

Responsible Development in Action

2020 – 2025



Honouring Indigenous History

These lands are part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, signatories of Treaty 13 and Host First Nation to YZD.

For thousands of years, it has been the Traditional Territory of many First Nations, including the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee Peoples. We are committed to the wise stewardship of these lands and to meaningful engagement and partnership with Indigenous Peoples, as we strive to shape communities welcoming to all.

Mississaugas of the Credit
First Nation Knowledge
Keeper Dan Secord

A Note from Claire Sault

Ogiima Kwe (Chief), Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

The story of these lands is one of connection between people, place and purpose.

The transformation of the former Downsview Airport lands into YZD arises within a long-standing relationship to this territory. It invites us to renew our commitment to the land, to deepen our understanding of shared responsibilities, and to honour the stewardship that guided the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation over their treaty lands and waters.

Our collaboration with Northcrest Developments rests on trust, mutual respect and a willingness to learn from each other. This work reflects the First Nation's understanding of how Indigenous presence endures and how traditional knowledge offers insight into how places grow and thrive. It moves beyond transaction to relationship-building, and beyond construction to community-shaping.

Reconciliation is an ongoing way of being rooted in this land, in this time, in this partnership. It expresses itself through listening and caring, through the choices we make and the spaces we build together. Through our shared endeavour we align with the values of respect, reciprocity and relationship that guide the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation as we move forward on their treaty lands.



A Message from Derek Goring

CEO, Northcrest Developments

YZD, named for the call-sign of the former Downsview Airport is unfolding at the heart of the fastest-growing region in North America and will redefine what it means to live in a city that prioritizes quality of life. Opportunities of this scale are uncommon. They carry real responsibility.

The decisions we make today will define how tens of thousands of Torontonians will live for decades to come, and how millions more will experience what this city has to offer. Getting it right is no small task. Our focus is on building with care. We are shaping neighbourhoods with homes, workplaces, parks, and public spaces that are inviting, adaptable, and built to serve communities for generations—places people return to again and again.

This inaugural Progress Report reflects the hundreds of conversations we've had with local communities, businesses, artists, civic leaders, our First Nation partners and experts from across the city and around the globe. Their voices are helping guide this transformation and ground every step we take.

The foundation is clear. Cities grow stronger when people participate in shaping them. With that belief at the centre of everything we do, YZD aims to help set a new standard for how Toronto grows and how community can be built with intention, care, and ambition over time.

A Vision for the Future

Northcrest Developments is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP), one of Canada's largest pension investors. PSP bought the Downsview Airport lands from Bombardier Aerospace in 2018. Recognizing the potential of this vast area, Northcrest was established to lead the planning and development of the 370-acre site, now known as YZD. From the outset and over the coming decades, Northcrest will collaborate with a diverse array of partners to transform YZD into a vibrant series of new neighbourhoods and new urban heart in Toronto.

Awards

Northcrest and YZD are earning recognition for Responsible Development, innovation, and meaningful community engagement. Some highlights include:

Greater Toronto's Top Employers – 2026

Northcrest was named one of Greater Toronto's Top Employers, an award that reflects how the same principles guiding the YZD project shape how we work together.

PlanON Award of Excellence – 2025

The Downsview Area Secondary Plan received the PlanON Award of Excellence from the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.

Architizer Vision Awards – 2025

Two-time finalist in the 2025 Architizer Vision Awards – Vision for Renewal and Vision for Reuse & Renovation – which spotlight projects redefining how cities evolve and spaces are renewed.

Global City Nation Place Finalist – 2025

Northcrest was a finalist for the Best Placemaking Initiative.

National Urban Design Awards – 2024

The Downsview Framework Plan – a joint effort between Northcrest, Canada Lands Company and a diverse team of partners – won an award in the Urban Design Plans category.

Toronto Urban Design Awards – 2023

The Framework Plan was awarded the Toronto Urban Design Award of Excellence in the Vision and Masterplan category.

World Architecture Festival Awards – 2022

The Framework Plan was the category winner for Future Project: Masterplanning and also received a WAFX Award.

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Our Impact, Quantified

The progress from 2020 to 2025 can be measured in the people reached, partners engaged, and early environmental gains that are already shaping YZD. This momentum is visible even before construction begins.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

120+

engagement events held across northwest Toronto
20+ in 2025

45k

participants reached directly through engagement workshops and sessions
5,000 in 2025

80k+

households engaged through outreach and communication
10k in 2025

RECONCILIATION & PARTNERSHIPS

250+

touchpoints with Indigenous partners, communities, and organizations
50+ in 2025

\$50k

invested in Indigenous scholarships since 2023
\$15k scholarship commitment per year

\$500k

invested in Indigenous partnerships, programming, and capacity-building since 2020
\$100k in 2025

4 Major long term partnerships advanced – Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund, Moccasin Identifier Project, and 2-Spirited Peoples of the First Nations
Completed a Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund Legacy Space in 2025

Indigenous Hockey Equipment Drive, collecting 50+ sets of hockey equipment and over 100 hockey sticks for Indigenous youth in-need

