



Toronto

A series of five horizontal bars in gold, teal, red, grey, and orange, stacked vertically and partially overlapping.

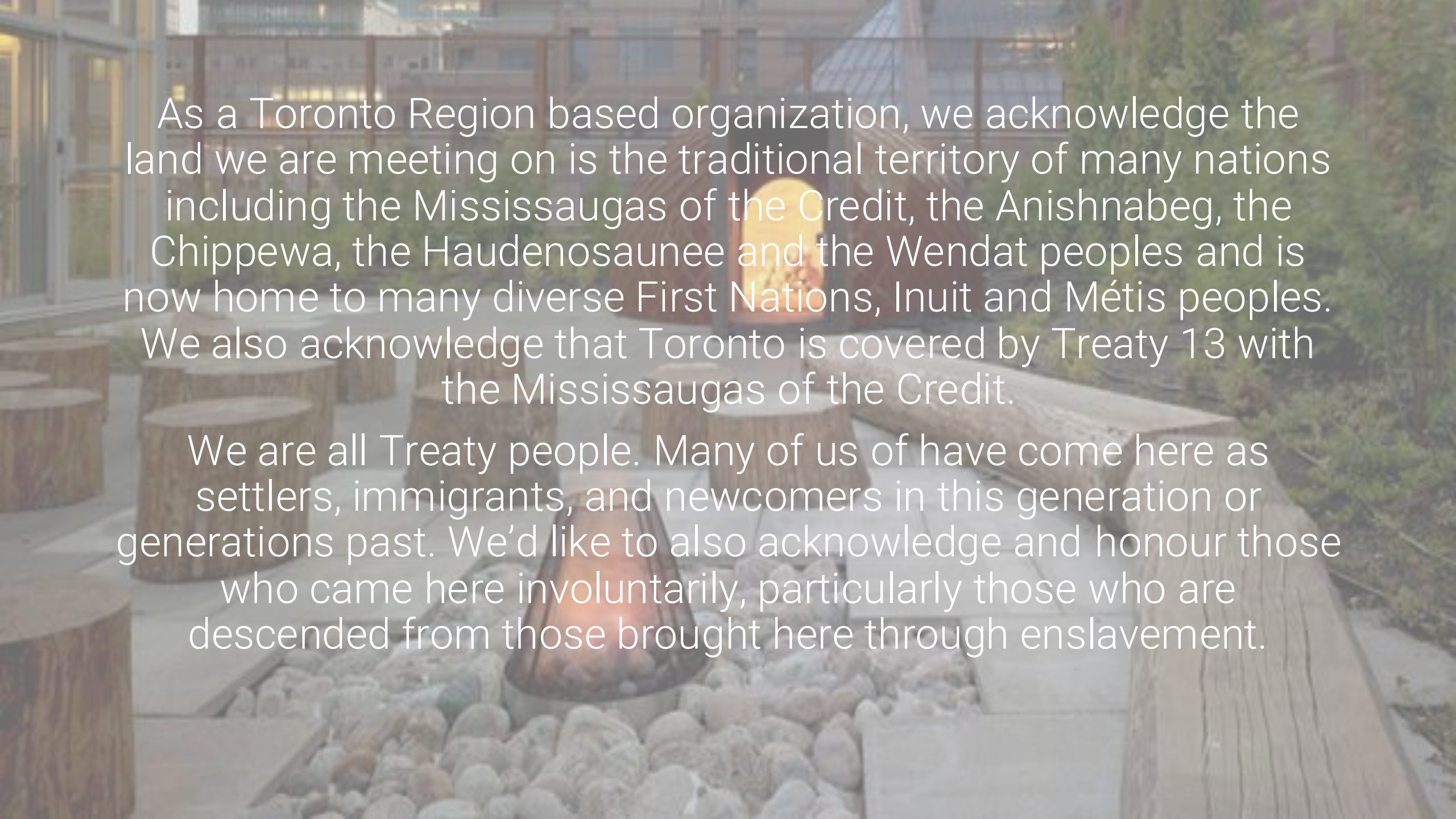
Curtner

Urban Leadership Program



FRIDAY APRIL 25, 2025

The logo for Northcrest, featuring the word 'Northcrest' in a dark grey sans-serif font. A small green triangle is positioned above the letter 'h'.

The background image shows a modern building with large glass windows. In the foreground, there is a wooden walkway made of stone slabs. Several tree stumps are placed along the path, and a glowing lantern is visible. The scene is set outdoors with greenery in the background.

As a Toronto Region based organization, we acknowledge the land we are meeting on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We are all Treaty people. Many of us have come here as settlers, immigrants, and newcomers in this generation or generations past. We'd like to also acknowledge and honour those who came here involuntarily, particularly those who are descended from those brought here through enslavement.

TODAY'S AGENDA

9:00AM – Welcome and Introduction

9:15AM – Leadership Keynote

10:00AM – Break

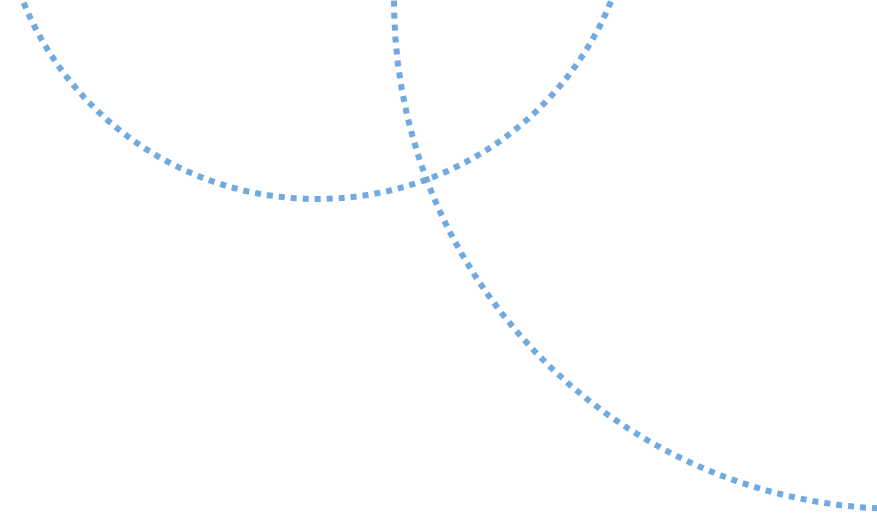
10:15AM – Program Presentations

12:30PM – Lunch

1:15PM – Panel Discussion

2:30PM – Break

2:45PM – Presentation and Site Tour





Curtner

Host and Event Sponsor

Northcrest



Derek Goring
Chief Executive Officer
Northcrest Developments

LEADERSHIP KEYNOTE



Toronto



Curtner



MODERATOR:
Nicole Lechter
Assurance Senior Manager
RSM Canada LLP



Derek Goring
Chief Executive Officer
Northcrest Developments



BREAK
10:00AM - 10:15AM

PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS

Leverage your Why?

*"People don't buy **what** you do, they buy **WHY** you do it!"*

Simon Sinek – Author and Inspirational Speaker

why?

how?

what?



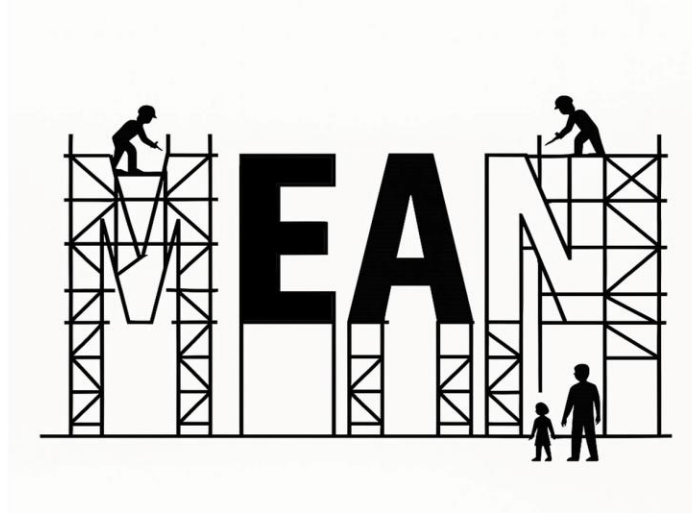
TEAM 1: Inclusive and Community Driven

Current development signs provide basic information about proposed projects but often fail to meaningfully engage the community. Many residents remain unaware of key project details, missing out on opportunities to provide input or understand how developments contribute to their neighbourhood. We propose enhancing development signage to make information more accessible and impactful.

TEAM 2: Adaptability

In Toronto, prolonged entitlement processes and market uncertainty, among other matters, leave many development sites sitting idle, becoming underused, unattractive, and sometimes unsafe. With the right policies and incentives, these spaces could be activated with meanwhile uses that deliver real community and economic value for all interested parties. The implementation of innovative and adaptable solutions would temporarily activate vacant and underutilized sites, creating functional and engaging community spaces, the components of which could be relocated to the next meanwhile site, once construction is ready to begin.

