

COVID-19: IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Toronto City Manager

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1 | Land Acknowledgement



The authors acknowledge that we are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The City of Toronto acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



2 | Letter to the City Manager

To Chris Murray, City Manager

We're pleased to provide this report to help guide and focus the City of Toronto's work in achieving its goals for recovery and rebuilding.

The loss of life and the hardships experienced in Toronto in the pandemic will leave lasting impacts, including the tragic loss of friends and loved ones. Yet, the crisis response also leaves strong evidence of Toronto's collective sense of goodwill and resilience.

In the months since the crisis began, Toronto residents largely listened and adhered to the direction of public health officials. When asked to do so, people limited their activities and stayed home as much as possible. Some businesses shut down entirely, at great sacrifice. Other businesses, and their employees, delivered much-needed goods and services. Companies and their employees adapted to the new environment and managed professional and personal pressures. Neighbours helped neighbours. Morale was boosted by creative displays of appreciation and small acts of kindness.

The leadership of Mayor John Tory, City Council, the City Manager and the City's senior executive team was instrumental in mobilizing such collective action in the crisis, which has enabled conditions for recovery. Recommendations regarding public health are given in acknowledgment of the continuing, highly effective performance of Medical Officer of Health Dr. Eileen de Villa, Toronto Public Health staff and the Toronto Board of Health, chaired by Councillor Joe Cressy. The consistently high-quality of services from the Emergency Operations Center, delivered in a rapidly evolving environment, led by Fire Chief Matthew Pegg, have also helped enable the conditions for recovery.

Recovery and rebuild depend on building public confidence in living, working and visiting Toronto while COVID-19 remains a risk. However, recovery and rebuild efforts must also be undertaken in the knowledge that many impacts of COVID-19 were disproportionately felt by some neighbourhoods, segments of the population, occupations and sectors – a reality that must be addressed in recovery.

In keeping infections in Toronto relatively low, a high proportion of the population remains vulnerable to COVID-19. Part of the challenge of recovery is establishing a sense of normalcy and community while ensuring that infection rates remain low and manageable.

Like others, around the world, we are hopeful that science will deliver solutions that could help break chains of COVID-19 transmission and reduce severe illness and deaths resulting from infection. However, for the purpose of this report, no assumptions are made regarding vaccine availability or treatments and therapies. As such, the terms “recovery” and “rebuild” take on a different dynamic. These activities are usually associated with the work that begins after a disruptive event, such as a natural disaster. In this case, Toronto is still within the event, that is, a global pandemic, and will be for some time.

Given this context, the phases of restart, recovery and rebuild do not represent points in time. There are no clear lines delineating the conclusion of one phase and the beginning of another. Rather, they should be considered stages of effort that will be complementary and overlapping. It is also understood that the rebuild phase must look beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and seek to build resilience into the way Toronto functions, strengthening its ability to overcome future challenges related to natural events.

It is worth noting that Toronto's crisis response relied on consensus, cooperation and significant financial support from the federal and provincial governments. This intergovernmental partnership must continue. In fact, it must be strengthened and realigned. It is time for a conversation among governments on what Toronto means to Ontario and Canada. COVID-19 has reinforced the reality that Toronto's fiscal capacity, funded primarily by property tax, is not commensurate to its responsibilities. Further, the property tax base is funding investments, such as supporting a healthier population and enabling meaningful labour force participation, which significantly benefits the budgets of the provincial and federal governments.

In developing this report, our analysis and recommendations were informed by knowledge, insight, compassion and creative thinking of City of Toronto staff. Their COVID-19 experience has been one of rapid learning, response, application of emerging knowledge and heightened collaboration. The City should approach recovery and rebuild with the confirmed knowledge that its public service is capable of focused and creative innovation that is responsive to the needs of people in an evolving, complex world.

While COVID-19 exacerbated various existing challenges, it also created conditions for accelerating good ideas. We thank all those who took part in the various forms of consultation and generously offered their perspectives. There was an abundance of thoughtful input, though this report's recommendations focused on those that will have the greatest relevance to the mandate of Toronto's recovery and building back better. Where appropriate, recommendations reflect our analysis of policy measures and inter-governmental partnerships that will be needed to make progress on desired outcomes identified in consultations.

The recommendations reflect a desire for measures to promote strong and healthy neighbourhoods, robust main streets, varied and diverse cultural experiences and expanded access to meaningful work and community life, all while ensuring public health and safety. There are also longer-term recommendations

aimed at contributing to more equitable, shared prosperity across the city, which will require further exploration and expanded partnerships. *Recommendations reflect consultations undertaken at a point in time, still early in the pandemic event. They provide a basis for beginning the conversation on recovery and building back better – the City, its agencies, its partners and stakeholders and the senior levels of government, working together, will achieve and refine this transformation.*

Our recommendations reflect a belief that Torontonians are ready for manageable and practical changes that make sense in the post-COVID context. The voices captured in the consultations supporting this report speak to a desire and determination to not only get Toronto back to where it had been pre-pandemic, but to accelerate progress toward what we know it can be – a thriving, equitable, cohesive, entrepreneurially vibrant and culturally dynamic city.



Dr. David Mowat

Mr. Saād Rafi





3 | Recommendations

3.1 Introduction and Context

The recommendations in this section are provided in the understanding that the City Manager may undertake further analysis with staff, and seek direction from City Council, on implementation and action. As a result, no weight or priority is given to any of the recommendations and no timetable for implementation is suggested. The recommendations are designed to avoid replication of existing Council strategies and plans, however, there are instances where acceleration of existing initiatives is recommended – including initiatives underway before the pandemic as well as good ideas that were quickly implemented during the crisis. *The recommendations should also be read as interconnected categories of actions that the City and its partners and other levels of government can undertake to aid in the recovery and building back better.*

The recommendations are heavily informed by consultations undertaken in various forms over the period from April through to August 2020, as well as input received in recent City consultations on related topics. These were wide-ranging and useful discussions about Toronto's future. In making recommendations, we have applied input that best meets the direct impacts of COVID-19 and the direction given to TORR. City divisions, agencies, partners and communities will no doubt gain additional value from reviewing all the consultation feedback for further ideas on city building. For that reason, the reports developed by theme leads and research papers generated by City staff are published in the sections following the recommendations. Following each section of recommendations, certain notable findings are highlighted – ideas and information outside the City's direct ability to act upon but useful to consider.

Limitations of time and availability did not allow for the full and comprehensive engagement process that would normally be commensurate with the development of City-wide recommendations. Many of those consulted were themselves striving to understand implications of the pandemic for their community, organization or sector.

Some groups, whose input is vital, such as Indigenous organizations, indicated a desire to consult more thoroughly with their own membership and networks and deliver thoughtful, comprehensive recommendations to the City.

The recommendations in this report are given in the expectation that the City will continue engaging residents, businesses and community groups and be further informed by input that may have been missed in our consultations and by exploring where issues intersect. It is hoped that these recommendations provoke further discussion on how they can be improved, built upon and implemented.

Within the recommendations, there are several suggestions regarding engagement with federal and provincial governments. The existing, established funding relationships with the other levels of government are insufficient to the task of generating a strong recovery and building back better in Toronto. There were strains before the pandemic. The City found ways of getting from one budget year to the next. Post-pandemic, in recovery, it is necessary to plan and strategize on a longer view. Toronto cannot plan a strong, resilient future with an uncertain fiscal foundation. Benefits from building back better, and supporting success for Torontonians, must be re-invested in continually improving services.

To put the issue in context, imagine that a young Torontonian growing up in a low-income, housing-challenged household sees their childhood stabilized by City programs supporting affordable housing, childcare, youth programs, public health and income support, with program delivery funded primarily by the property tax base. Other City investments, such as in high-volume transit corridors, may further enable opportunity. As this young person finds success as an adult, they may launch a business that generates employment for others. To be sure, federal and provincial spending in health care and post-secondary education, as well as other programs, will have contributed to this

Torontonian's well-being and progress in life. However, those levels of government will recover their investment – and more – in the income taxes and HST paid as a result of career success and jobs created for others. In fact, the positive intergenerational impacts may have exponential benefits to the federal and provincial budgets over time.

The City's programs, funded primarily by property tax, played a significant role in the human investments that resulted in this person generating such positive economic activity, but only very limited benefits will accrue to the City's budget, in the form of residential property tax and transit use. The trend toward a knowledge economy and online sales may also mean that such economic success generates little or no commercial property taxes paid to the City.

Many other stories could illustrate how City investments and policy innovations produce savings for the budgets of other governments. For example, walkable neighbourhoods contribute to reductions in chronic illnesses and reduce health-care costs for other levels of government. The operation of one of North America's busiest transit systems contributes to Ontario and Canada meeting their emission reduction targets.

This imbalance and misalignment of responsibilities and their funding has been well discussed pre-pandemic. It must be addressed in order to enable true recovery and rebuild. The magnitude of the challenge requires clarity and thoughtfulness in aligning funding, and services which the City delivers well, from senior levels of government in order to best capture and reinvest the fiscal benefits of policy innovation to continually improve outcomes for people.

This need for partnership involving all levels of government has significant influence on the recommendations, which are organized under six broad categories: Public Health, Social Determinants of Health, Increasing Prosperity, Infrastructure and Mobility, Resilience and City Services.

Lastly, during the crisis period, eight minutes and forty-six seconds of video depicting the brutal, violent death of George Floyd challenged any sense of complacency regarding anti-Black racism across North America and the world. Addressing the longstanding harms of anti-Black and Indigenous racism, and other forms of systemic discrimination, are now closely linked with public perception of successful pandemic recovery in Toronto. Issues related to racism were raised throughout the consultation, and across all themes, particularly in improving the participation of Black and Indigenous voices in the processes and at the tables where decisions are made. While several recommendations speak to issues of equity, inclusion and social determinants of health as essential to recovery and rebuild, they do not presume to speak for equity-seeking groups and racialized communities or the lived experience of racism. Future efforts to build a meaningful and broad public conversation about anti-Black racism and systemic discrimination will produce further ideas that contribute to long-term success for Toronto. It is clear that systemic racism contributed to inordinate incidence and impacts of COVID-19 among Black and Indigenous people through income disparities and other inequities and that is why identifying City actions in addressing systemic discrimination is the focus of the first recommendation in this report.

1

For its part, the City should lead by example and address racism against Black and Indigenous people openly and honestly within the City in its hiring and promotional practices. In addition, the City should set standards for Black and Indigenous representation at the tables where priorities, planning, investments and implementation of City Council decisions are discussed. Moreover, the City should also address the representation of Black, Indigenous and people from other vulnerable populations on Agencies, Boards and Corporations in order to ensure that the decisions made by these City bodies reflect the communities they serve.

3.2 Public Health

For as long as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, Toronto will need to maintain vigilance for new outbreaks and continue strengthening its understanding of impacts. This continual improvement in data gathering and understanding should support continual improvement in public health planning and delivery.

Until there is a solution to the pandemic, it will be necessary to continue measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (distancing, hand washing and mask wearing indoors). Continuing communication programs can also reinforce preventive actions. Further measures will be needed if there is any form of resurgence, and the extent of those measures will depend upon the source – an outbreak versus generalized spread in the community – and the severity.

The end of this pandemic cannot be predicted. Until then, Toronto must conduct itself in ways that reduce as much as possible the risk of ill-health and death from COVID-19. Recommendations in this section are directed primarily toward Toronto Public Health in its continued planning for addressing outbreaks and a possible resurgence. The epidemiology of COVID-19 has evolved throughout the course of the pandemic. Understanding the progression of the epidemic and the distribution of infection by age, sex/gender, socio-economic status, place, time, race, disability, and other factors will support decision-making in managing the pandemic. Other characteristics should be added as understanding of these relationships increases.

2 Complete planning for a resurgence of cases, including scenarios, staffing, case and contact management, (expansion, switch to focussed follow-up if cases exceed threshold, technical enhancements), and future adjustments of closures and measures (criteria for dashboard indicators, consultation with Ministry of Health and regional Medical Officers of Health regarding a regional approach).

3 Continue to collect data on COVID-19 and to publish it in the COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard.

4 Continue to collect data on equity issues in COVID-19 transmission, including detailed case information, particularly socio-demographic and race-based, to the neighbourhood or individual level, for better understanding of the characteristics of those at higher risk as well as possible mechanisms of transmission.

5 Work with others within City government and with Public Health Ontario to ensure that there is coordination of work in knowledge synthesis and jurisdictional scans, with the aim of identifying the priorities for accessing existing evidence reviews, undertaking and commissioning evidence reviews, and identifying priorities for primary research. Primary research might be conducted through the Ontario Health Data Platform. Reviews might be undertaken internally (particularly jurisdictional scans) by Public Health Ontario, the Evidence Synthesis Network or National Collaborating Centres for Public Health. Links should also be established with the new Science Table and the Research, Analysis and Evaluation Branch at the Ministry of Health, and collaboration with universities and colleges, within established MOUs, should be continued.

6 Ensure that surveillance data, evidence reviews and intelligence about sectors and activities that are high-risk for COVID-19 are periodically reviewed, in consultation with Public Health Ontario, with a view to amending the mandated and/or recommended preventive measures (or advocating for amendment, if the subject of a provincial order).

7 Explore the feasibility of collecting syndromic surveillance data, such as absenteeism in selected sites in workplaces, schools and other settings, or visits at COVID-19 Assessment Centres.

In testing, the emphasis so far has been on maximizing the number of tests performed. This is partly a reaction to a lack of access to testing in the early days of the pandemic, when some symptomatic people did not meet the criteria for testing. Now, testing is available for all those with symptoms.

8 Continue engaging the Ministry of Health, Public Health Division and Public Health Ontario in seeking to reduce the turnaround time for Toronto's laboratory tests and maintaining this timing once achieved.

9 Advocate for priority testing in high-needs areas and for the exploration of alternate testing methods in suitable circumstances, such as rapid tests or saliva tests.

10 Assist in ensuring that pilot programs to promote testing in high-need areas are continued and expanded to all areas with significantly elevated incidence rates or other indicators of need.

It is difficult to trace and manage the contacts of every case once the numbers greatly increase. If many cases are asymptomatic and many contacts are untraceable, it may not be possible for a contact tracing program to keep pace with the spread of an outbreak and to lower the transmission rate. Because COVID-19 is sometimes transmitted via the respiratory route, possibly during “superspreader events”, it will be difficult to identify all exposed contacts.

11 Prepare the case and contact management capability of Toronto Public Health (TPH) for continuing work during the balance of the pandemic, including throughout a potential second wave, and planning for some degree of repatriation of staff to their original duties while preparing plans to rapidly ramp up staffing if required; follow up with the Ministry of Health about the suggestion of it providing replacement staff so TPH staff can return to essential previous duties.

12 In view of the limits to rapidly scaling up the case and contact management system, and of the reduction in effectiveness when volumes of community cases are very high, develop plans for switching to a more focused protocol when indicators reach predetermined values; engage the Ministry of Health, Public Health Division in planning for a replacement of CORES by the CCM-Salesforce program, if that is determined to be advantageous; discuss with the Public Health Branch a possible system of “load-sharing” by transferring cases from high-incidence to low-incidence health units.

13 Continue to participate in the Public Health Measures Table and the Rapid Response Table and advocate for a review of terms of reference in order to reduce duplication and ensure a longer-term agenda and as much preparation time as possible.

14 Monitor the impact of travel on COVID-19 activity and liaise, through the Ministry of Health, with the Public Health Agency of Canada on related matters such as screening and border management.

15 Work with other Greater Toronto Area (GTA) health units and the Public Health Division to develop criteria for various stages/types of resurgence, develop pre-set criteria to identify increases in outbreaks and in community cases, and a generalized – possibly province-wide – resurgence; consider adding indicators to the current dashboard of

early increases in incidence such as test positivity rate, rate of untraceable cases and syndromic surveillance; plan an outline response to each type of resurgence.

16 Continue to plan for, liaising with the Public Health Division and school boards, a possible increase in COVID-19 activity arising from the return of students to schools and to post-secondary institutions in September, expected to be followed by the annual fall season of respiratory viruses including influenza/flu.

Public health expertise will be highly valuable to various sectors and activities in the city as they seek to safely reopen.

17 Work with the Public Health Division to ensure that proposals submitted to the Chief Medical Officer of Health for approval under O.Reg 364/20, Schedule 1 s4(3) or Schedule 2 s10(2) are discussed with Toronto’s Medical Officer of Health.

18 Ensure that adequate resources are confirmed to continue to implement preventive measures and to support the ongoing review and revision of guidance documents. Inquiries and complaints from businesses and the public should be collated and reviewed to identify the common themes and emerging trends including the need for adjustments or for clarification; continue to support City with public health advice.

Toronto Public Health must continue both to manage COVID-19 related issues and be prepared to respond rapidly to outbreaks and provide other essential public health services that have longer-term outcomes but are nevertheless important, such as immunization, clinics for sexually transmitted infections and inspections.

19 Continue to plan for public health services during the remainder of the pandemic, including reinstating some services previously discontinued, such as a program to catch up childhood immunizations and records, thereby meeting the requirements of the Immunization of School Pupils Act. This should also include planning with the Province for the distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine.

20 Ensure that schools in high-incidence/high-risk areas of the city receive particular attention in planning school-based programs of TPH (including the new allocation of nurses).

extending beyond infectious diseases and services to individuals, together with adequate funding.

21 Toronto Board of Health and City Council should engage with the Province and with other boards of health to press for a re-examination of previously proposed structural, governance and funding changes for public health in Ontario. The aim should be to secure continued governance through Toronto's Board of Health and a broad mandate

Limiting community transmission of COVID-19 will be essential to a sustained recovery. Beyond mitigating the immediate pandemic risks, the experience of the crisis has re-confirmed the value of broad and meaningful investments in physical and mental health and wellness, particularly among vulnerable and marginalized populations.

3.3 Social Determinants of Health

Toronto can generate increased community and economic benefits by designing, adapting and building services and infrastructure that maximize human health and productivity, often referred to as social determinants of health. The City of Toronto, through Council, has previously approved strategic plans to enact change that will contribute to social determinants of health. The uneven impacts of COVID-19 have shown a clear need to accelerate progress in this area, however, this is not fully possible using the City's current tools for revenue and policy innovation. Therefore, the City must promote a conversation on realigning municipal, provincial and federal roles and responsibilities in ways that maximize human health and potential in generating economic growth and community participation that benefits all levels of government.

As the pandemic has shown, Toronto can be impacted by global events over which it has limited control. The City with its partners, can, however, prepare for such impacts by maximizing the human potential within its population. There is strong evidence that gender, poverty, racism and discrimination, food insecurity, social exclusion and housing can have significant impacts on health. In addition to the tragic personal costs of systemic inequities, this is a costly economic weight in terms of lost productivity, foregone tax revenue, reduced consumer spending and higher expenditures on income assistance, social services, health care and justice.

Improvements in housing, income supports and child care will bring a return on investment that will, ultimately, positively impact the senior levels of government. They will also contribute to increasing labour force participation and therefore increase overall prosperity and incomes for everyone.

The City should engage with senior levels of government in a meaningful and outcome-based approach to develop additional funding for social determinants of health.

In recovery, it is time to enable methods for improving cross-government investment and delivery in social determinants of health – recognizing that investments and improvements in most social determinants inordinately benefit the senior levels of government.

22 Measure the extent to which previous transfers of funding and responsibilities to Toronto have not kept pace with, nor been indexed to, inflation pressures.

considered regarding the most effective combination and funding of those supports to improve Torontonians' overall economic conditions (e.g.: Basic Needs and Shelter components of Social Assistance). Monitor the changes announced by the federal government to the Employment Insurance system so the City can offer recommendations for continuous improvement.

23 Provide recommendations and enable methods to improve on the various income supports that senior levels of government fund to ensure the City's perspective is

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- 24** The City needs to call on the provincial and federal governments to work with the City's deep delivery experience to develop a bold plan that will deliver more affordable child care spaces for all families, which will also address the severe inequities for women that insufficient child care exacerbates.
-
- 25** During the pandemic, essential workers were provided with additional supports to supplement their income. As these supports are eliminated, continue to consider needs of essential workers in recovery. The City can immediately contribute through such measures as increasing and accelerating installation of priority bus lanes thereby improving reliability and reducing commuting time; and, advocate to other levels of government for enhanced and necessary benefits such as paid sick days.
-
- 26** Provide recommendations to other levels of government regarding social and labour force policies that could reduce COVID-19 transmission through incentives to stay home if sick or needing to quarantine.
-
- 27** The City of Toronto, including Public Health, is already heavily involved in equity issues. It could expand such efforts by evaluating existing programs from an equity perspective; take inventory of needs and services of priority areas; analyze the burden of illness and key needs and responses in priority areas; implement a rolling plan for measurable reduction in selected indicators of inequality in selected areas; and, re-examine the distribution of services and the uptake by area and equity-seeking group.
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- 28** Work with community partners to coordinate and support the development of a Neighbourhood Food Hub model that builds food supply chains and distribution methods with vulnerable and racialized communities; creating effective, streamlined emergency food access in community spaces, and establishing sustainable community food resilience into the future.
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- 29** Identify affordable housing projects with the provincial and federal governments and establish dedicated and appropriate funding to develop more modular housing units and accelerate the supply of additional housing units to assist in moving people from shelters into permanent and affordable housing.
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- 30** Accelerate targeted funding towards identified affordable housing project opportunities for Indigenous people, as approved by Council in December 2019.
-
- 31** Explore opportunities to expand the definitions of "Municipal Uses" to include affordable housing, supportive housing, long-term care facilities and public schools, freeing space for additional housing by increasing density above existing and future community infrastructure to realize previously unavailable opportunities, while enhancing green space.
-
- 32** Aim to fully deploy the City's assets to develop additional affordable housing units while also improving the conditions of assets, for example, identifying housing opportunities on existing community centre sites.
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- 33** Seek additional funding from the Province for a long-term care home specifically for the Indigenous Community, by providing City-owned property as a contribution.
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- 34** Present the positive and distinguishing features of the City's delivery of care in long-term care homes to the commission established by the provincial government to examine long-term care and present the need for a more stable and equitable wage structure and working conditions for personal support workers (who are predominantly women and integral to delivering patient-focused care), as noted by the Mayor's Task Force on Workers and Labour, chaired by Councillor Mike Layton.
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- 35** Continue advocating for public health measures to protect residents and staff of long-term care facilities and retirement homes, including funding for staff training and access to expert advice in infection prevention and control, and ensure Toronto Public Health is a local resource in combating outbreaks and collecting data.
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Housing is recognized as a significant determinant of health, particularly among people experiencing poverty. The City should accelerate progress, by working deliberately and cooperatively on City, provincial and federal housing strategies, which would increase supply of affordable units in a timeframe that can aid recovery and ensure a stronger rebuild phase.

A population with equitable access to health, wellness and opportunity will be better able to keep pace with the city's changing needs and economic transitions. The consultation and engagement process generated significant feedback regarding the use of and access to spaces that people and community groups need to advance fairness, wellness and other objectives.

- 36** Make it easier for vulnerable people and community groups in using City-owned spaces in a safe, inclusive manner, including office buildings, parks, Toronto Community Housing facilities, recreation centers and libraries, so that individuals can gain internet access, helping to bridge the digital divide that exists for many households and neighbourhoods, and so that there are spaces for groups to organize and engage communities in recovery. Work with school boards and faith groups to identify opportunities to combine programs and better utilize public assets and to create new opportunities for the accessible, safe and inclusive access to space for not-for profit groups and vulnerable community agencies, not just in the downtown core.

In May, the Canadian Mental Health Association cited that 69% of Ontarians believe the province is headed for a “serious mental health crisis” as it emerges from the pandemic. Research suggests many mental illnesses go unreported. According to a 2016 Centre

for Addiction and Mental Health survey, 40% of respondents reported feelings of anxiety or depression but never sought medical help, with the economic burden of mental illness in Canada estimated at \$51 billion per year. TORR engagement participants cited potential for mental health and addiction impacts arising from the pandemic, particularly among vulnerable populations, which could significantly impact health care costs and wellbeing, as well as economic and community recovery.

- 37** Work with the Province to examine the direct and indirect impacts of the pandemic on mental health and addictions among residents of the city from a broad cross section of affected communities, so that measurable impact informs meaningful solutions.



Notable findings:

- Consultation participants suggested ramping up programs that fund home modifications for low-income seniors who are renters and homeowners to support aging in place and reduce ongoing demand for long-term care.

In addressing social determinants of health, more Toronto residents are better enabled to meaningfully participate in the labour force and community life, further improving health outcomes, driving economic and income growth and increasing the overall prosperity that supports a healthy, vibrant city.

3.4 Increasing Prosperity

There is consensus that recovery and rebuild must enable renewed and more broadly shared prosperity that helps strengthen the city's resilience and enables Torontonians to make progress in their own lives. However, the City of Toronto has limited ability to effect change in the most important aspects of a prosperity agenda, particularly in enabling greater, more equitable, more meaningful employment and significantly increased labour force participation among its residents. Therefore, the City should strive to establish a prosperity focus to measure and address Toronto's labour force needs, especially among vulnerable populations and equity-seeking groups, and do so in partnership with the federal and provincial government.

Equity is a fundamental issue of respect and fairness. It is also an economic driver that, by unlocking increased human potential, ultimately increases everyone's quality of life and income. In a city where 52 per cent of the population identify as belonging to a racialized group, Toronto's economy is significantly held back when barriers to work and career advancement exist for racialized groups.

A new understanding of the value of prosperity – measured and supported by all levels of government – can increase equitable and meaningful labour force participation, providing the economy with a skilled, innovative and adaptable workforce. This work is now more urgent. Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer indicates that the participation rate in the labour market in Toronto, between February 2020 and May 2020 was down 5.4 per cent. People from vulnerable populations were hit hardest because they are over-represented in low-wage job sectors. While there may be disagreement on the means and methods to increase prosperity, the benefits derived by increasing labour force participation are clear.

Ontario's Panel on Economic Growth and Prosperity¹ found that increasing labour force participation for youth, women, seniors and Indigenous communities "would increase Ontario's GDP by \$54.0 billion or 6.8 per cent." This additional growth also reduces reliance on income supports, health care system expenditures, justice system costs, to name a few. People from other equity seeking groups who were under-represented in the pre-COVID-19 workforce would undoubtedly generate comparable economic benefits.

38 Work with provincial and federal governments to begin a meaningful and outcomes-based discussion on a Municipal Agenda; one that begins by recognizing the growth and prosperity role of municipalities; and how a "whole of governments" approach will improve incomes and prosperity for all.

39 Establish a process with provincial and federal governments to create the most effective programs for assisting businesses with forming internships, apprenticeships and demand-driven skills training, among other supports, with an emphasis on expanding job opportunities for youth, women and gender-diverse peoples, especially for Black and Indigenous populations and people from other vulnerable populations. This will be critical for those just now entering, re-entering or trying to increase their participation in labour markets, as also noted by the Mayor's Task Force sector table on Child and Youth, chaired by Councillor Shelley Carroll.

40 Encourage the provincial and federal governments to provide support in developing the local innovation ecosystem for emerging technologies, which will be in high demand in the post-pandemic economy, such as continued advances in artificial intelligence, data analytics, the cleantech sector, advanced manufacturing and sensor technologies – thereby also providing upskilling and retraining opportunities for workers.

41 Develop an investment retention strategy and work with the provincial government, and affected unions, to ensure that measures for job retention and future growth and expansion are in place or supports are being developed.

42 Facilitate innovations in accessibility by playing a convening role between the technology industry and disability organizations, enabling new partnerships and new sources of funding for the cultural disability community – Toronto has an opportunity to be a global leader in promoting accessibility and the arts in the digital age.

43 Develop indicators that measure social mobility, distribution of economic gains, per capita income and other measures for measuring growth in equitable prosperity.

Through the Mayor's Roundtables with the Cultural Industry, led by Councillor Gary Crawford, and through the engagement on Recovery and Rebuild Culture theme, there was significant input regarding support and continuity for culture sector businesses.

44 Significantly expand the culture sector's digital infrastructure and adaptation to enable online and virtual delivery of cultural events and experiences, in doing so, advocate to the provincial and federal governments for major investments in digital infrastructure as stimulus spending – including specific investments to strengthen e-commerce capabilities and data analytics, support efforts to modernize intellectual property protections and facilitate improved connections within the cultural sector.

45 Given the prolonged impact the pandemic has had on cultural industries and operations, work with the federal and provincial governments to provide additional supports for business continuity throughout COVID-19. This includes support to key cultural institutions, creative businesses, arts and heritage organizations, and festivals and events.

46 Streamline and simplify permitting of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) pop-up spaces to facilitate safe cultural performance spaces and simplify permitting for alternative use of municipal spaces.

47 Continue the work of Economic Development and Culture, with the support of Toronto Public Health, to provide guidance to sectors such as the performing arts with continuing significant constraints upon their activities and to review proposals for events.

- 48** Work with the City of Vancouver on its initiative to encourage local arts organizations to provide information to compile national data to help federal policymakers make informed decisions about how to support Indigenous artists and cultural practitioners in the wake of COVID-19.

In the crisis, many businesses demonstrated strong examples of corporate social responsibility and corporate donations to deploy their technology in various social services delivery. In consultations, business leaders consistently commented on the inequities that exist in Toronto and how the pandemic has exacerbated them, as well as consistent feedback that members of vulnerable populations do not have a seat at various "tables".

- 49** Establish, at scale, an emerging women and youth leaders program for people from vulnerable and equity-seeking populations, such as Black and Indigenous communities, which could be done in partnership with school boards, colleges and universities and multi-sector organizations such as CivicAction. In addition, a roster of businesses committed to creating meaningful opportunities for emerging leaders from Black and Indigenous communities should be developed.

- 50** Accelerate the development of the Tkaranto Indigenous Prosperity Plan, an Indigenous-led Toronto Poverty Reduction Action Plan and ensure provincial and federal government participation to provide balanced and accessible funding to implement the Plan. This should also be linked with Indigenous housing and training initiatives as well.

The Mayor's Task Force Sector Table on Small Business and BIAs, Chaired by Councillor Brad Bradford, found that reforming the commercial tax system and addressing long-standing property tax challenges for small businesses would help maintain the vitality of main streets.

- 51** Assess the feasibility and financial implications of creating a rate capping approach or other methods to address volatility impacts of MPAC tax assessments on small businesses.

- 52** Assess the feasibility and financial implications associated with creating additional tax bands for commercial properties to reduce or prevent additional tax burdens on main street locations.

Many major employers have shifted their employees to work from home arrangements, where possible for their operations. They have also determined that these arrangements will continue for some time, based on their operational capabilities and requirements and feedback from their employees. Employers have made these arrangements with prudent adherence to public health guidance; following the public health and occupational health approach of their landlords; and, with employee health and safety in mind.

- 53** The City should convene a table with the federal and provincial governments, major employers, major landlords and BIAs to assess the impact and develop solutions for the "ecosystem" of companies that provide support services to these employers and their employees; the impact of a prolonged work from home approach; and, considerations for economic development and a long-term vision for Toronto's downtown.



Notable findings:

- Recognizing that the federal support programs will not be permanent, many people who were consulted advocated for a gradual phase-out of these programs as the economy recovers to help mitigate risk and support employers as business levels slowly return to pre-COVID-19 levels or better. Some also advocated for a sector-by-sector approach to maintaining benefits, prioritizing support for industries and workers that will have a slower recovery period (such as hospitality, entertainment, cultural and tourism).
- Provincial and federal government evaluation criteria for cultural grants and program funding, including for Indigenous cultural businesses, place emphasis on attendance numbers, which should be reconsidered in light of continuing pandemic public health requirements for physical distancing.
- The City should consider applying the Creative Co-location tax subclass to expanded classes of cultural businesses.

- The business community and other organizations should be encouraged to continue with their philanthropic and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Some examples, by no means an exhaustive list, are donating computers through the City to vulnerable communities; offering the testing of new technologies to improve services to vulnerable populations (e.g. long-term-care homes); providing meals to the homeless population; and creating financial supports for local Canadian small businesses.

In building equitable prosperity, moving the largest number of people safely and efficiently through reliable public transit and supporting active forms of transportation will be essential to recovery. Therefore, sustaining long-term, socio-economic prosperity requires continual investment in the quality of the city's infrastructure.

3.5 Infrastructure and Mobility

Various governments have recognized that investments in infrastructure will be critical for Toronto's and Canada's recovery to COVID-19. Any stimulus funding for infrastructure should support Toronto's effort to build back better and prioritize investments that support key priorities – all through an equity and resilience lens.

Public infrastructure includes roads, transit, water and sanitation, digital capacity, community centres and public housing. The City of Toronto owns approximately \$94 billion in infrastructure assets and has a 10-year capital plan (2020-2029) to invest approximately \$12 billion in new infrastructure and state of good repair. Despite substantial investment and a recent increase in the City Building Fund, the City's state-of-good repair backlog will grow to approximately \$18 billion by 2029. The financial challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic may strain the City's ability to fund its capital program, leading to an even greater backlog.

Maintaining and increasing investment in addressing the operating and capital needs for public transit are also critical to the short- and long-term vitality and livability of Toronto and the surrounding interconnected region.

All orders of government have recognized the importance of investing in infrastructure, with the federal government committing to invest \$180 billion over 12 years and the Ontario government making substantial investments in public transit and other areas. The federal and provincial governments have identified the need for providing transit funding support to municipalities to account for reduced ridership and revenues due to the pandemic.

54 Expedite planning and building processes through all phases for academic institutions, to avoid cost overruns of existing projects and build necessary infrastructure for economic recovery, as identified in the Mayor's Task Force on Higher Education Institutions, chaired by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie.

55 Formalize the application of a climate lens, alongside equity analysis, in any decisions around infrastructure stimulus funding to ensure climate risks and opportunities are appropriately factored into decision-making in order to meet Toronto's net zero goals.

56 Develop project ideas, with haste, from the City for infrastructure funding support from the federal government in its recently announced COVID-19 Resilience Funding Stream, which should incorporate ideas quickly undertaken in the crisis as they address the mobility limitations for frontline workers and those over-represented in essential services, among other areas. Improving access to mobility solutions enhances ability to participate in the labour force and contributes to growth and prosperity.

57 In addition, proactively prepare a comprehensive infrastructure proposal for Toronto – as the largest city in Canada – to the federal and provincial governments, with projects that address resilience and equity, especially considering impacts on Indigenous communities and the Black community. The proposal should partner with labour and trade unions, the development industry, the cultural industry, universities and colleges, City agencies and the TTC, among others. This proposal should also have a retraining and reskilling component.

58 To be competitive in bandwidth-intensive industries, high speed, VPN infrastructure is needed in Toronto. The City can partner with industry leaders to deliver such infrastructure.

COVID-19 has further illustrated socioeconomic disparities inherent in the uses of mobility in Toronto. While overall transit and traffic volumes are down due to the pandemic, many bus routes remain in high demand and with some trips exceeding COVID-19 crowding standards. These routes provide service to essential workers who are heavily reliant on public transit and largely serve Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.

59 Accelerate or make permanent transit initiatives the City undertook quickly to support crisis response and restart, such as instituting priority bus lanes, improved cycling infrastructure, expansion of bike share and weekend recreational street closures, among others.

A regional transit model would contribute to long-term economic productivity and growth and enhance the long-term benefits of transit investment.

60 Consider initiating an effective and actionable partnership with all governments that recognizes the interconnected and regional nature of transit in the GTHA and investigates a more regionalized model of transit delivery, with enhanced and dedicated revenue tools.

61 Accelerate efforts and implementation on the City's surface transit network plan to identify transit priority corridors, applying an equity lens as a key siting criterion.

62 Work with the TTC to accelerate its successful bus electrification program and pursue green infrastructure funding to support continued progress toward a TTC-wide bus electrification program.



Notable Findings:

- Consider and assess whether the City should approach the provincial government to alter legislation to provide authority to Toronto for additional transit-related revenue tools.
- It was suggested in consultations that the City consider the candidacy and timing of the renewal of the St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts, which presents an opportunity to create a hub for arts and cultural performance in downtown Toronto. Given its key location, the project should apply an equity lens to the place-making opportunities; after-hours access to equity seeking groups; use of state-of-the-art technology to support the next generation of creative talent in Toronto, thereby driving economic and cultural growth.

Reliable infrastructure is a precondition for creating an optimal vision for the city. Such a vision consists of opportunity for a good education, adequate housing, quality health care and affordable and convenient transportation. Residents would enjoy safe, rewarding and secure employment, an environment with good air quality, access to green space, support when frail or experiencing loss of abilities, freedom from stigma and discrimination, access to culture, the arts, sports and leisure and civic participation. This is a vision of a resilient Toronto.

3.6 Resilience

Council has requested that resilience be part of the assessment of all strategies moving forward. Taking the opportunity to build back better in recovery and rebuild, the City can accelerate the building up of the city's capacity for resilience in future crises, stresses and shocks.

Cities around the world, including Toronto, are reflecting on the state of their resilience as part of recovery and rebuild from COVID-19. Resilience can include managing chronic stresses such as growing inequality, systemic racism, mobility challenges and ageing infrastructure, and acute shocks such as pandemics, heatwaves, flooding or blizzards.

In addition to other benefits, sustaining the city's progress toward a net zero carbon target supports resilience. As part of this effort, the City is developing a climate lens to apply to major City decisions across the organization. The insights provided would help improve the resilience of infrastructure to future climate events, reduce operating and service disruption and improve the city's accountability and transparency. This effort would also provide data and insights needed to secure intergovernmental funding, strengthen evidence-based policy making and build a more complete understanding of performance-based decision-making – outcomes also related to COVID-19 recovery and rebuild phases.

Resilience must be underpinned by a growing and vibrant economy, an adequate tax base and a more equitable apportionment of fiscal capacity among the orders of government.

63 Build on Toronto's existing strengths in finance, artificial intelligence, technology and research, cleantech and green industries to attract further foreign direct investment. Opportunities for a green recovery are being exploited by other regions and countries. Canada, Ontario and Toronto have an opportunity to better leverage new investment opportunities in this sector to increase jobs, improve productivity and deliver economic and environmental benefits.

Consultation for this report has generated ideas that can support resilience while creating jobs in the immediate- to mid-term.

64 As part of the commitment to lead "net-zero retrofits of Toronto-owned buildings", work with the provincial government to identify building retrofit projects, at scale, that would be candidates for innovative financing methods and to identify specific opportunities for training and upskilling to support the development of jobs and workforce capacity. A similar point was recommended by the Mayor's Task Force Sector Table on Workers and Unions, chaired by Councillor Layton.

65 Work in collaboration with Toronto Hydro to accelerate efforts toward electrification and other activities required to support improvements in energy efficiency.

The pandemic has shown a need for increased access to green and outdoor space for a wider cross section of people in Toronto and in various neighbourhoods, particularly among those who do not have access to private outdoor spaces.

66 Look for opportunities to enhance future access for those least able to access greenspace.

67 Consider developing a Winter City Plan to expand winter use of public parks, expand the CaféTO plan and pursue winter solutions for ActiveTO to increase resilience on a year-round basis.

Public health recommendations are considered and developed with an understanding of the way residents of Toronto live, work, play and move around – factors that also determine overall health and well-being and resilience to future epidemics. The City's built form – through its effect on how people live, work, play and move – is increasingly recognized as an important influence for health. Health issues ranging from the prevalence of diabetes to social connectivity have been shown to be associated with the built environment. The City should continue and strengthen its existing efforts in this regard.

68

Build upon initiatives put in place during COVID-19 to accelerate progress toward a modern, green and less car-dependent City, which is a network of connected complete communities, and includes a more extensive, integrated public transit system supporting complete streets – for all uses, all ages, all abilities – and public spaces with quality materials, shade, public art and green space.

- a. Apply a wellness lens to transportation planning, as both a preventive health measure and to ensure equitable access to green space, social opportunity and other contributors to well-being, emphasizing public transit and active transportation, including building on the additional cycling routes opened in the pandemic to accelerate progress toward increased provision of safe, protected cycle routes.
- b. Apply the principle of “build back better” to land-use planning and seek to improve the city’s overall built form by prioritizing gentle density that places greater emphasis on a mix of building types and uses – including low-rise residential, retail and services – and that supports transit use.
- c. Improve and refine the use of curb lanes and other spaces for restaurant patios, the success of which has indicated a public appetite for a more European urban form in some parts of the city, with much more pedestrian space, good transit and fewer cars, but taking care to apply a broader equity lens, including impacts on access.



Notable Findings:

- Many business stakeholders saw an opportunity to champion local capabilities and innovation through the pandemic and recovery period. There are opportunities to, for example,

enhance manufacturing capacity for critical products such as pharmaceuticals and PPE to help protect residents in the event of a second wave of COVID-19, and build resilience for potential public health crises in the future. It is suggested that the provincial government continue its efforts in supporting businesses to re-tool their manufacturing to generate local supplies to develop resilience when addressing future pandemics. This will continue to create additional jobs and the interventions thus far have proved successful in increasing supply and decreasing reliance on firms outside of Ontario. The federal and provincial governments have made a significant move in this direction with their investment in support of 3M Company in the Brockville area for the production, at scale, of N95 masks.

- A circular economy aims to reduce waste and maximize resources by replacing the linear take-make-dispose approach with an innovative system that focuses on product longevity, renewability, reuse and repair. For cities, a circular economy can significantly reduce waste, improve quality of life, and foster economic growth through clean and sustainable innovation, while reducing resource dependency and environmental impacts. There is a unique opportunity to consider a pilot project to intentionally design and implement the circular economy transition to support a bold, prosperous, equitable and sustainable recovery, to determine whether and how to use such an approach in Toronto.

While many recommendations emphasize partnerships with other levels of government, the City can also contribute to a strong recovery using its own regulatory solutions, service delivery innovations, additional financial measures and the strategic use of assets to support progress on social determinants of health and prosperity.

3.7 City of Toronto Services

In recovery and rebuild, the City must continue to innovate and apply lessons learned in the crisis to keep up a brisk pace of modernizing services and improving convenience for residents and businesses. Toronto’s public servants must continue their increased level of collaborating across the organization and with external partners to deliver results that make a meaningful difference in making it easier to do business with the City and in the city.

The crisis confirmed that the City’s public service is capable of accelerated innovation. While the pandemic has created tremendous challenges for the Toronto Public Service, the City modified and adapted its services to meet the needs of Torontonians during the crisis. With little notice, the workplace underwent profound change as staff worked remotely and more services were moved online. The crisis enabled the public service to propose, plan and implement ideas at an accelerated pace.

The City has, through Council approval, passed several impactful strategies and plans to address many and varied challenges facing the city and its populations. The City will need to accelerate its already approved strategies and initiatives, though it is recognized that this acceleration cannot take place without the rebalancing of funding from other levels of government, as the property tax base is insufficient.

- 69** Continue to closely monitor the implications on development charges and other growth funding tools, given the recent legislative changes introduced by the provincial government but not yet proclaimed into effect, and work to balance the revenue implications with the growth opportunities that additional development may bring during recovery and rebuild.

The Mayor's Task Force's Housing/Planning Table, Co-Chaired by Deputy Mayors Ana Bailão and Michael Thompson, offered recommendations for more efficiently and effectively moving affordable housing proposals through the City's approvals process.

- 70** Prioritize affordable housing appeals by requesting the provincial government and the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal to identify a process to fast track appeals that contain a significant portion of affordable ownership or rental units.

- 71** Specify a base density/height without affordable rental housing from which increases may be permitted if affordable rental housing is provided.

- 72** Implement different development charges across the city, with emphasis on a reduction in areas experiencing slow growth, to seed revitalization.

Councillor McKelvie convened sessions with the eight higher education institutions in Toronto, a conversation that produced recommendations for recovery and rebuild.

- 73** The City of Toronto should consider expanding supports for students through alternative summer job and experiential (co-op/training) opportunities, food security initiatives and supports for international students and racialized and vulnerable youth.

- 74** Develop partnerships between higher education institutions and the City to support local businesses and organizations, leveraging faculty expertise and student placements to develop small business supports, training and transition to online services; and, form a faculty working group to develop methods to support small businesses and arts and culture organizations.

In consultations undertaken for this report and by City Council, business leaders observed that the pandemic has created an opportunity to shine the spotlight on main street businesses across Toronto. They encouraged businesses to take advantage of the strong consumer interest in supporting main streets and trends toward 'hyper-local' shopping.

- 75** Continue to monitor the success of programs implemented in response to the crisis, such as the Ritual app, as well as pre-pandemic digital main street initiatives, and continuously improve on their utility for small businesses.

The City moved very quickly to develop remote, digital service delivery solutions during the response to the pandemic. Deputy Mayor Thompson's Economic and Community Development Committee, Councillor Cynthia Lai's engagement with Ethnic Roundtables and Councillor Bradford's sector table on Small Business and BIAs, indicated support for continuing such efforts at pace.

- 76** Continue with the significant business process redesign efforts in making City services more digitally capable and streamline the City's customer interface.

- 77** Continue with the modernization of the procurement system and continue to explore new programs and incentives for procurement solutions from Toronto-based companies.

- 78** Reduce regulatory burden for businesses, develop small business initiatives and continue with revitalizing main streets while applying a small-business-first lens.

The need for affordable and reliable access to personal protective equipment (PPE) is a precondition for restoring confidence of employees returning to work, as well as consumers and people who rely on non-profit agency supports as the economy reopens. Many businesses – particularly small businesses – and non-profit agencies have indicated that they have had difficulty sourcing the amount of PPE necessary to resume safe operations.

- 79** Support businesses by using the City's purchasing power to competitively select companies that can provide end-to-end solutions, from procuring through to distribution of PPE, to businesses and not-for-profit agencies at lower prices.

The City needs accurate, timely information to more effectively allocate capital funding, make investments and partner with other levels of government through infrastructure spending and investment.

-
- 80** Take an enterprise wide, horizontal approach to capital planning and budgeting, thereby identifying "highest and best use" capital priorities. In addition, undertake an extensive asset-condition assessment of City owned assets and ensure that the resulting information is kept up to date.
-

A potential second wave of COVID-19 infections could occur, as well as other types of shocks in the future. The pandemic experience confirmed the need to support vulnerable people in a crisis.

-
- 81** Work with the provincial government to continue to develop an app that could provide a single source for information on services related to wellness, food insecurity and meal delivery, clothing provision, volunteerism and other assistance. This app could also convey consistent public health guidance.
-

Leveraging, insights and analysis across policy areas and public engagement data will create further opportunities for evidence-informed recommendations, decisions and actions.

-
- 82** Improve coordination of research and data across City divisions, agencies and corporations.
-

- 83** Establish a more formal engagement strategy by:
- Identifying roles and responsibilities across the organization, including a lead practitioner who would support divisional engagement with City-wide guidelines and processes for engagement, including procurement, data management, technology capacity, equity and accessibility, and staff training;
 - Establishing organizational capacity for ongoing and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, Black Torontonians and equity-seeking and vulnerable communities;
 - Piloting innovative methods, increased evaluation and partnerships across divisions and agencies and other jurisdictions; and

- Supporting secure and effective collection and management of engagement data in a transparent manner through accessible communications and participant resources; and leveraging feedback across divisions and agencies to gain insights for decision making and continuous improvement.

3.8 Conclusion

COVID-19 revealed areas for improving health status and reducing the inequalities in health status. The inequities are extreme in the case of COVID-19, but not fundamentally different from those observed for decades pertaining to most other causes of disease and death. The causative factors, the social determinants of health, are many and are linked together in complex relationships. They influence both the state of health of the whole population and the extent of health inequalities.

Within the recommendations, there are several suggestions regarding engagement with federal and provincial governments. Toronto delivers a range of services that successive Ontario governments have determined to be best delivered at the local level. Consistent year-to-year fiscal pressures have limited the ability of municipal governments to develop transformative, cross-cutting policy innovations that can deliver better overall outcomes for people and contribute to a healthier city. In addition, the net effect of service realignments over many years has not delivered a cost-neutral transfer of programs from the perspective of municipal governments.

The City had many plans and strategies developed before and during the pandemic that can further strengthen recovery and building back better. The recommendations are designed to avoid replication of existing City strategies and plans, however, there are instances where acceleration of existing initiatives is recommended. Going forward, Toronto City Council will be most effective when it decides and acts with unanimity so that its voice is clearly heard by senior levels of government, as these governments' support will be critical to future implementation and for more balanced growth for all people of Toronto.

Many of those engaged and consulted did not need nor want to know which level of government delivered what crisis support. However, they were clear about the need for a continuation of many supports provided in the crisis by all levels of government. There is a collective view that people are still grappling with many challenges that this pandemic has brought to their doors.

So, we implore all levels of government to continue this unprecedented level of cooperation and coordination and engage in meaningful discussion about achieving better outcomes that build lasting, ever-increasing prosperity for Torontonians, Ontarians and Canadians. Because if not now, then when?

4 | COVID-19 in the Toronto Context

4.1 Key Facts about the City of Toronto



Fastest growing city, and part of the fastest growing region, in North America².



Between July 2018 and July 2019:

Toronto's population grew by **45,742**

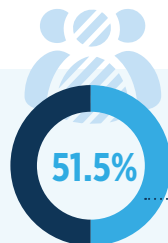


Toronto Region's population grew by **127,575**

Toronto had an operating budget of **\$13.5 billion** in 2020.



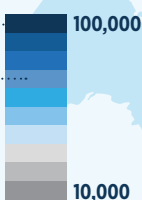
Generates **\$180 billion GDP** (2018), and part of a region that generates **\$358 billion in GDP**. This is equivalent to Alberta and Quebec³.



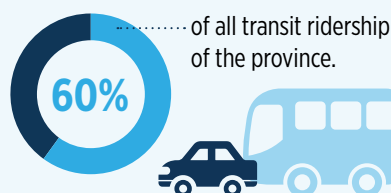
One of the most multicultural and multiracial cities in the world.

of Toronto residents belong to a visible minority group.⁴

Largest Indigenous population in Ontario and the **4th largest in Canada** with between **70,000** and **100,000** First Nations, Inuit and Métis.⁵



Operates Canada's most heavily used transit system, and the third busiest in North America.



Pre-COVID-19, the TTC had over:

3 million trips per day⁶



One in five adults and one in four children live in poverty in Toronto



The City of Toronto's poverty rate is:



1.5 times higher than the greater Census Metropolitan Area

1.7 times higher than the provincial rate

1.8 times higher than the national rate

Poverty is disproportionately experienced by Indigenous People, Black Torontonians, and other equity-seeking communities such as:



Racialized youth



Socially isolated individual



Vulnerable seniors



People with disabilities⁷

Economic Impact of COVID-19

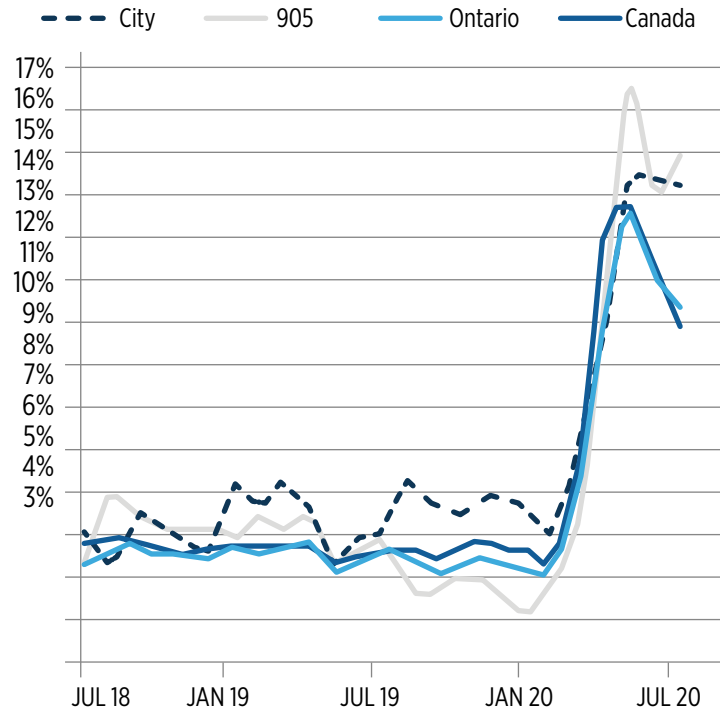
COVID-19 has produced the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression.

The Canadian economy is estimated to contract by 6.9 per cent in 2020⁸ – a recession that is two to three times as deep as the Great Recession of 2008/09. Toronto's unemployment rate rose from 5.9 per cent in February 2020 to 14.2 per cent in July⁹. However, the unemployment rate does not account for unemployed workers that are not looking for work, for example due to health concerns or child care responsibilities.

The Toronto CMA lost nearly 630,000 jobs in March, April and May, and many workers are working reduced hours¹⁰. The labour market is gradually recovering as COVID-19 restrictions ease. Total employment across the Toronto CMA increased by 199,100 in June, and by 68,400 in July. The rebound in hiring recoups about 40 per cent of the jobs lost from February through May¹¹.

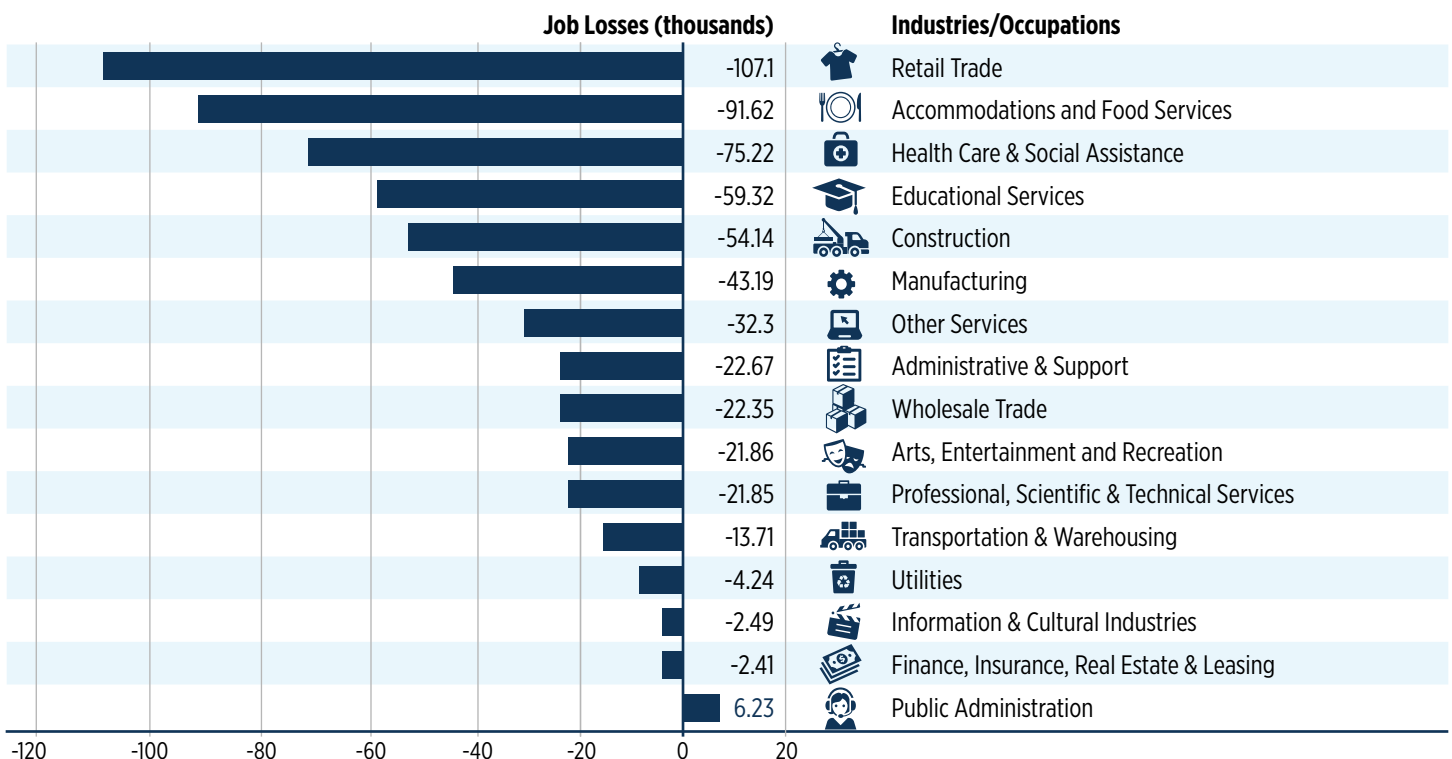
Jobs across industries and occupations have not been impacted equally. The largest employment changes are in industries affected by social distancing rules, including retail, accommodation, and food services¹².

Figure 1 – Unemployment Rate, July 2020



Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, Seasonally Adjusted Monthly.

Figure 2 – Toronto CMA Employment Change (Feb to May, 2020)



Social impact of COVID-19

- COVID-19 has predominantly affected urban Canada. Toronto accounts for 8 per cent of Canada's population and 13 per cent of Canada's cases of COVID-19. Provincially, Toronto accounts for 20 per cent of Ontario's population and 39 per cent of Ontario's cases of COVID-19¹³.
- Racialized groups are over-represented in reported COVID-19 cases. The majority (83 per cent) of reported COVID-19 cases in the City of Toronto identified with a racialized group¹⁴. This is compared to 52 per cent of Toronto's population who identify as belonging to racialized groups. In addition, 71 per cent of people who were hospitalized identified as coming from racialized groups.
- Recovery is likely to be hardest for communities that already face significant challenges and is likely to exacerbate income inequality. The risk of experiencing work interruptions during the pandemic has fallen disproportionately on financially vulnerable workers in industries most impacted by the need to socially distance, as demonstrated in job loss numbers. Approximately 60 per cent of Canadians are in jobs that cannot be done from home and the likelihood of holding such a job is not the same for all Canadians. Households with lower levels of education and earnings are the least likely to hold jobs that can be done from home¹⁵.
- Vulnerable communities, for example, immigrants, particularly women, account for a disproportionate share of nurse aides, orderlies, and patient service associates, putting them at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. In 2016, immigrants accounted for 78.7 per cent of nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates in the Toronto CMA compared with 50.2 per cent of workers in all other occupations¹⁶.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed women's participation in the labour force down to its lowest level in three decades. Women are overrepresented in industries — hospitality and food services, retail trade, educational services, health care and social assistance — most affected by closures, earnings losses and layoffs, such as hospitality and food services, retail trade, educational services, health care and social assistance¹⁷.

Key facts about City services

Cities play a central role in preparing for, mitigating and adapting to pandemics. Globally, cities with a high concentration of urban poor and deep inequalities have been more vulnerable than those that are better resourced, less crowded, and more inclusive. Cities that are open, transparent, collaborative and adopt comprehensive responses are better equipped to manage pandemics than those that are not. Likewise, cities with robust governance and health infrastructure are in a better position to manage pandemics than those that do not.¹⁸

The City of Toronto responded to the pandemic by working with other levels of government, agencies, corporations, businesses and community organizations and its residents to stop the spread of COVID-19, provide support to those who need it most, and prepare to recover from the pandemic.

Public health and City services are critical to community health, safety and economy. Neighbourhoods have been impacted when community centres, libraries and child care centres are closed. During the pandemic, emergency services – including police, fire and paramedic services – continued to operate normally. Toronto Water ensured safe, reliable drinking water and Toronto Hydro continued to provide energy to homes and businesses. Where services could not be delivered in the same ways, new approaches were put in place including shifting library resources to provide food security programs, delivering recreation programs online and web-streaming City Council meetings. The City established dedicated operational taskforces to respond to the emergency, secured supplies of personal protective equipment for frontline workers, and continued to respond to environmental risks such as heatwaves. City workers enforced provincial orders and the orders issued by the Medical Officer of Health to keep residents and businesses safe.



4.2 Emergency Management and Public Health Context

Separate frameworks establish the federal, provincial and municipal emergency management and public health roles and the management of public health orders. Associated authorities, such as those related to occupational health and safety, ensure further guidance and compliance. Those relevant roles, responsibilities and legislation are noted below and throughout this report.



The Government of Canada:

- Liaises with other governments and international entities such as the World Health Organization.
- Has the Emergency Management Act, which sets out the role and responsibility of federal cabinet ministers, coordination of activities within government and cooperation with the provinces.
- Works with provinces on the Emergency Management Framework and Emergency Management Strategy for Canada.
- Has the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#), whose mandate includes responding to public health emergencies.
- Under the Quarantine Act, can enact measures to prevent the introduction and spread of communicable diseases, including controlling the movement of potentially infected persons across international borders and issuing emergency quarantine orders.
- Can issue orders under various pieces of legislation including those related to travel (e.g. orders issued by the Minister of Transport).

The Province of Ontario:

- Has the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) and associated regulations, which “establish the province’s legal basis and framework for managing emergencies.” This includes defining the authority of provincial ministries and municipalities.
- Under the EMCPA and its associated regulations, the province can:
 - declare a state of emergency throughout Ontario or in any part of Ontario under section 7.0.1(1).
 - issue orders (via provincial cabinet) to, for example, modify existing legislation, and regulations, suspend certain appeal mechanisms and bargaining rights and require the closure of businesses, limit the size of gatherings and require physical distancing.
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) may provide additional guidance, after orders are issued under the EMCPA.
- Sets minimum standards for municipalities under the EMCPA and Ontario Regulation 380/04, including the requirement to conduct of emergency planning and training, exercises and public outreach.
- Can, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, issue many guidance documents for workplaces.
- Has the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) governing all aspects of boards of health/ public health units in Ontario. It provides authority for the local Medical Officer of Health to issue orders.
- Public Health Ontario is a Crown corporation that provides scientific and technical advice and support to clients working in government, public health, health care, and related sectors.








































The City of Toronto:

- May make bylaws with respect to the health, safety and well-being of persons (as empowered under the City of Toronto Act).
- Fulfills requirements as outlined in the EMCPA and Ontario Regulation 380/04.
- Can declare an emergency in the municipality (or any part of the municipality) under section 4 of the EMCPA and section 59-5.1 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management.
- Mayor may take necessary actions to protect property and the health, safety and welfare of residents in a state of emergency, per the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management. City Council delegates its statutory authority under the City of Toronto Act, 2006 to the Mayor.

- Public Health Unit (Toronto Public Health) may:
 - Use the existing public health powers in the HPPA such as issuing class orders.
 - Develop guidance to support residents and businesses prepare.
- Enforces the provincial EMCPA and the orders issued by the Medical Officer of Health under the HPPA.

Governmental Roles and Responses to COVID-19

The fight against COVID-19 has by necessity required strong collaboration and coordination among all governments. At this critical time all orders of government responded quickly, effectively and responsively to save lives and livelihoods. At a high level, roles and responsibilities as related to the pandemic are as follows (as outlined in the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild Discussion Guide):

 Municipal - Toronto	 Provincial - Ontario	 Federal - Canada
 Utilities (water, wastewater, garbage)	 Schools	 Income Tax
 Transit (TTC)	 Hospitals/Healthcare	 Mortgages
 Roads	 Supports for employers/employees	 Borders
 Emergency (Police, Fire, Paramedics)	 COVID-19 Testing	 RCMP/Military
 Municipal Enforcement	 Justice	 Student Loans
 City Hall	 Highways	 Airports
 Property Taxes	 School Taxes	 International Travel
 Culture & Recreation	 Safety Orders/Enforcement	 Safety Orders/Enforcement
 Family & Community Supports	 Economic Stimulus	 Income Supports (Employment Insurance, Canada Emergency Response Benefit, Canada Child Benefit)
 Affordable/Social Housing	 Transit (Metrolinx, GO Transit)	 Economic Stimulus
 COVID-19 Case & Contact Management	 Post-Secondary Institutions	 Environmental Protection
 Long-Term Care	 Long-Term Care	
	 Environmental Protection	

Federal Actions

The federal government's efforts have focused on limiting the spread of COVID-19 into Canada, mobilizing and coordinating public health across the country (including ramping up procurement and manufacturing of personal protective equipment), providing significant supports to individuals and businesses who are impacted by the resulting economic slowdown, and providing supports to Indigenous communities and vulnerable populations.

The federal government has used orders under legislation (including the Quarantine Act) to stop the spread of COVID-19 in areas of federal jurisdiction. That includes prohibiting entry into Canada, mandating quarantine and isolation, reducing risks in marine, rail and aviation, expanding income supports and expediting approval of health products.

As of the end of July 2020, according to the Government of Canada the federal COVID-19 Economic Response Plan anticipates at least \$241 billion in direct spending. Significant measures include:

- \$83.6 billion Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) program designed to support employers retain their employees.
- \$80.5 billion Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) providing direct income supports to individuals (plus \$5.25 billion in income supports for students).
- \$19 billion under the Safe Restart Agreement for provinces and territories, which includes federal contributions of up to \$2 billion for municipalities and \$1.8 billion for public transit (both to be cost matched by provinces/territories), and federal funding for other re-start priorities such as \$625 million for child care.
- \$13.75 billion to forgive a portion (25 per cent) of the interest free loans to be provided to businesses through the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA).

When combined with deferrals and liquidity measures (such as credit for small- and medium-sized businesses available through Business Development Canada (BDC) and Export Development Canada (EDC)) this rises to more than \$400 billion in federal supports.

Of the total support announced by the Government of Canada, the City of Toronto has, as of early August 2020, received approximately \$25 million through the expansion of the Reaching Home program to support people experiencing homelessness. The City also has been allocated funding under the \$19 billion in federal contributions from the Safe Restart Agreement. Details are noted

below. The City anticipates receiving its fair share in recognition of the unprecedented fiscal impact of COVID-19 due to unrecoverable revenue losses (including in transit fare revenues) and increased expenditures.

More details on the federal response are available at www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html.



Provincial Actions

Provincial governments exercise control over the healthcare system (including in Ontario, Public Health Ontario and Ontario Health), schools and school boards, post-secondary institutions and workplaces. Provinces have led the health and emergency response (including in long-term care homes), established processes for reopening their province's economy and critical services such as schools and child care, and provided supports to individuals, businesses and vulnerable communities throughout the pandemic. In total, across the country, the Federal Economic and Fiscal Snapshot quantifies provincial/territorial direct spending at \$24.1 billion. When combined with tax deferrals to individuals and businesses and liquidity measures, the figure grows to \$65.6 billion in supports.

Through emergency orders, the Province of Ontario has taken significant action to protect the health of Ontarians. It has included a full range of measures to shut down services and the economy (such as recreational amenities, restaurants, child care centres, schools, public events/gatherings, etc.), provide stronger measures and increase flexibility to respond to the pandemic (such as in long-term care homes, etc.), support consumers and businesses during the shutdown (such as enabling delivery of alcohol/cannabis, reducing electricity rates, addressing price gouging, etc.), and outline rules that would apply as the economy is reopened in stages on a regional basis.

The Province of Ontario, as of its fiscal update on August 12, 2020 has specifically committed to spend more than \$30 billion in response to COVID-19, including but not limited to:

- \$11 billion to support people and jobs through electricity cost relief, funding for social services, pandemic pay, support for seniors and Indigenous communities and the provision of other emergency assistance. This also includes \$4 billion under the Safe Restart Agreement as noted below.
- \$7.7 billion in health measures, including hospital capacity, testing, medical equipment (including personal protective equipment) and in long-term care.
- \$10 billion in support through tax and other deferrals.

Of the total support announced by the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto has, as of early August 2020, received approximately \$90 million through the first allocation under the Social Services Relief Fund (for homelessness and for an emergency benefit for those on social assistance), the Transit Cleaning Program, Pandemic Pay measures and additional funding for long-term care.

Federal/Provincial Safe Restart Agreement

In addition, the Federal/Provincial Safe Restart Agreement requires matching spending by provinces to support municipalities and transit systems. The Province of Ontario has noted it is contributing up to \$2.22 billion to meet that requirement.

Combined with federal contributions noted earlier, the allocation provides Ontario municipalities with up to \$4 billion in total - up to \$2 billion in emergency funding for municipalities, up to \$2 billion for public transit.

Note that the Province will be rolling out funding for the Municipal and Public Transit Streams in two phases, with the first phase totalling \$1.66 billion in emergency support for municipalities and \$660 million for public transit. An additional \$212 million is also provided through an additional allocation of the Province of Ontario's Social Services Relief Fund. Further, the Province of Ontario has announced \$175.8 million in federal contributions to service managers for the Child Care Reopening Plan.

The Province has announced the City's initial allocations under the Safe Restart Agreement, as follows. Further contributions are anticipated by the City through Phase 2 contributions under the Municipal and Public Transit streams.

MUNICIPAL STREAM

allocated on a per household basis

\$145,683,100

Toronto's Allocation Phase 1



PUBLIC TRANSIT STREAM

allocated based on ridership

\$404,088,232

Toronto's Allocation Phase 1



Total \$549,771,332

PROVINCIAL SOCIAL SERVICES RELIEF FUND

\$118,770,782

Toronto's Allocation Phase 1

\$47,545,885

Federal Safe Restart Funding

September Child Care Reopening

Total \$716,087,999

More details on the Province of Ontario's response can be found at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>.

Impact of Government Actions

Through formal emergency protocols, interventions to support economic sectors and individuals and public health measures, federal, provincial and municipal governments have largely planked the curve and headed off a larger economic downturn. Findings from engagement noted that while the response and certain initiatives and economic programs have been received poorly (for example the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (OCECRA)) the response to the collective efforts of governments in Canada have largely been positive.

Despite differences in local contexts, local public health units worked together to influence provincial public health decisions throughout the pandemic. This cohesiveness was demonstrated in their advocacy for a phased approach to reopening based on local public health data. This regional reopening approach was adopted by the provincial MOH informed by local data.

Actions by each government has largely been guided by areas of responsibility. The pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities in areas such as long-term care, public health preparedness and response and the trend toward precarious jobs in the modern economy. Governments have had to take unprecedented interventions. They have included expanded roles such as a broad-based income support program led by the federal government, rapid scale up in provincial testing and health care capacity (including wage top-ups for front-line workers) and new forms of collaboration. Examples of collaboration are shared federal/provincial action in procurement and manufacturing of personal protective equipment, contact tracing, long-term care operations, commercial rents and eviction prevention and labour standards to expand sick days.

Vulnerabilities have also been exposed in the municipal fiscal framework. Municipalities, including Toronto, have been on the front lines, providing essential supports to those in need and ensuring that critical services such as transit continues throughout the pandemic. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has quantified that, in 2020, the fiscal pressures on municipalities will amount to between \$10 and \$15 billion for unrecoverable revenue losses and added expenditures related to COVID-19. Requests were also made by the Large Urban Mayor's Caucus of Ontario as well as the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Mayors and Chairs which have been strongly advocating for funding from the federal and provincial governments, given unprecedented financial impacts.

While the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Safe Restart Agreement will provide some mitigation against these operating losses, there remains an immediate pressure and an uncertain future for Canada's municipal governments. The post-pandemic recovery is expected to be uneven, impacting revenues and expenditures for services such as child care, housing and homelessness and transit. Even as economic growth occurs, the City of Toronto will not be able to catch up fiscally, as there are limited revenue tools that are directly linked to the economy, making the losses to date and into 2021 and 2022 likely unrecoverable. To this point, federal and provincial funding committed to municipal governments, including through the Safe Restart Agreement, is unlikely to fully address these pressures. Finally, the accelerated transition to a digital economy, combined with uncertainty in the commercial property market, may even undermine the very nature of revenue sources such as the property tax.



Government Collaboration

City Approaches and Action

During the pandemic, governments were able to rapidly coordinate their responses by leveraging existing mechanisms for collaboration (including agreements, networks and structures) such as the *Toronto-Ontario Cooperation and Consultation Agreement*. For example, City of Toronto staff co-chaired with the Province of Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, a Municipal Technical Working Group on Emergent Municipal Needs in Response to COVID-19. The group continues to meet regularly with the goal of providing insight into the local impacts and responses to COVID-19 to help inform the provincial response and ensure coordination and alignment.

Active partnerships support alignment, create synergy, inform decisions and ultimately result in mutually beneficial outcomes across governments. For example, at the onset of the pandemic, all governments identified that the viability of small and medium enterprises would be essential for the long-term success of the economy. Municipalities acted by first providing property tax relief in the form of deferrals, and then ramped up strategies to promote local economic development including the City's partnership with the private sector to expand ShopHERE and Digital Main Street. Federal and provincial governments acted to provide commercial rent relief and prevent commercial evictions, and together funded the expansion of the Digital Main Street program across the province.

Municipal Partnerships

Municipal governments also increased their collaboration during the pandemic. Political leadership at FCM and the GTHA Mayors and Chairs focused on the fiscal impacts of the pandemic while coordinating advocacy and public awareness on issues such as recovery and reopening strategies and policies. The relative geographic proximity of municipalities highlighted the need for a regional approach to reopening and the need to consider differing public health circumstances while ensuring some regional consistency.

Similar networks were leveraged federally, such as with staff at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and Toronto worked with other large Canadian cities including Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa and Montreal. Senior management in these large cities increased their collaboration to discuss the impacts of COVID-19, emergency response and recovery, and potential areas of federal-municipal collaboration.

The Recovery

Response to the pandemic by governments highlights opportunities to explore further, proactive, collaborative intergovernmental partnerships during the recovery and beyond.

City plans and strategies provide directions for consideration as part of recovery, including:

- Long-Term Financial Plan, considered by Executive Committee in 2018, sets out the need for a new and positive framework with the potential to serve provincial and national goals as well as achieve Toronto priorities. Potential actions identified then included: continuing to pursue shared policy outcomes with the Governments of Ontario and Canada on housing, transit, public good pricing and community services, developing a strategic intergovernmental approach based on Council's priorities and augmenting provincial and federal investments in Toronto in a fair and equitable manner.
- Corporate Strategic Plan highlights the importance of intergovernmental relationships and partnerships in delivering the six key priorities for the Toronto Public Service.
- The Value Based Outcomes Review, considered by City Council in late 2019, notes structural challenges related to the unique role of the City of Toronto and the need for partnerships with other governments, including approaches to fairly fund city services and infrastructure that provide regional benefits.

Achieving desired long-term outcomes and opportunities through new relationships and agreements with other governments will require new or augmented internal approaches, with a focus on

populations, in addition to by service area, in order to successfully achieve City Council's desired goals. Taking a systems approach with other governments, matched with appropriate resources and a co-developed intergovernmental strategy that reflects lessons from the pandemic emergency to date, will allow the City and its partners to identify the full range of possible policy and program interventions needed to achieve shared outcomes and appropriate government actions.



Roles and Responsibilities of Governments

It is important that municipalities play a critical role in shaping the national conversation about Canada in a COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 world. Part of this role will include reflecting on the structural conditions that undermined a collective response. It will also include work to examine and clarify how governments can best serve Canadians by matching each level of government with the appropriate roles, responsibilities and resources. The pandemic highlighted that public policy at the national and provincial levels should be informed by first-hand experiences in municipalities.

Additionally, there is an opportunity for all governments to boost local economies and create jobs through a stimulus infrastructure package. That kind of stimulus funding would not only spur economic growth but would also help build infrastructure that mitigates, and is more resilient to, climate change.

Important conversations have already begun and will continue as cities recover. For example, intergovernmental actions through the 2017 National Housing Strategy are now more urgent than ever as demonstrated by the impact of the pandemic, which reinforced the need to provide affordable and supportive housing for those in need. Municipalities remain central to this conversation and its Collaboration and flexibility will be essential to meet the challenges governments face to recover from the impacts of the pandemic, and to address challenges that existed prior to COVID-19 including the continued effects of climate change.

4.3 Highlights of Phases and City Actions

Overview

In January 2020, a new coronavirus was identified as the cause of an outbreak originating in Wuhan, China. The disease caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). COVID-19 is spread through direct contact with the respiratory droplets of someone who is infected with the virus through their cough or sneeze. Symptoms of COVID-19 include new or worsening cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, fatigue, muscle aches and headaches. In severe cases, infection has led to death.

On January 25, 2020 Canada confirmed its first case of COVID-19, in Toronto.

On March 11, the global case count of COVID-19 reached 126,000 and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic. On the same day, Toronto's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated and the EOC began coordinating emergency response efforts to protect the health and safety of Toronto residents; to ensure business continuity so that residents could continue to access the services they rely on; and to protect the health and safety of City staff who provide these services.

In March 2020, Mayor Tory convened an Economic Support and Recovery Task Force, which engaged a number of City Councillors to host discussions with stakeholders. The Task Force included roundtables on Business and Community, Children and Youth, Cultural and Arts Communities, Recovery and Restart, Small Businesses BIAs, Social Services and Housing, Upper Education and Industry. Input collected through the Mayor's Task Force was considered by TORR.

As shown in the **timeline on the next page**, cases of COVID-19 continued to increase. On March 17, 2020, the Province of Ontario declared a State of Emergency under section 7.0.1(1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. Shortly after, on March 23, 2020, on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health and the Office of Emergency Management, the City of Toronto declared an emergency under section 4 of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, and section 59-5.1 of *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management*. All non-essential businesses were closed and various services and amenities shut down.

Toronto's Medical Officer of Health and Toronto Public Health actively monitored the situation, identified potential cases of COVID-19 and their contacts, implemented public health measures

to contain and reduce the spread of the virus, and provided daily updates to inform media and the public and emphasize/explain the public health measures put in place. The measures included actions to maintain physical distancing, such as recommendations to stay at home, and hygiene measures such as frequent handwashing.

In addition to the ongoing response efforts that were underway, the City of Toronto established the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR) to coordinate a city-wide approach to recovering and rebuilding from COVID-19 and to prepare recommendations for the City Manager, informed by public health evidence and best practices for the City's recovery strategy. Establishment of TORR and planning for recovery began at the end of April, with the recognition that response and recovery would happen concurrently.

The reopening of businesses and services followed directions from the Provincial Government according to a multi-phased approach outlined in, [A Framework for Reopening our Province](#). Toronto entered Ontario's opening of Stage 1 on May 19 along with municipalities across Ontario. Given the differences in the impact of COVID-19 in different parts of the province, a regional approach to reopening was implemented for Stages 2 and 3. As a result, while many parts of Ontario entered Stage 2 reopening on June 12 and 19, Toronto did not enter Stage 2 until June 24. Similarly, for Stage 3, some municipalities opened July 17, others opened on July 24 and Toronto waited until July 31 to reopen.

There are several phases to the City's COVID-19 strategy: **response, restart, recovery and rebuild**. There is no distinct point at which activities transition from one phase to the next, as the City's strategy timelines are guided by the course and nature of the pandemic. The response phase will continue for as long as required and EOC activation levels will remain in step with the virus spread and associated impacts. The restart phase was dictated by the lifting of provincial orders, aligned with Ontario's *A Framework for Reopening our Province*, and advice from the City's Medical Officer of Health. Recovery and rebuild phases will continue until all systems return to better than normal and a re-imagine phase will allow the City to continue to innovate and deliver its services within a COVID-19 environment and beyond.

This section of the report provides a brief summary of each of the phases related to the City's action taken during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Key Events




January 2020 to September 2020

This timeline identifies important global, federal and provincial events during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the City of Toronto's response and actions in greater detail.

JANUARY

-  **January 9, 2020**
A novel coronavirus is identified as the cause of a cluster of respiratory illness in Wuhan, China
-  **January 15**
Public Health Agency of Canada activates Emergency Operation Centre (EOC)
-  **January 25**
Canada's first confirmed case of COVID-19 (in Toronto)
-  **January 30**
World Health Organization (WHO) declares COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern

Legend
The timeline reflects key events that occurred at the global, federal, provincial, and municipal levels, as identified by the symbols below.