ECONOMIC IMPACT

1,200

local and diverse residents hired through the Rogers Stadium job fair

\$500k

reinvested into community partnerships, scholarships, and sponsorships

\$350k

invested to grow local capacity, expand social procurement opportunities, and develop the supporting tools that underpin our Community Benefits Plan

CULTURE & PUBLIC LIFE

1M 80+

visitors since April 2024
artists, performers, and cultural organizations supported

\$400k

invested in installations across the site through open calls inviting large-scale interactive art proposals, generating 100+ submissions
\$300k in 2025

60+

Northcrest-led community events hosted at the YZD Experience Centre and Plaza in 2025
Hosted major touring exhibitions at Exhibition Hub while also welcoming global touring acts to Rogers Stadium

YOUTH & EDUCATION

\$100k

in sponsorships provided to local sports teams through the YZD Youth Sports Program
8 teams sponsored in 2025

60+

YZD Ambassadors hired through Northcrest's youth employment and mentorship program
\$160,000 invested in paid Ambassador roles that support site tours, engagement, and on-site programming in 2025

30+

local students provided with scholarships
\$30k committed annually to provide 10 students with education support

750

post-secondary students engaged from five different institutions through curriculum-tied tours, guest lectures, and major projects

400+

young athletes supported
250+ athletes in 2025

ENVIRONMENT & RESILIENCE

Preserving more than 150,000m² of existing buildings through the Hangar District Plan
Salvaged and repurposed more than 21.5 tonnes of material in new public spaces in 2025

Advanced a green infrastructure first approach to stormwater management through the Master Environmental Services Plan
Achieved a 40% reduction in electricity use from baseline levels

Included more than 4.5 km of pedestrian and cycling priority corridors through The Runway, Green Spine, and Taxiway
More than 500m² of new pollinator gardens and native planting zones established across the site in 2025

The YZD Opportunity

What began as an airfield is becoming a new urban heart for Toronto. YZD is a rare city-building opportunity, where homes, jobs, parks, and public life will grow from the ground up. YZD will redefine what it means to live in a city that prioritizes quality of life.



370 Acres of Possibility

YZD, the largest urban development project in North America, is unfolding at the geographic centre of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

30,000+

housing units

66,000

residents

23,000

permanent jobs at completion,
supporting thousands of additional
jobs during construction

~70 acres

of parks, plazas, and open space

2km

Runway becoming one
of the world's great
new public spaces

7

new neighbourhoods
shaped by art,
culture, and public life

3

subway stations
and one GO
train station



A Timeline of Transformation

This timeline traces the steady evolution of YZD, from its earliest planning to the moment construction begins, and beyond.



Timings are indicative and subject to change

Guided by Responsible Development

How can Northcrest ensure that what we envision for YZD becomes real?
By putting Responsible Development into action.

At YZD, every step is informed by the site's long history and the relationships that continue to shape it. That means engaging meaningfully with neighbours, Indigenous partners, and local organizations, and creating steady, year-round programming that brings people together long before construction begins.

pillars that support learning, participation, environmental stewardship, and the creation of great places. This ensures progress is measurable, transparent, and continually improving.

Our Responsible Development Framework guides this work. It grounds decisions in five interconnected

[Read the Responsible Development Framework in full at yzd.ca](#)

CLIMATE READINESS

Preparing the site for a low-carbon, climate-resilient future.

CITY NATURE

Restoring ecology with native planting and green infrastructure.

URBAN MOBILITY

Designing neighbourhoods where walking, rolling, and transit come first.

INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

Expanding access to jobs, skills, and economic opportunity.

QUALITY OF PLACE

Creating public spaces and neighbourhoods that support daily life.



We're Shaping Places to Lift Us All



Play on the Runway (2024)

OMAR HASSAN, 2023 & 2024

YZD is being shaped through ongoing dialogue, founded in:

Engaging early and often so communities shape the process.

Being accessible through multiple formats and times.

Being transparent about what input is being sought and how it will be used.

Building trust through consistency, listening, and follow-through.



XOXO Downsview
Ulysses Curtis Mural



Downsview
Park Merchants
Annual Turkey
Giveaway



Drone Show, Light Up
Downsview (2022)

To date:

120+

engagement events
have been hosted

80,000+

households reached

200+

local, equity-deserving and
Indigenous artists, programmers
and partners have collaborated
with us on various initiatives

300+

partnerships and collaborations
with non-profits and charitable
organizations

\$700,000+

has supported local, equity-
deserving, and Indigenous
businesses through the purchase
of goods and services

~\$1M

invested in local initiatives through
sponsorships and donations

Impact Stories

QUALITY OF PLACE

The YZD Experience Centre

Opened in Fall 2024, the YZD Experience Centre became a true public gateway in 2025.

What began as a repurposed Hangar turned into a constant hub of activity as more than 15,000 people walked through its doors to see how Toronto's next community is taking shape.

Designed with Cicada, FORREC, Artuitive, Peter McCann Architectural Models, ASTOUND, and Aligned Vision, the YZD Experience Centre brings the project to life through:



A double-height history wall curated with artifacts, archival photography, and illuminated displays.



