2025

TORONTO URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

ALL SUBMISSIONS

PART 2

TORONTO

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2025 TORONTO URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

SUBMISSIONS | PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN CONTEXT

An individual building or a composition of buildings, with a primary function to serve the public and/or is largely accessible to the public. Public Buildings are focal points for communities of various sizes, from small neighbourhoods to a national body.

Submissions should demonstrate urban design and architectural excellence through a relationship to the public realm, pedestrian amenity, detailing and massing, the natural environment and sustainable design.

In this category, all building scales are eligible (low-scale, mid-rise and tall), as well as new construction and restoration/transformation. Buildings in both urban and suburban contexts will be considered. Submissions may include, but are not limited to: education, health care, recreation, cultural, community and civic buildings.

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE STORY ARTS CAMPUS LIBRARY

951 Carlaw Avenue

@rdharch

Project Team
Architects: RDH Architects: Principal and Design Director Tyler Sharp, Patrick Liu, Marc Dainow, Sanjoy Pal, Lisa Sato.
Structural Engineers: WSP Canada
Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: Jain & Associates
Civil Engineers: Valdor Engineering
Landscape Architects: NAK Design Strategies

Developer/Owner/Client
Centennial College

General Contractor
ROSSCLAIR Contractors

Photographer
Tom Arban

Project Description

Centennial College's Story Arts Campus in Toronto's East York occupies a restored 1954 educational building designed by renowned Toronto Modernist Peter Dickinson. RDHA were commissioned to renovate a 700 square-metre academic library within and construct a new glazed addition. The architects developed an architectural and urban design approach that centered around lightness—reinventing the library as a vibrant space that both acknowledges and contemporizes Dickinson's Modernist design language.

The new glazed addition utilizes rhythmic vertical window bay divisions and horizontal alignments that align with and respect the window pattern used by Dickinson. The result creates a thoughtful dialogue between old and new structures. On the glass, a ceramic frit pattern of vertical striations in cascading widths creates a trompe-l'œil impression of elegant internal louvers, while also helping to reduce glare and minimize solar transmission into the building. A subtlety integrated glazed door opens the library experience to a small concrete slab courtyard, terminated by a concrete bench. Fine shards of stanstead grey granite are elegantly cut into the generous front lawn and along with a river rock "pool" simply and minimally engage with this urban landscape.

On the interior, transparency, sightlines, views and reflective materials inspire a calm space. The highlight of the largely open concept plan is a double-height reading atrium and general collections space with various seating types for solo and group learning. The perimeter corridor wall is defined by glass-walled programmed spaces with sliding glass doors, a maker space and VR studio, study rooms and offices, and a computer lab/media screening room. This fully glazed internal façade to the building's internal corridor functions as an exhibition space, invites the curiosity of passersby to explore the library, and draws further light and views from the building's interior courtyard beyond.

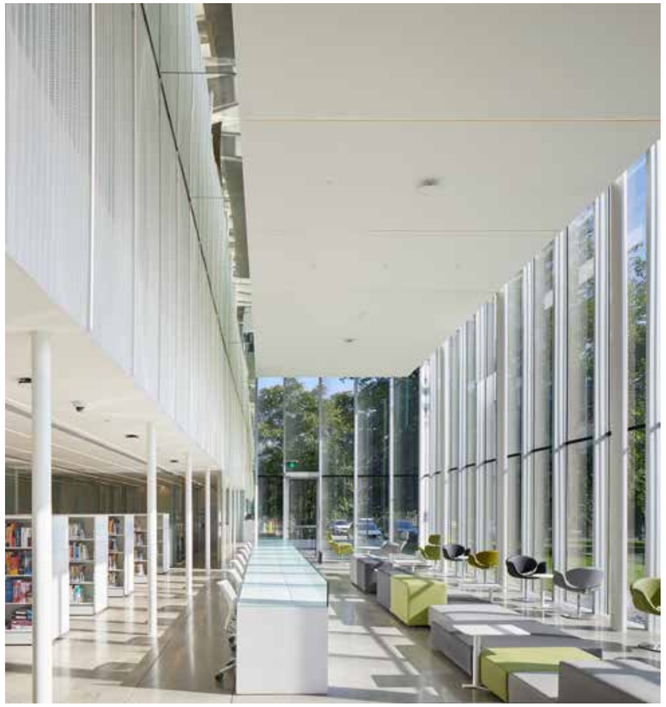
This building and its verdant lawn uphold the quality of space and help to integrate it with its surroundings. This small project is seen as an independent building element that provides the existing campus and the neighbouring community with an example of how architecture might evolve to incorporate highly sustainable systems in a beautiful, rhythmic, and expressive manner.

Sustainability Statement

The building incorporates numerous sustainable design features that prioritize energy efficiency, material durability, and environmental stewardship. The extensive use of transparent and reflective materials, including mirrors and glass, maximize natural light and reduce reliance on artificial lighting, while dematerializing the language of the new addition, allowing the existing architecture to be perceived in a clear and respectful manner. A customized, perforated 7/8 corrugated metal screen shields an existing second-storey classroom while drawing in natural light, further improving energy efficiency. Polished concrete floors and high-quality Corian millwork provide durable, low-maintenance surfaces that enhance the project's longevity. A white reflective TPO roof membrane reduces the urban heat island effect, while custom ceramic frit patterns and low E coatings on glazing improve thermal performance. Additional sustainable features include in-floor radiant heating, low VOC materials, locally available materials, and indigenous planting.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The project provided an opportunity for a student mural to be painted in one of the library's meeting rooms. The mural depicts a tree alongside a quote by Greek poet Dinos Christianopoulos: "They tried to bury us, but they didn't know we were seeds." In the 1990s, this proverb was adopted by the Zapatistas, an Indigenous movement in Mexico that has become a global symbol of Indigenous sovereignty. The mural symbolizes resilience and the enduring strength of communities facing suppression or erasure. It reflects the idea that even when silenced or marginalized, the potential for growth and renewal persists. This art supports Centennial College in an ongoing commitment to Indigenous reconciliation and healing, ensuring that the new library reflects diverse voices and histories, and encourages critical engagement with post-colonial perspectives.



UNION STATION REVITALIZATION
65 Front Street West

@norr_aep

Project Team
Architects: NORR Architects & Engineers Limited
Structural Engineer: NORR Architects & Engineers Limited
Mechanical Engineer: NORR Architects & Engineers Limited
Electrical Engineer: NORR Architects & Engineers Limited
Civil Engineer: Giffels Associates Limited / IBI Group
Heritage Architect: EVOQ
Traffic and Loading Consultant: B.A. Consulting Group Ltd.
Signage Consultant: Entro Communications

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto

General Contractor
Carillion Stage 1, Bondfield Stage 2, EllisDon Completion

Photographer
doublespace photography

Project Description

Designated a National Historic Site in 1995, Union Station was designed by the firm of G. A. Ross and R. H. Macdonald, Hugh Jones of the CPR, and John M. Lyle. After opening in 1927, no significant capital investment was made in the station for 90 years until this rehabilitation project. The station had fallen into disrepair and was unable to handle the shift from a national railway station of 40,000 passengers annually to a regional commuter hub of 65 million. Traffic was projected to grow to 130 million.

The project involved the conservation, restoration, and stabilization of the heritage building both internally and externally, as well as its transformation to address increased passenger flow and the needs of a modern multimodal transportation hub. This included accessibility and seismic upgrades, environmental remediation, integration of technology, security and life safety upgrades, new concourse areas for waiting passengers, and a new retail level under the tracks, similar to Grand Central Station in New York.

A key aspect of the rehabilitation was the creation of a more robust pedestrian network connecting the station internally and linking to the surrounding city. This included transforming the surrounding moat—previously used for service and loading—into glass-covered pedestrian routes and event space, done in a way that preserved the quality of the historic exterior.

One driver for the excavated retail level under the Headhouse and train platforms was to align it with the subway station and the PATH system to the north, improving accessibility and accommodating increased foot traffic. Similar pedestrian routes were created throughout the complex to support increased capacity while respecting the revitalized “Classified” heritage asset. This helped guide more passengers through the historic Great Hall, previously bypassed by urban commuters. The project was delivered in phases to ensure continued operations. The result restores a national heritage landmark, allowing it to remain a vital part of the transportation network and community.

Sustainability Statement

The Union Station Revitalization Project exemplifies sustainable development by aligning with Toronto's Green Development Standards through energy-efficient upgrades, transit enhancements, and water conservation measures. By retaining the existing building rather than replacing it, the project leverages the carbon investment already made and avoids adding to the demolition waste stream.

The project includes district heating and cooling, solar thermal panels, energy-efficient lighting, stormwater harvesting, a state-of-the-art HVAC system drawing fresh air from the roof, low-flow fixtures, and automated water-saving faucets to reduce consumption.

To improve power efficiency, the project consolidated substations, replaced aging electrical systems with low-loss transformers, and introduced a bi-fuel generation system for backup power that supports Toronto's energy grid through demand response programs. The generator includes emissions mitigation using selective catalytic reduction (SCR) with urea dosing to reduce NOx emissions, and it lowers global adjustment fees and operating costs. Upgrading aging systems improved energy efficiency, met Green Development Standards, and earned a $950,000 hydro rebate.

More impactful than these greenhouse gas reductions is Union Station's role as a multi-modal transportation hub that decreases the number of vehicles entering the city daily. Sustainable mobility was prioritized by enhancing pedestrian flow, improving cycling infrastructure, and better integrating Union Station with Toronto's transit network—encouraging a shift away from car dependency.

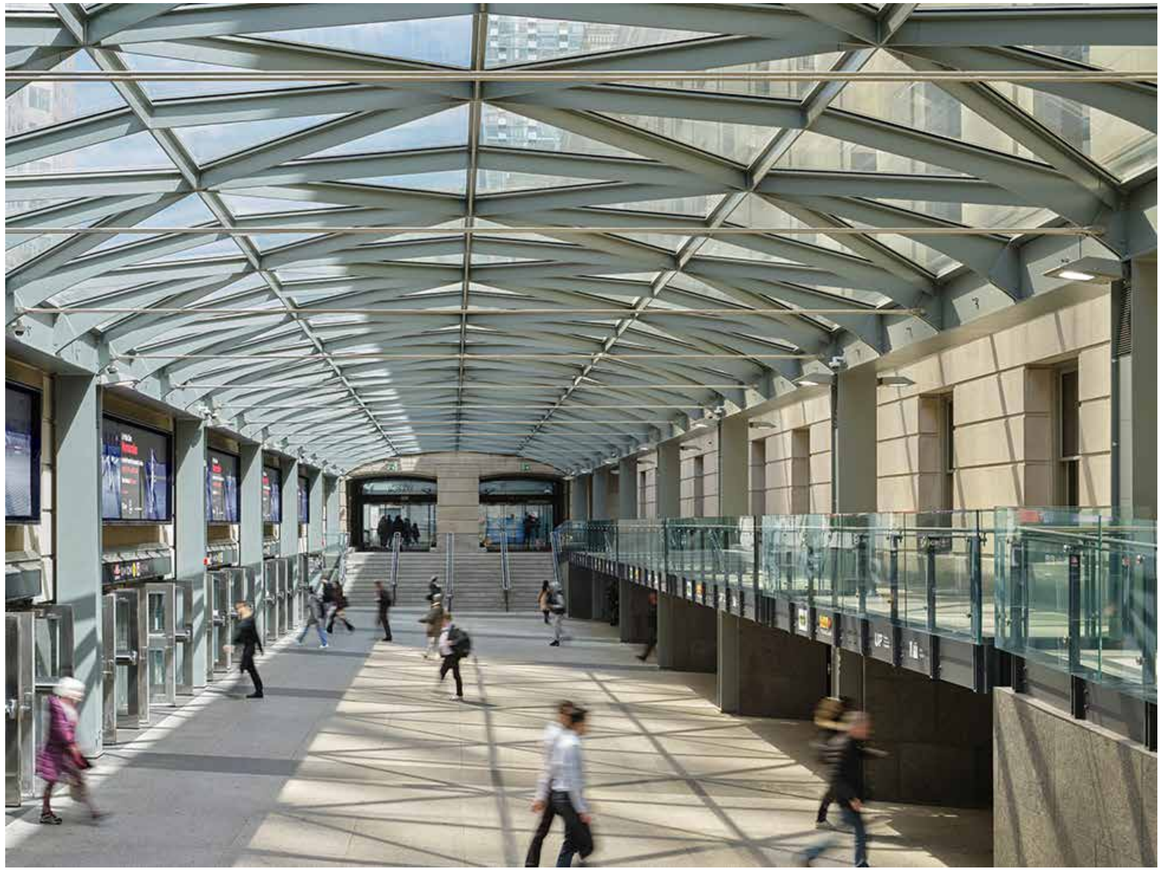
By doubling the station's passenger capacity and making it efficient and appealing, Union Station's rehabilitation makes a major environmental contribution.

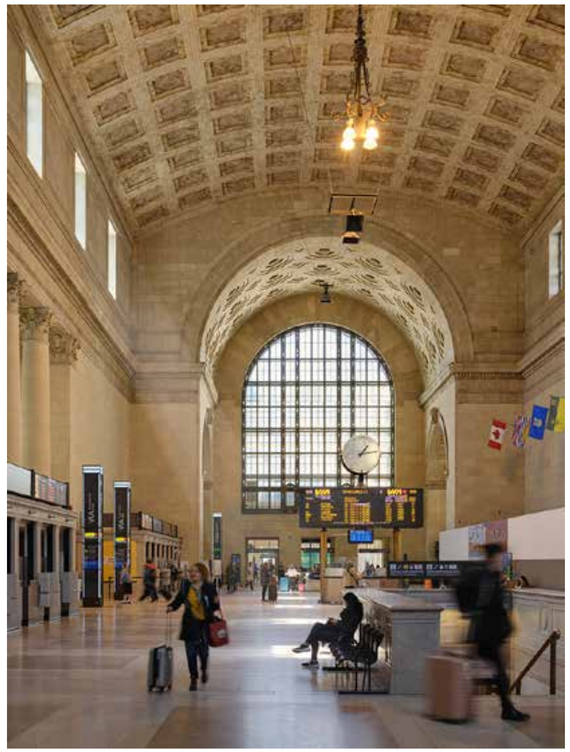
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

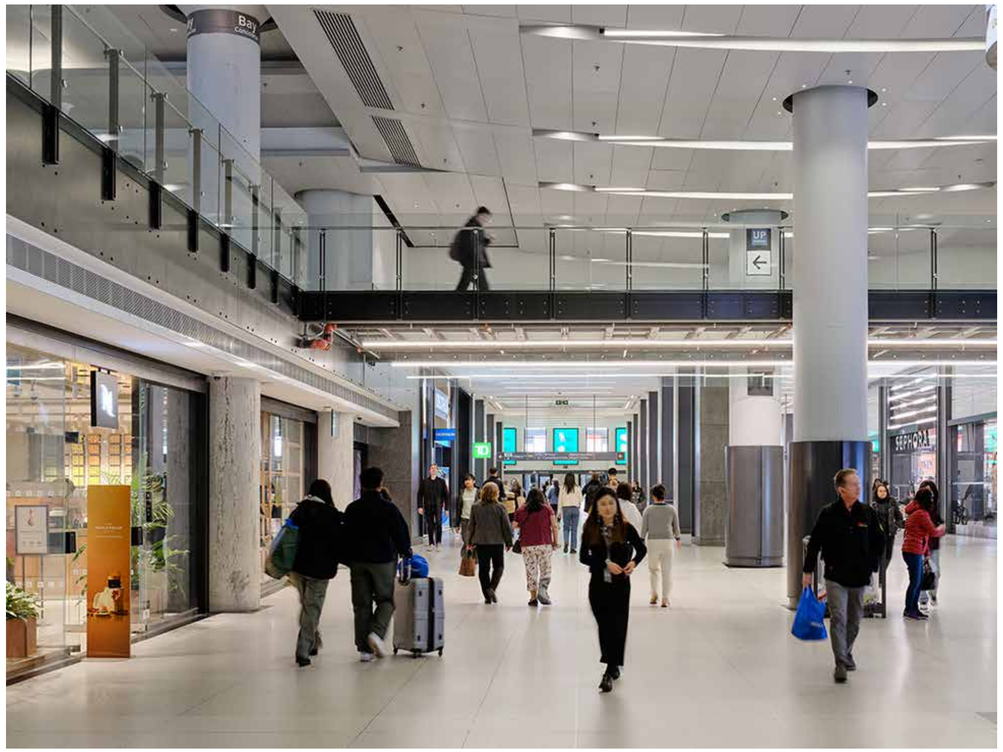
Before the rehabilitation, Union Station fell far short in meeting universal accessible standards and depended on ad hoc solutions that created significantly unequal levels of access for a large portion of society. This was inappropriate for the most used transportation node in the country. At the same time, the station is a classified national historic landmark of the highest level, so any change to its fabric had to be done with great care and in alignment with the Federal Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

Collaborative workshops were held to thread the needle between these competing goals, working with City, Provincial, and Federal authorities to identify the best solutions. This included transformative decisions like the 13-foot dig-down under almost the entire site to create seamless integration with the adjacent subway and PATH system. Similar opportunities for stronger linkages and wayfinding were achieved by leveraging latent entry arches into the Great Hall that had never been capitalized on after the building was originally completed when the train platform levels were initially set.

New accessible routes and wayfinding systems were carefully integrated into the historic fabric to meet the needs of Metrolinx, VIA Rail, the City of Toronto, and most importantly the passengers—ensuring a fully accessible and more clearly navigable facility. The renovation has created not just a station but a destination filled with public spaces that have become venues for civic events and festivals celebrating the rich culture of the city, linking to its past as the arrival point for generations of immigrants in Canada's early years and reinforcing its role as a landmark in the city.






SEPHORA


BAY

ONTARIO COURT OF JUSTICE - TORONTO
10 Armoury Street

@norr_aep

Project Description

"Toronto has received the gift of a dignified new civic building of great lightness and depth of character, carefully shaped to respectfully f it within this historic civic precinct and thoughtfully organized to support the increasingly complex and evolving demands of a contemporary justice system for many years to come. It's a testament to what was clearly and extraordinary collective team effort, combining inspiring design build/build leadership with thoughtful support and decision-making of the provincial client group and city approval authorities."
Joe Lobko, Canadian Architect September 2023

The Ontario Court of Justice - Toronto is the final component of a judicial campus that extends back to the original Osgoode Hall of 1832. The largest Courthouse in Ontario, it is situated in Toronto's central civic precinct, completing the set of justice buildings to the south. The design seeks to balance the need to express the identity and values of a modern justice institution without supplanting the predominance of the adjacent iconic City Hall. The design, siting, massing, component organization, materiality and finishes are all defined with the intention of ensuring that the building projects the stature of an important civic institution while responding to its context. The building mass is compact and placed as far north on the site as possible to create a meaningful public space, aligning with adjacent buildings and fabric in a manner that ties this portion of the city together. It completes the triptych of justice buildings to the south, aligning with the east portico of Osgoode Hall and reinforcing the terminating vista looking north on York Street.The design objective was to produce a welcoming but secure public institution that achieved the high security requirements in a non-oppressive manner and communicated an image of openness and accessibility.

The result is a refined and compact mass that expresses the two primary components of the programme; a four-storey highly transparent podium which includes entry, atrium, public services, and high-volume courts and relates to the immediate context; and a 14-storey tower that floats above containing the main courtrooms and associated functions and responds to the larger urban context. Even the roof has been treated as a significant façade with the mechanical equipment recessed into the building mass below enabling the photovoltaic (PV) roof to retain its clarity of expression and to provide the maximum amount of energy return.

Project Team
Architects: NORR Architects & Engineers Limited in association with Renzo Piano Building Workshop
Structural Engineers: Stephenson Engineering Ltd.
Mechanical Engineers: The Hidi Group
Electrical Engineers: MBI
Landscape Architects: Vertechs
Façade Engineering: Knippers Helbig
Indigenous Consultant: Two Row Architect
Heritage Consultant: +VG Architects

Developer/Owner/Client
Infrastructure Ontario

General Contractor
EllisDon

Photographer
Scott Norsworthy

Sustainability Statement

Designed with a service life of 100 years the building utilizes heat recovery ventilation, demand control ventilation, LED lighting, daylighting and occupancy sensors, low cooling supply air temperatures and supply air temperatures reset strategies, variable speed pumping, and ECM fans. Grey water and rainwater is collected on site and reused through toilet system. Mandated to achieve LEED silver it achieved LEED Gold with significant energy performance objectives the project includes a roof top solar voltaic array, 40/60 window to spandrel ratio in the tower, as well as 32 % of the site supporting vegetation primarily through intensive and extensive green roofs.

The compact massing, efficient planning and resulting reduced building size is one of the most consequential reductions in embodied carbon in the project. Similarly, the design inclusion of technology allowing for remote testimony and appearance greatly reduces, over the long term, carbon generated by transportation of participants. What carbon is embedded in the project is amortized over the planned 100-year lifespan of the project. The targeting of LEED points for recycled content including slag content in the cement mix and Regional Materials including 4 points for regional Priority contribute to the reduction of embodied carbon.

Care has been taken to create access to daylight in all the public circulation areas, open staff work areas and indirect light penetration to all the courtrooms even though they are typically embedded within the floor plates. The strategy of distributing the office support area on the court floors which typically have higher floor to floor heights has enabled higher ceilings as well as higher windows with corresponding deeper daylight penetration.

The building follows dark sky fixture selection requirements and bird friendly strategies including frit patterns on glazing surfaces.

Energy Use Intensity (EUI): .357 GJ/m^2

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The design team met with Indigenous, Black Community, and local Heritage community groups, as well as an Accessibility Advisory Group in an inclusive process that incorporated their input into the design. The Indigenous engagement was assisted by Indigenous consultants Two Row Architects. The result responds to the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada by providing a publicly accessible Indigenous Learning Centre, Courtrooms designed for Gladue proceedings, Aboriginal Court Support Offices and a Youth Conference Settlement Room all with smoke ventilation for smudging ceremonies. The project features a reproduction of “Beneath The Heartbeat Of The City Lies Our Traditions by Anishinaabee artist Mike Ormsby, and the display of an Indigenous artifact found on the site.

The British Methodist Episcopal Church previously located on the site, was an important focal point for the Black community including as a destination on the underground railroad. With input from the community it is celebrated with an explanatory Plaque, a replica of the original cornerstone, and a recreation of the church façade in a frit pattern on the east elevation of the building.

Images of cultural and historic importance to the local Heritage community are displayed in the main lobby along with other archaeological finds that speak to the rich cultural history of Ward in which the building is located. This is supplemented on the exterior by information plaques as well as medallions embedded in the paving presenting the history of various immigrant communities, individuals and even the historic fabric of the city.

Access is a critical part of the fair delivery of Justice and so with the input of the Accessibility Advisory Group numerous accessibility enhancements were incorporated in the building going beyond any other Courthouse in the province. This accessibility has been recognized with a Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Gold Certification™.

Energy Performance Metrics

Energy performance metrics have been included in the submission.

ONE YONGE COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTRE
24 Freeland Street

@perkinswill_ont

Project Team
Architects: Perkins&Will
Structural Engineers: Jablonsky, Ast and Partners
Mechanical Engineers: MV Shore
Electrical Engineers: MV Shore
Artist: Doublenaut

Developer/Owner/Client
Pinnacle International

General Contractor
Pinnacle International

Photographer
Lisa Logan Photography

Project Description

One Yonge, part of the 1-7 Yonge lands development, is at the heart of Toronto's growing Waterfront community where a mix of young professionals, families, and empty nesters call home. The City required the Developer to provide a public recreation facility within the private residential development – one of the first community amenities of its kind in Toronto.

A neighbourhood landmark, passersby are drawn from the street into a lofty atrium space which doubles as the community centre's entrance and condo lobby. This bright, colourful destination greets visitors with large mosaic murals designed by local design and illustration studio, Doublenaut. Inviting and open, the atrium space complements the future master plan park located across the street, enhances the public realm experience of the neighbourhood, and entices visitors to wander up to the second level where the rest of the recreation program is organized.

The design celebrates the passage from the busy urban edges to the inner life of the community centre at the second-floor podium. This passage begins at the corner lobby and continues up a distinctive stair or elevator to the second floor. Upon arrival, the passage becomes a continuous circuit linking all the program spaces. Strategic views out to the city, interesting finishes and unique spaces for community animate this experience for residents and users. The result is an innovative inhabitation of the structural framework of the towers above that creates celebratory spaces for each community activity within.

This partnership and integration of community services within a residential development sets a new standard for mixed-used city living. Residential space and three stories of retail space is complemented by the Recreation Centre to provide this rapidly developing downtown neighbourhood with access to community programs and recreational space. Our team was selected by the developer to design the podium fit up to accommodate the Park department's 'Big 5' program template that includes aquatics, universal change rooms, gym, multi-purpose rooms, fitness, nutrition kitchen, administration, and lounge spaces. Community consultation helped determine a modified template reflecting the mix of units and expected population of this 90-storey development.

Overall, the Recreation Centre provides needed publicly accessible social and recreational programming within the podium base of a major residential tower in the City's core. Faced with rapidly increasing residential density, the City of Toronto is finding unique ways to service emergent high-rise neighbourhoods and successfully integrate them into the community to serve a diverse population.

Sustainability Statement

One Yonge sets a sustainable precedent for integrating recreation space into dense urban sites at a time when many municipalities are faced with challenges of development. Integration of community recreation into a larger facility refrains from burdening services, land use, and stormwater management, all while creating an integrated development.

The design of the facility works within the broader sustainability framework of the One Yonge Street Development.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Designed as a ‘place to play’, One Yonge sets a new standard for dense, mixed-used city living for a diverse population.

Connection to the community and all groups within was made during the early engagement process. Open town halls were set up in the community inviting everyone to have a say on program, identity, and accessibility.

Since this is a new residential area, the patterns of use or need were not clear enough to influence the program or design. In response, the planning allows for programming flexibility through the inclusion of more multipurpose rooms, open public recreation spaces, and a range of group exercise spaces. The mix allows the programmers to tailor the services to a wide range of users including equity-deserving groups. This facility will act as a silent partner supporting many possible futures.

Public Art Statement

Throughout the recreation centre, a series of murals by Doublenaut, a local design and illustration studio, depict City of Toronto motifs and landmarks and celebrate vibrant, active lifestyles within our city. The bright, playful murals, composed of 1 inch mosaic tiles, nurture a unique civic identity to the centre and welcome the community to explore.

WELLESLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE POOL ADDITION

495 Sherbourne Street

@mjma.ca

Project Team
Architects: MJMA Architecture & Design
Structural Engineers: Blackwell Structural Engineers
Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: Smith + Andersen
Civil Engineers: EMC Group
Landscape Architects: MJMA Architecture & Design
Artist: MJMA Architecture & Design (Experiential Graphic Design)

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto

General Contractor
Aquicon Construction

Photographer
Scott Norsworthy

Project Description

This substantial addition to the existing Wellesley Community Centre preserves and enhances key urban design and neighbourhood connections while delivering much needed aquatic and social programming to St. James Town, one of Canada's most densely populated and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods. The original building, designed by MJMA Architecture & Design and ZAS Architects and completed in 2005, was originally conceived to have aquatic programming on the eastern flank of the facility but this was cut during budget deliberations by the City. The much-awaited addition is built tight to the sidewalk to maximize site usage. The Bleecker Street façade, with its clerestory glazing and single-screened window, provides selective views for the privacy of both the users and the neighbouring residential towers. The glazed south façade, with views into the natatorium, activates the Bleecker Street entry and bookends the existing green space looking out onto Wellesley Street. The addition provides previously lacking program within a well-proportioned volume that respects the context of the neighbourhood.

Clad in glass and custom-profile zinc, the 54,000 sf addition houses a light-filled aquatics hall with a five-lane, 25-metre lap pool, a leisure and hydrotherapy pool, and a steam room. Following consultation with the community, a planned waterslide was replaced with a diving platform that has an integrated waterfall feature. The original changeroom programming has been expanded and updated into a pair of universally accessible changerooms separated from the staff areas and pool deck by tiled partitions that are punctured by glazed slots to maintain a discreet visual connection between these spaces. In addition, new spaces include two multipurpose rooms, a staff office, and an interior bridge that marries the addition to the existing structure. A green roof divides the volumes housing the aquatics hall and multipurpose rooms, forming a rooftop "meadow" visible from the interior public corridor.

Construction of the addition on a tight urban site, while maintaining full operation of the existing facility serving a high-needs area, meant that the work had to be carefully sequenced and coordinated. Communication between the contractor and the facility was key to ensure that work progressed safely and with minimal impact on the patrons.

During the course of construction, the Wellesley Community Centre served as an emergency shelter run by the Red Cross for local residents displaced by a high-rise fire and served as COVID-19 vaccine centre.

Sustainability Statement

A feasibility study undertaken early in the design process determined that photovoltaics were not a good choice for the project, as future developments to the south could result in increased shade over the site. The area was known to have bedrock fairly close to the surface, making geothermal the best choice.

A hybrid geo-exchange system with a vertical ground heat exchanger comprising 30 boreholes extending 600 feet into the earth was added below the existing green space to the south of the Bleecker Street entry and connecting back into the newly provided basement addition. This system provides heat to the swimming pool supplemented by staged, high efficiency condensing boilers and a geothermal heat pump integrates with the existing gymnasium HVAC to provide cooling. With a projected 35 to 50% energy savings, it contributes to a comprehensive sustainability plan that meets Tier 1 of Toronto's Green Standards.

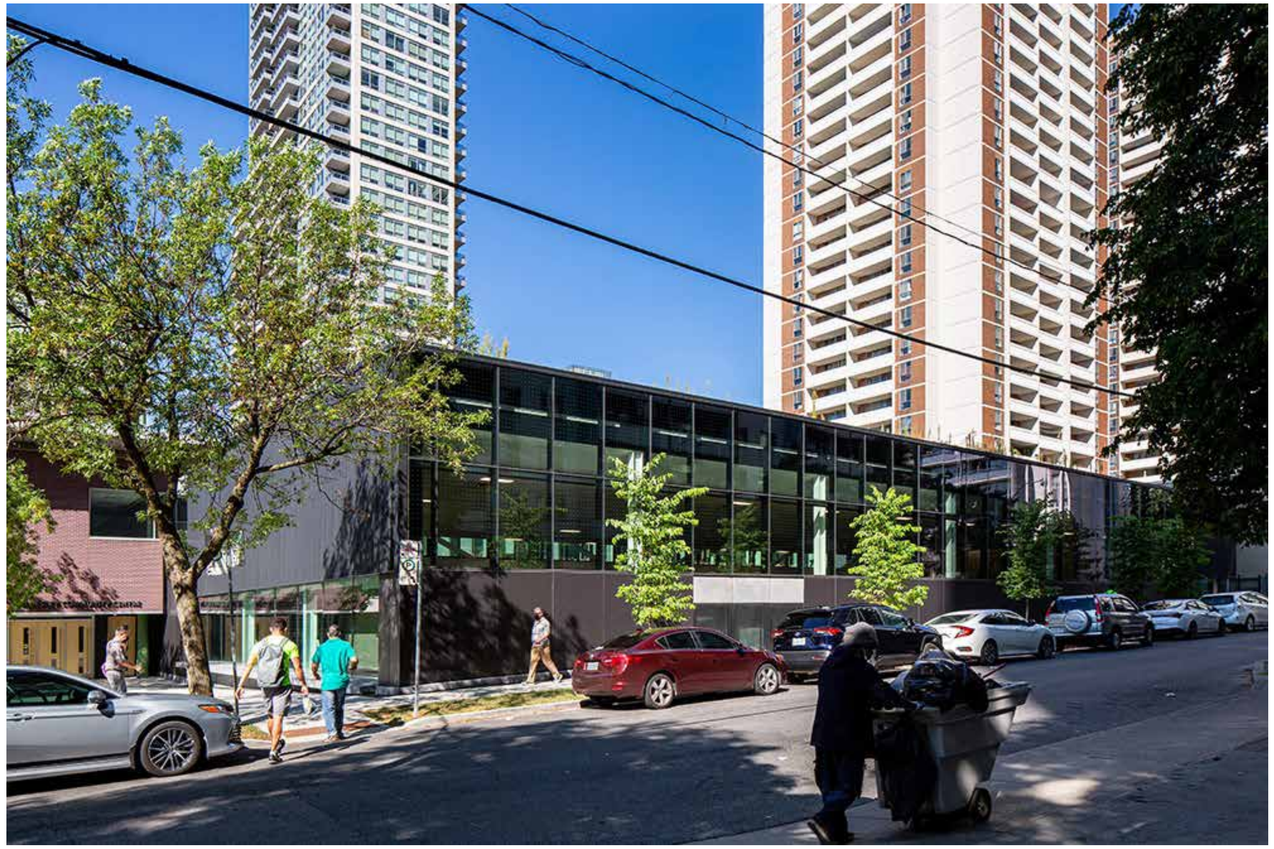
Intensive and extensive green roofs were provided above the pool volume and at the second floor level between the multipurpose room block and the aquatic hall, for a total of 66% of the available roof area.

As a passive design measure, glazing locations were selected to reduce solar heat gain and maximize natural light throughout the addition. An aging skylight was replaced at the tie-in to the existing building to improve thermal performance and quality of light.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The Wellesley Pool Addition is located in St. James Town, an inner-city neighborhood in the northeast corner of the downtown core of Toronto. In the late 1950's a private consortium developed the neighborhood into Canada's first high-rise development modeled on the modern planning notion of towers in an open landscape instead of a traditional urban street system. Despite this high density, a lack of civic buildings were developed in the area, leaving residents with fewer community resources compare to other neighbourhoods in the City. Several of the buildings were bought by the City and turned into public housing. Today, St. James Town is one of Toronto's most densely populated and ethnically diverse neighbourhoods.

Despite its restricted budget and the ambition of its program, the existing Community Centre has been lauded as a success story for the St. James Town neighbourhood, both as a highly functional hybrid civic building and as an example of "beauty on a budget." Two decades after the Aquatics programming was removed from the original plan due to budgetary restrictions, the Pool Addition completes the City's vision for a "full community centre program" to serve this vibrant high-needs neighbourhood. Most importantly, the addition reinforces a welcoming and accessible 'front door' access off of Bleeker St.



YORK WOODS LIBRARY
1785 Finch Avenue West

@diamondschmittarchitects

Project Team
Architects: Diamond Schmitt Architects
Structural Engineers: Entuitive
Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: Smith + Andersen
Landscape Architects: Land Art Design Landscape Architects Inc.
Artist: Mural painted by community members
Interiors: Diamond Schmitt Architects

Developer/Owner/Client
Toronto Public Library

General Contractor
Brown Daniels Associates

Photographer
Lisa Logan Photography

Project Description

The revitalized York Woods Library is transformed through a thoughtful renovation and expansion. Located in an underserved part of Toronto that lacks community infrastructure, York Woods Library serves a population exceeding 55,000, meeting the need for safe public spaces.

Beyond a traditional library lending model, it's a vital hub, particularly for youth. With ongoing neighborhood transformations and community rail upgrades, the design emphasizes street presence and transparency by introducing transparent program areas and flexible zones within the original Brutalist architecture. This ensures enhanced architectural clarity, wayfinding, and user flow.

The transformation of the original concrete Brutalist library and theatre, which embody an enormous amount of carbon, is an exemplar of repurposing our existing cultural assets, avoiding unnecessary demolition and emissions. The existing building is comprised of multiple volumes from two different eras. A new 1,300-square-foot glass entrance pavilion was scaled to fit into this family of elemental forms and unifies the collection of heritage building volumes. It also establishes the theatre as a shared resource for the library. The glazed addition connects lightly to the existing structure, and its transparency frames and displays the original brick drum and concrete tower facing Finch Avenue West. Heights of canopies align with the predominant lines of the existing facade.

The entrance pavilion, topped by a prismatic timber roof, creates a welcoming presence on Finch Avenue, provides a shaded seating area, and optimizes pedestrian flow. The light-filled pavilion is a multi-purpose space for public gatherings and events also offers glimpses to passersby. A new accessible ramp and stairway have been provided for the entrance. No new parking was added, and new bike racks encourage multi-modal transport. Once complete, there will be a Finch LRT stop right at the new front door of the library.

The project team collaborated closely with municipal, provincial, and transit authorities to coordinate the landscape design, urban planning, infrastructure, construction sequencing, and site access. This concerted effort ensures the library stands as a versatile hub, offering a spectrum of programs and educational support, contributing to the social and creative flourishing of its residents during urban transformation.

The renovation is centred around a new two-storey transparent interconnected atrium and amphitheatre staircase that completely opens-up the interior. This gesture improves orientation, enhances circulation, visual and acoustic connections, and creates a safer, more inclusive environment for users, while also offering additional seating and opportunities for formal and informal gathering and community events.

Sustainability Statement

An energy analysis was undertaken at project inception in 2018. The goal was to identify existing energy use and opportunities for greater efficiency. The existing energy consumption was 33.5 ekWH/ft2/yr which is higher than the Ontario average of 27.5 ekWh/ft2/yr for commercial / institutional – public buildings.

Energy Conservation Measures were undertaken by the project team as part of the building retrofit. Building and systems upgrades resulted in significant efficiencies and reduced building operation costs for natural gas and electricity, for a total cost savings of 32% and total energy consumption savings of 52%.

The existing masonry and pre-cast envelope has significant thermal mass and moderate glazing. Even with the new glass lobby entrance addition, which uses high efficiency curtain wall glazing and doors, the window to wall ratio is 25%. All existing windows were replaced with High performance triple-silver coated low-E-glass for solar control and visible light transmittance with comprehensive weatherstripping and sealants around the entire perimeter. The roof was replaced with a new high-albedo modified bitumen roofing membrane.

A 7,500 sf solar PV array at Level 2 produces 54,000 kW/year. All lighting was replaced with LED fixtures which reduces the electrical energy use by 76,276 kWh per year. Aging mechanical systems were replaced with high efficiency units. A new Building Automation System (BAS) is tied into Toronto Public Library's other branches providing improved capabilities for remote control.

Low-flow water-saving fixtures throughout building save approximately 25-30% of water consumption. A new outdoor garden area provides a shaded and welcoming entrance to the new addition and features indigenous plantings that do not require irrigation. A swale in landscape captures storm water runoff without the addition of catch basin.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

York Woods Library transcends the traditional lending model, addressing demographic shifts through a revitalized expansion.

The library's original four-square plan and siloed floors impeded vertical circulation which was previously only possible through a set of fire escape stairs, creating isolated areas. Diminishing useability further, the collection was in a maze of tall shelving, and the library's excellent range of programing was invisible and unknown to most users.

The innovative design opens the facility with a two-storey transparent atrium, creating a connected and inclusive community hub. Strategic placement of interior glazing provides sightlines, improves natural lighting, and highlights the program rooms. To be able to read or study quietly while overlooking areas of vibrant activity creates a sense of connectivity and commonality.

The renewed space is host to diverse programs to foster creativity and learning, including a Youth Hub, Digital Innovation hub (offering high end and emerging technology & software including 3D printing, digital design, scanning, robotics, virtual reality and coding/programming), a Computer Learning Centre for digital literacy training and the KidsStop Early Literary Centre. Anticipating an adjacent music school, the library also includes an instrument lending library. The revitalized space ensures inclusive participation and provides essential educational support.

York Woods Library has evolved into a vital hub, adapting to the changing needs of the community. Now, a primary gathering spot for youth after school, it offers a safe space for socializing, studying, and support programs. The interior retains the original Brutalist structure, incorporating exposed concrete beams, softened with wood and vibrant acoustic panels. Furniture selections embrace organic palettes and forms and bring colour and durability to spaces. With its warmth and transparency, the renovation establishes the building as a cultural hub for the community and its future generations.

Public Art Statement

A mural painted by teens from the community has been retained and is located in the new Youth Hub room as part of the renovation. Photographs of the mural being painted are also displayed large scale throughout the library, further reenforcing the communities involvement in this important institution.

Energy Performance Metrics

- Green House Gas Intensity: 33.9 kgCO2e/m^2
- Energy Use Intensity: 176 kWh/m^2/year

TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY: ALBERT CAMPBELL DISTRICT BRANCH

496 Birchmount Road

@lga-ap

Project Team
Architects: LGA Architectural Partners
Structural Engineers: Blackwell Engineers
Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: Enso Systems Inc
Civil Engineers: EMC Group
Landscape Architects: Aboud & Associates
Artist: Red Urban Nation Artist Collective - Mural Wall
Indigenous Consultant: Trina Moyan, Bell and Bernard LTD
Indigenous Garden Design and Installation: Miinikaan Innovation and Design

Developer/Owner/Client
Toronto Public Library

General Contractor
Pre-Eng Contracting

Photographer
Doublespace Photography

Project Description

LGA Architectural Partners' transformation of the Albert Campbell District Library demonstrates how aging civic infrastructure can be reimagined through design excellence to support equity, accessibility, and sustainability. This comprehensive renovation of Fairfield and DuBois' 1971 brutalist structure restores the library as a vibrant, inclusive, and future-ready civic hub—one that reconnects meaningfully with the public realm and surrounding urban fabric.

The original building's second-floor entrance created a physical and symbolic disconnect from the street. Its grade level was hidden from view and largely inaccessible. By relocating the entrance to grade and connecting it to a new elevator, the library is now universally accessible. In place of the former entry ramp, the building now opens generously to Birchmount Road, where an Indigenous garden establish a new green gathering space. This move also fills the ground floor with natural light.

Strategic interventions foster new relationships with the community. A ribbon of windows connects the children's area and garden. A colourful Indigenous mural weaves across interior and exterior surfaces.

New glazing on the previously blank west façade introduces views to a neighbouring school, and a rooftop terrace adds a welcoming overlook. Below grade, a once-inaccessible double-height auditorium has been revitalized as a flexible and generous event space—restoring a valuable community asset.

Modernization was balanced with heritage sensitivity. The original red-and-white cladding was replaced with charcoal fibre-reinforced concrete panels and black metal, preserving the building's striking geometries while vastly improving envelope performance. The updated system includes R-25 insulation and a liquid-applied air/vapour barrier, greatly reducing energy use.

This project exemplifies how adaptive reuse can drive sustainability and design innovation. Renovating instead of rebuilding halved the embodied carbon while celebrating and evolving Toronto's modernist civic legacy. The renewed library now exceeds its original intent—not only as a destination for learning and gathering, but as a precedent-setting example of inclusive, sustainable, and contextually responsive urban design.

Sustainability Statement

The renewal of Albert Campbell District Library reflects a progressive approach to sustainability, balancing architectural transformation with responsible resource management. Although the original plan called for demolition or a major addition, LGA worked closely with Toronto Public Library to fit the full program within the existing envelope—preserving the structure and avoiding the environmental cost of new construction.

Through this adaptive reuse strategy, the project reduced embodied carbon by half by retaining and upgrading the original concrete structure. Targeted interventions—including new insulation, recladding, and advanced building systems—significantly improved energy performance while maintaining the building's bold brutalist character. Larger, strategically placed windows introduce daylight deep into the plan, reducing reliance on artificial lighting and creating a more comfortable interior environment.

Site and landscape improvements further support the building's environmental goals. The new entrance regrades the site to follow its natural topography, helping the library withstand climate impacts such as flooding. Stormwater is diverted to a new underground cistern beneath the parking lot, easing pressure on public infrastructure. A newly planted Indigenous garden reintroduces native and pollinator-friendly species, adding biodiversity and offering a calm, green gathering space along a busy arterial road.

Material conservation was also central to the design. Original concrete block walls and columns were carefully restored using specialized cleaning and patching techniques to retain their patina. New materials were selected for durability and low maintenance, reducing long-term waste and resource use.

By extending the life of this valuable civic building, the project offers a replicable model for sustainable infrastructure renewal. It demonstrates how adaptive-reuse, when paired with resilient landscape strategies and thoughtful material choices can align climate responsibility with design excellence.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

One of the primary motivations behind updating Albert Campbell Library was Toronto Public Library's desire to create a more inclusive and culturally relevant space for the Scarborough community—a population that has significantly diversified since the library opened. To reflect this diversity, advance reconciliation efforts, and welcome all patrons equally, the design prioritized accessibility, spatial connectivity, and meaningful cultural representation.

We collaborated with Indigenous Consultant Trina Moyan of Bell and Bernard, who informed design decisions rooted in reconciliation. Through this engagement process, we learned the importance of creating a stronger connection between the building and the land, and found an opportunity to do so with the front entry garden. Designed in collaboration with Miinikaan Innovation & Design, the garden helps to establish natural and cultural connections through the reintroduction native plant species, a medicine wheel, and a mural by Red Urban Nation Artist Collective. The garden is now a dedicated space for learning about Indigenous traditions like the Four Sacred Medicines (tobacco, sage, cedar and sweetgrass) and the 13 moons calendar.

To honor the site's history and Indigenous presence, a ceremony was held for the five Grandfather trees that were felled during the regrading of the site. After their removal, the wood was salvaged for future integration within the library's smudging room, a purpose-built space for Indigenous cultural practices.

The library's transformation fosters a sense of belonging for all users. The renovation prioritizes clear sightlines, inside and out, across all floors, reinforcing safety and openness. A new elevator was introduced to connect all levels, making key amenity spaces—including the outdoor terrace and auditorium—universally accessible for the first time. This emphasis on spatial equity ensures that every visitor, regardless of ability, can fully participate in the library's offerings and experience a sense of welcome and inclusion throughout the building.

Public Art Statement

Public art plays a vital role in the transformation of Albert Campbell District Library, reinforcing its identity as a dynamic community hub. Integrated thoughtfully into the site, these artistic elements enrich the library's visual landscape, celebrate cultural narratives, and create meaningful connections between the building, its users, and its surroundings.

A focal point of this initiative is a striking mural by Red Urban Nation Artist Collective, a group dedicated to uplifting Indigenous voices through public art. Positioned in the interior children's area, and extending out into the public garden, the mural enlivens the wall with vibrant imagery, made even more dynamic by the introduction of a new ribbon of windows. This artistic intervention not only enhances the atmosphere for young visitors but also deepens the library's relationship with the surrounding community.

Beyond the mural, other subtle design elements nod to the library's past—palimpsest walls preserve remnants of previous ceiling geometries, while red accents recall the building's original aesthetic. By integrating public art into the renovation, the library fosters a sense of place, encourages dialogue, and ensures that artistic expression remains an integral part of the community's shared experience.

FIRST NARAYEVER CONGREGATION
187 Brunswick Avenue

@lga-ap

Project Team
Architects: LGA Architectural Partners
Structural Engineers: Blackwell Structural Engineers
Civil Engineers: MGM Consulting Inc.
Electrical Engineers: RDZ Engineers Limited
Mechanical Engineers: E-Lumen International Inc.
Heritage Architects: ERA Architects Inc.
Accessibility: Human Space
Planning: Bousfields

Developer/Owner/Client
Fist Narayever Congregation

General Contractor
Boszko & Verity Inc. Construction

Photographer
Younes Bounhar - Doublespace Photography

Project Description

Set within a row of Victorian brick houses on Brunswick Avenue, the First Narayever Congregation occupies a rare position: a place of worship quietly embedded in a stable, single-family residential neighbourhood. Modest in scale but deeply rooted in community life, First Narayever demonstrates how institutions of this nature can be sensitively and successfully integrated into Toronto's urban fabric—reinforcing neighbourhood character while meeting evolving social and spiritual needs.

Originally constructed in the 1890s as a Foresters' Hall and later used by Toronto's first Mennonite congregation, the building was acquired by the Narayever congregation in 1943. Aside from a coat of blue paint in the 1980s, the single-storey building remained largely unchanged. LGA Architectural Partners was retained to make the building fully accessible and environmentally sustainable, while preserving its role as a community anchor. The team's analysis determined that the synagogue's heritage value was within the congregation itself, not the building. So while we were able to make significant changes, we still needed creative strategies to work within a constrained footprint while expanding programming and enhancing functionality without overwhelming the context.

A new front vestibule, housing both elevator and stair, provides a dignified, barrier-free entrance that allows everyone—regardless of ability—to enter through the same door. Inside, we shifted the sanctuary eastward within the existing envelope to preserve the residential setback and allow space for the second-storey addition. Discreetly set back, the addition allows for important services including a rabbi's study that had not existed on-site before, while maintaining the block's scale, datum, and rhythm. A folded roofline reinterprets the original gable, establishing a familiar but contemporary silhouette. The building's systems were upgraded to include solar panels, green roofs, and passive design strategies—advancing both the City's climate goals and Jewish values of environmental stewardship.

The project restores the building's original clay colour of the façade, however with terracotta tiles that echo the neighbouring brick houses without aiming to imitate them. Blue accents and signage reference the synagogue's more recent identity, balancing renewal and continuity. The front landscaping includes a generous patio, designed to encourage gathering before and after services in the fresh air, further reinforcing the building's civic and social presence.

This thoughtful transformation enhances the public realm, preserves a sense of place, and sets a precedent for how inclusive, resilient design can enable long-standing institutions to thrive in low-rise neighbourhoods—aligning with the City's goals for equity, accessibility, and sustainability.

Sustainability Statement

In keeping with Jewish traditions of stewardship and care for the earth, the First Narayever Congregation is deeply committed to environmental sustainability. The building renewal project offered an opportunity to achieve long-held goals: creating an accessible synagogue while significantly reducing environmental impact and long-term operating costs.

Our approach began with conservation. Retaining most of the original 1890s structure, the project minimized embodied carbon, diverted construction waste, and avoided the toll of producing new materials. This was especially critical for masonry, whose local manufacture involves gas-fired kilns with high emissions.

Wherever possible, materials were retained and restored rather than replaced. When original elements couldn't be salvaged, they were carefully replicated. The sanctuary's millwork, originally made from poor-quality pressboard, was digitally scanned to guide the fabrication of high-quality replacements that preserve the space's visual continuity.

Natural light plays a key role in reducing operational energy. Existing north- and side-facing windows—no longer permitted under current code—were retained, filling the sanctuary with daylight and reducing reliance on electric lighting.

High-performance systems and building envelope strategies are layered throughout. Green roofs mitigate the urban heat island effect, manage stormwater, and provide insulation. Rooftop solar panels contribute renewable energy to the grid. An AeroBarrier weather sealing system reduces air leakage and improves thermal comfort.

Additional measures—upgraded mechanical systems, LED lighting, enhanced insulation, double-glazed windows, low-VOC finishes, and low-flow fixtures—further improve building performance and occupant well-being.

All trees on and around the site were carefully protected during construction to preserve the mature tree canopy, recognizing its ecological value and its importance to the property and streetscape.

These integrated strategies advance the synagogue's environmental mission while maintaining its modest urban presence. The project offers a replicable model for small-scale institutions seeking to embed sustainability within heritage contexts—aligning with the City's goals for climate responsibility, accessibility, and long-term resilience.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

As an unaffiliated synagogue, the First Narayever is not aligned with any specific movement in Judaism, allowing it to shape a proud identity rooted in both strong traditional and egalitarian values. Its renovation was therefore guided by principles of equity, reconciliation, and inclusion—reflecting the congregation's ethos, the architectural team's commitment to design justice, and the privilege of expressing cultural identity within a pluralistic Toronto.

A core design priority was to create equal access for all. A new front vestibule with a shared entrance, elevator, and stair ensures that everyone—regardless of mobility, identity, or background—enters through the same door. This gesture embodies the congregation's long-standing ethos of welcome to Jews of all backgrounds and identities within an inclusive and supportive community.

The project also acknowledges its location on the traditional territory of Indigenous nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. With the privilege of being on this land comes responsibility. Sustainability measures—such as green roofs, solar panels, and material conservation—were integral to the design, reflecting shared commitments to stewardship, intergenerational care, and ecological responsibility.

Equity is also expressed in daily life. A new weekly farmers market, hosted on the front patio and in the synagogue's lower level, has become a joyful meeting place where growers, congregants, and neighbours come together—nourishing both body and community. And an example of how the building serves the neighbourhood beyond simply its congregation.

The design process centred on listening and collaboration, preserving the sanctuary's character while expanding its inclusivity. This is a synagogue that lives its values not only in word but in form—where equity and tradition are woven into the architecture itself, welcoming difference and deepening a sense of belonging.

ANISHNAWBE HEALTH TORONTO - INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

425 Cherry Street

@SmithArchitecture

Project Team
Architects: Stantec Architecture Ltd.
Engineers: Stantec Consulting Ltd.
Landscape Architects: Stantec Consulting Ltd.
Others: Two Row Architect, Urban Strategies

Developer/Owner/Client
Anishnawbe Health Toronto
Prism - AHT Project Manager

General Contractor
Harbridge and Cross

Photographer
James Brittain

Project Description

The Indigenous Community Health Centre, located in Toronto's Indigenous Hub, occupies a prominent city block in the West Don Lands. This 4,000 SM facility brings Anishnawbe Health Toronto together under one roof, significantly enhancing access to health services for Toronto's Indigenous communities.

The building design draws inspiration from prioritizing 'place' through the concept of "land first." This approach fosters a new relationship between built form, landscape, and the city, emphasizing transparency, porosity, and connectivity. The ground floor and entrance space offer a visual connection from Cherry Street through to the central landscape at the heart of the Indigenous Hub. This landscape, characterized by native trees and traditional medicinal plants, provides essential outdoor space for the Health Centre and acts as a central focus and amenity for the Indigenous Hub.

The upper floors of the building are elevated from the ground plane to highlight the connection between the city and the landscape. Weathered steel-clad pavilions house publicly accessible programs include the Community Room, Community Kitchen, and a Traditional Healer space. The detail of the pedestrian paving along Cherry Street and the Mill Street Plaza, is carried through the ground floor and into the central landscape, reinforcing this important relationship. The upper clinical floors are connected to the ground floor through a four-story atrium that opens dramatically to honor the eastern sun and the central landscape. The red feature stair is inspired by 'The Red Road,' an Indigenous metaphor related to making wise and spiritual choices.

Above the ground plane, the building expression is inspired by the 'Fancy Dancer Shawl.' The curvilinear floor plates are clad with perforated aluminum panels that create the illusion of folding fabric and define traditional Indigenous textile patterns. The windows of the clinic spaces are punctuated by a red fin, also inspired by the Red Road, representing the individual patient within and providing solar shading. The fringe, an important component of the shawl, is represented by over 12,000 strands of stainless-steel bead that gently wave in the breeze, defining transition spaces between the building, street, and the plaza. This design mimics the movement of healing through dance, with their sound reminiscent of a jingle dress.

Indigenous art is integrated throughout the facility, including sandblasted etched 'Petroglyphs' on the exterior concrete walls. A one-of-a-kind art piece by Christi Belcourt, water jet cut into ¾" plate steel, further enriches the entrance lobby, creating a cohesive and culturally resonant environment.

Sustainability Statement

Land holds profound cultural and spiritual significance in Indigenous cultures. The design of the Anishnawbe Health Toronto Indigenous Community Health Centre prioritizes the concept of "land first". This approach introduces a new paradigm for integrating built forms within the city. The central landscaped courtyard, visible from Cherry Street through the main entrance lobby, features native trees and traditional healing plants. This landscape not only provides essential access for the Indigenous Community Health Centre but also serves as an amenity for the surrounding residential and educational components of the Hub.

The sustainability goals for the Anishnawbe Health Toronto Indigenous Community Health Centre are guided by the Toronto Green Standard. The building features an accessible, multi-level, extensive green roof, where soil and plants retain and evaporate stormwater, mitigating the urban heat island effect. Portions of the roof not covered by the green roof are designed with high albedo materials, using reflective, high albedo modified bitumen cap sheets with an initial Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) of 78.

All exterior lighting is Dark Sky compliant, featuring full cut-off fixtures and a color temperature rating of 3000k to protect nocturnal environments. The window glass is fritted to enhance visibility for birds, reducing the risk of bird-building collisions. Energy modeling indicates that the building's design is 25.7% more energy-efficient than required by the Ontario Building Code (SB-10). The building's design EUI is 178 ekWh/m2, and its GHGI is 24.5 kg CO2e/m2. Additionally, the plumbing fixtures are water-efficient, low-flow models.

The building is situated in a part of the city with ample bicycle lanes, offering short-term bicycle parking near the main entrance and covered, long-term bicycle parking in the garage. This thoughtful integration of sustainable features and cultural elements underscores the commitment to creating a harmonious and environmentally responsible space for the community.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

From the outset of the design process for the Anishnawbe Health Toronto Indigenous Community Health Centre, Joe Hester, the Director of AHT, emphasized, “I want this place to be for everyone.” This vision set the tone for the entire project, focusing on inclusivity and creating a welcoming environment for all.

The facility is designed to be inviting to the entire city, seamlessly connecting Cherry Street and the Mill Street Plaza both visually and physically to the central landscape at the core of the Indigenous Hub. Universal accessibility is a cornerstone of the design, allowing everyone, regardless of ability, to fully access and enjoy the space. Signage is thoughtfully designed to accommodate the visually impaired, further enhancing the building’s inclusivity.

Community members were actively involved throughout the design process, from planning to the building’s expression, reflecting the needs and values of the community. Indigenous artists have made significant contributions to the public realm of the building, including renowned figures such as Christi Belcourt, Joseph Sagaj, Vanessa Dion-Fletcher, and Jon Bird. Their artworks enrich the space, fostering a deeper connection to Indigenous culture and heritage.

The building design strikes a harmonious balance between the city, the Indigenous community, health, and the landscape. It embodies the spirit of inclusivity, creating a space where everyone feels welcome and respected. This thoughtful integration of cultural elements and universal accessibility underscores the commitment to creating a place for everyone, honoring the spirit of inclusivity and reconciliation.

TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY HEADQUARTERS

5 Shoreham Drive

@zas-architects @bucholzmcevoy

Project Team
Architects: Bucholz McEvoy Architects + ZASArchitects
Engineers: RJC, TYLIN, TRANSSOLAR, INTROBA, Mbii
Landscape Architects: Schollen & Co
Artist: Story Factory Studios
Sustainable Certification Consultants: DEW Inc., Waterwall Consultants, GREEN REASON

Developer/Owner/Client
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority - TRCA

General Contractor
Eastern Construction

Photographer
Michael Moran

Project Description

Set back from Toronto's Black Creek Ravine, the new TRCA administrative building accommodates over 400 staff within 8,000 m² of open-plan office space constructed of and clad in timber. Designed as a leading example of green building integrated into a restored natural heritage system, staff who manage the natural environment and their visitors are metaphorically placed into "the heart of the watershed" by providing a tangible platform for reimagining urban design for communities in the Greater Toronto Area. The crystalline geometry of the design is intended to unlock the presence of the natural environment externally and internally, and enhance the character and quality of the interaction between the urban realm, nature, and human activity.

TRCA's mission is to achieve safe and resilient communities and be the provincial leader in conserving, restoring and managing natural resources to advance safe and sustainable development. The urban design and building form centers the design of the urban realm around people, and respects and enhances its three primary natural characteristics; water, forestation, and topography by carefully weaving the building form within a restored landscape that enhances these systems. Generous setbacks from the stable-top-of-bank of the ravine and the associated woodland allow for the development of rain-gardens used to shape a new urban-nature public realm, joined by an arcing footpath through restored woodland connecting the building to adjacent pedestrian and cycle routes, the ravine landscape, cultural facilities and the communities along Jane Street to York University. Water from visible scuppers and troughs from the building's roofs enter this landscape and attenuate all surface water around the building's geometry and form. A series of sheltered external spaces, stepping through the preserved and restored urban woodland to the ravine woodland, create new vantage points to nature, through outdoor public meeting spaces, from the internal foyer, from lower and upper terraces and atria: this new ravine edge public realm is enriched by active spaces at the ground floor of the building, with inviting public 'rooms' offering venues for new uses, and places for community engagement embedded in the natural setting of the ravine. Within the timber foyer large public rooms connect the 'public' parts of the building to the 'workplace' parts of the building, allowing increasing levels of engagement and investigation helping TRCA to leverage its position as a not-for-profit operating in the broader public sector to achieve collective impacts within their communities and across all levels of government.

Sustainability Statement

The project sustainability approach provides an opportunity for Toronto to renovate, repair, and re-imagine its relationship with the Black Creek ravine, part of the system of river valleys that form the unique ravine-scape of the City, and of which TRCA and the City are the guardians. The building and site replaces a surface parking lot and now houses a “living laboratory” for the public and developers to reconceptualize building practices to reduce the environmental impact of construction, and to better bridge the gap toward sustainable methods through a tangible example. Through a rigorous evidence-based, research process of experimentation, interactive workshops established high performance metrics and synergies. This project goes beyond the baseline of Zero Carbon Building requirements. Notably, the building houses four solar chimneys pairing with four water wall reverse osmosis systems and an open loop geothermal heating / cooling energy system to support the natural ventilation system’s strategy. This allows the building to be run in natural ventilation mode for over half of the year. Extensive rain gardens are integrated into the landscape to collect surface run off and create a buffer for storm runoff to the ravine. Future proofing was essential in realising this fully accessible building, while making a conscious effort to achieve a smaller carbon footprint holistically through all lifecycle phases in combating climate change. The building has been accredited CaGBC, Zero Carbon Building Standard (ZCB) Design v1 2023 Ontario Embodied Carbon Awards, Commercial Category Winner, CLF Carbon Leadership Forum, 75% reduction in embodied-carbon footprint, meets or exceeds City of Toronto Green Building Standard v3 Tier 2, will LEED Platinum v4, and WELL Building Standard Silver v2.

