

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

EXPANSION
PACK



Thanks for picking up the T0core Community Engagement Toolkit Expansion Pack. This Expansion Pack goes into more detail than what's provided in the T0core Community Engagement Toolkit, giving you more information about T0core's seven "Building Blocks."



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?



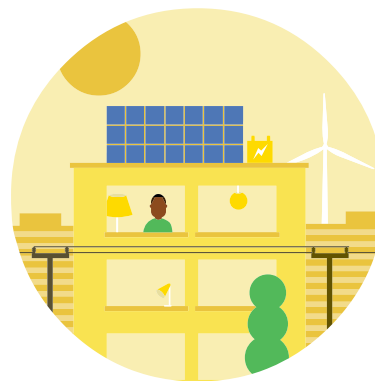
Economy

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?

BUILDINGS & NEIGHBOURHOODS

The City is developing a Secondary Plan for Downtown to shape future growth and secure the physical and social infrastructure necessary for a high quality of life. This includes strengthening land use and built form policies, providing clear direction on appropriate separation distances between towers and limiting shadowing on public spaces.

In the early days of city planning, planners would make a master plan for an “empty” piece of land, thinking about all the elements needed to support a community, things like transportation, water, and energy infrastructure; parks; community services; and the size and location of different kinds of land uses (like office and residential areas).

TOcore is thinking about the same kinds of things, but instead of starting with an empty piece of land, we’re planning for an existing, thriving area with a mature urban fabric. In other words, TOcore is master planning in an infill context.

The current plan for Downtown directs high-density, mixed-use development to specific areas while protecting other, more stable areas (like neighbourhoods). Because of these policies, many new communities have been built Downtown, and Downtown’s overall quality of life has improved through associated investments in parks, recreation facilities, and other physical and social infrastructure. We achieved many of these improvements by implementing large-scale growth planning exercises (like the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood or the Railway Lands), but since there are fewer and fewer similar big opportunities, we need a new plan to make sure that future growth brings the necessary improvements with it, especially as the capacity of our existing infrastructure — our parks, sewers, power lines, and community facilities — gets absorbed.

This new plan will include new overarching policies and maps to add clarity on how growth should occur Downtown. It will focus on five themes:

1. encouraging a mix of land uses while maintaining a strong Financial District and protecting neighbourhoods;



2. directing and shaping growth to ensure intensification occurs in the most appropriate locations while not negatively impacting public spaces;
3. encouraging public spaces that are vibrant, generous, diverse and serve the needs of all who live, work, play, learn in, and visit the Downtown;
4. a surface transit/active transportation strategy to facilitate movement, connectivity and accessibility; and
5. the timely provision of infrastructure to accompany growth.

This plan will also think about how to require and encourage more and better separation between towers to provide privacy for people inside the buildings and more sunlight to the sidewalks, streets, and parks on the ground. In June 2016, City Planning will bring forward new policies and zoning by-law requirements to address tower separation, as a first step.

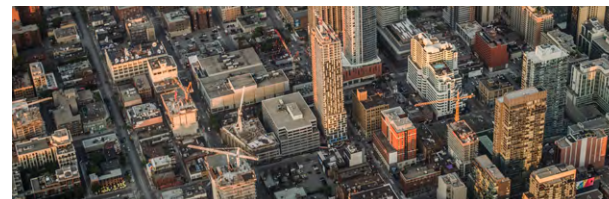


Photo by Jimmy Wu



Photo by Jay Woodworth
“Cabbagetown” (Creative Commons 2.0)

PARKS & PUBLIC SPACES

The City is developing a Parks and Public Realm Plan for Downtown to improve the quality and connectivity of public spaces and identify parkland improvement and acquisition priorities within the intensifying core.

Toronto's public realm – our parks, squares, streets, laneways, mid-block connections, trails, waterfront promenades, schoolyards, natural areas and other open spaces – is the space where civic life happens. These public spaces set the stage for daily social interaction in the city, as people travel to work or school, move around to shop or seek out a bite to eat, take in a festival or cultural event, get active in a park or playground, or just sit back and enjoy public life. Community is created in public spaces.

The Parks and Public Realm Plan under the TOcore Study presents an opportunity to generate a bold and compelling vision for the parks system and public realm network that puts public life, place-making and active mobility at the forefront of long-term planning, ensuring a lasting legacy for future generations. Consideration of “Big Moves” by looking for parkland opportunities in unlikely spaces (e.g. under the Gardiner Expressway or utilizing the rail corridor) or by improving access to ravine lands in the Lower Don Valley provides the chance for increasing the amount of parkland in unique ways.

This is an opportunity to look at the Downtown's public realm in a holistic way, within the context of its mature urban fabric. The process of developing the Parks and Public Realm Plan will be rooted in meaningful public engagement and will result in a long-term plan for Downtown's parks and public realm, with clear and tangible direction to leverage the existing great public places and spaces through development review and strategic capital improvements.



