APRIL 2026

TORONTO DESTINATION MASTER PLAN



Image courtesy of Norm Li

A SHARED VISION FOR TORONTO'S FUTURE COMPETITIVENESS

As Canada's largest and most-visited city, Toronto is a dynamic hub of culture, innovation, and global connection. To fuel our momentum as a top global urban destination, this plan provides a decade-long roadmap to enhance our visitor economy while delivering tangible benefits to residents.

Developed alongside 400+ partner organizations and community stakeholders, this plan reflects a broad consensus on Toronto's future. These diverse perspectives were vital in creating a strategy that is as resilient as it is inclusive. To those who participated, thank you for your collaboration and shared commitment to our city's vibrancy and competitiveness.



DESTINATION MASTER PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Sara Anghel, President & CEO,
Greater Toronto Hotel Association

Cameron Bailey, Chief Executive Officer,
Toronto International Film Festival

Kendra Bator, General Manager, Mirvish Productions

Dolf DeJong, Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Zoo

Kathy Haley, President & CEO,
Metro Toronto Convention Centre

Pauline Larsen, Executive Director & CEO,
Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area

Stephen Lund, President & CEO, Toronto Global

Roselle Martino, Executive Vice President,
Policy, Advocacy, and Stakeholder Relations,
Toronto Region Board of Trade

Karen Mazurkewich, Vice President,
Stakeholder Relations and Communications,
Greater Toronto Airport Authority

Kojo Modeste, Executive Director, Pride Toronto

Andrew O'Neil, Vice President of Development,
Oxford Properties Group

Jennifer Sullivan, Vice President, Operations and
General Manager, Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment

Patrick Tobin, General Manager,
Economic Development & Culture, City of Toronto

Andrew Weir, President & CEO, Destination Toronto

George Zegarac, President & CEO, Waterfront Toronto

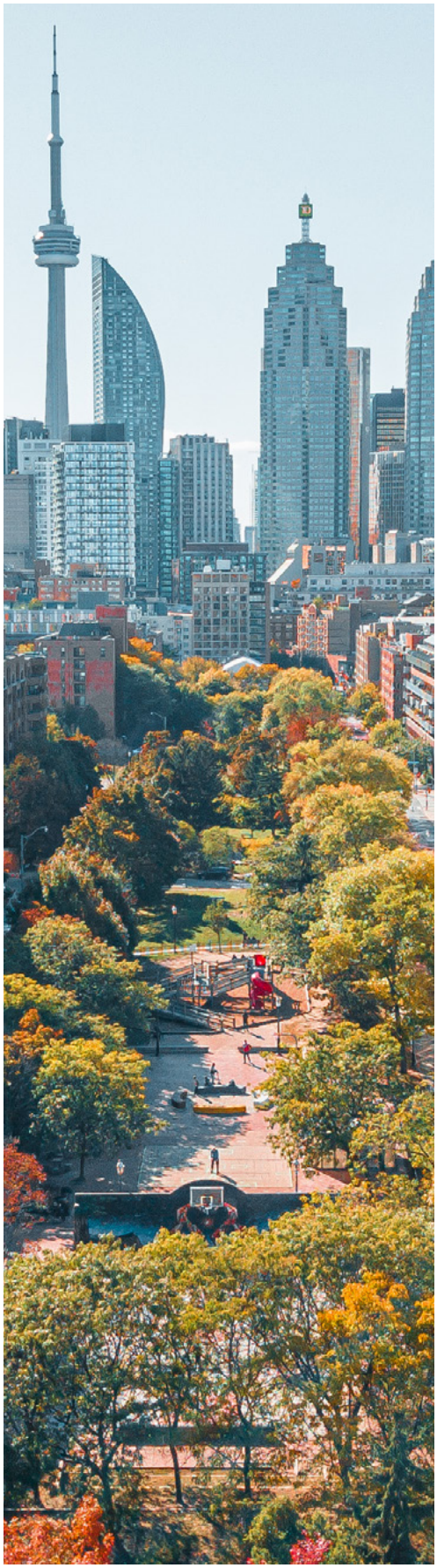


TABLE OF CONTENTS

01
Introduction 04

02
Toronto's Tourism Landscape Today 07

03
A Look into the Future 10

04
Strategic Framework 13

05
Strategies & Actions 15

06
Appendix 54

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION



As Canada's largest city and economic powerhouse, Toronto serves as the nation's stage—home to the country's most significant cultural institutions, major sporting events, internationally recognized dining and entertainment, and the greatest concentration of business activity.

The city's remarkable diversity, expressed through hundreds of distinct neighbourhoods and culinary traditions from around the globe, creates an urban fabric unlike any other in North America.

The next decade will determine Toronto's trajectory as a global city. Peer cities are investing decisively in the infrastructure, public realm enhancements, and signature attractions that elevate international profiles and capture market share. Convention centres are being rebuilt with integrated headquarter hotels, waterfronts are being transformed into animated visitor districts, and billions are flowing into transit systems that seamlessly connect airports to cultural neighbourhoods. These cities understand that tourism competitiveness requires more than existing assets—it demands continuous investment, bold placemaking, and coordinated action across public and private partners.

Toronto's foundations are strong, the opportunities are unprecedented, and the imperative for action is compelling. Several transformational projects are taking shape that could fundamentally strengthen the city's competitive position. A convention centre with modern facilities and surrounding district activation would protect and expand business events market share and enable Toronto to attract more global events and major meetings.

Waterfront developments at Ontario Place, Exhibition Place, and the Port Lands have the potential to create a cohesive visitor corridor rivaling the world's greatest urban waterfronts. Toronto Pearson International Airport's multi-billion-dollar expansion will increase aviation capacity and improve connections to global markets, while the recent introduction of U.S. customs pre-clearance at Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport will expand access to/from key American cities. New transit lines will enhance mobility to key districts, addressing persistent barriers to visitors' experience.

But infrastructure investments alone will not differentiate Toronto on the world stage. The city must also activate its destination districts with authentic cultural programming, animate public spaces that invite exploration and connection, develop landmark attractors that inspire international travel, and create arrival experiences that make Toronto feel accessible and welcoming. Winter must become a season of opportunity rather than limitation through

ambitious activation strategies. Neighbourhoods beyond downtown must be supported in becoming vibrant, visitor-ready destinations that showcase Toronto's true character and distribute economic benefits more equitably across communities.

This Destination Master Plan provides a comprehensive framework for achieving these ambitions over the next decade. It was developed by Resonance Consultancy through extensive research and consultation with more than 400 businesses, organizations, and community stakeholders throughout 2025, competitive benchmarking against leading urban destinations in North America, analysis of tourism performance trends, and alignment with broader city-building priorities including transit expansion, public realm enhancement, economic inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

The path forward requires partnership. This plan is not for one single organization to lead and develop. Rather, success depends on sustained collaboration among City of Toronto departments, Destination Toronto, provincial agencies, cultural institutions, Business Improvement Areas, major attractions, private sector investors, and community organizations. It demands alignment of resources, shared accountability for implementation, and collective commitment to the strategic priorities outlined in this plan.

This project was jointly funded by Destination Toronto and the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario). Destination Toronto served as the lead partner and project coordinator.





SECTION 2

TORONTO'S TOURISM LANDSCAPE TODAY

TORONTO 'S VISITOR ECONOMY

Success in Toronto's visitor economy comes from strong diversification, ensuring all demand engines are firing on high.

This includes geographic diversity across domestic, U.S. and key international markets, alongside a mix of traveller types, including leisure, business and meeting attendees, supporting balance throughout the year.

Business demand is concentrated on weekdays, while leisure travel is clustered more on weekends. International travel peaks in the summer months, and domestic travel remains steady year-round. Business events drive demand throughout the year, particularly in the shoulder seasons.

In 2025, a record 28.2 million visitors came to Toronto generating a record $9.1 billion in spending, with 37 per cent of spending coming from the U.S. and other international markets. International arrivals were the fastest growing segment of tourism, reaching 1.4 million visitors. These travellers tend to stay longer and spend more, driving a disproportionate share of overall visitor spending. Domestic visitation remained the largest segment at 25 million visitors, while the U.S. market was the second largest segment, with 1.9 million visitors.

Major meetings and events (multi-day events with more than 1,000 attendees) are a core pillar of Toronto's visitor economy. In 2025, Toronto hosted 74 major meetings with an estimated 378,000 delegates, generating $982 million in economic impact.



2025

28.2M

VISITOR ARRIVALS

2025

$9.1B

VISITOR SPENDING

2025

378,000

MEETING ATTENDEES ACROSS 74 MAJOR EVENTS

2025

$982M

MAJOR EVENTS ECONOMIC IMPACT



Throughout the development of the Destination Master Plan, key insights about Toronto's distinctive strengths and critical gaps pointed the way toward transformative action. These insights are outlined in the State of the Destination Executive Summary and include:

- Tourism is a significant export sector and the city's geographic location, population size and current market diversification position it well to further grow international visitation.
- Benchmarking against North American peers confirms Toronto's position as a top-tier destination for arts and culture, culinary experiences, retail, and attractions. Visitor behaviour data reinforces these findings, with dining, arts, culture, and shopping among the most frequently cited motivations for visitation.
- Toronto is one of the world's most diverse and inclusive cities; this is one of its key strengths. The city has an opportunity to further differentiate itself as a destination where every visitor feels welcomed.
- Toronto's global connectivity is is another defining strength. The city performs above average for air access, with US and international visitors accounting for 37% of total visitor spending and generating the highest per-trip expenditures.
- While connectivity to the city is strong, visitors often face challenges navigating Toronto, especially when exploring beyond the downtown core. Transportation congestion further limits efficient movement between districts and attractions. Wayfinding, accessibility, and regional transit integration all need improvement.
- The current street-level experience requires attention. To compete with top global urban destinations, Toronto needs more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly public spaces and strategies to ensure safety, cleanliness, and state of good repair, particularly in the downtown core.
- Toronto is well-positioned to attract more major events and conventions but is constrained by limited venue capacity and lack of convention centre-adjacent lodging. The city is experiencing increasing competition from U.S. cities that have expanded convention infrastructure and incentives.
- Seasonality remains a challenge with leisure visitation concentrated in the summer and spending peaking between May and September. Investment in winter events, indoor attractions, and outdoor recreation could improve the 40 per cent drop currently seen in visitor numbers between January and March.