Energy Performance Metrics

- Thermal Demand Intensity (TEDI) 29.0 kwh/m^2
- Green House Gas Intensity (GHGI) 4.1 kgCO_2e/m^2
- Energy Use Intensity (EUI) 82.5 kwh/m^2

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

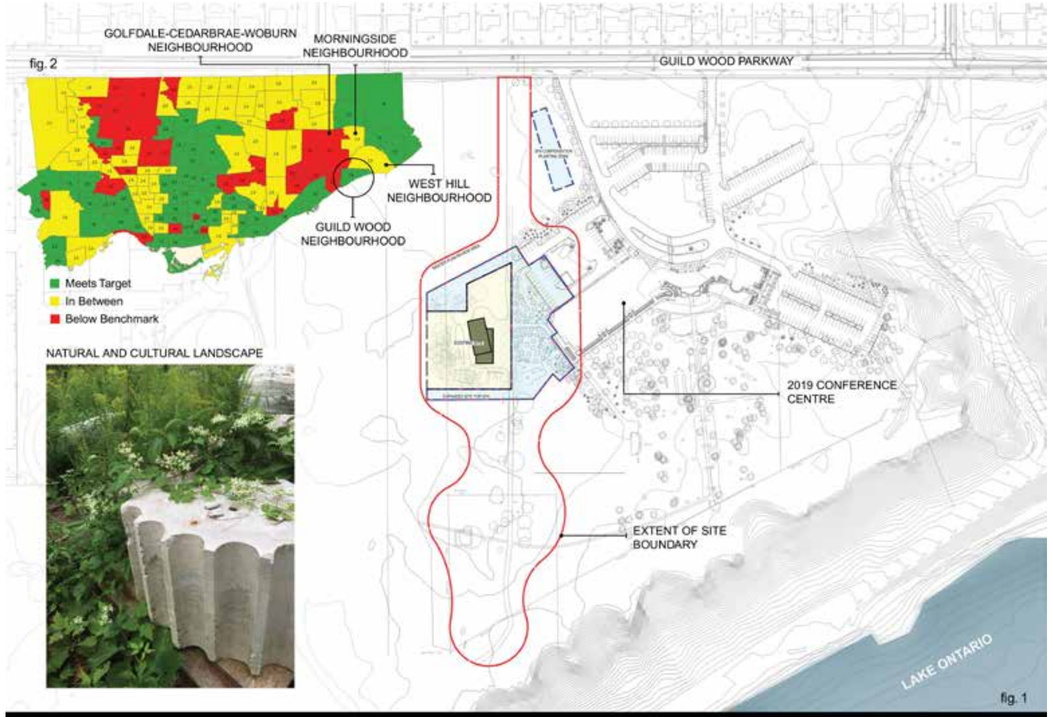
The TRCA uses the new headquarters building as a tool of implementation of its DEI Strategic Playbook through the design of an inclusive and accessible urban landscape that celebrates the history and acknowledges its stewardship of the Traditional Territories and Treaty Lands on which it sits, and providing a platform to extend the TRCA's long history of supporting social sustainability through Sustainable Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAP). The welcoming and accessible arcing footpath embraces the urban woodland and drawing the forested natural environment into the building, creating a 'living laboratory' and hub for collaboration in the external and internal spaces it creates. Building lightly on the ancient landscape of the ravine using primarily timber the building's urban design creates spaces for people around an inclusive landscape of rain-gardens, the Ravine forest, and the Urban Woodland, drawing the Ravine visually into the core of the project, providing adaptable multi-purpose spaces outdoors and indoors, accommodating collaborative meeting areas, exhibition spaces for show-casing projects, new research, presenting an open and engaging interface with the workings of the TRCA, a drop-in public space easily accessible from the public space, promote openness, transparency and collaboration, whilst offering possible venues for new partnering relationships, providing a meeting place for the communities at Jane Street to the west and York University to the east. On the eastern side of the site a structured urban interface with Tennis Canada integrates green 'soft' parking areas that can become a sheltered multi-use space offering the potential to become a venue at weekends for food and beverage kiosks during Tennis Canada events, or for selling of farmers market produce, whilst acting as an access to a service/depot area for TRCA ground operations during the week. The building is WELL V2 certified, highlighting the strong equity and inclusivity principles that the biophilic approach to design supports.

Public Art Statement

This exhibition, written by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and designed by Story Factory Studios, highlights TRCA's ongoing sustainability initiatives and the innovative features of their green building. The exhibit was developed with a strong focus on eco-conscious design, incorporating hand-drawn illustrations and environmentally friendly materials to create an engaging, educational experience. A carefully curated colour palette—evoking nature and creativity— supports the theme, offering visitors and staff an inspiring and visually cohesive journey through TRCA's commitment to sustainability.

CLARK CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
191 Guildwood Parkway

@taylorhazellarch



The CCA site within Guild Park and Gardens in Scarbourough. Figure 1 Drawing: PMA Landscape Architects
Neighbourhood Equity Study - Marginalization, 2020 (top left). Figure 2 Diagram: City of Toronto

01

Project Team
Architects: Taylor Hazell Architects
Engineers: RJC Engineers
Landscape Architects: PMA Landscape Architects/Arborist Amy Turner
Mechanical, Electrical, Civil Consultant: Jain Sustainability Consultants
Environmental Consultant: Azimuth
Transportation Planning: BA Consulting Group Ltd.

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto

General Contractor
Atlas Constructors Inc.

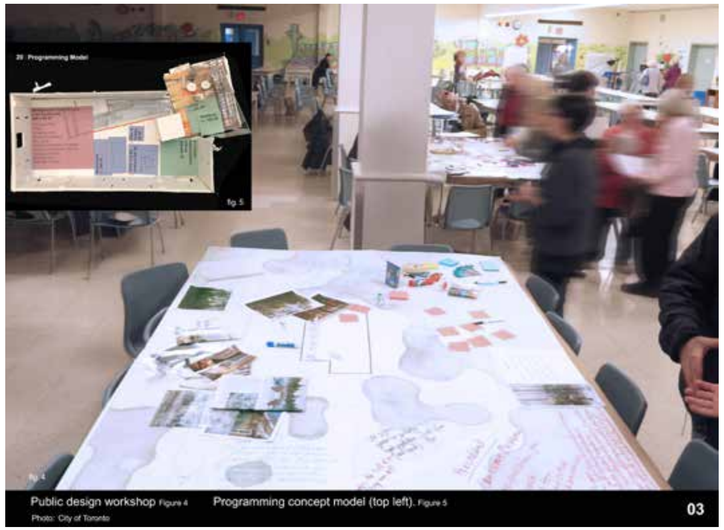
Photographer
PMA Landscape Architects
Taylor Hazell Architects
City of Toronto
Tom Arban

Project Description

Guild Park & Gardens is a property of diverse land forms divided into two parts: natural and cultural. These ecologies intertwine at the CCA site. The forest is complex and evolving. The cultural landscape is a park populated by architectural fragments and conference venue with associated parking. The facility provides classes focused on under-represented artists. The building integrates with natural and cultural landscapes. The urban design intent for this facility is that it supports the social, cultural and environmental goals described in the Guild Park and Gardens Masterplan. It reflects the needs and values of all peoples and identifies with communities in surrounding neighbourhoods. As the 2020 Neighbourhood Equity Index Scores demonstrate, amongst the 158 neighbourhoods making up Toronto, Guildwood ranks amongst the highest in amenities and outcome while surrounding neighbourhoods score amongst the lowest. The effect that this disparity has on human development as demonstrated by social outcomes is profound. The urban design intent of the of the project is fulfilled through attention to design, functionality and refinement of services that promote flexibility, and response.

In 2024 there were over 14,000 visitors to the CCA. The City of Toronto Urban Design guidelines for public spaces were used to inform decisions about every aspect of the public space. The CCA sets a precedent for the value of good design for interactive public space and innovation. It is designed to be visually memorable and to act as a gathering place. It communicates to a broad range of age groups and from a number of points of view: from the forest, the gardens or parking lot. It is a point of access into the forest and into the building foyer, through open galleries and to the third floor. It is interactive and has an unusual density of experience. Barrier free design governed all aspect of the design. The ground level was reinterpreted to create a unified barrier free surface connecting to accessible space around the northeast and west sides of the building. Open galleries with private gender-neutral washrooms on each floor. Studios and seminar spaces are located at the end of the open galleries. Universal design principles are used for all detailing and wayfinding.

Guildwood's urban design and scale promoted pedestrian movement. This naturally extends into the park. The CCA promotes cycling and has permanent lock up stations for bicycles. Public transit to the site is regular and convenient.



Sustainability Statement

The CCA carries forward a continuity of sustainable design and cultural stewardship. Rooted in a vision of the estate as a parkland dedicated to conservation and the arts, the project emphasizes adaptive reuse of the heritage building, restoration of local ecology, and a commitment to social equity through inclusive, community-based arts programming.

The surrounding landscape had been significantly disrupted by construction of the adjacent Guild Inn Estate venue. Increased rainfall and spring snowmelt caused seasonal flooding, restricting access to the historic building, the local ecology was in decline. To address this, a swale system was introduced to redirect surface water into a new wetland pond, and a raised plinth was added to improve resilience against extreme weather.

Sustainability measures include a green roof over 50% of the building and high-reflective roofing for all other surfaces. The 36.5-hectare Guild Park and Gardens site connects to woodland and is bounded to the south by an eroding cliff face. A Natural Heritage Impact Study by Azimuth Environmental Consulting assessed vegetation, mammals, birds, and species at risk, concluding the project posed no harm to natural systems. Recommendations such as tree root protection, habitat enhancements for bats, compensatory tree planning and mitigation to improve surface water drainage were fully integrated into the design.

The project meets or exceeds the Toronto Green Standard, with notable features including: buffer zone planning and reforesting, increased building size without an increase in original building foot print, bird-friendly glazing, stabilizing and reusing the existing heritage building, repurposing materials on-site, 100% disbursal of rainwater as surface water and directed on site, sheltered curtain walls to reduce heat gain and screening effect from the forest, operable windows with rolling screens and cross ventilation in the studio spaces, 1:5.2 ratio of glass to insulated wall and tree canopy coverage and bench seating with wheel chair access.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

What we do builds on a powerful narrative that began 75 years ago with Rosa and Spencer Clark. Their shared commitment to social justice, the transformative power of the arts, activism, and generosity shaped their vision. They used their privilege to do good and the impact of that is still visible throughout the site and within the Clark Centre for the Arts.

The design process for the CCA began with a series of workshops. Together, these sessions helped us understand the site's potential, how the building might take shape, and the community's expectations. Participants spoke both from personal experience and on behalf of others and we had City managers following up with additional contacts.

We became aware of a significant geographic and economic divide. People wanted to bridge it. We understood the CCA's purpose was to engage both emerging and professional artists yet at the time, we didn't fully understand the nature of that divide. As the design progressed, we felt empowered by what was emerging. The evolving plan reflected that. We presented the design at various stages, and attendees responded with enthusiasm. In 2019, the project was tendered. Now that it's built, the CCA is thriving.

The 2020 Neighbourhood Equity Index report revealed how long-standing disadvantage becomes entrenched. What it didn't capture is how that disadvantage feels every day as a Black, Indigenous, or equity-deserving person. The report was impactful. It reshaped the City's approach to inequity. Our hope is that the CCA will fulfill its purpose. It will amplify voices, create new opportunities, and present a vision for the future. One that emerges when we truly listen and act.

No project, no matter how well designed, can achieve this alone. But the same project, in the right hands, can create the conditions where remarkable things happen every day.

Energy Performance Metrics

- Energy modeling based on Supplementary Standard SB-10 (OBC 2017) .
- Building energy modeling calculations achieved : Annual energy = 367.3 MBTU; Modeled Area = 952m²; TEDI = 113.05 kWh/m².

View from the mezzanine of impromptu use of the sheltered Ground Floor plinth. Figure 6
Third Floor studio as assembly space (top left). Figure 7 Photo: City of Toronto

04

fig. 8

CCA Ground floor public space extends from the gallery into the foyer and outside. Figure 8

Photo: Tom Arban

05

fig. 10

Rosa and Spencer Clark. Figure 10

fig. 9

CCA North Elevation public space plinth, portico, foyer and collonade. Figure 9

Photo: Tom Arban

06

ETHENNONNHAWAHSTIHNEN' COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTRE

100 Ethennonnhawahstihnen' Lane

@mjma.ca

Project Team
Architects: MJMA Architecture & Design
Structural Engineers: Blackwell Structural Engineers
Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: Smith + Andersen
Landscape Architects: MJMA Architecture & Design
Artist: MJMA Architecture & Design (Experiential Graphic Design)

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto

General Contractor
Eastern Construction

Photographer
Scott Norsworthy
MJMA Architecture & Design

Project Description

The Ethennonnhawahstihnen' Community Recreation Centre is the civic and social heart of a high-density 18-hectare master-planned community in North York. This hybrid public building brings together a City of Toronto Parks, Forestry & Recreation Aquatics and Wellness program, a Toronto Public Library branch, a City of Toronto Child Services Centre, and a Toronto Parking Authority underground garage serving the multi-program building, as well as the 3.5 HA Ethennonnhawahstihnen' Park to the east.

The Bessarion TTC station, the Community Centre and a future TDSB school site align on a north-south zone stretching from Sheppard Avenue East to the 401, organizing public building typologies and a civic elevation along the west side of the park. In response to the long, elongated site, the building is organized in two parallel 'bar' volumes along its length. The taller eastern bar building has open ends with large north and south windows for daylight and program transparency. It contains the pool, gymnasium, walking track, multi-activity room, large meeting rooms, dance and fitness studios. The double-volume library reading hall forms the southern end of the public building overlooking Ethennonnhawahstihnen' Lane. The lower west bar building, shielded by planted enclosures, opens to outside child play areas and multi-purpose room garden terraces.

A one-storey difference in grade elevation between the east and west sides of the site establishes a split building section that allows for the major program components that require a grade-related location to have direct, level entrances. The Child Care entrance from the higher Sheppard Avenue entrance and Library and Aquatic main door from the lower Ethennonnhawahstihnen' Lane central entrance connect in a central 4-storey public lobby that is the social hub for all of the project partners.

The east street elevation has a large continuous canopy with a deep planting bed roof to form an elevated green 'eye-brow' to the street elevation. This green roof canopy provides pedestrian protection from the subway station to the main building entrance. The building 'bars' are clad in a board and batten panel texture. The 4-storey street facing bar has an undulating pattern of graphite porcelain panels with vertical zinc fins separating panels and larger verticals shading glazed areas. The western bar facing the outdoor play and terrace areas is clad with smaller scale profiled zinc batten panels. The east facing elevation is split by an elevated 3rd level courtyard that is used for child care, fitness and cultural programming.

Sustainability Statement

Sustainability strategies include:

- WATER: The building nestles into the west side topography and creates a naturalized soft landscape edge along the western property line. The west overland drainage is captured with infiltration trenches and bioswales. All storm water is captured in control flow roof drains to a water cistern for irrigation use. Ground water is directed to an infiltration gallery located below the north entrance plaza.
- LANDSCAPE: A 3-meter-wide soft landscaped western edge provides visual privacy to the low-rise residential neighbourhood. Long life shade trees along the boulevard aligns with the park tree landscape to the south east. A green roof is proposed for the adjacent existing Bessarion TTC Station.
- INTEGRATION INTO PARK SYSTEMS: The building is sited to connect on diagonal axis to the City Park.
- CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE: The building provides both below grade and at grade bicycle parking spaces supporting City of Toronto’s cycling infrastructure.
- RESILIENCY: Photovoltaics and 100% back-up generators provide the electrical power required for the facility to be an emergency shelter for the community.
- BIRDS: Ceramic Frit patterns on all glazing exceeds the requirements of the Toronto Green Standard Guidelines.
- ENERGY PERFORMANCE: A high-performance building envelope, energy efficient lighting, and mechanical systems with improved pool ventilation systems provide a 15% energy use reduction. 2,370sqftm2 of roof mounted photovoltaics provides 166MWh of renewable electricity per year that represents 5% of the total energy consumption of the building.
- URBAN SITE: The west 2-storey ‘bar’ of the building responds to the single-family residential houses to the west and sits lower on the site. The east 4-storey ‘bar’ of the building sits higher to contain the taller volume programs and rises to respond to the high-rise residential development to the east. The 45-degree angular plane ensures sunlight is maintained for the low-rise residences.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The site is located near the Moatfield Ossuary, which was accidentally discovered in the 1990s and indicated longtime presence by the Wendat Nation. The name Ethennonnhawahstihnen' means 'where they had a good, beautiful life' in Wendat, with a facility design seeks to honour the area's rich Indigenous history. MJMA collaborated with the City of Toronto's Public Art Officer, Indigenous Place-making, and an Indigenous Affairs Lead to develop culturally-appropriate experiences throughout the entire community centre. Refer to the Public Art Statement for more information.

Public Art Statement

The Ethennonnhawahstihnen' Community Recreation Centre project participated in the City of Toronto Percent for Public Art Program. The project features works by Berlin-based Canadian artist duo Hadley Howes and Maxwell Stephens (Studio of Received Ideas). "Conference of Neighbours" is a bronze portrait of trees and birds surrounding the site. It stands at the Sheppard Avenue entrance walkway within the bosque of Sweetgum trees, a conglomeration of bronze parts made by casting exiting tree fragments from the neighbourhood.

The Toronto Public Library Ethennonnhawahstihnen branch features works by Indigenous Artists. Tsista Kennedy is an Anishinaabe Onyota'a:aka artist from Beausoleil First Nation and Oneida Nation of the Thames. Tsista's work extends a Woodland-style of intricate patterns into a new digital hybrid of Indigenous traditionalism and modernism. His large-scale mural work will be located in the common entrance of the library branch.

Bridget George is an Anishinaabe author and illustrator from Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. Bridget is an illustrator of children's books as well as a graphic artist creating space for diverse Indigenous representation, especially for children. Her 'Colour Map' will be located in the children's areas of the Ethennonnhawahstihnen' TPL branch.

Ludovic Boney was raised in Wendake, the Huron-Wendat First Nation near Québec City and was nominated for this commission by the Huron-Wendat Nation. Ludovic's large-scale public art projects draw inspiration from the surrounding urban fabric, with the form, texture and sound of industrial mechanisms as generating elements of the concept. His multi-storey work will be located in the central public hub of the Ethennonnhawahstihnen' Community Recreation Centre.

ST.LEO - ST.LOUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL
271 Royal York Road

@kohnshnierarchitects

Project Team
Architects: Kohn Shnier architects
Structural Engineers: Entuitive
Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: Salas O'Brien
Landscape Architects: JSW
Heritage Consultant: ERA architect

Developer/Owner/Client
Toronto Catholic District School Board

General Contractor
Pre-Eng Contracting Inc.

Photographer
Michael van Leur

Project Description

The revitalized St. Leo Catholic Elementary School and childcare facility is located in the Mimico neighbourhood of Toronto. It is comprised of a deep retrofit to an existing heritage schoolhouse, along with a significant addition. Built in 1926, the original schoolhouse is a unique example of Toronto inter-war educational architecture with Collegiate-Gothic influence. It demonstrates the transition between traditional single-room schoolhouses and modern multi-storey schools.

Our approach to the design of the school has been to restore the beloved heritage building as viewed 'in the round': by removing the later additions, renovating the original building and linking it to a new addition strategically located behind it. Within the heart of the heritage building is the Learning Commons / Library, a two-floor flexible space that reinvigorates the heritage building by the active attendance of the students. It is a 21st Century Learning space housed in a proud 20th Century building.

The site plan, a response to the idiosyncratic site geometry and layout of existing buildings, has a campus-like feel; it faces three streets, creating varied play spaces between the school buildings, the neighbouring church and the adjacent public school to the south. As a result, there is no 'back' side to the building. The design nestles the kindergarten and childcare play areas between new and existing buildings on site while allocating a large elementary play area to the south of the addition, contrary to the conventional approach of consolidating all play areas at a single location.

The new addition acts as a quiet backdrop to the original schoolhouse along Stanley Avenue, while asserting a confident urban presence as approached from Royal York Road. All the school play quadrants are framed by the campus - basketball courts to the northwest, outdoor classroom and urban garden to the northeast, entry court to the west, and elementary play area to the south, which acts as a pedestrian and visual link between Royal York Road and Elizabeth Street.

For accessibility to all common spaces, such as the Learning Commons, Multi-Program Room, and Gymnasium, and to negotiate the level differences between the existing and the new buildings, a multi-level link and an elevator have been designed to connect the addition and the heritage building. The design aspires to embrace the history of the site, provide efficient space planning, and take advantage of the specific conditions of its site to best serve its immediate and greater community.

Sustainability Statement

The sustainability of St. Leo - St. Louis starts with the preservation and re-use of the existing heritage schoolhouse, saving the embedded carbon in the existing structure. The project Meets TGS tier 1. The approach to sustainability was to improve both energy consumption as well as future waste, prioritizing the longevity. This was done through the use of durable, easy to maintain materials that do not require a ‘finish’, such as polish concrete in lieu of floor finish and exposed ceilings in most places. The project utlizes in-slab radiant heating and cooling along with displacement ventilation to maximize comfort and energy use. The tight urban site uses undergrround storage of rainwater for stormwater retention on site as well as a cistern for greywater use. There is a green roof at the new addition and Bird-Friendly frit is installed on glazing. All light fixtures are dark sky compliant.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

St. Leo - St. Louis Catholic school is designed to be a safe and inclusive environment for all. The project carefully navigate the challenging levels of the existing school-house to create a continuous barrier free-path of travel, using principles of Universal Design wherever possible. A link area between the heritage schoolhouse and new addition houses the elevator tower, providing access. A small lift was installed within the tight constraints of the heritage building to ensure that the meeting room, which is located 4 steps up from the main floor level, is accessible to all, and that no space is left behind, going beyond the requirements of accessibility as required by the OBC.

SAM IBRAHIM BUILDING
1205 Military Trail

@ZASArchitects @cebra_architecture

Project Team
Architects: ZAS Architects in association with CEBRA
Engineers: Thornton Tomasetti
Landscape Architects: Land Inc.
Sustainability: Green Reason
Envelope: ZEC Consulting
Mechanical: TMP

Developer/Owner/Client
University of Toronto

General Contractor
EllisDon

Photographer
DoubleSpace Photography
ZAS Architects / Cebra Architects

Project Description

As one of the first completed projects in UTSC's campus master plan, the Sam Ibrahim Building (SIB) marks a significant addition to the North Campus in scale, function, and urban presence. Guided by key design drivers, the building:

1. Establishes a layered spatial sequence transitioning between interior, public realm, and campus.
2. Fosters informal interaction and community through social interfaces and gathering points.
3. Defines the eastern edge of the master plan and frames the future Campus Green.
4. Reinforces walkability and civic presence along the new pedestrianized Military Trail.
5. Strengthens north–south campus connectivity between the historic core and the Toronto Pan Am Sports Centre.
6. Articulates a strong architectural identity enabling and reflecting its diverse academic functions and individual preferences, stimuli, and needs in relation to learning.
7. Serves as a key institutional anchor alongside the current residence and future medical building.

Located along the future UTSC pedestrianized spine, SIB strengthens the campus as a public destination for students, residents, and international visitors. SIB functions as a shared community space focused on learning excellence, social exchange, support, and connection. It unites academic departments, co-curricular programs, and student-facing services under one roof, promoting collaboration, well-being, and individual growth.

At its centre, a vertical atrium connects functions across floors and acts as a shared space for movement, orientation, and social interaction. From the outside, SIB's spatial transparency reveals student life within, reinforcing its civic character and open invitation to the wider public.

The surrounding landscape architecture supports this openness, extending the public realm with planted mounds, embedded seating and terraced edges encouraging informal use and softening the transition between campus and public space.

Sustainability Statement

In terms of energy performance, SIB achieves a projected reduction of over 40% below a baseline building according to ASHRAE 90.1-2013. SIB is designed to the Toronto Green Standards (TGS) Tier 3, which requires energy and envelope enhancements beyond the typical.

Energy use is reduced through a combination of passive and active measures:

1. A full geothermal system supplements the mechanical infrastructure with a stable, renewable energy source.
2. Operable triple-glazed windows enhance energy performance while supporting natural ventilation and occupant comfort.
3. High-performance structural glazing made of double-glazed, low-iron curtain wall panels provide thermal insulation with extremely clear glazing.
4. The building mechanical system uses high-efficiency variable flow heat pump loops for VRF units, with the water loops serving the VRFs from vertical ground loop heat exchangers supplemented by a solar thermal system. The building's intake air is provided by energy recovery ventilators (ERVs).

The compact five-storey structure organization optimizes the usable area relative to the building envelope surfaces, with materials selected for durability and environmental impact across the building's lifespan.

Daylight access and air quality are prioritised throughout SIB, supporting indoor comfort and functionality for all users. Windows and mechanical systems work in tandem, regulating temperature and airflow for a wide variety of uses found within SIB. Features like dual landscaped terraces within the building footprint bring light and air to all upper-floor areas.

Large planting zones at the building's perimeter contribute to additional greenspace for pedestrians and users around the building's perimeter, with storm run-off control located below the planting beds and in the many storm cisterns below grade.

These strategies are integrated into the overall construction design, forming part of SIB's response to energy use, occupant needs, and site conditions. The result is a facility meeting defined performance standards while contributing to improved environmental conditions on campus.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

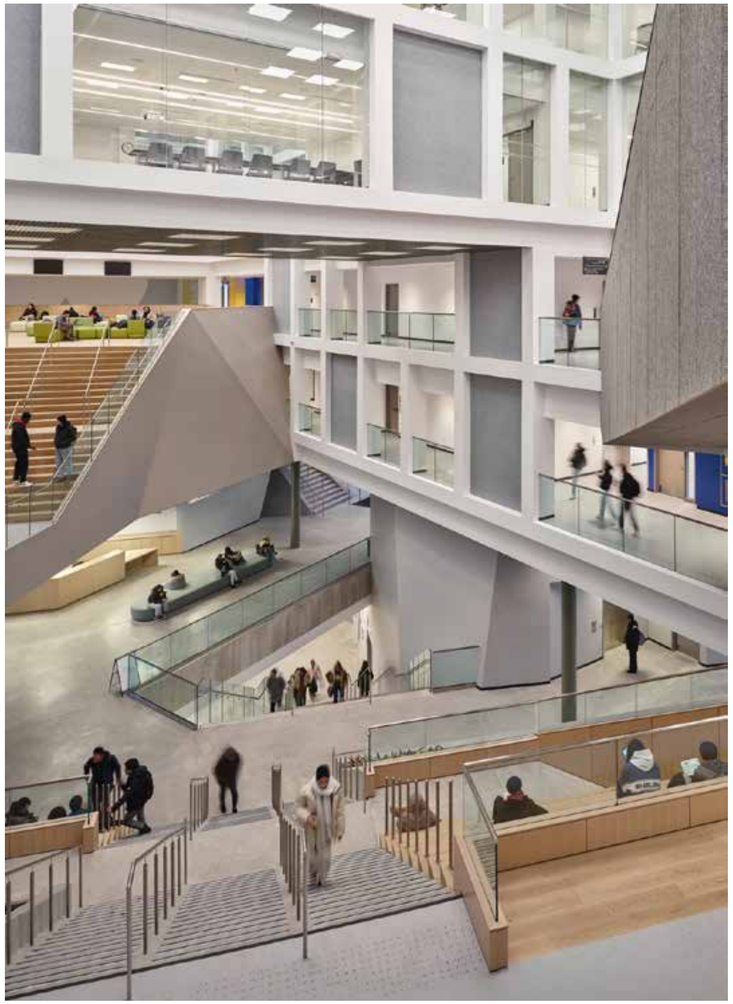
The new Sam Ibrahim Building (SIB) is located in the heart of University of Toronto Scarborough Campus. Known for its rich cultural diversity and vibrant community, Scarborough is one of the most multicultural areas of Toronto, with more than 50% of its population born outside of Canada. Embracing the City of Toronto's motto "Diversity, Our Strength" this iconic building's mosaic-like exterior serves as a community beacon for UTSC's northern campus.

SIB was designed with the student-body in mind, applying an intersectional approach to offer a variety of spaces that can resonate with the various cultures, demographics, abilities, identities and learning styles. The building combines different volumes, scales, surfaces, and spatial qualities as a response to the diverse student community that it serves. There is also a community incubator - the Sam Ibrahim Centre for Inclusive Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Leadership, a space for all student entrepreneurs. purposefully designed to strengthen the region's innovation ecosystem by providing tools and resources to advance their ideas directly in Scarborough, contributing directly to economic growth in the Eastern GTA.

Working closely with the University of Toronto and it's EDI commitment to "creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that supports learning, teaching, research and work," the building also houses a large wellness clinic incorporating nursing rooms, prayer spaces, as well as a student health practice on the top floor. Student wellbeing is a critical success factor in optimizing learning experiences, and this wellness clinic removes barriers of access to equitable healthcare, while accommodating the diverse needs of the students. The wholesome outcome is a holistic and welcoming student hub that ignites innovation while supporting 21st century learners and future entrepreneurial leaders. As Sam Ibrahim notes, the project will "lift the innovation potential of the entire GTA."

Energy Performance Metrics

Energy performance metrics have been included in the submission.



THE QUAD STUDENT COMMUNITY (PHASE 1B) AT YORK UNIVERSITY

115 Haynes Avenue
85 The Pond Road

Project Team
Architects: ARK
Structural Engineers: Quinn Dressel Associates
Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: MCW
Civil Engineers: R.V. Anderson Associates Limited
Landscape Architects: Quinn Design Associates Inc.
Artist: Julia Dault Studio

Developer/Owner/Client
FCS Development P2 LP

General Contractor
Buttcon Ltd.

Photographer
ARK
Fourm Assest Management
Lisa Logan Photography

Project Description

This 8-city block student residence development located on the edge precinct of York University's Main Campus, seeks to create a sense of place on this currently undefined swath of land, and in doing so – speak to the University's larger mission of equity, diversity and inclusion and strengthen the University's relationships and trust with the local largely immigrant surrounding community. At its core, this is a project which explores the power of architecture to improve outcomes for equity-deserving groups through urban design, architecture and program. Knitted into the surrounding community, the urban design strategy grafted the neighbourhood street fabric onto the campus, rather than imposing the University's master plan of large institutional blocks and avenues on these campus edge lands, in essence extending a hand outward.

Massing, material palette and public art speak to a shared and universal idea of a student residence as 'home' which is cultural transformative. Anchored to the ground, the striking black façades are inscribed by 2-dimensional public art on the scale of a city block. Complemented by stark white courtyards and public squares, sculptured 3-dimensional public art dissolve the rational design logic, embrace indigeneity, creativity and imagination across cultural divides.

Redefining the University's historic main vehicular and pedestrian spine – The Pond Road, this project explores how the streetscape can embrace sustainable objectives to decrease automobile dependance and improve the pedestrian cycling network. Dissolving the hierarchical relationship of university and city, the pattern of streets and blocks tells a story of how the context can evolve into a fabric of courtyards and squares: creating outdoor rooms, dissolving into streetscapes and forging passages which bridges across scale, gender, ability and culture.

The 'greening' of The Pond Road extends beyond the landscape impact with a strong programmatic vision for multi-modal transportation, integration of at-grade retail and introduction of public space in the form of an outdoor square at Haynes Avenue and The Pond Road. Designed with the 'walkable city' concept in mind, the site is organized around a permeable urban streetscape which facilitates connectivity with the broader urban context.

Synergies between community and university experience a shared urban experience with the at-grade retail and transparencies into courtyards, study nooks, lounges, kitch¬ens and work-out facilities. Supporting a diverse student body with a robust recreational program animates the residential fabric throughout the day and night bringing physical and mental health to the forefront of the project outcomes.

Sustainability Statement

York University is a leader in environmental and sustainable research and is committed to putting these ideas to practice on its campus. As reflected in its commitment to the Talloires Declaration (a ten-point action plan for universities to address sustainability), the university is committed to the sustainable growth and evolution of the campus and surrounding lands.

The evolution of the precinct area will see. Through careful planning and integration of transportation, open-space, land-use and built-form, the precinct will emerge as a distinctly sustainable community at the southern gateway to the University.

Challenging the commuter-campus paradigm, the development of a compact, mixed-use and well-connected campus neighbourhood speaks directly to this plan for sustainable growth. The Quad Student Residence program is a transit-oriented development with a significantly reduced carbon footprint. With the literal conversion of surface parking lots and land remediation to bring 2000 student beds onto York University's main campus, the project reduces GHG emissions while the design actively supports alternative transportation with a robust walking and cycling infrastructure. The building massing establishes a sustainable compact infrastructure which minimizes land consumption, is energy efficient and maximizes lifecycle with a high recycled-content material palette. Interior day-lighting and fresh air is maximized with floor to ceiling operable windows and ERV throughout. Rooftop beekeeping supports biodiversity and ecological stability.

Beyond Toronto Green Standards Guidelines, the collaborative building envelope design underwent rigorous evaluation by the Building Performance Engineering Team which included Energy Consumption modelling and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) assessment. As a result, the project achieved the highest level reduction in GHG emissions and energy efficiency of LEVEL 3 or greater than 40% lower than the National Building Code (NBC) / National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings 2020 (NECB).

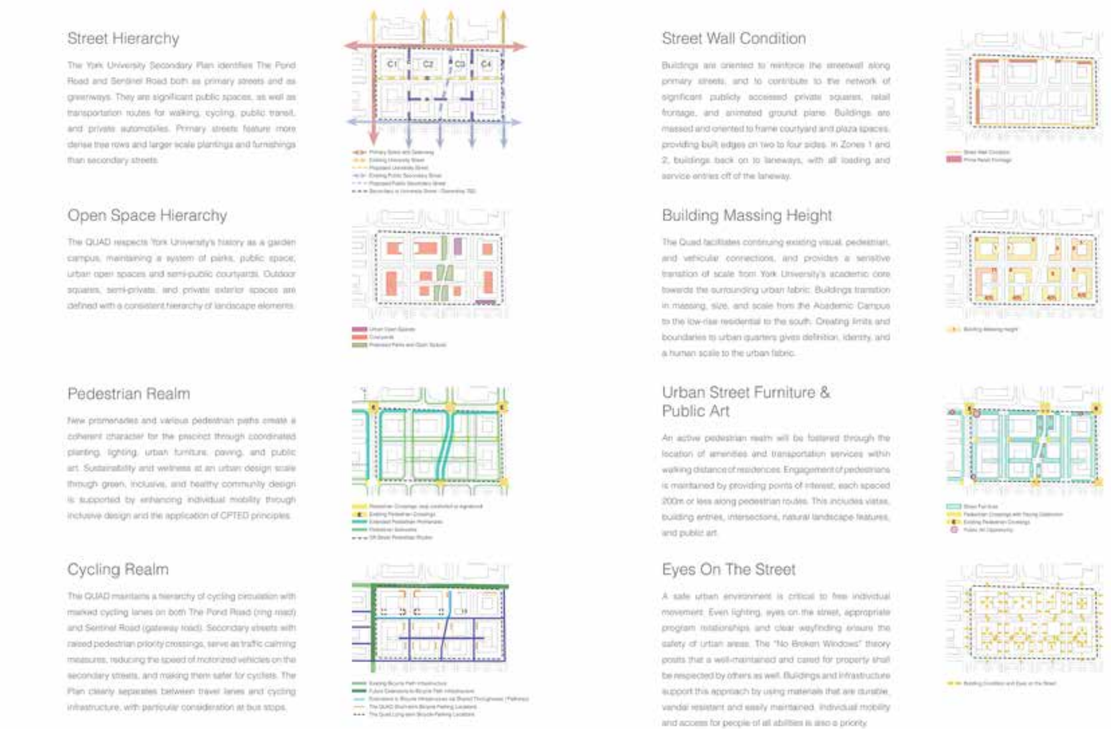
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

York University's vision for an equity strategy is based on a commitment to "decolonization, equity, diversity and inclusion (DEDI)". As this commitment informs the University's enrolment selection, the QUAD student residence design and program both accommodate this population profile and speak to this objective.

Equity and reconciliation are advanced through a range of public spaces created to function as 'common ground' in both design and program. Varying in scale from intimate spaces on each floor, to public spaces, courtyards and squares – they punctuate residence life with welcoming diverse cultural programs throughout the day and academic year. Talking circles, lunar festivities and culinary adventures are programed by student-run committees and a collaborative administration of student employees. Transparency is one of many architectural tools to invite student participations and inclusion both informally, accidentally and by design into the rich diverse student experience. This integrated design / program strategy encourages a sense of community across equity-deserving groups giving all a large voice and visible presence.

A cultural inclusion wayfinding program has been developed which integrates signage within the built form and speaks to York University's inclusive accessible, gender neutral and cultural universal vision. A clear hierarchy of information is represented in signage which speaks to empowerment, orientation, wayfinding and universal messaging.

Public art forms part of this strategy, acting as a shared cultural asset for the community, strengthening relationships and trust through art and public space.



Energy Performance Metrics

Energy performance metrics have been included in the submission.

Public Art Statement

The result of an Open RFQ issued to the artist community, public art is a central vehicle for place-making and inclusion for both the Quad Student and broader Communities. Embracing diversity, the Jury was comprised of majority art experts independent of the developer and one artist and resident /worker in the local ward. The Jury actively encouraged and sought out the participation of a diverse group of artists with the public statement:

“Strong efforts will be made to encourage artists from equity-seeking and Indigenous communities.”

The Phase 1a artwork was literally engraved into the façade surface by an innovative techniques created by the project architects. On the scale of 2 city blocks, Artist Nicolas Baier challenged traditional references to Ivy League and Ivy clad university buildings with decomposed vines, tree vines, celestial and sub-atomic images. More specifically the depicted networks describe branches of ivy, the shape of a super cluster of galaxies and the human neuronal network, expressed through a progressive multiplication of metaphorical references.

The diverse jury panel selected “Wheel of Fortune,” by local artist Julia Dault from a pool of artists who responded to the call. The 10-foot diameter coin, constructed of stainless steel and concrete, occupies a central theatrical role in the public square narrative – weaving a stainless path across the square in its journey from an unknown source to an unknown future. As the artist declared that the art promotes mental wellness in an inclusive way; it uses the common language of decision-making to remind us that we are connected; and it is a small nod to the power of fate in helping us along. Each choice we make compounds and becomes a life. The piece epitomizes this fact and celebrates the profound common experience of being human.

ROBARTS COMMON
130 St George Street

@diamondschmittarchitects

Project Team
Architects: Diamond Schmitt
Engineers: Blackwell (Structural)
Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: Smith + Andersen
Civil engineers: R.V. Anderson Associates Limited
Landscape Architects: Landplan Studio
Heritage: ERA Architects

Developer/Owner/Client
University of Toronto

General Contractor
Harbridge & Cross

Photographer
doublespace photography
Elizabeth Gyde
Diamond Schmitt

Project Description

Robarts Common responds to the new function of the academic library and the University of Toronto's growing need for more study space, by introducing a 50,000 sf addition dedicated entirely to solo and group work environments. The new design adds 1,200 study spaces over four floors in a variety of configurations, all enclosed in a five-story glass envelope that brings a new spirit of openness to Canada's preeminent academic research library.

Built in 1973, the triangular Robarts Library features existing pavilions on two of its three sides: the Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library at the southeast, and the Claude Bissell building at the northeast. As part of the original design, the west side of the library was intended to have an auditorium above the loading dock, but it was never completed due to budgetary constraints. Almost 50 years later, Robarts Common completes the complex.

Set against the austere west façade of the library, Robarts Common establishes a transparent counterpoint to the Brutalist expression of the original architecture—a monolithic concrete volume. Its massing draws influences from the triangular geometries of the existing pavilions, as referenced in the glass faceted façade. It reveals the student activity within and invites the university community inside through a new accessible south entrance and plaza that improve circulation throughout, while also establishing an alternate entry point to the long-standing St. George Street entrance.

The building is a five-storey bridge that spans the existing loading dock, which remained open during and after construction. Robarts Common touches down on either side of the loading dock, with mechanical space to the north and a new entrance lobby at the south. An interconnected sequence of terrace seating spirals up from the lobby, creating an informal study zone that spans all five floors and overlooks the plaza. A traditional open reading room anchors each floor, surrounded by a variety of types of reading positions, allowing for different kinds of individual and group study.

Cantilevered from the west side of the main reading room are two-storey wood boxes that have casual seating within and individual study carrels on top. These wood boxes are visible from the exterior adding warmth a visual play to the west façade.

Robarts Common will cater to 18,000 daily users who will experience the entire library complex as a more collaborative and human-centred space—a "campus living room" for students and faculty to gather, learn, and socialize.

Sustainability Statement

Robarts Common is designed to the equivalent of the LEED Silver standard. On the four upper levels, the floor slab is pulled two metres back from the curtain wall. Wood boxes protrude into this gap, enclosing small lounges and carrels. This gap functions like a solar chimney, allowing warm air to rise through it, which is exhausted at the top for natural ventilation.

In the evening, automatic blinds along the west facade close to control light spillage into the surrounding neighbourhood. The blinds are also automatically triggered by the afternoon sun to reduce solar heat gain while still providing daylight and views. Occupancy and weather sensors time lights, blinds, and mechanical systems into the building's BAS. All lighting in the building is energy reducing LED's. The mechanical systems tap into the district energy plants for heating and cooling, and the air handlers in the penhouse have a very efficient heat recovery system. Durable, low emissivity materials are used throughout. The blinds and bird-friendly frit on all glazing prevent bird collisions.

The building is located adjacent a subway, streetcar, and bus line, and as such does not provide vehicular parking. There is extensive bike parking throughout.

A stormwater management system includes a green roof, permeable pavers in the plaza, and a reclaimed water irrigation cistern. Native and adaptive vegetation is used to limit the need for irrigation and low flow fixtures are used throughout the facility. There was minimum site & tree disruption during construction.

The building is located on a brownfield site, spanning an existing loading dock and touching down in the former location of existing buildings, the foundations of which were removed as part of the construction process. Robarts Common takes advantage of the existing loading dock and service area facilities, without having to build new ones.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

As part of their mission statement, University of Toronto Libraries (UTL) is committed to creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that supports learning, teaching, research and work.

Robarts Common is open to the student body 24 hours a day, seven days a week during exam periods. This provides all students with a home-away-from-home, somewhere everyone can feel comfortable and safe studying at any time. Views in and out of the building invite students in and allow them to feel connected to the campus while they are studying.

The building is designed in such a way that it can accommodate wide variety of different student study needs, from large open quiet study areas, to individual carrels, to informal seating and group study rooms. Every type of study area is accessible to all students, regardless of ability.

The bright surfaces, unobstructed spaces and glazing within the building create an open and safe study pavilion that is accessible to all. This openness continues to the outside, where an plaza creates a formal library entrance from Harbord and Huron streets, with places to pause or meet friends; the plaza places a priority on accessibility and personal safety, with ample paving, lighting, and unobstructed views throughout.

Energy Performance Metrics

- Energy Use Intensity: 197 kWh/m^2/yr


PAVILIONS
1. Original Roberts Library
2. Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library
3. Claudel Bissell Building
4. Roberts Common
GLEN MORRIS ST
HURON ST.
new visitor entrance & plaza
existing main entrance
ST. GEORGE
1
2
3
4

2025 TORONTO URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

SUBMISSIONS | SMALL OPEN SPACES

A small open space, generally related to and defined by adjacent buildings or natural/built elements, which provides an extension and addition to the public realm in an exemplary way. The small open space need not be publicly owned, but must be publicly accessible.

Submissions may include, but are not limited to: courtyards, plazas, forecourts, gardens, trails, mews and small neighbourhood parks.

YORKVILLE LANE
162 Cumberland Street

@svn.ap

Project Team
Architects: SvN Architects + Planners
Electrical Engineers: Summit Engineering Inc
Mechanical Engineers: GPY+Associates Engineering Inc.
Structural Engineers: Blackwell Structural Engineers
Landscape Architects: SvN Architects + Planners
Signage: Bruce Mau Design

Developer/Owner/Client
The Pearl Group

General Contractor
Equinox Development Inc.

Photographer
Marcus Oleniuk

Project Description

Yorkville Lane at 162 Cumberland exemplifies how strategic design interventions can significantly enhance the public realm while addressing climate resilience and sustainability in an urban setting. Yorkville is a vibrant neighbourhood with a rich mix of residential, commercial, hospitality, and cultural destinations, welcoming both the local community and visitors from across the city. Yorkville Lane, a well-travelled pedestrian thoroughfare through a 1970s mixed-use building, required a contemporary retrofit to better serve the surrounding public realm. SvN's design transformed the existing underutilized laneway into an inviting and well-lit pedestrian experience.

Previously, the laneway was a dim and unappealing passage with heavily mullioned storefronts, low ceilings, and poor lighting. SvN's interventions included replacing storefront glazing for six retail units, restoring the original brick façade, and introducing a new canopy system to improve visibility. The ground-floor revitalization introduced new paving, lighting set into the paving, catenary lighting, and signage, fostering a dynamic and inviting atmosphere. The most distinctive feature, a mirrored stainless-steel soffit, reflects movement and light, dramatically enhancing the space and creating a cinematic pedestrian experience.

The project also prioritizes environmental sustainability through energy-efficient glazing, durable granite paving, and enhanced pedestrian connectivity. SvN's interventions align with the City of Toronto's Green Standard, improving urban resilience while reinforcing Yorkville Lane as a vital mid-block connection and social gathering space. The project's success is evident in its increased pedestrian traffic and full retail tenancy, re-establishing Yorkville Lane as a key urban destination.

Sustainability Statement

Yorkville Lane at 162 Cumberland exemplifies how strategic design interventions can enhance the public realm while addressing climate resilience and sustainability in an urban setting. By transforming an underutilized mid-block connection into a welcoming and energy-efficient pedestrian space, the project aligns with the City of Toronto's Green Standard and urban design guidelines.

A key sustainability feature is the replacement of outdated glazing with a high-performance storefront glazing system, improving energy efficiency by reducing heat loss in winter and solar gain in summer. The replacement of deteriorating pavers with new granite paving increases durability and long-term performance, with careful planning to minimize waste and use resilient, long-lasting materials. The restoration of the original brick façade extends the lifespan of existing materials and reduces embodied carbon by avoiding demolition and reconstruction. The repair of existing canopies along residential and retail storefronts improves visibility of the public passageway, ensuring the space is recognized as a public route and supports walkability, encouraging pedestrian movement through the area.

The pedestrian experience was a critical design focus. Embedded in-ground lights improve wayfinding, and a mirrored stainless-steel soffit amplifies ambient light. These interventions improve visibility and the perception of openness and security at night, encouraging continuous use while minimizing additional energy demands. The installation of catenary lighting across the courtyard further improves nighttime visibility, providing appropriate illumination that encourages evening use while minimizing light pollution. By eliminating the need for ground-based poles, catenary lighting preserves sightlines and maximizes usable space, supporting pedestrian movement and accessibility.

The renewed passageway and courtyard strengthen the pedestrian network, transforming an underutilized space into a visible and engaging public thoroughfare. Through material upgrades, lighting strategies, and design interventions, Yorkville Lane contributes to Toronto's sustainability goals by improving environmental performance, supporting walkability, and reinforcing the laneway's role as a vital urban link.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

At SvN, we believe that inclusive public spaces are foundational to building a more equitable city. The Yorkville Lane revitalization was guided by the principle that well-designed urban environments should welcome and serve all members of our communities. By transforming a previously underutilized space in a mixed-use building into a public passageway, the project improves pedestrian accessibility, safety, and experience—providing a well-lit, safe, and inviting space for people from all walks of life.
Located in one of Toronto's central neighborhoods, Yorkville Lane strengthens social connections by offering a welcoming, visually engaging setting where people from diverse backgrounds can intersect and interact. While the project was not designed specifically for Indigenous, Black, or other equity-deserving groups, we recognize that public spaces like this one create essential opportunities for all residents, including Indigenous and marginalized communities, to engage with and experience the city. The revitalized laneway supports inclusivity through design by improving pedestrian flow, access, and comfort.

Design interventions—such as the mirrored ceiling and lighting—were introduced to create a distinct, immersive experience and highlight movement through the space. These elements make the space feel open, visible, and engaging, encouraging interaction among diverse users. In a neighborhood that already attracts a wide range of residents and visitors, the revitalized laneway reinforces Yorkville's role as an inclusive urban space.

As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we recognize the ongoing responsibility to create places where Indigenous and marginalized communities feel heard, respected, and valued. In collaboration with Bruce Mau Design, we applied a methodology rooted in empathy to shape a space informed by community needs. By improving sightlines, access, and connections between buildings, Yorkville Lane becomes a more inclusive and resilient space—strengthening its role as a public passageway that promotes equity, connection, and community.

Public Art Statement

While not conceived as a formal public art project, the Yorkville Lane revitalization incorporates artistic design elements that enrich the urban experience. The use of a mirrored stainless-steel ceiling is a defining intervention that transforms the covered passageway into an interactive and engaging space. This reflective soffit not only amplifies ambient light but also captures the movement and activity of pedestrians, creating a dynamic and ever-changing urban scene.

Additionally, the integration of in-ground linear lighting enhances the laneway's visual rhythm, guiding pedestrians along the thoroughfare and contributing to the area's vibrancy, especially at night. The careful curation of materials, including high-quality paving, complements the aesthetic appeal of the passage while ensuring long-term durability. These elements work together to elevate the public realm, turning Yorkville Lane into an immersive and cinematic space that seamlessly integrates function with artistry.

31-85 GILDER DRIVE
31 Gilder Drive

@Kneider Architects

Project Team
Architects: Kneider Architects
Structural Engineers: Thornton Tomasetti
Landscape Architects: Lomco Landscape
Mechanical & Electrical: Hind Engineering Ltd

Developer/Owner/Client
Toronto Community Housing Corporation

General Contractor
Martinway Contracting Ltd.

Photographer
Slim Soula

Project Description

Designed with care and intention, this revitalization project transforms the exterior spaces into an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming environment for all residents and visitors. The scope of work extends well beyond surface upgrades it reimagines everyday movement and interaction with the built environment. Three newly installed concrete ramps with gently sloped surfaces and continuous handrails offer barrier-free entry points that align with the latest accessibility standards. These ramps are thoughtfully integrated into the site, seamlessly connecting to widened pedestrian pathways that allow for safe and comfortable navigation by individuals using mobility aids, strollers, or simply walking side-by-side.

Two accessible drop-off zones were added at key building entrances to enhance safety and convenience. These areas are clearly marked and protected with high-visibility bollards, ensuring drivers can assist passengers without obstructing the flow of traffic. Accessible parking spots complete with freshly painted symbols, wide loading zones, and new concrete parking curbs were strategically placed to ensure ease of access to main entrances.

Demolition of outdated and non-compliant walkways, concrete curbs, and interlock pavers made way for a reconfiguration of the landscape that better serves today's standards of universal design. Green areas were reshaped to support better sightlines and smoother transitions, creating a more navigable and welcoming exterior. The concrete paving was entirely reworked to eliminate tripping hazards and uneven surfaces, making the site safer for everyone, regardless of ability.

Below the surface, plumbing work addressed longstanding drainage issues, with the replacement of outdated drains and catch basins to improve water management and reduce surface pooling a key factor in maintaining year-round accessibility, especially during wet or icy conditions.

To support rest and connection, new accessible benches were installed along pedestrian paths and near drop-off points. These thoughtfully selected furnishings provide opportunities for pause, gathering, and outdoor enjoyment — reinforcing the idea that accessibility is not only about movement but also about creating a dignified, comfortable public realm for all.

Together, these improvements reflect a commitment to equity in the everyday experience ensuring that everyone, regardless of age or ability, can move through and interact with the site independently, safely, and with dignity.

Sustainability Statement

This project integrates sustainability through a holistic lens, combining environmental responsibility with inclusive urban design. A core aspect of the design was to enhance accessibility across the site, not only by removing physical barriers but also by strategically adding two accessible drop-off zones. These areas improve safety and ease of access for residents with mobility challenges, supporting more secure interactions with public transportation. This encourages low-emission commuting options while ensuring that people of all abilities can navigate the space with confidence and independence.

In parallel, the project reimagined the outdoor environment with a focus on climate resilience and user well-being. Green spaces were expanded and revitalized, replacing underutilized paved surfaces with soft landscaping that supports biodiversity, contributes to tree canopy cover, and mitigates the urban heat island effect. These additions offer shaded areas, improve stormwater management, and contribute to fresher, cleaner air throughout the residential complex—creating a healthier microclimate and promoting outdoor use year-round.

To further align with sustainability goals, the project prioritized the use of locally sourced materials and native vegetation. This approach reduced transportation-related emissions and ensured compatibility with the local ecosystem, while also supporting regional economies. The combination of durable local materials and climate-appropriate planting enhances the site's long-term resilience and ease of maintenance. Through this integrated strategy, the project demonstrates a strong commitment to both environmental stewardship and community health, positioning sustainability as a foundation for equity and livability.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

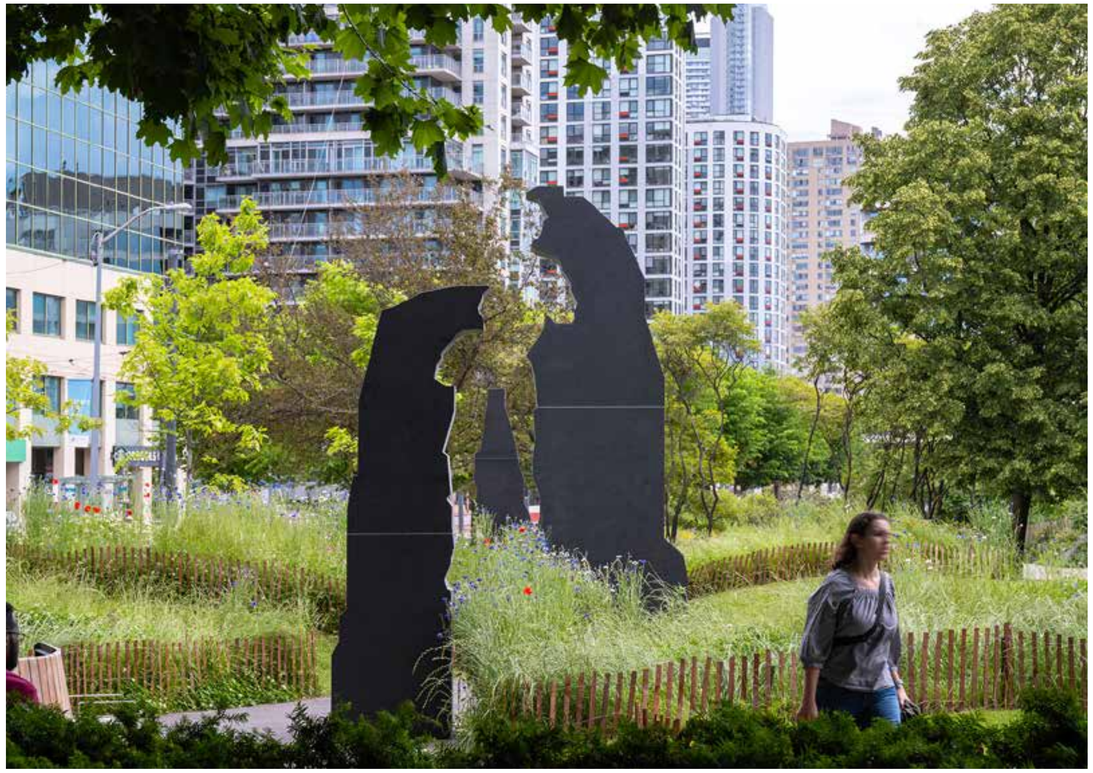
This project was guided by a strong commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusion, with the goal of creating a space that serves and uplifts all members of the community. From the early planning stages, the design approach emphasized universal access and equitable outcomes by removing physical barriers and enhancing the dignity of public space. The installation of barrier-free ramps, accessible drop-off zones, widened pathways, and clearly marked accessible parking was not only about meeting code requirements, but it was also about acknowledging the systemic barriers many face in their everyday environments and actively dismantling them through thoughtful, inclusive design.

Community experience was placed at the heart of the project. By improving site circulation, safety, and outdoor comfort through seating and clear pedestrian routes, the space was reshaped to be more welcoming and responsive to diverse needs. These changes were not made in isolation but with an understanding that creating accessible infrastructure also builds trust and strengthens relationships, particularly with communities historically excluded from decision-making in the built environment.

The methodology also reflects a reconciliation-based approach: working to acknowledge the lived realities of Indigenous Peoples and other marginalized groups through design practices that prioritize access, respect, and belonging. While the project may not include cultural symbolism, its focus on tangible, equitable outcomes, such as safe routes, inclusive access points, and barrier-free amenities, serves as a foundational step toward advancing justice and fostering community connection.
In every intervention, the project promotes equity not just in form but in function, ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, mobility, or social status, is treated with dignity and has equal opportunity to participate in, and feel ownership of, shared public spaces.

LEGACY ART PROJECT
439 Queens Quay West

@dtahtoronto @dtahtoronto.bsky.social



Project Team
Structural Engineers: Rimkus
Electrical Engineers: DPM
Landscape Architects: DTAH
Artist: Jon Sasaki
Indigenous Consultant: Trophic Design
Competition Management and Public Engagement: Art + Public UnLtd

Developer/Owner/Client
Waterfront Toronto / Legacy Art Project Toronto

General Contractor
Somerville Construction

Photographer
Scott Norsworthy
DTAH
Jon Sasaki

Project Description

Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope across Canada is a nationally significant story that has inspired generations of Canadians. In 2019, the citizen-led group Legacy Art Project Toronto sought to honour his spirit of courage, determination and action, with a permanent landmark on Toronto's waterfront. Following a national competition, Jon Sasaki and DTAH's proposal, We Are Shaped By The Obstacles We Face, was selected as the winning design.

Legacy Art Project translates Fox's journey into an interactive, narrative landscape along a bustling section of Toronto's Central Waterfront. Situated next to the Toronto Music Garden, with the revitalized Queens Quay West and Martin Goodman Trail running along the northern edge, the project creates a compelling new waterfront destination. The eastern side of the project features a sculpture of Terry Fox as a teenager before his cancer diagnosis, looking towards a path that continues west, referencing his westward journey across Canada. The meandering, curved asphalt path and topography is a nod to Fox's route along the Trans-Canada Highway, with the granite forms reminiscent of the highway's craggy sidehill cuts.

The intriguing granite sculptures act as physical and symbolic impediments along the pathway. The concept takes inspiration from P-Gates, a device commonly found at entrances to pedestrian walkways, which can appear as an impenetrable barrier from afar. Similarly, vertical rock slabs carved from solid black granite obstruct the path to convey formidable mass and immobility. The rocks and landscaped mounds slow movement, inviting pensive moments for visitors to contemplate obstacles within their own lives. At the trail's end, a bench is directed towards the beginning of the path. From this unique vantage point, as visitors reflect on their traveled path, they can observe that the granite sculptures align to create an uplifting silhouette of Terry Fox.

The strength of the project comes from its collaborative, interdisciplinary nature. The integration of public art with landscape design creates a unique and inspiring space that invites visitors to reframe obstacles as a growth opportunity that can make us stronger and help define our relationship to the world.

Aligned with Fox's mission to raise awareness for cancer research, the planting palette includes Indigenous species Hypericum perforatum, the bright yellow flower commonly referred to as St. John's Wort known for its cancer fighting properties. The plantings also include species that attract Monarch butterflies as a symbolic reminder of transformation and hope.

Sustainability Statement

The Legacy Art Project integrates sustainable design features to create a net positive impact on the local ecology. The planting palette includes robust native plant species, which were selected to thrive in the regional environment and support pollinator species, with bloom throughout the seasons. Introducing planting to the area helps mitigate the urban heat island effect by providing shade, releasing moisture into the atmosphere, and reducing solar radiation absorption. Furthermore, the lush planting replaces open lawn that previously occupied the site, which adds biodiversity and reduces maintenance costs. Porous ground surfaces from the vegetation and the resin-bonded aggregate allow water to infiltrate the soil and mitigate stormwater runoff.

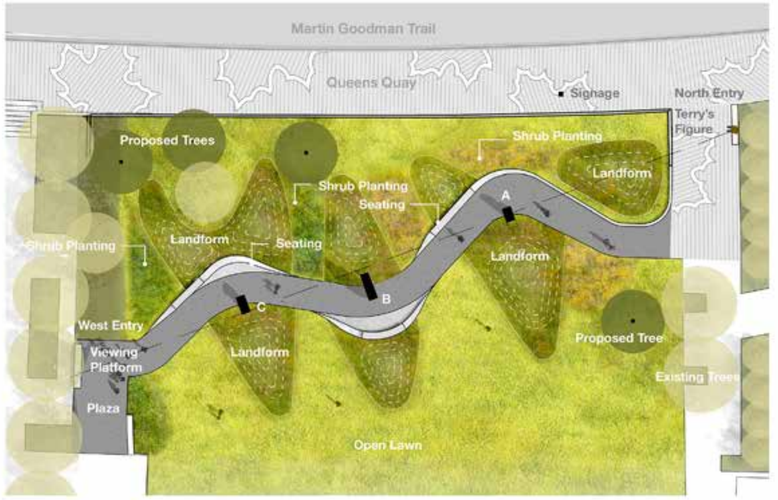
The project team prioritized using local services and materials to reduce the carbon footprint. The design uses salvaged discarded granite from Canadian quarries and local Ontario fabricators created the benches. Utilizing local sources eliminated the unnecessary need for international transportation and shipment.

