

Thoughtful Moves. Transformative Impact.

An Overview of YZD's
Responsible Development Framework



Images captured in and
around YZD and neighbouring
Downsview Park



Shaping Places That Lift Us All.

Established in 2018, Northcrest Developments, a Toronto-based real estate developer and wholly owned subsidiary of the Public Sector Pension Investment Board (PSP), one of Canada's largest pension investment managers, is leading the planning and transformation of the 370-acre Downsview Airport lands, known as YZD.

Since inception, Northcrest has worked closely with local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and a wide range of passionate collaborators to realize this once-in-a-generation opportunity. Over the coming decades, Northcrest will transform the former airport into a series of new neighbourhoods, all connected by a two-kilometre pedestrian street—the reimagined former runway.

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Building Block 20 by Block

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.

Words from Our CEO

To be at the forefront of reshaping a major part of Toronto is a unique privilege.

This is a defining opportunity for our city: to reimagine urban development through the transformation of a former airport. As stewards of these 370-acre lands, imbued with a rich legacy of community, industry, and Indigenous significance going back millennia, it is our obligation to do this once-in-a-generation opportunity justice. For me, and many at Northcrest, this opportunity epitomizes the best of city building—at its size, it's a rare chance to shape communities and improve lives in some pretty extraordinary ways.

YZD is ground-up development on a massive scale. As the lead developer, we carry a profound responsibility to approach this endeavor with utmost care, rigor and foresight. District by district, over several decades, we will shape this site into a global model for thoughtful city-building.

We recognize that the decisions we make today will reverberate for decades to come. That's why we're relentlessly pursuing the best solutions in every facet of the process from planning and development through to construction and operations. From sustainable design that respects our environment, to inclusive community engagement that honours diverse perspectives, every move we make is intended to leave an enduring positive impact.

We call this **Responsible Development**.



Derek Goring
CEO Northcrest Developments



Play on the Runway 2023, an annual event where the runway is opened up to the community for creative play

THOUGHTFUL MOVES. TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT.

Today, We Sow the Seeds of the Future of YZD.

Incrementally, move by move, we're charting a course towards global innovation and excellence.

Building a future city within a city compels us to push boundaries, challenge norms, and redefine what development can achieve. Grounded by the deep responsibility of the impact our choices will have that will reverberate through generations to come. It's not just about building, it's about building better—to create spaces that inspire, empower, and endure.

We Envision a Place Where...



You can see climate responsive design at every turn. Where details are designed and built with resiliency top-of-mind.

Parks and green spaces are always nearby. Where nature is part of the urban environment, not something you need to leave to find.

You move with ease and safety. Where streets are designed for people, not engines.

Opportunities are plentiful and within reach. Where neighbourhood childcare, health, and social services help people thrive.

Art, music, and play are a part of your everyday routine. Where people meet, families settle, and communities blossom.

In partnership with Toronto Bee Rescue, YZD is now home to 40 beehives

A Place the World Looks to for Both Precedent and Possibility

Where today's seemingly small moves are, in fact, anything but.

Vision Shaping Place.

A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity.

With nearly 370 acres of possibility—a rare expanse in a space-constrained major city—YZD emerges as a groundbreaking opportunity to redefine urban living.

As stewards of these lands, we will always question the status quo to distinguish what works from what can be improved—striking a balance between innovation and enduring principles. From ecological considerations and social equity to advanced mobility solutions and cultural enrichment, we believe that every aspect of YZD is an opportunity to thoughtfully explore how design can create harmony with nature and enhance the lives of future residents.

By considering the complexities of this transformative project and making informed decisions, our ambition is to create a lasting legacy, showing how development can positively and enduringly impact communities.

THOUGHTFUL MOVES. TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT.



Captured in August 2024 by
Garcia Creative Inc., to celebrate
the introduction of YZD

Our Discovery:
No existing blueprint can fully encompass the rigour and aspirations we envision for this project.

Our Response:
The scale and ambition of YZD demand a fundamentally new, dynamic approach.



Iterative, by Design.

We are in the very early stages of this ambitious project. Following the first major approval from the City of Toronto, YZD is now moving towards the district-level planning phases.