SECTION 3

A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE

As the calendar flips to 2036, Toronto stands among the world's most dynamic urban destinations. Travellers of all types—leisure, business, conference delegates, investors—seek out Toronto's breadth and quality of experiences throughout the year.

Tourism is fuelling economic growth, attracting more spending to the city, expanding our supply chains and creating meaningful career opportunities for more people.

Visitors choose our city for its signature experiences. Our well-known destination assets have been elevated to iconic stature, and new experiences and places have been added to travellers' must-see and do lists.

They choose Toronto for its ease of access and exploration, a city that has evolved with the needs of visitors in mind. They plan longer stays, no matter the season. And they pack their bags knowing they are headed to a city as diverse as the world itself, and as welcoming as home.

Visitors arrive easily thanks to Toronto's extensive global connectivity via a newly transformed Toronto Pearson International Airport, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport or Union Station. They move smoothly into and throughout our city alongside residents on easy-to-navigate regional rail and public transit connected through a unified fare structure, walkable streets with clear wayfinding, and a network of connected cycling paths and water-based transportation.

Our streets are vibrant centres of activity. Visitors and locals join together in shared public spaces enjoying our globally inspired food scene, performing arts, nightlife and world-class festivals. A calendar of signature events, cultural programming and after-dark experiences ensure the city glows year-round, drawing visitors through every season

with compelling reasons to explore, stay longer, and return. We host the world's most influential events, highly sought-after concerts, and globally-watched sporting moments placing the city firmly in the international spotlight.

A new convention centre pulses with energy alongside hotels, restaurants and entertainment. Major meetings and conventions align with Toronto's leadership in technology, life sciences, finance, film, music and creative industries, turning business events into citywide celebrations and catalysts for further economic growth.

The waterfront serves as Toronto's front porch to the world—a cohesive, four-season destination with exceptional public spaces, diverse transportation options, and intuitive wayfinding. New landmark attractions blend immersive culture with urban nature to deliver experiences that inspire Canadians and international travellers. Neighbourhoods across the city—from Scarborough to North York to Etobicoke—attract new levels of visitors, each showcasing the authentic cultural expressions, culinary traditions, and creative energy that make Toronto extraordinary.

This is Toronto becoming the best version of itself as a destination. Not by imitating elsewhere, but by amplifying what has always made us exceptional: our diversity, our neighbourhoods, our natural setting, and our ability to bring the world together. Through coordinated investment, collaborative partnerships, and shared commitment to sustainable growth, Toronto stakes its rightful place on the global stage as a city where innovation meets inclusion, where culture thrives in every season, and where every visitor discovers something remarkable.



SECTION 4

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



The Toronto Destination Master Plan represents a comprehensive vision for strengthening Canada's largest city as a world-class urban destination.

Developed through extensive research, stakeholder engagement, and community consultation, this framework addresses the opportunities and challenges facing Toronto's visitor economy over the next decade.

To realize this vision, five interconnected tracks were identified to form a comprehensive framework for action. These priorities balance competitive positioning with authentic cultural expression, visitor experience excellence, and sustainable city-building that benefits both residents and visitors alike.

These five tracks are underpinned by a total of 29 strategies. Each strategy outlines specific approaches and considerations designed to transform the plan's vision into tangible outcomes.

The following list of strategies and actions represent the Toronto tourism community's response to what must be achieved over the coming 10 years, and will remain flexible to updates as Toronto evolves and grows. The stakeholder community has rallied around this plan, raising their hands to lead or support the implementation of these actions. Some of these actions are already underway; others will require time for the relevant organizations to work them into their business planning, or for the right partnerships to form. All actions will be built into a comprehensive Implementation Plan.



TRACK 1

ENSURE THE CITY IS WELCOMING, SAFE, AND INSPIRING

TRACK 2

SEAMLESSLY CONNECT PEOPLE TO AND WITHIN TORONTO AND THE BROADER REGION

TRACK 3

INCREASE TORONTO'S COMPETITIVENESS FOR MAJOR EVENTS

TRACK 4

DEVELOP NEW ATTRACTORS AND DEMAND DRIVERS

TRACK 5

UNITE PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO ADVANCE DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP



SECTION 5

STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

TRACK 1 TRACK 2 TRACK 3 TRACK 4 TRACK 5



TRACK 1

ENSURE THE CITY IS WELCOMING, SAFE, & INSPIRING

OBJECTIVE

Improve Toronto's visitor readiness and reinforce the city's reputation as vibrant, safe, and inclusive through placemaking, storytelling, and authentic cultural expression.

Strategies:

1.1 Ensure Toronto's Destination Districts are visitor ready
1.2 Improve safety and quality of key public spaces
1.3 Create a consistent sense of arrival and welcome
1.4 Enhance street-level vibrancy and pedestrian-friendly spaces
1.5 Strengthen Toronto's waterfront
1.6 Advance Indigenous placekeeping and partnership
1.7 Solidify Toronto's inclusivity and accessibility

1.1

ENSURE TORONTO'S DESTINATION DISTRICTS ARE VISITOR READY.

Toronto's most-visited and iconic districts shape visitor perceptions and drive significant economic activity, yet inconsistent activation, governance, and amenities limit their ability to deliver world-class experiences.

A formal framework to designate Destination Districts would focus resources where they have the greatest impact, and ensure that these districts benefit from coordinated interventions to increase their appeal and drive demand that supports the entire destination.

ACTIONS

A. Develop criteria and a framework to identify Destination Districts, including visitation levels, cultural significance, accessibility, anchor attractions, programming potential, and connectivity to major transit hubs.

B. Establish an implementation framework in which City divisions, Destination Toronto, and BIAs activate a coordinated suite of mechanisms (branding, public realm upgrades, enhanced wayfinding, activation protocols, bundled permitting and nighttime programming) whenever a Destination District is designated.



1.2

IMPROVE SAFETY AND QUALITY OF KEY PUBLIC SPACES ENSURING THEY ARE CLEAN, SECURE, AND WELCOMING YEAR ROUND.

Perceptions of safety, cleanliness, and public realm quality greatly impact how visitors feel and whether they choose to linger or return for a future trip.

Many of Toronto's key tourism districts face irregular upkeep, lighting gaps, and visible social issues that detract from the visitor experience. While Toronto is relatively safe, concerns about public space conditions act as barriers to the city's competitiveness and its welcoming reputation. Addressing this requires coordination to complete safety audits and public realm upgrades that encourage exploration and reinforce Toronto's identity as a safe, vibrant destination.



ACTIONS

A. Conduct a public space safety & lighting audit across popular tourism destinations to prioritize quick upgrades.

B. Align destination public space investments with the City's Complete Streets Guidelines and Public Realm Strategy to ensure walkability and accessibility.

C. Support initiatives led by Toronto Police's Community Engagement Unit, Community Safety and Wellbeing, Shelter & Support Services, Streets to Homes, Public Health, TTC Special Constables, and local BIAs that enhance safety, community presence, and outreach in visitor districts (e.g. SafeTO).

D. Work with BIAs and Toronto Police's Community Engagement Unit on community-led approaches, including the potential of roaming ambassadors, to promote safety and a welcoming atmosphere during peak visitation and event periods.

E. Develop a coordinated cleanliness and maintenance program for high-traffic visitor areas.

1.3

CREATE A CONSISTENT SENSE OF ARRIVAL AND WELCOME THROUGHOUT THE VISITOR'S JOURNEY.

First impressions shape every visitor journey, and Toronto has an opportunity to elevate its arrival experience across entry points, transit hubs, and key districts.

Today, visitors to airports, Union Station, hotels, meeting venues, and major attractions often encounter fragmented signage and uncoordinated messaging that can feel disorienting. A cohesive sense of welcome—integrating clear wayfinding, multilingual information, local art, and dynamic digital messaging—would create a great first impression.



ACTIONS

A. Develop a coordinated visitor arrival experience that begins at key entry points (including Toronto Pearson International Airport, Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, and Union Station) and flows through other key touchpoints, including hotels, meeting venues, and major attractions, supported by multilingual signage, local art installations, and digital screens showcasing what's on in the city and welcoming key groups.

B. Make wayfinding more consistent, visible, and accessible through physical and digital channels, helping visitors easily locate and navigate the PATH and key cultural and commercial hubs.

C. Leverage digital platforms, real-time data, and AI-driven tools to deliver highly personalized visitor information at scale, offering tailored itineraries, transit guidance, nearby events, accessibility info, and neighbourhood recommendations based on visitor interests and location.

D. Ensure a coordinated framework is in place to equip frontline workers and residents with consistent, accurate, and citywide destination information, supported by shared tools and resources that enhance the welcoming experience across Toronto.

1.4

ENHANCE TORONTO'S STREET-LEVEL VIBRANCY AND EXPERIENCE THROUGH ANIMATED PUBLIC SPACES THAT REFLECT THE CITY'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY.

Toronto lags peer cities in walkability and street-level vibrancy, with many areas lacking pedestrian-friendly design, active ground-floor uses, and memorable public spaces.

Key parts of the public realm remain underactivated, limiting visitor dwell time, social interaction, and local economic impact. Through initiatives to enhance seating, shade, lighting, patios, seasonal elements, and accessibility, Toronto can create more inviting streets. Priorities also include pedestrianization, streamlined policies for cultural activations and public art, after-dark programming, winter-friendly infrastructure, and stronger cross-sector coordination.

