

# Updating Policies for Conservation and Infrastructure Projects in Parks and Open Space Areas:

## Draft Official Plan Amendment 528

Stakeholder Meeting



# Land Acknowledgement

The City of Toronto acknowledges 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 also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



# Meeting Outline

1. Introductions
2. Overview
3. Proposed Changes
4. Discussion
5. Next Steps

# Welcome and Introductions

## **City of Toronto**

- Kyle Fearon, Senior Planner
- Mario Giambattista, Project Coordinator
- Romas Juknevicius, Project Manager

## **Dillon Consulting Limited**

- Kristin Lillyman, Facilitator
- Dustin MacDonald, Note taker

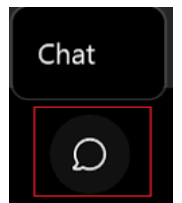
# Webex Meeting Instructions

- Please stay **muted** when you are not talking
- If you have a question or comment please **use the raise hand function** or type your question in the chat box
- The team will be in the background answering chat questions
- There will be dedicated points throughout the presentation for discussion
- Please introduce yourself first

To mute or unmute yourself, click **Mute**



or **Unmute**



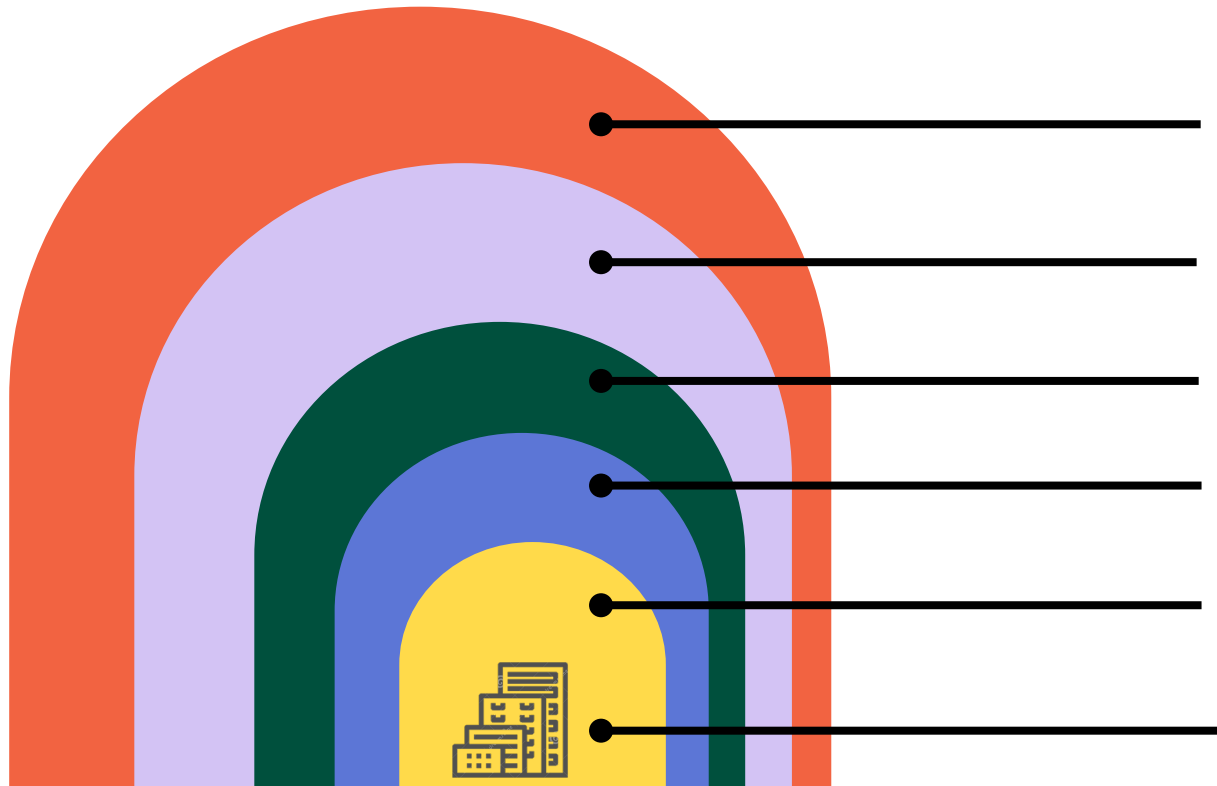
# Code of Conduct

- We welcome your questions and discussion – there are **no bad questions**
- We want to **hear from everyone** – everyone has wisdom and experience to share
- **Be respectful and listen** – everyone deserves to be heard – there will be differences in opinions
- We need **everyone's wisdom for the wisest result**
- The **City is here to listen** – you are welcome to reach out after the meeting

# The Planning Context



# Land Use Planning System



**Matters of provincial interest** – Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement

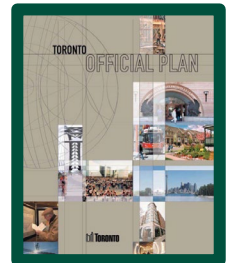
**Regional growth** – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, Greenbelt Plan

**City wide vision** – [Toronto Official Plan](#)

**Area priorities** – Secondary Plans, Local Area Studies, Precinct plans

**Area specific implementation** – Zoning By-law

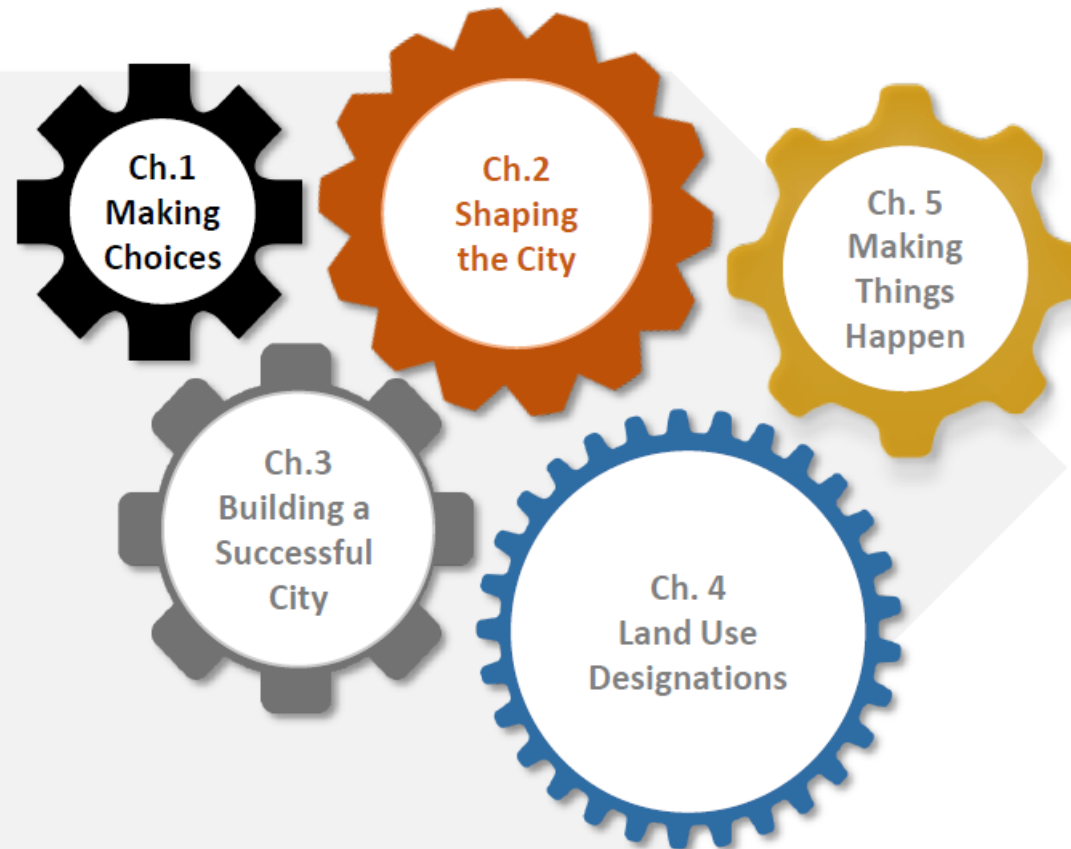
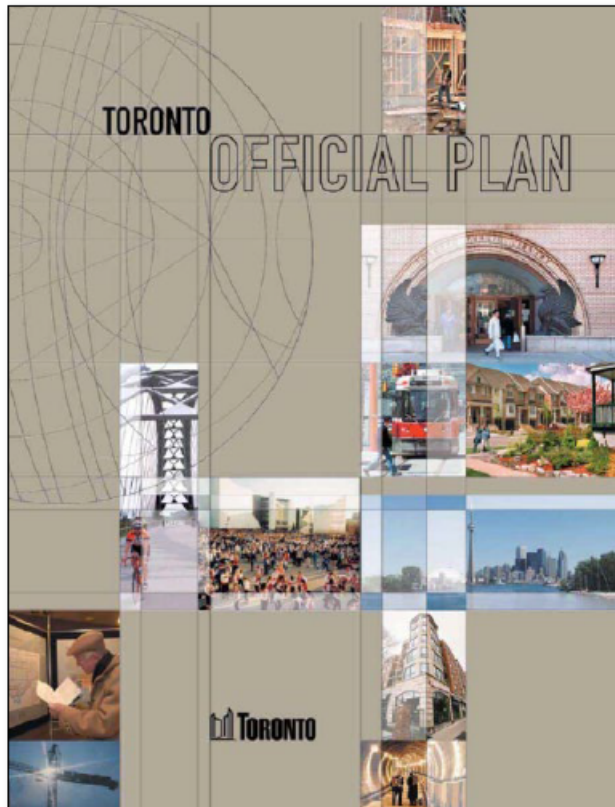
**Site specific precision** – Zoning By-law standards



