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Toronto's Complete Streets Guidelines help implement the City's Official Plan vision for complete streets and other city building objectives.

This chapter outlines that vision for streets, its supporting goals and how these guidelines should be applied.

1.0

INTRODUCTION, VISION AND GOALS

1.1

OVERVIEW

Streets are vital places in Toronto. They are the common space where our city comes together. Streets are where children learn to ride bicycles, neighbours meet and couples stroll. Streets are the front door of our businesses, homes, parks and institutions. They reflect the values of our city and, at their best, are a source of pride for the residents and visitors alike. Streets also form essential networks that move people and goods safely and efficiently in our growing city.

How our streets are designed reflect our city's values. How our streets look, feel and function should demonstrate how we want our city to be shaped.

This document outlines a refined approach for street design—a 'complete streets' approach which considers different and competing roles. This 'complete streets' approach reinforces that streets should safely accommodate all users – pedestrians, cyclists, transit services and motor vehicles – and also support and enhance local neighbourhood context and character. It's about making streets that are safe, beautiful and vibrant places with efficient links in a multi-modal transportation network.

LIABILITY STATEMENT

Toronto's Complete Streets Guidelines are based on recent experiences designing and constructing streets and extensive consultation with City divisions, Agencies, Board and Commissions,

the public, Councillors, industry and community stakeholders, as well as best practices from local, provincial, national and international sources. It integrates and builds upon the latest available City policies, standards and guidelines. It is consistent with other provincial, federal and nongovernmental organizations, including the Ontario Traffic Council (OTC), Transportation Association of Canada (TAC), Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and other sources. These Guidelines also work within existing Provincial and Federal legislation pertaining the street design and operations, such as the Ontario Highway Traffic Act and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The Guidelines are based on the principle that all streets are different, and that no single design solution exists. A street's design will be tailored for the particular needs and opportunities created by local context, existing and future uses and users and dimensions of each street.

Street design is an evolving practice. In the coming years, design strategies used elsewhere, and technologies that do not yet readily exist in Toronto, will affect how we design our streets. Street designers should stay up-to-date on the latest best practices.

TORONTO'S COMPLETE STREETS GUIDELINES

- Assist in implementing the vision for Toronto's streets set out in the City's Official Plan.
- Provide a clear street design process that enhances collaboration on city street projects.
- Encourage the use of every opportunity to apply the Complete Streets Guidelines.
- Integrate adopted City policies, standards and bylaws as they relate to street design.
- Provide City and agency staff, consultants, private developers and community groups with information on how to design streets that meet city-wide objectives.

1.2

APPLICABILITY OF GUIDELINES

Toronto's Complete Streets Guidelines should be considered in all street design projects in the City of Toronto. They are most applicable in the planning and preliminary design project phases, though they may be useful to later phases in some street design projects.

The City of Toronto carries out a wide range of street projects. Large projects, like full street reconstructions or the construction of new streets, tend to have higher budgets, broader scopes and longer timelines. Smaller projects, resurfacing or utility cut repairs have lower budgets, more constrained scopes and often shorter timelines.

Large and small projects – and all in between – offer different opportunities to make streets more complete. In each instance, practitioners are encouraged to apply their best professional design judgement and to work collaboratively to develop suitable and creative designs. They should endeavour to make all streets as complete as possible within the boundaries of budget, scope, timelines and maintenance considerations. The range of street projects includes:

PLANS

- Area Plans, Secondary Plans, Precinct Plans, Context Plans, Transportation Master Plans
- Avenue and Corridor Studies

MAJOR STREET PROJECTS

- New construction
- Reconstruction or revitalization, major resurfacing
- Environmental Assessments for new and existing streets
- Business Improvement Area projects
- Highway interchanges and grade separated crossings

MEDIUM TO SMALLER SCALE PROJECTS

- Development applications
- New sidewalks or other pedestrian links
- New bicycle infrastructure or facilities
- Transportation Safety and Local Improvement Projects (TSLIP)
- Streetscape improvements (such as: trees, landscaping, street furniture, beautification, public art, wayfinding)
- Short-term or temporary interventions for evaluation
- Signs, signal installations, lighting
- Utility cut repairs (where it affects a street segment)

1.3

STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDE

The Guidelines document is organized in ten chapters that relate to the various steps of the street design and development process. Although the Guidelines document informs the entire process, it provides a particular focus on the planning and design phases where the majority of critical decisions take place.