Welcoming

15,000+

people since September 2024



Artwork by Anishinaabe artist, Cathie Jamieson, grounding visitors in the land's history.



Interactive installations, including touchscreen planning tools, a 360-degree virtual tour, and mobile AR features.

In 2025, the YZD Experience Centre became a place to learn, gather, and participate. Workshops, open houses, student tours, and community events filled the calendar, making this the year the space truly fulfilled its purpose: welcoming people into the planning process and showing – in real time – how their input helps guide YZD's evolution.

Reconciliation & Building Community Connections

Reconciliation and relationship-building guide the work on these lands, shaping decisions through partnership with Indigenous communities and neighbours.

RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS:

- CLIMATE READINESS
Grounding environmental choices in Indigenous knowledge of land and water.
- CITY NATURE
Applying Indigenous ecological principles to planting and landscape design.
- URBAN MOBILITY
Ensuring movement, access, and gathering spaces honour cultural pathways.
- INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY
Expanding Indigenous access to education, employment, and procurement.
- QUALITY OF PLACE
Embedding Indigenous storytelling and culture into public spaces.

Play on the Runway (2025)

TANJA TZIANA

A Living Partnership

Northcrest's partnership with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) continued to grow in 2025. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2023 established shared priorities in education and workforce development, culture and placekeeping, and economic and commercial opportunity.



Elder Mark Sault, Bob Goulais, Derek Goring, Councillor Jesse Herkimer & Elder Carolyn King at Northcrest's IRAP Launch

Learning and mentorship remained central.

- The annual scholarship fund supported MCFN students pursuing post-secondary studies.
- Elders and Knowledge Keepers, including Mark Sault, Kim Wheatley, Darin Wybenga, Garry Sault, and Daniel Secord, led ceremonies, gatherings, and workshops that guided relationship-building on the land.
- Runway Rivers, a 2025 Summer public activation, emerged from these teachings—bringing water knowledge into the public realm for the community to experience.

Culture and design advanced in close collaboration.

- Artist and former council member, Cathie Jamieson, continued her role as Artist in Residence and shaped visual storytelling across the site.
- A traditionally carved birch bark canoe from MCFN was featured at the YZD Experience Centre during Indigenous Peoples Month.
- Interior designer, Destiny Seymour, of Indigo Arrows completed the Debwewin Legacy Space with MCFN, while artist Philip Cote completed the Debwewin Table mural as a place for reflection and conversation.

Landscape and planning work carried Indigenous knowledge forward.

- Trophic Design advanced the landscape plans for the Hangar District and the Indigenous Hub and contributed to the long-term guidelines for The Runway, grounding the work in Indigenous ecological systems.
- SpruceLabs developed the Planting Guide and advanced the Wilson District landscape scope, extending principles into implementation.

Education and community programs broadened participation.

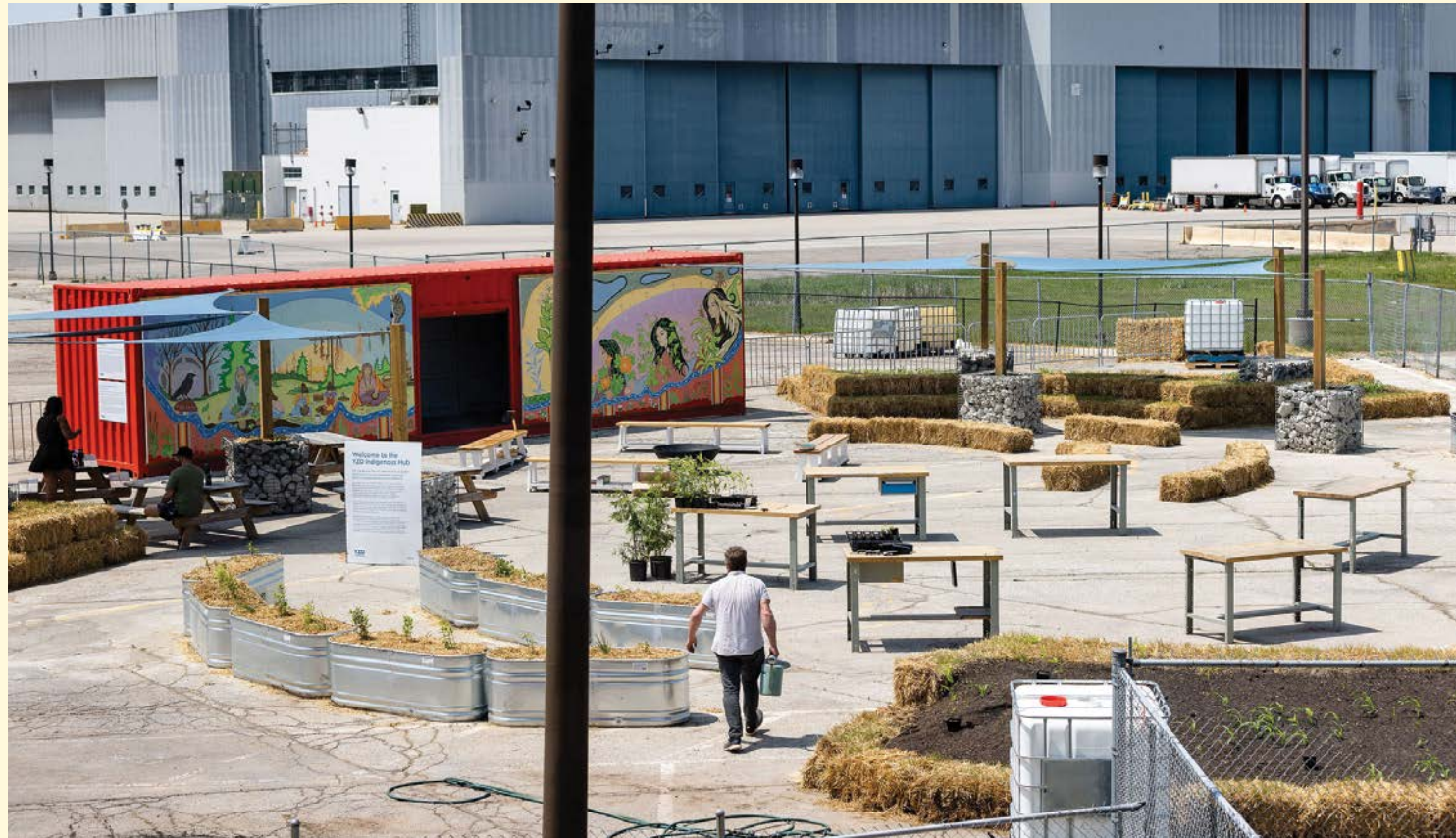
- A three-year collaboration with the Moccasin Identifier Project brought Treaty education and moccasin stencils into schools and community settings.
- Work with 2-Spirited Peoples of the First Nations supported workshops that brought Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists together, including sessions led by John Notten and Mark Sault.
- The first Indigenous Hockey Equipment Drive gathered nearly fifty sets of equipment and more than one hundred sticks for MCFN youth.