-  Government of Canada
-  Province of Ontario
-  City of Toronto
-  Global Event














MARCH

-  **March 11**
WHO declares a pandemic; Toronto's Emergency Operation Centre activates at Level 1
-  **March 12**
EOC increases activation to Level 2
-  **March 14**
City of Toronto cancels all programs, closes most facilities
-  **Mid-March**
Ontario opens dedicated COVID-19 assessment centres
-  **March 16**
Mayor Tory establishes Economic Support and Recovery Task Force
-  **March 17**
 Ontario declares state of emergency closing schools, libraries, child care centres, recreation facilities, bars and restaurants; **EOC increases activation to Level 3**; Toronto's Medical Officer of Health (MOH) recommends all bars, dine-in restaurants, nightclubs, and theatres close
-  **March 21**
Toronto's first death related to COVID-19
-  **March 23**
City of Toronto declares a state of emergency; Toronto's COVID-19 Strategic Command Team is established
-  **Mar 25**
 Ontario orders closure of non-essential businesses; **Federal Government requires 14-day isolation on entering Canada**; Toronto closes park amenities
-  **Mar 28**
Ontario prohibits social gatherings of more than five people
-  **Mar 30**
Ontario announces closure of outdoor recreation amenities
-  **Mar 31**
Toronto opens four emergency child care centres, cancels mass events to June 30

APRIL

-  **April 1**
Toronto's MOH issues COVID-19 class order for self-isolation
-  **April 2**
One million cases confirmed globally; Toronto enacts physical distancing bylaw
-  **April 9**
Toronto announces mental health support strategy for residents
-  **April 14**
Toronto launches Distantly.ca to support main street businesses
-  **April 15**
Toronto launches DonateTO portal; Canada surpasses 1,000 deaths related to COVID-19
-  **April 16**
Toronto expands Digital Main Street program to help local businesses; Toronto Public Health (TPH) launches new information system for case and contact management
-  **April 21**
Toronto receives three million surgical masks for long-term care homes and shelters
-  **April 22**
Toronto launches local BusinessTO Support Centre
-  **April 24**
Toronto establishes Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR)
-  **April 27**
Ontario announces **A Framework for Reopening our Province**; Toronto launches CurbTO
-  **April 29**
Toronto begins providing interim housing to people in encampments
-  **April 30**
Toronto City Council has first virtual meeting













MAY

-  **May 6**
Toronto and partners open a COVID-19 recovery site for people experiencing homelessness
-  **May 9**
Toronto partners with GlobalMedic and University of Toronto Scarborough to provide food to residents
-  **May 13**
Toronto adopts the Social Debenture Framework
-  **May 14**
ActiveTO program launches with weekend major road closures and 57 kilometres of "Quiet Streets"
-  **May 15**
Toronto extends period of cancellation of permits to major festivals and launches recovery program for events; Toronto cancels summer camps
-  **May 19**
Toronto enters Ontario's Stage 1 reopening
-  **May 20**
Toronto opens 850+ park amenities, recommends face coverings or non-medical masks be worn when physical distancing cannot be maintained
-  **May 22**
TPH partners with Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) to scale up case and contact management work
-  **May 23**
Toronto expands ActiveTO
-  **May 25**
Select Toronto Public Library drop boxes open to accept returns
-  **May 27**
Toronto releases geographic information on COVID-19 cases in Toronto
-  **May 28**
City Council approves 40 km of expanded and accelerated bike routes for ActiveTO; City Council approves next phase of Housing Now sites to increase the supply of new affordable rental housing; City Council approves property tax relief to help sustain live music venues
-  **May 29**
City and other major downtown employers encourage employees to work from home until at least September; TORR launches consultation on how the City can recover, rebuild and emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic; Toronto accepts applications for Community Crisis Response Fund


JUNE

-  **June 1**
Drop boxes at all accessible Toronto Public Library branches open; Toronto reopens waste Drop-Off Depots; Toronto and United Way Greater Toronto partner to create COVID-19 Shelter Interim Recovery Strategy
-  **June 3**
Toronto street food vendors, and food and ice cream trucks resume operations
-  **June 8**
Toronto's Emergency Operations Centre launches a "restart roadmap" to guide the restarting of City operations and to support businesses in their safe reopening
-  **June 9**
Bike Share Toronto announces expansion to 20 of 25 Wards
-  **June 10**
ActiveTO implements 65 kilometres of Quiet Streets; announces SwimTO
-  **June 11**
Federal and provincial governments partner to expand City of Toronto's Digital Main Street program
-  **June 12**
 TPH launches COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard; Ontario increases limit on social gatherings from five to ten people; some regions in Ontario enter Stage 2 of reopening (excludes Toronto); Ontario reopens child care centres with strict guidelines about cohort size and public health protocols
-  **June 15**
Toronto accepts registrations for CaféTO for outdoor bar and restaurant dining
-  **June 16**
Toronto issues Canada's first public sector social bond offering of \$100 million
-  **June 18**
Toronto records 1,000 deaths due to COVID-19
-  **June 19**
Additional regions in Ontario enter Stage 2 of reopening (excludes Toronto)
-  **June 22**
Toronto resumes marriage licence service; lifeguards return to beaches
-  **June 23**
Toronto announces approximately \$4.97 million from TO Supports Investment Fund to community agencies supporting vulnerable populations
-  **June 24**
Toronto enters Ontario's reopening Stage 2
-  **June 27**
Limited Toronto Island Park Ferry Service resumes
-  **June 29**
City of Toronto's directly operated child care centres begin reopening


JULY

-  **July 1**
Toronto and Canada host Canada Day celebrations virtually
-  **July 6**
Toronto reopens outdoor sport and multi-use fields
-  **July 7**
Toronto's new mandatory mask bylaw comes into effect
-  **July 8**
Toronto launches online business licensing and permit application
-  **July 19**
22 new affordable housing units open at 25 Leonard Ave
-  **July 13**
CampTO begins
-  **July 17**
24 regions in Ontario enter Stage 3 of reopening (excludes Toronto and Peel Region)
-  **July 20**
Toronto opens community centres and indoor pools
-  **July 24**
Seven additional regions in Ontario enter Stage 3 of reopening (excludes Toronto and others)
-  **July 27**
Ontario with the federal government announce up to \$4 billion to 444 municipalities for maintenance of critical services under the Safe Restart Agreement
-  **July 30**
Toronto Public Health releases new socio-demographic COVID-19 data
-  **July 31**
Toronto enters Ontario's reopening Stage 3; Toronto launches Family Well-Being Plan

AUGUST

-  **Aug 5**
Bylaw for common areas in apartments and condos comes into effect

SEPTEMBER

-  **Sept 1**
All child care centres permitted to resume normal operations at full capacity

City of Toronto COVID-19 Decision-Making Governance

At the outset of Toronto's state of emergency and prior to the establishment of the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild, the City's Senior Leadership Team – the City Manager, the Deputy City Managers and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer – implemented a governance structure to support COVID-19 response and lay the ground work for recovery efforts. Processes were established across teams to share information, escalate issues, make decisions, and implement actions. The cornerstones of this structure were:



Strategic Command Team, composed of the Mayor, City Manager, Medical Officer of Health and other senior leaders, provides oversight of key emerging issues.



Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) continues to lead all emergency responses, including urgent, short-term or operational actions. The EOC created a taskforce to manage issues such as PPE, business continuity, human resources, shelter and vulnerable supports and donations coordination.



Toronto Public Health leads the public health response, and is responsible for all public health directions, actions and coordination.



Strategic Issues Table led the non-emergency response, specifically mid to long-term impacts and strategies. The table was an extended Senior Leadership Team, which in addition to the City Manager, Deputy City Managers and Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer, also included the City Manager's Office Directors and other senior leaders. To lead and manage work across City divisions and agencies, three working groups were established: a Financial Implications Working Group, an Economic Support and Recovery Working Group and a City-Community Response Working Group.

With the establishment of TORR, the Strategic Issues Table pivoted back to meetings of the Senior Leadership Team, which continued to lead City divisions through response, restart and recovery. The Working Groups adjusted their focus to respond to corporate and public needs.

TORR was positioned to have a comprehensive line of sight into work taking place across COVID-19 response and recovery actions. Two functions served as liaisons with Toronto Public Health (TPH) and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). The direct connections to these two critical public health and emergency support functions ensured alignment with TPH and the EOC as operations evolved.

4.4 City's Response

At the beginning of the pandemic, the City responded to address both the immediate needs of the City's residents and businesses and to consider what would be required for the City's long-term recovery.

The objectives of the City's response are:

1. Preventing loss of life
2. Preserving the capacity of the health-care system
3. Minimizing the social and economic impacts of the pandemic

Public Health Response

COVID-19 has created an unprecedented global health emergency, requiring a comprehensive public health response. Toronto Public Health's role in protecting the health and safety of Torontonians includes monitoring, preventing and controlling the spread of infectious disease in the City.

Toronto Public Health's response included several strategies. A comprehensive overview of TPH's role and actions implemented throughout the pandemic is included in Section 5 of this report.

Coordinated Emergency Response

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) oversees and coordinates the City's emergency management program in partnership with divisions, agencies, and corporations. Required by Ontario's Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, the City's emergency management program includes emergency planning and conducting training, exercises, and public outreach. The OEM maintains the City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in a state of readiness and during an emergency, coordinates priorities, resources and information across divisions, agencies, and corporations, operating in accordance with the Incident Management System, a standardized framework to organize personnel, facilities, equipment, procedures and communication.

On March 11, 2020, the City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was activated to support coordinated emergency operations working with the Senior Leadership Team, Divisional Operations Centres, external agencies and the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre.

On March 17, 2020, the Province of Ontario declared a State of Emergency under section 7.0.1(1) of the *Emergency Management*

As of August 31, the City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) has been activated for 174 days and continues to be activated at Level 3, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency.

and *Civil Protection Act*. On March 23, 2020, on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health and the Office of Emergency Management, the City of Toronto declared an emergency under section 4 of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, and section 59-5.1 of *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 59, Emergency Management*.

An escalation process, implemented on March 11, allowed the EOC to escalate critical decisions to the Senior Leadership Team. On March 23, the COVID-19 Strategic Command Team was established to provide clear strategic oversight of key emerging issues. This team, convened daily, included the Mayor, the City Manager, the Medical Officer of Health, the COVID-19 Incident Commander, and other senior leaders. It provided strategic direction and oversight for all aspects of the City's COVID-19 response.

Divisions and agencies, through the EOC-led Incident Management Process, collaborated to ensure solutions met emerging needs in response to this unprecedented situation.

Under the Declaration of Emergency, the City:

- Secured supplies of personal protective equipment for frontline workers;
- Opened 30 new shelter facilities, secured 18 hotels with more than 1,900 rooms and moved 1,309 people into permanent housing (as of July 20);
- Enabled physical distancing for Ontario Works recipients when picking up their cheques;
- Implemented a Food Access Strategy;
- Opened eight emergency child-care centres prioritizing spaces for frontline healthcare and essential City workers;

- Launched a Community Coordination Plan in partnership with United Way Greater Toronto to support community organizations and vulnerable residents;
- Launched and expanded support for businesses through BusinessTO Support Centre, Digital Main Street program and Distantly.ca, a tool to donate online to small businesses;
- Maintained normal police, fire and paramedic services operations;
- Launched DonateTO for online donations of products, services and funds to support the City's pandemic relief efforts (more than \$4 million as of July 31);
- Maintained organic, garbage and recycling collection, resumed yard waste collection;
- Worked with telecom and community partners to provide free Wi-Fi to apartment buildings in low income neighbourhoods, long-term care homes and City shelters;
- Established chatbot support for COVID-19 questions;
- Developed a new public health information system called Coronavirus Rapid Entry System (CORES);
- Introduced an automated burial permit application process with funeral homes;
- Redeployed almost 500 staff to critical City services such as shelters and long-term care homes; and,
- Delivered the first-ever virtual Toronto City Council meeting.

Community and Social Services Response

At the onset of the pandemic, a City-Community Response Table was immediately convened with representatives from about 75 community agencies and 11 City divisions. The objectives of the table were to identify issues affecting vulnerable Torontonians, understand the community sector's capacity to respond, and leverage their combined expertise and resources to meet the needs of-vulnerable populations during this crisis.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Toronto, in partnership with the community-based sector took comprehensive action to support vulnerable residents through the T.O. Supports model. Consistent with a social determinants of health approach, the T.O. Supports model focused on:

- Community sector support
- Family support
- Food access
- Grieving and mourning
- Health care
- Housing and homelessness
- Income support
- Mental health
- Safety and well-being
- Social connections

Because many situations affecting vulnerable people require a local response, the City worked and partnered with United Way on a Local Community Response: Community Coordination Plan to coordinate service provision to vulnerable residents at the neighbourhood and community level and share resources across the community sector. The City was divided into 10 geographic areas (clusters). Dedicated coordinators engaged with local service providers to identify needs and issues and rapidly coordinate supports, services, and information sharing. There are also three city-wide clusters: one working with sector partners on city-wide issues and service responses, another with organizations to support the unique needs of African, Black and Caribbean communities, and a third partnership with Indigenous service organizations through the City's Indigenous Affairs Office and Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC). Information about social and community services and supports continues to be available through 211, a 24/7 phone line and web service available in more than 160 languages.



City Division and Agency Response

The City has modified and adapted its services to meet the needs of Torontonians during the pandemic. That has included staff working remotely and the provision of support to Toronto's residents, communities and businesses in new ways to keep them safe and to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Section 7 includes information about how City and agency services were impacted by COVID-19, responses that were implemented and input from the TORR consultation on these services, programs and related issues.

- Support for Local Businesses
- Emergency Child Care
- Long-Term Care Homes (LTCHs)
- Shelter Support and Housing (SSHA)
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)
- Food Access Plan
- Mental Health Support Strategy (MHSS)
- Parks, Forestry and Recreation
- Toronto Paramedic Services (TPS)
- Social Assistance

PPE has been a key issue due to the unprecedented demand on the global PPE supply chain. The EOC's PPE Task Force has been able to maintain a working inventory of PPE that continues to meet the needs of City staff. That includes the creation of the PPE Inventory Management Dashboard that analyzes current consumption/inventory levels and leverages predictive analytics to enable PPE demand forecasting.



Preparing for Ongoing and Future Response

Throughout the response period, the OEM planned and prepared for a potential resurgence in cases of COVID-19 ("second wave"). That effort included a review of all internal processes that had been implemented to inform the development of an action plan in response to a potential second wave of COVID-19. Toronto Public Health played a key role in this planning to ensure the safety and well-being of Toronto's residents and visitors.

4.5 Restart and Reopen

As efforts to contain the virus continued and the cases started to decline, the response shifted to supporting the reopening of businesses and services as permitted through the province's re-opening plan.

This phase included the gradual resumption of City programs and services and the gradual reopening of businesses, private sector and community sector services based on:

1. Changes to or termination of the Province of Ontario emergency orders, under s.7.0.2 (4) of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act. Any resumption of service must conform to the prevailing provincial order.
2. Toronto's MOH advice based on four criteria (as per the province's Framework for Reopening our Province):
 - a. Evidence of a significant and sustained reduction in local virus transmission
 - b. Sufficient healthcare system (e.g. hospital) capacity to provide an effective response to any resurgence of cases
 - c. Sufficient public health system capacity to manage a resurgence in cases; and
 - d. Laboratory testing trends that indicate timely identification of cases and the ability to rapidly detect increases in COVID-19 activity.

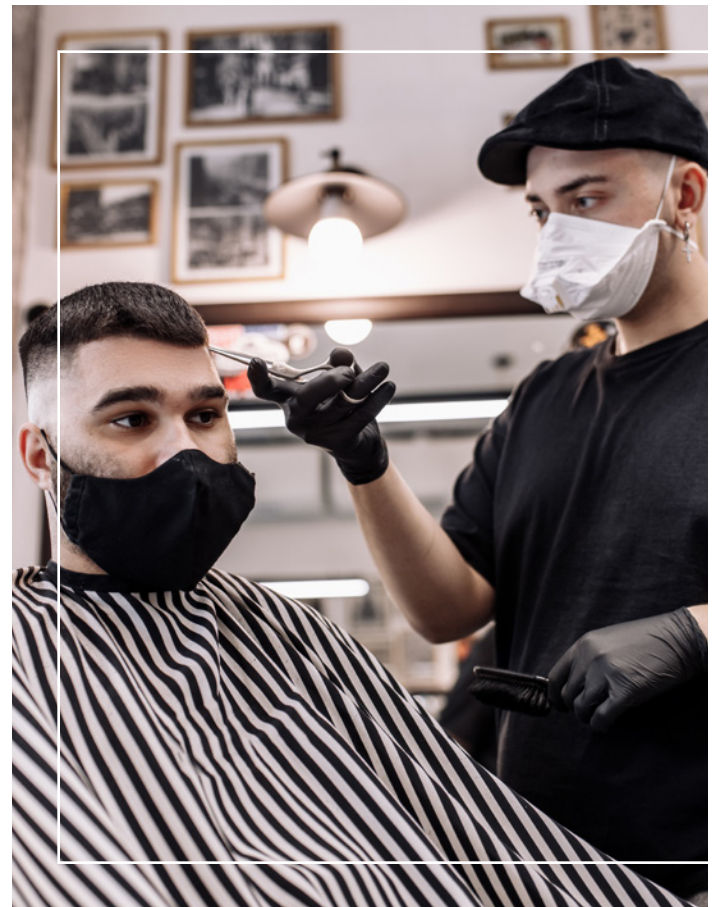
The City established guidance to support divisions and agencies to identify mitigation strategies to slow the spread of COVID-19 as they restarted their programs and services, including Toronto Public Health's COVID-19 Recovery Planning Guide for City of Toronto Programs and Services. Sector-specific information was developed to support business owners and operators in preparing for the safe reopening of their operations.

In May, a City *COVID-19 Restart Roadmap* was used to assess the re-start of programs and services that had stopped or been reduced during the emergency. The assessment included:

- public health and risk mitigation plans
- personal protective equipment
- staffing
- technology
- Occupational Health and Safety and PPE requirements
- facilities (office and public space) and physical distancing plans
- stakeholder consultations
- communication plans

City divisions worked with subject matter experts to complete the necessary assessments for service restart and with City agencies and corporations as they completed similar assessments. More information about the City's Service Restart and Readiness process is provided in Section 7.

Public health initiatives that supported the restart of City services as well as business reopenings are discussed in Section 5.



The City and feds need to work together to generate new jobs for a new reality of climate change, ongoing vulnerability to pandemics, and social unrest. While I understand the City's constitutionally constrained ability to generate income, the City does need to look at substantial tax increases and simultaneously re-examine the police budget. This is the opportunity to do things differently - to value/pay some jobs in essential human services better ...

Comment from Consultation

4.6 Recover and Rebuild

In April, the City of Toronto started to develop a strategy to support Toronto residents and businesses to recover from the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. The City established the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR) to develop recommendations to support the recovery and rebuild of Toronto's communities, organizations, partners and businesses. Building upon existing City engagement and collaboration, TORR consulted with diverse stakeholders and communities to identify what would be needed for an effective recovery and what services or programs should be considered by the City when rebuilding local government to operate in a COVID-19 context.

Details about the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild can be found in Section 6.1.

The Rebuild Phase will involve exploring opportunities for new ideas and partnerships and a renewed approach with the provincial and federal governments related to how programs and services are delivered. Input was gathered through the TORR consultation process to guide rebuild actions for each of the themes identified.

4.7 Re-Imagine

The City, as with other governments, has had to modify and adapt its services to meet the needs of Torontonians during the pandemic. That effort included changes to support the need for staff to work remotely and to support Toronto's communities and businesses in new ways to keep them safe and to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Modernization was part of the City's initial response and is serving as a catalyst for further recovery and re-imagine work. As City services restart, opportunities to continue to innovate approaches introduced during the pandemic have been identified, even those services that continued through the emergency. For example, during the pandemic, the City accelerated its ModernTO (Employee Experience) and Digital Government (Customer Experience) strategies.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City had begun service modernization, focusing on digital government and a mobile workforce.

The City's TO programs are examples of how the City took steps to act quickly and modify services to benefit both businesses and the community. Examples of these initiatives include: CampTO that enables children to attend summer camp during the pandemic safely; DriveInTO that supports the film culture and participation in arts events by the public safely; and CurbTO that supports businesses by allowing safe, dedicated, and convenient locations in the public right of way for customers to pick-up their shopping or meals without entering the facility. These are successful examples of how the City has introduced new approaches to accommodate the unique needs of businesses and residents in the midst of the pandemic.

In addition to creating new initiatives and scaling up existing programs such as CaféTO, CurbTO and expanded bike lanes, the pandemic accelerated modernization work in these four areas:

1. **Digital Customer Experience** – delivering services digitally
2. **Mobile Working** - putting in place the technology tools, network infrastructure and business culture to sustain scaled remote work moving forward
3. **Automation** - digitizing behind-the-scenes processes, operations, and organizational enablers such as digital approvals and signatures, data integration, etc.
4. **Acceleration** – pursuing strategies, new partnership models, and opportunities to support speed and scale and that will have broader economic or regional impact

Many of the new services and processes will be maintained as the City rebuilds and re-imagines its services moving forward. The City is also pursuing new models for partnerships, collaboration and better access for vulnerable populations. Re-imagined experiences will elevate the Toronto Public Service's responsiveness and resiliency, and drive equity-based outcomes.

Several City programs were modified to adapt to physical distancing requirements while still enabling provision of services to the public and other new programs were introduced. They include SwimTO, HistoricTO and CaféTO.



5 | Public Health Considerations and Actions

5.1 SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19

In January 2020, a new coronavirus called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory disease originating in Wuhan, China. SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes the disease COVID-19. The first case of COVID-19 was reported in Toronto on January 25, 2020. In March 2020, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization.

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that circulate in humans and animals. They can cause diseases that range in severity from the common cold to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). While our knowledge of the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, has developed since its introduction, much is still unknown.

SARS-CoV-2 spreads primarily through close contact with the respiratory droplets of a person infected with the virus, such as when coughing and sneezing, but also when just breathing or speaking. These droplets can spread up to two metres, or six feet. The virus can also survive on surfaces and spread when a person touches a surface and then touches their mouth or nose with unwashed hands, although it is thought that the virus does not spread easily that way.

Our understanding of the symptoms of COVID-19 has evolved over the course of the pandemic. Early on, the most commonly identified symptoms included fever, dry cough and shortness of breath. However, as additional cases have been identified it became clear that there are several symptoms of COVID-19 including: fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and difficulty swallowing. Symptoms may appear up to 14 days following exposure to the virus, although typically appear after about five days. Some people with COVID-19 may have mild or no symptoms. That can contribute to viral transmission as an asymptomatic person may be less likely to take precautions.

Most people with COVID-19 recover following mild or moderate illness. Older adults and people with pre-existing illnesses such as respiratory or cardiovascular disease, however, are more likely to develop serious illness and require hospitalization and intensive care.

Currently there are no specific drugs or a vaccine for COVID-19, but research is underway to develop treatments, including clinical trials for a vaccine.

5.2 The Course of the Pandemic

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease 2019) pandemic is the biggest global crisis in a hundred years. To date, worldwide, it has caused 654,000 reported deaths (and many more in reality), disrupted schooling for about 90 per cent of students, and caused an initial shrinking of global economic activity to rival that of the Great Depression. First identified on December 8, 2019, in Wuhan, China, there is speculation that the first case may have occurred as early as November 17.

The virus identified as the cause of COVID-19 was designated SARS-CoV-2. The initial outbreak in Wuhan was reported as originating in a seafood market, but that is now in doubt, and there is general agreement that the virus originally infected an animal species and jumped species to infect humans. The probable origin was in bats, but there may have been an intermediate species.

The World Health Organization (WHO) received the first notification from China on December 31, 2019. On January 5 the WHO issued an assessment that there was no significant human-to-human transmission, but by January 30 had declared COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and the WHO declared a Global Pandemic on March 11.

My number one priority is public health. Any programs that can be put in place to ensure the accessibility of public health information and measures in order to keep Ontarians safe is of the utmost importance.

Comment from Consultation

The first case outside China was in Thailand on January 13. Thereafter, the virus spread quickly, including by international travel, and is thought to have been in North America by January

2020. On January 22, Canada initiated screening for travellers from China. Canada's, and Ontario's first case, in Toronto, was recorded on January 25, and the first case not linked to travel occurred on February 23.

In Ontario SARS-CoV-2 was made a reportable disease by ministerial order on January 24. Non-essential foreign travel was discouraged by the Government of Canada from March 13 and a ban was put in effect. The Canada-U.S. border was closed to non-essential travel from March 21. On March 16, travellers entering Canada were advised to self-isolate for 14 days, and this became mandatory on March 25. A Provincial Emergency was declared in Ontario on March 17 and a Municipal Emergency in Toronto on March 23. Schools across Ontario were closed on March 17, and only essential visitors were allowed in long-term care homes. On March 25, Ontario closed all but essential businesses and parks were closed on March 30. People over 70 years of age were advised to stay home. A Class Order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) was issued by Toronto's Medical Officer of Health on April 1, requiring the self-isolation of symptomatic and test-positive persons and their contacts.

Thereafter, the number of cases increased steadily, in Toronto and across Ontario. Toronto's daily case count peaked in the middle of April. The provincial government issued "A Framework for Reopening Our Province" on April 27. Since that point there has been a gradual, staged reopening of businesses, public places, services and activities, with conditions. There is more detail in Section 5 (Public Health and the Recovery).



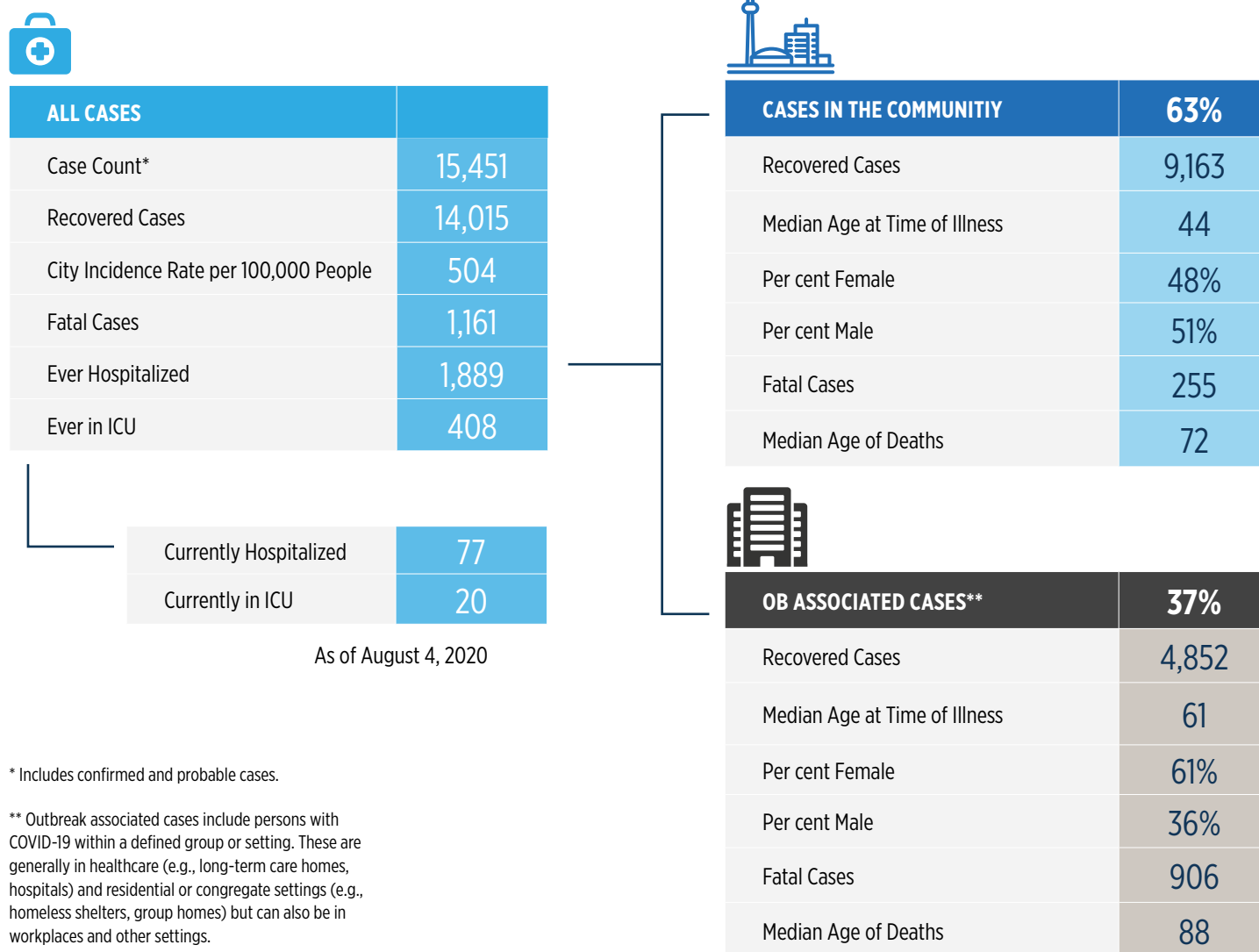
5.3 Epidemiology of COVID-19 in Toronto

Overview of COVID-19 Cases in Toronto

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, local data have been collected and analyzed to provide a picture of the progression of the disease, and the distribution of the disease across various groups (e.g. by age, sex, socio-economic status, time, severity, etc.). Figure 1 provides a summary of the COVID-19 cases in Toronto as of August 4, 2020.

As shown in the figure, overall, the majority of people infected with COVID-19 recover from their illness (91 per cent). Approximately 12 per cent of cases have required hospitalization, and 2.6 per cent have required intensive care. The case fatality rate for COVID-19 in Toronto is about 7.5 per cent overall, however, there are notable differences between the case fatality rate for cases in the community (2.6 per cent) compared with the higher rate among outbreak-associated cases (15.6 per cent). In terms of specific congregate settings, analyses conducted in the GTA have shown

Figure 1: Summary of COVID-19 Cases in Toronto



* Includes confirmed and probable cases.

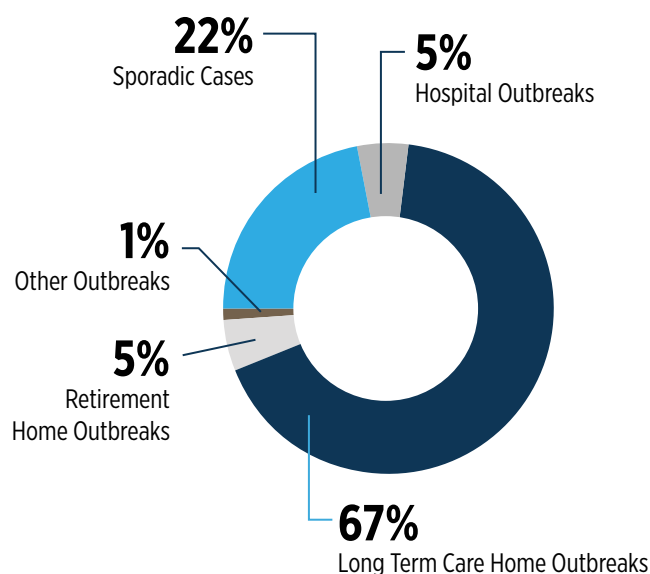
** Outbreak associated cases include persons with COVID-19 within a defined group or setting. These are generally in healthcare (e.g., long-term care homes, hospitals) and residential or congregate settings (e.g., homeless shelters, group homes) but can also be in workplaces and other settings.

Note: Gender was unknown or other for some cases

that the case fatality rate of COVID-19 is 1.4 times higher among long-term care residents compared with the rest of the population.¹⁹ The case fatality rate among residents of long-term care homes is higher than those in other settings (Figure 2). Of all COVID-19 related deaths in Toronto, 67 per cent occurred in long-term care homes (72% if retirement homes are included) (Figure 3).

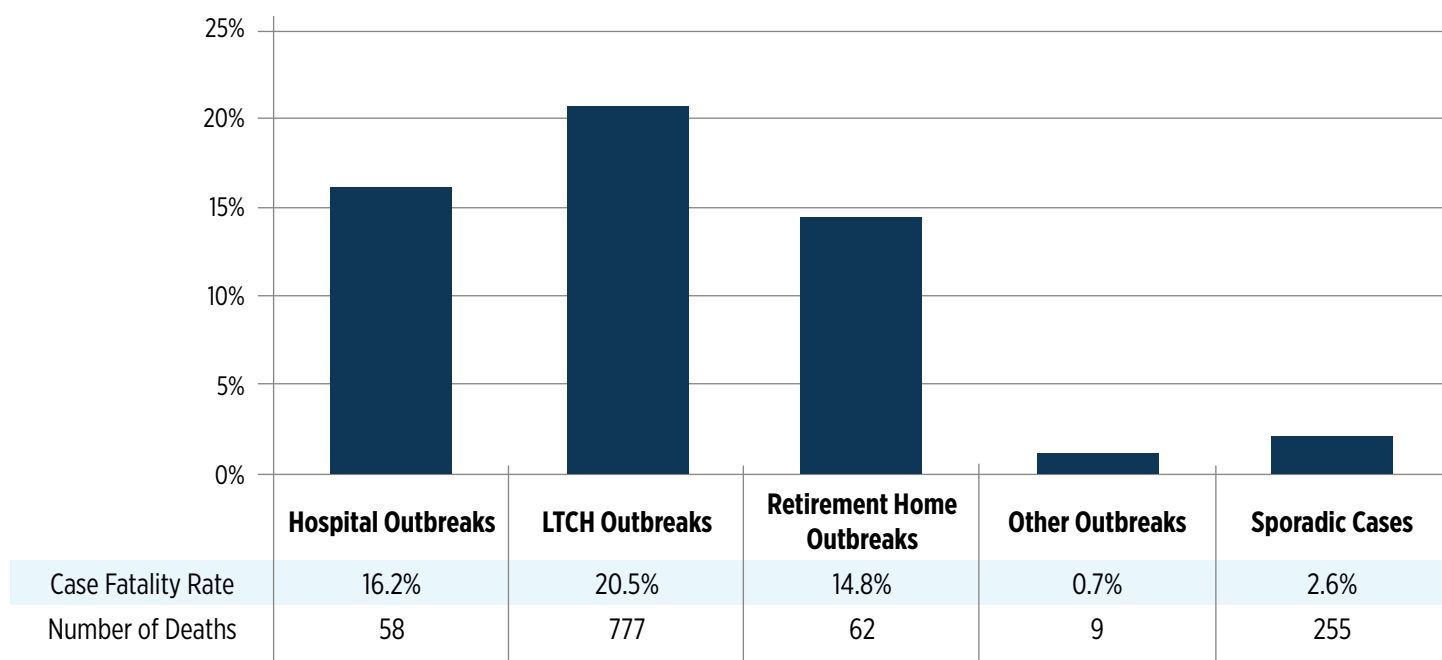
The incidence rate of COVID-19 in Toronto is estimated at 504 per 100,000 people. However, the true incidence and mortality rates are higher than the reported rates given the spectrum of severities for COVID-19, extending down to asymptomatic. As such, cases would be missed if symptoms were either absent or mild, because medical help and lab testing were not sought. Early in the epidemic, cases were underestimated because access to testing was restricted. Deaths might not be counted if COVID-19 was not given on the death certificate as a cause of death, either because there was no test result or because of the certifier's opinion as to the cause of death. There is evidence of undercounting in North America, where seroprevalence studies have shown rates of immunity higher than reported rates of incidence. A recent study by Public Health Ontario suggested that 1.5 per cent of Toronto's population tested between June 5 and June 30, 2020 were positive for COVID-19 antibodies.²⁰

Figure 3: Proportion of COVID-19 Deaths by Setting, Toronto



Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, Integrated Public Health Information System (IPHIS), Toronto Public Health, Coronavirus Rapid Entry System (Cores), extracted August 4, 2020 (3PM).

Figure 2: Case Fatality Rate and Number of Deaths by Setting, Toronto



Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, Integrated Public Health Information System (IPHIS), Toronto Public Health, Coronavirus Rapid Entry System (Cores), extracted August 4, 2020 (3PM).



Testing practices also have an impact on the measured incidence of COVID-19. For example, the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test that is the most commonly used testing method in Canada for COVID-19 can result in false negative results (i.e. the test result indicates the person does not have COVID-19 when the person does have COVID-19). Emerging evidence suggests that the likelihood of a false negative result varies throughout the course of infection.²¹

Evolution of the Pandemic

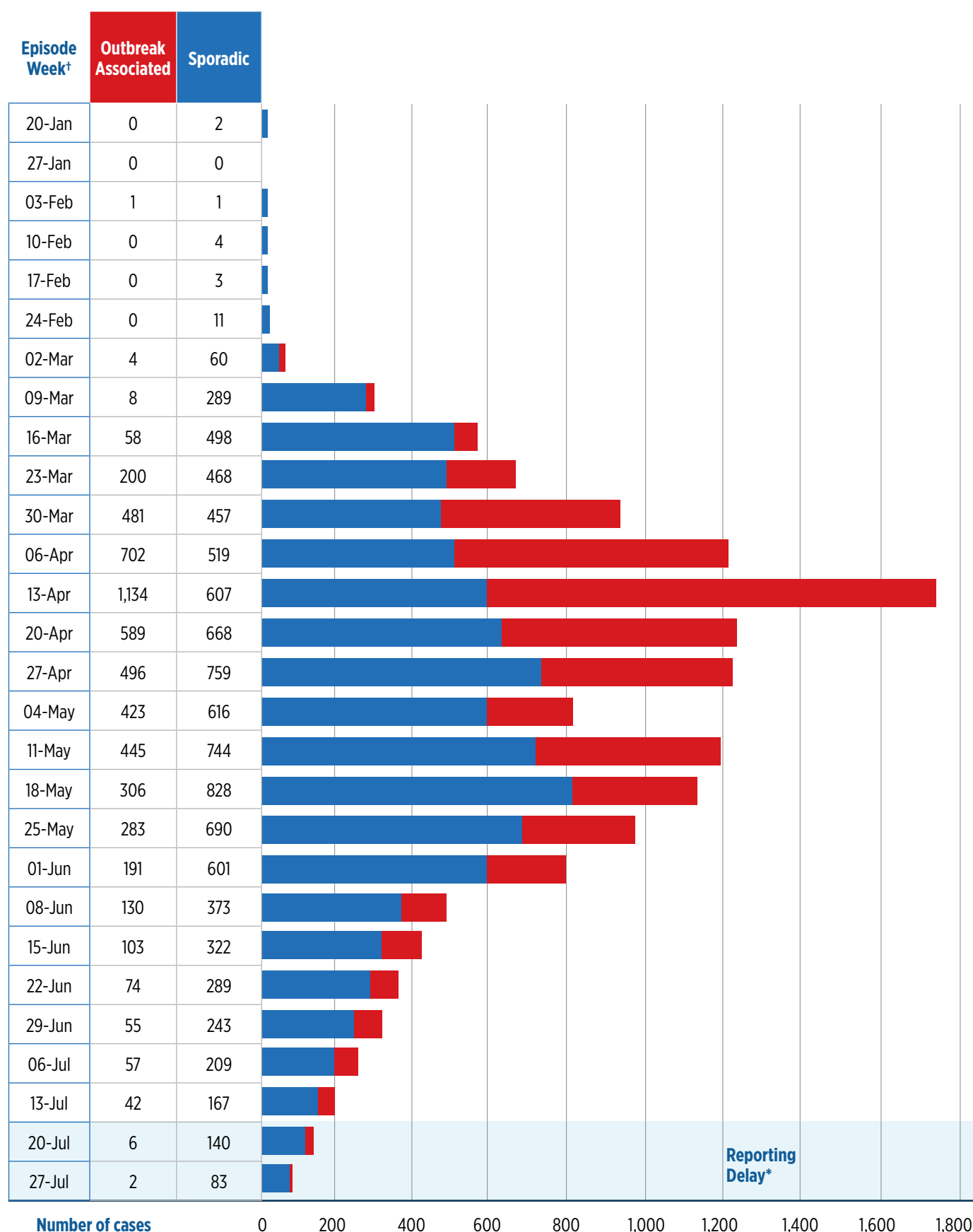
It is important to note that the epidemiology of the COVID-19 pandemic has changed over time. These changes include the most common exposure settings, the age distribution of cases and changes in illness severity.

The first case of COVID-19 in Canada was reported in Toronto on January 25, 2020 in a returning traveller. In the early stages of the pandemic, in January and February 2020, the majority of COVID-19 cases in Toronto were identified as travel-related. In March 2020, the pattern shifted from primarily travel-related exposures to exposures in community settings. This shift in exposure setting was likely influenced by a number of factors, including the introduction of travel restrictions at that time. At the end of March, the Public Health Agency of Canada reported that nearly half of all COVID-19 cases were the result of community transmission. By the end of March and into April, there was also an increase in congregate outbreak settings, particularly among residents of long-term care homes. Figure 4 provides an illustration of the distribution of COVID-19 cases over time in Toronto, including by exposure setting (i.e. community or outbreak-associated).

The number of cases has also changed, as shown in Figure 4, with the peak of Toronto cases occurring in the middle of April, followed by a gradual decline. The proportion of outbreak-associated cases also decreased including a decline in institutional outbreaks.

The median age of COVID-19 cases in Toronto is 50 years, and overall, older individuals have been disproportionately impacted (Figure 5). However, there has been a shift in the age distribution of cases toward younger people, particularly those under 40 years of age (Figure 6). For cases in the most recent two weeks (July 20 – August 2), the median age was 35 years. There are several possible causes for this change. One is there may be greater social contact in the younger age group, including at settings where people are in close physical proximity to others. It has also been suggested that increased testing to include those with milder/no symptoms may

Figure 4: Community and Outbreak-associated COVID-19 Cases, by Reported Date, Toronto



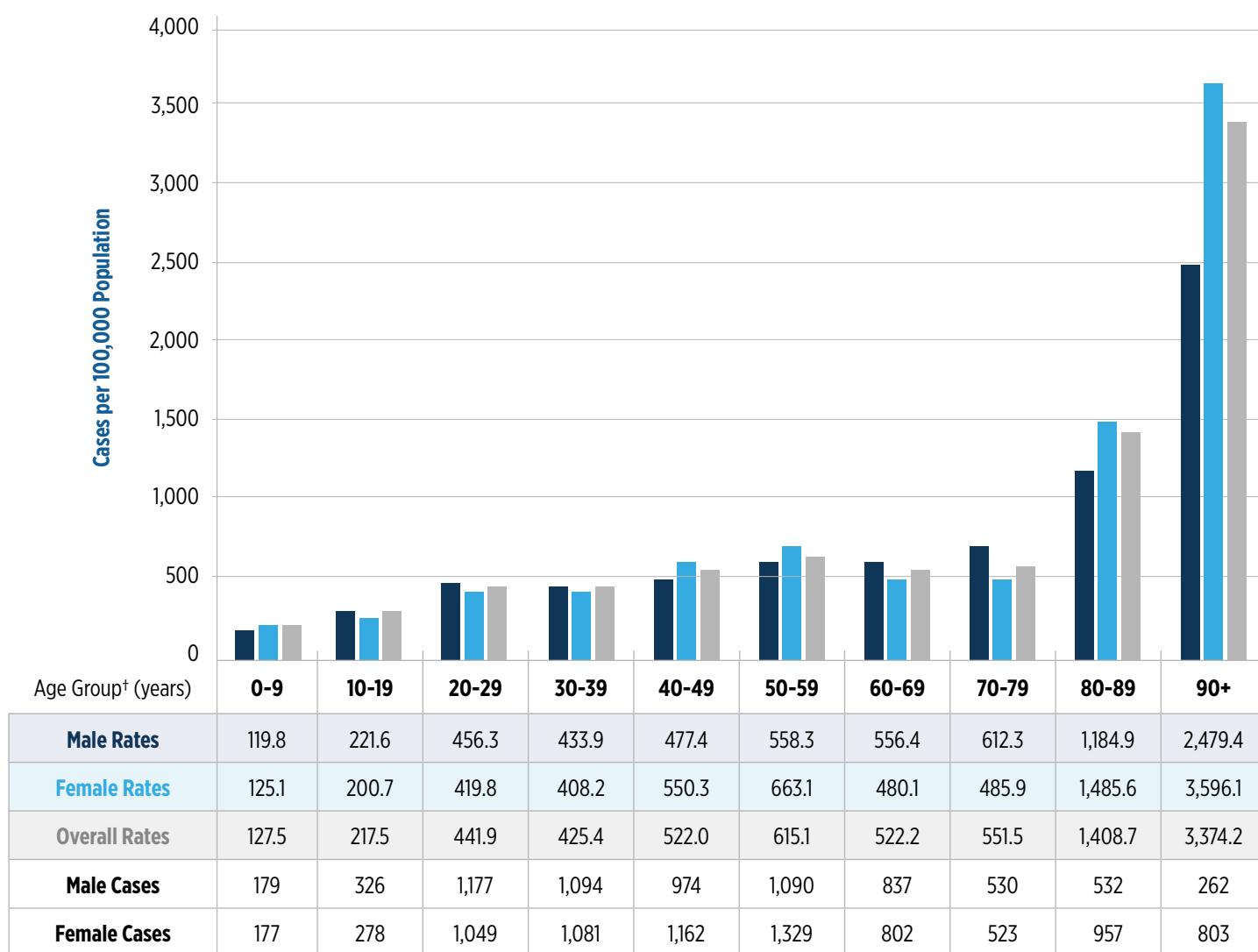
*Interpret case reports for the recent 2 weeks with caution due to reporting delays. †Refers to first day of episode week. Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS), Toronto Public Health, Coronavirus Rapid Entry System (CORES), extracted August 4, 2020 (3PM).

have played a role. Further, there has likely been a drop in the number of cases in older age groups as a result of the success in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities.

The distribution of COVID-19 by gender in Toronto is nearly equal between men and women for community cases. A recent analysis of cases in Ontario found that while more women than men were tested for SARS-CoV-2, men had a higher rate of laboratory-

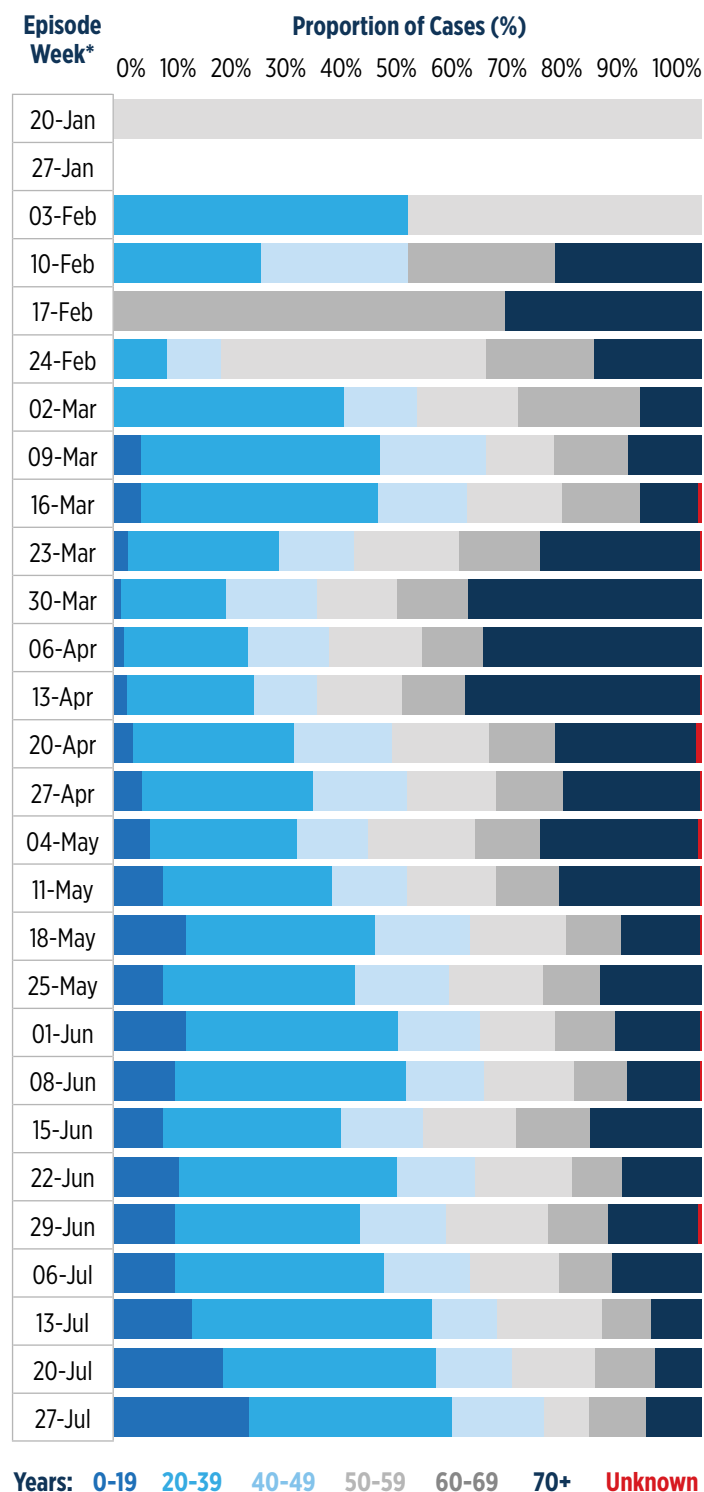
confirmed COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, ICU admission and death.²² A higher fatality rate in men has been reported in other jurisdictions globally, although reasons for it are unknown. Some suggestions have included behavioural and biological differences, as well as hypotheses related to the differences in smoking rates between men and women and its potential role in virus transmission.

Figure 5: COVID-19 Cases and Incidence Rates by Age Category and Gender, Toronto



*241 cases reported unknown or missing gender, 6 reported transgender, and 6 reported their gender as other. †Age was missing for 26 cases. Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS), Toronto Public Health, Coronavirus Rapid Entry System (CORES), extracted August 4, 2020 (3PM).

Figure 6: Proportion of COVID-19 Cases by Age Group and Episode Week, Toronto

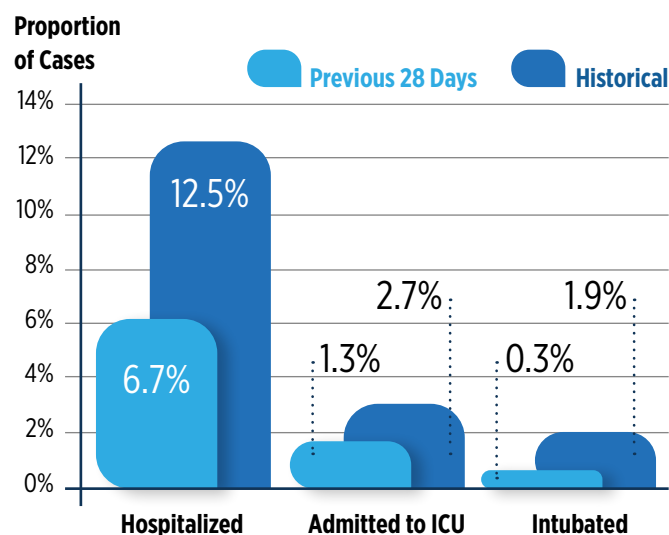


*Refers to first day of episode week. Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS), Toronto Public Health, Coronavirus Rapid Entry System (CORES), extracted August 4, 2020 (3PM).

Over time, the proportions of COVID-19 cases requiring hospital admission, ICU admission and intubation have all decreased (Figure 7). There are several possible causes for this change, including a rising proportion of younger cases, most of whom experience a milder course of disease; increased experience of, and new evidence about treatment, resulting in more success and avoidance of some intensive care; and mutation of the virus toward a less virulent form.

While it is challenging to predict how the epidemiology of COVID-19 may change in the future, it is reasonable to conclude that shifts will occur as businesses, schools and workplaces reopen and as public health measures are modified. Ongoing surveillance and collection of local epidemiological data will inform future management of ongoing response and potential resurgences of COVID-19 cases.

Figure 7: Proportion of COVID-19 Cases Hospitalized, Admitted to ICU and/or Intubated. Previous 28 days (July 6 to August 2, 2020) and historical (January 20 to July 5, 2020)



Data Source: Ontario Ministry of Health, integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS), Toronto Public Health, Coronavirus Rapid Entry System (CORES), extracted August 4, 2020 (3PM).

Socio-demographic Characteristics of COVID-19 Infection in Toronto

Given the diversity of Toronto's population and reports from other jurisdictions that COVID-19 infection was disproportionately affecting some ethno-racial groups and people living in lower-income areas, Toronto Public Health began collecting individual-level data on Indigenous identity, ethno-racial identity, household income and household size from reported COVID-19 cases on May 20, 2020.

These data show that racialized groups are over-represented in reported COVID-19 cases. The majority (83 per cent) of reported COVID-19 cases in the City of Toronto with valid ethno-racial data up until July 16, 2020 identified with a racialized group (Figure 8). This is compared to 52 per cent of Toronto's population who identify as belonging to racialized groups, based on the 2016 Census. In addition, 71 per cent of people who were hospitalized identified as coming from racialized groups.

Specific racialized groups over-represented in COVID-19 cases include:

- Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian people
- Black people
- Latin American people
- South Asian or Indo-Caribbean people
- Southeast Asian people

Ethno-racial groups under-represented in reported COVID-19 cases include:

- East Asian people
- White people

Data on Indigenous identity have not yet been released, as consultation and engagement with the Indigenous community is ongoing.

People living in lower-income households are also over-represented in COVID-19 cases as shown in Figure 9. Approximately half (51 per cent) of reported COVID-19 cases with valid income data up to July 16, 2020 were living in households that could be considered low income, compared to 30 per cent of the population of Toronto in 2016 that met that same definition. Sixty per cent of people who were hospitalized met this definition of lower income, although it should be noted that those hospitalized represented a very small portion of cases with valid income data (5 per cent).

Figure 8: Share of COVID-19 cases among ethno-racial groups compared to the share of people living in Toronto, with valid data up to July 16, 2020, Toronto Public Health

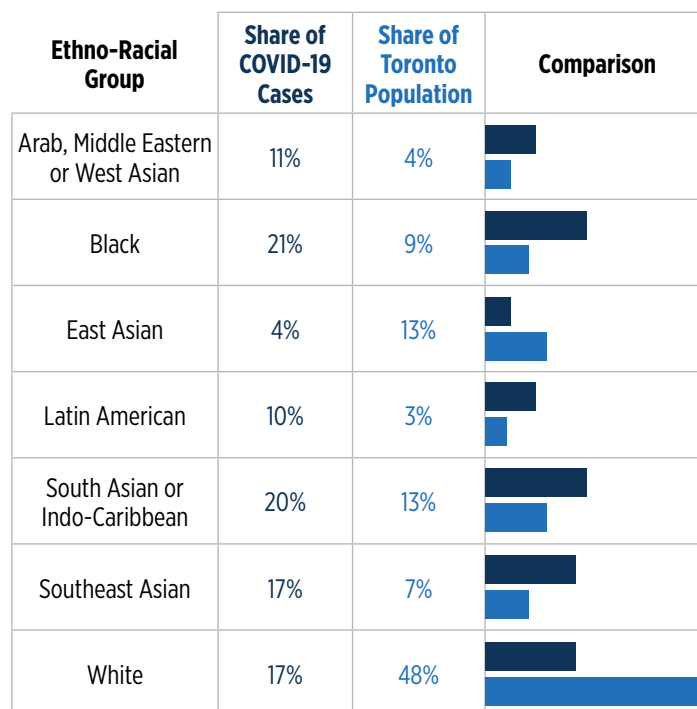
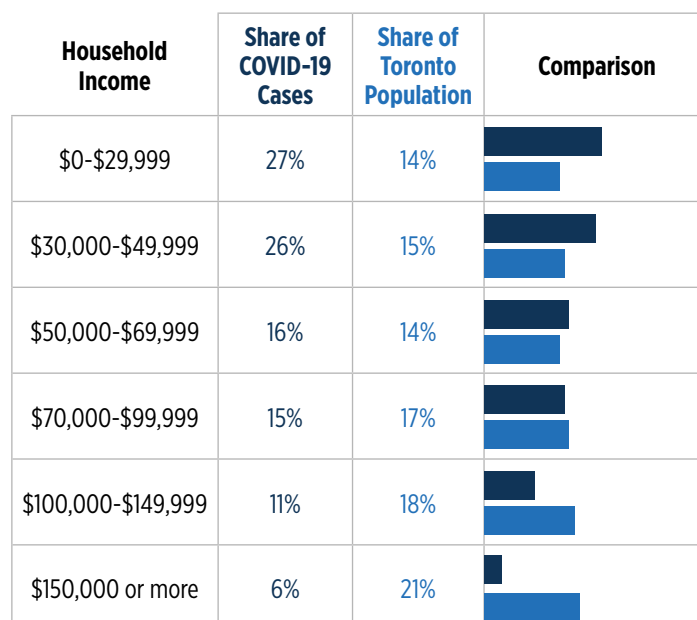


Figure 9: Share of COVID-19 cases by household income compared to the share of people living in Toronto by income group, with valid data up to July 16, 2020, Toronto Public Health



Early in the pandemic, individual-level data were not available for many socio-demographic characteristics for COVID-19 cases. In order to gain a preliminary understanding of any socio-demographic health disparities in COVID-19 infection across the city, TPH conducted an area-based analysis using data from the 2016 Canadian Census. While that kind of analysis has several limitations, it contributes to our understanding of trends and associations between socio-demographic characteristics and COVID-19 infection.

These analyses produced similar findings to the individual-level data, showing that areas with a higher percentage of people with lower income levels and people from racialized groups had higher rates of COVID-19 infection and COVID-19 hospitalization.

In addition, areas with a higher percentage of people with the following characteristics also had higher rates of COVID-19 infection and COVID-19 hospitalization:

- Newcomers to Canada (immigrants arriving in Canada in the past 5 years, as of 2016);
- People with lower education levels (no certificate, degree, or diploma);
- Unemployed people
- People living in 'unsuitable' (crowded) housing.

Figure 10 shows the rate of COVID-19 cases by area-based group based on the per cent of newcomers to Canada. For this analysis, census tracts were ranked from highest to lowest based on the per cent of newcomers to Canada using 2016 Canadian Census data. The City was divided into five equally sized groups called quintiles where quintile 1 has the highest per cent of newcomers and quintile 5 has the lowest per cent of newcomers. As shown in Figure 10, the group with the highest per cent of newcomers had the highest rate of COVID-19 cases, compared to the other groups.

Similar trends were found for the other socio-demographic characteristics that were assessed. Higher COVID-19 case and hospitalization rates were identified for the quintiles with the highest percentage of people with lower education levels, people living in crowded households, and unemployed people compared to the quintiles with the lowest per cent for each, as shown in Figures 11-13.

An analysis was also conducted to understand the association between different categories of occupations and the rate of COVID-19 infection. Areas with a high COVID-19 case rate had a higher per cent of

people in the labour force in occupations in the following categories compared with areas with a low COVID-19 case rate: sales and service occupations; trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations; and occupations in manufacturing and utilities.

Figure 10: COVID-19 Cases, Quintiles of per cent of Newcomers in Census Tracts (Sporadic Cases up to June 18, 2020)

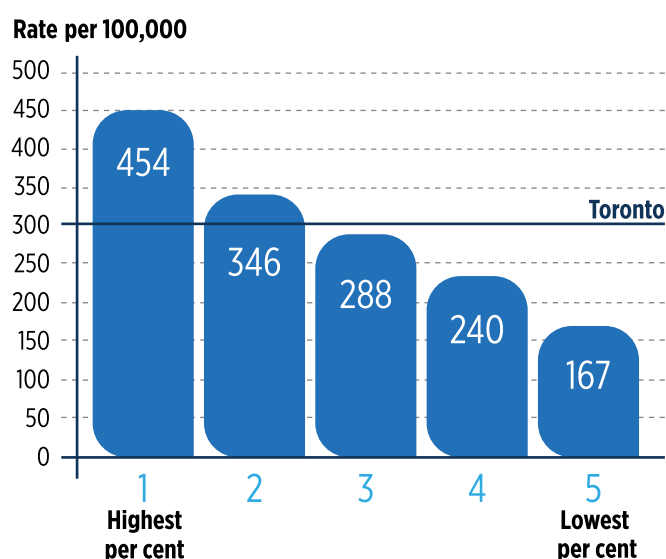


Figure 11: COVID-19 Cases, Quintiles of per cent of People with no Degree, Certificate or Diploma in Census Tracts (Sporadic Cases up to June 18, 2020)

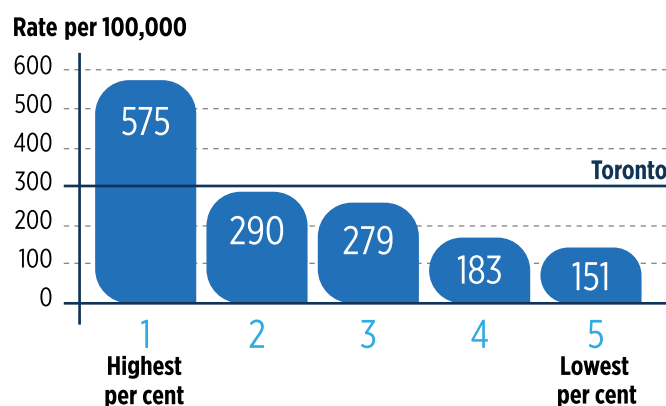


Figure 12: COVID-19 Cases, Quintiles of per cent of Household Crowding in Census Tracts (Sporadic Cases up to June 18, 2020)

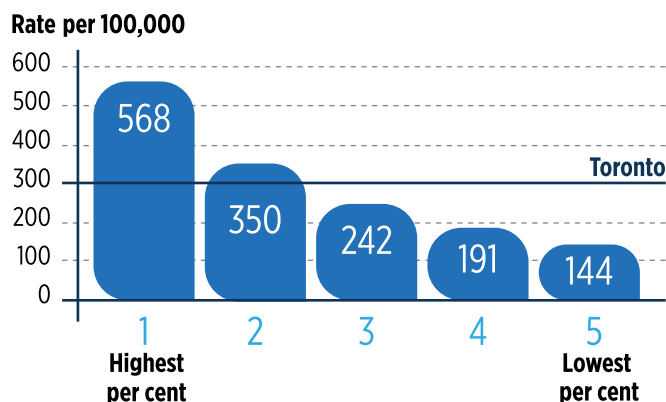
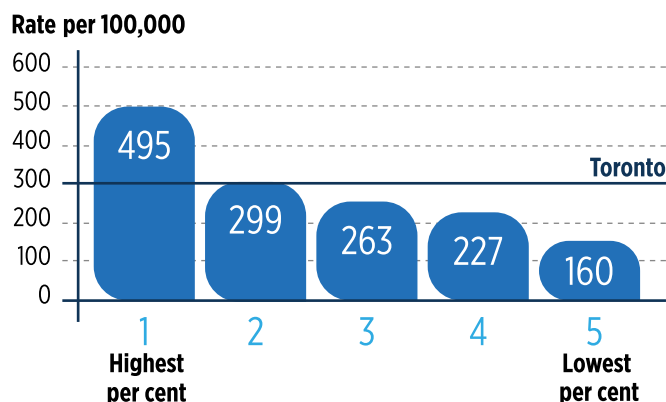


Figure 13: COVID-19 Cases, Quintiles of per cent of Unemployed People in Census Tracts (Sporadic Cases up to June 18, 2020)



Experiences in Other Jurisdictions

Findings from other jurisdictions also illustrate similar trends. For example, higher infection and death rates from COVID-19 have been reported in racialized groups in the United States and the United Kingdom.^{23,24} Lower income and more deprived areas have also been shown to have higher COVID-19 case rates.²⁵

Data Needs to Support Further Understanding

Individual-level data on additional socio-demographic characteristics among reported COVID-19 cases can also support focussed intervention to reduce COVID-19 infection. This includes collecting information about characteristics that potentially confound the association between a risk factor of interest and COVID-19 (i.e. to enable multivariate analysis and adjust for these factors). Toronto Public Health is exploring additional data collection and linkage strategies that could help to fill this current data gap.

5.4 Science and Decision-Making

Under normal conditions, a decision-maker in public health will collect data to understand the presenting public health problem, then find generalizable relevant knowledge (from scientific studies) that will provide guidance on, for example, the natural history of a disease, its distribution within the population by person, place and time, and the effectiveness of interventions that may prevent the disease or mitigate its effects.

In the case of COVID-19 – a new disease – there is little existing science to provide public health guidance. The evidence is also of low quality at present, being based by necessity on observational studies, with small numbers and short-term outcomes, but it is improving rapidly in quantity and quality. Also, COVID-19 has resulted in a reliance upon studies which have not yet undergone peer review, but which are published as “preprints”, rather than waiting to publish in journals after a lengthy peer-review process. One such website – medRxiv – contains many thousands of articles, with more being added each day. While there are benefits in terms of making information available relatively quickly, there are also limitations in the absence of a comprehensive peer-review process and in many cases the findings should be considered preliminary.

The evidence may consist of a large number of studies, of varying quality and showing conflicting results. In order to generate an overall impression of the evidence for use in decision-making a process of evidence synthesis is necessary. Individual studies are located, assessed for quality and the strength and direction of effects examined. For COVID-19 this process is challenging: there are many small, contradictory and low-quality studies, with weak designs and multiple end-points. It has proved necessary to default to the “best available” evidence, including ecological (those comparing two populations, which may differ in many ways other than those of interest), and other observational studies. Several

universities across Canada, and some government research bodies, have come together to form the Evidence Synthesis Network, which provides simple, free and rapid access to evidence reviews. Toronto has requested and received reviews on three topics – the risks associated with singing; sudden loss of the senses of smell and taste as indicators of early COVID-19 infection and its inclusion in screening questionnaires; and technologies used in contact tracing. Public Health Ontario has continued its production of evidence reviews and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the National Collaborating Centres for Public Health have also produced some. As evidence accumulates, it is often worthwhile to update previous reviews to incorporate new evidence.

New findings and the changes in recommendations that follow may be interpreted as a failure or a disagreement among experts. As evidence changes over time, policies must also change accordingly. The previous decision was not necessarily “wrong” – we must endeavour to make the best possible decision with the evidence available at the time.

Explaining how new decisions are based on new evidence should be part of the communications strategy. One must also understand what is knowable and what is not. It is not possible to predict how the pandemic might evolve with certainty, and the effects of policy measures will not be apparent until they have been in effect for some time.

In the absence of knowledge of how COVID-19 will evolve and the effectiveness of preventive measures, we must rely on inferences from experience with other infective organisms, and observations of the experience to date here and elsewhere in the world. Both approaches have limitations. SARS-CoV-2 – the virus that causes COVID-19 – is a coronavirus, and thus related to four coronaviruses that are a cause of the common cold, as well as to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The resemblance of COVID-19 to any of these is remote: a cold is a very mild illness, SARS spreads mainly through aerosol-generating procedures in healthcare and MERS is not easily transmissible. There has been considerable debate concerning the mechanisms of transmission in COVID-19, although it is clear that spread by droplets is the predominant method, with transmission by direct contact with contaminated surfaces and airborne transmission playing a minor role. Knowledge about transmission is accumulated through observational studies, laboratory studies (e.g. of synthetic droplet/aerosol generation), simulation studies and cautious extrapolation from experience of other respiratory pathogens.

As physical distancing is one of our best defenses against the virus, and key to keeping people safe, affordable housing and shelters as well as safe transit (where people can abide by physical distancing measures) is very important. This would also help our essential workers maintain their safety and health.

Comment from Consultation

The collection of local epidemiologic data serves to generate a picture of the progression of the epidemic and the distribution of infection by age, sex, socio-economic status, place and time, severity, outcome, etc. Data are collected from service providers such as hospitals and laboratories, but richer data may be collected from infected persons through the case and contact management process. Other sources of data include testing sewage for the virus. Data on behaviours may also be useful – examples include mobility data from Google and data on the use of modes of transportation, retail sales, etc.

Epidemiological data may also be interpreted in light of similar data in other jurisdictions in Ontario, Canada and elsewhere. This is a challenge in that many factors other than the one of interest may also vary among the jurisdictions, so assuming a causal relationship is misleading.

Perhaps the most significant challenge in using evidence is arriving at decisions under conditions of uncertainty. We need to understand relationships between risk factors and the probability of infection, or the distribution of specific risks, or the effectiveness of preventive measures. However, we may have only one small observational study, a few studies with inconsistent results, studies with obvious confounding effects unaccounted for, or solely ecological studies.



The “precautionary principle” states that when there is some evidence of a significant threat to health, even though it is not conclusive, then action should be taken to protect against it. There is no consensus, however, on what constitutes conclusive evidence, or regarding other terms used in this context, such as “substantial” or “credible”. Nevertheless, through debate and discussion among scientists, clinicians and public health practitioners, a rough consensus on most issues evolves, and it tends to favour the protection of health over other outcomes. These positions should, and do, evolve as more evidence becomes available. For example, the consensus position on the use of non-medical masks for source control by the general public has evolved from “don’t use” to “recommended indoors when distancing is not possible” to “recommend in all indoor public places”, to, eventually, “mandate in all indoor public places”.

Gaining the evidence necessary to make rational decisions is particularly challenging for a novel communicable disease that is both highly infectious and severe – such as COVID-19. Early in the pandemic there is little evidence, for obvious reasons. At this point, it may be necessary to take action, and, in the absence of enough high-quality evidence, there is no choice but to invoke the precautionary principle and implement a wide range of restrictions and preventive measures. Unfortunately, it then becomes impossible to measure the transmission of the infection because relevant activities become prohibited. For example, the risk of playing or singing music is unknown because it has, until very recently, been prohibited everywhere. Decision-makers

may also be influenced by reports in the news media and those which occur early tend to be repeated often and may exert a disproportionate influence. Such is the case with the outbreak in a choir in Washington State in April, resulting in 32 confirmed and 20 probable cases and two deaths among 61 members;²⁶ those outcomes may well have been confounded by prolonged social contact among the members. Progress in the understanding of transmission will depend on laboratory studies and the evaluation of the outcomes when one jurisdiction makes the first move to change their preventive measures: for example, Germany is leading the way in allowing concerts involving singing and wind instruments.

All policy making involves the balancing of risks and benefits, and of different interests. It is apparent in the current pandemic that avoidance of risks to health is highly valued, and that public opinion and the statements of political leaders alike demonstrate a willingness to rely strongly on the advice of public health officials. Nevertheless, attention must also be paid to balancing the benefits of public health measures against their adverse effects upon economic activity and the quality of life. Adding a consideration of a community’s values to the scientific evidence to achieve this balance is the responsibility of elected officials rather than public health experts. The public health advice achieves its goals of maximum effectiveness and minimum adverse side effects if it is solidly founded on the best available scientific evidence. This involves a conscious effort to find, critically appraise, synthesize and apply the evidence.

5.5 Public Health Strategy

Throughout the course of the pandemic Toronto's Medical Officer of Health has been guided by three goals:

1. To minimize loss of life
2. To conserve the capacity of the healthcare system
3. To minimize adverse effects on economic activity and the quality of life

Originally conceived during the first days of the outbreak of COVID-19, these goals continue to guide public health activities during the recovery phase, although the balance among the three goals changes over time.

During the initial phase, "flattening the curve" was imperative. Drastically reducing contact between people by shutting down most activities outside the home reduced transmission. The message was to stay home and to limit time outside the home to only essential activities. Globally, at that time (spring 2020), severe outbreaks, particularly in Italy and Spain, were overwhelming the capacity of the healthcare system, with the result that many people in those countries were unable to receive treatment and the case fatality rate was high. There was a shortage of PPE and it was believed that a very large increase in the availability of intensive care beds and of ventilators would be required. The efforts to protect the healthcare capacity were successful in that healthcare facilities were not overwhelmed, although at times PPE supplies were marginal and staff endured long hours and stressful working conditions. All other activity by the health professions was suspended, except for emergencies.

After the peak of the epidemic, the transition to the recovery phase has been challenging. The intent is to slowly return life toward a sense of normalcy and to contribute to a return of economic activity while ensuring that infection rates remain low and manageable. After the shutdown in the early part of the epidemic, there has been a stepwise progress through the three provincial stages of reopening, with several weeks in between each stage, and careful monitoring of progress, so that progression to the next stage might be slowed or halted. As each business or activity was allowed to reopen, it was allowed to do so only if protective measures were put into effect. That changed the approach from attempting to keep every person (or household) apart from every other person, to attempting to keep only vulnerable people sheltered away from others and allowing most of the population to start to move about more.

Public health programs need to be at the centre of reopening to curb spread of COVID-19.

Comment from Consultation

The second strategic element in Phase 3 is to maintain a capacity to follow up notifications of confirmed and probable cases and to interview them in order to identify all contacts, starting from two days before the onset of symptoms. Those contacts are then traced and required to enter quarantine for 14 days from the day of contact. Checks are made to verify observance of quarantine and to identify symptoms. By this means, it is possible to vigorously investigate both sporadic cases and outbreaks in order to control further rapid spread and manage numbers until they have been reduced to the level that can be effectively handled by the case and contact management system.

The third component of the strategy is to reduce serious outcomes, in particular by protecting vulnerable persons as much as possible. That includes those who might suffer serious disease were they to be infected – the elderly and those with chronic conditions, as well as those who are at high risk for infection because they live in crowded circumstances in congregate settings such as homeless shelters or prisons. Some are at risk in both of those categories, e.g. residents of long-term care institutions.

The final strategic component of recovery is the surveillance, monitoring and analysis provided by Toronto Public Health in order to provide data for making decisions about the public health management of the pandemic. This is particularly important in the context of a new disease such as COVID-19, as well as to inform the response to any resurgence in cases if and as it arises. As has been discussed previously, the epidemiology of COVID-19 has changed throughout the course of the pandemic. Understanding these changes in terms of progression of the epidemic and the distribution of infection by age, sex, socio-economic status, place, time, etc., supports decision-making to manage the pandemic.

5.6 Reducing Transmission

The basis of public health methods of preventing COVID-19 is to understand as much as possible of the biology and epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2, particularly how the disease spreads between persons. The virus infects the respiratory system, although we now know that it can also affect many other body systems. It is transmitted through breathing, speech, coughing and sneezing. All of these generate droplets of varying sizes, each containing particles of virus. Those with a size of greater than five microns are classified (by WHO and CDC) as droplets and smaller particles are called aerosols (or droplet nuclei). The droplets fall to the ground with a distance of about two metres (but farther in some cases or in some studies), but the aerosols, with each droplet containing 10 to 100 virus particles, remain suspended in the air, some for up to an hour or more, and are usually dispersed by air movement. Particle speed, evaporation, air flow, humidity and temperature all play a role in the distance virus-laden respiratory particles can travel after release by an infectious individual. SARS-CoV-2 is thought to be predominately transmitted through droplets, but some aerosol generation has also been observed. Aerosols are known to be generated by certain medical procedures (AGMP) such as intubation. However, in usual circumstances, the extent of aerosol generation, the load of virus transmitted by this means and its importance in spread of the disease are highly controversial.

The pandemic has caused more people to travel within their neighbourhoods and safely talk to neighbours. It would be great for the City to encourage people to spend more time outdoors through physical activity, and to get to know their fellow neighbours in order to create healthier and safer communities.

Comment from Consultation



At present there is evidence that there is some generation of aerosols in many circumstances, but there is little evidence that this is a significant mode of transmission. Overall, the risk of transmission from a case of disease to a contact ranges from 10 to 40 per cent for household contacts, seven per cent for sharing a meal, and only about 0.6 per cent for passing contact whilst grocery shopping, in one study.²⁷

The virus has also been detected in feces, in 28 per cent of cases in one study,²⁸ although the extent to which this phenomenon contributes to the spread of disease is unknown.

There is also an indirect route of transmission, through surfaces and objects (fomites) that have become infected and which, when contacted, may transfer virus to another person when they touch the eyes, mouth or nose with unwashed hands. Virus has been detected on hard surfaces for up to six days after placement, but how much and whether viable is uncertain. Very large inoculums of 10^4 to 10^7 have been used, which would probably be unrelated to a real-life situation.²⁹ Survival is less on absorbent surfaces. Virus subjected to summer temperatures, humidity and sunlight has been observed to survive for only about seven minutes.³⁰ Epidemiological data on the transmission of COVID-19 by fomites cannot practically be obtained.

Virus is spread by some form of contact with an infected person, either symptomatic or pre-symptomatic. It is clear that transmission may occur from about two days before symptoms occur and for up to, commonly, about seven days afterwards, but sometimes much longer. It has also become increasingly clear that transmission may occur from those who never develop symptoms (asymptomatic). The incubation period (from acquiring the virus to manifesting the first symptoms of disease) is about five to six days.

It is from knowledge of these methods of transmission that public health interventions to prevent transmission are derived. Seeking to have all people maintain a distance of two metres between themselves and all other people (except, for reasons of practicality, members of the same household) reduces the likelihood of inhaling infected droplets, which rarely travel farther than that distance.



Transmission through fomites is addressed by means of guidance concerning respiratory hygiene and hand hygiene and avoiding contact with, and cleaning and sanitizing, surfaces. The most important element is frequent handwashing. Gloves are sometimes used and should be changed frequently, otherwise they may spread infection from one place to another. Frequent handwashing is often better than wearing gloves.

Respiratory etiquette consists of turning away and coughing or sneezing into the sleeve or shoulder; or using a tissue to cover the mouth and nose and then disposing of the tissue in a wastebasket, followed by washing hands or using hand sanitizer.

It is the second-order issues that require the most attention. How do we facilitate compliance with advice and provide the conditions to make continued adherence to the recommendations easier? The possibilities are many. Some measures may be put in place by retailers and providers of services, others by employers, but, most of all, spontaneously by members of the public. Other actions, regulatory in nature, are taken by the provincial government and

the City. There is good evidence that much of the required change in behaviour will be accomplished by the public themselves, with or without action by governments. Comparison of data on retail sales and on mobility across the United States show that, regardless of early or late lockdown, or its extent, or the timing and pace of loosening restrictions, states showed similar changes in behaviours and the changes started before any official action. Similarly, comparisons of retail sales and mobility between Denmark and Sweden (Sweden took very little action to reduce risks) show little difference between the two countries.

In advising on preventive measures, especially those that restrict people's choices, the following should be considered:

- The burden of a proposed measure compared with the consequences of no action
- Achieving the objective by the least restrictive means
- Considering the possible inequitable distribution of the burden of preventive measures
- Assessing the potential for substitution by other risky actions

Reducing contact can be achieved by means in addition to requiring a two-metre distance. Strongly advising older people and those with medical problems to stay home except for certain essential trips is quite intrusive and burdensome but is justified by the high level of risk. However, it is challenging to find the best advice when many people who are older than 70 are fit and feel well, and many of them may even be employed or busy volunteering. Many workers, especially those normally working in offices, have been able to work from home. This is, of course, a particularly effective means of achieving distancing and has involved a large portion of the workforce.

Achieving spatial separation between those known to be infected, as well as their recent close contacts, and all others is important and is the justification for the self-isolation and quarantine prescribed by the case and contact management process.

Physical barriers, such as those made of Plexiglass, may be used when physical distancing is not possible. Little is known about their impact.

In cases where physical distancing may not be possible, other actions to mitigate risk have been introduced. For example, even though distancing is possible most of the time on the TTC/public transit during the lower ridership that has occurred during the pandemic, it is to be expected that, as ridership increases,

maintaining physical distancing will be challenging. The bylaw requiring a mask/face covering on the TTC aims to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Similarly, many workplaces have elevators, in which it is usually challenging to achieve distancing. Policies on masks/face coverings and restricting the number of people allowed on elevators are measures that are expected to reduce potential virus spread in these environments. Others who find distancing challenging include workers on assembly lines, grocery store workers, personal service and healthcare workers.

Cleaning and sanitizing regimes have been recommended, and some businesses draw attention to their elaborate protocols. While there are benefits to frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces, the virus is short-lived in the environment.

