PLANNING FOR CHILDREN IN NEW VERTICAL COMMUNITIES

Attachment 4
City of Toronto
Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities
Draft Urban Design Guidelines, May 2017

City Planning Core Team
Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis
Ann-Marie Nasr
Andrea Oppedisano
Annely Zonena

Urban Design
Emilia Floro
Julie Bogdanowicz

City of Toronto Advisory Team
City Planning, Community Planning
City Planning, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis
City Planning, Graphics & Visualization
Children’s Services
Parks Forestry & Recreation
Toronto Public Health
Toronto District School Board

Consultants
Urban Strategies Inc.
Hariri Pontarini Architects
Jane Farrow, Public Consultation
MBTW Group
Jeanhy Shim, Housing Lab Toronto
N. Barry Lyon Consultants

Visit Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities online:
• Demographic research
• Case studies & best practices
• Public consultation
www.toronto.ca/growingupTO
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Toronto is growing up! As an integral part of the city’s landscape, vertical communities are the predominant housing type to accommodate Toronto’s growing population. A successful city is measured by its diversity. The number of children is often used as a metric to measure success – if we build a city that allows children and youth to thrive, we are inherently building an inclusive, sustainable city for everyone.

The guidelines are rooted in Toronto’s Official Plan vision which seeks to create an attractive and safe city where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy a good quality of life. Toronto is often celebrated for its neighbourhoods and our City motto is: diversity is our strength. From a planning perspective, our diversity needs to extend to the planning of complete vertical communities. With the title of this document “New Vertical Communities” it is understood that every new mid-rise and tall building is in itself a new community of residents that becomes integrated within an existing community.
A mural painted on a condominium building in the downtown is a reminder that children’s needs should not be left out of the wider city building project.

The ‘Water Guardians’ is a public art installation in the West Don Lands that provides a whimsical anchor for this new community which includes generous community facilities, parks and open spaces.

i  TORONTO’S HOUSING BOOM

Between 2006 and 2016, over 143,000 new dwelling units were constructed in the City of Toronto, 80% of which were in buildings greater than 5 storeys. Increasingly, families with children are calling these buildings home. In 2011, 10,000 more families with children and youth lived in high-rise buildings than in 1996. While the overall number of households with children and youth will grow as the population increases, the long-term demand for family suitable housing will exceed the anticipated supply if current trends continue. This mismatch between demand and supply is exacerbated by a lack of large unit types and a trend towards smaller units. The City and its development partners will need to work collectively to provide viable housing choices for larger households.

ii  STRUCTURE OF THE GUIDELINES

The intent of these City-wide guidelines is to integrate family suitable design into the planning of new multi-unit residential development. The success of new vertical communities will be measured by their ability to meet the needs of a diversity of households including those with children. The guidelines are organized into three scales – the neighbourhood, the building, and the unit – based on the recognition that each positively contributes to how a family experiences living in vertical communities. Each scale is prefaced with the objectives.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD guidelines focus on children’s experience in the city, promoting independent mobility, access to parks, schools and community facilities, and civic engagement for the next generation of Torontonians.

THE BUILDING guidelines seek to support the social life of the building by increasing the number of larger units, encouraging the design of functional and flexible amenity space, supporting socializing and lingering in common spaces and promoting flexible building design for changing unit layouts over time.

THE UNIT guidelines seek to achieve functional spaces that accommodate a family’s daily needs, layouts that provide sufficient room for families to gather and share meals, bedrooms that are comfortable for more than one child and flexibility to allow for aging-in-place.
iii COMPLETE VERTICAL COMMUNITIES

A complete community, regardless of its form (low-rise, mid-rise or tall building), is one that meets the daily needs of its residents. It offers more than just a place to live, but a range of housing choices, access to higher-order transit, a high-quality public realm, community services and neighbourhood amenities. Many of Toronto’s low-rise neighbourhoods were master planned to include schools, community centres, child care facilities, retail and services alongside new housing. Through new investments in vertical communities, the guidelines encourage all stakeholders to continue to provide for the needs of all residents.

Toronto’s continuing evolution and re-urbanization now involves master planning within a dense infill context. The provision of community facilities and parks that were typically planned along with low-rise development should also be planned as part of new vertical development. City building results in a collective responsibility for separate developments to contribute to community infrastructure. Hard and soft infrastructure needs to be delivered in tandem with new development so that the daily needs of residents are met within their communities where available land is scarce and land values are high. Through investments in the public realm, integration of community facilities in new buildings, and provision of a range of unit types and sizes, the city can meet the needs of a growing population while ensuring livability.

Within a complete community, a child’s independent range can gradually increase, as outlined in the report Vertical Living Kids, by Dr. Carolyn Whitzman. A child plays on a private terrace and graduates to the private amenity space. From there the child can venture out for errands on their block and eventually cross the street to play in a park.
Children have lived in Toronto’s densest areas for over 150 years. At the turn of the 20th century, the growing urban population began to out-pace the provision of child-supportive infrastructure. Children sought informal play spaces: streets, laneways, stoops and staircases. At the time, in the vein of improving public health, these spaces were considered hostile to a child’s physical well-being. Recognizing the need for child-specific play space, the City embarked on building playgrounds that allowed for safe and sanctioned play. The Playground Movement, as it came to be known, represented a radical shift in the organization of urban space, marking the first time children were considered legitimate users of urban space, worthy of special consideration. The Growing Up study follows this tradition; taking a holistic approach that considers the needs of children and youth in city life.

Toronto also has a history of housing families in tall buildings. Toronto’s first tall building housing boom took place between the 1950s and late 1970s during which time approximately 2000 modernist ‘tower in the park’ buildings were constructed. Predominately rental apartments, these buildings were marketed to families with private amenities such as generous open space, recreational space and a range of large unit types. During the 1970s the City took a more proactive approach to community building and began housing families in master planned, dense, vertical communities. One example is the St. Lawrence neighbourhood which included a variety of building typologies, housing tenures and a range of unit types. New buildings, integrated schools and co-located community facilities, and a generous public realm were provided with comfortable parks that fostered strong community ties that continue to exist today in this desirable neighbourhood.

A key difference between the mid-to-late-century housing boom and today, is that new development is predominantly infill on sites less than one hectare. Furthermore, contemporary unit sizes, layouts and amenity space have been designed and marketed to smaller households without children. The needs of children have been outpaced by development and the intent of these guidelines is to ensure that new development responds to all segments of the population. To meet the Official Plan objectives, new vertical development with a range of housing types, needs to be delivered in tandem with community infrastructure to ensure that we create a positive legacy for years to come.
v POLICY CONTEXT

The objectives, policy and design directions found in these guidelines implement provincial and municipal policy that seeks to improve the quality of life for all Torontonians. A comprehensive list of policy references are provided in 4.3 of the Appendix.

PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (PPS), 2014

The PPS provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The policies of the PPS seek to promote strong, livable, healthy and resilient communities and they direct municipalities to promote these goals. The PPS also requires municipalities to provide an appropriate range and mix of housing types and densities to meet the needs of current and future residents. These guidelines recommend that city building includes a safe public realm, active transportation and high-quality community services and facilities such as schools, child care centres and parks. They also direct new development to provide an appropriate range and mix of housing types within vertical communities by recommending a minimum percentage of unit types and sizes to meet long-term projected housing need.

CITY OF TORONTO OFFICIAL PLAN

The Official Plan supports and implements the PPS and the Growth Plan. The Official Plan articulates a vision for the city’s future and provides a comprehensive planning framework to achieve it. The Growing Up initiative implements many of the Official Plan policies including those related to directing growth in Chapter 2 Shaping the City and integrating social, economic and environmental perspectives to create complete communities in Chapter 3 Building a Successful City. While the guidelines assist in implementing many policies of the Official Plan, they specifically address the provision for a full range of housing to meet the needs of all household sizes and income levels (Policy 3.2.1.1); the inclusion of community services and facilities in private sector development (Policy 3.2.2.7) and the need for new parks and amenities in the Growth Areas (Policy 3.2.3.1). These guidelines reinforce Chapter 4 Land Use Designations where specific land use designations such as Mixed Use Areas direct us to develop livable, complete communities.

PROVINCIAL GROWTH PLAN

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is a framework for implementing the Government of Ontario’s vision for building strong, prosperous communities while managing growth in this region to 2031. Section 2.2.2 states that growth is to be managed by encouraging cities and towns to develop as complete communities with a diverse mix of land uses, a range and mix of employment and housing types, high-quality public open space and easy access to local stores and services. To help achieve the vision, the neighbourhoods section of the guidelines encourage new buildings to contribute to complete communities through integrated community facilities, while the unit and building section of the guidelines specifically help to ensure that multi-residential buildings provide a diversity of units as required by the Growth Plan.

Regent Park is a phased, master planned community in Toronto with generous public facilities that anchor the public realm and animate the neighbourhood in all seasons. The central park and the pool facility were delivered in early phases.
The separated bicycle lanes on Toronto’s Queens Quay provide a safe route along the waterfront where children can gain confidence riding bicycles and gradually gain independence in their mobility.

Underpass Park in Toronto’s West Don Lands provides a whimsical space for children to congregate and build community ties.

Many families in Toronto’s vertical communities struggle to accommodate their needs within their units, such as the need to store a stroller at the entrance.

The separated bicycle lanes on Toronto’s Queens Quay provide a safe route along the waterfront where children can gain confidence riding bicycles and gradually gain independence in their mobility.

vi OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES

DIVERSITY OF HOUSING

By recommending a critical mass of larger two and three bedroom units, the guidelines help to implement the Official Plan’s housing policies while also supporting the delivery of community infrastructure. Guideline 2.1 describes the benefits derived from a concentration of family-suitable units. The outcome is to generate a stronger sense of community amongst residents and to allow children the opportunity to have peers to play with. A range of unit types and sizes not only supports households with children but also a variety of households at all different life stages. In Toronto’s vertical communities, when we design for children and for people to age in place, we design for all people.

LIVABILITY & QUALITY

Over the long-term, the liveability of vertical communities will affect the liveability of the city as a whole. The Official Plan highlights that the city needs to have communities where Torontonians are engaged, children are valued, diversity is celebrated and residents have equitable access to housing, support services and recreational opportunities. Large units and family-oriented buildings and neighbourhoods contribute to a diverse, thriving society. Families who chose to live in vertical communities may sacrifice household space for greater convenience to work and amenities, as well as more quality family time. The outcome is a benefit to Toronto in that well-designed vertical communities become desirable and help to keep a diverse population in the city. When children and youth live in the city, it supports private and public investments in community facilities, schools and parks which are all foundational to a healthy city.

PLANNING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A CHILD

In vertical communities, planning for children is predicated on the understanding that the public realm and community amenities become extensions of the home. Families rely on routes that are safe and that facilitate children’s independent mobility as they grow up. A public realm that meets the needs of children also accommodates the population as a whole. For example: designing comfortable, safe streets that support public life, will not only encourage families to linger and socialize, but they will become an asset to all users. The presence of children in the public realm is an indicator of a healthy community.
The guidelines were developed in collaboration with City staff; the development community, including developers, planners, architects, landscape architects; families; and children and youth. The consultation process was designed to uncover the lived experience of both users (families) and producers (architects and developers) of new multi-unit residential buildings. A targeted public consultation process focused on the daily, lived experience of a number of families living in mid-rise and tall buildings: the CondoHacks. The family visits uncovered how they adapted or “hacked” their homes to meet their unique needs. The CondoHacks demonstrated that units within a building are not a commodity, they amount to a community of homes, and that designing for the end user helps ensure that we build complete vertical communities.

Additional consultation activities such as kinder-workshops, walking tours and design jams with high-school students ensured that the perspective of children and youth were intrinsic to the study. Families were further consulted through pop-up events and online surveys at different stages of the study. Consultation activities were also undertaken through workshops with architects and landscape architects as well as interviews with developers. Informed by international and local case studies, the resulting guidelines respond carefully to the needs of families in vertical communities. These consultation activities can be explored in full on the Growing Up website www.toronto.ca/growingupTO.

This document is a collection of best-practices and is intended to describe the aspirational vision for Toronto that accommodates people of all ages and abilities. This document acknowledges that city building is a shared responsibility that all stakeholders should collectively strive for. Some guidelines are easy to achieve in the near term - the low hanging fruit - while the other guidelines represent long-term aspirations which might require a culture shift as we continue to build a great city together.
The broad applicability of the guidelines necessitates a collective responsibility in their implementation to achieve the objectives of the Growing Up study. The successful application of the guidelines recognizes their interdependence in meeting the objectives of creating a complete vertical community. Some guidelines will result in measurable outcomes that can be secured through the development approvals process. Others, such as encouraging whimsy in the public realm, or promoting youth civic engagement, are not as easily quantified. However, taken together they can contribute to physical improvements and social cohesion that enhance the livability of vertical communities for families with children and youth.

**THESE GUIDELINES ARE FOR:**

- The development community and designers to use in preparation of applications for residential or mixed use buildings, community infrastructure, or elements of the public realm.
- City staff to inform new planning frameworks and in the review of development applications and new capital projects including work in the public realm, Complete Streets, parks and community facilities.
- Condominium boards, rental property managers, community groups, Business Improvement Areas, families and any other groups that are invested in better informing themselves about what they can advocate for, towards creating family-friendly vertical communities.

**WHERE THE GUIDELINES APPLY**

The guidelines will be applied City-wide to all new multi-residential mid-rise and tall building development applications that include 20 units or more. This aligns with the city-wide zoning by-law threshold for amenity space requirements. These guidelines will also be used by City staff in the design and construction of new parks, community facilities, and Complete Streets and during public consultation activities, which should include children and youth. The guidelines can also be used, where appropriate, in the review of infill developments proposed in Apartment Neighbourhoods.

This document recognizes that livability depends on the ability of households to afford to rent or own larger units. Providing for a diversity of housing, in terms of form, tenure, and affordability are key objectives of the Official Plan. Where possible, securing the affordability of larger units will be encouraged. The creation and on-going affordability of new vertical communities will depend on investment from all three orders of government, as well as making use of existing planning tools, such as Section 37.

**COMPLETE COMMUNITIES**

The term “complete communities” is derived from the Growth Plan and refers to a full range of housing opportunities and amenities to meet daily needs.

**CHILDREN**

This document refers to “children”, which is a catch-all for infants, toddlers and youth. Children are defined as dependents living in the household who are between the ages of 0 to 19 years of age.

**LARGE UNITS**

The term “large units” refers to two and three bedroom units that comply with the design guidelines in this document. The size of these units are indicated in Section 3.0 Unit. These units are designed for the end user, to meet the needs of households with children. However, the design may also address the needs of other household compositions such as multi-generational families, seniors with home care or groups of unrelated students and/or adults who choose to live together. The provision of large units will ultimately benefit the full diversity of household compositions.
Kloden, or the Globe, is a Danish playground by the MONSTRUM design group built at a new library in Århus. Whimsy is embedded in the play areas which represent the cardinal directions and incorporate stories about nature, animals, landscapes, geology and culture. All design elements provide opportunities for play and exercise for children of all abilities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GUIDELINES:
• DIVERSITY OF HOUSING
• LIVABILITY & QUALITY
• PLANNING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A CHILD

1.1 MOBILITY
Design safe mobility networks to encourage children’s independence and active transportation

1.2 PARKS & OPEN SPACES: ACCESS & TYPE
Provide a variety of types of parks and open spaces that are easily accessible and meet a range of needs

1.3 CHILD CARE FACILITIES
Design high-quality, conveniently located child care facilities

1.4 SCHOOLS
Design high-quality, conveniently located schools

1.5 SHARED USE & INTEGRATED CO-LOCATED COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES
Co-locate community services and facilities with new development to ensure shared use as well as efficient, inclusive and dynamic program delivery

1.6 A COMPLETE COMMUNITY TO MEET DAILY NEEDS
Provide an active street life with a mix of community services and fine-grained retail spaces

1.7 WHIMSY & DESIGN FOR FOUR SEASONS
Incorporate whimsical elements and design for year round enjoyment

1.8 ECOLOGICAL LITERACY
Teach children and youth environmental values to promote a resilient city

1.9 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Engage children and youth in the planning and design process
2.1 BUILDING CONFIGURATION
Provide a critical mass of large units primarily located in lower portions of the building

2.2 FLEXIBLE BUILDING DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION
Design buildings to allow for future flexibility through unit organization and construction systems

2.3 COMMON INDOOR & OUTDOOR AMENITY
Provide indoor and outdoor amenity spaces to support a variety of age groups and activities

2.4 BUILDING LOBBY
Design lobbies that promote lingering and casual social interaction

2.5 SOCIAL CIRCULATION SPACES
Design common areas to support social interaction between neighbours

2.6 BUILDING MASSING & TYPOLOGY
Incorporate massing strategies that allow for a variety of unit types as well as innovative building massing and design

2.7 PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE SPACES (POPS)
Provide child-specific POPS to expand the network of open spaces within the public realm

2.8 STORAGE & UTILITY NEEDS
Provide ample, convenient and secure storage for larger items

3.1 ENTRANCE & STORAGE
Provide space to comfortably enter and exit, and store items

3.2 LAUNDRY
Provide space for laundry and utility

3.3 KITCHEN & DINING
Kitchen and dining areas should be large enough for families to cook, socialize and eat together

3.4 LIVING ROOM
Provide space that accommodates the social needs of a family

3.5 BEDROOMS
Design bedrooms as high-quality spaces with operable windows, space for homework and appropriate storage

3.6 BALCONY & TERRACE
Design balconies and terraces that extend the living space and provide access to the outdoors

3.7 UNIT FLEXIBILITY
Units should be adaptable and allow for layout change over time
1.0 NEIGHBOURHOOD

1.1 Mobility
1.2 Parks & Open Spaces: Access & Type
1.3 Child Care Facilities
1.4 Schools
1.5 Shared Use & Integrated Co-located Community Services & Facilities
1.6 A Complete Community to Meet Daily Needs
1.7 Whimsy & Design for Four Seasons
1.8 Ecological Literacy
1.9 Civic Engagement

The public realm is an integral part of any neighbourhood. In many instances, components of the public realm, such as parks or the library, become an extension of the home. Vertical communities become more livable when the public realm is designed and planned to support the specific needs of households with children and youth. Vertical living then becomes a more desirable and feasible option for more households.

Healthy neighbourhoods should address mobility by providing safe streets that encourage independent and active transportation. They should provide facilities such as schools, child care and parks that meet the specific needs of children within close proximity to the home. The design of the public realm can pay specific attention to children and youth by promoting ecological literacy, play in all seasons and by incorporating whimsical features. The guidelines that follow provide a blueprint for planning, designing and developing neighbourhoods that address the needs of children and youth.

Hammarby Sjöstad, above, in Sweden is a new community that was organized around naturalized green spaces and car-free active transportation corridors.

Official Plan Reference
See Appendix for a complete list of applicable policies.
Centralized parks help to anchor and organize the neighbourhood by providing a flexible space with the ability to congregate during weekly or seasonal events.

Retail and community facilities at the base of buildings help to animate the neighbourhood and provide convenience for residents to meet their daily needs on foot.

Co-located child care facilities, schools and community services and facilities allow for efficiencies and synergies. These are the places that foster civic engagement in children and youth and where community ties are developed.

Safe pedestrian routes help to connect neighbourhoods to child-focused destinations.

Public art and whimsy help create a sense of place.

Naturalized gardens provide a place for children to learn about ecology which can foster a sense of stewardship.

Cycling infrastructure that is separated from vehicular and pedestrian traffic provides a safe route for children to ride independently.

