



Resilient Toronto

Agenda Setting Workshop Summary



Introduction

This report provides a summary of Toronto's Resilience Agenda Setting Workshop (ASW), hosted by the City of Toronto in partnership with 100 Resilient Cities on December 8, 2016.

100 Resilient Cities - Pioneered by The Rockefeller Foundation (100RC) helps cities around the world become more resilient to social, economic, and physical challenges that are a growing part of the 21st century. In May 2016, Toronto was selected to join the 100 Resilient Cities network.

Toronto's Agenda Setting Workshop brought together more than 110 stakeholders from a broad range of sectors to begin to identify and discuss the critical issues to be considered in preparing Toronto's resilience strategy. The objectives of the Workshop, which was Toronto's first official engagement with 100RC, were to:

- Engage key stakeholders and facilitate a discussion and shared understanding of resilience and the 100RC initiative.
- Inform the development of Toronto's Resilience Strategy by beginning the process of identifying issues, needs, priorities, assets and stakeholders.
- Build relationships, buy-in and commitment from interested parties to support the strategy development process.

The workshop began with Mayor John Tory, City Manager Peter Wallace, and Elizabeth Mercer, Chief Operation Officer (100RC), welcoming participants to the Agenda Setting Workshop (ASW). Recognizing that Toronto is undertaking this process from a position of relative strength with respect to the state of our social and physical resilience, participants were challenged to consider the stresses and shocks the City will face.

As a member of the 100RC network Toronto will receive:

- Funding to hire a Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) to guide the City's resilience building efforts.
- Expert support to create a Resilience Strategy.
- Access to a platform of solutions, service providers and partners from the private, public and NGO sectors to support the development and implementation of the resilience strategy.
- Membership in a global peer-to-peer network of CROs who may share and learn from each other.

Key Findings

- Social inequity, transit and transportation issues, lack of affordable housing and climate change are top of mind concerns for participants.
- Resilience thinking and language provides a 'common home' to integrate existing efforts to address chronic stresses and shocks.
- Toronto's resilience strategy needs to be informed by lived experience and integrate the voices and perspectives of diverse stakeholders.
- There is need for greater integration and collaboration between and across sectors that typically operate in silos.
- We need to develop solutions that are scalable city-wide.
- Engagement and transparency should be at the core of Toronto's resilience efforts.



Image: Mayor John Tory, City Manager – Peter Wallace, Elizabeth Mercer, Chief Operating Officer (COO) – 100 Resilient Cities.

- Some issues are outside of the City's control. Opportunities exist to co-create solutions with other levels of government, private sector, philanthropy and communities.
- Toronto's resilience work needs to focus on a broad range of issues, much more than disaster risk reduction and emergency planning.
- Perceptions of the City's strengths and weaknesses vary based on an individual's perspective and/or affiliation.
- There is a great deal of positive work already being done in Toronto with a broad range of stakeholders, which often goes unnoticed.

city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

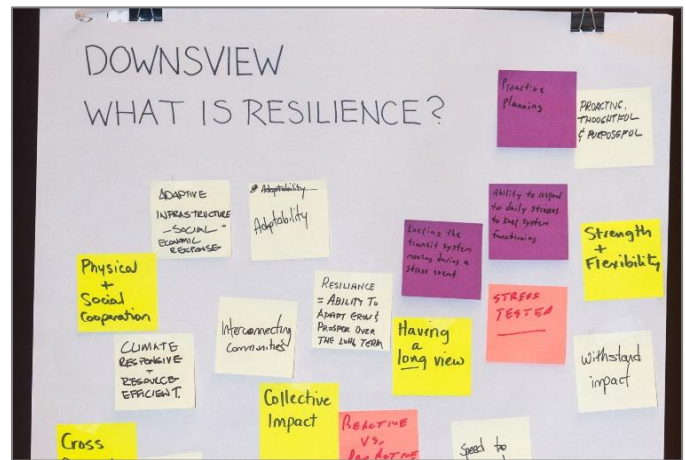


Image: Defining resilience as informed by participants at the ASW

Stakeholder Participation

The success of the workshop and the richness of discussions was largely the result of the enthusiasm and diversity of the stakeholders. Organized into diverse groups, participants were asked to:

Participants engaged in an in-depth discussion about the 100RC definition of resilience and what it means for Toronto in particular. The discussion elicited a broad range of perspectives on what makes a city resilient.

