

# Toronto's First Resilience Strategy

Resilience is the capacity of cities to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of the chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

Toronto's first Resilience Strategy addresses two inter-linked challenges:

## Toronto is getting “hotter, wetter, and wilder” due to climate change.

Hotter, wetter, wilder means: more and longer heatwaves; increased frequency and intensity of storms; and more extreme cold, wind, ice, and rain.

The Resilience Strategy considers the impacts of climate change within the context of a growing city facing challenges related to housing, mobility, and equity.

For example, in Toronto, where there is a lack of affordable housing, basements house thousands of Torontonians. Increased flooding, resulting in more flooded basements, will significantly impact housing affordability.

*"Indigenous views of the world do not have a separate category for the 'environment or the 'climate'... There is a big difference between environmental activism and living in a deep relationship with the land and water of a given territory. The real issues need to be addressed in much broader and more elevated ways..."*

– INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE WORKSHOP (2018)

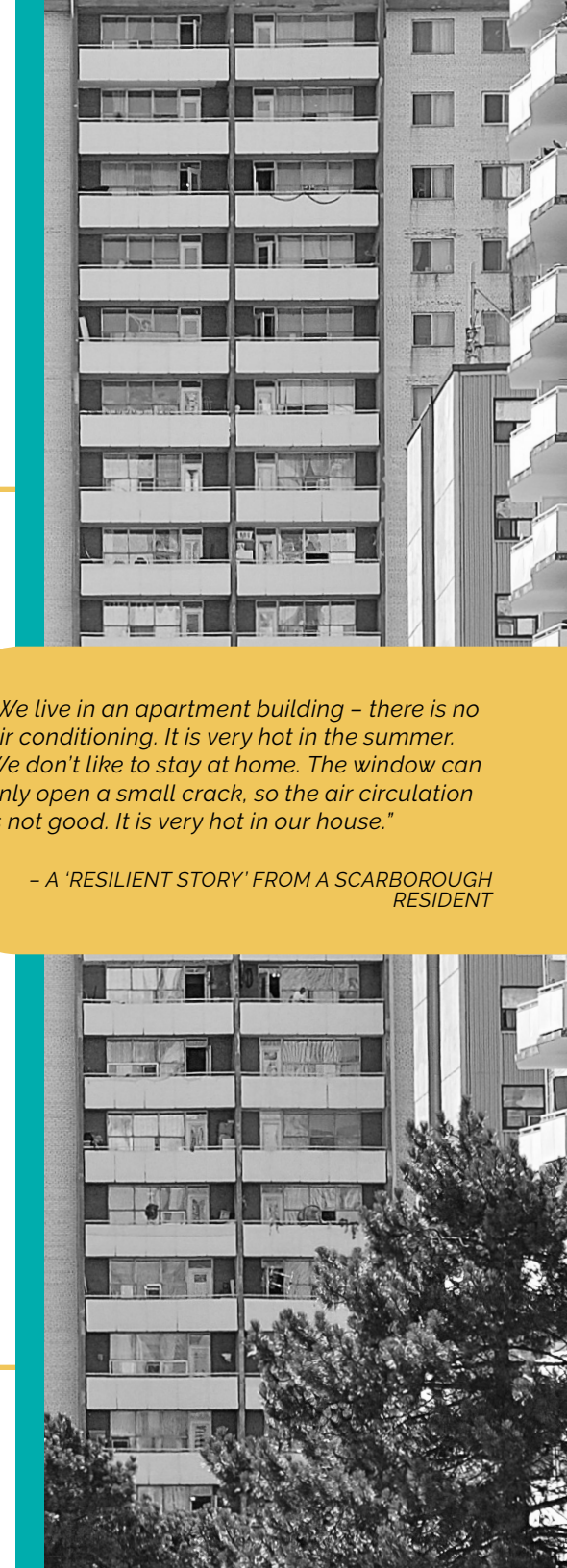
## Everyone experiences stresses and shocks differently – based on where they live and who they are, including their race, income, and gender.