Industry learning expanded.

- The Urban Land Institute and Shared Path released A Guide for Truth and Reconciliation in Corporate Responsibility and Land Development, featuring the MCFN–Northcrest MOU as a case study in long-term partnership and cultural responsibility.

Together, these efforts strengthened cultural presence, learning, and participation throughout the site. The partnership with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation continued to shape the values of the project and guide how YZD grows with care for the land, for community, and for the responsibilities carried forward through Treaty.

Impact Stories



CITY NATURE INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY QUALITY OF PLACE

The Indigenous Hub

At the heart of YZD, a once-industrial airfield has become a place for renewal.

Centred around the Four Sisters Gardens and surrounded by medicinal and food plants selected with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, the space reflects principles of reciprocity, interconnectedness, and care for the land. Designed and stewarded in collaboration with Trophic Design, Green Thumbs Growing Kids, and local partners, it offers a living place for learning, reflection, and community stewardship.

The Hub officially opened in June 2025, welcoming more than 800 visitors with programming through the Summer and early Fall. Following Indigenous agricultural traditions, the design includes:

- **Four Sisters Gardens** with corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers planted using traditional companion planting methods
- **Planters** featuring culturally significant medicinal and food plants such as mint, strawberries, yarrow, and sun chokes
- **A Ceremonial Fire area**
- **The Skillshare FabLab** for hands-on workshops and community learning

Constructed using biodegradable materials such as hay bales, the Hub honours the land and reflects YZD's commitment to ecological care and circular design.

INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan (IRAP)

Northcrest's roadmap for embedding reconciliation throughout the YZD project.

Grounded in the teaching of "doing things in a good way," the plan formalized commitments developed over years of collaboration with rights-holding First Nations and urban Indigenous communities. The IRAP is built on five principles:

Leadership – Integrating Indigenous perspectives into decision-making across the organization

Education – Building cultural competency and awareness through annual training and learning exchanges

Community – Strengthening relationships through on- and off-reserve engagement and capacity support

Economic Development – Prioritizing Indigenous procurement and partnerships that advance self-determination

Employment – Expanding workforce and mentorship opportunities for Indigenous youth and professionals

[Read the Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plan in full at yzd.ca](#)



Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Elder Carolyn King and Tamara Cochrane from The Moccasin Identifier Project

Social & Economic Impact

Opportunity is taking root across YZD as local hiring, youth pathways, cultural programming, and small-business support strengthen the community around the site. These early programs demonstrate how YZD will function as an economic engine for the region as the district grows.

RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS:

CLIMATE READINESS	Ensuring economic growth aligns with sustainable operations.
CITY NATURE	Supporting programs that connect youth and families to outdoor learning.
URBAN MOBILITY	Increasing access to work and culture through a connected site.
INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY	Delivering clear, accessible pathways into jobs, training, and creative industries.
QUALITY OF PLACE	Growing a community where work, play, and culture sit side by side.



Nicole Sinclair, urban farmer with the Black Farmers' Collective

Local Toronto muralist,
Leyland AdamsINCLUSIVE
PROSPERITYQUALITY
OF PLACE

Where Opportunity Takes Off

YZD is growing into a place where opportunity is local, visible, and shared.