BUILDING COMPLETE COMMUNITIES
The CityPlace neighbourhood in Toronto is master planned to include all of the ingredients of a complete community.
1.1 MOBILITY

Design safe mobility networks to encourage children’s independence and active transportation

Children’s Independent Mobility  The ability of children to move independently through their neighbourhood fosters social and physical development and provides opportunities for play. Children are granted increasing independence when caregivers perceive a sense of safety and security in the public realm.

Safe Routes  Children move differently and less predictably through the public realm than adults and require some unique design considerations. A safe route is the primary route through a neighbourhood that connects child-specific destinations. Safe routes are ideally located on local streets. These help mitigate real and/or perceived risk associated with independent mobility.

Active Transportation  Walking or cycling are most accessible to children and help to reduce vehicle trips, provide physical and mental health benefits and they are often the most convenient, sustainable and affordable mode of transportation for a family.

Walking/Cycling to School  The daily route to school presents the most significant opportunity for active transportation which in turn reduces vehicular traffic congestion and the safety risks associated with vehicular congestion around schools.

Streets as Open Space  Streets are important public open spaces that connect people and places. When they are comfortable they can support public life, allowing families to linger and socialize.

Fig. 1 MID-RISE SECTION  4.8m minimum from curb to building face

Fig. 2 TALL BUILDING SECTION  6m minimum from curb to building face

Separated bicycle lanes on Toronto’s Queens Quay provide a safe route along the waterfront. This parent borrowed a tricycle cart from his children’s school. Cycling is his family’s preferred mode of travel.
GUIDELINES

Safe routes should be incorporated in new capital projects or new master planned communities by:

1. locating new child-focused destinations on safe routes;
2. identifying routes between existing child-focused destinations such as schools, community centres, libraries, parks and playgrounds;
3. considering existing walk-and-bike-to-school programs;
4. congregating child-focused destinations to minimize the number of intersections children need to cross; and
5. using signage to indicate the presence of children, as well as signage legible to children, to allow for wayfinding. Signage should be located so that it is visible at a child’s height and include colourful symbols.

Consider reduced speed limits on safe routes that include child-focused destinations along their length.

New or reconfigured streets should comply with Complete Streets and Green Streets criteria and:

1. ensure that children are part of the user profile in the street context analysis particularly if there are schools or other child-focused destinations nearby;
2. all efforts should be made to minimize curb radii and lane widths, where feasible, to reduce vehicle speed; and
3. where feasible, explore alternative street and laneway designs such as shared streets to improve safety by reducing vehicular speed and to encourage flexibility, play and initiatives such as Block Party in a Box.

Pedestrian infrastructure should:

1. minimize the exposure risk of children to motorized vehicles by designing pedestrian-oriented intersections with landscaped curb extensions for shorter crossing distances, raised crosswalks and other features to provide safe crossings;
2. be physically separated from vehicle lanes with a planted boulevard, when it is not a shared street;
3. be lined with street furniture as well as trees where possible to provide a shade canopy;
4. incorporate ramps on public stairs for stroller or bicycle wheels to improve access and connectivity; and
5. be wider, where possible, on safe routes to school for children under 14 who can legally ride on the sidewalk.

When cycling infrastructure is provided it should connect to safe routes, and to the network of child-focused destinations and be physically separated from vehicular lanes and parking to minimize risks and provide comfort for children.
1.2 PARKS & OPEN SPACES: ACCESS & TYPE

Provide a variety of types of parks and open spaces that are easily accessible and meet a range of needs

Outdoor Living Room Parks and open spaces are integral to urban living and provide outdoor social and recreation space, offering places to rest, play and socialize.

Safety & Convenience A child’s mobility is determined by age, thus distances are experienced differently. Parks and open spaces are most accessible when located close to home and on safe routes, allowing children to exercise independent mobility.

Healthy Children Access to green space and recreational facilities results in social, physical and mental health benefits.

Independent Play Non-prescriptive design enables social growth by encouraging discovery, adventure, imagination and risk taking.

Variety & Scale Different types of spaces provide a choice of experiences meeting daily, weekly and seasonal needs. Smaller spaces provide needed resting areas while on route to destinations. Open spaces include lands such as schoolyards, cemeteries, urban plazas and ravine trails.

Multi-functional Inclusive and flexible design addresses varying ages and abilities and responds to the four seasons, ensuring that parks and open spaces are usable year-round.

GUIDELINES

i PROVIDE EQUITABLE ACCESS

a. New development should evaluate and prioritize on-site parkland dedication over cash-in-lieu where need is identified.

b. New parks and open spaces should be convenient and centrally located to meet daily needs within 250m-500m, or 5-10 minute walking distance of a new development site.

c. New developments should result in no new net shadow on parks, open spaces and playgrounds.

d. When expanding the network of parks and open spaces:

   1. where feasible, locate new parks and open spaces on safe routes and minimize the number of intersections children need to cross to access them;

   2. new connections can form loops or linear routes to link child-focused destinations;

   3. provide opportunities for rest along daily routes; and

   4. pursue opportunities to re-purpose underutilized spaces such as surface parking lots, left-over land parcels, and redundant vehicular lanes through “road diets”.

e. Continue to explore partnerships with public landowners such as School Boards to increase public, shared access to open space, playgrounds and recreational facilities.

f. Consider providing Wi-Fi where feasible.
Southeast False Creek in Vancouver offers flexible and specific elements such as boulders for sitting and climbing, play structures, plazas and public art as well as a naturalized landscape. This linear park also functions as a safe route.

Park an der Marienburger in Berlin includes a number of flexible elements that can be used for play, seating or community events. This round amphitheater is a simple element that can provoke a child’s imagination and unique use.

**ii PROVIDE A RANGE OF TYPES**

a. Vertical communities should include a range of park types to meet daily, weekly and seasonal needs.

b. Park design should consider a range of elements that are flexible and specific to allow for a diversity of activities, resting, climbing and imaginative/adventure/nature play to suit all ages and abilities. Provide a combination of:
   1. specific elements including: play equipment for a broad range of age groups, sandboxes, water features, play courts and smaller skateboard features; and
   2. flexible elements including: large boulders, lawn areas, mounds, concrete or stone shapes and seat walls. These elements could be sculptural and whimsical.

c. Where feasible, provide dog amenities to prevent conflicts with children and minimize damage to the public realm.

d. Playgrounds should:
   1. be located safely within parks and away from streets;
   2. offer group seating and gathering space for caregivers to allow for formal and/or informal supervision;
   3. provide shade from trees or shade structures to mitigate impact from sun exposure;
   4. provide entry/exit points that include integrated physical barriers to prevent young children from running into the street, such as fences, low walls or maze-like offsets;
   5. include naturalized spaces for children to explore;
   6. involve graduated levels of risk to allow children the opportunity to go up higher, or faster, as they become more comfortable and confident;
   7. include materials that extends the play season into winter, such as rubber surfacing; and
   8. be designed to drain snow melt efficiently with an under-drain system and overflow routes dispersed across the site, to encourage good drainage and surface flow in freeze/thaw conditions.
1.3 CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Design high-quality, conveniently located child care facilities

Accessible  Child care facilities are a vital service which should be close to home or work. Families need access to child care facilities that are located near active transportation or transit routes. Locations on safe routes allow parents with children to comfortably walk, cycle or roll to their child care facility.

Early Involvement  Securing child care in new developments requires early conversation with the City of Toronto and throughout the development approval process.

Equitable City  Affordable and accessible child care is part of a complete community. It supports working parents and creates positive social, economic and health outcomes.

The Bayside development in Toronto shows how the child care’s outdoor space was located on the 2nd level by taking a ‘bite’ out of the building. This alternative massing solution was a response to a constrained site and involved cooperation between the developer (Waterfront Toronto), City Planning and Children Services.

This child care centre in Tokyo has an oval rooftop that encloses an internal courtyard space. The design also includes glazed roof openings that allow direct views between the roof and classroom and a slide from the roof to the courtyard.
GUIDELINES

I PLANNING FOR CHILD CARE IN MIXED USE BUILDINGS

a. During the development review process, if child care is an identified need, staff from both City Planning and Toronto Children’s Services must be involved in early conversations to explore providing integrated child care facilities on site (while balancing the needs for other community infrastructure) and to support child care development details.

b. New child care facilities will adhere to the Provincial Child Care and Early Years Act and the City of Toronto’s Child Care Design & Technical Guideline R1 2016 and the Child Care Development Guideline.

c. Locate child care facilities so that they:
   1. are near pedestrian, cycling and transit routes to minimize dependence on vehicles; and
   2. consider adjacencies to other community services and facilities such as schools, parks and recreation facilities.

II DESIGNING CHILD CARE IN MIXED USE BUILDINGS

a. Child care is to be located on the first floor of a building. If this is not feasible, the second floor may be considered.

b. Children Services seeks new facilities to accommodate a minimum of: 62 children with 1 room of 10 infants, 2 rooms of 10 toddlers, and 2 rooms of 16 preschoolers.

c. Child care facilities should provide a minimum of 2.8m² of unobstructed indoor and 5.6m² of unobstructed outdoor space per child, as well as ancillary space, unencumbered by building structure, in order to achieve optimal space layouts.

d. Outdoor play space should be:
   1. directly accessible to child care indoor space;
   2. located away from high-volume traffic and other vehicular areas;
   3. oriented to maximize sunlight and create favourable exterior micro-climates for environmental comfort; and
   4. protected from shadow and wind impacts caused by existing and future development.

e. Pick-up and drop-off areas should be urbanized and prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access. Vehicular access should be located on the street (with signage), internal to the site (at the side or rear of the building) or underground in order to minimize negative impacts on the public realm with new laybys or drive aisles.

f. On constrained sites:
   1. innovative building design and massing strategies are encouraged to accommodate outdoor play space oriented to maximize access to sunlight; and
   2. explore opportunities for shared use agreements to locate a portion of the outdoor play space on adjacent lands such as parks if space permits and if the child care operator commits to its higher standard of maintenance.

g. Shared use agreements, including a time/use plan and detailed maintenance requirements, should be developed early on in order to maximize community spaces and guarantee operational success.

h. Given that children are uniquely vulnerable to environmental exposures and impacts, use natural, sustainable materials for play equipment and ground surfaces which do not over-heat.
1.4 SCHOOLS

Design high-quality, conveniently located schools

Social Hub  The role of the school goes beyond the classroom. Flexible design and programming allow schools to function as civic hubs of community activity. Schools are where social skills are developed and where children make friends. Schools support social cohesion and a sense of belonging in the community.

Daily Routine  Schools are one of the most important daily destinations in a child’s routine. Active transportation becomes a viable option when schools are within a convenient walking distance from home.

Quality of Life  The quality and proximity of schools have immediate and long-term impacts on a family’s well-being and choice of neighbourhood.

School Distribution  Families rely on access to high-quality local public schools within their neighbourhood, which minimizes the need for student busing. The availability of local schools allows new parents to remain in their neighbourhoods.

GUIDELINES

a. New schools should be located near major transit routes.

b. Schools and school sites should be retained where possible to meet future enrollment or community space needs.

c. Continue to explore opportunities to co-locate schools, parks and child care facilities as well as other community services.

d. City divisions, developers, school boards, local school staff and community groups should form partnerships to:
   1. facilitate early discussions to integrate schools into new development or on stand-alone sites; and
   2. normalize the practice of using school yards for passive community access outside of academic hours.

e. When developing new master planned communities:
   1. where feasible, build new co-located schools in early phases to attract families and improve livability;
   2. maintain flexible building layouts to allow for future retrofit and/or expanded facilities to accommodate enrollment growth and program changes while promoting shared use and service integration; and

f. Pick-up and drop-off should be:
   1. urbanized to limit the need to provide land-consumptive vehicle associated functions on site; and
   2. located on the street (with signage) or internal to the site (at the side or rear of the building) in order to minimize negative impacts on the public realm which result from new lay-bys and drive aisles.

The North Toronto Collegiate Institute is integrated into the base of two residential towers. School amenities, including a theatre, classrooms and sports fields, are available to the community outside of school hours.

Through a participatory design process, schoolyards across New York City were transformed into playgrounds. By the summer of 2007, 69 playgrounds were open at a cost of $50,000 per school.
1.5 SHARED USE & INTEGRATED CO-LOCATED COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

Co-locate community services and facilities with new development to ensure shared use as well as efficient, inclusive and dynamic program delivery

Convenience & Efficiency The co-location of services and facilities can minimize trips and travel time and address a family’s daily needs through various stages of life.

Synergy Co-location brings together compatible uses in a single building and supports interaction between people of differing backgrounds, ages and socioeconomic conditions.

Adequate and Equitable Access Maximizing resources by grouping services in the same facility improves access and allows for more efficient use of land and resources.

Strong Communities Shared use of multi-service facilities strengthens communities, improves public health and achieves positive socio-economic outcomes.

GUIDELINES

a. Early in the development review process, City Divisions, developers and community groups should continue to discuss forming partnerships to advance integrated co-located facilities in order to:

1. identify sites to develop co-located facilities in an urban format at the base of buildings;

2. support and encourage the practice of sharing space, such as schools providing recreation space for community programs outside of academic hours; and

3. fully program the facility throughout the day for community functions.

b. Explore smaller, alternative urban formats to provide space for facilities when larger spaces are not available.

c. Explore opportunities to co-locate community facilities with housing to enable synergies such as those between children and seniors.

d. New facilities should be designed with adaptable layouts to provide flexible programming space.

e. Long-term operational viability of co-located community services should be considered during early planning stages.
1.6 A COMPLETE COMMUNITY TO MEET DAILY NEEDS

Provide an active street life with a mix of community services and fine-grained retail spaces

**Convenience, Access & Variety** Flexible and diverse retail allows families to meet their daily needs on foot, maximizing time for other activities. Families generally require access to pharmacies, convenience stores and fresh, healthy and affordable food.

**Informal Supervision** Active and animated building frontages allow for eyes on the street and informal supervision of children.

**Animated Building Frontages** Buildings lined with active uses, such as retail and lobbies, generate a vibrant, healthy street life. This is especially important during winter months.

**Social Interaction** Fine-grained retail and community services such as community health centres, cafés and bookstores allow for chance encounters that encourage a sense of community.

**GUIDELINES**

**a.** The design of non-residential uses at-grade should:

1. be flexible over time to support a diversity of both large and small-scale retailers by providing multiple entrances at-grade, generous floor to ceiling heights and adaptability through demising walls;
2. provide building setbacks for active uses such as patios;
3. use clear glass to provide eyes on the street with street-related retail display, service uses and lobbies; and
4. be animated by limiting the at-grade frontage of large stores and lifestyle graphics that obstruct the windows.

**b.** Space secured by the City for community tenancies should be designed consistent with the terms of the City’s Community Spaces Tenancy policy or equivalent, and should be accessible and visible from the street.

**c.** Planners, developers, Business Improvement Areas and community groups should work together to:

1. use Section 37 agreements to secure space for community-based groups and not-for-profits, such as food co-ops; and
2. avoid vacant retail space by accommodating community services and facilities or short term alternatives, such as community groups, in retail spaces that have difficulty attracting established retailers.

The reconfigured Market Street in Toronto introduced fine grain retail and patio seating. The shared street is a flexible design (which uses bollards instead of a curb) that better accommodates special events or pedestrians on market days.

The active elevations at-grade at the Wellesley Community Centre in Toronto animate the public realm throughout the dark winter months.

A 12-storey building at 297 College Street in Toronto includes a medium-scale food store (with direct access from the residential lobby), a bank, and two small-scale shops facing the laneway, which was designed as a shared street.
1.7 WHIMSY & DESIGN FOR FOUR SEASONS

Incorporate whimsical elements and design for year round enjoyment

**Sense of Joy**  Playful design elements foster a sense of delight. They can allow for pause from daily routines and provoke play.

**Landmarks & Civic Pride**  Whimsical forms can become way-finding elements and help orient children by creating a sense of place, inclusivity and a feeling of belonging.

**Year Round Use**  Transportation and recreational needs of families remain consistent throughout the year.

**Flexible**  The public realm should be designed and maintained to adapt to seasonal change to enhance year-round usability.

**GUIDELINES**

**INCORPORATE WHIMSY**

a. Encourage a sense of joy and playfulness by incorporating whimsy in public art, building design, streetscapes, street furniture and parks and open space features.

b. Design child-friendly elements at a scale that responds to children that provoke the imagination and are fun, interactive, educational, musical and brightly coloured in fantastic sculptural forms.

**EMBRACE THE FOUR SEASONS**

(c. Winter maintenance is critical near transit stops and is encouraged on routes in parks that are heavily used.

d. Where feasible, public washrooms should be provided and open all year.

e. Design for four seasons should be:

1. flexible for year-round use and events;
2. transformable, such as a walking trail that becomes a skating trail in the winter;
3. incorporate animated patterns, colour and light;
4. designed to prevent freeze/thaw conditions with an under-drain system and dispersed overflow routes;
5. able to address extreme weather through resiliency (public spaces should retain storm water, include shade structures and feature extensive tree planting); and
6. massed to create micro-climates and use materials to create comfortable environments in extreme heat/cold.
1.8 ECOLOGICAL LITERACY

Teach children and youth environmental values to promote a resilient city

**Foster Environmental Stewardship** When children develop an understanding and appreciation of ecological processes they become citizens who make more sustainable choices.

**Resiliency** Children are most vulnerable to climate change impacts and less fit to withstand extreme climate events. Green building practices future-proof cities against climate events.

**Nature & Health** Contact with nature, the ravine systems and food gardens provides physical and emotional benefits. It has been demonstrated that nature-play leads to developing a stronger immune systems in children.

**GUIDELINES**

a. Explore opportunities to integrate sustainable design into new development, school curriculum and the public realm. Provide learning opportunities for children through elements such as visible storm water management, using spillways that flow into landscape beds.

b. When developing new streets, consult the Green Streets Guidelines to maximize access to nature and green infrastructure in the public realm.

c. Explore opportunities to develop community gardens in open space or food gardens on rooftop amenity space.

d. Neighbourhood plans should be developed to examine how systems (such as transportation, food resources and utilities) can better adapt during extreme climate events.

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The design of the Tumbling Bay Playground at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London promotes adventure play and ecological education with play structures made of pines and felled oaks, which represent the local woodland ecology.

The Table community food centre provides opportunities for children to learn to grow and prepare healthy food, while increasing access to nature.

Fairford Avenue Parkette in Toronto was created by reducing the adjacent vehicular traffic lanes. The new parkette captures storm water runoff from the adjacent street, and provides furniture for resting while providing children access to nature. The storm water inlets are designed to be visible, to provide a learning opportunity.
1.9 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Engage children and youth in the planning and design process

Inclusive Cities  A city that embraces all its citizens will involve children and youth in the planning and design process.

Children as Active Citizen  Engaging children and youth can foster long-term active citizenship, leading to enhanced civic commitment, social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Children’s Unique Perspective  Children as young as age four experience the city at a different scale than adults and maneuver through the city in unpredictable ways, which should inform new planning and design initiatives.

Children as a Resource  Children and youth can offer insight and unfiltered perspective on how urban spaces can be planned and designed to meet their needs.

GUIDELINES

a. Ensure city initiatives and consultation processes incorporate the perspectives and smaller scale of children.

b. Public engagement should be:

1. integrated into the school curriculum through programs like ‘Planners in Classrooms’;
2. in locations where children congregate including schools, libraries, community centres and parks;
3. scheduled during/after school and on weekends;
4. fun! and use child-focused tools such as mental mapping, hands-on workshops, computer-based tools and social media for older children and youth; and
5. designed to help children challenge traditional ways of using public space.

c. Establish community partnerships that engage students and seeks their advice on local planning matters.

d. Use public events in public spaces to demonstrate to children alternative and flexible ways to use the public realm such as Open Streets TO (where streets are temporarily opened to people and closed to cars) and Winter Stations (where temporary, interactive installations and furniture were built on Toronto’s beach).
2.0 BUILDING

2.1 Building Configuration
2.2 Flexible Building Design & Construction
2.3 Common Indoor & Outdoor Amenity
2.4 Building Lobby
2.5 Social Circulation Spaces
2.6 Building Massing & Typology
2.7 Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Spaces (POPS)
2.8 Storage & Utility Needs

The design of new buildings should consider the needs of families at various life stages to ensure that residents can remain in their communities. Within the building, the choice of amenities should anticipate the change of demographics over time and particularly address activities for young and middle-years children as well as youth. A critical mass of large units can enrich the social life of the building by fostering community and social interactions. A range of unit sizes also ensures that Toronto’s housing stock will be more dynamic and better able to respond to changing demographic needs.