The ability of a city to survive and thrive in the face of challenges is as much about the strength of its communities and neighbourhoods as it is about the design and management of its infrastructure and buildings.

There is a strong connection between those who already face systemic barriers in our city everyday – such as persons with disabilities, newcomers, or low-income residents – and those who are most vulnerable to shocks. For example, apartment towers, where one in three low income families live, are disproportionately vulnerable to extreme heat and power shortages. As such, the Resilience Strategy has an equity focus and draws connections on how equity impacts the entire city's resilience.

*"We live in an apartment building – there is no air conditioning. It is very hot in the summer. We don't like to stay at home. The window can only open a small crack, so the air circulation is not good. It is very hot in our house."*

– A 'RESILIENT STORY' FROM A SCARBOROUGH RESIDENT



## FAQs

### How was this Strategy developed?

The Strategy was developed over 2 years, led by the Resilience Office, with input from more than 8,000 Torontonians and 80 participant organizations. The Resilience Office was founded through a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, as part of the 100 Resilient Cities initiative.

Community engagement was central to the Strategy development. Through the 'Resilient Stories' campaign, Torontonians from all neighbourhoods shared how they experience resilience in the city, and those stories informed the Strategy. A detailed explanation of the process begins on page 32 of the Strategy, and an overview of Toronto's resilience context, informed by residents' stories, begins on page 46.

### What are other cities doing to be more resilient?

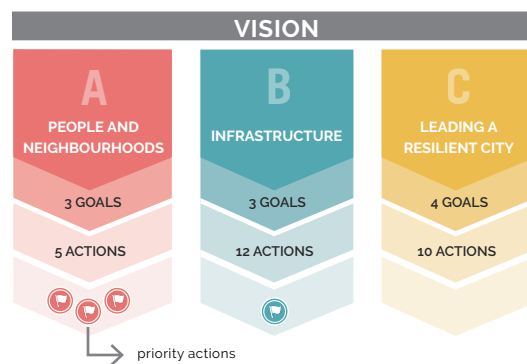
More than 50 cities internationally have released Resilience Strategies. In Canada four cities – Montreal, Toronto, Calgary, and Vancouver – have or are developing Strategies.

Each city has tailored the concept of resilience to their context. For example, Los Angeles' priorities include seismic resilience, whereas Boston focuses on resilience and racial equity.

### How will this Strategy make Toronto more resilient?

The Strategy includes a community-led vision for a resilient Toronto, which is summarized on page 3 of the Strategy. A shared community vision of what a truly resilient Toronto looks like will enable City divisions and the whole city to take action.

The Strategy contains 27 actions linked to achieving the vision. Four priority actions represent the first steps to address immediate needs. All actions are grouped in three focus areas, organized as follows:



Implementation of the Strategy should recognize that **resilience is a process**: building resilience is a long term process that will require the City and its partners to continuously adapt to new challenges as Toronto grows. The Strategy invites the City, residents, and leaders in Toronto to think and work differently to ensure that Toronto is a place where every resident can thrive.

### How does this relate to the City's existing work, including TransformTO?

The City of Toronto is an international leader in resilience, with over 40 action plans and strategies being delivered that significantly advance our resilience. While this is called Toronto's 'first' Resilience Strategy, for decades the City and our partners have invested in some of the world's most exciting resilience initiatives. Pages 34-38 of the Resilience Strategy provide some examples of resilience in action in Toronto, including TransformTO.

TransformTO is Toronto's plan to reduce greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions to reduce our impact on climate change, adopted by City Council in 2017. The Resilience Strategy includes actions to be more resilient to climate change and reduce the impact of climate change on us.

### Where can I learn more?

Visit [Toronto.ca/resilience](https://toronto.ca/resilience) to download a copy of Toronto's first Resilience Strategy, and supporting documents which informed our work.

