

The Wilson District Plan

February 2026

Northcrest SOM

Land Acknowledgment

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 the Downsview Airport Lands redevelopment. 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.

The Wilson District Plan

February 2026

Prepared for:
Northcrest Developments

Consultant Team:

SOM | Master Planning
Field Operations | Landscape Architecture
Adamson Associates | Architect of Record
ARUP | Microclimate and Thermal Comfort
BA Group | Transportation
WSP | Civil Engineering and Planning
SpruceLab | Indigenous Landscape Architecture
Human Space | Accessibility
Bousfields | Public Engagement
Spanier Group | Placemaking and Retail
SLR | Environmental Planning and Assessment
AeroAcoustics | Environmental Acoustics
JD Barnes | Surveying and Geomatics
Gehl | Public Life and Urban Design
Urban Forest Innovations | Urban Forestry
EXP | Infrastructure Engineering
Pratus Group | Development Advisory



Image 1.1 View of the Downsview Airport Lands (YZD)

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the Wilson District Plan.

This document marks an important milestone in the transformation of YZD, the former Downsview Airport lands. It's part of a long-term vision to create a series of vibrant new neighbourhoods that will grow and change over generations. The Wilson District is one of the first places where this transformation and reinvention will come to life. It will be a place to call home, a destination to explore, and a gateway that welcomes the rest of Toronto in, connecting them to something new.

What was once an airfield is being reimagined as a connected, walkable, and nature-filled community. Parks, plazas, and the re-imagined Runway will be central to everyday life. New homes will sit alongside neighbourhood services, community facilities, and places for culture and gathering. Streets are designed to make moving around easy – whether you're walking, biking, or taking transit. Together, these fundamental elements will help shape a neighbourhood that's distinctly the Wilson District – one filled with creativity, a sense of discovery, and a connection to nature.

This Plan is meant to guide what comes next. It brings together ideas and input from our partners, community members, designers, and city-builders, and sets out a shared direction for the future. All the while, it leaves room for flexibility and for ideas to evolve as the district takes shape.

Most of all, this Plan begins the story of a new neighbourhood – one rooted in Responsible Development, strengthened by public space, and inspired by the potential of what this part of Toronto can become.

Thank you for taking the time to explore the vision for the Wilson District. We invite you to imagine what's possible with us, and to look ahead as we work together to build a complete, welcoming, and forward-looking community.

Kristy Shortall

Executive Vice President, Development
Northcrest Developments

Derek Goring

Chief Executive Officer
Northcrest Developments

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Executive Summary

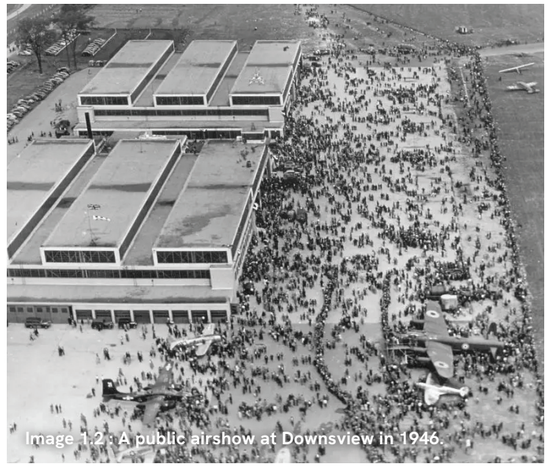


Image 1.2 : A public airshow at Downsview in 1946.



Image 1.3 : Play on the Runway

The transformation of the Wilson District marks an exciting new chapter in the evolution of Toronto's Downsview area. Once shaped by aviation and industry, this district is now poised to become a vibrant, welcoming, and connected neighbourhood—one that invites people in, celebrates creativity and community, and sets the stage for a greener, more resilient future.

As one of the first districts to take shape within the larger YZD redevelopment, the Wilson District will be both a gateway and a gathering place. Anchored by Wilson Station and defined by a rich network of parks, pedestrian-friendly streets, and public spaces, it will offer a neighbourhood where daily life unfolds easily on foot, by bike, or on transit. From the reimagined Runway—an iconic linear public space—to the Major Park, Local Park, and Green Spine that weave nature seamlessly through the community, the district is designed to support health, well-being, and year-round activity.

Homes for a wide range of households, community facilities such as a school, library, and daycare centres, and a mix of shops, services, cultural spaces, and workplaces will ensure the Wilson District grows into a complete, inclusive community. A thoughtful blend of mid-rise and tall buildings will shape a diverse skyline, with human-scaled streets that feel safe, comfortable, and welcoming to all.

Guided by principles of sustainability, resilience, and responsible urban design, the plan places climate-ready infrastructure, abundant green spaces, and nature-based solutions at its core. Stormwater will be managed through integrated green infrastructure, and new mobility options will make walking, cycling, and transit the most convenient ways to move through the district.

Most importantly, the Wilson District aims to spark moments of wonder, discovery, and connection. It is envisioned as a place where creativity and everyday life intersect—where public spaces invite conversation, where children can explore, and where residents and visitors alike feel part of a lively and evolving chapter in Toronto's future.

The Wilson District Plan provides the roadmap for this transformation, setting out a clear vision for a complete community that is transit-connected, environmentally forward, culturally rich, and distinctly Toronto. It is a district built not just for today's needs, but for the many future generations who will call this place home.

18 ha
Site Area (44 acres)

9,600
New Housing Units

3.3 ha
of New Open Space (8 acres)

8
Development Blocks

705,000 m²
of New Mixed-use Development (7,590,000 sf)

15,000 m²
of New Community Facilities (160,000 sf)



Artistic rendering of the Wilson District



Artistic rendering of the Wilson District

Chapter 1

Introduction

A. Site Overview & History

B. Introduction to the Wilson District

C. A Vision for the Wilson District

This Introduction provides a brief overview of the Wilson District – its history, existing conditions, and surrounding context– establishing the foundation for the planning framework and vision that follow.

A. Site Overview & History

The Wilson District is located north of Wilson Avenue between Dufferin Street and William Allen Road immediately adjacent to the Wilson TTC Station, providing strong regional transit access and seamless connections across the city of Toronto. It is in the southern most portion of the Downsview Secondary Plan area and identified as the Wilson District in the 2024 Downsview Secondary Plan.

The District comprises 24 hectares (59 acres) of land consisting of two ownerships – currently undeveloped and formerly part of the Downsview Airport, the 18 hectares (44 acres) Public Sector Pension Fund (PSP)-owned lands, managed by Northcrest Developments ("Northcrest"), are planned to be a complete community featuring a mix of employment, diverse housing, vibrant local retail, and high-quality parks and public spaces. The TTC-owned lands, managed by CreateTO, include 6 hectares (15 acres) currently dedicated to multi-modal transit facilities, surface parking lots, and transportation infrastructure. While this Plan addresses the entire 24-hectare district at a high level, detailed planning relates specifically to the 18-hectare Northcrest lands only, with coordination across ownerships to ensure an integrated approach to land use planning and urban design. The TTC lands will be subject to separate future planning applications to determine land use directions and guide the built form and public realm design.

The Wilson District lands are located in what is today known as the North York area of Toronto, within the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit who signed Treaty 13 (1805). Located on a high point along the divide between the Don River and Humber River watersheds, the broader Downsview area is believed to have been of significance to the First Nations.

The existing conditions of the site reflect the area's aviation legacy: large open areas, the southern end of the former runway, airport service roads, and TTC parking and operational facilities. This physical and historic context underscores the need for an ambitious and cohesive district-scale plan that can guide the transition of this area from former airfield uses and current transit facilities into a complete, connected, and vibrant neighbourhood offering a mix of uses, an abundance of open space, and a diverse and inviting public realm.

About this Document

This document describes the character, design narrative, and development framework that are specific to the Wilson District. It includes a detailed description of the overarching vision, and structuring elements, as well as the phasing and implementation strategy. The Wilson District is one of 15 Districts within the Downsview Secondary Plan Area. The District Plan implements the vision and policies of the 2024 Downsview Secondary Plan, and provides further context and detail that are specific to the District. Of note, the demonstration massing shown throughout the District Plan is indicative only; it has been developed to illustrate potential and demonstrate a manner in which the density within the District could be deployed; however the demonstration massing is not intended to represent the ultimate buildings that will be built. The demonstration massing has informed the built form provisions within the implementing Zoning By-law Amendment, which will ultimately regulate the future built form within the District.



→ Image 2.1: View of the Downsview Airport Lands (YZD)

B. Introduction to the Wilson District

Surrounding Context

The Wilson District is shaped by its adjacency to established neighbourhoods (such as Ancaster and Clanton Park), major infrastructure (including the Wilson TTC Yard Complex and Allen Road), and areas of emerging development (such as Wilson South and the Tippet Road regeneration area). To the east, Wilson Station and TTC facilities offer strong transit access; to the south, Wilson Avenue provides a key commercial and mobility corridor; to the west, the Ancaster neighbourhood presents a stable low-scale residential edge; and to the north lie future YZD districts that will be developed and evolve over time.

This physical setting presents both challenges and opportunities—particularly the chance to improve mobility connections and integrate transit access, to provide meaningful open spaces, and to enhance walkability and strengthen the public realm. A coordinated approach will ensure that future development and growth contributes positively to the wider transformation of the Downsview lands and the surrounding communities.

Figure 2.1 : Surrounding Context



The Toronto area is the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishnaabeg, and the historic homelands of the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples.



11,000 BCE

1929 - 1945



De Havilland Canada ("DHC"), launched in 1928, moves to a farmer's field at Downsview. In the 1940s, World War II resulted in the construction of additional airplane production plants and expansion of the runway.

1952

The Federal government offers DHC a 99-year lease on the Taxiway West District lands, and DHC moves its operations from elsewhere on the Downsview lands. The majority of the buildings that exist today were built in the 1950s, with additional expansion in the 1960s and 1980s.

1980s - 1990s

DHC is sold to Boeing in 1985, and then the District lands are sold to Bombardier in the 1990s. The first Downsview Area Secondary Plan ("DASP") is prepared by the City of Toronto in 1999, setting the stage for the transformation of Downsview Park and other areas surrounding the runway and airport operations.

2011

An updated DASP is adopted by the City of Toronto, allowing for the development of several new mixed-use communities in the vicinity of the District. The plan allows for the ongoing operations of the airport and related industries, but recognizes that change may come in the future.

2018

Bombardier announces that it intends to close down operations at Downsview by the end of 2023 and sells the Aerospace facilities to PSPIB. Northcrest Developments ("Northcrest") was established as a development arm to plan for the future of the Downsview Airport lands.

The Taxiway West District received District Plan Endorsement and Zoning approval by Council in 2025



2025

Images 2.2-2.4 : Throughout History



Image 2.5 : Late 1950s or early 1960s aerial image of the Downsview Airport Lands

Throughout History

The Wilson District sits within lands long inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, including the Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Michi Saagig Anishinaabeg, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. The area formed part of a broader network of travel, trade, and cultural exchange. Over time, agricultural endeavors, settlement activities, and later aviation innovation and infrastructure reshaped the landscape, with the establishment and operations of the Downsview Airport largely defining the area's activities, economy, and character throughout the twentieth century.

The District Today



Figure 2.2 : The Wilson District Today

Today, the Wilson District remains part of the formerly operational Downsview Airport, an area largely characterized by its legacy uses – a mix of former aviation lands, associated open spaces and buffer areas and supporting infrastructure – a largely undeveloped but expansive landscape that is well-situated to evolve over time and to accommodate a broad range of needs for new housing, economic development, and open space.



1 Existing Transit Access through Wilson Station



2 New and Planned Nearby Developments



3 Future growth along YZD Lands



4 Existing condition along Wilson Avenue



5 Established Residential Neighbourhoods



6 Adjacent Employment Lands



7 Proximity to Commercial Areas (SmartCentres)



8 Existing conditions along Transit Road



9 Development Opportunities on TCC Lands

Images 2.6-2.14 : The Wilson District Today

The District Tomorrow

The future of the Wilson District emerges from a deliberate and City-led planning evolution. The City of Toronto has undertaken a comprehensive update to the Downsview Secondary Plan, supported by the preparation of the Downsview Framework Plan. Together, these initiatives established a long-term vision for transforming the former airport lands into complete, transit-supportive neighbourhoods structured by landscape, mobility, and inclusive growth.

The 2024 Downsview Secondary Plan provides the statutory foundation for that transformation. It defines land use permissions, mobility priorities, environmental objectives, and district-scale structuring elements including the Runway and the Green Spine. It identifies the Wilson District as a strategic early phase of redevelopment, given its adjacency to higher-order transit and its capacity to accommodate a balanced mix of housing, employment, and community infrastructure within a civic-minded urban framework.

The Wilson District Plan advances this direction by translating policy into a coherent and implementable district structure. The street network, park system, development blocks, transit connections, servicing framework, and phasing strategy have been rigorously tested and refined through detailed technical analysis and sustained collaboration with City divisions and agencies. The result is a Plan that is grounded in infrastructure capacity, environmental performance, and long-term delivery, and that establishes a legible and resilient urban armature for future growth. Engagement and coordination have been integral throughout. Ongoing collaboration with City staff has shaped refinements to mobility systems, open space distribution, infrastructure sequencing, and built form parameters. Dialogue with community members and Indigenous communities has reinforced priorities around connectivity, access to nature, and recognition of the site's layered history, ensuring that the District's evolution reflects both technical precision and cultural continuity.

Within the broader transformation of the Downsview lands, the Wilson District represents a defining early step. Anchored by Wilson Station and structured by an interconnected public realm network, the District Tomorrow reflects the implementation of adopted policy at the neighbourhood scale. It establishes a clear and durable framework for the incremental realization of a complete, connected, and enduring urban precinct.

An Urban Mosaic.

An Evolving Ecosystem.

Together we are creating an urban mosaic: a reflection of Toronto's distinctive diversity. We imagine a place to play and gather — a place to explore, work, and innovate. It will be an ecosystem where people and nature thrive and evolve together.



Figure 3 : Downsview Framework Plan - A Vision for Downsview



The Framework Plan outlined desired outcomes. The structure, land use, and programs described in the Wilson District Plan contribute to achieving many of these outcomes.

A new model for comfortable density with buildings that are vibrant, sustainable, and human-scaled: new residents will be primarily housed in mid-rise buildings; taller development will be located at transit stations and key intersections; and appropriate transitions will be made to existing neighbourhoods.

40 hectares (100 acres) of new parks and open spaces linked to the cherished Downsview Park and the William Baker woodlot.

A **variety of ways to get around**, including a network of complete streets, 4 new rail crossings, and a system of greenways for walking and cycling that stitch the site back into the surrounding street and park networks of north-west Toronto.

Homes across the affordability spectrum, accommodating approximately **85,000 new residents,** and delivering on the city's needs and Council's vision for transit-oriented, complete communities.

A range of community facilities and services — including a new community centre at Keele and Sheppard — to support communities throughout the area as they grow and to serve both local and neighbouring community members.

Enhanced visibility of Indigenous Peoples, history, and living culture and a focus on Indigenous placekeeping, planned in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples and Rights Holders.

10 distinct districts, that will develop with their own character, while collectively demonstrating **a new standard for urban development.**

2.1 kilometres of reimagined runway that will form an iconic public space and destination, act as an important community connector, and create ample opportunities for interim activation.

Figure 4 : Downsview Framework Plan desired outcomes

C. A Vision for the Wilson District

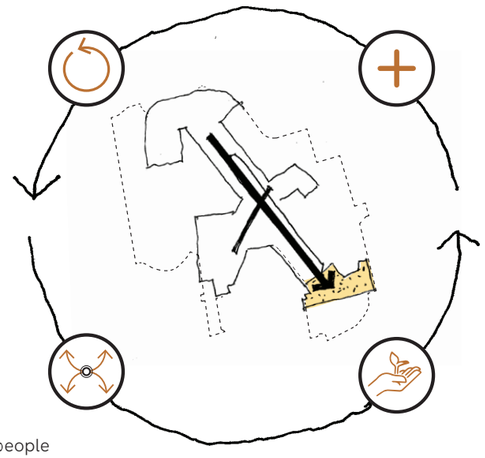
As the southern gateway into YZD, the Wilson District marks both the terminus of the former runway and the beginning of a new community. It will be a welcoming, vibrant neighbourhood where nature, public life, and everyday experiences come together to create a strong sense of place. Here, people will be able to move easily, rest comfortably, explore routinely, and feel connected—to each other, to the landscape around them, and to the broader transformation taking place across YZD and beyond.