ADAPT



WHILE

TEAM 2

Adaptability + Innovation

Curtner Urban Leadership Program 2024 - 2025

Urban Land Institute

How much vacant land is there in the GTA?

57,650 ac

MGP Malone
Given
Parsons.



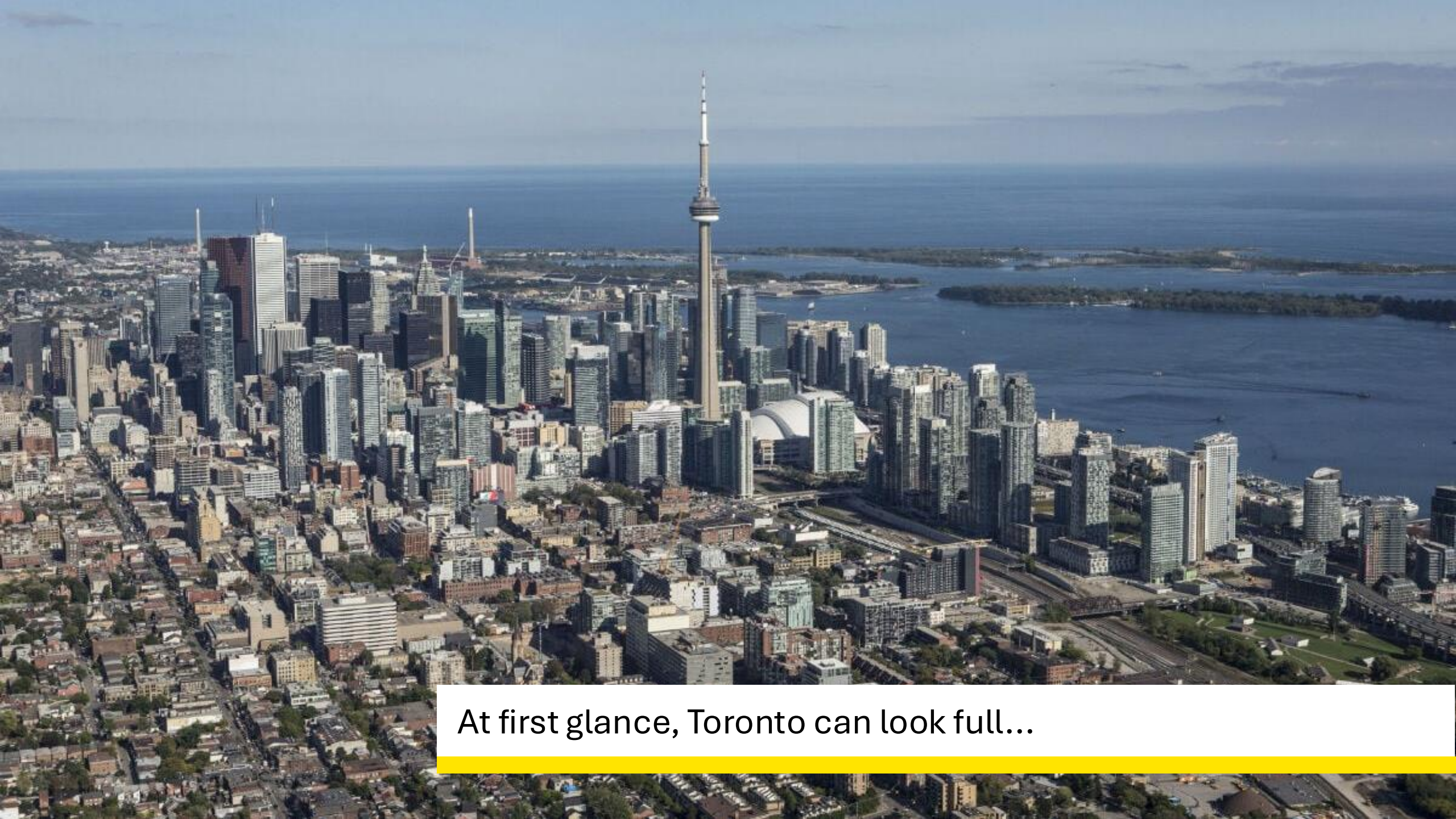
HIGH PARK

131,000 ac

Statistics
Canada

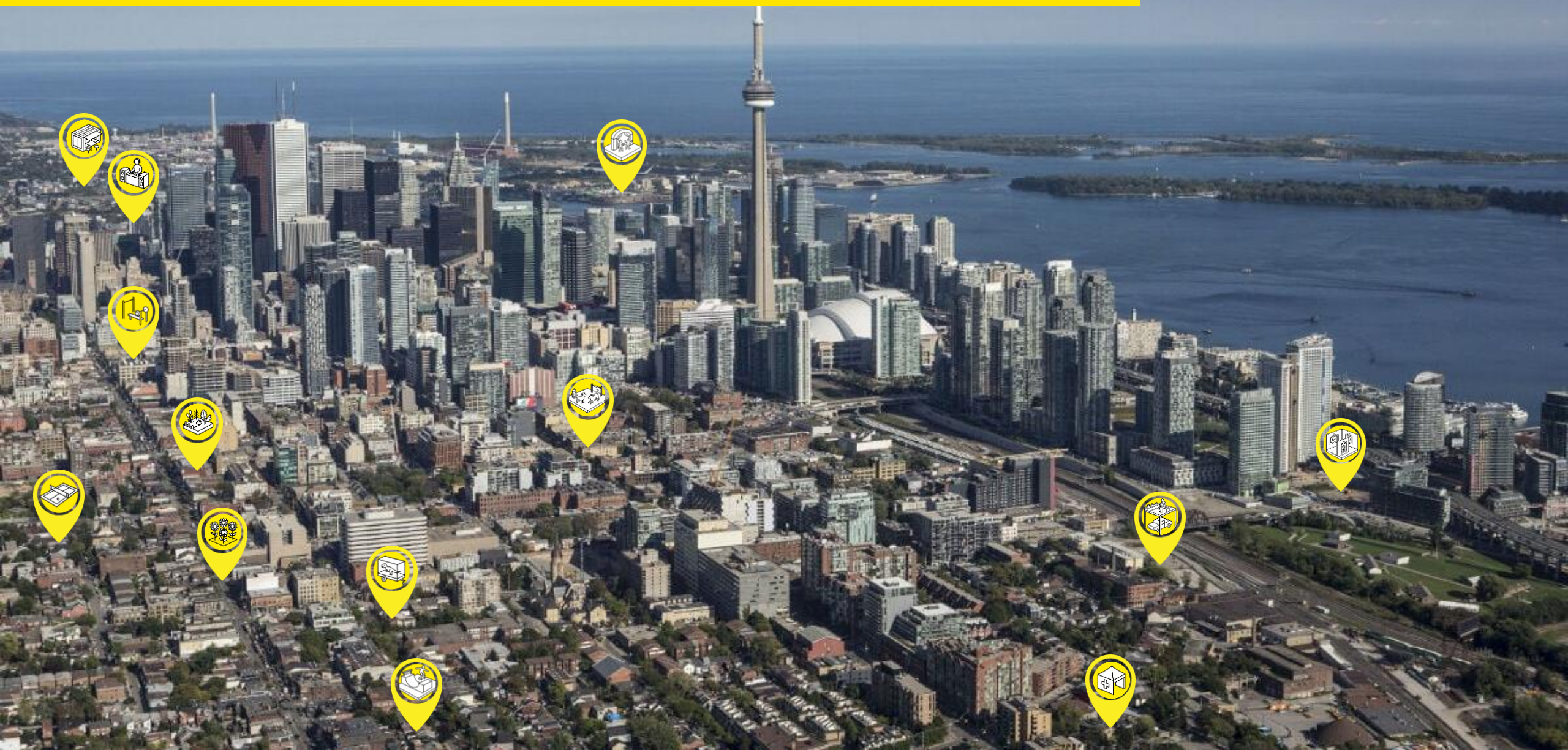


HIGH PARK



At first glance, Toronto can look full...

...but scattered throughout are opportunities hiding in plain sight.