Given its scale, the YZD development is a long-term project spanning several decades, designed to be responsive to an ever-evolving environment. As we chart this forward course, we recognize that regulations will shift, materials and approaches will

54k Residents
23k Jobs
~74 Acres Parks & Open Space

evolve, and new considerations will emerge. Our commitment to a responsible approach means our strategy is iterative, evolving with these changes. This built-in flexibility allows us to continuously pursue innovation throughout the anticipated 30-year development process.

Year after year, our district-by-district approach ensures that each phase of development is informed by current needs and conditions while remaining adaptable to future changes. This living plan is comprehensive, nimble, and responsive, evolving with time to deliver a development that truly meets the needs of the day.

Voices Shaping Vision.

Tony Kyriakopoulos
is the owner of
neighbourhood local,
Buzz Buzz Pizza



Since our inception
in 2018, Northcrest
has delivered:

120+
community activities
hosted and participated in

80k+
people and hundreds of
organizations reached

~6k
diverse voices in
compiled feedback

184+
collaborations with local,
Indigenous, and equity-
deserving artists to support
culture and the arts

North Toronto's transformation has long been an area of interest, attracting widespread attention and diverse aspirations over the years. In leading this transformation, we honour the voices we hear to deliver on a collective vision.

For us, engagement isn't just a process; it's essential to achieving better outcomes for everyone. It's crucial for addressing the social and environmental concerns of our community. Since our founding, we have been dedicated to deep, meaningful engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, including the City of Toronto and a wide array of local and city-wide partners.

As we progress, our commitment to ongoing engagement and dialogue will continue to shape and guide our actions. By actively listening and incorporating diverse perspectives, we ensure that our efforts align with the community's aspirations and contribute to a future that reflects the collective vision and potential of North Toronto.

Designed with Tomorrow in Mind.



Reimagining 370 acres of historic Brownfield land, rich with 100 years of aviation history – at the heart of the Greater Toronto Area.



Land Use & Community Planning

- Provision of infrastructure, housing, services, and amenities
- Shaping land use, density, mobility, and patterns of living

Architecture & Urban Design

- Envisioning beautiful, functional, healthy and efficient places
- Shaping placemaking and community identity

Development & Construction

- Pursuing environmental and economic improvements through the construction phase
- Executing on the design and planning vision

Site Activation & Community Engagement

- Championing community building with arts, culture, commerce, and fun
- Shaping YZD through inclusive community participation



Groundbreaking approach to responsible city-building.



Building on a legacy of innovation and aviation, nearly one million square feet of existing hangar space will be repurposed

THOUGHTFUL MOVES. TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT.

Our Guiding Philosophy and Framework: Responsible Development

This is our blueprint for bringing our vision of responsible urban development at YZD to life. The framework is built on clear pillars, targets, roadmaps, and standards, all designed to translate our philosophy into tangible, measurable outcomes. Each element contributes to our overarching goal: Enhancing Quality of Life for all.