These guidelines address how buildings can better accommodate families through recommendations on the siting, configuration and typology of buildings. Building construction is also examined in order to ensure flexibility within the floor plate, so that smaller units may be combined over time. The contribution that the building makes to the neighbourhood is considered through the dedication of open space, community facilities and retail. Within the building, special attention is paid to circulation areas and shared spaces, as well as their adjacencies and access.

The image above shows the rooftop amenity courtyard at Via Verde in New York. The large, flexible open space includes elements that promote play and socializing. The balconies overlook the courtyard, which enables supervision.

Official Plan Reference
See Appendix for a complete list of applicable policies.
ILLUSTRATION OF AN IDEAL BUILDING
The tower’s base building configuration incorporates all of the ingredients that make a family-friendly vertical community.
2.1 BUILDING CONFIGURATION

Provide a critical mass of large units primarily located in lower portions of the building

**Sense of Community** Increasing the number of large units creates a sense of community within the building.

**Outdoor Access** Units in lower portions of the building can have direct access to the outdoors (including rooftop amenity space) while reducing dependency on corridors and elevators.

**Informal Supervision** Children playing outdoors can be more easily supervised from the units above.

**GUIDELINES**

- **a.** A building should provide a minimum of 25% large units:
  - 10% of the units should be three bedroom units and 15% of the units should be two bedroom units. See Guideline 3.0 for overall unit size and the size of each unit element.
- **b.** Group the majority of large units together to encourage socializing and create a sense of community.
- **c.** Locate large units primarily in lower portions of the building to:
  - 1. reduce elevator dependency and facilitate efficient access to the outdoors, especially during emergencies;
  - 2. overlook public open space and/or private outdoor amenity areas to allow informal supervision;
  - 3. make them closer to amenity areas and, where feasible, have direct access outdoors from the unit;
  - 4. take advantage of deeper floor plates and provide wider common corridor space, enable layout flexibility and maximize unit size for laundry rooms, entrances and storage areas;
  - 5. take advantage of base building structure which typically has less of a requirement for shear walls; and
  - 6. reduce tower floor plate building bulk when providing large balconies.
- **d.** At-grade units should provide direct access to amenity, local streets or laneways for convenience.

The third level of 150 Dan Leckie Way in Toronto opens onto a rooftop amenity space that features a variety of play spaces including a lawn and splash pad. Some units flow out into the space while others can informally supervise from above.

The two-level units facing the laneway at B Street Condos in Toronto have terraces and direct access to the laneway. Pedestrian activity animates the public realm and families can informally supervise children playing in the laneway.
2.2 FLEXIBLE BUILDING DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

Design buildings to allow for future flexibility through unit organization and construction systems

Change Over Time  Buildings that are flexible become future-proof and allow for alterations, such as adding or removing partitions. This can better accommodate a household’s need for space during varying life stages. Purpose-built construction prevents opportunities for modification.

Alternative Construction  Alternative construction systems are encouraged as they can easily be re-purposed, such as wood-frame construction up to six storeys.

GUIDELINES

a. Design flexible buildings to allow for unit consolidation by:
   1. prioritizing columns over shear walls; and
   2. providing 3-5m demisable partition near the corridor if shear walls are unavoidable.

b. Design flexible units to anticipate change by:
   1. locating vertical risers in the core (not within units) and distribute services along each corridor; and
   2. grouping the unit’s services close to the corridor.

c. When designing a mid-rise building, consider wood-frame construction up to six storeys to provide flexibility.

d. Consider increasing the height and size of the moving elevator so that it can accommodate building materials for unit renovations.

e. Ensure there is sufficient power in each unit’s electrical panel to allow for a change of items such as appliances or lighting.

f. Condominium corporations are required to retain dimensioned, as-built drawings for residents who wish to undertake renovations. Toronto Buildings provides this information through their routine disclosure request service.

The T3 Building in Minneapolis is a 7 storey building made of heavy timber and nail laminated timber, which results in a flexible floor plate. Post and beam construction avoids shear walls, which maximizes flexibility over time.

The T3 Building in Minneapolis is a 7 storey building made of heavy timber and nail laminated timber, which results in a flexible floor plate. Post and beam construction avoids shear walls, which maximizes flexibility over time.

This plan illustrates two adjacent 51m² one bedroom units converted to a 102m² three bedroom unit.
2.3 COMMON INDOOR & OUTDOOR AMENITY

Provide indoor and outdoor amenity spaces to support a variety of age groups and activities

Support Social Interaction  Amenity space offers a venue for children to meet, socialize and play. It provides residents with an inclusive space to interact and form community ties.

Flexible & Durable  Amenities can be used throughout the day by any age group by de-emphasising luxury materials and furniture.

Age-Specific  A portion of the required amenity space should be designed to accommodate the needs of targeted age groups through flexible rooms and rooms for specific activities.

Sharing Economy  Amenity space can include collective toys, tools and equipment to reduce the need for personal storage.

GUIDELINES

a. The minimum amount and location of amenity space should be in compliance with Zoning By-Law 569-2013.

b. Design a portion of the required amenity space for children and youth. Flexible space can be included in that area. The proportion should relate to the number of large units in the building (~25%).

c. Secure amenity space that can be used at no additional cost to residents above condominium maintenance fees.

d. Locate and protect outdoor amenity space from shadow and wind impacts of existing and future development.

e. Enable passive supervision by locating child-specific amenities adjacent to other amenities.

f. Locate amenities vertically throughout the building to minimize vertical distances to some types of amenity space.

g. Indoor amenity space designed for children and youth:
1. should be high-quality space above grade with access to light where feasible;
2. should include a number of flexible and specific spaces for different activities throughout the day:
   • multi-purpose flexible rooms and generous storage for: toddler play, craft activities, youth fitness and homework groups
   • specific rooms for: music lessons, food education, tools and messy activities;
3. could include flexible, furnished areas adjacent to the lobby area to encourage socializing;
4. should include storage areas, movable furniture and soft furnishings that are durable and easy to maintain; and
5. should address resiliency and function as a refuge area during an emergency to accommodate first responders and be powered by alternative energy sources.

h. Outdoor amenity space designed for children and youth:
1. should be located to maximize access to sunlight while providing areas of shade in the summer;
2. should be directly accessible from private terraces if located on the same level; and
3. could include hardy landscape planting for flexible outdoor play, which can be counted towards no more than 25% of the required outdoor amenity area.

i. Consider locating amenity space so that it is adjacent to, and visible from circulation space to increase opportunities for socializing and passive supervision.

j. When planning a site with multiple buildings, consider grouping a portion of the amenity in a shared complex.

k. Consider the community-building potential of food by:
1. providing indoor/outdoor furniture to enable communal meals and gathering;
2. providing roof-top gardening opportunities; and
3. including a functional community kitchen or event kitchen for collective activities like cooking and dining, or for food-based after-school programs.
The rooftop community garden at Via Verde in New York, provides an opportunity to socialize while learning about growing food and healthy living.

This rendering of a brightly lit craft room at The Wyatt in Toronto demonstrates how a flexible room with a sink can support a variety of activities.

A rooftop amenity playground in Seattle, uses turf grass as a surfacing material which functions as a green roof and provides a flexible play surface.

Plan diagram illustrates amenity adjacencies off a ground floor lobby. The space is designed for a variety of ages and connects to an outdoor play area. Amenity areas are visually connected to allow for informal supervision and to animate the social life of the building.

The rooftop community garden at Via Verde in New York, provides an opportunity to socialize while learning about growing food and healthy living.
2.4 BUILDING LOBBY

Design lobbies that promote lingering and casual social interaction

Dynamic Spaces  Lobbies can be more than places to walk through, they can facilitate impromptu interactions.

Social Life  A casual, welcoming atmosphere provides children and youth with a sense of belonging and the opportunity for parents to linger and socialize informally.

Functional Space  Lobbies can provide convenient access to building amenities, storage rooms and wash-up stations.

GUIDELINES

a. Locate lobbies to animate the public realm and provide eyes on the street.

b. Where feasible, provide a thru-lobby to connect to the rear where pick-up and drop-off areas should be located.

c. Lobby design should:
   1. be dynamic and sized to anticipate a variety of activities;
   2. be visually connected to vehicular pick-up and drop-off;
   3. be visually and physically connected to amenity space such as multi-purpose rooms, wash-up stations and play areas to maximize social encounters and informal supervision of children playing independently;
   4. incorporate a variety of hard and soft movable seating that encourages lingering and socializing;
   5. provide a washroom for convenience; and
   6. provide space for stroller storage and bulky items.

d. Consider providing free Wi-Fi access.

The lobby at 150 Dan Leckie Way is a dynamic space that is day-lit, which encourages people to linger. The stair connects the lobby directly to the building’s amenities. Wayfinding is large, colourful and legible to children.

This indoor amenity space at RMIT Bundoora West Student Accommodations in Victoria, Australia, demonstrates a flexible layout and furnishing to support a number of purposes like play, group or independent study and events.
2.5 SOCIAL CIRCULATION SPACES

Design common areas to support social interaction between neighbours

Social Interaction  Circulation spaces can be designed as indoor streets to encourage opportunities for casual, social interaction.

Community Building  Impromptu interactions foster a sense of community and promote children’s social skills.

Active Circulation  Stairs that are well designed and day-lit, encourage families living on the lower floors to take the stairs which promotes active living (and relieves elevator congestion).

GUIDELINES

a. Provide wide hallways or common nooks near elevator cores to foster play and socializing.

b. Consider providing access to natural light in areas, such as stair cores, elevator lobbies or at the end of corridors.

c. Additional social spaces within corridors should be prioritized where large units are grouped.

d. If indoor amenity space is distributed vertically throughout the building, stairs and elevator lobbies that connect these spaces could be designed to encourage socializing while facilitating informal supervision to address Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.

e. Provide furniture that is built-in and non-flammable.

f. Floor and wall materials should be durable and washable, especially in areas designed for socializing or play.

g. Where feasible, unit entries should be:
   1. Staggered to maximize acoustic and visual privacy.
   2.Indented within hallways to create more space, like a front porch.
2.6 BUILDING MASSING & TYPOLOGY

Incorporate massing strategies that allow for a variety of unit types as well as innovative building massing and design

Within Toronto’s Typologies  Toronto’s mid-rise and tall building typologies can achieve the objectives of the Growing Up guidelines.

Beyond Toronto’s Typologies  Alternate typologies such as “L” or “C”-shaped buildings, as well as incorporating the skip-stop section, can result in unique design solutions.

Design Quality  Emphasis on high-quality design results in a larger stock of units and buildings that are more livable.

GUIDELINES

a. Mid-rise or base building massing should frame outdoor space and maximize corners, such as “C” or “L” shaped buildings which facilitate the layout of larger units and which allow outdoor space to be overlooked by the units above.

b. Orient the building and its outdoor space to maximize access to sunlight on outdoor space while ensuring separation distances maximize access to light and privacy between units.

c. Where feasible, the majority of the large units should be ground-oriented and lower in the building, see Guideline 2.1(c) Building Configuration.

d. Where feasible, consider innovative massing strategies in order to accommodate outdoor space, see Bayside example in Guideline 1.3 Child Care Facilities.

e. Consider multi-level units which separate living and sleeping areas, improving acoustic privacy. Ensure that no space in the unit is further than 18m from an exit as per the Ontario Building Code.

f. Consider a skip-stop building section that favours multi-level units; increases access to natural light; provides through-unit ventilation; and eliminates the need for a common corridor on alternate floors. Where feasible, consider day-lighting and widening the remaining corridors so that they are able to function as social areas.

g. When designing a master-planned community, consider sizing the block plan to suit alternative massing typologies.

Skip-Stop Section

Skip-stop is a building typology where corridors do not occur on every level, reallocating common space and/or sale-able area to units. Units are multi-level and typically separate living areas from bedrooms. This innovative design allows for light on both sides of the unit and cross ventilation through the unit. In the Appendix, Unit example 8A and 8B demonstrate the interlocking plans.

The podium section from 150 Dan Leckie Way demonstrates how two level units can be stacked. The three corridors (annotated above with an ‘X’) demonstrate how units with two levels eliminate the need for a corridor on every floor.
Mid-Rise Buildings
Mid-rise buildings provide a comfortable scale and relationship to the street, allow units to be closer to the ground and ensure all units are located close to amenity space which improves access for families.

Tall Buildings
Tall buildings result in a larger amenity space requirement, providing a more diverse range of spaces which can be tailored to children. The roof of the base building provides a large, flexible area to design a variety of amenity spaces, some of which can be child-specific.

The “C” shaped Ramona building in Portland frames the central courtyard to create a safe, intimate open space which is visible from the street. Children playing in the courtyard can be supervised by the units overlooking this space.

The six-storey, “C” shaped Ramona building in Portland demonstrates how three bedroom units can be located on corners. The facing distance of the wings is 16m which could have been increased to maximize sunlight penetration.
2.7 PRIVATELY OWNED PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE SPACES (POPS)

Provide child-specific POPS to expand the network of open spaces within the public realm

**Network of Spaces**  POPS contribute to the chain of open spaces and provide alternative pedestrian connections in a neighbourhood. They provide both a memorable destination for children or resting places for families passing by.

**Social Interaction**  When a development provides at-grade open space, the opportunity for neighbours to engage with each other and develop stronger social bonds is enhanced.

**Flexibility**  The size and design of the POPS should accommodate a range of uses and programming opportunities such as temporary art installations or performances.

**GUIDELINES**

a. New POPS are to adhere to Toronto’s *Urban Design Guidelines for Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Space*.

b. Provide a POPS if on-site parkland dedication is not feasible and if there is no park within 250-500m, or 5-10 minute walking distance of a new development site.

c. New development that is not within 250-500m of a playground should prioritize flexible child-friendly features such as whimsical, playful landscape elements.

d. The design and location of POPS should complement and not replace the City’s overall parks and open space networks and can include courtyards, forecourts and gardens to provide resting places for families en-route to destinations.

e. Use POPS to provide mid-block pedestrian connections to nearby child-specific destinations, where feasible.

The POPS at 5435 Yonge Street features a playground for residents and neighbours. A pedestrian mid-block walkway is also provided to connect the playground directly to Yonge Street. The fencing provides a physical barrier to enclose children, but the walkway leading into the POPS is left open to clearly articulate public accessibility.
2.8 STORAGE & UTILITY NEEDS

Provide ample, convenient and secure storage for larger items

Utilitarian Needs Families need utilitarian space for messy activities and to address their dog’s needs, where required.

Convenient Stroller Storage In vertical communities the stroller is often the primary family vehicle. Storage rooms allow families and their guests the ability to easily store strollers.

Seasonal Storage Families require additional storage space for seasonal clothing and gear such as sports equipment. Additional storage can be provided on floors with large units or in unused space within the building’s parking garage.

Extra Equipment Families often have multiple bicycles as well as equipment such as trailers. Residents can also allocate storage space for shared wheeled toys or shopping carts.

GUIDELINES

a. Provide a wash-up room for bicycles, pets and strollers.

b. Provide an outdoor pet relief area for dogs in order to address impacts on the public realm.

c. Provide a work room with necessary tools to support messy activities such as bicycle and furniture repairs.

d. Provide a storage room for strollers or wheeled toys near the concierge/lobby, ideally adjacent to elevators.

e. Consider a storage/flex room adjacent to the outdoor amenity space for strollers and shared wheeled toys.

f. Where feasible, provide communal storage or individual storage lockers above the minimum requirement, prioritizing floors with larger units. The full vertical height should be accessible. Explore locations in the base of buildings with deep floor plates.

g. Where parking garage layouts result in unusable area, consider individual storage adjacent to the required minimum parking space. Lockers should be a minimum of 1.2m deep; fill the width and height of the parking stall; and be fire separated and ensure sprinkler coverage.

h. Explore opportunities for storage in unusable areas in the parking garage, such as corners. These spaces can be enclosed to store large equipment such as bicycle trailers.
The unit above in Manhattan, designed for a family of Japanese origin, was inspired by a ‘bento box’. It addresses the needs of the family through flexible partitions, built-in furniture and by stacking an office on top of a walk-in closet.

3.0 UNIT

3.1 Entrance & Storage
3.2 Laundry
3.3 Kitchen & Dining
3.4 Living Room
3.5 Bedrooms
3.6 Balcony & Terraces
3.7 Unit Flexibility

GUIDELINES

a. The ideal unit size, based on the sum of the unit elements is:
   1. two bedrooms 90m² (969sf); and
   2. three bedroom 106m² (1140sf).

b. The following ranges represent a diversity of bedroom sizes while maintaining the integrity of the common space to ensure their functionality:
   1. two bedrooms 87 - 90m² (936 - 969sf); and
   2. three bedroom 100 - 106m² (1076 - 1140sf).

c. Unit size interior floor area is to be measured from the interior side of the walls, excluding mechanical space.

Any unit larger than one bedroom should be thoughtfully designed to accommodate children. The design of a unit that is suitable for families relies not only on size, but on functional, good design. As children go through their stages of development, they have distinct needs, including safety and the desire for varying levels of independence. For example, appropriately sized bedrooms can adapt to various configurations and can comfortably accommodate two people. The ability for the unit to respond to the changing spatial needs ensures that families can invest in, and remain in their units through various life stages.

The guidelines recommend minimum areas for each unit element to ensure that a family’s needs are provided for comfortably and efficiently. While overall minimum unit sizes are recommended, there is flexibility in how designers can arrange unit elements, resulting in a variety of unit sizes, depending on the layout and the efficiency of the connecting spaces such as corridors.

Official Plan Reference
See Appendix for a complete list of applicable policies.

The unit above in Manhattan, designed for a family of Japanese origin, was inspired by a ‘bento box’. It addresses the needs of the family through flexible partitions, built-in furniture and by stacking an office on top of a walk-in closet.
TWO BEDROOMS
approx. 90m² (970sf)

THREE BEDROOMS
approx. 106m² (1140sf)

ILLUSTRATION OF IDEAL UNITS
Each plan illustrates the ideal size for each unit element.
3.1 ENTRANCE & STORAGE

Provide space to comfortably enter and exit, and store items

**Multi-functional** Entries are the landing or launch pad where families get ready or unload items that might be messy. They are also places to store large items that are used on a daily basis.

**Gateway** Entrances function as the transitional space between private units and shared corridors, therefore acoustic and visual privacy are important considerations.

