



DOWNTOWN PARKS AND PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY SUMMARY



Proposed Downtown Plan

- The Proposed Downtown Plan is a **25-year vision** that sets the direction for the city centre as the cultural, civic, retail and economic heart of Toronto, and as a great place to live.
- The Plan is a **response to rapid growth** in the core that is placing **pressure on physical and social infrastructure**.
- The Plan will provide a renewed, comprehensive planning framework for 17 square kilometers – the **whole of the Downtown**.
- The Proposed Downtown Plan will be adopted as a **Secondary Plan** within the Toronto's Official Plan, with **five supporting Infrastructure Strategies**.



Proposed Downtown Plan

MAP 1 Downtown Plan Boundary

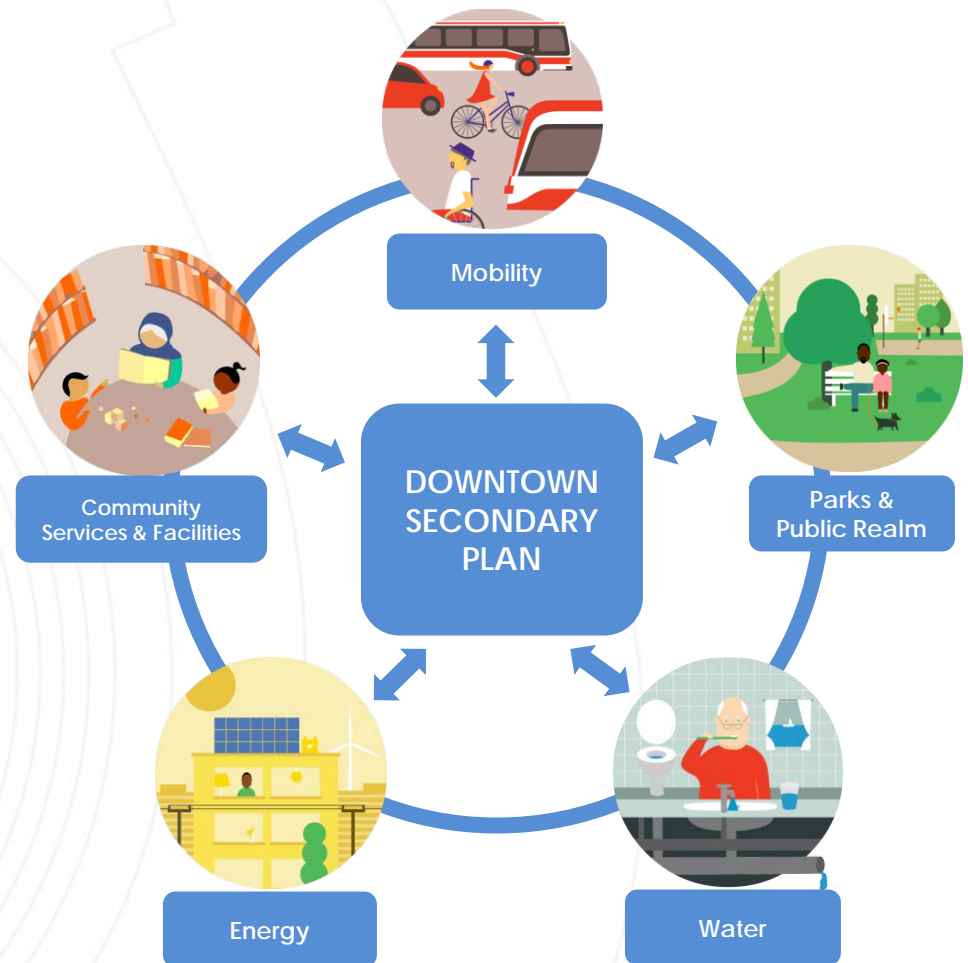
— Downtown Plan Boundary

■ Central Waterfront Secondary Plan



Infrastructure Strategies

- **Five Infrastructure Strategies** will work together to implement the vision, goals, and policies of the Downtown Plan and ensure infrastructure planning is aligned with long-term growth.
- The **purpose** of the Infrastructure Strategies is to:
 - Set **priorities** for the infrastructure investment needed to support growth
 - Provide a **vision, ideas and guidance** for implementation
 - Promote **coordination** among corporate and community partners throughout implementation.
- Each Infrastructure Strategy:
 - Identifies infrastructure **challenges** facing a growing Downtown.
 - Recommends **implementation strategies and actions**
 - Advances **related initiatives**
 - Sets **priorities and timeframes**
 - Determines required **investments**.





What is the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan?



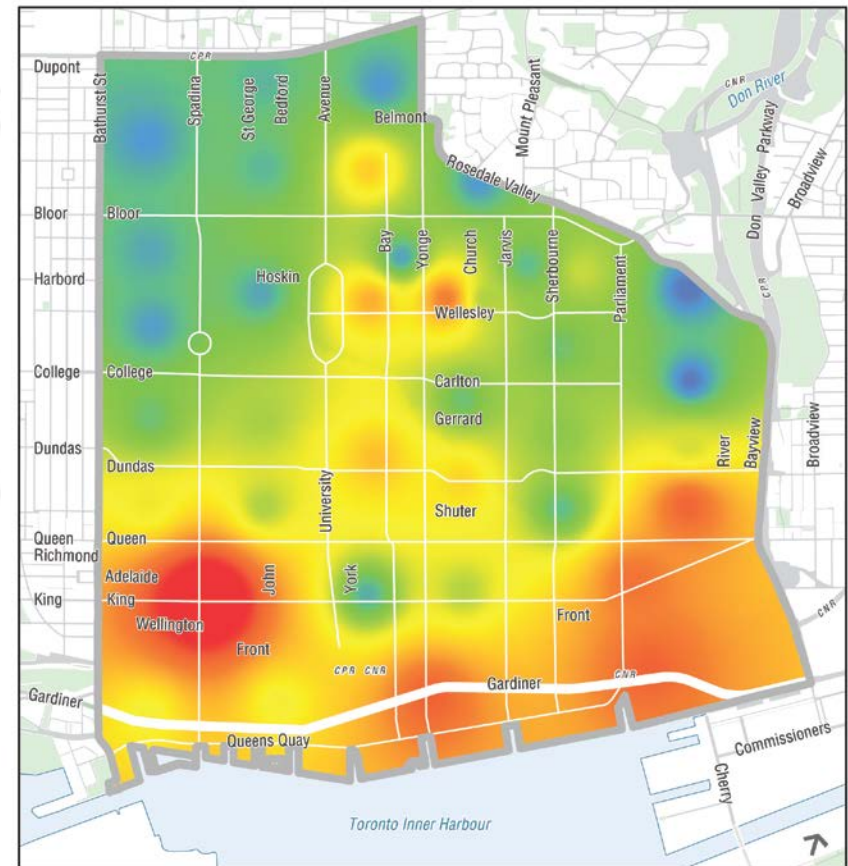
The Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan:

- Is a **25-year** integrated plan for parks, streets and other open spaces.
- Will improve the **quality and connectivity** of public spaces, and identify **parkland improvement and acquisition** priorities within an intensifying Downtown.
- Provides a **set of transformative ideas and initiatives** to inform decisions about land acquisition, budgets, programming and design of new and renewed streets, parks and open spaces.
- Is the **implementation tool** for the Downtown Plan.



Downtown is Growing Rapidly

- Population and employment growth in the Downtown is putting tremendous pressure on Downtown parks, open spaces and streets.
- 2041 population and employment projections (not including visitors or students) estimate that Downtown will grow:
 - From 238,000 to 475,000+ Residents
 - From 500,000 to 850,000+ Jobs
- Many Downtown parks are the most intensely used in the city, due to the number of residents, the large Downtown workforce, visitors to Toronto and dogs that frequent them daily.
- Narrow streets are under pressure to accommodate different users, ranging from pedestrians and cyclists, to transit, delivery vehicles and automobiles.
- Street furniture, bike parking, street trees and outdoor cafés are increasingly competing with a growing volume of pedestrians on the sidewalk.



Projected Population Change 2011 - 2041



TOcore Study Area

Source: Toronto City Planning Division, Research and Information - October 2016



Parkland Provision Has Not Kept Pace with Rapid Growth in the Downtown

- Most of the Downtown currently falls within the City's lowest local parkland provision rate at less than 0.45 hectares per 1,000 residents.
- As densities of new developments continue to increase on smaller sites, the gap between parkland provision and demand widens.
- To maintain current parkland provision levels in 2032, the City would need to acquire 165 hectares (397 acres) of new parkland in the Downtown.