ACTIONS

A. Work with relevant City of Toronto departments and BIAs to improve street vibrancy through the preservation and addition of seating, shade structures, lighting, seasonal planters, patio expansion, and accessible rest areas that encourage dwell time and social interaction.

B. Undertake a Pedestrian-Priority Corridor Feasibility Study to evaluate candidate streets for year-round pedestrianization and implement vibrant lighting, public art, and event-ready infrastructure where most relevant.

C. Build off the success of Market Street seasonal street closure pilot and evaluate the economic impact and visitor flow to support similar opportunities in other neighbourhoods.

D. Improve the policy and regulatory environment for the development of more neighbourhood cultural activations, and the integration of public art installations, festivals, and storytelling programs into high-traffic visitor districts and parks.

E. Work with the City of Toronto to enable after-dark programming, such as live music, night markets, illuminated public art, and cultural happenings to enhance safety and vibrancy during evening hours.

F. Invest in climate-responsive infrastructure (such as heating, shade, weather protection, lighting, misting, and adaptable patios) to support programming, comfort, and activity year-round, especially in winter.

G. Develop a Winter Activation Strategy identifying priority districts, and outline winter programming, lighting, food experiences, and amenities to drive visitation from November–March.

H. Organize annual joint planning and information sharing between City of Toronto Economic, Development and Culture, Destination Toronto, and BIAs.

CASE STUDY



16TH STREET MALL PEDESTRIAN TRANSIT CORRIDOR (DENVER)

Denver revitalized its downtown core through the creation of the 16th Street Mall, a mile-long pedestrian-focused corridor that prioritizes people, transit, and public life over private vehicles.

Opened in 1982 and designed by architect I. M. Pei, the mall reimagined a key downtown street as a shared public space where wide pedestrian promenades are paired with a free shuttle transit service connecting major downtown destinations. The corridor links key civic, cultural, and commercial anchors including Union Station, Denver Pavilions, and numerous hotels, restaurants, and office buildings.

Today, the 16th Street Mall serves as one of downtown Denver's primary gathering spaces, attracting residents, workers, and visitors with outdoor dining, retail, street performers, and seasonal programming. Its pedestrian-first design encourages activity throughout the day while supporting local businesses and strengthening connections between downtown neighbourhoods.

By reclaiming a central corridor for pedestrians and transit, Denver created a defining placemaking feature that helped catalyze downtown revitalization and established the city centre as a vibrant destination for both residents and visitors.

1.5

STRENGTHEN TORONTO'S POSITION AS A LEADING WATERFRONT CITY BY CONNECTING MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS INTO A COHESIVE VISITOR EXPERIENCE.

Toronto's Lake Ontario waterfront is one of the city's greatest assets.

With major transformations underway at Ontario Place, Exhibition Place, the Central Waterfront, and the Port Lands, the city has an opportunity to connect these precincts into a cohesive, year-round destination. Today, lack of visitor awareness, poor connectivity, and gaps in amenities, programming, and wayfinding limit the area's ability to function as a unified visitor corridor. Through coordinated strategic planning to address these challenges, Toronto can transform the waterfront into a vibrant anchor for the city.



ACTIONS

A. Implement the forthcoming Waterfront Destination Strategy to unite Ontario Place, Exhibition Place, the Central Waterfront, and the Port Lands into a cohesive visitor corridor.

B. Identify and prioritize development of new visitation attractors along the waterfront to complement residential and commercial developments, and create a supporting investment strategy to guide funding, partnerships, and phased delivery.

C. Work in partnership with Waterfront Toronto, Ontario Place, Harbourfront Centre, the Toronto Port Authority and the Waterfront BIA to embed tourism experiences, visitor amenities, and year-round programming into new waterfront projects, ensuring design and mobility improvements align with destination objectives.

D. Develop a signature shoulder season waterfront event that unifies districts along Lake Ontario and showcases Toronto's cultural vibrancy.

E. Create visual and navigational connections between the downtown and the waterfront to help visitors understand their proximity to the lake.

F. Identify and advance opportunities to enhance the Toronto skyline viewing experience from the Toronto Islands through targeted amenities.

G. Support the execution of the Bentway Conservancy's Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan, and its role as a key connector linking the waterfront, downtown core, and major visitor destinations.

1.6

ADVANCE INDIGENOUS PLACEKEEPING AND PARTNERSHIP.

Indigenous placekeeping and partnership are central to an authentic, inclusive visitor experience that reflects Toronto's location on traditional territories.

There is a significant opportunity to advance reconciliation by expanding Indigenous leadership within the visitor economy, supporting Indigenous-led tourism businesses, and integrating Indigenous storytelling into wayfinding and visitor materials. Indigenous leaders and non-Indigenous partners can collaborate to incubate Indigenous-led experiences, strengthen economic opportunities, and ensure Indigenous perspectives shape how key spaces are developed and experienced.



ACTIONS

A. Partner with the City of Toronto to advance the Reconciliation Action Plan by embedding Indigenous cultural infrastructure, spaces, and experiences into major redevelopment and public realm projects.

B. Work with Indigenous partners to identify opportunities to integrate local Indigenous languages and storytelling in wayfinding systems, place names, and visitor orientation materials in ways that advance reconciliation and build awareness among visitors about Indigenous histories, cultures, and ongoing contributions.

C. Work with Indigenous tourism organizations and local Indigenous partners to advance Indigenous-led tourism through business development, market readiness training, and pathways to pilot and scale new visitor experiences.

1.7

SOLIDIFY TORONTO AS AN INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE CITY TO A DIVERSE RANGE OF VISITORS.

Toronto's identity as one of the world's most diverse and inclusive cities is a powerful global differentiator.

Aligning with the City's Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Diversity & Inclusion frameworks, as well as AODA requirements, will improve accessible mobility, wayfinding, amenities, and representation across visitor spaces, transit hubs, signage, and programming. Expanding the presence of clear accessibility information, highlighting 2SLGBTQIA+ businesses, and providing free public Wi-Fi in high-traffic visitor areas will reinforce Toronto as a destination where every visitor feels seen, valued, and welcome.



ACTIONS

A. Align with the City of Toronto's Disability Inclusion Action Plan and AODA requirements to enhance accessible mobility, wayfinding, and visitor amenities across tourism experiences and transit hubs.

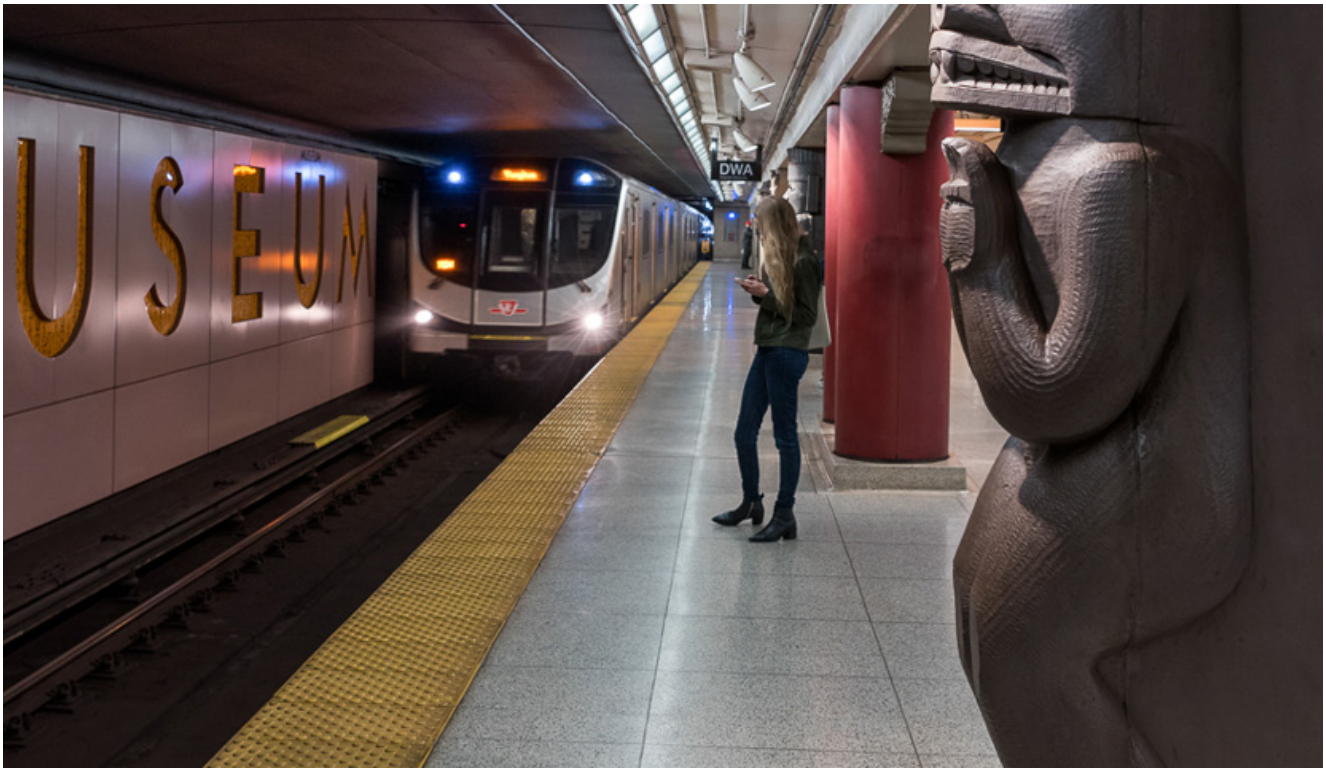
B. Align with the City of Toronto's Diversity & Inclusion frameworks to ensure visitor-facing spaces, signage, programming, and communications reflect Toronto's diverse communities.

C. Expand Toronto wayfinding program and digital visitor platforms to include accessibility information (e.g., step-free routes, accessible restrooms, sensory-friendly experiences).

D. Partner with 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, cultural groups, and BIAs (e.g., The 519, Pride Toronto, Church-Wellesley Village BIA) to ensure queer-owned, -operated, and -inclusive businesses and experiences are identified in visitor resources.