**GUIDELINES**

a. Provide a minimum area of 4m² and a minimum width of 1.5m to accommodate four people, a stroller and room for circulation and seating. A clear area of 1.5m x 1.5m meets accessibility requirements.

b. In buildings with double-loaded corridors, stagger entrances to increase privacy and minimize acoustic impacts.

c. Consider acoustic ratings above the minimum required to provide greater privacy and comfort.

d. Consider recessed entrances to provide personalization and to offer additional transitional space for people to linger.

e. Provide a coat closet with a minimum width of 0.3m per occupant, based on 2 people per bedroom: 1.2m for two bedroom units and 1.8m for three bedroom units.

f. Provide storage closets for outerwear and large seasonal items with a minimum area of 2.5m² with a minimum depth of 1.4m to allow for 0.45m deep shelving and 0.9m space in front of shelving.

g. Maximize vertical space by using full height closet doors.

h. Provide a bathroom for quick access to a toilet or sink.

i. Provide a laundry room with a sink which can double as a mud room for washing up.

j. Include blocking to anticipate wall hooks and shelving.

k. Storage areas should be made of durable materials to withstand frequent use.

l. Maximize usable wall space to accommodate built-in storage walls or furniture.
Provide space for laundry and utility

**Daily Chores** Children generate a significant amount of laundry.

**Utility** A generous laundry room provides additional space to repair items and store household cleaning supplies.

**GUIDELINES**

a. Locate the laundry room in a convenient location in the unit, such as adjacent to the entrance so that the laundry room can function as a mudroom.

b. If located in a room, provide a minimum area of 3.4m² with a minimum depth of 1.9m. If located in a closet, provide fully operable doors, a minimum depth of 1.2m and a minimum area of 2.2m².

c. Include an outlet for an iron or steamer.

d. Maximize vertical space for storage and to hang-dry items.

e. Provide space for a folding table, hamper, ironing board and a high shelf or cabinet for safe detergent storage.


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Shelving, fold-out drying racks and counter space above the appliances efficiently provide all the necessities of a laundry room.

Plan diagrams illustrate a laundry room and a laundry closet.
3.3 KITCHEN & DINING

Kitchen and dining areas should be large enough for families to cook, socialize and eat together

**Social Nucleus**  The kitchen is the family hub. It is more than an area for food preparation, but is also where the family gathers.

**Family Time**  A generous dining area accommodates the whole family and is also flexible for other uses. There are proven health and social benefits associated with eating together as a family.

**Teaching Opportunity**  Cooking with children teaches the importance of nutrition and skills such as math and planning.

**GUIDELINES**

a. The kitchen area should be a minimum of 9m².

b. Where feasible, the kitchen should be visually connected to the living area and balcony to allow for supervision.

c. Where possible, include a window in the kitchen to provide visual access to outdoor play space.

d. Provide counter space away from the cook-top for safety.

e. Maximize vertical space for storage.

f. Include standard-size-appliances and a large format sink.

g. The dining area should accommodate seating at a rate of two dining spaces per bedroom and have a minimum area of 9m² in order to allow for communal eating. Furniture such as a dining table, chairs and storage should fit in the dining room, in addition to circulation space.

h. Explore built-in kitchen furniture such as islands that can transform and extend into a table to seat a family.

i. The dining area should be flexible to accommodate other functions such as homework, games and crafts.

j. The dining area should include electrical outlets, USB ports and storage for electronics.

Plan diagram illustrates kitchen, dining area and adjacencies.

Seating nooks provide a comfortable place for children to sit and safely help with food preparation offering learning opportunities.
Provide space that accommodates the social needs of a family

Social Space Generous living rooms provide space for families to relax, study, play and connect.

Adjacent to Kitchen When living rooms are visually connected to kitchens, caregivers can supervise children at play.

Separation from Bedrooms Acoustic and visual privacy is provided when bedrooms are located away from the living room.

GUIDELINES

a. Provide a minimum area of 16.5m² to accommodate a standard size sofa, a chair, a coffee table and a storage cabinet, in addition to a 2mx3m flexible play space that includes storage furniture.

b. Living rooms should:

1. have visual and acoustic separation from bedrooms to maximize privacy;
2. have access to natural light and operable windows;
3. have visual access from the kitchen to allow supervision of young children; and
4. maximize wall space for furniture placement such as linear storage walls.

A brightly lit living at Hicks Street Residence in New York provides a flexible area for a family with views from the kitchen to allow for informal supervision.

The Chocolate Loft in Toronto demonstrates how flexible walls allow the user to adapt their space to their changing needs throughout the day.
3.5 BEDROOMS

Design bedrooms as high-quality spaces with operable windows, space for homework and appropriate storage

**Livability & Functionality** An ideal bedroom is a high-quality space with access to light and air; space to play and do homework; and adequate space for storage.

**Privacy** The need for visual and acoustic privacy increases as children age.

**GUIDELINES**

a. In large units, one bedroom should be a minimum of 11m², not including the closet. The remainder of the bedrooms are encouraged to be 11m², but a variety of bedroom sizes could be provided, ensuring that no bedroom is smaller than 8m².

b. The bedroom size should accommodate a closet and bed as well as a full-height storage wall that could include a desk.

c. Each bedroom should accommodate a minimum of two people in various sleeping configurations.

d. Bedrooms should be physically separated from and not open directly onto living areas for visual and acoustic privacy.

e. Where feasible, provide operable windows with the operable portion higher up for safety and to prevent objects falling out.

f. Consider raising windows 76cm above floor level to allow furniture to be placed against the window wall.

g. Maximize vertical space:
   1. anticipate bunk beds when designing the perimeter wall, provide outlets / switches higher up on the wall;
   2. closets should provide access to full wall height; and
   3. consider built-in furniture and integrated storage.

Additional storage space is made by raising the bed off the floor in the Mills Toy Management House in Melbourne Australia.

An adequately-sized bedroom can accommodate multiple bed configurations in addition to a closet, dresser, table and appropriate circulation space.
3.6 BALCONY & TERRACE

Design balconies and terraces that extend the living space and provide access to the outdoors

Outdoor Space  An appropriately sized balcony or terrace can be used for family dining and socializing, extends the living space and provides access to fresh air.

Independence  Private outdoor space is one of the first experiences of independence for a child.

Safety  An appropriately designed balcony or terrace provides a sufficient level of comfort to allow children to play outdoors.

GUIDELINES

a.  A private outdoor space should be a minimum of 2.4m deep by 2.7m wide and be designed to maximize sunlight access, safety, flexibility and adaptability and be free of uncomfortable wind conditions.

b.  Provide guardrails with minimal gaps or no gaps to increase safety and prevent small items from falling.

c.  Where possible, provide inset balconies to provide a more comfortable space, reduce building bulk and limit overlook.

d.  Design balconies to support planters, which provide children with learning and food growing opportunities.

e.  If the terrace is adjacent to outdoor amenity space, provide access through a gate for convenience.

f.  Where feasible, consider loggias and enclosures to extend the usability of balconies throughout all seasons as well as movable screens to maximize safety and mitigate sunlight. Ensure that these elements are incorporated into the building’s structure and that they are designed for wind loads.
3.7 UNIT FLEXIBILITY

Units should be adaptable and allow for layout change over time

Daily Space Needs Units with movable furniture and walls allow families to use space more efficiently and for multiple purposes.

Long-term Space Needs Units that are flexible adapt to a family’s varying life stages allowing them to expand and contract the private space within the unit. For example space for toddler play can be transformed into a teenager’s bedroom.

Putting Down Roots If residents remain in their neighbourhoods, they may feel more invested in their community.

Affordability Units that can respond to a family’s changing needs save the cost of relocation. Ideally adaptations should be easy, inexpensive and anticipated through the original design.

Alternative Construction New technologies can allow for adjustability through demountable partitions or built-in furniture. Walls can be flexible if designed as a system of movable furniture rather than using drywall construction. This type of adaptability can be provided in both rental and ownership tenures.

IKEA and PKMN Architects are testing movable walls and fold-away furniture for modifying small spaces. This emerging technology offer an inexpensive solution for adding flexibility to the unit.

Plants illustrate how daily or long-term space needs are accommodated in a 106m² unit: plans adapt into 3 configurations using folding walls and sliding pocket doors.
This unit provides lots of windows and an extra wide living space. This allows for an additional bedroom without sacrificing functionality.

As children grow up, the space once used for play is no longer required and can be used to suit the needs of families with teenagers.

In Le Corbusier’s Unite d’Habitation, sliding doors between two rooms provide flexibility for the rooms to function as playrooms, bedrooms or an office. Rooms fully connect to private outdoor space with large glass doors.

The ability of a homeowner to adapt their space (using prefabricated building components) rather than undertake a more traditional demolition/renovation avoids the condominium board approval process. For example, designs for new buildings can anticipate the location of future walls and doors so that when a layout change is needed, there is no need to attach permanent framing to common element surfaces.

GUIDELINES

a. Design adaptable units for daily needs by:
   1. using movable walls and fold-away furniture for easy space modifications.

b. Design adaptable units for long-term needs by:
   1. using alternative construction methods such as demountable partitions, pre-fabricated elements or modules rather than drywall and framing and
   2. designing elements such as closets as movable furniture that can be relocated.

c. Additional bedrooms should follow the Ontario Building Code and Guideline 3.5 Bedroom in this document.

d. Units should be adaptable and avoid shear walls, see Guideline 2.2 Flexible Building Design & Construction.

e. Condominium corporations are required to retain dimensioned, as-built drawings for residents who wish to undertake renovations. Toronto Buildings provides this information through their routine disclosure request service.

In Le Corbusier’s Unite d’Habitation, sliding doors between two rooms provide flexibility for the rooms to function as playrooms, bedrooms or an office. Rooms fully connect to private outdoor space with large glass doors.

The ability of a homeowner to adapt their space (using prefabricated building components) rather than undertake a more traditional demolition/renovation avoids the condominium board approval process. For example, designs for new buildings can anticipate the location of future walls and doors so that when a layout change is needed, there is no need to attach permanent framing to common element surfaces.
4.1 CASE STUDIES

AVAILABLE ON-LINE ONLY
www.toronto.ca/growingupto

There are a number of projects, across Toronto and internationally, which demonstrate good planning for children and youth. The projects showcased online illustrate how good design at the unit, building and neighborhood scales can improve the livability for current and future families residing in vertical communities.

The Toronto case studies were selected from areas across the city to demonstrate current success in planning for children. The international examples demonstrate best-practices in other contexts, and while not every element of these projects could work in Toronto, the case studies highlight elements that could be replicated. Read together, the case studies show the full spectrum of possibilities that have helped inform the Growing Up guidelines and that should guide future development which considers the perspective of the child.
There are a number of projects, across Toronto and internationally, which demonstrate good case studies show the full spectrum of possibilities, which will help inform the Growing Up study.

The Toronto case studies were selected from areas across the city to demonstrate how we've already had some success in planning for children and youth. The projects showcased here illustrate how good design at the unit, building and neighborhood scales can improve the livability for current and future families residing in vertical communities.

- **Unit**: 150 Dan Leckie Way, Toronto, Canada
- **Unit**: 150 Dan Leckie Way, CityPlace, Toronto, Canada
- **Unit**: Kent Vale, Singapore
- **Unit**: Unité d'Habitation (The Radiant City), Marseille, France

- **Building**: Bâtiment Home, Paris, France
- **Building**: NXT & NXT2 at Windermere By the Lake, Toronto, Canada
- **Building**: The Giraffe Child Care Centre, Boulogne-Billancourt, France
- **Building**: Unité d'Habitation (The Radiant City), Marseille, France

- **Building Elements**: Ramona Apartments, Portland, USA
- **Building Elements**: River & Warren, New York City, USA
- **Building Elements**: Paris Rive Gauche, Paris, France
- **Building Elements**: Lee Centre, Scarborough Centre, Toronto, Canada

- **Neighbourhood**: North Toronto Collegiate Institute & Residential Towers, Toronto, Canada
- **Neighbourhood**: Parkway Forest, Toronto, Canada
- **Neighbourhood**: Schoolyard to Playground Initiative, New York City, USA
- **Neighbourhood**: The Giraffe Child Care Centre, Boulogne-Billancourt, France
- **Neighbourhood**: Hammarby Sjöstad, Stockholm, Sweden
- **Neighbourhood**: Harbourfront Neighbourhood Centre, Toronto, Canada
- **Neighbourhood**: Lee Centre, Scarborough Centre, Toronto, Canada

- **Unit Elements**: Balconies and space efficiency
- **Building Elements**: Storage, lobbies, courtyards and work spaces
- **Building Elements**: Circulation and flexible space
4.2 UNIT EXAMPLES

The following unit sample plans illustrate various configurations of larger units in mid-rise and tall building formats. Other sample plans can be found throughout the document: 2.2 Flexible Building Design & Construction; 3.0 Unit Intro Section; 3.7 Unit Flexibility. The dash line rectangle shows an area for flexible play.

Unit 1 - two bedrooms - 85m²
This unit provides an open, flexible space where the entrance area is combined with the galley kitchen. The kitchen table includes a built-in bench.

Unit 2 - two bedroom - 88m²
This unit’s kitchen includes an island attached to a table, for multiple seating options. The entrance closet is combined with a laundry room which can accommodate stroller storage.

Unit 3 - two bedrooms - 90m²
This unit’s kitchen table includes a built-in bench. The kitchen counter includes additional seating for children to participate in food preparation.

Unit 4 - two bedroom - 87m²
This unit is deeper than a typical unit, and would be located in the lower levels on a deep floor plate. The bedrooms have been located deeper in plan, and they have windows which front onto the balcony which is inset. The living room is tucked around the corner from the kitchen for acoustic privacy.
Unit 5 - three bedroom - 102m²
This unit accommodates the kitchen and living room in an efficient square shape. The entrance is adjacent to a long laundry room which can accommodate stroller storage.

Unit 6 - three bedrooms - 105m²
This unit features a shallow plan, typical of the upper levels of a mid-rise building. The bedrooms are separated from the living areas with a door, to increase acoustic privacy. The kitchen island is attached to the table, for multiple seating options.

Unit 7 - three bedrooms - 101m²
This unit demonstrates a variety of seating areas at the kitchen table or counter. The bedrooms are separated from the living areas with a door, to increase acoustic privacy.
(Right column) Unit 8A and 8B, as seen in the section below, are interlocking and demonstrate a skip-stop design (see Guidelines 2.6 Building Massing and Typology).

Unit 8A - three bedroom - 113m²
This unit is located at the top of a mid-rise building. It is laid out on two floors and the top floor does not require elevator access or common corridor space. The lower floor features a generous entrance area that overlaps with the kitchen area. The upper floor has windows on both sides which improves natural ventilation. The landing between the bedrooms could accommodate a desk or additional storage.

Unit 8B - two bedroom - 101m²
This unit is accessed from the common corridor where there is an entrance closet and a large utility closet for stroller storage. The remainder of the living space is all on one floor that has windows on both sides which improves natural ventilation.

(Left) Unit 9 - three bedroom - 129m²
This unit features an at-grade entrance for convenient access to the street. The bedroom on the ground floor can be converted into a larger living space or remain a bedroom.
4.3 OFFICIAL PLAN POLICY REFERENCES

NEIGHBOURHOOD
2.2 Structuring Growth in the City: Integrating Land Use and Transportation Policy 2a, c, e, f
2.2.1 Downtown Policy 1c, 2a, 4, 11
2.2.2 Centres Policy 2e, f, g, h, i, k
2.2.3 Avenues Policy 2a, 3c (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (vi) (vii 3, 4, 5)
2.4 Bringing the City Together: a progressive agenda for transportation change Policy 4, 13b, 14 a, b, c, e, f
3.1.1 Public Realm Policy 1d, 5a (i), b, 6, 14, 16 a, b, d, e, f, g, 17, 18a, 19
3.1.2 Built Form Policy 1b, c, 3
3.1.4 Public Art Policy 1e
3.2.2 Community Services and Facilities Policy 1c, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7
3.2.3 Parks and Open Spaces Policy 1-8, except 5i
3.3 Building New Neighbourhoods Policy 1-3
3.4 The Natural Environment Policy 1a, c, d, 2, 18, 19
4.5 Mixed Use Areas Policy 2a, f, g, h
4.7 Regeneration Areas Policy 2c, d

BUILDING
2.2.1 Downtown Policy 1e
2.4 Bringing the City Together: a progressive agenda for transportation Policy 6
3.1.2 Built Form Policy 1, 2, 3, 5b, c, d, f, 6
4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods Policy 2 f, g, h, 3
4.5 Mixed Used Areas Policy 2k

UNIT
2.2.2 Centres 2e
3.2.1 Housing Policy 9a
4.2 Apartment Neighbourhoods Policy 2h

Children play and socialize independently in a Toronto neighbourhood formerly called the Ward circa 1922-1920.
4.4 IMAGE CREDITS

Note: images not listed here belong to the City of Toronto.

INTRODUCTION
P. 1 Kid draws, Project Team
P. 5 Mural on a condominium building, Jake Tobin Garrett
P. 6 Water Guardians, Nicola Bentts
P. 7 Elizabeth Street Playground, Toronto Archives
P. 7 Tower in the park, Jesse Collin Jackson
P. 9 Separated bicycle lanes, Jennifer Hyland
P.12 Playground, Monstrum

NEIGHBOURHOOD
P. 14 Neighbourhood cover page, Hans Kylberg
P. 17 Midtown loop, Public Work
P.17 Bicycle wheel channel, Steven Vance
P.17 Bike playground, Cascade Bicycle Club
P.18 TO Core Playground Map, Public Work
P.18 Water St. and Whitehall St., New York City Department of Transportation
P.19 Southeast False Creek, PWL Partnership
P.19 Underpass Park, Nicola Betts
P.19 Park an der Marienburger, Kamila Crigo
P. 20 Child care in Tokyo, Tezuka Architects
P. 20 Bayside child care, Tridel
P.21 Bergamot child care plan view, Hilditch Architects
P.21 Bergamot child care photo, Hilditch Architects
P.22 North Toronto Collegiate, CS&P Architects
P.22 Playground, Trust for Public Land
P.23 Seniors/child care, Bernard Weil/Toronto Star via Getty Images
P.23 North Toronto Collegiate interior, CS&P Architects
P. 24 St. Lawrence Market, DTAH
P.24 297 College, Condos.ca
P.25 Giraffe Child Care Centre, Philippe Ruault
P.25 Harbourfront Pond, Agropur Cooperative
P.25 Harbourfront rink, Opérations Canada
P.25 Skateboard park, SNE Architects
P.26 Tumbling Bay, David Grandge
P.26 Community Food Centre, Community Food Centre
P. 27 ‘I LIVE IN THE CITY’, Rafi Ghanaghouian

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P.28 Via Verde, David Sundberg/ Esto
P.30 150 Dan Leckie Way, Maris Mezulis
P.31 T3 Building, Blaine Brownell
P.32 Community Food Centre, The Table
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P.33 Craft room, The Daniels Corporation
P.33 Rooftop community garden, David Sundberg/ Esto
P.34 150 Dan Leckie Way hallway, James Brittain
P.34 Indoor amenity, Dianna Snape
P.35 150 Dan Leckie Way lobby, James Brittain
P.35 230 Sackville St, Toronto Community Housing
P.37 Ramona building, Sally Painter Photo
P.38 POPS Playground, Public Work
P.39 Stroller Parking, Pluche Ukkel

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P.40 Akiyoshi residence, KOKO Architecture
P.42 Entrance, Elissa Crowe Photography
P.44 Seating nooks, IKEA.ca
P.45 Living space, Francis Dzikowski/ OTTO
P.45 Chocolate loft, Steven Evans
P.46 Quintana 4598, Federico Cairoli
P.46 Raised bed, Peter Bennett
P.47 Large outdoor space, Michael Moran
P.47 Private balcony, MKPL Architects PTE LTD
P.48 Movable wall, by Ikea & PKMN Architects
P.49 Unite d’Habitation, Michel Bonvin

APPENDIX
P.55 Ward Circa 1922-1920, Toronto Archives
P.57 Elizabeth Street and Louisa Street 1912, Arthur Goss, Toronto Archives
P.57 Elizabeth Street and Louisa Street 2015, Mary Anderson
P.58 Crowd of children at playground, Toronto Archives
The two photographs below were displayed in an exhibition at the City of Toronto Archives titled *From Streets to Playgrounds: representing children in early 20th century Toronto* (2016-2017).