Our work in 2025 focused on strengthening the economic and cultural life of the surrounding community by creating practical pathways into work, business growth, learning, and creative expression.

Our efforts focused on:

- Supporting small businesses, social enterprises, and local entrepreneurs through direct procurement and on-site markets.
- Creating space for youth and newcomers to develop skills, build careers, and gain early exposure to trades, arts, and city building.
- Designing programs and events that respond to what the community has asked for: affordability, access, and reasons to gather.
- Advancing inclusion and accessibility so the widest possible range of people feel welcome and represented at YZD.

Coding workshop at
YZD in collaboration
with Just BGraphic

These priorities came to life through the people and partners who shaped the site throughout the year:

- Artist Leyland Adams, whose tactile mural created with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind showed that art can be experienced through touch, sound, and story.
- Crowned Lemonade, a student-run food business that used the YZD Farmers' Market to help cover nursing school tuition and grow a new venture.
- Artist John Notten, whose Runway Rivers activation invited visitors to paddle down the former Runway and learn about the historic waterways that once flowed through the area.
- La Magia Candombe, an Afro-Uruguayan cultural group who used the Community Hall as rehearsal space for performances that connected neighbours through music and movement.
- Photographer and researcher Omar Hassan, whose work captured the evolving character of the site while advancing conversations about mental health and equity.
- Just BGraphic, whose Summer Arts Academy, Hangar Skate programs, and ongoing collaborations brought hundreds of young people into creative learning environments at YZD.

Together, these stories reflect a simple idea: when people can work, create, learn, and share their culture in the same place, a site becomes more than a project. It becomes part of the community.

INCLUSIVE
PROSPERITYQUALITY
OF PLACE

Investing in the Next Generation

Education opens doors and prepares the next generation to help shape what YZD becomes. Learning takes place on the field, in classrooms, and through hands-on experiences across the site.

University of Toronto students
exploring the YZD Hangars
during a site visit.

The YZD Sports Sponsorship Program

provided more than \$100,000 in funding to fourteen local teams, supporting more than 400 young athletes across Downsview and North York. The program reflects a commitment to healthy bodies and healthy minds.

The YZD Education Fund

advanced new pathways into education and work. More than 30 students from twelve nearby high schools have received support through three annual \$10,000 scholarships, with more than \$100,000 awarded. Seven recipients now work on site as YZD Ambassadors, and the launch of the YZD @ YU club at York University is extending that engagement into campus life.

Creative learning opportunities

continued through partnerships with local schools. Students from Downsview Secondary School performed at major events at YZD, while donated instruments from touring artists helped strengthen local music programs.

STEM support expanded through investments in local schools. Madonna Catholic Secondary School's all-girls robotics team became Ontario champions, and Northcrest provided equipment to keep the program running through 2024 and 2025. Two nearby elementary schools, Ancaster and St. Norbert, received STEM learning kits through a partnership with Honour the Work.

Post-secondary engagement grew

through tours, research projects, and guest lectures. More than 750 students from seven institutions visited the site as part of their coursework.

Together, these efforts strengthened academic pathways, supported youth leadership, and connected young people directly to the future of YZD.

Impact Stories

INCLUSIVE
PROSPERITY

Arts, Culture and Placemaking at YZD

The Arts and Culture Downsview Committee

Placemaking at YZD began long before construction. The Arts and Culture Downsview Committee plays an important role in shaping YZD's cultural direction. Meeting twice a year, the committee brings together artists, curators, educators, and cultural leaders from across North York to provide guidance that directly informs YZD's arts strategy and programming.



Their insight has contributed to:

The Beyond the Tarmac Open Call, which the committee helped shape and refine. This resulted in three funded projects totaling \$300,000 for 2025 and one \$100,000 project for 2026.

New partnerships and programming connections, supporting more than \$50,000 in arts and cultural programming throughout 2024 and 2025.