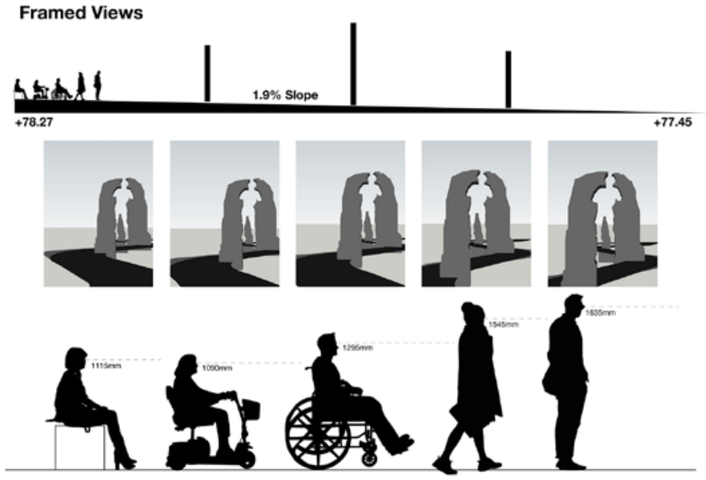
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Despite his circumstances, Terry Fox challenged the notion of disability and pursued his Marathon of Hope to raise awareness and funding for cancer research. To date, over $900 million has been raised in his name to support the disease that has the potential to impact people of all ages, races, genders, and abilities.

The project celebrates his remarkable story with an immersive and accessible landscape that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy. The project team ensured Terry's silhouette would be visible from various heights to allow anyone, from standing to sitting, to be able to appreciate the public art. The project has received an accessibility score from AccessArt's Artmap that is twice the national average. The Artmap ranks public art installations across Canada on their level of inclusivity to document and improve the accessibility of public art.

The project team also worked with Indigenous designer Trophic Design to select species with Indigenous significance and healing properties, including medicinal plantings with anti-cancer agents and the resilient Sweet Grass, symbolizing strength for the Métis people, which were thoughtfully incorporated along the pathway as a tribute to Terry Fox and everyone who has been affected by cancer.





Public Art Statement

We Are Shaped by the Obstacles We Face is a citizen-initiated project dedicated to the spirit of courage, determination, and action that Terry Fox embodied. Artist Jon Sasaki and landscape architects from DTAH met through the project's open-call competition and developed the winning concept, which adds a unique landmark and place of quiet reflection along Toronto's Central Waterfront.

The memorial is the result of a unique intersection between public art and landscape architecture, translating Fox's legacy into an immersive, spatial experience. On the project's eastern side is a bronze statue of a teenaged Terry Fox shortly before he was diagnosed with bone cancer, made in collaboration with digital sculptor Adam O'Donnell. The artwork continues as a path that, like Fox's journey, flows westward and is interrupted by a series of three formidable granite obstacles.

The planting design throughout the undulating landscape represents Fox's journey, spanning from the Northern Boreal to the Southern Carolinian regions with plants chosen for their Indigenous significance and healing properties. Additionally, the landscape features pollinator-friendly species to attract Monarch butterflies, serving as a powerful symbol of transformation and the journey they undertake.

At the western end of the pathway is an elevated vantage point. When viewed from the bench, the granite impediments converge into an anamorphic illusion, visually transforming into the iconic silhouette of Terry Fox running along the Trans-Canada Highway. The image was inspired by a photograph by Gail Harvey, who has generously given permission for its use. As a monument to a national hero, instead of putting him on a pedestal, the project creates a spatial experience that invites visitors to consider their own lives and consider how Terry Fox, "the ordinary boy [...] did something extraordinary".

Art+Public UnLtd supported with opportunity identification, artist selection, contracting, and project management.

ST. ANDREW'S PLAYGROUND PARK

450 Adelaide Street West

@dtahtoronto @dtahtoronto.bsky.social

Project Team
Civil Engineers: Ainley
Structural Engineers: IRC
Electrical and Lighting Engineers: DPM
Landscape Architects: DTAH
Public Consultation: LURA
Irrigation: SWS
Costing: Marshall Murray

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto

General Contractor
Loc Pave Construction

Photographer
Scott Norsworthy
DTAH

Project Description

St. Andrew's Playground Park is nestled into Toronto's dense and lively Fashion District. The revitalized park has been transformed into a playful and vibrant urban landscape, infusing much-needed usable green space for this densifying neighbourhood.

Toronto's Fashion District has seen remarkable growth over the last decade, with innovative city-building initiatives that weave together old and new building fabric and residential and commercial uses, including the opening of the Ace Hotel and the mixed-use Waterworks Building food hall, residence and YMCA. The reimagined St. Andrew's Playground acts as dynamic community green space at the centre of this bustling neighbourhood, connecting people of all ages and abilities, and providing flexible programming to allow this park to thrive for generations to come.

Designed to interact with the adjacent Waterworks Building that borders the northern edge of the park, the park includes a variety of seating options to allow food hall customers to spill out into the generous outdoor areas, creating a lively gathering place that is animated throughout the day and night.

Integrated historical signage shares the park's history, which was designated in 1908 as Toronto's first playground, and functioned as an extension of St. Andrew's Market. Over the past 100 years, all vestiges of the market building and the historic playground have disappeared, and the site had been significantly altered in piecemeal moves which led to the park being disconnected from the community. The one constant element through all this change was the large tree canopy which was preserved and continues to define the space.

The design strategy for the park renovation and expansion involved protecting and celebrating the mature trees and creating strong visual connections between the new park spaces. The ground plane is now re-defined with the introduction of new playful surfaces, whimsical bright yellow accents, and flexible spaces that accommodate day-to-day uses as well as larger social and cultural gatherings. These new spaces include ample seating, a platform stage, an Indigenous storytelling circle, casual lounge chairs, and communal tables and chairs in the plaza area. A catenary lighting system weaves just below the tree canopy, hovering over the central plaza, and seating areas, illuminating the outdoor spaces below. The design also includes two new playgrounds and a dedicated dog-off leash area, which replaced a commercial parking lot along the west side of the site.

Sustainability Statement

Located in the West Precinct of the King-Spadina Area, St. Andrew's Playground Park is within a neighbourhood that has one of the lowest parkland provision rates in the city at 5.5m2 per resident (using the 2016 census) and 1.8m2 per resident and employee, compared to a city-wide average of 28m2 per resident and 18m2 per resident and employee.

Close to 16,000 people live within a 0.5km radius around the site, and 52,000 more come to work in this area. In addition to creating a green oasis and healthy outdoor destination, St. Andrew's Playground Park also actively offloads increasing burden on local storm sewers and municipal infrastructure by introducing permeable surfaces that can absorb rainwater and alleviate pressure due to flooding and weather events caused by climate change.

The revitalized landscape includes new successional tree plantings and a tree canopy strategy to reinforce and protect the existing trees. Understory perennial planting areas include Indigenous perennial plantings along the northern portion of the park, edge planting at the new dog off leash area and planting beds at the main entry points to the park.

The design also successfully balances the pedestrian realm with adjacent buildings and streets to create a comfortable microclimate and reduce urban heat-island effect.

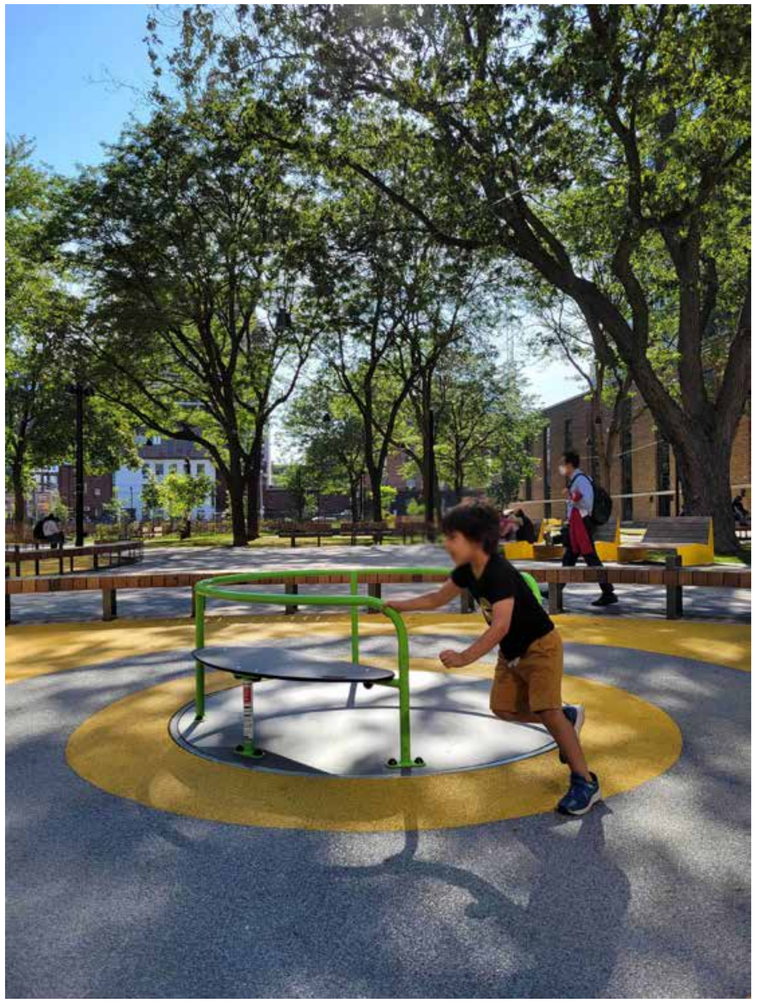
The materials chosen for this project were not only for selected for their design aesthetic, but first and foremost for their sustainability and durability. They are locally and sustainably sourced, robust and easy to maintain, ensuring the park will serve as an enduring community green space for years to come.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

A Park for everyone:
The design of St. Andrew's Playground Park was developed through extensive public engagement which included a series of park pop-up events to ensure the design meets the diverse needs of the community. The landscape also incorporates a storytelling circle and a medicine garden designed in consultation with the Indigenous community.

A Park without physical borders:
Flexibility in the site furniture design allows for informal gatherings and takes into consideration the needs of people of all ages and abilities. Inclusive site furniture is incorporated throughout, with armrests and backs on most of the seating options and space for wheelchairs within the communal picnic tables.

A Park without social borders:
The historical and ongoing cultural contributions of Indigenous peoples, their connection to the land, and their languages had long been erased in most of our public parks. The design team shares the City of Toronto's commitment to Reconciliation and we have done our best to integrate Indigenous Place-Keeping within the design and respond to the self-identified needs of urban Indigenous people for safe places to engage in ceremony, gather and heal.




1909


Queen St. W
Richmond St. W
Waterworks
Maud St.
Brant St.
Ace Hotel
Adelaide St. W
Bathurst St.
Portland St.
Morrison St.
Spadina Ave.
King St. W
King Residences

ZIIBIING
27 King's College Circle

@BrookMcIlroy

Project Team
Architects: Brook McIlroy
Engineers: Blackwell (Structure), TY Lin (Civil), Creative Irrigation Solutions (Irrigation), RC Engineering (light pole footing)
Landscape Architects: Brook McIlroy
Indigenous Plant Expert: Creators Garden
Arborist: Cohen & Master
Cost Consultant: AW Hooker

Developer/Owner/Client
University of Toronto - Office of Indigenous Initiatives

General Contractor
Ellis Don

Photographer
Tom Arban
Brook McIlroy Staff

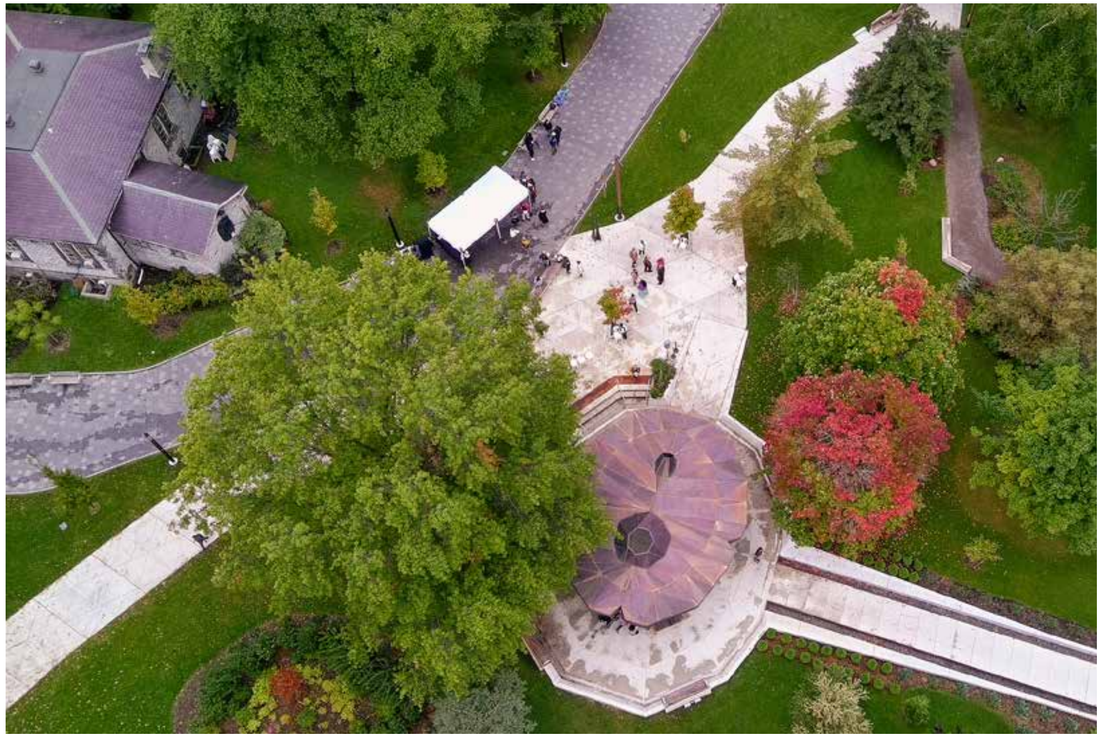
Project Description

Located at Hart House Circle, one of the most prominent landscapes at the University of Toronto and the eastern gateway to the St. George Campus, the Ziibiing project is a multi-use greenspace for learning, gathering, and ceremony. The name 'Ziibiing' means 'at the river' in Anishinaabemowin, a fitting name as the site is located along the historical course of Taddle Creek. Designed by the Indigenous Design Studio and Landscape Architecture team at Brook McIlroy with input from University of Toronto Elders, faculty, and students, this landscape acts as an immersive, active, and meaningful space that is representative of the many diverse Indigenous Nations on Turtle Island—and that will connect Torontonians with land, culture, and each other.

To foster an inclusive space, the design draws from cultural elements significant to many Indigenous communities such as fire, water, and the stars. A bronze open-air pavilion featuring a sacred fire and wood seating serve as a ceremonial gathering space. Situated atop of a hill, the pavilion forms a focal point in the landscape and is a beacon of welcoming to all. Marking the importance of waterways in Indigenous cultures, the design seeks to honour the memory of Taddle Creek which once flowed through the site and is now buried far below.

Inspired by the Anishinaabemowin words Awaadiziwin (knowledge you can see) and Akinoomaage (to look to and take direction from the earth) this landscape encourages reclamation of Indigenous knowledge. Working with Indigenous plant medicine expert Joseph Pitawanakwat, the plant selection—including woodland plantings, rain gardens, and forest plantings—is curated to demonstrate a microcosm of this region's most significant plants. Following on the University's mandate for teaching, this is intended to inspire education about plant medicine and increase Indigenous planting initiatives in urban settings. Indigenous plantings and immersive teaching spaces will provide resources for unique land-based education.

This project is among the University's early responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, and contemplates reclamation and (re)conciliation. It is being coordinated with a larger campus revitalization project, Landscape of Landmark Quality, which will fundamentally rethink the landscapes in and around King's College Circle.



Sustainability Statement

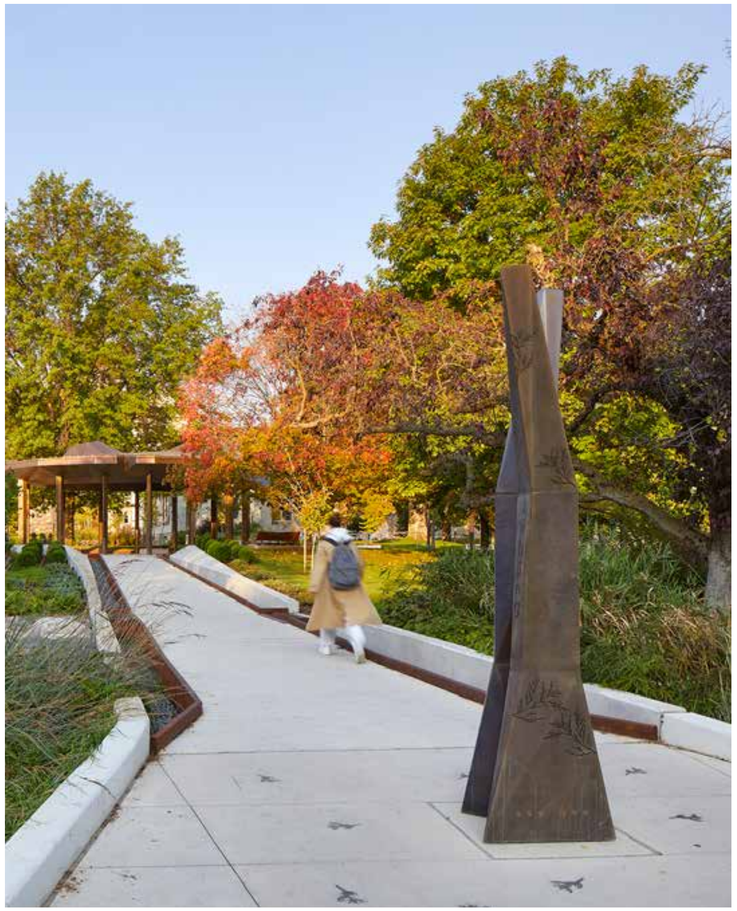
Ziibiing acts as a educational demonstration of how native plant selection can contribute to resilient landscapes that inherently provide stormwater management. Divided into three broad representative biomes--forest, meadow, and rain garden--Ziibiing's landscape recreates the naturally occuring ecosystems that see direct and indirect sun/water reaching the respective systems that need them most. Through the integrated informative signage throughout and the curated selections of Indigenous plant medicine expert Joseph Pitawanakwat, the project also encourages visitors and users to more holistically consider how plants and biological systems play into everyday life, both historically and in the present.

There were also a number of other key landscape sustainability considerations. The site was was designed to fit the existing topography to limit removals and maintain existing trees. Benches and platform site furnishings were fabricated from salvaged White Oak and Siberian Elm from University of Toronto grounds and Queen's Park, with integrated signage showing what kind of tree and where it was sourced included. The Curvilinear permeable pathway that winds through the site uses natural stone and an organic binder to maintain accessibility and represent the creek that once flowed through site. Finally, stormwater runoff is used as a feature in the landscape which channels water into rain gardens - reducing volume and improving water quality.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Designed by members of both our Indigenous Design and Landscape Architecture studios with input from University of Toronto Elders, faculty, and students, this landscape acts as an immersive, active, and meaningful space that is representative of the many diverse Indigenous Nations on Turtle Island—and that will connect visitors with land, culture, and each other. Engagement with the University's Council of Indigenous Initiatives Elders' Circle included meaningful conversations with the late Lee Maracle, an Indigenous scholar and renowned author at UofT. Lee guided the development of the medicine gardens as well as providing council on culturally-significant storytelling through the design of cultural markers as well as gathering places for ceremony and celebrations.

Ultimately Ziibiing is as much a reclamatory project as a reconciliatory one. It is a metaphorical unearthing of a natural water feature buried by the colonial expansion of Toronto and a reassertion of Indigenous presence on a colonial campus within view of a colonial provincial parliamentary building. Providing a space for traditional ceremony and celebration while situated geographically between "Queen's Park" and "King's College Circle", Ziibiing is power testament to enduring presence of Indigenous populations and culture in contemporary Toronto and the Western academy.



Public Art Statement

In addition to Indigenous contributions to landscape and architecture, Ziibiing also contains integrated Indigenous art throughout. The soffit of the central bronze Knowledge House structure is adorned with an intepretative pattern that reflects constellations historically observed by local Indigenous communities. Each of the entraces at the four cardinal directions of the project were assigned a culturally significant tree. The cultural marker at each entrance and the concrete inlays are each decorated with illustrations of the folliage of each respective tree by our Indigenous Design Studio. Signage throughout the site identifies medical and other important plant species by scientific, English, and Indigenous name. These names are accompanied again by an illustration by our staff so that even out of season or bloom, oberservers can get a full understanding of the plants they are seeing.

BLOOR WEST VILLAGE PARKETTES

256 Durie Street, 455 Windermere Avenue, 2364 Bloor Street West, 175 Armadale Avenue

@fflandscapearchitecture

Project Team
Engineers: LightInForm (Lighting), MJS Consulting (Electrical)
Landscape Architects: Forest and Field Landscape Architecture Inc.
Artist: Egnatia Paving

Developer/Owner/Client
Bloor West Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) in Partnership with City of Toronto

General Contractor
Egnatia Paving

Photographer
Michelle Lazar

Project Description

Forest and Field Landscape Architecture Inc., in partnership with the Bloor West Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) and the community, has redesigned four parkettes to revitalize this busy section of Bloor Street West by providing pedestrian comfort, establish a common visual language that reflect a unique business community, and embed the public realm with green infrastructure that touches on the area's ecological and cultural history. The project adds new planting strategies, seating, and a gateway marker bearing the BIA name. Positioned along a bustling commercial corridor above a subway and utility network, these parkettes required careful design and coordination.

Inspired by the Black Oak Savannah ecosystem in the nearby High Park, the custom designed, and locally manufactured furnishings feature durable concrete seating with laser-cut steel backs that evoke the form of the locally significant Wild Lupine flowers. Resilient native species in new planting beds support wildlife and add year-round beauty.

Community input from local businesses, property owners, BIA members, and city staff informed the design, with crucial funding from multiple sources. Completed in the summer of 2024, the parkettes now provide welcoming spots to rest, connect, and enjoy nature in the vibrant heart of Bloor West Village.

Sustainability Statement

Green infrastructure was a key element throughout each of the 4 parkettes in this project. Each parkette is designed to maximizes the planting bed area with native perennials that are hearty to urban condition and typically found in the locally native Black Oak Savannah. Many of the planting beds capture stormwater runoff locally, retaining and improving the quality of the water before it runs into the municipal stormwater system. At the Willard Avenue Parkette, curb cuts were provided such that the stormwater runoff from adjacent parking lot flows directly into the parkette planting bed. Special consideration was given to providing healthy growing conditions for existing trees within the parkettes. In many cases this meant that some of the existing trees required a raised edge to retain existing soil around trees to the level of the roots at the trees' base. By successfully maintaining the existing tree canopy in these four parkettes, and adding green infrastructure to this urban context, the parkettes contribute to lowering greenhouse emissions and reducing the urban heat island effect.

Native perennial plants in the parkettes contribute to urban wildlife habitat and food supply:

- Amelancier canadensis, Serviceberry
- Cephalanthus occidentalis, Buttonbush
- Rudbeckia fulgida, Black Eyed Susan
- Asclepias tuberosa, Butterflyweed
- Anemone canadensis, Canada Anemone
- Liatris cylindracea, Cylindrical Blazing Star
- Sorghastrum nutans, Indiangrass
- Schizachyrium scoparium, Little Bluestem
- Aster novai-angliae "Purple dome", Purple Dome New England Aster
- Euonymus obovatus, Running Euonymus
- Desmodium canadense, Showy Tick-Trefoil
- Helenium autumnale, Sneezeweed
- Panicum virginatum, Switch Grass
- Lupinus perennis, Wild Lupine

Also because the four parkettes contribute to a pleasant, comfortable, sustainable pedestrian realm in the City of Toronto, by enhancing the local community and reducing the need for trips using personal vehicles.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The parkettes in Bloor West Village exist in a globally scarce, culturally, historically and ecologically unique ecotype, the Black Oak Savannah. As such, the cultural and the ecological aspects of this project are intertwined. The area is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, who historically maintained the open structure of the tree canopy and understory ecology by intentionally burning the understory in the area surrounding the parkettes, for clearer hunting views. Many of the diverse species of the Black Oak Savannah require the historically naturally occurring burn events that provide access to sunlight and nutrients required for their regeneration.

Bloor West Village BIA parkettes and the local community are proud of their significant cultural and ecological history. Each parkette features planting beds with native perennials that are typically found in a Black Oak Savannah, honouring the area's cultural history being so interconnected with its ecology. Lupinus perennis, Wild Lupine is featured prominently in the backrest laser cut pattern and physical shape of the benches placed rhythmically throughout each of the parkettes. A laser cut pattern cut into the steel backrest of the benches that reference the Wild Lupin's petal structure, which is described as having a verticillate, whorl pattern of pea-like petals. The backrest also takes the same shape, providing stability to the bench and opportunity for lighting to be placed within the Willard Avenue Parkette benches, showcasing the added laser cut BIA name to be prominently displayed at night. Both backed and backless benches unify the streetscape and creates a common physical language, brings an opportunity for cultural and ecological awareness to visitors of the BIA, provides a place for all to enjoy the public realm, enhancing the value of the surrounding properties.


5003


BLOOR WEST VILLAGE

YONGE STREET LINEAR PARKS

20 Isabella Street
13 Isabella Street

@pmalarch

Project Team
Landscape Architects: PMA Landscape Architects (Prime Consultant)
Artist: Stanislav Jurković (Uoai Architects), Catherine Tàmmaro (TÀMMARO ART/Design)
Others: Marcel Dion Lighting Design, The Waterworx Co.
Additional consultants: Department of Words & Deeds, Blackwell, Husson Ltd., MJS Consultants, GPY+ Associates, SMART Watering Systems

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto, PF&R

General Contractor
Somerville Construction

Photographer
Scott Norsworthy

Project Description

This park design project focused on the creation of two connected parks, George Hislop Park & Norman Jewison Park (and link to James Canning Gardens, previously completed by others).

Using the Downtown Parks and Public Realm Plan and 2017 Yonge St Linear Parks Master Plan as a framework, in 2020 the PMA-led multi-disciplinary team of public engagement specialists, engineers, designers, and public artists, envisioned of the Linear Parks as a both an inviting commuter route and as a place for daily community life celebrations.

Vision and Design Goals

The project was guided by three key objectives:

- Place and Belonging: Foster a deeper sense of place and community
- Natural History: Celebrate and enhance Toronto's urban forest and ravine systems
- Culture Legacy: Honour the LGBTQ2S+ community through inclusive design

Character & Features

These interconnected parks running above the subway line represent a welcome leafy respite from their intense urban surroundings. Park paths are designed to encourage discovery with ebb and flow moments that link to pedestrian spaces, generous streetscape entry plazas and seating areas. Moving through the spaces, a rhythm of large steel gateway structures over-head mark moments of transition, emphasizing a squeeze-and-release effect created from the gradation of walkways to plazas, to playgrounds, and gardens, that echoes the natural ebb and flow of Toronto's ravines and forest clearings.

George Hislop Park honours one of Toronto's pioneering LGBTQ2S+ activists. At its heart is The Dance, a public artwork by Stanislav Jurković that reinterprets familiar park elements into a vibrant stand-in for spaces created, appropriated, and claimed by members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community to celebrate, love, play, exist, resist, demand, care and remember.

Norman Jewison Park offers a relaxed, nature-infused space. A tree-lined path leads to a central lawn, playful seating, and a bioswale that manages rainwater. A stone pet fountain commemorates Barney, the beloved dog of the park's namesake. Artist Catherine Tammaro enriches the space with poetry and artwork woven into the gateway arches, reflecting on land, time, and the unseen forces that shape our world.

The recently completed Yonge Street Linear Parks aim to deliver a public space that deftly blends ecology, identity, and inclusivity. Rather than simply serving the community, these connected parks seek to mirror it, creating spaces that grow with the city. In an evolving Toronto, they aspire to show how urban design can honour cultural diversity, foster meaningful connections, and ensure everyone finds a sense of belonging.

Sustainability Statement

Located at the precipice of the Rosedale Valley Ravine above the largely undiscovered former Moss Park Creek, George Hislop Park and Norman Jewison Park are conceived of as a green ribbon – an urban ravine – providing a parallel alternate route to the busy Yonge St corridor. Formerly a narrow swath of lawn and TTC parking lots, the Yonge Street Linear Parks aims to restore our relationship with the elemental aspects of life, including water, earth, and plant & animal life.

In addition to preserving 85% of the existing trees on site, the proposed work included 48 new trees, 8 of which are planted in urban conditions with the use of below-grade soil cells to aid in the development of healthy root systems. While the proposed design increases the parks' capacity for events, seating, and play, this did not come at the expense of the site's water balance or lead to excess run-off, as nearly 50% of the pavement is permeable unit pavers and resin-bound aggregate paving.

In Norman Jewison Park specifically, a bioswale comprised of biodiverse tree and understory planting runs along the western edge of the park, which symbolizes renewal and reconnection with the original landscape of Moss Park Creek, capturing natural drainage and rain to create and restore naturalized habitat and manage the site's water balance needs, with no new connections being made to the City's storm sewer system.

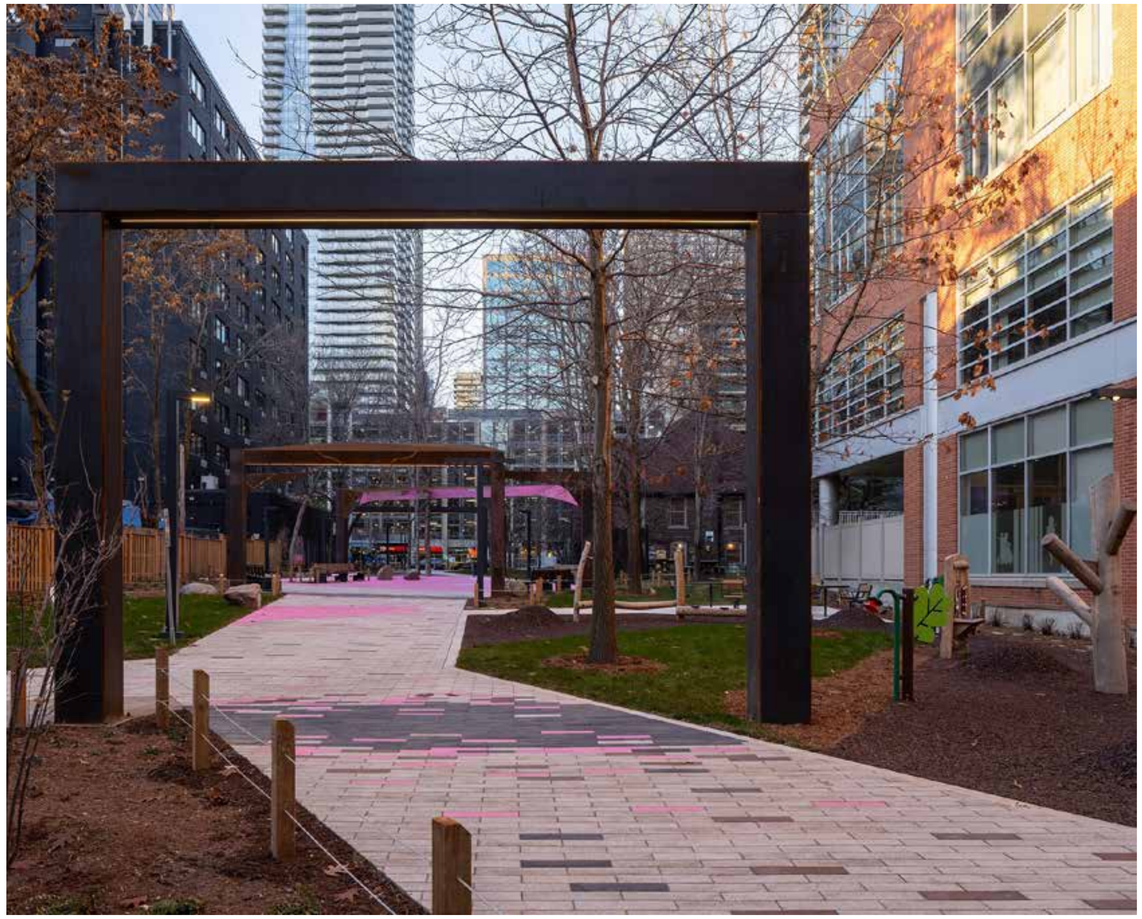
These sustainable strategies set the course for an ecologically robust park space, that supports the City's biodiversity objectives, provides increased tree cover percentages, and embodies climate resilience.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The public space of the Church-Wellesley neighbourhood is deeply rooted in a rich cultural history and remains the home iconic queer spaces within the City of Toronto, from the 519 Community Centre, to Barbara Hall Park and the AIDS Memorial, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, and countless events, festivals and celebrations of the diversity and vitality of the community. As such, the Yonge Street Linear Parks aims to reflect the rich diversity people who live, work, and visit the neighbourhood and culminates in signature public artworks designed by and celebrating both LGBTQ+ and Indigenous voices.

The Yonge St Linear Parks project was carried out through a comprehensive consultation process that included 3 community stakeholder meetings; 2 public meetings; consultation with Queer community leaders with a focus on history, culture, and artwork; meetings with vital community organizations including The 519, Sanctuary, and Buddies in Bad Times Theatre; and numerous public surveys. These consultations informed the proposed programming and the integrated artworks now located in the parks.

The diverse multi-disciplinary design team was assembled with an eye toward understanding the vibrant demographic of park users, from the existing and aged population, to young professionals, families, and more vulnerable populations including street-involved people - and it is important that we strive to not only re-imagine these spaces through park development but foster stewardship to support a range of public life as demographics shift and evolve in the Church-Wellesley neighbourhood.



CASA COURTYARD
48-50 Charles Street East

Project Team
Landscape Architects: PUBLIC WORK
Building Architect: Architects Alliance
Water Feature Consultant: DEW

Developer/Owner/Client
Cresford (Developer)
Elevate (Construction Management)

General Contractor
Aldershot Landscape Contractors

Photographer
Industryous Photography
PUBLIC WORK

Project Description

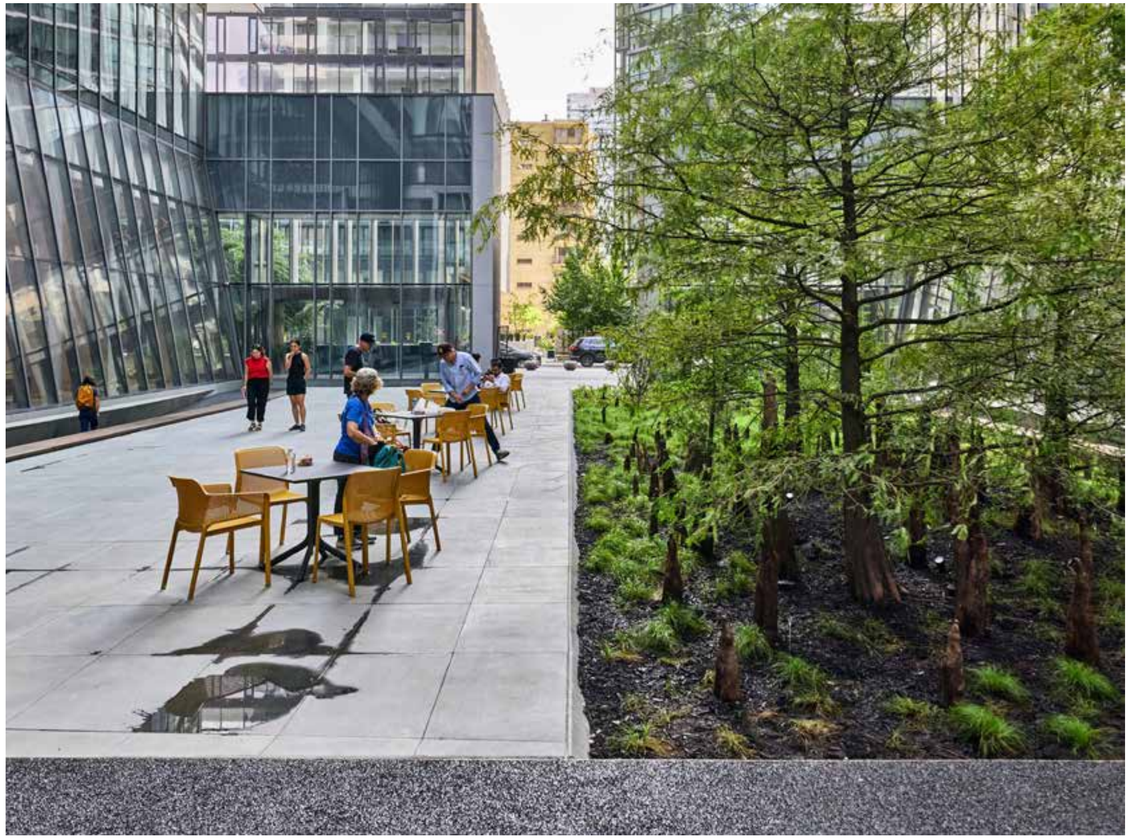
The CASA Courtyard space draws from the early history of garden design: The eternal search for paradise. From Eden to today, the garden seeks places of discovery and imagination where one can become 'lost' for a rare moment of contemplation within the city. It is notable that this courtyard is the result of an invited design competition initiated by a City Councillor in collaboration with a developer, in response to the desire of the community for a high-quality public realm and was delivered as part of a multi-phased private condo development.

The CASA Courtyard is a vital link in the fabric of Toronto's evolving and densifying Bloor/Yonge community. This pure and enduring spatial typology—an intimately-scaled, mid-block courtyard frame created by two buildings—offers a sense of discovery and delight as visitors encounter a garden featuring a botanical icon and dynamic water feature to provide a serene moment of pause in the public realm.

The courtyard creates both a sense of continuity and contrast with its urban context. In materializing the public realm, the black granite paving of the Charles and Hayden streetscape frontages are extended seamlessly through the midblock connection as a welcoming carpet leading to a central POPS space. From each frontage, a formal passage reaches through a filtering space to the courtyard, where the design articulates a new and contrasting form of public urban nature – a green space of remarkable calm. The courtyard is formally divided – half biological growth in the garden, half dynamic water feature on the multi-functional soapstone plaza floor. The sequence of movement from block to block incorporates barrier-free design for all, conceiving multiple routes of 'accessible pleasure' through an immersive garden.

There is a scale-expanding feeling within the courtyard. As the play of light upon the glazed edges of the space reflect off the mirrored patterns of still water on the soapstone floor of the court, visitors' eyes are drawn around the space and somehow lead up to the sky.

The beautifully engraved soapstone plaza of the courtyard is designed to be seasonally dynamic. It is programmed to be flooded intermittently and the air cooled by a fog feature, changing the character and use of the space throughout the day. When dry, the courtyard is programmable for events and gatherings. When wet, it is transformed into an inhabitable water-sheet: a contemplative space like no other in the city. The change of states in-between leaves memorable traces of moisture within the root patterning of the engraved floor.



Sustainability Statement

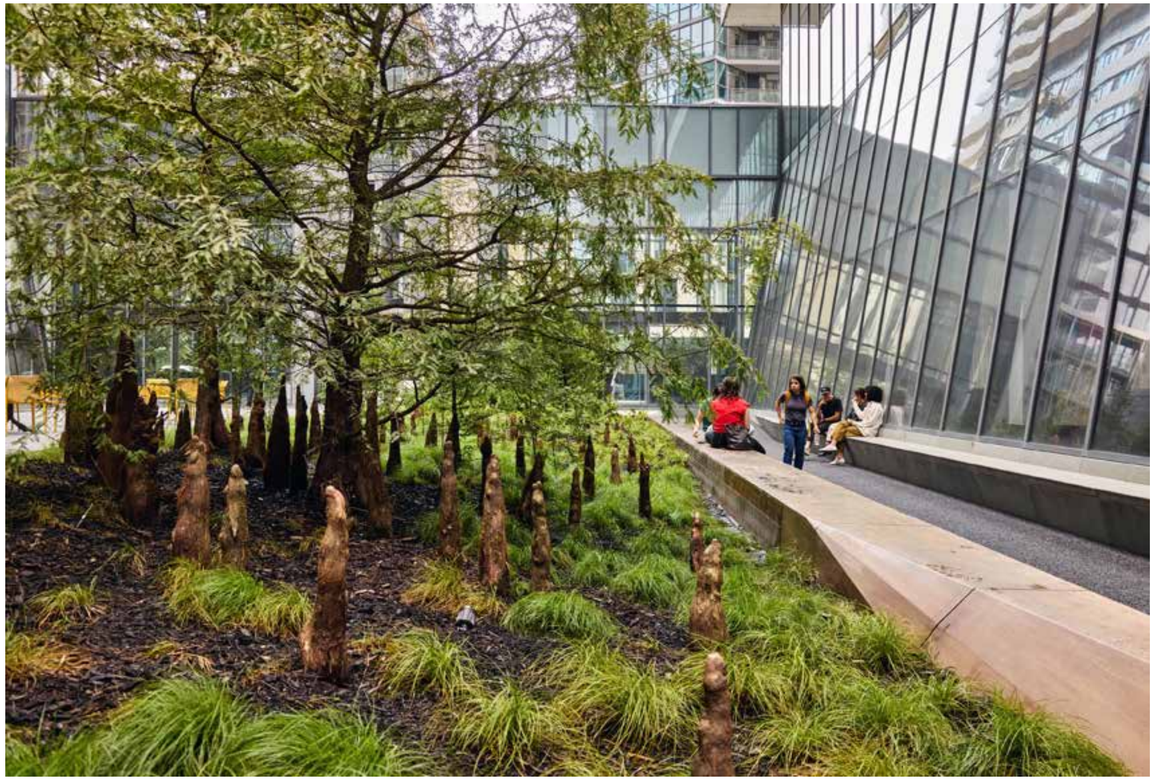
What can a 1,000m² space do? This POPS courtyard aims to raise contemporary questions about our environment: What does it mean to relate plants to place, but also to relate plants to each other in the context of climate adaptation? Gardens in the era of climate change invite us to consider how species from adjacent climate regions with physiologically relatable floras can be recontextualized as resilient and adaptative, far beyond their traditional habitat and distribution. Historically, the original depictions of paradise in the gardens of Persia were a celebration of the exotic in nature. In this spirit, this contemporary garden is a tribute to the peculiar plant architecture of Taxodium distichum and a reference to an ecology from far beyond our local geography – yet adapted to this place via the courtyard's specific micro-climate enclosure plus changing climatic conditions globally.

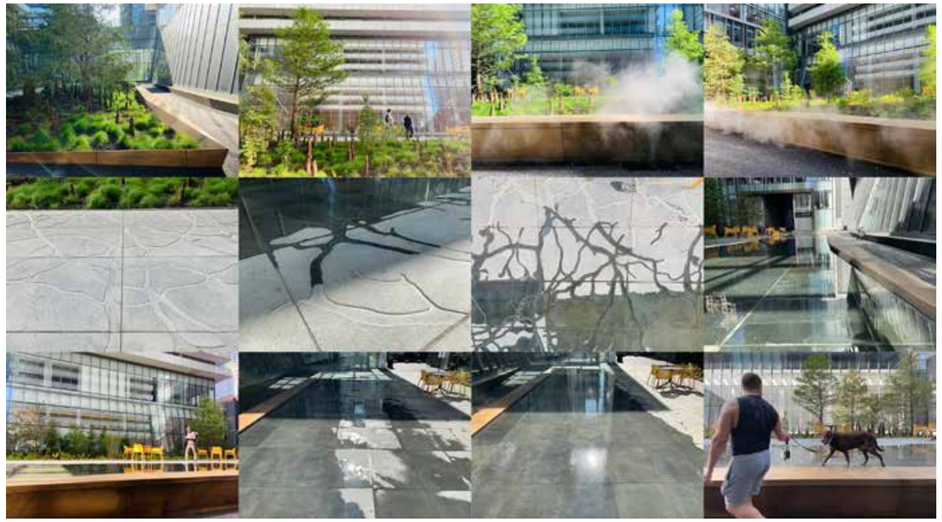
The garden is a composition of plants adapted to the unique conditions of the courtyard, a highly defined niche ecology. It aims to inspire new awareness of plants, adaptation, climate change, and resilience, provoking a way of thinking about gardens both as aesthetic experiences and as physiological systems. It showcases the amazing qualities of plants with remarkably broad distributions and peculiar growth habits that call on visitors to take notice. A sense of strangeness in the garden is rare in cities, where increasingly homogeneous designed landscapes are ubiquitous. Curiosity in these 'zone-busting' plants leads visitors to look closer and contemplate... which is ultimately the essence of gardens, to awaken our senses and transport us for a moment beyond the realities of our everyday life.

Practically, the courtyard prioritizes the addition of a substantial volume of soil over the parking garage to support biological life, absorb rainwater, support growth of tree canopy, and minimize the heat island effect through extensive plantings.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

It is notable that this courtyard is the result of an invited design competition initiated by a City Councillor in response to the desire of the community for a high-quality public realm. In a densifying district dominated by condo towers, public access to green space is limited – not to mention places of calm for mental re-charge in the city. This is an initiative to bring access to high quality environments that are publicly accessible to all. It is a project to reinforce the availability of spaces of refuge to enhance the quality of life for all within the often chaotic life of the city.

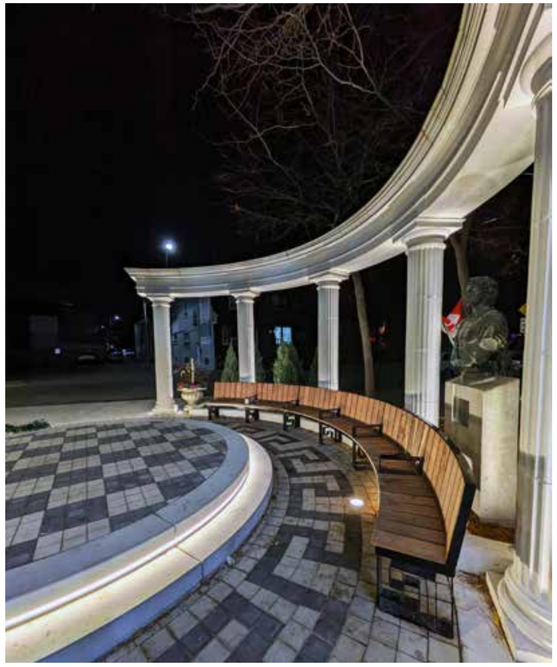




ALEXANDER THE GREAT PARKETTE

Northeast Corner of Danforth Avenue and Logan Avenue

@fflandscapearchitecture



Project Team
Engineers: Engineering Link (Structural and Membrane), Moon-Matz Engineering (Lighting, Electrical and Mechanical)
Landscape Architects: Forest and Field Landscape Architecture Inc.
Water Feature: Waterworx

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto/Greektown on the Danforth Business Improvement Association

General Contractor
Midome Construction

Photographer
Matthew Sweig
Kristian Lebitania

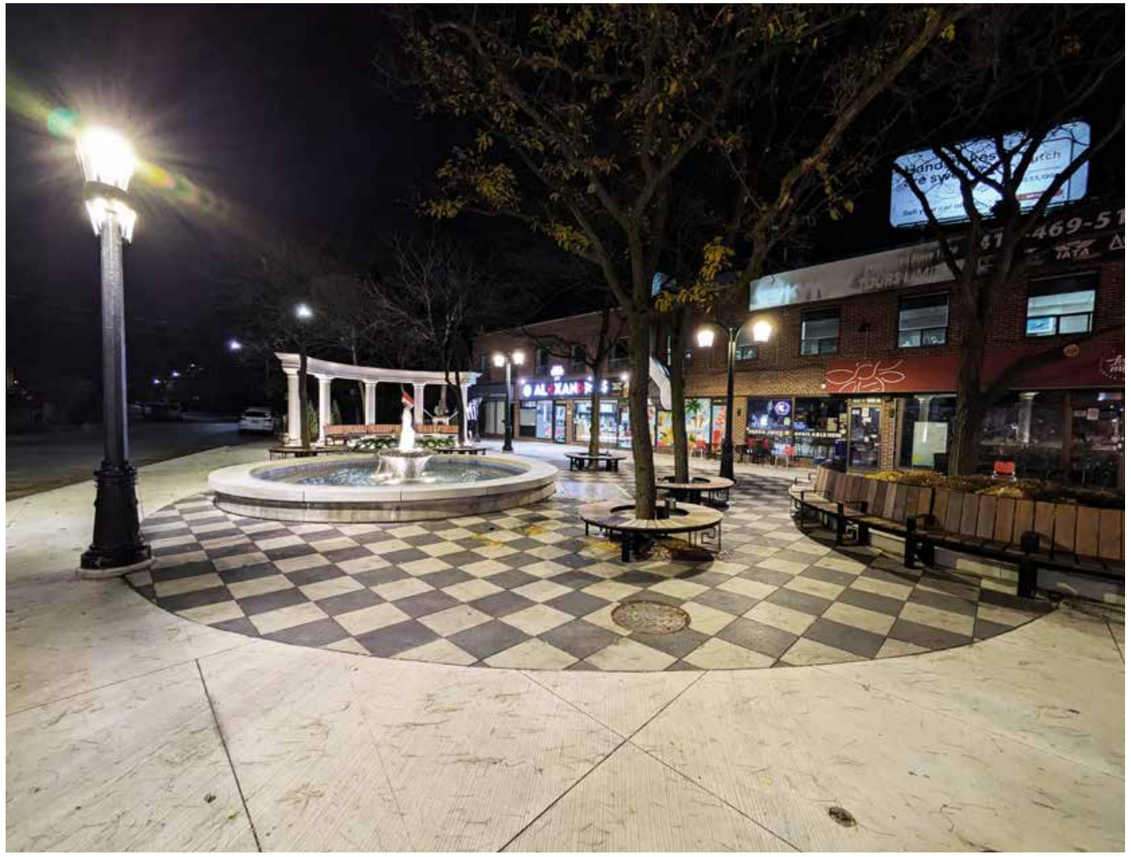
Project Description

Toronto's Alexander the Great Parkette in Greektown, revitalized by FFLA in 2024, blends modern design and contemporary landscape features with a layout that draws classical inspiration from ancient Greece, an homage to the neighbourhood's heritage as a gathering place for Greek immigrants to Canada. The parkette now maximizes its natural feeling of enclosure, featuring colonnades arranged with inspiration from Euclid's golden ratio, framing the space while drawing the public in. As one enters the parkette, the refurbished fountain fills the air with moisture, and the decades old tree canopy provides dappled light. The principles of efficiency, multipurpose functionality, flexibility and the recognition of the cultural heritage of the site that guided the design process also guided the detailing of the elements.

Comfortable wooden benches with steel legs bent into the Greek key symbol are laid out along the periphery of the space to allow the parkette to have a feeling of openness. The benches also encircle the existing trees, providing protection to the trees and dappled shade over people using the benches. The new, expanded elegant peristyle colonnade and raised stage, provide a feeling of being removed from busy urban life while providing functionality for events and daily enjoyment. Greek-inspired paving patterns reveal the 2.1m concrete pedestrian clearway required by the City of Toronto in the Right-of-Way. Curved, tree-lined benches provide shelter, microclimatic comfort, and a place to rest. Ample lighting limits glare on neighboring houses while accenting the parkettes built features made it so that the highly anticipated renovation was immediately enjoyed in evening concerts and performances.

FFLA worked closely with the contractor in the winter months to complete all the below groundwork including helical piles, exploratory digs to accurately locate underground utilities to allow the installation of helical piles for the colonnade and enable above-ground work to shorten the construction season during the winter months and ensure work was complete for summer community events.

Alexander the Great Parkette Revitalization is a project that succeeds at meeting the needs of stakeholders, the project's surrounding community, and abiding by municipal requirements. Beginning with a listening ear, an open mind, and envisioning possibilities along the way, Alexander the Great Parkette honours the past, connects the public's collective memories to the future and through contemporary materials and construction techniques creates a sustainable, enduring public space for decades to come. Likewise, the community's morning social meetups resumed as usual.



Sustainability Statement

Sustainability was a key consideration in the design and construction of Alexander the Great Parkette. Special consideration and painstaking care were focussed on maintaining the existing tree canopy by providing healthy growing conditions for existing trees within the parkette. As the existing mature Honey locust trees had well developed roots, the design team designed robust paving that impacted the underground roots as little as possible. Existing trees are either surrounded by softscape or gravel that slows infiltration. Excess material was reduced through the tree preservation efforts, as the new pavers sit on as much existing granular material as possible, rather than sitting on a new concrete slab. By successfully maintaining the existing tree canopy in this parkette, and adding green infrastructure to this urban context, the parkette contributes to lowering greenhouse emissions and reducing the urban heat island effect. Existing pedestrian lighting was updated with more energy efficient LED fixtures.

Also, because the parkette contribute a to a pleasant, comfortable pedestrian realm in the City of Toronto, they also make it a more sustainable city by making it an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for local residence to shop and visit their local businesses, thereby reducing the need for trips using personal vehicles.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Alexander the Great Parkette, originally built in 1994 by the City of Toronto, since then funded and maintained in partnership with Greektown on the Danforth BIA. The parkette has always been a refuge from busy Bloor Street East and city life because of its tranquil fountain and unique urban condition of retail facing the parkette. Although a comfortable resting spot for anyone, over the years surrounding community and businesses have proudly represented Greek culture at the parkette through celebrations, dancing, concerts, parades and street festivals, sharing and welcoming everyone to enjoy their traditions.

After decades of public use, Greektown on the Danforth BIA, and specifically a close-knit group embarked on a tremendous collective effort to refresh east end Toronto's famous parkette, community gathering space and distinguished cultural landscape. From the first meeting, it was clear that the parkette revitalization must maintain the parkette's distinct cultural identity as representative of Greek cultural and its traditions, while creating a space that welcomes all people of all abilities and lifestyles. Alexander the Great Parkette has always been a beacon of Canada's distinct cultural diversity, and the revitalization solidifies that cultural position for years to come.

At a time when corporate images and influence dominates urban life and commercial interests persuade citizens in all aspects of their lives, Alexander the Great Parkette offers a place to gather with our community, a place of respite from the pressures of urban life, and a place to experience a distinct cultural group with rich traditions that all can share.

THE SPIRIT GARDEN
100 Queen Street West

@gowhastings

Project Team
Architects: Gow Hastings with Two Row Architect
Engineers: MTE Consultants (Civil Engineering), Entuitive (Structural Engineers), HH Angus & Associates (Mechanical & Electrical Engineers)
Landscape Architects: PMA Landscape Architects
Artist: Solomon King (Artist - Turtle Sculpture), Tannis Nielsen (Artist - Spirit Canoe), Henry Kudluk (Artist - Inukshuk), Raymond Skye (Artist - Three Sisters)

Developer/Owner/Client
Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre with City of Toronto

General Contractor
Buttcon (Construction Company)

Photographer
Tom Arban
Christopher Wahl

Project Description

The Spirit Garden is a contemplative and educational public space, engaging visitors with a meaningful cultural experience. Located in Toronto's iconic Nathan Phillips Square, this inclusive project responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action 82, honouring Residential School Survivors and those lost in these institutions. The architects worked closely with an Indigenous architect, an Indigenous Knowledge-Keeper, Indigenous artists, and communities to design a multi-installation landscape, promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through cultural symbolism, storytelling, and native plantings.

Fully accessible, the 30,200-square-foot site acknowledges the Seven Directions in Indigenous placemaking, collectively representing a holistic approach to understanding the world and our place in it. These include four cardinal directions (north, east, south, and west); a vertical axis exists, representing two additional directions—below us to the underworld and above us to the sky world while the seventh direction points to the heart within each of us. These spiritual and relational directions reflect Indigenous worldviews, emphasizing balance, interconnectedness, and a deep relationship with the land, community and how we move about the earth.

The Spirit Garden offers a Teaching Lodge alongside Toronto's most significant civic gathering space, solemnly redefining it as a place for teaching, healing, and remembrance. Enclosed with wooden benches and skylights, the lodge is juxtaposed with a reflecting pool featuring the names of now-debunked 18 Residential Schools in Ontario—all revolving around a striking Turtle sculpture. This 10-ton Indiana limestone turtle sculpture is a nod to Turtle Island, an integral part of the Creation Story told by many Indigenous Peoples about the origins of North America and the interconnection between humans and the natural world prior to colonial contact.

Incorporating the City of Toronto's Urban Design Guidelines, the Spirit Garden includes native plants, an amphitheatre, and Three Sisters, illustrating regenerative traditional farming practices passed down through generations. Moreover, it features the Spirit Canoe, which is the exact size as the traditional voyageur canoe; visitors sit within its historically accurate proportions to experience how these large vessels were once used to transport goods. A powerfully composed Inukshuk marks the true north, made from rocks with orange lichen, a colour associated with the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Threaded through the site and anchored by a white pine Tree of Peace is a Two Row Wampum Walkway, a physical and metaphoric path connecting non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples, bridging the past and the future.

Sustainability Statement

In keeping with the Toronto Green Standards, the Spirit Garden prioritizes environmental responsibility with a rootedness in Indigenous knowledge and respect for the earth. The project extensively uses recyclable materials, on-site energy solutions and native plantings to increase biodiversity and reduce its environmental footprint.

The landscape reminds us of the benefits of integrating natural elements in the public realm. A key design element is its planting palette, informed by ecological knowledge of local plant communities. These include white pine, dogwood, birch, sweetgrass, and prairie sage. Many selected plants also hold traditional medicinal and food-related importance, such as juniper, serviceberry, Canadian wild ginger, Canada anemone, common bearberry, foam flower, and butterfly milkweed.

Most plants were sourced from Kayanase, a First Nations-owned and operated nursery based in Ohsweken, Six Nations of the Grand River, to ensure authenticity and support Indigenous stewardship. This collaboration underscores the project's commitment to cultural integrity, ecological sustainability, and Indigenous-led restoration.

The Three Sisters Garden is a standout feature that expresses sustainability. In this traditional Indigenous planting system, corn, beans, and squash are grown together to promote soil health and increase yields. What we call regenerative farming today is an ancient farming technique that remains an invaluable educational tool, teaching visitors about sustainable agricultural practices passed down through generations.

To continue these traditions, an annual programming budget will ensure that the Spirit Garden remains a living, evolving space that will continue to serve as a beacon of hope and reconciliation for generations. Plans for educational tours, workshops, and ceremonies will activate the garden and inject new life into it, ensuring the reconciliation message remains relevant and impactful.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The Spirit Garden is an inclusive and accessible space, ensuring everyone can experience its teachings and contemplative message of reconciliation. Exemplary for how Indigenous and non-Indigenous forces can come together, the design and installation process included extensive consultation and collaboration. The designers worked closely with an Indigenous architect, an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, Indigenous artists, and community stakeholders, offering an experiential landscape that effectively advances reconciliation efforts.

Every element has been thoughtfully crafted to honour Indigenous traditions for learning and reflection—from the timber-frame Teaching Lodge to the healing gardens imbued with cultural significance. One of the most symbolic aspects of the design is the White Pine stand, known as the Tree of Peace, which is prominently positioned at the southern end of the Kuswenta (Two Row Wampum) within a large circular planter. This tree is a silent ode, a living tribute to health, peace, and coexistence.

Moreover, the Spirit Garden features meaningful work by Anishinaabe, Inuit, Métis, and Haudenosaunee artists and a series of impactful installations within the site, reframing the future through experience, contemplation, and conversation. Based on the sentiments of the Indigenous advisor of the project: “The Spirit Garden is both a seed and a portal. As a seed, it provides a catalyst for the relationship between the Original Peoples of Turtle Island and all Canadians to improve and flourish through healing, sharing, and learning activities that align with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action. As a portal, it offers regional, national, and international visitors to Tkaronto [Toronto] a glimpse into the rich heritage of Our Peoples from the City’s ‘front porch.’ It will encourage them to seek more opportunities to experience the culture through the appropriate and meaningful programming presented by our communities and service providers throughout Ontario and across Canada.”

Public Art Statement

The Spirit Garden infuses the public realm with profound Indigenous symbolism. This experiential multi-installation landscape directly responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action 82, which urges the commissioning and installation of a publicly accessible, highly visible Residential Schools Monument in every capital city across Canada.

Prominently situated at the southwest corner of Nathan Phillips Square, Toronto's largest civic gathering space, the Spirit Garden invites the public to engage in a contemplative experience and learn about Indigenous cultures as a step toward reconciliation.

To ensure a meaningful experience, the architects collaborated with an Indigenous architect, Indigenous Knowledge-Keeper, Indigenous artists, and communities. This collaboration resulted in an unprecedented public space shaped by in-depth consultation, understanding, storytelling, and symbolism.