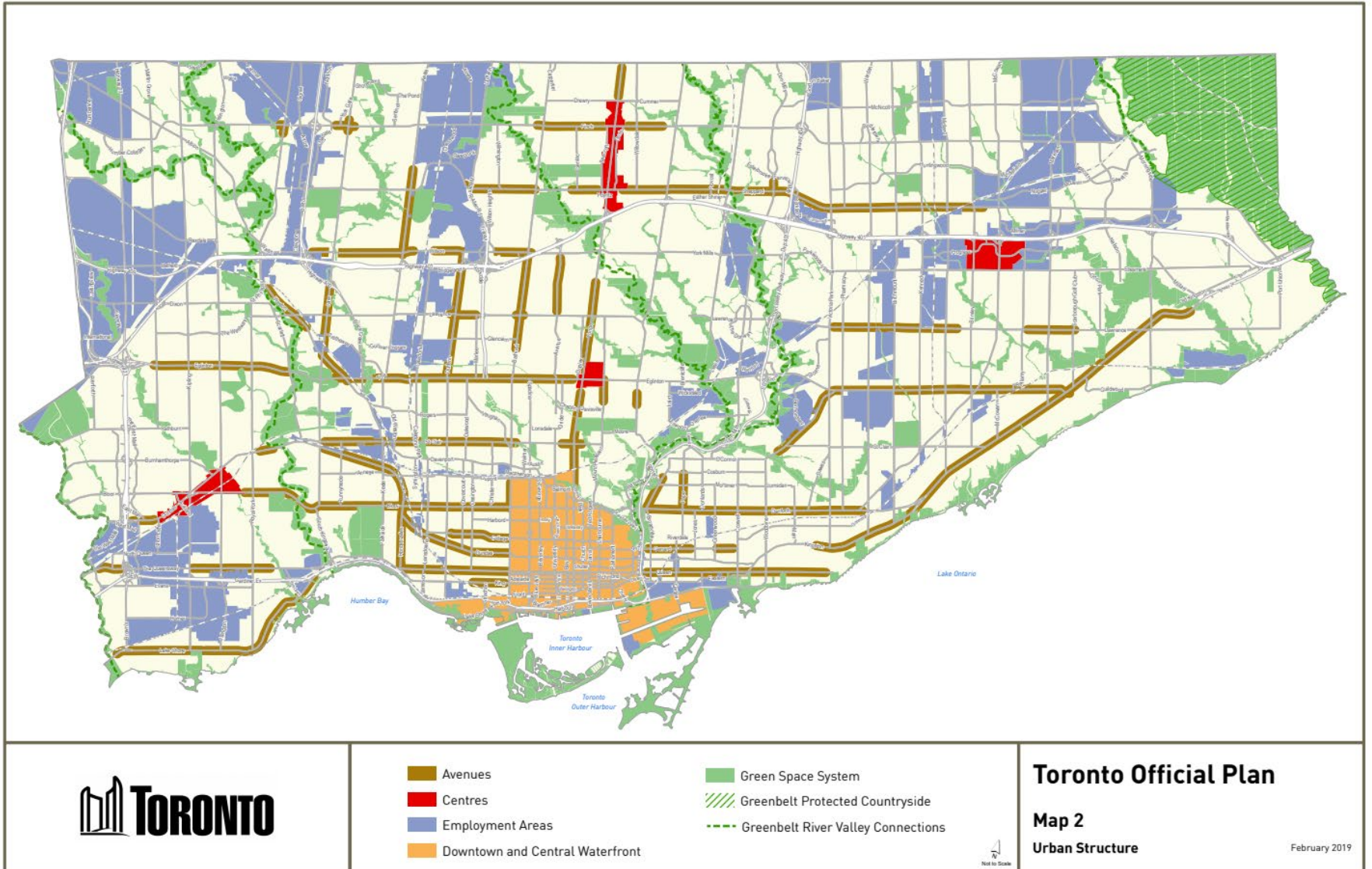


# Toronto's Official Plan

- Policies – Official Plan contains 5 Chapters

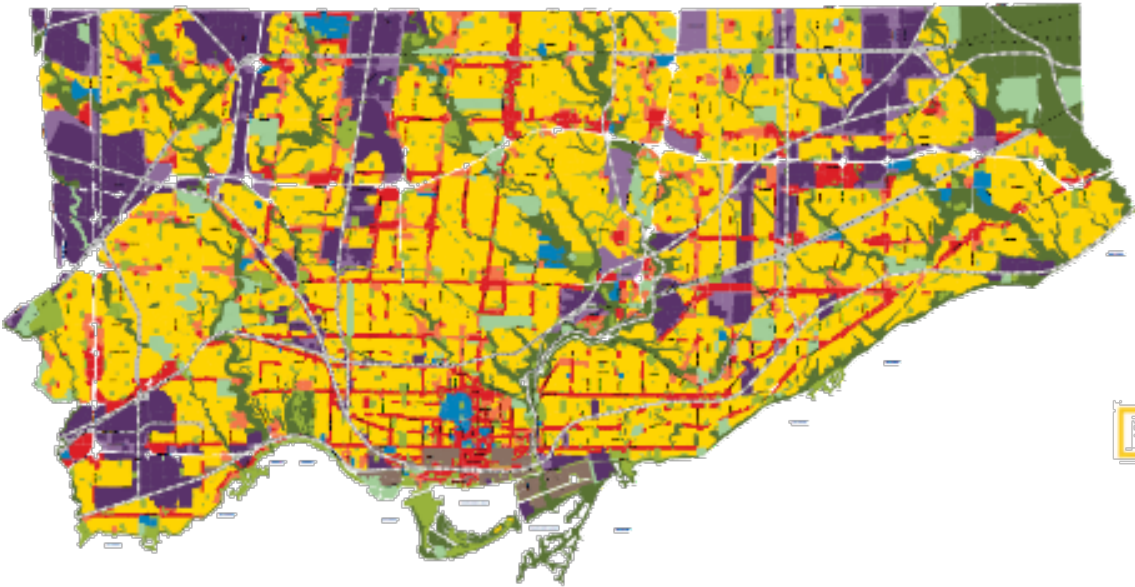