Addressing Challenges

Downtown Has Among the Lowest Parkland Levels of Park Provision per Resident and Employee



3.7 m²

**PARK AREA/
RESIDENT & EMPLOYEE
(2016)**

**TOcore
Boundary**



18 m²

**PARK AREA/
RESIDENT & EMPLOYEE
(2016)**

City-wide



Addressing Challenges



It's Time to Update Toronto's Alternative Parkland Dedication Rate

- Section 42 of the Planning Act is a tool for **securing parkland or cash-in-lieu** of parkland as a condition of development or redevelopment.
- Section 42 stipulates a standard parkland conveyance rate and an “**alternative rate**” in the case of higher density development or redevelopment in areas such as Downtown. The current alternative rate is **over 10 years old**.
- The alternative rate includes a series of **site caps** that set a maximum land dedication or payment of cash-in-lieu **based on site size**.
- When cash-in-lieu is provided it can be used to acquire, construct or improve parkland or recreational facilities.
- Since the rate was approved in 2005, development intensity has increased city-wide by **205%** by project.
- Parkland need has changed in the Downtown. **Over 83%** of growth across Toronto is in vertical communities.
- Over **90%** of sites in Toronto's high growth areas are small parcels less than 0.5 ha (1.2 acres). This is reflective of infill development. On-site parkland dedication on these small sites is often not ideal.



Addressing Challenges

The Alternative Rate Has Not Kept Pace with Development Intensity in Toronto

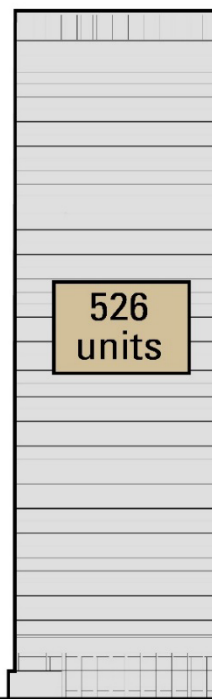
- Current policy sets a cap for cash-in-lieu based on site size.
- Over 90% of development across Toronto's Downtown and Centres is on sites that hit the 10% cap of the site or equivalent value.
- Once the cap is reached, a development's additional density does not contribute cash-in-lieu of parkland. However, the demand and need for parks increases with this additional density.
- To that end, the development industry has experienced a relative decrease in the requirement to contribute to parkland as a portion of overall development costs.



Cash-in-lieu payment

\$2.9 million

\$5,776 per unit

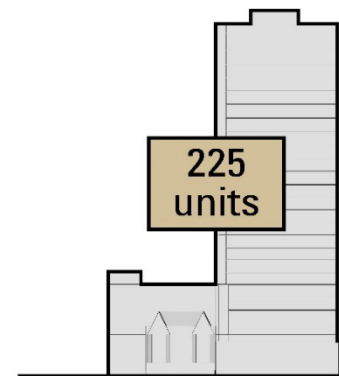


Bloor + Sherbourne

Cash-in-lieu payment

\$2.7 million

\$13,567 per unit



Bloor + Yonge



Addressing Challenges



Towards a New Alternative Rate That Supports Growth and Enhances Liveability

- The City has the authority to change the current alternative rate once a Parks Plan has been developed.
- The City will consult with the development industry on opportunities for a new rate and/or caps to the rate.
- New alternative rates will be brought forward for some Secondary Plan Areas in 2018 (TOcore, Yonge-Eglinton).
- A new city-wide alternative rate will be considered upon completion of the City-wide Parkland Strategy.



Addressing Challenges



The Downtown Presents Significant Challenges for Acquiring Parkland

- Small parcels: Small development sites do not create adequate amounts of functional parkland. 95% of development sites Downtown are less than 0.5 ha (2009-2015).
- Expensive sites: High land values Downtown make even small sites expensive.
- Limited size and functionality of Downtown parks: Small parks serve limited functions, and are immediately under immense pressure to provide useable space to residents.
- Limited purchasing power: The City of Toronto Act does not permit the municipality to pay more than the appraised value of land being acquired for parks, even though market prices in the Downtown are considerably higher than appraised values.



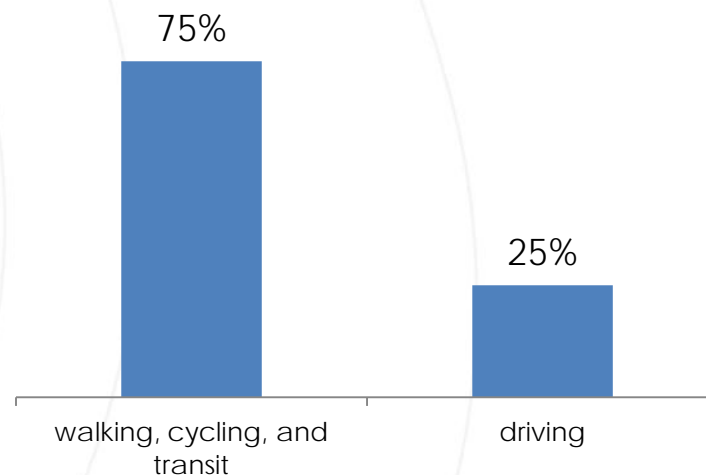
Addressing Challenges



Increased Demand for Walking, Cycling & Surface Transit

- The overwhelming majority of people living Downtown walk, cycle, or take transit to work. Half of households don't even own a car. At many intersections, pedestrians far outnumber cars.
- Active transportation is on the rise. The number of residents living Downtown who walk and cycle to their places of employment in the Downtown is increasing.
- The streetcars serving Downtown are seeing increasing ridership as a result of new residential and employment growth, both within the Downtown and in neighbourhoods close to the Downtown.
- Our streets also enable vehicle traffic to circulate within the Downtown, especially for goods delivery and other essential traffic such as fire and emergency vehicles.

How do Downtown residents commute?
(Morning Peak 7am-10am)





Parks and Public Realm Goals

The Parks and Public Realm Plan will advance the **goals** identified in the Proposed Downtown Plan:



- 3.4 Public spaces will be diverse, accessible, flexible, dynamic and safe, supporting year-round public life and setting the stage for daily social interaction and community building.
- 3.8 A connected public realm with an expanded system of parks and open spaces linked together by a fine-grain network of streets, laneways, mid-block connections and pathways will provide the foundation for health, liveability and public life as Downtown grows.



Parks and Public Realm Goals

The Parks and Public Realm Plan will address additional policy **principles** identified in the Proposed Downtown Plan:



- 7.1 The provision of parkland is an essential element of *complete communities*. New parkland will be provided to support and be concurrent with growth.
- 7.2 Expansions and improvements to the public realm system will be accessible, inclusive and welcoming to all people who live, work and visit Downtown.
- 7.15 The Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan will serve as the framework to improve the quality, quantity and connectivity of parks, open spaces and the public realm, and will guide parkland acquisition priorities and the allocation of capital funding.



From Vision to Reality

VISION

- Ideas
- Opportunities
- Constraints

FEASIBILITY

- Technical review
- Financial review
- Options

DUE DILIGENCE

- Pilot projects
- Concept refinements
- Preferred option

DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

- Procurement
- Construction and phasing
- Ongoing maintenance
- Monitoring

PLAN ► **DESIGN** ► **BUILD**

C O N S U L T A T I O N

The Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan (PPR Plan) provides a framework that will guide future change and investment in the public realm and parks for our growing Downtown. The PPR Plan is organized into three scales: regional, district and local. Each scale includes concepts that provide an example of the type of change or opportunity that could be explored further. Moving from the vision and concepts illustrated in the PPR Plan to the reality of implementation will happen through a number of steps. Each step will provide additional technical review and analysis, develop additional options for consideration, and will solicit further input and feedback from the community and stakeholders. The PPR Plan also promotes coordination among corporate and community partners for implementation.

VISION TO FEASIBILITY

Feasibility studies are needed to understand design, technical and financial requirements of each concept, and to develop options that address those requirements.

FEASIBILITY TO DUE DILIGENCE

As a concept moves into the design phase, a due diligence exercise such as a pilot project to test an option may be needed in order to collect data, refine the concept and develop a preferred option. Where appropriate an Environmental Assessment process may be initiated.