A central feature of the garden is a Teaching Lodge, designed as a resource for both the Indigenous community and those interested in Indigenous culture. Accompanying this is a striking turtle sculpture that references the creation story, rising from a reflecting pond that includes a wall inscribed with the names of Ontario's now-debunked 18 residential schools. This sculpture symbolizes Turtle Island, a crucial aspect of the Creation Story known to many Indigenous Peoples, illustrating the origins of North America and the interconnectedness of humans and the natural world prior to colonial contact. Other notable components of the Spirit Garden include a small amphitheatre, a large-scale etched illustration titled Three Sisters, a Métis Voyageur Canoe sculpture, and an Inukshuk crafted from rock adorned with orange lichen—a colour associated with the orange shirts honouring National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. These installations are connected by a Two Row Wampum pathway, anchored by a white pine Tree of Peace at its southern end, guiding visitors toward the existing Peace Garden at the northern edge of Nathan Phillips Square.

OSSINGTON PARKETTES

Argyle Street at 127 Ossington Aveue
Foxley Street at 154 Ossington Avenue

@fflandscapearchitecture

Project Team
Structural Engineers: Engineering Link
Landscape Architects: Forest and Field Landscape Architecture Inc.
Artist: Philip Cote
Metal Work: Allsteel Fabrication

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto/Ossington Business Improvement Association

General Contractor
Ferdom Construction

Photographer
Michelle Lazar

Project Description

The Ossington BIA parkettes at Foxley and Argyle Streets are a collaborative effort beginning during the pandemic, with local business owners looking to enhance the outdoor spaces along the hip and happening Ossington Business Improvement Association (BIA), and area known for it's reputable and exciting restaurants and nightlife. The BIA sought to provide visitors with inviting areas to relax amidst the vibrant energy of the Ossington strip. Inspired by the BIA's branding theme, "MEET ME" on Ossington, Argyle Parkette incorporates bright, colorful steel ribbons in the shape of letters, while also providing seating elements. Foxley Parkette features a large, twisting archway, fostering a sense of community interaction, while also showcasing artwork by Indigenous artist and young elder Philip Cote, which acknowledges Toronto as 'the meeting place.'

Inspired by the Ossington BIA's branding, Foxley Parkette embodies the bold "O" for Ossington BIA. At its heart stands a striking orange and yellow painted steel arch, its dynamic lean toward the roadway creating a sense of enclosure while framing activities beneath it. A 1.2x1.2-meter concrete foundation anchored by six 5-meter-deep helical piles supports this iconic element which invites interaction and provides a visually compelling focal point for the space.

Seating, both solitary and communal, is nestled alongside softscape elements, including Karl Foerster feather reed grass and Annabelle hydrangea, which establish a natural frame for horizontal views. A newly planted honey locust tree adds depth to the urban canopy, enhancing the parkette's spatial and ecological character.

Argyle Parkette amplifies the neighborhood's playful energy with a sculptural ribbon bench crafted from red and pink painted steel. The bench doubles as functional seating and spells out "MEET ME" when viewed from passers-by, reinforcing the BIA's identity. Accessible seating is thoughtfully positioned beneath the shade of mature street trees, ensuring inclusivity and comfort.

Behind the seating lies a generous planting bed featuring ornamental grasses, softening the space and adding seasonal vibrancy. The design accommodates high pedestrian traffic while maintaining a 2.1-meter accessible pedestrian clearway, addressing the functional needs of this busier corridor that connects to a local school and Trinity Bellwoods Park.

Through bold design and thoughtful collaboration, FFLA's work on the Foxley and Argyle parkettes demonstrates the transformative potential of landscape architecture in urban contexts. These spaces distill the social and cultural energy of Ossington into compact, enduring interventions, showcasing how small-scale design can make a profound impact on the urban experience.

Sustainability Statement

Green infrastructure was a key element throughout both parkettes in this project. Each parkette is designed to maximizes the planting bed area with perennials that are hearty to urban condition. The planting beds capture stormwater runoff locally, retaining and improving the quality of the water before it runs into the municipal stormwater system. Special consideration was given to providing healthy growing conditions for existing trees within the parkettes. By successfully maintaining the existing tree canopy in these 2 parkettes, and adding green infrastructure to this urban context, the parkettes contribute to lowering greenhouse emissions and reducing the urban heat island effect.

Winter hardy perennial plants are featured in the planting beds. The planting areas in the parkettes contribute to urban wildlife habitat and food supply.

Also because the 2 parkettes contribute to a pleasant, comfortable pedestrian realm in the City of Toronto, they also make it a more sustainable city by making it an enjoyable and worthwhile experience for local residence to shop and visit their local businesses, thereby reducing the need for trips using personal vehicles.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Diversity and Inclusion

The elements of the parkettes function as whimsical surprises that invite the public to interact with them. As people sit, stand, touch, perform, take pictures of each other on them, they themselves become a part of the urban narrative. As the parkettes are public spaces, designed to include and showcase the public, they contribute to the social vibrancy and health and wellbeing of the City. By transforming these formerly overlooked corners into engaging public spaces the parkettes reflect, shape and enhance local urban identity, celebrating the Ossington strip as a hub of social and cultural vitality.

Vibrant Platforms for Community and Cultural Expression

The Foxley and Argyle Street parkettes on Ossington Avenue are site-specific urban interventions that seamlessly integrate into the eclectic fabric of the neighborhood. These dynamic spaces offer vibrant moments of whimsy and discovery, acting as both a stage and a backdrop for community engagement—a place to perform, gather, and experience the social vibrancy of the Ossington strip.

Reconciliation

Indigenous artwork is front and centre in this high profile, visible socially vibrant area, its presence is integrated into the urban fabric. The images and narratives are a part of contemporary life and culture. The artwork also continues an acknowledgement of Indigenous culture for its foundations of culture in Canada. Foxley Parkette showcases artwork by Indigenous artist and young elder Philip Cote, which acknowledges Toronto as ‘the meeting place.’ Philip’s visuals draw on the narrative of the thunderbird and the first man and woman, serving as a poignant reminder to honor the ancestral gifts and talents passed down through generations.

Public Art Statement

Under a golden arch symbolizing the “O” in Ossington, and the heart of Foxley Parkette is the three-dimensional steel mural titled “Thunderbird,” by Indigenous artist Philip Cote, a Young Spiritual Elder and Knowledge Keeper from the Moose Deer Point First Nation who has continued to make a prolific contribution to Toronto’s Public Realm through his murals within TDSB schools, streetscape murals and sculptures. Cote’s contribution to the Ossington BIA is a three-dimensional steel mural titled “Thunderbird,” honors Toronto’s identity as ‘the meeting place.’

This powerful work draws from the thunderbird narrative and ancestral stories, celebrating the cultural and historical legacies of Indigenous communities. By integrating the brightly coloured and beautiful form, Phillip Cote’s artwork, is a central focus of Foxley Parkette. Through him, the legacy of Indigenous culture in the local culture proliferates. Philips’ work gives the Ossington streetscape a mark of distinction and enhances the quality of the built form and experience of the public realm. The golden arch and “Thunderbird” sculpture, this small public space has become a dramatic stage for community performances, a place to see and be seen and a marker of the presence of the surrounding vibrant business community.

2025 TORONTO URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

SUBMISSIONS | LARGE PLACES AND/OR NEIGHBOURHOOD DESIGNS

A design plan for a new or renovated large-scale area of the city. The project must be completed to such extent to allow the jury to clearly understand and evaluate the plan.

The submissions in this category should clearly state the existing conditions and demonstrate how City objectives for establishing a clear public structure of streets, parks, open spaces and building sites are met.

The submission should also highlight major areas of innovation, particularly those related to infrastructure, environmental management and sustainable design, as well as provide evidence of community involvement and acceptance. Submissions may include, but are not limited to: large parks, area/district plans, neighbourhood plans, subdivisions, industrial parks, campus plans and streetscapes. Both urban and suburban contexts will be considered.

LESLIE LOOKOUT PARK
12 A Leslie Street

@ccxa.landscape

Project Team
Architects: gh3 (Architecture)
Engineers: Arup
Landscape Architects: CCxA
Artist: Dani Kastelein-Longlade of Brook McIlroy
Ecology: Dougan Ecology
Planting: Kayanase

Developer/Owner/Client
CreateTO

General Contractor
UCC Group

Photographer
gh3*
CreateTO
Courtesy of CreateTO
CCxA

Project Description

Leslie Lookout Park is a new destination in Toronto's Port Lands located on the Martin Goodman Trail at the entrance to Tommy Thompson Park. This 1.9 acre open space at 12 Leslie Street includes a public beach surrounded by forested dunes, creating a new multi-use community landing that connects the public to the water's edge in Toronto's east end. The arched portals of the viewing platform frame dramatic sunset views along the length of the the Ship Channel to the Toronto skyline, as well as 360 degree views over the entire Port Lands. This new recreational hub, with its beach and grassy dune topography, provides opportunities for ecological restoration, reforestation, and naturalization, as well as a place for communities to come together.

Leslie Lookout Park (designed by CCxA) straddles the threshold between urban industrial lands to the northwest and the evolving wilderness at nearby Tommy Thompson Park to the southeast. These two diametrically opposing worlds inform two moods and functions. The beach on the urban side hosts a wide range of community uses. The mounds on the nature side are planted with Miyawaki-inspired forests that kickstart biodiversity with consideration for assisted climate adaptation. Leslie Lookout Park also informs the civic imagination of the future Port Lands as a place that is both urban AND wild, for people as well as their non-human counterparts.

The concept of the park revolves around the lookout structure (designed by gh3) and its views. Four mounds of heights ranging between 2 and 4 metres provide a green perch, enhanced by steps and a tiered amphitheatre oriented towards views across the beach and water. A long diagonal path traces the former rail spurs that once passed through this brownfield site, ready to connect to future expanded pedestrian networks to come. As one of the first non-industrial transformations in the east Port Lands, Leslie Lookout Park is at the ready to connect urban design moves to come, such as the Leslie Greenway – a habitat stepping stone linking the Don Valley with the Leslie Spit.

Leslie Lookout Park is a composition of bold moves through light touches, with a sustainability story that is as interesting as the experience of the park itself. From a distance, the lookout tower serves as a beacon for intuitive wayfinding, from cyclists in need of a tune-up to curious visitors watching the working waterfront from a front row of movable beach chairs.

Sustainability Statement

Working with Arup who engineered many of the park's sustainability features, Leslie Lookout Park was an early adopter of the city's new porous asphalt standard, designed with redundancy to be resilient for the long term. The retention volume in the deep clearstone base course, along with the sandy beach and vegetated surfaces, create a stormwater sponge that allowed Leslie Lookout Park to completely disconnect from the city's stormwater system. All runoff stays on site.

A significant sustainability innovation at Leslie Lookout Park was the integration of Miyawaki-inspired planting that allowed the slowness of Plant Time to be integrated into the quick pace of Contract Time. The Miyawaki approach specifies the dense planting (from 3 to 5 plants per square metre) of shade-tolerant climax indigenous forest species that produce rapid growth through competition above ground and cooperation below. Climate forecasts were studied to target geographies where seeds and saplings are already genetically adapted to the warmer conditions anticipated in Toronto's future, as well as a forest community suited to a similar sandy lakeside context. Point Pelée was chosen as the reference forest. The landscape architect (CCxA) and ecologist (Dougan Ecology) worked with Kayanase, an indigenous plant nursery, for seed collection, contract growing, installation as well as maintenance. This approach allowed for the accommodation of a more complex planting palette, reducing transport impacts and replacements normally associated with standard ball and burlap tree planting. This approach allowed for the integration of specialized species such as the Blue Ash (Fraxinus quadrangulata), which is less susceptible to Emerald Ash Borer, and fills gaps for creatures that rely on Ash for their sustenance. Survival assessments carried out within a year after planting of the overall forest showed a survival rate greater than 95%. This approach to rewilding has been noted for its strong potential in carbon sequestration, an important feature that allows Leslie Lookout Park to inform climate positive design strategies for urban parks.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Engagement with Indigenous Rights Holders in the early stages of the project introduced insightful perspectives that informed a constructive critique of the original competition-winning scheme. References to the Port Lands industrial context, as a result, were reconsidered, and the lookout structure evolved towards a more natural expression of a hollowed-out tree, with its portals aligned to the four cardinal directions with an open oculus to the sky.

In March 2023, a mural depicting the Great Anishnaabe Migration, created by Indigenous artist and architectural designer Dani Kastelein-Longlade of Brook McIlroy, was installed on the 150 metre long construction barrier protecting the site along Leslie Street. The artwork depicted on this mural interprets the journey through the seven sites of the chi-bi-moo-day-win', the Great Anishnaabe Migration, and is part of Brook McIlroy's Indigenous placemaking for the park.

Instrumental in the creation of the Miyawaki-inspired forest is Kayanase, an indigenous plant nursery from the Six Nations of the Grand River. Kayanase choreographed the propagation and supply of planting material used in the mound naturalization, taking the lead throughout the supply, installation, monitoring, and maintenance of the new forest.

The culmination of these voices and actions allowed Leslie Lookout Park to manifest the specificity of this place, emphasizing relationships with land, nature, community, and history.

THE WELL
486 Front Street West

@hariripontariniarchitects

Project Team
Architects: Hariri Pontarini Architects (Masterplan and Office), Adamson Associates Architects (Executive Architect), BDP (Retail, Canopy, Landscape Architect), Giannone Petricone Associates (Wellington Market), Wallman Architects (Residential Midrises), architects—Alliance (Residential Highrises), Urban Strategies (Urban Design and Planning)
Engineers: RJC Engineers (Structural), Jablonsky Ast & Partners (Structural Residential), Odan/Detech Group, Inc (Civil), The Mitchell Partnership Inc. (Mechanical), Mulvey & Banani (Electrical), BA Consulting Group (Transportation)
Landscape Architects: CCxA Architectes paysagistes
Artist: Catherine Tammaro and Jah Qube (The Spirit of the Woods), Dustin Yellin (Emergence), Michel Goulet (Draper Park Chairs), Vanessa Spizzirri (A Neighbourhood Stroll)
Others: EQ Building Performance (Sustainability), Albert Mondor (planting), Isaac Crosby (Indigenous Horticulture Advisor)

Developer/Owner/Client
RioCan REIT, Allied REIT

General Contractor
UCC Group
EllisDon, Deltera, Knightbridge (Construction Managers)

Photographer
Doublespace Photogaphy
Hariri Pontarini Architects

Project Description

The transformation of a prime eight-acre parcel in downtown Toronto into The Well displays a bold vision to expand density, advance sustainability, and sensitively integrate three-million-square-feet of mixed-use development within the context of heritage urban fabric. This new building typology with its innovative 50-50 share for commercial and residential use is distinguished by an animated interplay of office, retail and living space set in a weather-protected, open-air pedestrian realm.

The vision for this community took inspiration from the distinctive ambience of a network of pedestrian routes through the repurposed brick-and-beam warehouses of King West. The Well integrates this scale and materiality and extends the neighbourhood with a very high degree of porosity and connection – a contemporary complement to the adjacent urban tapestry.

The Well can be accessed 24/7 on all four sides via nine passageways – some grand, some discreet. There is no obvious back-of-house and deliveries and servicing are conducted below grade. The six residential buildings and one office tower are connected by a ‘spine’, an open-air, multi-tiered promenade beneath a large, undulating glazed canopy. The buildings are set back in a colonnade where bridges criss-cross the space and open onto a large public area fashioned like an amphitheatre where events and activities are programmed.

Architecture and landscape are symbiotic components blending the exterior and interior with key features such as resilient streetscapes, tree-lined promenades, vibrant plazas and lush passageways connecting to neighbourhood parks. The landscaping further revives a plan from 1837 to create a linear park on this portion of Wellington St. The block’s wide right of way has setbacks that were never capitalized on until The Well’s urban integration accentuated this rare public allowance. What was previously a backlot of surface parking and shipping docks, today features benches, gardens, granite paving, public art, and restaurant terraces at The Well that blend into the public realm beneath a green canopy of trees to further connect The Well with King West.

The Well features universal access without doors or stairs to experience a realm that fosters a sense of belonging and serves as a catalyst for the community. Locals were deeply involved throughout the design process and were supportive of the intent for an inclusive and engaging space.

This LEED® Platinum certified project exemplifies how a visionary team can transform a complex site into a vibrant, sustainable community and in the process, create a new destination for the city.

The Well This contextual view presents The Well in relation to the King West neighbourhood to the right and the rail corridor and City Place to the left. In scale and materiality, The Well introduces itself as a gateway from the financial district to King. W.

Sustainability Statement

The Well seeks to set a benchmark for sustainability, demonstrating that energy-efficient design can enhance large-scale development. Its open-air concept, a distinctive feature of sustainable design, contrasts sharply with traditional climate-controlled malls. Conceived before the pandemic, the master plan promotes a fresh air environment and creates a ‘five-minute city’ that supports everyday urban living.

As a LEED® Platinum certified project, The Well utilizes an integrated approach to sustainable design. The 35,000-square-foot canopy features advanced glazing to minimize summer heat accumulation, while green roofs on high-performance building envelopes reduce the urban heat island effect. The stepped massing of the office tower maximizes daylight for adjacent Clarence Square Park. The building is predominantly electrified, deriving only 2% of its energy from natural gas, leading to a 10% reduction in energy use compared to the 2018 energy model.

Extensive native, drought-tolerant landscaping enhances biodiversity, complemented by green infrastructure that supports the public realm. Passive irrigation and a comprehensive soil cell system manage stormwater, promoting vegetative growth while minimizing runoff into municipal systems. Demand control ventilation minimizes the use of the ventilation systems and optimizes for constant good indoor air quality.

The standout feature is the Deep Lake Water Cooling (DLWC) system, which uses cold Lake Ontario water for low-carbon cooling. This system halves the building’s operational carbon footprint at 2.33 $KgCO2e/m^2$ per year, exceeding the highest Tier of the Toronto Green Standard’s greenhouse gas intensity requirements set for 2028 almost by half of the 5 $KgCO2e/m^2$ per year required.

Under The Well, an 8.5-million-litre thermal storage facility acts as a thermal ‘battery,’ storing off-peak energy and alleviating strain on the electricity grid. This facility can also supply sustainable heating and cooling for an additional 17 million square feet of development in the King West neighborhood.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The Well is for everyone. It is an inclusive, accessible space where diverse and free programming initiatives are actively promoted throughout the year, making The Well a new urban hub and destination for citizens and visitors alike.

The West Walkway, a north-south passage in The Well will be re-named The Seven Generations Garden to honour the Indigenous peoples of the area as part of the land acknowledgement that is scheduled to take place in June 2025. The Seven Generations Garden, developed in collaboration with horticulturalist Brother Nature (Isaac Crosby), integrates Indigenous placekeeping and storytelling practices, fostering awareness of cultural traditions. The Seven Generations Principle is common within many Indigenous communities across North America based on an ancient philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. To further enrich the cultural experience and connection to The Well with Indigenous representation, a multi-tiered permanent public art installation designed by Catherine Tammaro (CT) and fabricated by Jah Qube will be unveiled in October 2025.

The artwork is called The Spirit of the Woods and is comprised of two key areas: a central sculpture that is a representation of a cluster of birch trees that creates a focal point at the cross-roads of the north-south and east-west pathways. The sculpture stands on a concrete plinth and features a representation of a luna moth chrysalis. Uplighting will illuminate the internal faces of the formed birch trees, making the sculpture a beacon of light at The Well during the night.

The second permanent installation is a series of wall panels activating the long north-south wall of the Seven Generations gardens. These panels express the meaning of each generation through the geometry of a spiral – a traditional symbol that shares a universal origin with many Indigenous communities as well as other cultural backgrounds.

Together, the sculpture and mural are designed in concert so that the panels form a primary background when walking along the Seven Generations towards the north, where each panel operates as an evolving set of generations, provoking movement and contemplation along the wall.

The three-level spine of The Well features colonnades and pedestrian bridges lined with reclaimed and repurposed wood from previous buildings on the site.

Public Art Statement

The Well creates an immersive experience that extends the King West public art scene by incorporating art, murals, and other installations by local and international artists throughout the year. A self-guided art tour provides a path of discovery to artistic exploration at The Well where creative placemaking is found in both prominent and unexpected locations. Emergence is the signature sculpture by renowned artist Dustin Yellin. This almost three-metre-tall cast metal composition explores the origin of the universe right up to the creation of computing. Murals throughout The Well serve as wayfinding as well as creative display. Hello Velo by Jenn Kitagawa is a 44ft by 9 ft mural on the theme of biking on walls that lead to the bicycle parking area. The dog-friendly access throughout The Well is given prominence in A Neighbourhood Stroll by Vanessa Spizzirri, a playful installation featuring images of pets in Toronto. Next to this are four colourful hydrant sculptures where dogs can relieve themselves. Speaking of pets, the cat sculpture in Draper St. Park is a likeness of a legendary cat, Dizzy, considered this quaint street's ambassador. Arcadia Earth is an interactive, multi-sensory experience incorporating art and technology on the theme of a more sustainable future. Sustainability is also featured in the wood furnishings of the lobby of 8 Spadina. Brothers Dressler used reclaimed wood to craft elegant seating and boxy bleacher-style seating from wood beams salvaged from previous buildings on the site. And history plays a part here with the preserved Art Deco entrance to The Globe and Mail office. This nickle-plated frame has been transformed into a monument that celebrates Toronto's newspaper publishing history on this site.

Energy Performance Metrics

These are the energy metrics for 8 Spadina, the 38-storey office tower at The Well.

- GHGI 2.33 kgCO2e/m2/yr
- EUI 152 kWh/m2 per year (vs. 168 kWh/m2 per year modelled)
- TEDI The Thermal Energy Demand Intensity – Modelled 59 kWh/m2 (not possible to calculate current/real TEDI)

LANDSCAPE OF LANDMARK QUALITY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

University of Toronto Front Campus

@kpmbarch

Project Team

Architects: Shirley Blumberg (partner-in-charge), Chris Couse (founding principal), Goran Milosevic (principal), Olga Pushkar (principal), Brian Melcher (associate-in-charge), Nick Jones (associate), Adam Jennings (associate), Matthew Krivosudsky (associate), Fotini Pitoglou, Christiana Apanapa, Ramon Janer, Shiyang Wang, Aurora Chi, Brent Wagler, Donia Barai, Erik Skouris, Arminé Tadevosyan, Olena Chorny, Anne Kwan, Andrew Barat, Nicolas Green, Leah Kim, Nick Choi, Thom Seto
Engineers: BA Consulting Group Ltd. (transportation and traffic), Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd. (structural), Crossey Engineering Ltd. (mechanical), Mulvey and Banani International Inc. (electrical), SCS (civil)
Landscape Architects: Michael Van Valkenburgh
Others: ERA architects, Infrastructure Ontario (project managers), Tillotsen Design Associates (lighting design), Harakawa Inc. DBA Two Twelve (wayfinding and signage), Turner & Townsend (quantity surveyors), SPH Planning & Consulting Limited (accessibility)

Developer/Owner/Client

University of Toronto

Image Credits

Salina Kassam

Project Description

At the heart of the University of Toronto's historic St. George Campus are four landmarks — King's College Circle (KKC), Hart House Circle, Sir Daniel Wilson Quad, and the Back Campus Fields. These spaces, comprise the university's central heritage precinct and are the focus of the Landscape of Landmark Quality project, one of the largest landscape infrastructure projects in Canada.

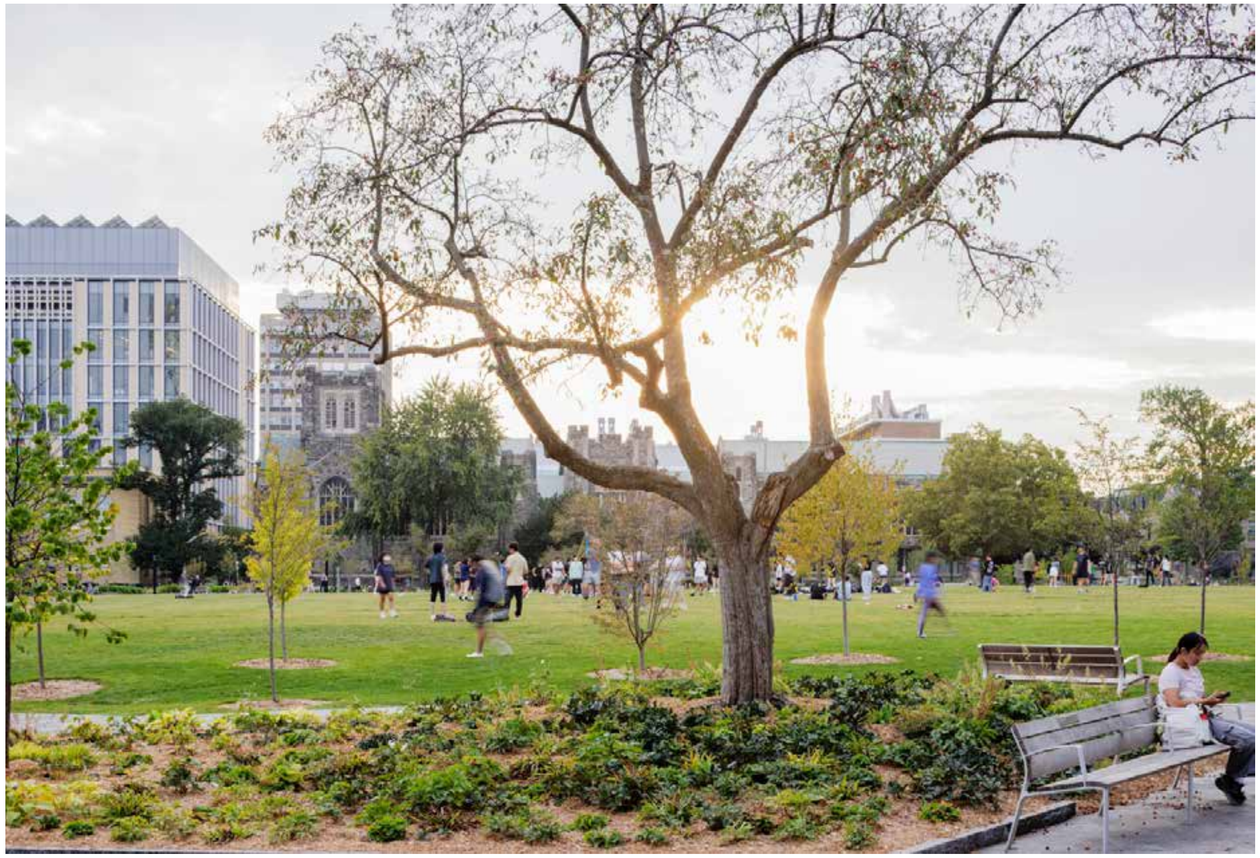
Led by KPMB Architects and Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, the project sets a long-term vision to clarify, reimagine, and connect the campus. It illustrates the university's initiative to remove all surface-level parking and significantly limit vehicular access to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists, expands green areas, and enhance accessibility.

MVVA designed a necklace of gardens and trees encircling the KKC lawn. The lawn was regraded, with new soil and turf installed to provide a flexible green space for events, sport, and quiet reflection. A network of granite pathways links the four spaces and pedestrian-scale lighting replaces vehicular routes to create a car-free environment. A single-level parking garage was designed and built below the reconstructed lawn of KKC, with a glass pavilion located south of the circle providing access to the garage. The project also preserves and frames heritage architecture through carefully designed view corridors and open sightlines.

During the project's design, the university made a bold decision to add a substantial geothermal field below the garage. With 368 boreholes drilled to depths of 250 meters, the system provides cooling and heating to campus buildings. The geo-exchange is part of project Leap currently under construction which will reduce emissions by over 46,000 metric tons annually by 2027. The system is also visible through subterranean observation windows, serving as an educational tool for students and visitors.

The project also contributes to biodiversity and climate resilience through extensive planting: over 90 new gardens, nearly 55,000 perennials, 41,000 bulbs, and hundreds of trees and shrubs. These selections foster pollination, enhance year-round visual interest, and rebuild local microecosystems. Additional features include integrated stormwater management, 357 bike parking spots, and 50 EV chargers.

The project underscores the scale of ambition: reclaiming 17 acres in the heart of North America's fifth largest city to create a welcoming, accessible, and green campus core. This landscape is a gesture to the university, its community, and the city at large, ensuring the St. George Campus remains a place of connection, inspiration, and legacy for generations to come.



Sustainability Statement

The project exemplifies the University of Toronto's bold vision for a more sustainable future. Supporting the University's goal to be climate-positive by 2050, this initiative integrates a wide range of sustainable strategies to significantly reduce carbon emissions, enhance biodiversity, and transform the historic St. George Campus into a resilient landscape.

A defining feature of the project is the integration of one of Canada's largest geo-exchange systems, installed beneath Front Campus. Comprising 368 vertical and angled boreholes drilled 250 metres deep, the system acts as a thermal battery to store excess heat in the summer to reuse in the winter for existing campus buildings. It is a key component of project Leap which will reduce carbon emissions by approximately 46,000 metric tons annually when complete in 2027. As a unique educational feature, the system includes publicly visible, color-coded pipes showcased through two large observation windows creating a subterranean classroom.

Above ground, the landscape functions as a carbon sink and a biodiverse urban oasis. Drawing from City of Toronto planting requirements, the project introduces over 90 new gardens which supported the creation of a microecosystem. The landscape team planted over 247 new deciduous trees (16 species), 6 evergreens, 287 hedge shrubs, 6,200 shrubs (15 species), 54,905 perennials (78 species), and 41,380 bulbs (6 species).
This rich vegetative strategy enhances ecological health and restores underutilized areas along the campus perimeter, offering visual interest, shade, and habitat throughout the year.

The project advances sustainable mobility with 232 at-grade and 125 garage bicycle parking spaces, plus 50 electric vehicle chargers. Pollution and noise levels are reduced through the pedestrianization of key areas, stormwater is managed via collection systems on green roofs, and engineered soils and irrigation strategies are tailored to each rooftop condition—from the garage's geofoam-supported system to the drip-irrigated Medical Sciences building courtyard.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The Landscape of Landmark Quality project at the University of Toronto prioritizes inclusive design and accessibility, setting a new precedent for equitable campus planning and design

Accessibility and inclusion
A comprehensive review of existing site accessibility guided design decisions to ensure the removal of barriers without diminishing existing accessible features. Universal accessibility was integrated throughout, with carefully regraded paths maintaining slopes below 5%, eliminating the need for ramps while improving access for all users.
Stairs were removed at key points such as the Medical Sciences Plaza, and grade changes are now navigated through gentle, accessible slopes and integrated wall seating.

The project delivers improved pathways to previously hard-to-access buildings and provides barrier-free parking and elevators linked to technically accessible parking zones. Wayfinding has been reimagined using simplified, intuitive signage based on universal design principles, supporting people with low vision and cognitive differences. Heat tracing and snow removal strategies further ensure safe and trip-resistant pathways in winter.

Engagement and collaboration
Design development was informed by deep engagement with accessibility services and student-led advocacy groups, including the Barrier-Free Access Committee. Feedback from students, local resident groups, and individuals with lived experience shaped decisions related to signage, rest areas, and Wheel-Trans drop-offs.

Rest and flexibility
The landscape offers ample, movable seating and rest areas, creating moments of pause throughout the site. These features accommodate a range of user needs and support events, informal gatherings, and quiet retreat.

Reconciliation and Indigenous collaboration
The design sought to thoughtfully and intentionally connect with Brook McIlroy-design Indigenous landscape and pavilion, adjacent to the Hart House Circle.

2025 TORONTO URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

SUBMISSIONS | VISIONS AND MASTER PLANS

Unexecuted visions for the city, studies and master plans of high inspirational value with the potential for significant impact on Toronto's development. Submissions in this category may include but are not limited to: theoretical and visionary projects, as well as any project fitting the description of Large Places and/or Neighbourhood Designs that are unbuilt.

PARKSHORE

2001 Lake Shore Boulevard West

@brenthaynes_arch

Image Credits
Brent Haynes

Project Description

Parkshore is a bold reimagining of Toronto's western waterfront, transforming an underutilized stretch of the city into a thriving urban district where public life, sustainability, and connectivity take center stage. More than just a new development, it is a reclamation of space—restructuring roads and infrastructure to create a truly people-first environment. By rationalizing Lakeshore Boulevard West and shifting roadways to better align with existing infrastructure, Parkshore unlocks vast new areas for parks, plazas, and public gathering spaces while seamlessly integrating new homes, shops, and community amenities. This is not a development that encroaches on greenspace; it is one that creates it.

Designed as an urban district first, Parkshore prioritizes density, walkability, and transit connectivity, reinforcing the idea that a truly sustainable city is one where people can move freely without reliance on cars. A robust network of pedestrian and cycling pathways weaves through the community, enhancing mobility while ensuring effortless connections to transit, the waterfront, and surrounding neighborhoods. Every element of the masterplan is crafted to foster social interaction, encourage active lifestyles, and bring the public realm to life in ways that feel both organic and inviting.

The project respects and embraces the cultural history of the area, integrating existing landmarks into its fabric rather than replacing them. This sensitive and layered approach creates a district that feels authentic and rooted in place, balancing history with innovation. The architecture and landscape work in tandem to create a dynamic, mixed-use environment where residential, commercial, and cultural spaces complement one another, ensuring a vibrant and evolving community over time.

Parkshore is a statement about the future of waterfront living—a place where urban energy and natural beauty converge, where past and future are thoughtfully connected, and where public space is not an afterthought but the foundation of the entire vision. It is a model for how cities can grow intelligently, creating not just new buildings but new possibilities for how people experience and interact with their city. With its bold vision, Parkshore is poised to set a new benchmark for waterfront development, reinforcing Toronto's reputation as a leader in innovative, people-focused urban design.

Sustainability Statement

Parkshore redefines sustainability through its urban-first, transit-oriented approach, where density, connectivity, and ecological resilience shape a thriving waterfront district. By rationalizing Lakeshore Boulevard West, the masterplan streamlines vehicle infrastructure to be more efficient, freeing up significant land for parks, public space, and a continuous pedestrian-first environment. This transformation not only enhances urban biodiversity but also mitigates the urban heat island effect, creating a cooler, healthier landscape along Toronto's waterfront.

At the heart of Parkshore, a new pedestrian corridor emerges—a complete inversion of the car-dominated space that exists today. What was once an unbroken expanse of asphalt, congestion, and emissions is reimagined as a green spine of movement and life, lined with a dense canopy of trees, layered plantings, and seamless pedestrian connectivity. This living corridor will serve as the green lungs of the district, passively improving air quality, offering shade and comfort, and creating a truly people-centered experience that stands in stark contrast to the infrastructure that once defined the area.

A transit-first strategy minimizes reliance on private vehicles by prioritizing walkability, cycling, and public transit, significantly reducing emissions while promoting active lifestyles. A robust network of pedestrian and cycling pathways seamlessly integrates with transit, reinforcing a low-carbon urban model aligned with TransformTO and the Toronto Green Standard. The expansion of tree canopy coverage throughout the district not only enhances biodiversity but also absorbs carbon, regulates temperature, and strengthens environmental resilience.

By combining high-density mixed-use development with extensive green infrastructure, Parkshore sets a new benchmark for climate-responsive city-building. It is not just a new waterfront district—it is a transformation of how Toronto breathes, moves, and thrives, proving that a truly sustainable city doesn't just accommodate people; it puts them at the center of its design.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Parkshore is built on the idea that a thriving mixed-use community must be more than just buildings and open space—it must foster meaningful social interaction and a shared sense of place. Public squares and gathering spaces are designed not just as voids between structures but as catalysts for engagement, where culture, community, and identity can be expressed. Sculptural landmarks, integrated public art, and flexible civic spaces create opportunities for storytelling and representation, ensuring the public realm feels both inviting and significant to all who experience it.

Public spaces are designed to be truly welcoming, fostering gathering, expression, and connection. A more accessible and walkable urban fabric ensures equitable access to parks, transit, and civic spaces, breaking down physical and social barriers. By restructuring infrastructure to create new community-oriented spaces, Parkshore establishes a waterfront district that not only serves the city but reflects the full breadth of its people.

While no single project can resolve systemic inequities, Parkshore recognizes the responsibility of city-building to create spaces that are open, accessible, and reflective of Toronto's diverse communities. By integrating opportunities for public engagement, cultural expression, and representation, the project aims to contribute to a more inclusive and socially connected city—one where more people can see themselves, participate, and belong.

Public Art Statement

Art can be an integral part of a community's fabric, woven into the spaces where people gather, pause, and connect. Parkshore's pedestrian corridor, public squares, and key intersections naturally create moments for reflection and interaction, offering prime opportunities for artistic expression. These spaces are designed not just as pathways, but as places—where one can stop, catch their breath, meet a friend, or experience something unexpected.

While specific installations are yet to be defined, the urban design inherently carves out space for a diverse range of public art, from sculptural landmarks and light-based installations to digital and interactive works. Seating areas, intersection nodes, and gathering points throughout the masterplan provide natural settings for artistic interventions that enhance the public realm, create identity, and foster cultural expression.

The central public square exemplifies how urban design and art can merge into one. Housing a lookout point, this sculptural structure functions as both a landmark and an experience, inviting visitors to engage with their surroundings in a meaningful way. More than a static piece, it embodies the potential of art to shape space, frame views, and define a sense of place.
Parkshore also presents a unique opportunity to engage local, Indigenous, and equity-deserving artists, ensuring that public art is not only an aesthetic feature but a reflection of Toronto's diverse voices and histories. Through collaboration and thoughtful integration, the project can evolve into a living gallery—one that tells stories, sparks dialogue, and reinforces the waterfront as a place for all.

250 BOWIE
250 Bowie Avenue

@svn.ap

Project Team
Architects: Allies & Morrison
Engineers: R.V. Anderson
Landscape Architects: SvN Architects + Planners
Others: Public Address, EQ, BA Group

Developer/Owner/Client
Hullmark, in partnership with BGO.

Image Credits
Hullmark

Project Description

The 250 Bowie project—Beltline Yards—is a transformative example of how design can drive urban regeneration, sustainability, and community connectivity in Toronto. Located along the historic Beltline Trail and directly adjacent to the future Caledonia GO and Crosstown LRT stations, the project reimagines a former industrial site into a vibrant, inclusive urban hub.

Rather than simply integrating into the existing low-rise residential fabric, 250 Bowie aims to define what growth should look like around this emerging transit hub. It sets a new standard for how the area will evolve—anchored by transit, public space, and inclusive community infrastructure. This is a model for sustainable intensification, leveraging connectivity to create a complete community that will guide future development in the district.

The project addresses key urban challenges such as climate resilience, housing demand, and green space creation while enhancing design excellence, ecological stewardship, and social impact. A standout feature is the integration of green infrastructure—permeable surfaces, native planting, and biodiversity corridors that restore natural habitats along the Beltline Trail.

Connectivity is central to the project. “Station Square” introduces a new gateway to the future GO Station, ensuring seamless transit access and promoting active mobility through extensive pedestrian and cycling links. The design features a ““spaces first, buildings second”” approach, organizing development around a robust public realm including a series of “yards” that open onto both public streets and the Beltline Trail. With nearly 46.4% open space, the site offers “buildings without backs,” enhancing accessibility, permeability, and social life.

Public spaces—playgrounds, community gardens, and plazas—are designed for everyday use and future programming, ensuring they remain active and welcoming. The site retains its historic brick chimney as a landmark and cultural anchor, linking the area’s industrial past to its creative and inclusive future.
Housing choices include affordable and market-rate units designed to accommodate a range of lifestyles over time. On-site employment spaces support stacked light manufacturing and flexible incubator spaces that connect with the nearby Caledonia Design and Décor District, creating a complete live–work–make community.

By preserving the site’s history and embracing its potential, 250 Bowie sets a precedent for people-centred development, demonstrating how thoughtful landscape architecture and urban design can lead growth in Toronto’s rapidly changing transit corridors.

Sustainability Statement

The 250 Bowie project is a model for sustainable urban development, addressing both the climate and biodiversity crises through innovative design strategies that exceed the Toronto Green Standard. By prioritizing climate resilience, ecological restoration, and a low-carbon public realm, the project aligns with the City of Toronto's environmental goals.

At the heart of Beltline Yards is a robust green infrastructure strategy that mitigates the urban heat island effect, enhances stormwater management, and promotes biodiversity. The project integrates native planting, green roofs, bioretention planters, and a substantial tree canopy to improve air quality and ecological resilience. These features, combined with permeable surfaces, reduce stormwater runoff and improve groundwater recharge, supporting climate adaptation.

The project is transit-oriented, integrating directly with Caledonia GO Station and the Crosstown LRT while also connecting to extensive cycling and pedestrian networks. This car-free public realm promotes sustainable mobility and active transportation, reducing emissions citywide. Additional energy strategies include district energy and geothermal systems to reduce long-term operational carbon.

Heritage preservation is also central to the sustainability vision. The site's historic chimney is retained and integrated into a new park space, preserving embodied carbon and celebrating the site's industrial past. Building massing and orientation respond to solar and wind conditions, enhancing natural ventilation and energy efficiency.

Through ecological restoration, low-carbon infrastructure, and inclusive design, Beltline Yards demonstrates how sustainability and community can coalesce to shape Toronto's future.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

250 Bowie embodies a commitment to equity, reconciliation, and inclusivity through its design, planning, and engagement strategies. The project transforms a former industrial site into a transit-oriented mixed-use community, ensuring that historically marginalized groups, including Indigenous, Black, and other equity-deserving communities, benefit from its social and economic opportunities.

Equitable Outcomes & Inclusive Engagement

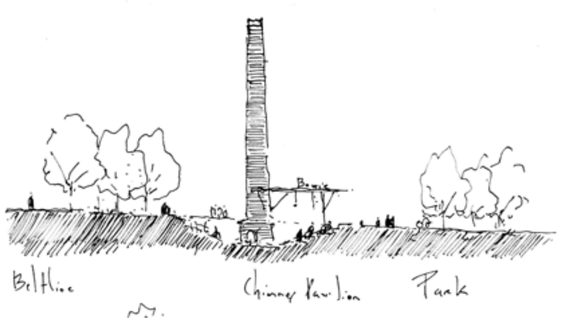
250 Bowie supports diverse communities by prioritizing affordable housing, barrier-free accessibility, and public spaces that foster social inclusion. The project integrates a variety of housing options, including affordable units, ensuring that lower-income individuals and families have equitable access to quality housing near transit and employment opportunities. The planning process included extensive community engagement, with multiple public consultations to incorporate feedback from a broad spectrum of local voices, particularly those from underrepresented groups.

Strengthening Relationships & Amplifying Voices

Recognizing the historical and cultural significance of the site, 250 Bowie integrates public art that reflects its manufacturing legacy and the broader narratives of Toronto's diverse communities. The project fosters economic empowerment through dedicated makers' spaces, supporting local artisans and small businesses. These spaces ensure that the site continues to serve as a hub for creativity and economic opportunity, aligning with broader goals of inclusive urban development.

Advancing Equity & Reconciliation in Methodology

The design and planning of 250 Bowie align with the City of Toronto's equity and reconciliation principles by prioritizing transit accessibility, green infrastructure, and barrier-free public spaces. The project overcomes significant elevation changes to ensure that all public areas are fully accessible, creating a seamless and inclusive urban environment. Additionally, the extensive green space at the heart of the site provides much-needed environmental relief and community gathering areas.
By embedding equity and reconciliation into its core principles, 250 Bowie—Beltline Yards—serves as a model for inclusive urban development, fostering a sense of belonging, opportunity, and resilience for all communities in Toronto.



Public Art Statement

Public art is central to the identity of 250 Bowie—Beltline Yards—serving as a key element in both placekeeping and community storytelling. The project integrates public art into its open space network and heritage features to celebrate the site's industrial legacy and reflect the diverse cultural narratives that shape Toronto.

A central feature of the public art strategy is the retention and repurposing of the site's historic brick chimney. Preserved as a landmark within the new park, it becomes a canvas and focal point for artistic interpretation, bridging the site's past as a place of industry with its future as a creative and inclusive community. Its prominence offers an opportunity for site-specific commissions that speak to transformation, resilience, and memory.

Public art is also embedded throughout the landscape design, particularly along the Beltline Trail interface and within the series of interconnected "yards" across the site. These spaces are envisioned as platforms for rotating installations, murals, and sculptural works that invite interaction and highlight the stories of local residents, makers, and communities historically underrepresented in Toronto's public spaces.

The project's early site activations have included temporary art and community programming, setting a precedent for long-term cultural engagement. Future commissions will prioritize collaborations with Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving artists, ensuring that the evolving identity of Beltline Yards remains rooted in reconciliation, inclusivity, and creativity.

By integrating public art with heritage preservation and landscape infrastructure, Beltline Yards fosters a layered and expressive public realm that is both reflective and forward-looking.

TORONTO ISLAND PARK MASTER PLAN

Toronto Island Park

@dtahtoronto @dtahtoronto.bsky.social

Project Team
Landscape Architects: DTAH; Trophic Design
Cultural Heritage: Common Bond Collective
Ecology: North-South Environmental
Wayfinding: Steer

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto

Image Credits
DTAH

Project Description

Toronto Island is a place like no other. It is a place of Indigenous significance, a landform central to the establishment of Toronto, a refuge from urban life and home to many species of plants and animals as well as the Ward's and Algonquin Island communities. It plays a critical role in many ecological systems and wildlife networks that extend well beyond the park's boundaries and is home to unique and threatened species. As an extremely valuable asset for all living beings in the city, Toronto Island deserved a plan that acknowledges its contribution to the city's wellbeing and balances the need for ecological preservation with recreation.

The Toronto Island Park Master Plan builds on established city-wide, downtown, and waterfront policies and initiatives to deliver a comprehensive strategy for managing the park. The plan presents a vision for the evolution of the Island and a framework for immediate and longer-term decision-making with an emphasis on enhancing the visitor experience without erasing the unique identity and spirit of the place.

The plan is informed by broad and meaningful investigations of the park's physical form, natural systems and cultural significance, as well as an extensive and iterative engagement process. Guidance is grounded in real conditions and context while also flexible enough to adapt to changing realities, both environmentally and socially.

Outlining improvements to the park through a 25-year vision and implementation, the plan seeks to enhance the intrinsic value of the park — supporting it as a place of meaning and destination — and the dynamic nature that has always existed and will continue to influence the Island. It takes an intentionally light-touch approach to change, acknowledging the established foundations and proposing strategic interventions that can be realized gradually and in coordination with other improvements, such as the revitalization of the ferry landings to support new ferries, and shore enhancement to align with planned flood mitigation works. The plan reconsiders the park's relationships with its edges: how beaches, wetlands, and constructed edges contribute to the experiences, operations, and health of the park. The plan advocates for collaborative, coordinated, and sustainable processes to realize a park that will be enjoyed for generations to come.

Hanlan's Landing

Hanlan's Landing will be re-imagined to create a new sense of arrival for Hanlan's Point. Reconfiguration of the arrival plaza will create a space that puts pedestrians first. It will become a welcoming and seamless space that supports movement for all visitors as they start their island adventure, elevating the landing to a destination in its own right. Visitors will be encouraged to stay and enjoy the view out to the harbour from the redesigned north lake wall, savour unique food from the revitalized pavilion, or wander over to learn about Ned Hanlan (the man and the tugboat).

Activities at Hanlan's Landing will quiet down in the wintertut all facilities should be winterized to ensure they can be used if needed in winter. Operations of the businesses and information hub should be optimized for three seasons, considering spring, summer, and autumn.

Potential improvements:

Pavilion + Information Hub. Rehabilitate the existing pavilion to provide a sheltered space for waiting for the next ferry, enjoying a snack, and learning about what's happening on the island from the new visitor information hub. Replace existing lighting, patio furnishings, and railings to create a welcoming and open space for any time of day or season. Introduce different furniture types, such as movable and moveable seating, to help activate the hub and facilitate use by visitors of diverse ages and abilities.

Gateway Feature. Use art and markers at the landing to support the arrival experience. Consider permanent and temporary installations that support a consistent visual identity for the island. Explore cultural markers to identify the Indigenous significance of the islands, water, and surrounding territories, identify Hanlan's Point as a 2SLGBTQI+ safe space.

Rental Node. Consider re-use of an existing wood building to support the creation of a new bike rental node. Explore opportunities for both Point-to-Point and recreational bike rentals. Use clear wayfinding signs throughout the landing to safely direct bike users to the node.

Ned Hanlan. Relocate the statue of Ned Hanlan and the eponymous tugboat to frame the arrival plaza, like the features to share the stories of the Hanlan family on the islands and highlight the island's maritime history. Leverage the lawn between the elements to provide an informal gathering space near the ferry and water taxi/shuttle landings.

Plaza. Leverage the continuous ground treatment to facilitate barrier-free movement by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. Use the plaza to support the pickup and drop-off functions of an accessible island transportation network and connect major destinations across the park. Create seating areas outside vehicle travel routes.

Grove & Flexible Lawn. Selectively remove and replant dense vegetation with the existing traffic island to create an open lawn and shaded grove. Support passive uses such as wandering, picnics or waiting. Consider opportunities to integrate temporary art (including performance-based works).

Sustainability Statement

Toronto Island Park Master Plan looks at sustainability from a holistic lens, not limited to building performance or carbon reduction. As a collection of living, resilient ecosystems, the park is inherently a climate positive space. However, after generations marked by change and intervention from human activity and the impacts of natural forces on this landform the master plan outlines the importance of sustainable management to support ongoing decision making and use of the park. Rewilding of underused open spaces, reintroducing native and naturally occurring trees throughout the park, and renaturalizing shorelines to both enhance aquatic and terrestrial habitat and mitigate impacts from seasonal and recurrent flooding are some of the nature-positive approaches identified.

As a landmark park for the city, the plan also identifies measures to ensure sustainable design through targeted improvements, including an overall emphasis on adaptive reuse instead of replacement for any built elements. The plan integrates guidance from other city policy on sustainable development and encourages partnerships within city divisions and beyond to deliver improvements that are financially sustainable as well as supporting ecological and social objectives. The plan advocates for the role of communities in the stewardship and governance of the park to support and learn about the ecological significance of these sensitive, but resilient ecosystems and participate in the sustainable caretaking of this unique place.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

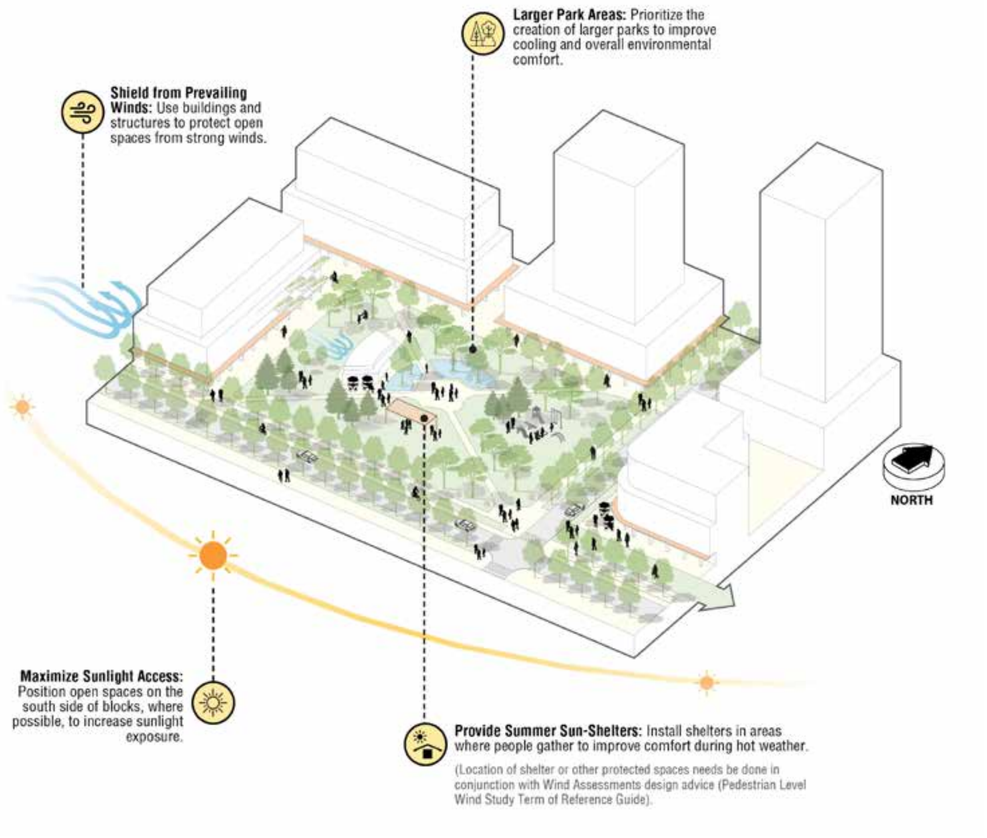
Toronto Island has a legacy of being a place where communities come together in celebration and mourning, healing and harvest, and as refuge from the city. The master plan aims to honour this history both through reconciliation with Indigenous communities and engagement with broader equity-deserving groups. The plan acknowledges the need to expand the concept of history and heritage to tell all the stories of the islands and share the significance of the area for humans, as well as the plants and animals.

The overarching goals and values guiding the master plan speak to the need to embed equity in the character and experience of the park holistically and not simply as a box to check. The plan aims to reveal the Island as an Indigenous Place—not only sharing stories and teachings of the past, but also revealing the diverse living culture, practices, and knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples in a current context. It speaks to the importance of accessibility as an intentional part of the park experience, both through the removal of physical and economic barriers to the Island. Additionally, the plan acknowledges the fundamental role Hanlan's Point will continue to play for 2SLGBTQ+ communities and the importance of honouring and protecting it as a significant landmark for many in Toronto and beyond.

CITY OF TORONTO THERMAL COMFORT GUIDELINES

City of Toronto

@dialogdesign



Project Team
Architects: DIALOG
Engineers: Buro Happold
Landscape Architects: DIALOG

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto

Image Credits
DIALOG

Project Description

The City of Toronto Thermal Comfort Guidelines is a trailblazing initiative designed to protect and enhance the quality and comfort of the public realm in the face of a warming climate. This project, the first of its kind in North America and only the second globally, meticulously focuses on year-round thermal comfort in Toronto's public realm.

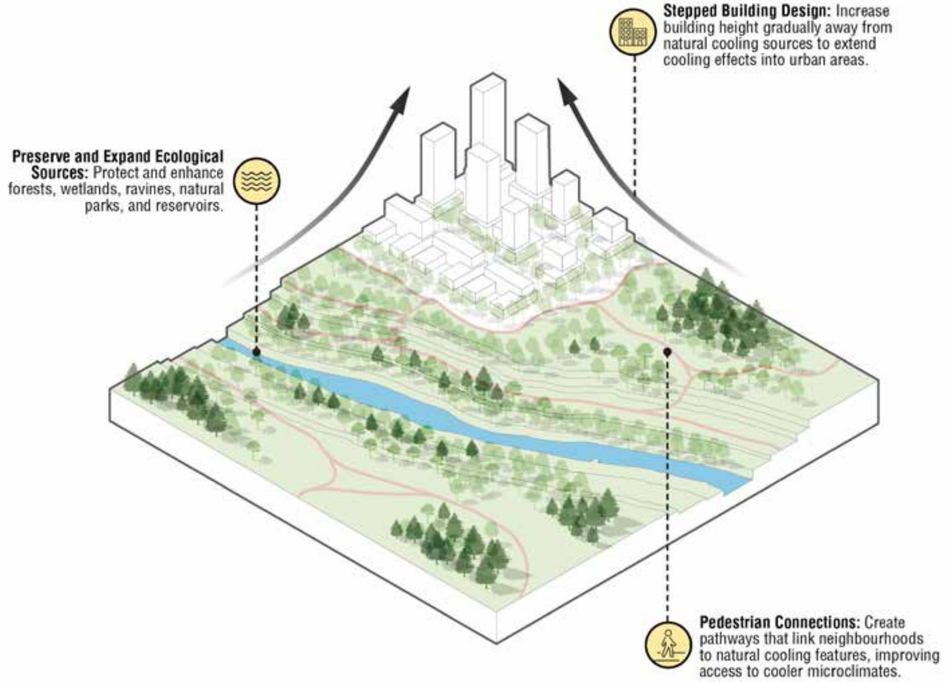
The rapid urban growth in Toronto, while contributing to the vibrancy of the city, places additional pressure on public spaces. These areas are essential for daily social interactions, recreation, and community engagement. As such, maintaining their usability and comfort in the face of a changing climate is more crucial than ever.

The initiative resulted in the adoption of a report by the City Council titled "Thermal Comfort Guidelines: For Large Area Studies, Public Realm Capital Projects, and Large Site Developments." This comprehensive document outlines three crucial components:

1. Toronto-Specific Methodology for Measuring Thermal Comfort: This part of the study defines how to measure thermal comfort at any given site, taking into account future climate projections. Four key factors are measured to determine thermal comfort: wind, humidity, air temperature and radiant temperature. Together, these factors are combined into an equivalent temperature called the Universal Thermal Climate Index (UTCI).
2. Setting Ambitious but Achievable Targets: The guidelines establish targets for the percentage of time that the UTCI of a public space should fall within a comfortable range in winter, summer, and the shoulder months. This allows for before-and-after comparisons when changes to a site are proposed to determine if the new design meets these targets.
3. Design Toolbox for Urban Resilience: A toolkit of design ideas offers a variety of options for creating thermally comfortable environments. This includes neighborhood-scale strategies like streetscape design and the orientation and size of parks, as well as smaller-scale suggestions like the strategic use of trees and vegetation for natural heat regulation.

The performance-based approach of this toolkit encourages creative and non-prescriptive solutions, providing designers the latitude to meet the specific needs of the site, project, and community.

These Thermal Comfort Guidelines serve as a model for other cities, demonstrating how urban areas can adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. By focusing on strategic, adaptable design interventions, Toronto is setting new standards in urban resilience and enhancing the quality of life for all its residents, ensuring that the city's public spaces remain vibrant and comfortable all year round.



Sustainability Statement

Thermal Comfort Study is one of the foundational climate action pieces from City of Toronto's City Planning Division to address climate adaptation comprehensively. This initiative is centered on redesigning our public realm to effectively respond to climatic changes, ensuring that urban spaces remain comfortable and sustainable. In partnership with the Canadian Centre for Climate Services, we integrated future climate data into our analyses, employing the latest and most reliable weather projections to gauge and enhance thermal comfort.

The guidelines harmonize with several other sustainability endeavors, such as the Toronto Green Standard (TGS) Version 4. This standard requires that 75% of a site's non-roof hardscape incorporates treatments to mitigate heat impacts, such as the use of cool paving materials and the provision of shade through tree canopies and architectural structures. The effectiveness of these interventions is evaluated through thermal comfort studies, which ascertain the practicality of such measures.

Moreover, the TGS sets a target of achieving a 40% canopy cover in public realms, a critical element for enhancing climate resilience. This coverage provides essential shade and contributes to urban cooling, thus playing a crucial role in our overall sustainability strategy.

Addressing the urban heat island effect is another significant facet of these guidelines. Our Thermal Comfort Guidelines include a dedicated section on this phenomenon, with a Design Toolbox that outlines strategies to cool urban areas, mitigate temperature extremes, and boost biodiversity.

Enhancing spaces for biodiversity and ecological balance ultimately fosters a comfortable and harmonious living environment for humans. This principle underscores a comprehensive perspective, recognizing the interconnectedness of all living things. Trees and vegetation, in particular, play a crucial role in moderating the climate. Therefore, by creating an environment where trees and vegetation can access sunlight and maximize their growth, we contribute to the well-being of all living things.