Chapter 1: Introduction, Vision and Goals provides an overview of complete streets for Toronto and the use of this guide, and outlines Toronto's vision and goals for complete streets. These provide the lens through which project design should proceed.

Chapter 2: Street Types describes the various types of streets in the city, the type of place they aspire to become and the transportation function they must serve.

Chapter 3: Steps to Street Design and Decision Making outlines the steps to designing streets and the decision-making framework.

Chapters 4 through 9 provide an overview of design principles and considerations for the six key components and functions on the street. Links to further resources are also provided.

- Chapter 4: Street Design for Pedestrians
- Chapter 5: Street Design for Cycling
- Chapter 6: Street Design for Transit
- Chapter 7: Street Design for Green Infrastructure
- Chapter 8: Street Design for Roadways
- Chapter 9: Street Design for Intersections

The **Conclusion** summarizes the overall process to deliver street projects.

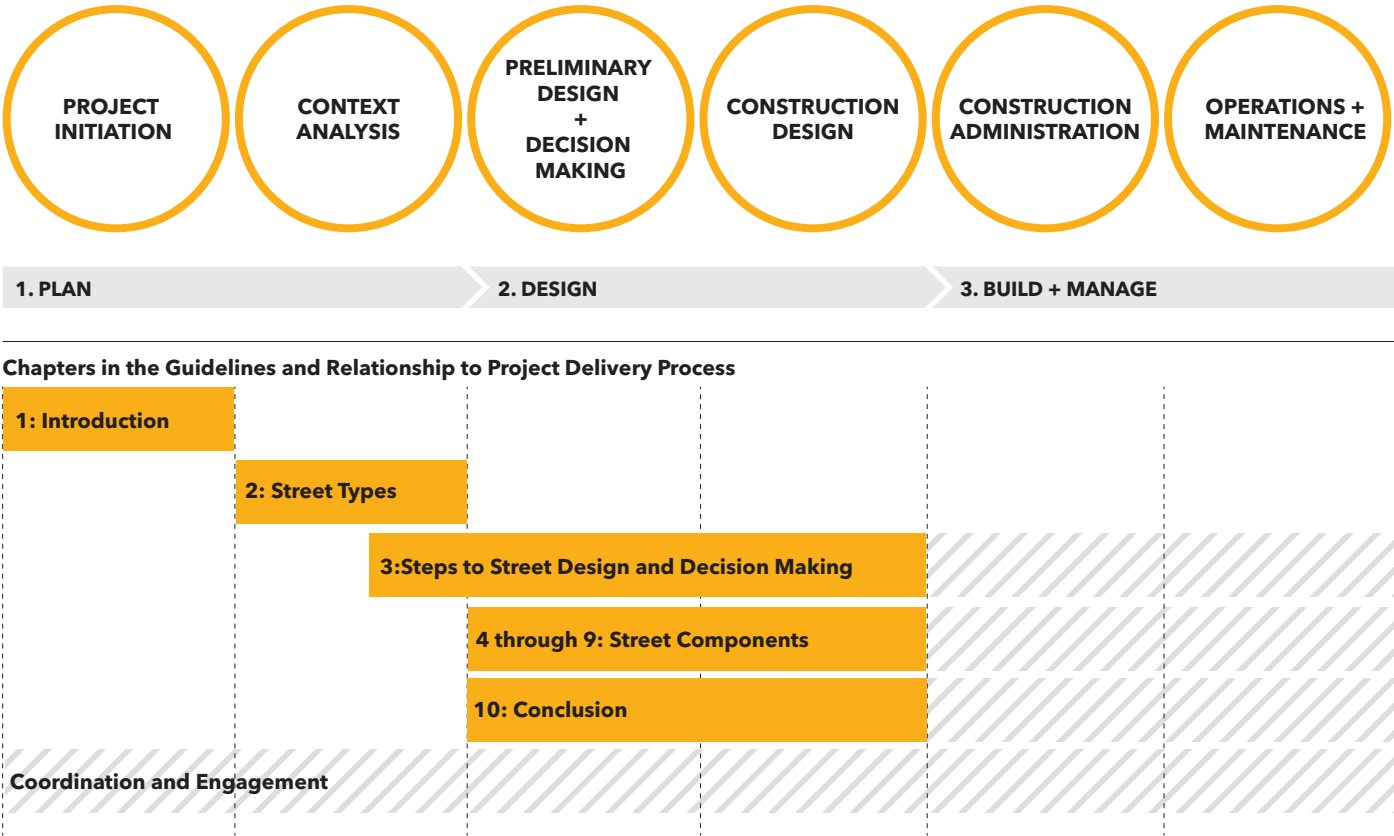


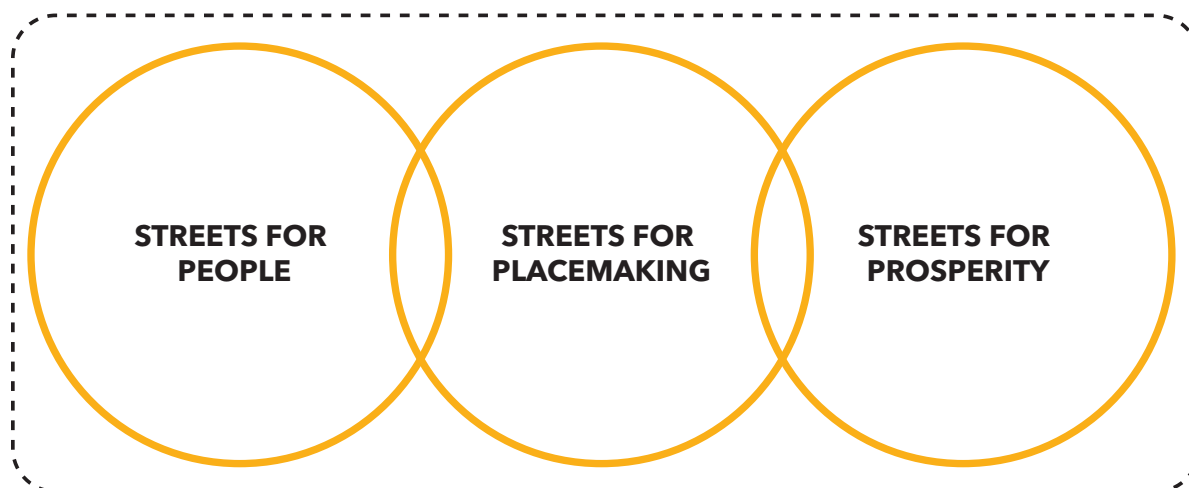
Figure 1-1: Toronto Complete Streets Guidelines Structure

1.4

VISION FOR COMPLETE STREETS

Toronto's vision for complete streets is built on the vision for streets in the City's Official Plan. There is a deep interdependence between how we design our streets and the people of the city, the health of our communities and the strength of our economy. Toronto's streets must serve a multitude of roles, functions and users. Complete streets should be designed for people, for placemaking and for prosperity.

TORONTO COMPLETE STREETS



Complete Streets for Toronto will help to satisfy several goals

STREETS FOR PEOPLE

Safe, Accessible, Choices,
Transportation, Networks,
Connectivity, Healthy, Resilient

Safety for all road users is a key priority and Toronto is committed to minimizing traffic injuries and fatalities. Streets are places where everyone should feel safe, comfortable and connected.