Guided by Northcrest's commitment to Responsible Development, the Wilson District brings forward a vision that blends livability, sustainability, and community-building. It is designed to be walkable, transit-oriented, and engaging – rich with opportunities for discovery reflecting both the history of the site and the promise of what this neighbourhood can become. The design of the District will foster connectivity and support civic engagement. It will address climate change and ensure resilience. The District will advance equity and inclusive prosperity – offering diverse housing opportunities, enhancing interactions among residents and visitors, and providing a vibrant public realm and an interconnected ecological network of open spaces.

An Opportunity to...

Restore

- Intimate connections to nature
- Functional ecologies and hydrological systems
- Urban and social fabric
- Historical understandings and cultural connections



Create

- A culture of community and connected neighbourhoods
- Complete communities
- Affordable housing opportunities
- Diverse forms of architecture and urbanism

Connect

- Buildings with landscapes and people with places
- Directly to transit and leverage transit-oriented development
- New district with adjacent development

Promote

- Equity and accessibility
- Capacity building and economic development
- New models of sustainable living
- Quality of place that honors the uniqueness of the place and its people

Figure 2.5 : An Opportunity



Figure 2.6 : A Vision for the Wilson District

District Goals and Objectives

The vision for the Wilson District Northcrest Lands is grounded in a set of holistic principles aimed at promoting urban nature, fostering connectivity and civic engagement, cultivating a unique district identity, addressing climate change and resilience, and ensuring equity and inclusive prosperity. The goal for the Wilson District is to create a walkable, complete, and resilient neighbourhood that is well-integrated with transit, features a distinctive character, offers diverse housing opportunities, and enhances interactions among people, places, and ecological networks through a vibrant and rich public realm.



Create a Green Gateway

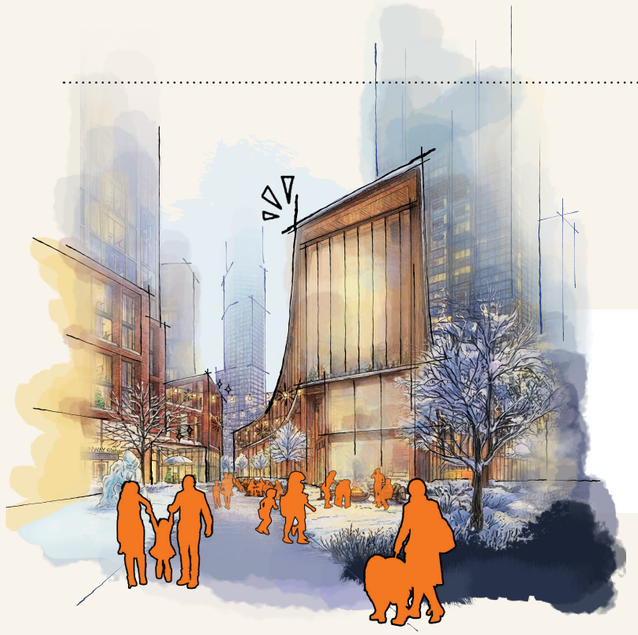
The Wilson District will welcome people with a network of parks, tree-lined streets, and landscape corridors that bring nature into daily life. The Green Spine, Major Park, Local Park, and the Trailhead will connect people to open spaces that support well-being, biodiversity, and climate resilience.

Connect People and Places

A clear and intuitive network of streets, cycling routes, and pedestrian pathways will make it easy to move throughout the district and reach the Wilson TTC Station, Wilson Avenue, Dufferin Street, Billy Bishop Way, and future YZD communities. Prioritizing walking, transit, and cycling will support a healthy, sustainable neighbourhood.



Figure 2.7 : District Goals and Objectives



Establish a Distinct Identity

The Wilson District will be a place defined by character—rooted in creativity, discovery, and a welcoming public realm.The architecture, public spaces, and programming will work together to create a district that is memorable, inclusive, and distinctly its own.

Achieve Sustainability & Resilience

The Wilson District will be designed for year-round comfort, combining sustainable buildings, vibrant public spaces, and people-focused streets. By strengthening connections, optimizing energy performance, and weaving nature throughout the district, the plan supports a resilient community that adapts over time and enhances everyday experience.





Embrace the Beating Heart of Urban Life

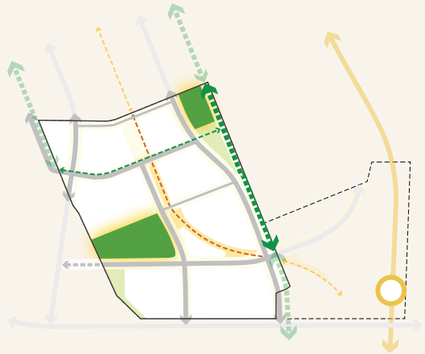
At the district's centre, a lively mix of culture, community spaces, retail, and gathering places will bring people together. Whether it's a quiet bench, a neighbourhood event, a bustling outdoor market, or just a daily commute, the district will offer spaces that animate community life and foster connection.

Structuring Moves

To bring this vision to life, six structuring moves will establish key relationships, embody important urban design principles, and shape how the district grows:

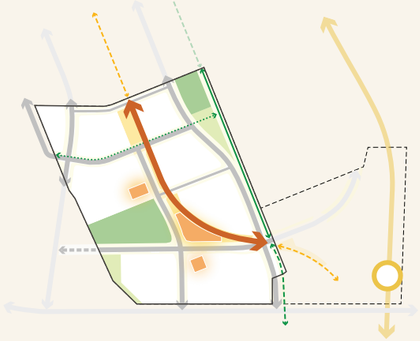
01 Parks and Open Space Linkages

A Major Park, Local Park, the Green Spine, Ancestor's Trail, connections to the Western Greenway and inviting Publicly Accessible Open Spaces (POPS) will anchor community life and provide flexible spaces for events, play, and everyday enjoyment.



02 Anchors and Cultural Connections

Prominently located in the heart of the Wilson District, a necklace of anchors – including the District Heart, public library, district park and iconic tower – will animate and enliven the public realm. The initial segment of the reimaged Runway and its extension - "the Arc" - will form a highly legible, pedestrian-focused cultural corridor connecting to the Wilson Station and creating a strong sense of arrival.



03 District Gateways

At key locations at the perimeter of the district, thoughtfully designed gateways will mark moments of transition and important arrival points into the Wilson District helping to define its unique identity.

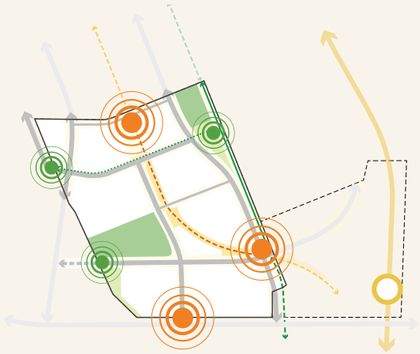
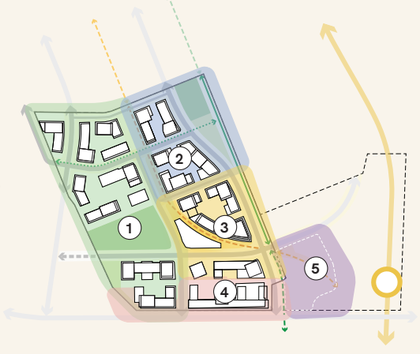


Figure 2.8 : Structuring Moves

04 Character Areas

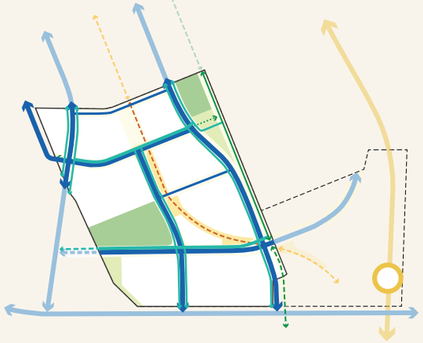
The Wilson District is composed of five distinct Character Areas:

1. Parkside – a civic-oriented area anchored by major community facilities
2. Wilson Commons – neighbourhood-scaled living supported by local amenities
3. The Arc – civic heart of the district
4. Wilson Avenue – a dynamic, urban destination
5. Transit Station Character Area – a major point of arrival and seamless transit-oriented development



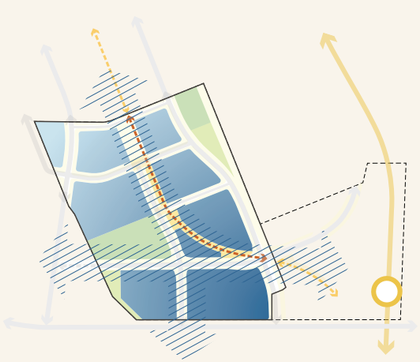
05 A Connected Mobility Network

A diverse network of fine-grained connections including local and regional streets, pedestrian paths and mid-block connections support an active mobility prioritizing pedestrian safety and user experience. The logical extension of existing streets, including Dufferin Street, Billy Bishop Way and Transit Road stitch the Wilson District into the evolving urban context and link with broader cycling and pedestrian networks.



06 A Transit-oriented Community

The distribution of density and height and the composition of built form in the District reflects the presence of the transit station to the east and the adjacency of the low-rise employment lands and Ancaster neighbourhood to the west. A rich mix of uses offer housing options, support employment, encourage retail, and foster a walkable and connected community.



Chapter 2

District Plan

Looking east across the Major Park toward the District Heart (center) and public library (left side)

1 Public Realm
2 Mobility
3 Community Building
4 Sustainability and Resilience

This chapter provides a summary of the key components comprising the District Plan – the public realm (i.e. p*arks, Runway, Green Spine, POPS, courtyards, mid-block connections and streets & sidewalks*), mobility systems (i.e. *streets & sidewalks, trails, transit connections, and bike lanes*), and community building elements (i.e. *character areas, land uses, community facilities & social infrastructure, retail, and built form*), as well as the sustainability considerations (i.e. *City Nature and climate leadership*) and resiliency infrastructure (i.e. *stormwater management & green infrastructure*).



Artistic rendering of the Wilson District

The Wilson District Plan establishes a comprehensive planning framework to guide the implementation and coordinated evolution of the Wilson District. It articulates a clear vision and district-wide structure to inform future planning, while maintaining the flexibility needed to support phased implementation and development over time.

This framework reflects a holistic and integrated approach. Each component has been developed with careful multi-faceted coordination and a strong understanding of how the district's systems—public realm, mobility, land use, built form, community infrastructure, and natural systems—interact to create a cohesive and complete community.

Planning Framework Components

- **Public Realm**
- **Mobility**
- **Community Building**
- **Sustainability and Resilience**

The Plan begins by establishing a unifying vision and overall structure for the District. This includes the arrangement of streets, configuration of development blocks, and the location and size of parks, as well as key internal and external connections that tie the district into the broader urban fabric.

It then sets out the design and performance expectations for the public realm—parks, open spaces, streets, and pedestrian environments—that collectively support walkability, comfort, and vibrant community life.

Mobility is addressed through a well-scaled and well-connected street network, an active mobility framework, and a transit-oriented development strategy designed to achieve a high share of non-auto trips and seamless integration with the TTC Wilson Station. Community building is supported through an integrated approach to the land use mix, access to community facilities, and the creation of welcoming public spaces that foster daily activity and social interaction.

Sustainability and resilience principles are embedded throughout the District Plan—both intrinsically, through compact and efficient land-use patterns that minimize energy consumption, transportation emissions, and embodied carbon, and explicitly through thoughtful design strategies that enhance environmental performance, increase climate responsiveness, improve biodiversity, and ensure long-term adaptability.

The District Plan concludes with implementation considerations and tailored guidance to support coordinated delivery across multiple blocks and property ownerships, ensuring that the long-term vision can be realized through feasible, phased, and collaborative action.

Planning Framework Components

Public Realm

This section describes the District's overall public realm network, which includes streets, parks and open spaces and emphasizes creating moments that reinforce a unique sense of place.

Mobility

This section describes the organization of Wilson's mobility network, which prioritizes active modes and public transit and is made up of public streets and active mobility connections.

Community Building

This section details the District's land use, density and built form, which work together to create a vibrant, livable and sustainable livework community.

Sustainability and Resilience

This section provides an overview of the District's sustainability and resilience strategy, which is integral to every layer of the District Plan.



→Figure 3.1 : Planning Framework Components



Looking north across the Trailhead towards the Local Park and Green Spine (right side)

Sub-chapter 1

Public Realm

2.1

2.1.1 Public Realm Objectives

2.1.2 A District of Places

2.1.3 Public Realm Network

- → Major Park
- → Local Park
- → The Green Spine
- → Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces
- → Streets & Gateways

This section elaborates upon the ambitious vision for a vibrant and welcoming public realm that serves residents, accommodates commuters, welcomes visitors, and fosters community through an interconnected district of distinct places for gathering, socializing, and recreating, as well as more intimate spaces for respite and reflection.

2.1.1 Public Realm Objectives

The vision for the Wilson District's public realm aims to advance the following objectives:









01 Enable Social, Cultural and Mobility Connectionss

As the southernmost district within YZD, the Wilson District will play a dual role—as both a recipient of, and a catalyst for, major public realm elements that are fundamental to YZD. This includes transformative linear spaces such as the reimagined Runway and the Green Spine, both of which will evolve over time into vital corridors for public life, recreation, sustainable mobility, and habitat connectivity.

Proximity to Wilson TTC Station further strengthens the district's connectivity, supporting transit-oriented development, linking residents and workers to employment opportunities, and welcoming visitors into the Wilson District.

02 Provide a Green Welcome to YZD

The Wilson District aspires to express the principles of City-Nature through a public realm that greets residents and visitors with a lush, green, and inviting landscape. A network of naturalized spaces will define each gateway into the district:

- On the east, the Green Spine, Local Park, and Trailhead create a strong green entrance.
- On the west, a nearly 3 acre Major Park provides an equally welcoming entry into the district from the adjacent Ancaster neighbourhood.
- Street C, the primary east-west connection, links the Local Park and Trailhead to the Green Spine and Greenway, potentially serving as part of the Ancestor Trail.
- Wilson Avenue will showcase the City-Nature ethos with generous setbacks and extensive tree plantings.
- To the north, the Runway will function as a signature public realm destination—completing a full "green welcome" that frames the district on all sides.

Figure 3.1.1 : Public Realm Objectives

03 Celebrate Ecology, Community, and Water

The Wilson District envisions a richly programmed, well-connected public realm that embraces community, celebrates Indigenous presence, encourages civic life and supports wildlife habitat and viable ecological functions.

Drawing from the broader site's history as the headwaters of one of Toronto's historic "lost rivers" and from the concept of City-Nature, the district will invite residents and visitors to experience water as a defining element of place within parks and open spaces, and through the integration of green infrastructure throughout the area.

04 Contribute to Placemaking and Placekeeping

Enabling arts and cultural programming and public participation inspires a greater sense of belonging in the public realm: essential to creating a welcoming and inclusive District. The District Plan explores opportunities to honour the legacy of the lands and create a sense of community through the creation of an Indigenous Ancestor Trail, as well as in the design and naming of spaces, public art, and programming.

2.1.2 A District of Places

The public realm network will serve as a connective fabric of social, cultural, natural, and community-centered spaces. Many of these spaces will become district destinations in their own right, functioning as hubs for community events, family gatherings, sports, and recreational activities.

This network will link the Wilson District with neighbouring communities and future developments, promoting sustainable mobility through neighbourhood streets designed primarily for pedestrians and cyclists traveling to and through diverse spaces and moving among these distinct places. Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS) will provide flexible open spaces for a variety of uses from seasonal markets to public art installation, as well as green spaces that connect people with nature.

The public realm will also facilitate access to key community facilities, including the District Heart, public library, schools, daycares, and community spaces. These facilities have been strategically distributed throughout the district, closely coordinating with key public realm elements to ensure convenient access, maximize community impact, and enhance site activation. In conjunction with retail and non-residential uses, these community facilities will energize the public realm, fostering social engagement while enriching the daily experiences of residents and workers year-round.



District Heart



The Runway



The Green Spine



Local Park



Transit Connection



Wilson Avenue Gateway



Major Park



Neighbourhood Linkages

→Figure 3.1.2 : A District of Places
→Images 3.1.1-3.1.8 : A District of Places

2.1.3 The Public Realm Network

The Wilson District is envisioned as a place where nature, community, and mobility come together in a comfortable, accessible and beautifully interconnected public realm. Lively spaces for gathering and celebration, intimate and peaceful places for contemplation and retreat, and vibrant civic spaces and cultural places will invite people to connect with one another and with the land.