E. Expand the City of Toronto's ConnectTO program to deliver free public wi-fi throughout high-traffic visitor zones.

TRACK 1 TRACK 2 TRACK 3 TRACK 4 TRACK 5



TRACK 2

SEAMLESSLY CONNECT PEOPLE TO AND WITHIN TORONTO AND THE BROADER REGION

OBJECTIVE

Ensure Toronto is easy to access, navigate, and explore, enhancing mobility for all across the visitor journey.

Strategies:

2.1 Develop and implement congestion relief strategies
2.2 Make use of water transportation options
2.3 Strengthen inbound aviation capacity
2.4 Foster micromobility innovation
2.5 Support transit expansion
2.6 Strengthen regional connectivity

2.1

COLLABORATE WITH KEY PARTNERS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT CONGESTION RELIEF STRATEGIES THAT IMPROVE MOBILITY AND THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE.

Congestion in Toronto's downtown core and around major attractions limits visitor access, affecting tour operators and travellers.

Designating motor coach drop-off and staging zones, coordinating City of Toronto Transportation Services, the TTC, Metrolinx, and Business Improvement Areas to better align road closures and construction with major events, and piloting a dynamic event curb management system can significantly enhance mobility and access.



ACTIONS

A. Identify and designate motor coach drop-off areas near major hotels and attractions (such as theatres, the CN Tower, Ontario Place, St. Lawrence Market), and staging zones outside of the downtown core, to reduce congestion and improve visitor flow.

B. In partnership with the City of Toronto's Transportation Services, the TTC, Metrolinx, and BIAs, better coordinate road closures, track work and construction scheduling to ensure access to major events and high-traffic visitor zones.

C. Pilot a dynamic event curb management system to allocate loading, rideshare, and coach zones by time of day and demand, supported by real-time digital signage and data from the City of Toronto's CurbTO initiative.

D. Support efforts, including those of the Toronto Region Board of Trade Congestion Task Force, that aim to address congestion issues.

E. Provide clear routes and travel times from Toronto Pearson International Airport and Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to downtown, emphasizing transit connections as the fastest option.

F. Integrate the UP Express into the One Fare program and work with Metrolinx and the TTC to implement a visitor-friendly open-payment system with account-based fare capping.

2.2

MAKE SMART USE OF WATER TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS BOTH AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO ROAD CONGESTION AND AS A VISITOR EXPERIENCE.

Toronto's waterfront location offers untapped potential to use water-based transportation as both a practical way to get around and a fun visitor experience.

The Toronto Island Ferry is a popular means of getting to the Islands, and expanded water transportation across waterfront districts, such as ferry routes and sea bus services, could improve road congestion and connectivity. These modes of transit would showcase Toronto in a unique and memorable way, and differentiate the city from other urban destinations.

ACTIONS

A. Partner with Waterfront Toronto, Transport Canada, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Toronto Port Authority, and City Transportation Services to evaluate demand and feasibility of new or enhanced ferry and sea bus routes, building on results of the 2026 pilot.

B. Conduct a central marine terminal study exploring a mixed-use pier redevelopment model integrating public space, events, retail, and hospitality.

C. Integrate future mobility solutions into waterfront planning, including the potential for a gondola or aerial system connecting the mainland to the Toronto Islands.



2.3

STRENGTHEN INBOUND AVIATION CAPACITY AND PASSENGER FACILITATION TO MEET PROJECTED GROWTH IN DEMAND AND EVOLVING TRAVELLER NEEDS.

Toronto's strong air connectivity, which ranks above average among peer cities, makes it a global gateway and drives international visitation.

By advancing connectivity through improved airport access and the new Waterfront East Transit Line, partnering with Metrolinx and the City on visitor-friendly station upgrades, and integrating tourism perspectives into transit planning, public transportation can become the preferred way for visitors to experience the city.



ACTIONS

A. Work with Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, Toronto Pearson International Airport, airline partners, and Destination Toronto to advocate for expanded inbound aviation capacity, with increased frequencies and seasonal service from high-potential markets.

B. Support the construction of the Waterfront East Transit Line, emphasizing its visitor mobility and economic development benefits.

C. Collaborate with the Greater Toronto Airport Authority and provincial/municipal partners to explore strengthening airport-adjacent capacity (hotels, retail, business events) and mobility connections.

D. Work with Nieuport Aviation/Toronto Port Authority, the Greater Toronto Airport Authority, Destination Toronto, and airlines to use Toronto's airports to promote curated layover and stopover programs.

2.4

FOSTER MICROMOBILITY INNOVATION BY IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE, UPDATING REGULATIONS, AND TESTING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY.

Micromobility options—such as bike share, e-scooters, and emerging technologies—offer visitors sustainable and convenient ways to explore Toronto while easing pressure on transit and roads.

However, Toronto's micromobility networks and regulatory framework remain underdeveloped compared to peer cities. By expanding infrastructure near key destinations and transit hubs, integrating visitor information, streamlining regulations, and simplifying Bike Share Toronto use, the city can position micromobility as a seamless part of the visitor transportation ecosystem.

ACTIONS

A. Expand cycling and micromobility infrastructure, including dedicated parking and docking stations, near key visitor destinations and transit hubs.

B. Assess opportunities to present cycling and micromobility information more clearly to visitors.

C. Update municipal regulations and permit processes to streamline the approval of micromobility pilots and ensure consistent safety, accessibility, and insurance standards across operators.

D. Improve process for buying Bike Share Toronto passes for visitors without a mobile data plan.



2.5

SUPPORT TRANSIT EXPANSION THAT IMPROVES ACCESS TO KEY VISITOR DISTRICTS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACROSS THE CITY.

As Toronto advances major transit projects, there is an opportunity to enhance the visitor experience through thoughtful design, wayfinding, and route prioritization.

By advocating for key connections such as improved airport access and the Waterfront East Transit Line, partnering with Metrolinx and the City on visitor-friendly station upgrades, and integrating tourism perspectives into transit planning, public transportation can become the preferred way for visitors to experience the city.



ACTIONS

A. Evaluate ways to improve connection between Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, transit, and key visitor points.

B. Advocate for the Waterfront East Transit Line, emphasizing its visitor mobility and economic development benefits.

C. Partner with Metrolinx and the City of Toronto's Transit Expansion Office to ensure new and upgraded stations include visitor information, legible wayfinding, real-time mobility tools, and public art that reflects local identity.

D. Integrate tourism perspectives into future municipal and provincial transit planning to prioritize routes that improve access to high-traffic cultural, waterfront, and entertainment zones.

E. Develop a visitor-facing public transit education campaign, across airport touchpoints, attractions, hotels, and digital platforms, to encourage the use of TTC, UP Express, and Bike Share Toronto for travel to popular visitor districts.

2.6

STRENGTHEN REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN TORONTO, NIAGARA, AND SURROUNDING DESTINATIONS TO SUPPORT DAY TRAVEL AND EXTENDED STAYS.

Toronto is the primary gateway to Southern Ontario's attractions, and stronger regional connections can extend visitor stays and support multi-destination itineraries.

Aligning regional transit service with tourism demand, developing partnerships between Metrolinx, VIA Rail, and Destination Ontario to promote visitor-friendly rail options, and advocating for high-speed rail to Quebec would strengthen Toronto's gateway role and unlock greater regional tourism collaboration.

ACTIONS

A. Adjust regional transit service and frequency to better support tourism activity, aligning schedules beyond traditional weekday commuter patterns.

B. Partner with Metrolinx, VIA Rail, and Destination Ontario to promote new regional rail and transit links (Ontario Line, VIA High Frequency Rail, GO Transit Expansion) as visitor-friendly travel options connecting Toronto to Niagara, and other Ontario destinations, such as Blue Mountain, Muskoka, Prince Edward County, and Ottawa.

C. Advocate for and support the development of high-speed rail connections between Toronto and Quebec City to enhance regional mobility and expand multi-destination travel opportunities.



TRACK 1 TRACK 2 **TRACK 3** TRACK 4 TRACK 5



TRACK 3

INCREASE TORONTO'S COMPETITIVENESS FOR MAJOR EVENTS

OBJECTIVE

Position Toronto as a leading global host city by ensuring a strong annual lineup of major events and conventions, and animating the city year-round through diverse music, arts, and culinary experiences.

Strategies:

3.1 Support the vision for a next-generation convention centre
3.2 Enhance Exhibition Place and Ontario Place as a major events campus
3.3 Elevate Toronto's existing events
3.4 Evolve annual events to ones of global significance
3.5 Establish a pathway for event attraction
3.6 Expand Toronto's capacity for major events

3.1

SUPPORT THE VISION FOR A NEXT-GENERATION CONVENTION CENTRE AND SURROUNDING DISTRICT, INCLUDING HEADQUARTER HOTELS AND ADJACENT SPACES.

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre (MTCC) plays a central role in Toronto's convention and events ecosystem.

Toronto has an opportunity to advance a coordinated master plan that redefines the city's capacity to host large-scale events, support industry growth, and showcase regional strengths to audiences around the globe to enable the city to compete for a greater share of city-wide conventions.

A next generation convention centre, supported by headquarter hotels and a vibrant district, will help ensure Toronto has the scale required to attract the largest conventions and remain competitive in a high-value sector that drives tourism, investment, and long-term economic growth.

Without strategic investment in modern convention infrastructure, Toronto risks losing market share in a sector that contributes to jobs, innovation, and business development.

ACTIONS

A. Advance a convention centre master plan that prioritizes expanded hosting and accommodation capacity.

B. Integrate a comprehensive placemaking strategy into the convention centre master plan including a vibrant district, public space, flexible event areas and year round programming to animate the area and strengthen its identity.

C. Develop funding tools that provide dedicated revenue to allow the construction of a convention centre that can compete for a greater share of city-wide conventions in the marketplace.