# Urban Structure Map

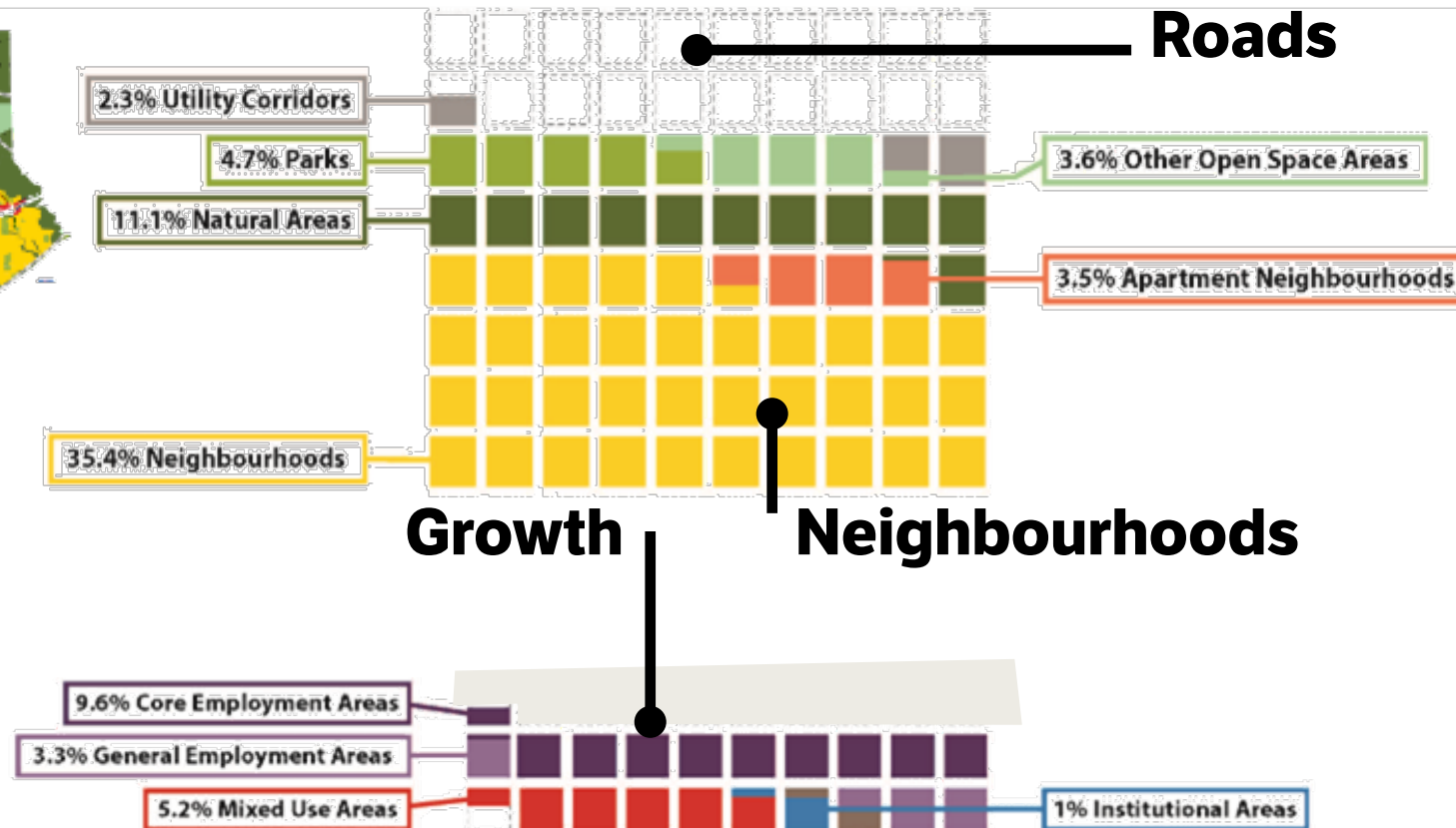


# Official Plan – Land Use Breakdown

## City of Toronto



## City of 100 Blocks



# Overview



# Official Plan – Current Policy

The Official Plan regulates uses in the Green Space System, which is made up of Natural Areas and Parks and Open Space Areas. Such uses allow, for example:

## Natural Areas

(Policy 4.3.3)

- conservation projects
- public transit
- public works & utilities for which no reasonable alternatives are available

## Parks and Open Space

Areas (Policy 4.3.2)

- recreational and cultural facilities
- conservation projects
- cemetery facilities
- public transit
- essential public works and utilities



# Official Plan – Current Policy

The Official Plan **prohibits the sale or disposal** of **City owned** Parks and Open Space Areas and Green Space Systems for infrastructure, including utilities, public works, and conservation projects (Policy 4.3.8, Policy 2.3.2.4).

**Example:** A utility company wants to build telecommunication cables underground in a park and requests an easement from the City. They are required to submit an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to permit the sale or disposal of an easement through the land.

**Sale or disposal means** to sell or otherwise transfer rights over City owned land, including a disposal by way of a lease or easement that exceeds 21 years.

# Examples of when an OPA is required

## Corktown Common

- Transfer of ownership to the TRCA to facilitate the operation of the Flood Protection Landform (berm)



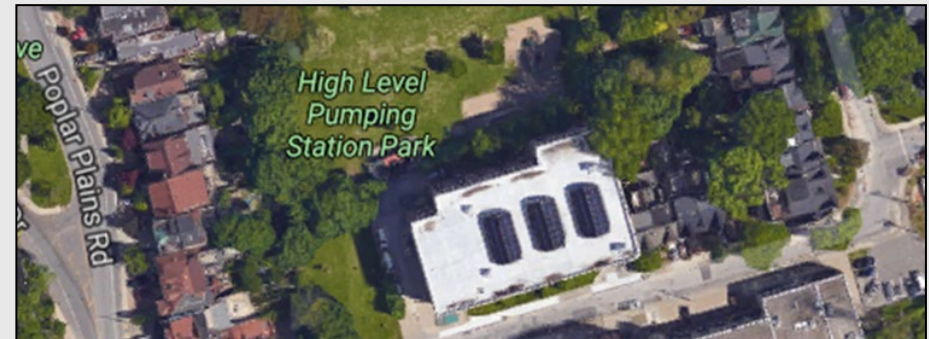
## Rouge National Urban Park

- Transfer of ownership to Parks Canada to operate and maintain Rouge National Urban Park



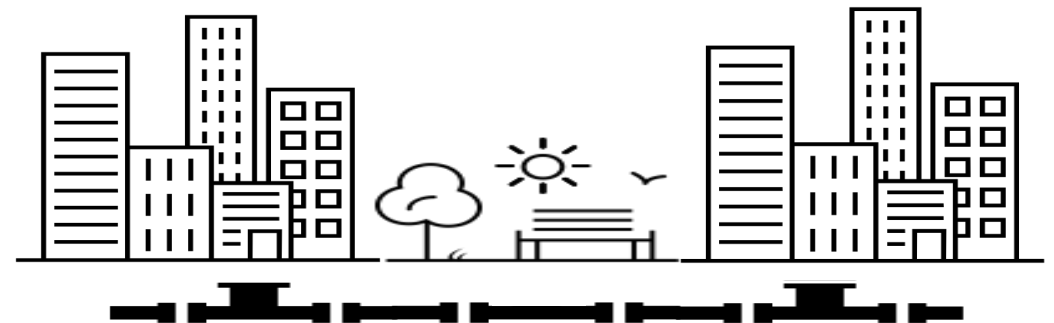
## High Level Pumping Station Park

- Permanent easement to Toronto Hydro
- For tunnel to nearby Toronto Hydro facility
- Easement is all below grade



# The issue

- Increase in infrastructure projects in Parks and Open Space Areas
- Every infrastructure project requires an OPA
- Regardless of project size, complexity or impact
- Delays infrastructure projects
- Opportunity to streamline the process





# Proposed Changes



# Approach

## **First phase**

- (OPA 528) focuses on reducing the number of OPAs required for conservation projects and infrastructure/utility projects
- Transit projects will continue through the current process