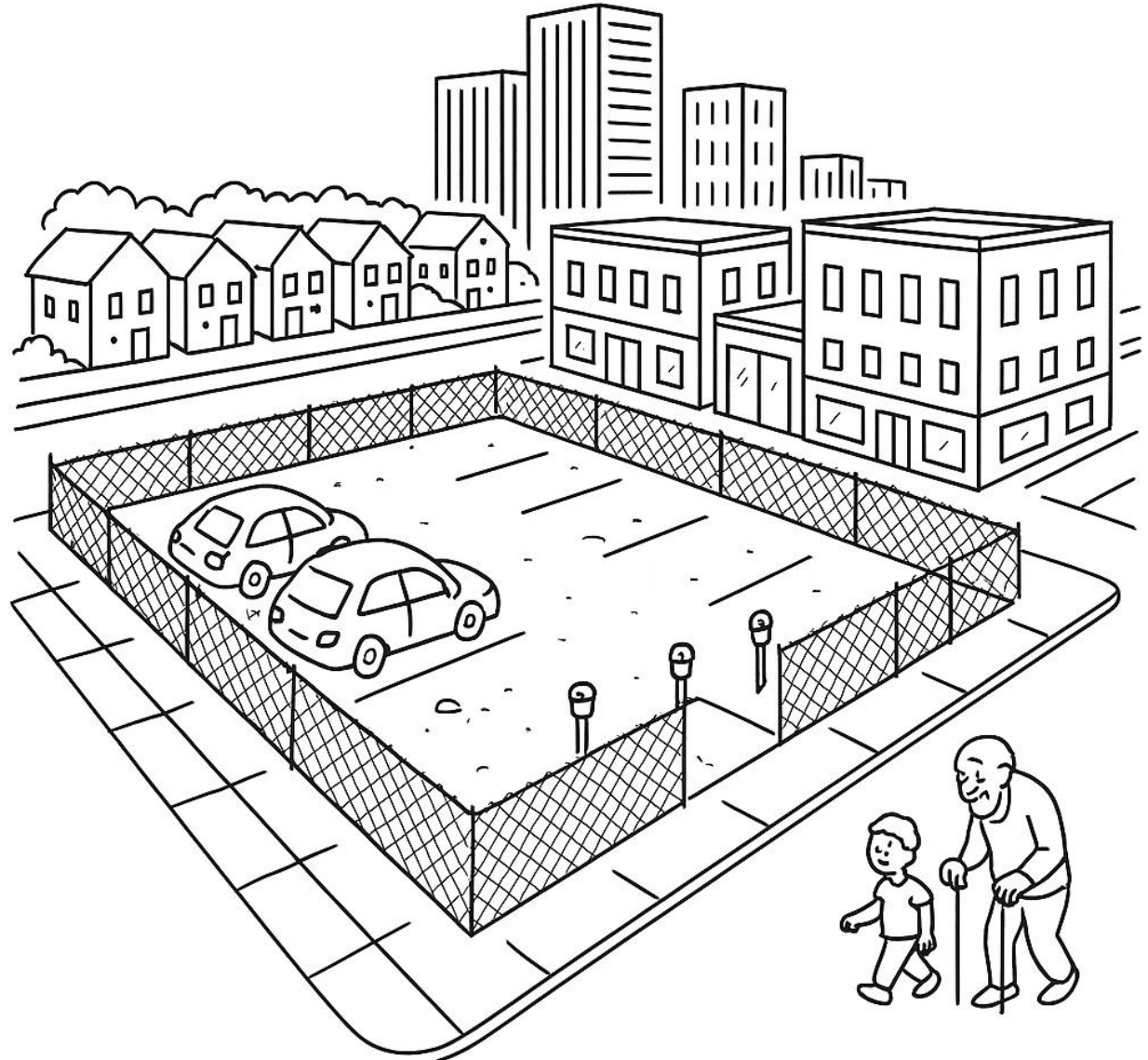


What do we mean by “under-utilized” sites?

- Construction zones with delays
- Public spaces with low activity
- Vacant/underused buildings
- Surface parking lots
- Vacant lots

Why are these spaces a problem?

- Safety
- Attractiveness
- Land value



Current examples across Toronto...



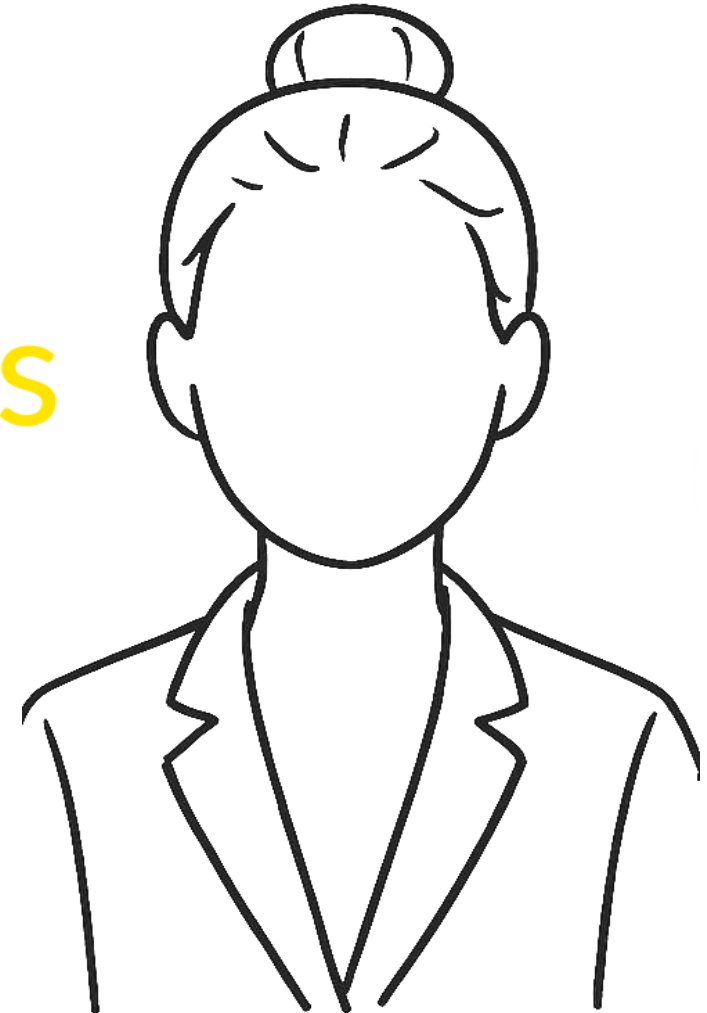
Who is impacted?

Resident, Community Organizer, Ratepayer Group



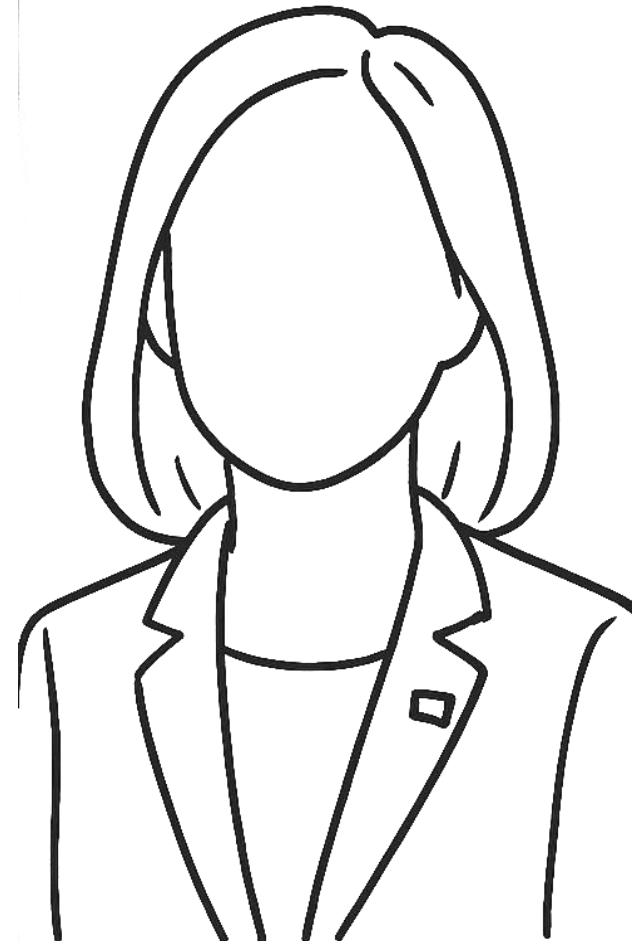
Who is impacted?

Real Estate Developer, Landowner

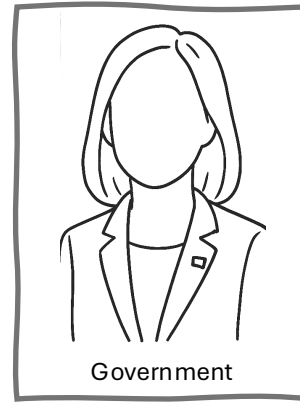
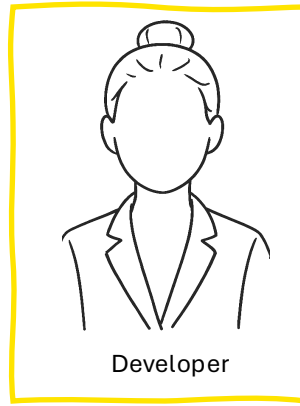


Who is impacted?