Streets should enhance human and environmental health by providing a range of safe, inviting and attractive choices for mobility and integrate all modes into a seamless network.

Streets should provide accessible sidewalk facilities that include clear, direct, unobstructed and continuous paths of context-sensitive width for all road users—regardless of physical ability or age.

STREETS FOR PLACEMAKING

Vibrant, Beautiful, Context Sensitive,
Sustainable

Streets are more than just corridors for movement, they are also important public spaces, occupying more than a quarter of the city's land area. Streets are places where people meet, linger and socialize, creating communities and shaping people's experiences of their city. This important placemaking role for streets should be considered in tandem with their transportation roles.

Streets should reflect the existing and planned function, scale and character of the neighbourhoods and communities that surround them, responding and respecting the local context and character, as well as their civic role in the city.

Streets should also help minimize impacts on climate and the environment, such as by providing a generous tree canopy, and should strive to incorporate innovative stormwater management features.

STREETS FOR PROSPERITY

Economic Vitality, Social Equity,
Flexible, Cost Effective

Streets are vital to the economy and our shared prosperity. People use streets to access their jobs, schools and places to shop for goods and services. Streets are the front door to many businesses that use streets to help deliver their goods and services.

The quality of a street's environment can affect its economic vitality. Toronto's streets must also be inclusive—people of all incomes, races, ages, genders and abilities should be able to safely access and benefit from functions provided by our streets.

Streets should also be flexible and have the ability to change over time, adapting to needs, preferences and technologies. Streets are not static, and should be cost effective to build, operate and maintain in all seasons.

Official Plan Sidebar: The ‘Complete Streets’ approach recognizes that there is no single way in which to make a street ‘complete’. It depends on numerous factors whose relative importance varies according to the character and context of each particular street. While it may not be viable or appropriate to accommodate every type of user or use on every street, the overall objective is to create a well-functioning street network that is planned and designed to provide safe access and efficient operation for all street activities and functions. Guidelines for applying the ‘Complete Streets’ approach will be developed to assist in resolving and balancing the competing demands placed upon the use of street rights-of-way and applied when streets are constructed, reconstructed, or otherwise improved.

CITY OF TORONTO OFFICIAL PLAN COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

In August 2014, City Council adopted a ‘complete streets’ Official Plan policy that recognized that although streets may have varying priorities, all new and existing streets should accommodate a variety of modes of transportation in a way that is safe and inviting for people of all ages and abilities. The policy emphasized that streets are for more than just transportation and required that they also be designed as unique public spaces that reflect community identity and support social and economic activity. Finally the policies required that while streets must efficiently serve their role in linking places, they must also be recognized as distinct places themselves.

Toronto’s Complete Streets Guidelines align with and integrate adopted City policies, standards and bylaws as they relate to street design.

City of Toronto Official Plan Policy 3.1.1(5):

“City streets are significant public open spaces which connect people and places and support the development of sustainable, economically vibrant and complete communities. New and existing City streets will incorporate a ‘Complete Streets’ approach and be designed to perform their diverse roles by:

a) balancing the needs and priorities of the various users and uses within the right-of-way, including provision for:

- i. the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians of all ages and abilities, cyclists, transit vehicles and users, goods and services vehicles, emergency vehicles, and motorists across the network; and
- ii. space for other street elements, such as utilities and services, trees and landscaping, green infrastructure, snow and stormwater management, wayfinding, boulevard cafés, marketing and vending, and street furniture;
- iii. ensuring the safety of vulnerable groups such as women, children, seniors and people with disabilities by implementing the Toronto Safer City Guidelines, or an updated version thereof.

b) improving the quality and convenience of active transportation options within all communities by giving full consideration to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users;

c) reflecting differences in local context and character;

d) providing building access and address, as well as amenities such as view corridors, sky view, and sunlight; and

e) serving community destinations and public gathering places.”

