

# Strategic Plan 2023-2027

**CREATE TO**





# CREATE TO LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As the public agency responsible for overseeing the City of Toronto’s real estate assets, we acknowledge the lands we have been entrusted to manage are treaty lands and the traditional territories of many nations including the Anishinaabeg, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and are now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. These territories are currently covered by Treaty 13 (1805) with the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaties (1923) signed with multiple Mississauga and Chippewa bands.

At CreateTO, our work spans the entirety of the City of Toronto’s geographic boundaries, encompassing many important waterways and lands that, for thousands of years, have been the homelands and gathering places for many nations. We gratefully acknowledge these Indigenous nations for their stewardship of this land.

We recognize our accountability to these Indigenous nations and support the realization of the priority actions outlined in the City of Toronto’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

We also look forward to strengthening our relationships with the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples of Toronto and to working together in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect to continue building a livable city for all who call it home.



# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE



“When CreateTO was established five years ago, the vision for the agency was encompassed within the framework of a new city-wide real estate model; one that focused on taking a different approach towards the City of Toronto’s real estate assets to ensure they are being put to the best use for the collective good. Since the agency’s inception, CreateTO has demonstrated what can be achieved when we think about our real estate holdings differently. And today, with the introduction of CreateTO’s first-ever strategic plan, the agency is truly poised to reach its potential.

This strategic plan captures the essence of the agency’s collaborative culture, strategic approach and expertise. It builds on the agency’s original mandate, strengthening the original vision with new purpose and mission statements, organizational values and a series of strategic directions that will serve as a roadmap to guide the agency over the course of the next five years. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am excited for the future and look forward to working with everyone as we implement this plan and continue striving to build our city in a way that pushes boundaries and improves the lives of Toronto residents.”

## RON CARINCI, BOARD CHAIR



“How do you build a better city? I’m fortunate to lead a team of city builders at CreateTO, that wrestle with this question every day. It might be turning a former TTC lot into a new community hub, with more than 500 affordable places for people to live. Or piloting the use of mass timber construction to radically accelerate sustainable development. Or imagining the new communities and economic possibilities ready to burst forth in Toronto’s Port Lands - the largest undeveloped downtown real estate parcel on the continent.

Building a better city requires us to work hard and think differently. And building a better city goes beyond the projects that we deliver; it’s about our process and how we work. It means breaking down walls and going beyond traditional thinking. It means working across agencies and divisions to make sure the trust of City Council, City colleagues and city residents is channeled into a tireless approach to city building and real action on the ground.

This strategic plan, the first in our organization’s history, is our agency’s roadmap and our guidepost, for our work, our approach, and our team. I want to thank everyone for the thoughtfulness and passion that went into developing this plan and for their dedication to the purpose it holds. I’m excited to lead this organization as we bring this work to life and change the landscape of our city.”

## VIC GUPTA, CEO



# OUR STORY

The City of Toronto’s real estate portfolio holds tremendous value, both financially and in its potential to be operated and activated for the public good. CreateTO was created in 2018 to put that value to use for our city, by applying a strategic, city-wide lens to Toronto’s real estate holdings.

Already, this work has helped City Council identify significant savings and opportunities to improve the lives of Toronto residents. We have co-located City services and identified underutilized sites for the development of much-needed affordable housing. We have established imaginative partnerships and created new possibilities in the city’s most underserved neighbourhoods.

Today, we offer the City centralized real estate governance, streamlining strategic planning and coordinating decision making for real estate matters. This allows us to see Toronto real estate as part of the answer to our city’s big social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges.

There is no better time for CreateTO to solidify our vision with a multi-year strategic plan, building on our important mandate originally delivered by City Council.



The City of Toronto owns one of the largest, most complex and valuable real estate portfolios in North America, including

8,446	6,976
PROPERTIES	BUILDINGS
105M+	\$27B
SQ. FT.	APPROXIMATE COLLECTIVE VALUE

From parking facilities and undeveloped lots to administrative buildings, theatres and recreation centres, these assets are found in every corner of Toronto. They offer an opportunity to optimize their use and try new things, to move quickly, collaborate, uncover large-scale cost savings and lead purposeful development, propelled by a desire to do good for our city.