A network of green gateways, parks, welcoming streets, generous sidewalks, and mid-block connections will invite residents and guide visitors through the district, offering seamless connections to transit, surrounding neighbourhoods, and the broader Downsview landscape. Signature spaces such as the Runway and the Green Spine will anchor the district with vitality and contribute to a sense of identity for the Wilson District— celebrating community life, embracing ecological beauty, and honouring the stories of this land.

Guided by collaboration with Indigenous communities, the public realm will honour histories and support a future grounded in shared stewardship, cultural expression, and connection. Pedestrian-focused streets, intimate courtyards, and flexible public spaces will foster everyday comfort and creativity.

Together, these diverse public realm spaces create a district rooted in nature, shaped by community, and designed for generations—an inspiring district to gather, move, and belong.



Image 3.1.9 : "Play on the Runway" installation



Image 3.1.10 : Passeig de Sant Joan, Barcelona



Image 3.1.11 : Chicago Botanic Garden



Figure 3.1.3 : Wilson District NC Lands District Plan

0 50m 100m 200m

Major Park

Size: 12,000 m² (1.2 Ha)

The Major Park serves as the Wilson District's primary community green space destination while functioning as a critical part of the broader stormwater management infrastructure. This is where the neighbourhood comes together for community events, recreational sports, and year-round recreation. Anticipated programming will emphasize active uses and community amenities such as walking paths, sports courts and/or sports fields, a children's playground and flexible gathering or event spaces.

Figure 3.1.4 : Major Park



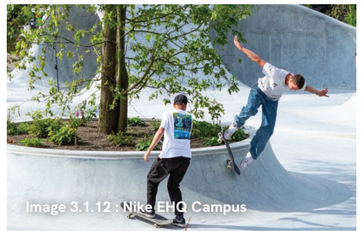


Image 3.1.12 : Nike EHQ Campus


Image 3.1.13 : Stanley Greene Park, Toronto


Image 3.1.14 : Jordal Sports Park, Oslo, Norway


Artistic rendering of the Major Park

Local Park

Size: 4,300 m² (0.43 Ha)

Positioned near the southern terminus of the Green Spine and adjacent to the Trailhead, the Local Park welcomes visitors into the district's green network. This park celebrates both ecology and mobility, offering space for potential amenities such as a playground, an outdoor fitness area, shaded picnic groves, areas for lounging, sports courts, and seasonal gardens that can increase biodiversity and demonstrate sustainable landscape practices.

Figure 3.1.5 : Local Park



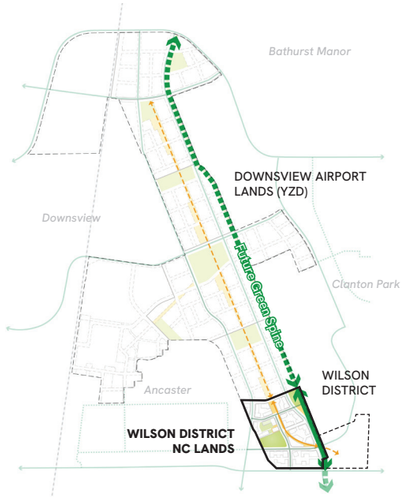

Image 3.1.15 : Philadelphia Navy Yard, Philadelphia


Image 3.1.16 : Gathering Place park in Tulsa, Oklahoma


Image 3.1.17 : Gathering Place park in Tulsa, Oklahoma

The Green Spine

Figure 3.1.6: The Green Spine - YZD



Size: ± 398 linear metres

The Green Spine serves as a linear mobility, green infrastructure and habitat corridor connecting the Wilson District to future Downsview districts and beyond to the City network. The corridor will have a strong ecological and sustainability focus, enhancing habitat connectivity, and increasing biodiversity while drawing users from outside of the District.



Image 3.1.18 : Corktown Commons, Toronto



Image 3.1.19 : Chevron Parklands located, Perth, Western Australia



Artistic Rendering of the Green Spine



Figure 3.1.7 : The Green Spine - The Wilson District
Image 3.1.20-3.1.22 The Green Spine - The Wilson District

Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces

The Runway

3,800 m² (0.38Ha)

The Runway will feature active ground-level uses, seasonal programming, and an amenity filled open space design that draws visitors and residents alike. With connections to the Major Park and Wilson Station via the Arc, the Runway will serve as a unique destination, an active public realm, and important mobility link for those coming to and from the Wilson District and future YZD districts via the Wilson TTC station. Similar to the Runway itself, the Runway Extension will serve as a highly connective and actively programmed portion of the public realm. Located on the east side of Street E and strategically situated between the formal Runway , the Runway Extension will be a generous pedestrian area lined by retail, shaded by canopy trees offering comfortable seating and accommodating temporary seasonal activation.

Figure 3.1.8: The Runway - YZD




Image 3.1.23 : La Rambla, Barcelona, Spain


Image 3.1.24 : Snowport in the Seaport District, Boston


Image 3.1.25 : Children and adults playing with a giant chess set


Artistic Rendering of the Runway



The Runway

A unique amenity filled pedestrian open space destination and important mobility link lined with retail



The Runway Extension

A highly connective and actively programmed portion of the public realm accommodating temporary seasonal activation

The Arc

A dramatic curvilinear mid-block connection offering a dynamic spatial experience that fosters a sense of wonder and discovery

Figure 3.1.9 : The Runway - The Wilson District
Images 3.1.26-3.1.28 : The Runway - The Wilson District

Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces

The Arc

3,800 m² (0.38Ha)

The Arc is a unique urban space that will become a distinctive and inviting feature in the Wilson District. As a dramatic curvilinear mid-block connection, it offers pedestrians a dynamic spatial experience flanked by active cultural and commercial uses, drawing people through the site and revealing different views as they reach either end of the curve. This spatial configuration fosters a sense of wonder and invites surprise and discovery, aligned with the District vision, characterized by an evolving vista as pedestrians navigate along the Arc.

Figure 3.1.10 : The Arc





Artistic rendering of the Arc and the District Heart

The Trailhead

2,945 m² (0.29 Ha)

Positioned near the southern terminus of the Green Spine, this POPS welcomes visitors into the district's green network. With the Green Spine and Local Park directly adjacent, the combined green space is significant, allowing for a variety of complimentary programming. The Trailhead celebrates both ecology and mobility, with space to offer amenities such as an outdoor fitness area, shaded picnic groves, bike repair stations, and educational pollinator gardens that increase biodiversity and demonstrate sustainable landscape practices.

Figure 3.1.11 : The Trailhead





Image 3.1.29 : Outdoor learning



Image 3.1.30 : Naturalistic Garden



Image 3.1.31 : Awen' Indigenous Gathering Place, Collingwood



Artistic rendering of the Green Spine

Streets & Gateways

The Wilson District will be organized through an interconnected network of neighbourhood-scale streets. These streets will enhance the quality of the public realm by prioritizing pedestrian safety, encouraging active mobility, accommodating robust canopy trees and plantings, and incorporating green infrastructure to manage stormwater. At the same time, the streets will provide effective and efficient vehicular access and servicing to ensure viable development parcels, support future residents, and meet commercial, retail, civic, and community needs.

As part of the public realm, the integration of these streets with key open spaces will help define district gateways. These gateways will mark important transition points and arrival areas within the Wilson District, contributing to its unique identity.

Additional information on streets can be found in Section 2 - Mobility.

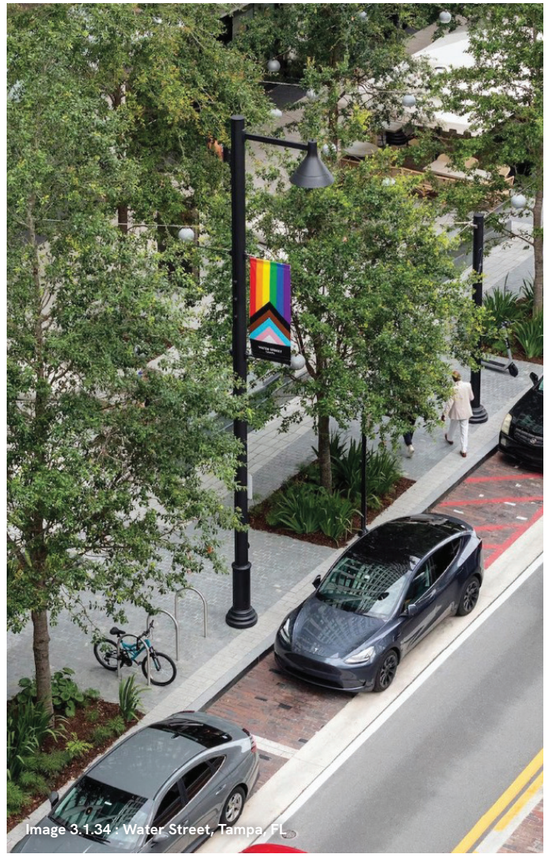


Image 3.1.34 : Water Street, Tampa, FL



Image 3.1.32

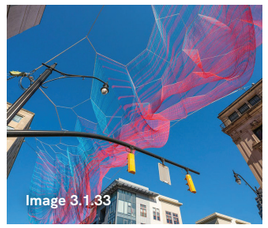


Image 3.1.33



Image 3.1.35 : Water Street, Tampa, FL



Image 3.1.36 : People biking

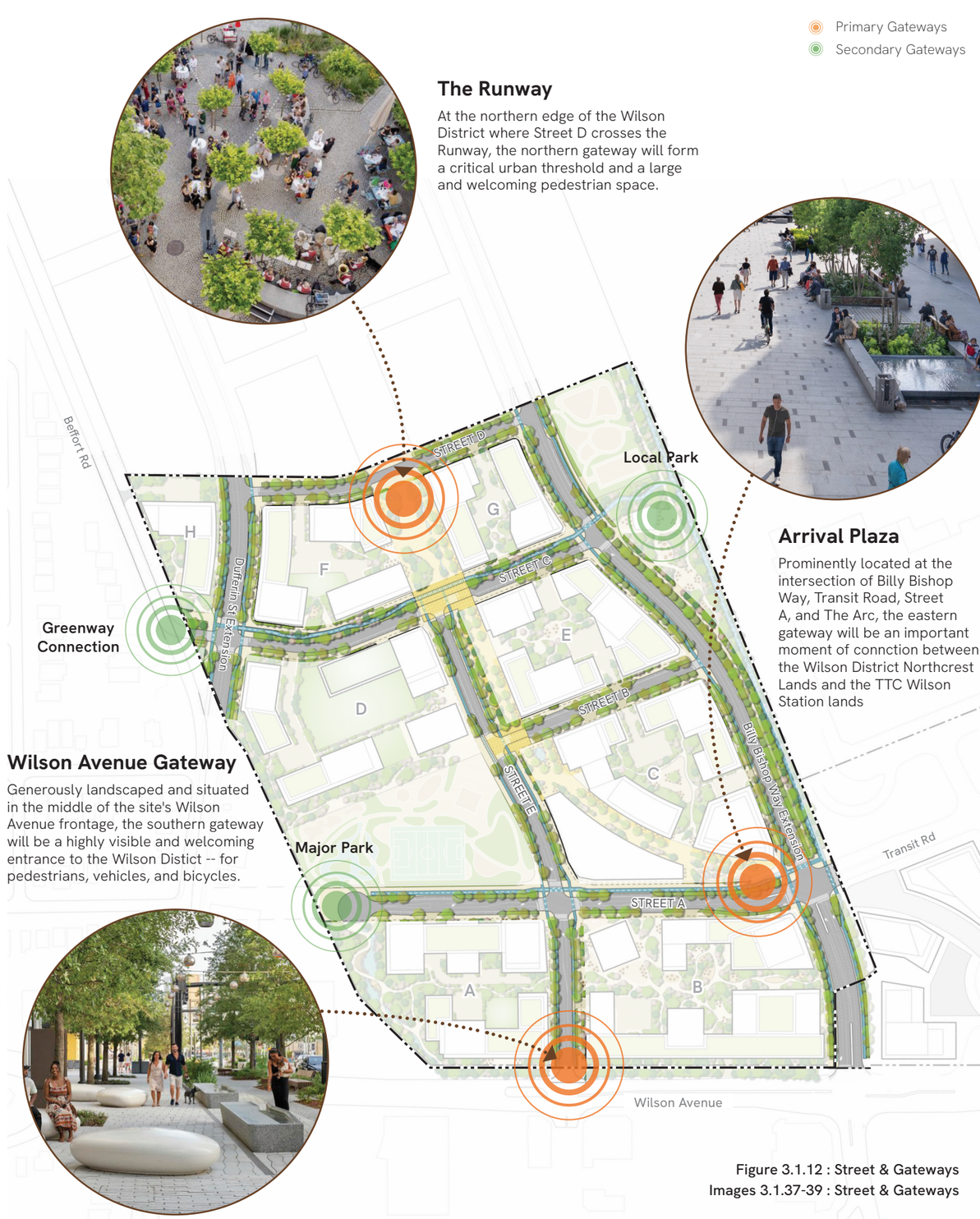


Figure 3.1.12 : Street & Gateways
Images 3.1.37-39 : Street & Gateways



Looking west along multi-modal Street A at the District Heart and the pedestrianized mid-block connection - The Arc

Sub-chapter 2

Mobility

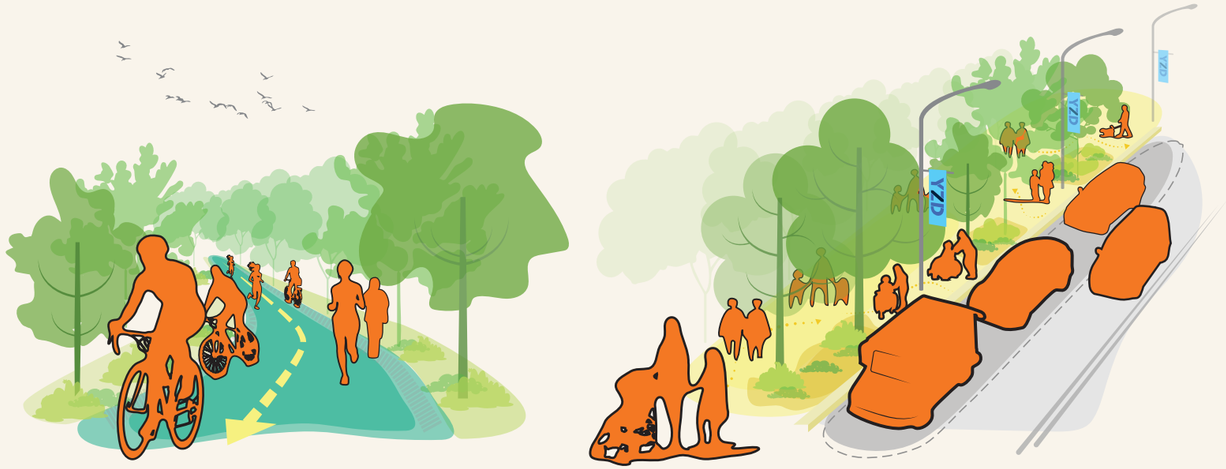
2.2

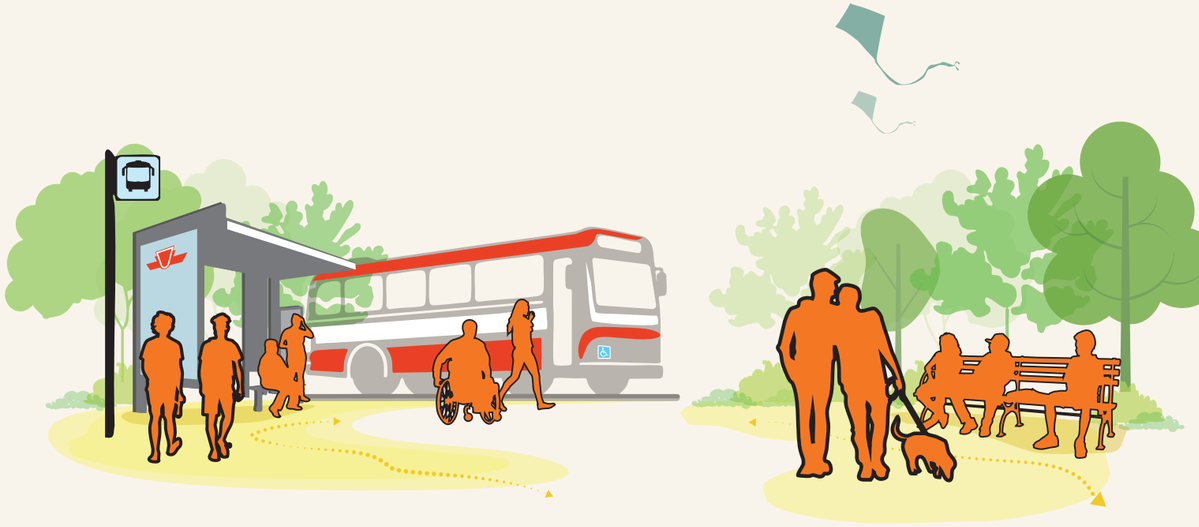
2.2.1 Mobility Objectives
2.2.2 A Multimodal Network
2.2.3 Street Network
2.2.4 Active Mobility Network
2.2.5 Transit Connections

For nearly a century, the Wilson District lands have been isolated within the former Downsview Airport, separated from the surrounding neighbourhoods and urban life. The transformation of the Wilson District presents a rare opportunity to reconnect this area with its context—linking it to Wilson Station, connecting it to nearby communities, and integrating it with the broader Downsview landscape—while reshaping how people will move through the district in the future.