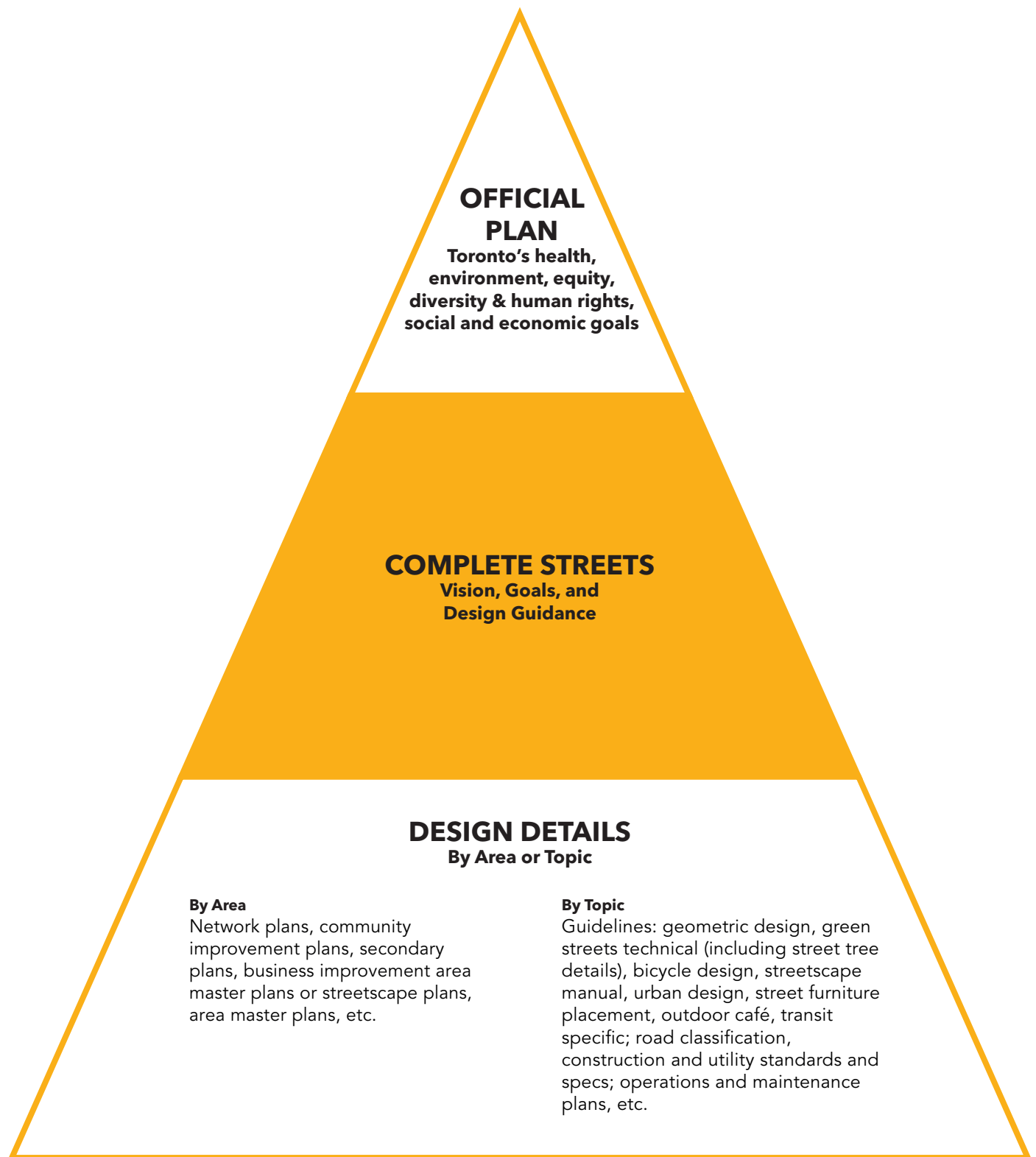