In 2018, CreateTO was founded to manage this portfolio differently: as a collective asset belonging to the people of Toronto. Our agency operates on the understanding that Toronto real estate can unlock great value for city residents and be creatively reimaged as the building blocks of Toronto’s future.

View of downtown Toronto from above the Garrison Crossing bridge



OUR  
GOALS

\$2.5B in unlocked  
land value

The City owns an estimated \$27 billion of real estate, including underutilized lands where the true value is unrealized. We aim to unlock 10 per cent of this value, or \$2.5 billion, within 10 years of existence.

10,000 units of  
affordable housing

Built on City-owned lands such as surface parking lots, as part of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan’s overall target of building 40,000 affordable rental and supportive units within 10 years.

\$66M in annual  
cost savings

Generating five per cent savings from the City’s overall \$2 billion annual capital and operating costs.

\*These goals were established at CreateTO's inception in 2018 to be achieved by 2028.



View of downtown Toronto from the Port Lands



OUR  
PURPOSE

Building  
the city we  
love

We work for the people of Toronto, changing this city for the better through reimagined buildings, communities, projects and approaches.

CreateTO is here to increase the social, cultural and economic value of our city’s real estate portfolio, ensuring positive impacts for residents and a bright future for the city.

We strive to be the City’s central point for collaboration, vision, expertise and implementation and to bring our work to life in neighbourhoods across Toronto and for the benefit of everyone who lives here.





OUR  
MISSION

Shaping Toronto's  
future through bold  
and impactful real  
estate solutions

How do you make the best use of one of North America's largest and most valuable real estate portfolios? That's the question we're here to answer for Toronto residents.

By truly understanding what the City owns, manages and develops, we offer creative and strategic approaches to solving some of our city's most pressing issues, from building affordable homes and inclusive communities, to creating cultural and employment opportunities, driving economic prosperity, achieving our climate goals and increasing our collective quality of life.



Etobicoke Civic Centre rendering provided by Adamson Associates Architects, Henning Larsen Architects and PMA Landscape Architects





- 1. Improve lives
- 2. Focus on the future
- 3. Push boundaries
- 4. Create change together
- 5. Be there for each other

Future site of Parkdale Hub

# 1. Improve lives

Cities are about people, and so are we. Everything we do is centred on creating social and economic value for the residents of Toronto. We prioritize work that creates opportunities, builds culture and inclusive communities and improves quality of life. This is our city too, and we’re motivated by a collective responsibility to Toronto residents.





## 2. Focus on the future

We leverage our unique city-wide lens to deliver projects that will have the most potential for positive, sustainable impact over the long-term. We know the decisions we make now will affect Toronto for generations to come and we work through short-term challenges to ensure long-term benefits. Building a better tomorrow through real estate is a journey; and it is our passion.



Basin Media Hub rendering provided by HCP - MBS, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

## 3. Push boundaries

Our goal is to be a global leader in bold and impactful real estate solutions. We set high standards and ambitious ideals and work to achieve them through proactive and ground-breaking approaches. We pride ourselves on operating as a centre of excellence, as we strive to shape the dialogue around public real estate in our city.



Stackt Market located on remediated lands at 28 Bathurst Street



# 4. Create change together

As a city-wide agency, our success is dependent on continued dialogue and collaboration with our clients and valued partners inside and outside of City Hall. Our working relationships prioritize responsiveness and mutual respect, and we go the extra mile to help achieve our city's goals through inclusive ideas, actions and approaches.



# 5. Be there for each other

We value the quality and ability of our team, and trust each other to achieve our shared purpose. Through our commitment to an open, collaborative, and inclusive culture, we seek all perspectives when we make decisions, celebrate each other's wins, and learn from each other in our endless pursuit to make the city a better place.



CreateTO staff on a bike tour of future city-building sites



- 1. Build a foundation to deliver results
- 2. Maximize the potential of our real estate portfolio
- 3. Elevate our partnership approach
- 4. Inspire internal success
- 5. Contribute to the City's financial strength



Garrison Crossing bridge

# 1. Build a foundation to deliver results



Leslie Lookout Park development

We were formed on the insight that the City's unique and complex real estate portfolio can be better leveraged to serve Toronto residents. To live up to that purpose and provide innovative insights and approaches, we continue to require a strong foundation of systems, policies and processes.