2.2.1 Mobility Objectives

The District's multi-modal network aims to:





01 Promote Sustainable Mobility and Non-motorized Trips

Prioritize non-motorized travel supporting the Secondary Plan objective that no more than 25% of trips in the Downsview area be made by personal motor vehicle. The reimagined Runway and the Green Spine will serve as essential mobility corridors and community infrastructure. The street network will incorporate dedicated cycling facilities and safe, convenient pedestrian amenities to encourage walking, biking, and other forms of active transportation.

02 Provide Adequate and Efficient Access and Servicing

Provide efficient vehicular access to all development blocks while prioritizing accessibility for people of all abilities. Drop-off, loading, and servicing areas will be primarily located within block interiors or underground to minimize conflicts with public spaces. Where these functions occur at grade, they will be designed with care—using high-quality materials and thoughtful detailing.

03 Enable Connections to Transit

Establish clear, intuitive connections to Wilson TTC Station, ensuring convenient access for pedestrians, workers, and visitors. The Runway will function as a major active mobility corridor, while the Green Spine and a dedicated on-street cycling network will strengthen connectivity for cyclists. Multiple bus routes will provide reliable links to surrounding communities and enhance transit access.

04 Support Broader Urban Design and Public Realm Vision

The circulation network is designed to reinforce the urban design and public realm goals. Streets are carefully calibrated to support density and a diverse mix of uses while ensuring human comfort, fostering an intimate neighbourhood character, meeting essential operational needs, and allocating space for pedestrians, retail spill-out, public art, and generous landscape plantings.

Figure 3.2.1 : Mobility Objectives

2.2.2 A Multimodal Network

The diverse mobility needs of residents, workers, and visitors will be addressed through a cohesive, integrated multimodal network that will prioritize active transportation, such as walking and cycling, to minimize transportation-related carbon emissions and promote healthy living. The network will ensure efficient and convenient access, while strengthening connections to public transit and promoting equitable access, ensuring transportation options are available to individuals of all ages and abilities. The Wilson District will lead the early implementation of critical elements of the Downsview Airport Lands long term mobility framework, including the Runway, the Green Spine, major street enhancements, and enhanced transit connections to Wilson Station, laying the groundwork for a cohesive long term network.

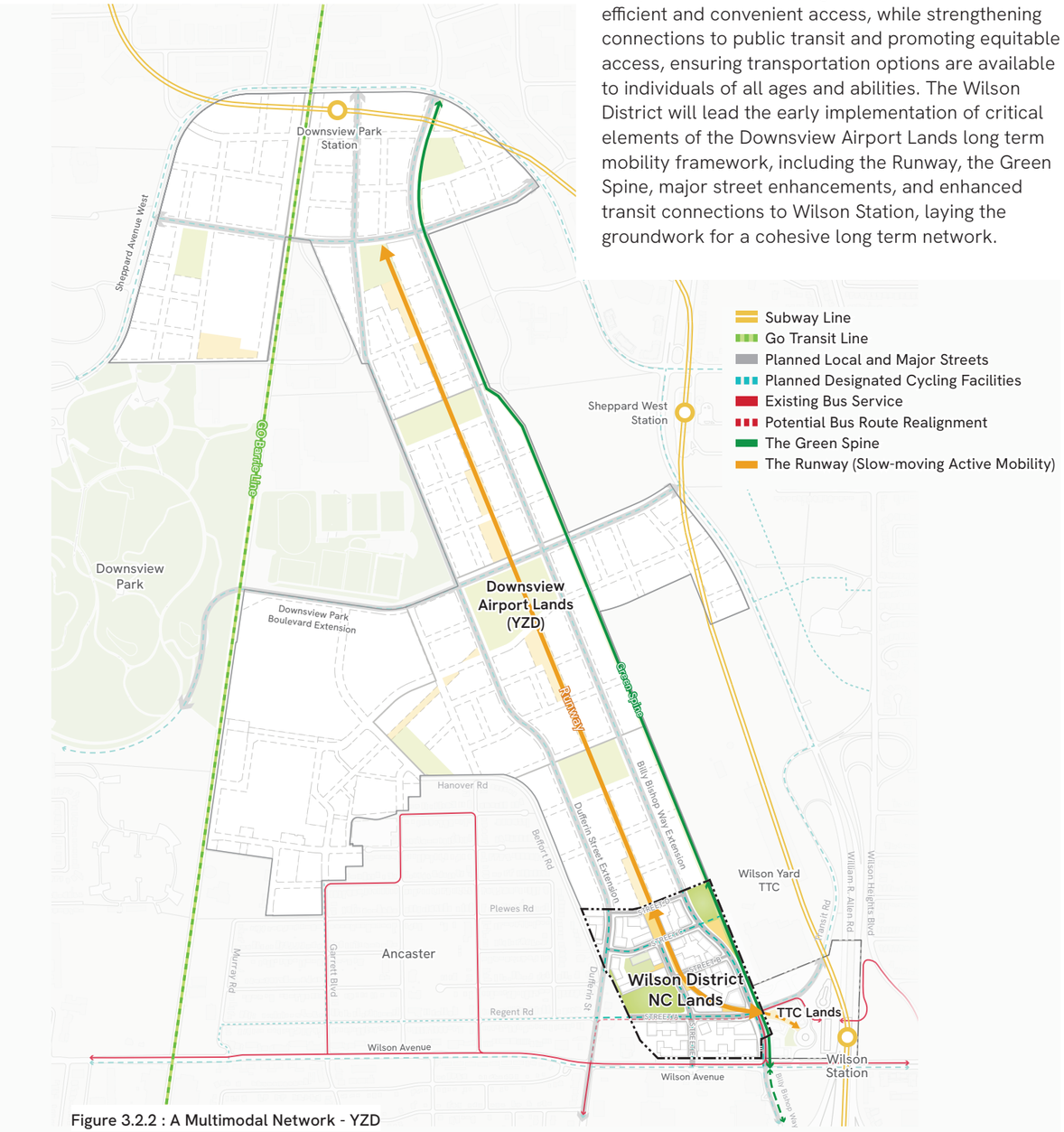


Figure 3.2.2 : A Multimodal Network - YZD

2.2.3 Street Network

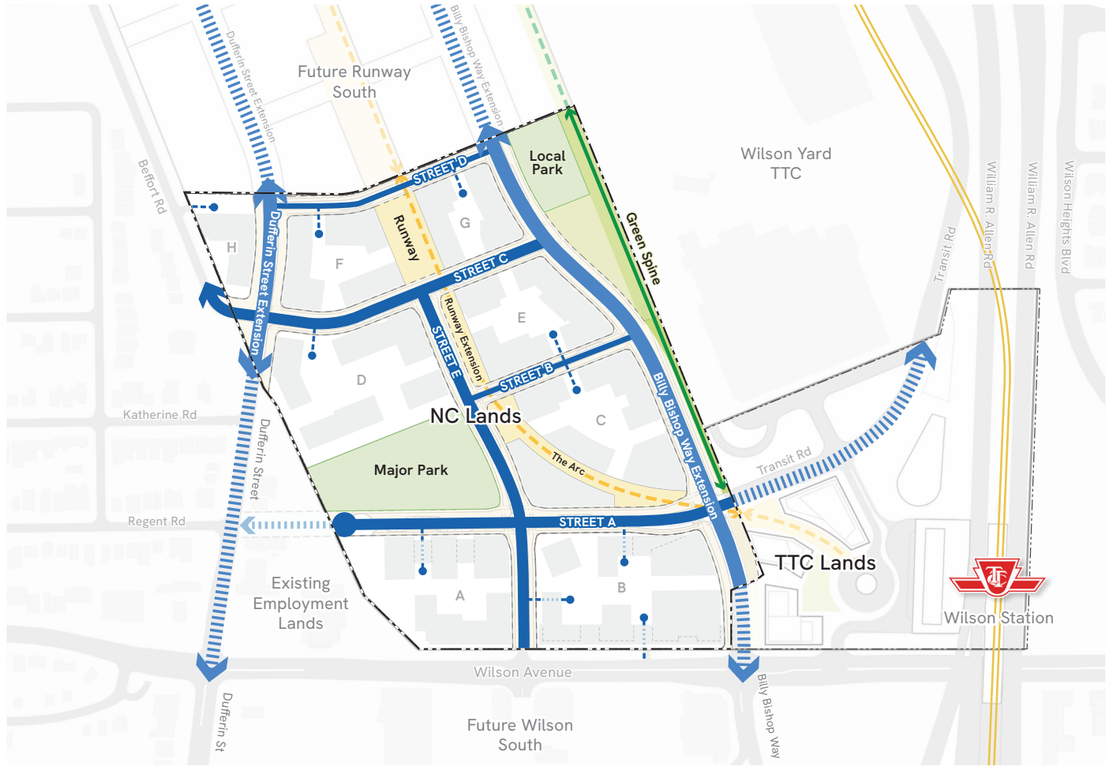
The Wilson District will feature a fine-grained local public street network that provides access and facilitated movement through the District while complementing the planned major street network identified in the 2024 Downsview Secondary Plan (2024 DSP). In compliance with the 2024 DSP, the new streets will be designed using a complete streets approach, incorporating traffic calming measures to increase pedestrian safety and discourage speeding.

The District will introduce a network of streets of varying rights-of-way widths ranging from 18.5 to 24 metres depending on their location, function, and adjacent density. The network will connect to Wilson Avenue at the existing intersection at Billy Bishop Way and aligned with the existing intersection at the shopping complex to the south; it will also provide indirect access through the existing Dufferin Street intersection. The network will also feature key north-south and east-west routes to facilitate access to the Wilson District and connections to surrounding neighbourhoods.

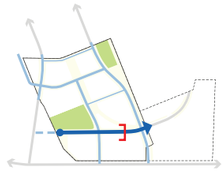
Planned Major Streets within Wilson District (Subject to EA)
New or Realigned Streets Outside of Wilson District (Subject to EA)
Existing Streets
Proposed Local Streets
Potential Street Connection
Potential Vehicular Block Access

0 50m 100m 200m

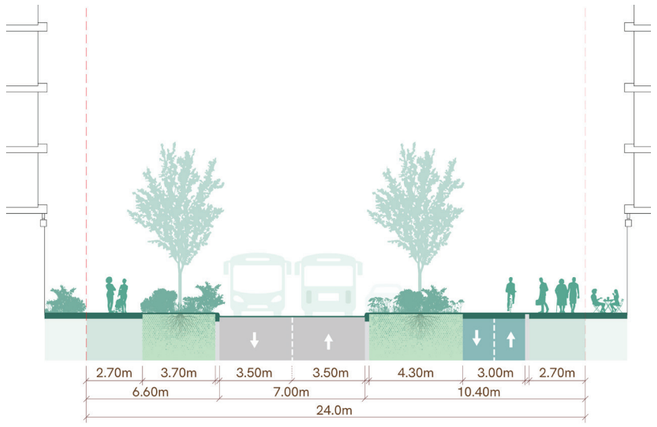
Figure 3.2.3 : Street Network



Street A



Street A (24m) will service the densest development blocks (Blocks A and B), connect to the TTC station via Transit Road, and provide access to the Major Park. It will be framed by retail anchors that activate the street and support daily needs while accommodating dedicated cycling facilities and robust tree plantings. The design of Street A also allows for a potential future connection to Dufferin Street via the long-term redevelopment of the existing Employment Lands; it provides room for future transit and allows for complete east-west connections to/from the TTC station.

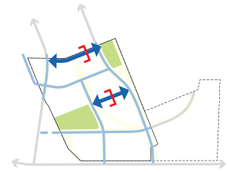


→Figure 3.2.4 : Street A ROW

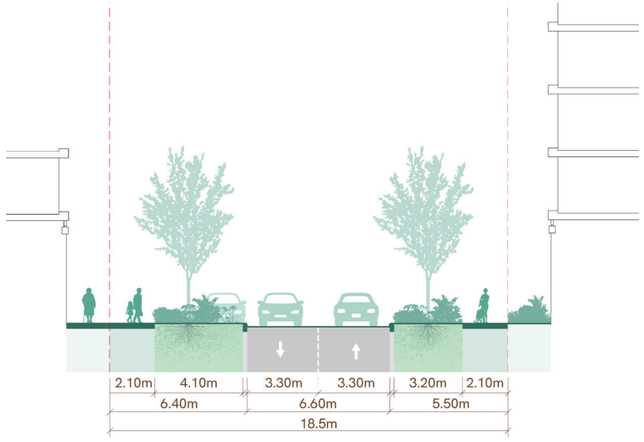


Artistic rendering of Street A looking towards the District Heart, the Arc and the Arrival Plaza

Local Neighbourhood Streets



Streets B and D are local neighbourhood streets with a 18.5 metre right-of-way, designed to serve movement of local traffic within the Wilson District. They create a more intimate, residential-scaled public realm due to the narrower right-of-ways while maintaining full functional access. These streets provide direct vehicular access to the majority of the District's development blocks, including well located pick-up and drop-off areas, as well as mid-block loading and servicing functions, ensuring day-to-day operations are accommodated without compromising pedestrian comfort or safety.



→Figure 3.2.5 : Local Neighbourhood Streets ROW

Typical Street B and D cross section



Image 3.2.1 : Example of a local street

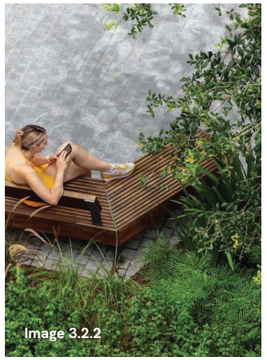


Image 3.2.2

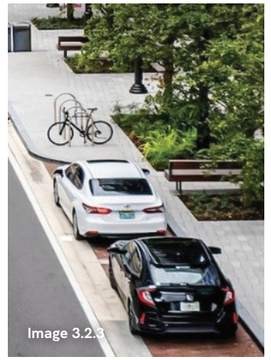
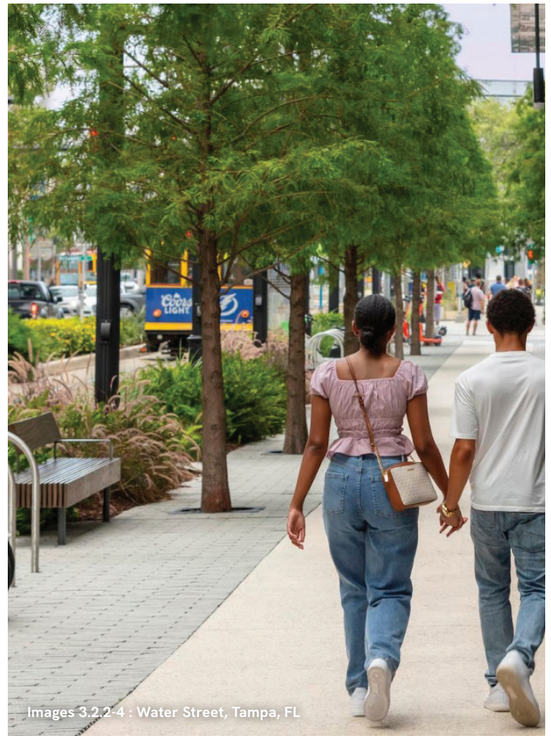
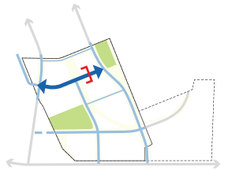


Image 3.2.3

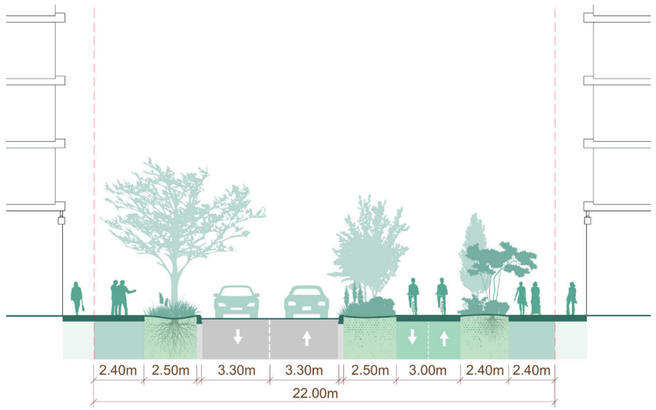


Images 3.2.2-4 : Water Street, Tampa, FL

Street C



Street C (22 m) is a robust green, people-focused street that connects the Green Spine, Local Park, Beffort Greenway, and the reimagined Runway, forming a continuous east-west green corridor. It prioritizes safe cycling, comfortable pedestrian movement, and integrated green infrastructure, supported by generous planting and midblock connections into adjacent open spaces and courtyards.