The photograph on the left, taken in 1912 by photographer Arthur Goss, shows Toronto at the south-west corner of Elizabeth Street and Louisa Street. Goss was commissioned by the Public Health and Public Works Departments. It captured independent children playing in Toronto’s public realm - a neighbourhood formerly known as “The Ward”. Toronto’s Playground Movement emerged around this time to better address the social and physical needs of local children.

Corktown Commons in Toronto’s new West Don Lands neighbourhood. This master planned neighbourhood demonstrated up-front planning for children. New development was built alongside generous public investments in Parks, public art, transit, streets, a YMCA and social housing.

The photograph on the right, taken in 2015 by Toronto artist Mary Anderson, is a re-shoot of the photo of the left. Local children assisted the artist in recreating the image from 1912. The image shows that the city has been built up (City Hall now sits on the block to the south), but the children remain idle as play space and amenities for children have not kept up with the growth of the city. Their calm stare is a reminder that the needs of all residents should be addressed in city building.
Growing Up planning for children in new vertical communities

'Toronto Together' Planning a Great City Together

'Crowd of Children at Playground' at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds in Toronto, 1938
150 Dan Leckie Way
CityPlace, Downtown, Toronto

What makes these units work for children and youth?

- Large 2 storey units with multiple bedrooms and flexible space.
- The large units span the building which allows for light and air from both sides, promoting natural ventilation.
- A variety of apartment configurations suit multiple household types.
- Multiple units are connected to a wide corridor that is day-lit and functions as an informal social space.
- At grade entrances for the lower units.
- Generous entrance area with large closet and room for a stroller.

This building was designed with large families in mind. Through its use of two storey units, a more efficient layout was achieved by eliminating the need for corridors on every floor. The building’s overall features are described in the case study at the building scale.

The colours on the unit plans correspond to the colours on the building section. The first three levels are ground-oriented units. The third level units have direct access to the podium rooftop courtyard play area.

The corridors occur on the 4th, 7th and 10th level. The corridor on the 7th level, serves three levels of units, which results in activity and social interaction. This promotes a sense of community as people take ownership of the space outside of their front door. The wide corridor also functions as flexible play space and has access to exterior light.

The view of the north elevation shows the wide 7th level corridor. It is expressed as an animated, orange element which is legible at an urban scale.
In the three bedroom unit (145.3m²), flexible spaces can be tailored to resident’s needs. The powder room and large utility room off the kitchen provides extra storage and a generously sized area for laundry.

On each floor plate, a repeating pattern of one, two, and three bedroom units makes this floor plate desirable for flexibility. A connected covered walkway provides shelter from the weather and a place for residents to interact.

Shared terraces on each floor plate allows neighbours to socialize and offers additional space for children to play.

In the two bedroom unit (100.3 m²) areas are separated from living areas with a large storage closet. A generously sized balcony allows an extension of the living space.

• Private and public outdoor spaces on each floor maximize opportunities for playing and socializing.
• Generously sized 1 - 3 bedrooms.
• Large storage spaces.
• Extra flexible space built into unit.
• Separation of bedrooms from living areas to ensure privacy.
• Family rooms oriented to maximize light and be comfortable for long periods of time.
• Building facades include sunshades that allows users to control the amount of sun penetration.

PROJECT INFORMATION
Address: 107 Clementi Road
Developer: National University of Singapore
Architect: MKPL Architects PTE LTD
Year Completed: 2012
Built Form Typology: two 25-storey towers

UNIT BREAKDOWN
Total units: 916

In 2007, the National University of Singapore held a design competition in order to develop a building for a ‘Global Village’. The building houses faculty members and their families and is intended to promote a sense of community.

The unit sizes vary from studio to 3-bedroom to accommodate a range of household types. Each apartment includes a storage room, which is important for families with children and youth. Flexible space is available in the 3 bedroom units, which can be used as a playroom for children, a work space for youth, or as an extra storage space.

A private balcony in each unit creates an extension of the living space. The perforated facade of the building encloses each private balcony, acting as a visual safety net for children. In addition to private balconies, communal, shared terrace is located on each floor, promoting interaction between residents and providing extra play space for children outside the home.

The unit layout on each floor promotes flexibility over time: one and two bedroom units are adjacent to each other which allows for expansion and amalgamation of the units to accommodate a family’s changing needs. It also provides the opportunity for care-givers or multi-generations of the family to live nearby in a separate unit.

The building introduces innovative design strategies where residents can rent and use the many different spaces at Kent Vale for activities like baby play groups, weekly coffee meet ups and cooking classes. The building also includes multi-purpose rooms and a swimming pool. Other amenities are located nearby such as a pre-school, supermarket, playground and garden.

What makes these units work for children and youth?

In the three bedroom unit (145.3m²), flexible spaces can be tailored to resident’s needs. The powder room and large utility room off the kitchen provides extra storage and a generously sized area for laundry.

Extra flexible space provides room for many functions including a quiet study area for youth or parents.

The private balcony is an extension of the living room. The movable perforated metal screen incorporated into the building facade provides safety and the ability to control sun penetration into the unit.
Generous Balconies

What makes this unit element work for children & youth?

- Large enough to function as an outdoor room.
- Extension of living space / play space.
- Safe and convenient access to fresh air and to a room outside the unit.
- Semi-temperate spaces that visually enclose the balcony for safety.
- Introduction of plants for ecological awareness and education.
- Visibility between play areas and living spaces to allow for informal supervision.

Space Efficiency

What makes this unit element work for children & youth?

- The full potential of a residential unit can be enjoyed through creative solutions to space planning.
- Maximize vertical space to accommodate more storage.
- Millwork can be used as flexible room dividers.
- Storage can have multi functions such as tables, counters or stairs.
- Different levels can provide play areas and spaces for children.
- Built-in furniture can perform dual functions (i.e. bed and storage, bed and desk, bed and play area, etc.)
What makes this building work for children and youth?

- Large private terraces provide outdoor play space that can be supervised from inside the unit.
- Shared semi-secure outdoor space that is a safe distance from the home.
- Access to landscaped open space on different floors provides a variety of play options within the building.
- Nearly 3/4 of the units contain two bedrooms or more, creating a critical mass of families and a sense of community.

Each unit includes a generous terrace that can be supervised from inside the unit.

The first residential tall building constructed in Paris since the 1970s, Bâtiment Home is designed as a response to the need for new vertical housing. The spiral design of the building which creates the impression of rotating floors works to create a wide range of unit types and sizes usually not associated with tall residential buildings.

The complex is made up of a four-storey base with two towers extending on opposite ends of the base. The roof of the base building which functions as a courtyard can be accessed by residents in the adjacent units. Furthermore, the building includes a 1:1 ratio of both market units for ownership and social housing.

This distinct and playful design maximizes light penetration into every floor, provides opportunities for larger corner units and allows access to the outdoors directly off every unit. The generously sized private terraces measure between 20 m² and 30 m² and provides care givers the opportunity to supervise from within the unit and while providing children with their first experience of independence.

Youth, meanwhile, have a separate, safe place to socialize within the building.

The unique unit layouts and terraces provide each households with a sense of individual identity which instils pride and greater feelings of “ownership”. The combination of the larger shared outdoor spaces, the variety of unit layouts including one, two, three and four bedroom options, large private terraces and tenure options help to accommodate the diverse needs of households including those with children.

Large private terraces provide direct contact with the outdoors. Each terrace shape is unique.

The ground floor and rooftop offers flexible play and social space at different levels for all ages. (note: rooftop green spaces are private for units building ontothem).

A mix of 2, 3 & 4 bedroom units offer greater flexibility for family sizes and lifestyles.
What makes this building work for children and youth?

- Amenity areas are centrally located and overlook the rooftop play area, enabling informal supervision of children while caregivers do laundry or other activities.
- The amenity areas include a community room, games room, laundry room, kitchen and community hall.
- Residents have access to a rooftop community garden.
- Child-friendly wayfinding.
- Arts organizations located at grade that engage the community.

This development is located in the CityPlace community and was designed for large families. The building’s large, multi-level units are stacked to avoid corridors on every floor (see the unit scale case study). The neighbourhood is well connected to a supermarket, restaurants, parks and the new Fort York Library, where there is access to the Bathurst streetcar. A school and community centre will be built nearby.

The base building forms a courtyard around a 3rd level rooftop amenity. This is the social heart of the building where children can play while they are supervised by caregivers in adjacent amenity spaces. The units located on the 3rd level have direct access from their unit onto the rooftop which contributes to informal supervision.

The ground floor features commercial space dedicated to non-profit arts groups like the Jumblies Theatre. This group is well located to engage with youth in the building through collaborations with professional artists. Jumblies expands where art happens, who gets to be part of it and which stories it tells.

Many sustainable building elements were incorporated, some of which are visible and provide learning opportunities for children. Over 50% of the roof area is a green roof or raised garden. This allows children to learn that green roofs absorb stormwater and help keep the surrounding environment cool by reducing the heat island effect. The rooftop community garden also teaches environmental stewardship. The building includes access to 10 vehicle spaces dedicated to a local car share company, which reduces dependancy on private vehicles.

This project was developed for Toronto Community Housing, a social housing provider that is leading the development of innovative buildings designed for families.
The child care’s outdoor play space is adjacent to the indoor play space. The large overhanging canopy provides shade and spatially defines the daycare element that lines the east side of the building.

This new residential community is located on the former Stelco lands, east of Humber Bay Shores and west of High Park. A child care facility was secured through the planning process. The child care has been integrated in the base of the building to serve the residents of this new development, as well as the larger community. Its convenient location is an amenity for all residents. The site is located on the 501 Queen streetcar line.

The two towers are organized to create a comfortable internal amenity courtyard that includes a pool and tennis court. The extensive use of glass allows children, youth and their caregivers to use different areas of the amenity block while still being visible to each other. The amenities are organized along a glass pavilion which links the two towers. The glass link connecting the two towers creates an informal social space with furniture and views to the outdoor amenity spaces.

The Windermere Early Learning Centre was secured through a Section 37 agreement. It is a non-profit, licensed child care that has the capacity for 52 children aged from 0 to 4 years. Roughly 50% of the children in the child care live in this development and are given enrollment priority. The child care has access to the building’s amenities. Currently the child care uses the theatre and the tennis courts during the daytime, off peak hours. Care-givers have access to visitor parking below grade for convenient pick-up and drop-off.

The glass link is foregrounded by a POPS that allows for additional casual social gathering. The link is used as a pedestrian connection to the child care in the east tower. Throughout the development three public art works were installed as place-making elements. The works are playful, respond to younger audiences and were secured through the Percent for Public Art Program.

What makes this building work for children & youth?

- Child care integrated into the base of a residential building.
- Building’s common amenities are shared with the child care.
- Access to 501 Queen streetcar.
- Access to open spaces such as High Park; the western waterfront and beaches; and Sunnyside off-road bicycle park.
- Public art functions as place-making element.
What makes this building work for children and youth?

- The building incorporates a public school and a community center on the ground floor.
- Over half of the units are 3-bedroom.
- Common areas are located on all residential floors, which include laundry and a lounge area.
- Large courtyard includes a playground and bicycle storage.

The Ramona is an example of a modestly-scaled building that vertically integrates community spaces. It is well located in the Pearl district of Portland and has a walk score of 92 because it is close to public transit, parks, retail, and recreation trails. The building was designed to accommodate families and youth occupy the units, the property managers instituted a policy which prohibits renting units to groups of students and has requirements for a minimum and maximum number of residents per apartment.

On the ground floor, the elementary school overlooks the residential courtyard, which helps to facilitate a sense of community between both uses. The school is also adjacent to a public community center, creating areas specifically for children within the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the adjacency of community facilities makes the daily routine more convenient for families in the Ramona.

The upper floors contain shared laundry rooms which are centrally located and have windows overlooking the courtyard below. Lounges are strategically located adjacent to the laundry rooms to encourage neighbour interaction and a place for children to socialize while caregivers do laundry.

To provide a welcoming play space for young children, there is a 700 m2 landscaped inner courtyard designed specifically for toddlers and pre-school age children. Benches and seat walls provide seating for parents and caregivers within sight of the play equipment. The walkways are wide enough for two tricycles to pass an adult. The seat walls create a physical enclosure for the play space which contributes to a sense of safety.

PROJECT INFORMATION
Address: 1550 NW 14th Avenue
Developer: Turtle Island Development
Architect: Ankrom Moisan Associated Architects
Year Completed: 2011
Built Form Typology: Six-storey mid-rise with a courtyard

UNIT BREAKDOWN
Total units: 138 affordable apartments
3 BDR: 51%
2 BDR: 43%
1 BDR: 3%
STUDIO: 3%

Ramona Apartments
Portland, USA
River & Warren
New York City, USA

What makes this building work for children and youth?

- A variety of amenities are vertically integrated into the building.
- The lobby connects directly to Teardrop Park and Rockefeller Park.
- The private rooftop space includes a play area, entertainment area and outdoor kitchen.
- Residents have access to extra storage and a bike room.
- Most units have two or more bedrooms.

PROJECT INFORMATION
Address: 212 Warren Street
Developer: Centurion Real Estate Partners and Five Mile Capital Partners
Architect: CetraRuddy
Year Completed: 2001, renovated in 2014
Built Form Typology: 28 storey tower

UNIT BREAKDOWN
Total units: 168

- 2 BDR: 19%
- 3 BDR: 19%
- 4 BDR: 10%
- 5 BDR: 6%
- 1 BDR: 6%
- 2 BDR: 10%
- 2+ Bedrooms

River and Warren is a newly renovated development located on the Hudson River Waterfront and in the heart of Battery Park City, a predominantly residential planned community in downtown Manhattan.

Of the 168 spacious units, a majority contain two, three and four bedrooms, which are suitable to a variety of household sizes. To facilitate a healthy lifestyle, there is a large fitness center spanning two floors. A number of fitness rooms have views out to the river and support many different types of activity such as a strength training studio, cardio conditioning area and glass-encased yoga room. In addition to the generous amount of storage built into the units, additional storage space and a bike room is accessible to residents within the building.

The lobby opens up to Battery Park on the harbour side of the building and to Teardrop Park on the other side, providing 36 acres of outdoor space that can be supervised from lower level units. Residences also have access to a shared rooftop space on the 18th floor, equipped with a green lawn, a grill for cooking and cabanas for dining or socializing.

In recognition of its proximity to the water, River & Warren has a nautical themed playroom with an interactive lighthouse. The walls are graphic and include magnetic and dry-erase surfaces to encourage creativity on days spent indoors.
The conifer garden provides an open space that is green all year. The garden creates a sense of enclosure, providing youth with a private area to socialize.

The central courtyard is the main outdoor feature of Via Verde. It provides a generous space where residents can play and socialize.

The building massing is organized to frame the shared indoor and outdoor common spaces.

Includes green roofs for community gardening and education.

The interior courtyard include a variety of gated play spaces.

Purpose-built community space is integrated into the ground floor which accommodates a medical clinic.

 Built on a former 1.5 acre brown-field site in the Bronx, Via Verde is a new approach to green, healthy, urban living. The project focuses on providing housing that is affordable, sustainable and replicable.

The city-initiated project sought a team of developers and architects to combine sustainable building practices with high-quality architecture to create a “beacon” that would challenge established ideas about social housing.

The development serves a range of income levels by providing 151 units for low-income households and 71 co-op units for middle income families. The diverse unit options include live-work units that are accessible to the public from the street.

The depth of the building is shallower than typical to enable units to have exposure to the outside from two sides. This allows for cross ventilation and reducing dependency on air conditioning.

The 20-storey tower element at the corner terraces down to a lower base building which forms the courtyard. Rainwater makes its way down the terraces and is harvested by the green roofs. The community gardens on the wide side form a more structured outdoor area. The remainder of the greenspace is flexible to accommodate a variety of play.
The Giraffe Child Care Centre
Boulogne-Billancourt, France

What makes this centre appeal to children & youth?

- Playgrounds Integrated in Health Care Facility: Outdoor playgrounds are located on each floor of the child care facility and nursery.
- Engaging and Playful Design: Large-scale animal elements add interest to an institutional building within a dense urban environment.
- Sustainability and Educational Value: The building was awarded the Net Zero Energy label, and allows children to learn about, and be exposed to an energy efficient building.

Located in the Seguin Rives de Seine district in Boulogne-Billancourt, a suburban area of Paris, the Giraffe Child Care Centre is a nexus of family activity, providing a day nursery and healthcare centre. The playful design appeals to children and attempts to make the health care experience less intimidating. The green space along the side of the building is open to the public, which further attracts neighborhood children to the site.

The facility is known for its large-scale animal figures. The giant yellow giraffe pokes its neck through the building and became a local landmark. In addition to the giraffe, a family of animals populate the facility and contribute to the narrative of the building: a polar bear peeks over the side of the building while ladybirds fly on the walls.

The idea is to animate the urban landscape in a whimsical way by provoking a child’s imagination. The building exterior is made of white corrugated iron, providing a neutral backdrop for the animal figures. Each of the building’s setbacks creates spacious, sunny, south-facing outdoor playgrounds that maintains continuity with the interior space.

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Once an industrial waterfront, Hammarby Sjöstad has developed into a vibrant mixed-use community. It has become an international model for sustainable urban design, known as the Hammarby Model. Initial surveys and forecasts anticipated that the majority of residents would be over 50 years old, however, many young families with children moved in.

The families in Hammarby Sjöstad were attracted to its safe, relatively car-free mobility network. Children have to cross very few streets with cars on their way to school. A network of pedestrian and cycling paths link open spaces and key destinations. A tram line was built along the central road in Hammarby Sjöstad to provide the primary transit spine in the district. It offers a convenient connection to the subway, bus and commuter rail lines. Ferries as well as bicycle and car-sharing options help to further reduce the use of private vehicles.

Access to high-quality outdoor space is paramount to healthy childhood development. Hammarby Sjöstad offers many opportunities for imaginative play and contact with nature. Courtyards and balconies are a prevailing architectural elements. Overhanging balconies provide outdoor space, views of nature, encourage social interaction and enable the supervision of children playing outside.

Hammarby Sjöstad is lauded for its holistic approach to infrastructure, energy, waste and water, all of which are visible and attractive, and made of durable, attractive materials. The ecological design in the public realm allows children to develop an early understanding of sustainable technologies. The community vision sets out qualitative goals that prioritize personal and social wellbeing. Its guiding principles strive to “elevate people’s mood” and create a livable community which co-exists seamlessly with nature.

What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?

- Green Space: Formal and naturalized parks, plazas, shared gardens, canal walkways, pedestrian bridges, waterfront trails, wooded areas with trails and splash pads.
- Traffic Safety: Car-free zones, traffic-calming, connections to high-quality cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure and public transportation.
- Community Amenities and Education: Schools, preschool, nursery, library sports centre and Stockholm’s only Fryshuset - one of the largest youth centres in the world.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Location: Stockholm, Sweden - brownfield development south of the city centre

Development team: Jan Inge-Hagström designed the masterplan. Over 30 developers including JM, Skanska, Family Housing, Swedish Housing, HSB, SKB and Borått. Over 29 architectural firms including White Architects, Nyréns Architect Firm and Erséus

Year Completed: 1996 - ongoing

Built Form Typology: Mid-rise, up to 8 storeys, townhouses

Land use: mixed-use including office, retail, commercial, institutional, cultural and light industrial

BREAKDOWN

17,000-24,000 residents in 11,000 units
250,000 m2 commercial / light industrial
Total Area: 160 hectares

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Harbourfront Neighbourhood Centre
Harbourfront, Downtown Waterfront, Toronto

What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?

- Community Hub: Child care, school and community centre uses are vertically integrated and share space.
- Outdoor Focus: High-quality, safe outdoor play space and adjacency to a waterfront recreational trail.
- Flexible Design: Interior spaces designed as flexible space for youth to socialize. Programming makes full use of building spaces for different users throughout the day.

