



Project Summary

November 2023

Plaza POV

(Plaza P_{oint} o_f V_{iew})

How Toronto's strip plazas contribute to commerce and community

Background:

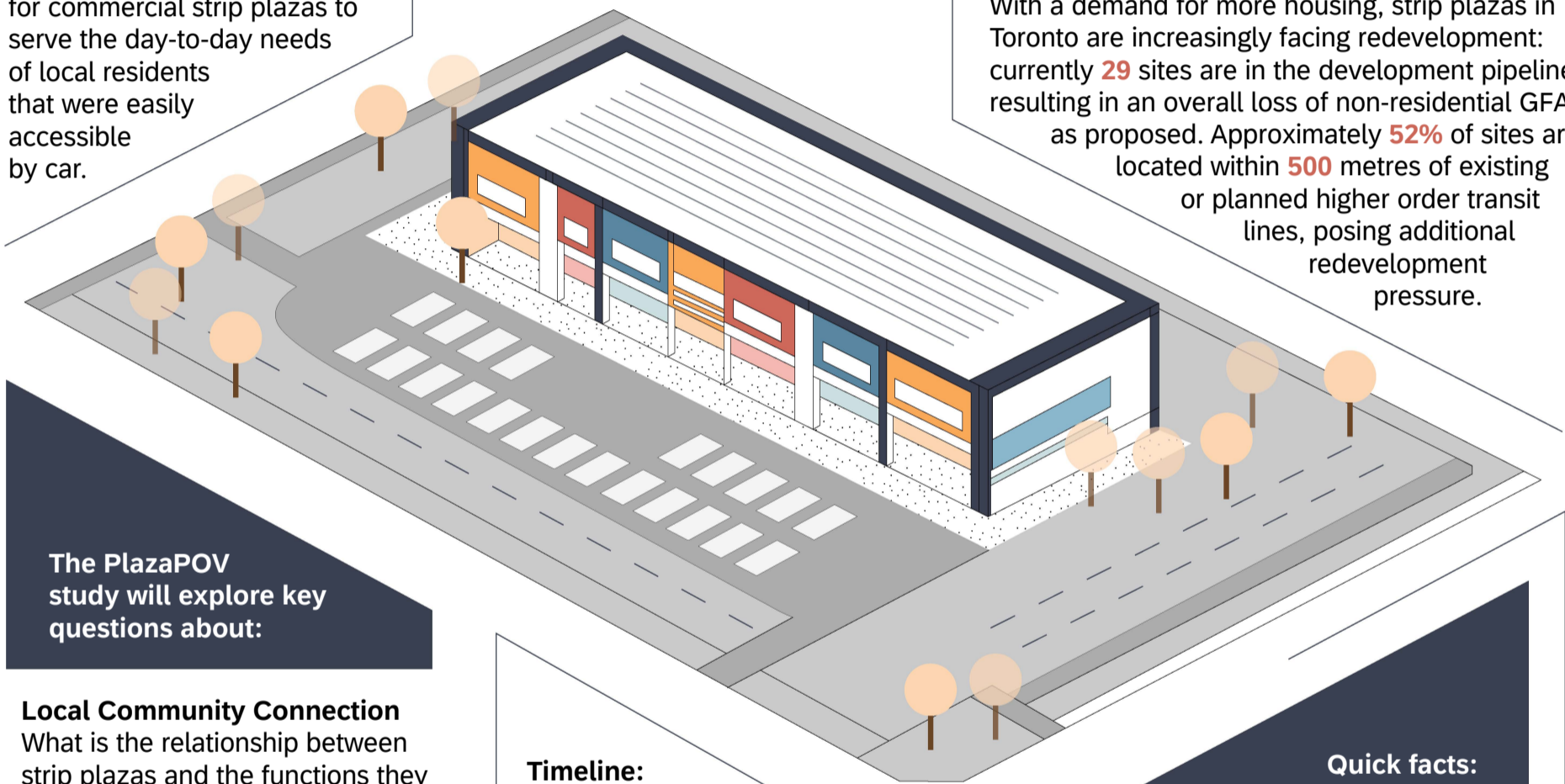
Through the 1950s-1980s, post-war development in Toronto led to the expansion of suburban neighbourhoods. By the end of the 20th century, **75%** of the city's population was living in the inner suburbs of Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough, creating a demand for commercial strip plazas to serve the day-to-day needs of local residents that were easily accessible by car.

City Planning is studying commercial strip plazas (or "strip malls") across Toronto to understand their role serving local communities, and the impacts of their loss through redevelopment. Study outcomes will help inform potential policy interventions, programs, or initiatives to support and improve their role in the city's economic and community landscape and avoid displacement.

Strip Plazas Today:

City Planning has identified over **320** strip plaza sites throughout Toronto. They are predominantly found in the inner suburbs, with the majority (**56%**) located in Scarborough. Many strip plazas are located in areas with high concentrations of racialized and immigrant populations, and often include ethnic businesses, amenities, grocery stores and restaurants.

With a demand for more housing, strip plazas in Toronto are increasingly facing redevelopment: currently **29** sites are in the development pipeline, resulting in an overall loss of non-residential GFA as proposed. Approximately **52%** of sites are located within **500** metres of existing or planned higher order transit lines, posing additional redevelopment pressure.



The PlazaPOV study will explore key questions about:

Local Community Connection

What is the relationship between strip plazas and the functions they serve for both local and ethnic communities?

Supporting Economic Growth

How does affordable space in strip plazas incubate and support small business and contribute to a diverse economy?

Redevelopment Impacts

How can the loss of affordable commercial space be mitigated to avoid displacement through redevelopment?

Public Realm

How can the physical environment of strip plazas be improved or retrofitted to contribute to a vibrant public realm and support their role as social hubs?

Timeline:

- 1** Research
 - Background review
 - Current conditions assessment
- 2** Engagement
 - Consultation with community and stakeholder groups, BIAs, business owners, user surveys
- 3** Identify and align with related work streams and initiatives
- 4** Recommendations and Next Steps

Quick facts:

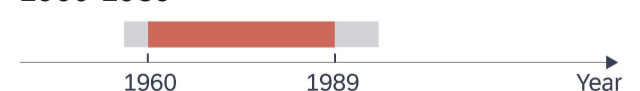
The average occupancy rate for strip plazas is 97%



78% of strip plazas have a gross leasable area of less than 20,000 square feet



65% of strip plazas were built between 1960-1989



The first strip plaza, Sunnybrook Plaza was developed in 1952 and closed in 2020 (68 years old!)