→Figure 3.2.6 : Street C ROW



Artistic rendering of Street C

As a key community connector, Street C provides direct access between the elementary school, surrounding residential buildings, and the Ancaster neighbourhood, while linking the district to major public realm destinations including the Runway, the Arc, and the Local Park.

Street C also offers the potential to accommodate an Ancestor Trail within its right-of-way, offering opportunities for cultural expression and storytelling, which would be co-designed through further engagement with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples.



Gardens and Courtyard Spaces



Local Park, Trailhead and Green Spine Access

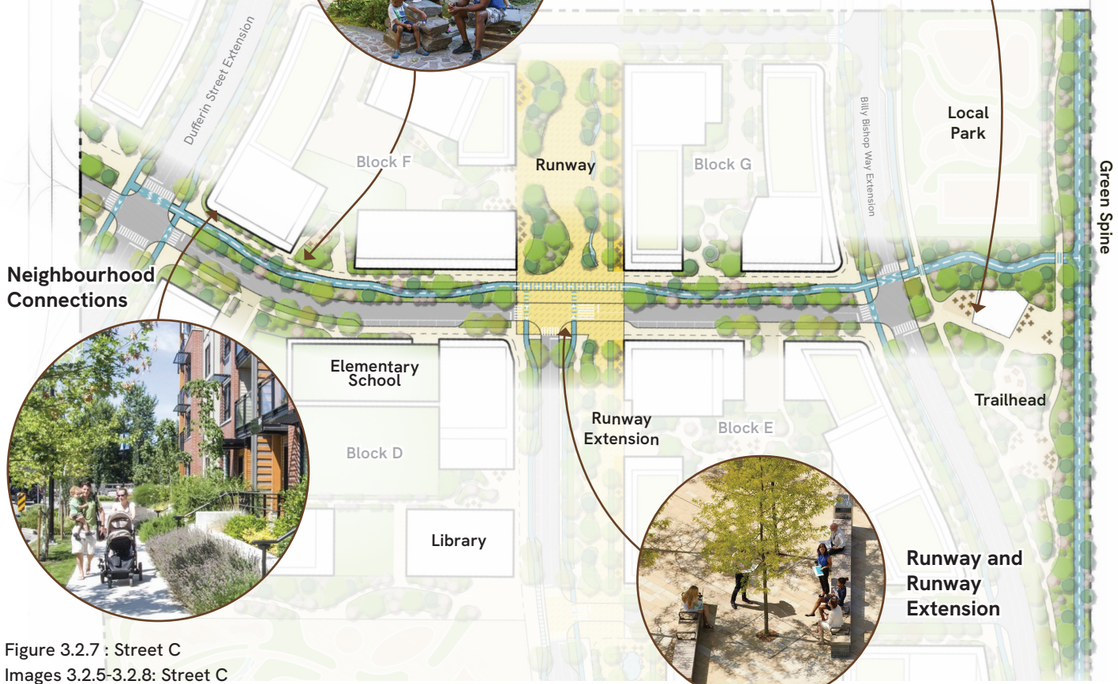
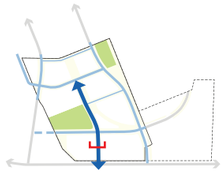


Figure 3.2.7 : Street C
Images 3.2.5-3.2.8: Street C

Street E



Street E (23m) functions as a local neighbourhood street that supports north-south movement within the Wilson District and prioritizes local access over through-traffic. It is designed with a pedestrian experience in mind directly connecting residents and visitors to key destinations, including the Major Park, the District Heart, the Runway and the Arc. High-quality, differentiated paving at pedestrian crossings reinforce the intentional continuity of the pedestrian priority experience extending from the reimagined Runway, the Runway Extension and and the Arc — providing safe, direct links to and from the Major Park.

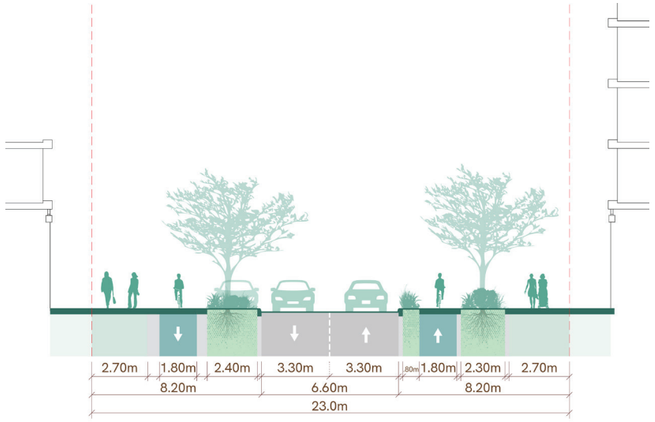


Figure 3.2.8 : Street E ROW

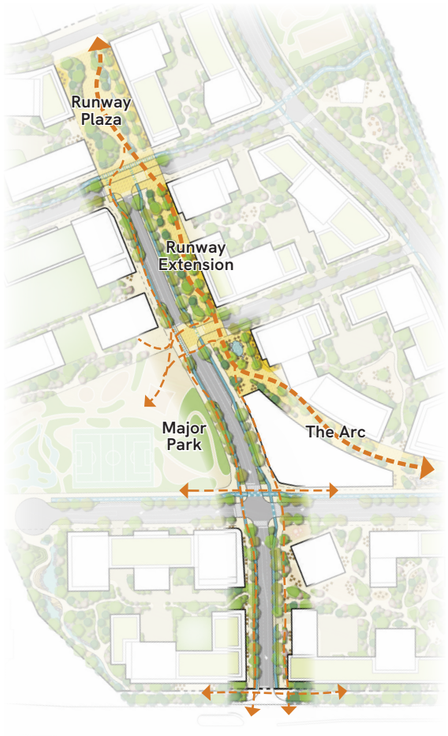


Figure 3.2.9 : Street E

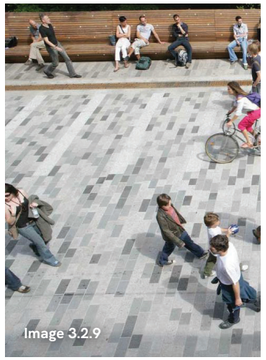


Image 3.2.9



Image 3.2.10 : Allen and Pike Streets, NY



Artistic rendering of the Street C and Runway pedestrian crossing

Major Streets

Dufferin Street

Dufferin Street functions as a major regional transit corridor along the western edge of the Wilson District, supporting strong connections to surrounding neighbourhoods and the broader Downsview area. It will be upgraded through the City-led Phase 3 & 4 Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) to accommodate future growth, improved transit service, and safe pedestrian and cycling connections, reinforcing Dufferin's as a key mobility spine for the district.



Figure 3.2.10 : Major Streets

Billy Bishop Way

Billy Bishop Way forms an important regional connection along the eastern edge of the Wilson District, extending the existing city street network into the site. As part of the broader EA, Billy Bishop will also be upgraded to support future growth, improved transit access, and safe pedestrian and cycling connections, including to the Green Spine. Within the District, Billy Bishop Way provides a key link to Wilson Station and the Local Park, enhances internal circulation, and supports access to major destinations including the Arc, Street A and Street C, and the district's emerging residential and mixed-use blocks. Its role as a continued north-south connector ensures integration of the Wilson District into the wider Downsview mobility network.



Image 3.2.11 : The green street section in Sheffield



Image 3.2.12 – the Avenues Mermoz et Pinel in Lyon, France

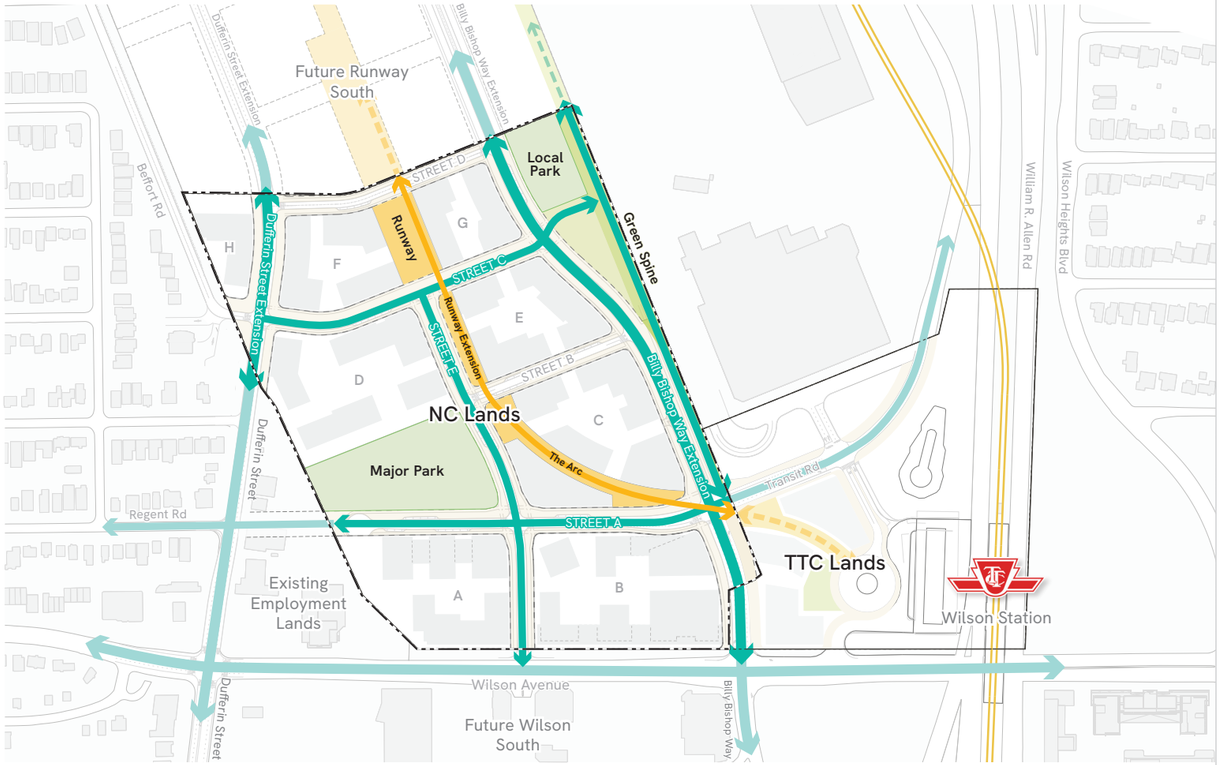
2.2.4 Active Mobility Network

The active mobility network will play a central role in advancing the Wilson District's commitment to sustainable transportation and supporting the Downsview Secondary Plan's target for a significant shift toward non-motorized travel. The goal is to make walking, cycling, and transit the most convenient, efficient, and attractive ways to move within and beyond the district.

Within the Wilson District, the proposed network will enable seamless movement to key destinations, including Wilson TTC Station, Wilson Avenue, and neighbourhoods to the west via Beffort Road. Over time, long-term mobility corridors such as the Green Spine and the Runway will extend these connections across the broader Downsview lands.

To ensure safety and clarity for all users, the network will separate pedestrian zones from cycling routes. Dedicated cycling facilities along key streets and throughout the Green Spine will create safe, direct movement for cyclists, while spaces like the Runway and its extension will prioritize slow-moving active transportation, supporting both circulation and opportunities for gathering and social activity.

The cycling network will include a combination of unidirectional and bidirectional cycle tracks that connect the Wilson District to the wider mobility system. This includes planned long-term facilities along Wilson Avenue, Billy Bishop Way, and Dufferin Street, as well as future extensions of the Green Spine as adjacent districts are developed.



← Figure 3.2.11 : Active Mobility Network

- Planned Designated Cycling Facilities on Major and Existing Streets (SP)
- Proposed Cycle Tracks
- Slow-moving Active Mobility

0 50m 100m 200m

2.2.5 Transit Connections

Within the district itself, unidirectional cycle tracks along Street E will support north-south travel, while bidirectional tracks on Street C will anchor east-west connectivity—linking the Local Park and Green Spine along Billy Bishop Way with the Greenway along Beffort Road. Additional unidirectional cycle tracks on Street A will create a direct connection to Transit Road and Wilson TTC Station. A future extension of Street A through the existing Employment Lands may also provide direct access to neighbourhoods west of Dufferin Street if those lands are redeveloped.

Finally, additional cycle facilities are planned along major streets north of the district, with alignments and design details currently being advanced through the ongoing EA Phase 3 & 4 process occurring in parallel with the 2024 Secondary Plan.

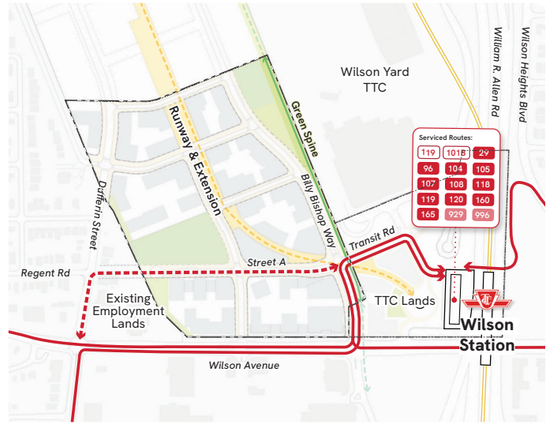
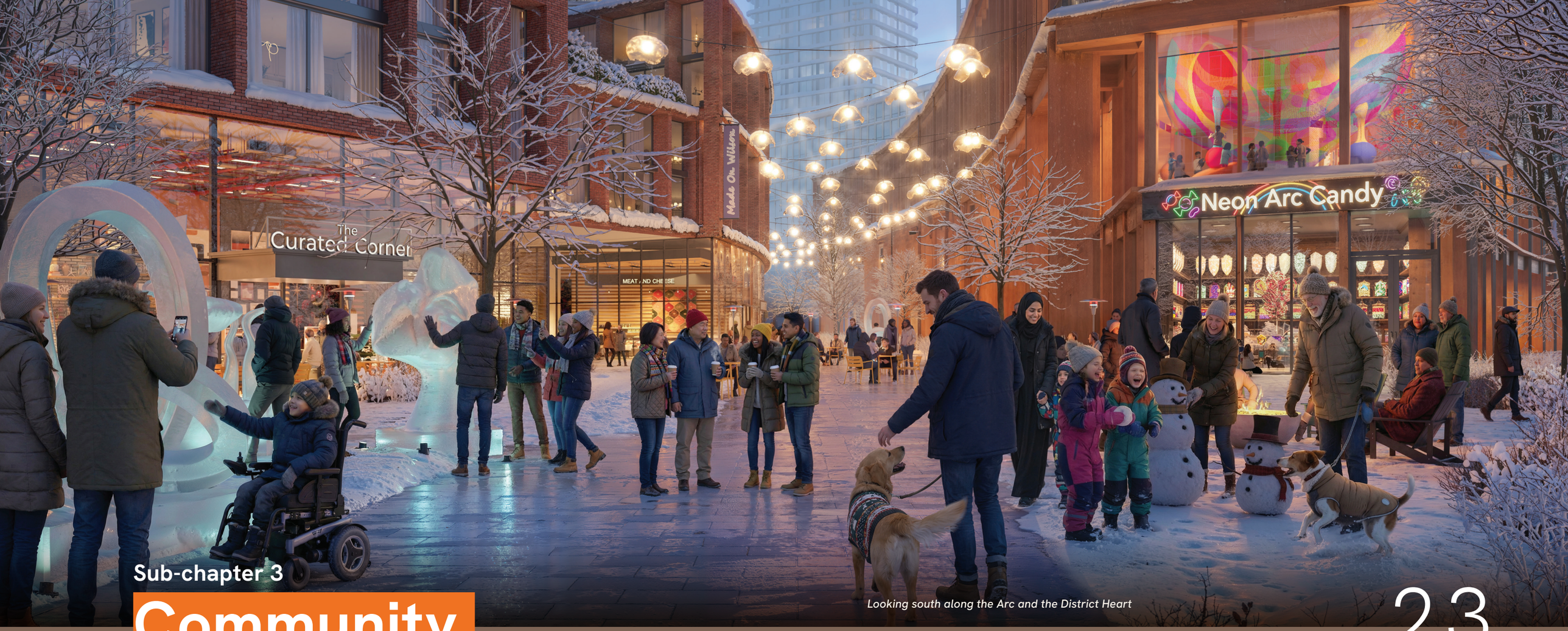


Figure 3.2.12 : Transit Connections

- Existing Bus Service
- Potential Bus Route Realignment
- Green Spine
- Slow-moving Active Mobility

The Wilson District will be well supported by robust transit connections and, anchored by its direct relationship with Wilson TTC Station, which will be fully integrated into the district's movement network to ensure convenient access for workers, residents, and visitors. As part of the broader Downsview redevelopment, the Wilson District is envisioned as a transit-oriented community where the subway station provides a major gateway to Line 1 and its regional connections. Multiple TTC bus routes operating from the Wilson Bus Division and serving Wilson Station will further enhance connectivity, offering direct links to surrounding neighbourhoods and key destinations across North York and Toronto.