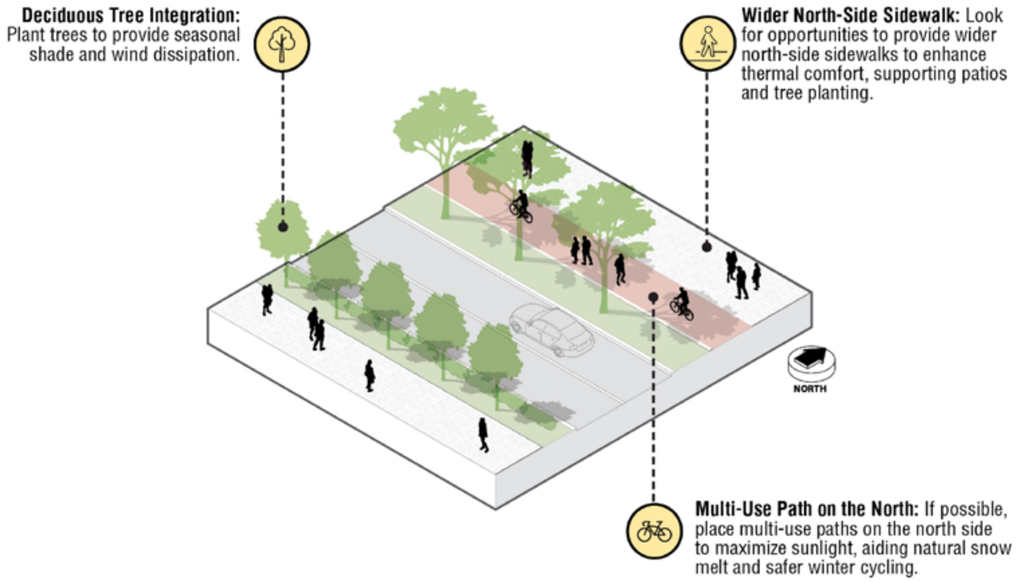
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

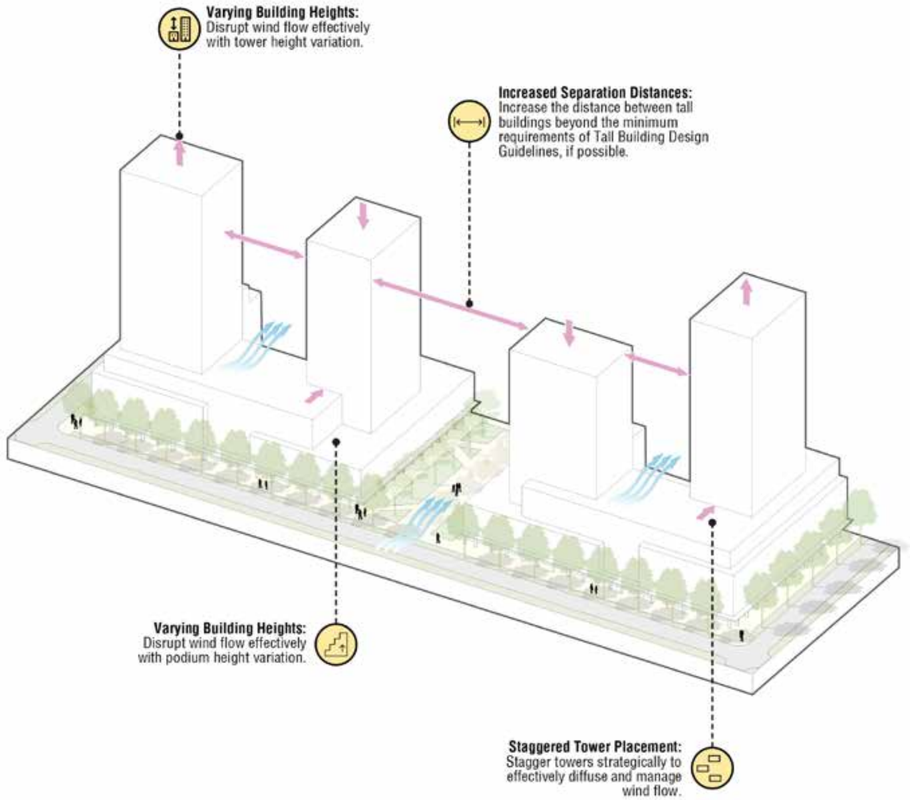
A core principles of the project is “Apply an Equity Lens”, to prioritize populations disproportionately affected by extreme weather, including seniors, youth, individuals experiencing homelessness, and residents in high-density or parkland-deficient neighbourhoods.

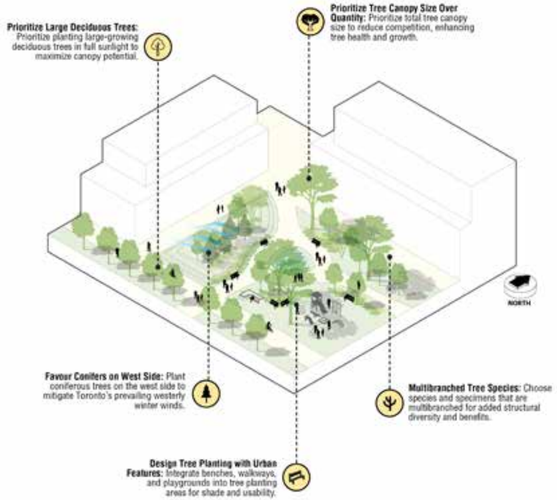
The Toronto Thermal Comfort Guidelines recommends the following tools:

1. Enhancing Tree Canopy with Toronto’s Tree Equity Score Analyzer (TESA): This tool, developed by American Forests, scores neighbourhoods from 0 to 100 to assess tree equity, prioritizing canopy enhancements in areas with inadequate coverage. As the first Canadian city to adopt TESA, Toronto aims to achieve a 40% tree canopy cover.
2. The Parkland Strategy: Identifies areas with low parkland provision and guides the development of equitable, high-quality parks and natural spaces.
3. Focus on High-Density Residential Areas: Emphasizes the development of comfortable public outdoor spaces in densely populated areas, where residents often rely on public amenities.
4. Use Neighbourhood Profiles for Data-Driven Planning: These profiles provide crucial socioeconomic and demographic data to identify areas needing enhanced public amenities and to tailor outdoor spaces to specific age groups.
5. Designing Around Child Care Centres, Schools, Playgrounds, and Senior Spaces: Targets improvements in thermal comfort for children and seniors, who are particularly vulnerable to temperature extremes.
6. Improving Walkability for All Abilities: Designs public spaces, including sidewalks, to be accessible and inclusive, maximizing street tree coverage and providing comfortable rest areas.

In developing these guidelines, DIALOG engaged a wide range of interested and affected parties through interviews and online surveys. Notably, the Urban Indigenous communities were involved through an Indigenous Advisory Committee and two dedicated workshops. As a result, the project embraced an indigenous life-centric perspective, transitioning from a people-centric approach to one that honours all living beings—humans, animals, insects, plants, and more. This shift recognizes that by nurturing environments where all life flourishes, humans, too, can thrive.




Varying Building Heights:
Disrupt wind flow effectively with tower height variation.
Increased Separation Distances:
Increase the distance between tall buildings beyond the minimum requirements of Tall Building Design Guidelines, if possible.
Varying Building Heights:
Disrupt wind flow effectively with podium height variation.
Staggered Tower Placement:
Stagger towers strategically to effectively diffuse and manage wind flow.

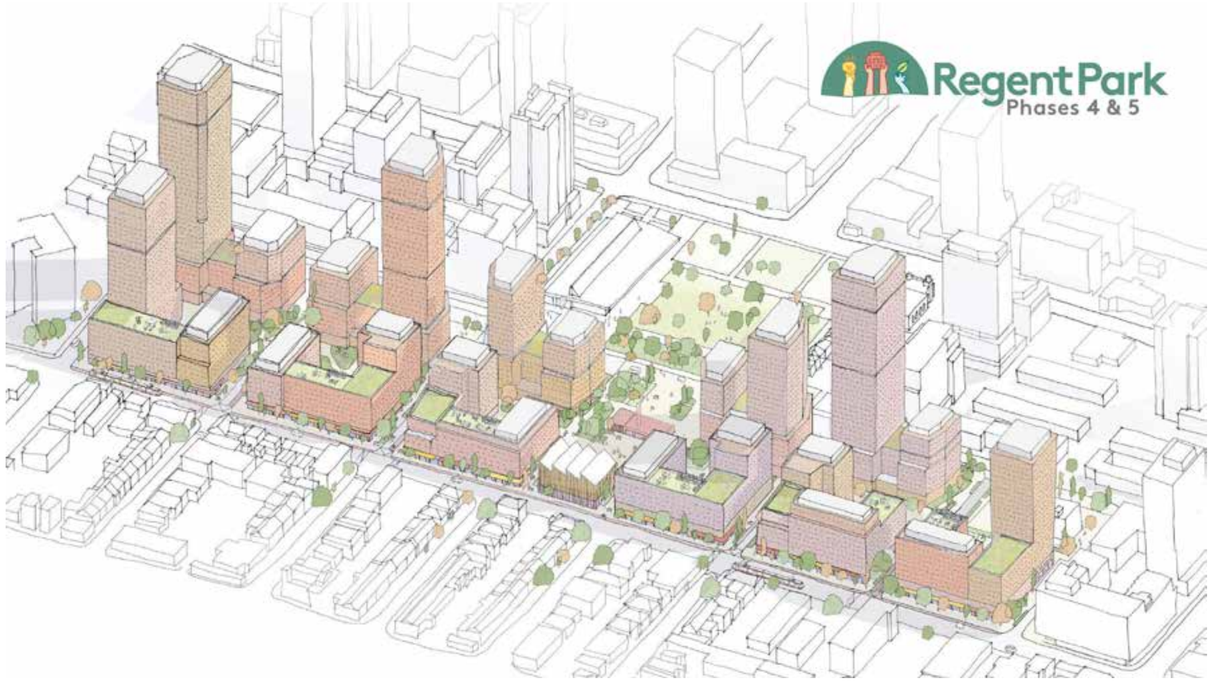

Prioritize Large Deciduous Trees:
Prioritize planting large-growing deciduous trees in full sunlight to maximize canopy potential.
Prioritize Tree Canopy Size Over Quantity:
Prioritize total tree canopy size to reduce competition, enhancing tree health and growth.
NORTH
Favour Conifers on West Side:
Plant coniferous trees on the west side to mitigate Toronto's prevailing westerly winter winds.
Multibranched Tree Species:
Choose species and specimens that are multibranched for added structural diversity and benefits.
Design Tree Planting with Urban Features:
Integrate benches, walkways, and playgrounds into tree planting areas for shade and usability.


AIR TEMPERATURE
DIRECT SUN RADIATION
REFLECTED RADIATION
HUMIDITY
WIND
SURFACE LONGWAVE RADIATION

REGENT PARK REVITALIZATION PHASES 4&5

325 Gerrard Street East - Phases 4&5

@bousfieldsinc @bousfields-inc-



Project Team
Architects: Karakusevic Carson Architects, ERA Architects Inc.
Engineers: BA Group, SLR, Transsolar Klima Engineering, Counterpoint Engineering
Landscape Architects: PFS Studio
Others: Bousfields Inc. (Urban Design, Planning, Community Engagement), Monumental, Parcel Economics

Developer/Owner/Client
Toronto Community Housing Corportation, Deltera Inc.

General Contractor
Deltera Inc.

Image Credits
Karakusevic Carson Architects
PFS Studio

Project Description

The updated vision and urban design framework for the Phases 4&5 of the Regent Park revitalization sought to maximize the positive impact of these final two phases of the revitalization of Canada's largest and oldest public housing development. This process was guided by a desire to maximize the redevelopment for additional housing (affordable and market) and introduce a mixture of uses and open spaces, all in a well-designed form that will support the ongoing creation of a complete community in Regent Park.

The design approach revisited elements of an already lauded plan and urban design framework, that was partially implemented through the first three phases of redevelopment and provided opportunities to strengthen successes and enhance the meaningful impact for the final phases of a mixed income and mixed-use community.

On this basis, the new design framework for Phases 4&5 built upon the earlier concept plans and found solutions to introduce key changes to the street network, public realm and built form permissions, while conforming to the policies of the Regent Park Secondary Plan. With a focus on fit, scale and integration, the new design framework introduces an appropriately scaled massing strategy that will bring significant reinvestment to the lands, new vitality to the streets, and provide greater opportunities for residents to live within walking distance of a wide array of amenities, services, and transit. The framework was designed to reconnect the site to the broader surrounding neighbourhood, limit shadow impacts onto the public realm and lower-scale neighbourhoods, and create an active public realm animated by active at-grade uses with flexible use permissions.

The updated urban design framework increased the overall density, number of residential dwelling units, open space areas, community spaces, and mixture of uses in Phase 4&5 lands within a variety of built forms, including a substantial increase in the number of affordable dwelling units compared to the previous framework. Together with this increase in the number of residential units, the framework proposed significant public realm expansions, including a new central plaza, community-use spaces and a new location for the Toronto Public Library Parliament Street branch, all while improving community safety.

Sustainability Statement

A Vision for Urban Regeneration: Sustainability at the Heart of Regent Park Phases 4 & 5

The final phases of the Regent Park revitalization represent Toronto's most ambitious commitments to low-carbon urbanism to date. As the City's largest residential low-carbon redevelopment, Phases 4 & 5 will redefine what a resilient, inclusive, and climate-conscious neighbourhood can be.

At the forefront of this transformation is a bold commitment: all City-led homes—nearly half of the approximately 2,973 new residential units—will be delivered to be low-carbon performance standards. These affordable rental homes, owned and operated by Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), will demonstrate climate leadership while ensuring energy efficiency and comfort for residents of all incomes.

Supporting this ambition is a decarbonized central energy system to which all buildings in Phases 4 & 5—TCHC and market—will connect. This low-carbon district energy network will dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and serve as a replicable model for neighbourhood-scale decarbonization. It is also a modern nod to the preserved Boiler House building that previously delivering heating to the neighbourhood.

Sustainability in Phases 4 & 5 is multifaceted. The design of the built environment will focus on high-performance, climate resilience, and low-operational carbon. Indoors, rigorous guidelines for daylight, air quality, and thermal comfort will ensure healthy living environments. Outdoors, thoughtful public realm design will create shaded, vibrant microclimates, while supporting active transportation, biodiversity, and urban agriculture.

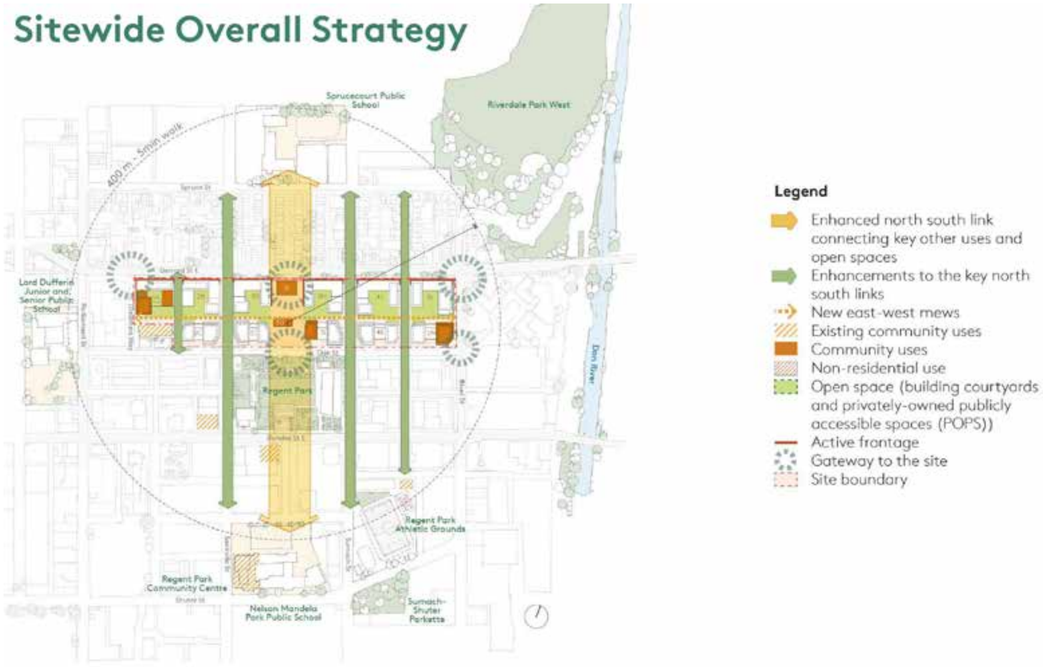
This is a community-first sustainability vision: one that prioritizes equity, resilience, and long-term livability. From small-format retail spaces for local entrepreneurs to community gardens and flexible public spaces, every element is designed to support social, economic, and environmental sustainability. Regent Park Phases 4 & 5 stand as a benchmark for climate-adapted urban design—Toronto's clearest vision yet for an inclusive, low-carbon neighbourhood of the future.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

A meaningful commitment to equity and diversity was a key component of the Project Team's approach to engaging with the community throughout the Regent Park Phase 4 & 5 Revitalization process. The Regent Park community is one of Toronto's most diverse neighbourhoods comprised of 50% immigrants representing a diverse population base. A central aspect of the engagement approach included hiring three Regent Park residents as Project Coordinators as part of the consultant's community engagement team. The Project Coordinators advised on the overall engagement and consultation process, drafting and reviewing planning application and engagement materials, and supporting the implementation of engagement events and activities. Their insights and recommendations ensured that the voices of the local community were brought forward throughout the process. This collaborative approach strengthens relationships and trust between the local community and the Phases 4 & 5 Project Team.

In addition to hiring three Project Coordinators, youth engagement was a critical part of the engagement process. A series of engagement sessions and design jams were hosted with local youth, youth organizations, community youth workers, and students in the local elementary schools to ensure that voices of the large local youth community were reflected in the plans for Phases 4&5.

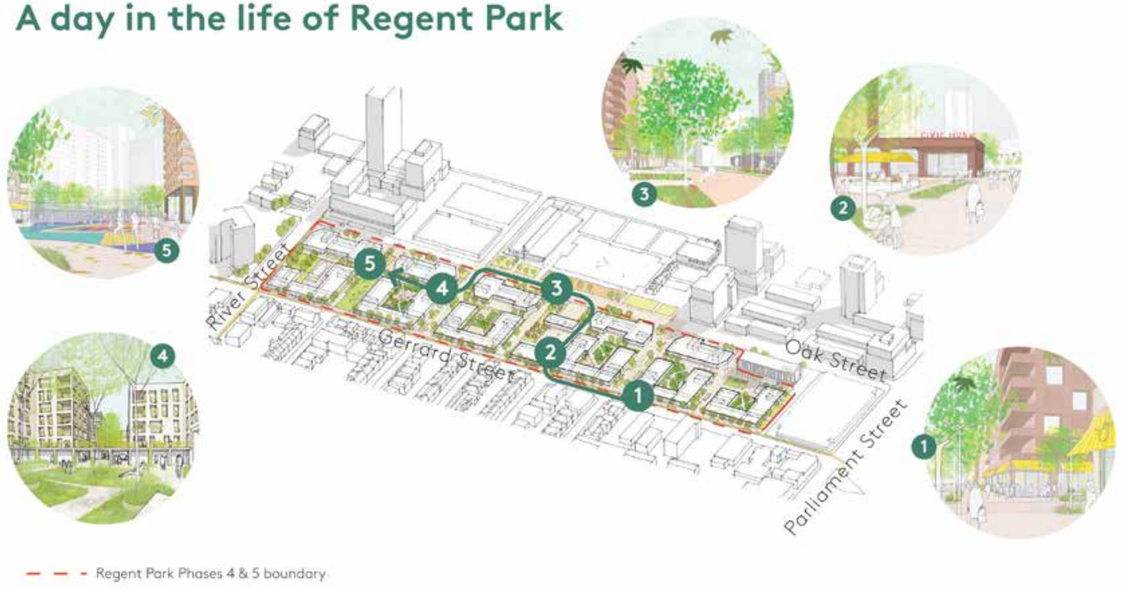
Lastly, a commitment to ensuring the engagement process was accessible to the diverse Regent Park community also promoted inclusivity and equity throughout the Phase 4&5 Revitalization process. Language translation and interpretation for up to 6+ languages (in some cases) was provided, including on the project website, at community meetings, and within engagement materials. A mix of online and in-person engagement sessions were hosted to minimize barriers to participation, print materials were provided where possible, and all engagement materials adhered to AODA standards.



Energy Performance Metrics

- Regent Park Phases 4 & 5 will meet the minimum requirements of the Toronto Green Standards ("TGS"). All TCH towers are required to achieve a higher City of Toronto TGS tier than is typically required for residential development.

A day in the life of Regent Park

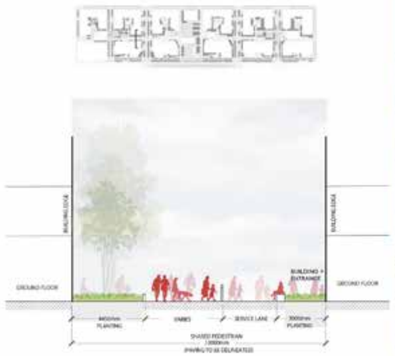


Central Plaza

Central Plaza from Gerrard Street

Central Plaza from Oak Street

Section through POPS (east-west mews) and driveway



Landscape Frontages and Forecourts View

45-47 SHEPPARD

45-47 Sheppard Avenue East

@BH_Architects @b-h-architects

Project Description

Located in North York, Toronto, at the intersection of Sheppard Avenue East and Yonge Street, the 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East development represents a forward-thinking approach to urban intensification. Its proximity to the Yonge-Sheppard TTC station makes it an ideal candidate for high-density development, supporting the ongoing transformation of this transit-oriented hub. The area has seen rapid growth due to its seamless connectivity to downtown Toronto via the subway and direct access to Highway 401, reinforcing the site's strategic importance as a nexus of urban life.

At the heart of the project is a carefully curated site organization that enhances livability and community integration. By positioning the four residential towers at the site's corners, we have unlocked the center of the development for a dynamic public realm. This includes a landscaped central park, an elegant drive court, a central plaza, and a retail promenade—all designed to foster pedestrian connectivity. This approach creates a highly permeable urban fabric, allowing residents and visitors to move seamlessly between the development, the TTC station, nearby retail, and local amenities. The site is not just a place to live but a pedestrian-friendly corridor that strengthens ties to the surrounding community.

A defining characteristic of the project is its mixed-use programming, which fosters an animated and inclusive public realm. The podium levels integrate substantial retail space, activating both the Sheppard Avenue frontage and the internal spaces adjacent to the park. Above, the development features residential units, indoor and outdoor amenities, and dedicated bicycle storage rooms, promoting sustainable urban living.

The four residential towers above the podium establish a distinctive architectural presence on Toronto's skyline. Each tower incorporates outdoor amenity spaces carved into its form, offering landscaped terraces that provide residents with intimate green spaces while simultaneously creating striking visual moments across the facades. The exterior design breaks from the ubiquitous all-glass towers prevalent in the area, instead embracing a contemporary interpretation of Art Deco architecture. A stronger emphasis on opaque and solid materials enhances the project's architectural expression and significantly reduces solar heat gain, contributing to its environmental performance.

By integrating high-density living with exceptional public spaces, sustainable design strategies, and a bold architectural identity, 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East sets a new benchmark for tall building development in Toronto—one that prioritizes both urban connectivity and timeless design excellence.

Project Team
Architects: B+H Architects
Structural Engineers: Greck
Landscape Architects: Janet Rosenberg & Studio
Planning Consulting: Goldberg Group
Energy & Sustainability Consulting: Pratus Group
Construction Management: Koler

Developer/Owner/Client
Lev Living

Image Credits
B+H

Sustainability Statement

The development at 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East takes a holistic approach to sustainability, focusing on environmental performance, community well-being, and long-term urban resilience.

This project emphasizes environmental sustainability through various design strategies. Green roofs on all four towers provide natural insulation, help reduce the heat island effect, and improve stormwater management. To enhance biodiversity and protect birds, bird-friendly glass is used on the lower sections of the podium and above the landscaped outdoor amenity terraces. The increased solid-to-glass ratio across the towers minimizes solar heat gain, improving energy efficiency while creating a striking architectural identity.

The exterior design diverges from the common all-glass towers in the area, embracing a contemporary interpretation of Art Deco architecture. A greater emphasis on opaque and solid materials enhances the project's architectural expression and significantly reduces solar heat gain, further contributing to its environmental performance.

The choice of materials focuses on solidity and performance, with a higher solid-to-glass ratio that reduces solar heat gain and boosts energy efficiency. This approach differentiates the project from the glass curtain walls of nearby towers while aligning with sustainability objectives.

To promote sustainable mobility, the development includes dedicated bicycle storage rooms, providing nearly one bicycle space for each residential unit and encouraging active transportation over car usage. Additionally, the project minimizes the footprint of the underground parking garage, which decreases the total number of vehicles on-site and reduces the embodied carbon footprint associated with large concrete structures.

On a broader level, the design fosters community connectivity through pedestrian-friendly spaces, linking residents to public transit, local retail, and green areas. By integrating sustainability across environmental, social, and economic dimensions, the 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East development sets a responsible, forward-thinking model for high-density urban living.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The design process emphasized collaborative engagement with the community. Feedback from residents, gathered through community meetings with the developer and project team, informed a thorough exploration of architectural styles, building massing and placement, open space development, and the functional programming of public areas.

The design promotes community connectivity through pedestrian-oriented spaces, linking residents to transit, retail, and green spaces, improving access for all and supporting a more equitable and inclusive community. At the street level that activates both the Sheppard Avenue frontage and the internal areas adjacent to the park, Wide pathways, plenty of seating, and a mix of shaded and open areas create an environment that prioritizes inclusivity and accessibility to people of all ages and abilities. Above this, the development offers residential units, indoor and outdoor amenities, and dedicated bicycle storage rooms, all of which promote sustainable urban living.

At a broader level, the design enhances community connectivity through pedestrian-friendly spaces, linking residents to public transit, local retail, and green spaces. By integrating sustainability across environmental, social, and economic dimensions, 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East presents a responsible, forward-thinking model for high-density urban living.


GROUND FLOOR PLAN
45-47 Sheppard Ave. East
Toronto, Ontario
CONTEXT MASSING - NW VIEW
CONTEXT MASSING - SE VIEW
DRAWING TITLE
45-47 Sheppard Ave. East
Toronto, Ontario

DOWNSVIEW WEST DISTRICT PLAN
1377 Sheppard Avenue West

@urbstrat

Project Team
Engineers: Arup (Municipal Infrastructure), BA Group (Transportation Planning)
Landscape Architects: SLA Architects
Urban Design, Urban Planning, Approvals: Urban Strategies Inc.
Landscape Architect and Indigenous Design / Cultural Advisor: Trophic Design
Indigenous Engagement: Nbisiing Consulting

Developer/Owner/Client
Canada Lands Company Limited

Image Credits
Urban Strategies Inc.
Cicada Design

Project Description

Downsview West is one of 15 districts in the new Downsview Secondary Plan: 30.3 hectares of underutilized land at the centre of the GTA. Far from a blank slate, Downsview West features the Downsview Park TTC/GO transit station, immediate adjacency to Downsview Park, access to the Arbo woodlot, and structures reflecting the district's military history — including the Fire Hall and the iconic 877,000 square foot Depot Building. The District Plan proposes a community that is inspired by, connects to, and integrates these unique features with a nature-first approach to complete, transit-oriented community development. It will deliver over 8,000 units, 20% of which will be affordable, and include 120,000 square metres of non-residential uses, supporting an estimated 3,300 jobs.

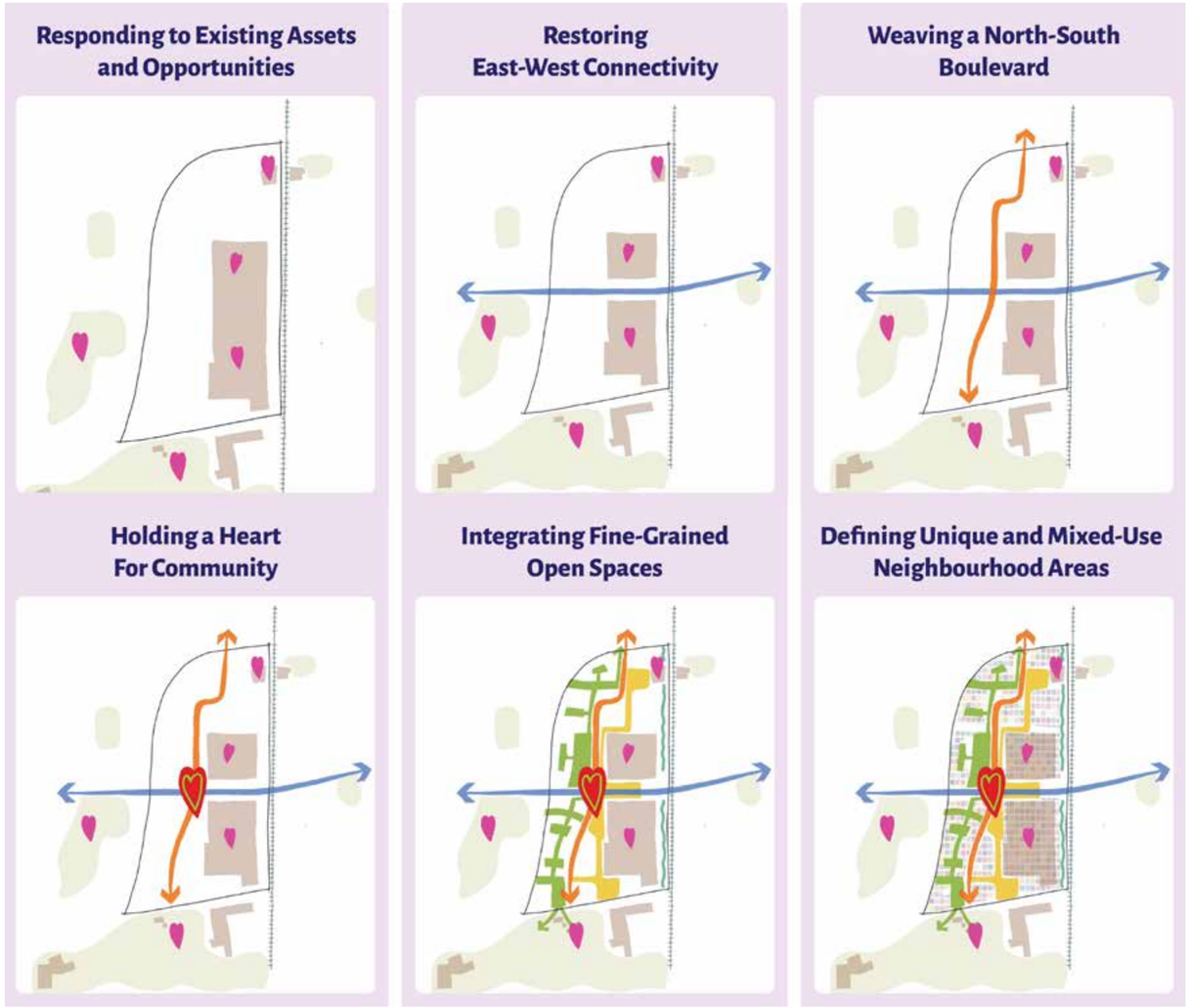
The opportunity presented by the broader Downsview lands is unprecedented in Toronto; and within them, the opportunity to embrace, re-interpret, and integrate the Depot Building within a transit-supportive community is an even rarer city-building moment.

The monumental building will be the centrepiece of the District. It currently dominates the landscape, and the community design respects its scale while modulating its unrelenting linearity. The introduction of a gentle curve in the main north-south Depot Boulevard simultaneously hides and reveals the Depot to passers-by, while the intimate Depot Mews provides the Depot with a frontage suitable for small-scale retail and commercial activation.

The intervention of a new east-west major street, per the Update Downsview EA, also brings opportunities to daylight the building, creating two street-facing edges that embrace public interaction and new public plazas within its existing footprint. These new spaces also form links within the broader public realm experience that continues from the station to Downsview Park. This north-south route will also become the canvas for the Ancestors' Trail.

Among the District's four hectares of parks and open spaces is a one-hectare park adjacent to Depot North that is a focal point for community. Northern Park introduces breathing space to the densest part of the plan. The open space network also features the Courtyard Commons: inspired by Toronto's rear lane network, this series of car-free mid-block connections offers neighbours a quiet place to meet and meander.

Mid-rise heights and courtyard typologies are predominant across the District, with tall buildings clustered near the station. The articulation of taller and shorter elements is deliberate — responding to contextual adjacencies; aligning with thermal comfort and public realm vibrancy objectives; and reinforcing the District's human-centred design.



Sustainability Statement

Downsview West's sustainability vision is anchored by a commitment to City Nature: integrating nature into daily urban life to address a variety of contemporary challenges, and to create a more healthy planet. At Downsview West, City Nature is woven into the fabric of every design decision. Neighbourhood components — parks, open spaces, streets, and buildings — are viewed in terms of their benefits for human settlement; their linkages and dependencies within a thriving ecological community; and their contribution to a more sustainable and resilient future.

The four hectares of interconnected open space includes dedicated spaces where biodiversity can thrive. Approximately 1,400 new trees will result in a tree canopy of 25% across the District. Over 900 metres of off-street active mobility connections (including the Courtyard Commons and Bio Corridor), dedicated bike lanes, and immediate transit access encourage green mobility and non-auto travel. The diverse array of living and working spaces — from retail, to office, to light industrial and institutional space, combined with a school and daycare — make Downsview West a complete community, further supporting a reduction in transportation related carbon. Development will target TGS Tier 3 Version 4 and the District is targeting net-zero operational carbon by 2040.

At Downsview West, water is recognized as a resource that nourishes the natural environment. The decentralized approach to stormwater management leverages all public and private lands, and prioritizes nature-based solutions to meet and exceed the City of Toronto's Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines. Leveraging green infrastructure also reduces reliance on more carbon-intensive grey infrastructure solutions, and is more resilient to climate-change related floods. Designing the public realm to support temporary stormwater management also reduces the need for land-intensive, single-use ponds — resulting in a more generous public realm overall.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Downsview West embeds equity considerations in both process and design, embracing Etuaptmumk — or two-eyed seeing — to blend Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. Informed by the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, this approach recognizes the interconnectivity of all beings and aims to introduce balance by nurturing spaces that support the Spirit, Heart, Body, and Mind.

Engagement for the District Plan involved local residents and interest holders, African, Caribbean, Black (ACB) communities. and local youth. Activities included open houses, public meetings, pop-ups, focused conversations.
A particular focus for the District Plan was meaningful engagement with the First Nations. Sharing meetings were held with the Huron-Wendat Nation, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and the Six Nations, as well urban Indigenous communities. Supported by cultural liaisons within the design team, we translated the learnings and outcomes from these engagement events into the design-based interventions within the District Plan.

The resulting open space strategy, in particular, nurtures spaces for the Spirit, the Heart, and the Body — the Mind being well represented by the District's built heritage. Each of Downsview West's conceptual park designs includes program offerings and design interventions which respond to this ambition. The mobility strategy prioritizes modes that co-exist with nature (e.g. the Courtyard Commons and Bio Corridor). And a focus of the land use and design strategy is cultural representation via the Ancestor's Trail, or Aanikoobijiganag Miikana: a key route through the District with interventions along its length intended to showcase diverse cultures. Potential interventions include: Indigenous language place names; building façades as a canvas for cultural expression; a focus on Indigenous programs/businesses; opportunities for Indigenous-led architectural designs; and public art opportunities that reflect the culture of Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving groups. Through these efforts, among others, Downsview West will stand as a lasting symbol of reconciliation.


CRAFTS MARKE

OPENROM
100 Queen's Park

@hariripontariniarchitects

Project Team
Architects: Hariri Pontarini Architects
Engineers: Structural Thorton Tomasetti, Mechanical TMP, Electrical Mulvey & Banani, Civil MTE
Fountain: Dan Euser Water Architecture
Heritage: ERA
Signage/Wayfinding: Entro

Developer/Owner/Client
Royal Ontario Museum

General Contractor
Eastern Construction

Image Credits
Hariri Pontarini Architects

Project Description

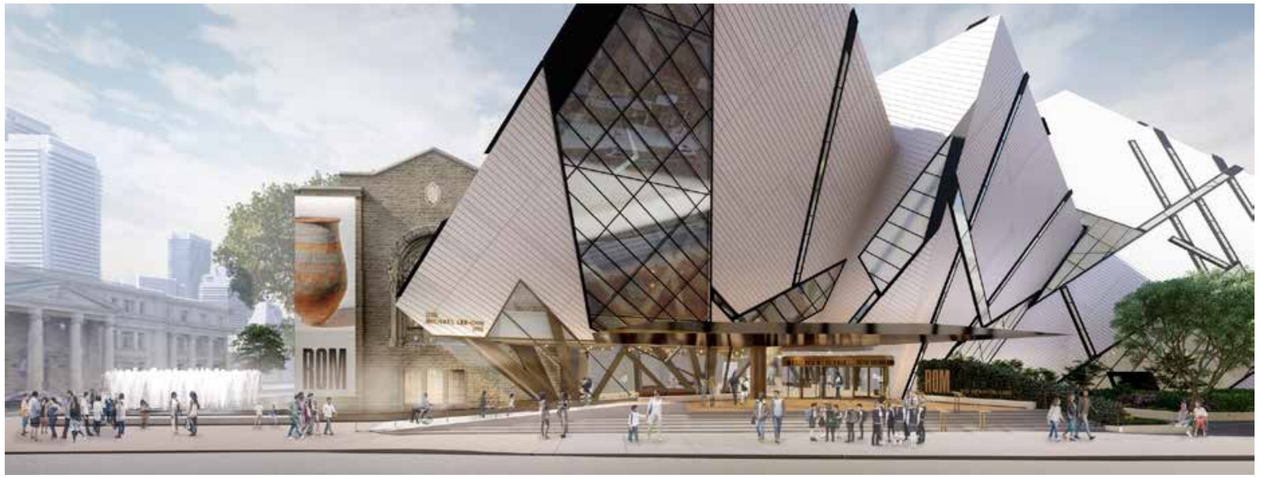
OpenROM is a bold initiative by the Royal Ontario Museum to strengthen the connection between the public realm and this public institution by creating a thriving civic and cultural hub. This architectural and programmatic reinterpretation redefines the role of the museum in the 21st century as a city builder and transforms its engagement with the urban landscape.

The aim is to convey ROM as one of the great museums of the world that is open to all by showcasing the depth and breadth of its collections and curatorial work from the moment the public enters. A redesigned Bloor St. entrance and plaza leads to a reimagined main floor with open vistas into the new heart of the museum, Hennick Commons, the soaring, four-storey atrium that connects the contemporary and heritage wings. Here, the roof is raised and replaced with a high-performance diagrid glass ceiling, allowing daylight to cascade into this renewed space destined to become a beloved cultural living room for the city. With OpenROM, admission policy will change to make the entire 86,000sf ground floor free of charge, creating a vital urban amenity at the crossroads of Toronto as a place to simply hang out and be inspired by live performances, talks, and hands-on activities.

The architectural centrepiece of Hennick Commons is a three-level, lily pad connector of ramps and stairs that improve circulation and offer whimsical wayfinding and accessible overlook platforms. More of the heritage façade's scalloped ceiling and arches now covered by the lower Crystal ceiling will be revealed. Openings in both the heritage and Crystal facades will introduce dialogue between gallery spaces across the atrium and the Crystal's angled steel columns will be exposed, celebrating its dynamism.

The Bloor Street entrance will feature a large bronze canopy and more windows to create a stronger relationship with the streetscape. New exterior stairs and ramp allow the current sloped ground floor to be levelled, adding program versatility and improved seating configurations. A showcase water feature will wrap around the heritage façade at the corner of Bloor Street W. and Queen's Park, enlivening the plaza.

OpenROM is a welcome invitation to experience Canada's preeminent museum. The design shifts conceptions of ROM as an ivory tower to a place for everyone. By bringing daylight and views deep within, by creating new connections with Bloor Street and revealing ROM's treasures and activities, OpenROM, in effect, turns the museum inside out.



Sustainability Statement

OpenROM is a renovation of an existing structure that has seen additions added to it for close to a century. Upgrades to mechanical systems are current and meet energy-efficient standards so no overhaul is required with this project. As such, energy performance metrics specific to this intervention are not applicable.

A crucial aspect of our sustainability strategy is intensifying the use of existing spaces, prompting us to rethink the environmental performance of underutilized buildings. As ROM is located in the heart of the city with limited options to expand the museum's footprint, OpenROM focuses on internal expansion for galleries and program spaces. This project is enclosing the second and third levels of the Spirit House atrium, adding 6,000 square feet (557 square meters) of new gallery space while aiming to reduce the carbon footprint of museum users.

The new high-performance, bird-friendly glazing on Bloor Street features a north-facing clear glass curtain wall. Two large revolving doors replace sliding doors to protect against wind and rain and improve internal temperature and humidity controls as required for a Class 'A' museum housing objects sensitive to their environment. The steel diagrid skylight introduces light into the museum while minimizing steel weight.

ROM champions environmental awareness through its programs and research, recently appointing the Allan and Helaine Shiff Curator of Climate Change. OpenROM embodies this mission with an outdoor water feature. This fountain will evolve with the seasons, with burbling water in the summer that will improve the local micro climate through heat absorption and cooling mists. In winter, with minimal energy use, bronze trays will capture and celebrate the beauty of ice, a nod to frozen Canadian landscapes and the importance of environmental stewardship.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

With OpenROM, the museum takes a giant leap forward towards democratizing access to the public by remaking the 86,000 square feet of the ground floor free admission to everyone. This is at the heart of the OpenROM transformation and will dramatically open the museum even more to visitors, building community and creating a thriving cultural and civic hub for Toronto.

A key example of how OpenROM is advancing the museum's mission to further strengthen relationships with Toronto's diverse communities is the newly announced Global Sikh Art & Culture Gallery and Program, which supports OpenROM's goal of increased public access and visitor engagement. With this program, the museum can expand the suite of galleries devoted to South Asia to include a dedicated Gallery of Sikh Art & Culture (2,300 square feet of new space created through OpenROM), establish funds to acquire Sikh historic objects and contemporary art, and introduce a new endowed curatorial position dedicated to Sikh art and culture. Public programs will highlight global Sikh art and culture, engaging museum visitors through a regular series of talks, performances, and gallery tours.

Additionally, the following galleries will now be open to everyone at no cost: the Gallery of Korea; Gallery of Chinese Architecture; Bishop White Gallery of Chinese Temple Art; Matthews Family Court of Chinese Sculpture; and the Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Gallery of China. The present Daphne Cockwell Gallery dedicated to First Peoples art and culture will continue to have free access with ongoing themed exhibitions and programming that address, among other issues, matters of reconciliation and equity.

Public Art Statement

The ambition of OpenROM is to provide more immediate access to the museum's world-class collections from the moment the public enters. Direct sightlines through new floor-to-ceiling glazing reveal artifacts and displays where ticketing and coat check were previously the first thing visitors encountered just inside the Bloor St. entrance. These functions will be moved further into the ground floor and be replaced with exhibits and interactive displays better connecting the collection with the public realm and acting as a prelude to the galleries beyond.

The lobby will feature projections on the interior walls creating an immersive experience with fresh digital content. An oculus cut into the ceiling and lined in warm wood panels that radiate outwards, will draw visitors' eyes upwards, offering views of the remarkable dinosaur galleries above. The new entrance better aligns with the axis of the building, allowing deep views into the heart of the museum, Hennick Commons, the soaring, four-storey atrium that connects the contemporary and heritage wings.

Previously, ROM programmed talks and events in a basement auditorium. With the addition of a 2,400sf (223sm) forum in Hennick Commons, these activities and others, including lectures, school programing, films and exhibitions, can occur in the midst of this dynamic public space energized with new vitality and purpose. Comfortable furnishings and an expanded café will further promote an environment designed to encourage congregation and conversation surrounded by ROM's art and artefacts.

The three-level, lily pad connector of ramps and stairs will offer accessible overlook platforms for taking in all the museum offers. New openings in both the heritage and Crystal facades will introduce dialogue between gallery spaces across Hennick Commons. And the new limestone and wood floor will be levelled, a major structural renovation of the previous incline across this space, enabling greater versatility in programming and seating to enhance the visitor experience in this urban living room.

UNDER GARDINER PUBLIC REALM PLAN

Under and along the Gardiner Expressway

@thebentway

Project Team
Architects: Public Work, Two Row Architect
Engineers: Transsolar Klima Engineering
Others: Third Party Public, Frontier Design Office

Developer/Owner/Client
The Bentway Conservancy & City of Toronto

Image Credits
Kathleen Fu
Rendering by Public Work

Project Description

Building on the success of The Bentway's Phase 1 site, The Bentway and City of Toronto collaborated on a comprehensive vision for underutilized public spaces below and adjacent to the Gardiner Expressway, from Dufferin to the DVP.

The Under-Gardiner Public Realm Plan (UGPRP) reimagines these space as a connected network of green spaces, safe intersections, cultural hubs, recreation, and active transit – adapting to changing typologies with a common vocabulary. This plan transforms a once-fragmented corridor into a cohesive, vibrant public realm that links Toronto's downtown neighbourhoods and waterfront.

The Gardiner is a defining feature of Toronto's landscape, with 250,000 people living across its elevated length, most in high-rise towers with limited access to greenspace, safe streets, and neighbourhood connectivity.

As the City works to rehabilitate the elevated expressway and bring new life to surrounding communities, there is an opportunity to reimagine how this piece of infrastructure can connect, perform, and inspire.

The UGPRP offers a long-term vision for expanding and unifying the corridor along the Gardiner's entire length:

- Prioritizes landscape as infrastructure and seeks to restore balance with natural systems and ecological processes;
- Improves experience of under- Gardiner spaces through new physical and visual connections to ensure road users are safe/ welcome;
- Embraces holistic understanding of climate change and promotes resilient urban spaces that enable outdoor activity all year round;
- Removes barriers to facilitate improved connectivity and active transportation;
- Guides design of exceptional, publicly accessible spaces that enable a diversity of uses and contribute to thriving neighbourhoods; and
- Supports development of sustainable maintenance and upkeep processes that help to address the Gardiner's fiscal, environmental, and social impacts.

Guided by environmentally-sustainable placekeeping strategies, Indigenous design practices, and thoughtful infrastructure improvements, the UGPRP focused on four key priorities:

- Safety & Comfort: Lighting upgrades, seating, pedestrian safety improvements.
- Wayfinding & Identity: A multi-use path with reflective treatments and consistent signage enhances legibility and connectivity.
- Productive Ecology: Native plantings and rainwater management promote urban biodiversity.
- Predictable Amenities: Wi-Fi, charging stations, washrooms, water fountains, and bike share locations support a comfortable, active public realm.

Additionally, it incorporates Site-Specific Recommendations for key culture and recreation projects along the highway' length, recognizing and responding to unique place-based needs, contexts and opportunities.

Endorsed by City Council in 2024, the UGPRP is a compelling case study in how communities can reclaim and reimagine transportation infrastructure.

Sustainability Statement

The Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan reimagines a divisive urban barrier as an ecological and social connector – working to “green” a heavy, grey piece of intrastructure. Guided by the Indigenous design practice of Two Row Architect and rooted in the principles of placekeeping, this project seeks not only to enhance the physical assets of the Gardiner Expressway but to honour the land it occupies and the communities it connects.

Key environmental features of the plan include:

- Resilient planting strategies to improve air quality: The use of low-maintenance, robust perennials, alongside native and drought-resistant species help to enhance biodiversity and improve air quality. Additionally, this vegetative strategy plays a role in mitigating the urban heat island effect by providing cooling shade and reducing surface temperatures in surrounding areas.
- Stormwater management: Rainwater harvesting, permeable surfaces, and bioswales help to support stormwater capture and bioremediation, filtering runoff from the highway before it enters the lake or city systems.
- Urban heat mitigation: The shaded canopy of the expressway also acts as a cooling asset for the neighbourhood. This feature will be enhanced through light-toned, high-reflectance paving materials made from recycled aggregate to reduce the surface temperature for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Active transportation: Beyond site-specific interventions, this project enhances community-wife resilience by promoting active transportation. A safe, accessible, and continuous multi-use path running along Lakeshore Boulevard encourages year-round walking and cycling, promoting healthier, active communities.

Together, these strategies support the Toronto Green Standard’s goals for sustainable, equitable, and low-carbon development, while reimagining a barrier as a vibrant civic space.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

As a city-building project, the Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan (UGPRP) recognizes that urban planning practices, particularly those associated with major infrastructure and industrial development, are historically entrenched in and perpetuate settler coloniality, which has excluded, displaced, and harmed many communities and cultures, particularly Indigenous communities, Black communities, and low-income and unhoused communities. The net result is an ongoing environment of distrust between formal planning policy and city-building processes and members of these communities.

The UGPRP recognizes the importance of establishing positive, supportive, and ongoing relationships with equity-deserving groups through dedicated outreach and engagement. In particular, the project undertook tailored outreach with both Indigenous and unhoused communities — distinct groups with unique experiences, knowledges, and deep connections to the Gardiner corridor. Their voices, historically excluded from planning processes, were essential in shaping the vision for a more inclusive public realm.

To incorporate the experiences of unhoused individuals, the Bentway team held semi-structured conversations with service users at nearby shelters and respite centres. These discussions underscored a strong desire for predictable amenities (such as washrooms, seating, and harm-reduction supports) and highlighted the need for public spaces designed with empathy, dignity, and accessibility in mind.

Equally important is our ongoing engagement with Indigenous communities. We acknowledge that the roots of planning are deeply entangled with colonial systems that have marginalized Indigenous cultures, governance, and land relationships. Our engagement with urban Indigenous communities and Treaty Rights holders reflects a long-term commitment to shared stewardship and mutual understanding. This includes ongoing engagements and collaborations with Indigenous-led firm Two Row Architect, who provided critical guidance and input into the UGPRP.

The UGPRP represents a dedicated commitment to redress exclusion, elevate community voices, and reimagine public space as a place of shared belonging where everyone is welcome.

Public Art Statement

At The Bentway, culture and public art are not add-ons — they are foundational to our approach to civic design. While we understand that a Public Art Statement is not typically required for the Visions/ Master Plans category, it's important to underscore how deeply embedded artistic practice is in this plan.

The Bentway is committed to creating inclusive and accessible encounters between art and audiences. We see artists and local residents as key actors in shaping their city and see it as a subject, site, and canvas.

Creative and artistic interventions helped inform the development of the UGPRP – serving as demonstration projects to test/trial ideas and prototyopes. These interventions also offered touchpoints and opportunities for public feedback and engagement.

- Under-the-Gardiner at Dan Leckie Way, Staging Grounds by Agency-Agency and SHEEEP offered experimental gardens that used rainwater run-off from the highway above to support the growth of flowering plant species.
- Under-the-Gardiner at York Street, Boom Town by 5468796 Architecture and Office In Search Of employed vibrant colour, playful characters, and environmental lighting to test safety strategies for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Under-the-Gardiner at Simcoe Street, Pixel Story by O2 and ENTUITIVE used colour, iconography, and storytelling to draw attention to the corridor as a cultural connector.
- Under-the-Gardiner at Exhibition Place, Confluence by Striped Canary was a large-form sculptural installation that invited visitors to flow through an engrossing convergence of natural and human-made forces, and tested connectivity between The Bentway Phase 1 and Exhibition Place sites.

Read more here: https://thebentway.ca/future-gardiner/#demonstratrion-projects.

With an in-house Programming team, we prioritize socially engaged and site-specific art that is developed in close dialogue with our architectural and landscape design. Artists are collaborators from the outset. Our teams work together to advocate for bold artistic visions and provide the resources and support necessary to realize ambitious works grounded in urban imagination.

JANE FINCH MALL (JFM+) REDEVELOPMENT: DESIGNING WITH COMMUNITY

1911 Finch Avenue West

@urbstrat

Project Team
Architects: BDP Quadrangle
Engineers: BA Group
Landscape Architects: B+H Architects
Urban Design, Planning, Engagement: Urban Strategies Inc.
Engagement: jfm+ Engagement Leadership Team & Community Animators
Strategic Advisor: Ezra Projects

Developer/Owner/Client
Southdown Builders Ltd.

Image Credits
BDP Quadrangle
Urban Strategies Inc.

Project Description

The Jane Finch Mall Redevelopment (jfm+) is a transformative project that exemplifies context-sensitive, community-driven urban design. Rooted in an inclusive engagement process, the design embraces the site's critical role as a longstanding community heart, responding thoughtfully to its layered social, cultural, and physical context.

The design demonstrates best practices outlined in the City's Mall Redevelopment Guide and breaks down the superblock mall into a fine-grained network of streets, parks, and open spaces. The outcome is a highly permeable and walkable urban fabric. Taller buildings on pedestrian-scaled public-realm-defining podiums lined with active uses are concentrated along emerging transit corridors of Jane Street and Finch Avenue, with heights stepping down respectfully toward adjacent low-rise neighbourhoods. This deliberate massing strategy delivers on key elements of the Tall Building Guidelines including maximizing sunlight access to new parks and open spaces along Driftwood Avenue and Yewtree Boulevard and supporting a comfortable, human-scaled pedestrian experience.

Placemaking is central to the proposal. A new Community Plaza at the Jane and Finch intersection, framed by active community uses, builds on the success of the community-led Corner Commons initiative. The plaza will serve as a vibrant civic space, hosting cultural events and daily gatherings. A pedestrian-focused retail street extends from the Plaza, reinforcing local economic development through small-format, flexible retail spaces that nurture local businesses. A connected network of parks, plazas, tree-lined streets, and mid-block pedestrian mews fosters social interaction, promotes well-being, and strengthens connections from the new LRT stop to the nearby Black Creek Ravine.

Phasing was critical to the design. The plan delivers key community amenities early, including an indoor community space, a childcare centre, and enhanced public realm improvements. By preserving essential services — such as grocery, childcare, and local retail — throughout all phases of redevelopment, the plan envisions an evolution of the site, not an erasure, reinforcing its role as a vibrant hub of daily life even as new density, uses, and opportunities are introduced. Stewardship is embedded into the process through future community committees focused on arts, culture, and economic development, ensuring the project continues to evolve alongside community aspirations.

jfm+ sets a new precedent for transit-oriented redevelopment within historically underserved communities. It is a compelling example of how private development, through deep engagement, application of the City's policies and guidelines, and commitment to place-making, can advance Official Plan goals of equity, resilience, affordability, and sustainability — while renewing a deeply rooted sense of place.

Sustainability Statement

The Jane Finch Mall Redevelopment (jfm+) plan enhances the quality of life for residents by addressing environmental, economic, social, and cultural priorities in a balanced and sustainable manner. It prioritizes sustainable urban design principles, such as transit-oriented development, that will intensify an underutilized parking and reduce reliance on automobiles and minimize the community's carbon footprint. Working at the master plan scale, the plan identifies opportunities and secures a framework which enables climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resilience to be addressed through future detailed design.

These include:

- The plan's commitment to delivering four new public streets as Complete and Green Streets in accordance with City standards and guidelines, and implementing boulevard improvements (e.g. street trees, cycling infrastructure) along all four of the site's frontages;
- Integration of green infrastructure, including parks, increased tree canopy, and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes that foster active, healthy lifestyles. It also prioritizes sustainable urban design principles, such as transit-oriented development, that will reduce reliance on automobiles and minimize the community's carbon footprint;
- An intention to deliver high-performing buildings designed with reduced glazing and sustainable material choices which reflect the character and interests of the existing community; and,
- Future opportunities to leverage existing, below-grade public infrastructure for heat exchange to service the future development blocks.

Future development blocks will meet or exceed the relevant Toronto Green Standards at site plan.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Jane and Finch is one of Canada's most multicultural neighbourhoods – home to a high percentage of renters, larger households, and residents identifying as BIPOC – and has been underserved by planning efforts for decades. Now with the arrival of the Finch West LRT, the community will be growing in new ways, bringing with it concerns about displacement and who will benefit from this transformational investment.

Recognizing the complex and intersectional nature of perspectives within the community, engagement was undertaken in partnership with 15+ local Community Animators from diverse backgrounds, ages and interests, using a variety of tactics. The Animators engaged their networks through one-on-one discussions and brought them into conversations with the broader jfm+ team. This enabled meaningful collaboration with a broad spectrum of the community, focusing on equity-deserving groups historically excluded from planning processes. Urban Strategies prepared materials and hosted training sessions for the Animators to listen first, develop a common language, and support reciprocal capacity building. By listening before planning and aligning engagement efforts with the concept design process, community voices were able to influence the plan meaningfully and during the most critical moments.

The approach and extent of engagement undertaken through jfm+ is uncommon, if not unprecedented, for a privately initiated application of this nature. The engagement process was co-designed with Engagement leaders from the community and the 15+ person team of local "Animators". The 2.5 year process engaged over 2,000 community members, 35 organizations and mall tenants in collaborative dialogues to build relationships and trust. The project actively incorporated feedback from residents into the design and planning process, ensuring the built environment reflects the community's cultural identity and priorities. This integration of local knowledge directly influenced the design, including phasing, mix of uses, and public realm strategies.


jfm+
STREETS

THE UNITED BLDG
481 University Avenue

@BH_Architects @b-h-architects

Project Team
Architects: B+H Architects
Engineers: Greck – Structural Engineering
Landscape Architects: B+H Architects
Artist: Elizabeth Wyn Wood - Heritage Artwork Restoration
Heritage Conservation: ERA Architects
Engineering: RJC Engineers
Residential Interior Designer: Tomas Pearce Interior Design Consulting Inc

Developer/Owner/Client
Davpart

General Contractor
EllisDon Construction Services Inc.

Image Credits
B+H Rendering

Project Description

The United Bldg at 481 University Avenue redefines urban living and working in Toronto. Occupying a full city block along a prominent civic boulevard, this development embodies the city's cosmopolitan character through its adaptable blend of residential, commercial, and retail spaces. Its strategic location at the intersection of key cultural, institutional, and retail hubs along University Avenue positions it as a vital link between Toronto's past, present, and future, celebrating the city's rich diversity.

As North America's tallest heritage retention project, the United Bldg preserves key features of the original Maclean Publishing Company Building (1928) and the Maclean-Hunter Building (1961), designed by renowned architects. This integration of heritage and contemporary design aims to create a cohesive voice rather than a separation between the two styles. The overall vision strives to establish a new urban village model centred on transit and pedestrian accessibility.

The design preserves the distinct architectural features of the original structures: the 1928 Maclean Publishing building's two-storey arched ground-level windows and the 1961 Maclean-Hunter Building's clean International Style lines, which complement its Beaux-Arts neighbour. Notably, the second-floor slab along the Dundas Street frontage will be recessed to create a sheltered arcade, effectively doubling the sidewalk width and providing direct access to St. Patrick subway station.

In collaboration with ERA Architects, the project involves the careful restoration of the nine-story limestone base of the original buildings. Modern, high-performance sealed glazed units and thermally improved interior envelopes are being implemented to enhance sustainability while respecting the heritage of Toronto's publishing and architectural legacy. Furthermore, Canadian sculptor Elizabeth Wynn Wood's bas-relief art installation is being restored and strategically relocated to frame the public end of the colonnade, reinforcing the site's cultural significance.

Architecturally, The United Bldg achieves a subtle contrast between old and new. Its massing is composed of two vertical elements: a north tower clad in light-toned limestone that harmonizes with the heritage base, and a south tower featuring a sleek, high-performance curtain wall with minimal balconies on its east and west façades, lending it a significant civic presence along University Avenue.

The project also plans for future access to Toronto's PATH system—30 km of underground shopping, dining, and services—solidifying its connection to the city's primary circulation routes. In its entirety, the project will deliver 743 new residential units while also offering commercial office space and grade level retail.

Sustainability Statement

The design of the United Bldg focuses on creating a sustainable and healthy future for the environment, people, community, and economy on multiple levels.

Its commitment to sustainability is evident in its climate change mitigation strategies, primarily through the adaptive reuse of existing structures. This approach significantly curtails resource consumption and construction waste compared to complete demolition, while also preserving the embodied carbon within the original buildings. Further reducing its carbon footprint, the project features a smaller basement, utilizing approximately half the concrete below ground than typical Toronto towers, a decision supported by research from the University of Toronto. This reduction in concrete usage directly translates to lower embodied carbon emissions associated with cement production, a major contributor to global greenhouse gases.

Additional features include access to Toronto's Deep Lake Water Cooling system, which enhances energy efficiency and reduces the need for mechanical space, along with a highly efficient heat pump system. Green elements such as plantings and water features contribute to improved air quality and urban aesthetics.

Improvements to the public realm enhance community support and engagement. The project's efficiency, connectivity, and density promote access to and foster a sustainable economy. It effectively integrates with the city's infrastructure, featuring a direct connection to the subway and PATH system.

Lastly, the United Bldg prioritizes the well-being of its residents and tenants by offering a variety of indoor and outdoor amenities that foster social interaction and the development of strong community networks deeply rooted in the city, contributing to its overall resilience.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The United Bldg, North America's tallest heritage retention project, is a transformative 54-storey tower that thoughtfully integrates historic architecture with contemporary design, fostering inclusive community development. Beyond its striking form, the project prioritizes diverse living spaces, a public galleria, and seamless transit connections, establishing it as a dynamic urban landmark.

Throughout planning and design, dedicated platforms empowered diverse community contributions, ensuring their voices shaped the project. The galleria and transit connections were designed with universal accessibility and inclusivity at their core, creating welcoming environments for all. Furthermore, the inclusion of rental units within the residential offerings addresses a range of housing needs.

To honour the site's history, interpretive plaques and heritage signage will be integrated throughout the building, both internally and externally. This initiative preserves and celebrates the architectural legacy of the original structures and their past uses.

By analyzing the impact of transit integration and public realm enhancements, The United Bldg exemplifies how heritage retention can be combined with public amenities to create modern, community-focused developments that align with Toronto's long-term vision. The City of Toronto Design Review Panel noted in 2013: "The colonnade will be a huge improvement over the existing condition here, and as depicted it has the potential for creating one of the more memorable and appealing pedestrian interfaces in all of Toronto's Downtown."

Public Art Statement

The United Bldg's heritage preservation integrates art and history, notably through the restoration and relocation of a bas-relief by Canadian sculptor Elizabeth Wyn Wood. This artwork, originally commissioned in 1958 for the former Maclean-Hunter publishing office, now graces the more public end of the colonnade.

Wood, a student and peer of the Group of Seven, created these bas-reliefs for the north and south entrance pavilions, centering on the theme of communication. The limestone façades feature two elegant nude figures, representing the transmission and reception of information. Despite the fading of their gold leaf accents, Wood's characteristic streamlined forms still convey the sensuous beauty reminiscent of her earlier works.

Beyond Wood's significant bas-reliefs, the public promenade at The United Bldg will also serve as a venue for showcasing public art through mural installations.

The building itself, located at 481 University Ave, stands as a significant example of interwar architecture with bold design features. Its transformation into The United Bldg represents a continuation of this story of regeneration.

The prominent display of Wood's artwork provides the public with direct access to a significant piece of Canadian art history. It offers an opportunity for residents and visitors to learn about Wood's artistic contributions, her connection to the Group of Seven, and the historical context of the former Maclean-Hunter building.