As one of the City's newest agencies, we have a mandate to work across divisions, asset classes and geographies, which gives us both the opportunity and the responsibility to model innovative approaches within City Hall. As we move our projects forward, we'll keep setting new standards for efficient and successful policy development, project delivery, and public reporting.

We're not just delivering results, we're looking for opportunities to improve policies and systems, because real estate people know that every great structure needs a strong foundation.



## 2. Maximize the potential of our real estate portfolio

Stackt Market

**With the advent of the City-wide real estate model, Toronto is no longer looking at projects or properties in isolation. We strive for a world-leading approach to asset management, and are focused on putting our city's portfolio to use for positive short-term impact and the pursuit of our city's long-term vision of success.**

Our job is to help address Toronto's urgent public policy objectives through the strategic use of real estate, which means creating housing, taking positive climate action, facilitating job creation, cultural activity and investment, and driving equity and inclusion in everything we do.

Our approach is systematic, strategic and city-wide, from overseeing the inventory of city real estate assets to identifying opportunities to maximize community benefit.

We're here to help City Council and City divisions, agencies and corporations achieve their goals through real estate, raising the bar for Toronto's long term real estate plans, while building the City's internal capacity to manage its assets and support residents through the innovative applications of space, talent and technology.

## 3. Elevate our partnership approach

**We exist in relation to our partners. Delivering bold and impactful real estate solutions through a city-wide lens requires intentional and seamless collaboration with our valued municipal, City, public and private sector partners, to ensure we are working efficiently and effectively towards our shared goals.**

That means we'll actively listen, seek out insight and expertise, let our partners know what we're doing and why, tell our story well and report out annually to Council and all our stakeholders with clear lines of accountability.

We'll keep working proactively to develop meaningful relationships across our city, working to remove systemic barriers and create true benefit for all city residents, including meaningful action to advance the City's Reconciliation Action Plan through strong relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities.