Municipal Staff, Politicians, City Advocate



Challenges to implementation



Incentives to implementation

Carrots



- Community Benefit Charge/Section 37
- Development Charge rebate
- Parkland Credit
- Tax relief
- Positive developer recognition
- Unlocking financing (points system)



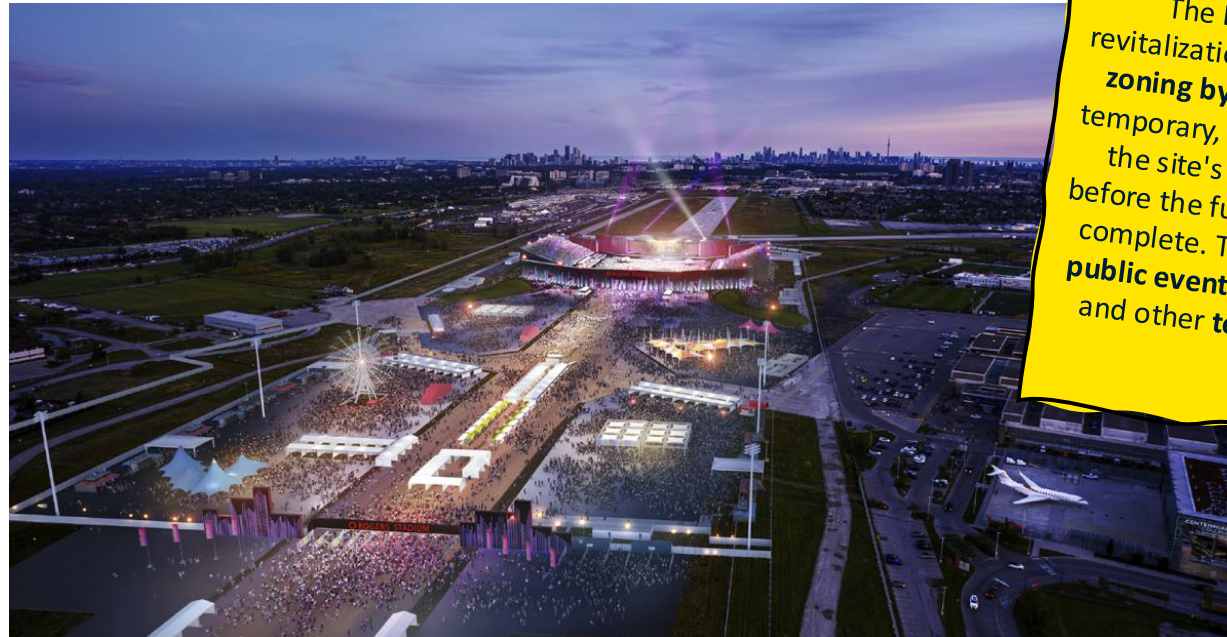
The **Lakeview Sunflower Fields**, among other amenities built on the lands pre-approval, were considered by Mississauga staff to be **community benefits** amounting to approximately **\$2M**, and were noted specifically in the final staff report for Lakeview Village, Mississauga

Consequences to non-fulfillment

Sticks



- Vacant land tax
- Policy implementation
- Requirements for “meanwhile by-laws” for large sites



The **Downsview Airport** revitalization includes a **meanwhile zoning by-law**, which allows for temporary, or “meanwhile”, uses of the site's **buildings** and **spaces** before the full-scale development is complete. These uses can include **public events, leasing of buildings,** and other **temporary activities.**

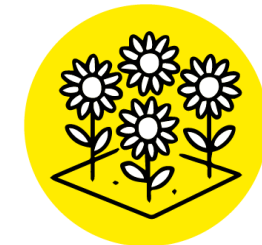
Meanwhile concepts...



... and real world examples.

Canary District
Toronto, Ontario

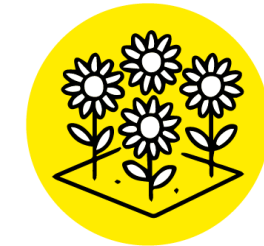
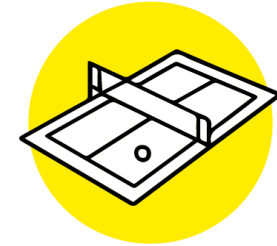
Landscaping
open spaces for
public use prior
to construction
start.



... and real world examples.

Fairground Racket Club
Toronto, Ontario

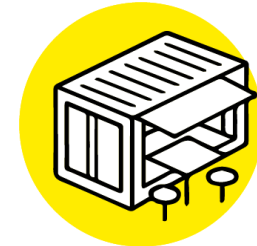
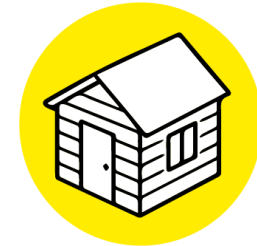
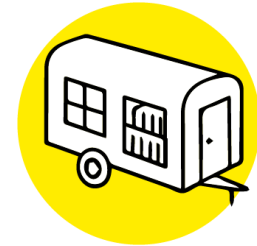
Temporary recreational uses for public use prior to construction start.



... and real world examples.

Welcome Home
Atlanta, Georgia

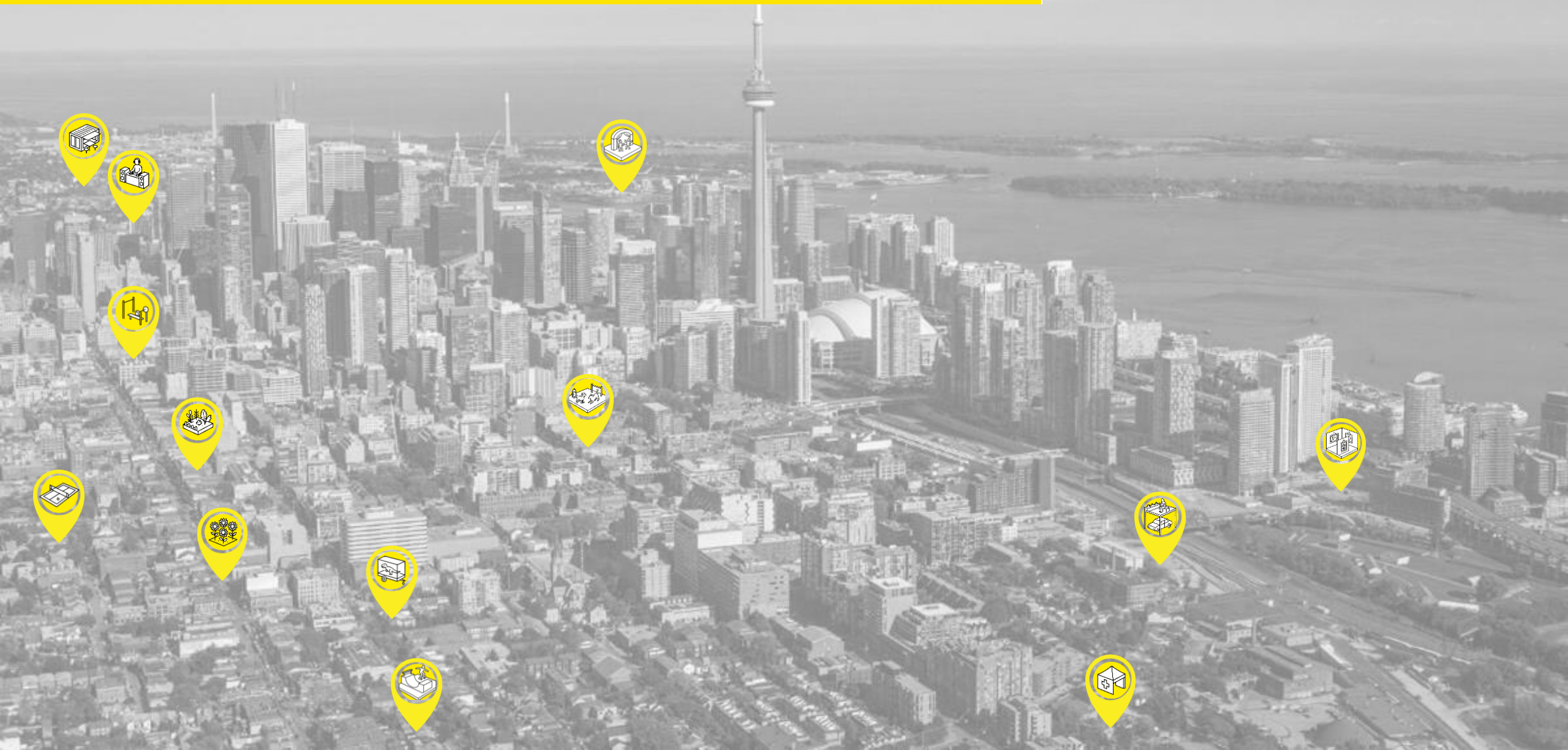
Temporary modular
housing that can be
relocated when
necessary.