DUE DILIGENCE TO IMPLEMENTATION

Finally, moving into the building phase, the preferred option is selected and the details of procurement and construction are considered. Once implemented, ongoing maintenance and monitoring will be needed to ensure the project continues to meet the needs of a growing Downtown.



Parks & Public Realm Framework

SCALE 1: REGIONAL



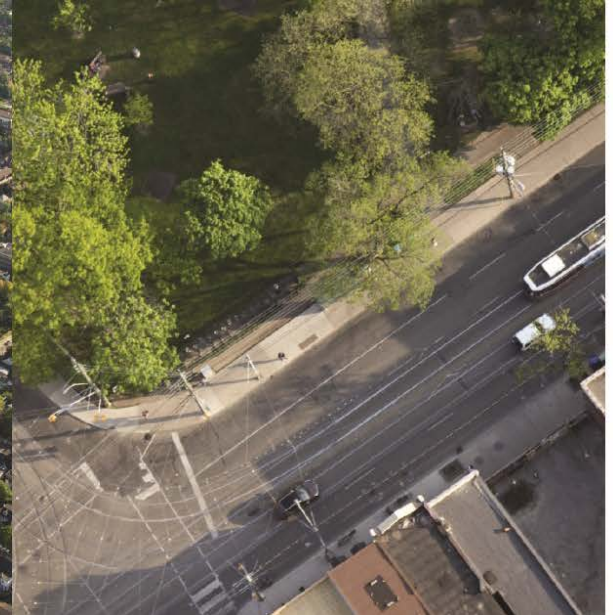
THE CORE CIRCLE
12 GREAT STREETS

SCALE 2: DISTRICT



PARK DISTRICTS
CIVIC PRECINCT
THE STITCH
AROUND THE BAY

SCALE 3: LOCAL



LOCAL PLACES

- Parkettes
- Laneways
- Schoolyards
- Churchyards
- Cemeteries
- POPS
- Streets to Parks
- Overlooked Places

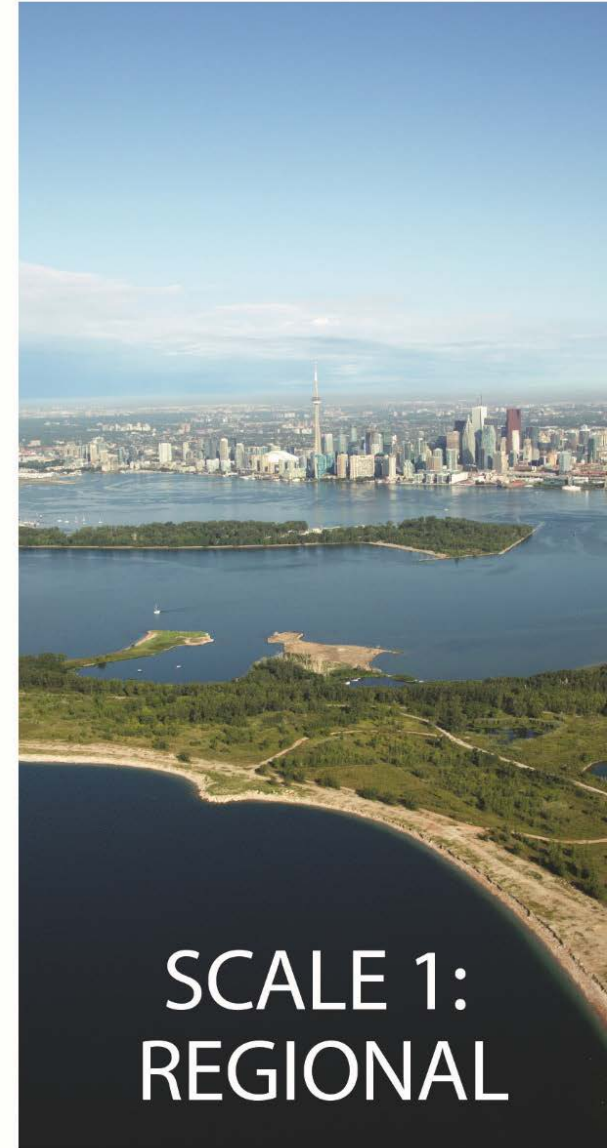


Scale 1: Regional

Situated on the edge of the largest system of fresh water lakes in the world, Toronto has many unique natural features such as the Toronto Islands, Don River valley and ravine, Garrison Creek and the historic Lake Iroquois shoreline. The natural landscape features of the city provide contrast to the original urban grid of streets laid out in the 19th century. This grid has acquired character and meaning over time. The Regional Scale considers both the natural landscape and the grid together and proposes a vision which is at the core of our city's evolution and civic imagination.

The Core Circle: Re-imagine Toronto's framework of valleys, bluffs and islands as a fully interconnected 900 hectare natural landscape system.

Great Streets: Identify Toronto's most emblematic streets and build on their unique qualities to create outstanding civic places.





The Core Circle

A continuous network of green spaces and public realm around Downtown that links large natural features including Lake Ontario Shoreline, Toronto Islands, Garrison Creek Watershed, Lake Iroquois escarpment, Rosedale Valley Ravine, and the Lower Don Valley.

Connecting these features creates a continuous network around Downtown, builds on Toronto's strong identity as a "city within a park," and provides opportunities to acknowledge our history and natural setting. The policies within the Downtown Plan will identify ways in which to improve access and connections along this network for pedestrians and cyclists, making better use of these invaluable assets.





Reconnecting the Natural Landscape

Initiatives within the Core Circle will focus on improving access and connections for pedestrians and cyclists. These include:

- North: Davenport Road Trail & Greenline
- East: Don River Valley Ravine connections and placemaking
- South: Toronto Islands/Toronto Bay improved access
- West: Garrison Creek Corridor, Shaw Street greening



The Davenport Trail, 'Gete-Onigaming' (Ge-de-oh-ni-guh-ming), meaning "at the old portage", is an Indigenous travelling route. The trail connects from the Humber River in the west to the Don River in the east along the base of the ancient Lake Iroquois shoreline. There is an opportunity to rediscover the natural environment along the bluff and celebrate the Indigenous cultural landscape that preceded our city. By restoring, connecting and improving this ancient bluff-trail system, we can protect and grow this beloved resource for all Torontonians.





Don River Valley Ravine

On the edge of the Downtown, with a rich and layered history, is the ravine landscape. A number of creative ideas and initiatives are being developed to reconnect Toronto to its ravines. A major conversation about the future of this landscape is emerging. There is an opportunity to restore the ravine landscape, to leverage the dramatic topography and Indigenous cultural landscape history for creative place making and interpretation, to design new gateways and re-invent bridges as access points, and consider new vantage points and overlooks to highlight this unique landscape. We can reconnect with our ravines by improving the health, legibility and navigability of the system through wayfinding, mapping and communications that increase awareness of this important natural feature.