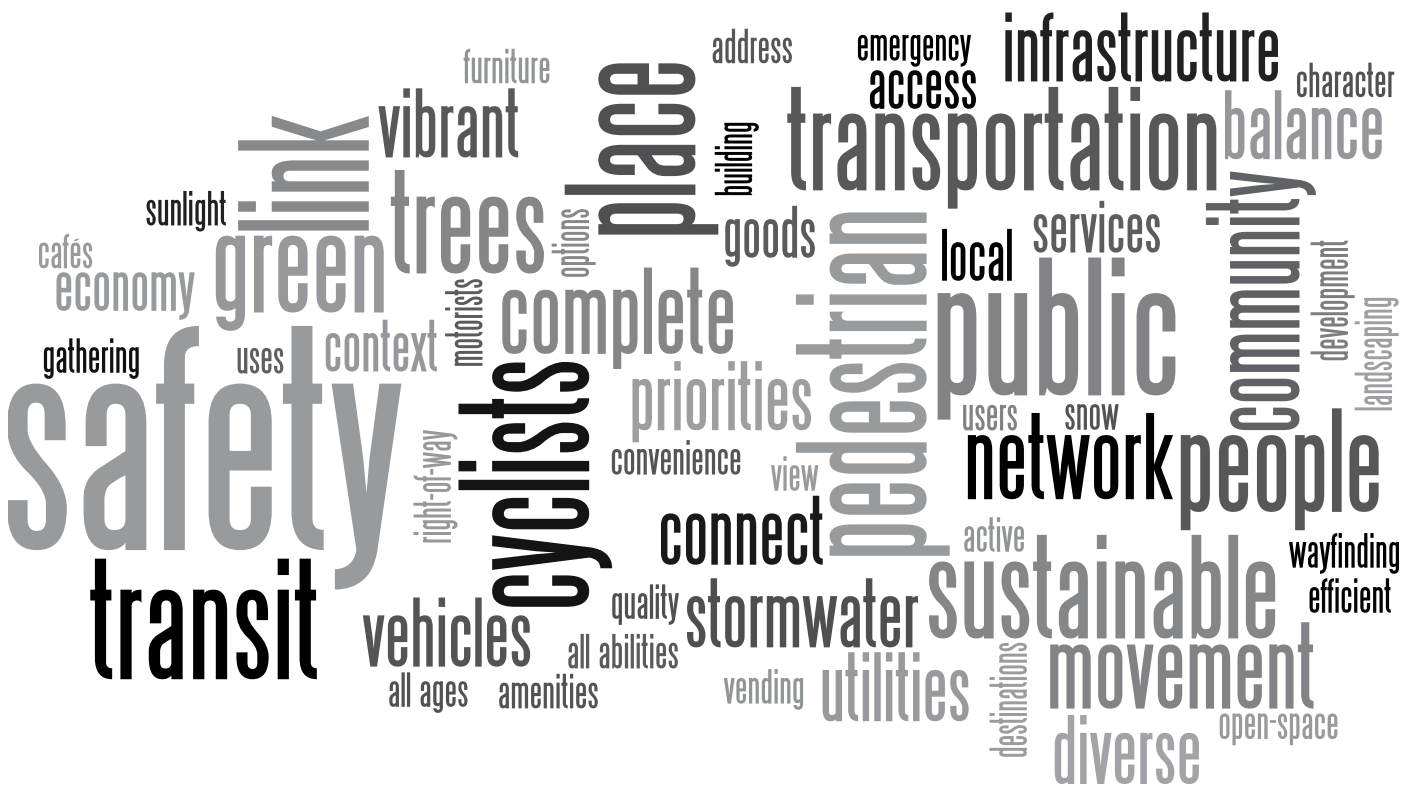