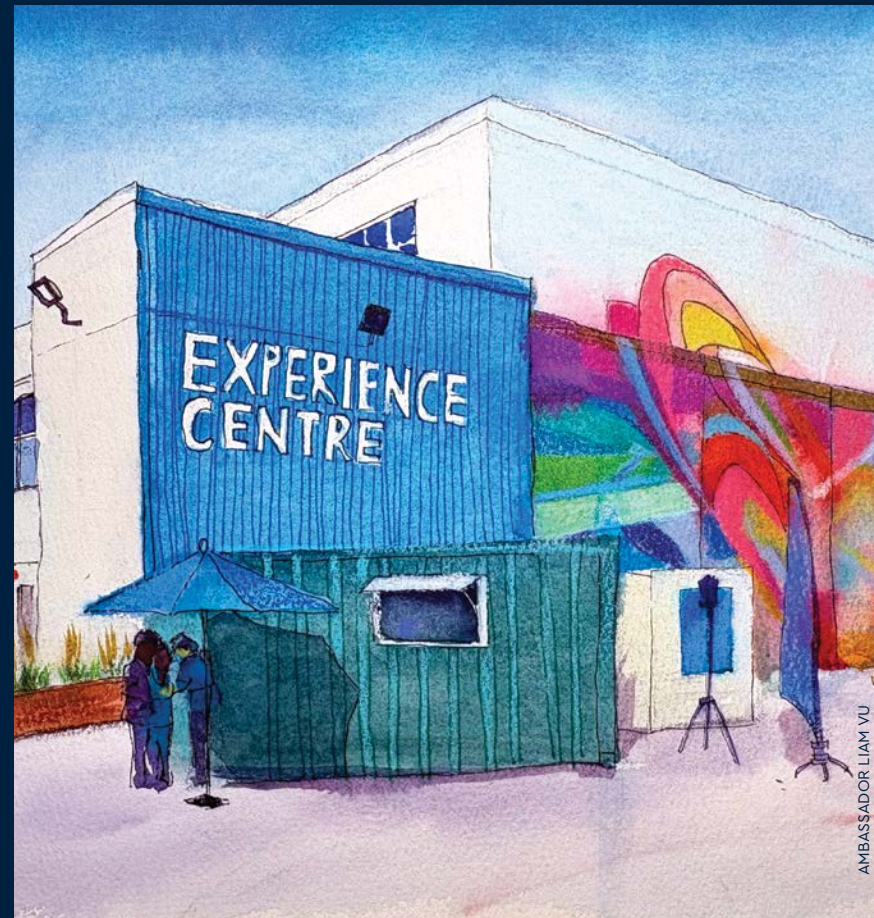
Site-wide cultural activation, with committee input guiding the approach to major events including Play on the Runway, festivals in the Hangars, and markets and workshops in the Plaza.

Impact Stories

INCLUSIVE
PROSPERITY

Accessibility and Belonging at YZD

Accessibility at YZD is a core commitment.



Accessibility shapes how spaces are designed, how information is shared, and how people participate in daily life. The progress made in 2025 reflects a clear belief: communities are stronger when everyone can move through them with ease and dignity.

Northcrest continued its work with the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition as a founding member and active contributor. This collaboration strengthens early-stage design and helps ensure accessibility remains a priority as the project advances.

Accessible design review is now built into planning across all districts. For the Hangar District, this included engaging HumanSpace, a leading accessibility consultant, to review public-realm concepts and identify improvements.

At the YZD Experience Centre, accessibility shaped the planning from day one. Key features include:

- **Full access to exhibits**, with interpretive content replicated inside the elevator.
- **Clear wayfinding** supported by high-contrast graphics and generous circulation space.
- **Accessible information stations**, including a mobility-friendly bar and upright touchscreens to reduce glare.
- **Universal washrooms** and automatic doors that support independence for a wide range of users.
- **Inclusive kitchen design** with lower drawer access and appliances usable from a seated position.

Accessibility also shaped how information was presented across 2025. Engagement materials, event formats, and programming were adapted to support clarity, readability, and ease of use. We also partnered with The Disability Collective to review the accessibility of YZD-led activations and temporary spaces, including the Plaza. This collaboration produced an accessibility checklist now used as a resource for designing and delivering Meanwhile Use programming.

These early steps form the foundation for the years ahead. As YZD takes shape, accessibility will remain a principle guiding design, construction, and community programming, ensuring the site becomes a place where everyone feels welcome and able to participate.

INCLUSIVE
PROSPERITY

Rogers Stadium Job Fair

Northcrest led a partnership with Live Nation and OVG, the employers behind the new Rogers Stadium, to deliver a large-scale hiring fair. WCG, Achev, and TNG supported the event by preparing applicants and connecting job seekers to available roles.



Through this collaboration:

1,200+ people secured food and beverage roles, hospitality positions, operations jobs, and guest services work at Rogers Stadium.

Residents from nearby neighbourhoods and equity-deserving groups met hiring teams face to face, with many completing interviews on the spot.

Employment agencies offered resume support, interview preparation, and training resources that helped applicants step into new opportunities.

Job seekers from newcomer and equity-seeking communities accessed a clear entry point into Toronto's entertainment and events sector.

Environmental Responsibility

Sustainability is being built into daily operations and long-term planning, from energy and materials to pollinator health, water systems, and green infrastructure. These early actions lay the groundwork for one of Canada's most ambitious low-carbon districts.

RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS:

CLIMATE READINESS	Building resilience and reducing emissions through energy, materials, and land use.
CITY NATURE	Expanding habitat, pollinator networks, and native landscapes.
URBAN MOBILITY	Supporting low-carbon travel with EV infrastructure and active transportation.
INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY	Supporting innovation that bridges sustainability with affordability and economic opportunities.
QUALITY OF PLACE	Embedding sustainability into places people love.

Toronto Bee Rescue



Environmental Responsibility in Practice

Caring for the land shows up in how we power buildings, move people, reuse materials, and shape the landscape. Our environmental commitments live in the details of daily operations and the choices that make this place greener every year.