Photo by City of Toronto



Photo by City of Toronto

MOBILITY

The City is developing a transportation strategy that prioritizes walking, cycling, surface transit and essential access and identifies networks and other improvements to address movement, connectivity and accessibility for the growing number of people living, working and visiting Downtown.

The Downtown transportation system, in all its elements, will need to adapt and be shaped to growth by rethinking how people and goods can move around more easily and efficiently; by building attractive, livable communities; and by continuing to support the city's economic prosperity. By putting more residents closer to jobs within the Downtown, the advantage of increased proximity has partly off-set the need to expand auto transportation capacity into the Downtown, even as employment levels have risen. More people are able to walk, cycle, or take transit to travel around the Downtown, reducing their dependence on the private automobile. In fact, 75% of Downtown residents walk, cycle or take transit to work. This change in priority will be a focus of TOcore moving forward. Together with this approach, a recognition of network impacts of changes to individual streets will factor into any decision.

The upcoming transportation work will include the following: unlocking the full potential of both existing and future surface transit with a focus on the existing busiest routes and the areas anticipating growth; connecting, growing and renewing the Downtown cycling network by filling gaps and expanding bike parking and bike sharing; and planning for a more walkable Downtown with a focus on pedestrian safety, comfort, accessibility and connectivity. In addition, the issue of increasing pressure for space on our limited street right-of-ways for construction staging, loading and parking will also be included.

While coordinating its work with the ongoing initiatives of Transportation Services Division, Toronto Transit Commission and Toronto Parking Authority, TOcore will focus on downtown-specific mobility challenges and opportunities.



Photo by City of Toronto

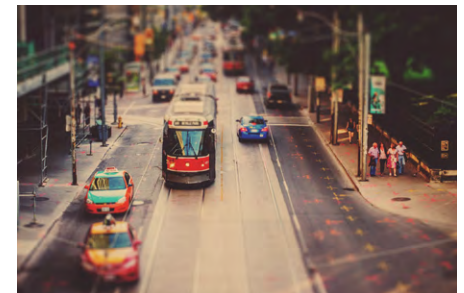


Photo by Ashton Pal, "Looking West" (Creative Commons 2.0)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The City is developing a community services and facilities strategy for Downtown that is responsive to the needs of a growing and diverse population for recreation, child care, libraries, schools, human services and public health.

The quality of life, health and well-being of Downtown residents, workers and students is linked to their access to community services and facilities: libraries, recreation facilities, community centres, schools, child care centres, shelters and employment centres. A comprehensive social infrastructure – delivered not just by the system of government but also by a network of partner community agencies – is essential to fostering complete communities and needs to be planned to meet emerging needs stemming from population and employment growth.

Downtown Toronto has a broad range of human service agencies – some of which are funded by the City through Social Development, Finance & Administration Division – that provide services not just to residents of neighbourhoods within the Downtown but also to workers and others from across the City and even the GTA. Good public transit access draws community and social service agencies to locate within the Downtown.

As the Downtown population has grown, the needs and demands for community programs and services have increased. Facilities and their programming have been challenged by the pace of growth and the needs of the growing and changing population they serve. While new facilities have been built in the Downtown and others are being planned, there is a need to review the system as a whole. TOcore will undertake a comprehensive assessment of community services and facilities, and the people that they serve, in the Downtown.



Photo by City of Toronto



Photo by City of Toronto

ECONOMY

The City is developing strategies for office, institutional, creative industries and retail to sustain a robust economy Downtown.

Downtown Toronto is Canada's leading commercial and cultural centre and the largest employment cluster within the regional economy. It is the country's premier hub for financial and business services and for creative industries, both of which are connected to global city networks. It is Ontario's capital precinct and a centre of provincial and municipal governmental functions and offices. The Downtown is the region's largest retail concentration featuring the Toronto Eaton Centre, the world's largest underground retail complex (the PATH) and thousands of small independent stores along traditional main streets and within unique districts such as Kensington-Chinatown. It is a major regional and international destination for tourism, arts and culture, entertainment, conferences and trade exhibitions.

Commercial and cultural activity in Downtown Toronto is flourishing. However, the success of Downtown has created issues that will need to be managed if we hope to sustain a robust economy. Competition for a finite number of developable sites in the Downtown and adjacent shoulder areas has created challenges for office and institutional uses. The ability of residential land uses to outbid office uses in much of Downtown has been identified as a potential economic threat. Class A office rents have escalated in the Financial District while a number of Class B and C buildings have been converted to residential uses, creating affordability issues that hamper the incubation of new businesses and the growth of small enterprises. Some Downtown institutions – such as hospitals, universities, colleges and cultural facilities – may be facing constraints when contemplating expansion.

By identifying these issues and responding to them with planning policy and economic development program initiatives, the City can support an economically robust and diverse Downtown and enable employers needing to be clustered in a central location to flourish in the decades ahead.



