

Phase 1 Background Report: Visioning Framework

October 2024



06. Visioning Framework



06. VISIONING FRAMEWORK

Future phases of work on North York at the Centre will be guided by a visioning framework that establishes our shared ambitions for the project. The visioning framework is based on community input and technical analysis of issues, opportunities and priorities for the future of North York Centre. It will be used to guide options development and the evaluation of those options in Phase 2 and it will help inform recommendations in Phase 3. The visioning framework includes:

- **Three overarching lenses** that articulate overall values for the type of community we are working towards in North York Centre and which will permeate all aspects of the project. These are: Truth and Reconciliation, Equity and Inclusion, and Action on Climate Change;
- **Four guiding principles** that reflect aspirations for the next stage of the Centre's growth in key areas. These are: Grow a Complete Centre, Green the Centre, Build Connectivity, and Design Places for People; and
- **A series of objectives** tied to each guiding principle that define more specifically what North York at the Centre is striving to achieve under each of the principles.

6.1 Overarching Lenses

Through the three overarching lenses, we can examine the Guiding Principles to explore how they help to address key issues and opportunities in the Centre. The three overarching lenses are:



Truth and Reconciliation: One of the major developments since the last iteration of the North York Centre Secondary Plan is the deep commitment to advancing truth, justice and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples at all levels of government. At the City of Toronto, this commitment is reflected in the Reconciliation Action Plan, which should be implemented across City-led activities including planning projects. North York at the Centre includes an Indigenous engagement process which will help to define how the Secondary Plan can advance truth and reconciliation.



Equity and Inclusion: Considerations for equitable and inclusive outcomes are essential in planning for the growth of a community. Prioritizing the identification of needs, barriers, impacts, and mitigation strategies that can benefit equity-deserving communities is a priority for the secondary plan review process. The measures supported by the secondary plan review process include:

- Implementing engagement strategies that enhance participation and raise awareness among Indigenous, Black, equity-deserving, and vulnerable communities in the secondary plan review process;
- Supporting a greater mix of housing choices including affordable housing;
- Retaining and expanding opportunities for locally-based employment;

- Improving and expanding community infrastructure such as child care centres, agency space, libraries, community centres, and parks as critical amenities for social, mental, physical and economic well-being;
- Illuminating the area's Indigenous history and creating spaces to celebrate Indigenous cultural practices, traditions and contributions;
- Improving active transportation and transit connections that provide access to employment and other opportunities;
- Protecting the land and water, and promoting sustainability, climate mitigation and resilience.



Action on Climate Change: The City of Toronto declared a climate emergency in 2019 and all future planning must help communities to adapt to the realities of climate change and mitigate the impacts of climate change, including achieving the city-wide target of net zero emissions by 2040. North York at the Centre will recognize this urgent reality and set in place the framework for climate resilience in this rapidly growing part of the city.

6.2 Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles include a series of objectives that form the basis of the evaluation criteria that will define what North York at the Centre is striving to achieve under each of the principles. These are defined below:

Grow a Complete Center

This principle is about defining what makes North York Centre a complete urban growth centre and regional centre for the north part of the city in terms of the type and amount of development. It responds to City policy about density, expanding housing and protecting employment; community feedback about affordability, retail and services; and analysis of recent growth in North York Centre.

Objectives

- 1.2.1 Optimize people and jobs within walking distance of higher order transit
- 1.2.2 Increase the housing supply, including new affordable housing units
- 1.2.3 Provide a diversity of unit sizes and types that meet the needs of all household types
- 1.2.4 Maintain North York Centre as a significant civic and office employment hub
- 1.2.5 Facilitate diverse employment opportunities and inclusive economic development in North York Centre
- 1.2.6 Grow and celebrate North York Centre as an arts and culture destination
- 1.2.7 Preserve and enhance the retail diversity of North York Centre
- 1.2.8 Integrate new and expanded community services and facilities (child care, schools, recreation centres, human services, etc.) in the Centre to support the well-being of residents
- 1.2.9 Provide access to reliable and safe water and wastewater servicing within the area to adequately service growth in North York Centre
- 1.2.10 Address the climate crisis and establish local strategies to achieve the City's climate targets



Green North York Centre

This principle is about defining the role of green space in a dense urban centre and how North York Centre can play its part in achieving the City's climate targets. It responds to an analysis of parks provision and land cover in North York Centre and what we heard from the community, such as growing and improving the connectivity of the parks system.

Objectives

- 2.2.1 Achieve the City's goal of 40% tree canopy coverage by 2050
- 2.2.2 Maintain and expand parkland and maximize opportunities for new parks and recreation programming
- 2.2.3 Create a connected parks and open space network
- 2.2.4 Improve people's access to parks
- 2.2.5 Promote biodiversity in the Centre
- 2.2.6 Increase permeable surfaces in North York Centre
- 2.2.7 Incorporate Indigenous placekeeping in parks including spaces for ceremony
- 2.2.8 Enhance green infrastructure and promote low impact development



Build Connectivity

This principle is about defining the vision for how people move to, from, and through North York Centre and the quality of experience as they do so. It responds to City policy about moving people and goods safely and efficiently; providing better connectivity and accessibility of sustainable transportation options while building upon approved infrastructure improvements; community feedback about east-west connectivity; and opportunities for enhanced streetscape and public realm.

Objectives

- 3.2.1 Improve connectivity, accessibility and user experience of active and sustainable travel modes
- 3.2.2 Prioritize walking, cycling and transit (non-auto modes) and make more efficient use of the City's mobility network
- 3.2.3 Improve safety for all road users
- 3.2.4 Provide the opportunity to incorporate streetscape, landscape and tree planting
- 3.2.5 Ensure improvements are feasible to deliver
- 3.2.6 Accommodate existing and future transit infrastructure
- 3.2.7 Centre equity in planning for mobility
- 3.2.8 Support new mobility and create adaptable mobility networks that can accommodate future innovations
- 3.2.9 Manage transportation impact of new developments through Transportation Demand Management (TDM)
- 3.2.10 Support efficient movement of goods



Design Place for People

This principle is about defining the character of place in North York Centre in terms of built form and open space design. It responds to Official Plan policy and City guidelines relating to urban design, analysis of building types, open spaces and at grade activation. It also reflects what we heard from the community about the commemoration of local history and preservation and enhancement of public spaces.

Objectives

- 4.2.1 Provide an effective transition between areas of different building heights and intensity in North York Centre and between North York Centre and surrounding areas
- 4.2.2 Include a mix of building types
- 4.2.3 Provide comfortable wind conditions for pedestrians at grade
- 4.2.4 Provide comfortable sun conditions in the public realm, parks or open space and adequate skyview
- 4.2.5 Animate the public realm with active at-grade spaces
- 4.2.6 Ensure built form defines and supports street proportions and public realm
- 4.2.7 Incorporate Indigenous placekeeping in the public realm and provide space to celebrate Indigenous | history, cultural practices and traditions
- 4.2.8 Preserve and expand other open spaces
- 4.2.9 Conserve and celebrate North York Centre's built heritage



6.3 Next Steps

The visioning framework identified in Phase 1 of North York at the Centre will be used in Phase 2 of the project to develop and evaluate options for how the Centre will grow and change in the coming decades. Community engagement will continue in-person and online to gather input and feedback on the options before a preferred option is identified as the basis for updating the North York Centre Secondary Plan.