The Core Circle - South

Toronto Islands and Toronto Bay

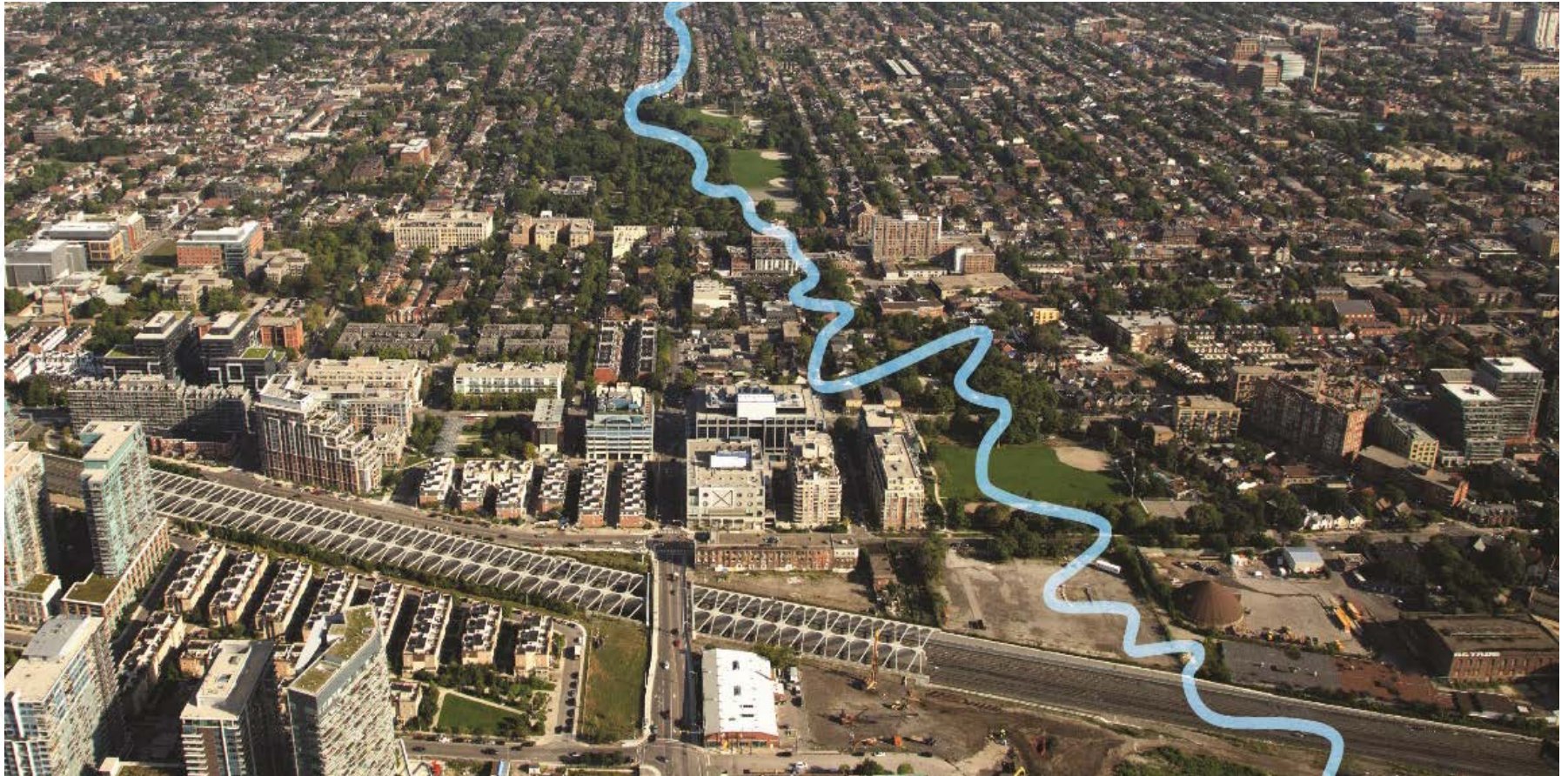
The Toronto Islands and Toronto Bay provide an escape from city life within close proximity to the Downtown. Improving access to the Toronto Islands improves their supportive role as a city-wide park resource. This can be achieved through improvements to ferry service and facilities, and exploration of improved pedestrian and cycling connections. There are also opportunities for increased water-based recreation and water-based transportation around Toronto Bay while maintaining commercial uses that contribute to Toronto's economy.





Garrison Creek Corridor

The Plan recognizes that Garrison Creek provides an opportunity to re-harmonize the natural and built landscapes and to discover and celebrate its cultural importance.





Great Streets

Great Streets have cultural, historical and civic importance and provide connections to significant public places. These streets will be prioritized for public realm improvements that reinforce their identity, character and heritage value. Each of the Great Streets connects to the Core Circle.

Twelve Great Streets in the Downtown have been identified as opportunities to improve the public space and the public experience. The improvement potential of each street will vary.

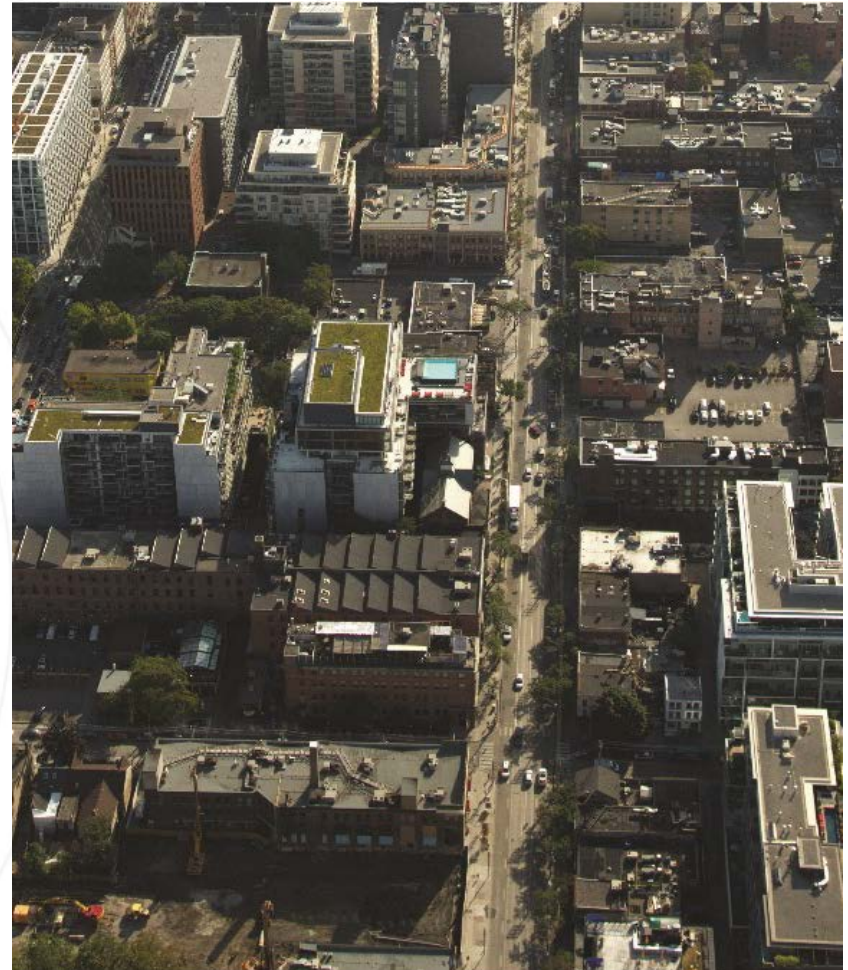




Streets as Places

Public realm improvements that transform streets into destinations in themselves are considered for 12 Great Streets in the Downtown.

- University Avenue
- King Street
- Jarvis Garden Street
- College-Carlton-Gerrard Street
- Bloor Street
- Bayview Avenue
- Spadina Avenue
- Yonge Street Cultural Corridor
- Queen Street
- Front Street
- Queens Quay



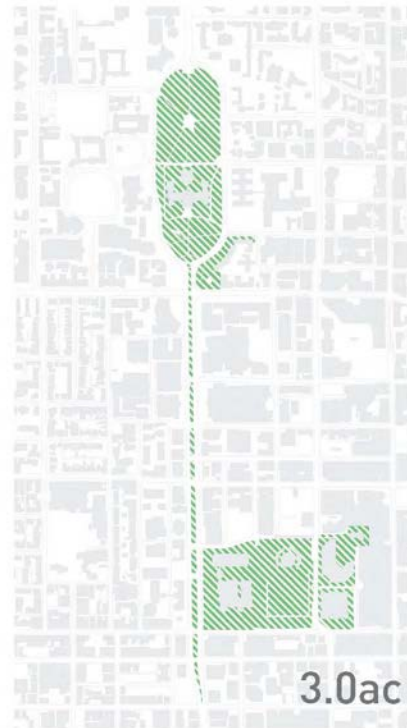


University Avenue

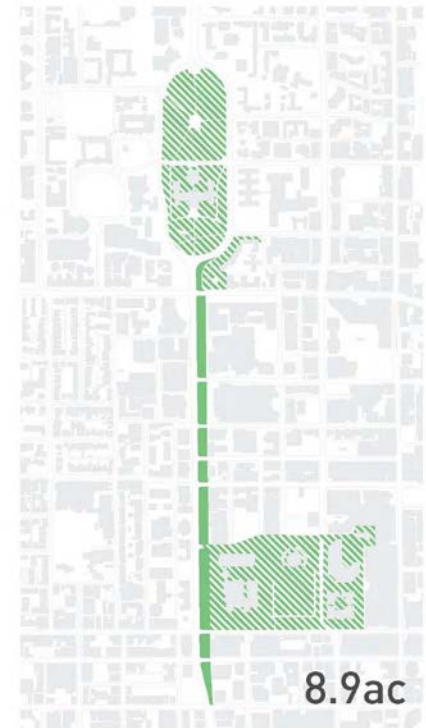
A realigned University Avenue will create grand tree-filled gardens along the eastern edge of the avenue. The Queen Street entrance is re-imagined as a garden gateway to the avenue, redesigned as a civic destination and gathering space to anchor and welcome people to the Civic Precinct.