Implementation

- Develop the points system of grading meanwhile spaces
- Investigate the feasibility of specific policy and requirements to mandate meanwhile spaces
- Investigate available public funding institutions and programs that can be used to incentivize meanwhile uses
- Canvas for additional public and private 'carrots' and 'sticks' ideas
- Adaptable and relocatable meanwhile components

Let's turn these opportunities into meanwhile destinations !



APPENDIX

Add a fourth component to MLI select

(accessibility, affordability, energy, meanwhile space)

Subcategory	Description	Points
Local Partnerships	At least 2 active partnerships with community-based organizations	10 pts
Economic Inclusion	20%+ of on-site jobs, vendor contracts, or leases are allocated to equity-deserving groups	10 pts
Publicly Accessible Amenities	Includes community rooms, shared gardens, coworking, or performance space open to the public 20+ hours/week	5–10 pts
Cultural Programming	Regular cultural/educational programming	5–10 pts
Placemaking/Beautification	Enhancements to public realm	5–10 pts
Community Governance	Residents or community members involved in governance/advisory board	5 pts

Tax exemption suggestions

Relief Mechanism	Description	Impact
Partial property tax exemption	Reduce municipal property tax for the duration of the Meanwhile use	30% reduction
Vacancy Tax Exemption	Exempt Meanwhile-use sites from vacancy/underutilization taxes (e.g. Empty Homes Tax)	Full exemption
Transfer Tax Deferral	Delay or reduce land transfer tax if property is leased temporarily before sale or redevelopment	Deferral until use ends
Capital Gains Incentive	Reduce capital gains on eventual sale if the land was activated as a Meanwhile Space for 3+ years	Up to 25% exemption
HST/GST Relief (Federal alignment)	Exempt temporary structures or services from HST/GST if used for non-profit/affordable housing	Tax-exempt status

Parkland Credit

- **Current Policy:** Developers must contribute **up to 10%** of the land area (or equivalent cash-in-lieu) for parkland dedication
- **Proposed Policy:** A **rebate of up to 50%** of the parkland fee (i.e., reduce the obligation to 5%) in exchange for meaningful meanwhile space activation.
- Criteria
 - Minimum continuous activation period: 6 months
 - Must occur before final site plan approval
 - Rebate is proportional to site area activated vs. total parcel size

TEAM 3: Fearless and Growth Mindset

The current municipal planning process in Ontario, anchored by several-hundred-page Official Plans, stifles innovation and responsiveness, leading to delayed development and increasing housing costs. These plans create confusion for community members and fail to adapt to the dynamic needs of our communities, perpetuating a bureaucratic, top-down approach that hinders progress. By reimagining Official Plans as concise visioning documents, we can unleash the potential for agile, community-driven growth.

TEAM 4: Efficiency and Resource Optimization

Urban land is a finite resource, yet many privately-owned lands remain vacant or underutilized, creating gaps in the urban fabric and missed opportunities for community benefit. These spaces, even when activated temporarily, can contribute to cultural vibrancy, local economic activity and public life. Our solution provides developers with a practical and efficient tool to connect with community organizations and small businesses ready to activate these sites - offering a streamlined, low-resource way to unlock value while supporting broader city-making goals.



Efficiency & Resource Optimization

Places of possibility

Which place tells a better story?



Overview

What is the problem?

- Many vacant or underutilized private lands in the city that developers are sitting on, while communities continue to feel like there's a lack of gathering space and parkland.

Why does it exist?

- Development approval processes take too long, or the market influence may mean it's not the right time to build.
- Activating these spaces for value creation lacks clear guidance and consistent process for developers to follow.



Why so much vacant space?

- Development cycles are not streamlined and are susceptible to many external factors with vast supply chains
- Developers are hesitant with today's uncertain macro-economic climate

Why activate these spaces?

- Directly contributes to thriving communities by supporting small/local businesses
- Fosters a sense of culture and placemaking
- Underutilized, neglected lands can turn into undesirable locations

Why aren't we already?

- There is a lack of clear guidance and a consistent process for developers to follow
- The business case may not be clear for developers, they only look at the risk involved

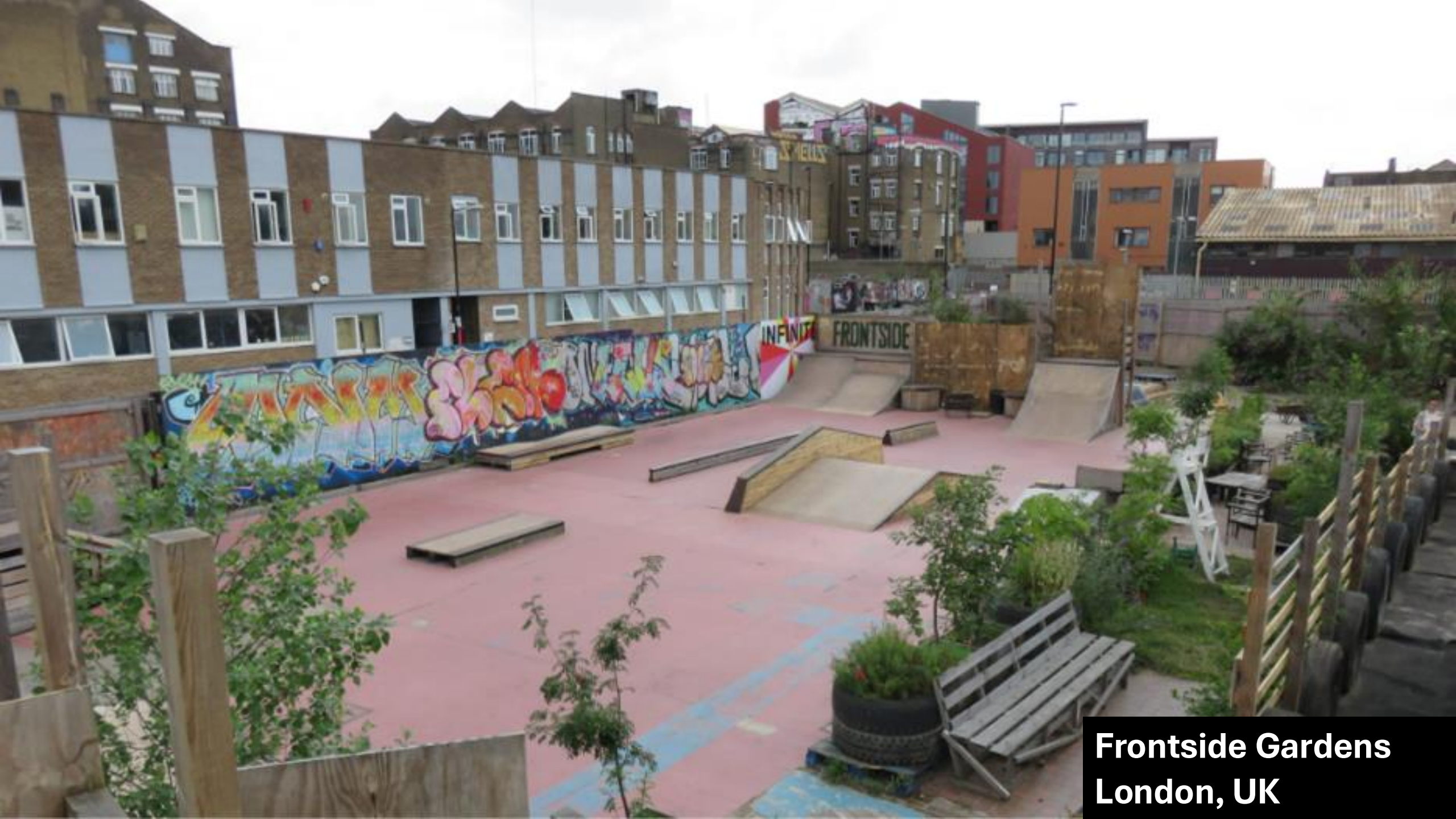


Our objective

To improve underutilized land to support thriving communities we need an innovative, adaptable and resource-efficient solution for temporary space activations – places of possibility. We need a solution that:

- Uses what is already existing and underutilized
- Does not require (or requires little) additional resources (financing, time, building materials, permits etc.,)
- Is scalable, or customizable for different sites
- Easily measures community impact