**As catalysts of change for these lands:
We are responsible for shaping what gets built.**



**As champions of transformative impact:
We look to build in the most responsible way possible.**



**As those entrusted with a generational opportunity:
We take the responsibility seriously.**

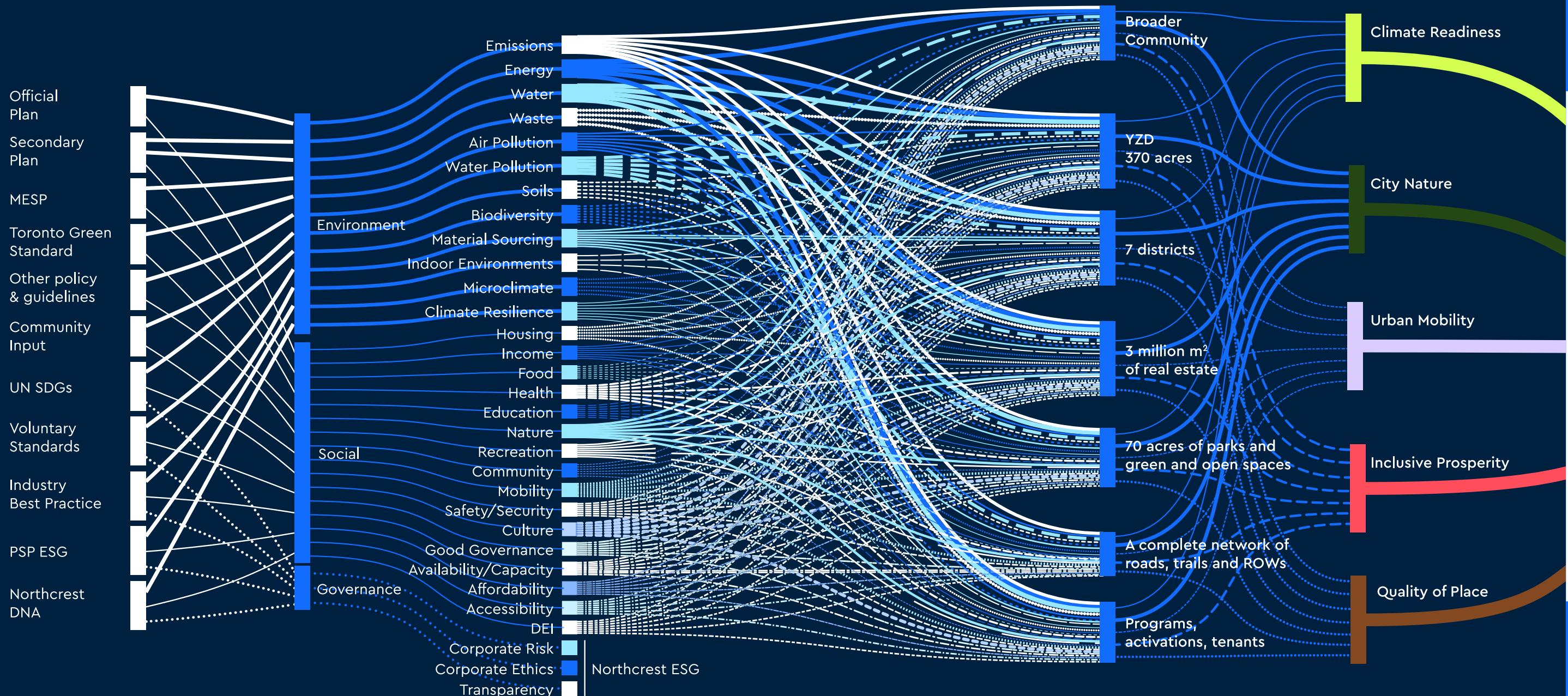


An Intricate Web Converging to Improve Liveability, Livelihoods, and Living Systems.



Dodecadandy is a public art piece installed adjacent to neighbouring Sheppard West Station in Toronto, that addresses the space between the urban and suburban

Threading Responsibility



QUALITY
OF LIFE
&
LIVING
SYSTEMS

Input

Inputs shape by a multitude of influences, from regulatory requirements to industry best practices, to community input.

Focus

Focusing on the requirements, aspirations, and opportunities to deliver positive Environmental and Social impacts – The E & S of ESG.

Impact

Organizing, measuring, and managing the numerous impact indicators tracked from early visioning through to future occupancy.

Efforts

Aligning our efforts across development scales for unified impact ensures each stage positions us for success moving forward.

Pillars

Coalescing around the delivery of five responsible development pillars, our efforts are anchored in this strategic framework.

Result

Enabling our mission to help enrich quality of life, through development

A Framework for the Future.

Five interdependent outcomes converge to shape our approach. Together, they form the foundational matrix for shaping a major development centred on the pivotal yet often elusive: Quality of Life.

By taking a holistic approach in which all five elements work together, not in isolation, we can maximize the potential of development and realize a new vision for responsible city-building.

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Climate Readiness

2

City Nature

3

Urban Mobility

4

Inclusive Prosperity

5

Quality of Place



Climate Readiness

We're Getting Ready for the Future.

YZD carries dual responsibilities: to advance climate action in the development industry and to anticipate the environmental realities of future generations. Given its scale, we have a unique opportunity to be course correctors, scale up innovative solutions, and in effect, address the industry's known impacts. While our environmental future holds many unknowns, we are certain that our choices—from the materials we use to the roads we design—create major ripple effects. With that, it is essential that our approach is meticulously considered, grounded in the deep understanding that every move builds towards a future that is more resilient.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Decarbonization

Minimize emissions wherever possible across the whole project and beyond. This includes:

- Operational emissions
- Embodied emissions
- Transportation emissions
- Land-use emissions
- Other emissions

Climate Resilience

Build a community prepared for future climate conditions and resilient to climate-related risks. This includes:

- Design for a warmer climate
- Seasonal air quality issues
- Extreme weather events
- Community resilience systems

TransformTO, the City of Toronto Climate Action Plan calls for zero net greenhouse gas emissions, city-wide, by 2040. This program is supported by the Toronto Green Standard for new development that calls for all new construction to be net zero emissions before 2030, as well as forthcoming Building Performance Standards which will regulate existing building emissions.