The existing median on University Avenue is 3.0 acres of landscaped garden space. A reconfigured Avenue with a linear park on the east side would provide 8.9 acres of parkland and connect the Civic Precinct to the Queen Park Precinct.

EXISTING CONDITION



PROPOSED RECONFIGURATION





12 Great Streets

University Avenue



Side-
walk

Six Vehicle Lanes

Two-way
Cycle
Track

Linear Park
and Gardens

Osgoode Hall
Public Lawn



Parliament Street

Parliament Street occupies a unique position in the city as a connector from ravine to waterfront. The street has a number of distinct character segments, including a connection to the ravine system in the north, a local street in the centre, and as a portal to the waterfront in the south. Rebalancing and reconfiguring the street will transform it into a clear civic place and connector. Parliament Street presents an opportunity to provide a streetcar connection from the Portlands and Distillery District to Castle Frank Station, improving transit connections and access to the waterfront and ravine, and creating a great walking street.





Jarvis Street

Jarvis Street's "garden street" character will be enhanced by strategically investing in tree planting infrastructure, planting beds, and an enhanced maintenance program. Imagine Jarvis Street and the surrounding parks and open spaces as a connected system where large, mature trees and immersive gardens can be experienced in the urban environment.





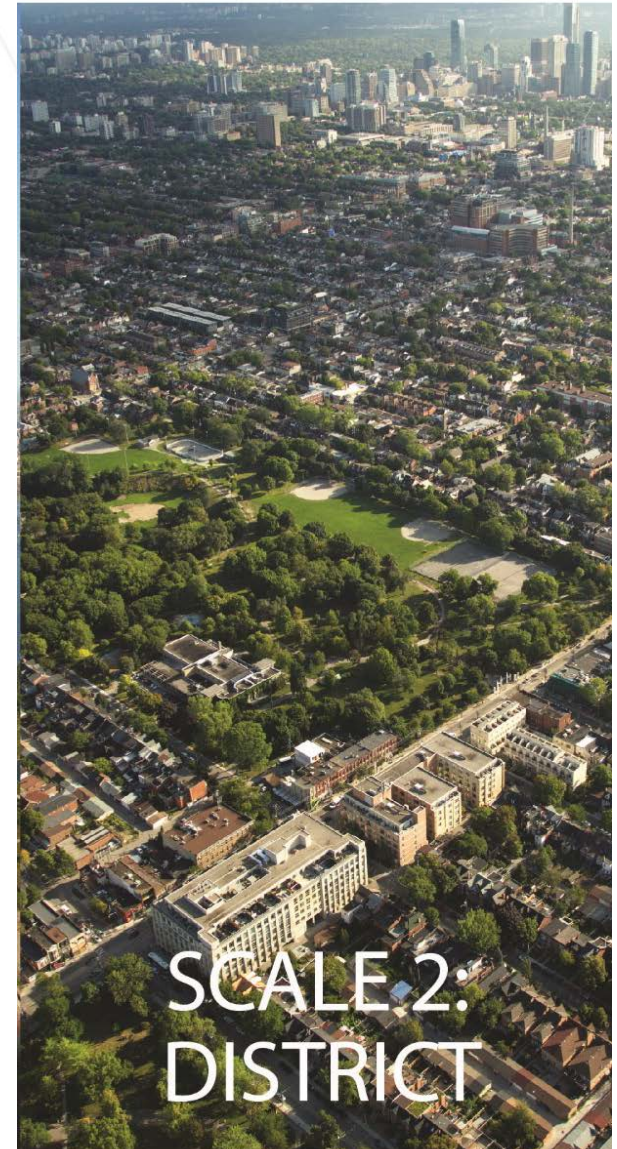
Scale 2: District

Public spaces at the District scale consist of parks, squares and streets that are integral to the quality of life in neighbourhoods. Projects at the District Scale propose expansion and connection between parks, open spaces and public realm; filling in the gaps in the public realm through acquisition and repurposing land; and connecting these neighbourhood networks into the broader system described at the Regional Scale.

Park Districts: Expansions, connections and improvements that are centered on one or more community parks that support public life of surrounding communities.

The Stitch: Reconnecting the city to the waterfront neighbourhoods, and linking the east and west Core Circle landscapes.

Around the Bay: Recognizing the Inner Harbour as a civic-scale “blue park” that connects a diverse network of places that encircle the Bay.





Park Districts

A set of 20 districts and two precincts centred on one or more community parks that support community life in surrounding areas. These parks can be improved, expanded, animated and better connected through public realm improvements. The Queen's Park Precinct and Civic Precinct centred on Nathan Philips Square are two Park Districts of civic importance.



Proposed Downtown Plan

MAP 6 Park Districts



Park Districts



Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

①

Christie-Bickford

②

The Garrison Parks - Fort York

③

Bathurst Quay - Coronation Park - Ontario Place

④

The Annex

⑤

Kensington Market - Alexandra Park

⑥

West Rail District

⑨

John Street Cultural Corridor

⑩

Ramsden Park - Yorkville

⑪

Bay Cloverhill Loop

⑫

The Garden District

⑬

Ryerson University

⑭

Old Town - St. Lawrence - Distillery

⑮

St. James Town

⑯

Cabbagetown - Riverdale

⑰

Regent Park

⑱

Lower Yonge - East Bayview

⑲

West Don Lands

⑳

Lower Don Lands



Garden District

Re-imagine Pembroke Street and Homewood Avenue as a garden-like shared street that creates a neighbourhood link between the district's two signature parks.

In this district, there are opportunities to create green laneways and mid-block connections. There is also potential to create green street edges by removing commercial boulevard parking on boulevards and limiting street parking to reduce auto-related pavement.

Changes to park edges and setbacks at Allan Gardens and Moss Park can broaden the park program into the street, in particular at corners and the end of St. George and Pembroke Streets.

Create safe pedestrian crossings and defined park entrances at Allan Gardens and Moss Park. Encourage a dialogue between Indigenous values and Victorian botanical design principles and practices at the Allan Gardens park gateways.





Park Districts

Garden District





Civic Precinct

At Queen Street West and University Avenue, a garden gateway and redesigned water feature create a civic destination and gateway to the Civic District including Nathan Phillips Square and Osgoode Hall.

There are opportunities to improve and expand the pedestrian experience along Queen Street; rethink and integrate the open spaces of Campbell House, Osgoode Hall, City Hall and Old City Hall; and celebrate our civic buildings with a cohesive, connected green frontage.

There are also opportunities to consolidate parking garage entrances to open up the south edge of Queen Street and the west side of Bay Street. Pedestrians and cyclists can be prioritized by re-imagining Armoury Street as a shared street, and Albert Street and James Street as pedestrian streets with a focus on civic life.





The Stitch

The Stitch is the opportunity of Toronto's largest park district; cutting through the most vibrant growth districts, connecting the east and west Core Circle, and better connecting the Downtown with the waterfront.

There are ways to limit the barrier effect of the rail corridor and elevated Gardiner Expressway and ramps, by re-thinking remnant open spaces associated with this infrastructure. Knitting the surrounding communities and their parks and open spaces together increases accessibility to fundamental community assets.

From the time of industrialization, Downtown has been historically separated from Lake Ontario by a wide swath of rail lines, the Gardiner Expressway and Lake Shore Boulevard. The Stitch proposes numerous interventions; some ambitious and long-term such as Rail Deck Park, and others that are more modest but highly impactful such as improving pedestrian crossings across Lake Shore Boulevard.