**Frontside Gardens
London, UK**



BOXPARK
London, UK



**Fairgrounds
Toronto**





Frontside Gardens
London, UK



BOXPARK
London, UK

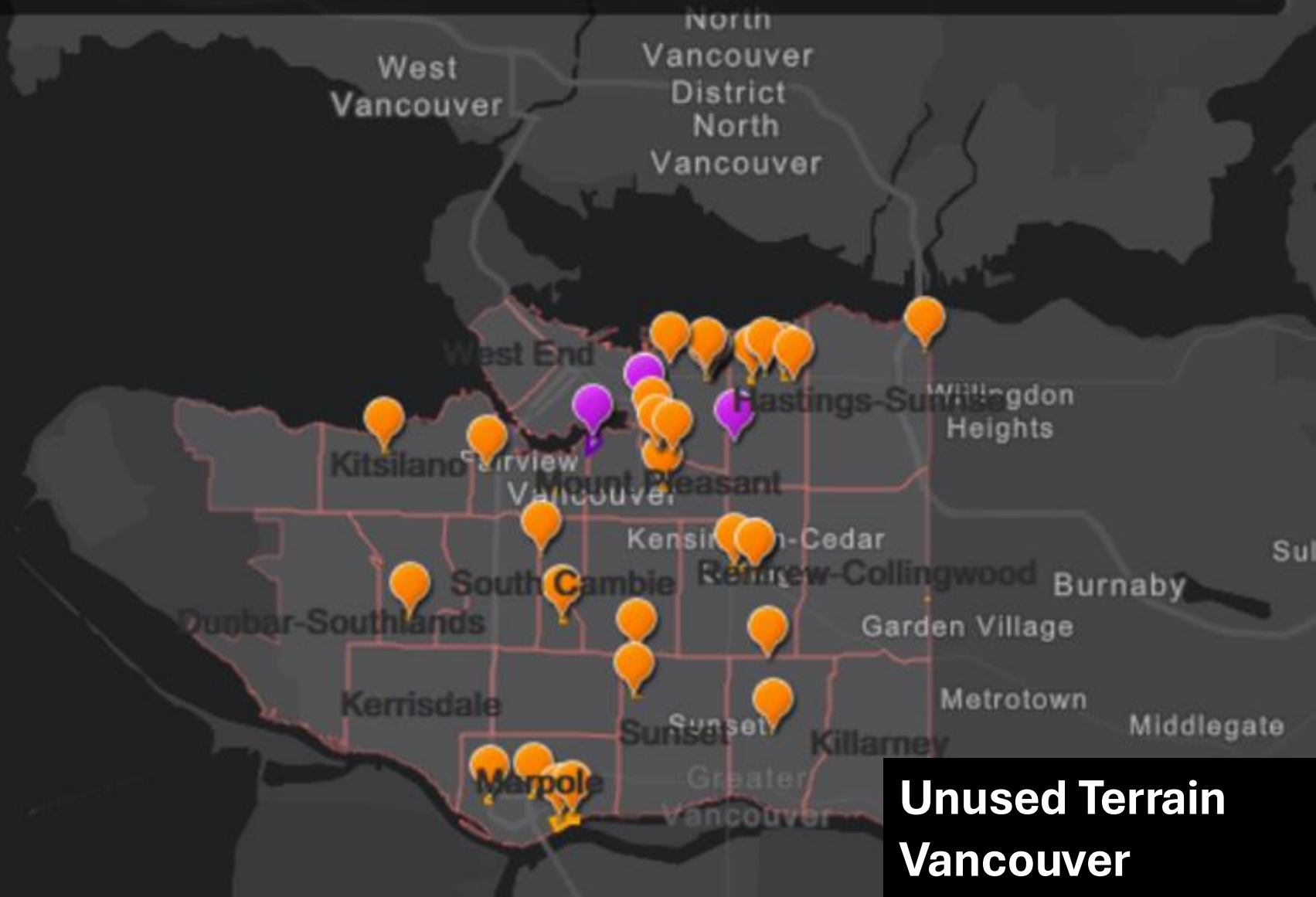


Fairgrounds
Toronto



YZD
Toronto

Unused Terrain: Activating Vancouver's Invisible Sites



**Unused Terrain
Vancouver**

Interactive Platform for Meanwhile-Use

- Full platform for connectivity and facilitation
 - Connecting interested parties to sort through viable land uses (ex. Coffee truck, farmers market, community gardens, pop-up shops, promotional events, circus, etc.)
 - Linking various community groups for collaboration
 - For developers to see market trends/public preference
 - For media exposure/marketing

FILTERS

Site Size



Environmental Restrictions

Owner Restrictions

Applicable Financial Incentive programs

Available Timeframe



Zoning By-Law

Residential

Residential Apartment

Open Space

Utility and Transportation

Commercial

Commercial Residential

Commercial Residential Employment

Employment Industrial

Institutional

Preferred Community Uses



ADDRESS

LANDOWNER: ABC Developer

LOT AREA: 520m²

LOT DIMENSION: 13m x 40m

DESCRIPTION: Abandoned, gravel, empty lot

CURRENT USE: Vacant

ULTIMATE USE: Residential

AS-OF-RIGHT ZONING: Commercial

Residential, Max. 6-storeys

VACANT SINCE: March 2024

AVAILABLE TIMEFRAME: 3 years

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTRICTIONS: None

OWNER RESTRICTIONS: None

PREFERRED COMMUNITY USES:



[DETAILS](#)

How does it benefit key players?

For landowners

- Derive value from vacant land
- Corporate/Social responsibility
- Marketing/exposure
- Partnerships

For prospective space users

- Cost and timing efficient
- Recommend uses to meet the brief
- Connect directly with landowners

For the City

- Activate community/usable spaces
- Streamline process that will reduce approval timelines for these uses
- Plug the gap for much needed open space

Key resources that would be optimized and made efficient

- Optimization of land as a resource
- Flexible uses will further create efficiencies.
- A framework for a new streamlined process for the use of vacant spaces throughout the City.
- In-built 'meanwhile use' permissions in Zoning By-laws
- A platform that will connect landowners with prospective space users.
- Optimization by collaboration.

Thank You!

Q&A Period

TEAM 5: Visionary and Systemic Change

We are looking to explore innovations and reforms for housing affordability and tenant equity. Housing is a basic human right and our current housing system makes it difficult for specific segments of our population, namely renters and low/moderate income households, to find adequate housing options and build equity towards their future. To address some of these inequities, our group is exploring innovative solutions to the public and private models for the delivery of housing which could help reduce the barriers to entry and provide a sustainable model for the delivery of affordable housing.

As part of our analysis, we are exploring how a new framework for the provision of affordable housing by the public sector could reimagine the concept of public housing, changing the discourse from “housing as an investment” to “housing as a key piece of infrastructure” which is critical to the functionality of cities. From the private perspective, we are exploring ways to work within the confines of the current framework to allow renters to build equity through renting as well as ideas for low/moderate households to enter into the ownership market through reduced financial barriers to entry.

Our goal is to explore how innovation can foster new ideas, both incremental and overarching, to break down the financial barriers and provide the basic human right of housing.



Group 5: Visionary & Systemic Change

Reforms for Housing Affordability & Tenant Equity



The Why?

Why did we choose this topic?

Housing should be a basic human right

All citizens should be able to afford a place to live.

What is the issue we are trying to solve?

As rental is becoming more prevalent, can we create a system for tenants to build equity?

Systemic changes to public housing model to get back to building.

The How: Tenant Rental Equity

How can renters build equity in the existing housing framework?

- **The ideas which we are exploring**
 - Rent-to-own model
 - Profit sharing or equity building through rental reserves
 - Allow renters to build their credit rating which can be used to qualify for mortgages
- **Innovation Case Studies and Solutions**
 - **Colorado Housing Accelerator Initiative** - Tenant Equity Vehicles
 - **Up & Up Co.** - rental deposit goes to an ownership stake in a property
 - **Zenbase solutions** - rent splitting which allows tenants to have more cash flow and partnership with Equifax so that residents can build up their credit rating for on time rent payments
 - **Tenant Equity Reserve Fund** - a government-backed fund which renters can opt into to build guaranteed returns on their rental payments
- **Ideas we still need to figure out**
 - How can these ideas be scaled?
 - How can these ideas be rolled out to the secondary rental market?
 - What policy changes may be required to implement these ideas?



The How: Reduce Upfront Costs of Owning

How can we reduce the financial barriers for low/moderate income households for ownership?

- **The ideas which we are exploring**
 - Wider use of land trusts
 - Wider roll out of government assistance programs
- **Innovation Case Studies and Solutions**
 - **Efficiencies and wider roll out of existing programs** - The First-Time Home Buyers Incentives (FTHBI), Ontario Down Payment Assistance Programs (Kitchener, Barrie, Hamilton), Attainable Homes Program (Alberta), [Mortgage Flexibilities Support Program](#) (Saskatchewan)
 - **Land Trust innovations** - Cedar Innovations - you buy the house, Cedar owns the land
- **Ideas we still need to figure out**
 - How can these ideas be scaled and streamlined?
 - What are the risks associated with these models?
 - What policy changes may be required to implement these ideas?



The How: Affordable Housing Reform

How we change the discourse from “housing as an investment” to “housing as key infrastructure”?

- **The ideas which we are exploring**
 - The wider roll out of home shares, co-ops and nonprofits
 - The government as a developer
 - Regulatory changes and the use of rent controls
- **Innovation Case Studies and Solutions**
 - Financial benefits of rent control
 - City of Minneapolis - ending single family zoning
 - Vienna, Austria - viewing affordable housing as infrastructure
- **Ideas we still need to figure out**
 - Recommended policy changes required for implementation
 - How to mitigate private sector/general public issues
 - How can these ideas be scaled?