Figure 1-2: Toronto Complete Streets Policy Context

1.5

GOALS

The goals for Toronto's Complete Streets Guidelines reflect, reinforce and build on the vision for streets in the City's Official Plan. These goals are used throughout this document to inform the complete street design approach as the overall organizing framework for setting priorities, making decisions and evaluating alternative designs for Toronto street projects.

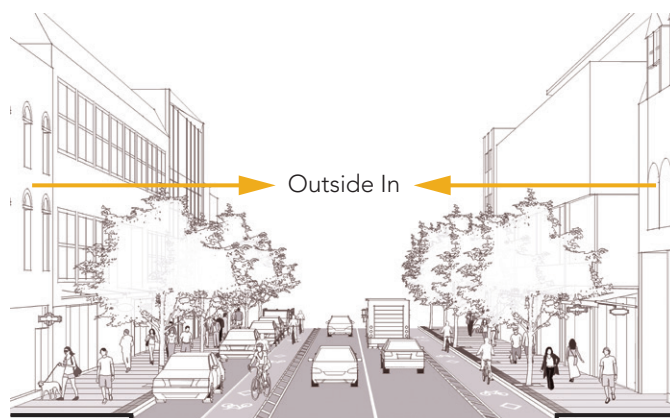


OUR DESIGN GOALS HAVE CHANGED



THEN

Auto-Mobility
Automobile Safety



NOW

Multi-modal Mobility + Access
Public Health/Safety
Economic Development
Environmental Quality
Livability/Quality of Life
Equity

c: Adapted from Michael Flynn (for NYC DOT)

1.5.1

STREETS FOR PEOPLE

Cities are built by and for people. Complete streets are safe and inviting, provide a range of attractive choices for mobility and integrate all modes into a seamless network. Complete streets enhance human and environmental health by providing an environment that enables and encourages active transportation. Complete streets are places where people feel comfortable and connected.

IMPROVE SAFETY & ACCESSIBILITY

Streets should be safe and accessible for people of all ages, genders and abilities, especially the most vulnerable—children, older adults and people with disabilities.

Key design objectives:

- Prioritize vulnerable users
- Design for desired target vehicle travel speed
- Minimize exposure risk for pedestrians
- Provide visible, predictable design
- Consider Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies
- Research, pilot and evaluate innovative safety treatments, especially those successfully adopted in other cities

GIVE PEOPLE CHOICES & CONNECTED NETWORKS

Streets should be designed to create connected networks for a variety of travel modes and give people choices for how they move around the city, whether on foot, bicycle, on transit or in a motor vehicle.

Key design objectives:

- Design and allocate space to move people more efficiently and enhance connectivity
- Design for person-throughput and mobility
- Understand and accommodate “desire lines” (typical paths to destinations for pedestrians and cyclists)
- Serve key community destinations and public gathering places
- Engage with stakeholders and advocates to help identify network priorities
- Accommodate emergency vehicles

PROMOTE HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIVING

Streets should help promote healthy and active lifestyles by making streets more comfortable and inviting people to walk and bicycle and be physically active.

Key design objectives:

- Design to encourage people to walk and cycle, as well as other active modes
- Design for people to be active on streets in all seasons
- Design streets to be inviting to all ages and to encourage social interaction

Improve Safety and Accessibility



Give People Choices and
Connected Networks



Promote Healthy and
Active Living



1.5.2

STREETS FOR PLACEMAKING

Streets are more than just corridors for movement. They shape the experience and memory of a city and they are, themselves, unique places in which to linger and enjoy. Streets should respect and respond to their existing and planned local context, physical characteristics and civic role in the city as a whole. They should be designed to encourage people to linger. Streets should help support objectives for an environmentally sustainable and resilient city.

RESPECT LOCAL CONTEXT

Streets should respond to the local area context, current and future land uses and relationships with adjacent buildings. There is no one-size-fits-all design approach. Streets should fit comfortably within the built and natural environment and reflect local identity and priorities.