35 BELLEVUE
35 Bellevue Avenue

@montgomerysisam

Project Team
Architects: Montgomery Sisam Architects
Mechanical & Electrical Engineers: Quasar Consulting Group
Structural Engineers: Entuitive
Civil Engineers: MTE
Landscape Architects: Baker Turner
Mass Timber Supplier: Element5
Code Consultant: Vortex Fire
Traffic: Nextrans

Developer/Owner/Client
City of Toronto

General Contractor
Gillam Group

Image Credits
Montgomery Sisam Architects (render)

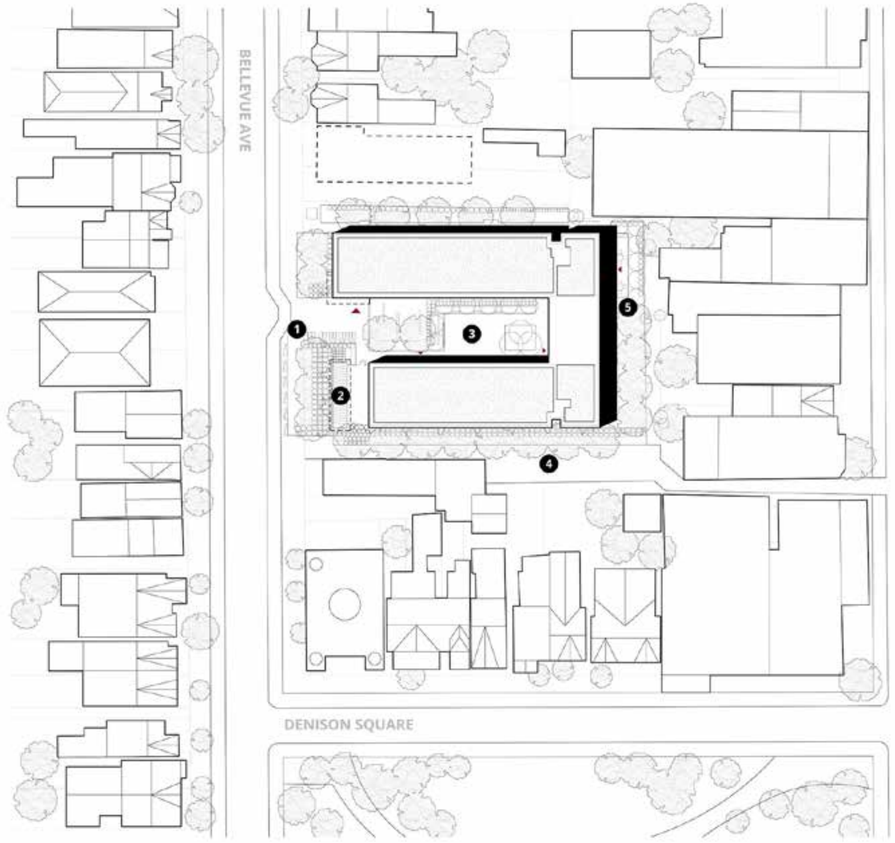
Project Description

35 Bellevue is one of the eight sites being developed under the third phase of the City of Toronto Rapid Housing Initiative. The four-storey building will provide 78 supportive housing suites with private bathrooms and kitchens, along with amenities such as shared laundry, a communal kitchen and programming spaces for residents. Flat pack modular mass timber construction will be utilized to achieve tight schedule constraints. While the construction method was selected for rapid delivery, great detail and consideration has been taken to ensure it will be a high-quality addition to the neighbourhood fabric.

The building's U-shaped massing creates a warm entrance on Bellevue as the narrow ends and landscaped courtyard face the street. The volume of the staggered wing ends, blend with the rhythm of the neighbouring single-family homes along the street, reflecting the pattern of the fine grain Kensington urban fabric. Foreground architectural elements, including an entrance canopy and bike pavilion structure, are reminiscent of the scale of the neighbouring porches. Red standing seam metal cladding was selected to complement the surrounding brick houses, while contributing to the playful and vibrant neighbourhood of Kensington Market.

A driving factor of the site design and building massing was to create a sense of place through rich outdoor amenity spaces that enhance the arrival experience and ensure that residents routinely engage with their surroundings and with each other. The entry court along Bellevue provides a welcoming landscaped area, while an enclosed landscaped courtyard at the heart of this scheme creates a secure outdoor amenity space. Within the courtyard residents have access to barrier free planters and seating. On the building interior, the courtyard not only provides ample daylight and views, but also acts as an organizing element. A single loaded corridor fronting the courtyard serves as the elevator lobby and arrival experience on each floor. Major interior amenity spaces, such as the dinning room and living/lounges spaces are directly adjacent to the courtyard. A quieter outdoor space at the rear features a barbecue patio and seating, offering more secluded relaxation options.

In keeping with the spirit of Kensington Market, pedestrian circulation has been prioritized. A range of secure bike parking options will be provided, along with the formalization of a mid-block connection between Bellevue and Augusta enhanced with vegetation, lighting, and a proposed mural.



35 BELLEVUE AVENUE
1. Short-Term Bike Parking
2. Long-Term Bike Parking
3. Courtyard with Seating and Barrier Free Planters
4. Mid-block Connection
5. Resident Barbeque Patio

Sustainability Statement

35 Bellevue is designed to meet and exceed the Toronto Green Standard v4, through a combination of sustainable building techniques. The structure will feature CLT panelized modular construction, while an efficient 14% window-to-wall ratio with high-performance triple-glazed windows, and a well-insulated, airtight envelope will reduce energy loads. Space conditioning will be provided through an air source heat pump and high efficiency energy recovery ventilators (ERV's) in suites, with domestic hot water supplied by a centralized hot water air source heat pump system. The building will be fully electric, except for a backup generator, supporting the building's resilience in the event of an emergency. The project is compliant with TGS v4 Net Zero Emissions through Absolute Performance Targets Pathways, achieving a TEUI of 96 kWh/m^2, a TEDI of 26.5 kWh/m^2 and GHGI of 4.8 kgCO_2 e/m^2.

An intensive green roof has been designed to cover the entire roof, optimizing stormwater retention through its deep profile. Additionally, infrastructure for bi-facial solar panels has been planned for future implementation.

A Life Cycle Assessment indicates an expected upfront embodied emissions intensity of 228 kgCO_2 e/m^2, exceeding the TGS requirements for GHG 2.2 target of 250 kgCO_2e/m^2. This is largely due to mass timber framing, the elimination of foam insulation above grade, and the absence of a basement or crawl space.

Replacing a former surface parking lot, a range of vegetation will be introduced, including a tree canopy shading the courtyard and pedestrian areas, along with native plants that align with the City of Toronto's drought-resistant requirements. Prioritizing active transportation, the development has no vehicular parking; alternatively, extensive bike parking options will be provided, including 16 short-term spots, 40 stacked spaces in an exterior bike pavilion structure with a repair station, and 32 stacked long-term spots inside the building.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

35 Bellevue advances the City of Toronto's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan by providing secure, dignified housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. Operated by St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society, the future building will provide affordable, mixed-income housing that reflects Toronto diverse population, in partnership with organizations such as Anishnawbe Health Toronto, Fred Victor, Community Living, and Sistering. During the design process, St. Clare's shared anecdotal experience of housing diverse tenant populations to shape a built environment that fosters gradual sociability, particularly for individuals with addictions and mental health challenges. This approach informed decisions such as varied seating arrangements in the dining area—accommodating both individual and group interactions—and a courtyard designed for passive engagement, where tenants can observe activities from interior spaces without direct participation. Safety is naturally embedded in the design through visibility from residential units and amenity spaces, including bike storage positioned within sight of the office.

Challenging the stigma of institutionalized supportive housing, 35 Bellevue creates a home-like environment with thoughtful design elements. Corridors terminate in windows to enhance daylight and improve wayfinding. The building embraces an economy-of-means approach, utilizing high-quality materials within efficient floor plans. Each fully furnished unit optimizes frontage space, allowing for dual windows—one in the sleeping area and one in the living space. The Kensington Market Community Land Trust represented the neighborhood's interests, advocating for a mix of unit types and the potential for one-bedroom units to be adapted into two-bedroom spaces in the future.

Ultimately, 35 Bellevue goes beyond providing affordable housing; it promotes integration and redefines perceptions of supportive living, with a four-story design that harmonizes with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Energy Performance Metrics

Energy performance metrics have been included in the submission.

Public Art Statement

A mural has been proposed for the adjacent building located south of 35 Bellevue, which forms part of the pedestrian mid-block connection. Kensington Market, renowned for its creative and diverse community, is rich with street art and murals that have become a defining feature of the neighborhood.

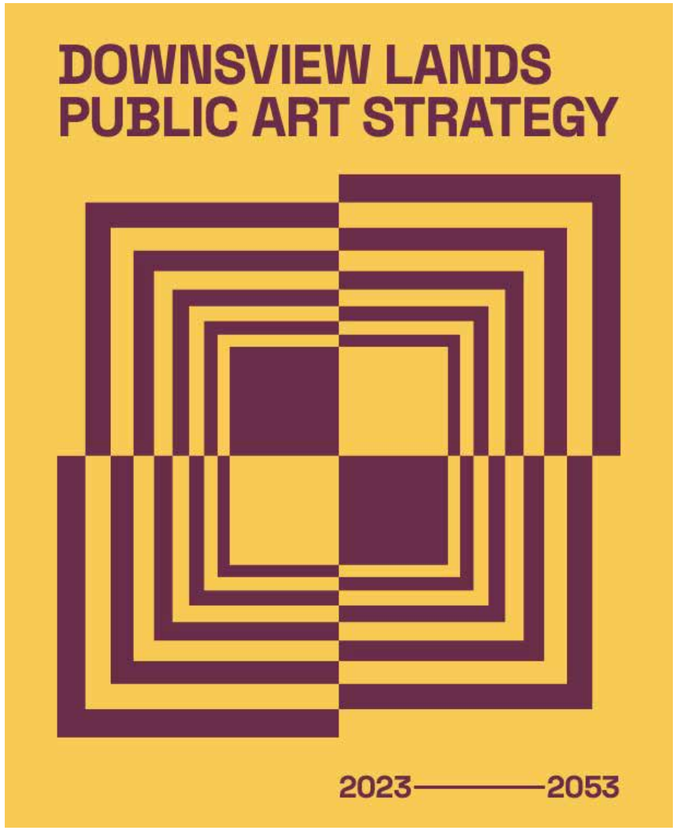
The façade of the existing house slated for the mural has been previously defaced by graffiti. This project presents a valuable opportunity to revitalize the façade with a visually engaging and meaningful piece of public art. The addition of a mural would introduce a playful and dynamic aesthetic to the site walkway, seamlessly integrating with Kensington Market's celebrated artistic identity. Further enhancing the experience, the walkway will be lined with lush vegetation, while nighttime illumination will highlight the mural's details and colors.

At this stage of development, the proposal has garnered interest and support from the neighborhood, the City of Toronto, and the building owner. The mural concept showcased in the attached site renders serves as a placeholder design, illustrating the potential impact and value of such an installation. Given Kensington Market's longstanding reputation as a hub for creatives, the vision for the mural is to engage a local artist or collective to bring the design to life, ensuring it reflects the cultural heritage and artistic spirit of the community.

DOWNSVIEW LANDS PUBLIC ART STRATEGY

Downsview Lands

@artpluspublicplus



Project Team
Others: Art+Public UnLtd - Public Art Consultant

Developer/Owner/Client
Canada Lands Company
Northcrest Developments

Image Credits
Brennan Kelly
Courtesy of Canada Lands Company and Northcrest Developments

Project Description

From 2020 to 2024, Northcrest Developments and Canada Lands Company collaborated with diverse stakeholders to generate a shared vision for their adjacent 520-acre lands, collectively referred to as the Downsview Lands.

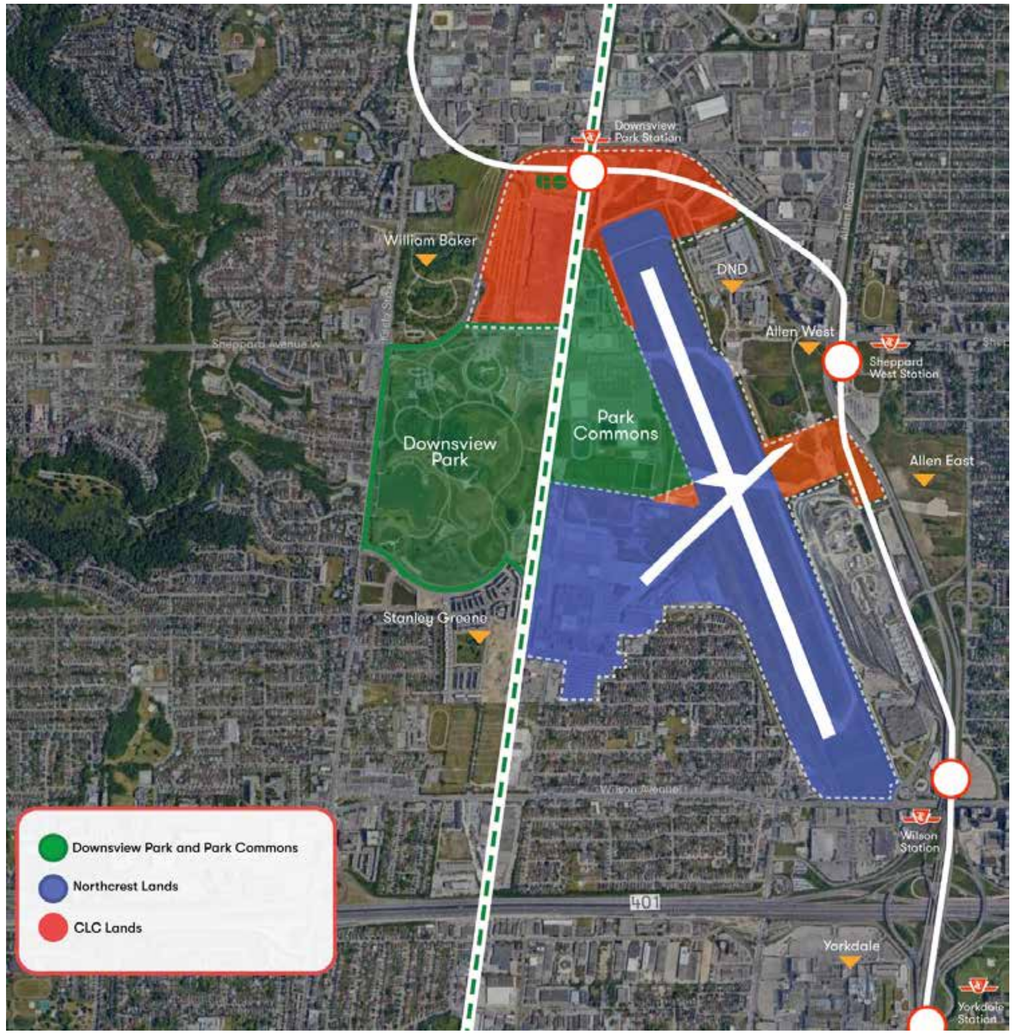
The changes that will occur at the Downsview Lands over the coming decades present a generational and transformative opportunity. Developed by ART+PUBLIC UnLtd, in close collaboration with Northcrest and Canada Lands, the Public Art Strategy provides an overarching vision, guiding principles, strategic pillars and lays out innovative programmatic approaches to guide the implementation of public art over an anticipated 30-year development timeline and across private and public partnerships. Informed by extensive engagement, consultation, and collaboration, the Downsview Lands Public Art Strategy seeks to push the boundaries of public art by ensuring that art and cultural experience are meaningfully embedded throughout the development process.

The implementation of the Downsview Lands Public Art Strategy will unfold through the development of a series of district-level Public Art Plans which will interpret the vision, principles, and pillars of the overarching strategy to determine a balance of programs best suited to the unique opportunities of the districts that will be built.

The vision is realized through two interlocking pillars: Commissioning and Stewardship, which embody the landowners' commitment to both innovation and sustainable art practices from the outset. The approach positions the Downsview Lands as a leader in sustainable public art, offering a model for best practices not only within the Toronto arts sector, but globally.

Key principles of the vision include:

- Prioritizing innovative artworks, art practices and technologies;
- Championing equity, inclusivity and social sustainability through public art to ensure the production and enjoyment of art is inclusive and accessible for all, and remains relevant and inspiring now and into the future;
- Creating opportunities to meaningfully support emerging and underrepresented artists.



Sustainability Statement

The Downsview Lands Public Art Strategy embeds sustainability at its core. Through the overarching pillars of Stewardship and Commissioning, the Art Strategy integrates both environmental responsibility, and social sustainability across a breadth of potential public art programs.

From an environmental perspective, the strategy encourages bold and forward-thinking commissioning of art across the expansive timeline and scale of development and has a robust conservation and maintenance plan. It encourages innovative solutions to sustainability and waste challenges found within the current global contemporary public art commissioning landscape by offering options for greater longevity of temporary artworks and waste reduction.

Approaches that prioritize reclaimed or locally sourced materials, modularity, low-emissions production, and durability are supported through the program's guidelines. This is evidenced in many pieces of public art across the lands already, even in advance of redevelopment including FLOAT by Jacquie Comrie—an explosion of colour splashed on the side of a blank industrial old airport hangar—which now serves as the YZD Experience Centre or the All City Shine mural project, curated by Danilo Deluxo displaying the graffiti of 5 BIPOC artists on the west facing wall of Canada Lands' Downsview Film Studios in its Depot Building.

Social sustainability is at the forefront where actively supporting the capacity of current and future generations to create healthy and liveable communities is encouraged. The Artist in residence programs bolster the City's Community Development Plan actions as well as the Toronto Public Art Strategy 2020/2030.

The strategy is built to be flexible and evolve alongside the 30-year development, with future art commissions informed by community needs, and advancements in sustainable design and priorities. The framework ensures that the public art program remains aligned with the sustainable vision underpinning the transformation of Downsview and contributes meaningfully to its environmental legacy.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

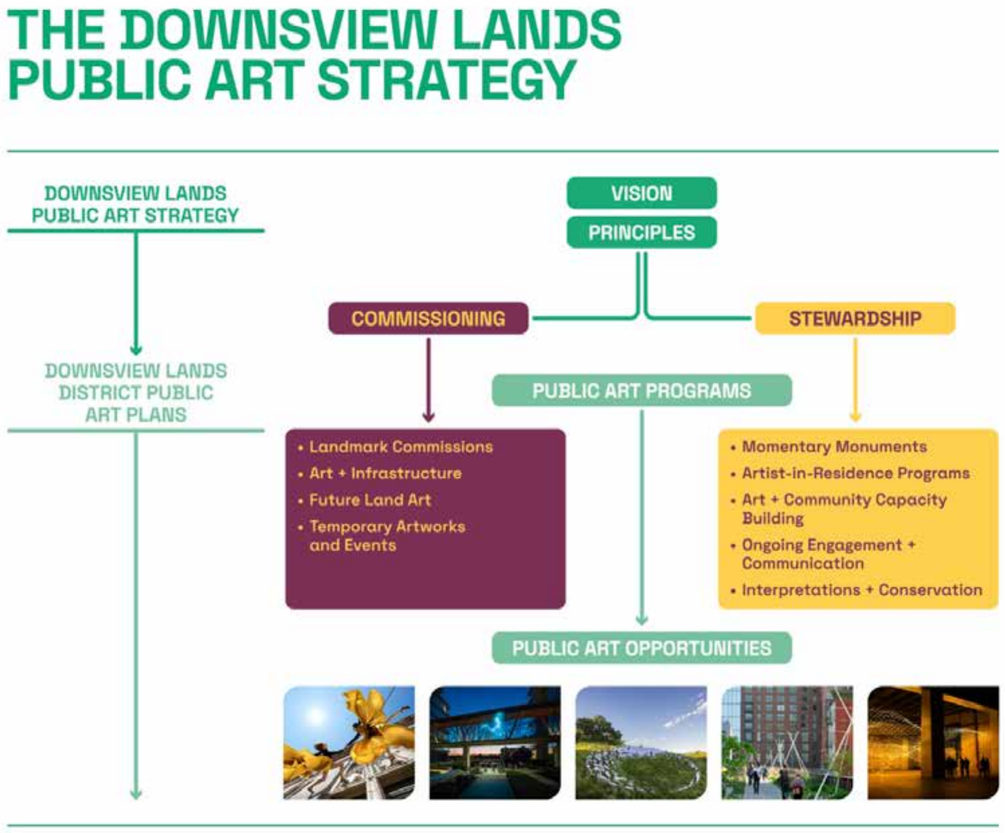
The Downsview Lands development is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive arts ecosystem that amplifies Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving voices. Through the Arts Capacity Building Program, it encourages spaces where artists can live, work, and engage with audiences, offering access to affordable studios, educational facilities, and exhibition venues.

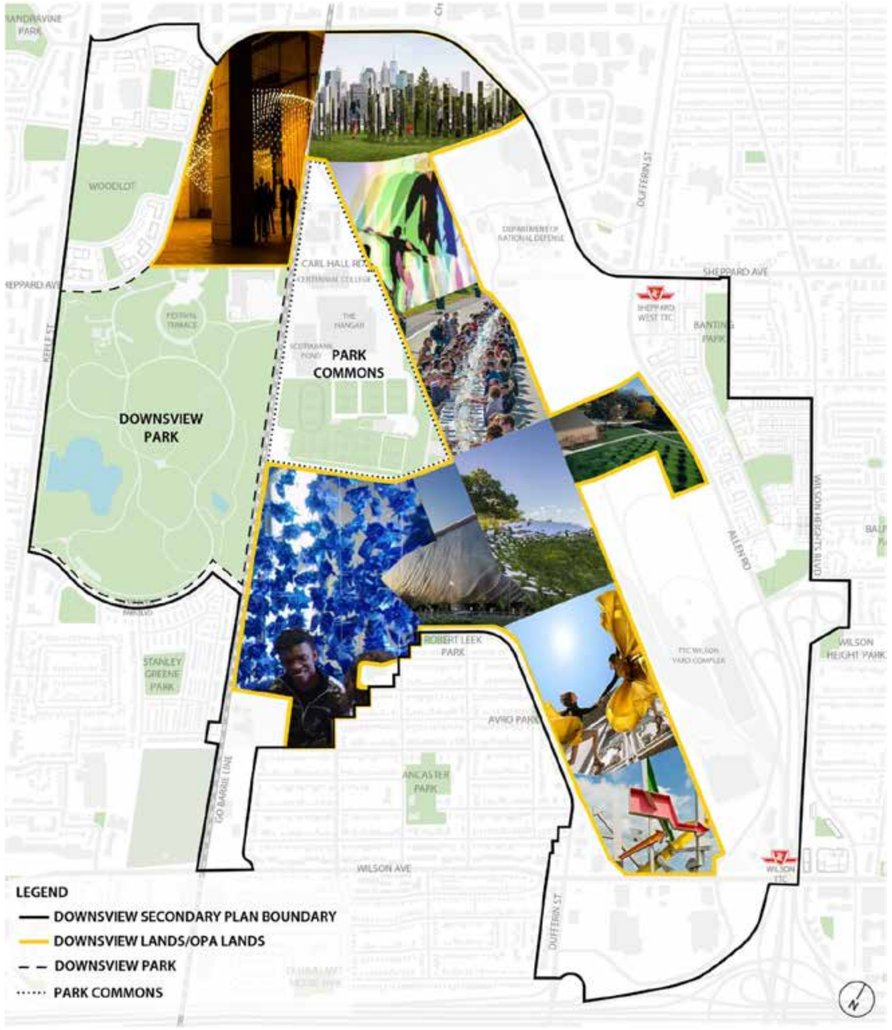
The Downsview Lands Public Art Strategy is anchored in a deliberate and sustained commitment to equity, reconciliation, and cultural inclusion. Developed by Northcrest Developments and Canada Lands Company, the strategy acknowledges the Downsview Lands are situated on the Treaty Lands and Traditional Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, as well as the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee peoples. Collaboration with First Nations Rights-Holders has shaped the foundational values of this strategy, including environmental responsibility, cultural continuity, and collective stewardship. The strategy lays out implementation steps that continue this collaboration throughout the strategy's lifetime.

Spanning ten districts over 30 years, the strategy establishes an enduring framework for accessible, inclusive, and locally grounded public art. Community engagement has shaped initiatives like artist residencies, mentorships, and commissions prioritizing local artists. These efforts emphasize public art not simply as aesthetic enhancement—it is a means of cultural expression reflecting communities' lived experience.

Designed to evolve with the site, the strategy embeds artists in long-term roles, aligns with development milestones, and supports creative career pathways. It empowers Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving artists to shape Downsview's cultural identity through capacity-building and collaboration. The Public Art Strategy contributes to a thoughtful, layered identity for Downsview—one that honours its histories while shaping its future.

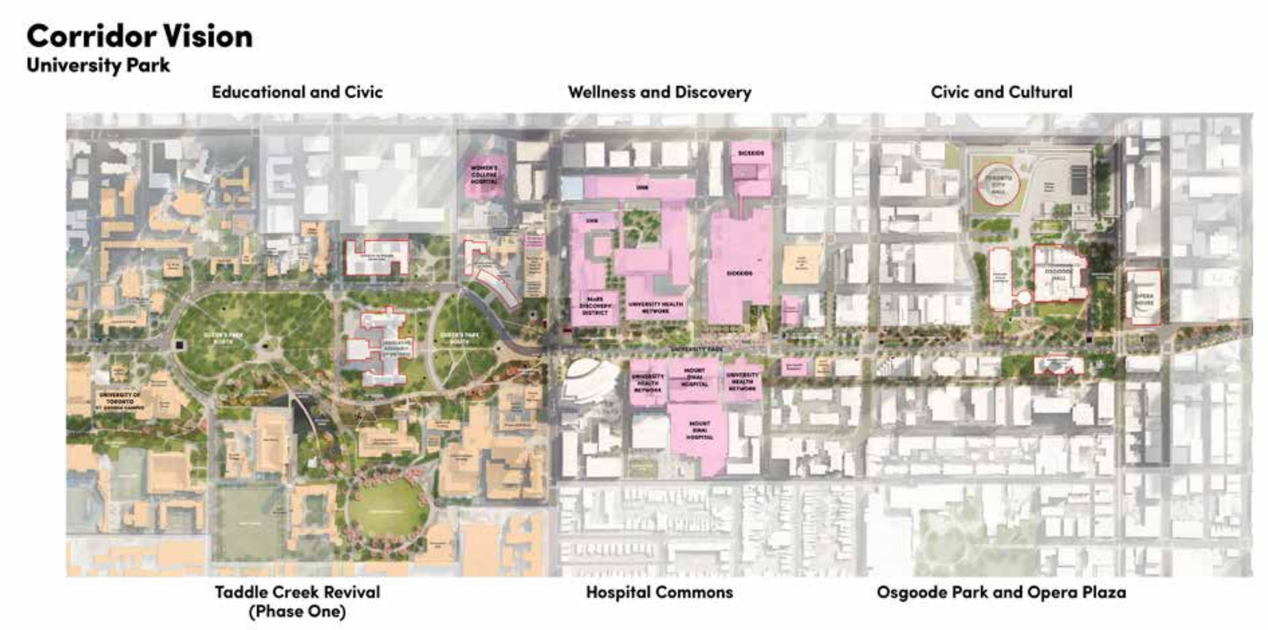
Aligned with Secondary Plan priorities and the Community Development Plan, this initiative strengthens social, economic, and cultural well-being by ensuring arts spaces are flexible, culturally safe, and designed with artists as primary users. Through this program, the Downsview Lands development plays a leadership role in building a thriving arts ecosystem.




DOWNSVIEW PARK
PARK COMMONS
LEGEND
DOWNSVIEW SECONDARY PLAN BOUNDARY
DOWNSVIEW LANDS/OPA LANDS
DOWNSVIEW PARK
PARK COMMONS

UNIVERSITY PARK

University Avenue between Bloor and King



Project Team
Engineers: BA Group (Transportation and Mobility), Stantec (Civil and Costing), Blackwell (Structural)
Others: Ken Greenberg (Project Representative for Matthews Family Foundation), Nina Pesavento (Project Representative for The Michael Young Family Foundation)

Developer/Owner/Client
The Michael Young Family Foundation, The Judy and Wilmot Matthews Foundation and the University of Toronto

Image Credits
PUBLIC WORK
Michael Muraz Photography
City of Toronto Archives

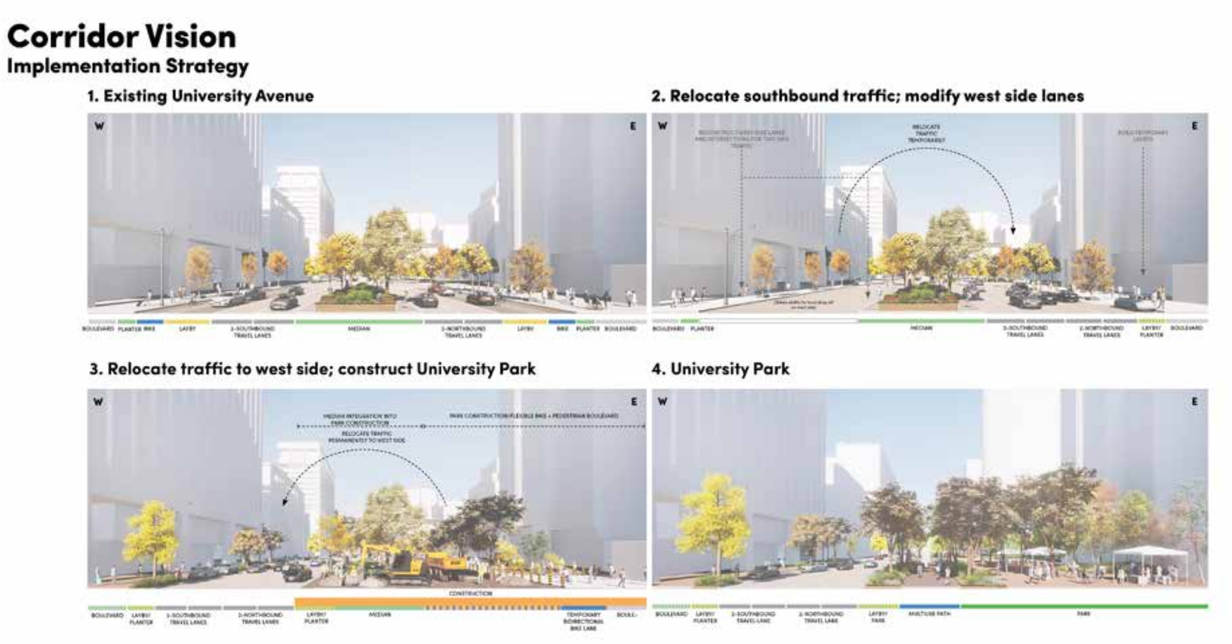
Project Description

University Avenue is home to some of Canada's foremost academic, cultural, healthcare and democratic institutions, yet the outdoor environment is hostile and underwhelming. By strategically reorganizing the boulevard to resituate, expand and connect the currently disparate green spaces along the corridor, 'University Park' creates a 90-acre park woven through the heart of Toronto. A proactive and unsolicited collaboration between designers and like-minded city builders and philanthropists, this vision advocates unlocking and regenerating a significant public space resource without the prohibitively costly purchase of new land; offering a once in a generation opportunity to create a new hybrid park for the intensifying downtown core, seemingly out of thin air.

The designer is leading a unique city-building collaboration with a group of philanthropists and non-profit organizations and institutions to rejuvenate Toronto's once-great avenue as a civic park experience, while reinforcing our contemporary shared values as North America's most diverse City.

South of College Street, the plans permanently consolidate University Avenue down to four lanes on the west side, allowing the east side to be transformed into an expansive linear park complete with new public gathering spaces, a multi-use trail and a rehabilitated urban tree canopy. Heritage elements such as the monuments are kept and reinterpreted to relate to humans, rather than passing vehicles. North of College Street, Queens Park Crescent traffic is consolidated on the east side, allowing the removal of the west leg arterial traffic overpass. This unlocks the potential for significant new park space, fusing Queens Park North and the University of Toronto green spaces into one contiguous legacy cultural landscape along the historic trace of the former Taddle Creek; its distinct topography capturing run-off from surrounding land and streets, facilitating flood prevention and promoting biodiversity.

The University Park design team has been pivotal in assembling an 'Innovation District Roundtable' consisting of the municipal government along with academic, innovation and healthcare institutions that reside along University Avenue. The group is convened to advocate for the park project and to make the financial case for implementation. University Park represents the potential for a completely transformed physical environment at the heart of the innovation district, currently lacking in cohesion and outdoor social gathering opportunities. This is critical for the success of the district – for attracting and retaining global talent and improving quality of life for all users.



Sustainability Statement

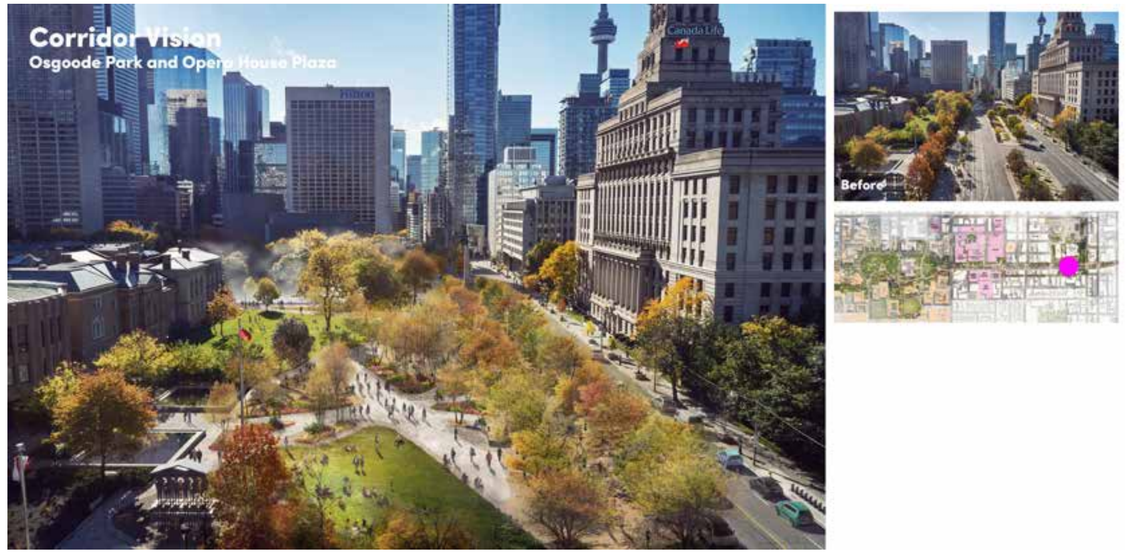
The vision reimagines the Avenue as a resilient landscape corridor, an exemplar of green infrastructure design. The removal of 9.5 acres of concrete and asphalt and subsequent conversion into a park dramatically increases the environmental performance of the corridor, while mitigating the localized flooding effects we experience in a changing climate. This strategic location also carries with it the opportunity to rediscover a lost landscape, Taddle Creek, buried over 150 years ago and supplanted with an expressway.

South of College Street, the avenue is transformed into a green sponge with dramatically increased tree canopy coverage to counter heat island effect, plus significant storm water absorption opportunities. North of College, the transformation of 4 acres of elevated arterial roadway and ramps into creek landscape is fundamental to enhanced landscape performance. Initial calculations indicate that the floodable creek landscape created will be positioned to absorb run off from a five hectare surrounding area, while delivering a biodiverse ecological habitat in the centre of the increasingly dense city core.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

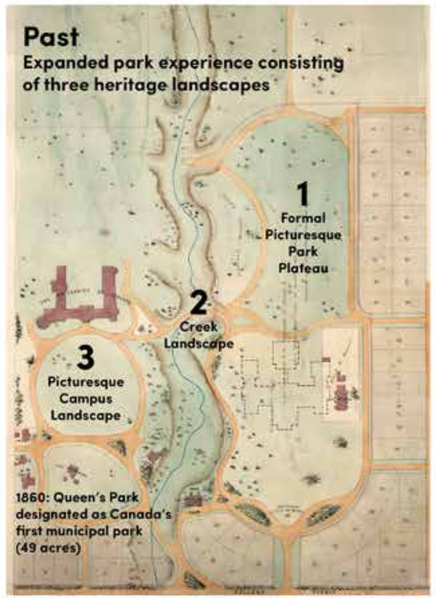
University Avenue is Toronto's most democratic street, where we learn amongst our nation's leading academic institutions, care for loved ones inside the walls of cutting-edge hospitals and expand our minds with Canada's foremost cultural institutions. Yet currently, its decorative median gardens lie isolated behind multiple lanes of fast-moving traffic, attracting remarkably few visitors given the prime location and subway access. As such, the act of transforming the currently stark street environment into a park has the potential to dramatically improve the way people from all walks of life experience the city.

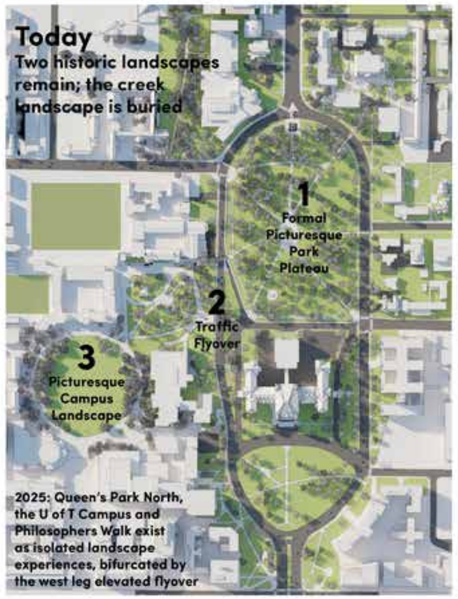
University Park offers the opportunity to curate a design process for a destination as dynamic as the people it serves. Across its 90 acres, University Park can celebrate our community's diverse backgrounds, cultures, and strengths with inclusive gathering spaces that are designed to serve our different needs. As the central hub for healthcare, business, culture, and civic activity in North America's most multicultural city, the park invites people to come together for both monumental and everyday moments. Here is the opportunity for a park purposefully built to amplify visitors' and residents' physical and mental wellness; with open recreational green spaces and scenic bike routes that encourage healthy lifestyles while immersive, indigenous landscapes provide restorative experiences and pay homage to our collective stories.

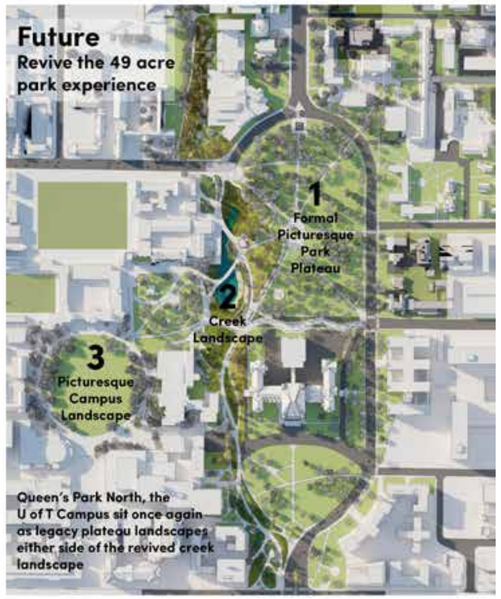


Phase One: Taddle Creek Revival

Retracing an Indigenous Landscape







2025 TORONTO URBAN DESIGN AWARDS

SUBMISSIONS | STUDENT PROJECTS

Students in urban design, architecture, landscape architecture and other design programs are invited to submit theoretical or studio projects set in, or relating to Toronto. Students should co-ordinate with design studio professors/advisors to select projects that are suitable for submission.

UNFRAMING
Between 14-16 Hazelton Avenue

Project Team
Linna Chang
Kimia Jouyandeh

Project Description

The project transforms a narrow alley between Between 14-16 on Hazelton Avenue in Yorkville into a vibrant, multi-functional public space. I envision this as a replicable model for “small spaces with big functions,” applicable to the bustling, land-scarce Yorkville.

The design is inspired by Yorkville’s culture of free expression. Combining the alley’s physical boundaries - narrow gaps between buildings - and the themes of surrounding galleries, the concept emerges as “Deconstructing the Frame: Limited Boundaries, Infinite Possibilities of the Path to Freedom.” Using the “frame” as a metaphorical carrier, the design explores the tension between physical boundaries and spiritual freedom - when the frame shifts from a static “container” to a dynamic “interface,” the alley itself becomes a philosophical experiment field of “confinement and breakthrough, observation and rebellion.” Here, everyone is an artist, a pigment, and the stroke striving to break the canvas’s edge. As an urban “gap space,” the alley offers “freedom pores” to release the pressures of the area’s fast-paced, compact urban life.

Key design elements breathe life into the space:

A mirrored installation on the left building wall creates a “spatial black hole,” visually expanding the narrow alley while introducing sunlight refraction and multi-functional visitor interaction. Ahead of it, a circular perforated speaker allows tourists to vote for music on the Yorkville website. The circular shape, resembling a frame, reflects parts of the alley into the mirror, creating a soft spatial division. Above the mirror, a graffiti zone, with regularly changing themes, encourages public art creation and sparks creativity.

In the middle of the alley, a vibrant red “Vanishing Corridor,” combined with vine-like greenery, forms a shaded rest area without impeding passage. This design symbolizes Yorkville’s free spirit, gradually fading under the pressure of high-end commercialization, yet persisting like red blood pulsing through the land.

On the right building wall, vines naturally cover and grow, forming a dynamic ecological green wall that enhances biodiversity while softening the urban edge.

At the alley’s top, LED strips and cloud-shaped lanterns symbolize freedom and romance, creating a stunning “galactic band” at night. Paired with an open space at the alley entrance, this area can host small evening events.

This project elevates public space quality, weaving Yorkville’s art and history into a modern tapestry. It aligns with Toronto’s Urban Design Guidelines, emphasizing accessibility and sustainability, while offering a replicable model to activate underutilized urban spaces.

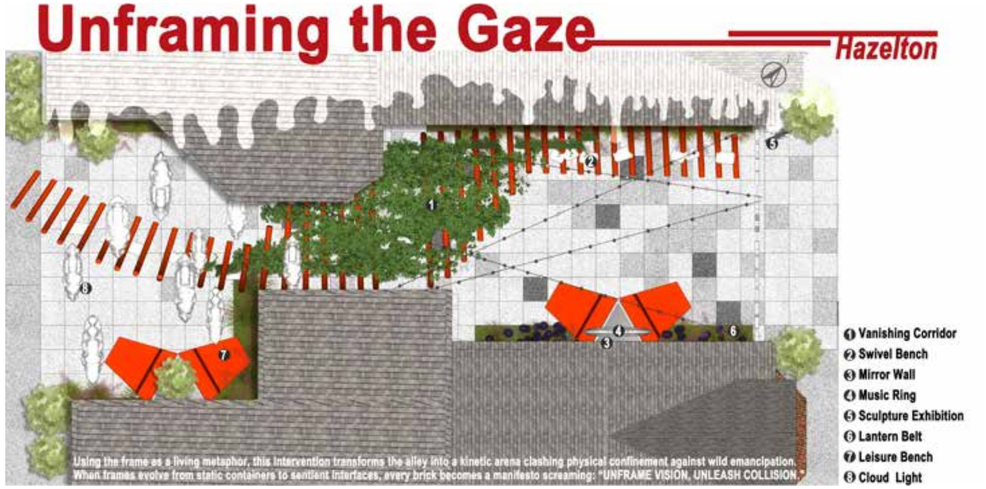
Sustainability Statement

The project addresses climate change and biodiversity crises with lush greenery forming an ecological green wall and vines entwined on the red pergola, strengthening local ecosystems by attracting pollinators like bees and birds, increasing canopy cover, and effectively mitigating the urban heat island effect. Low-energy LED strips and cloud-shaped lanterns, paired with an energy-efficient audio system, significantly reduce energy consumption. In terms of material choices, the project prioritizes sustainability: mirrors use low-VOC, recyclable components, extending lifespan and minimizing waste. The graffiti zone, managed through public participation, lowers maintenance needs, while plant shading reduces alley temperatures, enhancing pedestrian comfort and urban resilience. This design not only lowers the carbon footprint but also aligns with Toronto's climate adaptation goals, setting a benchmark for sustainable urban design in dense city environments.

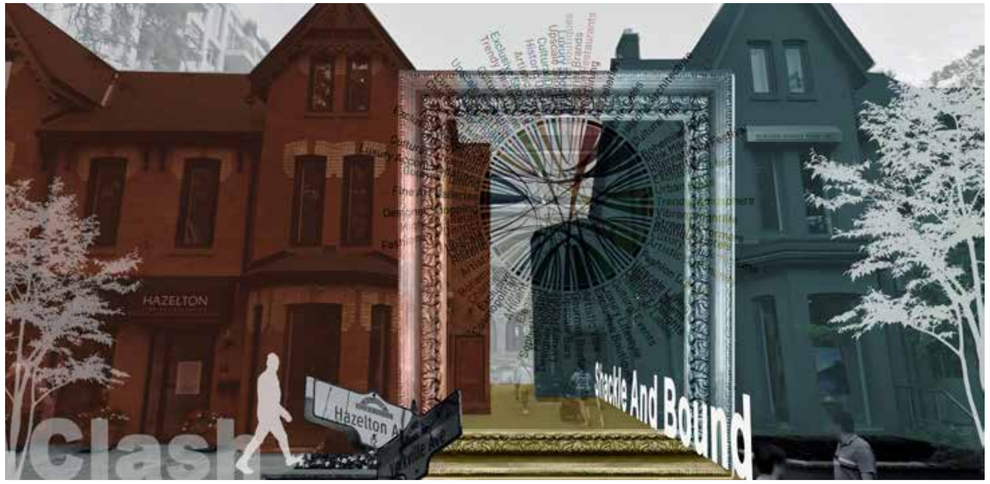
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

This project is committed to advancing equity, reconciliation, and diversity by amplifying marginalized voices and fostering inclusive participation. At the alley entrance, a sculpture area with regularly changing themes, developed through design workshops collaborating with Indigenous, Black, and other equity-deserving groups, seeks themes reflecting their needs, transforming what was once merely a passageway into a vibrant, diverse public space.

Drawing inspiration from Yorkville's multicultural history, the mirrored installations and audio interactions invite all visitors to engage actively, while the graffiti zone provides a canvas for free expression, echoing casual street interactions. Native plants in the green ecological wall symbolize environmental and cultural reconciliation. Nighttime lighting and audio support various artistic activities, continuously meeting diverse needs. By blending historical charm with modern inclusivity, this project builds trust and equity, creating a truly inclusive and diverse urban space.


Unframing the Gaze
Hazelton
1 Vanishing Corridor
2 Swivel Bench
3 Mirror Wall
4 Music Ring
5 Sculpture Exhibition
6 Lantern Belt
7 Leisure Bench
8 Cloud Light
Using the frame as a living metaphor, this intervention transforms the alley into a kinetic arena clashing physical confinement against wild emancipation. When frames evolve from static containers to sentient interfaces, every brick becomes a manifesto screaming: "UNFRAME VISION, UNLEASH COLLISION."


Hazelton Art Lane
Warm lighting transforms the alley into a nighttime gathering spot.Warm lighting transforms the alley into a nighttime gathering spot.


HAZELTON
Clash
Shackle And Bound

KAZIMI HAVEN – A NON-CLINICAL HEALING SANCTUARY FOR CANCER PATIENTS IN TORONTO

1 Leslie Street

Project Team

Syed Raza

Project Description

Kazimi Haven is a non-clinical healing sanctuary for cancer patients, envisioned within Toronto's Tommy Thompson Park. As a Master of Architecture student, I chose this site not just for its biodiversity, but because I have personally biked and walked its trails through different seasons. It is a place where the city meets quiet resilience — an ideal setting for reflection, healing, and reconnection with nature.

The design responds to a growing need in healthcare architecture: spaces that address emotional and psychological well-being in addition to clinical treatment. Inspired by Maggie's Centres in the UK, Casey House Toronto, and current research in neuroscience and environmental psychology, Kazimi Haven is shaped by sensory design principles. Tactile surfaces, filtered light, seasonal smells, and biophilic materials are all intentionally layered to reduce anxiety and support cognitive restoration.

The sanctuary is organized around a central water body and walking trails that link together therapeutic spaces: a communal kitchen, spiritual room, reading areas, and gardens. These are housed in a low, naturalistic form that follows the site's existing contours and microclimate. Passive cooling is achieved through gabion walls and operable windows, while large overhangs and natural shading reduce solar gain. The structure is designed to feel quiet and rooted — like it belongs to the land.

A key urban design feature is the integration of food-growing landscapes within the public realm. Patients grow native, anti-inflammatory, and immune-boosting herbs and vegetables — including leeks, spinach, mint, and berries — which are brought directly into the kitchen. This loop is both symbolic and functional: it represents healing, nourishment, and community. Research shows that even one day in a forested, biodiverse setting can increase intracellular anti-cancer proteins. By engaging the body, senses, and land, this space becomes deeply therapeutic — especially for equity-deserving communities who feel disconnected from sterile, institutional environments.

Kazimi Haven also contributes to Toronto's ecological goals. The gardens support local pollinators, improve biodiversity, and invite interspecies relationships into the healing process. The site is fully accessible by transit and located near health services, offering continuity of care.

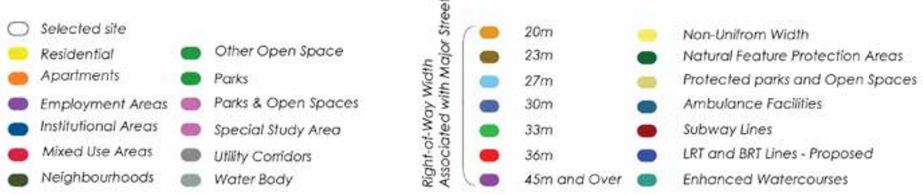
This project is personal, research-informed, and grounded in both architecture and empathy. Kazimi Haven imagines what it would mean for our cities to care — not just to treat — through urban spaces rooted in equity, ecology, and quiet dignity.

Title: Site Context: Land Use & Community Structure

Description: Map showing the selected site within Toronto's urban framework, surrounded by residential areas, employment zones, and parks — emphasizing local integration and community accessibility.

Title: Transit & Environmental Context

Description: Map highlighting the site's connection to major streets, existing and proposed transit lines, natural features, and protected green areas — demonstrating urban connectivity and sustainable accessibility.



Sustainability Statement

Kazimi Haven is designed to support both human healing and environmental resilience through accessible, low-impact architectural strategies. The project sits within Toronto's Tommy Thompson Park, a naturally biodiverse and ecologically sensitive site. Its orientation and layout respond to the existing topography and surrounding green zones, reducing land disruption and preserving natural views.

The building incorporates passive shading through the use of gabion walls, which serve a dual purpose of cooling and filtering sunlight while also supporting stormwater permeability. Natural ventilation is encouraged through open connections between indoor and outdoor spaces, reducing the need for mechanical systems and promoting user comfort. Large operable windows and cross-ventilation channels further lower energy demand.
Materials are selected for their sustainability and connection to place — including locally sourced stone, timber elements, and CLT construction, all of which support lower embodied carbon and reinforce the tactile quality of the space.

The project integrates vegetable and herb gardens into the therapeutic landscape. These gardens feature immune-boosting and anti-inflammatory plants such as mint, spinach, and leeks, which are harvested for use in the communal kitchen. This food loop reduces reliance on external supply chains and offers culturally meaningful engagement with land and nourishment.

To support sustainable irrigation, Kazimi Haven includes a rainwater collection system from the roof, allowing stormwater to be redirected and reused for watering the gardens. This closed-loop strategy reduces environmental impact while supporting biodiversity and daily functionality.
In addition, the design mitigates urban heat through increased tree canopy coverage, native vegetation, and permeable pathways that allow stormwater infiltration. While formal performance modeling was not conducted, the design aligns with the Toronto Green Standard by reducing energy use, supporting biodiversity, and fostering long-term adaptability.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Kazimi Haven was designed with the understanding that healing is not one-size-fits-all. For many equity-deserving groups — including racialized communities, newcomers, and people marginalized by the healthcare system — healing environments are often inaccessible, clinical, or culturally disconnected. This project aims to change that by offering a space rooted in inclusivity, nourishment, and personal dignity.

The sanctuary includes spaces that support multi-faith reflection and spiritual practice without privileging any single tradition. This includes a non-denominational spiritual room, outdoor meditative zones, and sensory-focused design strategies that reflect values of peace and contemplation found across diverse cultural perspectives. The layout invites personal rituals, quiet moments, and flexible engagement — acknowledging that healing looks different for everyone.

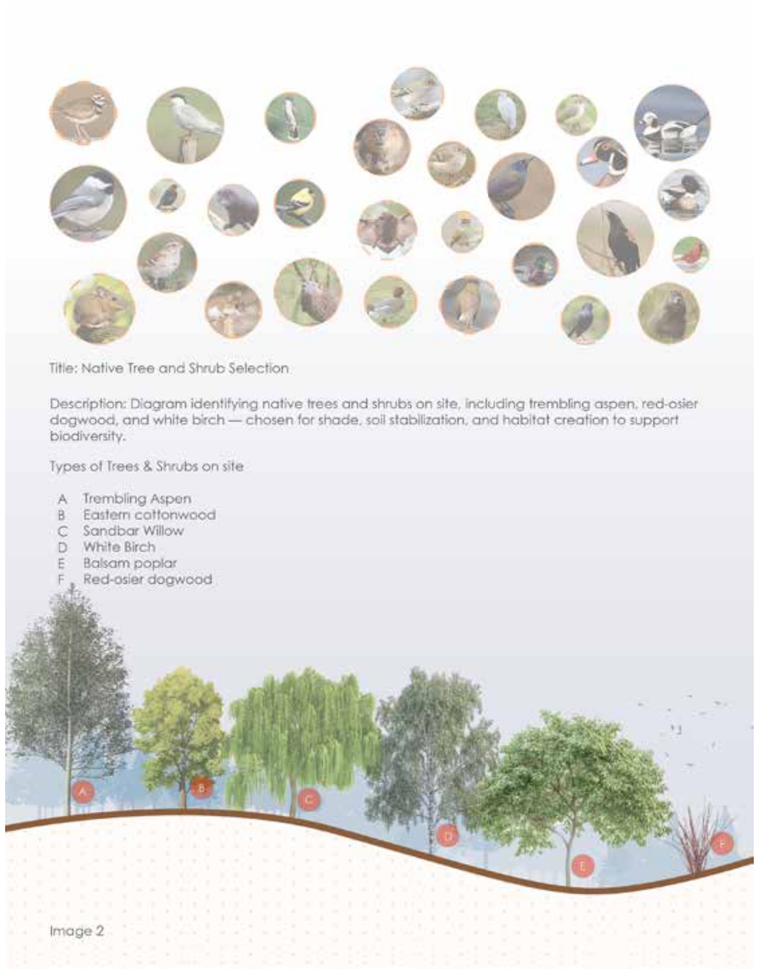
Kazimi Haven also addresses equity through food accessibility and reconnection with land. The herb and vegetable gardens feature Ontario-native species like leeks, mint, and spinach — plants known in various traditions for their immune-boosting and anti-inflammatory properties. These are grown, harvested, and prepared on-site, reinforcing food sovereignty and allowing users to actively participate in their healing. For many equity-deserving individuals, this tactile engagement with growing and giving life offers an empowering alternative to passive clinical care.

All outdoor and indoor spaces are designed with universal accessibility in mind — including barrier-free walkways, culturally neutral seating, and sensory features such as natural textures, light, and calming sounds. Materials were chosen to evoke warmth and familiarity, avoiding the sterile aesthetic often associated with medical spaces.

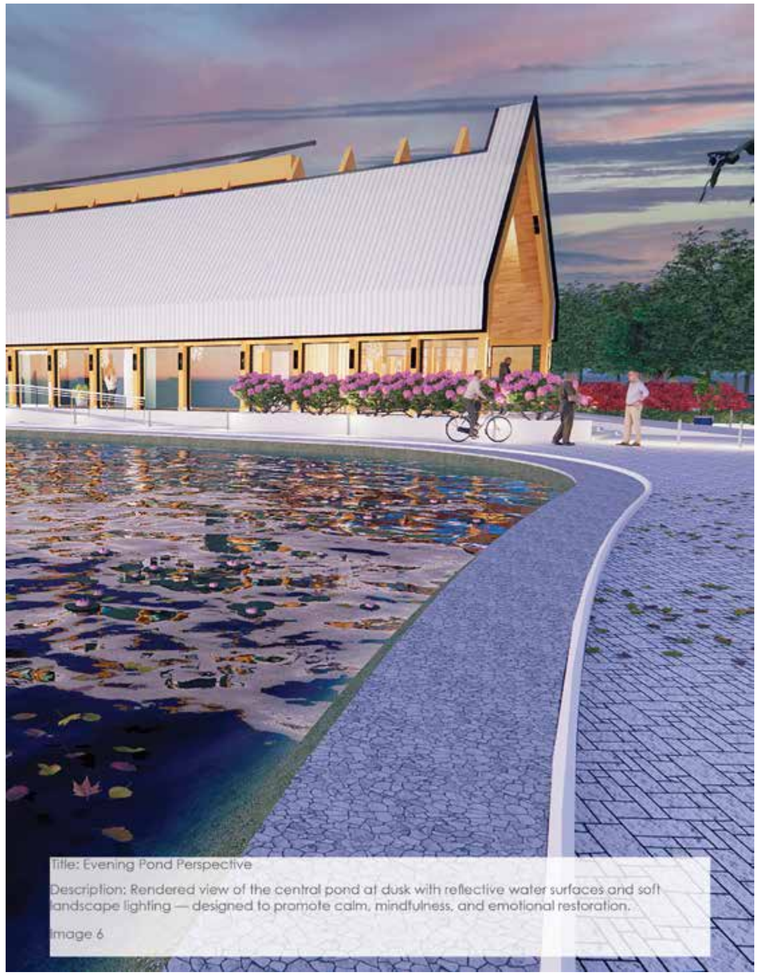
Kazimi Haven is not presented as a universal solution, but as a space that welcomes difference, respects cultural presence, and provides a gentle alternative to institutional care. It reflects the urgent need for public spaces that don't just accommodate diversity — but actively learn from it.

Title: Sectional Elevation
Description: Section drawing of Kazimi Haven highlighting material transitions, daylight strategies, and the arrangement of program spaces that support therapeutic engagement and user comfort.

Image 5


Title: Native Tree and Shrub Selection
Description: Diagram identifying native trees and shrubs on site, including trembling aspen, red-osier dogwood, and white birch — chosen for shade, soil stabilization, and habitat creation to support biodiversity.
Types of Trees & Shrubs on site
A Trembling Aspen
B Eastern cottonwood
C Sandbar Willow
D White Birch
E Balsam poplar
F Red-osier dogwood
Image 2


GROUND FLOOR PLAN
Legend
1 Entry
2 Info Desk
3 Therapy room
4 Kitchen
5 Dining Table
6 Storage
7 Reading / Workshop space
8 Washroom
9 Spiritual Space
10 Computer Lab
11 Fireplace
12 Lounge
13 Indoor Exercise
14 Indoor herb growing space
15 Outdoor Gardens
16 Outdoor Seating
17 BBQ Spot
18 Pond
19 Shaded space
20 Outdoor Seating
Lake Ontario
Title: Ground Floor Plan
Description: Floor plan of Kazimi Haven showing the spatial organization of indoor therapy rooms, kitchen, lounge, reading areas, and outdoor gardens — designed for fluid connection and sensory healing.
Image 4


Title: Evening Pond Perspective
Description: Rendered view of the central pond at dusk with reflective water surfaces and soft landscape lighting — designed to promote calm, mindfulness, and emotional restoration.
Image 6

SUBURBAN LANEWAYS
101 Englemount Avenue

Project Team
Hao Ran Qiu
Marie-Ellen Houde-Hostland

Project Description

Suburban Laneways explores how we can make the most out of underused school board land and transform it into housing. The site is a vacant field next to an existing school located within a suburban neighborhood. We wanted to respect the existing context and not create sudden changes in building typology, making sure our project can blend into its surroundings. This goal inspired us to create three typologies: the townhouse that runs the perimeter of the site, the 6 storey mid-rise that gradually transitions to denser buildings, and the 8 storey tower that is placed away from the street, reducing its impact on surrounding homes.

These three typologies are oriented along an internal pedestrian street that provides access to all units and facilitates daily operations, like deliveries, waste, and general circulation. Since our goal was to spread out the required units across the site, internal units needed a way to receive access. Building so many units at once also requires infrastructural considerations, so part of the site includes a stormwater retention pond that doubles as a landscape feature. This pond acts as a communal backyard for many units that face it. The site also provides space for the adjacent school to expand their activities, adding playground and open spaces that can be planned for events during the school year.

The buildings are designed with a slope that is directed towards the internal street, creating a valley that allows the street to feel more open. We also made sure to incorporate a gradient of privacy into each housing typology. The townhouses each have their own internal courtyard that faces the pedestrian street, meant to be a flex area that can be built out or left open. The towers all have a central courtyard that double as ground floor common space, and a shortcut to cross through the site. An explicit goal of the project was to reduce parking spaces to discourage vehicular use. Vehicular parking is located at the north of the site, which also acts as an entry point for trucks and vans to access the open space nearby to set up events and activities.