Urban farming, as captured at neighbouring Downsview Park, helps respond to an increasingly urban-based population

City Nature

The Antidote to City Challenges Lies in Nature.

We believe that ecosystems and biodiversity enhance the urban environment. Healthy soil, clean water and air, and diverse native plants and wildlife can reshape our urban landscapes, providing access to nature and creating microclimates that promote comfort and wellness throughout the year.

City nature can harness natural systems to absorb rainwater where it falls, offer spaces to grow food and medicinal plants, develop a network of green spaces like connected veins, and nurture trees to grow strong and tall. Our vision integrates nature into urban life, embedding green spaces and natural elements into the core of our communities.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Ecosystem Health and Biodiversity

Improve ecosystem health and support thriving nature in an urban context. This includes:

- Soil quality
- Water pollution
- Air pollution
- Plant health and diversity
- Healthy urban wildlife
- Invasive species and pest management

A closer look: Stormwater management.

We are advancing plans for a "sponge city" approach to catch, store and clean stormwater through our parks and landscapes. Solutions seek to manage flood risks, and also improve ecosystem hydrology and enhance our green spaces for the community to enjoy. This is one of many examples that shows the interdependence of the five pillars and how a holistic approach is necessary to achieve Quality of Life.

Ecosystem Services

Leverage natural systems to provide tangible physical and/or economic benefits to environmental quality, infrastructure functioning, or economic production. This includes:

- Stormwater management
- Environmental management
- Agriculture/production

Engaging with Nature

Understand and incorporate the physiological and psychological ways that people connect to nature in urban development. This includes:

- Parks and greenspace
- Urban greenery
- Biophilic design



Urban farming, as captured at neighbouring Downsview Park, helps respond to an increasingly urban-based population

Urban Mobility

Prioritizing People Over Engines.

Mobility is essential to a thriving community. We embrace a diverse range of affordable and sustainable transport options, seamlessly connecting districts and linking YZD to the broader city. Our approach builds on existing transit networks, emphasizing ease, safety, and connectivity.

By supporting new transportation technologies and reducing vehicle congestion through designated spaces, efficient infrastructure and considerate planning, we aim to create a human-centered urban environment. Transportation should be designed to put people first, addressing the ways cities have long overlooked the very individuals they are designed to serve.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Mode-split Hierarchy

Ensure access for multiple modes of transportation, while prioritizing overall community goals over individual mobility-mode optimization. This includes:

- Pedestrian-scale planning
- Pedestrian environment
- Transit
- Safe cycling and micromobility
- Car/truck access

Network Connectivity

Ensure safe efficient connection to the broader city to maximize socio-economic opportunities for those living and working in North Toronto and the city as a whole.

This includes:

- Connection to interchange transit hubs
- Bike network linkages
- Completing the street grid

Transportation Technology Shift

Support the technology shift to more sustainable urban transportation solutions.

This includes:

- Electric mobility
- Micromobility
- Autonomous mobility
- Urban-scale vehicles
- Transportation management systems and processes

Vehicle Burden

Minimize the infrastructure, space, and materials required to support vehicles. This includes:

- Minimize parking areas
- Right-size roadways
- Efficient loading areas



Inclusive Prosperity

Opening More Doors.