Photo by Jimmy Wu



Photo by City of Toronto

WATER

The City is undertaking an assessment of water infrastructure – water mains, sewers and storm sewers – that anticipates future population growth and establishes long-term investment priorities.

Toronto Water is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the City's water-related infrastructure, including but not limited to sewer, watermain and stormwater management systems. Toronto Water's main focus is on the state-of-good-repair of existing infrastructure and to support infrastructure expansion that accommodates future population growth, when opportunities and needs arise. Factors such as hydraulic performance and material life span of each type of infrastructure are considered as part of this work.

Currently, Toronto Water is implementing a multi-year capital works program to ensure that existing infrastructure, including 294 kilometres of watermains and 428 kilometres of sewers, can maintain their design function through state-of-good repair. This program is able to include improvements to the infrastructure to provide additional capacity for proposed development projects as applications are made.

In the past, Toronto's water infrastructure has been able to accommodate population growth in areas where industries moved out, such as King-Spadina and King-Parliament. As new neighbourhoods have been created, along the Waterfront and in the former Railway Lands, Toronto has successfully built new water infrastructure. However, capacity constraints in existing infrastructure are now becoming evident given the faster than anticipated residential and employment growth. It is likely that there will be a need to implement infrastructure expansion to accommodate the anticipated potential residential and employment populations. In addition to residential and employment growth, other factors such as the increase in the frequency of major storm events add pressure to the capacity of sewer infrastructure.



Photo by City of Toronto



Photo by City of Toronto

ENERGY

The City is developing an energy strategy for Downtown that addresses electricity demand, resilience to power outages and opportunities for local energy solutions.

A resilient energy infrastructure is critical to the growth, livability and economic vitality of the Downtown. The existing electricity infrastructure is under significant pressure with increased demand resulting from the rapid growth in the core and a constrained supply scenario. The use of air conditioning during the summer heat, in particular, adds to the strain, especially during peak demand and is anticipated to get worse. "Toronto's Future Weather and Climate Driver Study", commissioned by the Environment and Energy Division in 2011, predicted a five-fold increase in the number of heat waves by the year 2040. Recent severe weather events coupled with power outages have raised concerns about the vulnerability of downtown residents, particularly those living in high rise buildings.

Like sewers and watermain, electricity supply is something that many took for granted until fairly recently. However, the blackouts of 2003 and 2013, along with the 2014 ice storm, have shone a light on the critical importance of power supply to the core of the City. Planning for hydro services is very complex and regulated by the Ontario Energy Board. While Toronto Hydro must deliver service to new customers, planning for this delivery in a dense, complex environment can be a challenge and the pace of growth over the past few years has placed pressure on parts of the supply and distribution system.

New customers pay to connect to the grid, but service capacity must be available. Planning for overall growth in electrical demand is critical. Planning for new stations requires a minimum of 10 years lead time, based on econometric modeling that looks out 25 years into the future. While long-term planning has brought forward some major initiatives for Toronto Hydro, the pace of growth has created pressure to make timely connections to new major developments.

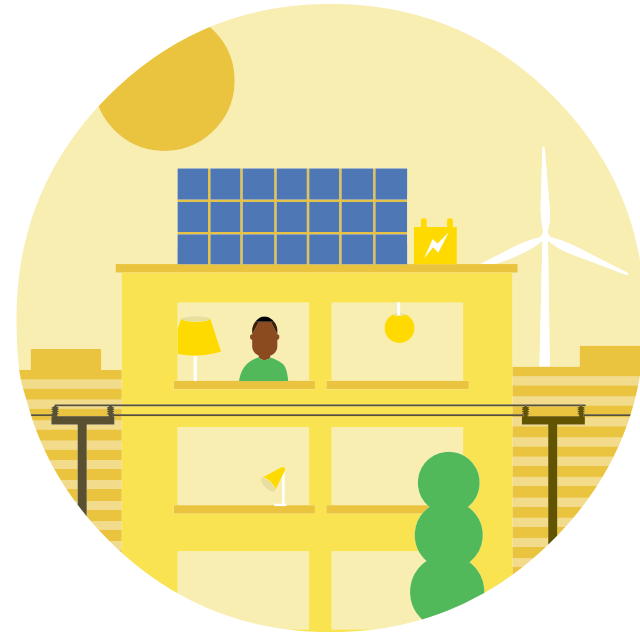


Photo courtesy of Toronto Hydro



Photo courtesy of Enwave

DOWNTOWN IS GROWING UP. WHAT'S YOUR ADVICE?

What do you think we should be thinking about as we develop our strategies for each of the 7 Building Blocks? Tell us in these boxes:

Submit your answers. Take a picture of your answers or scan this sheet. Then email it to: TOcore@toronto.ca

Buildings & Neighbourhoods

Parks & Public Spaces

Mobility

Community Facilities

Economy

Water

Energy

Is there anything else we should be thinking about?