## 4. Inspire internal success



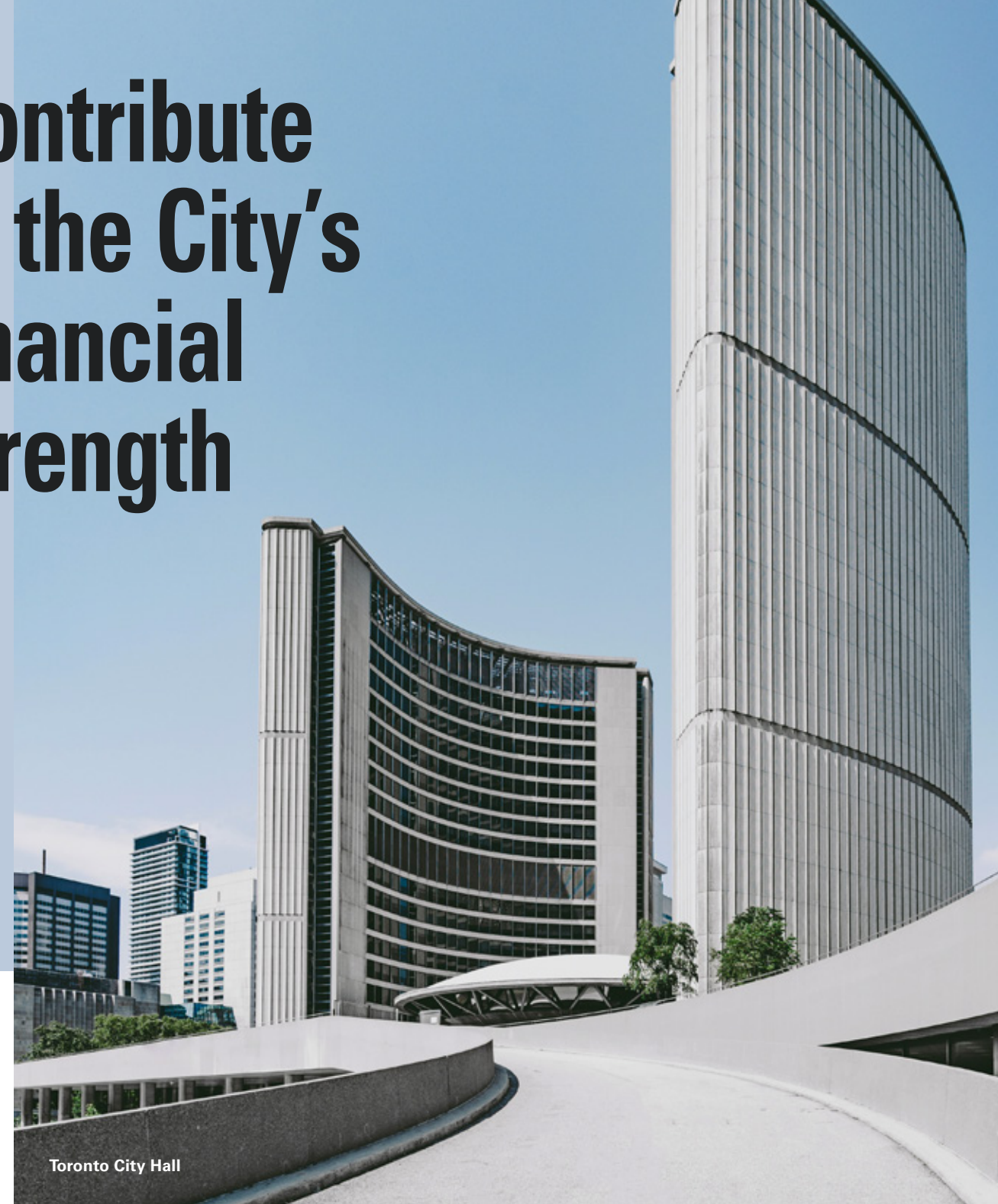
CreateTO staff outside our Union Station offices

**Our ambitious goals require innovation, creativity, and hard work. That means we need to keep building a multi-disciplinary team supported by an internal culture that brings out the best in people.**

We want to be known for our ability to recognize, engage and develop talent, making it clear that people can build their careers with us as they help build our city.

With a focus on strong communication and continuous skill development we will expand our policies and practices to promote diversity, equity and inclusion and to make sure every member of our team can reach their full potential while developing bold and disruptive real estate solutions.

## 5. Contribute to the City's financial strength



Toronto City Hall

**We owe it to our City to be good stewards of our municipal lands while also providing prudent management of our own organization.**

We will continue to focus on our own financial sustainability as we strive to shape a better future for our city, developing strong revenue streams through project development, asset management and innovative and transparent fee models.



# HOW WE GOT HERE

The creation of our first-ever strategic plan reflects our desire to be a best-in-class municipal agency. Over several months, we engaged a range of perspectives to identify and refine our thinking and set a clear direction for our work. We wanted our process to be deliberate, inclusive, challenging and honest. We wanted to reckon with our hurdles and push ourselves to go higher.

With a clear process plan and objectives, we embarked on an engagement tour where we listened to CreateTO and City staff, City of Toronto leadership from a range of divisions, agencies and corporations (DAC), as well as our Board Members and the Mayor’s Office.

We reviewed our own organizational structure as well as our shareholder directions, Board and Council reports and current initiatives. We surveyed and interviewed our team and the City’s DAC leadership to see what was on their minds, what motivated them and what barriers they identified.

And we looked outside our own city, doing a jurisdictional scan of organizations and agencies that inspire us, to see how they articulate their objectives and plan their impact. The objective of this research was to gather valuable internal and external stakeholder insights and important contextual information to help guide the future direction of CreateTO.

Like all of our work, the production of this Strategic Plan was fast, focused, clear, collaborative and future oriented. We couldn’t be prouder of the work and we’re excited for what comes next.



Old City Hall is being reimagined by CreateTO

“I think if we can focus on the impact of the work and the value we’re creating for the City, the way we’re changing communities and improving people’s lives – then that story becomes much more relatable.”