Next Steps prior to May Presentations

- Define how these innovations can be implemented in the Canadian context
- Assess if there is a way to pair the rent-to-own model with public policy for new purpose built rental builders to provide options for rent-to-own units in exchange for benefits (ie. DC credits/ waivers?)
- Define the parameters that need to be met to qualify
- For all solutions, look at how they can be scaled effectively



LUNCH
12:30PM - 1:15PM

PANEL DISCUSSION



Curtner




Emily Reisman
Partner
Urban Strategies



See-Yin Lim
Senior Associate
DTAH

BREAK
2:30PM - 2:45PM



PRESENTATION ON INTERIM SITE ACTIVATION AND SITE TOUR



Curtner



Alana Mercury
Director, Programming &
Placemaking
Northcrest Developments



Aytakin Mohammadi
Director, Impact &
Engagement
Northcrest Developments

2024 / 2025 CURTNER URBAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM



ORGANIZING THE TEAMS!

2024 Curtner Urban Leadership Program – Team 1



Munira Al-Amudy
Associate Development Manager
Toronto Community Housing
Corporation



Liban Hassan
Trustee and Board of Director,
Toronto Lands Corporation
Toronto District School Board



Josh Reiniger
Associate, Urban Designer
Urban Strategies



Rida Khan
Senior Urban Designer
Hatch



Brady Heslip
Associate, Development
Oxford Properties Group



Meaghan Palynchuk
Real Estate Consultant,
Affordable Housing
City of Hamilton



Nathaniel Francolla
Manager of Community
Development & Integration
FirstService Residential



Hailey McWilliam
Senior Planner
Bousfields inc.

Inclusive and Community Driven

2024 Curtner Urban Leadership Program - Team 2



Jeremy Kloet
Development Manager
Toronto Lands Corporation



Nyasha Harper-Michon
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CP Planning



Liana Carnevale
Senior Advisor
Infrastructure Ontario



Nicole Lechter
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Michelle Corcoran
Senior Manager, Development
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Justin Smith
Architect
BDP Quadrangle



William Hu
Development Manager
York University
Development Corporation



Juneja Varghese
Senior Manager,
Community Initiatives
United Way Greater Toronto



Katie Henley
Senior Urban Designer
City of Markham

Adaptability

2024 Curtner Urban Leadership Program - Team 3



Tejas Bhatt
Senior Development Manager
CAPREIT



Kyla Tan
Manager, Development
Fitzrovia Real Estate



Kit Leung
Senior Manager,
Real Estate & Insurance
Community Living Toronto



Hassan Mohamud
Community Benefits Coordinator
Toronto Community Benefits
Network



Czeryll Longalong
Specialist, Strategic Policy and Research
Regional Municipality of Peel



Dorsa Jalalian
Associate, Senior Urban Designer
DIALOG



Philippa French
Public Art Curator
City of Mississauga



Rachel Vesz
Senior Urban Designer
Arcadis

Fearless and Growth Mindset

2024 Curtner Urban Leadership Program - Team 4



Sara Gregory
Senior Planner
Bousfields Inc.



Bindu Shah
Strategic Lead, Planning
Town of Caledon



Diana Pitfield
Senior Manager,
Corporate Sustainability
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Prasanth Charakunnel Varughese
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Alanna Damp
Associate
Kilmer Infrastructure
Developments Inc.



Emily Li
Project Lead, Architect
BDP Quadrangle



Himanshu Katyal
Senior Planner
Bousfields Inc.



Edwin Li
Project Lead, Comprehensive Zoning
By-law Review / Senior Planner
City of Brampton

Efficiency and Resource Optimization

2024 Curtner Urban Leadership Program - Team 5



Geoffrey Mosher
Project Manager
LURA Consulting



Sagal Shuriye
Capital Planner
Government of Ontario



Justine Kicek
Development Manager
Fitzrovia Real Estate



Michael Salenieks
Vice President, Broker
Lennard Commercial
Realty, Brokerage



Han Liu
Principal Urban
Designer/Supervisor
City of Brampton



Nathania Dixon
Director, RioCan Living Operations
RioCan REIT



Matthew Heather
Associate Principal, Manager,
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Arcadis