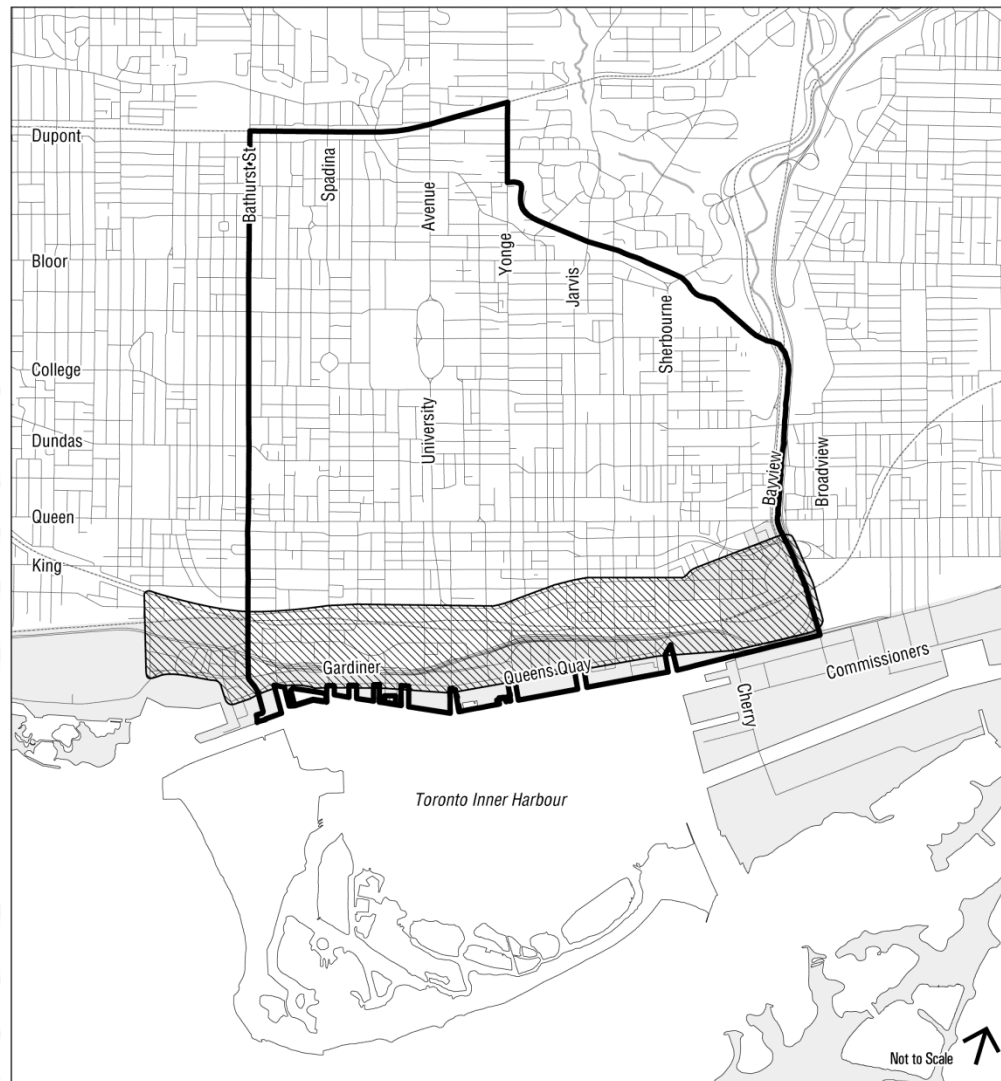


The Stitch

The Stitch establishes a series of connected open spaces anchored to both sides of the Core Circle. This Park District spans the Downtown and is a hybrid series of parks, streets and open spaces that fills in the gaps that have historically isolated Toronto's waterfront from the rest of the city.

Initiatives include:

1. North-South Connections such as Rees Street pedestrian realm and Cooper Street extension
2. East-West Connections such as Front Street Revival
3. Rail Deck Park
4. The Bentway
5. Northern Trail at Fort York
6. Roundhouse Park improvements
7. Union Hub such as Station Street Shared Street
8. David Crombie Park Expansion
9. Lower Don River Park
10. Cloverleaf Park




Proposed Downtown Plan

MAP 8 The Stitch

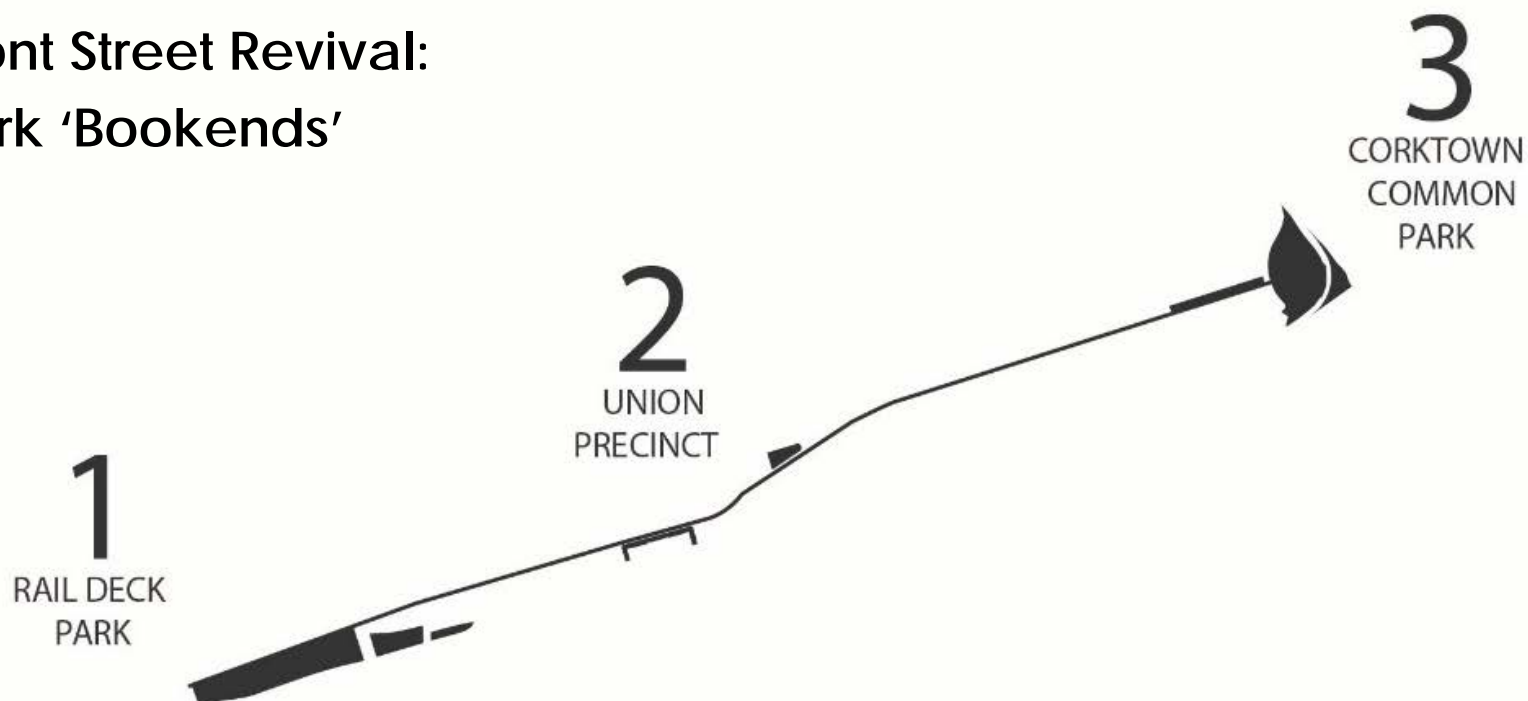
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 Central Waterfront Secondary Plan

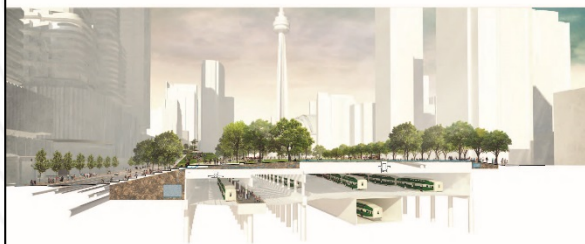
 The Stitch



Front Street Revival: Park 'Bookends'



The Stitch: Rail Deck Park





Around the Bay

Building on the central waterfront revitalization, this idea involves the development of a "Blue Park" to increase water-based recreation while supporting the Bay's important function as a commercial port and its potential to promote water-based transportation.

Building on the Core Circle initiative, this idea recognises the opportunity to improve access to the Toronto Islands.