CREATETO STAFF MEMBER

100+

PARTNERS FROM THE NON-PROFIT, PRIVATE AND BROADER PUBLIC SECTORS

200+

ACTIVE PROJECTS

68

DIVISIONS, AGENCIES AND CORPORATIONS SERVED



# OUR PROJECTS



50 Wilson Heights Boulevard. Image credit: Tridel Buildings and Greenwin Holdings



Example of mass timber construction



Image credit: HCP - MBS, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill



Former Toronto Coach Terminal at 610 Bay Street and 130 Elizabeth Street

1. **Housing Now**  
Housing Now currently consists of 21 sites across the city that will deliver approximately 15,000 homes including 5,400 much-needed affordable rental homes.
2. **Mass Timber Pilot Program**  
A new, scalable affordable and market housing solution that can be replicated on other City-owned sites across Toronto, and will bring faster construction timelines; reduced cost due to efficiencies; reduced greenhouse gas and material emissions from the housing, transportation, and construction sectors.
3. **Basin Media Hub**  
A 500,000-square foot film, television and digital media hub that is expected to create more than 1,600 direct and indirect jobs in the Port Lands
4. **ModernTO**  
Repurposing eight high-value City-owned properties to make better use of public land and create more livable and vibrant communities, including the delivery of between 500 to 600 affordable rental and ownership homes in prime downtown and midtown locations.



# OUR PROJECTS



Image credit: Henriquez Partners Architects and Tricon Residential Inc. and the Kilmer Group



Image credit: TAS



East Scarborough Storefront



Image credit: MOD Developments



Image credit: CCxA

- 5. Bloor-Kipling (Six Points)**  
With a total of 17.91 acres, Six Points will include the new Etobicoke Civic Centre, a new city park, and 2,700 new residential homes of which 900 will be affordable rentals. The largest of the 21 City-owned Housing Now sites, this entire development will be serviced by District Energy.
- 6. WellingtonDestructo**  
The site of a former garbage incinerator, this site has sat vacant since the 1980s. Now being re-developed as a community hub and iconic landmark.
- 7. 4040 Lawrence Ave East**  
Through the Housing Now program, a site housing a beloved community organization in Scarborough will be transformed to include affordable housing in addition to a new ground floor community space.
- 8. Waterworks**  
Once an uninspiring public utility building, this site at 505 Richmond Street West is now an awe-inspiring mixed-use community, with a 20,000-square foot food hall, affordable artists residences, a YMCA and market condominiums.
- 9. Leslie Lookout Park**  
A new destination park in Toronto’s Port Lands including a public beach, forested dunes and a viewing platform that will provide the public with dramatic views of the Toronto skyline. The park recycles an industrial landscape into a new recreational hub with year-round programming and events, ecological restoration, reforestation, and naturalization.



# THANK YOU

We could not have produced this Strategic Plan without the support, guidance and tremendous talent of our Board of Directors and all those who shared with us their insight, experience and ambitions for the city.

## Our Board



**Ron Carinci**  
Chair



**Sandra Levy**  
Vice Chair



**Councillor Paula Fletcher**  
Director



**Councillor Brad Bradford**  
Director



**Marni Dicker**  
Director



**Dennis Fotinos**  
Director



**Allison Mendes**  
Director



**Marcie Zajdeman**  
Director

## Our Partners

Thank you to all of our valued partners at the City of Toronto including the Senior Leadership Team and the Divisions, Agencies and Corporations that participated in our strategic planning process. We work in partnership with all of you on a daily basis and none of our achievements would be possible without this ongoing collaboration. Your feedback was instrumental in shaping the strategic plan and we look forward to building the city we love, together.

# THE TEAM

The public service is made up of passionate and hard-working individuals, who care deeply about their city. Every single member of the CreateTO team is here because we love Toronto, believe in what we’re doing, and want to contribute to the future well being of this city.

A big thank you to our CreateTO team for their work on this Strategic Plan and for believing in the work we do.

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**“CreateTO has the opportunity to shape the future of Toronto, to create a more dynamic and livable city and to build a better Toronto. As someone who loves this city and is proud to call it my home, I want to be a part of that.”**

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