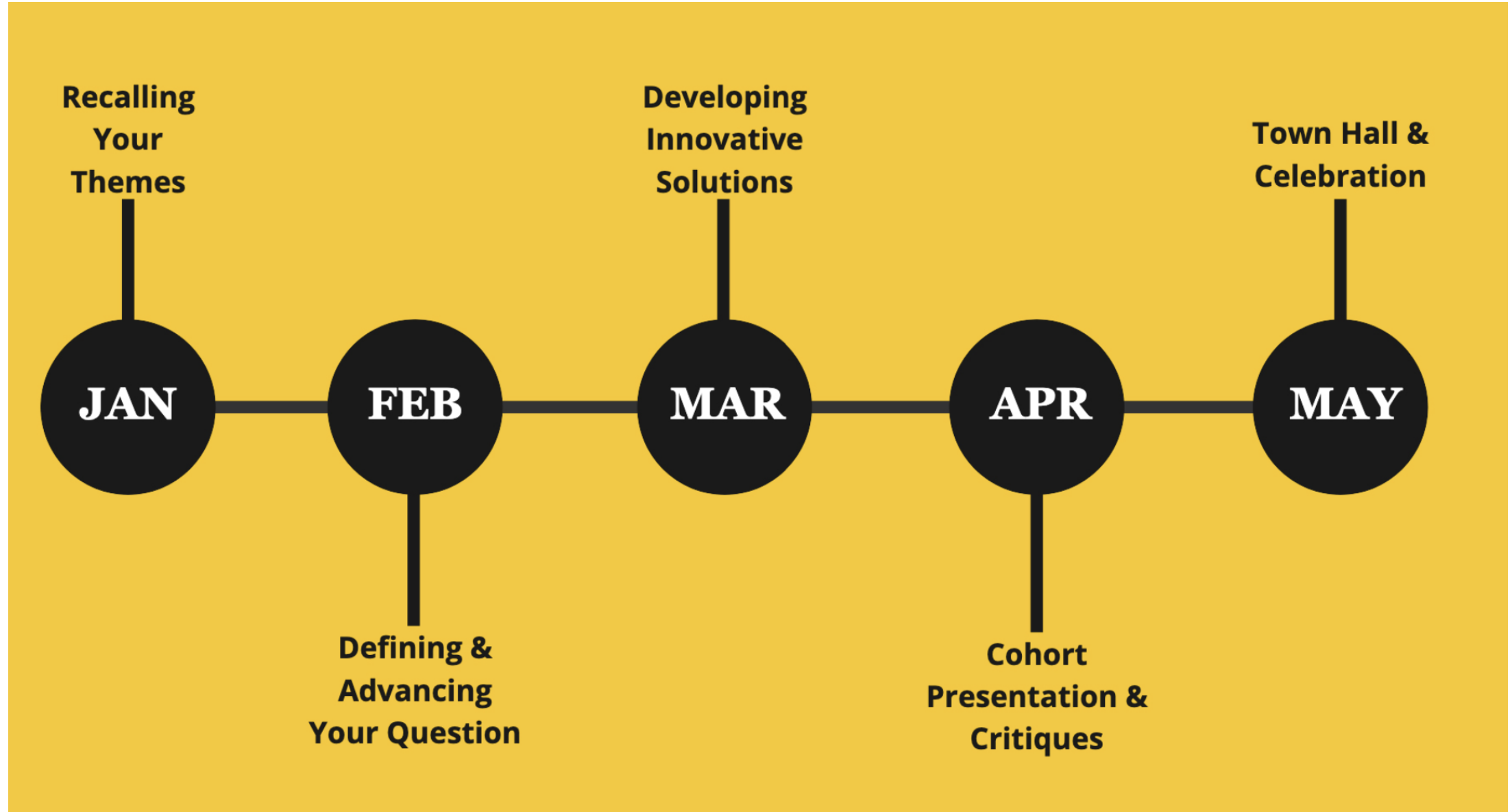


Kate (Ketevan) Gonashvili
Senior Designer
Giannone Petricone Associates

Visionary and Systemic Change

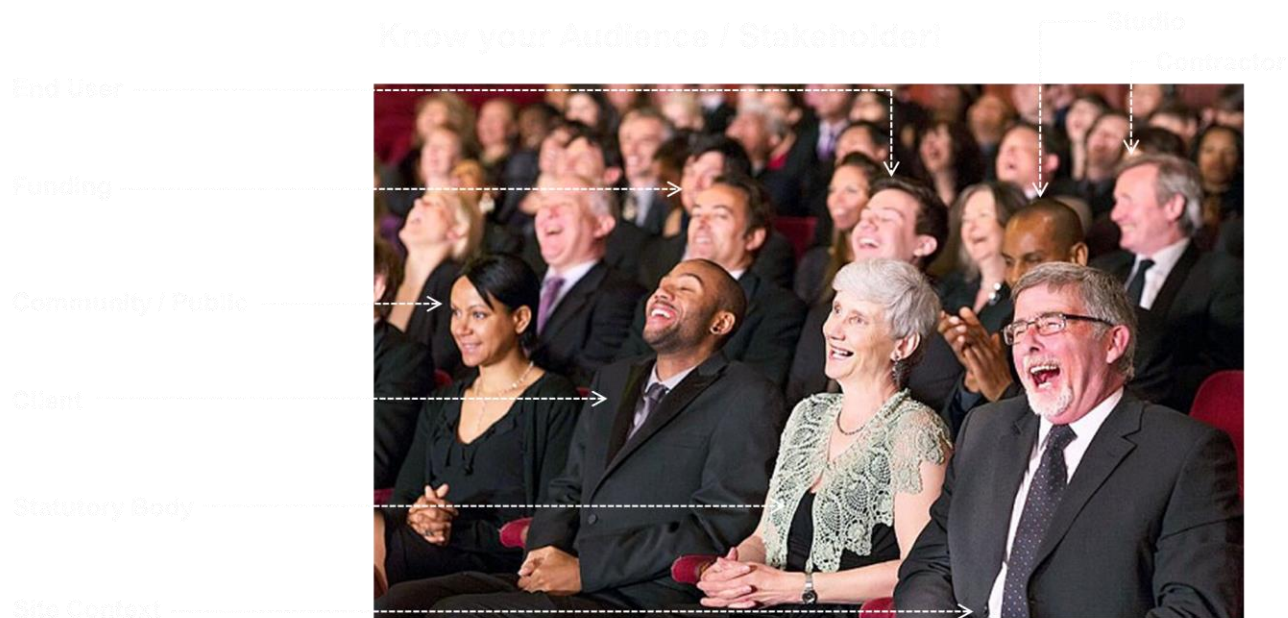
WRAP UP

Timeline and Process



Purpose of the Assignment

To demonstrate / practice your leadership skills by making a pitch to apply innovation to address an issue related to the urban land industry.

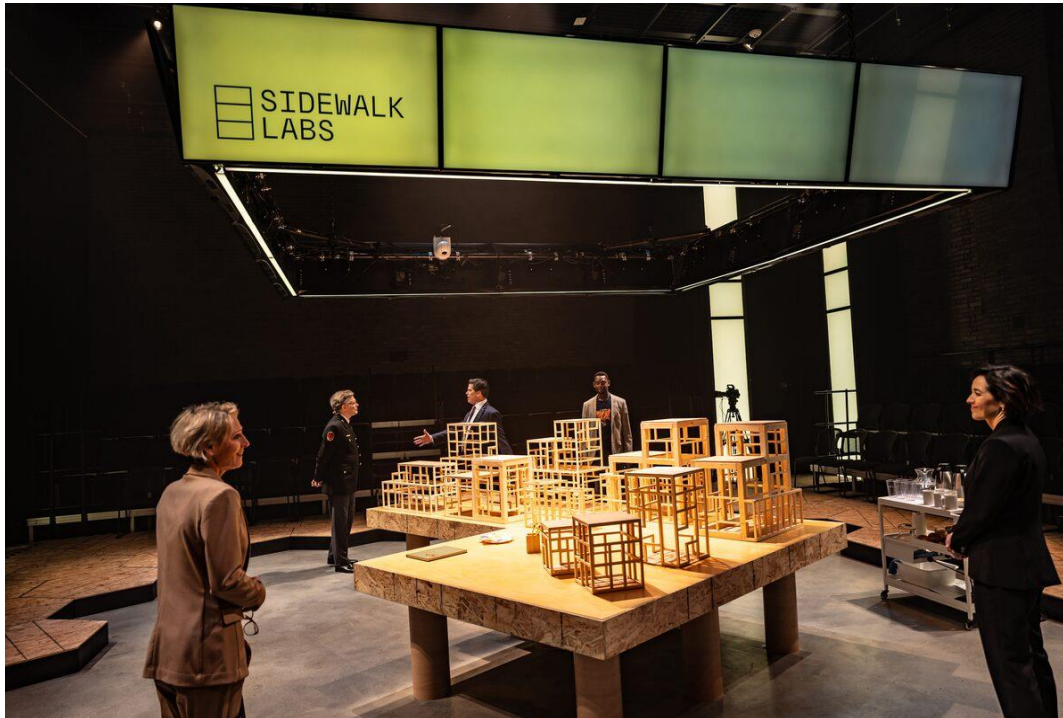


Your Audience could include:

- *Cohort Participants*
- *Steering Committee*
- *Past Speakers*
- *Curtner Urban Leadership Alumni*
- *Invited Guests – maybe your boss!*

Assignment Deliverables

Presentation of your "pitch" to apply an innovative approach to an issue relevant to the urban land industry.



The method of presentation is entirely your choice, it can be:

- *PowerPoint*
- *Poster*
- *Report*
- *Dramatization*
- *.... be Innovative*

Leverage your Why?

*"People don't buy **what** you do, they buy **WHY** you do it!"*

Simon Sinek – Author and Inspirational Speaker

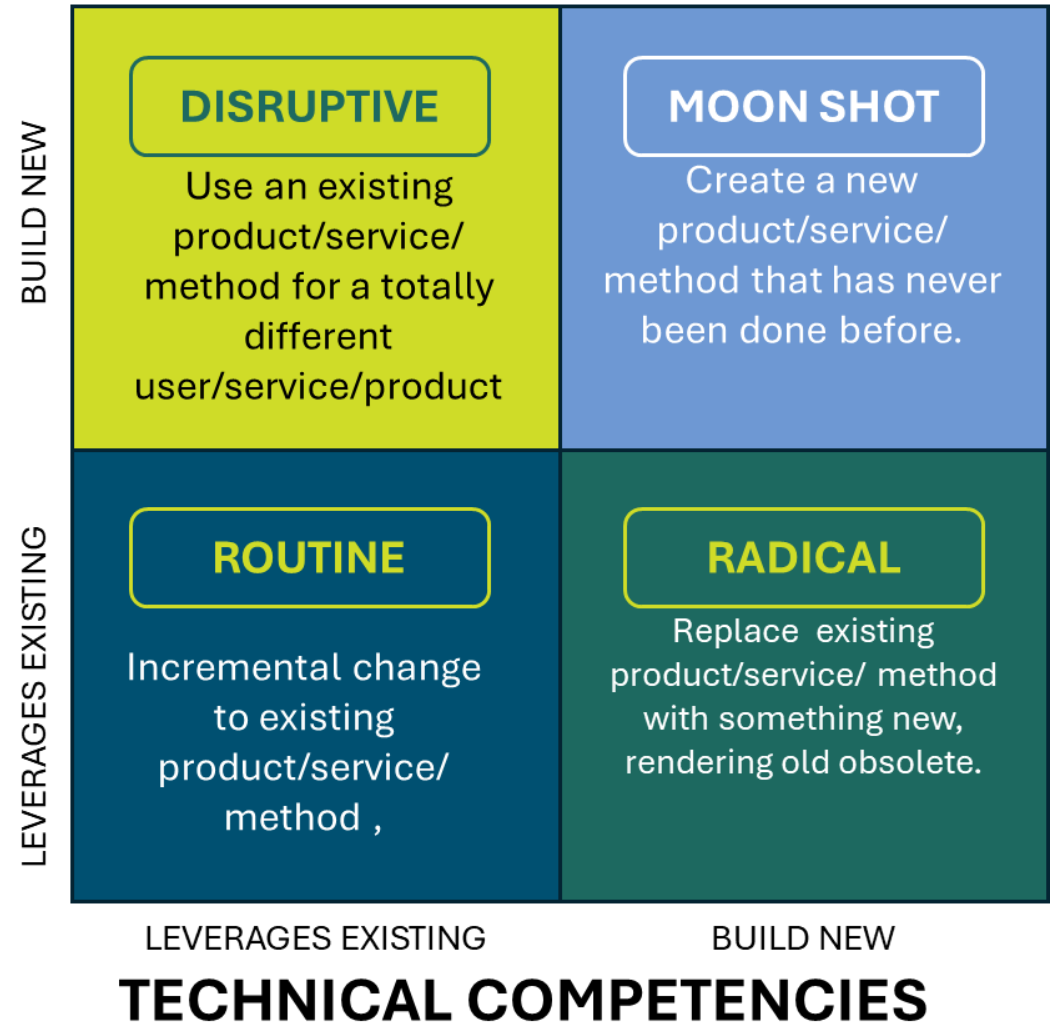


Contextualize your Innovation

Communicate the relationship of your innovation to "routine"

Are you just making a subtle adjustment to routine, pushing the boundaries of a new business model or technical competencies or both

BUSINESS MODEL



Resources

Utilize methods used
and advice given from
speakers and panelists