3.2

ENHANCE EXHIBITION PLACE AND ONTARIO PLACE AS A MAJOR EVENTS CAMPUS.

Exhibition Place is one of Toronto's most important event venues, hosting major trade shows, sports, festivals, and conferences on a prime waterfront site. With the planned transformation of Ontario Place, there is a significant opportunity for the two sites to evolve into a unified events district.

The Exhibition Place Master Plan, the transformation of Ontario Place, the growth of The Bentway, and the arrival of the Ontario Line create the conditions to strengthen connectivity, expand programming, and deliver a compelling, year-round destination for events and leisure.



ACTIONS

A. Support Exhibition Place governance and Ontario Place redevelopment teams to coordinate master plans, event scheduling, and infrastructure investments, creating a unified events district.

B. Support the implementation of the Exhibition Place Concept Plan to modernize facilities, and expand event-ready public spaces and food service options for delegates and visitors.

C. Improve pedestrian and GO Transit/TTC connections between Liberty Village, Exhibition Place, Ontario Place, and the Bentway.

D. Activate underused areas with year-round cultural programming, outdoor exhibitions, and seasonal markets to extend visitation beyond trade events.

E. Work with Ontario Place redevelopment partners to ensure visitor-focused amenities, including food and beverage and public-facing services, are strategically integrated to support year-round use and alignment with the broader events district.



CASE STUDY



L.A. LIVE EVENTS DISTRICT & CONVENTION CENTRE (LOS ANGELES)

Los Angeles has developed the L.A. Live district as a major integrated events precinct anchored by the Los Angeles Convention Center. Located in downtown Los Angeles, the district combines large-scale convention infrastructure, sports and entertainment venues, headquarter hotels, and an active public realm within a highly walkable urban environment.

The Los Angeles Convention Center provides approximately 870,000 square feet of exhibition space and more than 150,000 square feet of meeting space, enabling the city to host major international conventions and trade shows. The facility is currently undergoing a major expansion and modernization. Construction began in October 2025 on a $2.6 billion project that will add 190,000 square feet of new contiguous exhibit space connecting the South and West Halls, along with a 98,000-square-foot rooftop multipurpose space known as the Halo. The majority of construction will be complete by spring 2028, ahead of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, with full project completion expected by spring 2029, and the convention center will remain open and operational throughout. Immediately adjacent, L.A. Live brings together venues including the Crypto.com Arena, restaurants, nightlife, and cultural attractions that create vibrant off-site experiences for delegates.

The presence of nearby headquarter hotels, including the JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. Live and The Ritz-Carlton Los Angeles, allows thousands of rooms to be accessed within walking distance of the convention facilities.

Strategic coordination between the Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board, the City of Los Angeles, and private developers has enabled the district to function as a unified events ecosystem, strengthening Los Angeles' competitiveness in the global meetings and conventions market.

3.3

ELEVATE TORONTO'S EXISTING PORTFOLIO OF EVENTS BY IMPROVING COORDINATION AMONG ORGANIZERS, VENUES, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS.

Toronto plays host to festivals, cultural gatherings, live music, and community celebrations that animate neighbourhoods and bolster local artists and businesses.

However, many producers face barriers such as high infrastructure costs, complex regulations, and limited resources that restrict their ability to launch, sustain, or grow events. By creating a coordinated citywide system for shared infrastructure, expanding support for small and mid-size producers, advancing the City's Festival Strategy, easing red tape, and strengthening partnerships, Toronto's event ecosystem will become a more resilient demand driver.



ACTIONS

A. Work with City of Toronto divisions, BIAs, and cultural institutions to establish a coordinated, citywide system for shared event infrastructure (e.g., safety equipment, lighting, staging, and crowd management assets) that lowers production costs, reduces duplication, and enables more events to launch and scale, particularly for emerging and under-resourced producers.

B. Executive deliverable actions within the City of Toronto Festival Strategy.

C. Work with the City of Toronto (Music Office, Visitor Economy Office, and regulatory divisions), venue operators, and event producers to expand music programming by improving support mechanisms, removing regulatory barriers, and supporting incubation that builds a resilient live music ecosystem and enriches the nighttime visitor experience.

D. Strengthen Toronto's creative ecosystem by partnering with public and private cultural institutions and theatres, independent artists, grassroots event organizers and neighbourhood arts organizations to support and expand programming and creative sector resilience, especially during the shoulder season and winter periods.

3.4

ELEVATE AND AGGREGATE ANNUAL EVENTS TO CREATE EVENTS OF GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE THAT ATTRACT VISITORS.

Toronto hosts many marquee events and cultural festivals that showcase its diversity and creativity, but they often operate independently with limited coordination and insufficient scale to achieve global visibility.

By clustering complementary events into unified festival periods and developing multi-year growth strategies—including international partnerships and expanded venues—Toronto can strengthen its global profile and turn its events calendar into a more powerful driver of domestic and international visitation

ACTIONS

A. Develop multi-year growth plans for marquee events, including international programming partnerships, expanded venue footprints, and cross-neighbourhood extensions.

B. Create an event aggregation framework to cluster complementary events (e.g., arts, film, music, culinary, and tech) into unified festival periods that amplify demand and increase global visibility.



3.5

ESTABLISH A RELIABLE PATHWAY FOR EVENT ATTRACTION THAT LEVERAGES DESTINATION STRENGTHS AND BUILDS IN KEY PERIODS.

While Toronto has proven it can host world-class events, sustained success requires dedicated funding, coordinated bidding, and strategic calendar planning.

Creating a Major Events Fund with public and private partners, securing multi-year funding for arts and culture, piloting new events in slower periods, and strengthening bid coordination is the necessary approach to maximize economic impact and reinforce Toronto's position as a premier host destination.



ACTIONS

A. Create a dedicated Toronto Major Events Fund in partnership with the private sector and higher levels of government to attract and retain globally recognized cultural, business, and sporting events.

B. Advocate for a multi-year funding framework by all levels of government for Toronto's arts, culture, and festival ecosystem, with stable, predictable investment that strengthens year-round vibrancy beyond major events.

C. Identify gaps in Toronto's annual event calendar and launch a pilot program to incubate new annual events, providing seed funding, venue support, permitting acceleration, and marketing amplification.

D. Strengthen Toronto's competitiveness for hosting international events by developing a coordinated assessment and bid strategy with key partners such as Destination Toronto, the City of Toronto, provincial agencies, and venue operators.

3.6

EXPAND TORONTO'S CAPACITY FOR MAJOR CULTURAL, SPORTING, AND ENTERTAINMENT EVENTS.

Toronto's ability to host global-scale sporting events, international concerts, and cultural gatherings is limited by venue capacity, particularly for events requiring more than 50,000 seats.

Although the city has venues like Scotiabank Arena and Rogers Centre, it ranks thirteenth among peer cities in sports venue capacity, limiting its ability to attract high-impact events. Gaps in off-site venues also constrain conferences and related programming. A feasibility study for a new stadium and an assessment of other venue needs would help address these shortages and strengthen Toronto's competitiveness for transformational events.

ACTIONS

A. Conduct a feasibility study for a new large-scale, multi-purpose stadium capable of hosting major sporting events, international concerts, and cultural events, including site options, capital requirements, governance models, and year-round programming potential.

B. Assess the city's current and potential off-site venue landscape to address existing capacity shortages and attract new venues capable of supporting demand.



Image Credit: Joshua Halling

TRACK 1 TRACK 2 TRACK 3 TRACK 4 TRACK 5



TRACK 4

DEVELOP NEW ATTRACTORS AND DEMAND DRIVERS

OBJECTIVE

Develop and connect new attractions and experiences to create year-round opportunities for tourism and encourage more visitation throughout the destination.

Strategies:

4.1 Help more neighbourhoods become destinations
4.2 Develop new landmark attractions and experiences
4.3 Leverage developments to integrate tourism
4.4 Stimulate new accommodation supply

4.1

HELP MORE NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CLUSTERS OF ATTRACTORS BECOME VIBRANT, VISITOR-READY DESTINATIONS.

Tourism in Toronto is concentrated in the downtown core and established districts, while many culturally rich neighbourhoods remain under-visited despite offering compelling experiences that reflect the city's multicultural identity.

By co-developing Neighbourhood Destination Plans with BIAs, community groups, and residents, and investing in infrastructure, business readiness, culinary development, and cultural storytelling, Toronto can create a more diverse and vibrant visitor experience.



ACTIONS

A. Co-develop Neighbourhood Destination Plans with BIAs, community organizations, cultural institutions, major attractions, and local residents to outline placemaking improvements, programming opportunities, wayfinding, public realm upgrades, and visitor-serving amenities.

B. Support clusters of experiences and attractors (including culinary, cultural, and retail) in Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke.

C. Expand support for façade improvement, storefront activation, and public art programs to help neighbourhoods enhance visual identity, cultural storytelling, and pedestrian vibrancy.

D. Develop a "Visitor-Ready Toolkit" to help neighbourhoods build capacity around accessibility, business coordination, visitor experience, marketing, safety, and cleanliness.

E. Strengthen restaurant and food service operation readiness by promoting group-ready standards that enable them to accommodate international trade groups, delegation visits, and meeting-scale dining experiences.

4.2

DEVELOP NEW LANDMARK ATTRACTIONS AND SIGNATURE EXPERIENCES THAT RAISE TORONTO'S GLOBAL PROFILE AND INSPIRE TRAVEL THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

While Toronto boasts strong cultural and natural assets, developing ambitious, globally distinctive, landmark attractions will strengthen its competitiveness.

Through market assessment and international benchmarking, the city can prioritize transformative concepts—such as a Conservation Eco-District linking the Toronto Zoo and Rouge National Urban Park, and signature waterfront and ravine experiences that highlight environmental leadership and Indigenous stewardship—to elevate its global profile.



ACTIONS

A. Identify and prioritize 3-5 concepts for a new globally significant landmark attraction for Toronto through a comprehensive market assessment and international benchmarking study, evaluating opportunities that would elevate the city's global profile.