1. Discuss and define resilience and what it means for Toronto.
2. Identify the various shocks and stresses that affect the city and prioritize them in terms of their likelihood and potential consequences.
3. Identify perceptions of where Toronto is currently performing well and not so well using the City Resilience Framework.
4. Consider the interdependencies and interactions between stresses and shocks, and the potential impact on Toronto's most vulnerable populations.

Resilience...

- Is the ability of systems to bounce back and thrive
- Enables social inclusion and innovation
- Builds social capital and community
- Is a commitment to society as a whole
- Builds capacity for individuals and organizations to think ahead, develop connections and practices to better face change now and into the future

In addition to a lively discussion in the room, the conversation quickly spread on social media with the #resilientTO hashtag trending across the country.

Stresses and Shocks

Key Shocks and Stresses for Toronto

What is resilience in Toronto?

As defined by 100 Resilient Cities: Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a

- Extreme weather/climate
- Infrastructure failure
- Cyber attacks
- Poverty and inequity
- Aging infrastructure
- Infrastructure not sized for a growing population
- Lack of affordable housing

Workshop participants were asked to identify the most significant shocks and chronic stresses facing Toronto. One of the primary concerns expressed was the link between the city's physical and social infrastructure. The diversity of perspectives led to a discussion of how they overlap.



Image: Participants from various organizations discussing Toronto's top stresses & shocks, their likelihood and impact.

Increasingly, the relationship between various stresses and shocks highlighted the need for a resilience approach. For example, faced with the prospect of increases in extreme weather and population growth, how does the City 'right-size' its social and physical infrastructure with limited resources.

Strengths and Weaknesses



Image: The highly interactive process of determining where Toronto's strengths and opportunities lie in the context of the 100RC City Resilience Framework.

Using the [100RC City Resilience Framework \(CRF\)](#), participants were asked to consider Toronto's strengths and opportunities for improvement in four areas: Leadership and Strategy; Health and Wellbeing; Economy and Society; and Infrastructure and Environment, Results, captured in real time, indicated a fair degree of consensus among participants.

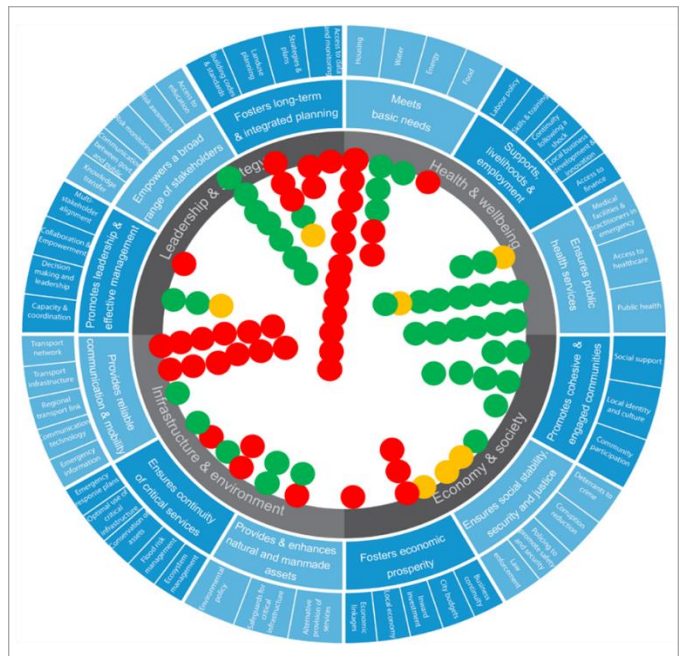


Image: A screen-grab from the live-polling of exercise to assess Toronto's strengths and weaknesses against the City Resilience Framework (CRF)

Additional Insights

- There was the perception that where access to services is fairly distributed there were generally positive results.
- Some participants raised a concern that costs are being deferred to the future.
- There was disagreement on the question of whether the City needed more resources, or rather a better allocation of resources.
- In many cases issues are recognized and a mandate exists to address them, but funding isn't available.
- The City was viewed to have many great policies in place, but there was a perception that implementation is lacking.

