway every day to my job as a Systems Engineer in the Electricity Sector. In my spare time I think a lot about renewable energy. My wife and I also head Downtown regularly for dinner and a show (we're season ticket holders with both the COC and Soulpepper Theatre). In the summertime, when we're not at our cottage in Muskoka, we'll often head to Harbourfront Centre for a stroll on weekends. We love the changes to Queen's Quay and want to see more of that kind of investment in our public spaces.

**Jerome**

**33 years old • Young professional  
• Rents with a roommate  
• Walks to work**

Hey, I'm Jerome. I'm 33 and I've been living in Toronto since my family came to Canada from the Philippines when I was 9. I grew up in the suburbs, but now I live in a 25th floor condo near Yonge and Wellesley that I rent with a roommate. I have a Master of Social Work from York University, and I usually walk to my job at SickKids. I love the condo life and being Downtown, but sometimes I worry about the impact of condo development on neighbourhoods like the Village. I'm gay, and since nightlife is really important to me, being close to the Village was a must when I was looking for a place. But lately I've noticed there are fewer and fewer gay businesses as rents go up and buildings are replaced by condo developments. Now there are fewer bars and clubs and more chain stores. My advice for Downtown? As it grows, we need to make sure we find a way to keep our local shops and great nightlife alive.

**Ann**

**30 years old • Métis • Works &  
lives Downtown • Rents • Walks  
everywhere • About to start a family**

Hi, I'm Ann and I'm a lawyer in a small Downtown firm that specializes in serving the First Nations community. My husband Parker and I rent a one-bedroom plus den condo in Regent Park. I'm four months pregnant, and although we love the condo life, it can sometimes feel like a bit of a tight squeeze, so we're starting to look at ways to make our unit more family friendly, like turning the den into the baby's room. We thought about buying a house, but even though our combined income is pretty good, we would still have to move out of the city to find something we could afford. That's not what we want – we love being able to walk pretty much everywhere. Maybe my kid won't have a yard, but they'll have the whole city to explore! I think that Toronto is doing a lot right, but there's still so much more we can do better at, like addressing homelessness and mental health issues, especially within the First Nations community.

# SHARE YOUR DOWNTOWN STORY



Draw yourself in!

**What's your first name(s)?**

**TIP:** Make copies of this sheet and fill it out individually and/or do it together on a whiteboard. You can also share your story at:  
[tcorestories.tumblr.com](http://tcorestories.tumblr.com)

**Use this space to write your Downtown Story (or Stories).  
Make sure your story talks about how you use Downtown,  
what you love about Downtown, and what prevents you from  
enjoying Downtown to its fullest.**