Over time, long-term mobility corridors such as the Green Spine and the Dufferin Street Busway will complement these existing transit services by providing seamless pedestrian, cycling, and active mobility connections to the station and through adjacent districts, strengthening the district's role within a highly connected, multimodal transportation network.



Looking south along the Arc and the District Heart

Sub-chapter 3

Community Building

2.3

2.3.1 Building a Community
2.3.2 Character Areas
2.3.3 A True Mix of Uses
2.3.4 Community Facilities and Social Infrastructure
2.3.5 Built Form

As the front door of the YZD redevelopment lands, Wilson has the opportunity to bring together homes, workplaces, amenities, parks, and public spaces in a way that supports daily life and fosters a strong sense of belonging. By integrating diverse uses and creating vibrant places for living, gathering, and daily / seasonal activity, the Wilson District will help shape a resilient, inclusive neighbourhood that contributes meaningfully to Toronto's long-term growth and quality of life.

2.3.1 Building a Community

The Wilson District is envisioned as a vibrant, people-focused community shaped by a diverse mix of uses that support daily life in a compact, walkable, and accessible urban setting. Guided by YZDs ambition of cultivating strong, healthy communities, the district will bring homes, workplaces, amenities, and public spaces into close proximity—creating a lively environment where residents, workers, and visitors can easily connect, participate, and thrive.

Housing diversity will be fundamental to ensuring the Wilson District is welcoming to all. By offering a broad range of housing options that meet the needs of different family sizes, life stages, and income levels, the district will foster an inclusive neighbourhood where people from many backgrounds can find stability, opportunity, and a sense of belonging. This commitment to housing choice supports a resilient and equitable community.

A dynamic mix of non-residential and recreational uses will further animate the Wilson District, transforming its public realm into a place of year-round activity and social engagement. Vibrant streets, plazas, and gathering spaces will encourage interaction, cultural expression, and community life, fostering a lively district that feels active and inviting throughout the day and across every season.

The district will also promote inclusive prosperity by creating economic and social opportunities for historically disadvantaged and equity-deserving groups. Through thoughtful investment in community anchors, accessible services, and workforce opportunities, the Wilson District will support the well-being of people of all abilities and backgrounds—ensuring that the benefits of redevelopment are shared broadly across the community.

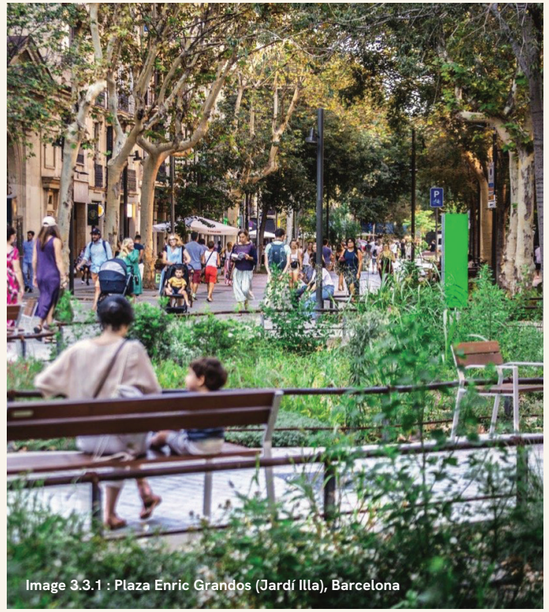


Image 3.3.1 : Plaza Enric Grandos (Jardí Illa), Barcelona



Image 3.3.2 : YZD Community Event



Image 3.3.3 : Kenmore Library, Kenmore, Washington

The District will support community building through the following objectives:

01

Cultivate a Thriving Community through a Dynamic Mix of Uses



As part of Northcrest's on-going commitment to cultivating strong communities and supporting the well-being of families, the District will meet the needs of residents, visitors, and workers through a rich and diverse mix of uses, provided within close proximity in a compact, walkable and accessible urban setting.

02

Provide a Wide Range of Housing Opportunities



In order to ensure that the Wilson District is welcoming to all Torontonians, a broad spectrum of housing options that cater to various family sizes and income levels will be offered, fostering and inclusive and diverse neighbourhood.



03

Foster Social Engagement and District Activation

The Wilson District will leverage non-residential uses to invigorate the public realm, creating vibrant settings that encourage social interaction and community gatherings throughout the year.



04

Promote Inclusive Prosperity

The District will provide employment and social investment opportunities for historically disadvantaged and equity-deserving groups and will work to introduce community anchors that promote social engagement and support individuals of all abilities.

Images 3.3.4-3.3.7 : Community Building Objectives

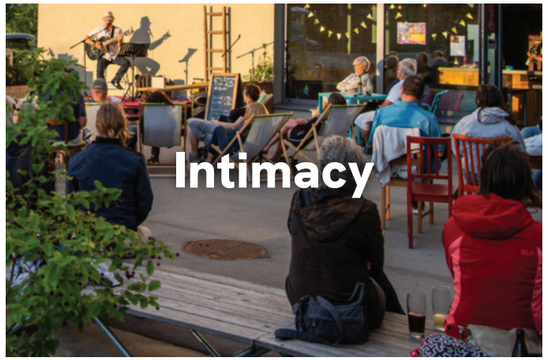
2.3.2 Character Areas

Guided by a people-first approach, the five Character Areas offer different levels of activity, intimacy, and connection to nature across the District. Some places are lively and outward-facing—such as the Runway and the Arc—designed to draw people together and create energy. Others are quieter and more personal, including local parks, POPS, and calm spaces set within the blocks.

Across all areas, the public realm supports everyday interactions as well as more intentional, programmed experiences. People may connect through chance encounters on the street or through events and activities that bring life to shared spaces. Together, the Character Areas create a mix of experiences that encourage creativity, play, and neighbourly connection, shaping a rich and memorable sense of place throughout the District.

The Character Areas balance transit-oriented intensity near the Wilson Station with park-oriented living and civic uses in the center of the District, along with appropriate transitions to surrounding communities to the west. The structure reinforces a five minute walk, bike or roll to your daily needs, ensuring transit access, open space, and community facilities and amenities are conveniently accessible. High quality and carefully curated edges and transitions between public and private realms create a welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters belonging, identity, and long-term community resilience. Each Character Area supports a complete community, enabling the district to evolve incrementally, while maintaining a consistent vision and spatial hierarchy.









Images 3.3.8-3.3.11 : Character Areas

Parkside

Wilson Commons

The Arc

Wilson Avenue

Transit Station

0 50m 100m 200m



Figure 3.3.1 : Character Areas

Parkside

Parkside is the District's residential and civic hub, designed around the needs and daily experiences of the local community. It supports strong neighbourly connections while also offering places for rest and retreat, creating a balanced neighbourhood that accommodates both quiet moments and active daily life.

As the primary community-focused area within the District, Parkside clusters social infrastructure and open space to promote physical and social well-being for all ages. Key amenities include the Major Park, a District library branch, a school and school yard, and multiple daycare centres. These facilities are planned as shared community assets that serve residents of all ages.

The design of the Major Park and surrounding streets prioritizes safety, comfort, and visibility. Generous tree canopy, seating, active ground-floor uses, and flexible open spaces support informal play, community gathering, and structured programming throughout the day and across seasons.

The Major Park functions as a central organizing element within Parkside, balancing areas of activity with quieter spaces. Strong sightlines, accessible pathways, and connections to the Green Spine ensure the park is welcoming, permeable, and well integrated into everyday movement patterns across the District.



Image 3.3.12 : Corktown Common park playground, Toronto



Image 3.3.13 : Tietgen Dormitory, Copenhagen



Public Life Profile



Wilson Commons



Public Life Profile



Wilson Commons is a dynamic neighbourhood where community life, culture, and nature come together. As the first point of arrival along the reimagined Runway, it serves as an active and welcoming destination for both residents and visitors, supporting year-round activity throughout the day and into the evening.

Anchored by the Runway and activated by dining, events, and public gathering, Wilson Commons offers places to meet, eat, play, and unwind. Its highly visible plazas prioritize active edges, transparent frontages, and strong visual connections that encourage people to enter, linger, and participate in public life. Together, these elements establish Wilson Commons as both a destination in its own right and the launching point of the Runway experience.

The area includes residential uses above active ground-floor retail and community-oriented programming, creating a mixed-use environment that transitions from the higher-intensity character of the Arc to the park-oriented setting of Parkside. A balanced mix of everyday and programmed activities supports regular use alongside seasonal festivals, markets, and performances.

Careful attention to seating, shade, lighting, landscaping, and microclimate creates a comfortable and inviting public realm. Connections to the Local Park, Trailhead, and Green Spine provide access to quieter spaces and nature, while reinforcing Wilson Commons' role as the District's central gathering place and social heart.

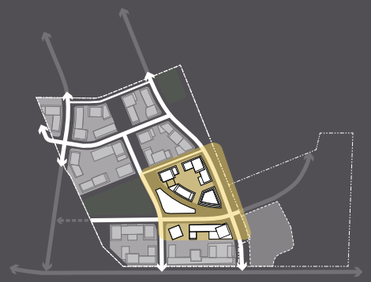


Image 3.3.14 : Green shared path



Image 3.3.15 : Larimer Square in Denver, CO

The Arc



Public Life Profile



As the Wilson District's front door and a gateway to the broader YZD area, the Arc gives visitors and commuters an immediate sense of the District's creative and playful character. It sets the tone for exploration and discovery, shaping first impressions through culture, design, and active public space.

The curving pedestrian Arc draws people into the District from Wilson Station through fine-grain retail, active edges, and spaces that spill into the public realm. From the Arrival Plaza to the landmark District Heart, the Arc forms a highly visible and lively corridor that supports both movement and lingering. Its design accommodates high pedestrian volumes while encouraging people to explore, pause, and engage with their surroundings.

The Arc Character Area includes a mix of residential, employment, and retail uses which supports a high-intensity, transit-oriented setting and strengthens the Arc's role as a key connection between Wilson Station and the Runway. Active frontages and transparent façades support everyday interaction and street life.



Image 3.3.16 : Umbrella Alley installation in Petit Champlain district, Old Québec



Image 3.3.17 : "Whammock!" installation at The New Children's Museum, San Diego.

Wilson Avenue

The Wilson Avenue character area serves as the southern gateway into the Wilson District, transforming a busy, vehicle-oriented corridor into a green, welcoming, and pedestrian-friendly edge. Accommodating a mix of residential, commercial, office and hotel, this character area signals arrival into the District while providing essential neighbourhood-serving uses that support daily life.

As a key threshold, Wilson Avenue combines strong architecture, generous landscaping, and active street-level uses to create a clear and legible urban frontage. An enhanced pedestrian realm, including wide sidewalks and improved crossings, supports comfortable movement along the Avenue and encourages people to enter the District.

Generous tree canopy, layered planting, and well-designed buffers will soften traffic impacts and create a more human-scaled street experience. Active ground-floor uses, transparent façades, and clearly defined entrances reinforce a continuous and animated edge, balancing convenience with a strong sense of place.

Built form and landscape strategies will support higher-intensity, transit-oriented development closer to Wilson Station, transitioning appropriately toward the existing neighbourhoods to the west. Together, these elements position Wilson Avenue not as a boundary, but as a welcoming and active gateway that frames the District's identity and sets the tone for the public realm beyond.



Image 3.3.18 : Central business district in Christchurch, New Zealand.



Image 3.3.19 : Water Street, Tampa



Public Life Profile



Transit Station



Public Life Profile

Conversation

Intimacy

Experimentation

Sensory Delight

The Transit Station Character Area includes Wilson TTC Station and the surrounding TTC-owned lands and serves as a key gateway to the Wilson District and the broader YZD area. As a primary point of arrival, it will function as a transit-oriented hub that supports clear, direct movement between the subway station, the District's street and pedestrian network, and the wider city.

Redevelopment of the TTC lands will focus on improving the station interface and pedestrian experience, with enhanced walking and cycling connections and opportunities for mixed-use and community-serving development that support high transit ridership. Station operations and functionality will remain central to all future development, with new uses designed to integrate closely with the surrounding District.

Recognizing that redevelopment of the TTC lands may occur on a different timeline than the rest of the District, near-term mobility improvements will help strengthen connections early. These include the realignment of Transit Road, improvements to transit access, and a new at-grade pedestrian connection linking the Arc directly to the station.

Over the longer term, two redevelopment scenarios are envisioned. One maintains existing station structures while improving the public realm and introducing complementary mixed-use development along key edges. The other allows for greater redevelopment intensity by replacing select ancillary station buildings with new mixed-use development. Final redevelopment options will be advanced by the TTC.

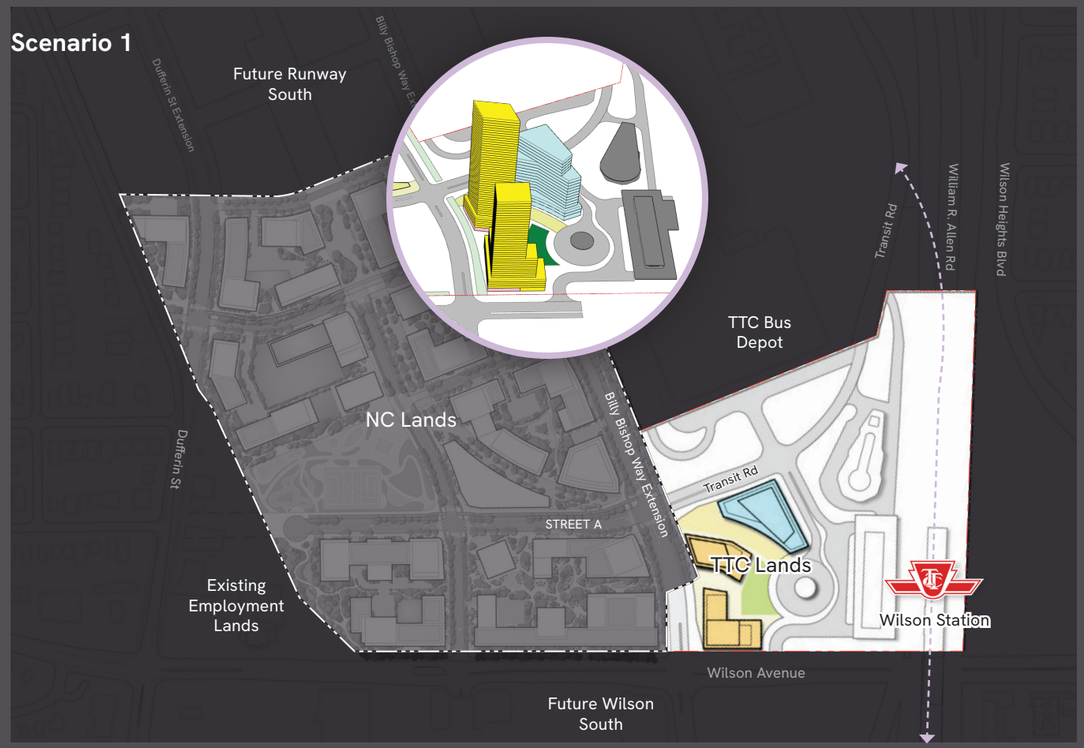
Together, these measures position the Transit Station Character Area as a welcoming and well-connected front door to the District, anchoring the Arc and Runway connection and strengthening transit integration across the broader Downsview lands.