B. Partner with the Toronto Zoo, Rouge National Urban Park, and regional partners to explore and support the development of a Conservation Eco-District, positioning the area as a nature-based visitor destination that integrates conservation, education, recreation, and Indigenous stewardship.

C. Position and animate Toronto's parks, ravines, and waterfront as signature visitor experiences that showcase the city's environmental leadership and access to nature.

D. Ensure design excellence is prioritized in the creation of and upgrades to public spaces.

4.3

LEVERAGE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT SITES TO INTEGRATE TOURISM AND VISITOR EXPERIENCES.

Toronto's ongoing development presents opportunities to embed tourism, visitor experiences, and cultural programming into major projects.

Waterfront precincts, heritage properties, public buildings, and mixed-use districts can evolve into attractors and cultural anchors that boost neighbourhood vitality. Key actions include creating a Tourism Investment Opportunity Portfolio and Prospectus, applying a tourism lens to planning processes, and partnering with the City of Toronto and developers to ensure redevelopments incorporate visitor-focused uses that strengthen the tourism economy.



ACTIONS

A. Develop a Tourism Investment Opportunity Portfolio that maps shovel-ready and future-ready sites for attractions, entertainment districts, waterfront experiences, and cultural assets, in partnership with Toronto Global, CreateTO, Waterfront Toronto, and major landowners.

B. Launch a Toronto Tourism Investment Prospectus highlighting priority opportunities, market demand narratives, workforce assets, development incentives, and potential returns, targeted at domestic and international investors.

C. Embed a tourism lens in the planning and design review of new and emerging development sites to assess opportunities for visitor experiences, cultural uses, and public realm activation (e.g., YZD and Woodbine Entertainment redevelopment).

D. Work with City Planning, CreateTO, and Heritage Planning to ensure redevelopment concepts for landmark public buildings and historic sites include options for visitor-facing uses such as museums, cultural attractions, exhibitions, music venues and signature experiences.

E. Designate Old City Hall as a priority site for a future iconic cultural hub or visitor attraction, ensuring redevelopment decisions fully evaluate its potential as a landmark destination.

F. Advocate for a broader approach to heritage conservation that extends beyond historic architecture to include places and visual markers of intangible cultural significance.

4.4

LEVERAGE PLANNING AND ECONOMIC POLICY TOOLS TO STIMULATE NEW ACCOMMODATION SUPPLY IN AREAS ALIGNED WITH KEY ATTRACTORS AND TOURISM DEMAND DRIVERS.

Toronto's hotel inventory is not optimally aligned to demand drivers throughout the destination, limiting its ability to accommodate growing visitation, attract major events, and support tourism outside the downtown core.

By identifying priority development zones, creating a Hotel Investment Attraction Strategy, introducing targeted incentives, and prioritizing hotel development within key areas like the Convention District, Ontario Place, and Exhibition Place, Toronto can strategically expand supply to meet demand and drive broader economic growth.



ACTIONS

A. Work with the City of Toronto Planning Division and CreateTO to identify priority zones for new hotel development based on visitor demand, growth plans, proximity to major attractions and cultural clusters, and transit accessibility.

B. Develop a Hotel Investment Attraction Strategy that outlines demand forecasts, site opportunities, development incentives, and partnership models to attract national and international hotel brands and investors to sites in the core and outside of the downtown (e.g. Scarborough and North York).

C. Introduce economic incentives and financing tools (e.g., tax increment financing, density bonusing, development charge adjustments, or public land partnerships) for hotel projects that support city-building goals and increase room supply in under-served areas.

D. Prioritize hotel development in major precincts (e.g., convention district, Ontario Place/ Exhibition Place) through explicit inclusion in master plans, secondary plans, and RFP requirements.

CASE STUDY

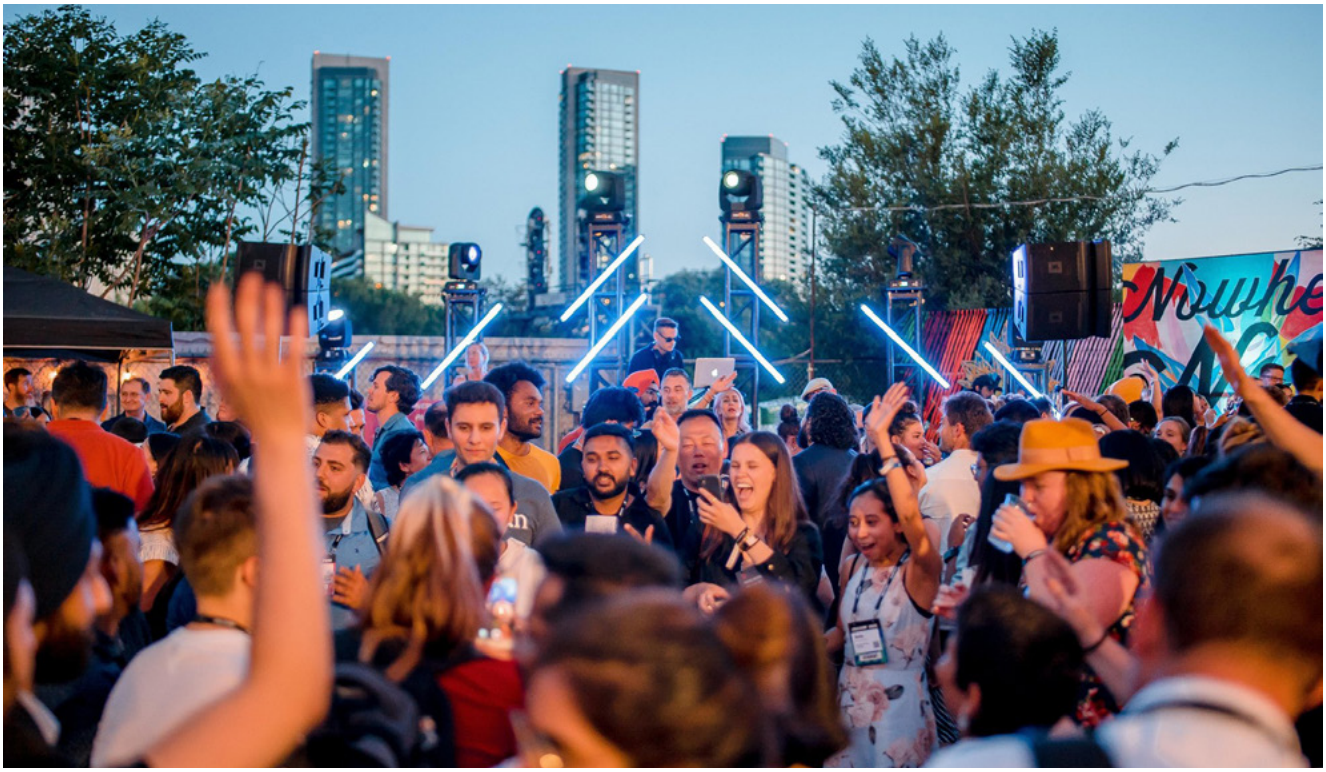


VANCOUVER HOTEL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

In 2025, Vancouver City Council approved a new Hotel Development Policy explicitly designed to tackle a documented shortage of hotel rooms and align accommodation growth with tourism and major events.

A study commissioned by Destination Vancouver found that the city had experienced a net loss of nearly 2,000 hotel rooms since 2010, even as visitor demand grew. The new policy aims to add 10,000 hotel rooms city-wide by 2050, replacing an interim 2018 policy and introducing more flexible hotel zoning in the Central Business District, Broadway corridor, transit-oriented areas, and entertainment districts. Measures include allowing mixed-use hotel-residential projects, offering additional density in some locations, and embedding hotel targets (e.g., increasing the Broadway Plan's 30-year hotel room goal from 1,200 to 3,000 rooms). Vancouver's example shows how a city can use land-use policy, quantified room targets, and investment signals in tandem to expand and diversify hotel supply in areas aligned with transit and visitor demand.

TRACK 1 TRACK 2 TRACK 3 TRACK 4 TRACK 5



TRACK 5

UNITE PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO ADVANCE DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP

OBJECTIVE

Advance the Destination Master Plan and foster a sustainable visitor economy that benefits residents, protects the environment, and builds long-term resilience through coordinated collaboration, funding, and partnerships.

Strategies:

5.1 Activate a shared implementation plan
5.2 Embrace the visitor perspective in planning and development
5.3 Reduce bureaucratic hurdles for tourism businesses and investors
5.4 Advance environmental sustainability
5.5 Attract and retain a skilled, diverse workforce
5.6 Generate local prosperity and belonging through tourism

5.1

ACTIVATE A SHARED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WITH ACCOUNTABILITIES ACROSS PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS.

Successful implementation of the Toronto Destination Master Plan requires clear accountability, coordinated governance, and sustained partner commitment.

A multi-year Implementation Plan will define responsibilities, timelines, and performance metrics, while a Steering Group will oversee delivery and decision-making. Embedding tourism objectives into business plans will ensure alignment and measurable outcomes.