YZD seeks to create a more inclusive community where abundant opportunities invite everyone to connect, contribute, and succeed. We will shape neighbourhoods and support local employment, services and amenities, so opportunities feel plentiful and always within reach. Our commitment extends to fostering a vibrant tapestry of cultures and backgrounds, where diverse residents find a place to thrive. We are dedicated to cultivating a sense of unity, where shared spaces and community initiatives flourish, creating a dynamic environment that nurtures community-led growth and opportunity.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Social Infrastructure

Support the provision of essential social services and public amenities. This includes:

- Education
- Childcare
- Eldercare
- Health services
- Recreation services
- Other social infrastructure

Inclusion

Remove barriers that have been faced by the historically disadvantaged. This will be achieved with early engagement and integration of the facilities, places and spaces needed to meet diverse needs, abilities and create a welcoming environment. This includes:

- Accessibility
- Racial/ethnic inclusion
- Gender/LGBTQ+ inclusion

Affordability

Implement strategies that reduce costs of living and increase economic access to YZD. This includes:

- Housing affordability
- Access to food
- Costs of transportation
- Other costs of living

Economic Opportunity

Expand economic opportunities related to the development and future operation of YZD. This includes:

- Workforce development
- Entrepreneurship and production
- Social procurement
- Local economic development
- Innovation
- Worker health and safety

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Guests visiting Bubble Planet, an immersive experience debuting in Toronto. In the background is the Heartee Foods container, a hyper-local vertical farm where gourmet mushroom varieties are cultivated and distributed to customers within a 10km radius.

Quality of Place

Elevating Lives Through Thoughtful Design.

Art and culture form a city's soul. Through thoughtful architecture, urban design, landscaping, and placemaking, we aspire to create spaces that inspire joy and play. Our goal is to build environments where public spaces, amenities, and transportation are not just functional but also delightful and engaging. Details are curated to encourage communal gatherings, spark moments of joy, and elevate everyday experiences. By celebrating our rich history, integrating arts and culture, and prioritizing well-being, we aim to craft beautiful spaces that people connect to and take meaning from.

BUILDING BLOCKS

Design Excellence

Ensure the quality of architecture, urban design, landscaping, and placemaking from design through construction. This includes:

- Placemaking
- Beauty
- Quality
- Functionality
- Responsible materials

Culture

Integrate culture through design, tenanting and activation. This includes:

- Art
- Music
- Performance and entertainment
- Food
- Sport
- Fun
- Community gathering

Heritage

Celebrate the rich and varied history of the site. This includes:

- Built heritage
- Historical landscapes
- Indigenous heritage

Complete Community

Include a wide and comprehensive mix of amenities to meet daily needs and provide opportunities for joy, ensuring that everything from jobs to homes to parks to community facilities is within a 15-minute walking or rolling distance. This includes:

- Activated streets
- Workplaces
- Goods and services
- Dining and drinking
- Things to do
- Parks and open space
- Social infrastructure
- Transportation

Wellbeing

Design for the physical, mental and social wellbeing of future residents.

This includes:

- Public safety
- Health and wellness
- Community cohesion and belonging



Visitors enjoying the Ultimutts show, part of Play on the Runway 2024

Building Block by Block.

To fully realize the potential of development in enhancing Quality of Life and uphold our commitment to Responsible Development, we must relentlessly manage, evaluate, and adapt.

Embodying Responsible Development requires converting this philosophy into every action. The fine details and the grand visions. The local insights, and the global perspectives. Through the aggregation of small, deliberate moves, we aim to create a meaningful and lasting impact.

Metrics that Matter. **Dashboards that Deliver.** **Decisions Driven by Data.** **Actions Aligned with our Vision.**



As our development grows, so too will our toolkit to collect, sort, and filter impact data. With project-specific dashboards, comprehensive processes outlined in the RDF, and detailed graphics and reporting templates, we'll continue to build our capacity to navigate the complexity of city-building with precision and clarity.

We look forward to pushing the boundaries of potential, together.

A note from the photographer commissioned for this booklet, Omar Hassan

In a single day at Ancaster, I met families from Australia, Colombia, Italy, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea, each adding a unique thread to the Downsview area's vibrant makeup. Prior to this project, I had no connection to the Downsview area, as the airport largely consumed most of the space. I now see the vast potential and rich history beneath the surface. Capturing this evolving community has given me a newfound appreciation for Downsview and its promising future, which embraces diversity, artists, environmental sustainability, and innovation. This experience and knowledge of the development has me considering moving here with my family one day.

Omar is a graduate student of nearby York University, community builder, and photographer with over 15 years of experience shooting subjects, from portraits and wildlife, to macro and fire scenes.

"FLOAT: When mindfulness meets public art" is a large-scale mural by artist Jacquie Comrie and artist mentees, commissioned for the entrance to the YZD Experience Centre





YZD
BY Northcrest