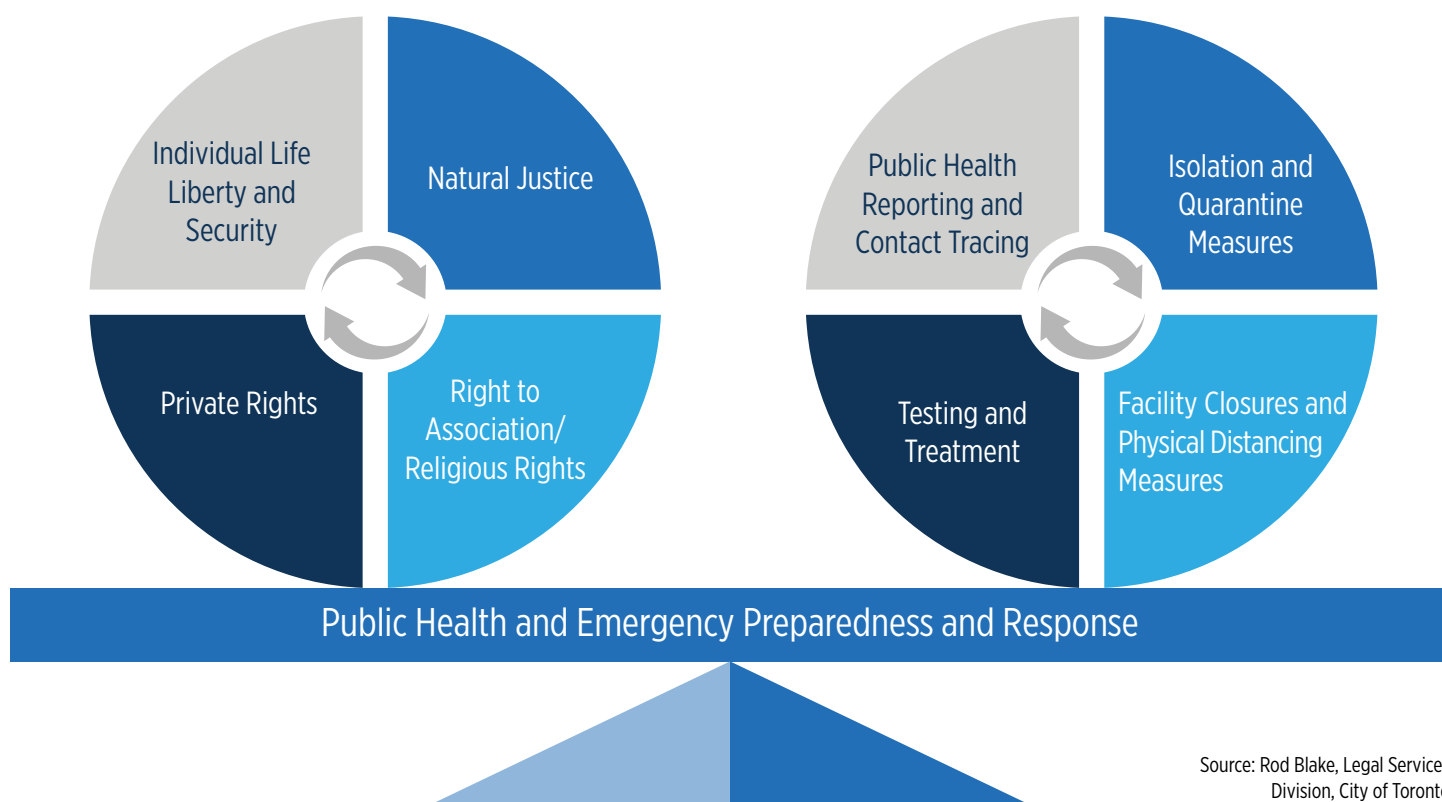
Balance is vital in deciding upon measures intended to reduce transmission. The effectiveness of a measure may depend upon how burdensome or intrusive it is, or how difficult or expensive to implement. In some instances, there might be significant non-compliance. It may also affect some groups in society unduly or

leave them without an alternative. The loss of one option should be balanced against the alternatives. Behaviours which are risky may be displaced to another activity. The feasibility of enforcement should also be taken into account. For the majority of measures, a reasonable level of public compliance might be expected, but, for some measures, it may be necessary to provide enforcement.

Throughout this process, it is essential to bear in mind that most measures intrude upon the autonomy of individuals. We must always balance individual rights against the public good.

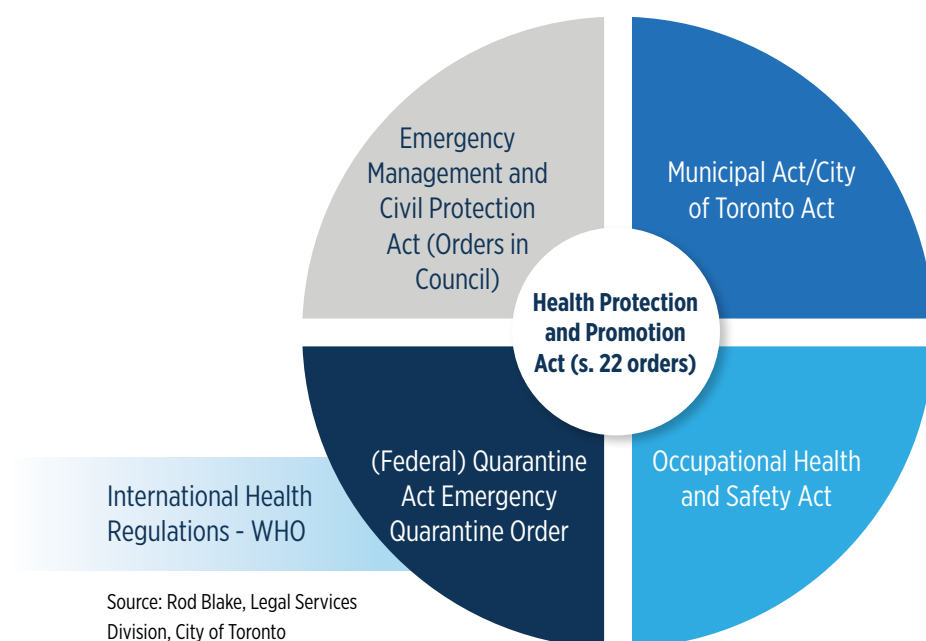
Deciding on the choice and exact wording of those measures that were mandatory in nature required extensive discussions with the City's Legal Services Division. Briefly, there are five broad areas of legislation available. There is variation in relevance, flexibility, practicality and ease of enforcement. The expectation is that most residents of Toronto would continue to follow the law, but occasionally, enforcement would be required. This approach, of course, works only if the requirements of the orders or bylaws are widely perceived to be reasonable and necessary, and if the efforts

Figure 14: Balancing individual rights and public interest in a pandemic



Source: Rod Blake, Legal Services Division, City of Toronto

Figure 15: The intersection of immediate legal jurisdiction exposed during a pandemic



of all governments to combat COVID-19 generally continue to have the public's confidence.

The federal Quarantine Act that was invoked to close borders and to issue Mandatory Isolation Orders imposing a 14-day quarantine period on those entering Canada may be enforced by the RCMP and provincial and local police forces.

The Health Protection and Promotion Act, section 22, provides for orders respecting communicable diseases. During SARS, the ability to issue class orders was added. This enables the MOH to direct an order toward an entire class of people (e.g. those infected with COVID-19) and to direct them to take a stated action (such as not leave their homes for 14 days). Such an order was issued on April 1. These orders can be enforced only through application to a judge.

Once an emergency is declared under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, the province can issue orders including in respect of the closure of non-essential businesses (Stage 1), followed by the gradual reopening of businesses and activities, under conditions set out in the orders (Stages 2 and 3). They have been applied at different times to different sets of health units, based on the progress in reducing the incidence to lower levels.

These have been the driving force and most important element of the population-wide measures to combat COVID-19. Some orders include a clause stating that the advice or instructions of public health officials must be followed. The CMOH has issued some documents labelled "Advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health", and local MOHs have used this clause for, e.g. mandating facemasks. The legal position of this advice or instruction is not clear.

During this pandemic, the City of Toronto (under the City of Toronto Act) has enacted a bylaw requiring the wearing of masks or face-coverings in all indoor public places (by means of a policy and signage), and another adding certain additional restrictions to the provincial order for bars and restaurants. These may be enforced by bylaw officers or police.

Lastly, the Occupational Health and Safety Act, administered by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, has issued many guidance documents for workplaces. In many circumstances, including businesses serving the public, employees would be subject to the provisions of the Occupational Health Act and the customers to those of health authorities. This has worked well, with some coordination between Labour and Health.

Some Examples

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

The TTC's ridership dropped dramatically early in the COVID-19 pandemic. People were working from home, or not working, or preferred to travel by car or by active means, and non-essential trips were not recommended. Ridership was as low as 15 per cent, but the service levels were kept at about 90 per cent, allowing riders to achieve distancing. There was concern that, as Toronto opened up, the maximum level of ridership consistent with the ability to maintain a two-metre distance, which was calculated to be 30 per cent, would be exceeded. Non-surgical masks or face-coverings were gaining favour as a means of source control (i.e. reducing dispersion of expired air and thus partially protecting others against transmission). While that approach was being considered provincially, it was decided to use the TTC's powers to enact bylaws to mandate the use of masks or face-coverings. The bylaw came into effect on July 2, 2020, accompanied by distribution of a million masks, mainly through existing channels used by low-income persons.



SCHOOLS

The reopening of elementary and secondary schools will not be examined in detail here, but the planning involves some of the same issues, but of course on a larger scale and with potentially serious consequences whatever the decision. The very significant need for children to learn and develop, intellectually, emotionally and socially, and the need for that to happen as much as possible in person, especially in the younger grades, cannot be ignored. A survey of parents by TDSB found that two-thirds of parents wanted their children to return to school in the fall, and three-quarters of students agreed (other surveys have yielded different results). That preference must be balanced against the potential long-term exposure of large numbers of children, with difficulties in implementing both the use of masks and physical distancing. The balance of the available evidence suggests that transmission among children, and between children and adults (in both directions) occurs at lower rates than between adults, especially for younger children,^{31,32} although there is conflicting evidence and some recent evidence of outbreaks in schools in other countries.³³ One might also consider a stratified approach — where the school's catchment area has a high incidence rate (which frequently corresponds to high needs of other kinds), there is both a great need for in-person schooling and a higher risk of transmission. These schools might receive special consideration for additional protective measures, including smaller class sizes.



RESTAURANTS AND BARS

Restaurants and bars were closed as being non-essential businesses on March 17. Soon thereafter they were allowed to provide take-out/delivery service. In Stage 2, the use of patios for sit-down dining was permitted, with conditions such as maintaining distancing. Patios were presumed to be safer because of good air circulation and a warmer, more humid environment. Direct sunlight (UV) is known to reduce the viability of the virus on surfaces. One estimate is that the risk of transmission outdoors may be as low as five per cent of the indoor risk.

As Toronto was preparing to enter Stage 3, there was a wish to help all restaurants to return to full functioning, albeit still at a reduced capacity, and to increase employment. But reports were accumulating of very large outbreaks in many U.S. states, many of which were thought to have originated in restaurants and bars. There were also reports of large crowds assembling outside of some bars and/or on patios in Toronto, attracting large crowds of people who were not wearing masks and not distancing. Bars also combined several conditions probably associated with an increased risk of transmission: large numbers, potentially close contact, prolonged contact and being indoors. Toronto approached the provincial government offering advice about how to strengthen protections, and also brought in its own bylaw. The additional provisions include requiring patrons to be seated at all times, except when entering or leaving, visiting the washroom or paying; requiring masks, except when eating or drinking; specifying a cap of 100 on the total number of patrons, limiting the capacity of tables to a maximum of ten; and requiring the restaurant to record the name and contact information of at least one diner from each party in order to assist contact tracing, if necessary. These elements are now all present, some in the amended order and some in the bylaw.

The original thinking had been that bars were a particular concern because people in bars mingle and drinking alcohol might enable/encourage mingling. It is impossible to distinguish bars from restaurants, e.g. for licensing purposes. Rather than attempt to regulate the premises, it is potentially more effective to regulate the behaviour. Hence the attention to being seated, rather than wandering freely throughout the room which should give some assurance of maintenance of distancing. Closing restaurants and bars should be avoided, not least because there is ample evidence that risky behaviours would be transferred to parties in houses or on beaches, on boats and so on.



5.7 Public Use of Masks and Face Coverings

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto Public Health has monitored the growing body of evidence regarding the effectiveness of non-medical masks/face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The evidence regarding a non-medical mask's ability to protect a person from COVID-19 infection is not definitive but it does suggest that a mask can act as a barrier to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets to other people from someone coughing, sneezing or talking while wearing the mask. Also, scientific models suggest that broad adoption of even relatively ineffective face masks may meaningfully reduce community transmission of COVID-19 and decrease peak hospitalizations and deaths.³⁴ It has also been postulated that more widespread wearing of masks in public may act as a visual cue that public health measures are still required. It signals that the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing, that resurgence of local disease activity remains a threat and that everyone's vigilance is required.

This evidence on use of non-medical masks, particularly given the evidence of COVID-19 transmission by asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic cases, although inconsistent, supports the utility of universal public face mask policies to prevent the spread of the virus, including from those who are unknowingly infected. The use of a mask or face covering is therefore an inexpensive and non-invasive measure that may help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

A government-mandated intervention on personal decisions must be of demonstrable and significant benefit to public health and safety. Overall, Torontonians have complied with numerous public health measures that have, to varying degrees, restricted liberties during the city's response to COVID-19, likely prevented further economic hardship, supported social cohesion and saved lives.

The growing body of evidence of the effectiveness of non-medical masks, along with local normative social trends, have informed and led to City-mandated mask/face covering policies that have gained widespread compliance from the public. This acceptance may be facilitated by events globally, as there are currently more than 100 countries that have adopted some form of legislation for universal public masking.

Toronto Transit Commission Policy

Effective July 2, 2020, masks or face coverings became mandatory when on TTC premises or vehicles. The TTC Board voted unanimously to pass the policy on the recommendation of the TTC CEO and Toronto's Medical Officer of Health.



City of Toronto Bylaw

On May 28, 2020, City Council requested a report to the June Council meeting on the ability of the City to require the wearing of masks or face coverings by the public. At the June meeting, the City Solicitor's report was considered. The best option appeared to be Council's general authority to legislate for the health, safety and well-being of persons in the City. The Medical Officer of Health's report acknowledged the growing body of evidence on the effectiveness of masks to act as a barrier to prevent the spread of COVID-19, suggested that as Toronto continues to ease public health restrictions, additional public health measures such as masks should be considered to prevent a resurgence of COVID-19 cases, and recommended that City Council enact a temporary bylaw requiring the wearing of face masks/coverings in enclosed public settings.

Effective July 7, 2020, the City of Toronto enacted a bylaw requiring the use of masks or face coverings in indoor public spaces, until October 1, 2020, unless extended by City Council. It applies to all places accessible to the public, including retail businesses and services. It was later amended to also apply to the common areas of apartment buildings and condominiums. Exemptions for those who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons, children under age 2, and other reasonable accommodations are included in the bylaw.

5.8 Case and Contact Management

Case and contact management is an essential component of the response to COVID-19. Through this process, public health staff contact the person who has tested positive for COVID-19 to monitor their symptoms, ensure they are self-isolating, and identify and notify their close contacts so as to limit further spread of the virus.

The basic reproductive number (R_0) for a communicable disease is the number of people infected by each case of the disease. For COVID-19, it is generally accepted to be in the region of 2.5 – that is, each person with the disease will infect, on average, about two and a half others, although higher values have been reported occasionally. It is thought that infectivity is not evenly distributed, so that about 10 per cent of cases account for about 80 per cent of transmission. Of course, these numbers depend on particular circumstances but represent the average in the base case, i.e. before any preventive measures are put in place. In the presence of preventive measures, the reproductive number (now called the effective reproductive number – R_t) will fall below 2.5. When it falls below 1.0, the number of infections will gradually decline. Achieving an R_t of less than 1.0 is therefore an objective of public health efforts against COVID-19.

This decline can, of course, be accomplished purely by population-level interventions aimed at preventing the acquisition of infection generally. A case-based strategy, on the other hand, attempts to find cases as early as possible and then isolate them from all others so that the virus cannot find a new host. It is important to understand that population-based measures can drastically reduce the number of cases but will not hold them down to very low levels. Case and contact management works well to keep numbers low, and to prevent outbreaks from getting out of control, but, when numbers once again rise quickly, the capacity to follow up all cases quickly becomes insufficient. This has been seen recently in some American states.

The “generation interval” for COVID-19 (the average time between generations of cases) is about five days.³⁵ One case might therefore, when the R_0 is 2.5 give rise to more than 2.5 cases in five days, and 15 in 15 days. Were all of those cases allowed to spread the disease without any preventive measures, the numbers would soon be beyond control. Where policy measures are not fully effective, or where, against a background of a few cases each day, an outbreak occurs, case and contact management is essential.

The efficacy of case and contact management appears to be demonstrated by success in controlling the disease in Iceland, Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea, although some of these countries have experienced a second wave. The consensus is that it is most effective when started early in the progress of an epidemic. It is not possible to provide a strong enough case and contact management program to make a difference once the circulation of the virus reaches high levels. Successful control is unlikely unless it is possible to implement, and continue, a program that is able to contact and test all cases and all contacts. The methodology differs little from that employed for other communicable diseases, but the volumes of cases and contacts are unlike anything experienced by public health in the past. The main challenge to effective case-based control efforts is achieving sufficient scale. Wuhan (China) employed 9,000 for a population of 11 million. Massachusetts hired one thousand extra staff (15 per 100,000).

Overview of the Case and Contact Management Process

When a person is tested for COVID-19, the test sample is sent to a laboratory to determine if it is positive for the virus that causes COVID-19. Under the provisions of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, cases and suspected cases of COVID-19 are reportable to the local health authority. Toronto Public Health's case and contact management process begins when a positive lab confirmation of a COVID-19 case is received. Public health investigators then immediately contact those newly identified with COVID-19 (i.e. the “case”) to:

- Ensure the person is appropriately isolated;
- Identify close and non-close contacts of the person, dating back two days prior to the onset of symptoms and until the date the case is self-isolated;
- Follow up with all of the contacts identified to ensure they self-isolate (close contacts) or self-monitor (non-close contacts) for 14 days and provide education and instruction on when and how to seek medical care, if necessary;
- Follow up with the case for 14 days to monitor symptoms as the person recovers, ensure they continue to isolate, and answer any questions.

Case and contact management is labour intensive and complex. The number of contacts for each COVID-19 case can vary depending on individuals' living, working, and social situations. As the number of cases in Toronto increased over the course of the pandemic, the scale of case and contact management also increased, particularly when the number of new cases was more than 200 a day. In the early stages of the City's response, Toronto Public Health had 50 staff assigned to the case and contact management team. That team was gradually expanded to include approximately 550 staff, mobilized by redeploying staff from other teams and hiring additional nurses through the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario and other partners.

Various factors external to local public health authorities pose challenges to the case and contact management process. The most important of them is the delay between conducting a COVID-19 test and notification of the public health unit so it can begin the process of contacting the COVID-19 case. The test is performed at a hospital or testing assessment centre, and then sent to a laboratory for processing. The laboratory testing results are then shared with the ordering health care provider and the local public health unit where staff must review and extract results and then begin the

When COVID-19 was at its worst we saw communities coming together in amazing caring ways. That is a strength upon which we can build.

Comment from Consultation

investigation. The laboratory reports are typically received by fax, in one large report that can include hundreds of individual lab results. This process requires staff time to review, remove duplicates and follow up on any missing information needed to contact the case. Making this process more efficient to reduce the time between the testing and contacting the case is critical to reducing the spread of COVID-19. The sooner a case's contacts are informed of their potential risk and requested to self-isolate, the less the likelihood of further virus spread.³⁶

The provincial case and contact management database, called the integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS), has been in use since 2005. It was found to be unsuitable for managing the high volume and rapid turnaround time required for case and contact management. In response, Toronto Public Health, in partnership with the Technology Services Division, developed and implemented a new system, the Coronavirus Rapid Entry System (CORES). This web-based system has increased the efficiency of the case and contact management process at Toronto Public Health. CORES has been developed with the ability to link Toronto Public Health directly to the Ontario Laboratory Information System (OLIS) resulting in additional improvements to the process. TPH has also implemented a pilot to locate TPH staff at assessment centres to rapidly assign positive cases to a case contact investigator; streamlined work processes from receipt of lab slips to entry into CORES; and expanded the use of CORES to institutional cases.

Toronto Public Health has been in active discussions with the province to improve case and contact management through policy, laboratory and IT solutions. In response, the province has launched a number of collaborative working groups and some improvements have already been implemented. The most significant of them has



been the introduction of a new case and contact management information system – CM-Salesforce. This system provides the ability to link with OLIS and offers other process improvements. There are plans for TPH to adopt this system eventually.

A further challenge is that self-isolation may not be feasible or safe for some individuals. For example, people experiencing homelessness face challenges in accessing space to enable safe and effective self-isolation. In response, Toronto has established three isolation facilities for people experiencing homelessness. In collaboration with federal and provincial partners, the City is also developing a voluntary isolation facility to support people who cannot properly isolate at home, such as those in housing that may be crowded or otherwise have insufficient space to properly distance from household contacts.

Technological solutions addressing the need for high-volume contact tracing are of interest: smartphone-based apps can detect proximity to other devices with the same app and can notify either contacts or the authorities and notify users of proximity to confirmed cases. They can also be used to monitor compliance with quarantine. There are also systems that use GPS location instead of proximity. The technology raises issues of privacy, with some controversy in France, Germany and the UK; it remains to be seen whether this technology will be as acceptable in Europe and North America as it is in Asia. The system developed jointly by Google and Apple leaves data on the smartphone, and thus addresses the privacy issue. There are also reports from South Korea that fatigue eventually sets in and messages are ignored. The Trace Together system used in Singapore

is voluntary, and does not share data with the government, but only 20 per cent of smartphone users have installed it. Fraud and spam are also concerns related to the use of these technologies.

These systems can provide benefits in terms of speed of response and unlimited capacity. Their impact has, however, been disappointing in practice, and, apart from a few countries that were early adopters, the use of phone apps of this kind has not spread widely. The fundamental problem for proximity-based systems is that they are only effective if a large proportion of the population uses them. The largest uptake was in Iceland, at 38 per cent,³⁷ but contacts are recorded only if each user has the app installed and working and their smartphone with them and turned on. Other countries have much smaller use rates (Singapore is next at 28 per cent) so the chance of two apps being in proximity are not high.

Ontario has been a lead partner in the development of a system by the Government of Canada, which is offering a free app that can be used on Android and iOS devices. This app was released in late July as the COVID Alert app. It will require a great deal of promotion if it is to achieve the market penetration with the potential to make a significant difference to contact tracing. It will also require those with a diagnosis of COVID-19 to agree to provide access to the records on their phones.

There are simpler technologies that might be useful to case and contact management, especially if volumes again become challenging. It might, for example, be feasible to use automated telephone call technology for some follow-up calls to contacts.



5.9 Testing

Testing for the COVID-19 virus using PCR (a molecular testing technique) is essential for diagnosis of symptomatic cases and for confirmed and presumptive cases being released from isolation. It is now being extended to testing contacts and might in the future be used to screen workers in high-risk settings (something that would require frequent repetition). It was a matter of concern that Ontario at one time had the lowest rate of testing of any province or territory – about half that in Quebec. That situation in Ontario slowly improved until 20,000 to 30,000 tests were performed daily as of July 2020.³⁸ As well as the capacity for much wider use, there is a need for quicker turnaround and for point-of-care testing, possibly using samples other than nasal swabs. The system is considered complex and a well-running supply chain is essential.

Provincial targets for the turnaround of tests and their reporting were set at 60 per cent within 24 hours and 80 per cent within 48 hours. Those targets have never been met for Toronto tests and achievement is currently running well below target in spite of concerted efforts. This efficiency challenge may well impact the effectiveness of case and contact management and surveillance efforts.

The development of testing for antibodies is in its early stages. Even the better tests have sensitivities around 93 per cent and specificities from 93 to (allegedly) 100 per cent. While useful for population studies, these validity data (given the low population prevalence of antibody) would lead to too many false positives and false negatives. The former would provide false assurance of immunity, and the latter would lead to unnecessary exclusions from contact. A high specificity is essential. It is not yet known whether the antibodies detected provide effective immunity, whether there are cross-reactions with antibodies for other coronaviruses, or how long immunity lasts.

If there is COVID-19-specific long-lasting neutralising antibody, suitable tests would be useful to indicate immunity. There have been suggestions that this information might also be incorporated into so-called Immunity passports or certificates, possibly held as a verified QR code on a smart phone and used to indicate suitability for work by healthcare/long-term care workers or others. The feasibility and effectiveness of such systems remains to be proved.

There are other proposals to initiate or pilot schemes for periodic mass testing of, for example, workers or students in order to reduce the chances of pre-symptomatic individuals transmitting the virus, but it is too early to form a firm impression of their value.

5.10 Screening

Screening for symptoms of COVID-19 is an important and routine part of efforts to reduce risk. Passive screening is usually in the form of a poster at the entrance to a business, service or event listing the symptoms (information displayed may also include contact with a case, recent foreign travel or being under an order to self-isolate or quarantine) and asks that persons with one or more symptoms not enter. Active screening requires that those seeking entry respond in the negative to each symptom, orally or by checking boxes on a questionnaire. Active screening is used mainly in high-risk circumstances or for staff in restaurants, personal service settings, etc.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are quite non-specific overall, so many people who turn out to have other infections may inadvertently be refused entry. One exception is the sudden loss of the senses of taste and/or smell, which occurs in about 40 per cent of COVID-19 cases, usually early on, but rarely occurs otherwise. Including that symptom in the list of symptoms increases the sensitivity (correctly identifies more cases).

The effectiveness of screening questionnaires is potentially limited by dishonest or negligent answers. More importantly, questionnaires will not detect pre-symptomatic and asymptomatic cases. There is no good evidence of effectiveness.

Screening of temperature is sometimes used; however, the evidence suggests that the performance is poor;³⁹ cases may not have an elevated temperature when screened, and the measurement of body temperature by no-touch devices such as infra-red thermometers is erratic.⁴⁰



5.11 Communications

Communicating with the public has already proven its worth. So far, the messages have been simple and frequently repeated – the “brand” for the current control measures – typified by the “stay the blazes home” comment of Nova Scotia’s premier.

As the recovery progresses, the messages are more complex and nuanced. Some people disregard the rules—it would be helpful to understand their motivations in order to craft/deliver more effective messages.

5.12 Public Health and the Recovery

The Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto each have a role to play in leading the population of Toronto through the entire COVID-19 experience in order to simultaneously protect health while enabling a vigorous recovery from the social and economic effects. Roles and responsibilities are noted earlier in this report (section 4.2).

In late April, the provincial government released “A Framework for Reopening our Province”. That report laid out principles and proposed actions for the emerging from the initial period of response to the pandemic. The period of the initial response, Phase 1, including the extensive closures of businesses and activities, was intended to “protect and support”; the second phase “restart” gradually loosened emergency measures, and the third phase “recover” was

to rebuild the economy and facilitate economic recovery. The second phase (restart) involved gradually relaxing restrictions, allowing businesses to reopen and activities to move toward a more normal way of life. Lower-risk activities were re-introduced first, and throughout, conditions under which businesses and facilities may operate were set out in provincial orders.

The process regulated the sequence and pace of reopening, together with the conditions or required protective measures, in order to ensure, as much as possible, that there is no resurgence of disease. Phase 2 was divided into three stages, with progression from one stage to the next the subject of an order. This progression is a cabinet decision that takes into account the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, which in turn, takes into account epidemiological data, advice from medical officers of health and the lapse of sufficient time to observe any adverse effects upon disease incidence.

The City of Toronto constitutes a large proportion of both the population and of the economic activity of Ontario. The City has an interest in the health and well-being of its population and in economic recovery. The balance between the interests and between the powers of Province and City is a delicate one requiring continual attention. After the Government of Ontario issues orders under EMCPA, the Chief Medical Officer of Health may provide additional guidance. Toronto Public Health has produced many documents providing guidance; these documents elaborate on the orders and CMOH advice as well as providing practical advice on options to meet the requirements.

The timing of provincial announcements has generally allowed little time for the City and businesses to prepare. TPH has developed guidance ahead of announcements, either to release upon the announcement, or, occasionally ahead of announcements in order to allow time for preparations (but with notice that some details may change).

The options for action on the part of the City are many and include using the existing public health powers in the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA), such as a section 22 Class Order, that required all diagnosed or symptomatic persons and contacts to self-isolate. The order was issued by the MOH on April 1, 2020. This power is appropriate for specific and immediate threats to health but might be challenged if perceived to have been used to make policy. The City may make bylaws with respect to the health, safety and well-being of persons, and in July enacted a bylaw



that mandated business owners must have a policy and signage requiring all persons in indoor public places to wear masks. The Stage 2 Order (O.Reg 263/20), states, in section 4:

(2) The person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall operate the business or organization in compliance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including any advice, recommendations or instructions on physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting.

This is the implicit authority for TPH's guidance documents and has been used explicitly by some other health units to mandate the wearing of masks in indoor public spaces.

The reopening of businesses under the orders is permissive – the City, for example, has the option to delay opening its services if it considers that delay the safer option, although the City generally follows the provincial schedule. The City may also modify programs, including online delivery and keeping staff working from home.

The Premier, the Toronto Mayor, the provincial CMOH and Toronto's Medical Officer of Health have all provided advice, including urging the public to take certain precautions. These communications may or may not be accompanied by a legal requirement. The “social circles” advice, issued to recommend that individuals limit the number of people they socialize with, for example, is voluntary. Overall, the public has responded well to the advice offered.

Public health officials at the Province of Ontario and the City of Toronto have also conferred through a variety of mechanisms and channels. The Public Health Measures Table has met twice weekly, bringing representative medical officers of health (regional chairs of the Council of Medical Officers of Health) together with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Public Health Ontario. It reviews proposals for orders and guidance, in confidence, and provides advice to the CMOH. In addition to an Associate MOH, Toronto is also represented by the Public Health Consultant to TORR. Toronto Public Health is also represented on the Municipal Emergency Operations committee (MEOC) for consultations related to public health between the government and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). Direct representation has also been made by Toronto's MOH and the Public Health Consultant to the CMOH Office, as well as through political channels.

The value of advocacy is illustrated by the regional variations in the stages of reopening. After the Stage 1 reopenings, Toronto and some other health units in the GTHA continued to have high case counts, while most other health units had only a handful of cases each week. The initial position of the provincial government was that all parts of the province should advance to Stage 2 at the same time. There was some trepidation that a difference in stage between areas might cause travel to adjoining municipalities in search of open businesses. The counter argument was that applying the same measures everywhere would either cause the



GTA to open too soon, risking a loss of control over cases, or would keep the rest of the province in the earlier stage too long, risking more economic damage. The GTHA MOHs developed their own dashboard of indicators and benchmarks at that point and argued for a regional solution, which was accomplished when most of the province entered Stage 2 on June 12, most of the GTHA on June 19, and Toronto and Peel on June 24, after consultations with MOHs. The municipalities of Leamington and Kingsville were experiencing a severe outbreak in camps for migrant farm workers and did not enter Stage 2 until July 7. Similarly, progression to Stage 3 was also timed to allow each health unit to be in Stage 2 for at least an equal amount of time.

The protective measures in workplaces are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, which has issued extensive guidance, industry by industry. In places where the public obtain goods or services, the occupational health guidance will apply to employees and the public health guidance to customers.

The local public input into the reopening of schools and post-secondary institutions flowed through the PHMT and were considered by the lead ministries: Education and Colleges and Universities respectively. TPH has been involved in the deliberations of the Toronto school boards and has also provided some advice to colleges and universities.



Reopening and Assessment of Risk

As businesses, facilities and activities are allowed to reopen/restart, there will be undoubtedly some level of risk. Preventive measures are intended to reduce this risk to acceptable levels, but it must be accepted that the risk cannot be eliminated entirely. The design of the measures starts with a rough estimation of the risk. This estimation is based upon what is known about the transmission of the virus in various circumstances. There may be a considerable error in the estimation of the risk, as there is much yet to be known about the transmission of COVID-19. It now appears to be the case that indirect transmission through surfaces is not a common (and may be a rare) mechanism, and that direct transmission through droplets is the single most important means of transmitting the infection. The occurrence of aerosols and their importance as a means of transmission remains controversial. In practical terms, it means that avoiding contact is crucial – numbers and proximity of contact, its duration, and being indoors are all important factors.

This assessment of the risk may be used to decide which businesses, activities and facilities should be opened in each stage, for each business to assess where its risk lies and where to direct mitigation, and as the first step in preparing guidance. The risk assessment indicates key areas for mitigation: for example, entering and/or leaving an event or establishment may increase the risk of contact. Mitigation measures most often include physical distancing, wearing masks as source control, avoiding pinch points by directing the flow of pedestrians, restricting certain activities, avoiding the touching of surfaces and objects by many people, cleaning and sanitation, and, if possible, recording attendance to facilitate follow-up if a case occurs.

The increased risks arising from reopening a particular business or activity must be balanced against the benefits, both social and economic. It is important to assess the net risk: sometimes not allowing an activity results in the substitution of another, or some other unintended consequence. The perception of risk by the public is also an issue. It is well known that risks that occur infrequently (e.g. in plane crashes) receive more attention than familiar everyday risks (e.g. motor vehicle crashes). COVID-19 is an unfamiliar risk with overwhelming coverage in the media. It will be important for the public to realize that reducing the risk of infection to zero is impossible in the short term, and any attempts to do so may increase the adverse effects disproportionately.

An example of the complexity of balancing risks and benefits was the decision on whether or not to operate children's summer

day camps. The program had to be heavily modified to allow for more supervision by means of a lower ratio of campers to counsellors, physical distancing, procedures for screening and managing children with symptoms, cohorting children, etc. This approach greatly increased costs, so that some private camps may have increased fees or chosen not to operate. Because of physical distancing, the available outdoor and indoor spaces could not accommodate as many campers. And, of course, there was a residual risk of transmission, and, even if children nearly always experienced mild disease, they could spread the infection to their families. That concern had to be balanced against the vital importance of providing opportunities for physical and developmental growth and social interaction and growth, and also of providing fun for children who had been kept largely at home for many weeks. There was also a benefit for parents, who might be able to return to the workforce. These benefits were set against the net risk – not all children would spend the summer safely at home, but some might be amusing themselves in the neighbourhood, without the supervision they would receive at camp.

TPH has produced three fundamental guidance documents to guide reopening businesses, programs and facilities through risk assessment and mitigation measures. There is one for each of businesses, City facilities and services, and the voluntary sector. In addition, more specific advice, which explains and elaborates on any advice from the CMOH, is produced when the reopening presents a higher level of risk and/or is complex. Examples included restaurants, places of worship and children's summer day camps. There are also modular fact sheets of wider relevance, such as those on cleaning and sanitation. All guidance is posted on the City's website and is

also sent directly, where possible, to affected parties, through mailing lists and business associations, BIAs, etc. Several webinars have been offered and they have been heavily subscribed.

Even with careful reopening, protective measures and case and contact management, there remains a level of risk for certain groups within the population which is unacceptably high. That includes people in congregate settings such as long-term care facilities, homeless shelters, facilities for refugees, victims of violence, and children and adults with developmental disabilities, and prisons. It also includes those with a risk for poor outcomes – specifically the elderly and people with certain chronic medical conditions. (The issue of more general inequality of outcomes is discussed elsewhere.)

The congregate settings experienced high rates of infection and deaths before control over transmission was gradually established. Provincial orders prohibited staff from working in more than one institution, streamlined certain routine reporting requirements, and placed some homes under direct provincial control, increasing wage rates and eventually securing the assistance of military personnel for particularly hard-hit homes. The City arranged and obtained financial assistance for the use of hotel rooms to reduce the occupancy of homeless shelters enough to allow for physical distancing. Those arrangements will be necessary for the duration of the pandemic. The safety of congregate settings will depend on careful control of admissions and transfers, testing, adherence to distancing and sanitation measures, and vigorous response to outbreaks. Toronto Public Health has deployed a team to address outbreak management, case and contact management, and infection prevention and control in long-term care facilities.



The COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard

It is possible to collect a great deal of data concerning the spread of the virus and when and where people become infected and the outcomes. Toronto Public Health may collect these data directly or obtain them from others such as Public Health Ontario or Ontario Health. The data can be collated and analyzed in many ways; a priority is to calculate and present a small number of key indicators relevant to the goals and to the timing of progress through the stages of reopening, then presenting them in a dashboard format. One set of indicators and targets has been agreed for all health units in Ontario.

Toronto developed and released a dashboard of these key indicators in June 2020 to provide a progress assessment of COVID-19 response. These indicators are organized into the following categories: virus spread and containment; laboratory testing and lab testing trends; health system capacity; and public health system capacity. Each category is assigned either a red, yellow, or green colour to reflect current status. Figure 16 provides an example of the COVID-19 monitoring dashboard.

Figure 16: COVID-19 monitoring dashboard examples

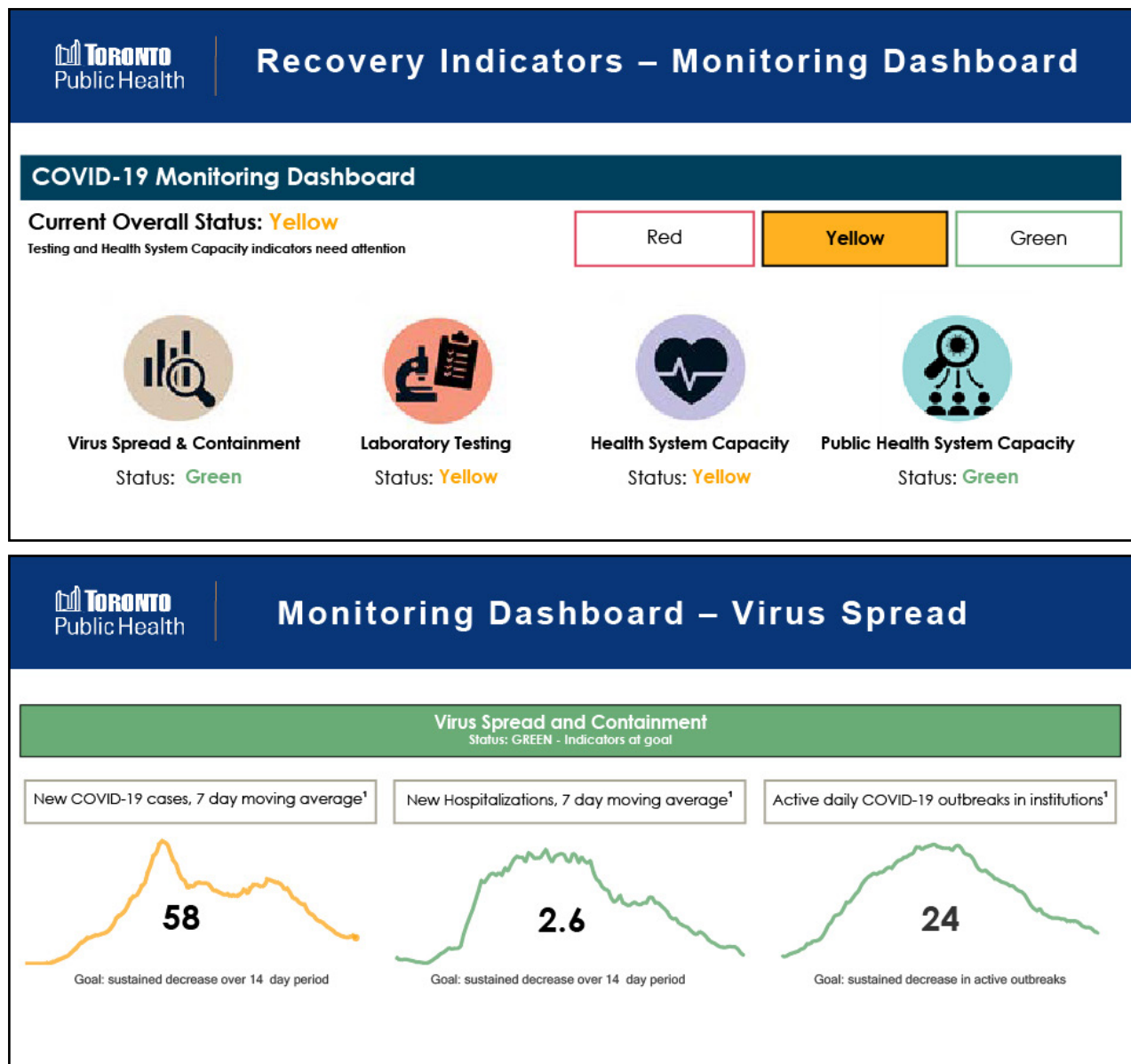
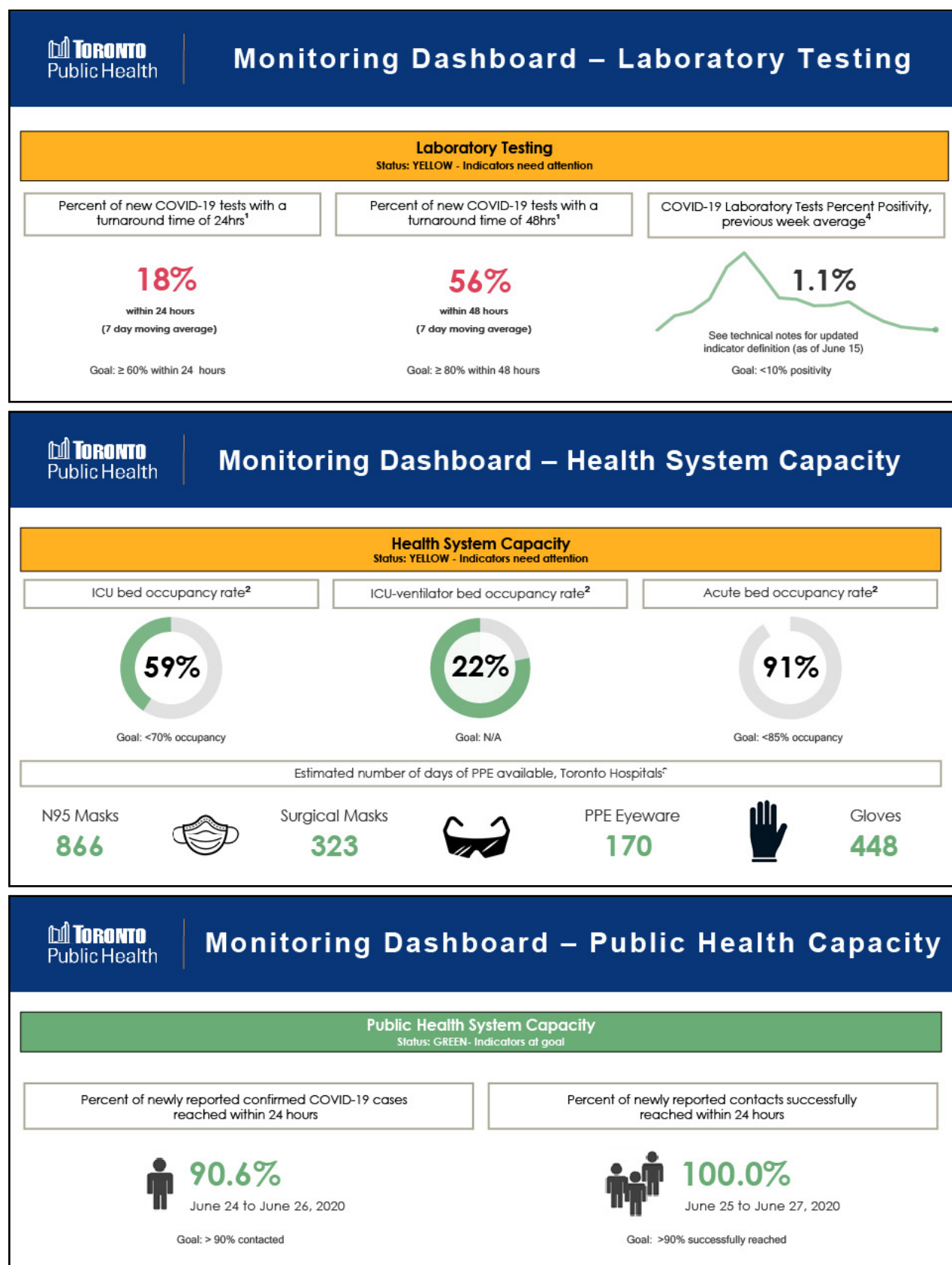


Figure 16: COVID-19 monitoring dashboard examples



5.13 Long-Term Care

The elderly and infirm people in long-term care (LTC) facilities and retirement homes, in Canada, Ontario and Toronto were affected severely by COVID-19. In the Greater Toronto Area, LTC residents were 59 times more likely to be infected than the general population and the case-fatality rate was 26.3 per cent. Adjusting for age and sex, this represents a case fatality rate from COVID-19 1.4 times that of the general population.⁴¹ An Ontario-wide study⁴² calculated a mortality incidence ratio of 13.1, compared to the community-living population 70 years of age and more. Staff were also infected: 38 per cent of all infected healthcare workers worked in LTC (this figure is an underestimate because not all workers in LTC were included from the beginning).

Canada does not fare well in international comparisons: the average proportion of all deaths occurring in long-term care (June 4) in 26 countries was 47 per cent, but in Canada was 85 per cent – the highest of any country studied.⁴³ The report of the Canadian military units called in to assist in LTC homes whose staff were mainly unable or unwilling to work revealed some shameful conditions. Canada spends less than the OECD average on LTC and has fewer than half the workers per 100 residents as Norway.⁴⁴ LTC workers suffer low wages and many (until the practice was banned) worked at more than one home, thus potentially spreading the virus. Turnover of staff is high. Canada's figure may be slightly inflated because some jurisdictions included all deaths occurring in LTC settings during the period, not just those with a diagnosis of COVID-19. The figure for Toronto is 67 per cent.

At one point, all City long-term care homes reported residents and/or staff with the virus. TPH provided assistance in managing outbreaks; expert infection prevention and control (IPAC) advice was supplied by hospitals.

Provincial orders raised wages and prohibited working at more than one facility, but more attention and investment will be required in the future. As the population of elderly and infirm persons increases, 78 per cent more LTC workers will be needed over the next 20 years (keeping the current staffing ratio).

Short-term action can be taken on wage rates and inspection and enforcement. Long-term improvements are not specific to COVID-19 or to other infections but should address the quality of life in the present facilities as well as their safety. Most importantly, the system must develop alternatives to LTC facilities for many who will need some form of care. It has been estimated that 40

per cent of LTC residents in Canada might be able to stay home if provided with the right supports.⁴⁵ Many options have already been discussed in Ontario and there are many examples of effective, innovative programs in Europe and elsewhere.

Why were Toronto's numbers so high?

Toronto has accounted for a high proportion (39 per cent) of Ontario's cases of COVID-19,⁴⁶ although its experience was not as severe as that in some other jurisdictions. Although Toronto's numbers were partly a consequence of its population, it did have a higher incidence rate than that for the province overall. It is commonly held that this situation is a consequence of Toronto's population density, but a review of rates across the world does not show a consistent association between population density and incidence rates. Some studies^{47, 48} have shown a weak association with density; another,⁴⁹ with better control of confounders, showed a slightly negative association with density, but a positive one with the size of the metropolitan area. This information suggests it is the quantity of interactions rather than density that is important. It is of note that Peel Region, with a density much lower than Toronto's, experienced infection rates almost as high.

Toronto was affected early: that may have been due to the presence of Canada's largest international airport and the importation of cases. In Toronto, the number of cases was slow to decline to the level deemed safe for progression to the later stages of reopening. After the large number of institutional outbreaks was brought under control, community cases remained significant for many weeks. An explanation for that occurrence is not readily apparent, but it may have been due to the total population, which was subject to some degree of mixing, and which extended to other parts of the GTA.

5.14 Unintended Consequences

Some of the direct effects of COVID-19 are well known – a range of acute symptoms ranging from none through mild illness, a combination of respiratory illness and general fatigue much like influenza, to acute respiratory distress and death. Admission to hospital is required in a minority of cases, or, for even fewer cases, the use of a ventilator. With more experience, there is more evidence of other effects – a cutaneous manifestation in children, thrombosis in various organs, and some long-term effects so far not well defined.

Those who are most affected by the direct effects – working in circumstances that present a high probability of acquiring the infection – are healthcare workers. In Ontario, 17 per cent of all COVID-19 cases occurred in healthcare workers.^{50, 51} As of June 22, 2020, 13 deaths were reported among healthcare workers in Ontario.⁵² There were 1,887 cases among healthcare workers in Toronto, or 60.5 per 100,000 total population – the highest incidence rate in the province (note that the denominator does not reflect number of workers). These data are possibly affected by high rates of testing for healthcare workers and may be incomplete.

The attempt to prevent, and to a lesser extent treat, COVID-19 gives rise to a broad range of secondary effects. These effects are caused directly by the preventive measures, by the public's perceptions of risk, by the stress of isolation, by the suspension or reduction of services or by other means. Although they are usually adverse effects, they occasionally have a positive impact; and they may be temporary or long-lasting.

The widespread side effect of the lockdown and subsequent measures has been a loss of access to goods and services, and also of social opportunities. Changes in service delivery, the economic impact and issues of equity are discussed elsewhere in this report. For many people, the restrictions have been an irritant, to which there has been some adjustment, facilitated by online purchases and access to services, and the increased use of social media. This loss of utility has gradually improved as businesses and facilities reopen. The pandemic has also been a period of suffering, including for those already experiencing social isolation or mental health challenges, and likely compounded by a loss of access to treatment and support services.

The necessary protective measures' effects on the economy have been severe: between February and May 2020, 3 million Canadians lost their jobs and 2.5 million worked reduced hours,

although there has been some recovery since then. The effects of changing employment patterns have had a differential impact on some groups. An example are the differences among groups in the feasibility of working from home and the implications it has on income during the pandemic and recovery, as well as the ability to reduce exposure to COVID-19 by complying with physical distancing requirements. The feasibility of working from home in Canada is greater for people with higher incomes and higher educational attainment.^{53, 54}

Data are only now starting to become available, and there can be little doubt that changing employment patterns has had effects upon health. Those already in low-paid and/or tenuous employment, and the already-stretched owners of small businesses have been affected more than others. About four in 10 Canadian workers are in jobs that can be done remotely, but lower-paid workers are less likely to have that option available.^{55,}

⁵⁶ We have seen, or can expect to see, impacts upon both mental and physical health.

I would like the City to address the issue of seniors housing by taking the following actions: securing financial support from higher levels of government, and make the city better in the following ways by providing safe, affordable and well managed senior housing options for the aging population.

Comment from Consultation

Food insecurity can be expected to become more prevalent during the pandemic, particularly given impacts on financial stability. A survey conducted by Statistics Canada in May 2020 found that almost one in seven Canadians indicated that they lived in a household where there was food insecurity in the last 30 days,⁵⁷ and it was higher for those in households with children than those living with no children. When compared to a previous survey, the results showed higher food insecurity during COVID-19 than a comparison time period in 2017/2018 (14.6 per cent versus 10.5 per cent). Many food bank programs closed in Toronto during the pandemic and nutrition programs based in schools have not been available due to school closures.

National surveys have revealed the mental health impacts of COVID-19. A survey in Canada (crowdsourced, so it may not be truly representative) found that about half of participants reported their mental health was either "somewhat worse" or "much worse" since physical distancing began.⁵⁸ Youth were the most likely to report worsening mental health. There is additional evidence to suggest that physical distancing is associated with negative impacts on mental health including stress and anxiety and that these effects are exacerbated by a longer duration of quarantine, infection fears, frustration, financial loss and stigma.⁵⁹ The potential for loss of employment, and the need to make alternate arrangements for child care and to supervise home learning, may contribute to increased levels of stress and

anxiety, and those with fewer social supports can be expected to be particularly affected. It remains to be seen whether previous experience of the association of sudden loss of employment with increased rates of suicide will be borne out.

International data show an increase in reports of domestic violence (no data for Toronto currently available),^{60, 61, 62} but that finding is inconsistent as a result of some reduction of services or other causes of a decrease in reporting. Pre-existing problems might have been exacerbated by unemployment and financial stress, enforced proximity for long periods, lack of child care and loss of supports. There have also been suggestions that long hours online might increase the risk of sexual exploitation.

In order to conserve beds, staff and personal protective equipment (PPE) for those suffering from COVID-19, hospitals drastically reduced their other services. Emergencies and obstetrical care continued, but all non-essential and elective services were discontinued until gradual resumption was permitted at the end of May 2020, according to specific operational requirements provided by the Ministry of Health. The offices of doctors, dentists and other health professionals were also closed for many weeks. Decreased vaccination coverage has been reported, likely influenced by the difficulty in accessing health care providers and public health programs. The vaccination situation will require a considerable program of catch-up immunizations in the future.

There has been a perception that medical care would be unavailable, or should not be accessed, or that it might present a real risk of contracting COVID-19. As a result, fewer people sought care for acute medical conditions. For example, research in the United States found a decline in emergency department visits during COVID-19 for acute conditions including heart attack and stroke.⁶³ An analysis of data from cardiac centres in Ontario identified a nearly 30 per cent reduction in visits to emergency departments for serious heart attacks between March and April 2020 compared with the same time period in 2019.⁶⁴

Toronto Public Health was obliged to discontinue many services in order to redeploy staff to activities related to COVID-19. The list of discontinued services is long, and includes the Vulnerable Adults and Seniors Team, Investing in Families public health nurses, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, immunization clinics, sexual health clinics, most breastfeeding clinics, many environmental health programs and most dental programs. This situation constitutes an enormous loss in the future benefits normally flowing from these programs.



Current evidence suggests that children are less affected by COVID-19 directly than adults but are particularly at risk for the adverse effects of preventive measures. At an important time for growth, development and learning, the disruption of planned schooling and learning experiences has the potential for serious and perhaps lasting negative effects. Schools were closed as of the March Break. Online learning has not fully compensated for the cancellation of in-school learning, particularly in the earlier grades. Internet access is not available to all households; for example, approximately 94 per cent of Canadian households have internet access and of those that don't have it, the most commonly reported reason is cost.⁶⁵ Online learning for younger children also requires parental supervision. Providing it may be difficult for some families.

Licensed child care has been unavailable for several months and has reopened with reduced capacity. Summer day camps have opened late, with modified programs and reduced capacity, and overnight camps remained closed for the summer. This is a loss of valuable social and developmental experience, and children from disadvantaged circumstances will particularly miss out on the benefits it would have provided in a normal summer.

It is probable that there were changes in health-related behaviours during the initial lockdown phase of the pandemic, and that these may have persisted, at least in part. Data on these changes, however, are largely not available. Following advice to stay home is likely to have resulted in a widespread drop in levels of physical activity. Sixty-eight per cent of Canadians report more time spent online, 63 per cent more television watching and 22 per cent more

time playing video games. Sports facilities, pools and athletic facilities and gyms have only recently reopened – and that also has had an effect on physical activity levels. All types of mobility fell at first, and most have recovered almost to prior levels, but the use of public transit has recovered only slightly and is still at only about one-quarter of the pre-COVID-19 levels. Using public transit is associated with higher levels of physical activity through the necessity of walking between destinations and transit stations or stops. It is clear, however, that cycling has increased. The City has increased the provision of cycling lanes and there has been a surge in sales of bicycles.

Evidence is emerging on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on substance use. Studies on alcohol use have found that trends in changes to alcohol intake are unclear; in some jurisdictions there are findings of increased use and in others decreased use.^{66, 67} The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction found that 25 per cent of Canadians aged 35-54 reported increased alcohol consumption during the pandemic.⁶⁸

A review on the impacts of COVID-19 on opioid and substance use noted that there is limited research evidence, however, the following effects were identified: reduced access to harm-reduction and treatment services; disruption to the supply of illicit drugs in Canada; and potential for an increased vulnerability for more serious effects of COVID-19 in people who use substances due to pre-existing conditions and vulnerabilities.⁶⁹ In British Columbia, there were 117 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths in April 2020 and 170 in May – the highest ever in one month.⁷⁰





The response to COVID-19 has produced some positive side effects. The City's Active TO program includes Quiet Streets (which enable physical distancing and encourage physical activity) and major road closures on weekends (which have received an excellent response from recreational cyclists). As part of Active TO, the City will also complete 40 kilometres of additional cycling lanes in 2020. Curb TO is a program to convert some curb lanes on City streets from car use to pedestrian use to facilitate distancing. The introduction of priority bus lanes on some high-use routes was recently announced. Overall, taking these programs together with Café TO, which promotes restaurant patios and simplifies and accelerates their approval, the effect is to move away slightly from a car-dominated urban form.

The COVID-19 experience has affected the City's approach to homelessness and shelters. Shelters are a congregate setting, in that persons from multiple families are living together in one dwelling. Long-term care homes and facilities for refugees, for victims of violence and for people experiencing physical and/or mental health challenges, as well as prisons and half-way houses, are also congregate settings. These settings present problems of an increased risk of transmission of the virus because of the difficulty of physical distancing, as well as an increased risk of transmission through shared objects and surfaces. For shelters, however, the risk is higher still, because of occupants being in close contact at all times.

Shelters were severely affected by cases of COVID-19. In response (as of July 20, 2020), the City created more than 30 new or expanded facilities, including 18 hotels and additional temporary

sites (and in community centres, now returned to normal use) to accommodate people experiencing homelessness and allowing the shelters to provide more space for each resident. Other measures – screening, contact tracing, isolating symptomatic persons, sanitation, etc. were also put in place. The City also instituted a program of clearing encampments and providing those people experiencing homelessness with hotel accommodation. More than 600 people sleeping outdoors have been provided with interim accommodation. Altogether, 3,500 people have been moved to new temporary shelter places, hotel programs or interim or permanent housing. More than 1,300 have been moved into permanent housing through the Rapid Access to Housing Initiative, housing allowances and rent-geared-to income housing. This experience/achievement can form the basis for a continued program of providing for the homeless in the future.

Some changes resulting from efforts to contain COVID-19 have effects that are necessary in the short term but possibly harmful in the long-term. Businesses have switched from reusable containers and cutlery to disposables, and there has been an increase in single-occupancy car use as commuters avoid the use of public transit.

Overall impacts of the pandemic have included an acceleration of change, especially in the workplace, the economy (e.g. changes in the retail sector), in technology and in how services are provided, including those of all levels of government. A more complete and widespread understanding of inequalities, particularly concerning health and its determinants, may be one of the most important outcomes.

5.15 Perspective

Pandemics have occurred throughout history: examples include the Black Death (bubonic plague) in 1345-48, right up to the end of the nineteenth century. A hundred years ago, the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918-1920 killed at least 25 million people worldwide; more recently, in 2009, there was a H1N1 influenza pandemic.

From that perspective, COVID-19 is the most significant health event in a century. It has already infected millions worldwide and caused half a million reported deaths, as well as massive disruption of the economy, services, travel, the healthcare system and way of life. But there are perspectives that show different results. In British Columbia it is possible that there will be more deaths from opioid overdoses than COVID-19 in 2020. Deaths from circulatory diseases and cancer continue and will almost certainly each exceed deaths due to COVID-19 during 2020. Theoretically, although no good data are available, deaths from non-COVID causes might increase as a result of the impact of COVID-related measures upon healthcare services.

Taking a broader perspective on the COVID-19 pandemic, one can observe that it does not completely differ from other diseases in that both upstream and downstream approaches are possible. Upstream approaches – those seeking to prevent the occurrence of the disease at the beginning – can have a positive influence upon many diseases at once, are cost-effective and sustainable, and tend to have positive effects on equity.

Public Health has a widely acknowledged role – indeed, a leading role – in preparing for and managing outbreaks of infectious disease. The lesson from COVID-19, even more so than previous epidemics, is that health on its own constitutes only a part of the story.

COVID-19 has revealed great disparities in its impact across groups defined by socio-economic status, age, co-morbidities, ethno-racial groups, occupation, housing situation and many other characteristics. It is also known that these same characteristics are associated with many other aspects of health. It is clear that the observed disparities in the incidence of outcomes of COVID-19 are not immutable, neither are they specific to COVID-19, although this disease appears to be associated with these factors to an unusual degree.

There are two causes of the ill-health and death that result from COVID-19: one is the SARS-CoV-2 virus; the other is the underlying state of health and its risk factors and determinants, both for society as a whole and for those members of society who are disadvantaged.



Not only is it necessary to continue to develop an understanding of COVID-19 and the distribution of risk across society, it is also time to initiate actions that will both mitigate the risks and address the underlying determinants of this virus and many other diseases.

Public Health Infrastructure

Most people understand that public health has an important role in the prevention of infectious disease, but beyond that there is less understanding of its equally important other roles. Public Health has been defined as:

The science and art of promoting health, preventing disease, prolonging life and improving quality of life through the organized efforts of society. It combines sciences, skills and beliefs directed to the maintenance and improvement of health of all people through collective action. The programs, services and institutions involved tend to emphasize two things: the prevention of disease and the health needs of the populations as a whole.⁷¹

It is worth recalling that public health in Ontario had started a process of budget cuts and reorganization immediately before the pandemic. It is hardly likely that the current pandemic and response would prompt a reconsideration of public health's role in protecting the public against the pandemic and other infectious diseases. Yet it is vitally important to recognize the role that public health can and must play in maternal and child health, environmental health, the prevention of chronic diseases and injuries, and in reducing inequalities in the opportunity to enjoy good health. Reduced budgets and new organizational structures diminish the roles of healthy public policy, and of public health's role in policy, in favour of a "one-person-at-a-time" strategy.

The key to understanding public health lies in the relationship between the health of individuals and the health status of populations, especially for the chronic, non-communicable diseases that account for the majority of morbidity and mortality. One-patient-at-a-time interventions, whether curative or preventive, may produce good results in individuals but often have a limited effect upon the burden of the condition in the population. It is often impossible to reach those most in need; there are not enough resources to tackle the problem one person at a time, and the benefits are seldom sustainable over time. Some well-used interventions, such as education for individual behaviour change, have very low efficacy. The important health problems cannot be solved one person at a time.

It follows that public health is the part of the system that focuses on the health of populations and sub-populations. As Quebec's Public Health Act (s.5)⁷² says: *Public health systems must be directed at protecting, maintaining or enhancing the health status and well-being of the general population and shall not focus on individuals except insofar as such actions are taken for the benefit of the community as a whole or a group of individuals.* Public health started out by preventing infectious conditions of individuals from affecting the population. Today that role continues, but it is also necessary to address the full range of causes by working on the determinants of, and risk factors for, ill health. It involves influencing and collaborating with a wide range of organizations outside the healthcare system, responding not to demand but to need, and achieving results often only in the longer term.

These efforts, which may involve constraining the autonomy of individuals, must involve public consultation and public governance.

Given the focus on populations, the goals of public health can be thought of as:

- Maintenance and enhancement of the health status of the population
- Reduction of disparities in health status
- Preparation for, and response to, health emergencies and outbreaks of disease

Public health has long been a system involving both provincial and local activities. In Ontario, local roles include health status assessment, surveillance, establishing local priorities and strategies, local program management (including planning, adaptation to local circumstances and evaluation), program delivery, developing relationships within the community, collaborating with local NGOs and other groups, local policy and accountability to provincial and local funders and to the local communities.

Policy is a vital tool to influence the environment – facilitating healthy choices, influencing determinants and reducing exposures to hazards. It has never been used exclusively at the provincial level in the past, either in Ontario or elsewhere. Some policies are intrinsically local in nature: education and urban planning, for example, have provincial frameworks, together with local decision-making by school boards and municipalities, and other provincial policies must be implemented locally. Many innovations in public health policy have local origins. There is a pattern of one or a few progressive health units innovating, and then adoption elsewhere, and finally progression into provincial law. Tobacco control is an example – it has been driven by the local level for more than 40 years; food menu labelling and regulating minors' access to tanning beds are other examples.

Public health has extended its activities beyond infectious diseases for many years. Scurvy, lead poisoning, nasal and scrotal cancers, pellagra, rickets and more were all understood and acted on more than a hundred years ago, and effectively eliminated through public policy. Toronto, under its Medical Officer of Health from 1920 to 1929, Dr. Charles Hastings was a pioneer in mandating the pasteurization of milk.

To experienced public health professionals, the cuts to the funding for public health announced in 2019 were the continuation of a cycle of fluctuating funding identified by Dr. David Naylor in his report on a previous epidemic of a novel virus affecting Toronto —“Learning from SARS”: “Public health is taken for granted until disease outbreaks occur, whereon a brief flurry of lip service leads to minimal investments. ... This cycle must end.” National Advisory Committee on SARS and Public Health, October 2003

An example of the neglect referred to is the information system that Ontario health units were using at the start of the pandemic – iPHIS. That system was developed 17 years ago. Toronto found it difficult to use it for the volumes it was experiencing, so had no choice but to have the City's Technology Services team rapidly develop a new system during the early part of the pandemic.

There must be a reconsideration of proposed cuts in funding for local public health units. Changes are required in several aspects of Ontario's public health system, but these must be more than an exercise that is focussed on reducing costs. A stronger, more coherent system requires a provincial strategy, a clear set of roles and a joint planning system for provincial and local components. There must be a proper understanding of the nature and importance of population-level interventions. Governance should have the strongest possible connection to municipalities – in Toronto's case, that would mean a continuation of the present structure of Toronto Public Health as part of the City government, with a Board of Health, which has worked so well during the pandemic. Success will depend upon recognizing that a public health system that balances provincial and local roles is most effective and it is best achieved by working together.

There is no lack of evidence for public health's cost-effectiveness.⁷³ A review in the U.S. in 2014⁷⁴ showed that a 10 per cent increase in local public health spending was associated with a reduction in the death rate of between 1.1 per cent and 6.9 per cent. Another review,⁷⁵ showed a median cost-benefit ratio for public health programs of 8.3 (\$8.30 benefit for each dollar invested). The return on investment is even more favourable for the prevention of disease by means of policy actions (such as those limiting tobacco marketing and use, or the fluoridation of drinking water), or changes to the environment (such as building infrastructure for active transportation).

5.16 Future Course of the Pandemic

As restrictions are gradually lifted and the people of Toronto begin to renew their acquaintance with at least some of their customary pleasures, it is tempting to focus one's thoughts on the current relief from the earlier more widespread disease and death and to ignore the threat of a resurgence of transmission. SARS-CoV-2 will present a significant threat to our way of life and to the capacity of the healthcare and public health systems until herd immunity has been achieved. That will require probably at least 60 per cent of the population to be immune and can be achieved only through experiencing the natural course of the infection or by means of the development and manufacture of a reasonably effective and lasting vaccine and its distribution to vaccinate most of the population.

Many candidate vaccines are in development, but it will likely take at least another nine months until one or more can be tested, approved and manufactured at scale, followed by a massive program of distribution and administration (perhaps of two doses). Vaccines may have been shown to induce the production of antibodies, and some have been shown to be neutralizing (i.e. to inactivate the virus), but the vaccines may not be effective in all cases and they may be short-lived. On the other hand, there may be cellular-mediated immunity that may respond when infection initially occurs. Overall, one may be hopeful, but there may be disappointments along the way.

Although transmission in Toronto is currently at a low level, as is the case for most of Canada, there is some circulation of the virus, and importation from the United States or another province or country, although a low risk, is nevertheless possible. As has been the case with so many aspects of this pandemic, the future is uncertain. The possibilities may be described in three scenarios. There may be a continuation of case counts at about the same level, fluctuating only a little, for the rest of the pandemic – this is perhaps the least likely scenario. Second, there could be a series of outbreaks, most likely occurring in bars or restaurants, house or beach parties, or workplaces. Third, there could be a second wave, with case counts approaching or even exceeding those seen in the initial outbreak, and with the accompanying risks of overloading the healthcare system. Many novel viruses have returned in a second wave within about six months so it is a possibility with COVID-19, although it is not known whether the continuation of preventive measures might affect the risk. There could also be some combination of those patterns.

5.17 Public Health Action for the Balance of the Pandemic

The strategy for the rest of the pandemic should resemble the strategy to date: move cautiously and gradually, and continue to be informed by the epidemiology. It will also be necessary to maintain good communications, both with healthcare stakeholders and the general public. Retaining the confidence of the public as the virus continues to be transmitted and as the necessary protective measures persist will be challenging. From now onward, however, we will have the benefit of experience to call upon for the difficult decisions, as well as an increasing body of evidence. Systems to gain access to and to review the evidence – from systematic reviews to jurisdictional scans to commissioned original research – should be put in place.

What we need to know

It is a commonplace to acknowledge there is much more to learn about COVID-19. It is only with the experience thus far that we can understand the complexity of managing the pandemic and the measures necessary to mitigate its effects. There is obvious potential to mitigate a second wave more effectively than the first, using experience gained, in Toronto and elsewhere, and the evolving knowledge base. At present, there are still critical gaps in our understanding; there is often some evidence, but it may be incomplete or inconsistent, including:

- The distribution of emitted virus between droplet and aerosol particles under a variety of circumstances – breathing, speaking, shouting, singing, playing a wind instrument and exercising vigorously
- The risk of transmission by aerosols, the viral load of aerosol particles, and their movements, outdoors and in rooms of various sizes
- The effects of buildings' HVAC air-circulation systems upon transmission and recommendations for ventilation and the design and use of HVAC
- The transmission of SARS-CoV-2 among children (by age-group) and between children and adults
- Critical factors in the transmission of the disease in high-risk workplaces and the effectiveness of the available preventive measures.
- Critical factors in transmission, and the effectiveness of preventive measures in long-term care and other congregate settings
- Super-spreader events and the distribution of infectivity amongst cases of COVID-19 (k factor)
- The proportion of true asymptomatic infections in the population and their infectivity
- The effectiveness and duration of protection of vaccines
- The factors (e.g. contact time, proximity, mask use, outdoors/indoors) and their values that best predict infection, for case and contact management
- Much more rich detail about high-risk populations and circumstances associated with risk (e.g. housing, employment, mobility).

Those uncertainties constitute just a fraction of the many needs for data and evidence concerning COVID-19 and its prevention.

Until there is a solution to the pandemic, it will be necessary to continue the basic measures (mainly distancing, avoiding crowded indoor spaces and wearing masks indoors) and other restrictions for higher risk settings. A continuation of a program of communications will also be necessary to remind people about and reinforce preventive actions.

Further actions will be necessary if there is any form of resurgence, and the extent of those actions will depend upon the source (outbreak vs. generalized in the community) and the severity. Toronto Public Health is developing plans to address outbreaks and sudden increases in spread in the community. A strong system of surveillance, possibly using new sources of data, will be required, and the case and contact management system should be maintained with a level of staffing sufficient to handle several moderate outbreaks at the same time. Plans should be in place to respond to outbreaks in high-risk settings, including long-term care and retirement homes, shelters, childcare centres, schools, post-secondary institutions and high-risk workplaces.

Beyond the management of outbreaks, including contact tracing and management, infection prevention and control practices in the affected places (and similar ones) should be strengthened. If there is increased community transmission, there should be enhanced communications and enforcement to reinforce preventive behaviours such as wearing masks, distancing, hand hygiene and gathering restrictions. There may be other specific measures available in future, as informed by epidemiology, research and experience. Some local measures may need to be mandated, either through a bylaw or by an order of the Medical Officer of Health.

In the event of a full-blown second wave, it would be necessary, under provincial direction, to reinstate certain closures of businesses and activities – in effect rolling back the recovery plan to earlier stages, although there may be a variation of the measures on the basis of experience in Ontario and in other jurisdictions and considering emerging science. It would also be necessary to augment the staffing of the case and contact management teams. The healthcare system and long-term care homes will also be responding to the demands placed upon them by resurgence.

Toronto should work with the Ministry of Health to develop pre-set criteria for action to combat any resurgence of disease. The data elements should include the positivity rate for PCR testing, a sharp increase in the number of untraceable cases, and possibly some syndromic surveillance data (such as absenteeism in selected sites) to facilitate early recognition and response.

Plans should be drawn up for a rapid expansion of the case and contact management teams, taking into account the experience in the first phase, including accessing redeployed TPH staff, other City staff, volunteers, newly hired staff, and staff from other organizations (depending on feasibility). It should also confer with the Ministry of Health regarding the possibility of using the Case and Contact Information System to reallocate the responsibility of follow-up from health units with many cases to those with few cases (i.e. “load-sharing”).

As shown in recent experience in the U.S., it is difficult to trace and manage the contacts of every case once the numbers increase, for example beyond 100 each day for Toronto. The World Health Organization advises performing contact tracing when cases are sporadic and widespread community transmission is not occurring. It recommends focusing on household contacts, healthcare workers, high-risk closed settings, vulnerable contacts and case clusters.

Contact tracing is less effective when contacts are difficult to trace, the incidence of infection is high, or when a large proportion of transmissible infections are asymptomatic. If many cases are asymptomatic and many contacts are untraceable, it may not be possible to reach a threshold for which a contact tracing program is able to keep pace with the spread of an outbreak and lower the transmission rate. Because COVID-19 is sometimes transmitted via the respiratory route, possibly during “super-spreader events”, it will not be possible to accurately identify all exposed contacts. TPH should consider drawing up criteria for setting aside universal case and contact management in favour of selective follow-up.

There are issues that should continue to be discussed with the Ministry of Health. One is PCR testing. The emphasis so far has been on maximizing the number of tests performed: to some extent this can be understood as a reaction to a lack of access to testing in the early days of the pandemic, when some symptomatic people were refused testing. Now, testing is available for all those with symptoms, and there have been invitations for asymptomatic persons to undergo testing.



The news media have concentrated their attention on the absolute numbers of tests performed. Although testing of asymptomatic persons is justified in certain high-risk circumstances, the value in widespread testing of low-risk, low-prevalence populations is questionable. Even when there may have been contact, if testing is performed too soon it is highly likely to return a false negative result. Even with tests with a high level of specificity (ability to correctly identify a negative), there is a surprisingly high occurrence of false positives when testing a population with a low prevalence of disease. Available testing capacity is more effectively directed toward areas and groups known to be at a higher risk of infection. Doing so may necessitate relocation of testing centres and/or using mobile or pop-up testing facilities with extended hours to enhance access. There may be a reluctance by some people to undergo testing, perhaps as a result of misunderstanding or myths, language barriers or other reasons. Health Commons Laboratory has conducted pilot programs working with communities at higher risk of infection at the grassroots level to promote and facilitate the uptake of testing, with promising results. The ministry should look again at its testing strategy to redirect efforts toward those in most need of a test.

TPH should continue to work with the Ministry of Health to reduce the turnaround time for tests and to meet the targets.

Toronto Public Health must continue to manage COVID-related issues and be prepared to respond rapidly to outbreaks while providing some other essential public health services. However, just as hospitals have reinstalled many non-COVID services, there are many services formerly provided by TPH but suspended since the start of the pandemic for which there is still a need. As restaurants reopen, they must be inspected; the reopening of schools in September will require some staff to be assigned back to regular duties. Strenuous efforts will be necessary to restore the previous levels of immunization and to meet the requirements of the Immunization of School Pupils Act.

Other programs and services are directed toward infectious disease control, including STI clinics, while others have longer-term outcomes but are nevertheless important. Additional challenges will include being prepared for a possible increase in COVID-19 activity arising from the return of students to schools and to post-secondary institutions in September, to be followed shortly thereafter by the season of respiratory viruses, including influenza. Finally, preparations will be necessary at some point for the distribution and administration of a COVID-19 vaccine. This is a challenging program and it will require strong financial and organizational support.

Clean, safe, free programming including parks, library programs, EarlyON programs and access to community centres is essential to young families, especially when everything else is closed and there is nothing else that we can do to entertain our families.

Comment from Consultation



5.18 The Longer Term—Working Upstream

The City is our environment. This is where we live: where we sleep, eat, work, raise families, grow, learn, play and pray. Within the concept of the environment there are many component environments – economic, social, commercial, work, physical, built, natural, cultural and others. Together they will shape the opportunities available to each person and shape their day-to-day choices. Either directly, as with air quality, or, more often indirectly, as with the options for travelling from place to place, they will affect everyone's health. Historically, public health started in cities. Cities presented more opportunity, but also more hazards. The infrastructure to provide pure water and the safe disposal of sewage was the start of the sanitary movement, which provided the greatest leap forward in life expectancy in history.

What are the corresponding opportunities today? They include providing housing that is large enough for each family, in good condition and is affordable; options for those who are currently homeless; a balance of sizes of apartments; more choice in rental apartments. More is provided elsewhere in this report, together with some thoughts on how this undertaking may be accomplished and where funds might be sought; and it is informed by those with expertise and those with lived experience.

The built environment is increasingly recognized as an important influence on health.⁷⁶ There can be little doubt that much physical activity has been engineered out of our modern lives, and that is in part an explanation for ever-increasing rates of obesity and diabetes. Cities can be designed in such a way as to reduce travel by car and to promote active forms of transportation such as walking and cycling. Children once again need the opportunity to walk or cycle to school as their parents did. Utilitarian active transport requires modest investment in building a connected network of separated bike lanes and bike paths, particularly directed along commuter routes. Toronto has made progress, including with the lanes opened during the pandemic, but this city lags behind Vancouver and Montreal. Cycling infrastructure has been demonstrated to be an investment in health with a return of between 1.2 and 3.8 to one.⁷⁷

Public transit is also an investment in health. A review performed for GTHA medical officers of health found that the Metrolinx Big Move would provide a positive return on investment from the health benefits alone.⁷⁸

One vision of Toronto is of a city of complete neighbourhoods, each close to amenities, including schools and attractive green space, and with good connections provided by public transit. Complete streets would meet the need for users of all ages and abilities, with deep sidewalks, places to sit and safe crossings. Each mode of transport – walking, cycling, public transit, wheelchairs and taxis would use the space, not just private cars and trucks. Some streets would be "pedestrianized", and there would be gathering places, cultural space, good architecture, quality paving and many trees. The urban form would be more supportive of social connectedness and good mental health. There would be an overall improvement of the public realm. A reduction in car traffic would help to reduce emissions and noise. Employment would be located nearby. Children should be able to use active transport to school and to play on some streets safely. Of course, not all elements would be possible in all places. Although many would associate this type of urban form with central Toronto, most elements can be used anywhere, and the areas more affected by COVID-19 should also be considered.

This vision requires density of dwellings and employment, but that does not necessarily mean a continuation of the current extent of construction of highrise buildings. Most cities in Europe achieve high densities with very little highrise building, but rather with consistent "gentle density" of low- and mid-rise multi-family buildings.

Neighbourhoods with higher walkability have been shown, in Toronto, to be associated with reduced occurrence of low levels of physical activity, obesity and diabetes – which are now widespread and worsening problems.

Is this of relevance to COVID-19? Yes, in that obesity and diabetes both place people at higher risk for poor outcomes, and poor air quality has been associated with a greater risk of acquiring COVID-19.⁷⁹ But the real benefit comes from creating a city that supports health and reduces the inequalities that underlie at least part of the unequal experience of COVID-19.



6 | Office of Recovery and Rebuild

6.1 Introduction to Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild

In consultation with the Mayor's Office, Toronto Public Health and the Senior Leadership Team, the City Manager established Toronto's Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR) on April 24, 2020 with a mandate to:

- Coordinate a city-wide approach for recovering and rebuilding from COVID-19 informed by public health advice and best practices,
- Undertake a broad engagement of stakeholders, residents, communities, businesses, Indigenous communities and City Council members on what is needed to recover and rebuild,
- Leverage the subject matter, service and operational expertise that resides in City divisions, agencies and partners, and
- Prepare recommendations for the City Manager, informed by public health evidence and best practices, to support the recovery and rebuild for Toronto.

The following themes were initially developed as a way of coordinating the work of the Office:

- **Business & Culture** focused on economic support and recovery for Toronto's businesses and cultural industries.
- **Resilience & Climate Change** focused on climate change and resilience. This theme continues to advance initiatives associated with the City's Climate Emergency Declaration, the TransformTO Climate Action Strategy and the Resilience Strategy.
- **Community & Strategic Alliances** focused on City-community partnerships and forging alliances with NGOs, institutions, Indigenous communities, faith groups and labour, and engaging vulnerable communities, City and sector partners.
- **Government & Financial Renewal** focused on examining expenditures, revenue strategies, the role of municipal government and its relationships to other governments and identifying and developing innovative approaches that support recovery and position the City for long-term fiscal sustainability and effective governance.

- **Inspire Toronto** focused on inspiring the City, strengthening civic pride and engagement and driving economic and cultural development through creativity with the intent to inspire hope.
- **Divisional and Agency Preparedness** focused on City divisions, services and program preparedness, as well as advice, support and engagement with City agencies, to ensure business continuity and response, and strategies for restarting or restoring services. This work was informed by a framework adopted by the City's senior leadership and detailed in Section 7.

In order to capture perspectives on issues that crossed over or intersected with other themes, City subject matter experts, including those on resilience, Indigenous affairs, equity, agency and intergovernmental relations and engagement, worked with the theme leads.

6.2 Engagement Strategy

The Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild's (TORR) engagement strategy was designed to support accessible and informed engagement with the public and a diversity of stakeholders, communities and organizations to support decision making by the office, the development of this report and recommendations to the City Manager. Given the dynamic nature of the pandemic and ongoing work the City will undertake to support residents, communities and business to recover and rebuild, this input will continue to serve as a resource for the City and its agencies and partners. It will be posted to toronto.ca/open for public/community use as well.

The work of TORR was guided by the advice and direction of public health officials. Since the health and safety of residents remains the City's top priority, TORR's consultation relied primarily on online collection of input and virtual meetings to maintain physical distancing and limit the handling of paper forms. Roundtable discussions were held by video conferences, several online surveys were launched and the City's 311 call centre accepted input in multiple languages and by phone.