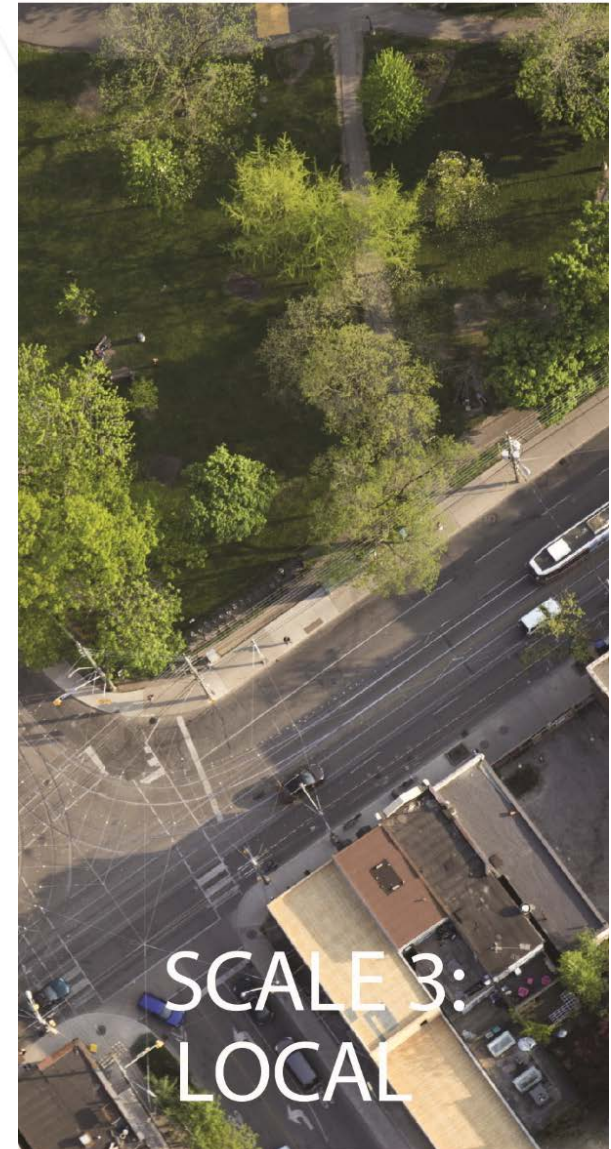




Scale 3: Local

Local Places include under-utilized, overlooked or under-performing public spaces that are embedded within communities. Parkettes, Laneways, Schoolyards, Churchyards, Cemeteries, Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS), Streets to Parks, and Overlooked Spaces are all included at this scale. Re-imagining local spaces, in some cases in partnership with private or institutional owners, will allow them to work harder to respond to neighbourhood needs and contribute to the expansion of the parks and public realm system.

Local Places: Provide a local network of neighbourhood parks and public realm assets – and places “in between” – to support increasing growth.





Local Places

Day-to-day places that bridge gaps in the provision of parks and the public realm at a local scale.

- Parkettes
- Laneways
- Schoolyards
- Churchyards
- Cemeteries
- Privately-Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS)
- Streets to Parks
- Overlooked Spaces