Image 3.3.21 : Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) Subway



Image 3.3.20 : The Well, Toronto



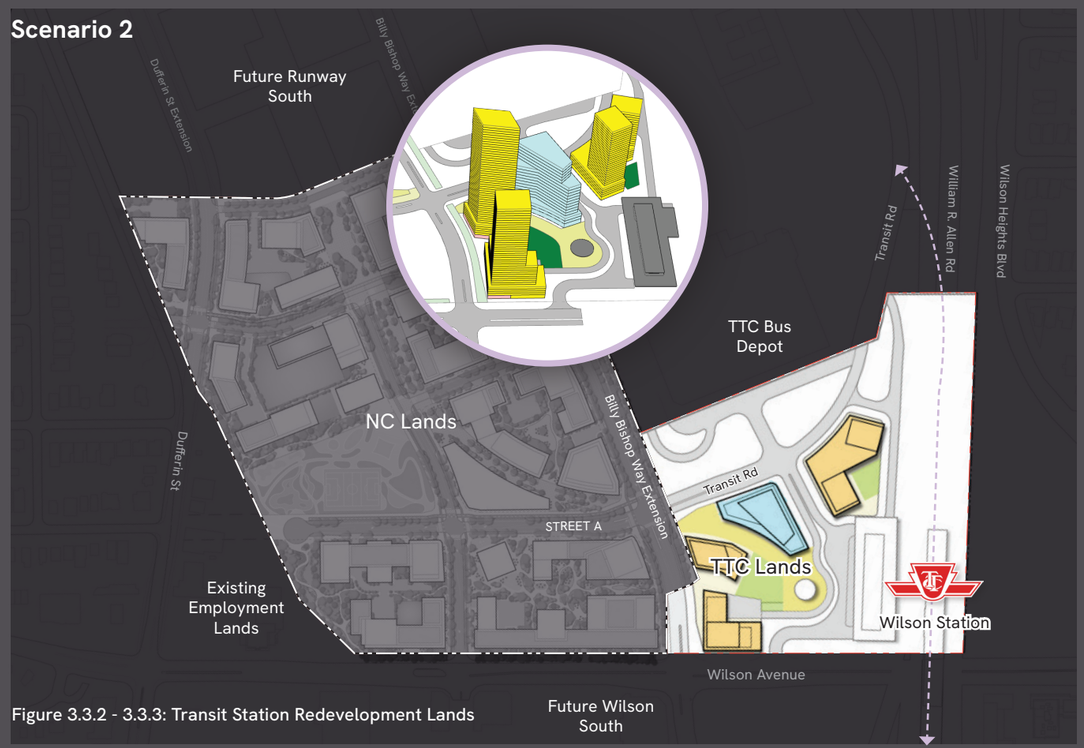


Figure 3.3.2 - 3.3.3: Transit Station Redevelopment Lands

2.3.3 A True Mix of Uses

Land Uses

The 2024 Downsview Secondary Plan designated the Wilson District as a Mixed Use Area. In accordance with this plan, Wilson District Northcrest Lands will feature a diverse mix of residential and non-residential uses, including commercial uses, institutional and community services, cultural facilities, and new parks and open spaces.

This rich mix of uses will create a transit-oriented district that offers a variety of housing options, supports employment and retail opportunities, and fosters a walkable, connected public realm.

Once completed, the Wilson District NC Lands is projected to accommodate approximately 9,600 residential units, encompassing a total residential gross floor area (GFA) of 600,000 square meters. Additionally, the district will feature 70,000 square meters of non-residential space, which is expected to create around 1,650 jobs.

Diverse Housing Choices

The Wilson District is expected to deliver 11,000 residential units, 9,600 of which are located within the NC owned lands. Approximately 70 per cent of these homes will be located within 500 metres of the Wilson TTC station, and the remaining within 800 metres: responding to both municipal and provincial priorities for transit-oriented and sustainable development.

A mix of unit sizes and ownership will broaden housing choices for a greater number and diversity of individuals to call Wilson District home.

In addition to significantly expanding the housing supply, Wilson District NC Lands will meet the Secondary Plan target of providing 10% of the residential GFA as affordable housing, with the opportunity for the TTC lands to meet or exceed this percentage as city-owned lands.

Retail and Commercial Spaces

The Wilson District will serve as a key gateway into the larger YZD Lands. Retail anchors along Wilson Avenue and Street A frame this entrance, drawing residents and visitors into the district and offering an early preview of the experiences that will continue into future YZD districts, and along the future Runway. These anchors provide convenient, one-stop daily shopping within a short walk or bike ride, supported by a mix of smaller neighbourhood-serving retailers that add variety and encourage exploration through the district's network of local streets and POPS.

With strong visibility from Wilson Avenue and immediate access to Wilson Station, the district's retail offerings will meet everyday needs while creating an animated and welcoming edge.

The curated mix—ranging from local shops to national brands—supports a vibrant, community-scaled retail environment that complements the Runway experience and reinforces the district as a destination.

A standalone Class A office building at the arrival plaza along the Arc will further anchor the district. As a prominent gateway marker and major employment address, the Class A office building will bring a significant daytime population that supports local businesses, strengthens transit use, and contributes to a balanced, 24/7 urban environment.

→ **Figure 3.3.4 : A True Mix of Uses**
→ **Images 3.3.22-3.3.23: A True Mix of Uses**

9,600
Residential Units

13,000 m²
of Ground level Neighbourhood Retail (145,000 sf)

70,000 m²
Non-Residential Space (750,000 sf)

6,500 m²
of Commercial Office Space (260,000 sf)

1,650
New Jobs





2.3.4 Community Facilities and Social Infrastructure

Community service facilities in the Wilson District will provide essential services to residents, workers, and visitors, fostering an inclusive and equitable community. These facilities will also play a vital role in addressing equity barriers and promoting inclusive prosperity for Indigenous, Black, and other equity-deserving groups.

The District's community services and facilities will include an elementary school, daycare centers, a library, and community support spaces. These facilities will support the community's social and cultural needs while enhancing well-being, health, and quality of life. Additionally, they will serve as anchors and focal points for the neighbourhood, contributing to social engagement, sense of community and public realm activation.

4,000 m²
Public Library Space
(45,000 sf)

6,500 m²
District Heart
(70,000 sf)

7,000 m²
K-8 Scool
(72,000 sf)

3,000 m²
City-owned Daycares
(30,000 sf)

930 m²
Agency Space - CST
(10,000 sf)

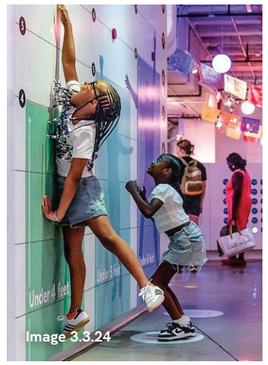


Image 3.3.24


Image 3.3.25



Image 3.3.26 : Kenmore Library, Kenmore


Image 3.3.27 - YZD Community Event

1. **District Heart:** This landmark building will serve as a key anchor for the District, establishing a destination-worthy place that is for both residents and visitors alike. Its programming could incorporate cultural, artistic, educational, entertainment, and/or community functions. Designed to support the District's vision, it will foster a sense of discovery and act as a key gathering place.
2. **School:** An innovative, urban-format school integrated within a mixed-use residential building allowing the school to co-exist with housing and supporting walkable, complete communities.
3. **Library:** The stand-alone District Library will be a significant community amenity encouraging and supporting creativity, learning, and shared experiences. Located in the same block as the elementary school and directly adjacent to the Major Park, these will form a community hub at the nexus of the District.
4. **Daycare Facilities:** A total of three city-owned daycares are planned for the Wilson District. The location and provision of these facilities has been thoughtfully phased to align with anticipated growth and the evolving needs of its residents.


Public Library


District Heart

Figure 3.3.5 : Community Facilities and Social Infrastructure
Images: Artistic rendering of the Public Library and District Heart

2.3.5 Built Form

As one of the higher density districts identified in the Downsview Secondary Plan, careful attention has been given to the distribution of density, and the range of building forms – from low rise to high rise. This mix of building scales contributes to a diverse skyline and helps create a comfortable outdoor experience for residents and visitors -- blocking winter winds, embracing sunshine in shoulder seasons, and providing shade in the summer. Additionally, the built form will support the District's goal of establishing a distinct identity by featuring varied building typologies, heights and orientations, as well as unique architectural treatments in key places within the district.

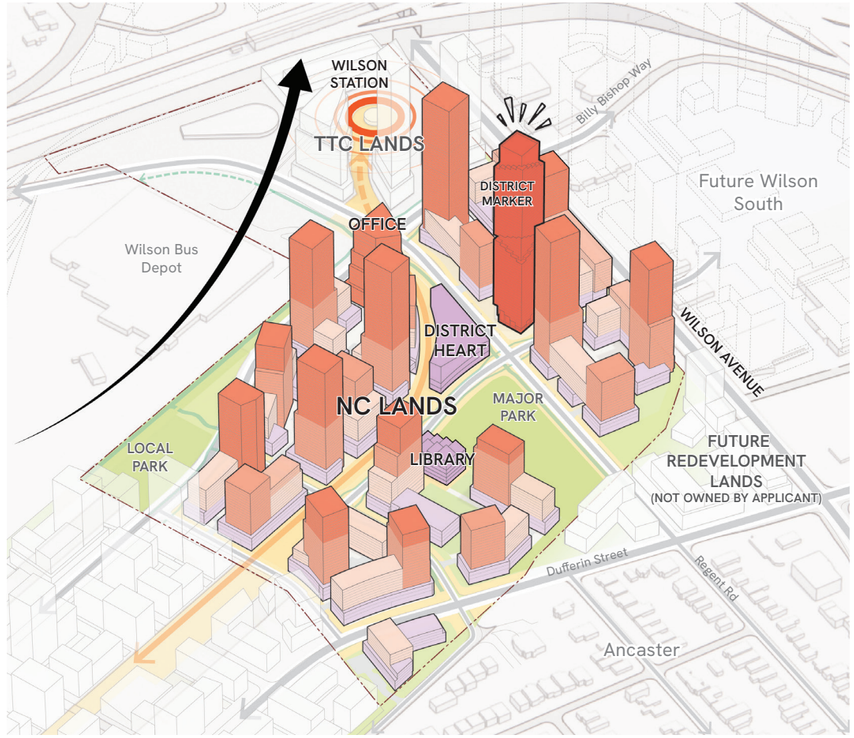


Figure 3.3.6 : Built Form

Tall Buildings

Tower forms are strategically located in the district and will range in height, from just over 20 storeys to 55 storeys, with one landmark tower at 65 storeys defining a unique and dramatic skyline. Most towers will be complemented by human-scale podiums, fostering a sense of intimacy and connection to the streets and open spaces below. Tower locations include main corners, where they act as gateways, or near the transit station, where they define the transit core, and are beacons of identity for the District. Their size and placement has also been coordinated to ensure that shadows on the Major Park and Runway are appropriately minimized, per the Secondary Plan requirements. Towers 20 storeys or more will maintain a minimum separation of 30 meters from each other in accordance with the 2024 DSP. Towers 19 storeys or under will feature a distance of 25 meters, as outlined in the Toronto Tall Building Guidelines.

Low Rise and Mid-Rise Buildings

The plan will feature a selection of low-rise buildings, ranging from 3 to 5 storeys, namely the district anchors and civic buildings. The mid-rise buildings in the plan will range from approximately 6 to 14 stories. These are intended to establish a defined human-scale street wall for key public areas and to create a smooth transition in scale towards the Ancaster neighbourhood.

More detailed information on the Built Form approach can be found in the Urban Design Guidelines.



Image 3.3.28 : River Park Tower, Nine Elms, London



Image 3.3.29 : Mercado in Groningen, NL

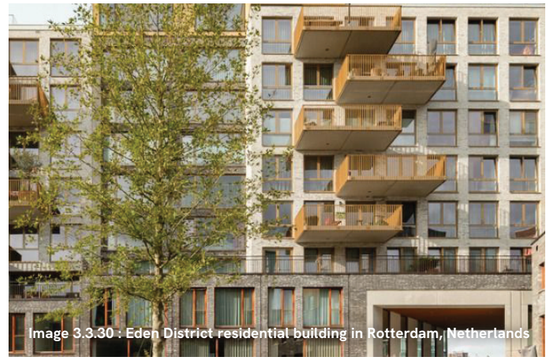


Image 3.3.30 : Eden District residential building in Rotterdam, Netherlands

Sub-chapter 4

Sustainability and Resilience

2.4.1 Sustainability and Resilience

2.4.2 City Nature

2.4.3 Stormwater Management and Green Infrastructure

Looking northeast along the Headwaters toward the Major Park and Public Library

2.4

This chapter provides an overview of our approach to sustainability and the resilience measures that support the ambitious vision for a high-performance Wilson District.

2.4.1 Sustainability and Resilience

The Wilson District advances the broad sustainability and resilience ambitions laid out in the 2024 Downsview Secondary Plan. Guided by Northcrest's Responsible Development Framework and designed to reduce embodied and operational carbon, the Wilson District boasts integrated land use, mobility systems, and stormwater management strategies as well as intelligent built form to improve environmental performance and enhance human comfort.



Climate Leadership

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions wherever feasible, including an emphasis on compact urban form throughout the District Plan drives lower net emissions – particularly lower embodied carbon realized through material efficiency, and reduced transportation emissions through walkable urban scale.

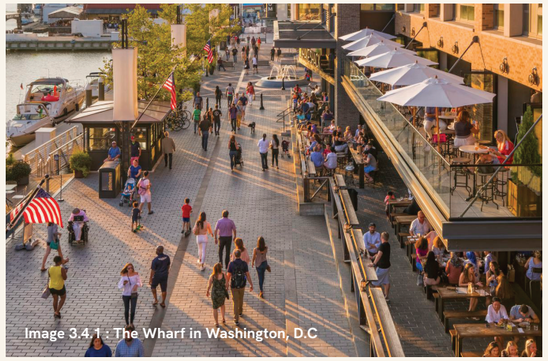


Image 3.4.1 : The Wharf in Washington, D.C



Image 3.4.2



Image 3.4.3



Image 3.4.4



Image 3.4.5



Image 3.4.6 - Brooklyn Botanic Garden, NY



City Nature

The Wilson District emphasizes integrating experiences of nature and city – abundant park spaces, generously planted right of ways, and the multi-use Green Spine - collectively manage stormwater, support biodiversity, reduce urban heat island impacts, and improve microclimatic conditions.



Sustainable Urban Mobility

As the gateway to YZD, with connections to Wilson TTC station, and both Wilson Avenue and Dufferin Street, (two major bus arteries), the Wilson District offers access to transit, a walkable public realm, a complete network of cycling routes, and the Runway, Green Spine, and pedestrian scaled streets and sidewalks.



Image 3.4.7 : Sankt Kjelds Square, Copenhagen, Denmark



Image 3.4.8



Image 3.4.9

2.4.2 City Nature



Images 3.4.10-3.4.13 : City Nature

In line with the vision for City Nature set out in the Downsview Framework Plan, naturalized systems are embedded in the plan, where an integrated approach to parks and open space brings nature to the urban context. City Nature is treated as an inter-connected system that aligns stormwater management, landscape, habitat, and movement to support environmental performance, public life, and a distinct sense of place. Collectively, the parks, the greenway and signature open spaces like the Runway and the Green Spine, provide essential green corridors for both people and nature. Across the district, this approach is reinforced through robust landscape plantings, generous soil volumes, significant tree canopy, and consistent and convenient access to nature—ensuring that green space is not limited to parks alone, but embedded within streets, POPS, and everyday walking and cycling routes.



Image 3.4.14 : Glassfields, Bristol



Image 3.4.15

2.4.3 Stormwater Management and Green Infrastructure



Image 3.4.16 : Tanner Springs Park, Portland, OR



Image 3.4.17 : Green Infrastructure in 420 Carroll Apartments development, Brooklyn, NY

In line with the Downsview Secondary Plan and the Master Environmental Servicing Plan (MESP), green infrastructure is at the core of the Wilson District's stormwater management strategy. This approach supports water balance, water quality, and flood protection while reducing reliance on conventional end-of-pipe infrastructure and strengthening the District's long-term resilience.