TORR staff sought input through online surveys, invited participation through stakeholder, sector and community roundtables and discussions, undertook research, and engaged divisional and agency staff. TORR also received and analyzed input from community-led discussions, email and mailed submissions and Council advisory bodies. The public survey launched May 29, 2020 to gather feedback on residents' top challenges, priorities and ideas closed on July 15, 2020 and was completed by almost 12,000 respondents.

More detailed information about engagement activities and results are provided in the **Engagement Summary**.

Communications and Promotion of Engagement

The engagement was supported and promoted through information, communications and outreach including the City's website, a RecoveryRebuild website, the City's Get Involved consultation portal, social media, news releases, communications through City divisions and City councillors, and online advertisements.

Staff also worked with existing City networks including partners, institutions such as universities and colleges, think tanks, industry groups and community contacts to promote the City's and its partners' surveys and to encourage residents and organizations to host their own virtual meetings. The City engaged Social Planning Toronto to conduct a separate survey and discussions specifically to enhance engagement with local organizations representing Indigenous, Black and equity-seeking communities.

Coordinated engagement

Even before the establishment of TORR, the City received input from residents, community organizations and businesses through many different avenues, including through City councillors and 311. For example, in March, the Mayor established an Economic Support and Recovery Task Force and roundtables on Business and Community Contributions; Children and Youth; Cultural and Arts Communities; Recovery and Restart; Small Business BIAs; Social Services and Housing; Upper Education and Industry (including Green Industries and Academics Roundtables); and Workers and Labour. This feedback helped the City respond to the crisis, provided valuable insights to TORR and, along with the consultations by TORR, will help shape future actions to recover and rebuild. These actions will include ongoing engagement with community partners and groups, Indigenous communities, residents and businesses to seek input throughout the different phases of recovery and rebuild.

TORR also built on input from City engagements and consultations conducted prior to, and during, the pandemic. For example, the Climate Change and Resilience section of this report looked to input from the City's recent Resilience Strategy and TransformTO consultations. The Government and Financial Renewal section looked to input from the City's governance review and Long-Term Financial Plan consultations as well.



Engagement by Theme

TORR engagement was both broad and broken out by theme to engage stakeholders and gather feedback on a wide range of issues and on specific topics. City Council requested that TORR include a diversity of voices including organized labour, women, Black communities, Indigenous communities and racialized communities, people with lived experience of poverty, people living with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+ and other socially marginalized groups in the City's recovery and rebuild strategies. The City engaged and partnered with Social Planning Toronto, which conducted outreach and consultations through a survey and discussions specifically with local organizations representing Indigenous, Black and equity-seeking communities. Additionally, presentations were provided and feedback gathered from the Toronto Francophone Affairs Advisory Committee, the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee, Toronto Music Advisory Committee, Film, Televisions and Digital Media Advisory Board, and the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee.

1. **Equity, Vulnerable Communities and Partnerships**

Engagement under this theme included working through 77 existing tables involving more than 1,000 participants. These tables, established to support a variety of initiatives to provide supports to vulnerable and equity-seeking communities and groups, include:

- *TO Supports Work Group Tables* – addressing specific issues such as housing and homelessness, income support, family support, food access, mental health, safety and well-being, and social connection.
- *Community-based Sector and Resident/Neighbourhood Response Tables* – City/Community Response Tables and outreach through the Community Coordination Plan's 13 tables and 400 community organizations.
- *City-led and City Supported Groups* – a range of tables and networks that include residents and other stakeholders that provide advice and inform a range of City policies and initiatives to address issues experienced by vulnerable groups and communities, including For Public Benefit Steering Committee, Toronto Seniors Strategy Accountability Table, Poverty Reduction Strategy Lived Experience Advisory Group, Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Residents Advisory Committee and Planning Table, Local Champions Network, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Partnership and Accountability Circle, Toronto

Youth Cabinet, Newcomers Leadership Table, Community Safety Table and TCHC Tenant Representatives.

- The City's Indigenous Affairs Office led and advised on opportunities to seek Indigenous perspectives and recommendations.
- Facilitation by the City's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit and Partnership Accountability Circle and Black Resilience Cluster, to reach out to almost 40 external organizations that specifically serve, support or are part of Black communities, and partnership with Social Planning Toronto to engage Black individuals and residents.
- Outreach to more than 69 external organizations that specifically serve or support people with disabilities and partnering with Community Living Toronto to engage individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Engaging more than 66 external organizations that specifically serve, support or are part of LGBTQ2S+ communities to seek their input, perspectives and recommendations.

2. **Business**

Engagement within this theme was focused on 11 sector-based tables, through the support of The Toronto Region Board of Trade, including Labour and Indigenous representatives, supported by a steering committee composed of senior leaders from across business and culture. The sector-based tables include:

- *Film, Music and Live Events* – Live venue owner/operators, industry association leaders, production company leaders, entertainment company leaders
- *Technology / Innovation* – Leaders in innovation/start-up hubs, financing companies, business incubators and venture capital firms
- *Large Retail, Grocers and E-commerce* – Leaders in large industry and community associations, shopping centres, large retailers, big box retailers, and franchise chains
- *Main Street Business* – Business Improvement Area (BIA) leaders, digital retailers, innovation hub leaders
- *Manufacturing* – Small, medium and large-scale manufacturing leaders (chemicals, tech, paper products, metal stamping, pharmaceuticals)
- *Travel and Tourism* – Leaders in the tourism industry, major events, hotel leaders and hospitality associations
- *Financial* – Financial industry leaders

- *Health Services* - Health professionals, innovation hub leaders, pharmaceutical association leaders, long-term care association leaders
- *Energy* - Public power generation and distribution leaders
- *Infrastructure* - Leaders in engineering companies, large transportation companies (airline, rail, airport authority), large telecom companies and large construction companies.

3. Culture

Building on consultations done by the Mayor's Task Force on Arts and Culture, TORR engaged 12 tables representing youth (people under 30), creators of interactive digital media, heritage (museums, galleries and heritage sites), publishing and literary industry, LGBTQ2S+, Black cultural workers, Indigenous cultural workers, cultural workers living with disabilities, Francophone cultural workers and, film industry, music industry, and people of colour.

4. Resilience and Climate Change

Engagement focused on hearing the perspectives of community organizations and experts across all sectors including buildings, energy, transportation and finance. Over 130 representatives from approximately 76 groups participated in meetings on climate change and climate resilience, and related TORR themes.

Conversations with existing tables, organizations and networks included the Clean Air Partnership/Clean Air Council (representing 30 GTHA municipalities), the Green Sector Development table of industry leaders from the green/clean tech sector (led by Economic

Development and Culture Division), as well as consultation with the Toronto Climate Action Network (TCAN) and ClimateFast. The climate and resilience work of TORR is also informed by previous stakeholder and public consultation in 2019 on TransformTO, the City's climate action strategy and consultation and engagement during the development of Toronto's Resilience Strategy in 2018 and 2019.

5. Governance and Financial Renewal

Stakeholders from the development, finance, technology and community sectors met with staff to discuss impacts and trends in digital, development, real estate and property taxes. Stakeholders included the City of Toronto Digital Infrastructure Plan Community Advisory Group (CAG), the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB), the Toronto Industry Network and property management firms and real estate investment trusts. Input was also drawn from business tables and the Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force.

Data and Reporting Strategy

City staff collected and analyzed a significant amount of data from these engagements to inform the recommendations in this report. This report presents preliminary findings, and the data will be posted to the City of Toronto's Open Data website to support ongoing analysis and consideration of priorities and opportunities to support ongoing pandemic response, recovery and rebuild strategies.



Engagement Methods

Virtual Discussions	Online Surveys	Virtual Roundtables	Stakeholder Meetings
Discussion Guide	311 (phone)	Council Advisory Bodies	Email

Public Survey

May 29–July 15, 2020



13,796
respondents



46% Homeowner
46% Renter
8% Neither

Employed full-time:

59%

26%

PRE-COVID-19

AT TIME OF SURVEY

Employed full-time remotely:

5%

26%

PRE-COVID-19

AT TIME OF SURVEY

Unemployed or looking for work:

3%

13%

PRE-COVID-19

AT TIME OF SURVEY

City Partner Organization Survey

Completed submissions from

243 community agencies:

- Health and mental health
- Children
- Youth
- Seniors
- Services and supports for racialized residents
- Employment and training
- People with disabilities and people experiencing homelessness
- Women's programs and services

Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force and Councillor Roundtables

Mayor Tory hosted

20 virtual meetings
with **200+ stakeholders**



8 Councillor-led roundtables, multiple sessions, multiple stakeholders



Engagement Conducted for City by Social Planning Toronto

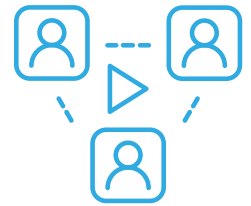
965 Survey respondents



41 discussions with
380+ participants



Theme Discussions



- Business
- Culture
- Inspire Toronto
- Climate Change and Resilience
- Equity, Vulnerable Communities and Partnerships
- Governance and Financial Renewal
- City Divisions and Agency Preparedness

240+ theme-based **roundtables** and **meetings** with stakeholders, individuals, and organizations including:



Business leaders



Small businesses



Arts and entertainment organizations



Artists



Women's organizations



LGBTQ2S+ organizations



Racial equity organizations



Environmental groups



Persons with disabilities organizations



Youth



Housing and homelessness organizations



Multiservice community agencies



Seniors organizations



Indigenous organizations



Food security organizations



Post secondary institutions



Newcomer organizations



Organized labour

Input from 5 Council Advisory Bodies:



Film, Television
and Digital Media
Advisory Board



Aboriginal
Affairs Advisory
Committee



Toronto
Accessibility
Advisory
Committee



Toronto
Francophone
Affairs Advisory
Committee



Toronto Music
Advisory
Committee

57 submissions on Recovery and Rebuild:



Email



Phone



Mail

Outreach and Promotion

- Websites: www.toronto.ca/RecoveryRebuild and City's public engagement portal www.toronto.ca/consultations
- Through City's community networks and partners and City Councillors
- City social media channels, online advertisement, media releases



6.3 Coordinated Research

A coordinated research strategy supported the City's ability to respond effectively to COVID-19 and will be important to the City's ongoing recovery and rebuild efforts. Early in the pandemic, a team was established in TORR to coordinate resources, initiate and coordinate research requests and rapid jurisdictional reviews across divisions, agencies and other City teams.



The City leveraged its existing research capacity and significantly improved coordination across the organization by identifying where duplication existed (e.g. multiple jurisdictional reviews) and identifying the best match of skills and knowledge to identify research gaps and new requests. Staff integrated research resources, such as data, dashboards, jurisdictional and evidence reviews, and established regular communications on findings and requests, and linked researchers across divisions. Research and analysis – such as on public health trends, risk factors and the impact on vulnerable populations during the pandemic – supported decision-making by identifying how to best match resources to those most in need. City staff applied best practices and lessons from other jurisdictions, academics and experts in the development of recommendations for City reports including from the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild.

The City's COVID-19 response and recovery work highlighted the deep and sophisticated research capacity that existed pre-COVID-19 to inform service delivery, policy, regulation and preparations for emergency interventions that have been put into use during the phases of the pandemic so far. Research was undertaken on issues such as community supports, child care, seniors, technology, finance, government renewal, economic development and culture, Indigenous peoples, transit and transportation, emergency management, public health and mitigating the impacts on vulnerable communities. Research also focused on preparing for any potential resurgence of COVID-19.

City staff have established a partnership to conduct recovery-focused research with Toronto's post-secondary institutions: Centennial College, George Brown College, Humber College, OCAD University, Ryerson University, Seneca College, University of Toronto and York University. Research has been initiated related to public health, scenario planning and forecasting, vulnerable populations, communities and neighbourhoods, and climate change and green recovery. Examples of research projects include the association between socio-demographic characteristics and COVID-19 incidence, hospitalization and death; plausible futures for economic and labour market trends; regional supply chain viability for PPE; analyzing who in Toronto has limited digital access; and air quality impacts related to COVID-19.

All post-secondary institutions have been involved in this research partnership. Multiple institutions are partnering together on some projects, while on others a single institution is engaged with the City. Participation varies based on the institutions' expertise and capacity, as well as alignment with the City's research objectives. Research outputs are expected before December 2020 for some projects, while other projects are longer term. This is the beginning of a long-term partnership with Toronto's post-secondary institutions to support the City's research needs.

Coordinated research and analysis will be critical to informing strategic recovery and rebuild policies and actions, and the City will benefit from continuing to improve its current approach to research and analysis across service and policy areas. A whole-of-government research, analysis and reporting team would support evidence-informed decision-making and maximize the research expertise within City divisions, agencies and corporations. Divisions are exploring the benefits of a centralized resource to leverage data and insights and apply them to recovery planning.

6.4 Research: Social Determinants of Health

The social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems.⁸⁰ The social determinants of health, such as gender, education, income, race/ethnicity, employment and working conditions, Indigeneity, food insecurity, social exclusion, and housing have a significant impact on our health.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been increasing evidence that the social determinants of health are associated with the risk of COVID-19 infection. For example preliminary evidence in Toronto shows the rate of COVID-19 cases is higher in areas with a higher percentage of people with lower-income, lower education levels, unemployed people, newcomers, and people from racialized groups compared to areas with the lowest per cent of each. Emerging evidence from other jurisdictions also demonstrates an unequal social and economic burden of COVID-19.⁸¹

The British Columbia Provincial Health Officer stated that “inequalities in the distribution of the social determinants of health are undermining Canadian society as a whole. However, they can be addressed through investments in affordable housing, early childhood development, equal access to higher education, improved literacy, and work place initiatives including onsite childcare and good maternity and paternity benefits, that promote more equality of opportunity and less societal disadvantage”.⁸²

Addressing the social determinants of health is one of the domains of the policy framework for public health programs and services in Ontario.⁸³ By addressing the social determinants of health and aligning public health and healthcare goals, there is greater potential for population health gains and healthcare related savings, particularly from high-cost use from within and outside the healthcare system.⁸⁴

Economic growth is affected by public goods (such as infrastructure), finance, demographic parameters, income distribution, and social norms, among other factors, all of which also contribute to social cohesion (a society that works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility). This is important background for developing an economic case for financing the social determinants of health.⁸⁵ Persistent inequities of health outcomes are a costly economic deadweight in terms of lost productivity, foregone tax revenue, reduced consumer spending and higher expenditures on income assistance, social services, health care and security. Inequities impose economic as well as social and individual costs.⁸⁶ Reducing health inequities has the potential to reduce economic inequities by increasing labour market participation and associated economic growth.

The health sector is the largest expense item in the Ontario Budget (\$63.5 billion in 2019, about 41% of total program spending). Analysis in 2019 from Ontario's Financial Accountability Office shows that balancing the provincial budget without raising new revenue would require spending \$8.6 billion less on health care by 2022-23.⁸⁷ Health care spending is likely to be even higher than previously projected due to COVID-19. Research also shows that the majority of health care expenditures are spent on conditions that are largely preventable. However, to date, only a small proportion of investment is made by federal and provincial governments in the social determinants of health to control 'downstream' health care costs.^{88, 89, 90} In Toronto, for example, housing unaffordability, poor quality housing, and housing instability, are associated with a range of poor mental and physical health outcomes and can result in significant costs to the health care system.⁹¹ Helping people stay housed has also been shown to significantly reduce costs in other sectors, including healthcare, law enforcement, mental health, and emergency services.^{92, 93} The following section details key findings from research undertaken for this report.



GENDER



EDUCATION



INCOME



RACE/ETHNICITY



EMPLOYMENT



INDIGENEITY



FOOD INSECURITY



SOCIAL EXCLUSION



HOUSING

Value of upstream investments in the social determinants of health

Through a systematic review of the literature, Masters et al. (2017) concluded that most public health interventions are substantially cost saving.⁹⁴ Public health interventions at a local level averaged a Return-of-Investment (ROI) of 4, meaning that every dollar invested yields a return of \$4 plus the original investment back.

The National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health reviewed public health evidence in Canada and highlighted the following key messages:⁹⁵

- There is irrefutable evidence that people living in disadvantaged circumstances are, on average, less healthy. Recent evidence suggests that growing poverty, exclusion and substandard housing are reflected in increasing mortality and morbidity rates, as well as increased health care costs.
- The evidence suggests that the health care sector can achieve better health outcomes for less money by spending more of its dollars on work that builds healthier communities, social supports and environments -- these are upstream and equity investments.

Reducing social and economic inequities saves health care costs

Research on the economics of public health intervention demonstrates that inequality contributes significantly to health

care costs, and that reducing social and economic inequities would save health care dollars. Evidence suggests that growing poverty, exclusion and substandard housing are reflected in higher mortality and morbidity rates, and increased health care costs. For example:

- The Public Health Agency of Canada estimated that 50% of the \$200 billion spent on health care annually is associated with the 20% of Canadians with the lowest income.⁹⁶
- The Ontario Association of Food Banks estimated that poverty-induced health care costs an estimated \$2.9 billion a year in Ontario, and \$7.6 billion per year in Canada.⁹⁷
- Fitzpatrick et al. found that those who experience food insecurity and substandard housing are associated with the greatest healthcare costs.⁹⁸
- The report from the “housing first” pilot project found that providing stable housing to people experiencing homelessness with high levels of chronic mental and physical illness impacted health service use, including shifts away from emergency room services and outpatient visits.⁹⁹
- A large number of international studies have found that members of racialized groups experience poorer health outcomes compared to members of non-racialized groups and that experiencing racial discrimination contributes to poor health outcomes.¹⁰⁰

Analysis by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) has shown an inverse relationship between socio-economic status and hospitalizations, where lower socio-economic status is associated with higher hospitalization rates.¹⁰¹



The social determinants of health are a public good that needs cross-government investment

Investment in the social determinants of health is beyond the public health and health care sectors alone. Public health units play a critical role in addressing the social determinants of health, in addition though many policy levers that positively impact health outcomes lie within the jurisdiction of other disciplines. Policy change is required in transportation, housing, and education, amongst others. This requires investment at all levels of government.

Researchers suggest that the funding for interventions related to the social determinants of health has long been inadequate, and some attribute this phenomenon to the fact that spending on the social determinants of health is often equated with the notion of “public goods”.¹⁰²

Investments in public goods deliver benefits across people and sectors simultaneously, and benefits are not limited to those who pay directly for them. The theory of and experience with public goods suggest that they can be undersupplied in a free market, even in cases where the market is dominated by non-profit health care providers and governments at every level. This undersupply is called the “free-rider problem,” experienced by investors who cannot easily prevent nonpayers from benefiting and thereby limiting their return on investment. This phenomenon is related to the “wrong pocket problem,” in which “investments from one part of the government are not reimbursed by the benefits that accrue to another part of government, discouraging cross-agency investment”.¹⁰³ In other words, compared to other levels of governments, municipalities often spend the most on the social determinants of health, however, as these efforts result in savings in the health care system (which is within the jurisdiction of provincial and federal governments), municipalities do not receive the primary benefit.

Municipal Role in Health

While the social determinants of health can be linked to population health, there is less analysis on the connection between different governments' investments in the social determinants of health and associated economic benefits generated across governments. For example, investments made to increase options for safe, affordable housing can positively impact population health, however, there is limited research that pinpoints how the resulting economic benefits -- such as program savings and tax increases -- accrue across municipal, provincial, and federal governments.

Municipal governments in Ontario are deeply invested in the public health and health care systems.¹⁰⁴ Municipal involvement includes direct, legislated funding and service delivery, as well as indirect and non-legislated efforts to address local gaps in health services. It includes municipal services that contribute to health outcomes, such as:

- Co-funding and delivering provincial health programs like public health, long-term care, and paramedic services.
- Investing in accessible communities to serve persons with disabilities.
- Delivering social services, housing and recreation programs that promote healthy living, health equity, and address socio-economic factors that influence health outcomes.
- Representing local health interests to health institutions and the provincial government.

According to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, municipal governments contributed \$2.1 billion for health costs in 2017, an increase of 38% over eight years. This does not include support services, like social services, housing, and recreation. Despite the evolving municipal role in health, there has been little corresponding change to municipal input into health policy, planning, and funding decisions. In addition, there is little protection against rising costs. Municipal governments often question whether it is appropriate for them to pay for health services from the property tax base, especially since they have little say on how these dollars are spent. Already stretched, the property tax base barely covers mandated responsibilities within the current fiscal environment, including municipally required public health programs, let alone the provincial responsibility for health services.



The social determinants of health and health inequities in Toronto

Income and health inequities

Torontonians do not all have equal opportunities to be healthy. Some people are more vulnerable to poor health because of their education, housing, work, income and experiences of racism, sexism and other kinds of discrimination.¹⁰⁵ Research reported by Toronto Public Health shows that low income groups in Toronto often have worse health, and health inequities in Toronto have not improved over time. For example, when compared to the health status of the highest income group:

- Men in the lowest income group are 50% more likely to die before age 75. The relationship between income and premature mortality has not changed over time and inequities have persisted.
- Women in the lowest income group are 85% more likely to have diabetes.

During the pandemic so far, there is evidence of disparities in COVID-19 infection. Ontario data shows a higher percentage of COVID-19 positive tests in neighbourhood quintiles with the lowest income compared to the highest income. As we move towards recovery, it is important to consider the policies of income support, social assistance and social support services that can support a healthy population.¹⁰⁶

Health equity benefits the entire community. To promote a healthy city for all and address the root causes of health inequities in Toronto, a broad range of supports and resources are needed from different levels of governments. These solutions also require collaborative efforts from all sectors that have an impact on health.¹⁰⁷

Housing and health inequities

Housing is a key social determinant of health. A significant body of evidence shows that the relationship between housing and health is multifaceted, complex, and that housing has strong interactions with other social determinants of health. Research and the lived experience of people in Toronto demonstrates that housing unaffordability, poor quality housing, and housing instability, are associated with a range of poor mental and physical health outcomes and can result in significant costs to the health care system.¹⁰⁸ Helping people stay housed has also been shown to significantly reduce costs in other sectors, including healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, and emergency services.

High demand and low supply of affordable housing affects all Torontonians. But, at the intersection of health and housing, several populations are particularly at risk and face challenges.



Seniors: Some groups of seniors face significant challenges in the housing market. In 2010, female seniors (65 years and older) living alone had the second highest incidence of unsuitable housing (38.1 per cent in of all household types in Toronto are in core housing need).^{109, 110}



Low-income families with children: Lone-parent households, particularly female-led, had the highest incidence of core housing need of all household types in Toronto in 2010. Female lone-parents had almost twice the incidence of core housing need compared to all household types (40.8 per cent versus 21 per cent).



People with mental health and/or substance use issues: Under-served populations living with mental health and substance use needs are intensifying Toronto's affordable housing and shelter emergencies, and require unique community-oriented mental health services, such as consumption and treatment sites, harm reduction training and supplies, and increased access to counselling and psychotherapy services.¹¹¹



People with chronic illnesses and/or disabilities: For people with chronic illnesses, physical or developmental disabilities, housing stability is associated with increased adherence to medication and treatment regimes and more appropriate use of health and social services.¹¹²



Indigenous people: Indigenous people have a higher incidence of core housing need compared to non-Indigenous people in Toronto (27.9 per cent versus 20.9 per cent in 2010).¹¹³



LGBTQ2S+ people and youth: People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and two-spirit (LGBTQ2S+) also face significant housing-related barriers in Toronto, including homelessness.¹¹⁴

No single approach will address all the unique needs for stable, affordable housing that supports health, and a continuum of options is needed. However, small, targeted initiatives, can yield greater collective impact, and assist in making progress on improving health outcomes related to housing.¹¹⁵

Making progress requires a cooperative, multi-sectoral approach, and investment from all levels of government. The City of Toronto has identified a clear need for federal and provincial funding to allow the City to act on its commitment to increase housing options for Torontonians, in particular housing for vulnerable populations. Under successive provincial governments, municipalities have had to take on increasing responsibilities for housing costs.

Moreover, income and housing are parts of interrelated socioeconomic inequities in Toronto. There are similar findings in other areas such as transit access, low-income and underserved neighborhoods, and vulnerable populations. Acting on the social determinants of health, the City of Toronto has invested extensively in a variety of programs, including income supports, municipal expenditures on equity, confronting anti-black racism, and poverty reduction. These municipal investments demonstrate the City of Toronto's commitment to tackle these issues which impair the ability for more residents to effectively participate in the labour market and contribute to the prosperity of Toronto, Ontario, and Canada.

The social determinants of health have significant implications for economic and health outcomes and the health care system itself. Inequities contribute significantly to health outcomes, as evidenced by the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, and in turn economic outcomes. Addressing the social

A key priority needs to be open reflection, and a fundamental shift in our processes to incorporate an indigenous perspective – this needs to be a priority – You can only help in the recovery by listening to those who aren't ever heard.

Comment from Consultation

determinants of health can provide a high return-on-investment, and policy interventions play an important role in addressing the social and economic inequities that directly contribute to poor economic and health outcomes. While the literature reviewed does not quantify the impact of municipal investments in the social determinants of health on economic outcomes, there is strong support for how municipal investments in areas such as housing, transit, and recreation have significant benefit to health and economic outcomes.



6.5 Indigenous Lens on Recovery and Rebuild

The City of Toronto has the largest Indigenous population in Ontario and the fourth largest in Canada. Agencies serving the Indigenous community in Toronto estimate that there are 70,000 to 100,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit residents living in Toronto.

Before the pandemic, the Indigenous community in Toronto faced many vulnerabilities. Given the ongoing impacts of colonization, structural and institutional racism, government policies and practices and intergenerational trauma, Indigenous Peoples face a disproportionate risk of being deeply affected by the pandemic, in a multitude of ways.

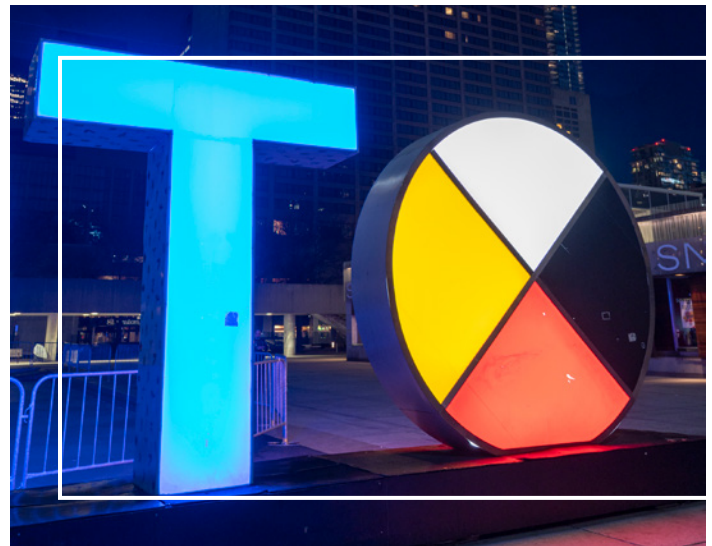
In the Our Health Counts Study (2016), the largest urban Indigenous population health study in Canada, where Indigenous organizations owned and controlled the data, reported the following findings:

- Over 90 per cent of Toronto's Indigenous population lives below the (before tax) low income cut-off;
- There is a persistent overrepresentation of Indigenous people in Toronto's homeless population, especially among individuals staying outdoors. Approximately one in three Indigenous adults are precariously housed or experiencing homelessness;
- Over one-third of Indigenous adults reported giving up key needs (groceries, transportation) in order to meet shelter/housing-related costs at least once a month.

In addition, Indigenous Peoples face ongoing challenges with respect to food security, access to land and waters for ceremony and other traditional uses, and culturally appropriate mental health and child-care supports.

All of the above challenges are further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City has adopted a number of commitments to Indigenous Peoples, including [the Statement of Commitment to the Aboriginal Communities in Toronto](#), and adopting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in response to the Calls to Action resulting from the report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The City's [commitment to Indigenous Peoples](#) acknowledges Indigenous Peoples' inherent right to health, and self-determination is necessary to meaningfully protect their communities. That is especially true of those most vulnerable, including the Elders, knowledge keepers, women and youth who are essential in ensuring cultures, languages and stories survive the global health crisis.



The City's Statement of Commitment identifies seven distinct goals to be fulfilled. These goals include internal and external education, working with Indigenous partners, increasing representation and civic engagement, enhanced Indigenous recruitment and retention, and working with all levels of government to advocate for the needs of Indigenous communities in Toronto.

Since early in the pandemic, the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC), a coalition of Indigenous organizations providing a variety of critical services to Indigenous People in Toronto, has undertaken tremendous advocacy work and in doing so, has connected with various City divisions to identify available funds and resources. TASSC has also been a key participant in the Mayor's Roundtable and task forces, as have other Indigenous organizations.

During times of immense pressure and drastic changes to the typical ways of doing business, efforts toward reconciliation are threatened and potentially ignored. It is imperative that the City continue to work toward fulfilling and expanding on its commitment to Indigenous peoples, lands and waters throughout the COVID response and recovery stages.

Indigenous input is needed when making decisions about Indigenous communities' well-being. The engagement process was the beginning of the COVID-19 recovery and rebuild plans to be co-created with Indigenous leaders, service providers and community members.

Indigenous Engagement

As mentioned, the effects of colonization, displacement and inter-generational trauma have had a profound effect on Indigenous Peoples; Indigenous Peoples face particular challenges with respect to housing and culturally supportive services including health (and mental health) care, child care, and access to space for cultural and ceremonial purposes. The pandemic and the resulting public health restrictions have made these challenges even more pressing.

Members of the Indigenous communities and organizations have been engaged at various tables as part of the TORR engagement activities. *While efforts were made to gain Indigenous perspectives on the myriad of issues and challenges raised by the pandemic, it is understood that the conversation is ongoing and that more targeted engagement will be necessary over the coming months.*

As part of the Mayor's Roundtable, the Social Services and Housing, Children and Youth and Arts Community Task Forces directly engaged Indigenous organizations and leaders and purposefully provided recommendations specific to Indigenous communities. Indigenous perspectives have been reflected in many of the other task force discussions and a targeted engagement with Indigenous business leaders also took place.

The Social Services and Housing Task Force recommended the following:

- Ensure that all funding decisions in this area be informed by an equity and reconciliation lens, and that the priorities of Indigenous organizations be supported;

- Indigenous Peoples are one of the groups most vulnerable to COVID-19, therefore, it's essential that Indigenous voices are included in all economic recovery decision-making tables;
- Work with Indigenous social service sector and other Indigenous leaders to ensure Indigenous representation on all recovery tables and committees;
- Ensure equitable resource allocation to Indigenous organizations servicing diverse needs;
- Support the development of an Indigenous-specific social services referral system, with partners including Findhelp/211 and TASSC;
- Maintain the commitment to develop and fund the implementation of the Tkaronto Indigenous Prosperity Plan, an Indigenous-led Toronto Poverty Reduction Action Plan; and
- Uphold the 2010 Statement of Commitment and the Aboriginal Education Strategy, Aboriginal Employment Strategy, Indigenous Health Strategy, Indigenous Overdose Strategy, Meeting in the Middle Strategy, Ontario Urban Indigenous Action Plan, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and future efforts including the City of Toronto Path to Reconciliation.

With respect to Indigenous children and youth, the City's Children Services Advisory Committee, along with the Indigenous Affairs Office, was engaged. Discussions resulted in specific recommendations to address the unique needs and challenges



I would like the City to address the needs of indigenous people by taking the following actions: Engage with Indigenous People. Learning from Elders and Traditional knowledge Keepers...Adding these type of programs will help put the city back on the right path.

Comment from Consultation

faced by Indigenous families and children living in care (Indigenous and Black children are overrepresented in the children-in-care and justice systems). The recommendations include:

- Increase funding and/or access to culturally appropriate programming to meet the needs of Indigenous children and youth for recreation and outdoor sport. This initiative could include enabling particular Indigenous organizations to book parks and other greenspaces for safe and scheduled activities with children, youth and families;
- Consideration should be given to Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) and vulnerable communities when planning for the reopening of recreation centres, outdoor pools and amenities, parks, summer camps and community programming;
- Increase access to funding and programming that support the specific cultural needs of Indigenous children and youth in outdoor recreation and sports;
- As soon as possible, find new ways to resume services for children-in-care and incarcerated youth such as virtual supervised visitations or phone counselling; and

- Indigenous and Black communities require culturally responsive strategies to resume court-ordered access visits for children in care. That could be accomplished through scheduling outdoor spaces in which to conduct visits.

Indigenous artists who participated in the Arts Community Roundtable noted that while they faced similar challenges experienced by other artists, because they tend to be already more vulnerable due to lack of financial and cultural supports and access to space, they have been hit particularly hard by the effects of the pandemic.

A targeted discussion also took place with representatives from the Indigenous business and entrepreneur community. Much of the feedback was consistent with feedback from consultations with other small businesses, as the challenges are generally the same. Like other businesses, many Indigenous businesses have pivoted or adapted to online or virtual formats during the pandemic. Some of the participants did, however, note the challenges and barriers many Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses face in accessing procurement opportunities with the City. For example, it was noted that many Indigenous businesses get "lost" in social procurement programs, as Indigenous Peoples are not an equity seeking group; separate Indigenous procurement streams should be established and greater support provided to help Indigenous businesses navigate through procurement processes. In addition, many Indigenous small businesses that are focused on artisanal goods and local tourism have suffered disproportionately. Moreover, some Indigenous "businesses" do not fit the typical business model parameters – many rely on in-person knowledge transfer and connection, and unique adaptations and considerations may be necessary in the recovery and rebuild efforts.

The discussions with Indigenous community to date are just the beginning of an ongoing conversation. In order to ensure that a lens of reconciliation is present in the City's recovery and rebuild efforts. Indigenous voices need to be engaged in an ongoing and meaningful way as the work toward recovery and rebuild evolves and moves forward.



7 | Critical City Services

The City's Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Since the onset of the pandemic, the City of Toronto's divisions, agencies and corporations have worked with the Province of Ontario, community organizations and businesses to monitor the spread of COVID-19 and ensure dates and timelines of reopening and restart were appropriate and safe for residents, staff and businesses. The City has demonstrated resilience in expanding its remote and digital capabilities, modifying services so they can continue to be delivered in a way that reduces physical contact.

In a matter of weeks, the City increased its remote-enabled workforce by almost 20 per cent in order to both reduce occupational health risks and maintain remote service provision. To help local businesses and artists access free digital ordering and e-commerce platforms, the City established several new partnerships, initiatives and programs, such as the ShopHERE and CurbTO programs, to minimize the economic impact of the pandemic. Many divisions enthusiastically embraced new forms of virtual and contactless service delivery, from virtual tribunals to social assistance case management, while ensuring client access and communication was multi-tiered and not geographically bound. The City is leveraging the lessons learned and momentum from its COVID-19 response to enhance and accelerate the development of its digital service infrastructure to better serve residents and businesses during and after the pandemic.

City Services – Restart and Readiness

In-step with the "Ontario Framework for Reopening our Province", the City created a COVID-19 Restart Roadmap to ensure the resumption of services and to support businesses and community organizations to reopen safely.

Many City services were maintained during the response period, and any City services that could be effectively delivered by staff working from home have continued to be delivered remotely, with about 10,000 staff working from home. Priority services on the COVID-19 Restart Roadmap that have required staff to return to the workplace all undergo a comprehensive series of assessments and planning exercises to ensure that operational procedures meet health and safety requirements. Assessments include occupational health and safety reviews, facility occupancy evaluations, and personal protective equipment (PPE) impact assessments.

City staff have also been working with City agencies and corporations to ensure they are aligned and have been supported with their restart efforts through information and coordination, public health and program guidance, PPE and face covering provisions, and other supports. Communication strategies, corporate signage, resources and playbooks were also developed to support City divisions, agencies and corporations through response and recovery stages.

As of July 2020, approximately 90 per cent of the City's services are active.

A robust planning exercise is now underway to plan for operational and service continuity, including an exercise to support business continuity via digital services in the event of a resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

Modified services as a pathway to reimagined services

The City is dedicated to ensuring that the programs and services that residents and business rely on will be maintained. While the pandemic has created tremendous challenges for the Toronto Public Service (TPS), it has also amplified the TPS's ingenuity, adaptability and imagination. Out of necessity, the City has had to modify and adapt its services to meet the needs of Torontonians during the crisis. The City is now future-proofing its service delivery, using many of these delivery changes as a basis for reimagined workplaces and customer experiences.

Many City services had to quickly transition to modified or remote service delivery to support communities and businesses to navigate hurdles of contactless or reduced-contact services required to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

That undertaking has created an opportunity to reimagine how the City will provide services in the future. Many innovations emerged in recent months: streamlined curbside pickup (CurbTO) and patio licensing (CaféTO); virtual Council and Committee meetings; online business licensing; remote tribunal hearings; increased call centre resources; and an increasingly remote-enabled workforce. The City continues to accelerate its Digital Government strategy through the digitization of customer services, processes and experiences and through expanding its mobile and remote-capable workforce.

The City is pursuing new models for partnerships, collaboration and better access for vulnerable populations. Re-imagined experiences will elevate the Toronto Public Service's responsiveness and resiliency and drive equity-based outcomes.





Critical City Services

7.1 Child Care

Impact of COVID-19 on the Child Care System

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto Children Services' was near completion of a five-year service plan (2020-2024) that was informed by significant consultation with families and care providers. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, child-care services have been affected significantly. All care centres had to shut down between March 17 and June 12 by provincial orders, except the opening of special emergency child-care services for essential workers. Since the lifting of the provincial order on June 12, some child-care centres in Toronto have begun to reopen with modified public health protocols and reduced numbers.

Emergency Child Care

On March 17, the Province declared a state of emergency and, among other measures, ordered the closure of all licenced child-care centres. On March 28, the province authorized the provision of emergency child care for children of essential and critical service workers, at no cost to parents, fully funded by the province. The City launched an online application that same day. Emergency child-care spaces were made available to workers deemed eligible by the province and access was provided on a first come, first served basis. Front-line health care workers and first responders were prioritized for available spaces.

Between March 31 and May 26, Children's Services opened eight emergency child-care centres for children (from birth to 12 years old) for eligible, essential and critical workers, with a total capacity of 236 children at any given time.

From March 31 to June 29, emergency child care was provided daily to 274 families and 394 children in the City's directly operated centres and staffed with City child-care workers.

Given the challenges in ensuring physical distancing when caring for young children, additional measures were implemented to maintain a healthy and safe environment in collaboration with Toronto Public Health and Occupational Health and Safety.

On June 12, the order closing child care across the sector was lifted and the province announced that Emergency Child Care and associated provincial funding would end on June 26. Since then, Children's Services has worked with families to find care in child-care locations that had reopened, including 11 of the City's Early Learning and Child Care locations.

Toronto's child care offerings

As of March 1, 2020, 1,050 licensed child-care centres were operating in Toronto, providing a total of 79,520 child-care spaces. Toronto's Children's Services (TCS) division operates 46 centres directly that include 2,306 spaces. The remaining centres are operated by non-profit or commercial entities.

About 800 staff work in City-run centres. Including supervisors, registered Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), housekeeping staff and casual workers such as child-care aides, daycare and recreational assistants, and food services workers. In non-profit or commercial centres, a similar mix of staff run the child-care centres, but often with a smaller proportion of registered ECEs than in a City-run centre.

Role of the City

Since child-care centres have reopened, the City, as the service system manager, has increased communication with child-care providers, including providing clarification and guidance regarding provincial guidelines. The City worked with Toronto Public Health to provide required training for centres to reopen safely. The reopening/recovery working group developed [Guidelines for Operators](#) to use when considering how to place children with smaller overall cohort sizes. Children's Services has been working with school boards to discuss shared space considerations for child care and recreation programs.

There will be a need to ensure that access to reopened spaces will not just favour parents who are working and will also support the vulnerable families and communities who have been hardest hit by COVID-19.

Licensed Child Care – Toronto Overview

- 1,058 licensed child-care centres with 80,168 spaces
- 429 child-care centres located in elementary schools
- 18 licensed home child-care agencies offering about 3,550 spaces in 950 private homes
- 47 City operated child-care centres and one City operated home child-care agency
- 21 organizations (including the City) providing service and support for children with extra needs enrolled in licensed child care
- 40 per cent of system restarted as of July 15, 2020

Intergovernmental Considerations for Child Care

The federal government committed \$625 million as part of broader federal funding toward child care across the country. On August 14, 2020, the province announced that Ontario's share would be \$234.6 million. Funding will be used to procure and deliver face coverings directly to operators and licensed home child care agencies, and also provided directly to operators to help them comply with the Province's reopening operational guidance or local public health requirements. Toronto's 2020 allocation from this program will be \$47.5 million. Toronto City Council called for a national child care strategy at its June 2020 meeting and endorsed the need for tri-government investment.

In the short term, Toronto's Children's Services Division is supporting the reopening of more than 700 child-care centres

The closing of schools and daycare centres served as a reminder of the important role child care plays in offering vital support to families. ... it is the availability of child care that allows for parents to work and to contribute to the economic stability and recovery of the city, the province and the country as a whole.

Comment from Consultation

across the city in order to return child care to its previous capacity. In the long term, the City will continue to lead the Growth Strategy that strives to increase licensed child-care spaces, improve affordability for families and support the child care workforce.

The City continues to be committed to improving the affordability and access to child care for its residents. However, the City recognizes that this support requires investments from both the federal and provincial governments and looks forward to a National Child Care Strategy and the provincial Child Care Plan.

Stakeholders have indicated that committed and ongoing provincial and federal funding is required to ensure the sustainability of the child-care sector, and to support access for parents and families during the reopening and recovery period. Access to child care is key to the reopening of the Toronto economy and ensuring an increased ability for people to enter the workforce and contribute to growth and prosperity.

Given the significant role the City plays in coordinating and supporting the restart and sustainability of the child care and early years sector, and the increased staffing needed to meet public health and other requirements, the City has also asked the province to consider deferring its planned reductions to administrative cost-share funding for child care in 2021 and 2022.

7.2 Long-Term Care

Outbreaks are common in congregate living settings and unfortunately, respiratory infections can be easily transmitted in an institutional environment where residents can be frail, older and have many complex chronic conditions. Mitigation actions that are implemented during an outbreak include active surveillance and precautions, testing of residents and staff, isolation, physical distancing, meals served on trays rather than in dining rooms, hand hygiene, and use of personal protective equipment. To address staffing needs, the City's Seniors Services and Long-Term Care (SSLTC) reassigned divisional and management staff to support essential operations; maximized frontline staffing and overtime hours; expedited hiring for key positions (e.g. nursing students for PSWs), redeployed staff from other divisions and used external agency staff to support frontline operations.

In terms of the direct impacts of COVID-19 on the residents of the City's long-term care homes, 251 residents tested positive for COVID-19 (9.5 per cent of total population) and, unfortunately, there were 70 deaths (2.7 per cent of total).

Pre-COVID-19 Long-Term Care (LTC) Snapshot

Under provincial legislation, the City of Toronto is required to establish and maintain a long-term care home. The City directly operates 10 homes serving 2,641 residents with 24-hour resident-focused care, including permanent, convalescent and short-stay admissions. Care, services and programs enhance quality of life by responding to individual resident needs, and include:

- nursing and personal care,
- behavioural support programs,
- medical services,
- dietetics and food services,
- recreational programming,
- spiritual and religious care,
- volunteer programs, and
- diverse and inclusive care and services.

Given the unique diversity and need for inclusion in the city, and to support the needs of these diverse communities, care and services at select homes include language, religious and cultural partnerships such as Buddhist, Cantonese, Farsi, French, Hispanic, Ismaili, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Ukrainian. The division is considered a leader in terms of its LGBTQ2S+ and Transgender inclusivity and cultural competence. SSLTC continues to improve its culture, staff training, programs and services, and policies to create a more inclusive, equitable long-term care environment for all residents and staff, including Black, racialized and other equity, diversity and inclusion groups.

I would like the City to address the issue of seniors housing by securing financial support from higher levels of government, and make the city better by providing safe, affordable and well managed senior housing options for the aging population.

Comment from Consultation

City-operated homes have residents with more complex needs and often with financial limitations. These residents are often not accepted by operators other than the City's LTC homes.

City homes compare favourably to national and provincial averages for all publicly reported indicators. Given the City's direct experience and knowledge of preventing and mitigating the spread of COVID-19, learning will be shared to better protect residents, clients and staff from future outbreaks. SSLTC leadership, residents and families will be actively involved in upcoming sector reviews, including:

- Independent Commission into Long-Term Care
- Patient Ombudsman investigation into the resident and caregiver experience in LTC homes with COVID-19 outbreaks, and
- Ontario Ombudsman investigation into Ministry of Health/ Long-Term Care oversight of LTC homes during the pandemic.

The City of Toronto has long invested additional funding beyond the provincial allocation for long-term care (approximately 20 per cent), which contributes to the vibrancy of City homes, quality jobs for staff, and high-quality care and programs for residents. However, increased provincial funding, including to support adequate staffing levels, was identified a critical need for COVID-19 and continues to be a priority.

Seniors Services and Long-Term Care division, along with Toronto Public Health, has been focused on preventing and mitigating COVID-19 to ensure a safe environment for the more than 2,600 residents in the City's 10 directly-operated LTCHs.

In response to the high risk the COVID-19 pandemic posed for LTC residents, the City introduced enhanced active screening early, including taking and recording temperatures of all staff entering a City home. Masking protocols were enforced, and all non-essential visits were suspended. Enhanced infection, prevention and control practices and procedures, including staff education, high-touch cleaning and disinfection, helped prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Despite best efforts, the virus has been extremely difficult to contain. At one point during the pandemic, all City long-term care homes reported residents and/or staff with the virus. A total of 251 residents tested positive (9.5 per cent of total population) and unfortunately, there have been 70 deaths (2.7 per cent of total). However, as of August 4, 2020, there are no positive resident cases of COVID-19 in City LTCHs. And, as highlighted in multiple media reports, municipal LTC homes such as City of Toronto homes have fared better than privately run LTC homes in terms of COVID-19 spread and outcomes.

Staffing is a serious issue across the long-term care sector. In response, SSLTC reassigned divisional and management staff to support essential operations; maximized frontline staffing and overtime hours; expedited hiring for key positions (e.g. nursing students for PSWs), redeployed staff from other divisions and used external agency staff to support frontline operations.

In June 2020, City staff made 16 recommendations in a report to the Mayor based on experiences and learning from the pandemic. Staff's detailed report on management of the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of Toronto's long-term care homes can be found at <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/97d7-ssltc-covid-19-response.pdf>

[Address the issue of] healthy aging in place [by] advocating for increased provision of home care with the provincial government, ensuring that our seniors have choice about where and how they live.

Comment from Consultation



As the City moves into a recovery phase, staff will complete a comprehensive review, examining all areas of its operational response, with a view to identifying short- and long-term strategies for improvement and change, considering key issues including:

- **Human Resources:** effective leadership and management, reliable clinical care, robust human resource strategy for return to work and staffing shortages.
- **Infection, Prevention and Control:** awareness and adherence to infection, prevention and control standards, clear protocols, process and expectations, supply and correct use of personal protective equipment, testing process and capacity.
- **Partnerships and Sustained Operations:** communications protocols in place with residents, families, staff on/offsite, caregivers, clear roles and responsibilities, outbreak management process and protocol in place, and local partnerships.

This comprehensive and systematic review will inform the City's next steps as we reimagine the future of long-term care homes.

7.3 Housing

As many residents struggle to secure and maintain affordable, suitable and stable housing, there is a growing need and demand to increase the availability of permanent housing and to enable housing affordability.

Vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals, people with mental health and addiction challenges, seniors, women fleeing violence, Indigenous people and people with disabilities, are particularly at risk of experiencing housing challenges.

Shelter, Support and Housing

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) worked with Toronto Public Health, other orders of government, the healthcare sector, and the community not-for-profit sector to develop and implement appropriate measures to protect Toronto's homeless population, prevent the spread of COVID-19, and care for clients who test positive for the disease.

The City implemented a three-tier approach to protect people experiencing homelessness, focused on prevention, mitigation and recovery. The aim of the response has been to stay ahead of the pandemic and continue to adapt and evolve as the situation changed. At the outset of the pandemic, SSHA (in consultation with Toronto Public Health and Inner City Health Associates) conducted an impact assessment to determine the greatest areas of risk and prioritize actions. The initial objective was prevention, with the goal of keeping COVID-19 out of the shelter system for as long as possible. This work included guidance, training and resources to all service providers on required Infection Prevention and Control measures to protect staff and clients. SSHA also provided PPE for frontline shelter workers and advocated to other levels of government for the provision of these critical supplies. Additional funding was provided to shelter operators for the purchase of PPE and to extend operating hours for shelters not operating 24/7 to remain open during the day.

A large portion of the considerable strain on the emergency shelter system was due to requirements around physical distancing and, in the case of persons testing positive, isolation. The average cost to operate a shelter bed in Toronto was \$3,347 a month pre-COVID-19. That cost has now grown to approximately \$6,667 per bed per month as a result of the increased response required to protect clients. Further pressures on access to shelters resulted from the closure of provincial services (such as detox and crisis beds) and discharges from correctional facilities of individuals directly into homelessness without adequate housing plans in place.

I would like the City to address the issue of housing by taking the action of fast-tracking the building of below market affordable units to open asap. Modular housing is one example and make the city better in the ways of ensuring that those who work here can afford to live here...

Comment from Consultation

SSHA worked closely with service providers to help them increase physical distancing measures where possible, including reducing or eliminating the use of bunk beds. Many of the City's shelter sites have been able to meet the increased physical distancing guidelines of two metres but in other cases additional space and support was required.

Beyond the impacts to the shelter system, the City mobilized resources to ensure that those facing housing instability and the most vulnerable would be protected during the pandemic. This includes:

- A COVID-19 response strategy for outreach and encampments that includes access to safe indoor space, shelter and housing; education and infection prevention; and harm reduction and encampment health and safety. The interim housing program noted above and securing additional hotel rooms to ensure people have access to safe indoor space.
- Opened 11 City-operated facilities with showers, washrooms and drinking water for people experiencing homelessness.
- Providing an additional investment of \$2 million to the Toronto Rent Bank that, along with changes to program rules (i.e. increased maximum loans, deferred loan repayment, etc.), will support approximately 750 households in rental arrears with no-interest loans of up to \$4,000 to help them remain in their homes.

Shelter Response Highlights

Responses to COVID-19 by City of Toronto's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division

SSHA secured **33** temporary locations, primarily in temporarily vacant hotels, resulting in **3,037** spaces



These actions assisted **24-hour service** providers and directly operated shelters meet physical distancing guidelines and provide isolation and recovery options for the homeless population.

These spaces currently operate on short-term leases from **three months to a year in length**.



\$5 million (approximately)

The monthly cost associated with renting these spaces and providing service. Paid through grants from the province until the beginning of June, and now funded entirely by the City.



Since the onset of the pandemic, the City has achieved the following (to July 20, 2020):

30+
OPEN

More than **30** new facilities opened.



1,309 people moved into permanent housing.



547 people provided space for isolation with medical supports.

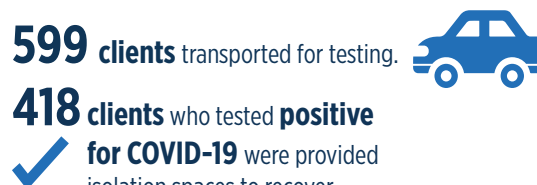
More than **600** people sleeping outdoors were moved to interim housing.



3,500 people moved to ensure physical distancing



599 clients transported for testing.
418 clients who tested positive for COVID-19 were provided isolation spaces to recover.



Toronto Community Housing Corporation

TCHC supported its tenants throughout the COVID-19 response period. In mid-March, TCHC extended local on-site building staff hours to seven days a week, 10 hours a day to enhance cleaning protocols in all high-touch areas and essential common rooms (such as laundry). Staff closed all non-essential common rooms and coordinated food-bank programming and food hamper delivery. The Community Safety Unit increased support, particularly in areas where local agency support has been withdrawn and an added security presence is required. At select sites, after-hours restrictions were implemented to reduce unwanted non-resident access. The Seniors Housing Unit (SHU) implemented a call-out to all tenants to provide COVID-19 information from Toronto Public Health and gather information about grocery and medication support needs. SHU also conducted wellness checks (door knocks) for tenants who could not be reached by phone. Programs were similarly established in the Family portfolio with vulnerable tenants. SHU staff made additional efforts to check on tenants identified as high risk. More than 19,000 households were reached, with connections to supports and services provided where required.

As part of COVID-19 recovery efforts, services and amenities for tenants have gradually reopened in TCHC communities where it is safe to do so. These include in-suite non-urgent repairs, sports courts, playgrounds, cooling centres, community gardens and swimming pools. TCHC continues to monitor and assess the safety of restarting services, tenant programs and amenities, and will continue to gradually reopen them safely.



Rental Affordability

Working closely with the City's Advisory Group on the Protection of Affordable Rental Housing as well as the Social Services and Housing working group led by Deputy Mayor Bailão, the City is gathering feedback from renters and landlords regarding the most pressing issues they are facing. Some of the key concerns include immediate challenges renter households face to pay their rents as well as the risk of delayed evictions for renters who will not be able to pay back multiple months of accrued rent as the moratorium on evictions is lifted. The City continues to work with other orders of government to expand rental assistance programs to provide short- and medium-term relief to renters and to advocate for putting measures in place to prevent economic evictions after the crisis. The City has also created targeted communication and outreach materials for renters and property owners to inform them of relevant health and safety guidelines and available social and financial support services. The City is also working with supportive housing providers to find alternative arrangements for their tenants who are living in congregate living situations to allow for physical distancing.



Expediting HousingTO 2020-2030

While continuing to provide emergency immediate responses to COVID-19, it is also crucial to increase investments in affordable and supportive housing to address chronic homelessness.

The pandemic has shown that the lack of access to affordable, suitable and adequate housing is as much of an individual health risk as it is a larger public health risk. The pandemic has also highlighted the fundamental interdependencies in the housing, health, social and economic systems.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto City Council had adopted and begun to implement the [City's 10-year HousingTO Action Plan 2020-2030](#). Throughout the pandemic the City continued to pursue this aggressive agenda to build 40,000 affordable housing units, including 18,000 supportive housing units over the next 10 years.

This work has accelerated planning for the following key projects, despite the need to adapt approval and engagement processes to ensure physical distancing:

- Continued implementation of Housing Now Phase 1, which seeks to activate 11 City-owned sites, with financial incentives from the City, to create approximately 10,000 new residential units with an estimated 3,700 affordable rental units;
- Launched Housing Now Phase 2, to add six additional sites estimated to yield up to 1,710 new residential units, including up to 620 affordable rental units;
- Continued work on 48 other active affordable rental housing projects with more than 3,900 units under development; and
- Accelerated progress to achieve 250 modular housing units in one year, in collaboration with the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario.

Those efforts will result in approximately 300 affordable rental units to open in 2020, with an additional 1,012 affordable rental units expected to be ready for occupancy in 2021. The Modular Supportive Housing project aims to get 110 new homes open by September 2020.

We must prepare for many people who have lost their jobs and who are behind in their rent to be supported to live (financially), to look for work and to prevent evictions from their housing. This is a top priority.

Comment from Consultation

7.4 Income Support

Pre-COVID-19 Poverty Snapshot

Prior to COVID-19, poverty was already a widespread and persistent challenge in Toronto, with one in five adults living in poverty. Poverty was concentrated among particular groups (Indigenous and equity-seeking communities including Black Torontonians, racialized youth, new immigrants, people with disabilities, vulnerable seniors) and in specific parts of the city. High levels of poverty reflect the rise of precarious, low-paid employment and inadequate income supports with limited Employment Insurance coverage and social assistance rates that leave people in deep poverty. Prior to the pandemic, many of the City's Toronto Employment and Social Services Division's (TESS) clients already reported significant barriers to employment

Impact of COVID-19 on Poverty

The pandemic has exposed existing weaknesses in Canada's and Ontario's employment and income security systems. The pandemic has increased poverty and unemployment, disproportionately impacting low-wage and racialized workers, with most job loss among those in temporary and low-paid work. The pandemic is resulting in dramatic increases not only in unemployment but also in challenges with debt levels, housing stability, food insecurity and worsening mental health and addictions.

Toronto is facing an unprecedented economic shock amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. Between February 2020 and June 2020, total employment across Toronto declined by 224,650; many employed Toronto residents are working reduced hours. Among the hardest hit have been workers in accommodation and food services, and information, culture and recreation sectors.

It is anticipated that the recovery will be slow and many of the sectors hardest hit will not see the return of employment levels that existed before COVID-19. Overall, the expectation is that there will be fewer jobs available and more clients facing barriers to employment. Many of those who are willing and able to work will need retraining for different opportunities.

Intergovernmental approach

To inform longer term COVID-19 rebuild efforts, City staff will be working to identify the social supports and economic opportunities needed by vulnerable residents and communities, and funding needed from the other governments. No order of government trying to assist low-income residents should work at cross purposes with other orders of government. Programs should be aligned and appropriately funded and should remove any barriers to participation.

CERB, for example provided several features of an improved employment and income security program that many economists, social policy practitioners, advocates and municipalities – including the City of Toronto itself – have called for over many years. The requests include broad, uniform coverage, a flat, simple and adequate benefit structure, and streamlined delivery through the CRA.

The delivery and funding responsibility for on-going employment and income-support financial benefit payments to individuals must be aligned to the right order of government.

- With an aging population and a now fully exposed crisis in long-term care, provinces will face enormous pressure for the next two decades at a minimum, to make significant new investments in primary health care, long-term care, child care and public health.
- Delivering income support payments through the CRA/federal tax system would help to ensure that very low income Canadians, especially those who are single, benefit fully from the various tax credits and tax-administered benefits to which they are entitled but which they are not yet accessing, believing – incorrectly – that it only makes sense to file a tax return if you owe taxes.
- Moving to a Standard Flat benefit rate for social assistance in Ontario would significantly lessen the pressure on Toronto's shelter system by making it much easier for shelter users

(in receipt of Ontario Works financial assistance) to afford alternative accommodation. The related elimination of RGI rent scales associated with the adoption of a Standard Flat social assistance benefit rate would free up as much as \$80 million a year for Toronto to invest in other critical services for low incomes residents, including supportive housing, child care and long-term care.

- With adequate federal funding, provinces and municipalities can focus more attention and resources on those elements of the social safety net that involve the delivery of integrated social and health services (in situ) to communities, nested in specific places (e.g. child care, healthcare, long term care, housing, etc.) and administer financial program requirements and assist very low income residents regain the trust, confidence, skills and supports they need to effectively pursue, secure and maintain employment.



These past few months has taught us so much about what is essential and what is not, and access to food is absolutely essential and building local food sovereignty is good for the local economy, public health and there is a lot of research out there that proves gardening is beneficial for mental health!

Comment from Consultation

7.5 Food Security and Food Access

Food Insecurity

Many people in Toronto are at high risk of food insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic, including those who already face existing barriers to food access due to financial constraints. In 2017, almost one in five Toronto households experienced marginal to severe food insecurity, with the majority of food insecure households being employed. Racialized residents face amplified and structural barriers to food access. Black households are 3.5 times more likely to be food insecure than white households in Canada, and Indigenous households are also disproportionately impacted by food insecurity. The use of food banks was on the rise in 2019, especially in low-income neighbourhoods in North York (nine per cent increase) and Scarborough (eight per cent increase).

Food insecurity surged during the pandemic for vulnerable residents and those who faced loss of income, shelter and community supports. 211 Toronto, a community information service, reported an alarming increase in average daily calls related to food security in April 2020 (almost 14x increase compared to

February 2020). Toronto Public Health conducted an analysis of the association between socio-demographic characteristics and the rate of COVID-19 cases, and found:

- Areas with the lowest income group (the quintile with the highest proportion of people living below the low-income measure) had the highest rate of COVID-19 cases.
- A higher COVID-19 case and hospitalization rate for areas with a higher percentage of people from racialized communities, newcomers to Canada, people with lower education levels, and unemployed people.

These same groups experienced higher risk for food insecurity during COVID-19. Other food insecure groups during COVID-19 include:



Vulnerable residents

(e.g. homeless, shelter residents, etc.)



Seniors



Individuals with mobility issues,

quarantined and/or in self-isolation



Households in the inner suburbs

and tower neighbourhoods of Toronto

Neighbourhoods with the highest burden of COVID-19 (Northwest Toronto) also face disproportionate levels of food insecurity and have higher populations of Black residents. Several wards, including those in North Etobicoke (Ward 1), North York (Wards 6, 7, 17) and Scarborough (Wards 20, 21, 22, 24, 25), experienced significant surges in requests for emergency food services.

North Etobicoke

(Ward 1)

- The Albion Public Library was the first Toronto Public Library (TPL) site to host a pop-up food bank, holding one in partnership with North York Harvest starting on March 25 due to the rise in food-bank clients in the Rexdale neighbourhood. The Albion Pop-up food bank remains operational.
- Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown received more than 100 deliveries of emergency food hampers from the Red Cross between April and June 2020.

North York

(Wards 6, 7, 17)

- North York Harvest Food Bank reported that its food bank at the Herb Carnegie Arena served the most clients in its food bank network during COVID-19. The number of clients steadily rose from March until May. The week of May 18, North York Harvest served over 900 individuals and 430 households out of the Herb Carnegie Arena.
- Black Creek and Glenfield-Jane Heights neighbourhoods received more than 300 deliveries of emergency food hampers from the Red Cross between April and June 2020.

Scarborough

(Wards 20, 21, 22, 24, 25)

- Four of the TPL pop-up food banks were located in Scarborough (Cedarbrae, Kennedy/Eglinton, Agincourt and Steeles).
- The City of Toronto, GlobalMedic and the University of Toronto Scarborough launched CARES – Collective Action and Response for Everyone in Scarborough -- due to high food insecurity in Scarborough. CARES packaged food for distribution to food banks across Scarborough.

Emergency Food Interventions

The City's Emergency Operation Centre convened a virtual Food Security Table of key partners involved in emergency food provision, including City staff, Daily Bread Food Bank, North York Harvest Food Bank, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Second Harvest, United Way Greater Toronto and FoodShare Toronto. The Food Security Table coordinated an emergency food response for Toronto focusing on the most vulnerable communities. The Food Security Table resulted in number of unique food interventions:

1. Supporting Food Banks and Emergency Food Providers

The City addressed food bank closures by opening alternative distribution sites in partnership with Toronto Public Libraries (TPL). This unique partnership with the City and community food partners resulted in the opening of 12 pop-up food banks supported at TPL locations in high-need areas across the city, supported by a library distribution centre which is normally used for books. City staff created a COVID-19 Resource Map to assess needs at the neighbourhood-level and help determine the locations of emergency food interventions. The intervention was supported by more than 150 library staff. These sites pack and distribute over 3,000 hampers a week. As of July 14, 11,574 households and 32,571 individuals were served through TPL food bank locations.

2. Food Delivery for Seniors and other Vulnerable Residents

Responding to the Province of Ontario's recommendation for everyone over the age of 70 to self-isolate, the City worked with the Red Cross and other partners to provide food-hamper delivery to seniors and others in need who were/are unable to leave their homes. The Red Cross accepts calls at a dedicated hotline for residents who require this service. The service is available for qualifying clients who do not have alternative access to food and are not receiving assistance from another community food program. As of July 17, 13,458 food hampers were delivered to seniors/persons in isolation with Red Cross.

3. Community Kitchens for Meal Preparation and Delivery

City staff, in partnership with Second Harvest and United Way, developed a community kitchen model to support large scale meal production and delivery for vulnerable residents. This response made use of existing inspected kitchens in community agencies and kitchen incubator space to produce meals at a large scale. Second Harvest provided food to these sites and oversaw the distribution of meals to vulnerable residents through member agencies. Various partners participated in the meal production using their catering kitchens, including Hawthorne Food & Drink, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE), Feed It Forward and Kitchen 24. As of July 17, 254,225 prepared meals were distributed by MLSE. As of July 22, 8,795 prepared meals were distributed by community partners, restaurants and donors.

4. Donation Matching

The Food Access team matched food-related donations and offers to community partner agencies. To date, staff leveraged over \$628,000 from grocery stores for Toronto's food banks and community agencies. Through this initiative:

- More than 100,000 non-surgical masks were distributed to food banks.
- Grocery cards were mailed out to families with children (repurposing the student nutrition grants) representing over 2.5 million meals.
- As part of the TO Supports Investment Fund, \$4.97 million was distributed to more than 50 community-based agencies to continue to provide support to vulnerable communities. About \$2.3 million of this fund was allocated to agencies and community organizations working on food access during COVID-19.

Food Security



The **Food Security Table** convened by the City's Emergency Operations Centre, coordinated an emergency food response for Toronto focusing on the most vulnerable communities. The Table resulted in a number of food interventions:

Supporting Food Banks and Emergency Food Providers



The City addressed food bank closures by **opening alternative distribution sites in partnership with Toronto Public Libraries (TPL)**. This unique partnership with the City and community food partners resulted in **12 pop-up food banks** at TPL locations in high-need areas across the city, a COVID-19 Resource Map to assess needs and determine emergency food locations.



Supported by more than **150 library staff**.



Packed and distributed over **3,000** hampers a week.

11,574 households



32,571 individuals



Served through TPL locations, **as of July 14**.

Community Kitchens for Meal Preparation and Delivery



City staff, with Second Harvest and United Way, developed a community model to support large scale meal production and delivery for vulnerable residents. Use of existing kitchens in community agencies and kitchen incubator spaces. Second Harvest provided food and oversaw distribution to vulnerable residents through member agencies. Various partners provided their catering kitchens, including Hawthorne Food & Drink, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE), Feed It Forward and Kitchen 24.

254,225 prepared meals



distributed by MLSE, as of July 17.

8,795 prepared meals



distributed by community partners, restaurants and donors, as of July 22.

Food Security Table partners included:



✓ **Daily Bread Food Bank**
✓ **North York Harvest Food Bank**
✓ **Red Cross**
✓ **Salvation Army**

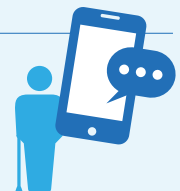
✓ **Second Harvest**
✓ **United Way Greater Toronto**
✓ **FoodShare Toronto**
✓ **City Staff**

Food Delivery for Seniors and other Vulnerable Residents



The City worked with the Red Cross and other partners to provide **food-hamper delivery to seniors and others in need who were/are unable to leave their homes.**

A Red Cross dedicated hotline for residents was available for clients who do not have access to food or a community food program.



13,458 food hampers



were delivered to seniors/ persons in isolation with Red Cross, **as of July 17**.

Donation Matching

The Food Access team matched food-related donations and offers to community partner agencies.

To date, staff leveraged from grocery stores for Toronto's food banks and community agencies.

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as part of the TO Supports Investment Fund, **\$4.97 million was distributed to more than 50 community-based agencies** to continue to provide support to vulnerable communities. About \$2.3 million of this fund was allocated to agencies and community organizations working on food access during COVID-19.



7.6 Mental Health Support Strategy (MHSS)

The City developed a mental health support strategy to support residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Measures put in place to slow the spread of COVID-19 have created stress and anxiety for many individuals, anxiety that may be compounded by financial loss and loss of critical supports. To assist residents experiencing stress and anxiety due to being isolated, quarantined, experiencing financial hardships or other mental health stressors, the City partnered with the following key mental health service providers to support the mental wellbeing of Toronto's most vulnerable. The MHSS has brought together 12 mental health partners providing services to diverse resident populations with a particular focus on supporting Indigenous, Black and racialized Torontonians.

- Across Boundaries for Black and Indigenous People/Persons of Colour (BIPOC)
- Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (CAFCAN) for Black residents
- Family Services Toronto
- Gerstein Crisis Centre
- Hong Fook
- Kids Help Phone and Crisis Text Line powered by Kids Help Phone
- Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST) for Indigenous residents
- Ontario Psychological Association for frontline workers in community agencies
- Progress Place Warm Line
- Strides Toronto
- The Access Point, and
- Toronto Seniors Helpline.

Residents can call 211 to access support and get connected to one of 12 primary mental health service partners for direct phone support. Mental health service information is also available at 211toronto.ca. These mental health support services are free to all residents. The Mental Health Support Strategy also redeveloped the City of Toronto Mental Health page to provide more targeted mental health support and guidance to Torontonians accessing the website. www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-protect-yourself-others/covid-19-mental-health-resources/

The MHSS hosts a regular biweekly partnership table meeting to facilitate ongoing learning, communication and coordination among partners.

As of July 29, the MHSS had facilitated 24,977 calls since its launch.

The MHSS will focus on finalizing the establishment of the MHSS grassroots mental health initiative, development of the MHSS reflection/evaluation document, and the launch of an Indigenous and anti-Black racism learning process for all 12 MHSS partners.

The MHSS team has identified the need to sustain the structure until December 2020 in the event of a second wave and to respond to the potential spike in mental health challenges that may occur in the fall and early winter. As a result, the MHSS will look to establish a partner-led MHSS model with three key partners that have the capacity to assume the lead of the MHSS with ongoing presence and support from City of Toronto staff. Through this model, the MHSS would continue to sustain itself through fall and winter 2020. The transition to a partner-led model will take place over August and September.

**Mental illness through isolation
- facilitating outdoor group
activities such as street markets,
park events, fireworks displays
by reminding people that we are
not alone and that the community
still exists- and is in fact stronger
for having gone through this
together. It's important to rebuild
our communities both in terms
of economy but also in terms of
societal links, in a safe way, as
both will benefit folks' mental
wellbeing.**

Comment from Consultation

7.7 Parks, Forestry and Recreation



On the recommendation of the Medical Officer of Health, community centres and amenities in parks, including parking lots, playgrounds and fitness equipment, were closed, signed and caution-taped to encourage physical distancing. A bylaw regulating physical distancing in City parks and squares was established, and an interdivisional enforcement team put in place to educate the public and ensure physical distancing. To prevent the yearly crowds that attend High Park for the cherry blossom bloom, Parks, Forestry and Recreation (PFR) worked with Municipal Licensing and Standards, Toronto Police Service, Strategic Communications and Transportation Services to close High Park to pedestrian and vehicle access for the duration of the bloom. Residents were able to experience this year's cherry blossom season through digital livestream events and videos.

Through the three provincial stages of reopening, PFR has worked with the restart team, the Emergency Operations Centre and other divisions on the process to resume its services and is currently operating modified programming at its community centres, pools and camps. As of mid-August, PFR restarted additional community recreation services, including playgrounds and issuance of permits to sports groups and other users for the use of community centres, sports fields and gathering spaces, in accordance with the Stage 3 conditions.

7.8 Support for Local Businesses

Toronto's small and medium-sized businesses are at the heart of Canada's economy. There is no doubt that local restaurants, tech-startups and the entertainment industry have all been severely impacted by COVID-19. Over the course of the last few months, Economic Development and Culture has put programs in place to help business owners stabilize their operations and begin their rebuild. This work has largely happened across four key themes: new and enhanced programming; business outreach, advice and support; COVID-19 mitigation and reopening support; and rebuilding and re-imagining Toronto's economy. Some highlights include:

New and Enhanced Programs Activated

- **New Programs** – More than 25 innovative new programs launched to support Toronto businesses, including targeted, sector-based initiatives.
- **Collision from Home** – About 32,000 participants from 140 countries attended the online tech conference. EDC supported 15 virtual international delegations to promote trade with 520 participants from 26 countries.

Business Outreach, Advice and Support

- **Sector-based Roundtables** – Over 30 sector-based virtual roundtables supported by EDC as part of Mayor Tory's and the Toronto Region Board of Trade's outreach, with more than 350 business and community stakeholders participating.
- **AdviceTO** – Thirty-five weekly online group mentoring sessions held for Toronto businesses with more than 2,100 participants attending over 10 weeks.
- **ChatBot** – A total of 7,737 questions and answers developed for the ChatBot across 6 City Divisions, with an over 80 per cent answer success rate.
- **BusinessTO Support Centre** – 730 one-on-one virtual support sessions were held with businesses accessing the City's support and advice centre.

Mitigation and Reopening

- **CaféTO** - 420 restaurants and bars supported in accessing additional outdoor spaces across 35 Business Improvement Areas.
- **Digital Main Street** - 3,189 businesses supported with virtual assistance, with another 3,002 online retail stores being built under ShopHERE utilizing 1,000+ volunteer web developers and students from 27 countries.
- **Reopening Webinars** - Six reopening support webinars hosted in coordination with Toronto Public Health, with a total of 1,781 business participants in a range of targeted sectors.
- **Restaurant Ordering Platform** - A total of 946 local Toronto businesses supported in using Ritual ONE, resulting in a projected \$1.4 million+ in total commission-free orders/sales in 2020.

Rebuilding and Reimagining

- **Sector-based Action Plans** - Six new coordinated strategy development action plans in preparation, focusing on: Technology, Entrepreneurship, Manufacturing, Restaurants, Retail and Community Economic Development (to be completed in fall 2020).



7.9 Strategic Partnerships

Strategic partnerships help the City develop and implement innovative programs, leveraging resources to amplify a collective response to community needs. During the COVID-19 emergency, the Toronto Office of Partnerships (TOP) strengthened strategic collaborations with public and private sector organizations, philanthropists and residents. These partnerships bolstered the City's responses to communities in need.

When the Mayor declared a State of Emergency on March 23, TOP established a Donations Coordination Task Force, within the Emergency Operations Centre, to facilitate the donation of funds, services and products, engaged Toronto's eight public sector universities and colleges to assist with modeling, research and expert advice and reached out to healthcare partners for assistance with clinical health supports.

The Donations Coordination Task Force activated DonateTO, the City of Toronto's online donation platform that provided a one-stop solution for businesses, public sector organizations and residents to donate products, services and funds for pandemic relief. The task force also established a Partnerships Table to reach out to corporate Canada and collaborate with community organizations to develop and implement a donation distribution strategy.

That work resulted in gifts of goods, services and funds valued at more than \$4 million, directly contributing to the delivery of vital, community-focused services. Donations included face coverings/masks, food supports, household items for vulnerable individuals who needed to isolate, space for the expansion of critical services, toys for children, and technology products that helped youth stay on track with their schooling and helped seniors stay connected with others.

The City also worked closely with institutional partners including Toronto's eight universities and colleges as well as with healthcare providers. These strategic partnerships resulted in faculty and students supporting the City with economic and clinical modeling; students supporting track and contact tracing efforts and the development of 17 research projects focused on themes including Public Health, Transit and Transportation, Scenario Planning and Forecasting, Supporting Vulnerable Communities, Climate Change and Planning and Adapting Public Spaces, which will continue to assist Toronto's recovery and rebuild efforts.

Beyond the immediate success of DonateTO and the Task Force collaborations, the City built new and stronger relationships with public sector institutions, philanthropists, corporate Canada and residents, which will support future partnerships the Toronto Office of Partnerships will steward to explore new opportunities for the City to reimagine and rebuild in close collaboration with its partners.

7.10 Mobility

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in direct impacts to the transportation system and mobility in general in Toronto. In anticipation of recovery, the City responded by implementing and modifying programs that support city-building efforts and the City's mobility goals. The City also built in measures to be able to scale and be flexible to adapt if the nature of the pandemic changes.

I would like the City to address the issue of availability of transit by taking the action of working with provincial and federal government to plan and fund more subways, LRTs, Express bus lanes and make the city better...

Comment from Consultation

During the onset of the pandemic, essential travel and peak hours shifted to earlier times, resulting in ridership levels that made physical distancing difficult on public transit. Delays on roads were significantly reduced. During the week of July 25-31, there was an average improvement in city-wide travel times of 37 per cent and 44 per cent during a.m. and p.m. peak times. Total weekday cycling volumes have remained largely in line with historical volumes, but with shifts in time-of-day profiles – to mirror weekend-type travel patterns for cycling and bike sharing.

Considerations for managing the city's transportation system during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 recovery include travel requirements of essential workers, public transit, and changes in demand for single-occupancy vehicle travel and potential traffic congestion implications over time if physical distancing is maintained.

It is important to provide safe access to transit and other travel options for work and daily activities, including grocery shopping, getting to medical appointments, volunteering, and

other destinations. Safety, a common thread throughout the public survey, will become more important as more people use active transportation (e.g. cycling, walking). This trend can also be supported by increasing public awareness of the benefits of reducing automobile traffic.

Transit reliability, speed and reduced crowding in neighbourhoods with vulnerable populations, such as people with low incomes, women, youth and racialized groups, have the potential to improve access to economic development opportunities, City and other government services and spaces, food, health services and recreation. Many respondents to the public survey would like the City to address crowding, with some encouraging the City to make transit free and accessible.

Transportation initiatives should be sustainable and resilient, including but not limited to supporting public transit, active transportation and demand management to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Public survey respondents are interested in "sustainable" and "green" transportation.

Public survey findings also reiterated the importance of green space and parks and, more specifically, the "equitable access to green space". Many asserted that there is not enough green space, parks or space for walking and biking.

Active Transportation

In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, the City accommodated more space for residents to be outside of their homes while physical distancing and taking part in physical activities, including increased space for pedestrians, people queuing for shops and services, and for cycling.

Adaptations to the city's public transit, roads and public spaces are required to support ongoing and long-term requirements for physical distancing.

For example, ActiveTO was launched to increase the space people can use to get around the city (e.g. by walking and biking) to allow for physical distancing. It was evaluated against several factors, including population density, equity, access to greenspace and traffic volumes. ActiveTO initiatives included:

- Quiet Streets as a means of turning streets into shared space by installing signage and temporary barricades to encourage only slow, local vehicle access. As of June 10, 32 Quiet Street Routes were installed on 65.27 km of roadway.

- Major Road Closures - short-term closures (i.e. weekends and holidays) of major streets adjacent to trails that provide more space for walking and cycling.
- An expanded cycling network allowed people to bike safely, connect to priority areas, and mirror major transit routes as a response to a decrease in TTC ridership and to reducing demand on public transit that would otherwise put pressure on social distancing. The City Council-approved plan is the largest one-year expansion of on-street bike lanes ever in Toronto, with 40 km of lanes approved for accelerated installation in 2020.

ActiveTO Stats – Saturday May 23 Counts

ACTIVETO STATS – SATURDAY MAY 23 COUNTS



21,000

Cyclists counted on **Lake Shore Blvd West** at Ontario Dr, compared to 21,000 cars pre-COVID weekend.

4,700

Cyclists counted on **Bayview Ave**, north of River St (with another 3,400 cyclists on the Don Valley Trail alongside).

5,000

Cyclists counted on **Lake Shore Blvd East**, east of Coxwell Ave, compared to 12,200 cars pre-COVID weekday.

4,400

Pedestrians counted on **Lake Shore Blvd West** at Ontario Dr.

1,000

Pedestrians counted on **Bayview Ave**, north of River St (with another 750 cyclists on the Don Valley Trail alongside).

5,400

Pedestrians counted on **Lake Shore Blvd East**, east of Coxwell Ave.



The different levels of government needs to come together with a coordinated efforts to solve issues related to housing. COVID-19 has shown us how the lack of affordable housing options in Toronto has made it challenging for our most vulnerable residents.

Comment from Consultation

Transportation Innovation

The City is also exploring partnerships in its recovery strategy. An example of a strategy is Transportation Innovation Zones (TIZ). TIZs in rights-of-way will:

1. Help the City and the public understand emerging transportation technologies by allowing them to be transparently tested in Toronto
2. Support economic development by facilitating appropriate private and academic sector-led research and development in a real-world setting, and
3. Provide an area to focus City-led testing of transportation technologies and materials.

Transit/TTC

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) is a critical service in Toronto today, supporting the City's economic vitality, employment growth and social cohesion. It also connects Toronto's diverse communities to economic and social opportunities through an integrated network of transit services, including subway, bus, streetcar and Wheel-Trans modes. The most heavily used transit system in Canada and the third largest in North America, the TTC serves approximately 530 million riders annually. Further development of the transit network is important for the City to achieve its broad range of economic, social and environmental city-building objectives. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, transit played a pivotal role in keeping the city moving; each day enabling hundreds of thousands of people to travel to essential destinations including employment, grocery stores, pharmacies, healthcare facilities as well as to access leisure and recreational activities. There is a strong reliance on the transit network in Toronto, with approximately 46 per cent of all trips in the downtown and 28 per cent of all trips city-wide made by transit.

Available and affordable public transit can effectively reduce poverty through increased access to social and health services, community resources and economic opportunities. The inability of a portion of the population to easily move throughout the city decreases the economic and social returns on transportation investments. It hinders economic growth and prosperity, counteracts government efforts for efficiency, and may contribute to health inequities within the population.