Laneways



Parkettes



Schoolyards



Churchyards /
Cemeteries



POPS

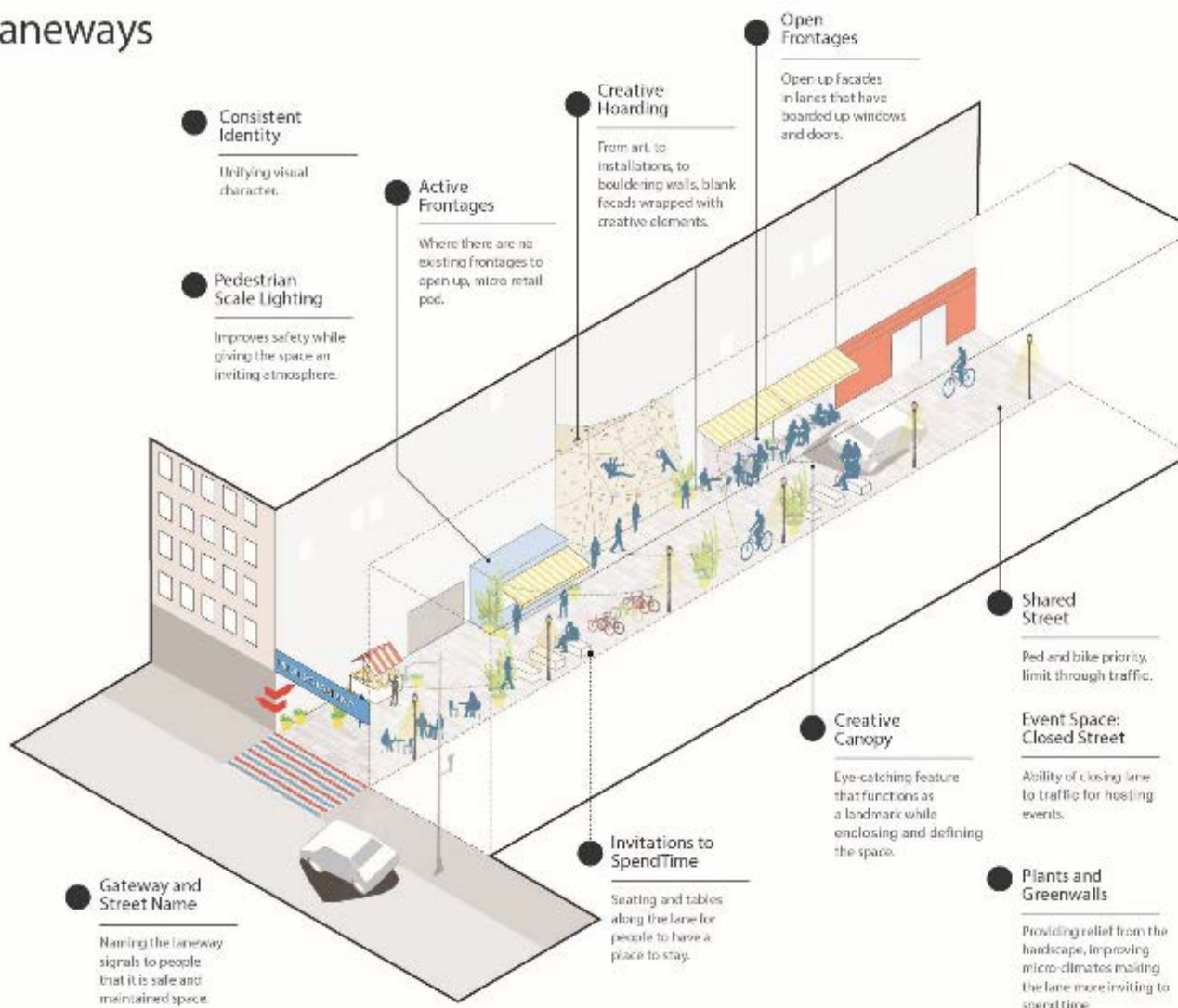


Overlooked Places



Commercial Laneway Design Templates

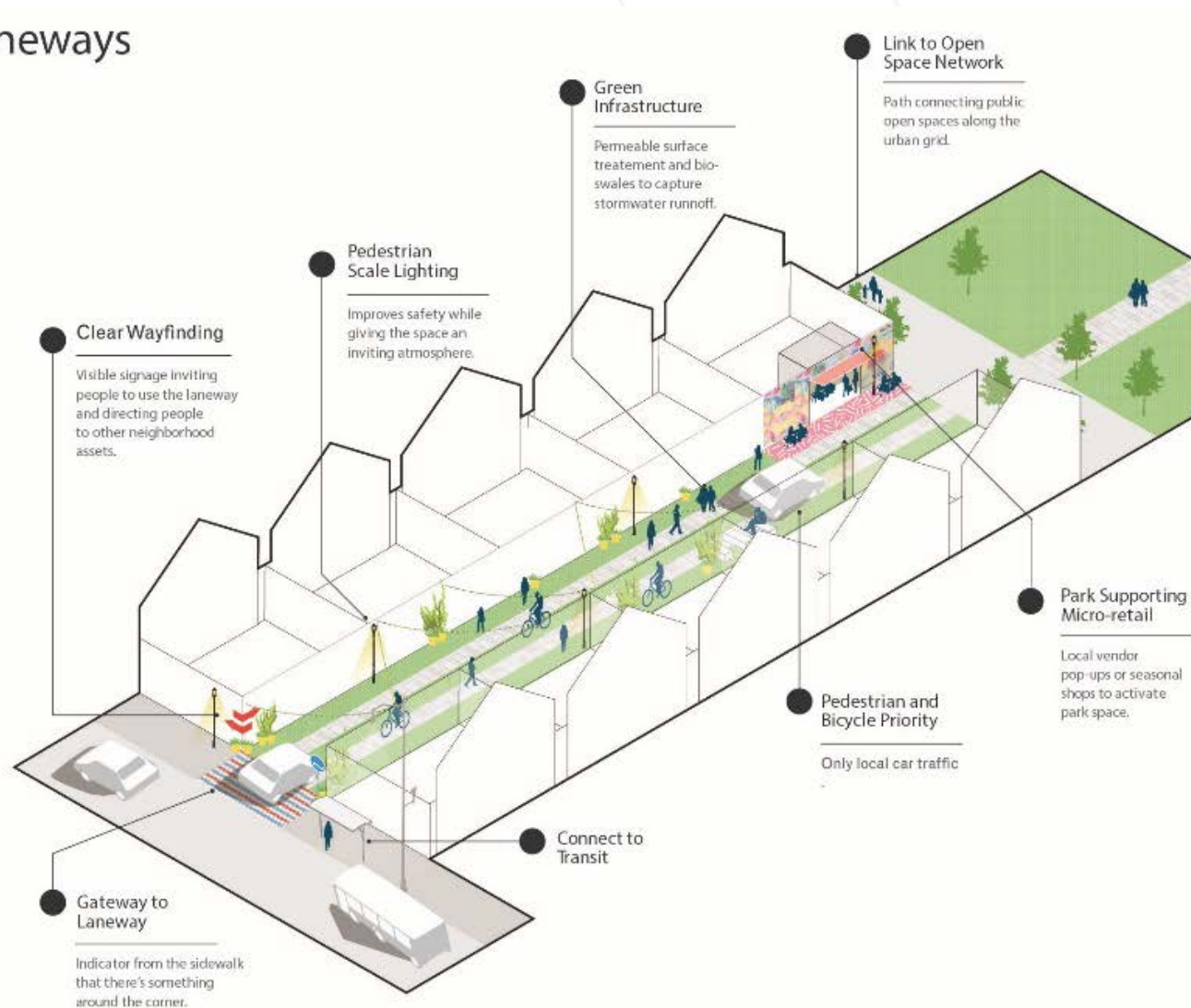
Commercial Laneways





Residential Laneway Design Templates

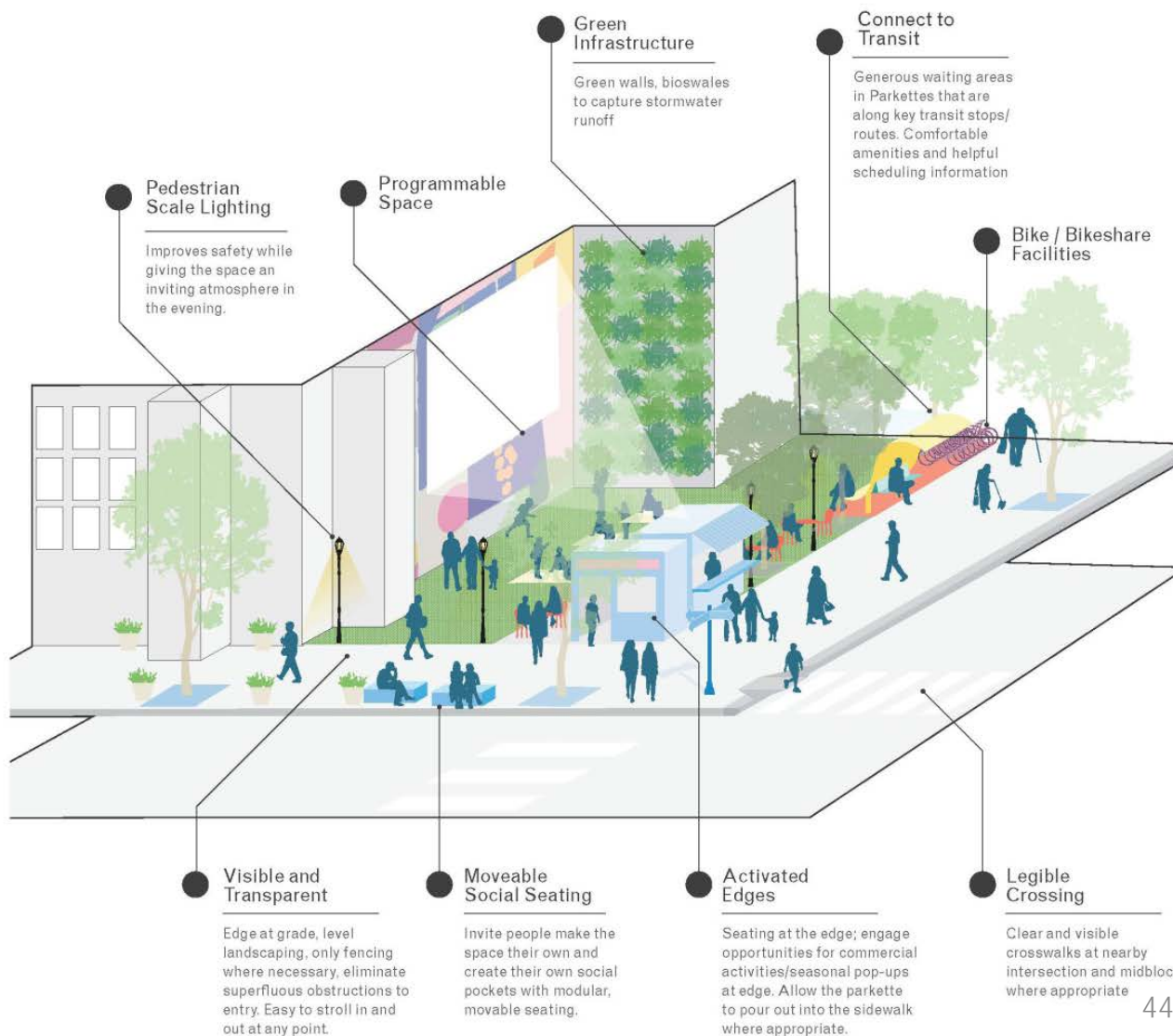
Residential Laneways





Parkette Design Template

Parkettes

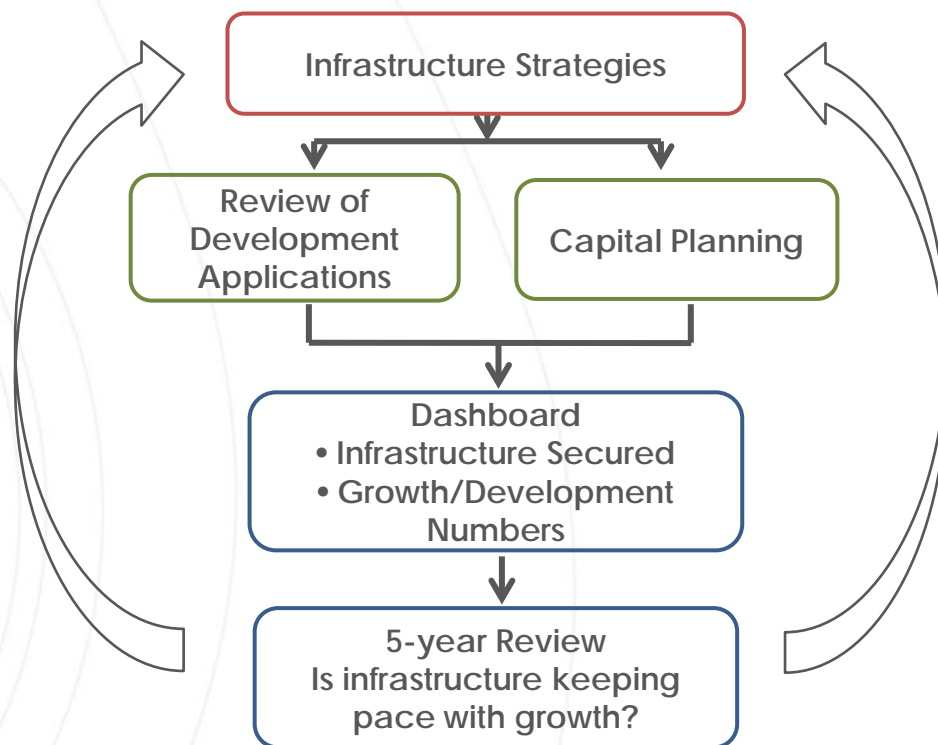




How the Parks and Public Realm Plan will be used

The infrastructure strategies are key to linking the timely provision of infrastructure to growth.

- Infrastructure Strategies will inform the review of development applications.
- The strategies will inform the annual capital planning process.
- A dashboard with metrics related to infrastructure secured as compared to our growth and development numbers will track how we are doing.
- A review of the strategies every five years will tell us whether infrastructure is keeping pace with growth





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