Sustainability Statement

The project was designed as part of a comprehensive studio term. Mechanical systems, structure, and environmental considerations were all developed as part of the overall strategy. The project emphasized the consideration of a carbon budget, meaning that a balance between embodied and operational carbon needed to be struck. We decided to construct using wood, with a mix of engineered timber and light wood framing. The townhouses are built using lumber and fire separation walls are constructed as CLT shear walls. This provided a simple and efficient solution for structure as well. The tower structure is built with glulam beams, columns, and CLT floors. This strategy of using predominantly wood for construction minimizes embodied carbon costs. The mechanical systems in the project also innovate beyond regular HVAC forced air. The floors are constructed with a radiant heating and cooling system, using water to condition the temperature of the floor.

Additionally, the stormwater retention pond acts as an infrastructural element that can serve the rest of the neighborhood as well. As Toronto gets further densified, there will be increased amounts of paved surfaces. This increases the chances of major floods overloading the city's sewage system. Stormwater ponds can mitigate the burden that sudden rainfall can have on the city. It also acts as a location for wildlife to grow, becoming an educational tool for the school as well to teach biodiversity.

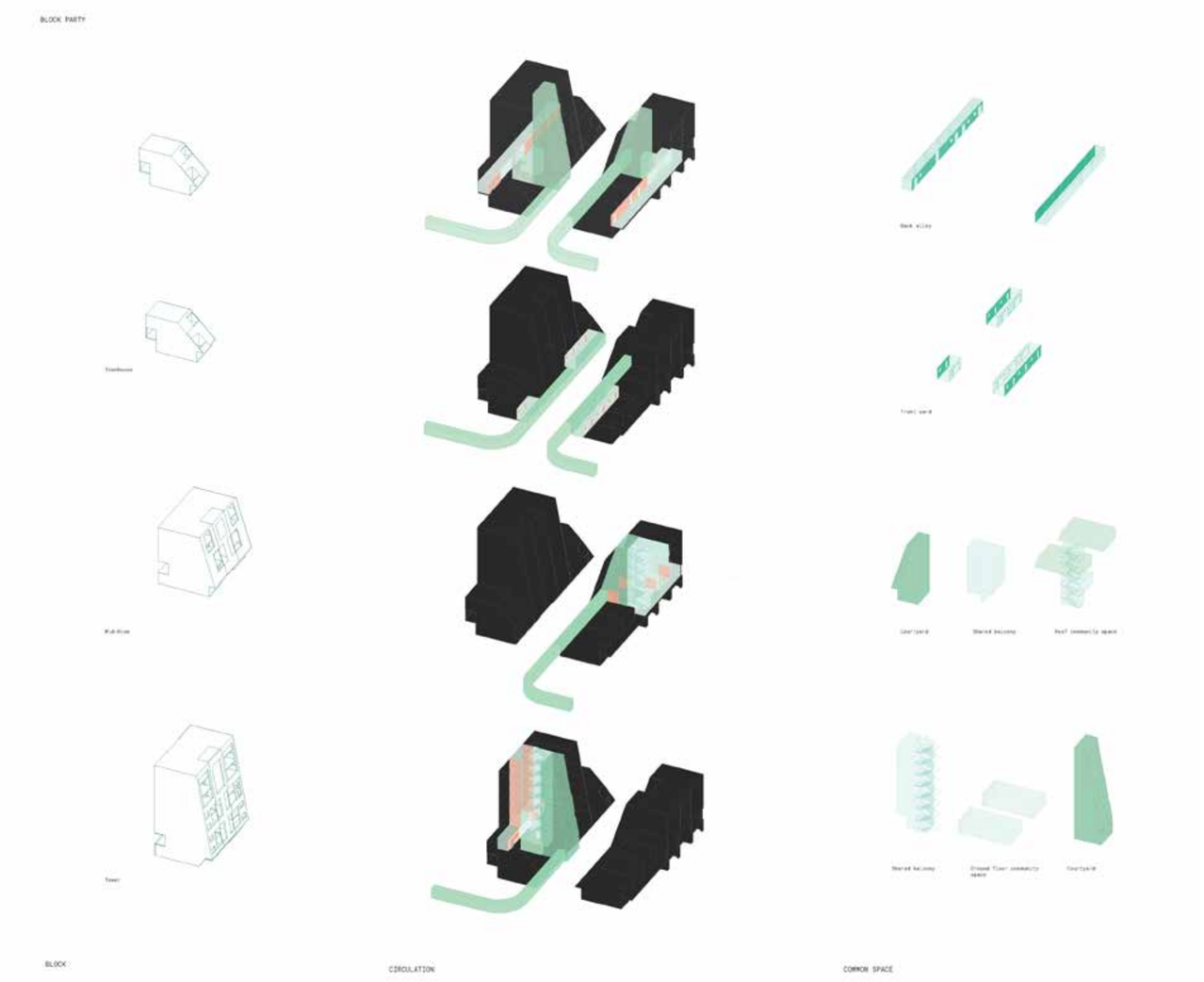
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Along with designing multiple typologies for the site, the unit types also vary greatly, accommodating for people with various living preferences. Townhouses are more suited for larger families, while the towers offer units that range from co-living to 2BD rental. We envisioned the residents living like a village, sharing and accommodating for others as people's situations change throughout their lives.

This allows people at different socio-economic levels to live together. Towers that offer co-living units are geared towards marginalized groups, and are situated near the ground floor, so they have more agency and control over the building's internal courtyards, changing it to suit their needs. Different groups coming together to negotiate how their communal spaces are shared will also strengthen their relationship and trust with each other.

Energy Performance Metrics

Energy performance metrics have been included in the submission.


BLOCK PARTY
BLOCK
CIRCULATION
COMMON SPACE

FLOWLINES
Overlea Boulevard

Project Team
Emily Pham
Krish Jain
Reid Hega
Bailey Hansen
Rafay Choudri
Ryan De Jong

Project Description

Thornecliffe Park is a neighbourhood located beside the Don River Valley and is a culturally diverse hotspot for recent immigrants. Public transit is limited, but future TTC expansion of the Ontario Line is set to better connect the neighbourhood with the region. With future growth and development expected within the next decade, thoughtful design is needed to provide necessary amenity and natural space for Thorncliffe Park to sustainably thrive.

The project forms and design concept draw inspiration from the Don River that 'flows' nearby. Thoughtful ecological and cultural design principles were applied to better connect the neighbourhood to the river valley. Like the Don River, this project seeks to carve and transform Thornecliffe into a thriving hub of Toronto.
Through research, site analysis, and stakeholder interviews, Flowlines was curated to address the needs and concerns of the Thorncliffe Park community. Specifically, Flowlines targets six aspects of the Thorncliffe Park community to enhance; the flow of ecology, hydrology, transportation, art, social/cultural, and business. With an interconnected neighbourhood, Flowlines can improve environmental awareness, quality of life, social-life and celebration of identity within Thorncliffe Park.

Design implementations that enhance the environmental flows include insect hotels, native pollinators planted in existing strips, tree-planting, the flow path and rain chain. These proposals have projected environmental benefits such as a 57% increase in carbon dioxide sequestration, mitigated urban heat island by canopy shade, increased habitat for birds and insects. In addition, the Thorncliffe Park community will gain a stronger connection with the Don Valley and the river with more interaction with the environment. Social and infrastructure-based design features include parking lots converted into event plazas and seating areas, separated bike lanes, safer pedestrian crossings, digital art boards, improved bus shelter designs, and a parkland emphasising exercise, play, and relaxation. Implementation of these features will increase pedestrian and cyclist safety, efficient transportation, and outdoors social interaction through designated community event spaces. Overall, Flowlines design emphasises on the enhancement of community connection with Thorncliffe Park's cultural melting pot and the life from the nearby Don Valley.

Sustainability Statement

The Thorncliffe Park community is known as Toronto's newcomer immigrant neighbourhood, providing opportunities to introduce Canadian environmental values and provide residents with a comfortable transition into the city. The Flowlines project is designed to ecological and hydrological flow by restoring the land and native species and improving water quality in the neighbourhood of Thorncliffe Park. Currently, the site is heavily urbanised with paved parking lots whilst adjacent to the Don River Valley which results in hotter summers, contaminated and poor wastewater management, and habitat fragmentation. Through design features of insect hotels made of recycled materials, pollinator planting strips, and the Flowpath, there are opportunities to improve biodiversity and educate the community with natural processes. With native pollinator species like Rudbeckias, Asclepias tuberosa, Buddleja davidii and more, insects and birds like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds will be able to feed and improve Toronto's ecosystems. Throughout the project, over 140 native trees like Pyrus calleryana are planted in existing softscape to improve canopy area which resultantly reduces pollution and the urban heat island. More planting also enhances ecological opportunities such as insect and bird habitats which improves migration throughout the neighbourhood with more greenspaces. In a more sustainable environment, the community will enjoy cleaner air, cooler temperatures and gain a greater awareness of the importance of ecology.

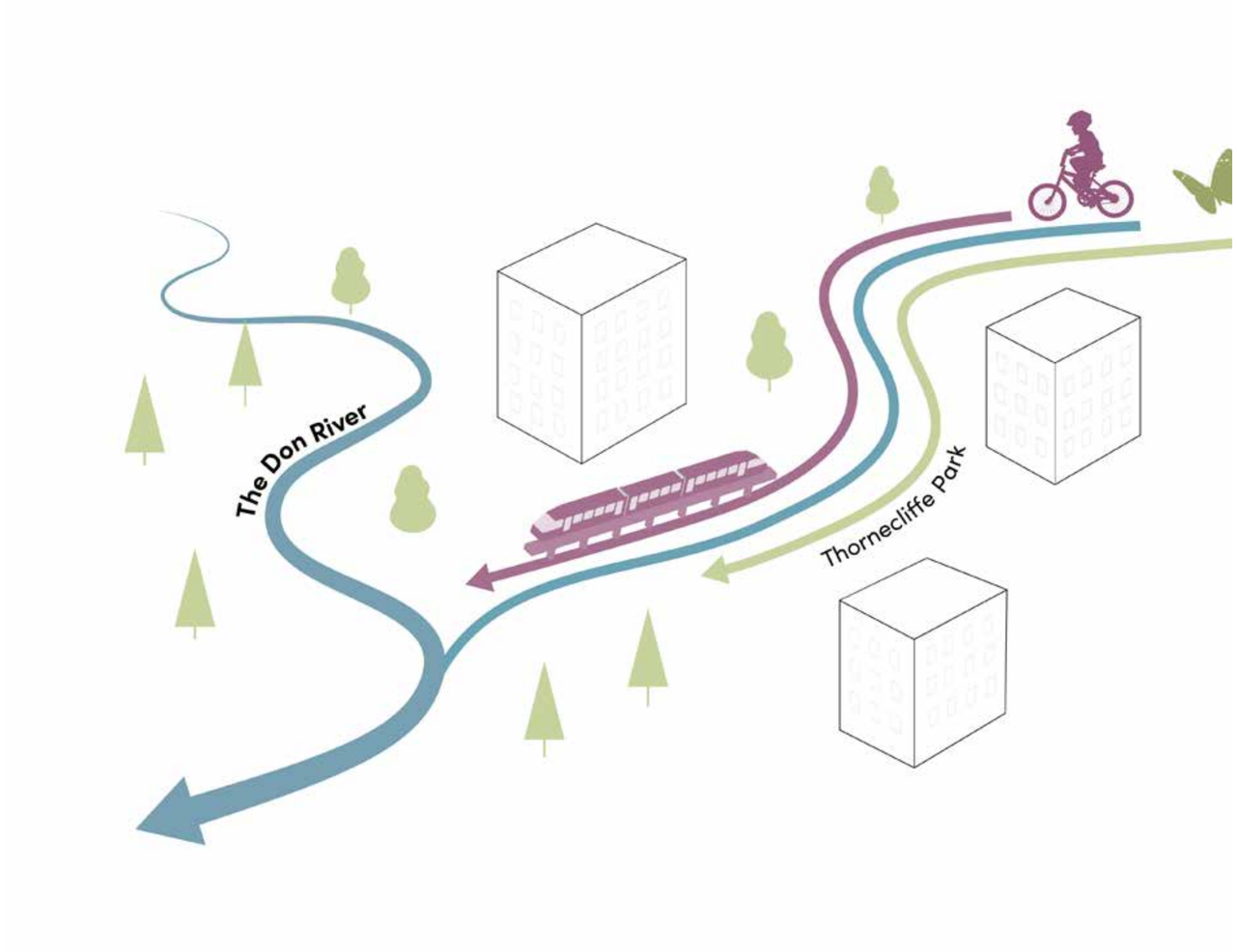
Lifestyle habits are also encouraged to adjust with the Flowline's proposals to improve transportation flow. Design features such as dedicated and separated bike lanes create a convenient and safe environment for cyclists to use the TTC Ontario Line and bike home. In addition, with more recreational activities and safer sidewalks, pedestrians will be encouraged to walk to community events and foster connections. In both situations, car-dependency is reduced which improves sustainable lifestyles with better improved pollution conditions like cleaner air quality and reduced noise pollution.

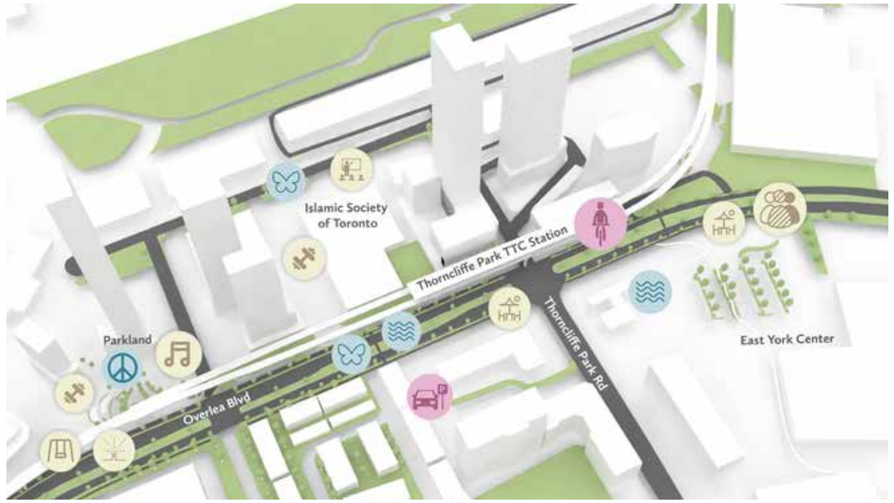
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

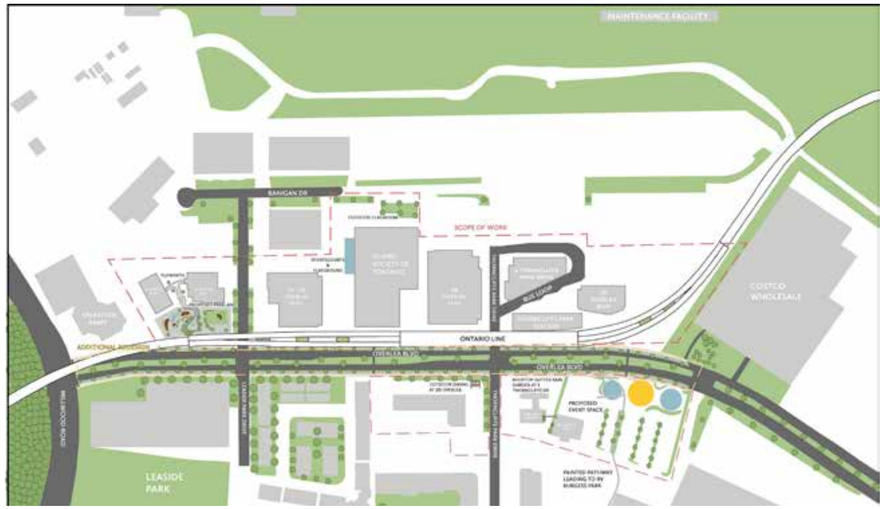
Flowlines is rooted in a vision of equity, reconciliation, and inclusive urban design. One that uplifts the voices of Indigenous, Black, and other equity-deserving communities. We honour the land on which this project stands,the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, by acknowledging the enduring responsibilities of stewardship, respect, and relationship.

Design, at its most powerful, is a bridge between past and future. Flowlines seeks to weave this bridge with intention,creating spaces where culture, memory, and belonging flow freely. One of our proposed event spaces directly connects to the nearby, often overlooked Burgess Park, aiming to engage the surrounding diverse residential community, including many Muslim residents. To celebrate cultural heritage, we have incorporated architectural elements such as arches at the future Islamic Society of Toronto building, honoring the community's traditions. Additionally, we have reimagined road infrastructure by introducing a green buffer and bike lanes, promoting walkability and a safer, more welcoming pedestrian experience for newcomers.

We believe that design must not only serve but listen, shaped by the stories, rhythms, and needs of its people. Flowlines is our commitment to nurturing that dialogue, creating places where all feel seen, valued, and at home.


The Don River
Thorncliffe Park


Islamic Society of Toronto
Thorncliffe Park TTC Station
Thorncliffe Park Rd
Parkland
Overlea Blvd
East York Center


SCOPE OF WORK
ONTARIO LINE
LEASIDE PARK
COSTCO WHOLESALE

PAST & PLACE: OLD TORONTO MUSEUM
10 Court Street

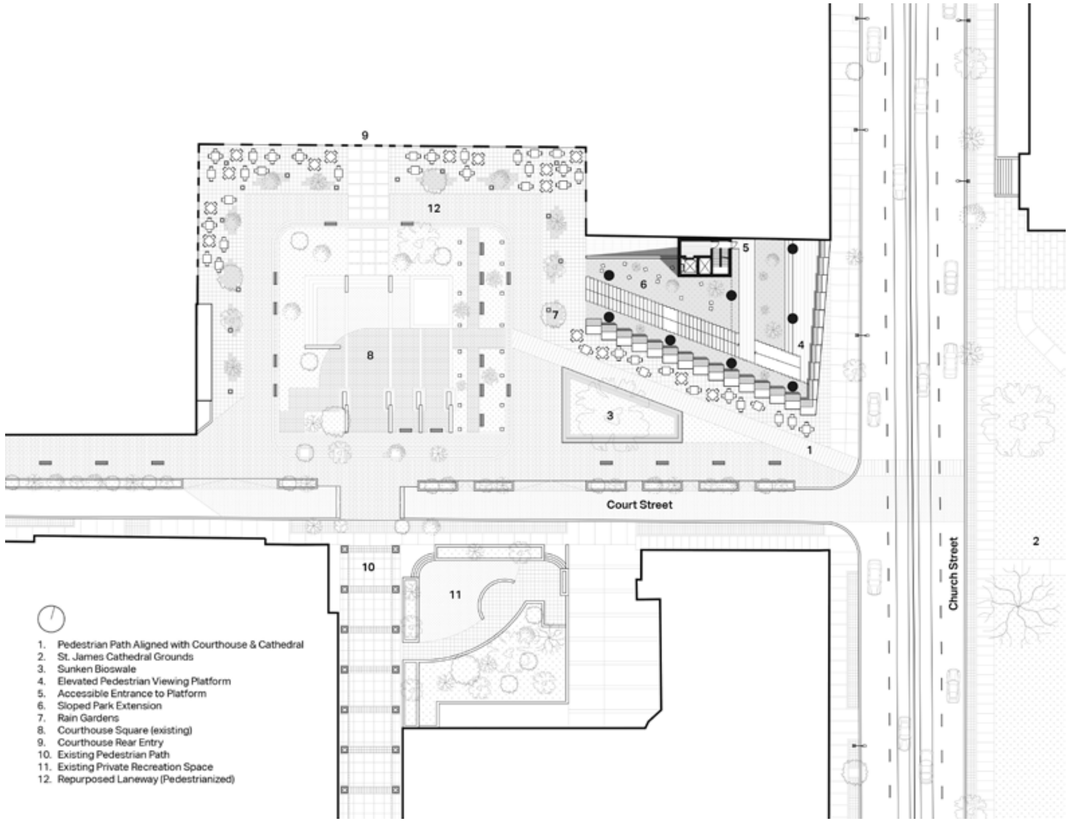
Project Team
James Goodeve

Project Description

The existing parking lot on the east side of Courthouse Square disrupts the spatial and visual continuity between Church Street and the park, undermining its potential as a vibrant public realm asset. This disconnect has led to low pedestrian engagement and a lack of recognition of the park as a meaningful public space. To address this, the lot must be reimagined as a civic gateway—an urban threshold that strengthens the park's connection to Church Street and Old Toronto, and invites users into the space. This transformation creates a defined pedestrian path that creates a physical link between the historic courthouse and St. James Cathedral, contributing to the narrative of Old Toronto that defines the surrounding neighborhood. The new landscaping and building on the site includes permeable paving, native plant species, universal access routes, and integrated wayfinding to help create a pedestrian-friendly, barrier-free space that fosters a strong connection to the existing public park and neighbourhood context.

The laneways surrounding Courthouse Square, currently dominated by back-of-house functions such as dumpsters and food waste storage, represent a further opportunity. These lanes could serve as an expansion of the park and pedestrian space. By creating a centralized waste disposal room within the new building proposal and repurposing the laneways as walkable public corridors, the project successfully creates additional space to be used for patios, vendors, and informal gatherings. This expanded space spills into the new building, with the park unfolding upwards to an elevated viewing platform directly between the courthouse and cathedral. This condition creates an explicit connection between the two landmarks, and allows for a unique pedestrian experience defined by the history of the neighbourhood.

The design also embraces heritage preservation in a meaningful and creative way. Storytelling elements and engravings are integrated into the new building, creating an educational journey for pedestrians to gain a better understanding and appreciation of old Toronto and the site. The new building is intended to house a museum and exhibition space dedicated to the history of the city of Toronto. Exhibits could include topics exploring the rich architecture, indigenous peoples, and multicultural history of Toronto that unfolded directly on the site and the surrounding context. Through this, residents and visitors alike have the opportunity to experience the history of Toronto in a space that establishes strong spatial, visual, and circulatory connections to some of the city's most relevant historic sites.



Sustainability Statement

This design project aims to extend the existing Courthouse Square park and create a new public space that prioritizes walkability and strengthens connections within the existing pedestrian realm.

The proposed building significantly enhances the existing green space within the square and contributes to biodiversity through a robust planting strategy that prioritizes native species, pollinator-friendly landscapes, and expanded tree canopy coverage. By incorporating a diverse selection of indigenous trees and vegetation into the landscaping and planters integrated into the facade, the project supports urban ecological networks, while also helping to sequester carbon and improve local air quality.

To combat the urban heat island effect, the design utilizes high-albedo paving materials in pedestrian zones, integrates ample shaded areas through tree planting and a covered pedestrian space, and introduces green infrastructure such as bioswales and rain gardens. These elements support stormwater management and promote climate resilience by mitigating runoff and reducing localized flooding risks.

Adaptation strategies include flexible open spaces designed for seasonal and community uses, as well as durable, low-impact materials selected for longevity and reduced environmental impact. Collectively, the design strengthens social and ecological resilience, creating a vibrant, inclusive public realm that responds to both present and future climate challenges.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

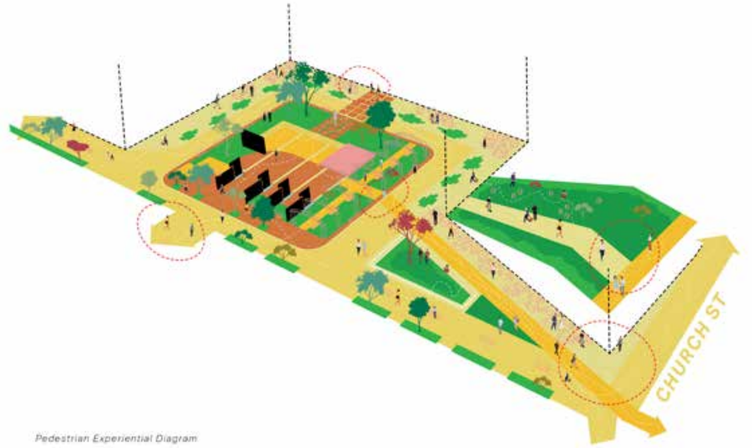
This design project is grounded in a deep recognition of the site's layered histories and aims to foster equity, reconciliation, and diversity by making these narratives visible, accessible, and celebrated in the public realm. The design establishes a strong spatial and symbolic connection to St. James Cathedral, a landmark with historical significance to Toronto's Black and immigrant communities. The cathedral held regular emancipation day celebrations in the 1800's and was an inclusive congregation located in one of the first multicultural neighbourhoods of the city.

Engravings along the new building's façade serve as a permanent, public storytelling element, commemorating these key events and history. The engravings also honour Indigenous histories through the recognition of the now-filled-in river on the site that once served as part of the transportation and fishing route for the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat nations. By reintroducing its memory into the site, the project creates a physical and interpretive space for reflection and education. This connection is further established through the intentional integration of Indigenous plant species throughout the site. This planting strategy not only supports ecological restoration and biodiversity, but also acts as a cultural gesture that acknowledges the deep relationship between Indigenous peoples and the land. These species, such as sweetgrass, cedar, wild bergamot, and black-eyed Susan, are integrated into rain gardens, pollinator zones, and informal gathering areas to support biodiversity while creating sensory-rich spaces that foster connection to land and place.

"Emancipation Day
In the 1800s, Emancipation Day was marked at St. James Cathedral in Toronto with solemn church services and community gatherings, celebrating the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. These events reflected the city's early Black communities' resilience, faith, and advocacy for freedom and social justice."

"Forgotten Rivers
This site was once home to a river that formed part of a vital network used by Indigenous communities for fishing, travel, and trade. The waterway connected settlements and supported traditional lifeways long before urban development reshaped the landscape."

"Diverse Communities
Old Toronto has long been a gateway for immigrants, who shaped the city's identity through diverse cultures, languages, and traditions. From 19th century Irish and Italian settlers to later waves from Asia, the Caribbean, and beyond, their contributions built vibrant communities and enriched the city's social and economic fabric."



Pedestrian Experiential Diagram

MOMENTS OF URBAN ACTIVATION

1. A couple looking for dinner spot the patio seating leading into the park and decide to explore further.
2. A commuter headed to the train detours into the park, enticed by the intriguing facade and activity beyond.
3. Dogwalkers stray from their regular Church Street route to wander further away from the busy road.
4. A nearby office worker met with a friend for lunch on the patio after seeing it on the way to work.
5. An avid artist sketches a view of the uniquely framed church from the elevated terrace.
6. Children run along the hill while they wait for their parents to receive their cafe order below.
7. A pedestrian pauses across the street, as they catch the reflection of the park from the mirrored ceiling above the terrace.

PARKDALE PEOPLE'S PALACE
240-250 Dunn Avenue

Project Team
Matthew Dlugosz

Project Description

In recent decades, Canada's church buildings have been steadily declining in number and use due to the increasing secularization of society and the diminished role of Christianity in the country. Considering the history of Toronto as a 'city of churches', the future of its church buildings is an important facet of its identity. Bearing in mind that churches are community-oriented places, and that demands for social infrastructure continue to grow, this thesis asks: how can a church building in disrepair become more socially relevant to its community through architectural adaptation?

This thesis project builds on the existing needs of the neighbourhood of South Parkdale to suggest the transformation of Bonar-Parkdale Presbyterian Church (BPPC) into a community food hub. Situated within the gentrifying neighbourhood of South Parkdale, various community initiatives have been set in motion since its official designation as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area in the 2020 Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy. For example, the Parkdale People's Economy published a report in 2016 that outlined a collective vision for developing social infrastructure, encouraging cultural development, and enhancing food security. One recommendation from the report was the redevelopment of a church into a community food hub—an idea that serves as the inspiration for this thesis.

The design proposal, named Parkdale People's Palace, remodels the existing church building, the ground floor of the adjacent seniors' apartments, and adjacent outdoor spaces into a communal ensemble of supportive and flexible spaces geared towards the growing, learning, cooking, eating, and sharing of food. The existing outdoor front yard driveway is reimagined as a public plaza where farmer's markets could occur. The basement contains a food co-op, which is closely connected to a commercially equipped kitchen for preparing meals for large events and food donations. The ground floor is subdivided into a series of flexible spaces that can be used for programs such as informal daycare and learning. Behind the church, a community garden with raised beds connects the church more directly to the nearby school, enabling greater engagement with the community, while the front of the building is reimagined as a co-op café, drawing in passersby. Finally, the existing sanctuary is transformed into a multipurpose atrium that can be used for celebrations, indoor markets, large communal dining, or co-working.

In all, this project shows how a waning church site might tread among uncertainty and develop new meaning within its existing neighbourhood as a revitalized community asset.

Sustainability Statement

The project advances towards sustainability in several ways.

Firstly, the project is one of building reuse. It maintains most of the existing structural elements, such as the walls, roof, and envelope, while tactically removing parts of them to enable greater function, accessibility, and interior environment. Particular attention is given to heritage preservation, such as with the retention of the larger stained-glass windows and the organ.

Secondly, where new architectural elements are added, the project tries to use wood member elements where possible. Wood is a renewable material with embodied carbon, which helps advance sustainable goals. The introduction of spaces designed to accommodate flexible programming helps reduce the construct new spaces as different user groups can share the building according to their needs.

Thirdly, the design improves the operational emissions and energy by introducing more opportunities for natural daylight and ventilation through the introduction of operable skylights. The lower reliance on lighting and ventilation by electrical and mechanical means helps reduce the energy required by the building.

Fourthly, pedestrian infrastructure is improved with universally accessible routes into the building, with adequate weather protection provided for pedestrian comfort.

Lastly, the design introduces new trees in the communal outdoor spaces, while the communal garden is based on a low carbon alternative of stabilized gravel. This helps with mitigating urban heat island effect and enhances air quality.

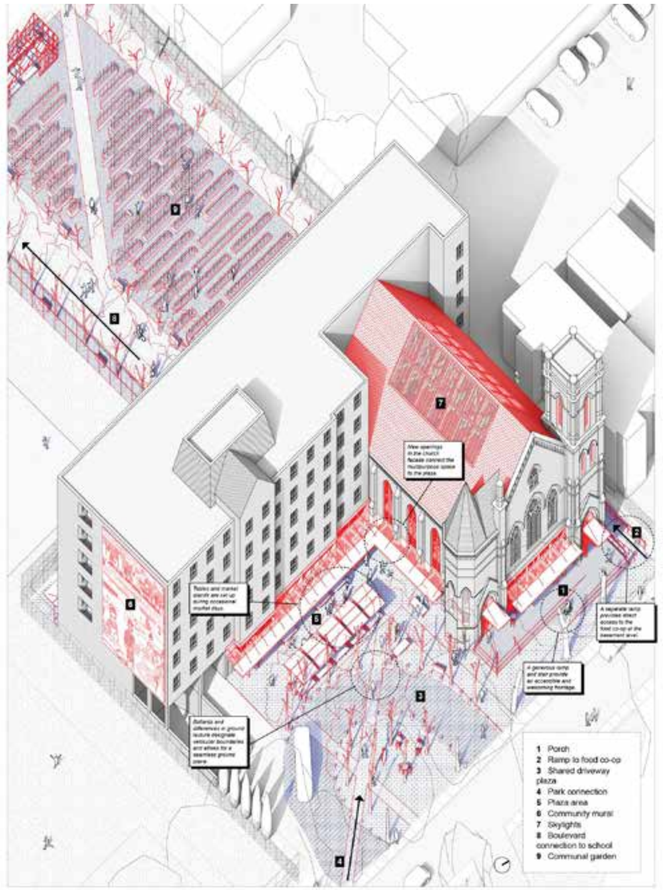
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

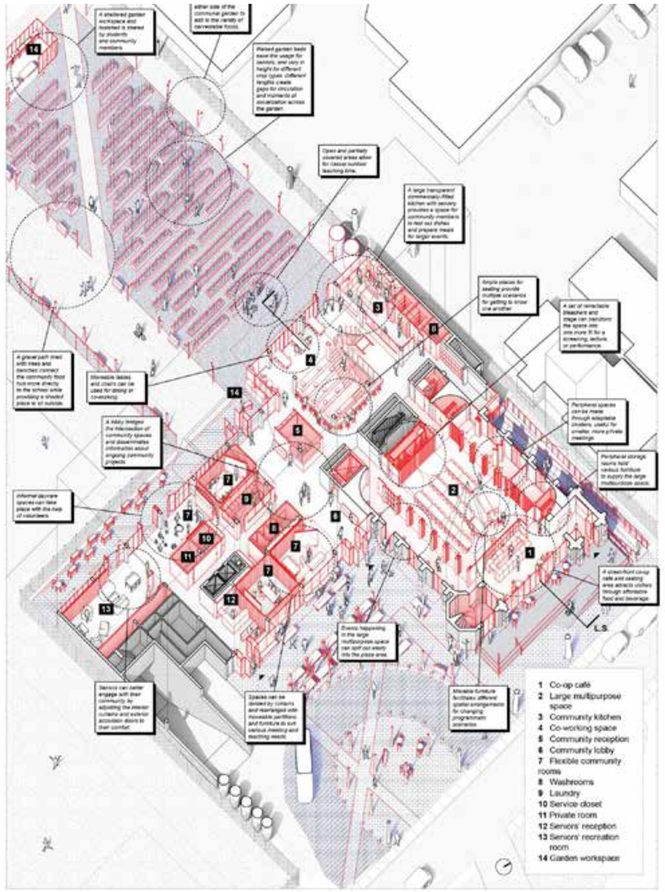
The project tries to promote equity, reconciliation, and diversity in a few ways.

Firstly, it introduces programs that respond to local needs of the neighbourhood, such as food security, work opportunities, and cultural development. A commercially-fitted kitchen enables cooking for large social dining events and food donations; a teaching kitchen and hydroponics area enable learning around growing and preparing food; flexible rooms enable informal activities for seniors and children alike, such as daycare and learning; the basement food co-op allows neighbourhood users to contribute to a collective grocery; the reimagined public plaza invites food markets and public events to take place; a community garden with raised beds connects the church more directly to the nearby school, enabling greater engagement with the community; a co-op café fronts the building, encouraging social mingling and interaction with neighbours; and the revitalized sanctuary (multipurpose space) can be used for celebrations, indoor markets, large communal dining, or casual co-working. These new spaces can enable groups such as the Parkdale People's economy to provide volunteer opportunities, bring together diverse local stakeholders to discuss land development, or foster experiential learning opportunities between various cultural groups.

Secondly, the design introduces multiple accessible routes to encourage universal access for the elderly and the disabled, addressing both equity and diversity.

Thirdly, reimagining the church for greater communal use by all populations can be considered as a positive response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, acknowledging the tenuous relationship between the church and Indigenous peoples in the past and attempting to right any wrongs.


1 Porch
2 Ramp to food co-op
3 Shared driveway plaza
4 Park connection
5 Plaza area
6 Community mural
7 Skylights
8 Boulevard connection to school
9 Communal garden


1 Co-op café
2 Large multipurpose space
3 Community kitchen
4 Co-working space
5 Community reception
6 Community lobby
7 Flexible community rooms
8 Washrooms
9 Laundry
10 Service closet
11 Private room
12 Seniors' reception
13 Seniors' recreation room
14 Garden workspace

REED PARK
318 Queens Quay West

Project Team
Alison Gilchrist
Rory Labelle
Faustine Liu
Andrew Marumoto
Lindsay Taylor

Project Description

The proposed Reed Park sits at a junction between the densely urban inner Toronto and the airy waterfront of Lake Ontario in a unique position that comprises of Peter Street Basin. Prior to the industrialization and subsequent urbanization of the waterfront, one of the largest wetlands in eastern Canada, Ashbridges Bay Marsh, sat just east of the site. The sacrifice of this significant natural system–in order to serve the needs of the city–deserves more than just recognition. Peter Street Basin provides a unique opportunity to pay homage to the natural, marshy form that preceded the site while contributing towards a modern, holistic understanding of the city's needs; healthy regional ecosystems. Reed Park welcomes users to explore the stream-like paths around islands of native vegetation, flowing river systems, and dynamic biodiversity that is reminiscent of a marsh wetland. Whimsical features help instill a sense of relaxed playfulness that encourages users to be present and rediscover their inspirations while providing all the amenities expected of a public park. Reed Park contrasts the surrounding rigid urban form whilst unifying the waterfront, city and existing public parks, demonstrating how this harmony can and should exist.

Sustainability Statement

Wetlands are understood to play a critical role in ecosystem recovery efforts through the improvement of water quality, the provision of wildlife habitat and vital nutrients, and as an element in climate change resilience. The proposed gardens and plantings support wildlife and reduce urban heat island effect, improve air quality, and improve public perception of an area, fostering community stewardship. The grassy spaces are to be planted with native grasses that play a more significant role in the ecosystem and rely on less resources for maintenance than typical lawn grass. The amount of impervious surfaces are minimized to improve stormwater quality and reliance on winter maintenance (salt) and use a light colour to reflect, rather than absorb, heat from the sun; this and previously listed features result in a over-all cooling effect from the park. Finally, the park replaces an existing parking lot, supporting the efforts of reshaping Toronto to better support pedestrians, not their vehicles, and the subsequent environmental benefits from such a movement.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Reed park was designed to be accessible and inclusive of all residents and visitors of Toronto, including Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving groups, with the intent of connecting users with nature and Toronto's natural heritage. Reed Park would promote user wellness and community engagement through the installation of public art pieces, seasonal markets and performances. Guidance from Indigenous groups on native plantings that support the efforts in reviving a marsh-like ecosystem would be an asset to the park's goals and would aim to promote reconciliation of relationships through partnerships and awareness. Public engagement sessions would be a welcomed, real world step in ensuring Reed Park's design is considering the needs and wants of all users, especially seeking voices that don't have "loud" or large representation.


PAVILION AND VIEWING AREA PERSPECTIVE
1:200
PLAN VIEW
ROOF STRUCTURE
SEATING AREA
SEATING AREA
BERM LEADING TO PAVILION
INCLUSIVE PLAY AREA
BINOCULARS
VIEWING AREA
WETLAND VEGETATION
ISLAND
ELEVATED WALKWAYS
NATURALIZED BASIN
FENCING
WOODEN DECK
DOG PARK

LITTLE JAMAICA MULTI-FLEX

Eglinton Avenue West (Little Jamica)

Project Team
Anusha Prakash

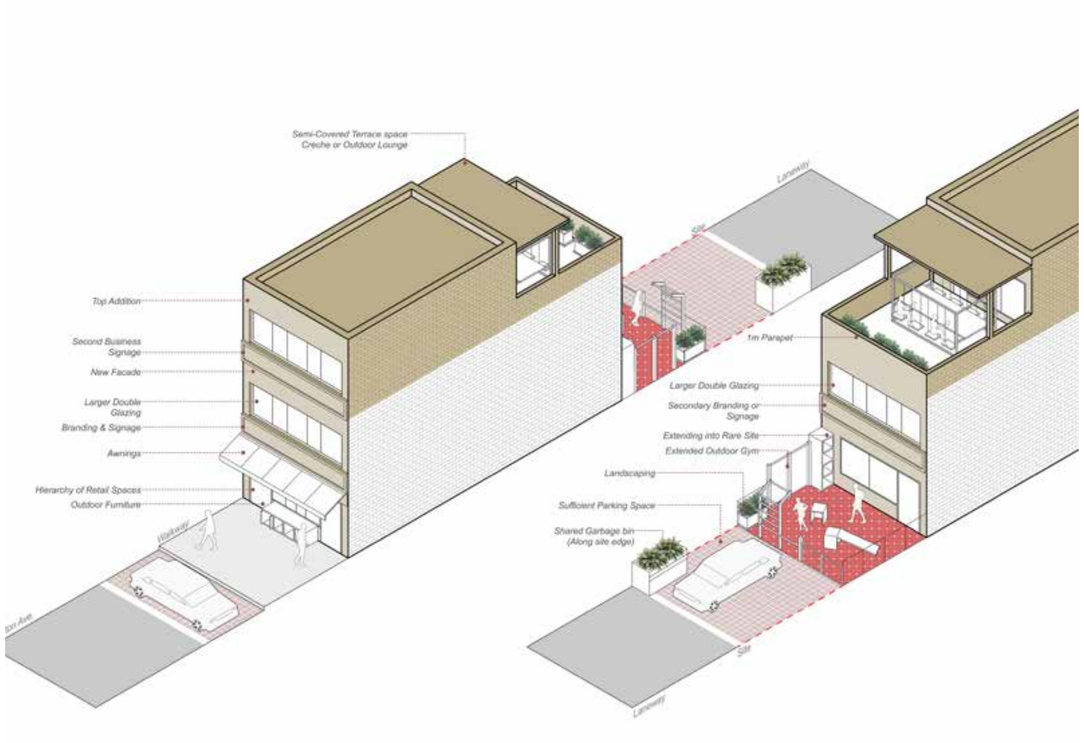
Project Description

Eglinton Avenue West, known as Little Jamaica, is a vibrant and culturally significant corridor in Toronto. The area has long been a hub for Black and Caribbean communities and is now home to a wide range of ethnic groups, businesses, and cultural institutions that reflect its deep multicultural identity. Over time, many small businesses in the area have adapted to economic pressures and cultural practices by taking on secondary activities, resulting in a multiplicity of use within retail spaces.

The Little Jamaica Multi-FLEX project explores how retail, street, and open spaces in the neighbourhood can better support these dynamic and layered uses. This initiative advocates for embracing flexible and multi-functional uses of retail space as a strategy to promote neighbourhood stability, preserve cultural heritage, and mitigate the displacement of small businesses and residents. This project explores a set of design guidelines tailored to local business owners. These guidelines offer creative ways to animate and activate the remnant or transitional spaces around storefronts through adaptable street furniture, flexible façades, and spatial interventions that can be adjusted depending on the activity. These interventions aim to support a wide range of uses, such as hosting community events, informal gatherings, markets, pop-ups, or celebrations.

This approach fosters a more vibrant and inclusive streetscape that reflects the community's diverse needs and traditions. Encouraging mixed and flexible use can make the area more engaging for both locals and visitors. It enhances the public realm, creates opportunities for economic resilience, and reinforces the role of local businesses as cultural anchors.

Ultimately, the Little Jamaica Multi-FLEX project is about revitalizing multi-functional spaces for small business. It celebrates the resourcefulness of local entrepreneurs and the richness of the neighbourhood's cultural identity, while offering practical tools to adapt to change. By designing with flexibility and community in mind, the project aims to contribute to a more equitable and enduring future for Little Jamaica.



Sustainability Statement

This project incorporates a range of building and streetscape interventions aimed at addressing the dual climate and biodiversity emergencies, while aligning with the performance targets of the Toronto Green Standard and broader City of Toronto sustainability strategies.

At the building level, the design integrates green roofs and rooftop heat pumps, supporting both energy efficiency and seasonal adaptability. The heat pumps can be used to warm attached greenhouse structures, promoting year-round food production on-site. Terraces are creatively designed as multi-functional spaces that allow for urban agriculture, enabling a local, low-emission food system where vegetables can be grown and sold directly on-site, minimizing transportation-related emissions and supporting a circular economy.

Other building features include dedicated bike storage to encourage active transportation, and efficient waste management that integrates beautified garbage enclosures and strategically planned laneway access to reduce service overlap and improve operations. Ground-level materials are proposed to be permeable, allowing for easy maintenance while supporting stormwater infiltration and reducing runoff.

At the street level, the project proposes Bio-Retention Curb Extensions designed to integrate with existing drainage infrastructure. These interventions filter and manage stormwater runoff while contributing to urban biodiversity and enhancing streetscape ecology. Should bike lanes be incorporated along Eglinton Avenue West, the bio-retention elements are designed to buffer and capture runoff before it enters the storm system, reducing the urban heat island effect and mitigating localized flooding.

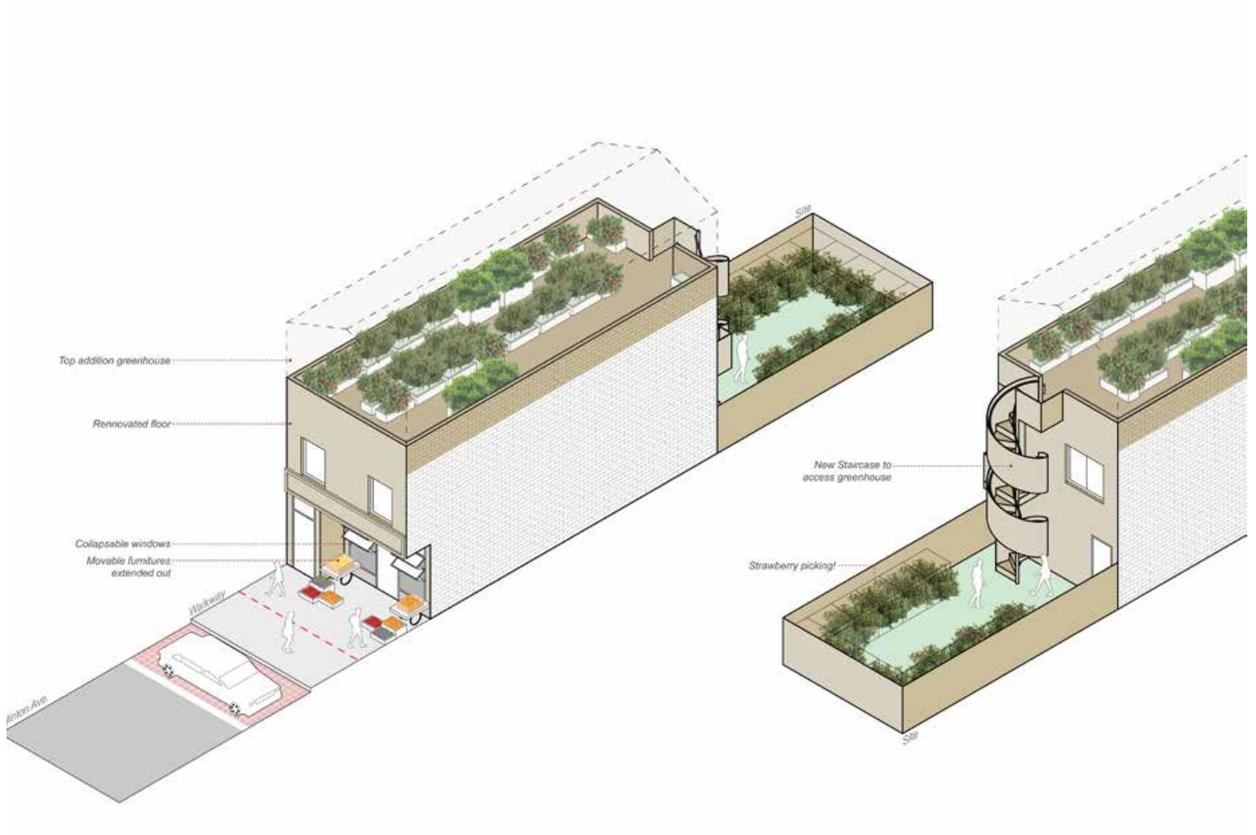
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The project is rooted in the understanding that equity, cultural preservation, and community self-determination are critical components of meaningful and inclusive urban design. Centered in Little Jamaica and Oakwood Village, the project amplifies the voices, histories, and contributions of Toronto's Black and Caribbean communities, who have played a vital role in shaping the social and cultural fabric of the city.

Today, the neighbourhood is home to a mix of diverse ethnic groups, whose businesses are closely interwoven with longstanding Black-owned establishments. However, the construction of the LRT and related road closures significantly impacted many of these small businesses, forcing several to shut down. With the arrival of the new LRT station, rents have risen sharply, placing further strain on local entrepreneurs and increasing the risk of displacement.

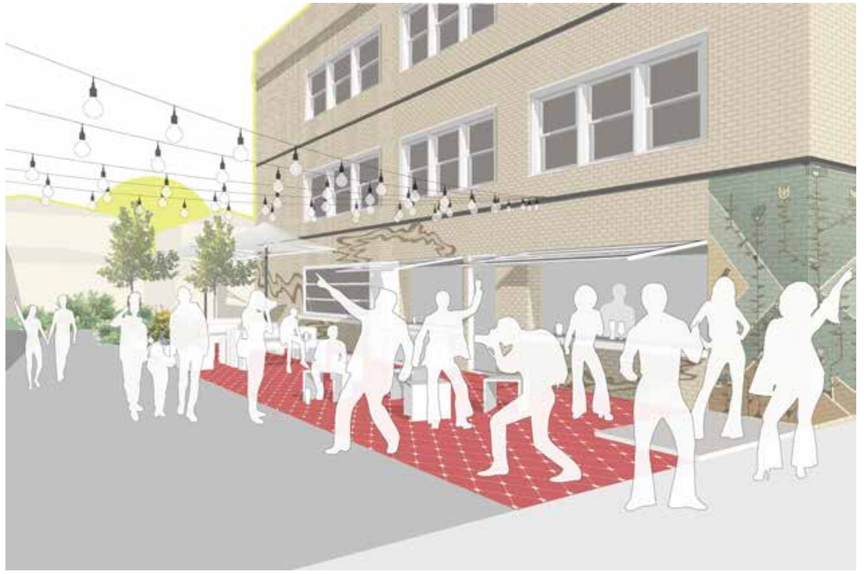
Through a multi-scalar approach, the project recognizes and celebrates Black-owned businesses not only as economic contributors but as cultural anchors within the neighbourhood. These businesses are often intergenerational, locally rooted, and deeply embedded in the rhythms of community life. By intentionally foregrounding the lived experiences of business owners, artists, and residents, the design process ensured that their stories, values, and aspirations meaningfully informed spatial strategies ranging from micro-level, street-front interventions to broader urban narratives that reinforce neighbourhood identity and belonging.

From the integration of music, food, faith, and visual art into public spaces to the activation of laneways and underused parcels as community assets, the design encourages cultural programming and economic development that reflects the diverse needs of local residents. It also embeds resilience by designing for multiplicity and adaptability, ensuring spaces can evolve alongside the community.




Ruth's Gift & Variety
Wash King Laundromat


More than a Hair Cut



WYCHWOOD MOVING HERITAGE HAVEN

Artscape Wychwood Barns, 601 Christie Street

Project Team
Seungkyu Lee

Project Description

Wychwood Moving Heritage Haven is a speculative retrofit proposal situated at the Wychwood Barns in Toronto, aiming to bridge ecological restoration and cultural memory. Inspired by the site's transit heritage and community-centered evolution, the project reimagines mobility as an ecological system—where movement becomes restoration. A central tram-shaped modular garden travels along a glowing ecological track, powered by solar panels, representing "moving heritage" in both literal and symbolic terms.

Surrounding this track is a suite of community-activated micro-systems. The "Regeneration Zone" collects stormwater and nourishes native holographic vegetation throughout winter, with visible carbon sink metrics (0.3T/yr) and soil data displayed on digital panels. A Pollinator Hub, supporting 32 species, connects to the vegetation system through glowing bee-paths visible under snow—symbolizing biodiversity persistence across seasons.

The former streetcar barn becomes an "AR Memory Wall" where visitors can access past ecological stories via QR codes. An adjacent green art wall, built with recycled brick and community mosaic work, celebrates the diverse voices of children and elders who built the neighborhood. Smart thermal seating, bioswale upgrades, and storm-adaptive tram logic highlight seasonal resilience.

Rather than designing a utopian future, the proposal amplifies existing cultural identities and ecological knowledge through augmented infrastructure. The site becomes a living classroom for circular systems, equitable cohabitation, and urban resilience—integrating data, ritual, and memory in spatial dialogue.

Sustainability Statement

The project actively incorporates sustainability across energy, ecology, and climate adaptation. Key design elements include passive water harvesting, bioswale retrofits, and circular reuse systems. The tram garden modules are powered by rooftop solar panels, supported by low-energy LED tracking and an IoT-based operation system that adapts to seasonal change, stopping in place under icy conditions.

The proposal incorporates winter sustainability through snow-friendly materials, stormwater absorption into permeable surfaces, and heat-responsive seating using compost thermal loops. Metrics such as “Carbon Sink: 0.3T/yr” and “Heat Recovery Efficiency: 72%” are visible and traceable through interactive data interfaces.

In line with future-forward resilience, green infrastructure becomes an adaptive public layer: pollinator corridors, urban farming, and ecological memory walls turn everyday urban functions into regenerative cycles. The inclusion of smart metrics like TEDI, EUI, and GHG intensity is not only to track performance but to educate the public on their shared environmental impact. This turns Wychwood Barns into a demonstrative node for sustainable futures embedded in local community values.

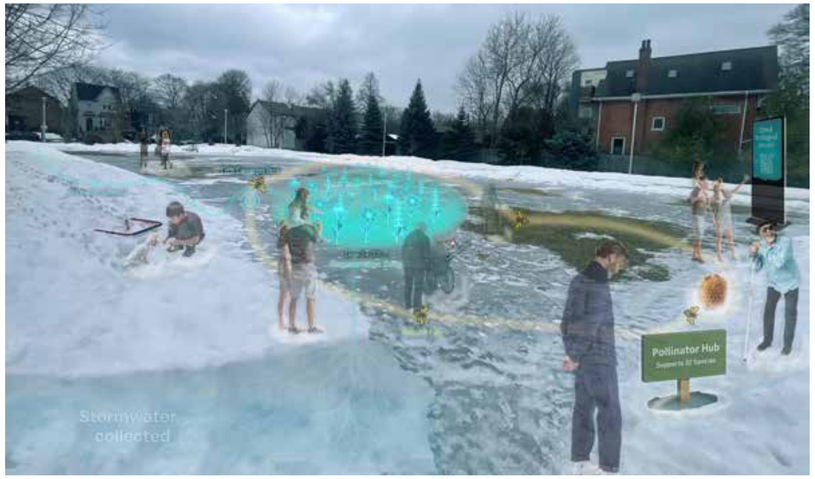
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

The project foregrounds equity by embedding community voices into both form and process. It draws on the history of Wychwood Barns as a commons where Black, Indigenous, and immigrant residents historically gathered—making this history visible through public mosaics, green artwalls, and multilingual ecological signage.

Participation is not tokenistic but embedded: local children's handprints line the mural base, and the smart ecological tram reflects future infrastructure designed for all mobilities—including seniors and wheelchair users. Programming includes digital story-sharing portals in AR, allowing intergenerational and cross-cultural narratives to define the site's evolving memory.

To strengthen reconciliation, the design engages Indigenous values by prioritizing cyclical regeneration, non-human agency (pollinators, soil systems), and land-water connectivity. Though speculative, the proposal was guided by contemporary Indigenous frameworks of "more-than-human rights" and the right to remain resilient on ancestral grounds.

Equity here is measured not just in access, but in authorship—those who use, shape, and inherit the space are also the ones who co-create it.


Pollinator Hub
Stormwater
collected

QUEER ARRIVAL PARK
33 Isabella Street

Project Team
Simon Liao

Project Description

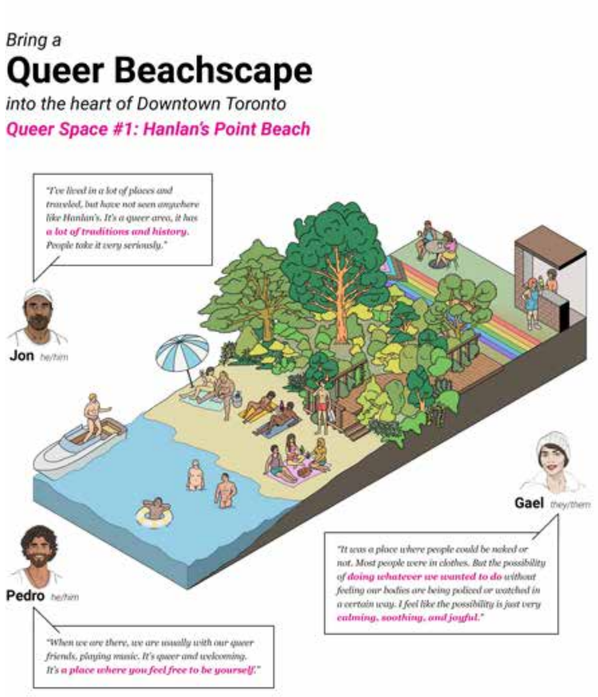
Queer Arrival Park is a hypothetical public space envisioned for Toronto's Church-Wellesley Village. It provides an inclusive, accessible, and community-driven environment for both structured programming and spontaneous gatherings, while celebrating the diversity of Toronto's queer and immigrant communities.

This project started with an ethnographic study of Queer and Trans People of Colour (QTPOC) newcomers in Toronto. Adopting the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology through 3 phases of community engagement – surveys, interviews, and focus groups, this research explored how QTPOC newcomers navigate Toronto's multicultural landscape. Findings reveal the structural barriers these newcomers face, and identify the critical need for accessible and inclusive social infrastructure that cultivates belonging and fosters connections. In response, this project invited community members to co-design a park that reflects their identities and meets their social and spatial needs.

The proposed park is situated along Isabella St between Yonge St and Church St, on the underutilized lawns and driveways in front of 3 post-war apartment buildings. Located within the Church-Wellesley Village and adjacent to the new Yonge Street Linear Park (part of the Clock Tower Trail), the site acts as both a local thoroughfare and a gateway into the queer character area. Its architectural and demographic diversity, coupled with strong urban connectivity, make it an ideal location for fostering cross-neighbourhood exchange and enhancing the public realm.

The design reimagines a "queer beachscape" in the heart of the city. Through fieldwork, two local queer spaces - Hanlan's Point Beach and Glad Day Bookshop – emerged as powerful sites of collective memory. The design translates their spatial and sociocultural conditions onto an urban street, reinforcing historical queer spaces and their significance to newcomers and beyond. Specifically, the park's layered spatial arrangement echoes Hanlan's natural separation of water, beach, and bushes; while the central plaza, anchored by the Rainbow Tower, honours Glad Day's legacy of queer resistance and community-building. Additional design features and materiality were developed collaboratively with community members through a design charrette. The final design outcome represents a collective vision shaped by the active participation and contribution of QTPOC newcomers.

This proposal advances Toronto's Tower Renewal initiatives by transforming underutilized ground floor space into sustainable and functional public realms. It also reinforces POPS guidelines in identifying and activating private space for public benefit. Ultimately, this project demonstrates how participatory design can achieve equitable urban design excellence, while empowering marginalized communities to shape their future built environment.



Sustainability Statement

This project achieves a high level of sustainability by implementing low-impact development practices and incorporating green infrastructure throughout the site, aligning with the Toronto Green Standard.

First, the park addresses climate adaptation through stormwater management. This project proposes a long stretch of bioswales along Isabella St to treat and infiltrate runoff from adjacent roads, hardscapes, and buildings' drainage systems. These bioswales improve runoff quality, reduce pressure on the city's storm sewer system, and support passive irrigation for planting beds.

Second, the planting strategy prioritizes biodiversity and native ecology. Existing trees are preserved, and conventional lawn grass is replaced by carefully selected native species. A comprehensive sun exposure study was conducted to inform plant choices suitable for shaded, partially shaded, wet, and drought-tolerant conditions. A variety of wildflowers were planted to ensure visual interest throughout the seasons. These landscape interventions enhance both the aesthetics and the ecological performance of the public realm.

Third, the material palette emphasizes sustainability, safety, and durability. Walk paths use eco-friendly permeable pavers to maximize infiltration, thus retaining soil moisture and supporting plant roots to prevent erosion. Individual Meeting Nooks and the Central Plaza feature recycled rubber flooring for comfort and design flexibility. This flooring reduces the project's carbon footprint, offering a safe and accessible surface for diverse users, and withstand heavy foot traffic during events.

Beyond sustainability, this project actively promotes biodiversity to enhance the quality and quantity of urban habitats. Both the bioswales and gardens provide refuge and food sources for migratory birds and pollinators. Particularly, the bioswales are planted with Swamp Milkweeds, critical for the lifecycle of monarch butterflies. As part of the Yonge Street Linear Park, this project contributes to a larger green corridor, enhancing connectivity between ecological core areas and supporting climate regulation while mitigating the urban heat island effect.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

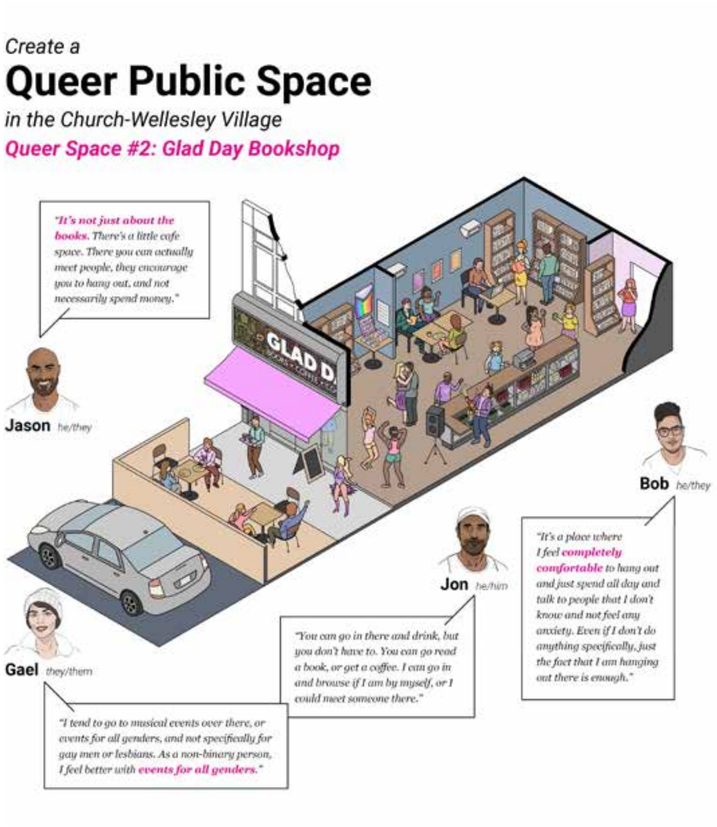
Despite Toronto's reputation for diversity and inclusivity, many immigrants, particularly Queer and Trans People of Colour (QTPOC) newcomers, face significant challenges in social integration and civic participation, including a lower sense of belonging and experiencing sexuality-based discrimination. This project employs the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology to foreground intersectionality and prioritize the voices of QTPOC newcomers throughout both research and design. Through 3 phases of community engagement – surveys, interviews, and focus groups, this project positions them as primary holders of knowledge and promotes "queer spatial justice" to challenge colonial practices in urban design.