Throughout the pandemic response, and despite the considerable drop in ridership, the TTC has remained committed to maintaining transit services with a special focus on serving neighbourhood improvement areas because reliable, safe transit is particularly important for Toronto's vulnerable communities. Many Toronto residents do not have options other than transit for getting to work, school and home, which was evident on the TTC during the pandemic. Rates of ridership did not decline as much for those riding the bus, with 36 per cent of bus customers continuing to use the TTC system compared to 19 per cent of subway customers. Supporting and improving the transit network helps to address inequities in the city and provides better service to those who need it the most. Therefore, while conventional system ridership experienced 15 per cent of normal levels, transit service was maintained at approximately 80 per cent overall. In addition, the demand-responsive service plan ensured additional resources were added to key routes when required to ensure physical distancing guidelines were followed.

As of July 31, the TTC continued to see ridership peaking about an hour earlier when compared to pre-pandemic ridership levels. Transit demand continued to be higher in areas outside of the downtown core, especially the northwest and southeast areas of the city. The downtown core continued to see less increase in transit use due to the continuation of work-from-home for the majority of downtown offices. Since Toronto entered the province's Stage 2 and Stage 3 of reopening, the increase in transit trips has been more evenly distributed across the city as shopping malls opened.

March 2-6 Average Weekday Boardings (Pre-COVID-19)

Bus	1,381k
Streetcar	350k
Subway	1,429k
Overall	3,160k



July 6-10 Average Weekday Boardings (During COVID-19)

Bus	547k	(40%)
Streetcar	105k	(30%)
Subway	375k	(26%)
Overall	1,027k	(33%)

This information is based on PRESTO taps on all modes and automated passenger count (APC) data for buses.

With the continued service and the significant drop in ridership, there has been enormous financial stress put on the TTC. Gradual recovery is expected to place an ongoing strain on TTC operations and its ability to support Toronto's broader economic recovery. During the pandemic, the TTC has been experiencing an average impact of \$90 million per month.

Financial impacts are likely to continue into 2021 given that some level of pandemic response measures is expected to continue for both staff and transit riders, including remote working arrangements; physical distancing and other safety measures as well as ridership behaviour and service demand.

7.11 Growth and Development

COVID-19 will continue to have significant fiscal, economic and social impacts, with major short- and long-term consequences, to the city and Toronto's development industry. Over the next 10 years, the estimated value of development activity in Toronto is over \$200 billion and ensuring that activity resumes quickly post-crisis is critical to Toronto's economic recovery. The City developed a Concept 2 Keys (C2K) program to improve how the City of Toronto attracts, facilitates and regulates development activity. C2K builds on the End-to-End Development Review undertaken by the City prior to the pandemic, with an expanded scope and accelerated timelines.

The emergency, and the associated economic impacts, have required the City to adjust its processes and accommodate and innovate to meet new challenges. In the past few months, C2K worked closely with the development community and soft launched a new online intake portal for a range of development applications. Currently, the C2K team is expanding the portal by adding additional application types and preparing for a broader public launch.

Construction

The City of Toronto's Building Division will support Toronto's economic recovery by supporting the construction sector and redirecting resources from enforcement to enabling development. Digitizing services will be critical because industry stakeholders want access to services on demand, without having to go in person to City offices. That means providing easily accessible information on the status of applications, including any outstanding requirements that might be holding up approvals.

Toronto Building is in the middle of a program review that will focus on better meeting the needs of developers and the construction sector, shifting its organizational culture and providing the public and industry stakeholders with clear protocols and online tools to assist them with their applications. The City will aim to eliminate multiple reviews and will bundle approvals on small projects to fast-track the process of permit issuance.



Housing Development

Toronto still faces substantial housing needs across all types, tenures and levels of affordability. Diversifying the variety of type and form of housing permitted in the city's neighbourhoods would, among other solutions, increase housing choice and access for residents.

It will be important for the City to consider ways to leverage market investments as part of its recovery strategy while being responsive to expectations and needs of diverse communities and ensuring the needs of residents to live in safe, affordable, accessible and livable neighbourhoods are met.

Options for expanding the City's parks and public spaces are limited, so creative options for acquiring new assets, as well as innovation in how available public spaces are used, will be necessary to respond to restrictions and meet health requirements while living in a COVID-19 environment. The City has seen an increase in the use of parks during the emergency as residents seek safe alternatives to staying indoors, engaging in social distancing outside to reduce the risks of contact and contamination, and to mitigate the impact of isolation.

Mobility and Transit Support the City's Growth Plan

Input to TORR's engagements identified the need for an expanded, connected transit network as central to the city being able to respond to current and future growth and development, including an expected 500,000+ new residents over the coming decades. A well-developed rapid-transit network will be essential for Toronto's economic competitiveness and for the region's competitive success as a whole.

The City's Official Plan, the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe each contain policies to encourage the development of complete compact communities with strong transit connections. Such communities make more efficient use of infrastructure and reduce the need for travel and the associated environmental impacts.

Reliable, safe transit is particularly important for Toronto's vulnerable communities. Supporting and improving access to the transit network will help address inequities in the city and provide better service to those who need it most.

Effective and reliable transit also helps address Toronto's congestion. A high-quality transit system enables more people to move through the city more easily and efficiently than the congestion that comes from a reliance on cars.



7.12 Public Engagement

Civic engagement is a core service of the City. It supports public and stakeholder involvement in visioning, issue identification, solution development, implementation and monitoring. It is an integral part of good governance and informs staff and City Council decision-making and virtually all City programs, policies and services. City-led engagement activities are diverse and number in the hundreds each year. Engagements include in-person and online methods, surveying, broad policy and issue-specific discussions, local and city-wide consultations, public appointments, polling, legislated public meetings, workshops and planning charrettes, and partnerships.

Over the years, the City has adopted an approach to engagement that provides the flexibility to achieve a variety of engagement objectives with diverse populations and a wide range of approaches. City divisions, agencies and corporations resource and lead most of their own engagements. That has helped them build considerable stakeholder knowledge and engagement expertise in areas such as environmental assessments, planning considerations, co-development and relationship building with Indigenous organizations and communities, and partnerships with vulnerable and equity-seeking groups. The City Manager's Office has played a support and convening role, leading city-wide engagements when directed by Council, providing training, research and a community of practice for City divisions and agencies to share experiences, learn from each other and collaborate on complex or large engagements.

Public feedback, lessons from other Canadian municipalities, and research all suggest ways that cities, including Toronto, can evolve civic engagement to better meet the needs of their public, staff and Council¹⁶. The public is committed to participating on a wide

range of issues with their local government, but a lack of trust and connection, uncertainty about how feedback will be used by decision-makers, and other systemic barriers to participation are keeping the City from always achieving a truly high standard in its public engagements.

The City needs a more responsive and coordinated approach, a larger toolbox of engagement and data management methods, and the ability to meet equity and accessibility objectives and the growing public expectation and interest in playing a greater role in local and city-wide decision-making. This expectation includes meeting communities' unique needs, including respecting self-determination of Indigenous peoples and honouring commitments the City has made with respect to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

A sustained investment in public engagement, including establishing a corporate lead, would increase the City's ability to deliver regular engagements as well as urgent or unscheduled engagements during difficult times such as during a pandemic or emergency. During the pandemic, the City leveraged its divisional expertise and relationships with community organizations to form ad-hoc working groups that led responses on a range of critical issues. With TORR, new staff groups and community partnerships formed to plan and implement significant community engagement on recovery and to restart divisional engagement on time-sensitive matters such as development and capital planning. This work was challenged by the lack of consistent divisional policies, training and staff resources to quickly resume engagement and manage public and internal feedback. Protocols, training, policies and tools would support effective, timely, quality engagement and new and strengthened relationships with residents, communities and partners.

We need to see more people of colour in leadership and as representatives in training programs.

Comment from Consultation

An effective toolbox of engagement and data management methods

In recent years, divisions and agencies have explored new methods such as online discussion platforms, telephone town halls, storefront, mall, park and street pop-ups, partnership tables, civic juries and training programs for resident leaders to build civic literacy and partnerships in delivering engagements. Often, these approaches gather valuable feedback and strengthen relationships for a particular project, but the lack of corporate-wide coordination and shared resources and tools have also led to unsustainable pilots, procurement delays, consultation fatigue or frustration, uneven distribution of resources and learnings, and inconsistent experiences for the public. Similarly, the City and the public would benefit from a coordinated approach to managing and gaining insights from participant information and feedback. Engagement data should be managed in ways that protect privacy, enable the City to proactively reach out to stakeholders on issues that they identify are important to them, support Open Data commitments, and share relevant data. Examples of engagement data include stakeholder networks and feedback on common issues across divisions and agencies to continuously improve relationships and engagement.

An equitable and accessible model

The perspectives of equity-seeking, Indigenous, Black and vulnerable individuals and communities are typically under-represented in policy and decision-making processes compared to other populations, due in part to the need for customizable engagement approaches that account for differences in mobility, culture, language and other socioeconomic factors. As staff engage greater numbers and a growing diversity of people through a wider range of methods, the public have expressed concerns that methods are still inaccessible, that the City engages the same groups and individuals in a piecemeal rather than coordinated manner, and that their own input does not influence decision-making.

The pandemic has exacerbated some barriers to participation. For example,

- Physical distancing and facial covering requirements and limits on numbers of people that can gather significantly affect the City's ability to engage in person at meetings, community fairs and events. Even when in-person methods can be modified and delivered safely, many people may avoid such interactions, particularly people who are hesitant to travel on public transit or are more vulnerable to COVID-19.
- Digital tools such as online surveys and web-based platforms offer ways to reach people, particularly when they cannot gather in person, but the City must consider how these platforms can be accessible and safe spaces for community conversations, and where other engagement methods may be preferable or can complement digital methods.
- Individuals and communities in Toronto who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 may be less likely to participate in engagement activities, including those living in long-term care, people experiencing homelessness or food insecurity, and some racialized communities. It is critical that engagement methods or stigma do not limit the participation of these individuals and communities.

How do we do any of this if those that are struggling are not part of the power structure?

Comment from Consultation

The City must strengthen its engagement approach to build trust and relationships through a consistent, accessible and high-quality engagement experience for the public and stakeholders. Engagement benefits Council and City divisions by ensuring purposeful processes, resulting in timely, applicable input that supports informed decision-making.

More accessible touch points for community members to engage and influence decision making processes, such as citizen assemblies, town halls, and community governance boards both online and in person with public health safety protocols, [will] foster democracy at the local level.

Comment from Consultation

7.13 Agencies and Corporations

Purpose of City Agencies and Corporations

City Council has chosen to deliver services through agencies and corporations for a variety of reasons, including:

- Meeting legislative or objectivity requirements
- Leveraging City resources by attracting funding
- Meeting objectives beyond core municipal services
- Operating in a commercial market environment
- Adding expertise and experience
- Engaging local community and diverse perspectives to guide service delivery
- Limiting the City's liability

The City's agencies range in purpose and function and generally fall into three broad categories:

- Service agencies, which include agencies where legislation limits Council's authority;
- Quasi-judicial bodies; and
- Business Improvement Areas

A full list of the City's agencies and corporations is available at www.toronto.ca/city-agencies-corporations-copy/.

Governance of City Agencies and Corporations

City Council has authority under the City of Toronto Act, 2006 to establish, change and dissolve City agencies and corporations, with some exceptions. City Council delegates authorities and defines the governance structure, mandate and relationship between the board and the City, and requires agencies and corporations to follow policies, procedures and reporting requirements established by the City. Three agencies -- the Toronto Police Services Board, Toronto Public Library Board and Toronto Board of Health -- are governed in accordance to provincial legislation specific to their responsibilities. This legislation results in restrictions to Council's authority over agencies under the City of Toronto Act. City Council approves the budget of City agencies and appoints members to its board, and in some instances appoints its chair.

City Council is also the shareholder of City corporations, appoints members to their boards and establishes their mandate, and reporting and other requirements. Given the differing history and mandate of each entity, City agencies and corporations operate with various degrees of autonomy and independence from City Council.

COVID-19 Response by Agencies and Corporations

The City's agencies and corporations are often called on to support City-wide objectives, and often seek guidance and support from the City to ensure they are aligned with one another and with the City's priorities. The response to the pandemic provided many examples of this relationship and the key role City agencies and corporations play in the city's well-being:

- Toronto Police Services assisted with bylaw enforcement;
- Toronto Community Housing Corporation provided housing for homeless people living outside;
- Toronto Public Library enhanced access to its online collection and provided space and staffing to offer food hampers to families;
- Some Association of Community Centres (AOCCs) community centres modified their food programs and offered virtual services to vulnerable clients;
- Toronto Public Health led and continues to lead the City's COVID-19 health response;
- The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) continued to provide its essential service with modifications to ensure emergency workers could travel to workplaces; in doing so, the TTC has run a significant deficit to ensure that its vital transit service continues to be provided.
- Business Improvement Areas worked closely with stakeholders and the City to support main-street and small businesses.

To support City agencies and corporations in fulfilling their emergency response activities and manage their operations through the pandemic, the City provided the following support:

- public health advice,
- access to PPE,
- emergency cash flow,
- facility playbooks to close, run and reopen facilities safely,
- occupational health and safety guidance,
- governance advice and supports,
- forums for regular information-sharing between the City and agencies, such as on human resources, and
- legal supports.

Aside from these important collaborations, some City agencies did report they were not engaged consistently by the City in the early stages of the pandemic response, and that the City didn't provide adequate and timely information and guidance about facility

closures and service suspensions. The City has emergency response provisions in the Toronto Municipal Code, but similar provisions are not required of agencies and corporations. Some larger agencies set up their own emergency operations centres, which facilitated communications and responses between the agency and the City (agencies such as Toronto Public Library and TTC). Given the unprecedented duration and nature of this emergency, the City may consider a review of emergency processes and procedures between the City and its agencies and corporations to prepare for future occurrences, applying lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff consulted with, received emails and calls from, and participated in discussions with City agencies and corporations resulting in the following suggestions for greater alignment with the City. Agencies and corporations would like to see:

- The City build on communication and coordination networks with agencies and corporations developed through the response and restart on an ongoing basis for recovery and rebuild;
- The City better inform and support agencies and corporations in their efforts to return to safe operations in a timely fashion;
- Senior City leadership communicate the City's emergency response, critical and essential business continuity, and recovery and rebuild priorities for each agency and corporation as applicable;
- The City conduct a structural review of community centre models to help determine best alternative service models; and
- The City work directly with agencies to advance initiatives and influence policy related to climate change, protection of vulnerable populations, and other objectives.



Financial Impact of COVID-19 on City Agencies and Corporations

COVID-19's impact on, and response from, the City's agencies and corporations differed depending on their mandate and service area, legislative framework and revenue sources. One of the primary impacts on several City agencies has been a loss of revenue resulting from COVID-19 closures. These agencies and corporations depend on revenue from fares, market sources and non-City funding (provincial, federal or charitable) such as the recreational, arts, social services and tourism focused organizations. Small community-based organizations such as the board-run community centres derive revenues mainly from memberships and donations, while larger boards such as the Toronto Parking Authority and Exhibition Place tend to engage in commercial ventures to manage City assets. In most cases, City agencies and corporations are partially subsidized by the City government.

As municipal entities, City agencies are ineligible (with some exceptions) for direct assistance through many federal and provincial emergency programs that were available to other similar commercial or not-for-profit enterprises. City agencies reached out to the City for financial support and advice including regarding staff layoffs during the closures. They remain anxious about the financial options available to them for operational sustainability.

The City of Toronto supported its agencies and corporations with financial assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a priority on requests for emergency relief funding. Agencies and corporations are provided funding (i.e. scheduled subsidies or emergency funds) once other sources of cash are depleted. The City anticipates that this cash flow process will continue for the foreseeable future, as agencies and corporations are experiencing financial pressures that will likely endure beyond 2020.

Restarting Agency and Corporations Services following COVID-19 Closures

Public-facing agencies began plans for reopening in-person services through spring/summer 2020. They expressed concern that their client base may not return, and by operating at the required lower capacity levels to sustain physical distancing, anticipate there will be little opportunity to recover their revenue potential. To mitigate these challenges, many agencies and corporations are reviewing their business models and how they deliver services, as well as engaging in novel marketing efforts, containing costs through measures such as staff reductions, and expanding fundraising efforts.

Some of the suggestions City agencies and corporations have provided the City to facilitate greater support in the short term include:

- Providing certainty regarding continued short-term and long-term funding for agencies and corporations to support operations through a potential second wave and to recover and rebuild;
- Assisting with pandemic-related costs and supplies (e.g. PPE, cleaning, engineering solutions, technology support);
- Providing assistance to enable the use of critical or essential agency and corporation services;
- In the longer term, allowing for year-end surpluses to flow to a reserve account for agencies or corporations to use to address emergencies in future years; and
- Eventually returning to funding strategic capital projects to support and transform their operations.



Modified Service Delivery

In addition to the financial pressures, agencies and corporations will have to continue to modify services and delivery approaches and implement public health measures, much like the City. Several agencies host large events and attractions as part of their key revenue sources (e.g. Exhibition Place hosts trade shows and conventions, TO Live operates performing arts venues, Toronto Public Library and community centres rent out space for meetings and events). While revenue will be limited as the market for large events will likely be depressed for the foreseeable future, they are pivoting to explore smaller events and alternative use of space. As well, drop-ins, community meetings and general public access to facilities such as community centres are likely to remain curtailed or modified, limiting their program offerings. While arenas are gradually opening with Stage 3 for Toronto, their operations will be modified in compliance with public health measures and legislative restrictions.

Agencies and corporations are using or exploring the use of technology to shift their services to a safer virtual platform, aware that this shift may not adequately meet the needs of their clients, who include low-income families, seniors, newcomers and people with disabilities.



To address some of these impacts, agencies and corporations recommend that the City:

- Continue communication with agencies and corporations to discuss common impacts to social agencies and opportunities to protect vulnerable clients;
- Prioritize longer term solutions (e.g. permanent housing, community social and mental health, community recreation) over crisis-oriented responses (shelters, policing);
- Continue advocacy efforts with the province to provide Toronto with the tools and resources it needs to effectively address challenges; and
- Offer support for virtual platforms to engage community members and provide online services.

Opportunities for the City to Leverage Agency and Corporation Assets

In addition to delivering a range of services to meet the City's strategic, financial and public policy objectives, City agencies and corporations generate and manage a significant portion of the City's physical assets, revenues and other resources. Agencies and corporations manage 48 per cent of the City's gross operating budget and have 27,870 total positions, representing 54 per cent of the City's workforce. These assets, a significant resource, need to be considered against risks for the City when considering planning for Toronto's recovery and rebuild as well as responses to future waves of COVID-19.

Shared Services and Strategic Alignment

The City provides the capital and operating budgets and a range of administrative supports to community-based agencies. The City launched the Shared Services Project in 2013 to identify opportunities for the City to further consolidate key administrative functions across agencies and corporations, including an exploration of how strengthening internal agency supports may achieve potential cost savings.

Given the significance of City agencies and corporations relative to the City's budget, a whole-of-government approach may be required to achieve strategic alignment with Council objectives, mitigate financial risks and ensure agency and corporation resilience over the long term. To that end, recognizing each entity's unique needs, circumstances and scope of responsibility, the City could undertake a review of the impacts of COVID-19 on agencies and corporations, including opportunities to accelerate service digitization and cost savings through shared services.



8 | Theme: Climate Change and Resilience

COVID-19 is a powerful reminder that the everyday stresses that Torontonians face are significantly exacerbated by external risks emerging from the natural world. COVID-19 emerged suddenly and with little warning. In contrast, climate change has long been recognized as another change in the natural environment that could undermine Toronto's efforts to build prosperity, equity and well-being.

A resilient city is better able to adapt to near- and long-term impacts of climate change and other natural events, such as a pandemic, that can disrupt City operations, impact people's lives and have a negative effect on the economy. A resilient city is focused on reducing inequities so that communities are better able to bounce back when they face a shock. A resilient city can generate new sources of economic opportunity by excelling in the development and adoption of sustainable technologies and practices.

Toronto should continue to address climate change and improve resilience through its recovery and long-term rebuild efforts to ensure the momentum and ground gained through past strategies are not lost. The City's existing efforts under the TransformTO Climate Action Strategy and the Resilience Strategy are generating ideas and partnerships that can help accelerate recovery and align rebuild with the City's strategic goals.

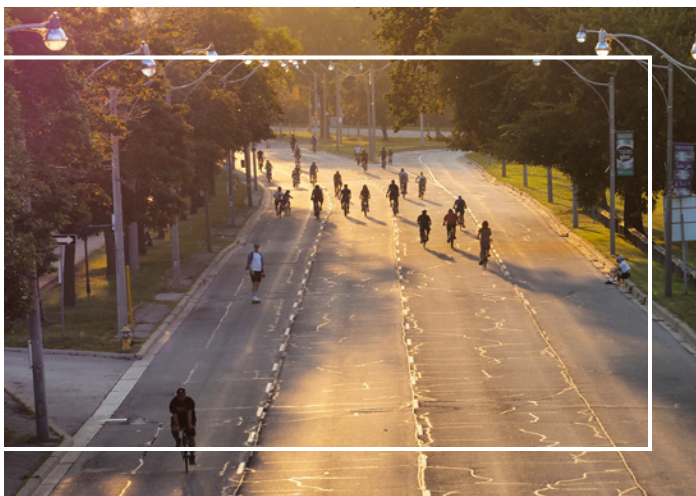
City already working to build a more resilient Toronto

Toronto's Resilience Strategy provided a community vision developed with the input of about 8,000 Torontonians and more than 80 organizations over two years. It was developed as part of the City's partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities initiative to:

- Protect the health and well-being of those who are at highest risk or are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
- Support City priorities to maintain affordability and the quality of housing by, for example, protecting homes from extreme weather.
- Support asset management and state of good repair by taking account of climate change to avoid future costs.
- Improve preparedness for extreme weather and other shocks, and capacity to recover from shocks.
- Advance TransformTO and improve alignment with federal and provincial policies that promote climate resilience.
- Maintain Toronto's leadership nationally and globally as a resilient city.

Based on these engagements, the Resilience Strategy identified a set of 10 goals and 27 actions in three focus areas: people and neighbourhoods, infrastructure, and leadership for a resilient city.

The [Resilience Strategy](#) was released publicly in June 2019 and Toronto City Council directed staff to institutionalize resilience into City decision-making and integrate the Resilience Strategy with TransformTO. City Council approved resources in the 2020 budget.



Key resilience concepts: shocks and stresses

Shocks are sudden, sharp events that threaten the immediate well-being of a city. Toronto faces potential shocks due to extreme precipitation (which leads to flooding), heatwaves, blizzards and cold snaps, terrorism, power outages and, most recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Stresses are chronic, meaning they exist day after day. Stresses weaken the ability of a city to bounce back in response to a shock. In Toronto, these stresses include increasing economic inequality among residents, systemic racism, a worsening housing crisis, congestion and mobility challenges, and aging infrastructure. A number of these factors have been experienced to a greater extent, and inequitably by some individuals and communities, due to COVID-19, and the result has been an exacerbation of stress to the city.

Climate change can manifest itself as both a stress and a shock, and its impacts are further compounded by critical urban pressures such as inadequate housing and inequality.

Climate goals, actions and emerging policy tools

TransformTO, Toronto's Climate Action Strategy, was unanimously adopted by City Council in 2017. The goal of TransformTO is to achieve Toronto's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission-reduction target while creating an equitable, healthy, prosperous and resilient city that benefits all. Given the scope of the challenge, the City's divisions, agencies and corporations must all play a role. That includes extensive external partnership with the private sector, the non-profit sector, residents and other levels of government.

To develop TransformTO's next steps, in 2019, the Environment and Energy Division (EED) gathered input from approximately 3,800 residents through various channels, including child engagement and a partnership with Indigenous Climate Action.

In October 2019, City Council, along with many other cities, declared a climate emergency. Council committed to accelerate the TransformTO climate actions while integrating the findings and recommendations of the Resilience Strategy. The declaration strengthened Toronto's TransformTO carbon-reduction goal by establishing a net-zero greenhouse gas emission target for Toronto by 2050 or sooner. This is the target required globally to limit average global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The City's Net Zero Strategy is now being developed. More detailed information is available online at the City's [TransformTO](#) web pages.



To support progress toward a net-zero carbon target, the City is developing a climate lens to help evaluate the climate impacts and considerations of major decisions across the City organization. The insights could also improve the resilience of infrastructure to future climate events, reduce operating and service disruption and associated costs, and improve the City's accountability and transparency. It will also provide data and insights to secure intergovernmental funding, strengthen evidence-based policy-making and build a more complete understanding of performance-based decision-making – outcomes also related to COVID-19 recovery and rebuild.

The City is also focusing on carbon budgeting in support of a net-zero carbon target. Carbon budgeting means restricting the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions that the City can emit over a year. This would embed climate considerations in planning initiatives and track progress on greenhouse gas reductions City-wide. Much like a traditional annual fiscal budget, implementing a carbon budget would involve establishing targets on carbon reductions at the start of the year, along with an action plan on how these targets will be achieved. The City could allocate and transfer carbon between different divisions or projects to balance the City's overall carbon budget. Carbon budgets can also help clearly communicate the impact of carbon reduction efforts to the public, organizations and stakeholders.

Other City strategies that contribute to resilience and address climate change

City strategies on equity, prosperity, health and city building intersect with and support the City's resilience and climate change goals. Understanding the relationship between these actions and goals will support the City's decision-making and consideration of budget and resource implications and how to address inequities magnified by the pandemic.

These strategies include:

- Overarching strategies: City of Toronto Corporate Strategic Plan;
- Equity-focused strategies: Indigenous Affairs Office Path to Reconciliation; Toronto Food Strategy; Housing TO; Poverty Reduction Strategy; Climate Change and Health Strategy;
- Transportation strategies: Vision Zero; Cycling Network Plan; Bike Share Toronto; Electric Vehicles Strategy; Freight and Goods Movement Strategy; Automated Vehicles Tactical Plan; TTC Corporate Plan, Capital Investment Plan, and 5-Year Service Plan and 10-Year Outlook; Pathway to Sustainable City of Toronto Fleets;
- Environmental strategies: Long-Term Waste Management Strategy; Ravine Strategy; Biodiversity Strategy; Strategic Forest Management Plan 2012-2022; Tree Planting Strategy; Parkland Strategy; Downtown Energy Strategy; The Atmospheric Fund Strategic Directions 2019-2022;
- Asset strategies: City-Wide Portfolio Management Strategy; City Asset Management; Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2019-2038.

Sources of greenhouse gases in Toronto

In Toronto, the largest source of local greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is buildings (52 per cent), followed by transportation and waste.¹¹⁷ Emissions from buildings are primarily from residential buildings (51 per cent), followed by commercial/institutional buildings (36 per cent) and industrial buildings (13 per cent). Approximately 94 per cent of GHG emissions from buildings result from the combustion of natural gas to heat space and water.

Transportation is the second greatest source of GHG emissions in Toronto, responsible for an estimated 38 per cent of local emissions. Passenger vehicles are responsible for the great majority (79 per cent) of local transportation GHG emissions, with light commercial vehicles at 11 per cent and heavy vehicles at 9 per cent. Transportation is also the greatest source in Toronto of air pollutants that impact health.

Waste is responsible for approximately 10 per cent of Toronto's GHG emissions. The majority of these emissions are from landfill.

These sources of GHG in Toronto point to areas of potential remedies and areas of focus for a green recovery.

It is possible that GHG emissions in Toronto decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Daily carbon dioxide emissions around the world are estimated to have fallen by about 17 per cent by early April, relative to 2019 average levels.¹¹⁸ This decrease in emissions was generated by a massive shift in human behaviour. This indicates that GHG-reduction efforts in the future will need to be ambitious and implemented thoughtfully and early in rebuild plans to ensure they result in co-benefits for residents, such as improved air quality, enhanced employment opportunities and economic activity.



Rather than needing to be better prepared to combat climate change, active steps should be taken to reduce the impact - a proactive approach rather than reactive.

Comment from Consultation

What COVID-19 tells us about achieving resilience and climate change goals

COVID-19 has demonstrated that communities, governments and nations are able to mobilize to address significant shocks. It has also demonstrated that Toronto's public health and safety, economy and quality of life are vulnerable to environmental threats that can emerge from anywhere on the planet, and that there is value in coordinating action with other major cities.

City leaders from around the world have already linked the need to consider COVID-19 recovery in the context of global change. Mayor John Tory became a signatory to the C40 Global Mayor's COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce *Statement of Principles* focused on a low-emissions, equitable recovery. These principles speak to the need "to rebuild our cities and economies in a way that improves public health, reduces inequality and addresses the climate crisis".¹¹⁹ To date, 45 mayors from major cities have endorsed the principles.

In May, in the largest international mobilization of health care professionals since the 2015 Paris climate agreement, more than 350 healthcare groups representing about 40 million healthcare professionals from 90 countries called on G20 leaders to "prioritize investments in public health, clean air, clean water and a stable climate in the economic stimulus packages" currently being considered in response to COVID-19.¹²⁰

Climate and resilience – engagement and key findings

Engagement overview and data sets analyzed

Both TransformTO and the Resilience Office conducted extensive consultations that included City-led and community-led processes, stakeholder consultations, public events and workshops, online surveys, pop-up conversations, a telephone-based town hall, activities created for children, and talks by community leaders, prior to COVID-19. The City also partnered with Indigenous Climate Action (ICA) to design, host and [report](#) on the outcomes of a 2019 workshop with Indigenous communities on urban climate action.

The consultation undertaken by TransformTO and the Resilience Office produced a wide range of recommendations. The observations in this Theme report were also informed by these consultations, as they share many common objectives with recovery and rebuild.

The Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild climate change and resilience theme leads also engaged a broad range of individuals and organizations, from community and non-governmental organizations to labour and business. More than 70 organizations and numerous participants were engaged through short-format discussions. Two larger consultations were convened with networks of organizations working on climate change and resilience issues. A consultation coordinated with Social Planning Toronto included a climate change and resilience question. A joint facilitated discussion was coordinated by the City's Indigenous Affairs Office (IAO) was also held on climate change and resilience. Staff also analyzed input from the Mayor's Roundtable on Green Industries and the Academic Roundtable - Toward a Green and Just Recovery for Toronto.



What we heard – consultation findings and observations

In consultations that informed TransformTO and the Resilience Strategy, one message that echoed across all consultations was for the City to take faster, bolder and more strategic action on climate. Participants urged the City to ensure actions are commensurate with the climate emergency declaration.

Other frequent messages on the overall approach to recovery and rebuild from a climate and resilience perspective included:

- There is a critical need to address inequities through recovery and rebuild.
- Recovery and rebuild presents an opportunity and a need to do things differently.
- Toronto should “build back better,” and successful COVID-19 recovery and rebuild means addressing issues of equity, economy, resilience and climate change together.
- Climate change is a slower moving crisis; recovery and rebuild in response to COVID-19 presents an opportunity to accelerate climate action.
- Problem-solving for multiple issues at a time to achieve co-benefits will be important.

Equity and Community

Issues, desired outcomes and opportunities

Equity was one of the most frequent themes raised by stakeholders during TORR consultations on climate and resilience. The need for the City’s recovery plans to directly address disparities in access to infrastructure and services was raised in discussions on economy, jobs, mobility, buildings, community, governance and finance.

Those consulted highlighted the uneven geographic distribution of COVID-19 impacts in Toronto and recognized how pre-existing stresses in some communities likely contributed significantly to increased severity in those areas of the city. It was also noted that the pandemic will have exacerbated the vulnerability of marginalized people and communities. There is a need to address and improve the social determinants of health throughout all stages of recovery and rebuild.

Consultations and other research note that climate change impacts will also be disproportionate and uneven and have greater impact on marginalized and racialized people. For example, extreme heat,

KEEP COOL AT HOME

BLOCK THE SUN

Keep blinds or curtains closed to block out the sun during the day.



AVOID USING THE OVEN

Limit the use of the oven or stove; they make your space hotter.



USE A FAN

Use a fan near an open window to bring in cooler air from outside.



PLAN AHEAD

Ask your landlord about providing an air-conditioned common area that residents can visit.

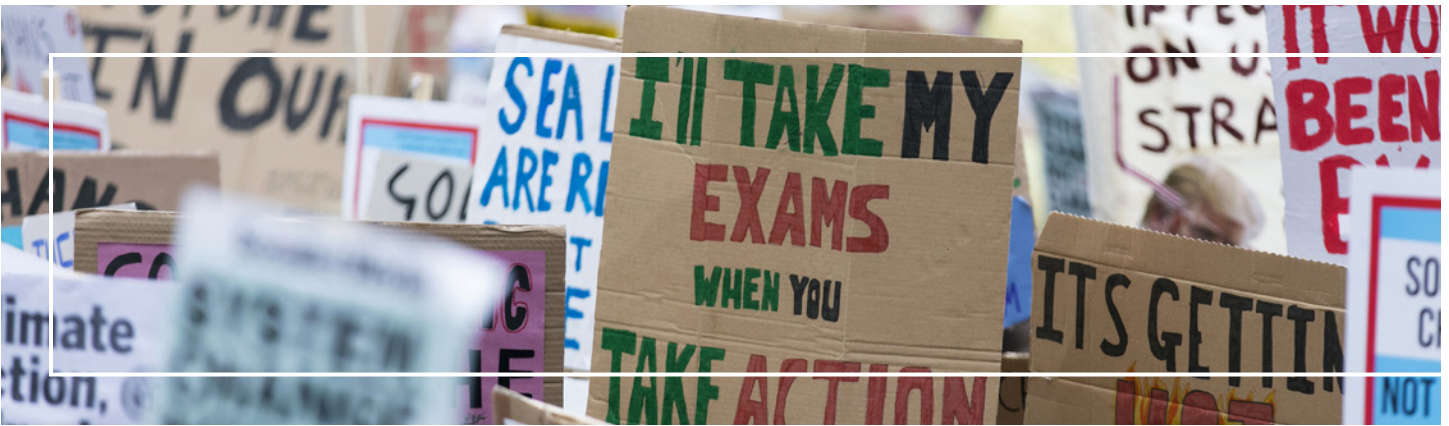


an issue the City is working to address and one that is anticipated to worsen due to climate change, is recognized as a major health challenge for vulnerable populations including seniors. Others who are vulnerable to extreme heat include those with pre-existing medical conditions, children, those living in poor housing conditions with no air conditioning, social supports or access to cooling options. Closures due to COVID-19 resulted in significantly fewer cool spaces (such as libraries, malls and community centres) for people to use for cooling. COVID-19 added another acute risk to these existing challenges and added a layer of complexity given the need to manage multiple risks simultaneously.

Recommendations in the Resilience Strategy are applicable to COVID-19 recovery, including overcoming any potential second wave. For example, residents from neighbourhood improvement areas suggested neighbourhood-based emergency preparedness plans for each community based on their respective challenges, assets and infrastructure.

Engagement participants agreed that successful reopening, restart, recovery and rebuild must be planned using an equity lens, just as equity is central to building resilience in a changing climate.

Groups emphasized the need to enable and support structures that facilitate meaningful participation and political inclusion of equity-seeking groups, including those impacted by systemic racism, in decision making processes. Others identified support for universal



basic income and changes in the City's and other governments' budgeting processes to focus on indicators such as wellness, or other outcomes-based measures that more holistically reflect improvements in communities' socioeconomic and health status.

Participants also highlighted the critical importance of connectivity, access to fast, reliable Internet as centrally important to economic and social participation (likely increasingly important as governments work to rapidly digitize services).

Applying an equity lens to recovery and rebuild, including efforts to improve housing and social services, decrease poverty and increase economic participation and improve health, will also reduce the drivers and impacts of climate change.

Significant ideas and input from various groups and recovery-focused initiatives highlighted the central role of equity and health, including from the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), the Pembina Institute, Sustainable Prosperity Canada, and the Just Recovery for All and Inclusive Recovery initiative.



Key suggestions from engagements and consultations

- Prioritize spending associated with recovery and rebuild, including any stimulus funding, in COVID-19 impacted communities through the explicit consideration of equity objectives, including considerations of Indigenous Reconciliation, efforts to address anti-Black racism and the social determinants of health, alongside a climate lens analysis.
- Make advancing equity and confronting anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, and all forms of systemic racism, central goals of the recovery by using an intersectional gender, race and equity lens in recovery and rebuild planning.
- Meaningfully and deliberately involve the residents of Toronto's communities most impacted by COVID-19 in planning and decision-making relevant to the implementation of recovery and rebuild activities in their communities.
- Build on community-led initiatives in response to COVID-19, support community and neighbourhood-based resilience initiatives to continue to address COVID-19 challenges and opportunities and also prepare for future shocks that impact communities, for example a potential second wave of COVID-19, heat waves, flooding, etc.
- Expand the City's Hot Weather Response program to provide more cooling options for members of vulnerable communities, to renew and cool older apartment buildings, and to reduce urban heat through green infrastructure.
- Support connecting marginalized communities through access to high speed Internet to maximize opportunities for socioeconomic inclusion and access to increasingly digitized government services.
- Recognize the significant impacts of COVID-19 on food security and accelerate and support initiatives to improve access to healthy and affordable food for Torontonians.

Economy, business and jobs

Issues, desired outcomes and opportunities

Climate change and resilience featured significantly in discussions related to economic recovery, as well as challenges and opportunities for businesses and employment. Those consulted emphasized the need to remember the climate crisis and said the investments made now in new businesses, the economy and the workforce need to be “futureproofed” to ensure they remain relevant and valuable.

Stakeholders referenced two distinct levels of action - systemic change in the way the economy functions and practical considerations for addressing the immediate needs and opportunities of businesses and the workforce. Observations and questions raised included:

- An economic model built around constant growth and measured only by GDP is not sustainable, and alternative models should be explored.
- COVID-19 has highlighted the fragilities and interconnections associated with a global economy.
- How could immediate challenges of COVID-19 align with the challenges and opportunities associated with the economic transformation and transition needed to address climate change over the longer term.
- How to address the tension between measures taken to ensure well-being (lockdown) during COVID-19 and the impact of those measures on the economy.
- What does a successful economy look like in terms of well-being, “doughnut economics” and the a circular economy.
- How to move toward zero-waste in a way that creates economic opportunities for materials recovery, reuse and repair.



Participants identified opportunities for creating meaningful employment that could aid recovery and advance climate change goals. Proposals included:

- Retooling, building workforce capacity and addressing skills gaps and in the process building out a competitive, greener, decarbonized economy.
- Helping local small business transition to a hybrid of relying on neighbourhood patronage while taking advantage of broader online marketplaces for sustainably produced products.
- Supporting Toronto’s emerging but “infant” clean technology sector.
- Applying Toronto’s research and innovation capacity to create a well-being-oriented economy that situates the environment, climate change and sustainability as part of a more inclusive economy.
- Improving processes and creating new business opportunities to improve the “last mile” challenges of connecting people and goods between key transportation hubs and final destinations.
- Accelerating existing programs that build economic opportunities in neighbourhoods hit hardest by COVID-19 through reducing and reusing waste and building a local circular economy.
- Recognizing the value of the “caring economy” made up of workers who care for children, seniors, the ill and the vulnerable, work that makes it possible for others to enter the labour force.



While the opportunities for creating “green” employment are well recognized, so are the challenges. There is a critical need to invest in people and labour in transitioning to jobs in a low-carbon economy. For example, mechanics asked to transition from maintaining vehicles with internal combustion engines to vehicles with electric motors need significant new knowledge and training.

Some stakeholders highlighted potential economic opportunities of the City of Toronto's goal to work toward zero waste and a circular economy. A circular economy aims to reduce waste and maximize resources by replacing the linear take/make/dispose approach to production and consumption with an innovative system that focuses on product longevity, renewability, reuse, and repair. A circular economy represents a fundamental change to current economic systems, a change that decouples human prosperity from the use of natural resources and the depletion of ecosystems. For cities, a circular economy can significantly reduce waste, improve quality of life and foster economic growth through clean and sustainable innovation, while reducing resource dependency and environmental impacts. There is an opportunity to intentionally design and implement a transition to a circular economy to support a bold, prosperous, equitable and sustainable recovery.



External research

The International Energy Association (IEA) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), through their Sustainable Recovery report, speak to the opportunities for economic and social uplift through investments in a climate-aligned recovery.¹²¹

The Science-Based Targets Group, a coalition of more than 155 companies (e.g. Unilever, Sanofi, Salesforce, Zurich Insurance) with a combined valuation of than \$2 trillion dollars employing more than five million employees, have called for a “policy that pairs recovery with ambitious climate action”.¹²²

In Canada, one industry-led initiative, Resilient Recovery,¹²³ supported by 280 signatories representing 2,112 companies, has been advocating for a resilient (climate-action-focused) recovery, and by extension supporting the interests of 298,000 Canadian employed by the sector. These jobs range from insulating houses to developing new technologies for renewable energy, and more. Moreover, as others have highlighted, incredible opportunities exist to grow this aspect of the economy while the broader economy is being decarbonized.

The Building Back Better with a Bold Green Recovery¹²⁴ report was supported by 50 corporate leaders from a range of Canadian industries and businesses.¹²⁵ Yet another coordinated by International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), based in Winnipeg, released a report *Green Strings: Principles and Conditions for a Green Recovery from COVID-19 in Canada* supported by leading environmental and policy groups, representing close to two million people, identified seven “green strings” strategies that should be attached to any recovery efforts. While directed toward the federal government, many are relevant in the municipal context, specifically the need to support companies working toward net zero, and the need to support a just transition that prepares workers for green jobs as well other principles aligned with the City’s equity, climate and resilience goals.¹²⁶

Researchers from a group of UK universities published a paper stating that strategic investments scaled appropriately to achieve net-zero emissions would contribute significantly to the economic recovery required to address COVID-19. The researchers highlight strong evidence that “green stimulus policies”, compared to traditional stimulus measures, lead to greater job creation and are localized, in the short-term. In the longer run, the operation and maintenance of productive clean technologies make them less intensive and generate multipliers arising from energy cost savings.¹²⁷

Canada's Economic Strategy Table on clean energy indicates that by 2030, a \$26-trillion low-carbon economy will create 65 million jobs worldwide.¹²⁸

The need for climate and resilient focused recovery was also supported by a McKinsey and Company analysis. Their analysis of options in one European country suggest that mobilizing €75-150 billion in capital could yield €180-350 billion in gross value added, generate up to three million new jobs, and enable a carbon-emissions reduction of 15 to 30 per cent by 2030. Alternatively, if a high-carbon recovery is pursued, it would make it challenging to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement and might leave governments challenged to pay for emissions cuts later.¹²⁹

Key suggestions from engagements and consultations

- Coordinate with economic and business sectors to develop a green jobs strategy aligned with COVID-19 recovery that supports the growth of green industries in Toronto (cleantech, green buildings, caring economy, local manufacturing, sustainable production, etc.) with a focus on workforce development, capacity building and re-skilling that supports unemployed, underemployed and equity seeking groups.
- Facilitating labour market transition given a need for decarbonisation and the increased digitization of the economy.
- Support initiatives to promote the development of a circular economy through recovery and rebuild efforts.
- Work with the provincial and federal governments to accelerate the development of a circular economy model focused on zero waste that supports local and regional business by creating economic opportunities through materials recovery, reuse and repair.
- Re-evaluate current methodologies for assessing economic prosperity (e.g. GDP measures) with a focus on a more holistic, outcomes-based approach (e.g. well-being budgets, doughnut economics).
- Coordinate, consult and compensate the workers in the “caring economy” to sustain a level of care in the continued response to COVID-19 as well as recovery and rebuild efforts.

Buildings and Energy

Issues, desired outcomes and opportunities

Toronto's buildings are where residents live, work, and play and it is essential that they are safe and resilient, that they promote well-being, and that they are part of the City's low-carbon future. Through COVID-19 recovery and rebuild efforts, opportunities exist to improve the quality of the buildings, and in doing so make them healthier and more resilient. In Toronto, 500,000 Torontonians live in highrise apartment towers that are more than 35 years old, and there are key resilience risks in those buildings.

Emissions from all buildings represent 52 per cent of the city's overall GHG emissions, with a significant relationship to existing energy systems.¹³⁰ Prior to COVID-19, it was broadly acknowledged that significant investments and improvements were needed to enhance resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing buildings.

COVID-19 has had significant impacts on built form – buildings and energy systems – from several perspectives. Comments and input received on this topic represent a significant proportion of the input received through engagement on resilience and climate change.

Like the pandemic, climate change is an existential threat to our communities and creating resilience to climate change is the most important thing the city can do. Learning from this pandemic, I hope the city focuses on building climate resilience and taking action on what seems like 'far off' risks.

Comment from Consultation

Short-term impacts

COVID-19 has resulted in entire buildings being emptied of their occupants, while others have seen an increase in occupancy as COVID-19 has forced millions of people to be at home for much of the time. COVID-19 also impacted the industry that designs and engineers buildings and building systems, manufacturers and suppliers, as well as the labour and building professionals that construct and renovate buildings. While many aspects of the building, engineering and construction industry are considered essential and activities have continued, there has no doubt been an impact, from the need for physical distancing on job sites to permitting and approvals to project financing.

Given these challenges, stakeholders highlighted specific concerns with respect to progressing and ultimately accelerating climate action in this area. For many, the exceptionally low price of natural gas (prior to COVID-19 and at present) is a significant barrier to advancing decarbonization. Those consulted also highlighted that financing for green buildings projects may become more challenging in the current economy. If financial constraints contribute to building projects being less ambitious in the use of green technology, these buildings will have higher emissions for decades to come.



Building renewal

A broad range of organizations including the David Suzuki Foundation, Pembina Institute, Efficiency Canada, the Canada Green Building Council, The Atmospheric Fund and others have identified significant opportunities for cities, including Toronto, to make progress on climate goals through retrofitting and increased use of clean electricity. Measures identified by these groups and currently being explored by the City include zero-emission building requirements for new and existing homes and commercial buildings, policies and regulation to drive energy efficiency, electrification and the specification of low-carbon building materials. Additional inputs speak to co-financing for public and commercial retrofitting, efforts to de-risk and encourage project financing, investment in low-carbon research and development and substantial investments in upskilling and workforce development.

Toronto's older apartment towers have been identified as one of the most pressing priority for the city's resilience. These buildings are home to one in three low-income families and many equity-seeking groups are overrepresented in the buildings, including seniors and newcomers. International evidence shows that deep retrofits of towers - which go beyond state of good repair to include improving the building envelope to improve insulation, new heating/hot water equipment, better ventilation and cooling, accessibility upgrades, fire system upgrades, and emergency backup power - result in significantly improved health and well-being outcomes for residents, improved resilience to the building and reduced GHG emissions. COVID-19 underscored the importance of retrofitting these buildings so they provide healthy and safe places to live for marginalized communities in Toronto.

Despite challenges, stakeholders emphasized the relative speed at which stimulus monies could be applied to retrofitting buildings and consequently support economic activity and livelihoods linked to this sector, from energy efficiency professionals to trades and labour. Given the broad range of building types and building stock, the predominant suggestion was that efforts should be concentrated on retrofitting public and institutional assets, for example schools, community centres and libraries. It was proposed that the City use anticipated stimulus dollars to jump-start retrofitting efforts through investment in its own portfolio and, in doing so, demonstrate the benefits.

Such activity could support economic activity while developing the industry and workforce required to facilitate the decarbonization of building stock over time. Many who commented pointed to research and studies highlighting considerable economic opportunities in this regard. While the benefits of retrofitting

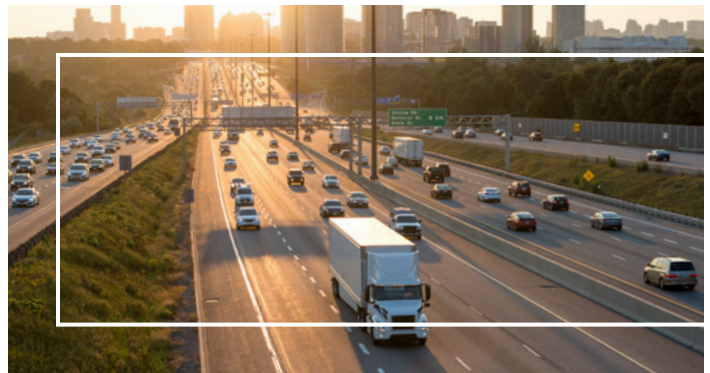
have been studied and articulated, practical implementation has proven more challenging. Many individuals and groups thought the City should also play a supportive role working with partners (public, private and not-for-profit sector) to aggregate potential projects. Stakeholders spoke to Toronto's competitive advantage in developing a pipeline of projects, given the knowledge developed through its implementation of Energy and Water Reporting and Benchmarking (EWRB), and a history of City-led programs, for example, the Better Buildings Partnership (BBP). There was enthusiasm for the potential of using the City's data assets, such as EWRB data and existing ASHRAE Level 2 building audits, to build a case for a large-scale retrofitting effort.

Energy policy

Many highlighted an incompatibility between Toronto's focus on decarbonization and the province's current energy policy, which will increase use of natural gas for electricity generation. Stakeholders highlighted that many of Toronto's efforts toward net zero could be nullified by provincial energy policies and that the City needs to advocate to the province to address this issue, similar to the ways the City supported the phase-out of coal-fired electricity generation. The input received from stakeholders on the need to electrify light, heat, cooling and powering the city is significantly tied to this issue.

Those consulted emphasized the need to use energy significantly more efficiently, to move from fossil fuel to electricity in order to heat and cool buildings, but also to decarbonize the electricity grid. Repeatedly those engaged highlighted the province's role in these issues, including regulations and priorities for utilities, and specifically Toronto Hydro's role. Some of those consulted supported the use of hydrogen and renewable natural gas within the existing natural gas system, while others supported the City taking the position that the City intends to move away from fossil fuels and toward electrification.

Those consulted saw a central role for Toronto Hydro in leading energy efficiency measures and supporting future planning for electrification (the electrification of transportation will be addressed separately). They emphasized the need for Toronto Hydro to take a more innovative and future-forward approach to supporting decarbonization. As Toronto Hydro's main shareholder, the City could use its influence to work with the utility, while recognizing the role of provincial authorities and the Ontario Energy Board (OEB).



Key suggestions from engagements and consultations

- Support socioeconomic recovery and rebuild, workforce development and Toronto's green economy through a City of Toronto commitment to retrofit existing buildings and to ensure any new buildings constructed by the City of Toronto (and agencies/corporations) are built to a standard aligned to meeting Toronto's climate objectives while improving health, air quality and resilience;
- Support the broader public and private sector in an accelerated effort to retrofit their buildings, including Toronto's older apartment towers;
- Support the public and private sector in an accelerated effort to construct any new buildings to a standard aligned to meeting Toronto's climate objectives;
- Explore opportunities to aggregate retrofit projects to achieve efficiencies of scale working with major property owners, including major institutions;
- Increase policy ambitions and use the City's regulatory powers to support these efforts;
- Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for funding and support;
- Accelerate efforts to electrify heating and cooling in buildings, using policy and regulation to encourage electrification in building back better;
- Advocate to the province to prevent carbon lock-in of the provincial electricity grid by prioritizing conservation and demand management, efficiency and renewable energy generation rather than increased consumption of natural gas;
- As the sole shareholder of Toronto Hydro, apply influence working in collaboration with Toronto Hydro to accelerate efforts toward electrification of both building heating systems and vehicles as well as other activities required to support decarbonisation such as conservation and demand management, efficiency and renewable energy generation.

Mobility

Issues, Desired Outcomes and Opportunities

Transportation demand, patterns, modes and capacity in Toronto have been heavily impacted by COVID-19. Access to transportation with physical distancing will be critical for getting people back to work, school and daily life.

In the immediate term, stakeholders focused on urgently improving mobility options in Toronto to allow for physical distancing, especially for those without access to private vehicles. Over the long term, stakeholders talked about transformational changes to how people and goods move around the city and region to provide people with more access to employment and services, improving livability and well-being in the city and contributing to climate goals. Stakeholders urged the City to think about equity and roads - how to improve public health, disadvantaged communities and air quality.

The situation before COVID-19

Diverse stakeholders spoke of the need to improve transportation options throughout the city. Prior to COVID-19 inequitable access to mobility was cited as a major concern by many. People expressed the view that downtown, people wishing to use transit, cycle or walk have a very different experience than residents of Toronto's vulnerable communities in the inner suburbs, and the disparities have been exacerbated by COVID-19. One stakeholder compared the situation downtown and in other parts of the city, referencing the need for separated cycle tracks with safety barriers, green infrastructure and shading: "If Richmond is worthy of barriers," busy commercial corridors in northwest Toronto "should be too."



A lot of resilience has been shown at the community level in responding to COVID-19, and this should be supported so that we are in a stronger position as a society during the next waves, and the next pandemics. Communities know what they need, and often have the skills within them to meet their needs.

Comment from Consultation

Transit

Stakeholders frequently cited a need for transit to be more reliable, available and affordable, and highlighted a need for more transit funding on an emergency basis as well as consistently over the long term.

Many stakeholders spoke about a need to support and expand transit availability immediately, particularly in vulnerable communities, including lower-income inner suburban communities. Methods identified include reallocating road space, particularly by expanding the use of buses operating in transit priority corridors. There was positive reaction to the acceleration of planned changes to surface transportation in response to the pandemic, specifically recent announcements on bus rapid transit. Participants spoke of the need to make the expansion of convenient transit permanent. In the city's most challenged neighbourhoods, such investment and action would improve access to jobs, services and other needs, both immediately during recovery and in the long term.

These opinions are consistent with those expressed during TransformTO consultations in 2019 when participants expressed a need for more robust and reliable transit, including more transit priority zones.

Active Transportation – Cycling and Walking

A strong focus of stakeholder feedback was on increasing access to safe, separated cycling and walking infrastructure. Cycling and walking were cited for their value in offering a healthier, less expensive way to travel in the city.

A common theme in TORR consultations was the need to re-allocate road space for access to jobs and other services in the recovery period and long-term. Many stakeholders cited the need for the City to satisfy unmet demand for more kilometres of safe-cycling infrastructure.

Stakeholders mentioned the City's success in rapidly creating much-needed space for cycling and walking through ActiveTO, and expressed a desire to see these measures expanded and made permanent. A number of the responses to the pandemic, such as accelerated development of cycling infrastructure and more safe space for pedestrians, have climate and resilience benefits. ActiveTO is about making sure people have space to get around and maintain physical distancing, and it supports essential trips, front-line workers and vulnerable road users.

A number of stakeholders noted that the first major ActiveTO measures were centred downtown, and said the next major ActiveTO announcement should be about measures in the inner suburbs that experience the greatest long-term stresses of inequality and racism, and that have been the hardest hit by the impacts of COVID-19. Numerous stakeholders encouraged the City to consider lessons from cities that are more advanced in re-allocating road space to the modes that are in demand today during COVID-19 recovery, and over the long term.

These opinions are consistent with input received in the development of Toronto's Resilience Strategy on the importance of expanding active transportation infrastructure. Active transportation infrastructure can exist alongside, or locally in place of, other road uses where appropriate. A number of options exist to balance the use of road space while moving as many people as possible and meeting the City's goals on congestion, climate and resilience.

Electrification

A frequent theme in TORR stakeholder discussions was the importance of putting Toronto on a path to electrify the movement of people and goods as part of building back better and to maintain the cleaner air experienced as a result of this difficult time. Fossil fueled vehicle traffic is the primary source in Toronto of air pollutants that affect health, and impacts are greatest in lower-income communities that are more likely to be located near a major road or highway.¹³¹ During TORR consultations, participants emphasized the importance of “multi-solving” – addressing multiple needs/challenges simultaneously. One opportunity is enabling electric mobility, particularly using a shared model, to address climate, air quality, health and equity concerns. Discussions about electric mobility included private vehicles, the need for shared models of electric vehicle (EV) ownership, building on the TTC's success with e-buses, and e-micro mobility such as e-cargo bikes. Accelerating the implementation of the City's Electric Vehicle Strategy may be a specific opportunity to drive a green recovery and build back better.





Goods Movement

Numerous ideas were put forward about the movement of goods. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a considerable increase in trips by delivery vehicles carrying the groceries and goods people have ordered online for delivery, rather than purchasing in person. Stakeholders spoke of the need to manage the number of trips by delivery vehicles to homes and retail outlets in the short- and long-term, to manage air pollution, noise, congestion and infrastructure usage, and to meet the City's climate commitments. One group suggested a tax on items delivered to reflect the increased costs borne by the City as a result of increased delivery activity.

Stakeholders' ideas for improving goods movement in Toronto included considering equity and environment in Toronto's freight strategy by ensuring that freight routes, along with associated air pollution and noise, avoid residential areas, particularly lower income communities. Innovative ideas included freight depots, with electric vehicle charging infrastructure to be used by multiple freight companies with electric vans and using cargo bikes as "last-mile" solutions. Some people suggested using City properties for that purpose. Stakeholders also emphasized the opportunity to promote cargo bikes to enable residents and businesses to make local trips while carrying goods and equipment.

Consultation findings are consistent with strategies put forward by the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) and its recent report, *Healthy Recovery*. That report highlights the

critical importance of investments for the financial sustainability of public transit systems, the need to increase federal investment in active transportation infrastructure, investments in zero-emissions vehicles and charging infrastructure - in light of not only the health and environmental benefits, but also the economic opportunities, ideas echoed by others, including McKinsey and Company and the Pembina Institute.

Transportation behaviour

COVID-19 has had a major impact on how and how much people travel in Toronto. Stakeholders spoke about teleworking (working at home) for those who are able to do so during recovery while physical distancing is required. This transportation demand management (TDM) approach is being used by the City and many other Toronto employers. Some stakeholders suggested a broad TDM strategy for Toronto's public and private employers to manage demand for transit and other transportation infrastructure during COVID-19 recovery while physical distancing is required. In the short term, a TDM strategy working hand-in-hand with ActiveTO would help employers manage teleworking, and help residents find their best commute or telework option. In the long term, TDM can improve quality of life, reduce congestion, improve air quality and help meet Toronto's low-carbon goals.

Other stakeholders identified transportation-based revenue tools such as road tolls and congestion charges to create revenue for the City while rewarding desirable transportation behaviours.

Key suggestions from engagements and consultations

- Develop a comprehensive surface transit network plan to increase transit priority throughout Toronto, a plan that incorporates social equity as a critical criterion for siting transit priority corridors, and continue to identify transit priority corridors for accelerated implementation.
- Accelerate the development of, and make permanent, safe active transportation infrastructure for cycling and walking throughout the city, including through the Cycling Network Plan, and include equitable access to transportation options in the criteria for choosing sites.
- Assess and prioritize potential sites for fossil-fuel-free transportation zones for use by pedestrians, cyclists and fossil-fuel-free transit to enable and support physical distancing and transition to cleaner transportation, and also create a plan to establish a fossil-fuel-free zone.
- Explore ways to align transportation infrastructure capacity with the travel modes and demand required during COVID-19 recovery, and anticipated in the future, on a complete streets basis as a standard approach to transportation projects.
- Accelerate implementation of the City's Electric Vehicle Strategy, including the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the city, and advocate to other levels of government for funds to support this work
- Work with TTC to accelerate its successful bus electrification program and examine opportunities for TTC-wide electrification, including Wheel-Trans and non-revenue vehicles.
- Develop a transportation demand management strategy and expand the Smart Commute program, to address COVID-19 recovery needs, vehicle emissions and congestion.
- Consider introducing transportation-related revenue tools to generate revenue while providing an incentive for desirable transportation behaviours.

Space & Planning**Issues, Desired Outcomes and Opportunities****Space and Mobility**

During the TORR climate and resilience consultations, issues about space and recovery and rebuild were raised, a conversation that touches on complete communities, ways the city is changing and greenspace.

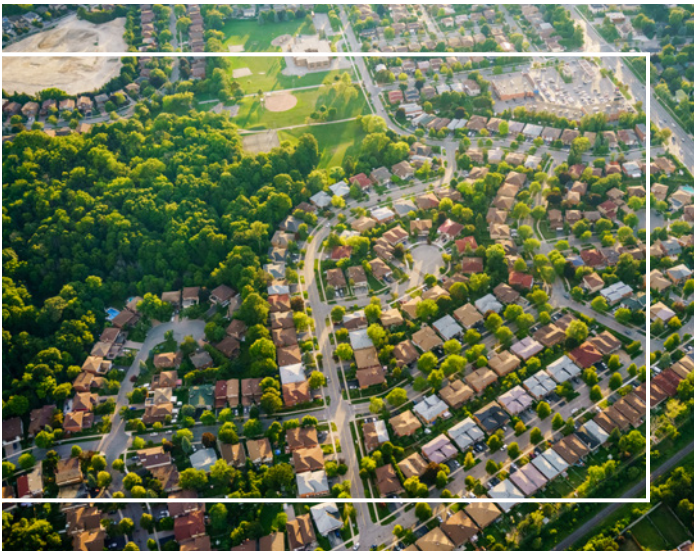
Stakeholders observed that physical distancing will be in place for the foreseeable future, and how people use public space will change. COVID-19 has created increased demand for safe cycling and pedestrian space. This demand has led the City to repurpose/reallocate road space to match road users' needs. Other stakeholders expressed concern that COVID-19 may make people less likely to want to live in dense urban environments given challenges with access to outdoor space and access to transportation, combined with other factors including the high cost of living. This may be particularly true of downtown highrise condominium residents who are now working remotely, are affluent enough to have more choices about where to live, and no longer see benefit in living downtown near their former place of employment. Stakeholders expressed concern that if Toronto loses talent due to these space-related and other issues, the City may become less competitive in attracting companies and economic development unless quality of life is maintained and enhanced.

Complete Communities and Density

Numerous stakeholders described a need for Toronto to develop complete communities, which many referred to as a "15-minute city" where residents can obtain the goods and services they need in their neighbourhood by cycling or walking within a 15-minute travel radius. Complete communities reduce pressure on transit and other transportation infrastructure by enabling people to travel less for necessities. This is particularly beneficial when the transportation systems are faced with the challenges of physical distancing. Reduced trips also provide emission-reduction benefits, improve air quality and help to meet the City's climate and resilience goals. Stakeholders connected complete communities with a need to increase gentle density in the city's "yellow belt", creating "middle" forms of housing and contributing to housing affordability. The yellow belt refers to an area of Toronto that represents almost one-third of Toronto's entire area that is now zoned only for detached houses.



Stakeholders also noted the importance of ensuring that jobs are created in the process of increasing density and encouraged the use of community benefits agreements. In that regard, policies and programs that ensure new and existing buildings are constructed with a focus on net zero GHG emissions and resilience will be critical. A key issue raised by stakeholders is that of high density and COVID-19 concerns, with a focus on addressing perceptions that population density is negative/problematic. As highlighted by stakeholders, carefully managed intensification and density support socioeconomic objectives, reduce emissions and create a more livable city.



Greenspace

Numerous stakeholders suggested the City protect and expand greenspace in order to improve residents' health and quality of life and improve resilience. The health and mental health benefits of greenspace are well understood, as are the benefits of the tree canopy to cooling the city and improving air quality.¹³² There was discussion of current disparities in access to quality greenspace. Stakeholders emphasized the particular importance of access to usable green space during pandemic recovery, given the need for physical distancing, limited availability of recreation and physical activity options and limitations on travel within the city. Stakeholders noted a need for the City of Toronto to consider who has access to greenspace and who does not, and to look for opportunities to correct the imbalance.

The critical role of space was further emphasized in consultation with members of Toronto's Indigenous community, who spoke to the critical role natural spaces play in supporting important ceremonial and cultural roles. Those engaged also highlighted the opportunities for Indigenous placemaking as part of recovery

and rebuild and opportunity for green jobs development through green infrastructure investment. Broadly speaking those engaged also spoke to a need to review City policies through an indigenous perspective and to explore how the incorporation of Indigenous values could inform current and future thinking about land and water.

There was a lot of discussion about the need to maintain and enhance the tree canopy to improve resilience and quality of life and, critically, to provide cooling during extremely hot weather. There was reference to the creation of employment (again, green jobs) specifically concentrated on improving, expanding and restoring natural assets.

Feedback included a desire for City capital projects to include, as a default, green infrastructure to shade sidewalks, help manage stormwater (flooding) and provide other resilience benefits. That opinion is supported by the City's Resilience Strategy (Action B1.5), which recommends the City expand the green infrastructure program to improve resilience and stimulate the economy.

Critically, other stakeholders spoke about equity and increased challenges with access to food during the pandemic. Stakeholders who participated in TransformTO and TORR consultations emphasized the need to address poverty and equity as the root cause of food insecurity. They also emphasized the need to increase food production in the city, including the expansion of community gardens and the planting of food-bearing trees.

Key suggestions from engagements and consultations

- Support the development of complete communities in Toronto with a focus on creating a "15-minute city" through zoning changes that support local economic opportunities.
- Accelerate the roll-out of gentle density in the "yellow belt" with a focus on net-zero building and development that supports economic activity and job creation through the development of housing and employment opportunities.
- Assess equitability of access to greenspace throughout Toronto, and look for opportunities to enhance access for those communities that currently have the least greenspace.
- Facilitate and support Indigenous communities in accessing space to support ceremony in response to COVID-19 and moving forward, and also, create opportunities for Indigenous placemaking and recognition through recovery and rebuild efforts.
- Expand efforts to utilize green infrastructure to improve resilience, stimulate the economy and support resident well-being.

Governance and Finance

Issues, Desired Outcomes and Opportunity

Governance and finance were also raised during the consultations, with connections made to equity. Groups emphasized the importance of fulfilling the City’s commitments to reduce GHG emissions and increase resilience, through immediate and long-term decision-making.

Those engaged emphasized that what the City and partners do in the next few years will determine whether the City takes a low-carbon path or locks in high-carbon energy usage. Stakeholders indicated they expect the City’s decision-making on climate to be guided by science, in the same way that the City’s COVID-19 response has been managed based on the advice of health professionals and science.

Organizations said climate change and resilience should not be presented by TORR or the City as separate or competing with key needs such as housing. Rather, they should be integrated into the development of broader, overarching solutions.

Groups engaged in consultation recognized the financial pressures facing the city, as well as the broader socioeconomic challenges facing Toronto’s residents, but emphasized that a delay in pursuing climate action would add to these challenges and increase the cost over the long term.

Those engaged raised the following points:

- The current situation calls for a non-traditional response to recession; there is an opportunity (not only for the City of Toronto) to be transformational.
- Those engaged also highlighted whether it was advisable to move ahead with high-carbon projects such as rebuilding the Gardiner Expressway.
- They emphasized the need to frame the urgency of climate action in a discussion of governance and finance, as that discussion will need to inform the City’s decision-making process and prioritization.
- Others highlighted the potential value of a “moonshot” project that the public could get behind in advancing some major initiatives collectively through recovery and rebuild.
- Multiple groups highlighted that applying a climate lens should inform decisions on recovery response from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as ongoing City decision making. This was a sentiment echoed in TransformTO consultations as well as a recommendation in the Resilience Strategy.



Procurement

Stakeholders highlighted existing City policies related to social procurement and the leadership role the City took in developing its framework for community benefit agreements (CBAs). Those engaged, however, emphasized the need for more effective use of these tools to realize the social equity outcomes these agreements and policies are intended to support. It was also highlighted that the City's predominant lowest bidder procurement methods often result in short-term solutions. Carefully considered procurement was also seen as an opportunity to support workforce development, such as through energy retrofitting of buildings and major infrastructure investments (e.g. transit expansion). By more effectively leveraging procurement, the City could use its purchasing power to leverage additional monies and realize opportunities to support social and community infrastructure.

Revenue tools

Those engaged also suggested the City should focus on revisiting the results of the 2016 City of Toronto Revenue Options Study. Those engaged highlighted previously proposed measures, from the vehicle registration tax, parking and/or stormwater levy, road tolls and congestion charging to taxes on plastic bags. Moreover, groups noted that while the City would need to continue to advocate to federal and provincial governments for emergency and sustained funding, it also needs additional revenue powers.

Others pointed out that revenue tools provide a dual function, not only generating revenue but also potentially motivating behaviour change that supports broader City objectives. For example, a congestion charge would generate revenue, and could also dissuade vehicle use and encourage greater use of public transit in congested areas, resulting in decreased travel times, improved air quality and positive health impacts.

Intergovernmental funding and stimulus

In reviewing the ideas put forward by various organizations, it was found that some of them highlight the role of higher tiers of government. Other orders of government will need to be involved in Toronto's recovery and rebuild efforts.

Prior to the pandemic, the Environment and Energy Division in partnership with the City Manager's Office initiated a green infrastructure "call out" to identify green infrastructure projects that are seeking intergovernmental funding. Through this call out, 48 infrastructure projects were identified, totalling approximately \$900 million in total project costs. This is a roster of projects that are ready to proceed and would contribute to the City's environmental sustainability, but they require capital funding.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, work has been underway to seek additional input from divisions on other potential shovel-ready, and importantly, shovel-worthy, projects. The intention of this second round of infrastructure identification is to prepare the City for stimulus funding that may be announced. In evaluating these projects, equity, climate and resilience have been considered.

As the federal and provincial governments move to support economic recovery through stimulus spending, the City has proactively worked to identify and prioritize projects to support recovery and rebuild.



Key suggestions from engagements and consultations

- Accelerate and formalize the application of a climate lens, alongside equity analysis, in any decisions around stimulus funding for recovery and rebuild and in future City Council decisions, to ensure climate risks and opportunities are appropriately factored into decision-making in order to meet Toronto's net zero greenhouse gas and resilience goals.
- Expand the improved use of social procurement and community benefit agreements in advancing recovery and rebuild efforts to support communities, working with stakeholders to improve these policies and programs.
- Explore the use of revenue tools to generate funds to support programs, services and investments in infrastructure that align with the City's strategic goals, while discouraging activities that negatively impact Toronto and its residents.



9 | Theme: Equity, Vulnerable Communities and Partnerships

Toronto's Equity Framework

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Toronto had adopted and is implementing various equity-related strategies, policies and commitments (see list at the end of this section) to strive to ensure Toronto is a leader in fairness and equity. COVID-19 has highlighted existing inequities through the disproportionately negative social, economic and health impacts on vulnerable communities, potentially setting back the progress that was being made through the implementation of Toronto's varied actions.

During COVID-19, vulnerable communities and individuals experienced:

- Higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to social conditions
- Restricted access to medical or other support services
- Potential discriminatory enforcement of emergency or public-health-related measures
- Hateful acts, racism, discrimination and/or harassment
- Loss of employment leading to loss of household income and increased poverty
- Loss of housing/housing affordability
- Disruption of education
- Family violence and threats to safety and well-being
- Separation from caregivers
- Greater difficulty accessing safe and affordable child care options
- Potential involvement of child welfare agencies
- Negative impacts on the treatment or management of pre-existing disabilities, mental health needs and/or addictions
- Risk of forcible return for refugees who are deported or denied entry to Canada
- Social exclusion
- Higher risk of food insecurity
- Greater need for emergency benefits (e.g., CERB)

As we enter into the recovery phase, unless we intentionally design for equity and inclusion, the very people who were disproportionately affected by stresses before the pandemic will become more vulnerable.

Comment from Consultation

- Greater barriers to accessing a range of affordable services required for daily living (e.g., transportation, broadband internet)
- Greater difficulties and financial strain in delivering community-based supports and services to specific populations (e.g., Indigenous, Black, people with disabilities)

Moreover, people with multiple, intersecting identities (for example, Indigenous women and girls, Black Queer/Trans youth, older East Asian people) continue to be at greater risk to these impacts or the cumulative effects of these impacts.

While social distancing and self-isolation are essential to flattening the COVID-19 curve, Toronto's successful recovery will need to address the unintended and disproportionate consequences for people living in vulnerable circumstances. As the current situation evolves, there are other surging curves (i.e. echo pandemics) that are deepening inequities in Toronto, particularly related to unemployment, food insecurity, mental health and housing stability.

A focus on equity will be essential to Toronto's approach to recovery and its ability to build resilience to mitigate the effects of future emergencies. Toronto's many existing equity-related strategies and action plans can serve as anchors for Toronto's equitable recovery. Renewed commitment and accelerated implementation of these strategies is an immediate option for the City.

COVID-19 Impact on Black Torontonians, People of Colour

While social distancing and other public health measures successfully flattened the curve in wealthier, less diverse neighbourhoods, the pandemic impacted people of colour, in particular Black Torontonians, and low-income Torontonians in a significantly disproportionate way. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that there are significant systemic vulnerabilities in the social and economic infrastructure of communities. This resulted in COVID-19, combined with social inequities, leading to disproportionate negative public health impacts on communities that have historically and systemically experienced barriers, particularly Black Torontonians.

On July 30, Toronto Public Health released the data presented in Figure 1 and 2 demonstrating the disproportionate cases of COVID-19 among various ethno-racial groups and low-income Torontonians.

There is growing evidence that racialized populations and low-income groups are more at risk of COVID-19. Toronto Public Health has suggested the reasons for this are unclear but could include:

- Existing health disparities linked to social and economic factors,
- Stress caused by racism and other forms of discrimination,
- Challenges in participating in the public health response to COVID-19, including
 - difficulties in limiting COVID-19 exposure because of being an essential worker, and
 - difficulties in physical distancing because of overcrowding,
- Inequitable access to health care and social services.

A focus of Toronto's response and recovery needs to account for the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has on racialized populations.

Figure 1: Share of COVID-19 cases among ethno-racial groups compared to the share of people living in Toronto, with valid data up to July 16, 2020, Toronto Public Health

Ethno-Racial Group	Share of COVID-19 Cases	Share of Toronto Populations	Comparison
Arab, Middle Eastern or West Asian	11%	4%	
Black	21%	9%	
East Asian	4%	13%	
Latin American	10%	3%	
South Asian or Indo-Caribbean	20%	13%	
Southeast Asian	17%	7%	
White	17%	48%	

Figure 2: Share of COVID-19 cases by household income compared to the share of people living in Toronto by income group, with valid data up to July 16, 2020, Toronto Public Health

Household Income	Share of COVID-19 Cases	Share of Toronto Populations	Comparison
\$0-\$29,999	27%	14%	
\$30,000-\$49,999	26%	15%	
\$50,000-\$69,999	16%	14%	
\$70,000-\$99,999	15%	17%	
\$100,000-\$149,999	11%	18%	
\$150,000 or more	6%	21%	

COVID-19 Impact on Seniors

COVID-19 is a serious health threat with increased risk of more severe outcomes for those in vulnerable populations, including people with underlying medical conditions, with compromised immune systems and age 65 and over. COVID-19 in Canada has hit many seniors especially hard, whether living in community or in long-term care settings.

A study from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (2020) found that the proportion of Canadian COVID-19 deaths that have occurred in long-term care facilities is about twice the average of rates from other developed nations. LTC residents made up 81 per cent of all reported COVID-19 deaths in the country compared to an average of 42 per cent among all countries studied.

Outside of LTC, COVID-19 had significant impacts on seniors in the community. On March 30, 2020, the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health recommended that everyone 70 years of age and older stay home and avoid contact with others.

Many agencies serving vulnerable seniors in the community, as well as SSLTC Community Programs (adult day programs, homemaking services and supportive housing services), had to scale back or suspend operations due to COVID-19. Seniors were unable to access the same level of home supports, transportation or congregate activities that they usually depend on for aging in place. That is in addition to closures of seniors active living centres, libraries, community recreation centres and other locations that form an important part of healthy, active living for many seniors. Accessing necessities such as a bank machine or a laundry or mail room became challenging, as well as being able to safely travel to and use emergency cooling centres on days with heat warnings.

The City needs to have more advocates from the community that have a permanent seat at City hall and allow these individuals to be part of the decision-making process.

Comment from Consultation

I would like the City to address the issue of systemic inequality by taking the action of increasing race-based data collection and by investing in understanding what factors are leading to greater vulnerability: e.g. race, income, education... to make the city better in the ways of support vulnerable communities.

Comment from Consultation

The isolation recommendations and the closure of seniors programs and services, while critical to maintaining safety, further exacerbated social isolation and in turn mental health challenges, as well as challenges accessing food, prescriptions and other essentials for some vulnerable seniors. Intersecting vulnerabilities including race, background, income, housing situation, health and mobility, sexual orientation, immigration status and many others can further exacerbate the challenges faced by many seniors throughout COVID-19. Specifically, Black and Indigenous seniors in Toronto – through experiences of systemic racism and oppression – have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated social issues that have resulted from the situation.

There was a rapid shift during COVID-19 of programs and services, medical appointments, access to benefits and social visits to virtual platforms, which has allowed many seniors to stay connected to their social network, medical care, finances and more. However, this shift has also exacerbated existing digital access challenges faced by many vulnerable seniors, which may lead to increased social isolation, disconnection from necessary health and community support services, difficulty applying for benefits and other programs, and a lack of full and equitable participation in society.

I would like the City to address the issue of possible increase in cases or second wave by taking the action of continued public health measures and make the city better in the ways of safety of all citizens especially the most vulnerable.

Comment from Consultation

TORR Engagement and Consultations

To consider how to mitigate the inequitable impacts on Torontonians due to COVID-19, the TORR's Vulnerable Communities and Strategic Alliances Theme undertook both internal and external engagement with stakeholders, including Social Development Finance and Administration (SDFA) Program Advisory Groups, SDFA supported partnerships, the City-Community Response Table and the Community Coordination Plan, and City Service Work Groups along with key public sector partners including post-secondary institutions.

The City engaged Social Planning Toronto (SPT) to coordinate grassroots and community sector engagements with residents from equity-seeking communities. SPT designed and conducted consultations, on behalf of the City, with organizational partners and provided their data to TORR. Other community sector organizations have indicated they will submit input directly to the City for consideration. SPT worked with the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) to support Indigenous organizational engagement. Additional focused engagements were held with the Partnership and Accountability Circle in collaboration with the City's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit.

City staff consulted with large public- and private-sector property owners including the Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic School Board, faith groups, Infrastructure Ontario, BILD and the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board. Discussions with these groups focused on the opportunities and challenges associated with COVID-19.

Summary findings

Across its engagements on the themes of vulnerable communities and strategic alliances, TORR found common issues identified by groups and individuals. These issues, most of which existed pre-COVID-19, were noted to have been exacerbated by the pandemic, leading to a heightened level of concern by residents, community groups, institutions and elected officials. Participants commented that the issues don't exist in isolation, rather, each crossed social, economic and cultural lines and was experienced throughout the city's community centres, libraries, schools, buses, shelters, streets and open spaces. Decisions and actions on one issue were seen to have impacts on one or more of the other issues across all recovery and rebuild themes.

A common finding was that as the City considers each issue and actions that will support the City's recovery and rebuild strategy, work must include deliberate, ongoing engagement with residents, community agencies and the City's partners.



Examples from Findings

Consultations with grassroots groups, community organizations and City staff who deliver social services that are critical to the City's social development goals have provided some clear themes and intersecting ideas for Toronto's recovery:

Equity

- Proactively address the multitude of deep inequities that are so prevalent in the city,
- Embed Black voices, experiences, knowledge and expertise in the decisions the Mayor, City Manager and City of Toronto staff are making in all sectors,
- Develop decision-making alliances for healthcare for Black Torontonians – between community-based health care and institutions to address supports for personal support workers (PSWs) and long-term care homes pertaining to the health of Black Torontonians,

- Implement equitable transit solutions,
- Address systemic racism and inequality, particularly in policing.

Role of all Government(s)

- Build recovery through public investment and strengthen rather than weaken the social safety net,
- Pursue a social and an economic recovery,
- Address the need for affordable child care and a more resilient child-care system, affordable housing and reformed income supports.

Economic Development and Rebuilding

- Maximize community benefits, job creation and decent work conditions,
- Increase climate resilience and accelerate Toronto's transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy, and
- Ensure gentrification is not a priority of rebuilding.

Need for key municipal services

- Parks and public spaces,
- Reliable and safe transit,
- Access to libraries and library services,
- Spaces for people to meet safely in the community,
- Access to recreational facilities and programming.

Stakeholder groups and residents emphasized that action must focus on the inequities that were exacerbated by COVID-19 and that Toronto should build upon and accelerate the Council-adopted strategies that are already informed by extensive consultation.

City staff who were consulted emphasized that Toronto should also focus on issues that advance systems of support, rather than just on specific issues, in order to be most effective. They suggested building on the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy as an important foundation.

Find innovative ways to support NGOs and other organizations that aim to educate, empower and address pressing issues. Individuals have jobs in turn they can put money back into our economy. The job market has changed greatly. I am a new graduate and am struggling to afford bills and cannot find a job. I am volunteering my time to address food insecurity in south Etobicoke.