Areas identified as most in need of improvement included those associated with the City's transportation network/infrastructure and housing. Strengths were clustered around access to health care, public health and education. By certain measures, Toronto may appear to be doing well, but there are often great disparities between neighbourhoods and communities. For example, poverty and housing issues are more glaring in some neighbourhoods than others.

Interdependencies between stresses and shocks

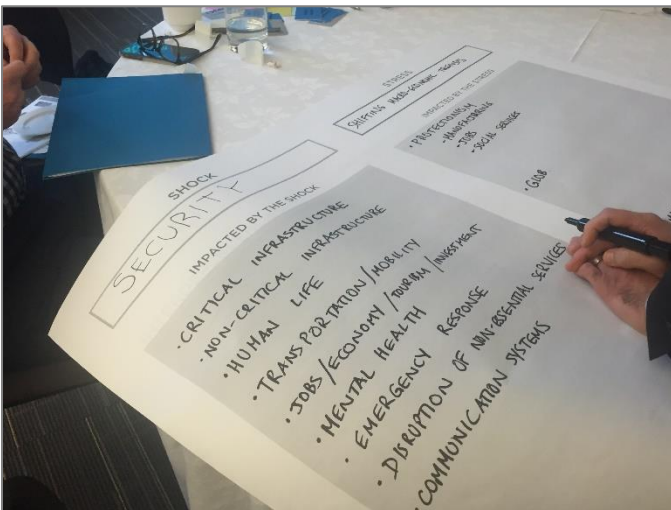


Image: Exercise 4 involved a discussion among participants of the interdependencies between shocks and stresses and their impact on vulnerable populations

Building on earlier exercises, participants were asked to consider the interdependencies between a stress and a shock, how a real time interaction between the two might affect the most vulnerable populations in Toronto, and who is best positioned to provide resources or expertise to address these interdependencies.

The exercise was challenging and illustrated that the connections between stresses and shocks were not always easy to see. Nevertheless, the concept of cascading impacts and interdependencies was explored and discussed in detail, in particular, the impacts on vulnerable populations.

Interdependencies between stresses and shocks and impacts on the vulnerable people – An example

- Extreme heat (shock) and poor population health (stress) are closely connected. Extreme heat affects vulnerable populations more acutely, specifically the elderly, young children, people taking certain medications and the socially isolated.

Panel Discussion

Over lunch, Sharon Avery, President and CEO of Toronto Foundation facilitated a conversation with Elizabeth Mercer, 100RC COO and Aaron Koch, Chicago's Chief Resilience Officer (CRO). They shared their experience and insights on the role of philanthropy in supporting resilience, the challenges of measuring progress, what is important for the success of Toronto's CRO, and the critical need to strike a balance between addressing chronic stresses and acute shocks.

Advice from Chicago's CRO

- Be bold, be creative. Go places that are uncomfortable. Hone in on the biggest opportunities and challenges.
- Drive towards solutions and different ways to do things. Harvest ideas that exist around the world.
- Look beyond city-wide indicators to truly understand disparity, neighbourhood by neighbourhood if necessary, to serve citizens better.
- The heart of resilience is neighbours helping neighbours – but government, the private sector and philanthropy have a key role to play.



Image: A lunchtime conversation between Sharon Avery, CEO and President of the Toronto Foundation, Elizabeth Mercer, COO – 100RC and Aaron Koch, Chicago's Chief Resilience Officer (CRO).

Next Steps

Information and insights gleaned from participants will help to inform further engagement and consultation efforts, as work continues to develop Toronto's resilience strategy. Once our CRO is in place, strategy development will take place in two phases:

- Phase I will be a two to three month process to create a baseline of Toronto's resilience - Preliminary Resilience Assessment (PRA). This phase will involve considerable stakeholder consultation and the identification of key areas of focus for the second phase of work.
- Phase II will involve a detailed analysis of key issues and opportunities facing the city, in consultation with key stakeholders and experts, and ultimately deliver an action-oriented Resilience Strategy for the City of Toronto.

More information

- 100resilientcities.org
- toronto.ca/resilientto
- Email: resilientto@toronto.ca
- Join the conversation: [#resilientTO](https://twitter.com/resilientTO)