## STEP 3: CREATE A NEW VISION

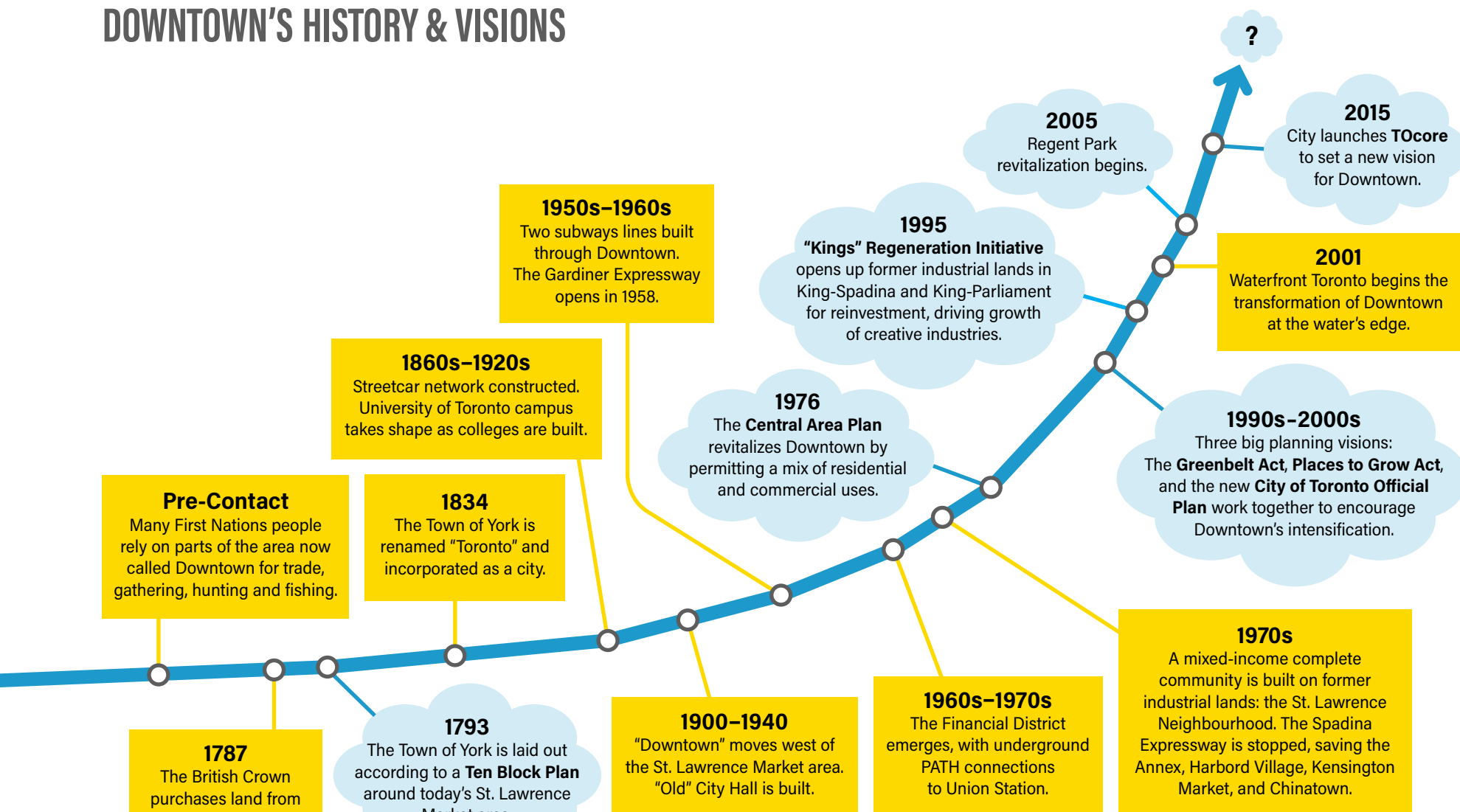
Now that you've shared your Downtown Story, it's time to tell us your vision for Downtown's future. The next few pages will tell you about how some of our previous visions created the place we know today.

### What to do

- Take a look at the Downtown timeline and the examples of older visions on the next few pages.
- Thinking about your Downtown Story, the stories of others, and Downtown's Building Blocks, imagine that you're in Downtown **as you think it should be** 30 years in the future. What do you see?
  - » How are people moving?
  - » What do the buildings look like?
  - » Where do energy and water come from?
  - » How/where do people meet each other?
  - » Where do people play sports?
  - » Where do people go to school?
  - » Where do people go to get help?
  - » What else do you see?
- Get creative to explain what you see. Draw a picture, make a collage, write a poem—however you like to express yourself. Use the back of any of these sheets, a whiteboard, or any other big surface.
- Go to **page 16** and describe your vision in the cloud in the middle. If you need examples, look at the previous visions on **page 15**.
- Finally, share your advice on **how we we can make your vision a reality**. Put your advice in the arrows pointing towards your vision.