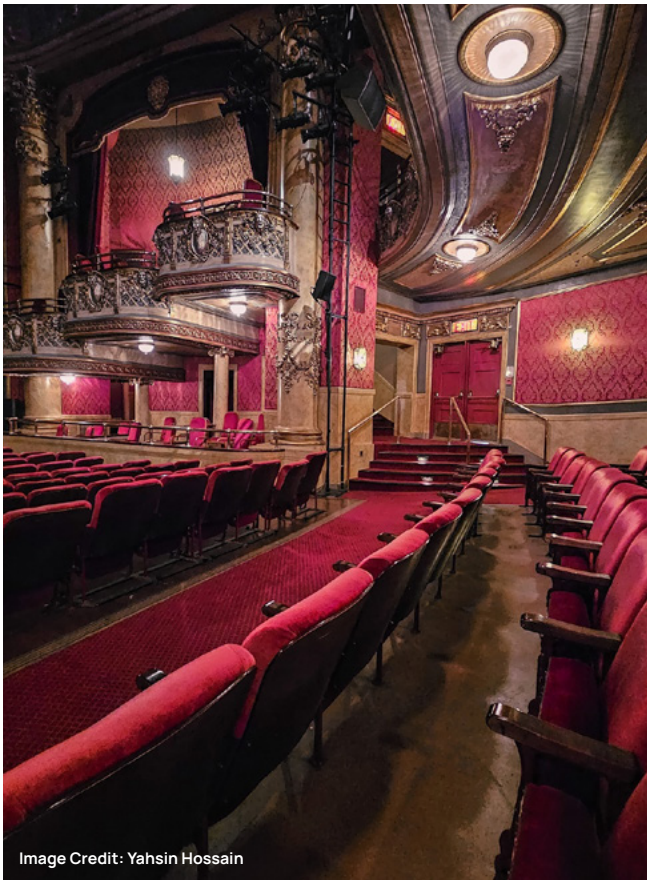


Image Credit: Yahsin Hossain

ACTIONS

A. Develop a multi-year Implementation Plan that assigns clear accountabilities, timelines, resource needs, and performance indicators for each strategy and action across City of Toronto divisions, Destination Toronto, BIAs, Waterfront Toronto, cultural institutions, major attractions, provincial partners, and private-sector partners.

B. Establish an Implementation Steering Group to oversee delivery, monitor progress, and coordinate decision-making.

C. Embed tourism objectives into the business plans and service plans of key City of Toronto divisions (e.g., Economic Development & Culture, City Planning, Transportation Services, Parks & Recreation, Waterfront Secretariat) to ensure alignment with shared destination goals.

CASE STUDY



BARCELONA CITY AND TOURISM COUNCIL

Barcelona established a City and Tourism Council to provide coordinated governance and shared accountability for destination management across public, private, and community partners.

The Council advises Barcelona's City Council on tourism policy and management, bringing together stakeholders from across the tourism ecosystem to oversee implementation, monitor impacts through key performance indicators, and coordinate decision-making. Barcelona embeds visitor perspectives into city planning processes, publishes monthly forecasts of visitor volumes to help manage carrying capacity, and works to ensure tourism contributes to quality of life and social cohesion, demonstrating how clear implementation accountability structures and sustained stakeholder commitment can align diverse partners around common objectives.

5.2

EMBRACE THE VISITOR PERSPECTIVE IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

Visitor experience is shaped by the same infrastructure, public realm, transportation, and regulatory decisions that affect residents.

Integrating tourism considerations into public and private planning processes ensures decisions reflect how visitors navigate and experience the city, while also benefitting the local community. Strengthening partnerships with transit agencies, BIAs, attractions, and Destination Toronto will embed visitor insights and mobility data into decision-making.



ACTIONS

A. Embed visitor experience considerations into key planning and development processes, including Secondary Plans, precinct frameworks, public realm guidelines, transportation planning, and major capital projects, to ensure decisions reflect how visitors navigate, understand, and enjoy Toronto.

B. Integrate visitor insights, mobility data, and satisfaction metrics into policy development and capital planning processes by partnering with TTC, Metrolinx, BIAs, attractions, and Destination Toronto to share relevant data and trends.

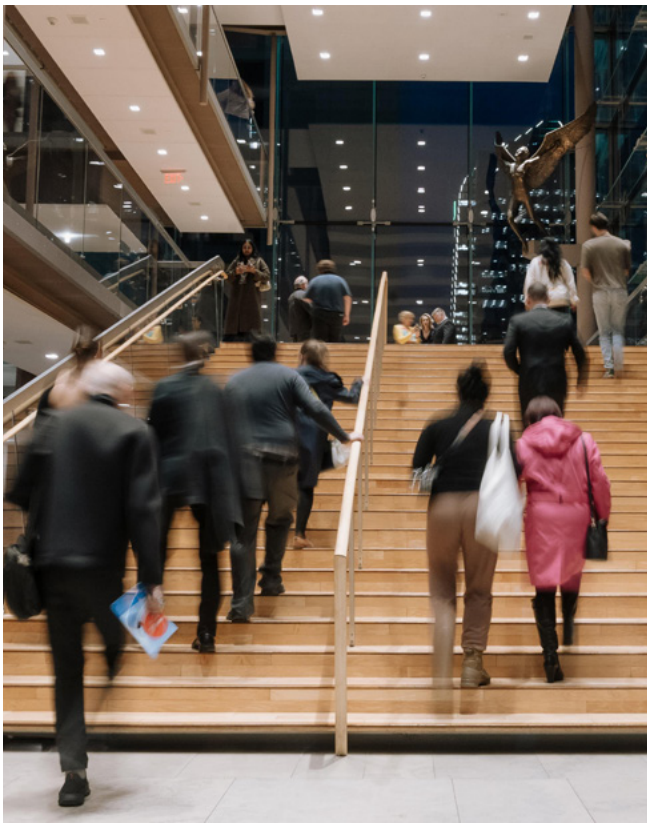
C. Conduct an annual visitor survey, along with other collected data, to support a Visitor Experience Insights Report that captures trends in visitor satisfaction, complaints, mobility challenges, and new expectations, providing a shared evidence base for policy and planning decisions.

5.3

REDUCE BUREAUCRATIC HURDLES FOR ORGANIZATIONS SEEKING TO DELIVER OR INVEST IN VISITOR EXPERIENCES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND PRODUCTS.

Complex regulations, slow approvals, and lack of coordination can deter organizations seeking to contribute to Toronto's visitor economy.

Establishing a Tourism Investment Concierge, fast-tracking shovel-ready and time-sensitive proposals, clarifying design guidelines for public-realm initiatives, and streamlining liquor licensing would reduce friction, support innovation, and position Toronto as an investment-friendly destination that welcomes partners committed to enhancing the visitor experience.



ACTIONS

A. Create a "Tourism Investment Concierge" service within the City's Economic Development and Culture Division to guide investors and developers through City permitting, zoning, and partnership opportunities.

B. Introduce a "Fast Track" pathway for shovel-ready tourism investments, innovative cultural installations, and time-sensitive event proposals that meet predefined criteria (e.g. impact, safety, alignment with City strategies).

C. Develop clear design guidelines and checklists for private-sector projects seeking to contribute to the public realm or cultural infrastructure.

D. Develop land-use and development policies that reinforce the role of designated cultural, nightlife, and event districts, ensuring new developments are planned with an understanding of year-round programming, nighttime activity, and visitor presence.

E. Advocate for clearer, streamlined liquor licensing and Special Occasion Permit policies that responsibly enable nightlife events and businesses, including exploring the extension of 24-hour liquor licensing in designated nightlife zones.

5.4

ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY ACROSS THE VISITOR ECONOMY.

Environmental sustainability is a growing priority for travellers, investors, and residents, making alignment with Toronto's climate goals essential for the visitor economy.

Through private and non-profit sector partnerships and by aligning with the City's Climate Action and Resilience Strategy, Toronto can reduce environmental impacts, strengthen green infrastructure in high-traffic areas, and position itself as a leader in sustainable tourism.

ACTIONS

A. Partner with major venues, cultural institutions, and event producers to co-develop and implement joint solutions that reduce their environmental impacts.

B. Align destination planning with the City of Toronto's Climate Action and Resilience Strategy to assess tourism assets under future climate scenarios and prioritize green infrastructure and nature-based design within high-traffic visitor zones.



5.5

ATTRACT AND RETAIN A SKILLED, DIVERSE WORKFORCE IN TORONTO'S VISITOR ECONOMY.

A skilled, diverse, and resilient workforce is key to delivering great visitor experiences and sustaining growth in Toronto's tourism sector.

By aligning with the City's Inclusive Economic Development Framework and working with education partners and major employers to expand training in high-demand areas, Toronto can build workforce capacity, improve job quality, and promote tourism as a meaningful career path.

ACTIONS

A. Align Toronto's tourism workforce priorities with the City's Inclusive Economic Development Framework (Pillar A: Inclusive Workforce Development and Sector Pathways) and recommendations from the City of Toronto Economic and Community Development Committee, ensuring tourism roles are integrated into programs supporting decent work, career pathways, and economic inclusion.

B. Through collaboration among local college and universities, major employers, and other relevant partners, expand targeted training streams in high-demand areas such as culinary arts, hospitality management, events, guest services, and technical production.



5.6

ADVANCE A VISITOR ECONOMY THAT STRENGTHENS TORONTO'S COMPETITIVENESS WHILE GENERATING BROAD-BASED PROSPERITY AND A SENSE OF BELONGING FOR RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITIES.

Tourism growth must do more than simply increase visitor spending; it should create meaningful economic opportunities and improve residents' quality of life.

By aligning with the City's economic priorities, measuring impact through a Social & Economic Impact Framework, and promoting responsible visitor behaviour, Toronto can strengthen competitiveness while fostering inclusive, shared prosperity into the future.



ACTIONS

A. Align tourism initiatives with the City of Toronto's broader economic development priorities, including the City's Inclusive Economic Development Framework, Main Street Recovery, and Cultural Strategic Plan, to ensure tourism investments advance inclusive and sustainable growth.

B. Develop a Social & Economic Impact Framework that includes a Resident Sentiment Survey and Community Wellbeing Index, and complementary data indicators to measure how tourism contributes to shared prosperity, and use these insights to guide policy and investment priorities.

C. Promote responsible visitor behaviour that reflects cultural sensitivity, respects shared and residential spaces, and minimizes waste impacts.

SECTION 6

APPENDIX



PROJECT BACKGROUND & APPROACH



The development of the Toronto Destination Master Plan followed a structured, multi-phase process designed to assess the city's current tourism landscape, engage industry and community stakeholders, and build a clear, actionable roadmap for the next decade.