Comment from Consultation

Key themes and considerations from Engagement Findings

The consultation findings speak to the success of the City's Community Coordination Plan, which provides an example of how a systemic, coordinated approach can enable innovative and agile responses to barriers experienced by vulnerable residents. In this model, the City brought together key community-based agencies across several regional clusters in Toronto. Information was disseminated, issues were flagged for attention and responses to protect residents were implemented. This approach demonstrates the value of the City investing in the development of a plan to systematically and intentionally connect all parts of the economic and employment support system so vulnerable communities are empowered and can better withstand any further economic downturn. There is also a need for the City to collaborate with residents with lived experience and community-based organizations as equal partners in decision-making. Two issues in particular may necessitate a more active City role in convening and coordination: access to food and inclusive economic recovery.

Housing

Housing was the predominant and most consistent issue raised during consultations on the Vulnerable Communities and Strategic Alliances theme. Housing security was already a major concern before the pandemic, as recently described by the Housing Now program, one of the Mayor's key initiatives tasked with providing 40,000 affordable rental units over 12 years. Housing findings in this report were informed by the City's initial response to COVID-19 and the need to increase space to provide social distancing within City shelters. Additional recommendations to address housing security from the Mayor's Task Force report signal the need for significant intervention from other orders of government, such as expediting and expanding the Canadian Housing Benefit and/or increasing funding provided for affordable housing under the National Housing Strategy.

The City of Toronto will struggle to meet its housing needs post-COVID-19. Additional demands to allocate increased housing options for all residents in proximity to community services, employment and schools, specifically in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) hardest hit by the pandemic, will be a

reality for the foreseeable future. It has been made clear during TORR's consultations that residents of NIAs travel significant distances, often on public transit, to go to work, school or shop, and they want to see significant change to the way the City plans its neighbourhoods. The most recent sites allocated by the City to the Housing Now Program have a maximum yield of 620 affordable units. These units will be added to the approximate 4,000 affordable rental units planned for the already allocated sites. The first group of sites represent the best available options for densification, with limited availability of other possible sites.

Housing for Toronto's Indigenous Communities

There has historically been a significant need for all forms of purpose-built housing for Indigenous communities in Toronto. Some housing pressures include:

- No dedicated long-term care beds for Indigenous communities
- Very few housing options dedicated to youth and family housing
- Very few supportive and shelter beds devoted to Indigenous men

These pressures were exacerbated by COVID-19.

There are currently no dedicated long-term care facilities in the GTA purpose built for the Indigenous communities of Toronto. The Toronto Indigenous Community Advisory Board (TICAB) and the City's Indigenous Affairs Office have identified that locating a purpose-built long-term care facility for this community would require proximity to green space, ravines, rivers and other bodies of water, and building in open spaces.

Mobility – Transit Options

A common thread throughout the TORR consultations, specifically from vulnerable communities and community organizations, is that Toronto needs to re-think how the City views transit and transportation. Many people noted the need for Toronto to increase the availability of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. This need was important before the pandemic and has become even more acute. Increasing the number of separated bike lanes, specifically in Scarborough and Etobicoke, would have a direct and significant impact on racialized and equity-seeking groups in those areas increasing access to local employment and retail shopping.

Community Space

The pandemic required the City to advance its remote workforce strategy much more quickly than previously contemplated. The City is now considering its needs as an employer for office and workplaces. That includes looking at the use of current assets such as civic centres, Metro Hall and community spaces, and determining how use of those spaces may need to meet the challenges of work in a COVID-19 context.

A common challenge articulated by the participants of the community consultations, specifically in many of the Community Cluster meetings, was access to appropriate, affordable community space including office spaces for community groups and residents. Community work spaces could help to address some of the challenges of working from home, including access to hardware and remote meeting technology, working while caring for children and/or the need for a change of scenery.

The lack of community space has been identified by approximately 400 non-profit organization through the Employment and Social

Services Working Group and the City's Community Coordination Plan that was developed in response to COVID-19. The following points identify challenges faced by vulnerable community members, equity-seeking groups and supportive non-profit organizations, along with some potential solutions.

The TORR engagement findings mirror other City consultations and research on the challenges related to community space, including:

- General lack of community space in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs), including meeting rooms, kitchens, program space, gyms, shelters/respite spaces, City and school board facilities;
- Inconsistent and highly administrative permitting processes and high fees are barriers to booking space available through the City and school boards;
- Many available spaces within non-profit organizations are small, which makes social distancing impossible;
- Pre-existing permits create "gatekeepers" that control access to certain community spaces and effectively shut out new/emerging groups;
- Residents often need to travel outside their immediate neighbourhood to access space, which can present challenges to providing place-based programs/supports and can potentially raise community safety issues;
- Lack of capital resources to upgrade existing spaces;
- Financial pressures, access to financing to purchase/redevelop land or buildings to increase space and the cost of leasing private spaces for use by non-profit organizations is increasingly challenging; and
- Access to City-owned community space for community groups during emergencies (i.e. food banks accessing community centres).

A message heard repeatedly during the consultations is the importance of access to affordable space for community organizations, groups and individuals. The ability for the City to improve and increase the availability of those types of spaces within its property inventory was emphasized, along with the concept of a "Community Recreation Centre" in a pre-pandemic Toronto not going far enough to meet the needs of these groups. The community sector played an essential role in meeting the urgent needs of vulnerable Torontonians through the pandemic and the work of the sector will be critical for an inclusive recovery. As the City reimagines its services and programs, developing spaces to strengthen and stabilize the sector and strengthen the City's relationship with the sector will be important.

There has been unprecedented collaboration and coordination between hundreds of agencies and funders, who have stepped up with innovative and rapid responses to all the new challenges caused by this pandemic. But there have also been problems in coordinating and ensuring populations facing barriers and exclusion are not left further behind.

Comment from Consultation



Feedback from the consultations suggested that the City is well positioned, as an employer and social service provider, to explore how its employees work in the future and how to leverage surplus office space. Surplus office space could be made available to non-City community members for meetings or work. If many City employees continue to work from home, can flexible, affordable space be made available within the City's current inventory of office space? Pursuing it might include modifying space in civic centres, libraries and community centres as touchdown spaces for small business incubators for local entrepreneurs and the general public.

Creating Opportunity – Strategic Partnerships, Regulatory Change and Capital Realignment

Community-based organizations and groups often play an unacknowledged role of being the community's first line of support against shocks like COVID-19. The current public health crisis has made clear that such public-benefit organizations, which take on a significant burden of supporting vulnerable communities, do not have access to space and other infrastructure required to do their jobs adequately. With so many different entities working in a city as diverse as Toronto, coordination is a significant challenge. It may be difficult for one organization to know what others are working on, or if they are even working toward the same goals. That difficulty is exacerbated by current project-based funding models that encourage the implementation of one-off solutions or pilots, rather than sustainable, mutually reinforcing systems/initiatives.

Regulatory Change

The City's current challenges create a unique opportunity to evolve how public spaces, specifically those spaces that fall within the designation of "Open Space", are defined in the City of Toronto's

Official Plan. The Open Space designation is the prevailing zoning for the vast majority of the City's park and green space, along with significant "hard" built form, primarily community recreation centres and ancillary parking facilities.

Staff identified that expanding allowable uses on City property would realize significant opportunity to meet the needs outlined by the City's Housing Secretariat and address some of the issues identified by vulnerable communities as noted throughout this report.

In 2019, the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division received City Council approval for their "Facilities Master Plan", which would see 17 new or rebuilt community recreational facilities across the city. Thirteen locations have already been identified and the plan, which is fully funded, will be implemented over the next 10 or more years. Along with the sites identified in the Master Plan, there are a significant number of other locations across the city that offer opportunity to intensify to meet the needs identified by the community.

Along with the opportunities to meet a significant number of the city's needs by reimagining how to approach the Open Space Designation, the ability for the City government, through its regulatory powers to enable and activate a significant number of housing opportunities, along with supporting main streets and local retail, was identified in a recent "Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods" staff report to City Council by the City's Chief Planner. That report puts forward a work plan to engage and report back over the next 18 months on how Toronto would add density to the "yellow-belt" or "missing middle"; an area of Toronto that represents almost one-third of Toronto's entire area that is now zoned only for detached houses.

Capital Realignment

The City of Toronto does not have a consolidated view of its capital budgets, which may be limiting the ability to see economies of scale and maximize land and building assets.

Changing how the City approaches its urban planning and related decision-making could help address Toronto's growing space needs and support a Complete Communities view that would shift from a horizontal capital program approach to a vertical approach.

Participant comments that the City is missing opportunities to consolidate uses and build complete communities suggested that there is benefit in taking a holistic view when planning major capital projects. Examples of that approach include the TTC's Easier Access Program and Parks, Forestry and Recreation's Facilities Master Plan.

Complete Communities – Creating New Opportunity

Building a more resilient Toronto, one able to evolve in response to this pandemic, but also able to respond to future crises is a message that has come through consistently with many of the groups engaged to date. The idea of resilience is rooted in accessibility and equality for all residents: accessibility to housing, jobs, schools, community services along with parks and recreation facilities. When speaking to many of the community agencies and community clusters, a common sentiment was that Toronto had been very good at providing “complete communities” in the older, more affluent areas of the city, primarily downtown, but there was a feeling that the older suburbs had been “forgotten” and had not evolved with the rest of the city.

What representatives of these communities feel is needed is a focus on creating complete communities that offer a range of affordable housing, allow for active transportation, offer a range of jobs, variety of food and retail options and that are sustainable from an environmental perspective.

Input from research and the TORR consultation suggests that the City of Toronto should look to create hyperlocal communities located close to existing or future community centre and transit developments. These communities should include an appropriate mix of affordable housing, community space, flexible work space and community services accessible to Indigenous communities and equity-seeking groups.

Public Property – Collaborative Approach to Decision Making

Along with the City of Toronto, other public-sector property owners including the Toronto District School Board, Toronto Catholic District School Board and faith groups face space pressures. As

the City works to solve its space needs, it should work with other public institutions with significant land holdings, as often they share a common customer or client. TORR engaged with the Toronto Catholic District School Board, the Toronto District School Board through the Toronto Lands Corporation, and the United Church of Canada's Strategic Real Estate Delivery Group to discuss how groups could work together to respond to community needs including coordinating decisions about assets.

One suggestion was for the City to change its Open Space policy to create opportunities for complete communities on these properties by incorporating new schools. Including schools within a City-initiated community would allow public school boards, especially the TDSB, to deal with its state-of-good-repair backlog. Additionally, school boards would be able to free up significant real estate, which could be reimaged as new communities, which would further increase opportunities for much-needed space. The City and the school boards had begun to slowly explore these opportunities prior to the pandemic. Increasing the speed and scope of their conversations would support this evolving thinking about public assets.

Participants suggested that school sites with significant state-of-good-repair issues could be identified by having the City, the school boards, the local councillor and the community in any of the 17 sites identified in the City's Facilities Master Plan work together and consider them for inclusion in new complete communities.

We need to invest in our Black and Indigenous communities, to reduce structural barriers to full participation in Toronto's social and economic life.

Comment from Consultation

Faith groups and inter-faith organizations that participated in conversations during the TORR engagement acknowledged the importance of their historic contribution to providing community services, and acknowledged that these contributions will in many cases need to evolve. Both the Anglican Church and the United

Church of Canada acknowledged their strong working relationship with the City of Toronto. They also acknowledged a need to evolve that relationship to meet the needs of the broader community through housing developments on their properties, building in resilience with respect to being more flexible in opening up spaces during broad emergencies and formally connecting with the City, specifically the Social Development, Finance and Administration division to coordinate and align service delivery.

The United Church of Canada acknowledged its evolving congregation and said the church is becoming much more of a provider of flexible secular community space, with less focus on sanctuary spaces for individual congregations. In many cases, there is a desire to look at partnering with the City on reimagining how to best leverage opportunities for public use of church-owned spaces. All of the faith-based organizations engaged through the consultations expressed a desire to have a “seat at the table” and to be acknowledged going forward as partners that should be continually engaged through the rebuild/reimagine phase of the City’s work.

We have been given an incredible opportunity to build-back better and if we don’t get it right now, we will likely never get another chance. This is our last decade to make the right choices, no matter how difficult.

Comment from Consultation

A partial list of City strategies, advisory bodies and plans addressing inequities.

Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee

The Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee provides advice to City Council on the elimination of barriers faced by Aboriginal peoples, including barriers related to City bylaws, policies, programs and service delivery. The committee also acts as a liaison with external bodies addressing barriers to the participation of Aboriginal peoples in public life, and advances the achievement of social, cultural, economic and spiritual well-being of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto.

Aboriginal Education Strategy

As part of the City’s Commitments to Indigenous Peoples, City Council adopted an Aboriginal Education Strategy, which combines formal and informal learning approaches, and a needs assessment to determine who in the Toronto Public Service should be educated on Aboriginal history, and what information staff need to know about Aboriginal peoples in Toronto.

Aboriginal Employment Strategy

The Aboriginal Employment Strategy, part of the City’s Talent Blueprint, focuses on employment practices that ensure opportunities for employment are accessible to Aboriginal people and increase the number of Aboriginal employees at all occupational levels.

Access to City Services for Undocumented Torontonians

City Council is committed to ensuring that Torontonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to City services without fear of being asked for proof of status. Access to City Services for Undocumented Torontonians (Access T.O.) aims to improve customer service to this vulnerable population by ensuring that City staff have the necessary and relevant information needed to provide effective service and protect their privacy.

Community Benefits Framework

The Community Benefits Framework utilizes City community benefits levers to create targeted hiring and training opportunities, provide economic opportunities, reduce poverty and support community priorities among Indigenous peoples and equity-seeking groups in Toronto when the City buys, builds or provides financial incentives for construction or remediation. The framework aims to bring the City’s community benefits initiatives under a common umbrella to coordinate across initiatives, strengthen community engagement and begin to monitor common data outcomes through a shared tracking system.

Confronting Anti-Black Racism Action Plan

The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism is the result of a collaborative effort between the City of Toronto and Torontonians of African descent. The Action Plan includes 22 recommendations and 80 actions to address five issue areas: children and youth development; health and community services; job and income supports; policing and the justice system; and community engagement and Black leadership.

Equity Lens and City Service Decision-making

For new, enhanced or modified initiatives, the City’s Equity Lens Tool and related resources must be applied to help identify and consider inequities so that a full equity impact assessment can be made with considerations for Indigenous, Black and equity-seeking

or vulnerable populations. The Equity Lens Tool supports best practices in the development and evaluation of policies, services and programs, and an Equity Impact Statement is a requirement for all reports to Council on major policies, services and programs.

I worry most about young people. They are carrying a huge debt load with tuition fees and there will be no jobs for them this summer... the federal and provincial governments must step in to help.

Comment from Consultation

Equity Responsive Budgeting

The City of Toronto incorporates equity- and gender-based analysis in the annual budget development process. All City divisions are required to report on the impact that changes in the Operating Budget could have on Indigenous people, Black and equity-seeking groups, with a particular focus on women and people with low incomes. The purpose of equity-responsive budgeting is to inform the budget discussion and decision-making process in order to advance the City's equity goals.

For Public Benefit Framework

The City of Toronto works with not-for-profit (NFP) organizations and the NFP sector to deliver hundreds of community services to residents, including but not limited to social housing, children's services, employment services and arts and cultural programming. The City also looks to the NFP sector to identify and respond to emerging community issues and to help ensure that local voices are heard by decision-makers. In these diverse ways, Toronto's NFP sector has a profound positive impact on Toronto's communities and on safeguarding local democracy. The "For Public Benefit Framework" guides how the City works with community-based NFP organizations and contains principles, commitments and 13 actions to help City agencies, corporations and divisions interact with Toronto's NFP sector more consistently, with the guidance of a clearly articulated vision.

Gender Equity Strategy

In October 2019, City Council approved the establishment of a Gender Equity Unit to lead the development of a City of Toronto Gender Equity Strategy addressing intersectional gender equity in key areas such as housing, shelter, governance, transit planning, recreation, urban planning, youth, violence against women and affordable child care, and to further integrate a more fulsome intersectional gender equity analysis within the City's annual Equity-Responsive Budgeting (Gender-Responsive Budgeting) process.

HousingTO: 2020-2030 Action Plan

The HousingTO 2020 -2030 Action Plan is the City's blueprint for action across the full housing spectrum – from homelessness to rental and ownership housing to long-term care for seniors. This new plan sets out an aggressive housing agenda focused on supporting people over the next 10 years and provides for new strategic City investments directed to enhancing eviction prevention measures; maintaining and sustaining Toronto Community Housing Corporation; establishing a pipeline to support the creation of 40,000 affordable rental and supportive homes through a public/private/non-profit land banking strategy; helping homeowners stay in their homes and purchase their first homes; and supporting in-home care and long-term care options for seniors.

Indigenous Health Strategy

The Toronto Indigenous Health Advisory Circle (TIHAC) released Toronto's first Indigenous Health Strategy, which informs the ways in which Toronto Public Health and the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network work toward improving Indigenous health outcomes in the city. The goal is to realize a thriving, healthy Indigenous community in Toronto through the respectful harmonizing of practices, policies and resource allocation.

Indigenous-led Poverty Reduction Action Plan

As part of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the City of Toronto will work with urban Indigenous leaders in 2020 to develop and fund the implementation of a community-specific poverty reduction action plan. The Indigenous-led Poverty Reduction Action Plan will ensure that the needs and perspectives of the Urban Indigenous community are identified, prioritized and funded, in order to best address the unique circumstances faced by this population.

Indigenous Overdose Strategy

The Indigenous Overdose Strategy was developed by an Indigenous facilitator and is grounded in the input of Indigenous People who use/used drugs, and service providers that work with Indigenous People who use drugs, as a companion to the Toronto Overdose Action Plan. The recommendations reflect key actions

needed in the areas of prevention, harm reduction and treatment and will be supported by Toronto Public Health in collaboration with Indigenous service providers and community members, including Indigenous People who use/have used substances, and also in collaboration with other City divisions.

LGBTQ2S+ Council Advisory Body

In December 2019, City Council approved the creation of a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) Council Advisory Body. This advisory body will advise on identified priority issues to support the elimination of barriers and inequities experienced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) communities in accessing City of Toronto programs and services.

Licensed Child Care Growth Strategy

Toronto's Child Care Growth Strategy envisions a licensed child-care system that can serve 50 per cent of children from birth to age 4 by 2026. The strategy entails creating approximately 30,000 new licensed spaces and making investments in affordability for all families by supporting equitable access for lower- and middle-income families, both by reducing parent fees and by increasing fee subsidies. The growth strategy provides a vision for developing a child-care system that is affordable and accessible for all families that would like to use licensed child care.

Women of colour need to be included in more focus groups and on representative boards and community training programs in order to make more meaningful decisions in our own communities.

Comment from Consultation

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The 2020-2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) outlines outcomes and initiatives that reaffirm the City's commitment to an accessible City and to building an equitable and inclusive society that values the contributions of people with disabilities. The MYAP, in providing a roadmap for the identification, removal and prevention of accessibility barriers, will improve awareness and understanding of requirements and will help embed accessibility into all City operations.

The MYAP is a key component of the City's accessibility framework, which outlines how the City will provide an accessible environment in which people with disabilities can access the City's goods, services and facilities, including all buildings, public spaces, information and communications and employment opportunities, in a way that meets their individual needs. The City is equally committed to supporting City employees through advice, policies, tools, resources and governance structures that promote an inclusive workplace and support employees in providing accessible goods, services and facilities.

Public Art Strategy

The Toronto Public Art Strategy (2020-2030) sets out a 10-year plan, including 21 actions that will strengthen the core services that the City provides to strengthen its commitment to public art. The strategy presents a vision to advance public art across Toronto and enhance the impact of public art for the benefit of all of Toronto by "empowering creativity and community, everywhere."

The strategy is committed to advancing truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities, and to championing the work of Indigenous artists and curators as well as to making public art that is accessible to all and that reinforces neighbourhood character, embraces excellence in design and advances the careers of local artists.

Resilience Strategy

Toronto's Resilience Strategy sets out a vision, goals and actions to help Toronto survive, adapt and thrive in the face of any challenge, particularly climate change and growing inequities. The strategy includes a set of 10 goals and 27 actions to deliver on this vision, organized into three focus areas: people and neighbourhoods, infrastructure, and leadership for a resilient city.

Seniors Strategy

The Toronto Seniors Strategy upholds the principles of equity, respect, inclusion and quality of life. It commits to ensuring all seniors having equitable access to City services and programs. It also continues to focus on actions that fall within the City's jurisdictional authority to plan, manage and deliver, including bringing together a wide variety of seniors housing and services under one entity and actions with more immediate benefits for seniors in the areas of health, housing, transportation, employment and income, and access to information.

Social Procurement Program

The City's Social Procurement Program aims to create jobs and drive economic growth in Toronto by including workforce development and/or supply chain diversity requirements in its procurement process. By doing so, the Social Procurement Program will increase the diversity of companies and provide equal opportunity for those businesses that want to bid on City contracts; encourage companies already doing business with the City to work with diverse suppliers and suppliers who provide community benefits; and increase the number of employment, apprenticeship and training opportunities for those living in poverty, including many newcomers, and for youth.

Tenants First

Tenants First is a City of Toronto-led project that sets out to make improvements to Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) and support it to become a more focused landlord. The overall focus of Tenants First is to implement a plan in which Toronto Community Housing can improve tenants' lives through better service delivery, and by providing buildings in good repair and opportunities for tenants to be connected to appropriate services and actively participate in their communities.

Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee provides advice to City Council on the elimination of barriers faced by people with disabilities and acts as a liaison with external bodies on barriers to participation in public life and to the achievement of social, cultural and economic well-being of people with disabilities. The committee also provides advice to City Council about the requirements and implementation of accessibility standards and the preparation, implementation and effectiveness of accessibility reports as required by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Toronto Newcomer Strategy

The Toronto Newcomer Strategy is designed to improve newcomer settlement through shared leadership, stronger collaboration and a more seamless and well-coordinated service system. There are three components to the Toronto Newcomer Strategy: Newcomer Leadership Table, Local Immigration Partnerships and Strategic Pillars.

Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy

The Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy is the City of Toronto's long-term strategy to address immediate needs, create pathways to prosperity and drive systemic change for those living in poverty in the city. The strategy includes a 20-year plan that focuses on housing stability, services access, transit equity, food access, the quality of jobs and incomes, and systemic change.

Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods 2020

The Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (TSNS) 2020 is the City's action plan for ensuring that each of Toronto's 140 neighbourhoods can succeed and thrive. TSNS 2020 supports healthy communities across Toronto by partnering with residents, community agencies and businesses to invest in people, services, programs and facilities in 31 identified Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs). The strategy will strengthen the social, economic and physical conditions and deliver local impact for city-wide change.

Toronto Youth Equity Strategy

The Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (TYES) seeks to support youth (aged 13-29) who are most vulnerable to involvement in serious violence and crime, both by taking steps to better coordinate youth service delivery in Toronto and by identifying specific service enhancements directed at those youth who are most vulnerable to involvement in serious violence and crime. The strategy identifies 28 key issues and offers corresponding recommendations. The strategy proposes 110 specific actions that can be taken by City divisions, agencies and corporations to build resiliency in Toronto's youth and to create the supportive systems to help young people resist the frustration and disillusionment that can lead to involvement in violence and crime.



Tower Renewal Program

The City's Tower Renewal Program leads and supports initiatives that encourage community engagement, support local capacity building, spur community investment and help to foster more resilient, thriving apartment communities. From social learning opportunities supporting employment skills to community gardens, and reinvestment and leadership opportunities through local networks, these initiatives drive change and improvement in local communities.

TransformTO

TransformTO is Toronto's climate action strategy that lays out a set of long-term, low-carbon goals and strategies to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions and improve health, grow the economy and improve social equity. To reduce the worst impacts of climate change, TransformTO aims to have:

- all new buildings built to produce near-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030, and
- all existing buildings retrofitted to achieve net zero emissions; 100 per cent of energy come from renewable or low-carbon sources; 100 per cent of vehicles in Toronto use low-carbon energy; 75 per cent of trips under five km be walked or cycled; advanced toward a zero-waste circular economy by 2050.

10 | Theme: Government and Financial Renewal

The Critical Role of Cities in Recovery

Municipalities will be crucial in COVID-19 recovery and rebuild. Ontario municipalities are at the frontlines of delivering essential services, providing services that drive economic success and working to address the social determinants of health, including transit and transportation, affordable housing, shelter, business and community supports, and in Ontario, delivering social services programs on behalf of the province.

Toronto, like Canada's other major cities, is an important driver of economic prosperity and contributes significantly to the broader economy and job creation. For example:

- Canada's six largest cities represent over half of Canada's gross domestic product (GDP) and lead the rest of the country in GDP growth.¹³³
- Urban economies are where people live, where jobs are created and where most goods and services are produced and consumed. Toronto is the fastest growing city, and part of the fastest growing region, in North America. It is estimated to grow by more than a million residents in the next 20 years.¹³⁴ Toronto's population growth is driven by international migration - without immigration the Toronto region's population would have decreased by about 16,000 residents in 2018/2019.¹³⁵
- With two airports serving 200 global destinations, and as home to 38 per cent of Canada's business headquarters, Toronto ranks among the most important cities in the world.¹³⁶
- Toronto is North America's second largest financial centre and continues to grow, having a significant impact on the local, provincial and national economies.
- Cities play a central role in innovation by creating geographic proximity across entrepreneurs, businesses, academics and researchers. Cities have always been home to new ideas. Toronto is no different - for example, it had the highest growth rate globally for "fintech" investment from 2010 to 2018.¹³⁷

The provincial and federal governments must fund important and essential city services: social housing, transit, child care, etc. Our clients depend on these services and have always been underserved in this regard even before COVID-19.

Comment from Consultation

- The Toronto region plays an important role in Canada, producing 20 per cent of national GDP, roughly equivalent to the respective GDPs of Alberta and Quebec.
- Toronto has more construction cranes than any other city in North America, with 27 per cent of all cranes. This growth creates opportunities and economic prosperity for Toronto and Canada.
- Prior to the pandemic, 27.5 million people visited Toronto each year, spending money on hotels, restaurants, attractions and transportation. In 2018, Tourism Economics estimated that visitors to Toronto spent \$6.5 billion, which in turn supported \$10.3 billion in total business sales, \$4.5 billion in total GDP, \$3.1 billion in income and almost 70,000 jobs. In addition, Toronto's tourism generates \$1.8 billion in taxes annually, mostly in the form of provincial and federal taxes.¹³⁸ In addition to spending within Toronto, visitors to the city often travel to other areas in the province, generating economic benefits for the entire region.

Toronto's success, however, is paired with significant challenges. Toronto is grappling with complex issues that include transit and transportation congestion, housing affordability, an overburdened shelter system, the need to mitigate the impacts of extreme weather and climate change, discrimination and anti-Black racism, Indigenous reconciliation, the opioid crisis and now, responding to, recovering from and rebuilding during (and after) a global pandemic.

Cities like Toronto will be crucial to the recovery of the region, the province and the country. That was the case in recovering from the 2008 recession, where the GTA led job growth in Ontario with aggregate employment growth from 2008-2018 of 17.3 per cent, compared to the provincial average of 9.6 per cent. In total, 91 per cent of all net job creation in Ontario during that period occurred in the Greater Toronto Area or Ottawa.¹³⁹ Unlike in previous recessions however, Toronto's economy has been hit harder than other areas of the country. As a large city, Toronto's employment mix includes relatively more industries reliant on large numbers of people coming together (e.g. conventions, entertainment, hospitality, corporate head offices) and these sectors have been (and will continue to be) most affected by the lockdowns and social distancing necessary to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent federal figures indicate that as of July 2020, the three-month rolling average unemployment rate in the Toronto CMA was 14.7 per cent, making it the worst-hit CMA in Ontario.¹⁴⁰

Government and financial renewal will be key for recovery

To effectively recover and rebuild from COVID-19, it is critical to recognize the financial challenges facing Toronto and consider how municipal government and finance can continue to create the conditions for success, and how they can help to provide continued prosperity for Toronto's residents and businesses.

The City government has taken unprecedented action to respond to COVID-19, and has transformed services, regulations and policies at impressive speed. Details on government transformation and renewal are provided throughout this report. Financial renewal is the focus of the remainder of this section.

COVID-19 has dramatically reduced City revenues while placing increased demand on key City services such as shelters. That revenue loss has exacerbated financial pressure on the City's operating budget, with an anticipated shortfall on the tax-supported operating budget of \$1.9 billion in 2020 – which is estimated to be reduced to \$1.35 billion through cost mitigation measures. There will be substantial budget pressures for 2021 and beyond. These pressures put at risk the City's services and

infrastructure programs, while highlighting structural gaps in the municipal funding model.

The combination of the City's responsibilities as a provider of provincially mandated services, City Council's proactive strategies to address Toronto's challenges and a lack of adequate funding to meet these needs, has created a structural funding gap. COVID-19 has added significant new depth and urgency to existing challenges. The funding of cities must be addressed to support COVID-19 recovery and long-term prosperity in cities across Canada.



Property tax: Context and Challenges

Property tax is the primary source of revenue for municipalities in Canada, including Toronto. It is a fundamental component of municipal finance. The Municipal Act of 1849, also known as the Baldwin Act, granted municipalities taxation powers, including the ability to tax property. Following that legislation, the Assessment Act was reformed and introduced the definition of taxable properties, exemptions and other policies that still exist today.

While there have been changes to property taxation over time, including the addition (in 1866) and removal (in 1904) of an income component, the rationale for property tax has remained essentially the same. Property tax is founded on the principle that those receiving the benefit of property-related services (property owners) should pay for them. The services that municipalities initially provided (roads, water, wastewater, fire, police and sidewalks) accrued to properties and property owners and were therefore to be funded by property taxes.

Property taxes make up nearly 40 per cent of the City's revenues and nearly all of the City's discretionary funding sources (that is,

those not tied directly to a service or a pass-through program). With the transfer of transit and housing costs to the municipality and recent emergent challenges facing residents and businesses, the City of Toronto has relied on property taxes to fund a much broader base of services, including health, environment and income redistributive services that go beyond benefits directly linked to property owners.

Property taxes do not grow proportionately with the economy. Although Toronto has experienced a rising real estate market, increased property values have not led to revenue windfalls. Property taxes are designed to be revenue neutral to property value re-assessment increases by proportionately lowering property tax rates each year.

While property tax is economically efficient, it is highly visible and often regressive in nature; it is politically challenging to reform or increase rates. Historically, property taxes in Toronto have grown less than the rate of inflation and, as a result, the average household tax burden has been declining.

Toronto's 2020 Tax-Supported Operating Budget

Revenue Source	% of 2020 Tax-Supported Operating Budget
Property Tax	38.2%
Municipal Land Transfer Tax	6.9%
User Fees & Fines	7.5%
Provincial and Federal Transfers	21.3%
Reserve Funds	4.4%
TTC Fares	11.6%
Other	10.2% [includes 5.6% other; 2.3% investment income; 2.3% transfers from capital]

Local property tax revenues have not kept up with the demands for services and infrastructure in Toronto. Over successive City Council terms, the City's finances have been heavily relied upon to meet increasing regional demand for services such as public housing, transit and transportation and shelters. The City faces those demands without contributions toward operating expenses from a regional tax or rate base. That creates significant pressures on the City to manage.

Underfunded Municipalities

In 1998, the Province of Ontario shifted financial responsibility between the provincial and municipal tax bases for several program areas and introduced the pooling of social welfare and housing costs among GTA municipalities as part of the Local Services Realignment (LSR) reforms.

Responsibilities for funding transit, social and supportive housing and the administration of some social services were “downloaded” to municipalities. In 2004, through the Provincial Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review, many of these previously downloaded services were “uploaded” back to the province. The upload did not include transit or social and supportive housing – programs that provide benefits to the region but are now funded in large part by Toronto taxpayers. The province created transfer payment programs designed to help Toronto with its disproportionate share of housing and other social service costs, such as the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund (OMPF), GTA Equalization Payments and Toronto Pooling Compensation. The last of those programs was phased out in 2016.

The City has taken on additional responsibilities that reach beyond property-related services, and these services are still primarily funded by property taxes. Cities do not have revenue tools that grow with the economy to address these needs. This misalignment between responsibilities and revenue sources has limited the ability of Toronto to respond to challenges. In Toronto, it has resulted in strategies that are approved by City Council but do not receive adequate funding, as well as large capital backlogs for critical transit and housing infrastructure.

All three orders of government have taken actions to invest in Toronto's infrastructure needs in recent years, however, Toronto services and infrastructure remain structurally underfunded. City

Council recently took a proactive step to address this underfunding by increasing the City Building Levy to generate an additional \$6.6 billion over the next six years, dedicated to transit and housing. Despite the substantial investment, the City's state-of-good-repair backlog will grow to approximately \$18 billion by 2029. Most state-of-good-repair needs pertain to the City's transit and housing infrastructure.

This underinvestment is compounded by the fact that while municipalities own and maintain the majority of Canada's public infrastructure – 59.8 per cent of all public infrastructure in Canada¹⁴¹ — they see limited return on investment generated by infrastructure investments (in terms of direct impact on municipal balance sheets). By some estimates, up to 44 per cent of infrastructure investments are recovered by the federal and provincial governments through GDP gains that lead to higher personal, corporate and indirect taxes. Meanwhile, municipal governments see just 0.001 per cent of the benefits of these investments due to a lack of access to revenue tools linked directly to economic growth and activity.¹⁴²

Toronto's Revenue Options

As Canada's seventh largest government by expenditure, the City of Toronto requires a broad, permissive legislative framework to achieve "made-for-Toronto" policies that are commensurate with its size, responsibilities, diversity, and economic and cultural significance. To facilitate it, in 2006, the City of Toronto Act (COTA) came into effect, granting Toronto new authorities for taxation. COTA introduces relatively broad authority for Toronto to levy some taxes, while prohibiting Toronto from implementing certain taxes such as income, sales, parking and gas taxes.

After the adoption of COTA, one of the revenue tools that the City of Toronto introduced was the Municipal Land Transfer Tax. Introduced in 2008, the Municipal Land Transfer Tax has grown to be a significant source of revenue for the city, representing 7.5 per cent of the tax-supported operating budget. The City has relied on unexpected increases to Municipal Land Transfer Tax revenue to help fund the operating budget in recent years. Other than the Municipal Land Transfer Tax, other COTA taxing powers generate very marginal revenues. For example, combined, the Third-Party Sign (Billboard) Tax and the Municipal Accommodation Tax account for less than 0.8 percent of all revenues budgeted by the City. The City also implemented a Vehicle Registration Tax in 2009, and later repealed it in 2010, but it too represented a small portion of budgeted revenues.

More public and community space, community building, open more public spaces safely, create subsidies for local businesses and community groups, support for people of all income levels living together in neighbourhoods.

Comment from Consultation

City Council has considered implementing new revenue options on several occasions, most recently in December 2016. Revenue options available to the City under COTA tend to be rather narrow in application, and correspondingly limited in terms of revenue capacity. Some of these options face additional challenges, such as potential negative economic and equity impacts, or would be complex and expensive to administer. Others require provincial approval, such as road tolling. In 2016, Council decided to pursue road tolling on the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway, but it was not approved by the province. Pre-COVID-19, City Council directed staff to study the possibility of implementing a vacant homes tax, a parking tax and a vacant storefront tax.

Recent trends, including the continued rise of e-commerce and mobile work options, and the corresponding decline in demand for office space, may further strain municipal revenues, which are predominantly reliant on land-based approaches. In a digital era, land-based assets may become less important.

The City's current mix of revenue tools does not adequately support the City's service responsibilities, most notably regional and income redistribution services that are funded primarily through local property tax but provide benefits across the region. This situation has created substantial risks to the City's long-term financial sustainability.

Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability is one of the City's top priorities. Toronto is committed to working and seeking partnerships to ensure value and affordability for taxpayers, adequately fund municipal services and infrastructure, make needed investments in the city and improve its financial health. Toronto is committed to making informed financial decisions and effectively managing resources for Toronto's future. The City is modernizing its budget, financial systems, capital planning and delivery and fostering innovation throughout the organization.

The City prioritizes financial sustainability across all services, programs, divisions, agencies and corporations. The City's Budget, Corporate Strategic Plan, Long-Term Financial Plan and initiatives such as the Value-Based Outcome Review exemplify Toronto's commitment to financial sustainability. All have been created with extensive input from the public, Council and City staff, including public consultation in communities, deputations at Council's committees and discussions with the City's Senior and Corporate Leadership Teams.

While City Council has established policy directions and service delivery expectations, there are financial barriers to their realization. In December 2019, it was estimated that, over the next three years, the City's average annual cash flow risk would be \$1 billion if sustainable strategies for fiscal management could not be secured.

It is clear that social infrastructure – including food security, affordable housing, transit, child care, community safety programs and services, public health services, and decent work standards – are critical prerequisites to economic prosperity and resilience.

Comment from Consultation

Expenditure Management

City Council has placed a high priority on expenditure control. That approach is reinforced by annual budget targets and strategic plans or reviews, such as the City's Long-Term Financial Plan and the Value-Based Outcomes Review. The City continually reviews and controls expenditures through strategic plans and initiatives, however, finding efficiencies will not resolve the City's long-term financial challenges.

Only a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic, the City completed a Value-Based Outcome Review of the City's finances, funded through a program of the Ontario Government. A key finding of the review, confirming advice from City officials, is that Toronto's financial risk is driven by the fact that the City funds key services that provide a regional benefit – such as transit and housing – without contributions toward operating expenses from a regional tax- or rate-base. It identified that over the course of four years (2015–2018), the compounded annual growth rate for expenditures was 0.6 per cent for core City operations and 0.2 per cent for agency operations, in real terms. Over that same period, population grew by 2.1 per cent and real per-capita expenditures decreased from \$3,166 in 2015 to \$2,979 in 2018. Those figures indicate that the City is not funding increased demand in services through higher levels of expenditure, but rather, responding to growth through continued focus on generating efficiencies. However, the analysis also demonstrates that these efforts are unsustainable in the long-term without significant investment in modernization initiatives. Even before the financial effects of COVID-19, the City was facing a potential cash flow risk of \$1 billion over the next three years (2020–22).

The unsustainability of the City's fiscal situation was also highlighted in the City's Long-Term Financial Plan, adopted by Council in 2018. Both the Long-Term Financial Plan and the Value-Based Outcomes Review recommended reviewing service delivery to address pressures including optimizing and restructuring the workforce, modernizing how the City does business and adopting new models of procurement to drive greater value. The City of Toronto is a service provider and delivering its services in smart, innovative and streamlined ways has the potential to better meet residents' and businesses' needs. The City has a continued focus on expenditure management, however, savings and efficiencies alone cannot address the capital backlog or the necessary investments in growth.

Experiencing the Financial Impacts of COVID-19

During the emergency shutdown, the City of Toronto has maintained critical services, ensuring that people are still able to use transit, established temporary food banks in library branches and opened new temporary shelters and respite sites. Since mid-February, the City, consistent with other major Canadian and Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) municipalities, has experienced significant financial impacts, both in the form of added costs and revenue losses and, in particular, reduced TTC fare revenue. The City has provided support to residents and businesses by implementing deferral programs for property tax and utility bill payments to alleviate financial pressures.

During the early months of COVID-19 the City faced financial pressures of \$65 million a week, and an anticipated tax-supported budget shortfall of \$1.9 billion by the end of 2020. The City has established mitigation strategies including workforce and spending restraints that are expected to reduce the total year-end shortfall to \$1.35 billion.¹⁴³

In addition, the City engaged with its federal and provincial counterparts to obtain funding support for municipalities to offset projected deficits resulting from COVID-19 related financial impacts and longer-term commitment to support Toronto into 2021. The federal and provincial governments have announced programs that are likely to provide relief in 2020, such as the Safe Restart Agreement. Toronto is grateful that the other orders of government are providing this much needed support. However, there is considerable uncertainty as to the extent provincial and federal support will mitigate future budget pressures in 2021 and beyond.

City staff have estimated a preliminary 2021 Operating Budget opening pressure of nearly \$1.5 billion, based on 2021 outlooks. When coupled with the long-standing funding challenges

Housing is a key driver of social and economic growth. All governments need to direct resources to address the urgent housing and health needs of residents. Intergovernmental collaboration is needed to ensure these needs are met while supporting the key role that municipal governments play in planning and delivering on federal and provincial economic stimulus measures.

Comment from Consultation

experienced by the City to fund transit, build affordable housing and provide social services, it is apparent that the City will require continued support from the federal and provincial governments into 2021 and future years while cities continue to experience financial impacts during the recovery and rebuilding phases.



Municipal Financial Sustainability – Looking Forward

As a result of changing demographics, rising income inequality and challenges posed by climate change, municipalities will likely continue to shoulder increased demands for social services. At the same time, intergovernmental transfers for operating expenses have decreased from \$1,100 per capita in 2010 to \$830 per capita in 2020, when adjusted for inflation. That decrease is explained in part by the elimination of previous provincial compensation for Toronto's disproportionate housing and social services costs, as well as reduced social service caseloads and the associated need for provincial funding, due to low unemployment rates in previous years.

A key component of financial sustainability is an efficient balance of authorities and clear responsibilities and funding across all orders of government. As recommended by the University of Toronto, the province and Ontario's municipalities have an opportunity to review the current division of responsibilities for planning, regulating, funding and delivering key services, including how to safeguard accountability, share costs fairly and enhance the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of services.¹⁴⁴ Toronto City Council has taken action to increase the City's autonomy by asking the City Manager to report on options for additional autonomy from senior level of governments, including a City Charter, that provides authority for fiscal matters including the ability to determine revenue sources, set tax rates, borrow funds and allocate monies.

In the immediate term, financial renewal needed to support COVID-19 recovery and rebuild must recognize the financial pressures in Toronto related to transit and housing, among other social service funding challenges.

Transit

The financial impacts of COVID-19 compound long-standing funding challenges for the TTC. Toronto has the least subsidized transit-system in North America, a large capital backlog, significant expansion needs and transit fares that have grown faster than the rate of inflation.¹⁴⁵

The TTC's backlog of deferred maintenance has grown, putting the safety, accessibility and sustainability at risk despite the need to move more customers more reliably than ever before. As of 2019, the system requires \$33.5 billion of investment over the next 15 years to address this backlog, only a portion of which is currently allocated funding.



Additionally, significant investment is required to support Toronto's growth and expand the transit network, including the Province's four priority subway projects, the SmartTrack Station Program, the Waterfront Transit Network, and the Eglinton East Crosstown Extension. All three orders of government have committed to funding transit expansion, but commitment to fully fund these projects has not yet been confirmed.

Toronto's recovery will rely on transit as people return to work and access health care, child care and schools. The impacts of COVID-19 may result in reduced transit ridership in 2021 and beyond. The Safe Restart Agreement provides up to \$2 billion in support for transit in Ontario, of which \$404 million will go to the TTC in the first phase of funding, helping to bridge the immediate budget gap.

A realignment of transit funding is needed to support not only the COVID-19 recovery, but also to support the long-term growth and livability of the Toronto and the GTHA. As the GTHA grows, it will also be critical to increasingly look at transit on a regional basis.

Housing

Toronto provides 90 per cent of the public housing in the Greater Toronto Area and 37 per cent of the total social housing in the province, representing a disproportionate share of costs borne by the City relative to its share of the provincial population or tax base. Additionally, since 2016, there has been a steady increase in the number of federal refugee and asylum claimants seeking emergency shelter and housing in Toronto. The City continues to maintain shelter capacity for this population.

Now that we know that certain things can be delivered in ways that accommodate people's specific needs - e.g. certain things can be accessible online that were not initially accessible, deadlines to submit or provide applications were extended, etc.; it would be important for those accommodations to remain even after COVID-19 for accessibility reasons and the like. The general response to accommodate people at this time and the quick turnaround to make the changes necessary all speak to the City and other governments' capacity to be creative and responsive to people's diverse needs even beyond COVID-19.

Comment from Consultation

As detailed in a recent report from the University of Toronto's Ontario360 initiative, in 2018 the City of Toronto spent \$933 million, or \$315 per resident, on social housing. Of this total, the provincial government contributed just \$333,250, or \$0.11 per resident – a share of just 0.04 percent. In comparison, municipalities in the rest of the province together spent \$1.9 billion on social housing, an average of \$182 per person. In these municipalities, the Province contributed a total \$405 million, or an average of \$38 per person – a 21 percent share of all operating and capital costs.¹⁴⁶

Municipalities in Ontario currently pay three-quarters of social housing costs. As suggested by the University of Toronto, these costs are borne through municipal property taxes, not income taxes, and are therefore not a progressive way to pay for social housing. Any review of provincial-municipal responsibilities should examine how social housing can be funded more effectively, rather than by property tax revenues.

Due to public health guidelines and requirements around safety and physical distancing, the onset of COVID-19 caused considerable strain on the emergency shelter system. The City has undertaken a number of actions to support the needs of people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic (see Section 7 for details). Many of the City's efforts have been supported by the Province of Ontario, with additional funding provided under the Social Services Relief Fund and direct supports provided through Ontario Health.

Toronto continues to face substantial housing needs across the spectrum of types, tenures and levels of affordability. The City also has funding pressures with City-owned housing stock, shelters and the supportive housing it provides.

It should be recognized that the City of Toronto provides a regional and national service through City-run shelters and supportive housing systems. Given the growing urgent housing and supportive needs, it will be critical for the City to work with all orders of government to examine and develop alternative funding to provide services that respond to emerging needs through a coordinated regional response to housing supports.

Engagement Overview

TORR undertook extensive engagement with stakeholders and the public. This section includes feedback from the City's public survey on recovery and rebuild, which received more than 12,000 responses, and input from the Mayor's Task Force and a number of stakeholder meetings. See Section 6 for details. Initial feedback largely focused on short-term recovery needs. Input from these engagements should be considered as a snapshot at a point-in-time during an unfolding pandemic.

Outreach was undertaken to invite stakeholders from the development, finance, technology and community sectors to meetings to discuss sector-specific impacts and potential longer-term trends in digital, development, real estate and property taxes. Stakeholders included the City of Toronto Digital Infrastructure Plan Community Advisory Group (CAG), the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board (TRREB), the Toronto Industry Network (TIN) and various property management firms/REITs.

The Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force, which held meetings with industry and community groups, involving tables chaired by Council members, also provided feedback relevant to government and financial renewal.

Below are key themes that emerged from the engagements. Feedback reported here has not been attributed to individuals or companies within industries and may not be representative of the wider Toronto population or all stakeholders within an industry, or the City of Toronto's position on the issues.

Input from Stakeholder Meetings

1. COVID-19 is a stressor on pre-existing conditions – it has deepened, accelerated or made them more acute.
 - Housing Supply. On the matter of housing supply, stakeholders indicated that:
 - There is pent up demand for housing and a growing tension between intentions to buy versus intentions to sell. This situation could lead to price acceleration.
 - Demand-side policies for housing may only have a relative effect on the market. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has a supply-side concern. There is a need for new supply and a diversity of supply.
 - Investor-owners in the short-term rental market are contemplating either listing short-term properties for sale or bringing them into the rental market, as a result of the City's new Short-term Rental Regulations. Participants suggested that toward the end of the year and into 2021, some re-balancing in the market will occur.
 - Manufacturing. It was noted that:
 - Many industrial companies in Toronto are multi-nationals with operations in the United States. Participants highlighted that these companies are sensitive to the cost of doing business where their facilities are located and will be closely monitoring the costs of running their facilities in Toronto.
 - Low vacancy rates indicate that there is still strong demand for manufacturing land.
 - Stakeholders expressed the view that government debt/financial challenges will have a strong impact on consumer confidence, taxes, etc., moving forward.
 - The concern was raised that a significant increase in property taxes would hurt the City's manufacturing community if there is a slowdown in the broader economy.
2. Transit is essential for Toronto's recovery and needs support from other orders of government, including the federal government. For businesses, stakeholders noted that:
 - Transit will be critical when office tenants return downtown, and it is important that public transit is perceived to be clean and safe.
 - Traffic congestion was a major challenge pre-COVID and there are concerns over the risk of rising congestion; particularly, if individuals choose to drive rather than use public transit.
3. Digitization will have ongoing effects on City revenues, main streets, businesses, residents and use of physical space. A potential shift to e-commerce may have an impact on Toronto's property assessment base. It was noted that:
 - Municipal revenues are reliant on land-based approaches to value, which will become less relevant in the digital age.
 - Enhanced digital infrastructure is required to ensure digital access for low-income populations.
 - The City needs to digitize to keep pace with demands from business and residents and to ensure administrative processes are expedient and effective.
 - The accelerated shift to e-commerce and online streaming platforms due to emergency measures has resulted in a significant decline in physically located and experiential-based retail, food and entertainment consumer activity. However, there continues to be confidence in the resumption of experiential-based consumption patterns over the long term.
 - There are concerns about the long-term health of the retail market; particularly, in Toronto's downtown PATH network. It is believed that changes to the retail space, as a result of COVID-19, will become a part of "the new normal."
 - The City needs to support continued public realm programming to encourage vibrancy in the downtown core.
 - Online service delivery will continue to change brick-and-mortar businesses, but it will not completely replace them. For example, it may reduce the overall brick-and-mortar footprint across the city as retailers choose to have fewer or smaller store frontages.
 - The City needs to continue supports for local businesses in the transition to online retail and digitization.

- If the zoning "use" of a shopping centre needs to change in the future, more flexible planning/zoning considerations are needed to ensure that these changes can occur as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- The City needs to reinforce the idea that start/end times for offices need to be staggered (for employees to safely return to working from offices, especially those in large towers).
- Governments had a very effective voice in communicating the need to shut down. As it becomes safe to reopen, the City, other governments and public health officials need to have a strong and effective voice to communicate that it's safe to return to transit, jobs, retail shopping, entertainment, etc.

4. The impact of COVID-19 on companies returning to work from offices remains an open question, although stakeholders are optimistic for recovery of office and commercial space use.

Stakeholders indicated that:

- Transactions within the commercial sector typically face longer timelines; therefore, it is still too early to tell what long-term effects may occur within this sector.
- There continues to be confidence in the long-term health of the office sector; however, it is too early to tell how employers will integrate office work and work-from-home scenarios.
- Future management of physical spaces, such as curbsides, may require measures enabling physical distancing and crowd reduction.

Input from TORR public survey

1. Keep property tax affordable

- Of respondents who commented on the City's finances, some included property tax as one of the most pressing issues to address during recovery and rebuild.
- The majority of these respondents would like the City to reduce property taxes and improve affordability for taxpayers. Reasons cited for reducing property tax include financial hardship faced by families due to COVID-19 and improving affordability for taxpayers. There were some calls for the elimination of commercial property taxes as a way to support local businesses.

- A minority of respondents favour the City increasing property taxes.
- A few respondents would like the City to explore new revenue options, for example, revenues that grow with the economy such as sales tax, as well as road tolls.

2. Improve the efficiency of government operations and how tax dollars are spent.

- Some residents would like to see the City find more efficiencies across its operations and budgets, such as reducing red tape, improving timeliness of services (e.g., building permits).
- Some respondents noted waste in the City budget, with public servants' wages and ineffective programs being a common concern among these respondents.

3. Renegotiate the City's Authorities

- Some respondents would like to see the City of Toronto have more authority over services and revenues. There were a few calls for reviewing cities' place vis-a-vis the provincial and federal governments and reviewing "who does what" across all orders of government.

4. Funding Transit and Housing

- From the online public survey, affordable housing and mobility/transit were the top priorities identified in the survey (43 per cent and 30 per cent of respondents).
- Of those who identified public transit as a top priority, the majority of respondents spoke to issues such as overcrowding on public transit, the need for enhanced services, and concerns about increasing congestion. However, several people noted that to solve these issues, the City requires increased funding, either by re-directing more City funds to transit or by receiving more support from the provincial or federal governments. Some survey respondents also noted that transit benefits the region, so funding should come from all orders of government.
- Similarly, of those who identified affordable housing as a key issue, several noted that the key action is to adequately fund affordable housing initiatives, including re-allocating funding in the City budget.

Input from Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force

1. Streamline, digitize and modernize City government.

- Stakeholders from the Mayor's Task Force emphasized the need to improve the City's processes and service delivery to residents and businesses. Task Force recommendations included:
 - Review the City's technology infrastructure to ensure integrated and streamlined processes, cost effectiveness and customer service.
 - Streamline the City's customer interface to reduce regulatory burden, simplify transactions and improve response times, including creating a unit reporting to the City Manager to provide a one-stop review of major development applications, and create digital portals for all permits, services and licences.
 - Complete a comprehensive bylaw review to ensure simplification, modernization and reduce redundancies.

2. Invest in housing.

- The Mayor's Task Force stakeholders recommended the City take several actions related to affordable and social housing, and rental assistance.
- Recommendations included increased provincial and federal support for housing, including
 - Providing emergency funding for cities and community agencies;
 - Providing urgent renter assistance;
 - Expediting and expanding delivery of the Canada Housing Benefit;
 - Accelerating and expanding funding for new affordable homes under the National Housing Strategy;
 - Establishing dedicated funding for a modular rental housing program;
 - Funding acquisitions, renovations and conversion;s
 - Providing operating funding to create supportive housing;
 - Increasing investments in permanent affordable housing; and
 - Increasing the supply of rental housing.

3. Explore financial supports for residents, businesses, and community organizations.

- Stakeholders noted that property tax and rate deferrals were very helpful and said further deferrals may be useful again if businesses face closure.
- One of the top "asks" mentioned by business is for the province to reduce, eliminate or defer small business electricity and natural gas costs while emergency measures are in place. In addition, there were calls to explore financial supports for small businesses.
- A theme from the Mayor's Task Force was for the City to use its financial tools to provide support, such as:
 - Vacant commercial property tax relief and commercial and industrial tax relief; and
 - Reforming the commercial tax system to get main street healthy again and address long-standing property tax challenges for small businesses (for example, by creating a capping strategy to manage the impacts of MPAC tax assessments and creating additional tax bands for commercial properties).



11 | Theme: Business

Toronto's economy entered this crisis on a strong foundation that will likely improve the city's ability to recover from the effects of the pandemic. The Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) has experienced 10 consecutive years of growth, with real gross domestic product (GDP) expanding at an average annual rate of 2.8 per cent from 2010 through 2019. Toronto has a highly diverse economy with a growing and skilled workforce. Immigration has fuelled strong population growth and linguistic and cultural diversity. Toronto is the fastest growing city, and the Toronto CMA is the fastest growing metropolitan area, in all of Canada and the United States in terms of population growth.

The construction sector, a key indicator of economic vitality, was booming. The city has also benefited from a surge of investment in public infrastructure and transit to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding region. Compared to other North American cities, Toronto has one of the lowest central office vacancy rates, and places first or second in high-rise construction is the second largest financial sector in North America, and the third largest tech sector. It is home to the largest share of head offices in the country.

Sectors Engaged

As part of the City response to the COVID-19 emergency, a wide range of consultations have been held with key economic and business stakeholders. The Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Taskforce started consultations in March 2020, with more than 200 stakeholders from a variety of business and community groups. City councillors also held roundtable discussions with key sectors and City staff conducted surveys and check-ins with business stakeholders.

The Toronto Region Board of Trade (TRBoT) partnered with the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild to convene sectoral consultation tables. City staff also established opportunities for sectors and stakeholders to provide input on how the pandemic has impacted them, their thoughts on the role of each order of government in meeting identified challenges, and suggestions for actions in recovery and rebuild.

The TRBoT roundtable discussions focused on key sectors of Toronto's economy and employment including film, music and live events, travel and tourism, energy, innovation and technology, main street business, large retail, grocery and e-commerce, finance, manufacturing, infrastructure, health, and post-secondary institutions. Some sectors have experienced a dramatic downturn in employment and revenue since the emergence of COVID-19 in Toronto (tourism, hospitality, film, music, events, retail) while others have not been as dramatically affected (finance, technology, grocery).



Toronto Economic Update - COVID-19

Toronto is facing an unprecedented economic shock amid the global COVID-19 pandemic. Between February 2020 and May 2020, total employment across Toronto declined by 255,400. The unemployment rate more than doubled, from 6.2 per cent to 14.2 per cent over the period. The increase would be higher if laid-off workers not currently looking for work were counted as unemployed. Additionally, many employed Toronto residents are working reduced hours. Among the most impacted have been workers in accommodation and food services, and in the information, culture and recreation sectors.

Many other economic indicators have also shown a steep contraction. For example, manufacturing shipments across the Toronto CMA tumbled 40 per cent month-over-month in April as many plants shuttered. Retail sales fell 33 per cent month-over-month in April.

A survey of three prominent forecasters – the Conference Board of Canada, Oxford Economics and Moody's Analytics – predict that real GDP for the Toronto CMA (Census Metropolitan Area) will contract by 6.9 per cent in 2020 before rebounding by 6.7 per cent in 2021. These forecasts align with estimates for the broader Canadian economy, including recent projections from the Bank of Canada.

Figure 1 – Indexed Employed, July 2018=100

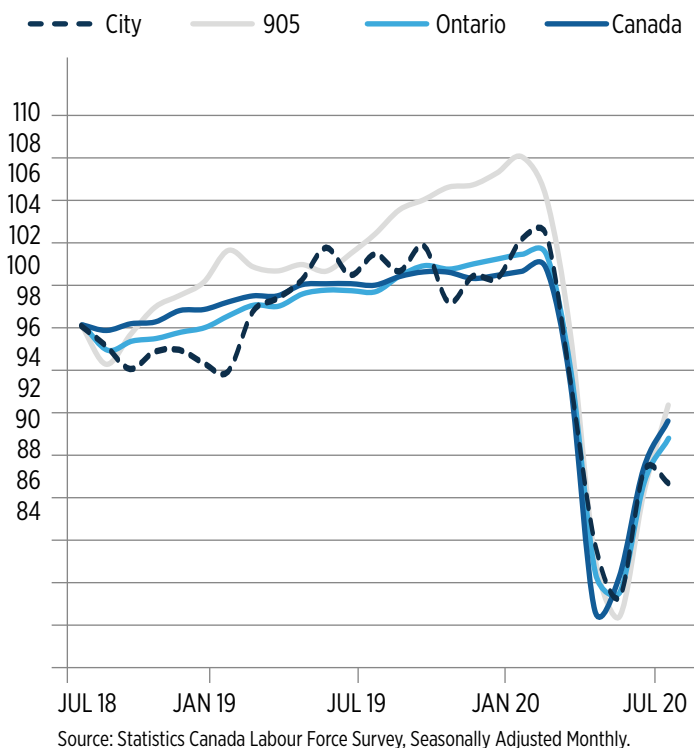
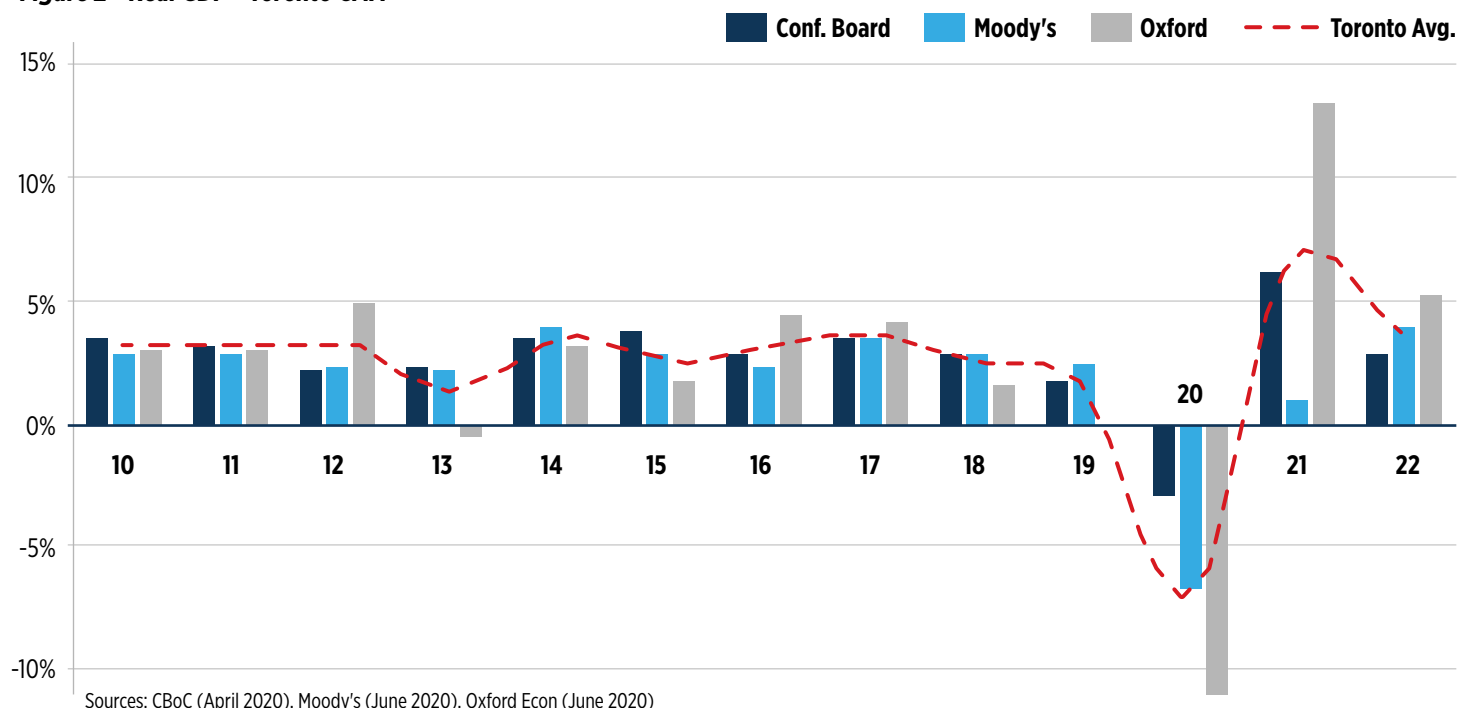


Figure 2 – Real GDP - Toronto CMA



Recovery is getting underway as restrictions gradually ease and more businesses reopen. Total employment for Toronto increased by 89,200 in June, though payrolls contracted again in July by a modest 9,400. The July level of employment has recouped roughly 30 per cent of the jobs lost in the period from February through May. Toronto manufacturing shipments returned 20 per cent month-over-month in May, reversing half of the prior month's decline. Retail sales increased eight per cent month-over-month. According to the CFIB's weekly survey of members, sentiment among Ontario small businesses is becoming more positive. Some areas are expected to return more quickly, including retail and manufacturing, while other sectors, notably tourism and culture, could face a prolonged adjustment phase. Output in the finance, insurance and real estate sector – Toronto's largest industry – is expected to emerge relatively unscathed. Resale housing activity as of July was back to pre-pandemic levels.

Toronto's economy may continue to look different, as physical distancing becomes the new normal. The shift toward e-commerce is showing signs of becoming more entrenched, challenging traditional brick-and-mortar retailers. Telework is likely to become more prominent for many workers, forcing changes to traditional office and commuting dynamics. This could also lead to lasting impacts on businesses that rely on commuter traffic for a significant portion of their customer base (e.g. food courts, bars and restaurants in the downtown core).

For example, the Conference Board of Canada estimates that pre-pandemic, nine in ten organizations had less than 20 per cent of their workforces working remotely. As of June, nearly two-thirds of organizations reported at least 60 per cent working remotely. Over the medium-term, 55 per cent of employers will be keeping at least half their workforce remote. Longer-term, the survey suggests many employees can expect to be called back to the workplace.

Statistics Canada estimates that about 40 per cent of Canadian workers are in jobs that can be performed from home. Close to that proportion were teleworking during the last week of March, compared with about 13 per cent pre-COVID, suggesting the economy was operating at maximum "telework capacity". The number of Canadians working from home declined in June and July as more workplaces reopened, but the number remains significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. Industries with a high telework capacity include finance, education, professional services, information and public administration.

The extent to which trends such as remote work, increased digitization of certain sectors and the growth of precarious work continue and/or accelerate could significantly reshape the nature of the Canadian and Toronto economies. These trends also have

significant potential downstream effects for municipal finances and the delivery of key services such as public transit and for tourism, culture and recreation. They also raise questions about which groups and individuals will bear disproportionate economic and social burdens arising from the pandemic and how best to mitigate those burdens.

















Equity and Distributional Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic has had unequal impacts on different parts of the city and different segments of the labour force. The highest rates of COVID-19 cases have been reported in areas outside the core, particularly in several neighbourhoods in the city's northwest corner. Toronto Public Health released data findings that show that the neighbourhoods with the highest rates of infection have larger numbers of Black and other racialized residents, along with higher incidence of low income.

From an economic equity perspective, work across different industries and occupations has been affected in different ways. Certain job categories were much less able to shift from retail locations and other communal places of work to enable employees to work from home. This likely meant either significant job losses or employees continuing to commute, often by public transit, to work in locations where distancing might be difficult. As is described below, these job categories, and more vulnerable work in general, are more likely to be done by Toronto residents facing other systemic barriers. Job losses since the pandemic onset reflect that pattern.

Figure 3 shows the magnitude of job losses, in terms of total employment and percentage change, between February and May of 2020 in each of broadest industry categories for the Toronto CMA. The source of this data is Statistics Canada's monthly Labour Force Survey, which relies on a relatively small sample size for cities and can therefore show some statistical variation from month to month. However, some overall trends are apparent. Not surprisingly, the largest employment changes on a percentage basis are in industries affected by social distancing rules, including accommodation and food services, arts and entertainment, and retail. While nearly all industries contracted over the three-month period, public administration employment grew slightly. Within smaller sub-sectors not shown in the table, couriers and messengers registered the largest gain in employment, with smaller increases in telecommunications, design services, building services, insurance brokers and nursing.

Figure 3 - Recent employment change among Toronto CMA residents by industry

	Employment Feb 2020	Employment May 2020	Change (000's) Feb-May 2020	% Change Feb-May 2020	% Part-Time Feb 2020	Median Wage/Hr Feb 2020
 Accommodation and food services	182.13	90.51	-91.62	-50.30%	46.70%	\$15.00
 Arts, entertainment and recreation	65.57	43.71	-21.86	-33.30%	53.00%	\$17.44
 Retail trade	393.82	286.72	-107.1	-27.20%	35.10%	\$15.85
 Educational services	241.09	181.77	-59.32	-24.60%	33.50%	\$32.97
 Construction	224.65	170.51	-54.14	-24.10%	11.50%	\$27.50
 Other services	134.45	102.15	-32.3	-24.00%	16.60%	\$22.12
 Utilities	19.1	14.86	-4.24	-22.20%	6.40%	\$46.15
 Health care and social assistance	385.8	310.58	-75.22	-19.50%	18.20%	\$25.00
 Wholesale trade	136.1	113.75	-22.35	-16.40%	7.80%	\$23.08
 Administrative and support	161.15	138.48	-22.67	-14.10%	20.40%	\$18.45
 Manufacturing	328.29	285.1	-43.19	-13.20%	2.60%	\$22.31
 Transportation and warehousing	217.6	203.89	-13.71	-6.30%	8.60%	\$24.00
 Professional, scientific and technical services	418.07	396.22	-21.85	-5.20%	8.70%	\$33.65
 Information and cultural industries	90.04	87.55	-2.49	-2.80%	14.20%	\$28.85
 Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	414.06	411.65	-2.41	-0.60%	7.00%	\$34.19
 Public administration	106.17	112.4	6.23	5.90%	5.70%	\$40.87

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey

Figure 3 shows that the industries with the largest relative job losses were also generally more likely to have a higher percentage of part-time and lower wage employees. While the median hourly wage column refers only to wages and not total compensation, the table overall strongly suggests that those in already somewhat precarious and lower paid jobs were more likely to lose employment as a result of COVID-19.

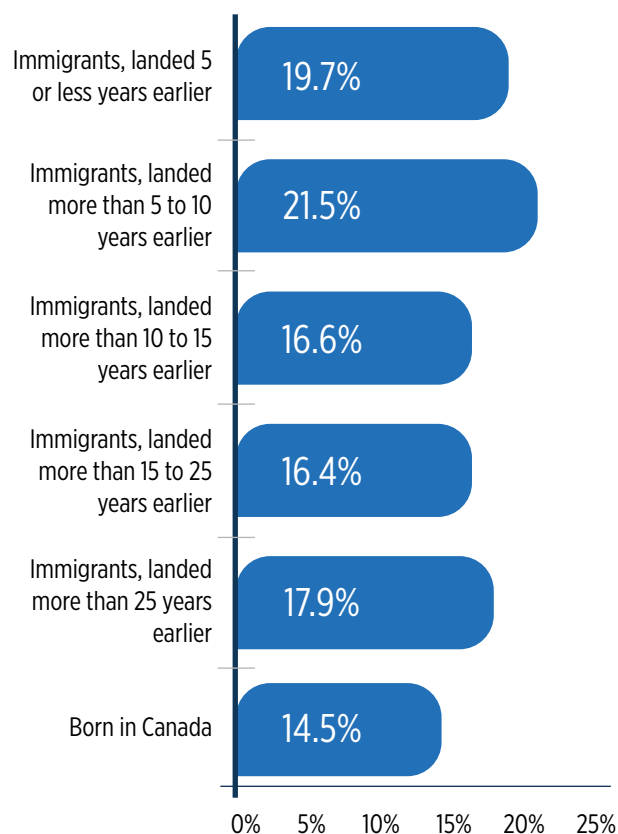
That helps explain why, as with rates of infection, there has been a disproportionate economic impact of COVID-19 on various Toronto communities. Research on precarious work in Ontario, defined in part by lower wages and fewer or less predictable hours, has shown a clear over-representation of recent immigrants, women and visible minorities.

With the August Labour Force Survey release (July 2020 data), Statistics Canada began collecting race-based employment data for the first time. This provides the opportunity to measure the current and future labour market conditions of diverse groups but does not provide historical information to determine the possible impacts of COVID-19 prior to July. Using available data from earlier this year, Figure 4 shows that between February and May, immigrants were more likely to lose their job than non-immigrants. Within the Toronto CMA, total loss of employment has been largest on a relative basis among those who immigrated to Canada within the last 10 years, and all categories of immigrants have fared worse than Toronto CMA residents born in Canada.

Further, between February and May 2020, the Labour Force Survey shows that the number of employed women within the Toronto CMA declined by 17.7 per cent while the number of employed men declined by 14.8 per cent. It is also likely that more women have taken leave from work to provide care for children and other family members but may still be counted as employed in labour force data.

The pandemic has also impacted different businesses and entrepreneurs unequally. Roundtable discussions hosted by the Toronto Region Board of Trade (TRBoT) highlighted the challenges facing various businesses. In the main street/retail sector, for example, participants noted independent small businesses were likely to have immediate cash liquidity challenges including difficulty covering rent and making capital upgrades to meet safety requirements. In other industries such as travel and tourism, business of all sizes reported facing liquidity challenges, but more established and larger companies are generally able to withstand revenue losses for a longer period.

Figure 4 - Per cent Total Employment Loss for Toronto CMA Residents between February-May 2020



While publicly listed companies have been quite volatile, as of early July, North American stock markets have returned to near pre-pandemic levels indicating confidence in the ongoing profitability of larger enterprises. And as unequal employment changes across industries have had disproportionate impacts based on demographics, small businesses have faced the greatest challenges and are also more likely to be diversely owned and operated.

Newcomer entrepreneurs, for example, are much more likely to run small businesses as a function of having only been established relatively recently.

Some of the Toronto Region Board of Trade (TRBoT) roundtables included discussions on how to rebuild the relevant sector in a way that is more equitable. For example, the Innovation and Technology sector table discussed anti-Black racism and the importance of

connecting it to the concept of “building back better” after the pandemic. In response to questions about how the sector can provide support, resources were shared by the Black Professionals in Tech Network outlining ways that companies can put anti-Black racism messages into action. More effective approaches discussed included being visible in the community as an employer of choice; offering mentorship and sponsorship for Black employees; and seeking advice externally and from colleagues.

A roundtable to engage Indigenous businesses was also organized by the City. Participants provided feedback on the fallout created by COVID-19 and how it can be meaningfully addressed. Indigenous businesses reported experiencing similar impacts to non-Indigenous businesses in terms of reduced cash flow and liquidity challenges, difficulty in paying rent, and the need to pivot business models to adapt to public health restrictions. They also noted that Indigenous businesses and organizations generally still do not feel like they are meaningful players in how Toronto operates.

Among suggestions provided to the City, participants noted enhanced procurement opportunities for Indigenous businesses; the development of Indigenous-led solutions at the municipal level on food security, climate change, Indigenous cultural awareness, and safety; and the need to think about recovery using a full systems approach by, for example, combatting social inequities and improving access to child care in order to boost the economy.

Recent City engagement, strategies, plans or City Council decisions related to business and the economy (pre-COVID-19 directives)

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City had approved and implemented a variety of plans to support Toronto’s economy and culture scene. At the highest level, City Council approved Creative Capital Gains and Collaborating for Competitiveness, respectively, as its economic development and culture strategies.

More recently, the City of Toronto’s Economic Development and Culture division conducted extensive consultation with stakeholders to develop a five-year strategy that included the four focus areas of Equity and Inclusion; Talent and Innovation; Space and Access; and Operational Excellence. These have been supplemented by action plans for individual sectors including A Strategic Action Plan for the Film, Television and Digital Media Industry and a 2020 report to City Council titled Enhancing Pathways to Innovation and Growth in Toronto’s Food and Beverage Manufacturing Sector.

Similarly, a variety of initiatives have been developed and approved to advance sub-sectors of Toronto’s arts and culture. They include strategies to preserve and assist live music venues; the creation of a property tax subclass for creative co-location facilities; a Public Art Strategy and a strategy to strengthen Toronto’s night-time economy. Before the pandemic required the widespread closure of Toronto’s bars and restaurants, the City’s support for the hospitality sector involved the development and ongoing coordination and marketing of the Winter and Summerlicious programs.

The City’s support for the local economy is also embedded in its planning process and legislation. Through zoning requirements, many areas of the city only permit employment uses. The City’s Imagination, Manufacturing, Innovation and Technology (IMIT) program offers a property tax credit for new buildings or significant renovations that lead to more jobs in various sectors.

More direct City support for businesses is available in the form of start-up information and mentoring provided by Enterprise Toronto. Several business missions have promoted Toronto as a place to do business and to find suppliers. The City continues to support the formation, maintenance and programming of Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) that began as a concept many years ago in Toronto.

Finally, as it has become clear that the overall prosperity of Toronto’s economy has not been equitably shared or available to all, several City Council directives have focused on advancing economic inclusion and more local economic development. They include a variety of economic actions in the City’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, support for the formation of BIAs within Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, mitigation of the impacts of transit construction on nearby retail businesses, and the upcoming launch of the Indigenous Centre for Innovation and Enterprise.

These initiatives and plans were developed during a different time. Some may, in whole or in part, still be relevant to the challenges and opportunities facing the city. Others, however, may need to be re-considered in light of the impacts of COVID-19, and either ramped up, scaled back or otherwise adjusted to take account of a new operating reality for the City, business and cultural organizations, and Toronto residents.



Interjurisdictional Scan

More than half of the world lives in cities, a number expected to rise to about 70 per cent by 2050. Consequently, the actions of local governments, including working with other orders of government, will be critical to the world's economic recovery and rebuild. Out of necessity, cities rapidly responded to the devastating impacts of COVID-19 on their communities and economy, with local governments carrying out essential work and developing policy responses in real time. As many cities transition to the recovery phase, local governments are now considering ways to innovate, rethink long-standing approaches, and pursue a rebuild that confronts historic inequities.

City of Toronto staff undertook a jurisdictional review of short- and medium-term economic support and recovery programs and policies put in place by cities around the world that might be relevant to the Toronto context.

The Canadian Context

Most municipalities in Canada have adopted similar economic and business supports during the pandemic, with almost all Ontario municipalities offering immediate relief in the form of deferred tax, utility and other service payments. Many established some form of an economic task force, comprising elected officials, City staff and industry partners, to make recommendations on economic support and recovery. Several municipalities continue to survey their business community to determine the impact of COVID-19 and identify areas of concern, and possible actions for longer term recovery planning. Many municipalities, including Toronto, have focused their support on expanded digital tools for business, and expanded outdoor dining options.

While some international municipalities have the authority to provide direct grants to support businesses, Ontario municipalities do not. They must operate in a different legislative and regulatory landscape than many global cities.

Key Themes

Much like Canadian cities, most international cities have implemented business supports - typically low-interest loans and/or grants, consulting services for small - and medium-sized enterprises, expanded access to patio and retail space, tax breaks, and waiving or reducing municipal fees or requirements. Businesses will continue to incur expenses that may exceed revenues if clients or customers are slow to return, making the continuation of many of these support programs important.

Beyond business support and relief programs, reshaping public space and enhancing local mobility emerged most consistently as central tenets of local plans for economic recovery and rebuild. Most cities have also introduced some form of business support that allows business to convert parking lots, operate on sidewalks, expand patio space, or convert public space for retail uses. Outside of North America, the pace and scope of change is immense. Dozens of cities from Bogotá to Paris to Auckland have rapidly expanded cycling and pedestrian infrastructure to reduce crowding, promote local mobility and retail, and ensure that recoveries leave cities greener than before the pandemic. Paris created 650 kilometres of “cycleways” and is in the midst of re-imagining its streets to support people and the economy.

Some cities, including Portland and Washington DC, have made efforts to link enhanced street design with business support and social inequity. Many cities are investing in cycling infrastructure in an effort to expand transportation choices for those who have limited options or must use transit, predominantly lower income residents, those without access to a car, and those in jobs that do not support working from home. Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Kitchener, Waterloo, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and Moncton have extended their cycling networks or established “slow streets”. While not a direct business support, improved local mobility and access to local retail have a direct relationship with economic potential. In many cities, these changes were made as emergency measures but have since become longer-term fixtures of the recovery phase.

Engagement Overview

As part of the response to the COVID-19 emergency, the City of Toronto held a wide range of consultations with key economic and business stakeholders in the spring and summer of 2020.

- **Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force**

The Task Force convened 20 virtual roundtable discussions with more than 200 stakeholders from a wide variety of business and community groups. Participants were asked about the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses, and were asked to consider short - and medium-term interventions to support Toronto's economy.

Several City councillors led stakeholder engagement sessions on focused themes, including small business, social services and housing, workers and labour, climate action, cultural communities, and children and youth. In addition, City staff received more than 3,000 responses to a survey of Toronto businesses on the impact of COVID-19 and their needs for relief and recovery.

- **Toronto Region Board of Trade Sector Roundtables**

The Toronto Region Board of Trade (TRBoT) partnered with the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild to convene sectoral consultation tables in May, June and July 2020. The TRBoT roundtables took a forward-looking approach to consider long-term opportunities for economic recovery and rebuild. Meetings were held with industry leaders in energy, finance, film, music and live events,¹⁴⁷ health, infrastructure, innovation and technology, large retail, grocery and e-commerce, main street business, manufacturing, postsecondary education, and travel and tourism.

- **Black and Indigenous Business Roundtables**

In July 2020, City staff convened additional roundtable discussions with Indigenous and Black business leaders, for a focused conversation on combatting economic inequalities and empowering Black - and Indigenous - led businesses in the recovery period.

Data Sets Considered

Findings from each of the above engagement methods were analyzed by City staff to inform the content of this report. Since most of the work of the Mayor's Task Force focused on identifying immediate and short-to-medium-term relief efforts, a majority of the longer term issues and opportunities included in this report are based on information gathered through the TRBoT's sector roundtables and the Black and Indigenous business roundtables. Recommendations developed as part of this report are supplemented by further research by City staff, including a jurisdictional review of best practices related to COVID-19 economic relief and recovery.

Common Issues across Business Sectors

- Businesses across all sectors reported experiencing significant disruption related to COVID-19.
 - While the severity of the impact varied from sector to sector, many businesses were confronted with cash flow and liquidity challenges. Revenue impacts were particularly damaging for smaller businesses, and sectors such as travel and tourism that had to cease operations due to public health restrictions. Many raised concerns about the ability of businesses to pay fixed costs throughout the pandemic and recovery period, particularly rental payments.
 - Businesses described the need to rapidly pivot their operating model to respond to the pandemic. Many had to act quickly to enable a fully remote workforce, activate digital platforms and service delivery, introduce new or adapt existing product lines, and make changes to the layouts of stores and factories. Other businesses, in sectors like healthcare and grocery, had to scale up their operations to meet a sudden spike in demand.
 - The rapid operational changes necessary to respond to the pandemic have had significant implications on the health, safety and well-being of workers. Businesses described concerns about the mental health of employees and the challenges that many faced trying to juggle work and home responsibilities when working remotely. Businesses also expressed concerns with keeping workers safe on the job, including ongoing and reliable access to PPE.