Stormwater is managed through an integrated, district-wide system that treats streets, parks, open spaces, and development parcels as active components of water management. By embedding green infrastructure throughout the public realm, the strategy helps maintain natural hydrological processes, reduce infrastructure demands and embodied carbon, and deliver environmental, social, and recreational benefits.

A decentralized, tiered approach prioritizes managing rainfall close to where it falls. On private development parcels, green infrastructure supports infiltration, filtration, and controlled release of everyday rainfall. Streets and POPS incorporate landscape-based conveyance and treatment to manage runoff before it reaches larger open spaces. Major storm events are accommodated within parks and open spaces, allowing these areas to function as both public amenities and critical infrastructure.

The Major Park plays the most significant role in this system, providing large-scale stormwater storage while supporting recreation, biodiversity, and year-round programming. Its size and flexibility allow it to balance active use with ecological performance and climate resilience. The Green Spine extends this framework across the District, integrating bioswales, native planting, and trees to support stormwater management, active mobility, and everyday access to nature. The Local Park complements this network by providing additional community-scaled green infrastructure and strengthening ecological and recreational connections to the broader Downsview landscape.

Together, streets, parks, and open spaces form a connected City Nature system that manages stormwater across multiple scales. This integrated approach improves environmental performance, enhances public space, supports climate adaptation, and establishes a strong landscape identity as a defining framework for growth and place-making in the Wilson District.



Looking south along the Runway

Chapter 3

Implementation

1 Phasing Approach
2 Next Steps

This chapter summarizes how development and infrastructure will be phased and developed over time to support the orderly and efficient creation of a complete community at the Wilson District.

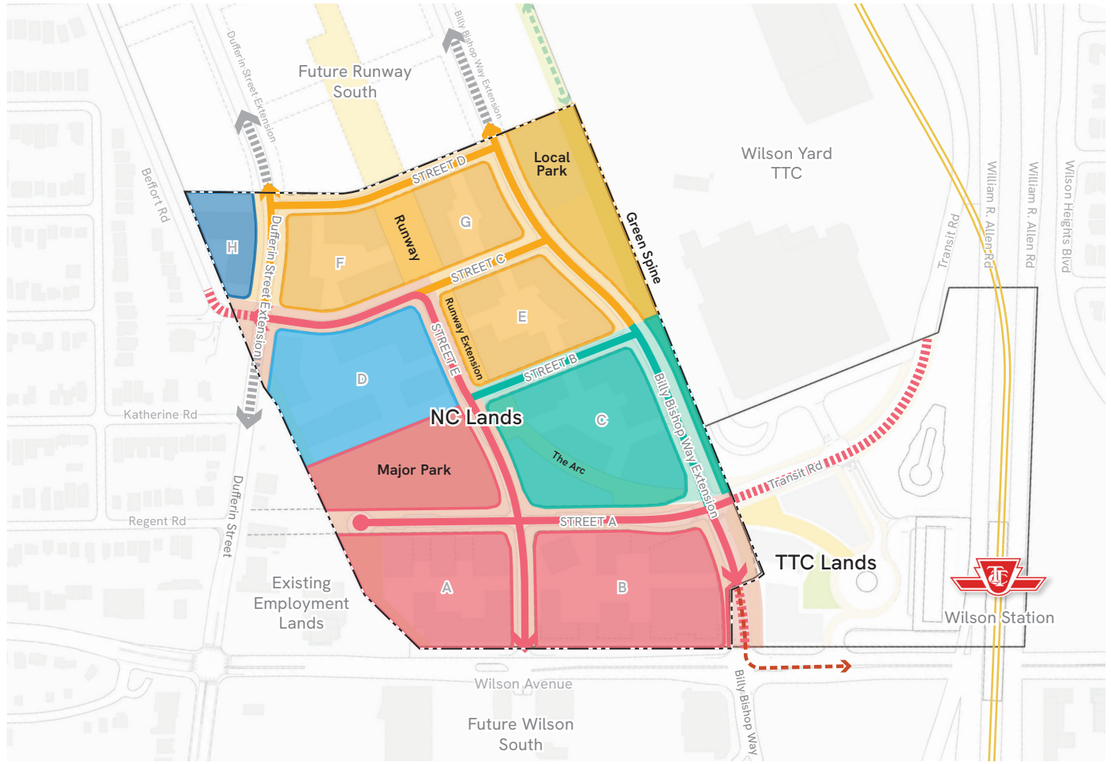
3.1 Phasing Approach

The Wilson District Plan supports phased development over time while ensuring that the Wilson District functions as a complete and connected urban area at each phase. Phasing reflects the logical sequencing of streets, parks and open space, transit access, development blocks and community facilities and amenities. It does not prescribe timing, but establishes the order in which key elements are delivered to support long-term district performance and complete communities. Across all phases, public realm elements are delivered in parallel with development to ensure that each phase of the District offers usable open spaces, safe and convenient mobility, and a complete public realm.

Phase 1

Phase 1 establishes the foundational structure of the Wilson District, focusing development in Blocks A and B to create a strong gateway along Wilson Avenue. This phase delivers the Major Park and key mobility infrastructure, including Street A, Street E, and the first segment of Street C. It also includes realignment of Transit Road, reconstruction of Billy Bishop Way south of the site, construction of a new portion of Billy Bishop Way and the Green Spine connection, improving early access to Wilson Station and defining primary east-west and north-south routes.

Phase 1 brings a significant mix of new homes, community facilities, and amenities—including affordable housing, a daycare, a hotel, open spaces, a grocery store, and retail. Critical sanitary sewer upgrades will relieve broader system capacity



constraints and unlock future development across adjacent districts. All phasing activities are coordinated to ensure continuous and safe access to Wilson Station throughout construction.

Phase 2

Phase 2 expands development into Block C and introduces Street B, extending Billy Bishop Way north to strengthen internal connectivity and improve access to Wilson Station. This phase builds on the infrastructure from Phase 1, enhancing pedestrian and cycling movement while delivering new homes (including affordable housing), an office building, a cultural destination, retail, and additional open spaces.

Phase 3

Phase 3 completes the heart of the Wilson District with development of Block D, centrally located beside the Major Park and key surrounding streets. This phase strengthens the District's complete-community structure by adding new housing—including additional affordable units—and delivering major community-serving facilities such as an elementary school, daycare, and district library. These additions bring activity, services, and daily amenities closer to residents, supporting vibrant public spaces and reinforcing the District's walkable, people-focused character.

Phase 4

Phase 4 completes the Wilson District's public realm and mobility network through development of Blocks E, F, and G, delivering new homes—including affordable housing—alongside community agency space and a third daycare. Key open spaces are finalized in this phase, including the Local Park, the Trailhead, the reimagined Runway, and the last segment of the Green Spine within the District. Completion of Local Street D, the remaining portion of Street C, and extensions of Dufferin Street and Billy Bishop Way strengthen district-wide connectivity. A temporary extension of the Green Spine may be introduced to maintain northward mobility until adjacent lands are developed.

Phase 5

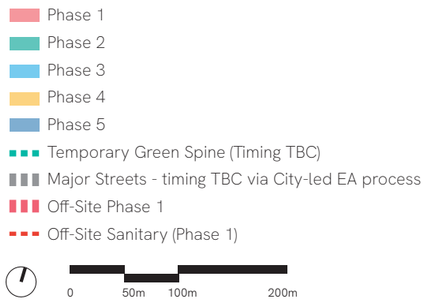
Phase 5 includes development of Block H at the western edge of the District and includes the delivery of additional housing and open space. Completion of this phase represents the full build-out of the Wilson District as envisioned in this District Plan.

Coordination with the EA Process

Major Streets within and supporting the Wilson District are subject to the City-led Phase 3 & 4 Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Phase 3 & 4 EA) process which is being undertaken concurrently with the District Planning process for Wilson. Northcrest is working collaboratively with the City to incorporate the design intention of the EA into the District and anticipates this process will not impede the approval of this District Plan.

The Major Streets, including the regionally significant services within these Major Streets, will be funded and delivered by the City of Toronto or by Northcrest on the City's behalf in alignment with this phasing approach. Other improvements including intersection improvements to Beffort Road, the Transit Road realignment, the Wilson Sanitary Sewer Upgrade, the Wilson Station access improvements and any off-site cycling network improvements are expected to be identified in the City's upcoming Development Charge Background Study and completed in alignment with this phasing approach.

← Figure 4.1 : Phasing Approach



3.2 Next Steps

The Wilson District Plan brings together technical planning and urban design to set a clear and practical vision for a new 18-hectare, mixed-use, transit-oriented district. Located next to Wilson TTC Station on the former southern edge of the Downsview airfield, the Wilson District marks an important step in the ongoing transformation of the YZD lands.

The District is planned as a connected, walkable, and welcoming community. It will offer easy access to nature through parks and green spaces, active public plazas, neighbourhood services, community facilities, and distinctive places for gathering, art, and culture.

The design of the Wilson District will continue to evolve through collaboration with City staff, engagement with community members and partners, and ongoing dialogue with Indigenous communities. Development is anticipated to occur in multiple phases over the next 10+ years and will be delivered through a range of partnerships.

The first step toward implementation is City review of the District Plan, alongside the accompanying Zoning By-Law and Draft Plan of Subdivision. These approvals will establish the overall framework for the District, including the location of streets, parks, and blocks, and the general approach to built form.

Following these approvals, future City-led and developer-led processes will refine the design at a more detailed scale, including buildings, streets, and public spaces. Continued collaboration and engagement will help guide the District as it moves from vision to delivery.



District Plan Submission
March 2026

Re-Submission
Fall 2026

Final Submission
Winter 2027

Draft Plan & Zoning By-Law Approval
Spring 2027

Future Site Plan Applications

Collaboration with City Staff to refine the Vision for the Distrct, with additional opportunities for community and partner input. Resubmission materials to address and respond to feedback.

Future engagement with the community and the City, within and outside the municipal revions process, to realize the vision at the scale of the block and building.

Artistic Rendering of the Arc

Looking west along the multi-modal Street C at the crosswalk with Street E and the Runway, with the school in the background.

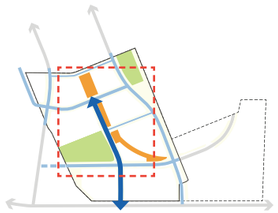
Appendix

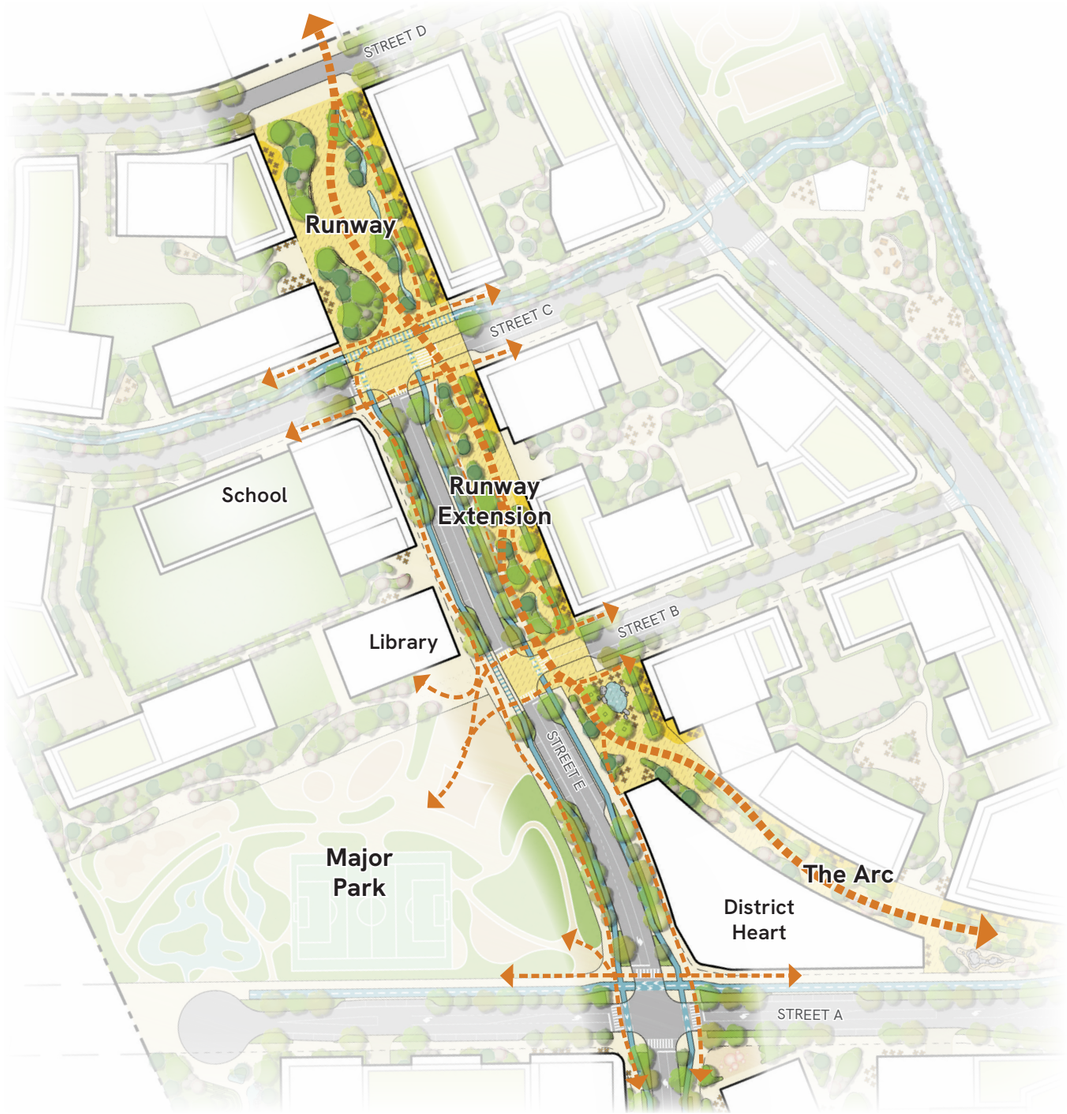
→ Cross Sections & Street Details

→ Image Credits

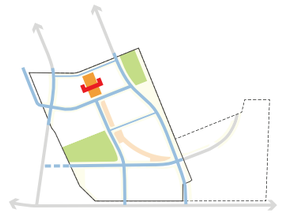
Cross Sections & Street Details

The Runway, Runway Extension and Street E Pedestrian Crossings



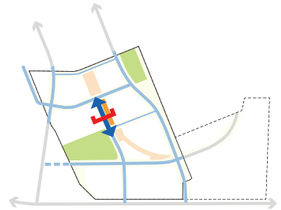


The Runway





Street E & Runway Extension



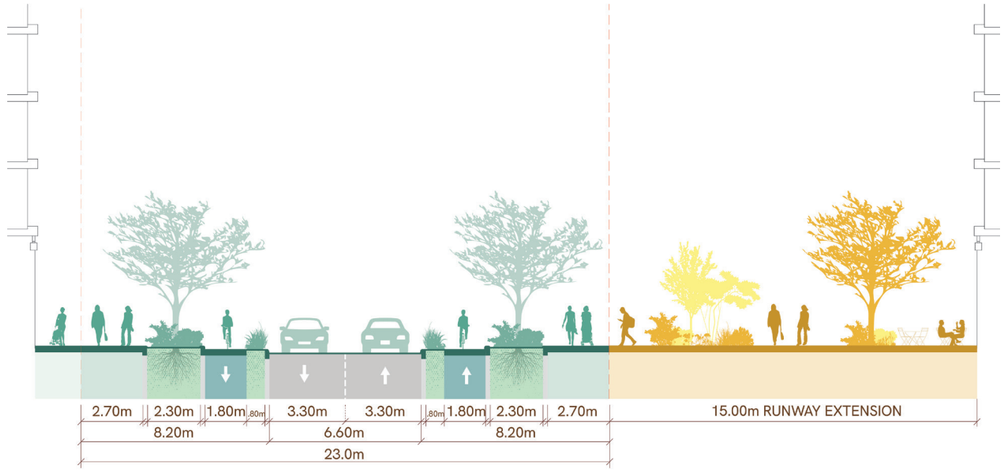


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Image	Page	Description	Credit
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The Wilson District Plan

February 2026