## **Second phase**

- Seek direction from Council on whether public transit projects should be addressed

# Proposed Policy Change

- Create a **balanced approach** that allows some conservation and infrastructure projects that meet our policies to proceed faster
- **Maintain strong protections** for Parks and Open Space Areas
- **Clarify with addition of new criteria** to evaluate sale or disposal requests to allow certain requests to proceed without an OPA
- **Streamline** the City's process with more efficient use of resources



# Draft Policy

# ***Draft*** Policy Language (OPA 528)

Update policy 2.3.2.4 (**Green Space System**) and policy 4.3.8 (**Parks and Open Spaces**) with red text below in each.

For example, draft policy 4.3.8 (**Parks and Open Spaces**):

The sale or disposal of publicly owned lands in Parks and Open Space Areas is discouraged and no City owned lands in Parks and Open Space Areas will be sold or disposed of, **unless such sale or disposal satisfies the criteria set out in Policy 4.3.9.** ~~However,~~ City owned land in Parks and Open Space Areas may be exchanged for other nearby land of equivalent or larger area and comparable or superior green space utility.

# *Draft* New OP Policy 4.3.9 (OPA 528)

The sale or disposal of lands to facilitate the development of **conservation projects** and **essential public works and utilities** may occur without an OPA where it is demonstrated that:

- a) It is necessary to implement an approved Environmental Assessment which has examined all reasonable alternatives; or
- b) the following criteria being satisfied:
  - i. there is no reasonable alternative;
  - ii. an appropriate assessment of potential impacts has been provided;
  - iii. adverse impacts are minimized;
  - iv. the integrity of the lands are sustained, restored and enhanced to the fullest extent feasible; and
- c) The project will also have to satisfy existing OP development criteria specific to where the project is occurring, i.e., along waters edge; within Parks and Open Space Areas

# Q&A

 TORONTO



# Discussion questions

- What can be clarified in the OPA?
- Should anything be added or changed?
- What are the key challenges with the proposed strategy and proposed policies?
- What are the opportunities with the proposed strategy and proposed policies?
- Do the policies strike a balance between accommodating growth and preserving the parks and open space areas?



# Next Steps



# Next Steps

## Q4 2023

### Engagement

- Stakeholder Meetings (Utilities Park Stakeholders & Metrolinx) (October 17, 18 and 25 respectively)
- Virtual Public Open House (November 1, 2023)



## Q1 2024

### Planning and Housing Committee

- Report back with final recommended Official Plan Amendments
- Seek direction on transit projects from Committee

# Thank you

- Contact info:

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1

An infrastructure provider (e.g. Toronto Hydro, Enbridge) needs to place a utility in or through (e.g. underneath) parkland. The City's Official Plan allows public works in parkland.



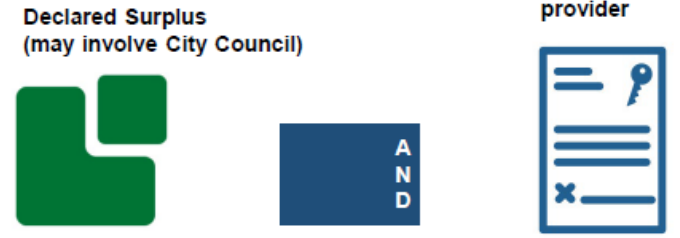
2

The parkland must be:

Declared Surplus (may involve City Council)

Sold or disposed to the provider

The City's Official Plan, however, does not allow parkland to be sold or disposed. Therefore, the infrastructure provider needs to:



3a

Apply to the City to amend the Official Plan to allow the sale or disposal.



OR

3b

Provide the City a piece of parkland that is equal to or better than what they're receiving.



OPA 528 seeks to allow the City to sell or dispose of parkland long-term to infrastructure providers without the amendment described in Box 3a, only if the infrastructure provider can demonstrate they've done appropriate assessments.

The infrastructure provider will still be able to exchange a piece of parkland (Box 3b) if they do not wish to apply to amend the Official Plan or prove they've performed the appropriate assessments under the new criteria.