Key design objectives:

- Respect and respond to existing and planned land uses, scale of buildings and setbacks
- Support a range of desired activities
- Help define and support adjacent buildings
- Serve key community destinations and public gathering places
- Engage with residents and community groups to understand the neighbourhood and its priorities
- Support and emphasize BIA identity

CREATE VIBRANT & ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC SPACES

Streets should strive to be vibrant and attractive public spaces where people want to spend time engaging in social, civic and recreational activities. Streets should be beautiful, attractive and inviting spaces that encourage investment and promote a sense of civic pride. Streets should help create a setting for daily city life and also accommodate special events. Streets should be well designed, with attention to landscaping, materials and maintenance so they remain attractive over time and in all seasons.

Key design objectives:

- Design streets for public uses
- Design to encourage gathering and social interaction
- Design for all-day 24/7 use
- Use attractive, durable materials
- Include space for street furniture
- Design green infrastructure to create aesthetically pleasing environments that also perform ecological and hydrological functions

IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Streets should improve the city's environmental sustainability by enhancing the tree canopy and landscaping, reducing urban heat island effects, reducing stormwater runoff, reducing energy consumption and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Key design objectives:

- Identify space for street trees or landscaping
- Minimize impermeable hard surfaces
- Prioritize sustainable transportation modes to reduce auto-dependency and improve air quality
- Design streets to complement adjacent parks, ravines and naturalized areas
- Design streets to use rainwater as a resource
- Protect and enhance natural heritage and environmentally sensitive areas

Respect Local Context**Create Vibrant and Attractive Public Spaces****Improve Environmental Sustainability**

1.5.3

STREETS FOR PROSPERITY

Streets are places of economic and social exchange. They are where we shop and work, meet friends and family and interact with other residents and visitors. To ensure a prosperous city, streets should support the local and regional economy, be equitable to all people and designed in a flexible and cost-effective manner to accommodate change over time.

SUPPORT ECONOMIC VITALITY

Streets should support the city's economic vitality by helping move people and goods efficiently and by supporting local shopping areas. The quality and vitality of a street influences and reflects the quality and vitality of economic activity along it. Design streets to invite patrons to retail and shopping districts. Streets should create environments that attract and leverage public and private investment. Streets should provide a range of transportation options to provide access for employees, residents and tourists as well as goods movement.

Key design objectives:

- Design to support retail and shopping
- Accommodate goods movement, delivery and loading
- Engage and partner with local businesses and BIAs
- Leverage public and private investment
- Accommodate space for utilities

ENHANCE SOCIAL EQUITY

Streets should be developed to remove barriers to people of all incomes, races, ages, genders and abilities can safely use and benefits from Toronto's streets. Toronto's streets should be inclusive for everyone and help provide people with opportunities to thrive.

Key design objectives:

- Design inclusive streets for people who walk, cycle or take transit
- Create connected and safe routes to support travel to employment and community services
- Engage and partner with local community and social service agencies to better understand social equity issues
- Incorporate neighbourhood socio-economic context, issues and priorities

BE FLEXIBLE & COST EFFECTIVE

Streets should be able to adapt to the city's changing needs and priorities over time. The design of complete streets should consider economic, social and environmental benefits and costs, as well as construction, operations and maintenance. Complete streets should be designed with the full lifetime of the street in mind. Complete streets recognize seasonal variations, accommodating the need for snow clearance and storage, dramatic temperature variations and the increasing incidence of major climatic events. Complete streets build resiliency in their networks, materials and the modes of travel they accommodate.

Key design objectives:

- Allow for incremental change over time, phasing and interim conditions
- Understand and account for the total lifetime cost
- Design streets to be resilient to extreme weather events
- Select durable materials

Support Economic Vitality



Enhance Social Equity



Be Flexible and Cost Effective