Guided by Resonance Consultancy and Destination Toronto and informed by extensive research and consultation, the Destination Master Plan reflects a combination of qualitative insights, quantitative analysis, and collaborative visioning.

The planning process emphasized consultation, data-driven assessment, and shared ownership. Overseen by a Steering Committee representing key sectors across tourism, hospitality, culture, economic development, and major attractions, the project team engaged stakeholders throughout the tourism ecosystem, conducted comprehensive analysis of the destination and its competitive position, and facilitated strategic development sessions that shaped the final recommendations. The steps on the following pages summarize this methodology.

PHASE 1

PROJECT LAUNCH & GOVERNANCE

The project began with a comprehensive setup process to establish clear governance structures, align on objectives, and understand the current operating environment.

A Steering Committee was formed to provide strategic guidance throughout the planning process.The project team then conducted a site visit to meet with Destination Toronto staff, Steering Committee members, key industry partners, and representatives from major tourism assets. These early conversations provided critical context regarding emerging challenges, operational realities, and evolving visitor trends in Toronto.



PHASE 2

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

Stakeholder engagement remained a foundational component of the planning process.

The project team developed a detailed stakeholder map and consultation plan, identifying priority groups across tourism, hospitality, culture, transportation, economic development, the public sector, and community organizations.

The engagement process included 40+ one-on-one industry interviews, 19 sector-specific focus groups, and 9 visioning workshops. In total, 411 unique businesses and organizations across Toronto participated. These engagement activities informed discussions on current trends, destination strengths, barriers to growth, and the future potential of Toronto as a globally competitive destination.

Additionally, an industry-wide survey was conducted, generating 586 responses from professionals working across hotels, attractions, arts and culture, events, transportation, and related sectors. The survey, publically available and shared through a variety of channels, gathered quantitative insights on destination perceptions, priority experiences, infrastructure needs, and strategic opportunities.



PHASE 3

DESTINATION ASSESSMENT

The third phase focused on building a comprehensive understanding of where Toronto stands today.

The project team conducted a strategic review of existing plans, economic analysis, market research, and tourism performance data to establish baseline conditions.

This analysis was supplemented by:

Tourism Trends Analysis – A review of global and national travel and tourism trends to understand how the visitor economy has evolved and identify emerging opportunities and challenges shaping the competitive landscape.

Destination Product Benchmarking – Comparative analysis using proprietary user-generated review data and destination assessment tools to evaluate Toronto's tourism products and experiences against 14 peer North American cities. The benchmarking framework also evaluated Toronto across 51 indicators grouped into 12 categories: Arts & Culture, Visitor Attractions, Sightseeing, Nightlife, Shopping, Culinary, Nature & Outdoors, Lodging, Sports, Meetings & Conventions, Connectivity, and Crime.

Destination Visitation Trends – Analysis of key markets and visitor behaviours to understand current demand patterns, seasonal fluctuations, geographic distribution of visitors, and market opportunities.

Hospitality Performance Assessment – Examination of the visitor economy, lodging supply and demand, hotel performance metrics, and future development potential. This assessment revealed Toronto's position relative to peer cities in hotel inventory and convention centre capacity.

These findings were synthesized into the State of the Destination Report, which established the baseline conditions for the strategy development phase and identified key priorities for tourism growth and stewardship.



PHASE 4

DESTINATION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

With the assessment complete, the project team convened visioning workshops with the Steering Committee, Destination Toronto leadership, key industry stakeholders, and tourism ecosystem partners.

Participants engaged in structured exercises to identify priorities, refine strategic themes, and provide direction on topics such as visitor infrastructure, business tourism capacity, seasonal demand management, product development, neighbourhood tourism, and global competitiveness. Insights from these sessions informed the development and refinement of the proposed Destination Strategy Recommendations.



PHASE 5

DESTINATION MASTER PLAN

The final phase focused on developing and socializing the draft Destination Master Plan with city leaders, industry partners, and key stakeholder groups. Sessions gathered feedback, validated strategic priorities, and strengthened alignment across agencies and partners.

Following revisions, the project team prepared the finalized Toronto Destination Master Plan, including refined strategies, roles and responsibilities, and best practice case studies from peer cities.

The final plan is intended to serve as both an advocacy tool and a practical roadmap to guide tourism policy, investment, and destination development across Toronto in the years ahead.

CASE STUDY CITATIONS

DENVER'S 16TH STREET MALL PEDESTRIAN TRANSIT CORRIDOR	https://denvergov.org/Government/Agencies-Departments-Offices/Agencies-Departments-Offices-Directory/Department-of-Transportation-and-Infrastructure/Programs-Services/Projects/16th-Street-Mall#section-3
L.A. LIVE EVENTS DISTRICT & CONVENTION CENTRE	https://www.lalive.com/
VANCOUVER HOTEL DEVELOPMENT POLICY	https://guidelines.vancouver.ca/policy-hotel-development.pdf
BARCELONA CITY AND TOURISM COUNCIL	https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/turisme/en

REFERENCE STRATEGIES & PLANS

The Destination Master Plan is meant to consolidate the key goals shared by stakeholders in Toronto's visitor economy.

While the Plan contains many new ideas, it also incorporates many elements of existing plans and reports completed or in development across the city, to ensure destination alignment. The plans and reports drawn from for the Destination Master Plan include:

Destination Toronto

- Visitor Economy Study 2023
- Annual Report 2024
- Market Performance Report 2025
- Destination Toronto Resident Survey May 2025

City of Toronto Strategies/Reports

- Culture Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto 2025-2035
- Sidewalks to Skylines: A 10-year Action Plan for Toronto's Economy 2025-2035
- Visitor Economy Office: Strategic Directions Report 2023-2028
- Level Up: Toronto's Esports Strategy 2023-2027
- Music Industry Strategy 2022-2026
- Toronto's Nightlife Action Plan 2019
  - Nightlife Action Plan 2024 update – SafeTO resources
  - Night Economy Working Groups 2024 update
- Toronto Island Park Master Plan
- City of Toronto Long-Term Vision, Plans & Strategies
- SafeTO Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan 2021
- SafeTO Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan – 2025 updates
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2032
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2025-2028
- Festival Strategy

Waterfront

- Waterfront Toronto Annual Report '23-'24
- Waterfront Toronto Business Plan 2024-2025
- Waterfront Toronto 5 Year Strategic Plan 2023-2028
- Toronto Region Board of Trade Ripple Effect, Unlocking Toronto's Waterfront Potential
- Toronto Region Board of Trade The Power of Connection
- Waterfront BIA Survey of Commercial Passenger Vessels in Toronto Harbour

Transit & Infrastructure Projects

- Metrolinx – East Harbour Transit Hub
- Metrolinx – Yonge North Subway Extension
- Metrolinx – Eglinton Crosstown LRT
- Metrolinx – Ontario Line Subway
- Metrolinx – Davenport Diamond Greenway
- Waterfront Toronto – Waterfront East LRT
- VIA Rail – High Frequency Train from Toronto to Montreal
- City of Toronto – Downtown Yonge redevelopment
- Park People – Canadian Cities Parks Report 2024

Additional Projects & Reports

- Under Gardiner Public Realm Plan
- Exhibition Place Master Plan
- Exhibition Place Budget Notes
- Ontario Place Revitalization
- Sankofa Square (Yonge-Dundas Square)
- Metro Toronto Convention Centre Business and Strategic Plan 2024-2027
- A Public Realm Plan for Yonge North York
- Ravine Loop Trail
- To Higher Ground: The Toronto Aboriginal Research Project 10-Year Legacy Review and Indigenous Prosperity Action Plan
- Air Canada expansion via Billy Bishop Airport to more US cities
- Workforce Issues, Opportunities, and Impact Report 2024

DESTINATION MASTER PLAN

2026–2036

The Destination Master Plan is a bold, collaborative roadmap for growing Toronto's visitor economy over the next decade.

TRACK	STRATEGY
1. ENSURE THE CITY IS WELCOMING, SAFE, AND INSPIRING	1.1 Ensure Toronto's Destination Districts are visitor ready 1.2 Improve safety and quality of key public spaces 1.3 Create a consistent sense of arrival and welcome 1.4 Enhance street-level vibrancy and pedestrian-friendly spaces 1.5 Strengthen Toronto's waterfront 1.6 Advance Indigenous placekeeping and partnership 1.7 Solidify Toronto's inclusivity and accessibility
2. SEAMLESSLY CONNECT PEOPLE TO AND WITHIN TORONTO AND THE BROADER REGION	2.1 Develop and implement congestion relief strategies 2.2 Make use of water transportation options 2.3 Strengthen inbound aviation capacity 2.4 Foster micromobility innovation 2.5 Support transit expansion 2.6 Strengthen regional connectivity
3. INCREASE TORONTO'S COMPETITIVENESS FOR MAJOR EVENTS	3.1 Support the vision for a next-generation convention centre 3.2 Enhance Exhibition Place and Ontario Place as a major events campus 3.3 Elevate Toronto's existing events 3.4 Evolve annual events to ones of global significance 3.5 Establish a pathway for event attraction 3.6 Expand Toronto's capacity for major events
4. DEVELOP NEW ATTRACTORS AND DEMAND DRIVERS	4.1 Help more neighbourhoods become destinations 4.2 Develop new landmark attractions and experiences 4.3 Leverage developments to integrate tourism 4.4 Stimulate new accommodation supply
5. UNITE PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO ADVANCE DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP	5.1 Activate a shared implementation plan 5.2 Embrace the visitor perspective in planning and development 5.3 Reduce bureaucratic hurdles for tourism businesses and investors 5.4 Advance environmental sustainability 5.5 Attract and retain a skilled, diverse workforce 5.6 Generate local prosperity and belonging through tourism



This project is jointly funded by Destination Toronto and the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario). Destination Toronto is serving as the lead partner and project coordinator.

DESTINATION TORONTO | Canada

Delivered by:

resonance

info@resonanceco.com
+1-604-681-0804