- Many businesses were affected by supply-chain disruptions. Travel restrictions as well as business shutdowns in other countries interrupted access to goods and services needed for manufacturing and other business activities – and only some of those needs could be met by local suppliers. Similarly, the restrictions have negatively impacted recruitment for businesses that rely on access to international talent to meet their needs.
- Many of those consulted were critical of a lack of clear, consistent and timely communication from government related to reopening and operating requirements.
 - Throughout the pandemic, businesses looked to the government for direction on how to prepare their offices, stores and factories to return to operations, and how to secure appropriate PPE for workers.
 - Many found that information coming from the various orders of government was at times confusing, conflicting and released with little time to react. Businesses want all orders of government to work together to promote a “shared standard of safety” to allow for consistent practices across Ontario’s public health units and establish clear expectations among consumers and workers.
 - While more information on reopening has been made available to businesses in recent weeks, the importance of improving communications and guidance for business must be kept in mind when planning for a potential resurgence of COVID-19.
- Concerted effort is needed to rebuild public confidence in the economy. Reduced levels of consumer and investor confidence remain a major obstacle to economic recovery.
 - Businesses recognized that a strong public health response is the best way to restore public confidence. Until a vaccine is available, the roundtable participants believed it is imperative that Toronto stays ahead of the pandemic by adopting world-leading standards for testing and contact tracing, as well as implementing and enforcing necessary safety measures (e.g. disinfecting protocols and physical distancing on public transit).
 - Those consulted emphasized the need for affordable and reliable access to PPE as a necessary means for restoring confidence of employees returning to work, as well as consumers as the economy reopens. Many businesses – particularly small businesses – may have difficulty sourcing the amount of PPE necessary to resume safe operations. It was suggested that the City could play a role in supporting businesses by providing support or facilitation of purchasing, or perhaps use its purchasing power to pursue bulk orders and distribute to businesses at lower prices.
- Rebuilding confidence is also dependent on proactive, positive communication from all orders of government, including transparency in data reporting. Businesses, workers and consumers need unified messaging to feel safe in the city once again. A robust multilingual communications strategy will also be critical to strengthen relationships with Toronto’s cultural communities and ethnic-based businesses.

Opportunities across Business Sectors

- Businesses across all sectors are committed to building back better. They expressed a desire to seize this moment to address longstanding issues that have confronted the City’s social, economic and environmental health.
 - There was agreement across the roundtables that the recovery period is an opportunity for innovation on multiple levels, including experimenting with new business models, collaborating with communities to advance social innovation, and leveraging Toronto’s tech talent to develop innovative technologies in impactful areas such as renewable energy and green infrastructure to lead economic recovery.
- Many see an opportunity to champion local capabilities and innovation through the pandemic and recovery period.
 - While supply chain disruptions and border closures have been challenging, businesses across sectors feel that this presents an opportunity to strengthen regional supply chains and expand domestic capacity. For example, enhancing manufacturing capacity for critical products such as pharmaceuticals and PPE will help protect residents in the event of a resurgence of COVID-19, and will build resilience for potential public health crises in the future.
 - There is also an opportunity for the local innovation ecosystem to lead in emerging technologies that will thrive in the post-pandemic market, such as developments in AI (artificial intelligence), data analytics, clean energy, advanced manufacturing and sensor technologies.
 - Many who commented believe that the pandemic has created an opportunity to shine the spotlight on main street businesses across Toronto. They encourage businesses to take advantage of the strong consumer interest in supporting main streets and trends toward hyper-local shopping that are expected to continue beyond the pandemic.

- Each of the business roundtables spoke to the importance of confronting social and economic inequality in Toronto. There was widespread agreement that for too long, systemic racism and institutional barriers have trapped racialized Torontonians and other equity-seeking groups in a cycle of poverty.
 - The roundtable participants agreed that now is the time to confront these inequities and make meaningful changes to create economic opportunities for equity-seeking communities, with particular action needed urgently to confront anti-Black racism and support Indigenous communities.
 - While there was broad consensus that action is needed to address longstanding issues related to inequality, most roundtables did not explicitly discuss how this change can be achieved, with some calling on the City to undertake more focused research and engagement on this topic.
 - Suggested actions from the Black and Indigenous business roundtables included pursuing a more inclusive procurement process for small businesses; encouraging more equitable hiring practices in the public and private sectors; creating more skills training opportunities; and collecting race-based data for decision-making.
- Many are seeing this period as a transformational moment for the future of work – though what the future of work will be remains an open question.
 - Changes that are being implemented related to remote work and digital collaboration may become permanent. The concept of “work from home” is shifting to become “work from anywhere”. How does this change how employers attract and retain talent? And what does this mean for the mobility of Toronto’s talent?
 - Some suggested that they will be less likely to renew leases for office space, and instead expect to invest more funds in talent and product development. That could stimulate further innovation by Toronto companies – but it may have an impact on the city’s commercial real estate market and vacancy rates.
 - There are also equity considerations related to changing work. Investment in digital infrastructure is needed to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, reliable high-speed broadband to participate in remote work environments.
- Roundtable participants called for the City to work with businesses on enhanced workforce development and skills training programs.
 - Many noted the need for skills training programs to be a cornerstone of economic recovery, including programs for youth, underrepresented communities and people who have been laid off due to the pandemic.
 - Roundtable participants encouraged collaboration between businesses, postsecondary institutions and the City on program development, along with leveraging community benefits agreements to implement and deliver job training and create pathways to employment.
- Recognizing the likelihood of a slow, uneven economic recovery, businesses called for the City to advocate for maintaining federal business subsidies and benefits during the recovery period.
 - Despite some gaps in eligibility, participants considered programs like the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), and Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) to be successful in supporting workers and employers.
 - Many suggested a gradual phase-out of these programs as the economy recovers to help mitigate risk and support employers as business levels slowly return to normal. Some also advocated for a sector-by-sector approach to maintaining benefits, prioritizing support for industries and workers that will have a slower recovery period (such as live events and tourism).
 - Those consulted also identified an opportunity to apply learnings from these temporary emergency support programs to improve existing government supports over the longer term – such as understanding the impact of the CERB to make positive changes to the Employment Insurance (EI) system.
 - Not all programs were perceived as successful. Many who commented were critical of the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (OCECRA), which they felt was implemented too late, had low uptake and ultimately did not achieve its objectives. Across all sectors, many advocated for a rent-relief program that works for tenants, and for an enhanced program to remain in place for an extended period to mitigate the risk of business failure during the recovery period.

Intersectional Recovery and Rebuild Issues

In addition to the issues and opportunities noted above, the business roundtables raised several cross-cutting points that directly relate to the other consultation themes.

- Many businesses agree that a robust public health response is the single most effective way to facilitate Toronto's economic recovery.
 - There were many who feared that the city's economy will remain at risk of further disruption until a vaccine is made widely available. Until that time, businesses across all sectors emphasized the need for all orders of government to adopt globally leading practices in testing, contact tracing and data sharing.
 - There is also a significant opportunity to leverage the expertise of Toronto's innovation ecosystem to develop technology solutions to improve the City's public health response, and address other social challenges facing the city during the pandemic and recovery period.
- Economic recovery and rebuild is dependent on restoring and improving City services that Toronto workers rely on.
 - Many participants emphasized the economic importance of improving access to affordable childcare for working parents and reopening the public school system. Working parents are struggling to balance childcare and home schooling with the demands of their jobs, and a considerable amount of that burden is falling to women. Even as child-care services resume, returning to the status quo is not enough – daycare fees are too high for many parents, and the waiting lists for subsidized childcare are long.
 - The need for improved transit was also raised at many of the sector roundtables. The pandemic has shaken the public's confidence in using mass transit systems – a situation that must be addressed with a robust public health response and concrete measures to relieve overcrowding on buses, streetcars and subways. Some people said that a return to work could worsen the Greater Toronto Area's congestion problems if many workers switch from using transit to personal vehicles.
- Businesses across sectors highlighted the importance of digital government and modernization of City services for Toronto's economic recovery.
 - Many who commented emphasized the need to reduce red tape through regulatory and legislative changes across municipal, provincial and federal governments, and to enhance the ability of businesses to engage governments through digital processes.
- Given the strong customer focus in the City of Toronto's service delivery, there is an opportunity to undertake a review of IT infrastructure and streamline Toronto's customer interface to ensure simple, integrated and streamlined processes, reduce regulatory burden for businesses, and improve response times.
 - Those consulted offered specific recommendations to improve and modernize City services, such as appointing registered professionals to assist with approval delays (e.g. in planning, building and permitting); collaborating with the private sector for contact tracing efforts; and better integrating service delivery across service lines and in conjunction with community organizations.
- Businesses across sectors also stressed the need to modernize the City's procurement system, and experiment with innovative new delivery models to reduce red tape and accelerate project completion. Many suggested the City explore new programs and incentives to procure solutions from Toronto-based companies and enhance social procurement to drive goals related to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- While digitization of government services and business operations can improve access (e.g. for those in remote communities), it will be important that this undertaking is paired with broader efforts in ensuring digital literacy and improving connectivity, given the emerging reliance on internet access to receive government, financial, educational and health services.

The government can create more jobs and support small businesses by opening up more avenues for entrepreneurs to have an opportunity to open up businesses in their own community.

Comment from Consultation

Priority Issues and Opportunities by Business Sector

This section provides an overview of priority issues and opportunities identified by roundtable participants related to COVID-19 recovery and rebuild in the following sectors, convened in conjunction with the Toronto Region Board of Trade from May to July 2020:

- Energy
- Finance
- Health
- Infrastructure
- Innovation and Technology
- Large Retail, Grocery and E-Commerce
- Main Street Business
- Manufacturing
- Postsecondary Education
- Travel and Tourism



Energy

The energy sector reported experiencing unique challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the sector has played a key role in supporting businesses and individuals (e.g., in enabling a transition to remote work arrangements), the resulting changes in energy demand have raised challenges. With many Toronto residents staying home through the pandemic, residential energy consumption has slightly increased – although there has been a significant decrease in energy consumption overall, largely from the loss of commercial energy consumers. Given the structure of Ontario’s energy system, this drop in “load” (i.e. demand) means that excess electricity on the grid makes consumption more expensive through Global Adjustment charges – which is particularly harmful to industrial consumers.

This reduction in energy demand is exacerbating overall financial instability across the sector. Reductions in transmission, cash flow and capital spending, alongside a dramatic increase in uncollectible accounts, have contributed to significant financial concerns. The sector has needed to prioritize credit-challenged customers and proactively reach out with tailored programs to minimize bad debt exposure. The sector has also become very aware of its dependence on global suppliers, particularly in China and the United States – relationships have been strained throughout the pandemic.

Workforce management concerns are also top of mind, as the sector is actively working to reconfigure work spaces such as operating rooms and call centres to enable social distancing. There is also some concern for potential cybersecurity threats for those working remotely, as reliance on home Wi-Fi, VPN connections and cloud-based storage can put sensitive data at risk (e.g., personal information of customers).

Desired Outcomes

Given these concerns, the energy sector is requesting support from governments to ensure its financial stability, such as regulatory protections and predictable energy rates. Perhaps most importantly, the sector is requesting that an economic development-focused load growth strategy be considered as a key component of the provincial government’s recovery plans. Governments should also consider improving sponsorship for conferences (e.g., virtual conferences) to support trade associations that have lost revenues due to cancellations and provide learning and skills development opportunities for the sector.

Those consulted recognized that governments will face fiscal constraints through the recovery period and identified low-cost areas where governments can reduce burden and support the industry. For example, the City of Toronto could leverage its assets to provide lab spaces, streamline permit processes, and utilize transit and building infrastructure to promote best practices in energy efficiency. Governments could also make simple changes to reduce burden on the sector during this time – for example, while time-of-use rate changes have been beneficial for individual cash flow issues, the province requires a mandatory disclosure outlining savings on bills. Providing relief from such requirements would prevent the sector from having to undertake system modifications.

As the health and safety of employees is a top concern, clear and consistent messaging from all orders of government is critical. The sector has received conflicting information on protocols for the return to work from various orders of government and even different provincial ministries. Clear guidance on reopening, as well as safe and effective field and facility operations with

reduced resource availability, is needed. Adequate contact tracing – involving employees as well as members of the supply chain – will also be critical for staff to feel comfortable returning to work through the recovery period.

Opportunities

While the energy sector is anticipating a decline in investment in the near-term and slower business than usual in the coming years, the sector sees significant opportunity to use this moment to address long-standing issues in energy. For example, a rate structure review was highlighted among those consulted as an opportunity to explore broader sector renewal.

The sector sees long-term opportunities to solve problems using local innovation. While de-globalization and protectionist measures have been challenging, the current period presents an opportunity to strengthen regional supply chains and champion local capabilities – such as Toronto's expertise in clean technology and community electrical power, and Ontario's growing energy-storage industry. Local companies can leverage anticipated infrastructure stimulus initiatives to lead in new and emerging technologies such as small modular reactors.

Those consulted emphasized the need to connect recovery efforts with other policy goals related to climate change, energy affordability and social equity. For example, mass building retrofits can be used to create jobs, stimulate the economy and reduce carbon footprints. Energy affordability issues, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic, should be tied to decarbonization goals and electrification efforts. Diversity and inclusion requirements in procurement, such as those used in the U.S., are a significant opportunity to change behaviour and support diverse entrepreneurs. All orders of government should make these requirements more commonplace, and pair with training and capacity-building initiatives.



Finance

The finance sector has been impacted by the overall global economic and market conditions that have resulted from both the pandemic and the collapse of oil prices this year. High unemployment rates and business insolvencies have raised concerns about the ability of financial institutions to find new business and maintain cash flow. While government support programs have been beneficial for individuals and businesses, they have had unintended consequences, such as displacing the sector in getting credit to businesses directly. There is also uncertainty around the longer-term implications of these programs (e.g. mortgage deferrals and the termination, withdrawal and/or claw-back of CERB funds). The impact on investment dealers has resulted in the shelving of many large-scale capital projects, and there is concern about the health of portfolio companies and the capacity to maintain and fortify the innovation ecosystem.

The sector has largely transitioned to digital transactions, although some still require in-person contact and paper certificates, which can put staff and clients at risk. While this digital shift is positive for efficiency and access (e.g. in remote communities), there are equity concerns to consider. Some customers may be unable to easily access financial services online (e.g. seniors, individuals with disabilities) and the sector is having difficulty reaching those groups. Furthermore, increased online presence may reduce the physical presence of financial service branches and create “banking deserts” across the city.

While the sector has smoothly transitioned to digital mechanisms, there are still concerns around remote work and returning to an office environment. Some are struggling with obtaining the technology required to support workers remotely (e.g. laptops, cloud-based solutions) and effective change management practices. The sector has acknowledged that the return to work for its employees depends entirely on the safe and reliable availability of childcare, and safe public transit options within the city and connecting to other regions.

Those consulted also expressed more specific concerns for their respective subsectors. For example, the insurance subsector – particularly property and casualty insurance – has raised concerns regarding potential lawsuits and liability claims, and the need to protect employers against frivolous lawsuits (e.g., those providing goods and services through the pandemic and those returning to work as the economy reopens). The financial technology (fintech) sector, which has an important presence in the Toronto region, has been left out of federal support mechanisms (e.g., as a distributor of funds) despite ongoing requests. Fintech has also experienced high levels of engagement on its platforms, although that trend has resulted in funds shifting away from innovation and toward ensuring platform stability.

Desired Outcomes

The sector is requesting support from governments to enable their continued digital transition – namely the legislative and regulatory changes required to eliminate the need for branch visits. The provincial changes to permit electronic beneficiaries was positive, although this must remain a permanent change and more needs to be done (e.g., unlike consumer cheques, business cheques cannot be deposited remotely). It will be important for this widespread digital transition to be accompanied by support from both the sector and governments to ensure digital financial literacy and access.

The sector is also requesting that financial support programs for individuals (e.g., CERB) and businesses (e.g., CEBA, CEWS) should be extended throughout the recovery period to avoid job losses and withdrawals. Support programs may be best extended through sliding scale or phased approaches but must be simple for businesses to access and understand. The federal government should include fintech firms in the distribution of funds and consider small business support as a longer-term solution, as repayment will be difficult if these programs are halted too quickly.

Measures that improve confidence in the return to work should be prioritized – including health and safety protocols on public transit, as well as streamlined and simplified access to PPE. Those consulted suggested that the City of Toronto assist businesses with sourcing masks for potentially hundreds of employees as the economy reopens.

Governments should pursue measures that improve overall confidence in the economy, such as tax measures to restore investor confidence and encourage participation in capital markets, as well as measures to induce demand. Jurisdictions that have largely recovered from the pandemic are still seeing depressed demand as consumers hesitate to spend their savings given the possibility of a resurgence of COVID-19.

Opportunities

The pressure resulting from the pandemic, and the rapid implementation of exemptions from industry regulators and policymakers, has contributed to the modernization of the sector and improved operational efficiency. There is an opportunity to continue this momentum of red tape reduction efforts towards positive change and innovation in the sector. For example, the roundtable suggested that there has historically been over-regulation that prevents the modern utilization of fraud-fighting tools, particularly in the privacy realm. The pandemic and tech-enabled solutions developed in response (e.g., for contact tracing) offer an opportunity to show how big data can be helpful while still maintaining privacy.

The shift to digital financial transactions can improve access to financial services, particularly for those living in remote and Indigenous communities. There may be opportunities to work with other sectors (e.g., telecommunications) and governments to invest in better digital connectivity moving forward, given that access to internet is becoming necessary to access financial, health and education services.

The ability for digital remote work will continue to benefit the sector by connecting and opening up dialogue with governments, eliminating the need for significant travel budgets for meetings, enabling a broader network of employees, and reducing the footprint required for office space.

Health

Given its role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the health sector has experienced significant system pressures and rapid, widespread digital transformation. The sector has faced increased demand for care within a constrained resource environment, while needing to maintain the quality of care, service and experience for patients. In order to continue providing services while protecting the health of the public, hundreds of physicians have shifted to virtual care platforms since March 2020 – a process that would have previously taken decades happened in only a few months.

The health, safety and quality of life of workers was cited as a top concern of the sector, as many employees in health and social care are feeling frightened, burned out and sometimes demoralized. Healthcare professionals described having to work physically and virtually and having to conduct proactive outreach to marginalized patients who are unable to connect digitally or reach a hospital. Access to PPE for workers has been, and may continue to be, an ongoing issue, as shortages have led to the rationing of supplies, which puts workers at further risk.

The rapid shift to digital care has also resulted in virtual services being provided by workers receiving a fraction of their usual pay. The sector emphasized precarity in the sector that has been exposed through the pandemic, the need for more stable jobs, and the risk of rapid innovation occurring at the expense of workers. Those consulted highlighted the dichotomy between those who can safely work from home and frontline workers at risk – highlighting equity issues among marginalized workers and explicitly calling out the role of women's work in the sector.

Equity concerns were also expressed with respect to patients. The sector has experienced considerable frustration with the lack of transparency in data reporting and insufficient public information on outbreaks, such as those in congregate settings of vulnerable individuals. Those consulted urged governments to consider all



recovery planning through the lenses of health equity, anti-poverty and anti-racism.

The sector has also experienced frustration resulting from the fragmentation and lack of coordination among public health, acute care, long-term care and other areas of care, as well as lack of coordination across different orders of government.

Desired Outcomes

The sector is prioritizing the need for holistic system redesign that focuses on responsiveness, flexibility and equity. The learnings of the recent shift to virtual health care should be extended and integrated across other forms of care and service delivery. Those consulted highlighted the need for governments and organizations to work together to develop “social prescribing” initiatives (i.e., proactively using healthcare visits and rosters, including COVID-19 screening, to screen for and make connections to meet social needs such as housing, food and social isolation).

Innovation in health sciences is capital intensive, and there is a risk of capital starvation in a prolonged economic recovery. The sector is requesting financial and political commitment from governments to strengthen the sector as it recovers from the pandemic. The City should advocate to the provincial and federal governments on improvements, including:

- Addressing regulatory issues that negatively impact pharmaceutical investment, research and development, clinical trials, manufacturing, new drug launches and jobs (e.g. proposed changes to the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board);
- Providing financial support such as investment incentives, targeted funding and tax credits; and,
- Ensuring sustained access to capital, global and domestic markets and talent.

The sector is also requesting stronger alignment and collaboration among avenues of care, orders of government and public and private sectors. Those consulted highlighted this lack of coordination as a significant barrier to innovation moving forward – Canada has a large health system that spans from early ideation to discovery and implementation, but insufficient efforts for coordination, collaboration and prioritization. There is also a trust gap between public and private sectors that must be bridged to enable developments in health policy and innovation.

Opportunities

The sector sees significant opportunities in maintaining the momentum of rapid innovation and digitization to improve care and explore options for virtual as well as blended models of coordinated, patient-centric care. There is also an opportunity to improve the arcane and inaccessible data systems that are currently used and build new data tracking and feedback analytics for future decision-making.

The COVID-19 pandemic has initiated a renewed interest in science, innovation, and commercialization from governments as well as the public. This trend can drive investment, attract companies to stay and grow domestically, and attract talent as highly skilled workers see new career opportunities in health sciences. There is also an opportunity to expand local manufacturing capacity of pharmaceuticals and PPE to address critical needs domestically.

Those consulted also emphasized the policy window that has been opened by recent social movements and institutional responsiveness to injustice. There is an opportunity to reflect on power relationships and to take action on health equity – particularly in addressing racism, housing, occupational discrimination and poverty as social determinants of health.

Innovation and Technology

The innovation and technology sector has been impacted by the overall market volatility and economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The sector is concerned about prospects for short-term cash flow given reduced funding and financing opportunities, maintaining angel and venture capital investor interest, and whether there will be revenue for work in the coming months as funders are pivoting away from existing strategic investments to respond to the pandemic. Travel restrictions and border closures have also been difficult given the reduced access to global markets and international talent.

The sector is focused on adapting priorities and pivoting models in response to the pandemic, including finding ways to support customers while ensuring physical distancing, and supporting the health and well-being of employees (e.g., managing “Zoom fatigue”). Altering the physical work place has been a challenge, as the structural implications of physical distancing requirements have led to a rethinking of space, especially space for convening, collaborating and co-working. While the sector is tech-savvy and flexible, it also relies heavily on face-to-face interactions for designing, networking, negotiating and deal-making. While some companies have permanently shifted to digital work and service delivery, others are rejecting this notion and will be bringing staff back into the office when possible with the necessary precautions.

The sector emphasized the destabilizing impacts of mass unemployment, weakness in supply of food and PPE and the

disproportionate impact on marginalized individuals during this time who face systemic challenges. Those consulted also drew attention to social injustice – particularly anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in Toronto and across Canada – and highlighted the need for innovative solutions to include not just technology but also social innovation.

Concerns regarding the role of government have been raised, including their financial prudence, uncertainty about timing for support programs, and overall lack of consistency in their approaches and communications.

Desired Outcomes

The sector is prioritizing the need to “build back better” and utilize technology, business models and social innovation to drive a clean and inclusive recovery rather than snapping back to business as usual. The sector has substantial knowledge and tools at its disposal to support governments as well as businesses across sectors in their recovery planning. The sector is requesting that governments strategically partner with technology and innovation companies and share stories and case studies of those harnessing innovation in the context of crisis and recovery to inspire others.

In order to address financial stability concerns, the innovation and technology sector is requesting that governments provide investment and support, such as:

- Investment in innovation infrastructure, including strategic data assets, futures/scenario planning, prototyping spaces and support, as well as establishment and support for hubs, incubators and accelerators;
- Local procurement efforts from both governments and industry, red tape reduction and accelerated adoption of innovation; and
- Supports to stabilize employment and unlock investment, funding and financing for Canadian start-ups.

The sector highlighted the specific role that the City of Toronto can play in encouraging pilots and trials, as well as in facilitating the use of trusted space to encourage participation for various technology and innovation events, meetings and trade shows. Sector leaders suggested that having events hosted in City-owned spaces, when possible, would add an element of trust around health and safety protocols. In collaboration with the federal and provincial governments, the City should also focus on talent development and transition training.

Help small business pivot quickly to new opportunities. Many small businesses like restaurants will need help to change their way of doing business - not just short term financial support. The city must cut back on regulations that don't let businesses try new approaches.

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The sector is also requesting that all orders of government prioritize the safety of the public in recovery plans, provide greater clarity and consistency in communications, as well as practical guidelines and clear priorities for reopening requirements, responsive timelines and sustainable resourcing.

Opportunities

The sector sees significant opportunity to leverage its knowledge and expertise to support other sectors through this time of transition. For example:

- Improving the user experience and productivity for businesses shifting to remote work arrangements (e.g. software, applications) and providing free trials of technology to small and medium-sized businesses to begin integration into their business models;
- Connecting young innovative companies with local businesses in need of support through matchmaking programs;
- Sharing innovative tools such as strategic foresight planning and design; and
- Developing technology that enables seamless and touchless interactions necessary for reopening the economy before a vaccine is available (e.g., touchless hotel check-in).

The sector also sees positive benefits as remote work arrangements can provide new job opportunities for residents and help businesses attract international talent (e.g., someone can live in Toronto but work in Silicon Valley and vice versa). Furthermore, while many businesses had to lay off employees and halt recruitment during the pandemic, this period also presents an opportunity for senior leaders to rethink the makeup of their workforce and recruitment processes, which can result in positive changes for equity, diversity and inclusion.

Finally, the sector sees long-term opportunities to build back better and imagines that businesses that thrive in the future will be those that solve meaningful problems. Just as financial technology emerged in response to the 2008 financial crisis, innovations in health technology and education technology are likely to emerge in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, cleantech could experience further growth in response to the combination of the pandemic and the oil and gas crisis.

Infrastructure

While the infrastructure sector has experienced some disruption arising from COVID-19, it is expected to recover quickly, particularly in comparison to other industries surveyed. Some of those consulted felt that construction activity had already return to pre-crisis levels. The sector's ability to rebound quickly is particularly important given the high likelihood of the federal and/or provincial governments introducing an infrastructure-based stimulus program. As a key vehicle for stimulus, the infrastructure sector will be engaged to deliver projects that support Toronto City Council's policy priorities, including transit, affordable housing, long-term care and green projects, among others.

When asked to consider pressing challenges and issues facing the sector, many roundtable participants looked ahead to the sector's ability to deliver major projects in the coming years. Ontario already has an ambitious schedule of large infrastructure projects to deliver over the next decade, and there is some question as to whether there is enough market capacity in the skilled trades to meet these aggressive timelines. If even more projects are introduced through a new stimulus program, it is not clear if there is enough skilled labour available to meet demand. The sector is also still processing the impact of new public health protocols on construction sites, such as potential project delays arising from the need for smaller crews, and productivity implications related to remote work and travel/border restrictions.

Roundtable participants were strongly in agreement that governments must continue to invest in infrastructure, and not to repeat mistakes of past decades by cutting back on infrastructure spending in the name of fiscal restraint. Pointing to Toronto's already significant infrastructure deficit, they argued that further cuts to infrastructure will have an impact on achieving city-building goals. They were concerned about the City's ability to bring new projects to market in light of COVID-related financial pressures.

Desired Outcomes

In the immediate term, the group called for the City to reinstate capacity for planning, building and permitting functions. Companies are reporting delays in receiving permits for new builds – an issue particularly impacting small firms. Looking ahead, there is a need to further expand capacity in these services to allow for streamlined approvals and to ensure efficient delivery of stimulus and other projects.

In considering how to work more effectively in partnership with the City, the roundtable identified the need for the City to adopt modernized and innovative procurement strategies to accelerate projects and reduce red tape. Examples of such strategies include:

- Considering use of integrated project delivery or alliance models to allow complicated projects to proceed as quickly as possible;
- Advancing use of retainers and vendors of record for more and larger projects;
- Leveraging progressive design-build methods to accelerate work in design process; and
- Exploring a potential program to give priority consideration to local companies to stimulate Toronto's economic recovery.

The group also identified the use of “Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Maintain” (DBFOM) models for infrastructure planning as a desired outcome. The use of DBFOM models moves beyond just construction to encompass a full life-cycle perspective on funding and asset management. Long-term DBFOM contracts can be used to lock in maintenance funding and protect infrastructure against changes in political priorities.

Opportunities

To meet the growing demand for skilled labour, the roundtable called for the City to help engage under-represented communities in the construction industry. The City has an opportunity to leverage future community benefits agreements for stimulus projects to recruit new workers from equity-seeking groups and enhance or create new skills development programs to improve representation in the sector. Participants noted that the skilled trades are well-suited to deliver new and expanded training programs, based on a track record of engaging youth and local communities in projects.

Participants were also in agreement that governments must give serious consideration to new strategies for raising funds for infrastructure and rebalance the roles of government and users/consumers of infrastructure. Many who commented felt that governments must look at user fees as legitimate and important



tools to invest in the infrastructure needed for future generations. Recognizing the political sensitivities related to user fees, the group discussed how to communicate the importance of new revenue tools to the public and talked about how to frame them as an option for building more and better infrastructure rather than a fee for paying for the use of infrastructure.

In addition, the group agreed that investing in digital infrastructure represents an important opportunity to improve Toronto's competitiveness in the digital economy. Digital infrastructure can advance issues that challenged the region during the pandemic, such as better data sharing. It can enable new ways to live and work, and it can improve equity by providing greater access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet access to enable workforce participation. Questions remain for the group about what the next phase of digital infrastructure will look like (e.g., fibre optics, 5G, or other new technologies), what Toronto's industries need in terms of bandwidth and speed, and whether the public or private sector would take the lead in building digital infrastructure.

Large Retail, Grocery and E-Commerce

Large retailers, grocers and e-commerce providers are among those businesses that remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, delivering in-demand products and essential services to the public. These businesses were some of the first to implement new public health protocols and adapt their business models to serve customers in new ways.

However, the roundtable participants found it very challenging to interpret and deliver the advice received from the various orders of government and Ontario's 35 different public health units. Many participants pointed to confusing, conflicting information, and a lack of clear guidelines for how to continue business safely. The use of masks was one such example – with no direction from the government to wear masks in public (prior to July), some retailers did not feel they had enough authority to make masks/face coverings a requirement for customers, even if they wanted to do so for the safety of staff and patrons. While more information became available to businesses as the pandemic continued, there remains a need for consistent, timely communication, and coordination of messaging across governments and public health units.

Large retailers also faced the challenge of pivoting their business models to adapt to public health restrictions. Changes were made to store layouts to enforce physical distancing, and capacity limits were enforced through lineups and appointment-based shopping. New ways of servicing customers were introduced, such as curbside pickup and dedicated shopping hours for older or vulnerable customers. Many retailers were also enabled by e-commerce platforms to expand their home-delivery options.

At the same time, large retailers, particularly grocers, struggled to meet high demand for products. Roundtable participants described how suppliers were stretched to deliver enough products, particularly those experiencing huge year-over-year growth in demand, such as for pasta, dry goods and toilet paper. Some grocers reduced their hours of operation to give staff enough time to re-stock shelves. While some larger retailers noted cash-flow challenges, the group agreed that liquidity issues were not as great a concern as for smaller businesses.



Desired Outcomes

As the state of emergency continues, and in preparation for a possible resurgence of COVID-19, there is a need for consistent, coordinated and well-communicated standards for retail operations. A clear plan for retailers, developed and led by government, needs to be supported by wide-reaching public communications to help to develop a shared understanding of safety standards. Standards should also be reinforced through widespread access to PPE, testing and contact tracing.

The group also emphasized the importance of restoring consumer and investor confidence in retail. Participants said business leaders and governments alike have an important role to play in reassuring the public that shopping is safe, and for helping retailers provide a range of options for customers to access products, including curbside pickup, home delivery or in-store shopping.

Opportunities

The roundtable was in agreement that the pandemic has accelerated consumer trends in retail and has created significant opportunity for growth and innovation in e-commerce and the retail experience. While it is not yet clear what form this innovation will take, some potential opportunities could include:

- Diversification of retail offerings to include services (e.g. furniture store diversifying to offer interior design advice): More retailers could expand into offering workshops, DIY sessions and other value-added experiences and partnerships to attract customers.
- Continued growth of e-commerce: Many observers anticipate that retailers of all sizes will continue to invest in new digital shopping platforms, which the roundtable group largely saw as being complementary to the in-store experience.
- New store formats: Many retailers are expected to adapt store formats to match consumer behaviour in the new normal, whatever that may be. Some retailers may refocus their in-person locations to be more convenience-focused, with “grab-and-go” style services. The group also considered how growth in e-commerce could impact store format, with some suggesting that large retailers may consider smaller spaces in the future.
- Retailers as social innovators: Temporary changes undertaken by large retailers, including dedicated shopping hours for vulnerable populations and pay increases for front-line workers, have been impactful for businesses and consumers, and would have a positive equity impact if made permanent.

Roundtable participants also called for increased protection of workers during the recovery period and in the post-pandemic economy. Retail employees have been considered front line workers during the pandemic. As the economy reopens, the group called for governments to take concrete action to protect the health and economic security of workers. They also recognized the risk of an expansion of precarious work and cautioned against the potential of technological innovations and automation exacerbating issues of inequality in Toronto. Some argued for City Council to demonstrate leadership by enacting a living wage bylaw in recognition of the high cost of living in Toronto and to help address low wages in the retail sector.

Main Street Business

Small businesses located on Toronto's main streets are faced with a set of challenges and opportunities that differ from those of larger retailers. Smaller main street businesses are facing considerable liquidity challenges as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Many have a significantly reduced cash flow and shrinking profit margin, and are unable to pay rent costs. Few have the capital needed to make required upgrades to meet new public health standards, such as store retrofits. Main street businesses are also struggling with competing demands. Some roundtable participants commented

that certain businesses have been slow to pivot and adapt to changing circumstances during the crisis. Others have noted that it is difficult for owners of small businesses to apply for government supports while at the same time trying to run or restart regular operations.

One challenge shared with larger retailers is adapting to safety requirements. Many participants noted a lack of consistent guidance related to reopening requirements, and they looked for greater clarity on timelines and for specific information on changes that need to be made for reopening. The ability to bring staff and customers back to main streets safely is top-of-mind for many small businesses. Main street businesses are looking to acquire PPE and make changes to their store layouts such as providing new queuing space – all of which comes at a cost.

At the same time, roundtable participants expressed confidence in the future of Toronto's main streets. While they agreed that some small businesses will inevitably not survive this crisis, they believed that new entrepreneurs will emerge to fill the city with new ideas and energy. The group also believes that renewed public interest in shopping locally will persist in the future, creating new opportunities for business growth and vibrancy in neighbourhoods across Toronto.



Desired Outcomes

The roundtable agreed on one clear, immediate need: main street businesses need a commercial rent relief program that works for tenants. They noted that the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (OCECRA) program has had a low uptake and is not benefiting main street businesses in the way it was intended. Rent is expected to remain a challenge for small business during the recovery period as reduced cash flows continue.

Roundtable participants were encouraged by the City's quick and innovative efforts to support small business during the pandemic and hope to continue to work collaboratively with the City as a strategic partner. Examples of further City support requested by the group include:

- Review City processes with a “small business first” lens to reduce barriers for local entrepreneurs, non-profits and social entrepreneurs (e.g. using online portals and new tools such as pop-up business licences and BIA business training programs).
- Reduce regulatory requirements and licence fees as a key element of this initiative. There was a particular interest in the rapid rollout of a patio extension program to take advantage of the summer season.
- Make public realm improvements to support main street businesses.
- Improve interdivisional collaboration within City government to coordinate and deliver new support programs.
- Coordinate construction schedules to avoid conflicting with recovery programs such as CurbTO and CaféTO.
- Provide support for collective marketing of main streets to encourage local shopping
- Maintain and enhance the City's advisory support for main street businesses by taking an active role in filling gaps in expertise and services.

Those consulted also suggested that reforming the commercial property tax system could help main street businesses. Examples of reforms include creating a comprehensive, long-term rate-capping strategy and establishing additional municipal tax bands for commercial properties.

Opportunities

Despite the significant challenges facing small business owners, the roundtable saw the growing spotlight on main street businesses as a pivotal opportunity coming out of the crisis. They said businesses should take advantage of the strong consumer interest in supporting main streets, and the expected trend of hyper-local shopping to continue beyond the pandemic. This evolution will be further supported by the shifting nature of work – with more workers operating remotely from their homes, there will be new economic opportunities for local main streets, with workers patronizing community businesses more frequently and at different times. This is also an opportunity for main streets to be recognized for their personalized service. Main streets can revive with “personal connection” as a competitive advantage.

Building on the success of the expanded Digital Main Street program, the group noted an opportunity for greater focus on digital capacity building/online platforms for main street entrepreneurs. The group did not see e-commerce as being a major threat to bricks-and-mortar main street businesses – rather, like the large retail group, they considered it to be complementary to the in-store experience. Digital business is becoming an opportunity for entrepreneurs to test ideas before investing in physical space. They also emphasized the importance of main street businesses adopting technology that is on par with large franchises (e.g. digital platforms, bookings, touchless technology, etc.).

Many participants said there is a need to work to achieve a convergence of interest between tenants and property owners on the health of main street business, with governments and business leaders encouraging and incentivizing greater cooperation between landlords and tenants. The current recovery period presents an opportunity to redesign leases that better reflect the role/service of business, such as having rents expressed as a percentage of sales, or based on the capacity of what can be earned. Any softening of rents, which currently stand as one of the sector's top expenses, will support the long-term sustainability of small business.

The group also said it approaches the recovery period as an opportunity to rethink the sustainability of small business models. Some called for action to address issues of low wages and equity for workers. Others advocated exploring new financing methods for small businesses, including cooperative models and credit unions.



Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector in Toronto has experienced variable impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some facilities were required to close and are preparing to reopen alongside other sectors of the economy. Others have maintained or ramped up their operations as essential service providers since March 2020 – as many manufacturers rapidly retooled their facilities to produce PPE. Given high rates of unemployment and overall economic uncertainty, there is a lack of demand for some products and it is particularly difficult to forecast future trends. Declining demand for automotive vehicles, for example, has already hit the market, and there is concern that trend may eventually extend into the demand for other products as government support programs end. As a result, many businesses are reluctant to invest in new equipment or facility expansions.



The sector has become acutely aware of its reliance on global supply chains – particularly suppliers in China and in the United States, where there is significant cross-border work. Canada-U.S. border closures and travel restrictions have also negatively affected recruitment and professional expertise, as some talent cannot be sourced locally.

Managing staff and adapting workspaces have been significant challenges. Employees who are required to be physically present in the workplace (e.g., to operate equipment) must follow strict

health and safety standards adopted from factories in China that experienced the virus before Canada, a change that has posed challenges for efficiency and productivity. Those who are not required to be physically present in the workplace (e.g. purchasers, engineers) have shifted to remote work, and while that was initially positive, some businesses are beginning to see declining performance.

Access to PPE for workers is an ongoing issue. Many workers in the sector used PPE for their daily tasks prior to the outbreak of COVID-19. While most are currently comfortable with their stock of PPE, the sector has experienced some price gouging (particularly for gloves and masks) and is concerned about the impact of a second wave of COVID-19.

Desired Outcomes

The manufacturing sector is currently prioritizing efforts to reorganize and localize supply chains, including the acceleration of digitization and use of data analytics to synchronize tiers across supply chains. The sector has requested that governments support the connection of Canadian supply chains by better connecting businesses and increasing awareness of, and cataloguing, what others are doing across the country. Those consulted provided examples of companies sending products overseas (e.g., for processing, treatment) as they were unaware of local examples/capabilities.

The sector is interested in seeing an overall reopening of the economy (and borders), and has urged governments to resume pre-pandemic operations and staffing levels. For example, those consulted in Toronto have experienced delays with the City of Toronto's permitting and application processes that have held up projects. To assist with this challenge, the sector has suggested that the City explore appointing registered professionals with sign-off authority to keep projects moving, similar to the approach taken by the City of Vancouver.

Those consulted noted that it has been a long time since any level of government has developed a manufacturing strategy. The sector identified the role that the City of Toronto can play in bringing attention to the need for manufacturing as a driver of economic growth, the ongoing lack of skilled trade workers and existing, burdensome regulations that have exacerbated challenges throughout the pandemic. Examples involving the public sector include rethinking regulations that tend to hinder competitiveness and increase the costs of doing business (e.g., global adjustment charges, tax measures, federal plans for carbon pricing and declaring plastics toxic). Participants said affordable energy for industrial users will be critical for the sector's recovery.

Opportunities

The sector sees opportunity in addressing existing issues in manufacturing as part of recovery planning efforts. While there is recognition that some production cannot occur locally, there are significant long-term benefits of “re-shoring” and “multi-shoring” the supply chain. Bringing manufacturing back to Canada can create new job opportunities and ensure adequate local supply of PPE and other necessary materials. There is also opportunity for local companies to lead in the development of new technologies that will thrive in post-pandemic markets.

There is a significant opportunity to get youth interested in the trades again, addressing critical long-standing labour shortages in the sector. Governments, academia and the manufacturing sector can work together and use this opportunity to provide exposure and hands-on, practical experience to youth (e.g., bring back shop classes in secondary education and make manufacturing courses part of engineering degree programs); showcase advanced high-tech manufacturing and robotics (e.g., through career expos); improve apprenticeship programs to ensure they are an accessible and reliable option for students to pursue; and bring back technical institutes over the long term.



Post-Secondary Education

Financial stability is a top concern for the post-secondary education (PSE) sector as institutions are experiencing revenue losses from declining student enrollment – particularly from international students as a result of border closures and travel restrictions as well as from deferrals (i.e., not returning to school until 2021-2022), and lower course volumes (i.e., students taking fewer courses each semester). Institutions are also facing increased costs, such as those resulting from the accelerated investment in virtual learning, and future costs associated with providing quarantine support for students when campus reopens. As a result, institutions have had to consider layoffs and non-renewal of contracts as faculty salaries make up a large part (as much as 80 per cent) of expenditures.

Broader economic impacts in Canada are exacerbating financial concerns for PSE institutions as well as students. Fundraising is difficult as investors are seeing their portfolios take a hit, and some are shifting donations elsewhere (e.g., to hospitals). Similarly, availability of funding for applied research and commercialization resources are vulnerable as industry funders are under strain. Availability of work-integrated learning opportunities will also be impacted by business closures in other sectors (e.g., the hospitality industry), which will limit opportunities for deeper learning and the ability for students to transition to full-time employment.

Financial support for students is a major challenge. Student financial hardship will be exacerbated by the lack of part-time and summer job opportunities. Institutions are looking internally at their budgets to find options for student support and are seeking industry donors, with an emphasis on student bursaries, given the uncertain environment.

The transition to online learning has posed challenges, such as the rapid response that was required, concerns about quality, support for students and faculty, and questions around assessments and examinations. In some cases, PSE institutions have needed to recruit from overseas because Canada does not have the necessary skills in education technology. Furthermore, some fields (e.g., engineering and science) are particularly difficult to move online. As a result, “stranded students” are unable to graduate due to laboratory work and other course requirements that cannot be completed – some of which are in critical areas of need, such as healthcare. There is also a lack of clarity around the return to campus, and limited information on what will be required of institutions (e.g., operating standards in laboratories).

Desired Outcomes

The PSE sector is requesting support from governments to directly address institutions' financial concerns. For example, suspending the provincial International Student Recovery Fee – either temporarily or permanently – could help offset increased costs. Decoupling funding from Strategic Mandate Agreements with the Province of Ontario or eliminating metrics, which would be significantly impacted by challenges in the labour market (e.g., graduation rates), would also contribute to the financial health of institutions. Those consulted highlighted that the challenges they are currently facing will have longer-term impacts over the next four or five years regardless of the status of the pandemic and recovery.



The sector is also requesting that governments prioritize support for students in the following ways:

- Provide additional financial aid for students (e.g., OSAP enhancement, extension of the Canadian Emergency Student Benefit).
- Ensure flexibility and remove barriers for international students (e.g., make federal changes to ease border restrictions, allow students to begin courses online and count time towards a work-study permit, and collect biometric information at entry as it is difficult to obtain in some countries, such as India and Brazil).
- Support industries hardest hit by the pandemic that are key employers for new graduates; and provide work-integrated learning opportunities for students (e.g., financial incentives for businesses to undertake work-integrated learning, including offering new incentives as well as enhancements to existing programs such as Ontario's Career Ready Fund).

This sector also needs support from governments to assist it with the shift to digital learning and new campus experiences, such as investment, tools and resources for course virtualization and development of blended/hybrid experiential learning, as well as ways to holistically support and engage students – particularly given loss of gathering places, clubs, teams and extracurricular activities. Those consulted also highlighted the need for clarity around return to campus and reconsideration from governments on whether social distancing measures are necessary in research facilities that already operate with significant regulations and PPE requirements.

Opportunities

The PSE sector sees an opportunity to rethink and transform the education system. Institutions have an opportunity to deconstruct the transcript, rethink the three-hour credit rule, develop new approaches to competency testing, work with industry to co-design curriculum for labour and research needs, and shift toward blended learning options that focus on education as well as skills development.

Rapid adoption of technology and new feedback loops offer an opportunity to continuously improve the quality of online teaching and learning. The ability to operate in a remote environment also offers an opportunity to rethink what is most important on campus (e.g., support service delivery). Institutions are redefining student engagement and paying greater attention to equity, diversity and inclusion.

There are opportunities for the PSE to collaborate with other sectors, such as the hotel industry, to provide quarantine space for international students and add spaces to enable social distancing in campus residences. Changes in the labour market resulting from the pandemic will also create demand for new learning opportunities from businesses looking to retrain and “upskill” their employees.

There is an opportunity to brand Toronto's PSE institutions as premier destinations for domestic and international students to get a high-quality education while remaining safe during the pandemic and recovery period (it was noted that Ontario provides health care for students). Institutions and governments should consider creating information packages and pursuing communications efforts to this end.

Travel and Tourism

The travel and tourism sector, one of the hardest hit segments of Toronto's economy, faces a long, uncertain path to recovery.

Cash flow and liquidity is a pressing challenge across the sector. Many businesses in the sector have an immediate need for working capital and have relied on emergency government subsidies to avoid closures during the crisis. Even as businesses are permitted to reopen, most will operate at a reduced capacity, making it difficult to cover expenses.

As the sector begins to look to a recovery period, there is a growing realization that some travel and tourism businesses will not survive beyond this crisis. While roundtable participants were confident that travel and tourism will eventually rebound to pre-COVID levels, exactly when, how and in what form recovery will take place remains uncertain.

Desired Outcomes

Recognizing these challenges, roundtable participants have called for enhanced financial support from all orders of government to sustain the travel and tourism industry and to position it for recovery. That includes:

- Improvements to commercial rent relief, such as stronger incentives for landlords to apply and/or allowing tenants to apply, an extension of existing supports, and continued support after the provincial moratorium on commercial evictions is lifted;
- Extension of successful programs such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) to support tourism and hospitality workers and businesses through a gradual recovery; and
- Dedicated financial support for tourism marketing, and a focus on domestic tourism growth in the near term, including Toronto-based promotions.

In addition to extended financial incentives, governments should take a leadership role in facilitating the reopening of the sector through clear operating protocols and accelerated approvals for recovery initiatives such as patio extensions. Many of those consulted cited the need for ongoing communications with business and the public on reopening guidelines and protocols. As the recovery period continues, businesses need to receive timely, clear direction on new operating expectations. Businesses consulted also emphasized the importance of harmonizing Toronto's reopening guidelines with those of Ontario's 34 other local public health authorities to avoid inefficiencies and confusion.

Above all, roundtable participants emphasized that the most desirable outcome for recovery is a lifting of restrictions on travel and mass gatherings as soon as it is safe to do so. Businesses in the travel and tourism sector cannot return to their full operating capacity until restrictions have been fully lifted, and consumer confidence will remain low until governments signal that travel is once again safe.

Opportunities

Looking ahead, tourism leaders are considering how to innovate and adapt the visitor experience at attractions and events. In the coming years, roundtable participants anticipate that the industry will shift to deliver blended events and experiences both in-person and digitally. The use of online platforms and technologies such as augmented reality (AR) or virtual reality (VR) have the potential to engage new audiences and allow for tiered participation at different price points. Exploring new digital event experiences takes on a heightened importance as the in-person experience is expected to be slow to recover, even as capacity restrictions are gradually lifted. Questions remain about how to engage audiences virtually for what is traditionally an in-person experience; how to work with sponsors to build meaningful marketing activations in the digital sphere; and how to adapt the business model for events and attractions to be sustainable in a digital world. Some of those consulted also questioned the affordability of new technological innovations, particularly as the sector continues to face cash flow and liquidity challenges arising from the COVID-19 crisis.

The recovery period presents an opportunity to revitalize public spaces across the city. The roundtable called for public spaces to be reframed as community hubs that can be used to showcase and highlight festivals, events, artisans and public art. Revitalized, people-focused spaces can foster a sense of pride and place among Torontonians and encourage them to travel and discover neighbourhoods across their city.

Rebuilding the travel and tourism sector can also include a focus on becoming more inclusive of Toronto's cultural diversity. Roundtable participants expressed the view that today is a unique time to support businesses in the sector led by equity-seeking communities, such as Indigenous-led tourism experiences. The group also pointed to the creation of a new, dedicated cultural diversity coordinator position as part of the Culinary Tourism Alliance working to engage and empower diverse businesses.

Black Professionals and Business Owners

While Toronto's Black professionals and business owners expressed many of the concerns that are common across industries, they are also experiencing unique challenges. Those consulted highlighted issues with government restrictions placed on businesses, reduced capacity for government services, and a lack of revenue from products, programs and services, which has resulted in financial concerns. Businesses are focused on supporting their staff and transitioning to remote work arrangements, which can involve significant capital costs. The digital shift has made it challenging to promote business and network virtually, as well as provide community outreach and support, as the internet access required to participate is not always readily available to community members.

Black professionals and business owners also face systemic barriers and are experiencing an exacerbation of historic inequities as a result of the pandemic. Those consulted highlighted the lack of access to economic opportunities, including financial support and access to capital, major supply chains and procurement opportunities. Financial institutions that compare the credit score of a Black business owner to a white businesses owner benefiting from generational wealth is problematic, and difficulties accessing loan programs (e.g., BDC) can result in borrowing from higher risk institutions. The pandemic has also exacerbated community concerns related to food security, family and child welfare, and access to safe and equitable emergency services (the latter specifically in the context of law enforcement).

Black professionals and business owners are requesting that governments provide financial support and capacity-building opportunities that are truly accessible and explore options such as Black credit unions, rent-to-own properties and adjusted credit scores to address inequities. Broader access to, and awareness of, tendering opportunities, as well as greater transparency in procurement, should be prioritized. The City of Toronto specifically should look at its procurement process to identify barriers and ensure that its sponsorships and programs are applying equity and inclusion lenses. Those consulted also emphasized the importance of language considerations and communications through the recovery period, correcting inaccurate narratives about Black businesses and ensuring that all businesses are communicated with as equal players.

The exacerbation of inequities caused by the pandemic has resulted in a renewed awareness of anti-Black racism, race-based violence and discrimination. Those consulted highlighted the long-term opportunities that this awareness presents, such as greater inclusion of Black constituents on City boards, deeper investment in Black neighbourhoods, expanded diversity and inclusion training of service providers, ongoing collection of race-based data to support decision-making, and a rethinking of models of community and social support.





Indigenous Business Roundtable

Participants in the Indigenous business roundtable reported experiencing many of the same challenges identified by other businesses during the Toronto Region Board of Trade consultations. Indigenous-led small businesses and sole proprietorships, for example, were deeply concerned about meeting cash flow requirements (following an abrupt drop in revenues) and covering fixed costs such as rent. Participants described relying on government benefit programs to avoid closure during the crisis – though some were initially not eligible (such as businesses operated directly by a First Nation, as they were considered a government operation rather than an independent business – a situation that has since been resolved, thanks to community advocacy).

Indigenous-led businesses also demonstrated resilience and innovativeness by rapidly pivoting their business models in response to the developing crisis. For example, one participant who operates a special event staffing agency described how she shifted focus to providing temporary staff for frontline and essential services, while another participant, who provides advisory services for Indigenous entrepreneurs, spoke about how clients quickly launched new product lines during the pandemic. In addition, participants representing technology businesses saw a continued, and in some cases increased, demand for their products – albeit with some challenges linked to the loss of in-person sales and networking.

Participants shared the view that the City and other governments can better support Indigenous businesses during the recovery period by making procurement opportunities more accessible. They noted that Indigenous businesses can “get lost” in social procurement programs and should be approached distinctly from businesses operated by equity-seeking groups. There was strong interest in breaking down barriers to securing government contracts by reducing red tape in the purchasing process and

creating opportunities to build trust with government, as well as to raise awareness of the services and talent offered by Indigenous businesses.

Other requests for support and collaboration included:

- Regular engagement between the City and Indigenous business community;
- Continued and enhanced business funding during the recovery period (e.g., rent relief, wage subsidies, etc.), combined with broader social supports (e.g., continued protection for residential tenants, student loan relief, etc.);
- Recognition of and support for non-Western business models, such as Elders’ services; and
- Creation of opportunities for Indigenous-led businesses to develop solutions to social issues such as food security, climate change and community safety.

Business Snapshot A: Sectors

Travel and Tourism

Tourism Toronto reported in 2019 that 27.5 million people visit Toronto and spend more than \$6.5 billion in the city each year, directly generating 50,270 jobs and supporting an additional 69,950 jobs. The travel and tourism workforce is primarily female, young, new immigrants, people of colour and people with lower levels of education.

Energy

The current health crisis has provided an opportunity to better understand the impact of a partial city shutdown on the energy sector. The clean-energy sector employs about 8,400 people in Toronto. The most recent statistics available indicate that electric power generation, transmission and distribution employed 3,580 people full-time in May 2020 compared to 5,850 in January 2020.

Innovation and Technology

Toronto is the largest technology hub in Canada and the third largest in North America. More than 400,000 people are employed in the technology sector in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, accounting for 15 per cent of all jobs in the region. The Toronto CMA is home to at least 15,000 technology firms, including major international companies such as Google, Facebook, IBM, Cisco Systems Canada, Symantec, AutoDesk and Microsoft Canada.

Main Street Business

Independent retail businesses (defined as having one to three locations in Canada) have long been a fixture of Toronto's main streets and a significant driver of economic activity. The independent retail sector includes a broad range of retail businesses, including "traditional" retail such as clothing stores, home furnishing stores, general merchandise stores and grocery stores, along with consumer services stores such as hair salons and dry cleaners. Retail makes up 3.9 per cent of the total GDP for Toronto and close to 650,000 or 42 per cent of total jobs in Toronto (full-time and part-time) are provided by independent retail and consumer services businesses.

Large Retail, Grocery and E-Commerce

As stated above, retail makes up 3.9 per cent of the total GDP for Toronto, with about 9,800 establishments (as of December 2019, Canadian Business Counts survey, Statistics Canada). Of these establishments, 441 had between 50 and 99 employees, 186 had between 100 and 199 employees and six had 500 or more employees. Retail establishments with large employee counts (50+) tend to fall into the following categories: furniture, grocery, clothing and department stores. According to the same survey, there were 568 grocery stores and 270 electronic and mail-order houses in Toronto as of December 2019. Food and beverage stores (any size) employed nearly 28,000 people in June 2020 compared to more than 32,000 people in January 2020 (LFS, Statistics Canada).

Financial Services

Over the last 10 years, employment in Toronto's financial services sector grew at the fifth-highest rate in the world. As of June 2019, Toronto had 24,525 businesses in the finance and insurance sector, the majority (82 per cent) in securities, commodity contracts and other financial investment and related activities. The financial services sector is the third-largest private sector employer in Toronto. In 2018, the sector employed 114,950 people (294,500 across the GTA), accounting for approximately nine per cent of the city's total employment.

Manufacturing

The manufacturing sector plays a vital role in making Toronto the economic engine of Canada. Ontario accounts for almost half of Canada's manufacturing output, with many large, medium and small facilities located in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area. In 2018, manufacturing employed 120,540 Toronto residents (341,220 across the GTA). Manufacturing typically employs ethnically diverse, equity-seeking groups including recent immigrants to Canada. Manufacturing in Toronto is concentrated in Etobicoke, North York and Scarborough, in the vicinity of a significant number of City-designated Priority Neighbourhoods.

Infrastructure

Employment in Toronto's infrastructure sector is broken into the following two components for the purpose of this report: utilities and construction. Employment in utilities grew from almost 6,000 jobs in January 2020 to more than 7,000 in June 2020. That growth could be attributed to the survey sample used in June, when an increase in employment was observed in "water, sewage and other systems". Employment in construction contracted from about 97,000 jobs in January 2020 to just over 72,000 in June 2020. That decrease was likely driven by a slowdown in work done by specialty trade contractors (48,000 in January to 23,000 in June 2020) (LFS, Statistics Canada).

Health/Life Sciences

Toronto is one of the top cities in North America for the human health sciences, combining research, clinical and business expertise to deliver new diagnostics and therapies. There are more than 6,000 companies employing a total of more than 90,000 individuals in Toronto and supporting over 100,000 jobs indirectly. The sector represents more than \$56 billion in annual revenues, with \$27 billion in direct GDP contributions and about \$30 billion in indirect contributions.

Post-Secondary Institutions

The education sector is one of the city's largest employers, with 1,400 educational establishments and related businesses, and more than 100,000 employees. Toronto is home to four publicly funded universities, one private university and four publicly funded colleges.

Business Snapshot B – Jurisdictional Examples

CANADIAN CITIES

Area(s)	Initiative
Business supports, climate change	The City of Edmonton is launching several environmental rebates and tools focusing on environmental upgrades over the summer (2020) to stimulate the economy, including the Building Retrofit Accelerator rebate program that facilitates renovations to improve energy efficiency in commercial and institutional buildings.
Business supports	The City of Montreal is providing grants to non-profit organizations that can assist local business with issues pertaining to supply, administrative support, people management, sales systems or other areas.
Business support, street design	The Cities of Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Kitchener, Waterloo, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, and Moncton, among other cities, have all recently extended their cycling networks or established "slow streets". Many cities are also working with businesses to expand patio space, convert parking lots and create curbside retail opportunities.
Business supports	As part of its Economic Resiliency Action Plan, the Town of Newmarket launched an innovative Mentorship Access Program to help businesses adapt during and after COVID-19.
Business supports	Quebec City introduced pre-paid \$20, \$50 or \$100 packages to spend at local stores. One hundred packages at \$100 were available, 500 packages at \$50 and 4,000 packages at \$20. The packages are worth more in-store than the face value amount.
Job creation, housing	The City of Vancouver is seeking to fast track housing projects in light of the impact of COVID-19. Changes to the review and approval process for affordable and rental residential development applications would prioritize the recovery of the housing market and create jobs through new construction. The first stage of the plan focuses largely on homelessness prevention and the second stage, lasting until December 2020, aims to fast-track affordable housing applications already received by the City.
Business supports, community supports	The City of Victoria increased funding for the Strategic Plan Grants Program to encourage the community to bring forward creative project proposals with a specific focus on recovery.
Business supports, community supports	The City of Victoria's parks staff are temporarily using the Beacon Hill Park nursery to grow vegetable and herb seedlings in communities (opportunities exist for business integration).
Business supports	The City of Victoria created an online toolkit with signage and floor markers for businesses.

Business Snapshot B – Jurisdictional Examples

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

Area(s)	Initiative
Business supports	The London Growth Hub has launched a new portal to support London-based businesses and employers manage amidst recovery efforts. One-hour phone or video calls can be arranged with an advisor to discuss impact on business.
Business supports	The City of Los Angeles temporarily capped the fees charged by delivery app companies to no more than 15 per cent of the cost of the order. This does not address the fees food delivery apps charge consumers. It only affects the fees these apps charge restaurants on the backend. Several other U.S. cities including San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Seattle, Washington D.C. and Jersey City have passed similar orders.
Business supports	In an effort to provide Seattle restaurants, cafés and breweries with a way to communicate to residents, that city's information technology department launched a mapping application built with geographic information system (GIS) technology. Business owners can use a simple survey form to populate the interactive online map with their information.
Business supports, economic recovery	Bristol has released a document on the impact of COVID-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic-owned businesses in the city.
Business supports, economic strategy	The City of Amsterdam became the first municipality in the world to publish a City Doughnut, with a vision to transition Amsterdam into a circular city.
Business supports, entrepreneur supports	The City of Amsterdam launched its own governmental accelerator: Startup in Residence. As part of the Technology Office, program start-ups will devise creative and viable solutions to confront urban and social challenges.
Business supports, mobility	The City of Tel Aviv converted 11 popular streets into pedestrian zones to encourage local economic activity and increase local mobility.
Business supports, public health	Kigali banks, shops, restaurants and bars have all been equipped with portable wash sinks and customers seem keen to use them (could be especially applicable to outdoor sites and multi-use areas)
Data, digital safety	The City of Amsterdam established a "Technology Office" to protect digital rights, monitor the stability and resilience of internet throughout the city, map risks in the city's supply chain, and monitor the impact of cyber/digital safety.
Economic Recovery	Salt Lake City falls under Utah's colour-coded recovery plan and currently remains at orange. The simple graphic and colour system makes progress easy for people and businesses to understand at a glance.

continued

chart continued: International Cities

Area(s)	Initiative
Labour, business supports	The City of Los Angeles Regional COVID-19 Recovery Fund started accepting applications for \$5,000 and \$15,000 grants from eligible small businesses, non-profits and micro-entrepreneurs that operate in Los Angeles County and meet the eligibility criteria. Funding of \$3 million is available in grants. The fund will also deploy flexible loans and micro-loans to micro-entrepreneurs, small businesses and non-profits.
Labour, public health	The City of Amsterdam public transit employees have been redeployed to take phone calls from members of the public who are experiencing loneliness.
Labour, public health	The City of Amsterdam provides free parking spaces for healthcare workers, with the risk of infection less in a car than on public transit. Almost 4,700 parking licences have been granted so far.
Mobility, business supports	The City of Bogota quickly created 76 km of temporary "emergency" bike lanes on main streets in place of car lanes, adding to the approximately 550 km of existing permanent lanes. Those new bike lanes have since been made permanent.
Mobility, public health	The City of Boston's MBTA transit riders can find real-time crowding information for Routes 1, 15, 16, 22, 23, 31, 32, 109, and 110.
Mobility, public health	The Société de transport de Laval (STL) has launched an online tool to help commuters get an idea how crowded their buses will be. The tool will provide real-time updates throughout the ride.
Public health, business supports, community supports	The City of Milan has released an Adaptation Strategy for "Phase 2" of that city's reopening, which includes the consideration that there may be future phases of containment or lockdown. The actions outlined in the strategy can be used for any "post-lockdown" and "new normal" containment phases moving forward.
Public health, labour	The City of Barcelona's municipal offices prioritized the delivery of personal protective equipment. Barcelona has invested in protective materials for employees working at the service desks and bought 600,000 face masks, 5,000 overalls, 12,000 glasses and 9,600 items for protecting eyes and mouth.
Public space, business support	The City of Glasgow's Spaces for People program provides additional space for physical distancing in public. It will help to ensure there is sufficient space for businesses and their customers, and will facilitate commuting options for workers.
Public space, mobility, business supports	The City of San Francisco announced the Shared Spaces Program designed to support neighborhoods by providing additional public space to support local business activities.
Public transit, mobility, labour, economic recovery	The City of Seattle's Mayor Jenny Durkan put forward legislation for a Seattle Transportation Benefit District that would maintain a 0.1 per cent sales tax to fund essential transit services, capital projects and transit access programs. The SBBDD fund has five goals, including safe and efficient transit for all.
Public transit, public health, mobility	Transports Metropolitans de Barcelona is piloting the "RESPIRA" ventilation system on Barcelona's metro network. The AI platform reads the temperature, humidity, air quality and electricity consumption in real time and adjusts to regulate temperature and energy consumption in stations.

continued

chart continued: International Cities

Area(s)	Initiative
Social supports, business supports	The City of Amsterdam's initiative "Everybody connected" distributes refurbished laptops and provides internet connectivity to the elderly and others who lack access.
Social supports, business supports	Approximately 40,000 volunteers have signed up for the Buenos Aires "Mayores Cuidados" program, which provides care and assistance for older people living alone, including food, retail and medicine purchases.
Social supports, business supports	The City of Cambridge partnered with local businesses to feed the homeless. With many shelters short staffed, the city has contracted local restaurants to provide bagged or boxed meals for lunch and dinner for shelters and programs that need meals.
Street design, business supports, community supports	The City of Oakland introduced a "slow streets" approach, but uniquely targeted "Essential Places", where temporary traffic safety improvements will be installed to enable safer access to local essential services such as grocery stores, social services and COVID-19 test sites. The city has identified a High Injury Network, given that just six per cent of city streets account for more than 60 per cent of severe and fatal traffic crashes.
Street design, mobility, business supports	Bristol City Council has plans to turn portions of the Old City, which includes independent shops, restaurants and cafes, into a traffic-free zone. The plans for the Old City include "pedestrianizing" historic streets and improving mobility as part of a greener, more equitable recovery.
Street design, mobility, business supports	Approximately 100 Buenos Aires streets are now "pedestrianized" to limit crowding and encourage local commercial interactions.

12 | Theme: Culture

Toronto's cultural industries are a major economic driver and foster healthy, vibrant communities across the city. Based on data from the Department of Canadian Heritage (2016), the sector contributes approximately \$11 billion to Toronto's gross domestic product and supports more than 111,000 jobs. Toronto has the largest number of artists (27,000 people) in the country and is home to about one in six Canadian artists (17 per cent), according to a study by Hill Strategies Research Inc. Toronto's dynamic cultural ecosystem also encourages and supports participation in amateur arts and arts education for all ages.

Torontonians love culture, whether they are making it or taking part. The World Cities Culture Forum reports that 41 per cent of working-age Toronto residents attend a museum or gallery at least once a year. Toronto's theatres enjoy almost 2.5 million in ticket sales annually, with a value of \$151 million, and the city enjoys almost 15,000 music performances annually. Toronto's musical talent is recognized worldwide, showcasing the diversity of the city's culture. About 80 per cent of recording industry expenditure in Canada is in the Toronto region. Toronto's film industry is also a juggernaut, with Toronto in the top five North American cities for film production. The industry injects over \$2 billion into Toronto's economy yearly and employs more than 30,000 Torontonians in skilled, creative jobs. Additionally, Toronto is the proud home of the Toronto International Film Festival, one of the world's most prestigious film festivals.

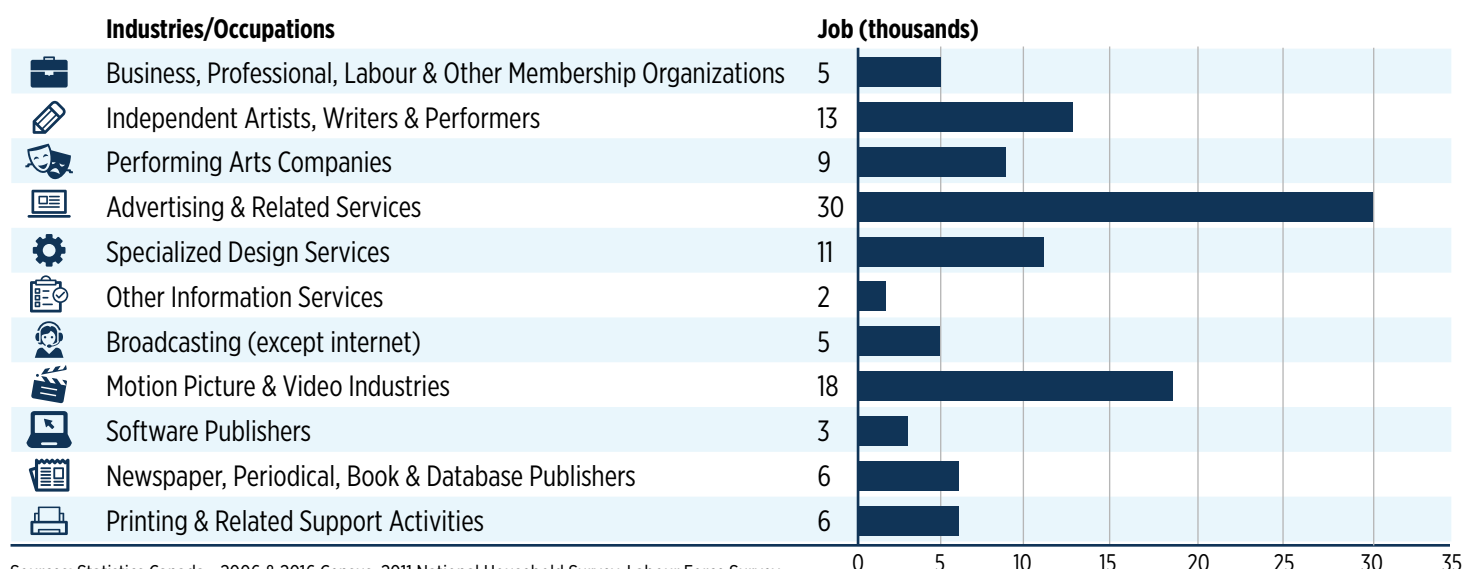
Toronto's exceptional artists, institutions and industries are critical factors in Toronto's livability, vitality and prosperity. Culture underpins Toronto's diversity, giving expression to the many cultural communities that have built Toronto and the neighbourhoods they call home. Culture is a primary motivator to travel here, drawing more than 2 million international travelers a year. But above all, with the contribution it makes to Torontonians' sense of place, sense of shared experience and pride, culture is a reason to live here.

Culture – What's included?

The culture sector includes for-profit and not-for-profit businesses and organizations in screen-based media production, interactive digital media, music, publishing, theatre, dance, museums and art galleries, heritage sites and collections, and special events. Occupations in the culture sector are connected to the region's other key sectors such as tourism, digital technology, design, light manufacturing and professional services in accounting and law. The sector also stimulates spin-off activity in other sectors, including hospitality and retail. According to the Toronto Arts Foundation's publication, Toronto Arts Stats 2018, 73 per cent of patrons of arts and culture events usually end up doing something else, like going to a restaurant, bar, or coffee shop, before and/or after an event.



Figure 1 illustrates employment in selected cultural industries in 2019. Note: Arts and culture may be found in parts of other North American Industry Classification Systems (NAICS) codes, so the chart below may not provide a complete picture of all jobs attributed to arts and culture.

Figure 1 - Employment in Selected Cultural Industries, 2019

Sources: Statistics Canada - 2006 & 2016 Census, 2011 National Household Survey, Labour Force Survey, Canadian Business Counts. Jobs by industry (NAICS) were projected by City of Toronto, Economic Development and Culture research staff.

Impact of COVID-19 on Cultural Industries

While many industries have experienced negative impacts from COVID-19, arts, entertainment, and recreation, along with the closely aligned industries of accommodation and food services, are the hardest hit, and may experience the longest lasting impact because they are dependent on public gatherings in their business models.

To combat the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Toronto's \$9-billion culture sector has complied with emergency orders to close non-essential businesses and practise physical distancing. This response has disrupted Toronto's creative economy at an unprecedented level, leading to an almost total shutdown across the various industries that make up the cultural sector. Some of these impacts include:

- Toronto's \$2-billion film production industry has come to a virtual standstill. While local projections are not yet available, the Canadian Media Producers Association estimates that \$2.5 billion in production investment is at risk nationally.
- The city's 200+ spaces that regularly book music performances, including live music venues, pubs, restaurants and event facilities have shut their doors – with NOW magazine estimating more than 400 live music shows were cancelled in the first month of the crisis alone.

- Special events that typically attract hundreds of thousands of tourists to the city and generate millions in visitor spending and economic impact, such as Pride Toronto and the Toronto Caribbean Carnival, as well as local neighbourhood festivals, have all been cancelled and/or reimaged.
- A stakeholder in museums said revenue typically consists of 33 per cent government funding, but next year it is anticipated to be 60 per cent government funding as ticket and merchandise revenues contract. There is no certainty regarding when revenue may return.

Some data was released in the report *StatsCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada: Expected changes in spending habits during the recovery period* on July 22, 2020. The report examined the expected changes in spending habits after stores and businesses start reopening and how these changes are associated with various demographic characteristics. It used data from the third iteration (June 15 to 21, 2020) of Statistics Canada's new Canadian Perspectives Survey Series (CPSS).

More than 4,000 Canadians from the 10 provinces responded to the survey. Respondents were asked whether they expected to spend more, less or about the same on selected items, compared with the time before the pandemic. Perhaps not surprisingly, Canadians indicated that they expect to be spending more on

items that are considered essential, such as groceries, education and utilities. Canadians indicated that they plan to spend less on discretionary items such as eating in restaurants, entertainment and recreation. The fact that many Canadians expect to spend less on many items is likely a reflection of the fact that many people experienced job losses or reduced hours of work as a result of the pandemic or saw a reduction in earnings. Residents of Ontario were more likely to say that they expected to spend less on most discretionary items, including entertainment and eating at a restaurant. The culture sector will likely see a direct correlation to the findings of the report as aspects of the sector fall under entertainment, and eating in restaurants is often a side activity when people are participating in culture.

Pre-Existing Challenges

Prior to the onset of COVID-19, Toronto's culture sector was responding to significant infrastructure constraints that were negatively affecting the sector's overall ability to thrive. The need for space, including affordable housing, issues with precarious employment, and equity and inclusion have challenged the culture sector for years. These challenges have been amplified with the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Need for Space

Access to affordable, sustainable space for culture and creative work has been a longstanding issue for the sector. The demand for office space and residential buildings downtown led to closures of some of the city's retail and music venues, LGBTQ2S+ nightclubs, and small performing arts theatres. DIY (do-it-yourself) event organizers were finding it increasingly difficult to find and retrofit event spaces and there continues to be a shortage of available film studio space in Toronto, constraining the growth of this \$2-billion industry.

Critical challenges have included the need to preserve employment lands for job-rich uses such as film studios, given the demands from other industries or from residential developers. Additionally, the need to streamline permitting processes and to remove red tape related to City Planning and Toronto Building, approvals for DIY pop-up spaces and permitting processes for alternative use of public realm such as parks and streets, are also paramount.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing has long been an issue for many people in Toronto, and the city faces a potential exodus of artists and creative professionals to more affordable neighbouring regions. The Toronto Arts Foundation's survey, Toronto Arts Stats 2019, asked artists why they want to leave Toronto. Seventy-six per cent of respondents indicated the overall cost of living was too high and 73 per cent indicated that housing was too expensive. Without artists and creators living and working in Toronto, all others who rely on their intellectual capital and talent cannot thrive.

Precarious Employment

Employment in the culture sector is often precarious. Precarious employment is usually associated with work uncertainty, low income and limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, as outlined in the Province of Ontario's study, The Changing Workplaces Review – Final Report (2017). In late 2019, Statistics Canada released a study, Measuring the Gig Economy in Canada Using Administrative Data, based on various tax forms and the 2016 Census data. The study concluded that "workers whose main occupations are in arts, entertainment and recreation were about four times more likely to be gig workers than workers whose main occupations are in management of companies and enterprises". As well, people in equity-seeking groups (i.e. Black, Indigenous, women, LGBTQ2S+, newcomers, racialized communities, vulnerable youth, etc.) are represented to a disproportionate extent in this economically fragile sector, increasing their vulnerability to sudden shocks such as COVID-19.

If the artists are fine, we're fine. If the artists are not fine, we're not fine.

Comment from Consultation

Equity and Inclusion

Growing inequalities have resulted in barriers to access for funding, employment and leadership roles for artists from equity-seeking groups. Additionally, city-wide cultural access and participation in cultural events is not yet equitable for citizens. The cultural sector has historically been concentrated in the downtown core, and while some progress has been made in recent years, more sustained effort is needed to ensure that all Torontonians have opportunities to participate in local, relevant cultural activities, no matter where they live in the city.

Artists and cultural organizations are also at the forefront of efforts to combat inequality and systemic racism in Toronto and across Canada. Indigenous artists have fought to raise awareness of the erasure of Indigenous cultural presence in Toronto, the culture sector is acknowledging the historical exclusion of Black artists and talent, and some sectors are taking concrete steps to prioritize youth from equity-seeking groups in workforce development.

City of Toronto COVID-19 Recovery Initiatives for Culture

The City of Toronto has undertaken several new and enhanced initiatives to support the culture sector. These initiatives include the following:

- **TOArtist COVID-19 Emergency Response** – Created an artists' relief fund in collaboration with the Toronto Arts Council and disbursed nearly \$837,000 in emergency funds to 982 Toronto Artists at the outset of the pandemic.
- **Live Music Venue Creative Co-Location Property Tax Subclass** – The property tax subclass was expanded to include music venues offering a 50 per cent property tax relief, with 45 venues declared eligible and a total tax savings of \$1.7 million.
- **Mitigation** – Consulted with 14 City divisions and 40 municipalities and 40 major third-party producers to mitigate losses due to COVID-19 related event cancellations.
- **Cultural Festivals Recovery Fund** – Created a new fund intended to assist festivals in their reopening efforts. To date, demand has greatly exceeded the available funding and, when the program closed at the end of July, close to 30 organizations benefited from \$500,000 in funding. This program also includes partnerships with third party producers Forrec and BaAM to provide webinars on health and safety planning for festivals and event producers.
- **Transformed Programs** – Pivoted the Canada Day event to a virtual platform featuring 56 artists and performing groups to an online audience of 120,000. Reimagined and announced the move of Nuit Blanche 2020 to a digital platform. The City led the development of the Arts@Home platform, launched in May, to move arts education materials online to assist parents with the shift to home learning.
- **ShopHERE Webinars** – In partnership with the City of Toronto's shopHERE program and Canada Council for the Arts' Digital Strategy Fund grant program, two webinars were held for a total of 465 attendees. To date, 609 businesses from the Creative/Cultural sector have registered for the shopHERE program. Outreach focused on enhancing diversity and inclusion.
- **Indigenous Arts and Culture Partnerships Fund** – The fund supports partnerships and collaborations that create new opportunities for Indigenous-led arts and culture. Providing a maximum of \$10,000 per project, incubation funding will support the development of new partnerships and first-time initiatives. Activation funding, a maximum of \$30,000 per project, will support projects and initiatives that have the potential for lasting impact.
- **Farmers' Markets** – Working in collaboration with 14 permitting divisions, safely restarted 21 farmers' markets across the city.
- **The pop-up DriveInTO** – Working in partnership with Toronto Public Health and four major external venues, created guidelines enabling the start-up of operations of pop-up drive-in movie activities. The program will also assist equity seeking producers and film festivals to create an estimated 10 additional nights of programming over the summer.
- **Ensuring Safe Cultural Gatherings** – Working in partnership with Toronto Public Health, provided guidance to stakeholders to apply Public Health guidelines. Further, created the #lightson partnership with Ryerson University researching the safe reopenings of live events and venues. Also produced a series of Reopening Webinars in coordination with the Toronto Arts Council and the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts.

Supporting Culture

The City of Toronto has undertaken several new and enhanced initiatives to support the culture sector. These initiatives include:

TOArtist COVID-19 Emergency Response

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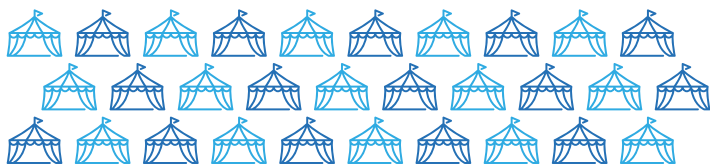
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Recent City Strategies, Engagements and Council Decisions

Toronto City Council has a strong commitment to investing in the culture sector. In the last five years, the City of Toronto has adopted four creative industry strategies. They are the: [Toronto Music Strategy: Supporting and Growing the City's Music Sector \(2016\)](#); [Spotlight on Toronto: A Strategic Action Plan for the Film, Television and Digital Media Industry \(2017\)](#); [Toronto Nightlife Action Plan \(2019\)](#) and a 10-year [Toronto Public Art Strategy \(2019\)](#). These reports led to the formation of the Toronto Music Advisory Council, an "agent of change" policy to protect existing music venues from new residential buildings, a 50 per cent reduction of property taxes for creative co-location facilities and

music venues, the Mayor-appointment of a "Night Economy Ambassador" and a commitment to celebrate a Year of Public Art in 2021. While the continued implementation of these strategies is important, staff will review strategic actions with recommendations from the TORR report and Council direction, if applicable.