- Northcrest benchmarks its building through ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager. Since taking possession, electricity use has dropped by 40 per cent from the baseline year.
- Through Natural Resources Canada's Zero-Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Program, we are installing 18 electric vehicle chargers on site, including level 2 and DCFC level 3 units. These stations will support tenants, visitors, and development teams.
- We have introduced shared bikes and scooters for staff and visitors and secured a Toronto BikeShare station at YZD as part of the network expansion serving Ancaster and Wilson areas. Wayfinding, walkways, and crossing improvements continue to support a safer pedestrian environment.
- Adaptive reuse guides all activation programming. More than 21.5 tonnes of material from the site have been repurposed and given new life in the Plaza, Indigenous Hub, and other installations.
- Forty beehives managed by Toronto Bee Rescue produce YZD honey and support native planting across the site.
- More than 5,000 square feet of new landscaped areas now sit on former Tarmac, each planted with native and climate-adaptive species.
- Events and workshops throughout the year have strengthened public understanding of biodiversity, ecology, and the watershed, including sessions delivered during Summer Saturdays and the Runway Rivers experience.

21.5

tonnes of material repurposed

5k+

square feet of new landscaped areas

35

workshops and events delivered to strengthen public sustainability literacy



YZD Runway riders at Rogers Stadium (2025)

University of Toronto Human
Powered Vehicles Design Team at
YZD's Play on the Runway (2024)

Leading through Research and Knowledge Sharing

Strong sustainability work grows through collaboration. Our partnerships with universities, researchers, and industry organizations help test new approaches to low-carbon construction, land use, and complete communities. These efforts support better planning and advance knowledge across the city.

- Northcrest is an industry partner to the University of Toronto's Centre for Sustainable Built Environments, sharing best practices and advancing research on low-carbon construction.
- We support OCAD University and the University of Toronto iCity Research Initiative as they study the characteristics of complete communities and how planning decisions affect resident experience.
- YZD supports post-secondary course work and major research projects, including featured case studies on The Runway for the University of Guelph environmental design and landscape architecture courses (2025), and the Downsview Framework Plan for the University of Toronto Daniels integrated studio (2024) where students advance urban development concepts that drive environmental and social impact.
- Our team contributes to energy and environmental advisory groups, including the City of Toronto's Climate Advisory Group and committees hosted by the Toronto Region Board of Trade and the Ontario Home Builders Association.
- Northcrest is an early signatory to the Building Decarbonization Alliance and the Climate Smart Building Alliance's Responsible Buildings Pact.
- We have published guidebooks for development teams, including the YZD Plant Guide, Construction Management Best Practices, and an Embodied Carbon Strategy.
- Northcrest has funded more than \$80,000 in research projects focused on embodied carbon, city-nature impacts, deconstruction and reuse, and greener event practices.

Designing for a Low-Carbon Future

The choices made in these early years set the foundation for a neighbourhood that supports healthier ecosystems and lower carbon impacts. Planning work completed to date establishes the structure of parks, corridors, and reuse strategies that will guide how the community takes shape.

The following achievements highlight material commitments that have been built into planning policy, including the Downsview Secondary Plan, Master Environmental Servicing Plan, and Taxiway West (Hangar District) District Plan.

- More than 70 acres of new parks and open spaces are planned across the lands. These spaces support biodiversity, stormwater management, and community wellbeing.
- The former Runway will form more than two kilometres of pedestrian priority corridor that connect future districts and support active transportation.
- Creating a dedicated mobility route known as the Green Spine, which will provide more than three kilometres of safe, separated cycling route along the eastern boundary of the site.
- The master environmental servicing plan sets out a nature-first approach to stormwater management through open spaces, street planting, and parks.
- Preserving more than 1.5 million square feet of existing buildings will result in significant avoided greenhouse gas emissions and reduce waste produced through demolition.



Illustrative Rendering
of the Hangar District,
looking south

Impact Stories



INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

CITY NATURE

YZD Honey and the Toronto Bee Rescue

The partnership with the Toronto Bee Rescue, led by beekeeper Peter Chorabik, has roots that stretch back across generations.

His father, an aircraft assembler at de Havilland, once relocated a swarm of bees from these same grounds. Today, that family story lives on through the 40 hives Peter manages at YZD.

Through hands-on workshops, visitors and staff have learned how pollinators shape urban ecosystems, why native plants matter, and how simple landscape choices help bees thrive.

The 800 litres of honey harvested in 2025 told a larger story about healthy land, resilient hives, and the role of pollinators in making YZD a greener place to grow. Donated jars also supported local schools, where they helped strengthen community fundraising efforts.

QUALITY OF PLACE

CITY NATURE

URBAN MOBILITY

YZD Plaza

The YZD Plaza became the first real test of YZD's design principles.



Built in 2025, it turned a once-industrial patch of Tarmac into a place where adaptive reuse, native planting, and community life all took shape in real time. Equally so, it became the early model for how green infrastructure, public space, and cultural activity will work across the future neighbourhoods.