The building was designed to be a flexible social space and encourage users to rest and socialize in the central amphitheater area overlooking the gymnasium. This daylit area is in the central atrium which enables passive surveillance by staff and volunteers.

Aerial of the waterfront area with the centre and outdoor play fields in red outline.

Circulation space was designed with generous proportions to encourage interaction through informal seating and socialization.

The community centre entrance is on the left, the school entrance is on the right, at the top of the ramp. This grading strategy allows easy access to a use on the second floor.

The building brings together many community uses into one shared facility with common spaces like the gym used by different groups according to their operating hours. The building is integrated by locating the community centre and childcare on the main floor, and schools on the upper levels. The centre maximizes community use and access to the facility is available seven days a week in the daytime and evenings.

The centre was designed to appeal to teens with an outdoor basketball court serving as the forecourt to the facility. The centre has a culinary focus and offers a food kiosk and a community teaching kitchen. Other shared community facilities include change rooms, a weight room, dance and aerobic studios, multi-purpose rooms, and a youth room. The centre is often used for performances, art exhibitions, sports events and other local activities.

The school is located on the upper two levels. The entrance at the second floor is located at the top of a wide walkway which gradually slopes up from the public sidewalk. The Waterfront Public School was designed for students from junior kindergarten through to grade 8. Since that time the facility is now shared with the City High School. The larger gathering spaces such as the lunchroom were located on the second floor to facilitate shared use by the school communities.

The Waterfront Neighbourhood Centre (Formerly Harbourfront Community Centre) is a non-profit centre run by the City of Toronto, and supported by a volunteer board of community members.
Lee Centre  
Scarborough Centre, Toronto

What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?

- **Open Space:** The development frames a public park that focuses on children’s play equipment.
- **Public Art:** The play equipment was made possible through the public art program and was designed by artists.

![Public art play structure by Dan Young & Christian Giroux “Reticulated Gambol”. The project uses CSA-certified playground equipment arranged on a symmetrical 12m grid.](image)

The Lee Centre is a neighborhood of six residential tall buildings organized around a central public park, Lee Centre Park, and ringed by a new public road. This neighborhood is in Scarborough Centre, in the McCowan Precinct, near Bellamy Road and Progress Avenue. Although the site is next to the 401 Expressway, the building massing was used to buffer the neighborhood and support a comfortable central open space for children.

Lee Centre Park is programmed with a splash pad and a play structure that is both a jungle gym and contemporary artwork. This is the first example in Toronto where the Public Art Program was used to create a play structure in a public park. The artists and the landscape architects worked collaboratively to develop a functional and interactive play space. The artwork’s rigid grid system sets it apart from the multi-coloured, asymmetrical elements found in the rest of the playground.

![The public art play structure was sited to anchor the east end of the Lee Centre Park.](image)

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

- **Address:** 1, 8, 11, 18, 36 and 38 Lee Centre Drive
- **Developer:** Lee Developments Inc
- **Architects/Designers:** Various including: Zeidler Roberts Partnership Architects; Page + Steele Architects; Kirkor Architects & Planners; PMA Landscape Architects
- **Year Completed:** 2004

**BUILT FORM**

- **Six tall buildings, ranging in height between 21-34 storeys with at grade retail and townhouses**

**BREAKDOWN**

- **Total Units:** 1766, combination of 1 Bedroom, 1 Bedroom + Den, 2 Bedroom, and 2 Bedroom + Den

![Splash pad along the north end of the park.](image)

![An aerial view of the Lee Centre development, south of the 401 Expressway. The central park is well buffered from this major transportation corridor.](image)
The school base building lines the mid-block connection along the sports field. The height of the base building relates to the pedestrian scale and local context. The brick cladding and metal louvers help distinguish the school from the residential building.

The North Toronto Collegiate Institute’s former school building and site has been transformed to optimize the site in the Yonge and Eglinton area, one of the City’s Centres. The new school building is now integrated into the base of two new residential towers, freeing up the site for a new large sports field.

The design sought to re-fresh the site by making the best use of the site to create a generous open space in this dense community. The process involved extensive consultation with community stakeholders to determine the project vision before the TDSB found a development partner.

The school amenities are accessible to the community after school hours, including a theatre and classrooms. The entrance atrium was designed to be flexible: during the day it functions as an entrance, cafeteria and social space, while after-hours it can be used by the community as a venue for presentations or gathering.

The redevelopment was made possible through a public-private partnership that was funded by the development of the residential towers. Condominium units feature knockout panels between units for future flexibility.

The section on the left illustrates how the theatre’s volume slips below the tower massing. The section on the right shows the light-filled school courtyard.

Two towers sit on top of the school. A generous mid-block pedestrian connection provides access to Broadway Avenue and Roehampton Avenue.

A 600 seat theatre is available to the community as an after-hours amenity.

A Student Commons; B Theatre; C Courtyard; D Administration; E Music; F Drama; G Vocal; H Tower A; I Tower B; J Open to Below

The school entrance is combined with the cafeteria to create a social space that can be used after-hours by the community. The room overlooks and animates the street.

North Toronto Collegiate Institute & Residential Towers
Yonge-Eglinton Centre, North York, Toronto

What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?

- Vertical Integration: School is integrated into the base of the two residential towers.
- Shared Use: School amenities are available to the community outside of school hours.
- Access to Transit: Site is near the Eglinton subway station and future Eglinton LRT line.
- Running track is available as a community open space.
- Site provides mid-block connection for convenient pedestrian routes.

PROJECT INFORMATION
Address: 30 Roehampton Avenue & 17 Broadway Avenue
Developer: Tridel
Architects: CS&P Architects with Burke Architects
Year Completed: 2011
Built Form Typology: two towers on a four storey school facility

UNIT BREAKDOWN
Total Units: 538

2 BDR 38%
1 BDR 62%
The Parkway Forest redevelopment is an initiative to revitalize an existing community and add residential density, given its adjacency to the Don Mills subway station along the Sheppard Subway Line. The project retains and improves on the existing rental housing buildings, built during the 1960’s and 1970’s, and includes new rental replacement buildings in the form of towers, mid-rise buildings and Toronto Community Housing townhouses.

The plan seeks to balance change with the need to create a new complete community, while bringing new amenities to an existing community. This included front-ending the rental housing replacement; improving the connectivity of the area; incorporating public art; and planning new Community Services and Facilities: 4,928m2 community recreation centre with a 846m2 child care with 82 spaces, and an outdoor pool. The area also includes 804m2 of non-profit community agency space on the ground floor of a residential building along Sheppard Avenue.

The community has been organized by a new diagonal pedestrian walkway supported by public art as a visual and cultural anchor, as well as a wayfinding element. The art work, entitled “Four Seasons” by Douglas Coupland, was secured through the Percent For Public Art program. The pedestrian walkway encourages active transportation and is anchored by the Don Mills subway station at one end and the central park and community services at the heart of the neighbourhood. New development has been organized to respect and enhance the existing park-like character of the neighbourhood, with buildings that define the arterial edges and internal open spaces.

What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?

- Community Services: community recreation centre, child care facility, centrally located school and park.
- Access to Transit: Neighbourhood is adjacent to a subway station. Clear and convenient pedestrian routes connect to the subway station.
- Public Realm: Public art as placemaking and wayfinding element.
- Non-profit community agency space in grade-related retail space.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Address: Sheppard Avenue East at Don Mills Subway Station
Developer: EI AD Group
Architects: WZMH Architect (new residential and replacement rental), Diamond Schmitt Architects (community centre and child care)
Year Completed: 2007 - on going
Built Form Typology: Existing > 6 to 17-storey buildings and townhouses
New > 9 towers (25 to 36-stories), 6-storey mid-rise and townhouses

UNIT BREAKDOWN

Total units: 4,344 new units (of which 2,791 are new condominium units); retention & improvement of 1221 units of rental housing; replacement of 322 rental units that were demolished.
**Paris Rive Gauche**

**Paris, France**

**What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?**

- **Traffic Safety:** Cyclist and pedestrian infrastructure is separated from public transportation.
- **Community Amenities and Education:** Schools, university, library, gyms, pool and other cultural and community amenities.
- **Green Space:** 10 hectares of green space, greenways, pedestrian pathways, parks, plazas, bridges.
- **Public Transportation:** Access to many modes including Metro, RER (regional commuter rail), bus and tram.

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Location:** New mixed-use neighbourhood, 13th arrondissement, Left Bank of Paris

**Developer:** SEMAPA

**Architect:** Various, including Jean Nouvel, Christian de Portzamparc, Ateliers Lion & Associates, Bruno Fortier, Jean-Thierry Bloch, Paul Andreu, Comte Vollenweider Architectes, Hamonic + Masson & Associés

**Landscape Architect:** Various, including Thierry Huau, Jean-Claude Hardy

**Year Completed:** 1994 - ongoing

**Built Form Typology:**

- 15,000+ residents
- 7,500+ residential units (6,000 family housing, 1,500 student housing)
- Total Area: 130 hectares

**BREAKDOWN**

- Total Area: 130 hectares
- Housing, 1,500 student housing)
- 7,500+ residential units (6,000 family
- 15,000+ residents

**Plan Information**

**Context Plan**

- Project Boundary
- Public Transportation
- Child Care/ Schools
- Community Centre/Culture/Library
- Parks/Open Space

**Public Transportation**

- Proximity to Paris & Open Green Space
- Proximity to Child Care/School
- Proximity to Public Transit
- Proximity to Shops/Services
- Proximity to Community Centre
- Active Transportation (Safety)

The Avenue de France, a central transportation spine, spans the length of Paris Rive Gauche. Buses and cycle tracks are separated by a planted median strip, providing safety across multiple modes of transportation. Wide sidewalks on the pedestrian promenade make it easy for families with children to access shops and services.

Los Doctos, Cité de le Mode et du Design is a cultural venue for education, exhibitions, conventions, workshops, restaurants, recreation, and events. Its mix of programming makes it an entertainment destination for children, youth, and adults alike. The Museum Art Ludique hosts exhibitions directed to children and youth on animation, manga, video games and cartoons.

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On a former industrial site, bordering the Seine River, Paris Rive Gauche is the largest development undertaken in Paris since the 19th century. The entire community spans across an active rail corridor. On average, families in the community live no more than 200 metres from a garden, while still benefiting from the activities and amenities offered in dense urban spaces.

The neighbourhood is divided into four quarters, each composed of housing, offices, shops, services and amenities. Close proximity to this rich mix of uses, as well as access to child care, schools, parks and playgrounds, ensures that the everyday needs of families are met within walking distance of their home. This high level of convenience and walkability makes the neighbourhood especially supportive to families with children. The district includes 10 hectares of green space including a number of large public parks, including the Jardin des Plantes (botanical gardens). Linear pedestrian corridors, such as the centrally located Promenade Claude Lévi Strauss and the waterfront Port de la Gare, provide connections between destinations and offer pleasant outdoor leisure space.

Paris Rive Gauche is well-connected to the Paris transit system: the Paris subway, RER and bus and tram lines run through the neighbourhood. Dedicated cycle tracks, bridges and tree-lined walkways offer safe and convenient options for families that encourage active transportation which contributes to physical well being.

This Jardins Grands Moulini Abbe Pierre contains a number of distinct green spaces. The Garden of The Avenue de France is a destination for teenagers, with sports fields, ping-pong, and a large, tree-lined lawn facing the Seine. Next to the university, the Central Garden boasts terraced meadows, a market square, and a footbridge over the garden that offers panoramic views of the city. The Garden of Schuat, located close to a public school, offers play and rest areas for children of many ages. Its “insect hotels” are also popular attractions for families.
Schoolyard to Playground Initiative
New York, USA

Why is this program important for children & youth?

- New Open Spaces: Creates public space for community activities and makes immediate, visible changes across the city.
- Educational Value: Design teaches children skills in planning initiatives, urban design, public engagement and democratic processes.
- Healthy, Sustainable Living: Initiative achieved former Mayor Bloomberg’s goal of increasing the number of residents living a short walk from a park, and ensured playground amenities met neighbourhood needs.

In 2007, former Mayor Bloomberg launched the Schoolyards to Playgrounds Program with 290 schools across New York City. The program renovated hundreds of schoolyards that were underused or in a state of disrepair and made them open to the public outside of school hours to make more efficient use of limited resources.

The nonprofit Trust for Public Land led the transformation of these spaces through capital investments including play equipment, painted sports surfaces, trees, and benches. The majority of the schoolyard transformations were located in Brooklyn and Queens, the two boroughs with the highest need for new playgrounds. The initiative helped advance the Mayor’s goal of ensuring every New Yorker lives within a 10-minute walk from a park, and ensured playground amenities met neighbourhood needs.

The initiative sought to rethink underused local urban resources by repurposing tired schoolyards. The redesigned spaces benefited local residents within a short period of time. Community consultation helped identify specific needs and design directions for each schoolyard. Surface parking and asphalt play areas were redesigned to incorporate urban furniture and amenities such as painted games, sports courts, benches, gazebos, trees, gardens and play equipment.

Dense urban environments often need more publicly accessible open space. The creation of partnerships to enable access to open space is key to optimizing limited resources in communities. Participatory design can help communities rethink their own environments to rejuvenate their neighborhoods for everyone’s benefit.

PROJECT INFORMATION
Developer: Trust for Public Land
Year Completed: 2007-2013
Built Form Typology:
Privately owned, publicly-accessible open space

BREAKDOWN
290 school playgrounds city-wide
Total budget: $117.2M (221 schools)
Southeast False Creek
Vancouver, Canada

What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?

- Family Housing: Policy focus on housing to attract families.
- Community Amenities: Full-size community center, child care facilities, schools and an interfaith centre.
- Green Space: 10+ hectares of park, natural habitat, playgrounds, urban agriculture and a continuous waterfront multi-use path.
- Transit: Proximity to bus routes and SkyTrain, future plans for new bus routes and ferry dock, link to the seawall multi-use trail that encourages active transportation.

PROJECT INFORMATION
Location: Downtown Vancouver
Developer: Various, including Millennium Development Group
Design team: Various, including VIA Architecture (master plan), PWL Partnership (landscape architect)
Year Completed: 2010 - ongoing
Built Form Typology: Tall buildings up to 24 stores, mid-rise up to 11 stores, townhouses

BREAKDOWN
11,000 residents, 16,000 by 2020
5,000 residential units by 2020
Total Area: 32 hectares, 56 ha by 2020

Originally built to house athletes during the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, the Olympic Village accommodations have been transformed into a mixed-use residential community. A key objective of the master plan was to build a neighbourhood where families could access outdoor recreation, community centers, transit, and jobs. In addition to being a model for sustainable development, Southeast False Creek (SEFC) accommodates a healthy social mix of residents, including many families.

The Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan included objectives to develop a variety of residential uses that accommodate households of all income levels. The plan prioritizes family housing and targets a household mix that includes 25-35% family households. The neighbourhood has several affordable and social housing buildings, as well as modest market income housing, supportive permanent housing and co-op housing. The Plan implements Vancouver’s High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines and the Family Rezoning Policy by providing a range of affordable housing choices, encouraging child care facilities, and targeting a percentage of units that are suitable to families. Social and community-oriented policies for families with children and youth encourage child-friendly design to “ensure children have a safe, supportive and stimulating place to learn, experience and grow.” For example, parks are intended to support active and passive recreation for all age groups and incorporate barrier-free design to improve accessibility.

Families living in the area enjoy proximity to the linear seawall along the waterfront, which is punctuated by a series of parks and open spaces. Allotment gardens, rainwater wetlands, bioswales and a habitat island support nature play and provide opportunities for environmental education.

The award-winning parks along the SEFC waterfront provide continuous play spaces including: soft and hardscaped surfaces, elevation changes, open lawns, shrubs and tree canopies, logs, boulders and blocks for sitting and climbing and public art.

Southeast False Creek (SEFC) was designed to accommodate active transportation by providing safe routes and easy connections to surrounding amenities. Its circulation network links with the seawall, a 28 km multi-use path along Vancouver’s waterfront. SEFC’s streetscapes draw on the shared street (woonerf) concepts, which use paving, landscaping, and traffic calming measures to increase safety and create places for children to play. This contributes to the ability for children and youth to move around their neighbourhood independently and use modes that contribute to healthy lifestyles.

Hinge Park was designed with both active and passive play areas for children. The design combines references to former industrial uses with natural features to create a memorable place that attracts and accommodates people of all ages.

Landscaped courtyards offer a variety of outdoor programming, including childcare play areas, rain gardens and urban agricultural gardens. Courtyards offer enclosed places for children to play while supervised from the surrounding units above.
What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?

- **Community Services:** All neighbourhood amenities were phased into the development to ensure equitable access to child care, school and a community centre.
- **Vertical Integration:** Most residential buildings are mixed-use, ensuring convenient access to local services.
- **Public Realm:** Nearly half of the development is devoted to streets and open space. The linear park frames the neighbourhood and provides high-quality, safe outdoor play space.

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Address:** Between Yonge Street and Parliament, south of Front Street  
**Architects:** Various including Irving Grossman, Jerome Markson; Zeidler Partnership Roger du Toit Architects; George Baird and Barry Sampson; Matsui, Baer, Canstone; Oleson Worland Architects; Quadrangle Architects; M. Spaziani.  
**Year Completed:** 1980  
**Built Form Typology:** low-rise and mid-rise up to 10-storeys

**BREAKDOWN**

A total of 4310 units were developed on a 23 hectare site (42% of the land is devoted to parks and public streets). The density is 2.3x (GFA/ total neighborhood site) with 535,000m2 of floor area.

The St-Lawrence neighbourhood remains one of Toronto’s best examples of a complete community. It was the first planned community to integrate community facilities within the base of residential buildings. The area was planned to ensure that community facilities were phased in as the area grew. This provided a focal point for the emerging community, ensuring that residents had access to community facilities in addition to a mix of uses, including schools, stores, restaurants and other services.

The community includes schools that were co-located, another first in Toronto. The Crombie Park Apartments and Downtown Alternative school is the best example: it combines residential, retail, two schools, a park and a recreational facility. The gymnasium and other school facilities are available to the community during off-hours. The playground, between Jarvis Street and George Street, was designed to appear as part of the linear public park, however, the lands adjacent to the school are private property. During school hours, the playground is used by the school community. During off hours it is used by the larger community because it is not fenced off and it appears public. The park is a major open space structuring element for the neighbourhood that helps to spatially define the community and provide it with an identity.

In The Shape of the City, 1993 former Toronto mayor John Sewell suggested that the new neighbourhood is a success because it: respects the urban grid; extends existing streets and creates new ones that reinforce the city’s pattern; and achieves high densities while maintaining traditional housing form and scale. To this day it remains of the most desirable neighbourhoods for families.
The building section demonstrates how the school, retail and residential uses are integrated and interlocked into one building.

The Crombie Park basketball court appeals to youth in the neighbourhood. The park is framed by buildings which allows for informal supervision.

This drawing illustrates how the linear park provides a spine of public open space to frame the neighbourhood. The playground in the foreground belongs to the school, but through its design, it appears to be a seamless part of the Crombie Park. This image demonstrates how the school’s playground is sunken a few steps below grade, but appears public.
Superkilen Park
Copenhagen, Denmark

How does this park accommodate children and youth?

- **Variety of Spaces**: The three colour zones support different activities and identities which enables children to navigate the area easily, facilitating their independent mobility.
- **Connects the Community**: Encourages active transportation and socialization.
- **Engaging and Playful Design**: The unique play structures provide neighbourhood identity and a sense of whimsy.