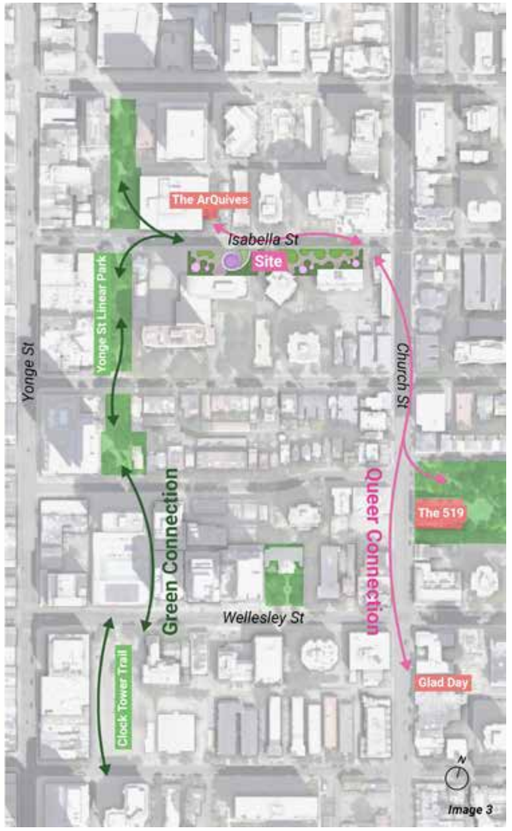
Through multi-faceted outreach across Toronto, this project recruited 156 survey respondents, conducted 8 in-depth interviews, and held 2 focus groups – all participants were racialized immigrants who landed in Canada within the past decade and self-identified as queer.

The surveys collected quantitative data on post-migration experiences, perceptions of public space, and social needs, thus establishing the project's objectives. The interviews gathered lived experiences navigating Toronto's urban environment, identifying meaningful sites and further developing design strategies. Based on these findings, a preliminary design was developed.

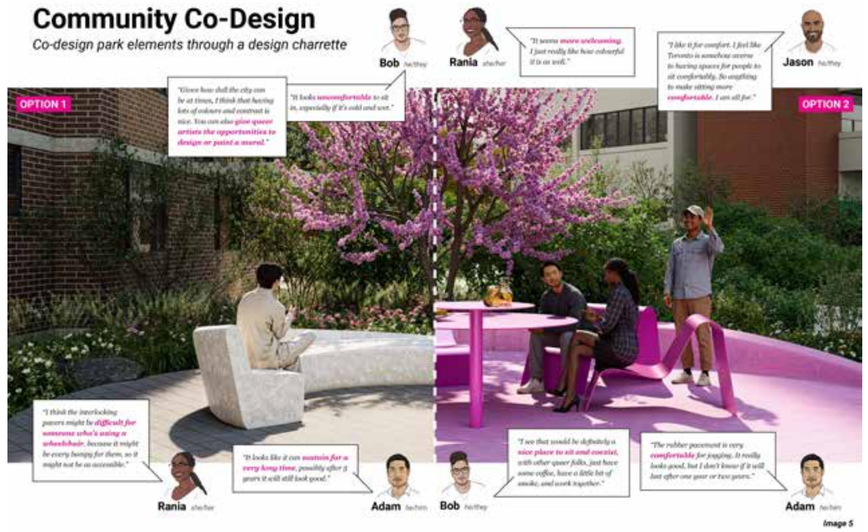
The focus groups were formatted as design charrettes where participants reviewed and co-designed the park. They engaged in interactive discussions and shared personal perspectives to inform design decisions. This iterative process positioned participants as active contributors, leveraging their knowledge to shape the design outcomes. The final design was revised to incorporate feedback from all participants, ensuring a collective vision that encapsulates the aspirations and needs of QTPOC newcomers. Based on participant evaluations, the sessions were well-received and fostered a comfortable environment for collaboration and idea exchange.

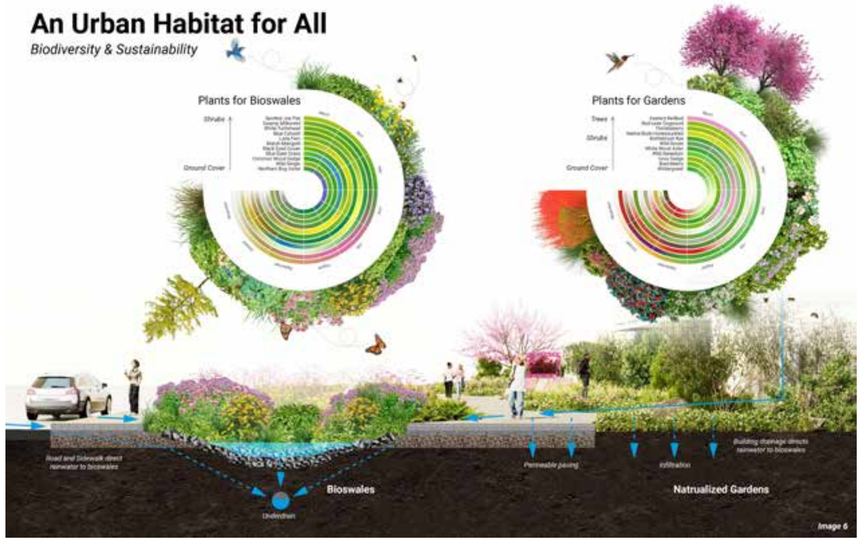
Overall, this methodology fosters an ethical, inclusive, and community-driven research and design environment. By amplifying the voices of equity-deserving groups and promoting their agency, this project provides an effective community engagement model in urban design practices, especially in consultation with traditionally hard-to-reach groups.





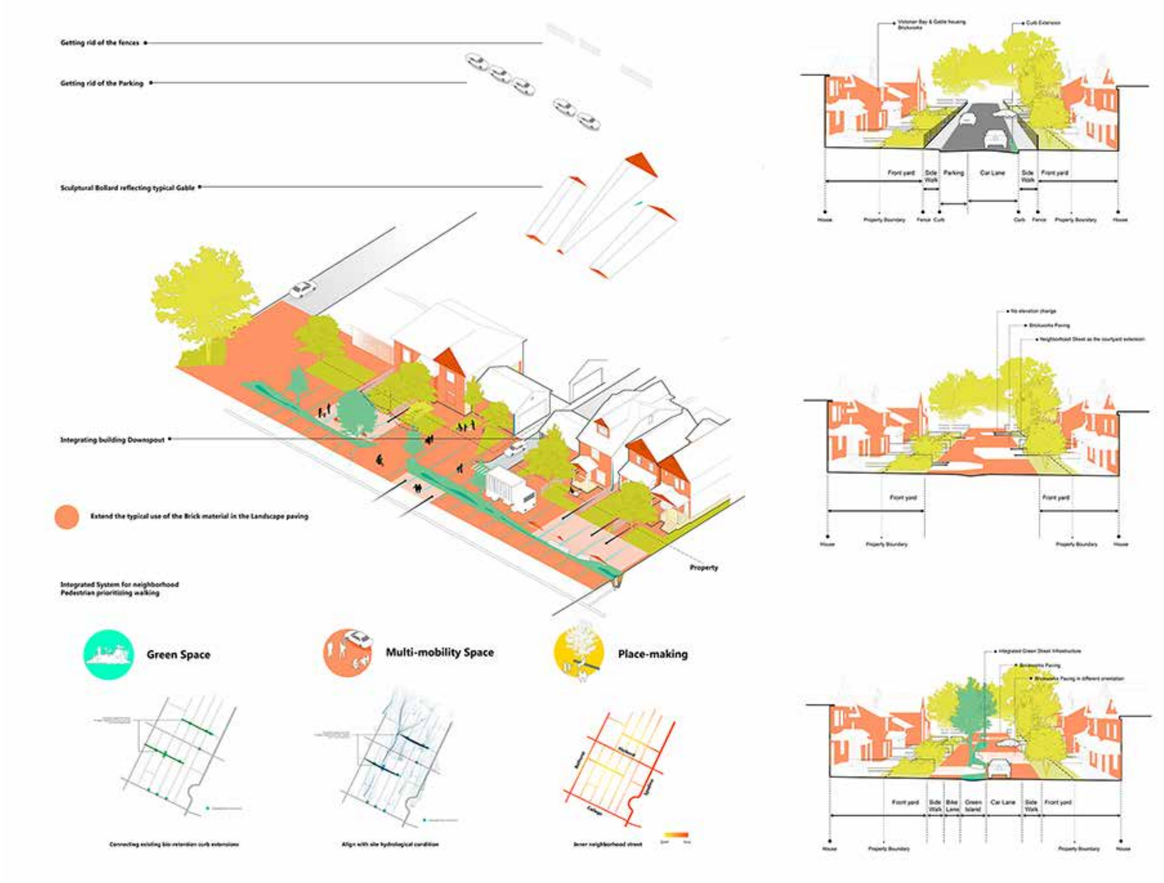

Queer Arrival Park
Spatializing the lived experiences of QTPOC newcomers
Collective
To Yonge St
Celebration
Communal
Intimate
Individual
To Church St
Isabella St
1 Plaza
2 Rainbow Tower
3 Meeting Nooks
4 Open Lawn
5 Bioswales
6 Naturalized Gardens
Pedro he/him
Jason he/they
David he/him
"The location is a great meeting point. It wouldn't be a destination unless there are activities or events, or vendors selling ice cream or coffee."
"I think the location is ideal. It's actually so close to me and on my usual walk towards the Village anyway, so I would probably be frequenting the area a lot."
"I live in one of these buildings, and sometimes in summer, I just wanna go down and sit and have some sunlight, but it's quite hard as there are no benches or anything proper. I can definitely see how it would be nice to have some use to this green space that's in front of the buildings."
Water
Sand
Bushes
Bioswales
Pathway
Gardens
Hanlan's spatial organization → Carve out queer spaces → Natrualization
Image 4


Community Co-Design
Co-design park elements through a design charrette
Bob he/they
Rania she/her
Jason he/they
"It looks uncomfortable to sit in, especially if it's cold and wet."
"It seems more welcoming. I just really like how colourful it is as well."
"I like it for comfort. I feel like Toronto is somehow averse to having spaces for people to sit comfortably. So anything to make sitting more comfortable. I am all for."
"Given how dull the city can be at times, I think that having lots of colours and contrast is nice. You can also give queer artists the opportunities to design or paint a mural."
OPTION 1
OPTION 2
"I think the interlocking pavers might be difficult for someone who's using a wheelchair, because it might be very bumpy for them, so it might not be as accessible."
"It looks like it can maintain for a very long time, possibly after 2 years it will still look good."
"I see that would be definitely a nice place to sit and socialize, with other queer folks, just have some coffee, have a little bit of smoke, and work together."
"The rubber pavement is very comfortable for jogging. It really looks good, but I don't know if it will last after one year or two years."
Rania she/her
Adam he/him
Bob he/they
Adam he/him
Image 5


An Urban Habitat for All
Biodiversity & Sustainability
Plants for Bioswales
Plants for Gardens
Shrubs
Ground Cover
Trees
Road and Sidewalk direct rainwater to bioswales
Permeable paving
Infiltration
Building drainage directs rainwater to bioswales
Bioswales
Natrualized Gardens
Underdrain
Image 6

CURB TO CITY- PARK STREETS

Harbord Village



Project Description

The project is to rethink the City's current approach to implementing Green Street and Green Infrastructure (GI) from the lens of landscape urbanism, moving away from considering GI as interventions in a conventional urban fabric, and instead leveraging the goals the City has for ecosystem services to transform urban design. This proposal envisions streets as holistic, multifunctional spaces that can simultaneously support ecological systems, social life, and neighborhood identity. Harbord Village serves as a crucial case study for testing this paradigm shift. With its historical fabric, tight-knit residential community, and absence of traditional park space, the neighborhood embodies both the challenges and opportunities of reimagining local streets as shared public places. By repurposing underutilized public right-of-way areas and merging them with semi-private front yards, the proposal transforms the boundary between home and street into a flexible, shared landscape. In doing so, it supports a new "street-park" typology—where community gathering, play, and stewardship co-exist with stormwater management, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

The design strategy operates at multiple scales. At the urban scale, the project introduces an added network of East-West connector streets across downtown Toronto, layering neighborhood-scale connectivity and park functions onto the existing TOCore framework.

At the street scale, it proposes five key transformations: the removal of parking, conversion to one-way traffic, removal of sidewalks and curbs, resurfacing for traffic calming, and the addition of furnishings and tools to support communal use and care. Material continuity, architectural referencing, and the inclusion of flexible-use features all contribute to a sense of place rooted in the neighborhood's character.

Ultimately, this proposal is not just about improving infrastructure—it is about fostering cultural change. It encourages a shift from passive ownership of private property to active engagement with the public realm. It suggests that streets can be more than thoroughfares—they can be parks, social spaces, and ecological corridors. By positioning residents as co-stewards alongside the City, the design redefines the role of the neighborhood in maintaining and shaping its environment.

In doing so, this proposal presents a replicable, scalable vision for transforming Toronto's downtown neighborhoods. It offers a model where green infrastructure becomes an invitation for social participation, placemaking, and long-term environmental care—ensuring that green streets are not only built, but truly lived in and loved.

Project Team
Xi Bai

Sustainability Statement

This project aligns with the City of Toronto's long-term environmental goals by integrating key principles from the Toronto Green Standard (TGS), the Green Streets Technical Guidelines, and the Parkland Strategy, while addressing the city's 40% tree canopy cover target. It reimagines neighborhood streets not only as corridors for movement but as critical ecological and social infrastructure.

By replacing impervious surfaces with continuous bioswales, permeable paving, and expanded soft landscaping, the proposal supports the TGS objectives for stormwater management, urban heat island mitigation, and biodiversity enhancement. These elements are designed to capture, infiltrate, and cleanse stormwater at the source, reducing pressure on Toronto's aging sewer systems during extreme weather events and aligning with Wet Weather Flow Management Guidelines.

The strategy also supports the city's Green Streets vision by embedding green infrastructure directly into the public realm, where it provides ecosystem services while improving the everyday experience of residents. Tree planting within the public and extended semi-private zones contributes to the city's 40% urban tree canopy goal, with planting conditions designed for long-term health and resilience.

Furthermore, the design promotes adaptive reuse of underutilized streetscape space, minimizing embodied carbon through selective demolition and maximizing carbon sequestration through new vegetation. The introduction of co-stewardship models between residents and the City enhances the long-term viability of these spaces by addressing maintenance, fostering care, and encouraging community-based ecological literacy.

Overall, the project proposes a resilient, low-carbon, and community-rooted approach to sustainability, expanding the definition of green infrastructure to encompass environmental performance, social vitality, and inclusive stewardship.

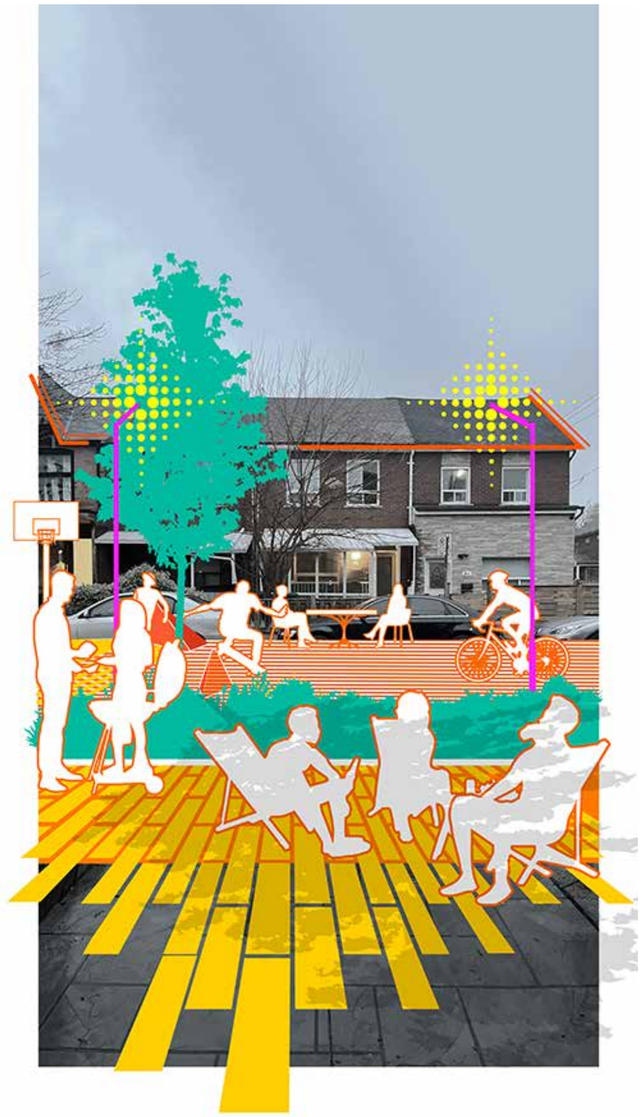
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

This project recognizes that truly sustainable design must also be equitable, inclusive, and rooted in reconciliation. By transforming local streets into shared, flexible, and co-stewarded public spaces, the proposal addresses long-standing issues of unequal access to green space, particularly in dense downtown neighborhoods like Harbord Village, which were historically overlooked in citywide park planning efforts. The design opens up the possibility for every street to function as a public park, ensuring that residents—regardless of housing type, income, or mobility—have daily access to safe, welcoming, and ecologically vibrant spaces at their doorstep.

The proposal also centers principles of co-governance and community agency, creating frameworks for local engagement, care, and decision-making. It invites diverse forms of participation by incorporating flexible spaces for informal gatherings, gardening, workshops, and cultural events. These elements support intergenerational interaction and cultural expression, while the inclusion of community tools and WiFi zones helps reduce digital and spatial divides.

In recognizing the land's deeper history, the project also acknowledges that Harbord Village sits on the traditional territory of the Wendat, Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas of the Credit. The proposal seeks to honour Indigenous ways of knowing and caretaking the land by incorporating native plant species, promoting biodiversity, and encouraging stewardship practices that build a reciprocal relationship with nature. Future collaborations with Indigenous designers, artists, or knowledge-keepers are encouraged to further guide programming, planting, and interpretation strategies in culturally meaningful ways.

In all, the project envisions streets as inclusive and regenerative public spaces that reflect the diverse identities, needs, and histories of the communities they serve.




Sharing the Place
Intersection
Functional & Experiential
Cultural Shift
Continuous Extension
Sharing and Living
Reclaiming the forgotten space
Yards to City

WATERFRONT STORIES
Gardiner Expressway

Photos of 1:100 scale concept models. The main image shows a long, linear model of the Gardiner Expressway corridor, with layered cardboard structures, ramps, and colorful interventions like ribbons, plantings, and signage. Smaller close-up images on the right show detailed sections with greenery, public art, furniture, and pedestrian walkways. Yellow figurines are used to indicate human scale and activity throughout the proposal.

Project Team

Yaxin Jiang
Pantea Eslami
Mathieu Howard
Rikki Cai
Saroash Haider
Kyle Do Couto
Ely Torreneuva
Stenzo Martin
Hyo Yeon Tiana Lee
153 Bachelor of Architectural Science students from Toronto Metropolitan University

Project Description

Waterfront Stories is a collective urban design project completed by undergraduate and graduate students in Toronto Metropolitan University's Department of Architectural Science. Over the course of four days, 20 teams of students collaborated on design interventions for a series of spaces under and around the Gardiner Expressway in downtown Toronto. The 20 programmatic and spatial propositions from student teams came together to form an integrated urban-scale project composed of large physical models at 1:100 and 1:20 scales, reimagining Lake Shore Boulevard from Spadina Avenue to Rees Street as a public corridor and a welcoming destination on the Toronto waterfront.

Responding to the Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan (UGPRP), a collaborative initiative between the City of Toronto and The Bentway Conservancy aimed at transforming underutilized spaces beneath the Gardiner into vibrant, connected, and resilient public areas, our proposal treats the sites as a living laboratory. Accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability are shared principles across all teams, while each group explored unique design strategies tailored to specific site opportunities to address these principles through creative public program designs.

For sites open to light and open spaces on the south, our teams proposed transforming the spaces into nodes for cultural life and socially inclusive events. Team Envelope and Team Verticality imagine open-air libraries and wellness zones linked to the Toronto Public Library system, providing low-energy, community-adaptive spaces for reading, workshops, and cultural programs in the extended public realm. Team Modularity and Team Cultivate frame Toronto's food culture as a spatial and social infrastructure, designing market pavilions and communal cooking spaces to foster sharing and community building.

For sites near vehicular intersections, pedestrian accessibility and safety are key to rebuilding connectivity between the under-Gardiner spaces and the surrounding urban fabric. Team Convergence and Team Dual-Unity proposed flexible gathering nodes and circulation paths that extend adjacent neighborhoods into the site. Team Biophilia and Rippleway foreground barrier-free design, using material texture, sound absorption and reflection, and spatial rhythm to create immersive and accessible installations designed to accommodate varying mobility needs along the walkway.

Vegetation offers a range of environmental and health benefits. Teams such as Rewilding, Intersect, Biomimicry, and Intimacy proposed native species planting to re-green the corridor, mitigate noise and pollution, and reconnect with the natural waterfront ecosystem.

Together, these proposals demonstrate how urban design can narrate alternative futures for Toronto's infrastructural landscapes, driven by collective design experimentation.

Photo of 1:20 scale sectional models. The top model shows a multi-level structure with pink platforms, wood stairs, vertical columns, comic-patterned walls, and small trees. The bottom row features three sectional models: a planted walkway with curved supports and nets; a faceted cave-like seating area with suspended lights; and a wooden platform space with dense greenery, ferns, and hanging vines. Yellow human figures appear throughout to suggest scale and activity.

Sustainability Statement

Hybrid infrastructure, serving both vehicles and people, is an innovative approach towards urban sustainability, especially in dense urban contexts with ecological challenges. Located between downtown Toronto and its waterfront, the Gardiner is an important ecological threshold of an area shaped by historical environmental changes of native habitats. Our collective project includes many design interventions that reimagine the Gardiner Expressway's role to provide environmental benefits to both the human and natural world.

For example, Team Rewilding and Team Intersect proposed strategies to restore biodiversity by introducing native plant species, transforming impervious surfaces into permeable ground, and creating multi-layered vegetation systems to mediate traffic-related pollutants. Many teams recognized the Gardiner's unique capacity to harvest significant amounts of rainwater and its ability to provide extensive shading. In response, they designed architectural installations and landscape topographies, such as bioswales and rain gardens, that actively engage with these environmental conditions to support microclimates and mitigate the urban heat island effect. These interventions also support non-human life by providing habitat, food sources, and safe passage for birds and small urban wildlife.

In conclusion, our proposals not only provide creative solutions to Toronto's green strategies but also reframe infrastructure as an ecological opportunity, making space for a more resilient and biodiverse future waterfront.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

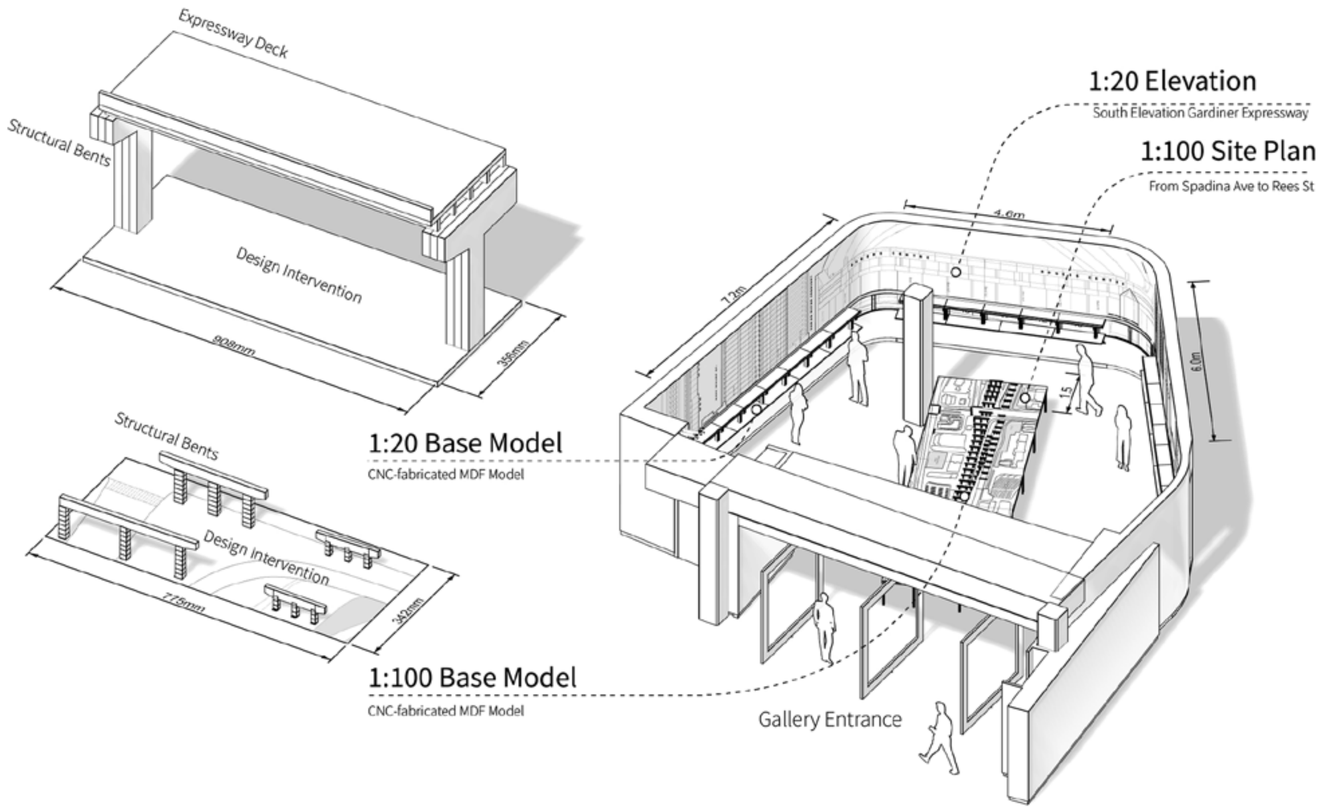
The title Waterfront Stories reflects our intent to propose urban design interventions for diverse spatial conditions and community narratives, an inclusive design framework that can respond to all citizens including Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving groups. These stories emerge from the layered histories, cultures, and everyday experiences of those who live, move through, and are often excluded from spaces beneath the Gardiner Expressway. Our goal was to reimagine these underused sites as inclusive public spaces that promote physical and social accessibility, well-being, connectedness, and belonging. By envisioning the under-Gardiner spaces as social infrastructure supporting a wide range of informal economies and every rituals, including various sports and cultural experiences, food cultivation and sharing, and multi-generational interactions, we are telling different stories about the site, the community, and this neighbourhood's changing needs.

This project was itself an experiment in collaborative design, bringing together 153 students from across all four undergraduate years and graduate levels in Toronto Metropolitan University's Department of Architectural Science. This strategy was used to intentionally integrate students at varying levels, the diversity of participants allowed for a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and visions to shape the design outcomes. The design process was iterative and grounded in community values, a collaborative and participatory process where each group member positively contributed to the creative work. This collective process was further enriched by input from members of the QCBE (Quality in Canada's Built Environment) research partnership, who helped frame the project brief within broader questions of equity and urban public life on Toronto's waterfront. Members of The Bentway Conservancy, who work directly with the local communities, provided inputs to the studio brief and critiqued the in-progress work, which helped students understand how to respectfully engage with place and people. The final student project was shared through a public exhibition in the Gallery at the Department of Architectural Science to invite the broader public and university community to see, critique, and imagine together what a more inclusive city might look like.

A photomontage integrating physical model elements into a view of Toronto's Gardiner Expressway. The collage features proposed urban interventions beneath the elevated highway, including small-scale architectural structures, public furniture, greenery, and yellow human figures, layered with existing city infrastructure and skyline to visualize future public space potential.

Conceptual and experiential collages explore spatial, ecological, and social possibilities under Toronto's Gardiner Expressway. Compositions include abstract geometries, oversized natural elements, architectural fragments, human figures, and layered textures. Themes explore ecological integration, spatial storytelling, material reuse, and everyday life beneath the Gardiner Expressway in Toronto.

The image shows a gallery space with long display tables presenting a continuous 1:100 scale model of the Gardiner Expressway corridor. Architectural collages and 1:20 models are arranged along wall-mounted shelves, and a digital screen at the back highlighting the design process and conceptual narratives. The exhibition presents speculative design interventions under Toronto's Gardiner Expressway, emphasizing collaborative studio work and spatial storytelling.



Annotated axonometric drawing of "Waterfront Stories," an immersive urban design exhibition in a gallery. The diagram illustrates the spatial organization of the gallery as an active part of the design experience. Two CNC-fabricated MDF models at 1:20 and 1:100 scales are enlarged to show the base sites for design interventions under the Gardiner Expressway.

SCARBOROUGH FOOD LINE AND HUB

290 Borough Drive

Project Team
Eric Cheung

Project Description

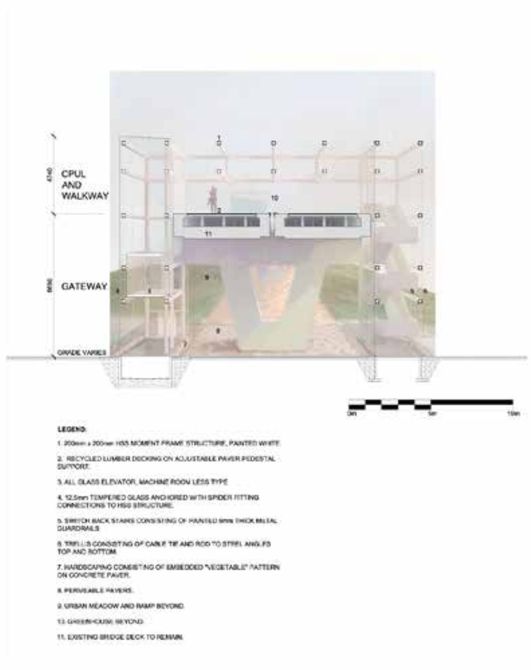
Invisible and often geographically distant food systems have led to fragile linear food systems thinking. Arguably, this linear model has led to food security issues, as evidenced by the City of Toronto declaring food insecurity as a public health emergency crisis in a January 2025 city council motion and Feed Scarborough recently reporting that 1 in 2 children in Scarborough are food insecure.

As one of many potential responses, an urban farm and food hub are alternative and local food cycle models that promotes a circular strategy that can have profound and positive opportunities within an urban environment. Urban design and architecture can play a key role in connecting people to this alternative food system model. Beyond readily achievable technical aspects, improving visibility and accessibility to allow contextually appropriate integration is a challenge.

Visibility and accessibility of a local food cycle model is explored in a design proposal in Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, which converts a portion of the decommissioned TTC Line 3 public transit line and Scarborough Centre transit station into an urban farm and food hub.

Scarborough Centre is an opportune area for investigation with the acknowledgement of future residential development and transit connections that allow the design to hypothesize succint integration within these urban narratives. The integration of a food hub allows for weekly farmers' market and market hall environment to engage both the adjacent civic and commercial presences on site. The design demonstrates that modest and light insertions based on a scaffold concept offers visible and accessible opportunities for public participation in food systems in unexpected places.

Although focused on re-use of the existing Scarborough Centre station and adjacent rail line, a potential urban farm stretching beyond is very well possible to connect people to a local and circular food system.



A Pedestrian Gateway

Sustainability Statement

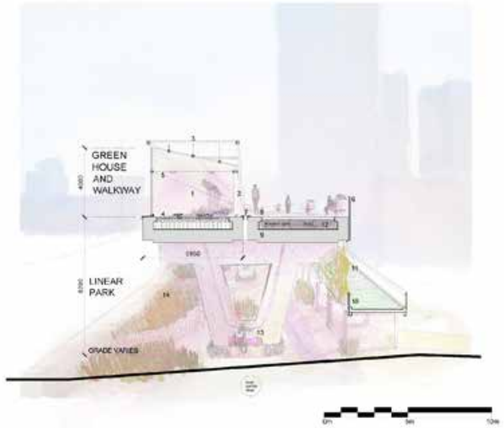
Key sustainability considerations of the Scarborough Food Line and Hub project are two-fold: an argument to promote local food cycles within a circular system mentality and an argument to adaptively re-use the Line and its transit stations in lieu of wholesale demolition. Both are intertwined.

Re-use of the existing Line 3 for a local food economy minimizes potential disruptive and costly demolition activities and can promote honoring of the existing transit line rather than erasure. Honoring the existing transit legacy includes a pedestrian walkway at bridge level as well as a linear park below beneath the line, allowing for greater pedestrian modes of transportation beyond simply automobile-centric routes.

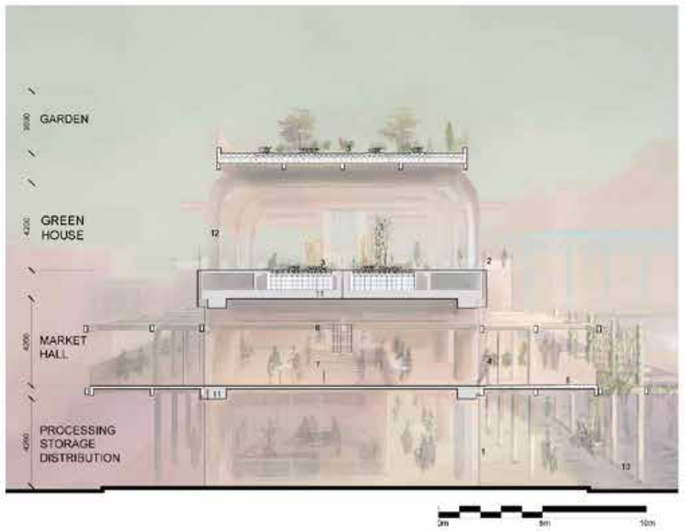
In integrating a food system into the greater urban design narrative affords additional opportunities for enhanced storm water management and re-use systems. Storm water can be looped back into greenhouses or greywater systems to feed a proposed linear park. The linear park itself is primarily a meandering trail through an urban meadow to promote local plant and tree growth, particularly pollinator gardens that can assist in stabilizing bee and other insect ecosystems. Incorporating public green spaces with food systems affords reduction of urban heat island effects as well, activating at a pedestrian scale often shallow and hard surfaces to more permeable and diverse spaces.

Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Providing a visible and accessible food system through re-use of existing transit infrastructure promotes a necessary backdrop for discussions of equity, diversity and reconciliation. By emphasizing a pedestrian and public scale opportunity, the Scarborough Food Line and Hub provides opportunities for culturally and locally appropriate food production that brings Scarborough's strong multi-cultural community together. Providing discussion around food and how and where it is grown allows for greater discussions to occur, whether in the form of demonstration gardens, teaching kitchens or incubator kitchens that provide opportunities for bringing people together around food. The Scarborough Food Line and Hub provides a programmatic diversity of food spaces on account of a circular attitude that acknowledges that food sharing—of being around a shared communal table for either growing, preparing, making or eating—allows stronger social bonds to occur.



A "Continuous Productive Urban Landscape"



LEGEND:

1. SSG CURTAINWALL
2. 2X 6mm TEMPERED GLASS GUARDRAIL WITH LAMINATE INTERLAYER.
3. 100-150mm ENGINEERED SOIL, FILTER FABRIC, CRUSHED GRAVEL, INSULATION, WATERPROOFING, LIGHT WEIGHT CONCRETE
4. CONCERTINA DOORS
5. 6mm THICK INTERIOR ALUMINUM PANEL WITH CNC CUT PATTERN OF "VEGETABLE" PATTERN.
6. 50mm X 50mm HSS SCAFFOLD SYSTEM ANCHORED TO EXISTING SLAB
7. MARKET STALLS CONSISTING OF POLYESTER POWDERCOATED TOPS AND PERCEPTUALLY "HUNG" FROM SCAFFOLD TUBE
8. PATIO - LIGHT WEIGHT CONCRETE ON 68mm METAL DECK, 100mmX100mm HSS FRAMING MEMBERS
9. COMMERCIAL KITCHEN CONSISTING OF FULL HEIGHT GLAZING WITH FROSTED LAMINATE INTERLAYER
10. LINEAR PARK
11. EXISTING CONCRETE STRUCTURE TO REMAIN.
12. EXISTING STEEL STRUCTURE TO REMAIN.

A Connected Linear Park

TERRACE VILLAGE
248 Ossington Avenue

Project Team
Olivia Chan
Jason Chen

Project Description

The West Neighborhood House located at 248 Ossington Avenue is proposed to be a three-storey community center with 70 units of affordable housing above. Conceptually, the project is a village that welcomes growth, connection, and diversity; and at its core, encourages a sense of home in both the public and private realms where residents, guests and Little Portugal locals experience a sense of belonging, familiarity, and knowing one another through a complex intersection of programs, circulation, and intergenerational sharing.

Terrace Village serves as a manifesto for being a good neighbour. Situated at the threshold of Little Portugal — the Dundas and Ossington intersection, a piazza and forested playground are carved out of a banal urban fabric as a gathering space and inviting entry into the non-profit. Towards the north end of the site, a laneway inspired by Portuguese pedestrian walkways sets back the building from its neighbour and serves as a flexible space for kids to play or for seasonal events such as pop-up markets or bike repair-cafe events.

Throughout the building, a blurring of indoor-outdoor spaces and flexible programs forefronts the design and allows the West Neighbourhood House to adapt any space to their needs. For example, an auditorium on the ground level for town hall meetings is adjacent to a community kitchen, that also converts into a full gymnasium with retractable bleacher stairs. Subsequently, the entire building is constantly re-imagined through the merging of spaces for larger gathering events including community barbeques or kids' play days. Through the dematerialization of the building facade using translucent panels and large bi-folding doors, people are welcomed from the street and guided directly into the building. The terraced massing further allows for a series of terraces and courtyards that enable social condensing spaces for the public, the community centre, and residents who are inclined to join from their dwellings above.

Within each residential tower, there is a diverse set of unit types designed for future flexibility and different models of accommodation such as co-housing or multi-generational living. Varying units also feature balcony-front porches or winter garden balconies that encourage social exchange between neighbours. At every scale of programming, there are various opportunities for people to meet, to learn, and for residents and the West Neighbourhood House to re-interpret their spaces for their growing needs.

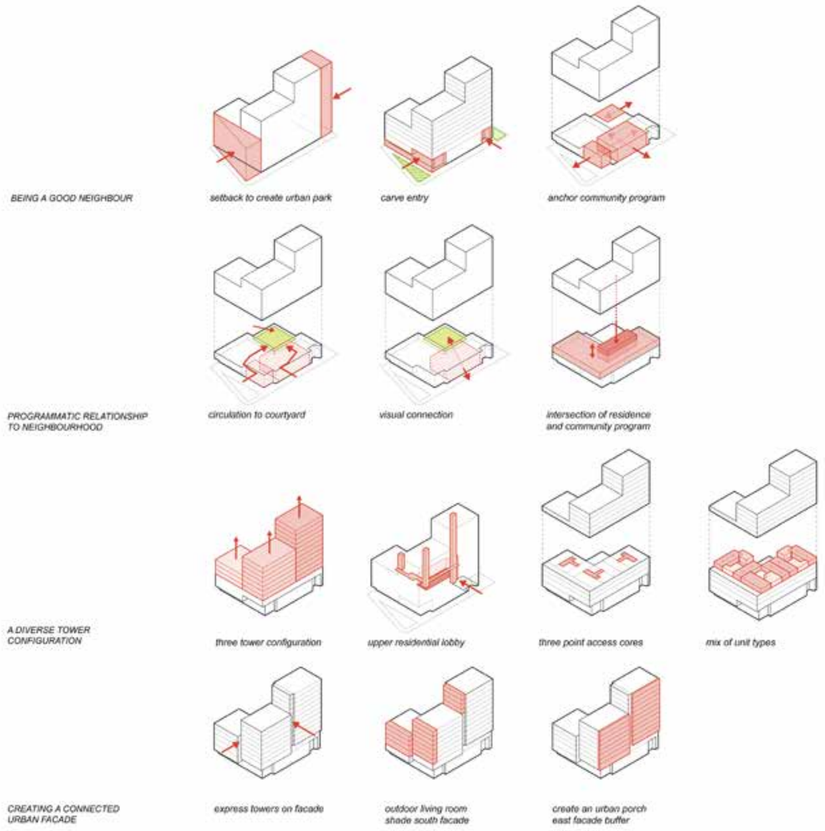
Sustainability Statement

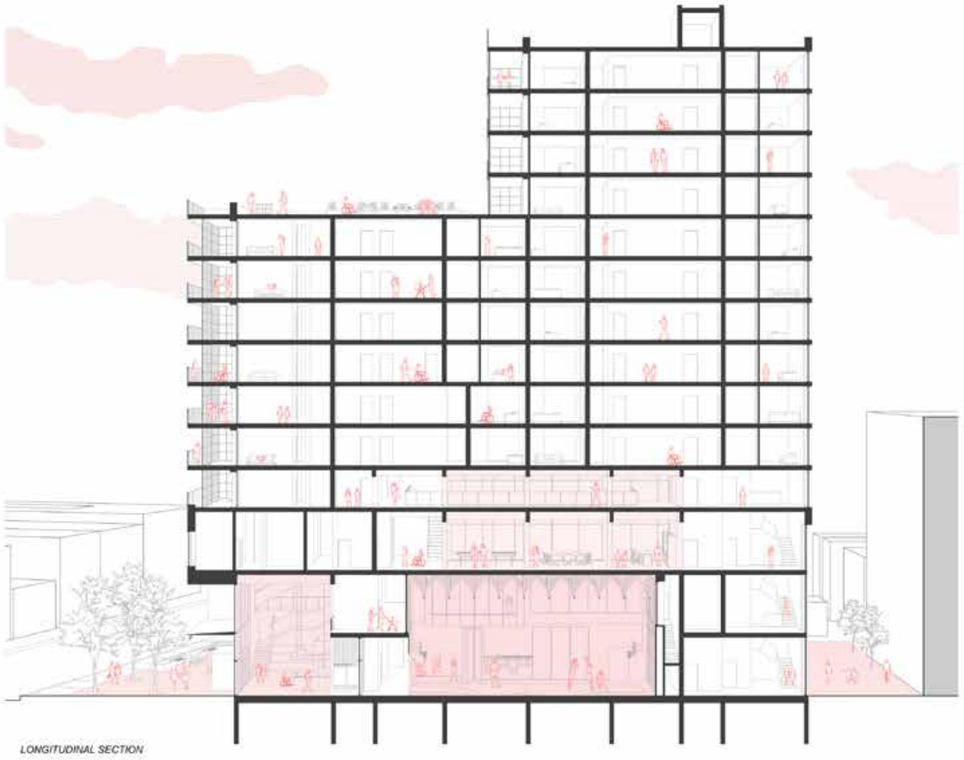
Terrace Village is a 14-storey mass timber building with point access cores. It utilizes a variety of passive and active systems to maintain thermal comfort throughout the year alongside strategies that approach net-zero energy and carbon. Due to the height of the building and the weak soil capacity on-site, concrete elevator and stair cores with steel helical pile foundations were opted for. To offset these carbon emissions, the building features glulam beams and columns, CLT floors and exterior wall assemblies and long span trusses constructed from dimensional lumber. A tight building envelope with an average R-value of 43 is accomplished through biogenic insulation such as wood fiber rigid insulation and reaches passive house standard to minimize active heating and cooling loads.

The project utilizes geothermal exchange to heat and cool the forced air system in both the residential and community center portions of the building, however, during the modest spring and fall seasons, natural cross-ventilation is optimized with through-unit apartment configurations and double height atria oriented towards west prevailing winds. A robust solar shading strategy using vertical louvres on the east side of gymnasium and enclosed balconies and winter gardens around three sides of the building serve as shading elements from high summer sun angles while simultaneously performing as thermal buffers when doors and operable windows are closed in the summer and winter months. Other strategies for approaching net-zero energy include photovoltaic panels on the roof, stormwater collection and recycling, as well as landscaping that creates cooler microclimates in the summer but allows sun to penetrate the building during the winter. The building is intended to have a life span of 100+ years and architecturally, is designed to allow for future flexibility and constant adaptation for new programs and tenants.

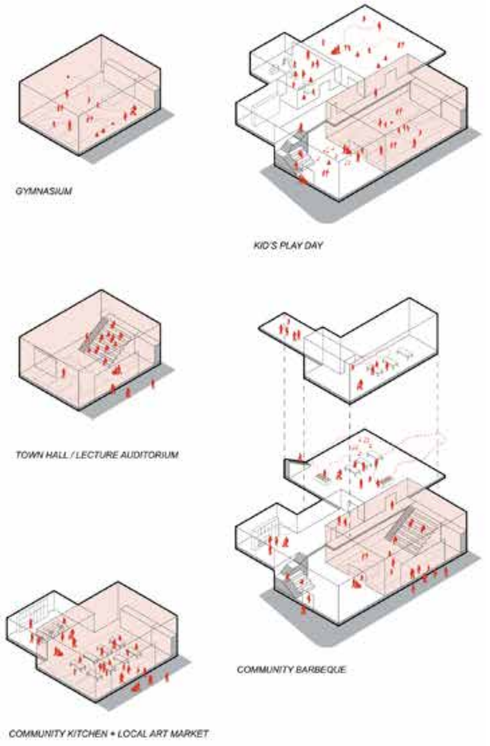
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

Equity and diversity remains at the forefront of the project with 100% of the buildings' residential units being affordable (50% of which are accessible), to designing fully accessible and culturally inclusive spaces in the community center. Situated within the Little Portugal community, the West Neighbourhood House has embraced its role as a community hub that provides active programs for youth and elders, arts and culture programs, counselling, and more to encourage growth and security within the community. The proposed Terrace Village will also participate within the Little Portugal BIA with mom-and-pop shops and small-scale local retail that may be run by the West Neighbourhood House non-profit or residents within the building. A variety of spaces are offered such as the community kitchen and upper community garden that support building life skills and healthy lifestyles, or the multi-purpose classrooms and counselling spaces on the upper levels of the community programs suitable for any age. There is also the fourth-floor collaborative workspace and residential mezzanine that serves as an anchor within the residential building that fosters communal gathering and collaboration. The space is envisioned as an open and welcoming space where kids can study, elders can supervise or socialize with friends and young working professionals can network or collaborate in workshops. A diverse range of affordable residential units ranging from 1-bedroom to 4-bedroom configurations, accessible units, and loft style units ensures that there is ample living accommodations for a wide range of household types. Notably, 3-bedroom units are adaptable where non-load bearing walls can be demolished or added to divide the unit into separate 1 and 2-bedroom units, or the den space may be converted into an extra bedroom for multi-generational living or co-living models.



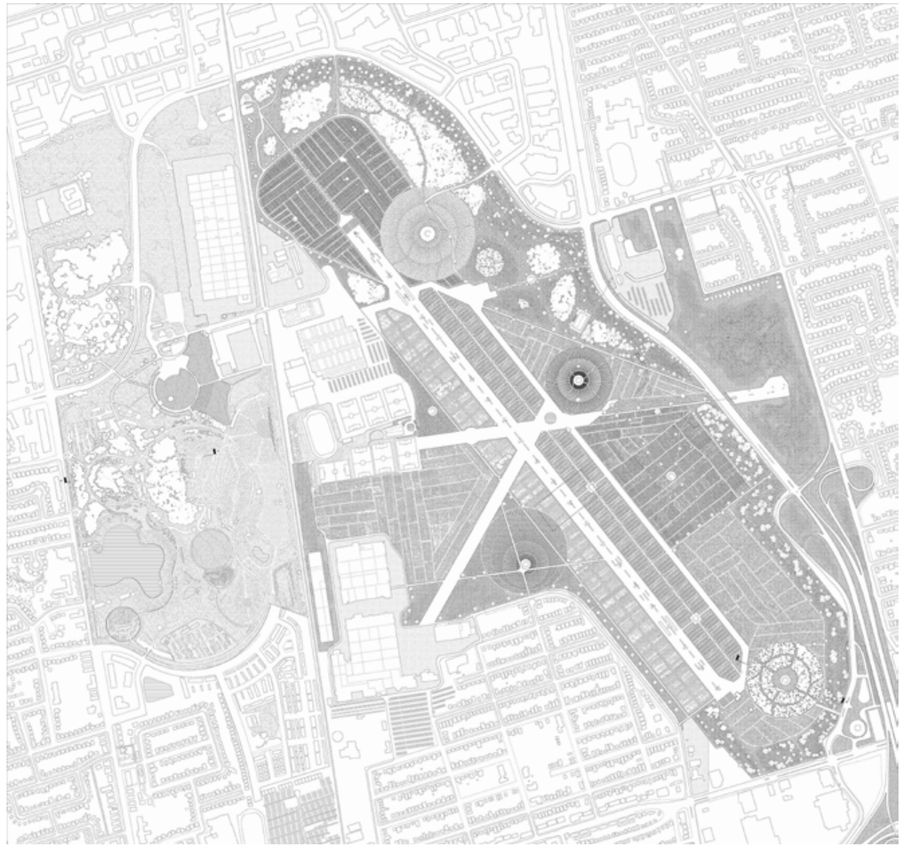


LONGITUDINAL SECTION



KOYAANISQATSI

Downsview Airport (123 Garratt Boulevard)



Project Team
Augustine Wong

Project Description

Ko·yaa·nis·qatsi (from the Hopi language), n. 1. crazy life. 2. life in turmoil. 3. life out of balance. 4. life disintegrating. 5. a state of life that calls for another way of living.

Canada must confront a history of violent European invasion and colonial transgressions. On shared Haudenosaunee, Anishinabeg and Mississauga land, Downsview Park was transformed through federal appropriation for military and aerospace. As the airport prepares for decommissioning, the Federal Government plans gentrified residences, symbolizing profit extraction amid economic challenges. Koyaanisqatsi represents lost Indigenous culture and a chance for physical reconciliation simultaneously.

A CHANGE IS PROPOSED TO THIS SITE.

An urban agricultural operation rooted in Indigenous practices aims to empower Indigenous land management. From tarmac redesigns to companion planting, interventions span ten years, repurposing aircraft hangars for food banks, establishing greenhouses as Indigenous knowledge hubs, and reclaiming the airstrip for community purposes. Four important Indigenous medicines — sage, sweetgrass, tobacco and cedar are planted in circles across the airfield in an interpretation of medicine wheels.

Current urban farms in Downsview cover 13 hectares, feeding 72 people. The proposed regime on 520 hectares addresses Toronto's food insecurity, supporting over 2600 people and introducing Indigenous cuisine.

Beyond a land acknowledgement is an interrogation of colonial power to restore lost Indigenous cuisine and culture. The design strategy begins with extrapolating tarmac vectors to establish new circulation paths connecting Downsview Airport to surrounding points of interest and creating dividing zones for a variety of crop rotations. Rather than European monocultural planting regimes, this approach will feature companion planting of corn, beans and squash, which makes up the traditional diet of Haudenosaunee people, supplemented with North American crops including maize, tomatoes, and sugar maple groves for creating traditional maple sugar.

Circles delineate Indigenous planting regimes and superimpose upon linear grids in the plan, representing the four directions and their sacred medicines embodied within the medicine wheel, a sacred and ancient symbol used by various First Nations. Sweetgrass, tobacco, cedar and sage are planted in the four circles respectively as a way of promoting Indigenous cultural awareness and production.

Greenhouses distributed around the redeveloped airport lands will house Indigenous medicinal plants found across the country, establishing a hub for diverse Indigenous medicinal plants and knowledge exchange. This project is not just a land acknowledgement that acknowledges a history of wrongdoing and dispossession. By promoting an Indigenous food and medicinal culture, agriculture at Downsview will directly challenge its legacy of colonial power and restore balance to culture lost.

Sustainability Statement

As European settlers found Downsview's geography highly suitable for an airstrip by the 1920s, they changed the land indelibly, removing trees and fertile soil to create the airport, in an irreversible state. De-icing agents like Glycol have salted the earth, while the military's presence has contaminated it with heavy metals and polyfluorinated compounds. All in all, two centuries of colonial ownership have poisoned the earth around the Downsview neighbourhood.

To revert the land into a state suitable for Indigenous farming, a phytoremediation regime will be responsible for removing contaminants from the soil. The planting regime would be capable of removing contaminants including petrochemicals, arsenic, and metals such as chromium, lead, mercury and cadmium; using a hybrid of international and native Canadian plants including Canada goldenrods (Solidago canadensis), trembling aspen (Populus tremuloides), and ground elder (Aegopodium podagraria), amongst others. At the same time, the airport lands will be sustained by bioswales planted on the edges of the intervention, which purify runoff water from nearby industrial activities before use.

This intervention will occur in phases spanning at least over ten years. The first year will be dedicated towards establishing infrastructure, planting phytoremediation crops and wild grasses, which will be burned annually to release contaminants and fertilise the soil, and planting a range of pioneer tree species to imitate forest succession growth. Furthermore, a grazing regime made of Canadian-bred Rideau Arcott sheep (Ovis aries), and native white-tailed deer (Odocoileus virgianus). will be responsible for improving soil health and maintenance. Reversing the polluting effects of contaminated soil does not necessarily need to come from technocratic measures, but is ultimately reliant on the natural mechanisms of the earth.

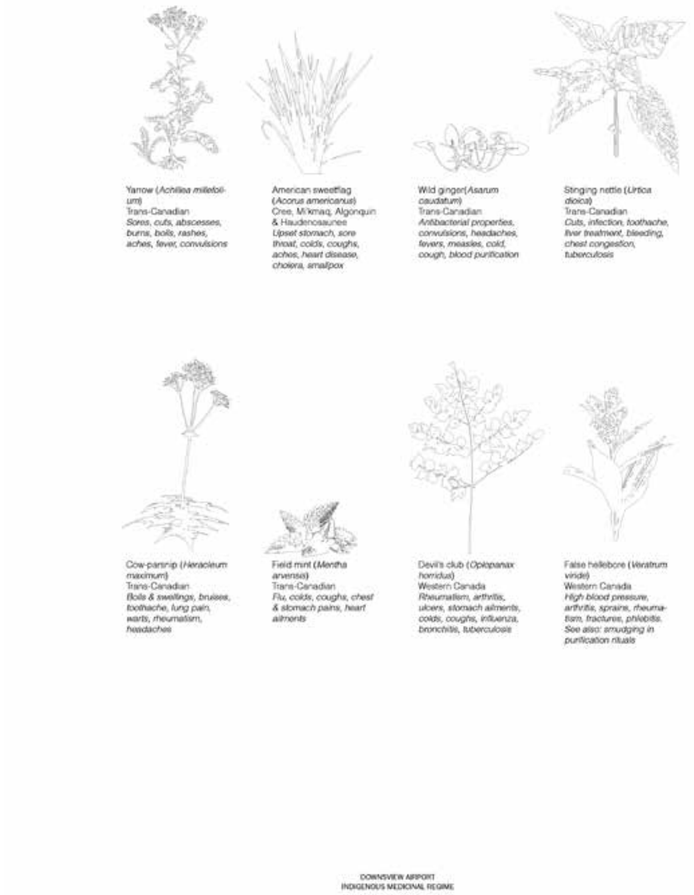
Equity, Reconciliation and Diversity Statement

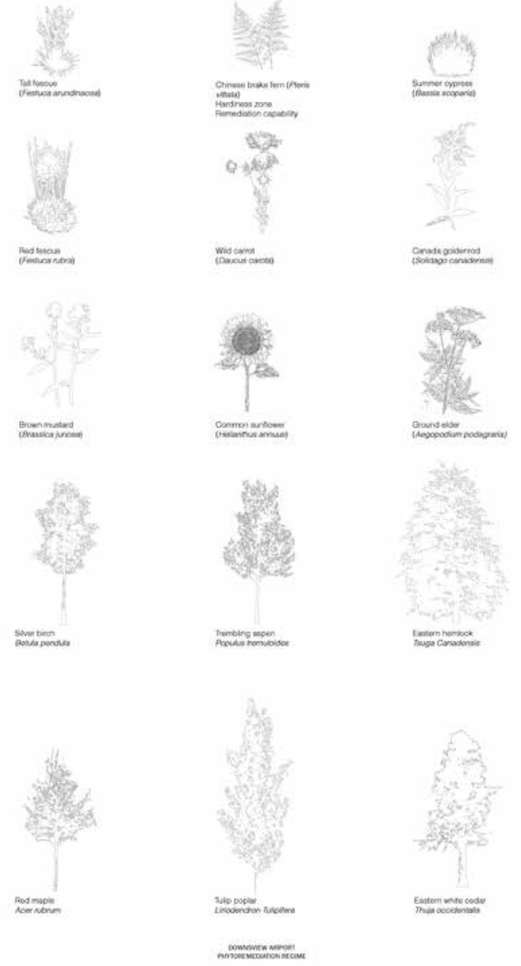
Toronto currently faces several crises at the moment, from an exorbitant real estate crisis, to a growing population that is responsible for driving up the cost of living. For some Torontonians, this results in food insecurity. For others, this living crisis can exacerbate further, as homelessness.

Indigenous people are both disproportionately susceptible to food insecurity and homelessness, highlighting the historical impact of colonial governance in land management.

While Indigenous peoples made up 0.8% of Toronto's population in 2018, 1 in 128 Torontonians are homeless. 1 in 40 people in Toronto identify as Indigenous. And 1 in 15 Indigenous people are homeless. According to the City of Toronto, Indigenous people hold the second largest share of household food insecurity in relation to racial or cultural identity, polling at 28.2%. This project ultimately aims to use the critical mass of Downsview's vast properties to establish a focal point for Indigenous-led actors that would support a lack of food banks in the area, bolster fresh food production, and introduce Indigenous cuisine to a diverse mix of people living in the area.

To ensure that the development plan respected the needs and traditions of First Nations peoples, research was conducted on the traditional land use of the site prior to European settlement using archives at the City of Toronto and the University of Toronto. Furthermore, Iehnhotonkwas Bonnie Jane Maracle of the Wolf Clan, Mohawk Nation was consulted as Traditional Teacher at the University of Toronto's First Nations House. As such, the project aimed to go beyond tropes of Indigenous planting, such as the 'three sisters' companion planting and instead tailor a sensitive, grounded approach towards a unique point in Toronto which may act as a meeting place for understanding between Indigenous and European techniques and values.


Yarrow (Achillea millefolium)
Trans-Canadian
Sores, cuts, abscesses, burns, boils, rashes, aches, fever, convulsions
American sweetflag (Acorus americanus)
Cree, Mi'kmaq, Algonquin & Haudenosaunee
Upset stomach, sore throat, colds, coughs, aches, heart disease, cholera, smallpox
Wild ginger(Asarum caudatum)
Trans-Canadian
Antibacterial properties, convulsions, headaches, fevers, measles, cold, cough, blood purification
Stinging nettle (Urtica dioica)
Trans-Canadian
Cuts, infection, toothache, liver treatment, bleeding, chest congestion, tuberculosis
Cow-parsnip (Heracleum maximum)
Trans-Canadian
Boils & swellings, bruises, toothache, lung pain, warts, rheumatism, headaches
Field mint (Mentha arvensis)
Trans-Canadian
Flu, colds, coughs, chest & stomach pains, heart ailments
Devil's club (Oplopanax horridus)
Western Canada
Rheumatism, arthritis, ulcers, stomach ailments, colds, coughs, influenza, bronchitis, tuberculosis
False hellebore (Veratrum viride)
Western Canada
High blood pressure, arthritis, sprains, rheumatism, fractures, phlebitis.
See also: smudging in purification rituals
DOWNSVIEW AIRPORT
INDIGENOUS MEDICINAL REGIME


Tall fescue
(Festuca arundinacea)
Chinese brake fern (Pteris vittata)
Hardiness zone
Remediation capability
Summer cypress
(Bassia scoparia)
Red fescue
(Festuca rubra)
Wild carrot
(Daucus carota)
Canada goldenrod
(Solidago canadensis)
Brown mustard
(Brassica juncea)
Common sunflower
(Helianthus annuus)
Ground elder
(Aegopodium podagraria)
Silver birch
Betula pendula
Trembling aspen
Populus tremuloides
Eastern hemlock
Tsuga Canadensis
Red maple
Acer rubrum
Tulip poplar
Liriodendron Tulipifera
Eastern white cedar
Thuja occidentalis
DOWNSVIEW AIRPORT
PHYTOREMEDIATION REGIME

TORONTO