# DOWNTOWN'S HISTORY & VISIONS



Queen & Yonge, circa 1915  
Image from Chuckman's Toronto Nostalgia



Downtown, 1930s  
Image from Chuckman's Toronto Nostalgia



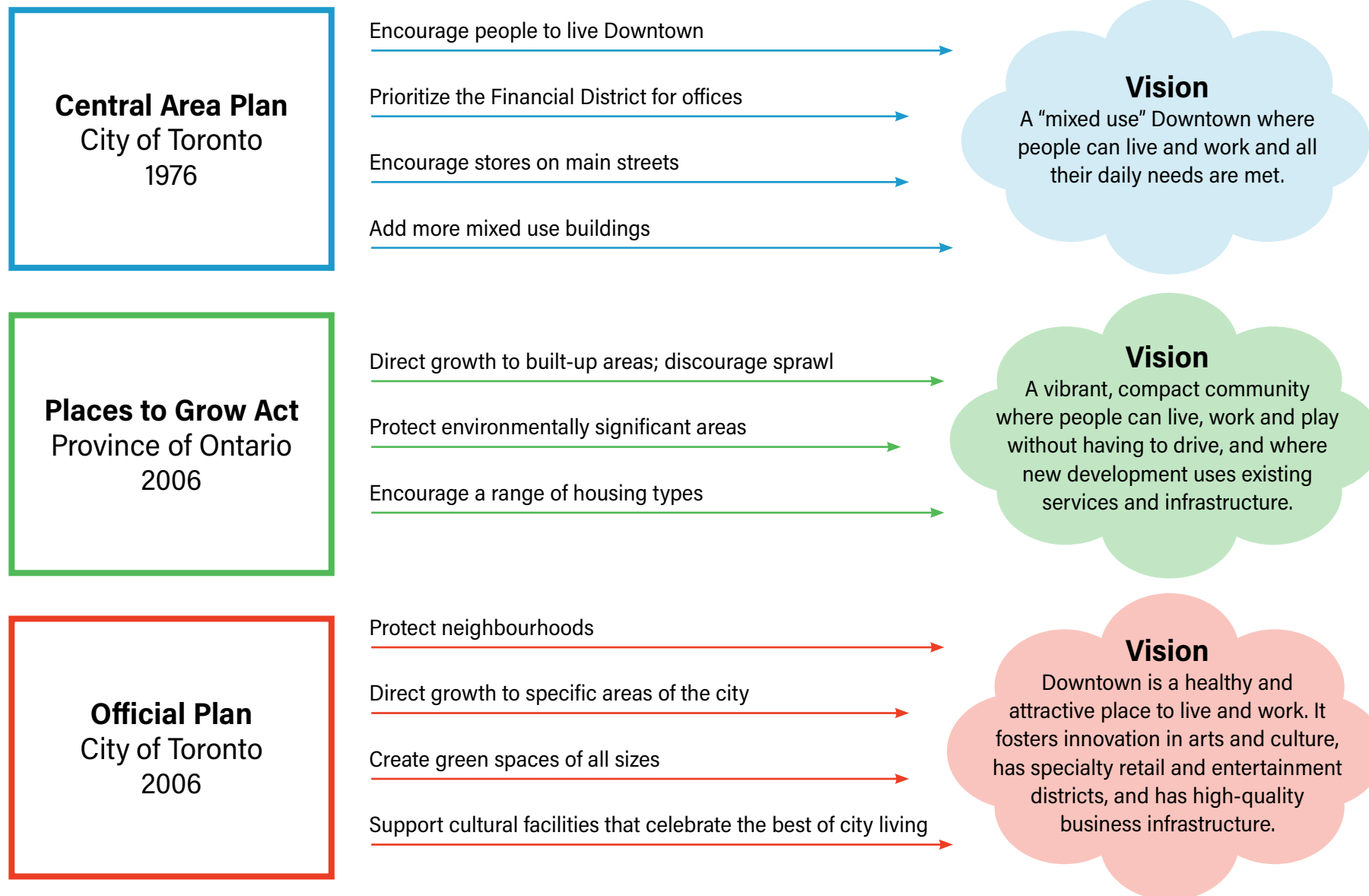
Skyline, late 1970s  
Image from Chuckman's Toronto Nostalgia



Downtown, 2014  
Photo by Jimmy Wu

## PREVIOUS VISIONS FOR DOWNTOWN

Here are three examples of some of our previous visions. Can you see how today's Downtown is the result of these visions?



## WRITE YOUR VISION & ADVICE

Once you've dreamt up your vision, describe it in words in the cloud in the middle. Along the arrows, write your advice on how to make your vision a reality. Use as many arrows as you'd like.

Along these arrows, write your advice on how to make your vision a reality.

**Vision**  
Write your vision for Downtown here.

**TIP:** If you need more space, you can copy this page onto a larger piece of paper or a whiteboard, or everyone can make their own copy and write their own vision.



## STEP 4: SUBMIT

### Share your Downtown Story, vision, and advice with us.

This is important—make sure you share your work with us! Your Downtown story, vision, and advice will help us develop a **new** vision and principles for Downtown, which will help us guide its change into the future.

### What to do

- Take a photo or scan these completed pages:
  - » **page 12** (Share Your Downtown Story)
  - » **page 16** (Write Your Vision & Advice)
- Take a photo of anything else your group made that you'd like to share: your sketches, drawings, and rough work. Share a photo of you and/or your group, too!

Email it all to:  
**TOcore@toronto.ca**

Thank you!



Photo by Vik Pahwa | <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vikpahwa/24193113320/>

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## #DTadvice

You can also post your responses and photos on social media using the hashtags **#DTadvice** and/or **#TOcore**.

On Twitter, make sure to tag **@CityPlanTO**.