The Superkilen project is part of an urban revitalization plan undertaken by the City of Copenhagen in partnership with Realdania, a philanthropic organization. The linear park has made a strong impact on the neighbourhood by physically connecting a community through a gesture in the public realm. The design focuses on children and youth and included new play equipment such as swings, monkey bars, a boxing ring, slides, punching bags, skateboard ramps and an integrated cycling route running through the site. The project is conceptually divided into three zones:

**The Red Square**: This zone is designed for team sports and outdoor fitness activities. The square is brightly coloured in red, orange and pink and serves as an extension of the sporting and cultural facilities in Nørrebrohall. A large central space with a variety of gym equipment invites residents to meet for and through physical activity and games.

**The Black Market**: The market is a modern interpretation of the neighbourhood square and offers an intimate gathering space for the community. Youth are attracted to the multiple amenities that are located away from the main street, including benches and barbecue facilities, backgammon and chess tables, and the Japanese octopus playground. The Black Market is an urban living room for the dense neighbourhood.

**The Green Park**: The park landscape offers slopes, play areas, picnic areas and sports fields. Its soft green hills appeal to children, youth, and families. The park unites the neighbourhood and celebrates the multicultural diversity of area residents through site elements inspired by their cultures. By interacting with these play elements, children are exposed to the variety of cultures that live in their community.

**PROJECT INFORMATION**

**Location**: Nørrebrogade 210, 2200 København, Denmark

**Developer**: City of Copenhagen, Realdania

**Architect**: BIG Architects and Superflex

**Landscape Architect**: Topotek 1

**Year Completed**: 2012

**Built Form Typology**: Linear public park

**BREAKDOWN**

- **800 metres long**
- **Total area: 30,000m²**
- The park serves Nørrebro which is Copenhagen’s densest city district at 18,000 people per km2.

The Superkilen Park is part of a larger redevelopment initiative to support this area that has seen a spike in population growth. Several local elementary schools and childcare centres are over-capacity due to its popularity with new families.

- Many objects in the park have been specially imported or based on designs that represent over 60 countries such as swings from Iraq and benches from Brazil.

The community is culturally diverse; 20% of area residents are newcomers. The park’s unique features celebrate this diversity and encourages social interaction.

**The Black Market**: The Black Market includes a Moroccan fountain which is one symbol of the area’s cultural diversity. More than 20 different ethnic groups are represented in the area.

**The Green Park**: The park landscape offers slopes, play areas, picnic areas and sports fields. Its soft green hills appeal to children, youth, and families.

**The Red Square**: This zone is designed for team sports and outdoor fitness activities. The square is brightly coloured in red, orange and pink and serves as an extension of the sporting and cultural facilities in Nørrebrohall. A large central space with a variety of gym equipment invites residents to meet for and through physical activity and games.

**How does this park accommodate children and youth?**

- **Organization**
  - The three colour zones provide different activities and identities for children.
  - The park is designed to facilitate independent mobility.

- **Socialization**
  - The park encourages active transportation.
  - There are multiple playgrounds for children to engage in social activities.

- **Playful Design**
  - The unique play structures provide a playful and engaging environment for children.
  - The park includes features such as swings, monkey bars, slides, and a boxing ring.

- **Community Connection**
  - The park connects the community through a linear design.
  - There are amenities such as benches and barbecue facilities.

- **Cultural Diversity**
  - The park features elements that represent cultural diversity from over 60 countries.
  - There are more than 20 different ethnic groups represented in the area.

- **Physical Activity**
  - The park includes gyms and fitness equipment.
  - The playgrounds are designed for physical activities.

**How is the park designed to connect with the community?**

- **Transportation**
  - The park is located near public transportation and community facilities.
  - The park is accessible by foot and bike.

- **Proximity**
  - Proximity to community centres, shops/services, public transit, parks/open space, childcare/schools, and Islamic centres/mosques.

- **Neighbourhoood**
  - The park serves the densest city district in Copenhagen.
  - The park is a popular place for children, young people, and families to meet for physical activities.

**How does the park accommodate different age groups?**

- **Children**
  - The park includes swings, monkey bars, slides, and a boxing ring.
  - There are multiple playgrounds for children.

- **Youth**
  - The park includes benches and barbecue facilities.
  - There are amenities for young people to socialize.

- **Families**
  - The park offers slopes, picnic areas, and sports fields.
  - Families can engage in physical activities together.

**How does the park support active transportation?**

- **Bicycles**
  - The park includes a cycling route running through the site.

- **Pedestrians**
  - The park is a popular place for physical activities.

- **Public Transportation**
  - Proximity to public transportation is highlighted.

**Superkilen Park is part of a larger redevelopment initiative to support this area that has seen a spike in population growth. Several local elementary schools and childcare centres are over-capacity due to its popularity with new families.**
Visage and Swiss Cottage Cultural Centre
London, England

What makes this neighbourhood work for children & youth?

- Public Realm: The complex has safe, well-used open spaces and is a destination for events, sports and a farmers’ market.
- Variety of Functions: The complex integrates a wide range of shopping, education and entertainment facilities within five minutes walk of new residential development.
- Special Education: The Swiss Cottage School provides special education for children aged 2 to 19 with learning, emotional, behavioral, and communication difficulties.

PROJECT INFORMATION

Location: Adelaide Road, Camden Town, London, UK
Developer: Various, including Barratt Homes West London Division, Dawnay, Day Properties Ltd, Housing Associations, Dominion Housing Group
Planners: Terry Farrell and Partners
Architect: Various, including Basil Spence Architects, Bennetts Associates, S&P Architects
Landscape Architect: Gustafson Porter
Year Completed: 2001-2007
Built Form Typology: Mid-rise up to 13 storeys

BREAKDOWN

130 residential units (25% affordable housing)
Total Area: 1.78 hectares

Through a public-private partnership, the London Borough of Camden led a mixed-use redevelopment to create a civic-cultural centre with multiple leisure facilities for the local community. The project optimized an existing block that was developed in the 1960s. The development of new residential units funded the refurbishment of an existing library and swimming pool as well as new amenities for the current and future residents. As a whole, the project brought together a range of community facilities to create a significant new indoor/outdoor civic-cultural centre in North London.

The Visage and Swiss Cottage complex integrates a library, pool, fitness centre, school, theatre, retail stores and a community park as well as a 13 storey mid-rise residential building. The development provides a diverse mix of amenities in a compact urban block with excellent access to public transportation, including the Swiss Cottage Underground Station and several bus routes.

The development has become a popular destination for the wider community: the fitness centre offers a wide range of recreational activities for children aged 2-19 years, in addition to family swim sessions. The interior design of the Children’s Library creates an adventurous place for children to explore.

Visage apartments are arranged around lift and stair cores with entrances on Winchester Road, resulting in small day-lit landings serving three to four apartments. Private apartments have balconies with views to the city, while each core has a larger communal roof terrace.

A community park is located at the heart of the complex which is anchored by the water feature. All other functions and uses are oriented to frame and front onto this open space.

The Public Art Plan by Modus Operandi includes the interior of the Children’s Library that was redesigned to encourage children to explore the world of knowledge. The contoured carpets reference maps, while the library’s activity areas incorporate trail designs.

The fitness centre attracts 55,000 visitors each month for gymnastics, trampoline, basketball, tennis and swimming classes. The climbing wall was designed to be visible from the exterior as part of the building facade, and is a featured element that creates a dynamic elevation for the building.

The open space is highly visible to the street, but its location allows it to be buffered from arterial traffic. On its north edge is a café in the adjacent theatre and on the south edge is spectator seating for the football pitch, along with cafes in the leisure and community centres which are popular and easily available to residents.
Adventure/Nature Play

What makes this neighbourhood element work for children & youth?

- Active outdoor play contributes immeasurably to children’s physical and mental health and to overall childhood development.
- Nature-based playgrounds have gained popularity for their capacity to inspire children’s imagination and foster environmental stewardship.
- Recent research from the University of British Columbia has shown adventure play areas that include elements of risk promote longer play times, as well as increased social interaction, creativity and resiliency.
- Unstructured play environments encourage children to take calculated risks, which develops their problem solving, coping, conflict management and leadership skills.
- Each nature-based playground is unique and does not rely on pre-fabricated parts or equipment. Their individuality contributes to a sense of place that children respond to.

Terra Nova Play Experience in Richmond, BC encourages creative play and interaction with nature. The park's design draws upon the region’s agricultural past and from local landscape types like dikes and intertidal foreshore. The community consultation process included local school children. Brickell, logs, and other natural features let children perform challenging tasks like climbing and balancing which builds physical strength, confidence and creativity. Nature-based playground elements are especially important in urban neighborhoods where access to nature may be limited.

The Anders Franzéns Park in Stockholm offers many different play zones, including sand and sun decks, grassy slopes, tree swings, sports courts and a skate park. The park’s main attraction is a miniature shipyard playground. The mechanical workshop has a sawmill, diving bell, carpentry station and tugboat. Children are encouraged to play with the tools and moving parts. The child-size village has a scaffold that children can climb, winding narrow stairs and rope nets. The rustic design inspires children’s curiosity, imagination, creativity and playfulness.

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The design of the Tumbling Bay Playground at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London, England embeds play within the landscape and promotes ecological education. Pines and felled oaks represent the local woodland ecology and offer a stimulating structure of treehouses, tunnels, and netted bridges. The playground encourages children and youth to push their comfort levels and test the limits of their courage and ability.

Whimsy in the Public Realm

What makes this neighbourhood element work for children & youth?

- Children regularly remind us of the simple joys in the world. Incorporating fantasy and whimsy into the public realm allows the creation of an urban environment that people of all ages can enjoy.
- Whimsy can be designed in both sophisticated art features, such as the Cloud Gate in Millennium Park, Chicago, or in playful structures located in local neighbourhood parks.
- Unique features and elements can create neighbourhood landmarks that contribute to community identity, civic pride and feelings of belonging.
- Whimsical design plays an important role in developing children’s cognitive skills and imagination.

The 21 Balançoires (21 Swings) installation in Montréal, encourages people to collaborate together in a musical experiment. Each differently coloured swing lights up and emits a unique sound when in motion. When swung in unison, different melodies can be heard. The result is an instrument and collective experience, where people of all ages and backgrounds can play together, while animating local street life. The installation, by Daily tous les jours, demonstrates the potential of collective experiences in public spaces. The playful design strives to spark conversations amongst strangers and create bonds between citizens and their environment.

MONSTRUM is a Danish design group that specializes in thematic playgrounds intended to inspire and fascinate people of all ages. Their designs surpass traditional notions of what a playground can be and have taken the form of space rockets, submarines, giant seashells and clown heads. Kinder, or the Globe (pictured above), is a playground centered around a new library in Aarhus, Denmark. Play areas represent the cardinal directions and incorporate storms, ghost towers, animal landscapes, geology and culture. All design elements provide opportunities for play and exercise for children of all abilities.
### Bicycle & Stroller Infrastructure

**What makes this neighbourhood element work for children & youth?**

- Active transportation is a critical component of a complete vertical communities. Public or private infrastructure should incorporate elements to facilitate navigating the city with strollers and bicycles.
- The design of these elements provides an opportunity for site-specific or whimsical design to appeal to children.
- Stairs that incorporate ramps for stroller or bicycle wheels improves accessibility and connectivity.
- Wheeling channels allow cyclists to roll their bicycles up or down a stairway with greater ease.

In Sweden, it is common to integrate ramps for bicycles and strollers into public staircases. This wheeling ramp makes accessing public parks and moving through the city easier, safer, and more convenient for families with children.

In Toronto’s Weston area, as part of a local public realm improvement plan, the artist Scott Eunson was commissioned to create bicycle rings for the area’s BIA. The playful design appeals to children and augments the standard street furniture in the area.

This wheeling channel in McDonald’s Cycle Centre (Millennium Park Bicycle Station) in Chicago provides a way for cyclists to move seamlessly between the station’s lower levels and the outdoor public space. The channel is generously offset from the wall/lining to accommodate the bicycle handlebars, while providing enough space for the cyclist to push the bicycle unencumbered.

### Season-Responsive Design

**What makes this neighbourhood element work for children & youth?**

- Recreational facilities that provide opportunities for outdoor play in both hot and cold months are a valuable amenity for families with children.
- Accommodating outdoor activities during winter months is more challenging and deserves special consideration.
- A space that has the ability to adapt its programs to suit the four seasons allows for more efficient use of space and supports the development of community hubs.
- The City of Edmonton lists 5 winter design principles in their “Winter Design Guidelines: Transforming Edmonton into a Great Winter City.” These principles are: Wind, Colour, Sunshine, Lighting and Winter Infrastructure. Each principle is an important consideration for the design of the public realm for year-round use.

The Water Garden at Prince Arthur’s Landing in Thunder Bay’s downtown waterfront attracts families in both summer and winter. The large splash pad transforms into a skating rink in colder months, with an outdoor fireplace and warming area for skaters. The Pavilion supports year-round activities including swimming, skating, dining, and cultural events. The warm colours and lighting along the facade create an inviting appearance and cozy environment during winter months.

Berlin’s Badeschiff is a public, floating swimming pool and urban recreation area programmed for all seasons. There are a series of wooden decks, change rooms and shower rooms, as well as activities such as yoga and stand-up paddle boarding. In the summer, there is an open pool, hammocks, lounge chairs and a small playground. In winter months, the floating area transforms into an indoor pool and saunas.
Community Gardens

What makes this neighbourhood element work for children & youth?

- A community garden is a piece of land typically found in urban areas, that is cultivated collectively by members of the community.
- Community gardens can make better use of marginal, left-over spaces in the city, maximizing the use of public or private open space.
- These spaces foster community identity and stewardship. They become social gathering places that can host environmental education programs about food systems, plant growth and gardening techniques for schools, youth groups and the larger community.
- Gardening is a recreational activity that contributes to health, physical activity and well-being, while providing a connection to ecological processes.
- Community gardens provide opportunities for inter-generational and cross-cultural connections.
- Micro not-for-profit food-based businesses could be based out of community gardens.
- These gardens can provide fresh produce for low-income families.
- Community gardens can include elements to assist with the preparation of meals (like BBQs, outdoor sinks or pizza ovens). This enables opportunities for social activities like shared meals and promotes better eating habits, using seasonally-shared meals and promotes better eating habits, using seasonally-shared meals and promotes better eating habits, using seasonally-shared meals and promotes better eating habits.
- The Evergreen Brickworks, in Toronto, used a temporary community garden to kick-start the creation of the environmental centre. The garden brought users and a vision to this site that has matured into a permanent institution and public park.

Shared Street/Home Zone/Woonerf

What makes this neighbourhood element work for children & youth?

- Shared streets, home zones and woonerfs are designed to slow vehicle traffic and improve safety.
- In dense urban areas where public space is limited, shared streets can perform multiple functions. While they support pedestrians, cyclists, children, and vehicles in close proximity, they also serve as social or play spaces for neighbours and children, akin to a rear lane internal to a city block.
- Shared streets have lower speed limits, typically around “walking speed.” This reduces road accidents and increases the sense of safety for pedestrians and children at play.
- In general, where cities have promoted shared streets, there has been a documented decrease in traffic-related accidents and injuries.
- Shared streets increase visibility and levels of social activity on the street, providing more opportunities for formal and informal supervision of children. This can increase Children’s Independent Mobility (CIM), which has many physical health benefits.
- Shared streets rely on decorative paving, offering an attractive alternative to asphalt. This treatment is lighter in colour and radiates less heat, which is safer for children at play and reduces impacts on the environment.
- Shared streets are appropriate in numerous settings, including residential, commercial and mixed-use areas where flexibility is a priority.
Pocket Parks

What makes this neighbourhood element work for children & youth?

- A “pocket park” is an intimate open space within a dense urban area. They can be delivered as public parks, Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Space (POPS).
- Each pocket park can take on a unique theme, serve as one component of a larger park, or form part of a chain of pocket parks that provide areas of rest en route to a destination.
- Pocket parks are often created by re-imagining “leftover” spaces or underused sites (reclaimed streets or parking lots) in order to maximize the use of outdoor open spaces.
- Small pocket parks cumulatively add to the amount of green space in a city and contribute to ecological objectives.
- Pocket parks can foster a sense of community, and are created through neighbourhood initiatives, by private entities, or by organizations reclaiming spaces to benefit a local community.

Free Admission & After-School Programs

What makes this neighbourhood element work for children & youth?

- Free admission to museums and art galleries as well as library and recreational programs ensures children and youth have access to culture regardless of financial means.
- They offer an enriched learning environment, helping children develop new skills and interests.
- These programs can help children get to know their city and their institutions, and become more engaged citizens.
- These programs can help keep teenagers engaged in social activities.
- After-school activities teach children time management skills and how to prioritize tasks and commitments.
- Free admission can be offered once a week or once a month during designated times, or daily on first-come, first-served basis.
Lorna and her 8 year old daughter Sophie were instantly smitten with the friendly, lively feel of their neighbourhood and proximity to programs and places to go. Lorna grew up in the suburbs but says she can’t imagine living there now. She’s seen an increase in young families in their building who connect and network easily around child-care options, activities and getting to and from school. “And there’s a baby girl in unit 706 who’s my friend now” adds the sprightly Sophie.

The unit is flooded with sunlight and a panoramic view of the lake. Storage space is at a premium but Lorna has maximized efficiency by adding a custom IKEA wall unit in her bedroom, minimizing purchases and tucking everything away neatly. Sophie’s bedroom has a large opening, no door, and overhang on her island countertop that would allow them to use it as a dining table with stools. Instead the two usually dine sitting on the couch, resting plates on the coffee table. It’s the sort of small space trade-off they’re used to, like avoiding bulk purchases, relying on the coffee table. It’s the sort of small space trade-off they’re used to, like avoiding bulk purchases, relying on

The local park is close but needs repairs to avoid muddy feet. In part because of their satisfaction with the school Sophie attends in part because of their satisfaction with the school Sophie attends in nearby Parkdale, “the most important thing is quality teachers, and the teachers there are great.”

Lorna appreciates the full size kitchen appliances but laments the lack of an overhang on her island countertop that would allow them to use it as a dining table with stools. Instead the two usually dine sitting on the couch, resting plates on the coffee table. It’s the sort of small space trade-off they’re used to, like avoiding bulk purchases, relying on regular trips to the nearby grocery store, and being very conscientious about purchases. “We have a storage locker that is packed full of stuff but in general I am good at getting rid of stuff when we don’t need it anymore.” The two of them remain committed to their home and the neighbourhood for the long haul in part because of their satisfaction with the school Sophie attends in nearby Parkdale, “the most important thing is quality teachers, and the teachers there are great.”

Lorna says she doesn’t use the small balcony much, but that might change when the adjacent construction and dust stops. The bathroom and shower stall is roomy but what they really miss is a bathtub - Sophie struggles to reach the taps and showerhead.

A lively social media presence, makes it easy to connect with the community and other parents. Pleased with the school Sophie attends in Parkdale, Lorna volunteers there on the Parent Council.

People here knock on your door, invite you over, I really like the social vibe.”

The unit is flooded with sunlight and a panoramic view of the lake.
“We don’t see the value of moving...We have friends with large homes and they are constantly working on it, and we’re like ‘bye, we’re going to the ROM’. That’s what we try to remember when it gets cramped and crazy in here.”

While they have a car in the garage, they rarely use it, preferring to get around on foot and scooter, and routinely access the nearby parks and ravine trails down to Evergreen Brickworks.

Frances and Joel’s home is a hub of activity for friends and children who are drawn to the welcoming, adaptable space they’ve created. They have a large modular couch they can expand and contract as needed – providing seating for up to 7 people or even a place for a young visitor to sleep in a pinch. Their fridge overflows with fresh food and greens, so they’ve added a bar fridge under the counter facing the living room for snacks and drinks.