In fall 2019, City Council adopted three [new strategic priorities for cultural investment over the next five years \(2020-2024\)](#), including:

- 1. Culture for all**, to increase opportunities for all Torontonians, no matter where they live in the city, to participate in local, relevant cultural activities throughout the year that reflect Toronto's diversity and creativity;
- 2. Space for culture**, to maintain and create new accessible, sustainable spaces for Toronto's creative sector in a growing city; and
- 3. Developing creative talent**, to strengthen Toronto's cultural workforce and increase diversity and representation within the sector.

These priorities were developed based on input from a robust, inclusive city-wide community consultation process undertaken to build the [Economic Development and Culture \(EDC\) Divisional Strategy \(2018-22\)](#); ongoing discussions with stakeholders and partners in the culture sector; and policy directions from City Council.

Engagement Overview

As part of the response to the COVID-19 emergency, the City held a wide range of consultations with key stakeholders from cultural and creative industries.

Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force

- Mayor Tory announced the creation of the Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force on March 16, 2020. The Task Force subsequently convened 20 virtual roundtable discussions with more than 200 stakeholders from a wide variety of business and community groups. Participants were asked about the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses, and to consider short- and medium-term interventions to support Toronto's economy.



- Alongside the work of the Mayor's Task Force, other City councillors led stakeholder engagement sessions on focused themes including small business, social services and housing, workers and labour, climate action, cultural communities, and children and youth. In addition, City staff received 3,366 responses to a survey of Toronto businesses on the impact of COVID-19 and addressing their needs for relief and recovery.

Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild Consultations: Culture

- The Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild reviewed consultations undertaken to date and conducted an additional 12 virtual roundtable consultations with the cultural industries in June and July 2020. These consultations examined immediate needs for recovery and also took a forward-looking approach to consider long-term opportunities for rebuilding. Meetings were held with industry leaders in heritage, literary/publishing, interactive digital media, music and film. Additionally, consultations were held with leaders in creative communities including people living with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, Francophone, LGBTQ2S+, people of colour and youth under 30.

Data Sets Considered

Findings from each of the above engagement methods were analyzed by City staff to inform the content of this report. Additionally, a staff research study, COVID-19 Toronto: Interim Report on Culture, and the report, COVID-19: Rebuilding Toronto's Creative Future – Report from Cultural Roundtables for the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Support and Recovery also contribute to the findings of this report. Because most of the work of the Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force focused on identifying relief efforts related to immediate response, restart and early-stage recovery, a majority of the longer term issues and opportunities included in this report are based on information gathered through the Toronto Office of Rebuild and Recovery culture sector roundtables. Recommendations developed as part of this report are supplemented by further research by City staff, including a jurisdictional review of best practices related to arts and culture relief and recovery.

Common Issues across Culture Sectors

While each of the cultural industries and communities consulted faces unique challenges in recovering from the impact of COVID-19, many stakeholders highlighted similar issues.

Equity and Inclusion

- Equity-seeking group members expressed concerns about backsliding on recent gains while leaders of mainstream institutions noted that equity needed to be accelerated, citing both business and ethical imperatives. On balance, there was a consensus that the time had come to address gaps in representation and participation in Toronto's cultural sector.
- Regarding City-led engagements, stakeholders from equity-seeking communities within cultural industries said they lacked a seat at the table. That view applied across all consultative and decision-making bodies, such as juries, advisory groups and agency boards.
- For people living with disabilities, equity and accessibility are inseparable, and as approaches to rebuilding physical and digital infrastructure are considered, accessibility should be a fundamental, non-negotiable principle within an equity strategy.

Financial Impacts

- Every sector is experiencing negative financial impacts from COVID-19. Extended closures have harmed film production and performance venues, many cultural products have not gone to market as scheduled, and artists have lost gigs as unemployment became almost total. The pivot to digital platforms has not offset these losses.

The Need for Space

- Stakeholders emphasized the importance of affordable housing, as COVID-19 has exacerbated the difficulty artists have meeting the expenses of living in Toronto. Many cultural workers are leaving the city or are facing precarious living situations. If creators do not live here, Toronto's cultural life will be imported. Also, the benefits Toronto has realized from being a creative hub will diminish as the community disperses.
- Venue owners and operators expressed concerns related to the financial impact of lingering hesitancy on the part of the public to gather when they reopen. In addition, the health protocols required for performance venues will be costly, and physical distancing is likely to suppress ticket and other revenues. These financial pressures create a formidable challenge for venues and performance spaces, and financial supports from government will be necessary for Toronto to retain private sector cultural infrastructure

Digital Adaptation

- The pivot to digital platforms was immediate and unplanned. For many, working digitally will be part of the 'new normal', yet the expertise and technology needed to succeed may be out of reach.
- COVID-19 has extended the digital divide and this could aggravate social and economic equity issues, particularly for low income communities and people with disabilities, unless this outcome is addressed.

Health Protocols and Communication

- Leaders across sectors highlighted the need for clarity of communication regarding the requirements to reopen their businesses, and to protect workers and the public. Support may also be needed for costs related to compliance.
- Public-facing sectors such as those in culture that depend on large public gatherings need support from government to encourage the public to return to theatres, music venues and all performance spaces. Both consumer confidence and worker confidence were seen as pre-conditions of business recovery.

Barrier to Business: Insurance

- Stakeholders called attention to an urgent crisis regarding insurance, which has the potential to impact cultural sectors. Insurers are currently unwilling to insure against pandemics or further outbreaks of COVID-19 associated with the worksite. This causes an untenable risk for producers, venue owners, employers and others, and could threaten any gains made to access to space and employment. The City should advocate with other orders of government to alleviate this structural issue that could paralyze cultural industries.

Opportunities across Culture Sectors

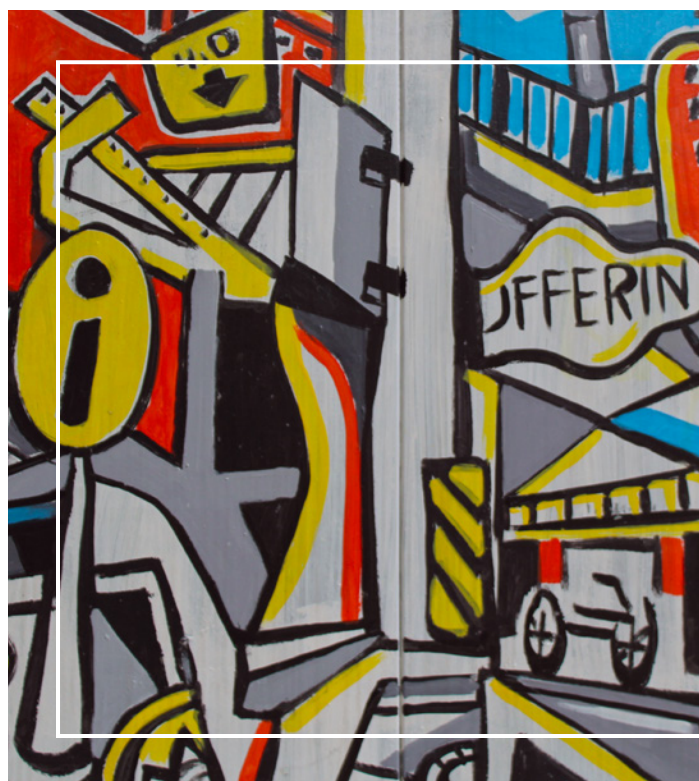
Across sectors, there was a shared vision of how the City can 'build back better'. Equity and inclusion are at the heart of this vision, and a collective desire was expressed to drive a shift in the balance of access, inclusion and decision-making that prioritizes equity-seeking groups, particularly Black, Indigenous, people of colour, LGBTQ2S+, and people living with disabilities. Further, new approaches to capitalizing cultural companies and organizations can drive change, build creative infrastructure and reward performance. Across sectors, cultural leaders asserted that access to space is critical for the cultural industries to help shape Toronto's landscape in a way that animates the whole city, and they presented ideas to support this outcome. And digital adaptation offers a virtual platform for Toronto's creators to engage people and build audiences locally and globally, if they have the tools to adapt and take advantage of this sudden acceleration. Culture

sector leaders cited the high level of solidarity and collaboration across cultural institutions of all types during the crisis and underlined the need for collaboration to become the norm and not the exception in the future.

Equity and Inclusion

Stakeholders strongly expressed that the opportunity to consider how these sectors will be rebuilt is an opportunity to resist going back to normal and to insist on something better, more inclusive, that elevates these industries and the city.

- **Leadership:** While access to employment and support for emerging artists and organizations from under-represented groups are critical, these things are facilitated by having leaders from these communities in decision-making roles, whether on juries or as senior executives in institutions. Succession planning for leadership roles should be prioritized, along with mentorship, and funding structures could be used to create accountability for recipient organizations for advancing equity in board positions and executive roles (discussed below in 'Funding and Other Supports'). A critical mass of diverse leaders within organizations will be required to create a truly inclusive cultural sector, which is something that will remain unattainable if representation remains at a minimal level.



- **Benefit Where It's Due:** Achieving more balance in leadership could help advance an additional goal: that creative work from all communities should be able to thrive without being evaluated against a mainstream perspective. Stakeholders extended this idea to include seeking to ensure that communities benefit from their own content. This will support a broader intention to advance sovereignty over culturally specific content. The sentiment of "Nothing about us without us" was expressed, noting that Toronto's cultural sector has long benefitted from the labour of diverse creatives without enabling their access to power.
- **Funding as a Tool to Advance Equity:** Stakeholders also encouraged the City to take even more concrete, demonstrable and measurable steps to prioritize equity and inclusion in all engagements, programs, funding, procurement and hiring. Regarding City funding for cultural industries, investment decisions were questioned for their lack of transparency and limited support for equity-seeking groups and creatives. As such, a re-balancing could be considered, which is discussed in greater depth below in 'Funding and Other Supports'.
- **Cultural Industries and Policing:** Leaders in equity-seeking groups expressed that the requirement for armed Paid Duty Officers to attend cultural events surpasses reasonable security needs, and that alternate means of securing events need to be found. Some expressed that police presence can be highly problematic, as the history of the community's relationship with the police determines how their presence is experienced at events.

For other cultural industries such as film, where Paid Duty Officers are currently required for production-related traffic closures or special effects, it's possible that an alternate authorized body could be made available for these services, alleviating occasional shortages.

- **The City's Convening Ability:** The disparate groups that were brought together for the consultation often remarked on the value of meeting and talking with one another, coming together to focus on common challenges and bringing their perspectives together to increase their knowledge and their influence. They called on the City to use its convening ability to continue bringing groups together. Additionally, the City was asked to function as an aggregator of resources and a connector to vital assets like venues and other cultural infrastructure.

The cultural sector was seen as a gateway onto sustainable employment for equity-seeking group members, a key means of confronting under-representation and racism through mass media, and a bridge to civic engagement for diverse communities. Much promising practice was also recognized in the sector. Many museums are already highly involved in initiatives related to decolonization, and are reimagining what museums and cultural institutions can be in order to elevate perspectives from outside the institutions. Other sectors, such as Interactive Digital Media, will continue to seek diversity in their hiring processes, as they find this positively affects exports. The film industry is expanding an already successful partnership with the City, which has advanced career growth for under-represented groups, including a Black-only on-set program.



Funding and other Supports

The City plays a critical role in the cultural industries as a funder, convenor, promoter and enabler, and can advance the rebuilding of the cultural industries in each of these capacities. Additionally, many City programs that are not directly targeting the cultural industries also have a significant impact on them and can contribute to their future success. Policy to preserve employment lands is vital to the growth of film production, as one example, and taxation has a particular impact on performance venues.

- **Funding as an Agent of Change:** The disruption caused by COVID-19 presents an opportunity to establish new objectives for how funding is allocated. To build capacity for equity-seeking groups, more funding will need to be allocated toward them, and to artists from these communities. This will require either more funding or a recalibration of the balance of current funding to established incumbents versus to equity-seeking groups. Funding structures can be used to create accountability for recipients with respect to representation in senior positions and actionable succession plans that constitute a commitment to inclusive leadership now and in the future. An Equity Index, ideally developed with other cultural funders, is highly encouraged as a measurement tool to ensure funded organizations demonstrate equity in leadership, employment and opportunities. Data on investments and outcomes for equity-seeking groups should be collected and made public.
- **Decision-making:** As decision-making bodies are not representative of the larger community, decisions that affect funding, access to space, or other critical supports such as affordable housing, were seen by those consulted as perpetuating social and economic exclusion. This would be alleviated by ensuring juries and other decision-making bodies are more representative and are constituted to ensure that decisions made regarding support for projects emerging from a particular community are made by members of that community.
- **Longer-term structural supports:** As the city aspires to build back better, it needs to think big, and this requires that infrastructure funding for cultural industries be included in the planning stages to ensure that it is not an afterthought. Accessible and representative culture was viewed as a critical component of healthy and liveable communities. This includes consideration for funding of shovel-worthy cultural infrastructure, and preservation of employment lands for production. In addition to infrastructure, as stakeholders struggle to recover, they reflected that multi-year and

operational grants need to be part of the mix of supports offered by the City and other orders of government. Further, live performance industries, hit hard by the pandemic, require supports for recovery that enable employment, and advocated for a labour-based tax credit, modeled on those in other cultural industries, such as film and television production.

- **Financial Sustainability:** The COVID-19 crisis is a liquidity crisis, and across all sectors access to capital is a key concern. Federal supports like CERB have been critical, and the cultural sector needs these supports to continue, sunsetting them on a timeline aligned with industries approaching resumption of customary capacity. These benefits have operated like a pilot of a Universal Basic Wage program, and they offered many benefits to the cultural sector and to equity-seeking groups, in particular. As these supports ease off, stakeholders support piloting mechanisms that could function as a universal basic wage.
- **Promotional support:** The City's ability to work as a promoter for cultural industries was frequently cited, and stakeholders across industries requested the City allocate more resources to promoting the creative work of Torontonians, both locally and internationally.

The Need for Space

The cost of space is a major challenge for the cultural industries, and the extent to which this constitutes a threat has been exacerbated by COVID-19. Stakeholders called for an integrated approach to access to safe, affordable and accessible space, noting three interrelated issues: living space, performance space and working space. Without affordable space to live, work and perform, Toronto will lose the creators, venues and workplaces that create economic opportunity and make it one of the most liveable cities in the world.

- **Streamlining City Processes for Infrastructure:** Stakeholders called for the City to permanently adopt the nimbleness it exercised in responding to the crisis. Regulation designed to eliminate risk have been rolled back without negative outcomes. They made particular note that the City's permitting processes are a barrier to accessing much needed space. This affects the film industry, as new studio space is desperately needed, and stakeholders have found processes related to planning and building permit approvals has slowed progress.

- **Streamlining City Processes for Alternative Uses:** As traditional performance venues are threatened, DIY Pop-up spaces will be an important part of the infrastructure, and there are barriers to this that should be explored in a way that facilitates both safety and speed to market. Streamlining processes for permits to use Park space for unconventional uses would also help alleviate space shortages and animate the entire City. The flexibility in regulation, permits and enforcement shown by the City during COVID-19 could be extended as one step that could contribute to a broader streamlining of processes much desired by stakeholders.

Digital Adaptation

One of the hallmarks of the COVID-19 pandemic is the rapidity of the shift to digital technologies undertaken by businesses, institutions and individuals. Many stakeholders indicated that the shift to digital is part of their 'new normal', and a return to the pre-COVID-19 status quo is not anticipated. The shift was sudden, and financing, skills, infrastructure and innovation are needed in order for stakeholders to thrive in this new model.

- **Up-skilling:** Stakeholders are progressively more dependent on digital-only ways of working for managing remote staff, making sales or maintaining a relationship with their audience. Each of these practices is completely different in a digital space and requires specific expertise and strategies and are unfamiliar to many. The digital market is a global market, so it brings with it heightened competition. Ensuring Toronto's cultural entrepreneurs have the knowledge they need to succeed in this instantly international market is a critical first step to enabling success in the new-normal, at home and abroad. This need is exacerbated by the systemic exclusion faced by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) professionals seeking managerial and executive roles in the cultural sector; a challenge requiring specific, targeted interventions.
- **New Tools Needed:** In addition to massive, large-scale digital infrastructure investments, parallel investments in new equipment are needed. For digital-intensive sectors like Visual FX and post-production, infrastructure providing enhanced speed and encryption could enable Toronto to compete at a new level, attracting jobs and inward investment. Some cultural industries plan to innovate hybrid digital/physical experiences, or use financial or creator software to transact and create products. New ways of working requires investment in new tools, yet these industries have been depleted by the COVID-19 crisis, and the digital business model is still evolving. Support from government sources may be necessary.
- **Digital Access and Equity:** Digital infrastructure must be considered critical infrastructure. The 'digital divide' has never been more critical or more predictive. The City must prioritize closing the digital divide, especially as faced by BIPOC youth facing elevated unemployment rates, compounded by poor digital access in social housing. Building up the infrastructure and accessibility for elders, those living with disabilities, priority neighbourhoods and others is critical for equitable participation in society. It will also further enable people to work and learn from home, which creates opportunities, supports COVID-19 recovery, and has positive environmental impacts.
- **Financial Sustainability for Creators:** International digital platforms have always presented an opportunity, but their dominance has grown as they have been the sole conduit to audiences during restrictions on gatherings. The revenue that is earned on these platforms is dramatically less than can be earned through other means, in part because the federal Copyright Act has not been updated to reflect the impact and use of new technologies, and to ensure creators receive adequate remuneration for their work. Stakeholders would support advocacy for amendments to the Act that will help to keep creators employed and creative industries afloat.

Although the cultural industries are among the hardest hit by COVID-19, if they are supported to take advantage of the opportunities that lay ahead, they can be drivers of Toronto's efforts to rebuild, ensuring a creative, bold, inclusive future for the city and all who live here.

Priority Issues and Opportunities by Culture Sector

This section provides an overview of priority issues and opportunities identified by roundtable participants related to COVID-19 recovery and rebuild in the following cultural sectors and communities consulted:

- Music and Live Events
- Heritage
- Literary/Publishing
- Film
- Interactive Digital Media
- Indigenous
- Arts and Accessibility
- LGBTQ2S+
- Black Cultural Leaders
- Youth Under 30
- People of Colour
- Francophone

Music and Live Events

Live music venues are critical to the industry and audiences alike, and many are closing or are at risk of closure. Operators or owners are struggling to pay fixed costs and are anticipating additional costs for health measures they will need to take to ensure audiences feel safe to come back once operations continue.

There was agreement that, beyond financial sustainability, challenges for the music and event sector include access to space, equitable access to funding and resources, consumer confidence and digital transformation.

Desired Outcomes

The live event industries are requesting assistance with fixed costs such as rent, property tax and utilities that must be paid despite having had no revenue for an extended period. Costs related to PPE and new venue infrastructure for accommodating performers, staff, and audiences will also be considerable, and this is particularly challenging, as revenue may be sluggish if the public is reluctant to return to venues. Government has a role to play in ensuring audiences and musicians see venues as safe.

It was also noted that insurance issues could paralyze the industry, as insurers are declining to insure against pandemics, resulting in an untenable risk for venue owners and operators that could prevent them from reopening.



Also, as artists have lost gigs and related income, it was noted that CERB needs to be continued until venues reopen. Requiring landlords to participate in OCECRA and unequivocally prohibiting commercial evictions is essential for venue survival. Additionally, a labour-based tax credit for live event producers, such as that in television or film production, could help capitalize venues and stimulate employment.

The need to innovate has never been clearer. Access to digital technology and up-skilling will be key to thriving in the global online marketplace. Revenue in the digital world is a fraction of what musicians would earn in a live setting in part because the federal Copyright Act favours distribution platforms. The City could advocate for changes to digital revenue models through amendments to the federal Copyright Act that could help artists and the industry remain viable.

Opportunities

Participants noted that there may be more vacant commercial real estate in the city given that many corporations may move to extended or make permanent their work-from-home models. There may be opportunities to animate new spaces. The sector has been working with the City to unlock City-owned spaces and to advance Do-It-Yourself spaces, capitalizing on the will to continue to streamline the permitting processes at the City.

Those consulted recognize that digital tools offer the opportunity to innovate, but this needs to occur both creatively, in terms of innovating the experience, and financially in terms of designing viable business models. For both the music and live events sectors, digital adaption offers opportunities to explore and reach new audiences, increase accessibility and build bridges between communities online. However, financial support for access to digital tools to maximize exposure is needed for emerging artists, venues and events. Providing education, upskilling and support specifically to artists in the music industry to build careers in the digital space would create opportunities for advancement. Hiring youth and investing in emerging artists will keep the pipeline of new talent development active.



As with other sectors consulted, participants saw the need for a commitment to equity, diversity and gender balance. Changes to granting practices could help ensure Toronto's diversity is reflected. Impact studies could be used to measure the efficacy of funding. As the industry is experiencing an increased scarcity in resources due to COVID-19, grant funding becomes even more critical as a determinant of the future viability of artists and of the industry as a whole. A clearer and more cohesive pipeline is needed to grow BIPOC representation and advancement in mainstream industry positions.

Participants also commented on safety concerns at music venues and live events. Paid Duty Officers are not perceived as allies by LGBTQ2S+ or BIPOC stakeholders, and their audience members accordingly feel unsafe. Current restrictions in gatherings provide an opportunity to reconsider the use of Paid Duty Officers for events, and to explore alternatives including night safety organizations such as Safe Night Out (Queensland, Australia) or the Dandelion Initiative (Toronto).

Heritage

The heritage sector shut down in March to comply with emergency orders and faced related revenue losses from admissions and merchandising. During the closure, the sector immediately focused on a transition to digital platforms, finding this to be critical to retaining engagement with local and international communities. Because substantial funding and expertise are required to successfully make this transition, this became a barrier to many institutions.

Many museums are engaged in the work of decolonizing and bringing new voices and new perspectives into seemingly traditional places. Stakeholders identified the need to support social movements around racial justice and decolonization through the work they do in their institutions. Digital tools and platforms may be more than a stopgap measure during closure. With support, they could be tools that explore these themes in new ways with new audiences.

Desired Outcomes

Heritage institutions voiced a need for support for digital adaptation. There will be a need to access funding and expertise to reskill staff and build new platforms and experiences with an emphasis on accessibility, collaboration and inclusion.

Support for museums is required to address the challenge of sharply reduced revenue and increased costs related to increased personal protection equipment, sanitization supplies and retrofitting of spaces for social distancing measures. Similarly, support for creators of content focused on the importance of inclusion, anti-racism and decolonization.

Operators stressed the need for the government to strengthen public confidence, when it is safe to do so, to encourage the citizens to come back to their museums.

Opportunities

Many in the sector are taking advantage of the situation to reimagine what museums and heritage sites can be in the future. Institutions could reposition themselves as brokers of space and ideas, versus curators and creators. Voices and experiences from outside of institutions can be elevated, thereby making museums more essential to their community and representative of the community where possible.



There is an opportunity for heritage institutions to play a vital role in stimulating the economy through investment in cultural infrastructure. Institutions can participate in recovery projects to create jobs, build resilience and transform physical cultural infrastructure.

Stakeholders are exploring innovations in hybrid digital/physical experiences that increase accessibility, enhance e-learning and offer a deeper participant experience. The shift to digital engagement can increase participation and help institutions reach new audiences.

A powerful social change movement has emerged from COVID-19 and protests against racism have heightened the focus on equity and inclusion. Institutions are exploring how they can engage in this moment to rethink who they are and how they will be different in three to six years from now. Arts and culture can play a key role and can be at the heart of recovery in the city.

Literary/Publishing

With the closure of non-essential businesses, the option for writers to promote their writing in physical places (e.g. pubs and cafes) was eliminated. At the same time, publishers have faced challenges taking books to market for an extended period, and most consumers moved to online purchases. Four hundred new titles were published between March and June that should be in bookstores this summer but have not yet made it to market.

The industry pivoted to a predominantly digital business model, however revenue from these platforms is much less than revenue from bookstores and other physical points of sale. In the digital economy, a high percentage of sales revenue goes to the distribution platform, substantially reducing the income writers and publishers receive for their work.

Once the city fully reopens, bookstores and publishers will continue to be challenged by high commercial rents and property taxes. Creators in this sector are moving outside of Toronto to take advantage of lower property values and rents. Toronto's status as a literary hub is at risk due to the high cost of space.



Desired Outcomes

The sector would like to see more support for physical bookstores to ensure they continue to be community spaces, especially for culturally specific groups. A mechanism to support rent payments would help maintain Toronto's status as a worldwide literary powerhouse. New models of support could be considered with industry for non-profit and for-profit organizations.

Stakeholders indicated that the City could be a resource to help expand the industry's reach to international markets through Toronto Global, and other partners. While at the same time, the City can help amplify the promotion of local authors to local readers through the Toronto District School Board, Toronto Public Library and festivals like Word on the Street. Both international and local promotion could be achieved by making Canadian content more accessible online by working with other cultural industries and orders of government to encourage major international platforms to promote Canadian work.

Opportunities

Finding ways to work with new partners and in non-literary spaces may be one way to address issues associated with space like high rent and property tax. Becoming hyper-local in promotion has the potential to lessen COVID-19 impacts in the near- to medium-term. The City, in conjunction with industry partners, can play a proactive role to help residents discover authors and bookstores in their neighbourhoods while also promoting community life and cultural hubs close to home.

Digital innovation also offers opportunities for creators and publishers, although both the expense and the need for expertise remain challenges. Nonetheless, the industry is striving to innovate new platforms and new experiences as they try to find a balance between digital and in-person engagement, which could create new opportunities for revenue generation and exposure to new audiences at home and abroad.



Film

COVID-19 brought Toronto's film industry to a virtual standstill. Emergency orders to close non-essential businesses and restrict the size of mass gatherings resulted in an abrupt halt to filming, leading to almost 100 per cent unemployment and financial losses from interrupted or delayed projects. This will have spin-off impacts for distribution platforms, broadcasters, and cinemas which could disrupt the value chain for years to come. Programs designed to help BIPOC youth enter the industry were paused as employment rates tumbled. Certain segments of the industry, such as visual effects and post-production, have been able to work from home, though productivity was curtailed, especially initially, due to the challenges involved in professional grade work being performed using residential grade infrastructure.

Desired Outcomes

Participants highlighted an urgent issue with insurance that could paralyze production. Insurance providers are declining to insure for COVID-19 or other pandemics, making production financing virtually impossible, and creating intolerable financial risks for production companies.

Additionally, the sector will be challenged to pay for new on-set health protocols within tight production budgets. Participants estimated that new health and safety measures could add anywhere from 5 per cent to 25 per cent to a production's budget. This is difficult to finance and could take resources away from casting and the production values that make shows competitive.

In the near term, consultation participants identified the need to enhance worker and consumer confidence to enable the sector's recovery. They called for clear, timely health and safety guidance and training to help workers feel secure on set, along with promotional campaigns to build confidence in workplaces and support a safe return of audiences to festivals and cinemas.

Industry stakeholders were united on the importance of building physical and digital infrastructure to enable film production. Every year the city turns away work, as there is not sufficient capacity. The City can help by streamlining approval processes to expedite studio builds and expansions. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for enhanced digital infrastructure to enable remote work and accommodate more bandwidth-intensive projects. The City could provide support by working with internet service providers and industry experts to improve digital infrastructure.

In addition, participants strongly agreed on the need for a more equitable film industry, highlighting the need to immediately restart programs and initiatives to ensure representation of marginalized voices both in front of and behind the camera.

Opportunities

Enhancing sector workforce development programs, with a focus on BIPOC advancement, can help to address gaps in representation in Toronto's film sector. This could involve allocating additional resources to successful programs that create career paths for individuals from diverse backgrounds. Other strategies include supporting internships, job shadowing and mentorships, and exploring succession planning for leadership positions.

Many also see the recovery period as an opportunity to make productions greener. Participants called for a reconsideration of production practices to reduce the environmental footprint of the industry – especially in light of the added waste anticipated due to use of on-set PPE. A movement toward more sustainable productions can be a catalyst to create new programs to decrease waste, and even extend to clean energy adoption via power drops on City properties such as parks.



Interactive Digital Media

Like many other creative businesses, companies in the interactive digital media (IDM) sector are experiencing significant disruptions due to COVID-19:

- Value chain disruption, client cancellations, and the loss of market opportunities have resulted in sharp drops in revenue in the sector, with smaller companies and freelancers being the hardest hit.
- In addition, many felt that physical distancing requirements were negatively impacting new business and product development. Participants indicated that IDM is an exceptionally collaborative and interdisciplinary industry, and that face-to-face interaction is important for creativity and innovation. Many small companies rely on networking and community-building to sell their products, which is more challenging in a virtual market.
- Many believed that without improved public confidence in the workplace and services such as transit, it will be difficult to restore normalcy and predictability to business.

Desired Outcomes

Despite the considerable uncertainty impacting the sector, the group was in agreement that IDM can be a major part of Toronto's economic recovery. Prior to the onset of COVID-19, IDM was experiencing strong global growth. Many believed that the move toward enhancing digital services across all sectors will lead to new job opportunities within IDM. As an example, participants forecast that there will be many new job opportunities in e-learning, arising from increased demand for reskilling and retraining.

Participants also hoped to see Toronto positioned as a global creative hub of the future. Toronto has an opportunity to compete on talent, with the city's diversity being a major advantage. People from all over the world work in Toronto's offices, bringing a wide range of creative perspectives to produce high-quality content.

An important component of building back better in the IDM sector is providing greater supports for workers. Participants cited concerns related to employee mental health and lack of access to child care as being barriers preventing the sector from returning to its full operating capacity.

Opportunities

To improve sector competitiveness, participants called on both the City and provincial governments to enhance incentives and other supports for interactive digital media companies. Other jurisdictions, such as Quebec, have tax credits and incentives that are highly favourable and enable the industry to attract more talent, build robust hubs and grow more quickly than Ontario. The group also looked to the City to clarify its role in supporting IDM companies, and improve collaboration with industry partners.

Many saw an opportunity to support continued innovation in the sector to fuel its economic recovery. To foster more collaborative work, participants encouraged the development of innovation / co-working hubs for media and technology to draw people back together. This is also an opportunity to create a space for smaller and emerging developers to take part in more networking and community building to help bring their products and ideas to market.

Now is the time to embed youth into leadership structures, utilize their skills in creative planning and place making. The City cannot let existing talent pathways collapse... This would be a major loss to Toronto, and sap the energy of Toronto's cultural industries that are known globally for Toronto's diverse young creatives.

Comment from Consultation

Indigenous

The Indigenous community stressed the difficulties for Indigenous people in accessing funding, starting businesses and gaining employment because of systemic racism. The pandemic accentuated these barriers, as public health measures to suppress the virus have destabilized the cultural sector. Indigenous creatives often work in precarious jobs that make them vulnerable to the decisions of larger institutions and festivals. Participants at the Indigenous Table stressed that Toronto's cultural sector cannot survive without artists in the city, and that any considerations of culture sector support should include freelancers, administrators, programmers and technicians.

The Indigenous arts organizations have experienced a loss of momentum in new funding due to COVID-19, and they are concerned that recovery efforts will reproduce outdated structures and processes. There was a call for governments to analyze current power structures and ensure that Indigenous leaders are at all decision-making tables. They stated this is also a time for governments to reflect on their role in perpetuating colonial art forms and to advance the work of decolonizing cultural institutions.

Similar to other cultural industries, the Indigenous arts and culture community has pivoted online. However, there is a resistance by some Indigenous performers to move online because it compromises the artistic experience and does not compensate artists fairly. There was also a comment that people who live on reserves and in rural areas do not have the same access to technology as people in cities.

Desired Outcomes

The Indigenous community would like to see a change in government funding systems. This includes a funding increase for Indigenous cultural production and presentation, new models of administering funds through Indigenous organizations, multi-year funding, a review of service gaps, and programs that proactively support under-funded organizations and people outside funding systems. There was support for governments to revise funding evaluations that over-emphasize quantitative measures, such as attendance, to reflect current operating realities.

There was a desire for governments to support a return to live performances. The Indigenous Table estimated that future in-person performances would be inaccessible to Indigenous performers due to the higher ticket prices that will be needed to cover increase costs for fewer patrons. They called for the City to consider new programs to offset post-COVID-19 economics of live Indigenous performances on stage.



Opportunities

There was an interest in making Indigenous businesses thrive through this time by supporting the creation and promotion of online Indigenous shops. The Indigenous community has a different approach to entrepreneurship that is about communities, not solely profit. Therefore, investing in Indigenous businesses strengthens the broader Indigenous community. The Indigenous Table also recommended governments invest in Indigenous cultural production now, so that when the sector reopens, Indigenous content will be readily available.

There is an opportunity for Toronto to demonstrate global best practices in creating equity-focused spaces and arts institutions. The culture sector should reflect the city's diversity through progressive hiring and content presentation. This will lead to greater innovation in the sector. The City of Toronto can support advocacy for independent contractors and those working in the gig economy by collaborating with professional associations that link individuals. It is also important to identify where the sector is doing well and create roles that bring people together and generate change.

Arts and Accessibility

COVID-19 has exacerbated inequities for cultural workers with disabilities. Artists are experiencing increased financial instability, physical health issues, isolation and difficulty securing affordable housing.

Cultural workers with disabilities identified a lack of accessible and equitable approaches within public engagement and decision making. There is need for better consultation with the disability community and in ensuring that City communications are AODA compliant. More data is required to understand how vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities, are being impacted by COVID-19 and how more supports could be effectively provided.

These challenges are compounded by gaps in the broader COVID-19 public health response for people with disabilities. Participants identified several key areas for improvement: providing at-home tests for people with disabilities, allowing caregivers to visit people with disabilities living in congregate housing and better supports for isolated and at-risk individuals.

Desired Outcomes

Participants emphasized that solutions for Toronto's rebuild and recovery should be disability-led. The City should ensure ongoing consultation and engagement with people with disabilities. People with disabilities should also be integrated across stakeholder groups and decision-making processes, rather than siloed as a separate group. For better solutions, the City should collect disaggregated data on how COVID-19 is impacting the disability community and other vulnerable populations.

The City should prioritize culture within Toronto's recovery. Culture provides connection during a time of isolation as well as economic opportunity. The City should support the arts sector in acquiring technology that can enhance the accessibility of programming.

Supporting the stability of artists with disabilities requires changes to many areas of life. There is a need for increased affordable housing and enhanced accessibility in transportation. Artists with disabilities need improved financial supports, such as a universal basic wage.



Opportunities

Toronto has an opportunity to be a global leader in promoting accessibility and the arts in the digital age. The City can facilitate innovations in accessibility by playing a convening role between the technology industry and disability organizations, enabling new partnerships and new sources of funding for the disability community. More training and resources for accessibility consultants for arts institutions can make cultural employment and events more accessible. By integrating a disability lens across City consultations and decision-making bodies, the City can fundamentally change how people with disabilities are included in public governance.

LGBTQ2S+

Due to gentrification and high market rent, cherished cultural and community gathering places in the Village and across the city have been closing, and this has been exacerbated by COVID-19. This has resulted in uncertainty and a sense of loss of community space, safe space and cultural space. Participants suggested long term solutions to build back, and to create a more inclusive portfolio of LGBTQ2S+ spaces for gathering and for cultural events, including public and alternative space.

The community's arts organizations need more funding. This is particularly the case for BIPOC community members. Funding is critical at a time when LGBTQ2S+ cultural organizations or businesses are enduring extended closures and lost revenue due to an unexpected dependence on digital business models. Digital adaptation, in particular, requires funding for new capital expenditures on equipment, along with access to expertise or training in order to continue to create, engage audiences and survive.

Participants also discussed their community's experience of policing. It has been defined by a history of incidents such as the Bathhouse Raids, Bruce McArthur, and Black Lives Matter during the Pride parade. Because of this, the requirement to have Paid Duty Officers at community events should change. Concerns of safety intersected with concerns about financial resources. Participants explained that permits and requirements for events, like Paid Duty Officers, are expensive and take funds away from community organizations.

Desired Outcomes

Participants discussed the need to increase the LGBTQ2S+ workforce at the City, particularly BIPOC community members, and to extend this to inclusion on boards and committees. A review of City requirements around permitting, the Paid Duty Officer requirement for festivals and events and streamlining processes is imperative, as well.



The acquisition of equipment and training to build expertise for online platforms would allow organizations to more successfully pivot, so they can continue to engage and serve their community. Additionally, in reopening, health protocols will result in new costs, and given the revenue lost during the period of closure, funding will be needed to support this expense. To stretch limited resources, the City could use its convening ability to facilitate more collaboration between festivals for cost sharing.

Opportunities

Participants discussed opportunities to create safe spaces and supports for the LGBTQ2S+ community. Encouraging the development of new spaces could be achieved by working with developers through Community Benefit agreements to create LGBTQ2S+ spaces in new developments. Other community spaces could be identified by working with the LGBTQ2S+ community to identify City-owned spaces (i.e. parks and indoor spaces) that could be made available. Simplifying approval processes for permits and eliminating red tape will be essential to the community's ability to animate alternative spaces across the city.

In addition, a stronger voice from the community is needed in City consultations, advisories, juries, committees and on staff. Additionally, creating an LGBTQ2S+ board that has regular check-ins with the City (similar to the Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit) is an opportunity to ensure diverse voices are heard.

Black Cultural Leaders

Following a recommendation from the Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) cultural roundtable, staff convened a separate discussion with Black cultural leaders to explore issues related to confronting anti-Black racism in the sector in greater depth. While anti-Black racism has long been an issue in the cultural sector, the need for meaningful action to combat it has taken on an increased urgency during the pandemic, which has disproportionately impacted Black communities, and laid bare the socio-economic disparities facing Black people both in Toronto and globally.

Within the cultural sector, this disparity has taken the form of the under-representation of Black Torontonians in positions of power; challenges in accessing funding, employment, and spaces for cultural gatherings and performances; and feelings of isolation in the workplace, to name but a few. Consultation participants described how many Black artists and cultural workers rely on gig work, making them even more vulnerable to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

The Black Cultural Leaders table stressed the importance of rejecting the status quo and empowering Black communities through the recovery period and beyond. They proposed several opportunities to support Black artists and cultural workers. It is important to note that confronting anti-Black racism was also highlighted as a priority across many of the other cultural and business roundtables, emphasizing its considerable significance for COVID-19 recovery.

Desired Outcomes

One of the key outcomes for a strengthened culture sector identified by the group is greater representation of Black artists and creatives in leadership positions in the sector. Many were discouraged by "token" representation of Black people in the arts. They urged structural change to bring Black voices to the forefront in the cultural community.

Another key outcome is enhanced funding for Black artists and creative workers in the recovery and beyond. In the near term, participants were encouraged by the extension of CERB, but noted the need to supplement this with targeted support to Black artists and gigging creatives who are likely to have fewer employment prospects in the coming months. Looking further ahead, the group called for sustained strategic funding in the long term to support Black artists and cultural organizations.

In addition, the group stressed the importance of the health and well-being of Black artists and cultural workers. They noted that it was already difficult to be an artist in Toronto, even prior to the onset of the pandemic, and were concerned about the mental health impact of reduced employment prospects and the continued stress associated with both COVID-19 and acts of anti-Black racism around the world.

Opportunities

The Black Cultural Leaders table saw the recovery period as a pivotal time to make a meaningful shift in Toronto's cultural landscape, using strategies related to space, funding and communication.

- **Space:** the group saw an opportunity to create new and increased access to affordable, sustainable and autonomous spaces for Black event producers, artists, and performers. Some of the specific actions encouraged by the group included finding a safety solution other than Paid Duty Officers at cultural events; subsidizing storefront spaces in all parts of the city, but especially downtown, for pop-up events; opening libraries for the Black community for use after hours, with a focus on Black youth activities; and supporting the development of the NIA Centre for the Arts as a hub for Black arts community.
- **Funding:** many considered government funding to be an important tool for structural change. They advocated for making federal emergency support for the culture sector targeted toward the Black community, pointing out that funding announced to date has flowed to existing recipients of public funding, which does not necessarily include Black arts organizations. The group also suggested creating a "scoreboard" to link public funding to organizations with representative leadership.
- **Communication:** the group also called on the City to better promote Black arts and culture and educate the public about issues of anti-Black racism. Suggested actions included encouraging the City to declare a "Blackout Year" (building on the successful "Blackout Tuesday" social media campaign) to celebrate Black arts and culture across the city and advance opportunities for Black artists; supporting education about Black heritage and culture in the public school system and museums; designing a promotional campaign about anti-Black racism; and creating a program to promote Black-owned businesses as vendors for cultural events.



Youth Under 30

COVID-19 has intensified existing challenges for youth in the cultural sector, and each of the challenges they discussed intersects with equity issues.

The primary concern was stakeholders' diminishing access to employment or to tools to build their own livelihoods. The closure of performance spaces and of businesses where artists are most likely to have a 'day job' has resulted in income loss and increased competition for whatever employment may become available. Anti-Black racism, and racism more broadly, are experienced as barriers to attaining scarce employment. The Digital Divide could exacerbate this challenge because, as more opportunities migrate online, those with insufficient connectivity, equipment or training will be left behind.

Space is also an ongoing challenge that, as in other sectors, has worsened as the impacts of COVID have played out. Due to redevelopment, there is less performance space available, and COVID has affected the viability of spaces where youth work and collaborate such as co-working spaces. Additionally, the cost of housing is going up, while minimum wage is not, making the City unaffordable for youth.

Youth see addressing equity and inclusion as fundamental to Toronto's recovery and rebuild, and as momentum builds around this issue, youth want to ensure their voices are not drowned out by non-racialized allies. They also want to know they can build careers toward leadership positions and that the non-Eurocentric perspective they bring will be valued and supported.

Funding in Toronto has become elitist ... there needs to be more grass roots outreach to audiences as well as artists.

Comment from Consultation

Desired Outcomes

Youth desire opportunity, access and equity, and there is much the City should do to facilitate this, such as hire and procure with equity as a priority. Additionally, the arts funding disbursed by the City and related agencies needs to support equity goals, including data and outcome measurement, and the City should hold cultural institutions accountable for lack of representation and inequitable hiring practices. And funding should be used to incent the development of mentorship, succession plans and leadership positions for BIPOC people. Critically, additional financial and skills development support is also needed to ensure the move to digital models does not aggravate inequity. Lastly, as a measure the City can undertake to advance access and equity, affordable housing is essential to this community. And further creative infrastructure is needed across the city, with a priority being placed on spaces north of Bloor.

Mental health has been a challenge throughout the pandemic, and racialized individuals need access to racialized mental health professionals who have similar lived experience. Under-represented individuals should be able to receive community services in a setting that feels welcoming and diminishes stigma.

Opportunities

The City should put a youth lens on the programs it offers to maximize benefit to the next generation. Addressing the Digital Divide will increase access to arts and culture and promote equity in Toronto's rebuild and recovery. New approaches to funding will ensure organizations are accountable for equitable hiring and diverse leadership. New investments in youth programming will support priority areas such as arts education, digital, and entrepreneurship skills. And it will be an important step to ensure youth can access these opportunities by engaging in outreach and supporting grant-writing workshops, etc.

Youth participants also see an opportunity to reallocate police budgets to community building initiatives such as the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy or programs that promote interactions across generations. Increased mental health supports that are culturally responsive will help address youth mental health needs that have been exacerbated by COVID-19.

The City should leverage its promotional platforms to create opportunities for youth and BIPOC creators, and as their work grows in value, they need to benefit. If people other than the creator benefit disproportionately, then they are benefitting from a system of inequality.



The City could be a global leader in terms of accessibility and the arts in the digital age. Suggestion that there be more training and resources dedicated to accessibility consultants for the arts, in institutions, organizations (large and small), in arts councils and governments.

Comment from Consultation

People of Colour

Access, funding and space are the primary challenges that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) creatives and cultural organizations face according to stakeholders that participated in the People of Colour consultation.

The People of Colour culture leaders said the pandemic has created a time for reimagining the city's diversity and history as assets to build on. Stakeholders felt that to do this work effectively, the City needs to collaborate with BIPOC people, with an intersectional perspective, to abolish structural discrimination that pre-dated the pandemic.

There is a concern about long-term investment in Toronto's BIPOC cultural sector and funding for artists. Stakeholders indicated that organizations have not had time to fundraise for next year, and multi-year sponsorship arrangements are weak. Performing artists are out of work, especially in music and dance. Many BIPOC artists, both emerging and established, are considering career changes due to financial concerns, potentially further damaging Toronto's diverse culture labour force.

Stakeholders had concerns with both physical and virtual space. Some found that the need to pivot to digital delivery left some creators out because of lack of adequate technology.

Desired Outcomes

Participants indicated that the current government funding to established arts and culture organizations should be reviewed. It was suggested that the City of Toronto develop an equitable funding program to support the next generation of BIPOC creatives, especially outside of the downtown core. This funding approach could advance equity in the culture sector through programs that strengthen accountability and access. Funding should be provided for BIPOC professional training at all stages of career advancement.

The participants said the community feels like it operates in a silo because of the lack of BIPOC physical spaces in the city. Of these spaces available, participants discussed how the City might help cultural organizations with reopening safely, while not eliminating specific art forms such as singing. BIPOC arts presenters are worried about audience and community members feeling comfortable returning to venues. Many participants called on the City to share best practices for testing, use of PPE, creating trust in public transit and supporting staff with mental health.

Participants also suggested the culture sector should maintain digital and virtual ways of gathering, when live performances return. There was a call on the City to continue citywide capacity building for digital services, such as access to laptops and internet access, to ensure equitable access to the digital realm. Virtual performance spaces help to eliminate many barriers that exist in physical performances spaces.

Opportunities

Stakeholders indicated that Toronto has the potential to be a cultural superpower if it taps into BIPOC talent and expertise. The participants said that BIPOC arts organizations could be part of the City's front-line resources of recovery because cultural life is an important part of civic life. The City could act as a convenor across communities about BIPOC activities and change.

The City could support the BIPOC cultural sector in breaking down silos and collaborating on citywide projects. For example, this could include the Year of Public Art, the Cultural Hotspots program, and a forthcoming Community Arts Strategy. Another suggestion was that Toronto could host the first "Global Majority Summit for Arts and Culture" to celebrate and recognize BIPOC arts. Such an event could launch a creative think tank in the city to continue this work, advance best practices in collecting race-based data, and foster collaborations for the BIPOC culture sector.

Francophone Community Impact

Staff sought input from the Toronto Francophone Affairs Advisory Committee about the impact of COVID-19 on the city's Francophone community, and opportunities to support and empower French-speaking residents during the recovery period. Committee members included representatives of Francophone cultural organizations, businesses and community leaders.



Desired Outcomes

Committee members called for greater engagement by the City with the Francophone community. They felt that Francophone voices have been "missing" from City strategies, and there was a strong interest among the group for the City to enhance outreach to French-speaking communities.

The group expressed considerable interest in emphasizing the social determinants of health as part of Toronto's recovery from COVID-19. They cited issues related to confronting anti-Black racism, empowering businesses and cultural organizations led by women, and supporting newcomer settlement and integration services as all being central to the community's recovery.

They also advocated for engaging and empowering a generation of diverse young new leaders to help Toronto build back better. The Committee encouraged the City to plan not just for the next one to two years of recovery, but to consider how to strengthen Toronto over the next one to two decades. They saw the engagement of youth leaders as a key strategy for doing so.

In addition, the Committee noted that Toronto's Francophone community is not concentrated in any one geographic area or neighbourhood, and often relies on special events to gather and connect. The group encouraged enhanced, ongoing support for community festivals and events to cover increased costs related to public health protocols, and to support innovative programming, including digital offerings and alternative forms of public engagement.

Opportunities

The Committee encouraged the City to build a stronger partnership with Toronto's Francophone community during the recovery period, citing a number of potential opportunities to do so:

- Establish a permanent Francophone Affairs Office within the City of Toronto to ensure appropriate representation of the community in City policy.
- Provide funding to Francophone community organizations to deliver new leadership and skills development programs to foster the next generation of talent.
- Reduce barriers to entry to the labour market for French-speaking and other newcomers by advocating for more licensing and regulatory bodies to accept foreign credentials, and discouraging requirements for "Canadian experience" in job applications.
- Leverage French presence in Toronto's business and cultural communities to promote investment in/from French-speaking markets such as Quebec, France and Africa.
- Promote Toronto to French-speaking domestic tourist markets in Quebec, and develop targeted packages with other regions such as Niagara.

Culture Snapshot Interjurisdictional Review

There are limited examples of COVID-19 related arts recovery programs beyond emergency grants in other jurisdictions.

- Montreal is providing grants to non-profit organizations that can assist local business with issues pertaining to supply, administrative support, people management, sales systems or other areas.
- The City of Vancouver is encouraging local arts organizations to provide information to Naheyawin, an Indigenous consultancy, who are working to compile national data to help policymakers make informed decisions about how to support Indigenous artists and cultural practitioners in the wake of COVID-19.
- Moving beyond emergency relief to content creation, the City of Sydney, Australia, has launched the Creative Fellowships Fund to provide grants to artists and arts organizations to produce new artistic works that can be presented during or after the pandemic.

Canadian Cities

Vancouver, BC

- On April 3, Vancouver City Council approved its 2020 Cultural Grants. Vancouver stated that funding for operating or annual assistance grants will not be affected if events or activities are cancelled or postponed, and increased flexibility for recipients' use of project-based grants.
- Vancouver is encouraging the cultural sector to respond to business impact surveys, such as the Vancouver Economic Commission's general business survey and several culture sector-specific surveys led by the province, the culture industry, and an Indigenous consultancy as mentioned above.

Montreal, QC

- Montreal's COVID-19 recovery plan, released in June, includes several cultural sector-specific measures:
 - \$500,000 subsidy program to support performance halls' and cinemas' fixed costs over the July-September 2020 period;
 - Continued implementation of a financial assistance program for artists' workshops, with funding from the provincial government;
 - Calls for proposals for digital creations, artwork, and art installations to enliven Montreal's new "safe active transportation circuits" for pedestrians and cyclists;

- Other general business recovery measures also apply to the cultural sector;
- Access to new grants and loans for businesses through PME MTL (PME is the French acronym for small- and medium-sized businesses);
- Workshops, training, and personalized support to help indebted business recover (cultural sector will be a targeted sector);
- Supports for Montreal businesses in attracting foreign direct investment, such as networking events and initiatives to help businesses publicize themselves to international companies; and
- Development of a nightlife economic policy.

Calgary, AB

- \$2 million in funding from the Community Economic Resiliency Fund (established in 2015) directed to arts and cultural organizations through the Calgary Arts Development Authority's (CAD) grant programs.
- Additional \$8 million allocated to support Calgary non-profits which may include arts organizations.
- In April, Calgary Arts Development (CAD) (arms-length municipal funding for the arts) funded 133 artists to a total of \$170,547 through their short-term relief funding program. Elephant Artist Relief also received a grant of \$30,000 to distribute through their individual artist relief funds.
- CAD also surveyed larger arts organizations to understand the current needs and provided \$950,000 in funding based on survey results.

Ottawa, ON

- Ottawa's Emergency Community Support Fund and the Rapid Response Fund provided nearly \$2 million in support to a variety of groups impacted by the pandemic including arts groups like Dandelion Dance, Ottawa Art Gallery, Multicultural Arts for Schools and Communities (ECSF), and others.
- Arts Network Ottawa created a webinar and tip sheet of strategies, tools and web platforms for artists wanting to share their work with audiences at a physical distance.
- The 2020 Ottawa Music Development Fund (OMDF) funding is specifically focused on addressing COVID-19. In partnership with the City of Ottawa, the Ottawa International Music Conference (OIMC) spearheaded the Ottawa Music Development COVID-19 Relief Fund, with \$25,000 to go toward projects as part of Ottawa's efforts to assist with the 'restart' efforts for the local music industry.

U.S. Cities

New York City, NY

- The city government provides listings of available resources to New York City's (NYC) artists and culture sector workers on the city's website.
- The New York Community Trust created the NYC COVID-19 Response and Impact Fund to aid non-profit service providers, including arts and culture organizations. The Trust raised \$110 million from 1,300 donors. It distributed nearly \$73 million in grants and \$37 million in no-interest loans through the Non Profit Finance Fund to NYC-based non-profits.
- The New York Foundation of the Arts (state-wide) provides information on various grants that are available to artists and culture organizations. Most programs are on hold while additional funds are sought from donors but have waitlists for when funding becomes available.

Boston, MA

- The Boston Artist Relief Fund run by the city and the Boston Center for the Arts receives donations and provides \$500 per artist for cancelled events, with priority focus on low-income artists. The fund has provided over \$280,000 to 515 artists.
- On July 7, the City of Boston announced a \$1 million Arts and Culture COVID-19 Fund for non-profit organizations that have been impacted by COVID-19, including arts and culture. This includes costs for finding new safe spaces for performances and rehearsals, adapting existing facilities to comply with public health standards, developing new capacities in streaming and virtual engagement, addressing issues of equitable access on digital programs, retraining staff, and other costs associated with physically distanced program delivery.
- The City of Boston is taking this opportunity to renovate City Hall outdoor public space to allow for future festivals and gatherings of up to 25,000 people, including public art.
- Drive In theatres, outdoor gardens, zoos, reserves and public installations reopened May 25 (Phase 1), with arts and entertainment forthcoming in Phase 3, and concerts/clubs in Phase 4.

Washington, DC

- Cultural businesses were eligible to apply for funding under the city's \$25 million Small Business Recovery Microgrants Program, which provided an average grant of approximately \$6,000 to 7,038 businesses.

- Events DC, Washington DC's official convention and sports authority, launched its programs for the \$5 million undocumented workers relief fund through the DC Cares Program and the \$10 million Cultural Institutions Grant Program in June. The program is aimed at those excluded from federal stimulus efforts and are experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chicago, IL

- The City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) partnered with the state and the broader philanthropic community on the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund. Since April 1, it has awarded \$5,088,000 in \$1,500 grants to 1,460 individual artists and \$6,000 to \$30,000 grants to 233 organizations around the state. The fund is administered by existing grant service organizations.
- The city created a self-certification process, Be Safe Chicago, for reopening. This includes industry guidelines for film and television production, museums, performance venues, and movie theaters.
- A full list of additional local and national emergency supports for artists is listed on the main page of DCASE website including Blues Musicians Emergency Relief Fund, Book Industry Charitable Foundation assistance to booksellers and comic retailers, Queer Writers of Colour Emergency Fund, etc.



Seattle, WA

- The City of Seattle is supporting artist relief through city-led programs and by investing in private philanthropic initiatives.
- Seattle Arts Stabilization Fund for Organizations (city-led): The City of Seattle has invested \$1 million in this fund, which is meant to support arts and cultural organizations that have been impacted by the moratorium on events and public gatherings. Funds will be distributed through the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture's grant programs.
- The Seattle Relief Fund for Individual Artists and Creative Workers is aimed at helping those in the greater Seattle arts community who have been financially impacted by cancellations due to COVID-19, with priority given to BIPOC artists, transgender and non-binary artists, and disabled artists. Donations have been accepted through a successful GoFundMe campaign and the City of Seattle has contributed \$50,000.
- Additional, smaller private initiatives are being promoted through the city website.

**Los Angeles, CA**

- LA Arts COVID-19 Relief Fund is a \$10 million fund to support Los Angeles-based non-profit museums and visual arts organizations. The fund is administered by the California Community Foundation (CCF) and provides both emergency operating support and recovery grants to eligible small and mid-sized organizations in Los Angeles County. The fund aims to have an efficient and expedited review process so that recipient organizations receive funds in a timely fashion.
- The City of Los Angeles' Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), the Durfee Foundation, and community partners have joined forces for three iterations of the COVID-19 Arts Emergency Fund aimed at providing relief to the spectrum of Los Angeles-based artists.
- The Music Fund of Los Angeles established an Emergency Relief Fund for American Federation of Musicians Local 47 members who have lost revenue due to work stoppages resulting from the COVID-19 emergency.
- The L.A. Art Workers Relief Fund is an emergency response to the sudden, widespread economic fallout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to raise at least \$250,000 through a GoFundMe campaign in order to distribute \$1,000 grants to as many art workers across L.A. County as possible.
- The Mission Asset Fund, in partnership with the Snap Foundation, established the LA Young Creatives Fund to offer financial support to members of the creative economy whose work has been impacted by the pandemic. LA County residents who work in creative fields are eligible to receive a \$500 grant to help cover any pressing financial needs.
- LA Dance Emergency Fund provides grants of up to \$500 to help support the LA dance community during the public health emergency. Dancers/companies must be residents of Greater Los Angeles.
- Women's Center for Creative Work (WCCW) re-worked its 2020 Emergency Health Grant for Artists to better respond to needs arising from COVID-19. WCCW devised a short-form application and rolling weekly deadline for \$1,000 grants.
- The Foundation for Contemporary Arts created a temporary fund to meet the needs of experimental artists who have been impacted by the economic fallout from postponed or canceled performances and exhibitions. The Foundation disbursed one-time \$1,500 grants to artists who had performances or exhibitions canceled or postponed because of the pandemic.
- The Relief Fund for L.A. County Visual Artists supports the region's visual artists struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Center for Cultural Innovation administered the Fund.

International Cities

Melbourne, Australia

- The City of Melbourne allocated \$2.5 million to local artists and creatives to invest in new works and digital presentation of works and performances.
- Sustaining Creative Workers delivers quick-response funding to professional independent creative practitioners, sole traders, freelancers, collectives and micro-organisations and businesses whose work and livelihoods have been negatively impacted by the coronavirus. The program provides up to \$5,000 for individuals, sole traders and freelancers and up to \$10,000 for collectives, micro-organisations and businesses.

Sydney, Australia

- Sydney created several relief grants that artists and cultural businesses were eligible for:
 - Up to \$2.25 million in Creative Fellowships to fund new projects
 - Up to \$1 million in Cultural Sector Resilience Grants to provide lost income relief for not-for-profits and sole traders
 - Quick Response Grants, which provide up to \$2,000 for emergency support for projects including cultural projects
- Sydney's recovery plan contains eight commitments to support cultural recovery, including:
 - Directing existing grant support to sustain cultural organisations and local creatives;
 - Advocating to federal and state governments for targeted support for culture and no net loss of cultural space; and
 - Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural practices.

Milan, Italy

- The Italian government's Ministry of Culture provided €20 million in funding for an emergency fund.
- Museums reopened starting May 18, many with free entrance, reduced hours, and measuring body temperature on entry.
- From May 12 to 25, the citizens of the Municipality of Milan were invited to fill in an online questionnaire that was prepared to collect information and listen to the needs and perceptions of people.

- 'Art Bonus' program promotes cultural patronage and financial support for the relaunching of cultural sites. The state promotes donations for the protection of cultural heritage, the development of culture and the revitalization of tourism through substantial tax deductions. The program exists for many northern Italian municipalities, not only Milan.
- La Scala has reopened for four performances in July, limiting to 600 people in the 2,000-person theatre.

Seoul, South Korea

- Performance Revival Project is providing 11.5 billion KRW (~\$13 million CAD) to approximately 500 culture groups to support performance production costs.
- Funding 10 teams of artists up to 50 million KRW (~\$56,000 CAD) to support streamed performances from Seoul's largest cultural complex.

Singapore

- A \$55 million Arts and Culture Resilience Package (ACRP) was announced in April 2020, to provide support and opportunities for arts organisations and artists, and help them develop longer-term capabilities for the post COVID-19 recovery. The program was recently extended to July 31. Programs include:
 - Capability Development Scheme for the Arts (CDSA): Launched in mid-March, the CDSA is aimed at supporting skills upgrading across various disciplines including art making, digitalisation, entrepreneurship and audience development. To date, nearly 320 training opportunities have been supported, benefiting over 120 arts organisations and arts Self-Employed Persons (SEPs).
 - Digital Presentation Grant for the Arts (DPG): To augment digitalisation efforts and to support efforts by artists and arts organisations to present their work in digital form or via digital mediums during this COVID-19 period, the DPG was launched in mid-April. To-date, it has supported more than 160 projects by the arts community and SEPs, creating over 1,800 job/gig opportunities.
 - National Arts Council (NAC)-Commissioned Works and Partnerships: NAC has also actively commissioned projects through its own festival platforms, as well as through partnerships with organisations such as Singapore Press Holdings and Hear65. Through the Digitalisation Fund for Commission and Partnerships, NAC targets to create over 1,000 more job opportunities, largely for the SEPs.



13 | Theme: Inspire Toronto

Inspire Toronto is an initiative of the City, that includes developing a plan for public-facing events, to animate Toronto as it reopens, by strengthening civic pride and engagement. This initiative will drive economic and cultural development through creativity with the intent to inspire.

As Toronto reopens, travel, tourism and local public interactions will have changed significantly. There is an opportunity to welcome Torontonians back to their reopening city in ways that can strengthen the bonds between them and also drive cultural and economic development across the entire city. A campaign to promote and inspire Torontonians to re-engage with their neighbours, neighbourhoods and the broader city should reach and engage residents, businesses and communities in every part of Toronto.

Following consultations, jurisdictional reviews and considering health guidelines, City staff have developed the framework for Inspire Toronto. Inspire Toronto will:

- apply an equity lens in every aspect;
- Include and benefit businesses, artists and residents across Toronto;
- Comply with municipal and provincial health protocols;
- facilitate economic development, promote culture, and create joy; and
- respect the losses experienced by Torontonians and the significant impact of COVID-19 on communities in the city.

Tourism, corporate and community partners as well as residents from across the city will be critical to the reach and success of this initiative. The initiative will work with partners from diverse and creative communities to develop a cohesive, fresh and powerful approach to restoring and renewing the city.

Events are intended to help Torontonians feel joy again or stimulate economic activity, with some initiatives focused on accomplishing both objectives.

The timing for Inspire Toronto will be guided by public health advice, assessment of progress in the COVID-19 response, and will align with municipal and provincial directions as Toronto moves through Stage 3 in Phase II. It is anticipated that Inspire Toronto will launch after Labour Day, if health data is positive. If the health data signals that delaying would be appropriate, programs currently being developed can also be adapted or pushed further into the fall if required.

The estimated budget for Inspire Toronto in 2020 is \$1.325 million financed through existing resources, sponsorships and partnerships. The existing resources largely come from budget allocations for initiatives that were cancelled due to COVID-19. Outreach is underway to secure partnerships and sponsorships.

Examples of Inspire Toronto Activations

Inspire Toronto is a combination of activations, both City-produced, and those produced by community partners. All will share the objectives of stimulating economic and cultural activity by welcoming Torontonians back to their City with creativity and hope.

While programs are still being developed, the following activations are being considered:

1. **LocalTO** – a hyper-local focused tourism program to promote exploring Toronto. A passport will be developed that highlights local cultural experiences, restaurants and small businesses, and that encourages exploration both locally and across the city.
 - **StrollTO** – will motivate residents to actively discover the unexplored shops, stops, places and spaces within their local main streets. StrollTO will include live music and other cultural opportunities.
 - **Dine With Your Neighbour (DWYN)** – will be neighbourhood-specific events where neighbours are invited to dine together, 'al fresco'. These events could involve local restaurants, delivery or take-out, along with cultural activations.

- **Indigenous and Newcomer Community Gathering -** Indigenous and Newcomer community members will be invited to register for this meal through the Native Child and Family Services and the Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership in order to provide a 'Dine With Your Neighbour (DWYN)' experience for those facing food and/or housing insecurity.

2. BigArtTO - will be a City-wide temporary public art campaign to encourage residents to come out and engage with art. This campaign could include walking routes with restaurants, local shops, etc.

3. HistoricTO - will give Torontonians a peek at the city's past through the access of local history, heritage, and land-based learnings at Toronto History Museums.

4. DineOutTO - is an expanded and inclusive city-wide program created to support the local restaurant industry in economic recovery.

Inspire Toronto is developing more potential activations, and will leverage some existing, COVID-19-adapted, City-produced events such as Nuit Blanche, to advance this initiative.

Implementation

An Inspire Toronto Working Group has been established to engage partners from the tourism, corporate, equity-seeking and creative communities that will inform, support, contribute to and collaborate with City staff on a cohesive, fresh and powerful program.

The Working Group will:

- Support Inspire Toronto by providing advice, information, creating connections, promoting it to their stakeholders;
- Develop a narrative and identity that can be applied to appropriate initiatives generated by member organizations. The identity could be extended to initiatives by non-member organizations when appropriate; and
- Act as ambassadors for Inspire Toronto by working with other stakeholders across the City.

Members of the Inspire Toronto Working Group include:

- The Mayor's Office, Rise Edutainment, Destination Toronto, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, Indigenous Tourism Ontario, TABIA, and Civic Action.
- Inspire Toronto will be supported by City staff with expertise in operations and logistics, marketing and communications.

Inspire Toronto Narrative and Visual Identity

Through the City's Economic Development and Culture Division (EDC), Cossette has been retained to work with the Inspire Toronto Working Group and staff to develop a visual identity, narrative and campaign. This 'umbrella brand' will be used to create a sense of cohesion for all programs included within this initiative, although individual programs will retain their own name and identity. This brand can be used for City-produced and third-party events. It will be launched when the program is announced.

Community spaces, parks, and public spaces are hugely important - gathering indoors is unsafe due to risk of COVID transmission so we need more access to outdoor public spaces for exercise, recreation, experiencing nature, connecting with others, holding performances and events - to keep our City's culture alive and its residents mentally/physically healthy.

Comment from Consultation

A group of cyclists riding on a city street. In the foreground, two cyclists are prominent: one in a blue jersey and another in a dark blue jersey. They are followed by several other cyclists further down the road. The background shows a typical urban setting with trees and buildings.

14

Appendix: Mayor's Economic Support & Recovery Task Force: Summary

Very soon after the start of the pandemic, in March and April 2020, the Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force was convened and 20 virtual roundtable discussions were held with more than 200 stakeholders from a wide variety of business and community groups. Participants were asked about the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and sectors and were encouraged to propose short- and medium-term interventions to support Toronto's economy.

As part of the Task Force's work, several City councillors led stakeholder engagement sessions on focused themes, including small business, social services and housing, workers and labour, climate action, cultural communities, and children and youth.

A summary of what was heard through the roundtable discussions and the recommendations from the Council Member Led Engagements are provided in this section. Additional details from the Task Force and roundtables will be posted to the City of Toronto's Open Data website at www.toronto.ca/open.

Roundtable Discussions

Summary of what the Mayor heard:

- An urgent focus by government and the private sector is needed to support people hardest hit by job loss and business closures.
- Government and the private sector need to be flexible and lenient wherever possible to keep the economy in operation.
- Larger institutions and big businesses are looking at ways to adjust operations and provide community support. Institutions and businesses will be under financial strain if the negative economic effects of the pandemic continue over the long-term.
- People working in essential services want to continue working, although they have concerns about safety, hygiene and sick leave programs. More support is needed for community social services.
- Even within this economic crisis there are opportunities for businesses to grow and experiment in the short-term (for example, in technology and manufacturing) and for the labour force to train online.

- A need for coordinated, clear communication from business, government and labour. A commitment from stakeholders to work together and with government.
- A need for strong messages of support from the Mayor about Toronto's future and a plan for economic recovery.

Council Member Led Engagements

1. Social Services & Housing - Councillor Ana Bailão

Mandate:

This group connected with social agencies to ensure that they are being included in the city's emergency management operations and advocate for the resources they need to help seniors and vulnerable people through an extended COVID-19 crisis. It looked at medium-term issues these groups are facing and made recommendations to strengthen the social agencies during and after this crisis. This group also connected with residential landlords and non-profit housing providers in order to ensure tenants remain housed throughout the crisis and avoid eviction afterwards.

Recommendations:

Social Services:

- Address the immediate and long-term cash flow and funding needs of the sector. Increase funding flexibility and collaborate to increase the capacity of the sector to innovate and respond effectively to changing community needs.
- Guide recovery with a strong equity lens, recognizing that certain communities are more affected by the impacts of COVID-19. Use data to inform targeted policy, program, and funding decisions to ensure inclusive recovery for all.
- Ensure the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous-led agencies in recovery planning. Recognize the complex needs of Indigenous communities in targeted funding, programs, and supports.
- Partner with the sector to leverage local resident engagement and grassroots leadership to ensure inclusive recovery.

- Work with the not-for-profit sector to generate options for the public purchase of Toronto residential and commercial properties to maintain and increase affordable housing and shared community and not-for-profit access to space.
- With a renewed appreciation for the essential services provided by the sector, embed decent work principles and standards in recovery efforts to create a new care economy.
- Invest in the technology needs of not-for-profit agencies and vulnerable communities to reduce the digital divide and enhance service provision and access.

Housing:

- Provide emergency funding for cities and community agencies, including further expansion of funding under the Federal Reaching Home program and the Ontario government community homelessness prevention initiative (chpi) program.
- Provide urgent renter assistance. Urgent supports through the following time-limited measures:
 - Federally or provincially led temporary rental assistance support
 - Expand and enhance rent bank programs
 - Establish an emergency housing benefit (for people who don't qualify for CERB)
 - Extend rent arrears eviction moratorium post-covid (for arrears incurred during the pandemic by tenants who were in good standing pre-COVID-19)
- Expedite and expand delivery of the Canada Housing Benefit
- Accelerate and expand funding for new affordable homes under the National Housing Strategy
- Establish dedicated funding for a modular rental housing program
- Fund acquisitions and renovations/conversions. Consider right of first refusal authority/ approach for strategic acquisitions
- Provide operating funding to create supportive housing
- Increase investments in permanent affordable housing, including:
 - Create affordable housing opportunities for Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous Peoples;
 - Housing retrofit programs
- Increase supply of rental housing through other policy and financial tools

2. Cultural and Arts Communities - Councillors Cynthia Lai and Gary Crawford

Mandate:

This working group looked at culturally specific organizations and the economic needs of diverse communities across the city. This group connected with specific cultural groups to ensure their unique needs are being reported to the Task Force. This group also liaised with the arts and music community to ensure their needs, as well, are being responded to and communicated to the Task Force.

Recommendations:

- Support culture sector business continuity and key institutions
 - The City should work with the federal and provincial governments during this unprecedented time to safeguard the city's culture sector infrastructure and business continuity throughout COVID-19. This includes support to key cultural institutions, creative businesses, arts and heritage organizations, and festivals and events.
- Significantly expand the culture sector's digital infrastructure and adaptation
 - Advocate to the federal government for major investments in digital infrastructure as stimulus spending.
 - City should seek specific investments to strengthen e-commerce capabilities and data analytics, support efforts to modernize intellectual property protections, and facilitate improved connections between Toronto's growing tech sector and the cultural sector.
- Maintain and advance a generation's worth of equity gains that are at risk and support vulnerable workers
 - City should work with the federal and provincial governments to support organizations trusted in diverse communities to help Torontonians facing systemic economic exclusion, expand career pathways for diverse creatives and support the continuity and development of new anchor institutions in diverse communities.
- Leverage culture to build strong neighbourhoods in a multi-centred city
 - City is encouraged to accelerate cultural investment outside the core, to support the development of neighbourhood vitality across the city, and to use cultural assets, space and events to catalyze small businesses and reconnect citizens from diverse communities to each other.

- Provide cultural and language specific information for residents and business owners for communities in which English is not the main language.
- Support small businesses to recover through streamlined approvals/processes, offering marketing support through 'Liscious' programs, BusinessTO support and assistance with moving to online business.
- Explore financial supports for small businesses including: vacant commercial property tax and commercial/industrial tax relief.

3. Small Business BIAs - Councillor Brad Bradford

Mandate:

The Small Business and BIA group stayed in communication with BIAs across the city and those businesses not included within BIA areas in order to recommend advocacy to other levels of government for helpful relief packages for the sector and medium/long-term supports to retain and strengthen main street businesses.

Recommendations:

- Reforming the commercial tax system to get main street healthy again and address long-standing property tax challenges for small-businesses by:
 - Creating a comprehensive and long-term rate capping strategy to manage the volatile impacts of MPAC tax assessments on small businesses.
 - Creating additional city tax bands for commercial properties
 - Analysing the feasibility of a vacant storefront tax
- Creating a "ready for re-entry plan" to kick start main streets in preparation for when they open, with measures including:
 - Launching a series of advertising and awareness campaigns for local business and creating a coordinated plan of city-wide local shopping and dining events.

- Delivering physical changes to public space on main streets;
- Leveraging infrastructure funding to ensure projects that have the ability to contribute to strong retail conditions, such as 'complete streets', are expedited; and
- Supporting local business with the transition to online retail and e-commerce through Digital Main Street, public art initiatives, and BusinessTO Support Centre.
- Completing a "small business-first review" to improve City process and reduce barriers for local entrepreneurs, non-profits, and social enterprises including:
 - Putting City services and applications into online portals ready to serve the next generation of entrepreneurs in our city;
 - Updating zoning and Toronto Building processes and requirements to support small businesses and social enterprises;
 - Reviewing business licensing fees and submission requirements with a lens to streamline process and remove unnecessary barriers; and
 - Expanding Digital Main Streets by advocating for provincial dollars for grants.
- Advocate to the provincial government for better commercial tenancy rules for small businesses in Ontario including:
 - In the short term, ensuring a rent-rebate program is rolled-out, in partnership with the federal government, immediately. And, halting small business evictions for April and May rent, at a minimum;
 - In the medium term, making changes to business interruption insurance policy regulations and regulations on insurance premiums to minimize financial burdens on small businesses; and
 - In the long term, reforming the Commercial Tenancies Act to create a better balance between the rights of small businesses, and commercial landlords.



4. Workers and Labour - Councillor Mike Layton

Mandate:

This working group focused on the immediate needs of workers and opportunities to strengthen the labour force post crisis. The primary function of this group was to communicate with labour stakeholders the decisions the city is contemplating and to hear their feedback. Connecting with relevant stakeholders to ensure the City is aware of short and long-term measures to support city workers, as well as the sustainability of the City was key. Collaborating on the need to engage other levels of government and build community support for the city's short, medium and long term response was also important.

Recommendations:

- Stabilize the care sector and protect the health, safety, and rights of workers
 - Apply the Fair Wage Policy to care workers who work in a facility in Toronto.
 - Use City procurement to support local supply chains and manufacturing, and to ensure employment and equity standards.
 - Restructure the shelter system to ensure client and staff safety, with a focus on accelerating affordable and supportive housing.
 - Call upon provincial and federal governments to dramatically restructure long-term care homes and implement industry employment standards that support a full-time workforce, with living wages and adequate staff to patient ratios.
- Improve supports and benefits for workers and their families
 - Advocate to the federal government to apply lessons learned from CERB to increase EI benefit levels and ensure income supports are available throughout the long recovery phase.
 - Call upon provincial government to protect workers through minimum wage of \$15 per hour and seven paid sick days.
 - Work with the sectors hardest hit by layoffs – tourism & hospitality, film, arts & culture, transportation and retail – to secure their recovery as soon as possible.
- Ensure the recovery achieves climate goals and builds resiliency and equity (aligned with Resilience and Climate Change recommendations)
 - Identify City projects that achieve climate, resilience and equity goals and can be rapidly scaled and accelerated in preparation to access funding from other levels of government

- Ensure the City uses disaggregated race-based and sociodemographic data to make data-informed decisions in the recovery period, to understand the disparities in how COVID-19 is impacting communities and to inform plans for recovery that benefit communities facing inequities.

5. Upper Education and Industry - Councillor Jennifer McKelvie

Mandate:

This working group connected with the universities and colleges to address their needs and look for opportunities where they could support the city. This group focused on the industries that are deemed essential and whose work is continuing during the pandemic; specifically, goods movements and manufacturing. These are businesses that deliver and create the essential needs we need to continue to provide to our residents. An important function was to communicate outwardly to Industry stakeholders the decisions the city is contemplating and to hear their feedback. This helped ensure the City did everything it could to ensure universities and colleges can function safely and efficiently.

Recommendations:

- Expedite planning and building processes through all phases for academic institutions, to avoid cost overruns of existing projects and build necessary infrastructure for economic recovery.
- Advocate to the provincial and federal governments for funding for accessible and affordable Wi-Fi to create resilient communities.
- City of Toronto should expand supports for students through alternative summer job and experiential (co-op/training) opportunities, food security initiatives, and supports for international students.
- Develop partnerships between higher education institutions and the City of Toronto to support local businesses and organizations:
 - Leverage faculty expertise and student placements to develop small business supports, training, and transition to online services; and
 - Form faculty working group to develop methods to support small businesses and arts and culture organisations.
- Develop new research partnerships around reopening, economic recovery, and resilience using memorandums of understanding.

6. Recovery and Restart - Councillors Stephen Holyday and Paula Fletcher

Mandate:

This working group focused on planning for the recovery and restart of City operations following the crisis. This group worked with City staff, divisions and the Task Force on comprehensive planning for a post-COVID climate ensuring the City can get back on its feet as soon as possible, and explored ways in which we can emerge stronger than before.

7. Business and Community Contributions - Councillors Michael Thompson and Michael Colle

Mandate:

With the support of the Toronto Office of Partnerships, this working group helped raise awareness of philanthropic needs and worked with business and community leaders interested in contributing funds or goods and services to help alleviate the COVID-19 crisis. Engagement with potential donors is critical, as well as communication with the rest of Council to create awareness of needs. This group consulted with and reported to the overall task force on the creation of a City-led fundraising campaign targeted to the areas of greatest need, which will evolve as the City shifts from response to recovery.

Recommendations:

- Review City's IT infrastructure to ensure integrated and streamlined processes, cost effectiveness and customer service.
- Streamline Toronto's customer interface to reduce regulatory burden, simplify transactions and improve response times:
 - Establish interdisciplinary unit reporting to City Manager to provide one-stop review of major development applications; and
 - Create resident and business accessible digital portal for all permits, services and licenses.
- Complete a comprehensive bylaw review to ensure simplification, modernization and reduce redundancies.
- Establish new guidelines to control the rights of Councillors to delay or interfere with developments to protect constituent interests and ensure a fair and expeditious process for development applicants.

- Encourage resident and business input on economic revitalization ideas through a digital 'hotline'.
- Leverage BIA and restaurant networks to develop customizable marketing support templates and provide meals to vulnerable and food insecure communities.

8. Children and Youth - Councillor Shelley Carroll

Mandate:

This group connected with programs and services that serve youth to coordinate their efforts in helping the social, mental and physical health of young people post-crisis. Determining the most effective ways for the City to help children and youth post-COVID was the main deliverable of this group. Councillor Carroll stayed in close contact with service delivery and advocate organizations to report to the entire Task Force on the status of the sector and their needs.

Recommendations:

- Continue to invest resources to increase recreation service capacity or programs in high demand areas, ensuring they remain affordable and/or free for low-income and vulnerable residents.
- Help agencies and businesses that provide recreation and services to children and youth by establishing a Health and Safety Support Fund or secure additional funding in the City's granting streams to implement the COVID-19 related health and safety requirements including staff training, personal protective equipment, screening and space reconfigurations.
- Work with key partners in planning re-opening and recovery of early years and child care sector, including the Government of Ontario, Toronto Public Health, and other partners
- Provide labour market intelligence and work with the Youth Employment Partnership Table to develop new large-scale youth recruitment approaches such as virtual job fairs to address the health risks of large gatherings and to rebuild the capacity of the youth employment sector.
- Invest in existing community based intermediaries that can provide virtual training, leverage investments, and provide services in local communities.

Section 3:

- 1 16th Annual Report in December 2017, Strength in Numbers: Targeting Labour Force Participation to Improve Prosperity in Ontario

Section 4:

- 2 Centre for Urban Research and Land Development (June 2020). Toronto now fastest growing metropolitan area in the United States and Canada, City of Toronto still fastest growing central city. Available at <https://www.ryerson.ca/cur/Blog/blogentry48/>
- 3 Statistics Canada data, with City of Toronto estimates
- 4 Statistics Canada, Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census, Toronto CMA. Available at <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=535&TOPIC=7>
- 5 Estimate from agencies serving the Indigenous community in Toronto
- 6 TTC Operating Statistics, with City of Toronto estimates.
- 7 City of Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy, 2019-2022 Action Plan (October 2019). Available at <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-139479.pdf>
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- 9 City of Toronto Economic Bulletin (July 2020). Available at <https://open.toronto.ca/dataset/toronto-economic-bulletin/>
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- 17 RBC Economics (July 2020). Pandemic threatens decades of women's labour force gains. Available at <https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/pandemic-threatens-decades-of-womens-labour-force-gains/>
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Section 11:

- 147 TORR also consulted with leaders in film, music and live events through the culture stream. Detailed findings related to these sectors are included as part of the report on culture engagement, though their feedback was also considered when identifying overarching themes and recommendations for business.