Adaptive Reuse and History Brought Forward

- Fuselage containers converted into planters
- Decommissioned Runway lights rewired into low-energy fixtures
- An industrial sink transformed into an interactive water feature
- A 100-foot deconstructed airplane rebuilt as a piece of public art and stage

Green Infrastructure in Action

- Rain chains and repurposed sprinkler systems managing rainfall

- Micro landscapes designed to absorb and filter water
- Native plantings from the YZD Plant Guide
- Early testing zones for bioswales and small-scale sponge city systems playscape

A Hub for Social and Economic Life

- Weekly markets, supporting more than 20 local vendors and neighbourhood businesses
- Cultural festivals and family programming that drew thousands
- A new gathering space for school groups, youth programs, and community events

The Plaza proved that even temporary spaces can build momentum. It previewed how YZD will blend ecology, creativity, and community at every scale, while honouring the aviation history that defines this land.

Accountability in Action

Clear governance, open communication, and shared decision-making ensure the project grows with transparency and stays aligned with community and city priorities. YZD's governance model is designed for collaboration at scale, bringing community voices, City of Toronto guidance, and developer accountability into one coordinated system.

RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT FOCUS:

- CLIMATE READINESS** Ensuring climate commitments are trackable and verifiable.
- CITY NATURE** Making ecological goals visible through reporting and design review.
- URBAN MOBILITY** Aligning mobility decisions with community and City input.
- INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY** Keeping hiring, procurement and equity goals publicly accountable.
- QUALITY OF PLACE** Ensuring design standards reflect community priorities over time.

'Postcards to the Future' engagement strategy at Play on the Runway (2025)



Governance That Keeps Pace With Change

YZD will evolve over decades, and its success relies on governance systems that remain steady and accountable as the project grows. Every major planning and design decision is shaped by three forces that guide the work forward:



Scholarship recipient,
Daniel Park

1

The needs and feedback of the community

2

The policy framework established by the City of Toronto

3

Northcrest's vision and responsibility as lead developer

Together, these forces help determine how information is shared, how decisions are communicated, and how each step stays connected to the people who live, learn, and work in Toronto's north. They also set the foundation for what comes next.

Established in 2021, the Community Resource Group set a strong foundation for early engagement at YZD. Its effectiveness helped shape the City of Toronto's own engagement model, which now draws on many of the same principles. Residents, youth, Indigenous representatives, and community leaders meet every two to three months to review milestones and provide guidance on the Community Development Plan and District Planning process.

Indigenous communities hold dedicated seats. A recipient of the YZD Education Fund participates as a youth representative. The City of Toronto now serves as a co-convenor, leading coordination for the current cohort.

Looking to 2026, the focus is on clarity and participation. Priorities include:

Clear communication during early construction

Broader social procurement pipelines

More opportunities for local and equity-seeking groups

Regular public reporting on progress

Impact Stories



INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

Community Resource Group (CRG)

The Community Resource Group played a central role in shaping the work of 2025.

Formed in 2021, the CRG brings together residents, youth, Indigenous representatives, neighbourhood associations, schools, and cultural organizations to inform design, policy, and engagement priorities.

Throughout 2025, members reviewed early concepts for public spaces in the Hangar District, advised on translation and accessibility needs, and helped identify clearer pathways for youth and newcomer participation in planning. Their input guided improvements in engagement materials and supported stronger coordination with partner organizations.

The City of Toronto joined the CRG as a co-convenor in 2025, strengthening alignment between YZD planning and broader city processes. To date, the group has contributed more than forty recommendations that continue to shape project design, governance practices, and the way information is shared with the public.

The CRG remains a consistent example of shared accountability and a key channel for ensuring YZD reflects the values of the communities connected to this place.

INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY

Community Benefits Plan

The Community Benefits Plan marked a major milestone in advancing inclusive prosperity at YZD. As the first private developer to use the City's Community Benefits framework for a private-sector project, Northcrest introduced a model designed to expand opportunity for equity-deserving groups connected to the Downsview area.

Developed with guidance from community partners, the plan commits to creating meaningful pathways into employment and procurement for Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving residents. A dedicated Workforce Intermediary now coordinates opportunities with local organizations, helping match talent, training, and project needs across the Hangar District.

Transparency is built in from the outset. Annual reporting, data tracking, and collaboration with the Community Resource Group and Indigenous Working Group ensure accountability and a direct line between community priorities and implementation.

This approach sets a new model for shared economic participation on major development projects in Toronto.

To date, investments include:

\$350k

to advance social procurement, build community capacity, and develop supporting tools

\$100k

for a dedicated contractor focused on workforce development

The plan sets a long-term foundation for shared economic participation as YZD moves from planning to construction



Anex Works at YZD refurbishing fuselage for public realm

Looking Forward

YZD is entering a new chapter. The planning, partnerships, and groundwork of recent years are giving way to visible transformation.

In 2026, construction will begin on early infrastructure, bringing the long-term plan into motion. New employment areas, cultural spaces, and public landscapes will start to take shape.

The work ahead will focus on:

Delivering the first phases of streets, parks, and servicing



Expanding social procurement and workforce pathways



Continuing partnerships with Indigenous communities and local organizations



Advancing design for The Runway and future neighbourhoods



The principles that have guided YZD from the beginning remain unchanged.

Responsible Development, transparency, and collaboration will continue to define each step forward.



Our next phase is
about progress in
motion: translating
vision into place,
and partnerships
into impact.