Joel and Frances dream of buying a place out of town where they would have more space but don’t feel they’ve had to sacrifice access to the outdoors. They say their balcony is like having a second living room and added a security lock to the balcony door so Cormac can’t wander out on his own.
Ying, Hai and their young daughter moved to Canada from the US in 2015 where they had both been finishing graduate degrees. They opted to rent a one bedroom plus den in the vicinity of the Scarborough Civic Centre so that Hai can be close to the U of T Scarborough Campus where he is pursuing a post-doc in environmental sciences. Ying worked as an urban planner in China but for now is taking care of Dandan full time.

They live in the Lee Centre where she has connected with neighbours easily, in part using the WeChat app with fellow Mandarin speakers. Dandan and Ying visit the park and playground directly in front of their building daily to enjoy physical activity and fresh air. "part of the reason we left China was our concern for the air quality." Ying likes walking, and can reach grocery stores, shops and the public library within five to 15 minutes with the toddler in a stroller. Her husband just purchased a bike to get to UTSC, which is twenty minutes quicker than transit. Ying works out often in the building gym but they don’t use the party room or amenity spaces, which cost money to book and have no programming for children. Still, she likes the area, attends classes on citizenship and engagement at the public library, is looking into good schools for Dandan and wants to put down roots.

Ying says that living in vertical communities comes easily to her as she grew up in six storey mid-rise with her mother, father and brother in a medium sized city in China. Despite this, Ying says that her decision to stay in the highrise building or move to a house will be determined by job and career prospects and having a second child, which she believes will necessitate living in a home with a backyard. She enjoys the maintenance-free convenience of condo living but says she thinks having a backyard would be ideal, "kids can play there any time, we could do some gardening and have a clothes line. And dryers are good, but there’s just a good effect with air and sunlight."

Dandan wants to go out all the time, likes access to fresh air and have the freedom, exercise and get there faster. But recently got a bike to enjoy the freedom, exercise and get there faster.

Gardening and having a clothes line. "Kids can play there any time, we could do some gardening and have a clothes line. And dryers are good, but there’s just a good effect with air and sunlight."

The family makes little use of the party room amenities due to cost and lack of opportunities to use them as a family.

Socializing in the lobby area is actively discouraged with a sign that reads ‘for waiting only’.

The large windows make it warm in the winter but Ying is concerned that it will be too hot in the summer, the cooling costs would be wasteful.

Hai takes the bus to UTSC daily which takes approximately 30 minutes but recently got a bike to enjoy the freedom, exercise and get there faster.

Their unit has no balcony. Ying would like access to fresh air and have the option to dry laundry outdoors.

Dandan wants to go out all the time, which is making her parents think that condo-living will not provide her with adequate access to the outdoors.
Libraries

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Ying likes walking, and can reach grocery stores, shops and the public library within five to fifteen minutes with the toddler in a stroller.

UNIT:
- 65m² (700ft²), no balcony
- 1 bedroom plus den, 1 bathroom
- 32nd floor of 33 storey building

PROFILE:
Ying, parent
Hai, parent
Dandan, age 18 months

RENTED: 2015

The family makes little use of the party room amenities due to cost and lack of opportunities to use them as a family.

Socializing in the lobby area is actively discouraged with a sign that reads ‘for waiting only’.

The large windows make it warm in the winter but Ying is concerned that it will be too hot in the summer, the cooling costs would be wasteful.

Hai takes the bus to UTSC daily which takes approximately 30 minutes but recently got a bike to enjoy the freedom, exercise and get there faster.

LIKES:
- Walkable and safe routes to shops, groceries and the library.
- The green space and playground in front of the building is used daily and includes a climbing gym, sandbox area and splash pad.
- Friendly, social and diverse neighbourhood.
- Easy to connect with other Mandarin speakers and families via WeChat.

WISHLIST:
- Their unit has no balcony. Ying would like access to fresh air and have the option to dry laundry outdoors.
- Dandan wants to go out all the time, which is making her parents think that condo-living will not provide her with adequate access to the outdoors.

WAITING AREA IN FRONT LOBBY
Waiting area in front lobby

GROUND FLOOR ENTRANCE INTO THEIR BUILDING COMPLEX
Ground floor entrance into their building complex

UNIT LAYOUT - 65M² (700FT²) WITH 1 BEDROOM PLUS DEN AND 1 BATHROOM
Unit layout - 65m² (700ft²) with 1 bedroom plus den and 1 bathroom

FACILITIES
Includes a climbing gym, sandbox and waiting only’.

SOCIALIZING IN THE LOBBY AREA IS ACTIVELY DISCOURAGED WITH A SIGN THAT READS ‘FOR WAITING ONLY’.

THE FAMILY MAKES LITTLE USE OF THE PARTY ROOM AMENITIES DUE TO COST AND LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES TO USE THEM AS A FAMILY.

THE LARGE WINDOWS MAKE IT WARM IN THE WINTER BUT YING IS CONCERNED THAT IT WILL BE TOO HOT IN THE SUMMER, THE COOLING COSTS WOULD BE WASTEFUL.

HAI TAKES THE BUS TO UTSC DAILY WHICH TAKES APPROXIMATELY 30 MINUTES BUT RECENTLY GOT A BIKE TO ENJOY THE FREEDOM, EXERCISE AND GET THERE FASTER.
Libraries

den into a nursery adding a sliding door the parents room. Larissa says compact and shelving and Henry sleeps in a crib in

Their condo includes en-suite laundry facilities, an open kitchen with an island and a small balcony. They’ve converted the
den into a nursery adding a sliding door and shelving and Henry sleeps in a crib in the parents room. Larissa says compact

living is challenging at times, but on the whole freeing, “it forces you to rethink what you need, I had to let things go. Now every time we break something like a plate or bowl, we say ‘yay, less stuff!’ And we don’t replace it.” They feel they’ll need more room eventually, but so far, the cost and benefits of staying in place and adding innovative storage solutions outweighs the expense of moving to larger unit in the same building.

Social media and the sharing economy has been a boon to Larissa who has been able to buy, sell and share baby items online. She reports that the neighbourhood is undergoing a baby-boom with 30-40% of households having children by her count, adding up to a total of 250 kids under the age of eight in the immediate vicinity.

The most significant amenity that Larissa’s home offers is the “Superclub,” a recreation centre in the Cityplace neighbourhood that is shared by a cluster of five condos and funded by their fees. Amenities include BBQ’s, bowling, a dog run, toy room, gym, movie theatre, playground and pool. Larissa and other parents successfully lobbied the board for the creation of kids amenity spaces, toy purchases and programming fees for things events like a magician, family BBQ and Christmas party.

“We love being able to walk out the door for groceries, visit a nearby museum and just hop on transit outside my door.”

The adjacent Superclub’s gym, play room and outdoor spaces with BBQ’s.

Many family households in area makes it easy to connect with other families.

Challenges

- Stroller impedes entryway, sometimes parked in kitchen blocking fridge.
- Open concept kitchen doesn’t allow for much storage & prep space.
- The two children will share a double bed in the den but in the near future they’ll need separate beds.
- Balcony is off limits to the children and they’ve added a security lock.
- Elevators are frequently congested.

Hacks

- Custom wall unit added in living room.
- Added bike racks in car parking spot.
- Sarina sleeps in the den, where they’ve added a sliding door that allows in light.
- Henry sleeps in a crib in his parents room for now.

Wishlist

- Free programming in local libraries and rec centres are frequently overbooked or crowded.
- To have stroller access through the underground connection to the Superclub. Currently, they must travel outside to use the amenity which is especially inconvenient in the winter.
- Concerned about the quality of local schools and lack of day care.
Carol and her young family put a premium on getting outside to experience all that Toronto has to offer in terms of cultural attractions, parks and neighbourhoods. “Condo-living gives us more time to do fun outdoor things and explore the city. We don’t spend time raking leaves or doing repairs, we just get up and go.” Carol is involved with the ‘Friends of Dempsey Park’ nearby, helping animate the park with family games nights, pumpkin parades and bike tune-ups. When not hanging out in local parks or libraries, the whole family often jumps on the subway to scope out distant parks, ravine trails, toboggan hills, museums and outdoor pools.

Carol and Alejandro are committed to the trade-offs of living a compact and environmentally sustainable lifestyle feeling they reap enormous benefits by cutting down on purchases, and preferring “to spend money on experiences rather than possessions.” Carol grew up in BC and her husband in Europe and don’t buy into the notion that they need large living spaces, “we both know that you won’t die if you grow up sharing a room with your sibling.”

Carol says even she was surprised by how many kids live in their building. Of the 25 residents living in the ten units on their floor, there are five kids, including one teenager, and only one single person. Family friendly features like the bowling alley, pool, billiards room and 12-person movie theatre make their home feel bigger. A social committee organizes annual events, BBQ’s and a garage sale. Suggestions by residents have resulted in positive additions to the building like bike parking and picnic tables. Still, the unit has its challenges with a very small kitchen and shortage of counter and prep space. They have a hard time containing their books and toys in shelves, and closets are jammed to capacity with clothes and storage boxes.

With two growing children Carol speculates that they could stay here a long time. “We will have the mortgage paid off in seven years. Convention dictates that we should upsize to a big house in the suburbs now that we have kids, since it would cost the same anyway. Forget that! We’re happy where we are.”

“We don’t buy into the notion that you need large living spaces. We both know that you won’t die if you grow up sharing a room with your sibling.”

**Unit layout - 81m² (867ft²) with 2 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms**

**North York Civic Centre**

**PROFILE:**
Carol, parent
Alejandro, parent
April, age 8
Gwyneth, age 4
Carol, parent

**PURCHASED:** 2007

**UNIT:**
- 81m² (867ft²) plus balcony
- 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms
- 6th floor of 40 storey building

**LIKES**
- Pool, library, study room and guest suite are greatly valued.
- 2 bathrooms is convenient.
- Minimal noise transfer between units.
- Having the children’s play structure on the property.
- Storage locker is included.
- TriSorter disposal system on each floor for garbage, recycling or organics.
- Being able to walk to the grocery store, library, classes, restaurants and Willowdale Park.

**CHALLENGES**
- They don’t use their balcony often due to second-hand smoke and garbage being blown onto it.
- Condo fees include everyone’s heating and hydro which removes the incentive to save money, turn the heat lower, be energy efficient.
- The party room costs $300 to rent so they’ve only used it twice.
- Stroller parking was a chronic space problem when the kids were little.
- Visitor parking is off-putting for friends to use.

**WISHLIST**
- Open up kitchen with a food prep area and seats that swing under counter.
- Bi-fold closet doors would make it easier to access closets, storage areas
- They sense that living in a different catchment area would give them access to better school.
- Require developers to use energy efficient lighting & wider gauge pipes.
- Install systems in new builds that make the AC turn off when windows or sliding doors are open.
Raj adores his panoramic south-facing view from the 36th floor, and in spite of the breeze, uses his balcony to grow a few tomatoes and soak up the sun. The unit generally suits their needs and the family likes the numerous amenities and terraces the building has to offer - Raj has even stepped up to become the VP on the condo board. But they say the building lacks a community feel, connected feel that they were hoping for when they moved to Toronto from New York City. “People come home and never leave their unit”.

Devyan and Raj regularly enjoy the building amenities - a pool, gym, terraces, a billiards room - but few residents enjoy them. “70% of the residents are renters and are not invested in making community where they live,” says Raj. As VP of the condo board he helped organize and promote bbq’s, parties and buffets through newsletters, social media and bulletin boards, “but only a small percentage of residents came, and even then, sometimes they just fill their plates and take it upstairs to eat.”

The building is a 15 minute walk from the Agincourt GO station, which Devyan uses daily to get to work in under 30 minutes. Raj drives 15 minutes to his wholesale business in the east end. Their son, Arif, takes two busses to get to school in about 25 minutes, though they yearn for school bus service to make it easier and safer. Sending their 12 year old out to negotiate multi-lane arterials like Kennedy causes their great concern.

Devyan says that they moved to Toronto not knowing the city well, and now, having lived here for 5 years, they’re thinking they will move to a house in a more connected, walkable neighbourhood with a good high school and more room for the grandmother who will be moving here permanently from India. “My son learned how to walk on Broadway, in New York City,” says Raj. “We were always walking there. And buying everything we needed from local stores on our way home.” Raj laments that he too has grown accustomed to the car. In New York he put 2,000 miles on his car annually and in Toronto, it’s more like 15,000 kilometers. “Here, we use the car for everything.”

“ Sending their 12 year old out to negotiate multi-lane arterials like Kennedy causes their great concern. Devyan says that they moved to Toronto not knowing the city well, and now, having lived here for 5 years, they’re thinking they will move to a house in a more connected, walkable neighbourhood with a good high school and more room for the grandmother who will be moving here permanently from India. “My son learned how to walk on Broadway, in New York City,” says Raj. “We were always walking there. And buying everything we needed from local stores on our way home.” Raj laments that he too has grown accustomed to the car. In New York he put 2,000 miles on his car annually and in Toronto, it’s more like 15,000 kilometers. “Here, we use the car for everything.”

“Here, we use the car for everything.”
There are some pros and cons of living in a high rise according to the three brothers who share a bedroom, “we keep our stinky basketball stuff in the bathroom,” explains 7 year old Max. “But in a small place, you don’t lose stuff because you don’t have to look far to find it”, says Aiden who sleeps on the top bunk. “And you get a good view of the fireworks every time,” notes Carter.

Since their parents Shuang and Joe moved in 14 years ago, they estimate they’ve spent over $100,000 in upgrades to make the unit work efficiently for their active family. The kitchen was completely redone with a kitchen island, custom wall units and space-saving appliances, walls were removed, closets added, cork floors installed to reduced noise and bathrooms enlarged. The kitchen flows seamlessly into the living area so the family can cook, eat, do homework, play games and lounge on the couch all at the same time. They don’t use the party-room much now but as kids they wandered in and played at no cost if

“We keep our stinky basketball stuff in the bathroom. But in a small place, you don’t lose stuff because you don’t have to look far to find it.”

Private terraces, especially the 6th floor patio with BBQ’s, picnic tables and space to hang out with other families. The boys are quick to say that if they could add only one thing it would be a gymnasium where they could shoot hoops.

Joe works in Mississauga but only commutes twice a week, spending the rest of his time visiting clients downtown and working from home. The kids take transit or get a drive to their school located near Spadina and Bloor. They have bikes but don’t feel safe riding on most city streets and know that they’re not supposed to ride on sidewalks. Shuang has a 15 minute walk to work. They’ve considered moving to a house to take advantage of the fireworks every time,” notes Carter.

Over the years, the children have marked their heights on a wall to see how much they have grown. Skateboard storage under the beds

“The children do not feel safe cycling to school.”

“Problematic HVAC so they added vents at considerable cost to vent the space better and improve air flow.”

Like living in a vertical community and not contributing to urban sprawl.

There is a workout gym in the building but not everyone likes it when kids are in the room.

The kids go outside a lot to David Crombie park.

About 40 families are active on a Parent Network Facebook page that organizes weekly play days, toy swaps and seasonal events in the building.

Around 40 families are active on a Parent Network Facebook page that organizes weekly play days, toy swaps and seasonal events in the building.

The St. Lawrence Market, grocery stores and transit.

The three boys share the larger, master bedroom, where they each have a chest of drawers.

The children do not feel safe cycling to school.

- Removed a wall to open up kitchen and added a long island as main eating, hang out and homework table.
- Moved a wall to enlarge one shower, and replaced one tub with a shower.
- Installed cork flooring to dampen sound transfer to the unit below.
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A bigger unit, but would likely cost them $1.5 million including increased taxes and fees making it unaffordable.

Play space and gym equipment for kids and teens.
Kali bought and moved into her condo in the Humber Bay Shores neighbourhood in 2006 knowing this was the place she wanted to stay for a long time. Typical of buildings built in the 1980’s, her unit has ample closet and storage space, two full bathrooms with a bath in the master, an open concept kitchen and living room area in addition to room for a home office off the dining room. There’s no balcony but Kali and her husband Alok say they don’t miss it – the rooftop garden is always available. There was no question they’d stay to raise their child, 18 month old Ravi, reasoning “we have more space in this condo than many of our friends have in a detached home, on top of access to the lake, beaches, running and biking trails and zero yard work!”

“We have more space in this condo than many of our friends have in a detached home, on top of access to the lake, beaches, running and biking trails and zero yard work!”

The young family makes the most of what their building and neighbourhood has to offer – regular walks by the lake, visits to nearby parks and playgrounds, and almost daily visits to the pool, games room, roof garden and activity rooms inside their building. Alok and Kali explain that while the condo fees are comparatively high at over $900 a month, they feel that they get good value because they use the amenities regularly. They sense an uptick and families in the building these days – a conversation has started about converting one of the buildings guest suites into a play room with toys and table for arts and crafts.

The challenge comes with neighbourhood connectivity, limited walkability and resulting car-dependence. They explain that transit can be time-consuming and undependable, so they’ve worked out reliable and efficient alternatives. Alok drives to work in Mississauga (often carpooling with a neighbour) and Kali takes her building’s dedicated shuttle bus to Union Station. They both leave at around 7 am, beating the rush hour in both directions, and have their commuting time down to a tight 15 - 20 minutes each way. A busy pair of professionals, their focus is minimizing time away from the family. “This condo is not ‘walkable’ per se, but it is connected for the car travel and shuttle bus routes we rely on daily,” explains Ravi.

The bathtub is also used as a place to store the stroller

The apartment entryway

The bathtub is also used as a place to store the stroller

Living/dining area

View from window of nearby trails, parks & open spaces

HUMBER BAY SHORES

PROFILE:
Kali, parent
Alok, parent
Ravi, age 18 months

PURCHASED: 2006

UNIT:
- 130m² (1400ft²), no balcony
- 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms
- 30th floor of 47 storey building

+ We have more space in this condo than many of our friends have in a detached home, on top of access to the lake, beaches, running and biking trails and zero yard work!

- No balcony but there’s a large roof deck they can access and windows in the unit open slightly for fresh air.
- There are no other children Ravi’s age that they know of so he goes to school by car alone.
- Limited connectivity, amenities difficult to navigate with child.
- Transit can be undependable and takes up to an hour to get downtown.

LIKES

- Big rooms, ample storage, two complete bedrooms big enough for full size beds.
- 8 inches of concrete between floors offers good sound separation.
- Adequate space for stroller in entryway
- Large parking spots makes getting in and out easy.
- Upgraded elevators roomy & frequent.
- Lots of trails, parks, beaches and open spaces for recreation and walks.
- Well situated for their commuting needs, ie close to highway and a dedicated shuttle bus service.
- A new grocery store and pharmacy are welcome local amenities.

CHALLENGES

HACKS

- kitchen renovation is open, making it easy to keep an eye on the toddler during meal prep.

WISHLIST

- They are likely to send Ravi to school outside the neighbourhood due to low rankings in catchment area
- Closer amenities.
“The big house brings many problems, always fixing, cleaning, lots of money and time wasted,” declares 15-year-old Vadim. "I grew up in a 9-storey building in Armenia where we had large two-bedroom apartments with two balconies and a big kitchen, but here in Toronto we’re renting a one-bedroom apartment in a tall building that’s compact and sparsely furnished. But they don’t seem to mind the downsizing, “after all the things we’ve been through - war, instability, losing my home twice - you learn you don’t need much stuff to be happy,” explains Ivonka. Vadim adds that he likes living in a smaller space, and being in a big home would just make him feel lonely.

Before arriving in Toronto, Ivonka and her husband Anton spent hours researching school rankings online and scouring google streetview to decide where to live. They chose the Yonge and Sheppard area to be close to transit, a good high school and rental apartments. Ivonka was the national champion in draughts. She lives in the building with her 15-year-old son Vadim, and they share the bedroom for now as Anton has returned briefly to Armenia to attend to some family matters so Ivonka can attend to some family matters."